

A study of L. Van Beethoven's Sonata Op. 31, No.1; Chopin's Nocturne Op. 55, No. 2 and Ballade Op. 23;
Ponce's Prelude and Fugue on a theme by Handel; and Larregla's ¡Viva Navarra! Jota de Concierto:
Historical, theoretical and stylistic implications

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this Master's report is to analyze the five-piano works at the author's piano recital on April 8, 2018. The discussed pieces are Ludwig van Beethoven's Sonata in G major Op. 31, No.1; Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin's Nocturne Op. 55, No. 2 and Ballade in G minor, Op. 23; Manuel M. Ponce's Prelude and Fugue on a theme by Handel; and Joaquín Larregla Urbietta's ¡Viva Navarra! Jota de Concierto. The author approaches the analysis and study of the pieces from the historical, theoretical, and stylistic perspectives.

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Chapter 1. Ludwig van Beethoven's Sonata in G major, Op. 31, No.1

Beethoven (born Bonn, Germany, December 16, 1770; died Vienna, March 26, 1827) is one of the foremost composers in the world of Classical music. His string quartets, concertos, symphonies, and piano sonatas are central to the repertoire of any musician. He absorbed the music of Haydn and Mozart; was affected by the French Revolution; idealized and then was disillusioned by Napoleon; endured occupation and economic privation during the Napoleonic wars, and lived his last dozen years under political repression.¹ His music marked the division between the Classical period of the eighteenth century and the new Romantic spirit that was the main characteristic of the nineteenth century. Shortly after his death, biographer Johann Aloys Schlosser divided Beethoven's career and works into three periods:

- From his birth in 1770 to 1802 when his music was similar to the music of Haydn and Mozart, and when he mastered and absorbed the musical language and genres of his time.
- Through about 1814, when he developed a style that reached a new level of drama and expression due to his deafness.
- From 1815 to his death in 1827, when his music became not only more personal and introspective, but more difficult for performers to play and comprehend as he experimented with new harmonies, modulations, and progressions.

BONN AND THE FIRST DECADE IN VIENNA

Beethoven's "first period" was indeed two periods: his youth in Bonn and his first decade in Vienna. During his childhood, Beethoven studied piano and violin with his father Johann (a musician at the court of the Elector of Cologne), who took him out of school at the age of eleven as he intended for him to become a famous child prodigy, just like Mozart. For this reason, the little Beethoven focused entirely on music, which included piano lessons, organ, composition, counterpoint, theory, and improvisation. It was in Bonn, under the service of Maximilian Franz, Elector of Cologne, and after being trained by his father

¹ Burkholder, James Peter, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014. p 563.

and other local musicians, Beethoven gradually attracted notice as a virtuoso and improviser. On a visit to Bonn, Haydn urged the Elector to send the young musician to Vienna for further study as he was so impressed with his compositions.

In November 1792, after the death of his mother, and under the patronage and support of Count Waldstein, the twenty-two-year-old Beethoven relocated to Vienna. In Vienna, his first teacher for only two years was Haydn, with whom he studied counterpoint, while at the same time he cultivated patrons among the aristocracy like Prince Karl von Lichnowsky. After taking lessons with Haydn, he then studied counterpoint for one year with Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, and later with Antonio Salieri. Through performing, publishing, teaching and thanks to the generosity of numerous patrons, Beethoven was able to make an independent living without taking a position with a specific employer, something that Haydn or Mozart did not achieve until late in their careers.

The works he wrote during these periods ranged from music for amateurs to virtuoso works, symphonies as well as works for connoisseurs, like the *Pathétique sonata*, the String Quartets op. 18, and the First Symphony. Because he was a pianist, piano works were a natural outlet for Beethoven's compositional impulses; indeed sonatas, variations, and shorter works for piano comprise the largest group of works he wrote during his first decade in Vienna.² During this period, Beethoven adopted new approaches to piano compositions such as:

- Strong contrasts of style
- Frequent use of octaves
- Abrupt changes in dynamics
- Use of thick textures

Beethoven's early career in Vienna was successful, but unfortunately, his progress was affected by progressive deafness that appeared first in 1798, and reached its greatest crisis in 1802, dragging him into

² Burkholder, James Peter, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014. pp. 565-566.

a period of great despair. Surprisingly, under those conditions, he emerged and gave to the world one masterpiece after another, establishing himself as the most popular and critically acclaimed composer alive.

THE MIDDLE PERIOD

By this period, Beethoven was known in German-speaking lands as the most important pianist and composer. However, because of his progressive deafness, Beethoven considered suicide because a deaf musician was inconceivable for him, just like a blind painter. The only thing that stopped him was his fervent belief in his art. In the fall of 1802, while staying in the small town of Heiligenstadt, he wrote a moving description of the artistic resolve that kept him alive in what has become known as the Heiligenstadt Testament: "It seemed to be impossible to leave the world until I brought forth all that I felt was within me."³

From around 1803 Beethoven played in public less and less but began to compose in a new and more ambitious style that marks a point of no return on his career. This approach to a "new style" was possible thanks to his reputation, the support of his patrons and publishers, and surprisingly, thanks to his growing loss of hearing. His compositions through all this period clearly reflect the struggle in Beethoven's life by representing his own experiences and feelings. His music in this period continues to imitate the models established by Haydn and Mozart, but with the difference that the forms used by him are often expanded to unprecedented lengths or reworked in novel ways.

The work that fully exemplifies his new approach is his Symphony No. 3, better known as *Heroic Symphony* (originally dedicated to Napoleon Bonaparte until he decided to invade Beethoven's Austria). This masterwork, premiered in 1805, was not only longer than any previous symphony, but also so revolutionary and complex that critics declared the piece bizarre, while the audiences complained that the work was too long. Many scholars explain that this work undoubtedly reflects Beethoven's understanding

³ Lunday, Elizabeth. *Secret Lives of Great Composers*. Philadelphia, PA: Quirk Books, 2009. p. 51.

of heroic struggle and triumph. Other major works from this period are his opera *Fidelio*, five string quartets, three piano trios, two violin sonatas, a cello sonata, three quartets Op. 59 dedicated to Count Andrey Razumovsky, piano concertos as well as the Symphony No. 5 and The *Pastoral Symphony*, No. 6, in F Major.

By 1814, Beethoven reached the peak of popularity. He was considered the greatest living composer of instrumental music. His music was frequently performed throughout Austria and Germany, as well as across Europe, from England to Russia.

THE LATE PERIOD

After 1812, Beethoven entered a period of calm but by 1818, he again gave signs of immense creative force by emerging into the last and probably the greatest productive stage of his life. In this period, he composed the Ninth Symphony, the *Missa Solemnis*, the *Hammerklavier Sonata* and the last string quartets. At the time he was composing all these masterpieces, his brother Caspar fell ill with tuberculosis. For this reason, Beethoven tried to gain the custody of his nephew Karl by convincing his brother to name him the sole guardian. Caspar later decided to divide the custody of his son between his wife Johanna and Beethoven.

When his brother died, Beethoven accused Johanna of poisoning his brother. Finally, in 1820, after a series of legal attacks and counterattacks, he won the custody of his nephew Karl. When Karl reached adulthood, his relationship with Beethoven was not good as his uncle barely let him out of his sight. From 1820 to 1826, Beethoven tried to reform his nephew while at the same time he wanted to gain his love, however, this period culminated with Karl's suicide attempt. Amazingly Karl survived and after he left the hospital, he enlisted in the military determined to forge his own life far from his uncle.

In 1826, while Beethoven visited his brother Johann in his country house, he got sick and by the time he reached Vienna again, he had high fever and pneumonia. According to one account, the composer had been in a coma for forty-eight hours when, on March 26, 1827, in the midst of a massive thunderstorm, he

suddenly opened his eyes, lifted his right hand, clenched it into a fist, and fell back, dead.⁴ He was fifty six years of age. Over ten thousand people joined his funeral procession. He became an inspiration for generations of Romantic composers, who admired his intense and expressive music. Nowadays, his popularity as a composer and cultural icon continues as his music, themes and motifs are recognizable even for people with no apparent interest in classical music.

