

TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS IN SELECTED KEYBOARD WORKS
OF SCARLATTI, MOZART, AND SCHUMANN

by

JIN LEE

NOEL J. ENGBRETSON, COMMITTEE CHAIR

KEVIN THOMAS CHANCE
LINDA PAGE CUMMINS
THOMAS ROBINSON
SUSAN CURTIS FLEMING
TRICIA A. MCELROY

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ABSTRACT

This manuscript is a study of four piano works of Scarlatti, Mozart, and Schumann, which I recorded as part of my D.M.A final project. The works are Scarlatti Sonatas, K. 141 in D Minor and K. 380 in E Major; Mozart Piano Sonata, K. 576 in D Major, and Schumann *Carnaval*, Op. 9. These works were chosen because each presents technical innovations in keyboard playing for its time and instrument.

Scarlatti's output for the solo keyboard is comprised almost entirely of sonatas. Although he did not collect the sonatas within the framework of the Baroque keyboard suite, each of his sonatas has its own distinctive character, and that character is sometimes marked by virtuosity and innovations in keyboard technique. His sonatas K. 141 in D Minor and K. 380 in E Major represent technical innovations using guitar technique, rapid repeated notes, imitating horn calls and Spanish dance rhythms.

Mozart's last Piano Sonata, K. 576 in D Major, is one of his most difficult works for keyboard and occupies a unique place in his repertoire. Before K. 576, Mozart's keyboard sonatas primarily utilized homophonic textures, but this last sonata is largely contrapuntal, and also among his most virtuosic.

Schumann's *Carnaval*, Op. 9, is a collection of character pieces, each identified by its own title. Schumann presented the different personalities drawn from his dual fantasy characters, his colleagues and friends, and the Italian *Commedia dell'arte* figures. The work is technically demanding, and Schumann strives to fully realize the expressive range of the piano. He expands

keyboard techniques by writing intervals and chords that require a much wider stretch of the hand, using a wider range of the keyboard, and introducing new pedal techniques.

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INTRODUCTION

The works discussed in this manuscript were chosen because in each the composer advances the boundaries of contemporary keyboard composition and sets new expectations of composers, performers, and even instrument makers. The following chapters will outline these innovations in Scarlatti's Sonatas, K. 141 in D Minor and K. 380 in E Major; Mozart's Piano Sonata K. 576 in D Major; and Schumann's *Carnaval*, Op. 9.

Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) was an Italian composer who was born in the same year as Handel and J.S. Bach. He composed 550 keyboard sonatas, and many of them are great teaching pieces for developing technical skills. Both Sonatas K. 141 in D Minor and K. 380 in E Major represent Scarlatti's technical and musical innovations such as rapid repeated notes, imitating horn calls and Spanish dance rhythms.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) was a leading virtuoso pianist of his time and composed many works for keyboard. He wrote numerous sets of variations for solo piano throughout his entire career. Mozart composed four pieces for piano duet and two pieces for two pianos. His four-hand works for one piano (K. 497 and K. 521) were composed in his childhood and youth for his own performance with his sister Marianne. He also composed nineteen piano sonatas and twenty-seven piano concerti. The piano concerti are one of his greatest legacies. The piano sonatas in Mozart's catalog were composed for one of two purposes: for amateurs or for teaching purposes and for his own use as a touring virtuoso pianist. Mozart's last Piano Sonata, K. 576 in D Major, is one of his most difficult works for keyboard and occupies a unique place

in the repertoire. Before K. 576, Mozart's keyboard sonatas primarily utilized homophonic textures, but this last sonata is largely contrapuntal and is also highly virtuosic.

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) was a German composer who wrote many works for solo piano, especially character pieces, and the character pieces are the most important genre of his keyboard output.¹ The style of his character pieces is often divided into two types. Most of his works are generally regarded as "non-programmatic" type of character pieces, such as the fantasias, *Nachtstücke*, Arabesques, *Album for the Young*, and *Album Leaves*; each separated piece is independent so that the order of pieces may not be important. The other type is programmatic with a logical sequence of events, such as those pieces found in *Davidsbündlertänze*, *Carnival*, *Fantasiestücke*, *Kinderszenen*, *Kreisleriana*, *Blumenstück*, and *Faschingsschwank aus Wien*.² Schumann's *Carnival*, Op. 9, is a collection of character pieces, each identified by its own title. The work is technically demanding, and Schumann strives to fully realize the expressive range of the piano. He expands keyboard techniques by writing intervals and chords that require a much wider stretch of the hand, uses a wider range of the keyboard, and he introduces innovative pedal techniques.

These works by each composer demonstrate technical innovations of three different time periods, Baroque, Classical, and Romantic. This manuscript will discuss how Scarlatti, Mozart and Schumann use their own compositional skill to develop keyboard technique and what the challenge of these pieces to perform is.

¹ John Gillespie, *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music: An Historical Survey of Music for Harpsichord and Piano* (New York: Dover Publications, 1972), 210.

² Gillespie, *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music*, 210.

