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# Three Concepts of the Sonata Principle

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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THREE CONCEPTS

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OF THE SONATA PRINCIPLE

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(TITLE)

BY

Gretchen van Sciver Tracy

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1970

YEAR

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	111
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### PART I. THE SONATA PRINCIPLE

History	1
Compositional Technique	8

### PART II. APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE

Joseph Haydn: Sonata in B Minor, No. 32 (Hoboken)	13
Serge Prokofieff: Sonata No. 7 in B Flat, Op. 83	22
Franz Liszt: Sonata in B Minor	41
CONCLUSION	55
BIBLIOGRAPHY	58

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PART I: THE SONATA PRINCIPLE

## HISTORY

The sonata has a rather imposing history of over three hundred years. It can be traced to the early sixteenth-century French chanson, which is characterized by a clear sectional structure, often involving repetition schemes such as AAB, ABB, etc. In Italy, this vocal form was transferred to the organ and, around 1580, to instrumental ensembles, called canzona d'organo and canzona de sonare, respectively, the latter of which must be considered the true ancestor of the sonata. From 1600 to 1650 a staggering quantity of instrumental ensemble works, with such titles as Canzone, Canzone de sonare, Sonate, and Sinfonie were published. These were essentially one-movement works, divided into several sections from approximately four to twenty bars each, in contrasting styles and tempi. A frequent feature of these pieces is the restatement of thematic material in the several sections, a practice which anticipates the late nineteenth-century cyclic works. At some point in this period, perhaps around 1635, the tendency toward fewer

sections of greater length began. Outside Italy, however, the numerous movements in polyphonic style, loosely connected, persisted as a "form" until about 1700.

After 1650 there develops (chiefly in Venice) a certain standard pattern of two fugal allegro movements, separated by a homophonic middle movement in dance-like triple meter, a three-movement scheme frequently enlarged to four or five by the insertion of shorter adagios either before or after the slow movement. Strangely enough, there does not seem to be any historical connection between the symmetrical development of the Venetian form and the Viennese classic sonata.

In 1687 a novel form appeared in a slow-fast-slow-fast scheme, which, under the designation sonata da chiesa, was used by a great number of composers after the initial presentation by Giuseppi Torelli in his Sinfonie a 2, 3, 4 istromenti. In the earlier examples of the sonata da chiesa, the final movement is usually cast in a fast dance-form, though in the later examples this characteristic seems to fade out, making a feasible distinction between sonata da chiesa and sonata da camera by the mere presence of dance movements.

The examples of the Baroque sonata fall into four categories, according to medium: those written in one part, in two parts (a due), three parts (a tre), and those of four or more parts. The sonatas a due usually



call for three players, actually -- one to play the melody, one to play the bass line and a third to realize the figured bass. The trio sonata (a tre), perhaps the most important form of all, was performed by one, two, or four players, rarely by three.

The actual emergence of the Viennese Classic sonata is difficult to determine. It involves a change from the slow-fast-slow-fast pattern of the Baroque to a three-movement pattern of fast-slow-fast, or to another four-movement scheme of allegro-adagio-scherzo-allegro. It incorporates, also, changes of style and of formal structure of the separate movements. Also, the repertoire falls into the three divisions of solo sonata, chamber sonata, and orchestral sonata (symphony), each of which "follows a separate line of development, though within the same general frame."<sup>1</sup>

The three-movement fast-slow-fast form was established with the Italian overture of Alessandro Scarlatti; Vivaldi established it as the standard form of the concerto, still adhered to today. Bach utilized this form in the Brandenburg Concerti, the Italian Concerto, and the six organ sonatas. The Italian harpsichord-sonata composers reduced the number of movements to two, frequently;

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<sup>1</sup>Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 694.

Domenico Scarlatti's "sonatas" contain but one. The introduction of the four-movement type (allegro-adagio-minuet-allegro) is attributed to Johann Stamitz, founder of the Mannheim School, who used it in all of his symphonies and chamber works. Practically all of the symphonies of Haydn and Mozart are in four movements, while their sonatas have only three. Beethoven, on the other hand, most often employed the four-movement scheme for all of his sonata works, in which the minuet was frequently replaced by the scherzo.

In the Rococo sonatas, the form of the single movements was usually binary (except for the minuets), with each section repeated. The "rounded binary" form, in which certain elements of the first section were reiterated in the concluding bars of the second, was well established by 1720.<sup>2</sup> From this probably developed the so-called "sonata-allegro" form, divided essentially into three sections: the exposition, the development, and the recapitulation (often followed by a coda). Its scheme is very like the rounded binary, in that the exposition may be repeated, and that the second section does indeed recall portions of the first (the recapitulation); however, the first section employs separate contrasting themes, as opposed to the continuous melody of the binary form.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 697.

The development of style from one musical "era" to the next also shows a marked change. Even as early as in the sonatas of Corelli the tendency away from the contrapuntal texture of the Baroque was evident, supported by the rhythmically incisive style of Vivaldi as well as by the Galanter Stil of the Rococo, which was largely derived from operatic models. This change toward a more dramatic style of writing is usually credited to the Mannheim School, although Italian composers worked in much the same direction. K. P. E. Bach, and the Empfindsamer Stil (expressive style), influenced Haydn in his youth; Johann Christian Bach provides the link between the Italian gallant style and Mozart. Clementi's sonatas are said to anticipate many of the dramatic elements of the Beethoven sonatas.<sup>3</sup>

The output of sonatas for solo instruments, or of sonata-forms for ensembles, appears, after the Classic era, to dwindle somewhat. Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, for example, wrote many more sonatas apiece than did their followers, considering sheer numbers of solo-sonatas, quartets, symphonies, and sonata-form ensembles. The Romantic period heralded the arrival of the character piece and, on the opposite side, large-scale works

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 695.

of tremendous proportions. When used, the sonata-allegro form remains essentially the same; it is simply expanded. The two or more themes of the exposition are highly contrasted; the development becomes more complex; and the recapitulation becomes equal to (or greater than) the exposition in length, often with a sizeable coda added.

Particularly interesting, and certainly appropriate at this point in the discussion of the development of the sonata-form, is the one-movement "sonata" of the Romantic era, composed of several loosely-connected sections. Closely related are the symphonic poems, in which a melody (or melodies) is subjected to metamorphoses in the several sections, producing a cyclic work. Composers of works of this type include Liszt, Berlioz, Franck, D'Indy, and Faure, to name but a few. This cyclic treatment was nothing really new; some of the works mentioned earlier, those written prior to 1650 (canzone da sonare, sinfonie, etc.) reiterated thematic material in different sections.

The reaction to nineteenth-century styles in the early twentieth century discouraged the composition of works in so formal a structure as that of the sonata. Ravel and Busoni did produce sonatinas, but it was not until after the emergence of "neo-classicism" that composers (notably Stravinsky and Hindemith) turned again to sonata form. Since that time, any number of sonata-

form works have been written (symphonies, solo sonatas, chamber works); so it would seem that another chapter is being written in the evolution of the sonata.

## COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUE

What actually gives a sonata its character would basically be the manner in which the musical material of the work is manipulated. The earliest sonatas actually designated as such were written in binary form; it was not, however, a form limited strictly to use in sonata-composing. The rounded binary approached sonata-form a bit more closely, but it is closely related to simple ABA form, used in any number of non-sonata works. It would seem that the one most important factor in the growth of the form is that of development, which by itself sets apart the sonata-allegro form from the simple ABA, though the element of return is essential to both. In the development section of the sonata the composer could exhibit his inventiveness, utilizing various colorings, implications, and juxtapositions of the thematic material set forth in the exposition. This can possibly be compared to the variation technique, though it would seem that developmental variety is more fragmental, whereas variation technique involves a total-theme treatment, one complete statement after another.



Certain basic techniques are common in the developmental procedure:

1. Subjects can be manipulated by a use of (1) inversion, (2) segmentation, (3) realignment, (4) imitation, (5) sequential repetition, or (6) contrapuntal interplay.
2. Continual modulations maintain tonality in a state of flux, a fluidity in decided contrast with the stable tonalities in other sections of the work.
3. Rhythmic shifts may involve a lengthening (augmentation) or a shortening (diminution) of time values; almost unfailingly these sections display a general increase in rhythmic activity.
4. Altered hues of coloration can be accomplished by a use of diverse instruments, and exploitation of extreme ranges, or demands for unusual fluency.
5. Development sections give a impression of being incredibly complex; their lines twist and turn; cross-rhythms, syncopations, and impetuous angular thrusts abound; often, the dynamic level mounts to ear-shattering intensity.<sup>4</sup>

The development is, of course, an elaborational treatment of that material presented in the exposition. Whether the exposition is monothematic, bithematic, or multithematic, elements of those themes will be found as germs for the development. In the Classic era, the development was somewhat cursory; later, with the works of

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<sup>4</sup>Walter E. Nallin, The Musical Idea. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1968, p. 180.

Beethoven and Brahms, the development came to be more lengthy, indeed, the focal-point of the sonata-allegro movement. In fact, the sonata as conceived by Franz Liszt was almost continual development.<sup>5</sup>

In most sonata-form compositions, at least two thematic ideas are presented in the exposition. These are generally of a contrasting nature, the first traditionally being aggressive (masculine), the second, more lyric (feminine), presented after the new tonality is established, different from that of the first theme. If the work is in a major key, often the second theme is presented in the dominant; if the work is in minor, the second theme usually appears in the relative major.

In approaching the area known as the coda (or codetta), the exposition may recall bits of its principal theme or introduce new material as a closing theme. The exposition closes on an incomplete cadence, heralding the action of the development. Usually the entire exposition is intended to be repeated before the development is begun, a procedure frequently ignored in actual performance.

The form of the sonata as Liszt conceived it is not so clear-cut. The germinal themes (or even motives) of the sonatas of Liszt are often so cunningly developed as to be almost unrecognizable; in this manner Liszt

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<sup>5</sup>Martin Bernstein and Martin Picker, An Introduction to Music. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966, p. 344.



achieves a certain unity in his cyclic works -- through subtle variation.

The study of sonata principle, then, is the tracing of tendencies in developmental theme-treatment, using as stepping-stones the different periods of musical thought.

We call it sonata form, though the term is misleading because it suggests that "form" can exist independent of musical "content." Sonata, like fugue, is not so much a form as a principle: an approach to composition. The sonata movements of Haydn, let alone Beethoven, resemble each other in their approach, but not in the details of the pattern. One might even say there is no such thing as sonata form; there are only sonatas. Sonata is a way of composing which grew out of a particular set of circumstances: which is apposite to those circumstances and not necessarily to others. A new approach to composition grew out of new human needs and desires. Certain conventions were, of course, gradually deduced from this new approach and hardened into cliché and dogma: social small talk which could be used by composers who had nothing to say as an agreeable way of passing time and making money. But for the masters, style never becomes dogma; form remains the principle which perpetually renews itself under the pressure of experience. <sup>6</sup>

What makes all sonatas "sonatas," beyond the composer's wish to call them such, would seem to be a compositional technique which involves (1) an exposition, with

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<sup>6</sup>Wilfrid Mellers, The Sonata Principle. London: Rockliff, 1957, p. 3.

contrasting themes (or motives, within a single theme); (2) a development section, to exploit further the coloristic and dramatic possibilities of the material in the exposition; and finally, (3) a recapitulation of the expositional elements, as if to underscore the importance of them when viewing the movement (or the entire work) as a whole. Sonata principle is that which puts into a common category all those works designated as "sonatas", works which, it would seem, amount to a convincing musical discussion of the merits (and consequent development) of two contrasting, though complementary, theme-groups.

PART II: APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE

FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN:  
SONATA IN B MINOR, NO. 32  
(HOBOKEN)

Research into the life and music of Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) has been, in comparison to that done on Mozart and Beethoven, scanty and disorderly. This may in part be due to the great gaps in the history of his life; also, there is much controversy as to whether many of those works accredited to him are authentic. The manuscripts have been dispersed to all parts of Europe, and many of them have yet to be carefully studied. Three important works in Haydn research must be mentioned here: The Symphonies of Joseph Haydn (1955 -- supplemented in 1961), by Howard Chandler Robbins Landon, which "indirectly contributes as much to the understanding of Haydn's sonatas as any study yet dedicated expressly to that subject."<sup>7</sup> Another is the collection (and translation into English) of Haydn's entire available correspondence and his "London Notebooks" (1791-95), all in a single volume: The Collected Correspondence and London Notebooks of Joseph Haydn (1959). The third is a complete thematic index of Haydn's works, a project undertaken by a veteran

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<sup>7</sup>William S. Newman, The Sonata in the Classic Era. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963, p. 458.

Dutch collector of Haydn first and early editions, Anthony von Hoboken: Joseph Haydn: Thematischbibliographisches Werkverzeichnis (four projected Abtheilungen).

A set of six sonatas (Hoboken Nos. 27-32) appeared in 1776, of which the last, in b minor, is said to stand "head and shoulders above the rest . . ."

...there is a sardonic streak in it, rising to almost demonic rage in the short but pithy development of the first movement, and in the fortissimo octaves with which the presto finale, with its furious repeated-quaver rhythm, storms to its end. 8

The first movement, Allegro moderato, begins in a martial 4/4 meter, with an eight-measure first theme consisting of three essentially different ideas, as follow in illustration:

Ex. 1 mm. 1-6




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<sup>8</sup> Rosemary Hughes, Haydn. New York: Pelegrine & Cudahy, 1950, p. 142

It is interesting to note that the three elements of this first theme make up a rhythmic progression, as it were; they are written in successively shorter note values. The first motive might be termed the antecedent; the second, the consequent; the third, by virtue of purely repetitive content, may be said to climax the first theme.

