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ISSUES OF NARRATIVITY IN THE ROMANTIC PIANO OPERA PARAPHRASE

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ABSTRACT

Issues of Narrativity in the Romantic Piano Opera Paraphrase
(Under the direction of Dr. Dillon Parmer)

Although the opera paraphrase was once a cornerstone of the virtuoso pianist's repertoire, as a genre it has traditionally been neglected by a scholarship which prioritizes authenticity and original compositional thought. By approaching this repertoire from a critical standpoint concerned with the production of narrative, this thesis demonstrates the true value of the paraphrase. A review of the current literature on narrative, gesture, and the paraphrase reveals major gaps in the state of research, and this thesis addresses these issues by presenting analyses of several works, in both printed and performed forms. The chapter "Settling the Score" interrogates the score, and argues that through their choice, ordering, and setting of operatic themes in a paraphrase, composers can alter or recreate the narrative of the source opera. By analyzing and comparing by reading the narrative schemes of seven different paraphrases based on Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, the chapter highlights the agency of the arranger in the production of narrative. The next chapter, entitled "Playing the Part," suggests that the creation of narrative also extends beyond the work of the composer to encompass the role of the performer. By comparing the use of physical gestures in two video-recorded performances of Liszt's paraphrase *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, the thesis postulates that a pianist's gestures can influence the audience's perception of narrative. In an attempt to centralize the voice of the performer, the chapter also includes reflective analysis of the author's own performances of Liszt's paraphrase. By employing analytical methods which focus on the production of musical narrative, this thesis demonstrates that the paraphrase is worthy of greater attention, both in scholarship and performance.

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Introduction

During the heyday of the virtuoso pianist in the Romantic period, the genre of the opera paraphrase was at the core of every performer's repertoire. Traditionally neglected or ignored by academia, the opera paraphrase is a type of arrangement which is distinct from transcription in that it features themes selected from the source opera re-arranged into a new (and typically virtuosic) setting. Because of a musicological emphasis on authenticity and original compositional thought, the paraphrase is often considered a bastardized genre. However, in this thesis, I suggest that by taking different critical approaches, the true value of this repertoire is revealed.

The critical approaches I advocate in this thesis center around two themes: narrative and gesture. In the first chapter, entitled "Setting the Stage," I provide a review of the literature surrounding these topics, as well as an overview of the state of scholarship on the genre of the paraphrase. While there is extant literature surrounding each of these topics, each area presents the musicologist with unique challenges. The literature on narrativity is fraught with critical debate on the nature of narrative in art music, with several leading scholars denying the possibility of musical narrative. Writings on the topic of gesture are less contentious, but they are also less focused, as the issue of gesture in musical performance has only become a site of significant academic interest in recent years. Finally, the literature related to the genre of the piano paraphrase is problematic, not only because it is relatively small, but also because many of the leading scholars on the piano and the music of the Romantic era have simply dismissed the genre entirely. The few writers who have paused to consider the value of this repertoire (e.g. Charles Rosen) typically only examine a handful of well-known paraphrases by Liszt, notably the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* and the *Réminiscences de Norma*, ignoring the work of other

composers completely.

In addition to the gaps and problems in the respective literatures on musical narrative, gesture, and the paraphrase, there is even less work that attempts to combine all three areas in order to provide insight into the nature and value of this repertoire. It is the goal of this thesis to amend this problem. After I set the stage in the literature review, the second chapter, entitled "Settling the Score," demonstrates that the paraphrase genre provides an excellent site for discussing musical narrative. Indeed, by focusing on reading the choice, ordering, and setting of operatic themes in a paraphrase, I suggest that composers of paraphrases are able to alter or recreate the narrative of the source opera. I illustrate this by comparing the narrative schemes of seven different paraphrases based on Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and conclude by suggesting that when approached from a score-based analysis of narrative, the true value of this repertoire becomes clear.

The final chapter of this thesis, entitled "Playing the Part," focuses on the interplay of gesture and narrative in pianistic performance. In this section, I offer my interpretation of two different video-recorded performances of Liszt's *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, making note of how the different gestures used by the two pianists alter my reception of the piece. By dividing a range of physical gestures into two categories, "enacting" and "directing," I argue that performers can influence the audience's perception of the musical narrative. Because few pianists have written about their personal uses of gesture, I conclude the chapter with a reflection based on my own experiences playing the piece.

By using analytical methods that explore the production of musical narrative, this thesis does more than just add to the critical literature on the paraphrase. Beyond bringing scholarly attention to previously obscure repertoire, it reveals that the Romantic piano paraphrase to be a

genre worthy of greater attention, both in scholarship and performance.

Chapter 1: Setting the Stage

Before examining the complex relationship between narrative, gesture, and the paraphrase, it is necessary first to understand the issues surrounding each of these topics individually. By reviewing the extant literature on the paraphrase, narrativity in music, and gesture and virtuosity in performance, this chapter establishes a foundation upon which the detailed analyses of the second and third chapters are built.

As a topic of research, the piano paraphrase is problematic for several reasons, not least of all because the genre itself defies straightforward definition. Writing on the virtuoso culture of Paris in the middle of the 1840s, Alicia Levin notes that "the nineteenth-century genre commonly referred to as the operatic fantasy poses a challenge in terms of its origins, its structure, and even its identity as a genre."[1] *Grove Music Online* offers only a single paragraph on the topic, informing us that "in the 19th century the 'Paraphrase de Concert', sometimes called 'Réminiscences' or 'Fantaisie', was a virtuoso work based on well-known tunes, usually taken from popular operas."[2] That the genre is known by so many different names poses several problems to the researcher, and in preparing this thesis, it has been a challenge to develop a clear discourse based on consistent terminology. While my initial inclination was to use the term "fantasy" to refer to the genre in question, this presented a number of problems. Notably, while all paraphrases can technically be described as fantasies, the reverse is not true - not all fantasies are paraphrases. Charles Suttoni explains that

> there is no more reason to assume that the term 'fantasy' was used with any more consistency in the Classic-Romantic period (roughly 1750-1850) than in the previous two

1 Alicia Cannon Levin, *Seducing Paris: Piano Virtuosos and Artistic Identity, 1820-48*, Ph.D. Diss. (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), 145.

2 *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. "Paraphrase" (by Richard Sherr), http://www.grovemusic.com (accessed September 24, 2011).

> centuries since it first appeared on the musical scene in connection in connection with instrumental compositions of the early sixteenth century.[3]

Despite the problematic nature of this term, many scholars still choose to refer to "fantasies" in their writings, a decision which often leads to confusion. In addressing this problem, Suttoni maintains that

> considering the total lack of consistency in the use of "Fantasy" as a title, it is best to abandon a strict etymological classification and take a more descriptive approach to the works under discussion. For present purposes a fantasy can be regarded as a work (1) based upon one more opera themes, (2) divided into rather well-defined sections, and (3) which may or may not contain variations on one or several themes within its structure.[4]

Although helpful, this definition is undermined by Suttoni himself when he writes that "the form is so variable that it is almost futile to suggest a paradigm."[5] As Levin notes, this effectively "[renders] at least two of [Suttoni's] criteria ineffective as analytical tools."[6]

While Levin highlights the paradoxes of Suttoni's definition, her own attempt to delineate the boundaries of the genre is similarly problematic. Levin isolates

> three shared characteristics that approach the genre from a broader perspective: 1) opera fantasies are based on one or more opera themes, 2) they exist in published form, and 3) they exhibit a set of aesthetic values that may run counter to contemporary musical ideals but that embody the concurrent aesthetic characteristics of nineteenth-century French and Italian opera.[7]

This definition is intriguing in that it centralizes the issue of historical context, but it is still far from complete. For example, another issue that must be addressed when attempting to define the fantasy/paraphrase is social context and purpose. While some paraphrases were written to showcase the pianistic antics of concert hall virtuosos, others were intended to provide

3 Charles Suttoni, *Piano and Opera: A Study of the Piano Fantasies Written on Opera Themes in the Romantic Era* (Ph.D. Diss. New York University, 1973), 19.
4 Ibid., 35
5 Ibid.
6 Levin, *Seducing Paris*, 146.
7 Ibid.

entertainment for amateurs in salons and music rooms. Moreover, even within paraphrases characteristic of the former setting, there is considerable variety in the compositional tone of the pieces: while some are merely vehicles of virtuosity (e.g. Dobrzyński's *Hommage à Mozart*), others are nuanced works that reveal compositional skill and sensitivity (e.g. Listz's *Réminiscences de Don Juan* and Leybach's *Fantaisie Brilliante*).

The preceding paragraphs have illustrated some of the many issues that make defining the paraphrase a fool's errand. Quite simply, there are too many variables at play to allow for a concise and universal characterization of the genre. Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity, it is necessary to settle on at least a broad definition of the genre for the purposes of this thesis. While it is never desirable to descend to lowest common denominator in formulating a definition, it is worth noting that the only point agreed upon by Grove, Suttoni, and Levin is that a fantasy is composition based on a theme or themes from another work. I will build on this basis and define the term "paraphrase" as a compositional genre based on themes taken from another work. Further, I would suggest that a distinction should be made between the terms "paraphrase" and "fantasy," despite the fact that these titles are frequently used interchangeably. I propose that whereas a fantasy can technically be based on a single theme from another work, the term "paraphrase" should only be used in reference to pieces based on *multiple* themes from another work.[8]

Beyond this, two final points should be made. First, it should be mentioned that while all the paraphrases studied in this thesis are based on operatic themes, it is entirely possible for a paraphrase to be based on themes from other sources (e.g. incidental music, folk traditions, musical theater, etc.). Second, to limit the potential for confusion and debate, I would be remiss

8 In making this claim, I am aware that it is highly probable that works based on a single theme have been published as paraphrases. However, considering the problems caused by the long-standing terminological inconsistencies, I would advocate that such a distinction is not only useful, but in fact necessary as we continue to develop a critical discourse for these repertoires.

if I did not note that the genre of the paraphrase is distinct from the genre of the transcription. While both genres fall under the umbrella category of arrangement, a paraphrase is a free reinterpretation of themes from another work rather than a more literal reduction or re-scoring of the source work. The distinction largely lies in the extent of the modification of the thematic material. While a transcription may include occasional slight interpolations of new material (e.g. the minor flourishes and cadenzas found in some of Liszt's transcriptions of Schubert's *Lieder*), the general structure of the transcribed work is maintained. In a paraphrase, the arranger typically not only varies the source material extensively, but also composes original introductions, transitions, and codas, in addition to freely transposing and changing the order of themes from the source work.

Regardless of its name or exact definition, the Romantic piano paraphrase on operatic themes has been largely neglected by musical scholarship. There are many reasons for this neglect. Levin, for example, suggests that "the negative light cast over the commercial market and virtuosity has excluded genres like the opera fantasy from musicological discourse for far too long, resulting in an incomplete picture of nineteenth-century musical culture."[9] Alan Walker, writing on Liszt, offers an another explanation when he notes that

> after [Liszt's] death, the operatic paraphrases fell into neglect for fifty years. There were good historical reasons for this. One of the values of the early twentieth century was an emphasis on "authenticity." Musicologists encouraged presentation and preservation of the composer's original thought. The objection to the paraphrase was that it did not preserve the "original thought."[10]

Even though Walker identifies the "neglect" of Liszt's paraphrases, he does little to rectify this situation. His two large volumes chronicling Liszt's life and works devote only scant attention to the paraphrases, and he barely mentions the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, despite its status as a

9 Levin, *Seducing Paris*, 160.
10 Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years (1811-1847),* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), 315.

landmark of the genre.

Another leading Liszt scholar, Derek Watson, takes a similar tack. Writing on paraphrases, he points out that

> In the first half of the twentieth century the prevailing tendency to condemn them was a symptom of the new age of musicological purism. It became the fashion to see the legacy of the past as sacred, which ought not to be re-thought and shifted by latter-day standards. The purist is of course right in claiming that the Urtext is to be preferred to editorial excrescence.[11]

Watson goes on to comment that the Romantic era was "the great age of arrangement and it must be admitted that in the name of 'transcription' some of the worst crimes of musical history were committed."[12] While it would be difficult to argue against such a claim — to be sure, many composers of lesser significance created paraphrases of dubious value — it is important to refrain from throwing out the baby with the bathwater, if the colloquialism can be excused. To assume that all works in the genre of the paraphrase are unworthy of attention based on the low quality of many pieces is a logical fallacy, akin to assuming that all symphonies or sonatas are unimportant because some mediocre examples exist.

Although most scholars have been at best critical of the genre of the paraphrase (and at worst outright dismissive), a few have recognized the importance of at least certain pieces within the repertoire. Noteworthy in this respect is Charles Rosen who devotes a substantial section of *The Romantic Generation* to Liszt's paraphrase on Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Although Rosen admits that "except by a few scholars and critics, the opera fantasy is considered a bastard genre," he goes on to suggest that

> the finest of [Liszt's] opera fantasies, however…are much more than that: they juxtapose different parts of the opera in ways that bring out a new significance, while the original

11 Derek Watson, *Liszt*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1989), 195.
12 Ibid.

> dramatic sense of the original number and its place within the opera is never out of sight.[13]

Rosen goes on to laud the *Réminiscences de Don Juan de Mozart* for twelve pages, noting that "every phrase…is derived from Mozart, and yet, at the same time, every note testifies to Liszt's profound originality."[14]

While Rosen is to be praised for his open-minded reassessment of this piece, it must be noted that he still approaches the repertoire from a musicological standpoint that is almost obsessively concerned with notions of authenticity and compositional originality, as evidenced in the preceding quotation. Despite the fact that the topic of the paraphrase has been largely ignored by musicologists, there are other sources of analysis worthy of consideration. Because this repertoire is of primary interest to pianists, much of the significant writing on paraphrases comes from dissertations from doctoral candidates in piano performance programs. For example, Yoon Ju Lee's DMA dissertation "Selected operatic paraphrases of Franz Liszt (1811--1886): Compositional style and performance perspectives" offers unique insights into several works, focusing on how the compositions relate to the original operas. Unfortunately, a large portion of Lee's thesis concerns the pianistic challenges of the paraphrases, a subject which, while intriguing, is of minimal interest to non-pianists and does little to plead the case of the paraphrase. One of the few dissertations that largely avoids this pitfall of pianistic-specialization is Axel Schmitt's thesis "Franz Liszt and the Don Juan Fantasy: An interpretive study of meaning and dramatic narrative." Schmitt makes the important claim that "Liszt always transcribed characters and dramatic situations and never only notes," and suggests that it is the prerogative of the pianist to transcend the technical difficulties in order to realize these aspects in

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13 Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 528.
14 Ibid, 539.

performance.[15] By examining Liszt's compositional decisions and how these decisions shape the pianist's performance, Schmitt argues that Liszt essentially revises the story of Don Giovanni, and reveals his own interpretation of the Don Juan archetype.[16]

Schmitt's dissertation on the Don Juan Fantasy is exemplary in its depth and useful in providing a methodology for analyzing paraphrases, but it is also limited in that Schmitt makes no meaningful attempt to address the issues concerning the genre of the paraphrase as a whole. Because he does not focus on positioning Liszt's Don Juan paraphrase in relation to other paraphrases, not to mention to the existing literature on the topic, Schmitt leaves room for other writers to expand his on work. This is in fact a major goal of this thesis, to reveal the relevance of the piano paraphrase as a genre from a critical standpoint. I will attempt to do this primarily by focusing on aspects of narrative and performed gesture, and the intersection of these two topics.

As noted above, Schmitt's dissertation sheds light on a specific paraphrase by attempting to discern a narrative force in the composition, and I wish to expand upon this approach. In order to do so, however, it is necessary to carefully examine the issues surrounding the idea of narrative in music. Although musical narrative is the subject of increasing attention, it would be inaccurate to describe the topic as well-established. While the concept of narrative — which Merriam-Webster reminds us is "the representation in art of an event or story"[17] — is simple enough, unfortunately, any attempts to define it become complicated when the term is used in the context of music. Always eager to engage in a debate on semiotics, musicologists have grappled with the topic of narrativity in recent decades. In 1990, Jean-Jacques Nattiez announced that "the question of musical narrativity, while by no means new, is making a comeback as the order of the

15 Axel Schmitt, *Franz Liszt and the Don Juan Fantasy: An interpretive study of meaning and dramatic narrative*. (Diss. University of California, Los Angeles, 2004), 61.
16 Ibid., 62.
17 *Merriam-Webster Online*, s.v. "Narrative," http://www.merriam-webster.com/ (Accessed 6 December 2010).

day in the field of musicological thought."[18] Since that time, several scholars — notably Carolyn Abbate, Peter Kivy, Anthony Newcomb, and Fred Everett Maus — have specialized in this area, albeit while developing widely divergent opinions. Several leading critics have argued passionately that narrative cannot exist in absolute music. Nattiez, for example, views narrative as related to plot, and holds that because absolute music does not reference events, characters, or stories, it cannot have narrative.[19] Abbate has also written against the idea of music as narrative, arguing that because music has no past tense, it cannot create a present tense to narrate from.[20] Another criticism against musical narrative is leveled by Peter Kivy, who holds that the common use of repetition in many musical forms would be absurd in the context of a linear story.[21]

While the aforementioned scholars have found much support for their arguments against musical narrative, they are not without detractors. Several musicologists object to the tendency to approach the topic of musical narrative from a purely literary standpoint, and suggest that music can express narrative in ways that are independent from verbal syntax or literary structure. For example, Douglas Seaton counters Nattiez's plot-centered argument by suggesting that "musical events are real events — in an important sense more real than the events referred to in a fictitious story — and they raise…real expectations in the listener."[22] One scholar who has addressed the question of whether it is possible to conceive of musical narrative in a non-literary sense is Michael Klein. In his article "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative," Klein challenges his readers to embrace the idea that musical narrative can be viewed as "an emplotment of expressive states" rather than as a programmatic story.[23] As Lillian Eyre comments, in Klein's

18 Jean-Jacques Nattiez, "Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?" *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*. Vol. 115, No. 2 (1990), 240.
19 Ibid.
20 Douglas Seaton, "Narrative in Music: The Case of Beethoven's 'Tempest' Sonata," in Narratology beyond literary criticism: mediality, disciplinarity," J.C. Meister, ed., 65.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Michael Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade," in *Music Theory Spectrum 26.1*, 23.

scheme "the embedded narrative, albeit a highly subjective one, issues from the subjective meaning and the feeling states that are evoked in the listener by the music."[24] While Klein also demonstrates how it is possible to read a past tense in a musical score (presumably in response to the criticisms of Abbate's camp), he more importantly suggests "significance is not inscribed into the text but arises as the result of an act of interpretation"[25] and posits that "the task of the critic is to convince the reader that they could hear the music in a way consistent with the interpretation at hand."[26] By situating the listener as the arbiter of meaning and significance, rather than the score, Klein facilitates the discussion of the issue of narrative in music, albeit from a troublingly subjective standpoint.

While it is beyond the scope of this proposal to present a more thorough review of the varied opinions on the topic of musical narrative, the preceding paragraphs have attempted to represent the most prominent voices on both sides of the topic. Although consensus may never be reached, it seems to me that there would not be such intense critical debate if the subject were altogether moot. Even Nattiez, a self-described opponent of the movement toward reading narrative in music, admits that "the notion of 'musical narration' is seducing the finest minds….Even the person most resistant…has to say to himself that there is no smoke without fire."[27] An insightful final word comes from Adorno, who notes that "it is not that music wants to narrate, but that the composer wants to make music in the way that others narrate."[28] While the debate will rage on as to whether or not music can create narrative, it seems likely that listeners, performers and even some scholars will continue to read and hear narrative in music.

The issue of narrative is of particular relevance to the musical genre of the paraphrase in

24 Lillian Eyre, "The Marriage of Music and Narrative: Explorations in Art, Therapy and Research," in *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy, Vol. 7 No. 3 (2007)*, online.
25 Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade," 29.
26 Ibid., 52.
27 Nattiez, "Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music," 241.
28 Quoted in Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade," 23.

that the paraphrase represents a sort of hybrid genre: unlike "pure" programme music (which, as Roger Scruton reminds us, is "music of a narrative or descriptive kind…that attempts to represent extra-musical concepts without resort to sung words"[29]), opera paraphrases, by definition, do at least reference sung words, thus facilitating the reading of narrative in a purely instrumental composition. Perhaps ironically, it is precisely the genre's "impurity" (i.e. in that it is does not prioritize original compositional thought) that makes it a potentially rich site for the discussion of musical narrative.

At the same time, in this thesis, I do not intend to limit my investigation of how narrative functions in opera paraphrases to a purely literary (i.e. plot and character defined) style of narrative. As noted earlier, some scholars have advocated the existence of different kinds of musical narrative (e.g. Klein's model of narrative as the progression of expressive states). Building on such work, in the final chapter of this thesis, I will examine the possibility that the act of physical gesture in performance can inform or even create musical narrative itself. Before developing this point, however, I offer a brief survey of the literature on gesture in music.

While the topic of physical gesture in musical performance has only recently become a subject of scholarly discourse, it is nonetheless a relevant and increasingly scrutinized subject. In their 2006 volume Music and Gesture, Anthony Gritten and Elaine King even go so far as to suggest that "the study of music and gesture…has come of age….The future [of musicology] is gestural."[30] John Rink, a prominent voice in this emerging field, lends credence to such a claim when he notes that the study of musical gesture is crucial in that it "foregrounds the roles of the performers and listeners alongside those of composers and scores."[31] In an age when there is an increasing divide between listeners and performers — a gap which has only been widened by a

29 *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. "Programme Music" (by Roger Scruton), http://www.grovemusic.com/ (accessed 16 Jan. 2011)
30 Quoted in John Rink, review of *Music and Gesture* in *British Journal of Aesthetics* (2007) 47 (2): 224.
31 John Rink, review of *Music and Gesture* in *British Journal of Aesthetics* (2007) 47 (2): 226.

scholarship which insists on valuing the score as the inviolable and definitive source of musical knowledge — this is an area worthy of further attention.

Yet, while the subject of gesture in music is newer and less controversial than that of narrative, it is also less unified and focused. Numerous books and collections of essays have been published in the past decade on the topic, but the literature has been so wide-ranging in its approaches and directions that it is difficult to find any consensus. Even within the more specialized subcategory of literature on gesture in piano performance there is no standard theme or approach. Some researchers work from a primarily pedagogical standpoint based on experience, while others use highly technical scientific models to analyze the gestures used by pianists in performance. For example, one paper by Ginevra Castellano *et al.*, entitled "Automated Analysis of Body Movement in Emotionally Expressive Piano Performances," utilizes complex mathematical formulas and measurements to analyze the correlation between physical movement and emotional expressiveness in musical performances.[32] While the result is impressive from a technical standpoint — the article contains dozens of very technical charts, equations, and diagrams — the researchers do concede that the topic is problematic in that emotional expressivity is difficult to map objectively.[33] Alexandra Pierce offers a different angle in her 2007 volume *Deepening Musical Performance through Movement: The Theory and Practice of Embodied Interpretation*. Pierce approaches the topic from a primarily pedagogical standpoint and examines how different gestures and movements can affect the experience of playing piano, using case studies of students to bolster her assertions.

While Pierce and Castellano are recent examples of researchers who have tackled the topic of gesture in piano playing, they are hardly the first. Dahl *et al.* note that as far back as

32 Ginevra Castellano et al, "Automated Analysis of Body Movement in Emotionally Expressive Piano Performances" in *Music Perception* 26.2 (2008), 112.
33 Ibid., 119.

1929 pianist Otto Ortmann, in his book *Physiological Mechanics of Piano Technique*, "performed detailed studies of different sound-producing gestures in piano playing. Using light bulbs fastened to players' hands he photographically recorded and analyzed different playing gestures" in an attempt to discover the secrets to a perfect technique.[34] While Ortmann's book was innovative in its approach to gesture, not to mention highly influential, it came no closer to solving the intricate problems of piano technique than did the many similar studies it inspired. A handful of more recent scholars have moved away from studying gesture as a means to a technical end, and towards viewing movement as a signifier of meaning. Fernando Iazzetta, for example, approaches the topic of musical gesture from a semiotic standpoint, suggesting that a musical "gesture is not only movement, but a movement which is able to mean something, a movement which carries a special signification."[35] His article also argues that "gesture is something intrinsic to music, although this question has not yet received the attention it deserves."[36]

While I agree with Iazzetta's assertion that the topic of gesture in music is worthy of more study, I would suggest that the problem is not that there is too little literature on the subject, but rather that there is too little of a certain kind of literature, namely research that reflects the experiences of the performer, as opposed to those of the scholar, the scientist, and the pedagogue. Ironically, while there is no dearth of critics ready to analyze and speculate on the gestures made by performers, the voices of the performers making the movements is largely absent from the literature. Few pianists have spoken in detail about how or why they use physical gestures while performing, and fewer still have done so and received recognition within academia.

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34 Sofia Dahl et al, "Gestures in Performance," in Musical Gestures: Sound, Movement, and Meaning, God Godøy and Leman, eds, 43.

35 Fernando Iazzetta, "Meaning in Music Gesture," conference proceedings from the International Association for Semiotic Studies, VI International Congress, 1997, online.

36 Ibid.

However little may be written on the topic of gesture from the perspective of the performer, there is even less literature on the intersection of narrative and gesture in music, and I propose that the genre of the piano paraphrase is an ideal starting place for an exploration of this topic. As noted above, many of the dissertations on paraphrases written by piano performance DMA candidates are concerned with the physical demands posed by the repertoire, and how the performer can meet these demands. Virtuosity is indeed a hallmark of the genre, since many (or even most) paraphrases were composed in order to showcase the pianistic abilities of the arranger. Put another way, paraphrases were written with conscious attention to how the audience would receive the physical gestures the performer was required to execute. Accounts of both the pianistic hijinks of Romantic era virtuosos and the effects these displays had on contemporary audiences are well documented in reviews and letters, and from these sources it is clear that this repertoire was designed to communicate with gesture. Even today, many pianists tend towards extravagance in their use of gesture while performing this repertoire, and I argue that such physicality can be read as a kind of narrative both in how it enacts or personifies the characters in the operatic source material (e.g. through facial expressions, physical mannerisms, etc.) and in how it communicates a narrative of emotional states (i.e. Klein's narrative model).

The preceding pages have attempted to survey the work related to the topics of this thesis, and have revealed some crucial gaps in the extant literature. Notably, there is a lack of significant critical literature written on the genre of the paraphrase, and even less writing that addresses issues of narrativity in this uniquely situated repertoire. Further, there is a clear dearth of scholarly discourse that examines the intersection of narrative and gesture in musical performance in general, let alone in relation to the paraphrase repertoire, a potentially fertile ground for discussion of these topics.

Having identified these relatively uncharted areas of research, in the following pages I use various methodologies and analytical frameworks to help create a literature on these topics. In the second chapter, entitled “Settling the Score,” I examine how narrative can be read in a selection of seven 19th-century paraphrases on themes from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Through score-based analysis, I demonstrate how composers, through their compositional decisions, can embed narrative in their paraphrases. In the third chapter, entitled “Playing the Part,” I suggest that through his or her use of gestures, the performer of such works can confirm, negate, or transform these embedded narratives.

Chapter 2: Settling the Score

As established in the preceding literature review, several scholars have examined the genre of the piano opera paraphrase in varying degrees of depth, but few have analyzed the issues of narrativity inherent in the repertoire. In this section, I will attempt to reverse this trend by employing traditional score-based analysis to reveal how the composers of paraphrases used different compositional techniques to create narrative in their works. The methods of my analysis are largely inspired by Axel Schmitt's dissertation "Franz Liszt and the Don Juan Fantasy: An interpretive study of meaning and dramatic narrative," which is invaluable in its exploration of issues of narrative in this repertoire. Schmitt, among others, focuses on the composer's choice of thematic material (i.e. paraphrases typically only use a few themes as source material, rather than trying to summarize all the themes in a given opera), and suggests that the composer's decisions reflect a desire to prioritize certain narrative elements over others. (This dialogue of inclusion and otherness is, of course, a popular theme in much scholarship in the arts in recent decades.) This interrogation of the composer's choice of themes is the first method of analysis I will apply to the works in question in this chapter.

The second method of analysis I will use is closely related to the issue of thematic choice, and concerns the arrangement of the chosen themes. Simply put, not only does the composer's choice of thematic material affect the paraphrase's (perceived) narrative, but so does his or her *ordering* of this material. For example, Schmitt points to the fact that while Mozart and da Ponte's opera ends with Don Giovanni being condemned and sent to hell, Liszt's paraphrase on the opera ends with triumphant musical material, suggesting an altogether different perspective on the story and character.[37] Even the "interaction" of different themes can be indicative of

37 Schmitt, *Franz Liszt*, 53.

narrative meaning. An instance of such interaction is noted by Lino Rivera Rivera, who finds that Liszt, in the coda of his paraphrase on Bellini's *Norma*, actually manages to ingeniously combine three of seven chosen themes,[38] and suggests that this imaginative arranging "reflects Norma's tragic predicament."[39]

Beyond issues concerning the ordering and interaction of thematic material, it is also possible to analyze the treatment and variation of the operatic source material, and this represents the third main method of analysis used in the following discussion. For example, many paraphrases feature variation forms (explicitly marked and otherwise), and a composer's setting of a given theme can be seen to contribute to the perceived meaning or narrative thrust of the composition. Schmitt, for instance, provides extensive evidence of this in his thesis on Liszt's *Don Juan* (as will be discussed in detail in the following section). By altering elements such as the rhythm, tonality, register, and accompaniment of musical themes, composers are able to transform the meaning of the original material.

By analyzing how a composer chooses, orders, and sets the themes in a paraphrase, it is possible to see how the narrative or meaning of the work can be altered. Yet while the work of Rosen, Schmitt, Suttoni and others provides an invaluable starting point for analysis of this repertoire, it is far from complete or definitive. Unfortunately, much of this literature exists as though in a vacuum, since these analyses do not usually extend beyond individual works, and fail to consider their relationships to other compositions in the paraphrase genre. Crucially, there exists almost no literature that compares two or more paraphrases written by different composers that are based on the same source opera (of which there are numerous examples).

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38 Lino Rivera Rivera, *Transcriptions , Arrangements, Paraphrases, and Metamorphoses for Solo Piano* (Diss. University of Maryland College Park, 1997), 56.

39 Ibid., 53.

The one major exception is Charles Suttoni's doctoral dissertation “Piano and Opera: A Study of the Piano Fantasies Written on Opera Themes in the Romantic Era.” In his extensive paper, Suttoni traces the history of the paraphrase during the Romantic period, outlining general trends in the formal development of the genre and highlighting important contributions to the repertoire by an array of composers. Of particular interest are Suttoni's chapters on the piano fantasies of Liszt and Thalberg, which include analyses of several major works by each composer. Suttoni's analytical approach is similar to the one employed in this thesis, though I became aware of Suttoni's methodology only after I had developed my own critical approach (inspired in part by Schmitt's work). However, whereas I divide my methodology into three categories of analysis, Suttoni outlines “nine general dimensions for the analysis of an opera fantasy.”[40] The approaches are fundamentally similar but Suttoni is simply more explicit in identifying and labeling multiple kinds of setting techniques (e.g. he counts compositional aspects such as transposition, ornamental variation, and motivic development as distinct setting techniques, while I prefer to take a synoptic view of a composer's treatment of thematic material that includes these and other aspects).

While Suttoni's work is invaluable in both its scope and depth of analysis, it largely sidesteps issues of narrativity and thus only considers in passing the significance of how different composers treat the same material. Yet this is surely one of the most fascinating aspects of the paraphrase: by comparing how multiple composers treat the same operatic sources, it becomes clear that it is possible to create different narratives from the same material. With this approach in mind, I have chosen to examine paraphrases on Mozart's *Don Giovanni* written by seven different 19th-century composers. I will examine them in order of simplicity of arrangement (i.e. in terms of narrative impact), starting with those paraphrases which are straightforward medleys

40 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 10.

of the original thematic material. It is important to note here that not all of the paraphrases presented in this chapter are intended to be positive examples. In particular, the fantasies by Wallace and Dobrzyński are included as foils since they exhibit very little potential for a narrative-based reading. Regardless of the merits of individual works, however, I have attempted to apply the same methodology to each piece. For each paraphrase, I provide a brief introduction to the composer and the work's significance, before proceeding to analyze the piece in terms of thematic choice, ordering, and setting. By considering these three elements, I suggest a reading of the narrative embedded in each paraphrase, and demonstrate how this reading differs from other paraphrases.

One final note: in the following discussions of paraphrases, I have taken the liberty of referring to each work by a distinctive shortened title in order to avoid confusion. This is due to the fact that many of the works in question are not readily identified by a single title. As noted in the first chapter, the terminology surrounding the genre of the fantasy or paraphrase is anything but standardized even today, and many nineteenth century composers and publishers were sloppy in their use of titles. Suttoni points out that even the scores themselves "cannot be trusted for accuracy because the titles sometimes vary from publisher to publisher, or, at times, between that given on the cover sheet and that appearing on the head of the music."[41] Unsurprisingly, this can cause great confusion, and Suttoni amusingly provides evidence of a single Liszt paraphrase being published under four different titles.[42] Suttoni goes on to warn his readers that "in line with the practices of the time period, then, I have not hesitated to alter the wording of the title given in the print, shorten the titles, or employ catch-word phrases…provided that the reference is clear and that there is no chance of misidentification."[43] Given that no fewer than four of the seven

41 Ibid., 34.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid., 35.

paraphrases examined in this thesis can be found published as “Fantaisie Brilliante,” I will continue Suttoni's practice and refer to each work by a unique title.

I: William Vincent Wallace: Souvenir de Mozart

The first paraphrase to be examined is William Vincent Wallace's *Souvenir de Mozart: Fantasie de Salon sur l'opera Il Don Giovanni*. It will serve as a foil against which the features of other more substantive paraphrases can be better understood. As its full title suggests, this paraphrase falls under the category of “salon music,” though it must be admitted that this is a problematic term. Rosen suggests that

> 'salon music' is usually a pejorative term, and there is no doubt that a great deal of bad music was played in salons — but not, I think, more than was played in public concerts, in the home, or in the opera house. It is not clear whether there is, in fact, any such thing as salon music, or at least whether any satisfactory definition of such a genre can be found.[44]

Since it is not the intention of this thesis to split hairs over what constitutes salon music, I will say, for the purposes of this discussion, that Wallace's *Souvenir de Mozart* can be heard as salon music in that it is intended to be played and enjoyed by amateur musicians. This is not to diminish its historical significance. Although Alicia Levin concedes that “the amateur versions of opera-based pieces played by and for the bourgeois and predominantly female salon audiences… have become symptomatic of the intellectual deficiencies of middle-class…citizenship,”[45] this this repertoire nevertheless played a “significant role in the development of musical life in the nineteenth century.”[46]

Regardless of the purposes it served at the time of its creation, Wallace's *Souvenir de*

44 Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 384.
45 Levin, *Seducing Paris*, 158.
46 Ibid., 157.

Mozart provides a useful starting point for this discussion because of its obvious simplicity. This description of the paraphrase's style is not intended to slight the composer, however. William Vincent Wallace (1812-1865), not to be confused with the later Scottish composer William Wallace (much less the fourteenth century Scottish knight), was an Irish composer, violinist, and organist who taught, composed and performed in Australia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States before finally retiring to France.[47] During his lifetime, Wallace was best known as an opera composer, and I was intrigued to discover that Sydney Smith (whose own paraphrase on *Don Giovanni* will be examined next) composed a *Fantasia on Wallace's "Maritana*." If nothing else, Wallace deserves recognition as being one of only a handful of composers who both composed paraphrases, and wrote operas which inspired paraphrases by other composers.

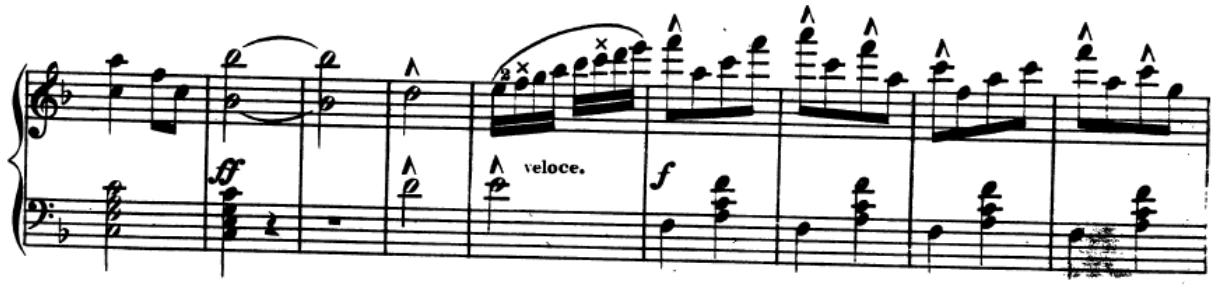
Returning to the work at hand, even a cursory examination reveals the *Souvenir de Mozart* to be little more than a basic transcription of several themes from *Don Giovanni*, strung together with a few short original modulatory transitions. In terms of thematic choice, Wallace selects a broad range of material from Mozart's opera, including the music from the Overture, the Minuet from Finale of Act I, and the arias "Il mio tesoro intanto" and "Finch' han dal vino." There is no discernible narrative significance behind these choices — it is evidently more of a pastiche representing the most memorable tunes from the opera.

The thematic ordering is similarly unremarkable. Wallace largely retains the chronological ordering of the original opera, beginning with material from the overture and proceeding to the Minuet from the end of the first act. While his decision to reverse the order of "Il mio tesoro intanto" and "Finch' han dal vino" (i.e. such that the paraphrase concludes with the Champagne aria) arguably highlights the comic over the tragic, a more simple explanation is that

47 *The Oxford Companion to Music*, s.v. "Wallace, (William) Vincent" (by Jeremy Dibble), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/ (accessed September 22, 2011.