CHAPTER 1 Scarlatti Sonatas, K. 141 in D Minor and K. 380 in E Major

Scarlatti's output for the solo keyboard is comprised almost entirely of his sonatas. His over 555 short sonatas for keyboard were written originally as exercise pieces. Although he did not utilize the framework of the Baroque keyboard suite, each of his sonatas has its own distinctive character, and that character is sometimes marked by virtuosity and innovation in keyboard techniques.

Born in Naples, Scarlatti was educated and worked in several cities in Italy including Naples, Venice, and Rome. He moved to Spain in 1719 or 1720 under the patronage of Queen Maria Barbara as a harpsichordist for the royal court, where he was entrusted with the musical education of the princesses; thus large numbers of his sonatas were composed in Madrid or other Spanish cities.

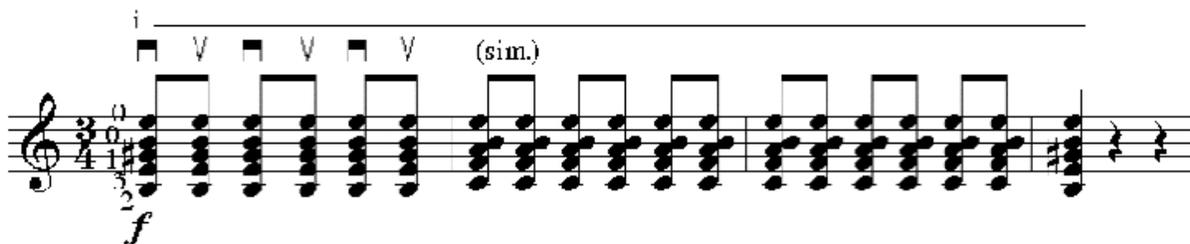
Most of Scarlatti's sonatas are composed of a single movement with two repeating sections in binary form, based on a single theme, although some do include new thematic material in the second section. Most editions of Scarlatti display each sonata as an independent piece; however, some authors believe that Scarlatti intended pairs to be performed together.³ Ralph Kirkpatrick, who is widely regarded as a leading expert on Scarlatti, and is known for his definitive chronological cataloging of Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas, discovered that apparently Scarlatti's sonatas were often arranged in pairs or groups of three, even though they are

³ Gillespie, *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music*, 71.

numbered individually. Thus, a pair of sonatas could be in a major key and the other in a minor tonality for contrast or to complement the others in that group.

Scarlatti has been often regarded as one of the most important proponents of keyboard technique. He raised keyboard technique to a new level of virtuosity by employing prolonged trills, hand-crossings and rapidly repeated notes, and his sonata K. 141 in D Minor is one of the most famous and challenging of Scarlatti's sonatas for pianists.⁴ The Sonata K. 141 is toccata-like, containing rapid repeated notes and hand crossings. According to distinguished scholars Sutcliffe⁵ and Boyd,⁶ Scarlatti's keyboard works are more technically challenging when compared to J.S. Bach's fugues. Scarlatti shows a Spanish influence in his Sonata K. 141; the rapidly repeated note clusters on the left hand represent the *rasgueado* (Figure 1)⁷ similar to Spanish guitar technique, especially in flamenco singing and dancing,⁸ and the repeated notes on the right hand imitate the plucking of the *chanterelle* or highest string.⁹

Figure 1: Basic *rasgueado* with the right-hand index finger in Spanish guitar technique.



At the beginning, while the right hand plays rapid alteration of notes, the left-hand chords create some guitar effects. The strumming opening with non-triadic dissonances imitates a guitar

⁴ Malcolm Boyd, *Domenico Scarlatti-Master of Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1987), 184.

⁵ Dean W. Sutcliffe, *The Keyboard Sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti and Eighteenth-century Musical Style* (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 42.

⁶ Boyd, *Domenico Scarlatti-Master of Music*, 209.

⁷ A guitar finger strumming, that commonly use in flamenco guitar music.

⁸ Gillespie, *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music*, 71.

⁹ Boyd, *Domenico Scarlatti-Master of Music*, 183.

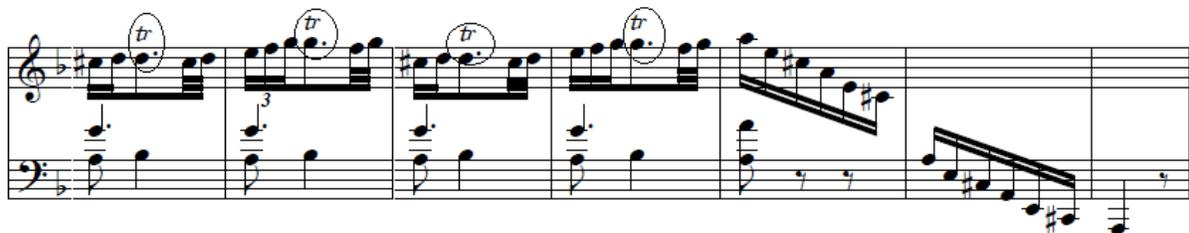
technique, *resgueado*, found in flamenco guitar music¹⁰; also the 5-4 suspension on the left hand, which describes strumming guitar sound, makes the opening quite distinct from the other section (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Scarlatti Keyboard Sonata, K. 141 in D Minor, mm. 1-9.



