NOTES AND A NARRATIVE TO ACCOMPANY A PIANO RECITAL

by

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In

Piano Performance

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ABSTRACT

I wrote this thesis in connection with my hour-long senior recital, held April 19, 2015 as the culmination of my work as an undergraduate student in the piano performance program. The thesis includes extended and short program notes for each of the compositions included in my recital: Frederic Chopin’s *Andante spianato and Grande Polonaise brillante*, op. 22; Ludwig van Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 (“The Tempest”); Franz Liszt’s piano transcriptions of “Sonetto 104 del Petrarca” and “Widmung”; and two movements from William Bolcom’s *The Garden of Eden Suite*—“Old Adam” and “The Serpent’s Kiss.” The extended program notes give a detailed history of each work and composer, as well as a description of each piece. The short version of the notes will be handed out at my recital. This thesis also includes a narrative analysis of the first movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata op. 31, no. 2, which also incorporates a detailed formal analysis of the movement. A narrative analysis is a written description of the abnormalities in the structure of a composition and an explanation, in narrative form, of how these abnormalities function and affect the piece as a whole.
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INTRODUCTION

As a piano performance major, I am required to perform an hour-long recital during my senior year. This recital is the culmination of my four-year degree and includes a variety of pieces. As I have had opportunities—such as this recital—to perform for an audience, I have often pondered how not only to engage myself in the music beyond the basics—the notes, rhythm, articulation, and dynamics—but also how to encourage my audience to become more active listeners. It was with these goals in mind that I formulated the idea for this thesis.

The program notes portion of this thesis includes the five pieces that I will perform during my recital and accomplishes both of my goals—to engage myself and my audience. Program notes are handed out with the program at a performance and give the audience a brief introduction to the works being performed. They often tell the listener about the history of the work—where and when it was composed and any special circumstances associated with the actual writing of the work, its publication, or first performance. They also inform the listener of relevant information about the composer’s life at the time the work was written. Successful program notes often suggest connections between the pieces being played because they show how they relate to one another. I unified my program by focusing on the extramusical associations of each work. Finally, the notes include a guide to the music so that the audience knows what to listen for. This may consist of a broad explanation of the genre, or a detailed description

1 This thesis is written with deep gratitude to Dr. Catherine Mayes who guided me through the writing process, gave me new insight and ideas for both the program notes and the narrative, and spent countless hours to help me write, revise, and polish this thesis.
of a recurring rhythm, providing the audience with an opportunity not only to be informed about the work but to listen for specific features of the music. Program notes—if written by the performer—similarly inform the performer about the works that he or she is learning and can aid him or her in knowing what to emphasize in the performance. I have included both an extended version of the program notes and a shortened version. The extended version is to show the in-depth knowledge that a performer should have about the pieces he or she is learning; however, it is not practical to hand out this much information to the audience and expect them to read and understand it all within the time of the performance. Therefore, the shortened version of the notes are a summary of the extended notes and actually represent what will be given out at my senior recital.

The second portion of this thesis is a narrative analysis of the first movement of Beethoven’s “Tempest” sonata, which gave me an opportunity to engage intimately with the music by going beyond learning the notes written in the score. I first conducted a formal analysis of the first movement of the sonata (see Appendix B). By completing this formal analysis, I understood where the movement was going harmonically and structurally. This is important for a performer because it helps give the music direction and it helps to understand the piece as a whole instead of only understanding it phrase by phrase. The narrative analysis takes the formal analysis one step further because it encourages an emotional response to the music. The narrative approach raises questions like—What feeling is the composer attempting to express in this passage? Why does this section cause a certain response—anger, peace, uneasiness, etc.? The narrative is then directly related to how the piece is performed. As a performer, the narrative analysis led
me to ask myself why I play certain passages the way I do and how I wanted my audience to feel as they listened. I then had to make a conscious effort to play the piece the same way that I described it in the narrative.

After writing this thesis, I know more about the pieces that I am playing—where and when they were written, what sources inspired them, and what, if any, unusual circumstances surrounded them. In the case of the Beethoven sonata, I am also a more knowledgeable performer because I actively made decisions about what emotions I think the music is portraying. My audience will also have the opportunity to engage with the music as they read the program notes. Thus, by writing program notes and a narrative analysis, my audience can become active listeners and I have become an informed performer.
EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES:

A VIEW OF EXTRAMUSICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Art, literature, dances, and scenes of nature are nonmusical materials that many musicians rely upon as inspiration for their compositions, or else they seek to evoke these extramusical associations in their work. Although composers are not obligated to explain such inspirations or associations, they may choose to share this information through the title of a piece or a note found within the music. Sometimes these details may even be shared in a conversation that was later recorded. In this program, I have chosen five pieces that all have extramusical associations.

Chopin, Andante spianato and Grande Polonaise brillante, op. 22

Between the ages of twenty and twenty-one, Frederic Chopin (1810–49) wrote the Grande Polonaise brillante, op. 22 (1830–31). This was the last of six works that he wrote for piano and orchestra. It was not until 1834 that Chopin wrote the Andante spianato, and the work was published as a whole in 1836 in Leipzig, Paris, and London. Although the Andante spianato was originally written for solo piano, it was attached to the polonaise as an introduction, so that when the piece is performed by piano and

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1 These program notes are primarily influenced by Dr. Catherine Mayes’s course Music Bibliography (MUSC 6010, University of Utah, Spring 2015) and Dr. Margaret Rorke’s course Music History I (MUSC 3630-001, University of Utah, Fall 2012). They are also influenced by Richard J. Wingell’s chapter “Program Notes” and Jonathan D. Bellman’s chapter “Three Kinds of Practical Writing.”


orchestra, the pianist plays the andante before the orchestra comes in with the opening tutti of the polonaise.\(^4\)