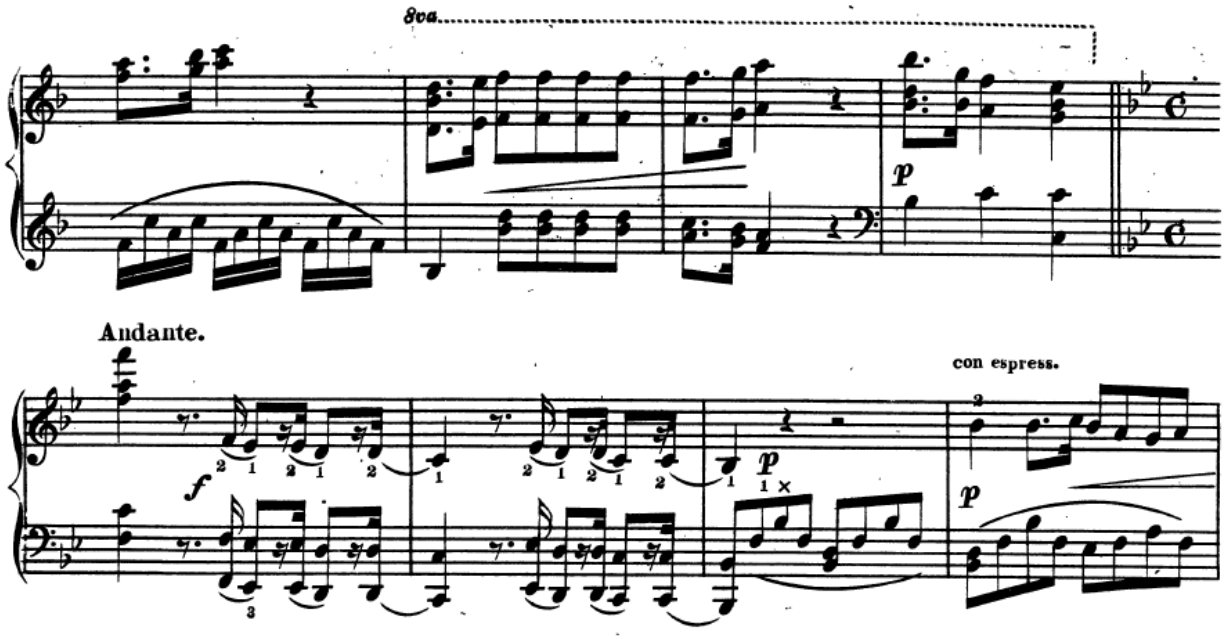
this theme is the most scintillating, exciting material used in the paraphrase, and thus was chosen to end the work in an exhilarating fashion.

Having ascertained that Wallace's choice and ordering of Mozart's themes is unremarkable, the final step is to consider the narrative implications of his settings of these themes. Unfortunately, the *Souvenir de Mozart* is equally unexceptional in this regard, for Wallace's settings of the themes are simple and straightforward. The piano part often resembles a basic reduction of the open score, such as would be used in a staging rehearsal. He adds in a few extra notes in the right hand part of "Finch' han dal vino," but the result is not especially demanding or virtuosic (example 1):



Example 1: Wallace, Souvenir de Mozart, mm. 130-139.

Nor does Wallace use any significant original material for the purposes of introduction or transition. The rather clumsy modulation between the end of the minuet material and the beginning of the setting of Don Ottavio's aria (example 2) is typical of the piece as a whole.



Example 2: Wallace, Souvenir de Mozart, mm. 50-57.

Although Wallace's *Souvenir de Mozart* is a relevant example of the paraphrase genre, it is unremarkable from a perspective that seeks to have a critical understanding of the genre. While Wallace was evidently a capable transcriber, he lacked either the skill or the will to impose his own voice on Mozart's themes. In the context of this discussion, this piece is best positioned as a foil against which other examples might be highlighted.

II: Sydney Smith: Grand Fantasy

One of the most intriguing paraphrases on *Don Giovanni* comes from an obscure composer named Sydney Smith (1839-1889). Smith was one of the leading pianists in Victorian England, though today he is perhaps best known as a student of Ignaz Moscheles. Having studied as a youth in continental Europe, Smith returned to England in 1858, where he found success as a teacher. William Barclay Squire notes that “his compositions, exclusively for the piano, were written for the Victorian drawing room and mainly comprise miniatures, transcriptions and

fantasias on operatic themes."[48] While this statement is certainly true, I would argue that Squire's assertion that Smith's works were "designed to entertain rather than edify"[49] is perhaps inaccurate, since as we will discover, the Op. 48 *Don Giovanni, Fantaisie Brilliante sur l'opera de Mozart* (henceforth referred to as the "*Grand Fantasy*" to avoid confusion) contains an encoded moralizing agenda. This piece, written in 1866, is an intriguing study of how an arranger can impose a narrative on the themes of another composer. Through his choice, ordering, and settings of Mozart's themes, Smith subtly delivers a distinctly Victorian reading of *Don Giovanni*.

When approaching Smith's paraphrase for the first time, I made note of his choice of thematic material from Mozart's opera. At first glance Smith's selection of themes appeared unremarkable — it seemed to be a haphazard pastiche of material from various parts of the opera. The piece opens with the ominous harmonic progressions of the minor section of the overture, before proceeding to the seemingly requisite rendition of "Là ci darem la mano." Next comes the pizzicato mandolin accompaniment of "Deh vieni alla finestra" and the soaring melodies of "Il mio tesoro intanto." Smith also includes the orchestral accompaniment to the dance "Riposate, vezzose ragazze!" from the finale of Act I, before ending the paraphrase with a bombastic variant of "Là ci darem la mano." It is all standard fare, but it is interesting to note that although Smith plucks at least five distinct themes from *Don Giovanni*, only one of these themes ("Là ci darem la mano") includes a female character in the original version. Significantly, "Là ci darem la mano" is dominated by the seductive power of Don Giovanni, and is hardly a study in female agency. While it is perhaps dangerous to read too much into the mere selection of material, it is interesting to consider that female voices are largely excluded in this paraphrase,

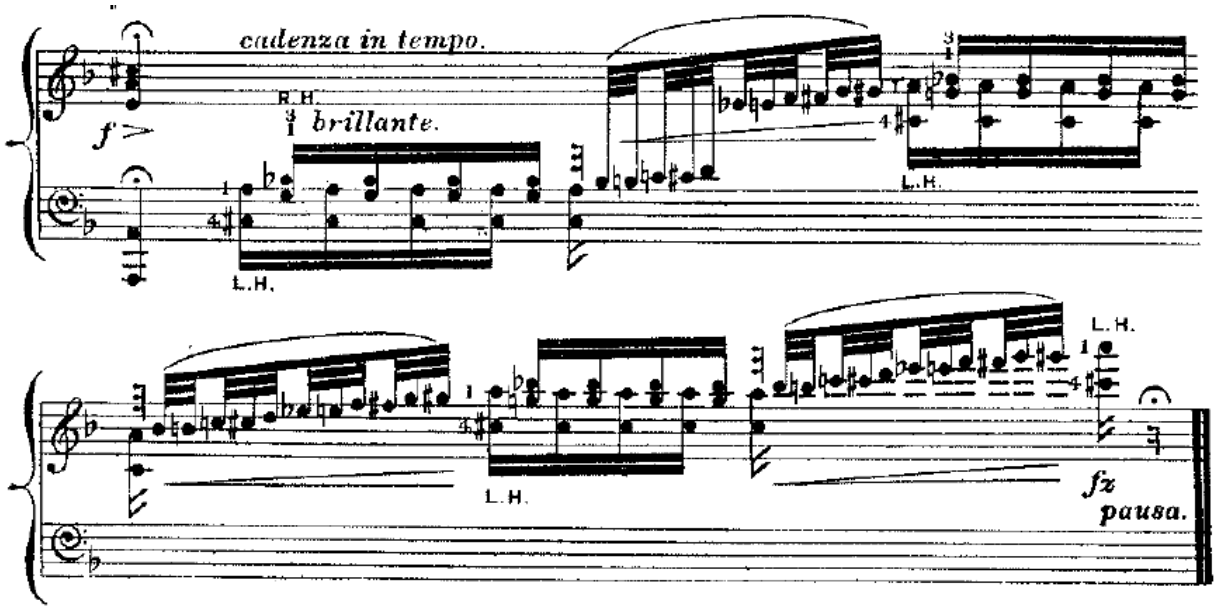
48 *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. "Smith, Sydney," (by William Barclay Squire, Jeremy Dibble), http://www.grovemusic.com/ (accessed September 25, 2011).
49 Ibid.

which was written during a time when the women's suffrage movement was beginning in England.

Even if this exclusion of women's voices is purely coincidental that Smith's *Grand Fantasy*, there are other aspects of the work that reflect its Victorian origins. The work is proper and formal in every regard. The facsimile of the original 1866 first edition even labels the themes used in capital letters. Moreover, unlike many of the other paraphrases examined, which freely rearrange the order of the thematic material, Smith's paraphrase largely retains the chronological ordering of themes as they appear in the source opera. He opens the paraphrase with material from the Overture, proceeds directly to the first act's "Là ci darem la mano," and then continues with "Deh vieni alla finestra" and "Il mio tesoro intanto" from act two. The only theme that is "out of place" is the brief quotation of the orchestral accompaniment to the dance "Riposate, vezzose ragazze!," which originally comes from the finale of Act I, but serves as a modulatory transition to the finale of Smith's paraphrase. The finale itself outlines "Là ci darem la mano," but in a startling new setting. By largely retaining the original chronological ordering of Mozart's themes, Smith not only preserves the narrative arc of the opera, but also demonstrates his conservative dedication to maintaining the *status quo*.

If Smith's rendition of Mozart's opera be so conservative in its selection and ordering of themes, what makes it so interesting from a scholarly standpoint? The answer lies in Smith's settings, which are surprisingly inventive from a pianistic view in that they reinforce the Victorian values alluded to above. The opening of the paraphrase, which features material from the overture, is rife with arpeggiated figures and intense crescendi and accelerandi. Barely four measures into the work, Smith interrupts Mozart with a bristling cadenza that would be more at home in Liszt's *Totentanz*, given its lightning-fast chromatic runs and interlocking alternating

chords (example 3):

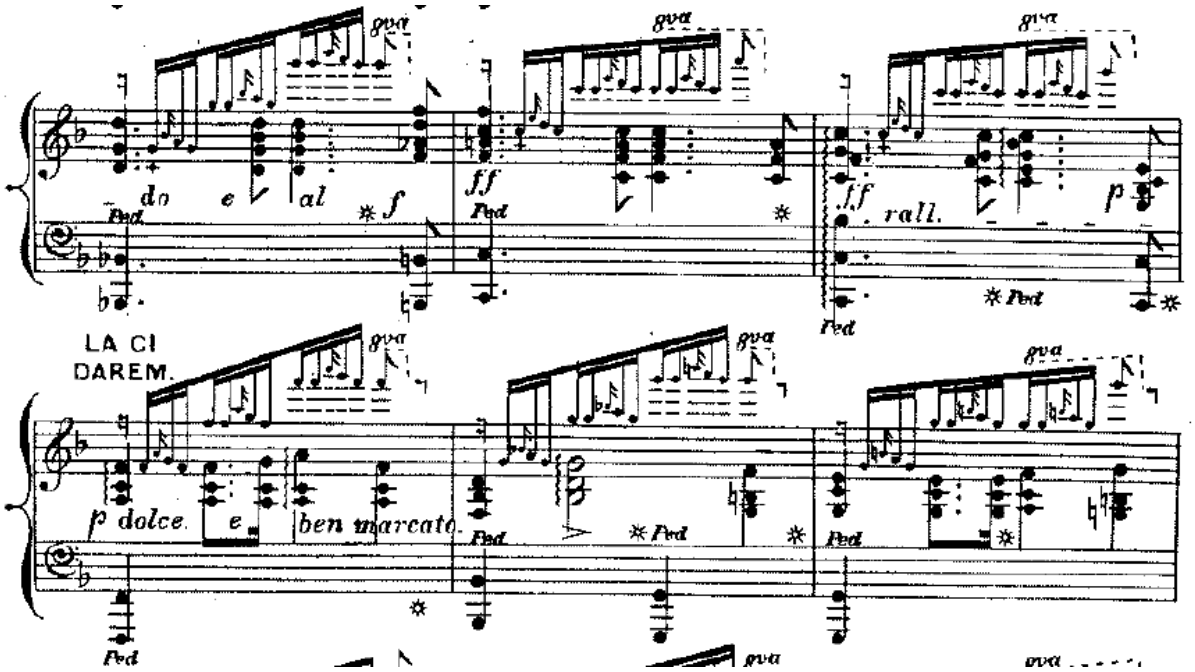


Example 3: Smith: Grand Fantasy, mm. 4-5.

It is important to recognize that this virtuosity serves a purpose. More than simply providing the pianist with an opportunity to impress the audience, Smith is painting a musical picture of the hellfire and damnation awaiting the Don. It is a stern warning that this paraphrase has a serious message.

Smith's invention is not limited to the opening phrases. As he pushes forward, he adorns the dark harmonies or the overture with a filigree of ascending grace notes, rising from pianissimo to fortissimo in a mere six bars. His most fascinating trick, however, is revealed when he seamlessly merges the material of the opening with that of "Là ci darem la mano," by using the same right-hand ornamentation to conceal the transition (example 4). By positioning the two themes in this way, Smith creates a musical setting of the adage "the road to hell is paved with good intentions" (while of course Don Giovanni's motives are far from pure, Zerlina initially claims innocent intentions in the duet). It is also worth noticing that Smith's transition between

themes is so subtle that it mirrors the smoothness of Don Giovanni's seduction.



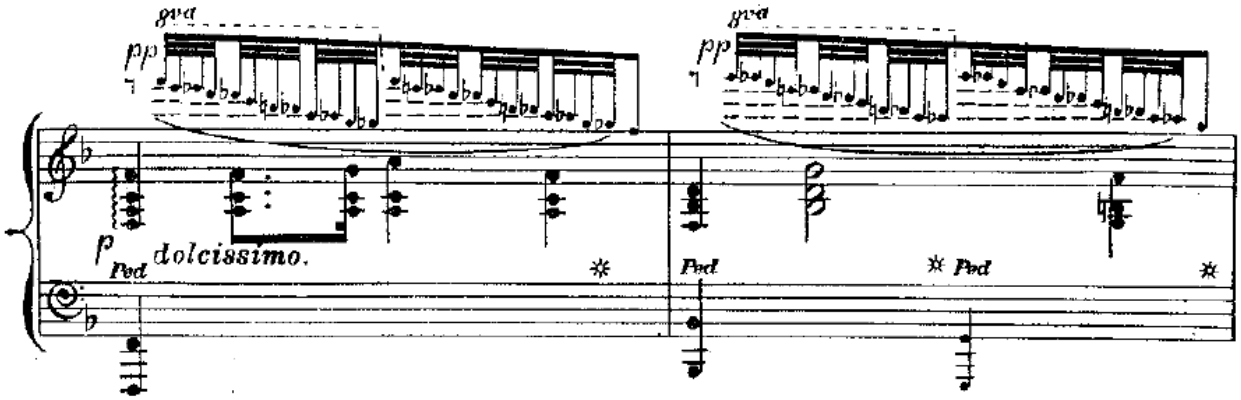
Example 4: Smith, Grand Fantasy, mm. 10-15.

The setting of the duet itself is rather less subtle, however, as Smith encrusts Mozart's lines with two layers of arpeggios and alternating chords. In the midst of all this virtuosic mayhem, it is easy to overlook one of the most fascinating aspects of Smith's setting of the duet. While most of the other settings of "Là ci darem la mano" examined in this thesis differentiate the voices of Don Giovanni and Zerlina through registral shifts (i.e. Don Giovanni's line is set in a lower register, while Zerlina's is played in a higher register), Smith's setting remains firmly rooted in the starting register (i.e. the voice of Don Giovanni). Because of this, Smith's setting of the material sounds more like a solo serenade than a seductive duet. This is especially notable when considered in light of the fact that, as noted above, Smith's paraphrase includes only themes featuring male characters from *Don Giovanni*. By eliminating Zerlina's voice from his setting of "Là ci darem la mano," Smith effectively eradicates every last vestige of female

agency from his retelling of *Don Giovanni*.

The omission of Zerlina's line is not the only notable aspect of Smith's setting of "Là ci darem la mano." Smith advances his treatment of the duet by adding all manner of arpeggios, alternating chords, and miniature cadenzas to Mozart's melody. It is all rather bombastic and, arguably, unnecessary — not to mention difficult for the performer! — until the final statement of the theme. In Mozart's duet, the final statement of the theme sees Don Giovanni accomplishing his seduction, as Zerlina relents and submits to his advances. In the corresponding phrase in the *Grand Fantasy*, Smith overlays the melodic line with trickling descending chromatic scales (example 5). These eerily soft tendrils stand out in sharp contrast to the sunny diatonicism of Mozart's theme, and suggest that the assent to sexual seduction is a slippery slope toward sin.

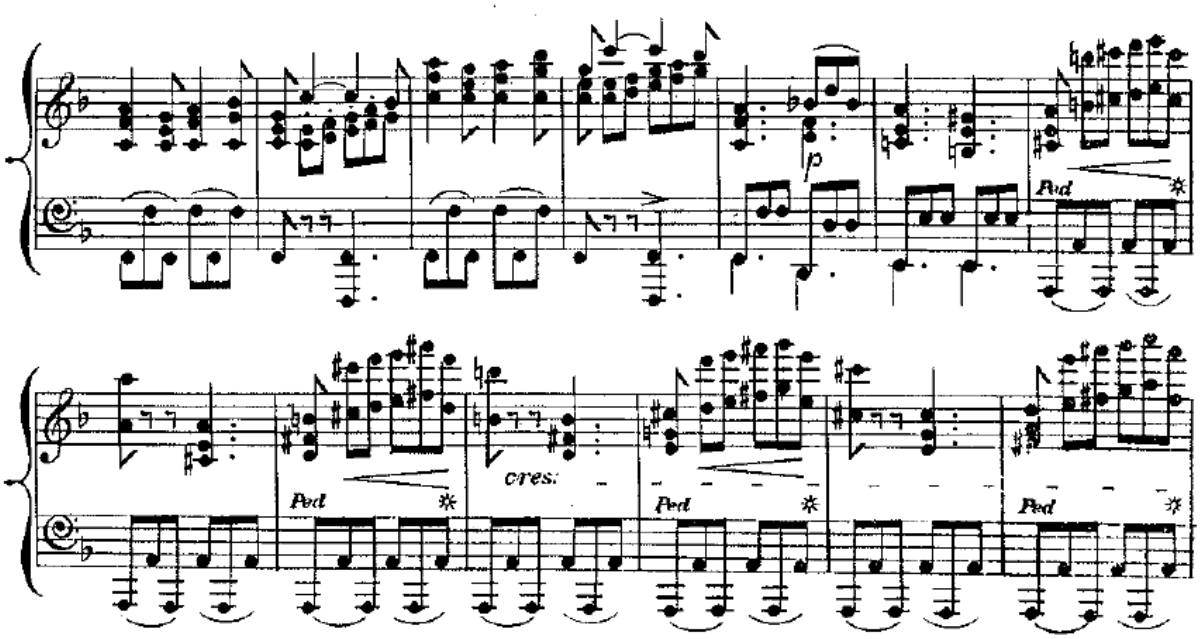
The descent does not end there. Like any good Victorian moralist, Smith underlines his point through repetition. While most paraphrases (with the notable exception of Liszt's *Réminiscences de Don Juan*) conclude their treatments of "Là ci darem la mano" with the end of



Example 5: Smith, Grand Fantasy, m. 31-32.

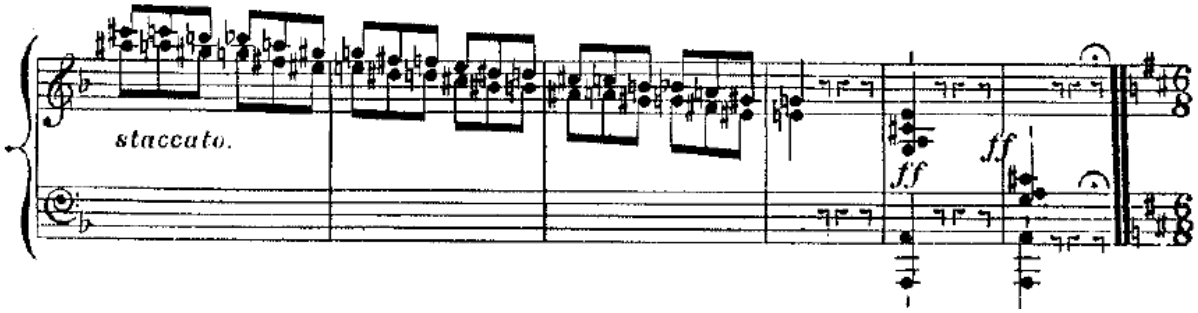
the 2/4 section in the duettino (i.e. with the first statement of the text "Andiam!"), Smith

continues into the following 6/8 “codetta” of the theme, which sees Don Giovanni and Zerlina singing of the pleasures of their “innocent” love (“andiam mio bene, a ristorar le pene d'un innocente amor”). Smith's setting is stunning in its invention. Where Mozart's (and Liszt's) version break off into a pastoral dotted dance theme played in the orchestral, Smith instead abruptly modulates (from F major to A major — via a iii chord no less!) into a second iteration of the vocal line (example 6). Yet this iteration is barely begun before it modulates again and is



Example 6: Smith, Grand Fantasy, mm. 47-59.

revealed to be a part of a frenzied rising sequence set against an almost savage pounding pedal tone in the left hand. Just as suddenly as the sequence reaches its shuddering climax at a fortissimo dynamic, it collapses into a solo descending chromatic scale in minor thirds (example 7), spanning a full four measures. Smith's setting of the material is so stark that it is difficult not

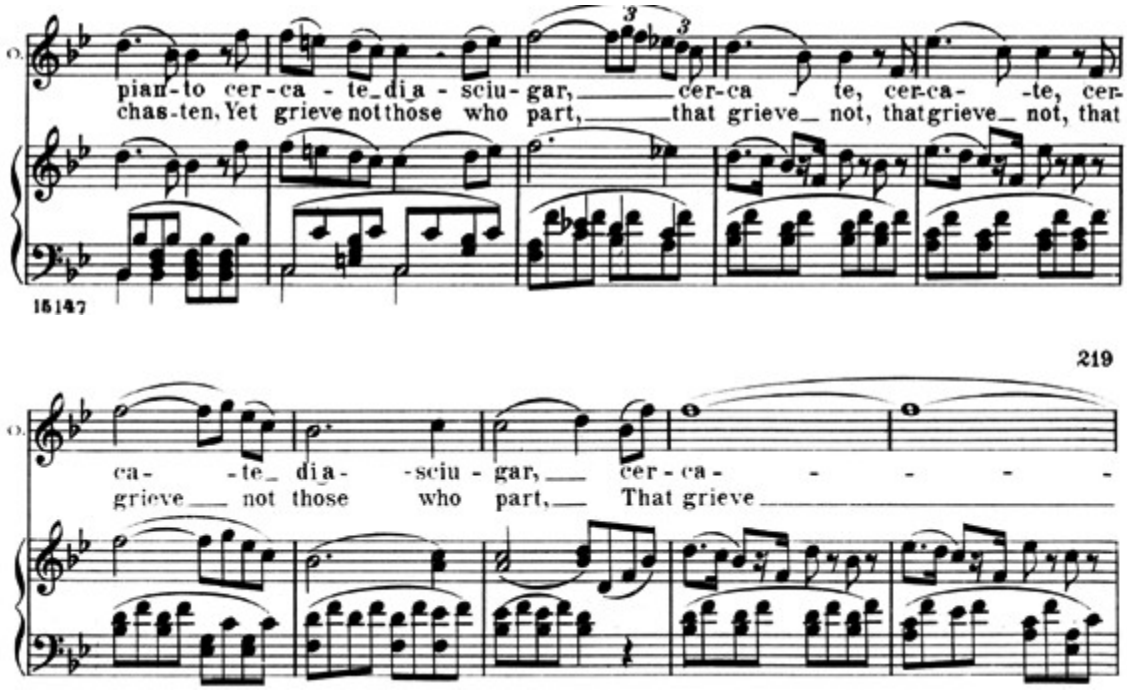


Example 7: Smith, Grand Fantasy, mm. 66-71.

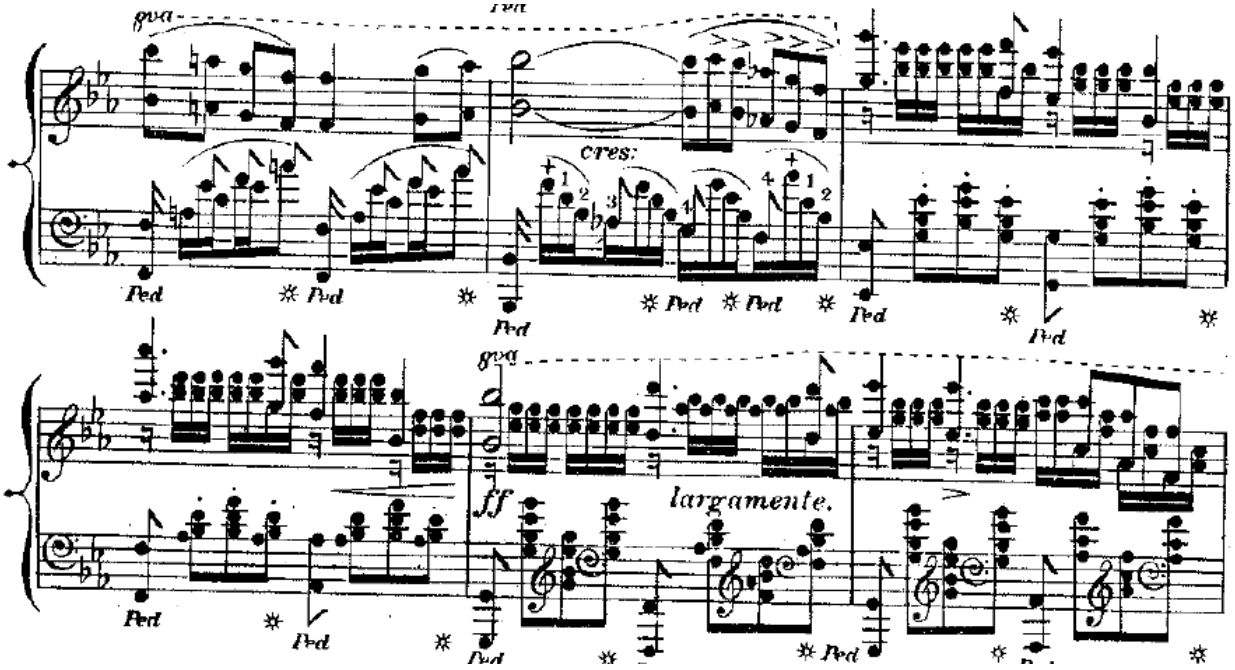
to see it as the musical equivalent of the cautionary adage "sin in haste, repent at leisure."

Although Smith's setting of the next theme showcased in the *Fantasie* — Don Giovanni's cavatina "Deh Vieni alla finestra" — is exemplary as a specimen of transcription, it is less significant in terms of its narrativity. Smith makes few changes to Mozart's original song, though he does add a few interesting passing notes and chords to fill out and intensify the accompaniment toward the end of the passage. His setting of Don Ottavio's aria "Il mio tesoro intanto" is similarly straightforward — or so it seems. Here Smith employs a curious compositional tactic. While he retains Mozart's melodic line for the first thirteen measures (albeit with a more florid accompaniment), at m. 14 he parts ways with the original melody. Whereas Ottavio's line (example 8) ascends to and holds a high F (*sol* in the key of B-flat major, based on a moveable *do* solfège system), Smith's line does not stop at *sol*, but rather continues all the way to a high *do* (example 9).[50] Because Smith is writing for piano, he is able to write notes that exceed the normal tessitura of the role. Yet the question remains: why does Smith rewrite the original aria? While it was of course more acceptable in the 19th century for a composer or arranger to modify the text of such hallowed works than it is today, one must still presume that there is a reason for such an adjustment. It seems to me that Smith's purpose is to elevate the

50 Because Smith has transposed Mozart's original line, I am using a movable *do* solfège to explain the relationship between the two versions.



Example 8: Mozart, Don Giovanni, "Il mio tesoro intanto," mm. 16-25.

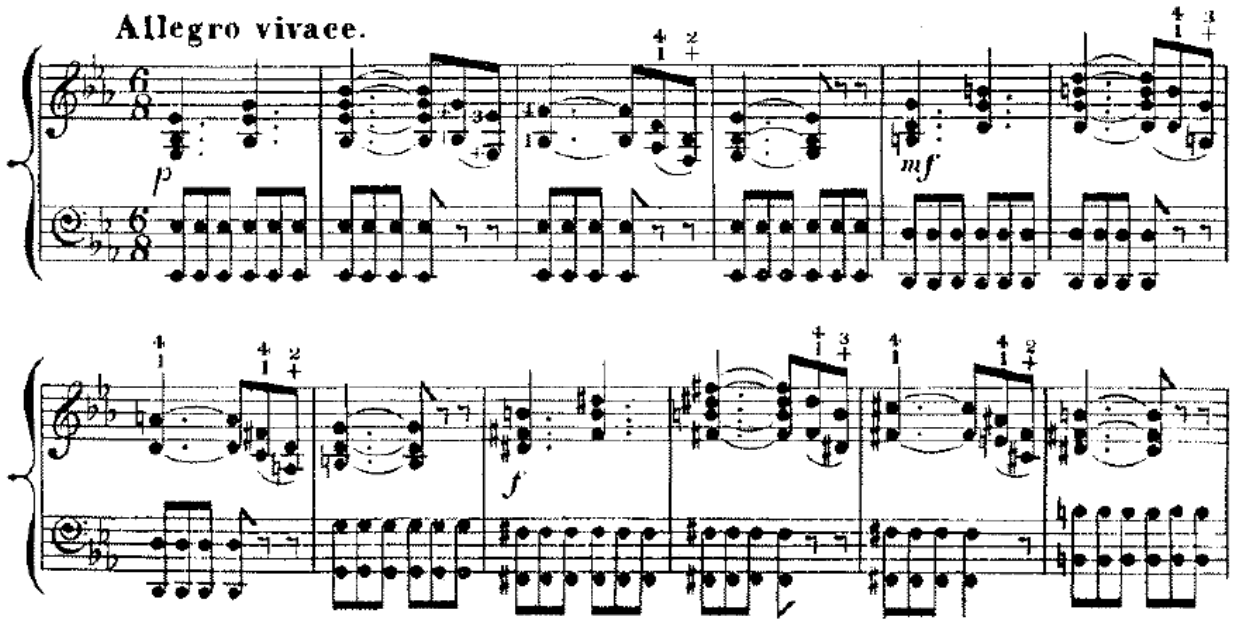


Example 9: Smith, Grand Fantasy, mm. 139-144.

character of Don Ottavio by giving him a truly heroic line. While Ottavio is of course a positive character in Mozart's opera, he is nonetheless hardly the focus of attention — after all, the opera

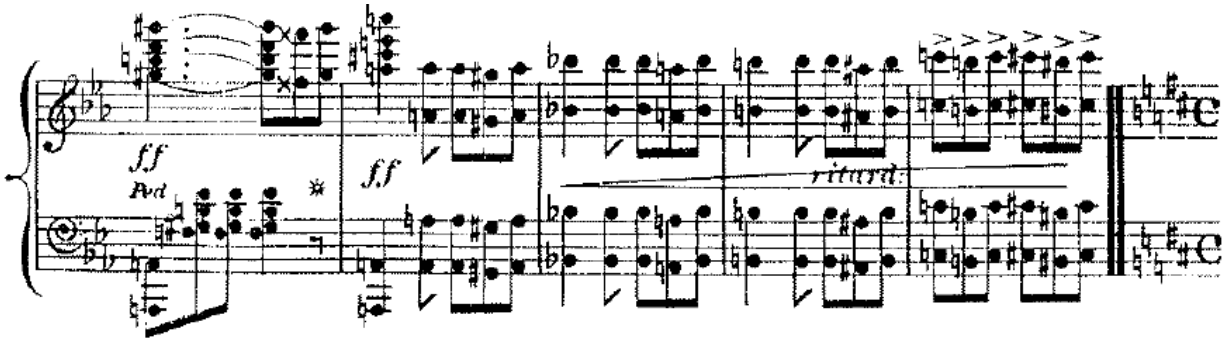
is called *Don Giovanni*, not *Don Ottavio*. By giving Ottavio such a superhuman line, Smith is seeking to "correct" this mistake, to draw attention away from the seductive powers of the rakish Giovanni and toward the rectifying force of Ottavio.

Although the narrative thread is more elusive in the final sections of Smith's *Fantasie Brilliante*, it is still possible to hear the influence of Victorian culture. Immediately following his setting of "Il mio tesoro intanto," Smith inserts a twenty-two measure transition that serves to modulate from E-flat major to D major. To accomplish this scene change, Smith employs orchestral material from the finale of Act I, a lively dance in 6/8 which accompanies the scheming of Don Giovanni and Leporello as they attempt to lure Zerlina away from her fiancé. What is interesting about Smith's setting of this material is his use of motivic fragmentation, abrupt key changes, and strong dynamic increases to create a sense of chaos and forward momentum. While he begins the transition with a four bar statement of the theme, this is quickly reduced to two- and then one-measure fragments, each one modulating upward (example 10). It



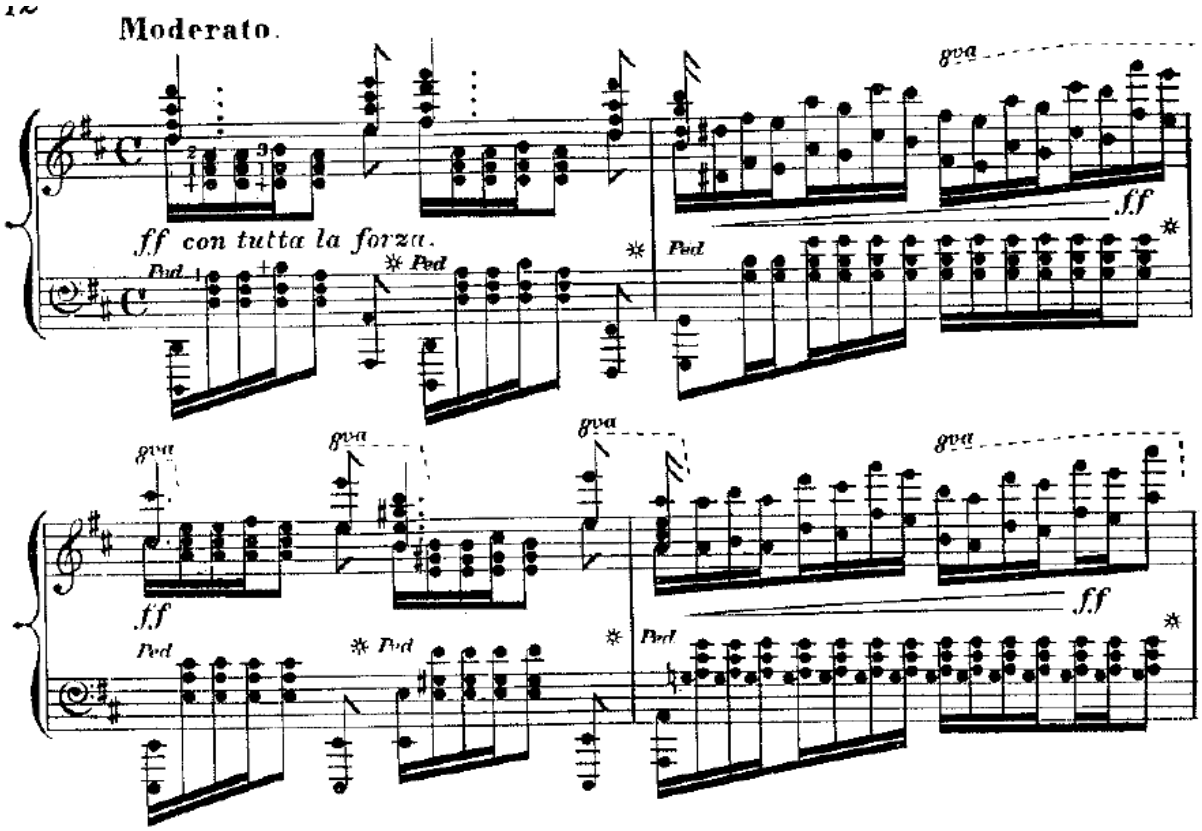
Example 10: Smith, Grand Fantasy, mm. 147-158.

is as though Smith were suggesting that the dance has an almost hypnotic effect. The music finally spins out of control in the final bars of the transition, in which the composer completely abandons Mozart's material in favour of a hair-raising chromatic sequence in double octaves (example 11). It is hardly a subtle maneuver, but it clearly tells the listener that a dramatic climax is at hand, specifically one of a rowdy, uncivilized nature.

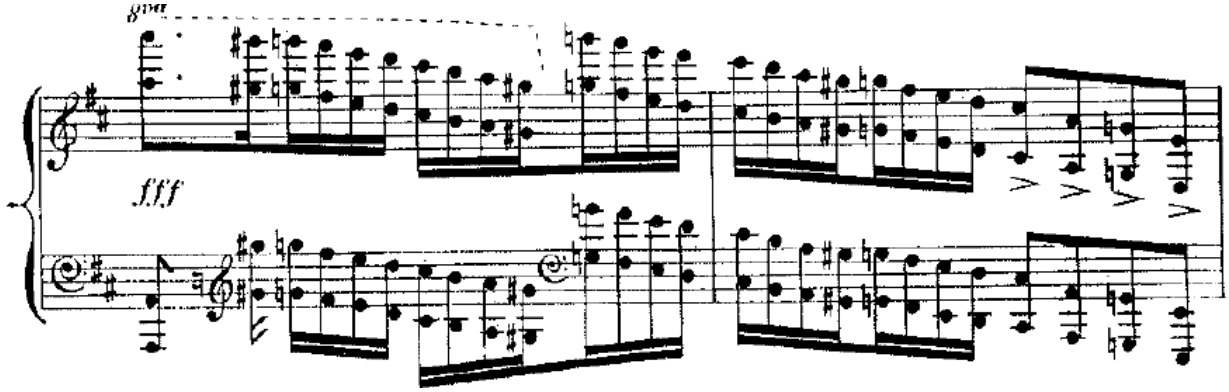


Example 11: Smith: Grand Fantasy, mm. 164-168.