The influence of Spanish folk-dances is also contained in the rhythms. Scarlatti used syncopations to give a rhythmic energy,¹¹ and this characteristic is shown in measures 19-22 and 33-36. A trill on the second beat in measure 33 makes a syncopated rhythm as well. These syncopated rhythms are often found in Spanish dance music¹² (Figure 3 & 4).

Figure 3: Scarlatti Keyboard Sonata, K. 141 in D Minor, mm. 33-39.



¹⁰ Ralph Kirkpatrick, *Domenico Scarlatti* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 205.

¹¹ Boyd, *Domenico Scarlatti-Master of Music*, 188.

¹² *Ibid.*, 6.

Figure 4: Falla Piezas Españolas, “Aragonesa” mm. 29-38.



From measures 40 to 45, a rhythmic difference appears between both hands. The left hand has rhythmic changes by a tied note, while the right hand plays steady sixteenth notes (Figure 5), and these rhythmic patterns reappear in measures from 113 to 125. Such rhythmic figures are commonly shown in Spanish dance music (Figure 6).

Figure 5: Scarlatti Keyboard Sonata, K. 141 in D Minor, mm. 40-45.



Figure 6: Falla Piezas Españolas, “Aragonesa” mm. 9-17.



Sonata K. 380 in E Major is one of the most popular of Scarlatti's sonatas, nicknamed "Cortège" (a funeral procession).¹³ Sonata K. 380 imitates the sounds of horns (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Scarlatti Keyboard Sonata, K. 380 in E Major, mm. 1-4.



This sonata also shows some Spanish elements. The repeated opening dotted rhythm and eighth and sixteenth notes together produce Spanish dance rhythm, particularly the bolero¹⁴ (Figure 8&9).

¹³ Sutcliffe, *The Keyboard Sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti and Eighteenth-century Musical Style*, 363.

¹⁴ "Early Bolero Rhythms." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed January 12, 2015.

Figure 8: Traditional Bolero Rhythms from Grove music.

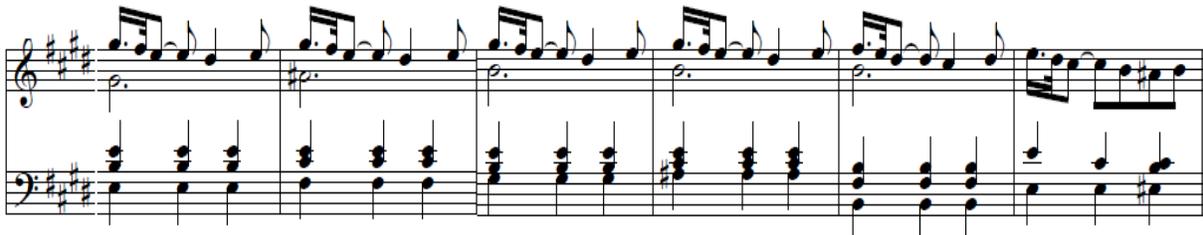


Figure 9: Scarlatti Keyboard Sonata, K. 380 in E Major, mm. 19-21.



Similar to Sonata, K. 141, K. 380 is also syncopated by a tied note. The tied notes, E, D[#] and C[#] produce a syncopated rhythm from measures 12 to 17 (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Scarlatti Keyboard Sonata, K. 380 in E Major, mm. 12-17.



Scarlatti inserted dynamic markings, piano or forte, in some of his early sonatas (Sonatas K. 70, 73, 88) implying to echo effect.¹⁵ Even though he did not insert any dynamic marking in this sonata, two repetitions of the same phrase could be interpreted as an echo-like effect. At the beginning, the motive from measures 1 to 2 is exactly repeated in measures 3 and 4. The same

¹⁵ Kirkpatrick, *Domenico Scarlatti*, 283.

motive, which was stated in the right hand is taken up by the left hand in measures 5 and 6, and also repeated in measures 7 and 8 (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Scarlatti Keyboard Sonata, K. 380 in E Major, mm. 1-9.



Even though Scarlatti's sonatas are short single-movement works, each of them has its own characteristics representing his innovative technical style. Both sonatas, K. 141 in D Minor and K. 380 in E Major show the influence of Spanish dance music with guitar technique, rapid repeated notes and syncopated rhythms.

CHAPTER 2 Mozart piano Sonata, K. 576 in D Major

Mozart's last piano Sonata, K. 576 in D Major, is one of his most difficult works for keyboard and occupies a unique place in his repertoire. His earlier keyboard pieces show galant style with homophonic texture; however from 1782 he had been influenced by J.S Bach's polyphonic style and this last sonata written in 1789 is his mature sonata displaying skilled contrapuntal treatment.

In Mozart's time, the primary keyboard instrument was the fortepiano, which was the same instrument that Beethoven used in his early works. Mozart was a mature composer whose development corresponded with the development of the piano. Mozart's early piano music was first conceived for the harpsichord. Mozart's sonatas with violin accompaniment K. 6-9, 10-15 and 26-31, and the four pasticcio concertos K. 37, 39-41 were designated for the harpsichord. Some of his earliest concertos, K. 175, K. 238, and K. 246, were probably written for the harpsichord as well. Mozart wrote seventeen sets of variations and a few fantasias for solo clavier. In the 1770s, as Mozart grew to maturity, the fortepiano had begun to surpass both the harpsichord and the clavichord in utility and thus in popularity. Until the middle of the 1770s, Mozart was familiar with using the harpsichord or clavichord rather than the fortepiano or piano. From his sonatas K. 279-284 onward Mozart's keyboard music was composed for the fortepiano. In 1777, Mozart came to know Johann Andreas Stein, a leading piano builder in Augsburg.