Most frequently, however, opus 22 is played as a piano solo because of the minimal orchestral accompaniment that Chopin wrote for the polonaise, making it easily possible to play it without the orchestra. Twenty-two measures of the piece were written for orchestra only—these have been transcribed for the piano. The rest of the accompaniment that the orchestra provides consists of sustained notes or chords, which add depth and fullness to the sound but are not vital for the work to sound complete.\(^5\)

The *Andante spianato* and *Grande Polonaise brillante* showcase two very different genres of music. The andante is in a moderately slow nocturne style with a smooth, arpeggiated left-hand accompaniment and a lyrical right-hand melody. There is a slight interruption when the mazurka section is introduced in the middle of the movement (mm. 67–96), but overall, this introduction seeks to move the listener into a dreamlike state. However, he is awakened by the fanfare of the orchestra (or piano) at the beginning of the polonaise.\(^6\)

The polonaise is a polish dance known for its “stately, processional character” as explained by Stephen Downes.\(^7\) It originated from the polish folk dance—the *polonez*—

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\(^5\) Ibid., ii.


that was simple in rhythm and melody. It was first performed at festivals and weddings until it was taken into the courts of the Polish nobility and changed to a more refined and stately style. It was used for dancing but also became known as a military style of music. By the end of the seventeenth century, the polonaise was found in many European courts and was firmly established as a polonaise—with a French title—by the mid-eighteenth century.

In courts, the polonaise was often played as couples walked around the floor in what Margaret Anderson called “a grand parade of beauty and grace.” At first, it was played solely by an orchestra, but gained popularity for keyboard and was later used in private settings, such as salons, where Chopin, who is now known for his polonaises, took the work to new heights with virtuosic passages and increased intensity. The polonaise can be immediately recognized by its unique rhythm (speak “Joyfully go to sleep now” to yourself to replicate the rhythm). In the Grande Polonaise brillante, the left hand carries this rhythm throughout while the right hand presents a melody that is often embellished.

**Beethoven, Piano Sonata No. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 (“The Tempest”)**

Unlike Chopin’s use of a dance as inspiration for opus 22, Ludwig van Beethoven’s (1770–1827) use of extramusical associations in his Piano Sonata No. 17 in
D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 (often nicknamed “The Tempest”) is not as clear cut. This work, written in 1802, is well known for its unusual features and great contrasts. The first movement is in sonata form—which includes an exposition, development, and recapitulation—but is not as easily defined as many of his earlier sonatas.11 This movement has three different tempos that depict different characters—Largo (slow, broad), which often sounds improvised and ethereal; Allegro (fast, lively) that includes the majority of the movement and often creates a feeling of urgency, and Adagio (slow), which is only found in two measures, each one ending a phrase.12 Contrast in this movement is created not only through tempo changes, but also through dynamics and articulation.13 Fermatas, which occur frequently, find the listener holding his breath, unsure of what may come next. The movement ends without any fulfillment.

The Adagio movement is also in sonata form but does not have a development section.14 This movement is not as dramatic as the first movement and was referred to by András Schiff as the “calm between the storms.”15 The music portrays a conversation that happens between the chords played in the lower register and the singing melody in the upper register. Although the Adagio seems more peaceful since it is in a major key (Bb major), Beethoven successfully creates a sense of uneasiness with dissonant


14 Tovey, *A Companion to Beethoven’s Pianoforte Sonatas*, 131.

15 Schiff, “Beethoven Lecture Recitals Part 5.”
harmonies and this movement—just like the first—also leaves the listener dissatisfied.\textsuperscript{16} The final Allegretto movement is also in sonata form and brings back the dramatic contrast of the first movement.\textsuperscript{17} It does not contain any tempo changes, but the sudden changes in dynamic level still generate emotional tension. This movement is very repetitive and is full of arpeggiated and broken chords causing what Donald Tovey has referred to as “an unsettling undercurrent of obsession.”\textsuperscript{18} Although the movement seems to be pushing to the end, the music still does not bring a feeling of accomplishment or success, but instead, a feeling of resignation—an acknowledgement of fate.\textsuperscript{19}

One may wonder what inspired Beethoven to compose a piece that has so many contrasting emotions, none of which seem to be resolved. Anton Schindler, who was an early biographer of Beethoven, asked him what this sonata meant. Beethoven apparently replied: “Read Shakespeare’s \textit{Tempest}.”\textsuperscript{20} Although there has been extensive debate as to what Beethoven was suggesting, many scholars believe that he was referring to the drama and emotion of the play, not to specific characters or scenes.\textsuperscript{21} Regardless of Beethoven’s meaning, the nickname “The Tempest” has stuck ever since.

\textsuperscript{16} Taub, \textit{Playing the Beethoven Piano Sonatas}, 197.

\textsuperscript{17} Tovey, \textit{A Companion to Beethoven’s Pianoforte Sonatas}, 134.

\textsuperscript{18} Taub, \textit{Playing the Beethoven Piano Sonatas}, 198.

\textsuperscript{19} Schiff, “Beethoven Lecture Recitals Part 5.”


Shakespeare's play may not be the key to a clear view of Beethoven's sonata; however, one can look at Beethoven's life in another attempt to understand "The Tempest." In 1802, when the work was written, Beethoven spent the summer in Heiligenstadt, a small town outside of Vienna. Beethoven's hearing had begun to diminish, and he was embarrassed by this handicap, for he of all people felt that he should have the most accurate hearing as a famous musician. He had only first admitted his hearing loss to a close friend in 1801, and it was still a closely kept secret at this point. Although Beethoven was not completely deaf and did not know what was to come, he was afraid of how deafness would affect his professional and social life and thus attempted to hide it.  

