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**THE INFLUENCE OF ROMANTICISM ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE
'TRANSCENDENTAL' ETUDES**

OF

FRANZ LISZT

by

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To my grandparents in Penang and my parents in London, thank you for encouraging me to follow my heart and pursue my dream.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis sets out to investigate the musical and Romantic ideas that may have influenced Liszt during the composition of the three versions of the ‘Transcendental’ Etudes in relation to the pianistic and musical evolution of the work. The musical and pianistic content of the juvenile *Étude pour le piano en douze exercices* (1827) takes after the didactic exercises of Karl Czerny. The intermediate version, known as the *Grandes Études* (1839), was conceived at the height of Liszt’s performing career and develops the principal thematic ideas of its predecessor whilst incorporating the virtuoso piano technique developed by Liszt’s contemporaries, Thalberg and Chopin, as well as the advanced chromaticism characteristics of the latter’s music. Crucial to the realisation of the intermediate version with its almost superhuman technical demands is also the influence of Paganini. The final version entitled *Études d’exécution transcendente* (1852) features a facilitation of some of the technically most demanding passages, as well as the addition of programmatic titles to ten of the twelve etudes. The relationship between programmatic intention and changes to the musical content is not as direct a one as may be supposed, since the vast majority of the radical changes to the musical content did not occur with the (explicit) addition of programmatic/descriptive intention in 1852, but rather in the 1839 version. This poses the question of whether the intermediate version was already implicitly programmatic/descriptive in intention, or whether the titles of the 1852 version were mere ‘afterthoughts’, added to works that had been transformed for other reasons. The balance of evidence gathered by the author supports the former view.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The three versions of Liszt's, 'Transcendental' Etudes form a fascinating account of Liszt's musical and personal development. The juvenile version was published in 1827 and entitled *Étude pour le piano en douze exercices*. The musical and pianistic content of this set of early studies takes after the didactic exercises of Liszt's mentor and Beethoven's student, Karl Czerny. The intermediate version, known as the *Grandes Études*, was conceived at the height of Liszt's performing career and published in 1839. This set of etudes develops its 1827 prototype whilst incorporating the virtuoso piano technique of Thalberg and Chopin, two of the nineteenth-century most celebrated piano virtuosos. The notorious technical demands of the intermediate version can also partly be attributed to the influence of the Italian virtuoso violinist Niccoló Paganini, whom Liszt had first heard in 1832. The final version was published in 1852 and entitled *Études d'exécution transcendente (Etudes of transcendental execution)*. This version features a technical facilitation of its 1839 predecessor, as well as the addition of programmatic titles to ten of the twelve etudes. This thesis sets out to investigate the musical and Romantic ideas that may have influenced Liszt during the composition of the 'Transcendental' Etudes in relation to the pianistic and musical evolution of the work, in other words, of the gradual change and development of the materials and concepts of the first version evinced in the two later versions.

1.1 Existing research on the ‘Transcendental’ Etudes

Previous research into the ‘Transcendental’ Etudes includes James Bryant Conway’s 1969 doctoral thesis, ‘Musical Sources for the Liszt *Études d’exécution transcendente*: A Study in the Evolution of Liszt’s Compositional and Keyboard Technique’.¹ Conway’s thesis provides a thorough examination of all three versions of Liszt’s ‘Transcendental’ Etudes and charts the composer’s pianistic and musical development through these sets of etudes. Conway does not examine the possible Romantic influences on the evolution of the work in any detail, but suggests that Liszt’s 1852 revisions were determined by the respective programmatic titles (Conway 1969:6).² This is highly contestable as the majority of the ‘Transcendentals’ had acquired most of their musico-dramatic substance and formal expansion in the intermediate version. In other words, the significant transformation of the set took place between the juvenile (1827) and intermediate versions (1839), while most of the alterations to the final version (1852) consist of a trimming of the more exorbitant technical demands of its 1839 predecessor.

Helen Hall’s 1983 thesis, entitled ‘The Evolution of Liszt’s Compositional Style as Reflected in the Three Versions of the *Transcendental Etudes*’, seeks to re-examine Conway’s study by concentrating on the specific sections of the etudes the author deemed most radically transformed. Unlike Conway, Hall includes a discussion on the development of the concert etude and a brief review of the possible musical influences on Liszt’s ‘Transcendental’ Etudes. However, like Conway, she does not pose the question of whether any of the extra-musical programmatic influences evoked by the titles of the 1852 version are already present in the intermediate version.

Entitled ‘An Analysis of Franz Liszt’s Stylistic Development As Manifested By the Three Compositional Stages of the 12 Etudes, Opus 1 (1826), The *Douze Grandes Etudes* [*sic*] (1838) and the Final Version, *Etudes d’exécution* [*sic*] *transcendente* (1851),’ D. J. Cilliers’s 1991 thesis is a detailed comparative study of the three

¹ Conway’s thesis was short-listed and recommended by Michael Saffle (1986:266) as one of the outstanding studies on Liszt’s solo keyboard work.

² Jim Samson (2003:178) suggests that Liszt had only thought of a ‘programmatic fit’ for these etudes during the final revision in 1852.

versions of ‘Transcendental’ Etudes Nos. 4 and 5 (‘Mazeppa’ and ‘Feux follets’). Cilliers also briefly discusses the development of the other ‘Transcendentals’. Although she acknowledges that an ‘expansive keyboard style, profound dramatic and poetic ideas and a much more evolved compositional technique’ distinguishes the intermediate set from the first one, and that the final version of the set is ‘basically the same composition’ as its predecessor (Cilliers 1991:83–84), the thesis does not examine the possible role of Romantic influences on the evolution of the ‘Transcendentals’.

One of the most exhaustive studies on the ‘Transcendental’ Etudes is Christian Ubber’s 2002 thesis entitled ‘Liszts Zwölf Etüden und Ihre Fassungen’ (‘Liszt’s Twelve Etudes and Their Versions’). In this study, Ubber’s discussion and comparative analysis is considerably more detailed than Conway’s, and although the thesis does provide substantial historical background to the history of all three versions of the ‘Transcendentals’ as well as an investigation of the musical figures that may have influenced Liszt during the composition of the work, like all the theses discussed above, Ubber’s study does not examine the possible Romantic influences on evolution of the ‘Transcendentals’ in any detail, nor does it pose the question of whether any of the extra-musical programmatic influences evoked by the titles of the 1852 version are already present in the intermediate version.

1.1a Objective of the study

This study intends to explore what the author perceives as a lacuna in the existing research on Liszt’s ‘Transcendental’ Etudes. None of the researchers listed above discusses the aesthetic and musical impact of Liszt’s programmatic intentions as evinced in the titles added to the third (final) version of the Etudes in any detail, nor do they investigate in depth the moment at which this impact occurs. For example, all four researchers noted that the source for Liszt’s ‘Mazeppa’ (Etude No. 4) was Hugo’s eponymous poem, yet none of them deals with the text, its metaphors, and especially its link with Romantic aesthetics, and hence the connection between Hugo’s text and what it symbolises for Liszt in this particular work, nor do they take into account the fact that the title ‘Mazeppa’ was added in 1840 to the virtually unaltered 1839 version of the Fourth Etude, which bore no title. The failure to attempt

to pinpoint the precise moment of extra-musical Romantic influence on the evolution of the Etudes is especially evident in Conway's research, who clearly states that Liszt's final revision of the etudes was conceived with their (respective) programmatic intentions in mind (1969:6), a view which this author believes to be open to discussion.

This study has three objectives, namely:

- to outline the ideas and philosophies of Romanticism that had a tangible influence on Liszt's music,
- to analyse the evolution of the 'Transcendental' Etudes in relation to possible Romantic influences and
- to determine, if possible, at what stage during the composition of each etude Liszt envisaged the programmatic title and/or intent of the final version (1852).

1.2 Overview of the study

In order to achieve the objectives outlined above and to contextualise the conclusions reached, brief overviews of Liszt's creative life, of the Romantic ideas and philosophies that may have influenced him, and of the 'Transcendental' Etudes themselves, are provided as preamble to the comparative analysis of the three versions.

The study is divided into six chapters:

- The remainder of Chapter 1 provides the historical background to the development of the concert etude.
- Chapter 2 is a concise survey of Liszt's creative life and of its subdivisions according to different authors.
- Chapter 3 is a discussion of the Romantic ideas and philosophies that had a tangible influence on Liszt's music.
- Chapter 4 provides an overview of Liszt's 'Transcendental' Etudes before discussing the early, intermediate and final versions in detail.
- Chapter 5 consists of a comparative analysis of the three different versions of the Etudes, focusing on the most important changes and the probable reasons behind them, especially where the changes seem to reflect the programmatic intentions of the final version. The Romantic influences that may have inspired the programmatic titles of the final version are examined in detail. Each comparative analysis will try to determine, as far as possible, at what stage during the composition of these etudes the programmatic aims of the final version were conceived.
- Chapter 6 draws conclusions from a summary of the findings.

1.3 The history of the etude

The French word 'étude' can be literally translated as 'study'. In Robert Schumann's 1836 review of Johann Pixis's *Exercices en forme de valse (Exercises in the form of the waltz)* for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, Schumann defined the latter as follows:

Studies are studies: that is to say, one should learn from them something one did not know before. In a broad sense, every piece of music is a study, and the simplest is sometimes the most difficult. In a narrower sense we require as especial aim in the study: it must improve a certain technicality and lead to the mastery of some particular difficulty, whether this lies in technicalities, rhythm, expression, performance, or what else.³

This is somewhat broader than the definition given by Randel (2003:301):

A composition designed to improve the technique of a performer by isolating specific difficulties and concentrating on his or her efforts [*sic*] and their mastery. A single etude usually focuses on one technical problem; etudes are usually published in groups more or less systematically covering a range of such problems in a range of keys. In present-day usage, the etude falls between the exercise, a short formula not worked out as a formal composition, and the concert etude, which can stand as a self-sufficient piece of music.

1.3.1 Early history

Although the title 'etude' or 'study' rarely appears in early keyboard music, some of the repertory during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries consisted of instructional guidebooks and instrumental essays on keyboard technique. Musical treatises and pedagogical resources consisting of numerous volumes of technical exercises can be traced back to the mid-seventeenth century. Among the latter examples of these must be mentioned, *L'art de toucher le Clavecin* (published 1716) by François Couperin (1631–1701) and *De la mécanique des doigts sur le clavessin* (1724) by Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764), which paved the way for what is arguably the standard keyboard treatise of the eighteenth century, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (1753) by Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788).

³ Quoted in *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Sachteil 3*, p. 200. The English version of the quote is a free translation of the original German text.

The suites of Henry Purcell (1659–1695) and George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) were entitled ‘Lessons’, while the term ‘Studio’ was also being used at the time to describe various keyboard compositions. Furthermore, musical works such as *Sonate per cembalo divise in studii e divertimenti* (1732) by Francesco Durante (1684–1755) and *Essercizi per gravicembalo* (1738) by Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1787) are examples of instructive works that were published in the eighteenth century. It is possible to argue that these are already early examples of the concert etude, as they are not merely designed as exercises, but aspire to be works with significant musical content.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) composed substantially for the keyboard, the composer’s output including the two volumes of the *Wohltemperierte Clavier* (1722 and 1742), and the four volumes of the *Clavierübung*, which includes the six Partitas, the *Italian Concerto*, the *French Overture* and the ‘Goldberg’ Variations’, as well as the two and three-part inventions, all conceived with didactic objectives which address a great variety of technical and musical problems. However, like Scarlatti’s *Essercizi per gravicembalo* (1738), the musical content in Bach’s compositions is never sacrificed to their pedagogical intent, and the music of both still occupies a substantial place in the repertoire of today’s harpsichordists and pianists.

Several factors in the eighteenth century contributed to the development of the piano study. These include the emergence of the *style galant*, the invention and development of the piano, the popularity of the piano, and the appearance of pedagogical works on piano-playing.

1.3.1a. The emergence of the style galant

In the early eighteenth century, instrumental music started to move away from the complex, contrapuntal Baroque style still evident in much of Bach’s music towards the Rococo⁴ style of writing, before the emergence of the homophonic *style galant*⁵

⁴ The term originates in the decorative arts and is often used to describe the compositional style (in especially French music) between the Baroque and the *style galant*.

⁵ The *style galant* is characterised by ‘light texture, periodic phrasing with frequent cadences, liberally ornamented melody, simple harmony, and free treatment of dissonance’ (Don Michael Randel 2003: 341). There are various spellings for the word ‘galant’: Dahms and Baker use the spelling ‘gallant’ (with two ls), whereas Wilson, Ratner, Radice, Viala and Lee, Sheldon and

(Schoenberg 1965:15). As a stylistic ideal, *style galant* is often vaguely characterised, as the opening comments of Sheldon's research (1975:240) on the subject shows:

The *galant* style remains an all too vaguely defined style concept. Ernst Bücken, in the first modern investigation of the subject, makes the distinction between an early partly-polyphonic and a later homophonic phase of the *galant* style. This distinction is developed somewhat by William S. Newman into a Rococo phase followed by an international pre-Classical phase. There also appears to be the view of the *galant* style as a transitional style characterized by simplified technique; H. J. Serwer has expressed the view that for Marpurg this style designated all non-contrapuntal music during the bulk of the eighteenth century. For some the style is associated mainly with keyboard music.

Among the key features of this new style was its emphasis on clarity of melodic line and gratifying harmonic modulations. The Venetian composer Baldassare Galuppi (1706–1783) described the characteristics of the style as '*vaghezza, chiarezza e buona modulazione*',⁶ (Dahms and Baker 1925:365). Ratner (1956:446) sees the use of permutation as a compositional device that 'works well' in *galant* music.⁷ Harold Schoenberg (1965:15), summarises these traits of *style galant* as follows:

It marks music's shift from the church to the salon, from fugue to sonata. It demanded a singing style, nuance and elaborate *fioritura*, politeness over force, fluffiness over deep content. It also demanded a new style of melody, a new kind of texture, a simplification of means.

The features that Schoenberg describes, and especially the emphasis on a singing style and on nuance, required a new type of keyboard instrument, capable of cantabile tone and dynamic variety. The stage was set for the arrival of the piano.

1.3.1b The invention of the piano

It was in Italy that the new instrument known today as the piano was invented. Sources such as Parish (1944), Harding (1932), Jensen (1998) and Schoenberg (1965)

Schoenberg all use the spelling 'galant' (with one l). Furthermore, Schoenberg (1965:15) also observed that *style galant* is referred to as the '*stile sueto*' in Italy. According to Radice, the term originates from the French verb 'galer' (literally translated as 'to be merry'), which can be traced back to thirteenth-century French literature, with the word 'galant' appearing in the fourteenth century.

⁶ 'Beauty, clarity and good modulation.'

⁷ Ratner wrote that 'well separated phrases, light texture, characteristic figures, and striking, juxtaposed contrasts of manner (particularly in Italian orchestral music) – all lend themselves readily to the substitution of one typical melodic formula for another' (Ratner 1956:446).

recognised a harpsichord-maker from Padua, Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655–1732), as the inventor of the first successful piano in 1709, while Montanari (1991) and Howard Schott's chronology (1985:30) and commentary show that Cristofori had conceived the prototype pianoforte as early as 1698. The Italian had envisaged the idea of a touch-sensitive instrument employing hammer-activated strings, and hence allowing the performer to play both loudly and softly.⁸ Cristofori's instrument was also a great improvement on the clavichord in terms of the variety of dynamic nuances.

Having literally invented the piano, Italy then had little to do with its development. It was a German, Gottfried Silbermann, who was responsible for its improvement.⁹ However, the slow but gradual spread of the piano in Europe during the eighteenth century shows that musicians were still uncertain about the new instruments. Parrish (1941:21) makes the point that the piano was initially seen as 'an economical substitute for the harpsichord.' Like the latter, it was for a while equipped with full apparatus of stops to imitate the tone colours of other instruments.

The Englishman John Broadwood began manufacturing pianos with Silbermann's protégée Johannes Zumpe in the 1760s, and his work had much to do with the acceptance of the piano throughout Europe. Broadwood's enterprise, design and distinction in craftsmanship meant that the English pianos were the finest in Europe. The growing popularity of the piano¹⁰ also saw the emergence of great performers and composers for the instrument, including Ludwig van Beethoven, who taught Karl Czerny, who, in turn, taught Franz Liszt.

⁸ Schott (1985:30) informs us that this instrument was known as *arpi cembalo che fa il piano e il forte*, whereas Montanari (1991) termed Cristofori's instrument as *Arpicimbalo che fa il piano e il forte, a due registri principali unison* (An arpicimbalo that can play both soft and loud, with two main unison stops).

⁹ Parrish (1944:429) shows that in 1711 Francesco Scipione, Marchese di Maffei (often referred to as Scipione Maffei), published a detailed description of Cristofori's new pianos in *Giornale dei letterati d'Italia* (published Venice 1711, 5:144). This review was accompanied by a sketch showing the action of Cristofori's pianos. It was the German translation of Scipione Maffei's article which appeared in Mattheson's *Musikalische Kritik* (published Hamburg in 1725, 3:340) that prompted Silbermann to build pianos similar to those of Cristofori.

¹⁰ The figures of transaction in the Broadwood journal (for the sale of pianos in Europe): the sale of around seven hundred pianos a year throughout the 1770s rose to almost nine hundred in 1784; and during most of the 1770s the number of references to pianos rose from under fifty per annum to over two hundred and fifty in 1784 (Wainright and John 1982: 676).

1.3.1c The development of piano-playing treatises and piano studies

The popularity of the piano resulted in a rapid increase in teaching materials aimed at the average musician as well as at the professional. By the late eighteenth century, the physical demand of the new piano soon led to a greater emphasis on pianistic technique, which was now isolated as an independent component to the study of music.¹¹ The London-based Italian piano virtuoso Muzio Clementi (1752–1832) wrote two sets of instructional works, *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Pianoforte* (1801) and *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1813). The latter consists of one hundred technical studies covering all facets of piano technique and is considered the basis of modern-day piano playing. Both of these works were to be the precursor to countless other didactic exercises in the nineteenth century, conceived solely for the purpose of technical execution, such as those written by Clementi's own students Johann Baptist Cramer (1771–1858) and John Field (1782–1837). Beethoven's student Karl Czerny (1791–1857) also contributed to the rapidly growing repertoire of the piano study, along with the Frenchman Henri Jérôme Bertini (1798–1876), who wrote over five hundred studies for the piano, ranging from simple technical exercises aimed at young students to works approaching concert etudes. In 1827, the Czech composer and pianist Ignaz Moscheles (1794–1870) completed two set of twelve studies (Opus 70) traversing all the major and minor keys. Moscheles's studies can be seen as forerunners to Chopin's Etudes Opus 10 and Opus 25, which finally established the etude as a concert genre.

1.3.2 Frédéric Chopin and the concert etude

The concert etude owes its origin to a number of converging tendencies, among which may be listed the rise of the concert virtuoso (as exemplified by Paganini), the vogue for character pieces, and the revived interest in the music of Bach. Paganini's example led to virtuosity of a spectacular type, conceived for public performance; both the character pieces and the 'Bach Revival' (See Chapter 2.1.5) contributed the notion of an organically evolved work based on a single music idea.

¹¹ Brocklehurst (1958:256–257) lists Türk's *Clavierschule* (1789) and Milchmeyer's *Die wahre Art das Pianoforte zu spielen* (1797) as early treatises on the subject.

All these tendencies are clearly reflected in Chopin's *Études* Opus 10 (1833) and Opus 25 (1837). These etudes differ significantly from the ones composed by others such as Czerny and Cramer at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Chopin's *Études* are not merely exercises aimed at assisting the pianist with the technical demands necessary in order to study the existing repertoire of the day, but rather set out to explore the full potential of the keyboard and of the musical language of the time. Karl Schumann (n.d.) writes that Chopin had seen the limitations of his predecessors' textbook-like exercises when composing his 'Magna Carta' of Romantic piano technique:

He [Chopin] considered the standard books of exercises by Czerny and Cramer outdated, and under the influence of Paganini he strove to attain a fusion of bravura technique and poetic expression.

Opus 10 and Opus 25 can therefore be seen as the first set of masterpieces in the concert etudes genre, etudes that are designed to be played, first and foremost, in the concert hall (Ferguson and Hamilton, 2005). The French pianist, Alfred Cortot, has been quoted as saying that the Chopin *Études* remain as inaccessible to musicians without virtuosity as they are to virtuosos without musicianship.¹² After the publication of both sets of *Études*, the musician poet Ludwig Rellstab cynically noted that 'those who have distorted fingers may put them right by practicing these studies; but those who have not, should not play them, at least, not without having a surgeon at hand.'¹³ In 1962, Artur Schnabel, considered by many piano connoisseurs as perhaps the greatest Chopin exponent of all time, admitted that he himself was 'scared to death' by the thought of playing the Chopin *Études*, explaining that to 'do them justice is a most difficult task, which I haven't yet had the courage to attempt.'¹⁴ Despite Schnabel's comprehensive discography, he never recorded either set of the Chopin *Études* in its entirety.

¹² Quoted in *Public television to feature 'Papazian Live' November 20 and 27 2000*. <<http://www.armenianreporteronline.com/old/11112000/ny-live.htm>> (Accessed 1st March 2006).

¹³ Dubal, D. *Biographical essay about Chopin* <http://www.chopinsociety.org/biogr_rf.htm> (Accessed 1st March 2006).

¹⁴ Perahia, Murray (2004). *Chopin Etudes* [SK61885] Quoted in from CD booklet written by Tim Page.

Chopin's elevation of the piano etude to a work of substantial musical and poetic stature, worthy of performance on the concert platform, had an enormous and lasting influence on subsequent composers,¹⁵ and especially on Liszt.

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¹⁵ Fine examples of the concert etude include Schumann's *Symphonic Etudes* (1837); Liszt's Three Concert Etudes S 144 (1848), *Grandes Études de Paganini* (1851), *Études d'exécution transcendente* (1852), Two Concert Etudes S 145 (*Waldesrauschen* and *Gnomenreigen*, 1863); Brahms's 'Paganini' Variations (1863); Scriabin's Etudes Opus 8 (1894), Opus 42 (1903) and Opus 65 (1912); Rachmaninov's *Études tableaux* (1911); and Debussy's *Études* (1915).

CHAPTER 2: THE CREATIVE LIFE OF FRANZ LISZT

2.1 The composition periods

The Hungarian pianist and composer Franz Liszt was born in the year 1811 in Raiding, Hungary, and died in 1886 in Bayreuth, Germany. As one of the principle composers of the Romantic period, Liszt's innovative technique in composition left its mark upon his contemporaries such as Richard Wagner¹⁶ and anticipated many of the innovations of the early twentieth century.¹⁷ Even though Liszt wrote in virtually every genre, his most significant contributions were in the field of orchestral and piano music.¹⁸

The different facets of Liszt's musical life and career have been the subject of many studies, including ones by Ramann (1882), Searle (1966), Haraszti (1967), Perényi (1974) and Walker (1983, 1989 and 1996).

One of the twentieth century's leading authorities on Liszt, Alan Walker, divided Liszt's life into three periods, reflected in the titles of the three volumes of his Liszt biography (published 1983, 1989 and 1996 respectively) entitled: the virtuoso years (1811–1847), the Weimar years (1848–1861) and the late years (1861–1886). These are further subdivided to arrive at eleven periods (See Table 1). Longyear (1930:159), however, delineates five periods in Liszt's life, subdividing the early phase into the Parisian period (1826–1839) and the 'virtuoso' period (1839–1847), and the third phase of Liszt's life into the 'religious' period (1861–1867) and the last period (1868–

¹⁶ Striking parallels can be drawn between Liszt's opening to the second version of *Die Lorelei* (1854), after Heinrich Heine's poem of the same name, and Wagner's prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*. Liszt's second version of *Die Lorelei* was published in 1856 before Wagner began his sketch for *Tristan* in December of the same year.

¹⁷ Many of Liszt's late piano works are experimental in their harmonic style, sometimes approaching the eroding of tonality.

¹⁸ Liszt's musical compositions can be categorised as follows: piano, piano duet, two pianos, chamber music (includes duo, piano trio, string quartet and piano quartet), organ, harmonium, pedal piano, organ and trombone, orchestral (symphonic poems and other one-movement symphonic works such as marches, mazurkas and waltzes), solo instrument and orchestra (piano and orchestra, violin and orchestra), sacred choral music (unaccompanied, or with an ensemble and keyboard, usually the organ or harmonium, or with orchestra), accompanied sacred solo music, secular choral music (unaccompanied, or with an ensemble and keyboard, usually the piano, or with orchestra), songs, and a one-act opera written in 1825 entitled *Don Sanche, ou Le château d'amour*.

1886).¹⁹ Sitwell (1955) also divides Liszt's life into five major periods, but with slight variations in terms of year span and headings. Sitwell calls Liszt's virtuoso touring years (1839–1847) the 'years of transcendental execution' – an expression also adopted by Walker as one of the sub-headings in the first part of his Liszt biography (*The virtuoso years*).²⁰ Searle (1966) also outlines five major periods for the different phases of Liszt's life. The headings of Searle's subdivisions are very close to Longyear's. Perényi, while ignoring Liszt's post-Weimar years, divides the rest of Liszt's life into six stages, with the period from 1811–1848 constituting four of these stages. Perényi's disregard for the later portion of Liszt's life is counter-balanced by her detailed focus on the early portion of Liszt's life. Unlike the above authors, Haraszti makes no attempt to divide Liszt's life into periods.

Table 1 shows the various stages of Liszt's life as described by different researchers:²¹

¹⁹ Longyear (1930:159, 167–168) does not use the expressions 'virtuoso' and 'religious' but implies such terms in his descriptions.

²⁰ Sitwell is clearly mistaken in indicating 1847 as the start of Liszt's Weimar period, as Walker's extensive biography of Liszt clearly (1989:52) shows that the composer left for Weimar in January 1848.

²¹ Sitwell, Perényi and Walker evidently considered the phases of Liszt's life to arrive at their subdivisions, while Longyear considered the composer's work. Longyear and Searle commence Liszt's Parisian period in 1827 and 1822 respectively. 1827 was the year in which the first version of the 'Transcendental' Etudes was written, whereas Liszt's earliest surviving composition was the *Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli* (1822). This youthful set of variations was composed by the then eleven-year-old Liszt. Please refer to table 2 below for Liszt's important early compositions.

Table 1: Periodic subdivision of Liszt's life by different researchers

Ramann (1882)	Longyear (1930)	Sitwell (1955)	Searle (1966)	Perényi (1974)	Walker (1983–1996)	
<i>Years of childhood and boyhood</i> (1811–1827)		<i>Childhood and youth</i> (1811–1839)		<i>Romantic origins</i> (1811–1833)	<i>The young prodigy</i> (1811–1829)	
<i>The years of development as a youth</i> (1827–1840)	<i>The Parisian period</i> (1827–1839)		<i>The early works</i> (1822–1839)			<i>Grand and literary passions</i> (1833–1835)
(1840–1881)	<i>The 'virtuoso' period</i> (1839–1847)	<i>The years of transcendental execution</i> (1839–1847)	<i>The virtuoso period</i> (1839–1847)	<i>Annals of furore</i> (1839–1848)	<i>The years of transcendental execution</i> (1839–1847)	
	<i>The Weimar period</i> (1848–1861)	<i>Liszt at Weimar</i> (1847–1861)	<i>The Weimar period</i> (1848–1861)	<i>Weimar and the music of the future</i> (1848–1858)	<i>Court and Kapellmeister</i> (1848–1853)	
				<i>Death of an ideal</i> (1858–1861)	<i>The years of maturity</i> (1853–1857)	
					<i>Gathering storms</i> (1857–1861)	
	<i>The 'religious' period</i> (1861–1867)	<i>The Roman period</i> (1861–1869)	<i>The final period: Part 1 – Rome</i> (1861–1869)		<i>From Weimar to Rome</i> (1861–1865)	
	<i>The late period</i> (1868–1886)		<i>Rome, Weimar and Budapest</i> (1869–1886)	<i>The final period: Part 2 – Rome, Weimar, Budapest</i> (1869–1886)		<i>The Abbé Liszt</i> (1865–1869)
						<i>A threefold life begins: Weimar, Budapest and Rome</i> (1869–1876)
						<i>De profundis</i> (1876–1886)

This study will use Searle's division into five periods, as it seems to reflect most clearly the phases of Liszt's stylistic development.

2.1.2 The first period: 1822–1839

The first period, 1822–1839, coincides with Liszt's sojourn in Paris and contains exclusively his youthful works, some of which were composed under the influence of his mentor, Czerny. Some of these adolescent compositions will eventually be subjected to revision before becoming part of the composer's most important musical essays. These include the *Étude pour le piano en douze exercices*, Opus 1 (1827), the juvenile version of the 'Transcendental' Etudes.

Whilst in Paris, Liszt also came in contact with four individuals who would have immense effect on his musical development and personal life. The first was the French composer Hector Berlioz, whose vision of orchestral colours and instrumental scoring were unprecedented. His influence on Liszt is described as follows by Ramann (1882[1]:323–324):

Berlioz's influence in time affected Liszt's musical composition in two directions – the technicalities and the principles in art.

Berlioz was not only a master in instrumentation, he was also a discoverer, and inventor, a pioneering genius. With wonderful force, he knew how to lend the orchestra power, splendour, and sharpness of characteristic such as no master had ever before produced. It appeared as though nature had revealed to him the secret of understanding and speaking the dialect of each instrument.

It was the same with his harmonies. He wrung every single chord, as it were, from the stream of general sentiment and presented its individual colour, speech, and characteristic physiognomy. On this side of technical art Berlioz has enriched his contemporaries and posterity as scarcely no [*sic*] master has done. These beauties of art produced the highest excitement in Liszt.

According to Perényi (1970:60), Liszt's interest in Berlioz started in 1830 after the pianist attended the dress rehearsals of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, a work with which Liszt soon familiarises himself and transcribes for the piano along with Berlioz's other orchestral works such as the *King Lear* and *Francs-Juges* overtures. Liszt's transcription of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* was especially important to the former as it introduced Liszt to Berlioz's *idée fixe*. After the completion of this work, Liszt composed an additional work entitled *Andante amoroso d'après une mélodie de Hector Berlioz* (*Andante amoroso after a melody of Hector Berlioz*, 1833) on the *idée fixe* taken from Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*. Berlioz's *idée fixe* will eventually be the springboard to Liszt's own concept of thematic transformation, a compositional device which underpins all of the one-movement symphonic works entitled symphonic poems, as well as many of the large-scale piano works.

Berlioz also played a significant part in Liszt's artistic and philosophical development, as the Frenchman was responsible for introducing Liszt to Goethe's *Faust*, which inspired the two versions of *A Faust Symphony* (1854 and 1861).²² Liszt acknowledged his debt to Berlioz by dedicating the work to the Frenchman. Liszt was the most Faustian figure in Romantic music and traces of the influence of this seminal work can be discerned in a number of his works, including the *Mephisto Waltzes*, the B-minor Sonata and possibly the Fifth 'Transcendental' Etude, 'Feux follets'.²³

Liszt's mistress at this time was Countess Marie d'Agoult, whom the pianist had met towards the end of 1832. The relationship between the young composer and the Countess six years his senior was intensified in 1835 when she left her husband and joined Liszt for an extensive tour of Europe. Initially settling in Geneva, the lovers remained in Switzerland for over a year before moving on to Italy. The Countess's influence on the then twenty-one-year-old pianist was significant:²⁴ not only did she

²² Goethe's *Faust* was introduced to Liszt by Berlioz upon their first meeting, as is evident from Berlioz's memoirs:

The day before the concert I received a visit from Liszt, whom I had never yet seen. I spoke to him of Goethe's *Faust*, which he was obliged to confess he had not read, but about which he soon became as enthusiastic as myself. (Perényi 1974:68)

²³ See Chapter 5.5.1.

²⁴ Philippe (1993:32–45) discusses the evolution of Liszt's relationship with the Countess Marie d'Agoult, as well as the negative impact it had on the young composer.

become Liszt's first important mistress²⁵ and the mother of his children, Blandine, Cosima and Daniel, but she was also the inspiration behind the collection of musical essays that form the *Album d'un voyageur*, which eventually became some of the composer's greatest (and in some ways, the most complete and personal) music essays, the first two volumes of the *Années de Pèlerinage (Years of Pilgrimage)*.

In performance, it was the Italian violinist Nicolo Paganini, whom Liszt heard in concert during the April of 1832, who made the most memorable impression on the pianist. After being mesmerized by the Italian violinist's performance, the then twenty-year-old Liszt was determined to emulate the violinist's achievement on the piano. Harold Schoenberg (1965:157) wrote that Paganini was the only musician who made an even bigger impact on audiences than Liszt himself, and that Liszt modelled a good number of his concert habits on those of Paganini. Sitwell (1955:19) expresses similar views:

The effect of his [Paganini's] playing upon Liszt was of decisive and far-reaching character. New horizons were displayed to him [Liszt], and perhaps Paganini taught Liszt as much in showmanship as he did in matters of execution.

In short, Liszt wanted to achieve on the piano what Paganini had achieved on the violin. This, according to Alan Walker (1983:173), was something that the Paris virtuoso school had thus far failed to achieve. As a performer, it was the pianist's constant desire to redefine the parameters of what is possible that earned him the status as one of the greatest piano virtuoso of his time. Living in Paris during the 1830s, he established his reputation as the greatest performer in a city that was considered the musical centre of the world. The French capital in the 1830s was dominated by the appearances of Europe's most important pianists such as Johann Baptist Cramer (1771–1858), Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1785–1849), Johann Peter Pixis (1788–1874), Henri Herz (1803–1888), Sigismond Thalberg (1812–1871) and Alexander Dreyschok (1818–1869). Amongst these artists only Thalberg²⁶ came close to challenging Liszt's phenomenal reputation.

²⁵ Anthony Wilkinson (1975:21–35) names Bettina von Armin, Princess Belgiojoso, Mariette Duplessis Charlotte Hagn, Lola Montez, Camile Pleyel and Caroline Unger as the objects of Liszt's affection between his two most important liaisons, those with Marie d'Agoult and Carolyn Sayn-Wittgenstein.

²⁶ Thalberg was alleged to be the illegitimate child of Prince Moritz Dietrichstein and Baroness von Wetzlar. He was nicknamed the 'Old arpeggio' as his special technical stunt was to play a melody

This was also the period of Liszt's artistic awakening or *Künstlerberufung*, the moment in which the artist becomes aware of his calling, which is well documented in Liszt's own writings:²⁷

Here is a whole fortnight that my mind and fingers have been working like two lost spirits, = Homer, the Bible, Plato, Locke, Byron, Hugo, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, and Mozart, Weber, are all around me. I study them, meditate on them, devour them with fury; besides this I practise four to five hours of exercises (3rds, 6ths, 8ths, tremolos, repetition of notes, cadences etc., etc.) Ah! Provided I don't go mad, you will find an artist in me! Yes, an artist as you desire, such is required nowadays [...] your poor friend cannot leave off repeating those words of the great ever since Paganini's last performance. René,²⁸ what a man, what a violin, what an artist! Heavens! What sufferings, what misery, what tortures in those four strings! As to his expression, his manner of phrasing, his very soul in fact!²⁹

Also present at Paganini's recital was Frédéric Chopin, who was the fourth individual to have a seminal influence on Liszt's musical development. Liszt's lifelong respect for Chopin, both as a pianist and a composer, has been well documented, and appears clearly in Liszt's review of Chopin's performance on 26th April 1841:³⁰

An open grand piano was on the platform; crowding people, people vied for the nearest seats. Composing themselves in anticipation, they would not miss a chord, a note, an intention, a thought of him who was about to sit there. And they were right to be greedy, attentive, religiously wrought up, for the one they waited for, the one they wanted to see, hear, admire and applaud was not only a skilled virtuoso, a pianist expert in the playing of notes – he was not only an artist of great renown – he was all this and much more: he was Chopin. (Waters 1961:177)

The feeling of respect was mutual. Chopin's admiration of Liszt is seen most clearly in the composer's dedication of his twelve Etudes, Opus 10 – considered by many pianists as the compendium of what constituted modern piano technique in the early nineteenth century – to Liszt, who had played them superbly. In a letter to Ferdinand Hiller dated Paris, 20th June 1833, Chopin wrote:

with both thumbs in the middle register while embellishing the melodic line with arpeggios from the top to the bottom of the keyboard. According to Robert Wangemée, Thalberg was also known as Fortuné François. <www.groveonline.com> (Accessed 19th July 2006)

²⁷ Liszt included in this letter to the junior Monsieur Pierre Wolff of Geneva, Switzerland three of Paganini's virtuosic musical quotations taken from the concert.

²⁸ It is possible that Liszt referred to Wolff affectionally as René, after Chateaubriand's fictitious hero (See Chapter 3.3.2a).

²⁹ Dated 2nd May 1832 (Liszt, F. 1894. *Letters of Franz Liszt* Volume 1 and 2. Collected and edited by La Mara. Translated by C. Bache. London: Grevel:8–9).

³⁰ The review was written for the *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris* published on 2nd May 1841.

I write to you without knowing what my pen is scribbling, because at this moment Liszt is playing my etude, and transporting me outside my respectable thoughts. I should steal from him the way to play my own etudes. (Chopin in Opiński 1973:171)

Chopin's influence on Liszt was to prove extensive, as is evident in the part of Liszt's oeuvre – composed after Chopin's death – which bears such Chopinesque titles as ballade, waltz, berceuse, polonaise and scherzo. However, the effect Chopin had on Liszt was very different from that of Paganini. The Italian violinist had shown the young pianist the immense potential of virtuoso technique as a means of instrumental exploration; Chopin, on the other hand, showed Liszt the depth of expression that the new instrument held. Ramann (1882 [1]:355–356), commented on two unique aspects of Chopin's piano playing which captivated the young Liszt. The first was the Pole's use of rubato:

That peculiar momentary *vibrato* of rhythms which seems to escape counting and measuring: forgetting the time, yet remaining within; leaving the form, yet not losing it. Nothing was known of this before Chopin.

The second was Chopin's sense of bel canto and musical line:

Yet another chord in Liszt's playing was made to vibrate by Chopin which until then, we might almost say, had lain silent in youthful ingenuousness. He [Liszt] learned from him [Chopin], as a high-born Polish lady has strikingly defined it, 'to sing the poetry of the aristocratic *salon* in music.'

Musically, Ramann (1882[1]:362–364) argues that it was Chopin's use of ornamentations – which has nationalistic roots – that had the most meaningful influence on Liszt's musical works, especially the *Hungarian Rhapsodies*:

No doubt this had its influence in Liszt; and when, in his later progress in all directions, he possessed himself of that spontaneity with which the Hungarian gypsies, that genuine musical people, created their *fiorituras*, Chopin's discipline became visible, lending artistic beauty and style to his [Liszt's] ornamentation. In him, too, it became an integral part of art, in the closest sense of the word, and in the most extended manner. Chopin's influence on Liszt as a composer was in this direction.

While Chopin was only a year older than Liszt, and upon their first meeting in 1831, Chopin had already matured as a composer, Liszt, on the other hand, had yet to find

his own voice on the piano and to compose anything significant. In other words, at this stage of their respective musical career, Chopin was well placed to serve as a model to Liszt, who aspired to imitate some of Chopin's composition techniques.³¹

Table 2 shows a list of Liszt's important works from 1822 to 1839. Apart from the two overtures and the lost *Tantum Ergo* for choir, all are for solo piano:³²

Table 2: Important works (1822–1839)

Original title of work	Date of composition	Dedication	Searle Catalogue No
<i>Tantum Ergo</i> (now lost)	1822		
<i>Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli</i>	1822		S 147
<i>Étude pour le piano-forte en 48 exercices dans tous les tons majeurs et mineurs</i> (12 pieces) ³³	1827	L. Garella	S 136
<i>L'idée fixe, Andante amoroso d'après une mélodie de Hector Berlioz</i>	1833		S 133
<i>Episode de la vie d'un artiste, Grande symphonie fantastique par Hector Berlioz</i>	1833		S 134
<i>Harmonies poétiques et religieuses</i> [First version]	1834	Lamartine	S 154
<i>Album d'un voyageur</i> (Comprises): 1. <i>Impressions et poesies</i> (7 pieces: Nos. 1, 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5 and 6) 2. <i>Fleurs mélodiques des Alpes</i>	1837	No. 1 Lammenais No. 2b F. Denis No. 3 B. Liszt (Liszt's daughter) No. 4 Étienne Pivert de Senancour No. 5 V. Schölcher	S 156

³¹ For a more detailed discussion of the similarities and possible influence of Chopin's work on Liszt's 'Transcendental' Etudes please see Chapter 5.

³² The compositions and transcriptions listed in Tables 2 to 6 are the composer's most frequently performed works as well as those which have received the most scholarly attention. For the complete catalogue listing of Liszt's compositions please refer to Rena Charnin Mueller's Liszt work-list <<http://www.grovemusic.com>> (Accessed 22nd September 2007) and Humphrey Searle's catalogue (Walker, A. 1970. *Franz Liszt: The Man and His Music* [Second Edition]. London: Redwood Burns 393–458).

³³ According to Mueller <<http://www.grovemusic.com>> (Accessed 22nd September 2007), Liszt also wrote a youthful study in the key of F-sharp major which could possibly be the 13th study in the 1827 version of the 'Transcendental' Etudes. For a detailed discussion of the key scheme in the 'Transcendental' Etudes please see Chapter 4.4 below.

(9 pieces: Nos. 7a,7b, 7c, 8a, 8b, 8c, 9a, 9b, 9c) 3. Paraphrases (3 pieces: Nos. 10, 11, 12)		Madame H. Reiset No. 10 Madame A. Pictet No. 11 Countess M. Potocka No. 12 Count T. Theobald	
<i>Vingt-quatre grandes études pour le piano</i> (12 pieces)	1837	C. Czerny	S 137
<i>Marche Funèbre</i> (After Beethoven's <i>Sinfonia eroica</i>)	1837	H. von Bülow	S 464
Piano reduction of Beethoven Symphonies 5 –7	1837	H. von Bülow	S 464
<i>King Lear Overture</i> (after Berlioz)	1837		S 474
<i>Francs-Juges Overture</i> (after Berlioz)	1837		S 471
<i>Études d'exécution transcendente d'après Paganini</i> (<i>Bravour – Studien nach Paganini capricen</i>) (6 pieces)	1838	C. Schumann	S 140

2.1.3 The second period: 1839–1847

During the second period of Liszt's life (1839–1847), he travelled as a virtuoso and composed for the most part paraphrases and transcriptions, which catered for the more general public. Walker (1991:249–250) defines the paraphrase as follows:

The paraphrase, as its name implies, is a free variation on the original. Its purpose is *metamorphosis*. It can concentrate exclusively on one theme, decking it out with ever more complex ornamentation; or it can embrace the entire act of an opera, mixing and mingling the materials en route, giving us, (so to speak) an aerial view of the original composition.

Amongst Liszt's paraphrases are fantasies based upon operas such as Bellini's *La Sonnambula* (1839), Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* (1840) and Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (1841).³⁴

³⁴ Liszt also composed operatic paraphrases on operas by Auber, Berlioz, Glinka, Gounod, Meyerbeer, Mosonyi, Pacini, Raff, Rossini, Tchaikovsky, Verdi, Wagner and Weber.

The transcription is described by Walker (1991:249–250) as follows:

It is strict, literal and objective. It seeks to unfold the original work as accurately as possible, down to the smallest details.

The works transcribed include Beethoven symphonies;³⁵ the overtures to Rossini's *William Tell Overture* (1841) and Wagner's *Tannhäuser* (1847); a substantial number of lieder by Schubert, Schumann and others, as well as the pianist's own three *Petrarch Sonnets* (1839), which would become part of the Italian book of the *Années de Pèlerinage* (1849).

Liszt's travels took him extensively across central and eastern Europe and also led to the encounter with the Princess Carolyn von Sayn-Wittgenstein, who would eventually become Liszt's second important mistress. At a time when orchestral performance of symphonic works were sparse, Liszt took upon himself the responsibility of introducing to the public Beethoven's symphonies Nos 5–7 (1837) and the *Marche Funèbre* from Beethoven's *Sinfonia eroica* (1843) in piano transcription. However, Liszt's output during this period was not confined to piano transcriptions, but included the *Malédiction Concerto* (1840) for string orchestra and piano (the only important work not for solo piano), as well as the intermediate version of the Fourth 'Transcendental' Etude, 'Mazeppa'.

³⁵ These were already completed in 1837, see Table 2.

