

“FANTASY”: GENRE EXPRESSION IN FOUR FANTASIES FROM DIFFERENT
HISTORICAL EPOCHS

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ABSTRACT

The fantasy as a genre is characterized by its fluidity. It sounds like an improvisation, but fantasies such as the four treated here have been notated by their creators and thus preserved, fixed in their gestalt – robbed of the absolute freedom of true improvisations. Unlike forms that are more carefully circumscribed through historical practice and also theoretically, the fantasy, chameleon-like, changes its shape and color in the hands of different composers. This project will compare the fantasies of four great masters from four different epochs of music history. Characterized as “formless,” the fantasy is revealed in the comparison to possess a versatility that allows it to permeate other genres easily such as the sonata. The problem of the apparent contradiction between a “written improvisation” and a fixed form is solved in four different ways by these composers: J.S. Bach, Mozart, Chopin, and Scriabin.

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The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

Psalm 23:1 (ESV)

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INTRODUCTION

The fantasy genre lacks typical structures associated with particular forms, such as the keyboard sonata. E. Eugene Helm writes that many fantasies in the 18th century were “formless.”

He states:

Brossard (1703) described the fantasia as a completely free genre, closely related to the capriccio; Mattheson (1739) said that order and restraint, especially as exemplified in strict fugal texture, are inappropriate to the form; Kollman (1796) considered the ideal fantasia to be entirely improvised; in his opinion it lost some of the ‘true fire of imagination’ when it had to be written down, as in a pedagogical work.¹

The primary characteristic of fantasies in this era was musical freedom. Composers focus less on rhythm, tempo, and strict meter, instead emphasizing virtuosity and experimental harmony. Fantasies of this era, despite sounding improvisatory, have formal and structural characteristics related to those of other contemporary genres, such as dance movements, preludes, capriccios, and others. The fantasy was an important keyboard genre in Germany. One of the foremost composers of fantasy in the eighteenth century was Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). The *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor*, BWV 903 is one of his 15 known fantasies.² The *Chromatic Fantasy* can be divided into two parts: prelude and recitative. The prelude can be subdivided into two sections: a cadenza-like beginning and an arpeggiated transition into the recitative. The piece was composed in a stylistically and formally free manner,

¹ Christopher D.S. Field, “Fantasia,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, ed. Deane Root, accessed September 25, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40048>.

² Ibid.

and it maintains an improvisatory effect during the arpeggiated section. Later in eighteenth century Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) took another approach in his *Fantasia in C Minor*, K. 475, writing a thematic return at the end of the fantasy, comparable to the recapitulation of a sonata form. In the mid-nineteenth century, the *Fantaisie in F Minor*, Op. 49, by Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) employs a more complex formal structure. Forty-five years later, Aleksandr Nikolayevich Scriabin (1871-1915) wrote his *Piano Sonata No. 2 in G# Minor*, Op. 19 (“*Sonate-Fantaisie*”) in 1886. Scriabin employed a hybrid of basic sonata form combined with fantasy traits. Although he calls the piece a “*Sonata*,” and without doubt sonata procedures underlie its structure, paradoxically it sounds more fantasy-like than the *Fantaisie in F minor*, Op. 49 by Chopin called “*Fantasy*.”

Fantasy Traits

The Fantasy composed for keyboard has no fixed structure. Common elements of the Fantasy are: sectionalism, virtuosic keyboard cadenzas, harmonic language, tempo variations and vocally-inspired sections.

1. Sectionalism

The fantasies discussed in this paper can be divided into several sections. Sometimes there are sharp contrasts between the sections. At other times the sections are fluidly connected.

2. Virtuoso Keyboard Cadenza Style

The virtuosity of the keyboard cadenza style of the fantasy consists of demanding scale figures and *arpeggio* patterns.

3. Harmonic Language

Rapid modulations through step-wise chromatic or diatonic motion and by the circle of fifths to distant tonal areas are frequently found in the keyboard fantasy. Such practices are

discussed in the treatise written by Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach (1714-1788) entitled: *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*:

It is one of the beauties of improvisation to feign modulation to a new key through a formal cadence and then move off in another direction. This and other rational deceptions make a fantasia attractive.³

C.P.E. Bach suggests many ways to improvise on ascending and descending scales following the tradition of the “Recola dell’ Ottava”

With due caution he fashions his bass out of the ascending and descending scale of the prescribed key, with a variety of figured bass signatures; he may interpolate a few half steps, arrange the scale in or out of its normal sequence, and perform the resultant progressions in broken or sustained style at a suitable pace. A tonic organ point is convenient for establishing the tonality at the beginning and end.⁴

4. Vocally-inspired Sections

In keyboard fantasies, vocally-inspired sections employ various vocal styles such as recitative, aria, chorale, simple song, etc. For example, Bach used the marking of *Recitativ* in his *Chromatic Fantasy*.

5. Tempo Variations

The varying sections of the fantasy often juxtapose varying tempi. Even if the fantasy is notated in strict measure delineation using bar lines, the performer can play it freely by incorporating the use of rubato and other tempo variations.

³ C. P. E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1949), 434.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 431.

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH'S *CHROMATIC FANTASY AND FUGUE IN D MINOR*,
BWV 903

Brief Background Information

Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor*, BWV 903 is one of the major works of his last years in Weimar and his early years in Cöthen. The autographs of the *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* were lost, but several copies reveal some interesting information. The fantasy and the fugue were written in different keys. George B. Stauffer reports that the fantasy is notated in "Dorian" and the fugue in "modern D minor."⁵ We know that the fantasy had an earlier version, BWV 903a, in which the triplet figuration of the first 23 measures are different and are performed with a more continuous line than in BWV 903. For the purpose of this paper the discussion will be limited to the *Chromatic Fantasy*.

The fantasy is written in *stylus phantasticus*. The term is well defined by German polyhistorian, theologian, and music theorist, Athanasius Kircher (1601-1680) in his book *Musurgia Universalis* in 1650:

The *stylus phantasticus* is appropriate for instruments. It is the most free and unfettered method of composition, bound to nothing, neither to words, nor to a harmonious subject. It is organized with regard to manifest invention, the hidden reason of harmony, and an ingenious, skilled connection of harmonic phrases and fugues. And it is divided into those pieces which are commonly called Phantasias, Ricercatas, Toccatas, and Sonatas.⁶

⁵ George B. Stauffer, "This fantasia . . . never had its like" on the enigma and chronology of Bach's *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D Minor*, BWV 903 in *Bach Studies*, ed. Don O. Franklin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 173.

⁶ Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia Universalis: The Section of Musical Instruments* (Rome: 1650), quoted in Jesse Parker, "The Clavier Fantasy from Mozart to Liszt: A Study in Style and Content" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1974), 2.

The fantasy is through-composed. The first section employs virtuosic passages that include runs and *arpeggios*. The second section, the *Recitativ*, follows the structure of a vocal recitative allowing the performer freedom and flexibility in terms of tempo choices.

