

CLARA WIECK AND HER PIANO VARIATIONS:
POSTCLASSICAL PIANISM OF THE 1830s.

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POSTCLASSICAL PIANISM OF THE 1830s.

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Scholarly and performative interest in the life and works of Clara Wieck-Schumann (1819–1896) began in the last decades of the twentieth century. The musicological interest in Wieck-Schumann in the four decades since Nancy Reich's landmark biography (1985) has led to a rich body of scholarship that has examined her numerous identities as a composer, performer, wife, daughter, mother, musical editor, and pedagogue. Much of the existing scholarship has been centred on post-marriage Clara Schumann; by contrast, the early career of Clara Wieck before her marriage in 1840 has received considerably less attention.

This dissertation addresses this gap in musical scholarship, focusing on the first decade of Wieck's career and the postclassical milieu characterizing her childhood. It combines archival work with a study of instruments, aesthetics, culture, and musical analysis to examine the wider culture of postclassical pianism in the 1830s, its repertory, and the ways in which Wieck cultivated and established her image as a virtuosa within this milieu. In bringing together distinct methodological approaches, it seeks first to contextualize the aesthetics of postclassical pianism, then to investigate the genre of postclassical concert variations, both in wider musical culture and their role in Wieck's programming and performing practices.

The genre of postclassical concert variations was pivotal to Wieck's early career and ubiquitous in wider musical life of the early nineteenth century, but fell to obsolescence by the middle of her career, and has since remained marginalized. Its reception history invites a reflection upon the longstanding historiographical narratives and practices that have come to shape our engagement with this repertoire and the culture of instrumental virtuosity to which it belonged, particularly in the domains of musicology and classical pianism. Engaging with the historical, social, cultural, and performative histories of these works and their composers reveals the rich and diverse practice embodied by this repertoire, and invites a deeper consideration of the complex relationships between gender, pianos, aesthetics, and cultural conceptions of virtuosity.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born in Singapore, Cheryl Tan began her musical studies initially on the Junior Special Advanced Course at Yamaha, before pursuing her piano studies at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts aged ten. In 2013, she was awarded a Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music (LRSM, U.K.) in Piano Performance and an Associate diploma of the Trinity College London (ATCL, U.K.) in Violin Performance. That year, she also won a place to pursue her A Levels and piano studies at Wells Cathedral School, one of four specialist music schools in the United Kingdom.

She stayed in the U.K. for the next seven years, during which time she earned her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, before embarking on her doctoral studies in the United States. Cheryl is an alumna of the University of Oxford where she graduated with a First Class Honors in Music in 2018. During her time there, she won the Joan Conway Scholarship for Advanced Performance Studies, academic scholarships for her results in both the Preliminary and Final Music examinations, and an Organ Scholarship to direct the Chapel Choir at St. Hugh's College. She was awarded a scholarship to pursue a Masters in Piano Performance at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama; graduating with Distinction in 2020, she also won the College's Gilbert Prize and John Roberts Memorial Award, as well as the Angela Rinsler prize at the European Piano Teachers' Association Piano Competition.

In 2019, Cheryl was invited to perform at the *International Bicentenary Conference of Clara Schumann*; she has since presented at several international conferences, and her research has been published in *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, with a forthcoming article in *Music Analysis*. She is grateful to have had the opportunity to work with scholars such as Joe Davies, Nicole Grimes, Natasha Loges,

Roger Moseley, James Sobaskie, and James Webster, and to have been a pupil of Xak Bjerken and Malcolm Bilson at Cornell University. Her past teachers include Michael Young, Victor Sangiorgio, and John Byrne, and she has also enjoyed working with Nikolai Demidenko, Steven Devine, Peter Donohoe, Peter Frankl, Leslie Howard, Vanessa Latarche, Michael Lewin, Joanna MacGregor, Leon McCawley, Murray McLachlan, Jonathan Powell, Craig Sheppard, and Claudius Tanski.

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One of the things I will cherish most about my time at Cornell is the opportunity to have played and performed on so many different historical pianos. This would not have been possible without Laurel, who skillfully and patiently managed the complex logistics of setting up these recitals, and Ken and Scott, who meticulously prepared these beautiful instruments. I also thank Colette, Fumi, and Jamie for their support, and for the many enjoyable conversations in the music lounge. Finally, I am grateful for the friendships of Lily, Anna, Thomas, Addi, Benjamin, Jonathan, Ryan, Lucy, Taylor, Will, my D.M.A. colleagues Thomas and Jack, and all the other pianists in Xak's studio.

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with music, both in its performance and in writing about it. My dissertation supervisor in my third year, Joe Davies, imparted crucial research skills and nurtured my passion for the study and analysis of late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century keyboard repertoire. I thank them both for these strong foundations, and for their generous, constant support in a post-Oxford era. I am grateful to my academic advisor at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, James Lea, who guided me through various research projects and encouraged me to explore new analytical paradigms and performance research, and to my Head of Department Simon Phillippo and Director of Graduate Studies Zoe Smith, for nurturing my academic and pianistic ambitions during my time as a master's student. Finally, I give thanks to all my past piano teachers — Michael Young at the RWCMD, Victor Sangiorgio in Oxford, John Byrne at Wells Cathedral School, and my childhood teachers, Tricia Lim, Karen Wong, Kellyn Quek and Kian-Boon Yeo.

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CHAPTER 1

Investigating Clara Wieck(-Schumann)

Musicological and performative interest in Clara Wieck-Schumann's life and works began in the last decades of the twentieth century, with Nancy Reich's pioneering biography, *Clara Schumann: The Woman and the Artist* (1985), having paved the way for a critical evaluation of Wieck-Schumann's own identity independent of her husband.¹ Reich's work was part of a wider current in musicology, in which a first generation of scholars sought to extricate and liberate women musicians from an "all-male framing" of music history, and to accord them increasing autonomy.² The musicological world has since displayed a sustained interest in Wieck-Schumann in the intervening four decades; this has most recently culminated in *Clara Schumann*

¹ Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, Revised Edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001). Originally published in 1985, the last decade of the twentieth century saw increasing scholarly interest in Clara Schumann, particularly in the German language. See Janina Klassen, *Clara Wieck-Schumann: Die Virtuosin Als Komponistin: Studien Zu Ihrem Werk*, Kieler Schriften Zur Musikwissenschaft, Bd. 37 (Kassel; New York: Bärenreiter, 1990), Claudia de Vries, *Die Pianistin Clara Wieck-Schumann: Interpretation Im Spannungsfeld von Tradition Und Individualität* (Mainz; New York: Schott, 1996), and the publication of the complete correspondence of Clara and Robert Schumann, edited by Ronald L. Crawford, Hildegard Fritsch, and Eva Weissweiler (New York: P. Lang, 1994).

² Joe Davies, ed., "Introduction: Clara Schumann in the Musicological Imagination," in *Clara Schumann Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 6. Marcia Citron's biographical approach to Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel is similar to that of Reich's; she published and translated the first edition of Mendelssohn-Hensel's letters; see Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and Marcia J. Citron, *The Letters of Fanny Hensel to Felix Mendelssohn* (Stuyvesant, N.Y.: Pendragon Press, 1987). Further literature from this time on women composers and their roles in music history include: Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Jane M. Bowers and Judith Tick, eds., *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

Studies (2021), a rich volume of essays which assesses Wieck-Schumann's pivotal contributions to musical life as a concert pianist, composer, and pedagogue. Beyond her pivotal contributions to the shaping of nineteenth-century culture, scholars have also increasingly investigated her ongoing legacy in modern-day musical culture.³

Nancy Reich distinguished three broad periods in Wieck-Schumann's lifetime.⁴ The first began with her first public appearance on October 29, 1818, aged 9, and ended in 1840 on her marriage to Robert Schumann.⁵ 1840 then marked the start of the second period, which came to an end with Robert Schumann's illness and admission to Endenich in 1854. The third period of her life was to last until her retirement from the concert stage on March 12, 1891, five years before her death. In each of these three periods, different facets of Clara Wieck-Schumann's identity come to the fore. In the first, we understand Clara Wieck as a performer, a rising star on the concert scene whose image as a *Wunderkind* and virtuosa was attributed, to no small extent, to the determined work of her father Friedrich Wieck. In the second, Clara Schumann established new identities as a wife and mother; concurrently, she participated in, and contributed to, the emergent ideology of the artist as interpreter.

It is primarily Clara Schumann of the third period that we have come to know and recognize; during this long, third period following the death of Robert

³ Davies, *Clara Schumann Studies*.

⁴ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 249.

⁵ In this concert, she performed a four-hand duet of Kalkbrenner's *Moses Variations* with Emilie Reichold at the concert of Caroline Perthaler. It was only in her second concert at the Leipzig Gewandhaus in 1830 that she began performing as a soloist.

Schumann, she (re-)established her international career.⁶ During this time, she cultivated a performing canon of works particularly by J.S. Bach, Ludwig v. Beethoven, and her husband.⁷ Her acts of canonization influenced a younger generation of musicians such as Brahms, the violinist Joseph Joachim, and the baritone Julius Stockhausen, with the latter two later establishing canons for their instruments around the figures of Niccolò Paganini and Franz Schubert respectively.⁸ It was during this time, too, that Clara Schumann established herself as a renowned pedagogue in Frankfurt. This stemmed, in large part, from her numerous, highly successful concert tours in England.⁹

Given that this dissertation focuses on her pre-marriage years, I refer to Clara Wieck-Schumann as “Wieck” and Robert Schumann as “Schumann”; her father, “Friedrich Wieck”. When I discuss her contributions to, and influences on, musical culture in the years post-1840, I refer to her as “Clara Schumann”. Clara Schumann’s historicist approaches to concert programming, especially from her second period,

⁶ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 256.

⁷ Clara Schumann lobbied hard to gain recognition for Robert Schumann in her concerts. See Roe-Min Kok, “Clara: Robert’s Posthumous Androgyn,” in *Clara Schumann Studies*, especially 234–45; Claudia de Vries’s discussion of Clara Schumann’s practices of canonization is particularly illuminating in terms of the ways in which Schumann introduced and incorporated Robert Schumann’s music into the canon in the years after his death. See “Die Konzertpianistin,” in *Die Pianistin Clara Wieck-Schumann: Interpretation Im Spannungsfeld von Tradition Und Individualität*, 186–221. She was particularly successful in championing the works of her husband in the Netherlands and England.

⁸ William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 146, 248: the model of the piano recital was solidified in the mid-1850s, with Clara Schumann, Franz Liszt, and Charles Hallé having been key proponents.

⁹ Natasha Loges, “Clara Schumann’s Legacy as a Teacher,” in *Clara Schumann Studies*, 271–91.

made her a crucial agent in the cultivation of the emergent *Werktreue*. In addition to her public presence on the concert stage, the impacts of her acts of canonization were extended through her pedagogical activities. Upon her appointment as a teacher at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt in 1878, Clara Schumann developed a core repertory around the works of Bach, Scarlatti, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Brahms, and her husband, whose solo piano and chamber works she expected her students to know and play.¹⁰

Jim Samson conceptualizes these ideological and aesthetic changes that occurred throughout the nineteenth century in terms of a “pre-recital age,” “age of recital,” and “post-recital age”.¹¹ The ideals of the *Werktreue*, in which the focus was increasingly placed on the composer, were developed most keenly in the “age of recital.” In this milieu, the performer was increasingly seen as a vessel for the musical work, as represented by the musical text, and the role of the performer was to forge a connection for the audience with the composer.¹² For Samson, this ideology marked a departure from the “pre-recital age,” in which the emphasis was on the spontaneous, ephemeral act of performance.

While Samson’s distinction of three broad periods is a useful starting point for understanding these ideological and aesthetic shifts that occurred in the six decades

¹⁰ Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 285–86; Loges, “Clara Schumann’s Legacy as a Teacher,” 280–81.

¹¹ Jim Samson, “The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism,” in *Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 110–27. Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 249.

¹² Mary Hunter, “‘To Play as If from the Soul of the Composer’: The Idea of the Performer in Early Romantic Aesthetics,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 58, no. 2 (2005): 375.

between Clara Wieck's first public concert in 1828 and Clara Schumann's last in 1891, his representation of "event-ness" and "text-ness" carries undertones of Carl Dahlhaus's "dualism" of styles, as embodied by Rossinian, non-Germanic manifestations of (operatic) virtuosity and Beethovenian, Germanic instrumental "work" culture respectively.¹³ While the reductionist and overgeneralizing nature of Dahlhaus's binaries has since been subject to scrutiny,¹⁴ the extent of Clara Schumann's influence in the later part of her life, arising to no small extent from her attitudes towards historicism and canonization, is attested to by the significant scholarly interest in this latter part of her career.

Her marriage to Schumann in 1840 has often been invoked as a useful chronological point of reference for discussing these shifting musical aesthetics.¹⁵ The ongoing musicological bias towards researching post-1840 Clara Schumann is reflected in *Clara Schumann Studies*, and likewise encapsulated by Alexander Stefaniak's monograph, *Becoming Clara Schumann*, similarly published in 2021.¹⁶ By

¹³ Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

¹⁴ See volume of essays in Nicholas Mathew and Benjamin Walton, eds., *The Invention of Beethoven and Rossini: Historiography, Analysis, Criticism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

¹⁵ See Pamela Susskind Pettler, "Clara Schumann's Recitals, 1832-50," *19th-Century Music* 4, no. 1 (Summer 1980): 70-76; Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, 244-66; Alexander Stefaniak, *Becoming Clara Schumann: Performance Strategies and Aesthetics in the Culture of the Musical Canon* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2021); Stefaniak, "Clara Schumann's Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 70, no. 3 (Fall 2017): 697-765; Stefaniak, *Schumann's Virtuosity: Criticism, Composition, and Performance in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2016), 198-221; Vries, "Die Konzertpianistin"; Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, 247-48.

¹⁶ Stefaniak, *Becoming Clara Schumann*.

contrast, there remains yet little interest in the life and works of young Clara Wieck whose decade-long solo career began on November 8, 1830, and which was essential to the cultivation and establishment of her image as a virtuosa.¹⁷ In 1841, Clara Schumann wrote in her marriage diary:

I pity the musician who has no understanding of this magnificent art [Beethoven's sonatas]. The less I play in public now, the more I hate the whole world of mechanical virtuoso showpieces; concert pieces like Henselt's Etudes, Thalberg's Fantasies, Liszt, etc. have become completely repugnant to me... I will play them only if I need to for a concert tour.¹⁸

The disdain Clara Schumann exhibited towards this repertoire, finding them "completely repugnant," has likely influenced scholarly discussions of this repertory, which often bears traces of this later narrative. Beyond the direct impact of this oft-cited quotation on Clara Schumann scholarship, the negative ongoing musicological and performative attitudes towards genres like etudes and fantasies, as well as potpourris, variations, and rondos — all of which constituted the "new genres of

¹⁷ There has been increasing interest in the works she composed in her late teens, particularly her virtuosic works: the concerto and piano trio. See Davies, "Clara Schumann and the Nineteenth-Century Piano Concerto," in *Clara Schumann Studies*, 95–116, and Nicole Grimes, "Formal Innovation and Virtuosity in Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17," in *Clara Schumann Studies*, 139–164. In recent years, Wieck-Schumann's Piano Concerto has also been performed and recorded regularly by Beatrice Rana, Isata Kanneh-Mason, and Anna Polonsky, amongst others.

¹⁸ See Robert Schumann, *Tagebücher*, Vol. 2 ed. Gerd Neuhaus (Leipzig: VEB, 1987), 181, translated and cited by Stefaniak, *Becoming Clara Schumann*, 22, as well as in Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, 255. Grimes, "Formal Innovation and Virtuosity in Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17" cites Berthold Litzmann, Grace. E. Hadow, and W. H. Hadow, *Clara Schumann, an Artist's Life Based on Material Found in Diaries and Letters* (London: Macmillan & co., ltd., 1913), 315–16.

virtuosity” that were ubiquitous during the age of postclassical pianism and which characterize her early career — invites a broader reflection of their reception history.¹⁹

I propose that the marginalization of this period and the ideals it embodied is a factor underlying the present scholarly neglect both of this period of Wieck’s life and its associated repertoire. This dissertation addresses this gap in the musical scholarship by focusing on the first decade of Wieck-Schumann’s career. It situates her within the postclassical milieu; the term “postclassical” is not merely chronological, but further representative of a style and aesthetic that will be addressed in subsequent chapters.²⁰ It considers Wieck’s early repertory, and spans the time from her first solo performance at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on November 8, 1830, to her concert at the Saale des Stadthauses in Weimar on September 5, 1840 — a week before her marriage to Robert Schumann on September 12. It focuses on the repertoire that defined Wieck’s concert career as well as her programming practices from a time when she was just beginning to establish her presence on the concert circuit. In situating the young virtuosa within the milieu of the 1830s, this study provides a glimpse into postclassical piano culture, in particular notions of virtuosity, and addresses the gap in the scholarship of a significant body of musical works that

¹⁹ Term is Žarko Cvejić’s; see *The Virtuoso as Subject: The Reception of Instrumental Virtuosity, c. 1815-c. 1850* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016).

²⁰ This period, Samson posits, had its heyday in the 1820s and 1830s. See “The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism,” 110.

had once been ubiquitous in pianistic culture but has since been neglected, if not fallen to obsolescence.

Wieck's programming practices, which will be explored in **Chapter 3**, were commensurate with broader pianistic trends: variations were amongst the most popular genres during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. They often drew on material from contemporary opera; inherently virtuosic, they were built to showcase the performer and not the composer, whose importance was insofar as (s)he was able to execute the feats of virtuosity notated on the page, and as marketed and sold to consumers. Wieck performed these variations — which I will define as postclassical concert variations — most extensively during the first decade of her concert career; through them, she was able to make a name for herself as a virtuosa.²¹

As a genre, variations were central in facilitating what Samson calls "instrumental thought."²² With parameters of melody and harmony partially delineated and controlled from the outset, the focus of these variation sets lies in the working out of these pre-established elements familiar to its audience, and primarily through textural means. In a genre such as this, the focus is on the "medium as much

²¹ While Liszt's Fantasies are still popular today, there is a wealth of a similar body of works that have been overlooked, by similarly popular composers such as Adolf von Henselt, Franz Hünten, Henri Herz, Sigismond Thalberg, amongst others. These works that constituted the core of Wieck's repertory are hardly performed, nor have they been recorded. British pianist Howard Shelley's work in the domain of postclassical pianism in partnership with the Tasmanian Symphony represents the exception. He has recorded virtuoso concerti from this time by composers such as Herz, Hummel, and Moscheles, and one of Herz's Variations that Wieck performed (Op. 67). See CDs released by Hyperion.

²² Samson, "The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism," 118.

as the message,” with the potentialities and limitations of the piano itself taking on a “highly proactive role in the generation of material.”²³ Indeed, the genre’s roots in improvisatory practices, as will be elaborated upon in the next chapter, confirm their orientation towards a performative culture that conflicts with the “pro-work-concept” characterizing traditional musicology’s attitudes towards the function of a musical work or performance.²⁴ With the exception of performers such as Gabriela Montero, Douglas Finch, Daniil Trifonov, and Stephen Hough, improvising on the concert stage or performing one’s own works is a largely obsolete practice in twenty-first-century classical pianism. While the advent of the *Werktreue* has given rise to a “musicological attachment to scores,” Dana Gooley illuminates the ways in which improvisation continued to be practiced by organists, jazz and folk musicians; the practice, Gooley posits, is not extinct, but rather, has been “rechanneled and redistributed.”²⁵

In his influential essay on music in the nineteenth century, Dahlhaus distinguished between “event-” and “text-”oriented works — a binary that was to exert lasting impacts on future musicological research.²⁶ Re-assessing Raphael Georg Kiesewetter’s *History of the Modern Music of Western Europe* upon which Dahlhaus

²³ Samson, “The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism,” 118, then 112.

²⁴ James A. Hepokoski, “Dahlhaus’s Beethoven-Rossini Stildualismus: Lingering Legacies of the Text-Event Dichotomy,” in *The Invention of Beethoven and Rossini: Historiography, Analysis, Criticism*, ed. Nicholas Mathew and Benjamin Walton (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 22.

²⁵ Andrew Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation: Free Playing in Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 2–4.

²⁶ Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*.

premised his thesis, however, James Webster illuminates the inadequacy of these reductionist binaries that aesthetically characterize music as either belonging to “opera[tic virtuosity]” or “instrumental ‘work’ culture.”²⁷ These “new genres of virtuosity” that were foundational to postclassical pianism, and consequently much of Wieck’s early career, can be understood as belonging to a category of their own — that which Webster terms “instrumental-virtuoso-culture.”²⁸ This dissertation explores this rich musical landscape through the perspective of young Wieck, focusing on the practices of performing and listening to this repertoire in light of early-nineteenth-century aesthetics, pianos, piano development, the culture and institutions that grounded them, their contemporary reception, and the processes by which the genre developed during the early decades of the nineteenth century.

In examining postclassical piano culture, its repertory, as well as Wieck’s prominence in, and contributions to, this milieu, this study brings together distinct methodological approaches that include historical research into contemporary pianism, concert culture, and the discourse on virtuosity, as well as analytical approaches to the repertoire. I begin with an exploration of the background and nature of this sub-genre of piano variations, which I will refer to as concert variations. Situating them within the wider context of the genre of variations, I discuss the landscape from which these concert variations emerged, contemporary aesthetics,

²⁷ James Webster, “Beethoven, Rossini - and Others,” in *The Invention of Beethoven and Rossini: Historiography, Analysis, Criticism*, ed. Nicholas Mathew and Benjamin Walton (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 49–65.

²⁸ Webster, “Beethoven, Rossini – and Others,” 61.

and the ecosystem of commerce around which they were built: that of composition — which went in tandem with publishing — performance culture, piano development and manufacture, and the synergy of pianism with the operatic theater.

What made concert variations so popular, and how did the musical ecosystem in Paris foster this popularity? How did the piano feature as a key agent and medium in the translation of this theatrical, public genre? I further discuss the growing capacities of the piano during a time of rapid technological advancements, its crucial role in the dissemination of opera in the early nineteenth century, and its facilitation of the crossing of spatial and social boundaries from the large-scale and public to the intimate and domestic. Elements of style and structure characteristic of the genre of concert variations, as well as the ways in which these aspects fulfilled their function, will also be outlined in this chapter. Finally, I discuss the contemporary reception of these piano variations: factors behind their immense popularity and their relationship with contemporary critical discourse, which grew increasingly antagonistic as the decade progressed.

In **Chapter 3**, I situate the genre of concert variations within Wieck's repertory, focusing on the ways in which she programmed them. This study is based on the first 187 of her 1312 concert playbills housed at the Robert-Schumann-Haus in Zwickau, beginning with her debut at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on October 20, 1828, and ending with her concert at the Saale des Stadthauses in Weimar on September 5, 1840 — a week before her marriage to Robert Schumann. Other primary

sources that will be drawn on in this chapter are the critical edition of letters between the Schumanns,²⁹ the entries in her *Jugendtagebücher*,³⁰ and the letters written by Friedrich Wieck between 1830 and 1838.³¹ A sub-section will be devoted to her 1832 Paris season, not only because Paris was the hub of virtuoso culture and the birthplace of the genre of concert variations, but because the city had the closest affinity for the theatrical, to which the genre of variations was closely related.³² Using this data, I outline trends in, and practices surrounding, her programming of the genre of concert variations and the role they took on in her concerts.

In this chapter, the importance of three sets of variations in Wieck's career comes to the fore; these findings lay the foundations for the final two chapters, in which I analyze these variations as case studies of the genre. Unlike Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano*, Herz's *Bravura Variations* and Wieck's *Concert Variations* are unfamiliar to most pianists today. The analyses in the final two chapters seek first to offer a practical illumination of the aesthetics and styles embodied by this sub-genre, as well as practices of performing and listening that were typical of the 1820s and 1830s. How does the listener perceive the transformation of the thematic entity? Does thematic obfuscation enhance, or hinder, the aesthetics of pleasure that the variations

²⁹ Clara Schumann et al., *Briefwechsel von Clara und Robert Schumann*, Schumann Briefedition, Band 4 (Köln: Dohr, 2012).

³⁰ Clara Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840: nach den Handschriften* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2019).

³¹ Friedrich Wieck, *Briefe aus den Jahren 1830-1838*, ed. Käthe Walch-Schumann (Köln: A. Volk-Verlag, 1968).

³² Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, 148.

were conceived for? In light of this, how can we interpret the ways in which composers manipulated texture, and what can this tell us about the ways in which they imagined and portrayed musical virtuosity? Through a multivalent approach, I investigate the interplay between the “introversive” and “extroversive” layers of the music and the ways in which their (non-)coincidence influences the experience of the listener.³³

In **Chapter 4**, I present the first and most substantial case study of this dissertation: Henri Herz’s *Variations de bravoure sur la romance de ‘Joseph,’* Op. 20, which I will refer to as his *Bravura Variations*. Through an examination of form and structure, I investigate the predisposition of the genre to the incorporation of improvisatory, soloistic moments. In studying its texture and figuration, I discuss not only the ways in which the pianistic writing reflected contemporary aesthetics of commercialism and materialism, but further, the ways in which it made semiotic references to larger-scale genres such as the concerto. Wieck performed Herz’s *Bravura Variations* a total of 41 times between 1831 and 1837, more than any other work. Her programming practices reflect the dominance of Herz in pianistic culture of the early decades of the nineteenth century. Yet, there has been scant literature

³³ Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 113, and *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). In 1991, he used the terms “intrinsic” and “extrinsic”; in 2000, “introversive” and “extroversive”.

devoted to Herz, with the only monograph being in French.³⁴ In offering a few points about the composer's biography and contributions to pianism, I draw on his status as a virtuoso-composer-manufacturer to probe the complexities of the musical ecosystem of the 1830s, particularly considering the function of the musical score within virtuoso culture.

While the first edition of the *Bravura Variations* was issued in Paris by François-Joseph Langlois in 1825, the Viennese firm Diabelli also published separate editions which consisted of orchestra and string quartet parts respectively in 1828. The edition for solo piano and orchestra is lost; I draw on the extant copy for piano and string quartet to create an edition for piano quintet.³⁵ What was the function of these supporting parts, and what were the implications of performing these variations solo, or accompanied by orchestra or quartet? How were the different settings in which these variations were performed related to their function, and how did it affect their reception? Access to an orchestrated version offers new insights to the work in that they illuminate issues of structure and performing practices, particularly in the aspects of improvisation, rubato, and orchestral references.

Finally, **Chapter 5** considers two other sets of variations that were also of great significance to Wieck during the 1830s, albeit for different reasons. First, I

³⁴ Laure Schnapper, *Henri Herz, Magnat Du Piano: La Vie Musicale En France Au XIXe Siècle (1815-1870)*, En Temps & Lieux 23 (Paris: Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2011).

³⁵ The former is held by the Universitäts Bibliothek Leipzig, but only the piano scores survive. The latter, which contains four separate parts for string quartet, is held by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München.

examine Frédéric Chopin's "Là ci darem la mano" varié pour le piano-forte, Op. 2; for reasons that will become clear in Chapter 3, I will refer to this set of variations as his *Là ci darem la mano*. These variations were composed in 1827, two years after Herz's *Bravura Variations*; it is an illuminating case study that contrasts with Herz's archetypal Parisian concert variations. Wieck programmed it 26 times between 1831 and 1838. Through analyses of its texture, harmonies, and structure, I explore the reasons behind the markedly different ways in which Wieck presented and marketed these two works. I draw upon Alexander Stefaniak's thorough study of postclassical aesthetics to engage with the ways in which attitudes towards pianistic virtuosity changed throughout the decade.³⁶ References to Friedrich Wieck's article in the periodical *Cäcilia*,³⁷ Robert Schumann's celebrated "Ein Opus II,"³⁸ and reviews of Chopin's performances of this work form the basis to an examination of these growing distinctions between what was perceived as mechanized or superficial, and a kind of "elevated" virtuosity that was believed to have transcended "mere physicality."³⁹

The third and final case study is Wieck's own composition in the genre: her *Variations de Concert sur la Cavatine du Pirate de Bellini*, Op. 8. She composed this set of

³⁶ Alexander Stefaniak, "Clara Schumann's Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism."

³⁷ Friedrich Wieck, "Chopin, Frédéric: 'Là ci darem la mano' varié pour le pianoforte," *Cäcilia: eine Zeitschrift für die musikalische Welt* 14 (1832): 219–23.

³⁸ Robert Schumann, "Ein Opus II," *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 49 (December 7, 1831): 49–50.

³⁹ William G. Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin: Pianist from Warsaw* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), translated reviews in Appendix B, 200–204.

variations in 1837 and began performing it in March that year; she performed the work a total of 17 times in the three years that followed. Though bearing hallmarks of the genre, Wieck's writing is a departure from the postclassical style of writing exemplified by the earlier two sets discussed. Reviews of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* reflect a complex discourse that was surrounding purely physical manifestations of virtuosity from as early as the start of Wieck's career. Composed a decade after Chopin's, Wieck's *Variations de Concert* not only encapsulates the progression of this discourse, but also offers a lens through which we can understand her own perception of virtuosity amid these aesthetic currents. Where Herz and Chopin's works once enabled her to showcase "scripted virtuosic display,"⁴⁰ her *Variations de Concert* are her own statement about virtuosity, about the genre of concert variations, and on the notions of virtuosity in pianism as refracted through the genre of concert variations. They invite us to further consider Wieck's engagement with this culture, and what it meant for her to be composing and performing such virtuosic repertoire in an age when women mostly engaged in piano-playing domestically.

In some sense, Stefaniak's monograph, *Becoming Clara Schumann*, serves as an inspiration for this dissertation.⁴¹ Instead of "becoming" Clara Schumann, I seek to uncover what it simply meant to "be" Clara Wieck: a young virtuosa amid the currents of post-classical pianism.

⁴⁰ Stefaniak, "Clara Schumann's Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism," 700.

⁴¹ Stefaniak, *Becoming Clara Schumann*.

CHAPTER 2

Postclassical Concert Variations

“For surely in no genre of our art has more bungling mediocrity been perpetrated — and it is still going on. One could scarcely imagine such wretchedness springing up on every side, such vulgarity that no longer knows any shame. Before, at least, we had good, boring German themes. But now one has to swallow the most hackneyed Italian tunes in five or six successive states of watery decomposition. And the best are the ones that stop there.”

— Robert Schumann, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 1836.¹

Robert Schumann’s scathing remarks were directed at a very particular subset of piano variations that flourished in the 1820s and 1830s, and which formed the staple of many young composers’ oeuvre. The first work that Schumann himself published was a set of variations: his *Abegg Variations* Opus 1, composed between 1829–30. These postclassical variations represented the pinnacle of virtuoso pianism during the initial three decades of the nineteenth century: aesthetically contemporaneous to fantasies, rondos, and potpourris, they constituted one of several “new genres of virtuosity.”²

Schumann’s critical response to this genre which was of such widespread prevalence reveals in part elements of German nationalism, and also his bitterness at his failed career as a virtuoso pianist. Indeed, what he would later recall as one of his

¹ *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 1836, 63. Cited in and translated by Leon Plantinga, *Schumann as Critic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 197.

² Žarko Cvejić, *The Virtuoso as Subject: The Reception of Instrumental Virtuosity, c. 1815-c. 1850* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 41, especially Chapter 3.

“finest hours” is rooted in a performance of Hummel’s Concerto in A minor and Moscheles’s *Alexander Variations* in his hometown of Zwickau; in Heidelberg, his performance of Moscheles’s variations with orchestra further earned him “unending applause” that he was to cherish.³

Though his public criticisms of the genre belie their significance in musical life of the first decades of the nineteenth century and the rich and complex ecosystem of which they were a part, they productively point towards several defining stylistic and aesthetic traits of these variations. I contextualize these variations within the “pre-recital age” and the practices of postclassical pianism embraced during their heyday to explore the following aspects: their thematic origins, as closely intertwined with the operatic domain; the ways in which these themes were developed; the ways in which their textural manifestations and structural layout can be understood in terms of contemporary aesthetics; and the ecosystem which supported and encouraged their widespread significance, focusing on the close and reciprocal relationships between the figure of the composer-virtuoso, the publishing industry, and developments in piano manufacturing. Schumann’s comments foreshadowed the genre’s eventual fall to obsolescence; I discuss the historical reception of these variations, considering first the factors contributing to their initial popularity and success, then the aesthetic changes that spurred increasing criticism towards them.

³ Robert Schumann, Georg Eismann, and Gerd Nauhaus, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1982), 354. Cited in and translated by Claudia Macdonald in *Robert Schumann and the Piano Concerto* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 8–11.

2.1 Variation themes

The dearth of piano variations from the postclassical period in present-day pianistic repertoires, both on the concert stage and in pedagogical domains, is paralleled by their marginalization in scholarship. Where discussed, there is no standardized nomenclature in the literature that adequately distinguishes this sub-genre of variations from either their contemporaries or precursors. Alexander Stefaniak draws on their operatic origins as a point of distinction; his definition of these works as “[popular] opera-based variation sets”⁴ echoes the work of pioneering Clara Schumann scholar Nancy Reich, who referred to these as “variations based on themes from operas by Bellini, Rossini, Donizetti, and other popular Italian composers.”⁵ The tone with which Elaine Sisman discusses this sub-genre of “superficial salon variations” is aligned with Schumann’s characterization of them as a perpetration of “bungling mediocrity,”⁶ as well as of Felix Mendelssohn’s discussion of this “wearisome” Parisian salon music as “trivial” and “showy.”⁷

⁴ Alexander Stefaniak, “Clara Schumann’s Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 70, no. 3 (Fall 2017): 697–765.

⁵ Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, Revised Edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 228. Reich contextualizes Clara Wieck’s Op. 8 *Variations de Concert sur la Cavatine du Pirate, de Bellini*, referring to them as her “Bellini Variations.” In this chapter, as in later chapters, I refer to these variation sets first using the titles they were published with in their respective first editions, then their abbreviated versions.

⁶ Elaine Rochelle Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), 77.

⁷ Karl Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Goethe and Mendelssohn* (London: Macmillan and co., 1874), 53. Cited in Pettler, “Clara Schumann’s Recitals, 1832–50,” 70. Mendelssohn’s writing dates to 1825, over a decade before Schumann’s *NZfM* article.

Characterizing these variations purely in terms of their Italian operatic bases overlooks the diversity of themes drawn on by composers: piano variations of the postclassical milieu were not exclusively based on operatic tunes, and where they were, these themes were not exclusively of Italian origins. The limiting nature of such a prescription is exemplified by the work which Wieck performed the most during her early career: a set of *Variations de bravoure sur la romance de 'Joseph'* composed by the Viennese-born, naturalized-French virtuoso Henri Herz. The theme of this work was derived from the French opera *Joseph*: of biblical origins, it was composed by Étienne Méhul in 1807, then revised between 1822–28, during which time these variations were composed.

Composers also drew on national airs and folk melodies as inspiration: Herz composed variations on airs from Eastern Europe, Russia, and Switzerland, while Wieck herself is known to have composed a set of Variations on a Tyrolean Air in 1830, albeit now lost.⁸ The tradition of composing variations on Tyrol songs — a practice that “spawned many dull works” — had its precedence in the 1790s, while variations based on national airs were popularized in the British Isles from as early as the 1760s and 1770s.⁹ On the one hand, the continuation of these practices in the early decades of the nineteenth century can be understood in relation to the culture of the

⁸ Laure Schnapper, *Henri Herz, Magnat Du Piano: La Vie Musicale En France Au XIXe Siècle (1815-1870)*, En Temps & Lieux 23 (Paris: Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2011), 135.

⁹ Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, 77.

touring virtuos[a] — they were a means of expressing deference to one's host and host country.¹⁰ On the other, the invocation of such national idioms and the exploration of its expressive capacity could be seen as a portrayal of originality, as it was especially in the case of Chopin.¹¹

Stefaniak and Reich's representation of these variations as based upon operatic derivatives is nevertheless a fair one. As will be shown in **Chapter 3**, this is true of Wieck's choice of postclassical concert variations; this sub-genre constituted the core of her repertory during the first decade of her career, and her practice is reflective of those of her contemporaries. This chapter also reveals the complexities faced in unravelling Wieck's own naming of these variations: there was no standardized means of referring to these variations, both in her public concert programs and diary entries. Further, the variations she performed were of mixed nomenclature: Herz's had various adjectives such as "bravura," "brilliant," and "grand" appended to them. Wieck composed one set of variations in this style: her *Variations de Concert sur la Cavatine du Pirate de Bellini*, Op. 8; Adolph Henselt's

¹⁰ William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 149. This was not limited to the piano: when Niccolò Paganini performed in Vienna in 1828, he is known to have performed a Fantasy on a theme by Joseph Haydn.

¹¹ The key works in Chopin's musical portfolio when he left his native Warsaw comprised almost exclusively of works that were premised on folk material: his *Là ci darem la mano*, Op. 2 had a Polonaise finale, and his performances of his Rondo à la krakowiak, Op. 14 and improvisations on the Polish folksong *Chmiel* at his Viennese debut earned the admiration and approval from a "notoriously reticent" Viennese audience. See John Rink, *Chopin, the Piano Concertos* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 8.

Variations de Concert sur le motif de l'opéra 'L'elisir d'amore', Op. 1 is the only work she performed that was similarly styled to her own.¹²

In my discussion of these variations that were performed by Wieck, I refer to them as “postclassical concert variations”: I draw first on Wieck’s own nomenclature, while also representing the unique milieu to which these variations belonged.

Wieck’s use of the word “concert” reflects the function of these works: in line with allusions to grandeur and bravura, these works were programmed to showcase her virtuosity on the concert stage; Carl Czerny’s treatise from 1839 further reveals that the incorporation of the word “brilliant” in titles of works points to the fact that they were similarly conceived of for public performances.¹³ The contextualization of these variations as “postclassical” is not merely chronological; as will be demonstrated in this chapter, this term encapsulates the style, aesthetics, and musical culture in which these variations thrived.

¹² The other works she programmed were Herz’s Op. 23 *Variations brillantes dur le choeur favori d’Il Crociato de Meyerbeer*, Op. 36 *Grandes variations sur le chœur des Grecs du Siège de Corinthe de Rossini*, Op. 48 *Variations brillantes avec introduction et finale alla militair sur la cavatine favorite de la Violette de Carafa*, Op. 51 *Variations brillantes sur la dernière valse de C.M. de Weber*, Op. 62 *Grandes variations sur le chœur des Chasseurs d’Euriante de Weber*, and Op. 76 *Variations brillantes di bravura de grand orchestra sur le trio favori de pre aux clercs (Der Zweikampf) de Herold*. Stefaniak has outlined the compositional influences of Henselt’s Op. 1 on Wieck’s Op. 8; see Stefaniak, “Clara Schumann’s Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism.” It is possible that Wieck’s choice of name was influenced by Henselt’s own work.

¹³ Carl Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano-Forte School from the First Rudiments of Playing to the Highest and Most Refined State of Cultivation Op. 500, Part III*, trans. James Alexander Hamilton (London: R. Cocks & Co., 1839), 81.

2.2 Thematic development & variation forms

Where Italian thematic origins were a key distinctive feature of postclassical concert variations, Schumann's statement reveals that this sub-genre co-existed alongside others that were based on "good, boring German themes." Herz's *Bravura Variations*, which will form the central case study to this dissertation, was composed in 1825: the same year that Franz Schubert composed his late piano sonata in A minor, D. 845. The second movement of Schubert's four-movement sonata is a set of theme and variations — it exemplifies the integration of variations as a compositional form into multi-movement works.

This also calls to mind Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* Op. 120, which were composed between 1819–23; based on a waltz, its monumental thirty-three variations are a far remove from the "hackneyed Italian tunes" criticized by Schumann. Scholars have discussed the theme as being of a "directional character [...] starting with the trivial but finally attaining the sublime"; rather than "superfluous," its waltz is a "prologue to the whole."¹⁴ The notion that Beethoven could render this "cobbler's patch" amenable to such "contrapuntal ingenuity, harmonic abstruseness and spiritual transcendence" epitomizes distinctions between the variations which

¹⁴ William Kinderman, *Beethoven's Diabelli Variations*, Studies in Musical Genesis and Structure (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1987), 67, then 71.

Schumann implicitly extolled, at least in contrast to the “successive states of watery decomposition” that postclassical variations subjected their themes to.¹⁵

It was not so much the themes themselves which rendered postclassical concert variations “trivial,” nor that they were only varied a limited number of times — similar to Herz’s *Bravura Variations*, the second movement of Schubert’s D. 845 was only subject to five variations — but rather, the ways in which techniques of variations were applied.¹⁶ Jeffrey Swinkin outlines overarching stylistic dichotomies between Classical and Romantic variations; albeit a generalization that is acknowledged by the author himself, his work presents a useful starting point for conceptualizing of the varying treatments of form that distinguished postclassical concert variations. While Beethoven’s *Diabelli* subjected the harmonic and melodic components of its theme to constant reinterpretation, (post-)classical variations can be perceived as primarily characterized by a decorative nature: through embellishments and changes of texture, their variations sought to create a multitude of views of the theme.¹⁷ To this end, Jim Samson’s reference to this sub-genre as “ornamental variations” is particularly useful.¹⁸

Variations such as Beethoven’s *Diabelli*, or generally those by German composers, are not known to have been performed or even played by Wieck during

¹⁵ Jeffrey Swinkin, “Variation as Thematic Actualisation: The Case of Brahms’s Op. 9,” *Music Analysis* 31, no. 1 (March 2012): 38.

¹⁶ Swinkin, “Variation as Thematic Actualisation,” 37; Plantinga, “The Virtuosi,” 196–218.

¹⁷ Swinkin, “Variation as Thematic Actualisation,” 37.

¹⁸ Jim Samson, “Chopin and Genre,” *Music Analysis* 8, no. 3 (1989): 218.

these years; instead, the variations which formed an integral part of her early years were exclusively of the manner which Schumann critiqued: derived from (Italian) operatic themes, and whose pianistic textures and structure rendered them suitable for the concert stage of the postclassical milieu.

The treatment of these themes as autonomous entities, “self-contained, self-defined, and directly given,” was crucial to the success of postclassical concert variations.¹⁹ The fixity of its fundamental parameters of melody and harmony lent itself readily recognizable, and therefore enjoyable, to its audience. It facilitated an accessibility that enabled the audience to feel as though they were “conniving with the artist with whom they share[d] knowledge of the theme and the way it was [being] transformed.”²⁰ Further, the constant variety of writing and expression achieved through frequently shifting flows of contrasting styles and figuration kept its audience engaged amidst the multifold repetition of this familiar material.²¹

The perpetually changing textures and figuration employed in postclassical concert variations served another key purpose: to maintain an emphasis on the performance and performer’s virtuosity. A distinctive feature of the postclassical

¹⁹ Swinkin, “Variation as Thematic Actualisation,” 37.

²⁰ Laure Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century: An Industry?,” in *Instrumental Music and the Industrial Revolution*, ed. Roberto Illiano and Luca Sala, trans. Vivienne Hunt, Ad Parnassum Studies 5 (International Conference “Instrumental Music and the Industrial Revolution,” Bologna: UT Orpheus, 2010), 287.

²¹ Alexander Stefaniak cites the German music theorist and composer Gottfried Wilhelm Fink, describing this as a form of “accessible pleasure.” See Alexander Stefaniak, *Schumann’s Virtuosity: Criticism, Composition, and Performance in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2016), 30.

milieu was that it was a “performance culture”; described by Jim Samson as a “performance-oriented” rather than “work-oriented” approach, it prized the moment of performative realization, rather than the ideas documented by the musical score.²² Beethoven’s *Diabelli* encapsulates ideals antithetical to those embraced by postclassical concert variations. Although his *Diabelli* was never programmed during Wieck-Schumann’s concert career, the shift in her selection of piano variations from the 1840s —which moved away from postclassical concert variations to include Mendelssohn’s *Variations sérieuses* (1840), Beethoven’s *Eroica Variations* Op. 35 (1802) and 32 *Variations in C minor* WoO 80 (1806), and her own *Variations on a theme of Robert Schumann* Op. 20 (1853) — attests to a wider aesthetic shift foreshadowed by Schumann’s critique.

Friedrich Wieck’s appraisal of these postclassical concert variations in his pedagogical treatise *Piano and Song* attests to this focus on the performative: these variations “make no great musical pretensions, leaving everything to the performance, the execution.”²³ This execution, Friedrich Wieck goes on to clarify, had to be “especially clean and delicate,” and necessarily entailed “first and foremost a complete technical command of the constantly changing degrees of difficulty.”²⁴

²² Jim Samson, “The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism,” in *Musical Work: Reality or Invention?* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 122.

²³ Friedrich Wieck, *Piano and Song (Didactic and Polemical): The Collected Writings of Clara Schumann’s Father and Only Teacher*, trans. Henry Pleasants (Stuyvesant, N.Y: Pendragon Press, 1988), 130.

²⁴ Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 130.

Laure Schnapper cites Franz Hünten, a composer with a prominent output of postclassical concert variations and rondos, proposing a structural understanding of postclassical variations that can be defined by “virtuosity [that] was increasingly necessary with each new variation.”²⁵

Schnapper’s proposition is premised on principles of rhythmic diminution — a progression that would stereotypically entail eighths in the first variation, sixteenths in the second, then triplet sixteenths, and so on. In **Chapters 4 and 5**, I discuss three sets of postclassical concert variations that formed the core of Wieck’s repertory; my analyses will reveal that this generalization built on the premise of velocity is untenable — the structural trajectories of these variations adhere neither to the principle of subdivision, nor are they influenced by an ideal narrative of “notes per minute” as might be suggested by metronomic indications.

This raises the question of how, and in fact whether, one can codify changing, much less successive, levels of “difficulty.” In Chapter 4 of Friedrich Wieck’s *Piano and Song*, Herz’s *Les trois grâces* Op. 68 no. 1 (1833) is used as a case study in Domine’s lessons to Emily Solid, a young girl who was “already fairly advanced, and not yet beyond the point of no return.”²⁶ In the lessons, no allusion to any particular order of difficulty is made, rather, only to their “various grades of difficulty,” for which an easy and skillful navigation and accommodation ought to be the pedagogue’s prime

²⁵ Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 287.

²⁶ Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 130.

concern.²⁷ This non-linearity is commensurate with the haphazard way in which Domine moves through his lessons with Emily: something which he acknowledges at the outset.²⁸ In the first lesson, he works with her on the theme and “first easy variation,” a few measures from the left hand of the Finale, then the last measures of the Introduction — as we will see, this is usually a virtuosic cadenza-like passage. In the second lesson, he works on the theme, first, and third variations, and the *Adagio*; they also review the left-hand part from the Finale. In the third, they work on the second variation. In the fourth and final lesson, Friedrich Wieck turns to the introduction, before recapitulating the first and second variations.

It is also revealed in the fourth lesson that the second variation is of the greatest difficulty owing to its rhythm; this was not in the manner of velocity that Schnapper suggests (such writing is seen in the third variation), but on account of the juxtaposition of triplets in the left hand with regular eighths.²⁹ Further, it is curious that, having highlighted varying difficulties as posed by the different figuration with no real degree of regularity, Domine has “little more to say” about the variation set

²⁷ Ibid. This example was based on a theme from Bellini’s *Il Pirata* — a highly popular theme which his daughter used in her sole composition in this sub-genre of virtuosic variations. This will be discussed in **Chapter 5**.

²⁸ Validating his irregular pedagogical method, Wieck writes in the first lesson: “I may take [the Introduction] last. Indeed, I don’t know when. In my teaching you will note other examples of reversed order. Perhaps the result will help to restore my credit.” It is only in the final lesson that the Introduction is reviewed: “Today we begin at the beginning with the Introduction, making good my perversity, and showing you that I, too, can begin at the beginning as others do — but at the right time!” Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 131 then 133.