Sure enough, when Smith at last arrives at the final theme, it is hardly fit for genteel society. Surprisingly, Smith chooses to set "Là ci darem la mano" once again, but this time in an altogether different manner. Marked "*ff con tutta la forza*," the setting adds a sense of recklessness and desperation to the once lyrical theme (example 12). The melody exists only in skeletal form, with many notes omitted, and the harmonies are weak (e.g. the second inversion dominant chord on the downbeat of m. 171). After each fragment of melody, the pianist plays a jagged ascending line which stutters and struggles to reach its apex. Although this ascent occurs three times, each time it is dragged back down, the third time by a massive descending scale in double octaves leading into an eight-bar codetta passage (example 13). Through his omission of melody notes, weakening of harmonies, and repeated denial of ascending motion, Smith undermines the seemingly triumphant nature of the section, and creates the impression that this is

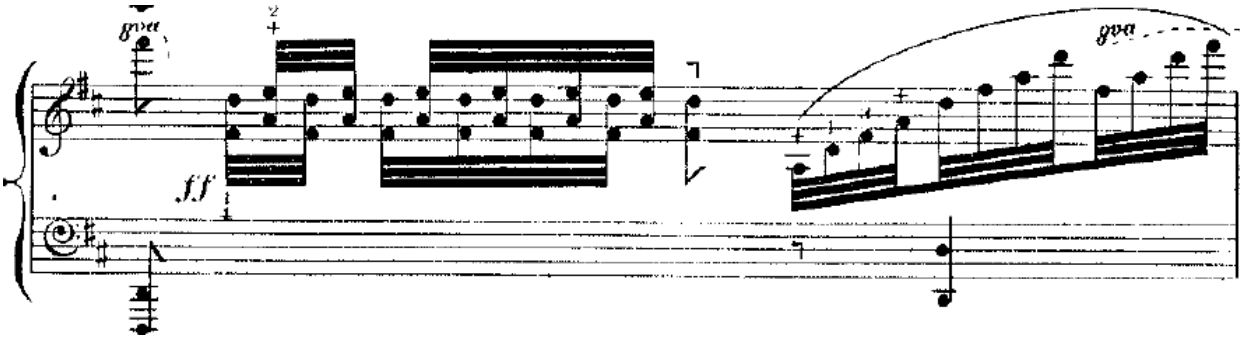


Example 12: Smith, Grand Fantasy, mm. 169-172.



Example 13: Smith, Grand Fantasy, mm. 175-176.

perhaps Don Giovanni's last stand. Such an interpretation is strengthened by a reading of the concluding passage, which includes a familiar alternating chord figuration (example 14). While



Example 14: Smith, Grand Fantasy, m. 181.

this figuration may not seem immediately significant on the page, to the listener, it harks back to the beginning of the *Grand Fantasy*, where Smith used a similar device in his *Totentanz*-like cadenza (see *Example 3*, above). It is a subtle link, to be sure, but a link nonetheless, and when combined with Smith's aforementioned undermining of the "Là ci darem la mano" statement, it suggests that perhaps Don Giovanni's downfall is closer than the character realizes.

Although at first glance Sydney Smith's *Grand Fantasy* may appear to be merely a bombastic Mozartean medley, a closer examination reveals a subtle narrative of Victorian moral rectitude lurking under the surface. Between restricting the roles of female characters, warning of the dangers of licentiousness through chromatic damnation, and glorifying the roles of morally upright characters, Smith's paraphrase stands as an unmistakably Victorian retelling of Mozart's narrative.

III: Joachim Raff: Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan"

In terms of issues of narrative, one of the most accessible (though by no means simple) paraphrases I have encountered is Joachim Raff's *Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan" von W. A*.

Mozart. Raff (1822-1882) was a Swiss-born German composer, teacher, and pianist. Although his works are relatively unknown today, Raff enjoyed considerable success during his lifetime, and was connected with many of the leading musical minds of his time, most notably Liszt and Mendelssohn. James Deaville notes that "in the 1870s he was one of the most frequently played German composers," but also suggests that "any analysis of Raff's music must confront the historical criticisms of his eclecticism and quantity of production."[51] Considering this penchant for eclecticism, and, given that Raff "wished to link the old with the new"[52] in his musical aesthetic, it is perhaps unsurprising that he composed a large number of paraphrases over the course of his career, mostly during the late 1840s and early 1850s.

Raff's proclivity towards combining both old and new musical styles in his works is evident in the paraphrase in question in this discussion, the *Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan"*. Composed in 1848 in Stuttgart, this paraphrase reveals a deep respect for Mozart's opera. Whereas many of the paraphrases examined in this study seek to subvert or change the basic narrative structure of *Don Giovanni*, Raff's work instead seeks to distill and clarify the literary themes of the source opera. While such a statement may seem agonizingly abstract, when one views the score it becomes clear, largely due to Raff's efforts to label and organize each of Mozart's themes. Although the *Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan"* stands as a unified piece, it is neatly divided into three sections, labeled "I. Donna Anna ed Ottavio," "II. Zerlina e Don Giovanni," and "III. Une Fête Champêtre."

Raff's tripartite division of this work is significant because it reveals a conscious decision to organize the chosen material from *Don Giovanni*. Instead of simply mashing the themes together haphazardly, Raff groups them in such a way that their similarities and differences (i.e.

51 *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. "Raff, Joachim" (by James Deaville), http://www.grovemusic.com/ (accessed August 20, 2011)

52 Ibid.

in terms of their contributions to the literary narrative of the opera) are highlighted. In the first section, entitled “Donna Anna ed Ottavio,” Raff engages two themes belonging to the titular characters, the arias “Non, mi dir” and “Il mio tesoro intanto” respectively. Yet the link between these two themes is not limited to the romantic connection between the two characters. After all, the musical passages are clearly separate within the chronological narrative of the opera. Rather, Raff's decision to pair these two themes together in the first section of his paraphrase is significant because it reveals his desire to highlight the literary (i.e. non-musical) theme underlying the arias: the power of pure, unselfish love.

Raff's linking of thematic elements is further evident in the second section, “Zerlina e Don Giovanni.” Here, Raff again chooses two themes which do not belong together within the chronology of the original opera. While one might expect a section involving Zerlina and Don Giovanni to incorporate the seduction duet “Là ci darem la mano” — arguably the single most famous theme from the entire opera — Raff studiously avoids this material altogether, using instead Zerlina's aria “Vedrai carino” and Don Giovanni's cavatina “Deh vieni alla finestra.” While at first the link between these two themes may be unclear, upon closer consideration, it becomes apparent that both songs are being sung to another character: Zerlina is singing to Masetto, while Don Giovanni is serenading Elvira's chambermaid. By drawing a parallel between these two arias, Raff reminds the listener that earlier in the opera, Zerlina and Don Giovanni shared an amorous duet. Thus, whereas the first section highlights the power of pure love, here Raff is pointing to the destructive forces of infidelity and lust.

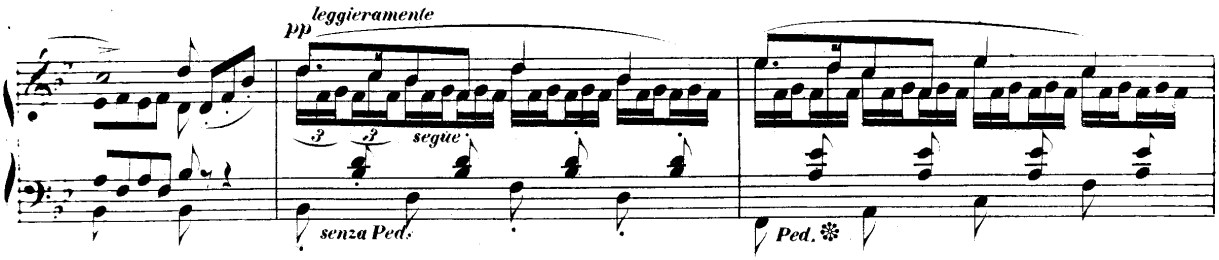
Already we can see a simple narrative progression between the first two sections of Raff's paraphrase. While the work begins by extolling the virtues of love, it moves forward to show the darker, tragic nature of lust. In the third and final section of the paraphrase, entitled “Une Fête

Champêtre," Raff continues this trend, but also raises the stakes by including not just two, but *four* themes from Mozart's opera. Yet again, the themes are not chosen or ordered to correspond to the narrative arc of the original opera, but rather to highlight their underlying literary themes. Perhaps unsurprisingly, though, considering the amount of material involved, the relationships between the chosen themes are rather more complicated in the third section. "Une Fête Champêtre" begins with the ominous music of the Commendatore, conveniently identified by Raff as linked to the text "Di rider finirai." The second musical theme is the courtly Minuetto from the finale of Act I. While the pairing of these two themes may at first seem odd, it makes sense when they considered next to the two other themes chosen by Raff for the third section: the racous peasant dance "Giovinette, che fate all'amore" (Act I, chorus) and Don Giovanni's boisterous aria "Finch' han dal vino." Although all four musical themes have little connection within the narrative of *Don Giovanni*, by positioning them together, Raff reveals a subtle set of relationships: the music of the Commendatore and the courtly minuet stand as bastions of order and civilized behaviour, while Don Giovanni's aria and the peasants' chorus represent chaos and barbarism. Through his choice of themes, Raff is heralding one of the fundamental dynamics in Mozart's opera, the struggle between the social norms of civilized society and the wanton desires of an id-driven man. Although he is not entirely rewriting Mozart's narrative, through his choice and ordering of musical themes, Raff postulates his own understanding of the thematic currents that run through *Don Giovanni*.

In the interest of playing "devil's advocate," I will admit that the preceding argument regarding the motivations behind Raff's selection and ordering of musical themes may seem contrived when considered in the absence of other evidence. Happily, though, Raff provides further evidence of his inclinations through his settings of Mozart's material. Not only does Raff

skillfully treat the themes by using several variation techniques, but in each section he also ingeniously combines and integrates two separate themes. Far from being merely a clever compositional feint, Raff's technique serves to create meaning and to alter the narrative of Mozart's opera. In order to examine this in detail, it is easiest to consider the setting techniques one section at a time.

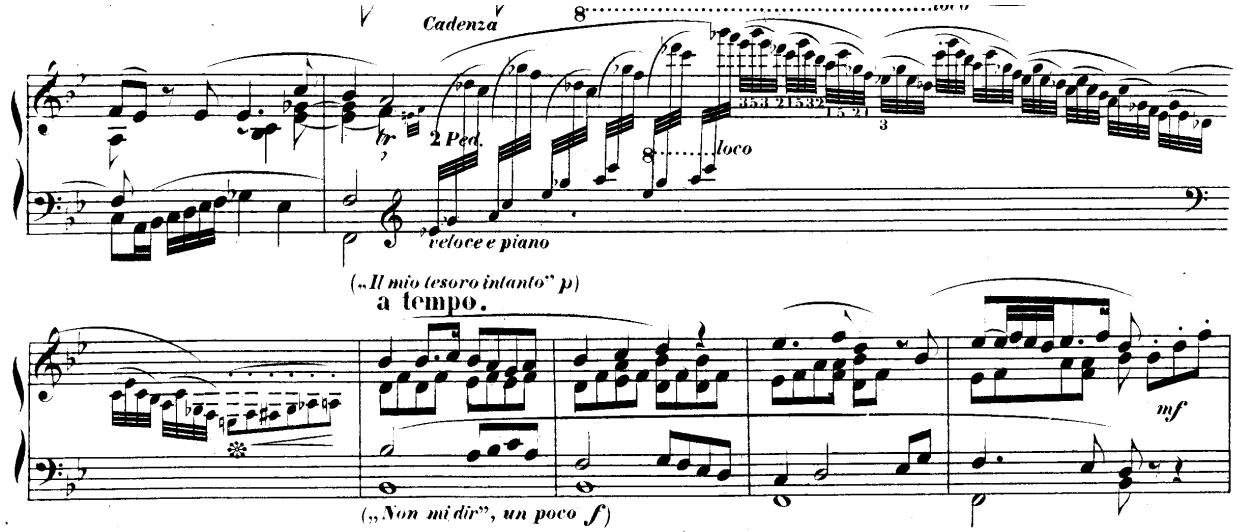
In the first section, Raff explores the compositional possibilities presented by Ottavio's aria “Il mio tesoro intanto”and Donna Anna's “Non, mi dir.” Raff begins by setting Ottavio's aria, in which the tenor vows to avenge the murder of the Commendatore, out of love for his betrothed. The piano arrangement of the theme begins simply enough, but soon Raff is faced with a compositional problem: how to reproduce on the piano the effect of Ottavio's extended high F on the word “cercate” (see previous *Example 8*). Raff's solution is to omit the tenor's high note entirely, focusing instead on the underlying orchestral texture. Importantly, Raff adds fast triplets to the orchestral accompaniment, an effect which increases the tension of the line (example 15). This solution is not only technically competent, but it also serves to heighten the emotional tension of Ottavio's theme.



Example 15: Raff, Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan," m. 17-19.

Immediately following this line, Raff abruptly parts ways with Mozart's material. Whereas Mozart continues the aria with a sharp, martial theme, Raff avoids changing the lyrical tone of the section, and instead smoothly switches to a woodwind motive from Donna Anna's

“Non, mi dir.” For eleven bars, Raff indulges Donna Anna's lyrical line, but at the beginning of the twelfth measure, he again changes tack. At this point in the aria, the soprano traditionally launches into a short cadenza, and while Raff respects this practice by including a flurry of notes, his cadenza is radically un-Mozartean. The cadenza makes abundant use of sevenths and diminished intervals, and ends with a stark chromatic scale (example 16). Once again, Raff is emphasizing the emotional strain suffered by Mozart's characters.

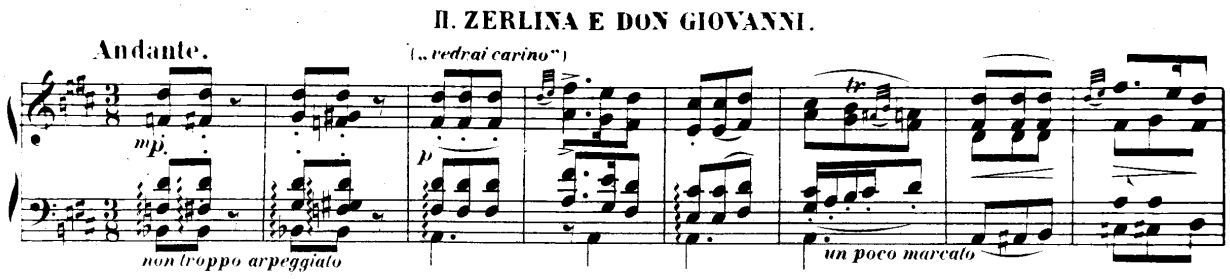


Example 16: Raff, Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan," mm. 34-40.

While this emphasis on the emotions present in the arias is interesting, it is what Raff does next with his setting that is most significant in terms of narrative. Having interrupted both musical themes at climactic moments, Raff begins again, this time ingeniously combining the two arias in a lyrical counterpoint (m. 37-40, in *Example 16*, above). Donna Anna's line supports Ottavio's melody, and functions is as an underlying harmony — perhaps an odd choice, considering that her line should be higher than his in register. Yet Raff marks the “Non mi dir” line as “un poco *f*,” while the “Il mio tesoro intanto” line is marked *piano*. While Donna Anna's line serves to support Ottavio's soaring melody, it is also equally present because the contrast in

dynamic levels. Effectively, Raff is showing that the lines are mutually supportive. In this way, Raff's setting of Mozart's material emphasizes the power of faithful, steadfast love, one of the major literary themes in *Don Giovanni*.

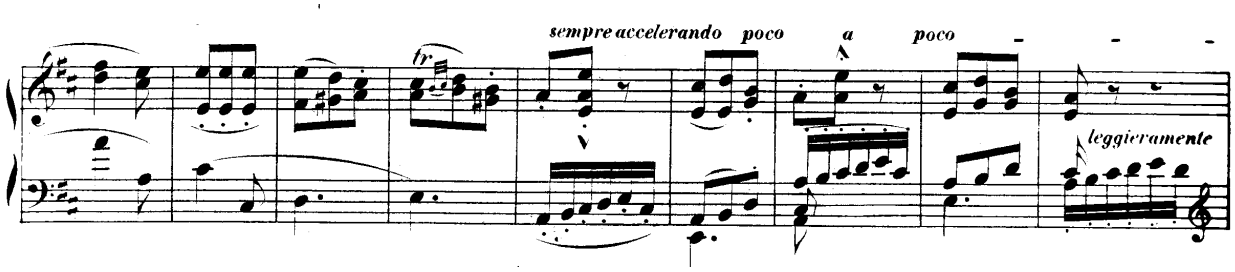
While Raff's thematic combination in the first section of the *Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan"* is suitably lyrical and harmonious, the same cannot be said of the combined themes in the second section, "Zerlina e Don Giovanni." Although Raff combines two love arias in the second section, the combination of themes is drastically different from the treatment of Donna Anna and Ottavio's music. However, given the textual content and context of the arias in question (Zerlina's "Vedrai carino" and Don Giovanni's "Deh vieni alla finestra"), Raff's contrasting setting is entirely appropriate. Although Zerlina's aria, sung to console her bruised fiancé, is delicate and consoling, it is also rather saucy, as it ends with Zerlina essentially inviting Masetto to partake of her sexual charms. Moreover, the audience recognizes that her sentiments are tinged by the memory of her earlier submission to the advances of Don Giovanni. It should not be surprising, then, that Raff employs a startlingly chromatic two-measure harmonic transition (example 17) into the new material.



Example 17: Raff, Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan," mm. 52-59.

Such chromaticism is hardly in keeping with Mozart's style, but this can perhaps be overlooked when we consider that this is merely functional transitional material. What cannot be

dismissed, however, is the equally chromatic bass line that underpins Zerlina's melody four bars later. It is as though Raff is questioning the very foundation of Zerlina's claims of love toward her fiancé. Still, Raff is willing to give Zerlina the benefit of the doubt, and allows her to continue her aria without chromatic incongruities for another thirteen bars. On the fourteenth bar, however, her line is again subverted, this time by the unmistakable mandolin-like accompaniment of Don Giovanni's “Deh vieni alla finestra” (example 18). It quickly becomes

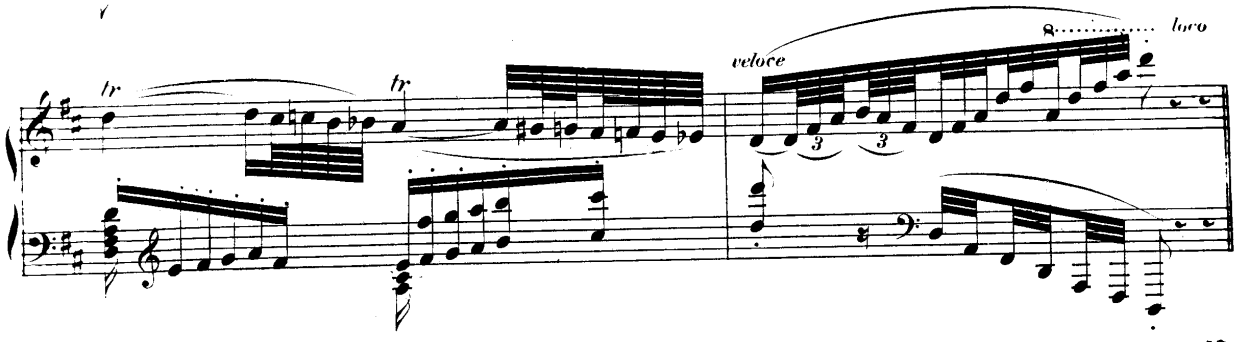


Example 18: Raff, Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan," mm. 69-77.

clear that this is how Raff chooses to combine thematic material in the second section. Whereas in the first section of the paraphrase Raff's combination of musical themes was lyrical and equanimous, here there is an altogether more insidious dynamic as Don Giovanni's material gradually overtakes and drowns out Zerlina's line. That Raff includes the instruction of “sempre accelerando poco a poco” only heightens the sense of unease. The effect is one of aggressive seduction, but it is a far cry from the amorous duet of “Là ci darem la mano,” which any listener could be forgiven for expecting, given the title of the section (“Zerlina e Don Giovanni”). Over the course of the twelve bars, Raff suggests a disturbing ballet of domination and submission, and illustrates the dangers of lust and infidelity.

It should come as no surprise that when Don Giovanni's cavatina “Deh vieni alla finestra” finally arrives in earnest on the thirty-fourth measure of the section, it, too, is steeped in chromaticism. Although the initial statement of the material is essentially faithful to Mozart's

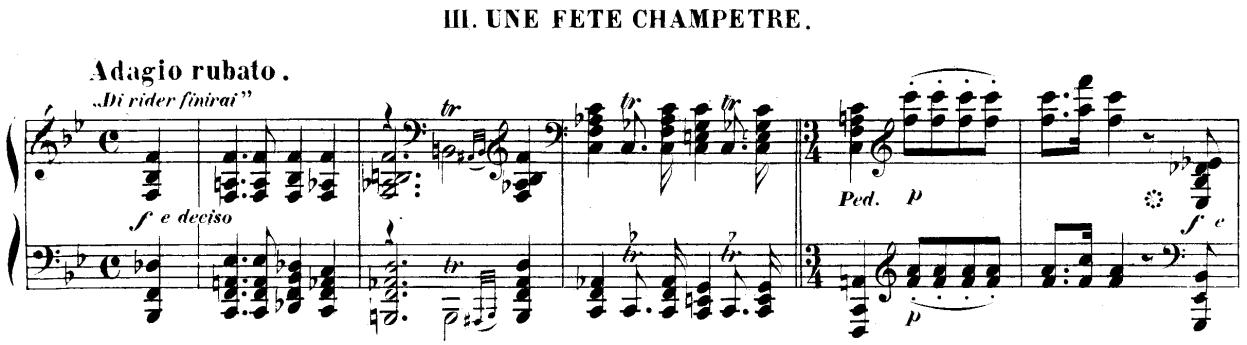
score, the subsequent variations are so chromatic as to lend an almost hallucinogenic, dreamlike quality to the music. The final cadential lines of the section are almost reminiscent of a hazy barcarolle, what with their ethereal trills and lazily descending chromatic slides (example 19). There is a careless, lackadaisical sensibility to this material, as though Raff wishes to highlight the transient nature of Don Giovanni's affections. Once again, Raff's setting of Mozart's material reveals a keen awareness of the textual themes surrounding the characters and plot of the opera.



Example 19: Raff, Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan," mm. 121-122.

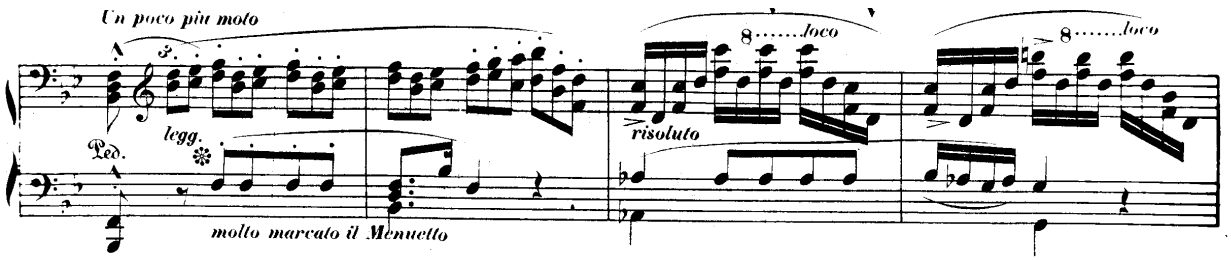
Although the first two sections of Raff's *Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan"* feature intriguing settings and combinations of themes, it is in the third section, entitled “Une Fete Champetre,” that the composer truly reveals his ability to delineate the underlying themes of the opera. As noted above, in the first two sections Raff contents himself with using and combining only two themes, but here his compositional appetite is not sated until he has introduced four separate themes from Mozart's opera. The section opens with the Commendatore's graveyard music, “Di rider finirai,” which is soon combined with the Minuetto from Act I. Through his setting of this material, Raff develops an altogether different relationship between the two themes. Whereas the first section features a sensuous intertwining of themes, and the second suggests a power struggle, in “Une Fete Champetre” Raff's setting creates a respectful dialogue between the Commendatore and the Minuet. The first phrase is given to the music of the statue,

and only once the line reaches its cadence does the Minuet appear (example 20). That this interplay (which continues in a similar fashion for twelve bars) is so seamless is a tribute to the composer's sensitivity, not least of all because the two themes are in different meters ("Di rider finirai" is in 4/4, while the Minuet is, of course, in 3/4). Although the two themes are separate, they co-exist peacefully, and in this way Raff illustrates the ideal of a respectful, lawful society.



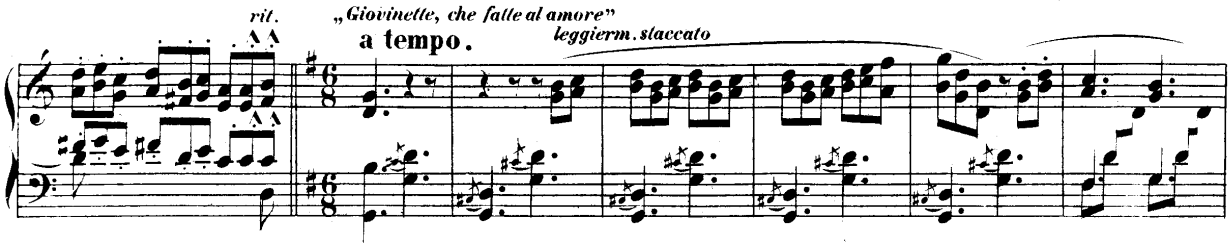
Example 20: Raff, Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan," mm. 123-127.

When the Commendatore's material has ended, Raff continues with the Minuet for sixteen measures. Although his setting is relatively simple, it is also exceptionally graceful, with gently cascading chordal figures in the right hand adorning the melody in the left. Of course, this peace leaves little room for dramatic progression, and soon enough Raff introduces a new theme, the duet and chorus "Giovinette, che fate all'amore." This music comes from Act I of *Don Giovanni* and is a sprightly dance in 6/8. It is diametrically opposed to the refined, courtly minuet, and when Raff ushers in the chorus of peasants, they all but trample over the dainty dance, edging out the minuet in a mere eight bars. Although Raff does combine the two dance themes, his striking use of a half-diminished seventh harmony on the downbeat of m. 158 sheds light on the uneasy relationship between the court and the peasants (example 21). The transition can be heard as the musical equivalent of a corporate hostile takeover, and the results are the



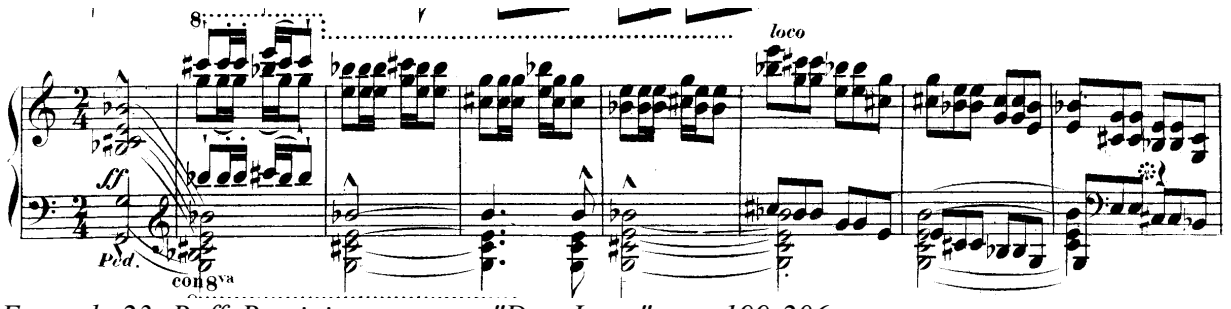
Example 21: Raff, Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan," mm. 156-159.

same: as so often happens in the business world, when new management takes control, the entire corporate environment changes. In the following measures, the music quickly modulates from B-flat major to G major, and the entire setting changes drastically to include a raucous accompaniment featuring open fifths adorned with tritone appogiaturas (example 22), a sound typical of folk-style dances in the music of Grieg, Bartok, and others.



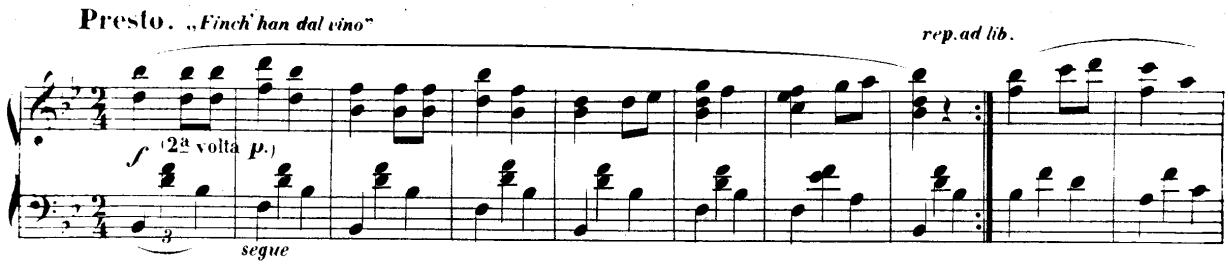
Example 22: Raff, Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan," mm. 172-178.

The folk dance music continues with increasing vigour, until it is finally interrupted by the music of the Commendatore, represented by a sudden diminished chord spanning an entire bar (example 23). It is a striking moment in the paraphrase, as Raff attempts to restore order to



Example 23: Raff, Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan," mm. 199-206.

the revelry. Yet the Commendatore's declaration is itself interrupted moments later by a strangely dissonant variation of the “Finch' han dal vino” motive. After a tense musical shouting match between these two themes, Don Giovanni finally wins, and launches into a relatively literal transcription of his famous aria. I write “relatively” because Raff takes a curious approach to his setting of “Finch' han dal vino.” While he retains the basic melody and harmonies of Mozart's original (i.e. he does not attempt to alter the melody by adding in the various virtuosic accretions that other composers so often use), he sets the simple 2/4 melody against slow triplets in the left hand. The result is essentially a four-against-three rhythm (example 24), which creates considerable rhythmic tension, and leads to a feeling of disorder and imbalance. The aria



Example 24: Raff, Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan," mm. 216-225.

becomes a drunken waltz in effect. As the paraphrase draws to a close, it becomes clear that Raff's settings of Mozart's themes highlights the uncivilized nature of the character, and further sets up the contrast between the forces of chaos and order in the opera.

By distilling the literary themes of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* into three distinct sections, Raff succeeds in presenting his interpretation of the opera's narrative. Although this interpretation is less subversive than that of other paraphrases, it nonetheless reveals a distinctive compositional thought process, and underlines the depth of Raff's insight into Mozart's score. Whereas other composers seek to impose their own narratives onto Mozart's work, Raff instead focuses on clarifying and synthesizing Mozart's own themes by grouping and combining the

musical material in terms of its literary themes. By doing this, Raff is offering a commentary on the literary themes of the opera, not just the musical themes. Through his choice and ordering of musical material, and through his combinations and settings of this material, he succeeds in delineating the literary themes of the opera — namely, the power of love, the danger of deceit and lust, and the conflict between the civilized and the barbarous.

IV: Ignace Leybach: Fantaisie Brilliante

Perhaps the most puzzling paraphrase in the present discussion is Ignace Leybach's *Fantaisie Brilliante on Mozart's 'Don Juan' Op. 81*. Leybach (1817-1891) was a famous pianist in his day, but today he is so obscure that Grove grants him a mere paragraph in its entry. Unsurprisingly, finding further information on Leybach and his work is difficult. Even the extant scores are suspect: while I was fortunate enough to find a scan of his *Don Giovanni* paraphrase on The Henselt Library website, I was initially puzzled by one incongruous page in the score, until I began to suspect that the page belonged to another piece. My suspicions were confirmed when I noticed that the page bore a different publisher's plate number from the other pages. To say the least, Leybach is a researcher's nightmare.

One of the few well-established facts about Leybach is that he was a student of Chopin and Kalkbrenner. Chopin's influence can be seen in the fact that Leybach favoured the genre of the nocturne in his own compositions. Perhaps Chopin's regard for Mozart also passed on, for just as Chopin wrote a set of variations for piano and orchestra on “Là ci darem la mano,” so too does Leybach open his paraphrase with the famous duet.

Yet, to say that Leybach begins the *Fantaisie Brilliante* with Don Giovanni's seduction of Zerlina is misleading, for the theme proper does not appear until m. 35. The first thirty-four

measures serve as an introduction, but therein lies the complication: what is the purpose of this lengthy introduction? Leybach does not include the introduction for the sake of mere virtuosity, unlike many paraphrases (e.g. Thalberg's *Fantaisie Op. 42*). The writing is, in fact, rather muted and delicate. The real curiosity, though, lies in the thematic material of the introduction. When I began my analysis of this obscure paraphrase, I spent several hours scanning through the score of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, trying to identify the source of Leybach's motives and style, not just in the introduction, but throughout the paraphrase. Although some themes — namely "Là ci darem la mano," "Batti, batti, o bel Masetto," and "Deh vieni alla finestra" — were instantly identifiable, others were not. Throughout the work, Leybach employs extensive passages featuring distinctive motives and themes which are not to be found in *Don Giovanni*.[53] Moreover, these passages are developed enough that their purpose is clearly thematic, rather than purely functional (i.e. they do not exist merely as transitional or modulatory material, etc.). This is in sharp contrast to the paraphrases of other composers, in which any original material is typically more functional in nature (e.g. the bridges in Wallace's arrangement).

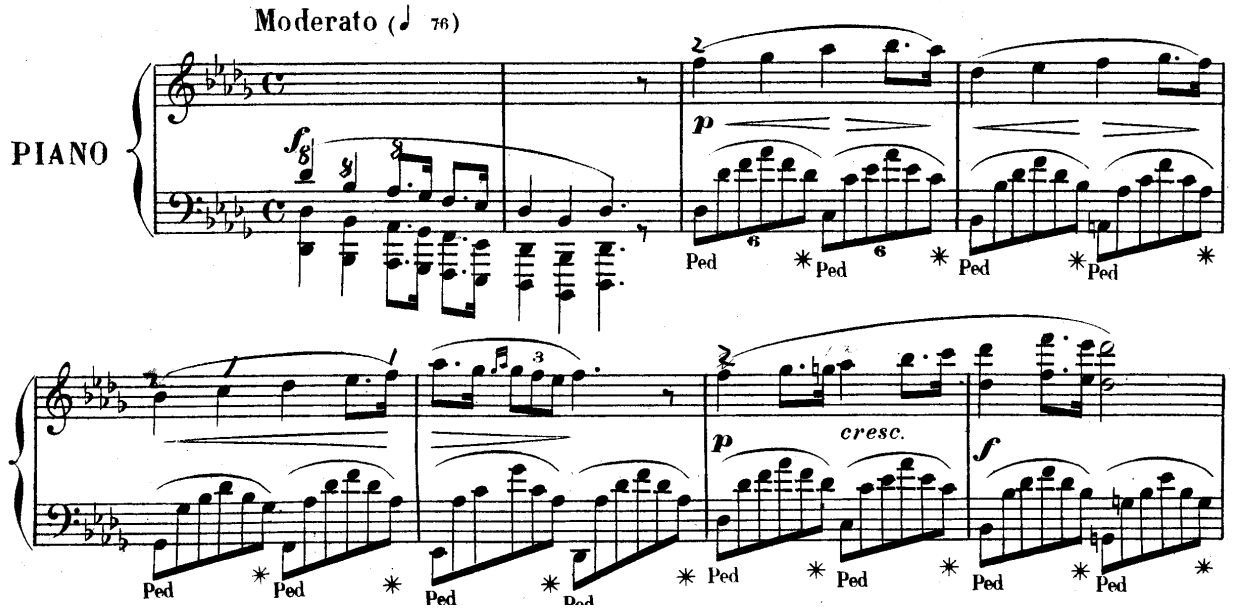
Having ascertained that the material in question did not originate in *Don Giovanni*, I broadened my search. Unfortunately, thematic catalogues were of little use, since Leybach may have transposed the material (all three of the Mozart themes used were transposed), and because there were simply too many possible works from which Leybach might have taken the themes. The material did not seem to derive from any of Mozart's other major operas, either.[54] I began to wonder if Leybach had perhaps borrowed the themes and motives from his own original works, and so I examined the few available scores of his compositions.

This proved to be the key to the puzzle. While studying the scores of several of Leybach's

53 My thanks to Dr. Dillon Parmer for taking the time to review the score, and confirming my findings.
54 Again, my gratitude goes to Dr. Dillon Parmer for sharing his knowledge of this repertoire.

works, notably his numerous nocturnes and various character pieces, I was immediately struck by the strong stylistic similarities present throughout his oeuvre. Many of his works are written in a compound meter, and feature a lyrical melody in the right hand, suspended above an arpeggiated harmonic accompaniment pattern. That is to say, they are typical of the genre of the nocturne, as exemplified by the works of Field and Chopin. All of these stylistic hallmarks are readily found in Leybach's *Fantaisie Brilliante*, both in the original material and in the settings of Mozart's themes.

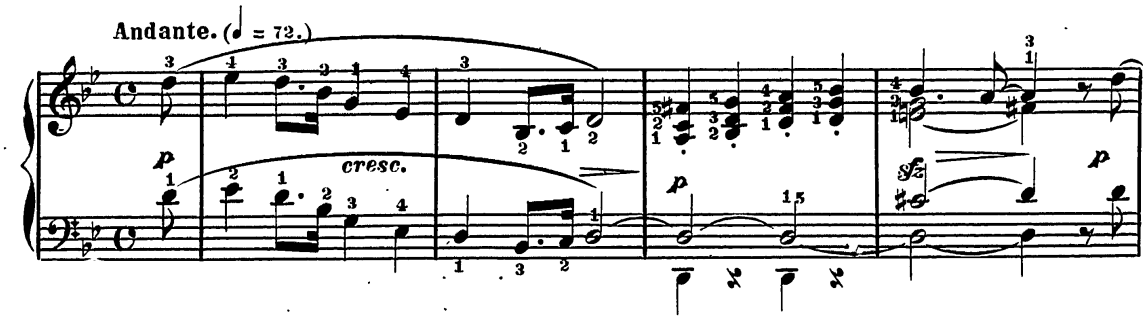
Having ascertained that the first section of the *Fantaisie Brilliante* features original material (i.e. as opposed to themes taken from Mozart's opera), it is worth considering the effect of this section on the piece as a whole. Leybach opens the paraphrase with a bold descending line in octaves (example 25). While it may seem to be an unremarkable gesture, it is notable in that it



Example 25: Leybach, Fantaisie Brilliante, mm. 1-8.