Analysis of the *Chromatic Fantasy*

1. Sectionalism

The *Chromatic Fantasy* is divided into two sections: the first section is an improvisatory prelude, and the second section is the *Recitativ*. The first section sounds monophonic in texture and subdivides into two parts. The music of the first part is played as notated in the score.

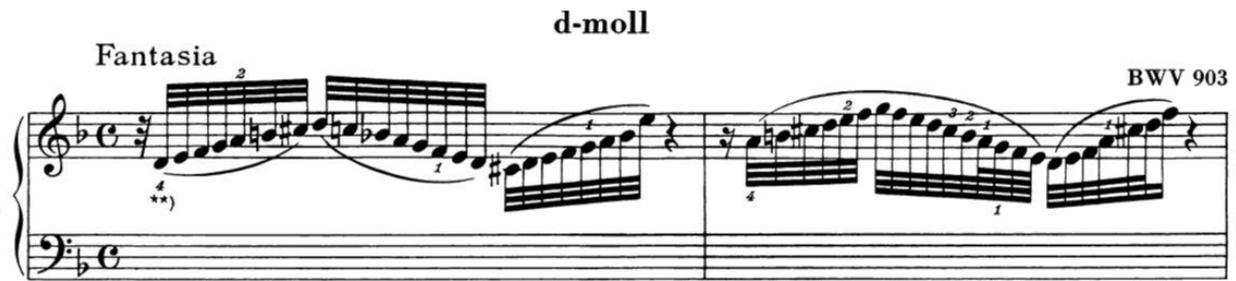
However, the rhythmic fluidity is accomplished through various rhythmic patterns that flow one out of the other, implying a lack of measured notation delineated by bar lines. In the book, *The Art of Fugue*, the authors describe the first part:

The word “untrammeled” may raise eyebrows, since whatever Bach did in the heat of actual improvisation, what he wrote down always has a strong semblance of underlying order and precision. The overall harmonic framework of this particular assault on tonality is simplicity itself. As to rhythm, the ebb and flow of the storm after the opening pair of lightning bolts is controlled by various calculated patterns of three, five, six, and twelve sixteenth-notes (not in that order) [bars 3-20].⁷

The second part consists of half-note block chords marked *arpeggio*. The marking of *arpeggio* gives the performer freedom of improvisation that is notated by the block chords. The fantasy opens with a free cadenza-like passage made up of ascending and descending D minor scales in the first two measures (Example 1).

⁷ Joseph Kerman, Davit Moroney and Karen Rosenak, “*Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, BWV 903*,” in *Art of Fugue: Bach Fugues for Keyboard, 1715-1750* (California: University of California Press, 2005): 48.

Example 1. J. S. Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy*, mm. 1–2.



The *Recitativ* section implies emotional sadness, opening with a single melodic line played in the right hand with an accompaniment of rolled block chords that can be interpreted as sighing. The middle of the *Recitativ* section becomes more plaintive still, leading to a free cadenza style. The coda shows shortened *Recitativ* motives with the pedal point D in the bass and the hidden chromatic descending lines in the other voices.

2. Virtuoso Keyboard Cadenza Style

The first part of the fantasy, consisting of a free cadenza-style segment, an arpeggiated prelude, and the *arpeggio* section, demands virtuosity. After the two statements of the D minor scale, the monophonic figuration, which consists of sixteenth-notes along with sustained eighth-notes, sweeps up and down the keyboard; during these 18 measures, the passage is played without any break. At measure 20, there is finally a pause in the motion with the half cadence. Throughout the eight measures of the free cadenza figure, it becomes more and more virtuosic by the addition of the free improvisatory *arpeggio* section along with the toccata-like interludes (Example 2) between the “*arpeggios*.” Arpeggios are played by rolling the block chords upward and downward, creating more rapid sweeping gestures than at the beginning of the fantasy, giving it an even greater sense of urgency.

Example 2. J. S. Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy*, mm. 31–32.



3. Harmonic Language

Schulenberg says, “It is especially important in the fantasy that the player understand which notes are chord tones and which ones are anticipations, passing tones, suspensions, and the like. Harmonic analysis in the ordinary sense is less useful for this purpose than understanding the voice leading that underlies the embellished surface.”⁸

The arpeggiated section begins with voice leading as the left hand plays a descending D minor scale (Example 3).

Example 3. J. S. Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy*, mm. 5–6.



⁸ David Schulenberg, *The Keyboard Music of J. S. Bach 2nd edition*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 148-9.

The use of chromaticism continues in the *arpeggio* section as the tonal center progressively moves toward the dominant. The *Recitativ* section is full of modulations returning to the tonic key. Unlike the first section where chromaticism fluidly moves between the left and right hands, the *Recitativ* section has a melodic line supported by block chords that progress chromatically, leading back to the tonic. The concluding five measures contain a hidden chromatic descending scale representative of the narrative style of *Recitativ* (Example 4).

Example 4. J. S. Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy*, mm. 75–79.

The image displays a musical score for Example 4, J.S. Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy*, measures 75–79. The score is written for piano in G minor and 3/4 time. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The right hand (treble staff) features a melodic line with trills and ornaments, while the left hand (bass staff) plays block chords. Red circles highlight specific chromatic passages in the right hand. Measure 76 shows a chromatic descending scale in the right hand. Measure 78 features a trill (tr) in the right hand. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

4. Vocally-Inspired Section

The *Recitativ* section resembles a *secco* recitative. The melodic line spins out in a kind of free narrative style, “sung” by one or sometimes two voices. The trills and other embellishment figures resemble Baroque-style ornaments such as those utilized by singers. The chordal accompaniment is to be played in the same way as the *arpeggio* section.

5. Tempo Variations

The fantasy is written in *stylus phantasticus*, a free compositional style with no tempo markings. Suggestions on how to play a fantasy can be found in several editions of the music of Girolamo Alessandro Frescobaldi (1583-1643), one of the most important Italian composers of keyboard music during the late Renaissance and early Baroque periods. Richard Troeger describes the performance style of Frescobaldi's toccatas, which would later influence J.S. and C.P.E. Bach:

[...] the style is subject to great freedom of tempo, including *accelerando*, and to pauses at appropriate places, even when they are notated in short note values. Frescobaldi explains that this is exactly like the performance of madrigals, where the tempo ebbs and flows according to the sense of the words. In the textless keyboard music, the tempo fluctuations are led by changes of mood and character from one passage to the next.⁹

When playing this fantasy, tempo adjustments are guided by the differentiations in textures, figurations, or harmonic language. The fantasy begins with a free cadenza figuration. The next figuration consists of sixteenth-note groupings of three, six, and twelve notes requiring the performer to maintain a consistent tempo. However, when the figuration changes to a group of five sixteenth-notes the performer can choose another tempo by the use of *accelerando*. The half cadence allows for another tempo adjustment such as a *poco ritardando*. As in sung recitative, the "narrative style" of the *Recitativ* section consists of clear melodic phrases that are punctuated through the incorporation of varying tempo changes.