²⁹ Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 134.

by the end of the fourth lesson.³⁰ Apart from the brief discussion of its left hand part in Emily's first lesson, the chapter ends without Domine having discussed the extended finale — the grand, dazzling culmination of musical drama.

A contemporaneous review from the magazine *Le Pianiste* in 1835 describes the thematic development in terms of a wide variety of characters that result from its figural and textural embellishments: there would usually be “a variation in triplets, another one being *scherzando*, one with roulades in the left hand, then in the right hand, and above all a large introduction, *adagio*, *maestoso*, *sostenuto*, *e con grandissima espressione* [and so forth].”³¹ That the figuration was characterized not only through a tangible and codifiable parameter — rhythm — adds a layer of complexity to the discourse. Reich similarly explores the expressivity and characters resultant from these techniques that were commonly employed: thirds, sixths, octaves, running scalic passages in sixteenths, ascending arpeggios, thundering bass rolls, diminished seventh chords, and spectacular keyboard leaps formed a catalogue of “clichés”; the series of combinations in which they were applied saw “one brilliant coup succeed another.”³² While authors and scholars’ perception of the ways in which the thematic content developed over the course of the variations differ, they all point towards a common function: one that prized the immediacy of effect on the audience.

³⁰ Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 135.

³¹ *Le Pianiste*, September 20, 1835, 175. Cited in and translated by Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 287. These “roulades” in the left hand, frequently in triplet eighth notes, were also noted as an area of difficulty in *Piano and Song*.

³² Reich, *Clara Schumann*, 228–29.

2.2a Layout

Though Czerny describes the number of forms at the disposal of the artist as “infinite,” the descriptions above allude to a standard repository of textures and figuration that were frequently recycled by composers.³³ We can understand this in the context of the history and development of the genre, which had its roots in practices of extemporization:

In the art of free improvisation [*freye Fantasie Kunst*] Mozart had no equal. His improvisations were as well-ordered as if he had them lying written out before him. This led several to think that, when he performed an improvisation [*mit einer Fantasie auftratt*] in public, he must have thought everything out, and practised it, beforehand. Albrechtsberger thought so too. But one evening they met at a musical soirée; Mozart was in a good mood and demanded a theme of Albrechtsberger. The latter played him an old German popular song. Mozart sat down and improvised on this theme [*führte dieses Thema durch*] for an hour in such a way as to excite general admiration and shew by means of variations and fugues (in which he never departed from the theme) that he was master of every aspect of the musician’s art.³⁴

Mozart’s “free improvisation” being recounted reflects a spontaneous, improvised set of theme and variations. Its focus was on the “medium as much as the message”: the material lay in the embellishments of the theme, as shaped by

³³ Carl Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte: Opus 200*, trans. Alice L. Mitchell (New York: Longman, 1983), 92.

³⁴ *Neue Wiener Musik-Zeitung*, 29 May 1856, 97, quoted in Deutsch, *Biography*, 566. See Katalin Kómlos, “‘Ich praeludirte und spielte Variazionen’: Mozart the Fortepianist,” in *Perspectives on Mozart Performance*, ed. R. Larry Todd and Peter Willam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 46.

“instrumental thought.”³⁵ In this genre, parameters of melody and harmony are partially delineated and controlled from the outset; the focus of these variation sets lies in the working out of these pre-established elements familiar to its audience, and primarily through textural means. The idea that the musical idea arose from the instrument, with improvisation playing a “crucial,” even “strengthening,” role in shaping the detailed substance of these works, is useful in conceiving of the development of these variations as a cycling through of a catalogue of techniques shaped by the potentialities and limitations of its medium: beginning with “simple, formulaic schemes,” the musical gestures that later developed were idiomatic manifestations and explorations of a myriad of forms of embellishments and decoration.³⁶ In contrast to the organicism that the genre of variations was beginning to adopt, as in the manner exemplified by Beethoven’s *Diabelli*, postclassical variations retained the structural properties of classical variations, in that their tonal and structural properties were “neither laid bare nor fundamentally altered in the course of the variations.”³⁷ Each variation was a discrete unit that showcased a different thought that arose through the composer’s interface with the keyboard: by way of technique, texture, and figuration.

The penultimate variation would almost always be a slow one, featuring a new *cantabile* theme. Based on the bass and harmony of the original theme, it

³⁵ Samson, “The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism,” 117–18.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Swinkin, “Variation as Thematic Actualisation,” 44.

remained closely aligned with the original structural properties, but had its *Affekt* altered.³⁸ Often in a related minor key, this slow variation harbors rich potential for capitalizing on the power of contrast and variety; it precedes the dazzling extended finale, which it would proceed into with an *attacca*. The use of *attacca* between variations is unique: apart from the final two variations, all the other variations are constructed discretely, separated by complete breaks, during which the audience would applaud each variation as an individual feat, and display, of virtuosity.³⁹ Occasionally, these variations were also composed for solo piano with orchestra or string quartet; in these, tutti ritornello sections would bridge variations to one another. The audience would have similarly applauded each individual variation, but this time while the ritornello interludes were being played.⁴⁰

The manner of improvisation that Mozart engaged in was still often practiced by virtuosos on the concert stage in the postclassical era. Both Liszt and Herz commonly requested themes from their audience for this purpose, although the latter is believed to have “positively recoiled in horror” at his manager’s suggestion that he

³⁸ Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte*, 92.

³⁹ Kenneth Hamilton, *After the Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 87. Clara Wieck’s *Jugendtagebuch* also reveals the function of these orchestral interludes as opportunities for the audience to applaud. Outside of the genre of variations, Samson also discusses this phenomenon in the context of Liszt’s *Transcendental Etudes*, where contrasts between individual exercises were premised on generic references. See “The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism,” 120.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Schumann is believed to have experimented with adding orchestral interludes when he composed his *Abegg Variations* Op. 1; this version was never finished. See Macdonald, *Robert Schumann and the Piano Concerto*, 10–11 and Stefaniak, *Schumann’s Virtuosity*, 92.

do so during his American tours.⁴¹ While such a reaction likely stemmed from an anxiety of having his imagination fail him in the spontaneous moment, it reflects a broader phenomenon in which composers engaged with the practice to varying degrees of enthusiasm. Mendelssohn exhibited a similar reluctance to engage with public improvisation, though his resulted from his critical view of the ways in which his contemporaries engaged in such extemporizations: they lacked contrapuntal imagination.⁴²

This distinction between the contrapuntal and the “empty figuration” present in such improvisations and the genre of postclassical concert variations that Schumann crusaded against reveals a crucial feature of postclassical pianism: its function was not for the audience to “search out a form of knowledge embedded in sound structure,” as would have been represented by fugal interpretations,⁴³ but rather, the immediacy of the sound and performance itself, even if this entailed “ludicrously affected ornamentation [that soared] stratospherically above the horizon of good taste.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 45–47.

⁴² Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 46.

⁴³ Samson, “The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism,” 112.

⁴⁴ Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 47.

2.2b Extended slow introduction

As it did for Mozart in the latter years of the eighteenth century, improvisation continued to serve as a sign of true musicality for the nineteenth-century pianist — it was a mark of distinction, essential to the image of a successful performer. The other facet of postclassical concert variations' improvisatory roots can be found in their introductory sections, which reflect the longstanding tradition of preluding that continued to be practiced ubiquitously throughout the postclassical era before gradually declining as the century progressed.⁴⁵

First published in 1829, Czerny's treatise on improvisation illuminates the importance and stylistic features of these ad-hoc introductions during the decades in which postclassical variations thrived. They could take on several functions: serving as an opportunity for the performer to warm up their fingers, get acquainted with and therefore ascertain the qualities of the piano that was likely unfamiliar to them — particularly in an age when pianos were far from standardized — but also to set the mood, and to pique the interest of their audience.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Czerny's treatise reveals that preluding was virtually applicable to any genre of music during the nineteenth century, even before Sonatas: Hans von Bülow would have improvised, for example, between performances of Beethoven's Sonatas Opp. 101 and 106. See Dana Andrew Gooley, *Fantasies of Improvisation: Free Playing in Nineteenth-Century Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Valerie Woodring Goertzen, "By Way of Introduction: Preluding by Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Pianists," *Journal of Musicology* 14, no. 3 (1996): 299–337, and "Clara Wieck Schumann's Improvisations and Her 'Mosaics' of Small Forms," in *Beyond Notes: Improvisation in Western Music of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Rudolf Rasch, *Speculum Musicae* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 153–62; Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 113–16.

⁴⁶ Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte*, 6. See also Hamilton, *Golden Age*, 112–13.

Czerny identified two kinds of preludes. First, they could be short, exhibiting only a few chords, runs, passagework, and “transitionary materials.” Where the manner of improvisation described of Mozart invokes links to the genre of the theme and variation, this manner of free improvisation without a particular theme calls to mind another mode of late-eighteenth-century extemporization: the free fantasia. These kinds of preludes featured bold modulations, manifesting either as several chords or in instrumental recitative-like figuration.⁴⁷

Where the first was more self-contained and ended with a cadence, the second kind which Czerny described was longer and more elaborate and functioned like an introduction to the piece that was to follow; it would typically include material from the following piece, and end on a dominant seventh. Connections between the preludial material and the work to follow would be forged not just thematically, but also harmonically. The writing in this latter type was typically rhythmically flexible, even free, and would alternate between lyrical passages that incorporated short elements of the theme and non-melodic exhibitions of filigree, arpeggios, and scales. While Friedrich Wieck conservatively advocated for some “fluent arpeggios” and “decent passages or scales, piano and forte, up and down the keyboard” as the basis

⁴⁷ The North German manner of extemporization is encapsulated by C. P. E. Bach, in Charles Burney’s *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Provinces*, 2nd edn, 2 vols. (London, 1775), II, 270–1: “[Bach] played, with little intermission, till near eleven o’clock at night. During this time, he grew so animated and possessed, that he not only played, but looked like one inspired. His eyes were fixed, his under lip fell, and drops of effervescence distilled from his countenance.”

to such preluding material, the reality was that postclassical concert variations mostly built their opening sections on “stupid stunts” comprised more of “hazardous flights up and down the keyboard,” octave passages in fortissimo, and a likely generous use of the sustaining pedal.⁴⁸ Another defining characteristic of these introductions was their disproportionate length in relation to the theme upon which the derivative work would be based. The end to this long introductory section would be signaled by a gestural arrival onto the dominant seventh, replete with a fermata; elaborated upon by a large, dramatic, virtuosic cadenza, this preparatory chord would consequently seek both harmonic and rhetorical resolution.

This manner of writing invokes what James Webster describes as an “improvisatory rhetoric”: events in the completed work are fixed by musical notation ask to be understood as a reference to the topic of improvisation, and ought be played as though they are being improvised in the moment of performance.⁴⁹ The “systematic incorporation” of this substantial slow introduction by means of written text rendered it a hallmark of this sub-genre of postclassical variations,⁵⁰ and the

⁴⁸ Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 139.

⁴⁹ James Webster, “The Rhetoric of Improvisation in Haydn’s Keyboard Music,” in *Haydn and the Performance of Rhetoric*, ed. Sander M. Goldberg and Tom Beghin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 174–76.

⁵⁰ Laure Schnapper credits Henri Herz for the “systematic incorporation” of extended slow variations to the genre of the piano variations. See “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 287. Here, she refers to the piano variations of another important contemporary composer of variations — Franz Hünten — whose works did not include a slow introduction. Carl Czerny, the other of the three prominent composers of variations that Schnapper cites, did begin incorporating slow introductions to his variation sets as early as his Op. 3 *Fantaisie et variations brillantes sur une romance de Blangini*, published circa 1820. However, his use of slow introductions was inconsistent throughout the decade. Hamilton

integration of this extended introduction in the genre of postclassical variations as a lengthy, notated section in itself enacts a performative paradox: while the act of performance seeks to approximate and emulate the immediacy of creation, it had to be first studied, practiced, and memorized.⁵¹ Given that the ability to improvise in public continued to be a “mark of distinction” during these years,⁵² we can understand the function of this structurally significant section as a means of legitimizing and propagating the image of its performer as a virtuoso.

More broadly, the introductions appended to postclassical piano variations were of varying lengths and exhibited techniques of varying difficulties. As will be discussed in **Chapter 4**, Herz’s *Bravura Variations* had a 29-measure introduction replete with a technically demanding cadenza; meanwhile, his Variations on a theme from Carafa’s *Violette*, Op. 48 has an introduction that lasts just nineteen measures, its “cadenza” comprised merely of a dominant seventh arpeggiation ascending through the compass of the keyboard. The latter work enjoyed immense popularity not just in

also discusses this “systematic add[ition]” as characteristic to the genre of postclassical variations. Hamilton also discusses this “systematic add[ition]” as characteristic to the genre of postclassical variations. See *After the Golden Age*, 127.

⁵¹ Annette Richards discusses this paradox in context of the late eighteenth-century keyboard fantasia. Drawing parallels between the purported “natural” English gardens and the musical genre of fantasia, Richards invites us to consider the ambiguous ontological status of the genre as it enacted the tension between improvisation and composition, and the opposition between art and nature. See *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁵² Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte*, 6.

Europe, but also worldwide, played and performed, to cite the American pianist Louis Moreau Gottschalk, “from Paris to Japan, from Japan to Rome.”⁵³

While catering to the public fancy for this work, Wieck performed it far less than Herz’s *Bravura Variations* and Chopin’s *Là ci darem la mano*, the introduction to the latter lasting nearly sixty measures. The variable lengths and difficulties exhibited in introductory sections in general will be contextualized in **Chapter 4**, in which I compare Herz’s *Bravura Variations* with three other sets similarly composed on the *Romance* from Méhul’s *Joseph*: Ferdinand Ries’s Op. 46 (1811), Carl Maria von Weber’s Op. 28 (1812), and Franz Xaver Mozart’s Op. 20 (1820). This discussion will illuminate how it was not just the second kind of preluding Czerny discussed that was incorporated into postclassical variations; Ries’s Op. 46 begins with a series of modulatory chords, and Mozart’s, a small number of tonic-dominant iterations. I will show, however, that the rhetoric, textures, and figuration that differentiate both types had a key role to play in laying out the function of different types of postclassical variations. While introductions to postclassical variations could be short, introductions to postclassical *concert* variations were invariably of the latter kind discussed by Czerny: extensive, dramatically preparatory, and rhetorically appropriate for the concert stage.

⁵³ See Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 283. «*De Paris au Japon, du Japon jusqu’à Rome, li ny’ eut pas une jeune fille de quinze ans qui en jout al Bagatelle de Herz et qui ne crût voir dans al fameuse Violette el poème de ses candides amours»; *Les voyages extraordinaires ed Louis Moreau Gottschalk, pianiste et aventurier*, edited by Serge Berthier, Lausanne-Paris, P.-M. Favre, 1985, 507.*

2.3 Operatic origins

Away from the theater, in the salons, we like to rediscover the melodies or harmonies which we have carried with us in our memories. The human voice is undoubtedly the most beautiful of instruments, but it is a capricious instrument that tires. What's more, we don't always have at our disposal the number and quality of voices needed to perform an opera, so we must call on the help of the quartet or piano. Of all the ways of reducing the harmony of a large orchestra to a miniature, the latter is the most pleasant and convenient, and is deserving of all the success it has attained in the world. Applied to Rossini's operas, it produces truly extraordinary effects, and provides sufficient compensation for those who, being passionate about theatrical music, are unable or unwilling to sing it.⁵⁴

The above quotation from the *Revue musicale* in 1829 encapsulates the main function of these transcriptions: to allow the public to listen once more to an opera in a pre-technological age, when they had no other means of reproduction apart from arrangements such as these. This relationship between the pianistic versions suitable for domestic consumption and its publicly theatrical origins was bi-directional; in July of 1827, eight-year-old Wieck herself had gone through a piano reduction of

⁵⁴ "Collection des Opéras de Rossini, arrange pour piano solo, avec accompagnement de flute ou violon, ad libitum," *Revue musicale* (Paris: Au Bureau du Journal, 1829), 550–51. "Ce fut toujours une idée heureuse que celle d'arranger pour des instrumens les chefs-d'œuvre composés par les maîtres de la scène. Loin du théâtre, dans les salons, on aime à retrouver les traits de mélodie ou d'harmonie dont on a emporté avec soi le souvenir. La voix humaine est le plus beau des instrumens sans doute, mais c'est un instrument capricieux et qui se fatigue. D'ailleurs on n'a pas toujours à sa disposition le nombre et la qualité de voix nécessaires pour executer un opéra; alors il faut invoquer le secours du quatuor ou du piano. De toutes les manières de réduire en miniature l'harmonie d'un grand orchestre, cette dernière est la plus agréable et la plus commode; elle mérite tout le succès qu'elle obtient dans le monde. Appliquée aux opéras de Rossini, elle produit des effets vraiment extraordinaires, et procure des indemnités suffisantes aux personnes qui, passionnées pour la musique dramatique, ne veulent ou ne peuvent la chanter."

Mozart's *Magic Flute* with Henriette Wieck before going to hear it in an opera for the first time.⁵⁵

The proliferation of what Leon Plantinga terms "second-hand music" is not unique to this period of music history, nor exclusive to the piano.⁵⁶ Arrangements and transcriptions are the "oldest and most venerable means by which musical works could be widely disseminated and played," and operatic components in particular had long been seen as a "compilation of detachable elements" that could be subjected to transcription, variation, and arrangement across various instrumentations.⁵⁷ The duet that formed the basis to Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano*, which Wieck would go on to perform extensively in the 1830s, was also adopted by Polish virtuoso guitarist, Jan Nepomucen Bobrowicz, who composed and performed his own set of *Grosse Variationen*.⁵⁸ In addition to the operatic, the early decades of the nineteenth century also saw an influx in the number of transcriptions of symphonic forces for both string and wind combinations, and also for solo piano. These transcriptions similarly

⁵⁵ Clara Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840: nach den Handschriften* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2019), 47. It was during this time that she also began to learn the primo parts of this four-hand postclassical repertoire.

⁵⁶ Plantinga, "The Virtuosi," 196.

⁵⁷ Thomas Christensen, "Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera," in *Music and the Cultures of Print*, ed. Kate Van Orden, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 68, 82.

⁵⁸ This was performed in a vocal and instrumental concert of Bobrowicz's at the Salle des Hôtel de Pologne in Leipzig on August 10, 1832. See Wieck's concert playbill #22.

facilitated the crossing of boundaries between the private and public and the widespread dissemination and consumption of works composed for larger forces.⁵⁹

Synergies between the keyboard and vocal spheres “domesticated” opera: in “decontextualizing” the theme from its original context — the theatrical and public — these variations “recontextualized” what initially was texted drama, allowing it to cross spatial and generic boundaries into being a musical genre.⁶⁰ Schnapper proposes the incorporation of extended introductions into the genre of postclassical concert variations as a reflection of these theatrical origins: beginning with “harsh and wild” chords would invoke suspense in the audience, thereby heightening the effectiveness of the “sweet and tender” melody that was to follow.⁶¹

The discussion in the *Revue musicale* also reveals the twofold influence of opera on the genre of variations. First, the keyboard was a suitable and preferred medium for the transference and re-creation of the theme that had been sung on the public stage — the point of attraction for the audience, and consequently, the

⁵⁹ Nancy November, “A Fruitful Age of Arrangements,” in *Beethoven’s Symphonies Arranged for the Chamber: Sociability, Reception, and Canon Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 7–39.

⁶⁰ The terms “decontextualizing” and “recontextualizing” are derived from Magdalena Oliferko, in “Hexameron – an Instrumental Di Bravura Song or a Musical Study in Character Psychology,” in *The Lyric and the Vocal Element in Instrumental Music of the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Kamila Stępień-Kutera (Warsaw: The Fryderyk Chopin Institute, 2017), 213–49. Christensen writes about the changing status of the piano’s introduction to the operatic domain, see “Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera,” 75–76.

⁶¹ Franz Hünten, *Méthode de piano: Op. 60*, fourth editions. (Mainz: B Schott, 1833), 17, cited in and translated by Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 288.

consumer — and as a medium that was ubiquitous, it facilitated the learning, playing, and enjoyment of this operatic material freely in an array of settings. Second, these variations sought to re-capture the ways in which its audience encountered this theme. In *Piano and Song*, the master Domine advises his pupil to “take special care to play [the theme, which has been very nicely chosen] as beautifully as possible, and to sing it on the piano as the singer does in the theater.”⁶² The next step in this process of instruction was for the teacher to further demonstrate this theme to his pupil in a way “more or less as [he had] heard it from the famous tenor, Rubini.”⁶³

In **Chapter 4**, we will encounter two ways through which the composer could make allusions to, and “awaken” a memory of, the original vocal performance: first, by incorporating snippets of the thematic material as early as the introduction — providing its audience gratification in advance of the presentation of the theme itself — and second, the addition of ornamentation, rubato, and expressive markings to the transcribed theme, in order to approximate the “famous [singer]’s” interpretation. This could also include improvisatory trills, as is revealed by Domine, as long as they were “tastefully chosen” and “prettily executed” as a singer would have done.⁶⁴

⁶² Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 130.

⁶³ Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 132. Friedrich Wieck had indeed seen Bellini’s *Il Pirata* performed by Rubini and Devrient at the Théâtre-Italien on Feb 18, 1832; he had taken his daughter on her first concert tour to Paris in February to April of 1832. Ironically, Friedrich Wieck was not all that impressed by the performance he had seen. See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher*, 109: “Abends 8 Uhr im Theatre ital.[ein], wo wir im Pirato [recte: *Il pirata*, von Bellini], de Triti [?] Rubini u die Devrient hörten. Die Devrient gefällt nicht u singt auch zu todt, auch kann sie nicht genug – besonders gegen Rubini, der mir aber doch verloren zu haben scheint.”

⁶⁴ Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 134.

In *Piano and Song*, it is also revealed that even for a fairly advanced pupil, such postclassical variations were “not easy.”⁶⁵ Indeed, the postclassical concert variations discussed in this dissertation, and which constituted the core of Wieck’s early repertory, depart from their earlier prototypes which were typically “radically simplified” or “augmented with elaborate embellishments and variations,” as will be seen in **Chapter 4**.⁶⁶ In this next section, I discuss the pianistic textures that were a defining characteristic of these concert variations, as intricately tied up with the brilliant style and developing notions of virtuosity.

⁶⁵ Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 130.

⁶⁶ Christensen, “Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera,” 71.

2.4 Pianos, pianism, and the brilliant style

Pianos were the “new modern instrument” of the 1830s: the organological developments that they underwent from the early decades of the nineteenth century were closely intertwined with emergent styles of composition and performance. Composers’ experimentation with the renewed properties of the piano led to the cultivation of the brilliant style, illuminated by Czerny as such:

The subsequent improvements in the mechanism of the Piano-forte soon gave occasion to young professors of talent, who were rising to maturity, to partly discover and partly improve upon another mode of treating the instrument, namely, the *brilliant style*, which about 1814, was distinguished by a very marked Staccato touch, by perfect correctness in the execution of the greatest difficulties, and by extreme and striking elegance and propriety in the embellishments; and which was soon acknowledged to be the most favorite and most applauded style of all [...] and by 1839,] further distinguished by even more tranquil delicacy, greater varieties of tone and in the modes of execution, a more connected flow of melody, and a still more perfect mechanism [and must continue to be considered] as the most desirable manner of all.⁶⁷

In his short survey of the history of the fortepiano and its stylistic evolution, Czerny contrasted this “modern brilliant School” with others as represented by Clementi, Cramer and Dussek, Mozart, and Beethoven. Amongst its key defining qualities was the “perfect mastery of all the technical difficulties,” the “utmost

⁶⁷ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano-Forte School*, Chapter XV, 99–100. Czerny identifies Hummel, Meyerbeer, Moscheles, and Kalkbrenner to have been the main proponents of this new style.

possible rapidity of finger," a "delicacy and grace," and the "most perfect distinctness."⁶⁸ Novel technical approaches to the keyboard and a renewed sensitivity to its sound world too contributed to the development of this new brilliant style. Czerny offers glimpses into the chief distinctions that were emerging between classical and postclassical textures: where rapid running passages once constituted an "excessive heaping together of a monstrous number of notes" or "senseless jargon," postclassical pianism built on the pre-existing requisites of executing rapid running passages distinctly and in correct time, further adding a necessary element of "attentive charm." It was through this delicacy of touch and high degree of expression that these passages were able to acquire a "real melodial [*sic*] interest" that grew to become characteristic of the brilliant style.⁶⁹

London-based virtuoso Ignaz Moscheles is frequently credited with having introduced the brilliant style to Paris, his concert of 1821 an "overnight sensation" that set new benchmarks for taste and style.⁷⁰ As a city that attracted foreign composers, performers, writers, and artists, Paris readily absorbed and nurtured this emergent style of playing — it was the scene of the "revolution" in pianism in these years, both in the cultivation of new techniques and instrument manufacturing.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano-Forte School, Part III*, Chapter XV, 100.

⁶⁹ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano-Forte School, Part III*, Chapter V, 51.

⁷⁰ Shaena Weitz, "Le Pianiste: Parisian Music Journalism and the Politics of the Piano, 1833–35" (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York, Graduate Center, City University of New York, 2016), especially Chapter 3.

⁷¹ Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism: An Historical Perspective: Including Interviews with Contemporary Performers* (White Plains, N.Y: London: Westport, Conn: Pro/Am Music Resources; Kahn & Averill; U.S. trade & retail distribution by Bold Strummer, 1992), 5–13.

Parisian pianists contributed to the development of this unique, “pure” finger technique — the *jeu perlé*. Its prime focus was on the equality of touch and an unforced tone controlled entirely by the fingers, with an ideal of a sound quality that can be likened to the imagery of individual pearls of the necklace, each note bright and perfectly formed.⁷²

Piano development and manufacture thrived in postclassical Paris, which had nearly 200 piano firms by the middle of the century; pianos’ organological advancements were closely intertwined with the development of pianistic technique and musical aesthetics.⁷³ Sébastien Érard’s invention of the double escapement mechanism fulfilled the brilliant style’s predilections for clarity, delicacy, precision, and equality. Patented in 1821, it allowed for finer control: the hammer had to travel less than half the usual distance of pre-existing mechanisms, remaining close to the string until the finger released the key completely.⁷⁴

Aesthetically, Dana Gooley contextualizes the brilliant style as the sounding equivalent of a wider culture of materialism, in that it had a distinct “noteyness” that

⁷² This development also reflects the influences of earlier French composers such as Couperin and Rameau, who advocated for a finger-based technique: well-schooled and independent fingers ought to stay close to the keys, with a suppleness of the wrist. See Timbrell, *French Pianism*, 14–15.

⁷³ Timbrell, *French Pianism*, 5–13. Carl Czerny uses similar imagery to describe this technique: these “musical rows of pearls” are an ideal of musical beauty achieved through a “pure, clear, rapid, and strictly equal execution of such runs.” See *Letters to a Young Lady, on the Art of Playing the Pianoforte*, trans. James Alexander Hamilton (London: R. Cocks & Co., 1838), 15.

⁷⁴ Timbrell, *French Pianism*, 2–3.

encapsulated the material properties physically afforded by the piano.⁷⁵ This percussive attack of the piano and the materiality of its “mechanical” sound was a source of delight to its listener’s ear; when used as a device for decorating and embellishing an already-popular theme, the brilliant style successfully “avoided public distaste for abstraction by drawing on what listeners had seen on stage to present brilliant new sonic images.”⁷⁶

Pianistic development during these decades did not merely advance the precision, clarity, and velocity sought out by the brilliant style — it was also influenced by a longstanding preoccupation with mimicking the human voice on the keyboard. In laying out his rubrics of what constitutes a good performance, C.P.E. Bach repeatedly alludes to the importance of the voice; in order to reach an understanding of a “correct” performance, one has listen to (artistic) singing, and to sing for themselves.⁷⁷ In light of this, the piano’s inability to create a true legato had

⁷⁵ Dana Gooley, “The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity in the Early Nineteenth Century,” in *Franz Liszt and His World*, ed. Christopher H. Gibbs and Dana Gooley (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 91–126. Gooley’s discussion serves in part to valorize Liszt, whom he perceives to have transcended the brilliant style; he discusses Liszt’s use of pre-existing techniques to new means in attainment of new soundscapes. His discussion invites us to consider more widely the implications of materiality, in particular the developing interface of the keyboard as a medium for experiencing this culture.

⁷⁶ Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, 143–44. Schnapper, *Henri Herz, Magnat Du Piano*, 121–123. Particularly in France, where the genre of postclassical variations and other opera-derivative genres were cultivated extensively, there was a demand for music that had a simple language, especially if they had the potential to introduce the theatre into an instrumental piece. By contrast, Parisians had no fashion for the fixed forms inherited from classicism, namely sonatas, which were growingly perceived as an “abstraction.”

⁷⁷ Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, trans. William J. Mitchell, 1st ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1949), 151.

long been perceived as one of the instrument's key deficiencies, particularly on Viennese pianos that Bach was acquainted with most intimately.⁷⁸ The preface to Friedrich Wieck's *Piano and Song* reflects the way in which these ideals continued to be prized, if not even more so, in nineteenth-century pianism:

A piano teacher endowed with both intelligence and heart — whether he be concerned with “elementary” or “advanced” teaching — if he is so constituted as I picture him, must understand the art of singing, or at least demonstrate an intense interest in it. Whenever I speak of singing, moreover, I refer only to “beautiful singing,” the basis of the finest and most perfect musical representation [...] In many matters *song* and *piano* must be mutually complementary and mutually enlightening.⁷⁹

It was not until the last decades of the eighteenth century that France began to have its own piano manufacturing industry; the earliest prominent piano makers such as Érard and Ignaz Pleyel both studied in London. The development of French pianos during the early decades of the nineteenth century combined the prized qualities of both Viennese and English pianos: they were both responsive to the lightness, delicacy, and rapid action required of the popular brilliant style, while increasingly capable of creating a sustained tone and legato that was required to reproduce “Belliniesque *bel canto* melodies and Rossinian coloratura passagework” on the keyboard.⁸⁰ On the one hand, keyboard composers sought to imitate and

⁷⁸ Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, 30.

⁷⁹ Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 10.

⁸⁰ Christensen, “Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera,” 79. Christensen identifies John Field, Sigismond Thalberg, and Frédéric Chopin as

recreate the vocal experience by incorporating elements of operatic performance practice into their pianistic idioms; on the other, the evolving capabilities of the piano inspired, and had a key role in facilitating, the successful delivery of such styles of writing and playing.

Samson argues that the reciprocal relationship between the promotion of the artist and an image of the instrument itself was an integral component of the ethos of postclassical pianism.⁸¹ In addition to composing and performing, many composer-virtuosos, such as Herz, Pleyel, Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Johann Baptist Cramer, Muzio Clementi, and Daniel Steibelt, also manufactured and sold pianos. These close relationships between the domains of performance, composition, and instrument manufacturing were a key driving force behind the advancement and exploration of novel pianistic techniques and soundscapes, as well as advancements in both the popular brilliant style and *cantabile*.

As I will illustrate in my analyses of the penultimate variation of Herz's *Bravura Variations* (Chapter 4), his slow variation is still largely premised on the attack of each individual note. On the one hand, this is a reflection of the popular *stile*

composers who had important influences on the development of piano writing in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, particularly with reference to the imitation of operatic gestures. Further discussions about the differences between Viennese and English pianos can be found in Malcolm Bilson, "The Viennese Fortepiano of the Late 18th Century," *Early Music* 8, no. 2 (1980): 158–62; Katalin Komlós, *Fortepianos and Their Music: Germany, Austria, and England, 1760-1800*, Oxford Monographs on Music (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1995); David Rowland, "Pianos and Pianists c.1770 – c.1825," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 22–39; Bart Van Oort, "Haydn and the English Classical Style," *Early Music* 28, no. 1 (2000): 73–89.

⁸¹ Samson, "The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism," 127.

brillante which is strongly rooted in the sensual engagement with, and material affordances of, this popular and ubiquitous instrument. On the other, the variation blends this approach with long, lyrical, and expressive melodies, underlining a broader phenomenon in which creative approaches to timbre and the cultivation of novel sound worlds served as another measure of virtuosity — one that was of growing importance towards the end of the 1830s.⁸² Slow variations were particularly fertile ground for such experimentation, and composers frequently deployed already-popular techniques in conjunction with innovative use of the pedal, in a bid to create new sonic landscapes.

During the initial decades of the nineteenth century, virtuoso culture was predominant in concert halls in Germany and London, but cultivated most widely in private and aristocratic settings in Paris and Vienna.⁸³ As the century progressed, however, these Parisian virtuoso-composer-manufacturers began to build recital halls of their own. Érard was amongst the earliest to have built his own concert hall; young Clara Wieck performed in the Salle Érard and dined with its owners several times over the course of her three-month stint in Paris in 1832. The Salle Herz was later

⁸² Stefaniak, *Schumann's Virtuosity*, 2. Daniel Steibelt was an important figure who advanced the notion that sound could be an “inexorable, technaesthetic category of taste itself,” his works serving as exemplars of the colors that can be achieved through an interplay of articulation, characterization, pedaling, and intensity. Charles Shrader, “Daniel Steibelt, Charlatanry, and the Technaesthetics of Bon Son,” in *The Lure of Paris, 1795-1810*, ed. Tom Beghin, vol. XIII, Yearbook of the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies (U.S.A: The Westfield Center, 2021), 157–82.

⁸³ Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, 148. I further contextualize this in **Chapter 3** through a discussion of the comparatively scarce nature of Wieck’s archive of public concert programs from her Paris trip in 1832.

built in 1836, the Salle Pleyel in 1839. In these halls, concerts took place, its audience socialized, and instruments were showcased — all in the same space. The owners of these halls exhibited not just their prowess as virtuosos, but further, as makers of pianos uniquely capable of creating these new sound worlds that its audience was experiencing.

2.5 Immense Popularity

Most young Artists do not sufficiently reflect how very important the *first debut* before the Public is. The future fortune of the Artist depends upon whether he is successful the first time in awakening general attention, admiration, and delight [...] It lies in the nature of things, that a numerous and therefore a mixed audience must be surprised by something extraordinary; and the sure, nay, the only means is; finished bravura of style combined with good taste. In this sense even the choice of the piece, with which the player is to make his debut, must be a lucky one. It must agree with the newest taste, and afford the Artist opportunities for overcoming the most shewy difficulties, as well as for the execution of melodies and delightfully embellished *Cantilenas* [...] For this purpose, the best compositions are brilliant Fantasias on *such themes as are generally known to and approved by the Public*.⁸⁴

In 1834, it was written in *Le Pianiste*: “An idea is a great deal; but knowing how to make good use of it is something else, it is everything.”⁸⁵ The popularity and ubiquity of these postclassical concert variations can be attributed to the fact that they readily lent themselves in fulfilment of these requisites as laid out by Czerny. Virtuosos took each variation as an opportunity for displaying yet new “shewy difficulties” that blended various fashionable, developing facets of virtuosity in a manner that pandered to contemporary tastes and aesthetics, on an instrument that was not just fashionable, but ubiquitous.

⁸⁴ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano-Forte School*, 88; Italics mine.

⁸⁵ *Le Pianiste*, VIII (June 1834), 117, cited in and translated by Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 284.

The relationship between the operatic and the pianistic was reciprocal. On the one hand, they aided in the popularization of new operas, particularly given the relative inaccessibility of the latter. On the other, basing these variations on a familiar, delightful thematic idea that the audience knew and loved could only propagate the new work's popularity. Often, these variations did not merely "recontextualize" their original source material, but further grew to eclipse them.⁸⁶ Beyond recapturing their initial experiences of this material at the opera, these postclassical concert variations provided fresh impetus for re-experiencing this material. The feats of virtuosity executed and showcased by their makers were a new source of inspiration for its audience, who now further sought to re-invoke their experiences in concert halls by emulating the great virtuoso that they had heard — this time, on an instrument that was readily accessible.

If purchasing the virtuoso's (make of) piano offered the promise of a yet more successful and satisfactory re-creation of the effects seen in the performance in one's own home, then one can view the proliferation of piano methods during these decades as representing another facet of the complex musical ecosystem: these manuals promised to provide the amateur with the mechanical tools to come as close to the performance that they had heard and enjoyed on the concert stage, as presented by the revered, famous virtuoso. The thriving industry of music publishing

⁸⁶ Christensen, "Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera," and Oliferko, "Hexameron – an Instrumental Di Bravura Song or a Musical Study in Character Psychology," 222.

readily catered to, profited from, and further propagated this widespread demand for musical scores and pedagogical methods alike; indeed, it played no small role in fueling this aspirational dynamic between the audience-consumer and virtuoso-composer who profited greatly from such sales — later in **Chapter 4**, I will explore the complexities underlying these relationships.

Musicologist Damien Ehrhardt has identified at least 863 collections of variations that were in circulation in Paris between 1830 and 1850, with the figure rising to 1012 if simultaneous editions of the same pieces by different publishers were to be included.⁸⁷ Publishing postclassical concert variations was extremely lucrative: though Parisian-based Herz sold his pianos and commanded significant fees from concertizing, he made most of his income through publishing. At the peak of his success in the genre, Herz sold manuscripts of his works to publishers for at least 5000F.

According to Schnapper's study of market conditions from the early decades of the century, it would seem that this price was higher than what an average grand piano would have cost, and comparable to, if not higher than, what Rossini would have earned for writing a single opera in Italy. Not only was the industry favorable to composers, but it was also equally lucrative for publishers. The sale of this copyright from the composer to the publisher then rendered the latter the direct beneficiary of the profit margins made from sales alone: Heinrich Probst, an agent for Breitkopf in

⁸⁷ Schnapper, *Henri Herz, Magnat Du Piano*, 122.

Paris, earned 4000F a year — this was four times the annual salary of a worker during this time.⁸⁸

We can see just how integral variations were to musical culture at the time through this contemporary review which, although potentially biased, having been written by Oscar Comettant, a friend of Herz's himself, corroborates with the broader point of just how lucrative the composing and marketing of these variations were, and how much pleasure and entertainment this music provided to its consumers:

One literally lined up at the door of the publisher who was selling a new composition by Henri Herz, to be the first to have it, to try it, to play it in salons; and, for several weeks, it was the great event which the musical world talked about everywhere.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Schnapper, *Henri Herz, Magnat Du Piano*, 133. She provides a detailed table of each work.

⁸⁹ Oscar Comettant. “*on faisait littéralement queue à la porte de l'éditeur qui mettait en vente une nouvelle composition de Henri Herz, pour être des premiers à l'avoir, à l'essayer, à la jouer dans les salons; et, Durant plusieurs semaines, c'était le grand événement dont le monde musical s'entretenait un peu partout.*” Cited in Schnapper, *Henri Herz, Magnat Du Piano*, 123.

2.6 Critical reception

The steep decline in the composition and publication of postclassical concert variations post-1840 can be attributed to three main factors. First, where Paris had propagated the rapid and mass cultivation of the genre in the initial decades of the century, the turn in attitudes towards intellectual property beginning around the middle of the century saw increasing negativity directed towards the publication of derivative works. Earlier in the century, composers only had to prove a personal contribution in order to publish second-hand derivatives of works; from 1855, however, the free borrowing of themes was largely prohibited, and composers would have had to obtain permission from the original author — in this case, the composers and/or librettists of the original opera — before they could publish such works. This was not limited to variations, but extended to other musical genres such as potpourris, fantasies, and rondos.⁹⁰

Second, the intricately intertwined relationships between the genre of variations and industrial mechanisms of the postclassical milieu served as a double-edged sword. The public constantly demanded new sets of variations, particularly

⁹⁰ Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 281–83. It was particularly in Paris that such mutually symbiotic relationships between composer and publisher were nurtured in the early decades of the century. She discusses Hünten’s experiences in the domain of publishing, and the ways in which the German market only displayed an interest in him after he had been recognized as a successful composer in Paris. Her discussion reveals the ways in which the French capital provided unparalleled opportunities for composers to enjoy international success and served as a gateway to other European and American markets.

after first performances of their associated operas (see **Table 2.1**). To this end, composers embraced — even required — standardization that was characteristic of mercantile culture, as it was this very fixed and standardized manner of writing that enabled composers to fulfil the public's rapid and perpetual demand for new works.⁹¹

Table 2.1: Publication of opera-based variations in relation to their original operas.⁹²

Opera Productions	Derivative variations by Henri Herz
Méhul: <i>Joseph</i> 1807, rev. <u>1822–28</u>	Opus 20: <i>Variations de bravoure sur la romance de 'Joseph' (Méhul)</i> <u>1825</u>
Meyerbeer: <i>Crociato in Egitto</i> <u>Sept 1825</u>	Opus 23: <i>Variations brillantes sur le choeur favori de 'Il Crociato' (Meyerbeer)</i> <u>1825</u>
Rossini: <i>La Siège de Corinthe</i> <u>1826</u>	Opus 36: <i>Grandes variations sur le choeur des grecs du siège de Corinthe (Rossini)</i> <u>1827</u>
Carafa: <i>La Violette</i> <u>Oct 1828</u>	Opus 48: <i>Variations brillantes avec introduction et finale alla militare ('La Violette', Carafa)</i> <u>April 1829</u>
Rossini: <i>Guillaume Tell</i> <u>1829</u>	Opus 50: <i>Grandes variations sur une marche favorite de 'Guillaume Tell' (piano 4 hands)</i> <u>1829</u> (debuted in <u>1830</u>)

The *Gazette musicale* described Herz as a “good industrialist” whose production of variations was no more than a product of him turning the wheels of his “variation machine.”⁹³ Contemporaneous to these comments was Dietrich Winkel’s invention of a componium (1821, debuted in 1823): a mechanical musical instrument

⁹¹ Samson, “The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism,” 116.

⁹² Schnapper, *Henri Herz, Magnat Du Piano*, 142–43.

⁹³ Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 292.

capable of churning out literal variations. Roger Moseley's discussion of this mechanical-organ-like instrument illuminates the ways in which it simulated human improvisation; it first "decomposed" the variation theme, then produced its own "variations" upon different aspects of the received material.⁹⁴ Did the *Gazette musicale* make this comment about Herz with this piece of machinery in mind? Winkel's componium can, after all, be seen as a technologically automated means of generating variations, paralleling that which is humanly represented in Czerny's and Hünten's treatises.⁹⁵

Such industrialized and mechanical approaches, as will be discussed in **Chapter 4**, blurred the lines between the human, superhuman, and the inhuman, inducing a considerable amount of anxiety in contemporary discourse. On the one hand, the resultant standardized structural framework that emerged out of composers' rapid production of the genre served as a point of familiarity that the audience could rely on. On the other, in their quest to meet these contemporary demands, composers relied on a standard repository of shared figuration and styles, leading to a perception of their pianistic figuration and textures as mechanical and stylistically uniform.

⁹⁴ Roger Moseley, *Keys to Play: Music as a Ludic Medium from Apollo to Nintendo* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016), 159–67.

⁹⁵ Hünten, *Méthode Pour Le Pianoforte*; Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation*.

Far too many contemporary operas — or at least those originating from beyond the Rhine — die at the hands of piano arrangers before they even reach the Rubicon. Scarcely has such a poor child emerged from the head of the composer when it is sprung on the Parisian stage clad with tam-tam, triangle and the link — a leap that often turns into a somersault (*salto mortale*). Scarcely has its feeble germination begun than the transcription vampires immediately descend upon the sweet, defenseless body and begin to suck out with their gluttonous snouts the few inventive and fresh ideas offered by such products in order to send into the world études, quadrilles, transcriptions, souvenir themes, and *airs variés* arranged for ten, twenty, sixty, or more fingers of every kind of proficiency or lack thereof.⁹⁶

This Viennese critic's exasperated and satirical remarks echo Clara Schumann's expression of utter disdain towards this "whole world of mechanical virtuoso showpieces" from six years earlier; nevertheless, she recognized the continued importance of this repertoire in public concerts.⁹⁷ The resultant phenomenon of "empty copying," the emergence of the *stile brillante* as an empty and superficial manifestation of virtuosity, and relationships increasingly drawn between the visual and acrobatic, were beginning to disturb critics as early as the 1820s — all of which will be explored in **Chapter 4**.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *Allgemeine Wiener Musik-Zeitung* 108 (1847): 135. Cited in and translated by Christensen, "Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera," 82.

⁹⁷ Robert Schumann, *Tagebücher*, Vol. 2 ed. Gerd Neuhaus (Leipzig: VEB, 1987), 181, cited in and translated by Stefaniak, *Becoming Clara Schumann*, 22, as well as in Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, 255. Grimes, in "Formal Innovation and Virtuosity in Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor," cites Litzmann, *Clara Schumann: An Artist's Life*, I: 315–16.

⁹⁸ Weitz, "Le Pianiste: Parisian Music Journalism and the Politics of the Piano, 1833–35."

Though largely overlooked in musical scholarship and performance, this chapter illustrates the rich and complex ecosystem of which postclassical concert variations were a part, as well as the unique milieu in which they thrived — one invested in the “characteristic deployment of recognized skills rather than the biography of the artist or the work.”⁹⁹ Their importance to musical culture of the time is reflected in Wieck’s extensive programming of them, which I will examine in the next chapter. As I revisit the genre that enabled Wieck to make her entrance to, and mark on, the concert stage in her youth, I explore the ways in which postclassical concert variations served as her calling card, outlining trends that arise from an archival study of her concert playbills. The final three case studies serve as practical demonstrations of the aesthetic, stylistic, and structural features characterizing this marginalized repertory, while offering a glimpse into the changing notions of virtuosity that characterized musical discourse and criticism during these years, and which gave rise to Robert Schumann’s disdain of the genre — as presented at the start of this chapter.

⁹⁹ Samson, “The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism,” 117.

CHAPTER 3

Clara Wieck: Programming Concert Variations

3.1 *Methodology*

To date, the most thorough survey of Wieck's concert programming can be found in Reinhard Kopiez, Andreas C. Lehmann, and Janina Klassen's historiometric analysis of her entire corpus of concert playbills.¹ Their primary goal was to provide a means for cultivating a deeper understanding of Wieck-Schumann's contributions to the canonization of repertoire and composers — as well as the ways in which this varied over time, and in different locales.² Having entered all Wieck-Schumann's playbills into a database, Kopiez et al. then used computer-assisted technologies to tabulate information about the 536 solo piano and chamber music works which she performed over the course of her entire career. From this, the number of times individual works

¹ Reinhard Kopiez, Andreas C. Lehmann, and Janina Klassen, "Clara Schumann's Collection of Playbills: A Historiometric Analysis of Life-Span Development, Mobility, and Repertoire Canonization," *Poetics* 37 (2009): 50–73.

² See also Claudia de Vries, "Die Konzertpianistin," in *Die Pianistin Clara Wieck-Schumann: Interpretation Im Spannungsfeld von Tradition Und Individualität*, Schumann Forschungen, Bd. 5 (Mainz; New York: Schott, 1996), 186–221. See especially the first sub-section, "Reisen, Rezeption und Repertoire." Other scholars have also drawn upon a selection of concert programs to discuss broader trends in her programming; see Pamela Susskind Pettler, "Clara Schumann's Recitals, 1832–50," *19th-Century Music* 4, no. 1 (Summer 1980): 70–76; Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, Revised Edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Alexander Stefaniak, *Becoming Clara Schumann: Performance Strategies and Aesthetics in the Culture of the Musical Canon* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2021). Wieck-Schumann's role in cultivating Robert Schumann's legacy is often a point of scholarly interest; see also Roe-Min Kok, "Clara: Robert's Posthumous Androgyn," in *Clara Schumann Studies*, ed. Joe Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 223–45.

were performed, as well as the percentage of her repertoire that they constituted, are brought to light. This permits the analysis of broader trends; however, given that their tabulations are banded in five-year periods — beginning in 1829, until the last period, which spans 1884–1891 — nuances between individual years are lost. Given that the time frame of the present study is until 1840, a breakdown of the “1839–43” bracket is necessary. Further, the limitations of such broad groupings become apparent when attempting to trace the specific distribution of not only the genre, but also particular composers and works.