Beethoven's doctor suggested that he spend some time in Heiligenstadt in order to preserve what hearing he had left and to prevent any strain to his hearing. During 1801–02, Beethoven experienced a mix of emotions, as evident in his letters—likely due to his fears of deafness—especially in a document now known as the Heiligenstadt Testament. This "testament" was a letter written to his brothers that was never sent, but found only after he died. This letter addressed his mixed emotions in realizing that his hearing was not likely to improve. He had contemplated thoughts of suicide, but felt that


he had a great purpose to serve through his work as a musician. However, he also
suggested that he was ready for death if and when it came.25

Thus, Beethoven’s Sonata No. 17 may actually portray his conflicting emotions as
he attempted to deal with his worsening deafness. There are moments of calm quickly
followed by explosive passages of emotion—these likely match Beethoven’s feelings,
especially those shared in the Heiligenstadt Testament. The sonata clearly depicts a
struggle that is never really resolved, just as Beethoven’s deafness continued to progress.

Liszt, Années de Pèlerinage, deuxième année, Italie: “Sonetto 104 del Petrarcha” and
transcription of Robert Schumann’s “Widmung”

Although Beethoven’s literary association was somewhat ambiguous in his
“Tempest” sonata, many composers, such as Franz Liszt (1811–86), incorporate text from
poetry as song lyrics or as an influence on instrumental works as a clear type of literary
association. Franz Liszt is very well known for his piano transcriptions—he wrote almost
four hundred of them—which came from songs, orchestral works, and excerpts from
many operas.26 A transcription—oftentimes also referred to as an arrangement—is a
piece that has been rewritten for a different instrument than that for which it was
originally intended. Franz Liszt originally set Francesco Petrarch’s (1304–74) 104th
sonnet as a song for solo voice with piano accompaniment.27 It was published with two


26 Nam Yeung, “Franz Liszt’s Piano Transcriptions of Sonetto 104 del Petrarcha” (DMA diss.,
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1997), 1, ProQuest
(9829451).

27 See Appendix A for text and translation by Nott as found in Franz Liszt, Années de pèlerinage,
other songs under the title Tre sonetti del Petrarca; the texts of all three songs are from Petrarch’s sonnets (nos. 47, 104, and 123). These three sonnets are from Petrarch’s Canzoniere, which included 366 Italian poems. In the Canzoniere, Petrarch wrote mostly about his affection for Laura—a married woman with whom he never had an intimate relationship, but whom he still deeply admired. The Canzoniere is split between “Laura’s Life” and “Laura’s Death.” The three sonnets that Liszt chose to set are from “Laura’s Life.” Petrarch intended the language of these sonnets to have a kind of musical quality—he wanted them to sound melodiouss.

Liszt first set the sonnets as songs in 1842–46, and he later rearranged them for lower voice sometime between 1864–82. In the meantime, he also transcribed these songs for piano solo. Because Liszt was a master improviser, he composed very quickly, which often meant that when returning to a work, he felt the need to rewrite it. Liszt’s first piano transcriptions of the sonnets were composed between 1843–46 and each piece was published separately. The first transcription of “Sonetto 104 del Petrarca” stayed very close to the original song for voice and piano, but with more virtuosity, and it was written in a different key. In 1858, Liszt was in Italy and reworked the three songs from the Tre sonetti del Petrarca again, this time including them in his Années de Pèlerinage,


31 Tsai “Franz Liszt’s Lyricism,” 41.
deuxième année: Italie (Years of Pilgrimage, 2nd year: Italy), one of three volumes of character pieces that he composed between 1835–77. The 1858 version of “Sonetto 104 del Petrarca” is the most popular and Liszt considered the pieces from his Années de Pèlerinage some of his most successful works. One can still hear the lyrical, bel canto (literally, beautiful singing) melody evoked through the piano. Liszt wrote “Sonetto 104 del Petrarca” in the style of a nocturne—long melodic lines supported by arpeggiated bass.

In 1858, Liszt was traveling through Italy with Marie d’Agoult. Liszt met Madame d’Agoult in 1832—she was unhappily married and Liszt fell in love with her. They kept their relationship secret until 1834 when she went to Paris to live with him. They had a daughter in 1835, one of three children that they would have together. They traveled to Switzerland and eloped. In Switzerland, Liszt began his work on the Album d’un Voyageur, which later became the Années de Pèlerinage. The first set was the Swiss volume and later he composed the Italian volume. It was shortly after their third child was born that Madame d’Agoult and Liszt ended their relationship.35 Meng-Yin Tsai proposed that the Années de Pèlerinage became “Liszt’s music diary;”36 therefore, one may further suggest that he chose to incorporate the piano pieces based on Petrarch’s

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34 Olivera and Fiorini, “Franz Liszt’s Petrarch Sonnets.”

35 Walker et al., “Liszt, Franz.”

36 Tsai, “Franz Liszt’s Lyricism,” 1.
poems into his Italian volume to reflect his feelings for Marie d’Agoult, just as Petrarch had written about his feelings for Laura. Sonnet 104 describes the contradictions experienced in love. The listener will hear the struggle and anxiety of the two sides through the music, which is increased further by fermatas and rests.\(^{37}\) The conflict is not resolved until the end of the piece when the tension dissolves into a feeling of peace.\(^{38}\)

Liszt also transcribed “Widmung,” a song written by Robert Schumann (1810–56) in 1840 as a part of his collection *Myrthen*, op. 25.\(^{39}\) *Myrthen* was composed as a wedding gift to his fiancée, Clara Wieck. Clara had asked Robert to write and dedicate something to her as his bride-to-be. The entire collection is made up of twenty-six songs, all of which are settings of texts by seven different poets.\(^{40}\) “Widmung” (dedication) is the first song in the collection and is a setting of a poem by Friedrich Ruckert (1788–1866). Schumann composed this piece during his *Liederjahr* (year of song) in 1840. It is likely that Schumann chose to focus on composing *lieder* (songs) during this year not only to show his love for Clara, but also because he hoped to improve his financial stability, something that his future father-in-law, Friedrich Wieck, felt that he was lacking. Lieder were a great source of income because they sold quickly and in great number. There was a lot of tension during this time as Schumann attempted to gain the

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 50.