⁹ Richard Troeger, *Playing Bach on the Keyboard: A Practical Guide*, (Cambridge: Amadeus press, 2003), 56.

MOZART'S *FANTASIA IN C MINOR*, K. 475

Brief Background Information

When programmed on a concert, the *Fantasia in C minor* is usually programmed with the *Sonata in C minor*. The first edition of Mozart's *Sonata in C minor*, K.457 (October 14, 1784) and *Fantasia in C minor*, K.475 (May 20, 1785) was published by Artaria in Vienna in 1785; Mozart supervised this publication. Although the sonata was composed seven months before the *fantasia*, it was Mozart's intention to have the two works published together.¹⁰ The two pieces share the same autograph score, which was recently found in 1990.¹¹ Despite these facts, the debate about whether the performer should play the fantasy and the sonata together continues. Alfred Brendel¹² insists that, "I maintain, as Artur Schnabel¹³ did that it is a mistake to connect in performance Mozart's *C minor Fantasy*, K.475 with the *C minor Sonata*, K.457." The fact that they were published in one volume proves nothing. Each of these works is an autonomous masterpiece; together, they cancel each other out."¹⁴

Katalin Komlós (1945-), a Hungarian musicologist and fortepianist, states a contrary opinion, observing that Mozart used the C minor tonal idiom in both pieces and that historical

¹⁰ Wolfgang Rehm ed., *Fantasia in c minor*, K.475 in *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe, Piano Sonatas*, vol. 2, Critical Report (Vien: Bärenreiter Kassel, 1998), 118.

¹¹ William Kinderman, *Mozart's Piano Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 57-8.

¹² Alfred Brendel is an Austrian pianist, poet, and author (1931-).

¹³ Artur Schnabel is an Austrian classical pianist, composer, and teacher (1882–1951).

¹⁴ "On Recitals and Programmes," in *Alfred Brendel on Music: Collected Essays* (Chicago: A Capella, 2001), 353, quoted in William Kinderman, *Mozart's Piano Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 57-8.

examples of pairing of the pieces exist.¹⁵ Kinderman says that two factors make the ending of the fantasy sound like a preparation for the sonata and destabilize the conclusion of the fantasy. First is the fact that two deceptive cadences occur at the very end of the fantasy and second, that the rising three octave C minor scale there is played *forte* (Example 5).¹⁶

Example 5. Mozart's *Fantasia*, mm. 178–182.



Analysis of Mozart's *Fantasia in C minor*, K. 475

1. Sectionalism

Mozart's *Fantasia in C minor*, K. 475 is an episodic piece divided by tempo markings: *Adagio* (*Adagio I* and *Adagio II*), *Allegro*, *Andantino*, *Più Allegro*, and *Tempo Primo*. The *Adagio* section can be subdivided further due to two distinct musical characteristics. The same thematic material is used in the first section (*Adagio I*) and the last section (*Tempo Primo*).

¹⁵ "Fantasia and Sonata K.475/457 in Contemporary Context," in *Mozart-Jahrbuch 1991: Bericht über den Internationalen Mozart-Kongress 1991*, vol. 2, ed. Rudolph Angermüller, Dietrich Berke, Ulrike Hofmann, and Wolfgang Rehm (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1992), 816-23, quoted in William Kinderman, *Mozart's Piano Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 58.

¹⁶ William Kinderman, *Mozart's Piano Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 58.

However, the first section modulates more than the last section, which has a more stable tonality and exhibits a strong final cadence.

These six sections are generally separated from one another by double bar lines; *fermatas* are frequently found before the double bar line, but between the *Andantino* and the *Più Allegro* sections there is no *fermata*.

The *Adagio* section can be subdivided into two parts, *Adagio I* and *Adagio II*. *Adagio I* introduce a two-measure motive of three octave unison played *forte* on the downbeat then answered by a more rhythmic three octave unison pattern played *piano*. The call (*forte*) and response (*piano*) pattern of dynamic marking is a unique characteristic of *Adagio I*, creating dramatic dynamic contrasts. Continuity is established when the same motive is heard again in the final *Tempo Primo* of the piece.

In contrast to *Adagio I*, *Adagio II* has a lyrical melody line with an accompanying bass. The symmetrical two-measure phrases marked *piano* create a calm and peaceful atmosphere.

The *Allegro* section uses full orchestral textures such as tremolo figures, parallel thirds, and octaves in the bass. The dramatic dynamic contrast from *forte* to *piano* used in the *Adagio I* is employed again in the *Allegro* section. Then a new melody line and accompaniment part are played twice at the dynamic marking of *piano*, first in major and then in minor. The section concludes with a chromatic descending scale in the left hand played in octaves, with triplet broken chords in the right hand leading to the virtuosic cadenza-like ending.

The *Andantino* section is the only section with a key signature. And for the first time there is a designated time signature of $\frac{3}{4}$. As in the *Adagio II* section, the *Andantino* is marked *piano* with the exception of two measures that are marked *forte*.

The section opens with a four-bar lyrical melodic phrase composed of a dotted eighth-note followed by two thirty-second-notes and a final eighth-note which completes the rhythmic pattern. (Example 6).

Example 6. Mozart's *Fantasia*, m. 91.



This four-measure motive is followed by a more rhythmic motive composed of a pedal point F with the melody in the right hand that is harmonized with parallel thirds and sixths. Mozart employs the slur marking to create a sense of rhythmic syncopation.

The *Più Allegro* is marked *forte* and consists of virtuosic passagework creating a sense of restlessness. Mozart creates a sense of deceleration by employing rhythmic changes via note durations: thirty-second-notes become sixteenth-notes, sixteenth-notes become eighth-notes, and finally quarter-notes until the end of the section.

Aptly labeled *Tempo Primo*, this section reprises melodic material from the opening *Adagio* I section. *Tempo Primo* is in the original key of C minor and ends with an ascending C minor scale.

2. Virtuosic Keyboard Cadenza Style

The *Allegro* section ends with a short three-measure virtuosic cadenza-like passage centered around the F⁷ chord. The passage begins with a major third, created by playing the lowest F on the keyboard and the A above, marked with a *fermata*. The arpeggiated F⁷ chord ascends four octaves to E^b before descending step-wise three octaves to a complete F⁷ chord with

a *fermata*. The passage ends with a sweeping ascending chromatic passage covering four octaves returning to E^b.

3. Harmonic Language

The six sections show interesting key schemes alternating between freely modulating sections and stable tonalities. The *Adagio I* (first), *Allegro* (third) and *Più Allegro* (fifth) sections are freely modulating sections; the bass line usually leads the modulations and moves step-wise. The *Adagio II* (second), *Andantino* (fourth) and *Tempo Primo* (sixth) sections are tonally stable composed in D major, B^b major, and C minor respectively. Hans David observes that “Mozart’s modulations are frequently carried by continuous bass-lines, ascending or descending diatonically, chromatically, or in mixed manner.”¹⁷

The harmonic substance of the *fantasia* can be found in the use of freely modulating sections where the bass line ascends and descends chromatically deceptively leading the listener through key schemes that momentarily reside in a stable tonal center before venturing out along another harmonic path.