This quantitative information can be supplemented with the index published by the Robert Schumann-Haus in Zwickau, which is a collation and transcription of the complete collection of all her concert playbills preserved there.³ As prefaced in their document, the limitations to this latter source are, first, that her performances as part of non-musical programs — such as those including *Schauspiel* or improvisations — have been omitted. Second, if several works by the same composer were to be performed in the same program, they are not always reflected separately. Third, there are no details as to whether she performed works in part or in full. Finally, while this index offers information about the composers whose works she programmed in all her concerts, specific details of these works are not provided; for example, opus numbers are rarely supplied.

³ “Collection of Concert Programs,” *Robert Schumann Haus Zwickau*, accessed October 1, 2023, <https://www.schumann-zwickau.de/en/04/clara/Konzertreisen.php>.

Nevertheless, both Kopiez et al.'s study and the Robert-Schumann-Haus index are foundational to this study, in which I delve more deeply into Wieck's programming practices. A preliminary examination of the first two periods presented by Kopiez et al., 1829–1833 and 1834–1838, reveals the curious significance of a composer and work largely unknown to the twenty-first century pianist: Henri Herz, and his *Bravura Variations*. In those first ten years, Wieck performed this work more than any other. Considering that Kopiez et al. did not examine merely solo piano works, but all works which included a piano — *Lieder*, chamber, and orchestral repertoire — the prominence of Herz and this set of variations is significant.

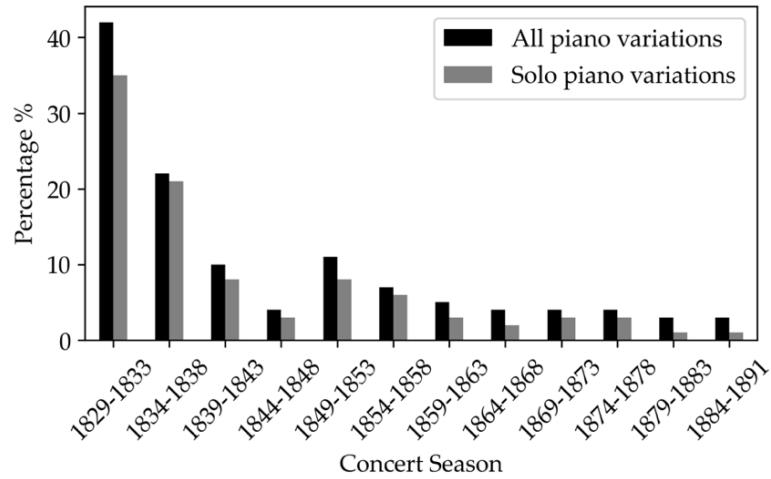


Figure 3.1: Piano variations as percentage of Clara Wieck's repertoire per season.

More widely, a closer examination of their data suggests the broader significance of piano variations as a genre. In Fig. 3.1, I represent the genre as a proportion of her repertoire, which dominated early in her career but declined sharply after her marriage to Robert Schumann in 1840. Further, while she performed

both four-hand variations as well as solo variations, the latter genre is of much greater significance; they were comprised exclusively of concert variations, as discussed in **Chapter 2**. These solo variations will be the focus of this chapter.

The findings presented in this chapter are largely derived from my visit to the Robert Schumann-Haus in Zwickau, during which time I worked with Wieck's collection of concert playbills. There, I examined two resources in tandem: the databank which holds electronic scans of each original concert program, and the *askSam7* software onto which the staff have transcribed each program, rendering this database text searchable. My goal is, first, to yield quantitative results which will enable me to map out general trends that have the potential to illuminate the significance of particular composers and variation sets. Then, I juxtapose these numerical data with a qualitative examination of individual concert programs, focusing on the ways in which Wieck programmed solo variations in her concerts: how many variation sets were featured in each concert, where in the order of program they came, and what other genres were featured alongside them. More broadly, the delineation of such trends serves as an impetus for exploring what the genre meant for her, and how she used it to cultivate her identity as a young virtuosa in the early years of her career.

I focus my study on her first 182 programs, beginning with Wieck's first concert at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on October 20, 1828, and ending with her concert at the Saale des Stadthauses in Weimar on September 5, 1840 — a week before her

marriage to Robert Schumann on September 12. While the data I have obtained are largely commensurate with those tabulated by Kopiez et al., there are minor discrepancies; where relevant, I will include a brief discussion. Unless indicated otherwise, the data presented in the rest of this chapter are my own, with complete tables provided in the Appendix to this chapter.

Wieck's entire collection of concert playbills enables a more comprehensive picture of her concert activities. I consider these materials in conjunction with three other important primary source materials: of greatest relevance, and most extensively cited in this chapter, is Clara Wieck-Schumann's *Jugendtagebücher 1827–1840*, in which Gerd Nauhaus, Nancy Reich, and Kristin Krahe have edited and transcribed all the diary entries as co-written by Clara and Friedrich Wieck during these years.⁴ Several letters from Friedrich Wieck's collection, as well as the reviews he occasionally alludes to, are also useful for this study.⁵ Finally, I draw on Clara Wieck and Robert Schumann's brief discussions of some of these variations in their correspondences.⁶ Not only do these entries and letters provide a direct glimpse into their perspectives on these works, their motivations for particular programming practices, and their performance settings and reception, they can also resolve ambiguities or gaps in the

⁴ Clara Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840: nach den Handschriften* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2019).

⁵ Friedrich Wieck, *Briefe aus den Jahren 1830-1838*, ed. Käthe Walch-Schumann (Köln: A. Volk-Verlag, 1968).

⁶ Clara Schumann et al., *Briefwechsel von Clara und Robert Schumann*, Schumann Briefedition, Band 4 (Köln: Dohr, 2012).

public records. This applies to entire periods — specifically, the absence of concert playbills from her Paris trip in 1832 — and specific concert(s) for which there is insufficient information in the playbill(s) alone.⁷

This chapter is structured around three sample concert programs, from which I draw out features that point towards broader trends in Wieck's programming and repertoire. Much of this chapter will be focused on Herz's *Bravura Variations* and Chopin's Variations on Mozart's *Là ci darem la mano*, Op. 2 — the two most often and consistently programmed works throughout this decade. Here, I investigate their respective significance for her, and how this can be understood in light of their reception, as intertwined with their stylistic features and contemporary aesthetics. Both Wieck's own set of *Concert Variations*, Op. 8 and Adolf Henselt's *Concert Variations*, Op. 1 were programmed only from 1837; as such, they will only be examined briefly.

⁷ An example that will be discussed later is programs #103 and #104 (Berlin, 1837), in which both playbills do not specify which set of variations by Herz Wieck performed: they were simply referred to as "Variationen von H. Herz," and "Variationen für das Pianoforte, von Herz" respectively. A letter from Friedrich Wieck to Tinchen about these concerts reveal these to be Herz's *Bravura Variations*.

3.2 Outlining broad trends

<u>Leipzig Gewandhaus: Nov 8, 1830</u>	
AUBER	OUVERTURE aus Frau Diavolo (neu)
LINDPAINTER	VARIATIONEN über „An Alexis send' ich dich“ (vocal)
KALKBRENNER	RONDO BRILLANT für Pianoforte mit Orchester, O. 101 (neu)
WIECK, C.	LIED mit Pianoforte-Begleitung
HERZ	VARIATIONS BRILLANTES für Pianoforte solo, O. 23
<i>[Intermission]</i>	
CZERNY	QUATUOR CONCERTANT für 4 Pianoforte mit Orchester, über mehrere beliebte Melodien, O. 230 (neu)
F. WIECK	ROMANZE für die Physharmonica mit Pianoforte
ROSSINI	ARIA aus Donna del Lago mit Orchester
WIECK	VARIATIONEN über ein Originalthema für Pianoforte solo

Concert Program #2.

I begin with an examination of Wieck's second public appearance in November 1830 at the Leipzig Gewandhaus — this was the first concert in which she performed as a soloist.⁸ Several features come to the fore: first, this concert program is characteristic of the virtuoso concerts in which Wieck performed throughout the 1830s, in that they are of a nature that Weber terms “miscellaneous” — and Reich,

⁸ In her concert debut on Oct 20, 1828 at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, she did not perform any solo works, but rather, Kalkbrenner's Variations on a March from *Moses with Emilie Reichold*. The soloist of this concert was Caroline Perthaler from Graz, Styria (then known as Grütz, Steyermark). See **Program #1**.

“diversified.” In these concerts, alternations between vocal and instrumental selections were the norm.⁹ As such, the concert would not be performed by one artist, but rather, shared with others. In this concert, Wieck performed alongside Dem. Henriette Grabau, Herren Musikdirector Dorn, Hammermeister, Knorr, and Wendler. The Gewandhaus-Orchester performed the overture and accompanied these performers where required.

Second, the program was heavily oriented to the vocal: apart from Kalkbrenner’s *Rondo Brillant* for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 101, Friedrick Wieck’s *Romance* for Physharmonica and Piano, and Wieck’s own variations on an “original theme,”¹⁰ all six other works had clear associations with the vocal. The concert opened with an opera overture; in addition to Grabau’s and Hammermeister’s vocal numbers, Carl Czerny’s Concerto for Four Pianos was based upon “several favorite melodies.” While not indicated on the program, Henri Herz’s *Variations brillantes*, Op. 23 was based on a theme from Meyerbeer’s *Il Crociato*. As discussed in the first chapter, it was normal for such concerts to be “suffused” with music from the theater; in the aftermath of the “overriding changes” in virtuoso and benefit concerts from the 1810s, the focus on contemporary opera selections and fantasies seen here was to remain widespread throughout the 1830s and 40s.¹¹

⁹ William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, Revised Edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

¹⁰ This set of variations is believed to have been lost.

¹¹ Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, 143–49.

Third, all the works performed were by living composers, with one third of the program advertised, explicitly, as new works. Opening the concert was the overture to Daniel Auber's *Fra Diavolo* — an opera that was premiered in January that year. Originally in French, it was also performed extensively in Berlin, in German, throughout 1830.¹² The idea of novelty was appealing during this time, and Wieck's concert programs suggest that this phenomenon not only persisted through the decade, but appeared to be of growing importance as it progressed. Where in program #2 these works were marked new in parentheses, this gradually became integrated into the titles of works. In December 1835, Wieck performed Chopin's "Neuestes Notturno" to her audience;¹³ all throughout 1836, she programmed the "Neueste Bravour-Variationen von H. Herz, Op. 76."¹⁴ That she advertised this set of variations by Herz as being new in Dresden twice, nine months apart in #88 and #101, suggests that the term was not only used in a literal sense as in a premiere, but more broadly applicable to the idea of being novel, fresh, and consequently appealing.

Finally, both two pieces for solo piano that Wieck performed were sets of piano variations: one by Henri Herz, and one of her own. We can understand her propensity for programming solo piano variations from this diary entry dated March

¹² Alfred Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera, 1597-1940*, 2nd ed., revised and corrected by Frank Walker. (Genève: Societas Bibliographica, 1955), 723–25.

¹³ Program #81, Plauen: Dec 1, 1835.

¹⁴ Programs #88 (Dresden: Feb 4, 1836), #90 (Görlitz: Feb 26, 1836), #92 (Breslau: Mar 11, 1836), and #96 (Breslau: Mar 28, 1836), #98 (Naumberg: Sept 16, 1836), #99 (Jena: Sept 24, 1836), #100 (Freiberg: Nov 29, 1836), and #101 (Dresden: Dec 9, 1836).

6, 1830, in which Wieck revealed that her Variations [on a Tyrolean song], two other sets of variations by Herz and Maiseder (for piano four hands), and the first movement of Field's Second Concerto were of the greatest appeal to an audience.¹⁵

The data tabulated from my survey of solo variations in context of all her performances during this decade is reflected in **Figure 3.2**. Wieck performed concert variations in 135 of her first 182 concerts. Up until 1837, variations were featured in nearly every concert, although this percentage began to decline post-1837 (see also **Figure 3.1**). While these orange points reflect the number of concerts in which concert variations were performed, it does not account for the fact that in many concerts, as in program #2, she performed more than one set of solo variations.¹⁶

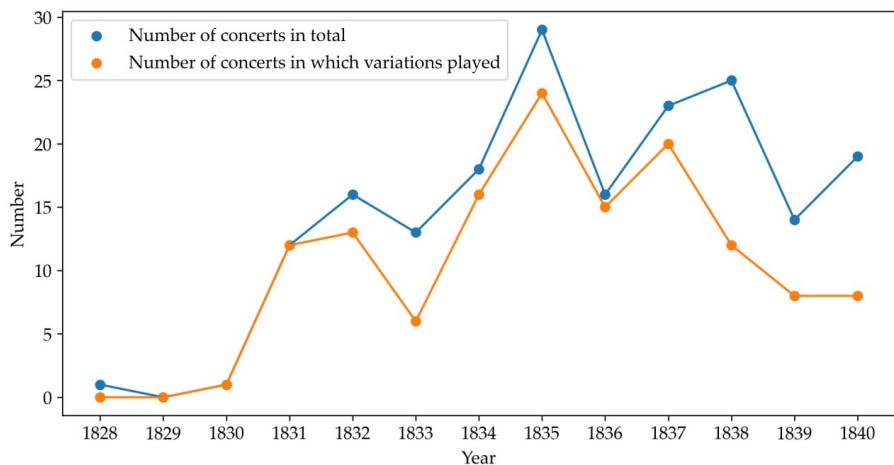


Figure 3.2: Number of concerts in which solo variations were featured.

¹⁵ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 57: "Meine Var u. Herz Var à 4/m u Maiseder Var a/4 m. u das Solo von Field gefielen am mehrsten."

¹⁶ She performed two sets of variations in concerts #2, #7, #8, #10, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #19, #32, #41, #50, #53, #54, #59, #62, #63, #67, #71, #83, #89, #90, #92, #95, #106, #108, #118; in #7a and #9, she performed three sets of solo variations. For the complete data, please see **Tables 3.7-3.11**.

It can be seen from **Figure 3.2** that the number of concerts in which variations were performed is largely correlated with the number of concerts performed, at least until 1838, at which point these lines in the table diverge. This corresponds to the preliminary findings of Kopiez et al. as represented in **Figure 3.1**: the genre ceases to be a significant part of her repertoire in the years leading up to, and after, her marriage. Accordingly, the programs in which variations are absent are concentrated in the final three years of the 1830s. In her early career, the absence of variations can be primarily accounted for by two scenarios: first, that she was performing a minor role in another artist's benefit concert, playing either a short solo work such as Schumann's *Toccata* or Chopin's *Mazurkas*, or as a collaborative musician in genres such as four-hand duets, two-piano duets, aria accompaniment, or piano trios. Second, in these concerts, she performed concerto movements, particularly her own, Chopin's, or Pixis's — more frequently in part, but also in full.¹⁷

In the later part of the decade, her concerts included an increasing selection of Chopin's and Henselt's Etudes, as well as Fantasies by Liszt and Thalberg based on Paccini's *Niobe* and Rossini's *Moses in Egypt* respectively. It was around 1838 that Liszt began transcribing Schubert's *Lieder*; accompanying the decline in concerts with variations is an increase in the number of concerts in which she performed these transcriptions, most often *Ständchen*, *Lob der Thränen*, *Ave Maria*, *Gretchen am Spinnrad*,

¹⁷ Variations and concerti were not exclusive. Given, however, that many of these concerts in which she performed only concerti are subscription concerts or private concerts, it is possible that she was performing repertoire requested by the organizer.

and *Erlkönig*. With Liszt, as with her choice of Etudes, she reflects a continued practice of programming the latest works, and the contemporary fashion for doing so; Chopin's and Henselt's Etudes often included an explicit reference to their novelty, similar to the ways in which she introduced Herz's new works. Her performances of these transcriptions and fantasies were not exclusive; occasionally, she would program them with variations in the same concert. Considering that variations were often criticized for their showcase of virtuosity, the rise in these fantasies and transcriptions — no less virtuosic — amid the decline of the popularity of variations presents an interesting juxtaposition and invites a further consideration of the ways in which the relationships between the vocal and pianistic virtuosity were changing during the later years of the 1830s.

Concurrently, this period reflects the growing prominence of Bach's C♯ major (Prelude and) Fugue, as well as Beethoven's *Appassionata*, Op. 57, especially its final (two) movement(s). She began programming these works in 1835, which invites a further investigation into her approaches to historicism, otherwise most frequently attributed to the second and third periods of her life.¹⁸ While these questions remain

¹⁸ Wieck's initial incorporation of Bach and Beethoven into her repertoire coincided with Mendelssohn's establishment of a series of *Historische Concerte* at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, which publicly championed German musical historicism. Yet, as Christoph Wolff shows, Bach's keyboard music continued to be played consistently in private circles throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century, particularly in the salon of Sara Levy — the grand-aunt of Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn. We can perceive Wieck's programming practices during these years, therefore, as an amplification of a continued tradition on the concert platform. See "A Bach Cult in Late-Eighteenth-Century Berlin: Sara Levy's Musical Salon," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 58, no. 3 (2005): 26–31. See also James Garratt, "Mendelssohn and the Rise of Musical Historicism," in *The Cambridge Companion to*

outside the scope of this dissertation, this brief survey of the remaining her 52 programs reveals the potential for a wealth of information to be uncovered through a deeper study of her programming strategies from this period of her life.

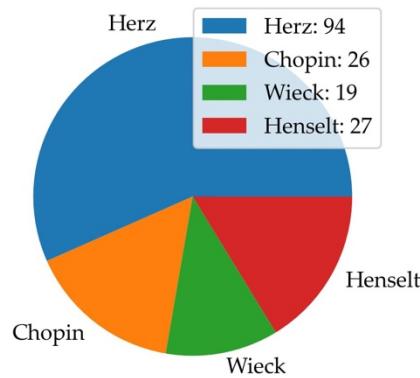


Figure 3.3: Number of solo variations performed per composer, 1828–1840.¹⁹

Returning to the genre of variations, this breakdown of the composers whose variations Wieck performed reveals her overarching propensity for programming those by Herz: of her 167 performances of concert variations, 94 were by him. Meanwhile, Chopin and Henselt each composed just one set of variations. Chopin's Variations on Mozart's *Là ci darem la mano* was composed in 1828; Wieck programmed it 26 times between 1831 and 1838. Equally significant is Henselt's Variations on Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*, which Wieck programmed 27 times.

¹⁹ Mendelssohn, ed. Peter Jameson Mercer-Taylor (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11–25, as well as Peter Jameson Mercer-Taylor, “Mendelssohn and the Institution(s) of German Art Music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Mendelssohn*, 11.

¹⁹ Program #109 features a set of variations, however, its composer is not specified. During this time, she was regularly performing the variations of Herz, Chopin, and her own; I have omitted this from subsequent analyses, which seek to establish trends by way of making comparisons between composers and their works.

Table 3.1: Programming Herz Variations.

Work	Number of times
Op. 20 <i>Variations de bravoure 'Joseph' (Méhul)</i>	41
Op. 23 <i>Variations brillantes 'Il Crociato' (Meyerbeer)</i>	18
Op. 48 <i>Variations brillantes 'La Violette' (Carafa)</i>	11
Op. 76 <i>Variations brillantes di bravura sur le Trio Favori du Pré aux Clercs (Hérold)</i>	11
Op. 36 <i>Grandes variations 'Corinthe' (Rossini)</i>	7
Op. 51 <i>Variations brillantes 'Danses brillantes' (Reissiger)</i>	2
Op. 62 <i>Grandes variations 'Euriante' (Weber)</i>	1
<i>Unknown</i>	3

Wieck performed seven of Herz's variations. Of her 94 performances, 41 were of the *Bravura Variations*, Op. 20. Not only did the frequency with which she performed Herz's *Bravura Variations* far outweigh any other variation sets of his, or of any other composer, Kopiez et al.'s study further reveals the *Bravura Variations* as the work which Wieck performed the greatest number of times between 1828 and 1838.²⁰

²⁰ There is a discrepancy in the data which I have presented and those by Kopiez et al. They have identified forty performances of the *Bravura Variations* between 1829 and 1838. This would be because they have identified 18 between 1829–33, whereas I have identified 17. This can be attributed to the ambiguity surrounding Program #11, in Kassel, on November 22, 1831. It is indicated on her concert program that she performed “*Variationen für Pianoforte von Herz*.” This is rare for her early years — there are no comparable ambiguities until 1835. Kopiez et al. have interpreted this to be the *Bravura Variations*. While there is good reason to believe that this was yet another performance of a set of variations that dominated her

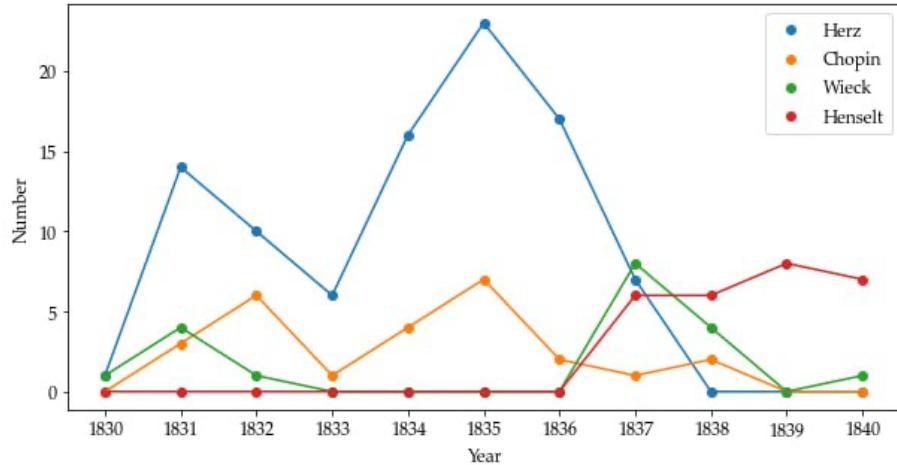


Figure 3.4: Number of solo variations performed per year until 1840, by composer.

Although Herz emerges as a prominent composer, the breakdown offered in **Table 3.1** suggests that his other sets of variations did not have any particular importance in Wieck's repertoire.²¹ Instead, it is Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* and Henselt's *Concert Variations* that were of next most importance, at least in frequency. I argue, however, that the distribution of variations as performed throughout the decade reveals that Chopin's were more significant to her early career as Clara Wieck. Herz and Chopin were the only two composers whose variations she began to program right from the start of her career, Herz in 1830 and Chopin in 1831, and

repertoire at large, it is worth noting that she was also programming Herz's Opuses 48 (twice) and 23 (four times) that year. For this reason, I have classed the set of variations from program #11 under "Unknown." Nevertheless, this difference is negligible for the purpose of this argument — the *Bravura Variations* still remains the work which she performed the greatest number of times. That the total figure turned out to be greater than theirs can be attributed to the fact that programs #103 and #104 are ambiguous in the concert programs; a study of Friedrich Wieck's letter from March 2, 1837, reveals the work she performed in these two concerts to have been Herz's *Bravura Variations*.

²¹ Wieck did not perform any other solo piano works by Herz apart from these variations, although his oeuvre of virtuosic piano music also included Rondos and Fantasies.

continued to be featured consistently for most of the decade.²² Wieck performed some of her own variations at the start of her career, such as seen in program #2, although these variations have sadly have now been lost; in 1837, she composed, and began performing, her only set of variations in this style: her *Concert Variations*, Op. 8.

While the statistical frequency of Henselt's variations seem like they might also warrant significant consideration, performances of the work were heavily skewed to the final third of the decade. That she began programming it only in 1837 is curious, given that the work was composed in 1830, shortly after Herz's *Bravura Variations* (1825) and Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* (1827), and contemporaneous with the other variations of Herz's which Wieck chose to program throughout the first two-thirds of the decade. Further, while she stopped programming all the other sets of variations seen here after 1840, she continued to program Henselt's *Concert Variations* until 1847. While the factors behind these shifting aesthetics lie outside the scope of the dissertation, they will be briefly alluded to in the final chapter. Here, I focus on Herz's *Bravura Variations* and Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano*, whose consistency in programming is a testament to their appeal in light of contemporary aesthetics, popular pianism, as well as the genre of concert variations.

²² The first set of variations by Herz which Wieck performed in 1830 was not the *Bravura Variations*, but rather, his Op. 23 Variations on a theme from Meyerbeer's *Il Crociato*. She did not begin learning Herz's *Bravura Variations* until February 1831.

3.3 Clara Wieck in Paris

Whilst comprehensive and illuminating, the limitation of Wieck's archive of concert playbills becomes evident when one considers that there are only two documented concerts from her two-month long sojourn to Paris in 1832: the very city that stood at the center of virtuoso culture in the 1830s.²³ Like Paganini and Thalberg, Wieck had herself the same status of a foreign, touring virtuosa. It is therefore curious that these archives present just two recorded performances.

A study of her *Jugendtagebücher* compensates for this partial account: it reveals the richness of her musical activities in the French capital, during which time she attended many musical soirées and dined with prominent musicians and aristocrats, often playing to them in private. Of the fifty-nine days she spent in Paris, she spent at least thirty-one of them in theatres, soirées, salons, dinners, or public concerts organized by these aristocrats, ambassadors, and other virtuosos, or by the Paris Conservatoire — whose high standards were often lauded by Friedrich Wieck.²⁴ Her *Jugendtagebücher* and Friedrich Wieck's *Briefe* reveal that she also had the opportunity to get acquainted with, and often played and improvised for Charles-Valentin Alkan,

²³ Both these concerts were hosted by François Stoepel, a journalist, critic, and concert organizer. Stoepel was a key figure who brought together virtuoso pianists in the early 1830s in Paris, including Franz Liszt and Frederic Chopin. See Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*.

²⁴ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 114. March 4, 1832: "Und nun das Orchester führt ja alles zu meisterhaft aus, spielt mit großer Reinheit | und Deutlichkeit u man möchte wohl in der ganzen Welt so ein Orchester vergebens suchen, als dieses hier im Conservatorium ist."

Pierre Baillot, Leopoldine Blahetka, Frédéric Chopin, Sébastien Érard, Delphine de Girardin, Henri Herz, Ferdinand Hiller, Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Charles Lafont, Sophie Augustine Leo, Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, Giacomo Meyerbeer, Ferdinand Paer, Niccolò Paganini, Johann Pixis, Maurice Schlesinger, Louis Spohr, and Franz Stoepel.

In **Table 3.2** overleaf, I have outlined fifteen documented musical events in which Wieck played during her time in Paris.²⁵ In it, I have included her two public performances that are also found in the archives. The lack of public concerts, but abundance of private events, is commensurate with Weber's comparative analyses of virtuoso culture in major European capitals during this time: where London enjoyed a flourishing public concert culture, in Paris — and even more so in Vienna — virtuoso culture was cultivated most widely, and thrived, in private and aristocratic settings.²⁶ While there is often insufficient or missing information about the location, setting, guests, or repertoire, the information presented gives us a glimpse into several aspects of her reception as a pianist in Paris. First, that she performed her own works — most notably her *Scherzi* — at least four times, and improvised at least three times, amongst which was her first public improvisation.²⁷

²⁵ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 108–119.

²⁶ Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste*, 148. This occurred in spite of the rise of the upper-middle-class, concert-going public.

²⁷ These are not her published *Scherzi* Nos. 1 and 2, Opp. 10 and 14, which were composed in 1838 and 1845 respectively.

Table 3.2: Clara Wieck's private performances during her first visit to Paris.

Date	Context	Repertoire
Feb 16	Unspecified	Part of a Herz Variation [unspecified]
Feb 25	Event unspecified: Chopin & Hiller	[Repertoire unspecified]
	Event unspecified: Pixin	[Repertoire unspecified] Included an improvisation
Feb 28	Dinner: Mr. Lafonta (brother-in-law of the Viscount of Corberon)	[Repertoire unspecified]
Mar 2	Big soirée: Princess Louise Vaudémont	Herz <i>Bravura Variations</i>
Mar 3	Soirée: Mad. Bonfil	Clara Wieck's Scherzi Clara Wieck's Variations
Mar 7	Event unspecified: Abbé Bardin; Prince of Dalberg	Pixin Third Trio Herz <i>Bravura Variations</i>
Mar 11	Dinner & soirée: Mad. Sophie Augustine Leo	Pixin Third Trio Herz <i>Bravura Variations</i>
	Event unspecified: Meyerbeer	Clara Wieck: own works
Mar 13	Event unspecified: Mad. Bonfil's	Pixin Concerto
Mar 19 *public*	Concert, musical soirée: Franz David Stoepel ²⁸	Solo de Piano (ending the 1 st half) Solo de Piano (penultimate item, 2 nd half)
Mar 20	Dinner: Countess d'Apponyi	Clara Wieck's 2 Scherzi A "new variation"
Mar 22	Concert: Prince of Arenberg	Pixin Concerto Herz <i>Bravura Variations</i> : with an improvised introduction on <i>God Save King</i> <i>Franz</i> , interweaving her own Scherzo in A
Mar 24	Soirée: Miel l'Aîné	[Repertoire unspecified]
Mar 25	"Disastrous" dinner: Mad. De Launay [Delphine de Girardin]	Hünten Rondo Improvisation Herz <i>Bravura Variations</i>
Mar 26	Beethoven's funeral	Performed with Mad. Devrient [repertoire unspecified] Improvisation on <i>Fidelio</i>
Apr 9 *public*	Public concert: Franz David Stoepel's salon ²⁹	Pixin Piano Concerto (F.) Wieck Romance for Physharmonica Wieck: first public improvisation Herz/Beriot: Duo for Piano & Violin Herz <i>Bravura Variations</i>

Johann Pixis emerges as another significant composer, with Wieck having played his Third Trio and Concerto twice each.³⁰ And while the “new” variation performed on March 20 is unknown, it is likely that they were the same as those performed on March 3, which Wieck is believed to have composed for this trip.³¹ Herz’s Variations account for the remaining variation sets performed, with his *Bravura Variations* constituting six, if not seven, of them.³² These entries thus confirm that Herz was the composer, and his *Bravura Variations* the work, which was of foremost importance in her repertoire. This is unsurprising, considering that Herz was a Parisian-based composer and enjoyed great fame and success there; further, this is commensurate with her wider propensity for programming Herz, and this work, in her public concerts, as outlined in the previous section.

²⁸ The *Jugendtagebuch* entries do not specify the repertoire. The information here is derived from her concert playbills.

²⁹ The *Jugendtagebuch* entries only specify Herz’s *Bravura Variations* and her improvisation. The rest of the information here is derived from her concert playbills.

³⁰ Apart from Herz’s *Bravura Variations*, Pixis’s Piano Concerto, Op. 100, was also a work that Wieck performed extensively — 30 times, including this record — in the 1830s.

³¹ On March 3, 1832, Friedrich Wieck wrote: “Clara hat nie so viel gespielt, als hier, ihre Scherzi und Var gefielen sehr und überhaupt alles, was sie auf dem schweren Flügel von Pleyel spielte.” And on March 20: “Nach Tische spielte die Blahetka eigene BravourCompositionen u ich ließ Nachher der Clara nur ganz bescheiden 2 Scherzi und die neuen Variat spielen.” See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 113 and 117 respectively.

Based on a letter from Wieck to his second wife Clementine Fechner, which is not readily accessible, the editors of the *Jugendtagebücher* believe that Friedrich Wieck was referring to a collection of works that his daughter composed specifically for this trip, which have now been lost. See *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 408.

³² Given that Herz’s *Bravura Variations* was the only set of variations she performed in Paris, it would be reasonable to assume that it was also this work which she performed parts of the day after she arrived in Paris, on Feb 16, 1832.

3.4 Programming Herz's "Bravura Variations"

In April of 1833, Friedrich Wieck described the *Bravura Variations* not just a widely beloved concert piece, but further, "several of the most famous variations" — a work which he was convinced would "satisfy all music lovers more or less without exception."³³ That this work was nearly exclusively programmed in 1833 attests to the fact that it was her calling card; this is further validated by a diary entry a year later, in which she reveals Herz's *Bravura Variations* and Johann Pixis's Concerto, Op. 100 to be the two works of Friedrich Wieck's choice whenever she was to perform for the first time in a new place, to an unknown audience.³⁴ It was also the work which she chose to present to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe when he invited her to play for him in Weimar in October 1831: there, she was praised not only for her choice of repertoire, but further, for her execution of the work.³⁵

A sample of quotes from her diaries throughout the years reveals the successful reception of this work. Her first performance of this work in 1831 in Altenburg was met with the "greatest applause"; in Paris, her performances of these

³³ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 136–37. April 4, 1833: "Clara in demselben Concert noch die allgemein beliebten Bravour-Var von Herz spielte [... mit] mehreren der berühmtesten Variationen, mit diesen Stücken ich meiner Ansicht „allen Musikliebhabern ohne Ausnahme mehr oder Weniger zu genügen überzeugt war.“

³⁴ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 154. Mar 12, 1834: "Ich spielte Pixis Concert und Brav. Variat von Herz (2 Stücke die der Vater für ein erstes Aufreten vor einem unbekannten Publikum gern wählt)." See **Program #40**, in Gera.

³⁵ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 68. Oct 1, 1831: "Clara wurde nun aufgefordert zu spielen und spielte la Violette v. Herz. Während des Spiels kam noch mehr Besuch u sie spielte dann noch Brav.Var v. Herz O. 20. – Goethe fällte über die Composition und das Spiel der Clara ein sehr richtiges Urtheil nannte die Comp.[osition] heiter, und französisch picant und rühmte Claras richtiges Eindringen indiesen Character." See **Program #7a**.

Bravura Variations earned her the praise of Kalkbrenner as well as of others who attended soirées hosted by Princess Louise Vaudémont and the German author Sophie Augustine Leo.³⁶ Such descriptions of the work's critical acclaim can be found all the way until her last performance of these variations in Berlin in 1837: there, she received thunderous applause — something supposedly rare for the city. This was followed by a demand for Wieck to perform these variations by Herz once more, which she did, two days later.³⁷

While accounts of her performances of this work are overarchingly positive, Friedrich Wieck did, too, criticize her playing at times, particularly in Paris, where she played either “coldly,” or had memory slips, which she had never had before.³⁸ Wieck nevertheless gave his daughter, who was only thirteen then, credit for having impressed the company, of which Felix Mendelssohn was a part. Though infrequent, these criticisms directed at his daughter, who was otherwise learning and performing

³⁶ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 63. May 18, 1831: “Es war sehr besucht und besonders die Bravour-Variat von Herz [(die ich hier zum ersten Male spielte)] fanden den größten Beifall.” See **Program #7**.

³⁷ Wieck, *Briefe*, 65–66. March 2, 1837: “Triumph, triumph. Clara hat Gestern Abend ihr Concert mit ihren donnernden Bravour-Variationen vor dem selben feinen Kennerpublikum beschlossen. Der Beifall war wieder ein Donner u. das furchtbarste Bravissimo. [...] Alles, alles will übermorgen zu Ganz strömen u. den Schauspielhaussal stürmen, um von Clara die im Opernhouse gehörten Variationen von Herz noch einmal zu hören.” Here, Friedrich Wieck was most likely referring to **Programs #103 and #104**, which took place at the Hôtel de Russie and then the Königliches Schauspielhaus on Feb 25 and Feb 27 respectively. This is an instance in which a comparison of personal letters has the capacity to resolve ambiguities in concert programs, in which these variations were referred to simply as “Variationen von H. Herz,” and “Variationen für das Pianoforte, von Herz”.

³⁸ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 119. April 9, 1832: “Clara spielte alles auswendig u fehlte bloß in den 1 Bravour-Variat von Herz, wo sie nie gefehlt hatte.”

similarly challenging repertoire, points towards the elevated technical difficulty of this “bravura” set of variations, which truly made it a feat of virtuosity. In April 1833, Friedrich Wieck wrote that his daughter’s performance of Herz’s *Bravura Variations* and Hummel’s Septet in the same concert would have been considered “impossible” by other professional pianists — “but only if he did not know my daughter well.”³⁹

Considering both the display of virtuosity that is afforded by a performance of this work, as well as its popularity, we can understand the Wiecks’ choice to constantly program this work as grand finales to the ends of programs. Of the 41 times she performed this work, it was programmed as a concert closer in 34 of them. Several of them are marked *auf Verlangen*, which points towards their popular demand as encores. In five concerts, the fact that they were not programmed as the final work can be accounted for by the fact that Wieck did not play a prominent role in these “miscellaneous” concerts. Programs #28a and #29 were the 16th and 18th subscription concerts at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, in which she performed with at least 10 and 7 other performers respectively; she performed just one item in August Moeser’s concert (Program #104) — and this was on request, following the success of her own virtuoso concert two days ago.

³⁹ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 138. April 5, 1833: “[B]ei mir hielt und natürlich mir Unkosten machte, ohne den Herrn Musikern etwas dafür bezahlt zu haben, abgerechnet, ließ ich Clara in demselben Concerfe, um auch den Nichtmusikalischen eine ueberraschung zu gewähren, in einem so überfüllten und heißen Saale, noch die Bravour-Var von Herz spielen; beide Leistungen hintereinander und unter solchen Umständen wird der Klavierspieler von Fach, wenn er meine Tochter nicht näher kennt, für unmöglich halten.”

Finally, in programs #7 and #35, she performed as part of a non-musical, multi-media concert: the former was an improvisation by Maximilian Langenschwarz, while the latter was centred around two *Lustspiele* — Carl Blum's *Der Secretär und der Koch* and Holbein's *Nummer 777*.⁴⁰ Though the Robert Schumann-Haus neglected to include these two performances in their index, it is significant that this set of variations was her work of choice, especially in these non-musically oriented performances. In the two remaining concerts (#16, #52), these variations were programmed as the penultimate work before an overture. Program #16 serves as a case study for further probing the significance between variations and their operatic origins, and the ways in which Wieck made direct associations for her audience through her programming strategies.

⁴⁰ The other solo work she performed in #35 was Pixis's Concerto Op. 100: here, we recall the importance of these two virtuosic works in particular as those which Friedrich Wieck used to introduce his daughter to a new audience — this concert was her first in Karlsbad.

3.5 Operatic associations & naming

<u>Darmstadt Großherzogliches Hoftheater: Feb 5, 1832</u>	
MOZART	OUVERTÜRE zu DON JUAN
PIXIS	PIANOFORTE-KONZERT
BELLINI	DUETTE aus Il Pirata
CHOPIN	GROSSE VARIATIONEN
<i>[Intermission]</i>	
FESTA	OUVERTÜRE
F. WIECK	NOTTURNO für die Physharmonica und Pianoforte
H. HERZ	BRAVOUR-VARIATIONEN
MEHÜL	CHOR aus JOSEPH und seiner BRÜDER

Program #16.

Though unnamed, the *Grosse Variationen* of Chopin's closing the first half is his *Là ci darem la mano*, based on Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. This explicit forging of links between the popular opera and its virtuoso keyboard derivative in the first half of the program is similarly seen in the second. Herz's *Bravura Variations* is programmed as the penultimate item before the chorus from the very opera — and Romance — that its theme was derived from. Beyond confirming the close associations between the original opera material and the success of the variation set in which the thematic material is absorbed and incorporated into an inherently pianistic genre, such a juxtaposition of the theme in its original operatic context (or at least in the Overture, a close approximation) with its pianistic spin-off can only have enhanced the concert-

going experience for its audience. Where variations had once served as a means for the audience to “enjoy hearing again the harmonies and melodies” that they “came away with and remember[ed from the theatre and salons],” they no longer needed to imagine nor remember this melody: it was, instead, presented directly to them.⁴¹

Here, I explore the naming conventions that Wieck adopted for both these works, in particular the proximity of their titles to their original operas, with a goal to uncover the ways in which she sought to market each work to her audience, and consequently, the different status and function that each work can be understood as having had for her. In **Table 3.3**, I examine and offer an overview of all the titles with which she programmed Chopin’s *Là ci darem la mano*; I do the same for Herz’s *Bravura Variations* in **Table 3.4**.

⁴¹ Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 286–87. I have used her translation of a quote from the *Revue musicale*, 1829, p. 550: “*Loin du théâtre, dans les salons, on aime à retrouver les traits de mélodie ou d’harmonie dont on a emporté avec soi le souvenir.*”

Table 3.3: Complete listing of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* with titles as indicated in the original concert programs.

#	Year	Place	Title
8	1831	Oct 7: Weimar	“Là ci darem la mano” für das Pianoforte verübt von F. Chopin. Op. 2.
9		Oct 26: Arnstadt	“Là ci darem la mano” für das Pianoforte variirt von F. Chopin, mit Quartett-Begleitung.
12		Nov 29: Kassel	“Là ci darem la mano”, für das Pianoforte variirt von F. Chopin (Op. 2).
14	1832	Jan 25: Frankfurt a. M.	“Là cirem da mano” für das Pianoforte variirt von F. Chopin (Op. 2).
16		Feb 5: Darmstadt	Große Variationen von Chopin.
19		Jul 9: Leipzig	“Là ci darem la mano” für das Pianoforte variirt von F. Chopin, Op. 2.
25		Nov 11: Altenburg	“Là ci darem la mano,” für das Pianoforte variirt von F. Chopin, Op. 2.
27		Nov 24: Schneeburg	Bravour-Variationen von Chopin für Pianoforte mit Orchester.
27a		Dec 3: Leipzig	“Là ci darem la mano” Variationen f. Pfte.
32	1833	Apr 29: Leipzig	“ LÀ CI DAREM LA MANO,” für das Pianoforte variirt von F. Chopin.
41	1834	Apr 3: Plauen	BRAVOUR-VARIATIONEN über “Làci darem” von Chopin
46		Nov 3: Leipzig	“LÀ CI DAREM LA MANO,” variirt für Pianoforte von Chopin.
50		Nov 25: Magdeburg	„Là ci darem la mano“, variirt von Chopin. (Auf Verlangen.)
54		Dec 1: Schönebeck	„Là cirem da mano“ von Chopin.
59	1835	Jan 10: Braunschweig	„Là ci darem la mano“ variirt von Chopin.
63		Jan 31: Hannover	„Là ci darem la mano,“ variirt von Chopin.
64		Feb 7: Hannover	„Là ci darem la mano,“ variirt von Chopin.
67		Feb 21: Bremen	„Là ci darem la mano,“ variirt von Chopin.
71		May 24: Hamburg	„Là ci darem la mano,“ phantastisches Tongemälde für das Pianoforte, mit Begleitung des Orchesters, von Fr. Chopin.
77		Apr 9: Hamburg	„Là ci darem la mano,“ phantastisches Tongemälde für Pianoforte und Orchester, von Chopin.
85		Dec 17: Leipzig	<i>Introduction und Variation</i> (auf: Là ci darem la mano), von Chopin.
89	1836	Feb 18: Dresden	„Là cirem da mano,“ variirt, phantastisches Tongemälde von Chopin.
92		Mar 11: Breslau	„Là cirem da mano,“ variirt, phantastisches Tongemälde von Chopin.
108	1837	Mar 20: Berlin	„Là ci darem la mano,“ variirt von Chopin.
128	1838	Feb 11: Wien	„Là ci darem la mano,“ variirt von Chopin.
138		May 25: Wien	Variationen für das Pianoforte über ein Thema von Mozart von Chopin.

For this study, I have relied exclusively on the scanned concert programs of Wieck's concert playbills; in the typeset database, titles of works are often abbreviated or inconsistent with the originals.⁴² As will be shown here, in order to acquire a thorough understanding of Wieck's perception of these works from the ways in which she advertised them to her audience, it is necessary to get as close to the original as possible. The text transcriptions provided — whether capitalized, bolded, or italicized — are a direct representation of the information derived from the concert programs themselves.⁴³

For example, Wieck's referring to Chopin's variations simply as "Grosse Variationen" in #16 is an anomaly. Her primary title in 23 out of the 26 performances instead included a direct reference to *Don Giovanni*. In 22 of these, there is a direct reference to the aria; only in one (#138), there is reference to neither the aria nor the opera — only to Mozart. Noteworthy is Wieck's description of these variations as "phantastisches Tongemälde" in programs #71, #77, #89, and #92: this is an allusion to a very different kind of virtuosity to the *stile brillante* which otherwise characterizes both this work and Herz's *Bravura Variations*, and the genre at large. The reference to

⁴² The wider goal of their database is to identify particular works; as such, the detail in the original programs is often omitted, with references to works abbreviated or simply referred to by opus numbers. Conversely, there are also examples for which the researchers at the Robert Schumann-Haus have provided specific information in the typeset version that is otherwise absent in the original playbills.

⁴³ The highlights of the prefixes in Programs #16, #27, and #41 are mine; they will be discussed in the next section.

color and tone here carries significant aesthetic implications that will receive further discussion in **Chapter 5**.

The most common structure adopted in her naming of Chopin's variations begins with first naming the Aria that the audience was familiar with. This can be contrasted with the ways in which she presents Herz's *Bravura Variations* (**Table 3.4**). Of the seven years she had been performing these variations, it was not until the thirty-eighth performance in 1836 that she listed the opera theme from which it came. Even so, in both these programs, she only listed the opera from which it came — Méhul's *Joseph* — and never its theme, "Ich war Jüngling noch an Jahren." Over the course of her career, these variations were almost exclusively known simply as the "Bravour-Variationen" by Herz. Only in two of these playbills, #7a (Oct 1, 1831, Weimar) and #62 (Jan 27, 1835, Hannover) did she simply introduce them as "Klaviervariationen" and "Thema und 4 Variationen." This can be attributed to the private settings in which the work was performed: in the former, to Goethe; the latter, at a court concert organized at the Court of Adolf Frederik Herzog von Cambridge.

Table 3.4: Complete listing of Herz's *Bravura Variations* with titles as indicated in the original concert programs.

