

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: CONSERVATIVE AND PROGRESSIVE ASPECTS
 OF THE SONATA FROM LATE BEETHOVEN
 TO PROKOFIEV

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The term 'sonata' arose in the early seventeenth-century Baroque period and was originally used to distinguish instrumental (sonata) music from vocal music. Later, the sonata style, as a reliable yet flexible compositional framework, was extensively shaped and utilized throughout the Classical period.

Subsequently, in the Romantic period, freer creative, individualistic, and expressive musical elements began to be preferred by composers in their use of harmony, tone color, form, and rhythm. However, even during the revolutionary Romantic period

in music, the compositions which did not have a pre-defined format (character pieces, etc) were often comfortably framed and limited within the recognizable boundaries provided by the Classical sonata style.

The sonata format, when used as a tool in musical composition, provides logical boundaries that may serve to organize any unexpected emotional expressions on the part of the composer. Yet the sonata framework is also flexible enough to allow freedom of expression. In the Romantic period and beyond, composers had relied, some more than others, upon the sonata's adaptable blend of stability and flexibility. In my opinion, it is more persuasive to express oneself musically within the framework of an established musical style. Thus, I have chosen my dissertation topic as the performance of six pieces incorporating elements of the reliable and flexible sonata style.

The sonata of each composer that I have selected clearly demonstrates a tension between logic and emotion expressed within the sonata framework. However, the compositions can be divided interestingly into two groups, such as 'conservative' and 'progressive' group. The 'conservative' group consists of composers who seemed to strive for greater freedom of self-expression within the constraints of the traditional sonata form. On the other hand, the 'progressive' group consists of composers who seemed more to rely upon the sonata form to rein in and add stability to their highly

individual and emotional musical ideas. It is my hope that this project will provide a stimulating viewpoint from which to consider the evolution and utilization of the sonata style especially as it is applied to the composition and performance of these six diverse and interesting pieces.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

'Conservative' Sonatas

Dissertation Recital CD I

J. Brahms, Piano Concerto no. 1 in d minor, op. 15

[1] 1. Maestoso

[2] 2. Adagio

[3] 3. Rondo: Allegro non troppo

Dissertation Recital CD II

L. V. Beethoven, Piano Sonata no. 31 in A major, op. 110

[1] 1. Moderato cantabile molto espressivo

[2] 2. Allegro molto

[3] 3. Adagio ma non troppo – Arioso dolente –

Fuga: Allegro ma non troppo – L'istesso tempo di Arioso

– L'istesso tempo della Fuga poi a poi di nuovo vivente

S. Prokofiev, Piano Sonata no. 7, op. 83

[4] 1. Allegro inquieto

[5] 2. Andante caloroso

[6] 3. Precipitato

R. Schumann, Piano Sonata no. 1 in f# minor, op. 11

[7] 1. Introduzione: Un poco Adagio – Allegro vivace

[8] 2. Aria

[9] 3. Scherzo: Allegrissimo – Intermezzo: Lento

[10] 4. Finale: Allegro un poco maestoso

'Progressive' Sonatas

Dissertation Recital CD III

[1] – [4] F. Schubert, Fantasy (Wanderer) in C major, op. 15

[5] – [7] F. Liszt, Piano Sonata in b minor

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By

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