4. Vocally-Inspired Sections

The *Andantino* section is similar to a vocal duet. The sequential phrases are conversational and repetitive as if the male voice is answering the female voice. The same melodic theme is repeated, first stated in the upper register and then repeated in the lower register.

¹⁷ Hans T David, “Mozartean Modulations,” in *The Creative World of Mozart*, ed. Paul Henry Lang (New York: Norton, 1963), 60.

5. Tempo Variations

In the *Fantasia in C minor*, K. 475 Mozart notated tempo markings for all the sections (with the exception of the second half of the *Adagio*): *Adagio*, *Allegro*, *Andantino*, *Più Allegro*, and *Tempo Primo*. At the end of the *Allegro*, the cadenza-like section can be played more freely.

Compositional Style

1. “Rondo” Scheme

As previously stated, in examining the fantasy, the six sections alternate between freely modulating and tonally stable segments: Modulation–Stable–Modulation–Stable–Modulation–Stable. The alternation of modulatory and stable sections is reminiscent of the harmonic scheme of a rondo. Thematically each section is new and unrelated to its neighbors (with the exception of the sixth section, which shares its thematic material with section one) but with an important difference: the last section is, finally, harmonically stable.

2. Sonata Form

The first and the second *Adagio* sections can be treated like a sonata exposition. The first section can be considered the primary theme, which immediately begins to modulate, showing rapid dynamic contrasts between *forte* and *piano*. The second section functions as the secondary theme, a very lyrical line with the dynamic marking of *piano*. The third, fourth, and fifth sections together can be considered a development section. The very last section, the *Tempo Primo*, can be treated as a recapitulation, as the tempo marking also suggests. It brings back the primary theme from the first section, and also maintains a stable tonality instead of modulating.

The fantasy shows the tonal trajectory of the sonata, “‘home–away–home’ in contrasting key areas.”¹⁸ The beginning of the primary theme appears in C minor, which is the home key. At

¹⁸ Michael G. Becker, “Keats’s *Fantasia*: The “Ode on Melancholy.” Sonata Form and Mozart’s

the point of arrival at the new key, D major rather than a more common relative minor, the secondary theme is heard. At the end of the second section (the *Adagio* II) a series of modulations begins, which continues throughout the third section, finally arriving in B^b major at the beginning of the fourth section. In the sixth and final section, *Tempo Primo*, the thematic material of the first section returns, now tonally stable as in a recapitulation, and ending with the flourish of a full C minor ascending scale.

Michael Becker easily and clearly explains the sonata-allegro form:

The quintessence of the Classical style is illustrated in the sonata cycle's first movement, usually cast in the sonata-allegro form. This "sonata form" is always *epi-dramatic* in character, conciliatory in structure. It is built upon two simultaneous ternary patterns. The first consists of an *exposition* (usually in two themes), an intensified *development* that combines thematic materials in different ways, and a *recapitulation* that resolves thematic and harmonic tensions. The second, paralleling the first, is perhaps the most common pattern in music: the quasi-narrative sequence of "statement-departure-return" or "home-away-home," in contrasting key areas. Commencing with a harmonic and thematic "known," indemnified by repetition, the music moves outward to new combinations and modulations, building up tension until a return to the home key and familiar themes – a resolution that has enriched and to a degree transmuted, through experience, the original musical ideas. Within this strict idiom Mozart labored, and his prolific output is due in part to his having worked within received, not innovative, forms.¹⁹

"Fantasia in C Minor" for Piano, K. 475," *The Comparatist* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1933), 24.

¹⁹ Michael G. Becker, "Keats's Fantasia: The "Ode on Melancholy." Sonata Form and Mozart's "Fantasia in C Minor" for Piano, K. 475," *The Comparatist* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1933), 24.

CHOPIN'S *FANTAISIE IN F MINOR*, OP. 49

Brief Background Information

Chopin returned from Paris to Nohant in the summer of 1841, and by the end of the summer he had finished the *Prelude*, Op. 45, the *Nocturnes*, Op. 48, the *A^b Major Ballade*, Op. 47 and the *Fantaisie in F minor*, Op. 49.²⁰ In the beginning of November, Chopin sent a letter to Julian Fontana, his close friend, a Polish composer, pianist, and writer who served as the copyist and intermediary between Chopin and his publishers: "I am sending you the two Nocturnes [Op. 48] and the rest on Wednesday."²¹ By "the rest" he meant Op. 46, Op. 47, and Op. 49. These four manuscripts were the last ones that Fontana copied during Chopin's lifetime. Eleven days later, Chopin sent another letter to Breitkopf & Härtel together with the four manuscripts Opp. 46–49.²² The fantasy was published that same year in Paris and one year later in Leipzig and London. Chopin dedicated it to Princess Catherine de Souza, one of his pupils.

Analysis of Chopin's *Fantaisie in F minor*, Op. 49

1. Sectionalism

Chopin's *Fantaisie in F minor*, Op. 49 can be divided into five large parts: an introduction, the transition, and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd "cycles," to use Carl Schachter's

²⁰ Kornel Michałowski and Jim Samson, "Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek" *Grove Music Online*, ed Deane Root, accessed March 31, 2019, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000051099>.

²¹ Pierre Azoury, *Chopin Through His Contemporaries: Friends, Lovers, and Rivals*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), 41.

²² *Ibid.*

terminology.²³ (Although I use Schachter's terminology here and agree with his division of the piece into segments, my understanding of the latent form of the piece differs from his, as I will discuss below.)

Schachter analyzes the fantasy as an introductory slow march in two strains, then a transition in an arpeggiated texture connecting the march to a chain of linked phrases. He calls the chains of linked phrases "cycles". In his analysis, the "cycle" appears three times; the second time it breaks off, and the third time it is complete (a slightly varied transposition of the "first cycle"). He said that "this is more large-scale repetition than would be usual in a sonata-form movement, let alone a fantasy."²⁴ However, I find a latent sonata form in this fantasy, even though the fantasy does not follow the traditional sonata form. Atypical for a sonata are three aspects: 1) it has a 42-measure introduction; 2) it shows transitions between the "cycles"; and 3) it does not follow a typical sonata key scheme (relative minor or dominant). However, the first cycle can be treated as an exposition, the second cycle and the *Lento sostenuto* as the development, the third cycle and coda as the recapitulation.

I will discuss below the key scheme of the harmonic language, and the underlying idea of a sonata form within the compositional style. Here, I will explain more about the introduction, the transition, and the "cycles." The introduction of the fantasy can be subdivided into two strains according to its thematic materials. The first strain of the introduction is in a minor key with the tempo marking of *Grave* (mm. 1–20) and sounds like a funeral march (Example 7).

²³ Carl Schachter, "Chopin's *Fantasy*, op.49: the two-key scheme" in *Chopin Studies*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 224.

²⁴ Carl Schachter, "Chopin's *Fantasy*, op.49: the two-key scheme" in *Chopin Studies*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 223.

