

From Classical Roots to Romantic Blossoms:
The Evolution of Motivic Organicism in the Music of Frédéric Chopin

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Abstract

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This dissertation explores the origin and evolution of motivic development across the Classical period and its transformation within the Romantic genre with a particular focus on how Frédéric Chopin synthesizes these techniques to form his dual musical identity—one deeply rooted in Classical traditions while simultaneously reforming a distinct Romantic expression. By tracing the development of motivic techniques in the works of key Classical composers such as C.P.E. Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, and analyzing Chopin's stylistic evolution in his works including *Ballades*, *Barcarolle*, and *Piano Sonata in B Minor, Op. 58*, this study examines how Chopin gradually enriched his musical language by incorporating Classical tradition with Romantic innovations, culminating in a musical style that is both structurally cohesive and aesthetically original.

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND	1
RESOURCES	5
EDITIONS	6
CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND CLASSICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	8
MOTIVIC DEVELOPMENT IN C.P.E. BACH.....	8
MOTIVIC DEVELOPMENT IN HAYDN.....	14
MOTIVIC DEVELOPMENT IN MOZART.....	21
MOTIVIC DEVELOPMENT IN BEETHOVEN	35
CHAPTER 2: CHOPIN’S STYLISTIC EVOLUTION	44
BALLADE NO. 1	44
BALLADE NO. 3.....	51
BALLADE NO. 4.....	58
BARCAROLLE.....	65
CONCLUSION OF CHOPIN’S STYLISTIC EVOLUTION.....	71
CHAPTER 3: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF CHOPIN PIANO SONATA NO. 3 IN B MINOR	73
INTRODUCTION	73
FIRST MOVEMENT: ALLEGRO MAESTOSO	74
SECOND MOVEMENT: SCHERZO. MOLTO VIVACE.....	87
THIRD MOVEMENT: LARGO	90
FOURTH MOVEMENT: FINALE.....	95
SUMMARY OF CHOPIN’S B-MINOR SONATA.....	106
PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS	111
CONCLUSION.....	115
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	122

List of Examples

Chapter 1

- Ex. 1 The different variations of the motif in the Bach Cello Suite in G major: (1) Prelude, m. 2; (2) Allemande and Sarabande, m. 1; (3) Courante, m. 1; (4) Menuet I, m. 1
- Ex. 2 C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 1st movement, mm. 1-2
- Ex. 3 C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 1st movement, mm. 5-8
- Ex. 4 C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 1st movement, mm. 9-12
- Ex. 5 C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 1st movement, mm. 19-22
- Ex. 6 C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 2nd movement, mm. 1-4
- Ex. 7 C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 2nd movement, mm. 20-35
- Ex. 8 C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 2nd movement, mm. 58-69
- Ex. 9 Haydn Keyboard Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI:23 (1773), 1st movement, mm. 1-3
- Ex. 10 Haydn Keyboard Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI:23 (1773), 1st movement, mm. 21-26
- Ex. 11 Haydn Keyboard Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI:23 (1773), 1st movement, mm. 33-38
- Ex. 12 Haydn Keyboard Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI:23 (1773), 2nd movement, mm. 1
- Ex. 13 Haydn Keyboard Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI:23 (1773), 1st movement, mm. 1-3 and 3rd movement, mm. 1-4.
- Ex. 14 Haydn Keyboard Sonata in D Major, Hob. XVI:42 (1784), 1st movement, mm. 1-3
- Ex. 15 Haydn Keyboard Sonata in G Major Hob. XVI:40 (1784), 1st movement, mm. 1-2
- Ex. 16 Haydn Keyboard Sonata in G Major Hob. XVI:40 (1784), 2nd movement, mm. 1-2
- Ex. 17 Haydn Keyboard Sonata in G Major Hob. XVI:40 (1784), 2nd movement, mm. 11-12
- Ex. 18 Mozart Fantasie in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 1-2
- Ex. 19 Mozart Fantasie in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 5-10
- Ex. 20 Mozart Fantasie in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 16-22
- Ex. 21 Mozart Fantasie in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 42-49
- Ex. 22 Mozart Fantasie in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 91 and mm. 107-111
- Ex. 23 Mozart Fantasie in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 130 and mm. 156-165
- Ex. 24 Mozart Piano Sonata in F Major K. 280 (1774), 2nd movement, mm. 1-4
- Ex. 25 Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 1-4
- Ex. 26 Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 6-15
- Ex. 27 Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 63-66
- Ex. 28 Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 80-96
- Ex. 29 Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 108-117
- Ex. 30 Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 3rd movement, mm. 107-120
- Ex. 31 Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 3rd movement, mm. 30-39
- Ex. 32 Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 3rd movement, mm. 58-62
- Ex. 33 Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 3rd movement, mm. 103-111

- Ex. 34 Mozart Fantasie in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 1-7
- Ex. 35 Mozart Piano Sonata in B \flat Major K. 570 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 1-13
- Ex. 36 Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 1-10
- Ex. 37 Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 1st movement, mm. 1-4
- Ex. 38 Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 1st movement, mm. 11-28
- Ex. 39 Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 1st movement, mm. 29-46
- Ex. 40 Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 3rd movement, mm. 1-8
- Ex. 41 Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 4th movement, mm. 29-40
- Ex. 42 Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 4th movement, mm. 113-119
- Ex. 43 Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 4th movement, mm. 123-128
- Ex. 44 Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 4th movement, mm. 170-175
- Ex. 45 Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 4th movement, mm. 194-204

Chapter 2

- Ex. 46 Chopin Ballade No. 1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 1-9
- Ex. 47 Chopin Ballade No. 1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 1-13
- Ex. 48 Chopin Ballade No. 1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 34-35
- Ex. 49 Chopin Ballade No. 1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 36-37
- Ex. 50 Chopin Ballade No. 1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 41-43
- Ex. 51 Chopin Ballade No. 1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 44
- Ex. 52 Chopin Ballade No. 1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), introduction mm. 1-9 and second theme mm. 65-73
- Ex. 53 Chopin Ballade No. 1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 138-139 and Three Waltzes op. 34: No. 1 (1838), mm. 33-36
- Ex. 54 Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 1-2
- Ex. 55 Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 6-15
- Ex. 56 Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 23-30
- Ex. 57 Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 33-36
- Ex. 58 Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 50-60
- Ex. 59 Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 91-100
- Ex. 60 Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 116-119
- Ex. 61 Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 228-241
- Ex. 62 Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 1-8
- Ex. 63 Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 6-16
- Ex. 64 Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 37-48
- Ex. 65 Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 56-61

- Ex. 66 Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 91-95
- Ex. 67 Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 195-210
- Ex. 68 Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 211-214
- Ex. 69 Chopin Barcarolle in F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 1-3
- Ex. 70 Chopin Barcarolle in F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 4-7
- Ex. 71 Chopin Barcarolle in F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 13-14
- Ex. 72 Chopin Barcarolle in F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 31-32
- Ex. 73 Chopin Barcarolle in F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 35-36
- Ex. 74 Chopin Barcarolle in F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 39-42
- Ex. 75 Chopin Barcarolle in F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 62-65
- Ex. 76 Chopin Barcarolle in F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 78-79
- Ex. 77 Chopin Barcarolle in F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 111-116

Chapter 3

- Ex. 78 Hugo Leichtentritt's Demonstration on Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement
- Ex. 79 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 1-4
- Ex. 80 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 9-15
- Ex. 81 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 2-3 and mm. 17-18
- Ex. 82 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 23-24
- Ex. 83 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 31-34
- Ex. 84 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 41-46
- Ex. 85 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 57-58
- Ex. 86 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 61-70
- Ex. 87 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 76-79
- Ex. 88 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 94-102
- Ex. 89 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 106-109
- Ex. 90 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 110-117
- Ex. 91 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 199-204
- Ex. 92 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 2nd movement, mm. 1 and mm. 61-64
- Ex. 93 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 2nd movement, mm. 1-2
- Ex. 94 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 2nd movement, mm. 73-77
- Ex. 95 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 3rd movement, mm. 1-4
- Ex. 96 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 151-152 and 3rd movement, mm. 4
- Ex. 97 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 3rd movement, mm. 7-10
- Ex. 98 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 3rd movement, mm. 32-36

- Ex. 99 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 3rd movement, mm. 113-119
- Ex. 100 The structure of Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, proposed by Zukiewicz
- Ex. 101 Chopin' Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 1-19 and 1st movement, mm. 13-18
- Ex. 102 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 9
- Ex. 103 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 9-24
- Ex. 104 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 52-53 and 1st movement, mm. 192-193
- Ex. 105 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 52-53 and 2nd movement in mm. 61-68
- Ex. 106 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 54-56
- Ex. 107 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 76
- Ex. 108 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 80-85
- Ex. 109 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 200-206
- Ex. 110 Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 271-286
- Ex. 111 Motivic structure of Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844)

Introduction

Background

Motivic development has been a basic technique of Western music since at least the fifteenth century, but the use and character of the motif altered radically in the later eighteenth century, evolving with the maturation of the sonata form.¹ In the Classical sonata form, duality and unity are two fundamental elements. Through contrasting musical themes, composers create tension, conflict, and drama. However, this also presents a danger in the sonata form, as Rosen points out, “Some of the thematic elements are highly characteristic, and they are so easily separated and rearranged that the work loses its continuity and falls to pieces in the hands of the incompetent composer.”² Thus, while differences and contrasts in musical material are crucial, composers strive to maintain a strong sense of unity throughout the composition. Motivic development plays a crucial role in achieving the thematic coherence and structural unity of compositions as it enables composers to expand a small idea into a cohesive work of significant scope.

C.P.E. Bach was the first master who applied the motif to emphasize the articulations of the form; this technique was refined and developed by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.³ For Haydn, everything comes from the theme, as the composer himself claimed, “Out of the character of the theme and its possibilities of development arises the shape of the musical

¹ Charles Rosen, *Sonata Forms* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), 178.

² Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 201.

³ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 178.

discourse.”⁴ Beethoven carried this a step further: both the large-scale structure and themes were worked out together. He not only made sketches for the themes and individual passages but also for the work as a whole; the conception of the entire work gradually took form and influenced the details of the individual themes.⁵ Miraculously, all Beethoven sonatas, in various ways, project towards the finale.

The Classical focus on motivic development laid a foundation for the Romantic generations. Nevertheless, when considering Frédéric Chopin’s compositions, one immediately thinks of him as the composer who “properly set romantic pianism on its rails and gave it the impetus that still shows no signs of deceleration. . . . He did this all by himself, evolving from nowhere the most beautiful and original piano style of the century. He was the very first of the new pianists, the one who snapped for all time the thongs of classicism.”⁶ In fact, as Schonberg indicates in his book, “Chopin was ‘a romantic who hated romanticism.’ He disliked the word “romanticism” and avoided the general sway of the romantic movement as much as he could, even if he was on good terms with all the musicians of his day but did not like their music. The only two great composers who meant anything to him were Bach and Mozart.”⁷ Simultaneously, “Chopin had a mighty pull toward Bach and Mozart. He studied them thoroughly, and their ideas of workmanship are significantly reflected in his own music and pianism.”⁸ Schonberg

⁴ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 178.

⁵ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 178.

⁶ Harold C. Schonberg, *The Great Pianists* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), 145.

⁷ Schonberg, *The Great Pianists*, 146.

