

AN ANALYSIS OF J.S. BACH'S PARTITA IN B FLAT MAJOR, BWV 825; W.A.
MOZART'S PIANO SONATA IN D MAJOR, K.576; F. CHOPIN'S MAZURKAS,
OPUS 17; A. KHACHATURIAN'S TOCCATA: THEORETICAL, STYLISTIC, AND
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

by

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Abstract

This Master's report analyzes four piano compositions performed on April 9, 2015 at the author's Master's recital. The works under consideration are Johann Sebastian Bach's *Partita in B flat major, BWV 825*; Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Piano Sonata in D major, K.576*; Fryderyk Chopin's *Four Mazurkas, Opus 17*; and Aram Khachaturian's *Toccata*. This analysis includes the discussion of the theoretical, stylistic, and historical background of each composition.

GRADUATE RECITAL SERIES

Jung Won Kim

Piano

Partita in B flat major, BWV 825.....Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Praeludium – Allemande – Corrente – Sarabande – Minuet I – Minuet II – Gigue

Piano Sonata in D major, K.576Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Allegro

Adagio

Allegretto

INTERMISSION

Mazurkas, Opus 17Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

No. 1 Vivo e risoluto

No. 2 Lento ma non troppo

No. 3 Legato assai

No. 4 Lento ma non troppo

ToccataAram Khachaturian (1903-1978)

Allegro marcatissimo

Andante espressivo

Kansas State University

All Faiths Chapel

Thursday, April 9, 2015

7:30 PM

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CHAPTER 1 – J.S. Bach’s Partita in B flat major, BWV 825

Brief Biography of J.S. Bach

Johann Sebastian Bach, composer and organist was born in Eisenach, Germany on March 21, 1685. He is considered to be a musical genius with his supreme creative powers in which forceful and original inventiveness, technical mastery and intellectual control are perfectly balanced.¹ Johann Ambrosius Bach, his father was employed as a court trumpeter and Maria Elisabeth Lämmerhirt was his mother. Elisabeth died and was buried on May 3, 1694 when Johann Sebastian was only nine years old. On November 27 of that same year Johann Ambrosius remarried a thirty-five year old, twice divorced woman, Barbara Margaretha nee Keul. Three months after his second marriage, Johann Ambrosius died on February 20, 1695 after a long and serious illness. J.S. Bach and his brother Jacob were taken in by their oldest brother, Johann Christoph who was the organist at Ohrdruf.

J.S. Bach lived with his older brother Johann Christoph from 1695 to 1700. There, Bach enrolled in school where he was introduced to exceptionally enlightened curriculums such as religion, reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, history and natural science. On March 15, 1700 just prior to his fifteenth birthday, Bach left the school and went to Lüneburg.² At Lüneburg, Bach’s studies embraced orthodox Lutheranism, logic, rhetoric, Latin and Greek, arithmetic, history, geography and German poetry. He earned

¹ Malcolm Boyd, “Bach, Johann Sebastian,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Ed., Stanley Sadie, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2001), Vol. 2, p. 309

² *Ibid*, 310

his keep as a singer and an accompanist while attending free schooling at the Michaelisschule for poor boys.

In 1702, Bach competed successfully for the vacant post of organist in Sangerhausen but he lost the position because the Duke of Weissenfels had Kobelius appointed instead. However, Bach found employment a year later as an attendant to Johann Ernst, Duke of Weimar. On June 15, 1707, Bach became organist at the Blasiuskirche in Mühlhausen.³

On October 17, 1707, Sebastian married his cousin, Maria Barbara Bach, who was the daughter of Johann Michael Bach. In February 1708, Bach composed his first publication, *Gott is mein König* for the occasion of the installation of a new Mühlhausen town council. On June 25, 1708 Bach resigned from the organist position at the Blasiuskirche to accept the post of court organist to Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Weimar.

Three notable musicians that Bach associated with were G.C. Strattner, vice-Kapellmeister, J.P. von Westhoff, a fine violinist and a diplomat, and Johann Effler, a court organist. With support from Effler, Bach received an official appointment as the court organist at Weimar in 1708. Bach served this post until 1717. In 1717, Bach accepted the position of Kapellmeister and music director to Prince Leopold of Anhalt in Cöthen. A major problem arose when the Duke of Weimar refused to release Bach from his obligation, and had him held under arrest from Nov 6 to Dec 2, 1717. Bach was finally allowed to proceed to Cöthen, where he enjoyed one of the most productive compositional periods in his life. Some of his works from this period include the

³ Nicholas Slonimsky, and others, "Bach, Johann Sebastian," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, Centennial Ed. (New York: Schirmer Books, 2001), Vol. 1, p. 163

Brandenburg Concertos, the *Clavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*, and the first book of *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier*.

In 1720, while Bach was accompanying Prince Leopold to Karlsbad, Bach's wife Maria Barbara died, leaving him to take care of their seven children. He remained a widower until December 1721 when he married his second wife Anna Magdalena Wilcken, a daughter of a court trumpeter at Weissenfels. Bach had an additional thirteen children during his second marriage. Notable future composers include Wilhelm Friedemann Bach and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach with Maria Barbara as well as Johann Christian Bach with Anna Magdalena.

On April 22, 1723, Bach was elected to the post of Cantor of the city of Leipzig and was officially installed on May 31, 1723. His new job duties included the care of musicians for the Thomaskirche, Nicolaikirche, Matthaekirche, and Petrikerche. In addition, Bach was responsible for the provision of the music to be performed at the Thomaskirche and Nicolaikirche.

In his later years, Bach suffered from cataracts and in the spring of 1749, he underwent surgery that left him almost totally blind. On July 28, 1750, Johann Sebastian Bach died from a cerebral hemorrhage. On July 28, 1949, on the 199th anniversary of Bach's death, his coffin was transferred to the Thomaskirche in Leipzig, Germany.⁴

⁴ Ibid

J.S. Bach's Partita in B flat major, BWV 825

During the period of 1726 to 1731, Bach turned his attention away from the composition of a “regulated church music” and returned to the production of keyboard music. The most notable of Bach's artistic efforts is the serial publication of the six partitas of the *Clavier-Übung*, Part I (BWV 825 – 830) which culminated in the appearance of the collected edition in 1731.⁵

The Partitas are a set of six harpsichord suites written while Bach was in Leipzig and were among the last of his keyboard suites composed. The meaning of the word “partita” comes from the Italian form of the word “parthie” or German form “partie” referring to a series of variations, or as Lang puts it, “a piece made up of parts or sections.”⁶

BWV 825, Partita No. 1 in B \flat major, the first of the six suites, was first printed singly in September 1726. This was dedicated to the newborn son of Prince Leopold of Cöthen, Prince Emanuel Ludwig, born on September 12, 1726.⁷ Partita in B \flat major are Praeludium, Allemande, Corrente, Sarabande, Minuet I, Minuet II, and Gigue.

