A STUDY OF FEDERICO MOMPOU’S *VARIATIONS SUR UN THÈME DE CHOPIN*

by

SALLYE JEFFCOAT YORK

A DOCUMENT

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ABSTRACT

Federico Mompou (1893 – 1987) was a Catalan composer often compared to Satie, Debussy, and Ravel, composing mainly for solo piano and voice. His piano works have become a favorite in the teaching repertoire as well as the performance repertoire. Concert pianists such as Alicia De Laroccha and Stephen Hough have performed and recorded Mompou’s compositions. 

*Variations sur un thème de Chopin*, one of Mompou’s larger piano works, has become a standard piece for performance. It is an extensive work for solo piano based on Chopin’s Prelude in A Major, Op. 28 No. 7. This document provides a study of Mompou’s *Variations sur un thème de Chopin*, focusing on his adaptation of Chopin’s motives, harmonies, and stylistic characteristics; influences from other composers are also considered where pertinent.

Several books and dissertations include analyses of various Mompou compositions; however, none have sufficiently covered the large work *Variations sur un thème de Chopin*. This study provides an investigation of an important Mompou piece and contributes to the continuing scholarly research of this Catalan composer and his compositions.
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1. Introduction

Federico Mompou (1893-1987) was a Catalan composer often compared to Satie, Debussy, and Ravel. He was a master of miniatures, and he composed mainly for solo piano and voice.\(^1\) His piano works have become a favorite in the teaching repertoire as well as the performance repertoire. Concert pianists such as Alicia De Laroccha and Stephen Hough have performed and recorded Mompou’s compositions. *Variations sur un thème de Chopin*, one of Mompou’s larger piano works, has become a standard piece for performance. It is an extensive work for solo piano based on Chopin’s Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7. This document provides a study of Mompou’s *Variations sur un thème de Chopin*, focusing on his adaptation of Chopin’s motives, harmonies, and stylistic characteristics; influences from other composers are also considered where pertinent.

The document is divided into six chapters. Chapter Two focuses on Mompou the composer. This chapter provides a brief biographical history of Mompou, an overview of his compositional style, and a concluding history and synopsis of *Variations sur un thème de Chopin*. Chapter Three gives an overview of Chopin’s Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7, the theme of Mompou’s set of variations. As each variation’s description stems from and depends on the theme’s discussion, beginning with an examination of Chopin’s work is necessary. The fourth chapter includes a study of Mompou’s variations moving through each in order. The

analysis includes observations on how Mompou interpreted this nineteenth century composition in terms of twentieth century harmonies and devices. It also shows how he alters motives from the initial theme in each variation. Finally, it examines stylistic influences, not only from Chopin, but other composers as well. Chapter Five includes performance issues the pianist faces in performing Variations sur un thème de Chopin. Observations from Mompou’s recording of this work assists in this discussion. The final chapter closes the document with an inclusion of concluding remarks.

Several books and dissertations include analyses of various Mompou compositions; however, none have sufficiently covered the large work Variations sur un thème de Chopin. This study provides an investigation of an important Mompou piece and contributes to the continuing scholarly research of this Catalan composer and his compositions.
2. Federico Mompou

**Biographical Information**

Federico Mompou was born in Barcelona on April 16, 1893.² With support from his family, he attended the Conservatoire of the Liceo de Barcelona as a child, studying piano with Professor Pedro Serra.³ Mompou debuted his first piano recital in 1908 at the age of fifteen.⁴ In 1911, he relocated to Paris to study privately with Isidore Philipp and Ferdinand Motte Lacroix in piano and Marcel Samuel Rousseau in composition and harmony. With the eruption of World War I in 1914, Mompou was forced to return to Barcelona where he remained for the next seven years. During this time, he composed the first of his compositions for piano, including *Impresiones Íntimas, Scènes D’Enfants, Pessebres, Charmes, Suburbis, and Fêtes Lontaines.*⁵

Following the end of World War I, Mompou moved back to Paris in 1921 to continue his musical career. After hearing Mompou’s music, renowned music critic Emile Vuillermoz included an extensive article praising Mompou’s talents in *Le Temps,* the French newspaper with the largest circulation and output of its time. Mompou quickly became recognized throughout international circles.⁶ Though known for his introverted character and shy personality, he kept close friendships with famous composers such as Francis Poulenc and artists such as Juan Mirò.

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⁶ Ibid.
He remained connected to well-known company throughout his life.\textsuperscript{7} Mompou stayed in Paris for the next twenty years. In this time he composed the following important piano pieces: 

*Dialogues, Souvenirs de l’Exposition, Seis Preludios, Variations sur un thème de Chopin,* and *Canción y Danza Nos. 3 and 4.*\textsuperscript{8}

In 1941, Mompou returned to Barcelona where he remained until his death on June 30, 1987. During this time in Barcelona, he continued composing piano as well as vocal and choral compositions.\textsuperscript{9} He was honored as Officier d’Academie and Chevalier des Arts et Lettres in France, and he also joined the Royal Academy of Saint George and the International Society of Contemporary Music, SIMC.\textsuperscript{10} He taught at the yearly conference for international students, Música en Compostel, and continued his lectures until he was immobilized by a stroke.\textsuperscript{11} He was survived by his wife, pianist Carmen Bravo.

\textsuperscript{8} Antonio Iglesias, “Biographical Notes,” *Mompou: Complete Piano Works,* 2.
\textsuperscript{10} Antonio Iglesias, “Biographical Notes,” 2.
Compositional Style and Influences

Mompou defined his style as *primitivista*, a term he created to describe his use of minimal means to produce overly expressive music.\(^1\) Levels of intricacy, such as multiple levels of voices, melodic lines, and rhythms, are removed to form simple music that seems almost primitive in its texture and sound.\(^2\) Some believe that simplicity is the most important aspect of Mompou’s compositional style in general.\(^3\) The effect of simplicity is created through his use of thin textures, very few voice lines, the lack of meter and bar lines, simple rhythms with only basic divisions of the pulse, and an avoidance of cadential progressions.\(^4\) Figure 2.1 shows a musical example from Mompou’s compositions exhibiting the *primitivista* style.

Figure 2.1  Mompou’s *Música Callada*: I. Angelico

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\(^{3}\) Email with Mac MacClure, former student of Federico Mompou and Carmen Bravo, sent 4 March 2010.

While discussing his idea of *primitivista*, Mompou is quoted as saying:

I always endeavor to make good music. My only aspiration is to write works that contain neither too little nor too much. Some people find it difficult to understand that I don’t have the same feel for grandiose form and traditional characteristics that they do; for me, nothing exists except my form and my concept.\(^\text{16}\)

Mompou is known as a nationalist composer. Though he spent over twenty years in Paris, the titles of his works and his use of folk elements make it clear that Barcelona remained his home. Mompou remained loyal to his Catalan roots, yet he did not join the modernist movement of his contemporaries, such as Toldrà, with an idealization of the urban life in Catalonia.\(^\text{17}\) Instead, Mompou focused on the folkloric aspect of Catalonia, which is most evident in his *Canción y Danzas*.\(^\text{18}\) This series was composed over a sixty-year period and combines lyrical songs with rhythmic dances. Two of the Catalan folk songs used in the Cancións are “La senyora Isabel” found in Canción No. 2 and “El Rossinyol” in Canción No. 9.\(^\text{19}\) Figure 2.2 shows the opening folkloric Canción No. 9.

Figure 2.2  Mompou’s Canción No. 9, Measures 1 – 6

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\(^{16}\) Linton Powell, *A History of Short Piano Music*, 111.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., 110.
His wife believed the most important quality of her husband’s music was his relationship with the Catalan culture and its traditions. Mompou exhibited the quality of Walt Whitman’s famous quote, “The proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as he absorbs it.”

Another characteristic of Mompou’s compositions is the use of bell simulations. As a child, Mompou was fascinated by bell sonorities that he heard at his grandfather’s bell foundry. Mompou imitated the reverberation and timbre of bells in his compositions. He accomplished this with the use of the pedals of the piano, oftentimes holding the pedal throughout a complete measure and sometimes even multiple measures. He believed, quite erroneously, of course, that the sound of the piano strings can intensify with time instead of weaken. He thought he accomplished this by playing with the fingers so close to the keys that it seemed the fingers are actually producing the sound.

Harmonies used by Mompou are often categorized as impressionistic. He regularly explored twentieth century harmonies by using added chromatic seconds and sixths. His works are characterized by the use of sparse textures and simple melodies. The range of his melodies and accompaniments are usually an outcome of the span of the composer’s hands. Extended chords and tenths would fit easily in Mompou’s hands; therefore, widely spaced intervals are found throughout his compositions.