The second statement of the opening theme begins as a direct quote of what preceded it; however, the first two beats of the second measure become extended in bar ten, which becomes in turn motivically transitional, leading to the second theme through extension of that transition, or at best a "preview" of the actual second theme, illustrated following:

Ex. 2 m. 13



This passage is justifiably referred to as the second theme proper, since it does in fact appear in the relative major key. As is frequently the case in Haydn's



sonatas, the element of contrast is hereby ignored, with the possible exception of bars eleven and twelve, which do set up a different quality for the more minutely subdivided rhythm of the second theme. A slight relaxation on the first beat of measure twelve, something short of a real ritenuto, might present this second theme in a somewhat different light from the first. The touch would of necessity be more legato for purposes of contrast in the second theme, as opposed to the brittleness required by the first, especially with the sharp staccato present in the bass.

At measure twenty appears a restatement of the second theme. Measure twenty-two departs from the second theme on the second beat, and leads to a three-bar scalar passage serving as the first bars of the codetta, which draws melodically from the second theme, rhythmically from the first. The exposition ends in the key of the relative major, in d.

The development, measure twenty-nine, begins with a recall of the first theme, but the c natural in the upper voice implies an approaching key change, and the expected g major is automatically displaced by the occurrence of d sharps in two separate registers. After only two bars of such horseplay, the key of e minor is rather firmly established, and manages to hold sway for a restatement of the first theme for three bars and a

half. With the sudden intrusion of a d natural in bar thirty-four, however, another modulation seems imminent. The appearance of an e sharp in the second half of bar thirty-five, functioning as a leading tone, clinches the f-sharp minor tonality, in which key a third statement of the first theme is made in bar thirty-eight. With so capricious a key scheme preceding, this f-sharp tonality cannot last long. The first real departure from it occurs in bar forty-one, with the e natural on the first beat; bar forty-two with its b sharps tries to secure c-sharp minor, using the same playful transitional motive found in bar ten, but with the a sharp on the second beat of bar forty-four, there seems no way to turn but back to the original tonality of b minor. It is reached by way of nine measures of a repeated dotted rhythm, which very effectively increases the excitement of the modulation back to the tonic.

The recapitulation is shortened in comparison to the exposition by the exclusion of a second statement of the first theme; the first four and three-quarter measures are an exact quote of the beginning of the work. In measure fifty-two, the third motive of the first theme begins its second statement on an f sharp, rather than on b, thus smoothing the way for the expected b-minor presentation of the second theme. The effervescent scalar run



into the codetta is given added interest by virtue of wider leaps and a leading-tone diminished seventh broken chord figure up to high b. The codetta of the exposition has been merely transposed, note for note, in keeping with the b-minor tonality.

The second movement, cast in ABA form, actually a pair of minuets, might take exception to the minuet-and-trio format. The trio section of this form was so named because in the Baroque era the second minuet, in the interest of contrast, was played by three instruments -- often a flute, an oboe, and a bassoon, with a return to tutti for the repeat of the first minuet; hence, most trio sections were conceivably played in three voices. The second minuet of this sonata is for the most part bi-vocal, which may or may not justify avoiding the terminology "trio" for purely didactic reasons.

The tempo de minuet was featured in this group of six sonatas, appearing three times as a middle movement (nos. 27, 28, and 32), and twice as a finale (nos. 29 and 30).<sup>9</sup>

The minuet movement begins in major, and is constructed in the Baroque procedure: both minuets are in binary form, and elements of the first section appear in the second section of each. The first section of the

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<sup>9</sup>Hughes, op. cit., p. 144.

first minuet cadences in the dominant key, whereas that of the second minuet, written in the parallel minor, cadences in its relative major.

The separate characters of the two minuets are worthy of note: the element of contrast so prevalent in the Classic era's conception of the form is here clearly depicted. The first minuet, in b major, has a free-flowing, largely treble melody; whereas the second, in b minor, consists of a rattling sixteenth-note line, all jagged edges and tension, located largely in the lower registers. The spinning sixteenths in a chromatic repetition in bar thirty-one add to the intensity. Balance is restored, however, with a da capo of the first rather serene little dance.

The finale, Presto, begins with a terse motive built largely on note-repetition. The line is made even more crisp by the brevity of the tones -- most of the notes of this first theme are marked with a wedge, which in Haydn's time reduced the duration of the note so marked and substituted a rest for the balance; the dot was reserved for a less sharp staccato (portato), usually appearing in slow movements.<sup>10</sup> The sudden legato which appears in bar twelve, rather than breaking the tension of the preceding hail of arrows, only tightens the bowstring for another volley.

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Apel, op. cit., p. 708.

Certain similarities must be noted between the finale and the first movement, aside from their both being written in sonata-allegro form: first, the key schemes of the two movements are paralleled almost exactly throughout; second, the second theme of each utilizes an ascending scalar passage in d major; and third, each movement has a burst of purely virtuosic material by way of transition in the final bars of both exposition and recapitulation. Noteworthy, too, are the whirling sixteenth-note accompanimental passages to the left-hand presentation of the second theme: this motive recalls the second section of the second minuet. There is an overall unity achieved through use of these similar materials.

The development capitalizes on the contrapuntal possibilities of the first theme; it begins on a dominant seventh chord into the key of e minor. It moves away from e minor into g major by way of a sequential chromatic progression of diminished seventh broken chords. After a short pause following a d-major chord serving as a dominant to the g major section aforementioned, an entrance of the first theme is made in the bass in f-sharp minor. It is answered in the treble beginning on a g sharp rather than an f sharp, making the "answer" at the interval of a ninth; however, this rather delinquent answer is patted into place by including

a leap of a diminished fifth instead of a sixth. The modulation moves from f-sharp minor through c-sharp minor, progressing stepwise through clever manipulations of chordal inversions in the bass, settling rather suddenly on the original b minor tonality but disguising its return with a last gasp from f sharp, this time appearing as a major chord to act as the dominant of the returning b minor. The recapitulation is regular, following the same format as did that of the first movement.

Particularly striking are the last notes of the entire work: the first theme is recalled in octaves as a coda, only to thunder up to a startlingly brusque dominant-tonic cadence. It is interesting to speculate on the purpose of this sort of ending. Was this the mischievous Haydn with tongue in cheek, hoping by the ending's very incongruity to fetch a smile from the visitors to Esterhaz? or was it a sort of antidote to the fury that came before it? Perhaps "incongruity" would be the key to the presentation of the work. Are these ludicrous contrasts, bordering on the grotesque, a humorous gesture, or in deadly earnest? Perhaps it was that Haydn felt that there was nothing more to say that would not detract from the work; hence, he used the understatement as an underscoring.

SERGE PROKOFIEFF:

SONATA NO. 7 IN B FLAT, OP. 83

Serge Prokofieff was born on April 23, 1891, in the Ukranian village of Sontsovka. His father was the director of the estate of the Sontsovs, which comprised large expanses of the steppe, but the owners never lived there. His mother played the piano fairly well, and this gave him a taste for serious music from his youngest years.