Table 3 shows a list of Liszt's important works from 1839 to 1847:

Table 3: Important works (1839–1847)

Original title of work	Date of composition	Instrument(s)	Dedication	Searle Catalogue No
<i>Tre sonetti di Petrarca:</i> (3 pieces)	1839	Solo piano		S 270
<i>Fantaisie sur les motif favoris de l'opéra La Sonnambula</i> (after Bellini)	1839	Solo piano	The Princess of Prussia	S 393
<i>Mazeppa</i>	1840	Solo piano	V. Hugo	S 138
<i>Réminiscences de Lucrezia Borgia</i> (After Donizetti) (2 pieces)	1840	Solo piano		S 400
<i>Malédiction Concerto</i>	1840	Piano and string orchestra		S 121
<i>Venezia e Napoli</i> (4 pieces)	1840	Solo piano		S 159
<i>William Tell overture</i> (after Rossini)	1841	Solo piano		S 552
<i>Réminiscences de Don Juan</i> (after Mozart)	1841	Solo piano	King Christian VIII Of Denmark	S 418
<i>Tannhäuser Overture</i> (after Wagner)	1847	Solo piano		S 442

2.1.4 The third period: 1848–1861

The third phase of Liszt's life is also known as the Weimar years. The years 1848–1861 saw Liszt accepting the position of 'Kapellmeister' (chapel director) at the court in Weimar and settling there with Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein. The nature of the relationship between Liszt and Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein was such that the pianist considered marrying her at one stage and even wrote the symphonic poem *Festklänge* in 1853 for the projected wedding. Liszt's residency in Weimar gave him the necessary time and peace of mind to revise some of his early works. These include the 'Paganini' Etudes (1851) and 'Transcendental' Etudes (1852), *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* (1853) and the first two volumes of *Années de Pèlerinage*, Switzerland

(1854) and Italy (1849).³⁶ Furthermore, this period in Liszt's life also saw the composition of many of his major large-scale works such as the Sonata in B-minor, the Ballade No. 2 in B-minor, the *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, the two piano concerti, *Totentanz*, the 'Faust' and 'Dante' Symphonies and the symphonic poems (1854–1857).

Table 4 shows a list of Liszt's important works from 1848 to 1861:

Table 4: Important works (1848–1861)

Original title of work	Date of composition	Instrument(s)	Dedication	Searle Catalogue No
<i>3 Études de Concert:</i> 1. <i>Il lamento</i> 2. <i>La leggerezza</i> 3. <i>Un sospiro</i>	1848	Solo piano	Eduard Liszt	S 144
<i>Années de Pèlèrinage</i> <i>Deuxième Année: Italie</i> (7 pieces)	1849	Solo piano		S 161
Arrangement of Schubert's 'Wanderer' Fantasy in C major Opus 15	1851	Piano and orchestra		S 366
<i>Grandes Études de Paganini</i> (6 pieces)	1851	Solo piano	C. Schumann	S 141
<i>Études d'exécution transcendente</i> (12 pieces)	1851	Solo piano	C. Czerny	S 139
<i>Harmonies poétiques et religieuses</i> [Second version] (10 pieces)	1853	Solo piano	J. É. Carolyne (Princess Sayn- Wittgenstein)	S 173
Sonata in B minor	1853	Solo piano	R. Schumann	S 178
Ballade No. 2 in B minor	1853	Solo piano	Count C. de Linange	S 171
<i>Festklänge</i> (Originally written for Liszt's planned wedding with Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein)	1853	Orchestra	Princess Sayn- Wittgenstein	S 101
<i>Années de Pèlèrinage</i> <i>Première Année: Suisse</i> (9 pieces)	1854	Solo piano		S 160
<i>A Faust Symphony in three character studies</i> (after Goethe)	1854	Orchestra	H. Berlioz	S 108

³⁶ The Italian book of the *Années de Pèlèrinage* is the second volume (of three) even though it was completed before the first volume (Switzerland).

<i>Ce qu'on sur la montagne</i> (after Hugo)	1854	Orchestra	Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein	S 95
<i>Tasso – Lamento e Trionfo</i> (after Byron)	1854	Orchestra	Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein	S.96
<i>Les Préludes</i> (after Lamartine)	1854	Orchestra	Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein	S 97
<i>Orpheus</i>	1854	Orchestra	Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein	S 98
<i>Mazeppa</i> (after Hugo)	1854	Orchestra	Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein	S 100
<i>Héroïde funèbre</i> (Taken from the first movement of the unpublished 'Revolutionary' Symphony revised in 1848)	1854	Orchestra	Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein	S 102
<i>Hungaria</i> (Taken from the 'Heroischer Marsch im ungarischen Stil' 1840)	1856	Orchestra	Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein	S 103
<i>A Symphony to Dante's 'Divina Commedia'</i>	1856	Orchestra	R. Wagner	S 109
Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major	1856	Piano and orchestra	H. Litoff	S 124
<i>Hunnenschlacht</i> (after Kaulbach)	1857	Orchestra	Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein	S 105
<i>Die Ideale</i> (after Schiller)	1857	Orchestra	Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein	S 106
<i>Hamlet</i>	1858	Orchestra	Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein	S 104
<i>Venezia e Napoli</i> . Supplement to <i>Années de Pèlerinage: Italie</i> (3 pieces)	1859	Solo piano		S 162
<i>Mephisto Waltz No. 1</i>	1859	Piano solo	C. Tausig	S 514
<i>Totentanz</i> . Paraphrase on the <i>Dies irae</i> <i>Dies irae</i>	1859	Piano and orchestra	H. von Bülow	S 126
<i>Two Episodes from Lenau's 'Faust'</i>	1860	Orchestra	C. Tausig	S 110
Piano Concerto No. 2 in A major	1861	Piano and orchestra	H. von Bronsart	S. 125

2.1.5 The fourth period: 1861–1869

Perhaps partially due to the disappointment of not being able to transform Weimar into one of the major cultural centres of Europe, Liszt resigned from his position of music director in Weimar in 1861 and followed the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein to Rome, where he stayed until 1869. Humphrey Searle (1952:67) depicts the various events which may have led to Liszt's resignation:

In 1858 had occurred the demonstration on the occasion of the first performance of Cornelius' *Barber of Bagdad*, a demonstration which Liszt took to be directed against himself and which caused him to offer his resignation to the Grand Duke. In the following year his relations with Wagner became strained; in addition Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein fell out of favour with the Weimar court, and Liszt felt that it was impossible for him to remain at Weimar, even in a private capacity. An even more grievous blow in the same year was the death of his son Daniel at the age of twenty-one. In 1860 the newspaper protest against the New Music of Liszt was published under the signatures of Brahms, Joachim and others; shortly after the Princess left Weimar and went to Rome in the hope of obtaining the Pope's sanction for her divorce so as to be free to marry Liszt.

While in Rome, Liszt learned that the sanction for Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein's divorce was revoked at the last moment. This led him to end his relationship with the Princess and he entered into a period of self-imposed celibacy.³⁷ Liszt's new-found religious fervour saw the composer accepting minor orders from the Vatican as well as taking an increasing interest in choral music. Amongst Liszt's important compositions of this period are the second version of *A Faust Symphony*; the *Two Legends*; the *Missa Choralis* and the two oratorios, *St. Elizabeth* and *Christus*; as well as the *Variations on 'Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen'*, the second of two organ works which evince Liszt's admiration of Bach (the first being the organ work *Fantasy and Fugue on the Theme B-A-C-H* composed in 1855). Bach was one of the most important influences on Liszt, who, like most of the great Romantic composers, was a fervent admirer of Bach's music. In fact, Bach must be counted as one of the major musical influences of the nineteenth century, and the 'Bach Revival', initiated by Mendelssohn's performance of the *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829, was the most

³⁷ Paul Merrick (1987:48–68) gives a detailed account of circumstances surrounding the breakdown of Liszt's relationship with Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein, but Di Grazia (1988) shows that not even recently discovered evidence is sufficient to explain the mysterious circumstances which led to the dissolution of Liszt's projected wedding.

important musical manifestation of that lively interest in the past, which is such a salient feature of Romanticism.³⁸

Table 5 shows a list of Liszt's important works from 1861 to 1869:

Table 5: Important works (1861–1869)

Original title of work	Date of composition	Instrument(s)	Dedication	Searle Catalogue No
<i>A Faust Symphony in three character studies</i> [Second version] (After Goethe)	1861	Tenor voice and orchestra	H. Berlioz	S 108
<i>Variations on a theme of Bach</i> (Basso continuo of the 1 st movement of the organ cantata 'Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen')	1862	Solo piano	A. Rubenstein	S 180
<i>Die Legende von der heiligen Elizabeth</i>	1862	Oratorio	King Ludwig II of Bavaria	S 2
<i>Légendes:</i> 1. <i>St François d'Assise: la prédication aux oiseaux</i> 2. <i>St François de Paule marchant sur les flots</i>	1863	Solo piano	C. von Bülow	S 175
<i>2 Concert Studies:</i> 1. <i>Waldesrauschen</i> 2. <i>Gnomenreigen</i>	1863	Solo piano	D. Pruckner	S. 145
<i>Missa choralis, organo concinente</i>	1865	Mixed chorus and organ		S 10
<i>Christus. Oratorio on texts from the Holy Scripture and the Catholic liturgy:</i> 1. <i>Christmas Oratorio</i> (5 pieces) 2. <i>After Epiphany</i> (5 pieces) 3. <i>Passion and Resurrection</i> (5 pieces)	1866	Soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, bass, solos, chorus, orchestra and organ		S 10

³⁸ Robert Schumann, for one, recognised the importance of Bach's influence on the works of the Romantics, as is evident in a letter addressed to Gustav A. Ketterstein in 1840:

The profound power of combination and the poetic and the whimsical qualities of recent music have their origins largely in Bach. Mendelssohn, Bennett, Chopin, Hiller, all the so-called romantics (I refer, of course, only to the Germans) are in their music much closer to that of Bach than Mozart was; all of them have a most thorough knowledge of Bach... (Schumann 1886:151, English translation taken from [Platinga 1966:228])

2.1.6 The final period: 1869–1886

During the final period of Liszt's life, which began in 1869 with his departure from Rome, the pianist-composer divides his time between that city and the cities of Budapest and Weimar. In public Liszt only appeared as a teacher in masterclasses, and he became one of the most influential figures of piano pedagogy in the late nineteenth century.³⁹ Liszt's last compositions included works for solo piano and lieder with piano accompaniment, as well as works for the church. These late works were experimental in their harmonic progressions and visionary in their foreshadowing of atonality, looking forward to the works of Debussy and in particular those of Scriabin and Schoenberg. The pianist Alfred Brendel (1981:234), one of the twentieth century's most notable exponents of Liszt's piano work, wrote of the composer's late musical style as follows:

Liszt was the first composer to experience the dissolution of tonality in his work, and the first to free himself of its domination. In his late piano music he avoids traditional cadences; he hardly ever modulates, but instead put keys and harmonies side by side, gliding from one to another chromatically, modally, or by the means of the gypsy scale. The assurance with which this happens caused Busoni to remark that 'the harmony of a revolutionary lies in the steady hand of a sovereign'.

Liszt's most important works in this period are the third and final book of the *Années de Pèlerinage* (1877) and the *Via Crucis* (1879), a work based on the Catholic ceremony that commemorates the fourteen stations of the cross.

Table 6 shows a list of Liszt's important works from 1869 to 1886:

³⁹ The names of Liszt's most important students as given by Harold Schoenberg (1965:274) are Isaac Albéniz, Eugene d'Albert, Conrad Ansoerge, Arthur Friedman, Arthur de Greef, Rafael Joseffy, Alfred Reisenauer, Emil von Sauer, Alexander Siloti, Bern Stavenhagen and Constantin von Sternberg.

Table 6: Important works (1868–1886)

Original title of work	Date of composition	Instrument(s)	Dedication	Searle Catalogue No
<i>Années de Pèlerinage: Troisième Année</i> (7 pieces)	1877	Solo piano	No. 1 D. von Bülow No. 5 H. von Bülow No. 6 In memory of Maximilian I of Mexico	S 163
<i>Via Crucis</i> . The fourteen stations of the cross for chorus and soloists, with organ accompaniment (or piano)	1879	Chorus and soloists, with organ (or piano) accompaniment		S 53
<i>Nuages gris</i>	1881	Solo piano		S 199
<i>Mephisto Waltz No. 2</i>	1881	Solo piano	C. Saint-Saëns	S 515
<i>Unstern. (Sinistre. Disastro)</i>	1881	Solo piano		S 208
<i>La lugubre gondola</i> (2 pieces)	1882	Solo piano		S 200
<i>R. W. – Venezia</i> (After Wagner's death)	1883	Solo piano		S 201
<i>Am Grabe Richard Wagners</i>	1883	Solo piano		S 202
<i>Schlaflos, Frage und Antwort</i> (Nocturne after a poem by Raab)	1883	Solo piano		S 203
<i>Bagatelle sans Tonalité</i>	1883	Solo piano		S 216a
<i>Mephisto Waltz No. 3</i>	1883	Solo piano	M. Jaëll	S 216
<i>Mephisto Polka</i>	1885	Solo piano	L. Schmalhausen	S 217
<i>En rêve. Nocturne</i>	1885	Solo piano	A. Stradal	S 207
<i>Mephisto Waltz No. 4</i> (Unfinished)	1885	Solo piano	n/a	S 696

CHAPTER 3: THE INFLUENCE OF ROMANTIC IDEAS AND PHILOSOPHIES ON FRANZ LISZT

3.1 Introduction

Liszt was the archetypal Romantic artist; he personified the contradictory extremes that marked the achievements of the Romantic era, combining in his life and work the sublime and the demonic, the transcendental and the profane. All this emerges in the description of the aging composer by Harold Schoenberg (1965:163):

He remained a complicated man – a mixture of genius, vanity, generosity, lust, religion, snobbery, democracy, literary desires and visions: part Byron, part Casanova, part Mephistopheles, part St. Francis.

As a man, Liszt's persona was often masked by a variety of visages. One of the twentieth century's most eminent Liszt biographers, Emile Haraszti (1947:490), put it as follows:

Liszt was a man of many faces; it is not easy to discern his true physiognomy behind the romantic mask that he has been made to wear for a century. Has he not characterized himself (in a letter to Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein, of August 13, 1856) as 'half Franciscan, half gypsy'? And the Countess d'Agoult wrote to Georg Herwegh (May 28, 1844) that he was 'half mountebank, half juggler, who makes ideas and sentiments disappear up his sleeve'.

This chapter outlines the origins of Romanticism and discusses the Romantic ideas and philosophies which had a tangible influence on Liszt's music, and specifically on the 'Transcendental' Etudes.

3.2 The origins of Romantic aesthetics

The Romantic period is usually regarded as a reaction to the Age of Enlightenment; however, many of the philosophical notions of the former have their roots in the latter, and the study of the origins of Romantic aesthetics has therefore to include a brief survey of the philosophies of the Enlightenment.

3.2.1 The Enlightenment

From the late seventeenth until the end of the eighteenth century, cultural life in Western Europe was affected by the accelerating growth of the middle class⁴⁰ alongside a movement in philosophy which, firstly, expressed skepticism towards the established authorities such as the monarchy and orthodox religion and, secondly, sought to eradicate man's dependence on received wisdom, introducing a belief that an individual is able to exist alone at the heart of his own rational world. Known as *Zeitalter der Aufklärung* by the eighteenth-century German writers and 'Enlightenment' elsewhere in Europe, the movement's emphasis on the autonomy of rationality meant that it is also celebrated as the 'Age of Reason'. Karl Ameriks (2000:19) depicts the aesthetic of 'reason' behind the Enlightenment as follows:

First, reason is a *faculty of criticism*, the power to examine beliefs according to the evidence for them. Second, reason is a *power of explanation*, the capacity to understand events by seeing them as instances of the general law.

The philosophers of Enlightenment targeted the Christian Church as the main source of their discontent, and challenged the power of its institute and received 'irrationality'. The English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), in *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695),⁴¹ reduced Christianity to one single assertion: that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and regarded all the rest as the fictionalised inventions of megalomaniac priests. In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693),⁴² Locke stressed the importance of education as the foundation of society, and of scientific

⁴⁰ For a more in depth discussion of the rapid expansion of the eighteenth-century trade industry and the continual growth of the middle class, please see Plantinga (1984:1–2).

⁴¹ J. Locke ([1695]1958), *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, edited, abridged and introduced by I. T. Ramsey, London: Adams and Charles Black.

⁴² J. Locke, ([1693]1964), *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, abridged and edited with an introduction and commentary by F. W. Garforth, London: Heinemann Educational Books.

knowledge as a weapon against perceived superstitions. Locke's view is consolidated by the advances in science made by the English scientist Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), who postulated the law of gravity and whose *Principia Mathematica* (1687)⁴³ completed the revolution begun by Nicolaus Copernicus⁴⁴ in the sixteenth century, clarifying the movements of the planets across the universe.

Enlightenment's autonomy of reason was also its weakness, as Ameriks (2000:19) explains:

The crisis of the Enlightenment grew out of each of these concepts of reason. Each concept, if universalised and pushed to its limits, led to unacceptable consequences. But the crisis was inescapable since Enlightenment *had to* radicalise each of them. For to limit them in any form would be a form of 'unreason': it would be either obscurantism or 'dogmatism', the limitation of reason by authority.

Paradoxically, the Enlightenment's distrust of established authority, its focus on the natural world, and its discoveries of the wonders of the universe, would lead to three of the cornerstones of Romantic aesthetics, respectively the cult of the Individual, of Nature, and of the Sublime.⁴⁵

Even before the advent of Romanticism proper, the movement known as *Sturm und Drang* would drastically shift the focus from objective rationalism to subjective emotionalism.

3.2.2 *Sturm und Drang*

The confines of rationalism imposed by Enlightenment eventually gave way to a movement in German literature which blossomed between 1760 and 1780 entitled *Sturm und Drang*. This movement can be seen as the precursor to full-scale Romanticism and adopts its name from the play *Wirrwarr, oder Sturm und Drang*

⁴³ I. Newton, ([1687]1833), *Principia Mathematica*, edited by J. Francisci, Glasguae: Excudit Georgius Brookman.

⁴⁴ Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) was the first astronomer to base his findings of the universe by using the heliocentric theories which challenges the received astronomical concept which consigned the earth to the centre of the universe. Copernicus's *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (*On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*, 1543) is often regarded as the starting point of modern astronomy.

⁴⁵ See Chapter 3.3.5.

(*Confusion, or Storm and Stress*, 1775) by Friedrich Klinger (1752–1831).⁴⁶ It is also known as the *Goethezeit* (*Age of Goethe*), after the movement's most influential writer, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), or the *Geniezeit* (*Age of genius*) because of its distinctly Romantic idea of the individual experience becoming the focal point in the creation of art. This was evinced by the prototypical Romantic hero found in the writings of Goethe such as *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774),⁴⁷ *Faust* (1790)⁴⁸ and *Poetry and Truth* (1811–1832).⁴⁹

Goethe straddled the Classic and Romantic eras in literature in much the same way that Beethoven did in music, although the former's sympathies were clearly on the Classical side. Ironically, his 1774 novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, originally intended as a spoof on *Sturm und Drang*, produced one of the most enduring prototypes of Romantic sensibility in the figure of its protagonist.⁵⁰ Werther, a young artist blessed with a sensitive and passionate temperament, falls in love with a woman named Lotte, who is engaged to another man eleven years her senior. Werther isolates himself from the society to which he is expected to conform by tormenting himself with the impossibility of his love for Lotte and by seeking solace in nocturnal excursions into the hills and forest – a typically Romantic pursuit (See Chapter 3.3.4). Werther eventually realises that death is the only release from the anguish of his worldly desires and commits suicide.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Based on sources from Knapp, G. P. *Sturm und Drang [Storm and Stress] (1767–1786)*. <<http://www.litencyc.com/php/topics.php?rec=true&UID=1266>> (Accessed 18th April 2008).

⁴⁷ J. W. von Goethe ([1774]1983), *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*, translated by V. Lange, New York: Suhrkamp.

⁴⁸ J. W. von Goethe ([1790]1929), *Faust: Parts 1 and 2*, translated by L. Macneice and E. L. Stahl, London: Faber and Faber.

⁴⁹ J. W. von Goethe ([1811–1832]1987). *From My Life, Poetry and Truth: Parts 1 to 3, Part 4*, translated by R. R. Heitner, New York: Suhrkamp.

⁵⁰ Goethe's Werther became the protagonist of Massenet's opera *Werther* (1892), while Thomas Mann's 1939 novel *Lotte in Weimar* depicts the fictitious reunion between Goethe and Charlotte Kestner, the object of Goethe's youthful affection and the inspiration behind Lotte in *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*.

⁵¹ Ignace Feuerlicht (1978) examines the factors which lead to Werther's suicide. These include anomie, the inferiority complex, total alienation from society, the death instinct as well as the Freudian psychoanalytical concept of the Oedipus complex. Longyear (1930:4) argues that Werther's death is a result of *Weltschmerz*, an expression which originates from the Romantic intensity of feeling and is often identified as the feeling of world-weariness coupled with the sense of frustration and melancholy which can lead to the extremities of human emotions and actions. Werther's suicide can be seen as a precursor to the death scenes so common in Romantic literature and opera. Instances include Verdi's *Luisa Miller* (1849) adapted from Schiller's play *Kabale und Liebe* (*Intrigue and Love*, 1784), Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer* (*The Flying Dutchman*;

Goethe's ally, Johann Christoph Frederick von Schiller (1759–1805), wrote a play entitled *The Robbers* (1781)⁵² in which the protagonist, Karl Moor, defies the authority of a patriarchal system and uses violence as the means to freedom before becoming preoccupied about the consequences of revolutionary violence and finally repenting. The character of Moor, while in many senses a prototype of the Romantic hero, can also be seen as the continuation of the Enlightenment ideal which seeks to emancipate man from despotism, bigotry and superstition.⁵³

3.2.3 Romanticism

Sturm und Drang was succeeded by a movement which derives its name from the Old French word *romance*, which referred to the often extravagant and fanciful literature of the Middle Ages. Entitled Romanticism, the movement originated in Europe from the middle of the eighteenth century and dominated almost the entire nineteenth century. Seminal in the establishing of the aesthetics of Romanticism was the German literary periodical entitled *Das Athenäum* (1798–1800) edited by the brothers August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767–1845) and Friedrich von Schlegel (1772–1829). Its contributors include the Protestant theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) and the poet Friedrich von Hardenberg (1772–1801), also known as Novalis.

1841). *Tristan und Isolde* (1865) and *Götterdämmerung* (*Twilight of the Gods*, 1869) and Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904).

⁵² F. Schiller ([1781]1922), *Die Räuber*, edited by L.A. Willoughby, Oxford University Press.

⁵³ The leaders of the French Revolution (1789–1799), Maximilien Robespierre (1758–1794) and Louis-Antoine de Saint-Just (1767–1794), saw similarities between their own aspirations and those expressed in *Die Räuber*, and promoted Schiller to an honorary French citizen in 1792. Schiller's *Räuber* was set to music by the Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901) in the four-act opera *I Masnadieri* (*The Bandits*, 1847). The contemporary German composer Giselher Wolfgang Kleber adopted Schiller's play as the basis for his own four-act opera *Die Räuber* (1956) which is dedicated to the memory of Verdi.

3.3 Specific Romantic ideas and philosophies and their influence on Liszt

The three principal Romantic ideas which had a tangible influence on Liszt are

- 1) The cult of the Individual, also allied to Romantic Nationalism,
- 2) The cult of Nature and
- 3) The cult of the Sublime

As an aspiring pianist, the young Liszt's passion for the literary works of Sainte-Beuve, Ballanche, Rousseau and Chateaubriand was a reflection of his notion that the ideal musician is one who will find the necessary balance between intellectual and emotional depth on one hand, and showmanship on the other. Driven by this ideal, he distinguished himself in performance and composition in his pursuit to become the profound, complete artist, a professional musician as opposed to a mere virtuoso (Gooley 2004:22). The figure of René, protagonist of Chateaubriand's eponymous novella (1802), became a personal favourite of Liszt,⁵⁴ and sparked the pianist's enthusiasm to further explore French literature, especially that of Victor Hugo.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the religious writings of Lamartine, which Liszt first came across during his teenage years, became the inspiration behind two of the pianist's major works, the *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* for solo piano and the symphonic poem *Les Préludes*.⁵⁶ Both Hugo and Lamartine also became part of Liszt's social circle of friends, alongside some of the most influential Romantic writers of the nineteenth century, such as Balzac, Heine, Musset, Sand and Vigny. In philosophy, it was the aesthetics of Saint-Simon and Lamennais that captivated the maturing composer. Liszt drew upon Saint-Simon's concept of the artist-priest who acts as the mediator between God and mankind, and admired Lamennais's vision of conveying order to an existing state of chaos through constitutional freedom and moral revival.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the similarities between Liszt's travels in the years 1835–1839 and René's voyages, please see Chapter 3.3.2a.

⁵⁵ According to Laurent Andre Marie Phillippe (1993:27–28), Hugo's *Marion Delorme* became one of Liszt's favourite plays after he saw its performance in the Théâtre de la Porte St. Martin on 11th August 1831. Two of Liszt's thirteen symphonic poems are based on works by Hugo – *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* (No. 1) and *Mazeppa* (No.6).

⁵⁶ Liszt prefaced the third composition of *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* (*Benediction of God in Solitude*) with one of Lamartine's poems. In addition, the composer also borrowed the titles *Invocation, Pensée des morts* (*In Memory of the Dead*) and *Hymn de l'enfant à son réveil* (*The Hymn of the Awakening Child*) directly from Lamartine's *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*.

3.3.1 The cult of the Individual

Romanticism's emphasis on the individual and on subjective experience can be seen as an extension of Enlightenment's reaction against the established powers and *Sturm und Drang*'s idea which places individual experiences at the heart of artistic creation. The quintessential Romantic view of the composer is to equate him to the figure of Prometheus, the titanic hero of Greek mythology who fought against the gods to steal fire for man and was eternally punished for doing so. The fire which Prometheus stole for the benefit of mankind became a metaphor for the inspired message which the composer brought to mankind at great cost to himself. In many ways the figure of Beethoven, who overcame the isolation of complete deafness to compose some of his greatest works, became for the Romantics the supreme expression of this idea.

3.3.1a Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

According to Altenburg (1994:51), Beethoven is the composer that Liszt turned to at decisive moments in his artistic development. The link between Beethoven and Liszt is a direct one: Liszt's mentor, Czerny, was a student of Beethoven. Liszt knew many of Beethoven's compositions intimately, and also transcribed a number of Beethoven's orchestral works and the song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* for the piano.⁵⁷

Beethoven was the archetypal artist-as-hero of the nineteenth century, both because of his struggle with, and triumph over, an adverse destiny, and because of his deviance of convention, but especially because these features are so strikingly present in much of his oeuvre.

In the spring of 1802, the thirty-two-year-old Beethoven travelled to the village of Heiligenstadt (situated in the district of Döbling which is located in the north of Vienna) to nurse his fading hearing. The composer's self-imposed exile was to eventually last six months, during which he wrote a will-like statement depicting his

⁵⁷ For the complete listing of Liszt's piano transcription of Beethoven's compositions please see Leslie Howard's complete recording of Liszt's piano works. <http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/liszt_index.asp> (Accessed June 18th 2008)

state of despair. This document has come to be known as the Heiligenstadt Testament, discovered only after Beethoven's death by Anton Schindler and Stephan von Breuning. Dated 6th October 1802 and addressed to the composer's brothers Karl and Johann, part of the document reads as follows:

My misfortune pains me doubly, in that I am certain to be misunderstood. For me there can be no recreation in the society of my fellow creatures, no refined conversations, no interchange of thought. Almost alone, and only mixing in society when necessary, I am compelled to live as an exile. If I approach near people, a feeling of hot anxiety comes over me lest my condition should be noticed – for so it was during the past six months which I spent in the country. Ordered by my intelligent physician to spare my hearing as much as possible, he almost fell in with my present frame of mind, although many a time I was carried away by my sociable inclinations. But how humiliating was it, when some one standing close to me heard a distant flute, and I heard *nothing*, or a *shepherd singing*, and again I heard nothing. Such incidents almost drove me to despair; at times I was on the point of putting an end to my life – *art* alone restrained my hand. Oh! it seemed as if I could not quit this earth until I had produced all I felt within me, and so I continued this wretched life – wretched, indeed, with so sensitive a body that a somewhat sudden change can throw me from the best into the worst state. *Patience*, I am told, I must choose as my guide. I have done so – lasting, I hope, will be my resolution to bear up until it pleases the inexorable Parcae to break the thread. Forced, already in my 28th year to become a philosopher, it is not easy; for an artist more difficult than for anyone else.

(Beethoven n.d.[1]:60)

The significance of the Heiligenstadt Testament within the context of Romantic aesthetics cannot be overestimated, and for the following reasons. Firstly, music is given a new spiritual eminence, it is now no longer a mere form of entertainment but a serious work of art. Much of musical Romanticism would be inconceivable without this shift in position, which would culminate in, amongst other things, Richard Wagner's all-embracing, total art form known as the *Gesamtkunstwerk*.⁵⁸ Secondly, it elevates the composer from the modest position of an entertainment provider to the lofty ideal of the artistic genius, a term first applied in the nineteenth century to supremely talented individuals such as Dante, Shakespeare, Bach and Beethoven. It is possible to argue that these views of the composer and of the music are the forerunners to the concept of the artist-priest which captivated Liszt through the influence of the Saint-Simonians and Abbé de Lamennais.

⁵⁸ Dahlhaus (1989:195) argues that the crucial concept behind Wagner *Gesamtkunstwerk* is not the Romantic fusion of separate art forms known as synaesthesia (see Chapter 3.3.3b) but the elevation of opera into a serious art form, just as Beethoven had achieved with the symphony.

3.3.1b *The Saint-Simonians*

The young Liszt was deeply interested in the ideas of the Saint Simonians, the French socialist movement during the first part of the nineteenth-century who named themselves after the Utopian socialist thinker Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon (1760–1825).

The movement was founded on Saint-Simon's concept of technological development and industrial productivity as the means towards the redemption of mankind, but after 1830 it turned its attentions from such concepts and drew upon the ideas found in Saint-Simon's last essay, *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825) before eventually changing its official title to *Religion saint-simonienne*. Led by Barthélemy Prosper Enfantin (1796–1864), *Religion saint-simonienne* developed into a religiously minded, pseudo-Messianic group who fused the doctrines of Christianity with the ideas of art in their search for the Utopian society. They believed that the practical fulfilment of love was Christianity's principal doctrine, as a means both to worship and to the development of the individual. According to the Saint-Simonians, three distinct principles are needed towards the foundation of a peaceful society: the first consists of art and religion, which represents the eternal; the second concerns science and dogma, which embrace rationality and truth; and finally, culture and industry, which signify the means.

The young Liszt was particularly captivated by the Saint-Simonians' ideas which included the belief that the aim of art should be to endow man with a sense of completeness and spirituality, thus making him more perfect in the service of Christianity. The Saint-Simonians postulates the pre-eminence of the artist alongside the priesthood, for it is artist-priest who is entrusted with the responsibility to cultivate and inspire the people with the appreciation of the spiritual.⁵⁹ Ramann (1882[2]:248) describes Liszt's fascination with the Saint-Simonian doctrines as follows:

⁵⁹ Locke (1981:214–216) showed the varying accounts of the Saint-Simonians' influence on Liszt by different Liszt biographers such as Joseph d'Ortigue, Gustav Schilling and Lina Ramann as well as the disagreement about the exact date of the pianist's first contact with the Saint-Simonians. On the one hand, Joseph d'Ortigue (1835) argued that this initial meeting took place before the July Revolution of 1830 whereas on the other, Gustav Schilling and Lina Ramann both concur that it was not until after the July Revolution that Liszt first made contact with the Saint-Simon society.

This ideal apprehension of nature and mission to art, which places it next to religion, and recognizes both to be closely united, as the revelation of the Eternal, moved Liszt deeply. It coincided with his own sentiments, nay, it touched the secret experiences of his soul. [...] The thought of a priest consecration to God was not yet extinguished within him; though he no longer felt the necessity for separation from the world. Mightily this thought broke forth again, but through the Saint-Simonian doctrines, in another direction. As a priest he [Liszt] would use his art in the task of perfecting humanity by a mediatory service of worship, which in the form of beauty awakens the feeling of the divine the most immediately, and unites it to the Eternal.

3.3.1c *Abbé de Lamennais (1782–1854)*

The idea of artist-priest is also evident in the writings of the French priest and philosopher Hughes Felicité Robert de Lamennais, more commonly known as the Abbé de Lamennais. Walker's 'register of personnels' (1970:378) shows that Liszt's contact with the Abbé was the result of a spiritual crisis caused by the death of Liszt's father, Adam. Furthermore, Walker (1983:155–157) also shows that Liszt's initial contact with Lamennais can be traced back to 1834, when the then twenty-three-year-old Liszt read a copy of Lamennais's *Paroles d'un croyant (Words of a Believer, 1834)*.⁶⁰ Liszt was so captivated by Lamennais's writings that it prompted him to write a letter to the Abbé. Lamennais returned Liszt's compliment by inviting the pianist to his retreat, La Chênaie,⁶¹ where he spent most of the summer of 1834. Apart from seeking religious instructions from him, it is also possible that Liszt saw Lamennais as a father-like figure, as shown in the following extract of Liszt's own letter:

⁶⁰ Paul Merrick (1987:7–25) examines the developing friendship between Liszt and Lamennais in connection with Lamennais's *Paroles d'un croyant (Words of a believer)* and *Esquise d'une Philosophie*.

⁶¹ For a thorough discussion of Liszt's musical and philosophical development during his stay at La Chênaie, please see the first volume of Alan Walker's biography of Liszt (1983:157–160).

Four months have actually passed, dear Father, since we parted, and I feel sad at not getting a word from you! – at the same time I do not wish to complain, for it seems to me that you can never doubt my deep and filial affection... Much more, I even know that you have been willing to accept it, and, however, humble it may be, to count it for something... What more can I desire? [...] Unless something very unforeseen occurs, I shall come again and beg you to receive me for a few days towards the middle of July; I trust sufficiently to your sincerity to tell me that you would rather not have me if my individuality would trouble or bother you too much. – Before that, I shall have the honour of sending you a little work, to which I have had the audacity to tack a great name – yours. – It is an instrumental *De profundis*. The plain-song that you like so much is preserved in it with the *Faburden*. Perhaps this may give you a little pleasure, at any rate. I have done it in remembrance of some hours passed (I shall say *lived*) at La Chênaie.⁶²

According to Ramann (1882[2]:374), the philosophies which Lamennais postulates in *Esquisse d'une Philosophie* (1840) were not published during the years of friendship between the Abbé and Liszt, but had already surfaced in the conversations between the two men. In this work, Lamennais fuses Romantic philosophy with Christianity in an attempt to reconcile the world, which has been subjected to chaos and corruption. The world, according to Lamennais, is a temple of God, art being the spiritual expression created by God which, firstly, reflects the divine image of its creator and, secondly, acts as a medium to restore the world to its original, unspoiled state. The artist, therefore, has a role to fulfil, like the artist-priest of the Saint-Simonians, he becomes the servant of art and the mediator between the divine and mankind.

Samson (2003:143–144) depicts Liszt's attraction to the idea of the artist-priest, a figure with the power to regenerate a community and lead it away from decay and debauchery:

It was apparent long before Liszt arrived in Weimar that his mission as an artist – and this is appropriate language; indeed it is his own language – was one of social engagement and intervention, embracing, as he put it, a 'grande synthèse religieuse et philosophique'. Weimar attracted not least because it offered him a testing ground for his own belief in the socially regenerative powers of music, a belief that owed something to his early association with the Saint-Simonians and with Felicité Lamennais.

⁶² Dated 14th January 1835 and translated by Constance Bache (1894:13–15).

Liszt's endeavour to create spiritually uplifting music is not restricted to his numerous religious choral works, but is also evinced in orchestral works such as the tone poem *Les Préludes* (1854) and various piano works such as the *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* (1834 and 1853), the Sonata in B minor (1853),⁶³ *Two Legends: St François d'Assise: La prédication aux oiseaux* and *St François de Paule marchant sur les flots* (1863), and *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este* (1877).⁶⁴

3.3.1d Faust

Unlike the creative genius who is allied to the spiritual eminence of the artist-priest, the Romantic idea of the genius performer – known as the virtuoso – is often associated with the diabolical figure of Faust, whose quest for expanded powers and hidden knowledge involves a secret pact with the devil. This is embodied in the legend surrounding the Italian virtuoso Niccolò Paganini, whose extraordinary prowess on the violin earned him the reputation of having done the same.

Evidently identifying strongly with the Faust legend as embodied in the works of Goethe and Austro-Hungarian poet Nikolaus Lenau (1802–1850), Liszt became a prime exemplar of the Romantic fascination with the diabolical.⁶⁵ The first version of Liszt's 'Paganini' Etudes (1838), exceeded almost any composition written up to that time in terms of their technical display and flamboyant showmanship and revealed the hidden potential of the new piano, as Ramann (1882[1]:265) points out:

Paganini's violin capriccios gave Liszt the first impulse towards the modern system for the pianoforte, and at the same time prompted him to enter the territory till then unknown of transferring effect.

⁶³ Paul Merrick (1987:283–295) convincingly argues that the B-minor Sonata portrays man's spiritual evolution from a Christian perspective.

⁶⁴ Liszt prefaced this work with a biblical quotation from the Gospel of John 4:14 (Good News 1990[New Testament]:120) 'But whoever drinks the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring which will provide him with life-giving water and give him eternal life' Liszt's *Jeux d'eaux* can be seen as the forerunner to Ravel's *Jeu d'eaux* (1901) in its musical texture and pianism.

⁶⁵ Eric Frederick Jensen (1982:151) showed that Liszt was not the only composer in the nineteenth century who was fascinated by the diabolical element expressed in the Faust legend. Bertin, Berlioz, Boïeldieu, Gounod, Pierson, Schumann, Spohr and Wagner all produced works inspired by Faust.

Instrumental virtuosity as such was closely associated with diabolical aid, as Paganini was rumoured to have sold his soul to the devil in return for dazzling execution. Dana Gooley (2004:1) defined the context of the virtuoso as follows:

Virtuosity is about shifting borders. The musician, the athlete, and the magician are potentially virtuosos as soon as they cross a limit – the limit of what seems possible, or what the spectator can imagine. Once this act of transgression is complete, the border shifts, and the boundaries of the possible are redrawn. If the performer does not cross a new, more challenging one, he will no longer be perceived as a virtuoso [...] To be a truly surpassing virtuoso, he must have his own tricks, inventing new impossibilities to be transcended, for these are the only impossibilities that will any longer seem truly impossible.

In a quest not entirely dissimilar to Faust's tireless search for sensual gratification and spiritual enlightenment, Liszt initiated numerous illicit affairs with women of high societal standing while studying some of the nineteenth century's most celebrated literary and philosophical works, including novels by Chateaubriand, Hugo and Goethe, poems by Heine and Larmartine, and the visions of Lammenais and Saint-Simon. Bauer (1936:311–312) describes the constant tussle between the profane and the spiritual in Liszt's life as follows:

He [Liszt] was constantly torn between his desire for solitude and his inability to live for any length of time without the distraction or the adulation of the public he had so easily won. He was a victim of an endless battle between his obvious need for spiritual stimulation and the insatiable craving of his physical nature [...] 'Mephistopheles dressed as an Abbé' Gregorovius wrote of him. But the Mephistophelean character was more than a surface appearance, while the true spirit was that of Faust searching for courage to face the adventure called life, to develop one's ability to the fullest, and to include within one's self all truth and all experience.

The diabolical element of Romanticism is reflected in some of Liszt's most important works, such as the *Malédiction Concerto* (1840), *Totentanz* (1859), *Two Episodes from Lenau's Faust* (1860), *Après une lecture du Dante, fantasia quasi sonata* (1849),⁶⁶ *A Faust Symphony in three character studies* (1854 and 1861),⁶⁷ 'Dante' Symphony (1856), the four *Mephisto Waltzes* (1859, 1881, 1883 and 1885

⁶⁶ *Après une lecture du Dante, fantasia quasi sonata* can be translated as *After a reading of Dante, sonata-like fantasy*. This is the final and most elaborate composition in the second book of the *Années de Pèlerinage* and is more commonly known as the *Dante Sonata*.

⁶⁷ This work is more commonly known as the *Faust Symphony*. According to Jensen (1982) though never completed, Liszt also projected an opera based upon the Faust legend based on the libretto by Gérard de Nerval and Alexander Dumas père. This project played a fascinating part in Liszt's composition of the *Faust Symphony*.

respectively) and the *Mephisto Polka* (1883). Like the B-minor Sonata, the 'Faust' Symphony and the works after Dante in fact combine and contrast elements of the sacred and the diabolical.

3.3.1e *Mazeppa*

The uncontrollable, often torturous urge which compels both the creative artist and genius performer to great achievements can be allied to the legends surrounding the figure of Ivan Stepanovich Mazeppa.⁶⁸ Immortalised in poetry by Lord Byron (1788–1824) and Victor Hugo (1802–1885), Mazeppa becomes an allegory for the artist-as-hero who triumphs over adversity and rises to be a leader of men. Hugo's poem was adopted by Liszt as the programmatic basis for the Fourth 'Transcendental' Etude⁶⁹ and for the symphonic poem of the same name.

Bekker (1942:188) points out how Hugo's *Mazeppa* becomes, for Liszt, an expression of his own tempestuous creative drive:

For Liszt, this *élan* is embodied in the idea of the artist, as most strikingly symbolized in Victor Hugo's *Mazeppa*: fettered, driven into the wilderness by a demon, a helpless prey to all the buffeting of fate, only to be freed by a miracle, to arise as king, and now as law-giver to proclaim the triumph of the spirit.

This all-encompassing artistic drive is described by Goethe (1879:527) as an invisible presence called the daemonic that makes its influence felt everywhere. According to Goethe, the daemonic shows itself most evidently in art, especially in poetry and music, but – for reasons that are unexplained – less in painting:

So it is in music, in the highest degree, for it stands so high that no understanding can reach it, and an influence flows from it which masters all, for which none can account... Thus, the daemonic loves to throw itself into significant individuals...

⁶⁸ Ivan Stepanovich Mazeppa (1640–1709) was a historical commander and a high-ranking military commander, known as the Hetman, of the Ukrainian Cossacks.

⁶⁹ See Chapter 5.2.

Furthermore, Goethe (1879:526) asserts that it was in Paganini that the daemonic shows itself ‘to the highest degree’ and that it was for this reason alone that the violinist was able to produce such great effects and acquire his legendary status.

3.3.2 The heroic outcast

The heroic outcast is another Romantic archetype, and represents the dark counterpart to the artist-as-hero. He is often depicted as an immensely talented individual who fails to fulfil his potential owing to an adverse fate or some flaw in his character, usually a morbid sensitivity and/or a self-destructive streak. He exhibits great passion, but his uncompromising and sensitive nature causes him to exile himself from a materialistic and philistine society. He is often also a rebel and is sometimes thwarted in love or hides an unsavoury past. Schiller’s Moor and Byron’s Manfred (discussed in Chapters 3.2.2 and 3.3.2c respectively) are prime examples of the type.

3.3.2a René

The prototype of the heroic outcast can be traced back to Goethe’s *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*,⁷⁰ a work which foreshadows the novella *René* (1802)⁷¹ by the French writer François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848). Chateaubriand’s work depicts the neurotic Frenchman René who seeks refuge from the unhappiness of his childhood by developing an intense friendship with his sister Amélie and by taking long, solitary walks in the countryside. Despite travelling to Scotland and Italy (the two spiritual homelands of the Romantic imagination), René remains unimpressed with what he sees and withdraws himself completely from the world. His self-imposed isolation almost leads to suicide, prevented by the intervention of his sister. However, Amélie’s incestuous love for her brother soon leads her to join a convent, where she hopes to overcome such forbidden desire. Chateaubriand’s novella ends with the death of Amélie and of René, who is killed in a battle.

⁷⁰ See Chapter 3.2.2a

⁷¹ F. R. de Chateaubriand ([1802]1917), *René*, edited by A.D. van Bever, Paris: Les Variétés Littéraires.

René was one of Liszt's favourite novels. Not only could he, a fervent Catholic who nevertheless indulged in many adulterous affairs, probably identify with the protagonist's illicit passion, but his European travels during his liaison with Countess Marie d'Agoult can be related to the symbol of the Romantic voyager, an ideal which the composer drew upon after the reading of *René*.

3.3.2b *The Romantic wanderer*

The Romantic wanderer featured prominently in the Romantic imagination, as evinced by such literary figures as René, Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, and Lord Byron's Childe Harold. Boorsch (1954:76) writes the following:

In French literature, René is probably the most perfect symbol of the restless voyager, endlessly looking for peace and calm, exploring the classical land and the past in a vain quest for an answer to his vague anguish and finally meeting death, prior to any reconciliation with himself, in a faraway land where he had been led by the relentless drive of his fatal destiny.

The wanderer is not only another example of the Romantic outcast, but is also often allied to the cults of Nature and the Sublime, and to the concept of the 'Grand Tour' (discussed under Chapter 3.3.5). His immersion in Nature and the Sublime is depicted in many of the works by the German painter Caspar David Friedrich. The musical counterpart to this figure can be found in Schubert's song *Der Wanderer* (1816) and in the piano fantasy based on it, as well as in the song cycles *Die schöne Müllerin* (1823) and *Die Winterreise* (1827), both on poems by Wilhelm Müller (1794–1827). In the former song cycle, a poet wanders through nature and comes upon a stream, which he follows to a mill. There the poet meets and falls in love with the fair maiden of the title. Unfortunately, the poet's love is not reciprocated and he resumes his wandering, finally drowning himself in the stream, which becomes a symbol not only of his destiny, but of death. In the latter, a poet with a broken heart undertakes a two-fold journey of physical wandering through a wintry landscape and spiritual self-discovery. The encounter with the organ-grinder in the final song again symbolises a final meeting with fate.⁷²

⁷² See Chapter 5.3.2.