Example 7. Chopin's *Fantaisie*, mm. 1–4.



The second strain, mm. 21–36, modulates through several major keys creating a bright atmosphere. The accompaniment in the left hand stresses the first and third beats of the measure against the lyrical melody so that we feel two beats in the measure instead of four, even though the introduction is written in common time. This is perhaps the first hint of the metric alteration from common time to cut time that Chopin will undertake in measure 43.

After the introduction, ten new motivic segments (each with a new theme) appear; as with Schachter, I call them sections A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H (transition), J and K. The first transitional segment starts at measure 43. The meter is changed to cut time. Broken chords of eighth-note triplets along with the sustained bass notes move by thirds from measure 43 to 53. In four measures of fluctuating *arpeggios* the passage arrives at the highest F of the keyboard. From measure 64 to 67, the transitional section ends with a descending run across the keyboard from the highest F to the lowest C.

Section A has nine measures of a melody and a broken chord accompaniment. Section B with its complicated rhythmic pattern of 4 against 6 played between the two hands contains two four-bar phrases. Two voices in the right hand harmonize the broken chord accompaniment in the left hand. Section C consists of eight measures of two four-bar phrases in which a single line of arpeggiated figures moves to the right hand. The chordal accompaniment in the left hand are marked *arpeggiando*. Section D has two measures of octaves, followed by seven pairs of slurred

eighth-notes. Section E develops the slurred eighth-note pairs, this time played with the bass accompaniment moving chromatically. Section F shows the dynamic marking *fortissimo*, which appears for the first time in the fantasy. This section contains alternating measures of parallel octaves in both hands moving apart from each other, followed by block chords. Section G is like a military march and is made up of two eight-bar phrases. Syncopated rhythms are played in the top voice and accompanied by the quarter-note parallel octaves in the left hand. Section H is transitional. New thematic material appears in Section J. Chopin changes meter again from cut time to $\frac{3}{4}$ and the key signature to B major. With the *Lento sostenuto* marking, the section introduces a new chorale-like theme. The melody in the top voice leads the section with 3 voices, and sometimes 4 voices, harmonizing it. The chorale-like texture continues in Section K introducing new thematic material.

Jim Samson summarizes: “On the face of it the *Fantasy*, Op. 49 brings together a range of contrasting characterisations of a kind common in contemporary improvisation – slow march, prelude or recitative, *motivische Arbeit* and chorale.”²⁵ In other words, I can explain the fantasy as being composed with the slow march (the introduction), prelude or recitative (the transitional section, H), *motivische Arbeit* (the section A to G), and chorale (the section J and K). (My subdivision of the fantasy seen below is similar to Carl Schachter’s in its understanding of the segments. The material described as “Transition” in mm. 43–67 by both Schachter and myself returns at the end of each cycle, but with a different configuration of the final figure (the “tail”) (Figure 1):

²⁵ Jim Samson, “Extended forms: the ballades, scherzos and fantasies” in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 121.

Figure 1. Diagram of Chopin's *Fantaisie in F Minor*, Op. 49.

Introduction (slow march)			Transition		
The first strain	The second strain	codetta	1 st phrase	2 nd phrase	descending run
mm. 1–20	mm. 21–36	mm. 37–42	mm. 43–53	mm. 54–63	mm. 64–67

1 st cycle							Transition
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
mm. 68–76	mm. 77–84	mm. 85–92	mm. 93–100	mm. 101–108	mm. 109–126	mm. 127–142	mm. 143–154

2 nd cycle (incomplete)				<i>Lento sostenuto</i>			Transition
A	B	C	H	J	K	J	H
mm. 155–163	mm. 164–171	mm. 172–179	mm. 180–198	mm. 199–206	mm. 207–214	mm. 215–222	mm. 223–234

3 rd cycle						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
mm. 235–243	mm. 244–251	mm. 252–259	mm. 260–267	mm. 268–275	mm. 276–293	mm. 294–309

Extended cadence and coda		
H	J (Adagio)	H (coda)
mm. 310–319	mm. 320–321	mm. 322–end

2. Virtuoso Keyboard Cadenza Style

The five variations of virtuosic keyboard cadenza style can be found in Section H which I refer to as transitional. There are five transitions, each of which is virtuosic, showing an arpeggiated figure across the keyboard from bottom to top. At the beginning of the first transition, this passage is played in a rather free tempo which begins in the previous section marked *Tempo di Marcia (Grave)*. The passage begins to speed up to a tempo twice as fast as the previous section (*poco a poco doppio movimento*). At the end of the first transition, a rapid descending scale runs restlessly across the keyboard for four measures, from the highest F to the lowest C, in triplet eighth-note and sixteenth-note figurations. The second and fourth transitions

show descending A^b seventh and G^b seventh *arpeggios* instead of the descending scale at the end of the first transitional section. Unlike the other transitions, the third transition does not show the descending scale or *arpeggios*. Dramatic effects are created through the use of changing dynamic and tempo markings: *accelerando*, *diminuendo*, *calando*, and *rallentando*. The last transition shows four-measures of a parallel minor seventh descending scale between the two hands.

3. Harmonic Language

The fantasy shows an interesting key scheme: beginning in F minor and ending in A^b major. In the three cycles, some sections show stable tonality and some sections show modulations. If we examine the key relationship between the tonally stable sections, we find ascending major/minor thirds (except in the *Lento sostenuto* section). Schachter believes that “...owing to the repetitive, cyclical design, the ear can easily connect the final A^b with the previous E^b and infer a large-scale progression of dominant to tonic.”²⁶ Chopin’s decision to end the fantasy on a plagal cadence could also lead listeners to conclude that the home key of the fantasy is A^b major and not F minor.

Here is the writer’s analysis of the harmonic structure (Figure 2):

²⁶ Carl Schachter, “Chopin’s Fantasy, op.49: the two-key scheme” in *Chopin Studies*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 223.

Figure 2. Diagram of Chopin's *Fantaisie in F Minor*, Op. 49, harmonic structure.

Introduction						
The first strain			The second strain			
F minor			modulation			
1 st cycle						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
F minor	A ^b major	modulation	C minor	modulation	E ^b major	E ^b major
2 nd cycle			Transition	<i>Lento sostenuto</i>	Transition	
A	B	C	H	J–K–J	H	
C minor	G ^b major	modulation	modulation	B major	modulation	
3 rd cycle						
A	B	C	D	E	F	G
B ^b minor	D ^b major	modulation	F minor	modulation	A ^b major	A ^b major
Transition		Coda				
H		Adagio		coda		
modulation		V of A ^b major		I of A ^b major, IV-I		

4. Vocally-Inspired Section

The *Lento sostenuto* section is composed in the style of a chorale distributed over five voices: soprano, alto I, alto II, tenor, and bass. The melody is played in the top line of the right hand with the remaining voices supporting the melody harmonically thus creating a hymn-like texture.

