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Crossing the Line: The Life and Musical Legacy of Friedrich Gulda Through a Study of *Play Piano Play*

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CROSSING THE LINE: THE LIFE AND MUSICAL LEGACY OF
FRIEDRICH GULDA THROUGH A STUDY OF *PLAY PIANO PLAY*

by

William Travis Worsham

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University of Nebraska, 2019

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In the 1950s, Austrian pianist Friedrich Gulda shocked the classical music community by publicly venturing into the realm of jazz. As one of the leading classical pianists of his generation, Gulda's decision to explore a different type of music was seen as a scandal, leading many in the classical world to label Gulda as an eccentric who sought to upend centuries of musical tradition. Although Gulda had grown weary of the conventions of classical music, it was his lifelong love of jazz that propelled him to devote time and energy studying the techniques of jazz performance. He gave his first professional performance as a jazz artist at New York City's Birdland in 1956, beginning a unique and controversial career that forever walked between the world of classical and jazz music.

Having gained the respect of many in the jazz community, Gulda became known for his programs and recordings of both classical and jazz music. Many of these featured his own compositions, such as *Play Piano Play*—a ten-piece cycle in which Gulda presents jazz techniques and styles within classical formal structures. In addition to being effective pieces for the concert stage, Gulda wrote these exercises as a tool to teach the classical pianist how to perform jazz. Through a pedagogical and performance analysis of *Play Piano Play*, this document will help musicians discover how Gulda's unique compositional approach of combining notated music with elements of improvisation

progressively instills the fundamentals of jazz technique throughout the cycle. A brief consideration of three additional solo-piano works continues to show the important contributions Gulda has made to the classical-jazz genre of the piano repertoire.

Friedrich Gulda's career took him on a journey from the finest concert halls to the darkest smoke-filled jazz clubs. Through it all, he remained uniquely himself—an artist confident in his musical vision. Today, his legacy lives in works such as *Play Piano Play*, as each note describes the journey of one of the twentieth century's most rebellious, radical, and revolutionary pianists.

To my wife, Arica

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS	viii
Examples.....	viii
Tables	x
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHY	1
Gulda and Classical Music.....	3
Gulda and Jazz	7
Gulda as Crossover Artist	11
CHAPTER 2. OVERVIEW AND PEDAGOGICAL/PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF <i>PLAY PIANO PLAY</i>	20
<i>Play Piano Play</i>	24
No. 9.....	24
No. 1.....	27
No. 5.....	29
No. 4.....	32
No. 2.....	34
No. 8.....	37
No. 6.....	39
No. 10.....	41
No. 3.....	43
No. 7.....	43
CHAPTER 3. FORMAL ANALYSIS OF <i>PLAY PIANO PLAY</i>	47
<i>Play Piano Play</i>	48
No. 1.....	48
No. 2.....	50
No. 3.....	51
No. 4.....	52
No. 5.....	54
No. 6.....	56
No. 7.....	57
No. 8.....	58
No. 9.....	59
No. 10.....	60

CHAPTER 4. ADDITIONAL SOLO PIANO WORKS	63
Aria	63
Prelude and Fugue.....	66
Variations on “Light My Fire”	70
CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	80
BIBLIOGRAPHY	83

ILLUSTRATIONS

Examples

2.1	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 9 (mm. 4-7)	24
2.2	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 9 (m. 4).....	26
2.3	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 1 (mm. 1-3)	27
2.4	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 1 (mm. 27-28)	29
2.5	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 1 (m. 29-31)	29
2.6	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 5 (mm. 1-3)	29
2.7	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 5 (mm. 1-3)	32
2.8	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 4 (mm. 1-2)	32
2.9	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 2 (mm. 1-5)	34
2.10	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 2 (mm. 13-16)	36
2.11	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 8 (mm. 1-3)	37
2.12	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 6 (mm. 1-3)	39
2.13	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 6 (mm. 54-57)	40
2.14	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 10 (mm. 1-3)	41
2.15	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 10 (mm. 61-64)	42
2.16	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 3 (mm. 1-3)	43
2.17	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 7 (mm. 3-5)	43
3.1	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 1 (mm. 1-2)	48
3.2	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 1 (mm. 3-5)	49
3.3	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 1 (mm. 16-18)	49

3.4	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 4 (mm. 1-2)	52
3.5	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 4 (m. 64-65)	53
3.6	<i>Play Piano Play</i> , No. 8 (mm. 1-3)	58
4.1	Aria (mm. 1-3)	64
4.2	Aria (mm. 18-19)	65
4.3	Prelude (mm. 1-2)	67
4.4	Prelude (mm. 57-59)	67
4.5	Prelude (mm. 90-94)	68
4.6	Fugue (mm. 1-4)	68
4.7	Fugue (mm. 32-35)	69
4.8	Fugue (mm. 65-67)	69
4.9	Fugue (mm. 93-95)	69
4.10	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 1-2)	71
4.11	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 10-11)	71
4.12	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 25-26)	72
4.13	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 32-33)	72
4.14	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 55-56)	73
4.15	Variations on “Light My Fire” (m. 62)	73
4.16	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 77-78)	73
4.17	Variations on “Light My Fire” (m. 85)	74
4.18	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 92-93)	74
4.19	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 100-101)	75
4.20	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 116-117)	75

4.21	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 130-133)	76
4.22	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 137-144)	76
4.23	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 152-159)	77
4.24	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 175-181)	77
4.25	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 182-184)	78
4.26	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 197-202)	78
4.27	Variations on “Light My Fire” (mm. 211-213)	79

Tables

3.1	Rondo form of Exercise No. 2	50
3.2	ABA'A form of Exercise No. 4.....	54
3.3	ABA' form of Exercise No. 5.....	55
3.4	AA'A"A form of Exercise No. 6	57
3.5	ABA' form of Exercise No. 10.....	62

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHY

It seems inevitable that with every generation there is at least one person who chooses to swim against the tide. Sometimes, this individual is viewed as a trailblazer: someone whose particular brilliance and exceeding talent is the catalyst needed to advance a movement or agenda forward into new and uncharted territory. On occasion, however, this person is viewed as a radical—anti-establishment of the highest order—who is seen as wanting nothing more than to rebel against social and established norms of the time in an effort to disrupt, dismantle, and reimagine the way things have always been done. The classical music world of the mid-twentieth century was presented with just such a rebel in Austrian pianist Friedrich Gulda (1930-2000), when the young and precocious classical musician turned his back on that world in pursuit of something new: jazz. Gulda's seemingly sudden and alarming change of heart immediately garnered much confusion and condemnation from music critics and classical-concert audiences alike. From accusations of “madness” to the distorted belief that Gulda now belonged to a different and lower social class, his very existence became a scandal.¹

Under ordinary circumstances, being the winner of the Geneva Piano Competition at the age of 16, having debuted at Carnegie Hall at the age of 20, and having played all Beethoven piano sonatas by the age of 23 would more than keep one at the top of one's

¹ Friedrich Gulda, *So What?! Friedrich Gulda: A Portrait*, dir. by Benedict Mirow, 165 min., Deutsche Grammophon, 2007, DVD, [32:10-34:38].

field.² In fact, by 1950, Gulda had already established himself as one of the preeminent pianists of his generation and his career was indeed set; and yet, not even these accolades could keep Vienna's native son from falling from grace. Gulda was venturing into territory that had never been explored by a classical artist with such prominence. In doing so, Gulda had crossed an invisible line that earned him a new title: "terrorist pianist."³ After his professional crossover, Gulda's career became fraught with controversy. While Gulda explored a career that had one foot in classical music and the other in jazz, critics and audiences of classical music tried to figure out what to do with their newest "bad boy," whose nonconformist attitude seemed to relish in opportunities to oppose tradition.⁴

As evidenced by his most contentious antics, Gulda was not afraid to challenge accepted conventions and practices throughout his career. In his recitals, he would often unpredictably disregard the printed program, including substituting pieces on stage, as well as offering extended improvisations in the middle of works.⁵ His bohemian style of concert attire⁶—ranging from a Jewish Bucharian kippah, sunglasses, and matching colorful shirt to a performance completely *au naturel*⁷—was certainly non-traditional. His reputation as a nonconformist was further solidified by his refusal to accept the coveted

² Leonne Lewis, "Both Classics and Jazz Intrigued Friedrich Gulda," *Clavier Companion* Vol. 43, issue 8 (October 2004): 16-19.

³ Philip Clark, "Friedrich Gulda," *Gramophone* Vol. 93, no. 1128 (October 2015): 58-59.

⁴ Lynn René Bayley, "Friedrich Gulda and Friends," *Fanfare: The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors* Vol. 37, issue 3 (January/February 2014): 543-545.

http://www.arkivmusic.com/classical/album.jsp?album_id=994788#review, accessed 4/15/19.

⁵ Philipp Blom, "Friedrich Gulda: Gifted pianist on a musical journey from the classics to jazz," *The Guardian* (January 2000) <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2000/feb/01/guardianobituaries>, accessed 2/17/19.

⁶ Bradley Bamberger, "Friedrich Gulda," *Steinway and Sons*, <https://www.steinway.com/artists/friedrich-gulda>, accessed 2/17/19.

⁷ In one infamous concert, Gulda (with his then girlfriend and fellow musician) appeared on stage naked for a live, televised performance of Schumann songs. Video footage from the documentary *So What?!* reveals a similar performance in 1981.

Beethoven Ring offered to him in 1969 by the Vienna Music Academy, as well as the infamous stunt of March 28, 1999—when Gulda faked his own death by sending a telegram announcing his demise, just to report days later that he was very much alive (and ready for his resurrection concert).⁸ The refusal to follow conventional practices flagged Gulda as an eccentric of the most unorthodox methods by many.

Yet, these practices also reveal a complex portrait of an artist who often pushed beyond the conventional wisdom and expectations of others in an effort to satisfy his own musical curiosities and remain devoted to his unique artistic vision. As Gulda once summarized,

Many people consider my very existence a scandal. It's scandalous when someone constantly does things that ordinarily shouldn't be done. You don't play Mozart or Beethoven and go to a jazz club two hours later. I don't lead a normal life. There are some things I just don't do, although everyone else does. Anyone who thinks and lives as I do is a constant scandal. And when certain events make that obvious, then its obvious, that's all. Basically, my whole life is a scandal.⁹

Gulda and Classical Music

Gulda was born into a musical home on May 16, 1930 in Vienna, Austria to two teachers. His father, Friedrich Johann Gulda, played the cello; his mother, Marie Aloysia Gulda, played the piano. His older sister and only sibling, Hedwig, began piano lessons, but quit after one year.¹⁰ In contrast, Gulda began piano studies at the age of seven at the

⁸ Philipp Blom, "Pianist 'faked death to see his obituary,'" *The Independent* (April 2002) <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/pianist-faked-death-to-see-his-obituary-1084584.html>, accessed 2/17/19.

⁹ Gulda, *So What?!*, [0:10-0:49].

¹⁰ Gulda Werkstatt Kremsegg, "Friedrich Gulda Biography," <http://www.gulda.at/english/impressum/text.htm>, accessed 2/17/19.

Vienna Conservatory and continued to receive private instruction from Felix Pazofsky from 1938-1942.¹¹

Gulda described his home as “a bourgeois family—not grand, more petty bourgeois, with an intellectual slant.”¹² Raised during the tumultuous period leading up to and through World War II, Gulda described his father as a “hard-hitting Social Democrat” who never broke under Hitler’s strain, and gave him the following advice: “Character, spine, and steadfastness are almost more important than talent.”¹³ Luckily, Gulda demonstrated aspects of all four: his talent would naturally set him apart from the other pianists of his generation, while distinct traits of character, spine, and steadfastness would undoubtedly place him into a class of his own creation. In 1942, Gulda entered the Vienna Music Academy where he studied piano under Bruno Seidlhofer and music theory with the late-Romanticist Joseph Marx. In 1946, a sixteen-year-old Gulda reached prominence by winning the Geneva International Music Competition in Geneva, Switzerland.¹⁴

Controversy seemed to plague Gulda from the very onset, as the 1946 Geneva Competition is noted for the fact that juror Eileen Joyce—who favored Belgian pianist Lode Backx—stormed out in protest of Gulda being given the top prize.¹⁵ Despite this contention, Gulda began successful tours throughout Europe and South America,

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Gulda, *So What?!*, [3:17-4:17].

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Clark, “Friedrich Gulda,” 58.

¹⁵ Richard Davis, *Eileen Joyce: A Portrait* (Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2001), 126-7.

eventually leading to his Carnegie Hall debut in 1950.¹⁶ However, even Gulda's entrance into the United States did not occur without controversy. Upon his arrival to Ellis Island on Oct. 7, 1950, Gulda admitted in questioning that as a ten-year old boy he was a part of Hitler's Youth organization; a mandate forced on all Austrian youth after Germany took over the country in 1938. Despite Gulda explaining that he never even attended the organization's meetings, he was detained at Ellis Island for three days due to Congress's recent passing of the Internal Security Act¹⁷—a law that invariably caused many European musicians of former Axis nations to face delays in their journey to the United States.¹⁸

During his internment, Gulda found a battered old piano on which to practice for his upcoming recital.¹⁹ According to one *New York Times* article covering the incident, Steinway & Sons later received permission to send over a concert grand piano “so that Herr Gulda would have a good instrument to practice on.”²⁰ After petitioning directly to United States Attorney General Howard McGrath, Gulda was released on Monday, October 9—two days before his Carnegie Hall debut.

Despite the difficulties leading up to his performance, Gulda's inaugural recital at Carnegie Hall on Oct. 11, 1950 was a tremendous success and included works by Haydn, Beethoven, Prokofiev, and Debussy. The headline of the *New York Times* review of the performance the following day read, “Gulda Impresses in Piano Program: 20-Year-Old

¹⁶ Howard Taubman, “Pianist, a Hitler Youth at 10, Held under U.S. Security Act,” *New York Times*, 9 October 1950, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, 1.

¹⁷ Passed on September 23, 1950, the Internal Security Act stated that present or former Communists, Nazis, Fascists or other undeniable totalitarians must be barred from entering the United States.

¹⁸ Sam Falk, “Maestro of La Scala Is Detained With 30 Others Under Alien Act,” *New York Times*, 13 October 1950, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, 14.

¹⁹ Taubman, “Pianist, a Hitler Youth at 10, Held under U.S. Security Act.”