The list of Prokofieff's teachers reads like a galaxy of famous names. First was Reinhold Gliere, who took him in hand at the age of eleven. When he entered the Petersburg Conservatory, Prokofieff studied harmony and counterpoint with Liadov, and orchestration with Rimsky-Korsakoff. Later he studied piano with Annette Essipova, a noted teacher who had been a student (and later the wife) of Leschitzky. Prokofieff graduated with highest honors from Petersburg in 1914.

Even as a young student, Prokofieff was in matters of music a belligerent leftist; in 1908 he joined a society in Petersburg dedicated to the performance of new and controversial works by Debussy, Dukas, Faure, Schönberg, Reger, Richard Strauss, Hugo Wolf, Scriabine, and Stravinsky. When he played his Suggestion Diabolique for



one of the meetings, he stunned his listeners. In 1911 he gave the first Russian performance of Schönberg's Klavierstücke, Op. 11. By the next year, in 1912, when he played his own First Concerto in Petersburg and Moscow, Prokofieff had become the enfant terrible of Russian music, a title which would take him many years to live down.

Few composers have had a greater natural aptitude for the gentle art of making enemies. Prokofieff's fault (or perhaps virtue) was his inability to speak with anything but utter frankness on any subject. He was gruff, outspoken, loudly sarcastic, sparing nobody's feelings or ideas. To some he was a porcupine personality, all spines and quills. At the conservatory, he caused untold anguish to the conservative professors by his reckless opinions and radical music. <sup>11</sup>

The attitude expressed in the piano music of Prokofieff has been compared to that of "a bad boy delighting in making rude noises and poking fun at his elders."<sup>12</sup> This appears to be particularly the case in his earlier works, those written before World War I, in which he seems to promote the idea that the piano is primarily a percussion instrument. He was not alone in this opinion, as Bartok, Stravinsky and Hindemith were also

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<sup>11</sup> Richard Leonard, A History of Russian Music. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1957, pp. 295-96.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Hansen, An Introduction to Twentieth Century Music. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1961, p. 271.

convinced that there was no disguising the fact that the piano has always been a percussion instrument -- this, even in the face of all that Debussy and Ravel had just created. Debussy wanted to create a piano without hammers; quite the reverse was true with Prokofieff.<sup>13</sup>

The years spent away from Russia, 1918-32, were years in which Prokofieff re-examined his style. He wrote:

Music has definitely reached and passed the greatest dissonance and complexity that it is possible for it to attain ... Therefore I think the desire which I feel ... to achieve a more simple and melodic expression, is the inevitable direction for the musical art of the future. 14

Thus it would seem that his writings in his last years (1932-53) were not so much a product of the Soviet influence (he had returned to Russia in 1932) as they were the results of his own direction of thinking. Gerald Abraham, a noted British critic, stated:

Why should Prokofieff, who was continuing a brilliant career outside Russia, have voluntarily returned to a land where he knew certain limitations would be imposed on his work,

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<sup>13</sup> Harold C. Schonberg, The Great Pianists. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963, p. 390.

<sup>14</sup> Hansen, op. cit., p. 278.

unless he felt that those limitations would be unimportant? The truth is, I think, that he had already been tending in this direction for some time. 15

Prokofieff himself outlined the five essential elements of his style of composition. These are (1) the classical element, which he attributed to his having heard his mother play Beethoven sonatas in his childhood; (2) innovation: "At first this innovation consisted in the search for individual harmonic language, but later was transformed ... (to) expression of strong emotions"; (3) the toccata, or motor, element, which he traced to his youth, when the Schumann Tocatta greatly impressed him (this element he considered the least important); (4) the lyric element; and (5) the element of the grotesque, which Prokofieff called "scherziness", or "jest", "laughter", or "mockery".<sup>16</sup>

The cycle of three piano sonatas, the Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Sonatas (op. 82, 83, and 84), were written in the years 1939-44, and might be said to be programmatic in the sense of a commentary on the war years -- the Great Patriotic War which was Russia's initial involvement in World War II (Russia's Great War actually encompassed the years 1941-45).

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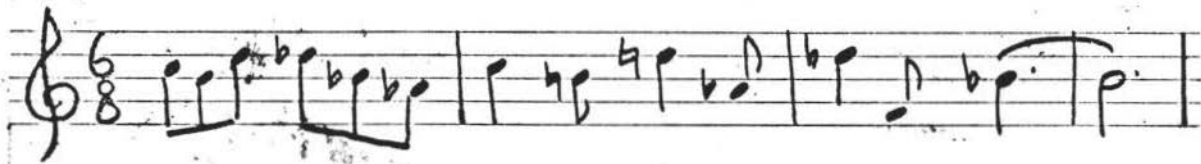
<sup>15</sup> Joseph Machlis, Introduction to Contemporary Music. W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1961, p. 278.

<sup>16</sup> Leonard, op. cit., p. 311.



The second of these, the Seventh Sonata, approaches atonality perhaps more than any of the other piano sonatas. It is specified by the composer as being in b flat, but of the three movements of the work, only the last is unquestionably written in that key. The first movement begins on c natural, followed by b natural, which makes the supposed b-flat tonality seem distant, indeed, for rather than a chromatic descent to the b flat, a leap upward of a minor third follows.

Ex. 3 mm. 1-4



Measures 1-4 are built on a closing-in principle, somewhat in reverse, so subtly as to leave in question until the end of the phrase just what is being closed in. <sup>17</sup>

The first movement, Allegro inquieto, creates the impression of a fiendish scherzo, filled with the swirling motion of repetitive triplet eighths. One might recall such dynamic writing as is found in the Toccata, Op. 11, in the restless pattern of the melody, the unrelieved persistence of the ostinato bass, the bare rhythmic con-

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<sup>17</sup>Patricia Ashley, "Prokofiev's Piano Music" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Rochester, 1963), p. 263.

struction, and mainly the dissonant harmonic texture. What keeps this harmony from being atonal in the strictest sense of the word are the cadence points, most of which are strongly in b flat, or closely related.

One rhythmic motive that Prokofieff used throughout the three sonatas of the cycle (perhaps related to the \*\*\*- "victory" code used by the Allied forces during the war) occurs in measure five for the first time, and appears frequently thereafter.

Ex. 4 m. 5



This rhythmic motive provides the basis for the highly lyrical second theme (Andantino: espressivo e dolente), which is described as "one of those misty, tritonal, quasi-modal, wandering bits of semi-atonality."<sup>18</sup>

Ex. 5 mm. 124-26



This second theme is contrasted with the first

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 270-71.

largely by way of its legato line. Whereas the first theme employed a heavy, disconnected touch, the second demands a legatissimo approach. Unity is achieved by the utilization of triplet patterns in both the first and second themes, and by the unsettled tonality (or perhaps the lack of it) of the melodic lines. The second theme is further isolated by a queer little five-bar "introduction" which serves as a color-changing device: it occurs first in measure one hundred nineteen, and once again in measure three hundred thirty-three, before the recapitulation of the second theme.

