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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF COMPOSITIONAL STYLES
EXEMPLIFIED IN FOUR SELECTED PIANO WORKS

by

MARIE MAY VANCE

B.M. Montana State University, 1960

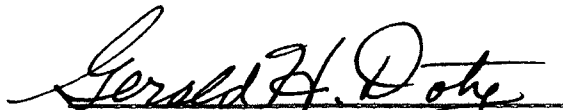
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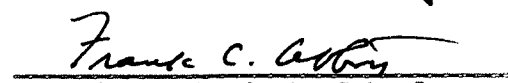
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Many students perform works with little or no idea of the form and construction of the work, key relationships, or the basic compositional styles underlying the composition. Much more insight and ease can be acquired in a performance of a thoroughly-understood composition.

Many students are also unaware of basic styles of composers. Many Musicians can recognize a composer's works only by relating them to other familiar compositions by the same composer but cannot state definite elements of the style.

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study to: (1) analyze four piano compositions, each representative of its composer and his period; (2) to compare the composers' styles in regard to all musical elements; and (3) thereby to discover exactly why four different composers writing in the same basic forms and within tonality can sound so distinctive. The compositions are:

Toccata in d minor Bach
Moderato: Piu lento
Fuga
Adagio
Fuga

Sonata, Op. 81a Beethoven
Les Adieux
L' Absence
Le Retour

- Sonatine in f# minor Ravel
 - Moderate
 - Mouvement de Menuet
 - Anime

- Concerto No. 2 in c minor Rachmaninoff
 - Moderato

Basic assumptions and justification of the study. The author presupposed a knowledge, on the part of the reader, of the general compositional styles and trends in music history as well as of the composers and a familiarity with the general histories of the lives of the selected composers.

The chosen works formed the bulk of the graduate recital given by the writer. Necessary for the memorization and intelligent, musical performance of a composition is the complete understanding of the form, key relationships, expressive content, method of construction, and stylistic characteristics of the composition. Aside from the necessity of the investigation for the benefit of the performer, the comparison of styles should be of interest to anyone interested in distinguishing between compositional styles of composers, since the comparison of styles is not often the topic of entire literary works.

Delimitations of the problem. This paper gives brief descriptions with musical examples of each movement of each work regarding melodic and harmonic content, form, tempo, rhythm, expressive content, voice relationships, and dynamics, pointing out characteristics of the respective styles, and a placement of the composition in the life, works, and style of its composer.

In addition the study also shows a general comparison of the compo-

sers' styles regarding expressive content, dynamics, form, melodic and harmonic content, and voice relationships.

METHODOLOGY

Procedure. Each of the chosen works was: (1) placed in the biographical life and the compositional style of the composer as far as his individual periods or trends are concerned; (2) described briefly with reference to pertinent musical examples exhibiting his style; and (3) discussed in terms of general stylistic characteristics. The last section of the study contains a comparison of the compositional styles contained in the selected works concerning expressive content, dynamics, form, melodic content, harmonic content, tempo, and voice relationships.

CHAPTER II

BACH TOCCATA IN D MINOR

The toccatas, seven in all, were written during the early part of the Weimar period, relatively early in Bach's life. Nevertheless, they clearly exhibit the form and style of the composer.

Using the practice of alternation begun by Froberger, the d minor toccata is in four movements alternating free and fugal forms.

MODERATO

The first movement is in two sections of contrasting character: (1) in free, rhapsodic, virtuoso style and (2) in slow, metric, sequential, homophonic style.

A display of the facility of the performer is the basic function of the virtuoso portion. Scales and arpeggios are placed over comparatively slow-moving chord progressions. Sections of scales and arpeggios are alternated, and the characteristic feature of the arpeggios is the use of the lower neighboring tones before certain or all chord tones. The scales change direction at intervals regular to each sequence.

Note values are essentially sixteenths in a duple simple meter with some thirty-second notes in the scale passages and eighths occasionally pointing out a melodic line over the sixteenths.

Thickening at the important cadences, the texture is made up basically of one line sometimes alternating hands or voices.

As is usual with a fast-moving melodic line, the harmonic rhythm is rather slow. The harmonic motion is dominant-tonic and includes a section of secondary dominants. A half cadence closes the entire first section.

Four voices compose the texture of the homophonic section. Chord progressions are very chromatic and fast moving and are connected by passing tones, suspensions, appoggiaturas, and other embellishments. Based on one motif (Ex. 1) the entire section is sequential. The level of the motif is lowered stepwise melodically and harmonically for several measures, then ascends by way of an embellished pattern; the sequence descends again with different voicing than at first. Expressions of dominant-tonic relationships form the coda through arpeggio and scale patterns with added embellishments.

A peaceful and lyric mood is expressed in this section. With harmonic variety and interest Bach made a completely interesting section from only one sequence.

FUGA

The second movement is a fugue in four voices, a good example of the defined fugue form. It seems logical to include the fugue with the sonata-allegro forms, since the essential difference is the monothematic character and polyphonic texture of the fugue.

Typically this fugue is in three sections: (1) exposition with the statement of the subject twice in the tonic key and twice in the domi-

Ex. 1 

nant; (2) development of the theme in various keys; and (3) the restatement of the theme in the tonic key with a short coda. The movement is very clear cut in its exhibition of the method of construction.

As has been stated, the subject (Ex. 2) is presented in the usual manner. The development begins simply, progresses to more complex texture and to more complex use of thematic material, and ends with less complex use of the material. Example 3 demonstrates the most frequent sequences based on the subject. With the exception of a few measures, these fast-moving sequences do not occur simultaneously. Thus the texture seems quite light and transparent.