5. Tempo Variations

Chopin indicates tempo markings for some of the sections: *Tempo di Marcia*, *Lento sostenuto*, *Adagio sostenuto*, and *Allegro assai*. Additional tempo markings appear after the original tempo indication. The opening section of the Introduction is marked *Tempo di Marcia* (march tempo). The first new tempo indication occurs at the beginning of the first transitional section when the meter changes to cut-time. The tempo marking here is *poco a poco doppio*

movimento (little by little double the movement) instructing the performer to play this section twice as fast as the previous section.

The rhythmically active section with tempo markings of *accelerando* and *rallentando* create a dramatic atmosphere. A change is created rhythmically and texturally when block chords are played gently, and the tempo marking is *rallentando* leading to the *Lento sostenuto* section in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter. The section ends on a block chord with a fermata creating a pause in the music. The next transitional section is marked *Tempo I*.

The first tempo marking of the coda is *Adagio sostenuto* and is played in a freer, quasi-improvisatory manner. Following an *arpeggiando* indication on a block chord, the tempo changes to *Allegro assai*.

Compositional Style

The form of Chopin's Fantasy could be described as an expanded sonata form with transitional sections interspersed between the standard introduction, exposition, development and recapitulation movements of the sonata form, plus a coda.²⁷

After the introduction and the first transition (H), sections A to G (1st Cycle) can be labeled as the exposition. Sections A and B can be understood as the primary theme, sections D and F as the secondary theme, and section G as the closing theme. The second transition (H) occurs after the exposition. The development section is comprised of the 2nd Cycle consisting of Sections A through C and transition (H) followed by the *Lento sostenuto* (J-K-J) section. The third transition occurs after the development section. The recapitulation is comprised of the 3rd

²⁷ Jim Samson also finds the influence of sonata procedures here, but concludes that the slow section, which I understand as part of the development section, as an inserted slow movement. See, 121.

Cycle (sections A through G) now heard in the subdominant. The fourth and final transitions follow the recapitulation and lead to the coda.

The fantasy does not follow the classical sonata key scheme of using dominant keys. Instead Chopin chose to use mediant key relationships, which was prevalent at the time of this composition. However, the key relationship of the first and the third cycle is reminiscent of the sonata key scheme, even though Chopin does not apply it in the traditional way. When the third cycle is played, it shows a subdominant key relationship with the first cycle, in other words we can say that it is transposed down a perfect fifth (dominant relationship), which makes the final, plagal cadence the logical ending for the piece (Figure 3):

Figure 3. Chopin's *Fantaisie in F Minor*, Op. 49, key scheme of the 1st and 3rd cycle.

1 st cycle	3 rd cycle
F minor–A ^b major–C minor–E ^b major	B ^b minor–D ^b major–F minor–A ^b major

And as I mentioned in the section on harmonic language, the entire fantasy shows ascending thirds except the *Lento sostenuto* section:

F minor–A^b major–C minor–E^b major–G^b major–[B major]–B^b minor–D^b major–F minor–A^b major.

SCRIABIN'S *PIANO SONATA NO. 2 IN G# MINOR*, OP. 19 (*SONATE-FANTAISIE*)

Background Information

Alexander Scriabin (1871-1915) started writing his second piano sonata in 1892 in Genoa and completed it in the Crimea in 1897. In October 1895, Scriabin's letter to his publisher, Mitrofan Petrovich Belyayev (1836-1904), and composer, Anatoly Liadov (1855-1914), states that Scriabin had almost finished his second sonata. After seven attempts at rewriting the sonata, Scriabin wrote to Belyayev again, stating that he wanted to turn his attention to another composition and revisit the sonata at a later date. A letter sent in July 1897 shows that the sonata was not yet finished.²⁸ Then, one month later, Belyayev wrote a letter to Scriabin: "Sasha, you've had the Second Sonata long enough. Don't fuss with it anymore."²⁹ Two months later Scriabin finally sent the manuscript of the second sonata to Belyayev and it was published the following year as Op. 19.

The second sonata is one of the well-known piano works having the title "*Sonate-fantaisie*." It consists of two movements, *Andante* and *Presto*. In Scriabin's program notes, he writes that the sonata describes a seascape:

The first movement (*Andante*) is a quiet, southern night on the seashore. In the development, a dark, stormy deep sea. The E-major part is the tender moonlight that comes

²⁸ Alexander Scriabin, *Pis'ma* [Letters], ed. A. V. Kashperov (Moscow: Muzyka, 2003). quoted in Anatole Leikin, *The Performing Style of Alexander Scriabin* (Santa Cruz: University of California, 2011), 135-6.

²⁹ Letter from Belaieff to Scriabin quoted in Faubion Bowers, *Scriabin, a Biography*. 2nd ed. (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1995), 226.

after the dark. The second movement (Presto) is an image of the wide, turbulent expanse of the sea.³⁰

Analysis of Scriabin's *Piano Sonata No. 2 in G# Minor, Op. 19*

1. Sectionalism

The first movement of Scriabin's *Sonata No. 2* is written in sonata form, divided into three large sections. Section A functions as the exposition, introducing thematic material. Section B is the development. The return of Section A' is the recapitulation (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Diagram of Scriabin's *Sonata No. 2, Op. 19, 1st movement*.

1st movement

[Exposition]			[Development]	[Recapitulation]		
m. 1	~	m. 57	m. 58~m. 86	m. 87	~	m. 136
m. 1	m. 23	m. 37	m. 58	m. 87	m. 99	m. 113
Primary theme	Secondary theme	Closing theme		Abbreviated primary theme	Secondary theme	Closing theme

Section A can be subdivided into three parts: the primary theme, secondary theme, and closing theme. The primary theme written in G# minor consists of a single measured chordal rhythmic motive that ends with a characteristic triplet eighth-note figure that appears throughout the sonata. A. Eaglefield Hull (1876-1928) described this triplet eighth-note figure "They are like the 'knocks of fate' in Beethoven."³¹ (Example 8) The first appearance of this motive is notated in *piano* and with a *ritardando*; however, in the development section they become percussive, and are notated with individual accents and in *forte*, thus taking on more of a Beethovenian

³⁰ Yuli Engel, "Scriabin: A Biographical Essay," [in Russian] *Musykal'niy sovremennik*, op.cit., 21, quoted in Ye. Rudakova and A. I. Kandinsky, *Scriabin: His Life and Times*, tans. Tatyana Chistyakova (Neptune City, NJ: Paganinina Publications, Inc., 1984), 69.

³¹ A. Eaglefield Hull and Alexander Scriabin, "A Survey of the Pianoforte Works of Scriabin," *The Musical Quarterly* 2, No. 4 (October 1916), 604.

character. The secondary theme has a long linear line of eight-bar phrases with a cadence. Hull calls the closing theme “an aspiring hymn-like tune.”³² The melody consists of eighth-notes and half-notes interwoven within the wide leaps of an *arpeggio*-like accompaniment section in both hands. The melody is stated alternately between alto and tenor.

Example 8. Scriabin’s *Sonata No. 2*, 1st movement, m. 1, “knocks of fate”.