\(^{39}\) See Appendix A for text and translation as given in Dr. Catherine Mayes, “The Schumanns and *Lieder*” (lecture, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT, September 16, 2013).

approval of Clara's father, but he never truly succeeded. This tension was also reflected in the lieder he composed during 1840.\textsuperscript{41}

It was also during 1840 that Schumann and Liszt met and developed a professional relationship.\textsuperscript{42} However, Liszt did not transcribe “Widmung” until sometime between 1846–60.\textsuperscript{43} He later revised the piece but it was never published. Just like “Sonetto 104 del Petrarca,” Liszt also transcribed “Widmung” in a way that maintains its melodic lines and emotional passion.

**Bolcom, The Garden of Eden Suite: “Old Adam” and “The Serpent’s Kiss”**

William Bolcom (b. 1938), like Franz Liszt, was also influenced by literature in his composition *The Garden of Eden* (1968)—a piano suite comprised of four ragtime pieces that tell of Adam and Eve and the fall.\textsuperscript{44} The suite includes: “Old Adam,” “The Eternal Feminine,” “The Serpent’s Kiss,” and “Through Eden’s Gates.” These pieces were written shortly after Bolcom rediscovered Scott Joplin’s music from the era of ragtime (1890s–1910s). During this “Ragtime Revival,” a group of young composers, Bolcom included, began to write what Bolcom considered to be “new traditional-style rags.”\textsuperscript{45} This was a strong movement from 1968–75, but some of the composers continued to write rags after that point. Bolcom is known for bringing ragtime to the


\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{43} Walker et al., “Liszt, Franz.”

\textsuperscript{44} William Bolcom, *Complete Rags for Piano* (New York: Edward B. Marks Music Company, 1999), 2.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 2.
public as “art music.” Although *The Garden of Eden* was originally written for solo piano, Bolcom arranged the whole suite for two pianos in order to make it accessible to pianists of various levels.

"Old Adam" is a two-step dance in the style of a "chicken scratch." This style is known for its dotted rhythms and is related to other animal dances such as the fox trot, and turkey trot—well known social dances in the early 1900s. Bolcom said that this piece "contains a reminiscence of Chris Smith’s ‘teens hit ‘Ballin’ the Jack’"—a fox trot with dotted rhythms written in 1913. This piece is in a traditional ragtime form with four alternating sections that repeat at least once. Stride style is a common element in ragtime and can be heard in the accompaniment of the piece, in which the left hand plays a chord in the lower register and then moves up to a middle register and continues to go back and forth creating an "oom-pah" sound. Eubie Blake—who Yeung Yu suggests was the "the most influential living ragtime composer during the ragtime revival in the 1970s"—taught Bolcom stride style. Bolcom also uses "call-and-response," in which

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47 Ibid., 36.


52 Ibid., 29.
the music is played in a lower range and then repeated in a higher range creating an echo effect.53

“The Serpent’s Kiss” is a rag fantasia—an extended form of a rag that was not meant to be a dance. Bolcom moves away from typical ragtime with unusual tempo changes found throughout. However, he also maintains traditional ragtime with stride style in the accompaniment and “stoptime.” Stoptime is a technique in which the soloist fills in gaps during which the piano is not being played with rhythmic taps on the piano, clicking the tongue, or tap dancing.54 Bolcom uses these compositional techniques, and others, to successfully create the deceptive and cunning sounds of the serpent through the music in this rag. “The Serpent’s Kiss” ends with the soloist whistling and playing a tune from “The Eternal Feminine,” a previous piece in the suite about Eve. It has been suggested that this quotation is the serpent mocking Eve when she falls for his plan.55

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53 Ibid., 85-87.
54 Ibid., 101.
55 Ibid., 102.
Bibliography


**Chopin, *Andante spianato and Grande Polonaise brillante, op. 22***


**Beethoven, Piano Sonata No. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 (“The Tempest”)**


**Liszt, Années de Pèlerinage, deuxième année, Italie: “Sonetto 104 del Petrarca” and transcription of Robert Schumann’s “Widmung”**


**Bolcom, The Garden of Eden Suite: “Old Adam” and “The Serpent’s Kiss”**


A VIEW OF EXTRAMUSICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Art, literature, dances, and scenes of nature are materials that many musicians rely on as inspiration for their compositions or as extramusical associations they seek to evoke in their work. Although composers might not explain their source of inspiration, they may choose to share this information through the title of a piece or a note found within the music. In this program, I will play five pieces that have extramusical associations.

Frederic Chopin (1810–49) originally wrote the *Andante spianato and Grande Polonaise brillante*, op. 22 (1830–34) for piano and orchestra; however, it is most frequently played as a piano solo. The andante and the polonaise showcase two different genres of music. The majority of the andante is in a moderately slow nocturne style with a smooth, arpeggiated accompaniment and a lyrical melody. The polonaise originated from the polish folk dance—the *polonez*—that was simple in rhythm and melody until it was introduced into the courts of the Polish nobility and changed to a more refined and stately style. In court, the polonaise was often played as couples walked across the floor in a brilliant display of elegance. Chopin took the genre to new heights in the realm of domestic keyboard music with greater virtuosity. The polonaise is recognizable by its unique rhythm (speak “Joyfully go to sleep now” to replicate the rhythm). In this piece, the left hand carries the polonaise rhythm while the right hand plays a melody that is often embellished.

Unlike Chopin’s use of a dance as an extramusical association, Ludwig van Beethoven’s (1770–1827) use of extramusical associations in his Piano Sonata No. 17 in
D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 (often nicknamed “The Tempest”) is not as clear cut. This work, written in 1802, is well known for its contrasting emotions shown through the tempo, dynamics, and articulation found in all three movements, none of which seem ever to resolve. The nickname “The Tempest” comes from Beethoven’s suggestion to Anton Schindler (an early biographer) to “Read Shakespeare’s Tempest”; however, many scholars are unsure of the connection and believe that the relationship only comes from the deep emotion found within both works. The contrasting emotions of bitterness and resignation may actually come from Beethoven’s own feelings as he battled his oncoming deafness. In 1802, when the work was written, Beethoven spent the summer in Heiligenstadt to preserve what hearing he had left and to avoid the embarrassment he felt from his handicap. The sonata depicts a struggle that is never resolved with a bold ending, but actually leaves the listener unsatisfied at the conclusion, just as Beethoven’s deafness was never stopped but only continued to progress.