The coda contains two statements of the subject in the tonic key. A number of sequences follow which begin the coda (Ex. 4). A long cadential chord progression follows, executed by an ornamented arpeggio figure.

Because of the subject material the main melodic interest is in short scale passages and some arpeggiated figures.

Excepting some passages of the more complex developmental section, the harmonic movement is comparatively slow. The rate of modulation is


Ex. 2



Ex. 3



Ex. 4



also rather slow.

ADAGIO

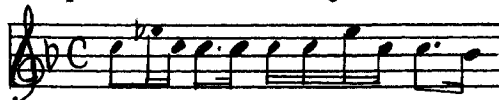

As the last portion of the first movement, the third movement is again a slow, homophonic section in duple simple meter; as a result, the main interest is harmonic. The mood is melancholy and rather doleful. Barring the first three introductory measures consisting of scale passages with chordal accompaniment and the last four measures which are ornamented and arpeggiated expressions of a chordal progression ending on the dominant, the work is unified by the continual reiteration of the theme (Ex. 5) appearing in various voices, registers, and with varied harmonic treatment. Each sequence ends with the first note of its next statement. In three voices the chordal accompaniment always uses the rhythmic pattern in example 6.


Chromatic harmonic motion keeps the movement alive utilizing secondary dominants extensively as well as other types of altered chords.

FUGA

Overflowing with jubilation, the last fugue is a continuous expression of restrained joy.

Example 7 is the subject of the last fugue. This fugue is trans-

Ex. 5  Ex. 6 

Ex. 7 

parent as is the first one, but because of the nature of the subject it is more complex. One section of the subject is a small descending scale passage followed by an octave leap. The other portion is on the dominant in the form of large leaps in different directions. All sequences in the fugue are closely related. Patterns originating from the first section are shown in example 8. The last portion of the subject remains in its original state throughout as does the countersubject.

Except in harmonic capacities the fugue usually employs no more than three lines simultaneously.

Using in the development the minor keys of a, d, a, and g, the harmonic background is constantly moving. The last section presents the subject four times in the tonic key. Then with quickening harmonic change and small sequences it progresses to the end emphasizing its finality with the repetition of the last measure.

The fugue is in triple simple meter. Consisting largely of eighth notes with some quarters and sixteenths, the rhythm throughout is based upon the subject.

STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

The d minor toccata illustrates very well Bach's style but in a slightly less complex manner. Sometimes doleful and at other times exceedingly joyful, the moods are typical of Bach. The form is very clear

Ex. 8

The musical notation for Example 8 consists of two staves. The top staff is in bass clef and the bottom staff is in treble clef. Both staves are in 3/4 time and have a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The top staff begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The notation includes eighth and quarter notes, with some accidentals and a sharp sign in the bottom staff.

and exemplary of the forms Bach utilized. Short, fragmentary, melodic lines changing directions occasionally and containing small note values--eighths or sixteenths--illustrate Bach's style. In these fugues, however, the subject is only slightly developed keeping essentially the same direction, rhythm, and harmonic function, whereas in later fugues the subject is used in more complex ways.

Simplicity of the melodic lines provides an extreme clarity not so evident in other Bach works. Harmonic variety and change maintain much interest in the composition. Although harmonic change is constant and interesting, the rate of modulation is rather slow, compared, for instance, with Bach's chorale style. Secondary dominants are the outstanding factor in the harmonic interest.

Since the counterpoint is not more than two- or three-part, the texture is more transparent than that of many fugues. Sequences are usually alternated between hands.

The register is necessarily restricted to the middle four octaves of the keyboard because of the limited range of the harpsichord.

Thus the entire composition is typical of Bach in an earlier, less complex period.

CHAPTER III

BEETHOVEN SONATA, OPUS 81a

Beethoven became completely deaf in 1802. In 1809 while living at Heiligenstadt, a village outside Vienna, he wrote this sonata, which was first published in Leipzig by Breitkopf and Hartel. The work was dedicated to Archduke Rudolph, a long-time friend and pupil, who fled Vienna with the royal family just before the French invasion. Some of the more important compositions Beethoven had written previously were four piano concerti and six symphonies.

Opus 81a is unique—it is the only programmatic sonata Beethoven wrote. The movements are entitled *Les Adieux*, *L' Absence*, et *Le Retour*.

The development sections are probably shorter than one might expect this late in Beethoven's work. It is somewhat unusual that the third movement is in sonata-allegro form.

The first and last movements are characterized by introductions and codas. Beethoven developed the introduction of the work into a longer segment and used its theme later in the composition. Beethoven's use of the long introduction is displayed in the first movement of the sonata to be discussed. As compared with earlier works the codas are also fairly long.

LES ADIEUX

The first movement is typical of sonata-allegro form with an adagio

introduction and a coda. Used as the second theme of the exposition, the theme of the introduction embodies horn fifths. This is significant in that period in history, since horn calls served many important purposes. In this case the horn call could possibly allude to the invasion or more probably to the farewell. Examples 9 and 10 illustrate themes A and B. Theme B is in the dominant key as usual. Only the first theme is worked out in the development. With both themes in the tonic key the recapitulation is an exact repetition of the exposition. The coda utilizes the first theme in various developmental sequences. Thus the form is strictly Classic sonata-allegro with the addition of the introduction and extended coda.