⁸ Schonberg, *The Great Pianists*, 156.

continues, “Bach was always an inspiration to Chopin; and before a concert he would shut himself up and play from the Well-Tempered Clavier.”⁹

However, Chopin’s deep connection to the Classical tradition was often overlooked, as Huneker claims, “The classic quality of his compositions, their clarity, concision, purity, structural balance, were largely missed by so many of his contemporaries. . . . His original manner of distributing his thematic material deceived the critics.”¹⁰ Moreover, writes Huneker, “To his audience and critics, his music was evolutionsal, exotic and perhaps insane.”¹¹ Walker cited English cleric Reginal Haweis’s comments on Chopin’s B \flat -minor sonata, “He was great in small things, and small in great ones.”¹² During his time, the main criticism towards Chopin’s composition was Chopin’s lack of control over large-scale musical structure. When Robert Schumann reviewed the B \flat -minor sonata after its publication in 1840, he was bothered by the seeming lack of unity among the movements and called Chopin’s use of the word “sonata” to describe the work as “capricious, if not downright presumptuous.”¹³ He told his readers that “Chopin has here tied together four of his most unruly children into places that they could otherwise never have reached.”¹⁴ Meanwhile, the B-Minor Sonata also attracted criticism for its lack of unity almost immediately after its publication. Moritz Karasowski, Chopin’s biographer,

⁹ Schonberg, *The Great Pianists*, 155.

¹⁰ James Huneker, “The Classic Chopin,” *The Musical Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (1915): 520.

¹¹ Huneker, “The Classic Chopin,” 145.

¹² Alan Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin: A Life and Times* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 418.

¹³ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 410.

¹⁴ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 410.

wrote that “the composer seemed to have found it difficult to keep the profusion of thought within due proportion.”¹⁵

Walker also noted that “The fine balance that Chopin achieved between respect for tradition and his urge to innovate was neither immediately recognized nor then immediately forgiven by our forefathers.”¹⁶ It is not until the modern era that Chopin’s intricacy and successful combination of traditional techniques with his unique genius and sensibilities become fully apparent. His innovative reimagining of Classical motivic development elevated this technique to a new artistic height, creating monumental works within the Classical piano repertoire.

This dissertation aims to explore the origin and evolution of motivic writing throughout the Classical period and its transformation in the Romantic genre with a particular focus on how Chopin synthesized these techniques to form his dual identity—one rooted in Classical traditions while reforming a unique Romantic expression. By analyzing the motivic process in Chopin’s writing from different periods, this study examines how his music reflects a deep connection to Classical roots while simultaneously showcasing his unique Romantic style.

Chapter 1 will provide comprehensive historical context by tracing the development of the motivic technique in the works of key Classical composers, including C.P.E Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, to present how each of these composers contributed to the experimentation and expansion of this technique. Chapter 2 will examine Chopin’s stylistic evolution through selected works such as his Ballades and Barcarolle. This chapter will show how Chopin gradually enriches his musical texture, skillfully incorporating Classical writing

¹⁵ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 479.

¹⁶ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 418.

with Romantic elements. Chapter 3 will present an in-depth analysis of Chopin's B-Minor Sonata, focusing on the motivic development in each movement. It will discuss how Chopin's exploration and innovation culminate in a style that is both structurally cohesive and emotionally expansive.

Resources

Jenny Sumono's 1997 thesis and Adam Zukiewicz's 2012 dissertation are two major studies on Chopin's Sonata in B Minor, opus. 58¹⁷. Sumono's thesis begins by introducing Chopin as a composer, pianist, and teacher, along with the historical background of the B-Minor Sonata. It provides an extensive analysis from the perspectives of melody, harmony, texture, and form. At the same time, Sumono examines historical performance practices and interpretations, including the evolution of the piano from Chopin's time to the present and the differences between the editions of Hele-Urtext and Paderewski. Zukiewicz's study presents a detailed historical context. It discusses Chopin's evolution of expression in his late style, focusing on the blend of genres, texture, and chromaticism, including the structural ambiguities and the formal hybridization of the Sonata in B Minor, op. 58.

Charles Rosen's works also provide valuable historical reference and inspiration. *Sonata Forms*, published in 1980, offers an extensive analysis of composition from the Baroque to the Classical period, including C.P.E. Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, accompanied by insightful observations and commentary.¹⁸ *The Romantic Generation*, published in 1995,

¹⁷ Jenny Sumono, "Frederic Chopin's Piano Sonata, Op. 58 in B Minor: An Analytical, Performance Practice, and Interpretation Study"(master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach, August 1997); Adam Zukiewicz, "Chopin's Third Piano Sonata, Op. 58: Late Style, Formal Ambiguity, and Performance Considerations" (DMA diss., University of Toronto, 2012).

¹⁸ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*.

discusses Chopin's counterpoint, narrative forms, and his evolution, as described by Rosen as, "from miniature genre to the sublime style."¹⁹

Alan Walker's book *Fryderyk Chopin, a Life and Times*, provides a wealth of literary records and rich details about Chopin's life, serving as historical context for research purposes. Other frequently cited books include Jim Samson's *Chopin: The Four Ballades* and Harold C. Schonberg's *The Great Pianist*. Journal articles that offer unique insights include Haling Goldberg's "Phrase Structure in Chopin's Early Works in the Light of Elsner's Instruction," Samantha M. Inman's "The Inner and Outer Form of Haydn's Monothematic Sonatas," Wayne C. Petty's "Chopin and the Ghost of Beethoven," Josquin Larsen's "Motivic Continuity in the Instrumental Suites, Sonatas, and Partitas of J. S. Bach," and John Rink's "Chopin's Ballades and the Dialectic: Analysis in Historical Perspective."

Editions

The music scores used for analysis and examples are:

C.P.E. Bach, *Württemberg Sonata*, Nagel's Musik-Archiv, no. 21-22 (Hannover: Adolph Nagel's Verlag, 1928; reprinted, Miami: Belwin-Mills, Ed. K3089). Online available at IMSLP.

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¹⁹ Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 410.

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- Frédéric Chopin, *Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58*, ed. Ludwik Bronarski, Ignacy Jan Paderewski, and Józef Turczyński. *Complete Works / Fryderyk Chopin*, Vol. 6. (Warsaw: Instytut Fryderyka Chopina, 1950), Plate PWM 235. Online available at IMSLP.

Chapter 1: Historical Context and Classical Foundations

Motivic Development in C.P.E. Bach

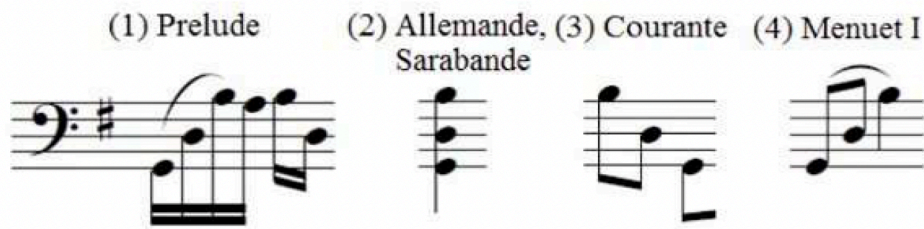
It is well established that motivic development is a hallmark of Western Art Music, particularly since the advent of sonata form in the Classical period. In large-scale musical forms, motivic elements unify the movements within an aesthetic whole. However, in the Baroque period, motivic elements abound in compositions, how a motive unifies larger-scale instrumental works, is not readily discussed.²⁰

In this article, Larsen presents an in-depth analysis of J.S. Bach's development and integration of motivic material, including how he applied voice-leading motifs, pitch motifs, rhythmic motifs, and harmonic outline in works to create continuity in the Solo Suites and Partitas. In his study, Larsen analyses Bach's methods of developing motivic ideas and also demonstrates how motifs are tightly interconnected between different dances in his Cello Suite in G major (ex. 1).²¹ He states, "Motives serve as thread, and their treatment is an important process that Bach uses to unify solo instrumental works."²²

²⁰ Josquin Larsen, "Motivic Continuity in the Instrumental Suites, Sonatas, and Partitas of J. S. Bach," *College Music Symposium* 60, no. 1 (2020): 1.

²¹ Larsen, "Motivic Continuity," 6.

²² Larsen, "Motivic Continuity," 3.



Ex. 1. The different variations of the motif in the Cello suite in G major: (1) Prelude, m. 2; (2) Allemande and Sarabande, m. 1; (3) Courante, m. 1; (4) Menuet I, m. 1

C.P.E. Bach inherited and developed his father's motivic techniques, pioneering the technique of using motifs to highlight the articulations of sonata form.²³ A sense of coherence is achieved by placing motivic materials on the structural points of the movement. In his Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, composed in 1742, he constructs two principal motivic groups presented in the first two bars: Motif A opens with an ascending arpeggio forming a minor triad, followed by a dotted rhythm and a quicker thirty-second-notes figure, concluding with stepwise descending eighth notes. This motif is followed by two variations, Motif A1 and Motif A2. Motif A1 is the shortened version of the motif A: quick ascending arpeggio and stepwise eighth notes. Motif A2 is characterized by its triplet figure (ex. 2).



Ex. 2. C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 1st movement, mm. 1-2

²³ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 178.

Motif B begins in the left hand with the same ascending arpeggio triad, but it is followed by quarter-note harmonic basses. It contains two layers, with a longer pattern that contains skip and step motion.

This combination of two motifs reappears in the rest of the sonata and emphasizes the structure of the first movement. In measures 1-2, both Motifs A and B serve as the primary thematic statement. Then, in measure 5, Motif A forms an imitation of upper voices, while A1 is played in the left hand. Together, they function as a bridge, modulating to the dominant (ex. 3).

The image displays a musical score for C.P.E. Bach's Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, measures 5-8. The score is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 5 and 6, and the second system covers measures 7 and 8. In the first system, the right hand (treble clef) plays Motif A, which is marked with a red 'A' above the notes. The left hand (bass clef) plays Motif A1, marked with a red 'A1' below the notes. The word 'forte' is written above the first measure of the first system. The second system shows a continuation of these motifs, with Motif A in the right hand and Motif A1 in the left hand. The key signature is one flat (A minor), and the time signature is 3/4.

Ex. 3. C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 1st movement, mm. 5-8

In measures 10-12, Motif A and Motif B reappear as the original combination, but this time in E Minor, solidifying the transition to the dominant. Meanwhile, Motif A starts in the right hand,

but motifs A1 and A2 are moved to the left hand (ex. 4):

A musical score for piano, showing two staves. The right hand (treble clef) contains a complex melodic line with many sixteenth notes. The left hand (bass clef) contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. A red bracket labeled 'A' spans a phrase in the right hand. A blue bracket labeled 'B' spans a phrase in the left hand.

A musical score for piano, showing two staves. The right hand (treble clef) contains a melodic line with some slurs and accents. The left hand (bass clef) contains a rhythmic accompaniment with triplets. A red line labeled 'a)' connects a note in the right hand to a note in the left hand. A blue bracket labeled 'B' is under the left hand. The number '5' is in the top right corner.

Ex. 4. C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 1st movement, mm. 9-12

In measures 19-22, Motifs A and B recur together as the closing theme (ex. 5).

A musical score for piano, showing two staves. The right hand (treble clef) contains a melodic line with slurs and accents. The left hand (bass clef) contains a rhythmic accompaniment. The word 'forte' is written in the left hand. A red bracket labeled 'A' spans a phrase in the right hand. A blue bracket labeled 'B' spans a phrase in the left hand. The score is divided into two sections, labeled '1.' and '2.'.

Ex. 5. C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 1st movement, mm. 19-22

Throughout this movement, Motif A undergoes various development. For instance, in measures 5-8 and 28-30, Motif A forms a sequence in the left hand, and A1 forms imitation in the right hand. Another notable instance is the three “suspension phrases” that go to the secondary dominant seventh in measures 17-18, 43-45, and 56-57, which precede the arrival of the closing theme in each exposition, development, and recapitulation. These phrases are all from Motif A, including the ascending triad with stepwise descending and triplet rhythm. These phrases emphasize the suspension and the delayed arrival of the resolution. Conversely, throughout the movement, Motif B consistently accompanies Motif A and is never independently developed as a primary theme or harmonic bridge.