Beethoven's late works were considered idiosyncratic during his lifetime and were not absorbed into mainstream musical culture until decades after his death.⁵ The main characteristic of his late works is the use of imitative counterpoint, especially fugue, as well as the use of familiar styles and genres for expressive purposes. Among his major works from that period are 9 symphonies, 11 overtures, 5 piano concertos, 1 violin concerto, 16 string quartets, 9 piano trios, 10 violin sonatas, 5 cello sonatas, 32 piano sonatas, 20 piano variation sets, his opera *Fidelio*, his *Missa Solemnis* as well as the Mass in C Major.

⁴ Lunday, Elizabeth. *Secret Lives of Great Composers*. Philadelphia, PA: Quirk Books, 2009. pp. 55.

⁵ Burkholder, James Peter, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014. p. 585.

SONATA IN G MAJOR, Op. 31, No. 1

This sonata was composed in 1801 after Beethoven finished the *Pastorale Sonata*, and it is the first that corresponds to the cycle of three Op. 31 piano sonatas. During this time, Beethoven stated that it was time for him to look for new ways of writing for the piano because he was not happy with what he had done so far. The three sonatas Op. 31 are contemporary to the Heiligenstadt Testament, a moving document in which Beethoven confessed to his siblings how he was suffering from his increasing deafness.

According to pianists Alfred Brendel and András Schiff, the Sonata in G Major Op. 31, No. 1, is the funniest sonata Beethoven ever composed. One example of this statement is in the collected essays written by Alfred Brendel where he describes the following aspects of the first movement: “There are clues to his comic intentions: the two hands that seem unable to play together; the short staccato; the somewhat bizarre regularity of brief spells of sound interrupted by rests. The character that emerges is one of compulsive, but scatterbrained, determination. The piece seems unable to go anywhere except where it should not.”⁶ András Schiff suggests that the second movement is a parody of Italian opera. Beethoven was often irritated about the success of the “good and not so good” Italian composers who were much more successful than he was.⁷

ANALYSIS:

1.1 ALLEGRO VIVACE

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS. The first movement is written in a 2/4 meter, it has two main Themes (A and B), and it is conceived in the Allegro Sonata form, which includes an exposition, a development, and a recapitulation. Through this movement, we will find four main rhythmic patterns:

⁶ Brendel, Alfred. *Alfred Brendel on Music: Collected Essays*. Chicago, Illinois: A Capella Books, 2001. p. 105.

⁷ Schiff, András. *András Schiff Beethoven Lecture-Recitals part 5 (Piano sonata in G Major Op. 31, No. 1)*, broadcast at Wigmore Hall, 2004-2006. Podcast link: <https://wigmore-hall.org.uk/podcasts/andras-schiff-beethoven-lecture-recitals>



Ex. 1. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Allegro vivace. rhythmic patterns

The exposition begins from the first theme (A) in the key of G major. The theme can be divided into three parts, as seen below.

In the first one (mm. 1-28), we can see how Beethoven introduces the four main rhythmic patterns which are the core of the movement.



Ex. 2. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Allegro vivace. meas. 1-16

The second one (mm. 29-45), is an abrupt answer to the first part of theme A. Besides, in this section of the sonata the second rhythmic pattern is extended in a very virtuosic passage which culminates in the dominant chord.



Ex. 3. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Allegro vivace. meas. 27-33

The third part (mm. 45-65), is a counterstatement of the first section of theme A which lead us to theme B.

The second part of the exposition (B) is a symmetrical 8-bar theme in the key of B major. However, one

of the main aspects of this theme is that we can find a counterstatement of the melody in the bass in the key of b minor.

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is in G major and contains a melodic line with various ornaments and fingerings. A red box highlights a portion of this melody, with a red arrow pointing to the label "Melody in a Major key". The bottom staff is in B minor and contains a counterstatement of the melody, with a blue box highlighting a portion of it and a blue arrow pointing to the label "Counterstatement in a minor key".

Ex. 4. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Allegro vivace. meas. 68-78

In measures 98-111, there is a closing theme, based on the tonic and dominant which connect to the next section of the movement. The development (mm. 112-193) proceeds to carry and develop principally two of the rhythmic patterns (2 and 3) established before in the exposition. At the end of this segment, we can see how Beethoven uses thirty-six bars of dominant preparation with the purpose to return to the original key (G major).

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, highlighted by a purple box and labeled "Rhythmic pattern No. 3". The bottom staff features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, highlighted by a blue box and labeled "Rhythmic pattern No. 2".

Ex. 5. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no.1, Allegro vivace. meas. 123-135

Finally, the recapitulation starts at measure 193 and it is virtually a complete restatement of the exposition. The only differences I found are that the abrupt answer from measure 30 is omitted, and that theme B now is presented in the keys of E major and e minor in its counterstatement.

The coda of this movement (mm. 280-325) starts by presenting the abrupt answer omitted before in the recapitulation. Yet from measures 300-325 we find an 8-bar tonic and dominant development that finishes this wonderful movement.

Ex. 6. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no.1, Allegro vivace. meas. 297-305

HARMONIC ANALYSIS. The first subject of the exposition is in the key of G major and modulates to D major, F major, C major and B major. The second theme is in B major and B minor.

Regarding the development, it begins in the home key (G major) and moves through C minor, B flat major, D minor and D major. The recapitulation begins in G major and the second subject is in E major and E minor. Later, the harmonic activity returns to G major with the purpose to finish the first movement.

1.2 ADAGIO GRAZIOSO

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS. The second movement is conceived in a 9/8 meter in the key of C major. It is presented in a Rondo form where the principal subject, alternates with one or more contrasting themes. The leading theme (A) appears in the first 16 bars, and its characteristic is that the melody switches between the soprano and the bass.

Ex. 7. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Adagio grazioso. meas. 1-3

The second theme B comes in the middle of measure 16 and it is very clear the use of eighth notes as a pattern in both hands. Despite this treatment, the episode finishes with a little cadenza in the right hand (m. 26) that leads us to the home key.



Ex. 8. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Adagio grazioso. meas. 17-19

From bars 27-34 we find the main theme A with increased ornamentations. However, the last chord changes from major to minor with the purpose to present a new contrasting episode.



Ex. 9. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Adagio grazioso. meas. 30-31

Without a doubt, the third subject C (mm. 35-64) is the longest in this movement. It is in the key of A flat major, and it is interesting to note that Beethoven principally uses a pattern of sixteenth notes as well as the last twelve bars of dominant preparation for the main theme.



Ex. 10. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Adagio grazioso. meas. 35-37

At this point (mm. 65-98), there is a complete recapitulation of A (mm. 1-16), B (m. 16-26) and A (mm. 27-35) with livelier accompaniment and enhanced ornaments. Finally, the movement culminates with a very extensive coda that begins in measure 99. One of the aspect to bring out is the use of the theme of bars 1-2 in the bass that combines in a sweet dialogue with the right hand.

Ex. 11. Beethoven, Soanata Op. 31, no. 1, Adagio grazioso. meas. 108-109

HARMONIC ANALYSIS. The second movement begins by presenting the main subject in the key of C major that eventually modulates to G major. The second subject, moves from G major to D minor, C minor and then returns to G major. The leading subject appears once more in the original key of C major and immediately it changes to C minor.

Regarding the third subject, it starts in the key of A flat major, moves to F minor, G major and ends in C major where the recapitulation begins. In the recapitulation, there are no harmonic changes, however, something of interest in the coda is the long tonic pedal used by Beethoven to conclude the movement.

1.3 ALLEGRETTO

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS. The third movement is in the key of G major and it was composed in Sonata-Rondo form, which is a blend of the Allegro Sonata form and Rondo form.

The exposition begins from the first theme (A) in the home key; the theme can be divided into two parts: The first one from bar 1 to 16, and the second one from bar 16 to bar 32. Something important to highlight in the second section of theme A is the repetition of the original material (mm. 1-16) in the bass first with an accompaniment in triplets and then with eighth notes. After the presentation of A, a small transition (mm. 32-42) connects with the next theme B.

Ex. 12. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Allegretto. meas. 1-5

The next subject of the exposition (B) is in the key of D major and can be divided into two parts as well: the first one from measures 42- 53, and the other one from measures 54-66. Something of interest in this theme is that it is constructed over two main rhythmic figures: triplets and eighth notes. After the presentation of B, only the first section of A (with an accompaniment on triplets) reappears in the original key of G major with the purpose to lead us directly to the development.