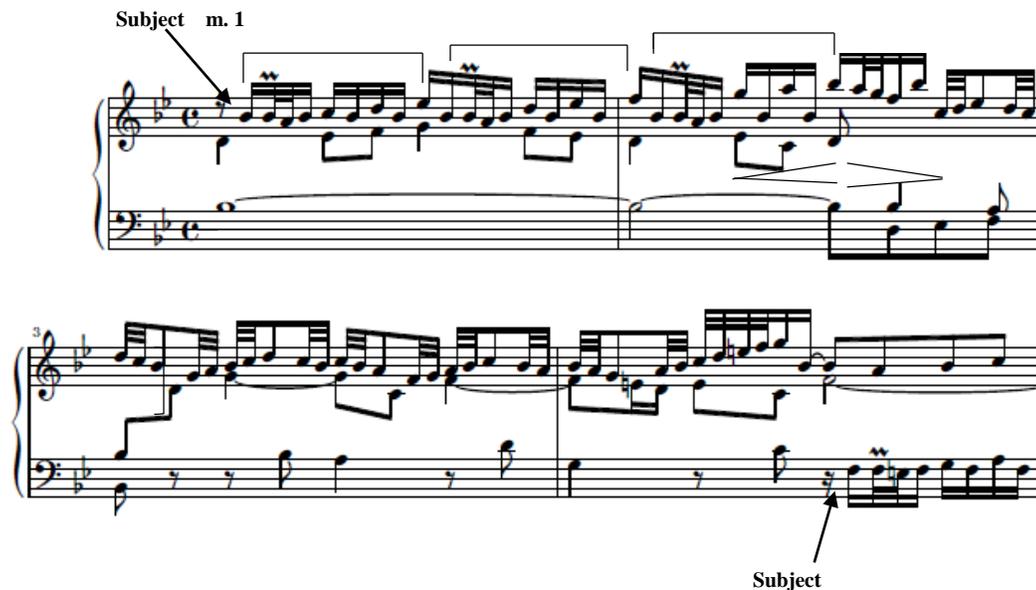
⁵ Robert Marshall, “The Music of Johann Sebastian Bach, The Sources, The Style, The Significance, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989), p. 199

⁶ Paul H. Lang, *Music in Western Civilization*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1941), p. 486

⁷ Marshall, pp. 206-207

Praeludium: This Latin title simply means “prelude.” It is a term of varied application that, in its original usage, indicated a piece that preceded other music whose tonic, mode, or key it was designed to introduce was instrumental and was improvised.⁸ The initial movement of Partita No. 1 has numerous ornamental trill notations. This piece is similar to a three-part invention. The ascending row B \flat -C-D-E \flat and B \flat -D-E \flat -F and B \flat -G-A-B \flat form the melodic basis of nearly every movement (mm. 1-2).⁹

Figure 1.1 J.S. Bach: *Partita No. 1 in B flat major, “Praeludium”* (mm. 1-4)



Allemande is a French word meaning “German,” is a dance movement in the suite, either first or following the prelude.¹⁰ It is written in 4/4 and has two sections, which are

⁸ David Ledbetter, Howard Ferguson, “Bach, Johann Sebastian,” *Grove Music Online*, 2014

⁹ Konrad Wolff, *Masters of the Keyboard*, (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 52-53

¹⁰ Theodore Baker, *Pocket Manual of Musical Terms*, 5th ed., (New York: Schirmer Books, 1995), p.11

repeated. Its tempo most closely approximates to our allegro moderato.¹¹ Just as in the Praeludium above, *Allemande* also has the melodic movement with the ascending row F-G-A-B \flat . (mm. 1-4)

Figure 1.2 J.S. Bach: *Partita No. 1 in B flat major, “Allemande”* (mm. 1-4)



One characteristic form of legato notation in Bach’s keyboard music is known as *style luthé*, a musical style imitating plucked, stringed instruments (as illustrated with a mark \blacktriangledown). This is distinguished by the fact that, within a single melodic line, individual notes are often held longer in order to fill out the harmony, thus creating the impression of two or three part writing. Figure 1.3 illustrates this *style luthé*.

¹¹ Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Bach at the Keyboard*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.85

Figure 1.3 J.S. Bach: *Partita No. 1 in B flat major, "Allemande"* (mm. 17-18 and mm. 37-38)



Corrente: Of Italian origin, the *Corrente* is typically written in a faster tempo than its French counterpart, the Courante. The Courante (*corrente*) has very strict rules as a dance. However, if merely played, it is allowed greater freedom so long as its uninterrupted figuration does justice to its name.¹² Though the written meter appears to be simple triple, that constant triplets actually create a compound feel. The rhythm in mm.1-4 of *Corrente* (Figure 1.4) is the same as in *Contrapunctus 12* of *The Art of Fugue* (mm.9-12) where Bach chose unambiguous notation (Fig 1.5).¹³ In *Corrente*, each eighth

¹² Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Bach at the Keyboard*, p.85

¹³ Ibid p.45

note of the right hand is played staccato while in the left hand, all notes except dotted quarter notes are played staccato.

Figure 1.4 J.S. Bach: *Partita No. 1 in B flat major, “Corrente”* (mm. 1-4)



Figure 1.5 J.S. Bach: *Art of Fugue, Contrapunctus 12*, (mm. 9-12)



The 16ths in the *Corrente* of the First Partita are meant to be played as triplet 8ths (mm. 29-30), similar to the initial upbeat of the head motive of the Finale of the Fifth *Brandenburg Concerto*. However, as soon as a polyrhythmic construction appears, 16ths following dotted 8ths must be played as written, to set them off from any triplets occurring elsewhere in the music.¹⁴

¹⁴ Konrad Wolff, *Masters of the Keyboard*, (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), p.5

Figure 1.6 J.S. Bach: *Partita No. 1 in B flat major, “Corrente”* (mm. 29-30)

m. 29



Sarabande: The *Sarabande* was originally a dance from Mexico and Spain, but by Bach’s day it had been completely re-imagined as a slow stately dance (figure 1.7) in triple meter.¹⁵

Figure 1.7 J.S. Bach: *Partita No. 1 in B flat major, “Sarabande”* (mm. 1-4)



¹⁵ Grant Hiroshima, LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC ASSOCIATION [website] *Bach, Johann Sebastian*, (April 10, 2015). Site address: <http://www.laphil.com/philpedia/music/partita-no-1-b-flat-bwv-825-johann-sebastian-bach>

An interesting fact about the *Sarabande Partita No. 1*, is that its basic form is very similar to Handel's famous *Sarabande in D minor*.¹⁶

Figure 1.8 Handel: *Sarabande in D minor* (mm. 1-4)



Minuet I & II: The minuet is a French dance that is in simple triple meter. It is written in 3/4 and consists of two sections, each eight bars in length, both of which are repeated.¹⁷ The double minuet is in a compound ternary form: A (*Minuet I*), B (*Minuet II*), A (a repetition of *Minuet I* without the repeats). The individual minuets are in binary form. In Bach's *Partita No. 1* the richer embellishment of the repeats in *Minuet II* should be noted. The repeat of *Minuet I* after the *Minuet II* seems to be required for formal reasons, because a short movement of only sixteen bars seems out of place in this Partita. *Minuet II* is nothing other than a trio even though it is in four parts.¹⁸

¹⁶ Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Bach at the Keyboard*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.511

¹⁷ Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Bach at the Keyboard*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.86

¹⁸ Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Bach at the Keyboard*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.483

Figure 1.9 J.S. Bach: *Partita No. 1 in B flat major, "Minuet I"* (mm. 1-13)

Figure 1.10 J.S. Bach: *Partita No. 1 in B flat major, "Minuet II"*

Gigue, or Jig is a kind of country dance with many modifications of step and gesture in triple subdivision of the beat or compound time with rapid tempo. In the traditional Baroque dance suite, the *Gigue* is usually the last movement.¹⁹ Bach's Partita No 1,

¹⁹ Theodore Baker, *Pocket Manual of Musical Terms*, 5th ed., (New York: Schirmer Books, 1995), pp.106,126

Gigue projects the energetic character of its British heritage.²⁰ This is a cross hand piece.

m.s. = *mano sinistra* (left hand); m.d. = *mano destra* (right hand).