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Austrian Artist Shows Great Musical Gifts in Recital at Carnegie Hall.”²¹ In his review, music critic Howard Taubman described Gulda as “a musician first and virtuoso second,” possessing the “sensitivity of a poet.” Speaking on the performance of Beethoven’s Sonata in C Minor, Op. 111, Taubman said, “[Gulda] showed how rare are his musical instincts and how subtle his understanding of great art.” It was clear that the young Gulda had made an immediate and lasting impression, as evidenced further by Taubman’s concluding remarks. “He is more than a prodigy. Young men and women who can make the piano do everything but sit up and shake hands come along periodically. This lad is different in that he has a head and heart as well as ten strong fingers.”²² Addressing the fact that Gulda had only been granted permission to stay in the country through the following Saturday, Taubman added, “If we make him live up to the last syllable of the law and send him home on Saturday, the loss will be ours.”²³

Gulda would eventually be granted an extension to stay in the United States and would go on to make equally successful debuts in Boston and Chicago, where he was described as “an interpreter of deep perception” and someone who “already outclasses many better known pianists.”²⁴ Describing his technique, one critic wrote, “[H]is playing is clean and polished, and he has a good ear not only for a sparkling phrase but for shadows and subtle colorings in tone.”²⁵ Reviewing Gulda’s 1955 Carnegie Hall recital in

²¹ Howard Taubman, “Gulda Impresses in Piano Program: 20-Year-Old Austrian Artist Shows Great Musical Gifts in Recital at Carnegie Hall,” *New York Times*, 12 October 1950, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, 51.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Harold Rogers, “Young Pianist Acclaimed at Jordan Hall,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 5 November 1951, 4.

²⁵ Claudia Cassidy, “On the Aisle: Friedrich Gulda Plays an Interesting Recital in Orchestra Hall,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 November 1951, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune, B3.

an all-Beethoven program, Harold Schonberg wrote, “He has brains, ability, and strength; and many of us can see him in a continuation of the great German tradition of piano playing exemplified by Schnabel and Backhaus.”²⁶ And in one review, Harold Rogers of Boston’s *Christian Science Monitor*—in an ironically prophetic manner—captured both the pomp that was occurring and the controversy that was about to unfold: “Gulda is of the elect, there’s no doubt about it. He knows where he is going; he knows how to get there; and his goal is well in sight.”²⁷

By this point, Gulda’s achievements seemingly predicted a more traditional career in classical music. A victory at a prominent competition combined with a dazzling technique and a seasoned command of the Beethoven sonatas, in particular, had propelled the young, bespectacled Austrian to immediate stardom. In the eyes of critics and audiences across the globe, Gulda’s future in classical music seemed obvious. However, unbeknownst to everyone, there was an equally strong and compelling love for a different type of music in Gulda’s life, and his desire to publicly explore it was ready to surface.

Gulda and Jazz

According to Gulda, aside from his international concert career, his main preoccupation was “buying jazz records and hanging out in jazz clubs.”²⁸ Whereas Gulda’s affinity for jazz came as a sudden shock to the public, the reality is a story of a boy who began to develop a love for the genre at an early age, in a place where it was strictly forbidden:

²⁶ Harold Schonberg, “Gulda Plays: Pianist Heard Here in Beethoven Program,” *New York Times*, 22 January 1955, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, 9.

²⁷ Rogers, “Young Pianist Acclaimed at Jordan Hall.”

²⁸ Gulda, *So What?!*, [6:37-6:44].

It was wartime, the Nazis were in power, and listening to jazz or news from “enemy broadcasters”—meaning British radio—could cost you your life. You had to reckon with the Gestapo at any moment, so you stayed quiet and cautious. My father always listened to enemy broadcasts so I got to hear jazz on the British and American military channels. It was all pretty dangerous. But the music left me fascinated, even back then when it was prohibited by Hitler. We all breathed a sigh of relief when the nightmare was over.²⁹

After the war, Gulda and other like-minded musicians—many of who went on to renowned careers in jazz music³⁰—would get together to play.

In 1946–1947, just after the war, talented young people got together in the legendary Artclub where we could officially play this music. [Joe] Zawinul was sixteen, I was eighteen, Hans Koller may already have been twenty-five. These really young people met there and played jazz, legally, and before then illegally.³¹

In the beginning, Gulda admits that he “couldn’t do a thing in jazz.”³² Gulda’s formidable technique was always something that set him apart in a crowded field of classical pianists. However, as a jazz musician, Gulda had yet to truly learn the skills that would allow him to improvise and freely communicate with other musicians. “I worked long and hard at it until I could finally play it,” said Gulda. “Slogging through that and falling short of my expectations, year after year, was incredibly hard.”³³ Gulda even went so far as to take up a second jazz instrument—the baritone saxophone—as a means to facilitate his education. “I practiced like an idiot and played everywhere. I even developed a certain skill at it,” he said.³⁴

²⁹ Gulda, *So What?!*, [6:45-7:25].

³⁰ Joe Zawinul (1932-2007) was an Austrian jazz keyboardist and composer who played with Miles Davis and became one of the creators of jazz fusion. Along with saxophonist Wayne Shorter, he co-founded the group Weather Report, an American jazz fusion band. Hans Koller (1921-2003) was an Austrian jazz tenor saxophonist and bandleader.

³¹ Gulda, *So What?!*, [7:26-7:57]. Gulda’s memory seems to be fuzzy, as Zawinul would have been 14 or 15 years of age in 1946-47.

³² *Ibid.*, [12:55-13:50].

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Aside from the crossover into jazz itself, one thing that set Gulda apart from others was his willingness to devote himself entirely to the study of a new craft. After dedicating numerous hours of practice to cultivate the “chops” necessary to be taken seriously in the field, Gulda would eventually perform with some of the greatest jazz pianists of the era, such as Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea, just to name a few.³⁵ “I played with all the good people in the jazz scene,” Gulda said. “I may not know them all but I know most of them, especially the important ones. They say, ‘Gulda’s not a front-rank player. He’s not a specialist like us, but he’s worth taking seriously.’”³⁶

In 1956, Gulda earned his first opportunity in a major jazz venue when he performed with his newly formed sextet at one of the most famous jazz clubs in New York City: Birdland.³⁷ After persuading producer John Hammond—manager of Count Basie and Benny Goodman—to arrange a gig for him,³⁸ the 26-year-old Gulda led a two-week engagement with a group that consisted of well-known jazz artists: Phil Woods on alto saxophone, Seldon Powell on tenor saxophone, Jimmy Cleveland on trombone, Idrees Sulieman on trumpet, Aaron Bell on bass, and Nick Stabulas on drums. In a song-set that combined Gulda’s original compositions with arrangements of popular and jazz standards such as “A Night in Tunisia,” “Bernie’s Tune,” and “Lullaby of Birdland,” the persona of a classical pianist who was midway through recording his first Beethoven sonata cycle was undergoing a metamorphosis.³⁹

³⁵ The reader is encouraged to view the many available video-recordings on YouTube of the legendary encounters between Gulda and these great jazz artists.

³⁶ Gulda, *So What?!*, [12:55-13:50].

³⁷ Clark, “Friedrich Gulda.”

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

With a headline that heralded “GULDA HAS DEBUT AS JAZZ PIANIST,” the *New York Times* spoke of the young Viennese pianist making “a debut of a different nature” just five blocks south of where he received warm praise for his recital at Carnegie Hall in 1950.⁴⁰ The article described the event as “reputedly the first time that a musician of Mr. Gulda’s standing in the classical field has ventured into a jazz club professionally.”⁴¹ Speaking about his first professional engagement as a jazz musician, Gulda confessed experiencing some nerves, saying it was “not much different from the way I felt before my Carnegie Hall debut.”⁴² Reviewing the performance, the *Times* said, “The [attentive] audience...almost filled the room even at the early evening show...and applauded [Gulda’s] solo passages with enthusiasm.”⁴³

When a live recording of the event was released the following year, John Hammond’s hyperbolic liner notes described Gulda as the first “classical artist of stature” to bridge “the hitherto impenetrable gulf between two hostile musical worlds.”⁴⁴ In a review of Gulda’s first jazz recording, Harold Rogers of Boston’s *Christian Science Monitor* captured the contrasting sentiments that critics and the public were beginning to feel as they struggled to understand Gulda:

One wonders what kind of a rationalization Mr. Gulda makes when he leaves the dignity of the concert hall and the acknowledged masterworks for a smokefilled [*sic*] night club...Taken in its own frame, however, Mr. Gulda’s jazz is provocative. It borrows sophistication from his classical background; it derives

⁴⁰ New York Times, “Gulda Has Debut As Jazz Pianist,” *New York Times*, 22 June 1956, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, 15.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Harold Rogers, “Gulda and His Sextet on a Recent Release,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 August 1956, 5.

flexibility from his classical technique, but its energy and vitality belong to jazz and jazz alone.⁴⁵

With one foot now firmly and publicly planted in jazz, Gulda began walking a difficult and controversial tightrope between two musical worlds. As writer Philip Clark put it, he had become a “jazz cat among the purist classical pigeons.”⁴⁶

Gulda as Crossover Artist

Prior to his professional entrance into jazz, Gulda had risen through the ranks at lightning speed to become one of the most important classical pianists of the postwar period and a leading interpreter of Beethoven’s sonatas.⁴⁷ Gulda’s Beethoven sonata cycle—recorded between 1953 and 1957—is fiery and full of a rhythmic clarity that is arguably unmatched. Additionally, recital and studio recordings of his two other heroes—Bach and Mozart—reveal an artist deeply devoted to the great masters of classical music.

By the 1950s, however, Gulda had grown bored with the tailcoats and sanctity of the concert hall. The monolithic classical music program and the hollow gestures of this “superior” art left the ever ambitious and eccentric Gulda calling many societal and musical norms into question.⁴⁸ Though he would remain deeply committed to the music of Beethoven, Bach, and Mozart throughout his career, for Gulda, the music of the time was jazz and popular styles.⁴⁹ Not particularly caring for contemporaneous concert music, Gulda once concluded, “Jazz is the music of our day, the only modern, progressive music. Schoenberg is not really new, neither is Bartok, and the experimental

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Clark, “Friedrich Gulda.”

⁴⁷ Blom, “Friedrich Gulda.”

⁴⁸ Gulda Werkstatt Kremsegg, “Friedrich Gulda Biography.”

⁴⁹ Lewis, “Both Classics and Jazz Intrigued Friedrich Gulda.”

composers certainly aren't. They are only trying to cast the past in concrete. Schoenberg does it dogmatically, Bartok with folklore."⁵⁰

For Gulda, jazz offered a “rhythmic drive” and a sense of “risk” that contrasted to the “pale academic approach” he had been taught.⁵¹ “There can be no guarantee that I will become a great jazz musician,” he once said, “but at least I shall know that I am doing the right thing.”⁵² Unwilling to “fall into the routine of the modern concert pianist’s life,” Gulda spent the next forty years refusing to limit his horizons to only one portion of the musical spectrum,⁵³ opting for a career that included programs and recordings combining classical and jazz, the initiation of several jazz competitions and music forums, and the advancement of his own compositions.

Beginning in 1966, Gulda instigated the first Viennese International Competition for Jazz. With Gulda serving as musical director, the competition also hosted an honorary committee that included Karl Böhm and Duke Ellington. Though he did not want it to be considered an amateur festival, Gulda insisted that amateurs were not excluded because, as he saw it, “the difference between amateurs and professionals is unimportant.”⁵⁴ The competition represented the first of many forums Gulda would design and produce in an effort to raise authentic improvisation to the level of true art.⁵⁵ Others included the First International Music Forum of Ossiachersee (1968) with a theme entitled “Improvisation in Music—Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow;” the Second International Music Forum

⁵⁰ Blom, “Friedrich Gulda.”

⁵¹ K. Robert Schwarz, “Gulda Reasserts His Claims to Fame,” *New York Times*, 29 September 1985, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, H24.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Thomas Willis, “Jazz Contest in Vienna,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 March 1966, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune, H7.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

of Ossiachersee (1969) with a theme entitled “Freedom and Chance, Commitments and Constraints Mirrored in Music;” and the Third International Music Forum of Ossiachersee (1971) with a theme entitled “First, Second, Third World? Music as a Universal Language.”⁵⁶

Held during the summer months in the Carinthian municipality of Ossiach, Austria, the Music Forum included lectures and seminars by Gulda, as well as guest speakers on a broad range of topics related to classical, jazz and pop music, and improvisation. Highlights of the festival included performances by guest musicians—such as Pink Floyd and Joe Zawinul’s Weather Report at the 1971 festival—in addition to performances by Gulda himself. Speaking about the festival, Gulda stated, “It presented the whole shebang: classical, exotic, folk, pop, jazz, electronic music—and all for the same audience, accompanied by seminars and panel discussions. After all, it’s very nice when a Frenchman talks to an Indian about music rather than tourism or something similar.”⁵⁷

Throughout the 1960s, Gulda continued to give sporadic recitals consisting only of classical music while also maintaining an active, but separate, presence in jazz. However, during a 1964 tour of South America, Gulda began incorporating jazz into his classical programs—the first half of the concert consisting of classical piano music and the second half featuring a jazz trio.⁵⁸ This approach of one artist combining performances of jazz and classical music into a single program had been done

⁵⁶ Gulda Werkstatt Kremsegg, “Friedrich Gulda Biography.”

⁵⁷ Gulda, *So What?!*, [22:54-23:30].

⁵⁸ Gulda Werkstatt Kremsegg, “Friedrich Gulda Biography.”

infrequently, and Gulda began to use this as one means to introduce classical audiences to jazz.⁵⁹

Even with this early incorporation of jazz into his programs, Gulda was able to maintain a respectable relationship with the classical music world throughout most of the 1960s, including a well-received performance of Beethoven's "Emperor Concerto" with George Szell and the Vienna Philharmonic in 1966 and the release of a new, prize-winning recording of the complete Beethoven sonatas in 1967.⁶⁰ As 1969 proved, however, not all experiences were pleasant. Amidst an eight-evening, cyclical performance of Beethoven's thirty-two piano sonatas at the Vienna Konzerthaus, Gulda was awarded the esteemed "Beethoven Ring of Honor" by the Vienna Music Academy in recognition of Beethoven's upcoming bicentennial and Gulda's performances of the composer's works. After giving a provocative acceptance speech in which he was critical of the Vienna Academy's conservative approach to classical music education—something he considered contrary to the revolutionary spirit of Beethoven—Gulda returned the ring in protest.⁶¹ The event was widely covered in the press and was one spectacle among many that burnished Gulda's reputation as radical and unconventional.⁶²

By the 1970s, Gulda had begun irritating concert promoters by refusing to announce the content of his programs in advance and by juxtaposing works by Bach, Beethoven, and Debussy with his own jazz (and sometimes freely improvised) music.⁶³ Gulda preferred that organizers would say nothing at all about his program, or at the very

⁵⁹ Lewis, "Both Classics and Jazz Intrigued Friedrich Gulda."