Ex. 13. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Allegretto. meas. 39-46

The development starts in G minor in measure 82 and ends in measure 132. However, it is important to bring out in this section the appearance and development of the first phrase of theme A (mm. 1-4) first in the bass with an accompaniment in triplets and then as 2-part canon from bars 86-98. At the end of the development (mm. 129-132), a tremolo serves as a dominant preparation for the recapitulation.

Ex. 14. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Allegretto. meas. 85-89

The recapitulation (mm. 132-206), presents both themes (A and B) with new scoring and ornamentation as well as the transition from the exposition. The only difference between the exposition and this section is that theme B is now in the original key of G major.

Finally, the coda appears in measure 206 and ends in measure 275, and it is very interesting as it serves as a cadenza to conclude this wonderful sonata. However, one of the main aspects of this coda is the imitative development of a particular section of theme A (mm. 8-10), as well as the appearance of the first eight measures of the same theme in different tempos such as Allegretto, Adagio, and Presto.

Ex. 15. Beethoven, Sonata Op. 31, no. 1, Allegretto. meas 205-208

HARMONIC ANALYSIS. The third movement begins by presenting the first subject of the exposition (A) in the key of G major, and its transition moves throughout E minor, D major and A major which serves as a dominant preparation for the entry of the second theme. Regarding the second subject B, it is in the key of D major and consist of nothing but tonic and dominant harmony that at the end, returns to the home key where theme A is presented to conclude the exposition.

The development starts in the key of G minor and its harmonic movement is throughout C minor, B flat major, G minor and G major. Finally, the recapitulation begins with theme A in the original key of G major, however, its transition moves now E major, A minor and D major. At the end of the transition, the second subject B is transposed to the tonic key, and instead of heading to the return of the first subject in its original form, it leads to the coda. Two things of interest in this coda are its dominant pedal point, as well as its several reminiscences of theme A used by Beethoven in order to conclude this Sonata-Rondo form movement.

GENERAL COMMENTS. Each movement of this sonata is unique as none of them seem to be motivically related. The first movement, for example, is very rhythmic, the second one is ornate and the last one is lyrical and expansive.

In the exposition of the first movement, one needs to be careful with the chord in the bass as it must follow the held sixteenth note very quickly and decisively, while in the second subject from the exposition, it is necessary to be careful with its syncopation as the note before it has to be played softly and staccato. Because this movement is of a fluent rhythmic nature, sometimes rhythmic pedal can be used in places where it is important to remark something; for example the sforzandos or syncopations in the second subject. There are two particularly challenging spots in this movement (mm. 30-45 and 134-170) which I suggest to study as soon as possible before practicing any other place in the movement. The way to practice these spots is by:

- Playing them with a metronome and with different rhythms.
- Always articulating in order to get a clear sound, trying to avoid the use of too much damper pedal.
- Finding any fingering pattern in order to memorize passages quickly.

Unlike the first movement, the 9/8 meter of the second one (*Adagio grazioso*) results in very long phrases. For that reason, it is going to be important to manage the dynamics from the beginning of each phrase by starting with a soft sound, so we can have room for any crescendo. Yet, it is imperative to pay attention to the eighth notes in the bass, always avoiding the use of too much damper pedal, as we need to play them “pizzicato.” In this specific movement, all the appoggiaturas, fioraturas (embellishment of melodic lines), and cadenzas require stretchiness in the tempo, in order not to sound stiff or crowded as in the passages located either in measures 26 or 90. At the end of the second movement, I suggest playing the main subject of the movement as cantabile as possible by helping with syncopated pedal.

The principal characteristic of the third movement is the main theme (refrain) that continues to appear throughout the Rondo. For that reason, it is very important to always bring out the melody line by playing the accompaniment lighter. Another difficult aspect is the use of triplets either in the right hand or left hand throughout the movement. This use of triplets is difficult, but it is possible to solve the problem by playing them very light and with articulation for clarity.

For the first time in measure 82, there is a very interesting entry of the main theme in a minor key that should be played as soft and mysterious as possible until the appearance of the crescendo in the two-part canon in bar 86. In the final reprise of the main subject, it is essential to pay attention in the change of mood between the Allegretto, the Adagio, and the Presto.

It is possible to use rhythmic pedal in this movement, however, I highly suggest not to abuse of it as it will result in the loss of clarity necessary for all the passages where eighth notes and triplets are present. As usual, it is important for the player to follow all the indications of dynamics, tempo or articulation written by the composer.

Chapter 2. Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin's Nocturne Op. 55, No. 2

Chopin (born Żelazowa Wola, Warsaw, March 1, 1810; died Paris, October 17, 1849) was a Polish composer and pianist known for being one of the leading nineteenth-century composers who began a career as a pianist and gradually abandoned an active concert life. His music opened new possibilities for the piano, appealing to both amateurs and connoisseurs alike. Chopin's output comprises about two hundred solo piano pieces, six works for piano and orchestra composed for his own concerts as a virtuoso, about twenty songs, and four chamber works.

Chopin was the second of four children and his parents were Mikołaj Chopin and Tekla Justyna Krzyżanowska. He was born in the village Żelazowa Wola, where his father Mikołaj worked as a tutor. The family moved to Warsaw when he was only seven months old. After his family moved, his father ran a boarding house for students and taught French at the Warsaw Lyceum.

In his childhood, Chopin mixed socially with three principal groups of Warsaw society⁸:

- Professional people (academics in particular)
- Middle gentry (szlachta)
- Wealthy aristocratic families at the top of the social hierarchy in Poland

From a very early age, he showed an immediate talent for the piano. His first piano teacher was his elder sister Ludwika, and later the Bohemian pianist Adalbert Zywny, who resided in Warsaw at that time. Chopin's first public performance was at the age of seven. His talent as a gifted prodigy became his passport to the most important circles of high society. A much more important teacher for Chopin was Joseph Elsner (director of the Warsaw School of Music), who gave him a thorough instruction in music theory and form. After a few years of study at the Warsaw Conservatory, Chopin gradually realized that the political situation in his homeland was dangerous, but also that it offered few opportunities for a professional musician like him. In November 1830 he left Warsaw for Western Europe.

⁸ Michalowsky, Kornel, and Jim Samson. "Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek." Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Second edition. London: Macmillan, 2001. Vol. 5, p. 707.

Although his first intention was to embark on a tour in Europe with Vienna as a first stop, he had to remain there for eight months in the Habsburg capital because of an insurrection in Poland. A return to his homeland seemed impossible. In September 1831 Chopin settled in Paris. He immediately felt at home there and organized his debut concert to the Parisian audiences with the E minor Concerto at the Salle Pleyel on 26 February 1832. Critics declared the event unforgettable. Shortly after, Chopin befriended Mendelssohn, Liszt, Rossini, Meyerbeer, and Berlioz, as well as the writer Honoré de Balzac, the painter Eugène Delacroix and the novelist Victor Hugo.

For the next two years, his reputation as a teacher of exceptional quality and as a performer grew while at the same time he turned away from the genres of the concert hall, the variations, rondos, and concert pieces. During this time, Chopin composed mazurkas, nocturnes, and etudes, where the achievements of public and salon pianism were distilled and refined into a musical style of remarkable individuality.⁹

By late 1834, without income from concerts, he settled into a stable routine of teaching, composing as well as performing in the salons. On a trip to meet his parents at a German spa in 1835, Chopin met and fell in love with Maria Wodzinska, the daughter of some friends in Warsaw. One year later, he travelled again to Germany and proposed marriage to her and she accepted. Unfortunately, Maria's mother insisted that the public announcement be delayed until her husband's blessing. The next year was a period of waiting until Maria's mother informed Chopin that the relationship was over. Alone and depressed, Chopin spent the rest of the summer in Paris where he composed the Etudes op. 25, the Impromptu op. 29 as well as the Scherzo Op. 31, the Nocturnes op. 32 and probably the Funeral March which later was incorporated into the B flat minor Sonata.¹⁰

In 1837, Franz Liszt introduced to Chopin an entirely different kind of woman, the Baroness Dudevant (Amandine Aurore Lucille Dupin), better known as George Sand. Sand was a notorious figure not only because she used to wear men's trousers or smoke cigars, but also because of her protofeminist novels.

⁹ Michalowsky, Kornel, and Jim Samson. "Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek." Stanley Sadie, ed. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Second edition. London: Macmillan, 2001. Vol. 5, p. 709.

¹⁰ Burkholder, James Peter, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014. p. 616.