Although Mozart praised Stein's instrument, Mozart purchased a pianoforte built by Anton Walter of Vienna in 1785 that became his favorite instrument.¹⁶

Mozart's nineteen piano sonatas can be divided into three groups according to their dates and circumstance of composition. The first set of his sonatas was composed in Salzburg and Munich during late 1774 and early 1775. The piano Sonatas, K. 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, and 284 were all composed in this time. His second group of sonatas was composed in Mannheim and Paris between 1777 and 1779. They include K. 309, K. 310 and K. 311. Two sonatas, K. 309 and K. 311 were written in Mannheim. The opening of K. 309 begins with the fanfare in unharmonized octave played forte and juxtaposed with piano. Mozart often used symphonic textures in his piano sonatas, and K. 309 shows this characteristic. The motivic figures resemble the Mannheim orchestral school. Mozart was also influenced by the Mannheim style "rocket", an ascending figure in broken triads that appears in numerous piano sonatas written in and around Mannheim. Mozart's mature sonatas start with K. 330-333 after the time of his journey to Mannheim and Paris when he developed a reputation with the success of his "Paris" Symphony (K. 297/300a). The last sonatas, K. 457, 533, 545, 570 and 576, were composed between 1788 and 1790 in Vienna.

Mozart's piano sonatas consist of three movements, with the exception of the Sonata K. 498a in B-flat Major, which consists of four movements. Overall, Mozart chooses to write the first movement in sonata-allegro form, with the exceptions of the Sonata, K. 282, in E-flat Major, which opens with an Adagio and the Sonata, K. 331 in A Major with Air and Variations. The second movement is generally a slow movement, Adagio or Andante. The third movement is an

¹⁶ Richner, *Orientation for Interpreting Mozart's Piano Sonatas*, 18.

Allegro or Presto in sonata or rondo form. The only exception is Sonata, K. 284 in D Major, which closes with an Air and Variations.

The last Sonata, K. 576 is a typical three-movement work in fast-slow-fast tempi. The first movement opens with an arpeggiation of a tonic triad, which sounds like hunting horns. Mozart's Sonata, K. 576 shows a strong cohesiveness and motivic unity¹⁷; the rising arpeggios of first two measures are answered by a harmonized phrase in measures 3 and 4, and the opening arpeggiated triad moves upward by a step in measures 5 and 6. The first theme is from measures 1 to 8 with 4+4 structure, and the beginning motive becomes a principal feature in the ingenious contrapuntal development style of this movement (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Mozart Sonata, K. 576, 1st mvmt, mm.1-8.



The second theme appears from measures 27 to 31. However, unlike the traditional sonata form, the second theme does not contrast with the first theme. In the second theme, the opening material appears in six-measures of canonic style in A Major. The canonic imitation of the first theme in measures 8 and 9 begins in the left hand a half-beat early, and in the second theme in

¹⁷ William Kinderman, *Mozart's Piano Music* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 67.

measures 27, 28, and 29, the left hand begins a half-beat early this time, and the right hand follows (Figure 13&14).

Figure 13: Mozart Sonata, K. 576, 1st mvmt, mm.8-9.



Figure 14: Mozart Sonata, K. 576, 1st mvmt, mm.27-31.



In the development section, the first theme also appears in contrapuntal style with contrasting keys of B-flat Major and G Minor. In measure 62, the right hand plays a theme first and then the left hand imitates the right hand. However, in measure 69 in the key of G Minor, the left hand plays a motive first and then the right hand takes over. From measures 74 to 76, Mozart shows a double counterpoint; the dotted quarter notes in measure 74 of the tenor voice are imitated by the soprano part in measure 76, and the sixteenth notes in the soprano part in measures 74 take over the tenor part in measure 76 (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Mozart Sonata, K. 576, 1st mvmt, mm.74-76.



From measure 83, the triple counterpoint appears. A motive from measures 83 to 85 in the right hand is imitated in the left hand from measures 86 to 88. The inner voice of the left hand in measures 84 and 85 is imitated in the right hand's inner voice from measures 87 to 88. Also, a chromatic melody in the outer voice of the left hand from measures 84 to 85 is imitated in the right hand's outer voice from measures 87 to 88 (Figure 16). Unlike Mozart's previous homophonic sonatas, he shows a contrapuntal texture with imitating voices in K.576.

Figure 16: Mozart Sonata, K. 576, 1st mvmt, mm.83-93.



The first theme in the recapitulation is the same as in the exposition; however the theme is transformed in a canonic style from measures 107 to 117 (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Mozart Sonata, K. 576, 1st mvmt, mm.107-113.