Figure 1.11 J.S. Bach: *Partita No. 1 in B flat major, "Gigue"*



²⁰ Grant Hiroshima, LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC ASSOCIATION [website] *Bach, Johann Sebastian*, (April 10, 2015). Site address: <http://www.laphil.com/philpedia/music/partita-no-1-b-flat-bwv-825-johann-sebastian-bach>

CHAPTER 2 – Mozart’s Piano Sonata in D major, K.576

Brief Biography of Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born on January 27, 1756 in Salzburg, Austria, to Leopold Mozart and Anna Maria Pertl-Mozart. His music education was provided by his father, Leopold at an early age. Leopold Mozart was a violinist of high repute in the service of the Archbishop of Salzburg. At the age of three, Wolfgang shared harpsichord lessons with his then eight year old sister Maria. At the age of four, he played minuets and composed little pieces. He performed in public for the first time at Salzburg University in September 1761 at the age of five.²¹

In 1762, when Wolfgang was only six years old, Leopold took him and his sister Maria on a musical tour. Wolfgang and his sister visited the courts of Munich, Paris, London, The Hague, and Zurich, performing as child prodigies. In 1764, while in London, Wolfgang met Johann Christian Bach, the youngest son of Johann Sebastian Bach, who became a strong influence on him. On one occasion, J.C. Bach shared a keyboard with Wolfgang when they were performing a modern day piano duet. J.C. Bach was a leading exponent of the newly-introduced fortepiano and may perhaps have sowed a seed which was later to grow into Mozart’s great series of piano concertos. Mozart’s childhood compositions are sometimes indistinguishable from those of J.C. Bach.

In December 1769, the thirteen year old Wolfgang accompanied his father to Italy and returned to Salzburg in December 1771. While in Rome, he heard a performance of

²¹ Cliff Eisen, et.al. “Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Ed., Stanley Sadie, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2001), Vol. 15, p.276

Gregorio Allegri's *Miserere* in the Sistine Chapel. Later, he wrote out the entire score from memory, with only a few minor errors. During this time Wolfgang also wrote an opera, *Mitridate, re di Ponto* for the Court of Milan.

In 1777, Wolfgang, accompanied by his mother, went on tour to Mannheim. During his Paris tour in 1778, his mother suddenly died. Mozart moved to Vienna in 1781 where he married Constanze Weber in 1782. Mozart's reputation as a composer and pianist reached its peak in 1785. In the same year, he published six string quartets and dedicated them to his good friend, the composer Joseph Haydn.

Mozart continued to travel extensively throughout Europe composing famous works such as *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Magic Flute*, as well as numerous piano concertos, and other concertos. From 1786 to 1790, Mozart continued to gain public acclaim but his health deteriorated. His father Leopold died in 1787. The premier of *Don Giovanni* in Vienna was not received well by the Emperor. All these events led Mozart into a difficult and depressing time.

He was experiencing financial difficulties as an independent composer as his commissions frequently did not meet his expenses. Mozart's attempts to secure a new court appointment did not come to realization. In 1790, he wrote letters to his friend Puchberg asking for financial assistance. He accepted private pupils to secure some additional income. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart died in Vienna, Austria, on December 5, 1791 at the young age of only thirty-five. The cause of his death has not been determined. He was buried in a common grave. Mozart is considered by many to have been the greatest of composers.

Mozart's Piano Sonata in D major, K.576

Mozart's very last sonata written in 1789, *Sonata in D major* (K.576), has often been associated with his reference in a letter to Michael Puchberg to writing "easy sonatas" for Frederike, the Prussian princess. On the contrary, performance of this piece is extremely difficult and demands high level of technique from the performer. The Sonata in D major K.576 completed after Mozart's return to Vienna, is his last surviving sonata. More than any other of the sonatas, K.576 displays an intense cohesiveness and motivic unity. This is the only one of the Prussian commission to be completed, where elegance suitable to the Potsdam princess combines with the almost symphonic use of counterpoint characteristic of Mozart's late music to produce a work fit to stand at the head of the sonatas.²²

First Movement (Allegro)

This movement is in classic sonata-allegro form and presents the "trumpet call" theme to be developed in the first two measures. The opening begins with a theme (mm. 1-8) featuring rising arpeggios in octaves in 6/8 meter. The call motive of the first two measures is answered by harmonized phrases marked by trills in mm. 2-3, thereby pairing the arpeggios with gestures sweeping upward by step. A repetition of the arpeggiated idea on the supertonic E-minor harmony and a varied yet framing unit of two bars closes the theme on the tonic. This eight-bar theme is pervasive throughout. Mozart repeats the idea in mm. 9-16 and transfers the original melodic progression primarily to the left hand.

²² Stanley Sadie, Mozart, (New York: Grossman Publishers, Inc., 1965), p.102

At the same time, he introduces a quasi-canonic counterpoint in the treble that breaks into running sixteenth notes.²³

Figure 2.1 W.A. Mozart: *Piano Sonata in D major, “Allegro”* (mm. 1-8 and mm. 9-16)

m. 1

Allegro.



m. 6



m. 11



m. 16



The second theme of the first movement which is much more melodically smooth can be heard toward the end of the exposition starting in m. 41. Here, the theme with

²³ William Kinderman, *Mozart's Piano Music*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp.67-68

“dolce” stands apart. It is prepared by a cadence and begins without accompaniment in a mood of reflection, where the ascending line [C#-D-E-F#] is seen in the same register in mm. 41-42. The role of such nonadjacent connections in this sonata emerges clearly if we examine Mozart’s chromatic reinterpretation of this motive toward the end of the exposition and recapitulation, as well as a network of related passages. Between the E of m. 49 and the F# of m. 50 he has inserted an E#, supported by diminished harmony in the left hand. The E#-F# half-step is echoed in the following gesture in sixteenth notes.²⁴ See the illustrations below in Fig. 2.2.

Figure 2.2 W.A. Mozart: *Piano Sonata in D major, “Allegro”* (mm. 41-53)

The figure displays three systems of musical notation for W.A. Mozart's *Piano Sonata in D major, “Allegro”*, measures 39 through 53. The first system (measures 39-43) shows a trill in measure 39 and a *dolce* marking in measure 41, with an arrow pointing to a specific note. The second system (measures 44-48) features a dotted line under a note in the bass clef in measure 44. The third system (measures 49-53) includes arrows pointing to notes in measures 49 and 50, a bracketed note [F#] in measure 50, and a dynamic marking *f* in measure 53.

²⁴ William Kinderman, *Mozart’s Piano Music*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.68

Second Movement (Adagio)

The second movement, Adagio is in the dominant key of A-major. It involves prolonged sustained pitches highlighted in the opening theme, particularly the very first note, C# as well as the melodic importance of E that is heard as a tied half-note in m. 2. This section displays an eloquent rhythmic fluidity and a reliance on color as a central expressive device as observed in comparing the motion of the first beat of m. 2 to E, then of m. 6 to E#, then of m. 14 to G.²⁵ While Mozart's melodies respect period structure (typically in the 4 + 4 mold), it is the bass line whose arrival in the fourth measure is explicitly punctuated by a rest. The upper voice frequently flows on into the following phrase.²⁶

The main theme of the second movement is in mm. 1-8.

Figure 2.3 W.A. Mozart: *Piano Sonata in D major, "Adagio"* (mm. 1-8)

The image displays the musical score for the first eight measures of the second movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in D major, Adagio. The score is written for piano and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff (upper voice) and a bass clef staff (lower voice). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo marking 'Adagio.' is placed above the first measure. The upper voice begins with a C# in the first measure, followed by a tied half-note E in the second measure. The lower voice begins with a C# in the first measure, followed by a rest in the second measure. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and rests, illustrating the rhythmic fluidity and expressive devices mentioned in the text.

²⁵ William Kinderman, *Mozart's Piano Music*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.69

²⁶ Robert Marshall, *Eighteenth-Century Keyboard Music*, (New York: Shirmer Books, 1994)

The middle section of Adagio turns toward a shadowy F-sharp minor in mm. 17-22. Absent of any real melody, this section projects a mood of melancholy. The most remarkable is the expressive transformation that leads into the middle section of the large ternary form, beginning in m. 17 as seen in Fig 2.4. This section is set in one of Mozart's rarest keys of F-sharp minor. Its reharmonization of the movement's initial C-sharp becomes prominent since this pitch, in its original register, occupies the downbeats of mm. 17 and 18 and of subsequent phrases as well.²⁷

Figure 2.4 W.A. Mozart: *Piano Sonata in D major, "Adagio"* (mm. 17-22)



The slow movement of Adagio is one of Mozart's heartfelt romances, at least in its chromaticism.