Chopin initially disliked her, writing to a friend, “What a repulsive woman Sand is! But is she really a woman? I am inclined to doubt it.”¹¹ Despite this situation, he met Sand again in April 1838, and as a result, dislike turned into desire, regardless of the contrast in their backgrounds and personalities. They became lovers by June, and they showed the early stages of their affair mainly within the circle of Sand’s friends, like Countess Charlotte Marliani, wife of the Spanish consul in Paris.

It was in this circle where Sand and Chopin planned to spend the winter months of 1838-39 in Majorca with her two children, mainly to escape from Sand’s former lover, the French novelist and playwright Félicien Mallefille. They settled on the island of Majorca envisioning a Mediterranean paradise, where she surrounded Chopin with total devotion. However, conservative Majorcans disapproved of the unmarried couple. The weather in Majorca was delightful in the spring, but autumn rains made Chopin’s life difficult and miserable as his health deteriorated rapidly when he started coughing up blood. This situation forced them to leave the island by late January. At first, with Sand’s two children and a maid, they moved into an abandoned monastery. Finally, by February they decided to return to France, as Chopin was so ill with tuberculosis he could barely walk.

For several years, Sand babied Chopin and tended to his health, but such devotion eventually wore thin. Rather than to break up with him in person, she wrote a novel (*Lucrezia Floriani*) in which a character thinly disguised as herself takes a lover immediately recognizable as Chopin. The novel ends when Lucrezia casts off the jealous Prince Karol.¹² Chopin’s friends were outraged by the story, and eventually, Chopin and Sand put an end to their love affair.

Sicker than ever, Chopin continued his concert career as he toured as a pianist in England and Scotland in 1848. He gave his last concert in Paris on February 16, 1848. *La Revue et Gazette Musicale* of Feb. 20, 1848, gives a precious account of the occasion: “The finest flower of feminine aristocracy in the most

¹¹ Lunday, Elizabeth. *Secret Lives of Great Composers*. Philadelphia, PA: Quirk Books, 2009. pp. 85-86.

¹² Lunday, Elizabeth. *Secret Lives of Great Composers*. Philadelphia, PA: Quirk Books, 2009. p. 88.

elegant attire filled the Salle Pleyel,” the paper reported, “to catch this musical sylph on the wing.”¹³ On November 16, 1848, Chopin played his last concert in London as a benefit for Polish émigrés. After his trip to England, he arrived in Paris desperately weak. For that reason, his friends rented an apartment for him and arranged for his sister Ludwika to come to France. Fryderyk Chopin died in the morning of October 17, 1849 and was buried at Père Lachaise between the graves of Cherubini and Bellini. At least during his lifetime, he never returned to Poland after his departure in 1830. However, at his own request, his heart was sent to Warsaw to be interred in a pillar of the Church of the Holy Cross.

¹³ Slonimsky, Nicolas, Laura Kuhn, and Dennis McIntire. “Chopin, Fryderyk Franciszek.” *Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*. Nicolas Slonimsky and Laura Kuhn, ed. Centennial edition. New York: Schirmer Books, 2001. Vol. 1, p. 639.

NOCTURNE Op. 55, No. 2

The term “Nocturne” of French origin can be translated as “of the night.” In German, its equivalent is *Nachtstück*, and in Italian is *Notturmo*. Both terms were used in the eighteenth century for instrumental and vocal works. Two examples are Mozart’s *Notturmo* KV 286 for orchestra and Haydn’s eight *Notturmi* for chamber orchestra. *Notturmi* used to be related with the *Serenade* because both were performed at night, however, *Serenades* were typically performed at 9:00 p.m., while *Notturmi* were performed at 11:00 p.m.¹⁴ The serenade’s rich texture of melody with accompaniment became the model for the piano solo nocturne in the nineteenth century.

During the nineteenth century, four kinds of nocturnes coexisted: for three or more instruments, for voices (usually *a capella*), for instrumental duos and the most dominant type, the solo piano nocturne. The first composer who used the term “Nocturne” for a solo piano piece was John Field in 1812. The main characteristics of most of his nocturnes are their ABA or ABAB structures as well as the use of singing melodies in combination with an arpeggiated accompaniment. All these aspects later served as the standard form of the so-called “nocturne style.”¹⁵

It is possible that the solo piano nocturne may have been transmitted to Fryderyk Chopin thanks to Maria Szymanowska, a Polish composer and piano virtuoso, who very likely became acquainted with Field’s Nocturnes while she was touring in Russia from 1822-1823. Chopin expanded this genre and transformed it into a greater musical form by creating harmonies and ornaments much more elaborated with melodies that resemble the *bel canto* style he used to admire. Chopin composed the Nocturne in E flat major, Op. 55, No. 2 along with the Nocturne in F minor, Op. 55, No. 1 between 1842 and 1844. Both nocturnes, were published in August 1844. They were dedicated to his friend and student Jane Stirling.

¹⁴ Chan Kiat Lim. *Twentieth Century Piano Nocturnes by American Composers: Echoes of Romanticism*. D.M.A. diss., University of Cincinnati, 2004. p. 8.

¹⁵ Piggott, Patrick. *The life and Music of John Field 1782-1837: Creator of the Nocturne*. London: Faber and Faber, 1973. p. 115.

ANALYSIS:

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS. This nocturne is composed in the compound meter 12/8, its tempo indication is *Lento Sostenuto*, and it is sixty-seven measures long. It follows the principal characteristics of the “nocturne style” as its structure is ABA¹B¹ and the work is based on a beautiful singing melody combined with an arpeggiated accompaniment. The melody throughout this piece is characterized mainly by three intervals: a 6th, a 4th, and a 2nd while the accompaniment consists of flowing eighth notes. A descending 2nd is the leading motive of the nocturne usually occurring as an appoggiatura figure either in the melody or accompaniment. In addition, three different voices are heard in this nocturne: the main melodic line which creates an expressive *bel canto* gesture, the contrapuntal line, and the accompaniment line presented in both A and B sections.

The first subject A (mm. 1-12) starts in the top line from the main tune by presenting the three principal intervals (the initial interval is a 6th, followed by an ascending 2nd, a rising 4th, and a descending 2nd). These three motives mainly create the musical material for the whole piece, however, in bar 9, a variation of the first 4 measures of A occurs shortly after with a beautiful counterpoint in the tenor voice.



Ex. 16. Chopin, Nocturne Op. 55, no. 2. meas. 1-3

Curiously, the second theme B (mm. 12-26) is not contrasting with the first one as it follows more or less the same textures and ideas. Nevertheless, it is in this specific section of the nocturne where the middle contrapuntal line is not presented in a whole subject. Instead, an A flat in the soprano and in the last note of each group of arpeggios serves as pedal point in bars 17 and 18.



Ex. 17. Chopin, Nocturne Op. 55, no. 2. meas. 13-16

In A¹ (mm. 26-38) and B¹ (mm. 38-55), Chopin presents the same material used before but now very ornamented in order to produce special textural effects. Still, a lot of contrapuntal textures are shown by juxtaposing short note values in one voice against long values in another voice. Finally, a coda occurs from measures 56-67. It is in this coda where a second soprano pedal point occurs in a B flat in mm. 59-60, however, a tempo change occurs in measure 61 with a *rallentando* that returns to the original tempo in measure 63. It is important to note that the only measures where the arpeggiated accompaniment does not occur are the opening two beats of the nocturne, as well as the final measures of the coda (m. 62 and mm. 64-67) where the texture is merely chordal.



Ex. 18. Chopin, Nocturne Op. 55, no.2. meas. 62-67

HARMONIC ANALYSIS. The Nocturne is in the key of E flat major and generally stays in that key to the end. The opening section in measure 8, vaguely cadences in G major/G minor. However, in measures 19-24 and 27-31, C minor is tonicized. Throughout this piece, triads and seventh chords are the most common sonorities, but ninth chords also appear as a part of the appoggiatura motif, embedded in the accompaniment. Moreover, dissonances not only occur between the appoggiatura motif and other voices in the melodic texture but also when the notes of one line of the texture invade the space of another line by converging on a clashing interval. One example of this can be seen in the second beat of measure 5 where the accompaniment moves up to reach a C⁵ with the purpose to collide with the D⁵ of the melody, creating a clashing interval of a 2nd. The harmonic structure of this nocturne is as follows:

- A (E flat major)
- B (E flat major; highly chromatic; C minor tonicized)
- A¹ (E flat major; highly chromatic; C minor tonicized)
- B¹ (E flat major, highly chromatic)

Coda (E flat minor/E flat major)

GENERAL COMMENTS. Lenox Berkeley considers this Nocturne as “one of the most beautiful and flawless in the whole series as it is a small masterpiece in which technical skill and inspiration go hand in hand.”¹⁶ This piece needs to be played as cantabile as possible always trying to imitate the *bel canto* style Chopin loved. For that reason, the best articulation to use is legato for both hands in combination with syncopated pedal. The dynamics of this piece, range from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* in which Chopin uses and combines with mastery not only rubato but pedalling, and several ornamentations to produce very special and beautiful textural effects.

