THE EARLY PIANO MUSIC OF RICHARD WAGNER

by

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DEDICATION

To my parents, John and Rosemary, who have supported me through thick and thin since day one. It has only taken ten years of higher education that included seven recitals and thousands of hours of blood, sweat, and tears. No matter what, you both have been there for me. Words cannot even describe my gratitude. Without you this would not have been possible.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to educate a wider audience about Richard Wagner’s early piano music, specifically the Sonata in B-flat Major, the Fantasia in F-Sharp Minor, and the Grand Sonata in A Major. The study seeks to make these three, large-scale piano works more accessible for study, and to draw attention and spark interest in the piano compositions of Richard Wagner.

The study consists of six chapters, a bibliography, and two appendices. The first chapter includes an explanation of why this study is needed, a brief biography of Richard Wagner, related literature, methodology, and limitations of the study. Chapter two contains information on the influences and musical language of Richard Wagner. Chapter three consists of a stylistic analysis of the Sonata in B-flat Major. Chapter four consists of a stylistic analysis of the Fantasia in F-sharp Minor. Chapter five consists of a stylistic analysis of the Grand Sonata in A Major. Chapter six consists of a conclusion. Appendix A provides a brief summary of all 13 of Wagner’s piano pieces. Appendix B provides translations of the German text found in the body of the document.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

K. .................................................................Köchel
No. .................................................................Number
Op. .................................................................Opus
WWV .............................................................Wagner-Werk-Verzeichnis
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Richard Wagner (1813-1883), a German composer, is primarily known for his operas and his influential developments in the opera genre. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (The Ring Cycle) is one of his most known works and has even influenced literature. Unlike the prominent pianist composers of the Romantic Period such as Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) and Franz Liszt (1811-1886), Wagner’s name is rarely, if ever, mentioned outside the opera repertoire, and even more rarely in association with the piano literature.

There is a lack of research on the piano works of Richard Wagner and most, if not all, of his piano output is unknown to pianists. To understand the musical language of Wagner’s piano works it is crucial to analyze these pieces. This study will function as a guide to help pianists better understand the highly pianistic nature of three early works of Richard Wagner and through stylistic analysis, demonstrate the accessibility of these pieces and encourage more performances of this repertoire.

1.1 A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Wagner was the ninth and final child born to Carl Friedrich Wagner and Johanna Rosine.¹ Upon his father’s death, six months after his birth, Wagner became the stepson of Ludwig Geyer who was a German actor and playwright. The young Wagner was greatly influenced by Geyer’s love of the stage. Wagner’s other early influences came

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from the plays he attended. At the age of 15, he had his first lessons in harmony with Christian Gottlieb Müller in Leipzig. During his studies with Müller, which lasted from 1828-1831, Wagner heard performances of Ludwig van Beethoven’s 7th and 9th Symphonies and was deeply influenced by what he heard. This influence was so great that Wagner would go on to write a biographical, book length essay of Beethoven in 1870.²

In addition to the operas, Wagner’s instrumental music includes works for orchestra, choir, and solo instruments. Among his solo works are his pieces for solo piano written between 1831-1875, with the major works being composed between 1831-1832. Two piano sonatas were written in 1829 but unfortunately have been lost.³ The first surviving sonata and Wagner’s Op. 1 is *Sonata in B-flat Major* from 1831.⁴ Following this sonata Wagner composed *Fantasia in F-sharp Minor* in 1830 published as Op. 3, *Polonaise for Piano Four Hands* in 1831-1832, published as Op. 2, and *Grand Sonata in A Major* in 1832, published as Op. 4.⁵ According to *The Wagner Compendium*, these four pieces appear to be the only works to which Wagner assigned opus numbers.

The *Polonaise for Piano Four Hands* was published in 1832.⁶ Record indicates that there is also a solo version of the *Polonaise* published by Breitkopf and Härtel in

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This solo version is cataloged as WWV 23A while the version for four hands that was published during Wagner’s lifetime is cataloged as WWV 23B. Following the completion of these four piano pieces, Wagner wrote no piano music until 1840. His piano output from this point onward consists of much smaller scale, single movement works that are reminiscent of character pieces similar to those of Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms. Although the Polonaise is one of the four early piano works, it is on a much smaller scale than Op. 1, Op. 3, and Op. 4, and so will not be discussed as a major work here.

Wagner composed the early piano works at a time when two major pillars of the Classical Period, Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Schubert, had recently died. During this same time the Romantic Period pianist composers were garnering attention and gaining importance. At first glance, the Grand Sonata in A Major could be mistaken for a late Schubert sonata. Wagner’s early writing is inherently classical in nature, but this is not the style of writing that Wagner is remembered for in his operas. These compositions were far removed from the classical style found in his early piano music.

Richard Wagner involved himself in the democratic movements in Germany towards the end of the 1840s. This led to his exile from Germany for 12 years. When this ban was lifted in 1862 Wagner had a positive turn in his career and financial situation. In 1864 King Ludwig II ascended the throne of Bavaria. The King was a great admirer of Wagner and offered to stage some of the major operas including Tristan and Isolde, Die

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7 Friedrich Hofmeister, Monatsbericht, (Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister Musikverlag, 1832), 41.
Meistersinger, and Der Ring des Nibelungen. During this time period Mein Leben, Wagner’s autobiography, was started at the request of King Ludwig II.

Throughout his life Wagner was also outspoken with regard to his dislike of Jews and composers of Jewish decent, namely Giacomo Meyerbeer and Felix Mendelssohn. Wagner went so far as to publish Das Judenthum in der Musik first in 1850 under a pseudonym in Robert Schumann’s Neue Zeitschrift für Musik and then again under his own name in 1869 in the same publication. His opinion was that Jewish composers, specifically Felix Mendelssohn and Giacomo Meyerbeer, wrote music that would gain popularity there by creating financial stability for them; however, in his opinion all of their music was not genuine. Upon the news of Giacomo Meyerbeer’s death in 1864, Wagner wrote in his autobiography of how Meyerbeer had done him great harm. Meyerbeer had actually been a supporter of Wagner during his time in Dresden, even helping him to stage Rienzi. Although Wagner admitted having close friendships with Jewish people, his anti-Semitic tendencies would be significant in the performance of his music in World War II Germany.

Richard Wagner’s personal life was rather complicated. He was married twice in his life, but during his first marriage he had many affairs, some quite public. He married his first wife, Wilhelmine “Minna” Planer in 1836. The following year she left him to

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9 Joachim Köhler, Richard Wagner, the Last of the Titans (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 280.

have an affair of her own, returning to Wagner the following year. Though Wagner had many affairs during his marriage to Minna it is believed by a number of biographers that none of these affairs were of a physical nature until 1850. The turning point is cited in a letter to Minna from April 16, 1850.\footnote{Barry Millington, ed., *The Wagner Compendium: A Guide to Wagner’s Life and Music* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1992), 120.}

In the 1850s Wagner had an affair with one of his patron’s wives, even going so far as to write her the *Wesendonck Lieder*, but this affair ended when Minna intercepted one of Wagner’s letters to Mathilde Wesendonck. In 1853, Wagner wrote one of his smaller-scale piano works, *Eine Sonate für das Album von Frau Mathilde Wesendonck* WWV 85. He also dedicated another piano work, *Züricher Vielliebchen-Walzer* WWV 88, from 1854, to Mathilde Wesendonck’s sister. Further information on these pieces is available in Appendix A.

The most scandalous of Wagner’s affairs was his involvement with the illegitimate daughter of Franz Liszt, Cosima. Cosima had their first child together while her then current husband, Hans von Bülow, was working with Wagner as the conductor for the premiere of *Tristan und Isolde*. This public affair led to Wagner being exiled from Munich in 1865. Even after von Bülow became aware of the affair between his wife and Wagner, von Bülow remained committed to conducting performances of Wagner’s music.