By contrast with the first movement, the middle movement encompasses no counterpoint. The second movement is a slow Adagio in ABA form. The key is A Major with a lyrical melody, and the middle section is in the relative minor, F-sharp Minor. Even though it is based on major tonality, it is darkened by frequent use of chromatic passages. In the middle section, a use of chromatic progressions embellished with appoggiaturas creates a melancholy mood (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Mozart Sonata, K. 576, 2nd mvmt, mm.25-28.



The contrapuntal opening movement returns to the Rondo finale. The brilliant finale opens with a simple melody, but it develops quickly in a canonic style. The melody at the

beginning from measures 1 to 4 is repeated against a sixteenth triplet counterpoint from measures 9 to 11 (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Mozart Sonata, K. 576, 3rd mvmt, mm.1-11.

The image shows a musical score for measures 1 through 11 of the third movement of Mozart's Sonata in G Major, K. 576. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 1 to 4, and the second system covers measures 5 to 11. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The right hand (RH) features a melodic line with various ornaments and slurs. The left hand (LH) provides a counterpoint, including a sixteenth-note triplet in measure 9. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and forte (*f*). Fingerings and articulation marks are clearly indicated throughout the piece.

This countermelody occurs throughout the finale movement. In the development, a theme in F Major from measures 95 to 99 moves to the left hand in G Minor from measures 99 to 101. Also, a canonic motive of the right hand in measure 103 is imitated at the fifth below to the left hand from measure 104 (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Mozart Sonata, K. 576, 3rd mvmt, mm.95-107.

The image shows a musical score for measures 95 through 107 of the third movement of Mozart's Sonata in G Major, K. 576. The score is written for piano and consists of three systems. The first system covers measures 95 to 99, the second system covers measures 100 to 102, and the third system covers measures 103 to 107. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The right hand (RH) features a melodic line with various ornaments and slurs. The left hand (LH) provides a counterpoint, including a canonic motive in measure 104. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and forte (*f*). Fingerings and articulation marks are clearly indicated throughout the piece.

In the finale, the motive is imitated in several places in a contrapuntal style, in the same manner as the first movement.

The sections of this movement can be labeled “A,” “B,” and “C” (Figure 21). In the typical rondo form, A section is in tonic key with a theme, and B section is often in the dominant key with new material, and the “A” section repeated either in the second “B” section or a “C” section. However, Mozart uses the same theme in the “B” and “C” section, and it is developed in contrapuntal style rather than using new material. Overall, Mozart’s last Sonata, K. 576 shows his mature style with a counterpoint and canonic imitation. It is interesting to note that this was not the only late work to receive strong contrapuntal treatment; his Requiem in D Minor, K. 626 is highly contrapuntal, particularly in the vocal writing, and the last Symphony (K. 550) has a five-voice fugue in the last movement.

Figure 21: Table of rondo form of Mozart Sonata, K. 576, 3rd mvmt.

Section	Measures	keys	function
A	1-25	D Major–A Major	First theme
B	26-64	A Major – E Major – A Major	First theme
A	65-94	D Major–C Major	First theme
C	95-162	F Major	First theme
A	163-189	D Major	First theme

Mozart’s last Sonata, K. 576 in D Major was supposedly an “easy sonata” commissioned for a Prussian princess.¹⁸ However, K. 576 is considered one of the most technically difficult of Mozart’s 19 sonatas, a distinction shared with the treacherous Sonata K. 310 in A minor. Sonata,

¹⁸ Robert L. Marshall, *Eighteenth-century Keyboard Music*. (New York: Routledge, 2003), 318.

K. 576 in D Major demands virtuosic technique including fast scales and passagework, difficult fingerings and articulations. At the beginning of the first movement, the first theme is stated with staccato articulation, but it suddenly changes to legato on the trills. Mozart frequently uses rest markings at the end or middle of phrases so the hands should lift precisely when the rest marking appears. The rapidly moving sixteenth notes in the first movement require a highly skilled technique, especially when the canonic imitation appears in both hands. Similar technical issues arise in the finale. In the last movement, the simple main theme contrasts with rapid triplet virtuoso passages. The fast, arpeggiated chords and continuously moving sixteenth notes require a highly virtuosic technique (Figure 22). The general challenge of this sonata is not only to be found in a skilled technique, but this also must be played without losing lightness and playfulness, in spite of its rich polyphonic treatment.

Figure 22: Mozart Sonata, K. 576, 3rd mvmt, mm.58-64.



Mozart develops the opening material with ingenious contrapuntal materials throughout the first movement. The second movement has a graceful lyricism without contrapuntal treatment. However, his great genius in a contrapuntal setting is once again evident in the finale. Mozart's last Sonata, K. 576 in D Major, is his among the most innovative works, possessing an

unusual emphasis on contrapuntal texture employing such devices as counterpoint, imitation, canon and inversion.

CHAPTER 3 Schumann *Carnaval*, Op. 9

As one of the quintessential Romantic period composers, Robert Schumann (1810-1856) concentrated only upon piano music during the 1830s and created a new genre of piano literature called the character piece. It is a short descriptive work, usually gathered into a collection.