Sandra Rosenblum comments on Chopin’s use of pedal and textural sonorities the following: “The unusually meticulous pedal indications keep the bass line clear, keep the texture clear when the parts are close, prevent the sound from becoming too full in delicate places, and avoid certain combinations of dissonance while creating other colours.”¹⁷ Therefore, my suggestion is always follow all the pedal indications suggested by Chopin in order to get those textural effects very characteristic of this Nocturne. One clear example of all of these effects of combining dynamics, pedalling, and change in tempo can be seen in the coda.

¹⁶ Berkeley, Lennox. “Nocturnes, Berceuse, Barcarolle,” *Frederic Chopin: Profiles of the Man and Musician*, ed. Alan Walker. London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1966. p. 180.

¹⁷ Rosenblum, Sandra. “Some Enigmas of Chopin’s Pedal indications: What do the sources tell us?,” *Journal of Musicological Research* 16. 1996, p. 51.

Chapter 3. Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin's Ballade in G minor, Op. 23

The best way of understanding Chopin's own unique invention of the ballade is by discovering what is behind the terms "ballade" and "ballad." *Ballade* is originally referred to one of the medieval *forms fixes* that dominated both French song and poetry during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Over time, the *Ballade* continued to be cultivated as poetry, but it gradually lost its musical importance.

On the other hand, the word *ballad* has its origins from the Latin *ballare* which basically means "to dance." At first, the *ballad* was applied to a strophic popular song that used to contain narrative elements however, it lost its connection with the dance by becoming into a distinctive song type with a narrative character. It was during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the *ballad* reached its height when ballad singers traveled between cities and village fairs to ply their trade.¹⁸ In this tradition, the most important aspects of the *ballad* were: strophic songs (recurring refrains) and narrative characters (lyrical passages).

Moreover, during the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries in Germany, the *folk ballad* flourished as a literary and musical genre in the form of narrative poems, songs, or instrumental works. Usually, *folk ballad's* subjects were serious, tragic, or supernatural, inspired by medieval histories and legends. The main aspect of this kind of ballad is that it is in strophic form by using simple rhyme with three and four stress lines (sometimes with a refrain). In a musical work, it usually appears as a solo song with piano accompaniment. Among Chopin's contemporaries, Schubert and Schumann composed songs called ballads.

Between 1835 and 1842, Chopin composed four Ballades that were inspired by genuine folk ballads and probably from Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz's Ballads and Romances (published in 1822), as the ties between Chopin's instrumental ballades and Mickiewicz's ballads are evident in a review of new music written by Schumann on November 2, 1841:

¹⁸ Porter, James. "Ballad." Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition. New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 2001. 2:541.

“Its impassioned episodes seemed to have been inserted afterwards. I recollect very well that when Chopin played the Ballade here, it ended in F Major; now it closes in A minor. At that time, he also mentioned that certain poems of Mickiewicz had suggested his Ballades to him.”¹⁹

The sentence “certain poems on Mickiewicz” is a mystery, since no documented evidence shows that Chopin had particular poems in mind. Moreover, “Chopin had an almost pathological dislike of talking about the way he composed.”²⁰

ANALYSIS:

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS. Chopin’s ballades are often described as being cast in sonata form, however, harmonically, formally, and expressively, these pieces go far beyond the rituals of sonata form.²¹ Following the principles of this form, the Ballade in G minor, Op. 23 has an exposition, a development, and a recapitulation.

The exposition (m. 1-94), begins with a slow introduction in a Largo tempo consisting of a meandering melody with a voice-like quality written in octaves where the main purpose is to lead us to the first subject (mm. 8-36). The main two characteristics of the first subject A are that: it presents a change in the tempo (now in Moderato), and that it has several dissonant melodic figures who find their resolution and release of tension in the longer notes that follow. Continuing with the tradition of the sonata form, the first theme A has a modulating bridge (mm. 36-67) where the principal task is not only to serve as a transition to the second theme but also, to set the new key area in which the second subject will be heard.

Ex. 19. Chopin, Ballade no. 1. meas. 6-11

¹⁹ Schumann, Robert. *On Music and Musicians*. New York: Dover Publications, 1946. p. 143.

²⁰ Walker, Alan. “Chopin and Musical Structure: an analytical approach.” *The Chopin Companion: Profiles of the man and the musician*. Alan Walker, ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1973. p. 249.

²¹ Greenberg, Robert. *The 23 Greatest Solo Piano Works: Course Guidebook*. Chantilly, Virginia: The Great Courses, 2013. p. 58.

Chopin's fabulous second theme B (mm. 67-94) is in the key of E flat major, and it would have been instantly recognizable to his contemporaries as a barcarole, a theme composed in the style of a folk song sung by Venetian gondoliers.²² From measures 82-94, this beautiful second subject concludes with a transition to the developmental area.

Ex. 20. Chopin, Ballade no. 1. meas. 63-74

The development (mm. 94-202) of this ballade is very different from that of the sonata form as it is not a combination of fragmented material from the exposition. Instead, what Chopin does is a massive variation of the exposition as it begins with theme A (mm. 94-105), which is immediately followed by not one but two passionate versions of theme B (m. 106-125 and 166-194) connected by a *scherzando* passage from bars 138-166.

Ex. 21. Chopin, Ballade no. 1. meas. 138-141

The recapitulation (mm. 194-207) follows the standard sonata-form operating procedure by presenting the first theme A in the tonic key (g minor). However, from that point, nothing is "standard" about this recapitulation as after showing the first theme A, Chopin dispenses entirely with the modulating bridge

²² Greenberg, Robert. *The 23 Greatest Solo Piano Works: Course Guidebook*. Chantilly, Virginia: The Great Courses, 2013. pp. 61.

and the second subject B. All these changes, result in a very small recapitulation that immediately connects with the coda (mm. 208-264) that brings this ballade into a very dramatic concluding apotheosis.

Ex. 22. Chopin, Ballade no. 1. meas. 208-211

HARMONIC ANALYSIS. The introduction of his ballade in G minor is very interesting as it sets up the harmony in a very unusual way. After the lengthen C, three measures of the Neapolitan-sixth chord are presented in the way of an embellished arpeggiation of A flat major that concludes on the cadential six-four chord in measure 7. In the exposition, the principal theme A starts in the key of G minor and basically stays in that key. On the other hand, the modulating bridge lingers in the original key area of G minor as well for an extended period. This is curious as it seems to be an inadequate preparation for the modulation to the second subject, however, what Chopin does instead of using other key areas is stimulate the sense of transition by some special parameters such as acceleration of tempo, or the use of short phrases.

The second subject B is in the key of E flat major and, basically, it alternates for an extended period of time between B flat major and E flat major. Yet, a transitory passage in measures 90-94 utilizes a rising third progression through E flat major, G minor, B flat major and D minor before landing on E. In the development, the principal and second subjects are in the key of A minor and A major respectively but after the *scherzando* passage (mm. 138-166), the second subject is presented once more now in its original key of E flat major. The ballade concludes with a very small recapitulation by presenting only the first theme A and the coda in the key of G minor.

GENERAL COMMENTS. Harmonically, expressively, and formally, this ballade is absolutely sublime as it is basically a representation of Chopin's very special way of playing the piano. This representation is

evident in the piece as different melodic lines are combined not only with the tempo rubato but also with the use of what it is called “the soul of the piano,” the damper pedal.

In order to play the ballade with the flexibility and sonority it demands, the pianist needs to employ rubato which is a judiciously lengthening and shortening of the rhythms in order to avoid strict time in a piece. In few words, the tempo must “sway and balance.” Regarding the first and second subjects of the ballade, both need to be played legato cantabile imitating the *bel canto* style Chopin admired. For that reason, a pianist should not release one melody note until the next has been played, being the result, a smooth and unbroken melodic line.