#	Year	Place	Title
7	1831	May 18: Altenburg	Bravour-Variationen von Herz
7a		Oct 1: Weimar	Klaviervariationen f. Klaviere von Herz (op. 20)
8		Oct 7: Weimar	Bravour-Variationen von Herz. Op. 20.
9		Oct 26: Arnstadt	Bravour-Variationen von H. Herz, Op. 20., mit Quartett-Begleitung.
10		Oct 31: Gotha	Bravour-Variationen von H. Herz O. 20 mit Quartett-Begleitung.
12		Nov 29: Kassel	Bravour-Variationen von Herz.
14		Jan 25: Frankfurt a. M.	Bravour-Variationen von Herz (Op. 20).
16	1832	Feb 5: Darmstadt	Bravour-Variationen von Herz.
18		Apr 9: Paris	VARIATIONS de Bravoure , par H. Herz.
19		Jul 9: Leipzig	BRAVOUR-VARIATIONEN von Herz, Op. 20.
26		Nov 18: Zwickau	Bravour-Variationen von Herz für Pianoforte mit Orchestre.
28a		Feb 7: Leipzig	<i>Bravour-Variationen</i> von Herz, für Pianoforte. [ENTFIEL!]
29	1833	Feb 28: Leipzig	<i>Bravour-Variationen</i> von Herz, für Pianoforte.
30		Mar 11: Dresden	<i>Bravour-Variationen</i> von Herz.
32		Apr 29: Leipzig	BRAVOUR-VARIATIONEN von Herz.
34		Aug 13: Chemnitz	BRAVOUR-VARIATIONEN von H. Herz.
35		Aug 24: Karlsbad	Bravour-Variationen von H. Herz, (Op. 20.)
39	1834	Feb 14: Plauen	BRAVOUR-VARIATIONEN von H. Herz.
40		Mar 12: Gera	Bravour-Variationen von Herz.
42		Apr 11: Freiburg	BRAVOUR-VARIATIONEN von Herz.
43		May 5: Leipzig	BRAVOUR-VARIATIONEN von Herz.
48		Nov 20: Magdeburg	Bravour-Variationen Op. 20 [no playbill; only typeset record]
51		Nov 26: Magdeburg	Bravour-Variationen für das Pianoforte von Herz.
52		Nov 29: Magdeburg	Bravour-Variationen für das Pianoforte, von Herz.
53		Nov 27: Burg	Bravour Variationen von Herz.
54		Dec 1: Schönebeck	Bravour Variat , von Herz.
57		Dec 13: Halberstadt	Bravour-Variationen von Herz, Op. 20.
58	1835	Jan 3: Braunschweig	Bravour-Variationen von Herz.
60		Jan 22: Hannover	Bravour-Variationen von Herz, Op. 20.
62		Jan 27: Hannover	Thema und 4 Variationen von Herz. Op 20 (auswendig)
65		Feb 13: Bremen	Bravour-Variationen von Herz, Op. 20.
68		Feb 27: Bremen	(Auf Verlangen.) Bravour-Variationen von Herz.
70		Mar 20: Hamburg	Bravour-Variationen (Op. 20.) von Herz.
72		Mar 28: Hamburg	Auf Verlangen: Bravour-Variationen von Herz.
74		Apr 2: Altona	Bravour-Variationen von Herz.
78		Jul 24: Halle	Bravour-Variationen (Op. 20.) von Herz.
83		Dec 8: Glauchau	Bravour-Variationen , Op. 20. von H. Herz.
93	1836	Mar 19: Breslau	Bravour-Variationen über ein Thema aus „Joseph“ von H. Herz.
108	1837	Mar 20: Berlin	Bravour-Variationen über die Romance aus: Joseph, (Op. 20.) von Herz.

Not only was Goethe a discerning listener, but it was also likely that he already knew the work. While there is no further information about the concert #62 that can be gleaned from other primary sources, we can understand this in context of her having performed this work just four days earlier in the same city, at the Saal des Herrn Hanstein. More broadly, it is likely that her naming conventions were deliberate, and a marketing strategy: in order to promulgate her status as a virtuosa in the public sphere, she capitalized on the strong connotations of virtuosity associated with the word “bravura” that was already present in its original title. For her discerning audience, and at a repeat performance in the same city when the work had already been established as a feat of virtuosity, to do so would be unnecessary.

On the one hand, it is possible that she merely chose to pick out the first part of each title, as published: in his autograph copy, Chopin’s work was titled ““Là ci darem la mano’ varié pour le piano-forte.”⁴⁴ While no autograph of the Herz is extant, the first edition published in Paris by Langlois and second edition by Richault were both titled “Variations de bravoure pour le piano forte sur la Romance de Joseph.” Herz’s *Bravura Variations* did, too, include a reference to their operatic origins; that Wieck did eventually include references to Méhul’s *Joseph* suggests that its omission more generally was likely intentional.

⁴⁴ This is derived from the *Stichvorlage* manuscript which Chopin sent from Warsaw to Haslinger, which is held by the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna. See Frédéric Chopin, ““Là Ci Darem La Mano’ Varié Pour Le Piano=forté Avec Accompagnement d’orchestre Dedié à Mr. Titus Woyciechowski. Oeuvre 2,” https://digital.onb.ac.at/RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DTL_5499823.

On the other hand, there are other reasons to consider the implications of such different designations: Herz's was *the* work with which she showcased her bravura — it was not so much to bring pleasure to her audience in the form of familiarity by invoking its operatic references, but rather, through dazzling feats of virtuosity to establish her status as a virtuosa. By contrast, Chopin's were almost always meant to be understood — if not appreciated — in reference to its operatic source material. We can understand the latter phenomenon in the following ways.

First, based on the data presented in Alfred Loewenberg's survey of individual operas premiered and their reception thereafter, it is clear that Mozart's *Don Giovanni* enjoyed immense success in Germany. Between its premiere in 1787 and 1802, it was performed across 42 German cities in Italian and French, with at least five different German translations having been published by H. G. Schmeider, C. G. Neefe, F. L. Schröder, C. A. Zschiedrisch, and F. Rochlitz.⁴⁵ E. T. A. Hoffmann's description of *Don Giovanni* as the "opera of all operas" in 1815 is a further testament to its enduring success throughout Germany.⁴⁶ As such, capitalizing on the success of the operatic source material is not only understandable, but also expected. The popularity of Mozart's duet is reflected in that it was not only arranged and varied for the piano by Chopin; J. N. Bobrowicz, whose mixed instrumental and vocal

⁴⁵ Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera, 1597-1940*, 448–57. Rochlitz's served as the standard version for the next fifty years.

⁴⁶ Review in *Dramaturgisches Wochenblatt*, No. 14 (October 7, 1815). Cited in James Parakilas, "The Afterlife of Don Giovanni: Turning Production History into Criticism," *The Journal of Musicology* 8, no. 2 (Spring 1990): 251.

concert in Leipzig Wieck participated in, also composed a set of theme and variations of his own based on this same theme for guitar.⁴⁷

Second, although Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* was composed in 1827, a diary entry from June 1831 reveals that the Wiecks — who had toured extensively — did not hear these variations being performed outside of Vienna, nor by anyone other than Chopin himself; these performances suffered a mixed reception.⁴⁸ While both she and her father lauded this work as "original" and "witty," it gained little recognition and won little favor: pianists and teachers deemed it incomprehensible.⁴⁹ Though it did not take long for the diary entries to reveal changes in others' attitudes towards the work, it is no coincidence that positive associations are almost exclusively associated with private, and not public, performances of the work.⁵⁰

Multiple diary entries, letters, and reviews suggest that both Friedrich Wieck and Schumann lobbied hard for this work to gain wider acceptance.⁵¹ This is

⁴⁷ See **Program #22**.

⁴⁸ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 63. June 8, 1831: "Wir haben nicht gehört, daß sie bisjetzt irgendwo, als in Wien von dem Componisten selbst und zwar nur mit getheilten Beifall, vorgetragen wurden." This is an inaccurate reflection of Chopin's resounding success when he performed his own *Là ci darem la mano* at his Viennese debut on August 11, 1829. This will be discussed later in **Chapter 5**.

⁴⁹ Ibid. "Diese originelle geistreiche Komposition ist noch so wenig erkannt, daß sie fast alle Klavierspieler und Lehrer für **unverständlich** und unspielbar halten, selbst die Wiener Correspondenzen, und Carl Kraegen in Dresden, pp."

⁵⁰ On Sept 28, 1831, the work won the favor of Herr Geheime RegierungsRath Schmidt — who was himself a connoisseur of Beethoven's works; Goethe, too, looked upon the work favorably in October, as did Louis Spohr in November. See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*.

⁵¹ See Friedrich Wieck, "Chopin, Frédéric: 'Là ci darem la mano' varié pour le pianoforte," *Cäcilia: eine Zeitschrift für die musikalische Welt* 14 (1832): 219–23, and Robert Schumann, "Ein Opus II," *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 49 (December 7, 1831): 49–50.

particularly evident in a letter from Friedrich Wieck to Eduard Fechner on November 15, 1831, in which he explicitly states his main objective as being to inform Fechner of his wish for his article on Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* to be published in the *Revue musicale*, as a "precursor" to the Wiecks' upcoming tour three months later.⁵² Given that these variations were neither played nor discussed in Paris, it would be safe to say that the work never gained the recognition that the Wiecks had hoped for by 1832. Instead, Herz's *Bravura Variations* — a work tried and tested — was the one which Wieck performed extensively on this trip, both in public and in private.

There are some exceptions in which her performances of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* is known to have been well received in public, such as in program #16 cited above — but these were far and few between.⁵³ In 1833, her father even stopped her from finishing a performance of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* in Dresden because of the cold reception it received — something that is not recorded of other performances.⁵⁴

⁵² Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 90. Nov 15, 1831: "Und nun zur Hauptsache 1.) Beifolgende Rhapsodien über Chopin O. 2. wünschte ich in die revue musicale aufgenommen zu sehen, und sie sollten uns gleichsam als Vorläufer in Paris dienen. Du möchtest also gütigst sogleich Herrn Chopin aufsuchen und ihm viel von meinen und der Clara künstlerischen Treiben erzählen – ihm meine Recension übergeben und ihn bitten, er möchte daran streichen und ändern wie er es für gut befände und alsdann geschickt übersetzen, und abdrucken lassen und Fetis (dem er uns angelegtlichst empfehlen möchte) übergeben für die revue musicale."

⁵³ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 107. Feb 5, 1832: "Sie spielte mit vielem Beifall, so daß fast jede einzelne Variat beklatscht wurde."

⁵⁴ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 63. Feb 15, 1833: "Den 15ten waren wir bei dem Grafen Baudissin zu Tisch, wo ich nach Tisch vor einer ganz kalten Gesellschaft die Var von Chopin spielte, aber der Vater ließ mich bei der 4ten Var aufhören." The reception of Wieck's performances of *La ci darem la mano* is in contrast to Chopin's, which was particularly successful in Paris. Wieck did not perform in Vienna until December 1837; there, she

Given that these variations were generally considered inaccessible to the public, this strategy of making explicit links to its opera can therefore be interpreted as intended not merely to win the favor of her audience and warm them to her performances of this work, but also to promote and gain wider acceptance for this work of Chopin's which she, her father, and Schumann were to advocate for strongly in the years to come. The difference in reception between these two works is further evidenced by the ways in which Wieck programmed them in individual concerts.

performed Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* only twice (#128, #138) in favor of her own *Concert Variations* (#121, #126, #132, #133) and Henselt's *Concert Variations* (#122, #123, #124, #130, #131, #137).

3.6 Programming concert closers

The third and last concert program to be discussed in this chapter is #9, which corroborates the trends observed in programs #2 and #16. Different genres and instrumentation are presented in alternation, variations occupy a significant place in the program — here, she performed four sets — and each half was closed with virtuosic solo variations, namely Chopin's and Herz's respectively.

<u>Arnstadt Rathaus, Großer Saal: Oct 26, 1831</u>	
HÜNTEN	RONDO à 4 mains über ein Thema aus Elisabeth, von Rossini
F. WIECK	ROMANZE für die Physharmonica und Pianoforte
C. WIECK	PHANTASIE-VARIATIONEN über vorgehende Romanze
C. WIECK	ZWEI LIEDER mit obligater Pianoforte-Begleitung
CHOPIN	„Là ci darem la mano“ für das Pianoforte variirt [von F. Chopin,] mit Quartett-Begleitung
<i>[Intermission]</i>	
CZERNY	PHANTASIE-VARIATIONEN von Maiseder, arangirt für das Pianoforte à 4 mains
F. WIECK	NOTTURNO für die Physharmonica und Pianoforte
H. HERZ	BRAVOUR-VARIATIONEN Op. 20, mit Quartett-Begleitung

Program #9.

That Chopin's was used as a closer to the first half and Herz's the whole concert is similar to that seen in #16; this is no coincidence. These two variations were programmed together in nine concerts, and in all of them, Herz's *Bravura Variations*

were programmed at the end of the concert, and Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* elsewhere in the program, or as a closer to the first half.⁵⁵ Of its twenty-six performances, Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* was used as a concert closer in just five of them — in all of these, it was the only variation set on the program.⁵⁶ On the other hand, as established earlier, Herz's *Bravura Variations* were overarchingly programmed as concert closers. Unlike Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano*, as well as Herz's other variation sets, the *Bravura Variations* were unique in that they were never used as a closer to the first half. The importance of Herz's variations more widely is exemplified by the ways in which they were programmed in conjunction with Chopin's. Wieck's preference for Herz over Chopin as the rousing finale to a concert program was not just in the case of the *Bravura Variations*. In eight other concerts, a Herz variation was programmed alongside Chopin's; in these, the latter was never used as the concert closer, rather, the former.⁵⁷

The reception of both these works is informative in cultivating an understanding of these practices. Herz was amongst the most prominent composers of these postclassical concert variations, and there was a huge demand for his piano variations by the wider market. By contrast, Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* had a mixed

⁵⁵ Closer to first half with Herz *Bravura Variations* as concert closer: #8, #9, #16, #32, #108. Appeared in concerts where Herz *Bravura Variations* used as concert closer: #12, #14, #19, #54.

⁵⁶ Programs #25, #27, #27a, #64, #128.

⁵⁷ Programmed with Herz Op. 76: #92.

Programmed with Herz Op. 48: #41, #50.

Programmed with Herz Op. 23: #59, #63, #67, #71, #77.

reception: not only was it difficult for audience to accept the work, pianists, too, deemed it not just incomprehensible, but unplayable.⁵⁸ It is therefore unlikely that Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* was performed often; there are no references to any other pianists performing the work, apart from the composer himself.⁵⁹ By contrast, one can find occasional references in Wieck's diary entries to other pianists performing Herz's *Bravura Variations* — albeit badly.⁶⁰ In the case of the latter, the fact that she could perform these variations well further solidified her unparalleled place on the concert stage.

Her diary entry pertaining to program #16 in Darmstadt suggests another reason for her different approaches to programming these two works: the ease with

⁵⁸ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 63. June 8, 1831: “[A]lle Klavierspieler und Lehrer für unverständlich und **unspielbar** halten.”

⁵⁹ Robert Schumann “assiduously” practised Chopin's *La ci darem la mano* from 1830; it is possible that its technical challenges deterred him from engaging with the work fully. He did not perform it, rather playing it in private; a letter from Robert Schumann to Clara Wieck on July 13, 1833 in Leipzig reveals that he only played the fifth variation, the *Adagio*. See Claudia Macdonald, *Robert Schumann and the Piano Concerto* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 10–11, then Clara Schumann et al., *Briefwechsel von Clara und Robert Schumann*, Schumann Briefedition, Band 4 (Köln: Dohr, 2012), 64–65.

⁶⁰ Wieck began studying Herz's *Bravura Variations* in February 1831. See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 62. Her first encounter with the work was likely in October 1830. See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 59. Oct 4, 1830: “Fräulein von Belleville von München bei uns das Concert von Pixis in C und Herz Var über Joseph [von Méhul] und mit mir Herz Var O. 50 die linke Partie | und spielte dieselben Solostücken.”

She criticized two other performances, as follows:

Clara Schumann et al., *Briefwechsel von Clara und Robert Schumann*, Schumann Briefedition, Band 4 (Köln: Dohr, 2012), 57. Clara Wieck to Robert Schumann, Leipzig, Dec 17, 1832: “Der berühmte junge Barhdt [sic: Barth] spi<l>ete in dieser Euterpe auch die Brav. Var. von Herz auf einen Stutzflügel in 5 |4| Unheil schwangern Adagios. Das Nähere müssen Sie sich vom Vater beschreiben und vormachen lassen.”

See also Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 310. Dec 17, 1838: “Herr Doerfel [Dörffel] spielte die Joseph-Variationen von Herz – unglaublich schlecht.”

which each could be coordinated with an orchestra. Wieck's complaints about the orchestra in Darmstadt were levelled at their inadequacy in executing the parts to Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* — they failed to hold together so much so that Wieck had to help them out by playing the tuttis.⁶¹ On the other hand, no such complaints were made of Herz's *Bravura Variations*, which were also performed in that same concert. In fact, the situation was quite the opposite: her performance of Herz's *Bravura Variations* in Leipzig in February of 1833 did not require any rehearsal at all, yet went very well.⁶² It is therefore likely that such pragmatic considerations would have played a part in her programming of these two works, with the view to secure a performance that was as reliable as possible in order to leave the audience with the best impression at the end of the concert.

While #16 does not offer any indication on its concert playbill that Herz's and Chopin's variations were played with orchestra, program #9 offers a clear indication that the work was not performed solo, but rather, with string quartet accompaniment — Wieck's diary entries reveal this to have been common practice.⁶³ Both these

⁶¹ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 107. Feb 3, 1832: "Die von Chopin gingen gar nicht u Clara half in den Tuttis, wo das Orchester wankte u nicht einsetzte – unbegreiflicher Weise – | nicht ein einziges Mal nach."

⁶² Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 133. Feb 28, 1833: "[S]pielte ich im 18. Abonnement-Concert Herz Br[avour]-Variat ohne Probe und Hummels Septett Dm[oll]. Es wurde alles mit allgemeinem Beifall aufgenommen." This could be attributed in part to the fact that, prior to this concert, she had also already performed Herz's *Bravura Variations* at the Leipzig Gewandhaus three times.

⁶³ Less than two weeks from when she first learned Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano*, she performed the work in private with a quartet. See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 63. June 6, 1831: "Gab mein Vater eine musikalische Abendunterhaltung wo ich (nur einmal von Henriette Weick unterbrochen, welche ein Rondo von Winkler spielte) | hintereinander

programs illustrate the versatility of these works, in that they could be performed in a myriad of different settings — a possible reason for their repeated performances and success. References to orchestral accompaniment can also be found in **Tables 3.3 and 3.4**, although #16 suggests that there were likely more performances of these two variations with orchestra than the concert playbills show. In addition to her diary entries, we can also extrapolate the possibility of these variations having been performed accompanied from an examination of the other works that were programmed in the same concert: in #16, overtures, a chorus, and a piano concerto were also programmed — works which all required an orchestra.⁶⁴ When considering the high costs and logistical difficulties that accompanied the engagement of an orchestra, it would seem natural that she would capitalize on the instrumental forces already present.⁶⁵

das originelle Trio von Pixis mit Herrn Fr. Kummer (welcher mit der ital. Opera als Cello-Spieler hergekommen war) und H. Müller (Directeur bei Breitkopf & Haertel [Härtel] Chopin Variationen O. 2. 2mal und Herz Bravour Var. Beide letztere Stücke mit Quartett (von Kummer, Müller, Horn, und M. Pohle ausgeführt).“

⁶⁴ It is unclear however whether the presence of such forces meant the pieces were necessarily accompanied. See #85 in the Leipzig Gewandhaus, in which she performed Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* and Beethoven's Choral Fantasy, however, Mendelssohn is documented to have only conducted the latter. It could have been the case that, much like Mozart's performances of his concerti, the work did not require a conductor. See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 203. Dec 17, 1835: “17ten spielte ich im Gewandhausconcerfe “*Là ci darem la mano*“ von Chopin und die Fantaisie mit Chor von Beethoven Letztere von Mendelssohn dirigirt, und die Solostimmen von Dlles. Graubau, Weinhold, und Döring gesungen.“

⁶⁵ This did not just include the orchestra, but further, for instrument movers and drivers. See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 105. Jan 25, 1732, with reference to concert #14 in Frankfurt: “Das Orchester ist theuer; jeder bekommt 1 Kronthalter u einige unter andern Herr Golmik [Gollmick] (der Paukenschläger) war nicht einmal in der Probe. – Bei der Probe war nicht einmal ein Aufwärter; 2 Violinen mußte ich mehr bezahlen, und an den Instrumententräger 2 Brabanter Thaler. Der Lohnkutscher wußte weder Wege noch Steg und

That these works came with versions for piano and orchestra lent it associations with the genre of the concerto: more specifically, these opportunities to perform these variation sets with orchestra elevated its status a virtuoso work through direct association with the genre that epitomized virtuosity on the most public level.⁶⁶ The practice of composing and performing works of such a brilliant nature for piano and orchestra had a precedent; amongst those which constituted Wieck's repertoire include Pixis's *Variationen und Rondo* and *Glöckchen Rondo*, Kalkbrenner's *Rondo Brillante*, Op. 101, and Mendelssohn's *Capriccio Brilliant*, Op. 22. Unlike these works that were deliberately composed for orchestra, both Chopin's and Herz's variations did not need to be performed with an orchestra, although doing so could potentially enhance the listening experience — a reliable orchestra being a requisite, as highlighted by Wieck.

The programs examined here, alongside Wieck's diary entries, point towards the richness of contexts in which Wieck was able to perform these works. This is reflected by the editions in which such works circulated, including with string quartet reductions: the only extant version of Herz's *Bravura Variations* with string quartet parts, published in Vienna by Diabelli in 1828, belongs to a collection of works which had a role in popular music culture. The cover of Diabelli's edition is interesting itself

kam nicht einmal pünktlich." Hiring orchestras also required advanced planning; on April 29, 1833, Friedrich Wieck discusses how he was unable to hire an orchestra for a performance in the Leipzig Gewandhaus. See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 139-40.

⁶⁶ Robert Doran, "From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style: Reconceptualizing Lisztian Virtuosity," in *Liszt and Virtuosity*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 267-308.

— along with thirteen other works, Herz's *Bravura Variations* were compiled under a list of “Amusements de Societe,” “ou choix des Compositions brillantes.” Of the fourteen works in this compilation, half (seven) were Herz's, followed by Czerny (five), then one each from Moscheles and Blahetka.



Figure 3.5: Cover of Diabelli's Edition that included Herz's *Bravura Variations* (1828).⁶⁷

That there are a multitude of editions for solo piano, only one with string quartet, and none remaining of an orchestral edition, reflects the prevalence of each performative mode throughout and beyond the 1830s. The sale price of Herz's *Bravura Variations*, as listed on the cover page of an edition by Hofmeister, is indicated as 16 Gr — without accompaniment (see overleaf). While there is no price listed for a version *avec Accomp.*, it is likely that such an edition would have cost more, not less. As such, it would also have been more financially appealing for a consumer to purchase — and perform — a solo rather than accompanied version.

⁶⁷ This cover, as well as the quartet parts to Herz's *Bravura Variations* to be used in **Chapter 4**, has been kindly made available by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.



Figure 3.6: Cover page of Herz's *Bravura Variations*. Publisher: Hofmeister, Leipzig.

The quintet version was somewhat a middle-ground between the solo and orchestral versions; in France, where Herz was composing and publishing these variations, hiring an orchestra was both expensive and unpredictable, and consequently rare.⁶⁸ From the perspective of a composer, therefore, it was less preferable to compose for large ensembles, particularly when considering that there was demand for rapid production of such works, as seen in the previous chapter. Publishing various simultaneous editions in this manner would therefore guarantee its status as a virtuosic work while maintaining profitability.

⁶⁸ In Paris, orchestras cost an approximate 1000 Fr. per concert, including two rehearsals; this would have been in addition to other costs, amongst which the rental of a room (250F), issuance of tickets (150F), as well as copyists (200F). See Laure Schnapper, *Henri Herz, Magnat Du Piano: La Vie Musicale En France Au XIXe Siècle (1815-1870)*, En Temps & Lieux 23 (Paris: Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2011), 130.

Finally, we consider that the Wiecks often did not have laudatory things to say about the pianos they encountered on their concert tours; pianos by Conrad Graf and Sébastien Érard were the exception. Two accounts of her encounters with undesirable pianos in Paris offer us another perspective from which we can understand her different approaches towards programming these two sets of variations. In the first, she recounts her having heard Chopin perform his own *Là ci darem la mano* at a concert organized by Kalkbrenner: there, Kalkbrenner's piano was so "tough" and "stubborn" that it could not afford any shading or expression. Despite having played, and knowing, the work herself, she found it hardly recognizable due to the inadequacy of the piano.⁶⁹ By contrast, in writing about a performance on a Clementi piano that similarly left much to be desired, Friedrich Wieck wrote of his daughter's playing:

Clara made a start with Herz's Opus 20 on an old, rickety, English grand piano by Clementi, whose every key jerked and twitched, and whose stubborn corpulence made it hard to play successfully. But Clara made it possible, and played so well that even Kalkbrenner, who was there, shouted Bravo so often, and the whole society [in attendance at the big soirée held at Princess Vaudémont's] applauded greatly.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 110. Feb 25, 1832: "Chopin spielte die Var. O. 2 so, daß sie kaum zu erkennen waren auf diesem zähen u. halsstarrigen Flügel von Kalkbrenner, der ja keine Schattirungen, keinen Ausdruck zuließ und worauf das Spiel nichts als ein Würgen ist."

⁷⁰ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 112–13. March 2, 1832: "Clara machte den Anfang mit Herz O. 20 auf einem alten englischen klapprlichen Flügel von Clementi, wo jede Taste ruckte u zuckte und dessen halsstarrige Corpulenz schwer zu erreichen war. Doch Clara machte es möglich u spielte so gut, daß selbst Kalkbrenner, welcher mit da war, sehr oft Bravo rief u die ganze große Gesellschaft großen Beifall schenkte."

As much as the reliability and quality of orchestras was a cause for concern, even when played solo, the reliability of the piano was a decisive factor influencing how successful a performance would be. It emerges that the requisites for a good performance of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* was in its subtlety and shading; by contrast, the quality of tone did not seem to play as significant a role for a successful execution of Herz's *Bravura Variations* — such comments are not found in any discussions of Herz's music. The disparities between the stylistic features, and the elements that defined the success of each these works, can be traced to their different aesthetics and the different facets of virtuosity that they epitomized; I discuss these features in greater depth in subsequent analyses of them.

The reception of Wieck's performance in the above-cited concert suggests that her successful execution even, or especially, on such a piano could only have won her greater favor with her audience. To achieve the greatest success, she had to program the work for which she had the best probability of achieving success, independent of external factors such as the quality of the piano or orchestra. In light of these considerations, we can better understand not just why Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* received less performances than Herz's *Bravura Variations*, but further, why the former was never the concert closer whenever a more reliable option — Herz — was available.

3.7 “Bravura” Variations

Table 3.5: “Bravura” Variations outside of Henri Herz’s Op. 20.

Composer, Work	Program; Year	Title
Chopin Op. 2	#27 Nov 1832	Bravour-Variationen von Chopin für Pianoforte mit Orchester
	#41 Apr 1834	BRAVOUR-VARIATIONEN über “Làci darem” von Chopin
Herz Op. 23	#56 Dec 1834	Bravour-Variationen für das Pianoforte von Herz, opus 23.
Wieck Op. 8	#105 Mar 1837	Bravour-Variationen über die Cavatine aus der Oper: „Der Pirat“ von Bellini
	#106 Mar 1837	Bravour-Variationen über die Cavatine aus der Oper: „Der Pirat“ von Bellini
	#111 Apr 1837	Bravour-Variationen über die Cavatine aus der Oper: „Der Pirat“ von Bellini
	#113 Apr 1837	Bravour-Variationen über die Cavatine aus der Oper: „Der Pirat“ von Bellini
Herz Op. 76	#88 Feb 1836	Neueste Bravour-Variationen von H. Herz, Op. 76.
	#90 Feb 1836	Neueste Bravour-Variationen , Op. 76, von Herz.
	#92 Mar 1836	Neueste Bravour-Variationen , Op. 76, von Herz, über ein Thema aus dem „Zweikampf“ von Herold,
	#96 Mar 1836	Neueste Bravour-Variationen über ein Thema aus „Der Zweikampf“ von H. Herz, (Op. 76).
	#98 Sept 1836	Neueste Bravour-Variationen von H. Herz, Op. 76.
	#99 Sept 1836	Neueste Bravour-Variationen von H. Herz, Op. 76.
	#100 Nov 1836	Neueste Bravour-Variationen von H. Herz, Op. 76.,
	#101 Dec 1836	Neueste Bravour-Variationen für Pianoforte, von H. Herz, Op. 76.

Wieck’s anomalous appending of the modifier “Große” to Chopin’s *Là ci darem la mano* in #16 can be understood in relation to her occasionally loose use of terms that deviate from the original titles that these variation sets were published with. Twice, she describes Chopin’s as “bravura” variations. From **Table 3.5**, it can be

seen that although the term “bravoure” was always appended to public performances of Herz’s Op. 20, it was not wholly exclusively to it.

The occasional use of the word “bravura” in these contexts is interesting, particularly when considering the changing definition and function of the term throughout the 1830s. Robert Doran proposes that, at the start of the 1830s, the term was used somewhat interchangeably with “brilliant” — more specifically, the *stile brillante* which represented the primary mode of virtuosity during this time, as encountered in **Chapter 2**.⁷¹ Through his study of Carl Czerny’s Opp. 500 (1839) and 740 (1844), Doran highlights the progressive bifurcation of these two terms by the 1840s. However, a large part of Doran’s study is focused on Franz Liszt and his compositional style post-1840; he primarily discusses a bravura *aesthetic*, which he believes to have been a new, autonomous style that eventually overshadowed and displaced the florid figuration characterizing this earlier brilliant aesthetic. Doran credits Liszt as a key driving force behind the cultivation of this new style and aesthetic, and his discussion is heavily reliant on Liszt’s expansion of pianistic techniques, as well as the reciprocal relationship between Liszt’s writing and the development of pianos during this time.⁷²

⁷¹ Doran, “From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style,” 276–289. When Chopin made his debut in Vienna on August 11, 1829, his *Là ci darem la mano* was introduced to the audience as a set of “Variations Brillantes on a theme by Mozart.” As seen in **Table 3.3**, however, Wieck never used *brillantes* to describe Chopin’s work.

⁷² Doran, “From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style,” 275–78. Doran contrasts Liszt’s “bravura” with Chopin’s “beautiful” aesthetic. In **Chapter 4**, I will discuss the parameters of this “bravura” style in the context of Herz’s *Bravura Variations*, composed in 1826 — well before the time frame of Doran’s study.

However, Doran also performs a closer study of the evolution of the term “bravura” and the ways in which value judgments propagated such binaries over the course of the nineteenth century. In doing so, he acknowledges that these distinctions were far from clear during the 1820s and 30s. In this section, I will delve more deeply into the significance of these categories, exploring the complexities of these intertwining concepts at the time when these works were being composed and performed extensively. Here, I focus on Wieck’s titling of these works, as well as the attitudes towards these styles that can be gleaned through a study of various primary sources.

Czerny’s Op. 500 (1839) reveals that “bravura” and “brilliant” were distinct categories, rather than being synonymous or interchangeable, as Doran suggests, and that even by the end of the decade, they had yet become exclusive to each other in the manner that Doran writes about. On the contrary, they could be, and were often, complementary. In his section dedicated to the brilliant style of playing, Czerny wrote: “May [the performer] even infuse something of the Bravura into [their] execution of [a work in the brilliant style], and the audience will be anxious to hear more of [their] performance. *He will therefore have played with brilliancy.*”⁷³ Further, Czerny instructs that one “may, and indeed must employ, even in such pieces as appear to have been written **almost exclusively for shew and bravura**, all the

⁷³ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano-Forte School*, 81, but especially 80–82. Italics original.

different shades of gentle, pleasing, and elegant execution, and of internal feeling [in conjunction with the requisites of the brilliant style that make up a good performance].”⁷⁴

That the “bravura” was associated with a style of playing is further attested to by Wieck’s description of Moscheles’s concert in 1832, in which she details the “bravura” style of playing he engaged in his performance of his (pre-meditated) free fantasy on a theme from Mozart’s *Magic Flute*; this, however, he repressed in performances of his “great, noble” Concerto in C major, as well as his Fantasy on Danish Songs.⁷⁵ This bravura style of playing did not merely co-exist with the brilliant style; as a method of performance, it served as an enhancement to the prevailing mode of composition: the brilliant style. Indeed, that a work could be both of a bravura and brilliant nature is attested to by Herz’s Op. 76, which was published with the title *Variations brillantes di bravura sur le Trio Favori du Pré aux Clercs de Herold* in 1834 — Wieck performed this work eleven times.⁷⁶

Wieck’s use of the prefix “bravura” in context of her own set of variations, published and performed from 1837, is interesting. Our reference point is the original title with which she published the work: *Variations de Concert pour le Piano-forte sur la Cavatine du Pirate, de Bellini*. Describing a work as a set of “concert” variations is

⁷⁴ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano-Forte School*, 82.

⁷⁵ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 77. Oct 22, 1832: “[In seiner Freie Phantasie war prämeditirt über Themas aus der Zauberflöte [von Mozart]] zeigte er seine alte Bravour, die er in den ersten beiden Stücken verläugnet hatte.”

⁷⁶ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano-Forte School*, 80–81.

interesting because, to quote Czerny, “[The greater part of such] Compositions which are called brilliant on their Title page [...] are intended for public performance.”⁷⁷

Table 3.6: Complete listing of Wieck’s *Concert Variations* with titles as indicated in the original concert programs.

#	Date		Place	Title
105	1837	Mar 1	Berlin	Bravour-Variationen über die Cavatine aus der Oper: „Der Pirat“ von Bellini
106		Mar 11	Berlin	Bravour-Variationen über die Cavatine aus der Oper: „Der Pirat“ von Bellini
111		Apr 8	Hamburg	Bravour-Variationen über die Cavatine aus der Oper: „Der Pirat,“ von Bellini
113		Apr 22	Bremen	Bravour-Variationen über die Cavatine aus der Oper: „Der Pirat“ von Bellini
115		Aug 13	Leipzig	Concert-Variationen über die Cavatine aus Bellini’s Oper: „Der Pirat,“
118		Nov 12	Prag	Concert-Variationen über die Cavatine aus Bellini’s Pirat
119		Nov 18	Prag	Concert-Variationen über die Cavatine aus Bellini’s Pirat
121		Dec 14	Wien	Concert-Variationen über die Cavatina aus Bellini’s >Pirata<
126	1838	Jan 21	Wien	Concert-Variationen über die Cavatina aus Bellini’s >Pirata<
132		Mar 7	Wien	Variationen über die Cavatine aus der Oper II Pirata
133		Mar 9	Wien	Concert-Variationen für das Pianoforte, über die Cavatine aus der Oper: Il Pirata
140		Apr 2	Preßburg	Konzert-Variationen über die Cavatine aus: „der Pirat“
164	1840	Jan 25	Berlin	Variationen über ein Thema aus dem Pirat, von Bellini

While a set of “brilliant” variations — which several of Herz’s works were termed — had a public function in a concert, the converse is not true. A set of brilliant variations was necessarily a concert piece; a set of “concert” variations need not be in

⁷⁷ Czerny, *Complete Theoretical and Practical Piano-Forte School*, 81.

the brilliant style, although it could imply one. This becomes particularly clear when considering Henselt's *Concert Variations*, Op. 1. One can read Wieck's decision to brand her Op. 8 as a set of "concert" variations as marking a departure, if not a distinctness, from the prevailing "brilliant" style which had characterized these variations for a large part of the decade. Similarly, while a piece in the brilliant style could be played in a bravura manner, Czerny reveals that a piece cannot be bravura without first being brilliant.

That Wieck used the term "bravura" to introduce her own Op. 8 to the public in her first four performances of this work is significant, especially since it was later dropped in favor of its original title in the subsequent nine performances. As with Chopin's variations, she makes a reference to the opera from which the theme came in every performance of the work: that is, Bellini's *Il Pirata* (1827). By 1837, this theme was "so well worn" and "exhausted by the embraces of so many composers," that Stefaniak goes as far as to regard Wieck's choice of this theme as "bold."⁷⁸ One could interpret her description of her work as a set of "bravura" variations as at once

⁷⁸ Alexander Stefaniak, "Clara Schumann's Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 70, no. 3 (Fall 2017): 749. Czerny's *Introduction, variations et polonaise* (1828), Kalkbrenner's *Variations brillantes sur 'Il Pirata'* Op. 98 (1829), and Henri Herz's *Cavatine* Op. 68 no. 1 from *Le trois graces* (1835) were all composed on the same theme. Herz's enjoyed such great fame that it was the set which Friedrich Wieck used as a case study in *Clavier und Gesang* as an exemplar of the genre of postclassical piano variations. The theme continued to be used in the 1840s, such as in Camille Schubert's *Variations élégantes sur un motif de l'Opéra 'Le Pirate'* Op. 67. Composers also wrote variation sets on this theme for other instruments, such as Ferdinando Carulli for flute and guitar, Op. 337 (1831), George Osborne and Charles-Auguste Bériot for Violin and Piano (1836), J. B. Singelée Op. 13 (before 1851), Pietro Pettoletti (for two guitars, Op. 22; for one guitar, Op. 26 in 1844).

aligning herself with, yet setting herself apart from, this tradition of composing variations on this popular theme. Further, it can be understood as a representation of the persona with which she sought to introduce herself and her work to her audience.

Throughout the decade, “bravura” was growing to embody connotations of boldness, and the bravura player was increasingly synonymous with the virtuoso player.⁷⁹ She was not just a “bold” performer — an identity that she had already established over the past decade — but further, composer. When understood in this way, her use of the word “bravura” served as a means for her to enter this tradition and stake a claim about her status as both a virtuoso performer and composer. We consider this in the context of her Berlin performances in February and March of 1837. Earlier, it was established from Friedrich Wieck’s letters that her performance of Herz’s *Bravura Variations* in Berlin Feb 25 at the Hôtel de Russie was so well received that there was demand for her to play them again — which she did at the Königliches Schauspielhaus two days later in Carl Moeser’s solo concert.⁸⁰ Given the great acclaim to which she performed these *Bravura Variations*, branding her own set of variations as such serves only to heighten her status as not just a performer, but a performer and composer of this genre intended to epitomize virtuosity.

⁷⁹ Doran, *Liszt and Virtuosity*, 20–22, and 287.

⁸⁰ Programs #103 and #104 respectively. Friedrich Wieck, *Briefe aus den Jahren 1830-1838*, 65–66. March 2, 1837.

This assessment of the “bravura” in the context of performances suggests the presence of a “bravura” style of playing in the 1820s and 1830s, one which prefigured this “bravura” aesthetic of the 1840s which Doran primarily defines by way of compositional approaches, in the manner of texture and figuration.⁸¹ Yet, a composition could also be described as having qualities of “bravura” that pre-disposed it to such a manner of playing: for the Wiecks, Chopin’s *Là ci darem la mano* was not only a “great, witty bravura piece,”⁸² but also the “greatest fantasy-bravura piece of the time.”⁸³ Wieck’s somewhat inconsistent and different uses of the term throughout the decade reflects the developing notion of a “bravura” that was in flux during this time. An examination of these sources has offered insights into the different stylistic connotations it could entail, and the ways in which Wieck used them to her advantage, raising her profile as first a performer, then later, a composer.

⁸¹ Doran, *Liszt and Virtuosity*, 20–22, and 287.

⁸² Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 100. Dec 28, 1831: “[E]in geistreiches großes Bravourstück.”

⁸³ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 77. Oct 20, 1831: “[D]as größte Phantasie-Bravourstück <uns> der neuesten Zeit von Chopin.”

3.8 Conclusion

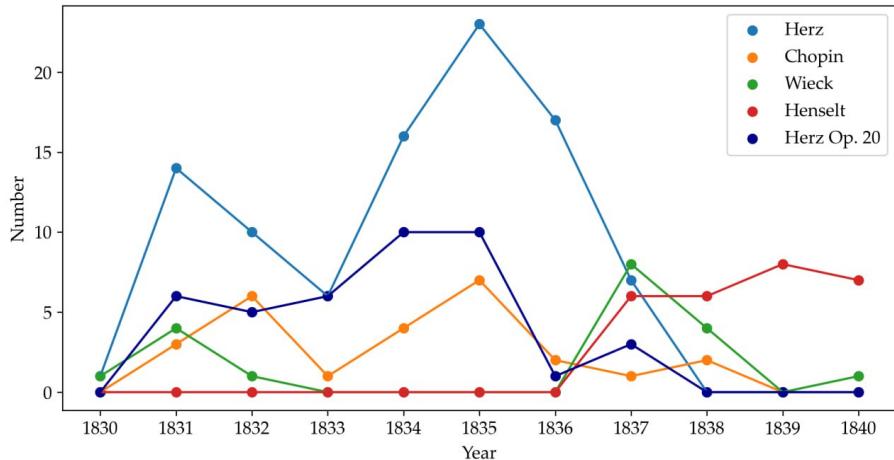


Figure 3.7: Number of solo variations performed per year until 1840, by composer.

In June 1831, Wieck described Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* as the most difficult piece of music that she had seen and played — this is significant when considering that at this point of writing, she had already begun performing Herz's *Bravura Variations*.⁸⁴ In addition to the reasons outlined above for the work having received fewer performances, its inaccessibility to its audience — both connoisseurs and amateurs alike — was exacerbated by the fact that its immense difficulty of execution was not appreciated by, nor did it come across fully to, her audience.⁸⁵ With these considerations in mind, we gain a better understanding of the reasons

⁸⁴ Nevertheless, she learned it in eight days. Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 63. June 8, 1831: "Chopin Var. O. 2, welche ich in 8 Tagen einstudirte, ist das schwerste Musickstück [sic], was ich bis jetzt gesehen und gespielt habe."

⁸⁵ In Berlin, Carl Ludwig Berger remarked after hearing her perform the work that it did not seem too difficult. See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 63. June 8, 1831: "Ich spielte [Louis Berger von Berlin] die Var von Chopin vor, welche ihm als originell gefielen, er fand sie aber nicht so schwer, wie sie sind."

why — despite the high regard she held for Chopin’s variations — Wieck did not perform it as much as Herz’s *Bravura Variations*. To cite Schnapper’s discussion of the economic principles that were fundamentally at the root of (the composition of) this genre, Herz’s variations yielded “maximum profit from minimum work.”⁸⁶

Apart from Herz and Chopin, she only programmed her own, and Henselt’s, variations in this decade. As seen in **Fig. 3.7**, the highest concentration of her own works centered around 1837. The variations she composed and performed in her early years (1830–1832) have unfortunately been lost; as such, I focus my discussion of Wieck’s contributions to the genre only in context of her extant set of *Concert Variations*, Op. 8. At the start of this chapter, I alluded to Henselt’s *Concert Variations* being a curious case study, as it was composed in 1830, but only programmed by Wieck from 1837. Henselt’s variations took precedence from 1838; though not reflected in this graph, the fact that it was programmed until 1847 renders it beyond the scope of this project, which is focused on the function and significance of the genre in her early career, pre-1840. Wieck’s programmatic decision can be understood in context of the aesthetic and stylistic orientation of Henselt’s variations; I will contextualize these in my discussion of Wieck’s *Concert Variations*, which received their last performance in 1840.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 290.

⁸⁷ Stefaniak highlights the aesthetic overlaps between these two works. See “Clara Schumann’s Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism.”

Having now established Herz's *Bravura Variations* and Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* as the two most prominent variation sets — and in the case of Herz, the most prominent work — characterizing Wieck's early career, they will constitute the two primary case studies to this dissertation. In **Chapter 4**, I will delve deeper into the style that gave Herz's *Bravura Variations* (1825) the enduring popularity it enjoyed. In **Chapter 5**, I discuss the features of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* (1827) that gave rise to the complexities she faced in approaching this work, and also her own *Concert Variations* (1837). Herz's will serve as an exemplar of the genre; in all these analyses, I focus on the gestures, figuration, textures, structures, and styles of these two works with the aim of illuminating the aesthetic orientation of each, thereby accounting first for the disparity seen in her programming of these two key works earlier in the decade, and second, the function that each work had in her career.

3.9 Appendix

Table 3.7: All solo variations performed by year, 1830–1832.

Year	Herz	Chopin	Wieck	Henselt
1830	#2: Op 23		#2: “original”	
1831	#3: Op 23			
	#4: Op 48			
	#5: Op 51			
	#6: Op 48			
	#7: Op 20		#7: Romanze	
	#7a: Op 48; #7a: Op 20		#7a: [?]	
	#8: Op 20	#8		
	#9: Op 20	#9	#9: Romanze	
	#10: Op 48; #10: Op 20			
	#11: [Op 20?]			
	#12: Op 20	#12		
	#13: Op 23		#13: Romanze	
	15	3	5	–
1832	#14: Op 20	#14		
	#15: Op 48		#15: Romanze	
	#16: Op 20	#16		
	#18: Op 20			
	#19: Op 20	#19		
	#20: Op 51			
	#21: Op 48			
	#23: Op 62			
	#24: Op 48			
		#25		
	#26: Op 20			
		#27		
		#27a		
	10 (25)	6 (9)	1 (6)	–

Table 3.8: All solo variations performed by year, 1833–1834.

Year	Herz	Chopin	Wieck	Henselt
1833	#28a: Op 20			
	#29: Op 20			
	#30: Op 20			
	#32: Op 20	#32		
	#34: Op 20			
	#35: Op 20			
	6 (31)	1 (10)	— (6)	—
1834	#39: Op 20			
	#40: Op 20			
	#41: Op 48	#41		
	#42: Op 20			
	#43: Op 20			
	#45: Op 23			
		#46		
	#48: Op 20			
	#50: Op 48	#50		
	#51: Op 20			
	#52: Op 20			
	#53: Op 48; #53: Op 20			
	#54: Op 20	#54		
	#55: Op 23			
	#56: Op 23			
	#57: Op 20			
	16 (47)	4 (14)	—	—

Table 3.9: All solo variations performed by year, 1835.

Year	Herz	Chopin	Wieck	Henselt
1835	#58: Op 20			
	#59: Op 23	#59		
	#60: Op 20			
	#61: Op 48			
	#62: Op 23; #62: Op 20			
	#63: Op 23	#63		
		#64		
	#65: Op 20			
	#67: Op 23	#67		
	#68: Op 20			
	#70: Op 20			
	#71: Op 23	#71		
	#72: Op 20			
	#73			
	#74: Op 20?			
		#77		
	#78: Op 20			
	#79: Op 23			
	#80: Op 36			
	#81: Op 36			
	#82: Op 36			
	#83: Op 36; #83: Op 20			
	#84: Op 36			
		#85		
	23 (70)	7 (21)	—	—

Table 3.10: All solo variations performed by year, 1836–1837.

Year	Herz	Chopin	Wieck	Henselt
1836	#86: Op 76?			
	#87: Op 36			
	#88: Op 76			
	#89: Op 23	#89		
	#90: Op 23; #90: Op 76			
	#91: Op 23			
	#92: Op 76	#92		
	#93: Op 20			
	#94: Op 23			
	#95: Op 23			
	#95: Op 36			
	#96: Op 76			
	#98: Op 76			
	#99: Op 76			
	#100: Op 76			
	#101: Op 76			
17 (87)		2 (23)	–	–
1837	#102: Op 76			
	#103: Op 20			
	#104: Op 20			
		#105		
	#106: Op 23		#106	
	#108: Op 20	#108		
	#109?	#109?	#109?	#109?
			#111	
	#112: Op 76			
		#113		
	#114: Op 76			
		#115		
			#117	
		#118	#118	
		#119		
			#120	
		#121		
			#122	
			#123	
			#124	
7 (94)		1 (24)	8 (14)	6 (6)

Table 3.11: All solo variations performed by year, 1838–1840.

Year	Herz	Chopin	Wieck	Henselt
1838			#126	
		#128		
				#130
				#131
			#132	
			#133	
				#137
		#138		
				#139
			#140	
				#142
				#148
	– (94)	2 (26)	4 (18)	6 (12)
1839				#150
				#151
				#152
				#153
				#154
				#156
				#158
				#162
	– (94)	– (26)	– (18)	8 (20)
			#164	
				#166
				#169
#1840				#171
				#175
				#176
				#179
				#180
	– (94)	– (26)	1 (19)	7 (27)
Total	94	26	19	27

CHAPTER 4

Henri Herz and his *Bravura Variations*

In this chapter, I build on the contextual discussion of concert variations presented in **Chapter 2**. With Henri Herz's *Bravura Variations* as case study, I analyze the work's structure, texture, and figuration to explore the ideals embodied by, and characteristics of, the genre of concert variations. Herz was a key composer-virtuoso figure during this time, and these *Bravura Variations* invite us to probe the intricacies of its ecosystem and the function of the musical score during this time. I begin with a discussion of the introduction, then the theme, from which I examine the significance of devices such as the fermata and cadenza as the variation set progresses. In analyzing Herz's treatment of the theme, I explore the ways in which virtuosities are made manifest through these transformations.