Although Beethoven’s use of literary associations was somewhat ambiguous in his “Tempest” sonata, many composers, such as Franz Liszt (1811–86), incorporate text from poetry as song lyrics or as an influence on instrumental works as a clear type of literary association. Liszt’s final keyboard version of Francesco Petrarch’s (1304–74) 104th sonnet, “Sonetto 104 del Petrarca,” is found in his Années de Pèlerinage, deuxième année: Italie (Years of Pilgrimage, 2nd year: Italy). Sonnet 104 describes the contradictions experienced in love. The listener will hear the struggle and anxiety of the two sides, which is intensified by many fermatas and rests. The conflict is not resolved until the end, when the tension finally dissolves into a feeling of peace. Liszt’s
transcription of “Widmung” is based on a song originally written by Robert Schumann (1810–56) as a part of his collection Myrthen, op. 25 that was composed as a wedding gift to his fiancée, Clara Wieck. “Widmung” (dedication) is the first song in the collection and is a setting of a poem by Friedrich Ruckert (1788–1866). Just like “Sonetto 104 del Petrarca,” Liszt also transcribed “Widmung” in a way that maintains the melodic lines and emotional passion originally found in the work for voice and piano.

William Bolcom (b. 1938), like Franz Liszt, also used literary associations to influence his instrumental works in The Garden of Eden (1968)—a piano suite comprised of four ragtime pieces that portray the fall of Adam and Eve. “Old Adam” is a two-step dance in the style of a chicken scratch—a genre known for its dotted rhythms. This piece includes stride style (the left hand plays a chord in the lower register then the middle register to produce an “oom-pah” sound) and call-and-response (a phrase played in a lower range is repeated in a higher range to create an echo). “The Serpent’s Kiss” is a rag fantasia that moves away from traditional ragtime with unusual tempo changes; however, Bolcom maintains a standard ragtime sound with stride style and stoptime—a style that fills in the gaps of silence with rhythmic taps on the piano, clicking the tongue, or tap dancing.
BEETHOVEN’S PIANO SONATA NO. 17 IN D MINOR, OP. 31, NO. 2
("THE TEMPEST"), MOVEMENT 1:

A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

In the Classical period, sonata form became the dominant musical structure.

Sonata form refers to the form of a single movement, whether independent or within a multi-movement work, such as sonatas, symphonies, and concertos. Although it is often the structure of the first movement of these genres, it can also be used in later movements. It consists of three large components—an exposition, a development, and a recapitulation. The following description of these parts of sonata form are presented as a "textbook case," and it is important to note that there is great variety found throughout Classical period sonatas; thus, this structure acts only as an outline.

The exposition is made up of three parts—the main theme or theme group, transition, and subordinate theme or theme group. The main theme (or themes) are usually tight-knit and well defined. Although it is not required, the transition often moves the music from the tonic (home) key to the dominant key if the home key is major, or the dominant minor or relative major if the home key is minor. The subordinate theme

\[^{1}\] This essay is primarily influenced by Dr. Bruce Quaglia’s course Prosthesis: Anomaly and Narrative Structure in Beethoven’s Sonatas Forms (MUSC 4565–001: Special Topics in Music Theory, University of Utah, Spring 2014). It is also influenced by the articles written by Edward T. Cone, “Schubert’s Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics”; Fred Everett Maus, “Classical Instrument Music and Narrative”; and Susan McClary, “A Musical Dialectic from the Enlightenment: Mozart’s ‘Piano Concerto in G Major, K. 453’, Movement 2.” The structural terminology used to describe sonata form is informed by William E. Caplin’s book Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven as taught in Dr. Bruce Quaglia’s course Form and Analysis of Tonal Music (MUSC 3540–001, University of Utah, Spring 2013).

(or themes) would then continue in this key. The development section begins with a precore, which is often slow and soft, and moves into the core. The core is not rooted in one key, but often explores multiple tonal regions. The goal of the development section is expansion, but it must return to the home key by the beginning of the recapitulation. The recapitulation is, most commonly, a restatement of the exposition—often with minor motivic changes—but most importantly, the recapitulation must remain in the tonic key. The sonata principle is that material presented outside the home key in the exposition must be repeated in the home key in the recapitulation. The end of the movement can include an optional coda, bringing various themes together in a final concluding statement.

Unlike a typical sonata, the first movement of Ludwig van Beethoven’s (1770–1827) Piano Sonata No. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 (often nicknamed “The Tempest”) does not begin in the tonic key nor does it begin in the movement’s primary tempo (Allegro). Although the listener may not initially realize that the music is not in the tonic—it actually begins on the dominant—the opening chord and following right-hand arpeggiation cause the listener to anticipate some sort of slow introductory material; however, only as the movement progresses will the listener realize that this material is actually the foundation of the full movement and even the entire sonata. The protagonist of the music, then, seems to enter in a hopeful, ethereal state (mm. 1–2). The music moves upward, indicating what András Schiff called an “existential and metaphysical”

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4 See Appendix B for an analyzed score of the first movement.
sense—one that the listener may not fully grasp at this point—and ends the phrase on a hopeful fermata on the dominant, creating a sense of expectation. As the final note of this motive dies away, it is reinterpreted as the first note in a group of two-note slurs, which quickly descend as the bass chords ascend, generating tension as the downward fall aims to overcome the attempted ascent (mm. 3–5). At this point, the protagonist has shown that he is unsettled and seemingly confused, because not only does this movement start on the dominant in a slow tempo, but the main theme is also ambiguous. It is likely a period with an antecedent and extended consequent. Nonetheless, there is a sense of urgency and struggle as the music climbs higher, seeking a resting point, which only comes after a short recitative (m. 6), ending as a half cadence (HC) on the same chord on which we began (A major); however, because it is only a half cadence, the listener does not hear true closure.