Wagner’s first wife Minna died the following year, 1866, and he did not even have the decency to attend her funeral. After her death Wagner continued his affair with Cosima, having two more children with her. All three of the children that Cosima and
Wagner had together were named for characters of his operas. The first child, a girl, was named Isolde. The second child, also a girl, was named Eva for the heroine of *Die Meistersinger*. Their last child, a boy, was named Siegfried for the hero of *Siegfried*, the third opera of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

Cosima ultimately obtained the divorce she wanted from von Bülow on July 18, 1870 and married Richard Wagner on August 25, a month later. Cosima and Richard would remain married until his death in 1883. Some biographers attribute his untimely death to a heart attack brought on by an argument had with Cosima over the visit of a flower girl in the Bayreuth production of *Parsifal*. There is no concrete proof of this, and the composer had suffered heart trouble since December 1881. Following Wagner’s death and a period of mourning, Cosima championed her late husband’s legacy and took up the mantel of director of Bayreuth.

1.2 RELATED LITERATURE

Literature pertaining specifically to Richard Wagner’s piano works is limited, as most scholarly writings focus on Wagner’s operas, his influence on the theatre, and his involvement in political movements. The most in-depth and comprehensive look at the entire life of Richard Wagner can be found in his autobiography, *Mein Leben*.12 There was much controversy surrounding the autobiography and so the first complete edition, published in German, did not appear until 1963, 80 years after Wagner’s death. His

autobiography is a priceless primary source because “Mein Leben provides the only information we have about Wagner’s two lost early sonatas.”

In *The Life of Wagner Volume I 1813-1848*, Ernest Newman provides a brief discussion of the early works and the history of their publication, or lack thereof, as of the year 1937. Since the *Grand Sonata in A Major* was not published until 1960 by Musikverlage Hans Gerig, its availability to pianists and scholars for study has been relatively brief. In 1968 a brief ten page article by William S. Newman, titled “Wagner’s Sonatas,” was published in the *Studies in Romanticism* journal. Six years later Charles W. Timbrell published a series of short articles about Richard Wagner’s piano music in journal *The American Music Teacher*. Both of these publications give brief but detailed narratives regarding the sonatas and the other early works.

Most biographies of Richard Wagner spend a portion of a single chapter listing the early surviving compositions, and then the background of Wagner’s studies in composition as a young man. These biographies include *Wagner: A Biography* by Curt Von Westernhagen, *The Wagner Compendium* edited by Barry Millington, *Richard...*

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1.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Sources regarding Richard Wagner’s piano output are limited. In all Wagner composed 13 pieces for piano if both the solo and the four hands versions of the Polonaise are counted. This study will focus on his first three piano works, Sonata in B-flat Major, Fantasie in F-sharp Minor, and Grand Sonata in A Major. Musical examples and references for purposes of analysis will come from the Schott 1981 edition. Though there are references made to other composers and their works, they will not be discussed in detail unless they are related to the three pieces focused on in this study. A short biography will be provided, but it does not cover all aspects of Richard Wagner’s life. This study will be restricted to English sources and sources translated from German to English.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This study of Richard Wagner’s first three surviving piano works will discuss the composer’s musical language and analyze movements of the two sonatas as well as the Fantasie. It will provide a brief biography of Wagner and will trace the influences of other composers such as Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Carl Maria von Weber, and Franz Liszt on Richard Wagner’s compositional style. Some of these influences were

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only through their music as they were dead before Wagner began his studies, while others were his friends and colleagues.

Richard Wagner’s early writing style is both reminiscent of the past while at the same time foreshadowing what was to come in his operas. Known for his use of the leitmotif as a way of representing characters through musical motives, Wagner pioneered a new technique of intertwining music and libretto. In his three early piano works, his use of motives in unique ways is already evident.

The way in which Wagner uses motives is reminiscent of other composers who he highly respected, while at the same time venturing into a new and somewhat experimental area for this musical period. Through stylistic analysis of Richard Wagner’s early piano works, a comparison of his use of motives and their sources will be presented.
CHAPTER 2
INFLUENCES AND MUSICAL LANGUAGE

Richard Wagner grew up greatly influenced by what he heard and saw at the theatre. With his stepfather, Ludwig Geyer, being an actor, the young Wagner spent a lot of time in the theatre and from a young age was exposed to works by William Shakespeare and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Many composers were influenced by Goethe who was in turn influenced by Shakespeare. Ludwig van Beethoven was influenced by Goethe and based his *Egmont* Op. 84 on Goethe’s play of the same name. Franz Liszt, who would later in life become Wagner’s father-in-law, transcribed for piano Franz Schubert’s Lied *Erlkönig* which is a setting of Goethe’s poem by the same name.

Thomas S. Grey attributes Wagner’s early opera style to that of an “assimilation of German Romantic opera, Italian bel canto, French opéra comique and grand opera.”  

There is disagreement among scholars when it comes to what exactly makes up Wagner’s musical language. For the most part his staged works were not composed for the sole purpose of the musical idea. The music that Wagner composed was meant to tell the story. The addition of the libretto was simply that, an addition.

Beethoven expanded both musical forms and ensemble size. The length of his works grew longer and more Romantic in nature as he matured as a composer. The structure of his works was classical, but Beethoven composed on a larger scale from

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themes to movements to entire pieces. The works from Beethoven’s second and third
d periods were undoubtedly the most influential on Wagner’s writing style. The major
Beethoven fugues. Of these the fourth movement fugue of Op. 106 stands out as a great
Classical period example of counterpoint. In his autobiography Wagner discusses how he
studied and composed fugues while studying with the Kapellmeister at Thomaskirche,
Theodor Weinlich.\textsuperscript{20} (In Ernest Newman’s biography the spelling varies from Weinlich to
Weinlig, but Weinlich is the spelling found in Wagner’s autobiography).\textsuperscript{21} Weinlich was
Wagner’s teacher following his studies with Christian Gottlieb Müller. Wagner seems to
have a fondness for Weinlich. He had the \textit{Sonata in B-flat Major} published making it

Ludwig van Beethoven would continue to remain an important presence in
Wagner’s life long after his study of fugues in Leipzig. Wagner saw a production of
Beethoven’s only opera, \textit{Fidelio}, in 1829. This performance left him with the acute desire
to write something as distinguished as \textit{Fidelio}. At the time Wagner was studying
harmony with Christian Gottlieb Müller. From this period also comes Wagner’s early
work \textit{Leubald und Adelaïde} for which he wanted to write “incidental music” modeled
after Beethoven’s \textit{Egmont}.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{footnotes}
1992), 54-55.
\item[21] Ernest Newman, \textit{The Life of Richard Wagner: Volume I 1813-1848} (Cambridge:
Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976), 85.
\end{footnotes}
During this time Wagner became acquainted with the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. He refers to Mozart as a “master” in his autobiography and writes “that with the finale to the second act of Don Giovanni now joined by pantheon of spirits.”

Before this statement Wagner had discussed a dream where he met and spoke with Beethoven and Shakespeare, waking “bathed in tears.” He seems to indicate that Mozart was as significant to him as the two men from his dream. As Wagner matured as a composer, he distanced himself from his early compositions. Nonetheless he remained reverent of Beethoven and attributed his early achievements to Beethoven’s influence on him. In 1870 Wagner wrote a book length essay on Beethoven.

As Wagner began to turn his attention to composing operas, his sources of influence changed. He modeled some of his earliest operas after composers such as Carl Maria von Weber and Christoph Willibald Gluck. Wagner even arranged Gluck’s opera *Iphigénie en Aulide* in a German version that appeared at the court of Dresden in 1847. The first completed opera that Wagner composed was *Die Feen*. The themes of this opera would reappear in later, more mature works, the most notable one being the theme of the mysterious stranger who does not want his/her lover to ask their name. This opera shows the influences of Carl Maria von Weber from the overture to the main themes. Wagner referred to the work as a German Romantic Opera, but one can argue that it has influences of *grand opera* and *opéra comique*. These influences would appear again in *Rienzi* and later in *Lohengrin*.