²⁷ William Kinderman, *Mozart's Piano Music*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.69

Third Movement (*Allegretto*)

The last movement, *Allegretto*, opens with a simple tune with a playful mood and a light texture. However, unlike the first movement, the third movement is in a rondo sonata form of A-B-A-C-A. It features circular sequence found in mm. 1-20(A-1), then mm. 65-84 (A-2), then mm. 163-184 (A-3).

A rondo usually begins in the tonic key (in this piece, D-major) with a theme in section “A”.

Figure 2.5 W.A. Mozart: *Piano Sonata in D major, “Allegretto”* (mm. 1-20)

The image displays the first 20 measures of the third movement of Mozart's Piano Sonata in D major, 'Allegretto'. The score is written for piano and consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto.' and the dynamics include piano (*p*) and forte (*f*). The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system (measures 1-8) features a simple melody in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system (measures 9-12) introduces a more complex texture with sixteenth-note patterns in the right hand and a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the left hand. The third system (measures 13-17) continues the sixteenth-note texture with a more active bass line. The fourth system (measures 18-20) concludes the first section with a final cadence.

The first digression, section “B” (mm. 26-64) uses different material and is often in the dominant key of A-major starting in m.26.

Figure 2.6 W.A. Mozart: *Piano Sonata in D major, “Allegretto”* (mm. 22-36)

m. 22 m. 26

m. 29

The second digression, section “C” (mm. 84-162) is nearly twice as long as section “B”.

The secondary theme in D-major is reached in mm. 117.

Figure 2.7 W.A. Mozart: *Piano Sonata in D major, “Allegretto”* (m. 117)

m. 117

m. 117

CHAPTER 3 – Fryderyk Chopin’s Mazurkas, Opus 17

Brief Biography of Chopin

Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin was a Polish composer and pianist. He was born on March 1, 1810 in Zelazowa Wola, near Warsaw, Poland. Chopin was the second child of four children born to Mikolaj Chopin and Tekla Justyna Kryzanowska.

Chopin’s father, Mikolaj was a Frenchman from Lorraine who was employed by Countess Justyna Skarbek as a tutor for her son at her estate in Zelazowa Wola, Poland. Chopin’s mother was a distant relative of the Countess. She was sent to the Skarbeks while still a girl to act as a companion and housekeeper for them. Mikolaj and Tekla met here in 1802 and the couple married in 1806. They remained at the estate of the Skarbek family until 1810 leaving for Warsaw when Chopin was seven months old.

The Chopins were well respected family and socially well connected. All four children benefited from a lively cultural milieu in which literary and musical interests were fostered. As a child, Chopin mixed socially with three principle groups, first of which were professional people in academia. Through these contacts, the young Chopin visited Berlin in 1828. The second group was the middle gentry *szlachta*. Many of the Lyceum pupils were from this background and several of them boarded with the Chopins. Chopin was privately educated until 1823 when he entered the Lyceum. Friends he met at Lyceum were to prove enduring and important. Chopin spent two summers in 1824 and 1825 at the country home of one of the boarders, Dominik Dziewanowski, where he was exposed to folk music. The third group that Chopin mixed with was the small

handful of wealthy aristocratic families at the top of social hierarchy in Poland. His talent earned him the title “Second Mozart” and was the passport to these aristocrats.²⁸

Even before entering high school of music, Chopin had private lessons with Jozef Elsner for several years. Elsner introduced Chopin to a harmony textbook by Karol Antoni Simon in 1823. In the same year, he began to take organ lessons from Wilhelm Wurfel, an eminent pianist on Elsner’s staff at the High School. However, Chopin dedicated his Polonaise in A-flat major of 1821 to his first teacher Wojciech (Adalbert) Zywny, a Czech musician who taught Chopin from 1816 to 1821. Zywny introduced him to Bach and to the Viennese Classicism.

Neither Zywny nor Elsner had much to offer on keyboard technique to Chopin. His highly individual approach to teaching and playing in later life resulted in part from this unorthodox background. His high school years gave him a rigorous training in music composition. Chopin’s final academic report indicates that he was an exceptional talent and musical genius. Immediately after graduating from high school, Chopin visited Vienna where he performed two well-received public concerts in the Austrian capital. This opened opportunities for Chopin to perform in salons and concerts but he never really liked it.

On November 1830, Chopin started his European tour, beginning with Vienna. During the eight-month stay, he composed the first nine mazurkas. He stopped composing the salon pieces of his early years. Because of the November 1830 revolution in Poland, the political climate of that time became hostile toward Polish people, which limited Chopin’s ability to travel. In July 1831, Chopin left Vienna and departed for

²⁸ Kornel Michalowski, Jim Samson. “Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Ed., Stanley Sadie, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2001), Vol. 5, p.707

Paris, stopping in Munich for a month, then Stuttgart for two weeks. When he arrived in Paris, Chopin immediately felt at home in this great cultural city. He was well accepted by many young artists and musicians in the city, including Hiller, Liszt, Berlioz and the cellist Auguste Franchomme. Shortly after only a year in Paris, Chopin was in constant demand socially. All in all he did quite well in Paris.

In 1834 he went to Germany, where he met Mendelssohn, Clara, and Robert Schumann. In 1836 he met the famous novelist Aurore Dupin (Madam Dudevant) who published her works under the affected masculine English name George Sand.²⁹

In September 1836, Chopin proposed marriage to Maria Wodzinska, who was from his hometown in Warsaw. The rejection letter came in July of 1837 that pushed Chopin into depression. In April 1838 Chopin met up with the novelist, George Sand.

Chopin and George Sand's relationship was kindled immediately as they both were going through difficult periods from personal loss. Sand remarked that her maternal instinct drew her to Chopin. This relationship lasted until February 1847 when Sand broke off the relationship. Chopin never recovered from this and his health continuously declined rapidly with severe chronic coughing symptoms that was very likely tuberculosis.

A devoted Scottish pupil Jane Stirling offered financial support during Chopin's difficult last months, as Chopin was traveling to London to perform one final concert for the Friends of Poland. The doctors urged him to go home to Paris as soon as possible. During the last months of Chopin's life in Paris, he was surrounded by his friends. Additionally, Chopin's sister, Ludwika arrived with her husband and daughter and

²⁹ Nicholas Slonimsky, and others, "Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, Centennial Ed. (New York: Schirmer Books, 2001), Vol. 1, p.638

provided just the family atmosphere that he craved. On October 17, 1849 in the presence of Solange (George Sand's daughter) and his pupil Adolphe Gutmann, Chopin gave up his spirit.