⁶⁰ Gulda Werkstatt Kremsegg, "Friedrich Gulda Biography."

⁶¹ Bambarger, "Friedrich Gulda,"

⁶² Gulda Werkstatt Kremsegg, "Friedrich Gulda Biography."

⁶³ Schwarz, "Gulda Reasserts His Claims to Fame,"

least, only mention that he “played the piano,” so that no one would think he would “play the crumhorn all evening.”⁶⁴ Speaking on the issue of programming, Gulda once said,

I don’t give detailed program information because even at the last moment I want to keep my options open and decide not only how but what to play! Then the key elements of spontaneity and improvisation are thus already in the program—not only how I play, but what I play.⁶⁵

This type of ambiguity began to cause rifts with some in classical concert audiences, who believed he had thrown away a promising career by succumbing to egotistical eccentricity.⁶⁶ Speaking on his relationship with the classical audience, Gulda stated,

The ordinary concert audience wants to see an artist as a DJ, always playing the same five sonatas—to exaggerate the point. There’s no point playing anything new to this sort of audience because it doesn’t want to hear it. Having butted my head against this wall in vain for years, I finally told myself: The only thing left to do is to chuck them all out since there’s no talking to them. I gradually, and very successfully, turned to a young audience that’s more open-minded towards new efforts in music. I don’t even think the things I’m doing are particularly original. Anyone who does something different or new will have problems with people who won’t put up with it. That’s all there is to it.⁶⁷

The further Gulda explored his artistic vision, the more a younger generation recognized and was attracted to the fact that Gulda was not an ordinary classical pianist. With large-scale concerts, such as 1979’s “Mozart for the People” (which included sound amplification through speakers and the stage lit through red lighting in an all-Mozart program) and 1980’s “Bach for the People” (a similar concept with works performed on

⁶⁴ Gulda, *So What?!*. Interview with Joachim Kaiser (1986), [21:46-22:42].

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Schwarz, “Gulda Reasserts His Claims to Fame.”

⁶⁷ Gulda, *So What?!*, [38:08-39:17].

an electronically amplified clavichord), Gulda began appealing to a younger generation that appreciated his fresh approach to performances.⁶⁸

The 1980s also brought about a series of highly successful professional encounters with leading jazz pianists. On June 27, 1982, an iconic concert at the Munich Piano Summer Festival featured a two-piano collaboration with Chick Corea, in which both pianists freely improvised together before coalescing into commentaries on three familiar tunes—Frank Churchill’s “Someday My Prince Will Come,” Miles Davis’s “Put Your Little Foot Out,” and Brahms’s “Lullaby.”⁶⁹ The high level of collective spontaneity, in which both pianists relied entirely on listening and responding to each other, made the concert and subsequent collaborations between Gulda and Corea a critical success.⁷⁰ Gulda would perform similar improvised programs throughout the 1980s, including frequent collaborations with Joe Zawinul in 1986 and an appearance with Herbie Hancock at the Munich Piano Summer Festival of 1989. There were even instances of three-piano programs, such as the 1987 concerts in Vienna, Barcelona, Winterthur, and Innsbruck (featuring Zawinul and Corea) and a 1989 concert in Salzburg (featuring Zawinul and Hancock).⁷¹

Throughout this time, Gulda continued to perform solo piano recitals that more frequently incorporated his own piano compositions, in which he adapted the conventions of both jazz and classical music to traditional forms. With such works as Prelude and Fugue, Sonatine, Invention, Introduction and Scherzo, and Variations—to name a few—

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Schwarz, “Gulda Reasserts His Claims to Fame.”

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Gulda Werkstatt Kremsegg, “Friedrich Gulda Biography.”

Gulda pioneered a compositional genre that blends classical and jazz idioms within the form suggested by its classically-named title. Though it was hard work for him, composing was important because it allowed Gulda the freedom to explore a variety of musical interests while expressing himself in a personal way.⁷²

One primary mode of expression was the element of improvisation. The “urge to improvise,” as Gulda put it, continually became a mainspring of his artistic career. Though he would be equally comfortable improvising in either a jazz tune or a Chopin nocturne, Gulda believed classical music inherently forced him to play a part already determined by the composer—an “actor identifying with his role.” “I have to creep into the composer’s mind,” Gulda said. “Ideally, you have to achieve total identification. That’s what interpretation is all about.”⁷³ While he was capable and equally comfortable with interpreting masterworks of the classical repertoire, improvisation—and subsequently composition—provided Gulda an outlet of expression that allowed him to be in charge of every aspect of his art. “When I improvise, write or compose myself, the identification is there from the start since I’m not talking about this or that person but about myself. There’s nothing I need to interpret. I turn from an actor into a playwright. That’s a very fine goal and I wouldn’t miss it for the world.”⁷⁴

Gulda’s compositions may be best summarized as the packaging of various jazz techniques and sounds in a way that introduces jazz music to a classical audience. Though part of a lineage of composers who experimented with blending jazz techniques into a classical framework—including Ravel, Gershwin, and even Gulda’s contemporary

⁷² Lewis, “Both Classics and Jazz Intrigued Friedrich Gulda.”

⁷³ Gulda, *So What?!*. Interview with Joachim Kaiser (1986), [20:06-21:02].

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, [21:03-21:25].

Leonard Bernstein—Gulda’s personal experience as a jazz musician and improviser can be heard throughout all of his works, seemingly elevating his compositions into a category not previously explored within classical music. With Gulda’s compositions, one gets the feeling that the “jazz” element comes first and the “classical” second, rather than the other way around. The impression that the performer is improvising is heightened, resulting in a more authentic sense of jazz. Further, Gulda’s variations on The Doors’s 1967 classic, “Light My Fire” (Variations on “Light My Fire,” 1970) became a popular audience-favorite,⁷⁵ and frequent performances of various movements from his ten-movement suite, *Play Piano Play*, (1971) displayed Gulda’s unique compositional voice.

By the 1990s, Gulda had found a new generation of listeners receptive to his individualistic approach to programming, which might begin with piano music by Mozart before transitioning into a dance party—complete with DJs, discos, and dancing girls. In 1998, Gulda famously hosted a club night at the Viennese House of Radio and Culture, along with DJ Pippi and the “Paradise Girls.” He later described the television recording of the event as his only relevant obituary.⁷⁶

On March 28, 1999, Gulda publicly staged his own death by faxing his own obituary to major news outlets, later asserting, “To be somebody important in Austria, you first have to be dead; so I thought to myself, ok, let them have it.”⁷⁷ After giving his final concert at the Vienna Musikverein in November of that year, the 69-year-old Gulda did, in fact, die of a heart attack on January 27, 2000—Mozart’s birthday—at his home in Weißenbach, Austria. As news of his death was announced, obituaries from across the

⁷⁵ Gulda Werkstatt Kremsegg, “Friedrich Gulda Biography.”

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Gulda, *So What?!*, [1:11-1:54].

world spoke of the mixed reactions to Gulda's eccentric career while ultimately praising his unique and artistic outlook, such as this one from *The New York Times*:

Although it often seemed that he had torpedoed the classical side of his career with misguided antics, Mr. Gulda usually gave the impression that his rebellion was rooted in deeply held principles...in which the elucidation of musical structure was prized over virtuosic flashiness...He never abandoned classical music, but he insisted that his jazz and classical performing be regarded as equal aspects of his musical personality, with composition often bridging the two.⁷⁸

Today, Friedrich Gulda's legacy is preserved in the numerous audio and video recordings of him performing works from both the classical and jazz repertoire, as well as his own compositions. Throughout his over fifty-year career as both a classical and jazz musician, Gulda composed several compositions for piano. When studied and performed, they offer a valuable addition to the piano repertoire while heightening awareness of the distinct creativity of one of classical music's greatest iconoclasts.

⁷⁸ Allan Kozinn, "Friedrich Gulda, 69, Classical-Music Rebel," *The New York Times*, 29 January 2000, B00007.

CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW AND PEDAGOGICAL/PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF
PLAY PIANO PLAY

One of the best representations of Gulda's characteristic blend of the classical and jazz genres is the multi-movement cycle, *Play Piano Play*. Consisting of ten, individual pieces, the cycle features a wide range of musical expressions presented within popular and familiar sounds characteristic of jazz piano music. With clear formal structures and an average length of around three minutes, the succinct presentation of each piece makes them extremely accessible to both the performer and audience.⁷⁹

Dedicated to his second wife, Yuko Wakiyama, *Play Piano Play* was premiered by Gulda on March 12, 1971 and published that same year.⁸⁰ As a complete cycle, they appeared on four separate recordings. The first, *The Long Road to Freedom: A Musical Self-Portrait in the Form of a Course*, was released in 1971 and also contained other compositions by Gulda, including his Prelude and Fugue and Variations. A second release occurred in 1972 on the 9-LP boxed set, *Midlife Harvest: Friedrich Gulda, Musician of Our Time*. After not appearing on disc for some time, the cycle was again released on the eponymously-named 1986 album, *Play Piano Play*, which also included works by Chick Corea and Ravel. A new and final recording was released in 1999 on the

⁷⁹ Georg Baumgarten, "Midlife Harvest liner notes," in *Friedrich Gulda: Wanderer zwischen Welten: Diskographie, Reden, Interviews, Statements, Fotos*, ed. Ursula Anders and Thomas Kanehl (Vienna: Weirta Verl. Bibliothek der Provinz, 2004), 185. Translations from this source have been made by the author using online translation software.

⁸⁰ Friedhelm Flamme, "Der Pianist Und Komponist Friedrich Gulda"(Ph.D. dissertation, Paderborn University, Göttingen: Cuvillier Verlag, 2006), 264. Though Flamme includes analysis of *Play Piano Play* in his German-language study of Gulda's music, the following analysis has been completed by the author, except where otherwise cited.

album *Das Große Friedrich Gulda Doppelalbum (The Great Friedrich Gulda Double Album)*. Additional recordings of individual pieces from the cycle were released throughout Gulda's career. These would usually appear as part of larger compilation albums or as part of a live-concert recording, since Gulda would often include several of these pieces in a program or perform them as encores.

Subtitled “10 Übungsstücke” (or ten exercises), Gulda originally designed the cycle as a method for teaching the classically-trained pianist how jazz inflections differ from classical music and, in the process, for teaching the all-encompassing, basic requirement of all jazz music—how to truly “swing.”⁸¹ Mirroring the journey of his own career, Gulda felt there was a need for classical pianists to discover a freer stylistic approach through the forsaking of the stylistic stricture of conventionally notated music—what he described as the “long road to freedom:”

How do you start?...You flee to the jazz club, where creation takes place daily, you like it, you come back, you listen to records, you learn, finally you grasp your heart and "get in." That is source, foundation and exercise at the same time. You collect what you have learned, try to contribute and summarize...The ten practice pieces are the result of all this and a viable access to all that is strongly recommended to the learner; a first step on the "Long Road."⁸²

Through the ten pieces, Gulda exposes the pianist to a variety of forms, techniques, and rhythmic characteristics that he considered to be the stylistic foundations of modern piano music: blues form; how to perform a ballad; left hand techniques (including stride and walking bass); the execution of specific rhythms and rhythmic

⁸¹ Marc-André Hamelin, *In a State of Jazz*, liner notes by the author, CD A67656, London: Hyperion, 2008.

⁸² Ursula Anders and Thomas Kanehl, editors, *Friedrich Gulda: Wanderer zwischen Welten: Diskographie, Reden, Interviews, Statements, Fotos* (Vienna: Weirta Verl. Bibliothek der Provinz, 2004), 156-7.

motives (including various pop and Latin rhythms, as well as swinging of eighth notes); and the element of improvisation.⁸³

The latter component of improvisation is an important one as it separates Gulda from other composers in the classical-jazz genre who rely exclusively on notated music, such as George Gershwin and Nikolai Kapustin. Though a majority of the music within *Play Piano Play* is notated, Gulda includes the element of improvisation for pedagogical purposes within four of the pieces (Nos. 3, 6, 7, and 10). At times, this is an optional component that can be increasingly added to the notated music as the performer becomes more comfortable with the piece. In these cases, its exclusion does not detract from the music. In a few of the pieces, however, the element of improvisation is a central component to the music and must be included in order to perform the piece. In these instances, Gulda provides a skeleton of the piece—melody, chord symbols, or a combination of the two—and asks the performer to improvise the rest.

Because of the previously discussed pedagogical design, Gulda suggested that the pieces be learned in the following order: Nos. 9, 1, 5, 4, 2, 8, 6, 10, 3, and 7.⁸⁴ As Gulda notes in the preface to the score, the further the pianist progresses, the more improvisational changes are desired and necessary. Thus, a fully notated piece with no improvisational element (No. 9) is placed at the beginning of the order of study, while a piece that relies completely on improvisation (No. 7) is placed at the end. Speaking about his design and the overall purpose of the work, Gulda stated the following:

⁸³ Baumgarten, “Midlife Harvest liner notes,” 185-6.

⁸⁴ Friedrich Gulda, *Klavier-Kompositionen* (Vienna: Papageno Music Publishing, 1971), preface.

[P]iece 9 without [improvisation] is “complete;” on the other hand, piece 7 without improvisational “know-how” can not be realized at all. The learner is guided “by hand” in this way. The purpose is that an academic pushover becomes a real musician. Once he has done so, he will not only succeed in the presentation of the pieces, but will also be prepared to cope with more difficult works...⁸⁵

Speaking on the didactic nature of the work, Dr. Georg Baumgarten stated, “these miniatures are much more than dry etudes; namely a small compendium of the prerequisites which the young adept must work out...in Gulda’s own words, ‘penetrate into the foundations of modern piano style.’”⁸⁶ And pianist Marc-André Hamelin explains that “Gulda’s designation of them as ‘exercises’ ...should not deter pianists from attempting groups of them in recitals.”⁸⁷ Indeed, Gulda intended *Play Piano Play* to be both a fun and instructive experience for the performer and audience. Thus, in addition to being effective pieces for the concert stage, a consideration of the musical and technical challenges inherent within each piece reveals a pedagogical value worthy of the performer’s time.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Baumgarten, “Midlife Harvest liner notes.”

⁸⁷ Hamelin, *In a State of Jazz*, liner notes.