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The first opera that received significant attention was *Rienzi*. This opera was traditional in its form and style. It emulated the *grand opera* style of Giacomo Meyerbeer. At almost five hours in length, *Rienzi* is the longest work Wagner composed next to *Götterdämmerung*, the fourth opera of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Although *Rienzi* was the work that put Wagner on the map, he would eventually disavow the opera. In comparison to the three “Romantic operas,” *Der fliegende Holländer* (1843), *Tannhäuser* (1845), and *Lohengrin* (1850) and what would follow, *Rienzi* was very traditional. This was not one of the operas that used leitmotif or that led to Wagner’s compositions being hailed as the birthplace of modernism. What this opera does have are dramatic situations that Wagner would return to in later operas. These include brother and sister relationships, revolution, and social hierarchy.

These three operas that were strongly rooted in the traditions of Romantic Opera, are *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*. While *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser* employ the use of doubled winds, *Lohengrin* has divisions of three throughout from the three groups for strings, winds, and brass, to the three flutes, three oboes, three clarinets, three bassoons, three trumpets, and three trombones. This may be Wagner’s nod to Christianity and the Holy Trinity. Johann Sabestian Bach was known to have used three in his music to show his reverence for God. *Lohengrin* was a hybrid of French and Italian Opera.\(^{25}\) Millington goes on to describe how the opera often has passages that begin with standard four-bar phrase structure but transform into “breathless

narrative as the unfolding of the tale seizes the imagination of both teller and listener.”

*Lohengrin* has the Forbidden Question motive that foreshadows what would become Wagner’s famous leitmotif principle developed in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. The Forbidden Question is the theme of the unknown lover that Wagner had used in his earlier opera *Die Feen*.

The music that changed the face of the Romantic compositional style of opera can be found in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1854-74), *Tristan und Isolde* (1859), and *Die Meistersinger* (1867). In *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Wagner employed the use of the leitmotif to represent characters, places, and ideas. He was not the originator of this concept and did not use the term in reference to his works, although it is Wagner with whom it is most associated. Wagner used the terms “Grundthema,” “Motiv,” and “Hauptmotiv” when referring to his use of reoccurring themes. Earlier instances of its use can be found in works by composers such as Christoph Willibald Gluck and Carl Maria von Weber.

Weber uses the concept of motives as representations of people, places, or ideas in his opera *Die Freischütz*, which is considered to be the first important German romantic opera. The reoccurring motif concept is attached to the character Samiel. Nine-year-old Wagner saw a production of *Die Freischütz* with Weber conducting, and this performance left a lasting impression on Wagner. A concept similar to Weber’s and that

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was utilized by Hector Berlioz is the *idée fixe*, found in his *Symphonie Fantastique* from 1830. 1871 was the first instance of the term “leitmotif” appearing in print and was used by Friedrich Wilhelm Jähns to describe *Die Freischütz*.

Looking at the *Der Ring des Nibelungen* beyond being bound together by leitmotif, it is structured after the ancient Greek dramas. These consisted of as a prologue followed by at least three episodes. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* follows this plan and consists of a prelude (*Das Rheingold*) and three dramas (*Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*). Wagner was greatly influenced by Greek antiquity. Martin Geck describes how Wagner reminds us of the purity that exists within each of us and in the world, and that redemption is possible: “...Wagner invested the musical drama with a cathartic, purifying force: by seeing through the world’s iniquities and by reflecting them in his art in the form of a ‘prophetic reflection,’ the artist enables his community of listeners to forget the world’s wickedness.”28

*Tristan und Isolde* is considered to be the beginning of the end of traditional harmony and tonality. Barry Millington states that this opera was the first time that the “Classical tonal system had been so stretched.”29 *Tristan* is full of examples of chromaticism, unresolved dissonances, and unresolved cadences that had not been seen in music up until this point. The most notable example of this is what has become known as the “Tristan Chord.” The harmonic basis of this chord is not unusual; if the notes are spelled enharmonically and reordered, they form the notes of a half-diminished seventh

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chord on F (F, Ab, Cb, and Eb). What is unusual about the chord is its relationship to the implied key center of the opera. The chord is part of the opening of the opera as well as part of Tristan’s leitmotif.

Interestingly enough, the notes of the “Tristan Chord” can be found in exactly the same ordering in an earlier work by Ludwig van Beethoven. Piano Sonata Op. 31 No. 3 presents the exact chord used by Wagner. In measure 36 of the first movement of this Beethoven sonata, the chord F, Cb, Eb, and Ab appears. This is the very same ordering of notes that Wagner uses in the “Tristan Chord.” The only difference is the spelling of Cb as B, Eb as D#, and Ab as G#.

Due to the enharmonic spelling the presence of the Augmented 4th, Augmented 6th, and Augmented 9th above the bass does not exist in Beethoven’s chord, but to the ear they are identical. This could be an indication that the “Tristan Chord” was not something so new and innovative when it appears in Tristan und Isolde but rather that Wagner stole it from his hero, Ludwig van Beethoven, and by respelling it, he made it his own. Although Beethoven’s use of the chord does not have the same relationship to the key center that Wagner’s use does, the earlier appearance is still worth noting. Below are the two chords taken from their respective works and placed side by side for comparison.

Figure 2.1 Ludwig van Beethoven Piano Sonata Op. 31 No. 3, Movement I m. 33-36 (Wiener Urtext Edition, 1999)
Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg is Richard Wagner’s only mature comedic work and stands out as the most Germanic of all Wagner’s operas. Another unique characteristic of this work is the setting in a clearly defined time period in history and an actual town in Germany. This setting differs from the other major operas that are set in fictional worlds. Furthermore, Wagner was greatly influenced by Georg Gottfried Gervinus’ Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung. In his writings Gervinus gives details on the real-life Hans Sachs and the mastersingers. The real Hans Sachs wrote a poem that Wagner uses in Act 3 Scene 5 of Die Meistersinger. This poem called Die Wittenbergisch Nachtigall is mentioned by Gervinus in Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung. Richard Wagner was strongly drawn to the Hans Sachs he learned of in his readings of Gervinus and fashioned his character in Die Meistersinger after the real-life man.

There is some controversy among Wagner scholars regarding the character Beckmesser in Die Meistersinger. Wagner’s antisemitic views were no secret. In 1850 he published Das Judenthum in der Musik under a pseudonym in Robert Schumann’s Neue Zeitschrift für Musik. Barry Millington asserts that “it seems immediately obvious that

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the treatment of Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger* draws directly on the characterization of the Jew in *Das Jundenthum.*"  

This article gives examples from Wagner’s *Das Jundenthum* that back up this assertion. Millington slightly amends the translation but what he makes clear is that according to Wagner, Jews are incapable of enunciating themselves in appearance, art, and music. Furthermore, Wagner believed that they could not create true works of art or poetry and that everything was imitation. Beckmesser is painted as a character who is unable to create music and his attempt at performing the text that he took from Han Sachs’ workshop is an example of this.

According to Barry Millington, Adolf Hitler’s propagandist, Josef Goebbels, described the work as “‘the fullest embodiment of the national ideal’ and ‘the herald of National Socialism.’” Nationalism was not a new concept at this time in history but because of this belief that *Die Meistersinger* was the embodiment of German Nationalism, the Nazi party appropriated the opera and it was performed at “all important party and state occasions.”

The appropriation of Wagner’s music was not a positive period in Richard Wagner’s legacy, nor was the close relationship of his daughter-in-law, Winifred, with Hitler and the Nazi party. Wagner himself was not without fault with regards to antisemitic views, but no direct relationship between him and the Nazi party existed as it

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32 Barry Millington, "Nuremberg Trial: Is There Anti-Semitism in "Die Meistersinger?"" 251.