Liszt knew Schubert's 'Wanderer' Fantasy intimately, having transcribed it for the piano on two occasions: for piano and orchestra in 1851 and for two pianos in 1859. Furthermore, Liszt also edited Schubert's original score with the addition of numerous *ossias* as well as rewriting the entire final movement in 1868. The composer also knew *Die Winterreise* well, having transcribed twelve of the twenty-four songs for piano solo in 1839.⁷³ The first two volumes of Liszt's *Années de Pèlèrinage*, composed during the pianist's European travels with Countess Marie d'Agoult, can also be seen as the composer's personal musical narrative of his own 'wandering' years. In fact, the first version of the Swiss volume of *Années de Pèlèrinage* was entitled *Album d'un voyageur* (Table 2), a heading which could well have drawn its inspiration from the concept of the Romantic wanderer.

3.3.2c Lord Byron (1788–1824)

The English poet Lord Byron can be seen as archetypal heroic outcast. Born to the profligate John Byron (known as 'Mad Jack') and the Scottish heiress Catherine Gordon, Byron had an uneasy childhood before inheriting the title and the estate of his great uncle at the age of ten. Byron's physical beauty was counterbalanced by the physical deformity of a club foot. His personal life is marked by the contrast between a heroic public persona and rather sordid private affairs. The former saw Byron as a regional leader of the Carbonari, Italy's quasi-masonic conspirators who demanded the freedom of their country from Austrian stranglehold and later being part of the Greek war of Independence against the Ottoman Empire. The latter included the homosexual liaison with the then sixteen-year-old Nicolò Giraud during his visit to Athens, the affair with his publisher Thomas Moore (1779–1852), the scandal involving his half-sister Augusta Leigh (1783–1851) which ostracised him from the House of Lords, and the well publicised affair to the married Lady Caroline Lamb (1785–1828). The character of the heroic outcast is a prominent feature of Byron's writings, as epitomised by the expression 'Byronic hero' which identifies the poet with the protagonists of his works. This is evident in the narrative poem *Childe*

⁷³ According to Leslie Howard's complete discography of Liszt's solo piano music, there is an additional version of the Liszt/Schubert *Winterreise* in 1839 consisting of alternative text for five of the twelve songs transcribed (CDA66957/9) <www.hyperion-records.co.uk> (Accessed 17th January 2008).

Harold's Pilgrimage (1812),⁷⁴ a work which bought Byron overnight fame at the age of twenty-four. In this autobiographical epic poem, Byron depicts the wanderings and reflections of a melancholy man who, disillusioned by a life of pleasure and revelry, seek distraction in a foreign land. The Byronic hero also appears in the dramatic poem *Manfred* (1816),⁷⁵ a work containing supernatural elements, in keeping with the English fascination with the Gothic of the time. In this work, the Faustian noble, Manfred, enlists the help of seven spirits to help him overcome the mysterious guilt which is connected with the death of his beloved Astarte. It is possible to interpret the relationship between the two as incestuous, with Astarte either committing suicide or being murdered by Manfred. Unfortunately, the spirits cannot grant Manfred his wish whilst at the same time fate prevents him from evading his guilt by committing suicide. Byron's poem ends with the death of Manfred, who refuses to yield himself to any form of religious belief that offers redemption from sin. Here, the Byronic hero challenges the authoritative power represented by the seven spirits and chooses death over submission to a higher spiritual power.

Liszt knew Byron's literary works intimately having adapted the Englishman's poem *Tasso* as the programmatic basis for his eponymous symphonic poem in 1854. Furthermore, Byron's *Childe Harold* was the literary inspiration behind Berlioz's viola concerto *Harold in Italy* (1834), a work which Liszt transcribed for piano and viola on two occasions, in 1836 and 1851 respectively. Altenburg (1994:57) shows that during Liszt's Weimar period, the composer had planned symphonies based not only on *Faust* and Dante but also on *Manfred*. Byron's *Manfred* also became the programmatic basis for Schumann's *Manfred Overture* (1849) and Tchaikovsky's *Manfred Symphony* (1885).

⁷⁴ G. G. Lord Byron ([1812]1980), *Lord Byron, The Complete Poetical Works Volume 2: Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, edited by J. J. McGann, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

⁷⁵ G. G. Lord Byron ([1816]1980), *Manfred*, in J. J. McGann (ed.), *Lord Byron, The Complete Poetical Works Volume 4* (1980), 53–102, Oxford: Clarendon Press. Byron's *Manfred* was adapted musically by Schumann in *Manfred: Dramatic Poem with music in Three Parts* (1852) and Tchaikovsky in his *Manfred Symphony* (1885).

3.3.3 Romantic Nationalism

The concept of Nationalism is allied to the Romantic emphasis on individual identity. However, in some sense it negates the notion of the individual, as it focuses on the doctrine of collective individuality, where the defining characteristics of a nation are considered more important than subjective individualism. Closely linked with Romantic Nationalism is the idea of the cultural hero, where an historical or legendary individual specific to a certain race or culture is elevated to become a symbol of his nation. This can be found in the works of the German composer Richard Wagner, who developed Romantic opera by incorporating specific characters from German mythology as the protagonists of his music dramas.

The starting point for Romantic Nationalism can be traced to the search for national identity which originated in eighteenth-century Germany. At that time, Germany was not a unified nation but consisted of a group of German-speaking states, with Prussia being the largest as well as the most powerful. Furthermore, the Germans had no artistic tradition or cultural centre with which they could either share or be inspired by. The only common ground they shared was the German language, which became inseparable from their national identity. The cause of German Nationalism would be espoused by a number of early Romantic philosophers and artists including Johann Gottfried von Herder, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Carl Maria von Weber.

A disciple of Immanuel Kant, the philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803), postulated that language is inseparable from human thought and hence is central to the experience of different cultures. Herder also saw language as the unique expression of each culture and a provider of insight into the diversity of human experience. With this theory, Herder discards the traditional concept of a country's political state in favour of the physiology of the 'national group' and the 'folk nation', characterised by the national spirit known as the *Volkgeist* – literally, the soul of the people. Responding to the German's lack of artistic heritage and cultural experiences, Herder's 1773 essay entitled *Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker* (*Extract from a Correspondence about Ossian and the Songs of Ancient Peoples*) exalts the purity and power found within the poetry of primitive nations, and gives the Germans a sense of pride in their origins by trying to find such

virtues in ancient Germanic and Norse poetry and mythology. Furthermore, the philosopher also collected native German folksongs (*Volkslieder*) and encouraged Goethe to revive German literature by becoming the ‘German Shakespeare’. Goethe duly obliged by immortalising the fifteenth-century German knight Götz von Berlichingen in a drama of 1773. Herder’s interest in German mythology can be seen as the forerunner to the Romantic fascination with the past in especially the works of Richard Wagner.

Herder’s idea was further developed by Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Like Herder, Fichte was also a student of Kant, but he rejects Kant’s idea of the *phenomena* and *noumena* – things as they appear and things as they are – two hypotheses postulated by Kant in *Critique of Pure Reason* (1791)⁷⁶ – arguing that both concepts can be amalgamated into one single philosophical concept. This is evident in Fichte’s *The Foundation of the Collected Science of Knowledge* (1794), which was followed by *Foundations of Natural Rights* (1796). In the latter work, Fichte introduces the concept of the self-ego entitled *thesis* (which the philosopher equates to the German people, known also as the *Volk*) and the non-ego dubbed *antithesis*. In Fichte’s theory, the contradiction between the ego and the non-ego is resolved in a synthesis (also known as the *will*) which became the basis of Fichte’s ‘metaphysical nationalism’, where the consciousness of the self-ego delineates itself by looking to dominate the non-ego. It is possible to see Fichte’s theory as the starting point for the emerging identity of a German nation.

⁷⁶ In this work, Kant argues that the human perception of *a priori* knowledge, which is independent of human experience, is subjected to interpretation by the intrinsic part of the human mind known as the categories of understanding. This feature of the brain enables the ordering of objects and consists of concepts such as space, time, cause and effect. This meant that for Kant, subjectivity dictated our understanding of ‘reality’ – hence our perception of the *phenomena*, the world as it appears to the human senses, is different to the *noumena*, the world as it truly is. In other words, the ‘real’ world is both incomprehensible and mystifying, and lies beyond our understanding. Sources taken from *Kant’s Aesthetics and Teleology* <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-aesthetics>> (Accessed 4th April 2008) and Heath, Duncan and Boreham, Judy (1999) *Introducing Romanticism* (1999). Cambridge University Press.

3.3.3a Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)

According to Longyear (1930:6–7), there are two different types of nationalism in music: defending and aggressive. The former is characterised by a desire to establish an individual achieve a cultural identity as a counter to a cosmopolitan culture which is perceived as foreign and/or oppressive. The latter is often associated with politics and xenophobia, and looks to suppress any hint of counter-nationalist ideals. Both defending and aggressive nationalism appear to manifest themselves most evidently in opera, where the nation, its stories and its music could be represented most fully.

Romantic opera is associated with the Romantic desire to revive a bygone era and the search for national identity, both of which are closely related to mythology. All of this is evident in *Der Freischütz* (1821) by Carl Maria von Weber, regarded as the first German Romantic opera, and also as the first significant nationalist opera. Although there is no literal English translation of the title, *Der Freischütz* is also known as ‘The Marksman’ or ‘The Freeshooter’. The opera, set in the German forest celebrated in folklore, depicts the young ranger Max who, in his determination to win a shooting contest, enlisted the Devil’s help to forge seven magic bullets. *Der Freischütz* incorporates elements of German folk legend such as the mythical ‘Wolf Glen’ Scene, where supernatural visions accompany the forging of the magic bullets, and features several nationalist numbers such as the Hunters’ chorus and the Bridesmaids’ chorus, as well as celebrated orchestral evocations of Nature and the supernatural.

According to Walker (1996:166), Liszt was no stranger to Weber’s compositions having completed his own editions of Weber’s piano sonatas during his stay at the Villa d’Este in Trivoli. Even though Liszt never saw a complete performance of *Der Freischütz*, Walker (1996:504–506) shows that a concert organised in the presence of Liszt by the Société de Musique of Luxembourg includes a performance of the *Freischütz* overture. Parallels can be drawn between the subject matter of Weber’s fabled ‘Wolf Glen’ scene and several of Liszt’s piano compositions that incorporate evocations of the hunt, such as the E flat major ‘Paganini’ Etude entitled ‘La Chasse’ and the Eighth ‘Transcendental’ Etude entitled ‘Wilde Jagd’.

3.3.3b Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

Weber's *Freischütz* was followed by the music dramas of Richard Wagner, who developed Romantic opera by incorporating German mythology as his subject matters.

In *Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg* (*Tannhäuser and the Singers' Contest at Wartburg*, 1845), Wagner combines mythology with medieval history by developing a storyline that integrated the German tradition of lyric and song writing known as the Minnesang (which flourished from the twelfth to the fourteenth century) and its most famous thirteenth-century exponent, Tannhäuser, with the myth of Venus.

In *Lohengrin* (1848), Wagner adopts the German Arthurian legend of the Swan Knight⁷⁷ sent to rescue a maiden who must never question his identity. Wagner's inspiration came from the German medieval poem *Parzival*⁷⁸ written by the thirteenth-century knight and poet Wolfram von Eschenbach (1170–1220)⁷⁹ where Lohengrin, the son of Parzival, first appears as Loherangrin. Wagner's *Lohengrin* looks forward to the composer's final opera, *Parsifal* (1882); a work consisting of pseudo-Christian symbolism and one which, yet again, adapts its subject matter from Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*.

Wagner's most monumental composition is the epic cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*, 1848–1874), a project which took the composer over a quarter of a century to complete. It consists of the operas *Das Rheingold* (1869), *Die Walküre* (*The Valkyrie*, 1870), *Siegfried* (1871) and *Götterdämmerung* (*Twilight of the Gods*, 1874). *Der Ring* is Wagner's most explicit illustration of total art form – *Gesamtkunstwerk* – the amalgamation of myth, poetry, music and theatre, which is

⁷⁷ Nicknamed the Der Märchenkönig (The Fairy-tale King), King Ludwig II of Bavaria was captivated by Wagner's operas and became the composer's most important patron. Ludwig's castle Neuschwanstein was named after the Swan Knight and is the King's tribute to Wagner's operas.

⁷⁸ Eschenbach's *Parzival* is a partial adaptation of the unfinished romance entitled *Perceval, le Conte du Graal* (*Perceval, the Story of the Grail*, 1181–1191) written by the French twelfth-century poet Chrétien de Troyes. The work depicts the story of the Arthurian hero Parzival and his search for the Holy Grail.

⁷⁹ Wolfram von Eschenbach was immortalised by Wagner as one of the characters in the opera *Tannhäuser*.

closely associated with the Romantic concept known as synaesthesia – the achievement of the ultimate spiritual unification between the different art forms. The idea behind Wagner’s *Ring* came from the fusion of Norse mythology and German legend as recorded in the twelfth-century German poem known as the *Nibelungenlied*. The plot depicts a magic ring which possesses the power to rule the world, forged from the gold stolen from the Rhine by the dwarf Alberich. The absolute power which the ring promises soon leads to a struggle between several mythical figures including Wotan, the chief of the Gods. Eventually the ring falls into the hands of Siegfried, the protagonist of the cycle and Wotan’s grandson, but he is betrayed and killed. In the end it is Siegfried’s lover, the Valkyrie Brünnhilde, who returns the ring to the river Rhine and seals the fate of the Gods. The characters and symbols in Wagner’s *Ring* have been subjected to numerous interpretations. In *The Perfect Wagnerite: A Commentary on the Nibelung’s Ring* (1898), the Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) draws parallels between Wagner’s epic cycle and the socialist critique of a industrial society and its abuses, whereas the scholar Robert Donington in *Wagner’s Ring and Its Symbols* (1984), interprets *Der Ring* using the theories developed by the Swedish psychiatrist Carl Jung and the nihilistic philosophies of Schopenhauer.

The philosophies of Artur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) can also be found in Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* (1859), one of the composer’s most explicit illustrations of synaesthesia. *Tristan* is a work which moved conventional Western harmonies and tonality toward the atonal movement; which became the hallmark of the second Viennese School. In composing this opera, Wagner turned towards Schopenhauer’s ideas found in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (*The World as Will and Representation*, 1819).⁸⁰ These include the idea of the unattainable, signified by the *will*, and the concept of *Phenomenon*, humanity’s erroneous perception of the physical world, and *Noumenon*, the unknown reality of the physical world, both of which are critiques and extensions of Kant’s idea of the *phenomena* and *noumena*. In Wagner’s *Tristan*, Schopenhauer’s *Phenomenon* is depicted as the day – the realm of falsehood and unreality where the star-crossed lovers had to abide by the court of

⁸⁰ For a comprehensive discussion of this work and Schopenhauer’s critique of Kant, please see *Arthur Schopenhauer* <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schopenhauer/#4>> (Accessed 15th June 2007).

King Marke thus concealing their love for each other. It is during the day that Tristan, in conflict with his own desire for Isolde, escorts his beloved from Ireland to her marriage with Marke. In contrast, the *Noumenon* is represented by the night, the realm of sex and intrinsic reality where passion can be openly expressed and desires can be fulfilled. This is most evident in the second act, which takes place at night. Furthermore, Noumenon also signifies the realm of death, as portrayed in Isolde's *Liebestod*, which Wagner referred to as her transfiguration, when the two lovers are finally united in death. Here the emotional content of the work becomes internalised as it does not simply depict an effect or feeling but seeks to arouse the same in the listener.

Wagner's penultimate work, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (*The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*, 1867), again adapts the German folklore of the Mastersingers – lyric poets from the fourteenth to sixteenth century who developed the tradition inherited from the medieval Minnesingers. Furthermore, Wagner based one of the opera's main characters on an actual historical figure: the cobbler-poet Hans Sachs (1494–1576), who was perhaps the most famous of the Mastersingers. Wagner's nationalism emerges most strongly in this opera's final scene, where Hans Sachs declares the loyalty of the Mastersingers to German art, preserving it through years of unrest and guarding it against foreign influence.

The link between Liszt and Wagner is a direct one. Liszt knew Wagner's operas intimately, having transcribed a number of them for solo piano. The pianist was also an ardent admirer and avid supporter of Wagner's music, and conducted the premiere of *Lohengrin* in the composer's absence. Walker (1996:278–280) showed that not only was Liszt influential in promoting Wagner's music in Budapest through his involvement with a fund-raising concert for the Bayreuth Festival during a time of national hostility towards the German composer, but the pianist also attended three complete cycles of Wagner's *Ring* whilst he was in Bayreuth in 1876 (1983[3]:346–355). Wagner eventually became Liszt's son-in-law by marrying the pianist's daughter, Cosima. Some of Wagner's advanced harmonic progression and compositional devices can be seen as extensions of Liszt's own, such as the harmonic parallels between the opening of Wagner's *Tristan* and the second version of Liszt's

Die Lorelei.⁸¹ Furthermore, Wagner's use of leitmotifs in his operas and music dramas can be seen as an extension of Liszt's technique of thematic transformation.

3.3.4 The cult of Nature

Closely associated with the Romantic idea of individualism is the Romantic reverence for Nature. The cult of Nature can be traced back to the writings of the Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1717–1778), regarded as one of the forerunners of Romanticism. Part of Rousseau's autobiographical *Confessions* (1781–1788)⁸² depicts his seeking refuge in solitude and nature, by, for instance, crossing the Swiss Alps on foot. Rousseau's consistent examination of his own emotional experiences while seeking refuge in nature has a distinctly Romantic flavour and foreshadows the communion between the Romantic artist and nature as symbolised in the figure of the wanderer (see 3.3.2b). The importance of nature is also evident in Rousseau's *Émile* (1762),⁸³ a semi-fictional work recounting the education of a boy as overseen by the philosopher himself. In this work, Rousseau outlines his methodology for education. The countryside, where human beings allowed to connect with their originally unspoiled state, away from the seductive materialism of the cosmopolitan society, is regarded as the ideal environment for nurturing an individual.

Like Rousseau, the English Romantic poet William Wordsworth (1770–1850) saw man estranged from his 'natural' self, due to the industrialisation of urban life. His intention of healing this rift is reflected in many of his works such as the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798–1802),⁸⁴ characterised by their unpretentious use of the English language, which reflect and celebrate the simplicity of rural life.

⁸¹ See Footnote 16 on Chapter 2.1.

⁸² J.-J. Rousseau ([1781–1788]1964), *Confessions Volume 1 and 2*, introduced by R. Niklaus, London: J. M Dent.

⁸³ J.-J. Rousseau ([1762]1930), *Emile*, translated by B. Foxley, London: J. M. Dent.

⁸⁴ W. Wordsworth ([1798–1802]1992), *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems*, edited by J. Butler, and K. Green, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

3.3.4a Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840)

The German artist Caspar David Friedrich was famed for incorporating Romantic philosophy concerning Nature into his landscape paintings. Just as Byron's heroes are reflections of his own personality, Friedrich also incorporated himself in many of his paintings which thus become not only depictions of Nature, but of the artist's immersion in Nature. The eminent Friedrich scholar Helmut Börsch-Supan (1972:624) recognises the similarity between Friedrich's self-portrait and the lonely figure in the foreground of the artist's *Monk by the Sea* (1808):

It has passed unnoticed until now that the figure in *Monk by the Sea* is a self-portrait. The thick fair hair, the sprouting beard, the round-shaped skull and the gaunt stature are features of Friedrich's appearance as it is known from authenticated portraits and written descriptions. Moreover, Friedrich's secluded and modest way of life, for which there is ample evidence, not least George Friedrich Kersting's representation of his studio, justified him in depicting himself as a monk.

Illustration 3.1: Caspar David Friedrich, *Monk by the Sea* (1808)



In this painting, Friedrich portrays both the artist's immersion in Nature and the unbridgeable gulf between Nature and the individual, who is depicted as a 'blot' on the blank face of landscape. This duality has been termed 'Romantic Irony': the artist

is at once immersed in the landscape at a spiritual level and physically separated from it.⁸⁵ The infinity of the dark sky, the ominous sea and the vastness of water depicts not only Nature's overwhelming powers, but also the artist's own estrangement from the 'tame' world of civilised society. Sterling Lambert (2004:241) depicts the metaphorical power of the sea in Romantic art:

The sea has always been compelling, for its apparent boundlessness and sheer insusceptibility to rational measurement hold the potential for both fascination and fear. It is hardly surprising that in all areas of the arts its power as a metaphor for the unfathomable has shown itself time and again to be especially potent. Perhaps the most unfathomable concept of all is that of eternity, or timelessness, and the sea has perhaps always been suggestive of this elusive state, at no time more powerfully than in the first half of the 19th century.

Friedrich succeeds in communicating the effect of the sublime to the outside observer just as the painting itself depicts the effect of the sublime on the painter and his immersion in Nature.⁸⁶ The overwhelming effect of Friedrich's painting can be compared to the immersion in orchestral soundscapes that is such a feature of Wagner's operas, most famously in the *Ride of the Valkyries* and in Isolde's 'Liebestod'.⁸⁷

Friedrich's *Monk by the Sea* foreshadows his most famous painting, *The Wanderer above the Sea of Mist* (1818), which would become one of the symbols of Romanticism:

⁸⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of 'Romantic Irony' please see Hoffmeister, Gerhart. *Romantic Irony* <<http://www.litencyc.com/php/sttopics.php?rec=true&UID=576>> (Accessed 6th January 2009).

⁸⁶ Friedrich's contemporaries, the poet Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) and the novelist Clemens Brentano (1778–1842), were unnerved by this Friedrich painting. The former concluded his review of *Monk by the Sea* for the Berlin *Abendblätter* dated 13th October 1810 with the following:

But my own feelings about this wonderful picture are too confused; and therefore, before daring to speak them out more fully, I have tried to learn something by listening to the comments of those who, in pairs, pass before it continually from morning to night.

Brentano's experience involves his 'entering the picture' by identifying with the human figure of the monk, but being immediately thrown back by Friedrich's overpowering depiction of nature. Like Kleist, Brentano concludes that perhaps the best manner to appreciate the painting involves listening to the remarks of various by-passes. For Kleist's complete review of Friedrich's *Monk by the Sea* entitled 'Feelings Before Friedrich's Seascape' and the complete text from Brentano's 'In Front of a Friedrich's Seascape with a Capuchin Monk', please see Miller (1974:208–210).

⁸⁷ See Chapter 3.3.3b.

Illustration 3.2: Caspar David Friedrich, *The Wanderer above the Sea of Mist* (1818)



The dominant figure in the foreground is a representation of the archetypal Romantic wanderer. The dark colouring and contemplative posture of this figure is contrasted with the vastness and mysterious luminosity of the landscape, which convey his Romantic vision. It is possible to interpret the gulf which appears between the artist and the landscape as another illustration of Romantic Irony.

Liszt's immersion in Nature is most clearly reflected in the symphonic poem *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* (*What One Hears on the Mountain*, 1854), in 'Paysage' and 'Chasse Niegé' (from the 'Transcendental' Etudes),⁸⁸ and in four of the compositions found in the first volume of the *Années de Pèlerinage*, namely 'Au lac de Wallenstadt', 'Au bord d'une source', 'Pastorale' and 'Vallée d'Obermann'. The latter is the most elaborate composition in the set and draws its inspiration from the semi-autobiographical romance *Obermann* by Étienne Pivert de Sénancourt⁸⁹. In this composition, Nature is depicted as a surrounding where the solitary artist is able to heal the wounds caused by society. The gloomy, chromatic opening is soon dispelled by the broad C-major section which portrays the poet's sorrows being gradually eased by the vision of the vast landscape. The philosophical epilogue suggests that even though the poet may be destined to live in sadness, he will always look towards the consoling qualities of Nature as a form of redemption, a sentiment shared by the protagonists of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, Schubert's song cycles and Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*.

The cult of the Sublime is closely related to the Romantic concept of immersion in Nature. Not only did Nature become the focal point of the Romantic disillusionment with urban society, but was also regarded as a metaphorical mirror which enabled the Romantics to witness the external powers which created both man and the physical world. Immanuel Kant refers to the overpowering forces of nature as the 'dynamic sublime', while the poem entitled *The Season* (1730)⁹⁰ by the Scottish poet and playwright James Thomson (1700–1748) depicts the 'scared terror' and 'severe delight' in the sublime form of Nature.

⁸⁸ See Chapter 5.3.

⁸⁹ Born in Paris in 1770, Sénancourt renounced his childhood education for priesthood and escaped to Freiburg, Switzerland, where he later married and lived as an immigrant. The death of Sénancourt's wife in 1800 saw him return to Paris, where he led a humble life as a writer. The extreme poverty of Sénancourt's livelihood and the depression he suffered after his wife's death formed the basis of *Obermann*. Written in 1804, *Obermann* takes the form of a series of letters written from Switzerland that tells the story of a lonely and cynical individual who is tired of society and of life. See also Chapter 3.3.5.

⁹⁰ J. Thomson ([1730]1972), 'The Seasons', in J. Sambrook (ed.), *The Seasons and The Castle of Indolence by James Thomson*, 3–157, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

3.3.5 The cult of the Sublime

The cult of the Sublime can be traced back to the Enlightenment, where scientific investigations revealed to its thinkers the complexity and incomprehensibility of the physical universe. To describe this awe-inspiring quality they use the term 'sublime', which was readily adopted by the Romantic for purposes of their own.

According to Heath and Boreham (1999:20, 22), the earliest encounter with the sublime occurred for many Romantics as part of the 'Grand Tour', where sons from wealthy European families travelled to foreign land such as Italy to absorb the country's culture and history. This journey usually involves having to cross the Swiss Alps, perhaps the supreme Romantic symbol of sublimity in landscape. The English poet Thomas Gray (1716–1771) and the Gothic novelist Horace Walpole (1717–1797) both gave accounts of the sublime in their depiction of the Swiss Alps during their Grand Tour from 1739–1741.

The great artistic and architectural treasures of Italy represented another aspect of the sublime. The Italian artist and etcher Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778) was famed for his depiction of the Roman ruins, in which he invested them with an aura of the colossal and the mythical, encouraging visitors to see imitations of their power in contemporary art and architecture.

Another perspective on the sublime is evident in the writings of the Anglo-Irish philosopher Edmund Burke (1729–1797). A forerunner to Romanticism, Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757)⁹¹ distinguishes between the beautiful and the sublime, stating that the former is well-formed and aesthetically pleasing to its beholder, whereas the latter lacks such proportion and harmony, inducing potentially destructive emotions such as passion and fear.

⁹¹ This essay can be found in *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* (1906), edited by J. Willis, Oxford University Press, 55–221.

Burke's work would be followed by *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764) and *Critique of Judgment* (1790)⁹² written by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). In the former, Kant discusses the objects and attributes of the beautiful and the sublime in correlation to man, the interrelationship between man and woman, and of different nationality and culture. In the latter work, Kant distinguishes between the 'mathematical sublime', which is present in immense structures (such as those depicted by Piranesi) and the 'dynamic sublime', represented by the overpowering forces of nature (as sometimes seen in Friedrich). Kant also argues that the sense of the sublime is a creative act within the beholder as it compels one to sacrifice imagination – which proved inadequate when trying to understand the infinite – to reason – which now must extend itself to comprehend the new sensory information. Burke and Kant's idea of the sublime is a precursor to the one expressed by Romantic thinkers such as Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829), Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843), Novalis (1772–1801)⁹³ and John Keats (1795–1821), who associate the sublime with the 'infinity' of Romanticism.

A critic and accomplished translator, Friedrich Schlegel contrasted the 'finite' and formal completeness of Classical art – which highlights the importance of balance, discipline and moderation – with the 'infinity' and 'incompleteness' of Romanticism – which focuses on inspiration, irrationalism and emotions. The 'infinity' espoused by Romanticism meant that all subjective interpretations ultimately proved inconclusive. This led philosophers such as Friedrich Schlegel, Hölderlin and Novalis to the paradox of Romantic imagination known as Romantic Irony, where the dualism of a subject (or object) is taken to its 'infinite' extreme to cast doubts on all predetermined values and interpretation. It is an expression which seeks to extend Kant's theory that places the physical world within the self, and is most evident in the nineteenth-century perception of the individual as bound to the physical world while alienated from it at the same time.

Romantic Irony can also be found in the nineteenth-century philosophy of art known as aesthetics, with its awareness of the insuperable gap between artistic aspiration and

⁹² I. Kant ([1790]1952), *The Critique of Judgement*, translated by J.C. Meredith, Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

⁹³ Novalis was the alias of the German philosopher Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg.

the perfectly ‘complete’ art form. The Romantic artist’s eternal struggle to attain the seemingly unattainable, leads Longyear (1930:2) to conclude that Romanticism is about ‘striving rather than achieving’. In works such as the poem *Endymion* (1817),⁹⁴ Keats equates the Romantic sublime to the ‘infinity’ of Romanticism and the unachievable ideal, which will always be sacrificed to reality and can only be realised in the realm of human imagination.

Romantic aesthetics is also marked by the increasing desire to determine the value and perception of art, as well as to explain it as a creative medium. This new area of thought emphasises interpretation over rationality, as is evident in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* (1790) and *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). In the former, Kant postulates that the aesthetical judgment of art stems from the impartial but subjective feelings common to all people. In the latter, Hegel suggests that each historical age consists of a cultural – *Zeitgeist* – an entity closely associated with drive or motivation – which determines its art form and means of interpretation.⁹⁵ The *Sturm und Drang*’s idea of the gifted individual was integrated with the aesthetic of subjective interpretation by the Schlegels, who maintained that the critic should respect the subjective expression of the creative genius. In a series of lectures of 1808, August Schlegel (1767–1845), the elder brother of Friedrich, raised the status of the reader to a lofty position similar to that of the artist, and Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) believed that it is the interpreter’s duty to understand the written text at an even deeper level than the author. Schleiermacher’s lecture on critical interpretation (1819) elevates the reader as critic by drawing the important parallels between interpretation in art and literature and moral decision-making.

⁹⁴ J. Keats ([1817]1970), *Endymion*, in M. Allot (ed.), *The Poems of John Keats*, 116–284, Harlow: Longman.

⁹⁵ G. W. H. Hegel ([1807]1977), *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Music was for the Romantics the most sublime of the arts as it could express the ineffable without the limitations of the physical world as represented by written words or painted objects. The twentieth-century colloquial use of the terms ‘romance’ and ‘romantic’ are associated with the emotional experience of music, which Romantic aesthetics seek to emphasise. The earliest example of this can be found in the *Herzensergießungen eines kunstliebenden Klosterbruders (Outpourings of the Heart of an Art-loving Monk, 1797)*⁹⁶ by the German theorist Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder (1773–1798). In this semi-fictional work, Wackenroder created the autobiographical personage of Joseph Berlinger, author of essays on the emotional understanding of music.⁹⁷ Wackenroder’s other important work devoted entirely to the discussion of music, *Phantasien über die Kunst für Freunde der Kunst (Fantasies on the Subject of Art for the Friends of Art)*, remained incomplete at the time of his death. This work was eventually published in 1799 by Wackenroder’s close friend and poet, Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853), along with *Outpourings of the Heart of an Art-loving Monk* and several of Tieck’s own writings on music in a single volume, which was to become the foundation of the German Romantic philosophy of music. Particularly important is the second part of Tieck’s edition, which contains three of Wackenroder’s fantasies entitled ‘The Wonders of Music’, ‘On the Various Species in Each Art with Special Reference to Different Kinds of Church Music’ and ‘The Strange Inner Substance of Music and the Spiritual Lesson of Contemporary Music’. In these essays, Wackenroder elevates music as the expressive art form that cannot be intellectually comprehended but can only be felt by the heart.⁹⁸

Wackenroder’s views were shared by the German author and critic E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776–1822). In Hoffman’s essay entitled *Beethoven’s Instrumentalmusik* (1813), the writer depicts the wealth of emotional sensation upon coming in contact with the music of Beethoven and the limitless expressive quality of instrumental music:

⁹⁶ W. H. Wackenroder (1797). *Sämtliche Schriften*, Munich: Curt Grützmacher, Sybille Claus. This essay can also be found in Wackenroder, W.H. ([1791]1952), ‘The Remarkable Life of the Musician Joseph Berlinger’, in O. Strunk, *Source Readings for Music History*, 750–763, London: Faber and Faber.

⁹⁷ David Sanford (1972) discusses Wackenroder’s reference to the Nuremberg painter, print-maker and theorist Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) in *Outpourings of the Heart of an Art-loving Monk*.

⁹⁸ For a comprehensive discussion of Wackenroder’s musical essays in *Phantasien über die Kunst für Freunde der Kunst* please see Siegel (1972:352–357).

Beethoven's music set in motion the level of fear, of awe, of horror, of suffering, and wakens just the infinite longing which is the essence of romanticism. He [Beethoven] is accordingly a completely romantic composer, and is not this perhaps the reason why he has less success with vocal music, which excludes the character of indefinite longing, merely representing emotions defined by words as emotions experienced in the realm of the infinite?

(Hoffman 1952:777)

As the archetypal Romantic artist, Liszt himself personified the contradictory extremes suggested by the Romantic sublime: he was the abbé and the devil, the transcendental and the sacrilegious. The Romantic sublime is evident in many of Liszt's important works for solo piano, especially in the B-minor Sonata and the Swiss volume of the *Années de Pèlerinage*. Liszt prefaced the sixth composition in the latter, 'Vallée d'Obermann', with two extracts from Sénancourt's eponymous novel which evince the typical traits of the Romantic outcast, with his longings, his disillusionments and his dissatisfaction that can only be resolved in the unattainable Sublime. The first reads as follows:⁹⁹

What do I wish! What am I! What shall I ask of nature? – Every cause is invincible, every end is deceitful; all forms change, all lengths of duration finally come to an end... I feel; I exist only to waste myself in unconquerable longings, to drink of the seduction of a fantastical world, to remain a subject to its voluptuous illusions.

(Sénancourt, *Obermann*, Letter 53)

For Obermann, Nature represents not merely a respite from the world and a chance for the individual to come into contact with an unspoiled environment, but also a powerful force that can act as a catalyst for cataclysmic experiences. This is reflected in the second extract cited by Liszt, taken from the fourth letter in which Obermann depicts a visionary night on the shores of the lake near Marin:

Inexpressible sensibility, the charm and the torment of our futile years; vast consciousness of nature that is everywhere overwhelming and incomprehensible; universal passion, indifference, supreme wisdom, abandonment to pleasure; all profound needs and cares that the heart of a man can know; I felt them all on that memorable night. I have taken a sinister step towards the age of feebleness; I have consumed ten years of my life.

(Sénancourt, *Obermann*, Letter 4)

⁹⁹ The English versions of Obermann's two following letters are free translation of the original French text as it appears in Liszt's score.

CHAPTER 4: THE HISTORY OF THE ‘TRANSCENDENTAL’ ETUDES

4.1 Introduction

As a pianist, Liszt was one of the most influential figures of the Romantic era and perhaps the greatest performer of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁰ Most of Liszt’s vast output of over thirteen hundred works was written after the pianist’s decision to abandon a successful performing career in order to devote himself fully to composition. Of these, the majority are for the piano.¹⁰¹ Despite the best efforts of the great Liszt interpreters of the twentieth century such as Horowitz, Arrau, Bolet, Ashkenazy, Barenboim and Kocsis, many of his piano compositions are still poorly received in some musical circles. Unlike the works of Chopin, whose works occupy an undisputed place in the repertoire of today’s pianists, Liszt’s compositions still divide opinions amongst musicians. Pianists who think highly of works such as the twenty *Hungarian Rhapsodies* (S 242) and the operatic paraphrases have been accused of lacking musical taste. One perspective could be that these compositions show Liszt’s more lighthearted and extrovert side, and are quintessentially showpieces, conceived with the composer’s own unique brand of virtuosity and bravado. Charles Rosen (1999:491) describes the musical contents of Liszt’s *Hungarian Rhapsodies* and operatic fantasies as follows:

The least respectable side of Liszt is to be found in the Hungarian Rhapsodies: even more than the opera fantasies, this is what has given him a bad reputation, and it is from the fame of these works that his most earnest admirers feel that he must be rescued.

Although reservations can be expressed concerning the musical depth of both the *Hungarian Rhapsodies* and the operatic paraphrases, the compositional and musical quality of the ‘Transcendental’ Etudes has never been doubted. The three versions of the twelve etudes that became Liszt’s ‘Transcendental’ Etudes, published respectively

¹⁰⁰ The poet and author Heinrich Heine, in his attempt to explain Liszt’s phenomenal success as a performer, concluded that a large portion of Liszt’s success lies in the pianist’s ability to skilfully manipulate the public by stage dissimulation (Bernstein 1998:66–67). According to Walker (1983:164), Heine’s statement stemmed from Liszt’s refusal to pay Heine a bribe for a flattering concert review. Walker also proposed the notion that Heine’s admiration for Liszt the musician is marred by his dislike for Liszt the man.

¹⁰¹ Leslie Howard’s recording of all of Liszt’s piano music occupies ninety-four compact discs. <<http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk>> (Accessed 23rd July 2006).

in 1827, 1838 and 1851, form a fascinating account of Liszt's development as a composer and exponent of pianistic virtuosity. In some ways, the three illustrate the unattributed description of Liszt in Dorian (1943:250) as 'the past, the present and the future of the instrument'.

The juvenile version, written when Liszt was in his mid-teens,¹⁰² is pianistically the least developed and looks back to the pianism of Liszt's predecessors such as Czerny. The intermediate version was conceived in 1837 at the height of Liszt's performing career, at a time when the pianist distinguished himself amongst Europe's prominent virtuosos. This version reflects the 'new' pianism of the day, as developed by Liszt and his contemporaries such as Chopin and Thalberg, and incorporates the advanced chromaticism of Romantic music. The final revision of the 'Transcendental' Etudes was completed in 1851, and features the addition of titles to ten of the twelve etudes, implying the programmatic intent that was one of the hallmark of the Romantic movement known as the Music of the Future, of which Liszt and Wagner were the chief exponents.

¹⁰² The exact dates when these etudes were conceived remained unclear. Alan Walker (1983:118) proposes the year 1824 when Liszt was thirteen years old. On the other hand, Samson argues that their creation could have fallen between the early months of 1826 and the year 1827.

4.2 The early version

The earliest version of the ‘Transcendental’ Etudes was published by Boisselot of Marseille and Dufaut et Dubois of Paris under the title *Étude pour le piano-forte en 48 exercices dans tous le tons majeurs et mineurs Opus 6*.¹⁰³

The title of the 1827 version of the *Transcendentals* is interesting from a number of viewpoints:

- The *Étude* in the title refers to a traditional compositional structure, the study (See Chapter 1.3). The inspiration behind these juvenile studies may well have come from some of the methodological exercises composed during the early part of the nineteenth century. Samson (2003) showed that significant parallels can be drawn between Liszt’s youthful set of studies with not only those of Cramer and Kessler, but also with disparate composers such as Berger, Steibelt, Potter and Bertini. However, the strongest influence behind Liszt’s juvenile studies may be traced to the instructive works of Karl Czerny, Liszt’s mentor and Beethoven’s student, and in particular Czerny’s technical exercises from his *School of Velocity*, Opus 299.
- The use of the singular form, *Étude*, indicates that Liszt conceived the work as a single whole.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ The publication date of the first version of the *Transcendentals Etudes* is given as 1826 by Sitwell (1955), but this was changed to 1827 by later scholars such as Walker (1970, 1983), Kentner (1976), Samson (2003) and Searle (1966). Due to the differing dates given by various scholars concerning the completion of all three versions of the ‘Transcendental’ Etude, the overview will use the publication dates for the etudes. According to Searle’s catalogue (Walker, A. 1970. *Franz Liszt: The Man and His Music* [Second Edition]. London: Redwood Burns 393–458), Liszt’s earliest surviving works that preceded these youthful studies were *Variation on a Waltz by Diabelli*, Opus 1 (1822), *Huit Variations* and *Sept Variations brillantes sur un theme de Rossini*, Opus 2 (1824), *Impromptu brillant sur des thèmes de Rossini et Spontini*, Opus 3 (1824), *Allegrì di bravura* and *Rondo di bravura*, Opus 4 (1824). The omission of Opus 5 could be an indication that the work is probably lost. According to Searle (1966:1), Liszt’s earliest recorded composition (which is now lost) was a *Tantum Ergo* for choir written in 1822 (Table 1), a work which could well be the forerunner to Liszt’s *Tantum Ergo* composed in 1869.

¹⁰⁴ The same concept of a unified cycle of etudes will recur to some extent in Chopin’s Etudes, Opus 10 (1833) and Opus 25 (1837); but especially Schumann’s *Études symphoniques* (1837) and Brahms’s ‘Paganini’ Variations (1863).

- The number of the etudes proposed (48) invites comparison with the two volumes of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier*, which contain two preludes and fugues in each of the major and minor keys. However, Liszt only published twelve of the studies, while a thirteenth study (in F sharp major) remained incomplete and the remaining thirty-five never appeared.¹⁰⁵

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¹⁰⁵ In the German edition issued by Hofmeister (1827), the title appeared as *Étude pour le piano-forte en douze exercices Opus 1*. It is under this title and opus number that the earliest version of the 'Transcendental' Etudes is now most commonly known. Liszt dedicated this set of etudes to Lydie Garella, a young girl from Marseille, and the possible object of the teenage composer's affection.

4.3 The intermediate version

The intermediate version of the ‘Transcendental’ Etudes, more commonly known as the *Grandes Études*, was Liszt’s first reworking of his set of juvenile studies.

According to Ramann’s biography (1882[2]:283), Liszt’s first revision of his Opus 1 was undertaken during his stay in Lake Como with the Countess D’Agoult. Although Ramann does not give a date for the revision, Samson (2003:10) proposed that Liszt could well have started his revision of Opus 1 during the middle of 1837 before their completion in October of the same year. These new etudes were then published in 1839 under the title *Grandes Études*.¹⁰⁶ The complete title *24 Grandes Études Pour le Piano composées et dédiées À Monsieur Charles Czerny par F Liszt* makes interesting reading for the following reasons: Firstly, as in the 1827 version, the number of etudes proposed (48 in the 1827 and 24 in 1839) was more than the actual number of published etudes (12) and secondly, *Études* is now in the plural form, which meant that each etude is now conceived individually. Ueber and Kraus (2005:12) notes that Liszt had originally intended to call the pieces ‘Préludes’, which would perhaps have suggested more strongly that, despite the unique character of each piece, the work was conceived as a unified cycle exploring all the major and minor keys, much like Chopin’s *24 Préludes* Opus 28 (1839).

The *Grandes Études* were conceived at a time when significant progress was being made in the craftsmanship and manufacture of the piano. The new instrument not only introduced Liszt to an entirely new realm of orchestral-like textures and sonorities but also assisted the composer in his exploration of a new pianistic technique, as is clear from Liszt’s own writings:

¹⁰⁶ According to Liszt’s letter dated 17th January 1855 (1894:230), the *Grandes Études* were published not only by Haslinger in Vienna, but also Schlesinger in Paris, and Mori and Lavener in London.

With its seven octaves, it [the piano] includes the entire range of an orchestra, and ten human fingers are sufficient to recreate the harmonies played by the joint effort of more than a hundred performers ... Because of the progress already made, and increased daily through the persistent work of the pianist, the piano extends its acquisitional ability everyday [sic]. We create arpeggios like the harp, hold notes like the wind instrument, staccato and a thousand other passages heretofore though to be the speciality of this or that instrument. Further progress in piano manufacture which we can already foresee will indubitably allow us to make those differentiations in sound that are yet lacking.¹⁰⁷

These new etudes were essentially a highly complex elaboration of the technical and musical expression of Opus 1. At the same time however, Liszt kept the overall tonal relationship of Opus 1 and the underlying thematic motif of each individual etude. The diatonically clean-cut, classically conceived style of the studies of 1827 was replaced by massive, surging chromatic harmonies and Romantic virtuosity. The technical demands surpass any music that had been written – and any pianistic technique that had been developed – up to that time. Even by today's standards, these works remain inaccessible to most pianists, as Liszt himself must have realised, for in the second and final revision of Opus 1, known as the *Études d'exécution transcendente*, many of the most difficult passages are simplified.

With the publication of the *Grandes Études*, Liszt enters on the second part of his musical autobiography: his development as both a Romantic composer and the supreme virtuoso. Alan Walker (1983:307) comments that, in the *Grandes Études*, 'Liszt the supreme virtuoso openly reminisces about Liszt, the infant prodigy.' Astonished by the exorbitant technical demands of the *Grandes Études*, Schumann called them 'studies in *Sturm und Drang* for, at the most, ten or twelve players in the world.'¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, Schumann's review of the *Grandes Études* also confirmed the extent of Paganini's influence on Liszt, 'They are most related to some of those for the violin written by Paganini, some of which Liszt has recently announced his intention of transferring for the pianoforte.'¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Quoted from Ubber (2005:10).

¹⁰⁸ Schumann in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, No. 11, 1839.

¹⁰⁹ Schumann, R. 1875. *Etuden für das Pianoforte*. In *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker*:122. (Translation taken from Ubber and Kraus [2005:10]).

There were minor discrepancies in the *Grandes Études* compared to the 1827 version of the studies. The seventh study of 1827 was transposed from E-flat major to D-flat major, and revised as Etude No. 11, resulting in the original D-flat major Etude of 1827 being discarded, and a new etude now took the place of the previous E-flat major Etude. Interestingly enough, the opening of the newly composed seventh etude incorporates a partial revision of another youthful work, the *Impromptu brillant sur des themes de Rossini et Spontini* (1824).¹¹⁰

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¹¹⁰ Unlike Liszt's youthful studies of 1827, which were dedicated to Lydie Garella, the 1839 Milan edition of the *Grandes Études* by Ricordi was dedicated to both Czerny and Chopin. Czerny did, however, appear alone as the dedicatee in the Haslinger edition published in the same year.