Play Piano Play

No. 9

4 **Allegro, dolce**

The musical score consists of two staves. The bass staff (left) plays a continuous eighth-note ostinato pattern: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3. The treble staff (right) plays a melody: measure 4 has a quarter rest followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4; measure 5 has quarter notes B4, A4, G4, a quarter rest, and a quarter note F#4 with a fermata; measure 6 has a quarter rest followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4; measure 7 has quarter notes B4, A4, G4, a quarter rest, and a quarter note F#4 with a fermata.

Example 2.1. *Play Piano Play*, No. 9, mm. 4-7. Ostinato accompaniment and melody.

As the first piece in Gulda's suggested order of study, the musical content of Exercise No. 9 is fairly straightforward, containing no element of improvisation and relying on strict notation only. However, elements of rhythm and meter combine to create an interesting and formidable technical study.

The main feature of this piece is the constant eighth-note rhythm that is used as accompaniment throughout. Although composed in a simple-triple meter (3/4), the piece begins with a three-measure introduction of the accompanimental ostinato-rhythm pattern, which due to the recurring alternation between the first and fifth scale degrees naturally implies a simple-compound meter (6/8). This ostinato pattern continues without interruption for the duration of the piece. Beginning in measure four, a simple but deliberate melody superimposed on the ostinato asserts a pulse that strongly suggests a simple-triple meter (3/4). The combination of the two, contrasting but complementary meters will create an initial challenge for the performer, who must maintain a fluent and even ostinato accompaniment that does not overshadow the light and playful nature of the melody.

Solving the initial challenge of integrating the two hands will first be facilitated by wise fingering choices for the ostinato pattern. Since the ostinato is played by both the left hand (mm. 1-67) and the right hand (mm. 68-99), it will be important to choose a fingering that works well for each hand and ensures no interruption in the flow of the ostinato when it transitions from one hand to the other (mm. 67-68; mm. 99-100). Since a majority of the ostinato is heard in the left hand, it is imperative that a strong and sustainable fingering be chosen. Two options will immediately become apparent to the performer, with each holding respective value. The first option is a fingering that relies heavily on the thumb. If the initial B natural is played with the second finger, the ensuing F#s will be played with the thumb and fifth finger respectively (Example 2.2, *a*).⁸⁸ Though Gulda provides no fingering suggestions, video-recordings of his performances consistently show the use of this fingering.⁸⁹ The result of using option *a* allows for the difficult but worthwhile technical development of a fluent and relaxed thumb that is able to perform the repetition of the F#s. A second option (*b*) eliminates the need for repetition in the thumb, instead relying only on the fifth finger to play the alternating B and F# while the second finger and thumb alternate on the repeated F# (Example 2.2, *b*).

⁸⁸ The author has provided all fingering suggestions in Chapter 2.

⁸⁹ See Gulda's performance of Exercise No. 9 at the following link: <https://youtu.be/BtJUBV334TI>

4 **Allegro, dolce**

a: 2 1 1 5 1 1
b: 5 2 1 5 1 2

Example 2.2. *Play Piano Play*, No. 9, m. 4. Fingering for left-hand ostinato.

Both fingering options have merit. Though the development of fluency in the left-hand thumb may prove challenging with option *a*, the fact that this mirrors the fingering that occurs when the right hand plays the ostinato (mm. 68-99) may be appealing to some. The mirrored fingering of the right-hand fifth finger playing the repeated F#s in measure 68 is more accessible and seems to be the most viable option. It also creates the opportunity for both hands to practice the ostinato simultaneously. In contrast, option *b* provides the benefit of not having to play repeated notes with the left-hand thumb. However, the performer will have to settle for more movement in the hand due to the fifth finger jumping from the B to the F# throughout the ostinato. While both options are possible, the performer should choose the fingering that will ensure the most consistent and even performance of the ostinato pattern throughout. Once this fingering has been chosen, the elements of phrasing and meter will help to integrate the melody with the ostinato accompaniment.

In regards to the former, attention to short, two-measure phrases inherent in the piece will be helpful. When two of these phrases are combined, they create a recurring, four-measure question and answer phrase group (mm. 4-8). Focusing on groups of two to four measures will help with the overall musical phrasing throughout. In addition, one

can embrace the fact that the alternating B and F# of the ostinato occurs on strong beats, and—when conceived within a four-measure phrase group—implies the feeling of common time. When conceived this way, the ostinato can simply be felt as a series of repeated, triplet rhythm patterns; meanwhile, quarter-notes in the melody are felt as eighth-notes, and eighth-notes are felt as triplet rhythms that line up with the left hand. When facilitated by a metronome, the conception of four-measure phrases in common time becomes clearer. These components—combined with the necessary drilling of hands separately—will aid in a successful performance of this unassuming, but captivating, little piece.

No. 1

Moderato

p marcato
 ♩ = (inégales)

Example 2.3. *Play Piano Play*, No. 1, mm. 1-3. First and second entrance of subject.

As the second piece in the suggested order of study, Exercise No. 1 is also composed using strict notation and requires no elements of improvisation. The primary formal and pedagogical component of this piece lies in the fact that it is a fughetta—a shorter, less formal version of a fugue whose contrapuntal writing is not necessarily strict. Nevertheless, it contains the same characteristics as a fugue and would be a unique and accessible option for teachers seeking to expose students to the principles and performance of a fugue.

Because it is imitative, proper voicing will be one of the most important skills used in this piece. Highlighting each entrance of the fugue subject, as well as considering if there is any countersubject material will be crucial in executing a successful performance of this piece. The author recommends that the performer begin by labeling the number of entrances in the exposition (mm. 1-16) and recapitulation (mm. 33-50). Since the first two entrances are played by the right hand and are accompanied by a simple, chromatic countersubject in the left, they will be relatively easy to voice. Beginning with the third and fourth entrance, however, the subject is now played by the left hand and the texture in which it is played becomes more involved, making the voicing more challenging. The final entrance, in particular (m. 9), proves to be the most problematic as it is tossed from one hand to the next amidst a texture of countersubject material. It will be imperative for the performer to determine a fingering that facilitates good voicing of the subject, even when it ventures into the left hand (mm. 9-10). Within the fugal exposition and recapitulation, the performer should work so that each entrance of the subject is heard equally and prominently. (See Chapter 3 for an analysis of Exercise 1.)

Regarding the contrasting development section (mm. 17-32), the performer may find the technique of redistributing notes between the hands to be particularly useful. Such instances primarily occur when the left hand is either stationary on a chord or when it is resting altogether. For example, the fingering for the tricky scalar passage in measures 27-28 is made easier when two of the notes are played by the left hand—the lower B in measure 27 and the E \sharp in measure 29 (Example 2.4). A similar example

occurs in measure 31 when the lower Eb and C are taken by the left hand, avoiding awkward fingerings and jumps that would be necessary if all of the sixteenth-notes were played by the right hand (Example 2.5).

Example 2.4. *Play Piano Play*, No. 1, mm. 27-28. Redistribution fingering.

Example 2.5. *Play Piano Play*, No. 1, mm. 29-31. Redistribution fingering.

Once elements of voicing and fingering are addressed, this little fughetta becomes less problematic and more enjoyable to perform.

No. 5

Example 2.6. *Play Piano Play*, No. 5, mm. 1-3. Opening of main tune.

In the fifth piece, Gulda attempts to imitate a typical jazz-trio or quartet ensemble.⁹⁰ With its catchy melody and groovy, walking bass accompaniment, it is a rewarding piece to perform and also yields several pedagogical benefits that relate to a few specific jazz-piano techniques.

A prominent element of this piece lies in the left-hand walking-bass accompaniment used in the outer sections of the work's ternary structure. Perhaps the development of this technique was Gulda's intention at this stage in his order of study—thus its prominence throughout the piece. As an important element in jazz piano playing, the performer's successful practice and execution of a walking-bass accompaniment will be crucial. The performer should consider a fingering that most closely achieves a consistent legato sound within the walking-bass pattern—thus adhering to Gulda's specific marking for the left hand of *sempre legato*. While pedal can be used in some instances to aid in the connection, the performer is encouraged to adhere to a fingering that keeps the connection in the hands, only using the pedal to connect in moments when it is necessary to adjust hand positions and when it would not compromise notated rests and rhythms. When the pedal is used to aid in legato—either for the left or right hand—the use of quarter- or half-pedal should be explored. In this way, the performer will avoid overusing the pedal, thereby maintaining a light, thin texture in which all voices can be clearly distinguished.

Exercise No. 5 utilizes strict notation in a way that follows the typical structure of a jazz tune, including the presentation of a main “tune,” as well as the musical

⁹⁰ Flamme, “Der Pianist Und Komponist Friedrich Gulda,” 268.

conversation typically heard in a small jazz ensemble. The piece begins with the tune being introduced in the opening eight bars. A contrasting, secondary theme is briefly presented after this (mm. 12-19), followed by a concluding eight bars that restate the opening tune.

This is followed by a time for each “instrument” to solo. Initially beginning with a single instrument (m. 27), a layering effect of several voices is created as additional instruments are slowly added into the mix (m. 44; m. 58). The presence of multiple voices, as well as the need for each of those voices to be heard as a new instrument, makes the element of voicing very important in Exercise No. 5. The performer should work to develop a level of fluency that conveys the impression of spontaneous improvisation. To facilitate this, the pianist should voice in a way that highlights each entrance of a new “instrument.” For example, in measure 27 we hear the imitation of a bass solo, thus it should be played prominently as melodic material. However, beginning with a second voice entering in measure 44, a new instrument has taken over as primary melodic material, thus now relegating the bass voice to a softer, accompanimental role. A similar instance occurs with a third and final instrument entering in measure 60. Distinguishing between accompaniment and melodic material is an important component of the piece and the middle section in particular. Voicing in a way that promotes this desired layering effect is essential to achieve the spontaneous and conversational nature of this music.

In addition to the walking-bass pattern in the left hand, the use of legato fingering will be equally important in connecting the right-hand melody. Though there can be

several fingering options for the right hand, the presence of two voices will most likely require the performer to frequently rely on successive fingerings of the thumb. Such a fingering is often necessary, particularly if the performer is working to maintain the advised connection of the top voice. By following this type of fingering—such as the one suggested below—the pianist will ensure that the top voice is heard as the primary melodic material. The performer may need to occasionally use fingering techniques—such as finger substitution and the overlapping of lower fingers to higher—combined with the aforementioned use of quarter- and half-pedal in order to achieve a fluent performance.

Moderato, poco moso

4 5 4 5 3 5 3 4 5 3
2 1 1 2 1 1 2 1

p
= inégales

sempre legato

Example 2.7. *Play Piano Play*, No. 5, mm. 1-3. Fingering suggestions.

No. 4

Allegro ma non troppo

p e leggiero

sim.

im 3. Pedal stumm vorbereiten

Example 2.8. *Play Piano Play*, No. 4, mm. 1-2. Opening motive.

The lively Exercise No. 4 is also the fourth piece in Gulda's suggested order of study. Although it continues to be a fully notated score with no improvisational elements,

there is an increase in technical demands. The primary technical challenge of touch and articulation occurs with the main theme, introduced in the first sixteen measures. The piece opens with a swinging triplet and sixteenth-note rhythmic motive in the right hand that is accompanied by a complimentary half- and sixteenth-note rhythm in the left hand. Because of Gulda's indication of staccato articulation, as well as the instruction to play *leggiero*, the performer should carefully consider the approach to the keyboard. Examples such as the opening staccato, triplet rhythm should be executed with a touch that utilizes the fingers only, supported by firm fingertips and a stable arm. The performer should also maintain suppleness in the wrist to avoid tension, all of which will aid in producing a melodic sound that is both light and crisp.

The opening, left-hand accompaniment is fairly straightforward, although the pedal-tone F that is played throughout can create timing issues, including instances where the right hand must cross over to play it (mm. 25-28). These instances must be carefully worked out at a slower tempo. In addition, Gulda's various instructions for use of the pedal with the low F should be carefully considered. From beginning the piece with a muted F in the pedal to creating a pedal-tone effect that lasts for six measures (mm. 8-14), the performer will be forced to creatively utilize the piano's acoustics throughout the piece by incorporating the sostenuto pedal per Gulda's instructions.

Additional pedagogical challenges include the frequent occurrence of octave passagework throughout. These occur in both hands, often as a repetitive series (mm. 65-80). There are also instances of tenths, mostly when the left hand employs stride-piano

technique (mm. 33-47; 57-63). At the same time, the right hand will frequently play large, four-voice chords.

Due to the overall importance of these techniques to the piece, as well as their general recurrence throughout, one should consider the performer's physical abilities and limits. If the interval of a tenth cannot be reached, the pianist should consider rolling the interval when appropriate. If the tenth also includes a middle note (such as in mm. 36-47), the pianist should consider eliminating the middle note to aid with the execution. No matter what one ultimately decides, the pianist should always work to maintain the various articulations that Gulda has indicated for the left-hand accompaniment. Thus, a student that is hindered by a physical limitation should first establish the sound that is required by the music and then determine a physical approach that matches that sound.

The combination of octaves, tenths, and a variety of articulations and physical approaches to the keyboard—as well as, the increase of length—make Exercise No. 4 a formidable step forward in Gulda's order of study. Despite its challenges, the exciting climaxes and assortment of stylistic sounds of jazz-piano playing make Exercise No. 4 a fun and engaging piece.

No. 2

Alla marcia, risoluto

The musical score shows the opening five measures of Exercise No. 2. The right hand begins with a forte (f) dynamic, playing eighth-note patterns. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. The tempo and mood are indicated as 'Alla marcia, risoluto'. Dynamics shift from forte to piano (p) in the second measure.

Example 2.9. *Play Piano Play*, No. 2, mm. 1-5. Opening motives.

Exercise No. 2 is the first piece to use elements of improvisation. To ease the student's introduction into improvisation, Gulda essentially notates suggestions for improvisation in the score. As the student progresses, Gulda desired that one would begin adding one's own improvisations in these moments. Yet, Gulda's own recording of this exercise adheres to the score exactly as written, suggesting that he must have accepted performers using what is notated for the improvisational moments.

Aside from the "improvised" moments, Exercise No. 2 bares many similarities in style and technical requirements as Exercise No. 4. If following the notated improvisations, the biggest challenge is adjusting to large shifts in position. Gulda's notation often has the pianist playing with both hands in the treble region of the keyboard, followed by an immediate shift of one or both hands to the lower end of the piano. Such shifts will need to be carefully choreographed by the performer, although they can be avoided altogether if the performer chooses to create his own improvisations.