Second Movement:

Rosen points out that in Bach’s sonatas, one sees the Classical hierarchy between the principal voice and accompaniment but no interchange. He writes, “A is the motif of the principal voice, but it never enters the accompaniment; B is an accompaniment figure, and at no point in the movement does it ever become the melody.”²⁴ While this is mostly the case, an exception occurs in the second movement of Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor.

Intriguingly, Bach begins to explore a sense of coherence by developing the same motif material from the previous movement. This time, Motif B from the first movement emerges as the principal melody and is played together with Motif A (ex. 6).

²⁴ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 181.



Ex. 6. C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 2nd movement, mm. 1-4

In measures 1-4, the opening theme is shaped by two contrasting motifs. Measures 1-2 are a transformation of Motif B from the first movement—it retains the longer note values and the phrasal figure and features a two-voice texture with an interval of a sixth. Moreover, it commences with the exact same notes as in the first movement, A and C, but now appears in a major key. Measures 3-4 present a transformation of Motif A characterized by its ascending and descending contours, brisk note values, and the inclusion of triplet figures.

Next, measures 20-24 and 32-35 reintroduce the same motivic combination (ex. 7).

Ex. 7. C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 2nd movement, mm. 20-35

However, in measures 60-69, in which the closing theme is formed, Bach rearranges Motifs A and B. Here, Motif B is elongated into four measures; the note's value is doubled to a half note and is followed by a quarter-note repetition. Motif A follows with its original meter (ex. 8).

Ex. 8. C.P.E. Bach, Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor, (1742), 2nd movement, mm. 58-69

In this sonata, C.P.E. Bach develops an idea of consistent motivic structure for the music. Nevertheless, the scale of development is relatively limited. Motifs barely undergo dramatic changes in character or shifts in emotion within a single movement. The themes are transposed and then repeated in the same rhythmic pattern, rather than transforming into a different contour. The musical expression of motifs remains largely simple throughout.

Motivic development in Haydn

In the previous analysis, the case for developing the accompaniment into the melodic function found in C.P.E. Bach's Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor is rare. Haydn explores new possibilities in motivic development by increasing the significance of accompaniment. Rosen claims that "before Haydn, an accompaniment could occasionally be fashioned out of the motifs of the principal voice, but the most fruitful solution was to learn how to make themes out

Ex. 10. Haydn Keyboard Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI:23 (1773), 1st movement, mm. 21-26

By the time the music modulates to the dominant, Motif B is echoed by the principal notes of the right hand's thirty-second notes of the running figure. Emphasized by a unison in thirds, Motif B evolves into the second thematic group (ex. 11).

Ex. 11. Haydn Keyboard Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI:23 (1773), 1st movement, mm. 33-38

The second movement offers an even more striking transformation. The initial three notes—C-A-F—of Motif A from the first movement are inverted and repeated in sixteenth notes, forming a triplet accompaniment figure. Meanwhile, Motif B from the first movement retains its contour and original intervallic relationships in the minor key but is now presented as the right-hand melody (ex.12). By relocating Motif B to the melodic line and adding ornamentation, Haydn shifts its character to one of lyricism and melancholy.



Ex. 12. Haydn Keyboard Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI:23 (1773), 2nd movement, mm. 1

The third movement retains the same motivic combination as the first movement. The right hand plays the main notes of Motif A from the first movement in a different order; both intervals and the characters show the connection. The left hand plays Motif B from the first movement with exactly the same notes, A-Bb-A (ex. 13). These examples showcase Haydn's mastery of thematic development and transformation and his deliberate effort to maintain a cohesive dialogue between the movements.

1st movement, mm. 1-3



3rd movement, mm. 1-4

Ex. 13. Haydn Keyboard Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI:23 (1773), 1st movement, mm. 1-3 and 3rd movement, mm. 1-4

Monothematicism: Deriving accompaniment from the motif

Besides transforming the accompaniment into a melody, Haydn employs another device to accomplish the coherence of the composition—crafting both the melody and the accompaniment from the same motivic material. Haydn’s Piano Sonata in D Major, Hob. XVI:42 offers a clear example of this technique. In measures 1-2, the primary notes of the right-hand melody are D-E-D, while the left-hand accompaniment emphasizes the notes F#-G-F#. Both sequences share a similar intervallic structure and stepwise contour. This parallelism continues in measures 3-4, where the motifs in both hands consist of five-note descending scales (ex. 14).

Ex. 14. Haydn Keyboard Sonata in D Major, Hob. XVI:42 (1784), 1st movement, mm. 1-3

Haydn's genius lies in his ability to embellish this foundational motif. In this movement, he transforms this basic element into a rich and varied theme by introducing small repetitions, incorporating dotted rhythms, and adding ornamental decoration to the right hand. He blurs the traditional boundaries between the melody and accompaniment, creating a more integrated and harmonious musical texture.

Motif consistency and continuation between the movements

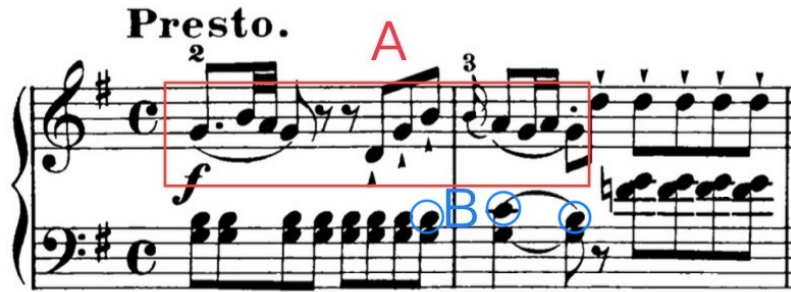
Haydn's commitment to this thematic approach can be further exemplified in the Sonata in G Major Hob. XVI:40. This sonata demonstrates Haydn's adeptness in carrying over the motif material from the first movement to subsequent ones. By doing so, he finds a way to keep a connection between movements. In measures 1-2 of the first movement, Motif A in the right hand presents an ornamented melody characterized by repeated notes. Concurrently, notes B-C-B delineate Motif B in the left hand (ex. 15). This pairing of the primary group consistently recurs in the ensuing variations.



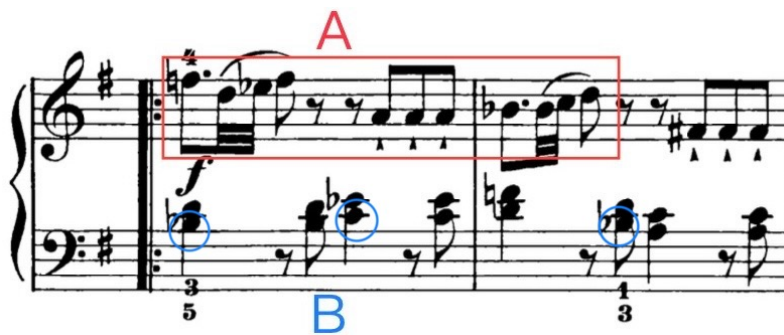
Ex. 15. Haydn Keyboard Sonata in G Major Hob. XVI:40 (1784), 1st movement, mm. 1-2

In the second movement, the combination of Motifs A and B persists throughout each section. The sequence B-C-B is noticeable in every segment, predominantly in the left hand,

undergoing multiple modulations (ex. 16 and 17).



Ex. 16. Haydn Keyboard Sonata in G Major Hob. XVI:40 (1784), 2nd movement, mm. 1-2



Ex. 17. Haydn Keyboard Sonata in G Major Hob. XVI:40 (1784), 2nd movement, mm. 11-12

Haydn described his compositional process to his early biographer Georg August Griesinger as

I sat down, began to improvise, sad or happy according to my mood, serious or trifling. Once I had seized upon an idea, my whole endeavor was to develop and sustain it in keeping with the rules of art. Thus, I sought to keep going, and this is where so many of our new composers fall down. They string out one little piece after another; they break off when they have hardly begun, and nothing remains in the heart when one has listened to it.²⁶

The examples above illustrate Haydn's endeavor to maintain coherence throughout his compositional process. Motifs and their evolution present various musical characters and

²⁶ Samantha M. Inman, "The Inner and Outer Form of Haydn's Monothematic Sonatas," *Theory and Practice* 41 (2016): 3.

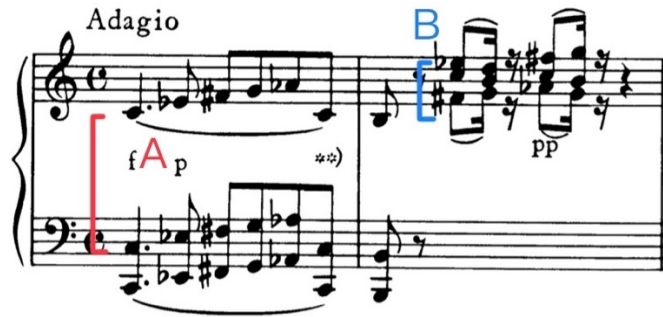
expressions in his works. Simultaneously, Haydn uses various techniques to allow initial motifs to penetrate different movements, contributing to a strong sense of coherence and unity.

Motivic development in Mozart

Making the individual and permutable motivic elements

Building on Haydn's foundation, Mozart stands out as a master in preserving a sense of unity by developing the motivic material throughout his compositions. Going beyond traditional conventions, the motif in his composition is not merely developed thoroughly but also maintains a strong sense of drama and contrast. This contrast in Mozart's music is not limited to different sections of a movement or between movements; motifs themselves are designed with strong contrasts and multiplicity.

In Fantasia K. 475, Mozart introduces this contrast immediately within the motifs of the first two bars. Once established, this contrast serves as a cohesive thread that runs throughout the movement. Motif A from measure 1 is characterized by an extended gesture marked by a dotted rhythm. This motif employs longer note durations and has a stepwise progression that moves in both ascending and descending motion, giving it a strong and heavy-hearted presence. On the other hand, Motif B from measure 2 presents a more concise gesture, beginning with an upbeat rest. Its rhythmic structure, characterized by a long-short note pattern and generally briefer durations of beats, presents a sense of delicacy and grace, standing in great contrast to the weightiness of Motif A (ex. 18).



Ex. 18. Mozart Fantasia in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 1-2

The use of monothematicism to derive accompaniment from the motif material, as already demonstrated in Haydn’s Piano Sonata in D major, Hob. XVI:42, is refined by Mozart. As Rosen points out, “Mozart’s motif reveals the same relation between main voice and accompanying voices and the same ambiguities that we have observed in Haydn’s, with a delicacy, even a smoothness of surface that was not in Haydn’s range.”²⁷ The beginning of Fantasia K. 475 proves how Mozart adopts a more concise approach—in measures 1-2, both hands present Motif A and Motif B in unison; there is no extra accompaniment. From the beginning, both motifs are treated as the primary melody. Mozart then constructs the whole movement with these two short motifs.

Following the introduction of the two motifs, the Adagio section in measure 6 continues with Motif A, which is transposed and repeated in various keys, serving as a bridge (ex. 19).

²⁷ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 201.

5

f p

A

8

f p

A inversion

f p

A

Ex. 19. Mozart Fantasia in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 5-10

By measure 16, a transformed version of Motif B takes over the music, characterized by its stepwise descending pattern and lightweight character. In measure 18, a condensed rendition of Motif A, with its note values transitioning from eighth notes to thirty-second notes and its recognizable contour, enters the scene, engaging in a dialogue with Motif B. This transformation progressively increases with imitation and overshadows Motif B. Ultimately, Motif B resurfaces, surprises the music with a chord marked *forte*, and contrasts with a subsequent repetition that fades into *pianissimo* (ex. 20).