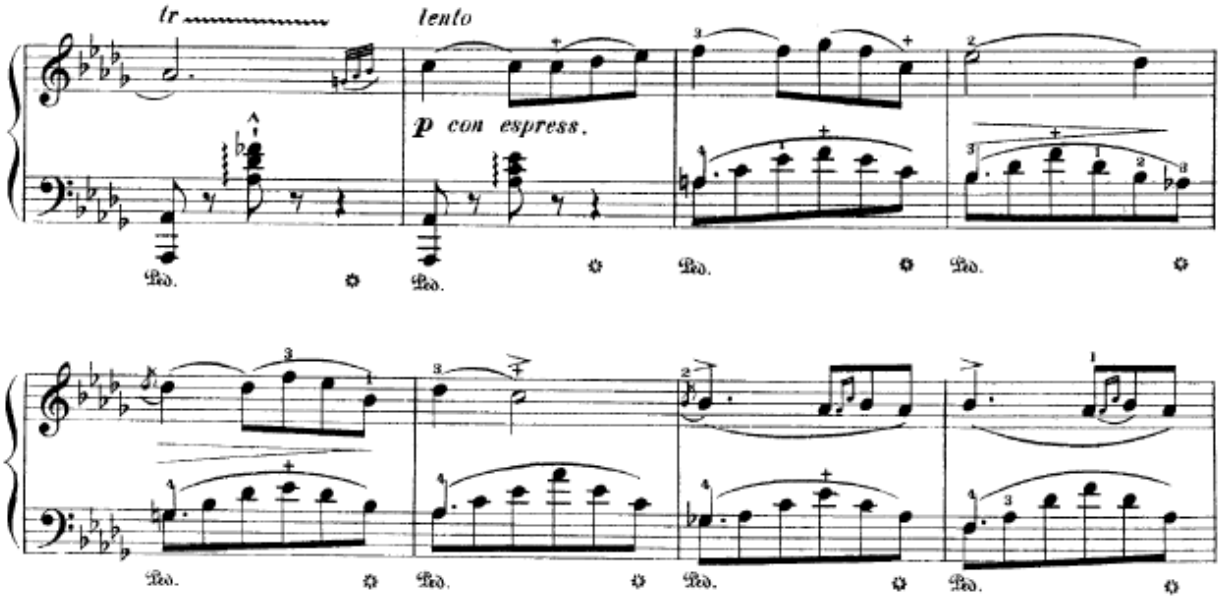
is evidently typical of Leybach's style: it is strikingly similar in both melodic contour and rhythmic content to the opening phrase of Leybach's character piece *Meditation* (example

26). Already we can see that Leybach is including his own voice in his rendition of Mozart's opera. After this introductory phrase, the *Fantaisie Brilliante* relaxes into a more lyrical theme,



Example 26: Leybach, Meditation, mm. 1-4.

featuring a *bel canto*-style melody strung over an arpeggiated harmonic pattern (see example 25, above). Again, it is easy to find comparable writing in Leybach's other compositions. Consider, for example, the style of his *Deuxième Nocturne*, which features a similar melody (replete with grace-note ornaments) and accompaniment scheme (example 27).



Example 27: Leybach, Deuxième Nocturne, mm. 7-14.

The first section of Leybach's paraphrase continues in a similar fashion for over thirty bars, and though it is intriguing to identify the numerous stylistic features it shares with his other compositions, it is hardly necessary for the purposes of this discussion. The point is simply that in the extended introductory section of the *Fantaisie Brilliante*, Leybach altogether avoids using any of Mozart's themes, preferring instead to compose in a style reminiscent of many of his own nocturnes and character pieces. The only other point of note is that while Leybach modulates to a new key area at the end of the section, the following section — the setting of "Là ci darem la mano" — is not in its original key. Rather, Leybach sets the duet in the key of A-flat major (as compared to Mozart's A major). On the surface, it seems like an insignificant compositional decision. However, when considered in the context of the paraphrase as a whole, the issue becomes more complicated, since Leybach also transposes both of the other themes from *Don Giovanni*: "Batti, Batti, batti, o bel Masetto," moves from F major to D-flat major, and "Deh vieni alla finestra"shifts from a sunny D major tonality to a muted D-flat major. There is no immediately apparent reason for Leybach to transpose any one — let alone all three — of these themes. From a purely technical standpoint, the material is not easier to play in the new keys, as evidenced by the fact that other paraphrases feature the themes in their original keys. I would suggest, then, that Leybach chose to transpose Mozart's themes for a musical reason.

Unfortunately, such a suggestion only leads to more questions: assuming that Leybach did have a musical motivation for transposing this material, what was this motivation, and what does it signify in terms of the paraphrase's narrative? The musicological practice of linking extra-musical meaning to key choice is always fraught with potential for error and misinterpretation. Even in the cases of composers as prolific and well-documented as Beethoven and Schubert, scholars disagree over the significance of specific key choices, assuming they are even willing to

entertain the possibility of tonality having a relationship to meaning. Considering Leybach's comparative obscurity, and the dearth of scholarship on his life and work, it is perhaps foolish to attempt to read his key choices as signifiers of meaning. Nonetheless, I believe that it is worth considering this compositional choice in terms of its intertextual relationship to Leybach's other works, specifically his aforementioned nocturnes. As noted earlier, it is difficult to locate scores of Leybach's music, and I was only able to find copies of five of Leybach's six nocturnes. However, it is worth noting that of these five nocturnes, four are written in keys with several flats.[55] Based on this, it is possible that Leybach associated keys with multiple flats with a muted, nocturnal atmosphere. By transposing Mozart's themes to these keys, then, Leybach could be attempting to change the perceived reception of their overall impact.

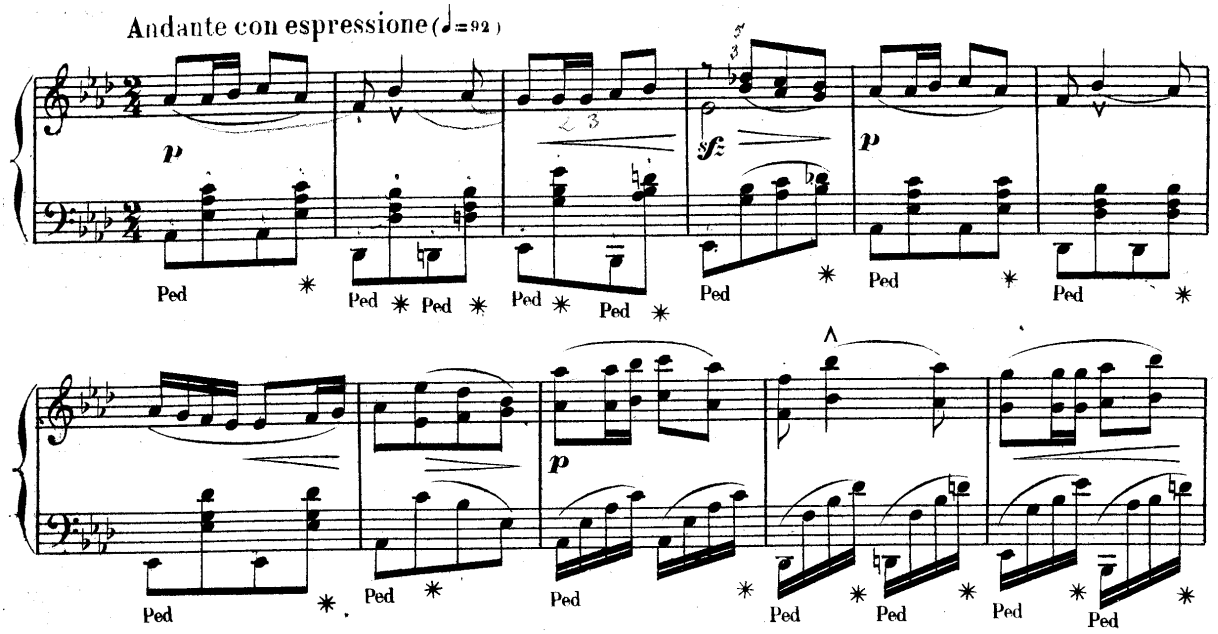
Matters of key choice aside, Leybach's choice of themes certainly influences the overall impact of the *Fantaisie Brilliante*. It is worthwhile considering his selections in comparison to those of other composers in their *Don Giovanni* paraphrases (see Appendix). What is most notable is that Leybach alone uses “Batti Batti, o bel Masetto,” and also that he is one of the few composers who does not include “Finch' han dal vino.” By “substituting” Zerlina's mellifluous aria for Don Giovanni's rambunctious song, Leybach shows that he is prioritizing a more restrained, lyrical aesthetic in his paraphrase. Also notably absent from Leybach's arrangement is the Commendatore's “Di rider finirai,” a theme remarkable for its dramatic intensity. By omitting these themes from his paraphrase, Leybach is eschewing virtuosity and drama in favour of a more relaxed, *cantabile* sensibility. Although the paraphrase presents the pianist with many challenges, it generally avoids the pitfall of featuring virtuosity for the sake of virtuosity; it is engaging without being obnoxiously ostentatious.

55 The Nocturne No. 1, Op. 3, is in A-flat major; the Nocturne No. 2, Op. 4 is in D-flat major, the Nocturne No. 5, Op. 52, is in A-flat major; the Nocturne No. 6, Op. 91 is in B-flat major.

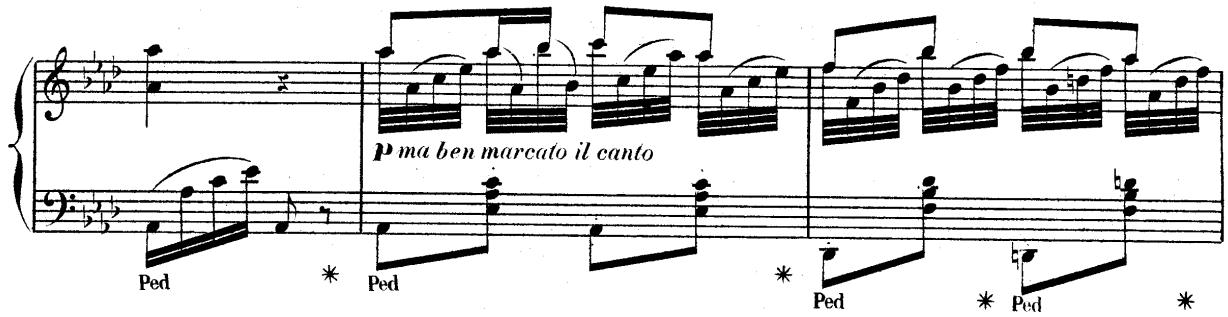
It is also worth pausing to consider the textual implications of Leybach's thematic selection. The three themes from *Don Giovanni* present in this paraphrase share a common feature: they all center on the theme of persuasion. In “Là ci darem la mano,” Don Giovanni attempts to persuade Zerlina to engage in carnal pleasures, and in “Batti, batti, o bel Masetto,” Zerlina in turn attempts to convince her fiancé that she has not done so. In “Deh vieni alla finestra,” Don Giovanni is once again on the prowl, this time attempting to persuade a young woman to come to her window so that he might begin his arts of seduction. So strong is the pull of this narrative theme that one wonders if Leybach was acquainted with the novels of Jane Austen.

The overall persuasiveness of the paraphrase, however, is not due merely to Leybach's thematic choice, but rather is largely a result of his setting techniques. Take, for instance, his setting of “Là ci darem la mano.” Like many composers, Leybach makes an effort to distinguish the voices of Don Giovanni and Zerlina by changing the register of the melody. More than that, however, he also differentiates their voices by altering the underlying accompaniment patterns. While Don Giovanni's line is supported by a somewhat stodgy bass-chord accompaniment (example 28), Zerlina's response is set against a smooth broken chord pattern. While this second accompaniment pattern is hardly inventive, it is exceptionally graceful, and it lends the theme a sense of delicacy and poise that is lacking not only in most other treatments of the theme, but also in Mozart's original version.

This sense of grace can also be seen in Leybach's first variation on the “Là ci darem la mano” theme. At measure 72, he begins a statement of the theme in which the melody (in the right hand) is augmented by running thirty-second notes outlining the harmonic structure of the phrase (example 29). Once again, it must be admitted that this is not an especially inventive (let



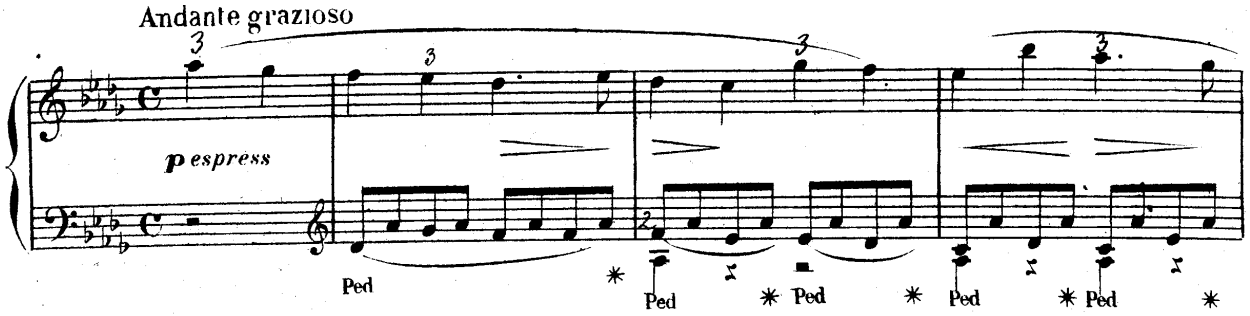
Example 28: Leybach, Fantaisie Brilliante, mm. 35-45.



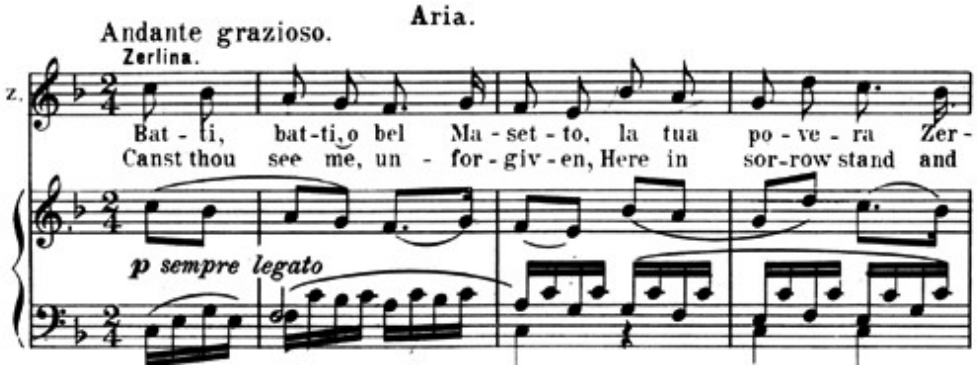
Example 29: Leybach, Fantaisie Brilliante, mm. 71-73.

alone virtuosic) setting. However, this simplicity is precisely what makes this passage remarkable. Whereas other composers are quick to use "Là ci darem la mano" as a basis for extravagant virtuoso gestures, Leybach resists any such temptation, preferring instead to highlight the subtle nuances of Mozart's melody. He even attempts to minimize by the distraction of the running thirty-second notes by marking the passage "*p* ma ben marcato il canto." Once again, he is demonstrating his commitment to infusing Mozart's narrative with an atmosphere of grace, elegance, and calm.

Leybach's dusky setting of Mozart's music does not end with his treatment of "Là ci darem la mano." In the next theme included in the *Fantaisie Brilliante*, "Batti Batti, o bel Masetto," Leybach again chooses grace and directness of expression over virtuosic tumult. Consider, for example, his setting of the very first line of the aria. He sets both the melody and the accompaniment in a high, airy register (example 30), and it is notable that the accompaniment pattern features a slower surface rhythm than its counterpart in Mozart's opera (example 31). This is not to say, though, that the effect of Leybach's arrangement is un-Mozartean; on the contrary, the Alberti pattern is immediately reminiscent of works such as the famous piano sonata in C major, K. 545. What is even more interesting is Leybach's continuation



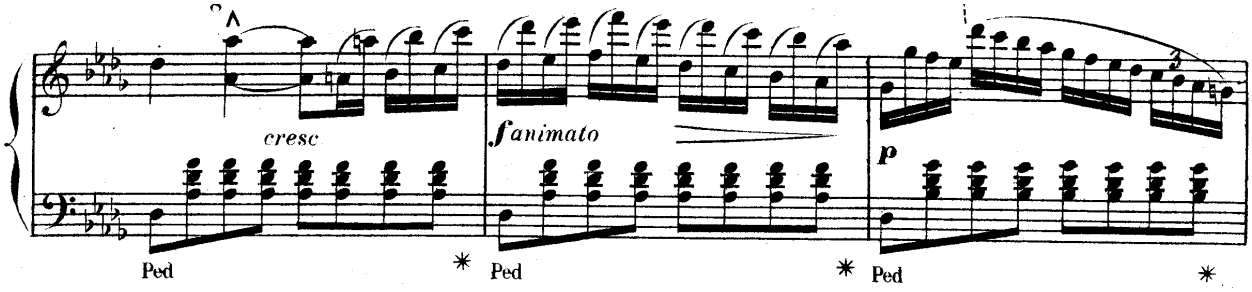
Example 30: Leybach, Fantaisie Brilliante, mm. 110-113.



Example 31: Mozart, Don Giovanni, Act 1, "Batti, batti, o bel Masetto," mm. 1-3.

of Zerlina's pleading aria. Rather than continue to use Mozart's line, Leybach introduces his own

original material in a fourteen measure passage that serves as a transition. Yet to label this passage as a mere transition is to do it a disservice, for it is remarkably lyrical and engaging. Although it features a broken octave pattern in the right hand, the resulting flurry of notes does not obscure the graceful contour of the melody (example 32). The melody itself is especially

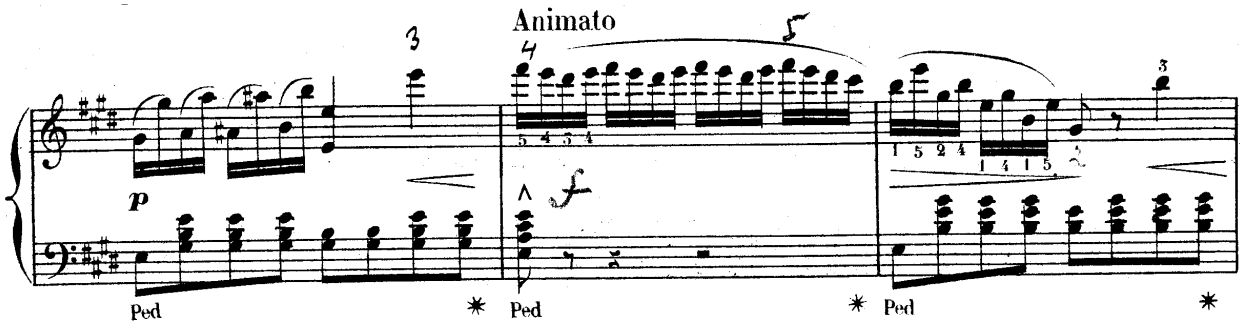


Example 32: Leybach, Fantaisie Brilliante, mm. 130-132.

notable for the beauty of its line — there are very few leaps, yet it flows smoothly and avoids becoming stagnant. Once again, Leybach has gone to great effort to convince the listener of his romantic, nocturnal interpretation of Mozart's narrative.

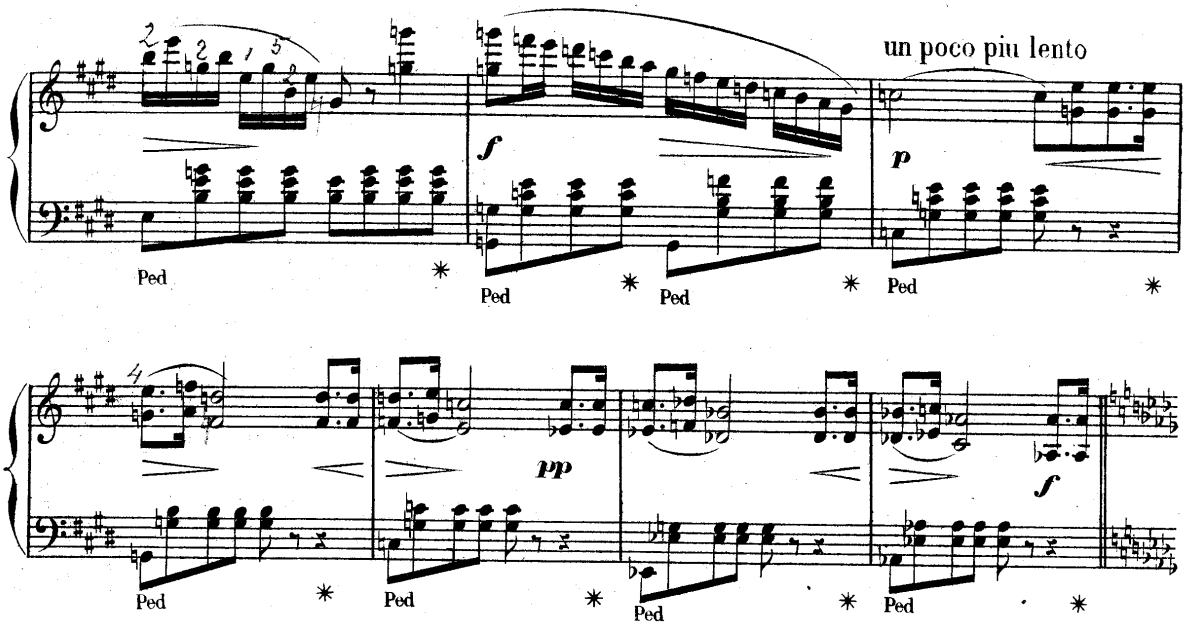
While the aforementioned transition passage leads into a new section, it does not lead directly to another of Mozart's themes. Rather, it leads to another extended passage featuring original material. This section is perhaps the most puzzling in the paraphrase, for it largely undermines the "nocturnal" setting that Leybach has thus far established. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that this section is also the only part of the piece notated in a key featuring sharps (E major). It is as though Leybach is using the shift in tonality to underline a shift in character. Yet while this section features a quicker tempo and less inherently "vocal" lines (i.e. the writing is more suitable for the keyboard than for the voice), Leybach still makes a point of instructing the pianist to play "*grazioso*" in measure 146. Certain figurations, such as those found at the *animato* marking, are reminiscent of the third movement of Mozart's A-Major Piano

Sonata K. 311 (better known as the "Rondo alla Turca"), but it would be a stretch to consider this an example of quotation (example 33). A closer link can be made to another of Leybach's works,

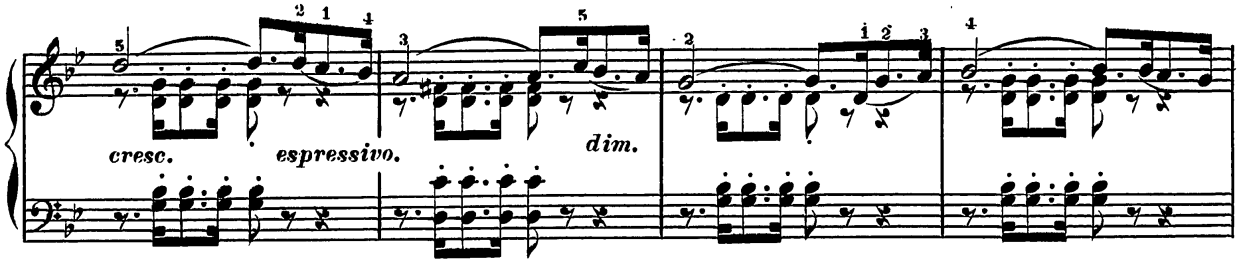


Example 33: Leybach, Fantaisie Brilliante, mm. 153-155.

however. After the *animato* section spins out its energy, Leybach settles into a passage marked *un poco piu lento* (example 34), and the rhythmic design of this material is similar to a passage found in his aforementioned *Meditation* (example 35). Once again, Leybach is shifting back into a meditative mode, in preparation for the final theme, "Deh vieni alla finestra."



Example 34: Leybach, Fantaisie Brilliante, mm. 159-165.

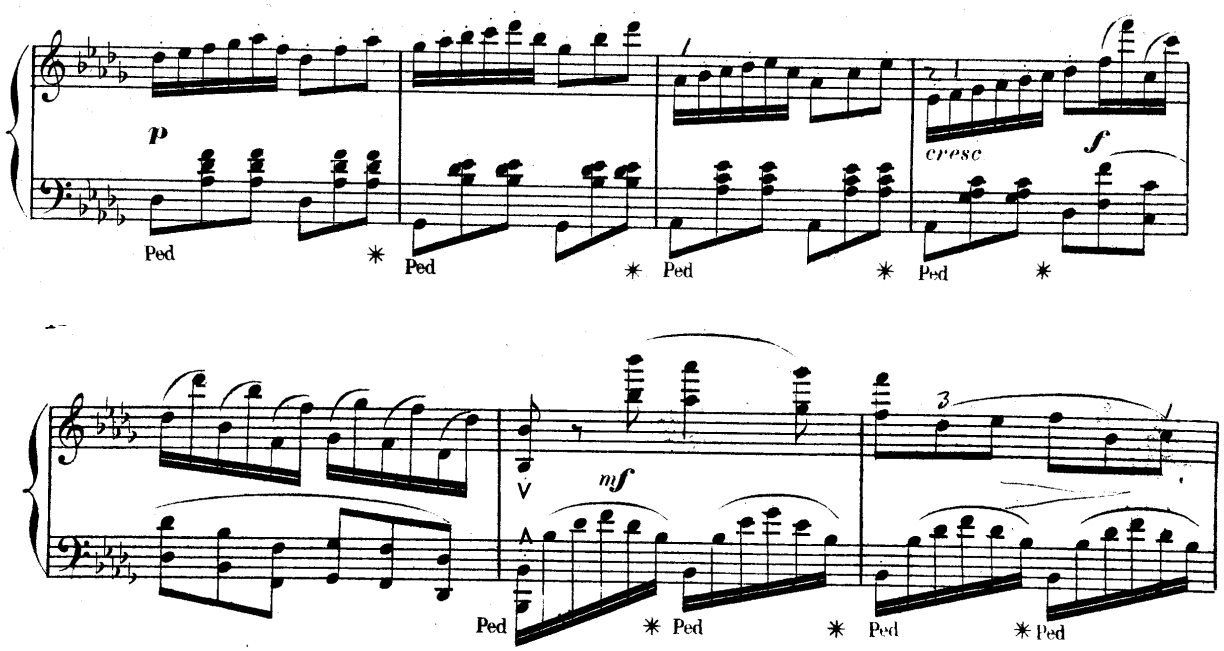


Example 35: Leybach, Meditation, mm. 10-13.

Before discussing Leybach's treatment of "Deh vieni alla finestra," however, it is worth ascertaining the purpose of this seemingly incongruous transition passage. I believe it functions to signify the passage of time and dramatic action within the narrative arch of the opera. As noted in the preceding discussions of other paraphrases, the composer's ordering of the selected themes can reveal a great deal about their understanding of the opera's narrative, and this piece is no exception. While Leybach's positioning of themes may at first seem unremarkable — i.e. he keeps them in their original order, as per the opera — it is interesting that he buffers each theme with an original passage, as if to separate it from the other material. Considering this, it suddenly becomes clear why Leybach goes to such lengths to include extended original passages that transcend their surface functions as transitions or introductions. He is attempting to maintain the original proportions — and by extension, the original pacing — of the opera and its narrative. For example, he begins the paraphrase with an extended thirty-four measure introduction, and this sets the scene for Mozart's duettino (which is situated near the middle of Act I in the opera). The original transition between "Là ci darem la mano" and "Batti, batti, o bel Masetto," by contrast, is only twelve bars long, and this is appropriate given that the dramatic distance traveled between the two themes in Mozart's opera is considerably shorter. (To put it another way, whereas a great deal of expository and dramatic action occurs before "Là ci darem la

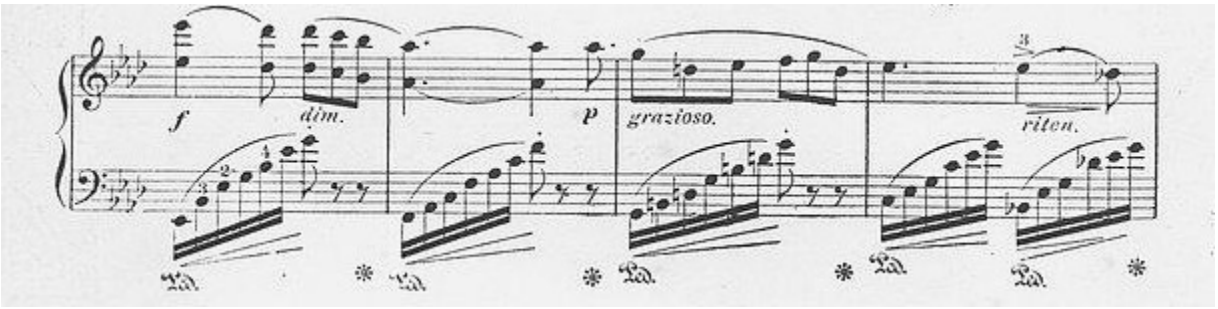
mano," less occurs in the space between the duet and Zerlina's aria.) It makes sense, then, that this third, seemingly incongruous, original transition should be of a medium length (twenty-five bars, to be exact). While there is less expository action than occurs before "Là ci darem la mano," there is also a break between the first and second acts of the opera, and this is reflected in the length of the transition. Moreover, Leybach's apparent change in tone and style (not to mention tonality) in this transition can also be seen to reflect the progression of the narrative (not to mention the break in tension due to the intermission) that takes place between the first act's "Batti, batti, o bel Masetto" and the second act's "Deh vieni alla finestra."

Leybach's setting of the latter aria proves to be the most intriguing facet of this paraphrase. He begins his treatment of Mozart's theme in much the same way as other composers, with the right hand playing the mandolin-like figurations against the left hand's string pizzicati. However, at the end of the eighth measure, Leybach suddenly deviates from Mozart's material, introducing entirely new material instead of integrating Don Giovanni's vocal line into the texture (example 36). The added material is twenty-six measures long, and despite the fact



Example 36: Leybach, Fantaisie Brilliante, mm. 173-179.

that it leads back to another section of "Deh vieni alla finestra," it can be seen to constitute an entirely new theme. Once again, the style of this new theme is strikingly similar to that of Leybach's nocturnes. Compare, for example, elements such as the theme's sighing melodic line and arpeggiated harmonies to those found in the composer's *Fifth Nocturne* (example 37). Yet again Leybach is situating his paraphrase in a muted, nocturnal realm.



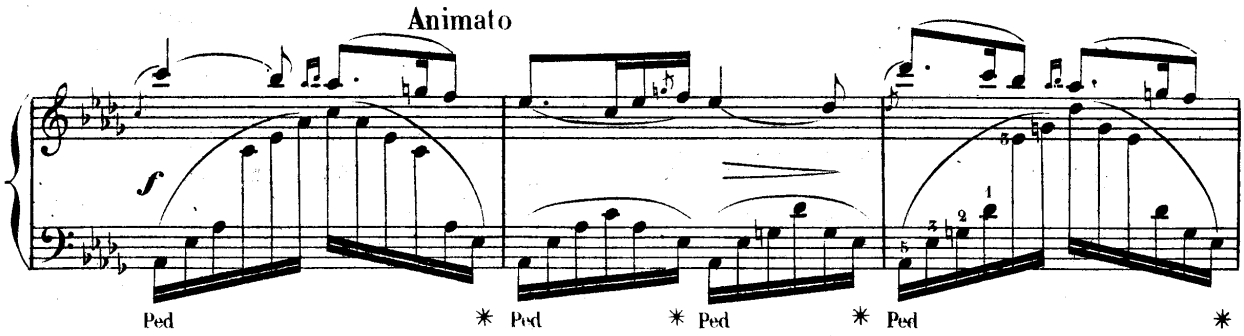
Example 37: Leybach, Fifth Nocturne, mm. 17-20.

It is worth pausing to consider the effect of this odd interjection. This B-flat minor theme is fascinating not because it breaks from Mozart's material, but rather because it fundamentally changes the listener's perception of the character of Don Giovanni. As I will discuss in detail later in this chapter, some critics view Don Giovanni as a hero precisely because the character remains utterly unrepentant.[56] It would seem that Mozart interprets the character in the same way, for nowhere in the opera does Don Giovanni express emotions such as remorse, sadness, or melancholy. Above all, he is never vulnerable. Yet it is precisely such emotions that Leybach ascribes to Don Giovanni through this moody interjection into "Deh vieni alla finestra." In this way, Leybach paints Don Giovanni as a prototypical romantic, rather than simply as a incorrigible rake.

Leybach's re-imagining of Don Giovanni does not end with the B-flat minor interjection, however. As noted above, this section leads back to "Deh vieni alla finestra," with a sixteen

56 Schmitt, *Franz Liszt*, 52.

measure setting of Don Giovanni's vocal line, followed by an eight measure reprise of the mandolin pattern. This material is all treated in a straightforward manner, with few changes made to Mozart's original. At the end of this section, however, Leybach veers away from the source material for a second time. He introduces another original theme, once again in a style characteristic of a nocturne (example 38). Unlike the previous interjection, however, this theme

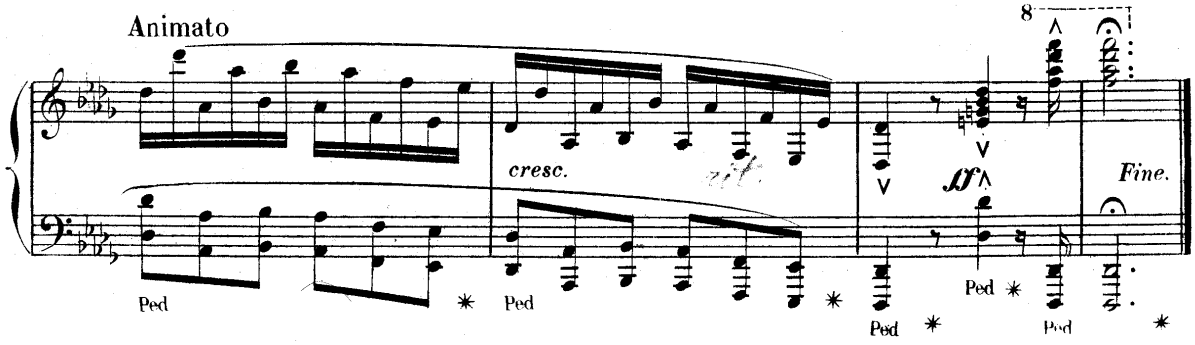


Example 38: Leybach, Fantaisie Brilliante, mm. 228-230.

is set in the relative major key of D-flat. Its disposition is also altogether more lighthearted, if not quite cheerful. When considered as a reflection of Don Giovanni's persona, this D-flat major section reveals a gently fanciful aspect of the character, which stands in sharp contrast to the cocky, vainglorious rogue of Mozart's opera. Once again, Leybach is painting Don Giovanni as a hopeless romantic, rather than as a philandering menace.

Following this D-flat major interjection, Leybach returns to the mandolin strains of “Deh vieni alla finestra” one final time. Although this return is brief, lasting a mere eight bars, it is significant, since it neatly bookends the section as a whole, and ensures that the listener hears the second interjection as part of Don Giovanni's serenade. Leybach closes the paraphrase with a brief four measure phrase that serves as a sort of codetta. The phrase could be described as heroic in character, and it is most interesting from a harmonic standpoint. It begins with a grandiose gesture in descending octaves outlining an anhemitonic pentatonic scale, before landing on an

unexpected diminish seventh chord (example 39). This chord stands out for its sheer dissonance,



Example 39: Leybach, Fantaisie Brilliante, mm. 252-255.

and its effect can only be described as bittersweet. It is as though Leybach is suggesting that Don Giovanni, for all his unrepentant airs, harbours a mote of regret in his lost soul. Although the final two chords are firmly triumphant, a sense of wistfulness pervades this final codetta, reminding the listener that this paraphrase has offered a decidedly different interpretation of *Don Giovanni*.

Through its selection of themes, choice of key areas, inclusion of extensive original material, and overall romantic setting, Leybach's *Fantasie Brilliante* stands out as the most unusual paraphrase written on themes from *Don Giovanni*. That Leybach felt it appropriate to clothe Mozart's themes in a characteristically nocturnal garb is fascinating not only because it effectively stamps Leybach's seal on Mozart's material, but also because it presents a unique reading of the opera. By choosing only lyrical, romantic material from Don Giovanni, and by further setting this material in a characteristically muted, nocturne-like manner, Leybach offers a fresh vision of the opera, a vision that focuses on the gentle and genteel aspects of the work, rather than on the harsher themes of lust, violence, and damnation. It is as though Leybach, in true Romantic fashion, is only willing to look at the soft-edged, sentimental sides of life.

Whether we as listeners are prone to agree with such an outlook is largely irrelevant; what matters is that the composer is wholly committed to presenting an alternative version of Mozart's narrative.

V: Sigismund Thalberg: Fantaisie Op. 42

Among the paraphrases considered within this thesis, Thalberg's *Fantaisie sur la Sérénade et le Menuet de l'Opera: Don Juan de Mozart Op. 42* is undoubtedly the best-known after Liszt's *Reminiscences*. This notoriety, however, is due more to the stature of the composer than to the quality of the work itself. Sigismund Thalberg (1812-1871) is remembered today as the only pianist to ever seriously rival Franz Liszt. During the heyday of the Romantic piano virtuoso, the two pianists vied for public recognition as the greatest pianist in the world, and the annals of history provide us with many captivating stories of the two trading backhanded compliments and competing for the attention of Parisian audiences. However, as the saying goes, the victor writes the history books, and today Thalberg appears most often in the footnotes of biographies of his contemporaries. Indeed, the state of Thalberg scholarship was so lean in the middle of the twentieth century that it prompted Charles Suttoni to write in 1973 that "a proper 'Life and Works' is sorely needed because, with time, writers have apparently settled on three points about [Thalberg's] career which tend to deprecate him; Chopin's antipathy toward him, his rivalry toward Liszt, and the nickname of 'Old Arpeggio.'"[57]

Regarding "Chopin's antipathy," Suttoni is referring to an amusingly bitter comment in a letter that not only disparages Thalberg's playing, but also whines about his popularity with the fairer sex and his ostentatious fashion sense.[58] As for the other two points, both can be neatly

57 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 151.