Fryderyk Chopin's Mazurkas

Chopin's mazurkas are famous dance miniatures and, at about fifty-eight, are the most numerous group of works by Fryderyk Chopin. During Chopin's lifetime, forty-five of the fifty-eight were published and forty-one of mazurkas have opus numbers. Thirteen of the fifty-eight mazurkas were published posthumously, of which eight have posthumous opus numbers. Eleven additional mazurkas are known to have been in existence as manuscripts.³⁰ Chopin composed mazurkas throughout his life, from around 1825 to 1849. Alongside the polonaises, they are the most "Polish" of Chopin's works. Mazurkas would not be possible without Polish folk dances and Polish folk music. Chopin composed the mazurkas and created an unparalleled model of the musical stylization of traditional, national, and authentic folk repertory.³¹ Chopin's mazurkas along with traditional ones contain great deal of repetition. Repetition of single measure or small group of measures, repetition of a theme or even repetition of an entire section are seen in mazurkas.³²

³⁰ Michalowski, Kornel and Jim Samson, "Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek," *Grove Music Online*, (April 11, 2015), Site Address: http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.er.lib.k-state.edu/subscriber/article/citations/grove/music/51099?q=chopin+mazurka&search=quick&source=omo_gmo&pos=9&start=1

³¹ Artur Bielecki, The Fryderyk Chopin Institute [website], Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek, (April 12, 2015), Site address: <http://en.chopin.nifc.pl/chopin/genre/detail/id/6>

³² Jeffrey Kallberg, *The Problem of Repeat and Repetition in Chopin's Mazurkas*, *Chopin Styles*, ed. Jim Samson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)

The second and third beat of Chopin's mazurkas often stress foot stamping in the dance. He occasionally exaggerated this disruptive effect in his own performances to such an extent that listeners lost touch with the underlying triple meter. The cross accents and rhythmic variations written into the mazurkas inject the music with a quasi-primitive energy and dynamism that challenged aspects of conventional language at the time.³³

The example below portrays a typical mazurka rhythm:

Figure 3.1 (rhythm of Chopin's mazurkas)



Chopin's Mazurka Op. 17

Mazurkas Opus 17 were written in 1832 – 1833, during the second period of Chopin's life while in Paris.³⁴ The set of four mazurkas for piano lasts about fourteen minutes. Chopin dedicated this work to Mrs. Lina Freppa who was a singer and a friend. The Mazurka had made its way into the salons and the ballrooms of Warsaw by the time Chopin came upon it. Retaining the rhythms and general character of the dance, Chopin appropriated it as a vehicle for his own distinctive style of melodic and harmonic invention.

³³ Jim Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), p.111

³⁴ Gerald Abraham, *Chopin's Music Style*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.43

Op. 17 No. 1 in B flat major (Vivo e risoluto): *Vivo e risoluto* means “lively and vigorous”. The first Mazurka is full of vigor and dynamism; underlined with bass octaves and thick chords:

Figure 3.2 Chopin: *Mazurka Op. 17 No. 1* (mm. 1-8)



The melodic line dominates at the beginning (mm. 1-4) then repetition occurs at (mm. 5-8). The typical Polish mazurka rhythm can be heard in m. 2; m. 4; m. 6; and m. 8.

In the Mazurka, Op. 17, No. 1, the connection is broken in the middle by a foreign chord, D-F-C-A flat, taken as a chromatically altered form of the chord on D flat and left as an altered form of the chord on D natural.³⁵ (m. 16)

³⁵ Gerald Abraham, *Chopin's Music Style*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.88

Figure 3.3 Chopin: *Mazurka Op. 17 No. 1* (m. 16)



The Op. 17, No. 1 is A(B-flat major)-B(E-flat major)-A ternary form.

Op. 17 No. 2 in E minor (Lento ma non troppo): Lento ma non troppo means “slow but not too much.” The second Mazurka from Op. 17 is based on lyrical melody. It is written in ternary form. A-section is in E minor (mm. 1-24) and B-section is in C major (mm. 25-52). Repeat A-section is mm. 53-68.

Figure 3.4 Chopin: *Mazurka Op. 17 No. 2* (mm. 1-6)



In mm. 49-51 the neighbors are transformed into passing chords which prepare for a modulation to the original tonic, E minor.

Op. 17 No. 3 in A flat major (*Legato assai*): The third Mazurka does not follow traditional harmonic progressions. There are no traditional subdominant (IV) or submediant (VI) chords. Most of the movement is comprised of dominants, tonics, iii or III, and vii°. This piece is composed in A-B-A compound ternary form. The A-section in A-flat major is in ternary form with mm. 1-16(a) – mm. 17-24(b) – mm. 25-40(a). The B-section in E-major is also in ternary form with mm. 41-56(c) – mm. 57-64(d) – mm. 65-80(c). The final A-section in A-flat major returns to the original a-b-a. Neighbor notes are used frequently in this piece.

Figure 3.6 Chopin: *Mazurka Op. 17 No. 3* (mm. 1-5)

The image shows the first five measures of Chopin's Mazurka Op. 17 No. 3. The score is written for piano in 3/4 time, A-flat major. The tempo and mood are marked 'Legato assai' and 'M.M. ♩ = 113'. The first measure has a 'dol.' (ritardando) marking. The bass line features a series of chords with a descending line of notes. Pedal markings are indicated by arrows pointing to the bass line: 'pedal' under measures 1, 2, and 3; 'no pedal' under measure 4; and 'pedal' under measure 5. A 'Play slow' instruction with an arrow points to the final measure of the excerpt. The treble clef part consists of a melodic line with neighbor notes and slurs.

Neighbor notes are very important in this piece.

Op. 17 No. 4 in A minor (Lento ma non troppo): The fourth Mazurka in A-minor, with its musical lyricism, is a real masterpiece, in the form of a dance poem.³⁷ The overall form of the Mazurka in A minor Op. 17 No.4 is basic A-B-A' ternary comprising of three large sections: A-section in A-minor (mm. 1-60); B-section in A-major (mm. 61-92); A'-section (mm. 93-132). This piece is the longest among the four in Op. 17 and is one of the most beloved among all of Chopin's mazurkas.

Figure 3.7 Chopin: *Mazurka Op. 17 No. 4* (mm. 1-8)

The image shows a musical score for Chopin's Mazurka Op. 17 No. 4. It is in 3/4 time and A minor. The tempo is 'Lento ma non troppo. M.M. ♩ = 152'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1-8. Measure 4 is specifically labeled 'm. 4' and 'ii 4/2', with a note below the staff indicating 'left pedal used'. The first system includes markings for 'sotto voce' in the bass line, 'espressivo' for the melody, and 'ten.' (tenuendo) for the final notes. The second system covers measures 9-15. Measure 9 is labeled 'm. 9' and 'p' (piano). Measure 15 is labeled 'm. 15' and 'delicatissimo'. The melody in measure 15 is circled.

In this mazurka a four-measure introduction announces the principle motive of the piece, the ascending third B-C-D. The piece opens and closes in hushed incantation.³⁸

Chopin is able to connect the non-tonic opening in mm. 1-4. A performer would expect that Chopin would stress rather than soften m. 4. The beginning of the three-part section A (mm. 5-60) picks up the ascending third motive, restating it twice more in mm. 5-7 as

³⁷ Mieczyslaw Tomaszewski, The Fryderyk Chopin Institute [website], Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek, (April 12, 2015), Site address: <http://en.chopin.nifc.pl/chopin/composition/detail/id/179>

³⁸ Herbert Weinstock, *Chopin the Man and His Music*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p.204

the music climbs toward primary tone reached in m. 8. It is clear that Chopin's use of the left pedal was highly innovative and followed the dictates of an acutely sensitive ear, rather than any set of hard and fast "rules."³⁹

Figure 3.8 Chopin: *Mazurka Op. 17 No. 4* (mm. 61-70)

m. 61

dolce

----- pedal ----- / ----- no pedal ----- // ----- pedal ----- / ----- no pedal ----- // ----- pedal ----- /

I V

m. 66

I V

The B-section starting in m.61 introduces new material in the parallel key of A-major. While the bass line remains the same, the melody undergoes subtle pitch and rhythmic changes. In addition, the B-section is built upon a repetition of one phrase. There is a long section in A-major that slowly rises, falls, and rises to a thoroughly welcome and satisfying climax.⁴⁰

³⁹ Joseph Banowetz, *The Pianist's Guide to Pedaling*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp181-182

⁴⁰ Herbert Weinstock, *Chopin the Man and His Music*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p.204

The final A' section starts at m. 93 where Chopin returns to the beginning A section, varied with appoggiaturas that intensify its creativity. The Coda (mm. 108-132) displays chromaticism and the ascending-third motive B-C-D inherent in the beginning four-measure introduction as postlude to conclude the piece. According to William Thomson, this ending is one of the most provocative in all music history, the capping ambiguity of all. The unquestionable finality of A-minor, driven home in mm. 124-128 is enigmatically displaced by the sound of an F-major triad in first inversion. And thus Chopin's brief little piece fades back into the ambiguous haze from which it emerged.⁴¹