4.4 The final version

The revision of the *Grandes Études* came after a significant period of Liszt's life. During the period 1839–1847, Liszt embarked on a performing career unparalleled in the history of music up to that point. According to Walker (1977), Liszt's series of concert tours took him to Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Turkey and even as far as Russia. Liszt's success on these travels no doubt consolidated his reputation as the greatest pianist of his generation. Furthermore, the tour also brought Liszt to the attention of Princess Carolyn von Sayn-Wittgenstein. The princess's relationship with Liszt probably influenced his decision to settle in Weimar and accept the post of Court Kappellmeister during 1848. Shortly after his arrival, Liszt began an extensive programme of composition and revised some of his earlier works from what Mueller (1992:245) calls his *Glanzperiode*,¹¹¹ works which Liszt now considered too taxing or flashy. These included the *Grandes Études*, the *Paganini Etudes*, the *Album d'un Voyageur*, and the *Hungarian National Melodies*.

Liszt's intentions with these revisions are reflected in two letters of 1855. In the first, to Paris publisher Heinrich Schlesinger, he says:

You know that over the last few years I have taken the trouble to revise, re-work, correct and much modify a fairly large number of works of mine previously published (among them the Etudes, the Rhapsodies and the pieces which will appear shortly from Schott under the collective title 'Années de Pèlèrinage') in such a way that a second edition of it has been necessitated, to the point that I totally disavow the first. The example is often followed in literature and I believe that musicians would do well to profit from it however inconvenient it may be to be conscientious for the author to set himself to improving as much as it devolves upon him that, though his work may initially cause inconvenience to the publisher.¹¹²

¹¹¹ A term generally used to describe the period when the artist is at the height of his powers. It literally means 'brilliant period', although the term could also have negative connotations.

¹¹² Dated 3rd January 1855 (Liszt, F. 2003. *Liszt's Letters in the Library of Congress*. Translated, annotated and edited by M. Short. New York: Pendragon Press 109)

In the second, to the Leipzig publisher Alfred Dörrfel, Liszt states:

In literature the production of very much altered, increased, and improved editions is no uncommon thing. In works both important and trivial, alterations, additions, varying divisions of periods, etc., are a common experience of an author. In the domain of music such a thing is more minute and more difficult – and therefore it is seldom done. None the less I do consider it very profitable to correct one's mistakes as far as possible, and to make use of the experiences one gains by the editions of the works themselves. I, for my part, have striven for this; and, if I have not succeeded, it at least testifies my earnest endeavour.¹¹³

In 1851 the *Douze Grandes Études* of 1839 were revised and stripped of some of their more exorbitant technical demands to become the *Études d'exécution transcendente* (*Etudes of transcendental execution*).¹¹⁴ This set, published in 1852, is generally known today as the 'Transcendental' Etudes. This revision of the *Grandes Études* represents the third and final part of Liszt musical autobiography – the maturity of the accomplished composer.

The term 'transcendental' can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, these etudes require a pianistic facility that lies beyond the normal, in other words, a 'transcendental' technique. Not unlike Paganini, whose compositions remained technically accessible only to Paganini himself (at the time), it is possible that Liszt may have planned the 'Transcendental' Etudes with one performer in mind, namely himself. Even by today's standard, the technical challenges of these etudes present the greatest difficulty to outstanding professional pianists.

Secondly – and this is the sense in which Liszt probably intended the term – as the 'Transcendental' Etudes represent some of Liszt's greatest musico-poetic creations, a convincing interpretation can only be achieved once the pianist has succeeded in 'transcending' the technical difficulties they incorporate, so that the work themselves

¹¹³ Dated 17th January 1855 (Liszt, F. 1894. *Letters of Franz Liszt* Volume 1 and 2. Collected and edited by La Mara. Translated by C. Bache. London: Grevel 231).

¹¹⁴ The complex history of Liszt's 'Transcendental' Etude invites comparison with that of the 'Paganini' Etudes. Originally composed in 1838, the *Paganini Etudes* were revised and stripped of their flamboyant technical demands in 1851. Like the 'Transcendental' Etude, the key schemes in both versions of the 'Paganini' Etudes were kept the same. Furthermore, there was also an early version of *La Campanella* (Etude No. 3) written in 1832. Leslie Howard's complete discography of Liszt's piano works shows that there are also intermediate versions of Etude No. 1 as well as Etudes Nos. 4 and 5 <<http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk>> (Accessed 22nd April 2006).

transcend the function of etudes and become full-blown tone poems, where virtuosity is merely the means to conveying the poetic intention.

In the final revised version of the ‘Transcendental’ Etudes Liszt kept the original tonal plan but added evocative titles to all the etudes except No. 2 in A minor and No. 10 in F minor. Although it is unclear whether or not Liszt had already envisaged these poetic headings before the revision, or whether the titles were mere afterthoughts, they nevertheless served to consolidate the musical vision that led to the composition of the *Grandes Études* in 1839.¹¹⁵ Liszt’s poetic captions underline his intention to turn these etudes into pianistic tone-poems, to which Paul Henry Lang’s comment (in 1936) on the orchestral tone-poems is equally applicable:

Liszt’s great innovation and achievement consisted in proving that it was possible to create a well-rounded and logically organized piece of music without forcing the ideas into the established frames of the traditional forms.

Apart from the opening etude entitled ‘Preludio’, which serves as an introduction and a homage to J. S. Bach, the remaining nine titles either evoke a specific Romantic image or mood or make reference to Romantic literature. ‘Feux follets’ (No. 5) and ‘Wilde Jagd’ (No. 8) show Liszt’s fascination with legend and the supernatural, while ‘Paysage’ (No. 3), along with ‘Mazeppa’ (No. 4) and ‘Vision’ (No. 6), take their inspiration from Hugo’s eponymous poems. At the same time, ‘Paysage’, along with ‘Chasse-Niege’ (No. 12) embodies aspects of Romantic immersion in Nature. ‘Ricordanza’ (No. 8) and ‘Harmonies du soir’ (No. 11) reflects the Romantic penchant for nostalgia and evocation.

The seventh etude is entitled ‘Eroica’. With this title it would appear that Liszt is paying homage to Beethoven as E-flat major is the key reserved for some of the latter’s most heroic compositions, namely the *Sinfonia eroica*, Opus 55 (1806) and the ‘Emperor’ Concerto (1811). Further traces of Beethovenian influence can be found in the two untitled etudes (No. 2 and No. 10). The second etude, sometimes dubbed ‘Fusées’, uses the Beethovenian ‘fate’ motif as the thematic undercurrent to its overall musical structure; the tenth etude was nicknamed ‘Appassionata’ by the pianist Ferruccio Busoni because of parallels between it and Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in F

¹¹⁵ See Chapter 5.

minor, Opus 57 (1805) in terms of musical character, but is perhaps more potently modelled on Chopin's F-minor Etude, Opus 10.

Table 7 presents the key schemes and the tempo indications for all twelve etudes in all three different versions of the 'Transcendental' Etudes:

Table 7: The overall key design and tempo indications of the three versions of the etudes

Liszt		1827 version	1839 version	1852 version
<i>Etude No.</i>	<i>Key</i>	<i>Études pour le piano en douze exercices</i>	<i>Grandes Études</i>	<i>Études d'exécution transcendente</i>
1	C major	<i>Allegro con fuoco</i>	<i>Presto</i>	'Preludio' (<i>Presto</i>)
2	A minor	<i>Allegro non molto</i>	<i>Molto vivace</i>	<i>Molto vivace</i>
3	F major	<i>Allegro sempre legato</i>	<i>Poco adagio</i>	'Paysage' (<i>Poco adagio</i>)
4	D minor	<i>Allegretto</i>	<i>Allegro patetico</i>	'Mazeppa' (<i>Allegro</i>)
5	B-flat major	<i>Moderato</i>	<i>Egualmente</i>	'Feux Follet' (<i>Allegretto</i>)
6	G minor	<i>Molto agitato</i>	<i>Largo patetico</i>	'Vision' (<i>Lento</i>)
7	E-flat major	<i>Allegro con molta espressione</i>	<i>Allegro deciso</i> (new)	'Eroica' (<i>Allegro</i>)
8	C minor	<i>Allegro con spirito</i>	<i>Presto strepitoso</i>	'Wilde Jagd' (<i>Presto furioso</i>)
9	A-flat major	<i>Allegro grazioso</i>	<i>Andantino</i>	'Ricordanza' (<i>Andantino</i>)
10	F minor	<i>Moderato</i>	<i>Presto molto agitato</i>	<i>Allegro agitato molto</i>
11	D-flat major	<i>Allegro grazioso</i>	<i>Lento assai</i> (formerly Etude No. 7 in 1827)	'Harmonies du soir' (<i>Andantino</i>)
12	B-flat minor	<i>Allegro non troppo</i>	<i>Andantino</i>	'Chasse-Niege' (<i>Andante con moto</i>)
13	F-sharp major	(Unfinished)		

As can be seen in table 7, all three versions of the ‘Transcendentals’ share the same tonal plan, with etudes in the major and relative minor forming pairs that follow each other in descending fifths, starting in C major and ending in B-flat minor. This scheme is similar to that followed in Chopin’s *Préludes*, except that the latter moves up in fifths.

Liszt’s juvenile set of studies in 1827 also included an unfinished work in F-sharp major (recently added to New Grove online), the next key enharmonically in the circle of fifths.¹¹⁶ Note that the 1827 D-flat major Study is replaced in 1839 by a transposed version of the 1827 E-flat major Study, which is replaced in its turn by a new etude.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Interestingly, an attempt to complete the cycle was made by the Russian composer Sergei Liapunov (1839–1924), who studied with Liszt’s pupil Carl Tausig. In a work of 1905 entitled *Douze études d’exécution transcendente* (Twelve Etudes of Transcendental Execution), Liapunov not only continues Liszt’s tonal plan, starting in F-sharp major and ending in E minor, but he also gives each of his twelve etudes a poetic heading, viz. *Berceuse, Rondes des fantômes, Carillon, Térék, Nuit d’été, Tempête, Idylle, Chant épique, éoliennes, Lesghinka Rondes des sylphes, Elégie en mémoire de François Liszt*.

¹¹⁷ See Chapters 5.6.2 and 5.1.2, respectively.

CHAPTER 5: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE THREE VERSIONS OF THE 'TRANSCENDENTAL' ETUDES

The comparative analysis focuses on the early (1827), intermediate (1839), and final (1852) versions of Liszt's 'Transcendental' Etudes for piano, belonging respectively to the first three phases of the pianist's life as described above. The analysis will not discuss the 1827 studies that were not incorporated in the final 1852 version (No. 11 and No. 13).

Unlike all the comparative analyses of the four studies mentioned in Chapter 1.1 which discuss the 'Transcendental' Etudes in numerical order, this study will group the twelve etudes according to their programmatic intentions, in order to emphasise shared extra-musical influences and correlations between their musical realisations. For example, Etude No. 3 ('Paysage') and Etude No. 12 ('Chasse Nieve') will be discussed under the heading 'Etudes inspired by Nature', while Etude No. 5 ('Feux follets') and Etude No. 8 ('Wilde Jagd') will fall under the title 'Etudes based on legends'. Etudes which fall under more than one category will be cross-referenced.

The analysis of each etude comprises three sections:

- Background and possible influences: A discussion of the possible meaning of Liszt's programmatic titles and of the probable sources of literary and musical influence.
- Comparison between the three versions of the etude: An analysis of the formal structure and the main thematic ideas of the 1827 prototype, their development in the intermediate version and final appearance in the 1852 version.¹¹⁸ Unlike previous comparative analyses of the 'Transcendentals', here reference will also be made to other musical works where appropriate.
- Summary and conclusion: A synopsis of the analyses and findings.

¹¹⁸ Please note that there are only two versions of Etude No. 7 ('Eroica'), which first appeared in 1839, while there are four versions of the fourth etude ('Mazeppa'). Refer to Chapter 5.1.2 and Chapter 5.2, respectively.

5.1 Etudes that pay homage to Liszt's models

The four 'Transcendentals' which most clearly pay homage to Liszt's models are 'Preludio', 'Eroica' and the two untitled etudes (Nos. 2 and 10).

'Preludio' is closely modeled on the preludes of J. S. Bach, while 'Eroica' shares the same heading as Beethoven's Third Symphony. The Second Etude in A minor utilises Beethoven's so-called 'fate' motif – most prominent in his Fifth Symphony – as a salient feature in its motivic structure, while the Tenth Etude in F minor has been nicknamed the 'Appassionata' by the eminent pianist-composer Ferruccio Busoni, underscoring its relation to Beethoven's Piano Sonata in F minor, Opus 57. However, despite its Beethovenian heading, the strongest influence of the Tenth 'Transcendental' can be traced to Chopin, as striking pianistic and musical parallels can be found between this work and Chopin's Etude in F minor, Opus 10 No. 9.

5.1.1 'Preludio', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 1 in C major (*Presto*)

5.1.1a *Background and possible influences*

Consisting of only twenty-three bars,¹¹⁹ the opening etude is by far the shortest of all the 'Transcendentals'. Its title, 'Preludio', indicates that this short composition is not a full-blown tone-poem like those that comes after it, but an introductory movement.¹²⁰ Like many of the shorter preludes in Bach's *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier* and some of Wagner's *Vorspielen* to his music dramas, Liszt's 'Preludio' is essentially a curtain-raiser. In other words, Liszt gives the audience a hint of what is to follow in the rest of the work: the exploitation of the full range of the instrument; the metric freedom that is often inseparable from the performance of Romantic music; the flamboyant gesture and the virtuosity that are apparent from the opening bar; and a glimpse of the pianistic techniques and musical textures that will be introduced and developed during the course of the next eleven etudes.

¹¹⁹ In the *Étude en douze exercices*, the opening study consists of thirty-five bars, whereas the *C major Grandes Études* has exactly the same number of bars as the 'Preludio'.

¹²⁰ 'Preludio' is the Italian term for *Prelude*, and originates from the Latin *Praeludere*, meaning to play beforehand. (Randel 2003:676).

The musical makeup of the ‘Preludio’ is not unlike that of the traditional keyboard toccata, which features the prominent use of arpeggios and the lack of substantial thematic motifs. This meant that many pianists viewed this short etude as essentially a warm-up piece, one in which the artist familiarises himself/herself with the instrument. Similar pianistic exploration of the keyboard can also be found in the opening Prelude in C major from the Book I of J. S. Bach’s *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier*, in the opening Etude in C major of Chopin’s Opus 10 (1833) and the opening (also marked *Preludio*) of Liszt’s G-minor ‘Paganini’ Etude (1838), all of which utilise arpeggios as an introductory gesture:

Example 5.1a: J. S. Bach, *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier*, Book I, Prelude in C major, bars 1–2

Example 5.1b: F. Chopin, Etude in C major, Opus 10 No. 1, bars 1–8

Example 5.1c: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude de Paganini* No. 1 in G minor (1838), bars 1–5

Kentner (1976:106) describes the ‘Preludio’ (1852) as ‘so much a “prelude” that one involuntarily expects something else to follow it,’ and traditionally it is not performed on its own, as, unlike the rest of the etudes in the cycle, the ‘Preludio’ is not a self-sufficient piece of music. Ubbert and Kraus (2005:12) adds that the purpose of the ‘Preludio’ is two-fold: it not only acts as an introduction to the cycle but also introduces the second etude. The first two etudes of the cycle are thus linked and should be played *attacca*, a performance direction proposed by Ferruccio Busoni.¹²¹

¹²¹ Pianists such as Richter, Cziffra and Berman all choose a tempo considerably faster than the ‘Preludio’ when starting the A minor ‘Transcendental’ Etude. However, Claudio Arrau, who studied with one of Liszt’s students Martin Krause, in his recording for Phillips (1974) achieved a more cohesive transition between the ‘Preludio’ and the A minor ‘Transcendental’ Etude by playing the latter at much the same tempo as the former.

Further parallels can be drawn between the harmonic progression in the arresting opening bars of all three versions of the ‘Preludio’ and the First Prelude from Book II of *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier*:

Example 5.2a: J. S. Bach, *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier*, Book II, Prelude in C major, bars 1–2

C: I V⁷ of IV IV II⁽⁷⁾ V⁷

Example 5.2b: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 1 in C major (1827), bars 1–2

C: I V⁷ of IV IV⁽⁷⁾ V⁽⁷⁾ V⁽⁷⁾ of V

Example 5.2c: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 1 in C major (1839), bars 1–2

C: I V⁷ of IV IV V⁽⁷⁾ V⁽⁷⁾ of V

Example 5.2d: F. Liszt, ‘Preludio’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 1 in C major (1852), bars 1–2

C: I V⁷ of IV IV V⁽⁷⁾ V⁽⁷⁾ of V

As can be seen from the above examples, the opening bars of the later versions of the Etude are identical apart from an added octave on the first bass note of the ‘Preludio’. Both versions greatly expand the range of the opening arpeggio of 1827, creating a more flamboyant use of the keyboard, and also employ fuller and more chromatically inflected harmonies afterwards, including four augmented triads. In examples 5.2 (a–d), the first bar consists of the tonic chord of C major which is modified to become V^7 of IV . The rhythm and ascending-descending shape of the opening gesture in Liszt’s 1827 version of the ‘Preludio’ resemble those in the Bach example. However, unlike Bach, Liszt does not first establish the chord as a tonic triad, but immediately treats it as V^7 of IV , rather like Beethoven in the arresting opening bars of the First Symphony:

Example 5.3: L. van Beethoven, Symphony in C major, Opus 21, first movement, bars 1–4

The musical score for Example 5.3 shows the opening of the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony in C major, Opus 21. It features five staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The tempo is 'Adagio molto'. The key signature is C major. The score begins with a forte (f) dynamic and a pizzicato (pizz.) instruction. The first three bars show a series of arpeggiated chords, with dynamics alternating between forte (f) and piano (p). A crescendo (cresc.) is marked in the third bar. The fourth bar features a final forte (f) chord, with the instruction 'arco' (arco) indicating the end of the pizzicato section. The score is watermarked with 'University of Cambridge'.

Liszt shared with Mendelssohn, Chopin, Schumann and Brahms an admiration for Bach, and he transcribed a considerable amount of Bach’s *oeuvre* for the piano. He inherited this partly from his teacher, Czerny, who was one of Beethoven’s students. Both Beethoven and Czerny had been instrumental in promoting Bach’s music.¹²²

¹²² Indeed, Beethoven was one of the first musicians to perform Bach’s *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier* in public. The influence of Bach is apparent in Beethoven’s late works, such as the last set of string quartets and the last piano sonatas. Beethoven’s student, Karl Czerny, was one of a number of composers in the early nineteenth century who edited Bach’s *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier*. See <<http://www.sheetmusicplus.com/sheetmusic/detail/HL.50252040.html>> (Accessed 31st January 2009).

5.1.1b Comparison of the three versions of the etude

The juvenile C-major Study resembles a short toccata in binary form. Its technical makeup consists almost entirely of semiquaver movement. This is used initially to outline arpeggio-like figures decorated by accented non-chord notes in the right hand with the left hand providing chordal accompaniment, changing to broken octaves in both hands in bar 9, and then to an oscillating figure in bar 11, and to broken chords in bar 14. The latter lead to the climax which precedes a reprise of the opening bars:

Example 5.4: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 1 in C major (1827), bars 5–19

The image displays a musical score for F. Liszt's *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 1 in C major, covering bars 5 to 19. The score is presented in five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and the label 'Piano' or 'Pno.' on the left. The first system (bars 5-7) begins with a piano (*p*) and *leggiero* marking. The right hand features arpeggiated figures with accented non-chord notes, while the left hand provides chordal accompaniment. The second system (bars 8-10) shows a change to broken octaves in both hands, with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The third system (bars 11-13) features an oscillating figure in the right hand and broken chords in the left hand, marked with *fp* and *sf ten.*. The fourth system (bars 14-16) continues with broken chords and octaves, marked with *f* and *sf*. The fifth system (bars 17-19) concludes with a reprise of the opening bars, marked with *fz*. The score includes various musical notations such as accents, slurs, and dynamic markings.

The later versions emphasise the improvisatory character of the piece by discarding the reprise, by introducing cadenza-like passages in bars 1, 3 and 12–13, and by replacing the uniform tempo of the original with a multitude of inflections.

While the 1827 version introduces numerous ideas in the opening bars, both the 1839 and 1852 versions are far more economical and organic in their deployment of thematic material. The rising sequence from bar 2 is developed at some length in the later versions, driving the music towards the central climax:

Example 5.5: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 1 in C major (1839), bars 4–9¹²³

The musical score for Example 5.5 is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 4 to 6. It features a complex texture with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The instruction 'poco a poco cresc.' is written below the first staff, and 'accelerando molto' is written below the second staff. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers bars 7 to 9. It begins with a dynamic marking of '8^{ma}' above the first staff. The right hand continues with rapid sixteenth-note patterns, while the left hand plays chords and moving lines. The instruction 'sempre più forte' is written below the first staff.

In fact, Liszt discards all the rest of the material presented in the opening page of the 1827 version (bars 5–19). Instead, he retains two ideas presented in the latter part of that version for development:

- The first is a two-bar chordal progression which leads into the coda:

¹²³ In bars 7–8 of both the C-major *Grande Étude* (1839) and 'Preludio' (1852), Liszt presents a more effective build-up to the central climax with the following ossia:

The musical score for the ossia passage is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 7 to 8. It features a complex texture with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. The instruction 'sempre più forte' is written below the first staff, and '8^{ma}' is written above the second staff. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers bar 9. It features a complex texture with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand.

All of the recordings encountered by the author incorporate this ossia.

Example 5.6: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 1 in C major (1827), bars 29–31

In the latter versions of the etude, this passage is completely reinvented from a harmonic perspective and expanded into a five-bar central climax, of which the first three bars form a chain of dominant functions:

Example 5.7: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 1 in C major (1839), bars 9–13¹²⁴

The chain of ascending fourths in the soprano part of the melody can be linked to similar chains in the second etude (See Ex. 5.34) and to the descending chain in the introduction of ‘Mazeppa’ (see Example 5.91), and represent a remarkable foreshadowing of the famous theme from Schönberg’s First Chamber Symphony:

¹²⁴ The Peters edition edited by Emil von Sauer (1917:5) shows the A-major chord on the first beat of bar 11 as follows:

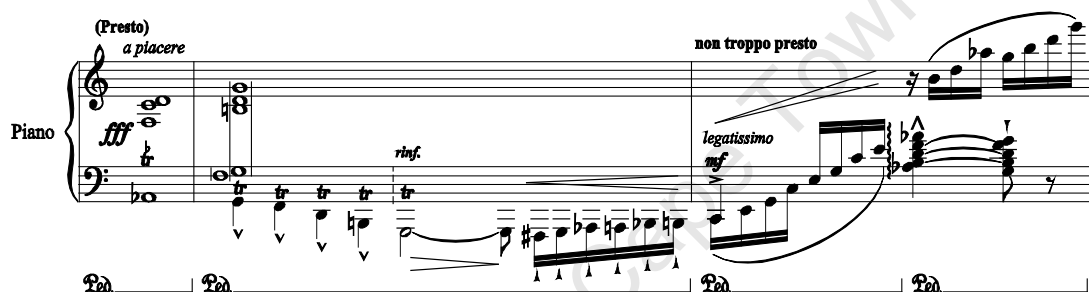
This makes the contrary motion between the hands consistent throughout the passage, but detracts from the dramatic effect of the next chord.

Example 5.8: A Schoenberg, Chamber Symphony in E major, Opus 9, bars 5–6

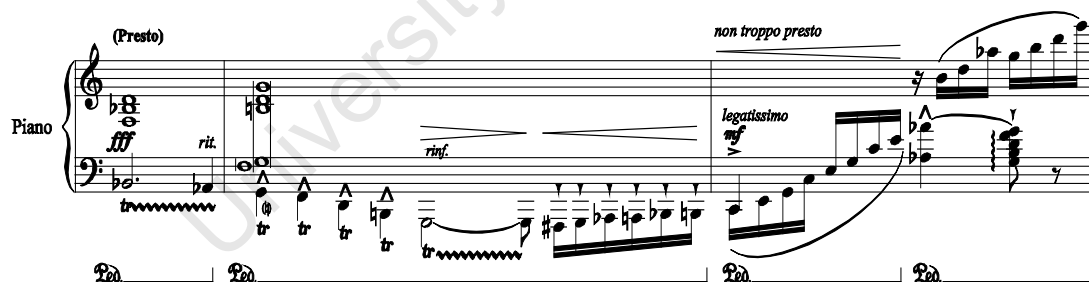


The cadence itself is expanded to include a left-hand cadenza on V. In the 1839 version Liszt introduced a II quartad with lowered fifth instead of the *I* 6/4.¹²⁵ However, in the 1852 version, he substitutes a new chord of B-flat major for this, creating a much more surprising resolution onto the *V*⁷ in C:

Example 5.9a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 1 in C major (1839), bars 12–14



Example 5.9b: F. Liszt, 'Preludio', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 1 in C major (1852), bars 12–14



As mentioned above, the later versions do not feature a restatement of the opening bars. Instead, the five-bar climax leads directly into the coda.

- The second idea consists of a flurry of arpeggios and is located in the coda of the 1827 version:

¹²⁵ This type of 'borrowing' from the minor mode was very common in Romantic music. See Piston (1987:257–272) and Ottman (1972:131–158) for a comprehensive list of musical examples.

Example 5.10: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 1 in C major (1827), bars 31–32

Again, its transformation in the later versions is impressive. In the coda of the C-major *Grande Étude* (1839), Liszt gives us this flamboyant make-over, enriched by a striking appoggiatura figure on the third beat:

Example 5.11: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 1 in C major (1839), bars 14–15

before finally deciding on the following in the coda of the 'Preludio' (1852):

Example 5.12: F. Liszt, 'Preludio', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 1 in C major (1852), bars 14–15

The only difference between the 1839 and 1852 versions of the above passage is the treatment of the left hand on the third and fourth beat of bar 14 and 15, respectively. In 1839, the harmonic progression from the arpeggiated compound on the third beat to the V^7 on the fourth beat constitutes a common resolution of an appoggiatura, a rather 'tame' effect, especially as the

staccatissimo on the fourth beat is masked by the pedal. In the final version, the transference of the arpeggiated chord to the fourth beat of the bar reinforces the dynamic energy implied by the articulation.

In the juvenile version (1827), the flurry of C-major arpeggios leads directly into the final perfect cadence of the study. In the latter version of the etude, Liszt ends with a solemn gesture typical of the Baroque by introducing a plagal cadence after the final cadence of bar 14:

Example 5.13a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 1 in C major (1839), bars 21–23

Example 5.13b: F. Liszt, 'Preludio', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 1 in C major (1852), bars 21–23

Note how the 1852 version amplifies and improves the use of the sonorous capabilities of the piano by filling in the huge gap between the hands evident in the penultimate bar of the 1839 version via octave displacements in the left hand. This is done without sacrificing the effect of utilising the entire keyboard.

5.1.1c Summary and conclusion

The juvenile C-major Study (1827) contains a reprise of its opening bars in the second part of the work, while the enhancement of the improvisatory character of the C-major *Grande Étude* (1839) and 'Preludio' (1852) entails the discarding of this restatement

as well as the introduction of cadenza-like passages and a variety of tempo indications. Musically, the 1827 prototype, although evidently conceived as a kind of prelude to the set, mainly recalls the didactic exercises of Czerny and introduces numerous thematic ideas, while the more flamboyant use of the keyboard and thematic homogeneity in both later versions of the work seems more closely modelled on the preludes of J. S. Bach. This tendency to use Bach as model is highly Romantic, and a typical feature of the 'Bach Revival' (See Chapter 2.1.5). The C-major *Grande Étude* (1839) sees Liszt exploiting the range of sonority and colours made available by the new instrument, thus setting the scene for the etudes that are to follow. The final version of the etude consolidates Liszt's musical vision of 1839 with the title 'Preludio' and introduces various amendments to exploit more fully the sonorities of the improved piano, but essentially the prelude character and function of the etude remain intact. The title merely makes explicit that which was already implicit in the work in both earlier versions.

5.1.2 'Eroica', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 7 in E-flat major (*Allegro*)

5.1.2a *Background and possible influences*

The seventh etude, 'Eroica,' is the only etude amongst the 'Transcendentals' that does not have an 1827 version – the original E-flat major etude was transposed down a tone and developed into the eleventh *Grande Étude*. In writing the new E-flat major etude for the 1839 set, Liszt revised the opening of another youthful work, the *Impromptu brillant sur des themes de Rossini et Spontini* (1824), to provide the introduction (See Chapter 5.1.2b below).

It would appear that Liszt was paying homage to another part of his musical heritage by adopting the title used by Beethoven for his Third Symphony as well as the key of that work, a key also employed by Beethoven in another of his most 'heroic' compositions, the 'Emperor' Piano Concerto (1811). This 'vibrating of the heroic string' (Searle 1966:17) is also evident in the use of double octaves towards the end of the etude:

Example 5.14: F. Liszt, 'Eroica', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 7 in E-flat major (1852), bars 87–90

This passage invites comparison with the famous double octave passage from Liszt's B-minor Piano Sonata (1857):

Example 5.15: F. Liszt, Piano Sonata in B minor, bars 55–61

Double octaves also occupy a prominent place in many nineteenth-century piano concertos; this type of pianistic writing has often been seen as a means for the soloist to display his strength and agility against the might of the orchestra. This is evident in the pianist's magisterial opening statement at the beginning of F. Liszt's First Piano Concerto, also in the key of E-flat major (1856).

Example 5.16: F. Liszt, Piano Concerto in E-flat major, bars 5–9

The character of the central section of the etude invites comparison with the scherzo of Liszt's First Piano Concerto as well as with another Beethoven tribute, the march-like second movement of Schumann's *Fantasia* (1836), again in the key of E-flat major. Note the consistent use of dotted rhythm in both the latter work and the etude, as well as the use of repeated B flats at the start of the respective thematic motifs.

Example 5.17a: R. Schumann, *Fantasia in C major*, Opus 17, second movement, bars 8–12

(Mäßig, durchaus energisch)

Example 5.17b: F. Liszt, 'Eroica', *Études d'exécution transcendente* No. 7 in E-flat major (1852), bars 19–27

Tempo di Marcia

5.1.2b Comparison of the two different versions of the etude

Both the E-flat major *Grande Étude* of 1839 and 'Eroica' (1852) adopt the introduction of the *Impromptu brilliant* as the first of two introductory gestures before utilising the theme and variation form for the main body of the etude:

Example 5.18: F. Liszt *Impromptu brillant sur des themes de Rossini et Spontini*, bars 1–8

The image shows two musical staves for the piano introduction of Liszt's *Impromptu brillant*. The top staff is labeled 'Piano' and the bottom 'Pno.'. Both are in E-flat major (three flats) and 3/4 time. The tempo is 'Allegretto' for the first part and 'Largo' for the second. The dynamics are 'ff' and 'smorz.'. The top version starts on E (I) and the bottom on D (I). Both feature a diminished cascade of eighth notes in bars 3-4 and a cadence in bars 7-8. The bottom version has a more complex harmonic structure in the second phrase.

Chordal analysis for the top version (Piano):

- Bar 1: E: I
- Bar 2: $\flat VII$ C of V
- Bar 3: V/B
- Bar 4: $\flat VII^7$ C of V
- Bar 5: V/B
- Bar 6: $\flat VII^7$ C of V
- Bar 7: V/B
- Bar 8: 2-1

Chordal analysis for the bottom version (Pno.):

- Bar 1: D: I
- Bar 2: $\flat VII$ C of V
- Bar 3: V/B
- Bar 4: $\flat VII^7$ C of V
- Bar 5: V/B
- Bar 6: $\flat VII^7$ C of V
- Bar 7: V
- Bar 8: 2-1

Many elements of the original are retained, including the initial octave leap, the cascades on a diminished quartad and the concept of the second phrase cadencing onto a triad a tone lower than the first, but these now form part of a more complex harmonic argument, as can be seen from the figuring. Interestingly, Liszt retains the start on E, now enharmonically reinterpreted as the Neapolitan supertonic of E-flat major, and the second phrase initially starts a semitone higher than the first. The diminished cascades now incorporate non-chord notes and fulfil a more complex harmonic function, acting as quartads of the raised supertonic rather than merely as leading note quartads of the dominant. Note also that the chords in bars 3–4 and 7–8 are thinned out in 1852:

Example 5.19a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 7 in E-flat major (1839), bars 1–8

The image shows the musical score for Example 5.19a, consisting of two systems of music. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second system is labeled 'Pno.'. Both systems are in E-flat major and 3/4 time. The tempo is 'Allegro deciso'. The first system includes the dynamic marking 'f marcato'. The score features a descending demisemi-quaver cascade in the right hand, starting in bar 2. Below the first system, there are chord diagrams for Fb/E: I II#3 I II#3 and I/B. Below the second system, there are chord diagrams for F: I II#3 and D:II#3, and I/C. A large watermark 'University of Cape Town' is visible across the score.

Example 5.19b: F. Liszt, 'Eroica', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 7 in E-flat major (1852), bars 1–8

The image shows the musical score for Example 5.19b, consisting of two systems of music. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second system is labeled 'Pno.'. Both systems are in E-flat major and 3/4 time. The tempo is 'Allegro'. The score features a descending demisemi-quaver cascade in the right hand, starting in bar 2. A large watermark 'University of Cape Town' is visible across the score.

Liszt's revision of the E-flat major *Grande Étude* involves a number of substantial pianistic adjustments in order to simplify the technical demands of the etude, which can be summarised as follows:

- In the bridge passage subsequent to the first opening gesture, the 1839 version makes use of the descending demisemi-quaver cascades found in the second bar of the etude:

Example 5.20: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 7 in E-flat major (1839), bars 9–15

The musical score for Example 5.20 is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 9-11) shows a piano texture with a right-hand part featuring a 'sempre forte' dynamic and a left-hand part with a 'P20' marking. The second system (bars 12-15) includes a 'Quasi Presto' tempo change, 'sf' dynamic, 'stringendo molto' instruction, and 'con forza' marking. The right-hand part has a 'ten.' marking and the left-hand part has a 'P20' marking.

In 1852, the demisemiquavers are replaced by bare octaves and the *stringendo molto* passage (bars 13–15) is discarded:

Example 5.21: F. Liszt, 'Eroica', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 7 in E-flat major (1852), bars 9–12

The musical score for Example 5.21 is presented in a single system. The right-hand part features a 'ff' dynamic and the left-hand part has a 'P20' marking.

- In the E-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839), the second introductory gesture is made up of the extended *Quasi presto* episode (bars 15–28), which explores the opening progression, and is characterised by repeated octaves and sharp accents:

Example 5.22: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 7 in E-flat major (1839), bars 15–17

The musical score for Example 5.22 shows two staves for Piano. The tempo is marked 'Quasi presto'. The music consists of repeated octaves in both hands, with sharp accents (>) on each note. The bass line is marked 'con forza'. The key signature is E-flat major (three flats).

In 'Eroica' (1852), Liszt replaces the *Quasi presto* with eight bars based on the same progression, which feature the consistent use of dotted rhythm and repeated notes, in preparation for the principal melodic idea of the etude:

Example 5.23: F. Liszt, 'Eroica', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 7 in E-flat major (1852), bars 12–19

The musical score for Example 5.23 shows two staves for Piano. The dynamic is marked 'sempre ff'. The music consists of repeated notes with dotted rhythms and repeated notes, in preparation for the principal melodic idea of the etude. The key signature is E-flat major (three flats). The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at bar 16.

- In the 1839 version, the principal melodic idea (bars 29–53) starts on the first beat of the bar:

Example 5.24: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 7 in E-flat major (1839), bars 29–40

The image shows a musical score for F. Liszt's *Grande Étude* No. 7 in E-flat major, bars 29–40. The score is for Piano and consists of two systems. The first system (bars 29-35) is marked 'Tempo di marcia' and 'poco cresc.'. The second system (bars 36-40) is marked 'p leggiero'. The score shows a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand with grace notes.

In 'Eroica', this passage (bars 19–44) is subjected to four significant changes; firstly, the three-note upbeat that characterises the three subsequent phrases is added to the first as well. Secondly, the descending triad cascade in bar 36 of the 1839 version is replaced by single-note semiquaver movement (bar 28 of 'Eroica'). Thirdly, the grace notes in the left hand of bars 37 and 38 of the 1839 version are omitted, and lastly, the widely spaced chords found in the right hand from bars 37 onwards are replaced by more closely spaced chords in the middle register. These revisions result in the following:

Example 5.25: F. Liszt, 'Eroica', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 7 in E-flat major (1852), bars 19–31

- The central variation starts in the key of C major. Note how, in the E-flat major *Grande Étude* of 1839, the repeated notes in the first and third bars of the theme are replaced by wide leaps, while the descending demisemiquaver cascades in bars 55 and 57 refer back to those found at the opening of the etude:

Example 5.26: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 7 in E-flat major (1839), bars 54–59

Bars 45–56 of ‘Eroica’ reinstate the repeated notes, incorporating a double-dotted rhythm, which refers to the seventh bar of the theme, and replace the demisemiquavers with sextuplet quavers from the second part of the theme, which also replace the dotted rhythms in the left hand of the penultimate bar:

Example 5.27: F. Liszt, ‘Eroica’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 7 in E-flat major (1852), bars 45–50

Note how the harmonic discourse again becomes more adventurous: In 1839 Liszt moved from C major to E major; now he moves from F minor to E major.

- The build-up to the etude’s climax consisted of a fiendish passage in 1839:

Example 5.28: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 7 in E-flat major (1839), bars 80–85

This was considerably simplified in 1852, eliminating references to the opening cascades and extending the chromatic descent in the bass in the latter part. The chromatic ascent is transferred to the right hand, where it forms a scale with octave displacement of every second note:

Example 5.29: F. Liszt, 'Eroica', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 7 in E-flat major (1852), bars 75–80

Furthermore, Liszt adds an eight-bar bridge-like passage similar to that found in bars 12–19 (Example 5.23):

Example 5.30: F. Liszt, 'Eroica', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 7 in E-flat major (1852), bars 79–86

- The climax of the etude is significantly revised. In the E-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839) it continues into a ten-bar *Più animato ancora* (bars 98–107):

Example 5.31: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 7 in E-flat major (1839), bars 96–101

In 'Eroica', a more concise climax is attained by the omission of the *Più animato ancora* and the continuation of the double octaves:

Example 5.32: F. Liszt, 'Eroica', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 7 in E-flat major (1852), bars 98–102

- In the E-flat major *Grande Étude*, an extended 23-bar episode (bars 108–130), derived from the *Quasi presto* starting in bar 15, follows immediately after the *Più animato ancora*. This passage is omitted in ‘Eroica’:

Example 5.33: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 7 in E-flat major (1839), bars 107–111

The coda of the etude remains virtually unaltered.

In general, the final version makes more pronounced the heroic character of the piece through an increased reliance on the march-like dotted rhythms, sonorous double octaves and vigorous leaps, although Busoni (1988:x),¹²⁶ for one, finds the intermediate version to have ‘broader characteristics and more uniformity’.

5.1.2c Summary and conclusion

The Romantic evolution of the ‘Eroica’ stems from Liszt’s revision of the *Impromptu brillant sur des themes de Rossini et Spontini*. The heroic element of this etude is most evident in the march-like main theme and the double octave passage towards the end of the work. Liszt’s transposition of the youthful *Impromptu* from the key of E major into E-flat major, the key used by Beethoven in some of his most heroic compositions, serves to consolidate further Liszt’s heroic vision. In Liszt’s revision of the E-flat major Etude, the thematic discourse is tightened through the elimination of a

¹²⁶ Taken from Liszt, F. 1988. *Complete Etudes for Solo Piano*. Edited with a foreword by F. Busoni. New York: Dover.

repeated-quaver idea (bars 15–28) and its later development (bars 108–130). The most demanding passages are either simplified or discarded. Both Liszt’s pianistic and structural adjustments in 1852 serve to consolidate and underline the heroic elements already present in the 1839 version.

5.1.3 *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 2 in A minor (*Molto vivace*)

5.1.3a *Background and possible influences*

The Second ‘Transcendental’ Etude is the first of the two etudes in the cycle that is without an official programmatic title. The influence of Beethoven is especially evident in the opening repeated-note motif which recurs relentlessly throughout the rest of etude:

Example 5.34: F. Liszt, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 2 in A minor (1852), bars 1–3

This motif is linked by Samson (2003:117) to the underlying rhythmic figure found in the scherzo of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, derived from the famous ‘fate’ motif that opens the work:¹²⁷

¹²⁷ Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony was composed toward the end of 1807, at a time where the composer was battling to come to terms with the increasing deafness that was to eventually force him to abandon his performing career (See Chapter 3.3.1a). Beethoven’s defiant attitude of ‘seizing fate by the throat’ is reflected in the symphonic journey from minor to major – from darkness to light – an illustration of the composer’s final triumph over adverse fate. Beethoven himself confessed that the motif at the outset of the work represents ‘fate knocking at the door’, and it appears throughout the work as a cyclic element.

Example 5.35: L. van Beethoven, Symphony in C minor, Opus 67, first movement, bars 1–5

Allegro con brio

The score shows five staves: Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The tempo is 'Allegro con brio' and the time signature is 2/4. The key signature has three flats (C minor). The motif begins on the second eighth note of the first bar. Dynamics are marked as *ff* for all parts.

A similar motif can also be found in the opening section of the Sonata in F minor Opus 57 ‘Appassionata’¹²⁸ (1805). In the symphony, the motif falls on the offbeat of the first bar, whereas in the sonata, the motif is heard on the beat in compound time.

Example 5.36: L. van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F minor, Opus 57, first movement, bars 9–13

The score shows two staves: Piano and Pno. The tempo is '(Allegro assai)'. The key signature has three flats (F minor). Dynamics include *[mp]*, *[mf]*, *poco ritard.*, *pp*, and *f*. The instruction *a tempo* is also present. The score includes a watermark for 'University of Cambridge'.

The persistency of this motif can be traced throughout the first movement. It is much in evidence towards the end of the development:

¹²⁸ According to Tovey (1931:177), the title ‘Appassionata’ was given to the sonata by the publisher without Beethoven’s knowledge. Composed in 1805, two years before completion of the Fifth Symphony, the ‘Appassionata’ can be seen as the forerunner to the C-minor Symphony. Numerous parallels can be drawn between the two works, such as the orchestral conception, also in the sonata; the underlying tragedy and the autobiographical content within the musical essay; and the *attacca* link between the last two movements in both works. Charles Rosen (2002:192) calls the ‘Appassionata’ and the C-minor Symphony the ‘archetypal examples of Beethoven’s heroic style’.

Example 5.37: L. van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F minor, Opus 57, first movement, bars 130–133

(Allegro assai)

And again before the first-movement coda:

Example 5.38: L. van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F minor, Opus 57, first movement, bars 235–238

(Allegro assai)

The coda of the first movement of the Fourth Piano Concerto isolates the repeated-note figure from the opening theme, resulting in another version of the ‘fate motif’.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Completed in 1807, Beethoven’s Fourth Piano Concerto was composed during the same period as both the Fifth Symphony and the ‘Appassionata’. Apart from the ‘fate’ motif that can be found in all three works, the penultimate movement of all three works also move into the finale without a break. Another striking feature that links the ‘Appassionata’ and the concerto is the novelty of the slow movement. Instead of the elaborated, fully formulated slow movement, Beethoven presents an interlude-cum-introduction to the finale. Beethoven also adopted this practice in the ‘Waldstein’ Sonata in C major, Opus 53.

Example 5.39: L. van Beethoven, Piano Concerto in G major, Opus 58, first movement, bars 361-362

(Allegro moderato)

The image displays a musical score for six instruments: Piano, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The tempo is marked '(Allegro moderato)'. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The score covers two measures, bars 361 and 362. The Piano part features a complex texture with ascending and descending lines in both hands, marked with a 'cresc.' (crescendo). The string parts (Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass) play a simple, rhythmic pattern of quarter notes, also marked with a 'cresc.' and starting at a 'p' (piano) dynamic. A large, faint watermark 'University of Cape Town' is visible across the score.

Liszt knew both the Fifth Symphony and the ‘Appassionata’ intimately,¹³⁰ and was a great admirer of Beethoven’s music.

This etude is sometimes called *Fusées (Rockets)*,¹³¹ a nickname that may well derive from the *Prestissimo* episode in bars 57–68, which comprises two musical ideas. The first is a series of crescendo ascending chords in the right hand in alternation with the dominant bass note and a chromatic descending line in the left hand,¹³² which has an effect similar to that of rockets going off, and may be considered an example of the musical effect known as the ‘Mannheim rocket’.¹³³

¹³⁰ Liszt made piano transcription of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, and Newman (1972:192) showed that amongst Liszt’s repertoire of Beethoven piano sonatas, the ‘Appassionata’ was one of the few works that Liszt had performed at least twice in public.