58 Chopin, Quoted in Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 151: "Thalberg plays famously, but he is not my man; he is

summed up in an illuminating quotation from Liszt's review of Thalberg's *Grand Fantasy in B minor, Op. 22* in an 1836 *Gazette musicale*:

> Not only is it one of the most pretentiously empty and mediocre works we know, but again it is a supremely monotonous thing and therefore supremely boring. Arpeggios, everywhere arpeggios and nothing but arpeggios!...With all the best will in the world, I can find nothing original or charming in all 21 pages of Opus 22. Impotence and monotony, that is all we find in the final analysis in the publications of Monsieur Thalberg.[59]

Considering this vicious diatribe, one can only imagine what Liszt would have thought of Suttoni's assertion that "Liszt and Thalberg were the Dioscuri representing the opera fantasy in its most highly developed form."[60] If his obscure references to classical mythology are ignored, Suttoni's point is worthy of careful consideration. Not only was Thalberg prodigiously prolific within the genre of the paraphrase, composing literally dozens of fantasies on operatic themes, but he was also one of the great innovators of the keyboard. Chambers argues that "the fundamental element of the Thalberg paraphrase comes from the singing style known as *bel canto*. Thalberg masterfully transfers the extensive and sustained melodic lines characteristic of bel canto singing to the piano keyboard."[61] Thalberg achieved these effects through a variety of innovative techniques, most famously a technical feint that can be described as a "three-hand" or "thumb-melody" technique. Grove informs us that

> Thalberg's basic compositional method [of this technique] was relatively simple, consisting of placing the melody in the centre of the keyboard first in one hand, then in the other (the thumbs and the sustaining pedal used in particular to prolong the sound), and ornamenting it with florid counterpoint and chords above and below.[62]

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younger than I, popular with the ladies, writes Pot-pourris on themes from *Masaniello*, produces piano with the pedal instead of with the hand, takes tenths as easily as I do octaves and wears diamond stud shirts. Moscheles does not impress him so it's not surprising that he liked only the tuttis of my concertos. He too writes concertos."

59 Liszt, quoted in E. Keith Chambers, *Sigismund Thalberg: The three-hand method and piano techniques of his operatic paraphrases* (Diss. University of Houston, 2004), 6.

60 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 209.

61 Chambers, *Sigismund Thalberg*, 11.

62 *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. "Thalberg, Sigismund" (by Robert Wangermée), http://www.grovemusic.com/ (accessed September 2, 2011).

Even if this technique was "relatively simple," it was also remarkably effective, and Thalberg mesmerized audiences across Europe with his pianistic feints. It is worth noting, though, that even Thalberg's technical innovations have not aged well, with scholars such as Charles Rosen uncharitably labeling them as "virtuoso hackwork."[63]

It is evident from the preceding discussion that Thalberg and his music have been the site of considerable conflicts of opinion. Regardless of his status today, however, it seems clear that during his lifetime at least, Thalberg was not merely another esteemed pianist, but rather one of the leading lights of his age. How is it, then, that Liszt has so completely eclipsed his rival over the course of the past century? I believe the answer can be found in the work at hand, Thalberg's *Fantaisie sur la Sérénade et le Menuet de l'Opera: Don Juan de Mozart Op. 42*.[64] While the *Fantaisie Op. 42* is a competent paraphrase, when compared to many of the other paraphrases examined in this study, its flaws and failings quickly become evident.

Yet perhaps it is unfair to even class this work as a true paraphrase. As noted in the first chapter, the terminology surrounding the genre is problematic, and publishers have often been less than conscientious in their choices of titles for works such as the one at hand. Although *Fantaisie Op. 42* would seem to be (at least on the basis of its title) a free, organic work, it in fact bears resemblance to a theme and variations form. After a Brobdingnagian introduction lasting 172 measures, Thalberg finally introduces a theme from *Don Giovanni*, specifically "Deh vieni alla finestra." He proceeds to offer three distinct variations on this theme, before revealing the Act. 1 Minuet, which he further varies and subjects to his notorious thumb-melody treatment.

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63 Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 394.

64 In order to prevent confusion, it is important to note at this juncture that Thalberg also wrote an earlier fantasy on themes from *Don Giovanni*, the *Grande Fantaisie et variations sur deux motifs de l'opera Don Juan de Mozart, Op. 14*. This youthful work displays many of the same problems present in the *Fantaisie Op. 42*, and is less relevant to the issues at hand in this study. Moreover, at least two different published versions of the *Op. 42* paraphrase exist, with significant differences between them. In this discussion, following Suttoni's example, I will be referring to the edition published by E. Troupenas in Paris (c. 1842), rather than the shorter edition published by Steingräber in Leipzig (c. 1900).

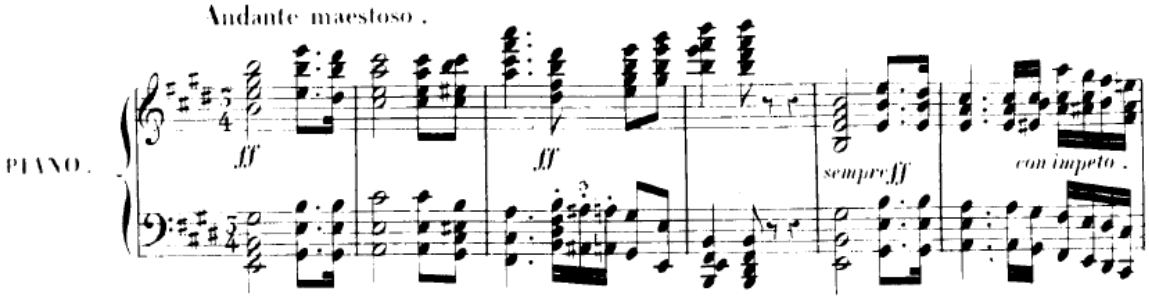
While it would be hard to imagine a listener who would not be astonished by the sheer range of pianistic effects displayed over the course of these variations, it is equally difficult to conceive of a listener perceiving any sort of connected narrative throughout the piece.

On the other hand, of course, one could also argue that the *Fantaisie Op. 42* fails to fulfill the formal terms of a theme and variations. After all, Thalberg does not explicity mark variations, uses two themes (i.e. instead of one), and includes an introduction far beyond the normal length for such a work. In the end, such debates about the formal categorization of the *Fantaisie Op. 42* are perhaps moot. What matters for the purposes of the present discussion is how the work presents a narrative, or an interpretation of Mozart's narrative. In this regard, it is perhaps best viewed as the perfect foil to Raff's treatment of Mozart's themes. Whereas Raff shows both respect and restraint in his rendition of Mozart's work, Thalberg rides roughshod over the master's music. Indeed, Thalberg's *Fantaisie Op. 42* was one of the most difficult works to approach in the context of this thesis, because it shows little insight into the narrative of the original opera. Ironically, though, it is precisely this lack of insight that makes Thalberg's work worth studying in this discussion. Because Thalberg so completely disregards the narrative of Mozart's work, he reveals more clearly his own agenda.

In fairness, however, perhaps I am revealing my own agenda as a writer by so quickly dismissing Thalberg's work, and so it is worth stepping back and considering the piece in more detail. In this regard, Suttoni's analysis is invaluable, if at times contentious. Although Suttoni's dissertation is largely unconcerned with issues of narrative, it employs many of the same analytical methods as this thesis, and so his examination of the *Fantaisie Op. 42* serves as a useful starting point for a discussion of the piece's narrativity.

Although Suttoni holds Thalberg's *Fantaisie Op. 42* in higher regard than I, he does admit

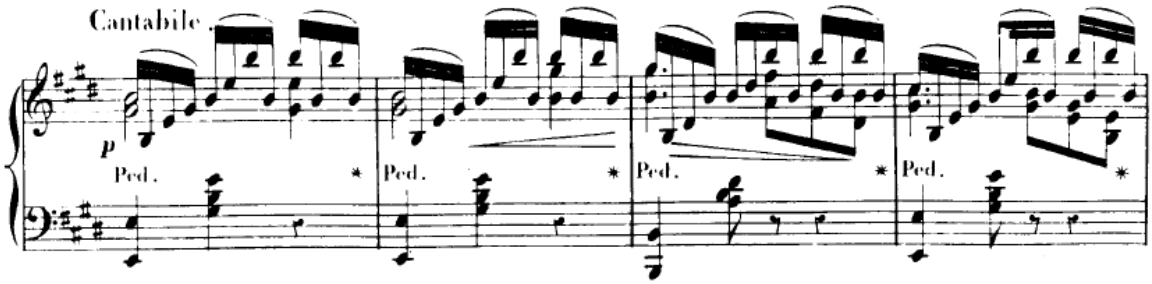
from the outset that it is hardly a purist's version of *Don Giovanni*. He writes that "it is a truism that every age reinterprets a work of art in its own image, and Thalberg's *Don Juan* is no exception.… It is Mozart seen through a Romantic imagination."[65] Evidence of this "Romantic imagination" can be seen from the first bars of the paraphrase. Thalberg draws the curtains with what Suttoni describes as a "sharp call to order,"[66] a hardy chordal passage in E major (example 40).[67] Although this passage clearly belongs to Thalberg, not Mozart, Suttoni notices that the



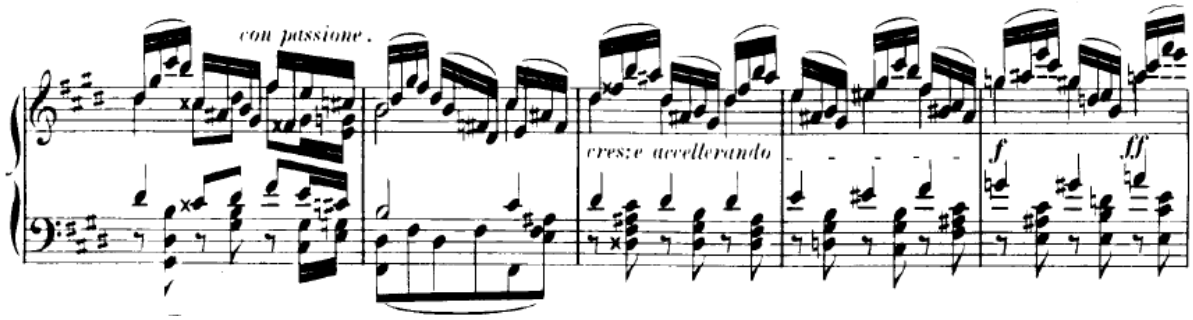
Example 40: Thalberg, Fantaisie Op. 42, mm. 1-6.

"opening leap of a fourth (dominant to tonic) coincides with the opening thematic motion of both the Serenade and Minuet."[68] Suttoni is generous in allowing that "it is possible to regard the opening as a type of thematic transformation hinting at a theme to come rather than following from it."[69] Be that as it may, Thalberg quickly discards this theme in favour of a similar phrase, marked *cantabile* (example 41), which forms the basis of the rest of the introduction. This phrase, too, features the motive of the ascending fourth, and Suttoni suggests that this, coupled with the "simplicity of the theme and its purely diatonic harmony" represents a transformation of Mozart's themes.[70] As the introduction progresses (example 42), however, even Suttoni is forced

65 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 192.
66 Ibid., 193.
67 Although the key of E major dominates the paraphrase, Suttoni does not ascribe any significance to this foreign key choice, and nor do I.
68 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 193.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., 194.

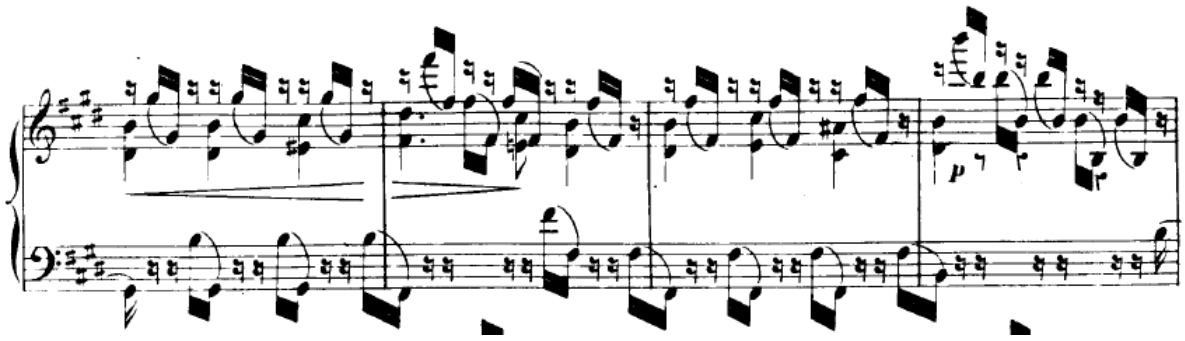


Example 41: Thalberg, Fantaisie Op. 42, mm. 28-31.



Example 42: Thalberg, Fantaisie Op. 42, mm. 83-87.

to admit that "there appears to be little attempt to emulate Mozart; the theme twists and turns on itself and the harmony takes a richer, chromatic hue."[71] Thalberg does not even acknowledge Mozart until much later, at measure 98 (example 43). Here, amidst a downpour of broken octave figures, Thalberg seems to integrate a fragment of "Vedrai carino." Yet his inclusion of this theme



Example 43: Thalberg, Fantaisie Op. 42, mm. 98-101.

71 Ibid., 195.

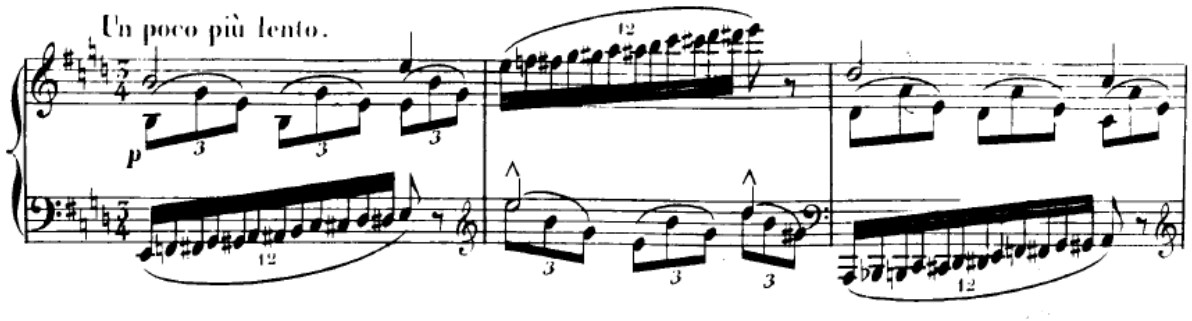
is so brief and well hidden that it seems, at best, to be a paltry lip-service to Mozart's genius. Indeed, the introduction as a whole reeks of the excesses of the Romantic ego. Even if it is argued that Thalberg is transforming Mozart's themes through his rising fourth motives, it is still difficult to see the *Fantaisie Op. 42* as any kind of tribute to *Don Giovanni* when the introduction takes up nearly half the piece (the entire paraphrase is 402 measures long, while the introduction is 172). Even Suttoni concedes that "this section would seem to be [the work's] major weakness. It is too long."[72]

Although it would be possible to describe the remainder of the introduction, there is little value in doing so in the present discussion. In brief, Thalberg varies his themes using a variety of virtuosic effects, including arpeggios, repeated notes, and even a short cadenza. What must be considered, however, is the effect this introduction has on the listener's perception of the narrative. Obviously, because this material bears little or no relationship to Mozart's opera, the listener is not put in mind of either the themes, settings, or characters of *Don Giovanni*. Instead, the listener is presented with what might be described as a narrative of virtuosity. Listening to the empty gestures of this introduction, it is easy to see the source of Liszt's vitriol. This music is sound and fury, but it signifies nothing other than the inflated ego of its composer.

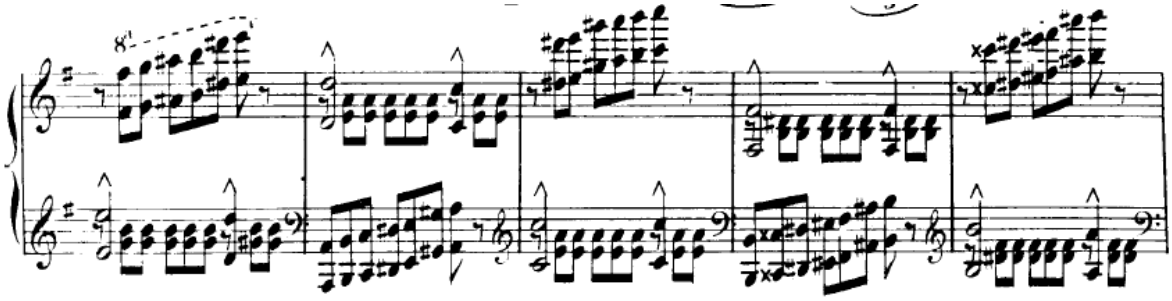
Once again, though, it is important when judging music to hear the full case before pronouncing a final judgment. Thalberg finally introduces one of Mozart's themes at measure 171, where he begins the oft-heard mandolin accompaniment to "Deh vieni alla finestra." After stating the theme once in a fairly literal setting, Thalberg shifts to a minor mode and adorns Don Giovanni's cavatina with chromatic scales running both above and below the melody (example 44). This section builds to a climax, and the theme is heard in *fortissimo* octaves (example 45). Of this passage, Suttoni grants that "it is surely not Mozart, but there is a certain noble pathos in

72 Ibid., 198.

Thalberg's treatment."[73]



Example 44: Thalberg, Fantaisie Op. 42, mm. 219-221.



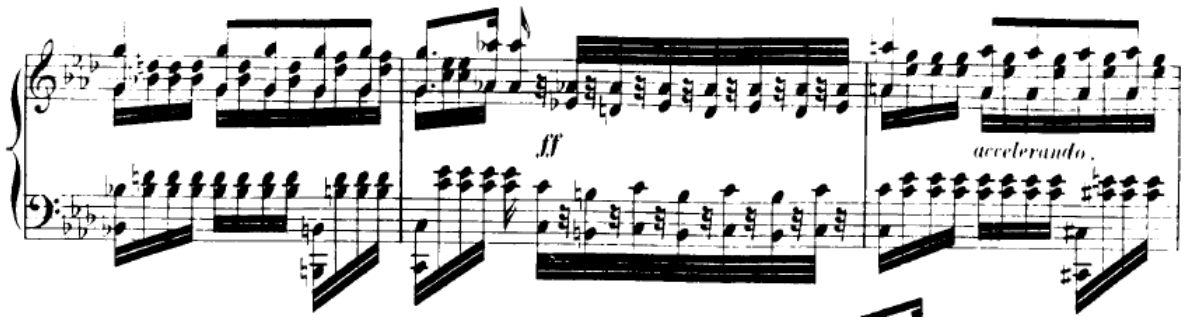
Example 45: Thalberg, Fantaisie Op. 42, mm. 242-246.

While it is hard to deny that Thalberg has affected an air of "noble pathos," it seems doubtful that this emotion is intended to represent an aspect of Don Giovanni's character. Here we come to the crux of the issue. While it is certainly possible to imbue Don Giovanni's cavatina with an air of "noble pathos" — after all, this is precisely what Leybach does in his paraphrase — Thalberg's attempt to do so seems, at least to my ear, disingenuous. Because Thalberg has already displayed his penchant for empty displays of virtuosity in the introduction, the listener is primed to expect more such displays in his treatments of Mozart's themes. Unfortunately, Thalberg's variations are intuitively heard as just that: virtuosity for the sake of virtuosity. To put it another way, if Thalberg had contented himself with writing a simple, stark minor mode variation on "Deh vieni alla finestra," it would be easier to hear it as music as opposed to mere

73 Ibid., 196.

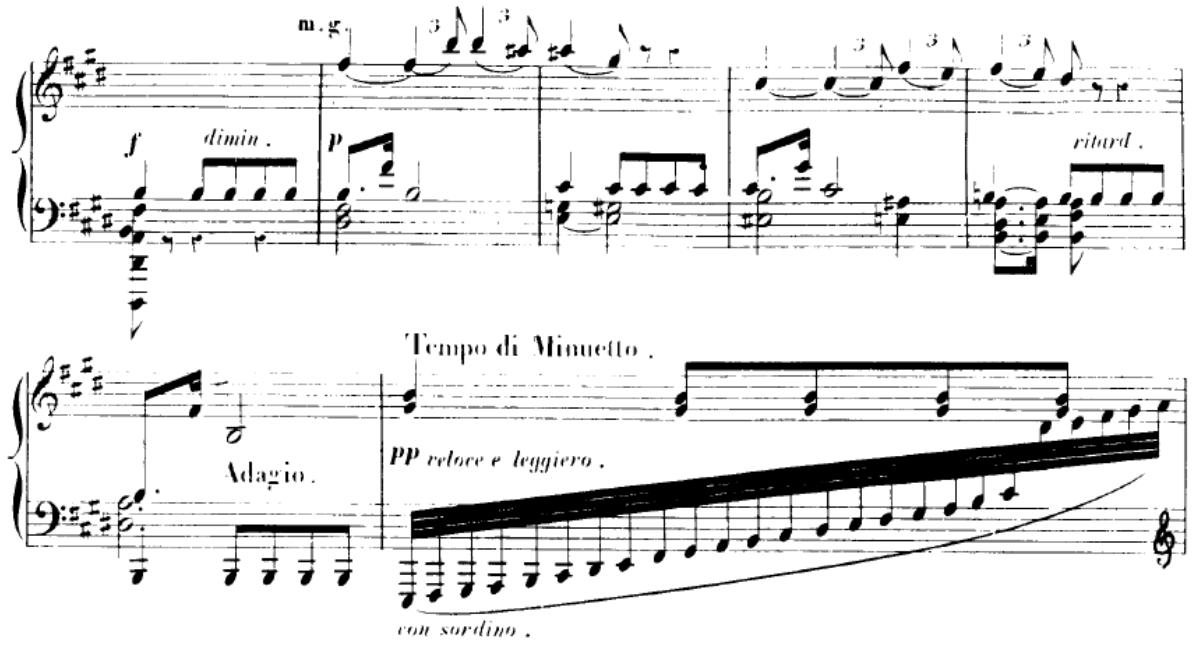
notes. As it is, the dramatic pianistic effects seem born out of concern for stunning an audience, rather than out of any deep understanding or interpretation of Mozart's character. In essence, the virtuosity impedes the music.

To be clear, I do not mean to imply that narrative progression cannot be imparted through variation technique. As we will see in the discussion of Liszt's *Reminiscences de Don Juan*, it is possible to use both explicit variation technique (Liszt labels sections of his paraphrase as "Var. 1" and "Var. 2") and extreme virtuosity to create a sense of narrative growth. That Thalberg does not succeed in doing this in his paraphrase is a result of his compositional choices, rather than a fault in the genre or style itself. He continues to compose in this style-over-substance mode in his treatment of the next theme, the Act 1 Minuet. Unfortunately, his settings of the dainty tune are hardly dance-like, with the melody obscured by encrustations of chords, arpeggios, and tremolandi (example 46). The one exception to Thalberg's seeming rule of



Example 46: Thalberg, Fantaisie Op. 42, mm. 340-342.

"virtuosity above all" occurs at measure 363, where the clouds of sound break to reveal a six measure passage in which the two themes are overlapped and combined (example 47). This passage is arguably the most original portion of the piece, and it forces us to reevaluate the merits of the composition as a whole. In the preceding analyses of other paraphrases, much weight has been given to a composer's ordering of Mozart's material, and in particular to the



Example 47: Thalberg, Fantaisie Op. 42, mm. 363-369.

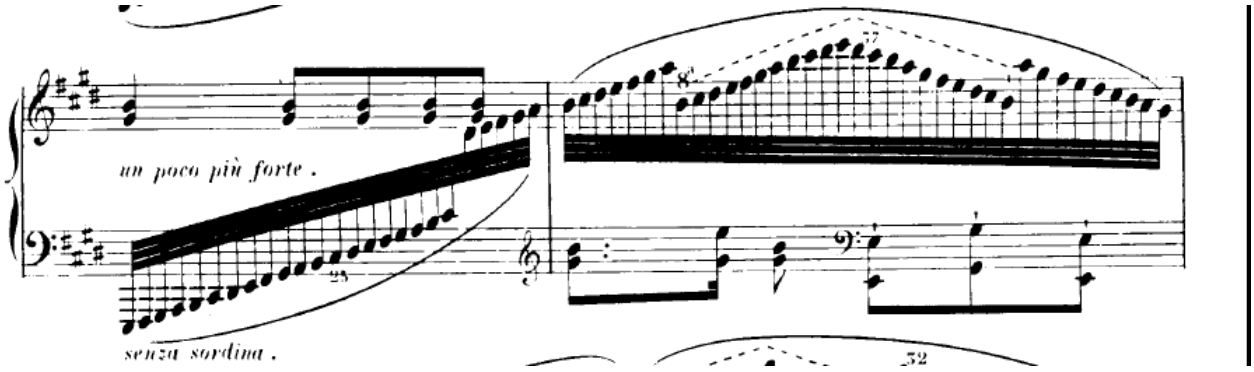
practice of combining two different themes. Yet while such an analytical method works well when applied to those paraphrases, it is less effective in Thalberg's case. Because Thalberg only uses two themes[74] from *Don Giovanni* (as compared to other composers, who use three or more), it seems dangerous to draw many conclusions about a narrative-based motivation behind their selection. The likeliest explanation for Thalberg's choice of themes is that "Deh vieni alla finestra" and the minuet are among the simplest themes from Mozart's opera in terms of motivic composition and surface rhythm, and thus are most amenable to extreme variation.[75] Moreover, the ordering of the two themes is less meaningful, given that there are only two possible options for their positioning. What can we make, then, of Thalberg's clever pairing of these two themes in the preceding example? While it is certainly an interesting moment in what

74 i.e., "Deh vieni alla finestra" and the minuet; while it can be argued that Thalberg includes a fragment of "Vedrai carino" in the introduction, the alleged quotation is too short to be considered a third theme.

75 The other theme from *Don Giovanni* that immediately comes to mind as an ideal candidate for variation is, of course, "Là ci darem la mano." That Thalberg does not include it in the *Fantaisie Op. 42* is due to the fact that he already used it in his Op. 14 work.

Liszt would surely have described as a “monotonous”composition, it is unfortunately only that — a moment. Because Thalberg does not develop this combination of themes beyond the six measure passage, it is difficult to see it as anything more than a convenient compositional feint, and to ascribe any significance to the gesture from a narrative standpoint would be a mistake.

Immediately following the “combination” passage, Thalberg launches into one final assault upon Mozart's minuet, this time using his famed thumb-melody technique. The theme lies in the middle of the keyboard, exchanged between the left and right hands in the midst of a continuously undulating scale that traverses the range of the keyboard (example 48). Not to be



Example 48: Thalberg, Grand Fantaisie, mm. 371-372.

denied his moment in the spotlight, Thalberg continues this variation for four pages, and though the effect is certainly scintillating from a pianistic perspective, even Suttoni admits that “Mozart's galant simplicity has been aggrandized to suit the virtuoso needs of the 1840's.”[76] When the *Fantaisie Op. 42* at last reaches its final grandiose cadence a few measures later, the effect is curiously underwhelming. While Thalberg has used nearly every trick in the pianist's arsenal, the work reveals little insight into Mozart's themes, let alone *Don Giovanni* as a whole. Suttoni touches on this problem when he writes that “[Thalberg's] works tend to lack dramatic vitality and, viewed as a body, display a certain similarity of effect.”[77]

76 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 199.
77 Ibid., 206.

At the beginning of this section, I raised the question of why Thalberg — who, during his lifetime, was measured as the equal of Liszt — has sunk into relative obscurity in the century following his death. On the basis of this paraphrase, the answer is clear: although Thalberg possessed remarkable insight into the art of piano playing, he was unable to reconcile the oft-opposing forces of musicality and virtuosity. In the final cut, Suttoni says it best:

> Liszt had an acute sense of dramatic integrity and propriety that Thalberg lacked. A fantasy by Thalberg, for all its fine pianistic effects, remains something of a potpourri; an effective work within its own terms, but without a dramatic point of view or a significant dramatic connection to the opera itself.[78]

Although Suttoni does not explicitly use the word "narrative," he recognizes that the central flaw of Thalberg's work is its lack of dramatic direction. Simply put, works like the *Fantaisie Op. 42* fail to tell a story. Perhaps it is works like these, which show little regard for the importance of narrative, that have given the genre of the paraphrase such a bad reputation within the critical literature.

VI: Ignacy Feliks Dobrzynski - *Hommage à Mozart*

Perhaps the most obscure of all the paraphrases examined in this chapter is Ignacy Feliks Dobrzyński's *Hommage à Mozart - Fantaisie sur les Thèmes de l'Opera: Don Giovanni, Op. 59*. Dobrzyński (1807-1867) was a contemporary of Chopin, and according to Grove, they were fellow students at the Warsaw Conservatory.[79] Whether or not the two musicians influenced each other is unclear, but it is interesting to note that both composers wrote variations on "Là ci darem la mano," albeit at different times in their lives (Chopin's variations were written in 1827, while

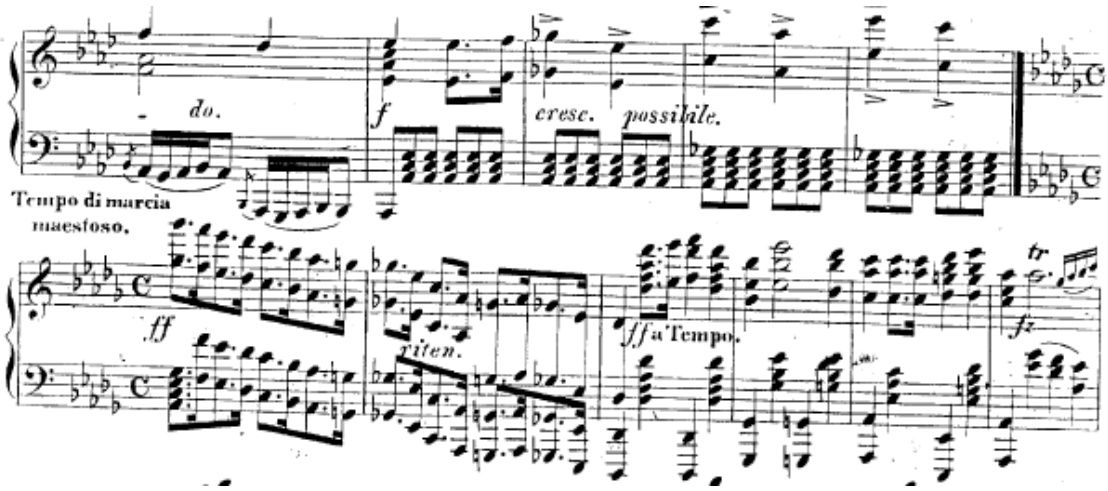
78 Ibid., 339.

79 *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, s.v. "Dobrzyński, Ignacy Feliks" (by Jim Samson), http://www.grovemusic.com/ (accessed September 22, 2011).

Dobrzyński's did not appear until 1850).

Unfortunately, for the purposes of this discussion, Dobrzyński's *Hommage à Mozart* is of little more interest than Chopin's Op. 2 *Variations on ' Là ci darem la mano'* for piano and orchestra, because although it is technically a paraphrase (i.e. it uses multiple themes from Mozart's opera), when subjected to analysis, it becomes clear that it is little more than a set of shamelessly virtuosic variations on themes from *Don Giovanni*. Much like Thalberg's work, Dobrzyński's *Hommage à Mozart* is impressive from a pianistic standpoint, but largely impervious to any type of narrative-based analysis. Like Thalberg, Dobrzyński uses several themes from the opera (specifically "Là ci darem la mano," "Deh vieni alla finestra," and "Finch' han dal vino"), subjecting each to extensive variation techniques. Similarly, Dobrzyński does not explicitly label the variations, though unlike Thalberg, he does not include any kind of original introduction. Nor does Dobrzyński include any transitions or other original sections of particular note; the piece is essentially a showcase for virtuosic excess.

One of the few intriguing passages in the *Hommage à Mozart* can be found toward the end of the piece, when Dobrzyński transitions from a variation on "Deh vieni alla finestra" into a recapitulation of the "Là ci darem la mano" theme, which permeates the work. Example 49 shows how Dobrzyński achieves this transition by maintaining the underlying 6/8 meter and surface rhythms of the serenade while reintroducing the melody of the duet. It is a clever technique, but unfortunately the writing reveals little insight into the context of the original material. Note, for example, that when the "Là ci darem la mano" theme reasserts itself in earnest, it is marked "Tempo di marcia." While it is certainly a unique rendition of Mozart's duet, it is hardly appropriate: even those scholars who read "Là ci darem la mano" in terms of male sexual domination would be hard-pressed to describe the character of duet as martial.



Example 49: Dobrzyński, Hommage à Mozart, mm. 322-332.

This example is symptomatic of Dobrzyński's treatment of Mozart's themes throughout the paraphrase. In fairness, the *Hommage à Mozart* is a respectable example of inventive use of variation techniques. However, because Dobrzyński presents the three themes in so many stylistically different guises, and because he displays a preference for virtuosic display over direct musical expression, it is difficult to trace any kind of unified narrative progression in the piece. For this reason, this piece, like Thalberg's *Fantaisie Op. 42*, is at best an archaic curiosity, and at worst a justification for the critical dismissal of the genre as a whole.

VII: Franz Liszt: Réminiscences de Don Juan

Liszt's paraphrase on *Don Giovanni* is, paradoxically, at once the easiest paraphrase to write about, because many critics have already weighed in on its merits, and also the most difficult work to discuss, *because* so much has already been said. Along with Liszt's paraphrase on Bellini's *Norma*, the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* is one of the most famous works in the genre, and with good reason: in addition to setting benchmarks of virtuosity, it displays a depth

of insight into the opera that transcends mere commentary. In this final case study, I argue that the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* is also a paragon of narrative development within the genre.

Before arguing my case, however, it is necessary to briefly review the existing literature related to this composition. While the piece has been the subject of critical appraisal since its composition in 1841, scholars have been divided in their assessments of its value. The majority of writers have agreed that the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* represents an unusual union of virtuosity and dramatic intelligence, and they generally accept that Liszt uses the genre to present his own reading of *Don Giovanni*. However, that each critic presents their own version of Liszt's alleged reading speaks volumes about the challenges and pitfalls of interpretation, and also about the rich possibilities that the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* offers as a site of interpretation.

The best-known scholarship relating to the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* comes from Charles Rosen, who includes a lengthy essay entitled "Self-portrait as Don Juan" in his seminal volume *The Romantic Generation*. Although I will be referring to Rosen's analysis throughout the following pages, it is worth quoting his conclusion at length here, by way of summary. Rosen suggests that the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* is

> one of Liszt's most personal achievements. With his international reputation for erotic conquest already set, Liszt must have known that the public would take his fantasy as a self-portrait in sound, just as everyone had assumed that Byron's *Don Juan* was an autobiography. In does not, in fact, matter much whether or how often Liszt went to bed with the women who threw themselves at him: he did almost nothing to discourage his international reputation as a Don Juan. Every performance of his fantasy must have been understood by his audience as an ironic image of the composer-performer. As Mozart had used coloratura brilliance in *The Magic Flute* as a metaphor for rage and power, so Liszt uses virtuosity here as a representation of sexual domination.[80]

Rosen is not alone in recognizing Liszt's fascination with the character of Don Giovanni, but not all scholars perceive the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* as an autobiographical statement.

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80 Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 539-540.

Schmitt, for example, suggests that Liszt's understanding of the character extends beyond the confines of Mozart's opera to include the archetypal Don Juan character present throughout literature. Taking an intertextual approach in his analysis, Schmitt demonstrates that

> the tragic conception of Hoffman, the satiric-epical conception of Byron, and the idealistic conception of Kierkegaard provide a framework against which Liszt's fantasy can be positioned to understand his personal reinterpretation of the Don Juan legend.… Liszt sees Don Juan as an ideal hero and personification of seduction, conquest and virtuosity. His identification with the Don Juan figure demonstrates his view of the artist and virtuoso as a leading individual, whose ability, power, and inspiration puts him in the first place of society.[81]

Schmitt's appreciation of the piece extends beyond its literary and philosophical connections, however. His passionate advocacy of the paraphrase is almost tangible when he writes that "in terms of formal coherence and poetic content, the Don Juan fantasy is equal to any piece by Chopin or Brahms; in terms of dramatic effectiveness and virtuosity it far surpasses any of their works."[82]

While Schmitt's enthusiasm is to be commended, one suspects that Brahms and Chopin scholars would object to his bold claims, and naturally, other critics take a less personal view of the paraphrase. Rather than suggesting that Liszt displays a personal affinity with the character of Don Giovanni, Yoon Ju Lee approaches the paraphrase from a more thematic perspective, noting that "Liszt presents the important theatrical themes of Mozart's original *Don Giovanni*, summarizing three cardinal aspects of the story: justice, seduction, and carefree enjoyment."[83] That Yoon speaks of "Mozart's original *Don Giovanni*" is significant (though probably not intentionally), for Suttoni offers an intriguing prospect when he notes that Liszt may not have based his fantasy on the *Don Giovanni* familiar to modern listeners, but rather on an obscure

81 Schmitt, *Franz Liszt*, viii.
82 Ibid., 9.
83 Yoon Ju Lee, *Selected operatic paraphrases of Franz Liszt (1811--1886): Compositional style and performance perspectives*, (Diss. The University of Arizona, 2000), 22.