Mompou is commonly compared to Erik Satie: neither completed his training at the Paris Conservatory and both found a fundamental focus on simplicity. They are masters of the art of

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20 Email from Mac MacClure, former student of Federico Mompou and Carmen Bravo, sent 4 March 2010.
the piano miniature and of minimalism; yet Mompou’s embracing of Romanticism, though only in terms of mood and spirit, set him apart from the French composer.\textsuperscript{25}

According to Gilbert Chase, the most noted aspect of Mompou’s compositions is his use of sentiment and sensitivity.\textsuperscript{26} His music comes across as intimate and restrained, highlighting tranquility with exceptional poignant moments.\textsuperscript{27} This is achieved through a large use of soft dynamics, exceedingly descriptive performance instructions, folk tunes and elements, and calm tempos. The subtle features of his compositions in terms of texture, harmony, and sound promote this inherent character to his music.\textsuperscript{28} These qualities can be found throughout Mompou’s compositions for piano, and more specifically, in this document’s subject, \textit{Variations sur un thème de Chopin}.

\textsuperscript{25} Ann Zalkind, \textit{A Study of Catalan Composer Federico Mompou’s Música Callada}, 66.
\textsuperscript{26} Gilbert Chase, \textit{The Music of Spain}, 170.
\textsuperscript{27} Ann Livermore, \textit{A Short History of Spanish Music}, 208.
Variations sur un thème de Chopin Historical Information

One of Mompou’s most extensive works, *Variations sur un thème de Chopin*, took nearly twenty years to compose. While he was living in Paris, his close friend, the renowned Spanish cellist Gaspar Cassadó, approached Mompou about composing a set of variations for cello and piano. He proposed using Chopin’s Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7 as the theme for the composition. In 1938 Mompou wrote four sketches of the Chopin theme; however, both Mompou and Cassadó soon abandoned the project. Nineteen years later, London’s Royal Ballet of Covent Garden suggested using these variations for a ballet. Mompou finished the composition, using the original four sketches from 1938 as the first four variations and published the work in 1957 for solo piano. The variations were never converted into a ballet even though Mompou intended this adaptation at some time.

The following study will begin with an examination of the theme, Chopin’s Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7. Each variation will be discussed individually in subsequent chapters.

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Chopin’s set of twenty-four preludes found in Opus 28 is regarded as either a complete, unified cycle or a collection of separate pieces with similar titles.\(^{31}\) The preludes were composed between 1838 and 1839 in Majorca and published in Leipzig, Paris, and London in 1839. The autograph and Leipzig editions are dedicated to J.C. Kessler while the London and Paris editions are dedicated to Camille Pleyel. The preludes are composed in all keys, both major and minor. Chopin organized the preludes by the circle of fifths interrupted by each key’s relative minor (C Major, A Minor, G Major, E Minor, etc.).\(^{32}\)

Federico Mompou used one of the shortest and most well known of Chopin’s preludes as the theme of his variations, the seventh prelude in A Major. To fully understand how Mompou transformed this Chopin composition into a twentieth century Catalan repertoire standard, one must begin by studying the original prelude. This chapter will explore the form as well as melodic and harmonic aspects of Chopin’s Prelude No. 7 in A Major, focusing on those features that will affect and concern the Mompou compositional study found in Chapter Four.

The theme for Mompou’s variations, Chopin’s Prelude No. 7 in A Major, is found in its entirety with the analysis included in Figure 3.1 below. Mompou used the entire prelude as the theme for his set of twelve variations and concluding epilogue.

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Figure 3.1 Mompou’s Theme for *Variations sur un thème de Chopin*, Chopin’s Prelude No. 7 in A Major
This sixteen-bar composition can be seen as one period with an eight-measure antecedent and an eight-measure consequent creating a simple sectional binary form. The beginning of the antecedent and consequent are marked in orange in the score. Both the antecedent group and the consequent group are each made of two four-bar phrases, which are further more made up of two two-measure phrase members. The four phrases are marked in purple in the score while the eight phrase members are marked in blue. The antecedent ends with an imperfect authentic cadence while the consequent ends with a perfect authentic cadence. The elementary harmonic progressions reinforce the simple form. The harmonies follow a straightforward and minimal progression outlined in the diagram below. Figure 3.2 illustrates this analysis.

Figure 3.2  Chopin’s Prelude No. 7 in A Major Form and Harmonic Scheme

Measures: 1-2  3-4  5-6  7-8  9-10  11-12  13-14  15-16
Phrase Members: 1 2  3  4  5  6  7  8
A Major: V7  I  V9  I  V7  I  V7/ii  ii7-V9  I
Phrases: 1  2  3  4
Period: Antecedent  Consequent
Cadence: IAC  PAC

Looking at the score and the table above, it is apparent that the harmonic progression is very basic and barely strays from a dominant-tonic motion. However, there are a few points about the harmony that do make this piece more interesting than these basic observations. First, the symmetry of the phrase harmonies is especially clear and even. One common pattern of
phrase structure for a parallel period moves I-V in the first phrase and I-I in the second phrase. In this Chopin prelude, instead of a I-V/I-I motion, an alternative pattern is formed since the harmonies of the phrases move I-I/I-I. The most fascinating chord breaks this pattern in the second half of the piece, the V⁷/ii found in measure 12, signaling a change to the recurring motives.³³ The V⁷/ii adds an element of surprise since it breaks the pattern of dominant-tonic motion seen in the previous eleven measures. This chord is outlined in green in the score.

Another interesting aspect of the harmony is Chopin’s use of nonharmonic tones. Each phrase member begins with an upbeat and an accented nonharmonic tone on the downbeat of the first measure. If these downbeats were considered as a part of the harmony, then the first chord would be analyzed as a i⁶. However, upon closer scrutiny, it becomes clear that the C-sharp on the downbeat is actually a nonharmonic tone and is embellishing the D of the V⁷ in measures one and two.³⁴ Their direct association with a root position triad strengthens the dissonant character of the nonharmonic tones that occur at the beginning of each two-measure phrase member. The nonharmonic tones are circled in red in the score.

Even the type of nonharmonic tone becomes a recurring pattern. Chopin only uses appoggiaturas and retardations for this accented phenomenon. Considering only the nonharmonic tones on the downbeat of each phrase member, the first half of the piece, measures one through eight, demonstrate the following model: appoggiatura, appoggiatura, appoggiatura, retardation (7-8). The second half of the composition, measures nine through sixteen, follow a similar pattern though not identical: appoggiatura, appoggiatura, retardation (2-3/7-8), appoggiatura.

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³⁴ Hugh Aitken, The Piece as a Whole, 8.
As discussed, the form and the harmonic rhythm remain highly regular throughout the prelude. The melody also contains many consistent features, such as the use of upbeats with the beginning of each phrase member as well as the melodic contour and rhythm. However, it is the subtle changes that make the melody unique. The use of chromaticism, such as the downbeats of measures three, five, eleven, and thirteen, are especially distinctive. Also, the range of the melody remains very limited until suddenly expanded in the consequent at measure eleven. It is this move to the high C-sharp that signals not only a change in the melody but a sudden change in harmony as well, V7/ii. Also, the bass line remains static until this point, when it suddenly accelerates in harmonic rhythm, carrying the whole to V in measure fourteen and setting up a decisive closure that is strongly prepared.

With a simplistic form, harmony, and melody, Chopin composed one of the most memorable and popular preludes with his A Major composition. The seventh prelude from Chopin’s Opus 28 serves as the theme of Mompou’s set of variations. In the next chapter, the variations will be discussed in more detail. This study will make comparisons to the Chopin analysis just given as well as draw attention to Mompou’s style and influences discussed in the previous chapter.
As mentioned earlier in Chapter II, the first four variations were originally written in 1938 as fragments of a set for cello and piano. However, these were soon abandoned and not revisited until 1957. In Variation I, Mompou has preserved the original melody, rhythm, and formal structure. Altered harmonies affect the texture slightly. In this variation, Mompou plays with the use of dissonance in the Chopin prelude through extended harmonies and nonharmonic

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tones. With the use of these small changes in harmony and texture, Mompou is setting the course for a gradual movement away from the theme.

As shown in the Roman numeral analysis given in the score, Mompou preserves Chopin’s original harmonic outline and adds new harmonies within this basic structure. He adds new predominants to the third and sixth phrase members and changes the cadence of the antecedent to a deceptive cadence. He also alters the surprise chord of the sixth phrase member to a C-sharp diminished chord. This chord replaces the $V^7/\text{ii}$ in the original prelude and matches the surprise quality with its unexpected character. It is also outlined in green in the score. The C-sharp half diminished seventh chord can be viewed as either a $\text{iii}^\#7$ or a $\text{ii}^\#7$ of B Minor, which is found in the following measure.