The development begins in measure one hundred fifty-five, where the time signature changes from the  $9/8$  of the andantino to the original  $6/8$ . It first treats a fragment of the second theme, found in measure one hundred thirty. The rhythmic motive of a dotted quarter tied to an eighth, followed by two eighths, is employed in the uppermost voice for seven bars, accompanied in different registers quasi-contrapuntally, so that something does occur on each beat in the measure, tying in with the constant activity following in the development. In bar one hundred sixty-four the figure which first appeared in the pickup to bar twenty-four in the upper register occurs in the bass, the rhythmic motive drawn from the second measure of the first theme. The first break from the constant-eighth pattern is

found in measure one hundred sixty-eight, with a great clanging f-sharp minor chord with an added b flat in the uppermost voice (again the conflict between major and minor), which moves to a similar chord, c major with an added e flat, by way of chromatic movement. This figure occurs twice, elaborated slightly the second time, before moving into a restatement of the measure twenty-four motive in the pickup to measure one hundred eighty-two. From here the rhythmic drive is built for the most part on the first two measures of the first theme, either on the six eighth-notes pattern or on the galloping quarter-eighth, quarter-eighth idea.

After a verbatim quote of the first theme in the uppermost voice in measure one hundred eighty-six, a cascading tumultuoso introduces a repeat of what happened in measures one hundred sixty-eight to one hundred eighty-five, lowered a whole step, so that the chords are e major-minor moving to b-flat major-minor.

Measures two hundred eighteen through two hundred thirty-three develop what first occurred in the bass in bars forty-five through fifty-nine, built on the rhythmic motive of the second measure of the first theme; the uppermost voice of measures two hundred twenty-two through two hundred twenty-five quote measures seventy-one through seventy-four. Bar two hundred thirty-four

extends and paraphrases what began in bar two hundred twenty-two.

Bars two hundred forty through the first half of two hundred fifty-two may be paralleled to that which closes the first theme area, first occurring in bar one hundred three, except that now the idea is one of crescendo rather than of diminuendo. The figure is expanded to what amounts to a second inversion of a diminished triad on e. What follows is an ingenious interplay of tertian harmonies, utilizing both the constant-eighth and the galloping rhythms. Surely this is the motor element at work. The second theme is introduced rather surprisingly in the bass at measure two hundred sixty-nine, considering the "trebleness" of its first appearance. Its hemiola quality adds further interest: three quarters against what would amount to two dotted quarters in the accompaniment. This treatment of the second theme is repeated in bar two hundred eighty-one, this time in octaves.

Until this point the several elements of the exposition have been developed very much in order of their initial appearances. Reiterated here, however, are elements of the first theme-group, from bar ninety. The development section might be said to conclude with what



closed the first theme-group, for it is slightly more elaborate than in its first appearance, is written a whole-step higher, and would be hard put to convey the feeling of recapitulation. If this is the case, the recapitulation may be said to occur in reverse, with the first theme elements more or less ignored in favor of the second theme, until a rather extensive statement of it has been made, in bars three hundred thirty-eight through three hundred fifty-eight. This restatement, too, is written a whole-step above the original.

Measure three-hundred fifty-nine is again in 6/8 meter, is again marked allegro inquieto, and does follow the original format of the first theme. An extension of what was stated in bar thirty-six occurs in measure three hundred eighty-seven, and winds up to a coda beginning in bar three hundred ninety-seven.

Prokofieff seemed entranced with the Phrygian mode, with the dark second involved (producing a diminished triad on the dominant), and used that particular sound in the Seventh Sonata. The undermining dark b (the second: c flat of b-flat Phrygian) and its associated diminished triad were used as a blurring force in the Sixth Sonata. The Phrygian was always used untransposed; the dominant triad always had a diminished fifth, sometimes utilizing a major third.<sup>19</sup> The movement closes

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 263.

with four b flats, four c flats (the dark second as the neopolitan): an f, the mutual dominant of both the b-flat Phrygian and b-flat major-minor; a first inversion a-minor chord (the minor lower neopolitan); and the major triad tonic arpeggio b-flat-d-f-b-flat, with a d sounded below the final b flat. The exotic quality lies mainly in the skillful intermingling of the tonal with the modal.

The first movement must be described as being composed in sonata-allegro form, since the exposition, development, and recapitulation are to be found therein. Prokofieff was self-admittedly fond of the classical forms, though the recapitulation in this movement might be considered revolutionary. The forty-four bars preceding the restatement of the second theme appear ambiguous; they could be considered either the actual beginning of the recapitulation proper, or simply a rounding-off for the development section. The vaguery is intriguing: if the former statement is correct, the progress of the sonata is stepped up; if the latter, the reversed recapitulation itself is of interest.

The second movement, Andante caloroso, might seem out of place when compared to its surrounding movements, as the atmosphere is one of unabashed romanticism; after so much of the previously-mentioned "motor element" (which Prokofieff claimed was the least important to him),

his best-loved "lyric element is a welcome relief.

The second movement is more subjective, warmly melodic and introspective in character ... it opens with a nostalgic song which weaves through the different voices of the harmony, and, undergoing various extensions and modulations, swells to a climax almost orchestral in sonorities. These engage much of the range of the piano, with clashing bell effects ... the sounds, as the music subsides, seem to echo from far and near, and they give place to the melody which opened the movement. 20

The movement is written in ABA form; the B section is by far the most complex, harmonically and rhythmically. Without the simplicity of the opening song-theme, the developmental B section would be made less poignant, surrounded by the highly complex first and third movements.

Ex. 6 mm. 413-15 A theme

<sup>20</sup>Olin Downes, "Preface," Sonata No. 7 by Serge Prokofieff. Leeds Edition, ed. Schmitz, 1945.

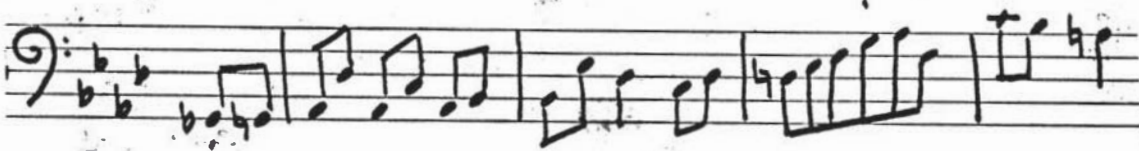


The B section of the movement is drawn from one of the closing motives of the first section (compare the examples below).