The image shows a musical score for Mozart's Fantasia in C Minor, measures 16-22. The score is in C minor and 3/4 time. It features two main motifs: Motif B, a staccato eighth-note pattern in the right hand, and Motif A, a dotted eighth-note pattern in the left hand. The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *f*, and *p*, and articulation like *cresc.* and *diminution*. A red annotation "A imitation" points to a passage in measure 20 where the left hand imitates the right hand's pattern. A blue box labeled "B" highlights Motif B in measure 16. Another blue box labeled "B" highlights a passage in measure 22.

Ex. 20. Mozart Fantasia in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 16-22

At the beginning of the Allegro section in measures 42-49, the two contrasting materials can be traced back to the opening motifs. Initially, the left hand introduces a dotted pattern with longer note values—Motif A retaining its dark character. By measure 49, an answering phrase emerges, marked with a softer piano dynamic, shorter note values, and staccato articulations. This is reminiscent of Motif B, recalling back to the contrasting elements introduced at the Adagio (ex. 21).

Allegro

A

B

f

p

Ex. 21. Mozart Fantasia in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 42-49

In the Andantino section, Mozart starts with Motif B and sets a serene atmosphere. By measure 107, Motif A enters the scene, characterized by its extended gesture and dotted rhythm. It engages in rhythmic contrast with Motif B as they alternate and converse (ex. 22).

Mozart Fantasia, mm. 91

Andantino

p B

Mozart Fantasia, mm. 107-111

A

B

f

p

Ex. 22. Mozart Fantasie in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 91 and mm. 107-111

The Piu Allegro commences with an extreme tension generated by a pattern with rapid thirty-second notes. Upon closer examination of the principal notes in the left hand, the contour of Motif A becomes noticeable. Following a tumultuous modulation, Motif B enters, characterized by its short two-note gesture with the slur. It releases the tension, leading the section to a delicate closure with *pianissimo* (ex. 23).

Mozart Fantasie, mm. 130

The motivic process in this work illustrates both the sophistication and flexibility of Mozart’s compositional techniques. Motifs are used not only to articulate the form of the piece but also to convey distinct characters and profound emotions. Additionally, it reveals Mozart’s attempt to construct the motivic development at a more intricate level, where thematic connections become more subtle and harder to detect.

Contrapuntal Writing in Mozart Piano Sonatas

Mozart began to incorporate contrapuntal writing in his Piano Sonata in F Major, K. 280, which was composed during the initial year of his exploration into piano sonatas. The second movement, titled “Adagio,” commences with an imitation voiced in four parts. This theme features a dotted rhythm motif. It begins in the soprano voice and subsequently passes on to the alto and tenor (ex. 24). This contrapuntal approach is repeated many times in the movement, especially during the development section spanning measures 33-42.



Ex. 24. Mozart Piano Sonata in F Major K. 280 (1774), 2nd movement, mm. 1-4

Mozart’s later sonatas are more frequently embedded in contrapuntal techniques. Both the first and last movements of Sonata K. 533 and Sonata K. 576 showcase this evolution in his compositional style, which reflects his deepening engagement with the motivic transformation. In the first movement of K. 576, Mozart employs counterpoint to enhance thematic presentation. The movement commences with both hands moving in parallel octaves, articulating Motif A.

This is followed by a contrary motion where both hands present Motif B (ex. 25). Right after the presence of motifs, Mozart ingeniously inverts this arrangement. In measure 9, he introduces Motif A with hands moving in parallel intervals of fourth, third, and sixth, which is then succeeded by the right hand playing Motif B in the top voice (ex. 26).

Allegro.

Ex. 25. Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 1-4

Ex. 26. Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 6-15

In the development section, Mozart initially presents an imitative counterpoint combined with Motifs A and B in measures 63-66 and 72-73 (ex. 27).

Ex. 27. Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 63-66

Subsequently, at measure 81, Mozart introduces a shortened version of Motif A in both hands with imitation. This imitative pattern undergoes a gradual augmentation: it begins with voices imitating each other in every measure, then extends to every third measure, and finally, the fifth measure. This section seamlessly leads into the recapitulation (ex. 28).

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piano sonata. Each system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The first system is labeled '1 measure' and shows a rhythmic pattern in both hands. The second system is labeled '3 measures' and shows the pattern extending to every third measure. The third system is labeled '5 measures' and shows the pattern extending to every fifth measure. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings such as 'cresc.'.

Ex. 28. Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 80-96

In the recapitulation, Mozart revisits the *stretto* passage during the transition. Notably, he extends its length, allowing the imitation to span eight measures (110-117) before the second theme arrives (ex. 29).



Ex. 29. Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 108-117

In the third movement of Sonata K.576, Mozart persists with this contrapuntal approach. Initially, Motif I in measures 1-2 is articulated by the right hand, while the left hand provides accompaniment through repeated intervals. Upon the second presentation of Motif I in measure 9, the left hand introduces a new motif. This Motif II is composed of sixteen triplets. This motif, bearing equal significance to the first, immediately dominates the musical narrative (ex. 30).



Ex. 30. Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 3rd movement, mm. 1-11

Mozart plays with these two motifs throughout the remaining movement, employing various contrapuntal techniques. The inversion of the Motif I appears in measure 30 and subsequently engages in an imitative dialogue with the original Motif I from measures 34-39 (ex. 31).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Mozart's Piano Sonata in D Major, K. 576, 3rd movement. The first system consists of two staves. The upper staff is labeled 'Inversion' in red text. The lower staff is labeled 'Inversion' in red text. The second system also consists of two staves. The upper staff is labeled 'Imitation' in red text. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as 'mf'.

Ex. 31. Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 3rd movement, mm. 30-39

This method of imitation is similarly applied to Motif II; between measures 58-62, Motif II undergoes a mirrored imitation (ex. 32).

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Mozart's Piano Sonata in D Major, K. 576, 3rd movement. The first system consists of two staves. The upper staff is labeled 'Imitation' in blue text. The lower staff is labeled 'Imitation' in blue text. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as 'mf'.

Ex. 32. Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 3rd movement, mm. 58-62

This is succeeded by a *stretto* passage in measures 103-111, in which Motif I is shortened and echoed between both hands (ex. 33).



Ex. 33. Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 3rd movement, mm. 103-111

This kind of thematic manipulation and development showcases Mozart's mature style, which seamlessly integrates complex contrapuntal techniques into the Classical sonata form while maintaining a lively character and enchanting melody.

Continuation of motivic contrasts in Mozart's late piano sonatas

Mozart's Fantasia K. 475 exhibits Mozart's exceptional talents in crafting distinctive and adaptable motivic materials. Beyond this single composition, Mozart carries this idea and manifests a continuation of this contrast of motifs in his subsequent sonatas. A close examination of the initial bars of his sonatas K. 457, measures 1-7 (ex. 34); K. 570, measures 1-12 (ex. 35), and K. 576, measures 1-8 (ex. 36) reveals striking similarities. Each sonata commences with a similar Motif A, characterized by longer note values, an ascending figure, and a robust character. This is contrasted by a similar Motif B, which is marked by quicker note values, ornamental decorations, an upbeat motion, and a softer sound. Particularly, all these sonatas introduce their Motif A with both hands playing in unison. Yet, to the casual listener, these similarities might go unnoticed. Each sonata, while sharing common motivic structures, possesses its unique personalities and characters.

Datiert: Wien, 20. Mai 1785

Adagio

f p pp f p pp

5

f p

Ex. 34. Mozart Fantasia in C Minor K. 475 (1785), mm. 1-7

Allegro.

p f

Ex. 35. Mozart Piano Sonata in B \flat Major K. 570 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 1-13



Ex. 36. Mozart Piano Sonata in D Major K. 576 (1789), 1st movement, mm. 1-10

Rosen states, “Mozart is a master of making the individual and permutable motivic elements.”²⁸ Beach points out that

the motivic relationships in Mozart’s composition exist at two levels. First, there is the recurrence of motives at or slightly below the musical surface and thus at a level that is readily perceptible. Secondly, there is ‘concealed motivic repetition’ where subsequent statements of a pattern are partially or completely masked especially in the contrasting sections, and these deeper levels of repetitions give this piece its inner coherence and raise it above the mundane.²⁹

The examples and analysis provided above exhibit Mozart’s masterful strokes in preserving the motivic coherence at this “second level,” which distinguishes his composition from that of Haydn. This “second level” of coherence in motivic language spans across Mozart’s different works, displaying his commitment to stylistic consistency. Furthermore, Mozart began to employ various contrapuntal techniques, expanding the role of counterpoint in his works, which later inspired Beethoven. Mozart’s ability to create dramatic contrasts within a brief presentation of motifs also profoundly influenced Chopin.

²⁸ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 201.

²⁹ David Beach, “Motive and Structure in the ‘Andante’ Movement of Mozart’s Piano Sonata K. 545,” *Music Analysis* 3, no. 3 (1984): 235.

Motivic development in Beethoven

Monothematicism

In his dissertation, Vaičekonis claims that Beethoven adopted Haydn's "organic" approach to composition, where an initial idea is fundamental to the piece. He cites Beethoven's words to Louis Schlosser, a young musician from Darmstadt:

The working-out in breadth, length, height, and depth begins in my head, and since I am conscious of what I want, the basic idea never leaves me. It rises, grows upward, and I hear and see the picture as a whole take shape and stand before me as though cast in a single piece, so that all that is left is the work of writing it down.³⁰

Vaičekonis then comments that "Beethoven developed the idea of the unified, organic composition to the extreme. In his work, the opening statement becomes a core, upon which large structures, such as a movement, an entire sonata, or even an entire opus, are built."³¹ In Beethoven's Sonata op. 101, there is a synthesis of the thematic approaches pioneered by Haydn and Mozart. Beethoven takes these foundational ideas and pushes them even further to search for a more unified thematic language.

From the first presentation of the theme in measures 1-4, Beethoven adopts Haydn and Mozart's technique of both hands sharing the same thematic material. However, Beethoven initiates these in contrary motion. While the main theme of this movement comprises two phrases and two primary motifs, each motif has a multi-layered structure. Specifically, each layer of primary motifs can be further dissected into several smaller motifs (ex. 37).

³⁰ Dainius Vaičekonis, "The Forest for the Trees" (DMA diss., University of Washington, 2004), 10.

³¹ Vaičekonis, "The Forest for the Trees," 10.

*Etwas lebhaft, und mit der innigsten Empfindung.
Allegretto, ma non troppo.*

Sonate N°28.

Ex. 37. Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 1st movement, mm. 1-4

In the first phrase, Motif A contains three layers. The Motif A1, which is in the upper voice, has a sequence of G#-A-B-C#-E-D-B, forms a pattern of a stepwise four-note ascent, then descends by a second, and finally skips downward by a third. Simultaneously, the inner voice Motif A2 introduces a sequence E-(B)-F#-G#-(E)-A-B-G#, forming a parallel third in relation to the upper voice; it also contains a triplet element. The Motif A3 is played by the left hand with a descending sequence E-D#-D-C#-B-E. It starts with an achromatic scale and a leap of a fourth at the end. It shares the same rhythmic figure as Motif A1.

The upper voice of the second phrase introduces Motif B1, which contains of a four-note stepwise descent followed by a skip downward by a third and then a stepwise descent. The inner voice of Motif B2 forms a syncopated pattern with the repeated note A. The left hand aligns with the parallel third structure of the right-hand Motif B1 in measures 3-4, and forms Motif B3.

Fragmentation

Rosen indicates that “Haydn’s handling of the short motif makes the fragmentation possible. Beethoven adapted it to a larger scale. He carries the fragmentation even further than Haydn and sometimes reduces a motif to one note.”³² The way Beethoven developed his motivic

³² Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 189

material by fragmentation can be examined in Sonata op. 101. Following the introduction of the main theme, Beethoven extracts Motif A2 and Motif A3 and transforms them into concise four-note motifs with contrary directions: E-F#-G#-A#, D#-C#-B-E# in measures 17-18. These fragmented motifs serve as a thematic variation (ex. 38).