Mompou also adds nonharmonic tones and embellishments. Like the theme, phrase member one projects the dominant seventh harmony. However, Mompou adds a fourth to the chord, which resolves to the third at the end of the phrase member. This fourth as well as other nonharmonic tones and ornaments are circled in red in the score. Also following the theme’s model, the second phrase member uses the tonic harmony. In this phrase member, Mompou changes the inversion of the tonic to second inversion and adds dissonant seconds and sevenths within the chord. The use of the second inversion is considered an embellishment since the theme consistently uses root inversions and the $^6_4$ in this variation is given rhythmic and harmonic emphasis. Another nonharmonic tone used is the triple chromatic appoggiatura found at the beginning of the third and fourth phrase members.
In Variation I, Mompou preserves the melody, rhythm, formal structure, and the harmonic skeleton of Chopin’s prelude. Through small changes in terms of harmony, nonharmonic tones, and texture, Mompou sets the course for a gradual dissolution of the theme throughout the variations.
Variation II

Variation II maintains the A Major tonality of the Chopin’s original prelude yet changes the meter from 3/4 to 6/8. The change of pulse in addition to the dotted rhythms adds a certain degree of Spanish panache.\(^{36}\) In this variation, Mompou uses compression to vary the theme; he compresses the theme into half of its original length. The form remains binary; therefore, the original sixteen-bar period with an eight-bar antecedent and an eight-bar consequent is now an eight-bar period with a four-bar antecedent and a four-bar consequent. Each measure now corresponds to the theme’s two-bar phrase member. For example, measure one of Variation II correlates with phrase member one of the theme. Measure two of Variation II compares with phrase member two of the theme, and so on. Figure 4.1 illustrates this concept.

The harmonic scheme shown in Figure 4.1 highly resembles the theme, with its constant dominant-tonic motion and a tonicization of ii in the consequent. Mompou maintains a deceptive cadence at the end of the antecedent, seen previously in the first variation. He also delays the third of the surprise chord, the $V^7/ii$ found at the end of the sixth phrase member. With the absence of the third, it can be argued whether this chord is a $vi^7$ or a $V^7/ii$. However, Mompou provides the third in the last beat of measure six.

The melody is also found in a compressed version. The repeated notes found at the end of each phrase member in the theme are now deleted. Mompou also presents notes from the theme’s melodic line in a vertical form. This can be seen in the first measure, with the D and B provided as harmonic intervals. This also occurs in measure five with D and B played simultaneously. The theme’s melody is circled in red in the score. In this variation, Mompou has moved the metric accent from a strong downbeat pulse seen in the theme to two beats within a measure. However, since he has abbreviated the piece, the metric accents still fall on the same melodic notes from the Chopin prelude.
In Variation II, Mompou takes a step further away from the original theme. Even though the form is preserved in an abbreviated form, the melody, rhythms, and harmonic scheme are somewhat altered from the Chopin prelude. Finally, Mompou provides a new variant on the theme through compression.
Variation III
Variation III includes the instructions “para la mano izquierda” and “pour la main gauche” which translates to “for the left hand.” Only the performer’s left hand is intended to play this variation. Mompou writes the third variation in the theme’s subdominant, D Major, and returns to the original time signature, 3/4. He also preserves Chopin’s melody while excluding the repeated notes found at the end of each phrase member in the theme. However, the melody in Variation III is often interlaced among arpeggios. In the score above, the melodic notes are circled in red with the path of the melody traced by red arrows.

In his book *Le Jardin Retrouvé: The Music of Frederic Mompou 1893-1987*, Wilfrid Mellers suggests the resemblance of this variation to Chopin’s Prelude in B Minor, Op 28, No. 6 due to the prelude’s reliance on the left hand for melody and the interweaving arpeggios found in both.\(^{37}\) The opening of Chopin’s Prelude in B Minor, Op. 28, No. 6 can be found in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2  Chopin’s Prelude in B Minor, Op. 28, No. 6, Measures 1-4

In this variation, Mompou uses expansion as a technique to vary the theme. It is interesting to note that this occurs directly after the variation using compression. First, Mompou expands the melody by making the initial nonharmonic tone of each phrase member a half note.

\(^{37}\) Ibid.
tied to an eighth note, resolving with the last eighth note of the measure. This is expanded
compared to the theme’s dotted eighth note nonharmonic tone. Mompou extends the initial
nonharmonic tone in every phrase member.

The form is also slightly expanded. Variation III’s form remains binary like the theme, a
period. By starting with the downbeat of the melody, the structure remains a period with a
4+4+4+4 design. However, in this variation, Mompou has extended the consequent by one
measure with the insertion of two quarter rests found at measure thirteen. With this delay,
Mompou is slowly making the extremely symmetrical form of the theme into an asymmetrical
design. Figure 4.3 outlines the formal layout of Variation III while the form is also shown in the
score.

Finally, Mompou expands the harmonic scheme. First, in phrase member one, Mompou
adds a D bass to the melody’s downbeat. By doing this, Mompou accentuates the tonic aspect of
the melody’s initial downbeat nonharmonic tone, the appoggiatura seen in measure one of the
theme and measure one of Variation III. This is the first time in the variations Mompou hints at
the tonic possibility of this melodic downbeat and will be seen again in later variations. In this
variation, Mompou increases the tension of tonic projection in phrase member five on the
downbeat of measure nine. The tonic bass is found once again with the F-sharp nonharmonic
melodic note. At this point, Mompou also adds the third, seventh, and ninth of the dominant
ninth chord.

Another harmonic expansion is found in phrase member three. In the theme, the third
phrase member projects a dominant ninth. In this variation, Mompou maintains this dominant
harmony but expands upon this harmony by including an embellishment of a B dominant seventh
chord. With this embellishment, a $V^7/ii$ arises within this phrase member. This superimposed B dominant seventh is especially strengthened by the emergence of the B-flat in measure six, suggesting an e-diminished chord, or a borrowed ii$^o$ from the parallel minor. The upbeat to the fourth phrase member projects a dominant seventh of D Major, which would logically follow the preceding predominant.

The final harmonic expansion to note is the tonicization of ii. In the theme, Chopin tonicizes ii by ending the sixth phrase member with $V^7/ii$ and beginning the seventh phrase member with ii. In this variation, Mompou ends the sixth phrase member with ii$^o/ii$, which then progresses to $V^7/ii$ –ii in the seventh phrase member. Variation III’s surprise chord, ii$^o/ii$, is outlined in green in the score.

With this variation, Mompou adds the unique characteristic of using one hand for all voices as well as seemingly imitates another famous Chopin prelude, Prelude No. 6 in B Minor. Mompou expands aspects of the form, melody, and harmony of Chopin’s A Major prelude to
create the third variation. Wilfrid Mellers suggests that this variation produces pathos and possibly even a Catalan lament with its soft dynamics, slow tempo, use of the rich register of the keyboard, interweaving arpeggios, and rhythmic extension of the melodic line.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
Variation IV
Variation IV was the last variation originally written for cello and piano in 1938. This variation is in the theme’s lowered submediant, F Major, and the time signature is changed to 2/4. The change to a duple meter creates a new metric accent throughout. In this variation, a constant movement to the weak beat, the second beat of each measure, is seen, whereas in the theme, a consistent motion to the downbeat was emphasized. Throughout the fourth variation, a quasi-canonic texture is maintained in SATB design, and the use of the pickup beat to each phrase member, which is reminiscent of the theme, is used inconsistently.

In this variation, Mompou evolves the form of the theme into a three-part structure supported by the basic tonal structure. Instead of the theme’s simple two-part form of a sixteen-bar period, Variation IV is a ternary form, ABA, with the A sections at measures one through sixteen and its return in measures thirty-three through forty-eight. The B section encompasses measures seventeen through thirty-two. The A section and its return are both formatted like the theme, a sixteen-bar period with an eight-bar antecedent and an eight-bar consequent, each containing two phrases, which are furthermore made up of two phrase members. Figure 4.4 and the score above show a model of this form.

Though the form of the A section looks identical to the theme’s symmetrical form, there is a pronounced asymmetrical portioning of phrase members three and four. Phrase member three is extended to include five beats as well as an emphasis on the final downbeat. Phrase member four is greatly shortened, including only two beats. It can be viewed as a remnant of the third phrase member and as cadential material. All other phrase members of the A section contain four beats.
The B section acts somewhat like a development section in sonata form. The A section’s melody can be found in fragments, still in a canonic style. The B section begins in A minor and transitions back to the A section by ending on a dominant eleventh of F Major. With a heavy use of sevenths and dissonances, cadences and progressions are highly obscured, making the form of the sixteen bars even less obvious. However, melodic similarities do show that the B section is divided into a 16-bar period with an eight measure antecedent and an eight measure consequent, just like the A section and the theme. The antecedent and consequent are both divided into two phrases; however, these phrases are not broken down into two phrase members. The B section acts as an interpolation between the two A sections with a direction to V of F major. Figure 4.5 and the score show the B section’s form.

The melody of Variation IV contains fragments of the theme’s melody. It begins similar to the theme with a major sixth leap up from scale degree five to scale degree three. This is then followed by a minor second up to scale degree four. However, from here, Variation IV’s melody
deviates from the theme’s. A remnant of the theme’s melody can be found in phrase member eight of the A section and its return. In phrase member eight, the melody is identical to the theme’s melody at phrase members seven and eight in contour and scale degrees.