While the analyses in this chapter are predominantly based on the solo piano part, I also draw on the accompanying string quartet parts; not only do they reveal aspects of performing practices, but they also enhance our understanding of the work's structure. I draw upon these parts to explore intra-generic semiotic references of the cadenza, both explicitly designated and implied. Two aspects of pianistic virtuosity will be discussed: first, the *stile brillante* that characterized pianism of the 1830s, and second, the burgeoning bravura aesthetic. Finally, I contextualize Herz's concert variations in light of three other variations that were composed on the same theme from Méhul's *Joseph*.

4.1 The Introduction

Example 4.1: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Introduction (mm. 1–9).

Herz's *Bravura Variations* opens with a grand, sweeping, ascending scale in *forte*, followed by a series of affirmative chords that mark its arrival onto the dominant. The “*tutti*” marking appended to this gesture can be understood as being both a direct allusion to external instrumental forces — such as a full orchestra or string quartet, of which both editions circulated during Wieck's and Herz's lifetimes — and the cultivation of a conceptual *tutti* that was to be conveyed by a solo pianist. In the case of the latter, such a gesture requires the soloist to engage in a significant

degree of theatricality, and to simulate both the sound world and gesture of these larger forces. In the first ten years of her career, Wieck performed this set of variations in all three of these settings.

The Introduction is characterized by the juxtaposition of contrasting topics, as shown by alternations between *forte* and *piano*, which in turn characterize the changes in textures between emphatic runs and chords respectively. Through the latter, the affirmative tonic-dominant motion — first in tonic C, then rising a tone to D minor in m. 3 — is weakened in preparation for the ensuing chromaticism. The second half of the seven-measure *Largo maestoso* is built on the dominant that was attained in m. 4³. Over a pedal point, chromatic chords create tension, and this sequence is then repeated an octave lower in m. 6; marked *pianissimo* and *calando*, the music eventually dissipates into a low G triad. A solo rising scale picks up where the dominant had left off, with its arrival back into the tonic in m. 8 — by way of attainment of ^3 — marking the start of a new section. Marked *Cantabile assai*, the texture of this extended section is homophonic, with the right-hand alternating between *cantabile* melodies and filigree. The left-hand's harmonies are supported by the string parts, which alternate between *arco* and *pizzicato* in alignment with the affect of the solo parts.

A fragment of the theme on which the variation set is based is presented with the arrival onto m. 8. The theme for this set of variations is the Romance “Ich war Jüngling noch an Jahren” from Act I, Scene II of Étienne Méhul’s opera, *Joseph en Égypte*. This opera was composed in 1807 and revised between 1822–28; it was in the

latter period that this set of variations was composed. Particularly in Paris, where this set of variations was composed and first published (1825), this theme would have been of great appeal: Méhul had established a reputation as one of the leading French Revolutionary opera composers since the late-eighteenth century, and *Joseph* was awarded the prize for being the opera of the decade in 1807. In the intervening two decades, it had continued to maintain a prominent place in the repertory, not just in France, but also in Germany.¹ In this sense, Herz ensures that as soon as the piano solo enters, it gratifies its listener (or consumer); the theme was presumably what attracted them to attend his concerts and purchase copies of his music.

¹ Vincent Giroud, “Revolution to Romanticism,” in *French Opera: A Short History* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2010), 93–125.

Example 4.2: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Introduction (mm. 8–15).

This initial fragment of the theme is but brief; the falling fifth characteristic of the Romance, the descent from $\hat{3}$ (E) to $\hat{6}$ (A), is presented in the first two measures (mm. 8–9), embellished with turns. Where the theme builds up to $\hat{3}$ by means of a rising initial ascent $\hat{5}-\hat{1}-\hat{3}$ (Example 4.3), in the introduction, it is preceded by a sweeping scale that rises over one and a half octaves. Although the harmonies of mm. 8–11 are derived from the opening four measures of the theme [I --- | IV – ii – | I^{6/4} – V⁷ – | I ---], the melodic contours do not follow that of the original theme after its characteristic opening descent (which ends on m. 9²).

Andante con espressione $\lambda = 92$
Cantabile

Example 4.3: *Herz Bravura Variations*, Theme (mm. 30–57).

The theme is comprised of five four-measure units: [A | A' | B | C | C'].

I read it as tripartite; the middle consists of a single four-measure unit. This is unlike its two outer sections, where each is repeated and embellished. The harmonies in **A** and **A'** remain constant: [I – – – | IV – ii – | I^{6/4} – V⁷ – | I – – –]. By contrast, there are structural differences between **C** and **C'** arising from changes in harmony. **C** takes a detour of V/V \rightarrow V, ending on a half cadence in its fourth measure (m. 45); **C'** offers the material, and theme, harmonic closure with a perfect authentic cadence on m. 49¹. The middle **B** section is the only four-measure unit not to be repeated. This unit [ii – vi – | ii vi ii V7 | I V I – | V: *fermata*] is significant harmonically and

rhetorically; its harmonic rhythm moves more quickly than its outer two units, and the fermata in m. 41 is structurally significant, as we shall see.

Although **C** and **C'** both move from I to vi in their first two measures respectively (mm. 42¹ to 43¹, then mm. 46¹ to 47¹), **C** does so through simple tonic-dominant alternations at a harmonic rhythm of an eighth, but **C'** through the harmonic coloration of V⁷/vi (m. 46²) → vi (m. 47¹). The latter harmonic movement is correlated with its *espressivo* marking in m. 46, which exemplifies a more general phenomenon in which the second presentation of **A** and **C** respectively calls for the intensified presentation of its initial material. **A'** and **C'** also embellish **A** and **C** by additional turns, appoggiaturas, *volute* — a leap in the treble followed by descending motion, as in m. 35² — and the addition of a *delicato* fioritura in m. 48.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, singers commonly embellished all styles of music, albeit to varying degrees. In theatrical music, these embellishments were typically “elaborate” and of an “energetic” nature; the ornaments in **A'** and **C'** derive from the standard repository of embellishments at the disposal of a nineteenth-century singer, as identified by Robert Toft,² and can therefore be understood as the direct translation of performing practices from the theatrical and vocal spheres onto the medium of the keyboard. Laure Schnapper has outlined the significance of vocal operatic performance practice in the music of Herz; not only does the transcription of

² See “Ornamentation” in Robert Toft, *Bel Canto: A Performer’s Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Toft further identifies techniques such as trills and cadenzas; the *fioritura* in m. 48 can be interpreted as a form of cadenza.

ornamental formulae and tempo rubato through the abundance of expressive indications forge associations between the piano music and its original operatic origins, but it also illuminates contemporary interpretative practices embodied by singers on the operatic stage.³

Returning briefly to the Introduction, the vocally inspired *Cantabile assai* continues for twenty measures. The writing remains harmonically simple; over these sustained harmonies, the right hand exhibits a dazzling array of filigree in the manner of arpeggios and scales. This writing is inherently free and improvisatory in nature; this is confirmed through the presence of a “ritardando” marking in the string parts from m. 13², which is absent in the solo part. Here, mid-phrase tempo rubato is indicated, and its absence in the piano part suggests that such practices were a part of mainstream contemporary keyboard performance practice. For a quartet whose members were likely to have been sightreading these parts without access to the piano parts or full score, these markings direct their attention to the soloist’s free elaboration.

³ Laure Schnapper, *Henri Herz, Magnat Du Piano: La Vie Musicale En France Au XIXe Siècle (1815-1870)* (Paris: Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2011), 136–141. She regards this, too, as a compensation for the absence of words, particularly as these details are absent in contemporary transcriptions of operatic arias with piano accompaniment.

11

cres - - - - cen - - do.

p *sempre più leggiero*

13

pp ritard.

pp ritard.

pp ritard.

ritard.

sf

14

(ritard.)

(ritard.)

(ritard.)

(ritard.)

Basso

risoluto

ca - lan - do

Basso

à Tempo

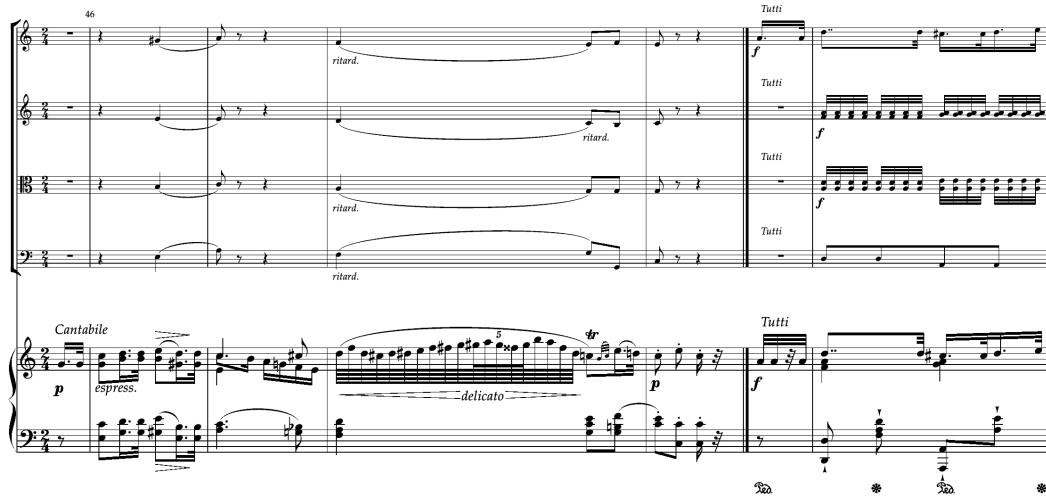
à Tempo

à Tempo

sf

sf

Example 4.4: Herz Bravura Variations, Introduction (mm. 11–17).



Example 4.5: *Bravura Variations*, end of the Theme (mm. 46–50).

A similar example can be observed in the penultimate bar of the theme, in which ii⁶ is elaborated. In both these instances, Herz's notation can be understood not only in light of contemporary operatic performance practices of fioritura, but taken more broadly, the freedom characteristic of this entire introduction can also be seen as a reflection of its pianistic roots in practices of preluding. One of Herz's major contributions to the genre of variations, Laure Schnapper argues, is his codification of such improvisatory practices — where they were previously ad-hoc, he incorporated them “systematic[ally]” through extended introductions.⁴

⁴ Laure Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century: An Industry?,” in *Instrumental Music and the Industrial Revolution*, ed. Roberto Illiano and Luca Sala, trans. Vivienne Hunt, Ad Parnassum Studies 5 (International Conference “Instrumental Music and the Industrial Revolution,” Bologna: UT Orpheus, 2010), 287. Here, she refers to the piano variations of another important contemporary composer of variations — Franz Hünten — whose works did not include a slow introduction. Carl Czerny, the other of the three prominent composers of variations that Schnapper cites, did begin writing slow introductions to his variation sets as early as his Op. 3 *Fantaisie et variations brillantes sur une romance de*

4.2 *Cadenzas*

As the lyricism of the *Cantabile assai* fades away in m. 26, it plunges, *piu piano e calando*, into the lowest register of the keyboard, arriving on a low G: the same note which the introductory seven measures of *Largo maestoso* had arrived onto in m. 7. In m. 7, a *dolce* solo line emerges from the low G major chord, whose function remains that of a half cadence. At the end of the Introduction, however, its added seventh gives it an additional preparatory function. A tremolo marks the start of an unexpected *Presto* which presents fiery chords, leaps, scales, chromatic thirds, and chromatic motion that traverse the entirety of the keyboard.

In this section, the sonorous capacity of the piano is pushed to its extreme through feats of virtuosity, with the texture getting progressively thicker. Yet, upon attainment of the outer two extremes of the keyboard, the texture reverts to a light *leggiero* texture, offering a semblance of resolution to the accumulated tension. Rhetorically and harmonically, these two measures fulfil their function of invoking a “feeling of suspense so as to focus the attention on the following theme.”⁵ In 1833, Franz Hünten discussed the power of such contrasts, with the purpose of these harsh — even wild — chords being to stress the “sweet and tender” theme that was to

Blangini, published circa 1820. However, his use of slow introductions was inconsistent throughout the decade.

⁵ Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 288.

follow with the greatest effectiveness.⁶ Indeed, the theme, presented in full after the *Adagio*, provides both harmonic and affectual resolution.

Example 4.6: Herz *Bravura Variations*, end of the Introduction (mm. 26–29).

The mensural freedom, dramatic nature, and pianistic virtuosity characteristic of these two bars invoke a cadenza. Unlike a cadenza of a concerto, however, this

⁶ François Hünten, *Méthode Pour Le Pianoforte*, Op. 60, First edition (Mayence: Schott, 1833), 17. “afin de faire ressortir une douce et tendre mélodie, le Compositeur peut juger à propos de l’amener par des accords âpres et des chants Presque sauvages”. Cited in Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 288. In the first English edition, *F. Hunten’s Celebrated Instructions for the Piano Forte* (Richmond, Virginia: J. W. Randolph, 1864), this passage was translated as such in p. 14: “For the sake of contrast[,] the composer introducing a sweet and tender air may preface it with harsh chords and wild passages.”

section does not develop “thematic material”; as of this point, the operatic theme has yet been presented. This passage does not fulfil the archetypal harmonic function of a cadenza either. Its dominant is not attained by means of a second inversion chord, and instead of developing its harmony, the whole section is presented entirely in the dominant. As such, these moments lend themselves more readily to the definition of an *Eingang* than a cadenza. This passage does, however, fulfil other semiotic requisites of a cadenza: it begins with a preparatory passage whose texture is divorced from its prevailing context, and it presents other-than-normal musical discourse with an abrupt change of topic by way of its chromaticism, leaps, then whimsical fantasy-like figuration that gives way to yet another vocally inspired *Adagio*.⁷

In his discussion of Joseph Haydn’s keyboard music, Webster highlights the necessity of having an extensive definition of a cadenza, given that criteria as to what constitutes a cadenza in written-out examples differ. Similarly, it is difficult to define whether this passage is in fact a cadenza *per se*, given the factors discussed that render it inadmissible to such a definition in the sense when referring to a cadenza in the context of a concerto or a keyboard sonata: both these passages lack harmonic development, and instead of extending for several bars, they each present one or two extended, unmeasured bars.

⁷ James Webster, “The Rhetoric of Improvisation in Haydn’s Keyboard Music,” in *Haydn and the Performance of Rhetoric*, ed. Sander M. Goldberg and Tom Beghin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 176.

Example 4.7: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Cadenza between Var. IV & Var. V (mm. 166–167).

A similar example can be found at the end of Var. IV (m. 167). Here, harmonic preparation occurs by means of a *sf* German 6th chord. It is first sustained by a trill before presenting a downward scalic figuration, arriving onto a *sf* G major chord. Four *Veloce* rapid repetitions on each key, à la Scarlatti, affirm the attainment of this harmony through G major arpeggio that spans three octaves, and lands on a trill on the dominant. Similar to the cadenza at the end of the Introduction, this extended measure remains on the same harmony and functions as an extended dominant pedal, with the arrival onto Var. V being its “resumption to normal discourse,”

“normal” here being some form of presentation and iteration of the theme.⁸ Both these interpolations provide the performer (who was in the first instance the composer) with the opportunity to showcase their virtuosic abilities and indulge in their fantasy through their showmanship — a function characteristic of cadenzas.⁹

The accompanying parts in the orchestra and piano quintet versions provide answers to this ambiguity. Herz’s *Bravura Variations* also exists in editions with orchestra, and string quartet accompaniment. While the version for piano and orchestra is lost, the accompanying string parts are extant.¹⁰ The two sections that have been discussed here are clearly marked “Cadenza” in a manner seen in these reproductions of the violin part from Diabelli’s 1828 edition.



Figure 4.1: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Introduction, first violin part.
Publisher: Diabelli, 1828.

⁸ Webster, “The Rhetoric of Improvisation in Haydn’s Keyboard Music,” 176.

⁹ Eva Badura-Skoda and Paul Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart: The Performance of His Piano Pieces and Other Compositions*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2010), 251.

¹⁰ The quartet parts used for this dissertation have been kindly made available by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.



Figure 4.2: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. IV, first violin part.
Publisher: Diabelli, 1828.

A structural analysis of Herz's *Bravura Variations* reveals that there are no two sections between which there is a complete break (Table 4.1 overleaf). Each of the main sections — the Introduction, Theme, and its five variations — is bridged to the next. Four of these are tutti sections, with the other two being these cadenzas. At a time when the piano was growingly seen to embody the potentialities of an orchestra with the ideal, even, of assimilating it, these cadenzas can be further understood as moments which invite the audience to compare pianistic forces with that of an orchestra, albeit just gesturally.

This is particularly salient when considering the end of the Coda: although "Tutti" is only marked for the rising chordal arpeggios in the final three measures, the textures and figuration of the entire *Più mosso* section from m. 250 call to mind the tutti writing post-cadenza at the end of concerto; further, the quartet parts are present all throughout the section marked *Più mosso*, which points towards the non-literal, but rather gestural, nature of this marking. This will be discussed later in context of the Coda.

Table 4.1: Structural layout of Herz's *Bravura Variations*.

Introduction	1–7	<i>Largo maestoso. [Tutti]</i>
	8–27	<i>Cantabile assai. [Piano solo]</i> A presented in mm. 8–11.
"Cadenza": <i>Presto</i> (mm. 28–29).		
Theme: <i>Andante con espressione</i>	30–37	A, A'
	38–41	B , ending on a fermata in m. 41 ¹ (V, <i>sfz</i>)
	42–49	C, C'
Tutti (mm. 78–85)		
Var. I: <i>Vivo e leggieramente</i>	58–65	A, A'
	66–69 ¹	B , ending on fermata (V, <i>sfz</i>)
	69	<i>Eingang</i> : rapid downward arpeggiation of 5½ octaves (<i>con forza</i>)
	70–77	C, C' [*Harmonic interjection in m. 75]
Tutti (mm. 78–85)		
Var. II: <i>Con leggierezza</i>	86–93	A, A' (connected by a <i>glissando</i> , m. 89 ²)
	94–97 ¹	B , ending on fermata (V, <i>sfz</i>)
	97	<i>Eingang</i> : <i>sfz</i> trills on G, descending five octaves
	98–106	C, C'
Tutti (mm. 78–85)		
Var. III: <i>Vivace assai</i>	115–122	A, A
	123–126	B – no fermata
	127–130	A'
Tutti (mm. 78–85): Ends on <i>ritardando Lento</i> .		
Var. IV [minor]: <i>Adagio cantabile con molt' espressione</i>	150–157	A, A' , with parallel minor harmonies. Here, ii is substituted for by bII ⁶ . Double barline.
<i>Energico</i>	158–167	Eb major → G major → <i>ritenuto</i> into pre-dominant Gr. 6 th (m. 167)
"Cadenza" (m. 167)		
Var. V: <i>Allegro non troppo ma con fuoco</i>	167–183	A [4 measures]: harmonic structure; A' [4 measures]: melodic outline B [4 measures]: harmonic structure C' [4 measures]: melodic outline
Coda <i>Dolce Scherzando</i>	184–210	No semblance to thematic material. Ends with orchestral gesture: I ^{6/4} –V in mm. 208–210; fermata at the end of m. 210.
	211–215 ¹	Harmonies of A, A' rhythmically diminished by half.
	215 ² –217 ¹	Harmonies of B rhythmically diminished by half. <i>Ritenuto</i> into half-cadence, but no fermata: m. 217 ¹ .
	217 ² –243	Begins with I–V of C but turns into chromatic meandering. Virtuosic rising 3-octave C major scales [mm. 241–243] → cadential 6/4
<i>Con fuoco</i> <i>Più mosso</i>	244–246	Extended cadential 6/4 emphasized by arpeggios
	247–249	Prolonged V: cadential trills across the keyboard
	250–End	I–V alternations with <i>sforzandi</i> . Gestural concerto ending; last 3 measures marked [Tutti].

4.3 Fermatas

Earlier, I alluded to the importance of the fermata placed at the end of the middle unit **B**: [ii – vi – | ii vi ii V⁷ | I V I – | *V: fermata*]. Both Var. I and Var. II pivot on this fermata to present a short improvisatory passage whose virtuosic nature resembles that seen in both the cadenzas discussed earlier. In the context of late-eighteenth-century keyboard music and concerti, these two measures, mm. 69 and 97 from Vars. I & II respectively, can be read as *Eingänge* — they are used to link “two successive but clearly distinct sections [of a movement].”¹¹ Their function here can be seen as a bridge between the first section [**A** and **A'**] and third [**C** and **C'**] sections of the theme, for which there are textural shifts. In both these variations, the music is primarily of a homophonic texture in **A** and **B**, with the horn call texture of Méhul’s opera introduced at the beginning of **C**. While suspending time, this fermata can be seen as a means of preparing the listener for this change; further, these *Eingänge* take on a structural function on a micro-level not dissimilar to the macro-level structural function of the two cadenzas.

The *Eingang* in Var. I presents itself as a trill that evolves into a turn, which then leads to a five-octave descending G major arpeggiation marked *con forza*. This dominant serves as the anacrusis to the restatement of the horn call in the tenor region, where accented grace notes in the right hand lend it a playful nature. With the

¹¹ Badura-Skoda and Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart*, 275.

anacrusis itself beginning on a *staccato*, there is a juxtaposition of the pastoral with the *scherzando* in this bar.

Example 4.8: Herz Bravura Variations, Var. I (mm. 66–77).

Drawing on the dramatic potential of register, both these *Eingänge* utilize the full compass of the keyboard. The *Eingang* in Var. II displays a rapid series of *vivo* trills that similarly descends through five octaves. From the resonances accumulated from this range — captured and amplified by the pedal — a single, staccato G emerges, just as in Var. I. Here, however, its pastoral associations are completely negated in the piano part; in Var. II, C begins marked “leggiero assai.” This passage resembles a *scherzando*, and this is confirmed with the expressive mark two measures later (m. 100).

The image shows a page of a musical score for orchestra and piano. The score is divided into ten staves. The first staff is for the piano, with dynamics like *p*, *ritard.*, and *arco*. The second staff is for the strings, with dynamics *p* and *arco*. The third staff is for the piano again, with dynamics *p* and *ritard.*. The fourth staff is for the strings, with dynamics *p* and *arco*. The fifth staff is for the piano, with dynamics *p* and *ritard.*. The sixth staff is for the strings, with dynamics *p* and *arco*. The seventh staff is for the piano, with dynamics *p* and *ritard.*. The eighth staff is for the strings, with dynamics *p* and *arco*. The ninth staff is for the piano, with dynamics *p* and *ritard.*. The tenth staff is for the strings, with dynamics *p* and *arco*. The score includes various performance instructions like 'ritard.', 'cresc.', 'pizz.', and 'scherz.'. The music is in 2/4 time, with some measures in 3/4 time. The piano part includes many sixteenth-note patterns and sustained notes. The strings part includes sustained notes and sixteenth-note patterns. The overall style is dynamic and expressive, with a focus on the interplay between the piano and the orchestra.

Example 4.9: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. II, quintet arrangement (mm. 94–105).

When performed as a solo work, the melodic contour of the horn call is heard only fleetingly; it is passed between the hands at the distance of an octave on each sixteenth. It is only when performed with quartet that the semiotic references to the original horn call are unambiguous, though this is only in **C**; the accompanying textures in **C'** — offbeat sixteenths in *pizzicato* — support the *scherzando* character of the piano writing.

Both these *Eingänge* in the first two variations brim with theatricality: they begin by accumulating a mass of sound either through a *con forza* arpeggio or a series of trills that descend over five octaves, with these resonances further amplified through the pedal. In its moment of release, there is a spontaneous return to a single note in *staccato*. These sudden turns of *Affekt* and character, from the flamboyant to the light-hearted and jesting, fits these *Eingänge* perfectly to the purpose of this set of variations in a way markedly different to the virtuosity displayed in the two cadenzas discussed earlier.

Much like cadenzas, *Eingänge* were an “indispensable part of every virtuoso’s equipment” who hoped to satisfy their listener.¹² Beyond showmanship and the pyrotechnics that the audience sought to witness in attending a concert, however, these moments offer the performer opportunities to showcase a unique kind of

¹² Badura-Skoda and Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart*, 251.

charisma — a successful execution of these *Eingänge* will contribute to the “aesthetics of pleasure” that this genre was premised on.¹³

Example 4.10: *Herz Bravura Variations*, Var. I, quintet arrangement (mm. 66–77).

¹³ Alexander Stefaniak, *Schumann's Virtuosity: Criticism, Composition, and Performance in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2016), 29–37.

As noted, there are only a few expression markings and external indications present in the string parts which are otherwise absent from the piano score: “ritardando” in the introduction, and “cadenza” at the end of the Introduction and Var. IV. In the context of these two *Eingänge*, the string parts potentially enrich our understanding of contemporary performing practices. “Ritard” markings are applied to the measures that immediately precede them: mm. 68 (Var. I, see **Example 4.10**) and 96 (Var. II, see **Example 4.9**). The expressive markings presented in the piano parts — the measure-long *crescendo* in m. 68 and the repeated *sforzandi* in the second and third eighths in m. 96, leading to its crescendo on the last eighth — suggest that the music is growing in intensity towards the arrival onto the *sforzando* fermata on which the *Eingang* begins.

The indication of a broadening of time in the string parts serves as an aural indication that would prepare the listener for, thereby drawing their attention to, the imminent act of virtuosity — a curious juxtaposition both of holding back through time and the simultaneous creation of a sense of arrival through volume. The use of *crescendo* in both these instances is also significant; throughout the *Bravura Variations*, Herz uses “opening” and “closing” hairpins (for which I will use the symbols < and >) more than he explicitly identifies changes in intensity through volume: *crescendo* or *decrescendo*.¹⁴

¹⁴ These terms are used by David Hyun-Su Kim in the context of performance practice in the latter half of the nineteenth century. See “The Brahmsian Hairpin,” 19th-Century Music 36, no. 1 (2012): 46–57. Kim challenges the (then-)widely accepted view that these markings indicate

4.4 Structural modifications of the theme

Having established that the expansion of the fermata at the end of **B** into an *Eingang* serves as a formal point of articulation between the first (**A**) and second (**B**) section of both Var. I and Var. II, I now turn to a discussion of the ways in which the Herz transforms the formal structure of the theme in the other variations in which the fermata does not serve as a point of articulation. In the slow, minor Var. IV, the harmonies of **A** are transformed to the parallel minor, repeated in **A'** (mm. 150–157).

Example 4.11: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. IV, first half (mm. 150–158).

changes in volume. He argues that these descriptive, connotative expressive indications span a myriad of parameters such as rhythm and agogics. Though writing in the context of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century practices, he highlights the likelihood that this tradition was inherited from, and a continuation of, practices from earlier in the century.

Its derivation from the theme effectively lasts only eight measures, with **B**, **C** and **C'** omitted. Following a double barline, Var. IV turns to the parallel major of its newly attained C minor, E♭ major, in a section marked *Energico*. The material and figuration employed in this second half is reminiscent of the Introduction, in which the right-hand is characterized by rapid, occasionally virtuosic filigree and the left, simple, sustained harmonies (Examples 4.11 & 4.12).

Example 4.12: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. IV, second half (mm. 158–166).

A similar truncation of the theme is seen in Vars. III and the opening of Var. V. In Var. III, **C** is omitted entirely; instead, **A** is restated. In Example 4.13, I have labelled the first and second phrases both as **A**, as the only change made is that of a

chromatic inflection of G♯ in the third sixteenth of the left hand in m. 119 (from G in the third sixteenth of m. 115). I have labelled the final four measures as **A'** rather than **A**, primarily on account of the rhetorical shift that is achieved through changes in the left-hand rhythm, that which deviates from the mischievous, light-hearted nature from before, veering towards the determined and assertive.

Example 4.13: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. III (mm. 115–130).

The insertion of a G♯ in the second iteration of **A** in m. 119 is curious. There are two possible reasons accounting for this slight shift: first, that Herz intended for a momentary color change. This would be complemented by the *crescendo* appended to

the second iteration of **A**, that aligns with the newfound impetus that the chromatic coloration affords the second iteration of the material. Equally, this change invites question of whether there is in fact a textual problem, and whether Herz did in fact intend for the G#, since a G# is additionally marked in the final sixteenth of the measure; if the first were to have been unambiguous to the performer, then the second would have been unnecessary. This question is complicated by the change in clef: all of mm. 118²–119¹ could have remained in the bass clef, given that none of its notes are higher than those presented in the first four measures; the repetition of G# in two clefs in quick succession in the same measure is therefore problematic, and warrants further interpretative decisions to be made by a performer.

In the opening of Var. V (**Example 4.14** overleaf), the opening half-cadence of **C** is omitted; **B** is followed by **C'** and the music is taken to its closing perfect authentic cadence in sixteen instead of twenty measures. There is no fermata on the attainment of the dominant at the end of **B**: a consequence of, if not because of, the omission of the original half-cadence characterizing **C**. In its original twenty-measure structure, there was some form of symmetry pivoted around **B**: 8 [two authentic cadences] + 4 [half cadence] + 8 [periodic phrasing — half cadence; authentic cadence]. Truncated, the half cadence at the end of **B** replaces the harmonic function of the end of **C**.

Allegro non troppo ma con fuoco $\text{d} = 112$

Piano

168 **A** f p leggiero assai f *8va loco*

171 **A'** f f p rf

174 **B** p

177 **C** $\text{sf} >$ $\text{sf} >$ $\text{sf} >$ p cres *cen - - do* rf p

180 sf

182 *cresc* *cen - - do.* f

Example 4.14: Herz *Bravura Variations*, opening of Var. V (mm. 168–183).

Allusions to the theme occur for the final time in m. 211 (**Example 4.15**), midway through the extended finale of Var. V. Here, the theme is also fragmented, and further rhythmically diminished by half: **A** (mm. 211–213¹), then **A'** (mm. 213²–215¹) in which **A** is repeated an octave higher, and **B** (mm. 215²–218¹) can be traced.

Example 4.15: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. V (mm. 211–219).

The melodic outline of **A** (and **A'**) remain readily identifiable; the initial ascent, as well as each of the descending five notes of the opening melody, is audible, with the latter changing on every sixteenth, the offbeats decorated with neighbor notes. While the I–V harmonic progression with the $\wedge 1 - \wedge 2 - \wedge 3$ outline characterizing the beginning of **C** does occur on the arrival on m. 217², this quickly unfolds as a two-measure chromatic meandering before the tonic is restored in a *brillante leggiero* texture from m. 220. In the lack of harmonies grounding its tonality, this structure completely breaks away from the theme — the return to the tonic in m. 220 marks a new section.

4.5 Virtuosities

Pianistic virtuosity was the *raison d'être* for the style of writing in this genre; in this section, I discuss the ways in which the physicality of virtuosity manifests in the texture, focusing on the *stile brillante* which, as established in **Chapter 2**, is a key aesthetic of the genre.¹⁵ As one of the most important pianists in pre-Lisztian and -Chopinian Paris, Herz exemplified what it meant to be part of the ecosystem of composer, pianist, publisher, teacher, and piano manufacturer. His commercial success as both pianist and composer is attributed to his style, rooted in the *stile brillante*, and which is believed to have been chiefly influenced by his brief contact with Ignaz Moscheles — often regarded as the first and most important exponent of virtuosity in Paris.¹⁶

Moscheles's 1821 debut in Paris not only created "quite a stir,"¹⁷ but further achieved a "revolution" overnight: it was a catalyst for profound changes that set a new benchmark for taste in the French capital, "rip[ping] apart" a world that had

¹⁵ Dana Gooley, "The Battle Against Instrumental Virtuosity in the Early Nineteenth Century," in *Franz Liszt and His World*, ed. Christopher H. Gibbs and Dana Gooley (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 91–126. See also Shaena Weitz's study of the contemporary French journal, *Le Pianiste*, "Le Pianiste: Parisian Music Journalism and the Politics of the Piano, 1833–35" (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York, Graduate Center, City University of New York, 2016).

¹⁶ Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism: An Historical Perspective: Including Interviews with Contemporary Performers* (White Plains, N.Y: London: Westport, Conn: Pro/Am Music Resources; Kahn & Averill; U.S. trade & retail distribution by Bold Strummer, 1992), 16–17; Kenneth Hamilton, "Après Une Lecture de Czerny? Liszt's Creative Virtuosity," in *Liszt and Virtuosity*, ed. Robert Doran (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 48.

¹⁷ Weitz, "Le Pianiste," 112. She cites and translates *Le Pianiste* an 2, 60: "[...] tout à coup Moschelès, et une révolution musicale s'opéra en une soirée, pour ainsi dire."

thus far been fairly insulated.”¹⁸ Herz was eighteen when Moscheles made his Parisian debut; he was regarded as the latter’s “happy and rash imitator,”¹⁹ with this manner of *stile brillante* exemplified in this set of *Bravura Variations*. While Weitz and Timbrell have attributed Herz’s style to the influence of Moscheles, Louis Spohr’s review from the year before reveals that Herz himself was already exhibiting a propensity for the display of “extraordinary” physical pianistic skill. It was perhaps not so much that he was “imitating” Moscheles, but instead, that Moscheles’s influence on the Parisian public accelerated, solidified, and garnered acceptance for the aesthetics that Herz sought to encapsulate in his music.²⁰

The following reviews of Herz’s playing are a direct reflection of his compositional style, and help draw us closer to imagining the French *jeu perlé* style that he helped popularize. In New York, the *Tribune* described his fingering as being “so rapid and precise,” his playing the “very perfection of grace, delicacy, lightness, elasticity, equality.”²¹ Closer to home, in *Le Pianiste*, Henry Lemoine and Charles Chaulieu described his playing as always having an “irreproachable” execution, with

¹⁸ Weitz, “Le Pianiste,” 112–14. She cites and translates *Le Pianiste*.

¹⁹ Weitz, “Le Pianiste,” 114. She cites and translates *Le Pianiste*.

²⁰ Louis Spohr, “Briefe aus Paris von Louis Spohr. Zweyter Brief. Den 31sten December 1820,” *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* 23 (1821): 157. “Die ausserordentliche Fertigkeit dieses jungen Mannes setzt in Erstaunen; doch scheint auch bey ihm, wie bey allen hiesigen jungen Künstlern, die ich bis jetzt hörte, die technische Ausbildung der geistigen vorgeschriften zu seyn.”

²¹ *The Tribune*, October 31, 1846, 2; see Timbrell, *French Pianism*, 17–18.

a “great lightness” underlining his “clear mechanism.”²² The *stile brillante* can be characterized as having rapid, ornate, light filigree; this rapid, crystal-clear, even, and most of all elegant passagework was to be played with the utmost equality of touch and unforced tone controlled entirely by the fingers, with each note bright and perfectly formed — like individual pearls on a necklace.²³ Such writing and technique was part of a wider revolution of piano techniques characterizing 1830s Paris; it extended beyond Herz and Moscheles, to the likes of Kalkbrenner, Chopin, Clementi, Adam, Cramer, and others.²⁴

While this style of writing was seen in the first three variations and finale — *Vivo e leggieremante; con leggierezza; Vivace assai*; then *leggiero assai* again — it is significant that even the expressive locus of the variation set, its minor, slow Var. IV that is marked *Adagio cantabile con molt' espressione*, remains predominantly based on the *stile brillante*. As discussed earlier, this variation is structurally based only on A. As in the theme, its elaboration in A' draws on contemporary operatic performance practice. In the theme, A is the simple presentation of Méhul's *Romanze*, with decorative turns and a *volute* added to A'. These same turns that characterize A' from the theme are used in the opening of Var. IV (A here). In A', Herz enhances the

²² Weitz, “Le Pianiste,” 184. She cites and translates *Le Pianiste an 1, 183*: “[...] et son execution a été irréprochable”; *Le Pianiste an 1, 183*: “[...] Un mécanisme toujours clair, une grande légèreté en font de la base.”

²³ Timbrell, *French Pianism*, 16.

²⁴ Timbrell, *French Pianism*, 13.

poignancy and *Affekt* characteristic of the opening descent from $\wedge 3$ to $\wedge 6$ through successive descending trills (m. 154).

This attack-based means of prolonging harmony is congruent with the means through which Herz decorates the $\flat II^6$ harmony (where it had previously been ii^6 in the major version of the theme). Where $\flat II^6$ is ornamented in A through a rising scale and turns (m. 151), here it is characterized by a rapid *crescendo* trill in A' (m. 155) and further emphasized through the leap of a twelfth, which is arrived onto with a *sforzando*. In the latter case, the sonorities are also accumulated with the pedal extending throughout the whole measure. Herz's pedal markings indicate this even more clearly: in m. 152³⁻⁴, the pedal is released such that the filigree is not merely for coloristic effects, but rather, in *con forza*, each note ought to be distinct. This contrasts with his use of pedal which extends the whole of m. 155 where the pedal serves to color and enhance $\flat II^6$ in A'.

The elaborations in this variation call for the same *jeu perlé* touch as in the other variations; the affectual capacity of this variation is derived in part from the legato *cantabile*, but also from the blending of these chromatic sonorities. Where the other variations are diatonic, rooted in C major, these inflections of chromaticism, particularly on the unequal temperament of a nineteenth-century keyboard — give rise to affects that deviate from its earlier simplicity (*Einfalt*).²⁵

²⁵ C. F. D. Schubart, *Ideen Zu Einer Ästhetik Der Tonkunst* (Vienna: J. V. Degen, 1806), 377–380. $\flat II$, $D\flat$ major, is one that sinks into sorrow and bliss, one with unusual characters and feelings. “Ein schielender Ton, ausartend in Leid und Wonne. Lachen kann er nicht, aber lächeln;

Example 4.16 (4.11): Herz *Bravura Variations*, opening of Var. IV (mm. 150–158).

The abundance of detailed and precise pedal markings, as well as those concerning articulation and dynamics, is not just a characteristic of this set of variations, but more broadly of Herz's wider oeuvre. On the one hand, this is a reflection of the growing capacity of the piano, which brought about greater affordances and bigger range of expression. Herz was as prominent a virtuoso composer-performer as he was a piano manufacturer; classed amongst the likes of those by Sébastien Érard and Ignaz Pleyel, his pianos regularly won prizes in

heulen kann er nicht, aber wenigstens das *Weinen* *grimassiren*. — Man kann sonach nur seltene Charaktere und Empfindungen in diesen Ton verlegen,” 378.

exhibitions.²⁶ His writing reflects, first, the reciprocal relationships between the then-evolving capacities of his pianos — which he would showcase as a touring virtuoso — and the image he could portray of himself as a virtuoso. Herz's experimental and innovative approaches to the use of felt, instead of the usual leather, for his hammers would have created significantly new tone colors and sonorities in his writing, particularly when coupled with his precise use of pedal, articulation, and dynamics, all of which are reflected in his scores.²⁷ In addition to the “astonishing” display of physical velocity and power, another of the key components of virtuosity in the 1830s lay in the ability to imagine, invent, and execute new sounds on an instrument.²⁸ The proliferation of expressive prescriptions in these scores give us a glimpse into the creativity behind Herz's approach to timbre, which conceivably played no small role in his ultimate success.

We can understand the precision of Herz's markings by situating his work as a composer and virtuoso within the wider composer-performer-publisher ecosystem of the time. As Friedrich Wieck had established in his pedagogical treatise, the value of these variations lay in their execution: for this, the details marked in the score are crucial.²⁹ In theory, the greater the precision of the composer's markings, the greater the chance the consumer had of approximating what they had heard in performance,

²⁶ Schnapper, *Henri Herz, Magnat Du Piano*, 195–210.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Stefaniak, *Schumann's Virtuosity*, 2–3.

²⁹ See Friedrich Wieck, *Piano and Song (Didactic and Polemical): The Collected Writings of Clara Schumann's Father and Only Teacher*, trans. Henry Pleasants (Stuyvesant, N.Y: Pendragon Press, 1988), 130.

and of coming as close to the performer and performance as possible. In reality, however, it is unlikely that consumers were physically able to re-create the feats of pianistic virtuosity that they had admired, as put on display by its creator.

In 1832, Herz published a set of *Les trois grâces*, Op. 68; a year later, Louise Farrenc published an arrangement of the third — a set of Variations on the Cavatine from Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* — for piano four hands.³⁰ Farrenc's arrangement is nearly identical to Herz's; her arrangement is not a simplification of its difficulties, but rather a redistribution of techniques. The separation of textures such as octaves and leaping bass into primo and secondo respectively allows for greater precision and velocity to be achieved individually, then collectively. That such an arrangement exists is a testament to the immense difficulty that these variation sets posed to its average consumer, and the ongoing attempts to nevertheless re-create it. It further confirms that second-hand pianistic derivatives did indeed “eclipse” the popularity of its original source material.³¹ Rather than seeking out simpler arrangements to re-

³⁰ Henri Herz and Louise Farrenc, *Les Trois Grâces* No. 3: *Cavatine d'Anna Bolena de Donizetti* (Mayence: Les Fils de B. Schott, 1833).

³¹ See Thomas Christensen, “Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera,” in *Music and the Cultures of Print*, ed. Kate Van Orden (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 75–76. Farrenc's (re-)arrangement of this pianistic transcription reveals a new precedence of pianism over the operatic domain in these variations, particularly in light of Fétis' article just four years ago in the *Revue musicale*, in which he identified the value of these variations in that they were vessels for re-creating operatic and vocal material in the absence of available forces. See “Collection des Opéras de Rossini, arrange pour piano solo, avec accompagnement de flute ou violon, ad libitum,” *Revue musicale* (Paris: Au Bureau du Journal, 1829), 550–51.

experience the opera theme, it was instead the pianistic version that consumers sought to recreate, even at the cost of double the number of hands and fingers.

The *stile brillante*, earlier established as one of early-nineteenth-century virtuosity's more explicit guises, is epitomized in Var. III of Herz's *Bravura Variations*. Its relentless staccato markings exhibit Herz's approach to the piano as a percussive instrument, wherein the sharp, precise attack of each individual note is foregrounded. Its physical difficulty stems from the leaping motion characterizing the *moto perpetuo* staccato sixteenths that outline the theme at the distance of constant two-note sixteenths that traverse the distance of two octaves — and back again — on each successive note.

La 2da volta pp e più cresc.

8va

Vivace assai, = 84

A 115

Example 4.17 (4.13): Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. III (mm. 115–130).

The difficulty of this variation stems largely from having to perform it *vivace assai*. At a tempo marking of 84 notes per quarter, this would mean playing 336 notes per minute amid this texture; to perform this variation accurately at this speed is an incredible, if not nearly impossible, feat. From an organological perspective, pianos from the early decades of the nineteenth century — whether Viennese like the Stein young Wieck practiced this work on, or French like those Herz composed these variations on — did have a shallower key dip and lighter action than the modern-day

Steinway.³² This should, in theory, aid with its execution, as scholars have rationalized to have been the case with Czerny's "impossible" metronome markings.³³ Having played this work on a Pleyel (1842) and a copy of a Graf (1824) however, this justification only holds true to a small extent in this variation. While these differences do indeed impact other textures that value lightness and velocity (such as the runs seen in Var. IV), there is hardly a noticeable difference here, where difficulty stems primarily from a mastery of keyboard geography. Such figuration necessitates extensive leaps across the keyboard; at this speed, the pianist would have been put on a visual spectacle for their audience, first in the right hand, then the left.

Herz's use of metronome markings in this variation, and indeed his others, invites a further consideration of the relationship between virtuosos' public display of virtuosity, their published scores, and the ways in which the consumer interacted with them within this culture. Herz's *Bravura Variations* was challenging for young Wieck, herself an accomplished virtuosa; even when they were performed by other established concertizing pianists such as Gustav Barth and Alfred Dörffel, Wieck did not find any of their performances convincing.³⁴ It is unlikely that the consumers of

³² Kenneth Mobbs has conducted a comprehensive, empirical study in this area. See "A Performer's Comparative Study of Touchweight, Key-Dip, Keyboard Design and Repetition in Early Grand Pianos, c. 1770 to 1850," *The Galpin Society Journal* 54 (May 2001): 16–44.

³³ See Marten Noorduin, "Czerny's 'impossible' Metronome Marks," *The Musical Times* 154, no. 1925 (Winter 2013): 19–46.

³⁴ Her criticism of performances can be found in Clara Schumann et al., *Briefwechsel von Clara und Robert Schumann*, Schumann Briefedition, Band 4 (Köln: Dohr, 2012), 57. Clara Wieck to Robert Schumann, Leipzig, Dec 17, 1832: "Der berühmte junge Barhdt [sic: Barth] spi<l>ete in dieser Euterpe auch die Brav. Var. von Herz auf einen Stutzflügel in 5 |4| Unheil schwangern Adagios. Das Nähere müssen Sie sich vom Vater beschreiben und vormachen lassen," and

the mass market purchasing these scores for domestic consumption could play them; in order to satisfy their desire, even “rage,”³⁵ to see such virtuosity on display, they would have had to buy tickets to hear it performed, either by its author or by a virtuosa such as Wieck.

Even so, would Herz and Wieck actually have performed these variations at the tempo indicated? There would have been no way for their audience to ascertain this in a pre-technological age when there was no means of reproducing or re-examining a performance. It is possible that extreme metronome markings such as these were not so much a prescription of what needs to be executed in order to achieve a desired effect, but rather, to exhibit the ideal of what was pushing the boundaries of what was possible. To this end, the impossibility of these markings themselves can be further understood as a marketing strategy that ensured the virtuosos’ enduring popularity on the concert stage. It was not so much the tempo at which Herz could perform his variations, instead, the illusion that he was performing in ways that pushing the boundaries of pianism. The immense popularity of such variations in the domestic realms is less a reflection of the levels of contemporary music-making outside of the concert hall. Rather, they are documents that represent first their awareness of what was fashionable in the musical world, and second, to

Clara Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840: nach den Handschriften* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2019), 310. Dec 17, 1838: “Herr Doerfel [Dörffel] spielte die Joseph-Variationen von Herz – unglaublich schlecht.”

³⁵ Stefaniak, *Schumann’s Virtuosity*, 2.

borrow the words of Arthur Loesser, “aspiration and pretense.”³⁶ Similar to the ways in which the piano began to proliferate the bourgeoisie household towards the end of the eighteenth century, these scores can be seen as commodities and documents of social history.

There are striking similarities between Herz’s writing in Var. III and that of Niccolò Paganini’s. I refer specifically to the second of Paganini’s 24 Caprices, composed between 1802 and 1817. Similarly premised on wide leaps, this figuration manifests itself in a different way on the violin: beginning on the same string, the Caprice quickly moves to cross-stringing between adjacent strings by the second measure, and across three strings by the fifth measure. Coupled with the increasingly complex articulation and intervals between these leaps, most prominently through the use of spiccato and various manners of double stops, this work increasingly becomes a visual spectacle for the audience in the same way that Herz’s third variation was.

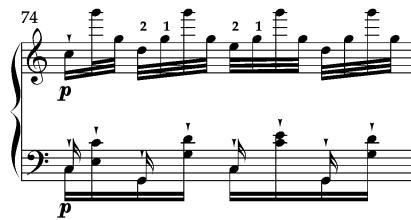
³⁶ Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), 136.

Moderato
dolce

Example 4.18: Niccolò Paganini, *Caprice No. 2* (mm. 1–34).

Herz's music was published by Ricordi, the Milanese firm who also published Paganini's Caprices in 1820, and there were also comparisons between Herz and Paganini in the English press. In the 1833 issue of *The Harmonicon*, Herz was deemed, after a performance of his own Concerto in C minor on June 10, 1833, to have

achieved “extraordinary feats [...] quite as astonishing as some things accomplished by Paganini on the violin.”³⁷ It would be fair to say that Herz’s writing reflects his awareness of, if not influences from, contemporaneous virtuoso violin culture, especially when considering his use of the ricochet effect, of which snippets can be found in Var. I (m. 74, **Example 4.19**). Here, the idea of having ricocheting octaves with the melody (1–2–3) traced with a crossing-over of the thumb is recycled in Var. II. In Var. III, the subsequent incorporation of triplets in gives this motion even greater momentum (see **Examples 4.20** and **4.21**).