Ex. 7 mm. 441-44



Ex. 8 mm. 445-48 B theme



The B section is marked Poco piu animato, which very much describes the structural nature of the music as well as simply the tempo change. As well as a growing volume of sound, there is to be found more minute subdivision of the original eighth-note motion. The texture becomes thicker, with greater extremes reached in the melodic range. The whole of the keyboard is utilized. At measure four hundred fifty-nine an upward scalar run appears, a sort of "geyser" of sound, a device used by Prokofieff throughout this cycle of sonatas. It is inter-

esting to note that the first of three appearances of this figure is not as strictly scalar as the following two; it is composed of two five-note patterns, starting on d, so that there is a skip of a perfect fourth (between a and d) rather than the usual stepwise motion. The effect is one of incredible speed and efficiency. The other two figures are strictly scalar, amounting to e-major scales starting on the dominant, b. All three figures are written in sixty-fourth notes, lending a glissando effect. Of the three, only the first serves as a purely melodic liason.

The "clashing bell effects" mentioned by Clin Downes are best explained as reiterated tones, or even chords, usually (but by no means always) appearing in the bass, countered by a slightly more ornate figure, usually a repeated pattern. These "bell effects" appear first in measure four hundred sixty-five, and are maintained through measure five hundred eight, varying slightly in intensity and rhythmic involvement. The climax seems to appear not so much simply with the occurrence of a fortissimo (since there are four of them between bars four hundred sixty-five and seventy-five), but at bar four hundred eighty-two, marked un poco agitato, a section featuring increased rhythmic activity with alternation of duple and triple groups of sixteenths. The motion slows with a descending melodic

figure in the bass, in bar four hundred ninety, and gives way in bar four hundred ninety-two to perhaps the best-known bell-sequence of all. This idea begins to evaporate in bar five hundred eight, and finally disappears, as completely as a dream, with the recurrence of the opening of the A theme in bar five hundred eleven. The mood lingers, however, with the repeated e, g-sharp third in the treble, played above some mysteriously unrelated triads in the bass. The movement is not remotely Phrygian, although some of the ideas of the Prokofieff Phrygian still cling to it. The final cadence consists of two major triads, c and e. In many of his Phrygian passages, the composer makes use of the medieval dominant, c.<sup>21</sup>

The third movement is possibly the most impressive. It is cast in the form of a toccata (again, a comparison with the Opus 11 is fitting here), written in driving 7/8 meter, patterned thus:

Ex. 9 Rhythmic motive



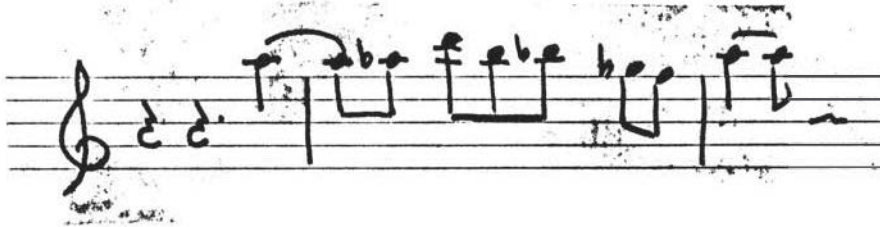
Just as in the first movement of the work, melody is here overpowered by a relentless elemental rhythm, a growing volume of sound, and heavy, dissonant chords. The

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<sup>21</sup>Ashley, op. cit., p. 273.

movement is constructed in an arch form -- that is to say, ABCBA. The C-section has the only shred of lyric melody to be found in the movement, as contained in measures six hundred three through six hundred seven, and it is restated an octave higher in bars six hundred twenty-one through twenty-five.

Ex. 10 mm. 603-05



The last movement, marked Precipitato, has been described as being written in sonata-allegro form,<sup>22</sup> but this is at best an approximation, and excludes any explanation of the reverse-progressive nature of the work, as though the mirror image were that thrown through a magnifying glass, for the general crescendo to the crashing climax begins in almost the exact mid-point of the movement, and preceding themes are stated in reverse order.

Noteworthy, too, is the conflict between major and minor in the opening bars of the last movement; the

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<sup>22</sup> Israel V. Nestyev, Prokofieff. Stanford University Press, 1957, p. 337.





evaluations were obviously exaggerated, for they failed to take into consideration the questionable aspects of the work, which prevented it from becoming a genuine expression of national feeling during the terrible year of 1942 ... At the same time, one can see in this sonata a certain aestheticizing of antiquity, an attempt to endow epic images with arbitrarily distorted features. Despite the boldness and stunning power of the composer's unusual manner of writing, it is here so exaggerated as to make it difficult for the listener to perceive any features of Soviet reality in the music. The overdrawn tension in the first movement and the primitive elements found in the finale give this work a stylized quality. 23

It is that "stylized quality" for which Prokofieff is hailed today, even in the Soviet Union. The Seventh Sonata obviously adheres to the Classic principle; there are certain similarities between the Haydn sonata previously discussed and this work, not the least of which is a peculiar "classic sound" resulting, at least in part, from a particular touch inherent in the style of writing of both composers. Pianistically speaking, one must admit that the technical problems encountered in the Prokofieff are vastly different from those of the Haydn; there are wider leaps, greater "clumps" of sound, more

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid.



irregular subdivisions and a greater overall scope with regards to keyboard range. Equally important to each, however, is clarity. Those listeners with a good concept of form will not be put off by the imposing technical demands of the Prokofieff, for the shape of the work is simply Classic, and classically simple.

## FRANZ LISZT:

### SONATA IN B MINOR

The long and brilliant career of Franz Liszt spans one of the most glittering eras in the history of music. Born in 1811 in Raiding, in what is now Hungary, Liszt lived to see the triumph of Richard Wagner and to survive him by three years. As a child he was heard by Beethoven; as an old man, he was heard by many persons living well into this century. He died in Bayreuth on July 31, 1886, after having played publicly only twelve days before.

When he was ten years old, this future marvel was taken by his father, a one-time cellist in Haydn's orchestra at Eisenstadt, to Vienna, and placed with the teacher Carl Czerny. It was Czerny who first introduced Liszt to Beethoven. At a concert given in 1823, when Liszt was but twelve years old, Beethoven is said to have been so impressed with the boy's playing that he rushed up to him afterward and kissed him on the forehead. Some scholars doubt this story; Beethoven would

have been utterly deaf at this time, "and must have appreciated the visual rather than the aural aspects of the performance."<sup>24</sup>

Liszt's father tried to enroll the boy in the Paris Conservatoire but could not gain his admittance because he was not a native of France. Liszt spent eleven years at the French capital, except for occasional concert tours, and came under the influence of French artists with strong Romantic tendencies, such as Hugo, Musset, Balzac, Heine, Chopin, and Berlioz.<sup>25</sup> The playing of the violin virtuoso Paganini inspired him to become the pianistic counterpart of that man, and as a result he developed a formidable, rather innovative technique.

Liszt's life may be divided roughly into four periods: his youth (until about 1838), his concertizing years, the Weimar period, and the religious period.

Liszt's most fruitful writing years occurred between 1848-61; he lived at Weimar when not conducting or playing elsewhere. Many of his mature masterworks took shape at Weimar, and at the same time Liszt was extremely generous in propagandizing music by other composers.<sup>26</sup>

It was during this Weimar period that Liszt com-

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<sup>24</sup> Bernstein, op. cit., p. 340.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 341.