In terms of harmony, Mompou preserves very little of the theme’s harmonic scheme. The first obvious deviation is the projection of tonic in the first measure. In the theme and the previous three variations, the first measure projects the dominant. However, in the fourth variation, Mompou begins with tonic, making the melodic downbeat not an appoggiatura as seen in the theme and Variations I, II, and III, but as the third of the tonic triad. This is repeated in measures nine, thirty-three, and forty-one with the fifth phrase member and the return of the A section.

Also interesting to note is the use of the surprise chord found at the end of the A section’s sixth phrase member in the theme and previous variations. In this variation, Mompou does not end the sixth phrase member with a distinctive chord, as vi – ii has been used before in the third phrase member within this variation. He changes the surface, adding an arpeggiated sextuplet in the bass, greatly changing the previous quasi-canonic texture. Though not an unexpected chord
in this context, this sudden change in texture achieves the same degree of surprise and distinctive alteration as seen before in the theme and Variations I through III. This is outlined in green in the score.

Using the melodic line in several voices, Mompou creates a quasi-canonic variation with glimpses of Chopin’s original form, melody, and harmonic structure. The most significant change is the evolution of the theme’s form into a three-part structure. With added instructions of expression, such as *Espressivo*, *dolce*, ritardandi, decrescendi, and crescendi, this variation suggests a certain element of nostalgia.\(^\text{39}\)

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Variation V
Variation V, marked *Tempo di Mazurka*, greatly resembles the Polish dance mazurka since it is written in the meter 3/4 with given accents on beat three throughout. It is not known if Mompou composed this variation in the style of a mazurka to resemble Chopin’s mastery of this genre and not only expand upon the theme but the theme’s composer as well; or if he chose a mazurka as this was the first variation composed in 1957 intended for a ballet. In either case, Mompou wrote this variation as a mazurka highly resembling the theme. The intervals of the theme’s melody are maintained throughout. The only exception is measure sixteen, where a minor third ends the phrase member instead of a major third as seen in the theme. The rhythm of the melody is transformed into a dotted eighth-sixteenth figure followed by two quarter notes in every measure. This accented rhythm creates a somewhat harsh dance as compared to the languid theme. The biting dissonances throughout, found in downbeat double and triple appoggiaturas, also contribute to this brusqueness.\(^{40}\)

In this variation, Mompou uses both compression and expansion. Similar to Variation II, the melody is compressed due to an exclusion of the repeated notes found at the end of each phrase member in the theme. Also like Variation II, one measure in this variation equals one phrase member of the theme. Therefore, measure one corresponds to the theme’s first phrase member, measure two correlates to the theme’s second phrase member, and so on.

Similar to Variation III, Mompou uses expansion in terms of form and harmony. In this variation, the form is expanded into a two-part continuous binary form. Part I of the simple continuous binary form is a double period. The first period of the double period is found at measures one through eight, with a four measure antecedent and a four measure consequent. The first period uses tonic harmony, A Major. The second period of Part I is found at measures nine

through sixteen, with the antecedent at measures nine through twelve and the consequent at measures thirteen through sixteen. The second period projects the subdominant as tonic, D Major. The atypical motion to IV at the end of Part I serves as a dominant preparation for the return of the tonic in Part II after the double bar found at measure sixteen. Part II is a single period reaffirming the tonic and closing the structure. Part II is found at measures seventeen through twenty-four, with a four-bar antecedent and a four-bar consequent. Figure 4.6 and the score illustrate Variation V’s formal structure.

Figure 4.6  Formal Structure of Variation V

Measures:  1-4  5-8  9-12  13-16  17-20  21-24

Period:

|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|

Form:

- **Period 1**  
- **Period 2**  
- **Period 3**  

**Part I/ Double Period**  
**Part II**

Simple Continuous Binary Form

A Major:

| I   | IV   | V-I  |

Mompou adheres to Chopin’s harmonic scheme within each period with a constant dominant – tonic motion. He even maintains the ii-V found in the seventh phrase member of the theme in the seventh and eighth phrase members of this fifth variation. However, he deviates from this norm in a few measures. In phrase member six of all three periods, the progression VII\(^7\)/ii - ii\(^{07}\)/ii is found. The inversion of the ii\(^{07}\)/ii is different in each period. The first period uses ii\(^{06}\)/ii, the second period uses ii\(^{04}\)/ii, and the third period leaves out the seventh and uses a
$ii_{6}/ii$. This is the same phrase member from the theme and previous variations known for its unexpected quality in terms of harmony, and in the fourth variation, sudden change in texture. Here, the presence of the lowered seventh scale degree, circled in red in measure six, along with this sudden harmonic embellishment of $ii$ creates the same surprising effect as seen before. This progression is outlined in green in the score. In the third period, Mompou elaborates the cadence on $ii$ in the seventh phrase member even further by including a rolled chord, ritardando, crescendo, and a fermata. This creates even more of a surprise as this unexpected elaboration and emphasis of $ii$ occurs right before the final cadence of the variation. This emphasis of $ii$ at measure twenty-three is also outlined in green in the score.

In Variation V, Mompou clearly presents the theme in the context of a brisk mazurka. The melody remains identical in a compressed form, and the dominant-tonic harmonic scheme with the tonicization of $ii$ is preserved. The original form of a period is expanded into a continuous binary form composed of three periods while presenting an overall tonal structure of I-IV-V-I. After Variation IV’s vague resemblance to the theme, Variation V quickly brings the listener back to the Chopin prelude as almost a reminder. This allows for the following sixth variation to deviate even further away from the original theme.
Variation VI
Described as “highly hermetic,” Variation VI moves the furthest from tonality thus far in the variation set.\textsuperscript{41} The harmonies and textures are very similar to 20\textsuperscript{th} century Impressionist music, especially due to its use of whole tones and dissonance. Wilfrid Mellers suggests that this variation is closer to Mompou’s \textit{Musica Callada} and, therefore, must be a later addition to the variations.\textsuperscript{42}

Variation VI is divided into two parts: an opening recitative followed by a lento lament. The time signature fluctuates between 2/4 and 3/4 while a clear tonal center for the entire variation is never accomplished. The recitative spans measures one through seventeen. It is divided into three phrases, different in size and tonal center. Figure 4.7 illustrates the recitative’s form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6-7</th>
<th>8-12</th>
<th>13-14</th>
<th>15-17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phrase Member</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Minor</td>
<td>V\textsuperscript{9}/iv</td>
<td>iv</td>
<td>V\textsuperscript{9}/vii</td>
<td>vii</td>
<td>V\textsuperscript{6}/bv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lament begins at the marked \textit{Lento} and begins in 3/4 and later changes to 2/4. The frequent appearance of nonharmonic tones and their failure to resolve in conventional ways embellished the harmonic succession to such an extent that the inference of a useful Roman numeral analysis, conceived to support a tonal structure in G Minor, is problematic. Nonetheless, several

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
possibilities have been included her as suggestions for the readers consideration. The lament is composed of four phrases. Figure 4.8 exhibits an outline of this form. The score above also marks the form. The beginning of the recitative and lament are marked in orange. The phrases are shown in blue while the phrase members are outlined in purple.

Figure 4.8    Form of Variation VI’s Lament

Phrase Member: 1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9
G Minor:      iv  vii  (v\textsuperscript{6/7})  v-ii  iv-i  v  i
Phrase:  1  2  3  4

The melody is derived from the theme’s first and second phrase members. The melody imitating the theme’s first phrase member is found at the beginning and is outlined in red and labeled “a” in the score. The contour and rhythm of the theme’s melody is preserved, yet the intervals are altered in this variation. First, the opening leap of a sixth, originally seen as a major sixth, is now transformed into a minor sixth. Following the minor sixth, a major second is found, instead of the minor second used in the theme. The last interval in this melody is a major third as opposed to the theme’s minor third. The melody imitating the theme’s second phrase member is found first at measure six and is outlined in red and labeled “b” in the score. This melody imitates the contour of the theme’s melody in its second phrase member, but the intervals are once again changed. The first interval, seen as a minor third in the theme, is now a diminished seventh while the third interval is a minor seventh as opposed to a perfect fourth as seen in the
theme. The entire variation is based on the “a” and “b” melodies. These melodies can be found in every phrase, transposed and in imitation.

In the recitative, phrase two is a direct transposition of phrase one while phrase three acts as cadential material. The first phrase spans measures one through seven and uses both the “a” and “b” melodies. Phrase two transposes the first phrase down by a perfect fifth. This movement down a fifth is reminiscent of Variation V where the second period of the double period is in the subdominant. It is also interesting to note that with this specific transposition, three of the four pitch classes are maintained between the two phrases. The C, D, and B-flat of the first phrase “a” melody can be found in the “b” melody of phrase two. The F, A, and G used in the “b” melody of phrase one are reused in the second phrase “a” melody. Figure 4.9 illustrates this point.

