

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SELECTED CHARACTER PIECES OF
FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810-1849), FRANZ
LISZT (1811-1886) AND JOHANNES
BRAHMS (1833-1897)
Sun Ho Son, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2010

Dissertation directed by: Professor Cleveland Page
Piano Division, School of Music

During the 19th century, Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849), Franz Liszt (1811-1886), and Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) were among the most recognized composers of character pieces. Their compositions have been considered a significant milestone in piano literature.

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) did not give descriptive titles to his character pieces. He grouped them into several genres such as Mazurkas, Polonaises. His Mazurkas and Polonaises are influenced by Polish dance music and inspired by the Polish national idiom. Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was influenced in many ways by Chopin, and adopted Chopin's lyricism, melodic style, and tempo rubato. However, Liszt frequently drew on non-musical subjects (e.g., art, literature) for inspiration. "*Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*" and "*Années de pèlerinage*" are especially representative of character pieces in which poetic and pictorial imagination are reflected. Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) was a conservative traditionalist, synthesizing

Romantic expression and Classical tradition remarkably well. Like Chopin, Brahms avoided using programmatic titles for his works. The titles of Brahms' short character pieces are often taken from traditional lyrical or dramatic genres such as ballade, rhapsody and scherzo. Because of his conservatism, Brahms was considered the main rival of Liszt in the Romantic Period. Brahms character pieces in his third period (e.g., Scherzo Op.4, Ballades of Op.10, and Rhapsodies of Op.79) are concise and focused. The form of Brahms' character pieces is mostly simple ternary (ABA), and his style is introspective and lyrical.

Through this recording project, I was able to get a better understanding of the styles of Chopin, Brahms and Liszt through their character pieces.

This recording dissertation consists of two CDs recorded in the DeKelboum Concert Hall at the University of Maryland, College Park. These recordings are documented on compact disc recordings that are housed within the University of Maryland Library System.

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by

Sun Ho Son

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Dekelboum Concert Hall, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

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