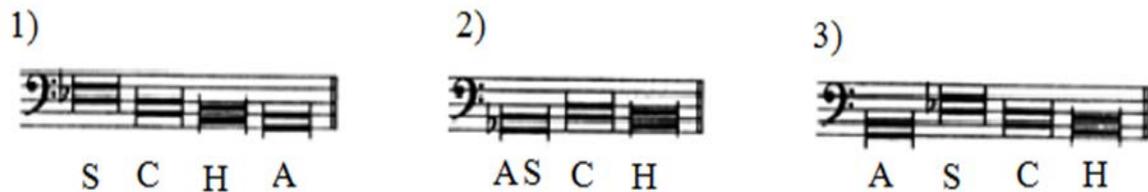
The programmatic title of Schumann's *Carnaval*, Op. 9, sets the stage for this collection of character pieces, depicting a glorification of the ballroom enclosed in the atmosphere of the masquerade. It consists of 21 short movements, which are Schumann's presentation of the different personalities drawn from his dual-fantasy alter-egos, his colleagues and friends, and the Italian *Commedia dell'arte* figures, each identified by its own title. Schumann divided the real and unreal characters; some of them are from the Italian *Commedia dell'arte* in movements' no.2 "Pierrot," no.3 "Arlequin," and no.15 "Pantalon et Columbine." Composers who Schumann admired are in no.12 "Chopin" and no.17 "Paganini." Two of his loves appear in no. 11 "Chiarina" (Clara) and no. 13 "Estella" (Ernestine), and his dual-fantasy characters show up in no. 5 "Eusebius" and no. 6 "Florestan." Others are allusions to interactions between these main characters- no. 4 "Valse noble," no. 8 "Réplique," no. 14 "Reconnaissance," no. 16 "Valse allemande," no. 17 "Aveu," no. 18 "Promenade," and no. 20 "Marche des 'Davidsbündler' contre les Philistins."¹⁹

The *Carnaval* subtitled *Scènes mignonnes sur quatre notes* (Little Scenes on Four Notes) is based on the musical letters, A-S-C-H, which originated from the small town where his fiancée

¹⁹ Peter Ostwald, *Schumann: The Inner Voices of a Musical Genius* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 115-116.

Ernestine von Fricken lived.²⁰ Most of the movements in *Carnaval*, Op. 9 are based on these four notes, ‘A- S- C- H’²¹, which are arranged in different combinations. Schumann reveals this in “Sphinxes” (Figure 23); the “Sphinxes” appear between movements “Réplique” and “Papillons.”

Figure 23: Schumann *Carnaval*, Op. 9, the musical letters ‘A-S-C-H’ in Sphinxes.



The first Sphinx represents Schumann’s own name, although it is not completely used as a theme in *Carnaval*. However, the other two Sphinxes are used everywhere except in “Réplique” and “Chopin.” The alteration of these four motives unifies the work.

Schumann’s *Carnaval*, Op. 9 is technically demanding. He strives to fully realize the expressive range of the piano. He expands keyboard techniques by writing intervals and chords, requiring a much wider stretch of the hand, uses a wider range of the keyboard, and introduces new pedaling techniques (overtones vibrate or sounds blur). Schumann also shows some rhythmic innovations in particular movements. However, not only are these technical innovations, but Schumann also crafts some musical innovations such as alternating motives, tempo changes, and borrowing previous material.

In the energetic beginning “Préambule,” Schumann uses large chords, legato octaves, fast broken-chords and large leaps. He uses many intervals of a tenth in the chords for the left hand

²⁰ Ernestine von Fricken was Schumann’s fiancée whom Schumann met in 1834 at Wieck’s place, where Ernestine was a piano student and house guest of Wieck.

²¹ ‘A- S- C- H,’ S is German for A, E-flat, C, and B-natural and the name for small town, where Schumann’s fiancée, Ernestine von Fricken, was born.

accompaniment that should hold the bass-note with the pedal. These large leaps, fast chords and octaves are dominant throughout most of the movements in *Carnaval*, Op. 9. In the first movement, Schumann uses a rhythmic device called hemiola in the accompaniment in the left hand from measures 33 to 39 to create a feel of two instead of three (Figure 24). This hemiola rhythm appears throughout this movement.

Figure 24: Hemiola accompaniment, 1st mvmt, “Préambule” mm.27-40.



In the coda, Schumann changes meter for one measure without any indication, and it shows that Schumann was not bound by strict formality (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Meter change to 4/4, 1st mvmt, “Préambule” mm.115-125.



This hemiola rhythm reappears in movement no. 7 “Coquette,” no. 20 “Pause,” and the finale “Marche des ‘Davidsbündler’ contre les Philistins.”

For another rhythmic device, Schumann uses a polyrhythm in movement no. 12 “Chopin” and the last movement “Marche des ‘Davidsbündler’ contre les Philistins.” Movement no. 12 “Chopin”, imitates Chopin’s writing style, with a miniature nocturne illustrating Schumann’s admiration of his contemporary.²² The polyrhythm is presented in measures 8 and 9; the right hand is felt in 3/2 and the left hand in 6/4 in these measures (Figure 26).

Figure 26: A polyrhythm, 12th mvmt, “Chopin” mm. 8-9.