Figure 4.9  Recitative, Phrases One and Two Melodic Similarities

Phrase One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“a”</th>
<th>“b”</th>
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Phrase Two, a transposition of a perfect fifth down

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“a”</th>
<th>“b”</th>
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</table>
The lament’s melodic content is derived from the recitative. First of all, the lament is made up of four phrases: the first two using the “a” melody and the last two using the “b” melody. Also, the first two phrase members of the lament’s first phrase are a direct transposition of each other, just like the first two phrases of the recitative. The second phrase member of the lament’s phrase member is a direct transposition of the first phrase member, transposed up a perfect fourth. Figure 4.10 shows this relationship.

Figure 4.10    Lament, Phrase One, Phrase Members One and Two Similarities

Phrase Member One Melodic Content

Phrase Member Two Melodic Content, transposed up a perfect fourth

These two phrase members are also derived in terms of melodic content from the recitative. The first phrase member uses three of the same pitch classes as the first phrase member of the recitative. The C, D, and B-flat are found in both. Figure 4.11 illustrates this point.

The lament’s second phrase member found at measure twenty is derived melodically from the beginning of the recitative’s second phrase, measures eight through eleven.
Figure 4.12 displays these similarities.

Figure 4.11  Melodic Similarities Between the Lament’s First Phrase Member and the Recitative’s First Phrase Member

Lament, Phrase Member One Melodic Content, Measure Eighteen

![Melodic Content Image]

Recitative, Phrase Member One Melodic Content, Measures One Through Five

![Melodic Content Image]

Figure 4.12  Melodic Similarities Between the Lament’s Second Phrase Member and the Recitative’s Second Phrase

Lament, Phrase Member Two Melodic Content, Measure Twenty

![Melodic Content Image]

Recitative, Phrase Two Melodic Content, Measures Eight Through Eleven

![Melodic Content Image]
In the second phrase of the recitative, a transposition of the “a” melody is found again. Measures twenty-five through twenty-six are an exact transposition down a tritone from measures twenty-three through twenty-four. Figure 4.13 exhibits this relationship.

Figure 4.13  Lament’s Phrase Two Melodic Similarities

Phrase Two, Phrase Member Four, Measures Twenty-Three Through Twenty-Four

Phrase Two, Phrase Member Five, Measures Twenty-Five Through Twenty-Six, Transposed Down a Tritone

The melody found at measure twenty-three is identical to the melody found at measures two and three. The melody at measure twenty-five would be a replica of the melody at measures nine and ten, but Mompou purposefully transposes this melody down by a tritone and not a perfect fifth. The F-sharp is made available through inversional relationships of the opening melody and the reordering of the melodic content found in measures twenty-three through twenty-four. Figure 4.14 shows this inversional relationship.
Figure 4.14  Relationship Between Arrival to F-sharp at Measure Twenty-Five and Opening Melody

Opening Melodic Content, Measures One Through Five

Melodic Content Reordered, Measures Twenty-Three Through Twenty-Four

The B-sharp found on the downbeat of measure twenty-six is enharmonically equivalent to C, which is the initial note of the lament’s second phrase. This creates the effect that the listener has come back to where they started, and it tightly links the antecedent-consequent relationship.

In the third phrase of the lament, the two phrase members are related by transposition. “B” melodic material is used and the second phrase member of this phrase is transposed down by a major second. Figure 4.15 illustrates this transposition.

It is also interesting to note that the melodic content of measures twenty-nine and thirty, the lament’s seventh phrase member, is identical to the melodic content of measures six and seven, the recitatives’ second phrase member. Figure 4.16 shows this melodic replication.
Figure 4.15  Melodic Similarities in the Lament’s Phrase Three

Phrase Three, Phrase Member 6, Measures Twenty-Seven and Twenty-Eight

Phrase Three, Phrase Member 7, Measures Twenty-Nine and Thirty, Transposed Down a Major Second

Figure 4.16  Melodic Replication in Recitativo’s Second Phrase Member and Lament’s Seventh Phrase Member

Recitative’s Second Phrase Member Melodic Content

Lament’s Seventh Phrase Member Melodic Content
The final and fourth phrase of the lament uses melodic content similar to the “b” melody. The first phrase member of this phrase uses three of the same notes as the recitative’s second phrase, measures thirteen and fourteen: C-sharp, D, and B-flat. Figure 4.17 exhibits this relationship.

Figure 4.17  Similarities in Melodic Content Between the Lament’s Fourth Phrase and the Recitative’s Second Phrase
Lament, Phrase Four, Phrase Member Eight, Measures Thirty-One and Thirty-Two

Recitative, Phrase Two, Phrase Member Four, Measures Thirteen and Fourteen

The final two measures of variation six begin as if it is a transposition of the phrase member preceding it. However, the final interval of this phrase member is not a minor sixth as seen in the previous measure, but ends with a leap of an octave. This final octave leap imitates the final octave leap in the theme. By doing this, Mompou reminds the listener that this variation is not completely introspective and able to stand alone as a separate composition, but serves as a variation within one large composition based on Chopin’s A Major prelude.

45
The seventh variation is oftentimes considered the most difficult of the variations due to its quick tempo and rapidly changing right hand chords.\textsuperscript{43} It shows similar characteristics to a miniature Chopin etude: quick 3/8 time, chromatic harmonies over a tonic pedal, and virtuosic finger work.\textsuperscript{44} Variation VII especially resembles Schumann’s ninth etude in his 1837 Symphonic Etudes, Op.13.\textsuperscript{45} Figure 4.18 exhibits the first six measures of both compositions. Note the similarities in texture, range, and right hand patterns.

Figure 4.18  Variation VII and Schumann’s Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13 Similarities

Variation VII, Measures One Through Six


\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{44} Wilfrid Mellers, \textit{Le Jardin Retrouvé}, 111.
\end{quote}
Mompou maintains the A Major tonality from the theme, yet changes the time signature to an allegro leggiero 3/8. The variation sustains a waltz-like effect due to the triple meter and particular bass line; however, with the given tempo marking and eighth note pulse, this variation is more of a fast dance than a languid waltz. The form is a ternary form, more specifically, ABA with the A section spanning measures one through twenty-five and its return at measures forty-nine through seventy-three and the B section covering measures twenty-six through forty-nine. The two A sections are identical. They are both a twenty-five-bar period with a thirteen-bar antecedent overlapping with a thirteen-bar consequent. The antecedent is made up of two phrases each with three phrase members. Figure 4.19 and the score illustrate the antecedent for the first A section.

Figure 4.19    Form of the Initial A Section’s Antecedent for Variation VII

Measures:       1-2      3-4      5-6      7-8      9-10    11-13
Phrase Member:  1       2     3      4     5     6
A Major:        $V^9$   I     $IV^7$  $V^9$   I
Phrase:         1       2

The consequent also consists of two phrases each made up of three phrase members. Figure 4.20 and the score show the form of the opening A section’s consequent.

Variation VII’s A section has many similarities to the theme. First of all, both forms are periods with an equal number of phrases, which have an equal number of phrase members in each phrase. They both rely heavily on $V^9$-I at cadence points at the end of phrases. They both
accelerate the harmonic rhythm greatly in the final phrase of the period, focusing on the
tonicization of ii before the final cadence. Also, Variation VII’s consequent begins identically in
melody and harmony to the antecedent; however, the consequent’s sudden deviation at measure
eighteen in both harmony and melody from the antecedent’s model resembles the unexpected
leap to C-sharp in the theme at measure eleven. This deviation is outlined in green in the score.

Figure 4.20  Form of the Initial A Section’s Consequent for Variation VII

Measures: 13-14  15-16  17  18-19  20-21  22-25
Phrase Member: 7  8  9  10  11  12
A Major: V⁹  I  ii⁰⁷/ii-V⁷/ii  ii  V⁹-I
Phrase: 3  4

The B section, measures twenty-six through forty-nine, acts like a development section of
a sonata-allegro form. It moves through different keys and finally retransitions to the original
tonic, coinciding with the recurrence of the opening theme. The B section consists of three
phrases. It begins in E Minor, then moves to D Minor, and finally ends in A Minor. The B
section suddenly switches to the parallel major, or original tonic, A Major at its very end. It is
interesting to note that the B section begins in the minor dominant of the variation and then
moves to the minor subdominant before returning to tonic. This movement to the subdominant is
reminiscent of Variation V’s move to the subdominant in the second period of the double period
and Variation VI’s use of the transposition a fifth down.
Though measure forty-nine is the end of the B section, it is also the opening measure of the A section, and, therefore, an overlap occurs between the two sections.

In this variation, Mompou transforms the Chopin prelude into a fast etude. Like Variation IV, he expands the form into a ternary structure while maintaining aspects of the original binary form within this larger structure. Like Variations V and VI, Mompou visits the subdominant key in the B section, setting up the whole for a dominant-tonic motion, bringing the piece back to the original key and original A section. Finally, Mompou introduces overlapping into the structure with the A section’s overlap between the antecedent and consequent and the B section’s overlap with the return of the A section.
Variation VIII
A | Antecedent | Phrase One

F Major: I vi

Consequent | Phrase Three

a Tempo

Phrase Four
The eighth variation is in the flat submediant of the theme’s original key. This is reminiscent of the fourth variation, which is also in F Major. Variation VIII has been compared to other Chopin works, such as the E Minor prelude, Op. 28, No. 4.\textsuperscript{46} Figure 4.21 includes the first three measures of Chopin’s Prelude in E Minor, Op. 28, No. 7. Note the similarities with Variation VIII in the use of constant left hand chords in the middle register of the piano with a simple right hand melody above these chords and a descending step-wise bass line.