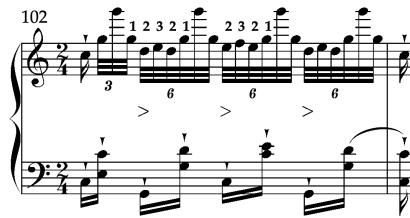


Example 4.19: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. I (m. 74).



Example 4.20: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. II (m. 98).

³⁷ *The Harmonicon* (London: William Clowes, 1833), 155.



Example 4.21: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. II (m. 102).

Although both Paganini and Herz were recognized and hailed as prominent virtuosos, their ability to achieve extraordinary physical feats was a double-edged sword. Rapid technological and industrial developments coincided with their careers; there was a “wholesale mechanization of life” that began around the turn of the century, during which time machines of different forms were becoming a part of everyday life — pianos included.³⁸ Herz’s incorporation of a metronome marking is a musical manifestation of this phenomenon; in many of his variation sets, the tempo prescription would be preceded by a reference to Johann Maelzel, who patented the metronome in 1815 after co-opting Dietrich Winkel’s earlier double-pendulum technology. This increasingly-ubiquitous item was but one “meagre entry in Maelzel’s large oeuvre of self-moving machines.”³⁹ Indeed, beginning from the last decades of the eighteenth century, automata that were capable of mimicking living

³⁸ Žarko Cvejić, *The Virtuoso as Subject: The Reception of Instrumental Virtuosity, c. 1815-c. 1850* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 130. See also James Parakilas, “1770s to 1820s: The Piano Revolution in the Age of Revolutions,” in *Piano Roles: Three Hundred Years of Life with the Piano* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1999), 75–120.

³⁹ Alexander E. Bonus, “Maelzel, the Metronome, and the Modern Mechanics of Musical Time,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Time in Music*, ed. Mark Doffman, Emily Payne, and Toby Young (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021), 307–12.

creatures became fashionable; this included Jacques de Vaucanson's "duck" and "flautist," John Merlin's "swan," and Maelzel's "chess player," the last of which based on Wolfgang von Kempelen's invention.⁴⁰

Žarko Cvejić foregrounds the "strongly destabilizing" effect that these technological advancements had on musical discourse, particularly in virtuoso culture.⁴¹ Through a reading of a wealth of primary sources from this period, Cvejić foregrounds the ways in which performers who exhibited extreme virtuosity, especially Herz and Paganini themselves, risked being compared with automata. The lines between what constituted a "superhuman" and "inhuman" performance were blurred, and there was a danger that in perpetually striving for ever yet more extraordinary physical manifestations of virtuosity, these performers "might come to be likened to, and dismissed as, automata, mere lifeless machines, instead of being celebrated as extraordinary human individuals who push the limits, as virtuosi were supposed to do, of the humanly possible."⁴²

Indeed, that the *Allgemeine Wiener Musik-Zeitung* later described such music as seeming to have been "arranged for ten, twenty, sixty, or more fingers of every kind of proficiency or lack thereof" foregrounds the non-human level of impossibility that these

⁴⁰ Bonus, "Maelzel, the Metronome, and the Modern Mechanics of Musical Time"; Cvejić, *The Virtuoso as Subject*, 131–32; Richard D. Altick, "Exhibitions of Mechanical Ingenuity," in *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1978), 64–76.

⁴¹ Cvejić, *The Virtuoso as Subject*, 132.

⁴² *Ibid.*

variations were perceived to have embodied.⁴³ Their description of these authors as “transcription vampires” speaks to a wider phenomenon: without the ability to conceive of virtuosos’ acts as existing within the realms of the human(e), critics rationalized and degenerated the capacity for achieving this mode of performance — especially in the case of Paganini — non-human monstrosity.⁴⁴ In light of Paganini’s reception, Herz might have considered himself fortunate, particularly given the close associations that the press invoked between him and his violinist counterpart, to have been likened only to an automaton.⁴⁵

The requisite for ensuring that one’s achievement did not cross into the realm of the inhuman, Cvejić argues, was expression: albeit a notion “tantalizingly vague” in nineteenth-century discourse.⁴⁶ We can further interpret the proliferation of expressive markings, particularly in Herz’s slow movement, as a document of his capacity for being expressive in ways that complemented the mechanical prowess he was recognized for. Friedrich Wieck’s assessment of Chopin’s plethora of

⁴³ *Allgemeine Wiener Musik-Zeitung* 108 (1847): 135. Quoted in and translated by Christensen, “Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera,” 82.

⁴⁴ Ibid. See also Cvejić, *The Virtuoso as Subject*, 128–29.

⁴⁵ Spohr, “Briefe aus Paris,” 157. “Der junge Klavierspieler Herz, von dem Du ebenfalls in dem Pariser musikalischen Allerley gelesen haben wirst, spielte auch an jenem Abend zweymal [...] die ausserordentliche Fertigkeit dieses jungen Mannes setzt in Erstaunen [...] Er ist aber auffallend, wie alles hier, jung und alt, nur darnach strebt, durch mechanische Fertigkeit zu glänzen, und Leute, in denen vielleicht der Keim zu etwas Besserm liegt, ganze Jahre, mit Aufbieten aller ihrer Kräfte dazu verwenden, ein einziges Musikstück, was als soches oft nicht den mindesten Werth hat, einzuuben, um dann öffentlich damit aufzutreten zu können. Dass bey solchem Verfahren der Geist getötet werden müsse, und aus solchen Leuten nicht viel Besseres werden könne, als musikalische Automaten, ist leicht begreiflich.”

⁴⁶ Cvejić, *The Virtuoso as Subject*, 134.

performance indications in his *Là ci darem la mano* as excellent, even masterful, supports the proposition that this mode of documentation could serve as an antidote to prevailing charges of superficial mechanism.⁴⁷

Example 4.22: Robert Schumann, “Paganini” from *Carnaval*, Op. 9 (mm. 1–16).

Herz was not the only piano virtuoso to have been influenced by Paganini; Chopin’s use of similar textures in *Là ci darem la mano*, composed two years after Herz’s, will be examined in **Chapter 5**. Nearly a decade after Herz’s variations, Robert Schumann, too, continued to write in this idiom, making an unambiguous reference to violin virtuoso culture in *Carnaval*’s “Paganini” (1834–35). This idiom can be understood, thus, as having belonged to the repository of virtuosic keyboard

⁴⁷ Friedrich Wieck, “Chopin, Frédéric: ‘Là ci darem la mano’ varié pour le pianoforte,” *Cäcilie: eine Zeitschrift für die musikalische Welt* 14 (1832): 219. “vortrefflichen meisterhaften Bezeichnung oder Andeutung dees Vortrages.” Wieck continues with an allusion to the musical language of John Field, in particular its soulfulness (seelenvoller) — antithetical to the mechanical.

figuration in 1830s piano culture, for which I argue that its defining characteristic that gave it an edge over the prevailing *stile brillante*, to earn “bravura” connotations, is its capacity for igniting visual interest through its physical virtuosity.

While this visual aspect of performance was of great appeal to concertgoers, for whom this style of writing and performing was conceived, there was equal censure against this phenomenon. During the Wiecks’ visit to Paris in 1832, Friedrich Wieck wrote:

Now I have heard the master who knows so well how to get rich. Indeed, he plays without heart; his hands jump about with no soul, and everything looks much better on paper than it actually sounds. But he plays with finesse and clearly, chooses good tempi, yet everything is somewhat restrained and delicate — he himself lacks true feeling — yet he is — also in his elegant appearance — a true man of the French salon — and he earns 15-20 Francs per hour. He and his brother Jacob, who also was there [and is praised as a teacher] have two open carriages and know their business.⁴⁸

In *The Harmonicon* — where we earlier encountered a comparison between Herz and Paganini — it was reviewed of Herz’s performance in London on June 10, 1833:

⁴⁸ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 116. “Jetzt habe ich also den Meister gehört der so gut versteht, reich zu werden. Ja, der spielt ohne Herz, die Hände springen ohne Seele, und es sieht alles viel besser noch auf dem Papier aus, als es sich anhören lässt. Aber er spielt fertig u deutlich, übernimmt die Tempi, doch alles sehr abgemessen und immer noch zierlich – er selbst ermangelt des Gefühls – aber er ist – auch in seinem eleganten Aeußersten – der wahre Mann der franz. Salons – u verdient 15 – 20 Fr. für die Stunde. Er und sein Bruder Jacob, welcher auch da war [u als Lehrer gerühmt wird] haben 2 Cabriolets und – verstehen ihr Geschäft.”

To those who consider mechanical dexterity, or that sort of command of the keyboard which persevering labour is sure to bestow, the perfection of pianoforte playing, — or, in other words, to such as think what is termed execution the only reasonable aim and desirable end of music, — this gentleman must appear the realization of the beau-ideal of the performer: the neatness with which, without any apparent effort, he does extraordinary feats, is surprising [...] and equally valuable, in the eye of those who ground their judgment on anything like sound principle. He crosses his hands, he weaves his fingers, with the cleverness of a juggler [...] But with those who think that sentiment or expression, — that taste, that rich harmony, that air '*che nell' anima si sente*,' are all or any of them essential to good music, M. Herz has small chance of becoming a favourite.⁴⁹

Finally, also in London, this was written in *The Spectator*:

When Herz played, the pianoforte was [pushed out front, away from the orchestra], in order to enable the audience to discern his feats of legerdemain — his ups and downs — his crossings and weaving, and all the fooleries with which he contrives to gull the simpletons of this metropolis. Herz's exhibition is not only addressed to the eyes, but to the eyes of the ignorant: conscious that he has little worth *hearing*, he is doubly anxious to be seen. Thalberg seated himself at the instrument where and as he found it; and a very few bars had passed before we were satisfied that no common mind impelled the firm, brilliant, and rapid finger that glanced over the keys [...] His playing, had nothing frothy and claptrap about it — nothing for mere trick or display.⁵⁰

One can give the visual element of this idiom renewed associations by refracting it through its operatic origins. As Thomas Christensen notes, "no musical genre was probably more tethered to a specific location for its performance than

⁴⁹ *The Harmonicon* (London: William Clowes, 1833), 155.

⁵⁰ *The Spectator*, "Philharmonic Concerts," (London: Press Holdings, 14 May 1836), 464.

opera,” in which visual spectacle was historically integral to the experience.⁵¹ In its translation from opera to the medium of the piano, initially in the manner of transcriptions — then later, variations — the focus was shifted from the visual to the aural. The virtuosity inherent in this manner of piano writing offered opportunities for renewing the aural and visual elements characteristic to its initial theatrical origins, bringing them in new, unique ways to the virtuoso instrument at hand.

⁵¹ Christensen, “Public Music in Private Spaces,” 68.

4.6 A Burgeoning Bravura Style

While Herz's musical language reflects the pinnacle of the *stile brillante* during its heyday, I argue that his ability to blend the prevailing *stile brillante* with the new "bravura" virtuosity, thereby pandering to popular demand for the visual spectacle, was what gave him his immense success. The comparison of Herz's musical acts with that of jugglers in *The Harmonicon* is echoed by a reviewer from the *Allgemeine Wiener Musik-Zeitung*, who likened the leaps composed into these variations with acrobats' somersaults, both reviewers making references to the visual virtuosity of theatrics and the circus.⁵²

Robert Doran discusses this new "bravura" aesthetic in Liszt's music in detail.⁵³ I draw on his discussion of pianistic textures to discuss the ways in which Herz was beginning to incorporate these elements — that which grew to define a new aesthetic of virtuosity that Doran argues was later solidified by Liszt — into his music as early as 1825. For Doran, these features are characteristics that define this "bravura" aesthetic: the "thrilling" tremolando that mimicked orchestral textures, rapid note repetition, extended declamatory or virtuosic double-octave passagework, glissandi, rapid broken octaves blurred by the pedal to create a "surging" effect, long

⁵² *The Harmonicon* (London: William Clowes, 1833), 155; *Allgemeine Wiener Musik-Zeitung* 108 (1847), 135. The latter is cited in and translated by Christensen, "Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera," 82.

⁵³ Doran, *Liszt and Virtuosity*, 20–22, and 287.

trills combined with melody notes in one hand, Thalberg's "widely-admired" three-handed technique, and Liszt's "patented interlocking chromatic octaves."⁵⁴

Example 4.23: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Introduction, tremolo in the bass (mm. 28–29).

Many of these techniques can be found in Herz's *Bravura Variations*, composed more than a decade earlier than Liszt's operatic-based *Réminiscences*. In the first cadenza at the end of the introduction, the tremolando in the bass is used to give the music momentum and drive; here, the fact that virtuosic contrary motion thirds moving from the outermost extremes of the keyboard to the middle in a long *crescendo*, followed by the wide leaps outlining a dominant seventh chord also sees a

⁵⁴ See J. Q. Davies, "Boneless Hands / Thalberg's Ready-Made Soul / Velvet Fingers," in *Romantic Anatomies of Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 93–122 and Doran, "From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style, 279–280.

direct correlation between the sonic and visual components of virtuosity. The repeated note figuration is exhibited in the second cadenza at the end of Var. IV (Example 4.24), and is also used again in his later *Variations brillante di bravoure*, Op. 76 (1836) — a work which also became significant in Wieck's repertoire, as she performed it eleven times in 1836 and 1837. In Herz's *Variations brillante di bravoure*, the repeated note figuration is fleshed out over an even longer cadenza; where the use of cadenzas had once been ambiguous in the piano parts of his *Bravura Variations*, it is explicitly indicated so in the score in this later work (Example 4.25).

Example 4.24: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. IV,
Repeated note figuration (mm. 166–67).



Example 4.25: Herz *Variations brillante di bravoure* (1836), Cadenza.

The cultivation of this technique can be linked with one of the key developments of the piano of the time — the double escapement mechanism. With this new action, the hammer that had been struck would remain close to the string until the finger released the key completely; with the hammer travelling less than half its usual distance, the repetition mechanism grew to become capable of finer nuances, and gave the player a much higher degree of control over such rapid passagework. The development of this mechanism was cultivated in France by Sébastien Érard; it had been in development as early as 1808, and he patented it in 1821.⁵⁵ Herz later modified and simplified Érard's mechanism, his technical innovations facilitating to

⁵⁵ Timbrell, *French Pianism*, 2, 13–14.

yet greater extents the velocity, lightness, and precision that defined his style.⁵⁶ As discussed previously, the use of these passages and techniques can be understood as a manifestation of the reciprocal relationship between his work in the domain of piano manufacturing and the exhibition of what they could achieve through his composing: where his performances would encourage consumers to purchase sheet music to play these works at home themselves, these performances on his pianos served to further encourage them to purchase his pianos.

Another technique which Doran aligns with the burgeoning bravura aesthetic is the glissando which Herz uses in Var. II to bridge A and A' (m. 89², **Example 4.26**). Finally, while Herz's writing does not showcase the "double octaves" believed to be characteristic of Liszt's piano textures, a similar "interlocking" texture can be seen in the Coda of Var. V (**Example 4.27**).⁵⁷ Instead of octaves, however, Herz's use of chords offers an added harmonic dimension to the rapidity of these thirty-second alternations. In mm. 201–202, each note of what otherwise would have been a simple rising C major scale is harmonized in a quick succession of first inversion triads. In addition to generating aural intensity, this figuration is also of greater complexity in execution — while hand shapes can remain fairly stable in octave passages, hand positions need to be constantly reconfigured in such chordal textures.

⁵⁶ Schnapper, *Henri Herz, Magnat Du Piano*, 205–6. See also Alfred Dolge, *Pianos and Their Makers*, vol. 1 (Covina, California: Covina Publishing Company, 1911), 257–59.

⁵⁷ Doran, "From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style," 280. This manner of interlocking octaves is, however, not unique to Liszt; it can also be observed in the Coda of Felix Mendelssohn's *Rondo Capriccioso*, Op. 14 (1828–30).

Example 4.26: *Herz Bravura Variations*, Var. II, glissando (mm. 86–93).

Example 4.27: *Herz Bravura Variations*, Coda from Var. V (mm. 191–205).

4.7 Audibility of the theme

Beyond virtuosity and the myriad of techniques through which Herz generates interest, both in the *stile brillante* and the bravura, another aspect key to an audience's experience listening to a work such as this lies in the audibility of the melody. Carl Czerny identified a need for the theme to remain consistently audible throughout the entire set of variations, in order for it to be successful.⁵⁸ This prescription is, however, not always fulfilled in Herz's writing, and yet, his *Bravura Variations* remained highly successful. Var. III is the first variation in which the theme is clearly identifiable. Having discussed it in the previous section, I dedicate this section to analyzing Herz's treatment of the melody in Vars. I & II and the first sixteen measures of Var. V.

For Kofi Agawu, the musical fabric of a work is constituted of its "extroversive" layer, which refers to the implicit, subjective play of the musical surface, and the "introspective," which refers to the explicit and objective underlying harmony governed by the nature of logic.⁵⁹ Agawu argues that the basis of any expressive structure is premised on the non-coincidence of intrinsically harmonic processes and extrinsic changes in surface design, particularly for works composed

⁵⁸ Carl Czerny, *School of Practical Composition*, trans. John Bishop (London: R. Cocks, 1848), I: 21–28, 31. See Stefaniak, *Schumann's Virtuosity*, 31.

⁵⁹ Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 113, and *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). In 1991, he used the terms "intrinsic" and "extrinsic"; in 2000, "introspective" and "extroversive."

after the turn of the nineteenth century. Where Agawu's focus is on signs and topics outside the realms of the purely musical — he uses the terms "introversive semiosis" and "extroversive semiosis" — I draw primarily upon his fundamental premise that the music is constituted of two layers, and that much of its significance arises from the hermeneutic friction of contrasts within and between domains. How did these interactions influence the audience's listening experience? In a genre such as the theme and variation, the harmonies in the "introversive" layer remains largely "intrinsic" to the work; musical interest is generated primarily through the development occurring on its "extroversive" layer. I adopt a multivalent approach to analyses of this "extroversive" layer, drawing on parameters of dynamics, figuration, articulation, and the use of pedal — all of which contribute to texture.

Variation I

The original melodic material is fragmented and passed around registers in Var. I. Rhythmically, the theme begins on the offbeat; texturally, it is interwoven into the tenor region of the texture amid swirling arpeggiations. The concealment of a melody amid a texture defined by a flurry of virtuosic figuration in the manner of the *stile brillante* can be understood as a manifestation of a “three-hand technique,” in which a “metaphysical ‘tenor’ [is] played covertly by the thumbs.”⁶⁰ In the version with quartet, the clear outline of the syncopated descending fifth from $\wedge 3$ to $\wedge 6$ seen in the tenor region, played by the left hand’s thumb, is further supported by the first violin.

Apart from this opening descent, which is also the only fragment of the theme to be presented in the Introduction, the ability to trace the theme in analysis in A and A’ does not necessarily translate to audibility while listening to a performance. This stems in part from the speed at which this variation is played, but also because any identification is premised on individual notes or snippets that are juxtaposed in quick succession across various registers that are too disjointed to be coherent in the moment of listening; only the start of each section of the theme lends itself to being easily identifiable.

⁶⁰ Davies, “Boneless Hands / Thalberg’s Ready-Made Soul / Velvet Fingers,” 95. Although Herz’s presentation of the theme is in the tenor region and played by the thumb, it is distinct to Thalberg’s “tenor thumbs” that Davies premises his arguments on in that it does not follow through with a melodic line. This will be discussed further in **Chapter 5**.

There are only few compelling snippets which one might easily identify in performance, such as the rising third $\wedge 1 - \wedge 2 - \wedge 3$ characterizing the third measures of **B**: here, though the rising motif is recognizable in m. 68, there is registral displacement between $\wedge 1$ at the start of the measure and $\wedge 2$ and $\wedge 3$, which occur an octave higher. Here, $\wedge 1$, $\wedge 2$, and $\wedge 3$ are also echoed in the thumb of the left hand at the distance of a sixteenth from the right.

Example 4.28: Herz *Bravura Variations*, first half of Var. I, quintet arrangement (mm. 58–65).

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed the restatement of the horn call in **C** which was recognizable not just on account of its open textures in the left hand, but also through the doubling of the melody in the right. Unlike **A**, **A'**, and **B**, in which the

melody drops out after the first two measures, the melodic outline of **C** can still be traced through m. 72, albeit slightly displaced within the left-hand texture. While the melody is restated clearly once again in **C'** (m. 74), it drops out almost immediately with the arrival onto $\hat{1}$ in m. 75. At this point, the music presents the first of its two key moments of harmonic deviation.

With $\hat{1}$ of the melody as constant, Herz takes an unexpected detour to $\flat VI$, where vi was otherwise expected. The sudden turn to this chromatic key would have been particularly effective at a time when the temperament of keyboards had yet become equalized — as discussed earlier in the chapter with relation to the turn to the Neapolitan in Var. IV. This moment is even more significant when one considers Herz's use of vi just four measures earlier (m. 71). No longer as stately as had been in the theme, its sudden turn to *pp* catches the listener off-guard, as does the light-hearted chromatically-inflected rising scale that immediately follows — that which has a two-measure \langle into the attainment of ii in m. 72.

In the theme, this moment of harmonic coloration is fleeting — it arises from passing notes, and this tension resolves quickly onto ii through $a >$ (m. 44). By contrast, the marking of $a <$ through the second half of m. 71 spotlights this chromaticism as well as the related secondary dominant progression; it is prominent that the strings do not play during these four measures, particularly when considering that the strings play in the other eight measures of this extract.

Example 4.29 (4.10): Herz Bravura Variations, Var. I, quintet arrangement (mm. 66–77).

Contrasting this is the texture of the string parts in the turn to the unexpected Ab major harmony in m. 75: here, the string parts sustain bVI, which emphasizes this change for the listener. While the piano part *crescendos* through bVI into a I^{6/4} *forte*

from which its regular cadential harmonies are restored, the strings do the opposite with a > to the second half of the measure — a conflict that suggests a tension between the need for harmonic resolution and that of foregrounding this interesting, unexpected deviation.

Within the span of five measures, the listener must contend with this chromaticism, an enhanced secondary dominant, and the resolution of a half cadence onto a *subito piano*, from which a new figuration — a restatement of **C'** — is presented; finally, Herz introduces bVI in m. 75. It is perhaps for this reason that the second half is repeated — it gives the listener yet another chance not merely to be surprised by, but to experience and fully appreciate, these rapid turns in harmony and its rhetorical potential.

Variation II

Example 4.30 (4.26): Herz Op. 20, first half of Var. II (mm. 86–93).

The first half of Var. II bears even less resemblance to the theme — it is built around its harmonic framework, with little direct allusion to its melodic content at all. There are frequent registral displacements of the melody, which is at times masked, and at times completely lost; where the theme is lost, it is the harmonic outline underlying the surface material that allows, and requires of the listener, an extrapolation of the missing elements of the melody. One can trace some semblance of the opening $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{6}$ in mm. 86–87¹ (A) and 90–91¹ (A'), but this is again only fleeting, with $\hat{2}$ to $\hat{1}$ occurring like a snap, and $\hat{7}$ omitted — implied — in another snap-like motion. The second halves of A and A' are once again grounded in the harmonic framework of theme, attempts to trace its melodic outline otherwise unproductive.

B only presents the anacrusis; as discussed earlier with reference to the *Eingang*, the entrance of **C** in mm. 98–99 is clearly identifiable and further supported by the lower strings. If the second measure of **C** in Var. I (m. 71) is a development of the chromaticism in the submediant, then this idea is taken a step further in its comparable position in Var. II (m. 99). Here, instead of allusions to chromaticism through coloration in a predominantly vi tonal area, a fully-fledged chromatic rising scale spanning 2½ octaves propels the submediant, this time also through a *crescendo* that lasts the entire measure, instead of half. Under this scale, [^]1 attained in m. 99¹ is passed to the “tenor thumb” on an offbeat sixteenth, from which the descending scale through to [^]2 can be found in the middle of the three-voiced texture, under the inner tonic pedal of the left-hand thumb. The melody is returned to the right hand by way of convergence on the first sixteenth offbeat of m. 100. Here, staccato echoes of the theme can be found springing from the start of each of the four groups; in m. 101, this is passed to the left hand, still on the off-beat. This texture is an elaboration of that found in m. 98 and persists in the restatement of **C'** in m. 103.

94

97

100

103

Example 4.31: *Herz Bravura Variations*, Var. II, quintet arrangement (mm. 94–105).

Variation V

Example 4.32 (4.14): Herz *Bravura Variations*, first half of Var. V (mm. 168–183).

Finally, I discuss the first 16 measures of Var. V. It begins with a clearly recognizable rising initial ascent through its anacrusis $^5 - ^1 - ^3$ that characterizes the opening of the theme. The arrival onto the 3 from which there is the descent of

the fifth is affirmed through a *sf*; Herz does not, however, establish the theme in full. Where the descent in Var. II lacks $\wedge 7$, the arrival onto $\wedge 6$ being approached through a lower neighbor note, here in Var. V, $\wedge 7$ is not articulated meaningfully, instead, on the last thirty-second of a two-octave descending scale. This scale begins follows the establishment of the arrival onto $\wedge 3$ after the first fragment of the theme; in some sense, the rest of the descent is completed partially by the left hand. Given that this is the fourth iteration of **A**, one might argue that it would be inconsequential, particularly given that the listener would already have known the theme even prior to attending a concert.

A full iteration of the theme is presented in a decisive *forte* in the fifth bar of this variation. The running thirty-seconds are passed to the left hand in **A'**, where the melody resounds in the top register of the piano. This alternation between that which is masked and that which is clearly defined persists for the second half — **B** is premised on its harmonic outline, while **C'** restates the thematic material in no uncertain terms — replete with its horn call texture, as will be heard for the last time. In the accompanied version, this reference supplemented by the violins, who double these 7 notes in mm. 180–181¹ at the same register.

Example 4.33: *Herz Bravura Variations*, second half of Var. V, quintet arrangement (mm. 176–183).

This aural support is significant when considering the general textures of the quartet accompaniment more broadly. The accompanying parts have the primary function of punctuating the texture harmonically in a way that is aligned with its

character: first, *arco* double stops in *forte* aid with the announcement of the **B** material in mm. 176–177¹, then single *pizzicato* notes coincide with the *subito piano, scherzando* of mm. 178. The upper two strings break out from *arco* to *pizzicato* to articulate this horn call reference, doubling the piano at its same register, before *arco tutti* is reinstated in the final two measures where the texture gradually thickens to aid the *crescendo* towards *forte* for the final restatement of the theme's melodic material. These string parts give us a glimpse into the dramatic potential of instrumental textures, which one can only imagine would have been even greater when Wieck performed this set of variations with an orchestra. Further, these accompaniment parts can help inform a reading of structure, as will be shown in the next section.

4.8 Performing the Extended Coda

Following the shortened, sixteen-measure reprise of the theme at the start of Var. V is an extensive Coda of 76 measures (mm. 184–259). Its structure can be read as being framed around two cadenza-like moments which culminate on mm. 210 and 239 respectively, the former of which preceded by a fermata, the latter, a series of trills. Unlike the earlier cadenzas and *Eingänge* discussed, these sections are not alluded to explicitly by text, nor implied by tempo markings in the accompanying parts. Instead, in my discussion of these points of formal articulation, I draw on the string textures surrounding these measures, as well as on Herz's use of harmony and pianistic figuration.

The lead-up to the first formal juncture at m. 210 begins with the preparatory $I^{6/4}$ in m. 201, which serves as the impetus for a rising C major scale that is harmonized in a series of first inversion chord over the dominant pedal. It resumes the bravura technique of interlocking hands which had begun in m. 191, but momentarily disrupted for three measures between mm. 198–200. This disruption coincides with the harmonic exploration of a circle of fifths at the harmonic rhythm of an eighth; the effectiveness of this re-articulation of figuration and harmony in m. 201 is heightened by the preceding German 6th harmony, as well the *forte, arco* (where it had once been *pizzicato*), triple-stopped textures of the accompaniment that announce its arrival. It is on the arrival of this virtuosic passage in m. 204¹ that the strings drop out completely for the first time in the Finale. This "cadenza," referred to in

parentheses to distinguish these semiotic references from the two cadenzas otherwise explicitly specified, is characterized by abrupt changes in topic, texture, figuration, harmony, and rhythm.

201 *arco*

202 *arco*

203 *arco*

204 *arco*

205 *arco*

206 *2*

207 *5*

208 *2*

209 *2*

210 *2*

211 *2*

8va

8va

loco

p *cresc.*

più cresc.

pp

Cello.

sf

p dol. scherz

Example 4.34: *Herz Bravura Variations*, Coda (mm. 201–211).

Contrasting not just the several affirmations of $I^{6/4}$ in *forte*, but also the diatonic harmony that had dominated since the beginning of Var. V,⁶¹ mm. 204–5 are an elaboration of a $F\sharp^{07}$ harmony in descending arpeggiated figuration. With each group of three split between the hands, these sparse textures in *piano* invoke the *topos* of a fantasy. More than the earlier cadenzas at the end of the Introduction and Var. IV, this passage reflects an “other-than-normal” musical discourse characteristic of cadenzas.⁶² In its return to a tonic^{6/4} on m. 206, the idea of triplets being split between the hands is maintained, however, Herz extends the technique to include hand-crossing, first with single notes, then octaves; in m. 208, there are contrasts in articulation between broken, single staccato notes in the treble and bare octaves marked by offbeat slurs in the bass.

The textural figuration of these three layers is highly orchestral. The string parts return in m. 209; here, their function is to support the left-hand part of the piano, enhancing the outline of the descending tonic^{6/4} in *forte*, which culminates in the attainment of *sf* V⁷. The ensuing fermata is significant: it marks the first time in the final variation that the *moto perpetuo* musical action is brought to a halt. The “resumption-to-normal” discourse after this fermata is in the thematic reprise in m. 211 — albeit truncated and rhythmically diminished, as discussed earlier. The

⁶¹ A German 6th occurs briefly in the last eighth of m. 200 en route to $I^{6/4}$. Its brevity contrasts with the prolonged diminished seventh chord of the cadenza that spans two whole measures. In this, and the next, discussion of these cadenzas, I draw on Webster’s semiotic definitions of a cadenza. See Webster, “The Rhetoric of Improvisation in Haydn’s Keyboard Music,” 176.

⁶² Term from Webster, “The Rhetoric of Improvisation in Haydn’s Keyboard Music,” 176.

string parts in m. 211 are substantial: their textures are the richest that has been seen up till this point — an unambiguous tutti gesture. Taken as a whole, the harmonic, textural, figurative, rhetorical, and topical trajectory of these ten measures lend themselves readily to semiotic associations with a concerto, first a cadenza, then m. 211, the post-cadenza tutti.

Like m. 211, m. 240 exhibits the same tendency to resolve a cadenza-like gesture in an orchestral manner. Where m. 211 was a partial reprise of the theme, the *Più mosso* of m. 240 — as the end of the piece — is a reaffirmation of the home key with relentless V—I progressions; each gathers momentum and intensity through rising scales that are punctuated by *sforzandi* and performed at a *fortissimo* dynamic. Initially punctuating the textures to give it rhythmic impetus, the quartet textures also gradually thicken, culminating in a *ff* tutti. These orchestral-like textures are preceded by material that harmonically and rhetorically invoke the end of a cadenza. Its preceding three measures are a series of eight V⁷ trills that occur in both hands; each marked *sf*, they traverse several registers of the keyboard with varying rates of change, first doubled in m. 238, then prolonged in m. 239.

Example 4.35: *Herz Bravura Variations*, Coda (mm. 231–243).

The four measures immediately preceding the “tutti” recall and combine the configuration presented in the virtuosic *Eingänge* of Vars. I (arpeggiated decoration of V)

& II (trills on $\wedge 5$). Meanwhile, the harmonic attainment of $I^{6/4}$ that occurs in m. 231, which one can identify as the onset of the “cadenza,” begins with sweeping scales (mm. 231–32) that can be seen as a manifestation, if not a development, of the glissando seen earlier in Var. II: a technique which Doran defines to be derived from the burgeoning “bravura” aesthetic.⁶³

Given that these scales are in C major, it would indeed be possible to play these passages as glissandi. While greater velocity would probably be achieved more easily, clarity, precision, and dynamics would be compromised. Given that there is a large < appended to each of these two rising scales, it is more likely that this gesture wants to simulate the bravura gesture of a glissando, but whose effect is necessarily achieved by means of rapid fingerwork.

This theoretical discussion of potential “cadenzas” and semiotic references to concerti remains speculative; for the performer, however, an awareness of these possibilities and the potential conceptualization of particular moments as “cadenzas” can shape one’s interpretative understanding of the flexibility and freedom, as well as virtuosic mannerisms, that could be displayed in such moments. This is particularly useful when approaching such a lengthy section, in which different textures, topics, and figuration are constantly juxtaposed, often in quick succession. These analyses illuminate the ways in which a wider consideration of the musical texture outside of

⁶³ Doran, “From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style,” 280.

the solo part offers the potential for informing interpretative decisions, particularly when a soloist was to perform this work alone — as Wieck often did.

Example 4.36: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Coda (mm. 189–196).

In addition to the “cadenzas,” two other important points for the performer to articulate in this lengthy section are in mm. 191 and 236 respectively. They are both marked *pp* — a dynamic level that is rarely seen in Herz’s writing. Most of the eleven *pp* markings in the *Bravura Variations* coincide with significant structural or harmonic moments. As discussed earlier, its application to the vi chord of the **B** material in both Vars. I & II can be seen as a means of generating rhetorical interest on the extroversive level of the music, particularly given that the introversive-level deviation

to a deceptive cadence laid out in the theme is now no longer deceptive, instead anticipated. In m. 191, *pp* can be seen not in subservient of rhetoric or harmonic purposes, but as a structural marker, applied to the presentation of a new technique: that of interlocking chords.

The orchestrated version reveals that the strings completely drop out at this point for the first time since the Finale had begun. This textural, dynamic, and rhetorical change is similarly articulated in m. 227, in which a *pp* immediately follows not just a crescendo to a *forte* dynamic, but further, a whole passage characterized by running scales and arpeggios in which a tonic-dominant polarity is highly pronounced. *Sforzandi*, running scales, and arpeggios lend rhetorical power to these repeated cadences, whose harmonic rhythm accelerates from changing every measure (mm. 220–23) to each half measure (mm. 224–25), and finally four per bar in mm. 226.

220

p *brillante* *leggiero* *8va* *loco* *8va* *cresc.*

224

mf *mf* *mf* *mf* *mf* *cresc.* *f* *pp* *poco - a -* *mf*

p *marcato* *f* *f* *pp*

228

poco - - sempre - più - cresc.

Example 4.37: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Coda (mm. 220–230).

The *pp* marking is nearly *subito*: it is applied only to the second sixteenth of the measure, after the final resolution to tonic is articulated, *staccatissimo* and *forte*. The absence of orchestration here can be attributed to harmonic, textural, and sonic

considerations: unlike the affirmative tonic-dominant polarity in home key from before, these four bars meander through a palette of occasionally distant harmonic colors, including fleeting references to A♭ and E♭. On the one hand, the second half of Var. IV is in E♭ major, and Var. I included a momentary coloration of ♫VI instead of vi. On the other, it is unlikely that these allusions would have been made with these structural references in mind, particularly in view of the ensuing chromaticism that follows in m. 229, which is unparalleled in the whole variation set.

The absence of orchestration not only rhetorically and harmonically isolates these four measures from its preceding and following stability — m. 231 marks the onset of the second “cadenza” — but further spotlights the pianist, who can now take liberties with time to explore means of foregrounding this unique presentation of harmonic colors, through figuration that exhibit a fantasy-like *topos*. To an extent, the function of mm. 220–226 and their illusion of harmonic stability can be further understood in context of the preceding section, which begins with a truncated iteration of the theme in m. 211. While the beginning of **C** does occur on the arrival on m. 217², it does not deliver the expected I—V—I—V—vi harmony. Instead, it breaks off in m. 218¹, with this F♯^{o7}chord marking the start of chromatic exploration that lasts two measures, further characterized by tempo rubato — *stretto*, then *lusigando*.

Example 4.38 (4.15): Herz Bravura Variations, Var. V (mm. 211–219).

It is only on the return to a *brillante leggiero* texture in m. 220 that the tonic is restored. In contextualizing these seven measures through the passages preceding and following them, it emerges that, at the same time as they appear to be a resolution to the harmonic instability of the preceding two measures, this illusion of affirmation is a means of heightening the effectiveness of the section to follow.

The function of the Coda was not so much, at the start, to reaffirm the tonic; in fact, following the end of **C'** in the tonic in m. 183, the Coda opens with a C⁷ arpeggio, which emerges as a secondary dominant to F (IV). Though this entire section never deviates from its tonic pedal until the start of the soloistic cadenza in m. 191, it is oriented towards the subdominant. While the tonic is eventually restated with great

conviction, it does not do so without having experienced rhetorical and harmonic instability. Rather than being of a harmonic function, I propose this Coda to be a restatement and development of the virtuosic techniques presented over the course of the variation set. The interpolation of “cadenzas” and orchestral references is a semiotic invocation of larger forces. Taken as a whole, the long section beginning after the first “cadenza” is a lead up to the attainment of the second “cadenza,” which seeks to affirm tonic^{6/4} through sheer brilliance. Its rapid glissando-like thirty-second *crescendo* scales in both hands are bravura-like, while its arpeggios and trills recall the textures from its earlier *Eingänge*. This coda presents a grand synthesis of the *stile brillante* and burgeoning bravura style — consequently, a reaffirmation of the status of this set of concert variations, and of its deserving a place on the concert stage.

4.9 Other “Joseph” Variations

Herz’s *Bravura Variations* follows from a tradition of piano variations composed based on popular contemporary operatic themes. That this *Romanze* from Méhul’s *Joseph* was well-known is attested to by the presence of at least three other sets of variations: Ferdinand Ries’s Op. 46 (1811), Carl Maria von Weber’s Op. 28 (1812), and Franz Xaver Mozart’s Op. 23 (1820).⁶⁴ All three were composed before the revival and restaging of the opera in 1822. While the genesis of the earlier two sets is ambiguous, Ries’s was published in St. Petersburg: a reflection of the broader phenomena that there was an interest not merely in Méhul’s opera — but also of the genre of piano variations — at least a decade before Herz’s career began.⁶⁵

A brief comparison of these three earlier sets of variations with Herz’s reveals key structural differences in the conception of form. Earlier, we discussed the importance of the slow introduction — a substantial section of the work that lasted, in Herz’s *Bravura Variations*, some 29 measures. Of the three other composers, only Ries incorporates a slow introduction. At a length of just seven bars, this *Adagio* does not allude to the theme; instead, this is a harmonic exploration of various keys and of chromaticism. In Ries’s introduction, we see an exemplar of the more “ad-hoc”

⁶⁴ It was not until 1994 that this work was perceived to have been composed by Franz Xaver Mozart; until then, it was mistakenly attributed to Franz Liszt. See liner notes, Leslie Howard, *Fünf Variationen Über Die Romanze Aus Der Oper Joseph von Méhul*, S747a, Musical Recording, The Young Liszt (London: Hyperion, 1994).

⁶⁵ Méhul’s *Joseph* was staged in St. Petersburg and Moscow from 1812, in both German and Russian. See Alfred Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera, 1597-1940*, 2nd ed., revised and corrected by Frank Walker (Genève: Societas Bibliographica, 1955), 600.

practices of preluding which preceded Herz's otherwise "systematic" incorporation of extended, structurally significant introductions to the genre.⁶⁶

Adagio

p

cresc.

measures 1-4: The score shows two staves. The top staff is in common time (indicated by 'c') and the bottom staff is in 2/4 time. The key signature changes from C major (no sharps or flats) to G major (one sharp) and then to D major (two sharps). Measure 1: Treble staff has a bass note, then two eighth-note pairs. Bass staff has a bass note. Measure 2: Treble staff has a bass note, then eighth-note pairs. Bass staff has a bass note. Measure 3: Treble staff has a bass note, then eighth-note pairs. Bass staff has a bass note. Measure 4: Treble staff has a bass note, then eighth-note pairs. Bass staff has a bass note. The dynamic 'cresc.' is indicated at the end of measure 4.

Example 4.39: Ries *Variations*, Op. 46, Introduction (mm. 1–7).

In place of an Introduction, Weber and Mozart both present the opening gesture by the brass and winds from the original *Romanze*: a threefold repetition of an open fifth that lasts two measures (**Example 4.40**). Mozart transforms this figure into a “tutti” that precedes all subsequent variations (except Var. V, which is led into by way of an *attacca* after his slow variation). This is similar to Herz’s conception of structure, although Herz’s tutti are more substantial; they are at least eight measures long, and are either repetitions of entire sections (of **B** and **C'** after the Theme & Var. I), or orchestral developments of entire material (eight measures after Var. II, nineteen after Var. III). This can be attributed to the fact that virtuosic, concert variations were conceived of for soloist and orchestra, and the purpose of these extended tutti sections were for the audience to applaud the soloist between

⁶⁶ Schnapper, "Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," 287.

variations; this was unlikely the context for which the earlier variations were composed.

Example 4.40: Méhul, Romanze from Act I, Scene II of *Joseph en Egypte*.

Neither Ries nor Weber incorporate tuttis between their variations. Weber does, however, build on this opening gesture in some way; he typically appends a few measures following the attainment of the PAC at the end of C', in which a reference to the horn call would be incorporated. Unlike Mozart's literal repetition, this horn call gesture is woven into the prevailing texture, and Weber blends the orchestral gesture with the pianistic figuration; for Weber, what once was a semiotic reference becomes a motif to develop in the piano writing.

An interesting point that surfaces from an examination of Weber's Op. 28 is that the text accompanies the piano transcription; his theme is therefore also most

closely aligned, rhythmically, with that from the opera. By contrast, both Mozart and Ries transfer the theme into a pianistic idiom. Use of ornamentation and filigree as a primary mode of embellishing the theme is sparing in the earlier variations, with mm. 5² and 13² of Mozart's theme (Example 4.41) presenting exceptions. This contrasts with Herz's treatment of the theme; as established earlier, Herz makes extensive allusions to the operatic origins of the theme through embellishment and elaboration in A' and C', using techniques aligned with contemporary vocal performance practices.

Example 4.41: Mozart *Variations*, Op. 23, (mm. 1–14).

Example 4.42: Weber *Variations*, Op. 28, (mm. 1–9).

In the three other variations, the repetition of the **A** and **C** units in the Introduction are nearly a direct reprise, as seen in **A** and **A'** for each of the three themes.⁶⁷ The most significant change is seen Mozart's development of **A**; here, however, **A'** is decorated not vocally, but rather, pianistically — the change in the left-hand figuration from simple homophonic textures to broken chords arpeggiation is a pianistic idiom.

Example 4.43: Ries *Variations*, Op. 46, Theme (mm. 1–8).

The general lack of embellishment — apart from occasional notated turns and *acciaccaturas* — suggests more broadly that these composers conceived of the theme in pianistic, not vocal, terms. There are only slight hints of the transference of a vocal style in Ries's and Mozart's slow, minor Var. VI and Var. III respectively, in the manner that can be seen in Herz's Introduction, the development of **A'** and **C'**, and the elaboration in his slow Var. IV. By contrast, no traces of operatic embellishment

⁶⁷ Ries does not repeat **C**; he omits the half cadence of **C** and leads directly to the PAC in **C'**, and his theme is sixteen bars long: **A, A', B, C**.

can be identified in Weber's variations, not even in the minor Var. VI, which is homophonic and *alla marcia*.

As established previously, the fermata was integral to Herz in that it gave him opportunities to carve out moments for showcasing the performer's virtuosity (Vars. I & II). An examination of these three earlier variation sets reveals that these three composers did not develop the fermata, nor did they incorporate free, soloistic moments: for Mozart and Weber, the fermata on a half cadence is simply omitted in the variations, with the **B** and **C** sections eliding into one another.⁶⁸

Ries is the only one of the three earlier composers to maintain the fermata in all the variations, though unlike Herz, he does not compose any *Eingänge* for it. It is possible that these fermatas indicate invitations for the performers to interpolate their own improvisations; as Paul and Eva Badura-Skoda point out, there is much ambiguity in this sign — while their principal function is to indicate a lingering, they can also indicate an opportunity for taking a breath between two phrases (or in this case, sections). In citing some of Mozart's solo keyboard sonatas, they too propose that some of these fermatas even call upon a performer to insert an improvisation, conceivably in the style of Herz's *Eingänge*.⁶⁹ Of the three composers, Ries is the only

⁶⁸ The closest that the fermata comes to serving a “structural” purpose in Mozart's Op. 23 is when a *calando* is applied to the end of **B** in its last Var. V. There is a fermata at the end of **B** in Weber's Var. VI; its function here is likely more affectual and rhetorical, as it brings the marching rhythms of the slow, minor variation to a halt before the resumption of **C** on *con passione dolce*.

⁶⁹ Eva Badura-Skoda and Paul Badura-Skoda, *Interpreting Mozart*, 251–286.

one who incorporated an *Eingang* into his writing; this occurs in the penultimate minor key variation. His figuration however can be contrasted with Herz's, the latter of which is highly virtuosic.

Example 4.44: Ries *Variations*, Op. 46, Var. VI (mm. 5–16).

This is reflective of a broader distinction between postclassical variations and postclassical concert variations, in that they do not necessitate, nor cultivate, explicit opportunities for the showcase of virtuosity. In Friedrich Wieck's discussion of the genre in *Piano and Song*, it seems that the incorporation of additional improvisatory passages outside of what is reflected in the text is not common. Where the player chose to, they ought not to engage further in dramatic gestures, instead "leading neatly into the dominant [... by combining one's improvisation] with what is already

there.”⁷⁰ Embellishments seem to have been more widely practiced than passages of *Eingänge*, although the emphasis continues to be placed on connections with their vocal origins; they ought to be “tastefully chosen and prettily executed,” in alignment with “the way the singer does it.”⁷¹

Finally, each of the three earlier extended finales presents iterations of the theme multiple times in the Coda; this contrasts with Herz, whose Coda almost entirely evades any full restatement of the theme. In contextualizing Herz’s writing with other variations, we can better understand the function of his Coda, and the ways in which the pianistic writing eclipses its original operatic source; the operatic origin was what lured his audience — a vocal association which he makes clear in the theme. Through feats of virtuosity and bravura that occur as the set of variations progresses, Herz transforms the original source material into a style and sub-genre of its own. The culmination of these techniques and references in the Coda and its references to the cadenza, grand orchestral textures, and thereby the genre of the concerto, transcends boundaries of genre, as well as the domestic and public spheres.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the genre of concert variations, particularly as exemplified by Herz’s *Bravura Variations*, was as successful as the concerto.⁷² It can be gleaned from Wieck’s diary entry of March 12, 1834 that this particular set of variations and Johann Pixis’s Piano Concerto, Op. 100 were her calling cards — the

⁷⁰ Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 134.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Schnapper, “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,” 123.

two pieces with which she would be introduced as a virtuosa to any new audience.⁷³

This style that made Herz so successful also led to his eventual fall to obsolescence;

his fame made him a target for disapproval, and he later became — in the words of

Kenneth Hamilton — a “whipping boy” for Maurice Schlesinger’s *Gazette musicale*.⁷⁴

By the mid-1830s, his success was deemed a “misfortune for art,” and Robert

Schumann began to “wage war” on him, as well as other touring virtuosos, in his

Neue Zeitschrift für Musik.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, Herz remained — at least for a large part of

the decade — the “king” of variations.”⁷⁶

Wieck performed his variations until 1837, and in spite of the slew of criticism that followed, Herz’s playing and writing were viewed as unparalleled, at least in France: it was the conviction of Lemoine and Chaulieu, the editors of *Le Pianiste*, that “nevertheless, we have to say that he does [variations] so well and plays them so admirably, that we do not know who would dare to oppose him.”⁷⁷ Indeed, to quote Weitz, Herz’s contributions to and mastery over the genre of concert variations “redefined the genre itself, and his playing defined a style.”⁷⁸

⁷³ She described Johann Pixis’s Concerto and Herz’s *Bravura Variations* as “2 Stücke die der Vater für ein erstes Aufreten vor einem unbekannten Publikum gern wählt.”