¹³¹ As on Georges Cziffra’s EMI recording of the ‘Transcendental’ Etudes, the content of which are listed on <http://www.amazon.com/Liszt-Transcendental-Studies-Mephisto-Waltz/dp/B0001HAH7S/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1233788518&sr=1-3> (Accessed 3rd February 2009).

¹³² For a discussion of the technique of alternation as the main didactic purpose in the 1852 version of the *A-minor Etude*, please see Examples 5.59a–5.61 below.

¹³³ The latter effect is also used by Beethoven at the outset of his First Piano Sonata.

Example 5.40: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 2 in A minor (1852), bars 57–61

The musical score for Example 5.40 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 57 to 59. It features a 'Prestissimo' tempo and a 'Piano' dynamic. The music is in A minor and 3/4 time. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers bars 60 to 61. It features a 'Prestissimo' tempo and a 'Pno.' dynamic. The music continues in A minor and 3/4 time. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The second idea also features alternation between the hands, but both hands now leap up and then down in consecutive octaves from the lowest to the highest E on the keyboard, and seem almost to suggest the trajectory of the sparks from the rocket:

Example 5.41: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 2 in A minor (1852), bars 65–68

The musical score for Example 5.41 consists of two systems of piano music. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 65 to 67. It features a 'Piano' dynamic. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers bar 68. It features a 'Piano' dynamic and a 'poco rit.' tempo. The music is in A minor and 3/4 time. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Further Beethovenian influence can be found in the didactic purpose of this etude. The 1852 version of the A-minor 'Transcendental' Etude is in essence a study in alternation between hands, and this is especially challenging as the texture encompasses not only single notes, but also double notes, chords, octaves and wide leaps, all of which are executed at a relentless tempo. Rajna (1979) believes that Liszt

borrowed this device from the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A-flat major, Opus 26 (1802):¹³⁴

Example 5.42a: L. van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in A-flat major, Opus 26, first movement, bars 68–70

Example 5.42b: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 2 in A minor (1852), bars 6–8

However, passages from the finale of the 'Appassionata' and the scherzo of the 'Hammerklavier' Sonata in B-flat major, Opus 106 (1818) show an almost identical use of alternation that may well have influenced Liszt. Especially close to Liszt's usage is the combination of stepwise motion and dominant pedal point that can be seen in the left hand of the excerpt of the former work. (Examples 5.43a)

Example 5.43a: L. van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F minor, Opus 57, third movement, bars 168–175

¹³⁴ Suttoni (1989:141) states that Liszt had a special affinity for this particular work – it was the Beethoven sonata that appeared most often on the pianist's concert programme during his virtuoso tours.

Example 5.43b: L. van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in B-flat major, Opus 106, second movement, bars 89–104

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and includes the tempo marking '(Presto)' and the dynamic marking 'cresc.'. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with many rests in both the treble and bass staves. The second system is labeled 'Pno.' and includes the bar number '96' and the dynamic marking 'ff'. It shows a more active bass line with a steady eighth-note rhythm. The third system is labeled 'Pno.' and includes the bar number '100'. It continues the rhythmic complexity with many rests and dynamic markings.

The technique of alternation between the hands is also employed by Schumann in the fourth movement of the *Davidbündlerstänze* (1837):

Example 5.44: R. Schumann, *Davidbündlerstänze*, fourth movement, bars 1–5

The image shows the first five bars of a musical piece. The tempo is marked 'Ungeduldig' and the dynamic is 'f'. The score is written for piano and features a repeated-note figuration in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The right hand has a series of repeated notes with some slurs, while the left hand has a more active bass line with some chords.

Further Schumannesque influences can be found in the repeated-note figuration in 'Reconnaissance' from *Carnaval*, which shows striking resemblances with the *delicatamente* passage from the A-minor *Grande Étude* of 1839:¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Liszt's familiarity with both the *Davidbündlerstänze* and *Carnaval* is reflected in the pianist's letter to Schumann dated 5th June 1839:

In the interim I mean to play in public your *Carnaval*, and some of the *Davidbündlerstänze* and of the *Kinderszenen*. (Bache 1894:33).

Example 5.45a: R. Schumann, 'Reconnaissance' from *Carnaval*, bars 1–4

Animato
Piano
pp
Red. sempre staccato

Example 5.45b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 2 in A minor (1839), bars 6–8

Tempo giusto.
delicatamente
Piano
p
ten.

Apart from the probable influence of Beethoven and Schumann, parallels can be drawn in terms of the right-hand voicing and the general shape of the phrase between the opening bars of Chopin's A-minor Etude, Opus 10 No. 2 (1833) and the second idea of the A-minor *Grande Étude*:

Example 5.46a: F. Chopin, Etude in A minor, Opus 10 No. 2, bars 1–2

Allegro
sempre legato
Piano
p
cresc.

Example 5.46b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 2 in A minor (1839), bars 11–12

Piano
p
leggermente brillante
mf un poco marc. il basso

5.1.3b Comparison of the three versions of the etude

The A-minor Study of 1827 is an exercise in broken octaves. Composed in binary form, its principal thematic ideas are as follows:

- The opening bars present a melody in broken octaves in the right hand against the ‘fate’ motif in the left hand:

Example 5.47: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 2 in A minor (1827), bars 1–3

Allegro non molto.

Piano

p molto leggiero

ten.

f

- This is followed by an early version of the Chopinesque passage:

Example 5.48: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 2 in A minor (1827), bars 5–6

Piano

dolce

grace

f

A variant of the opening idea is then heard in the relative major:

Example 5.49: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercice* No. 2 in A minor (1827), bars 8–12

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The first system contains bars 8-11, and the second system contains bars 12-15. The music features a complex texture with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the right hand and more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present at the beginning of the first system.

This leads to a free contrapuntal inversion of the opening bars:

Example 5.50: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 2 in A minor (1827), bars 17–20

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The first system contains bars 17-19, and the second system contains bars 20-22. The music features a complex texture with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the right hand and more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present at the beginning of the first system.

Note that in both cases the ‘fate’ motif is largely sacrificed. It evidently did not yet have the significance for Liszt that it would acquire in the later versions, where it is used as a referential element, in much the same way as in Beethoven.

This development of the opening idea is followed by the reprise of the Chopinesque passage and a coda.

For the composition of the A-minor *Grande Étude* (1839), Liszt expands the binary structure of the juvenile study into one which resembles monothematic sonata form. However, unlike the traditional sonata form, the modulation into the relative major is reserved for the development section. The structural expansion in this etude is consolidated by the introduction of numerous pianistic novelties which serve to develop those already present in the 1827 version (especially the ‘fate’ motif) as well as to enhance the technical difficulty of the work. In the etude’s final version (1852), a greater sense of economy in both the overall structure and the musical material used is attained by the emphasis Liszt places on the ‘fate’ motif, achieved by thinning out various pianistic textures. The principal revisions can be summarised as follows:

- Much like the 1827 A-minor Study, the exposition of the 1839 version also presents the ‘fate’ motif in the left hand, but now placed in relief through the use of accents and the displacements of the soprano line onto the off-beats:

Example 5.51: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 2 in A minor (1839), bars 6–8

In 1852, the repeated-note figuration of 1839 is simplified by omitting the notes on the beat, resulting in the alternating hand technique discussed above. This makes the fate motif even more clearly audible, and Liszt dispenses with the accents on the anacrusis:

Example 5.52: F. Liszt, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 2 in A minor (1852), bars 6–8

- Three bars later in the intermediate version (1839), Liszt added an inner voice to the Chopinesque right-hand figuration of 1827 and chromaticises the repeated E's in bar 6. Furthermore, the repeated chords in the left hand are now replaced by an alternation between a 'horn-call' motif¹³⁶ and the incomplete 'fate' motif:

Example 5.53a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 2 in A minor (1827), bars 5–6

Example 5.53b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 2 in A minor (1839), bars 11–12

- In 1852, Liszt simplifies the left hand of the 1839 version by discarding the 'horn call' motif and replacing it with a metrically displaced version of the 'fate' motif in the arpeggiated chords:

¹³⁶ The 'horn call' motif in the left hand of the *A-minor Grande Étude* is the retrograde of the one used by Beethoven in the famous opening of *Les Adieux* (Piano Sonata in E-flat major Opus 81a, 1810):

The same motif was also introduced in the intermediate version of 'Mazeppa' and removed in the final version (See Chapter 5.2.1).

Example 5.54: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 2 in A minor (1852), bars 11–12

- In the 1827 version, a descending scale and arpeggio flourish led to the variant of the opening in the relative major. The scale is fragmented and chromaticised, and the arpeggio discarded in favour of an octave flourish in 1839. The modulation into the relative major is now postponed until the start of the development section by the introduction of repeated chords between the hands in the inner voices with the ‘fate’ motif in the right-hand soprano part:

Example 5.55a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 2 in A minor (1827), bars 7–9

Example 5.55b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 2 in A minor (1839), bars 13–15

- In the final version (1852), Liszt reintroduces the idea of a single descending scale, but employs a curious six-note scale (derived from the ‘Gypsy’ scale¹³⁷ with the supertonic omitted) and simplifies the left hand while making it more dissonant:

¹³⁷ This scale, equivalent to the harmonic minor with raised subdominant, is widely used in Eastern European folk music, and Liszt also employs it in the opening of the B-minor Sonata.

Example 5.56: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 2 in A minor (1852), bars 14–16

- The codetta of the exposition in the A-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) is also subjected to revision and simplification in the 1852 version. Liszt reworked the following bars to incorporate the technique of alternation: introducing strong chromatic movement in contrary motion to drive the harmony towards the cadence:

Example 5.57a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 2 in A minor (1839), bars 23–26

Example 5.57b: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 2 in A minor (1852), bars 26–29

- Liszt opens the development section of the A-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) with the repeated-note figuration (bars 26–35) initially found in bars 7–9 of the composition, with the ‘fate’ motif making a prominent appearance in the left hand:

Example 5.58: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 2 in A minor (1839), bars 26–28

In 1852, Liszt incorporates the technique of interlocking chords, which can also be traced back to the exposition (bars 2–4):

Example 5.59: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 2 in A minor (1852), bars 29–33

Note that the arpeggiated compound and its resolution in bar 29 of the 1839 version, which served as a link between this C-major passage and the C-major Etude which precedes this one (See Example 5.11), is discarded in 1852.

- This is followed immediately by the off-beat octaves, which replace the repeated-note figuration of the 1839 version to create a more transparent pianistic texture, and are used here to extend the development section:

Example 5.60: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 2 in A minor (1852), bars 34–37

- In the final version, Liszt replaces the first part of a flamboyant passage in the development section of the 1839 version with a new pianistic idea that incorporates both the ‘fate’ motif and the technique of alternation. This passage, from bars 36–43, is in the form of a free sequence which starts as follows:

Example 5.61: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude No. 2* in A minor (1839), bars 36–39

This was revised and facilitated in the 1852 version to:

Example 5.62: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente No. 2* in A minor (1852), bars 41–44

The remainder of the 1839 passage (bars 44–47) was discarded in the 1852 version:

Example 5.63: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude No. 2* in A minor (1839), bars 44–45

Piano

*molto agitato
il piu forte e presto possibile*

Pia

- Finally, the coda of the 1839 version featured highly taxing simultaneous leaps in contrary motion similar to those in the final variation of ‘Mazeppa’ (Example 5.100b):

Example 5.64: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude No. 2* in A minor (1839), bars 75–80

Piano

con bravura

Pia

In 1852, Liszt facilitates this by dividing the chords between the hands by means of alternation:

Example 5.65: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente No. 2* in A minor (1852), bars 83–88

Piano

marcatissimo

Pia

5.1.3c *Summary and conclusion*

The principal technical figuration of the A-minor Study (1827) was transformed from triplet semiquavers to repeated thumb octaves in the A-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) and finally into alternating octaves in the A-minor ‘Transcendental’ Etude (1852). The formal expansion of the 1839 version also introduces a wealth of pianistic ideas that serves to present the ‘fate’ motif as the principal motivic undercurrent of the etude and to develop the juvenile version into a fully-fledged concert etude. Even though new musical ideas are introduced in the final version of the etude, they are conceived in correlation with the ‘fate’ motif as well as the technique of hand alternation, which results in a greater sense of musical homogeneity. These new ideas replace the overtly flamboyant episodes in the 1839 version, such as those in the development section, thus leading to a more unified realisation of the musical vision, which is already evident in the intermediate version.

There can be no doubt that Liszt’s own use of the ‘fate’ motif is not only a direct reference to Beethoven, but also has for him the same significance, both musically and symbolically. The ‘fate’ motif can also be traced throughout the evolution of both the F minor etude and ‘Harmonies du soir’, appearing in their respective intermediate versions before being discarded (See Chapters 5.1.4b and 5.6.2b). Liszt will refer to it again in the most doom-laden of the etudes, ‘Vision’ (See Chapter 5.4). As has been shown in the discussion of the heroic outcast (See Chapter 3.3.2), the concept of Fate as a dominant force in human existence is a typical Romantic notion, and one which obsessed a number of Romantic composers, such as Schubert, Tchaikovsky and Mahler.

5.1.4 *Étude d’exécution transcendente No. 10 in F minor (Allegro molto agitato)*

5.1.4a *Background and possible influences*

The tenth ‘Transcendental’ Etude is the second etude of the set that has no title. However, the etude’s key and tempestuous character have led Busoni (1957:162) to call it ‘Appassionata’ in reference to Beethoven’s Piano Sonata in F minor, Opus 57. It is possible that Busoni may have derived this nickname from the similarity between

the *Presto feroce* episode in Liszt's F-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) and the *Presto* coda to Beethoven's 'Appassionata' Sonata, both of which open with loud and thickly voiced chords in the lower register and employ staccato repeated chords against the melody in quavers:

Example 5.66a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 180–187

Presto feroce

Piano

ff marcatissimo sempre

184

Pno.

Example 5.66b: L. van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F minor Opus 57, third movement, bars 308–315

Presto

Piano

ff sf p

Despite its possible Beethovenian references, the strongest musical influence on Liszt's F-minor 'Transcendental' Etude can be traced directly to Chopin. Striking parallels exist between the intermediate version of Liszt's F-minor 'Transcendental' Etude (1839) and Chopin's own F-minor Etude Opus 10 No.9 (1833) in its principal melodic design and left-hand accompaniment figurations:

Example 5.67a: F. Chopin, Etude in F minor, Opus 10 No. 9, bars 1–3

Allegro molto agitato

Piano

p legatissimo *cresc.* *con forza*

Example 5.67b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 23–27

molto appassionato

Piano

p sempre agitato *poco rinf.*

5.1.4b Comparison of the three versions of the etude

Apart from the brief ascending demisemiquaver flourish before the final cadence, the toccata-like makeup in the early version (1827) of the F minor ‘Transcendental’ Etude consists almost entirely of triplet semiquavers. Conway (1969:114) argues that this juvenile study was composed within the framework of rounded binary form. The opening page of the F-minor Study (1827) presents the principal thematic idea in the tonic key:

Example 5.68: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 10 in F minor (1827), bars 1–12

The musical score for Example 5.68 is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled 'Piano', shows bars 1 through 4. It is in F minor (three flats) and 2/4 time, marked 'Moderato'. The music begins with a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand, followed by a series of eighth-note patterns. A dynamic marking of 'p egale' is present. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', shows bars 5 through 12. It continues the eighth-note patterns in both hands. A fermata is placed over a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand at the end of bar 10. The score concludes with a final cadence in bar 12.

The same triplet figuration is inverted and developed in the section in the relative major:

Example 5.69: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 10 in F minor (1827), bars 31–36

The musical score for Example 5.69 is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled 'Piano', shows bars 31 through 33. It is in F minor (three flats) and 2/4 time. The music features a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand, followed by eighth-note patterns. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', shows bars 34 through 36. It continues the eighth-note patterns in both hands. A fermata is placed over a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand at the end of bar 35. The score concludes with a final cadence in bar 36.

The F-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) employs a unique formal structure which superimposes ABA form upon a structure which continuously develops the thematic materials. Furthermore, the F-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) utilises both duple and triple metre, and features three different tempo indications: *Presto molto agitato*, *Presto feroce* and *Prestissimo agitato ed appassionato assai* (the latter two appearing in the coda of the etude).

There are three principal thematic ideas in the F-minor *Grande Étude* (1839). The first is presented in the opening two bars of the etude, where Liszt keeps the triplet movement and the melodic outline of the juvenile study and introduces the interlocking chords prominent in the A-minor ‘Transcendental’ Etude. Note that the chords now fill in the ‘missing’ harmonic notes of its predecessor. As will be seen later in ‘Mazeppa,’ the material of the juvenile study now becomes subsidiary to the main thematic material, which here consists two new themes, A and B. The second idea is the Chopinesque first main theme A, which is foreshadowed in bars 3–4 by the ‘breathless’ motif played by the left hand crossing over the triplet semiquaver accompaniment in paired sixths in the right:

Example 5.70: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 1–5

Although the compositional structure of the F-minor ‘Transcendental’ Etude (1852) is very similar to the one in 1839, Liszt seems to have decided on a less hectic tempo for the etude, revising the performance direction from *Presto molto agitato* to *Allegro agitato molto*, which creates a further correspondence with Chopin’s *Allegro molto agitato*. Bars 3–4 are now technically more accessible due to the omission of the hand-crossing: the melody is composed in octaves for the purpose of tonal enhancement whilst the accompaniment figurations are rewritten and divided between the hands, maintaining the semiquaver flow of the opening bars:

Example 5.71: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 10 in F minor (1852), bars 1–5

Allegro agitato molto

Piano

p

Pno.

The adjustments in bars 3–4 are applied to A as a whole:

Example 5.72a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 6–9

Piano

p

sempre più cresc. ed agitato

Example 5.72b: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 10 in F minor (1852), bars 6–9

Piano

p

sempre più cresc. ed agitato

The third idea (and second main theme B) of the F-minor *Grande Étude* appears almost to be a desperate transformation of the heroic main theme of the E-flat major *Grande Étude* (No. 7):

Example 5.73a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 7 in E-flat major (1839), bars 41–42

sempre marcato il canto e piano gli accompagnamenti

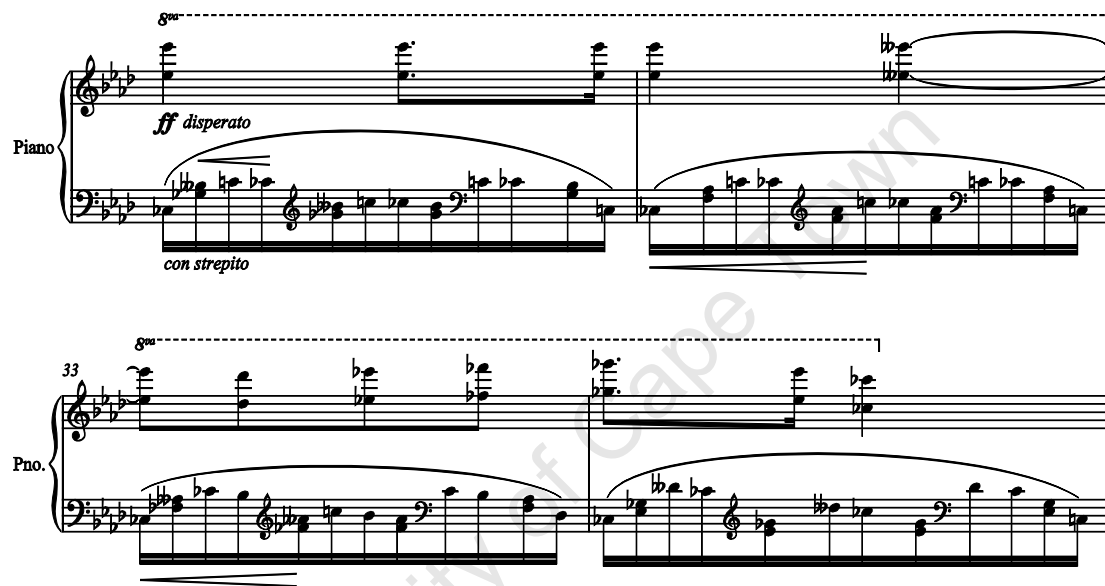


Example 5.73b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 31–34

ff disperato

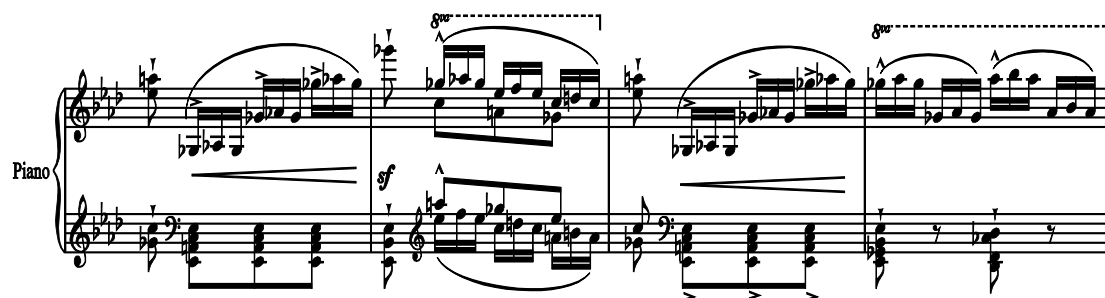
con strepito

33



This creates a further link between these two ‘Beethovenian’ etudes. Liszt also makes reference to the ‘fate’ motif (used in the other ‘Beethovenian’ etude, the A minor) in the passage following the introduction of B, where it occurs four times in the left hand:

Example 5.74: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 43–46



Liszt's principal revisions in 1852 concern the tightening of the etude's formal structure. This is achieved by a more resourceful use of the musical materials present within the first nine bars of the etude and the omission of certain flamboyant passages, which may disrupt the balance of the etude as a whole. Liszt's main revisions in 1852 are as follows:

- In the passage that follows the initial appearance of A, Liszt replaces the descending triplet cascades in bars 13 and 15 of the 1839 version (which seems to imitate the opening of the 1827 juvenile study) with the interlocking chords found at the beginning of the etude. Furthermore, the 1852 version also sees the thinning out of the left-hand accompaniment leading into the imperfect cadence in bars 19–20:

Example 5.75a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 13–20

Example 5.75b: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 10 in F minor (1852), bars 13–20

- In the second statement of A, Liszt changes the dyad found at the end of each group of left-hand triplet semiquavers (bars 23 and 26) into a single note, and eliminates the left-hand doubling of the melody, while the right hand's off-beat fragments are now also syncopated and in polyrhythmic relation to the left hand.

Example 5.76a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 23–27

Example 5.76b: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 10 in F minor (1852), bars 22–26

The accompaniment to the first statement of B is subjected to similar simplification.

- In the F-minor *Grande Étude* (1839), a left-hand variant of B featured the semiquaver figure of the opening in the right hand. In the final version (1852), this passage is subjected to two changes. Firstly, Liszt omits the pianistically uncomfortable upper-auxiliary-note figures in the semiquaver cascades, changing the latter into more feasible ascending arpeggio-like figurations. Secondly, he reinforces the left-hand melody with octave doubling, an amendment not dissimilar to the one found at the beginning of the etude:

Example 5.77a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 54–57

Example 5.77b: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 10 in F minor (1852), bars 54–57

This is a rare instance of F. Liszt increasing the textural density in the final version of the etudes. He is careful, however, to do it in such a way as to decrease the technical difficulty of the passage.¹³⁸

- In the F-minor *Grande Étude* (1839), this leads to an extended thirty-fivebar episode (bars 67–101) consisting of three different musical ideas. The first (bars 67–78) is twelve bars long, and recalls the pianistic writings in bars 13 and 15 (See Example 5.75a) before presenting the opening of A with an additional inner voice in the right hand:

¹³⁸ There are also moments in the final version of the third, sixth and eleventh etude – ‘Paysage’, ‘Vision’ and ‘Harmonies du soir’ respectively – when Liszt thickens the texture of the music. Please see Chapters 5.3.1, 5.4 and 5.6.2.

Example 5.78: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 67–72

This is followed by a development of the second bar of A:

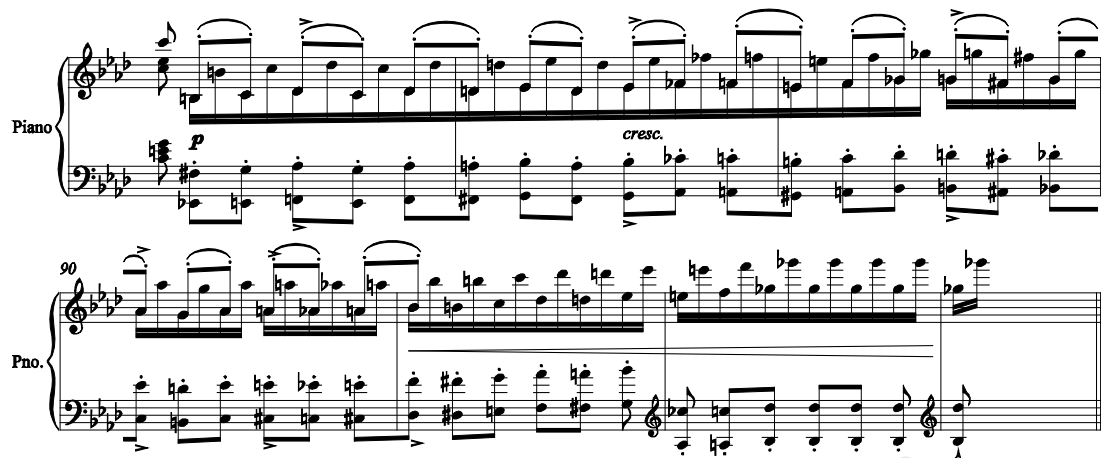
Example 5.79: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 75–77

In 1852, this is condensed to twenty-five bars, and some of the thematic discourse is sacrificed. The above passage is replaced by the following:

Example 5.80: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 10 in F minor (1852), bars 69–71

The episode concludes with a development of the first bar of A (bars 87–101), characterised by broken octaves:

Example 5.81: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 87–93



The image shows a musical score for Example 5.81, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. Both systems are in F minor. The first system (bars 87-93) features a piano part with a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. Dynamics include *p* and *cresc.*. The second system (bars 90-93) continues the piano part with similar textures and dynamics.

This passage is replaced by the following development of the first bar of A in the 1852 version:

Example 5.82: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 10 in F minor (1852), bars 75–86



The image shows a musical score for Example 5.82, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. Both systems are in F minor. The first system (bars 75-86) features a piano part with a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. Dynamics include *ff* and *tempestuoso*. The second system (bars 81-86) continues the piano part with similar textures and dynamics, including *crescendo molto* and *sf*.

- In the F-minor *Grande Étude* (1839), the central section develops B in a Chopinesque manner:

Example 5.83: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 116–119

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Example 5.83. The first system, labeled 'Piano', consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The right hand (treble clef) is marked with '8^{va} il canto molto accentato' and 'sotto voce p legatissimo'. The left hand (bass clef) features a complex, wide-leaping figuration. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', also consists of a grand staff. The right hand (treble clef) is marked with '8^{va}' and contains a melodic line with wide leaps. The left hand (bass clef) continues the complex figuration from the first system. The key signature is three flats (F minor) and the time signature is 3/4.

The 1852 version presents a rhythmic alteration in the melody and facilitation of the left-hand figuration in bar 102. But, unusually, also increases the difficulty for the left hand by introducing wide leaps between bars.

Example 5.84: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 10 in F minor (1852), bars 100–103

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Example 5.84. The first system, labeled 'Piano', consists of a grand staff. The right hand (treble clef) is marked with '8^{va}' and 'p'. The left hand (bass clef) features a complex, wide-leaping figuration. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', also consists of a grand staff. The right hand (treble clef) is marked with '8^{va}' and contains a melodic line with wide leaps. The left hand (bass clef) continues the complex figuration from the first system. The key signature is three flats (F minor) and the time signature is 3/4.

- In 1839, Liszt adds a bipartite coda to the etude: the first part (bars 180–208) is a twenty-nine bar transformation of B, marked *Presto feroce*:

Example 5.85: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839) bars 180–187

Presto feroce
Piano *ff marcatisimo sempre*

184

This leads directly into the *Prestissimo agitato ed appassionato assai* (bars 209–242) based on A:

Example 5.86: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 10 in F minor (1839), bars 209–214

Prestissimo agitato ed appassionato assai
Piano *poco meno forte*

In the final version (1852), the *Presto feroce* is discarded, while the *Prestissimo agitato* is revised as the *Stretta*, inverting the first four notes of A:

Example 5.87: F. Liszt, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 10 in F minor (1852), bars 160–165

Stretta
Piano

163

8^{va}

5.1.4c Summary and conclusion

The material of the juvenile study becomes subsidiary to the main thematic material in the intermediate and final versions of this etude, which here consist of two new themes, A and B. A consists of two parts and has a distinctly Chopinesque character, while B is introduced at the etude's first climax. The Chopinesque influence in this etude serves to consolidate Liszt's admiration for the Polish composer, as shown in Chapter 2.1.2. The intermediate version (1839) of the etude features virtuosic episodes which develop both parts of A, whereas more emphasis is placed on the first part of A in the final version of the etude. Unlike many of the other passages in the rest of the 'Transcendentals' Etudes that are subjected to technical facilitation and textural transparency in their final version, some of Liszt's revision of the F-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) include enhancing the textural density of the etude's climaxes and the difficulty of the left-hand part in the development of B. Both later versions incorporate references to the other 'Beethovenian' etudes, those in A minor and E-flat major and share with them a sense of passionate and/or heroic struggle. Beethoven was the supreme musical embodiment of this 'struggle against fate', which formed the subject of much Romantic art and literature (See Chapter 3.3.1a).

5.2 The etudes inspired by the cult of the Romantic hero

The two etudes which refer to the cult of the heroic are ‘Eroica’ (discussed under etudes that pay homage to Liszt’s models) and ‘Mazeppa’, inspired by Hugo’s poem of the same name.

‘Mazeppa’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (*Allegro*)

5.2.1 Background and possible influences

‘Mazeppa’ is the etude with the most complex compositional history of all the ‘Transcendental’ Etudes. The transformations of this work, from the youthful exercise of 1827 to the piano duet arrangement of the symphonic poem version in 1874, reveal not only the different stages of Liszt’s development as a composer but also his particular fascination with the subject matter.¹³⁹ Celebrated in poetry by Byron (1819), Hugo (1828)¹⁴⁰ and Pushkin (1828),¹⁴¹ the legend of Mazeppa tells of a young Pole, who after being found guilty of an illicit love affair, was strapped naked to the saddle of a wild horse by the enraged husband. The horse was then whipped, and galloped across the wilderness of Poland into Ukraine for three days before falling down dead from exhaustion. The half-dead Mazeppa was found and freed by the Cossacks, eventually becoming their leader.

Even though Byron’s *Mazeppa* is more elaborated than Hugo’s, it was Hugo’s poem that became the programmatic basis of Liszt’s Fourth ‘Transcendental’ Etude. Hugo’s poem differs from Byron’s in that it is written in a more dispassionate idiom and presents Mazeppa’s torturous ride in the present tense, while Byron’s *Mazeppa* takes the form of a more retrospective commentary, the opening lines ‘Twas after dread

¹³⁹ Liszt wrote seven versions of ‘Mazeppa’, including four versions for solo piano. Apart from the juvenile D-minor Study and the 1839 and 1852 versions, there is a second intermediate version dating from 1840. This version, published as *Mazeppa*, marks the first application of a programmatic title to one of Liszt’s ‘Transcendental’ Etudes. The Symphonic Poem ‘Mazeppa’ (1854) is an orchestral adaptation of the eponymous etude, and in turn became the basis of the two-piano arrangement in 1855 and the piano duet version in 1874.

¹⁴⁰ Hugo’s *Mazeppa* is the thirty-fourth poem of *Les Orientals*. It is prefaced by the inscription ‘Away! Away!’ taken from Byron’s poem of the same title.

¹⁴¹ Tchaikovsky’s three-act opera *Mazeppa* (1883) uses a libretto written by Victor Burenin based upon Pushkin’s poem *Poltava*.

Pultowa's day'¹⁴² setting the tone for a subjective narrative presented by the aging Cossack. Structurally, Hugo's poem is clearly divided into two separate parts, with the first portraying the wild galloping of the horse across the plains of Eastern Europe:

Ils vont. Dans les vallons comme un orage ils passent,
Comme ces ouragans qui dans les monts s'entassent,
Comme un globe de feu;
Puis déjà ne sont plus qu'un point noir dans la brume,
Puis s'effacent dans l'air comme un flocon d'écume
Au vaste océan bleu.

Ils vont. L'espace est grand. Dans le desert immense,
Dans l'horizon sans fin qui toujours recommence,
Ils se plangent tous deux.
Leur course comme un vol les emporte, et grands et grands chênes,
Villes et tours, monts noir liés en longues chaînes,
Tout chancelle autour d'eux.

*They go. They pass through the valleys like a storm,
Like a tempest which overshadows the mountain,
Like a globe of fire;
Already they are no more than a point of darkness in the fog,
And they disappear in the air like a flake of foam
Into the vast blue ocean.*

*They go. Into the vast space of the immense desert,
Into the endless horizon that always begins anew,
They plunge together.
Their course carries them as on wings, and the vast forests,
Cities and towers, black mountains lying in long chains,
Everything rushes past around them.*

(Part I, stanzas 4 and 5)

The second part of Hugo's poem concentrates directly on the Romantic metaphor of the creative genius, his suffering, and his eventual triumph over fate. Mazeppa represents the Romantic artist, whilst the horse is symbolic of the powerful urge that drives talented individuals to extraordinary achievements. When an artist is prodigiously gifted, he has no choice but to let his genius dominate his very existence; like Mazeppa, the artist is 'tied to the saddle of genius':

¹⁴² Pultowa's day refers to the battle of Poltova that took place on 8th July 1709. <http://www.internationalbyronsociety.org/images/stories/pdf_files/mazeppa.pdf> (Accessed 18th December 2006).

Ainsi, lorsqu'un mortel, sur qui son dieu s'étale,
S'est vu lier vivant sur ta croupe fatale,
Génie, ardent coursier,
En vain il lutte, hélas! tu bondis, tu l'emportes
Hors du monde réel, dont tu brises les portes
Avec tes pieds d'acier!

*Thus, when a mortal, to whom his god has revealed himself,
Finds himself bound alive on your fatal croup,
Genius, ardent courser,
In vain he struggles, alas! you leap, you carry him
Out of the real world, of which you break the portals
With your hoofs of steel!*

(Part II, stanza 1)

Once bound in this way, the artist has to go where the creative urge leads, whatever the price:

Qui peut savoir, hormis les démons et les anges,
Ce qu'il souffre à te suivre, et quels éclairs étranges
A ses yeux reluiront,
Comme il sera brûlé d'ardentes étincelles,
Hélas! et dans la nuit combien de froides ailes
Viendront battre son front?

*Who can know, except the demons and the angels,
What he suffers in following you, and which strange flashes
Will glitter before his eyes,
As it will be burned by ardent sparks,
Alas! and in the night how many cold wings
Will come beating against his face?*

(Part II, stanza 5)

It is only after the creative urge has spent itself and the artist has completed his arduous journey that he can free himself and receive the reward for his torments. In Hugo's poem this allegory is presented in the final verse of the poem:

Il crie épouvanté, tu poursuis implacable.
Pâle, épuisé, béant, sous ton vol qui l'accable
Il ploie avec effroi;
Chaque pas que tu fais semble creuser sa tombe.
Enfin le terme arrive... il court, il vole, il tombe,
Et se relève roi!

*He shouts in terror, you continue relentless.
 Pale, exhausted, spread-eagled, under your flight which overpowers him
 He twists with fear;
 Each step that you take seems to dig his tomb.
 Finally the end arrives...he runs, he flies, he falls,
 And he rises [as] king!*

(Part II, stanza 6)

5.2.2 Comparison of the four versions of the etude

The D-minor Study (1827) is composed in binary form. The first idea requires the pianist to negotiate rapid thirds by means of hand-crossing:

Example 5.88: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 4 in D minor (1827), bars 1–6

The second is in the key of the dominant and consists of arpeggio-like figures in the right hand, supported by chordal accompaniment in the left hand:

Example 5.89: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 4 in D minor (1827), bars 25–31

Both of these ideas will be developed in the latter three versions of ‘Mazeppa’ (see Examples 5.93a onwards).

Unlike the juvenile D-minor Study (1827), all latter three versions of ‘Mazeppa’ (1839, 1840 and 1852) utilise theme and variation form. In these etudes Liszt incorporated the technical device of passages in double thirds from the juvenile study as part of the accompaniment to the principal melody. It is possible to interpret the

technical device of the double thirds as symbolic of the relentless flight of the horse's hooves.

Example 5.90: F. Liszt, 'Mazeppa', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (1852), bars 7–8

The main structural difference between the D-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) and the two later versions of 'Mazeppa' is the addition of an introduction. In the 1840 version Liszt presents the following five bars as a prologue to the main musical essay:

Example 5.91: F. Liszt, *Mazeppa* (1840), bars 1–5

The first six chords delineate a series of descending leaps of a fourth and recall the ascending series introduced in the 1839 version of the C major and A-minor *Grandes Études*.¹⁴³

In the final version, Liszt – contrary to his general tendency in 1852 – thickens the texture of the opening chords, which are now arpeggiated, and adds a *Cadenza ad libitum*:

¹⁴³ See Examples 5.7 and 5.34.

Example 5.92: F. Liszt, 'Mazeppa', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (1852), bars 1–6

While Hugo's poem does not depict the events that precede the wild galloping, Byron's poem does. The following description of the horse's struggle before the ride might well have inspired Liszt's introduction, which seems almost literally to portray the horse's stamping (bars 1–5) and rearing (bar 6):

Twas but a day he had been caught,
And snorting, with erected mane,
And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
In the foam of wrath and dread,
To me the desert born was led:
They bound me on, that menial throng,
Upon his back with many a thong;
They loosed him with a sudden lash –

Byron (Stanza IX, line 8 onwards)

It is therefore possible to argue that the introduction of the 1852 version of 'Mazeppa' is considerably closer to Byron's poem than to Hugo's. This is also the case with a second and third variations (see below).

In all three later versions, Liszt presents five variations upon the principal musical motif, the so-called Mazeppa theme. The energetic drive of the theme and the first variation depict the horse's headlong charge and are similar in musical character and construction. Musical contrast is provided by the second and third variations, which can be interpreted as representing Mazeppa's dazed state. The final two variations

return to the preceding mood, and lead directly to the D-major coda, which depicts Mazeppa's triumph.

Interesting comparisons can be made between the intermediate and final versions of the etude. In general, there are few differences between the two intermediate versions,¹⁴⁴ apart from the addition of the title 'Mazeppa' in 1840. However, the 1852 version saw Liszt making a considerable number of changes to the score. Liszt's important revisions in 1852 are as follows:

- In the theme, Liszt changes the time signature from 6/4 to 4/4. He also rewrites the double thirds as paired semiquavers and reinstates the flamboyant gesture of crossing of the hands from the 1827 version. The ascending chromaticism introduced in the re-written thirds also increases the sense of urgency in the music.

Example 5.93a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 4 in D minor (1839), bars 1–2

Example 5.93b: F. Liszt, *Mazeppa* (1840), bars 6–7

¹⁴⁴ These amount to slight changes in the placement of the crescendos in the theme, the alternation of the articulation from *staccatissimo* to *staccato*, and the expansion of the coda. The latter will be discussed below.

Example 5.93c: F. Liszt, 'Mazeppa', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (1852), bars 7–8

The image shows the musical score for Example 5.93c, which is the bridge passage from Liszt's 'Mazeppa'. The score is for piano and is marked 'Allegro'. The tempo and dynamics are 'sempre fortissimo e con strepito'. The score consists of two staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass staff. The grand staff shows a complex texture with diminished quartads in the right hand and a chromatic ascending line in the inner voices of the left hand. The bass staff shows a simple bass line with two 'Ped.' markings. The first two bars are marked with 'm.s.' (mezzo-soprano) and 'm.d.' (mezzo-dominant).

- The bridge passage which links the first two variations develops the second principal idea of the juvenile D-minor Study (1827). In the intermediate versions Liszt presents a nine-bar passage that commences as follows:

Example 5.94: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 4 in D minor (1839), bars 16–19

The image shows the musical score for Example 5.94, which is the bridge passage from Liszt's 'Grande Étude'. The score is for piano and is marked 'sempre più forte ed animato'. The score consists of two staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass staff. The grand staff shows a complex texture with diminished quartads in the right hand and a chromatic ascending line in the inner voices of the left hand. The bass staff shows a simple bass line with two 'ten.' markings. The first two bars are marked with '8^{va}' and '18'. The score is marked with 'sempre più forte ed animato' and 'ten.'.

The most significant difference in the bridge passage between the intermediate and final versions of 'Mazeppa' lies in Liszt's treatment of the accompaniment figurations and harmony. In 1852, Liszt thins out the texture of the diminished quartads but adds a chromatic ascending line in the inner voices in the first two bars:

Example 5.95: F. Liszt, 'Mazeppa', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (1852), bars 22–25

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. Both systems feature a treble and bass clef. The music consists of rapid, simultaneous leaps in contrary motion, primarily using triplet rhythms. Dynamic markings include *8^{mo}* (crescendo) and *ten.* (tension). The notation includes various accidentals and articulation marks.

- Liszt's revision of variation 1 consists of a change in pianistic technique; in both the earlier versions the pianist is required to negotiate rapid simultaneous leaps in contrary motion. In 1852 the triplet accompaniment is divided between the hands in order to stagger the leaps.

Example 5.96a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 4 in D minor (1839), bars 25–26

The image shows a single system of musical notation for piano, labeled 'Piano'. It features a treble and bass clef. The music consists of chords and rhythmic patterns. Dynamic markings include *fff* and *energico sempre*. The notation includes various accidentals and articulation marks.

Example 5.96b: F. Liszt, 'Mazeppa', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (1852), bars 31–32

The image shows a single system of musical notation for piano, labeled 'Piano'. It features a treble and bass clef. The music consists of chords and rhythmic patterns. Dynamic markings include *sempre ff*. The notation includes various accidentals and articulation marks.

- Written in the key of B-flat major, the programmatic content of the second variation is the second passage from Liszt's 1852 version of 'Mazeppa', which appears much closer to Byron's poem than Hugo's.¹⁴⁵ This more lyrical middle section in B-flat major provides a direct contrast to the rest of the work. It is possible to interpret variation 2 as a reference to Byron's description of Mazeppa's dazed recollection of a happier past:¹⁴⁶

I know no more – my latest dream
 Is something of a lovely star
 Which fixed my dull eyes from afar,
 And went and came with wandering beam
 Byron (Stanza XVIII, line 20 onwards)

Example 5.97a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 4 in D minor (1839), bars 56–57

Example 5.97b: F. Liszt, 'Mazeppa', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (1852), bars 62–63

¹⁴⁵ Conway (1969:41) considers the 'boundlessness and space' suggested by the fifth stanza of the first part of Hugo's poem (see Chapter 5.2.1) the programmatic basis of variation 2 and 3. Conway's argument is unconvincing, as the general mood of the fifth stanza of Hugo's poem is very much in keeping with the character of Liszt's theme and first variation, which clearly depicts Mazeppa's ride.

¹⁴⁶ This constitutes an anomaly in terms of the narrative flow, as this passage occurs in Byron after the death of the horse, while Liszt's gallop continues in the subsequent variations, but it is the only moment of repose that occurs in either of the poems.

Liszt eliminates the horn-call motif, as he also does in the exposition of the second etude (see Examples 5.53b and 5.54).¹⁴⁷ The composer now restricts the accompanying figuration to the double thirds found in the earlier variations, but limits himself to chord notes. Another difference between the 1852 version of this passage and its predecessors is the slight difference in rhythm of the Mazeppa motif, which slows down the triplet quaver at the end of the bar to a normal quaver. These changes, together with the fact that the tempo is now no longer increased (as it was in the earlier versions) means that this section now forms more of a contrast to the preceding.

- The third variation of the 1852 version differs from its predecessors in the left-hand accompaniment figurations. As shown in Example 5.98a in the earlier version, the tonic harmony of B-flat major used in the first two bars is only decorated by the occasional unaccented passing note in the accompaniment. However, even though Liszt employed the same harmony in the 1852 edition, there is the added novelty of ascending chromaticism in the left hand, recalling the additions to the theme. The 1852 version also features a slight change in performance direction: the melody is to be played *espressivo ed appassionato assai*, rather than *espressivo e un poco marcato*. Rhythmically, Liszt replaced the figuration of two quavers (in the right hand) against triplet quavers (in the left hand) of the intermediate versions with triplets against triplets in 1852, thus making the final version of variation 4 rhythmically more straightforward:

¹⁴⁷ The recurrence of this motif might have been construed as a cyclic cross-reference between the second and fourth etude. Its elimination may point to a desire to give each etude a greater sense of autonomy, although having eliminated it from one of the two etudes would have been sufficient for this purpose.