<sup>26</sup> Schonberg, op. cit., p. 163.

posed the Sonata in B Minor. It was published in 1854, and was dedicated to Robert Schumann. Its compositional technique consists for the most part of an almost continuous development of a few basic ideas in a process which he himself called "transformation of theme." These themes are usually short, almost epigrammatic, and their transformations frequently appear soon after their first presentations. By employing these themes in their various metamorphoses in all of the movements and by joining these movements into one large work, Liszt achieves unity by a method that had its origins in the variation technique.<sup>27</sup>

It is this transformation of theme principle which Liszt used in the symphonic poems and in the Dante Sonata, as well as in the B Minor Sonata, which is an expansive work, long-winded and ornate, but

For a work written "en pleine Romantisme," it is incredibly disciplined, molded with meticulous attention to detail. Some critics find the melodic ideas insipid and various bridge passages careless and inconsistent, but it is safe to assume that these critics do not care for Liszt in any form. 28

In discussing the construction of the B Minor

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<sup>27</sup> Bernstein, op. cit., p. 344.

<sup>28</sup> John Gillespie, Five Centuries of Keyboard Music. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1966, p. 242.

Sonata, some problems in terminology might arise, as the subject of semantics in music, utterly a sound-art, has always been a thorny one. One of the most perplexing of these might be whether to call the several components of the sonata "thematic" or "motivic." To call them thematic would imply that the work had five essential themes, which suggests an ultimate disjunct unity, at best. To call them motivic would imply that together they made up a single theme, more in keeping with the supposed thread of continuity in a cyclic work, but even this is vague; the first three "motives" fit together very well, whereas the fourth is so different in character as to serve nicely as a second theme in a sonata-allegro structure. The fifth, unique when compared to any of the others, appears only thrice in the work, functioning as a coda in each instance, or perhaps a "closing theme."

Suffice it to say that the B Minor Sonata is as unique in this age as it was when it was written; it defies textbook analysis or "pigeonholing," for each generality could be contradicted any number of ways. For a point of departure, at least, the first three elements elaborated upon throughout the work will be defined as motives, while the fourth and fifth will be treated as themes.

The sonata opens with the first motive, staccato doubled octaves which serve as a pedal point to a descending scalar line:

Ex. 12 mm. 1-3



This opening, marked pianissimo, is immediately followed by the second motive, doubled-octave leaps in dotted rhythms, followed by strongly articulated arpeggiation, still in doubled octaves:

Ex. 13 mm. 9-13



The third motive follows close on the heels of



the second, and is said by some scholars to be a part of it, the two forming one single theme:<sup>29</sup>

Ex. 14 mm. 13-15



These three motives are subjected to complicated development, leading finally to a statement of the fourth element, in d major -- the grandioso theme over "thick, ponderous repeated chords":<sup>30</sup>

Ex. 15 mm. 105-06



These four elements are developed extensively, providing the sole thematic basis for the first section of the work, through measure three hundred thirty. Application of the transformation principle is dramatically

<sup>29</sup> F. E. Kirby, A Short History of Keyboard Music. New York: The Free Press, 1966, p. 317.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

illustrated in the treatment of the second motive in bars one hundred twenty through one hundred forty, wherein this originally bombastic motive is treated so meditatively as to be almost unrecognizable. Measures one hundred fifty-three through one hundred seventy-eight develop the third motive, appearing now in a more tender and reflective guise than in its original form. Bars one hundred seventy-nine through one hundred ninety develop the second motive in yet another manner, now slightly capricious, as it increases speed and intensity to give way to an agitato treatment of the third motive, appearing in bar one hundred ninety-one. The second motive is treated exclusively (and extensively) beginning in bar one hundred ninety-seven, under a delicate trill sustained in the treble, through amazingly ornate restatements and extensions until bar two hundred fifty-five, where the third motive holds sway until bar two hundred seventy-seven. The interest has been in octaves and in broken-octave figurations in the bass, and this vehicle is utilized also with the appearance of the first motive, in bar two hundred eighty-one, this time in the bass. It is followed in turn by the second motive, appearing very much in the same mood as its original statement, but it is extended this time through staccato octaves, which dissolve into quasi-broken-chordal patterns that spin into a c-sharp minor statement of the

first four bars of the grandioso fourth element. A recitativo bridge section spans the short distance between this and a second statement of this fourth component, this time in f minor, leading to b-flat minor. Between the two instances of planing (stepwise chordal motion in similar sonorities) in diminished chords, in bars three hundred nine and ten, and again in bars three hundred twelve and thirteen, there occurs a restatement of the third motive, a reiteration of which follows in bar three hundred fourteen, which leads into a sequential treatment of the first measure of the second motive. In bar three hundred nineteen, two motives are used together: the first full measure of the third motive is used as a basso ostinato accompaniment to a chordal version of the second motive in the treble. After a twice-repeated ninth chord on b, occurring in a ritenuto as a cadence, the subsequent Andante sostenuto employs for the first time the "chorale theme" which appears only twice more in the entire work:

Ex. 16, mm. 331-38



This andante section is written for the most part in f-sharp major, which would theoretically serve as

the dominant to the tonic key of b minor. The actual b-minor tonality was not firmly stated, however, until the eighth bar of the work, and was not adhered to very strictly, in keeping with the multichromatic tendencies of the Romantic period. The fourth element was written in d major for its first appearance, which is, of course, the relative major of the tonic key, b minor. Suffice it to say that while the work has, for the most part, the key signature of two sharps throughout the first section, it is not played in two sharps. These keys do serve as anchor points around which the chromaticism revolves.

Such is the case with the andante section. After the initial statement of the fifth element in f-sharp major, which cadences in c-sharp major, there occurs a stepwise modulation in the bass, beginning in bar three hundred forty-seven, to an a-major treatment of the third motive, in triple-piano octaves. A modulation back to f-sharp major occurs in bars three hundred sixty-one and sixty-two, leading to another statement of the fourth element, which, by means of a chromatic bass movement in bars three hundred seventy-one and seventy-two, modulates to the rather remote key of g minor which, when firmly established, serves as the tonal center for a repeat of the fourth element. In bar three hundred eighty-five the second motive is once more employed, this time in e minor, the sixth degree of which was reached in octaves chromatically, in the treble. The tonality of

the following eight bars is built largely on the harmony employed in a ninth chord on b. After much octave-play and enormous leaps the "chorale theme" appears for the second time, this time in a much more glorious and far-flung statement, beginning in bar three hundred ninety-five. This theme goes through a gradual diminuendo to an almost hauntingly beautiful, delicate scalar bridge section, triple-piano, which begins in measure four hundred fifteen, supported by quiet chordal changes in the bass. The third motive is here brought into play, in f-sharp major, and appears in both treble and bass, gradually subsiding into a recall of the first motive, now stated a half-step lower than in its original form.