Melodic content comprises the themes with their variants and various scale passages which fill in the gaps between thematic presentations. Theme A is composed of leaps and sequences with frequent change of direction in the first portion of the theme. Its mood is rather bold and robust. The contrasting theme descends stepwise in a more melancholy mood.

With much use of dotted rhythms and greater varieties of note values within phrases, the rhythmical material is more distinctive than that of the Baroque era. Some augmentation and diminution are used. Syncopation also plays an important role in the duple simple meter.

Ex. 9

8va loco

8va loco

Ex. 10

The image contains musical notation for two examples. Example 9 consists of two staves of music in a key with one flat (B-flat major or D minor) and a 2/4 time signature. The top staff features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, and dotted rhythms. The bottom staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. Handwritten annotations '8va loco' are present above the first and second measures of the top staff. Example 10 is a single staff of music in the same key and time signature, showing a sequence of chords and notes.

The harmony is representative of Beethoven but not, of course, as complex as it becomes in his later works. Altered chords are used to a great extent as well as diminished and dominant sevenths built on any melodic note. Usually quickening at cadences, the rate of harmonic change is rapid with slower-moving melodic lines and slower with quickly-moving melodic lines. Harmonic rhythm is made very exciting by the use of dotted rhythms and syncopations.

Voice relationships are essentially homophonic with occasional polyphonic lines in scale passages and in the stretto passage in the coda. The texture generally includes three or four voices, usually composed of the melodic line, another line which is its harmonic counterpart, either in parallel or contrary motion, and the accompanimental figure, either chordal or a pianistic embellishment of the harmonic background.

L' ABSENCE

Movement two is in binary form with the two themes presented a fifth apart. Theme A (Ex. 11) is in c minor, relative to the E^b major of the first movement. Theme B (Ex. 12) is in G major. In the second presentation the keys of both themes are a whole step lower.

Tempo and melodic movements are very slow; thus the harmony, probably the most important facet of the movement, provides the interest.

Ex. 11



Ex. 12



The chordal movement is quite complex and continually presents harmonic surprises. Anticipations, suspensions, superimpositions, and syncopations are used as well as strict sequential patterns. Beethoven used the full diminished seventh chord predominantly to lead to the tonic (Ex. 13).

One dotted rhythm (Ex. 11) forms the basis for the first theme. The first note belongs to the tonic chord with the second and third outlining the diminished seventh (Ex. 13). When the chordal rate of change quickens, the melodic sequence must also, since it germinates from the harmonic background. In the last section of the phrase the dotted figure appears on the last half of the beat, effecting a greater motion toward the cadence. Barring theme B and the arpeggiated, connective material, the dotted rhythm is used exclusively throughout the movement. By contrast, the second theme is very peaceful and serene; it outlines the harmonic background but in a lyric frame (Ex. 12). Turns, trills, and other embellishments are used in the melody--another device common to slow movements of the Beethoven piano sonatas.

Representative of Beethoven's slow movements, the rhythmic figures are extremely varied in combinations of note values. The entire section which embodies theme A is based upon the dotted rhythm of that theme. The very slow tempo allows for division of the beat into many parts. Beethoven made full use of the possibility in utilizing everything from quarter notes to thirty-seconds, dividing the unit several times within

Ex. 13



one phrase as is exemplified in theme B.

Characteristic of Beethoven, the pianoforte is used to good advantage. The juxtaposition of extremely soft, slow passages and of the heavy, forte sections demands and displays the expressive quality and resources of the instrument.

LE RETOUR

With the addition of a short introduction and a coda, the final movement is in sonata-allegro form. The introduction is merely an embellished arpeggiation of the dominant seventh chord leading to tonic on the first beat of theme A (Ex. 14), which is presented three times in the exposition and twice in the recapitulation. Theme B (Ex. 15) is presented twice in each section. Both themes are developed in the middle section, which is rather short. Theme A is developed in the coda of moderate length, which exemplifies Beethoven's trend to the long, developmental coda.

Melodic movement and pianistic figurations now come to the fore. The harmonic tempo is much, much slower and does not employ syncopation, as the first beat of the measure again becomes the resting place of the rhythmic and harmonic impact. Harmonic relationships are also less complicated. Dominant-tonic relationships are prominent. The key relationships of the three sections represent the Classic period. Themes A and

Ex. 14



Ex. 15



B are in the tonic and dominant keys respectively in the exposition, progress through various keys in the development and return to the tonic for presentations in the recapitulation.

Underlying triads are outlined by theme A on each beat. Theme B is more lyric with smaller intervals and more stepwise movement. The themes and intervening material are very fast-moving---characteristic of final movements of Beethoven sonatas.

A strong accent on every beat is effected by the duple compound meter. The themes exhibit the basic rhythms. Scale passages comprise sixteenth notes rather than eighths. The tempo, as is representative of Classic final movements, is very quick.

Beethoven made good use of the technical facilities of the piano. The rapid scale passages, trills, and tremolos are very typical of his pianistic style.

STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

This sonata as a whole is very representative of Beethoven's piano sonatas, the formal, harmonic and textural structure, and expressive qualities of this period in his life and of the period in music history. The work is very indicative of the trend and transition from strict Classic form and style to the freer treatment of the same forms and expressive media of the Romantic period.

Formally the sonata is very clear cut and Classic, but the addition of the introduction and coda to the first and last movements is not found so often in earlier sonatas. Although not nearly as extensive as Beethoven finally made them, the developments are longer than those in the

earlier sonatas. The form exhibits Beethoven's trend toward larger introductions, codas, and developments.

Although comparatively quite simple, the harmonic functions indicate a trend toward more complex relationships and modulations to more remote keys.