Example 5.98a: F. Liszt *Grande Étude* No. 4 in D minor (1839), bars 73–74

espressivo e un poco marcato il canto

Piano

l'accompagnamento piano e leggero

Example 5.98b: F. Liszt, 'Mazeppa', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (1852), bars 80–81

il canto espressivo ed appassionato assai

Piano

p

- In the fourth variation Liszt again abbreviates the three-note figures in parallel thirds of 1839 to two-note figures consisting of grace-note and quaver, and alternates them between the hands:¹⁴⁸

Example 5.99a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 4 in D minor (1839), bars 106–107

Allegro animato

Piano

sempre ffe marcatissimo

¹⁴⁸ The procedure of simplification is very similar to that used in variation 1 (see Examples 5.96a and 5.96b)

Example 5.99b: F. Liszt, 'Mazeppa', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (1852), bars 114–115

Animato
leggiero
Piano
mp

- The final variation sees Liszt in his most daring virtuosic guise, reserving the most notorious technical challenge as the last hurdle – the ultimate test of the pianist's endurance. Again, the 1852 version represents a slight facilitation of these pianistic challenges:

Example 5.100a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 4 in D minor (1839) bars 127–128

Piano
fff staccato con bravura

Example 5.100b: F. Liszt, 'Mazeppa', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (1852), bars 136–137

Allegro deciso
Piano
ff

Musically, there is a possibility that Liszt may have been inspired by Schumann's *Fantaisie* (1836) when composing this variation¹⁴⁹ as there are distinct similarities between the notorious technical challenges of the closing bars of the scherzo from the *Fantaisie* and those found in Example 5.100b:

Example 5.101: R. Schumann, *Fantaisie in C major*, Opus 17, second movement, bars 252-255

(Mässig, Durchaus energisch)

- The coda is composed in the key of the tonic major already suggested at the outset of the final variation.
- In the D-minor *Grande Étude* (1839), the closing bars appear as follows:

Example 5.102: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude No. 4 in D minor* (1839), bars 158–169

¹⁴⁹ Schumann had dedicated the *Fantaisie* to Liszt, who considered this a great compliment:

The *Fantaisie* dedicated to me is a work of the highest kind – and I am really proud of the honour you have done me in dedicating to me so grand a composition. I mean, therefore, to work at it and penetrate it through and through, so as to make the utmost possible effect with it. (Constance Bache's [1894:33] translation of F. Liszt's letter to which Schumann dated on 5th June 1839)

Note that the right-hand descending figurations in bars 158–161 closely reflect those in the coda of the C-minor *Grande Étude* (Example 5.196), whereas the use of plagal cadence recalls the C-major *Grande Étude* (Example 5.13b).

In the 1840 version, Liszt expanded the final seven bars of the 1839 version, firstly by recalling the harmonic introduction found at the beginning of the etude (bars 171–172), secondly, by the addition of a two-bar interjection (bars 174–175) and finally, by the introduction of triplet semiquavers (perhaps as a triumphant version of the ‘fate’ motif) and *tremolandos*. Like the introduction, this passage appears to have clear programmatic significance, representing the collapse of the horse and Mazeppa’s rising as king. Liszt’s revision utilises the capacity of the nineteenth-century piano to simulate massive orchestral sonorities:

Example 5.103: F. Liszt, *Mazeppa* (1840), bars 170–180

The image displays a musical score for Example 5.103, F. Liszt's *Mazeppa* (1840), bars 170–180. The score is presented in two systems. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 170 to 175. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers bars 176 to 180. The music is written in a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The score includes various performance markings: 'ritenuto a capriccio' in the first system, and 'fff' (fortissimo) and '8va' (octave) markings in the second system. The music features complex textures, including descending lines, triplets, and tremolos, characteristic of Liszt's style.

In the final version of ‘Mazeppa’ (1852), Liszt eliminates the repetition of the last chord of the chordal cascade (bar 173) and develops the two-bar interjection of the 1840 version into a recitative-like cadenza ending on the same harmonic compound as before, but now spelt as a dominant quartad rather than a German sixth:

Example 5.104: F. Liszt, ‘Mazeppa’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (1852), bars 175–177

The musical score for Example 5.104 shows two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The first staff begins with a 'ritenuto' marking and a 'piano' dynamic. The second staff begins with a 'più rit.' marking. The music features a complex harmonic structure with many accidentals and a final cadenza-like passage.

Liszt then adds a self-contained thirteen-bar *Più moderato* in which the melodic progression of the last four bars of the 1840 version is transposed and reharmonised in the remote key of E-flat minor (the minor key suggested by the respelt German sixth at the end of the preceding bar). This is followed by alternating fragments of recitative and staccato chords which lead (via an audacious enharmonic modulation employing the diminished quartad on the leading notes of E flat minor and A major) to a varied amplification in the tonic major of the last seven bars of the 1840 version:

Example 5.105: F. Liszt, 'Mazeppa', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 4 in D minor (1852), bars 178–201

Note that the triumphant 'fate' motif is discarded in favour of repeated demisemiquavers.

While Conway and Hall link this coda to the second section of Hugo's poem, they fail to mention the programmatic connection between Hugo's poem and Liszt's choice of key. The transition from the minor key to the tonic major is a tonal device frequently adopted by composers in the nineteenth century to represent the artist's heroic triumph over adverse fate. The obvious models for this are Beethoven's Fifth and

Ninth Symphonies. In Hugo's poem, Mazeppa only becomes king after he has overcome adversity. On the pianistic level, this is reflected in the technical demands of the work: after the fearsome struggle of the theme and five variations, the coda of the etude presents no specific technical challenges and is jubilant in character. The programme of the work becomes a symbol of the quest of the performer, who only by overcoming the difficulties of Liszt's writing can triumph as artist, transcending technique in order to present the composer's musical and aesthetic intentions.

5.2.3 Summary and conclusion

The D-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) utilises and develops the two main technical figurations of the D-minor Study (1827), respectively as the accompaniment to the main theme and the bridge passage which links the first two variations. The 1840 version of 'Mazeppa' sees the addition of a five-bar introduction and the extension of the etude's coda. Aesthetically, Liszt's addition of the title 'Mazeppa' in the 1840 version of the work seems to signify the composer's desire to establish a direct link between this etude and Hugo's eponymous poem. Apart from the minor alteration of articulations from *staccatissimo* to *staccato*, the 1840 version is identical to its 1839 predecessor. The D-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) must therefore already have been programmatic in intention, without this being indicated by Liszt, or the title 'Mazeppa' must have been a mere afterthought.¹⁵⁰ The 1852 version of the work introduces a greater variety of accompaniment figurations to the theme and utilises the sonority of the nineteenth-century instrument by amplifying the introduction and the coda of its 1840 predecessor in ways that may also be interpreted programmatically (see Chapter 5.2.2).

¹⁵⁰ It is possible to draw parallels between this notion and Debussy's practice in the *Préludes* of appending the titles at the end of each piece, in the guise of an afterthought.

5.3 The etudes inspired by nature

Two etudes reflect different aspects of the Romantic fascination with Nature. The Third Etude, 'Paysage', depicts nature as a refuge, where the artist can reflect and develop his talents. The Twelfth Etude, 'Chasse Nieve', portrays nature at her most sublime and merciless, threatening annihilation to the wanderer in a snowstorm.

5.3.1 'Paysage', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 3 in F major (*Poco adagio*)

5.3.1a *Background and possible influences*

The title of the third 'Transcendental' Etude suggests a pastoral vision, as 'Paysage' can be literally translated as 'Landscape'. Samson (2003:37, 118) noted that Liszt's choice of key and time signature in 'Paysage' are compositional devices that point closely to the pastoral genre, while Usher (2005:12) states that Liszt's performance marking of *dolce pastorale* in bar 81 further signifies the composer's desire to portray the pastoral tradition, a genre that can be traced back to the seventeenth century. According to Geoffrey Chew (www.groveonline.com), the earliest surviving collection of vocal and instrumental pastorals in Italy comes from the Christmas collection of the medieval Italian composer Francesco Fiamengo (1620–1637). Composed in 1637, Fiamengo's *Pastorali concerti al prescepe* can be noted as not just the prototype for the later Italian pastorals, but also the prototype for instrumental pastorals in general. Fiamengo's *Pastorali* includes instrumental melodies scored in compound metre, the consistent use of parallel thirds, pedal point bass notes, as well as symmetrical musical phrases. Furthermore, Fiamengo's *Pastorali* is in F major, the key later adopted by composers such as Bach in the *Pastorale* for organ, Beethoven in the *Pastoral Symphony* (1809), and Berlioz in the *Scène aux champs* from the *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830). Indeed, parallels can be drawn between the opening bars of Fiamengo's *Pastorali* and Liszt's 'Paysage' (1852) in terms of rhythm, key and the descending parallel motion in thirds over a tonic pedal:

Example 5.106a: F. Fiamengo, *Pastorali concerti al presepe* bars 1–4

Musical score for Example 5.106a, featuring Soprano 1, Soprano 2, and Bass parts. The lyrics are: Vie - ni [vie - ni], ca - lo, ca - le - to, Vie - ni, [vie - ni], ca - lo, ca - le - to,.

Example 5.106b: F. Liszt, ‘Paysage’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 3 in F major (1852), bars 1–8

Musical score for Example 5.106b, featuring Piano and Pno. parts. The tempo is *Poco Adagio* and the performance instruction is *dolcissimo, una corda*. The score includes a first ending marked *8^{va}* and a second ending marked *5*. The instruction *un poco cresc.* is present in the Pno. part.

Ubber (2005:12) suggest that the title and the subject matter of the Third ‘Transcendental’ Etude may refer to Victor Hugo’s ode entitled ‘Paysage’.¹⁵¹ It is evident that Liszt was fascinated by Hugo; apart from ‘Paysage’ and ‘Mazeppa’ (the latter being the etude most clearly inspired by the poet), there is also a possibility that the Sixth ‘Transcendental’ Etude, ‘Vision’, is based on one of Hugo’s odes (See Chapter 5.4).

¹⁵¹ Hugo’s *Paysage* is the eleventh ode of the Fifth Book (1823). Ubber also proposes the notion that Liszt’s first symphonic poem entitled *Ce qu’on entend sur la montagne* (*What one hears on the mountains*, 1854) may be inspired not by the eponymous poem by Hugo, but by his ode *Paysage*. However, Searle (1966:70) states that this particular work is based on Hugo’s poem *Feuilles d’automne* (*Autumn Leaves*, 1831). Neither Ubber nor Searle gives a reason for their view.

Both Hugo and Liszt's 'Paysage' reflect the Romantic ideal of nature as a haven of solitude and nostalgia.¹⁵² Prefaced by Horace's inscription of the Latin prayer *Hoc erat in votis* ('This was among my prayers'), Hugo's ode *Paysage* evokes an artistic persona summoned by the muse into a solitary exile where the individual is able to contemplate, to reflect, and, ultimately, to develop his/her artistic gifts, as is evident in the opening verse of the Ode:

Lorsque j'étais enfant: << Viens, me disait La Muse,
Viens voir le beau Génie assis sur mon autel!
Il n'est dans mes trésors rien que je te refuse,
Soit que l'altier clarion ou l'humble cornemuse
Attendent ton souffle immortel.

*When I was a child, 'Come', the Muse said to me,
Come and see the beautiful genius sitting on my altar,
There is nothing in my treasures that I refuse you,
Whether it be the lofty clarion or the humble bagpipe
That awaits your immortal breath.*¹⁵³

A parallel can be drawn between the second and third verse of Hugo's Ode:

<< Mais fuis d'un monde étroit l'impure turbulence;
Là, rampant les ingrates, là, régner les méchants.
Sur un luth inspiré lorsqu'une âme s'élance,
Il faut que, l'écoutant dans un chaste silence,
L'écho lui rende tous ses chants!

<< Choisis quelque désert pour y cacher ta vie.
Dans une ombre sacrée emporte ton flambeau.
Heureux qui, loin des pas d'une foule asservie,
Dérobant ses concerts aux clameurs de l'envie,
Lègue sa gloire à son tombeau.

¹⁵² The aesthetic alignment between landscape and music was also an important part of the Romantic philosophy, as shown by Alice Kuzniar (1988:360):

For the Romantics, both music and landscape share a concern with formal arrangement instead of with conceptual thought; in addition, they are both suggestive and emotive rather than discursive media.

Hugo's *Paysage* may have influenced other Liszt works as well. The image of a mysterious valley (Verse 5), a reflective lake (Verse 7) and transparent skies (Verse 11) in Hugo's *Paysage* can be closely linked with several of Liszt's musical visions of the Swiss scenes of the *Années de Pèlerinage*, namely 'Au lac de Wallenstadt', 'Au bord d'une source', 'Pastorale' and 'Vallée d'Obermann'.

¹⁵³ The English versions of the poems are free translations of the original French.

*But flee from the impure turbulence of the narrow world;
The ingrates triumph and the malicious reign.
When on an inspired lute the soul is poured forth,
The echo, listening in chaste silence,
Must return to it all its songs.*

*Choose some desert where to live in secret.
Carry your torch into a sacred obscurity.
Happy is he who far from the rush of the servile crowd,
Concealing his works from the clamour of envy,
Bequeaths his glory to his tomb.*

and the quotation from Byron's *Childe Harold* with which Liszt prefaces 'Au lac de Wallenstadt':

... thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwell in, is a thing which warns me,
With its stillness, to forsake earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.

These quotations illustrate the Romantics' view of society as an indifferent, cold and shallow place, a world of fashion where success and fame can be bought at a price or achieved by superficial skills. In contrast to society, Nature is seen as an inspirational refuge where the disillusioned artist is able to reflect and find creative freedom. Furthermore, by immersion in Nature, the artist becomes part of what is unaffected and genuine, as opposed to what is materialistic and pretentious. Charles Rosen (1999:159) describes the evocative power that Nature possesses for the artist as follows:

... It is less the truth of Nature than the way of arriving at the truth that interest the artist. The portrayal of the hidden process of thought, however, is achieved by the images of Nature themselves and by the vivacity of the representation.

Such thoughts were also echoed by Liszt in his preface to 'Les cloches de Genève' ('The Bells of Geneva'), which features a quotation from Byron's *Childe Harold*:

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me.

5.3.1b Comparison of the three versions of the etude

The structure of the F-major Study (1827) closely resembles ternary form. The first section of the study presents the principal thematic idea over a tonic, and later a dominant, pedal point:

Example 5.107: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 3 in F major (1827), bars 1–15

Allegro sempre legato

Piano

6

dimin.

11

ritard.

Pno.

The second section develops this idea by the means of modulation and sequence:

Example 5.108: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 3 in F major (1827), bars 30–45

Piano

36

pp

41

cresc.

Pno.

The return to the tonic key from bar 48 onwards consists of a climactic restatement of the opening idea:

Example 5.109: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 3 in F major (1827), bars 58–62

In this first version of the etude, the squareness of the opening musical phrase is consolidated by the time signature. In the F-major *Grande Étude* (1839) and 'Paysage' (1852), both the time signature and the tempo are significantly revised; the former is changed to 6/8 in 1839 in order to conform to the compound metre associated with the pastoral genre, while the latter is radically altered from *Allegro sempre legato* to *Poco adagio*. The flexibility of the phrase is greatly enhanced by the fact that the descending four-quaver motif now forms a hemiola-like cross-rhythm against the compound division of the new time signature, and that the musical phrase is now repeated after three bars, as opposed to the two bars of the juvenile version. In the later versions, the idea is rearranged to be played by the left hand alone, and now becomes the accompaniment to a counter-melody in the right hand:¹⁵⁴

Example 5.110: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 3 in F major (1839), bars 1–8¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ This process is somewhat similar to that followed in 'Mazeppa' and the F-minor Etude, where the material of the juvenile study becomes subsidiary and is 'overwritten' (rather as in a palimpsest) by new and more striking thematic material.

¹⁵⁵ Apart from the addition of the arpeggiated F-major chord on the first beat of the opening bar (see Example 5.106b), the first eight bars of 'Paysage' (1852) are identical to those of its 1839 predecessor.

Unlike the F-major Study of 1827, both the F-major *Grande Étude* (1839) and 'Paysage' (1852) employ the theme and variation form, developing the principle melodic idea and the counter-melody by means of variants and modulations – the latter an extension of the technique found in the 1827 version. This means that the pianist's biggest challenge lie not in virtuosity, but in variety of tone production, transparency of pianistic textures and subtleties of musical expression. The pianist's main task is to present the repeated ideas in subtly differentiated ways, so that the music becomes neither tedious nor laborious. One is reminded of the opening pages of Chopin's F-minor Ballade, where sensitivity of touch and subtleness of pianistic nuance are essential in order to differentiate between the repetition of the melodic ideas.

The modulatory scheme of both the F-major *Grande Étude* (1839) and 'Paysage' (1852) consists of F major, D-flat major, F major, with a brief excursion to A major and a return to F major in the coda. Not only does this movement in four-semitone intervals outline an augmented chord,¹⁵⁶ but it also divides the octave into equal segments, much like the notes of the diminished quartad. Bass (1996:272) points to a similar scheme in the closing progression of the alternative ending of *Un sospiro*, which invites comparison with the modulatory scheme of Chopin's E-major Prelude. In the latter, the music shifts from E major to C major and then to A-flat major before finally moving back to E major:¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Todd (1988) shows that the augmented chord is extensively used by Liszt in works such as *Vallée d'Obermann*, the *Petrarch Sonnets* and *Funérailles*, and Merrick (1998) demonstrates that Liszt's choice of keys in the first six pieces of the Swiss volume of *Années de Pèlerinage* also closely mirror the augmented triad. Liszt's modulation via this 'cycle of thirds' is a feature that can often be found in his mature works such as *Consolation No. 3* and *Un sospiro* (No. 3 from *Études de concert*), both of which uses the same modulatory scheme as *Paysage*. Similarly, in *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* (No. 3 from *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*), the F-sharp major opening leads to a D-major *Andante sostenuto* middle section, followed by a *Quasi Preludio* which begins in the key of B-flat major before returning to the *Tempo primo* in F-sharp major.

¹⁵⁷ Even though Chopin's *Préludes* Opus 28 were composed in 1838–1839, at much the same time as Liszt was working on his first revision of Opus 1, it is unlikely that Liszt had directly borrowed the idea of cyclic modulation in four-semitone intervals from Chopin, as, according to Waters (1961:177), it was not until 1841 that Liszt came into contact with the *Preludes*.

Example 5.111a: F. Liszt, 'Un sospiro' from *Étude de concert*, alternative ending

Example 5.111b: F. Chopin, *Prélude in E major*, Opus 28 No. 9 bars 5–8

The intermediate version of the etude contains two climaxes preceded by a twenty-eight-bar build-up beginning at *Un poco più animato il tempo*:

- The first is an eight-bar episode (bars 60–67) beginning in A major, which is preceded by the six-bar F major build-up developed from the climax of the F-major Study (1827):

Example 5.112a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 3 in F major (1827), bars 58–62

Example 5.112b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude No. 3* in F major (1839), bars 54–67

The image displays a musical score for F. Liszt's *Grande Étude No. 3* in F major, specifically bars 54 through 67. The score is presented in three systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system (bars 54-59) is marked *fff marcato ed agitato* and features a right-hand melody with eighth-note groups and a left-hand accompaniment of chords. The second system (bars 60-63) is marked *ff con passione* and shows a change in the right-hand melody and a more active left-hand accompaniment with eighth-note patterns. The third system (bars 64-67) continues the right-hand melody and left-hand accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

In 'Paysage' (1852), the right-hand texture of the six bars that precede the climax is thickened by the addition of octaves doubling, while the rhythm of the left-hand accompaniment is revised as syncopation to create a sense of urgency in the build-up and increase the polyrhythmic tension with the four-note grouping in the right hand. The climax sees the addition of an oscillating third in the left hand. This causes a slight loss of motivic identity in the original quaver pattern, which was closely modelled on the opening motif. This represents an unusual shift away from motivic integration in the final version of an etude:

Example 5.113: F. Liszt, 'Paysage', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 3 in F major (1852), bars 65–78

- The second climax of the F-major *Grande Étude* (1839) occurs in the extended twenty-two-bar *Presto agitato assai* (bars 71–92) that follows the A major-episode and which uses the hand alternation which is a prominent technical feature of the A-minor 'Transcendental' Etude:

Example 5.114: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 3 in F major (1839), bars 71–78

This was discarded in 'Paysage' (1852), leaving the eight-bar A-major episode as the etude's only climax. There seems to be little justification for this. Perhaps Liszt felt that the turbulence of this climax was not in keeping with the general tone of Hugo's Ode or with the idea of nature as a source of consolation.¹⁵⁸

5.3.1c *Summary and conclusion*

The principal thematic idea in the F-major Study (1827) is developed by means of sequence and modulation. In the 1839 version of the etude, Liszt presents this theme as subsidiary material, using a hemiola-like cross-rhythm, which increases the flexibility of the musical phrase, and 'overwrites' it with a new principal theme. Liszt's programmatic aspects in the final version of the etude (1852) see the enhancement of textural density evident in the A-major climax and the omission of the twenty-two bars *Presto agitato assai*. The latter seems to be the result of the application of *programmatic*, rather than purely *musical*, criteria. Both later versions developed the pastoral nature of the music which is further underlined by Liszt's choice of title, a quintessentially Romantic one, inspired by the Romantic reverence for Nature (Chapter 3.3.4).

5.3.2 'Chasse Nieve', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 12 in B-flat minor (*Andante con moto*)

5.3.2a *Background and possible influences*

The subject-matter in the final 'Transcendental' Etude is twofold. Firstly, it depicts the Romantic obsession with Nature; however, unlike the redemptive and inspirational qualities found in 'Paysage', 'Chasse Nieve' portrays Nature at her most powerful and merciless. Parallels can be drawn between Liszt's depiction of nature in this 'Transcendental' Etude and Chopin's 'Winter Wind' Etude (Etude in A minor, Opus 25 No.11, 1837).

¹⁵⁸ For Samson (2003:177–178) the omission of the *Presto agitato assai* in the final version of *Paysage* 'serves to foreground and place the human presence in this landscape'.

Secondly, ‘Chasse Nieve’ evokes the Romantic image of the misunderstood outcast, recollecting happiness and love in a wintry landscape, symbolic of a cruel and uncaring world. Such an individual was immortalised by Schubert in works such as the four-movement piano fantasy nicknamed ‘Wanderer’ (1822) as well as the song cycle *Die Winterreise* (1827).¹⁵⁹ In the latter, a poet with a broken heart wanders through the snow-covered countryside in search of consolation. Images of nature and of rural life become reminders and symbols of his suffering – the weathervane, of his beloved’s fickleness; the frozen crust of a gushing stream, of the state of his own heart; the falling leaves, of his fast-failing hope; a signpost, of the road from which no one has returned, and finally, the hurdy-gurdy man, of the grim reaper with whom the poet wishes to be united.¹⁶⁰

Musically, it is possible that Liszt’s writing in this etude owes its inspiration to both Beethoven and Schubert. The melody line that appears over the *tremolando* accompaniment (in the latter two versions of the etude) has the musical effect of the Beethovenian continuous trill against a melodic idea in the same hand:

Example 5.115: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1839), bars 14–15

¹⁵⁹ For a discussion of the wandering archetype in both Schubert’s instrumental music and song cycles please see William Kinderman (1997). As mentioned before, Liszt knew Schubert’s ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy and *Winterreise* intimately (see Chapter 3.3.2b).

¹⁶⁰ Unlike most conventional interpretation of the hurdy-gurdy man that regards the old beggar as the symbol of death, Susan Youens (1985:131–133) interprets the hurdy-gurdy man as a symbol of optimism and hope, as a long lost companion who will accompany him for the rest of his journey. This interpretation does not take into account the barren starkness of Schubert’s setting.

The continuous trill is a technical device often found in Beethoven's late piano works such as Opus 109 (1820) and Opus 111 (1822). In the latter, the idea is combined with left-hand *tremolando*:

Example 5.116a: L. van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in E major, Opus 109, third movement, bars 177–180

Example 5.116a shows two systems of musical notation for the Piano Sonata in E major, Opus 109, third movement, bars 177–180. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff features a continuous trill on a single note, marked with a trill symbol (tr) and a fermata. The bass staff contains a complex rhythmic pattern of sixteenth and thirty-second notes, creating a tremolando effect. The key signature is E major (two sharps).

Example 5.116b: L. van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in C minor, Opus 111, second movement, bars 160–166

Example 5.116b shows three systems of musical notation for the Piano Sonata in C minor, Opus 111, second movement, bars 160–166. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second and third 'Pno.'. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff features a continuous trill on a single note, marked with a trill symbol (tr) and a fermata. The bass staff contains a complex rhythmic pattern of sixteenth and thirty-second notes, creating a tremolando effect. The key signature is C minor (no sharps or flats).

Similar pianistic writing can be found in the closing section of the slow movement of the ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy:

Example 5.117: F Schubert, ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy, second movement, bars 48–49

The use of *tremolandos* to depict the dazzling shimmer of snow in ‘Chasse Nieve’ (1852) look forward to the *tremolando* writing employed to evoke the glittering play of water in *Les jeux d’eaux à la Villa d’Este* in the final volume of *Années de Pèlerinage* (1877):

Example 5.118: F. Liszt, *Les jeux d’eaux à la Villa d’Este*, bars 41–52

5.3.2b Comparison of the three versions of the etude

Composed in binary form, the B-flat minor Study (1827) consists of a four-bar introduction, which is an exercise in part-playing. The first bar of this passage requires the pianist to sustain the melody with the right-hand thumb whilst keeping the semiquaver accompaniment in the background. The melody is then reinforced in octaves from bars 2–4.

Example 5.119: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1827), bars 1–4

The musical score for Example 5.119 shows the first four bars of the piece. The tempo is marked 'Allegro non troppo' and the dynamics are 'p' (piano) and 'tenuto'. The right hand plays a melody with a semiquaver accompaniment, while the left hand plays a steady semiquaver accompaniment. The melody is reinforced in octaves from bars 2 to 4.

The principal theme of the study is presented from bar 5 onwards and features an accompaniment in triplets:

Example 5.120: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1827), bars 5–15

The musical score for Example 5.120 shows bars 5 to 15 of the piece. The tempo is 'Allegro non troppo' and the dynamics are 'dolce con molto espressione'. The right hand features a melody with triplet accompaniment, while the left hand plays a steady semiquaver accompaniment. The score is divided into three systems, with bar numbers 8 and 12 indicated at the start of the second and third systems respectively.

The second thematic idea of this youthful study is written in the dominant key. In this passage the left-hand accompaniment changes from triplet quavers to crochets:

Example 5.121: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1827), bars 28–35

In 1839 Liszt expanded the four-bar introduction to thirteen bars, giving it a recitative-like character and introducing fragments of the main melodic idea (bars 1 and 7):

Example 5.122: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1839), bars 1–13

A varied reprise of this passage is also inserted in the middle of the etude (bars 51–62):

Example 5.123: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1839), bars 51–62

The introduction is followed by the etude's principal thematic motif, which is now presented against a *tremolando* accompaniment, derived from the inner parts of the B-flat minor Study (1827):

Example 5.124: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1839), bars 14–15

The B-flat minor *Grande Étude* (1839) is essentially a study in tremolando. However, Liszt introduces greater variation in the accompaniment materials for ‘Chasse Niede’ (1852). Furthermore, he omits the two recitative passages found in the intermediate version (See Examples 5.122 and 5.123 above). Other important revisions are as follows:

- In the 1839 version of the etude, the passage starting in bar 22 features simultaneous leaps in contrary motion, a risky technique which Liszt had introduced in several of the 1839 etudes and removed again in the final versions (see Chapters 5.1.3b, 5.2.2, 5.3.1b and 5.6.2b):

Example 5.125: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1839), bars 22–23

The image displays a musical score for two staves, labeled 'Piano' and 'Pno.'. The key signature is B-flat minor (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system, labeled 'espressivo', covers bars 22 and 23. In bar 22, both hands play a tremolando pattern with simultaneous leaps in contrary motion. In bar 23, the right hand continues with a tremolando pattern while the left hand plays a more complex, staggered tremolando pattern. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

In 1852, the *tremolandos* are revised to eliminate the simultaneous leaps in both hands. Note that the right-hand *tremolandos* in bar 9 resemble those used in a later passage in the intermediate version (see Example 5.128) Furthermore, bar 23 sees the introduction of alternating hand tremolando and slight staggering of the leaps, known as ‘the breaking of the hands’ (Conway 1969:104):

Example 5.126: F. Liszt, 'Chasse Niece', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1852), bars 9–10

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Example 5.126. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. Both systems are in B-flat minor. The first system (bars 9-10) features a complex texture with a wide intervallic leap in the right hand and a tremolo in the left hand. The second system (bars 10-11) continues this texture, with the right hand playing a series of chords and the left hand playing a tremolo. The word 'tremolando' is written below the left hand in the second system.

The passage below features in the revision a similar use of alternating hand *tremolando* and the 'breaking of the hands' as evident in the final version of 'Ricordanza' (see Chapter 5.7.1b):

Example 5.127a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1839), bars 35–37

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Example 5.127a. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. Both systems are in B-flat minor. The first system (bars 35-37) features a complex texture with a wide intervallic leap in the right hand and a tremolo in the left hand. The second system (bars 36-37) continues this texture, with the right hand playing a series of chords and the left hand playing a tremolo. The word 'rinfor.' is written above the right hand in the first system.

Example 5.127b: F. Liszt, 'Chasse Nieve', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1852), bars 22–25

The image displays three systems of musical notation for Example 5.127b. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the subsequent two are labeled 'Pno.'. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The music is in B-flat minor, indicated by three flats in the key signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as *mf* and *ff*. Bar numbers 23 and 24 are clearly marked at the beginning of their respective systems.

- The passage that follows the central section is also subjected to change. In the B-flat minor *Grande Étude* (1839) the following is presented:

Example 5.128: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1839), bars 48–51

The image displays four systems of musical notation for Example 5.128. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the subsequent three are labeled 'Pno.'. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The music is in B-flat minor, indicated by three flats in the key signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as *mf*, *ff*, *p*, and *sotto voce*. Bar numbers 49, 50, and 51 are clearly marked at the beginning of their respective systems. The fourth system ends with a double bar line.

In 1852 Liszt introduces demisemiquaver sextuplets against an ascending and descending chromatic scale of eight hemidemisemiquavers in bar 38, which seems to suggest the howling of the icy wind. This will become an important new element in the latter half of the etude, both in the accompaniment and as the subject of the two cadenza-like passages. This motif represents the only instance of the introduction of an important new motivic element in the 1852 version of the etude:

Example 5.129: F. Liszt, 'Chasse Nieve', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1852), bars 36–39

The image displays a musical score for Example 5.129, consisting of three systems of music. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 36 and 37. It features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. The treble clef part includes a demisemiquaver sextuplet marked 'ff' and a descending chromatic scale marked 'rfz'. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers bar 38. It features a treble clef with a melodic line marked 'accentato ed espressivo' and 'mezzo piano', and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. The third system, labeled 'Pno.', covers bar 39. It features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a rhythmic accompaniment. A large 'X' is placed below the bass clef part of bar 39.

It is possible that in writing the passage above Liszt was inspired by the central section in the slow movement of Schubert's 'Wanderer' Fantasy which suggests a similar effect:

Example 5.130: F. Schubert, 'Wanderer' Fantasy, second movement, bar 39

Musical depiction of chilling wind also appears in 'Der Lindenbaum' ('The Linden Tree'), the fifth song from Schubert's *Die Winterreise*:

Example 5.131: F. Schubert, 'Der Lindenbaum', bars 45–53

The figure marked X in Liszt's bass line in Example 5.129 bears a striking resemblance to the notes circled in Schubert's accompaniment in Example 5.131.

- In the final version of the etude (1852), the central climax is prolonged by the addition of this massive, surging cadenza, based on the new chromatic scalar motif, which is also featured in the surging scales of bars 52 and 65:

Example 5.132: F. Liszt, 'Chasse Nieve', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1852), bars 49–51

The image displays a musical score for Example 5.132, consisting of five systems of notation. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and shows a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The second system is labeled 'Pno.' and shows a grand staff with two bass clefs. The third system is also labeled 'Pno.' and shows a grand staff with two bass clefs. The fourth system is labeled 'Pno.' and shows a grand staff with two bass clefs, featuring a dynamic marking of *ff* and an accent (^) over a note. The fifth system is labeled 'Pno.' and shows a grand staff with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff, featuring a dynamic marking of *ff* and an accent (^) over a note. The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, time signatures, notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

- In the passage that follows the cadenza, Liszt again uses the technique of alternation to replace the difficult interrupted *tremolando* writing of the 1839 version, before reinforcing the melody by presenting it in octaves in the following bar:

Example 5.133a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1839), bars 73–74

Piano

sempre ff e marcatissimo

Example 5.133b: F. Liszt, 'Chasse Niegé', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1852), bars 54–55

Piano

ff strepitoso

In the revision of the coda of the etude, the *tremolandos* are retained in the right hand but replaced in the left by the chromatic scalar motif; the polyrhythmic use of five-against-four in the 1839 version becomes five-against-six in the 1852 version:

Example 5.134a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 12 in B-flat minor (1839), bars 95–96

Piano

Example 5.134b: F. Liszt, 'Chasse Niegé' (1852), No. 12 from *Étude d'exécution transcendente*, bars 72–73

Piano

5.3.2c *Summary and conclusion*

The B-flat minor *Grande Étude* (1839) develops the introductory gesture of its 1827 prototype into recitative-like passages at the beginning and in the middle of the etude; both are discarded in 'Chasse Nieve' (1852). The intermediate version of the etude develops the didactic intentions of the juvenile study into a *tremolando* etude, whereas the final version of the etude sees a more imaginative approach to the accompaniment materials. These include alternating *tremolandos* and the introduction of a new chromatic scalar motif, which forms the subject of a central surging cadenza. All these underline Liszt's programmatic idea of Nature as an annihilating force, which is evidently linked with the Romantic fascination with the Sublime in Nature (Chapters 3.3.4 and 3.3.5). This is a rare instance of an etude in which the adaptations in the final version seem clearly to result from the programmatic intention implicit in the title.

5.4 The etudes after the writings of Victor Hugo

The etudes in this category include ‘Paysage’ (discussed under etudes inspired by nature), ‘Mazeppa’ (discussed under etudes which reflect the cult of the Romantic hero) and ‘Vision’.

‘Vision’, *Études d’exécution transcendente* No. 6 in G minor (*Lento*)

5.4.1 Background and possible influences

According to Ubbert (2005:11), there is a distinct possibility that the subject matter of ‘Vision’, like those of the third and fourth ‘Transcendental’ Etudes, took its inspiration from Hugo’s ode of the same title.¹⁶¹ Prefaced by Verse Nos. 7–9 of Psalm No. 90,¹⁶² Hugo’s ode can be divided into two parts. The first acts as a form of commentary upon the Biblical prophecy of Judgment Day. This is much in evidence in the first verse of the ode:

Voici ce qu’ont dit les prophètes,
Aux jours où ces homes pieux
Voyaient en songe sur leurs têtes
L’Esprit-Saint descendre des cieux:
“Dès qu’un siècle, éteint pour le monde
Redescend dans la nuit profonde,
De gloire ou de honte chargé,
Il va répondre et comparaître
Devant le Dieu qui le fit naître,
Seul juge qui n’est pas jugé.”

*Behold what the prophets foretold,
In the day when those pious men
Saw in dreams the Holy Spirit
Descending upon their heads from the heavens:
“Since an age, extinguished from the world
Redescends into deepest night,
Covered in glory or in shame,
It goes to respond and to appear
Before the God that gave it birth,
Only judge that is not judged.”*

¹⁶¹ Hugo’s *Vision* is the tenth ode of the First Book (1821).

¹⁶² Psalm 90 Verse 7–9: For we are consumed by thy anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. (King James 1982:457)

The second part of Hugo's ode is an account of the judgment and eventual condemnation of *Le Siècle* (*The Age* or *Worldly Life*) given by *La Voix* (*The Voice*):

Verse No. 8:

Le Siècle
O Dieu! Votre jour est venu!

The Age
O God! Your day has come!

Verse No. 9:

La Voix
Pleure, ô Siècle! D'abord timide,
L'erreur grandit comme un géant;
L'athe invite au regicide:
Le chaos est fils du néant.
J'aimais une terre lointaine;
Un roi bon, une belle reine
Conduisaient son peuple joyeux;
Je bénissais leurs jours augustes;
Réponds: qu'as-tu fait de ces justes?

The Voice
Weep, o Age, at first timid,
Your sins grew gigantic;
The atheist incites regicide:
Chaos is the son of nothingness.
I loved a far-away land;
A good king, a beautiful queen
Leading their joyous people;
I blessed their happy days;
Answer: what have you done with these righteous ones?

In 'Vision' (1852), Liszt reflects the judgment and damnation visited upon Hugo's *Siècle* by the use (at the start of the main theme) of the head-motif of the medieval plainchant known as the *Dies irae* (*Day of Wrath*)¹⁶³ as the start of the thematic idea, which is announced in thirds in the lower register of the piano against a widespread arpeggio accompaniment:¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ According to Haupt (1919:142), the *Dies irae*, a trope describing the Day of Judgement, is attributed to the companion and biographer of St. Francis of Assisi, Thomas of Celano (died 1253). Furthermore, Haupt also shows that the text of the *Dies irae* is based upon verse 14–18 in the Latin version of Zephaniah, which speaks of God's anger and judgement.

¹⁶⁴ The *Dies irae* had already appeared in the 1839 version of the work (see Chapter 5.4.2)

Example 5.135a: The opening of *Dies irae*

Di - es - i - rae, di - es il - la, sol - vet _ sae - clum _ in fa - vil - la; tes - te _ Da - vid _ cum Si - byl - la.

Example 5.135b: F. Liszt, 'Vision', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 6 in G minor (1852), bars 1–4

Lento (Di - es i - rae) *simile, sempre marcato*

Piano *f pesante*

Pno.

The *Dies irae* has been used for its doom-laden associations by a number of composers since the nineteenth century,¹⁶⁵ and Liszt himself utilised it in several of his other compositions, namely the *Malédiction Concerto* (1840), the 'Dante' Symphony (1856) and *Totentanz* (1859). It is cited in the opening orchestral introduction of the latter:

¹⁶⁵ Boyd (1968) notes that the *Dies irae*, and especially its four-note head-motif, has not only been adopted by well-known composers such as Berlioz, Liszt, Saint-Saëns, Tchaikovsky, Mahler and Rachmaninov but also by less familiar figures such as Bantock, Schelling, Miaskovsky, Sorabji, Dallapiccola and Kraft.

Example 5.136: F. Liszt, *Totentanz* bars 1–6

It would appear that Liszt had a typically Romantic fascination with the nightmarish visions associated with the *Dies irae*. Gregory (1953:136) writes:

In the first movement of his ‘Dante’ Symphony Liszt represents the Inferno, where “strange tongues, horrible cries, word of pain, tones of anger, voices high and hoarse” mingle to create a whirling tumult. Again the theme of ‘Dies irae’ appears to help suggest the violence of the picture, as it does in his ‘Totentanz’ for pianoforte and orchestra, a work inspired by the triumph of death fresco in the Campo Santo at Pisa. The damned have interested Liszt more than the saved; there is but one short passage in more or less tender vein, yet startlingly in the midst of harshness and austerity. For the rest, the majestic plainsong becomes transformed into a grotesque and merciless march, from which the very stench of death arises. There is no ray of hope.

In addition, Liszt evokes the doom-laden atmosphere of Hugo’s *Vision* by using a repeated-note figuration that recalls the ‘fate’ motif found in the A-minor ‘Transcendental’ Etude (See Chapter 5.1.3) and also cited in the F-minor Etude (See Chapter 5.1.4b). In Liszt’s ‘Vision’ (1852) the repeated note motif appears throughout the etude and acts as a miniature link passage from the one variation to another.¹⁶⁶

Example 5.137: F. Liszt, ‘Vision’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 6 in G minor (1852), bars 8–9

¹⁶⁶ In the G-minor *Grande Étude* (1839), the repeated-note motif appears in bare octaves, whereas in ‘Vision’ (1852), the same figuration appears with the addition of other chord notes, except in bars 41, 43, 49, 51 and 55.

The processional character of Liszt's 'Vision' is further enhanced by the use of the dotted semiquaver-demisemiquaver rhythm – a rhythmic figuration derived from the left-hand part of the juvenile G-minor study (1827). From the third variation onwards until the end of the etude, Liszt merges this with the repeated-note motif:

Example 5.138: F. Liszt, 'Vision', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 6 in G minor (1852), bars 22–25

The musical score for Example 5.138 is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 22-23) shows the piano part in G minor. The right hand has a melodic line with a dotted semiquaver-demisemiquaver rhythm, and the left hand has a bass line with the same rhythm. The second system (bars 23-24) continues this pattern with three measures. The third system (bars 24-25) shows the right hand moving to a more complex rhythmic pattern while the left hand maintains the dotted semiquaver-demisemiquaver rhythm. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'ten.' and 'poco a poco cresc. ed accelerando'.

It is possible that Liszt here deliberately conflates the musical symbol of fate with that of death, as the use of dotted repeated-note figures is often associated with solemn funeral music, as in the slow movement of Beethoven's *Sinfonia eroica* (1806):

Example 5.139: L. van Beethoven, Symphony in E-flat major, Opus 55, third movement, bars 10–13

Marcia funebre
(Adagio assai)

Oboe
Clarinet in Bb
Bassoon
Horn 1&2 (in C)
Horn 3&4 (in Eb)
Timpani
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

Liszt was no stranger to this funeral march, having transcribed the work for solo piano in 1843. Furthermore, there is a possibility that Liszt was influenced by a similar figure in the slow movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A-flat major, Opus 26:¹⁶⁷

Example 5.140: L. van Beethoven, Piano Sonata in A-flat major, Opus 26, third movement, bars 1–4

MARCIA FUNÈBRE sulla morte d'un Eroe
Maestoso andante

Piano

¹⁶⁷ For a discussion of Liszt's affinity with Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A-flat major Opus 26, see Chapter 5.1.3b above.

Repeated notes and dotted rhythm also feature in the funeral march from Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, Opus 35 (1839):

Example 5.141: F. Chopin, Piano Sonata in B-flat minor, Opus 35, third movement, bars 13–16

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. The title is "Marche funèbre (Lento)". The instrument is labeled "Piano". The score consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. The key signature has three flats (B-flat minor). The music features a dotted rhythm and repeated notes. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present. The score is for bars 13-16.

The climax which follows the two *tremolando* central variations of 'Vision' (1852) also invites comparison with the finale of Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 3 in Opus 58 (1844):

Example 5.142a: F. Liszt, 'Vision', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 6 in G minor (1852), bars 54–55

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. The instrument is labeled "Piano". The score consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. The key signature has two flats (G minor). The music features a tremolando effect. A dynamic marking of *fff* (fortissimo) is present. The score is for bars 54-55.

Example 5.142b: F. Chopin, Piano Sonata in B-minor, Opus 58, fourth movement, bars 1–8

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. The title is "FINALE Presto non tanto". The instrument is labeled "Piano". The score consists of two staves, treble and bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (B-minor). The music features a crescendo. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is present. The score is for bars 1-8.

5.4.2 Comparison of the three versions of the etude

Composed in binary form, the juvenile G-minor Study (1827) is an exercise in part-playing, which requires the pianist to hold down the melody with the right-hand thumb whilst keeping the arpeggio-like figuration as the background accompaniment:

Example 5.143: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 6 in G minor (1827), bars 1–4

The musical score for Example 5.143 shows the first four bars of Liszt's Étude en douze Exercices, No. 6 in G minor. The piece is in 2/4 time and G minor. The right hand plays a melody primarily with the thumb, while the left hand provides an arpeggiated accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Molto agitato' and the dynamics are 'p' (piano).

The right-hand pattern is retained after the modulation to the relative major, which features a slight thickening of the left-hand texture:

Example 5.144: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 6 in G minor (1827), bars 23–28

The musical score for Example 5.144 shows bars 23–28 of Liszt's Étude en douze Exercices, No. 6 in G minor. This section features a modulation to the relative major, B-flat major. The right-hand pattern is retained, but the left-hand texture becomes thicker. The dynamics are marked 'p', 'pp', 'ff', 'p', and 'pp'.

The climax of the study sees the partial return of the opening thematic material (bar 46 forward), this time presented in a higher register:

Example 5.145: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 6 in G minor (1827), bars 37–50

The image shows three systems of musical notation for piano accompaniment. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and contains measures 37-42. It features a treble clef with a melodic line and a bass clef with a harmonic accompaniment. Dynamics include 'cresc.', 'f', and 'ff'. The second system is labeled 'Pno.' and contains measures 43-46. The third system is also labeled 'Pno.' and contains measures 47-50. The notation includes various rhythmic values and accidentals.

In both later versions of the etude, Liszt expanded the rounded binary form of the G minor Study (1827) into theme and variation form. The opening thematic idea is transformed from a melody in 2/4 to one in 3/4 and the *Dies irae* idea is grafted onto it:

Example 5.146: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 6 in G minor (1827), bars 1–4 (RH) and *Grande Étude* No. 6 in G minor (1839), bars 1–3 (LH)

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The top system is the right-hand part (RH) from the 1827 version, showing a melodic line in G minor. The bottom system is the left-hand part (LH) from the 1839 version, showing a bass line. A bracket under the first three measures of the LH part is labeled 'Dies irae'.

