# ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SELECTED MASTERWORKS BY BACH, BEETHOVEN, AND BRAHMS

Jiawei Yuan, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2023

Dissertation directed by: Professor Larissa Dedova
School of Music

Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms each wrote several masterworks for piano. This dissertation features the performance of selected masterpieces by each composer. These selected masterworks include Bach's: *The Italian Concerto* BWV 971 and *the Goldberg Variations* BWV 988; Beethoven's *Sonatas* Op. 10 No. 3, Op. 90, and Op. 111; and Brahms's *the Second Piano Concerto*, Op 83. Focusing on these works was a meaningful way for me to investigate these essential composers as a foundation to learn about other pieces from other composers, not only German composers but also composers from some other countries in the future. As I studied these masterworks, it became easy to see how Bach influenced Beethoven to use counterpoint effectively, as the fugal writing technique exemplified in Beethoven's sonatas Op. 106 and Op. 110 show clear contrapuntal skills. Then, one can see how Beethoven heavily influenced Brahms and note the similarity between the beginnings of the first movements of the *Hammerklavier* and Brahms's *First Piano Sonata*. In addition, Chopin also frequently used contrapuntal writing in his compositions. For instance, Chopin's fourth *Ballade* demonstrates just how strongly Bach influenced other composers. Beethoven and Brahms also greatly impacted future generations of

composers, such as Schubert, Schoenberg, and *Bartók*.

This DMA piano performance-oriented dissertation project includes one concerto recital, two solo recitals, and a written part of the dissertation. All three recitals occurred in the Gildenhorn Recital Hall at the University of Maryland at College Park, Maryland. On December 13, 2021, I performed the Brahms recital, supported by Yihan Sun playing the orchestral reduction; on May 10, 2022, performing the Bach recital; and on March 16, 2023, performing the Beethoven recital. The Digital Repository from the University of Maryland possesses the live audio recordings of these three recitals.

# SELECTED MASTERWORKS FROM BACH, BEETHOVEN, AND BRAHMS

by

Jiawei Yuan

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
2023

Advisory Committee:
Professor Larissa Dedova, Chair
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Professor Rita Sloan
Professor Robert Gibson
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2023

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would love to express my gratitude to each professor on my dissertation committee. Most specifically, I need to heartfully thank my teacher, Prof. Larissa Dedova, for all her encouragement, support, and guidance. After my audition at the Gildenhorn Recital Hall, I still remember her warm words welcoming me to choose the University of Maryland for my doctoral study. Each lesson taught by Prof. Dedova made me a superior artist. Then, I want to thank Prof. Rita Sloan for coaching the chamber group during my graduate assistantship years, Prof. Robert Gibson for teaching me about style analysis, and Prof. Bradford Gowen for teaching me piano pedagogy. I would also like to thank Prof. Mayron Tsong for teaching me about piano literature, Prof. Thomas DeLio for teaching me how to analyze music, Prof. Theodore Guerrant for teaching me during the two summers of the comprehensive exam review workshops. Thank you to Prof. Carmen Balthrop, Prof. Jennifer Cabot, Prof. Delores Ziegler, Prof. Diba Alvi, Prof. David Salness, Prof. Katherine Murdock, and Prof. Ji Su Jung for their care and help during my time at the University of Maryland. Moreover, I would like to thank my former piano professors, Prof. Roberta Rust, Prof. Andrew Parr, Prof. Nancy Weems, and Prof. Alvin Chow, for their lessons and care for studying in the United States. In addition, I am grateful for my friends and their kind support. Finally, I want to thank my parents and grandparents for their support and love. No matter what life difficulty I face, they always discuss what I feel, think, and act with me.

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# FIRST DISSERTATION RECITAL PROGRAM

December 13, 2021. 5:00 PM
Gildenhorn Recital Hall, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, the University of Maryland at College Park

Jiawei Yuan, piano

Assisted by:

Yihan Sun, piano

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)

The Piano Concerto No. 2 in B flat major, Op. 83

I: Allegro non troppo

II: Allegro appassionato

III: Andante

IV: Allegro grazioso

Yihan Sun, Piano Accompaniment

# RECORDING TRACK LISTING

Dissertation Recital #1 – CD 1

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)

The Piano Concerto No. 2 in B flat major, Op. 83

| | |
|---|---|
| [TRACK 1, CD 1] I: Allegro non troppo | 17’00’’ |
| [TRACK 2, CD 1] II: Allegro appassionato | 9’02’’ |
| [TRACK 3, CD 1] III: Andante | 10’19’’ |
| [TRACK 4, CD 1] IV: Allegro grazioso | 9’23’’ |

# PROGRAM NOTES

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)
The Piano Concerto No. 2 in B flat major, Op. 83

Romantic-era piano compositions developed with more power compared to works written a century ago. After the industrial revolution, piano builders found a way to upgrade the piano to have stronger strings that prevent it from breaking. The piano concerto was a popular genre in the Romantic era. Many famous composers wrote piano concerti from this period, including Liszt, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms.

As one of the representative Romantic period composers, Brahms wrote two piano concerti and completed his first in 1858. He began composing his second piano concerto after a two-decade gap in 1878 and finished it in 1881. The time it took to complete his second concerto demonstrates the number of revisions he made to this masterwork.

His B flat major piano concerto has four substantial movements for a concerto setting. The first movement is in sonata form, and the second is a scherzo full of passion. The third movement is slow and expressive, and the finale is lively with some Hungarian dance elements.

Brahms, as a soloist, performed his second piano concerto on November 27, 1881, in Zurich with Hans von Bulow as the conductor. Brahms wrote in a letter, “I
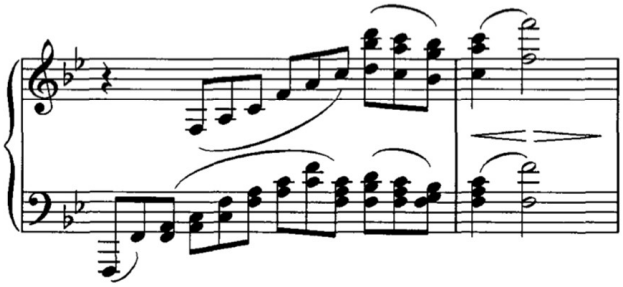
want to tell you that I have written a tiny little concerto with a tiny little scherzo."[1] This concerto is one of the most substantial and magnificent piano concerti in the Romantic era. Brahms's second concerto is comprised of four movements which last more-or-less close to an hour, making it a monumental composition in piano literature.

The first movement of Brahms's second concerto opens with the French horn, followed by the piano. The conversation between these two instruments creates a warm atmosphere from the beginning of the concerto. The second movement shows rhythmic hemiola, one of Brahms's trademarks. He used B flat major, its parallel minor, and F sharp major for the third movement. The F sharp major enharmonically equals G flat major, who shares two common notes with B flat minor. In addition, there is a sense of harmonic resolution between the B flat minor triad to the F sharp major first inversion chord. Finally, the last movement has some dance elements with light and graceful characters. This concerto requires technical skills and precise control, although it is not a showpiece.

Brahms favored using crescendo followed by decrescendo to express his emotional intensity. As Fritzen wrote, "The legato with the dynamic hairpin signifies intensity, demonstrating the close connection between fingers and keys."[2] As shown in example 1, it is challenging for the performer to create this hairpin sound effect.

[1] Jonathan D. Kramer, Listen to the Music: A Self-Guided Tour through the Orchestral Repertoire (New York: Schirmer Books, 1988), 142.
[2] Daniel Fritzen, "The Second Piano Concertos of Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms: History, Analysis, and Performance Practice" (dissertation, 2010), 344.

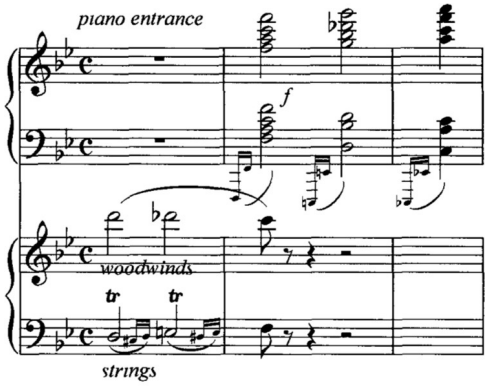
Still, feeling and imagining the tension between these two beats is possible. Once the pianist can pretend to do it psychologically, the sound quality will transmit to the audience more effectively.



*(m 4 – 5)*

Example 1

Moreover, Brahms tends to give more power to the soloist to play against the whole orchestra. As Fritzen wrote again, "the diatonic version of the theme in the solo part overpowers the chromatic version in the orchestra part,"[3] as example 2 shows below, the giant left-hand leaps create a natural crescendo to two hands together playing chords on strong beats. This level of sound effect is typical of powerful romantic piano concerti.
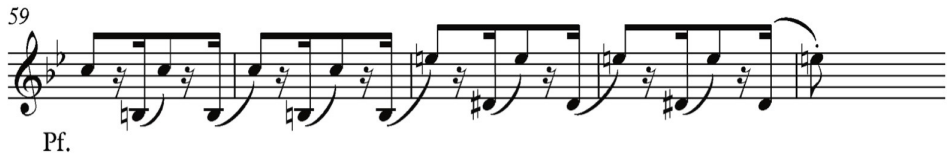



*(m 67 – 69)*

Example 2
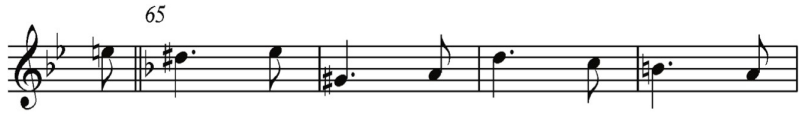
[3] Fritzen, 313.