These sonatas have been referred to as unorchestrated symphonies. Opus 81a exemplifies more pianistic techniques, however, than many of the earlier sonatas, especially in the last movement with the rapid scales, tremolos, trills, and broken octaves.

Its texture is essentially homophonic with polyphonic sections interspersed at various intervals.

Where expressive content is concerned, there is more freedom in regard to tempo and tempo changes than in the sonatas of Mozart and Haydn and some earlier ones of Beethoven. However, this facet of the expression, with the exception of the third movement, is still quite refined.

An outstanding expressive characteristic of Beethoven is ever exemplified in the composition--contrast--in dynamics, mood, and style. The wide contrast in dynamics made possible by the newly-developed piano-forte was very attractive to Beethoven, and he utilized the possibilities of contrast to the fullest extent. Creating infinite interest and excitement, the constant juxtaposition of repose and tumult in mood and style is ever present.

This sonata, employing elements appearing both in the early and late works of the composer, is a very good representative of the "middle-road" sonatas of Beethoven's output.

CHAPTER IV

RACHMANINOFF CONCERTO IN C MINOR

Rachmaninoff was not a nationalist but a cosmopolitan. He did not utilize the compositional styles of the Russian schools. Not only that, he used styles which preceeded his era. These two facts are exemplified in the concerto. It represents the heart of the cosmopolitan Romantic era although it was written in 1901 long before Rachmaninoff left Russia. The concerto was dedicated to N. Dahl and was Rachmaninoff's eighteenth opus. The work, attractive, formally well constructed, using ultra-Romantic melodies accompanied by a variety of arpeggiated figures, is characteristic of the composer's style.

MODERATO

As is typical of the Romantic period, the form of the first movement is sonata-allegro but in a slightly freer way. With a short chordal introduction the exposition presents theme A (Ex. 16) twice in c minor and theme B (Ex. 17) twice in the relative major. All connective mate-

Ex. 16



Ex. 17



rial between themes and sections is based upon the thematic material. In contrast to the Classic concerto the exposition is not repeated. With use of short melodic sequences or rhythmic patterns, the middle section develops both themes progressing from E^b to G to D to B^b to c minor using closely related keys and the third relationship. In the recapitulation theme A is presented in c minor and theme B in A^b major. A fairly long coda finishes the movement in c minor.

The entire movement is based on the two themes. Even the transitional sections are developments of the themes. Since these themes appear in various contexts and are used in different figurations, they are never exactly the same. Various motives are developed into new melodic ideas with different accompanimental settings in diverse textures. Some small motives become important notes of impact interspersed by rapid successions of notes in technical passages.

Melodic content in the solo part is very pianistic—largely in the form of scale figures and arpeggios with interpolated non-harmonic tones which are usually in the form of upper or lower neighboring tones (Ex. 18). Groups of irregular numbers of notes in each beat are characteristic of Rachmaninoff's pianistic style. The other facet of the style is formed by block chords in each hand.

In a duple simple meter, the germinating rhythmic figure of theme A is its dotted figure. The melodic material of the entire first section

Ex. 18



to theme B is based either upon this rhythm or the stepwise movement of the theme. Including a small amount of syncopation, the rhythm and the harmonic structure give meaning to an otherwise relatively motionless melodic line. Non-harmonic tones are used a great deal in aid to the harmonic background. The most frequent are suspensions, passing tones, and upper and lower neighboring tones.

Theme B is characterized by chordal movements interspersed with passing tones or lower neighboring tones.

The most general and striking element of Rachmaninoff's style is the elongation and seemingly endless continuation of the phrases based on one idea caused by the harmonic progressions.

Usually found on the first beat is the root or third of the chord and on the second beat, the fifth or seventh.

Late Romantic styles are typified in the harmonic elements of the second concerto. Chord types consist of triads and seventh chords. Progressions are characterized by many secondary dominants, relationship of the third, and chromaticism.

In the smooth-flowing harmonic rhythm there is a chord change on every beat in theme A and in the second theme a change in each measure with a few added on beat two. Generally, the presentation of the themes is carried by a regular, smooth-flowing rhythm. In the transitional and developmental sections the rhythm becomes more interesting and pronounced because of syncopations, dotted rhythms, augmentation, diminution, and quickening at the **cadences** (Ex. 19). Probably the most interesting

Ex. 19 

element of the concerto is its harmonic aspect.

With the exception of one short polyphonic section, the texture is essentially homophonic; it is composed of three parts: melodic line, chordal accompaniment, and pianistic accompaniment as discussed previously.

As a whole the rhythm is quite smooth flowing. It is very repetitious as it rarely deviates from the motif upon which it is based. Again there is a certain amount of augmentation and diminution in the rhythmic development of the movement. Theme A is based upon the dotted rhythm in example 16. Theme B is characterized by some syncopation (Ex. 17).

Within a moderate *alla breve* tempo there is a great deal of freedom in tempo changes as compared with Baroque and Classic styles. There are frequent gradual changes of tempo as well as some abrupt ones at section or theme changes.

Other means of expression lie in dynamics. Again there are abrupt and some very long, gradual changes.

In the composer's pianistic style there are many more and irregular numbers of notes per beat. The important melodic notes are widely spaced with a sweep of rapid notes between each thus causing a body of sound rather than a group of individual notes.

STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

Romantic tendencies are well exhibited in this concerto. With the addition of an introduction and coda, the form is sonata-allegro. In the recapitulation the themes are presented just as they were in the ex-

position but with different accompaniment. The key of the second theme in the recapitulation is a major third below theme A rather than in the tonic.