A primary example of the "improvised" moments occurs in measures 13-32. Here, Gulda imitates a stop-time break in which a soloist improvises while a "band" keeps time with accompanying chords.⁹¹ Yet, because the pianist serves as both the improviser and the band, the pianist will often be switching abruptly between registers to facilitate both roles. Nonetheless, Gulda has set the beginning improviser up for success: the open and free moments that stop-time creates allow the performer to experiment with adding one's own improvisations.

⁹¹ Flamme, "Der Pianist Und Komponist Friedrich Gulda," 265.

Example 2.10. *Play Piano Play*, No. 2, mm. 13-16. Stop-time break.

In order to create personal improvisations, the pianist is encouraged to first become familiar with the notation Gulda has provided. By doing this, the pianist not only gets the general feeling of one way an improvisation could possibly sound, but one is also given specific rhythmic and melodic motives on which to base one's own improvisation. The pianist should view Gulda's notation as a tool that can be manipulated. Most importantly, the pianist should pay attention to the notes Gulda has specifically used within the moments of improvisation. Since these notes correspond to specific harmonies and scales, the performer can use these to create something new, either simply by rearranging notation or by taking a very specific motive and using it as inspiration for generating a personal improvisation.

As the performer works to develop improvisation, the author recommends beginning with a simple approach. One should begin by changing only a few notes of what Gulda has already provided. Additionally, the pianist can try adjusting locations on the keyboard, e.g. if Gulda has notated an improvisation in the bass clef, one can try playing this in the treble. Because Exercise No. 2 is in the key of F major, using jazz elements such as the F blues scale would be an easy way to begin improvising. Many of Gulda's notated improvisations utilize notes within this scale, thus becoming more

familiar with its fingering and execution will only provide further aid as the performer works to create personal improvisation. Finally, because the pianist is imitating a solo, jazz instrument, one could limit improvisations to one hand, just as Gulda has done in his notation.

No. 8

Tempo giusto e risoluto

The musical score for Exercise No. 8, measures 1-3, is presented in G major and common time. The right hand begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and the instruction *(Notes égales)*. The first measure contains a subject line of eighth notes. The second measure continues this subject line. The third measure features a trill on the third note, marked with a '3' and a trill symbol (*tr*), followed by a series of wavy lines indicating a trill. The left hand has a whole rest in the first two measures and then enters in the third measure with a bass line of eighth notes.

Example 2.11. *Play Piano Play*, No. 8, mm. 1-3. Opening articulation of subject and answer.

Exercise No. 8 bears similar improvisational characteristics as Exercise No. 2 in that Gulda provides notation as suggestions for improvisation. Like in Exercise No. 2, Gulda encourages the performer to enhance what is notated with personal improvisation.

Given its contrapuntal texture, this piece is neo-Baroque in nature, opening with fugue-like subject and answer material reminiscent of Exercise No. 1. Pedagogically speaking, within the opening sixteen measures of strictly notated music, one could study articulation, evenness of rhythms and scales, and a brief use of trills.

In the opening two measures, Gulda provides a combination of slurs and staccato markings over the subject material, implying that this articulation is to be used any time the subject material is stated. Indeed, Gulda strictly notates this articulation accordingly throughout the piece, perhaps providing an important pedagogical model for students to follow when learning other pieces of a contrapuntal nature.

Unlike many of the other pieces in the cycle, Gulda has specifically requested that the pianist perform the opening sixteen measures with even rhythms, rather than swinging them. This instruction demonstrates the neo-Baroque nature of the piece and allows for a valuable study in even, rhythmic playing. The recurring sixteenth-note passages, including playing unison scales in both hands (mm. 8, 10)—as well as, the brief use of a trill (mm. 3, 30)—provides the opportunity to listen for clarity of rhythms and articulation, once again contributing to the pedagogical nature of this cycle.

Opportunities to improvise occur in measures 17-24. The performer is encouraged to use the methodology discussed in relation to Exercise No. 2, although in Exercise No. 2 the performer needs only to improvise using one hand. In Exercise No. 8, the performer must improvise melodic material in the right hand while also providing accompaniment chords in the left hand. Because of this, the performer is encouraged to carefully study the left-hand harmonies that Gulda has provided in his notation. For the beginning student, one approach is to use the left-hand chords that Gulda has provided as accompaniment to the performer's own right-hand improvisation. The performer can choose to use the rhythmic model Gulda has provided or may choose to create another.

Since this section is to be played twice, one approach may be to play Gulda's notation the first time through, followed by the performer's improvisation on the repeat. Much like Exercise No. 2, the use of a blues or modal scale may provide inspiration for improvisation. In the case of Exercise No. 8, the E blues scale will work well for measures 17-24.

No. 6

Presto possibile
R.H.

f *L.H.*

Example 2.12. *Play Piano Play*, No. 6, mm. 1-3. Opening idea played by alternating hands.

Exercise No. 6 appropriately appears later in the order of study, as the combined technical and improvisational demands placed on the pianist are higher than in any previous piece. The piece is structured by the alternation of two contrasting ideas. The first (mm. 1-25) is characterized by rapid, toccata-like, repeated notes that are to be played by alternating hands. The close proximity in which the hands are placed around each other makes it important to carefully choose a fingering that allows the hands to freely operate with one on top of the other. As such, the performer may find it helpful to keep the right hand predominantly on top of the left, keeping in mind that primary melodic material always lies in the right hand. This right-hand melodic material is repeated in octaves in measures 13-25, which in some ways makes this section easier as it frees up more space for the left hand to operate.

The second idea (mm. 25-40) is more improvisatory in nature and is characterized by the use of stride technique in the left hand with virtuosic blues scales in the right hand. A steady and reliable left-hand technique will be of utmost importance for all statements of this section. When practicing the stride technique, the pianist should work for accuracy over speed, focusing on the large shifts in position. To facilitate the shift, the pianist

should begin with a relaxed arm on the surface of the keys. Seeing the next location with the eyes first, the pianist should then shift as quickly and accurately as possible to the next location, attempting to land precisely on the surface of the keys. After quickly adjusting for any over- or undershooting, the pianist should immediately relax the arm to release any undesirable tension. After working on individual shifts from one location to the next, the pianist can then begin linking the shifts together, maintaining the release of tension as one works to decrease slowly the amount of time it takes to shift from one location to the next. This method should first be practiced on the surface of the keys only. After shifting on the surface has been mastered, the element of depressing the keys can be added. However, the pianist should always work to keep the arm free of tension, even when attempting to increase speed. In addition to the necessary physical training, viewing measures 25-37 as a sequential harmonic pattern will be beneficial to comprehension and accuracy. (For harmonic analysis of these measures, see Chapter 3.)

54

*** Die mit ~~~~~ versehenen Teile können (sollen) jeweils improvisatorisch verändert (evtl. auch erweitert) werden.*

Example 2.13. *Play Piano Play*, No. 6, mm. 54-57. Improvisation instructions in the score.

The aforementioned section (mm. 25-40) is repeated several times throughout the piece (mm. 53-65; mm. 81-93). With its repeats however, Gulda instructs that the provided notation—which is notated each time exactly as it first occurs in measures 25-

40—should now be improvised and possibly extended (Example 2.13).⁹² Although Gulda provides some notation on the page as guidance, because of the fast tempo, Exercise No. 6 contains some of the most challenging moments of improvisation in the cycle. Though the improvisational techniques discussed in other pieces will be useful, confidence and accuracy with the left-hand technique will prove to be the most beneficial component, as the foundational rhythmic and harmonic elements it provides will be absolutely necessary to allow the right hand to freely improvise. As such, the performer should maintain the left hand exactly as written throughout these sections, improvising in the right hand only. Improvisation in the right hand should be guided by the underlying harmony that is created in the left hand. The performer should consider improvisations that are similar to the model provided in measures 25-40. Thus, scalar passages—such as the C blues scale—as well as short, motivic gestures that can be repeated over several measures, will work well as improvisational material.

No. 10

Allegro pesante
f *inégales*

Example 2.14. *Play Piano Play*, No. 10, mm. 1-3. Opening theme.

As one advances through the order of study, the improvisational requirements become increasingly more demanding. While most of the notated music in Exercise No. 10 is fairly approachable, the primary pedagogical and performance challenge lies in

⁹² Gulda, *Klavier-Kompositionen*, 29.

measures 61-70. For the first time in the cycle, Gulda asks the pianist to improvise both the left and right hand, offering limited notation and providing chord symbols as the primary guide (Example 2.15). Though the task may at first seem daunting, a look at the previous twelve measures (mm. 49-58) reveals that Gulda has provided a suitable model.

61 *Solo fill* *(Stilo simile)* *3rd Ped.* *comp. simile* *Solo fill*

C F C C⁷

Example 2.15. *Play Piano Play*, No. 10, mm. 61-64. Improvisation in right and left hands.

A quick analysis reveals that the harmonic progression outlined in the walking bass technique of measures 49-58 matches the chord symbols that follow in measures 61-70. Because of Gulda's marking in measure 61 (*Comping simile*), it should be understood that he would like the pianist to continue utilizing a walking bass technique in the left hand. Therefore, one simple solution for improvising the left hand in measures 61-70 is to simply duplicate the left-hand notes of measures 49-58.

Regarding the right hand, the performer can once again look to measures 49-58 for inspiration. Similar to the notation Gulda has provided, the performer can create right-hand material that corresponds to the harmony of the left hand. When attempting to create a right-hand improvisation, the performer should take note of how Gulda often creates short motivic gestures by using notes that lie within an inverted chord of the underlying harmony, thus allowing the pianist to utilize notes under one hand position for

several measures. Conceiving a right-hand improvisation based on harmony in this way—even going so far as to practice the right hand as blocked chords over the left-hand walking bass—will be beneficial in creating an improvisation that is similar in style to what Gulda has modeled.

No. 3

Andante serio

*Rhythmic liberties *as well as embellishments ad lib.*

Example 2.16.⁹³ *Play Piano Play*, No. 3, mm. 1-3. Opening notated melody with improvised chords.

No. 7

rhythmic liberties and embellishments sempre ad lib. (Siehe auch Stück III.)

Example 2.17.⁹⁴ *Play Piano Play*, No. 7, mm. 3-5. Notated melody with improvised chords.

As the final two pieces in Gulda's suggested order of study, Exercises No. 3 and No. 7 have been paired together due to their ballad style and similarity in improvisational requirements. In both pieces, Gulda provides a melody and asks the performer to improvise a harmonic accompaniment based on the chord symbols he has supplied. It is appropriate that these two pieces are placed at the end of the order of study, as they prove to be the most musically demanding, as well. The performer not only must improvise a

⁹³ Ibid., 11.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 33.

harmonic foundation to accompany the melody, but also must do so within a slow-tempo style that leaves the performer “completely exposed, both technically and emotionally.”⁹⁵

When approaching either of these pieces, the performer must understand that the improvised accompaniment has two purposes: to provide harmony and to keep time. Though the former is perhaps more readily apparent, the latter can easily be overlooked. Yet, it would behoove the performer to consider the melodic material as the “soloist” and the improvised accompaniment as the “rhythm section” of a band. In this way, the accompaniment can be seen as supplementing, or imitating, a few key instruments—namely the bass and drums.

The pianist should begin the piece by first studying the left hand alone. After analyzing the chord symbols for harmonies, the pianist should attempt to play the left-hand harmonies within a slow, consistent tempo, making sure to observe the metric markings Gulda has provided and noting specific placement of each chord within a measure. For example, in a measure with two chords symbols (No. 3, m. 2), each chord should be held equally for two beats. In the case of three or more chord symbols, Gulda provides metric markings to illustrate on which beats the chords should be placed (No. 3, m. 4; No. 7, m. 8), as well as occasionally offering specific rhythms that should be followed (No. 7, m. 10). It is recommended that the pianist begin by only keeping time, making sure that one chord is played for every beat. Once the pianist is able to successfully keep time according to the chord symbols, the melody may be added using the rhythm Gulda has indicated. After playing the melody with the left hand keeping

⁹⁵ Bobby Hackett, as quoted in Margaret Moos Pick, *Riverwalk Jazz* (California: Stanford University, 2008) <http://riverwalkjazz.stanford.edu/program/gentle-giants-beauty-jazz-ballad>, accessed 3/2/19.

time, the performer should have a more complete picture of how the piece will sound, and may begin considering additional procedures to enhance the improvisation.

In pieces like Exercises No. 3 and No. 7, the key element to improvisation is the understanding of the harmony. Once the performer has a thorough grasp of the underlying harmony, one can use the notes of the chord in a variety of ways to enhance a phrase. For instance, though the root position is sometimes warranted for moments of harmonic solidity or resolution, the performer is encouraged to experiment with playing harmonies in different inversions. Along with providing smoother transitions from one harmony to the next, inversions will also open up various possibilities in voicing that will produce different timbres. Additionally, the performer should consider the various textures that can be created using the notes of the specified harmony. For example, instead of simply playing a blocked chord on every beat, the accompaniment can be enhanced by breaking the chord up over multiple beats and across different regions of the keyboard. Though the possibilities are endless, some ways in which these textures can be accomplished include playing the root an octave lower followed by an inversion of the chord or by creating an arpeggiated pattern based on the notes of the harmony. In addition, the right hand can also utilize these techniques by turning melodic notes into complete chords, as well as adding broken chord patterns and arpeggiations to fill in gaps created by longer note values.

While these techniques will prove useful to the performer, development of the ear will be of utmost importance. By listening to recordings of jazz ballads, the performer will become accustomed to popular techniques and textures of the style. Whether by

listening to Gulda's own recordings of Exercises No. 3 and No. 7 or by hearing pianists like Bill Evans (1929-1980), Bud Powell (1924-1966), and Art Tatum (1909-1956) each demonstrate their unique approach, the pianist can gather examples to be copied or reconstructed for their own improvisations.

CHAPTER 3

FORMAL ANALYSIS OF *PLAY PIANO PLAY*

I am the most important creative Viennese musician of the second half of our century. I am this because I have led our music in valid works out of the dead end of twelve-toned works and other unworlly, music and misanthropic practices and have returned it to the undisturbed favor and love of the audience. I achieved this high goal by the fact that in my compositions I did so naturally, namely to combine the afro-American influence, that is, the most important musical event of our century with the great Vienna music tradition, characterized by the illustrious names Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms...⁹⁶

These words, spoken by Gulda, reveal a musician confident in his artistry and a composer sure of his approach to writing. According to his eldest son, Paul, the primary idea behind Gulda's compositional style was to "blend classical and jazz idioms" in his music. Another son, Rico, described composing as a "challenge" for his father, adding that it was "hard work for him."⁹⁷ Gulda's use of formal techniques displays an understanding and dedication to the art of composition. While the presence of vernacular elements, such as blues scales, swing rhythms, left-hand techniques of stride and walking bass, and numerous characteristic riffs naturally contribute to the jazz feel, it is Gulda's use of form that brings an air of structure and sophistication to the music, elevating the music beyond being mere improvisations casually written down to highly crafted miniatures worthy of the concert hall.