According to Kim, there is a connection between the fourth movement of this concerto and the Hungarian theme. As example 3 below shows, “the characteristic minor ninth leaps B natural–C and D♯–E natural in dotted rhythm in the piano part in mm. 59–63. The D♯–E natural becomes the seed of another descending zigzag figure D♯–E–G♯–A in m. 65, which initiates a new, Hungarian dance-like theme.”[4] Therefore, the half-step intervallic relationship in this concerto is a trademark of the Hungarian element.

Example 3




c. the beginning of the Hungarian theme.




[4] Jin Uk Kim, “The Half Step in Brahms’s Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-Flat Major, Op. 83: A Study of the Motivic, Harmonic, and Tonal Relationships, Their Dramatic Significance, and Their Implications for Performance” (dissertation, n.d.), 59.

# SECOND DISSERTATION RECITAL PROGRAM

May 10, 2022. 5:00 PM
Gildenhorn Recital Hall, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center College Park,
University of Maryland

Jiawei Yuan, piano

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Italian Concerto BWV 971

I. Allegro
II. Andante
III. Presto

Goldberg Variations BWV 988

Aria
Variatio 1. a 1 Clav.
Variatio 2. a 1 Clav.
Variatio 3. Canone all'Unisono. a 1 Clav.
Variatio 4. a 1 Clav.
Variatio 5. A 1 ô vero 2 Clav.
Variatio 6. Canone alla Seconda. a 1 Clav.
Variatio 7. A 1 ô vero 2 Clav. al tempo di Giga
Variatio 8. A 2 Clav.
Variatio 9. Canone alla Terza. a 1 Clav.
Variatio 10. Fughetta. a 1 Clav.
Variatio 11. a 2 Clav.
Variatio 12. a 1 Clav. Canone alla Quarta in moto contrario
Variatio 13. a 2 Clav.
Variatio 14. a 2 Clav.
Variatio 15. Canone alla Quinta. a 1 Clav.: Andante
Variatio 16. Ouverture. a 1 Clav.
Variatio 17. a 2 Clav.
Variatio 18. Canone alla Sesta. a 1 Clav.
Variatio 19. a 1 Clav.

Variatio 20. a 2 Clav.
Variatio 21. Canone alla Settima
Variatio 22. a 1 Clav. alla breve
Variatio 23. a 2 Clav.
Variatio 24. Canone all'Ottava. A 1 Clav.
Variatio 25. a 2 Clav.: Adagio
Variatio 26. a 2 Clav.
Variatio 27. Canone alla Nona. a 2 Clav.
Variatio 28. a 2 Clav.
Variatio 29. a 1 ô vero 2 Clav.
Variatio 30. a 1 Clav. Quodlibet
Aria da Capo

# RECORDING TRACK LISTING

Dissertation Recital #2 – CD 2

Italian Concerto BWV 971 & Goldberg Variations BWV 988

[TRACK 1, CD 2] 59’33’’

# PROGRAM NOTES

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Italian Concerto BWV 971

During the Baroque period, instrumental music became more prominent and gradually increased its significance. Bach was born in 1685 and was a dominant composer from the late Baroque. Bach wrote the Italian Concerto for two-manual harpsichord solo. The dynamically contrasting two manuals most likely imitate the dialogue between solo and tutti in a concerto setting. The Goldberg Variations were written for the keyboardist of Count Kaiserling at the Count's request. During Bach's time, there was a Russian ambassador in Germany named Kaiserling, and he had difficulty sleeping at night. He hired a pianist named Goldberg, a virtuoso pianist who played the piano for Count Kaiserling in his living room, primarily to help him with his sleepless nights. The Count stated in Bach's presence that he needed a work to help him sleep and Bach wrote his Goldberg Variations for the Count. This masterpiece was smooth and somehow lively. Both compositions can be performed on the piano as well.

The Italian Concerto was a Baroque period concerto with fast first, slow second, and quick third movements, published in 1735. As Farrell points out, this composition "is obviously an experiment in the transference of an orchestral form to a solo instrument."[5] As the first work from part II of the Clavier-Übung, which means

[5] Maureen Sister Farrell, "A Comparative Analysis of the Baroque Concerto Form of Johann Sebastian Bach's Italian Concerto in F and the Neo-Baroque Sonata-Allegro Form of Paul Hindemith's Piano Sonata No. 2" (dissertation, n.d.), 9.

keyboard exercise, Barsalou wrote, “the idea of the concerto was to write an ideal concerto without orchestra, distributing the tutti and solo between the two manuals of the harpsichord.”[6] Thus, the performer needs to imagine and adjust as both *ripieno* and *concertino* in a concerto grosso setting.

Under the influence of the Italian composer Vivaldi, Bach composed this composition for the harpsichord. Bach’s music differed from Vivaldi’s; “while Vivaldi’s concerti are simpler in texture and more homophonic in writing, Bach’s concerti, on the other hand, are richer in texture, more adventurous in harmonic idiom, and more contrapuntal in writing style.”[7] The two different manuals suit the contrasting dynamics of solo and tutti. If the performer plays some notes on the lower manual, it automatically doubles to the upper manual, which creates a sound effect of the concerto grosso *ripieno* part. However, if the performer presses some keys in the upper manual, the lower manual will not double. The harpsichord gives an imaginary sound effect of the *concertino* and *ripieno*.

As Huang believed, “with the benefit of the modern piano; one can create a greater variety of sounds than the harpsichord by a refined control of the finger attacks.”[8] However, in my opinion, performing this work on the modern concert grand piano should require the performer to imitate the contrasting dynamic colors

[6] June Eunice Barsalou, “Bach’s Goldberg Variations: An Historical and Style-Critical Approach” (dissertation, n.d.), 10.
[7] Hsing-Yu Huang, “The Italian Concerto and the French Overture Styles in J.S. Bach’s Selected Keyboard Music: With an Emphasis on the Ritornello Form and the so-Called French Dotted Rhythm” (dissertation, n.d.), 9.
[8] Huang, 36.

from the harpsichord's two manuals. One possible approach is to double some notes as a way of improvisation and embellishment to make the tone color from the piano sound like two manuals doubling together from the harpsichord, which simultaneously resemble the sound effect of the *ripieno* in the concerto grosso. I personally used this doubling technique, as it is clear from my Italian Concerto recording audio files. In some repeated passages, the performer should feel free to add scales or ornaments to fill the gap between some large intervals. Doing so makes the performance more innovative, brilliant, and virtuosic.

The emphasis on the cadence within the piece is influential in reaffirming the key centers of each section. Huang adds that the cadence implies "the transfer of the dominating musical role from the tutti to the soloist where they frequently elide, and vice versa."[9] Thus, it is ideal for performers to feel the great moments of cadences whenever they occur.

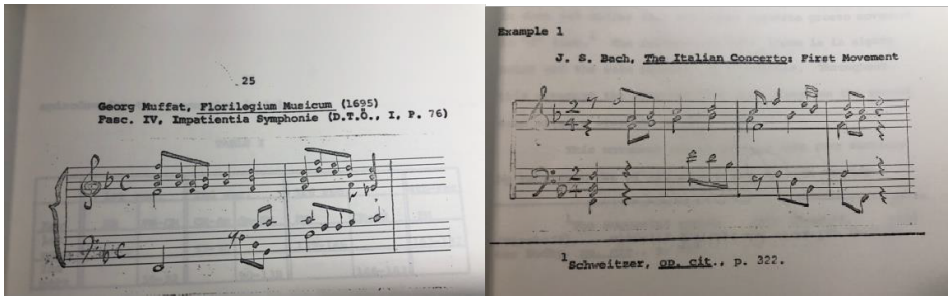
Some predecessors influenced Bach. Choi wrote, "Schweitzer believed that Bach got the idea of this work from a sinfonia in Georg Muffat's Florilegium Primum, which was composed in 1695."[10] The two pictures from example 4 below shows that it might be reasonable to speculate that Muffat inspired Bach for composing the Italian Concerto. In addition, performers can perform the beginning chord from the left hand of the first movement as a rolling chord as part of the performance practice.

[9] Huang, 27.

[10] Whakyung Choi, "The Italian Concerto of J.S. Bach and Its Interpretation" (dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1965), pp. 24-25.