Figure 4.21  
Chopin, Prelude in E Minor, Op. 28, No. 4, Measures 1-3

Variation VIII has also been compared to Chopin’s Prelude in D-Flat Major, Op. 28, No. 15.\textsuperscript{47} The comparisons between the eighth variation and the famous “Raindrop” Prelude are similar to the previous observations, an incessant repeating note or chord below a simple melody. Figure 4.22 displays the first four measures of Chopin’s fifteenth prelude in D-Flat Major.

Like Variations IV and VII, Mompou expands the form into a ternary structure, ABA. The two A sections span measures one through sixteen and twenty-five through forty-one. They are almost identical. The only difference is found at measures thirty-three through thirty-six, which add fourths to the melody. Reminiscent of the theme, the A section is a sixteen-bar period.

\textsuperscript{46} Wilfrid Mellers, \textit{Le Jardin Retrouvé}, 111.
with an eight-bar antecedent and an eight-bar consequent. There are a total of four phrases in the
period, two in the antecedent and two in the consequent. However, these phrases are not broken
down into two phrase members like the theme. The B section covers measures seventeen
through twenty-four. This eight-bar section is in D Minor. The use of a major key for the outer
two A sections and a minor key for the inner B section is also reminiscent of Chopin’s Prelude in
D-flat Major, Op. 28, No. 15, which uses D-flat Major for the A sections and C-sharp Minor for
the B section. Figure 4.23 illustrates the form of Variation VIII.

Figure 4.22  Chopin’s Prelude in D-Flat Major, Op. 28, No. 15, First Four Measures

In terms of harmony, Mompou veers far from Chopin’s original plan. First of all,
Variation VIII begins with tonic, whereas the theme began with dominant. Also changed is the
cadence at the end of the antecedent. In the theme, an imperfect authentic cadence was used. In
this variation, a half cadence is used. Finally, he uses 20th century devices in the B section at
measures twenty-one and twenty-two. These whole-tone and cluster chords are circled in red in
the score.

There are a few harmonic aspects Mompou preserves. He maintains the surprise chord at
the end of the third phrase. He achieves this by ending the third phrase with a deceptive cadence. This cadence is outlined in green in the score. He also retains the progression ii\(^7\)-V\(^9\)-I in the fourth phrase, which is the same progression used in the fourth phrase of the theme.

Figure 4.23  Form of Variation VIII

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phrases:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Major:</td>
<td>ii-V(^7)</td>
<td>I-V-vi(^7)</td>
<td>ii(^7)-V(^9)-I</td>
<td>vi</td>
<td>V(^7)/vi-vi</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>ii-V(^7)</td>
<td>I-V-vi(^7)</td>
<td>ii(^7)-V(^9)-I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period:</td>
<td>Antecedent</td>
<td>Consequent</td>
<td>Antecedent</td>
<td>Consequent</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ternary:</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The melody is transformed into a two-note sighing motive. The two-note slur is used throughout the variation. A remnant of the theme’s melody is found at measures fifteen and sixteen, with the use of scale degrees 4-6-7-2-1 in the same order and contour.

In this variation, Mompou revisits the tonal area of F Major, expands the form to the ternary structure once again, and preserves very little of the original harmonic scheme and melody. Mompou introduces the use of cluster chords, whole tone chords, and the use of the two-note sigh motive in this variation.
Variation IX
With its marked tempo of Valse, time signature of 3/4, and the consistent accentuation of the downbeat, Variation IX can indisputably be defined as a waltz. Once again Mompou has referenced Chopin as Chopin composed fifteen waltzes. The ninth variation maintains the theme’s original tonal area and time signature. It is the longest variation thus far with its eighty-four measures. Like Variations IV, V, VII, and VIII, this variation uses formal expansion by expanding the structure to the largest form used up to this point, a rondo. Figure 4.24 illustrates Variations IX’s form with measure numbers and overall tonal structure.

Figure 4.24  Form of Variation IX

Rondo:     A   B   A   C   A
Measures:  1-16  17-32  33-48  49-68  68-84
A Major:   I     vi  I    IV   I

Within this expanded form, Mompou preserves the simple binary form used in the theme. Both the A section and B section are formatted as sixteen-bar periods with an eight-bar antecedent and an eight-bar consequent. The antecedents and consequents are broken down into two four-bar phrases, each with two two-bar phrase members. The C section strays from this pattern as it is expanded into a twenty-bar period with a ten-bar antecedent and a ten-bar consequent. Both the antecedent and consequent are broken down into two phrases. Each phrase is comprised of either two phrase members or three phrase members.

The melody is also expanded in this variation. The melodic expansion used is similar to that used in Variation III. The downbeat of each phrase member in the A and B sections is

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transformed into a half note. The C section is the only segment that deviates from the constant downbeat half note. The theme’s melody is preserved in the A section, but not in the B or C sections. In the B section, the melody begins similar to theme with the use of scale degree 5 rising to scale degree 3, followed by scale degrees 4 and 2. However, the melody deviates after that. The C section also begins with scale degree 5, but it leaps to scale degree 2 afterwards. The contour of the melody in the first measure of the C section resembles the opening of the theme, but it does not match in terms of intervals and scale degrees.

Finally, the harmonic scheme is greatly expanded. First of all, the B and C sections are in different tonal areas than the A section, which creates the overall tonal structure of I-vi-I-IV-I. Note that Mompou once again visits the subdominant, as seen before in Variations V, VI, and VII. Second, since the downbeat of each phrase member in the A section is extended to a half note and the bass line includes chordal arpeggiation, Mompou turns the downbeat nonharmonic tone from the theme into a harmonic tone. This is first seen in the first measure, which projects tonic harmony. This tonic possibility was hinted at in Variation III and used in Variations IV and VIII. However, this is the first variation that strongly resembles the theme melodically and clearly projects tonic on the downbeat of the opening phrase. Also, Mompou greatly extends the use of predominants within the dominant-tonic motion established by the theme. This can be seen throughout the score with the heavy use of ii, IV, and vi chords.

Cadences are another interesting point to note in this variation. In the theme, only the imperfect authentic cadence and perfect authentic cadence were used. In this variation, Mompou expands the type of cadence utilized. The first unique cadence is found at the end of the antecedent of the A section. Here, Mompou ends the antecedent on a vii\(^{7}\)/V, which resolves to
$V^9$ at the upbeat to the consequent. Another cadence used in this variation is the half cadence. This occurs at the end of the antecedent of the B section. Finally, a deceptive cadence is used to end the C section. Cadences maintained from the theme are the perfect authentic cadence found at the ending of the A and B section, the imperfect authentic cadence used at the end of the C section’s antecedent, and the $V^7/ii$ used as the surprise chord and final chord of the sixth phrase member of the A section.

In Variation IX, Mompou consolidates all of the expansion ideas used throughout the variations. He uses formal expansion by extending the form into a rondo. He includes melodic expansion by transforming the downbeat melodic notes into half notes. He uses harmonic expansion by using different tonal areas for each formal section, using a large number of predominants, extending the use of cadences, and transforming the downbeat nonharmonic tones into harmonic tones. With all of these alterations, Mompou turns Chopin’s prelude into a stately waltz.
Variation X

Évocation
Variation X is given the title, "Évocation," reminiscent of the title given to Albeniz’s first dance in his suite *Iberia*. In terms of melody and texture, the tenth variation is also similar to Mompou’s Canción y Danza No. 6. Figure 4.25 shows the first few measures of Variation X and Mompou’s Canción y Danza No. 6. Note the similarities in the use of contour, melodic line, and falling appoggiaturas.

Figure 4.25  Similarities Between Variation X and Canción y Danza No. 6

Variation X, Measures One Through Three
Once again, Mompou has expanded the form to ABA. The A section is found at measures one through nine and twenty-seven through thirty-five while the B section spans measures ten through twenty-six. Both A sections are in F-sharp Minor and are identical. The A section is a nine measure period with a four-bar antecedent and a five-bar consequent. Figure 4.26 illustrates the form of the A section and its return with measure numbers.

Figure 4.26  Form of Variation X’s A Section and its Return

Measure: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
          27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35
Phrase Member: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
F-Sharp Minor: i vii\textsuperscript{b} i V i V7/iv-iv i V-iv V\textsuperscript{7}-i
Phrase: 1 \hspace{2cm} 2 \hspace{2cm} 3 \hspace{2cm} 4
Period: \hspace{2cm} \textit{Antecedent} \hspace{2cm} \textit{Consequent}

In the A section, Mompou portions the phrase members and phrases unevenly. First of all, the phrase members are unbalanced in terms of length. All of the phrase members include...
three beats, except for the seventh and eighth phrase members. The seventh phrase member is extended to include four beats while the eighth phrase member is shortened to two beats. This is similar to the asymmetrical portioning of the phrase members in Variation IV. Also, the fourth phrase is expanded to include three phrase members rather than two as seen in the previous phrases. This is accomplished through an unexpected cadence on iv in measure eight. Therefore, an extra phrase member is needed to end the A section with a perfect authentic cadence.