The listener is unsure what to expect next, as he feels no grounding in a home key nor in thematic material. To his surprise, the opening material comes back, as the beginning of the consequent phrase, but this time on the dominant of F major (C major), as if the music was attempting to restart in a new key (mm. 7–8). Yet once again, the short two-note slurs return (mm. 9–12). This time, the ascent, now even more desperate, climbs much higher until it reaches an unstable (second-inversion), yet somewhat clarifying, tonic chord in D minor (m. 13). However, the direction is quickly reversed as the right hand descends, still seeking an arrival, which is finally found at the first perfect

5 Schiff, “Beethoven Lecture Recitals Part 5.”
authentic cadence (PAC) in D minor (m. 21). Yet even after such an urgent attempt, the finality of this cadence is weakened because it is elided, taking the music directly into the transitional material. It does not allow time for the listener to process the confirmation of the tonic key and suggests that the protagonist is not satisfied, but is desperately struggling to triumph over opposition.

As the music moves into the transition, Robert Taub suggests that it “evolve[s] from the improvisatory to the definite” and that the listener is no longer unsure of the tonality.7 A dialogue begins between the upper and lower registers, filled in by an underlying disturbance created by the ongoing tremolo in the middle register.8 The lower register in this conversation acts as the voice of insistence, as it uses a motive reminiscent of the “Mannheim Rocket”—a phrase that starts in a low register and moves up in a declamatory style demanding immediate attention (mm. 21–22).9 An anguished legato motive in the upper register pleads desperately (mm. 23–24) with the rocket figure, only to be overcome by it.10 This two-voice dispute is repeated again, but the lower register triumphs and the upper voice gives in to the unrelenting rocket motive, reduced to a single high note (mm. 29–37). Each time the lower motive is repeated, it begins on a higher note, once more seeking an arrival. The protagonist seems demanding as a diminished seventh chord is repeated three times (mm. 38–40) to solidify the new key of

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7 Taub, Playing the Beethoven Sonatas, 195.
8 Taub, Playing the Beethoven Sonatas, 195; Schiff, “Beethoven Lecture Recitals Part 5”; Donald Francis Tovey, A Companion to Beethoven’s Pianoforte Sonatas: Complete Analyses (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1976), 129.
9 Schiff, “Beethoven Lecture Recitals Part 5.”
10 Ibid.
A minor, signaled by an elided half cadence (m. 41). The listener hopes for a clarifying arrival, but it is brushed off as the cadence immediately continues into the next section—the subordinate theme group.

The first theme of the subordinate group brings back the breathless two-note slurs from the opening main theme, but this time they are not driving the movement forward with impatient urgency.\(^{11}\) Instead, the listener feels excitement as if the music finally knows where it is going, building up anticipation with agitated two-note groupings that climb ever higher until they reach their climax at a dominant-seventh chord (mm. 41–52).\(^{12}\) These climbing two-note slurs hearken back to the extended consequent that lead to the first unstable D-minor chord (m. 13), yet this time the listener has a greater sense of what is coming. As expected from the original consequent, the music plummets down, this time to land on a failed cadence in the key of A minor, bringing partial tonal clarification to the listener. This time, though, our arrival is not followed by a dialogue between two voices. Here, our protagonist makes a firm declaration (mm. 55–62), ironically presenting the retrograde form of the pleading motive (mm. 23–24), but with large and accented chords, suggesting that he is now demanding what he would merely plead for before.\(^{13}\) The demands soften with each repetition, growing higher and softer to end in a cadence (m. 63). This is the first PAC of the movement that is not elided, implying that for a moment, the music is secure and comfortable; it is no longer questioning or searching for resolution.

\(^{11}\) Taub, *Playing the Beethoven Sonatas*, 196.

\(^{12}\) Schiff, “Beethoven Lecture Recitals Part 5.”

\(^{13}\) Taub, *Playing the Beethoven Sonatas*, 196.
After the PAC concludes the first theme of the subordinate group, the second theme is immediately introduced (mm. 64–74). It is similar to the first theme of the group because it also features the retrograde of the pleading motive; however, the mood has changed. The music moves back to a low register that threatens instead of declares. Each repetition moves higher and grows until a high point is reached, but it is promptly followed by a *subito piano*, and once more the music tries again to rise, this time not with menacing chords, but with a legato scalar passage. The upper register alludes to the two-note slurs from the beginning, but this time in a slower tempo and without urgency. This passage flows into the closing section (mm. 75–92), which reemphasizes the key of A minor, but without any forward direction. Typically, a closing section is preceded by a PAC, but the PAC at the end of this exposition does not occur until the end of the closing section—which could, therefore, be considered the third theme of the subordinate group—and, although A octaves are played five times (mm. 87–90), they are not convincing and are upset by the following G octaves, which bring a renewed feeling of anticipation (mm. 91–92 of the second ending).

The G octaves signal a new section. In the first ending, it is a repeat of the exposition, and in the second ending, it is a move to the development section, specifically to the precore. The precore hearkens back to the opening motive—slow and improvisatory to create an ethereal state. Although a precore typically contains music that is slow and soft, this improvisational, obligatorily pedaled motive is very unusual in

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14 Tovey, *A Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas*, 129.
15 Schiff, “Beethoven Lecture Recitals Part 5.”
16 Ibid.
Beethoven’s sonatas. Taub argues that our protagonist is again “questioning [his] feelings.” The clarity of the transition and subordinate themes has vanished and the music is self reflective. This motive (mm. 93–94) is an arpeggiation of D major—the major version of the original home key—indicating a more hopeful outlook. The second repetition (mm. 95–96), however, is an arpeggiation of a common-tone diminished-seventh chord, which upsets any optimism suggested by the first chord. The final repetition (mm. 97–98) on F-sharp major is surprising because of the unusual change in harmony, but these two measures bring contentment and are the softest and most intimate measures of the entire sonata. The listener feels time stop, unconcerned about what will come next.