French staging of the opera that opened in 1834. Suttoni explains that

> this French version expands Mozart's two acts to five, and its major points of difference from the original Don Giovanni are the insertion of a ballet and a complete change in the situation at the end of the opera. In the French version, Donna Anna dies. The Don is forced to view her corpse and goes mad while a chorus chants the *Dies Irae* from Mozart's Requiem. The fact that this hyper-Romantic presentation of *Don Juan* was on the stage when Liszt wrote his fantasy has been overlooked by commentators who assume Liszt was thinking of Mozart's original.[84]

While Suttoni admits that it is likely impossible to prove which version of Mozart's opera inspired the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, he does provide an excellent analysis of the piece. Of particular interest is his claim that the paraphrase lacks "dramatic integrity" because it "occupies an ambiguous position because of the variations and the reversal of the dramatic sequence [i.e. the chronological ordering of the opera]."[85] Nor is Suttoni alone in his ambivalence. Ferrucio Busoni significantly titled the preface to his edition of the piece "'Mozart's Don Giovanni and Liszt's Don Juan Fantasy' … as if he means to disassociate the two works." While Busoni elevates the work in declaring that it "has acquired the almost symbolic significance of a pianistic summit,"[86] at the same time he writes derisively that it "treats sacred themes in altogether too worldly a fashion."[87] One shudders to imagine what Busoni would have thought of Leybach's treatment!

If Suttoni and Busoni are ambivalent, other critics are unabashedly negative in their reception of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, and even though it is one of the most important works in the paraphrase repertoire, it is only rarely performed on concert stages. Schmitt offers a compelling explanation for this state of affairs:

> Why, then, has Liszt and the Don Juan fantasy suffered so much contempt even among pianists? The answer is surprisingly simple: because of its enormous and almost

84 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 284.
85 Ibid, 290.
86 Quoted in Schmitt, *Franz Liszt*, 3.
87 Quoted in Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 283.

> insurmountable technical difficulty as well as bad performances of the fantasy that lack understanding of the poetic and dramatic content and concentrate instead on the struggle with sheer technical difficulties.

This quotation brings into focus an intriguing aspect of Don Juan scholarship. Because of its notorious difficulty, the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* occupies an almost iconic role in the pianist's repertoire, despite being relatively obscure to non-pianists. Perhaps as a result of this, almost all of the scholarly literature on the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* is written by pianists, and much of it is written by players who have performed the work (Rosen, Schmitt, and Busoni all fall into this category). In this way, Liszt's paraphrase can be seen as a locus for scholarship that is rooted in performance and personal experience. As a result, much of the literature on this piece offers insight into the methods of overcoming the technical challenges of the writing, and also reflections on the interpretive difficulties of conveying the dramatic essence of the score.

I mention this trend of performers writing about the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* because in preparing this section of the chapter, I have attempted to integrate my own experiences of playing the piece into my analysis. While most of my reflective practice will be presented in the following chapter, it is impossible to divorce the experience of performing a piece — an experience which, of course, entails a variety of formal and informal analytical methods — from the practice of writing about that piece, and so some of my practical observations will be included in the following discussion. Nonetheless, I have attempted to adhere to the methodology established in the preceding analyses, and so I will begin by examining the issues of thematic choice in the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*.

Despite being one of the longest and most structurally involved paraphrases considered in this study, Liszt's fantasy on *Don Giovanni* only uses material from three major sections of Mozart's opera: the music of the statue (“Di rider finirai”), the seduction duet “Là ci darem la

mano," and the "Champagne" aria, "Finch' han dal vino." Rosen holds that

> the title, Réminiscences de Don Juan, must be taken not as a series of isolated memories but as a synoptic view of the opera, in which the different moments of the drama exist simultaneously: what Liszt reveals is the way they are interrelated. He combines material from different parts of the opera freely."[88]

While Liszt does indeed use the material from the opera "freely," this must not be taken to mean that there is a lack of order or structural logic to the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*. In regards to the ordering of the themes, Liszt diverges from the scheme of the original opera, opening the paraphrase with the music of the statue (taken from the finale of Act 2), continuing backward to the early Act 1 duet, and then ending with Don Giovanni's hedonistic aria from the end of the first act. It significant that Liszt starts with damnation and ends with triumph. Suttoni writes that

> in a sense, the sequence of dramatic events in the fantasy is backwards and there probably would have been much less need for symbolic interpretation if Liszt had reversed the order of the themes; that is, if he had the Don plan his gala first, seduce Zerlina, and then meet his damnation. Had Liszt reversed the order, however, the work would have become a moral tract and not the brilliant refashioning of Mozart that it is.[89]

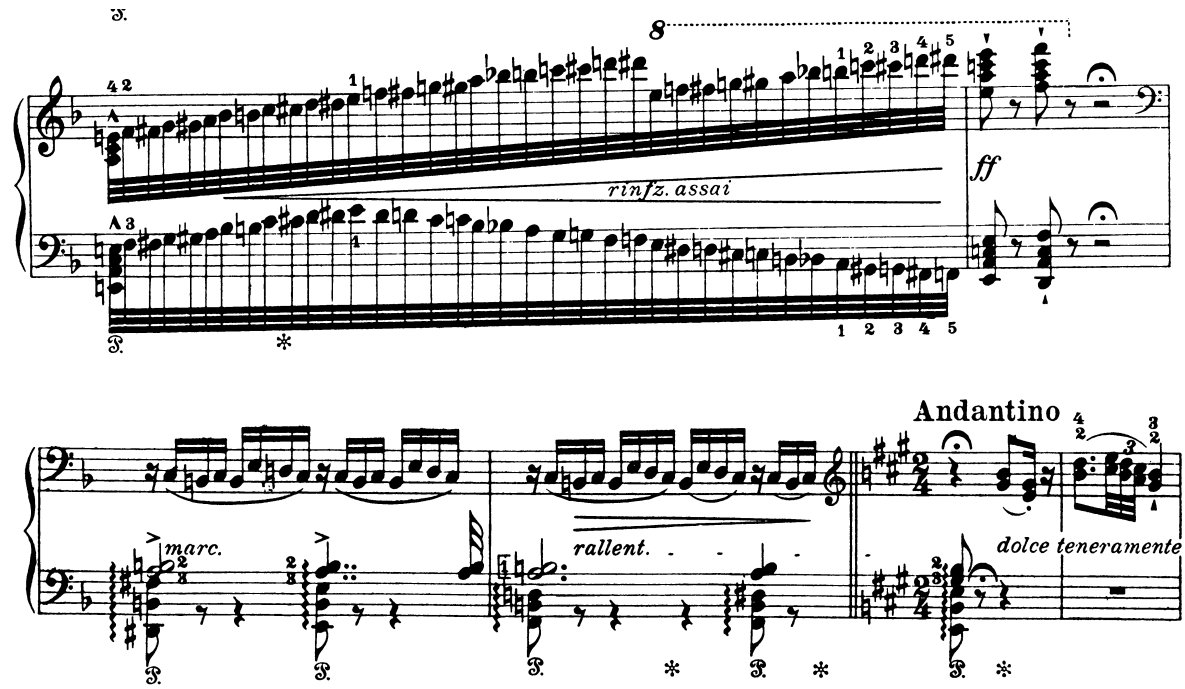
Schmitt also comments on the narrative structure of the piece, arguing that Liszt's decision to end the paraphrase with Don Giovanni's triumphant Champagne aria represents a choice to view the character as a hero: "it is precisely through the refusal to repent and the resulting conflict with the stone-guest that the figure of Don Juan achieves greatness and stops being a mere villain."[90]

While Schmitt argues a convincing case in regards to the narrative implications of the ordering of themes in the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, it is ultimately unwise to focus on Liszt's ordering, since what is more significant is how the three themes interact in an organic manner

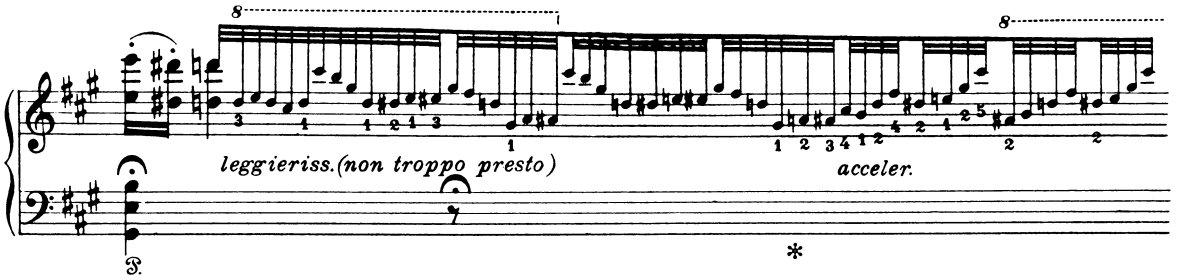
88 Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 530
89 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 285-286
90 Schmitt, *Franz Liszt*, 52.

that is entirely absent in the other paraphrases examined in this paper. While Raff, for example, successfully combines Mozart's themes in intriguing ways, the result sounds engineered, rather than organic. There is always a sense of clear architectural design in Raff's paraphrase; through his tripartite division of the piece, the listener is made aware of the force of the composer's will, as compared to the force of the musical and dramatic direction of the piece. Liszt's piece, by way of contrast, feels much more like a free-form fantasy. It is expansive and flowing, despite the fact that it contains formally labeled variations and numerous notated divisions on the page. The piece is so organic in its growth and direction that a listener could be forgiven for thinking that it was an improvisation. As we will see, though, it is ultimately one of the most intelligently designed examples of the paraphrase genre.

Before proceeding to a section-by-section analysis of Liszt's setting techniques, it is worth considering two general compositional elements that lend the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* its organic presence. These features are the liberal use of various types of pauses and structural breaks, and an overall commitment to narrative pacing through subtle tempo changes. While these are somewhat intangible elements, it is possible to find examples of each throughout the piece. Take, for instance, Liszt's use of both extended notated rests and fermatas in the transition between the opening section and the theme of “Là ci darem la mano” (example 50). These markings force the pianist to pace the performance, and create a sense of spaciousness and a break in the dramatic tension. Similarly, consider Liszt's direction to play the flirtatious cadenza at m. 117 “non troppo presto” (example 51). While this could easily be a moment of ostentatious virtuosity, Liszt encourages the performer to relax into the line and let it breath, if the colloquialism can be excused. Throughout the score, Liszt constantly controls the tempi through a myriad of subtle indications, ranging from rinforzandos to rallentandos. While it is a question



Example 50: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 55-60



Example 51: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 117.

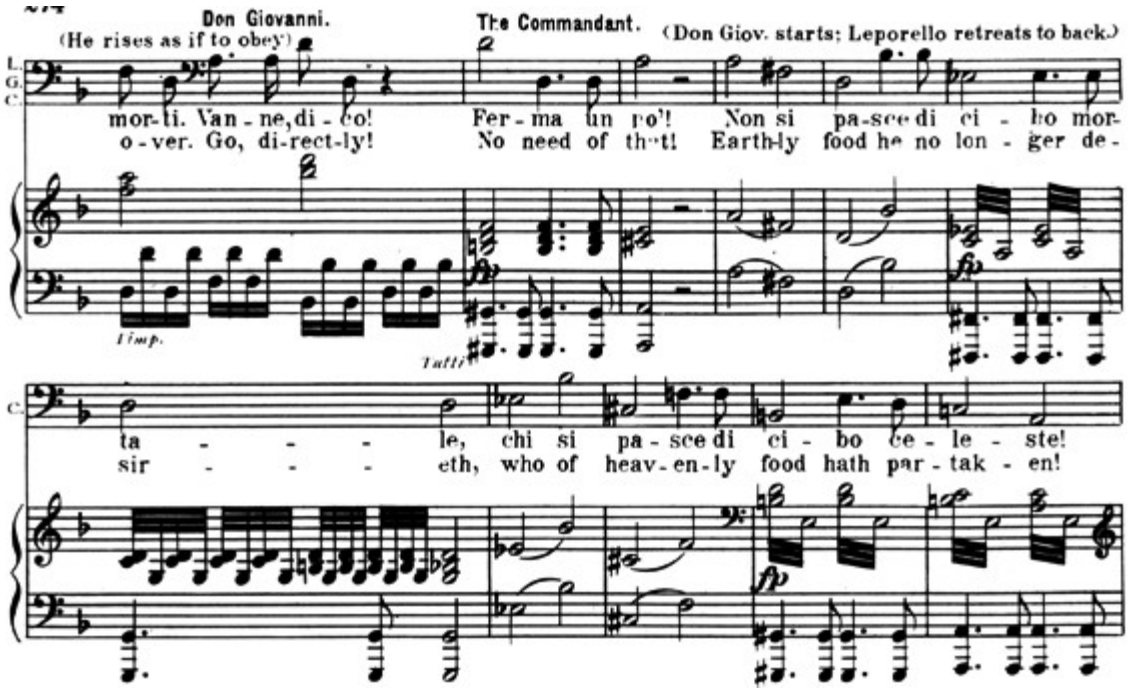
of performance practice which markings are intended to alter tempi (e.g.,by most definitions the marking *rinforzando* does not explicitly affect tempo, but many Liszt performers can be heard to interpret it as implying a slight broadening of tempo), by my count, Liszt provides over one hundred indications to adjust tempo throughout the piece — an average of over one tempo change every eight measures. Through his use of these indications — not to mention the dozens

of markings related to colour, tone, and expression — Liszt carefully paces the progression of the music, and by extension, the embedded narrative in the music.

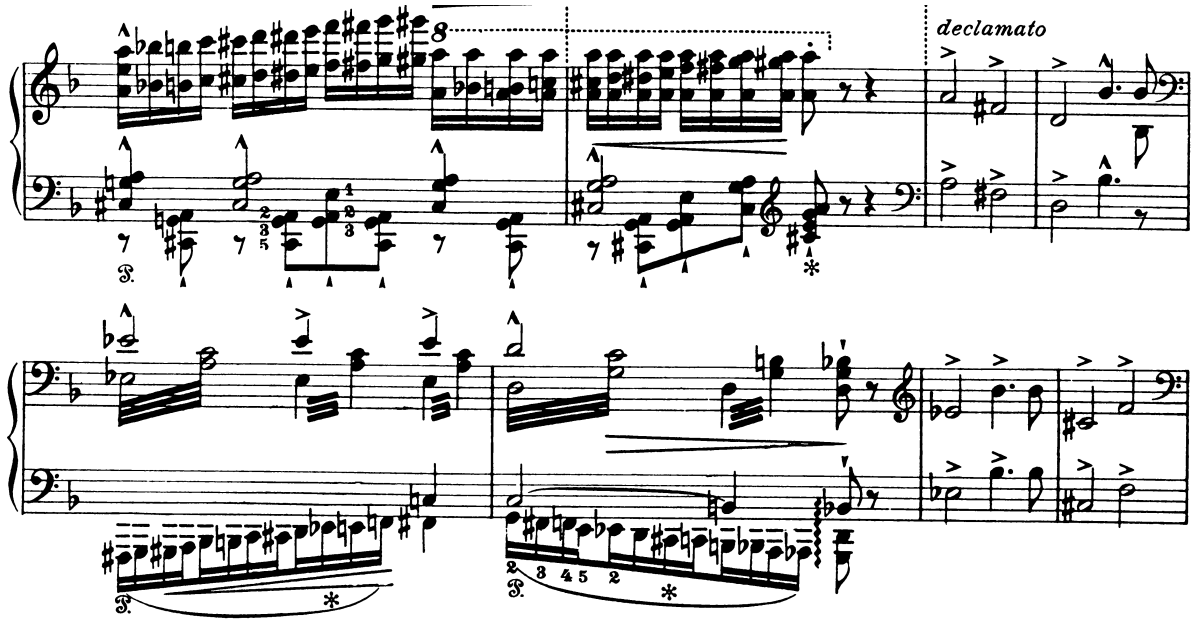
While Liszt's liberal use of pauses and his pacing of tempi throughout the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* lends the piece a sense of natural growth and expansion, it is only one part of the equation. Because the piece is so intrinsically organic in its conception and dramatic trajectory, it is a fool's errand to attempt to dissect the various elements of the piece separately. Rather, it is more effective to offer a tour of the composition from beginning to end, pointing out the myriad setting techniques Liszt uses to realize Mozart's drama within the scope of eighty-eight keys. The opening pages, for example, reveal Liszt's skill at manipulating Mozart's material. Of this section, Rosen notes that "[Liszt] combines material from different parts of the opera freely. The work begins with the sinister phrases of the statue in the cemetery, act 2, scene 11, and follows these immediately with the statue's terrifying appearance two scenes later (act 2 finale, bars 433-436)." Although Rosen provides a score excerpt as an example, he does not explicitly comment on the terrifying gesture employed by Liszt in mm. 10-13. To mark the statue's entrance, Liszt expands Mozart's chordal harmonies into explosive arpeggios that span the keyboard. While the effect is undeniably virtuosic, it is neither gratuitous nor unwarranted, for it encapsulates the drama of the scene.

It is worth comparing this section to one that follows shortly thereafter. At m. 41, Liszt quotes one of the most dramatic moments from Mozart's opera, the Commendatore's line "non si pasce di cibo mortale, chi si pasce di cibo celeste" (example 52).[91] Liszt's setting is shocking in its starkness. Rather than adorning the line with arpeggios or chords, he remains faithful to Mozart's original by setting it in plain unison octaves (example 53). Unlike the preceding section which marked the statue's entrance with clattering arpeggios, this passage is

91 Roughly translated, "they do not partake of mortal fare, who feast on heavenly food" (my own translation).



Example 52: Mozart, Don Giovanni, Act 2, Finale, "Don Giovanni! a cenar teco m'invasti," mm. 19-29.

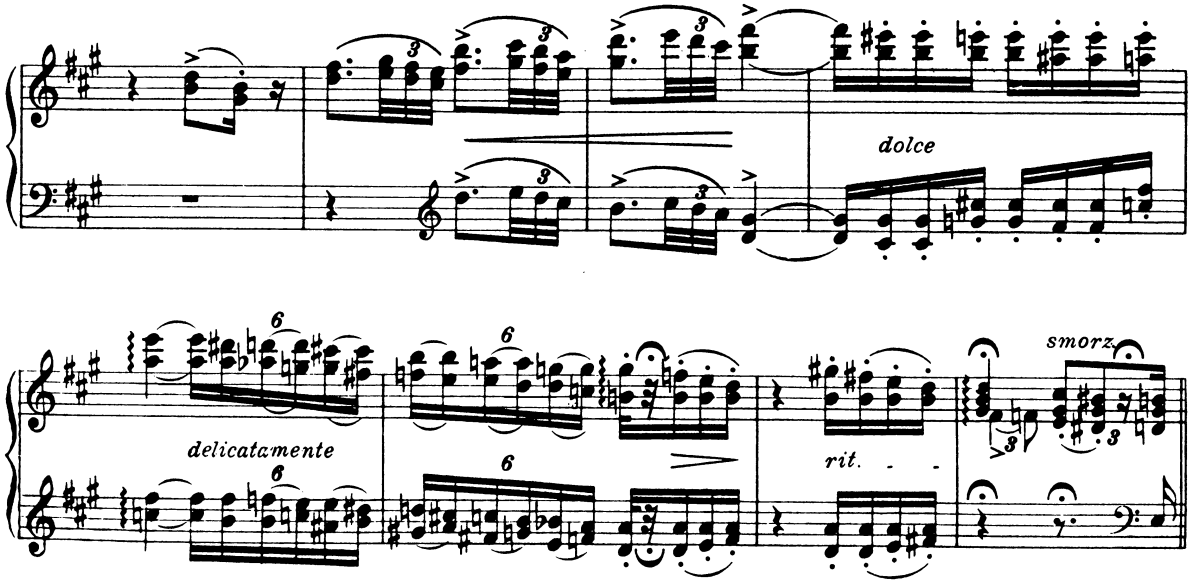


Example 53: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 39-46.

resolutely un-virtuosic. Again, we can see that Liszt uses virtuosity to propel the dramatic narrative of the music, rather than to simply impress the audience.

In the measures following this stern proclamation, Liszt builds the texture into a storm of chromatic scales sweeping up and down the piano and culminating in a harrowing passage in exposed thirds. Again, there is a dramatic purpose for the virtuosity: Liszt is imprinting the Commendatore's warnings in the audience's mind. Because he has essentially reversed the opera's narrative arch (i.e. by placing the Act II finale at the beginning of the paraphrase, and ending with "Finch' han dal vino"), Liszt needs to ensure that the audience will recognize the return of the statue later on in the paraphrase.

Moving forward to the next section, Liszt once again proceeds in a manner than can only be described as organic. Rosen notes that "Liszt uses bars 474 to 477 of the finale with the pathetic figuration once again as a counterpoint to introduce the first suggestion of the love duet 'Là ci darem la mano'"(see example 50, above).[92] Note Liszt's continued use of diminished harmonies in this transitional passage. The writing is extremely chromatic, and it features extensive use of harmonic fifths and tritones (example 54), intervals which typically sound harsh



Example 54: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 61-68.

92 Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 535.

and exposed on a percussive instrument such as the piano (e.g. consider the opening of Liszt's piano transcription of Saint-Saen's *Dance Macabre*). Yet by marking the section "dolce teneramente" and "delicatamente," Liszt takes pains to ensure that the pianist understands that this passage must smoothly transition between two themes that are almost diametrically opposed. In other words, the harmonies and intervals of the damnation music are moderated by the tempo, dynamics, and expressive and colouristic instructions of the love duet.

At this juncture, it is worth taking a brief detour to quote George Bernard Shaw, who wrote about this piece when reviewing a Paderewski recital in 1890. Rosen provides this excerpt from the writer: "when you hear the terrible progression of the statue's invitation suddenly echoing through the harmonies accompanying Juan's seductive *Andiam, andiam, mio bene*, you cannot help accepting it as a stroke of genius — that is, if you know your *Don Giovanni au fond*."[93] Shaw's last comment about the listener's familiarity with the opera is particularly telling. If one must know *Don Giovanni* "au fond" to recognize the genius of Liszt's maneuver, it is clear that the transition is so subtle as to be almost seamless. This is significant from the perspective of narrative. Whereas many of the paraphrases examined in this chapter have featured transitions that were either stylistically disjunct (e.g. Leybach), functional to the point of being awkward (e.g. Wallace, Smith), or simply formal divisions (e.g. Raff), Liszt's piece is unique in that his transitions — including, but not limited to the one in question — are not only based on Mozart's themes, but also seamless in their integration. The crucial result of this is that the listener is less aware of Liszt's cunning reordering of Mozart's narrative, and more convinced by Liszt's own version.

Leaving behind the realm of Shaw, it is time to consider Liszt's treatment of the next theme, "Là ci darem la mano," which forms the core of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*. This

93 Quoted in Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 540.

section, which spans from mm. 69-296, is comprised of a statement of the theme and two (labeled) variations. The theme, predictably, is the least problematic element from an analytical standpoint, though this should not be taken to mean that Liszt's transcription of Mozart's duet is anything less than masterful. Both Rosen and Suttoni comment on Liszt's handling of the theme, noting that whereas most other composers (e.g. Chopin in his Op. 2 Variations, Thalberg in his Op. 14 Fantasy, and, as we have seen, Smith in his *Grand Fantasy*) fail to differentiate the voices of the duet through register or other techniques, Liszt "scrupulously respects the placement of voices."[94] Another key difference between Liszt's setting of "Là ci darem la mano" and those of other composers (with the notable exception of Sydney Smith) is that Liszt includes the "andiam, andiam, mio bene" portion of the duet (written in compound meter), rather than simply stopping at the end of the 2/4 section. This compositional choice is fascinating, because it shows that Liszt is devoted to preserving the dramatic thrust of the opera, despite the fact that the second half of the duet (i.e. the "andiam" section) is, arguably, less amenable to variation techniques than the first.[95] Liszt eschews the temptation of using only that material which lends itself to virtuosic treatment, because he recognizes that there is an important change in narrative tone between the two halves of Mozart's duet. Whereas the first half of the duet is about seduction and resistance, the second part revolves around consent and lust, and Liszt explores this shift not only in his presentation of the theme, but also in the subsequent variations.

These variations present a curious paradox. On one hand, as noted above, Liszt's choice to include the entire "Là ci darem la mano" duet seems to be a counterintuitive compositional decision, considering that it would be easier to simply write variations on the first part of the material. On the other, Liszt is clearly committed to using variation technique, because he

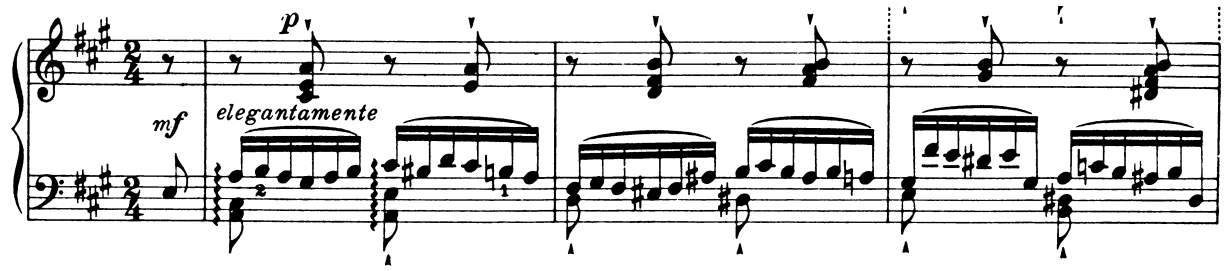
94 Suttoni, *The Romantic Generation*, 287

95 The first half of the duet makes a better candidate for variation because it is essentially homophonic in texture, while the "andiam" section is more contrapuntal. Moreover, the first half features simpler rhythmic and melodic motivic content, and a slower harmonic rhythm than the 6/8 section.

explicitly marks the variations in the score. It is interesting to note that Liszt is alone in doing this; even Thalberg and Dobryzinski, whose paraphrases both feature obvious and clear-cut variation techniques, do not formally label their variations. Nor is this especially typical of Liszt: Yoon notes that "Liszt rarely incorporates variation sets within an operatic fantasy,"[96] and Suttoni identifies the inclusion of the theme and variations as a feature "recessive and reminiscent of the early Liszt.…Their inclusion recalls the earlier fantasies on *La Juive* and *Niobe*, but is something that Liszt abandoned in a work such as *Hugenots* and in all later fantasies except for this one."[97] Yet to dismiss these variations as a sort of regressive compositional gene is to do *Réminiscences de Don Juan* a great disservice. This is because the two extended variations on "Là ci darem la mano" do not simply exploit the virtuosic possibilities of the theme (as in Thalberg and Dobrzynski), but rather serve to develop the narrative arch of the piece.

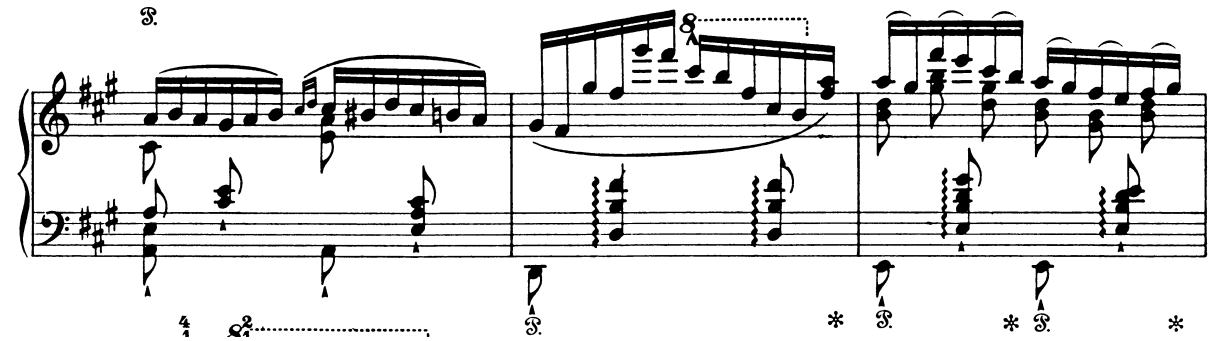
Of course, this is not to say that the variations are uncomplicated or easy to render on the piano. Many of the most devastatingly difficult sections of the paraphrase can be found in the first variation. Still, when viewed within the context of the paraphrase as a whole, the variations are more about characterization and the development of the tension between seduction and submission. As noted above, Liszt's initial treatment of the theme is sensitive. Courtly and formal, it is more Mozart than Liszt. The first variation, starting at m. 150, still retains a certain Mozartean grace, and Liszt encourages the pianist to play "elegantemente." The development of the characterization can be seen, however, in the increased surface rhythm of the left hand, punctuated by dainty staccato chords in the right (example 55). The duet has become a sort of lilting dance, and the texture is now more lush and full. Although the theme is still clearly

96 Yoon, *Selected Opera Paraphrases*, 28-29.
97 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 285



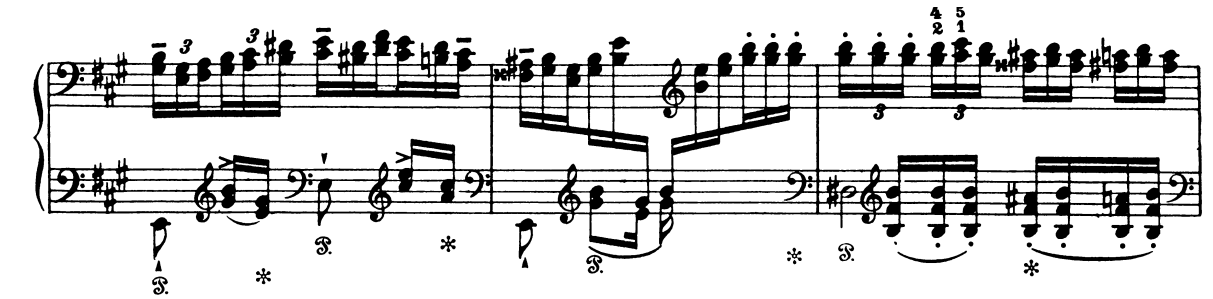
Example 55: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 150-153.

outlined, there is an unmistakable element of flirtation in the octave displacements in passages such as mm. 163-165 (example 56). Moreover, when Liszt continues the theme in parallel thirds,



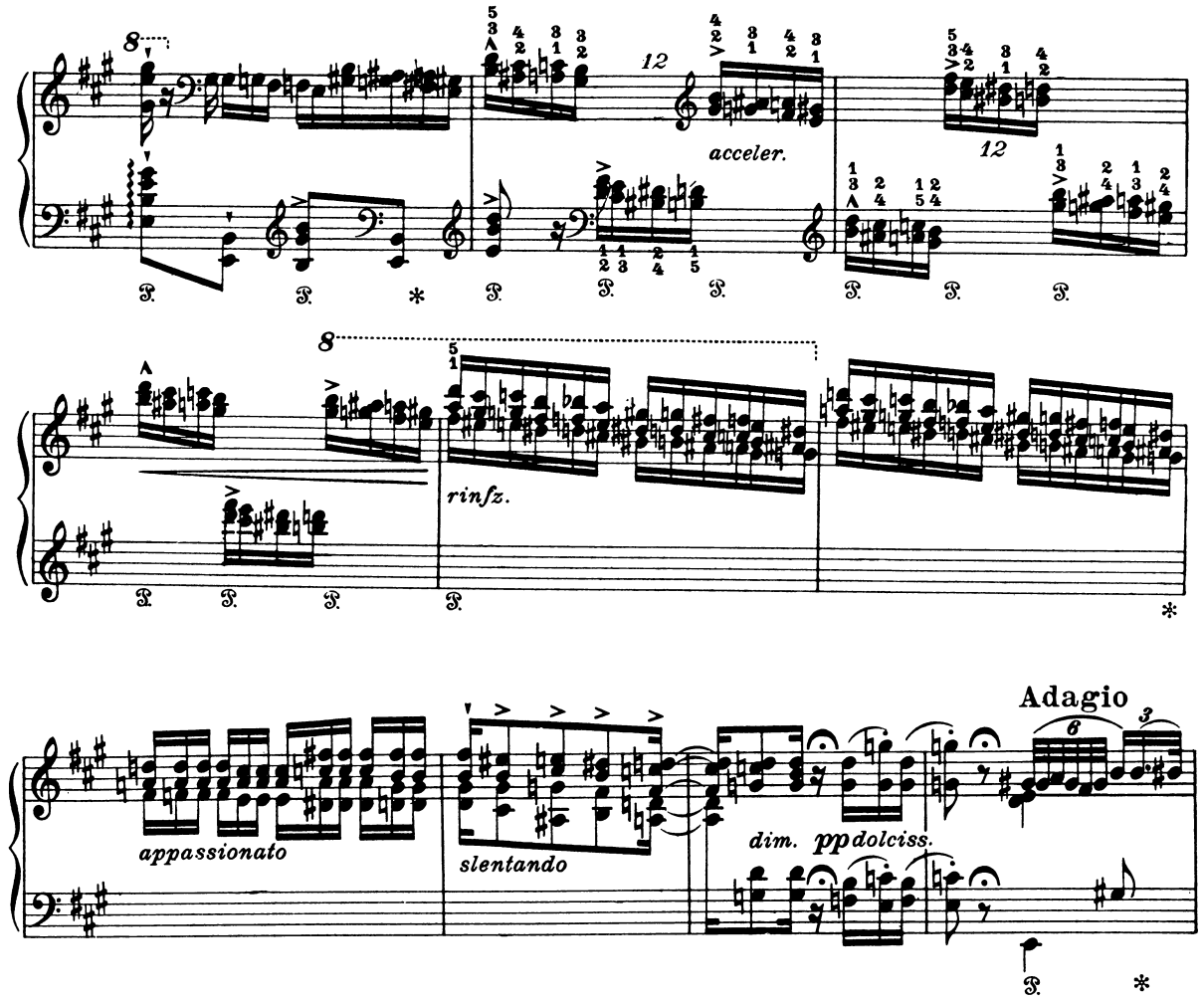
Example 56: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 163-166.

it is not merely a showy effect. In Mozart's original, the voices only begin to move in parallel thirds in the “andiam” section, signifying their combined surrender to lust. By setting the first part of the duet in thirds (example 57), Liszt is suggesting that the seduction is no longer merely a one-sided attempt originating from the Don, but instead a mutual effort; Zerlina is in on the act as much as the Don.



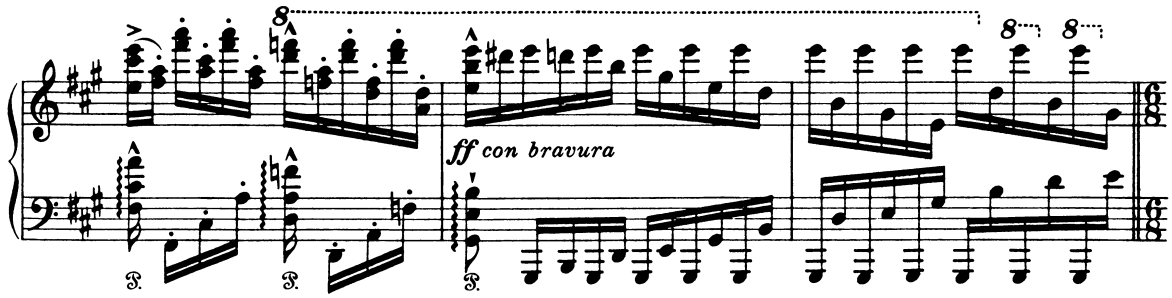
Example 57: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 169-171.

Liszt continues to write in parallel motion for several measures, and in so doing, he employs an interesting tactic. In the original statement of the theme, the first half of the duet (i.e. the material preceding the “andiam” section) lasts forty-nine measures — precisely as long as Mozart's original. In the first variation, however, the material is extended by ten full measures. This extension encourages the impression that the characters have become swept up in their dance of seduction, that they are carried away by a storm of reckless passion. This argument is strengthened when we isolate the ten “added” measures (i.e. the material which is not directly based on the theme). The passage in question occurs in mm. 178-187 (example 58), and it continues the parallel motion in a distinctly chromatic idiom. It is hard to hear the resulting



Example 58: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 178-187.

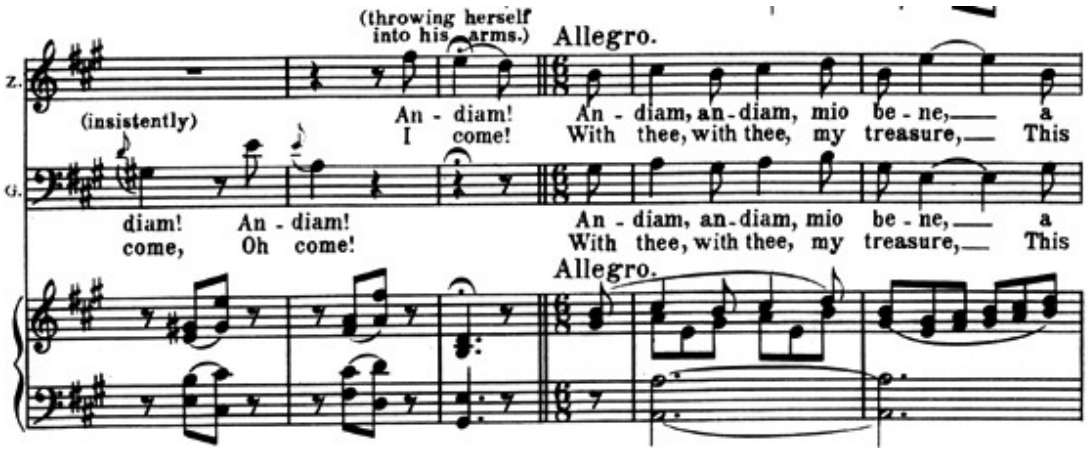
cadenza as anything but a descent into chaos and danger, and it is as though Liszt is suggesting that his characters are aware of the risks of their actions. In the following passage, however, Liszt restates the theme in an even more emphatic setting, with the melody now in solid left hand octaves. Don Giovanni and Zerlina may well know that they are headed to hell in a handbasket, but they are determined to get there *presto possible*. Moreover, they will arrive together: Liszt ends the section with what is arguably the most technically demanding material in the entire paraphrase, a passage which, according to Heinrich Neuhaus, "with the exception of the Pianola, probably nobody but Ginzburg ever played without a smudge."[98] The writing is intensely reminiscent of the etude *La Campanella*, and it challenges the pianist to accurately perform wide leaps in opposite directions in both hands (example 59). On the surface, this seems to be merely



Example 59: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 206-208.

empty virtuosity. However, when considered in the context of the variation form, its significance becomes clear. This passage is a variation of the last final measure of the "seduction" section of the duet, in which Zerlina tentatively sings the word "andiam," traditionally embellishing the fermata pitch with an *eingänge* (example 60). In his initial statement of the theme, Liszt renders this ornament with an extended florid cadenza (example 51, above). Importantly, this first cadenza is strictly monophonic; it is only Zerlina singing. In the first variation, however, this cadenza has become a duet (i.e. example 59, above). Once again, Liszt is emphasizing the

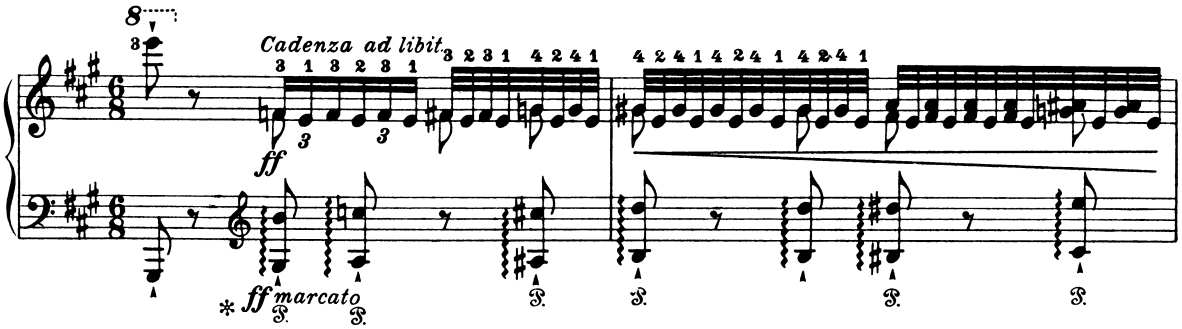
98 Quoted in Schmitt, *Franz Liszt*, 42-43.