The B section is in the relative major, A Major, which is also the tonal area of the theme. In the B section, Mompou quotes the B section of Chopin’s Fantaisie-Impromptu, Op. posthumous. Figure 4.27 shows the portion of the Fantaisie-Impromptu Mompou is quoting, measures forty-three through fifty-eight. Mompou has maintained Chopin’s form and melody. However, Mompou has changed the texture of this quotation, creating a chorale style middle section for his tenth variation, as well as expanding upon Chopin’s original harmonic scheme in D-flat Major of consistent dominant-tonic motion.

Variation X’s B section is a period with an eight-bar antecedent and a nine bar antecedent, each made up of two phrases. Like the A section, the phrases are portioned unequally, as the fourth phrase is five measures long whereas the other three phrases are only four measures long. Mompou extends this phrase to end on a $V^7/vi$, which brings the variation back to the original tonal area of F-sharp Minor.

In Variation X, Mompou creates a folkloric cancion with multiple voices and falling appoggiaturas, suggestive of the two-note slur seen in Variation VIII.
He uses expansion by utilizing a ternary structure of ABA while including instances of asymmetrical portioning of phrase members and phrases. Finally, Mompou directly quotes another Chopin work, making the previous comparisons to various Chopin compositions even stronger.

Figure 4.27  Chopin’s Fantaisie-Impromptu, Op. posthumous, Measures 43-58
Variation XI
Variation XI maintains the expressive and quiet atmosphere of the tenth variation as well as the tonal area of F-sharp Minor. The time signature in this variation is changed to 2/4 from the original theme’s 3/4, and the form has been developed into a rounded binary form. Figure 4.28 illustrates the form of the eleventh variation.

The first sixteen measures of Variation XI create the initial A section of the rounded binary form. Mompou maintains the use of the theme’s form of a period by formatting the a section as an eight-bar period. Measures one through eight make up the eight-bar period with a written-out repeat found at measures nine through sixteen. The b section is found at measures
seventeen through twenty-eight. This portion is broken down into three phrases. The return of the a section’s consequent is found at measures twenty-nine through thirty-two.

Figure 4.28   Form of Variation XI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measures:</td>
<td>1–16</td>
<td>17–28</td>
<td>29–32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-sharp Minor:</td>
<td>i V i</td>
<td>—» V</td>
<td>i V i</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this variation, Mompou uses fragments of the theme’s melody to create the texture, intervals, and melody. First of all, a melodic fragment is found throughout the variation in all voices. This fragment resembles the theme’s first measure’s beats one and two. The fragment is similar in terms of contour and rhythm; however, it is not intervallically equivalent. This melodic fragment used throughout the eleventh variation is circled in red in the score.

Second, the opening interval of a ninth is taken directly from the theme. The E and F-sharp used as the opening ninth are both from the theme’s initial notes of the first two phrase members. Figure 4.29 shows this relationship.

Figure 4.29   Extraction of Theme’s Initial Notes of Phrase Members One and Two

A similar extraction is used for the ninth used in measure two. The D and E are taken from the
third note of the theme’s first and second phrase member. Figure 4.30 exhibits this extraction.

Figure 4.30 Extraction of Theme’s Third Note of Phrase Members One and Two

Finally, Mompou’s choice to utilize these pitches from the theme affects the texture throughout the entire variation. Mompou continues to use the ninth in mostly stepwise motion.

In Variation XI, Mompou once again uses formal expansion to shape the variation’s structure. He also uses melodic fragmentation and extraction, taking notes and melodies directly from the theme to compose a new variant on Chopin’s A Major Prelude.
Variation XII

Galope y Epílogo
With the final variation, Mompou composes the longest variation of the entire composition. With its one hundred and thirty-two measure galop and eighteen-bar epilogue, Variation XII takes nearly four minutes to perform. In Variation XII, Mompou compiles techniques used in the previous variations. Mompou uses expansion, extraction, fragmentation, and embellishment as well as visiting previously seen tonal areas.

First of all, Mompou uses formal expansion. Like Variations IV, VII, VIII, and X, Variation XII is a large ternary form, ABA. Figure 4.31 illustrates the form of Variation XII’s galop.

**Figure 4.31  Form of Variation XII’s galop**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure:</th>
<th>1-63</th>
<th>64-101</th>
<th>102-132</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form:</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key:</td>
<td>A Major</td>
<td>A Minor</td>
<td>A Major</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within this ternary form, Mompou utilizes the theme’s sixteen-bar period in the initial A section. He also uses asymmetrical portioning of phrase members in the B section and in the final phrase of the epilogue. This technique is also seen in Variations IV, IX, and X.

Melodic expansion can be found in the B section and the epilogue. The epilogue uses melodic expansion similar to Variations III and IX with the downbeat of each phrase member extended to a half note. In the B section, the theme’s melody from the first two phrase members is used in expansion. This can especially be seen in the second phrase member, where the melody covers four full measures. This melodic fragmentation and its stepwise transposition in
the B section are similar to Variations VI and XI. In addition, Mompou includes tonal areas seen in other variations. Like Variations V, VII, and IX, a tonicization of the subdominant is used. This can be found in the consequent of the first period of the initial A section. F-sharp Minor is also found in the A section, used in the second period. This is reminiscent of Variations X and XI.

Comparable to Variation XI, Mompou extracts specific notes from the theme to create the texture and melodic content of Variation XII’s galop. The melody of the first two phrase members of the opening A section is formed from the nonharmonic tones and their resolution found on the downbeats of the theme’s first two phrase members. However, in Variation XII’s first phrase member, Mompou adds thirds below the melody, A-sharp and B. He also embeds the theme’s complete melody in the third period of the A section in the right hand alternating sixteenth notes.

Finally, Mompou revisits the use of harmonic elaboration in the epilogue. This was first seen in Variation I. Due to a heavy use of chromaticism and nonharmonic tones, some harmonies are heavily embellished. Examples of this are found at the downbeat of the fourth phrase member and the second and third measures of the final phrase member. Finally, whole tone chords are used in the seventh phrase member, emphasizing the twentieth-century influence on this nineteenth-century prelude and recalling Variations VI, VII, and XI.

In Variation XII, Mompou uses a compilation of techniques used throughout the variations to compose the ending to one of his largest piano works. Expansion, fragmentation, extraction, and embellishment are all utilized in the concluding galop and epilogue. By doing this, Mompou creates a decisive summary to this Catalan repertoire standard.
5. Performance Issues

The pianist faces a number of issues when performing this large Mompou composition. First and foremost, the pianist must perform the piece as one large composition and not as a Chopin prelude followed by twelve variants. Mompou gives the performer hints throughout the work on how to keep the variations together as one large composition. He does this through fermatas at the end of variations and added rests at the beginning of the variations, letting the performer know how long to wait in between the variations.

In Variation I, the main issues the pianist faces are the use of the damper pedal and expressive elements. Mompou adds several instructions for expression, such as *poco espressivo* at measure five, *sforzando* at measure ten, *ritardandi* at measures eleven and fifteen, a rolled chord at measure six, and grace notes at measures five and sixteen. Crescendi and decrescendi are also included at measures five and eleven.

A few pedal suggestions are given in the score by bass notes; however, little instruction is given other than these pedal notes. In his recording, Mompou changes the damper pedal at the end of the first two phrase members. On the third phrase member, he changes the pedal at measure five beats two, three, and the following downbeat, the large rolled dominant ninth. In the fourth phrase member, he changes the pedal on every beat, including the upbeat. He returns to his previous pedaling for the fifth phrase member by holding the pedal until the next phrase member. On the following phrase member, he changes the pedal with each left hand note, which helps accentuate the tenuto marks given to the D-sharp, E and C-sharp in the middle voice. In
phrase member seven, he holds the pedal downbeat to downbeat. Lastly, he holds the pedal for the entire final phrase member. 49

Close listening and discretion on expressive elements should be the performer’s main focus when interpreting this sensitive variation with its colorful harmonies and subtle changes to the original theme.

The major pianistic issues of Variation II are pedal and dynamics. In his 1974 recording, Mompou changes the pedal in every measure at beats one and four. Only once does he deviate from this pattern. This occurs at measure six where he changes the pedal at beats one, three, and four, defining the F-sharp seventh chord, or the theme’s surprise chord. He also takes time at this point, including a ritardando from beat three to beat four. In this recording, he takes time in the final measure to the last A Major chord as well.