Section B, the development section, starts with a restatement of the primary theme with a grace note added to the last three repeated notes. The previous two themes are juxtaposed: the primary theme is in the left hand and the secondary theme is in the right hand. A fragment of the third theme, the closing theme, can first be heard in the tenor and alto voices and later in the soprano. The “knocks of fate” motive returns now played *forte*, in a percussive manner and notated with individual accents becoming a driving force to the recapitulation.

The second movement shows an interesting formal structure (Figure 5).

The entire movement is written in a free sonata form, with a sprawling exposition (mm. 1-74 [78]³³) and a compressed recapitulation (mm. 75 [79]–107 [110]). The ternary principal section takes up the first 32 measures of the exposition. It is followed by a transition (mm. 33–40), a secondary section (mm. 41–62), and a closing section that includes a retransition back to the home key (mm.63–75 [79]). No development section per se can be discerned, yet both the exposition and the recapitulation are brimming with developmental procedures.³⁴

³² Ibid.

³³ The alternative numbers represent first, the measure numbers of the piano roll version as recorded by Scriabin himself; the subsequent numbers in square brackets represent the measure numbers of the score.

³⁴ Anatole Leikin, *The Performing Style of Alexander Scriabin* (Santa Cruz: University of California, 2011), 139.

In the exposition there are three themes. The first theme in the “ternary principal section” is more like a texture. It shows consistent triplet notes figures in the right hand and quarter-note

Figure 5. Diagram of Scriabin’s *Sonata No. 2*, Op. 19, 2nd movement.

2nd movement

[Exposition]				[Recapitulation]			
m . 1 ~ m . 7 8				m . 79 ~ m . 110			
m.1	m.33	m.41	m.63	m.79	m.93	m.102	m.108
Ternary principal section	Transi-tion	Secondary section	Closing section (retransition)	Principal section	Secondary section	Coda (closing section +	Second-ary section)

octave figures in the left hand. We can find similar rhythmic and intervallic relationships between the right hand’s perpetual motive in the beginning of the second movement and the accompaniment figure at the end of the first movement. This figure creates an arch shape (Example 9) with a two- bar phrase by increasing the size of the interval for one bar, then reducing the size of the interval in the second bar. In the secondary section, the secondary theme is a hymn-like melody in the right hand for four bars (mm. 41–44). After the statement of the second theme, the third theme is played by the left hand (mm. 45–48) with syncopated rhythm in a *hemiola*-like bass line. The closing section is transitional and returns to the tonic key. The right hand plays a similar melody to the secondary theme with syncopated rhythm in the bass which recalls the “knocks of fate” theme of the first movement.

Example 9. Scriabin's *Sonata No. 2*, 2nd movement, mm. 1–2.

The image shows a musical score for the first two measures of the second movement of Scriabin's Sonata No. 2. The score is in G# minor, 3/4 time, and marked Presto. The tempo is indicated as M.M. ♩ = 96-100. The music is written for piano with a treble and bass clef. The right hand features a melodic line with a syncopated rhythm, and the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'sotto voce' and 'p'.

The last section, the recapitulation, is from measure 79 to the end. Measures 79 to 92 are the same as the exposition section. The development of previous themes begins in measure 93. In the right hand, the syncopated rhythm of the “knocks of fate” theme appears for two measures. And the fragment of the secondary theme is modified for seven measures. The next six measures restate the closing section. For the ending, the syncopated rhythm in the left hand of the third theme is modified by the “knocks of fate” theme concluding on a full G# minor chord.

2. Virtuoso Keyboard Cadenza Style

In the first movement, the melody line from measure 31 to 36 shows a cadenza-like style in the right hand (Example 10). This is a restatement of the secondary theme. The soprano voice is embellished progressively across six measures with shorter note values: four sixteenth-notes in m. 31, five sixteenth-notes in m. 32, six sixteenth-notes in m. 34, seven sixteenth-notes and eight thirty-second-notes in m. 36. Later, almost the same figure with modified accompaniment is restated from measure 107 to 112.

Example 10. Scriabin's *Sonata No. 2*, 1st movement, mm. 31–36.

Musical score for Example 10, measures 31–36. The score is in F# major (three sharps) and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (measures 31–32) features a treble clef with a melodic line starting on G4 and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *p* is present. The second system (measures 33–36) continues the melodic line in the treble and features a more complex bass line with chords and a dynamic marking of *pp* in measure 34.

Another cadenza-like passage is stated from measure 52 to 57 in the exposition and later the same material is modified when it reappears in the recapitulation, measure from 128 to 134 (Example 11).

Example 11. Scriabin's *Sonata No. 2*, 1st movement, mm. 128–129.

Musical score for Example 11, measures 128–129. The score is in F# major (three sharps) and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system (measure 128) features a treble clef with a melodic line starting on G4 and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *pp* is present. The second system (measure 129) continues the melodic line in the treble and features a more complex bass line with chords and a dynamic marking of *p*. A box containing the number '129' is located at the beginning of the second system.

The entire second movement represents a virtuosic keyboard cadenza style. Hull says "... he is likewise developing a somewhat alarming pianoforte technique. The Presto is one of those rapid, filigree-spun movements..."³⁵

3. Harmonic Language

The step-wise motions, sometimes diatonic or chromatic, the "feeling of harmonic elision" in the melody, and frequent deceptive cadences between the sections makes it hard for the listener to anticipate the next harmonic progression.³⁶

Though written in sonata form, the first movement does not return to the tonic key of G[#] minor but ends in E major. The first three measures provide the blueprint for the harmonic progression of this movement insinuating, the ending key of E major. Incorporating the use of chordal inversions and non-chord tones, Scriabin meanders through a series of deceptive harmonic resolutions, teasing the listener before arriving at the satisfying tonal center of E major in the closing theme.

In the development, the lowest bass notes that move chromatically act as a guide to the harmonic progression of this section (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Diagram of Scriabin's *Sonata No. 2*, 2nd movement, mm. 62–86, bass line.

62	63	65	69	70	75	77	78
D	G	C	C ^b	B ^b	D [#]	D	B
79			80	81	82		86
G [#] - A [#] - B [#] - C [#]			C [#] - C ^{##}	C [#] - C ^{##} - D [#]	E		D [#]

³⁵ A. Eaglefield Hull, "The Pianoforte Sonatas of Scriabin," *The Musical Times* (1916): 493.

³⁶ John Alexander Gorman, "An Analysis of Performance Problems in Selected Pianoforte Sonatas of Alexander Scriabin," Ph.D. diss., (New York University, 1979), 45-6.

Unlike the first movement, the second movement returns to the home key in the recapitulation. The key of the exposition of this movement is G[#] minor. Similar to the first movement, Scriabin wanders through a series of deceptive harmonic resolutions before arriving at the home key of this movement, G[#] minor.