However, as the listener may have realized by this point of the movement, questions must be answered, self-reflection leads to resolution, and fate cannot be ignored. This proves true yet again, when the explosive dialogue and accompanying tremolos reappear as the opening of the core (mm. 99–118). Schiff proposes that as the core opens, the protagonist is “brutally woken up from this dream” and reality returns. The softest of arpeggios is followed by the loudest of declarations as the conversation between the lower and upper registers begins again. The lower register is just as insistent as in the transition of the exposition and the upper register pleads just as desperately, but the lower register prevails and seeks a new resting place. The listener anticipates, in vain, some sort of reprieve from this thundering and persistent voice. The development section

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17 Taub, Playing the Beethoven Sonatas, 196.
18 Schiff, “Beethoven Lecture Recitals Part 5.”
19 Ibid.
gives the music an opportunity to return to the original tonic key, and as the lower register moves higher with each repetition of its motive, it reaches D minor (the home key), but it does not stay there. Instead, there is a short linking passage (mm. 119–20) to new material that continues this tempest. This new material stands on the dominant and thus hints at harmonic stability, but still does not move directly to D minor, which creates suspense for the listener as he anticipates clarification (mm. 121–43). It never comes. Rather, this expectation is prolonged as the material moves into the recapitulation, bringing back the opening arpeggiated A-major chord of the exposition. This avoidance of D minor is further evidence of the lack of arrival in this movement—and even the sonata as a whole—implying that arrival may mean acceptance of an undesirable fate—one that the protagonist is attempting to avoid at all costs.

As we move into the recapitulation, the listener expects to hear an almost exact repetition of the exposition, but without a move to the dominant key in the transition. The music does not fulfill that expectation, but continues to prolong our arrival on D minor by expanding the main theme. After the opening A-major chord, the last A is not reinterpreted as the beginning of the cascading two-note slurs like it was in the exposition. Instead, it leads into a new improvisatory recitative (mm. 143–48). According to Schiff, this is a “revolutionary” way to begin a recapitulation because of the improvisational sound and the specific pedal markings found within the score. Again, the listener is taken into a dreamlike state, where time seems to stop and self reflection

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20 Ibid.

21 Taub, Playing the Beethoven Sonatas, 196.

22 Schiff, “Beethoven Lecture Recitals Part 5.”
continues. Our protagonist is questioning his fate. Will he accept it or can it be avoided?

After a long fermata to end the recitative, the two-note slurs reenter (mm. 149–51), but without the same urgency as in the exposition. They are held back in performance, indicating that the music will not continue as it did before. After the half cadence on A major (m. 152), the dominant of F major returns (compare m. 7 and m. 153). It once again expresses a new start and an attempt to move forward; nonetheless, a recitative returns (mm. 155–58), this time with even more expression and filled with contemplation. A final A-flat fermata is held, and the listener is again unsure of what will come next. At this point, the music is very far away from the home key and must return before the beginning of the subordinate theme group; thus, the listener may expect the dialogue between the registers to return as it did after the last improvisatory section and as the returning transitional material in order to bring us back home.

However, the dialogue does not return. Our protagonist takes yet another new approach—possibly suggesting a last desperate attempt to avoid his fate. This time, the transitional material is unnerving to the listener. It begins with faint, ominous chords that are followed by an interrupting arpeggio that crescendos into the next group of chords, played in a higher register (mm. 159–62). This process is repeated again, this time with more force and direction, and again the arpeggio takes us to a yet higher register (mm. 163–66). The chords are repeated once more, this time thundering as the arpeggio takes over and leads us directly into the same subordinate theme that was played in the exposition, via an elided half cadence, but in D minor as expected (mm. 167–71).
The following subordinate themes are the same as those found in the exposition, but in D minor—the agitated two-note slurs that move into the demanding chords, which repeat the pleading motive in retrograde (mm. 171–93), followed by the second subordinate theme that continues the pleading motive, now in a more menacing tone (mm. 194–99). The legato scalar passage of the lower register returns us to the closing section and again the protagonist seems to seek a resting place (mm. 200–16). The PAC (m. 217) and final octave chords on D minor of the last codetta are no more convincing then they were the first time, but the protagonist makes one last desperate attempt at closure with an additional codetta added at the end (mm. 219–28). The rumbling in the lower register does not suggest a triumphal finish, but implies surrender, as if the protagonist can no longer fight against his fate. Although D minor is finally found, the listener is left wondering what will come next.23

The sonata continues with second and third movements, and a brief explanation of both prove that neither movement showcases a victorious ending. The second and third movements seem to portray the same feeling of resignation as the first movement, suggesting that our protagonist will never overcome his fate in this sonata. The second movement is in B-flat major and Donald Tovey argues that it is also in sonata form, but does not contain a development section.24 The opening immediately alludes to the first movement with a rolled chord that sounds similar to the one found at the beginning of the

23 Taub, Playing the Beethoven Sonatas, 197.

24 Tovey, A Companion to Beethoven’s Pianoforte Sonatas, 131. Many theorists would argue that because the development section is a fundamental part of the sonata form, this movement cannot be in sonata form. However, Tovey’s argument is worth considering because of the exposition and recapitulation-like sections that are still found within the movement.
first movement's exposition; however, the music continues more contemplatively as a two-voice dialogue that interacts in a less argumentative way than the dialogue that we heard previously. It is interrupted by a simple and delicate melody that creates a feeling of freedom, expressing the hope and optimism of days gone by. Yet, there is still an uneasiness due to unexpected harmonies and the timpani-like undulations in the lower register, which move the music forward and prevent the listener from feeling completely at ease.\textsuperscript{25}