The word *rubato*, with the implication of "robbery" (taking time from one note and giving it to another, thus anticipating or delaying beyond the beat or prolonging a stressed note at the expense of a following one) entered the musical vocabulary in Pier Francesco Tosi's *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni* (1723).⁴² Chopin used *tempo rubato* in his creative works. Chopin's own performance, as those who heard him play have testified, was a reaction against the precise and rigid playing characteristic of eighteenth-century classicism. The freedom of rhythm called *rubato* is most vital in playing the Mazurkas. One of the rules in playing his music is to follow Chopin's advice in playing his work, remembering that he is often robust, and rarely sentimental. "Imagine a tree with its branches swayed by the wind: the stem represents the steady time (left hand) while the moving leaves are inflections (right hand). This is what is meant by *Tempo* and *Tempo Rubato*."⁴³

⁴¹ William Thomson, 1983, "Functional Ambiguity in Musical Structures," *Music Perception* 1/1, (Fall), p.23

⁴² Richard Hudson, *Stolen Time: The History of Tempo Rubato*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p.195

⁴³ Thomas Fielden, 1953, "Tempo Rubato," *Music & Letters*, Vol. 34, No. 2, pp.151-152

CHAPTER 4 – Khachaturian’s Toccata

Brief Biography of Khachaturian

Aram Khachaturian, an Armenian composer, conductor and teacher, was born in Tbilisi, Georgia on June 6, 1903 and died on May 1, 1978 in Moscow. His father’s name was Yehgia and mother’s was Kumash Sarkisovna. His father had a natural gift for music; he knew many Armenian and Azerbaijan folk songs and liked to sing at home with the rest of the family in the evening.⁴⁴ Aram was the youngest of five children. He is considered by some to be the central figure in the 20th-century Armenian culture and, along with Prokofiev and Shostakovich, was a pillar of the Soviet school of composition. Khachaturian influenced the development of composition not only in Armenia but also in Asia and South America.

His earliest musical impressions came from hearing folk music in Tbilisi during his youth. He did not study music or learn to read music as a child. However, while studying at Tbilisi from 1913 to 1920, he started composing piano pieces. In 1921 he moved to Moscow and studied biology at the university and studied cello at the Gnesin Institute with Bichkov and Borisyak. He transferred to the composition faculty and studied under Gliere and Gnesin.

He further studied at the Moscow Conservatory from 1929-1934. While in Moscow, Khachaturian became close with a family of Yelena Beckman-Shcherbina, a Professor of Moscow Conservatory, an outstanding pianist and sensitive interpreter of the

⁴⁴ Vactor Yuzefovich, Translated by Hicholas Kournokoff and Vladimir Bobrov, *Aram Khachaturyan*, (New York: Sphinx Press, Inc., 1985), p.6

works of Scriabin, Debussy, and Ravel. There, he met many talented musicians who attended her home recitals, and this also served to develop his musical tastes.⁴⁵ There are evidences that works of Debussy and Ravel attracted young Khachaturian and influenced his style.

In 1933, he married Nina Makarova.⁴⁶ His postgraduate work from 1934-1936 included composition classes with Gnesin and then Myaskovsky. He also took orchestration classes with Vasilenko and harmony with Georgy Konyus. Khachaturian wrote over fifty works during his student years.

Many of his earlier works for violin and piano (1929) were written under the influence of hearing an ensemble of Armenian *ashugh* (romantic tale accompanied by music) in Moscow and the *Seven Fugues* for piano (1928). Khachaturian wrote this work as the first movement of a three-movement suite (Toccata; Waltz-Capriccio; Dance) for piano. In 1932 he wrote his famous Toccata for piano that was published and performed in Paris the same year. Sergei Prokofiev, one of the founders of the Triton chamber music society, took Khachaturian along to France to perform the Trio. This was probably the first performance of his music abroad.⁴⁷ Khachaturian's two main lines of writings were the neo-folkloristic style and dramatic romanticism. The most important works of the postwar years include the *Cello Concerto* (1946), the *Third Symphony* (1947) and the ballet *Spartacus* (1950-1954).

⁴⁵ Grigory Shneerson; translated by Xenia Danko,; edited by Olga Shartse, *Aram Khachaturian*, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959), p.26

⁴⁶Nicholas Slonimsky, and others, "Khachaturian, Aram," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, Centennial Ed. (New York: Schirmer Books, 2001), Vol. 3, p.1866

⁴⁷ Grigory Shneerson; translated by Xenia Danko,; edited by Olga Shartse, *Aram Khachaturian*, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959), p.33

Khachaturian was the first composer in Armenia to write music for films with sound as he had high interest in cinema until his death. During his travels abroad, he enjoyed friendships of famous people including Charlie Chaplin, Ernest Hemingway, Rubinstein, Sibelius, and Igor Stravinsky. He began conducting in 1950 and presenting his own works in over thirty countries. He was also the first composer to place Armenian music within an international context. Khachaturian stated that his harmonic language came from “imagining the sounds of folk instruments with their characteristic tuning and resulting range of overtones.” His music was one of the bridges that most effectively connected European and Eastern traditions during the Twentieth century.⁴⁸

Tocatta in Piano Literature

The term “toccata” originated from the Italian word *toccare*, “to touch”. Toccata is a well-known compositional genre in keyboard literature, featuring mostly fast moving, improvisatory passages, imitation sections, as well as sudden and unexpected changes in harmony, tempo, and dynamic.⁴⁹ As a musical genre, toccata flourished in the Baroque period. The height of the historical development of the toccata is seen in the toccatas of Johann Sebastian Bach.⁵⁰ However, this freely composed keyboard music first appeared in certain 15th-century German manuscripts during the Renaissance period. Although it was neglected in the later eighteenth century due to changing musical aesthetics, the

⁴⁸ Svetlana Sarkisyan, “Khachaturian, Aram,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Ed., Stanley Sadie, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2001), Vol. 13, p.558

⁴⁹ Frank E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short Story*, (New York: Amadeus Press, 1995), P.18

⁵⁰Carole Ann Lee, *The Piano Tocatta in Twentieth Century: A Selective Investigation of the Keyboard Styles and Performance Techniques*, MUS.A.D., thesis. Boston University, 1978. P.16. Retrieved April 14, 2015

stylistic features of the toccata reappeared in other classical genres. C.P.E. Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven all preferred the fantasia as a vehicle for improvisatory textures and freer formal plans. Etudes and exercises were used to execute rapid and virtuosic motions; and the capriccio and rhapsody likewise embraced the formal and rhythmic freedom typical of the toccata.⁵¹

In the Romantic period, Schumann's Toccata (1832) is regarded as the most significant composition in this genre. Away from free-form and fugal writing, he adopts a strict sonata-form and massive chordal patterns. Both the exposition and recapitulation consist of the principal theme with rapid sixteenth-note motion and the secondary theme presents a short, cantabile phrase with sixteenth-note accompaniment.⁵² Schumann's Toccata is among the most challenging pieces to play in all piano repertory.

