

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: USE OF VARIATION AND FUGUE IN PIANO
MUSIC FOLLOWING THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

Soohyung Yoo, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2009

Dissertation directed by: Professor Larissa Dedova
School of Music

The variation and fugue originated from the 15th and 16th centuries and blossomed during the Baroque and Classical Periods. In a variation, a theme with a particular structure precedes a series of pieces that usually have the same or very similar structure. A fugue is a work written in imitative counterpoint in which the theme is stated successively in all voices of polyphonic texture.

Beethoven's use of variation and fugue in large scale works greatly influenced his contemporaries. After the Classical Period, variations continued to be popular, and numerous composers employed the technique in various musical genres. Fugues had pedagogical associations, and by the middle of 19th century became a requirement

in conservatory instruction, modeled after Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*. In the 20th century, the fugue was revived in the spirit of neoclassicism; it was incorporated in sonatas, and sets of preludes and fugues were composed.

Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* presents his song *Der Wanderer* through thematic transformations, including a fugue and a set of variations. Liszt was highly influenced by this, as shown in his thematic transformations and the fugue as one of the transformations in his Sonata in *b*. In Schumann's *Symphonic Études*, Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* and Copland's *Piano Variations*, the variation serves as the basis for the entire work. Prokofiev and Schubert take a different approach in Piano Concerto No. 3 and *Wanderer Fantasy*, employing the variation in a single movement. Unlike Schubert and Liszt's use of the fugue as a part of the piece or movement, Franck's *Prelude Chorale et Fugue* and Shchedrin's *Polyphonic Notebook* use it in its independent form.

Since the Classical Period, the variation and fugue have evolved from stylistic and technical influences of earlier composers. It is interesting and remarkable to observe the unique effects each had on a particular work. As true and dependable classic forms, they remain popular by offering the composer an organizational framework for musical imagination.

USE OF VARIATION AND FUGUE IN PIANO MUSIC
SINCE THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

By

Soohyung Yoo

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Duck Sun and Yoon Ok Yoo,
for their endless love, support, faith, and encouragement.

None of this would be possible without you.

and

My wonderful teachers,
Professor Larissa Dedova and Professor Thomas Schumacher.
Thank you for helping me become the musician I am today.

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Assisted by Naoko Takao, piano

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