The finale, “Marche des ‘Davidsbündler’ contre les Philistins” illustrates Schumann’s imagination. Schumann put together a group of persons (some real and some not) who fight against the Philistines. In this finale, Schumann shows a variety of unusual rhythmic treatments. The music exhorts the player to propel faster and faster toward the conclusion, in which the Philistines will be routed. Perpetual shift of meter, tempo and accents create this compelling atmosphere. Even though it is written in 3/4 time (an improper meter for a march), frequent changes of rhythm and tempo convey the freedom of his Romantic spirit. The last section in ‘*piu stretto*’ produces a strong polyrhythm with syncopations in the right hand and accents in the left

²² A Nocturne is a Romantic piano piece of a slow and dreamy nature in which a graceful, highly embellished melody in the right hand is accompanied by a broken-chord pattern in the left. Chopin composed 21 nocturnes for solo piano.

hand (Figure 27). The ‘Marche’ itself represents of the earlier theme especially the opening movement “Préambule” in measures 86-101 and 182-197 that transposed the same material. The routing of the ‘Philistines,’ which is the conclusion of the piece, is in bass octaves in measures 53-61 and 149-157. The meter changes without indication in measures 230 and 238, the same as the opening movement. The hemiola rhythms also appear from measures 261 to 267 with accents in the left hand. At measure 241, the bass line starts moving as it had in “Paganini”, as he too joins in the fray.

Figure 27: A polyrhythm, 21th mvmt, “Marche des ‘Davidsbündler’ contre les Philistins” mm. 225-242.

Schumann uses syncopations on a weak beat in several movements. Movement no. 6, “Florestan,” is in 3/4 meter. Schumann uses a sforzando on the second beat and an accent on the third beat to portray the passionate characteristics of Florestan. The 13th movement, “Estrella” is an expressive waltz in triple meter. The use of half notes and the highest notes on the second beat, at the same time, in the left hand produces syncopated rhythms, which break a traditional waltz feel in three (Figure 28).

Figure 28: Syncopation rhythms, 13th mvmt, “Estrella” mm.1-8.



In *Carnaval*, the most technically challenging movement is “Paganini.” Paganini was an Italian violinist who was the most celebrated virtuoso of his time. Schumann evokes the spirit of a virtuosic violinist with large leaps, molto staccato textures, and syncopated markings. At the very beginning, the left hand begins with a fortissimo before the down beat, but the right hand begins on the beat with a dynamic level in piano, so that it sounds as if the right hand is offbeat (Figure 29). The articulation is changed in the middle of movement to legato (Figure 29). The staccato articulation imitates a pizzicato, and the legato imitates the bowing of violin. Molto staccato textures, large leaps for both hands, and continuous syncopated rhythms make “Paganini” into the most virtuosic (and treacherous) movement of *Carnaval*.

Figure 29: ‘Large leaps,’ 17th mvmt, “Paganini” mm. 1-5.



Figure 30: Imitating bowing violin, 17th mvmt, “Paganini” mm. 9-12.



Other movements that demand technical prowess are no.14 “Reconnaissance” and no. 15 “Pantalon et Colombine.” The “Reconnaissance” is a scene wherein Schumann and Ernestine meet each other at the ball. A unison octave melody is presented in the right hand with both articulations, staccato and legato. It becomes even more difficult in that the soprano voice holds longer while the alto voice is repeated with the thumb, something that is at best unnatural for the hand (Figure 31). The repeated sixteenth notes should be played lightly with a dynamic level of pianissimo. The character of “Pantalon et Colombine” is drawn from the *Commedia dell'arte*.

Pantalon is a gullible old Venetian of the 17th century and Colombine is his witty and constantly misunderstanding wife. In this movement, Pantalon’s character is represented by a fast staccato passage and Colombine with a lyrical legato texture and this toccata like movement concludes with a coda in a parallel major. The technical challenge in this movement is to accurately play fast sixteenth staccato notes with a soft touch and sudden changes of articulations and dynamics.

Figure 31: A unison melody with both staccato and legato, 14th mvmt, “Reconnaissance” mm.1-5.

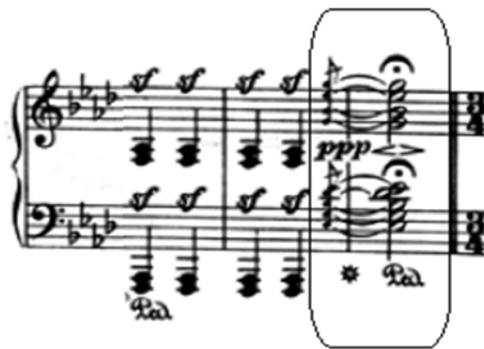


Schumann tried a new pedaling to give special sound effects both in “Pierrot” and “Paganini.” At the end of the second movement, the half note chord is quietly played while the pedal sustains from the previous measure. After playing the half note chord, the pedal is released, which leaves the chord still ringing from the incisive attack of the previous chord (Figure 32). Also in “Paganini,” the E-flat seventh chord is played silently while the damper pedal holds from the previous sforzando chord in order to let the overtones vibrate or sounds blur (Figure 33). Thus, Schumann’s pedaling gives an unexpected sound effect, something very new at that time.

Figure 32: A Pedal effect, 2nd mvmt, “Pierrot” mm.47-51.



Figure 33: A Pedal effect, 17th mvmt, “Paganini” mm. 33-37.