In the early twentieth century, Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel attempted a new approach to music which was unlike the Romantic tradition. This musical style was influenced by French painting and literature. The nineteenth century term, "impressionism," was applied to the painting style in France. Artists such as Claude Monet and Edouard Manet emphasized color and subjectivity through light and shading rather than objectivity and detail.⁵³ These artists were naturally absorbed into the music of French composers, especially Debussy and Ravel. They focused on creating the image of the title through colorful sonority and ambiguity of harmony and structure.⁵⁴

⁵¹ William Drabkin, *Fantasia: 3. 19th and 20th Centuries*, "The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. Stanley Sadie, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2001), Vol. 8, p.554

⁵² Frank E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short Story*, (New York: Amadeus Press, 1995), P.177

⁵³ Frank E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short Story*, (New York: Amadeus Press, 1995), P.278

⁵⁴ Stewart Gordon, *A History of Keyboard Literature*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), pp.359-61

Debussy's Toccata displays brilliance and virtuosity. The continuous sixteenth-note patterns in perpetual motion dominate the entire piece, a reminder of Robert Schumann's toccata and Johann Sebastian Bach's fugal toccata sections.⁵⁵ Debussy combined the traditional elements of the earlier toccata with his own musical concepts such as rhythmic freedom and rich harmonic texture. Structurally, it is a ternary form A-B-A'-Coda. The thematic progression of this piece may be viewed as having a sonata-allegro form.⁵⁶ Debussy's use of harmonic language such as unresolved tension, pentatonic and whole-tone scales is illustrated throughout the piece. This was a new tonal concept and described as "unprepared modulation, use of whole-tone and pentatonic scale, bitonality, use of parallel chords, and an occasional absence of tonality."⁵⁷ Debussy employed contrapuntal writing that is reminiscent of the toccatas of the Baroque.⁵⁸

Maurice Ravel's Toccata from *Le tombeau de Couperin* was his last solo piano composition. This work not only pays homage to Couperin and French music, but also each piece includes a dedication to one of his close friends who died in World War I.⁵⁹ Within the suite, Ravel designated the toccata as a final piece as did Debussy in the piece, *Pour le piano*.

⁵⁵ Hye Won Lee, *The Toccata and the History of Touch: A Pianist's Survey of the Symbiosis of Style and Performance Practice of Selected Toccatas from Froberger to Muczynski*, D.M.A. thesis. University of Nebraska, 2008. P.56. Retrieved April 16, 2015.

⁵⁶ Robert Schmitz, *The Piano Works of Claude Debussy*, (New York, Dover Publications, 1966), pp.75-80

⁵⁷ Rudolph Reti, *Tonality, Atonality, Pantonality*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1958)

⁵⁸ Hye Won Lee, *The Toccata and the History of Touch: A Pianist's Survey of the Symbiosis of Style and Performance Practice of Selected Toccatas from Froberger to Muczynski*, D.M.A. thesis. University of Nebraska, 2008. P.50-57. Retrieved April 16, 2015.

⁵⁹ Stewart Gordon, *A History of Keyboard Literature*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), p.396

Ravel's toccata movement is more technically demanding than any of his other movements. It features techniques such as interlocking hands, large leaps, alternating thirds, and rapidly repeating notes. His virtuosity was influenced by Liszt's pianistic technique.⁶⁰ The toccata's structure is similar to sonata-allegro form. However, the key relationships between movements are not traditional. The thematic ideas feature repeated notes in ostinato, a clear melodic line, and appoggiaturas.⁶¹

Impressionism and Neoclassicism were the major musical trends in the early twentieth century. This movement took place especially in Russia and came to be known as Neoclassicism. Russian music identified with both nationalistic qualities and Germanic Classicism.⁶²

One of the most significant Russian composers was Sergei Prokofiev. After World War I, people wanted music to have a character that was conservative and traditional.⁶³ Prokofiev was influenced by this trend. His approach to modernism appeared not only in his remarkable use of dissonance but also in his use of the piano as a percussive instrument.⁶⁴ Prokofiev's Toccata in D minor, Op. 11, one of the most virtuosic piano pieces in the early twentieth century, displays percussive, motivic elements, and attempts to demonstrate the percussive capability of the piano.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, *Maurice Ravel: Variations on his Life and Work*, trans. Samuel R. Rosenbaum, (Philadelphia, New York, London: Chilton Book Company, 1968), p.171

⁶¹ Carole Ann Lee, *The Piano Toccata in Twentieth Century: A Selective Investigation of the Keyboard Styles and Performance Techniques*, MUS.A.D., thesis. Boston University, 1978. P.43. Retrieved April 14, 2015

⁶² Frank E. Kirby, *Music for Piano: A Short Story*, (New York: Amadeus Press, 1995), P.319

⁶³ *Ibid*, 325

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 326

⁶⁵ Seon Hwa Song, *A Study of Selected Piano Toccatas in the Twentieth Century: A Performance Guide*, thesis, University of Florida, 2011. P.15. Retrieved April 20, 2015

Prokofiev's toccata style was influenced by Schumann after being strongly impressed when he heard Schumann's toccata.⁶⁶ Instead of adopting lyrical sections and linear melody like Ravel, energetic sixteenth-note motion rhythmically dominates throughout the work. Employing relentless sixteenth-note pulsation is a typical element in his toccata line, and its performance demands technical endurance and stamina.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Neil Minturn, *The Music of Sergei Prokofiev*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), p.25

⁶⁷ Seon Hwa Song, *A Study of Selected Piano Toccatas in the Twentieth Century: A Performance Guide*, thesis, University of Florida, 2011. P.15. Retrieved April 20, 2015

Aram Khachaturian's Toccata

Aram Khachaturian, a native Armenian composer wrote one of the most significant toccata of the Twentieth century. He composed the toccata in 1932 at the age of twenty-nine while studying composition with Miaskovsky at the Moscow Conservatory.⁶⁸ Upon Prokofiev's recommendation, Khachaturian's Toccata for piano was performed and published in Paris in 1932.⁶⁹ His Toccata is pianistic and brilliant in its use of the piano, while aspects of its melodic and rhythmic material are traceable to Armenian folk music.

The formal toccata structure remains in traditional ternary form A-B-A'-Coda. Traditional contrapuntal writing with rhythmic layering, influenced by Baroque aesthetics, is also featured in his Toccata.

Khachaturian's Toccata in E-flat minor was written in 1932 as a first movement of a three-movement suite for piano: Toccata; Walz-Capriccio; Dance. Typical of toccatas, it is in ternary form (A-B-A'-coda) but the A sections are expansive and can be further subdivided into smaller sections. These smaller sections are recognizable by use of different motives, texture and scales.

⁶⁸Nicholas Slonimsky, and others, "Khachaturian, Aram," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, Centennial Ed. (New York: Schirmer Books, 2001), Vol. 3, p.1866

⁶⁹ Svetlana Sarkisyan, "Khachaturian, Aram," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Ed., Stanley Sadie, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 2001), Vol. 13, p.557

A-section, mm. 1-108. (Introduction, a, transition, b, c, transition, c', codetta)

The **Introduction**, mm. 1-8 is marked by the importance of pitches B-flat and F. The beginning of the A section is marked *Allegro marcatisissimo*: This is played fast with very marked emphasis. It has very lively and powerful rhythmic drive establishing itself from the very beginning of the Toccata, which begins *Allegro marcatisissimo*. Pedal and non-pedal areas mark additional emphasis. See figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Khachaturian *Toccata in E-flat minor* (mm. 1-8)

Allegro marcatisissimo [$\text{♩} = 120$]

8^{va}-1

f

pedal pedal no pedal pedal

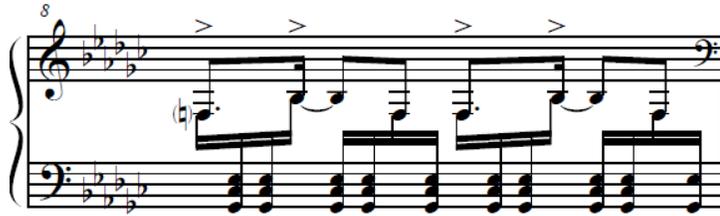
4

p *cresc.*

no pedal pedal

6

f



A section a. mm. 9-16, marked by the importance of pitches B-flat, F, E-flat, and D