Moreover, the opening sonority imitates the orchestra tutti section in a ritornello form. The term ritornello means to return. In this work, the ritornello also means the repeated loud *ripieno* part imitating the orchestral tutti section on the keyboard. The dynamic of the piano signifies the solo episodes, which performers can consider using the *una corda* and softer finger attack. The key of F major in this first movement makes the character uplifting and lively.
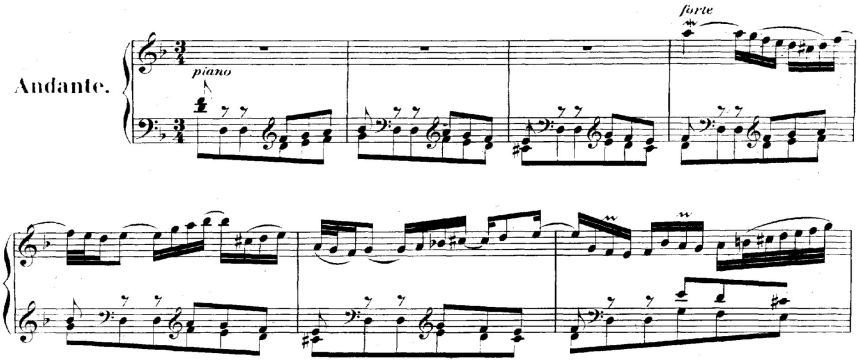
Example 4




The second movement does not employ the ritornello form. Huang states “The sonority of this movement resembles a trio sonata, in which the violin plays the melody, and the viola da gamba and the harpsichord play the continuo accompaniment.”[11] The left-hand middle register double notes imitate the delicate sound color from the harpsichord. In contrast, the lower register repeated single note D resembles the sound of sustained viola da gamba. As Choi wrote, “The recitative-like melody appears after three measures of introduction in the left hand based on a short figure which is reiterated throughout the whole movement in piano (Manual
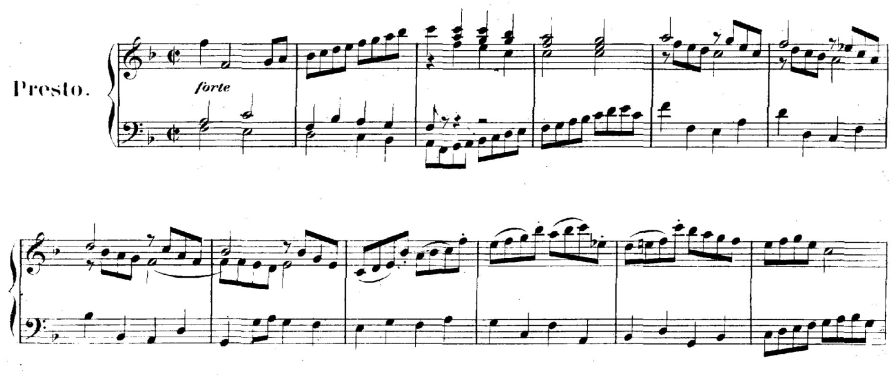
[11] Huang, 39.

II).”[12] The atmosphere of D minor in this movement creates a sense of melancholy and longing. Example 5 below shows the beginning of the second movement.




Example 5

The third movement is in an energetic Presto tempo. However, Bach’s Presto is not extremely fast but rather lively and controlled. As Huang points out, “the contrary motion between two hands increases the intensity by wider register contrast.”[13] Example 6 shows how the dynamic marking *forte* further emphasizes the energy generated from two hands. Choi wrote, “The last movement is given almost the same treatment as the first allegro movement and uses the same juxtaposition of tutti and solo parts.”[14] Thus, the ritornello form also appears.




Example 6

[12] Choi, 31.
[13] Huang, 41.
[14] Choi, 32.

Goldberg Variations BWV 988

One of the similarities between the Italian Concerto and the Goldberg Variations is that Bach composed both for a two-manual harpsichord. The fourth book from Clavierübung is the Goldberg Variations, published in 1741. It starts with an aria, followed by 30 variations. As Williams pointed out, "although two manuals are required, there are no forte and piano signs such as those found in Clavierübung II,"[15] highlighting the key difference between the Goldberg Variations and the Italian Concerto.

According to Cole, "The Goldberg Variations are a culmination of Bach's efforts and experimentation in keyboard forms, a brilliant work strictly within the framework of Baroque style and theory, yet, undeniably original in melodic inspiration and harmonic expressiveness."[16] When melody and harmony both inspire and express the meaning behind the notes, it is inevitable that something great will happen.

All the variations are in binary form, and each variation shows its unique character. After the last variation, the aria repeats as the ending: "It has changed from a greeting to a farewell, from elegantly promising to sadly concluding."[17] The repeated aria at the end has a different meaning compared to its beginning: as life starts from nothing, it later disappears into nothing. Therefore, this work serves as a metaphor for human life. As Cole pointed out, "many of the motives in the Goldberg

[15] Peter Williams, Bach The Goldberg Variations (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 51.
[16] Frances Elaine Cole, "Bach's 'Goldberg Variations:" A Descriptive Study and Analysis" (dissertation, n.d.), 196.
[17] Williams, 2.

Variations may be associated with feelings of joy, peace, grief, sorrow, death."[18] Therefore, this masterpiece is not only a technical work but also a work of emotion and art.

The beginning of the Goldberg Variations is tranquil and helpful for people with insomnia. As Barsalou wrote, "since the work was composed for the purpose of soothing Count Kaiserling in his sleepless night, it can be speculated that the intention of the composition was not pedagogical, but purely musical."[19] Thus, this composition has the function to reduce the effect of insomnia as well. "It may be that Bach selected the variation form because it would not be very likely to arouse any great emotion."[20] The calmness from the variation form with the same harmonic progressions made it easier for Count Kaiserling to fall asleep.

Nonetheless, the Goldberg Variations also include a climax. The climax of the piece appears near the end of the variation. As Barsalou wrote again, "gradual increasing of intensity occurs because of the increased complexity in voices, especially toward the end."[21] Bach planned this work from the beginning to the end. The intentional structure of the work makes it necessary for the performer to reserve emotion at first and then gradually add more passion for mastering the glory of this composition during the performance.

[18] Cole, 12.
[19] Barsalou, 6.
[20] Barsalou, 12.
[21] Barsalou, 94.

However, according to Peter Williams, another talented composer, “the variety, extreme contrast, elements of caprice and sheer virtuosity of the Goldberg do make one think of Domenico Scarlatti.”[22] Hand-crossing and finger dexterity are trademarks of Scarlatti, which Bach employs in the Goldberg Variations. The complexity of Bach’s masterpiece makes it a work of great pedagogical value.

When performing the Goldberg Variations, pianists should think about “feasible fingering and crossing of hands for the negotiation of unpianistic passage”[23] because canon appears in every third variation. Bach used the compositional technique of canon to unify all the thirty variations and the aria together. “ From the third variation, there are canons in every third variation, numerically increasing from the canon at the unison in variation three, to canon at the ninth in variation twenty-seven.”[24] Bach was brilliant in using this compositional technique while maintaining the same harmonic progressions. According to Cole, “The difficult hand-crossing passages can be aided through phrasing, articulation, fingering, and for pianists, the substitution of notes and occasional use of the pedal.”[25] Therefore, musical ideas can help solve technical problems.
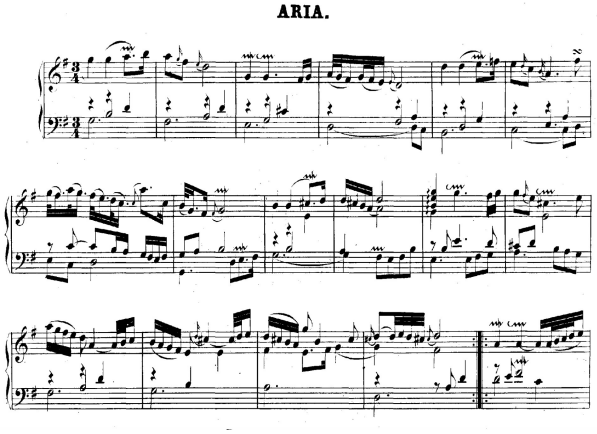
“It is difficult to ascertain the precise date when the Goldberg Variations were published. It is known that Goldberg became Bach’s pupil in 1741 and that the variations were engraved by 1742, so that one might believe the work to have been

[22] Williams, 28.
[23] Barsalou, 4.
[24] Barsalou, 48.
[25] Cole, 202.

published sometimes in these two years."[26] From this point of view, apparently Bach wrote this masterpiece for the instrument of the harpsichord with two manuals since piano became popular around the 1770s. When pianists nowadays perform this masterwork in a concert hall, they should imagine the tone color from the harpsichord. However, they must conquer some technical difficulties of playing on one keyboard from the piano instead of two manuals from the harpsichord. The awkwardness of hand crossing with many running notes challenges the pianist to have swift finger movements. One more leisurely way to play the hand crossing is to use an accent, shape the phrase and use a light touch.

As example 7 shows, the aria is in the meter of 3/4. Only one manual will be enough if a keyboard player performs it on a harpsichord. There are three voices. That aria is melodic and sounds like a Sarabande. The Sarabande comes from a Spanish dance.
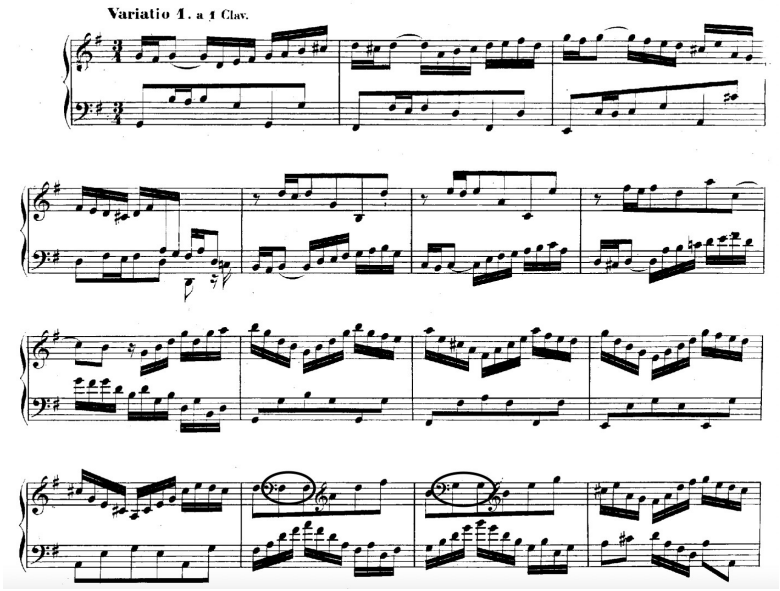
Example 7



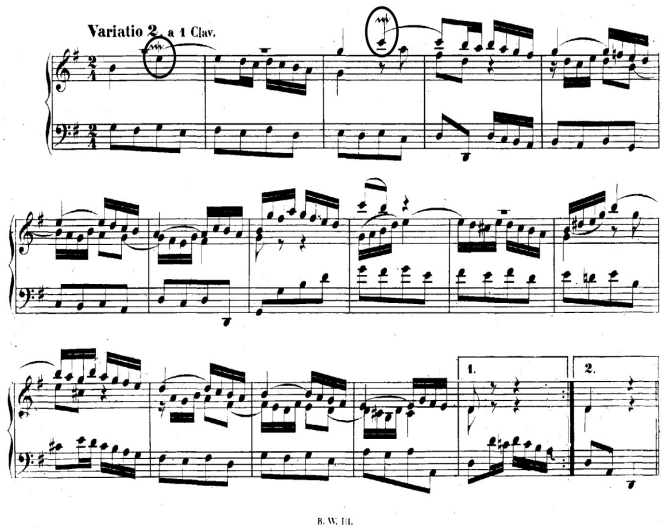

[26] Barsalou, 13.