Schumann’s musical innovations appear in several movements. The alternation of small motives are continuously presented in the movements’ no.2 “Pierrot,” no.3 “Arlequin,” no.5 “Eusebius” and no.6 “Florestan.” In “Pierrot,” motive ‘a’ and motive ‘b’ are alternated with a

contrasting dynamic level, piano and forte in the A section (Figure 34). Following on the B section, new motive ‘c’ and a motive ‘b’ from the A section are alternated (Figure 35).

Figure 34: Alternated motives ‘a’ and ‘b’ in A section, 2nd mvmt, “Pierrot” mm.1-8.

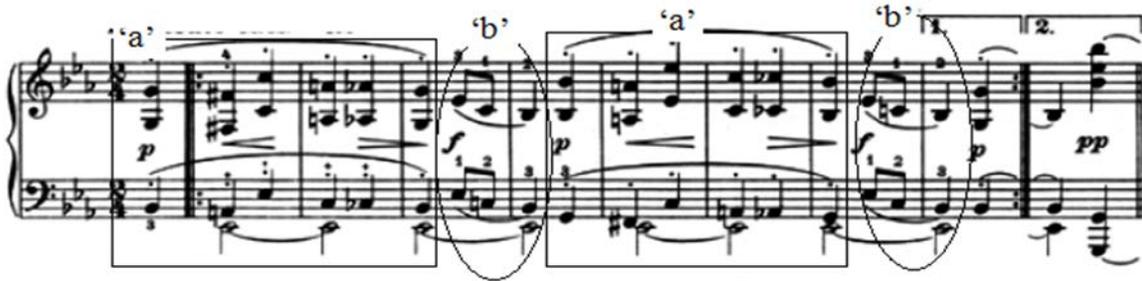


Figure 35: Alternated motives ‘b’ and ‘c’ in B section, 2nd mvmt “Pierrot” mm. 10-29.



Another feature that makes this work special is borrowing the same musical material from a previous movement or earlier work. Schumann quotes previous musical material in the following movements to lend unity to this large work. The beginning “Préambule” and the concluding “Marche des ‘Davidsbündler’ contre les Philistins” share the same thematic material. Also, Schumann inserted “Valse allemande” to the end of the “Paganini,” and the musical motive in “Coquette” reappears in the following movement in “Réplique” (Figure 36&37).

Figure 36: Sharing the same musical motive, 7th mvmt, “Coquette” mm.1-6.



Figure 37: Sharing the same musical motive in “Réplique” mm.1-7.



The movement, no. 6 “Florestan,” is Schumann’s most dramatic example of frequently changing tempo among his piano works. The fast tempo change at the beginning suddenly slows down in measures 9 to 10 and 19 to 22, and Schumann marked the second one for a “Papillons” (Figure 38).

Figure 38: Sudden tempo changes, 6th mvmt, “Florestan” mm.1-28.

The title, “Papillons” is used in the eighth movement of his *Carnaval*. However, the quotation of “Papillons” is from his previous piano work of Op. 2 with the same name, so a perceptive listener can be reminded of his earlier piano work.²³ The character “Florestan” represents Schumann’s extroverted and passionate side; however inserting the quotation from “Papillons,” which is an elegant waltz, is possibly a kind of musical irony. The ending of Papillons is also quoted in the mad chase leading to the final conclusion of *Carnaval*.

Each of the twenty pieces of Schumann’s *Carnaval*, Op. 9 provides a musical picture of persons, real or fictional, and demonstrates his innovative compositional style both technically and musically.

²³ Jim Samson, *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-century Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 169.

CONCLUSION

The four selected works from Scarlatti, Mozart and Schumann represent each composer's distinctive technical innovations in different styles. Both Scarlatti's K. 141 and his K. 380 are in typical single movement sonata form. However he exploits repeated notes, syncopations, trills, and dotted rhythms, imitating Spanish dance music. Sonata K. 141, a toccata, uses rapid repeated notes and hand crossings in imitation of guitar techniques in Spanish flamenco music; in Sonata K. 380, amid horn calls, repeating chords and echo effects, his rhythmic figures and trills also imitate Spanish dance music. Even though Scarlatti's sonatas are short single-movement works, each of them has its own characteristics representing his innovative technical style.

Mozart's last Sonata, K. 576, is his most unique sonata, being not only contrapuntal but also virtuosic. Before K. 576, his sonatas include music with a galant style or Alberti-bass figure. His last Sonata, K. 576, is a good example that demonstrates his technical innovation with contrapuntal texture including counterpoint, imitation, canon and inversion. The simple opening develops into canonic passages with rapid triplet notes and these complex textures and fast passages which are a challenge for pianists to perform.

Schumann's *Carnaval*, Op. 9 demonstrates his innovative and personal compositional style. The virtuosic techniques used in most of the movements are demonstrated by the large leaps and chords, fast passages, octaves and sudden dynamic changes, and some of those techniques are newly used in this work. Additionally, Schumann introduces new pedaling to give some special sound effects both in "Pierrot" and "Paganini." Not only are these technical

innovations, but Schumann also demonstrates musical innovations such as a cross quotation of musical material between movements, between actual pieces, and innovative tempo changes.

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