Finally, a judicious use of the damper pedal is going to be necessary for the ballade as it will allow the pianist not only to create the perfect atmospheres and sonorities required in this piece but also, it will allow to connect widely spaced notes that could not be connected through fingering. However, the pianist needs to be very careful when using the damper pedal as an overuse of it could occlude the music while playing. For that reason, it is always going to be necessary to pay attention to all the pedal indications suggested by the composer. The most demanding section in the piece is undoubtedly the coda. I strongly suggest practising this section very slowly, with separate hands and different rhythms than the original written in order to memorize it as soon as possible.

Chapter4. Manuel M. Ponce's Prelude and Fugue on a theme by Handel

Manuel Maria Ponce (born Fresnillo, Zacatecas, December 8, 1882; died Mexico City, April 24, 1948) was a composer, performer, conductor, pedagogue, musicologist, music critic, and lecturer. Many scholars consider him one of the foremost composers in Mexico and Latin-America. His music is so vibrant and it has influenced the music of many composers in both Latin America and Europe. His musical production encompasses a wide variety of styles such as the Romantic, Impressionistic, Neoclassic and Neoromantic, as well as works imitating the Baroque and the Classical period. Besides, many of his works reflects aspects of the music of Cuba, Spain, and naturally, Mexico.

Around the globe, he has been one of the best exponents of the piano in America as he composed more than 180 works for piano (not including his arrangements of popular Mexican songs). It is not surprising that he had produced such amount of music for the piano. After all, he was a student of Martin Krause who himself was one of the most prominent students of Franz Liszt, and who also was the professor of artists such as Rosita Renard, Edwin Fischer, and Claudio Arrau.²³ Another eminent professor he had was Paul Dukas, with whom he studied composition at the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris from 1925-1932. Dukas was always convinced that one day Ponce would become an important composer. He even honoured him at his graduation ceremony through a special announcement to the audience. He said: "Ponce was not really a student, but a distinguished musician who always gave me the honour of attending my classes."²⁴

Nowadays, due mainly to his composition for guitar, Ponce is the most recognized and heard Mexican composer around the world. This is mainly thanks to Andres Segovia, the renowned Spanish master, who discovered in Ponce a brilliant and talented musician capable of creating a repertoire so demanding and beautiful for the guitar that with the passing of the years, it became the cornerstone of guitar literature. Through all his life, Segovia took the task of promoting and publishing all Ponce's guitar music

²³ Vázquez, Carlos, "Manuel M. Ponce y el piano," *Heterofonía* 15, no.79 (1982): 16.

²⁴ Mello, Paolo, "Manuel M. Ponce, músico polifacético," *Heterofonía* 15, no.79 (1982): 27.

considered by many guitarists as a necessity to play for their professional development. However, Ponce's works for guitar and piano only represent a small part of his musical production. With the same passion, he also wrote vocal music (mainly directed to the Mexican Song), chamber music, and symphonic music. In Mexico City, Ponce founded in 1934 the first class of folklore at the Escuela Nacional de Música from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. In 1939, he became the Chairman of the Academy of Folk Studies at the National Conservatory. According to Yolanda Moreno Rivas, Ponce was the pioneer of the musical nationalism in Mexico because he was the first composer to collect and classify a significant portion of the folk music of his beloved country. He did this thanks to the ideals that the Mexican Revolution brought by a new concept of national unity in the arts with the goal to search for a distinctive and unique Mexican form of expression.²⁵

Through all his life, Ponce was always in contact with the musical world, and it is possible to see this through all his letters (with Casals, Segovia, Manuel de Falla, Stravinsky, Castelnuovo Tedesco or Stokovski), that without a doubt, reflect the affection they all felt for him. Moreover, we can say precisely the same of great artists such as Arthur Rubinstein, Alexander Brailovski, Ernest Anserment, or Carlos Kleiber who used to visit him whenever they performed in Mexico.²⁶

The pianist and lecturer Paolo Mello explains that Ponce's works have two phases, one romantic and the other modern, which can be divided into four periods:²⁷

- The first one, from 1891 to 1904, before his first trip to Europe.
- The second one, from 1905 to 1924, after his first trip.
- The third one, from 1925 to 1932, during his second trip to Europe.
- The fourth one, from 1933 to 1948, after his second trip.

²⁵ Moreno Rivas, Yolanda, *Rostros del nacionalismo en la música mexicana: Un ensayo de interpretación*. México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1989: 42.

²⁶ Castellanos, Pablo, *Manuel M. Ponce*. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982: 13.

²⁷ Castellanos, Pablo, *Manuel M. Ponce*. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982: 18-19.

First period (1831-1904):

In this period (Romantic), he not only composed a considerable amount of works for piano that show the influence of Mexican folklore, but he also produced symphonic music, chamber music, choral music as well as organ, cello, flute, harpsichord, and guitar music. Ponce also used all the musical structures such as sonata form, suite, variations, motet, choral, canon or fugue, as well as all different kinds of dances, lied, and of course, new forms like the symphonic poem, prelude, or the etude. His piano works in this period are not as mature as the compositions of another renowned Mexican composer named Ricardo Castro. However, Ponce's piano compositions are considered better than the music of his compatriots such as Julio Ituarte or Miguel Rios Toledano. Among his most renowned piano works of that time is the *Gavota* whose main melody is based on a Mexican romantic song, *11 Miniatures*, *5 Etudes* and *Malgré Tout* (In Spite of Everything).

Second Period (1905-1924):

During the second period, similarly inspired by romanticism, Ponce undertook his first trip to Europe. He arrived in 1904 with the recommendation letter from Eduardo Gabrielli to study at the Liceo Rossini in Bologna. In this place, he took composition, counterpoint and instrumentation lessons with Cesare Dall'Olio and Luigi Torchi. Later, he moved to Berlin with the purpose to study at the Stern Conservatory with Martin Krause with whom he absorbed all the influence of Franz Liszt which is very evident in his piano compositions.

It is in Berlin where all his friends gave him as a gift a collection of Mexican folk songs arranged by the German pianist Alberto Friedenthal during his visit to Mexico in 1884. There are rumours that this group of pieces aroused in Ponce his love and interest in creating a national art inside his music, but according to pianist Carlos Vázquez (universal heir of Ponce's work), this claim is entirely wrong as he showed interest in the Mexican nationalism before his first trip to Europe.²⁸

²⁸ Pulido Silva, Esperanza, "Diversos aspectos del nacionalismo de Manuel M. Ponce," *Heterofonía* 18, no.3 (1985): 45.

The national labour crafted by Ponce in his music during this period is in more than 200 Mexican songs that he harmonized so later presents them in the way of a suite, sonata or variations. Between his most significant piano works, we can find his *Concerto for piano and orchestra*, his *Mexican Rhapsodies*, his *Mexican Scherzino* and his very popular *Mexican Ballade*.

Third Period (1925-1932):

Not satisfied with his labour as a composer, Ponce decided to move to Paris from 1925-1932 with the purpose to study composition with Paul Dukas who was one of the best pedagogues among all the modern composers of the time. In Paris, he practised polytonality and familiarized with all the musical richness of the French impressionism, giving himself to the pure spirit of Neoclassical music. Scholars consider this period (Modern) in Europe as a transitional period, as they explain that it is important to note that Ponce used the titles of abstract music such as prelude, fugue, suite, sonata or etude. However, according to pianist Pablo Castellanos, his music still presents melodic and rhythmic elements from his beloved Mexico mainly in his piano works.²⁹ Also in Paris, Ponce had a great friendship with Andres Segovia, which had a very significant story for the guitar literature as Ponce renewed the compositional tradition of Tarrega and Sor by adding a base purely modern in his works.

Among his most remarkable piano compositions, we can find his *Enchained Preludes*, a *Sonatina*, 2 *Preludes* dedicated to Arthur Rubinstein and his *Four piano pieces* in which he used with great mastery the polytonal technique.