⁷⁴ Hamilton, “Après Une Lecture de Czerny? Liszt’s Creative Virtuosity,” 48–49. These attacks on Herz by Schlesinger were, Hamilton argues, “likely motivated more by Schlesinger’s desire for a controversy to whip up sales than by a selfless crusade for all that was noble in art.” Here, he cites Ellis, Kammertöns and Schnapper. See also Weitz, “Le Pianiste,” 179.

⁷⁵ Weitz, “Le Pianiste,” 179–80.

⁷⁶ Schnapper, *Henri Herz*. The first subsection of Chapter 3 is titled “*Le roi de la variation*.”

⁷⁷ Weitz, “Le Pianiste,” 185. She cites *Le Pianiste* an 2, 73: “Néanmoins, nous dirons qu’il les fait si bien et les joue si admirablement, que nous ne savons pas qui on oserait lui opposer.” Here, I have made a minor modification to her translation.

⁷⁸ Weitz, “Le Pianiste,” 186.

CHAPTER 5

Virtuosities beyond the *stile brillante*

For the first half of the 1830s, the popularity of the *stile brillante* gave works conceived in this style, as exemplified by Herz's *Bravura Variations*, an enduring presence on the concert stage. As outlined in the previous chapter, however, the rapid technological advancements characteristic of this period meant that if a (composer-)virtuoso was seen to be executing only the mechanical — which the *stile brillante* encapsulated — then (s)he risked being reduced to an automaton, as Herz did.¹ Against this aesthetic backdrop, we can contextualize Robert Schumann's review of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* on December 7, 1831 as a work that could transcend the purely "mechanical functions" of the brilliant style.² Contrasting with Friedrich Wieck's private criticism of Herz as a pianist who played "with no soul" in the *Jugendtagebücher* is his public review of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano*, which he lauded for harboring "something higher in performance than the presentation of mere mechanical dexterity."³

¹ Žarko Cvejić, *The Virtuoso as Subject: The Reception of Instrumental Virtuosity, c. 1815-c. 1850* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 129–38.

² Robert Schumann, "Ein Opus II," *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* 49 (December 7, 1831): 49. "Es ist, als wenn der frische Geist des Augenblicks die Finger über ihre Mechanik hinaushebt." Similar tensions are revealed by other authors in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, as well as the *Revue et gazette, Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*; Cvejić performs a close reading of these sources in *The Virtuoso as Subject*, 164–171.

³ Clara Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840: nach den Handschriften* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2019), 116. "Der spielt ohne Herz, die Hände springen ohne Seele, und es sieht alles viel besser noch auf dem Papier aus, als es sich anhören lässt." Then Friedrich Wieck, "Chopin, Frédéric: 'Là ci darem la mano' varié pour le pianoforte," *Cäcilie: eine Zeitschrift für*

On the one hand, Friedrich Wieck's comments can be read as a means of marketing first his daughter, who was one of few pianists able to perform this notoriously difficult work well, and second Chopin's variations, which had thus far suffered a mixed reception in Germany.⁴ On the other, the language used by Schumann and Friedrich Wieck invite us to consider Chopin's virtuosity in light of the prevailing mode of virtuosity — the *stile brillante* — and contemporary critical discourse.

What was this “something higher” in Chopin’s music that Friedrich Wieck hoped would similarly attract other virtuosos to this work, and indeed to Chopin’s music? From a reading of a sources from the late-1820s to early-1840s, Žarko Cvejić identifies expression to have been the “vital ingredient” for extricating oneself from such discourse of the purely mechanical; what “expression” meant for critics of this time, however, remains “tantalizingly vague.”⁵ With a focus on Wieck’s milieu, Alexander Stefaniak has similarly considered the tension and anxieties surrounding the discourse on virtuosity, likewise identifying aesthetic currents that increasingly saw the purely physical engagement with an instrument as an aspect of music that

die musikalische Welt 14 (1832): 219. “Das der Beachtung aller Virtuosen, denen die grossartige Field’sche Schule nicht unbekannt ist, in der praktischen Darstellung etwas Höheres suchen als die Darlegung blos mechanischer Fertigkeit.”

⁴ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 63. June 8, 1831: “Wir haben nicht gehört, daß sie bis jetzt irgendwo, als in Wien von dem Componisten selbst und zwar nur mit getheilten Beifall, vorgetragen wurden.”

⁵ Cvejić, *The Virtuoso as Subject*, 170.

was in need of redemption.⁶ We explore the complexities of this discourse on virtuosity, beginning with an examination of *Là ci darem la mano* through the lenses of Chopin as composer-virtuoso.

Frédéric Chopin made his Viennese debut on August 11, 1829 at the Kärntnerthor Theater, with *Là ci darem la mano* as the focus of his program.⁷ Contemporary reviews from the local *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater, und Mode*, and *Der Sammler*, as well as the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in Leipzig, reveal that Chopin was overwhelmingly lauded as both a composer and pianist in this performance.⁸ Any hints of discontent — this word an overstatement in itself — were directed at certain qualities in his playing rather than the work at hand, such as his “conspicuous failure to place any accent at

⁶ I draw on three key publications by Alexander Stefaniak: *Becoming Clara Schumann: Performance Strategies and Aesthetics in the Culture of the Musical Canon* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2021); “Clara Schumann’s Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 70, no. 3 (Fall 2017): 697–765; and *Schumann’s Virtuosity: Criticism, Composition, and Performance in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2016).

⁷ As was also the case in several of Wieck’s programs, Chopin’s debut occurred as part of a multi-modal concert — it was a prelude to a two-act comic ballet, *The Masked Ball* — in which “spectacular feats” of the ballerinas were the “real attraction of the evening.” See William G. Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin: Pianist from Warsaw* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 22. Chopin’s debut is also discussed in Alan Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin: A Life and Times* (London: Faber & Faber, 2018), 141–47; Jim Samson, *The Music of Chopin* (London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), 8–10.

⁸ The quotes here are based on the translations from the Appendix of Atwood’s *Fryderyk Chopin*, particularly 200–204. The attitudes of these critics contrast the image of Chopin’s work which Wieck painted in her diary entry on June 8, 1831, in which she alludes to a mixed reception. See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827–1840*, 63.

the start of each phrase.”⁹ Viennese critics seem to have been unanimously in praise of Chopin’s *Là ci darem la mano*, which they believed revealed a “spark of genius” in the young foreign pianist.¹⁰

In Chopin’s performance of this work, the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* heard in him a “most exceptional virtuoso, liberally endowed by nature,”¹¹ and *Der Sammler* in Vienna, a “pianist of the highest order.”¹² For the latter, the “clarity of [his] performance and the genius of his compositions” were both markers of a “naturally endowed virtuoso.”¹³ The vocabulary employed by these critics are similar to that of Robert Schumann and Friedrich Wieck: Schumann’s *Ein Opus II* is famously characterized by a line from its first paragraph: “Hats off, gentlemen, a genius!”¹⁴ while Wieck referred to the composer, at the end of his five-page review, as an “ingenious composer.”¹⁵ Through these reviews, Chopin emerges as a virtuoso-pianist whose ingenuity as a pianist and composer are discussed both separately and together. This approach is paralleled in Robert Schumann’s oft-cited *Ein Opus II*, in which he blends his praises of both compositional and performative elements of

⁹ *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, Vienna, August 20, 1829. Cited in Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 200–201. As will be discussed later in this chapter, this quality is one which the Wiecks and Schumann prized in Chopin’s writing.

¹⁰ *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, Vienna, August 20, 1829. Cited in Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 200.

¹¹ *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, Leipzig, November 18, 1829. Cited in Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 203.

¹² *Der Sammler*, Vienna, August 29, 1829. Cited in Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 202.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Schumann, “*Ein Opus II*,” 49. “Hut ab, ihr Herren, ein Genie.”

¹⁵ Wieck, “Chopin, Frédéric: ‘*Là ci darem la mano*’ varié pour le pianoforte,” 223. He refers to Chopin as “der Geistreiche Komponist.”

Chopin's work: Florestan identified in Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* a spark of compositional genius, one that could be, and was, brought to life by the spirit of the moment through Eusebius's performance.¹⁶

For Friedrich Wieck however, the value of *Là ci darem la mano* lay primarily in the work's structure, novel use of harmonies, and "surprising and completely new" passages; Chopin's "daring" and "completely unusual turns of phrase" not only rendered the work a source of artistic pleasure, but further gave it the power to transcend "mere mechanical dexterity."¹⁷ Wieck's comments echo those seen in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater, und Mode*, whose critics saw in Chopin's writing a "rich and pleasing variety,"¹⁸ and the *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, the exploration of "unique forms," particularly in his introduction, first, second, and fourth variations, as well as the final Polacca.¹⁹ Chopin was also to find favor with Joseph-François Fétis at his Parisian debut nearly three years later, who displayed a similar enthusiasm for the "abundance of original ideas" teeming in Chopin's music, and was of the belief that the composer's innate musicality would "exercise much influence over this department of the art" in good time.²⁰

¹⁶ Schumann, "Ein Opus II," 49. "Es ist, als wenn der frische Geist des Augenblicks die Finger über ihre Mechanik hinaushebt."

¹⁷ Wieck, "Chopin, Frédéric: 'Là ci darem la mano' varié pour le pianoforte," 219.

¹⁸ *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater, und Mode*, Vienna, August 29, 1829. Cited in Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 203.

¹⁹ *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, Vienna, August 20, 1829. Cited in Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 200–201. Jim Samson suggests that the incorporation of national color through the final Polacca was a further selling point for Chopin's Viennese audience; see *The Music of Chopin*, 10.

²⁰ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 224; Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, 8–9. While Fétis's comments reflect his admiration towards Chopin as a composer, Chopin's Parisian debut on February 26,

These reviews reflect a bifurcation of the concept *virtuosity*, extending it beyond the domain of the purely performative, to encompass compositional virtuosity as well. The vocabulary employed in them reveal the emerging discourse surrounding a perceived “inner essence,” as well as a rhetoric of elevation and transcendence. To this end, they illuminate the wider goal of contemporary critics to express an imagined distinction between two different kinds of virtuosities. The first was rooted in the corporeal and resulted primarily in a sensuous display of technical skill. Exemplified in the writing of Herz, and by Wieck’s programming practices, such resplendent display of technique was necessary for the legitimization of one’s status on the concert stage during the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Its prevalence gave rise to a “crisis” in musical discourse and criticism, for which critics’ solution, Alexander Stefaniak posits, was to construct an imagined, metaphysical ideal of a kind of virtuosity that offered the promise of reconciling such external physical manifestations with an internal essence.²¹ The ideals discussed by Stefaniak parallel the notion of “expressivity” that Cvejić explores; as with Cvejić, Stefaniak has identified an ambiguity between the source and portrayal of this metaphysical ideal, as well as the language and terminologies surrounding it.

1832 was poorly attended, and ultimately a concert which made a loss. This possibly accounts for Wieck’s choice not to program Chopin’s music at all during her concurrent trip to Paris, instead relying on the success that would be guaranteed through performances of Herz’s popular *Bravura Variations*, as seen in **Chapter 3**.

²¹ Stefaniak, *Schumann’s Virtuosity*; “Clara Schumann’s Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism”; *Becoming Clara Schumann*, especially the Introduction and Chapter 1.

Invoking references to “elevated,” “lyrical,” “poetic,” and “transcendent” kinds of virtuosities, Stefaniak proposes that these descriptors all hinged on a shared, imagined notion of “interiority”: a cultural construction that fed into the wider cultivation of a German musical identity in the nineteenth century.²²

This chapter explores the varying virtuosities in Chopin and Wieck’s writing that can be seen as embodying “interiority,” investigating three main aspects: textural innovations, harmonic explorations, and musical structure. The first of these encompasses several facets; I first investigate the ways in which both composers transformed the *stile brillante* from being an end in itself to a means to an end, and its departure thus from serving as a means of displaying a visible spectacle of “virtuosity for virtuosity’s sake.” Other manifestations that will be explored include the incorporation and significance of contrapuntal techniques, the relationship between each composer’s unique performative characteristics and the compositional techniques they employed, and the ways in which they drew upon the organological developments of the piano in exploration of new sonic landscapes.

Chopin’s *Là ci darem la mano* was composed shortly after Herz’s *Bravura Variations*, and contemporaneously to the other Herz variations which Wieck programmed until 1837. From a chronological perspective, the stylistic and aesthetic features of the prototypical postclassical concert variation, illustrated in the previous chapter by Herz’s *Bravura Variations*, serve as a useful critical yardstick against which

²² Ibid.

the originality of Chopin's compositional techniques can be explored. What ideals did Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* embody that invoked these metaphors of transcendence and elevation? The writings of Friedrich Wieck and those of the Viennese critics serve as the initial impetus for my analysis of Chopin's variations, in which I explore the thematic and textural development seen in his introduction and the new paths that he forged with his harmonic innovation — a quality foregrounded and extolled by Friedrich Wieck.²³

In the second part of this chapter, I explore Wieck's own *Concert Variations* Op. 8. Her diary entries reveal that the acclaim with which her work was received was similar to the reception following her performances of Herz's and Chopin's variations. Composed some ten years after Herz's and Chopin's variations, Wieck's *Concert Variations* invite us to consider the ways in which broader aesthetic currents of the 1830s had shaped approaches to pianistic virtuosity as the decade drew to a close. Where earlier chapters have given us a glimpse into Wieck's identity as a virtuosa, an analysis of her *Concert Variations* invites us to examine her contributions to a genre which had represented the pinnacle of pianistic virtuosity for a large part of the decade. How might we understand her compositional techniques in relation to the image she had cultivated as a virtuosa throughout the decade? Finally, in a world in which male virtuoso-composers were the "most conspicuous" kinds of pianists on

²³ Wieck, "Chopin, Frédéric: 'Là ci darem la mano' varié pour le pianoforte," 219. "Diese Composition zugleich dem Gebildeten verständlich und fasslich und in harmonischer Hinsicht bedeutend und höchst interessant genannt werden kann."

the concert platform,²⁴ I consider the ways in which the techniques Wieck presents in her *Concert Variations* are not merely a reflection of the burgeoning bravura aesthetic which was being developed by contemporary male virtuosos, prominently Liszt,²⁵ but further, a statement about her (ongoing) status as a key figure on the concert platform.

²⁴ Katharine Ellis, “Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50, no. 2–3 (July 1, 1997): 356.

²⁵ Robert Doran, “From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style: Reconceptualizing Lisztian Virtuosity,” in *Liszt and Virtuosity*, ed. Robert Doran (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020), 267–308.

Frédéric Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano*, Op. 2

5.1 An "original" introduction

Like Herz's *Bravura Variations*, Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* was composed for piano and orchestra; here, I explore the ways in which the latter's "originality," as commended by Friedrich Wieck and the *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, can be understood in view of the soloist's entrance, Chopin's references to the operatic theme, and the textures, rhetoric, and function of the orchestral opening.

In both introductions, a short eight-measure orchestral introduction precedes the soloist's entrance, in which a reference is made to the opera theme. For Herz, the theme is clearly identifiable both melodically and harmonically, and its characteristic melodic descent from $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{6}$ is elaborated upon in the right-hand melody, replete with operatic-like ornamentation in its first two measures. Although Herz's solo piano part takes on a different melodic trajectory after its initial one and a half measures, the harmonic structure of the first eight measures — the entire **A** section — is retained (mm. 8–15³; this will be reviewed in **Example 5.3**). By contrast, the extent to which Chopin invokes Mozart's theme in the solo opening is both harmonically and melodically limited.

Example 5.1: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Theme (mm. 1–8).



Example 5.2: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, thematic fragment in the Introduction (mm. 1–13).

First, Chopin adopts only the melody's opening dotted rhythmic climb from $\wedge 1 - \wedge 2 - \wedge 3$; second, where Herz's homophonic textures and *cantabile* melody in the melody made for accessible listening and an easy identification of this melodic allusion, Chopin's thematic fragment is concealed in the inner textures of the piano. Though marked *ben marcato*, that this reference is not to be heard as a statement of the theme is attested to by the entrance of another melody in the right-hand merely a beat later in m. 9³. At the top of the texture, this melody is expressive and lyrical; meanwhile, what had initially started as a thematic allusion in the tenor voice is quickly subsumed within chordal textures, which now serve as accompaniment to the melody in the right hand. Third, unlike in Herz's *Bravura Variations*, the harmonic trajectory of the pianist's entrance hardly bears resemblance to the progression seen in its operatic source. Chopin eschews the straightforward diatonic movements between primary chords I, IV, and V⁽⁷⁾ that characterize the duet between Zerlina and Don Giovanni in favor of chromatic harmonies.

These harmonic explorations displayed in the solo part first follow on from the opening gestures of the eight-measure instrumental introduction, and second, foreshadow Chopin's conception of harmony that is to be revealed as the introduction unfolds. The chromaticism and harmonic instability in Chopin's instrumental introduction arise from his contrapuntal writing, which is based upon the first measure of the theme. First presented in the bass by the cellos, Chopin then explores the intervallic relations of this theme: at the distance of a measure, the violas enter in chromatic inversion, before the first violins restate the theme in home key in m. 3. It is at this point that diatonic harmony is presented for the first time, in service of an approaching half cadence. This antecedent is followed by a fermata, following which there is a continued interplay of textural imitation; this time, the opening motif explores minor and diminished intervals. As did the antecedent, this consequent too attains eventual harmonic resolution, and it is on the onset of the tonic in m. 9¹ that the soloist enters.

Chopin's texturally intimate opening contrasts with the *tutti* and *forte* writing seen at the start of Herz's *Bravura Variations* — a texture that is more representative of the genre. Chopin's variations begin with just one voice in the bass, layering upwards to no more than a full strings section; while there is a proliferation of expressive markings in the manner of hairpins, the instrumental introduction never departs from its *piano* dynamic. Rather, there is a *pianissimo* appended to m. 7 in preparation

for the soloist's entrance, also marked *piano*. Herz's soloist, by contrast, announces its opening gesture with a *sforzando*.

Largo maestoso $\lambda = 80$
tutti.

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello

Largo maestoso $\lambda = 80$
Tutti.

Piano

5 *calando* *cantabile assai*
p Solo

Basso. *calando*

10 *pp* *ca - - - lan - - do* *Solo.* *sf* *p* *cresc - - - cen - - - do*

Example 5.3: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Introduction (mm. 1-11).

In the absence of an orchestra, the opening eight measures would have been performed by the pianist. Recalling that the introduction is rooted in, if not representative or an allusion to, improvisatory practices, we can understand Chopin's contrapuntal opening as exhibiting a mark of distinction. In his final lesson in *Letters to a Young Lady*, Czerny discusses the practice of extemporization; of the various types outlined, the final — that of "strict four-part composition" — was one which a highly talented player might use to distinguish oneself.²⁶ Similarly, amongst the various forms of improvisation that were occurring on the concert stage during these years, Mendelssohn regarded contrapuntal improvisation most highly.²⁷

From a rhetorical perspective, instead of employing a bold gesture that would command the attention of his audience, Chopin's use of *piano* and *pianissimo* dynamics — and when played with orchestra, a reduced orchestration — draws his listener in. In doing so, he invites, even requires, his audience to experience a kind of performative interiority. His relationship with his audience, as arising out of his approach to the keyboard and to composition, is illuminated in this review of his performance. Distinctions are made between an otherwise superficial, "pompous" display of outward, physical labor — as reviews of Herz's performances in the previous chapter show to have been characteristic of the French composer-virtuoso —

²⁶ Carl Czerny, *Letters to a Young Lady, on the Art of Playing the Pianoforte*, trans. James Alexander Hamilton (London: R. Cocks & Co., 1838), 81.

²⁷ Kenneth Hamilton, *After the Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 47.

and Chopin's "true" musicianship, through which he is able to present "music simply as music":

In both his playing and his compositions — of which, to be sure, only the Variations were heard in this performance — the young man displays an *extremely modest character*. He seems reluctant to show off. Although he could easily execute technical difficulties which, even here in the homeland of piano virtuosity, must command attention, he elected, with almost ironical naïveté, to *entertain a large audience with music simply as music*. Well, lo and behold, he succeeded! His receptive listeners rewarded him with a deluge of applause. His touch, though clean and firm, had little of the brilliance which our virtuosos like to exhibit the minute they sit down at the keyboard. Because he lacked that rhetorical *à plomb* which our pianists consider to essential to success, he appeared rather like someone overwhelmed in a crowd of clever people who doesn't get the attention he deserves. He played in the calmest manner without those flourishes which generally distinguish the artist from the dilettante immediately. Nevertheless, our highly refined and sensitive public quickly recognized in the young, unknown foreigner *a true musician*. He displayed the noblest and most delightful artistic accomplishments *without the least trace of pomposity* and gave the unbiased observer the pleasure of hearing (as any honest person would have to admit) a genuine connoisseur and a perceptive virtuoso of definite merit.²⁸

Chopin employs the full orchestra as a ritornello only in the *Poco più mosso* of m. 34 after the first solo episode; his orchestration here puts the full dramatic force of his orchestra on display for the first time. All parts are at a *forte* dynamic as they

²⁸ *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, Vienna, Aug 20, 1829. Cited in Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 200. Bold mine.

restate the first measure of the theme in the parallel key of B \flat minor. The orchestral tutti serves as an impetus for the soloist's first showcase of overt virtuosity and bravura: the pianist responds to its orchestra's rhetoric (mm. 34–35; 38–39; 42–43) with *risoluto forte* passages that outline descending diminished harmonies, first with unison octaves in both hands (mm. 36–38¹) — a figuration which Friedrich Wieck identifies as having been rather challenging to play — then in fourths and fifths (mm. 40–42¹).²⁹

²⁹ Wieck, "Chopin, Frédéric: 'Là ci darem la mano' varié pour le pianoforte," 220–21. "Das Quartett wiederholt obige Wendung in f-moll, und *Don Juan* widersetzt sich noch kühner und gewagter in, schwer mit beiden Händen zu spielen und nach dem Basse zu stürzendem *unisono*."

Poco più mosso $\text{♩} = 80$

34 TUTTI. SOLO. TUTTI.

a 2. Poco più mosso $\text{♩} = 80$ *l'oco*

Piano

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello & Bass

40 SOLO. TUTTI. SOLO.

Fl. 1, 2

Ob. 1, 2

Cl. 1, 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Horns

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Example 5.4: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Introduction (mm. 34–44).

Chopin's use of orchestral textures, when combined with his treatment of the theme, demonstrates his "serious attempt to weave the orchestra and piano parts of his compositions together"; this caught the attention, and earned the praise, of the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater, und Mode*'s critics.³⁰ There is no complete presentation of the theme's melody throughout Chopin's 64-bar long introduction. Rather, he treats its first measure as a motivic fragment to be developed. It is most lyrically developed in its third and final presentation in mm. 52–54, where it is inflected with chromaticism to serve a broader modulatory function. Through semitonal steps, this fragment leads the music through series of thirds and fifths, moving from a B \flat ⁷ in m. 52 back to V⁷/V (m. 55) → V (m. 56). Its harmonic arrival marks the start of an extended dominant pedal. Though featuring a myriad of chromatically inflected filigree in the right hand (whose significance will be discussed later), the Introduction is harmonically grounded for the first time and remains in this harmonic area until the end of the Introduction eight measures later.

³⁰ *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater, und Mode*, Vienna, August 29, 1829. See Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 203–204.

Example 5.5: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Introduction (mm. 51–56).

Chopin also makes meaningful references to the theme in the lyrical section that begins in m. 17. Partway through the first solo episode, its appearance coincides with the clear establishment of a new topic in m. 16 — one which Friedrich Wieck described to have stemmed from the “great Field School.”³¹ Within this primarily lyrical context, Chopin explores different *Affekts* for this opening fragment by manipulating extroversive and introversive layers of the music, the former represented by dynamics and articulation, the latter, harmonies.

³¹ Wieck, “Chopin, Frédéric: ‘Là ci darem la mano’ varié pour le pianoforte,” 219. Wieck describes it as the “grossartig[e] Field’scher Schüler”.

Example 5.6: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Introduction (mm. 15–28²).

In m. 18, this reference is accompanied by a sudden turn to *pianissimo* and away from the warmer key areas of dominant F major, then D \flat major, to a diminished harmony. The impact of this measure is best understood in context of its preceding measures and the two measures which follow: its harmonic color generates tension that sets the scene for a chromaticized G 7 which, decorated with *leggierissimo* filigree, resolves onto C minor in m. 20. When repeated in sequence in mm. 21–24, the opening gesture functions as a tender resolution to F major (m. 22) following an impassioned half-diminished harmony in m. 21: here, it is part of a wider harmonic trajectory that leads back to home key B \flat major.

5.2 Chopin's harmonies

These nine measures further provide a glimpse into two important qualities that Friedrich Wieck lauded as original and significant in this work: harmonic innovation, and an unusual pianistic language by way of figuration and passagework. The former can be understood first in terms of Chopin's evasion of the establishment of any key area; this contrasts with Herz's introduction, which only experiences one key change to its dominant of G major. Further, the many remote harmonies through which Chopin passes over the course of just these nine measures contrast with the largely diatonic harmonies in Herz's introduction which features just one diminished chord, in preparation of a $I^{6/4} - V^7 - I$ into mm. 21–22, which marks the final section of his Introduction.

Harmonic changes can be observed in nearly every measure of the piano solo episode seen in **Example 5.6**. I represent these shifts in **Table 5.1** which reveals that, apart from the two cadential points, chords in this passage primarily transition between each other chromatically rather than diatonically, with the attainment of chords achieved through stepwise displacements from its former. In seeking a deeper understanding of these shifts, I draw upon some terminology and ideas from Neo-Riemannian Theory. Departing from the dualist foundation that characterizes diatonicism, Neo-Riemannian Theory treats internal components as a complex of equally weighted pitch-classes and intervals, thereby doing away with the need to

confer tonic status on one of the “so-related triads.”³² This theory, Richard Cohn highlights, primarily applies to triads and not augmented and diminished chords. My goal in invoking this theory is not to offer a thorough analysis of Chopin’s writing in terms of it. Instead, I draw upon its underlying principle that foregrounds semitonal movement and enharmonic respellings to explore new ways of conceptualizing of the proximity of harmonic relations in a way that diatonic frameworks — which were the prevailing mode of composition during these years — do not lend themselves as amenable to.

Table 5.1: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, harmonies (mm. 16–24).

Measure	Harmony	Transformations into the next measure
16	F major	P: A \sharp → A \flat L: C → D \flat
17	D \flat major	D \flat → D \sharp (+ B \sharp , root of diminished chord)
18	B dim ⁷	A \flat → G
19	G ⁷ (chr.)	V ⁷ –I cadence
20	C minor	G \sharp → G \flat (+ B \flat , added 7 th)
21	C half-dim ⁷	* C retained * B \flat → A; E \flat & G \flat → F
22	F major ⁷	
23	V–I cadence	
24	B \flat major	

Understanding these chromatic chords in terms of their voice leading reveals their proximity: for example, the first move from F major to D \flat major in mm. 16–17

³² Richard Cohn, “Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions,” *Music Analysis* 15, no. 1 (March 1996): 9–40.

can be accounted for in terms of two stepwise chromatic transformations, first a **P** (Parallel) move from $A\sharp \rightarrow A\flat$, then an **L** (Leitton) raise from $C \rightarrow D\flat$. That Chopin's harmonic language did not appeal to the prevailing mode of diatonic reason is attested to by the contemporary complaints that his writing lacked "comprehensibility."³³ As **Table 5.2** shows, however, the chromaticism experienced between individual chord changes still serves a wider comprehensible trajectory: mm. 52–54 are defined by rising sequences that fit into a diatonic framework.

Table 5.2: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, harmonies (mm. 51–56).

Measure	Harmony	Transformations into the next measure
51	$G\sharp$ dim ⁷	$B\sharp \rightarrow B\flat$ $G\sharp \rightarrow A\flat$ (enharmonic respelling)
52	$B\flat$ ⁷	$V^7 - I (E\flat)$
	$E\flat$	$P: E\flat \rightarrow E\sharp$ Addition of C as root
53	C^7	$V^7 - I (F)$
	F	$L: C \rightarrow D$ $P: F \rightarrow F\sharp$
54	D	$V^7 - i (G \text{ minor})$
	$G \text{ minor}$	$V^7 - I^7 (C \text{ major}^7)$
55	$C \text{ major}^7$	$V^7 - I$ cadence
56	F (V-pedal)	

³³ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 63. June 8, 1831: "Diese originelle geistreiche Komposition ist noch so wenig erkannt, daß sie fast alle Klavierspieler und Lehrer für unverständlich und unspielbar halten, selbst die Wiener Correspondenzen, und Carl Kraegen in Dresden, pp."

On the one hand, the continual harmonic tension enacted in his introduction in part hampers an accessible and pleasurable listening experience for his audience, for whom the largely diatonic language of (post-)classical variations was the norm. On the other, Wieck's diary entries reveal that Chopin's continual and seemingly haphazard progressions were difficult to follow, or even learn, for pianists and teachers alike.³⁴ His *Rondo à la Krakowiak*, Op. 14 which was performed in the same concert presumably also contributed the Viennese critics' judgment that Chopin's harmonic language — particularly its chromaticism — was "difficult to appreciate."³⁵

The function of, and impetus for, this novel harmonic language can be understood in improvisatory terms. In his review of Chopin's Parisian debut, published in the *Revue musicale* on March 3, 1832, François-Joseph Fétis wrote of Chopin's having been endowed with unique inspirations that allowed him to compose not "pianoforte music," but rather, "pianists' music."³⁶ Jim Samson's development of the idea of "instrumental thought" bears traces of this argument.³⁷ Here, I recapitulate Kofi Agawu's premise that music is constituted of two layers: the "introversive" level, which is comprised of harmonic processes, and the "extroversive," which is characterized by surface design, which is multivalent and

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater, und Mode*, Vienna, August 29, 1829. See Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 203.

³⁶ Review cited in and discussed by John Rink, *Chopin, the Piano Concertos*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 8–9; Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 224; Jim Samson, *The Music of Chopin*, 8–9.

³⁷ Samson, "The Practice of Early Nineteenth-Century Pianism," 110–27.

comprises aspects such as texture, figuration, dynamics, and articulation — parameters that give music its “surface design.”³⁸ Samson’s argument was made in relation to the textures and figuration in genres such as variations, which he believes arose out of improvisatory practices that rendered the notated figuration idiomatic to the hands; this, I interpret as improvisation that occurs primarily on the extroversive level. I propose that the physical engagement with the keyboard in the domains of harmonic freedom and flexibility, as seen in Chopin’s introduction, is an embodiment of introversive-level “instrumental thought.”

That Chopin’s fantasizing at the keyboard transcended the typical “extroversive”-level improvisation which featured mechanical “fluent arpeggios” and “decent passages or scales, piano and forte, up and down the keyboard” is likely a key reason for Friedrich Wieck to have lauded the work, and for him to have expressed his hope that it would one day become both intelligible and comprehensible for the educated musician. The merit of this compositional technique likely found similar admiration in the young Clara Wieck, who emulated it in the Introduction of her own *Concert Variations* a decade later.³⁹

³⁸ Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 113, and *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). In 1991, he used the terms “intrinsic” and “extrinsic”; in 2000, “introversive” and “extroversive.”

³⁹ Friedrich Wieck, *Piano and Song (Didactic and Polemical): The Collected Writings of Clara Schumann’s Father and Only Teacher*, trans. Henry Pleasants (Stuyvesant, N.Y: Pendragon Press, 1988), 139, then “Chopin, Frédéric: ‘Là ci darem la mano’ varié pour le pianoforte,” 219. “Diese Composition zugleich dem Gebildeten verständlich und fasslich und in harmonischer Hinsicht bedeutend und höchst interessant genannt werden kann.”

5.3 Textural innovation: transforming the brilliant style

In addition to his use of harmony, Friedrich Wieck also praised Chopin for his “surprising” and “completely unusual turns of phrase.” The writing seen in the lyrical first theme of Chopin’s introduction (Example 5.6, reproduced overleaf) exemplifies this: its rapidly changing figuration blends Field’s “soulful musical language” (mm. 16–18, 21–23) with the “light, graceful *but purely mechanical* Viennese style of playing” and “newest, most piquant, perhaps frivolous, but elegant and very tasteful French school” (mm. 19, 23) — all of which enhanced by his “masterful designation and (performance) indications.”⁴⁰

The comparisons drawn with the likes of Herz, Kalkbrenner, and Moscheles — key exponents of the *stile brillante* who had acquired an increasingly negative reputation for their pyrotechnical displays of virtuosity — can be interpreted as an attempt to gain favor for Chopin’s music amidst its perceived incomprehensibility. On the one hand, situating Chopin within a group of composers to whom “fashionable enthusiasm” was exhibited was a means of justifying a place for *Là ci*

⁴⁰ Wieck, “Chopin, Frédéric: ‘Là ci darem la mano’ varié pour le pianoforte,” 219–20. Italics mine. “Das Werk steht in jeder Hinsicht ganz selbständige da und verrät eben so sehr die genaueste Bekanntschaft mit der leichten, graziösen, aber rein mechanischen Wiener Spielart, mit welcher viele Virtuosen (in Ermanglung Field’scher Schüler, welche Russland meist für sich behalten zu haben scheint) bis in die neuere Zeit so viele Namen erzeugten, als die Kenntniss der neuesten, pikanten, vielleicht frivolen, aber eleganten und sehr geschmackvollen französischen Schule, die H. Herz und andere mit so viel Glück ausgebildet hat und in der unter andern *Pixis* sein geistreiches und originelles Concert, Op. 100, und *Kalkbrenner* und *Moscheles* mehre allgemein bekannte und beliebte Concert-Stücke, geschrieben haben.”

darem la mano on the concert stage, bolstering both Chopin's image as a composer as well as his daughter's image as a virtuosa.⁴¹ On the other, an analysis of Chopin's textures does reveal his significant departure from the characteristic deployment of the *stile brillante* as seen in Herz's writing. I illuminate the potential ways in which Chopin might have been seen to transcend its merely mechanical presentation, focusing on the multivalency of parameters such as dynamics, articulation, pedal, and the general textures within which this figuration is used.

Example 5.6 (reproduced): Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Introduction (mm. 15–28²).

⁴¹ Term is Robert Schumann's; here, he refers specifically to Herz and Hünten. See "Ein Opus II," 49. "Meister Raro [...] viel lachte und wenig Neugier zeigte nach dem Opus zwey: „denn ich kenn' Euch schon und euren **neumodischen Enthusiasmus** von Herz und Hünten — nun bringt mir nun den Chopin einmal her.“"

Chopin's use of passagework in mm. 19 and 23 are reflections upon the *stile brillante*: the former, however, is accompanied by *legatissimo* markings, and though it begins at a *pianissimo* dynamic level, continues with a *decrescendo*. Further considering its register and chromatic inflections, the overall texture within which he situates such figuration reflects a sonorous departure from the attack-based nature of the brilliant style. He focuses not on the individuality of each note, but rather, the new colors that are created through the harmonic and gestural treatment of this filigree.

By contrast, a more conventional approach to the *stile brillante* as would have been employed by his contemporaries is demonstrated in m. 23: octave leaps in the right hand bear characteristic staccato markings throughout. While the left hand is static, I propose that the presence of multiple voices is a potential indicator that the textures are not homophonic, and the left hand is not merely a notated sustaining of an Alberti-bass-like pedal. Rather, it can be interpreted as a countermelody, initially static, but whose function becomes clear when this prolonged E_b (seventh) finally descends to a D in m. 24³, subsequently developed as an inner melody, *ben marcato il canto*.

In this reading of texture, the focus is not purely on the mechanical manifestation of its *stile brillante* in the right hand, but rather, shared with an inner melody played by the thumb of the left hand. For critics of this time, the presence of concealed melodies such as seen here — Chopin's *il canto* melody is distinct to Herz's more fleeting references, as seen in Var. I — served as a marker of interiority and

compositional virtuosity. Consequently, its successful realization in a performance displayed performative virtuosity.

Similar textures are employed throughout the Introduction. The establishment of the dominant pedal in m. 56 offers one such example. Here, the offbeat melody in the middle of the texture is more clearly foregrounded; oscillating between tonic and leading tone in the four measures leading to the cadenza-like gesture of m. 64, this inner voice continues to maintain a significant presence in the cadenza as it outlines the dominant triad in preparation for the arrival of the theme, under *stile brillante*-like *staccato* double thirds in the right hand.

56

leggieriss. 10

8va loco

7 11 6

p

58 24 scen

7 48

do dimi nu en do

8va

60 (8) loco 3 3 loco 12 loco

p dim. delicato 12 dim.

Ped: per il basso.

8va loco

63 12 staccato ma leggier. e sempre più piano accellerando.

8va loco

12

loco

poco a poco calan do.

8va loco

ppp ff

* con forza e prestissimo

s'attacca il Thema.

Example 5.7: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Introduction (mm. 58–64).

Throughout these eight measures, markings such as *leggierissimo* and *delicato* are appended to the filigree in the right hand. Considering that the function of the dominant seventh in this whole extended passage — leading up to the cadenza and end of the Introduction in m. 64 — is to create anticipation for the arrival of the theme, Chopin’s treatment of the sustaining pedal can be read as a means of building up intensity. The absence of pedal markings upon arrival on the dominant in m. 56 is significant when contrasted with the richer textures of the previous section, which was pedaled through. The pedal is only gradually incorporated from m. 58¹⁻², increasing to every half measure from mm. 60–64; the entirety of the cadenza, apart from the final flourish marked *con forza e prestissimo*, has one pedal throughout.

While the pianistic writing exhibited by the right hand is highly virtuosic, its lightness of touch, *legato* articulation, and registral situation at the top of the texture above a countermelody creates a different effect to the sound world of the *stile brillante* seen in Herz’s writing. For Herz, the *stile brillante* is almost always located in a homophonic texture, its figuration the display of virtuosity, and the focus of the performance. For Chopin, however, such writing is a means to an end, not an end in itself — *stile brillante* figuration is subsidiary to a melody, its purpose coloristic. A comparison of the use of florid figuration in the right hand part of Herz’s and Chopin’s slow movements further elucidates this: for the former, runs are first marked *con forza* in m. 152, then later reinforced in m. 154, where a *sf* is placed on each trill.

Example 5.8 (4.11): Herz Bravura Variations, first half of Var. IV (mm. 150–158).

By contrast, the *legatissimo* marking appended to Chopin's filigree not only confirms that he does not emphasize the attack of each note, but further, that the notes are intended to be taken together as a broader gesture. As in his Introduction, the focus is once again on the countermelody in the inner voice of the texture (Example 5.9). On historically appropriate keyboards, such as a Pleyel from 1843, this texture is particularly effective: with a more resonant and warm tenor region and a light upper register, adhering to the pedaling as marked gives rise to a unique mixture of sound that foregrounds the novelty of Chopin's approach. On the one hand, Chopin's approach to articulation and phrasing seen here can be understood in light of the criticism he received from the *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*: this "conspicuous

failure to place any accent at the start of each phrase" later grew, however, to become a trademark of Chopin's musical language, and a quality that the Wiecks and Robert Schumann prized in his writing and playing.⁴²

Cantabile e molto legato.

Example 5.9: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Var. V (mm. 267–72).

On the other, such precise control of parameters such as dynamics, pedal, register, and figuration gave rise to a kind of originality appreciated by other critics:

⁴² *Allgemeine Theaterzeitung*, Vienna, August 20, 1829. See Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 200–201.

With [Chopin, technical] difficulties are only a means, and whenever he makes it most difficult, the effect is accordingly great. Great means, great effect, great rewards—indeed, where these three are found together, the artist needs our advice no more; with Chopin we certainly often find them united.⁴³

I draw on mm. 46–48¹ of Chopin’s Introduction to discuss another manifestation of the *stile brillante* in his writing. Here, the figuration is no longer situated at the top of the texture, but rather embedded within two outer voices that engage in a dialogue. It departs from its earlier function as a means of generating harmonic color; marked *forte* and *energico*, it contributes to the section’s stormy *Affekt*. At a relatively brisk tempo, these *forte* sixteenths would have created a wash of sound, however clearly performed or rapidly articulated this might have been. While it poses an added layer of complexity for the pianist, the focus was not on the difficulty posed by this virtuosic writing — but instead the outer two *energico* voices.

⁴³ “Etuden für das Pianoforte,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, September 24, 1839, 97–98. “bei ihm ist die Schwierigkeit nur Mittel, und wo er die schwierigsten gebraucht, da ist auch die Wirkung danach. Große Mittel, große Wirkung, großer Gehalt--freilich wo dies sich zusammen findet, ist der Künstler auch unseres Rethes nicht mehr bedürftig; bei Chopin finder wir allerdings die drei oft vereint.” Cited in and translated by Cvejić, “The virtuoso as subject,” 169.



Example 5.10: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Introduction (mm. 46–48).

Chopin's first variation employs brilliant figuration to similar ends. There are two ongoing textures in the right hand; brilliant-style writing is concealed within the inner textures of the music, under a presentation of the melody from *Là ci darem la mano* that is marked *marcato*. That the word "brillante" is appended here is a reference to the (likely) *piano* dynamic which was often used in conjunction with such figuration.⁴⁴ As in other examples, *sempre legato* indicates a departure from the attack-based writing of the *stile brillante*. Having to play this inner voice legato requires greater attention and physical skill from the performer, who has to enact fine control in order to achieve a sense and smoothness of line.

⁴⁴ Vars. I & III of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* begin without dynamic indications. I will survey Chopin's use of dynamics throughout his variations later in **Table 5.6**, although for the purpose of this present discussion, this speculation of Chopin's dynamics here is based on an analysis of his broader use of dynamics which reveals that apart from m. 186, Chopin never uses a *crescendo* or an open hairpin after a *forte*, unless this open hairpin is immediately accompanied by a closing one (mm. 13, 353, 367). Use of *mezzo*-level dynamics is similarly rare.

Example 5.11: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Var. I (mm. 105–112).

In these two passages, we can identify a concealed manner of virtuosity; known only to the hands of the performer, this contrasts with overt displays of virtuosity seen in the previous chapter. Earlier, I had discussed the visual spectacle invoked by techniques such as hand-crossing and Paganinian leaps, the latter of which seen in the context of Herz's third variation and Schumann's "Paganini" from *Carnaval*. This idiom is also found in the Var. IV of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano*. Like Herz (Example 5.12), Chopin outlines the melody in the top, off-beat sixteenth, articulated *sempre staccato* (Example 5.13).

La 2da volta **pp** e più cresc.
8va.

Vivace assai = 84

115

p

cresc - - - - -

Example 5.12: Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. III (mm. 115–19).

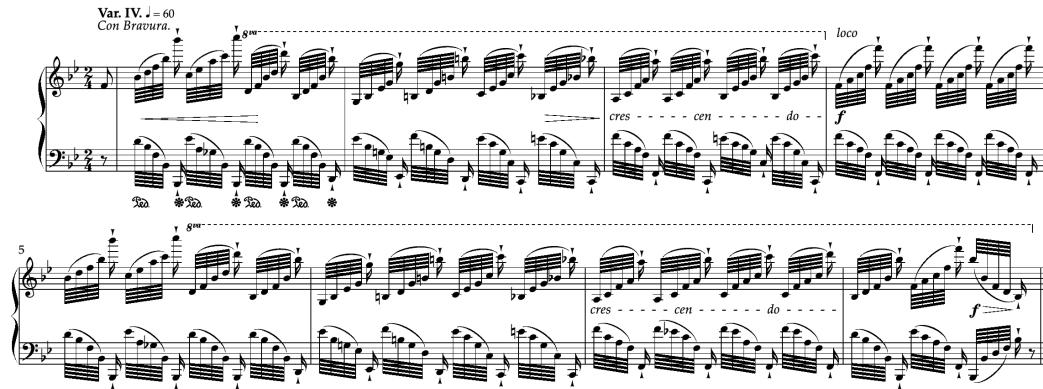


Example 5.13: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Var. IV (mm. 211–18).

Where Herz's writing features two-octave leaps, Chopin's generally traverses a shorter distance between each note. Its figuration, however, can be perceived as being of greater complexity as the first of each group of two sixteenths is a dyad. Where both hands move in similar motion in Herz's variations, the hands are moving in contrary motion in Chopin's. Further, where Herz's metronome marking is 84 notes per quarter, Chopin's is meant to be played even more quickly at 92 notes per quarter; both share the same subdivision of a sixteenth. Finally, Herz truncates the theme and reduces it from twenty to sixteen measures, while Chopin retains all thirty-two measures of Mozart's theme. At twice the length, a quicker tempo, and an overarching *forte* dynamic, Chopin requires of his performer greater stamina, speed, and power.

This omitted version of Chopin's writing, found in the initial manuscript, presents yet greater difficulty than the published version (**Example 5.14** overleaf). Not only does it trace the melody in octave leaps, here, the first half of the beat (in this case, per eighth) is not just a single note or dyad outlining its harmony: it is an arpeggio, in sixty-fourths. This leaping arpeggio motion is mirrored in the left hand. The contrary motion between the hands is akin to Chopin's published Var. IV, and

this figuration is reversed in the last eighth, on the arrival back to the tonic which completes the authentic cadence.



Example 5.14: Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Var. IV (omitted version).⁴⁵

Robert Doran's study of the brilliant and bravura reveals that Chopin's use of the latter is rare. His use here can be understood, Doran argues, as an indication of this sheer display of virtuosity as being able to cohere with works of a more serious nature.⁴⁶ Friedrich Wieck's review of this work includes an analysis of each variation; he similarly describes this as one that needs to be recognized as very difficult, and which demands a daring, more-than-ordinary bravura performer — even in its simpler, published, version.⁴⁷ Similarly, young Wieck described Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* as the most difficult work she had ever learned, even when compared to

⁴⁵ Derived from the manuscript copy, found in the online archives of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

⁴⁶ Doran, "From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style," 290.

⁴⁷ Wieck, "Chopin, Frédéric: 'Là ci darem la mano' varié pour le pianoforte," 222. "Var. IV. ist wieder eine Bravour-Variation, die einen mehr als gewöhnlichen Bravour-Spieler verlangt; übrigens **s e h r d a n k b a r** genannt werden muss. *Don Juan* wagt hier Viel — der Spieler auch; er wage es mit Glück! Der Erfolg erwünscht seyn."

Herz's *Bravura Variations*.⁴⁸ On the one hand, we can understand this sentiment in relation to the figuration seen in the fourth variation. On the other, passages such as those in **Examples 5.10 & 5.11** reflect a "concealed" manner of virtuosity that led to Carl Ludwig Berger's remarks, upon hearing her perform this work, that it did not seem too difficult.⁴⁹

Such disparities reflect a phenomenon in which, in order to present an idealized "transcendence" of a mechanical display of dexterity, the difficulty and virtuosity of such figuration had neither to be the focal point, nor overtly displayed. Indeed, Hiller's account of Chopin's playing brings us closer to imagining the ways in which such textures were conceived of, as performed under its creator's hands:

Nobody has stirred the keys of a grand piano like that, nor known how to release such countless sonorities from it. Rhythmic firmness was combined with freedom in the declamation of his melodies [...] what in the hands of others was elegant embellishment, in his hands became a colorful wreath of flowers; what in others was technical dexterity seemed in his playing like the flight of a swallow.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 63. June 8, 1831: "Chopin Var. O. 2 [...] ist das schwerste Musickstück [sic], was ich bis jetzt gesehen und gespielt habe."