Example 60: Mozart, Don Giovanni, Act 1, "Là ci darem la mano," mm. 47-51.

collaborative nature of the seduction. He is changing the fundamental narrative of the music to further explore the themes of seduction and lust.

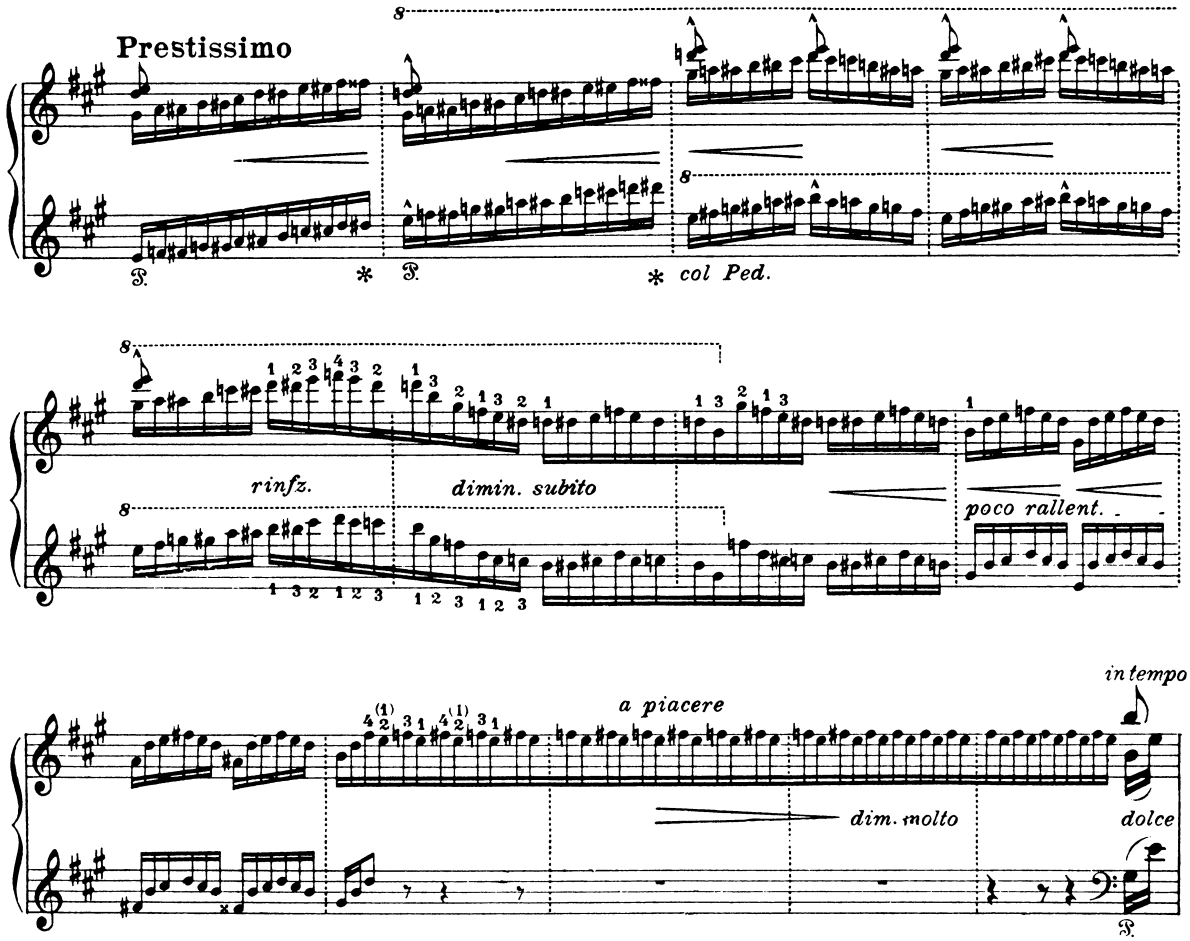
Unsurprisingly, when the first half of the "Là ci darem la mano" equation is altered, the second half (i.e. the "andiam" section in 6/8) is also affected. In the second half of Var. 1, Liszt continues to develop the narrative by subjecting the "andiam" material to increasingly obscure and chromatic settings. Consider, for example, the material immediately following the "*La Campanella*" passage (example 61). Marked "Cadenza ad libitum," the passage outlines the



Example 61: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 209-210.

contour of the "andiam" theme in the left hand, tricking the listener into hearing this as the beginning of the second half of the variation. In reality, however, this passage is merely a

transition into the variation proper of the theme. This begs the question of why a transition is necessary when it is not present in the original theme. No modulation takes place, and there is no obvious compositional problem that would necessitate such an inclusion. The simple answer would be to speculate that Liszt merely included this section to showcase his pianistic abilities, for the passage is undeniably virtuosic, with a glittering scale passage that flies to the highest reaches of the piano and flutters dizzyingly back down to earth (example 62). However, in this



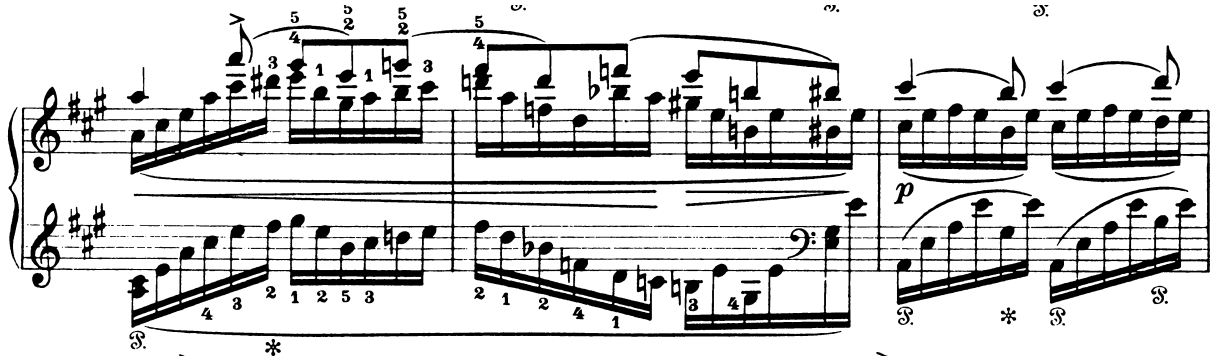
Example 62: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, m. 215.

piece, as we have already discovered, Liszt does not employ virtuosity for its own sake, but rather for a musical purpose. Based on this argument, I would like to propose a possible

"hearing" of this curious transition. Because Liszt has already fundamentally modified the narrative thrust of the theme in the first half of Var. 1 by changing the duet from a song of coercion into a dance of mutual seduction, it follows that the subsequent relationship between the characters in the "andiam" section should be different as well. I use the word "relationship" here intentionally, because the second half of Mozart's duet represents the beginning of a union between Don Giovanni and Zerlina; they are no longer strangers flirting in a garden, but rather newly-minted lovers anticipating the consummation of their affections. In the original (i.e. unvaried) statement of the "andiam" theme, the material is rather innocent and coquettish, and this makes sense, given that the seductive impetus derives primarily from Don Giovanni. In Liszt's first variation, however, the seductive impulse is found in the vocal lines of both characters, and as a result, there is no place for coyness in the subsequent relationship between Don Giovanni and Zerlina; all their cards are on the table, and so they can proceed straight to the consummation of their lust. This curious transition between the two halves of "Là ci darem la mano," then, can be heard as Liszt's fanciful vision of the first flushes of physical passion.

Interpreting musical material in sexual terms is a musicological cliché, to be sure, but in this case, it is hard not to admit that it is justified by the material. The transition begins with rapidly ascending chromatic tremolo patterns, and Liszt underlines the lovers' impulsive passion by marking the passage both "accel." and "string." Suddenly the tremolos break off into an ascending line that reaches a peak several times, before descending with a *subito* diminuendo. The cadenza finally collapses into an undulating pattern marked *poco rallentendo* before finally subsiding in a quavering *a piacere* trill. Given Liszt's infamous reputation as a lover, it is not difficult to imagine how the audiences of the mid nineteenth century would have received this passage.

While it is, of course, possible to hear this transition in different ways, the interpretation offered above at least provides a narrative-based explanation for the virtuosic writing. When the air finally clears from this heady passage, Liszt finally settles into the afterglow of the "andiam" theme proper. His variation of this material is suitably lightheaded; Mozart's lilting line is further shaped by an accompaniment so undulatory as to induce seasickness in the listener (example 63). The passage is also so highly colouristic in its harmonies that Rosen suggests it foreshadows

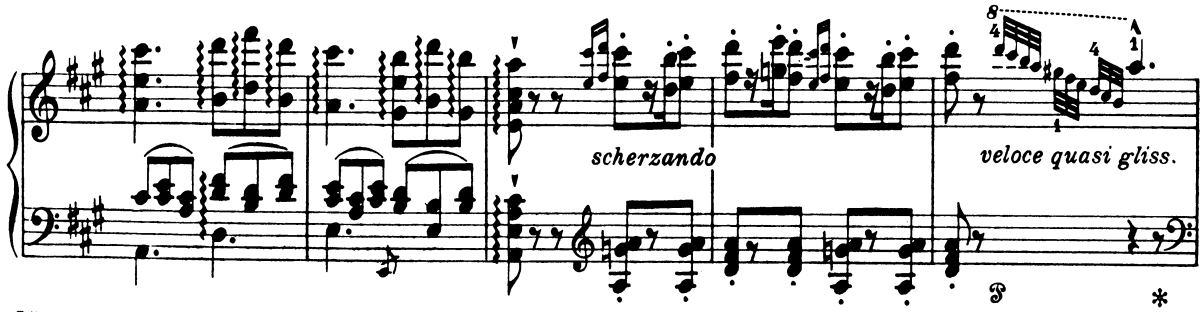


Example 63: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 107-109.

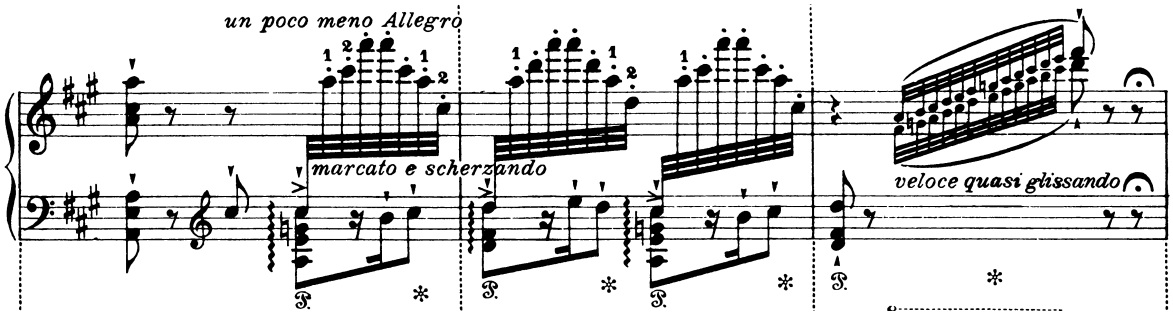
Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*.[99] This tendency toward expansion of Mozart's material is not only limited to the harmonic setting. Liszt also continues his trend of creating spacious, open textures in his setting of the ornamented dotted rhythm played by the orchestra. In his initial setting of the theme, Liszt filled in the spaces with small quasi-glissando runs (example 64). In this first variation, the runs are both doubled and lengthened (example 65). It is a subtle touch, but worth pointing out as an example of the persistent organic growth of the narrative scope of the paraphrase.

Before moving on to the second variation, it is worth pausing to examine one last detail pertaining to the first. This detail concerns the cadential measures that conclude both the theme, and the first variation. In both sections, Liszt, following Mozart's lead, ends the duet with a series

99 Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 535.

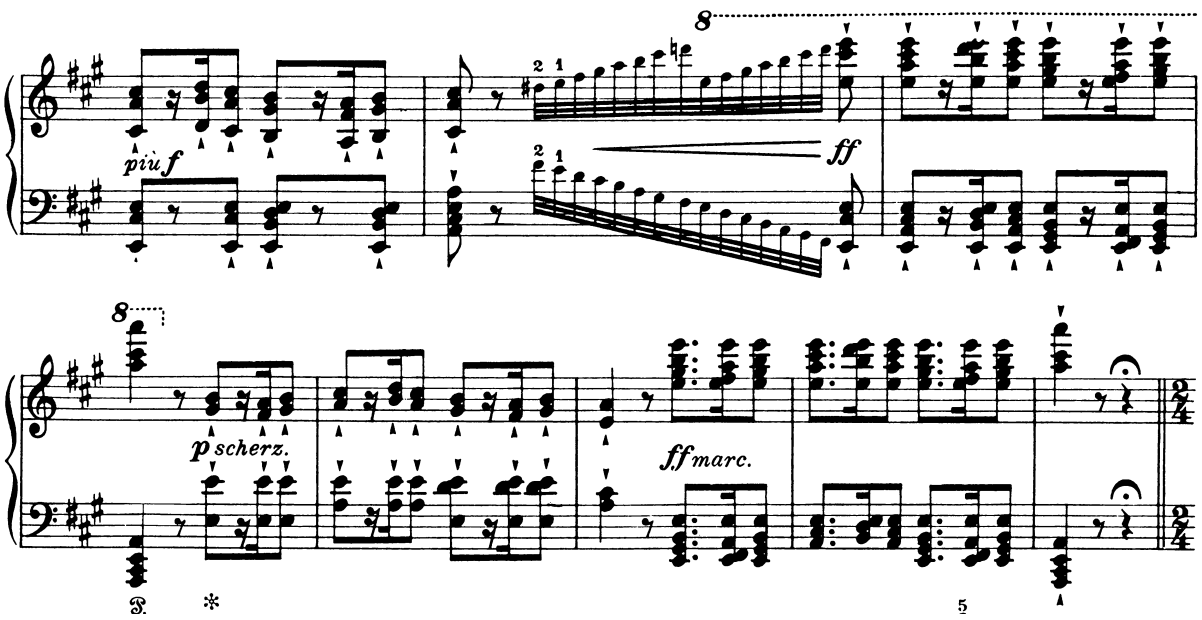


Example 64: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 130-134.

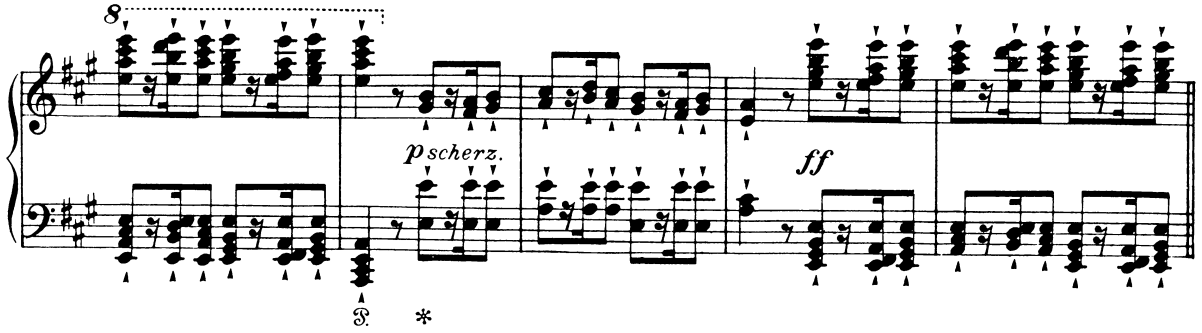


Example 65: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 230-232.

of conclusive chords, ending with a tonic harmony in root position in A major. Aside from minor differences in surface rhythm, the two passages are nearly identical. However, when practicing and memorizing the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, I noticed a seemingly insignificant variance between the two cadential passages. In the first instance, Liszt ends the first half of the cadential statement with a tonic chord in root position, with the tonic note in the top voice (example 66, downbeat of m. 146). In the second statement, however, the corresponding chord, while still in root position, is crowned by the dominant note (E) in the top voice (example 67, m. 244). Admittedly, this is an extremely minor difference, and only a pianist trying to memorize the score would be likely to make note of it. Nonetheless, I feel that it is significant that Liszt decides to weaken the second cadence by placing the dominant note in the top voice. By doing so, he is showing that the story is not over, and insinuating that the imminent second variation will continue the trend of narrative growth that was established in the first variation.



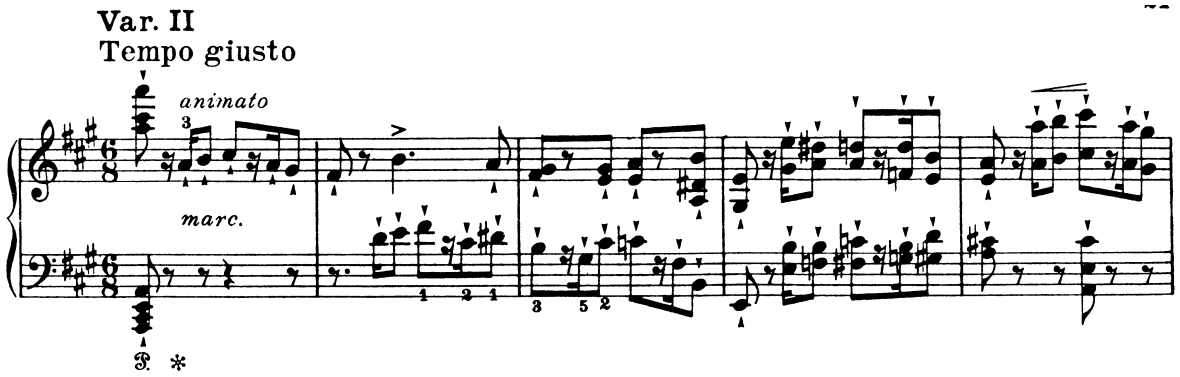
Example 66: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 143-150.



Example 67: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 243-247.

While this argument regarding a single different note in a cadence may seem far-fetched, it is also supported by the material immediately following the passage. When Liszt begins the second variation on "Là ci darem la mano" after the cadential material, he makes a crucial change to the metrical setting of the music. The first variation ends in 6/8 meter, because it is based on the "andiam" section of the duet. However, whereas the first variation *begins* in 2/4, having reverted to the original meter after the end of the theme, the second variation begins in

6/8 (example 68), thus retaining the meter of the preceding variation of the “andiam” material.

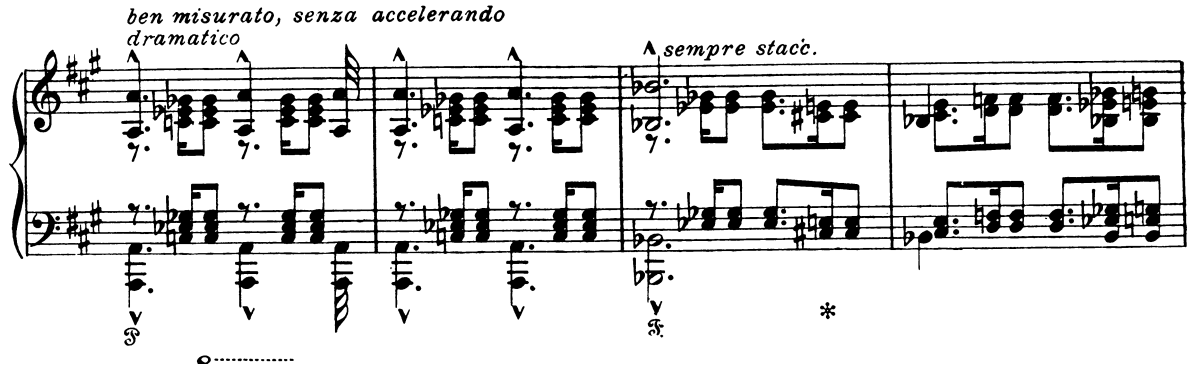


Example 68: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 248-252.

However clever it may be, this change is not merely a compositional trick. Rather, it represents a continuation of the narrative trends found in the first variation. As noted earlier, the two halves of Mozart's duet exist in two different emotional spheres; while the first focuses on seduction, the second revolves around the consent to lust. We have already seen that Liszt, in the first variation, has blurred the boundaries between these spheres, by turning Mozart's one-sided serenade of seduction into a more mutual flirtation. In this second variation, then, Liszt is further hybridizing Mozart's material, by resetting the “seduction” music in the meter of the “release” material. In this way, Liszt is proposing a narrative that charts the evolution of the relationship between Don Giovanni and Zerlina. The narrative begins with Mozart's vision of the relationship between the two characters, a portrait of domination and submission punctuated by boastful promises and coy refusals. In the first variation, the relationship is portrayed as having a more balanced distribution of power, with both parties actively pursuing sensual fulfillment. In the second variation, Liszt, through his metrical setting, suggests that the relationship is based on an almost animalistic desire, to the point where seduction is all but an afterthought. Whether or not “Là ci darem la mano” was ever about love is debatable, but even if it was, the second variation is only about

lust.

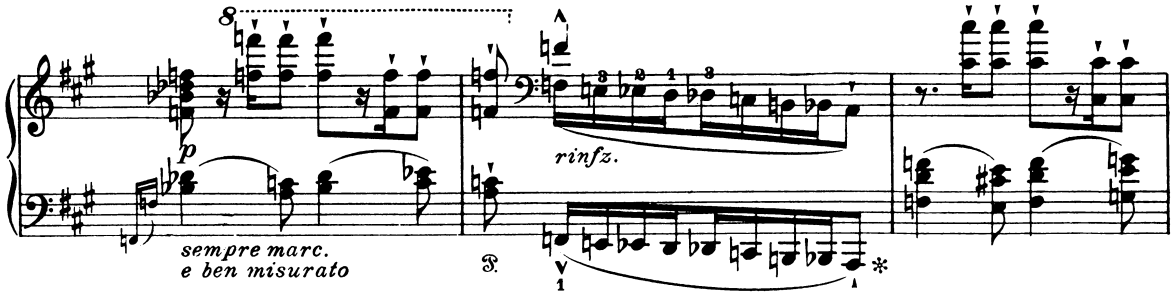
Of course, as the prescient reader will have noticed, by setting up this narrative progression featuring the encroachment of lust over love, Liszt paints himself into a compositional corner. If the seduction material has already been subsumed by the lusty "andiam" music at the beginning of Variation 2, what is the point of continuing the variation into the second half of the duet? Liszt, happily, does not disappoint, and his solution to this problem, found in the ensuing section, is one of the most brilliant aspects of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*. After toying with the grandiose 6/8 setting of the seduction duet for thirty-six measures, Liszt, rather than continuing on to the "andiam" material, introduces a new ingredient. Or rather, an old ingredient: in one of the most dramatic moments in the entire paraphrase repertoire, he brings back material from the beginning of the fantasy (example 69), namely "the statue's invitation that will take Don Giovanni to hell."[100] This sudden shift in tone is a harrowing



Example 69: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 285-288.

moment, both for the listener and the pianist. However, the full brilliance of Liszt's strategy is not revealed until bar 297 (example 70), when the "andiam" theme unexpectedly reappears beneath the crashing octaves of the statue's music.[101] The theme is fragmented, marked *piano*, and set in a

100 Ibid., 536
101 This is, of course, another example of the ingenious organicism of Liszt's transitions.



Example 70: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 297-299.

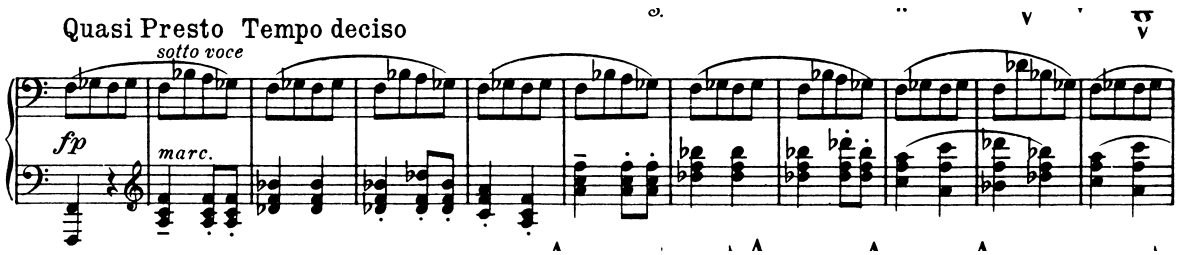
minor mode — this is Don Giovanni and Zerlina cowering in fear before the wrath of the Commendatore. Their interjections last only a few brief moments before they are lost entirely in a sea of *marcatissimo* chords, *tempestuoso* chromatic scales, and *precipitato* interlocking octaves. The narrative implications of this material are clear. As Rosen notes, "these passages make explicit a Victorian condemnation of Don Juan's morals and amount to an assertion that his erotic misbehavior will lead to eternal damnation — an assertion which does not betray the eighteenth-century libretto."

The section following the (premature) end of the second variation is the site of some discordant discourse. At m. 337, having unleashed all hell and damnation upon the keyboard, Liszt offers the pianist a choice: proceed with a forty-measure transition into the final section, or skip ahead to m. 377 to play a much more involved 118-measure *ossia* passage. In their critical appraisals of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, both Suttoni and Schmitt argue that the longer ossia passage should be omitted. Schmitt informs us that

> personally I do not play this version as I think that it is dramatically not necessary and in fact diminishes the impact and formal coherence of the fantasy. Musically, this section combines the figuration of the overture with the material of the statue and Don Juan's '*Finch' han dal vino*.' It does not really fit into the overall three-part form of the fantasy and seems to delay the arrival of the final section by artificially prolonging the arrival of the development.[102]

102 Schmitt, *Franz Liszt*, 49-50.

Suttoni takes a similar tack, intentionally "ignoring the lengthy 'ossia' that Liszt provided for the end of the transition."[103] From their comments, it seems that both critics object to the length of the ossia, but although Rosen admits that ossia is "long," he also argues that it is "one of the most original pages of the fantasy."[104] His description of the passage is eloquent: "the pathetic figuration of the overture and the statue's warning combine with the theme of the so-called Champagne aria, the celebration of hedonism, as the figuration now becomes a thunderous virtuoso display."[105] This combination of themes can be seen in example 71. Earlier in my



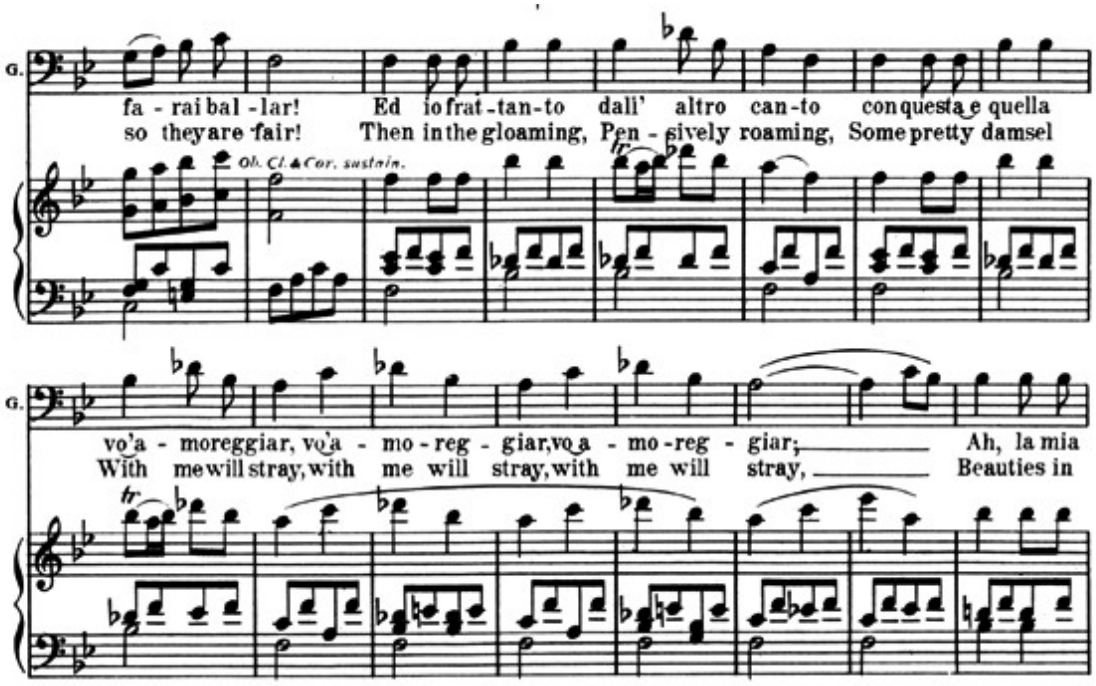
Example 71: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 392-400 (ossia passage).

examination of this piece, while discussing the stormy chromatic scales and exposed thirds, I wrote that "there is a dramatic purpose for the virtuosity: Liszt is imprinting the Commendatore's warnings in the audience's mind." It is in this ossia transition passage that Liszt's tactic comes to fruition, for the attentive listener is immediately reminded of the early episode, and remembers the statue's threats. For this reason alone, I feel that it is a grave mistake to ignore the ossia; the shorter alternate passage (i.e. the one played by Schmitt and Suttoni) does not include the return of the music of the statue with its stern chords and roiling chromatic scales.

Although I agree with Rosen in his assessment of the ossia passage's merit, I would like to offer an alternative appraisal of its thematic genesis. While it is incontrovertible that the ossia

103 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 289.
104 Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 538.
105 Ibid.

passage is partly based upon the music of the statue, I am not entirely convinced that the other material is derived from the Champagne aria. While it must be admitted that it is easy to trace the melody of the aria throughout the transition, even Suttoni notes that "the transition ends with a curious interpolation; the first portion of "Finch' han dal vino" to be heard is not the start of the aria, but its continuation beginning at 'Ed io fra tanto'" (example 72).[106] This "curious interpolation" raises two questions: why would Liszt begin his quotation in the middle of the



Example 72: Mozart, Don Giovanni, Act 1, "Finch' han dal vino," mm. 55-74.

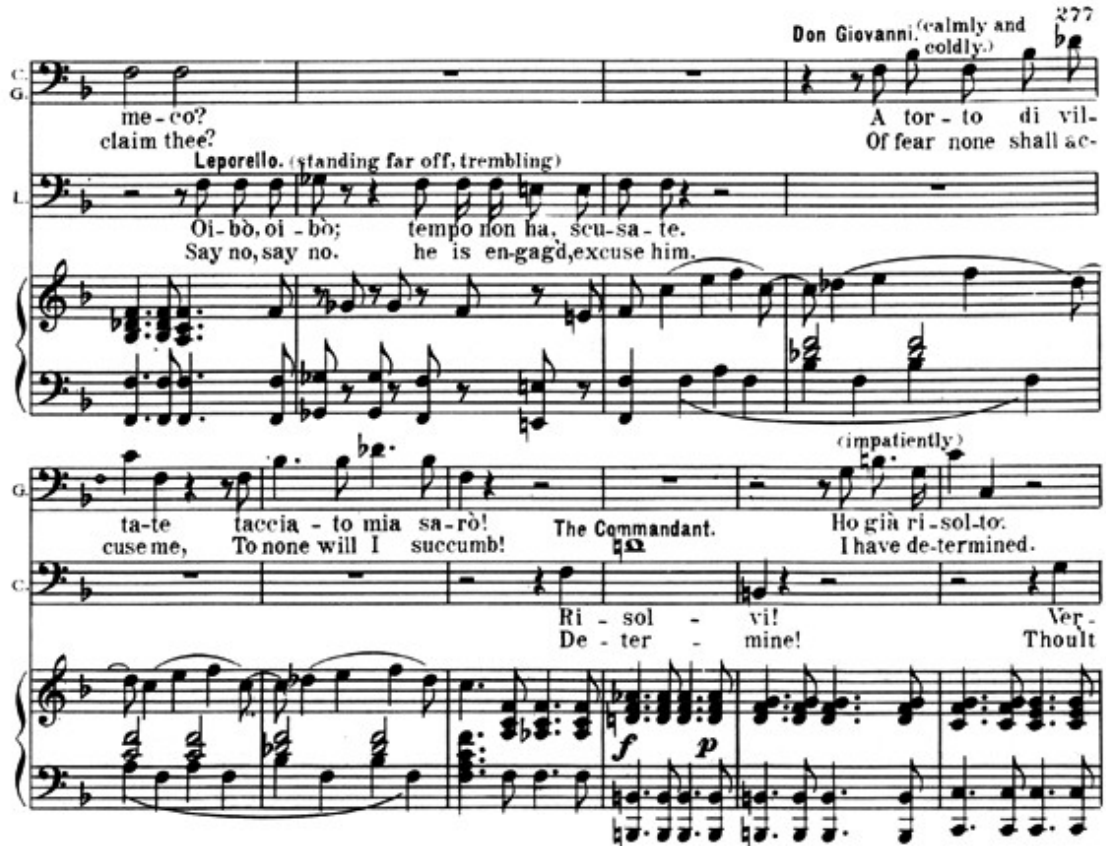
sentence, and what is the narrative significance of the quoted text? If, as Suttoni and Rosen suggest, the material originates from the middle of "Finch' han dal vino," the accompanying text is "Ed io frattanto dall' altro canto / con questa e quella vo' amoreggiar" ("in the meanwhile I shall have my own fun, making love to this or that girl.)"[107] This line makes sense in the context

106 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 289. While Suttoni is writing about the default (i.e. not the ossia) transition, the same motive from "Finch' han dal vino" is used in both versions.

107 *The Aria Database*, "Translation of 'Finch' han dal vino' from *Don Giovanni*," (by Guia Monti) http://www.aria-database.com/ (accessed September 25, 2011).

of Mozart's aria, but not in Liszt's paraphrase — why would Don Giovanni be singing of his secretive conquests when he is being confronted by the arbiter of his demise?

Given this apparent incongruity, I would like to propose a different explanation for the origin of the material. In studying Mozart's score, I found another instance of the motive outlining a B-flat minor chord, in the finale of the second act. It appears in a trio between Don Giovanni, the Commandatore, and Leporello, as the Don attempts to escape his impending doom, and can be viewed in example 73. The text accompanying the motive in question is



Example 73: Mozart, Don Giovanni, Act 2, Finale, "Don Giovanni! a cenar teco m'invasti," mm. 69-79.

revealing: Don Giovanni defiantly sings that no man shall accuse him of being a coward while he

still lives. Viewed within the narrative progression that I have traced through the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, this explanation makes more sense. Rather than being lost in thoughts of lust, oblivious to the statue's warnings, in this interpretation Don Giovanni is strong and defiant in the face of adversity; he is not afraid to face his fate. One interpretation positions Don Giovanni as merely a macho buffoon, while the other places him in the role of a (misguided) hero. If we agree with critics such as Rosen and Schmitt, who see the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* as Liszt's musical self-portrait, it seems more likely that Liszt would advocate the latter, more flattering interpretation.

This theme of heroic defiance can be heard in the third and final section of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, Liszt's treatment of "Finch' han dal vino." After reaching the end of either the ossia or the "default" transition, Liszt launches into an extravagant transcription of the hedonistic song, providing the full material from the beginning of the aria. Suttoni explains that

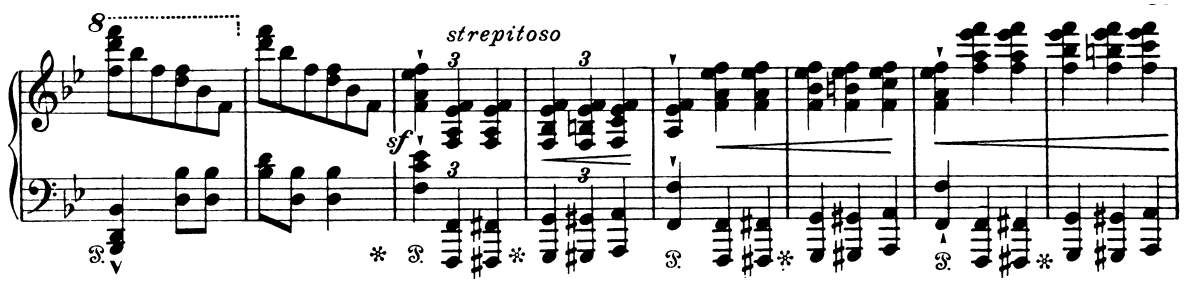
> the theme is repeated three times. Between each repetition Liszt inserts episodes that maintain the essential character of the theme but extend the music by the use of harmonic sequences. Between the second and third statements, for example, a three-measure chromatic progression by Mozart is lengthened into a twenty-seven measure one by Liszt.[108]

This can be seen as another example of Liszt's general expansionist tendencies. Rather than simply transcribe Mozart's themes note-for-note, Liszt extends the material through organic development of the music. For the listener, this instills a sense that the paraphrase has its own narrative scheme independent of the original opera; it is not merely a collection of themes, but a re-imagining of the ideas behind the music. In many ways, it is this expansive quality that sets Liszt's paraphrase apart from the others examined in this work. While a few of the other paraphrases (e.g. Leybach, Thalberg) extend Mozart's themes through the insertion of transitions, introductions, and variations, none of them do it so naturally. Throughout the *Réminiscences de*

108 Suttoni, *Piano and Opera*, 289.

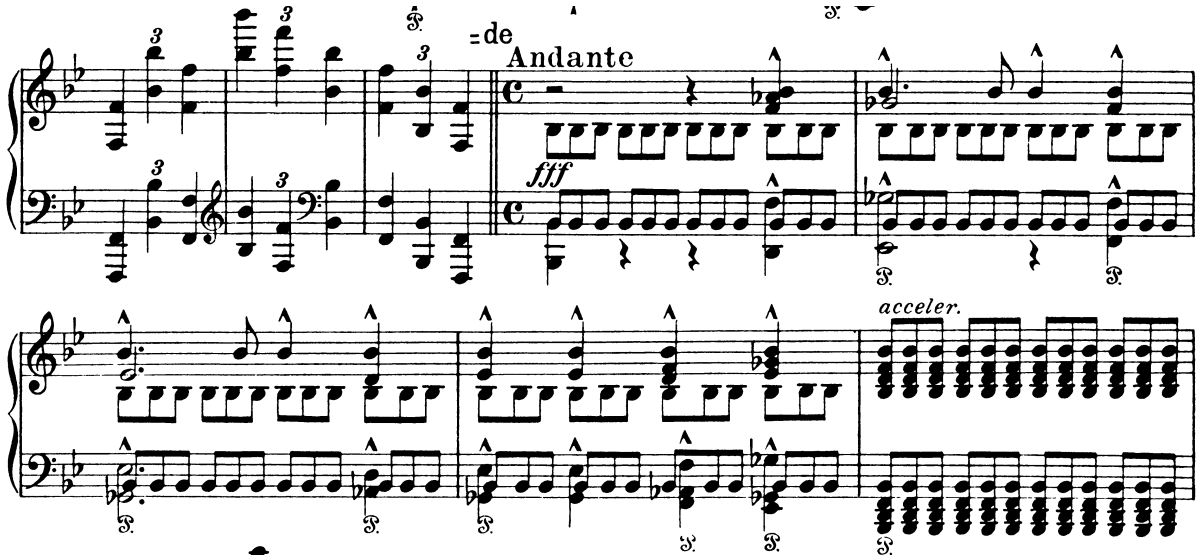
Don Juan, Liszt consistently takes all of his musical materials from Mozart's opera, and as a result, the piece — and its underlying narrative — develops organically.