The third section, Allegro energico, employs an enharmonic change from f sharp to g flat, used as the sixth degree of the new tonality, b-flat minor. This section begins with a fugal exposition, composed of the second and third motives. The statement of the third motive is extended by a staccato eighth-note figure, much as many of the fugal subjects of J. S. Bach possess additive elements to solidify the theme. A real answer is given at the interval of a fifth for nine measures. The third entry of the subject is in the soprano, at the interval of an octave; it is identical to the original subject. The linear fugal concept involved here does not



last long; it dissolves into the thick-textured, resonant pianistic writing continuing a development of the second and third motives, leading to a direct restatement (quasi-recapitulation) of the material originally presented in measure thirty, here appearing at measure five hundred thirty-three.

At measure five hundred fifty-four the chordal bass departs from what occurred earlier in the work, to give way to a percussive accompaniment to a restatement of the first motive, this time in e flat; it is immediately followed, after an arpeggiated bridge in the treble, by a quote in e minor. In bar five hundred sixty-nine there begins an interesting intermixing of motives one and two in the bass, accompanied in the treble by ascending broken-chord figurations. Bar five hundred eighty-two introduces a pared-down version of the second motive, restated sequentially, ascending, giving way at last to the cascading doubled octaves of bars five hundred ninety through ninety-four. Three statements of the third motive follow, serving as a cadence into a b-major statement of the fourth element. The b major key signature remains throughout the rest of the work.

The third motive appears in bar six hundred sixteen in very much the same guise in which it appeared in bar one hundred fifty-three; its second b-major statement, however, is interspersed with accompanimental broken



chords, and bridge passages in chromatic thirds. The second motive occurs in the lower voice, in bars six hundred forty-two through six hundred forty-nine. Bar six hundred fifty begins a virtual quote of bar two hundred fifty-five, with triplets in the bass rather than the original quadruple sixteenths; it leads to the doubled-octave treatment, marked Presto, of the first motive, beginning in bar six hundred seventy-three. Octaves in the treble herald utilization of the second motive, accompanied by dominant-tonic chordal elements in wide leaps in the bass. In bar six hundred ninety the parts are inverted, with the octaves in the bass. A chromatic ascent to a d natural in doubled octaves, with its subsequent descent to a triplet f-sharp chord (dominant), provides the cadence into the final appearance of the fourth element, here in its most grandioso statement.

After a smashing triple-forte arpeggiated ascent on the dominant of b major, in measures seven hundred eight through ten, the third and final statement of the fifth element, the "chorale theme," appears, made all the more sublime by what has immediately preceded it. It is followed by a coda of sorts, utilizing all three of the shorter motives, but they occur in reverse order: the third motive appears as a basso ostinato, in bars seven hundred twenty-nine through thirty-six, as

it did in bar three hundred nineteen, even appearing in the same key; the second motive appears in the treble, in bars seven hundred thirty-seven through forty-three; the first motive occurs, as in its original, in the bass, and the work comes quietly to a close in b major.

Liszt is credited with being the originator of the piano recital, since before his concerts the custom had been to play publicly only with an orchestra. Liszt was said, however, to have been able to make the piano sound like a whole orchestra, probably much to the chagrin of contemporary artists who wished that they might be able to fill a hall with sound without incurring the added expense of an accompanying ensemble. Liszt filled his halls with both sound and people; apparently he had a great deal of charisma. His charm with members of the fair sex is legendary. Admiration for the man was not limited to women by any means; many were the gentleman pianists who came in order to observe and perhaps absorb some of the diabolical technical innovations Liszt developed in order to become the pianistic Paganini.

On the one hand there was Paganini; Liszt's other great influence was Chopin, from whom he learned that the piano could be a delicate means of expression as well as a bravura instrument.

... And so Liszt put everything together. He developed a technique that was the equivalent of what Paganini could do on the violin (his transcriptions of six Paganini caprices carried bravura piano technique to unheard-of heights), and he also modified virtuosity rampant to take in the color and poetry Chopin had introduced. More than any pianist who ever lived, Liszt combined technique, showmanship, and poetry. 31

The Sonata in B Minor conceivably was composed as a vehicle for just these attributes. It requires both fiendish technical capabilities, with arms and fingers of steel, and the manner and mood of a poet. It is interesting to compare performances of the work -- they range from pure pianistic pugilism to maudlin, emasculated emotionalism: one extreme to the other. To be sure, the range of expression in the work is indeed wide, and a fine performance of the work might depend almost solely on meaningful contrast of the various elements of it. The palette of colors employed is practically limitless. It is an extremely dramatic work, one designed to enhance the master Liszt's combination of "technique, showmanship, and poetry."

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<sup>31</sup>Schonberg, op. cit., p. 157.

## CONCLUSION

It has been said many times that tendencies in musical composition have a sort of pendulum-swing; it has also been said many times that history repeats itself. It is hoped that some of the ideas presented in the preceding pages have suggested, if subtly, these same adages. The works were not presented chronologically because of the order of their appearance on the recital program; this actually may be the best manner, after all, for it put the two classically-oriented sonatas in close proximity, the better for purposes of comparison. This left the Liszt sonata by itself as an entirely different concept, which is of course as it should be.

The true historian or musicologist does not look simply for similarities, however; indeed, by studying contrasts the learning process is made effective.

It was said in discussing the Seventh Sonata of Prokofieff and the B Minor Sonata of Haydn that certain

sounds within the two works would be found to be similar. So would, naturally, certain sounds within the Liszt work be comparable to its predecessors in this study. An important element in any sonata principle is that of return -- a restatement of some thematic element of the work, to give the listener a sense of polarization, of identification; but this is true of most forms, not just the sonata. What actually "makes a sonata a sonata" is the way the return is separated from the original. With Haydn, the separation appeared in the form of a terse development -- a sort of musical cat-and-mouse game with the principal theme and tonality. With Prokofieff, the separation was a bit more sophisticated: the development took mere fragments of the principal themes and distorted them practically beyond recognition; in addition, the recapitulation occurred with the themes appearing in reverse order. Liszt's work was almost entirely development. The recapitulation, if such it may be fairly called, beginning in measure five hundred thirty-one, is something any listener may claim to have heard before (and perhaps breathe a sigh of relief in conjunction with that statement), but since the entire work is based upon "what he heard before," simply in a more fragmental way, one must go farther to evolve some sort of terminology to apply to the man's compositional techniques. Fortunately, Liszt himself coined the term

"transformation of theme," but most composers leave it to their followers (or, at any rate, their students) to describe the wherefores of inspiration.

There is only the framework, some concept of form, to cling to for security. The form is there, for each of the three sonatas here discussed, but rearranged according to the whims of the composers. The arrangement of the several elements of the form might not be recognized on the first hearing, or the second, or even the third. All three works are designated "sonatas," and all three are justifiably so classified; hence, there are similarities, however distantly related.

What makes the study so interesting, on the other hand, is the discovery, comparison, and subsequent appreciation of the differences.



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