Ex. 38. Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 1st movement, mm. 11-28

Then Motif A2 forms another four-note gesture with a syncopated rhythmic pattern—E-#G-#F-B—in measure 22, which enhances the sensation of the musical question. In addition, it was followed by an even stronger, yelling-like ascending phrase with notes from Motif A2 in measures 23-24. The resolution to this thematic tension emerges in measures 25-26, where Motif A2 is presented in retrograde in the left hand, moving as B-G#-F#-E.

Subsequently, Beethoven reduces Motif A2 to just two notes in the right hand and a single note in the left hand in measure 29; he repeats these multiple times. After this, the Motif

B1—A-#G-#F-E—emerges in measures 31-32, bringing a sense of closure to this section (ex. 39).

2 (40)

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a piano sonata. The first system, measures 35-40, shows Motif A2 (red bracket) in the left hand and Motif B1 (blue bracket) in the right hand. The second system, measures 41-42, shows Motif A2 (red bracket) in the left hand and Motif B2 (blue bracket) in the right hand. The third system, measures 43-46, shows Motif A1 (red bracket) in the right hand and Motif B2 (blue bracket) in the left hand. Dynamics include *pp*, *cresc.*, *f*, and *p*.

Ex. 39. Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 1st movement, mm. 29-46

In the development section, Beethoven keeps evolving, emphasizing the motivic materials derived from inner voices. The development section starts with Motif A2 in the left hand in measure 35, which engages in a dialogue with the syncopated pattern of Motif B2. This conversation is repeated twice. From measure 41, Motif A1 reappears, then it is shortened with only its last half—characterized by the pattern of large intervallic skips in measures 43-44. This is accompanied by syncopated Motif B2 in the inner voice, and together, they evoke a sense of unease, yearning, tension, and anxiety (ex. 39).

Motif consistency and continuation between the movements

Similar to methods used by Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven attempts to maintain a sense of coherence by applying the same motivic material across movements. Yet Beethoven's approach is even more adventurous. In the third movement of op.101, Beethoven subtly takes thematic material from the first movement. First, the movement retains the four-voice structure evident in the first movement. Within the first two beats, motivic notes G#-A-B-C-E-D-B of Motif A1, transferred in the minor key, recur in four voices with a different order. Moving on to measure 3, fragments of Motif B1 and Motif B2, the sequence of pitches A-G-F-E and F-E-D-C, which has a four-note descending pattern, are played in both hands. Right after, in measure 4, Beethoven extracts the last three notes, E-C-B, directly from Motif B1, but this time in a minor key, to close this thematic statement (ex. 40).

Langsam und sehnsuchtsvoll.
Adagio, ma non troppo, con affetto.

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of the third movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A Major, Op. 101. The score is in 3/4 time and features a four-voice texture. Motif A1 is marked in red in measures 1-2, and Motif B1 and B2 are marked in blue in measures 3-4. The instruction 'Una corda' is present in measure 1.

Ex. 40. Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 3rd movement, mm. 1-8

Furthermore, at the end of this movement, the exact first two bars of the first movement resurface surprisingly without a single note altered, serving as a bridge to the fourth movement. This flashback to the initial theme evokes a sense of déjà vu, as if the first movement never truly

concluded. This manifests Beethoven's intention to blur the boundary between movements and break the traditional structures of the sonata form.

The fourth movement continues developing motifs from the first movement. The initial theme, spanning measures 33-34, features the notes E#-C#-B, fragmented from Motif B1. Beethoven adds quicker sixteenth notes in between to give it an energetic character. In measures 37-39, the main pitches G#-A-B#-C-E-D from the Motif A1 are expanded and elongated, transforming into a rapid, flowing phrase (ex. 41). Meanwhile, this initial theme of the fourth movement could be considered the destination point of the entire sonata: the downbeat after the double bar, arrives on the tonic in the root position, which the piece has been seeking for four movements.

The image shows a musical score for the 4th movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in A Major, Op. 101. The score is in 2/4 time and A major. The tempo is 'Allegro' with the instruction 'Geschwind. doch nicht zu sehr; und mit Entschlossenheit.' The score shows a double bar line at measure 29. Motif B1 is circled in blue at the start of measure 30. Motif A1 is circled in red in measures 37-39. Dynamics include 'f' and 'p'.

Ex. 41. Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 4th movement, mm. 29-40

By measure 114, an augmented version of Motif A1 emerges, retaining its original pitches G#-A-B#-C-D#-E (ex. 42).



Ex. 42. Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 4th movement, mm. 113-119

Contrapuntal writing

Unlike Mozart or Haydn, who only partially embed contrapuntal approaches and techniques in their sonata movements, Beethoven integrates a four-voice fugue in the last movement of Sonata Op. 101. In addition, Beethoven crafts all motivic materials from the first movement to construct this fugue, illustrating his insistence on thematic unity. The fugue's main subject contains two motifs. Starting at measure 123, the first motif features the notes E-C-B of B1 but this time in the minor key. By measure 127, the second motif emerges with an eighth-note descending figure, A-G-F-E, which contains the initial segment of Motif B1 from the first movement (ex. 43). This subject is introduced across all four voices, spanning from the beginning to measure 154.



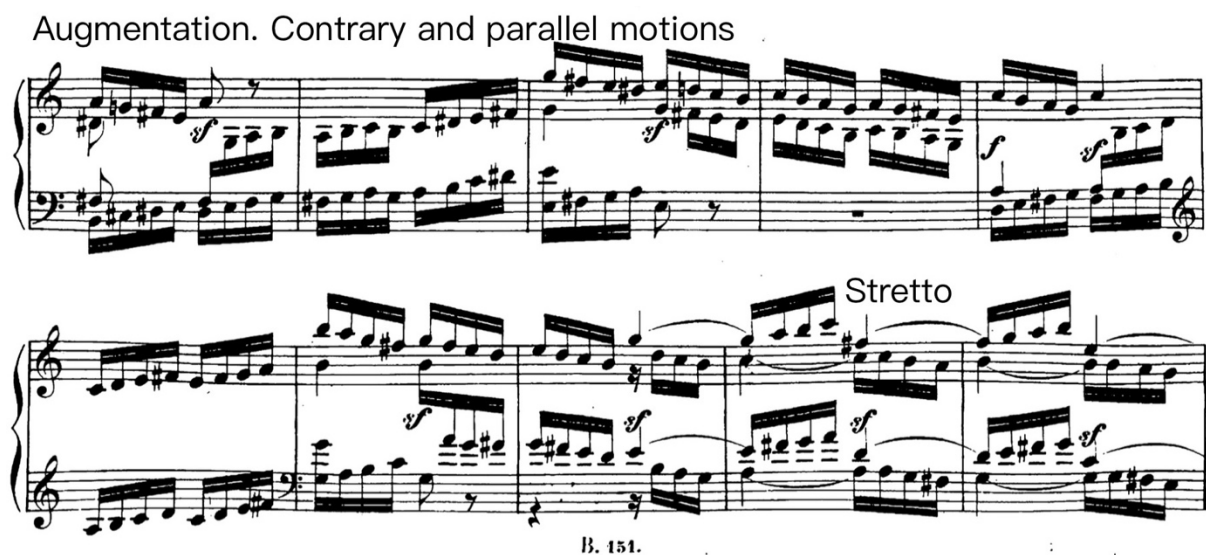
Ex. 43. Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 4th movement, mm. 123-128

Next, Beethoven starts with an episode crafted from this second motif in measures 161-168. This episode then transitions and evolves, incorporating the second motif and its inversion in measures 170-175 (ex. 44).



Ex. 44. Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 4th movement, mm. 170-175

The intensity of this thematic interplay increases as Beethoven applies various contrapuntal techniques. In measures 194-200, Beethoven employs augmentation by elongating this conversation and putting contrary and parallel motions in both hands. This ascending and descending running-sixteenth passage creates a long suspension, and a dramatic *stretto* immediately follows it in measures 201-204. Here, two hands play the first motif and its inversion in unison with *sforzando*, creating a climactic moment before the recapitulation (ex. 45).



Ex. 45. Beethoven Piano Sonata in A Major Op. 101 (1816), 4th movement, mm. 194-204

The analysis of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 101 reveals his fragmentary approach and bold shifts in musical character and texture. These are all grounded in motivic material. The intricate transformation of motifs across movements and the comprehensive application of counterpoint, including integrating a four-voice fugue, laid the foundation for Chopin's compositional development and creativity.

If Chopin's worship for Mozart is evident, his view of Beethoven is quite subtle. As Schonberg asserts in his book, "Beethoven's works disturbed Chopin. The 'behemoth of Bonn,' with his turbulence and titanic hammer strokes, frightened him."³³ However, it is untenable to assert that Beethoven had no influence on Chopin; as Huneker claims, "Chopin was a musician skilled in the handling of formal problems, one grounded in the schools of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven."³⁴ Petty suggests that "many experienced musicians seem to have felt a Beethovenian presence in Chopin's B \flat minor sonata, but no one has really explored it in sufficient depth."³⁵ Petty also highlights the link between the slow movement of Chopin's B \flat -Minor Sonata and Beethoven's Sonata, op. 26, noting that Chopin himself played and taught Beethoven's 'Funeral March' from Sonata op.26 frequently.³⁶ Chopin's engagement with Beethoven's work is expressed on a more underlying level, which will be discussed in Chapter 3.

³³Schonberg, *The Great Pianists*, 145.

³⁴ Huneker, "The Classic Chopin," 521.

³⁵Wayne C. Petty, "Chopin and the Ghost of Beethoven," *19th-Century Music* 22, no. 3 (1999): 284.

³⁶ Petty, "Chopin and the Ghost of Beethoven," 285.

Chapter 2: Chopin's Stylistic Evolution

In his book, Samson points out that the first Ballade has a special significance within Chopin's output,

It is the first of his extended compositions to turn aside from the genres of post-classical popular concert music as well as those of so-called 'Viennese' Classicism. In the Scherzo and Ballade, Chopin followed a special path. He drew sustenance from classical and post-classical traditions but remained essentially independent of both - to the point of establishing new genres.³⁷

By keeping the structure of the sonata-based form and integrating the brilliant styles and expressive elements, Chopin reinterprets the classical tradition into his new compositional creation.

Ballade No. 1

The introduction of this ballade only contains two phrases. Despite the symmetry of the four-bar length for each phrase, the second phrase does not give a sense of satisfaction because it is interrupted by rests and then moves directly to Theme I. However, while the phrase structure remains incomplete, the introduction still provides the full motivic elements that will be developed for the entire Ballade.

The main notes from each phrase of the introduction contain two motivic groups. The first group commences with a long downbeat—a half-note C, followed by an eighth-note

³⁷ Jim Samson, *Chopin: The Four Ballades* (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1992), 1.

ascending pattern and a descending closure with notes B \flat -A \flat -G-F \sharp . The second group contains a falling gesture with main pitches F \sharp -E \flat -D-C (ex. 46).

The image shows a musical score for Chopin's Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 23, measures 1-9. The score is in G minor, 4/4 time, and marked 'Largo*'. It features two groups of motifs: Group 1 (measures 1-7) and Group 2 (measures 8-9). Group 1 is marked 'f' and 'pesante', while Group 2 is marked 'p'. The score includes dynamic markings like 'dim.' and 'p', and articulation like 'pesante'. The score is annotated with red and blue boxes and circles highlighting specific notes and groups.

Ex. 46. Chopin Ballade No.1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 1-9

Theme I contains two motivic figures based on motivic groups from the introduction. Motif A starts in measure 8; it features a skip up and step down, arch-like contour. Main notes, C-F \sharp -B-A-G, of this motif are derived from the first motivic group of the introduction. Motif B starts in measure 9, pitches D-C are fragmented from the second motivic group. In the next phrase, the same Motif A is answered by notes E-F \sharp on measure 11, which is again the fragment from the second group of the introduction (ex. 47).