34 Millington, *The Sorcerer of Bayreuth*, 280.
had not yet been formed. The use of his music by the party was not his choice.
Nevertheless, this association has colored the perception and reception of his works.
Furthermore, the current director at Bayreuth, the great granddaughter of Richard
Wagner, repeatedly puts on provocative and risqué productions of her great grandfather’s
operas. No one can know for sure how Richard Wagner would have responded to all of
the controversy surrounding his music; however, two things that are certain are that his
music is powerful and his ability to tell a story is that of a genius. These two elements
that make him stand out as a composer and both stem from who his great influences
were.
CHAPTER 3

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SONATA IN B-FLAT MAJOR

At first glance, the form of the Sonata in B-flat Major looks very typical of a classical sonata structure. It is comprised of four movements, “Allegro con brio,” “Larghetto,” “Menuetto – Allegro/Trio – Meno Allegro,” and “Allegro vivace.”\(^{35}\)

Wagner’s use of the four-movement structure with the typical slow second movement and a Menuetto/Trio as a third movement indicates that he was familiar with the standard compositional practices of the time. Both Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Schubert used this four-movement structure with a slow second and Menuetto/Trio or Scherzo/Trio third movement. Knowing that Wagner held Beethoven in such high esteem, it might be assumed that Wagner used Beethoven’s piano sonatas as a model for this first attempt of his own.

Earlier Classical composers such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Franz Joseph Haydn used the three-movement structure for most of their keyboard sonatas. Haydn only implemented the four-movement structure for two of his sonatas, those being Hob. XVI:6 and Hob. XVI:8. These are both very early works and the title of sonata was not applied to them as a primary title. They are titled \textit{Partita} and \textit{Divertimento} respectively. The use

of the four-movement structure gained popularity with the composition of Ludwig van Beethoven’s Op. 2 sonatas as well as his Sonata in E-Flat Major Op. 7.

The first movement has a 111-bar exposition with a repeat indicated, a 101-bar development, and a 95-bar recapitulation with a coda. This is a ratio in size found more frequently in the later works of classical composers such as Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Schubert as well as the use of the coda, which was employed by Beethoven during frequently during his middle period. Wagner followed the formal trends of his time. The earlier classical sonata first movements by composers such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart or Franz Joseph Haydn have development sections that are noticeably shorter than the exposition section of the movement. As the sonata form developed, composers pushed the envelope of size and scale. Richard Wagner modeled his opus 1 first movement after one of these larger scale sonatas.

There is frequent use of the traditional Alberti bass pattern. Although first appearing to be a standard use of the figure, Wagner turns this on its head and presents the figuration in its inverted form which was a pattern used by Classical composers including Mozart, specifically in his Sonata No. 16 in C Major, K. 545. This begins at measure 24 and is used on and off in conjunction with the more standard Alberti bass pattern.36

![Figure 3.1 Richard Wagner Sonata in B-flat Major, Movement I m.24-27 (Schott Edition, 1981)]

The melody in the first movement is almost always found in the right hand while the left hand accompanies with the figure described above. A single instance of the left hand having the melody occurs from measure 139 through to the downbeat of measure 143. On occasion a call and response figure appears between the two hands similar to the Baroque practice of call and response. This occurs first from the pick-up to measure 68 through measure 73 and again from the pick-up to measure 257 through measure 262. The first instance centers around F Major which is the V in B-flat. The second instance centers around B-flat which is reiterating the tonic key as the movement comes to a close. This style of call and response appears in Mozart’s Die Zauberflöte in the Act II duet of Papagena and Papageno. Undoubtedly the young Wagner was familiar with Die Zauberflöte as he spent so much time at the theater with his stepfather.

Wagner’s use of modulation in the first movement is fairly traditional. The exposition finds its way first to F minor, the parallel minor of the dominant of B-flat Major. Following this the exposition ends with a clear cadence in F Major. The development modulates to such distant keys are G Major and E-flat Minor, finally returning to with the start of the Recapitulation at measure 214.37

The second movement of Sonata in B-flat Major consists of 150 measures of regular phrase lengths, being either two, four, or eight bars, and is similar to the structure and melodic line of Ludwig van Beethoven Piano Sonata Op. 26 first movement theme. Both Wagner and Beethoven use dotted rhythms and a 3/8-time signature. 3/8 time was not the most commonly used time signature during the late classical period. Although the

structure of Wagner’s second movement is not that of a variation set, the development of the material in this movement progresses in density of texture in much the same way that a theme and variations movement would but without the final cadential material found at the ends of variations similar to the slow movements of Franz Joseph Haydn.

An example of this developmental sequence can be found from beginning of the movement, (Figure 3.2). In measures 1-8 the is accompanied sparsely by intervals and chords. In measures 8-16 the melody is accompanied by eighth note moving thirds intermingled with an occasional dotted thirty-second note figure. The development of the material continues in measures 16-24 with the melody now being presented an octave higher and accompanied by Alberti bass. At measure 24, the second theme appears. From measure 24-40 the melody is doubled, while the accompanying figure consists of four note chords. These chords appear in five note groups of sixteenth notes separated by one sixteenth rest. The five note groups are broken by the bar line with three on one side of the bar line and two on the other.

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Figure 3.2 Richard Wagner *Sonata in B-flat Major*, Movement II m.1-40 (Schott Edition, 1981)
From measure 40-50 the chords change to primarily triads and the sixteenth rest is removed, which makes the figure a constant drum like pattern. This provides an ominous tone to this section.

Figure 3.3 Richard Wagner *Sonata in B-flat Major*, Movement II m. 40-50 (Schott Edition, 1981)

From this point until measure 66 the material becomes more ornate with faster moving notes and thirty-second notes scales. After measure 66 a melody similar to that of the second theme appears with a standard Alberti bass accompaniment in thirty-second notes. Finally, at measure 83 the opening material reappears, and the movement returns to the simplicity of the opening phrase.\(^{39}\) It is as though the movement is a phoenix and is

reborn from the ashes. The development of material begins again until the end of the movement.

The third movement is a Menuetto and Trio but not traditional in form. This movement is 111 measures. The Menuetto is 36 measures, the Trio is 24 measures, and the return of the Menuetto material is 51 measure (36 measures plus a 15 measure coda). The first noticeable deviation from the standard form is that the return of the Menuetto is written out. Second, from measure 96-105 there is a restatement of the opening of the Trio theme.\textsuperscript{40} This is not at all common in Menuetto/Scherzo and Trio movements. No Beethoven piano sonata that has a Menuetto/Scherzo and Trio movement brings the trio theme back as an afterthought at the closing of the return of the Menuetto material.

In contrast to many other examples of Menuetto and Trio movements in piano music of the time, Wagner’s use of the form does not have the Trio in the parallel minor key. Both the Menuetto and Trio found here are in B-flat Major. This use of the same key is more common in the symphonies of the Classical Period, such as in Beethoven’s first four symphonies. Wagner’s treatment of dynamics in this movement is interesting because during the Menuetto material, f and p dynamics are frequently interspersed. If taken literally these dynamic changes give the Menuetto section a humorous overtone because the dynamics do not change with the start of a phrase. Often these changes take place on a weak beat making which plays into the humorous nature of this section. No crescendos or diminuendos soften the effect of the dynamic changes. In the Trio material

\textsuperscript{40} Richard Wagner, \textit{Klavierwerke} (Mainz: Schott Music, 1981), 17.
all dynamics marked are p or softer with diminuendos except for a lone sf on the third to last measure of this section.\textsuperscript{41}

The final movement of the \textit{Sonata in B-flat Major} is in Sonata-Allegro form as found in the first movement but on a smaller scale. This movement has a 77-bar exposition, a 43-bar development, and a 118-bar recapitulation with a short coda. In this movement Wagner again uses modulation frequently. In both the development section and the recapitulation there is a sequential figure employed for a return to the dominant of B-flat Major. The first instance of this appears from measures 116-123 (Figure 3.4) and then again from measures 215-223 (Figure 3.5).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.4.png}
\caption{Richard Wagner \textit{Sonata in B-flat Major}, Movement IV m. 114-123 (Schott Edition, 1981)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{41} Richard Wagner, \textit{Klavierwerke} (Mainz: Schott Music, 1981), 16.
These patterns are not modulatory material because they do not travel through different keys; however, they are sequential material that enters in a stretto pattern. The melodic material is found entirely in the right hand in this final movement. The only exception to this is the case of the sequential material discussed above. Both the melody and subordinate voices in this movement contain frequent chromaticism.