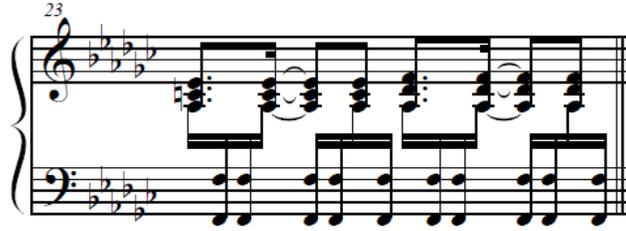
Figure 4.2 Khachaturian *Toccata in E-flat minor* (mm. 9-16)

Detailed musical score for measures 8-16 of the Khachaturian Toccata in E-flat minor. The score is written for piano in E-flat minor (three flats) and 3/4 time. Measures 8-16 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and chords in the left hand. Accents (>) are placed above the eighth notes in the right hand. The key signature is E-flat minor, and the time signature is 3/4. The score includes dynamics such as *fp* (fortissimo piano) and articulation marks like slurs and accents. The score is divided into four systems, with measure numbers 8, 10, 12, and 14 indicated at the beginning of each system.

transition, mm. 17-23: The mood develops from *pp* to *ff*

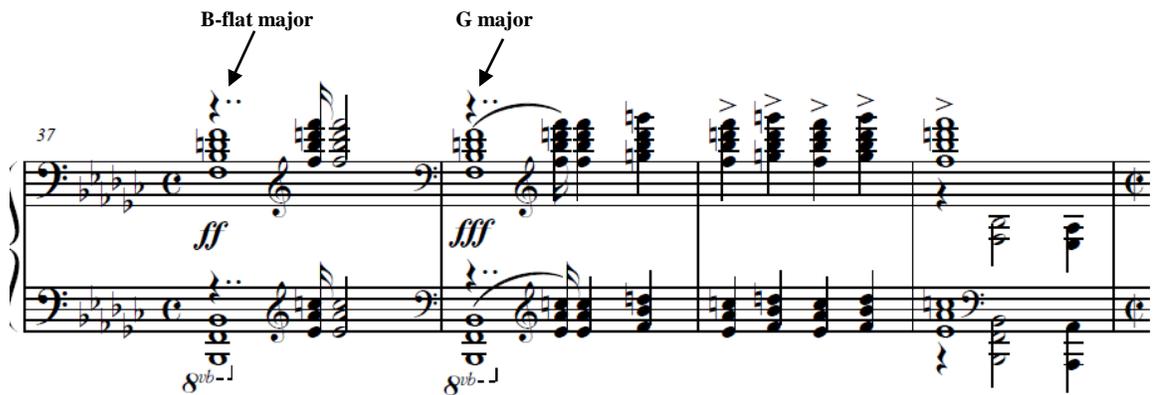
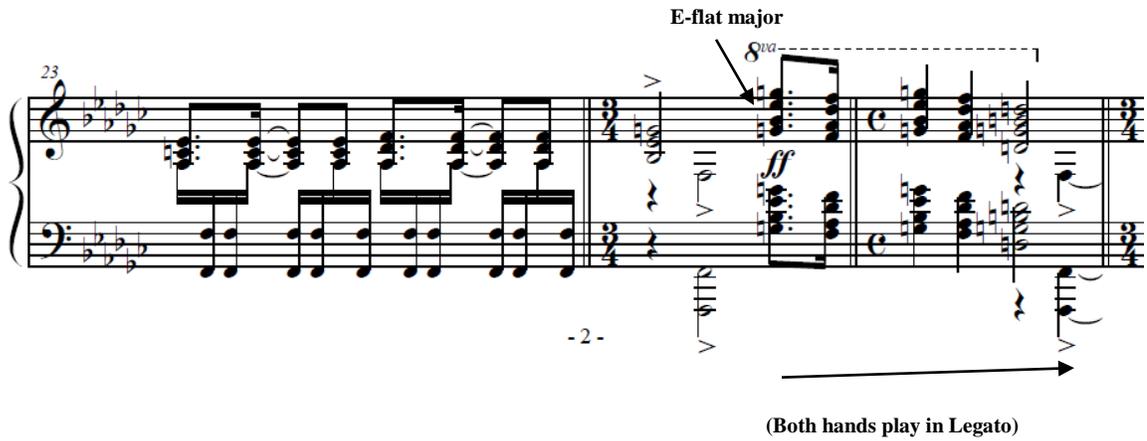
Figure 4.3 Khachaturian *Toccata in E-flat minor* (mm. 17-23)

/----- Left Pedal-----/



A section **b.** mm. 20-40, different time signature, texture is not as “toccata-like” but more homophonic, chords with more naturals appear (E-flat major, B-flat major, G major)

Figure 4.4 Khachaturian *Toccata in E-flat minor* (mm. 24 & 37-40)



A section c. mm. 41-71, opens with a Debussy-like sonority, toccata-like as in the “a” section, but the chords used are different.

Figure 4.5 Khachaturian *Toccata in E-flat minor* (mm. 41-49)

The musical score for Figure 4.5 consists of three systems of piano music. The first system covers measures 41 to 43, the second system covers measures 44 to 46, and the third system covers measures 47 to 49. The key signature is E-flat minor (three flats). The tempo is 'Vivace con brio' with a quarter note equal to 160 beats per minute. The dynamics range from mezzo-piano (mp) to fortissimo (ff). The music features prominent triplet patterns in both hands, with a 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking in measure 42. The notation includes various articulations and phrasing slurs.

Transition to the new section starting in m.41 features changes in beat and tempo. The change begins with triplet repeated notes and moves to a swirling triplet figure starting in m. 46.

Transition (coda), mm. 72-76, in the downwards 16th passage (mm. 74-76), the top note of each group of 16th ends up outlining a pentatonic scale: A B D E F (as do the bottom notes: D-flat, E-flat, G-flat, A-flat, B-flat).

Figure 4.6 Khachaturian *Toccata in E-flat minor* (mm. 71-76)

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the first system of Figure 4.6. The first system (measures 71-76) is written for piano and includes dynamic markings such as *m.s.* (mezzo-soprano), *m.d.* (mezzo-forte), and *Rec.* (ritardando). The second system (measures 74-75) features a prominent melodic line in the right hand with a *m.d.* marking. The third system (measures 76) continues the melodic development with *m.d.* and *m.s.* markings.

A section c'. mm. 77-100

A section coda (mm. 101-108)

The B section begins in measure 109 where the tempo is marked *Andante espressivo* which means moderately slow movement with expression. This contains lyrical and melodic lines and provides a moment of peacefulness after the dynamic and energetic A-section.

Figure 4.7 Khachaturian *Toccata in E-flat minor* (mm. 109-111)

The return of the A section occurs in mm. 119-166. However the smaller section **b** does not reappear. The **a** idea appears in mm. 119-128 and is immediately followed by section **c** (mm. 132-155). The transition/coda material follows in m. 156, this time functioning like a coda.

Figure 4.8 Khachaturian *Toccata in E-flat minor* (mm. 119-121)

In the last four measures (Fig 4.9), there is a reappearance of the motive from section B, ending the movement with a reminder of peacefulness, but at a very loud dynamic.

Figure 4.9 Khachaturian *Toccata in E-flat minor* (mm. 164-167)

m.164

The image displays a musical score for the final measures of Khachaturian's Toccata in E-flat minor. It is divided into two systems. The first system, labeled 'm.164', shows the beginning of the piece with a treble clef and a key signature of three flats. The bass line features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The right hand has a rest in the first measure, followed by a series of chords in the second measure marked with a forte 'f' dynamic and accents. The second system, labeled '165', continues the piece. It features a treble clef and a key signature of three flats. The right hand has a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by a series of chords in the second measure marked with a fortissimo 'ff' dynamic and accents. The bass line continues with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a coda symbol.

This piece ends with a coda in m. 164 that uses the second section's theme. The stark contrasting dynamics and pounding rhythm make this piece an enjoyable one to perform as well as to listen.

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