Ex. 47. Chopin Ballade No.1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 1-13

The combination of these two motifs appears multiple times. However, Chopin's way of developing the theme is quite subtle and unique. Only Motif B keeps its intervallic and rhythmic contour. Chopin tends to reshape the main notes from Motif A. For instance, at the end of Theme I, the closing phrase starts with Motif B, which contains pitches D-C. It is followed by fragmented Motif A, which has notes G-B \flat -F \sharp -G (ex. 48).

Ex. 48. Chopin Ballade No.1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 34-35

The transition is developed from Motif B. Two voice lines in both hands present the same motif with different rhythms—the falling second (ex. 49).

Ex. 49. Chopin Ballade No.1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 36-37

However, Motif A joins in at measure 41. The outer voice of the right hand is holding a descending line of half-note octaves with notes B \flat -A \flat -G-C-F \sharp . These notes are all from Motif A with rhythmic augmentation (ex. 50).

Ex. 50. Chopin Ballade No.1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 41-43

Soon, another reformation occurs on measure 44. The right hand plays the notes C-B \flat -A-G from Motif A in eighth notes with a shorter rhythmic pattern, while the left hand keeps playing

Motif B. Moreover, Chopin applies a contrapuntal way of writing; by reducing the notes' value of Motif B from quarter notes to eighth notes, Chopin creates a diminution (ex. 51).



Ex. 51. Chopin Ballade No. 1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 44

The second theme of Ballade No. 1 starts on measure 68 and contains a longer, fluid phrase with a broad sense. Despite the characteristic contrasts from Theme I, the motivic materials are from the same root (ex. 52). This theme contains two phrases. The melodic notes of the first phrase, F-G-E \flat , E \flat -D-C-B \flat , are derived from the second motivic group of the introduction. The arch-like shape of F-G-E \flat and the descending direction of D-C-B \flat are kept the same. The following phrase, which contains B \flat -A \flat -G-F# with a descending direction, is transformed from the first motivic group. Unlike the first theme, in this second theme, the second motivic group is applied for the first phrase, and the first motivic group is used to construct the second phrase. Chopin intentionally breaks the order of the initial motivic group to increase the thematic ambiguity of the music. The effect is that Chopin crafts a beautiful, *cantabile* second theme, which features dramatic contrast while maintaining an underlying connection to the first theme.

The introduction:

Largo*
f *pesante*
dim. *p*
3
3

Moderato
3
3
5
*

The second theme:

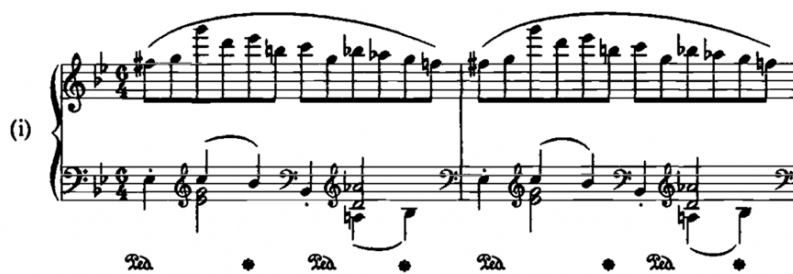
meno mosso
sotto voce
ritenuto *pp*
8
65
* *ped* * *ped* * *ped* *

70

Ex. 52. Chopin Ballade No.1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), introduction, mm. 1-9, and second theme, mm.

65-73

In Ballade No. 1, as Samson points out, Chopin also infuses the thematic material from the waltz, which was a popular genre during Chopin's time (ex. 53).³⁸ This proves Chopin's synthesis of the post-Classical brilliant style, as he successfully elevates popular traditions to a higher level of creativity.



(i) First Ballade bars 138-9



(ii) Three Waltzes Op. 34: No. 1 bars 33-6

Ex. 53. Chopin Ballade No. 1 in G Minor Op. 23 (1836), mm. 138-139; Three Waltzes Op. 34: No. 1 (1838), mm. 33-36³⁹

At the same time, Chopin demonstrates remarkable efficiency in organizing his thematic materials, as the introduction itself contains all the essential motifs for the entire Ballade. Both Theme I and Theme II are developed from the introduction's motivic groups. Citing Carl Dahlhaus's writing, Rink highlights that "this Ballade illustrates Chopin's exploration of finding the balance between a narrative ballad, lyric *cantabile*, and urgent virtuosity. The thread of

³⁸ Samson, *Chopin: The Four Ballades*, 9.

³⁹ Samson, *Chopin: The Four Ballades*, 9.

motivic unity maintains the coherence of musical language and supports this wild exploration.”⁴⁰

Last, in this Ballade, Chopin already begins experimenting with contrapuntal techniques for motivic development, including augmentation and diminution.

Ballade No. 3

Rosen points out that the beginning section of the third Ballade starts with two distinctive short motifs.⁴¹ Motif A is an ascending scale with an interval of a sixth: E \flat -C. Motif B is a descending gesture with an interval of a second: F-E \flat . These two short motifs develop the multiple thematic materials in Ballade No. 3 (ex. 54).



Ex. 54. Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm.1-2

The main theme containing the initial motifs is defined by four-bar phrases with a lyrical nature, characterized by a down-beat feature. Chopin incorporates contrapuntal elements directly into this first theme. The opening two measures feature the right hand playing the theme, with the left hand inversely echoing it, and it transitions the theme to the left hand in measure 3. The

⁴⁰ John Rink, “Chopin’s Ballades and the Dialectic: Analysis in Historical Perspective,” *Music Analysis* 13, no. 1 (1994): 108; Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J.B. Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

⁴¹ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 303.

next phrase begins with the left hand on bass and then shifts back to the top voices. The direction of different thematic voices may transform, but the feature of the interval of the sixth from Motif A is consistently dominant in every voice.

Following the introduction of the main theme, a transition initiates in measure 9. This is where Motif B plays the main role in the musical material. The two-note descending second, with its modulation, contrasts the primary thematic element, as it features a short, upbeat motion (ex. 55). Astonishingly, Chopin places this motif in each measure with rests. He repeats this pattern for sixteen measures, from measures 9-24.

Ex. 55. Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 6-15

While this motivic pattern seems to disappear in measure 25, the same, but disguised, motif returns in measure 26 with an even more sophisticated writing—a polyphonic writing based on the interval of seconds with contrary motion (ex. 56).

Ex. 56. Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 23-30

This transition leads to a closure of Theme I in measure 33. It begins with a fast, up-lifting arpeggio that spans three registers. The left hand plays chords containing the melody that echo the same right-hand pattern but with a longer rhythmic value. This is a special technique of counterpoint called “heterophonic accompaniment” that was observed by Rosen;⁴² “The effect is not one of canon or imitation but of the simultaneous playing of a clearly defined simple phrase and its free decoration.”⁴³ Chopin embeds Motif A in both hands in reversed directions—E \flat descends to C. (ex. 57).

⁴² Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 304.

⁴³ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 305.

Ex. 57. Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 33-36

Starting in measure 52, Theme II evolves from both Motif A and Motif B. The short, upbeat gesture of Motif B with a rest now stays in the inner voice and becomes the main rhythmic pattern. This pattern is played by both hands, which creates a light and agile character. At the same time, a descending pattern with the parallel interval of a sixth from Motif A becomes a thematic figure on the upper voice (ex. 58).

The image shows a musical score for Chopin's Ballade No. 3, measures 50-60. The score is in A-flat major and 3/4 time. It features a complex texture with multiple voices. Annotations include 'mezza voce' in measure 50, 'Interval of 6th' in measure 51, and various rhythmic markings like 'Red' and asterisks. Blue circles highlight specific motifs in measures 56-57.

Ex. 58. Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 50-60

Later in this section, Chopin continuously develops this figure using the contrapuntal method.

Sometimes the motif is elongated, and sometimes it moves back and forth in different voices or is played by both hands in different directions (ex. 59).

Ex. 59. Chopin Ballade No. 3 in AbMajor Op. 47 (1841), mm. 91-100

Starting in measure 116, despite its surprising characteristic differences from the other two themes, Theme III continues to grow from Motif A and Motif B. The right hand starts with a long-note downbeat gesture. It is embellished with ornaments and contains pitches Eb-C from Motif A. It is followed by a downward sixth running scale that spans a wide range of registers and moves quickly with main notes of C-Eb. At the same time, the left hand provides chordal accompaniment with a familiar upbeat motion and the interval of the second from Motif B (ex. 60).

Ex. 60. Chopin Ballade No. 3 in Ab Major op. 47 (1841), mm. 113-117

After a series of developments, Theme III, with the same combination of Motif A and Motif B, returns as the closure for the entire Ballade in measure 231 (ex. 61).

The image shows a musical score for Chopin's Ballade No. 3, measures 228-241. The score is in A-flat major and 3/4 time. It features a piano accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern in the left hand and a more complex melodic line in the right hand. The right hand melody is marked 'più mosso' and includes several red and blue circles highlighting specific motifs. A dashed line with the number '8' indicates an eight-measure phrase. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat signs.

Ex. 61. Chopin Ballade No. 3 in A \flat Major Op. 47 (1841), mm. 230-241

Despite this piece being composed of three distinct themes, each possessing unique characteristics, the motivic materials for all themes were established from the same motifs.

Chopin's preference for contrapuntal writing is increasingly evident. It is not merely a method of developing thematic material; it is also integrated directly into the initial presentation of Theme I. Meanwhile, different thematic materials are subtly merged to form new sections, producing a natural and seamless sound effect.

Ballade No. 4

The introduction in Ballade No. 4 is more extended than that of other Ballades, featuring a complete phrase structure marked by a *ritenuto* and *fermata*. As in Ballade No. 1, Chopin embeds the key thematic information within the introduction. Motivic elements serve as the foundation for both the main theme and development sections of the whole piece, all originating from this introduction (ex. 62).

4. *Andante con moto.*
p
2 1 3 2 3 A
ritenuto. * * * * *
B
dim.
a tempo.
ritenuto. m. v.

Ex. 62. Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 1-8

In measures 1-2, the right hand contains a two-voice structure pattern—the eighth-note melody and sixteenth-note inner voices. The eighth-note melody in the soprano line includes a five-note descending scale containing notes G-F-E-D-C, forming Motif A. The left hand also

displays Motif A with a fragmented version; notes E-D-C appear in measures 1-2. Starting in measure 2, the left hand presents a sixteenth-note broken pattern. A repeated element that contains three notes C-G-C with ascending intervals of a fifth and a fourth form Motif B.

Theme I is developed from these two motivic elements. The first phrase of the right hand in measures 8-10 is a melody constructed with eighth notes from a five-note descending scale, pitches F-E-D \flat -C-B \flat from F minor. The following phrase from measures 10-12 also features a five-note descending scale, E \flat -D \flat -C-B \flat -A \flat , from A \flat major. Rosen indicates that “in this theme, one of Chopin’s most original inventions is that he intentionally extends the harmonic ambiguity of surface, while the tonic F minor is still the key center.”⁴⁴ Therefore, even if the same motif is repeated twice here, the color is changeable because Chopin swiftly modulates between relative minor and major keys (ex. 63).

In addition, Samson points out that the first theme has a generic character of a slow waltz.⁴⁵ However, as Walker details in his article, Chopin once wrote to his parents about his waltzes, stating that “they are not for dancing.”⁴⁶ In Chopin’s hands, the waltz is raised to a high art form, which offers another example of how he blends Classical techniques with post-Classical genres to create a new artistic expression (ex. 63).

The left hand starts right away with Motif B in measure 8, and notes F-C-F contain the same intervals of a fifth and a fourth.

⁴⁴ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 339.