In conclusion, this sonata is strongly rooted in the classical period because of the standard four-movement form as well as the use of the Sonata-Allegro form for the first and last movements. The influence of Ludwig van Beethoven is quite evident but even so, Wagner is able to produce a work of individuality. Although the work was from a time in Richard Wagner’s life when he was composing his piano works as an exercise in composition and counterpoint, the Sonata in B-flat Major is a window into his early
compositional style and who he was as a composer before the enormous operas came into existence.
CHAPTER 4
A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF FANTASIA IN F-SHARP MINOR

Richard Wagner composed his Fantasia in F-sharp Minor in 1831. As with the Sonata in B-flat Major, Ludwig van Beethoven’s shadow and influence looms large over this work. Wagner’s composition is a 374-bar epic of different keys, time signatures, tempos, and characters. A complete performance of this work would take close to 30 minutes. Both Wagner and Beethoven’s Fantasia are in minor keys; Beethoven used G minor while Wagner used F-sharp minor.

Charles Timbrell presents an example of what might be the first appearances of Wagner’s “Tristan Chord.” As discussed in Chapter 2, an example of the what we know now by ear as the “Tristan Chord” appears in Beethoven’s Piano Sonata Op. 31 No. 3 which suggests a source for Wagner’s inspiration. Below is an example taken out of the Fantasia in F-Sharp Minor which Timbrell presents as the “Tristan Chord.”

Figure 4.1 Richard Wagner Fantasia in F-Sharp Minor m. 59 (Schott Edition, 1981)

There are some issues with this claim made by Charles Timbrell. What makes a “Tristan Chord” a “Tristan Chord” is an augmented 4\(^{th}\), an augmented 6\(^{th}\), and an augmented 9\(^{th}\) above the bass. Now, this same process of fact checking can be applied to the chord found in the above example taken from the *Fantasia in F-Sharp Minor*. The notes of the chord found in the *Fantasia* are B#, F#, A, and D#. The B# to F# is problematic, the B# to A is problematic, and finally, the B# to D# is also problematic. The B# as the base is generally problematic because this creates a literal spelling of a Diminished 5\(^{th}\), Diminished 7\(^{th}\), and a Diminished 10\(^{th}\), respectively. This is a chord of three same intervals as is the “Tristan Chord” but not the three Augmented intervals that make up the famous chord found in Wagner’s Opera.

If the B# is respelled as a C at least a 4\(^{th}\), 6\(^{th}\), and 9\(^{th}\) do exist; however, if the B# is respelled as a C the chord becomes an Augmented 4\(^{th}\), a Major 6\(^{th}\) and an Augmented 9\(^{th}\). This does not fix the issue. Upon further attempts to make sense of the claim by Mr. Timbrell, I was met with continued confusion. The source from which Mr. Timbrell takes his example is Otto Daube’s *Ich schreibe keine Symphonien mehr*. This book does not exist in an English translation but whether or not access to a translation is available does not change the facts set forth above in the analysis provided. There is no possible explanation of how the chord of B#, F#, A, and D#, and the chord of C#, G, B-flat, and E could be a “Tristan Chord.”

Evidence indicates that Wagner was proud of this composition. In his autobiography he says that he allowed himself “complete formal freedom” and that the
piece brought him great pleasure, “as it won Weinlich’s approval.” Although it is known that Wagner distanced himself from his earlier compositions, reading his autobiography gives one the sense that he still cared about the pieces that were successful and that the approval from others was something he valued in order to feel that his compositions were successful.

The *Fantasia in F-sharp Minor* opens in 12/8 pianissimo with a tempo marking of “Un poco lento” (Figure 4.3). This is short lived as after only three measures the time signature changes to common time and the marking is “Recitativo.” These short sections alternate before a lengthy section, “Un poco lento” at measure 10. The “Recitativo” sections are very operatic in nature and foreshadow Wagner’s dramatic writing that was to come. A very similar “Recitativo” section appears in the third movement of Beethoven’s *Sonata A-Flat Major, Op. 110*. The rising arpeggiated figure followed by the descending slower passage (Figure 4.2) bares a striking resemblance to Wagner’s “Recitativo” (Figure 4.3).

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Wagner’s Fantasia does not have many fast sections to contrast with more lyrical sections. The “Allegro agitato” in 9/8 which begins at measure 68 does offer contrast to the “Recitativo” and “Un poco lento” sections. Its nervous and agitated mood comes from both the minor key and the constant eighth notes that appear in an ascending three note pattern beginning in measure 80.45 At the beginning of the “Allegro agitato” section the

melodic material appears first in thirds but the phrases are incomplete and separated by rests. Beginning in measure 80, the phrases become longer and more regular in length with the right hand melody, (Figure 4.4).46

Figure 4.4 Richard Wagner *Fantasia in F-sharp Minor* m. 80-83 (Schott Edition, 1981)

The doubling of the melody continues until measure 96. The octaves return again from measures 105-124 (Figure 4.5) but this time the left hand also has octaves beginning in measure 109.47

Figure 4.5 Richard Wagner *Fantasia in F-sharp Minor* m. 104-115 (Schott Edition, 1981)


The material from measure 80 returns starting in measure 158 and seems to be a literal repeat until the key center changes in measure 172. This time the cadential figure in A Major reappears in D Major.

Following the “Allegro agitato,” the “Recitativo” material from the beginning of the piece recurs; however, this time instead of being contrasted by a “Poco lento” section, one two measure section of “Poco vivace” appears from measure 214-215 and is followed by another “Recitativo” section. The “Adagio molto e cantabile” section that appears at measure 217 is reminiscent of the piano music that might accompany German Lieder of the time period. The section is set in D Major which is a cheerful contrast with what preceded it. The texture is sparser, and the section does not utilize the keyboard’s range in the same way that the earlier sections do.

Figure 4.6 Richard Wagner *Fantasia in F-sharp Minor* m. 217-228 (Schott Edition, 1981)

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As in a recapitulation, the alternating “Recitativo” and “Poco lento” sections from the opening return at measure 317. This is followed by a very brief fragment of the “Allegro agitato” section beginning at measure 325, one long measure of “Recitativo,” a five measure fragment of the “Adagio molto,” and then another long measure of “Recitativo.” The piece ends with one final section of “Poco lento” material recapitulated from measure 25. In this presentation, the cadential material appears in F-sharp Minor.

This piece, the only single-movement work of the large-scale piano works, is the one that most foreshadows the operatic writing that Richard Wagner is remembered for today. The composers of the Romantic period who were known for fantasy pieces had not yet composed their pieces when Wagner composed his, therefore it is not possible to say he was influenced by them. Robert Schumann wrote his first set of Fantasiestücke Op. 12 in 1837, his Fantasie in C in 1836 but revised it in 1839, and the Drei Fantasiestücke Op. 111 in 1851. Therefore, Wagner was most certainly influenced by Ludwig van Beethoven’s Fantasia op. 77 in structure with frequent changes in tempo marking and changes of key signature.

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CHAPTER 5
A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF GRAND SONATA IN A MAJOR

The Grand Sonata in A Major is an epic three-movement work and the last of the large-scale piano works that Wagner composed. In comparison to the Sonata in B-flat Major, this sonata is more virtuosic and experiments with range, dynamics, and treating the piano as though it were an orchestra. The three tempo markings for the Grand Sonata in A Major are “Allegro con moto,” “Adagio molto, e assai espressivo,” and “Maestoso – Allegro molto.”\(^{51}\) Ludwig van Beethoven also wrote a Grand Sonata early on his career. This sonata is his Piano Sonata in E-flat Major Op. 7.