In 1839, Liszt moved the music down an octave to enhance the dark solemnity of tone and the right-hand broken-chord accompaniment figure is significantly transformed into hemidemisemiquaver figurations in the left hand – this was then turned into sextuplet demisemiquavers in 1852. However, the most interesting adjustment between the 1839 and 1852 version of *Vision* comes from the performance point of view. In the G-minor *Grande Étude* of 1839, Liszt had intended the first section of the etude (bars 1–12) to be played only by the left hand, hence the *main droite tacet*

indication. Perhaps realising that few pianists possess the technical apparatus necessary for such execution, Liszt omits this performance directive, thus leaving the execution to the discretion of the pianist:

Example 5.147a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 6 in G minor (1827), bars 1–4

Musical score for Example 5.147a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 6 in G minor (1827), bars 1–4. The score is for Piano and features the tempo marking "Molto agitato" and the dynamic marking "p". The music is in 2/4 time and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The right hand plays a series of eighth-note chords, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

Example 5.147b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 6 in G minor (1839), bars 1–4

Musical score for Example 5.147b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 6 in G minor (1839), bars 1–4. The score is for Piano and features the tempo marking "Largo patetico" and the dynamic marking "f pesante". It includes performance instructions for the right hand ("main droite tacet") and the left hand ("main gauche"). The music is in 3/4 time and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The right hand is silent, while the left hand plays a series of chords with a tenuto mark. The score includes a watermark for "University of Cambridge".

Example 5.147c: F. Liszt, 'Vision', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 6 in G minor (1852), bars 1–4

Musical score for Example 5.147c: F. Liszt, "Vision", *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 6 in G minor (1852), bars 1–4. The score is for Piano and features the tempo marking "Lento" and the dynamic marking "f pesante". It includes performance instructions for the right hand ("simile, sempre marcato") and the left hand. The music is in 3/4 time and consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The right hand plays a series of chords with a tenuto mark, while the left hand plays a series of chords with a tenuto mark. The score includes a watermark for "University of Cambridge".

Liszt's revision of the G-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) includes minor pianistic adjustments to the two passages leading up to the central climax:

- The first was originally as follows:

Example 5.148: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 6 in G minor (1839), bars 26–28

In 'Vision' (1852), bar 28 of the G-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) is omitted; the pianist is allowed a little more time for the octave leaps, and the tremolandos texture is changed to arpeggios:

Example 5.149: F. Liszt, 'Vision', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 6 in G minor (1852), bars 26–27

- Immediately following on from the above is the second passage subjected to revision. The four statements of the varied *Dies irae* motif in bars 29–31 are discarded in the 1852 version, resulting in a loss of motivic integration, and the figuration is reduced to a series of descending chromatic scales over three rather than four bars. The alternation between E-flat and D (also derived from the *Dies irae*) in the final bar is expanded to three beats instead of two, and the texture is thickened considerably:

Example 5.150a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 6 in G minor (1839), bars 29–33

Example 5.150b: F. Liszt, 'Vision', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 6 in G minor (1852), bars 28–31

Whereas the 1839 version of this passage contained varied diminutions of the 1827 opening themes, the 1852 version retains only the bare outline of that idea, with D descending before leaping up to E-flat, and then descending to E-flat an octave lower:

Example 5.151: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 6 in G minor (1839), bars 1–4 (LH); *Grande Étude* No. 6 in G minor (1839), bar 29 (RH) and ‘Vision’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 6 in G minor (1852), bar 28 (RH)

G minor Grande Étude (1839)
Opening theme

G minor Grande Étude (1839)
bar 29 (RH)

Vision (1852) bar 28 (RH)

- In the coda of the G-minor *Grande Étude* (1839), the following passage requires large stretches in the left hand, rendering it inaccessible to most pianists:

Example 5.152: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 6 in G minor (1839), bar 66

tremolando

p sotto voce cresc. rinf.

Piano

In 1852, it was changed to the following:

Example 5.153: F. Liszt, 'Vision', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 6 in G minor (1852), bar 64

The image shows a musical score for piano, labeled 'Piano' on the left. It consists of two staves, both in G minor (one sharp). The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The music is marked with a piano dynamic. There are two measures of music on each staff, with a fermata over the second measure of each. The first measure of each staff contains a series of eighth notes, and the second measure contains a series of eighth notes with a fermata. The number '12' is written below the first measure of each staff. A large oval bracket encompasses the entire musical notation.

5.4.3 Summary and conclusion

The accompaniment figuration in the opening bars of the G-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) is derived from the right-hand arpeggio figuration of its 1827 prototype, whilst the processional dotted rhythm of the 1839 version, reminiscent of a funeral march, can be related to the dotted rhythm in the left hand of the G-minor Study (1827). The sombre character of the 1839 version is further enhanced by references to the *Dies irae* and the 'fate' motif. The former appears as the main thematic idea whilst the latter generates the miniature link passages in this work. Liszt's pianistic revisions in 'Vision' (1852) serve to render more attainable the practical realisation of the musical vision that is already evident in the intermediate version of the work.

The Romantic penchant for citation from the musical past is reflected here firstly by, Liszt's citation of the medieval plainchant Dies (Chapters 3.2.3 and 5.4.1) and, secondly, by the Beethovenian 'fate' motif (Chapters 3.3.1a and 5.1.3a) which underscores the etude. Both references serve to underline (to the informed listener) the doom-laden atmosphere of the apocalyptic vision described in Hugo's ode. The reliance on knowledge of a shared repository of musical symbols in order to enhance musical meaning is in itself a highly Romantic practice.

5.5 The etudes based on legends

The etudes based on legend comprise ‘Mazeppa’ (discussed above under etudes after the works by Hugo), ‘Feux follets’ and ‘Wilde Jagd’.

5.5.1 ‘Feux follets’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 5 in B-flat major (*Allegretto*)

5.5.1a *Background and possible influences*

‘Feux follets’ (‘Will-o’-the-Wisps’) is the second of the three ‘Transcendental’ Etudes that evince Liszt’s fascination with Romantic legends.¹⁶⁸ Included in the heading of the Fifth ‘Transcendental’ Etude is its German equivalent, *Irrlichter*, a title which invites comparison with Schubert’s song ‘Irrlicht’ in *Die Winterreise* (1827).¹⁶⁹

The will-o’-the-wisp is also known by the Latin name *ignis fatuus* (*Fool’s fire*), and it was held that these impish and mysterious lights lead the unsuspecting traveller from well-trodden paths into treacherous terrains, as described in Müller’s ‘Irrlicht’:

In die tiefsten Felsengründe
Lockte mich ein Irrlicht hin;
Wie ich einen Ausgang finde,
Liegt nicht schwer mir in dem Sinn.

Bin gewohnt das Irregehen,
's führt ja jeder Weg zum Ziel;
Unsre Freuden, uns're Wehen,
Alles eines Irrlichts Spiel!

¹⁶⁸ In scientific terms, the will-o’-the-wisp originates from the natural methane found in rotting vegetation, most commonly near marshy plains. The gasses from these decomposing plants are known to ignite spontaneously, resulting in shining vapours without heat, flame-like entities that drift over the boggy grounds.

¹⁶⁹ Newell (1904:44) refers to the expression *ignis erraticus* (*wandering fire* or *straying fire*), which can be translated into *Irrlicht* in German.

*In the deepest mountain chasms,
A will o' the wisp lured me;
How to find a way out,
Doesn't worry me too much.*

*I'm used to going astray,
And every way leads to the goal.
Our joys, our sorrows,
Are all a will-o'-the-wisp's game!*

In English mythology, the will-o'-the-wisp has often been associated with a wandering soul who is not allowed entrance into heaven or hell. Briggs (1976:231) supplies a comprehensive list of names associated with the will-o'-the-wisp in different parts of England.¹⁷⁰

Liszt's 'Feux follets' has more in common with the glittering and alluring entity of light of the traditional will o' the wisp legends than with the vengeful spirit accompanied by a lantern found in some English traditions. This is evident in two aspects of the composition: the first is Liszt's abundant use of the piano's upper and the second, the dynamic markings and performance directions. Apart from the two climaxes at bars 49–65 and 91–100 respectively, the dynamic markings remain predominantly *piano*. This, combined with the performance direction of *leggiero* (bars 1 and 30), *dolce tranquillo* (bar 18), *dolce* (bar 30), *scherzando* (bar 42 and 83) *con grazia* (bar 73) and *grazioso* (bar 83), gives *Feux follets* its playful, yet spectral and eerie quality.

¹⁷⁰ Some examples of the name given to the will-o'-the-wisp as found in Brigg's *Dictionary of Fairies* are Billy-wi'-t'-wisp (West Yorkshire), Hobbledy's lantern (Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire), Hobby-lantern (Worcestershire, Hertfordshire, East Anglia, Hampshire, Wiltshire and west Wales), Jenny-burnt-tail (Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire), Jenny-wi'-t'-lantern (Northumberland and North Yorkshire) and Joan-in-the-wad or Joan-the-wad (Somerset and Cornwall). Briggs also refers to the Shropshire Legend and the figure of Will the Smith in *A Dictionary of English Folklore* (1970:574–575). Saint Peter gave the malevolent blacksmith Will a chance to redeem himself by living a life free from wickedness. However, the blacksmith lived his life in such evil fashion that not even the Devil was willing to grant him entrance at the gates of hell. Will was thus left to wander the earth for eternity, accompanied and kept warmed by a piece of burning coal given to him by the Devil. As a gesture of vengeance the blacksmith flickers the coal over boggy marshes to lure unsuspecting wanderers to their death. A slightly different version of the Shropshire Legend recalls the blacksmith tricking the Devil into a steel purse and hammering the Devil in such a way that the Devil dared not allow Will into hell.

It is possible that Liszt's *Feux follets* was inspired by the following two passages from Goethe's *Faust*.¹⁷¹ In the 'Walpurgis Night' scene, Mephistopheles and Faust called upon a will-o'-the-wisp to aid their travels through the darkness as they struggle to find their way in the Hartz Mountains:

Mephistopheles:

Wie traurig steigt die unvollkommne Scheibe
Des roten Monds mit später Glut heran,
Und leuchter schlecht, daß man bei jedem Schritte
Vor einen Baum, vor einen Felsen rennt!
Erlaub' daß ich ein Irrlicht bitte!
Dort seh'ich eins, das eben lustig brennt.
He da! mein Freund! Darf ich dich zu uns fodern?
Was willst du so vergebens lodern?
Sei doch so gut und leucht'uns da hinauf!

*How sadly the imperfect disc
Of the red moon rises with belated glow,
And the light it gives is bad, at every step
One runs into some rock or tree!
Permit me to ask a will o' the wisp!
I see one there, he's burning heartily.
Ahoy my friend! Might I call on you to help us?
Why do you blaze away there to no purpose?
Be so good as to light us along our road!*

Will-o'-the-Wisp:

Aus Ehrfurcht, hoff'ich, soll es mir gelingen,
Mein leichtes Naturell zu zwingen;
Nur Zickzack geht gewöhnlich unser Lauf.

*I only hope my sense of your mightiness,
Will control my natural flightiness;
A zigzag course is our accustomed mode.*
(Goethe 1929:131)

¹⁷¹ Goethe's *Faust* has been discussed above as a major influence in Liszt's creative life (see Chapter 2.1.2 and 3.3.1d).

Melodically, both the 1839 and the 1852 version of the etude can be seen as the possible inspiration behind the ‘magic fire’ motif in Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Both motifs start with alternating use of the submediant and flattened submediant as upper auxiliaries to the dominant before ascending to the tonic and returning to the dominant. They also incorporate a four-note descending scale (x, consisting of three intervals: semitone-tone-tone) ending on a strong beat. Here is Liszt’s motif:

Example 5.154: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 5 in B-flat major (1839), bars 18–21

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. The music is in B-flat major. The first system includes the instruction 'sempre legato' above the right hand and 'dolce, tranquillo' below the left hand. A red bracket labeled 'x' spans across the right hand in the first system, highlighting a four-note descending scale motif. The second system starts at bar 20. The score features complex chordal textures and melodic lines in both hands.

Wagner’s motif employs the same rhythm that Liszt uses in the juvenile study of 1827:

Example 5.155a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 5 in B-flat major (1827), bars 1–4

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. The music is in B-flat major. The first system includes the instruction 'Moderato' above the right hand and 'p molto legato' below the left hand. A red bracket labeled 'x' spans across the right hand in the first system, highlighting a four-note descending scale motif. The second system starts at bar 1. The score features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a more melodic line in the left hand.

Example 5.155b: R. Wagner, *Götterdämmerung*, Act 3 Scene 3 (upper winds)

Both Liszt and Wagner were probably expressing the indescent qualities of the firelight through the alternating colours of the major-minor forms of the submediant, while in Liszt's case the figure also suggests the 'zigzag course' of Goethe's Will-o'-the-Wisp. The same alternation is used by Chopin in the D-major Prelude (See Example 5.188a), which was composed at almost the same time as Liszt's *Grande Études*.

5.5.1b Comparison of the three versions of the etude

The B-flat major study of 1827 employs a formal structure similar to first-movement sonata form. Its principal subject features a dotted-rhythm melody over a three-voice accompaniment based on four-part harmony:

Example 5.156: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 5 in B-flat major (1827), bars 1–4

The second subject of the B-flat major Study of 1827 is closely related to the opening of the C-minor Study (1827) (See Example 5.177). Both employ the same ascending left hand scale against descending right-hand chords. In the case of the B-flat major Study, this idea is interspersed with sequential treatment of the principal thematic subject, now accompanied by left-hand leaps. Curiously enough, Liszt also commences the second subject in the tonic key as opposed to the dominant:

Example 5.157: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 5 in B-flat major (1827), bars 17–26

In the development section of the B-flat major Study (1827), the right-hand figuration of the opening theme becomes the accompaniment to a scalar left-hand theme and introduces the technique of crossing hands, similar to that found in the juvenile D-minor Study (See Chapter 5.2.2):

Example 5.158: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 5 in B-flat major (1827), bars 40–47

The recapitulation of the B-flat major Study (1827) begins with the restatement of the second subject in the key of the dominant:

Example 5.159: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 5 in B-flat major (1827), bars 61–67

before finally recalling the opening theme:

Example 5.160: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 5 in B-flat major (1827), bars 72–74

The compositional structure of both the B-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839) and ‘Feux Follets’ (1852) is very similar to their juvenile predecessor; however, in both latter versions of the etude the main thematic motif makes an additional appearance in place of the second subject of the 1827 version, which is now discarded. Furthermore, both the intermediate and final version of the etude sees the addition of a two-stage introduction of which the first part is based on the minor-second-major-second alternation that characterised the main motif (See Example 5.154):

Example 5.161: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 5 in B-flat major (1839), bars 1–7

The performance indication is altered from *Egalmente* and *veloce leggiero* in 1839 to *Allegretto* and *leggiero* in 1852. From an interpretative point of view, it is possible that Liszt is more interested in this etude – and especially its fiendish double-note figurations – being played evenly than at a hectic pace.¹⁷²

The second stage of the introduction presents two other thematic ideas that will be subjected to development during the course of the etude. The first is a shimmering octatonic cascade (bars 7–8) and the second a descending chromatic theme (bar 9).

¹⁷² Pianists have often viewed the pianistic intricacies of ‘Feux follets’ as the ideal vehicle to display their rapid fingerwork, tending to play the etude at a much faster tempo than Liszt himself originally envisaged. Ubbet (2005:13) shows that Liszt himself preferred a modest tempo as opposed to a frantic one in this etude, whereas Walker (1970:53) argued that pianists’ preference for a faster tempo in ‘Feux follets’ has often been one of the major stumbling blocks in their interpretations. From a performance point of view, Walker proposes that, despite the time signature of 2/4, the music should be thought of as four in a bar, similar to the 4/4 in the B-flat major Study of 1827.

Example 5.162: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 5 in B-flat major (1839), bars 7–16

In the B-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839), the introduction leads directly into the main thematic idea. In ‘Feux Follets’ (1852), Liszt achieved a more transparent (and sprightlier) pianistic texture by changing the left-hand demisemiquavers in bars 7–8 and 10–11 of the 1839 version to staccato chords. He also facilitates the remainder of the introduction by removing the repeated-note demisemiquavers from the accompaniment and simplifying some of the chordal voicing. A more homogeneous transition into the main thematic motif is achieved by the addition of an extra bar of demisemiquaver figuration, which expands the rhythmic diminution of the minor-second-major-second alternation from the previous bar:

Example 5.163: F. Liszt, 'Feux follets', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 5 in B-flat major (1852), bars 7–17

For the principal thematic idea, Liszt discards the dotted rhythm of the juvenile B-flat major Study (1827) in favour of even demisemiquavers and chromaticises the melody (See Example 5.154). The second appearance of the main thematic motif of both the B-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839) and 'Feux Follets' (1852) develops the left-hand leaps (bars 18 and 20) of the juvenile B-flat major Study (1827):

Example 5.164a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 5 in B-flat major (1827), bars 17–26

Example 5.164b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 5 in B-flat major (1839), bars 29–32

The image shows a musical score for Example 5.164b, consisting of two systems of music. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second system is labeled 'Pno.'. Both systems are in B-flat major and 3/4 time. The piano part (top staff) features a melodic line with a 'dolce' marking. The pno. part (bottom staff) features a rhythmic accompaniment with a 'leggiero' marking. The score covers bars 29 to 32.

As shown in the examples above, Liszt's 1852 revisions have two aims: the first is to simplify the technical execution through the adjustment of certain virtuosic passages in the etude; the second to increase the transparency of the musical texture. The most important revisions are as follows:

- In the exposition and the recapitulation of the B-flat major *Grande Étude*, the widely spaced accompanying chords in the left hand are replaced by open tenths:

Example 5.165a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 5 in B-flat major (1839), bars 25–26

The image shows a musical score for Example 5.165a, consisting of two systems of music. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second system is labeled 'Pno.'. Both systems are in B-flat major and 3/4 time. The piano part (top staff) features a melodic line with a 'rinf.' marking. The pno. part (bottom staff) features a rhythmic accompaniment with a 'diminuendo' marking. The score covers bars 25 to 26.

Example 5.165b: F. Liszt, 'Feux follets', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 5 in B-flat major (1852), bars 26–27

The image shows a musical score for Example 5.165b, consisting of two systems of music. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second system is labeled 'Pno.'. Both systems are in B-flat major and 3/4 time. The piano part (top staff) features a melodic line with a 'rinf.' marking. The pno. part (bottom staff) features a rhythmic accompaniment with a 'dim.' marking. The score covers bars 26 to 27.

- In the passage towards the end of the exposition featuring interlocking of the crossed hands, Liszt redistributes the parts and eliminates the repeated Fs from the tonic chord to facilitate the execution (which no longer involves interlocking) and thin out the texture. In the next bar, the left hand is again considerably simplified, as in the introduction (see Example 5.163), and is used to continue the *staccato* semiquaver rhythm of the previous bar, rather than to duplicate the rhythm of the right hand:

Example 5.166a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 5 in B-flat major (1839), bars 41–44

Example 5.166b: F. Liszt, 'Feux follets', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 5 in B-flat major (1852), bars 42–45

- The entire development section is also subjected to revision in terms of technical practicality. In the first passage, Liszt turns the left-hand octave melody of the 1839 version into single notes with arpeggio accompaniment. Furthermore, Liszt thins out the accompanying cascades of the right hand, replacing virtually all of the three-note compounds with dyads:

Example 5.167a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 5 in B-flat major (1839), bars 48–51

The image shows the musical score for Example 5.167a, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. Each system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 3/4. The first system (bars 48-51) features a right-hand part with a dynamic marking of *ff* and a left-hand part with a dynamic marking of *marcato*. The second system (bars 50-51) features a right-hand part with a dynamic marking of *ff* and a left-hand part with a dynamic marking of *marcato*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and articulation marks.

Example 5.167b: F. Liszt, 'Feux follets', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 5 in B-flat major (1852), bars 49–52

The image shows the musical score for Example 5.167b, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. Each system has a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 3/4. The first system (bars 49-52) features a right-hand part with a dynamic marking of *f marcato* and a left-hand part with a dynamic marking of *f marcato*. The second system (bars 51-52) features a right-hand part with a dynamic marking of *f marcato* and a left-hand part with a dynamic marking of *f marcato*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and articulation marks.

- In the passage that follows immediately, Liszt replaces the right-hand motifs of the 1839 version with paired dyads, admittedly sacrificing some of the thematic discourse as well as the playful metric displacement of the melodic motif. The impish off-beats of the 1852 version compensate in some measure for the loss of the latter:

Example 5.168a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 5 in B-flat major (1839), bars 52–55

Example 5.168b: F. Liszt, 'Feux follets', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 5 in B-flat major (1852), bars 53–56

- The passage leading up to the central climax is also revised. In the B-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839) the following is presented:

Example 5.169: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 5 in B-flat major (1839), bars 56–60

In ‘Feux Follets’ (1852), Liszt thins out some of the accompanying chords in the chromatic descents and discards the demisemiquaver motif at the end of the first descent:

Example 5.170: F. Liszt, ‘Feux follets’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 5 in B-flat major (1852), bars 57–61

- The central climax is also subject to revision. Dense musical texture is evident in the B-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839):

Example 5.171: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 5 in B-flat major (1839), bars 61–65

The musical score for Example 5.171 consists of two systems. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 61 to 63. It is marked with a forte dynamic (*f*) and a marcato articulation. The right hand plays a series of chords with a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the left hand plays a similar pattern in octaves. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers bars 64 and 65. It is marked with a piano dynamic (*p*). The right hand continues the chordal texture, and the left hand plays a more active line with eighth notes. A fermata is placed over the final chord in bar 65.

In ‘Feux Follets’ (1852), the composer rewrites the fifth bar using the rhythmic motif found in the previous four bars. To facilitate the execution of the demisemiquaver motif, he omits some of the left-hand octaves and the repeated-note demisemiquaver chords, as he had done in the introduction:

Example 5.172: F. Liszt, ‘Feux follets’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 5 in B-flat major (1852), bars 62–66

The musical score for Example 5.172 consists of two systems. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 62 to 64. It is marked with a forte dynamic (*f*). The right hand plays a series of chords with a rhythmic pattern of demisemiquaver notes, while the left hand plays a similar pattern in octaves. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers bars 65 and 66. It is marked with a piano dynamic (*p*). The right hand continues the chordal texture, and the left hand plays a more active line with demisemiquaver notes. A fermata is placed over the final chord in bar 66.

- In the B-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839), the recapitulation begins with a slightly modified version of the main thematic motif, unusually in the key of A major. Note how the left-hand accompaniment echoes the one found in bar 18 (See Example 5.154):

Example 5.173: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 5 in B-flat major (1839), bars 71–72

The corresponding passage in ‘Feux Follets’ (1852) sees the alteration of the ascending repeated thirds in the right hand to a chromatic ascent in thirds shared between the hands:

Example 5.174: F. Liszt, ‘Feux follets’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 5 in B-flat major (1852), bars 72–73

- Finally, the coda is also simplified for the purpose of technical accessibility through the elimination of the demisemiquaver repeated chords and of the fiendish writing for the left thumb (bars 105–106 in the 1839 version):

Example 5.175a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude No. 5 in B-flat major* (1839), bars 100–109

Tempo rubato dolce piacevole radolcendo Animato

Piano

105

Pno.

più cresc.

107

Pno.

stringendo rinf. ff molto dimin. ritard.

Example 5.175b: F. Liszt, 'Feux follets', *Étude d'exécution transcendente No. 5 in B-flat major* (1852), bars 101–111

un poco ritenuto (a piacere) in tempo

Piano

p dolce poco rinf. rall. e smorz. p R.H. R.H. R.H. R.H. R.H.

106

Pno.

più cresc. sfz

109

Pno.

dim. molto

5.5.1c *Summary and conclusion*

The technical figurations of the B-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839) are derived from the melodic outline of the juvenile study, but the 1839 version of the etude introduces a profusion of musical ideas which enhances the technical difficulty of the etude. Musical homogeneity of the intermediate version of the etude is partly attained by thematic discourse in the development section, some of which is sacrificed in favour of textural transparency and pianistic facilitation in the final version. The changes heighten the sprightly quality of the music and as in the case of 'Chasse Niede', enhance the realisation of Liszt's programmatic intentions.

The fascination with spritely manifestation of the supernatural is a typical feature of Romanticism (Chapter 3.3.3b), echoed in works such as Weber's *Oberon* and Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. 'Feux follets' can be seen as a worthy heir to the tradition of German 'fairy' music.

5.5.2 'Wilde Jagd', *Étude d'exécution transcendente No. 8 in C minor (Presto furioso)*

5.5.2a *Background and possible influences*

The eighth 'Transcendental' Etude is the third of the three works in the set that evince Liszt's fascination with Romantic legends. The heading, 'Wilde Jagd', can literally be translated as 'Wild Hunt',¹⁷³ but more probably refers to the nocturnal, and usually spectral, chase popular in Northern European legend and evoked in a number of nineteenth-century compositions.

Amongst the best known examples of this is the eerie vision that occurs during the forging of the fifth magic bullet (of seven) in the fabled 'Wolfglen' scene from Weber's *Der Freischütz* (1821). It is described as follows in the libretto:

¹⁷³ The French equivalent of the 'Jagd' is 'La Chasse', a name often given to works featuring horn calls and galloping motifs. Examples include Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E-flat major, Opus 31 No. 3, nicknamed 'La Chasse'. The title is also given by Liszt to both versions of the E major 'Paganini' Etude (1838 and 1851).

Hundegebell und Wiehern in der Luft; Nebelgestalten von Jägern zu Fuss und zu Ross, Hirschen und Hunden ziehen auf der Höhe vorüber.

*Barking of dogs and neighing in the air; misty images of hunters, on foot and on horseback, stags and dogs fly past overhead.*¹⁷⁴

A later example is César Franck's *Le Chasseur maudit* (*The Accursed Huntsman*, 1880). Franck's symphonic poem is based upon the extended ballad *Der Wilde Jäger* (*The Wild Huntsman*)¹⁷⁵ by the German poet Gottfried August Bürger (1748–1794). Bürger's ballad describes an arrogant count who disregards the warnings of pious elders by setting off on a hunt one Sunday morning. Whilst in the forest the count becomes lost and is sentenced by a voice from unseen height for his violation of the Sabbath. Pursued by imps and demons, the huntsman now becomes the hunted and is condemned to ride the skies for eternity as punishment for desecrating the Lord's Day.

The legend of the accursed horseman also appears in Arnold Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* (1911). Schoenberg utilises the three-part Danish poem *Gurrelieder*¹⁷⁶ by Jens Peter Jacobsen (1847–1885) of which the final section is entitled 'Die Wilde Jagd', depicting the protagonist, Valdemar, who, having cursed God after the murder of his beloved Tove, become the accursed horseman, terrorising the countryside as he gallops through the night skies with his vassals:¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Schwinger, Wolfram and Kleiber, Carlos (1973) *Weber Der Freischütz*. Three LPs and one booklet in German, English and French. Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft [2720–071].

¹⁷⁵ Bürger's *Der Wilde Jäger* is written in 1773, and came from the same period as the poet's other well-known ballad – *Lenore* (also written in 1773). Much like *Der Wilde Jäger*, *Lenore* also depicts vision of the supernatural and features a 'wild ride'. In this ballad, the heroine's slain fiancé returns from the grave and carry her to their nuptial bower, which is an open grave in the village cemetery. According to Richard Freed <http://www.kennedy-centre.org/calender/?fuseaction=composition&composition_id=4044> (Accessed 30th November 2008), Liszt wrote piano music to accompany a recitation of Bürger's *Lenore* while Joachim Raff, Liszt's one-time assistant and orchestral collaborator, based the programme of his Fifth Symphony on Bürger's *Lenore*.

¹⁷⁶ Jacobsen's *Gurrelieder* appear in German for the first time in 1899 in the complete edition of his work entitled *Jens Peter Jacobsen: Gesammelte Werke, 3 Volumes*. The *Gurrelieder* appear in the first volume of the work *Novellen, Briefe, Gedichte*, from which the extracts below are taken. These three volume of Jacobsen's work were translated by Marie Herzfeld and Robert Franz Arnold.

¹⁷⁷ The English translations are taken from <<http://www.cd101.net/VBX204notes.html>> (Accessed 3rd March 2008).

Valdemar:

Erwacht, König Valdemars Mannen wert!
Schnallt an die Lende das rostige Schwert
Holt aus der Kirche verstaubte Schilde,
Gräulich bemalt mit wüstem Gebilde.
Weckt eurer Rosse modernde Leichen,
Schmückt sie mit Gold, und spornt ihre Weichen:
Nach Gurrestadt sied ihr entboten,
Heute ist Ausfahrt der Toten!

*Arouse ye, hear Valdemar's royal word!
Gird now on your loins the rusty-red sword,
Take from their holy place shields all battered,
Fly on your standard, colours all tattered.
Wake from your tomb your moldering courses;
To Gurre then ride through the valley,
There today shall dead men rally!*

The passage which follows immediately depicts Valdemer's torturous ride – as seen through the eyes of a peasant:

Peasant:

Deckel des Sarges klappert und kappt,
Schwer kommt's her durch die Nacht getrabt.
Rasen nieder vom Hügel rollt,
Über den Gräften klingts hell wie Gold.
Klirren und Rasseln durch's Rüsthaus geht,
Werfen und Rücken mit altem Gerät,
Steinegepolter am Kirchhofrain,
Sperber sausen vom Turm und schrei'n,
Auf und zu fliegt's Kirchentor.
Da fährt's vorbei! Rasch die Decke übers Ohr.

*Hark to the rattling coffin, oh hark,
Slow on its way, and the night is dark.
Down from the hillsides great rocks are rolled,
Over the valley they ring like gold.
Clatters and rattles the arsenal,
Lances and cannon in warring heaps fall;
Stones of the grave o'er the churchyard fly,
Howling hawks on the spire do cry,
To and fro the church door flies.
It passes by! Stop the ears and close the eyes!*

The peasant's description is followed by the narrative given by Valdemar's vassals:

Valdemar's retainers:

Über Buchenkronen die Rosse traben,
Hollah! So jagen wir nach gemeiner Sag'
Eine jede Nacht bis zum jüngsten Tag.
Holah! Hussa Hund! Hussa Pferd!
Nur kurze Zeit das Jagen währt!
Hier ist das Schloß, wie einst vor Zeiten!
Hollah! Lokes Hafer gebt den Mähren,
Wir wollen vom alten Ruhme zehren

*Over highest tree-tops our steeds have striven,
Holla! So hunt we now in our olden way,
All and every night till the Judgment Day.
Holla, hie on hound, hie on steed!
Our time is brief, so make good speed!
As long ago, here stands the castle!
Holla! Loki's oats shall feed our horses,
Still as of old shall we ride our courses.*

A similarly headlong and tumultuous chase, whether real or spectral, could easily be envisaged as the programme of this work, even in its intermediate version, which opens as follows:

Example 5.176: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude No. 8 in C minor* (1839), bars 1–6

The image shows a musical score for Example 5.176, F. Liszt's *Grande Étude No. 8 in C minor* (1839), bars 1–6. The score is presented in two systems. The first system is marked **Presto strepitoso** and *con forza*. The second system is marked *sempre fortissimo e marcatissimo*. The score is in C minor, 8/8 time, and features a piano part with a driving eighth-note pattern in the left hand and a more complex, rhythmic pattern in the right hand. The tempo and dynamics are indicated by the markings above the staves.

5.5.2b Comparison of the three versions of the etude

Composed in ternary form, the C-minor Study (1827) consists of running figuration (usually in the left hand) against the main theme, which is presented in the opening bars:

Example 5.177: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices*, No. 8 in C minor (1827), bars 1–11

Allegro con spirito

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system is labeled 'Piano' and includes dynamics markings *p*, *f*, *p*, and *f*. The second system is labeled 'Pno.' and starts at bar 4. The third system is labeled 'Pno.' and starts at bar 7. The fourth system is labeled 'Pno.' and starts at bar 10. The score shows a main theme in the right hand and a running figuration in the left hand.

This idea is then subjected to modulation and development in the central section of the study with the roles of the hands inverted:

Example 5.178: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 8 in C minor (1827), bars 32–43

The musical score for Example 5.178, F. Liszt's *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 8 in C minor (1827), bars 32–43, is presented in four systems. The first system (bars 32–34) is labeled 'Piano' and features a right-hand part with chords and a left-hand part with a continuous eighth-note pattern. Dynamics include *ff*, *p*, and *ff*. The second system (bars 35–37) is labeled 'Pno.' and shows the right hand playing a melodic line with a crescendo leading to *ff brillante* and an *8^{va}* marking. The third system (bars 38–40) is labeled 'Pno.' and features a right-hand part with a continuous eighth-note pattern and a left-hand part with chords. Dynamics include *ff sempre*. The fourth system (bars 41–43) is labeled 'Pno.' and shows the right hand playing a melodic line with a crescendo leading to *ff* and an *8^{va}* marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

The restatement of the theme in the final section of the study is identical to its opening appearance.

In its mood, figurations and didactic aim, this youthful Liszt study foreshadows Chopin's 'Revolutionary' Etude in the same key:

Example 5.179: F. Chopin, Etude in C minor Opus 10 No.12, bars 10–13

In the C-minor *Grande Étude* (1839), Liszt diminished the first five notes found in the first bar of the left hand (numbered 1–5 in the example below) from semiquavers to demisemiquavers. The five semiquavers are then repeated four times and organised in five groups of four, resulting in a motif which contains the first five notes of the left-hand figuration of the juvenile study in retrograde form. In ‘Wilde Jagd’ (1852), Liszt retains only this motif and utilises the hand alternation technique that is so prominent in the A-minor ‘Transcendental’ Etude:

In both the C-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) and ‘Wilde Jagd’ (1852), the five-note scale is then developed in the passage below, which immediately follows the opening gesture, and which consists of a polymetric superimposition of a 5/8 pattern on the 6/8 metre. The pattern is then abbreviated to 3/8 and finally 2/8. This shows Liszt at his most innovative and experimental, while at the same time suggesting a wild and uncontrolled stampede:

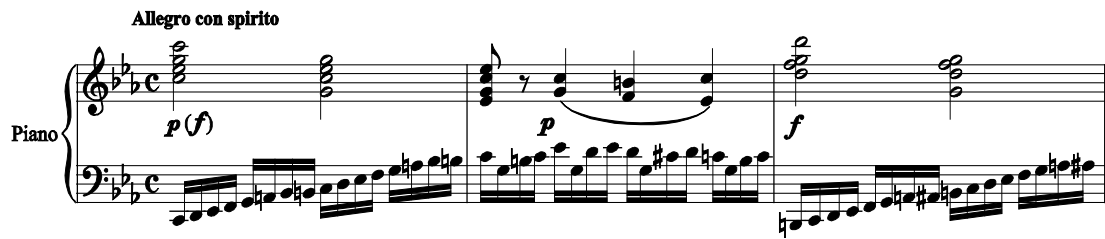
Example 5.180: F. Liszt, ‘Wilde Jagd’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 8 in C minor (1852), bars 7–12

In the C-minor *Grande Étude* (1839), Liszt conflates the ternary structure of the juvenile study with aspects of theme and variation form. ‘Wilde Jagd’ (1852) retains this design, but revises the passages considered awkward, as well as discarding those which might have seemed overtly flamboyant. The revisions include the omission of a massive thirty-three-bar cadenza (bars 163–194 of the 1839 version).¹⁷⁸ This means, firstly, that the pianistic writing of the final version (1852) are less demanding than in the 1839 version and, secondly, that the technical demands of the 1839 version seem to suggest much more of a ‘wild ride’ than those of the later version. The time signature in the latter versions of this work is changed from common time (in 1827) to 6/8 to suggest the galloping of horses as in the finale of Beethoven’s Opus 31 No. 3. Furthermore, bars 2–3 in the 1839 and 1852 versions present the right-hand melody of the juvenile study in dotted rhythm:

¹⁷⁸ See Example 5.191.

Example 5.181a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 8 in C minor (1827), bars 1–3

Allegro con spirito



Piano

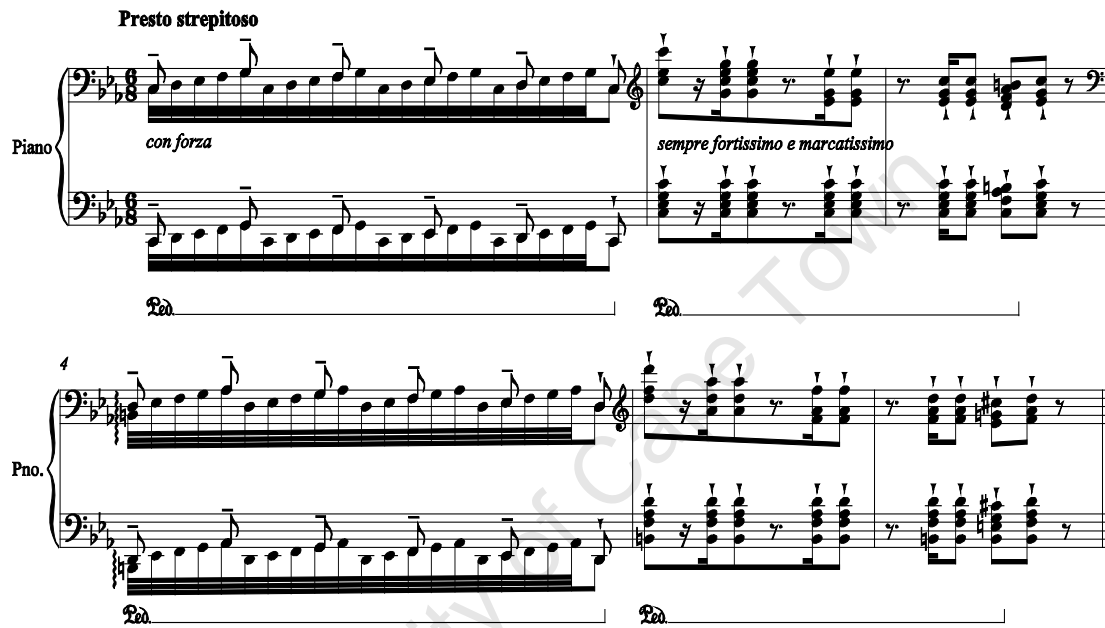
p (*f*)

p

f

Example 5.181b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 8 in C minor (1839), bars 1–6

Presto strepitoso



Piano

con forza

sempre fortissimo e marcatissimo

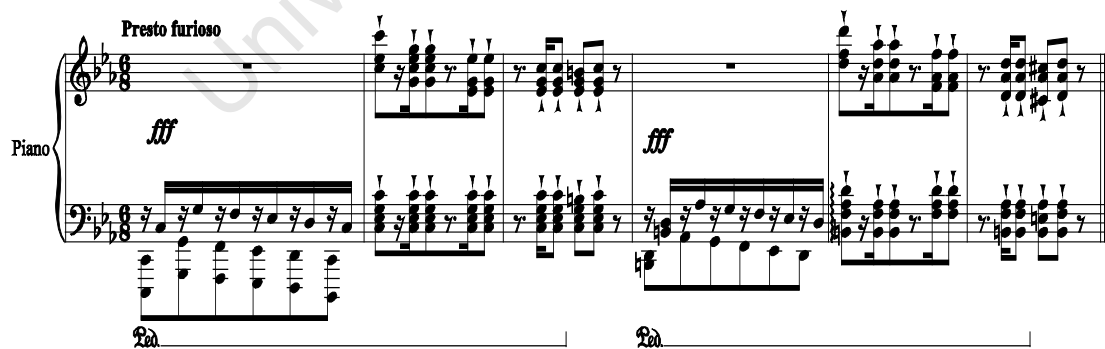
Pno.

con forza

sempre fortissimo e marcatissimo

Example 5.181c: F. Liszt, 'Wilde Jagd', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 8 in C minor (1852), bars 1–6

Presto furioso



Piano

fff

fff

In the bridge passage that leads into the 'hunting horn' section, the following is presented in the 1839 version:

Example 5.182: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 8 in C minor (1839), bars 54–59

For ‘Wilde Jagd’, Liszt discards the octaves leaps in bars 55–56 and rewrites the rest, condensing the five bars of dotted rhythm (bars 55–59 in 1839) to four (bars 55–58 in 1852):

Example 5.183: F. Liszt, ‘Wilde Jagd’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 8 in C minor (1852), bars 54–58

The second theme of the C-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) is a pianistic depiction of a hunting-horn fanfare and remains identical in *Wilde Jagd* (1852):

Example 5.184: F. Liszt, ‘Wilde Jagd’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 8 in C minor (1852), bars 59–66

The lyrical third theme that follows the fanfare section expands the opening five-note cascade in the relative major of E-flat. The 1839 version is as follows:

Example 5.185: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 8 in C minor (1839), bars 86–89

The awkwardness of bars 86–87, caused by the repetition of the upper G in the right hand against the off-beat melody in the inner voice, is removed in the 1852 version by firstly sustaining the G and then returning to it as melody note, turning the idea into an expanded retrograde inversion of the opening motif. The polyrhythmic complexity of 1839, in which the right hand suggests a displaced hemiola (implying 3/4) and then a 12/16 metre against the 6/8 of the left hand, is replaced by a uniform 12/16 against 6/8 in 1852:

Example 5.186: F. Liszt, 'Wilde Jagd', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 8 in C minor (1852), bars 85–88

A similar facilitation of the right hand can be found in the revision of the passage below:

Example 5.187a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 8 in C minor (1839), bars 94–97

Example 5.187b: F. Liszt, 'Wilde Jagd', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 8 in C minor (1852), bars 93–96

Piano

leggiermente e staccato

Here, however, the revision increases the polyrhythmic interest between the hands: where the 1839 version suggested displaced hemiolas in both hands, the right hand now implies 12/16 (or four beats per bar) against the displaced hemiola (suggesting three beats per bar) in the left hand. Liszt's complex use of polyrhythm in this passage extends the displaced hemiola found in some of Chopin's works:

Example 5.188a: F. Chopin, *Prélude in D major*, Opus 28 No. 5, bars 1–5

Piano

Allergro molto

cresc.

Example 5.188b: F. Chopin, *Etude in A-flat major*, Opus 10 No. 10, bars 1–2

Piano

Vivace assai

dolce

legato

In the C-minor *Grande Étude*, bars 135–154 develop the same pianistic writing found at the beginning of the etude:

Example 5.189: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 8 in C minor (1839), bars 135–138

Animato il tempo

Piano

pp sotto voce

Ped.

137

Pno.

sempre staccato e distintamente il basso

Ped.

In 1852, Liszt abbreviated this to twelve bars (134–145) and again simplified as at the beginning of the etude using the technique of hand alternation:

Example 5.190: F. Liszt, 'Wilde Jagd', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 8 in C minor (1852), bars 134–137

Tempo I

Piano

pp

Ped.

The C-minor *Grande Étude* features an extended thirty-threebar development consisting of a cadenza (bars 163–194) before the reinstatement of the opening materials (bars 195–222). The cadenza includes the fiendish passage below:

Example 5.191: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude*, No. 8 in C minor (1839), bars 163–170

The image displays a musical score for F. Liszt's *Grande Étude*, No. 8 in C minor, specifically bars 163–170. The score is presented in three systems. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 163 to 167 and features a complex texture with many accidentals and dynamic markings like 'p' and 'pp'. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers bars 168 to 170 and includes the instruction 'il più forte e presto' above the right hand. The third system, also labeled 'Pno.', covers bar 170 and includes the instruction 'marcatissimo' above the right hand. The score shows a cadenza in bars 169–170, characterized by a hexatonic scale and diminished quartads.

The entire cadenza, with its ground-breaking exploration of the hexatonic scale¹⁷⁹ (bars 169–170) is discarded in 1852.

¹⁷⁹ An artificial scale consisting of alternating one-and three-semitone intervals, the hexatonic scale was used much less frequently by Liszt and other nineteenth-century composers than the wholetone and octatonic scales. Liszt's use of the scale here is perhaps the earliest instance and is allied to a chain of diminished quartads as is his use of the octatonic scale in 'Feux follets' (see Example 5.162).

The recapitulation of ‘Wilde Jagd’ (1852) features two reinstatements of the hunting-horn fanfare, both of which appears in the tonic major and utilise the sonorous capability of the nineteenth-century piano. The first is identical to its 1839 predecessor:

Example 5.192: F. Liszt, ‘Wilde Jagd’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 8 in C minor (1852), bars 164–171

The heroic sturdiness of this C-major climax invites comparison with many similar passages in nineteenth-century music, but perhaps most especially with the opening bars of the finale from Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony:

Example 5.193: L. van Beethoven, Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Opus 67, fourth movement, bars 1–4

Allegro

Piccolo
Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in C
Bassoon
Contrabassoon
Horn in C
Trumpet in C
Alto, Tenor Trombone
Bass Trombone
Timpani
Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

ff

In the 1839 version, the second statement of the fanfare is presented as follows:

Example 5.194: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 8 in C minor (1839), bars 231–240

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 231-232 and includes the instruction 'sempre ff'. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', covers bars 233-236 and begins at bar 235. The third system, also labeled 'Pno.', covers bars 237-240 and begins at bar 238. The score is in 2/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns, including dotted rhythms and broken octave semiquavers. Dynamic markings include 'sempre ff' and '8va'.