Like example 7, in example 8, variation 1 is in the meter of 3/4, with only one manual. However, it only has two voices (vs. three). The two circled spots in example 8 shows the hand-crossing compositional technique, which imitates the style of Domenico Scarlatti. It is reasonable to speculate that the rhythmic pattern of the one-eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes foreshadows the rhythmic character of the polonaise of Chopin.

Example 8
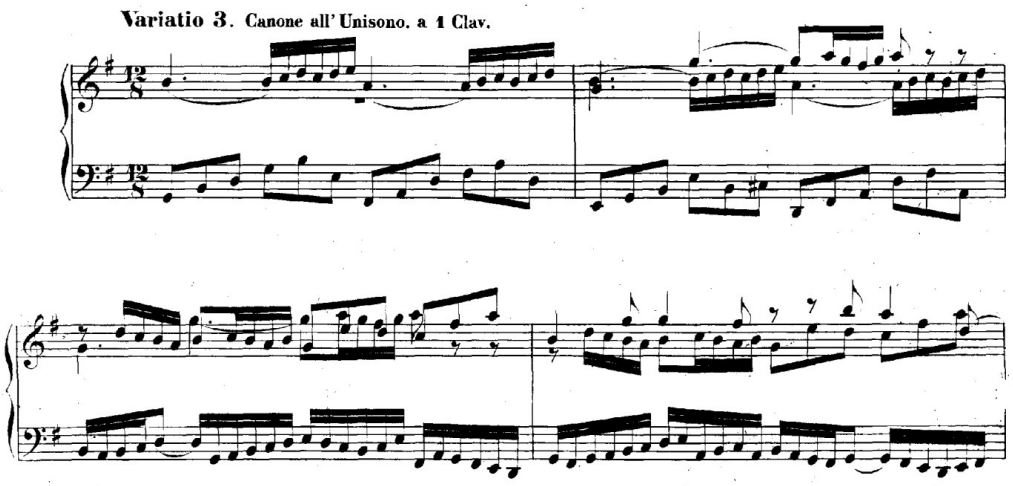



Example 9 shows that variation 2 is in the meter of 2/4. The variation only needs one manual, although it employs three voices. The upper two voices are imitative, which resembles the two upper instruments in a trio-sonata setting. The two circled embellishments are called mordents, which starts from the primary note and goes down a second before it returns to the primary note. Bach used mordents frequently.




Example 9
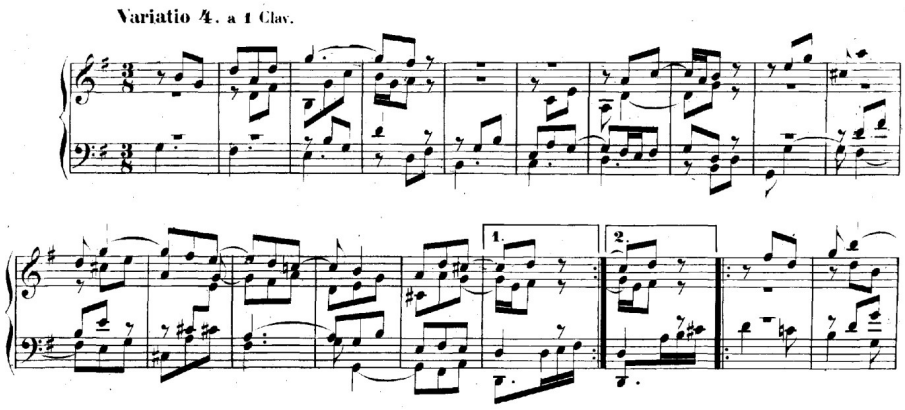
In example 10, variation 3 is in the meter of 12/8. Again, there is only one manual for three voices. Bach used canon for unison with frequent tied-over long notes to create an elegant dance feeling.

Example 10
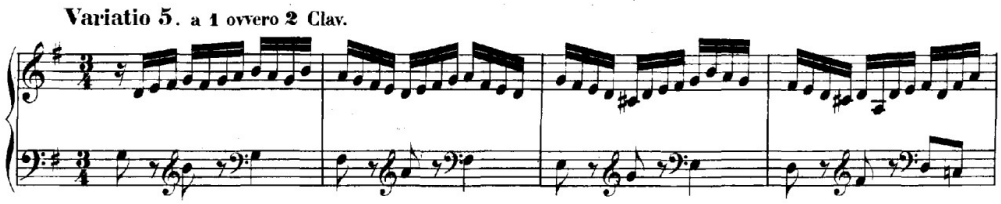



As example 11 shows, variation 4 is in the meter of 3/8. It has one manual, but four voices in an imitative texture. The variation also sounds like a passepied, which means a lively minuet.

Example 11
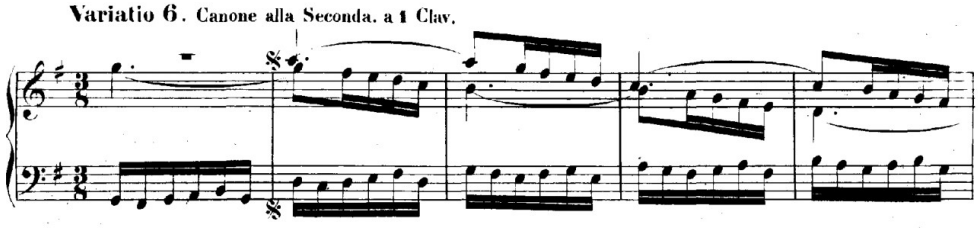



Variation 5 is in the meter of 3/4 (example 12). There can either be one manual or two manuals for this variation. Again, there are only two voices. The hand-crossing technique shows virtuosity once again.

Example 12
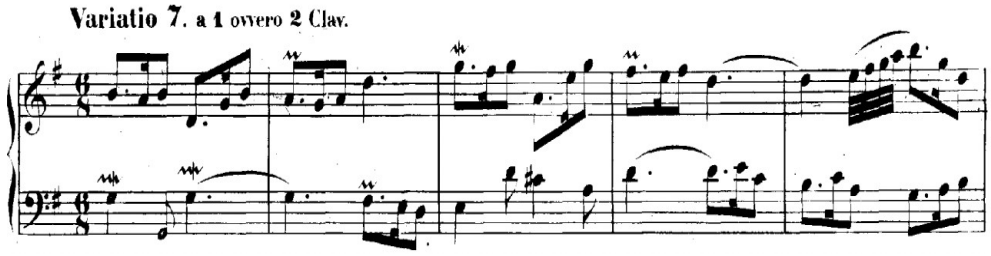



As example 13 shows, variation 6 is in the meter of 3/8. There is one manual for three voices. The canon at the second appears in this variation.

Example 13
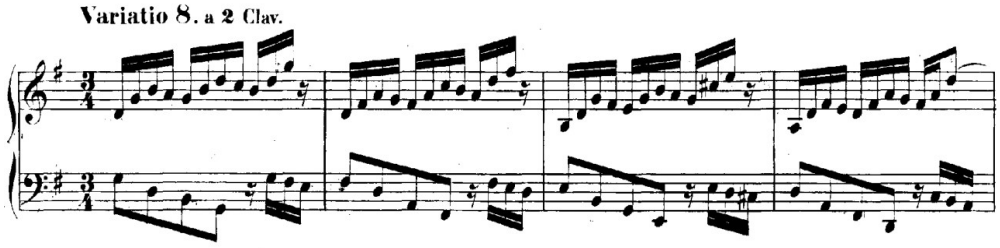


In example 14, variation 7 is in the meter of 6/8. It needs either one or two manuals for two voices. The gigue with dotted rhythm makes this variation a character of the pleasant dance.

Example 14
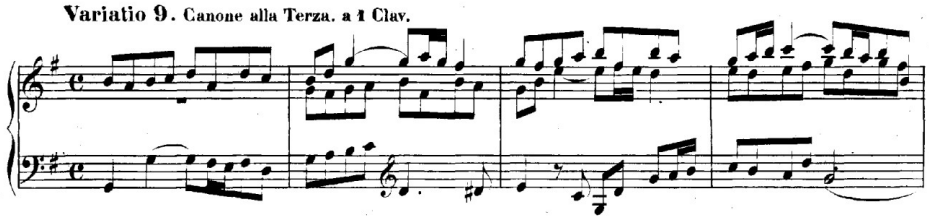



As example 15 shows, variation 8 is in the meter of 3/4. This variation requires two manuals, and there are only two voices. To feel the stable tempo, the performer can feel the second half of the beat more musically intentional for phrase shaping to avoid rushing.