⁹⁶ Anders and Kanehl, editors, *Friedrich Gulda*, 16.

⁹⁷ Lewis, "Both Classics and Jazz Intrigued Friedrich Gulda," 20.

Play Piano Play

No. 1

The first exercise is structured as a four-voice fugue, complete with an exposition containing proper subject entrances and episode (mm. 1-16), development (mm. 17-32), and recapitulation (mm. 33-50) material. Constructed in G major and in common time, the swinging fugue subject (beginning on G and ending on D, mm. 1-2) is heard in various voices throughout the exposition.

Moderato

p marcato
♪ = (inégales)

Example 3.1. *Play Piano Play*, No. 1, mm. 1-2. Fugue subject.

The second subject entrance shows Gulda's careful consideration of traditional fugue-technique as he begins to construct what appears to be a real answer. However, the answer is slightly altered by changing the C# to a C \natural , thus creating a tonal answer that fits the key and harmonic scheme of the subject. Gulda also employs the use of augmentation in the last three notes of the subject answer (mm. 4-5), which proves to be a continuing motive heard again in the recapitulation. To further reiterate the tonality, Gulda restates the last three notes of the answer (C–E–A) one step lower on B–D–G, thus solidifying the ultimate resolution of the answer on a G⁷ harmony (m. 5).



Example 3.2, *Play Piano Play*, No. 1, mm. 3-5. Real answer and resolution to G.

The development section, while completely notated, leads the pianist through improvisatory playing over a sequence of $ii/ii^0-V-I/i$ progressions. Three key areas—B \flat major (mm. 17-20), A minor (mm. 21-24), and B minor (mm. 25-28)—are tonicized in equal, four-measure phrases, leading to an ultimate return to the home key of G major in measures 29-33. Right-hand scalar passages and riffs corresponding to the aforementioned harmonic progression create the feeling of improvisation. The left hand supports with a walking-bass motive (Example 3.3).

Musical score for Example 3.3, showing measures 16-18 of 'Play Piano Play, No. 1'. The score is in G major, 2/4 time, and features a walking bass motive in the left hand. The right hand has a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 16, followed by a half note in measure 17 and a quarter note in measure 18. The left hand has a walking bass line with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 16, followed by a half note in measure 17 and a quarter note in measure 18. The score includes a first ending bracket over measures 16-17 and a second ending bracket over measures 17-18. The dynamic marking 'p' is present in measure 17, and the articulation 'legato' is present in measure 18.

Example 3.3. *Play Piano Play*, No. 1, mm. 16-18. Walking bass motive in left hand.

With the exception of the occasional appearance of an added eighth-note or triplet rhythm to simulate improvisation, the recapitulation (mm. 33-50) restates the opening material exactly as it appears in the exposition. An extra measure is included before the final four measures (m. 46) to emphasize the closing statement of thematic material, drawing Exercise No. 1 to a close.

No. 2

Exercise No. 2 is a five-part rondo that opens with a twelve-bar blues theme in F major. The rondo-theme (A) begins with two opposing ideas—a groovy, march-like motive featuring sharp, sixteenth-note rhythms combined with a borrowed, flatted mediant harmony (mm. 1-2) and soft, open-voiced triads (mm. 3-4). A third element completes the theme in measures 9-12 where a boogie-woogie style—characterized by the grouping of dotted quarter- and sixteenth-notes, as well as the quintessential V⁷/IV-ii^o/V-iv-I progression in measures 11-12—brings everything together.⁹⁸

Two episodes (B) alternate between the rondo-theme—each beginning with two twelve-bar choruses featuring the stop-time style discussed in Chapter 2. The episodes conclude with a gentler, eight-measure section that is characterized by a *legato* and *dolce* touch. Two key areas—A \flat major and G \flat major—are tonicized before an ultimate return to the rondo-theme in F major. The complete five-part rondo form, including measure numbers and tonal areas, is shown in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1 Rondo form of Exercise No. 2

Section	A	B	A	B	A	Coda
Measure	1-12	13-44	45-57	57-88	89-100	100-105
Tonal Areas	F major	F major (13-36) A \flat major (37-40) G \flat major (41-43)	F major	F major (57-80) A \flat major (81-84) G \flat major (85-87)	F major	F major

A brief, five-measure coda—featuring the soft, open-voiced harmonies of the rondo-theme—brings the piece to a tranquil close.

⁹⁸ Flamme, “Der Pianist Und Komponist Friedrich Gulda,” 265.

No. 3

Exercise No. 3 is in the key of F minor and constitutes binary form, utilizing an AA'BB structure. Four, eight-measure phrases create a thirty-two-bar form common in jazz ballads and American popular songs, while a two-measure coda (mm. 33-34) brings the piece to a conclusion.

Though the first phrase (A) uses extended harmonies and visits additional tonalities, it begins in F minor. Within this larger phrase, the model of two four-measure phrases—consisting of right-hand, bass-clef melody and left-hand, improvised accompaniment—creates primary thematic material. The second phrase (A') is a restatement of the first; however, it is now centered in a D minor tonality. Although the harmonic progression that was presented in the first phrase is maintained, the notated, right-hand melody is embellished slightly differently, keeping with the improvisatory nature of the piece.

The second half of the two-part form begins in measure 17 and continues with the D minor tonality from the previous phrase. This third phrase (B) presents new harmonic and melodic material in its first four measures (mm. 17-20). Beginning in measure 21, identical melodic and harmonic material from the first phrase (A, mm. 5-8) returns in the F minor tonality to complete the third (mm. 21-24). The fourth and final phrase (B, mm. 25-32) is a repetition of the third phrase, with melodic material—now in octaves—appearing in the treble clef for the first time. A brief, two-measure coda brings the piece to a conclusion in the key of F minor.

No. 4

Exercise No. 4 is constructed of four, thirty-two-measure sections, creating an overall ABA'A form with a three-measure coda. Each section consists of four eight-measure phrases that follow an *aaba* form in the key of B♭ minor. In the opening A section (mm. 1-32) and its return (mm. 97-128), the *a* phrases are always constructed using a pedal-tone F in the left-hand accompaniment while the right hand plays a shuffle rhythm reminiscent of the boogie style.⁹⁹

Allegro ma non troppo

p e leggiero

im 3. Pedal stumm vorbereiten

Example 3.4. *Play Piano Play*, No. 4, mm. 1-2. Opening of A section.

In the A' section (mm. 65-96), the *a* phrases are constructed by a pedal-tone B♭ as both hands play a unison, triplet rhythm. Thus, while it shares many similarities to the opening A section, because of its change in pedal-tone and slight change in rhythm it is best labeled as A'.

⁹⁹ Flamme, "Der Pianist Und Komponist Friedrich Gulda," 267.

Example 3.5, *Play Piano Play*, No. 4, mm. 64-65. Pedal-tone B \flat in triplet rhythm.

The B section (mm. 33-64) features contrasting material, most noticeably in the *a* phrases (mm. 33-40; 41-48, 57-64) in which a new harmonic progression is introduced over eight measures using a stride accompaniment in the left hand: B \flat m–G 7 –C 7 –F 7 | B \flat m–G 7 –C 7 –F 7 | B \flat m–(Am)–A \flat m–D \flat | G \flat 7 –F 7 . This progression recurs with every statement of the *a* phrase within the B section.

Within all of the sections (ABA'A), each *b* phrase (mm. 17-24; 81-88; 49-56; 113-120) is characterized by stride and walking-bass techniques over the following circle-of-fifths chord progression in the key of B \flat minor: E \flat m7 –A \flat 7 –D \flat M7 –D \flat m7 –G \flat 7 –C \flat M7 –C 7 –F 7 .

The *ad libitum* coda (mm. 129-131)—with instructions to play “slow and sexy”—begins with improvisatory playing over a B \flat 7 harmony before ultimately resolving to an extended harmony on E. The piece concludes with a *sforzando* strike of unison B \flat s in octaves.

Table 3.2 ABA'A form of Exercise No. 4

Section	A	B	A'	A	Coda
Phrases	<i>a</i> : 1-8	<i>a</i> : 33-40	<i>a</i> : 65-72	<i>a</i> : 97-104	129-131
	<i>a</i> : 9-16	<i>a</i> : 41-48	<i>a</i> : 73-80	<i>a</i> : 105-112	
	<i>b</i> : 17-24	<i>b</i> : 49-56	<i>b</i> : 81-88	<i>b</i> : 113-120	
	<i>a</i> : 25-32	<i>a</i> : 57-64	<i>a</i> : 89-96	<i>a</i> : 121-128	
Important Features	Pedal-tone F	New <i>a</i> phrase	Pedal-tone B \flat	Pedal-tone F	<i>“slow and sexy”</i>

No. 5

Exercise No. 5 is a reworking of “Quartet II,” a piece that Gulda wrote for his performances at the Birdland Jazz Club in New York.¹⁰⁰ The piece is composed in the key of B \flat major and follows an ABA' design that is reminiscent of the typical structure of a jazz tune, in which a statement of a written melody (or chorus) is followed by repetitions of the chorus's harmony for improvisations, finally ending with a restatement of the written melody.

The opening A section introduces a thirty-two-bar chorus comprised of four eight-measure phrases—*aaba* (mm. 1-24). The *a* phrase (mm. 1-8) begins with a tuneful, right-hand melody over a left-hand walking bass, taking the pianist through a series of ii–V–I progressions that ultimately resolve to a B \flat major harmony. The repeat of the *a* phrase is facilitated by a first and second ending. The *b* phrase (mm. 9-16) that follows offers contrasting melodic material that, once again, uses a series of ii–V–I progressions—in particular, tonicizing the keys of E \flat major (m. 11) and C major (m. 15). A return of the *a* phrase (mm. 17-24) brings the opening thirty-two-bar chorus to an end.

The B section (mm. 25-56) that follows offers a quasi-development section in which the underlying harmony of the A section's thirty-two measures is “improvised” via

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 269.

the notation Gulda has provided. Though the improvisatory nature of the B section has changed the melodic material, the harmony and overall structure of the A section's *aaba* phrases is repeated in measures 25-56.

Although the melodic material that begins in measure 57 may be heard as a continuation of the improvisation that precedes, a ternary analysis of three, thirty-two-measure sections makes measure 57 the best location to mark a return of material from the A section. While the underlying harmony is the same (even returning to a walking-bass motive in the left hand), because melodic material continues to be varied through “improvisations,” this section is best labeled as A'. Although an exact statement of the A section's written melody does not occur until measure 73 (equivalent to the *b* phrase of the A section, m. 9), the opening phrases of the A' section can be viewed as a culmination of the development that occurred in the B section, resulting in a transformation of the opening tune.

A brief, three-measure coda restates the final cadence before ending the piece on a B \flat ^{M7} harmony.

Table 3.3 ABA' form of Exercise No. 5

Section	A	B	A'	Coda
Measure	1-24	25-56	57-88	89-91
Phrase Structure	<i>aaba</i>	<i>aaba</i>	<i>aaba</i>	--
Important Features	32-bar chorus introduced in B \flat Major	Improvisations over chorus' <i>aaba</i> phrases	Begins with transformed <i>aa</i> phrases, followed by a return of <i>ba</i> phrases	Restatement of final cadence; ends on B \flat ^{M7}

No. 6

Exercise No. 6 is comprised of three sections (AA'A") that use the same two contrasting themes. The first theme is a rapid, toccata-like alternation between the two hands, while the second is comprised of notated- and free-improvisations over a fixed harmonic progression. The sections (AA'A") are distinguished by the tonalities in which the first theme is stated, while the second theme remains the same through each section. (For additional discussion of the two themes, see Chapter 2.)

The piece opens with an introductory statement of the first theme in the key of C minor, followed by the beginning of the A section (mm. 13-40) in which the first theme is stated in octaves. Beginning in measure 25, a second theme is introduced over the following cyclic, harmonic progression: $i-i^6-V^7/V-V^7$. This progression serves as the harmonic foundation on which the right hand “improvises”—either with notation that Gulda has provided (mm. 25-40) or with free improvisations created by the performer (mm. 53-68; 81-96)—and appears in the key of C minor with each subsequent statement of the second theme. The first theme is stated again in the tonality of F minor (A', mm. 41-68), followed by a statement of the second theme (m. 53), which continues with the aforementioned harmonic progression. A third statement of the first theme is heard in measure 69, this time in the tonality of G minor (A", mm. 69-96). Free improvisations may occur over the second theme's harmonic progression (mm. 81-96) before a *D.S. al Coda* marking takes the performer back to measure 13.

After playing through measure 32 of the A section for a second time, the performer is taken to the start of the coda in measure 97. Following a few additional

statements of the second theme's harmonic progression and a final statement of first-theme material in octaves (m. 105-109), the piece concludes in a blaze with a rapid, descending C blues scale. Thus, when considering the repeat of the opening A section, the overall structure and tonality of the piece is outlined in an AA'A"A design with coda, as shown in Table 3.4:

Table 3.4 AA'A"A form of Exercise No. 6

Section	Introduction	A	A'	A''	A (D.S.)	Coda
Measures	1-12	13-40	41-68	69-96	13-32	97-112
First Theme	C minor	C minor	F minor	G minor	C minor	C minor
Second Theme	--	C minor	C minor	C minor	C minor	C minor

No. 7

Like their shared stylistic traits discussed in Chapter 2, Exercise No. 7 is structured in much the same way as Exercise No. 3. Akin to a jazz ballad stylistically, Exercise No. 7 comprises thirty-two-bar form using the customary eight-bar phrase design of AA'BA'.

The first phrase (A, mm. 1-8) introduces the primary melody of the tune, heard in the right hand. The left hand provides improvised accompaniment on a given harmonic progression. The melody tonicizes D \flat major (m. 4) before ultimately returning to an A \flat tonal center and the start of the second phrase. The second phrase (A', mm. 9-16) begins much like the first. However, beginning in the second half of the phrase (mm. 13-16), the harmony changes to a descending, chromatic progression (Fm⁹ to D \flat ^{M7}) before ultimately resolving on the deceptive harmony of D^{m7}. This facilitates a ii-V-i progression in the key of C minor that leads to the beginning of the third phrase. The third phrase (B, mm.

