

# MPKS 472a Assignment 3

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## Q1, Clementi, Sonata in B Minor, Op.40, No.2

Structure:

- (1) First movement: adagio in 6/8, then allegro in 4/4.
- (2) Second movement: largo in 4/4, then allegro in 6/8, then coda, largo 4/4 followed by presto in 6/8

This set of sonata is structurally to Beethoven's Op.27 in two ways:

- (a) Beethoven's Op.27, No.1 consists of four movements, slow-fast-slow-fast, in that order. There are no gaps in-between. Clementi's Op.40, No.2 has a similar structure in the sense that both movements start slow and end fast.
- (b) In the coda of Beethoven's fourth movement, a theme in the third movement is repeated. Similarly, in Clementi's second movement, the coda borrows a theme from the slow (largo) section of the second movement.

## Q2, Field, Nocturnes

I view "Field nocturnes" as the prototypes of "Chopin nocturnes". Some notable things that Chopin extended on:

- (1) More "color", especially darker ones. Chopin's nocturnes sometimes express more complex feelings, e.g., desolation (Op.48, No.1) or nostalgia (Op. Posth, No.20).
- (2) More tensions: in some nocturnes, Chopin would take lines of measures to build up the tension, e.g., middle section of Op.62, No.2.
- (3) More complex patterns in RH and LH, in particular, more complex melodies. Field's nocturnes have relatively simple melodies, but some of Chopin's nocturnes would feature various techniques, e.g., Op.15, No.5's double voice on RH. Also, Chopin's melodies feel more cantabile thanks to the extra degree of freedom.
- (4) More freedom in structure, not just RH melodies, e.g., cadenzas.
- (5) Somewhat more complicated structures, e.g., surprising coda in Op.32, No.1, or Op.37, No.2, which takes the form ABABA.

### Q3, Schubert, Sonata in G Major, Op.78

Andante: structure more resembles ABAB-coda. Most notable features include the sharp contrast between loud minor chords and the pianissimo Neapolitan right afterwards in the B sections. This happened multiple times.

Allegretto: first I have to admit this movement is huge. The exposition in G major is almost itself a Rondo, taking the ABACABA form. The development starts with a theme in E-flat, repeated twice, then moves to a second theme, first in C minor and then repeated in C major. Finally the development returns to the first theme in E-flat. The movement then moves to recapitulation and end with a coda. Extra things to notice: a quick downward modulation by major thirds in G → E-flat → B → G near the end of exposition, a sudden appearance of B major in recapitulation before coda, and a reiteration of the first theme in exposition in the very end.

### Q4, Mendelssohn, Fantasy Op.28

(1) First movement:

- Introduction in 32th
- Andante, theme 1 in F-sharp minor
- Theme 2 in A-major
- Transition (32th again) / development
- Theme 1, one octave higher
- Theme 2, varied, now in F-sharp major
- Reappearance of theme 1, varied with LH 16th
- Coda (32th), ending with theme 1.

(2) Second movement: quite standard scherzo: theme 1 ×2, theme 2 ×2, development, then recapitulation with slight decoration.

(3) Third movement: quite standard sonata form, with a coda borrowing from development.

The most notable structural similarity between the two sonatas is that both sonatas start off with the slowest movement and end with the fastest.

### Q5, Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn

I believe it is unfair a priori to compare Fanny with Felix directly, due to the extra restrictions imposed on her. However, even under such restrictions, Fanny composed pieces of various styles and formats (e.g., the Sonata we heard in class, or her string quartet), implying that she was musically mature and was capable of writing full-scale works. Upon searching online, I also found an interesting story: because of the restrictions, some of Fanny's compositions were published under her brother's name with her knowledge and consent, and Queen Victoria mistakenly praised Felix for a piece called *Italien* which was composed by Fanny. If the social norms back then didn't hold her back, I would believe she could (not saying she isn't) be as bright as Mendelssohn is, both judged by us two centuries later or by people back then.

## Q6, Schumann, Etudes Symphoniques Op.13

I looked at my response from last spring's first assignment. After going through the piece again, I believe the addition/deletions I chose are reasonable.

- (1) Variation III right before Etude IX. On one hand, the previous Etude VIII / Variation VII is very slow and *sempre marcato* in 4/4 but it is followed by a *presto* in 3/16. Unless Schumann intended to do so to stress the sudden, dramatic change (which is entirely possible), it is more reasonable to insert a Variation in-between to ensure a smoother transition. On the other hand, Etude IX is followed by Etude X / Variation VIII, another fast-paced piece whose style highly resembles its predecessor (staccato notes) but with a more intense dynamic (overall louder). It makes sense to construct a three-Variation sequence, starting from Variation III, that increases in both tempo and intensity, thereby achieving a mini climax at the end of Etude X.
- (2) Variation II after Etude X and before Etude XI / Variation IX. Having built up a little climax during the previously, the transition from being energetic to *andante* is huge, let alone the sudden shift in key from C-sharp minor / E major to something else (G-sharp minor), the first time since the beginning! Putting Variation II in-between will address this issue well, since its beginning harmonically connects to Etude XI and its melodic, fading end will prepare the audience for the upcoming surprise in change of key.
- (3) Variation V between Variation IX and Etude XII /Finale. G-sharp enharmonically serving as the dominant of D-flat, the soft ending of Variation IX connects beautifully with the beginning of Variation, and they both happen to have *legato* sixteenth notes with 4/4. Variation V also happens to be in the same key as the Finale, so the transition between these two are also very smooth. And one last reason: this scrapped Variation is just so exquisite that I must not leave it unused, but it fits nowhere else better than near the end.