Fourth Period (1933-1948):

Finally, in the last period (Modern), Ponce again returns to his idea of showing Mexican folk themes in his compositions inside big musical structures. He left Paris in 1933 and returned to Mexico where he stayed until the day of his death. These last 15 years, were the most significant years in his musical

²⁹ Castellanos, Pablo, *Manuel M. Ponce*. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982: 37.

nationalism as he created works in a modern-nationalist style. In this period, we can find three kinds of compositions:³⁰

- Those who show an artistic styling of folklore themes as his *Twenty Easy Pieces* for the little Mexican pianists or his *Instantáneas Mexicanas* for orchestra.
- Those in which the popular themes are the base of complex structures such as his symphonic poems *Chapultepec* and *Ferial*.
- Those whose original themes reveal the nationalist style (very personal) developed for Ponce such as his *Violin Concerto* or his *Mexican dances* for piano.

Among his most relevant piano compositions in this period we can find his *Mexican dances* and his *Twenty Easy Pieces* for the little Mexican pianists. In the *Twenty easy pieces*, Ponce summarized both the Mexican musical aspects from the Mexican Indians and the musical elements after the Spain invasion. In the Indian pieces, we can find the use of pentaphonic melodies of the Mayan, Yaquis and Huicholes while in the pieces after the invasion we can see popular tunes from the Colonial Mexico, the Independent Mexico, and the Mexican Revolution.

³⁰ Miranda Pérez, Ricardo, *Manuel M. Ponce: Ensayo sobre su vida y obra*. México, D.F.: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1998.

PRELUDE AND FUGUE ON A THEME BY HANDEL

A prelude 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. The earliest notated preludes are for organ and were used to introduce vocal music in church.³¹ On the other hand, a fugue (from the Italian *fuga* “flight”) is a composition or section of a composition in imitative texture, based on a single subject that repeats over and over in different voices.³² Over the centuries, many composers have used the combination of prelude and fugue and perhaps the greatest example of this combination is undoubtedly Johann Sebastian Bach’s *Well-tempered Clavier*, which is a collection of preludes and fugues in all 24 major and minor keys.

Ponce composed the *Prelude and Fugue on a Theme by Handel* in 1915 during his first trip to Europe. It is inspired on the original fugue in E minor that opens the suite No. 4 for clavichord by G. F. Handel. It is believed that Ponce dedicated this piece to his piano teacher Martin Krause (former pupil of Franz Liszt) after hearing him perform the little-known keyboard suites of Handel.

Original theme from Handel's Fugue



Ex. 23. Handel, Fugue from the suite No. 4 for clavichord. meas. 1-3

ANALYSIS:

This piece is in the key of D minor, and clearly accomplishes a perfect unity between the prelude and fugue as it presents certain romantic features typical of Ponce’s language. In the prelude for example, *cantabile* lines are combined with *tempo rubato*, while in the fugue, he not only uses the motoric drive of the Baroque, but also the style of Liszt and Busoni’s piano transcriptions that it is particularly noticeable

³¹ Ledbetter, David. “Prelude.” Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edition. New York: Grove’s Dictionaries, 2001. 20: 291.

³² Burkholder, James Peter, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca. *A History of Western Music*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014. p. 345.

in the *stretto* in octaves, or in the use of organ sonorities produced in the *piu lento finale* where the purpose is to reinforce the theme with chords in the right hand and octaves in the lower part of the keyboard.

1.4 PRELUDE

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS. The prelude can be divided into two parts and interestingly, its melody is based on a solemn variation of Handel's fugue in E minor. Moreover, the variation serves perfectly as an introduction to the second piece as it also imitates in some way its fugal character by preparing the audience for what it is coming later in the music.

The first part (mm.1-20), begins with a very small introduction of only two measures that leads to the solemn variation (in a minor key). This tune is repeated four times:

1. In the soprano (mm. 3-7)
2. In the bass (mm. 8-10)
3. In the soprano (mm. 11-13)
4. In the soprano and bass (mm. 14-20)

Variation of Handel's Fugue

Moderato solenne

p

p legato

Introduction

(1)

Coda III

Ex. 24. Ponce, Prelude form the Prelude and fugue on a theme by Handel. meas. 1-5

On the other hand, the second section is not contrasting at all from the first one as once more, the tune is repeated four times:

1. In the soprano and bass (mm. 21-25)
2. In the soprano and bass (mm. 26-29)
3. In the soprano and bass (mm. 30-35)
4. In the soprano (mm. 36-41)

However, the most important two aspects from the second part are that the melody begins in a major key (instead of a minor one) and that the piece finishes with a chordal texture on the dominant of D minor.

Main subject in a major key

Ex. 25. Ponce, Prelude from the Prelude and fugue on a theme by Handel. meas. 20-22

Chordal Texture

Ex. 26. Ponce, Prelude from the Prelude and fugue on a theme by Handel. meas 38-41

1.5 FUGUE

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS. The fugue from this piano work by Ponce is in three voices, and it is in the key of D minor. As I explained before, it is inspired by the original subject from the fugue in E minor that

belongs to the suite No. 4 by G. F. Handel. It has an exposition, a countersubject, four episodes, three middle entries, a cadenza and a final entry.

In the exposition (mm. 1-12), the main subject is presented for the first time in the soprano voice and later, the theme has a real answer in the tenor voice which is accompanied by the countersubject. In this section, the subject is repeated twice in the soprano and in the tenor.

Fuga
Allegro non troppo

subject

Link

countersubject

Real answer

Ex. 27. Ponce, Fugue from the Prelude and fugue on a theme by Handel. meas. 1-4

The first episode starts in measure 13 and finishes in measure 17. However, one of the most curious aspects of this section is that it has a false entry of the subject in the bass line (mm. 16-17).

Episode 1

False entry

Ex. 28. Ponce, Fugue from the Prelude and fugue on a theme by Handel. meas. 13-16

From bars 18-20, the first middle entry shows the main subject in the soprano and tenor lines. At the end of this section, the second episode (mm. 21-27) is reached. Curiously once more, a false entry of the original theme is shown from measure 26 to measure 27. The second middle entry (mm. 28-31) starts by

presenting half of the subject in the soprano, and the rest in the tenor. Shortly after, the third episode is shown from measure 31 to 38.

The subject is shown once more in the soprano and the tenor in the third middle entry from bars 39-41. However, the final episode (mm. 42-65) is very interesting as half of it serves as a cadenza for this fugue. Something to highlight in this cadenza (mm. 48-65), is a dramatic false entry of the subject not only in *stretto* but in octaves in both hands. The fugue concludes with the final entry of the subject from bars 66-

71.

Ex. 29. Ponce, Fugue from the Prelude and fugue on a theme by Handel. meas 47-49

Ex. 30. Ponce, Fugue from the Prelude and fugue on a theme by Handel. meas. 65-66

HARMONIC ANALYSIS. Harmonically, the first part of the prelude starts on the key of D minor, and goes to G minor, G sharp minor, and C sharp minor. However, it is in the second section where the main theme is now presented on a major key (C major). This theme will move now throughout the keys of F major, A minor, D minor and finishes on A major. Regarding the fugue, there is not too much to say as it basically stays on D minor, with some modulations to A minor, G minor, F major, E minor, and D major.

GENERAL COMMENTS. Although Ponce is mostly known around the globe for his song *Estrellita* and for his great influence in the revival of the guitar repertoire, his musical output for piano embraces a

whole spectrum of genres and styles such as nationalism, romanticism, impressionism or the use of all the musical structures. One good example of these musical structures is his *Prelude and Fugue on a theme by Handel* in which he explored in the gentle 12/8 meter of the prelude a solemn and romantic mood, while in the fugue, he explored the motoric drive of the Baroque and the rhetorical style of Liszt and Busoni's piano transcriptions.

In order to get the *Moderato solenne* mood required in the prelude, the pianist needs to employ a legato articulation for the melody, and rubato to avoid strict time in the piece. In addition, the three pedals from a grand piano have to be used in the following way:

- The damper pedal or *sustain pedal* in order to connect widely spaced notes in the music
- The soft pedal or *una corda* necessary to play the *pianissimos* in the piece
- The sostenuto pedal or *middle pedal* with the purpose to sustain selected notes without affecting the other ones like the notes from the bass in measures 2-4, 20-21, 25-26, and 35-37.

Throughout the fugue, it is necessary for the pianist to always bring out the main subject that will be switching between the right hand and the left hand. Nevertheless, a lot of articulation is going to be necessary in the piece with the purpose to get clarity and speed while playing. In addition, the damper pedal can be used just in specific places where *fortes* or accents are found. At the end of the piece, specifically in the *cadenza*, the pianist will have to manage the dynamics in order to create an astonishing finale for the fugue.