⁴⁵ Jim Samson, *Chopin, The Master Musicians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 220.

⁴⁶ Alan Walker, “Chopin: The Voice of the Piano,” *American Music Teacher* 59, no. 6 (2010): 22.

The image shows a musical score for Chopin's Ballade No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 52, measures 6-16. The score is in F minor and 3/4 time. It features a right hand with a descending scale motif and a left hand with a rhythmic accompaniment. The score is annotated with 'ritenuto.', 'a tempo.', and 'm. v.'. Red circles highlight specific notes in the right hand, and red text labels 'F minor' and 'A b major' are placed above the staff. Blue circles highlight specific notes in the left hand. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-3. The score is numbered 36891 at the bottom left.

Ex. 63. Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 6-16

Starting in measure 38, the right hand of Transition I develops the same motivic material from the introduction; the descending scale G \flat -F-E \flat is fragmented from the five-notes scale and elongated. The left hand in this section starts with Motif B, which includes pitches G \flat -D \flat -G \flat in mm. 38 (ex. 64).

The image shows three systems of musical notation for Chopin's Ballade No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 52, measures 37-48. The notation is in F minor (three flats) and 3/4 time. The first system includes a *dim.* marking in the right hand and a *pp* marking in the left hand. A blue circle highlights a chord in the left hand, and a red circle highlights a chord in the right hand. The second system continues the two-voice texture. The third system includes a *m. v.* marking and a complex sixteenth-note figure in the right hand. The left hand continues with its sixteenth-note inner voice pattern. Various musical notations like 'legato', 'pp', and 'dim.' are present throughout the score.

Ex. 64. Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 37-48

The variation of Theme I begins with Motif A in measure 58 on the top voice. Here, Chopin incorporates another motivic element from the introduction—the two-voice rhythmic structure. The left hand starts with Theme I on the top voice, and it is combined with a sixteenth-note inner voice. This is another of Chopin’s innovations, demonstrating the richness of the introduction; not only are the key pitches of the motif developed, but the voice structure and the rhythmic feature are also applied and evolved throughout the piece. At the same time, it illustrates that contrapuntal writing has become a natural language for Chopin, even as he constructs the recurrence of the main theme (ex. 65).

Ex. 65. Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 56-61

Beginning in measure 80, Theme II appears in the key of Bb major and contrasts Theme I with its chordal nature and contrapuntal style. The hands play motifs in contrary and parallel motion, creating differences with Theme I in terms of the musical character and texture. However, the same motivic roots—descending five-notes scales—can be detected in this passage (ex. 66):

Ex. 66. Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 91-95

In measures 195-210, two motifs are embedded mindfully. In measure 196, the series of chords seems to skip in a random direction; however, the descending scale Ab-Gb-F-E-Db is

placed on the top of each chord with a different order. From measures 202-203, Motif B, consisting of the pitches C-G-C and intervals of a fourth and fifth, first appears in the left hand and then the right hand, providing a dramatic moment with huge dynamic contrast (ex. 67).

50

Ex. 67. Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 195-210

The closing theme, with its violent, chaotic acoustic effect and extreme technical difficulties, leaves a puzzle for the listeners, making them wonder if there is any relationship with the former context of the piece. However, the motivic root is still steady in this passage. Chopin manages to hide the melodic notes from Theme I in the first phrase. At the beginning of measure 211 and the end of measure 212, Chopin breaks the order of melodic notes C-F-E-Bb-

Db, incorporating them into the inner voice of the right hand. At the end of measure 212, the bass and the soprano voices play a chromatic scale developed from Motif A's five-note scale, G-A-Bb-C-D, with contrary directions. Meanwhile, Motif B is played by the left hand on the bass in measures 211-214 (ex. 68). This passage is remarkable in its complexity. Through the contrapuntal writing, with each voice representing different motifs and thematic material, Chopin elevates the motivic structure to a higher level of sophistication.

Ex. 68. Chopin Ballade No. 4 in F Minor Op. 52 (1843), mm. 211-214

Rosen suggests that “the variation technique in this Ballade is more elaborate than in any other.”⁴⁷ Only two simple motifs from Ballade No. 4’s introduction are intricately developed throughout the whole piece. Both motifs and two themes are embedded with different counterpoint writings; the variation of Theme I that starts in measure 135 is even presented in a

⁴⁷ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 342.

four-voice canon form. Different combinations of motifs and themes are transformed with distinct characteristics, creating varied sound effects. Chopin avoids the direct repetitions of thematic materials; the themes and materials are subtly woven together, remaining ever-present yet scarcely recognizable.

Barcarolle

Composed around the same period, the Barcarolle exhibits motivic figures that closely parallel those in the fourth Ballade, centering around the intervals of the fourth, fifth, and a major scale. In his book, Hatten indicates that “The introduction of Barcarolle sets up most of the main premises that are discussed and developed through the work. . . . The motivic material used in these three bars forms the basis of the main thematic and motivic material throughout the piece.”⁴⁸ In just three measures, the introduction of the Barcarolle presents three layers of voices that contain all the motivic information. It starts with the bass playing an octave of C#, then the right hand plays an inversion of the G#-major chord, emphasizing the long notes G#. Next, the bass line follows with the notes G#-C#, F#-C#. This interval of the fourth and fifth forms Motif A of the Barcarolle. Simultaneously, the main notes of the inner voice and bass in measure 2-3 follow the descending F#-major scale, which serves as Motif B of this piece. Meanwhile, the top voice features a dotted-half note followed by eighth notes. These eighth notes move up and down with intervals of seconds and thirds. This long-short rhythmic pattern is Motif C (ex. 69).

⁴⁸ Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Chopin: Analysis and Performance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 189.

Allegretto.

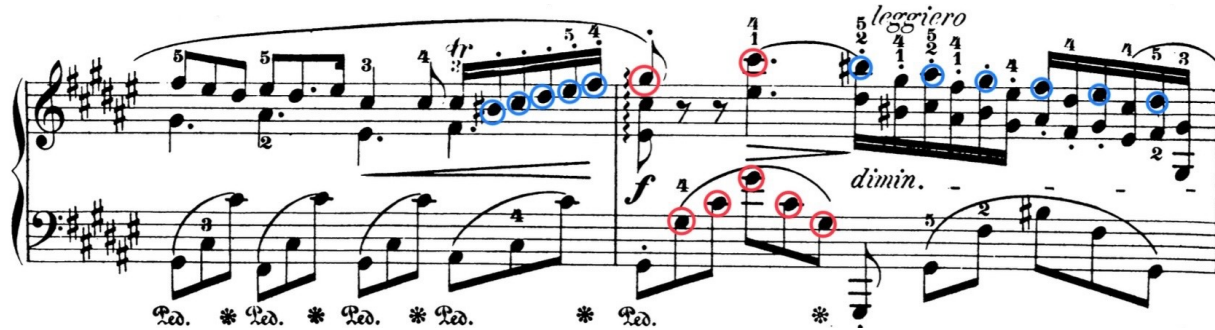
Ex. 69. Chopin Barcarolle F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 1-3

Theme I is constructed by three motifs from the introduction. First, the left hand on measure 4 starts with a pattern featuring the main notes F#-C#-G# of Motif A. These intervals of a fourth and fifth become a recurring accompaniment for the Theme I.

Starting in measure 5, the right hand features the combination of two motifs from the introduction. First, it starts with the long-short rhythmic pattern of Motif C. Second, the main pitches that form the melody are based on Motif B, the descending F#-major scale (ex. 70).

Ex. 70. Chopin Barcarolle F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 4-7

In measures 13-14, Theme I finishes with a phrase that is a combination of Motif A and Motif B. It first starts with an ascending scale and is followed by a skip formed by two chords, with the notes G#-C# on the top. This gesture forms a question mark. It is answered by a descending gesture that contains quick double notes with *staccato*. The top notes of this pattern are B#-A#-G#-F#-E#-D#, which again form a descending scale but this time in C# major. Nevertheless, the left hand is composed of the Motif A—intervals of a fourth and fifth—from the introduction (ex. 71).



Ex. 71. Chopin Barcarolle F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 13-14

Motif B reappears in the variation of Theme I in measure 32. This time, it is reversed and presented in an ascending gesture with a *diminuendo* and *fermata*, effectively creating a dramatic moment (ex. 72).



Ex. 72. Chopin Barcarolle F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 31-32

In measure 35, Chopin incorporates Motif A—itches C#-F#—and Motif B into the F#-minor scale to form a transition (ex. 73). Next, the long-short gesture of Motif C reappears in measure 39, leading into a contrapuntal section. In measure 42, the top and middle voices engage in imitation (ex. 74).



Ex. 73. Chopin Barcarolle F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 35-36



Ex. 74. Chopin Barcarolle F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 39-42

Theme II starts in measure 62. It has a downbeat motion with a chordal structure and is characterized by a grand character. This creates a great contrast with Theme I. Despite the extreme changes in musical images, the phrase is still built on Motif A. The main notes of melodic phrases form intervals of fourth and fifth (ex. 75).

Ex. 75. Chopin Barcarolle F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm.62-65

In measure 78, the left hand is constructed on the intervals of a fourth and fifth from Motif A, while the right hand plays an Italian-opera-like melody. This floating and beautiful melody is combined and transformed from Motif B and Motif C; it contains the long-short rhythmic gesture and the extended phrase built on F#-major scales. Although grounded in the basic motifs, the fluidity and the freedom that Chopin achieved in this passage transcends the constraints of conventional motivic development (ex. 76).

Ex. 76. Chopin Barcarolle F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 78-79

In measure 111, the piece concludes with Motif A and Motif B. It first starts with hands play different rhythmic patterns that each contain Motif A, the intervals of a fourth and fifth. This is followed by a *leggiero* running passage based on the variation of the F#-major scale. In the end, both hands play Motif A together in powerful octaves, bringing a concise but dramatic end to the composition (ex. 77).

Ex. 77. Chopin Barcarolle F# Major Op. 60 (1845-1846), mm. 111-116

In this composition, Chopin demonstrates an even more remarkable efficiency in the utilization of thematic materials. The introduction is densely packed with multiple thematic elements despite being relatively short. When the first theme begins, Chopin does not create new themes; all motifs are directly developed from the introduction. The two core thematic elements are intervals of fourths and fifths along with the F# major scale. Moreover, the use of contrapuntal writing, though constructed subtly, becomes a recurring technique throughout the composition.

Conclusion of Chopin's Stylistic Evolution

Monothematicism: Deriving accompaniment from the motif

The introduction of Ballade No. 1 and the beginning theme of Ballade No. 3 demonstrate that Chopin continued the monothematic ideas developed by Haydn and Mozart. In the introduction of Ballade No. 1, both hands play in unison, presenting thematic materials that are developed throughout the entire piece. In Ballade No. 3, Chopin extends this approach by having both hands begin with the same thematic idea but enriches the texture through contrapuntal writing. The hands may play the same material but in different directions, with voices interweaving between various parts.

Interchangeability: Transforming accompaniment motifs into melodic figures

Chopin is concise with his musical language especially with accompanying materials. In Ballade No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3, he avoids creating something new for the accompaniment. Instead, the left hand plays in unison or imitation along with the right-hand theme. In Ballade No. 4 and Barcarolle, Chopin explores greater possibilities and varieties in composing interchangeable accompaniment based on intervals of the fourth and fifth. This is particularly

evident in the Barcarolle, where the fourth and fifth intervals are transformed into different patterns in the left hand. They are not only employed in the accompaniment; they are also transformed into the transitional passages and second theme. Moreover, the interval of the fourth ultimately concludes the Barcarolle.