Unlike the Sonata in B-flat Major, the Grand Sonata in A Major was not published during Wagner’s lifetime. The manuscript was held at Wahnfried, Wagner’s villa and burial place in Bayreuth, until it was finally published in 1960. The first publication and autograph differ from the version found in the 1981 Schott edition. Originally there was a third movement made up of a nine-measure cadenza followed by a 41-measure fugue. This fugue appears in the first publication.\(^{52}\) The autograph contains a marking of “Vi — de” in red ink which indicates that the 9-measure cadenza should lead directly into the Allegro molto movement that is now considered the third and final

\(^{51}\) Richard Wagner, Klavierwerke (Mainz: Schott Music, 1981), 54; Richard Wagner, Klavierwerke, 64; Richard Wagner, Klavierwerke, 69-70.

Although the fugue is not included in the Schott edition, the published copy of the first edition by Hans Gerig is still available for study and deserves discussion.

The fugue is three voices and has the correct entry and presentation of the fugue subject first in the bass, then in the alto, and finally in the soprano voice. The answer that appears in the alto voice is a tonal answer because there are alterations in the last measure of the statement.

![Sheet music image](image)

**Figure 5.1 Richard Wagner Grand Sonata in A Major, Fugue m. 1-9 (Musikverlage Hans Gerig, 1960)**

Following this exposition is a sequence of incomplete stretto entrances of the fugue subject from measure 10-19 (Figure 5.2).\(^{54}\)

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This stretto entry material appears again from measure 21-25; however, this time the entry in measure 22 of the alto voice presents the subject as an inversion.\textsuperscript{55} Although not a complete statement this is still the only instance in the whole fugue where Wagner uses an inversion of the subject.

No other complete statements of the fugue subject occur. An almost complete statement in the bass voice appears in measure 28 but the final figuration breaks off with an improvisatory section which completes the fugue.\textsuperscript{56}

Returning to the Schott edition, the first movement consists of 318 measures in a standard sonata form with a coda section beginning from measure 294. This first movement suggests the style of an overture or other work for orchestra. It has an air of pomp and circumstance that would lend itself to orchestration. According to Charles Timbrell, the autograph contains penciled-in markings of “tutti” and “viol” which seems to indicate that Wagner at some point in his life had meant to orchestrate at least this movement of the \textit{Grand Sonata in A Major}.\textsuperscript{57}

The exposition lasts 106 measures while the development is longer, totaling 108 measures. The secondary material, which first appears in measure 21, contains a figure used throughout the whole movement that is made up of a repeating pattern of one eighth note and two sixteenth notes.\textsuperscript{58} This figuration is reminiscent of horse’s hooves or military snare drumming. The pattern can be found throughout the late Classical and Romantic periods. One example of it that Wagner might have heard Gioachino Rossini’s Overture to \textit{Guillaume Tell}, which premiered in 1829, two years before the \textit{Grand Sonata in A Major} was composed.


\textsuperscript{58} Richard Wagner, \textit{Klavierwerke} (Mainz: Schott Music, 1981), 54.
The first appearance of contrasting material occurs from measures 56-70 is chorale like and offers a contrast from the grandeur of the earlier material.\textsuperscript{59}

![Figure 5.4 Richard Wagner Grand Sonata in A Major, Movement I m. 54-65 (Schott Edition, 1981)](image)

In the first movement of Ludwig van Beethoven’s \textit{Piano Sonata in E-flat Major op. 7}, a contrasting, four part chorale appears from measure 59 to measure 65 and then again later in the movement.\textsuperscript{60} Although it was composed some seventeen years before Wagner was born, it undoubtedly was influential in his writing of the \textit{Grand Sonata in A Major}. Like Wagner’s \textit{Grand Sonata in A Major}, Beethoven’s too has the title of \textit{Grand Sonata in E-flat Major}. As Beethoven’s composition came first, the evidence of his influence on Wagner’s compositional style is significant. Beethoven’s \textit{Piano Sonata in B-Flat Major op. 106} carries the title \textit{Grand Sonata for Hammerklavier} but it is more commonly called \textit{Hammerklavier}.

The second movement marked “Adagio molto, e assai espressivo,” is in the relative minor key of F-sharp minor and is 86 measures in length. The meter of this movement is 12/16. Although the written time signature is 12/16, the movement feels as


though it is moving along in a slow 4/4. The movement opens with an expansive melody over repeated chords.

![Musical notation](image)

Figure 5.5 Richard Wagner *Grand Sonata in A Major*, Movement II m. 1-2 (Schott Edition, 1981)

From the opening of the movement the melodic figures are presented in octaves. In some instances, the thumb of the right hand holds the octave note as a pedal tone while the melody moves above it, while at other times the thumb simply doubles the melody down the octave. The similarities to Beethoven *Sonata in A-flat Major, Op. 110* are extremely apparent. From the 12/16 time signature to the descending melody, not to mention to sixteenth note chords in the left hand.

![Musical notation](image)

Figure 5.6 Ludwig van Beethoven *Piano Sonata Op. 110* Movement III, m. 6-10 (Henle Verlag Edition, 1980)
At measure 21, a second theme is presented in the relative major and is accompanied by broken chord figures.

![Sheet music](image)

Figure 5.7 Richard Wagner *Grand Sonata in A Major*, Movement II m. 21-24 (Schott Edition, 1981)

The octave texture becomes briefly contrapuntal in measure 24, but the texture returns to octaves in measure 27. Wagner employs this tactic of melody in octaves again for the recapitulation of the same material beginning at measure 70. This time the key center has transitioned to D Major. The movement comes to a close with the presentation of the same cadential material heard third times each in a different octave, descending from highest to lowest.

The final movement of this sonata is prefaced by a nine-measure virtuosic section marked “Maestoso” which leads “attacca subito” into the main body of the movement. As discussed above, this nine-measure section originally proceeded the 41-measure fugue that appears in the autograph. The final movement is marked “Allegro molto” and is 291

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measures in length. Of all of the movements of this work, this one involves both hands in presenting melodic material most frequently. Starting with the pick up to measure 24, a three measure long melodic figure appears in the right hand. This is then followed by a presentation of the same melodic material appearing in the left hand. From measures 30-32, a variation on the previously presented material appears in the right hand and then following that in measures 33-35, the material appears in the left hand. The passing of the melody between hands is very reminiscent of a call and response that might be heard between different instruments in an orchestral work.

![Sheet Music](image)

**Figure 5.8a Richard Wagner *Grand Sonata in A Major*, Movement III m. 22-31 (Schott Edition, 1981)**

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Throughout the movement examples can be found where this call and response material occurs. For example, in measures 182-193, the same pattern as above appears again.65 The material is the same as is the key center.

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The material is presented a third time from measures 271-282. One could argue that this repeated occurrence of the same material makes this a Sonata-Rondo form movement. Although this is not the first theme of the movement, this second theme that keeps returning is regal and more memorable than the opening melody. Furthermore, the coda that closes the movement would seem to start in measure 283, which follows the final...
presentation of the second theme, meaning that the final presentation of the second theme is not part of the coda.

The development section of the movement, which takes place from measure 92 to measure 167, wanders through many keys and does not really develop the thematic material in the way that Ludwig van Beethoven or Franz Schubert did in their sonatas.67 Beginning with the opening melodic material, Wagner goes from F-sharp Major to B Minor in measures 92-97, followed by B Major to E Minor in measures 104-110.

Figure 5.10 Richard Wagner *Grand Sonata in A Major*, Movement III m. 92-99 (Schott Edition, 1981)

Figure 5.11 Richard Wagner *Grand Sonata in A Major*, Movement III m. 103-110 (Schott Edition, 1981)

In both instances, pitches are raised or lowered giving the sense of instability to the section. First, in F-sharp Major, measures 92-94, the D that should be sharp is natural, making it a lowered 6th degree of the scale. Ludwig van Beethoven is known to have favored the use of the progress from I (or i) to flat VI. The most famous example of this would be his 9th Symphony. As it is already well known that Wagner loved Beethoven it is quite possible that this use of a lowered 6th scale degree came from Beethoven. Wagner again employs this tactic in B Major, from measures 104-106, where the G that should be sharp in natural, again making it a lowered 6th degree of the scale.