Harmonically, progressions are much freer than the Classic and early Romantic styles. There is much greater use of the third relation and chromaticism although triads and seventh chords are still the predominant chord types. The harmonic rhythm is more steady and even than that at the beginning of the Romantic period.

Typical of the Romantic era is the pianistic style. Themes are slow with a rapid accompaniment in the form of arpeggios and scale passages, not for the sake of playing a scale or arpeggio but for the sound of the harmonic background. There are more and irregular numbers of notes per beat than ever found in Classic or early Romantic music thus leading to some extent to programmatic ideas of expression. The addition of so many non-harmonic tones also eliminates much Classic clarity.

More characteristic of the Baroque period, the thematic content consists largely of motives rather than long phrases. The first theme is made more interesting by the rhythm and harmonic background whereas earlier melodies often imply the harmony more strongly, and the pitches are more meaningful in themselves.

It is apparent that the concerto embodies old characteristics as well as innovations.

CHAPTER V

RAVEL SONATINE IN F# MINOR

At thirty years of age and still in his student period, Ravel completed the Sonatine in 1905. The first movement was written in 1903 for a contest. The Sonatine was dedicated to Ida and Cipa Godebski and was written after such works as "Jeux de 'eau" and the String Quartet and just before "Miroirs". It is a good example of Ravel's use of Classic form, harmonic extension, restrained emotion, and clarity of texture.

MODERE

The Sonatine is a perfect example of the Classic sonata-allegro form with a slight development section which remains in one key and is very short and with no introduction. The first theme of the exposition is stated in f# minor; theme B is in the relative major. In the recapitulation theme B is in the parallel major and is followed by an extremely short coda. Thus the movement follows the Classic form of the sonatina in all respects.

There are only two components in the homophonic texture--the melody in octaves and the chordal accompaniment in both hands combined. In some places the melody appears in just **one** voice.

The most **distinctive feature** of the work, the harmonic content, is typically Impressionistic. In theme A the harmonic progression is extremely interesting. Each melodic note is the root of the parallel-

moving triads (Ex. 20). The triads occur not only within the scale, therefore becoming various triad types, but also occur as parallel major triads and parallel dominant seventh chords. Ninth and eleventh chords are also prevalent--a feature not seen in Romanticism.

Although the melodic movement is scalewise, the first interval is a fourth; it emphasizes the first beat of the melody. In some small developmental sections the harmonic background is outlined. A chordal outline of the harmonic background--the accompaniment to the melody is in various block positions and in a shimmering tremolo pattern (Ex. 20).

The rhythmic patterns of the first movement are repetitious and, therefore, seemingly quite smooth although there are a number of modifications in the patterns--largely augmentation. Example 21 demonstrates the three germinating rhythmic patterns. A very important melodic and rhythmic motif is the anacrusis at the beginning. The last pattern is taken from the second theme (Ex. 22). The chordal accompaniment progresses at an even rate on each eighth note. There is a slight amount of syncopation.

Ex. 20

Musical notation for Example 20, showing a melody and accompaniment in G major, 4/4 time. The melody is written on a single staff, and the accompaniment is written on two staves. The melody starts with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note G4, then a quarter note A4, and continues with a scale-like pattern. The accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a block chord pattern in the left hand.

Ex. 21

Musical notation for Example 21, showing three rhythmic patterns in G major, 4/4 time. Each pattern is shown on a single staff. The first pattern is a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second pattern is a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The third pattern is a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4.

Ex. 22

Musical notation for Example 22, showing a melodic motif in G major, 4/4 time. The motif is written on a single staff and starts with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note G4, then a quarter note A4, and continues with a scale-like pattern.

tonic feeling is quite often present in the accompaniment and in the few scalewise melodic patterns. Leaps of thirds, fourths, and fifths comprise the greater portion of the melodic line.

In the accompaniment the rhythm is fairly steady (Ex. 24). The melodic rhythm is again based on that of the main melodic figure and its variant (Ex. 23). Dotted rhythms are also frequent in the triple simple meter.

Tempo characteristics are like those of the first movement.

Impressionism is probably most felt because of the parallelism, chordal movement in thirds, and more distant relationships of the harmonies. Pianistic devices which supplement the effect are tempo changes, dynamic shadings, and broken chords.

ANIME

A less clear but nevertheless, good example of the Classic sonata-allegro form is displayed in the final movement. Key relationships are slightly stretched. Theme A is in f# minor. In the exposition the second theme is in the relative major of the dominant and in the recapitulation is in the dominant. Since theme B is based on theme A of the first movement, the Sonatine is cyclic. Both themes are developed in the middle section. The recapitulation is almost exactly like the exposition except that it omits one repetition of theme A.

The texture again is made up only of the melody underlined by a chordal accompaniment in various combinations of block chords and eighth-

Ex. 24



note triplet or sixteenth-note arpeggios.

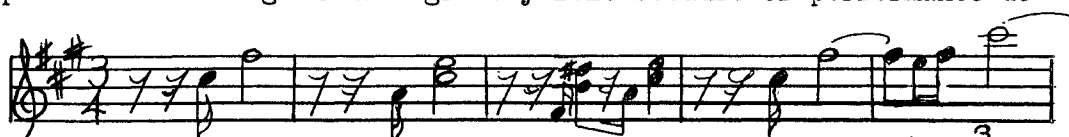
Parallelism is again an important figure in the chordal movement. More complex chords are used now such as sevenths, ninths, elevenths, and thirteenth. Although there is an abundance of dominant feeling, there is, at the same time, a whole step between the seventh and eighth scale steps. At times the chordal movement is very slow and at other times moves on every beat.