Example 15
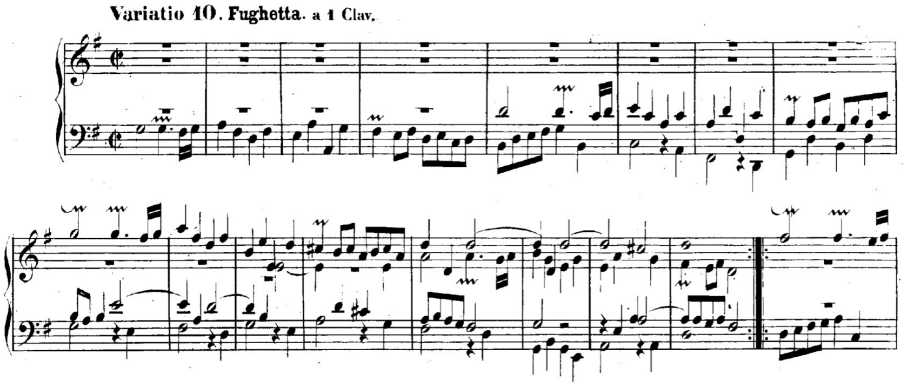



In example 16, variation 9 is in the meter of 4/4. It only requires one manual for this variation with three voices. The canon at the third between the two upper voices makes it sound like a cantata with a warm feeling.

Example 16
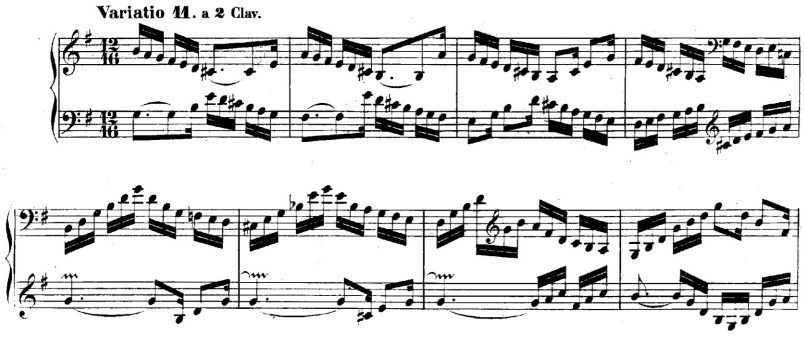



As example 17 shows, variation 10 is in the meter of 2/2. There is only one manual, but with four voices. We can describe it as a fughetta. The pianist can play the first note of each voice entry as a mordent to embellish it as a performance practice.

Example 17
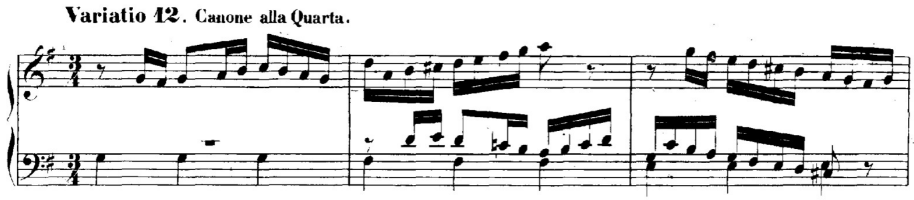



In example 18, variation 11 is in the meter of 12/16. There are two manuals required if this is performed on a harpsichord. The two-voice duet is technically challenging because of the hand-crossing if this is performed on the piano. The space between the two hands is very crowded, which makes it physically demanding to play. Pianists should listen for note clarity when practicing this variation on the piano.

Example 18
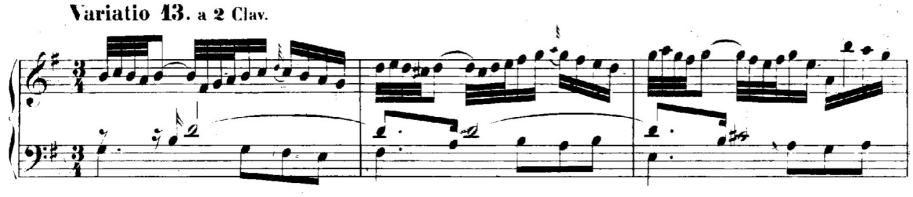



As example 19 shows, variation 12 is in the meter of 3/4. There is only one manual used. However, there are three voices. The canon at the interval of the fourth makes this variation special.

Example 19
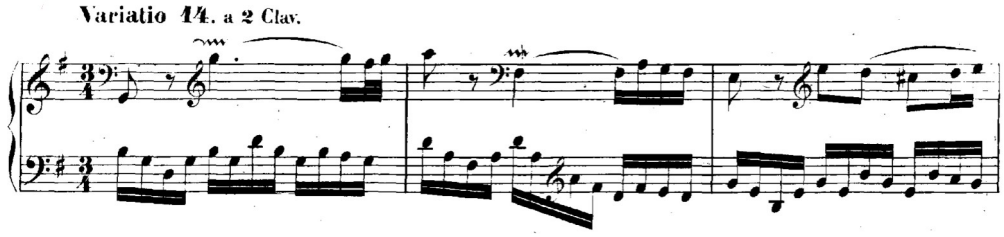



In example 20, variation 13 is in the meter of 3/4. There should be two manuals for this variation. The three voices sound melodic. The middle voice notes are long, creating a vocal sound effect.

Example 20
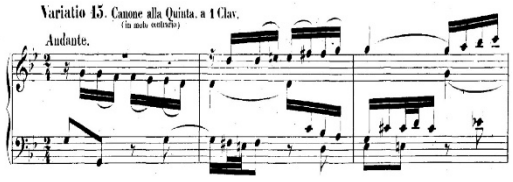


As example 21 shows, variation 14 is in the meter of 3/4. There are two manuals with two voices. While the duet sounds musical, the hand-crossing technique also requires swift hand movements. The left-hand sixteenth notes should not be mechanical but melodic as their up-and-down musical shapes.

Example 21

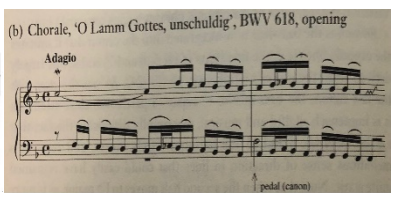



In example 22, variation 15 is in the meter of 2/4. Only one manual is necessary. The three-voices make this variation musically colorful. The canon at the fifth interval makes it unique. This variation is the first time a minor key is used in this variation set. The articulation of the two-note slur creates a sad, weeping sound effect. It can also be called a "dragging motif," according to Williams. There is a similarity between this variation and the opening of Bach's Chorale, *'O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig,'* BWV 618, as example 23 shows.

Example 22
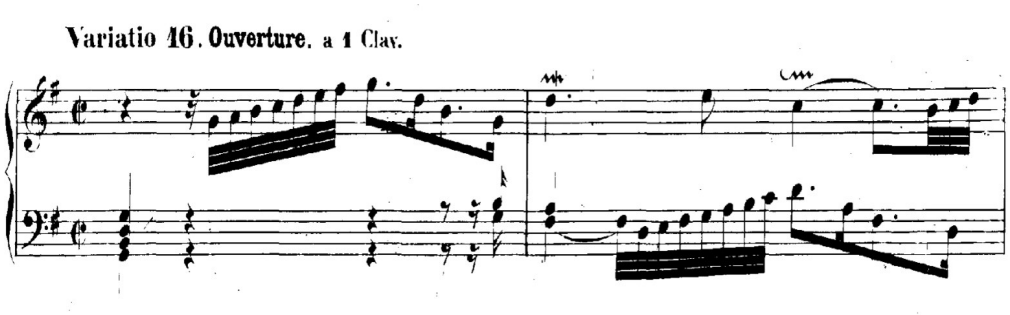



Example 23
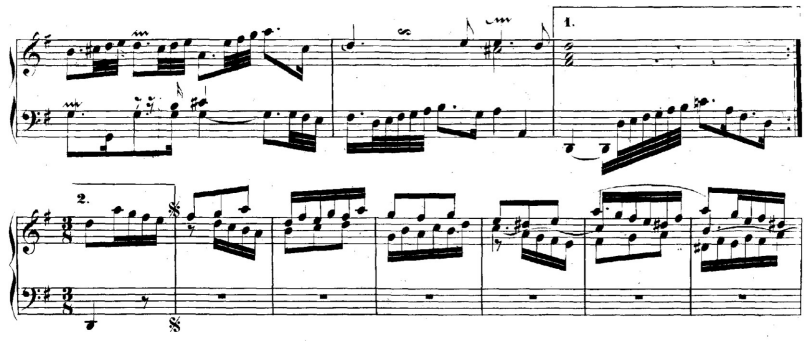


As examples 24 and 25 show, variation 16 is in the form of a French overture. For this musical form, Huang pointed out the general characteristics of it, which include “a slow, majestic and solemn opening section in duple meter and homophonic texture filled with dotted rhythm, figures running toward the downbeats, and rich harmonies leading without pause to a spirited fugal passage in a faster triple tempo.”[27] For performance practice, artists generally play the dotted longer note relatively longer than expected. The shorter note is relatively faster to create a sound effect of the royal court’s magnificence. “However, not every dotted rhythm is played as double dotted (or over-dotted).”[28] Interestingly, Huang believed “the tempo of this overture is taken on the faster side … It is probably because a greater contrast with Variation 15 in Andante is desirable and that brilliant, spirited stimulus is needed for a long piece like this.”[29] Therefore, the pianist should also consider the bigger picture and the connection between the variations to perform convincingly.