The uneasiness of the second movement is intensified by the third movement—which is also in sonata form—through a constant stream of sixteenth notes that begin in the first measure and do not come to an end until the final note of the movement, and the entire sonata, is played.\textsuperscript{26} The movement starts out with uncomplicated harmonies and a sense of direction, but as it progresses, this sense of direction is turned into an urgency that only causes the listener to feel anxious, awaiting a resting place. There are small moments of relief scattered throughout the movement, but these are always overtaken by intense passages that cause these small instances of respite to be forgotten. As the end of the movement approaches, we expect the protagonist finally to overcome his fate, to triumph over his struggle, but before we realize it, the movement concludes with a descending arpeggio that lands on a single, stark D. In the silence that must follow, the listener takes a moment to contemplate the reality of the end and the inevitable fate that our protagonist must endure.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} Schiff, "Beethoven Lecture Recitals Part 5."

\textsuperscript{26} Tovey, \textit{A Companion to Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas}, 134.

\textsuperscript{27} Schiff, "Beethoven Lecture Recitals Part 5."
Although no one will ever know exactly why Beethoven wrote this piece the way he did—with a lack of cadential conclusion, a variety of tempi, and stark contrasts in articulation, dynamics, and motivic material that result in a sense of struggle—one may wonder if reading this piece against events happening in his life would bring clarity to this sonata.\footnote{The only hint that Beethoven gave regarding the meaning behind this piece was a suggestion to Anton Schindler (an early biographer) to “Read Shakespeare’s Tempest.” Scholars have argued what connection this piece actually has to Shakespeare’s play; nonetheless, the nickname “The Tempest” came from this brief remark (see Taub, \textit{Playing the Beethoven Piano Sonatas}, 195).} One must remember that this “forbidden question,” as Edward Cone refers to it, can be answered with “only the most tentative of hypotheses”; nonetheless, it is interesting to compare Beethoven’s life to his music.\footnote{Edward T. Cone, “Schubert’s Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics,” \textit{19th Century Music} 5, no. 3 (Spring 1982): 240, http://www.jstor.org/stable/746462.} In 1801—the year before this work was written—Beethoven first admitted to his deafness in a letter to Franz Gerhard Wegeler, a longtime friend. By 1802, Beethoven knew that his deafness was progressive and could not be cured by doctors. He spent the summer in Heiligenstadt, a village near Vienna—where this sonata was likely written—in order to prevent strain on what hearing he had left.\footnote{Joseph Kerman et al., “Beethoven, Ludwig van,” in \textit{Grove Music Online} (Oxford University Press, 2015), accessed March 9, 2015, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40026.} While in Heiligenstadt, he wrote a letter to his brothers that conveys his struggle as he tries to accept his incurable disease. Although it was never sent, the letter—now known as the “Heiligenstadt Testament”—provides us with an understanding of Beethoven’s feelings. He writes:

But what Mortification if someone stood beside me and heard a flute from afar and I heard \textit{nothing}; or someone heard a Shepherd Singing, and I heard nothing. Such Happenings brought me close to Despair; I was not far from ending my own life—only Art, only art held me back. Ah, it seemed impossible to me that I
should leave the world before I had produced all that I felt I might, and so I spared this wretched life—truly wretched; a body so susceptible that a somewhat rapid change can take me from the Best Condition to the worst.31

It is this portion of the letter that may best relate to “The Tempest” with its fight against fate. Ultimately, Beethoven did not take his life but accepted his deafness, just as the protagonist of the sonata seems resigned to his reality. We will never know if Beethoven did intend to portray his struggle in the “The Tempest”; nevertheless, we can appreciate the unmatched contributions he made to “Art”—the only thing that forced him to continue.

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Bibliography


APPENDIX A

Text and Translation of “Sonetto 104 del Petrarca”

Pace non trovo, et non ho da far guerra;
E temo, e spero; ed ardo, e son un ghiaccio;
E volo sopra 'l cielo e giaccio in terra;
E nullo stringo, e tutto il mondo abbraccio.

Tal m'ha in prigion, che non m'apre ne serra;
Ne per suo mi riten, ne scioglie il laccio;
E non m'ancide Amor, e non mi sferra;
Ne mi vuol vivo, ne mi trae d'impaccio.

Veggio senz' occhi, e non ho lingua e grido;
E bramo di perir, e cheggio altra;
Ed ho in odio me stesso, ed amo altrui:
Pascomi di dolor, piangendo rido;

In questo stato son, Donna, per Vui.

(Translation by Nott as found in the score published by G. Schirmer Inc.)

Text and Translation of “Widmung”

Du meine Seele, du mein Herz,
Du meine Wonn', o du mein Schmerz,
Du meine Welt, in der ich lebe,
Mein Himmel du, darin ich schwebe,
O du mein Grab, in das hinab
Ich ewig meinen Kummer gab!

Du bist die Ruh, du bist der Frieden,
Du bist der Himmel, mir beschieden.
Daß du mich liebst, macht mich mir
wert,
Dein Blick hat mich vor mir verklärt,
Du hebst mich liebend über mich,
Mein guter Geist, mein bessres Ich!

You my soul, you my heart,
you my bliss, o you my pain,
you the world in which I live;
you my heaven, in which I float,
o you my grave, into which
I eternally cast my grief.

You are rest, you are peace,
you are bestowed upon me from
heaven.

That you love me makes me worthy of
you;
your gaze transfigures me;
you raise me lovingly above myself,
my good spirit, my better self.
APPENDIX B

See the following pages for an analyzed score of the first movement of Ludwig van Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 17 in D Minor, op. 31, no. 2 (“The Tempest”).
Sonate

Opus 31, No. 2

d-moll

Largo

Allegro

Adagio


"Evolved from the improvisatory to the definite (I.A.5)"
Adagio

Largo

con espressione e semplice
Name of Candidate: Lindsay Tarbet Kerr

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