In Liszt's revision of the above passage, the dotted rhythm figure found in the left hand of bars 231–232 and 235–236 of the 1839 version is imitated at the distance of a quaver in the right hand in bars 172–173 and 176–177. This replaces the triplet semiquaver cascades found in the earlier version. Furthermore, the broken octave semiquavers from bars 237–240 are now changed to double octave quavers:

Example 5.195: F. Liszt, 'Wilde Jagd', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 8 in C minor (1852), bars 172–181

The coda of the C-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) contains three reinstatements of the third theme in C major (bars 253–275). The second is as follows:

Example 5.196: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 8 in C minor (1839), bars 261–264

The identical number of reinstatements occurs in 'Wilde Jagd' (bars 194–215). However, in the second reinstatement of the theme, Liszt now presents the melodic line in alternation between the hands, a pianistic technique identical to that found at the beginning of the etude:

Example 5.197: F. Liszt, 'Wilde Jagd', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 8 in C minor (1852), bars 202–205

Finally, the closing bars are also subject to modifications. Liszt's pianistic writing in 1839 requires a virtuosity of almost superhuman strength and agility:

Example 5.198: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 8 in C minor (1839), bars 282–288

Liszt revised this passage with the omission of the octave doubling in the right hand and the addition of a chromaticised retrograde inversion of the opening motif at the end:

Example 5.199: F. Liszt, 'Wilde Jagd', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 8 in C minor (1852), bars 222–228

5.5.2c Summary and conclusion

The five-note ascending scale of the C-minor Study (1827) appears as a cyclic motif in both later versions of the etude. In the C-minor *Grande Étude* (1839), Liszt seeks to imitate the range of orchestral colours made possible by the nineteenth-century piano and to exploit its seemingly limitless technical possibilities. The former is exemplified

by two passages: the etude's arresting opening bars, which seem to suggest a murky texture of rushing strings and the etude's first E-flat major theme which evokes a fanfare of hunting horns. The 'transcendental' virtuosity of the C-minor *Grande Étude* (1839) is evident throughout the work and especially in the massive central cadenza and the coda, which require a pianistic technique that is almost superhuman. Liszt's amendments in 1852 serve mainly to make the work more playable, but the Romantic vision of its predecessor stays the same, and can be evidently linked to the spectral, nocturnal hunt which is commonly found in Romantic folklore (Chapters 3.3.3a and 5.5.2a). The concept of a 'Wilde Jagd' must have been in Liszt's mind already in 1839, judging from the importing of the galloping rhythmic pattern and the hunting-horn motif, and the 1852 version, while making this programmatic intention explicit, sacrifices some of the tumultuousness of its first realisation. The 1839 version is even more of a 'Wilde Jagd' than the version that bears that title, and is also an extreme example of the exorbitant technical demands that could result from the Romantic cult of the heroic virtuoso.

5.6 The contemplative etudes

These two etudes can be considered as examples of the contemplative character piece, in which a Romantic atmosphere of dreamy introspection is evoked. The first, 'Ricordanza', is strongly linked with the Romantic obsession with nostalgia, while the second, 'Harmonies du soir', is a typical 'mood piece'.

5.6.1 'Ricordanza', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (*Andantino*)

5.6.1a *Background and possible influences*

'Ricordanza' has a two-fold meaning. It can mean 'recollection', possibly even a literal reference to the fact that this etude looks back and adheres to its 1827 prototype as no other etude in the 'Transcendentals' does. However, the term *ricordanza* can also refer to a memento, an object that was stored over a period of time to recall a specific moment of the past. Busoni (1957:162) famously compared the musical content of this etude to 'a bundle of faded love letters from a somewhat old-fashioned world of sentiment'.

Romanticism's obsession with nostalgia is partly due to the fact that the movement itself was the result of a desire to revive the Romantic values of a bygone age, that of Romance literature. At a musical level it also manifests itself in the revived interest in the music of Bach, Handel and Palestrina, amongst others.

In Romantic music, nostalgia, whether representing a bitter sense of lost happiness or a wistful yearning for the past, is often linked with the idea of cyclic reprise, as in the famous codas of Schumann's *Dichterliebe* (1840) and *Frauenliebe und -leben* (1840). Further significant examples can be found in Schumann's *Fantasie* (1836) and the *Fantasiestücke* (1837). In the former work, Schumann prefaced the first movement with a quote from Schlegel as well as incorporating a motif from Beethoven's song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte* (*To the Distant Beloved*, 1816)¹⁸⁰ as a means to

¹⁸⁰ Rosen (1999:166–174) convincingly delineates the complex process of memory and reminiscence represented in Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte*.

expressing the unattainability of his own love for the then seventeen-year-old Clara Wieck.¹⁸¹ In the *Fantasiestücke*, the composer recalls the falling five-note motif which he used to enshrine Clara's image in the *Fantasie*, where this motif was already a reminiscence of Beethoven. Beethoven himself in fact also uses the motif, heard first in the first song, as a symbol for memory by recalling it in the last song of the cycle. Another instance occurs in the fourth movement (Intermezzo) of Brahms's Piano Sonata in F minor, Opus 5. Entitled *Rückblick (Retrospect)*, this movement recalls the second movement (*Adagio espressivo*) in its thematic material and programmatic intentions.¹⁸²

Musically, the A-flat major Study (1827) reflects the works of both Schubert and Chopin. The central section of Liszt's juvenile etude echoes that of Schubert's A-flat major Impromptu, D899 No. 3 (1827) in its use of a semitonal oscillation against a melodic repeated-chord accompaniment:

Example 5.200a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 30–34

¹⁸¹ For an extensive discussion of Schumann's motivic developments in the *Fantasie* please refer to Rosen (1999:101–112). Daverio (1987) examines the relationship between the central section of the *Fantasie*'s opening movement entitled *Im Legendenton (In an epic manner)* and Schlegel's *Arabeske*, whereas Walker (1979) uses the *Fantasie* to explore the declining relationship between the Schumanns and Liszt.

¹⁸² The musical content of both the *Adagio espressivo* and the Intermezzo is linked with the poems of C. O. Sternau. Although Brahms prefaced the second movement with Sternau's *Junge Liebe (Young Love)*, the composer was more cryptic about the subject matter behind the fourth movement, which is based on another one of Sternau's poem entitled *Bitte (Request)*. Whereas the second movement depicts the embrace of a young couple beneath a moonlit sky, the fourth movement portrays a love that has grown cold similar to a withered tree or a barren forest.

Example 5.200b: F Schubert, Impromptu in A-flat major, D899 No. 3, bars 106–109

The second is the continuous trills towards the end of the study:

Example 5.202a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 38–42

Musical score for Example 5.202a, F. Liszt's *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 38–42. The score is in A-flat major and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system is labeled "Piano" and shows the right hand with a trill and the left hand with chords and a trill. The second system is labeled "Pno." and shows the right hand with a trill and the left hand with chords and a trill. Dynamics include *p* and *sf*.

Example 5.202b: F. Chopin, Nocturne in B major, Opus 62 No. 1, bars 68–72

Musical score for Example 5.202b, F. Chopin's Nocturne in B major, Opus 62 No. 1, bars 68–72. The score is in B major and 3/4 time. It consists of two systems. The first system is labeled "Piano" and shows the right hand with a trill and the left hand with chords and a trill. The second system is labeled "Pno." and shows the right hand with a trill and the left hand with chords and a trill. Dynamics include *dim.*, *dolce*, *poco rallentando*, and *a tempo*.

If these do not necessarily demonstrate a direct influence on Chopin, they certainly show the extent to which Chopin and Liszt shared a pianistic aesthetic, without the latter's style being necessarily derived from the former's, as is often assumed.

The chromatically rising trills in the juvenile A-flat major Study and final version of 'Ricordanza' may well owe their inspiration to the slow movement of Beethoven's 'Emperor' Piano Concerto (1811):

Example 5.203a: F. Liszt, 'Ricordanza', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (1852), bars 62–64

The musical score for Example 5.203a shows two systems of piano music. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 62-64. The right hand (treble clef) features a chromatically rising trill in the upper register, marked with '8va' and a dashed line. The left hand (bass clef) plays a sustained chord in the lower register. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', continues the piece. The right hand has another chromatically rising trill, also marked '8va'. The left hand continues with sustained chords. The key signature is A-flat major (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4.

Example 5.203b: L. van Beethoven, Piano Concerto in E-flat major, Opus 73, second movement, bars 39–44

The musical score for Example 5.203b shows two systems of piano music. The first system, labeled 'Piano', covers bars 39-44. The right hand (treble clef) features sustained chords, with a 'cresc.' marking. The left hand (bass clef) plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The second system, labeled 'Pno.', continues the piece. The right hand has sustained chords with a 'cresc.' marking. The left hand continues with the rhythmic pattern. The key signature is E-flat major (three flats) and the time signature is 3/4.

The pianistic texture in 'Ricordanza' also foreshadows the more meditative moments in Liszt's B-minor Sonata (1857):

Example 5.204a: F. Liszt, 'Ricordanza', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (1852), bars 14–22

The musical score for Example 5.204a consists of three systems of piano and piano accompaniment. The first system (bars 14-17) is labeled 'Piano' and includes the instruction 'dolce, con grazia'. The second system (bars 18-19) is labeled 'Pno.' and features an 8th fingering. The third system (bars 20-22) is also labeled 'Pno.' and includes the instruction 'smorz.'. The score is written in A-flat major and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Example 5.204b: F. Liszt, Piano Sonata in B minor, bars 355–361

The musical score for Example 5.204b consists of two systems of piano and piano accompaniment. The first system (bars 355-360) is labeled 'Piano' and includes the instruction 'dolcissimo'. The second system (bars 361) is labeled 'Pno.' and includes the instruction 'rinforz.'. The score is written in B minor and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

5.6.1b Comparison of the three versions of the etude

The juvenile A-flat major Study (1827) is composed in ABACA form (also known as five-part rondo form). Liszt opens the work with the principal theme:

Example 5.205: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 1–8

The musical score for Liszt's *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 1–8, is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 1–2) is marked *Allegro grazioso* and *Piano*, with dynamics *p* and *con leggerezza*. The second system (bars 3–5) is marked *Pno.* with dynamics *con espressione* and *pp*. The third system (bars 6–8) is marked *Pno.* with dynamics *(espressivo)*. The score features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, slurs, and a trill in the right hand.

This leads to a related second idea, which starts in the relative minor:

Example 5.206: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 10–20

The second theme leads to the restatement of the principal thematic material followed by the third melodic idea in the subdominant:

Example 5.207: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 30–34

The third theme leads directly into the final restatement of the principal melodic idea. Both the A-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839) and ‘Ricordanza’ (1852) follow the 1827 version very closely in their use of thematic material and compositional structure: all three versions share the ABACA formal plan, whilst the final version of the etude contains numerous passages that are identical to those in the 1839 version. However, whereas the juvenile A-flat major Study (1827) presents the melodic theme immediately, Liszt delayed the appearance of the theme in the 1839 version by adding a thirteen-bar introduction consisting of two extensive cadenzas:

Example 5.208: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 9 in A-flat major (1839), bars 1–13

The musical score for F. Liszt's *Grande Étude* No. 9 in A-flat major (1839), bars 1–13, is presented in six systems. Each system consists of a grand staff with a Piano (Piano) part on the top staff and a Pno. (Piano) part on the bottom staff. The score is marked with various dynamics and articulations: *Andantino*, *dolce con grazia*, *poco rallentando*, *espressivo*, *a capriccio*, *dolce*, *cresc. ed accelerando*, *Un poco animato*, *dolce*, and *cresc.*. The score includes several cadenzas in the right hand, marked with '3', '5', '6', and '8'. The key signature is A-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is numbered 1 through 13 at the beginning of each system.

This introduction remains identical in ‘Ricordanza’, apart from melodic variations in the first three bars of the *Un poco animato*:

Example 5.209: F. Liszt, ‘Ricordanza’, *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (1852), bars 10–12

In bars 10–11 in the 1839 version, the melodic theme is repeated an octave below its initial appearance, a device frequently found in orchestral writing and often used by Beethoven in his piano music as a means of varying motivic repetition. The revision

in 1852 discards the ‘echo’ and extends the theme itself, signifying that Liszt now favours one colour for the entire right-hand melody.

Unlike the rest of the *Grandes Études* that were dramatically transformed from their respective juvenile versions in terms of the increase in technical demands and the flamboyance of execution, the A-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839) is much more modest in its embellishing of the original opening melody. However, the 1839 version also sees a considerable thickening of the arpeggio texture through the addition of notes in both hands. These additions serve not only to fill in the gap between the hands, but also to enrich the musical discourse, through rhythmic (and sometimes melodic) imitation between the three-quaver units in the melody and accompaniment. Here is the opening of the juvenile version:

Example 5.210: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 1–8

Allegro grazioso

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 1-2) is marked 'Piano' and 'p con leggerezza'. The second system (bars 3-4) is marked 'Pno.' and 'con espressione pp'. The third system (bars 5-8) is marked 'Pno.' and '(espressivo)'. The right hand features a melodic line with trills and grace notes, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.

And the opening of the 1839 version:

Example 5.211: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 9 in A-flat major (1839), bars 14–22

The musical score for F. Liszt's *Grande Étude* No. 9 in A-flat major (1839), bars 14–22, is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 14–17) is marked *Tempo rubato* and *dolce, con grazia*. The second system (bars 18–20) is marked *cresc.*. The third system (bars 21–22) is marked *rall.* and *smorz.*. The score features a piano accompaniment with a secondary inner voice in the right hand and a left hand with chords and arpeggios. Fingerings and articulation marks are present throughout.

In the final version (1852), Liszt's focus seems to be on projecting the melody. The opening idea is subjected to four significant changes:

- The secondary inner voice (in the right hand part) is discarded,
- Certain chords in the left hand are thinned out, as is evident in bars 18, 21 and 22,
- The ascending flourishes in the right hand part of bars 18 and 22 are reduced to single notes, and

- The start of each melodic phrase is delayed by a quaver, entering after the bass-note on the beat.¹⁸³ These revisions result in a more transparent pianistic texture, closer to the 1827 version than the 1839 version:

Example 5.212: F. Liszt, ‘Ricordanza’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (1852), bars 14–22

The second theme in both the A-flat major *Grande Étude* and ‘Ricordanza’ elaborates the 1827 prototype in terms of length and texture. The left-hand accompaniment is considerably thicker, while the straight-forward rhythm of the melody in bar 11 of the 1827 version is rewritten using ties and triplet quavers, thus giving this part of the melodic phrase a sense of forward momentum. Bars 23–26 of the later versions are virtually identical and develop the musical materials presented in bars 10–13 of the A-flat major Study (1827):¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ The effect is very similar to a slowed-down version of the nineteenth-century pianistic practice known as the ‘breaking of the hands’ (Conway 1969:104), which can still be heard in some modern-day performances of Chopin, Liszt and Schumann.

¹⁸⁴ As the differences between the 1839 and 1852 versions amount to no more than dynamic markings and slurs in this and the next five extracts, only the final version will be use for comparison.

Example 5.213a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 10–20

Musical score for Example 5.213a, F. Liszt's *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 10–20. The score is written for Piano (Piano) and Pno. (Piano) in A-flat major (three flats). The key signature is A-flat major (three flats). The score is divided into four systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system (bars 10-12) is marked *con dolore*. The second system (bars 13-15) is marked *leggiere*. The third system (bars 16-17) is marked *f*. The fourth system (bars 18-20) is marked *pp* *leggiere* and *rallentando*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Example 5.213b: F. Liszt, 'Ricordanza', *Études d'exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (1852), bars 23–26

Musical score for Example 5.213b, F. Liszt's 'Ricordanza', *Études d'exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (1852), bars 23–26. The score is written for Piano (Piano) and Pno. (Piano) in A-flat major (three flats). The key signature is A-flat major (three flats). The score is divided into two systems, each with a treble and bass clef staff. The first system (bars 23-24) is marked *espress.* and *mf*. The second system (bars 25-26) is marked *I* and *A*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

Liszt elaborates the next five bars (bars 14–18) of the A-flat major Study (1827) into a seven-bar phrase:

- Bars 14–15 of the 1827 version become the first two bars of the *Vivamente* (bars 27–28) of the later versions. The simple auxiliary-note-plus-octave-leap motif in the right-hand of the juvenile version is replaced by an ascending and descending arpeggio-like figuration in the right hand incorporating the non-chord note C. The auxiliary-note motif itself is metrically displaced and moved into the left-hand accompaniment.
- Bar 16 of the 1827 version is lengthened into a three-bar phrase (bars 29–31) in the 1852 version in which the left hand continues with the auxiliary-note motif. In bar 29 of ‘Ricordanza’ (1852), Liszt changes the diminished quartad that accompanied the descending cascade of the 1827 version into a dominant quartad of E and adds non-chord notes along with a secondary voice to the right hand to enrich the texture. In the next bar, Liszt recalls the principal theme of the etude in a different guise in the remote key of E major. Bar 31 is a varied repetition of bar 29, but now resolves (as inversion of the German sixth) into E-flat major.
- The angular octave writing of the right hand in bar 32 of ‘Ricordanza’ (1852) replaces bars 17 of its 1827 prototype and again refers to the principal theme, whilst the left-hand accompaniment retains its harmonic design, but is now rewritten as chords.

Example 5.214: F. Liszt, 'Ricordanza', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (1852), bars 27–33

In the 1839 and 1852 versions of the etude, the cadence which leads into the restatement of the opening theme is delayed by the introduction of an extended nine-bar interlude which commences as follows:

Example 5.215: F. Liszt, 'Ricordanza', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (1852), bars 33–37

The Schubertian middle section in the juvenile A-flat major Study is in the subdominant:

Example 5.216: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 30–34

Piano

con molto espressione

Pno.

33

In the later versions Liszt opts for a darker, more Romantic sonority by moving the melody down an octave:

Example 5.217: F. Liszt, 'Ricordanza', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (1852), bars 50–54

Piano

largamente, molto espressivo

Pno.

53

In both latter versions, the three bars of continuous trills that follow the middle section are condensed from the five bars of the juvenile version. Furthermore, the trills in both the 1839 and 1852 versions are now interspersed with demisemiquaver flourishes over fragmented statements of the opening idea:

Example 5.218a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 9 in A-flat major (1827), bars 38–42

Example 5.218b: F. Liszt, 'Ricordanza', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (1852), bars 62–64

This section, which leads into the central cadenza and anticipates the return of the main theme in bar 72, now creates a far richer musical discourse.

The coda of the A-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839) begins as follows:

Example 5.219: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 9 in A-flat major (1839), bars 79–88

The image displays a musical score for the coda of Liszt's *Grande Étude* No. 9 in A-flat major, spanning bars 79 to 88. The score is presented in four systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

- System 1 (Bars 79-81):** Labeled "Piano". The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents, marked with *8va* (octave) above. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment. The tempo/mood instruction is *molto agitato ed accelerando*.
- System 2 (Bars 82-83):** Labeled "Pno.". The right hand continues the melodic line, marked with *sempre più animato* and a circled 9. The left hand features a rhythmic accompaniment. The instruction *ff delirando* is present.
- System 3 (Bars 84-85):** Labeled "Pno.". The right hand has a complex melodic passage with triplets and slurs. The left hand has a dense, rhythmic accompaniment with triplets.
- System 4 (Bars 86-88):** Labeled "Pno.". The right hand concludes with a melodic phrase featuring triplets and slurs. The left hand has a final accompaniment with a triplet and a fermata.

In contrast to his revision of the opening theme in 1852, Liszt's revision of the above passage involves the thickening of pianistic texture in order to provide a more effective build-up to the *fortissimo* climax in bar 83:

Example 5.220: F. Liszt, 'Ricordanza', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 9 in A-flat major (1852), bars 79–88

The image displays a musical score for Example 5.220, consisting of four systems of music. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and covers bars 79 to 81. The second system is labeled 'Pno.' and covers bars 82 to 83. The third system is labeled 'Pno.' and covers bars 84 to 85. The fourth system is labeled 'Pno.' and covers bars 86 to 88. The score is in A-flat major and 3/4 time. The piano part features a melodic line with grace notes and slurs. The pno. part features a thickening texture with chords and triplets. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *ff appassionato*, and performance instructions like *più agitato*. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is watermarked with '© 2011 Oxford University Press'.

The coda of the etude remains unaltered.

5.6.1c *Summary and conclusion*

The history of the ninth etude is unique in the sense that the formal structure and thematic materials of the juvenile version are retained virtually intact in both the later versions. In the intermediate version, the etude's principal thematic ideas are embellished and the textures of their accompaniment figurations thickened. The final version introduces only minor alterations. Unlike many of the 'Transcendental' Etudes (1852), which consolidate in their final version the fairly radical remodelling of the intermediate version, 'Ricordanza' closely follow the concept, and therefore probably the programmatic intentions, of the 1827 prototype. . The dreamily nostalgic 'remembrance of things past' is of course a quintessentially Romantic conceit (Chapters 2.1.5 and 3.2.3). The first version of the etude seems already to depict a mood of reflective nostalgia; although the later versions enhance the mood, they do not substantially alter it. The only sense in which the later versions add programmatic content is in the increased 'recalling' of the opening motif later in the work and in the fact that the work itself is a fairly faithful echo of its former incarnation.

5.6.2 'Harmonies du soir', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (*Andantino*)

5.6.2a *Background and possible influences*

'Harmonies du soir' is like 'Ricordanza', a character piece, and, like the latter, shows the influence of Chopin's lyrical style. The compositional history of the penultimate 'Transcendental' Etude is unique in the sense that the intermediate version of the etude (1839) represents not only a development of its predecessor but also a transposition. The original D-flat major study (1827) was discarded and the seventh *Étude en douze Exercices* (1827) was transposed from E-flat major to D-flat major (See Chapter 5.6.2b). In the final version (1852), Liszt added the title 'Harmonies du soir' ('Evening Harmonies'),¹⁸⁵ also adopted by Baudelaire for one of the poems in *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857).

¹⁸⁵ Baudelaire's poem in turn inspired 'Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir' ('Sounds and perfumes swirl in the evening air') in the first book of *Préludes* by Debussy, who also set the poem as one of his *Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire*.

Whereas Baudelaire’s poem depicts a multitude of sensory impressions as ‘sounds and perfumes swirl in the evening air’, Liszt focuses on evoking the sonorities of evening bells in the intermediate version of the etude (1839), as indicated by the ‘Glocken’ marking in the first bar. The left-hand repeated A-flat, a rhythmic augmentation of the ‘fate’ motif prominent in both the Second and Sixth ‘Transcendental’ Etudes, and also cited in the Tenth Etude, is used throughout the 1839 version but eliminated in the final version. It is heard in alternation with a figure consisting of rapidly changing harmonic progressions in the right hand, reminiscent of similar passages in Chopin (See for example bar 12 of the E-flat major Nocturne Opus 9 No.2), especially in its later development (See bar 14 onwards).

Example 5.221: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839), bars 1–7

The musical score for Example 5.221 is for Piano. It begins with the tempo marking 'Lento assai'. The right hand starts with a 'dolciss.' marking and contains a melodic line with a 'mf' dynamic. The left hand features a repeated A-flat note with a 'un poco marcato' marking. The score includes the German title '(Glocken)', the French title '(Cloches)', and the Italian title '(Bella)'. The score is in D-flat major and common time.

The bell sounds looks forward to his later compositions such as ‘La Campanella’ (*Grande Etude de Paganini* No. 3 in Gsharp minor, 1838), the final work in the Swiss book of the *Années de Pèlèrinage*, ‘Les cloches de Genève’ (‘The Bells of Geneva’, 1854) and the opening work in the Italian book of the *Années de Pèlèrinage*, ‘Sposalizio’ (‘The Wedding’, 1849), based on Raphael’s famous painting.

Example 5.222a: F. Liszt, *Les cloches de Genève*, bars 172–177

The musical score for Example 5.222a is for Piano. It features a 'pp' dynamic. The right hand contains a melodic line with an 8va marking. The left hand contains a bass line with an 8va marking. The score is in Gsharp minor and common time.

Example 5.222b: F. Liszt, *Sposalizio*, bars 19–29

Liszt's musical imitation of bells is not the only pianistic moment in the D-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839) that foreshadows his later works. Interesting parallels can be drawn between the G-major subject in this etude and the third appearance of the *cantalina* from the composer's B-minor Ballade (1853):

Example 5.223a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839), bars 37–39

Example 5.223b: F. Liszt, *Ballade* in B-minor, bars 144–147

However, it is not just the intermediate version of the etude that looks forward to the composer's B-minor Ballade (1853). Liszt's use of broken octaves in the 1852 version also resembles those in the Ballade:

Example 5.224a: F. Liszt, 'Harmonies du soir', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 89–94

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Piano' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Pno.'. Both staves are in D-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. The piano part (top) has a treble clef and a bass clef. It features broken octaves in the right hand, with a '6' marking indicating a sixteenth-note figure. The Pno. part (bottom) also has a treble clef and a bass clef, with similar broken octave patterns and a '6' marking. Both parts include the instruction 'sempre più rinforz.' (always more reinforced). The score is divided into two systems, with bar numbers 89-94 indicated.

Example 5.224b: F. Liszt, Ballade in B minor, bars 103–106

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Piano' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Pno.'. Both staves are in B minor (two sharps) and 3/4 time. The piano part (top) has a treble clef and a bass clef. It features broken octaves in the right hand, with a '6' marking indicating a sixteenth-note figure. The Pno. part (bottom) also has a treble clef and a bass clef, with similar broken octave patterns and a '6' marking. The piano part is marked 'tempestuoso' (tempestuous). The score is divided into two systems, with bar numbers 103-106 indicated.

The final version of the etude (1852) also introduces the pianistic imitation of the harp as is evident in the following four passages:

- Arpeggiated harp-like figurations appear towards the end of the introduction (bars 6–9):

Example 5.225: F. Liszt, ‘Harmonies du soir’ *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 1–9

The musical score for Example 5.225 is in piano and features arpeggiated harp-like figurations in the right hand. The tempo is marked *Andantino*. The score is in D-flat major and 3/4 time. The right hand part consists of arpeggiated chords, while the left hand part consists of a simple bass line. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering bars 1-4 and the second system covering bars 5-9. The second system includes markings for *m.s.* (mezza sostenuto) and *rit.* (ritardando).

- Arpeggiated chords appears again in bars 24–30:

Example 5.226: F. Liszt, ‘Harmonies du soir’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 26–28

The musical score for Example 5.226 is in piano and features arpeggiated chords in the right hand. The tempo is marked *(Un poco animato)*. The score is in D-flat major and 3/4 time. The right hand part consists of arpeggiated chords, while the left hand part consists of a simple bass line. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering bars 26-27 and the second system covering bars 28-28. The second system includes markings for *(arpeggiato con molto sentimento)* and *fz* (forzando).

Parallels can be drawn between the passage above and Chopin’s E-flat major Etude Opus 10 No. 11:

Example 5.227: F. Chopin, Etude in E-flat major, Opus 10 No. 11, bars 1–3

The musical score for Example 5.227 is in piano and features arpeggiated chords in the right hand. The tempo is marked *Allegretto*. The score is in E-flat major and 3/4 time. The right hand part consists of arpeggiated chords, while the left hand part consists of a simple bass line. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering bars 1-2 and the second system covering bars 3-3. The second system includes markings for *fz* (forzando), *p* (piano), and *cresc.* (crescendo).

- The accompaniment figurations in the *Più lento con intimo sentimento* middle section are marked *quasi Arpa*:

Example 5.228: F. Liszt, ‘Harmonies du soir’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 59–62

Più lento con intimo sentimento

Piano

accompagnamento quasi Arpa

- The coda of the etude (bars 143–155) again imitates the harp:

Example 5.229: F. Liszt, ‘Harmonies du soir’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 143–146

dolce, armonioso

Piano

sempre arpeggio

5.6.2b Comparison of the three versions of the etude

The juvenile E-flat major Study (1827) is composed in binary form and characterised by the technique of hand alternation, which is so prominent in the second climax of the F-major *Grande Étude* (1839) and the final version of the A-minor ‘Transcendental’ Etude.

The E-flat major Study (1827) features two main thematic ideas; the first begins as follows:

Example 5.230: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 7 in E-flat major (1827), bars 1–4

Allegretto con molta espressione

The textural design of the second thematic idea is derived from the first, the right hand now echoing the left at the distance of a semiquaver, rather than moving in contrary motion to it. Both hands are also required to sustain a melody in contrary motion to the flow of quavers in bars 14–16:

Example 5.231: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 7 in E-flat major (1827), bars 14–26

The climax of the second subject leads directly to the restatement of the opening theme.

Both the intermediate and final version differ from the juvenile version through the addition of an introduction. In the D-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839), the following is presented:

Example 5.232: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839), bars 1–7

The musical score for Example 5.232 shows the first seven bars of Liszt's *Grande Étude* No. 11. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a series of chords marked 'mf' and '(Glocken) (Clocher) (Bella)'. A slur over the first four bars is labeled '(dolciss.)'. The left hand (bass clef) starts with a series of chords marked 'un poco marcato'. The key signature is D-flat major (three flats) and the time signature is common time (C).

In the final version (1852), the ‘Glocken’ marking is removed, and the A-flat octaves in the left hand are broken up. This eliminates the ‘fate’ motif and creates the basis for the syncopated motif that often replaces it (see Example 5.233). The broken octaves in the 1852 version of the etude are derived from the extended developmental interludes in the intermediate version, and the broken octaves also anticipate the musical texture of the development section in ‘Harmonies du soir’, which features rapid broken octave in the left-hand accompaniment.¹⁸⁶ It is possible that Liszt is now more concerned with the different layers of pianistic colours represented by the octave displacement in the writing. Furthermore, the broken octaves create a more organic transition to the arpeggiated harp-like chords in bars 7 and 8, which start with the same octave leap:

¹⁸⁶ For a discussion of the extended developmental interludes in the 1839 version and the development section in ‘Harmonies du soir’, please see to Examples 5.240–5.242 below.

Example 5.233: F. Liszt, 'Harmonies du soir', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 1–9

In the D-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839), the introduction is immediately followed by the first appearance of the principal thematic motif in the left hand. This is derived from the juvenile E-flat major study (1827):

Example 5.234a: F. Liszt, *Étude en douze Exercices* No. 7 in E-flat major (1827), bars 1–4

Example 5.234b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839), bars 8–14

In 1852, the left-hand chords are thinned out, and the ‘fate’ rhythm of the right-hand accompaniment revised as syncopation, which can be related to the bass pattern in bar 1 (see Example 5.233):

Example 5.235: F. Liszt, ‘Harmonies du soir’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 10–16

The image displays a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system covers bars 10 to 12, and the second system covers bars 13 to 16. The score is written in D-flat major (two flats) and common time (C). The right-hand part (treble clef) features a melodic line with a 'fate' rhythm, characterized by syncopation. The left-hand part (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and arpeggiated patterns. Performance markings include 'dolce' at the beginning of the first system, 'ten.' (tension) above the right hand in bar 14, and 'poco rit.' (poco ritardando) above the right hand in bar 16. The score is labeled 'Piano' and 'Pno.'.

Numerous passages in the final version of the etude reveal an increased textural transparency in comparison to the 1839 version. The first and third bar of the bridge passage that follows the initial appearance of the D-flat major theme are a case in point. However, the same page also sees considerable thickening of the musical texture in the following two revisions:

- The single-note dominant pedal points in the second, fourth and fifth bars are revised as arpeggiated compounds of four and even five notes.
- The incomplete dominant quartads in the right hand of the sixth and eighth bars are filled out, thus enhancing the build up to the perfect cadence in bar 22.

In both instances, Liszt again replaces the ‘fate’ rhythm by syncopation, while the octave leaps in the latter example can now be derived from the broken octaves at the outset.

Example 5.236a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839), bars 14–22

Example 5.236b: F. Liszt, ‘*Harmonies du soir*’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 16–24

A thickening of texture also marks the climactic reappearance in B major of the G major theme:

Example 5.237a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839), bars 49–54

Example 5.237b: F. Liszt, ‘Harmonies du soir’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 50–55

Musical contrast is provided by the E-major central section. In the D-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839), it begins as follows:

Example 5.238: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839), bars 80–83

In 1852, Liszt’s performance direction is more specific: whereas he previously wanted the melody to be played *molto espressivo* in *Tempo rubato*, the composer now writes

Più lento con intimo sentimento for the entire middle section. Furthermore, the accompaniment figures of twos (in the right hand) against three (in the left hand) are replaced by much simpler, harp-like arpeggios (*accompagnamento quasi Arpa*), eliminating references to both the fate-motif and the head-motif of the G major theme:¹⁸⁷

Example 5.239: F. Liszt, ‘Harmonies du soir’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 59–62

In the D-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839), Liszt precedes the *Grandioso* central climax with the addition of a thirty-one bar episode consisting of three different sections of which the first is marked *Quasi presto* (97–107). Here Liszt presents the opening thematic motif via the technique of alternating hands:

Example 5.240: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839), bars 97–100

¹⁸⁷ This provides another instance of the ‘thinning out’ of the motivic discourse in the final version of the set. See Chapters 5.3.1b and 5.5.1b, respectively.

The second section, marked *Allegro vivace* (bars 107–114), presents the G-major subject mostly in broken octaves against the ‘fate’ motif:

Example 5.241: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839), bars 107–110

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Example 5.241. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second 'Pno.'. Both systems are in D-flat major (three flats) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Allegro vivace (tempo giusto)'. The first system (bars 107-110) features a piano part with a melody in the right hand and broken octaves in the left hand, marked 'mf'. The second system (bars 109-110) features a piano solo part with a melody in the right hand and broken octaves in the left hand, marked 'sempre cresc.'. Both systems include a '8va' marking indicating an octave shift.

The third section (bars 115–126) presents the G-major subject in simultaneous broken octaves in both hands:

Example 5.242: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839) bars 115–118

The image shows a system of musical notation for Example 5.242, labeled 'Piano'. It is in D-flat major (three flats) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'f molto energico'. The score shows simultaneous broken octaves in both hands, with a melody in the right hand and broken octaves in the left hand.

Perhaps wary of losing the etude’s overall shape due to the expansion of the central section caused by the tripartite developmental interlude, Liszt discards this interlude in the final version (1852), retaining only the eighteen-bar *Molto animato* based on the G-major theme, which leads into the *Grandioso*. Again the difference here between the 1839 and 1852 version lies in the accompaniment. Whereas the pianistic writing in the intermediate version is almost identical to the first appearance of the G-major theme (bars 37–54, Example 5.243a) the final version utilises the rhythmic accompaniment of twos (in the right hand) against three (in the left hand) initially found at the beginning of the 1839 E-major section (Example 5.238):

Example 5.243a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839) bars 37–39

Piano
ppp dolcissimo
8^{va}

Example 5.243b: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839) bars 97–100

Piano
Molto animato
ff trionfante
8^{va}

Example 5.243c: F. Liszt, 'Harmonies du soir', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 80–95

Piano
Molto animato trionfante
ff
8^{va}

Pno.
ff
sempre più rinforz.
8^{va}

Pno.
sempre più rinforz.
8^{va}

Pno.
sf

Note the more effective use of broken octaves in the final version of the etude.

The *Grandioso* utilises the colossal sonorities of the nineteenth-century piano. The 1839 version is as follows:

Example 5.244: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839), bars 127–130

The musical score for Example 5.244 is a piano arrangement of F. Liszt's *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major, bars 127–130. The piece is marked *Grandioso* and *ff senza agitazione*. The score is written for piano and features dense, arpeggiated chords in both hands. The right hand has sixteenth-note patterns, and the left hand has block chords. The key signature is D-flat major (two flats).

In 1852, the awkwardly spaced arpeggiated chords are discarded in favour of A-flat octaves to provide the pianist with more time for the leaps:

Example 5.245: F. Liszt, 'Harmonies du soir', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 98–101

The musical score for Example 5.245 is a piano arrangement of F. Liszt's 'Harmonies du soir', *Étude d'exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major, bars 98–101. The piece is marked *fff*. The score is written for piano and features dense, arpeggiated chords in both hands. The right hand has sixteenth-note patterns, and the left hand has block chords. The key signature is D-flat major (two flats).

The passage just before the recapitulation is also simplified but without sacrificing the sonorous effect of the modern piano:

Example 5.246a: F. Liszt, *Grande Étude* No. 11 in D-flat major (1839), bars 143–145

Example 5.246b: F. Liszt, ‘Harmonies du soir’, *Étude d’exécution transcendente* No. 11 in D-flat major (1852), bars 114–116

5.6.2c Summary and conclusion

The poetics and pianism of ‘Harmonies du soir’ are marked, as they are in ‘Ricordanza’, by the influence of Chopin. The principal melodic idea of the E-flat major Study was transposed and developed as the opening theme of the D-flat major *Grande Étude* (1839), where it is accompanied by a rhythmic augmentation of the ‘fate’ motif in the left hand. Liszt also introduces a second theme in G major and a third theme in E major, which opens the central section. Both the first and second themes are subjected to transformation in the tripartite developmental interlude which precedes the *Grandioso* climax. In the 1852 version of the etude, Liszt improves the formal balance by the omission of the tripartite developmental interlude and achieves a greater sense of musical homogeneity by replacing the ‘fate’ motif with syncopation and broken octaves. The latter look forward to the broken octave passages in the *Grandioso*. The programmatic intentions of 1839 are consolidated in 1852 by Liszt’s musical imitation of harps in ‘Harmonies du soir’, which are added to the bell sounds that are already evident in the 1839 version. The extra-musical connotations of the ‘fate’ motif as employed elsewhere in the set would have been at variance with the

programmatic intensions in this etude, and it is perhaps for this reason that it is discarded by Liszt.

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6 CONCLUSION

There can be no doubt that the evolution of Liszt's 'Transcendental Etudes' was significantly influenced by many of the musical and extra-musical tendencies of the Romantic era. The main object of this study was to investigate how and at what point these influences had their greatest impact on the evolution of the set.

It is evident that Romanticism's cult of the individual, as evinced by the figures of Faust and the Beethoven, played a substantial role in the aesthetic evolution of the 'Transcendentals'. Like Faust, with his insatiable lust for expanded powers and adventure, Liszt was determined to redefine both the technical and musical boundaries established by the traditional etude. Indeed, the exorbitant technical demands of the *Grandes Etudes* are, in more ways than one, diabolical, as it surpasses any piano works written at the time. This is most evident in the intermediate version of the C minor Etude (which became 'Wilde Jagd'), a work which requires the execution of a superhuman virtuoso. Up to the present, complete performances of the *Grandes Etudes* have been few and far between.

If Faust embodies the myth of the supernaturally endowed hero, the Romantic view of Beethoven is closely allied to the myth of the artist-priest and the Greek God Prometheus, the fire-bearer who sacrifices himself for the benefit of mankind. Central to this is the quintessentially Romantic notion of Fate as a dominant force in human existence, the inescapable entity against which the artist wrestles, before finally overcoming it. Liszt's veneration of Beethoven is particularly evident in the former's treatment of the so-called 'fate' motif. Not only is this musical quotation evident in the final version of both Etudes Nos. 2 and 6 (in the latter, the 'fate' motif is incorporated alongside the *Dies irae* for the most cataclysmic of musical effects), it can also be found in the intermediate version of Etudes Nos. 10 (further underlining its Beethovenian characteristics) and 11, before being discarded in both final versions. Although the reason for the omission is unclear, the fact that Liszt at one stage incorporated this motif also in these two etudes is further evidence of his ongoing fascination with the concept of Fate. A similar process occurs in 'Mazeppa', the second of the three etudes after Victor Hugo. In this etude, the 'fate' motif only appeared briefly in the coda of the 1840 version, and is again discarded in the final

version of the work, perhaps so as not to adulterate the triumphant mood of the coda with references to a motif which for Liszt evidently had negative connotations. In this case, Mazeppa becomes the symbol of the Romantic artist who is 'chosen' by Fate to serve his art and who triumphs over adversity.

Closely allied to Romanticism's cult of the individual is the Romantic reverence for Nature. For the artist, Nature is not only seen as an escape from philistine society, it is also an inspirational haven where the gifted individual is able to reflect, meditate and develop their artistic gifts. Liszt's affection for Nature is clearly reflected in the pastoral quality of 'Paysage' (Etude No. 3), a work which echoed the picturesque tranquillity of much of the Swiss volume of the *Années de Pèlerinage*. Programmatically, the final version of this etude saw the omission of the twenty-two bar *Presto agitato assai* climax, a revision which, according to Jim Samson (2003:177–178), 'serves to foreground and place the human presence in this landscape'. In contrast, 'Chasse Nieve' (Etude No. 12) is a depiction of Nature at her most powerful and merciless, annihilating the lonesome artist as he wandered across the snow-covered landscape. This is evidently linked to the Romanticism's cult of the Sublime in Nature, thus inviting comparison with the more tempestuous passages in the Swiss volume of the *Années de Pèlerinage*, notably 'Orage' and 'Vallée d'Obermann'. It has been shown that direct parallels can be drawn between these depictions of Nature and those found in Romantic painting and literature.

The Romantic interest in legend and folklore also influenced the programmatic ideals, and therefore the musical content, of the 'Transcendental' Etudes. The flickering chromatic inflections and notorious double-note figurations in 'Feux follets' (Etude No.5) serve to evoke the eerie, impish quality of the *ignis fatuus*, while the thundering and fearsomely difficult pianism of 'Wilde Jagd' (Etude No.8) conjure up the image of a violent, uncontrollable stampede, probably inspired by the spectral, nocturnal chase popular in Northern European legends.

Apart from Romantic ideas and philosophies, the influences of other composer also played a significant role in the programmatic evolution of Liszt's 'Transcendentals': The first of these is Bach, whose influence is in evidence in the 'Preludio'. This 'curtain-raiser' in the key of C major, like the first of Bach's own preludes in *Das*

Wohltemperiertes Clavier, can also be seen as the first of Liszt's homages to Bach, as it precedes the composition of *Fugue on the Theme B-A-C-H* and *Variations on 'Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen' Fantasy*. Although the 1827 prototype of the etude introduces a wealth of pianistic ideas resembling those of Czerny, the later versions are much more homogenous and organicist in their treatment of thematic material and set out to exploit the sonorous capabilities of the new piano, much as Bach explored the capacities of the keyboard instruments of his time.

The same tendencies can also be seen in Chopin's Etudes, which are also modelled, to some extent, on the style of Bach. The influence of Chopin can also be seen in the pianism of 'Ricordanza' (No. 9), 'Harmonies du soir' (No. 11) and the so-called 'Appassionata' Etude (No. 10). The programmatic vision and nostalgic lyricism of 'Ricordanza' and 'Harmonies du soir' closely echo the atmosphere evoked in many of Chopin's lyrical works, such as the nocturnes, while the thematic and pianistic ideas of the tenth 'Transcendental' closely mirror Chopin's own F-minor Etude, Opus 10 No. 9.

The generally held assumption that the most radical transformation occurred with the explicit addition of programmatic titles (and the implicit addition of programmatic intent) in the final version has been shown to be problematic in the majority of cases. All the etudes undergo their most radical transformation in the 1839 version, while two of the set, Nos. 1 ('Preludio') and 9 ('Ricordanza'), already conform to the concept suggested by their later titles in their respective juvenile version of 1827.

In all cases, the intermediate version evinces not only the radical alteration of earlier material, but also the introduction of new thematic material and often new principal themes. These very often determine the character, and therefore the meaning, both musical and extra-musical, of the final version. Only in 'Chasse-Niege' and 'Harmonies du soir' are new ideas introduced in the final version. In the former, a new chromatic scalar motif is heard mostly in the accompanying texture, but it also forms the basis of two surging cadenza-like passages, and certainly seems to enhance the programmatic intentions suggested by Liszt's 1852 heading. In the latter, the imitation of harp textures only serves to enhance the evocation of musical sounds heard in the distance at dusk, which was restricted to the imitation of bells in 1839.

However, unlike the bell motif, the harp textures contribute nothing to the motivic discourse of the work.

Liszt's alterations in 1852 are more in the line of adjustments to the thematic and musical materials already present in the 1839 version: textures are thinned out (and occasionally thickened), technically arduous passages are facilitated or discarded, the thematic discourse is tightened (and occasionally relaxed) and certain passages are abbreviated, remodelled, or removed. Programmatic intentions might account for the lightening of textures in 'Feux follets' or the discarding of a tumultuous climax in 'Paysage', but the fact remains that most of the revisions are editorial, relying on the manipulation of existing material rather than the introduction of new ideas. The structure (and therefore the musico-dramatic narrative) is almost always altered drastically from the 1827 to the 1839 version, but very little from the latter to the final version, again suggesting that whatever programmatic intentions Liszt had were already largely present in 1839. Musical material and structure in a programmatic work are supposed to be generated by the composer in response to some extra-musical stimulus, and while the 1839 version shows abundant evidence of creativity charged with, and, one may surmise, propelled by Romantic intention, the 1852 version adds almost nothing to this in terms of original materials, that could have been generated in response to similar stimuli.

All this makes one suspect that Liszt's intentions were already largely programmatic in 1839. The most telling confirmation of this is the fact that the D-minor Etude of 1839 was published virtually unaltered a year later with the title 'Mazeppa' and that most of the revisions to this etude in 1852 were, as in all the other cases, of an editorial rather than substantive kind. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that Liszt himself, even in his younger days, would refer to passages from literary works, such as Dante's *Divine Comedy* or Hugo's *Odes*, to explain the content of ostensibly non-programmatic works such as etudes by composers like Moscheles or Kessler (Ubbel 2002:357–358).

Whether the programmatic intentions preceded or followed the conception of the 1839 version, there can be little doubt that most of Liszt's alterations to the 1852 set serve to consolidate a vision already present in the intermediate set, and the balance of

the evidence would suggest that perhaps the addition of titles is merely part of the same process of making more explicit that which was already present in 1839.

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