Example 24
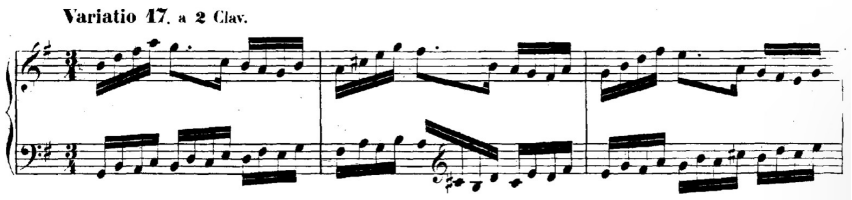



[27] Huang, 68.
[28] Huang, 108.
[29] Huang, 109.

Example 25
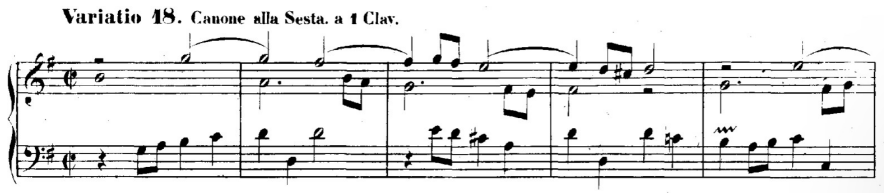


In example 26, variation 17 is in the meter of 3/4. There are two manuals for two voices. The hand-crossing duet poses a technical challenge. However, the second beat dotted rhythm from the right hand makes the shaping very musical.

Example 26
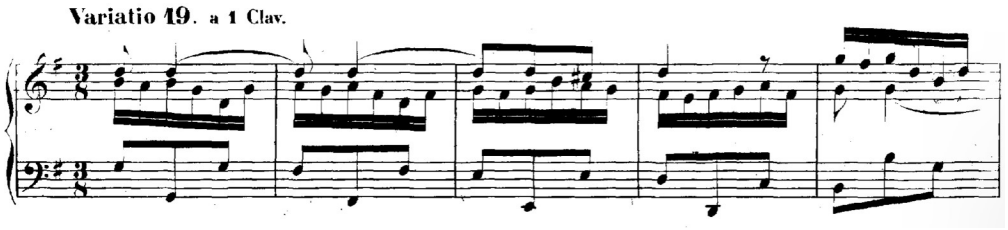



As example 27 shows, variation 18 is in the meter of 2/2. There is only one manual, but with three voices. The form is trio-sonata with the canon technique at the sixth interval. The left hand is energetic with a forward-going momentum.

Example 27
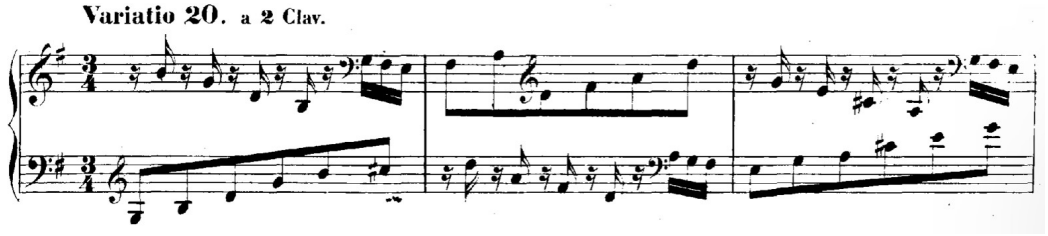


In example 28, variation 19 is in the meter of 3/8. There is only one manual, but with three voices. The syncopation rhythm makes it sound like a minuet.

Example 28




As example 29 shows, variation 20 is in the meter of 3/4. There are two manuals for two voices. The hand-crossing duet poses a technical challenge again. Additionally, whenever a hand has consecutive eighth notes, that is the dominating voice in that measure.
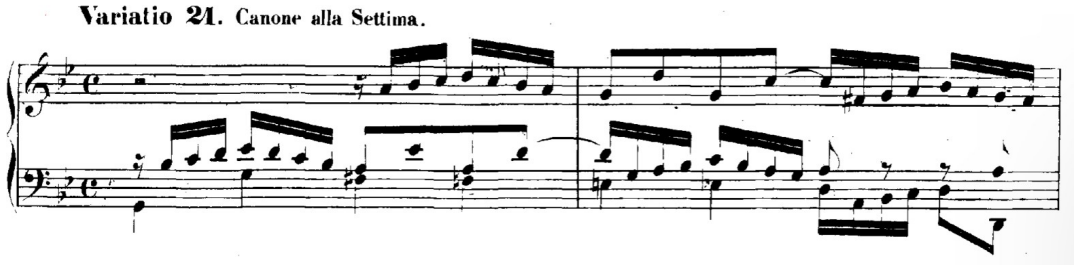
Example 29




In example 30, variation 21 is in the meter of 4/4. There is only one manual, but with three voices. This variation is the second time Bach uses the minor key in this set. The canon at the interval of the seventh is throughout this variation. “The chromaticization is clearest in No. 21,”[30] as Williams pointed out.
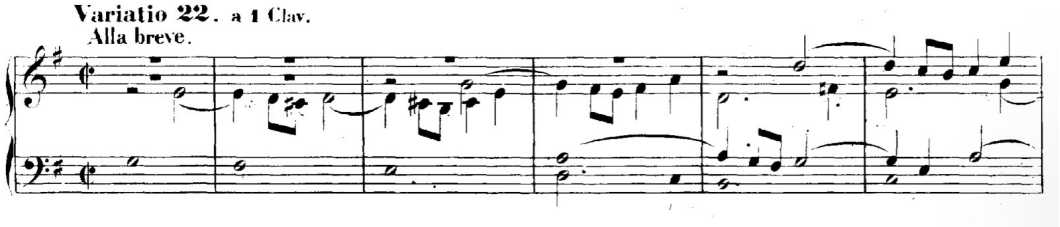
[30] Williams, 50.

Example 30
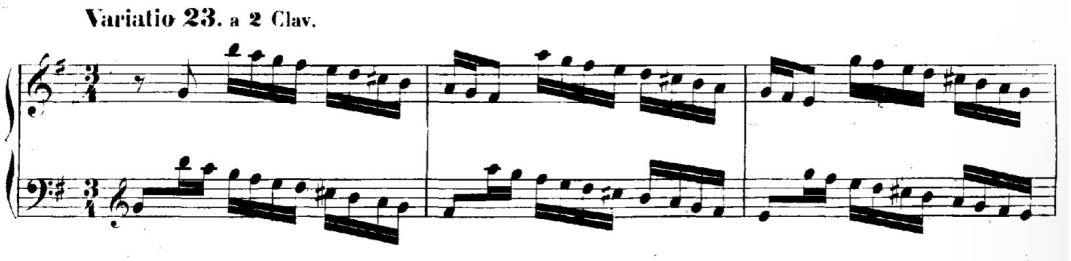



As example 31 shows, variation 22 is in the meter of 2/2. There is only one manual, but with four voices. The *alla breve* indication means a time signature, including two or four half-note beats in each bar. This may be a gavotte, which means a French dance in medium tempo, popular during the 18th century.

Example 31
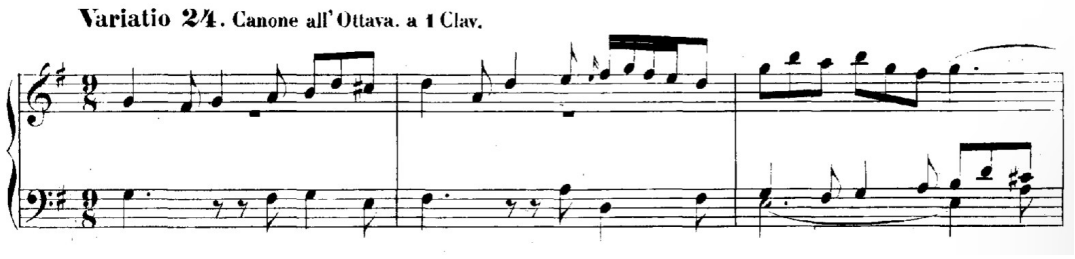



In example 32, variation 23 is in the meter of 3/4. There are two manuals with two to four voices. The hand-crossing technique occurs again in this variation.

Example 32
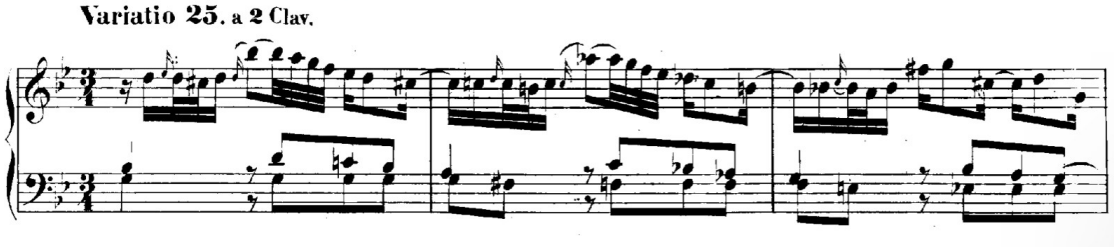


As example 33 shows, variation 24 is in the meter of 9/8. There is only one manual, but three voices. The canon at the octave is characteristic of this variation.

Example 33




Example 34 shows variation 25 is in the meter of 3/4. There are two manuals with three voices. It is the third and last time Bach used a minor key in this variation set. There is also a nickname for this variation, “black pearl.” As Williams pointed out, “The beauty and dark passion of this variation make it unquestionably the emotional high point of the work.”[31] The five variations after this variation finish the whole set with an uplifting spirit.
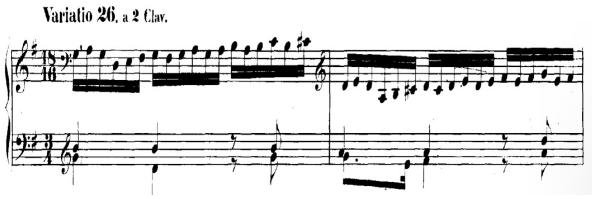
Example 34




[31] Williams, 82.
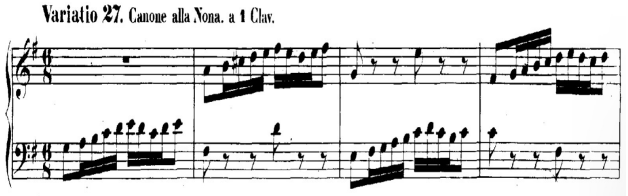
As example 35 shows, variation 26 is in the meter of 18/16. There are two manuals with three voices. The hand-crossing technique appears again in this variation.