The similarities between this work and the major sonatas of Ludwig van Beethoven is clear. The use of *Grand Sonata* as the title is the most obvious of these and is a nod to Beethoven’s *Sonata in E-flat Major* op. 7. Furthermore, Wagner’s use of a flat VI in the development of the third movement would seem indicate a nod to Beethoven’s us of the same content. Finally, the fugue, although it does not appear in all current print editions of the work, can be seen as a nod to Beethoven’s use of fugues in his later sonatas. Although Wagner’s *Grand Sonata in A Major* is more experimental than his *Sonata in B-flat Major*, the *Grand Sonata in A Major* is still strongly rooted in the classical period style.

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CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

From the beginning, music was a major influence in Richard Wagner’s life. Whether it was theater or classical performances, he was surrounded by music and came to love it. His emulation of Ludwig van Beethoven was most evident in Wagner’s early works for the piano and for other instruments. For a composer who is usually only remembered for his operas, it is remarkable that the period of time during which Wagner composed piano works spanned over 44 years.

Although Wagner is not remembered as a composer of important piano works, this does not mean that those major works discussed are of lesser value than some of Wagner’s other compositions. His piano works emulated the compositional style of the period and the composers who came before him. Wagner did attempt to distance himself from his early works including the piano compositions. Much of that effort was successful, especially for those early compositions that were not published until long after his death. Of the piano works, the *Grand Sonata in A Major* was the one neglected the most, as it remained unpublished until 1960, 77 years after Wagner’s death.

For any great creative artist, the early works help to define his/her style. Whether or not Wagner valued his early works once he had matured as a composer, those works were where he found his compositional identity. A current recording artist put it best, “You see I study art. The greats weren’t great because at birth they could paint, The
greats were great because they paint a lot.” Artists are not remembered for their first
great undertaking, but that does not make that undertaking of less significant than their
later works.

The three large-scale piano works that Richard Wagner composed between 1831-
1832 emulated the great compositional styles of the period. The two sonatas, *Sonata in B-
flat Major* and *Grand Sonata in A-Major* continued the high Classical traditions of the
piano composers such as Franz Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Ludwig
van Beethoven, while the *Fantasia in F-sharp Minor* continued the more experimental
style of writing that grew out of opera recitative.

It can be difficult to determine what Richard Wagner truly valued as his greatest works. It
can be argued that the early piano works are just as valuable to the repertoire as the
Wagner operas. Take for example Ludwig van Beethoven’s three piano sonatas op. 2.

Beethoven was experimenting and he was also emulating Franz Joseph Haydn with
whom he studied. Even though these are not his most significant compositions for piano,
they are part of the standard repertoire that is taught and performed today. Wagner’s three
eyearly piano works should be valued in the same way and take their place in the standard
repertoire as well.

It is true that Richard Wagner’s autobiography sheds light on his beliefs regarding
his compositional output, but just because the autobiography survives does not mean that
more value should be placed on what he thought was most important. That is the beauty
of history. The surviving body of works by an artist of the past should be preserved and

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69 Macklemore, “Then Thousand Hours,” by Ben Haggerty, Ryan Lewis, and Chris
Mansfield, recorded 2009-12, track 1 on *The Heist*. Macklemore LLC, compact disc.
cared for as if each piece is a gem, because if it is not held in high esteem, it will not continue to survive. In a world fixated on instant gratification the importance of preserving history must be kept alive.

The connections that Wagner’s legacy has with the Nazi Party and the Third Reich, were fueled by Wagner’s son Siegfried’s wife, Winifred, who took over running the festival after Siegfried’s early death. It is unknown what Wagner’s position would have been on the matter. As Lin Manuel Miranda said, “What is a legacy? It’s planting seeds in a garden you never get to see.” Everyone wants to be remembered but no one has control over how they are remembered after their death.

It is evident by his actions during his life that Richard Wagner wanted to leave behind a legacy. He wanted to be remembered as a great composer just as his hero Ludwig van Beethoven is remembered as a great composer. The actions of Cosima, and in turn the children that Wagner and Cosima had together, indicate that preserving Wagner’s legacy was of great importance to them. His mark on history has remained through his operas and both the Bayreuth Festspiele and the Bayreuth Festspielhaus. The Festspielhaus and Festspiele have been consistent in their preservation of Wagner’s operatic works by presenting performances on an almost yearly basis since 1876. Tumultuous history aside, the Wagnerian opera legacy has been well preserved by the descendants of Richard Wagner. Now it is time for his early piano works to become a part of that legacy.

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REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

CATALOG OF PIANO WORKS BY RICHARD WAGNER

**Sonata in D Minor WWV 2** – This piano sonata was composed in the summer of 1829 but was lost.\(^71\)

**Sonata in F Minor WWV 5** – This piano sonata was composed in the autumn of 1829 but was lost.\(^72\)

**Sonata in B-flat Major for four hands WWV 16** – This sonata was composed in early 1831. According to Richard Wagner’s autobiography, *Mein Leben*, he enjoyed practicing this piece with his sister Ottilie. Wagner and Ottilie loved the piece so much that he made an orchestrated version.\(^73\) Neither the piano four hands nor the orchestrated version survived.

**Sonata in B-flat Major (Op.1) WWV 21** – This is the earliest surviving piano work of Richard Wagner. It was published by Breitkopf and Härtel in 1832 with the support of Wagner’s teacher at the time, Theodor Weinlich. This sonata is in four movements with a slow second movement and a Menuetto/Trio third movement. Ludwig van Beethoven’s influence on Richard Wagner is already evident in this work.

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Fantasia in F-sharp Minor WWV 22 – This work followed shortly after the Sonata in B-flat Major and according to Wager’s autobiography Mein Leben, his teacher at the time, Weinlig, allowed him to compose the work in a free form.\textsuperscript{74} The work is reminiscent of Ludwig van Beethoven’s Fantasia in G Minor as well as the bel canto opera style of the period. This work is virtuosic and free, foreshadowing Wanger’s writing in his operas.

Polonaise in D Major (Op. 2) WWV 23A and WWV 23B – There are two existing versions of this piece. The solo piano version at the end of 1831 was followed by a four-hand version from the early part of 1832. According to Barry Millington, the four-hand version is a “revised, improved” version of the one for solo piano.\textsuperscript{75} Both versions feature elements of the traditional Polish dance with strong dotted rhythms and delayed cadences.

Große Sonata in A Major (Op. 4) WWV 26 – This sonata is steeped in the influences of Ludwig van Beethoven. Originally a three-voice fugue existed as a third movement, making the sonata a four-movement work; however, Wagner indicates in the autograph for this fugue to not be included. Without the fugue the sonata is three movements. The slow second movement is reminiscent of Beethoven’s Op. 106 and Op. 110 sonatas.

Albumblatt für Ernst Benedikt Kietz (“Lied ohne Worte”) WWV 64 – An Albumblatt or albumleaf is a work that originated as a short piece dedicated to a


particular person and presented to that person in an album. This piece was composed at
the end of 1840 but was not published until 1911. This work is reminiscent of Felix
Mendelssohn’s important eight-volume set of works that we know as “Songs Without
Words.” All of Mendelssohn’s pieces were composed during Wagner’s life and
undoubtedly influenced him. It seems as though Wagner wrote a poem at the same time
as this piece for his friend Ernst Benedikt Kietz who was about to embark on a long
journey.76

**Polka WWV 84** – This piece is only 23 bars in length and is untitled in the only
surviving primary source. From the end of May 1853, Millington writes that the piece is
“humorous” and has a “parodistic edge.”77 Wagner uses “Schnell” and “Langsamer” to
indicate changes in tempo (as found at the beginning of a movement to indicate
tempo/character). Wagner employs the same tactic in an earlier composition, the
*Fantasia in F-sharp Minor*.