17-24) offers contrasting melodic and harmonic material—first, in the tonality of C minor (mm. 17-20), followed by a presentation in the tonality of F minor (mm. 21-24).

The return of the opening melody—now heard in octaves—begins in measure 25. A comparison of measures 29-32 to measures 13-16 reveals the use of the same descending, chromatic progression, thus making this a return of the A' section. The use of the minor-subdominant and flatted-seventh harmonies (m. 32) brings about a final resolution on an A \flat major chord.

No. 8

Much like Exercise 1, the Baroque-influenced imitation featured in Exercise No. 8 is indicative of a four-voice fugue. The exposition and recapitulation feature subject, answer, and episode material, while the development section offers opportunities for improvisation. Composed in E minor, the piece opens with a two-measure subject, beginning on the tonic (mm. 1-2). This is followed by a real answer on the dominant in measures 3-4.

The musical score for Example 3.6 is written for piano in E minor, 2/4 time. It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and the instruction *Notes égales*. The first staff (treble clef) contains the subject, starting on E4 and moving chromatically down to E4. The second staff (bass clef) contains the beginning of the answer, starting on B3 and moving chromatically down to E3. The score includes a triplet of eighth notes and a trill in the right hand in the third measure.

Example 3.6. *Play Piano Play*, No. 8, mm. 1-3. Fugue subject and beginning of answer.

A third (mm. 5-6) and fourth (mm. 7-8) subject and answer entrance leads to episode material in measures 9-16. Here, a question and answer of two jazz-rock harmonic progressions—VI–III–iv–i (mm. 9-10) and VI–VII–IV–I (mm. 11-12)—leads to four measures of bluesy, chordal riffs, ending the exposition on an E major harmony.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the development section (mm. 17-24) provides written notation, as well as instructions to freely improvise. The underlying harmony centers on an E pedal-tone as well as the alternation between tonic and dominant harmonies: E⁷(#9) and B⁷(b11). The recapitulation begins in measure 29. Subject and answer material appears as it did in the exposition. The harmonic progression of measures 37-40 is identical to measures 9-12. Like the exposition, the final measures of the recapitulation feature bluesy, chordal riffs. However, these occur on the major-subdominant harmony, a surprising twist that brings the piece to conclusion on an A major chord.

No. 9

Exercise No. 9 is in B minor and is formed by a binary presentation of an *aaba* phrase structure. After a three-measure introduction of the left-hand, ostinato rhythm, measures 4-67 lay out the first presentation of the *aaba* structure in four sixteen-measure phrases. The first phrase (*a*, mm. 4-19) introduces the primary theme heard throughout the piece, a melody that shifts focus between tonic and dominant notes through a series of question and answer phrases—all over a B minor tonality. The second phrase (*a*, mm. 20-35) restates the thematic melody in chords. The third phrase (*b*, mm. 36-51) offers contrasting material, retaining the characteristics of the melody but shifting to an E minor tonality. The fourth phrase (*a*, mm. 52-67) returns to a B minor tonality and opening melodic material.

The second presentation of the *aaba* structure occurs in measures 68-131. The first phrase (*a*, mm. 68-83) offers a new staging of the primary theme, as the left hand now plays the melody in the bass clef, while the right hand plays the ostinato

accompaniment in the treble clef. The second phrase (*a*, mm. 84-99) continues with the left hand playing melodic material, now heard in harmonic intervals. The third phrase (*b*, mm. 100-115) offers material identical to measures 36-51, while the fourth phrase (*a*, mm. 116-131) presents the melody in chords, similar to measures 52-67. The coda begins with a repeat of the melody from the preceding eight measures (mm. 132-139). Like the introduction, the piece concludes with three statements of the ostinato rhythm, teetering from the tonic to the dominant before ultimately resolving on a B.

No. 10

Exercise No. 10 is composed in C Major and constructed in an ABA' form. The outer A sections are characterized by notated music, whereas the B section affords the performer opportunities to improvise. The twelve-bar blues form—I⁷ (4 mm.)—IV⁷ (2 mm.)—I⁷ (2 mm.)—V⁷ (1 m.)—IV⁷ (1 m.)—I⁷ (2 mm.)—and its elements dominate this final exercise.

The A section (mm. 1-48) opens with a chromatic melody played in unison octaves with both hands. Though the A section's twelve-bar blues form is not as immediately recognizable as it will be in the B section, the opening measures of the A section are nonetheless structured over the underlying tonic, subdominant, and dominant harmonies upon which the form is based. As such, the opening motive that begins on C (mm. 1-4) represents the tonic harmony. A similar motive that begins on F (mm. 5-6) represents the subdominant harmony. A return to the tonic harmony occurs in measures 7-8 when the motive, once again, begins on C. Through a sequence of descending mordents, the final four measures (mm. 9-12) take the pianist through the remaining

dominant, subdominant, and tonic harmonies of the progression. The dominant harmony is represented by the arrival on the D—the fifth scale degree of a G major chord (m. 9). The subdominant harmony is represented by the arrival of the C—the fifth scale degree of an F major chord (m. 10). Measures 11-12 return to the tonic harmony by ending the phrase on C. The melody from the opening twelve measures is repeated in a similar fashion in the right hand of measures 13-24. The left hand of measure 13 begins with a canon-like echo of the opening motive, followed by motivic gestures that imitate the right-hand melody.

The A section continues with two additional twelve-measure phrases that use scalar passages, chordal strikes, and walking-bass technique to take the pianist through an extended, circle-of-fifths progression that begins on the minor-tonic harmony (m. 25) and ends on a preparatory, dominant-seventh (m. 46-48) harmony. This leads to the beginning of the B section (mm. 49-72), which is explicitly structured by the use of the twelve-bar blues form. Beginning in measure 49, the aforementioned blues progression commences in the key of C major. In measures 56-60, a common harmonic substitution to the final measures of the twelve-bar blues progression is used, consisting of $V^7/ii-ii-V^7-I-V^7$. The dominant-seventh harmony at the end of the progression is used to lead the pianist into another statement of the twelve-bar blues. During the second statement of the blues progression, Gulda provides no notation, instructing the pianist to continue improvising a twelve-bar blues chorus in C major. (For improvisation suggestions, see Chapter 2.)

The A' section is facilitated by a *Dal Segno al Coda* marking that takes the pianist back to measure 25. A coda begins after measure 47, in which Gulda restates material

similar to measures 13-24. The final twelve measures (mm. 85-96) showcase the opening motive from measures 1-3 in broken octaves, leading to descending motivic gestures over three different harmonies— C^7 (m. 88-89), $D\flat^7(\#\text{11})$ (mm. 90-91), and $F\#\text{7}(\flat 5)$ (mm. 92-95). The piece concludes on a resolute, unison statement of the dominant to the tonic (mm. 95-96).

Table 3.5 ABA' form of Exercise No. 10

Section	A	B	A' (<i>D.S. al Coda</i>)
Measure	1-48	49-72	25-47; 73-96
Important Features	Primary theme; Circle-of-fifths progression	12-bar blues; improvisation	Begins with A material from m. 25; ends with opening A theme from m. 13

CHAPTER 4

ADDITIONAL SOLO PIANO WORKS

While this document does not cover Gulda's complete output for solo piano, the purpose of this chapter is to bring attention to three additional works that highlight Gulda's unique and significant contributions to the classical-jazz genre of the solo piano repertoire. The pieces—Aria, Prelude and Fugue, and Variations on “Light My Fire”—present Gulda's jazz-influenced compositional style within three, different classical formal procedures. A brief consideration of each continues to demonstrate Gulda's adept skill as a composer, while highlighting a thoughtful approach to writing that seeks to blend the finest forms of the past with the most exciting sounds of the present.

Aria

In Italy, I can often sit in front of the jukebox for hours and listen to the
singers...¹⁰¹
– Friedrich Gulda

Originally released as the third movement of the *Suite for Piano, Electric Piano, and Drums* (1969), Gulda's *Aria* (1970) is cast in the Italian tradition of the da capo aria form.¹⁰² Though he would later release a version with text under the title, *Nina Carina*, Gulda described the work as a “da capo aria without words.”¹⁰³ The version for solo piano appeared on multiple recordings and became a frequent addition to his recital programs, offering the piece as a spiritual bridge between Mozart and modern

¹⁰¹ Friedrich Gulda, *Aria*, transcription by Rainer Nova (Vienna: Papageno Music Publishing, 2006), preface.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Horst Schade, “It's All One liner notes,” in *Friedrich Gulda: Wanderer zwischen Welten: Diskographie, Reden, Interviews, Statements, Fotos*, ed. Ursula Anders and Thomas Kanehl (Vienna: Weirita Verl. Bibliothek der Provinz, 2004), 148.

Canzonieri.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the work easily draws comparison to the arias of Verdi, as well as the second movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 21, KV. 467.¹⁰⁵

Maintaining a traditional interpretation of the *da capo aria*, Gulda designs his *Aria* in ternary form (ABA). After a two-measure introduction establishes the tonic key by outlining D major triadic harmonies, the first section (A, mm. 2-18) begins. Characterized by a lone-voiced melody in the treble clef and a triplet accompaniment pattern, the primary aria-theme appears in the tonic key. Through the frequent use of ornamentation, the melody takes on a free-flowing, improvisatory ambiance, while the stable accompaniment maintains a harmonic clarity and rhythmic foundation throughout.

Example 4.1. Aria, mm. 1-3. Introduction and beginning of aria-theme.

A common-tone modulation from D major to B \flat major leads to the B section, occurring in measures 19-43 (Example 4.2). Here, Gulda begins with the same melodic content as the A section, but quickly brings in various minor tonalities and rising ornamental-embellishments to offer a contrast of heightened emotion. Tonal resolutions to G major (m. 27) and B major (m. 35) provide a momentary feeling of return. Yet, these resolutions are swiftly interrupted by the addition of a flatted-ninth on beat three that

¹⁰⁴ Baumgarten, "Midlife Harvest liner notes," 189.

¹⁰⁵ Schade, "It's All One liner notes."

propels the pianist into passionate and dramatic statements of contrasting melodic material.

The musical score for Example 4.2, Aria, mm. 18-19, is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It features a common-tone modulation from D major to B major. The right hand has a melodic line with triplets and a fermata. The left hand has a bass line with triplets and a fermata. The piece starts at measure 18 with a piano (p) dynamic.

Example 4.2. Aria, mm. 18-19. Common-tone modulation (beginning of B section).

The return of A occurs in measures 44-59. In the tradition of the *da capo* form, Gulda restates the thematic material of the opening with some alterations, adding new ornamentation and slight changes in harmony. A brief coda (mm. 60-65) offers an affectionate variation on the primary theme's final phrase, bringing the expressive work to a poignant and reflective end.

Aria would make an excellent addition to any program, either as a companion piece to a set of smaller works by Gulda or as a transition piece—such as a bridge between a Mozart Sonata and a more contemporary work. The primary challenges lie in the highly decorated melody, where a supple technique will be required to execute the various ornamentations with ease. Like most of Gulda's works, focused analysis and comprehension of the underlying harmony will provide freedom in the pianist's performance. In addition, a thorough internalization of the simple melodic and harmonic

progression can facilitate a more authentic performance in which the pianist may wish to add further embellishments in the *bel canto* style of the piece.¹⁰⁶

Prelude and Fugue

Prelude and Fugue is in the form of "classical music," the rhythm, melody, and harmony of "jazz music." The piece has proven itself x-fold in front of "classical," "mixed," or "jazz" audiences. This and the numerous quotation marks mean that it is high time to finally stop the dumb quibble.¹⁰⁷

– Friedrich Gulda

With the Prelude and Fugue (1965), we see Gulda turn to yet another familiar form of classical music, in which he uses his skills as a jazz pianist to blend the two worlds. According to Gulda, the prelude is based on chord figurations that are used in a similar way as the preludes in the *Well-Tempered Clavier* by Johann Sebastian Bach, while the fugue is a double-fugue with two themes.¹⁰⁸

Composed in E \flat minor and cast in a ternary design, the Prelude is based on a broken chord figuration formed by a dotted-eighth, sixteenth-note rhythm that is arpeggiated between the hands throughout. The prelude's A section (mm. 1-32) opens on an E \flat ^{m7 (add 11)} harmony (mm. 1-2) and is characterized by two-measure harmonic phrases that feature pedal-tone bass notes.

¹⁰⁶ The preceding analysis is based on the transcription by Rainer Nova, published in 2006. It provides the most accurate notation of Gulda's many performances of the work and, in particular, is based on the version performed at the "Gulda: Non-Stop" concert in Munich on November 19, 1990.

¹⁰⁷ Anders and Kanehl, editors, *Friedrich Gulda*, 267.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

Allegro moderato

Example 4.3. Prelude, mm. 1-2. Opening broken-chord pattern on $E\flat^{m7(\text{add } 11)}$ harmony.

The B section (mm. 33-64) shifts to the minor-dominant and begins by repeating the opening material, starting on a $B\flat^{m7(\text{add } 11)}$. The A section's harmonic progression is followed in the minor-dominant key until measure 47, where changes in harmony lead to a *fortissimo* climax in measure 57-60.

Example 4.4. Prelude, mm. 57-59. Climax of Prelude.

A return of opening material in the tonic key begins the final section (A', mm. 65-94). Here, Gulda maintains the pedal-tone $E\flat$ until the end of the piece. A trill on $F\flat$ leads to an accentuated conclusion on an $E\flat$ major harmony colored by the added-eleventh—ending the piece on an $E\flat$ major sonority.

90

rit. **Adagio**

tr *ad lib.* *piu f f*

mf *p*

Example 4.5. Prelude, mm. 90-94. Final measures of Prelude.

The Fugue begins with a three-and-a-half-measure subject, starting on the fifth scale degree and characterized by swinging eighth notes and a half-step mordent (Example 4.6). A tonal answer begins in measure 4, followed by a third-voice- (m. 10) and fourth-voice-entrance (m. 13). Episode material ensues, as well as a few additional statements of subject and answer material.

Piu mosso

p *ma ben marcato*

mf = *inegales*

Example 4.6. Fugue, mm. 1-4. Subject and beginning of answer.

The entrance of a second subject occurs with a modulation to the minor dominant key of B \flat minor (m. 32). The second subject begins on the tonic of the new key and offers a contrast to the first subject through a motive of descending half notes (Example 4.7). A tonal answer begins on the third scale degree in measure 35, followed by a third-voice- (m. 40) and fourth-voice-entrance (m. 43). In the succeeding episode, Gulda offers a fragment of second subject material while hinting at elements from the first subject.