Though the score only includes one dynamic marking, mezzo forte, Mompou adds a few dynamics in his recording. First, he adds a decrescendo at measure four, ending with a pianissimo F-sharp Minor chord on beat three. He then immediately returns to mezzo forte at the beginning of the consequent. He also includes a pianissimo at measure six, beat four on the surprise chord, or the F-sharp seventh chord. Finally, he inserts a decrescendo at the last measure, ending the variation very soft. 50

Pianistic issues in the third variation are voicing and timing. The performer must be very conscious of the projection of the melodic line since one hand is responsible for all voices. For example, the melody is sometimes found at the bottom of a chord, such as in measure two beat three, measure three beat one, and measure sixteen beat one. Also, in one instance, the melody is

50 Ibid.
found in the middle of a closely positioned chord. This occurs on the downbeat of measure nine with the F-sharp acting as the melody yet is found as the second lowest note of the chord. The pianist must also listen carefully to matching the sound from held notes to the following note. An example of this is found in measure one. This is accomplished by matching the dynamic level of the last note to the final level of the initial note from the measure. This technique occurs regularly throughout the variation and requires focused concentration by the performer.

The other issue the performer must confront is timing. With the given instructions of *Lento* and *molto cantabile e espressivo*, Mompou is giving the pianist some freedom in his interpretation of tempo and rhythm. In his recording, Mompou takes time between the melodic line and the arpeggios to help delineate the melody. Also an interesting point to note from his recording, on the last beat of measure two and the first beat of measure three, Mompou plays the melody, or the lowest note of the chord, on the beat with the two higher notes of the chord as a sixteenth between the melody and following eighth note.\(^{35}\) *Ritardandi* are included at measures eight, eleven, and sixteen through seventeen; however in his recording, Mompou extends the ritardando at measure eleven until the end of measure twelve.\(^{36}\)

The main issue the performer must deal with in Variation IV is voicing. With a canonic style throughout, there is an abundance of choices for melodic lines. In his recording, Mompou consistently brings out the top line. There are a few instances, however, where the soprano voice is either resting or inactive. Mompou uses these moments to bring out other lines. One such instance is the bass line in measures seventeen and twenty-four. This also occurs in the tenor line in measures twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-nine, thirty, and thirty-one. Mompou also

\(^{35}\) Ibid.
\(^{36}\) Ibid.
voices the tenor line at measures thirteen through fourteen and forty-five through forty-six. In all other instances, the topmost line is played as the main melody.³⁷

In Variation V, the main pianistic issues are widely spaced chords and accents. Reaches of ninths and tenths are found throughout. A twelfth is even found in the left hand of measure fourteen as well as a thirteenth in the right hand. It is helpful that rolled chords are included for several of these larger chords, but a larger hand would be better suited for an accurate performance.

The accents are also somewhat troubling. The lack of repetition in the use of accents as well as accents in separate hands at different moments can be problematic. For example, in the first and second measures, accents are found on the downbeat in the right hand and the last beat in the left hand. However, in measures three, four, and five, an accent is only found in the left hand on beat three. Then measures six and seven do not include accents at all. The performer must pay close attention to these small details and listen carefully for an exact interpretation.

Voicing is the chief performance issue of Variation VI. The performer must be very conscious of bringing out the melody, even when imitated in a lower voice. Also, Mompou includes double stems in the bass line of the lament’s phrase member one and phrase member three. The pianist should play these few bass notes louder, though not louder than the melody. The performer should maintain focused and attentive listening throughout this variation to successfully produce the mysterious mood it can evoke.

The performer has two main pianistic issues to focus on in Variation VII: accuracy and pedaling. Accuracy is especially challenging in this variation due to the quick changing chords in the right hand. Most of these are highly chromatic and do not follow a consistent pattern for

³⁷ Ibid.
the performer to rely on. There are also a few large leaps for the left hand, such as those found in measures twenty-seven and thirty-three.

Pedaling is also problematic. Mompou indicates a ringing bass on the downbeats found mainly throughout the A sections and a dotted quarter on the downbeat bass notes for most of the B section. However, the highly chromatic right hand can make this seemingly simple pedal pattern somewhat unclear in sound. Due to the quick tempo and use of the higher register for these chromatic chords, the pianist can use a shallow pedal by slightly depressing the damper pedal. This will allow the piano to catch the bass note sound but not completely catch the following notes, creating a much clearer sound. This seems to be the technique Mompou uses in his 1974 recording.\(^3\)

When performing Variation VIII, the pianist must be very aware of two performance difficulties: balance and large stretches in the hand. In some measures, the stretches can be rearranged between the hands to avoid any unreachable intervals. However, a few places arise that this device cannot be applied, such as the ninths and tenths found in the left hand in measures fifteen and thirty-nine.

The other main performance issue is balance. With an accompaniment of repeated chords in the middle register of the piano, it can become difficult to keep these chords softer than the very thin melodic line. Therefore, the pianist must always be aware of the sound and keep a light left hand throughout the entire variation.

When performing Variation IX, the pianist must be very conscious of the wide stretches found throughout the variation. A total of twelve tenths are found in the left hand and six ninths

\(^3\) Ibid.
are found in both the right hand and left hand parts. Also, three rolled tenths are included at measures eight, forty, and seventy-six in the right hand. Accurate execution of these large stretches for the hand is necessary to maintain the consistency of beat and texture needed in a waltz such as that found in Variation IX.

The two main performance issues for the tenth variation are large stretches for the hand and voicing. A larger hand is needed in this variation to successfully play the four left-handed tenths, two right-handed tenths, and one left-handed ninth. Other large intervals are included in the score, but they can be redistributed between the hands to create intervals no larger than an octave in one hand. The other pianist’s concern, voicing, can also be difficult. The A section contains many interesting melodic lines in multiple voices, and a decision must be made as to which line to play as the principal melody. In his 1974 recording, Mompou voices the topmost line as the most important melody. He brings out the bass line eighth note melody as a secondary line, as almost an imitation of the soprano’s melody.39 Also, the B section contains many close intervals. These can make the melody difficult to voice as the notes are close together and in the richer middle register of the keyboard. Close listening and a hand weighted to the topmost note is needed throughout.

Concerning performance difficulties in Variation XI, the pianist must be aware of the constant large stretches. Nonths are found consistently throughout every measure. Some have the potential of being split between the hands; however, not all occurrences allow this comfort. For the pianist with a small hand, rolling the ninths on the downbeat of each measure may be quite unappealing as the texture and flow of rhythm will be highly skewed.

39 Ibid.
A hand that can comfortably reach a ninth is needed for this variation to avoid a distorted interpretation or an injured pianist.

The two main performance issues of the twelfth variation are voicing and stretches. Oftentimes, Mompou includes melodic lines embedded in constant sixteenths, such as in the transition from the A section to the B section of the galop, or masks the theme’s melody, such as in the a' portion of the galop’s A section. In these instances, the pianist must listen carefully for a clear projection of the desired melody. Also, a large hand is needed for many stretches beyond an octave. These are found especially in the galop’s B section and the epilogue. A sensitive ear and a large hand are greatly needed to properly perform the final variation of *Variations sur un thème de Chopin*. 
6. Conclusion

In his *Variations sur un thème de Chopin*, Federico Mompou creates a twentieth-century Catalan repertoire standard using Chopin’s Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7. The variations were a large work for Mompou, taking nearly twenty years to finish. As shown in the fourth chapter, many of his compositional characteristics were visible in this work. Examples discussed were wide stretched chords, extended harmonies, and Catalan folk elements. Mompou also allowed Chopin to remain a major influence on his composition of the variations. This was not only seen with the use of the theme, but also in the use of dances commonly composed by Chopin, such as waltzes and mazurkas, as well as references to other Chopin compositions.

Mompou used the theme of Chopin’s Prelude in A Major, Op. 28, No. 7 in various ways throughout the composition. He incorporated twentieth-century elements by using whole tone chords, added seconds and fourths, and nonfunctional sevenths and ninths. He also exploited the use of the theme’s form, a period, in most variations. Some variations were a period by themselves, and others used the period within larger forms, such as rounded binary, ternary, and rondo. Examples of embellishment, compression, expansion, and fragmentation were found throughout the variations. In every case, Mompou stayed true to the theme, incorporating some element, whether obvious or marginal.

The purpose of this document was to provide a detailed study of Mompou’s *Variations sur un thème de Chopin*. Throughout the fourth chapter, discussion of Mompou’s adaptation of Chopin’s motive, harmonies, and stylistic characteristics was made with musical examples and
detailed analysis. Therefore, this document provides a significant contribution to the continuing study of the Catalan composer Federico Mompou and his compositions.
Works Cited


APPENDIX

Dear Ms York:

Thank you for your message. I am sorry if we have failed to reply to your requests previously, but I have no record of having received any earlier message from you.

We are of course pleased to be able to grant you permission to include this score in your doctoral thesis. The copy/copies must not be distributed other than for the purposes of the examination and may not be sold, hired, lent or otherwise distributed for any other purpose.

May I take this opportunity to wish you every success in your doctorate.

Yours sincerely,

David Bray Chef du service editorial

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