**Eine Sonate für das Album von Frau Mathilde Wesendonck WWV 85** –
Composed in June of 1853, this sonata is in a single sonata-form movement. The
supporting thematic material appears in the mediant rather than the dominant key. Also,
in the recapitulation the presentation of the themes in reversed so that the main theme is
the last to appear in the home key. It seems that the first performance was given by
Wilhelm Tappert on September 29, 1877 for the Berlin Wagner-Verein.78 The dedication

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76 Barry Millington, ed., *The Wagner Compendium: A Guide to Wagner’s Life and


to Mathilde Wesendonck is a further indication of Wagner’s affection for this woman with whom he had an affair.

*Züricker Vielliebchen-Walzer WWV 88* – This piece is 32 bars in length and was composed at the end of May 1854. It was written for Mathilde Wesendonck’s sister, Marie Luckmeyer. According to Barry Millington, “Philippina” refers to the dinner-party game where two people eat the twin kernel of a nut and one “pays” a forfeit to the other in certain instances.79

**Theme in A-flat Major WWV 93** – Originally composed in 1858 and then revised in 1881, this piece is extremely short, only twelve bars in its revised form. It is possible that it was intended to have been a part of *Tristan und Isolde*.80 This is the only work not included in the Schott Edition of Richard Wagner’s piano music.

**In das Album der Fürstin Metternich WWV 94** – This piece is an albumleaf in C Major, dedicated to the wife of the Austrian ambassador in Paris, Princess Pauline Metternich. Princess Pauline played a major part in securing the production of *Tannhäuser* in Paris. This piece seems to serve as Wagner’s token of thanks for her support.

**Ankunft bei den schwarzen Schwänen WWV 95** – This work dates from the summer of 1861 during Wagner’s stay at the Prussian Embassy in Paris. The piece is another albumleaf, this one dedicated to Countess Pourtalès, who was an important figure in securing Wagner’s stay at the Embassy. Barry Millington writes that the atmosphere of


this piece is reminiscent of the Act III prelude of Tristan und Isolde as well as the appearance of “sei mir gegrüsst” from Tannhaüser but transformed into a major key.\(^{81}\)

**Albumblatt in E-flat Major WWV 108** – This piece dates from the January of 1875 and is Richard Wagner’s last piano work. This piece is 95 measures in length and bears a tempo marking of “Mässig bewegt.” The piece is dedicated to Betty Schott who was the wife of Wagner’s publisher. Of all the piano works, this one is the one that most reflects the later style of Wagner. The writing is, in a way, contrapuntal in comparison to Wagner’s other piano works discussed above. The textures are consistently three voices or more and the inner lines move in a way that is reminiscent of fourth species counterpoint.

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APPENDIX B
TRANSLATIONS

Albumblatt – Albumleaf

Ankunft bei den schwarzen Schwänen – Arrival at the House of the Black Swans

Das Judenthum in der Musik – Jewishness in Music

Das Rheingold – The Rhinegold

Der fliegende Holländer – The Flying Dutchman

Der Ring des Nieblugen – The Ring of the Nieblung

Die Feen – The Fairies

Die Freischütz – The Marksman

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg – The Mastersingers of Nuremberg

Die Walküre – The Valkyrie

Die Wittenbergisch Nachtigall – The Wittenberg Nightingale

Die Zauberflüte – The Magic Flute

Drei Fantasiestücke – Three Fantasy Pieces

Eine Sonate für das Album von Frau Mathilde Wesendonck – Little Sonata for the Album of Mrs. Mathilde Wesendonck

Erlkönig – Elf king

Fantasiestücke – Fantasy Pieces
Festspiele – Festival

Festspielhaus – Festival House

_Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung_ – History of German Poetry

_Götterdämmerung_ – Twilight of the Gods

_Große Sonata für Klavier_ – Grand Sonata for Piano

Grundthema – Basic theme

Hauptmotiv – Main reason why

_Ich schreibe keine Symphonien mehr_ – I no longer write symphonies

_Idee fixe_ – fixed idea

_In das Album der Fürstin Metternich_ – In the Album of Princess Metternich

_Iphigénie en Aulide_ – Iphigeneia in Aulis

_Klavierwerke_ – Piano Works

_Langsamer_ - Slower

_Lied ohne Worte_ – Song Without Words

_Mässig bewegt_ – Moderately moved

_Mein Leben_ – My Life

_Newe Zeitschrift für Musik_ – New Journal of Music

_opéra comique_ – comic opera

_Schnell_ – Fast

_sei mir gegrüsst_ – I greet you
Wagner-Werk-Verzeichnis – Catalog of Wagner’s Works

Züricher Vielliebchen-Walzer – Zurich Philippina Waltz
APPENDIX C

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS DEGREE RECITAL PROGRAMS

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
School of Music

presents

ANNIE ROSE TINDALL-GIBSON, piano

in

DOCTORAL RECITAL

Friday, December 4, 2017
6:00 PM • Recital Hall

Sonata in E Major, Opus 109 Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
I. Vivace ma non troppo; Adagio espressivo
II. Prestissimo
III. Gesangvoll, mit innigster Empfindung (Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo)

Pictures at an Exhibition Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881)
1. Gnomus
2. Il vecchio Castello
3. Tuileries (Dispute d’enfants après jeux)
4. Bydlo
5. Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks
6. Samuel Goldberg und Schmuckle
7. Limoges. Le marché. (La grande nouvelle)
8. Catacombæ Sepulcrum romanum; Cum mortuis in lingua mortua
9. The Hut on Hen’s Legs (Baba-Yaga)
10. The Heroic Gate (in the Old City of Kiev)

Ms. Tindall-Gibson is a student of Dr. Joseph Rackers. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.
presents

ANNE ROSE TINDALL-GIBSON, piano

in

DOCTORAL RECITAL

with

Steven I. Christ, clarinet
Pai Liu, cello
Isabel Ong, violin

Sunday, April 22, 2018
5:00 PM • Recital Hall

Quatuor pour la fin du temps
Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)
I. Liturgie de cristal
II. Vocalise, pour l’Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps
III. Abîme des oiseaux
IV. Intermède
V. Louange à l’Éternité de Jésus
VI. Danse de la fureur, pour les sept trompettes
VII. Fouillis d’arc-en-ciel, pour l’Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps
VIII. Louange à l’Immortalité de Jésus

Ms. Tindall-Gibson is a student of Dr. Joseph Rackers. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.
presents

ANNIE ROSE TINDALL-GIBSON, piano

in

DOCTORAL RECITAL

Thursday, January 17, 2019
6:00 PM • Recital Hall

Fantasia in C minor, K. 475
W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Sonata no. 14 in C minor, K. 457
W.A. Mozart
I. Molto allegro
II. Adagio
III. Allegro assai

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
I. Allegro con brio
II. Largo
III. Rondo. Allegro scherzando

Dr. Claudio Olivera, piano reduction

Ms. Tindall-Gibson is a student of Dr. Joseph Rackers.
This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.
presents

ANNIE ROSE TINDALL- GIBSON, piano

in

DOCTORAL RECITAL

Friday, October 25th, 2019
4:30 PM • Recital Hall

Three Irish Legends
1. The Tides of Mananaun
2. The Hero Sun
3. The Voice of Lir

Henry Cowell
(1897-1965)

Makrokosmos
Volume I

3. Pastorale (from the Kingom of Atlantis, ca. 10,000 B.C.)
   (Taurus)
7. Music of Shadows (for Aeolian Harp) (Libra)
10. Spring-Fire (Aries)
11. Dream Images (Love-Death Music) (Gemini)

Volume 2

4. Twin Suns (Doppelsanger aus der Ewigkeit) [SYMBOL]
   (Gemini)
8. A Prophecy of Nostradamus [SYMBOL] (Aries)
12. Agnus Dei [SYMBOL] (Capricorn)

Second Hand, or, Alone at Last
(Six Novelettes for piano, left hand)

George Crumb
(b. 1929)

Frederic Rzewski
(b. 1938)

Ms. Tindall-Gibson is a student of Joseph Rackers. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Performance.