Example 35
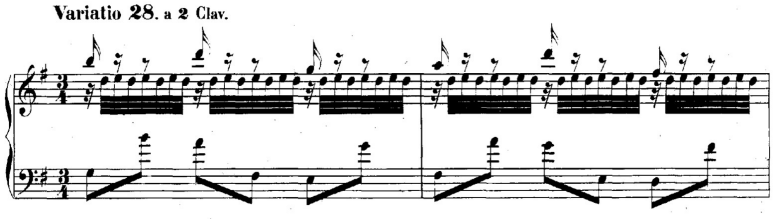



In example 36, variation 27 is in the meter of 6/8. There is only one manual, with two voices. The canon at the ninth sounds like a dialogue between two hands.

Example 36
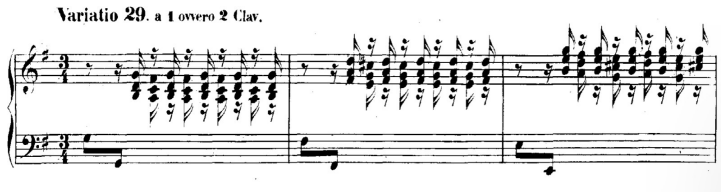



As example 37 shows, variation 28 is in the meter of 3/4. There are two manuals with two to four voices. The hand-crossing technique is used again in this variation. Moreover, it also has a lot of trills which is good training for pianists.

Example 37
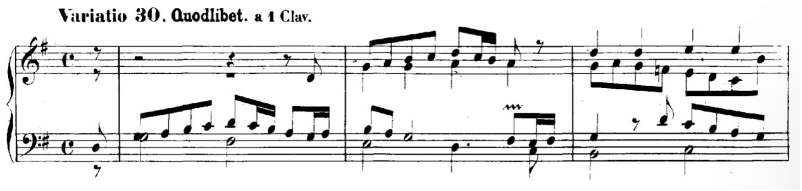


In example 38, variation 29 is in the meter of 3/4 again. There are either one or two manuals with two to three voices. Two hands alternate with many chords.

Example 38




As example 39 shows, variation 30 is in the meter of 4/4. There is only one manual, but with four voices. Instead of using the compositional technique of canon, this variation is known as quodlibet, which means a well-known tune with a lighthearted melody.

Example 39




After thirty variations, the repeated aria sounds like an older person recalling a lifetime. Therefore, the tempo should be slower than the beginning aria, although the notes are the same. As Williams pointed out, “The Goldberg’s elusive beauty, an uncanny world not quite like any other, is reinforced by this return to the Aria.”[32] Performers should feel each moment of this masterwork in their hearts.

[32] Williams, 92.

# THIRD DISSERTATION RECITAL PROGRAM

March 16, 2023. 5:00 PM
Gildenhorn Recital Hall, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center College Park, University of Maryland

Jiawei Yuan, piano

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata No. 7 in D major, Op. 10, No. 3

I. Presto
II. Largo e Mesto
III. Menuetto
IV. Rondo

Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 90

I. Mit Lebhaftigkeit und durchaus mit Empfindung und Ausdruck ("With liveliness and with feeling and expression throughout")
II. Nicht zu geschwind und sehr singbar vorgetragen ("Not too swiftly and conveyed in a singing manner")

Intermission

Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111

I. Maestoso – Allegro con brio ed appassionato
II. Arietta – Adagio molto semplice e cantabile

# RECORDING TRACK LISTING

Dissertation Recital #3 – CD 3

[TRACK 1, CD 3] 1:00:03

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I. Maestoso – Allegro con brio ed appassionato
II. Arietta – Adagio molto semplice e cantabile

# PROGRAM NOTES

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Classical era composers were more rational thinking in their compositional structures compared to the emphasis on feelings from most of the compositions from the Romantic era. Composers such as Beethoven had clear compositional skills in their sonatas. He was a revolutionary composer compared to his predecessors, Haydn, and Mozart. Haydn and Mozart wrote many beautiful melodies, long phrases full of humor, with organized and predictable Alberti basses.

However, Beethoven's style of composing some sonatas was based on short motives and motivic connections. The motives between the movements of Beethoven's early period sonata Op. 10, No. 3 are well connected. The E minor first movement of his middle-period sonata, Op. 90, contrasts tonally with its parallel key of E major in the second movement. His last sonata, Op. 111, from his late period, shows the contrast between the fast and dramatic first movement and the slow and contemplative second movement.

Beethoven studied with Haydn; his sense of humor came from his teacher. It is universally acknowledged that Haydn was praised as the "Father of Symphony" and "Father of String Quartet." Therefore, we can speculate that Beethoven's sudden dynamic changes might be partly because of his unpredictable temper, partly because of his humor, or partly caused by his imaginary orchestral contrast of tutti and solo sound effects.

As Boulanger argued, “Unlike a rigidly formal Baroque suite or an intensely persuasive but loosely structured piano cycle (or sonata) from the Romantic era, a sonata of Beethoven incorporates a variety of emotions into a logically ordered structure.”[33] Boulanger’s statement supports the argument that Beethoven's sonatas include rational thinking.

Sonata No. 7 in D major, Op. 10, No. 3

In 1798, Beethoven composed his Piano Sonata No. 7 in D major, Op. 10, No. 3, and dedicated it to Countess Anna Margarete von Browne. Gordon stated, “The first and second movements open with the same two melodic notes in the same register, descending a half-step. The fourth movement opens with an ascending half-step,”[34] For this early period sonata, Beethoven connected different movements through motivic similarities.

The first movement is in a brilliant style and is in sonata form. The tempo is presto, and the key is in D major. The opening has forward drive momentum, unprecedented for the first movements. According to Scheldrup, “It should be played lightly but with definiteness and precision.”[35] This movement is characterized by its

[33] Margaret Anne Boulanger, “Dramatic Processes in Two Piano Sonatas of Beethoven: Op. 10, No. 3, and Op. 101” (dissertation, n.d.), 52.

[34] Stewart Gordon, Beethoven’s 32 Piano Sonatas: A Handbook for Performers (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 128.

[35] Dorothy Marie Scheldrup, “Teaching Problems in Beethoven’s Piano Sonata Opus 10, No. 3” (dissertation, n.d.), 4.

four-note rhythmic motive. The character of this first movement is full of emotional extremes.

The second movement is sensitive and dark, in the key of D minor. The form is also in sonata form, and the tempo is *largo e mesto*. The harmony and structure in this slow movement are unstable. Some diminished seventh chords and augmented sixth chords make the music more dramatic. The character of this second movement is gloomy, melancholy, and ominous. As Scheldrup pointed out again, "Beethoven was beginning to realize that his hearing was growing weaker."[36] Thus, the mood for this movement is melancholy and thoughtful.

The third movement is in a singing style. It is in the key of D major. The form is in ABA with a minuet, and the tempo is allegro which also means happy. The graceful character in this movement makes a clear distinction from the sad, slow movement.

The finale is in a style of a brilliant scherzo. It is still in the key of D major. The form is in sonata rondo, and the tempo is also allegro. Beethoven employed a three-note rhythmic motive as questioning multiple times. This movement requires the pianist to understand Beethoven's humor and interpret it from a personal performance experience. The character of this finale is light-hearted with playfulness and humor.

[36] Scheldrup, 7.

As Boulanger wrote, “the intensity of the first two movements demands the resolution accomplished by the last two.”[37] The energetic first movement and the slow melancholy movement require the pianist to focus on physical precision to imitate different orchestral sound colors and emotional intensity to feel the tragedy in the parallel minor key. On the other hand, the joyful third and humorous last movements make the audience more relaxed, particularly after the tension created by the first two movements.

Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 90

In 1814, Beethoven composed his Piano Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 90. As his last middle-period sonata, he dedicated it to Prince Moritz von Lichnowsky. According to Gordon, “both movements open with upbeats leading to a downbeat on the third of the scale.”[38] This common compositional technique unifies these two movements.

As Macahilig pointed out, “Beethoven’s Middle Period is characterized as emotional, expressive, dramatic, and energetic.”[39] However, Op. 90 was a sonata transition to his late period, so he emphasized the development of motive more in this composition. Furthermore, it is more intimate than his earlier middle-period sonatas, such as Opp. 57, 81a, and 53.

[37] Boulanger, 56.
[38] Gordon, 228.
[39] Suzanne Macahilig, “A Method for the Interpretation of Beethoven’s Middle Period Piano Sonatas” (dissertation, n.d.), 406.

Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111

From 1821 to 1822, Beethoven composed his Piano Sonata No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111. In his late period, he became more spiritual and contrapuntal. Thus, there are some fugal elements in this sonata. He dedicated it to Archduke Rudolf, one of his friends, pupils, and patrons. According to Gordon, "the two movements of this work balance each other with striking contrasts, incorporating the dramatic and the contemplative, fast and slow tempi, and minor and major keys."[40] My understanding of the two contrasting movements is that the audience can feel the first movement as a turbulent hell while thinking the second movement is peaceful, which resembles the joy in heaven.