4. Vocally-Inspired Section

In the first movement from measure 46 with two eighth-note pick-ups, a simple song-like melody is played. This closing theme is called “an aspiring hymn-like tune”³⁷ by Hull. Scriabin indicates *ben marcato il canto* at the beginning of the melody: The composer asks performers to sing this hidden melody. The dynamic marking of the melody is *mezzo forte* while the accompaniment in the outer voices has a dynamic marking of *pianissimo*.

In the second movement from measure 41 to 46, a lyrical melody line appears for the first time. This linear line is completely different from the previous section which is a perpetual triplet figure. This simple song-like melody is connected for four measures with one slur. The lyrical line is maintained until measure 78 though sometimes it is interrupted by a variant of the “knocks of fate” theme. Like the closing theme of the first movement, Scriabin indicates *ben marcato il canto* and this time he adds *legato* for the melody.

5. Tempo Variations

In the opening, Scriabin wrote a *rit.* on the “knocks of fate” theme and a *fermata* on the dotted eighth-rest right after the statement of the theme (Example 8). The same figure is repeated and then it is developed slightly for two measures. This similar pattern is maintained until measure 12, which has big break of a *fermata* on a quarter-rest. For this opening section, he sets

³⁷ A. Eaglefield Hull and Alexander Scriabin, “A Survey of the Pianoforte Works of Scriabin,” *The Musical Quarterly* 2, No. 4 (October 1916): 604.

up the improvisatory atmosphere by not only adding *rit.* and *fermata*, but also dividing one beat by four (sixteenth-note) or three (eighth-note triplet). It makes it hard for the listener to hear a regular beat in the opening section. John Alexander Gorman describes this section:

The hesitating quality of the opening motive sets up an immediate rhythmic ambiguity which is reinforced by further statements of this motive and by subsequent irregularities in the surface rhythm.³⁸

Another tempo variation is found in the secondary theme. For the first eight measures, the listener can hear more flexible rhythms than the previous transitional section (mm. 13–18) followed by the primary theme. In the previous section, even though the composer uses syncopated rhythms for six measures, one can hear a steady pulse divided by triplets. But the composer uses varied rhythms for four measures prior to the secondary section, and then at the beginning of the secondary section he indicates tempo *rubato*. In the secondary theme, one can easily find syncopations in the melody. It is combined with alternate pulses between duple eighth-note to triplets and tempo *rubato*. It makes listeners feel a fluctuating pulse. And from measure 31 to 36 (Example 10), one beat is divided by three, four, five, six, seven, or eight. More complex rhythmic variants (with *rubato* markings) it even harder to catch the beat.

Based on the recording on the piano roll, we can find out how much liberty Scriabin took with the tempo throughout the entire sonata;

The printed metronome marking in the score is ♩ = 60. Scriabin's performing tempo fluctuates between ♩ = 15 in m. 112 and ♩ = 120 in m. 64, an eightfold difference between the two extremes. The published score, in the meantime, has no accelerando markings and bears only four *rit.* indications (mm. 1–2 and 11–12), none of which Scriabin follows in his playing.
[...] More often than not, accelerando is twinned with crescendo (mm. 3, 5, 19, 25, 29, 66, 95, and 105) and ritardando with diminuendo (mm. 4, 20, 26, 90, 98, and 102). Only

³⁸ John Alexander Gorman, "An Analysis of Performance Problems in Selected Pianoforte Sonatas of Alexander Scriabin," Ph.D. diss., (New York University, 1979), 54.

occasionally does Scriabin broaden the tempo while increasing the volume (mm. 44 and 70). In mm. 81–85, at the end of the development, a combination of crescendo and accelerando leads to a fortissimo statement of the principal section in the recapitulation and, at the same time, an abrupt, almost fourfold slowdown in mm. 86–88.³⁹

Compositional Style

Scriabin's *Piano Sonata No. 2 in G# Minor*, Op. 19 is cast in sonata-fantasy form. Based on the structure, the first movement shows that it is written in sonata-allegro form. However, it shows a freer key scheme and sounds more like fantasy. And Scriabin wrote lots of fantasy aspects throughout the sonata.

First, this *Sonate-fantaisie* is written based on the image of sea as I mentioned earlier. Second, Scriabin uses cyclic aspect in this sonata. The theme of the “knocks of fate” in the opening in the first movement is used over and over again throughout the sonata; the first movement and the second as well as the final movement. The triplet figure in the opening section of the second movement is derived from the accompaniment figure at the end of the first movement. Third, the first movement does not follow the strict key scheme: there is no modulation turning back to the tonic key in the end.

Because of all the fantasy aspects, this second sonata of Scriabin sounds like a fantasy.

Like the contention in 1817 by Ernst Ludwig Gerber (1746-1819), a musical scholar:

...one can no longer perceive either any definite musical forms or any limits to the influence of the fantasia. Everything goes in all directions but to no fixed destination; the madder, the better! The wilder and stranger, all the more novel and effective; this is an endless straining after distant keys and modulations, enharmonic deviations, ear-splitting dissonances and chromatic progressions, and incessant process and without respite for the listener. In such a way we hear and play nothing but fantasias.⁴⁰

³⁹Anatole Leikin, *The Performing Style of Alexander Scriabin* (Santa Cruz: University of California, 2011), 136-7.

⁴⁰Letter from E. L. Gerber to C. H. Rinck, 1817, in Friedrich Noack, ‘Eine Briefsammlung aus der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts’, *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* (1935), 326. quoted in Peter Schleuning, “The Fantasia II: 18th to 20th Centuries,” in *Anthology of Music*, edited by K. G. Fellerer (Cologne: Arno Volk Verlag, 1971), 15.

CONCLUSION

The fantasy as a genre is characterized by its fluidity. It sounds like an improvisation, but fantasies such as the four treated here have been notated by their creators and thus preserved, fixed in their gestalt – robbed of the absolute freedom of true improvisations. Unlike forms that are more carefully circumscribed through historical practice and theory, the fantasy, chameleon-like, changes its shape and color in the hands of different composers. Characterized as “formless,” the fantasy is revealed in the comparison to possess a versatility that allows it to easily permeate other genres. Bach’s *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor*, BWV 903 shows *stylus phantasticus*; Mozart’s *Fantasia in C Minor*, K. 475 shows ‘rondo scheme’ married to sonata form; Chopin’s *Fantaisie in F Minor*, Op. 49 shows sonata form with an introduction and repeated interruptions by “transitions” made up of similar thematic material; and Scriabin’s *Piano Sonata No. 2 in C# Minor*, Op. 19 shows a hybrid form of Sonata-fantasy. At the same time, the four fantasies which are treated here still sound like a “written improvisation” by including a number of fantasy traits such as those examined here: sectionalism, keyboard cadenza style with improvisatory passages, virtuosic passages with *arpeggio* patterns and scale figures, rapid modulations, vocally-inspired sections, and tempo variation. These four pieces represent a broad selection of pieces belonging to the vague genre of fantasy. This manuscript suggests an understanding of these fantastical works which includes a consideration of the more fixed genres that I claim underlie these fantasies. Performers can more successfully understand

these pieces and can structure their performances more coherently by recognizing the importance of these more fixed genres in these four works.

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