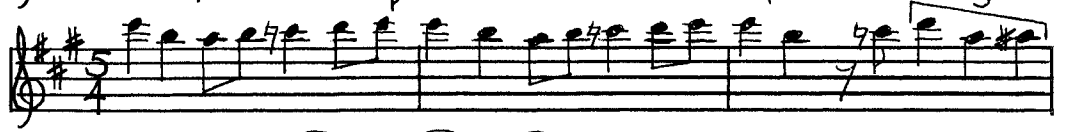
Theme A comprises only one motif (Ex. 25). The two notes are usually either a fourth or a fifth apart. Theme B is melodically like theme A of the first movement but with a different rhythmic structure (Ex. 26). In the form of triplets or sixteenth notes, the accompanying figures are arpeggiated.


The rhythmic figure in the first theme comes at various intervals with in the measure throughout the movement. Even more rhythmically interesting is the 5/4 meter in theme B. Another device used by Ravel is a duple feeling within triple meter (Ex. 27). There is a constant change in the accompaniment from triplet eighth notes to sixteenths and back.

With frequent changes, both rapid and gradual, the tempo is quite fast.

Impressionism is again more greatly felt because of performance de-

Ex. 25 

Ex. 26 

Ex. 27 

vices--changes in tempo and dynamics. Probably the most important single factor is the Impressionistic harmonic devices. Another important aid is the texture. A rapid, feathery accompaniment with only the melody makes a very thin, transparent construction which fits perfectly with the illusive qualities of Impressionism.

STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

Ravel's style of Impressionistic writing is quite well demonstrated by the Sonatine. While using the Classic sonata-allegro form with a minuet for the second movement, Ravel takes no more formal liberties than Beethoven, himself, would have.

Consisting only of chordal accompaniment under the melodic line, the texture is generally thin and clear. A large portion of the chords is arpeggiated. When they are in block position, they are in open structure. Thicker construction is used in more emotional passages of which there are few. This thin, open texture gives a clear, light quality to the work.

The harmonic structure is very much in the style in its parallelism of identical chord types, the addition of ninths, elevenths, and thirteenth to the triads and seventh chords, and an occasional modal, whole-tone or pentatonic scale passage. Ravel stayed within tonality, as there is dominant as well as tonic feeling, but he stretched the diatonic system and interpolated other types of scales and progressions. The use of parallel octaves and fifths with the melodic line also reduces the significance of traditional harmony. The rhythm of harmonic change seems to follow that of the melody quite closely, and the rate

of change does not always quicken at a cadence. It would seem that the infrequent use of traditional cadences contributes to the illusive qualities of Impressionism and the restrained emotion of Ravel.

The melodic content revolves around the leap in theme A of the first movement. Based on this small motif, the intervals appear often, but at irregular and unexpected intervals rather than in a regular, sequential fashion. Groups of scalewise notes separate the statements of that motif. Ravel made moderately lengthy phrases of his melodies which are very lyric and delicate.

Ravel's rhythmic element exhibits an Impressionistic innovation-- 5/4 measures interpolated into the basic meter. The rhythm is mathematically irregular and assymetrical. One more or one less beat may be contained in the repetition of a given phrase. Sequences appear at irregular intervals, and the end of one phrase leads promptly into another. All of these devices serve to make the listener unaware of and surprised at what he hears as opposed to what he expects. The element of the refined, subdued unexpected makes the musical impression more illusive and cloudy.

In many instances, however, the sequences are regular and used in a strict, Classic fashion on regular beats. The Sonatine is certainly a masterful blending of Classic and Impressionistic elements.

Although the tempo is much more pliable than that of a Mozart sonata and many of the Beethoven sonatas, the basic tempo of each movement is strictly in Classic style. There are a goodly number of tempo changes both quick and gradual.

Expressive devices which contribute to the Impressionism of this

work include dynamics, the general level of which is subdued but with an occasional high point. One of the vital factors in the effect of Impressionism is the pianistic figurations of the chordal accompaniment in the first and third movements. Notes fly by so quickly and softly that with the aid of the sostenuto pedal merely the harmony is heard rather than the attack of each note. These figurations produce a harmonic mirage rather than a number of individual notes.

Thus the frequently irregular melodic and rhythmic sequences, the unpredictable harmonic progressions, the transparent structure and the mirage of accompanimental figurations provide an intangible picture as far as details are concerned, yet with an overall idea of general outlines provided by the melody--all within the frame of formal Classicism.

CHAPTER VI

COMPARISON AND SUMMARY

FORM

These four composers--Bach, Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, and Ravel--who sound so different from each other, use basically the same formal structure in the major movements of the keyboard compositions. Although the form used by Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, and Ravel is sonata allegro, the form of the Bach fugues can be related to the others in its structure based on the same three-part idea of statement-development-restatement. The greatest differences in the forms are the monothematic character and the polyphonic texture of the fugue. All melodic material is based on the one fugue subject which is very strictly adhered to. Stating melody and harmony simultaneously, the voices are equally important in all respects. Movement is continuous in the fugue, and there are no apparent breaks between sections as there often are in sonata-allegro form.

Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, and Ravel used the Classic sonata-allegro form with introductions and codas. Two contrasting themes within a homophonic treatment form the basis of the sonata-allegro form. Melodic content and harmonic accompaniment divide the texture into two distinct, separate parts. Each theme is presented two or three times in the exposition and recapitulation and connected with material not necessarily derived from the themes--quite different from the fugue. In the sonata-allegro form the recapitulation is a likeness of the exposition except

for the new key of the second theme, whereas in the fugue the last section is much freer in that the subject may be presented any number of times and in any voice order. In contrast to the sonata there is never an introduction. A statement of the subject always begins the fugue. Beethoven, more than the other composers, used the introduction and coda for the development of his musical ideas. The introductions and codas of Rachmaninoff and Ravel serve mainly as embellishments of the harmonic progressions.

HARMONIC CONTENT

Perhaps one of the greater differences in the styles is in harmonic content. All four composers used tonality and the diatonic system with the exception of Ravel, who stretched the diatonic system by interpolating modal, whole-tone, and pentatonic scales and chordal progressions. He did not use traditional, functional harmonic progressions moving from one chord classification into the next and more important class. The roots of the chords move freely from one melodic note to another as is exemplified in the first movement or in scalewise fashion effecting parallelism of chords within the diatonic system or parallelism of identical chord types, which breaks the boundaries of diatonic harmony; Ravel also used a good deal of root movement by fifth but in the Aeolian mode caused by the whole step between the seventh and eighth scale steps. He also used occasional progressions on whole-tone and pentatonic scale patterns.

The harmonic content of the Rachmaninoff concerto is within the realm of functional, diatonic harmony. Dominant feeling is used extensively. Long chains of secondary dominants are frequent and cause a good

deal of chromatic melodic movement. Root movement in the relationship of the third is also a prominent feature. By the use of these two harmonic devices, Rachmaninoff made seemingly endless phrases of only one or two melodic ideas driven by the restless, endless continuation of dominant feeling.

Beethoven also used diatonic harmonic progressions. Capitalizing on various types of seventh chords, he made much use of altered chords. He did not use long, endless chains of secondary dominants as did Rachmaninoff, but complex harmonic passages are interspersed with simpler, slower-moving, cadential progressions. Except for developmental sections the major harmonic relationship is dominant-tonic.

The Bach composition, of course, exhibits traditional, functional harmony with much root movement by fifth and with a majority of normal progression moving from one classification of lesser importance to one of greater importance. Bach utilized altered chords of various types; Secondary dominants are the most frequent, especially in the slow movements. But he used much more modulation in the faster, fugal movements. Chains of secondary dominants are prevalent. Many harmonic progressions are sequential.

Bach's only chord types are triads and seventh chords of which the dominant type is most prominent. Beethoven remained within these two types as did Rachmaninoff, but Ravel added ninths, elevenths, and thirteenth.

Ravel's harmonic rhythm rather closely follows the melodic rhythm and at times is repetitious and at other times is rather unpredictable. Rachmaninoff's rhythm is quite steady, moving often on each beat with

some syncopation. Beethoven's harmonic rhythm is more distinctive and very often much slower except in the slow movement in which the harmony is the important feature. Here Beethoven incorporated much syncopation, anticipation and superimposition. The harmonic movement in the fugues of the Bach toccata is even, at times, slower than that of Beethoven because of the fast-moving melodic lines and the polyphonic texture but is more repetitious and modulates more often. The movement quickens at the cadences. In the slow movements the harmonic rhythm, becoming much more regular and rapid, is, therefore, in the spotlight.

VOICE RELATIONSHIPS

Difference in textures is very apparent. Bach wrote polyphonically and the others, homophonically although Beethoven and Rachmaninoff used polyphony in one or two short phrases. Bach wrote in three or four voices, each one containing the subject at various points, each one having its own melodic importance, and the interest being generally horizontal. In the works by the other three composers the melody is usually in the upper voice and accompanied with its harmonic background in the other parts, either in block chords or arpeggiated figurations, and the primary interest is vertical.

MELODY AND RHYTHM

Since melody and rhythm are so closely related and integrated, it would seem necessary to discuss them together regarding a comparison of styles, the element of time being often a major difference in melodic styles. One of the more outstanding features of this rhythmic importance

lies in the thematic material of the Bach toccata. As is typical of all Bach keyboard works, the motion is steady except in fantasia movements. There are no simultaneous pauses or long note values in all voices. Note values do not change radically within a phrase, e.g., a phrase does not begin with half notes and change to quarters, eighths, sixteenths, and thirty-seconds as it might in Classic melodies. In the d minor toccata the melodic lines are made up almost entirely of eighth and sixteenth notes. As a matter of fact, the sixteenth notes are used primarily as a device to make a smoother line from one chord tone to the next. The accompanimental lines sometimes vary slightly more.

Although Bach's melodic and accompanimental lines are every bit as beautiful, lyric, exciting, and appealing as those of the Classic and Romantic periods, they were constructed in such a way as to imply the underlying harmony. They comprise the important chord tones interspersed with passing tones effecting scalewise motion or merely state chord tones in a plain or ornamental fashion.

There is no syncopation within the themes themselves but only in the development of sequences. There is always a strong feeling for the primary beats. An integral part of this pulsation is the harmonic impulse which falls on important beats.

Melodic content is very sequential. Bach, of course, made more use of sequences than anyone. All material comes from the subject. He used sequences in chains while others used motives only occasionally in modified sequential fashion or merely repeated them at the same level and in the same harmonic function.

Indeed, Bach's melodic content is some of the most elegant, lyric,

and emotional expression ever created, but in contrast to the work of the other composers, it is so intellectual, rhythmically and harmonically strict and complex, and so refined that the difference is immediately apparent.