Chapter 5. Joaquín Larregla Urbietta's ¡Viva Navarra! Jota de Concierto

Joaquín Larregla (born Lumbier, Navarra, August 20, 1865; died Madrid, Spain, June 24, 1945) was a Spanish composer, pianist, and pedagogue. He had his first piano and theory lessons with D. Valero Munárriz, a highly respected organist in Obanos, Navarra. Later, Larregla became a student at the Academia Municipal de Pamplona, where he spent three years in the piano class of Mariano García. Subsequently, Larregla moved to Madrid with the goal to study at the Real Conservatorio de Música de Madrid where he obtained diplomas in both piano performance and composition. At the Conservatory, his most important professors were: Dámaso Zabala (piano), José Aranguren (harmony) and Emilio Arrieta (composition). Following his studies at the Real Conservatorio de Música de Madrid, Larregla became one of the most influential music educators in Spain.

Larregla developed a deep bond with his composition teacher Emilio Arrieta who later considered him as his second son. Through him, he had the opportunity to meet some of the most important musical figures in Spain, such as the Aragonese writer Eusebio Blasco or the famous tenor Sebastián Julián Gayarre Garjón.

His career as a touring virtuoso began in Madrid in 1888 at El Salón Romero and lasted until the first years of the twentieth century. Between 1885 and 1899, Larregla used to give concerts in Pamplona for the celebrations of San Fermín's festival. He regularly received enthusiastic reviews from local newspapers.

As a composer, Larregla wrote often for the piano. He composed also religious and secular songs, zarzuelas, works for orchestra and band, including one of his most famous pieces, the *Jota Viva Navarra!*. During his lifetime, he often served as an adjudicator in piano, composition, and band competitions in Spain. On November 11, 1906, Larregla was elected a permanent member of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes in San Fernando de Madrid. His acceptance speech was devoted to the influence of pianist-composer on artistic-musical education in different towns in Spain. In terms of his private life, Larregla

only had one love, the amateur pianist Mariana Nogueras, with whom he had three children: Joaquín, and the twins Pilar and Santiago.

In 1935, at the age of seventy-five, he was named the favourite son of the town of Lumbier, Navarra due to his achievements as a musician. On November 9, 1940, he gave his last performance on a Bechstein at the Teatro Gayarre in Pamplona. In this concert, he played his own compositions including the *Prelude in a minor*, his *Asturiana Rhapsody*, *Después del Vals*, his *Scherzo in G major* and his famous *jota Viva Navarra!*. In addition to his own works, he also performed Beethoven, Schumann, and Chopin.³³ Joaquin Larregla always wished to die in Santesteban, Navarra. Unfortunately, he died from hemiplegia in Madrid on June 24, 1945.

³³ Mauleon, Lola. *Joaquín Larregla, Nacido en Lumbier [Archivo familia Larregla]*. Lumbier, Navarra: OLATZ Grupo para la Recuperación del Patrimonio Cultural de Lumbier, 2015. pp. 55-57.

¡VIVA NAVARRA! JOTA DE CONCIERTO

A *jota* is a type of dance considered as the “mother dance” through all Spain. This couple dance encapsulates essential traits of Spanish music such as dialoguing or solo-chorus vocal performance, small-group instrumental accompaniment, and evocative poetic texts³⁴. The songs related with a *jota* are quite diverse being the most popular those of religion, patriotism, love, or sexual exploits. In addition, the steps of this dance are very similar of those of a waltz. However, for their performance, guitars, bandurrias, lutes, dulzaina, bagpipes, bombos, castanets and drums are used. Inside the structure of a *jota*, the two most important characteristics are that it is constructed on a quick triple time while the chords used in the music are principally I, IV, V and V⁷.

There is not enough information about the background of *The Jota de Concierto ¡Viva Navarra!*, however, it is well known that this *jota* is one of the most famous piano solo works by Spanish composer Joaquín Larregla. It was completed in 1865 with a dedication to Miss Ana Bea y Pelayo.

ANALYSIS:

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS. This piece clearly follows the structure of a *jota* as it is developed on a quick triple time (3/8). It is on the key of C major, and its structure is ABCB¹ plus a coda, where the main contrasting subject is C as it presents the most popular vocal style in all Spain: the *Cante Jondo* or “deep song” which is a genuine Andalusian chant of profound sentiment.

The first subject A can be divided into two parts, one from measures 1-34 and the other one from measures 35- 60. It is important to highlight that both parts have exactly the same melody with the difference that the second one is transposed an octave higher with minimum variations in the accompaniment. In the first part of section A, two measures of a G major chord serve as an introduction while in the second part, specifically in bar 51, starts a transition entirely formed by a scale in thirds and octaves that leads to the second subject B.

³⁴ Miles, Elizabeth, and Loren Chuse. “Spain.” Timothy Rice, James Porter, and Chris Goertzen, ed., *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000. 8: 594.

Ex. 31. Larregla, ¡Viva Navarra!. meas. 1-7

Ex. 32. Larregla, ¡Viva Navarra!. meas. 52-58

Theme B has the same character as A and it can be divided into two parts as well. The first part is from measures 61-75 while the second one is from 76-133. It is in this entire section of the piece where the triplet is mostly presented, providing a huge difference when comparing B with the other themes A and C. In bar 92, a long virtuosic transition connects to the third theme C.

Ex. 33. Larregla, ¡Viva Navarra!. meas. 59-65

As I explained before, the third subject C (m. 133-161) is completely different of A or B as it is developed in the *Cante Jondo* style. It is important to remark that this is the only part of the piece where a lyrical melody is presented.

Ex. 34. Larregla, ¡Viva Navarra!. meas. 133-138

Shortly after the ending of C, the piece returns to its original character by presenting B¹ (mm. 162-249), which basically is a variation of the second subject. However, two things to highlight in this part are that:

- It is the place where triplets are mostly used in the musical texture
- It is the place where the second part of theme B (mm. 76-133) is not only varied once but twice (mm. 178-210 and 210-249).

Finally, the piece ends with a very virtuosic coda in bars 250-292.

Ex. 35. Larregla, ¡Viva Navarra!. meas. 168-179

HARMONIC ANALYSIS. Harmonically, the introduction of the piece (mm. 1-2) is very interesting as it starts in with a G major arpeggio, implying the dominant of C major. However, at the beginning of theme A, a sudden change of harmony to G minor will remain until the end of the first section of the *jota*. There is not too much to say about the rest of the piece as sections B, C, B¹ and the coda, are entirely in the key of C major with some inflexions to A minor, F major or G major. Perhaps, the only interesting thing that

happens throughout the piece is that it actually follows the traditional structure of the *jota* by mainly presenting I, IV, V and V⁷ chords.

GENERAL COMMENTS. As Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky established the popularity of Russian music around the world in the nineteenth century, also in the early twentieth century, Spanish composers sought to reclaim their national tradition by using authentic Spanish elements not only to appeal to their own people but also to gain a foothold in the international repertoire. The *Jota de Concierto ¡Viva Navarra!* is a good example of this tradition as Joaquín Larregla used elements from his homeland, Spain, to compose it. Among those elements, I could identify the rhythms and dancing character of the *Jota Aragonesa* evident in both subjects A and B, as well as a recitative-like melody known as the *Cante Jondo* for the third theme C.

For themes A, B, and B¹, the most difficult part for a pianist to achieve is getting the rhythmic and dancing character required for the *jota*. For that reason, it is going to be necessary to use a lot of articulation in both hands especially for clarity and speed in those measures where scales, arpeggios, and repeated rhythmic figures are present. It is possible to use the damper pedal in those specific sections however, the pianist needs to be careful as an overuse of it will cause a lack of clarity. What a pianist can do when performing those parts, is using the damper pedal just in places where accents, *fortissimos*, or *sforzandos* are displayed into the musical texture.

In order to address the contrasting third theme C, the pianist will need to play legato cantabile to create a smooth and unbroken melodic line. The best way to achieve this legato is by not releasing one note of the melody until the next has been played. Nevertheless, a proper use of the damper pedal is necessary as it will allow any pianist to get the perfect cantabile atmosphere by connecting widely spaced notes that are not possible to connect through fingering. Finally, for the coda, good planning of dynamics and tempo (*stringendo*) is required with the aim to achieve a brilliant ending.

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