⁴⁹ See Schumann et al., *Jugendtagebücher 1827-1840*, 63. June 8, 1831: "Ich spielte [Louis Berger von Berlin] die Var von Chopin vor, welche ihm als originell gefielen, er fand sie aber nicht so schwer, wie sie sind."

⁵⁰ Ferdinand Hiller, *Briefe an eine UNGE NANNTE* (Köln: DuMont und Schauberg, 1884), 150–52. See Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger et al., *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher: As Seen by His Pupils*, translated by Naomi Shohet, Krysia Osostowicz, and Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 270.

Clara Wieck's *Concert Variations*, Op. 8

5.4 Wieck's harmonies

Given that Friedrich Wieck regarded Chopin's novel exploration of harmonies as one of the key defining aspects of his originality, it is no surprise that Clara Wieck adopted a similar conception of harmonic relationships in the introduction of her *Concert Variations*. I focus on the point at which she references Bellini's theme: m. 14.

Example 5.15: Wieck *Concert Variations*, Introduction (mm. 13–31).

As the point in which the soloist references the theme in a *dolce cantabile* after the development of introductory material, it is the structural equivalent of m. 8 of Herz's and m. 14 of Chopin's variations. For Wieck, this took the form of a lengthy recitative, and for Herz and Chopin, orchestral material. Neither Wieck nor Chopin make this thematic reference in the home key; where Chopin introduces the dominant, Wieck opts for the Neapolitan.

The “extroversive” and “introversive” layers of the music similarly coincide in Wieck's variations to mark the onset of this material — in its preceding 13-measure long recitative, rhetorical force and drama result from the proliferation of diminished chords. It is in m. 14 that the first key area is meaningfully articulated in Wieck's Introduction, its texture breaking away from the preceding free fantasia-like figuration. The next eighteen bars sustain its initial texture and *Affekt*. The lingering on D \flat for three measures, replete with a pedal point, is the longest a single harmony is presented, although Wieck later moves through several remote harmonies until the *con duolo* of m. 24: here, a dominant pedal of the original theme is attained, then prolonged (implied in m. 27) until the end of the introduction.

As for two passages from Chopin's introduction, I present an analysis of Wieck's harmonic development in mm. 14–24¹ (**Table 5.3**) which considers her harmonic progressions in terms of stepwise movements and enharmonic respellings. As with Chopin, these relationships can be understood as a product of improvisatory

practices, with the harmonic fluidity resulting in “maximally smooth” movements under the hands.

Table 5.3: Wieck *Concert Variations*, harmonies (mm. 14–25).

Measure	Harmony	Transformations into the next measure
14	D _b major	
15		
16		L: D _b → C P: A _b → A _h (+ E _b , added 7 th)
17	F ⁷	V ⁷ —i (B _b minor)
18	B _b minor	F → F _h B _b → A _h (enharmonic respelling) D _b → C _h (enharmonic respelling) (+ E _h , added 7 th)
19	F _h major ⁷	V ⁷ —i (B minor)
20	B minor	L: F _h → G (+ F _h , step down from F _h : added 7 th)
21	G major ⁷	V ⁷ —i (C minor)
22	C minor	P: E _b → E _h R: G → A (+ G, added 7 th)
23	A minor ⁷ German 6th	A _h → A _b *
24	G (V-pedal)	

Revisiting the idea that the introductory section served as a display of — or allusion to — improvisation, Wieck’s innovative use of harmonies could only enhance her image as a performer and virtuoso. Beyond the display of mechanical dexterity through pyrotechnic display or the cultivation of a beautiful tone, the

enaction of these harmonic processes demonstrated an inner essence. A further consideration of the improvisatory as a measure of virtuosity informs Wieck's use of structure in her variations, as represented here:

Table 5.4: Structural layout of Wieck's *Concert Variations*.

Introduction	mm. 1–13: Recitativo
	mm. 14–31: <i>Ben legato, dolce</i> (thematic reference)
Theme	mm. 32–63: A sections C major; B sections G major
Var. I <i>Più allegro</i>	mm. 64–87: Variation in triplet eighths mm. 88–91: <i>Calmato</i> “bridge”
Var. II <i>Molto grandioso ma non troppo allegro</i>	mm. 92–107: Variation in triplet sixteenths mm. 108–116: Ritornello (marked)
Var. III <i>Brillante</i>	mm. 117–146: Variation in sixteenths * C minor
Adagio quasi fantasia a capriccio	mm. 147–161: Harmonically free; see discussion here * A♭ major
Var. IV <i>Brillante e passionato</i>	mm. 162–190: Variation in triplet eighths mm. 191–230 (end): <i>Volante</i> in triplet sixteenths

Where the penultimate variation of a set of postclassical concert variations is typically slow and set in a minor key, as seen exhibited in the former two case studies, Wieck treats these two features independently. They are not used collectively to serve the broader goal of generating contrast through pathos; the harmonic colors of the parallel C minor in Var. III are instead the impetus for a new, stormy *Affekt*, explored in conjunction with the *brillante*. In place of a slow variation is an *Adagio quasi fantasia a capriccio* — a potential reference to Beethoven, perhaps, whose *Sonata*

quasi una fantasia, Op. 27 no. 2 she began performing later that decade.⁵¹ Explicitly invoking the improvisatory, Wieck does not formally regard this as a variation; ironically, it is in this that we hear some of the clearest melodic outlines of Bellini's theme. Throughout her *Concert Variations*, the theme is typically alluded to, either in fragments, or as subsumed within broader textures in a way that displays a "poetic" kind of virtuosity.⁵² Her re-harmonization of the theme exhibits a harmonic freedom and flexibility which, like the Introduction, arises out of stepwise shifts. The harp-like arpeggiations characterizing the whole *Adagio* are especially well-suited to this embodied mode of harmonic exploration; each stepwise movement is drawn out, its resultant harmony prolonged by the sustaining pedal.

Adagio quasi fantasia a capriccio.

Example 5.16: Wieck *Concert Variations*, *Adagio quasi fantasia a capriccio* (mm. 147–48).

⁵¹ Wieck performed this work a total of 38 times over the course of her career; she also began programming Beethoven's *Sonata quasi una fantasia* Op. 27 no. 1 from the 1850s.

⁵² Stefaniak, *Schumann's Virtuosity*, 36–44; Stefaniak, "Clara Schumann's Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism," 750.

Alongside the many harmonic colors that emerge from Wieck's writing is an exploration of pianistic sonorities through the use of pedal and dynamics. When the consequent of A begins in m. 151, Ab major is restated, with $\wedge 3$ characteristically at the top of the texture; here, there is a change in dynamic level from *p* to *pp* which is enhanced using the *una corda*. The pertinence of this dynamic marking is best understood in context of the general dynamic markings applied to the entire set of variations, presented in **Table 5.5**.

Example 5.17: Wieck Concert Variations, *Adagio quasi fantasia a capriccio* (mm. 151–52).

Table 5.5: Dynamics in each variation of Wieck's *Concert Variations*.

			Beginning	Ending
Var. I	[A]	m. 64 [repeated]	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i> >
	[B]	m. 72	<i>ff</i>	<i>(ff)</i>
	[A']	m. 76	<i>sfp</i>	<i>ff</i>
	[B']	m. 80	<i>ff</i>	<i>ff</i>
	[A'']	m. 84	<i>ffp</i>	<i>(f)</i>
Var. II	[A]	m. 92	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>
		[repeated]	<i>p</i>	<i>mf</i>
	[B]	m. 100	<i>mf</i>	<i>p</i>
	[A']	m. 104 [repeated]	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>
Var. III	[A]	m. 117 [repeated]	<i>f</i>	<i>ff</i>
	[B]	m. 125	<i>p</i>	<
	[A]	m. 129	<i>fp</i>	<i>sf</i>
		[repeated]	<i>fp</i>	<i>p</i> : thematic extension, m. 138
Adagio	[A]	m. 147	<i>p con pedale</i>	<i>(p)</i>
	[A']	m. 151	<i>pp una corda</i>	<i>pp</i>
	[B]	m. 155	<i>ff</i>	<i>(ff)</i>
	[A'']	m. 158 ⁴	<i>pp una corda</i>	<i>pp una corda</i>
Var. 4	[A]	m. 162	<i>ff anacrusis, then sempre ffuocoso</i>	<i>(f)</i>
	[B]	m. 170	<i>mf</i>	<i>(mf)</i>
	[A']	m. 174	<i>ff</i>	<
	[B']	m. 178	<i>p</i>	<i>cresc. sf</i>
	[A'']	m. 182	<i>ff anacrusis, then p</i>	<i>ff & sf</i>
	<i>Volante</i> , m. 191		<i>p</i>	<i>ff</i> (m. 230)

Wieck's dynamic markings are predominantly in the region of *forte*: the use of a *piano* dynamic often functions as a structural marker, articulating the start of a new

section. In Var. II, it indicates the restatement of **A** in contrast to the preceding *forte*; in Var. III, the start of **B** is *piano* in contrast to a preceding *ff*. Generally, *piano* dynamics that start a section give way to a higher dynamic by its end. Only very rarely does she begin and end a whole section in *piano*; the *Adagio* therefore presents an anomaly, in that *piano* — and even *pianissimo* — are used as dynamic markings in their own right affectively, not merely as a means for achieving a more dramatic ending at the end of the section. There is only one other instance in which she uses *pianissimo* in this work: in the opening *Recitativo*, where it is used in conjunction with *leggiero* improvisatory-like filigree in the right hand. Here, it generates short-range contrast with diminished *forte* octaves in the left hand.

Example 5.18: Wieck Concert Variations, Introduction (mm. 7–13).

This use of *pianissimo* in the opening can be further contrasted with its use in the *Adagio*: the combination of *sostenuto* pedal markings with the special effects of the *una corda* in the latter render it affectually novel. When viewed in terms of the work's larger structure, the impact achieved through this combination of texture and harmonies — creating therefore novel sonorities — comes to the fore, particularly when considering the otherwise bravura rhetoric that serves as the canvas for this display of an intimate improvisatory rhetoric: one that was a marker of virtuosity in itself during this time.

Returning to the discussion of her *Adagio quasi fantasia a capriccio*, Wieck's indications that the melody at the top of these harp-like textures should be articulated by the left hand is significant: it plays into the visual culture that was an appeal of virtuosity. Hand-crossing also appears in the Coda of Herz's *Bravura Variations*, in which an overt display of bravura serves the broader function of displaying orchestral-like references (Example 5.19/4.34). In Herz's writing, the technique thrilled its audience through technical prowess exhibited by dynamics and velocity. A decade after Herz, Wieck's use of hand-crossing in her *Adagio quasi fantasia* reveals a transformation of the function of the visual spectacle. In its exploration of new harmonies, sonorities, and in enabling rhythmic freedom and rubato to be showcased by the performer, such writing offers to transcend the purely mechanical, reflecting an ideal of interiority that contrasts the outward portrayal of virtuosity.

201 *arco*

205 *p* *più cresc.*

208 *Cello.*

p dol. scherz

Example 5.19 (4.34): *Herz Bravura Variations*, Coda (mm. 201–211).

5.5 Pianistic textures

While Wieck's use of hand-crossing in the *Adagio* can be seen as a transcendence of its initially "superficial" visual origins, her work as a whole reflects a broader conception of texture, which draws upon a bravura aesthetic that Doran suggests emerged by the 1840s.⁵³ There are only two explicit references to the *brillante* in Wieck's *Concert Variations*: in the minor-key Var. III and finale Var. V.

Example 5.20: Wieck *Concert Variations*, Var. III (mm. 117–124).

In the former, the indication likely refers to the right-hand figuration, which resembles that in the first variation of Herz's *Bravura Variations* (Example 5.21/4.28). Unlike his delicate, *leggieramente piano* writing, Wieck's swirling sixteenth

⁵³ Doran, "From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style."

arpeggiations are marked *forte*, transforming this figure's *stile brillante* origins to bravura ends.

Example 5.21 (4.28): Herz *Bravura Variations*, first half of Var. I, quintet arrangement (mm. 58–65).

Not only is Wieck's use of *forte* dynamics in this *brillante* variation distinct to Herz's, but it is also more broadly representative of her different conception of dynamics in relation to both earlier composers. In **Tables 5.6 and 5.7**, I provide analyses of the use of dynamics in the variations of Herz and Chopin respectively, similar to **Table 5.5** for Wieck.

Functionally, Wieck's use of brilliant figuration in the right hand is akin to Chopin's. Chopin often utilized the *stile brillante* in conjunction with other melodic

lines; it could either be concealed within the inner parts of the texture (Examples 5.10 & 5.11) or situated at the top of the texture, above a more important melody (Examples 5.6 & 5.7). The latter is seen in Wieck's writing as well; in both composers, they remain texturally subsidiary to a melodic voice in the left hand.

Table 5.6: Dynamics in each variation of Herz's *Bravura Variations*.

		Beginning	Ending
Var. I	[A]	m. 58	<i>p</i>
	[A']	m. 62	<i>p</i>
	[B]	m. 66	<i>p</i> (<i>f</i>) Eingang, <i>con forza</i>
	[C]	m. 70	<i>p</i> (<i>p</i>)
	[C']	m. 74	<i>p</i>
Var. II	[A]	m. 86	<i>p</i> (<i>p</i>), <
	[A']	m. 90	<i>sfp</i>
	[B]	m. 94	<i>p</i> (<i>f</i>) Eingang
	[C]	m. 98	<i>p</i> (<i>p</i>)
	[C']	m. 102	(<i>p</i>)
Var. III	[A]	m. 115	<i>p</i>
	[A]	[repeat]	<i>pp</i> (<i>più cresc.</i>)
	[B]	m. 124	<i>p</i>
	[A']	m. 127	(<i>subito</i>) <i>p</i>
Var. IV	[A]	m. 150	<i>p</i>
	[A']	m. 154	(<i>p</i>), but series of repeated <i>sfs</i>
Var. V	[A]	m. 168	<i>p</i>
	[A']	m. 172	(<i>subito</i>) <i>f</i>
	[B]	m. 175	<i>p</i>
	[A'']	m. 180	<i>p</i>

Table 5.7: Dynamics in each variation of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano*.⁵⁴

			Beginning	Ending
Var. I	[A]	m. 105 [repeated]	(<i>p</i>)	(<i>p</i>)
	[B]	m. 114	(<i>p</i>)	(<i>p</i>) <i>cresc.</i>
	[A']	m. 122	<i>fz</i> (<i>p</i>)	<i>f</i>
Var. II	[A]	m. 138	<i>p</i>	(<i>p</i>)
	[A']	m. 146	<i>p</i>	(<i>p</i>)
	[B]	m. 154	<i>p</i>	<i>f, ></i>
	[A'']	m. 162	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>
Var. III	[A]	m. 178	(<i>p</i>)	<i>cresc.</i>
	[A']	[repeat]	(<i>p</i>)	<i>f, <</i>
	[B]	m. 187	(<i>subito</i>) <i>p</i>	(<i>p</i>)
	[A'']	m. 195	(<i>p</i>)	<i>f</i>
Var. IV	[A]	m. 211	<i>sempre f</i>	<i>sempre f</i>
	[A']	m. 219	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>
	[B]	m. 227	<i>f</i> <i>p</i> (m. 231)	<i>cresc.</i>
	[A'']	m. 235	(<i>subito</i>) <i>p</i>	<i>f</i>
Var. V	(Adagio)	m. 168	<i>ff: Espressivo opening</i>	
		m. 172	<i>pp: Lyrical interjection</i>	
		m. 175	<i>ppp: Cantabile e molto legato</i>	
		m. 180	<i>pp: Delicato ending</i>	
Polacca Finale	[A]	m. 279	<i>sfp</i>	(<i>p</i>)
	[A']	m. 287 (orchestra)	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>
	[B]	m. 295	(<i>p</i>)	[B] developed; no clear ending
	[A]	m. 312	<i>fz</i>	[A] developed; no clear ending

⁵⁴ Vars. I & III of Chopin's *Là ci darem la mano* begin without dynamic indications. Where Chopin does not include dynamic levels explicitly, I offer speculations in parentheses. These are based on an observation that the use of mezzo-dynamic levels is rare, and with the exception of m. 186, Chopin never uses a singular open hairpin after a *forte*, only a set of hairpins (mm. 13, 353, 367).

Wieck's second reference to the brilliant style comes in her fourth and final variation; it can be seen as a figural extension of the Paganini-inspired textures in Herz and Chopin.⁵⁵ Where the relentless *staccato* markings in Herz and Chopin foreground the characteristic attack on each individual note that popularized the *stile brillante* (**Examples 5.22 & 5.23**) Wieck does away with these articulatory details (**Example 5.24** overleaf). On the contrary, she relies extensively on the sustaining pedal, which is completely absent in Chopin's writing — in Herz's, it is used at the cadential gesture, contributing to the dramatic *forte* closing of each section.



Example 5.22 (5.12): Herz *Bravura Variations*, Var. III (mm. 115–19).



Example 5.23 (5.13): Chopin *Là ci darem la mano*, Var. IV (mm. 211–18).

⁵⁵ Earlier, I discussed the links between Herz and Paganini. In his native Warsaw, the *Warsaw Courier* also compared Chopin to Paganini, referring to him as the “Paganini of the piano.” See Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 119.

Brillante e passionato

162

***ff* precipitato** ***f* sempre forte e fuoso**

165

167

mf

Example 5.24: Wieck Concert Variations, Var. IV (mm. 161⁴–69).

Wieck's entire variation is pedaled, with changes made on each new harmony.

Not only does its *sempre forte et fuocoso* contribute to the “passionato” effect, but these markings are also indicative of the further challenges that are posed to the pianist: in addition to accuracy, sustained power is now also a requisite for success. Wieck’s figuration is more challenging than Herz’s and Chopin’s in two other ways. First, a far more acute sense of keyboard geography is required, as the outer voices of both hands are not merely reaching for a top note, but rather a whole octave. In the right hand, Wieck further transforms a two-note leap into a three-note figuration, calling for the pianist to return once more to the top note, before beginning the next group of

leaps. Second, the juxtaposition of triplets in the right hand with regular eighths in the left calls to mind a particular lesson in Wieck's *Piano and Song*, in which an interaction between Domine and Emily reveals that the greatest difficulty in Herz's *Les trois grâces* was in its fourth variation — not on account of its velocity of execution, but of the same kind of rhythmic juxtaposition between triplets and regular eighths.⁵⁶

Example 5.25: Wieck *Concert Variations*, Var. IV, [A'] (mm. 174–77).

Though both hands become rhythmically synchronized on the reprise of A, it is not any easier to play; the textures of the left hand now match the difficulties of the right, but in contrary motion. The chordal and octave writing give rise to clamorous textures. More broadly, her penchant for octave writing, large registral spans, heavy reliance on the sustaining pedal, and a predominantly *forte* dynamic level reflect her inclination towards the use of rich textures. There is also a near complete absence of

⁵⁶ Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 134–35.

any *staccato* markings throughout these variations, with the textures seen in **Example 5.26** presenting an exception.

Example 5.26: Wieck *Concert Variations*, Var. I, [A] (mm. 63⁴–71).

The A section of Var. I further displays a kind of “lyrical” or “poetic” virtuosity: as a textural “interplay” and “blending” of virtuosic figuration and melody, this manner of compositional virtuosity was typically attributed to Adolf von Henselt, whose *Variations de concert sur le motif de l’opéra ‘L’elisir d’amore’*, Op. 1 has been discussed by Stefaniak in great detail.⁵⁷ This quality of compositional

⁵⁷ Stefaniak, “Clara Schumann’s Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism,” 750. In his analyses of Wieck’s *Concert Variations*, Stefaniak further identifies the compositional influences of Henselt’s *Donizetti Variations*.

lyricism or poeticism was in itself perceived as a manner of “interiority,” even when it accompanied virtuosic flourishes, although its use in conjunction with virtuosity could only further elevate the virtuosity that the performer was seen to embody. Such virtuosity is also present in Var. IV of Wieck’s *Concert Variations*, as well as the beginning of Var. II.

Molto grandioso ma non troppo allegro

Example 5.27: Wieck *Concert Variations*, Var. II, [A] (mm. 92–95).

As a performer, Wieck’s tone was often evoked as a source of her interiority, with a focus placed on her warm, legato tone.⁵⁸ The tendency towards not only “lyrical virtuosity” but also a more general legato writing in her variations can be understood as way in which she scripted the display of a prized quality for which she was known and lauded. The above examination of her two explicit references to the *stile brillante* reveals first a departure from its function and display as had been

⁵⁸ Stefaniak, *Schumann’s Virtuosity*, 73.

established in the early years of the decade, and also the general bravura aesthetic with which Wieck imbued the textures of her *Concert Variations*. It is not until the final section of the finale, marked “Volante,” that she employs the *stile brillante* as understood in the late-1820 sense: in m. 191, *piano* passagework occurs in a lateral, rather than vertical, manner, and over homophonic textures — one rarely seen in this whole set of variations.

Example 5.28: Wieck *Concert Variations*, Finale (mm. 191–98).

This allusion to the brilliant style that had once played such a pivotal role in popularizing the genre — a style which defined her early career — is only brief; *piano* quickly gives way to *forte* before gathering in intensity towards a recapitulation of the *fortissimo* chords seen at the opening of the work. Now *pesante*, *triofante*, and voiced with all ten fingers, it reinstates not only the verticality of her textures, but also her bravura style of writing that emerges over the course of her variations. The closing textures that follow in m. 220 are orchestral in rhetoric and texture, and their voicing,

register, and articulation parallel the writing and style of the (literal) orchestral textures that characterize Herz's and Chopin's endings.

Example 5.29: Wieck *Concert Variations*, Finale (mm. 214–30).

In her first public performance of her *Concert Variations*, Wieck presented her work as a set of "Bravour-Variationen." This aspect is prominent in the introduction, especially its harmonies, textures, and references to larger orchestral forces. The dotted rhythm figure at the beginning is premised on the opening anacrusis to Bellini's theme: bold and declamatory, it is a far remove from the *molto espressivo* and the *cantando* in m. 14. Presented in bare octaves at the lower register of the piano, it is marked *fortissimo*; instead of ${}^1\text{A} - {}^2\text{G} - {}^3\text{F}$, the rising figure takes on ${}^3\text{F} - {}^4\text{E} - {}^5\text{D}$,

although it quickly becomes clear that it will not establish any semblance of home key or harmonic stability. The arrival onto $\wedge 5$ is harmonized by a *sf* diminished seventh whose arpeggiated nine-voice texture amplifies the rhetoric set up by the initial rising octaves in the bass. Similar gestures lead to a momentary arrival onto D major (II⁶, m. 2); though equally emphatic in its rhetoric, the attainment of this major harmony is not structurally meaningful, nor is the arrival onto I⁶ three measures later.

Example 5.30: Wieck Concert Variations, Introduction (mm. 1–6).

The metrically free *precipitato* passages in D and C major suggest both an improvisatory rhetoric as aligned with the function of the introduction and the use of techniques that reflect a burgeoning bravura aesthetic; the interlocking textures seen in these *precipitato* passages can be understood, at least in the context of Liszt's chromatic octaves, as a characteristic technique.⁵⁹ As discussed in **Chapter 4**, however, a similar technique is also displayed in the Coda of Herz's *Bravura*

⁵⁹ Doran, "From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style."

Variations. Fundamentally, having both hands alternately engaged at the keyboard in quick succession was a display of spectacle that merited the attention of the “eyes of the ignorant,” and can be understood as its primary function in these measures.⁶⁰

Example 5.31 (4.36): Herz *Bravura Variations*, Coda (mm. 189–196).

Herz uses this technique in *pianissimo*; Wieck, *fortissimo*. Where Herz’s writing clusters these textures around the middle region of the keyboard, Wieck’s traverses a span of five octaves — nearly the entire compass of her piano. Further, she specifies the pedal throughout the measure; beginning at the establishment of these major

⁶⁰ J. Q. Davies, *Romantic Anatomies of Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 93.

chords right at the start of the measure, the richness of the bass and eight-voice arpeggiation is also to be captured and preserved. Collectively, these parameters amass a sound that enables Wieck's writing to approximate, if not display, features of this new bravura aesthetic.

The rhetorical confidence of these major chords is non-congruent with their place in the broader harmonic framework of the introduction: taken as a whole, the recitative neither displays nor seeks harmonic stability. While mm. 3⁴–4³ are a sequential repetition of the opening measure a step higher, the next iteration of this rhythmic gesture in m. 7 loses its original melodic contour. The dotted rhythm is used as an impetus for the emphatic reach of a tritone through yet more bare octaves in *energico e grandioso*: from this, unrelenting diminished sonorities arise, persisting until the lyrical thematic reference in the Neapolitan key area in m. 14.

Apart from the *pp leggierissimo* filigree in mm. 9 and 12, the rich textures in Wieck's introduction showcase a clearly vertical approach to the keyboard. The wide-ranging display of registration, textures, and gestures invoke the orchestral openings of the other concert variations that had been so integral to the successful establishment of her early image as a virtuosa. As these gestures were absorbed into her piano solo writing, they reflected, displayed, and challenged the growing capacity of the piano to embody a wide range of colors and textures, and to intimate references to forces larger than itself.

5.6 Contrapuntal Imagination

Wieck effectively commands the attention of her audience in this opening with a bold statement of “harsh and wild chords”; her incorporation and development of the Bellini’s “sweet and tender” theme in m. 14 invites a further consideration of thematic development and texture.⁶¹ Although the section blends separate elements and fragments of Bellini’s theme, neither the periodic phrasing nor original harmonies from the theme are retained.

Example 5.32: Wieck *Concert Variations*, Theme (mm. 31⁴–39).

The first measure of the theme can be broken down into two constituent elements: first, the rising third in dotted rhythms characterizing its anacrusis, upon which Wieck also based her Recitativo; second, the melodic repetition of quarters on

⁶¹ Franz Hünten, *Méthode de piano: Op. 60*, fourth edition. (Mainz: B Schott, 1833), 17, cited in and translated by Laure Schnapper, see “Piano Variations in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century: An Industry?,” in *Instrumental Music and the Industrial Revolution*, ed. Roberto Illiano and Luca Sala, trans. Vivienne Hunt (International Conference “Instrumental Music and the Industrial Revolution,” Bologna: UT Orpheus, 2010), 279–94.

[^]3. This entire unit is used in reverse in the right hand of m. 13 (marked *a* in **Example 5.32**), its contour implied once again in mm. 16–17¹, though its rhythmic profile of [^]3 is altered from three straight quarters to a two-note dotted rhythm (marked *b*). The anacrusis's rising third is also motivically developed in this section as a counter-melody in the tenor voice over pedal points in the bass (mm. 14–21), and in imitation (mm. 23–25).

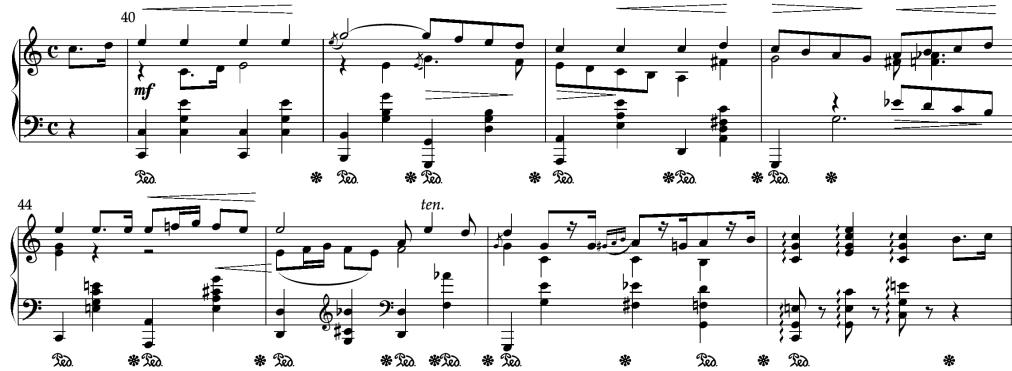
Example 5.33: Wieck *Concert Variations*, Introduction, with thematic annotations (mm. 13–31).

The broader importance of counterpoint surfaces in an analysis of Wieck's main presentation of Bellini's theme in m. 32. Here, I outline the structure of the theme, from which the structural role of contrapuntal development can be gleaned:

Table 5.8: Structural analysis of the Theme from Wieck's *Concert Variations*.

mm. 32–35	A (antecedent)	Half cadence.
mm. 36–39	A (consequent)	Authentic cadence.
mm. 40–43	A' (antecedent)	Imitative entries in the alto: distance of half measure.
mm. 44–47	A' (consequent)	
mm. 48–51	B	In dominant key area (G).
mm. 52–55	A (consequent)	Repetition of mm. 36–39.
mm. 56–59	B'	Imitative entry in the alto (m. 56 ²). Dotted rhythm motif developed in alto, in counterpoint to the melody in the soprano
mm. 60–63	A'' (consequent)	Imitative entry in the alto (m. 61) at the distance of a sixth — not a direct imitation for the first time. As in B , a counter melody is developed independently in the alto. Chromatic inflections in the tenor in m. 60 give rise to a momentary four-voiced texture.

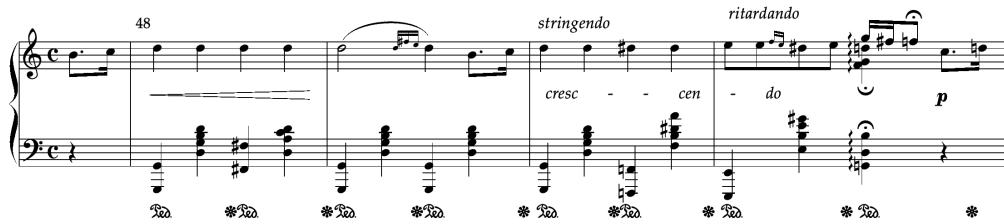
The initial eight-measure **A** section (seen earlier in **Example 5.32**) undergoes two developments. The first follows the initial presentation of the theme and has an inner voice which imitates fragments of the top voice: there is a direct imitation at the distance of a half-measure in mm. 40², 50², 45¹, and m. 43^{3–4} is also an imitation of m. 43^{1–2} a sixth lower (see **Example 5.34** overleaf). Such techniques are akin to the imitative writing seen in the tenor and bass of Var. III (seen earlier in **Example 5.20**), which occurred at the distance of a measure.



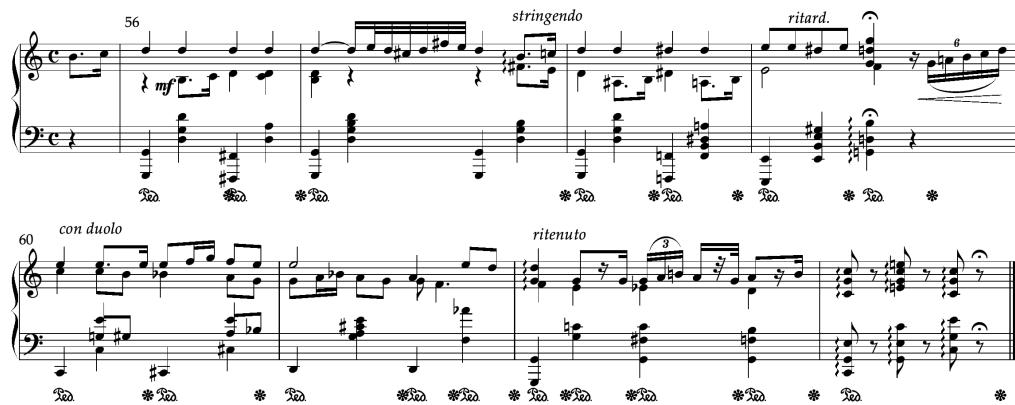
Example 5.34: Wieck Concert Variations, Theme, [A'] (mm. 394–47).

We have seen that Herz drew upon contemporary vocal performance practice to embellish the repetition of his theme (in **A'** and **C'**). By contrast, Wieck's development of the theme occurs by way of contrapuntal development. With each re-statement, she displays an increasing number of layers, and consequently, her mastery of counterpoint. After a reprise of the consequent of **A**, **B** (Example 5.35) is developed by **B'** (Example 5.36), first using the similar technique of direct imitation (m. 56², at the distance of half a measure), then with the dotted rhythm motif developed independently as an alto countermelody. The latter development contributes to the section's chromaticism.

The reprise of **A** in the form of its consequent (**A''**, m. 60) does not rely on imitative counterpoint — there is only one instance of imitative counterpoint, m. 61, in which the theme enters a sixth lower — but rather, develops the alto voice independently. The momentary separation of the otherwise chordal constituents of the homophonic left hand gives rise to a fleeting tenor voice, and resultant four-part texture, in m. 60.



Example 5.35: Wieck *Concert Variations*, Theme, [B] (mm. 47⁴–51).



Example 5.36: Wieck *Concert Variations*, Theme, [B', A''] (mm. 55⁴–63).

The use of counterpoint in Wieck's theme and introduction can be understood in light of the emerging notions of virtuosity that surrounded critical discourse during this time. As a historicizing guise, contrapuntal techniques were prized as a mode of compositional virtuosity; its use in her introduction can be further contextualized through a Mendelssohnian perspective (see **Chapter 2**). Mendelssohn often found the improvisatory practices of his contemporaries distasteful and inappropriate; compare Friedrich Wieck's representation of the typically "stupid stunts" of these introduction sections as constituting "a few hazardous flights up and

down the keyboard, along with many octave passages, *fortissimo*, with depressed sustaining pedal.”⁶²

Mendelssohn’s complaints were directed not merely at such superficial displays of virtuosity, but further, a broader lack of contrapuntal imagination. The perceived “lucidity, polyphony, and structure” documented in Mendelssohn’s own improvisations are commensurate with his ideals of what virtuosos’ improvisatory practices ought to entail.⁶³ There is no want of contrapuntal imagination in Wieck’s writing; these compositional techniques not only set her apart from her contemporaries, but further showcased — at least through Mendelssohnian lenses — an elevated virtuosity.

Beyond compositional techniques, critics, especially Robert Schumann, also identified an interiority of sound that could exist independently of its repertoire. As a performer, Wieck’s skill at shading primary and middle voices was a compelling feature of her performances; the presence of such textures and their successful realization through intricate voicing represented the performance of textural depth; Wieck’s tone, Schumann claimed, could “sink into the heart and speak to the soul.”⁶⁴

While a trace of vocally inspired embellishment does surface in m. 57 (a decoration of m. 49 from **B**, as seen in **Example 5.35**), Wieck’s structural development

⁶² Wieck, *Piano and Song*, 139.

⁶³ Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, 47.

⁶⁴ Stefaniak, “Clara Schumann’s Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism,” 726–27.

of the original ternary-form source material is inherently pianistic. Where Herz's embellishments of the theme offer a direct, accessible form of pleasure, the textures arising from Wieck's contrapuntal techniques can be seen as a guise of musical interiority in which knowledge was concealed and embedded in its sound structure. Though Robert Schumann's comments ought to be read at some remove, the contrapuntal writing seen in these examples can be understood as having served two ends: first, she was able to showcase her compositional dexterity; second and consequently, she was able to capitalize on the prestige that was accorded to such manner of writing and performing, therefore scripting a kind of virtuosity that was unique to her. To this end, her *Concert Variations* reveal a convergence of composer-virtuosa Clara Wieck and her (transcendental) virtuosities, both compositional and performative.

5.7 Wieck, the Composer-Virtuosa

What did it mean for Wieck to have performed, even composed, such virtuosic piano repertoire as a young girl? The introduction to Czerny's contemporaneous *Letters to a Young Lady* reveals the instrument's gendered divide:

So decided a disposition and inclination for this fine art could not, in truth, remain long dormant; for no art is more noble, nor more surely indicative of general mental cultivation than music; and you know that *pianoforte playing*, though suitable to every one, is yet and particularly one of the most charming and honorable accomplishments for young ladies, and, indeed, for the female sex in general. By it we can command, not only for one's self, but for many others, a dignified and appropriate amusement; and, where great progress has been made, we also ensure a degree of distinction in the world, which is agreeable to the amateur as to the professional artist.⁶⁵

Czerny's writing is a reflection of longstanding values which, as Matthew Head illuminates, had been cultivated through the latter part of the eighteenth century, during which time playing the piano well was a requisite for "the fair sex" insofar as it reflected a good education that her family was able to provide her with.⁶⁶ Well into the first few decades of the nineteenth century, a young lady being able to play the piano well continued not only be "charming," but also "honorable." Yet, the

⁶⁵ Czerny, *Letters to a Young Lady, on the Art of Playing the Pianoforte*, 1–2.

⁶⁶ Matthew William Head, "'If the Pretty Little Hand Won't Stretch': Music for the Fair Sex," in *Sovereign Feminine: Music and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 48–83.

piano ought not to be more than “dignified and appropriate amusement” for women, nor should she trespass into the realms of the professional.

From the outset, Czerny “earnestly retreat[s]” his hypothetical female student to acquire a “graceful and appropriate position when sitting at the piano-forte.”⁶⁷ Throughout his *Letters*, repeated reminders are issued that grace, elegance, and beauty ought to be at the forefront of her consciousness when seated at the piano. Indeed, Head illustrates the ways in which the visual appearance of females at the keyboard were aligned with the aesthetics of the beautiful; it wasn’t just that a young lady’s arms and fingers ought to be kept “tranquil and fine,”⁶⁸ but further, that she should not as much as display the exertion of labor through “unattractive” squinting or furrowed brows.⁶⁹

What would Czerny have had to say about the physical athleticism that Wieck displayed at the keyboard, that which encapsulated not grace and elegance, but of bravura? These variations, and indeed the fantasies, etudes, and Schubert transcriptions that Wieck continued to perform, are a far cry from these qualities that her contemporaries were expected to embody at the piano. Later in Czerny’s *Letters*, it emerges that these “grand and difficult pieces” do not find a place in the young lady’s repertoire: these “splendid bravura-compositions” were intended not for them, “rather for highly cultivated players, and for public performances, than for the

⁶⁷ Czerny, *Letters to a Young Lady*, 2.

⁶⁸ Czerny, *Letters to a Young Lady*, 25–26.

⁶⁹ Head, “If the Pretty Little Hand Won’t Stretch,” 64.

instruction of those who, like you, Miss, have still to climb many steps to arrive at perfection.”⁷⁰

Indeed, the models of successful virtuosos that Czerny placed before his hypothetical young lady were male.⁷¹ The female realm of music-making had long been, as Head aptly describes, “not fundamentally different from that of the male,” instead represented by “a segment in a masculine universe of opportunities.”⁷² That Wieck was a successful concertizing artist in the first place was unusual for her time. As can be seen from her *Jugendtagebücher*, rare few female virtuosas enjoyed a public career, amongst which Leopoldine Blahetka and Marie Pleyel. Katherine Ellis’s work reveals the ways in which these gendered connotations were highly pronounced in Paris — the European hub in which virtuoso culture had been thriving since the early decades of the century — and the impacts this had on female concert pianists, especially leading up to the middle of the 1840s.⁷³

Institutions such as the Paris Conservatoire gendered performance and repertoires. A survey by James Parakilas illuminates how, beyond the gendering of particular kinds of repertoires and composers, performance itself was also gendered. Works that were assigned to male pupils in one year could be assigned to females in

⁷⁰ Czerny, *Letters to a Young Lady*, 43.

⁷¹ James Parakilas, *Piano Roles: Three Hundred Years of Life with the Piano* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1999), 119.

⁷² Head, “If the Pretty Little Hand Won’t Stretch,” 51. Similarly, Parakilas describes this phenomenon as such: “learning the piano has been like learning to cook: girls did it as a matter of course, whereas the relatively few boys who did it got the jobs and the glory.” See *Piano Roles*, 119.

⁷³ Ellis, “Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris.”

subsequent years, and vice versa — a phenomenon symptomatic of a wider unwillingness to engage in a meaningful assessment of female pianists on the same level as their male counterparts: it was “too risky to test the belief that women couldn’t play like men.”⁷⁴

Wieck herself was subject to these tensions throughout her lifetime. Though they will not be considered here, there is a significant body of sources concerning her physicality, choice of repertoires, and reception that investigate the gendered lenses through which Clara Wieck — later Clara Schumann — was perceived as a performer, and the ways in which this was further complicated in the years after her marriage.⁷⁵ The significance of female concert pianists in Paris during the early decades of the nineteenth century, Ellis argues, was insofar as they could successfully establish themselves as “interpreter-virtuosas” — a notion that brings to mind Clara Schumann’s identity later in her life, as discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation.⁷⁶ A male pianist, by contrast, could establish himself on the concert stage as a composer-virtuoso. Not just a vessel, he “basked in the authority of both

⁷⁴ Parakilas, *Piano Roles*, 121. See Ellis 380–81 for the ways in which repertoires were gendered in Paris during this time.

⁷⁵ Ellis, “Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris.” In Paris, it was not until the middle of the 1840s that critics began to develop a critical language and suitable rhetoric which the accomplishments of women pianists could be evaluated. See also Claudia de Vries, *Die Pianistin Clara Wieck-Schumann: Interpretation Im Spannungsfeld von Tradition Und Individualität*, Schumann Forschungen, Bd. 5 (Mainz; New York: Schott, 1996); Stefaniak, *Becoming Clara Schumann*, Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman*, Revised Edition (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), Amanda Lalonde, “The Young Prophetess in Performance,” in *Clara Schumann Studies*, ed. Joe Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 187–201.

⁷⁶ Ellis, “Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris,” 359.

complete control over and ownership of his repertory,” his performances a “reflection, through the fingers, of authorial thought.”⁷⁷ Indeed, the composers whose virtuoso showpieces Wieck programmed extensively during her early career encapsulated this model. Their status gave these works, such as the variations and (later) fantasies she performed, the legitimacy they did; her successful performances of these works gave her legitimacy on the concert stage — an otherwise male-dominated platform.

Wieck’s *Concert Variations* was the only work she composed in the style of popular showpieces; she did not compose any rondos, fantasies, or potpourris that also constituted the repertoire of these “composer-virtuosos.” We recall the ways in which she introduced this work to her audience as a set of “bravura” variations in 1837. To an extent, this can be understood as an alignment with Herz’s renowned set of *Bravura Variations*, and reflective of an intent to situate and establish herself as similarly amongst the “most conspicuous kind(s) of pianists” of her day.⁷⁸ We further consider the gendered connotations associated with the term “bravura,” drawing on Doran’s study on Liszt, in which he identifies the term “bravura” as having embodied connotations of courage and of machismo.⁷⁹ On the one hand, such popular showpieces staged opportunities for the composer-virtuoso to showcase his technical command at the instrument.⁸⁰ Ellis invites us to consider, on the other, that

⁷⁷ Ellis, “Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris,” 356.

⁷⁸ Ellis, “Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris,” 361.

⁷⁹ Doran, “From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style,” 270.

⁸⁰ Doran, “From the Brilliant Style to the Bravura Style,” 270.

these virtuosos' styles of writing served equally to mask their deficiencies in the domain of what Cvejić contextualizes as "expression," and Stefaniak, "interiority."⁸¹

Notating and publishing a work whose abundance of technical difficulties far surpass that of Herz's and Chopin's enabled Wieck to make a clear statement that these "stereotypically masculine qualities of athletic bravura, interpretive and physical power, and showmanship" were not at all qualities that she lacked, in spite of her gender.⁸² Beyond leveling the playing field with her male contemporaries, the multiple guises of virtuosities in her writing played into the emergent notion of "interiority," of which facets were encountered earlier in this chapter: "lyrical" virtuosic textures, uses of the *stile brillante* that transcended its original function, harmonic innovation, and the refined display of counterpoint. Her compositional virtuosity underscored her unique performative virtuosity; she executed these physical feats of virtuosity with a beautiful tone that could "sink into the heart and speak to the soul."⁸³ As an embodiment and synthesis of both the bravura demanded on the concert stage and the beauty expected of female pianists during this time, Wieck's *Concert Variations* enabled her to transcend her former status as an "interpreter-virtuos[a]" to become a composer-virtuos[a]" — a figure of authority not only in a genre which epitomized pianistic virtuosity, but further, at the piano herself.

⁸¹ Ellis, "Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris," 356.

⁸² Ellis, "Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris," 361.

⁸³ Stefaniak, "Clara Schumann's Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism," 726–27.

CONCLUSION

While this study primarily set out to cultivate new insights into Wieck's early life and career — her artistic identity, programming practices, and wider musical contributions — it has also revealed the richness of pianism and of virtuoso culture in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century. It has been nearly two centuries since Clara Schumann expressed her disdain for this “whole world of mechanical virtuoso showpieces” with which she had once made a name for herself; that this repertoire and its milieu have yet to receive adequate attention from both scholars and performers invites us to reflect upon the historiographical narratives that have shaped its reception.

Consider Dahlhaus's influential historiography of nineteenth-century musical culture. On the one hand, many of these variation sets were cultivated in Paris: the European epicenter in which virtuoso instrumental culture was nurtured during the 1830s, but a country that was marginalized in his account. On the other, the complex relationships between the musical score and virtuoso performance culture characteristic of these “new genres of virtuosity” foundational to postclassical pianism — and consequently much of Wieck's early career — likewise do not fit comfortably within his dichotomies.

The works examined in this dissertation are but a small sample of the repertoire through which Wieck established herself as a virtuosa, and indeed a negligible fraction of the wealth of virtuosic keyboard repertory circulating during

these decades. Likewise, Henri Herz was but one of many illustrious composer-virtuosos of his time, rivalled by figures such as Ignaz Moscheles, Friedrich Kalkbrenner, Daniel Steibelt, Johann Pixis, and John Field. Geographically, virtuoso instrumental culture was simultaneously being developed across the Channel — London was the other key hub in which virtuoso piano culture thrived during the early decades of the nineteenth century. As with Paris, organological advancements that arose from innovations in instrument manufacturing gave rise to new conceptions and manifestations of virtuosity that these composer-virtuosos likewise drew upon to further their reputation. To this end, the methodologies employed in this study can be extended to studies not only of other contemporaneous figures, but additionally to genres such as rondos, fantasies, and transcriptions, and even the concerto: the most celebrated public genre in which instrumental virtuosity could be scripted and displayed.

Future work in this domain can be enriched through studies of reviews of Wieck's own playing, a consideration of the ways in which gender impacted Wieck's career (and, more broadly, that of female pianists), the nationalistic impulses spurring on this growing critical discourse that was coming into focus during these years, and relatedly, a first-hand exploration of the burgeoning ideal of "interiority" which Alexander Stefaniak has written extensively about. Chronologically, we can further consider the function and status of piano variations beyond the 1830s. How might we understand Clara Wieck's shift away from the immensely popular sub-genre of

postclassical concert variations to Clara Schumann's extensive programming of Mendelssohn's *Variations sérieuses*? To this end, how were various elements of virtuosity (re-)packaged in the years that followed?

This study of Wieck's early career reveals the richness of a different kind of pianistic culture — more specifically, “instrumental virtuoso culture” — than we are used to today. As has been shown, engaging with the historical, social, cultural, and performative histories of such repertoire and their composers more deeply has the potential to enrich our understanding of a period of history whose styles and aesthetics have thus far been reduced to the margins. Finally, we are invited to reflect upon the historiographical narratives that have shaped musical discourse over the past centuries, and to consider the diverse representations of, and approaches to, virtuosity — a discourse that not only Clara Wieck-Schumann navigated throughout her lifetime, but which continues to present itself in ever-changing ways today.

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