Beethoven utilized many more varied note values in his melodic lines; for this reason, the rhythm is more distinctive than that of Bach. Dotted rhythms and syncopation are used to a great extent. One phrase might contain everything from whole notes to eighth notes.

Since the texture is homophonic, most of the voices have simultaneous rhythms at certain points. At other times the accompaniment might have its own running figure and the melody, its own distinctive rhythm.

Beethoven's themes are quite lengthy as compared to Bach's. They also usually contain two sections. The themes appear when the form directs, and the spaces between are filled with rapid scales and arpeggios.

The melodic lines are scalewise or chordal, with some sequences, but unlike Bach's they are mixed. Either in block or broken form, the accompanimental lines are chordal. Scales and arpeggiated passages, instead of being short and sequential, are long and continuous.

The most apparent differences between the melodic content of Bach and Beethoven are the longer phrases of Beethoven and his use of two ideas in a phrase, the chordal accompaniment, the variety of rhythm, and the use of wider intervals.

Where thematic content is concerned, Rachmaninoff is very much like Beethoven: sequences, long phrases of two sections, and chordal or scalewise movement. The rhythmic movement is more even and steady than Beethoven but uses some dotted notes, suspensions, and syncopations. Rhythmic

motives appear often on the same pitch level. Intervals are small; thus, the melodic line is made even smoother. Much of the melodic interest is gained from the harmonic background. Coupled with the chromatic harmonic background, the length of the phrases creates the surging melodic lines so apparent in Rachmaninoff's work.

Rachmaninoff's accompaniment is less like Beethoven's and more like Bach's in that it is more sequential and constantly moving. The accompaniment provides the chordal background but only once appears in block formation. The notes often are all of the same value--usually eighth notes. There are three passages in which are found long, continuous arpeggio or scale patterns, and the remainder of the accompanimental figures is made up of short sequences. At times the melodic line is set within a line of embellishments based upon one motif, either repeated or in sequential style.

Ravel, in several respects, carved his melodic lines as Bach did. The melody often outlines chord tones and interpolates the intervening scale steps making, generally, very small intervals and a melodically smooth line. Rhythmic patterns are also smooth flowing, as the note values do not vary a great deal. Eighth and sixteenth notes are most prevalent with some quarters added. Ravel's melodic lines are very sequential. Almost all melodic material in a given movement is based upon the thematic material. Dotted rhythms and syncopations are characteristics not found in Bach. Another distinguishing factor in Ravel's rhythmic content is the varying number of beats within a phrase. There are irregular numbers of beats within a phrase, and the number of beats sometimes changes from one statement of the phrase to the next. He also uses

a 5/4 meter and employs duple meter in a succession of bars in triple meter.

More often arpeggiated than in block form, the accompaniment is chordal. The one-octave arpeggios appear on each beat in either eighth-note triplets or sixteenth notes.

Ravel's melodic composition is very Classic. Merely by changing the harmonies and some rhythms, he gave the melodic line a new and disguising character.

TEMPO

In tempo there is a steady progression from the strict tempo of Bach to the freedom found in Rachmaninoff and Ravel. Bach did not use changes of tempo to express emotion. Rather, the steady tempo harbors the excitement in his music. In the first movement of the Toccata, as is customary, there is a change from the fantasia to the adagio section. In Beethoven's work there appear a few gradual changes in tempo. In the first movement there is the abrupt, major change from the slow introduction to the allegro tempo of the exposition. The Rachmaninoff Concerto embodies a great freedom of tempo using subtle or long, gradual variances as well as abrupt ones. Ravel's Sonatine is also made effective by the use of nuances in tempo.

EXPRESSIVE CONTENT

Expressive content could well be discussed from the standpoint of the development of the piano. Bach composed for harpsichord, since the piano was not as yet developed. Since the harpsichord did not have the

sustaining power of the piano, short, running notes were more suited than block chords of a longer rhythmic value for the instrument. There was a minimum of dynamic possibilities on Bach's instrument. The emotion was acquired in the melody, harmony, texture, rhythm, and tempo. Since the longer keyboard was not available, the compass of pitches was also restricted. Therefore, in Bach keyboard works is found a four-octave range.

Thus, the most profound music was produced under such great limitations resulting in perfect craftsmanship and ultimate refinement.

The piano was, of course, not a new instrument in Beethoven's day but was only then becoming a mechanically well-developed instrument. Being very intrigued by it, he wrote to exhibit its qualities. One of the most important of these qualities to him was the facility for forte and piano dynamics to be executed merely by the touch of the hand. Beethoven utilized the dynamic possibilities constantly, placing side by side complete contrasts in volume and in mood. Also, the block chords and long note values, wide compass of pitch, the fierce as well as gentle emotions as Beethoven used and expressed them could never have been possible with the harpsichord.

Rachmaninoff, writing almost a century after Beethoven, had the benefit of a pianistic style founded by Chopin and Liszt. The continuous, running passages, wide compass of pitch, rapid figurations more grateful on the piano, large sonorities, use of the sostenuto pedal, and the wide variety of dynamic shadings and rhythmic nuances as well as the Romantic harmonies contribute largely to the attractiveness of the second Concerto.

Tempo and dynamic shadings are a very important part of Impression-

istic writing. Ravel made much use of the upper register of the piano. He used lighter and thinner constructions than Rachmaninoff although very rapid, as is typical of his restrained emotion and the illusive qualities of Impressionism. The most important factor in Ravel's Impressionism is, of course, the parallel and modal harmony.