One last example of the organic development of the piece can be found in the final pages of the "Finch' han dal vino" section. As Suttoni notes, Liszt expands Mozart's material through episodes featuring harmonic sequences, and the second of these episodes shows how Liszt combines different material to suggest the conflict between Don Giovanni and the statue. Of this passage, Schmitt writes that "the music of the statue with its chromatic harmonies tries to invade and challenge Don Juan's victorious B-flat Major tonality for one last time; however, Don Juan has already reached a point where nothing can stop or deter him."[109] Further evidence of the Don's exuberant courage can be seen in the final climactic moments of the paraphrase, where the "Finch' han dal vino" motive asserts itself under lightning-bolt arpeggios (example 74), and in a final *fortissimo possible* passage in which the harmonic progression associated with the statue surges over a pedal-tone B-flat, only to be finally overcome by pounding B-flat major chords leading to a decisive cadence (example 75). This ending leaves little doubt that Liszt views Don Giovanni as a triumphant hero, rather than as a tragic villain.



Example 74: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 711-718.

109 Schmitt, *Franz Liszt*, 53.



Example 75: Liszt, Réminiscences de Don Juan, mm. 738-745.

In the final analysis, Liszt's *Réminiscences de Don Juan* stands as the finest paraphrase on *Don Giovanni*, not because of its virtuosity or its originality, but rather because of its unusually natural integration and development of a narrative scheme. While paraphrases such as Raff's *Reminiscenzen* or Leybach's *Fantaisie Brilliante* are arguably more inventive in their combinations of thematic material and their re-imagining of the opera's narrative, and while Thalberg's *Fantasy* is more virtuosic, no paraphrase is more successful than Liszt's *Réminiscences de Don Juan* in creating a unified composition out of disparate themes plucked from different sections of the source opera. The opening pages dramatize both the first appearance of the statue, and his later proclamations of doom and destruction, using both virtuosity and pianistic simplicity to imprint the episode in the mind of the listener. After seamlessly transitioning into the duet “Là ci darem la mano,” Liszt uses two extended variations to depict the development of the relationship between Don Giovanni and Zerlina, and even more importantly, the relationship between seduction and mutual lust. Changing tone once again, Liszt heralds the return of the statue and its dire warnings, allowing fear to consume any lingering

strains of passion. The narrative arch does not conclude there, however, for Liszt grants Don Giovanni the opportunity to defy accusations of cowardice and return to his former glory in a finale that exudes triumphant hedonism, all the while beating back the advances of the statue. Even though the paraphrase lasts roughly twenty minutes, the dramatic impulse remains taut throughout. To quote Rosen one last time, "every phrase of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* is derived from Mozart, and yet, at the same time, every note testifies to Liszt's profound originality"[110] — high praise coming from a critic who has labeled the paraphrase as a "bastard genre."[111] Although it must be admitted that Liszt's essay on *Don Giovanni* is a pinnacle of the genre, it is unfortunate, perhaps, that critics such as Rosen have not taken the time to investigate other paraphrases with such rigour and enthusiasm.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to show that composers of paraphrases can embed narrative schemes in their arrangements of foreign thematic material. By analyzing different paraphrases based Mozart's *Don Giovanni* side by side, it becomes clear that how a composer chooses, orders, and sets the thematic material can dramatically effect the perceived narrative progression of the piece. The first paraphrase examined, Wallace's *Souvenir de Mozart*, displayed little narrative ingenuity on the part of the composer. Because Wallace largely maintained the original ordering of Mozart's themes and neglected to include substantial original material, and because his settings were essentially simple transcriptions, it is difficult to read any significant revision of *Don Giovanni*'s original narrative in this paraphrase. The *Souvenir de Mozart* is best viewed as a foil for other paraphrases, such as the *Grand Fantasy* written by Wallace's English

110 Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 539.
111 Ibid., 528.

contemporary, Sydney Smith. Smith's retelling of *Don Giovanni* is encoded with a subtle narrative of Victorian values, which can be seen through both his choice of themes and his settings of Mozart's material. Through his thematic selection, Smith populates the paraphrase with a predominantly male cast, and limits the agency of Mozart's female characters. His setting techniques, which range from using chromaticism to condemn licentious behaviour to recomposing an aria to apotheosize the character of Ottavio, further promote an unmistakably Victorian agenda.

If Smith's *Grand Fantasy* recasts the narrative of *Don Giovanni* to suit the needs of his day, Joachim Raff's *Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan"* takes a more respectful, conservative approach to Mozart's material. Rather than attempting to reshape the opera's literary themes, the *Reminiscenzen aus "Don Juan"* distills and highlights certain aspects of Mozart's drama. Through his skillful pairings and combinations of disparate thematic material, Raff delineates three of the main literary themes of the opera — namely, the power of love, the danger of deceit and lust, and the conflict between the civilized society and humanity's baser nature.

Whereas Raff explores the broader themes of Mozart's work, Ignace Leybach, in his *Fantaisie Brilliante*, chooses to focus on very specific elements in the narrative of *Don Giovanni*. By framing Mozart's themes in original material that bears similarities to his own nocturnes and character pieces, Leybach presents an altogether more muted, nocturnal vision of the opera. This vision is further communicated through the choice of themes; by selecting only music linked to romantic persuasion and courtship, and by omitting the material related to violence, debauchery, and damnation, Leybach creates an idealistic narrative that reflects his position as a Romantic era composer.

Sigismund Thalberg's *Fantaisie Op. 42* also reveals the persona of a Romantic era

composer, but in a sharply different way. Whereas Leybach's paraphrase is suitable for the sentimental, genteel tastes of the salon, Thalberg's work is a virtuosic showpiece clearly designed for the concert stage. Through his overly long original introduction, insensitive treatments of Mozart's themes, and general lack of concern for dramatic integrity and development, Thalberg makes it patently clear that he is more concerned with maintaining his reputation as a virtuoso than with paying hommage to Mozart's genius. Ironically, the same can be said of Ignacy Feliks Dobrzyński's *Hommage à Mozart*. While this paraphrase reaches spectacular heights of virtuosity, Dobrzyński's lack of understanding of the dramatic context of material is made painfully clear by his stylistically inappropriate settings of Mozart's themes, and the work conveys little or no narrative to the listener. By writing fantasies that prioritize virtuosity over narrative, both Thalberg and Dobrzyński are culpable for the current critical disdain for the genre of the paraphrase.

While composers like Thalberg and Dobrzyński allowed virtuosity to impede their musicality, Franz Liszt succeeded in writing paraphrases that are both pianistic marvels and musical masterworks. In the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, virtuosity is used to enhance the dramatic arch of the music, rather than to simply impress the concert audience. Moreover, even though Liszt uses several themes from Mozart's opera, the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* never descend into the mire of medley. Rather, through his use of steady thematic development and his total integration of transitional passages and variation sections, Liszt creates an organic re-imagining of *Don Giovanni* that simultaneously pays tribute to Mozart's genius, and redirects the opera's narrative arch.

The seven paraphrases examined in this chapter display a wide range of both dramatic depth and musical quality. While some, admittedly, provide clear justification for the

longstanding academic neglect of the paraphrase, others demonstrate that it is possible for a composer to radically alter the narrative scheme of another work through a variety of means, including (though not limited to) the selection, ordering, and setting of thematic material. This is significant, because it highlights the agency of the arranger in the (re)creation of narrative. The important corollary of this concept, of course, is that meaning is not the sole domain of the original author. Yet perhaps this is only the first step. If an arranger can transform the narrative of another composer's work, it is not such a leap to suggest that a performer can enact a similar transformation on the arrangement. It is precisely such a transformation that will be the focus of the next chapter, “Playing the Part.”

Chapter 3: Playing the Part

While it is all well and good to claim that the performer, like the arranger, can play a role in the creation of narrative in the paraphrase, it is admittedly rather more difficult to prove. This is partially because there is no simple or widely-accepted way of notating the myriad aspects of a performance. I first became aware of the problems surrounding the analysis of musical performance during my undergraduate studies as a pianist. One of my teachers, Heather Dawn Taves, was fond of asking her students how much they improvised when performing notated repertoire. When the students invariably replied that they did not improvise, but rather played the notes as written, Taves would quickly point out that in any given performance, many elements — ranging from tempo fluctuations to acoustical issues — exist on a spectrum, and are never the same twice. In other words, live performance always contains elements of improvisation. This points to the crux of the problem: how does one impose a rigorous analysis upon an essential but ephemeral aspect of the art?

The solution to this challenge remains elusive to scholars, though not through any lack of effort. As noted in the literature review in chapter 1, the study of gesture — one of the fundamentally variable aspects of live performance — is a rapidly emerging area in musicology. Still, few scholars have succeeded in tracing the link between performed gesture and the creation or reception of meaning. In chapter 1, I reviewed the literature related to the subjects of musical narrative and performed gesture, and, with the challenges these topics present independent of each other clearly outlined, it is now possible to consider how the two may interact. Before looking at current research on the intersection of narrative and gesture, however, it is worth considering the historical precedents for such a theory. A good starting point for such a survey is

C.P.E. Bach's *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* (1753). In this treatise, which serves as a cornerstone for baroque and early classical performance practice research, Bach encourages keyboardists to use gesture as a means of communicating with the listener. Writing on the emotional relationship between the performer and the audience, Bach argues that it is the goal of the player to

> master the feelings of his audience. Those who maintain that…this can be accomplished without gesture will retract their words when, owing to their own insensibility, they find themselves obliged to sit like a statue before their instrument. Ugly grimaces are, of course, inappropriate and harmful; but fitting expressions help the listener to understand our meaning. Those opposed to this stand are often incapable of doing justice, despite their technique, to their own otherwise worthy compositions.[112]

Bach's insistence on the importance of facial expressions shows that as far back as the eighteenth century, scholars were aware of the link between gesture and the creation of meaning, and evidence of performers using gesture to communicate with their listeners can be found throughout the history of keyboard performance.[113] During the rise of the virtuoso in the late eighteenth century, gesture became an intrinsic part of musical performance. Margaret Ellen Rose acknowledges this shift when she notes that during this time, "audiences and performers became increasingly concerned with appearance on stage. Establishing a unique persona became a part of the romantic performance."[114] She continues to suggest that the performance histrionics of Liszt and his contemporaries can be viewed as a form of ritualistic activity, akin to "ecstatic religious events."[115] Expanding upon this idea, Rose suggests that "some ethnomusicologists

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112 C.P.E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans.William J. Mitchell, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1949), 152.

113 Readers interested in further exploring this topic are encouraged to consult Margaret Ellen Rose's dissertation *Coming to terms with the twentieth century using a nineteenth century instrument: Virtuosity, gesture and visual rhetoric in contemporary piano composition and performance*, which provides an exemplary history of attitudes toward gesture in keyboard performance from the Baroque period to present times.

114 Margaret Ellen Rose, *Coming to terms with the twentieth century using a nineteenth century instrument: Virtuosity, gesture and visual rhetoric in contemporary piano composition and performance*, (Diss. University of California, San Diego, 1987), 25.

115 Rose, *Coming to terms*, 27.

view virtuosity as one of the most important factors in Western music, defining it according to its effect upon the audience."[116] While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the social and cultural constructions of virtuosity, it can be safely argued that virtuosity played an integral role in the reception of piano performances in the nineteenth century. In demonstrating this point, Rose offers many audience accounts of performances by Liszt and his cohorts, although she does not include the words of Carl Lachmund, an American student of Liszt. Writing in 1882, Lachmund provides a description of Liszt's gestures during a performance of the etude *Feux-follets*: "his head shook slightly as his right hand flew to and fro, from the treble to the bass; his facial expression changed continually with the contrasting passages of the music, and he seemed oblivious of his surroundings. So were we."[117] This quotation is significant not only because it describes Liszt's physical interpretation of his piece, but also because it suggests that Liszt's gestures had an effect on the listener. Lachmund's diary provides only one of countless accounts of the effects of Liszt's performances on audiences during the peak of the phenomenon known as "Lisztomania," which swept Europe in the 1840s. Although Liszt's astounding facility at the keyboard was largely responsible for the public hysteria that accompanied his performances, it is also evident that his physical presence and affects played a major role in the nearly fanatical receptions of his performances.

While there are numerous other examples of historical literature that suggest a link between gesture and meaning, for the purposes of this chapter, it is more relevant to continue by considering modern attitudes toward this construct. Ironically, despite the general growth and proliferation of academic study in the past century, there has been relatively little work done in this area. William F. Thompson offers a compelling reason for this when he points out that

116 Ibid., 40.

117 Carl Lachmund, *Living with Liszt: From the Diary of Carl Lachmund, an American Pupil of Liszt, 1882-1884*, ed. Alan Walker (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 1995), 68.

> Until the late nineteenth century, music performances were almost always experienced as audio-visually integrated activities. Audio and visual components of music performance were separated with the introduction of technologies such as the radio and gramophone, which isolated the aural component of music from all other aspects. That separation has influenced conceptions of music, such that visual contributions to music activities are often ignored.[118]

Perhaps predictably, the majority of the contemporary studies of narrative and gesture in musical performance approach the topic from an empirical standpoint, and many include various charts, data, and computational analyses in an attempt to quantify the reception of performed movements. While these studies are intriguing, unfortunately not all of them yield meaningful results. Psychologist Luisa Bonfiglioli offers an explanation for the difficulties of this work when she notes that

> the main obstacles to this type of research are most probably due to interindividual [sic] variables between performers and the fact that, with regard to many performances executed by great pianists, it is impossible to know exactly what kind of formal analysis the musician had in mind when performing the piece.[119]

Bonfiglioli's last line draws attention to one of the fundamental problems facing analysts of gesture: except it rare circumstances, it is difficult to know the thought process behind a performer's actions.[120] Despite such problems, the study by Bonfiglioli *et al*. offers several insights into the role of physical movement and the production of meaning in performance. The study suggests that "the analysis of performers' movements during executions of musical pieces…can be accomplished on three different levels at least."[121] The first level described is "productive gestures," a category which encompasses all motor functions required to produce sounds mechanically. The second category is "accompanying gestures, the movements that a

118 William F. Thompson and others, "Seeing Music Performance: Visual influences on perception and experience," in *Semiotica* 156 (2005), 203.

119 Luisa Bonfiglioli and others, "Facial expression and piano performance," conference proceedings from the *9th Annual Conference on Music Perception and Cognition*, Bologna, August 2006, published online, 1.

120 It is for this reason that in this chapter I present an analysis of my own performance.

121 Bonfiglioli et al, "Facial expression," 2.

pianist carries out during a performance involving facial expressions, movements of the head, of the bust and of the shoulders."[122] These accompanying gestures are seen as separate from the productive gestures. The final level of analysis suggested by Bonfiglioli *et al.* is "figurative gestures," and this is the most intriguing in terms of the production and reception of meaning or narrative. This third type of analysis

> regards the figurative gestures that are evoked in the listener's mind according to the music that the pianist is playing. For instance a swaying movement may be evoked by a certain melody, as well as lunging or leaning etc.…This final level of analysis shows that there is a relation between the sound produced by performers' movements and the mental representations of these movements in the listeners' minds.[123]

While the study by Bonfiglioli et al yielded fascinating results, the researchers cautioned that because of certain variables (e.g. stylistic differences in the repertoire analyzed, the unknown aspects of each pianist's personal interpretation, etc.), their conclusions "do not allow for generalisations."[124]

Unfortunately, this sort of blanket disclaimer is common in contemporary literature related to the perception and interpretation of musical gesture. Of course, such academic caution is understandable, for it is dangerous to make claims about the relationship between two topics which are difficult to quantify even when considered on an individual basis. The complications of this relationship were revealed to me firsthand when I participated in a seminar by James Wright entitled "The Impact of Visual Presence and Gesture on Music Perception: A Case for Live Performance."[125] In his seminar, Wright presented his interim work on the subject of how the visual presence of a performer can alter an audience's perception of musical value and meaning. While he did not directly explore the topic of narrative, his ideas and methods are

122 Ibid.
123 Ibid.
124 Ibid., 6.
125 James Wright, "The Impact of Visual Presence and Gesture on Music Perception: A Case for Live Performance," seminar, University of Ottawa, 3 Nov. 2010.

relevant to this discussion because they focus on the relationship between the production and the reception of gesture in performance. Wright proposed an experiment in which an audience is presented with recorded performances of various piano pieces played by different pianists. In the experiment, the recordings are played twice, once with only audio versions, and then (after an interval of time) with both audio and video presented. The subjects were asked to rate each performance on a scale reflecting the emotional and expressive qualities of the performances, with the aim of determining whether or not there was a demonstrable difference in the ratings depending on which version of the performance was presented.

While Wright's idea was undeniably compelling, in the ensuing discussion, it quickly became clear that the experiment, at least at this stage, contained too many variables and flaws to yield meaningful data. A central challenge was that because emotion and expressivity are relatively subjective parameters, they largely resistant to academic analysis. In noting this, however, I do not mean to imply that such inherently subjective topics are unworthy of study or critical attention. Rather, these topics deserve a different *kind* of attention. Earlier I noted that Klein proposes a paradigm shift in which musical narrative is seen as an emplotment of expressive states rather than as an event-based narrative derived from literary theory. Rather than attempting to steep his claims in untenable notions of objectivity, Klein accepts the subjectivity of his approach, and argues that it his job as a critic to convince the listener of possible interpretations. In a similar spirit, I propose that Wright's intuitions are valid, and suggest that rather than attempting to quantify them as data, it may ultimately be more effective to outline the connection between gestures and their reception by embracing the subjectivity of the topic. For example, rather than trying to gauge a consensus in the receptions of multiple listeners, it may be more compelling to write persuasively about one's own interpretations of a performer's gestures,

and also to discover the performer's own perceptions and intentions with their gestures through interviews and discussions.

It is precisely this type of subjective method that I employ in the remainder of this chapter as I attempt to elucidate the relationship between gesture and narrative. Through first offering my interpretations of two performances of Liszt's *Réminiscences de Don Juan de Mozart*, and then describing my own experiences in interpreting the same work as a performer, I posit possible readings of narrative as derived from gesture in these performances. While I make no claims to scholarly objectivity, it is precisely for this reason that I believe my research is valid, as it represents a fresh appraisal of this difficult topic. By approaching the problems of narrative and gesture in music from an experiential rather than an empirical knowledge standpoint, I hope to develop a new discourse that facilitates discussion of these emerging issues.

In undertaking this kind of subjective analysis of gestural narrative, I feel that the genre of the paraphrase provides opportunities for research. Because the majority of the opera paraphrases written in the Romantic era are highly virtuosic, there is considerable potential for performers to use exuberant "productive gestures" defined by Bonfiglioli et al. More importantly, however, this repertoire also encourages pianists to use other, non-productive types of gestures. Because the genre, by definition, is based on programmatic music, paraphrases provide the performer with an embedded narrative upon which to build. In the following discussion, I suggest that by using various types of gestures, pianists can potentially communicate and shape this narrative in at least two ways: "enactment" and "direction." *Enacting* the narrative entails taking on the theatrical aspects of the characters in the opera through physical gesture. For example, while playing a section of a paraphrase based on a specific aria, a pianist could use facial expressions to portray the emotions of the operatic character associated with the material.

By constrast, *directing* the narrative is not linked to theatrical performance, but rather to the emotional states associated with the operatic source material. For example, by using physical gestures that can be interpreted as signifying specific emotions, and by using movement to indicate changes in emotional tone, pianists can direct the audience's perception of the narrative progression of the piece. In this way, the gestural direction of narrative is connected to Klein's conception of narrative as an emplotment of emotional development.

While several of the paraphrases examined in chapter 2 could be excellent candidates for an examination of the enactment and direction of narrative through gestural, unfortunately none of them have been performed by more than a handful of modern pianists, and only the Liszt paraphrase has been widely recorded. Accordingly, the composition I have chosen to analyze from the perspective of gestural narrative is Liszt's *Réminiscences de Don Juan*. There is arguably no more famous (or perhaps infamous) performance of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* than that of pianist Lang Lang at Carnegie Hall in 2003.[126] Lang Lang's interpretation is as controversial as it is spectacular, for his physical gestures and facial expressions are as extravagant as Liszt's treatment of Mozart's themes. It is revealing to read the YouTube comments on the video of this performance, for it becomes clear that many of the viewers have read narrative from Lang Lang's physical gestures. Amusingly, one viewer even suggests the caption "Spider?" for a particular moment in the performance during which Lang Lang looks over his shoulder with raised eyebrows.[127] Another YouTube user's comment is more eloquent in assessing the physicality of the performance:

> People who complain about Lang Lang's facial mugging forget that he is singing all the roles in a three hour opera. To play Liszt's paraphrase full-out — as Lang Lang clearly does here — a pianist needs to master the opera: the character, the words, the conflicts, the scenes…[He] needs, in effect, to assimilate and inhabit a vast theatrical landscape. To

126 "Lang Lang plays Don Juan Paraphrase; Part 1," *YouTube*, 11 June 2006.
127 "Lang Lang plays Don Juan Paraphrase; Part 2," *YouTube*, 11 June 2006, 0:08.

> attempt to do this with a flat affect — as some clearly do on these YouTubes — is an insult to Mozart and the theatre.[128]

Despite its non-academic source and its colloquial tone, this comment strikes me as particularly insightful in that it illuminates the way in which a pianist can use physical gesture to enact the characters in Mozart's opera. While such an interpretation admittedly relies on a rather literary mode of narrative theory, it is worth considering as an example of how gesture can create narrative, or at least elicit interpretations of narrative. For example, when Lang Lang plays the section of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* based on the thematic material for the *Don Giovanni* seduction duet "Là ci darem la mano," his facial expressions suggest how he would characterize the characters of Zerlina and Don Giovanni (3:33-5:30).[129] He bats his eyelashes coyly and leans back as he plays those lines belonging to Zerlina, while nodding gruffly and puffing out his chest when rendering those belonging to Don Giovanni. Even a listener unfamiliar with the operatic context would not likely fail to recognize the dual characters portrayed by the performer's gestures.

While it is possible to identify several other examples of how Lang Lang enacts characters in his performance of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, it is crucial to note that this is not the only way he creates narrative by using gesture in this performance. Notably, Lang Lang also uses gestures to create a narrative of expressive states, and this can be seen as an example of narrative direction. He begins his performance with sharp, violent, and sudden gestures that suggest a state of emotional turmoil and drama (0:00-0:49).[130] His demeanor changes at 0:50, however, and this signals a change in the emotional state of the music. His back becomes rigid, his eyes downcast, and his arms more static, suggesting a somber mood. A stunning example of

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128 Ibid.
129 "Lang Lang plays Don Juan Paraphrase; Part 1." YouTube, 11 June 2006, 3:33-5:30.
130 Ibid., 0:00-0:49.

how Lang Lang utilizes physical gesture to narrate a change in expressive state comes at 5:26 when he suddenly changes from swaying movements to bouncing gestures, heralding a change in tone from the serene and lyrical to the boisterous and playful.[131] By employing a myriad of gestures and expressions throughout his performance of the piece, Lang Lang writes a narrative of expressive states that exists independent from the score.

While it is tempting to devote pages to describing Lang Lang's narrative of expressive states, it is ultimately more revealing to consider his performance by contrasting it with that of another pianist. The performance of Dutch pianist Wibi Soerjadi provides a perfect foil to that of Lang Lang. It is worth noting that Soerjadi is well versed in the art of the paraphrase, having composed several virtuosic fantasies on film music himself. Yet while Soerjadi is arguably no less esteemed as an interpreter of Liszt than Lang Lang, his prize-winning performance of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* from the prestigious 1989 International Liszt Competition is almost diametrically opposed to the one described in the preceding paragraphs. Soerjadi neither enacts characters nor suggests expressive states through his use of gesture (or rather, the lack thereof). From the opening bars of the composition his mien is impassive, and he employs few noticeable gestures with his arms and torso (0:40-5:00).[132] Even when he arrives at the "Là ci darem la mano" duet, his face barely registers any change in expression, and the rest of his body moves only as much as is necessary to facilitate the technical demands of the passage. This lack of physical involvement is characteristic of the entire performance, and leaves the viewer with the impression that Soerjadi does only what is necessary from a technical pianist standpoint. It is difficult to decipher any gestural narrative in this performance, whether of "literary enactment" or "expressive state" origin.

131 Ibid., 5:26-5:50
132 "Wibi Soerjadi: Réminscences de Don Giovanni — 1," YouTube, 21 May 2008, 0:40-5:00.

While it may not be possible to know if these two pianists have different conceptions of the narrative of Liszt's Réminiscences de Don Juan, it is clear that they use diametrically opposed gestures in their performances of this work, and it is possible to interpret or read meanings based on these differences. Admittedly, such interpretations are inherently subjective, and, in the spirit of Klein's approach,[133] I seek only to convince the reader that such readings are conceivable. In order to really know whether or not the performer intends his or her gestures to encourage the reception of an embedded narrative, it is necessary to ask the performer firsthand. It is with this in mind that I will begin my final analysis of gesture: a reflective analysis of my own performances of Liszt's Réminiscences de Don Juan.

Having examined how two pianists use gesture in their performances of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*, and how this relates to different forms of musical narrative, I will conclude by analyzing my own performance of the paraphrase and offering my insights into the motivations behind my interpretation. In doing this, I do not mean to compare myself to Lang Lang or Soerjadi as a pianist, for I freely admit that I do not possess their technical command of the instrument. Nor do I intend to posit my performance of the piece as in any way definitive or notable; it is only of interest for the purposes of this discussion because I am the performer in question. While I have performed the piece several times, for the purposes of this paper, I will refer to my live performance of the piece on 6 May 2010, which was recorded on video and which I subsequently uploaded to YouTube.[134] I have chosen this performance because I made it before I began considering or researching issues of narrative and gesture from an academic standpoint, and thus did not alter my performance to support my arguments in this paper.

I will begin my analysis of my performance by considering how I used gesture in the

133 Cf. to page 12: "the task of the critic is to convince the reader that they could hear the music in a way consistent with the interpretation at hand."

134 "Liszt: Réminiscences de Don Juan, 1/2. Matty Walton, piano," YouTube, 12 May 2010.

same sections of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* as discussed in relation to the performances by Lang Lang and Soerjadi. In the opening measures of the piece, I note that I hunch over the piano and raise my shoulders, suggesting a state of emotional heaviness and tension (0:14-0:31).[135] At 0:28 I suddenly wrench myself "out" of the piano, signaling a momentary reprieve in the tension, before launching back into an "inward" posture at 0:35.[136] I remain within similar gestural domains for the first several minutes of the piece. At 3:47, however, I note that I swing my arms up and then let them fall swiftly to my sides in a gesture that could be equated with resignation.[137] A major change comes at 4:01, however, when I suddenly change the movement of my arms, releasing a chord with a flick of the wrist accompanied a moment later by a raising of my eyebrows.[138] These movements correspond to a change in the music from the ominous opening material to the lighter introduction to "Là ci darem la mano," and clearly suggest a changed expressive state.

If placed on a spectrum of gesture, my performance of the ensuing duet material (4:35-6:15) lies somewhere between Soerjadi's deadpan interpretation and Lang Lang's animated enactment.[139] While my gestures do differentiate between the lines sung by Zerlina and those sung by Don Giovanni, the differences are much more subtle than those found in Lang Lang's performance. My movements during Don Giovanni's lines could be described as lethargic and bashful, in contrast to Lang Lang's vainglorious and boastful physical presence. During Zerlina's motives, I lean back slightly more and hold my head more erect, expressing a more attentive, alert state. These differences, however, are slight, and I suspect that a listener unfamiliar with the context would not recognize a dialogue between two characters through my gestures.

135 Ibid., 0:14-0:31.
136 Ibid., 0:28-0:35.
137 Ibid., 3:47-3:50.
138 Ibid., 4:01-4:15.
139 Ibid., 4:35-6:15.

Having attempted in the preceding paragraphs to dissect portions of my performance as an external observer, I will now comment on my gestures from the standpoint of the performer himself. Recollecting my performance and my practice in preparation for that performance, I do not recall paying special attention to the visual aspects of my interpretation, as manifested as physical gestures. My physical movements often tended to be dictated primarily by how they related to the technical demands of the piece, especially in the most challenging passages of the paraphrase (which, I am sorry to admit, constituted most of the piece, given my limited technical abilities). However, my gestures also reflected the emotional and expressive states I wished to engage while playing various sections of the piece. Often, I found that physically approximating certain expressions or movements that I associated with certain emotional states helped me to connect with the musical material I was playing in a more direct and immediate way. While I was not consciously trying to create a narrative of expressive states for the benefit of my audience, I *was* attempting to create and follow such an emplotment (to use Klein's term) for myself in order to facilitate my performance from a musical, interpretative standpoint (i.e. as opposed to a purely technical standpoint). In this way, I would say that I did use gesture to create a narrative in this performance, if primarily for myself (i.e. instead of for the audience).

In terms of "enacting" a narrative through gesture, I was certainly aware of the programmatic context of the piece, and strove to physically embody the characters implicated in the drama to at least some degree. However, while practicing and performing the composition, I never actually attempted to act the roles of the characters, but rather to engage the emotional spheres of those characters. To put it another way, I did not attempt to physically move as though I were mimicking the gestures or mannerisms of a character, but rather, I sought to match my movements to the expressive states I associated with that character. While it is a subtle

distinction, I believe it is important, because it positions my experience within the realm of emotional or expressive events, instead of the area of plot or character events. Even when I was aware of the characters underlying the musical material, my concern was with the emotions represented by those characters, rather than their personal histories or traits, or even their words.

As noted above, I chose to analyze this particular recording of my performance of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan* primarily because I made it prior to beginning work on this thesis. Since that time, however, I have performed the paraphrase in concert several times, and my increased awareness of the issues at play has influenced my interpretation. In the previous chapter, I argued that Liszt redirects Mozart's narrative through a variety of compositional techniques, and in preparing for performance, I have attempted to highlight these aspects of the piece through my use of gesture.[140] For example, in the opening section of the paraphrase, in which Liszt develops the themes related to the statue, I convey changes in emotional tone through my use of arm and torso position. In the opening measures, I maintain a straight back and neck in order to communicate a sense of emotional composure in keeping with the staid chordal writing. However, when Liszt abruptly changes the tone by writing shocking arpeggios, I adopt a stiff posture and widen my eyes to emphasize the fearful quality of the music. Later, when Liszt sets the statue's warning in stark octaves (example 53, above), I attempt to corroborate his compositional decision to eschew virtuosity by limiting my use of non-productive gestures to facial expressions. In that regard, I attempt to enact the cold, firm character of the Commendatore by holding my chin high and staring resolutely beyond the end of the piano. While such gestures are certainly theatrical in nature, they serve to communicate Liszt's own narrative instincts.

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140 It is worth noting that, like any performer, I also used other interpretive elements (e.g. variations in voicing, tempo, tone colour, etc.) to highlight various aspects of the composition. However, since this chapter is focused on gesture, I have chosen to omit these aspects from my reflective analysis.

I also experimented with using gesture to emphasize Liszt's interpretation of “Là ci darem la mano” in the middle section of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*. Beyond using gesture to characterize Don Giovanni and Zerlina in the theme, I attempted to aid the perception of Liszt's narrative progression throughout the following variations. As noted in chapter two, Liszt uses the variations to depict the development of the relationship between the lovers as it evolves from formalized flirtation and seduction into more intimate realms of lust and sensuality. By using increasingly animated gestures, such as swaying motions in the dancelike opening of Var. 1, and more vigorous arm movements in Var. 2, I attempted to reveal the underlying narrative progression embedded in the score. Similarly, one of the best opportunities for using gesture to enhance notated narrative can be found toward the end of the paraphrase. I suggested earlier that in the ossia passage preceding the “Finch' han dal vino” finale, Liszt incorporates a theme which I believe originates from the Don's confrontation with the statue, rather than from the middle of the Champagne aria as many scholars suggest. By adopting a defiant pose and facial expression during this passage, I indicate that this material is linked to Don Giovanni's protestations that he is not a coward, rather than his champagne-inspired plotting of sexual conquests. Through using gesture to both enact the character and indicate the emotional tone of the material, I emphasize Liszt's underlying narrative decisions.

In my practice, I explored numerous other ways of using gesture to enhance the narrative arch found in the score of the *Réminiscences de Don Juan*. However, it is also worth noting that gesture can be used negatively as well. In other words, if it is possible to enhance Liszt's embedded narrative through the use of gesture in performance, it is equally possible to subvert the notated narrative. While I have not intentionally done so in performance, I have, as a result of my research, considered how such a denial of Liszt's narrative impulses could be accomplished.

For example, if a performer were to use stiff, restricted gestures throughout the treatment of “Là ci darem la mano,” the audience would not likely perceive the scope of Liszt's narrative progression. Similarly, if a pianist were to play the ossia passage with a mischievous or carefree demeanour, the listener could be forgiven for assuming the material derived from “Finch' han dal vino.” By denying the Don his chance to confront his accuser and prove his heroic bravery, such a choice would derail Liszt's entire narrative scheme. By considering this negative example, it is possible to begin to understand the true power of gesture in performance.

This chapter, through examining historical trends and performance practices, subjective modern performance reception, and reflective self-evaluation practices, has attempted to show that gesture plays an important role in the reception of performance. More specifically, it has suggested that performed gesture is closely linked to the production of meaning and narrative in a musical composition. Finally, it has demonstrated that the paraphrase repertoire, because of its frequent emphasis on virtuosity, and because of its inherently programmatic nature, is an ideal forum for the exploration of this challenging topic.

Although this chapter has attempted to address the problems surrounding these topics, and to pose preliminary approaches to embracing these challenges, much work remains to be done. Problems of subjectivity and ambiguity abound when discussing issues of narrative and gesture, and it seems unlikely that any kind of critical consensus will ever be reached. It is my hope, however, that this chapter has convinced the reader that these topics are deserving of more attention, both from scholars, and from performers themselves.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to both review and expand upon the literature related to three underrepresented topics in musical scholarship: narrative, gesture, and the paraphrase. While it is clear from the preceding discussion that issues of musical narrative and gesture are complex when examined from a purely abstract, academic standpoint, by exploring these topics in relation to the paraphrase repertoire, it is possible to gain a unique understanding of how they operate, both on the score and on the stage. Nor is the relationship between the theories of narrative and gesture and the genre of the paraphrase one-sided. Barring a few exceptions, the paraphrases of the nineteenth century constitute a lost repertoire, and this is largely because they have traditionally been approached using critical frameworks based on originality and authenticity. By examining these works from perspectives which recognize the agency of the arranger and the performer, the true historical and cultural value of the genre is revealed. Stepping back from the immediate issues, it is worth considering how other neglected repertoires and topics in musicology may benefit from alternative critical perspectives.

It is my hope that scholars and players alike will continue to examine these topics, for I believe that both gesture and narrative are elements that can help bridge the growing gaps between performers, academics, and audiences, given that they can be approached from so many angles. Moreover, many questions remain to be posed and debated. For example, even if it is argued that narrative is an externally imposed element emanating from the gestures of the performer or the interpretations of the audience, does that necessarily make it less significant or valid than if it originated in the score? Can the methods used in this thesis to analyze the relationship between gesture and narrative also be effectively applied to absolute music? While this paper has focused on analyzing a repertoire that is at least partially programmatic in nature, I

believe that future research in this area could — and should — attempt to apply similar methods to absolute music.

To be sure, there are no easy answers to these questions. However, by facing these challenges through embracing the subjectivities of expression, the intricacies of narrative interpretation, the compositions of neglected genres, and the voices of performers, musicology may well find strength in diversity, a strength which affirms the continued relevance of the field as a whole.

Appendix — Thematic Usage Chart

	Wallace	Smith	Raff	Leybach	Thalberg	Dobrzyński	Liszt
Overture	☑						
Giovinette, che fate all'amore			☑				
Là ci darem la mano		☑		☑	☑	☑	☑
Finch' han dal vino	☑		☑			☑	☑
Batti, batti, o bel Masetto				☑			
Riposate, vezzose ragazze		☑					
Minuet (act 1)	☑		☑		☑		
Deh vieni alla finestra		☑	☑	☑		☑	
Vedrai, carino			☑		(☑)		
Il mio tesoro intanto	☑	☑	☑				
Non mi dir			☑				
Di rider finerai (statue)		☑	☑				☑

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