Example 4.7. Fugue, mm. 32-35. Second subject of Fugue.

Beginning in measure 66, the two subjects combine, offering a recapitulatory peak that showcases Gulda's skillful use of counterpoint (Example 4.8). After a climatic and powerful statement of the first subject in octaves (m. 89), the pianist must improvise the final measures. Here, Gulda asks the pianist to perform a cadenza that leads from the dominant harmony ($Bb^{7(b5)}$) to the tonic ($Eb^{7(b9, \#11)}$).

Example 4.8. Fugue, mm. 65-67. Two subjects of fugue combine.

Example 4.9. Fugue, mm. 93-95. Ending of Fugue, featuring improvisation.

The need to improvise the final measures of the fugue could be the reason why this fascinating work is not performed more often (Example 4.9). Furthermore, the inherent difficulty of performing a fugue is only exacerbated by the additional technical and musical requirements of Gulda's jazz-influenced writing—not to mention the

challenge of managing two fugue subjects. The ambitious pianist should be encouraged, however, by the numerous recordings of Gulda's own performance of the Prelude and Fugue, in which the pianist can gather ideas for ending the fugue. In addition, recordings by classical pianist Marc-André Hamelin, and rock/jazz pianist Keith Emerson also can serve as inspiration for pianists aspiring to perform this work.

Variations on "Light My Fire"

Two or three hundred years ago, one said "variations;" today, we say "choruses." The meaning of both expressions is the same.¹⁰⁹

– Friedrich Gulda

Considered one of his most popular compositions,¹¹⁰ Gulda creates a tour de force rendition of The Doors 1967 classic hit in his Variations on "Light My Fire." The work consists of eleven variations and a coda and includes both notated music (Var. 1-7) and moments of improvisation (Var. 8-11). The theme and subsequent variations are composed in G major (transposed from the original's A minor) and are built on the underlying original harmonic progression of the song's verse and chorus.

The work opens with an introduction—a "free fantasy" over the original harmony of the song's verse. Here, Gulda provides improvisatory, melodic fragments over the hypnotic alternation from the minor dominant harmony (D minor) to the mediant harmony (B minor) (mm. 1-9).

¹⁰⁹ Anders and Kanehl, editors, *Friedrich Gulda*, 232.

¹¹⁰ Gulda Werkstatt Kremsegg, "Friedrich Gulda Biography."

Frei (fantaisie über das Thema)

Example 4.10. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 1-2. “Free fantasy” introduction.

The introduction continues with a statement of the song’s chorus, now in a set tempo (m. 10). While Gulda retains the original harmonic progression of the chorus (ii^7-V^7-I), he alters the melody slightly. In the original song, the iconic line “Come on baby, light my fire...” is sung on a descending motive of the fourth, third, and first scale degrees in a local harmonic context. Instead of following this pattern, Gulda descends to the second scale degree and resolves up to the third (C–B–A–B). In addition, instead of beginning the melody on the downbeat of the measure, Gulda begins the iconic motive on beat two, attributing a more syncopated feel than in the original song.

Example 4.11. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 10-11. Introduction, set tempo begins chorus of original song.

The main theme—as Gulda has labeled it—occurs in measures 17-31. The harmonic progression of the song’s verse and chorus is once again followed. In the verse, Gulda presents the melody in its original form, enhanced only by repetition of notes, the oscillation between notes, and bluesy chordal and scalar embellishments. Likewise, when

the chorus begins in measure 25, Gulda begins on the downbeat and presents the song's original motive, now resolving on the first scale degree.

Example 4.12. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 25-26. Descending motive of original song’s chorus heard in the theme.

The first variation (mm. 32-46) is Baroque in nature, providing imitative counterpoint over the harmonic progression of the song’s verse. When the harmony of the song’s chorus begins in measure 40, syncopated chords and blues-notes provide a more carefree feeling of improvisation, all the while adhering to the harmonic foundation of the theme.

Example 4.13. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 32-33. Beginning of Variation 1.

The second variation (mm. 47-61) is characterized by virtuosic right-hand improvisations, whose rhythmic intensity and technical demand increase with each statement of the verse’s v–iii progression. A final statement of the improvisatory motive in octaves leads to the song’s chorus, where the bluesy character introduced in the first variation is continued through a further intensity of extended-harmony-note embellishments and dance-like syncopations (Example 4.14).

Example 4.14. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 55-56. Bluesy, syncopated rendition of original song’s chorus in Variation 2.

The third variation (mm. 62-76) is based entirely on a sixteenth-note triplet rhythm pattern, which Gulda uses with increasing intensity as the variation unfolds. The rhythm is used for the harmonic progression of both the song’s verse and chorus.

Example 4.15. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 62. Beginning of Variation 3.

In the fourth variation (mm. 77-91), Gulda switches to a compound meter of 12/8, taking on a character that has been described as a “stylized jazz waltz.”¹¹¹

Example 4.16. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 77-78. Beginning of Variation 4.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 186.

When the harmony of the song's chorus begins (m. 85), Gulda maintains the sixteenth-note sextuplet rhythm that was featured in the right hand of the preceding measures; however, he now divides the rhythm between the hands, continuing this technical exercise through the remainder of the variation.

85

senza ped.

Example 4.17. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 84-85. Variation 4, sixteenth-note sextuplet rhythm divided between the hands.

The fifth variation (mm. 92-106) returns to a simple meter of common time. It is characterized by the use of an oscillating octave motive, enhanced by the syncopated groupings Gulda creates through two-note slur markings.

92

Var. 5

ff *mf* *ff* *mf*

ff = *égales*

Example 4.18. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 92-106. Syncopated octaves in Variation 5.

When the harmony of the chorus enters (m. 100), the hands continue to play octaves while leaping large distances, posing one of the more challenging technical moments of the work.

Example 4.19. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 100-101. Variation 5, large leaps in octaves.

The sixth variation (mm. 107-121) consists of rhythm patterns that alternate from lower to higher registers. Beginning with eighth notes, the variation travels progressively through triplets and sixteenth notes, culminating in a syncopated combination of sixteenth notes and eighth notes. When the harmony of the verse is featured (m. 107-114), the rhythm pattern unfolds in two-measure phrases; however, when the harmony of the chorus occurs (mm. 115-121), the pattern unfolds more quickly, adding a change in rhythm every measure (Example 4.20).

Example 4.20. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 116-117. Progressive changes in rhythm in Variation 6.

The half-note, extended harmonies of the seventh variation (mm. 122-136) provide a welcome contrast to the preceding virtuosity. Though Gulda maintains important references to the theme’s underlying harmony, the seventh variation offers the

most adventurous and captivating harmonic progressions of the work, particularly when the harmony of the chorus begins (m. 130).

Example 4.21. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 130-133. Extended harmonies of Variation 7.

With the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh variation, Gulda asks the performer to improvise both melodic and accompaniment material, offering specific instructions and suggestions for each variation. Flowing naturally from the seventh, the eighth and ninth variations (mm. 137-151) give the performer two opportunities to improvise over the theme’s fifteen-measure harmonic progression. In the score, Gulda instructs the performer to start *pianissimo* with a stride accompaniment in the left hand, suggesting a more relaxed feel for these two variations.

Var. 8 u. 9 (♩♩ = *inégales*)

Example 4.22. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 137-144. Beginning of Variations 8 and 9, featuring improvisation.

In the tenth variation (mm. 152-166), Gulda requests that the performer cross hands in order to improvise a melodic “bass-solo” with right hand. In addition, a comping pattern of quarter-note chords has been suggested for the left hand.

152 *Var. 10 (Cross hands!) (♩♩ = inégales)*
 ("Bass solo")

(etc. comp. simile)

Example 4.23. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 152-159. Beginning of Variation 10, featuring improvisation.

In the eleventh variation (mm. 167-181), Gulda instructs the performer to continue playing the bass solo, now in “double time.” With the entrance of the chorus’s harmonic progression (m. 175), Gulda asks for a staccato touch, as the variation builds in intensity before leading into the start of the coda.

175 **(Double time, but ♩♩ = égales u. staccato!)**

comp. staccato

(take over from r.h.)

p

Example 4.24. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 175-181. Variation 11, featuring improvisation in double time.

The coda (m. 182) begins with improvised material. As the right hand continues to improvise on a D Dorian scale, the left hand accompanies with a harmonic pattern that alternates between two broken triads—D minor and E minor. The performer is instructed to repeat the sequence “many times,” adding octaves and sixteenth-note rhythms in the left-hand as intensity grows towards the climactic return of the theme (m. 186).

Coda
Repeat many times! Many times!

notes égales

p
improvise about D doric scales
poco a poco cresc.
legato, ma marcato

sempre cresc.

cresc.

Example 4.25. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 182-184. Beginning of Coda, featuring improvisation.

When the harmony of the chorus returns (m. 194), the performer is encouraged to embellish the notated melody. Beginning in measure 198, the performer has the opportunity to improvise additional material over the harmonic progression of the chorus. A four-measure, chromatic progression (mm. 200-203; $A^m7-A\#^o-B^m7-E^7$) leads into the decisive final statement of chorus material (mm. 204-213), where bombastic, chordal statements of the melody are enhanced by a descending glissando and a conclusive tremolo on an A major chord (Example 4.27), drawing Gulda’s warhorse to an electrifying finish.

197

Repeat many times

ff improv.
sempre.
(Comp.)

8va-----

(fill)

G E⁷ Am⁷ D⁷ G E⁷ Am⁷ A[#] Bm⁷ E⁷ Am⁷ A^{#m}7

Example. 4.26. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 197-202. Coda, additional measures for improvisation over harmony of the original song’s chorus.

211

Example 4.27. Variations on “Light My Fire,” mm. 211-213. Ending of piece.

With an approximate duration of thirteen minutes, Variations on “Light My Fire” is one of Gulda’s most popular large-scale works for solo piano. Gulda would frequently perform the work himself, and it was always a favorite with audiences. His masterful technique highlighted the virtuosity of the more challenging variations, while his skill as an improviser often produced exciting and unpredictable interpretations of the latter variations and coda.

Just as Gulda suggested a progressive order of study for the pieces of *Play Piano Play*, he likewise referred to his Variations on “Light My Fire” as a “touchstone” reserved for the most accomplished jazz pianist and improviser.¹¹² As such, pianists who are interested in the work should consider studying exercises of *Play Piano Play* as preparatory material. In particular, exercises that utilize elements of improvisation will give the performer opportunities to develop fundamental techniques essential to a successful performance of Variations on “Light My Fire.”

¹¹² Gulda, *Klavier-Kompositionen*, preface.

CHAPTER 5

CLOSING AND SUMMARY

As writer Philip Clark summarized, Friedrich Gulda was “an artist entirely sure of his own vision.”¹¹³ In a career spanning fifty years, Gulda regularly broke from the mold of classical music orthodoxy to follow a doctrine of his own design. Guided by individuality and a passion for all types of music, Gulda crossed a line many considered uncrossable, becoming the first artist of his kind to achieve success as both a classical and jazz musician. In doing so, Gulda provided a bridge for future generations of musicians to cross over, while at the same time creating a unique legacy as one of classical music’s most eccentric and controversial artists.

“My entire life consists in trying to come to terms with this disturbance...the conflict between the conservative society where I grew up as a musician and the disturbance caused by a different kind of music,” Gulda once said.¹¹⁴ Indeed, Gulda’s love of different kinds of music was boundless, and his desire to push the boundaries of what a conservative society deemed musical was beyond limit. Although it would be easy to attribute this conflict to Gulda’s seemingly natural ability to be antagonistic, doing so diminishes the incredible originality of Gulda’s career and musicianship. Gulda did not necessarily love controversy—he loved music.

Gulda’s career became a balance between two musical worlds, as evidenced by his combined programs of classical and jazz music. Gulda used his own compositions to bridge the gap between the different genres, and in the process made important

¹¹³ Clark, “Friedrich Gulda,” 58.

¹¹⁴ Gulda, *So What?!*, [47:11-48:08].

contributions to the solo piano repertoire, including his ten-piece cycle, *Play Piano Play*. This work exemplifies Gulda's compositional method of combining classical forms with jazz piano techniques and styles. The work is didactic in its design, with Gulda proposing an order of study to teach the classical pianist how to perform jazz. Furthermore, his distinctive compositional approach of combining notated music with improvisation distinguishes Gulda from other composers in the classical-jazz genre of the piano repertoire. In this way, Gulda's music forces the pianist to come to terms with a key element of jazz piano playing and, as a result, uniquely encourages the pianist to grow as both a classical and jazz musician.

When approaching Gulda's music for the first time, the pianist may find the notated pieces of *Play Piano Play* to be the best place to start. Just as Chopin's preludes and etudes can serve as preliminary exercises to his ballades or sonatas, the ten pieces of *Play Piano Play* can serve as preparatory studies to Gulda's more challenging works such as *Prelude and Fugue* and *Variations on "Light My Fire."* In this way, the performer is exposed to important and fundamental jazz techniques that are packaged in manageable designs, allowing the pianist to develop critical technical and stylistic attributes in an efficient manner. In addition, their importance as effective performance repertoire should not be overlooked. With their compact design and succinct presentation of audience-friendly jazz themes and styles, a set of three or more pieces makes a welcome addition to any program.

As performers and audiences continue to discover the music of Friedrich Gulda, each does so through a new prism. Although the journey for Gulda was fraught with

debate, offense, and even rejection, the attitude toward combining the world of classical and jazz music has never been more accepting than it is today. From Gershwin to Kapustin, the blended-genre of classical-jazz music has become increasingly more popular, particularly in the piano repertoire. Friedrich Gulda's music is a significant and pioneering part of this repertoire and therefore deserves the attention and consideration of performers and audiences alike.

Reflecting on his career, Gulda once said, "No matter what I play, I always play Gulda."¹¹⁵ At a time when society and tradition demanded that he be part of one musical world or the other, Friedrich Gulda dared to be himself. Through his blended concert programs of classical and original works, Gulda's personality and musicianship brought both classical and jazz music to a generation of listeners in a way that no other pianist of that time could or ever would. Friedrich Gulda's legacy as one of classical music's greatest rebels continues to inspire the individual in all of us, resulting in artistic visions that cultivate innovation and developing artists who—when confronted with the tide—choose to swim.

¹¹⁵ Gulda, *So What?!*, [51:21-51:27].

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