Floyd states, "The first movement, although in sonata form, is largely written in free fugal style, and the finale is a perfect example of a highly developed variation form."[41] Beethoven wrote fugues in his other late sonatas, such as Op. 106, and Op. 110. He also wrote a variation form for the third movement of his Op. 109. As Hochler pointed out, "this is not a jazz piano piece, though these rhythms do bear a strong resemblance to that style."[42] Beethoven was such a pioneer composer during his time compared to his contemporaries. Although Beethoven had a severe hearing problem when he composed his Op. 111, he could still hear the fun sound effect of

[40] Gordon, 262.

[41] J. Robert Floyd and Lloyd Hibberd, "Beethoven's Piano Sonata, Op. 111 in Its Historical Perspective" (dissertation, n.d.), 23.

[42] Andrew J. Hochler, "Musical Irony in Selected Piano Sonatas, by Ludwig Van Beethoven" (dissertation, n.d.), 83.

jazz in his mind. His spirit of optimism and fighting against his destiny always inspire us never give up but do our best to pursue our dreams.

## Conclusion

This performance-oriented dissertation project allowed me to study the masterworks of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms more deeply. After researching these selected compositions from these three extraordinary composers, they inspired me to learn more about their works to understand their musical souls fully. Exploring this meaningful project and performing it in three recitals was a joy. The more readings I study, the more intelligible I become when I learn these compositions, which are still admirable after hundreds of years because their musical spirits remain inside the hearts of listeners through the interpretation of performers. I plan to apply what I learned from this research to my future performances and teachings, particularly concerning topics such as the Baroque period ornamentation style, the Classical era's structural plan, and the expressive quality from the Romantic period. The balance between convincing styles and personal interpretations is a beauty that inspires more audiences to think and feel. As I researched for this project, I developed a curiosity that will last a lifetime and motivated me to study their quantitative and qualitative compositions. That is the way to open the mind and broaden the horizon.

# ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barsalou, June Eunice. “Bach's Goldberg Variations: An Historical and Style-Critical Approach,” 1954.

This thesis discusses the history of the Goldberg Variations. The author also listed other variations by Bach. In addition, there are comparisons between different compositions and the Goldberg Variations. Finally, the author also elaborated on this work's technical and stylistic analysis.

Boulanger, Margaret Anne. “Dramatic Processes in Two Piano Sonatas of Beethoven: Op. 10, No. 3 and Op. 101,” 1989.

This dissertation discusses preliminaries about editions and performance practice. Then, it introduces the dramatic models. Next, there is an overview of the sonatas. Finally, it has a detailed analysis of the structure in the presto movement and climax in the largo movement.

Choi, Whakyung. “The Italian Concerto of J.S.Bach and Its Interpretation,” 1966.

This thesis discusses the history of the concerto to 1750, Bach’s use of keyboard instruments, and ornaments. The author also elaborates on the Italian Concerto and includes a chapter specifically for dynamic problems.

Cole, Frances Elaine. “Bach's ‘Goldberg Variations:" A Descriptive Study and Analysis,” n.d.

This document discusses the Goldberg Variations in several aspects. The first chapter includes the abstract style, the unusual length of the composition, technical difficulties, interpretation, Baroque notational style, modernized editions, need for the study, statement of purpose, procedures followed in the study, literary sources, the analysis, considerations for performance, the instrument question, concepts of performance style, the editions, the recordings, and value of the study. The second chapter discusses the background of composition which contains historical context, philosophical influences, the Clavierubung, composers’ influence, general description, and formal structure. The third chapter introduces the analysis of the aria and thirty variations. The fourth chapter talks about the consideration for performance which includes harpsichord versus piano, the question of Baroque style, differing viewpoints, among authorities, the expressive details, the basis underlying the selection of editions and recordings, tempo, tempo suggestions from published editions, approximate tempi and duration times, dotted rhythms, rubato, observations of rubato: recordings, dynamics, suggested harpsichord registrations, observations of

dynamic treatment: recordings, phrasing, suggested applications for phrasing: Editions, Observations of phrasing: recordings, ornaments, observations of added ornaments: recordings, observations of substituted ornaments: recordings, observations of omitted ornaments: recordings, technical problems, repetitions. The fifth chapter discusses the summary, conclusions, and recommendations. There is also bibliography, and four appendixes.

Farrell, Maureen, Sister. “A Comparative Analysis of the Baroque Concerto Form of Johann Sebastian Bach's Italian Concerto in F and the Neo-Baroque Sonata- Allegro Form of Paul Hindemith's Piano Sonata No. 2,” 1966.

This document compares the Italian Concerto in F by Bach and the Piano Sonata No. 2 by Hindemith. It also discusses the principle Bach employed in the work of Hindemith. Each movement has a detailed analytical comparison between these two composers.

Floyd, J. Robert, and Lloyd Hibberd. “Beethoven's Piano Sonata, Op. 111 in Its Historical Perspective,” n.d.

This document elaborates on Beethoven’s last piano sonata. There are three chapters. The first chapter talks about the history of the sonata from the eighteenth century. The second chapter discusses Beethoven and his sonatas. The third chapter talks about the Op. 111 with background, general description, and special details.

Fritzen, Daniel. “The Second Piano Concertos of Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms: History, Analysis, and Performance Practice,” 2010.

This dissertation compares the second piano concertos from Liszt and Brahms. There are four major parts to this document. For Brahms's content, he discusses the form, arm weight, brilliance, pleasure and enjoyment, emotional change, symmetric structure, solo-orchestra interaction, technique, fingering, tempo flexibility, and physicality of articulation notation habits.

Gordon, Stewart. *Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas: A Handbook for Performers*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017.

This book discusses sources, Beethoven and the piano, performance practices, Beethoven’s expressive legacy, and the windmills of Beethoven’s mind. It further elaborates on each of Beethoven’s sonatas. Each sonata includes information about the biographical snapshot, information, observations, and detailed analysis on form, harmonies, and so on.

Hochler, A., 2021. *Musical Irony in selected piano sonatas by ludwig van beethoven*. Master of Arts in Music Theory. Hunter College The City University of New York.

This dissertation includes five chapters. The first chapter is about introduction to irony and literature. The second chapter describes types of irony. The third chapter is irony in music. The fourth chapter is irony in the music of Ludwig van Beethoven. The fifth chapter is irony in selected piano sonatas by Ludwig van Beethoven. In this final chapter, the author also mentioned the first and the fourth movements of the sonata in D major, Op. 10, No. 3 and sonata in C minor, Op. 111.

Huang, Hsing-Yu. "The Italian Concerto and the French Overture Styles in J.S.Bach's Selected Keyboard Music: With an Emphasis on the Ritornello Form and the So-Called French Dotted Rhythm," 2005.

This dissertation document consists of two styles from Bach. Huang discussed the historical background, the ritornello form, and performance practice for the Italian Concerto style. There are also musical analysis and performance suggestions for the Italian Concerto.

Kim, Jin Uk. "The Half Step in Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-Flat Major, Op. 83: A Study of the Motivic, Harmonic, and Tonal Relationships, Their Dramatic Significance, and Their Implications for Performance," n.d.

This doctoral dissertation discusses Brahms's second piano concerto in analysis, interpretation, and performance practice. There is a similarity between this concerto and his four symphonies. The development of the half step in this work reveals its harmonic, tonal, and motivic possibilities. The dramatic and structural effects in the half-step intervals make this composition expressive and coherent.

Kramer, Jonathan D. *Listen to the Music: A Self-Guided Tour through the Orchestral Repertoire*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1988.

This book is basically a program notes collection for orchestral music. Composers such as Bach, Barber, Bartók, Beethoven, Berg, Berlioz, Borodin, Brahms, Bruch, Bruckner, Chopin, Copland, Corelli, Debussy, Dvorák, Elgar, Falla, Franck, Glazunov, Grieg, Handel, Hindemith, Honegger, Ives, Janáček, Kodály, Liszt, MacDowell, Mahler, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Mussorgsky, Nielsen, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Respighi, Roussel, Saint-Saëns, Schoenberg, Schubert, Schumannn, Shostakovich, Sibelius, Strauss, Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky, Villa-Lobos, Vivaldi, Wagner, and Webern are included. The compositions include Concertos, Suites for Orchestra, Toccata and Fugue, Symphonies, Overture, Quartet, Concerto Grosso, and Symphonic Variations.

Macahilig, Suzanne. "A Method for the Interpretation of Beethoven's Middle Period Piano Sonatas," n.d.

This dissertation includes a list of timelines, a list of musical examples, and twelve chapters with a bibliography. The first chapter is an introduction. The second chapter talks about the classic era. The third chapter is an overview of Beethoven sonatas. The fourth chapter contains analysis for selected sonatas. The fifth chapter discusses existing analytical methods. The sixth chapter talks ab out method of analysis. The seventh chapter elaborates on the sonata Op. 57. The eighth chapter talks about sonata Op. 81a. The ninth chapter talks about sonata Op. 31, No. 2. The tenth chapter discusses sonata Op. 53. The eleventh chapter talks about sonata Op. 90. The last chapter concludes and recommends further study.

Scheldrup, Dorothy Marie. “Teaching Problems in Beethoven's Piano Sonata Opus 10, No. 3,” n.d.

There are three chapters in this dissertation. The first chapter introduces the sonata. The second chapter discusses its interpretation. The third chapter talks about its technical problems.

Williams, Peter. *Bach: the Goldberg Variations*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

This book elaborates Bach’s Goldberg Variations. There is an introduction part. The author also talks about its background and genesis. The chapter of its overall shape provides clear point of view for readers. The writer also wrote detailed analysis for each variation with a chapter of questions of reception.