Contrapuntal writing

Chopin begins his exploration of contrapuntal writing in Ballade No. 1, where he constructs augmentation and diminution based on motivic elements to form dialogues between the two hands. This exploration continues to be developed in Ballade No. 3 and starts right at the beginning of the thematic presentation. The theme is played with the imitation, and the melodic voice moves with parallel and contrary directions. Chopin also crafts transitional passages with both hands playing the same thematic material in different directions and applies a special contrapuntal technique called “heterophonic accompaniment.” In Ballade No. 4, the contrapuntal technique is applied more frequently in a complex manner and a *fugato* section is incorporated into the piece. Starting with Ballade No. 4 and Barcarolle, the counterpoint becomes one of major methods for constructing motifs in Chopin’s writing.

Individual and permutable motivic elements

Chopin’s endeavor to preserve the motivic unity is evident in the compositions analyzed above. This study reveals his intention to establish all motivic information in the introduction or the first theme of the piece. Moreover, as his compositional style evolved, this approach became increasingly concise, refined, and subtle. The musical development with dramatic tension, brilliant melodies, and diverse characters are all derived from the initial thematic materials. Yet, they are seamlessly transformed so that it becomes difficult to discern their origins.

Chapter 3:

In-depth Analysis of Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor

Introduction

The B-Minor Sonata represents the culmination of Chopin's late style. However, early critics overlooked the significance of this work. According to Walker, "the sonata was never played in public during Chopin's lifetime and had to wait until January 1866 for its first performance. . . . From the moment of its publication, the B-minor sonata attracted criticism for its lack of unity."⁴⁹ Walker also mentioned Hanslick's comments: "Chopin was never able to unite the fragrant flowers that he scattered by handfuls into beautiful wreaths."⁵⁰ The Classic aspect and thematic consistency are disguised by Chopin's innovations—the expressiveness, the key center, the harmony, the variety of textural writing, the structure of each movement, and the mix of genres. It remained misunderstood until scholars turned their attention to it in the early twentieth century. For example, Walker provided an interesting demonstration created by Hugo Leichtentritt to illustrate how the different themes in this sonata can be tightly combined (ex. 78):

51

⁴⁹ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 486.

⁵⁰ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 479.

⁵¹ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 479.



Ex. 78. Hugo Leichtentritt's Demonstration on Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement

Jenny Sumono points out in her thesis that "Chopin handles his materials in such a way that they are unified with superb mastery. This sonata has interrelated themes with the movements, thematic unities which are subtle and concealed."⁵² The following analysis of the motivic aspect of each movement will reveal Chopin's achievements in large-scale structures.

First Movement: Allegro Maestoso

Theme I of the first movement is expansive and majestic with a great sense of tension. It begins with three distinct motifs. Motif A, a quick and brief gesture, begins on the upbeat and features five descending notes. In addition, main notes G-F#-B-F# contain intervals of a second, fifth, and fourth. This is followed by Motif B, which presents a contrast with its extended gesture and longer note values. The phrase of Motif B displays an arch-like direction; it starts with ascending, stepwise eighth notes followed by a downbeat half-note chord and continues with a descending, dotted rhythmic pattern. Meanwhile, the notes of Motif B form a B-minor scale, B-C#-D-E-F#-G-A. Chopin again applies the familiar motivic elements that he developed so

⁵² Sumono, "Frédéric Chopin's Piano Sonata, Op. 58 in B Minor," 10.

successfully in Ballade No. 4 and Barcarolle, intervals of a fourth and fifth as well as the scale (ex. 79).

Ex. 79. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 1-4

Between Motif A and Motif B, a brief chordal gesture of Motif C contains the notes B-C#-A# on the top voice, which features a step-up and a skip-down motion. While Motif C is not as extensively developed as the other two motifs in the sonata, it is transformed several times as a transitional element. The left hand in the Theme I manifests Chopin's Classical heritage from Haydn and Mozart. There is no new motivic material used to construct accompaniment; instead, both hands play in rhythmic unison while the left hand moves in parallel and contrary directions.

Although Motif A and Motif B are closely linked through the atmosphere of “*maestoso*,” there is a distinctive contrast in characters between them. Motif A is robust, anxious, and impulsive, and Motif B is expansive and broad. By combining these two motifs together within just four measures, Chopin establishes a powerful contrast through tension and resolution. The sonata is efficiently developed from these two motifs, and this driving force serves as an emotional thread throughout the entire work.

Before the transition, the first transformation of Motif A is presented in measure 11. First, the left hand repeats an inverted five-note pattern of Motif A twice. In measures 12-15, both hands start to play Motif A together with parallel and contrary motions. (ex. 80).

Ex. 80. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 9-15

The transition starts in measure 17. This fresh pattern with triplets and dotted rhythm is transformed from Motif B. With reversion and rearrangement, the motivic notes from Motif B are all applied there. Meanwhile, the left hand echoes the right hand and forms an imitation with it. The grand, march-like character of this section resolves the tension created by the chromatic sequence of Motif A (ex. 81).

Motif B in mm. 2-3

Transition in mm. 17-18

Ex. 81. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 2-3 and mm. 17-18

In measure 23, the transformation of Motif B appears in the right hand, with its spacious character, forming a two-voice canon, while the inverted and elongated Motif A executes chromatic scales in the bass. This chromatic scale contains a retrogradation—B-D-F#-G—of Motif A (ex. 82).

Ex. 82. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 23-24

A tumultuous, three-layered passage dominated by Motif B and Motif C starts in measure 31. In the soprano of measures 31-32, the main notes are B-C#-A, B-C-D-E-G-F, which are Motif C and Motif B respectively. At the same time, the inner voice plays a swift pattern of sixteenth notes developed from Motif A. This combination of motifs creates a strong sense of tension and ultimately leads to the second theme (ex. 83).

Ex. 83. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 31-34

Theme II can be divided into three sections: IIA, measure 41-55; IIB, measures 56-59; and IIC, measures 61-65. The delicate and glamorous melody of Theme IIA, starting on measure 41 and described by Walker as “an aria without words,” creates a dramatic characteristic shift.⁵³ However, “fresh as this theme sounds, it does not come from nowhere. . . . [I]t is a sophisticated touch that lends integrity to the theme it heralds.”⁵⁴ A close examination illustrates how the Theme II is shaped and evolved from Motif A and Motif B of the principal theme (ex. 84):

⁵³ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 478.

⁵⁴ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 479.

Ex. 84. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 41-46

Initially, Theme II A in measures 41-42 exhibit the same contour as Motif A. It features a similar short gesture with the descending direction and primary pitches G-F#-D of Motif A. However, this time, the notes' values are expanded. Following the display of Motif A, Motif B enters measure 42 with its distinctive arch-like contour and dotted rhythmic feature. This phrase contains all primary pitches from Motif B but this time transposed into a major key: F#-B-C#-D-E#-F#-A-G. With an elaborate disguise, Chopin lets the main motifs of the Theme I repeat completely again after its first presentation.

Theme IIB is again evolved directly from the principal theme, with the right hand presenting a contour that closely mirrors Motif B. It includes a stepwise ascending gesture with the pitches B-C#-D-E-F# and a descending gesture that contains pitches A-G-F# with a dotted rhythmic pattern. The left hand, which is dominated by the running sixteenth notes, is evolved from Motif A and contains the main pitches G-F#-D-B (ex. 85).



Ex. 85. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 57-58

Theme IIC spans measures 61-65. The right hand plays a transformed Motif B with its dotted-eighth-notes feature while the left hand plays a transformed Motif A with its running pattern but in a reversed direction. The same combination repeats once in measures 63-64 (ex. 86). The transition starts in measure 66 and is firstly dominated by Motif A's elongation in the right hand. The running sixteenth notes of Motif A progress into a long gesture in the inner voice, which brings an unsettled feeling. Meanwhile, this gesture is decorated by Motif B's fragmentation in the top voice. The eight notes F#-E-B-A-E-D are derived from Motif B. Following this, another transformed Motif B, with its long-note value, arch-like contour, and dotted-rhythmic feature makes an immediate appearance and answers the previous phrase in measure 69. This combination again echoes Theme I with the interplay of tension and resolution, creating a great sense of momentum (ex. 86).

61 *cresc.* **B**

63 *f*

65 *leggiero* **A** *p*

67 **A**

69 *tenuto* **B**

Ex. 86. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 61-70

The closing theme initiates with Motif A in a reversed direction in measure 76. This transformation of Motif A is based on the intervals of a second, fourth, and fifth. It becomes a series of ascending patterns and forms a tranquil moment. On the last up-beat of measure 77, a transformed Motif C, with its same intervals of an ascending second and descending third, appears in the top voice. On the last two beats of measure 79, the descending pattern containing main notes B-A-G-F# with a dotted rhythm, forms a fragmentation of Motif B (ex. 87).

Ex. 87. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 76-79

The development begins in measure 94 and can be divided into three sections. The first section spans measures 94-117. In this section, Chopin intricately weaves the principal thematic material into a complex contrapuntal texture. Through transformation, modulation, diminution, and augmentation, Chopin constructs Motifs A, B, and C into this dizzying polyphonic passage.

In measure 94, the bass starts with an augmented and reversed Motif C, while the tenor plays a rhythmically diminished version of Motif B. Next, the alto plays Motif A on the last beat

of measure 95 while the second half of diminished Motif B shifts to the soprano on the same beat. Next, this diminished Motif B reenters the alto in measure 96 (ex. 88).

Ex. 88. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 94-102

In measures 99-100, a full presentation of the principal theme is introduced by all voices with parallel and contrary motion. Starting in measure 106, another *stretto* passage unfolds, with Motif A initiating each entry of the voice. (ex. 89).

Ex. 89. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 106-109

The climax is built through a sequence of modulation from measures 110-117, where Theme I is repeated and emphasized, ultimately leading to the *forte* on measure 117 (ex. 90).

110 *sf* *sempre forte*

112

114

116 *f* *legato*

117 *p* *legato*

Ex. 90. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 110-117

Theme IIB of the exposition reappears with *subito piano* in measure 117. Its dreamy and intimate character creates a great contrast with Theme IIA and forms the second section of the development from measures 117-132. The last section of the development spans measures 133-

137 and features a four-voice *stretto* built with an eighth-note pattern that evolves from Motif B, which leads the music into the recapitulation.

The recapitulation starts directly from the transition material from the exposition, and the Theme I is entirely omitted. This innovative departure from the traditional sonata form has been widely discussed by scholars. Rosen explains that this is a scheme that Chopin found in his three mature sonata (B \flat -Minor, B-Minor, and Cello Sonata), which compromised neither his sense of style nor the energy of the form. Rosen states:

He returned to an older eighteenth-century tradition of eliminating most of the first group from the recapitulation and placed the definitive moment of resolution with the return of the second group. In compensation, he made the development section largely and elaborately contrapuntal working-out of the first theme along. The development is the traditional place for chromatic harmony, but Chopin outdoes any previous composer in richness, complexity, and an almost bewildering variety of surface change.⁵⁵

Beneath these sophisticated surfaces of musical changes lies a cohesive motivic continuity that binds the composition together with structural integrity.

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that the coda in measures 196-202 is once again constructed from Motif A and Motif B. It first starts with an ascending pattern that contains main notes G \sharp -F \sharp -D \sharp -B of Motif A but this time in B major. After it modulates and spans for three octaves, the entire movement concludes with an augmented and fragmented version of Motif B (ex. 91).

⁵⁵ Charles Rosen, "The First Movement of Chopin's Sonata in B \flat Minor, Op. 35," *19th-Century Music* 14, no. 1 (1990): 63.

Ex. 91. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm. 199-204

Second Movement: Scherzo. Molto Vivace

The second movement illustrates both Chopin’s traditional roots and innovations of Classical sonata form. Walker points out that “this movement unfolded in a form that was already a century old: the minuet and trio.”⁵⁶ However, the distribution of the movements in Chopin is rather different. Chopin repositions this fast movement as the second movement and assigns the slow largo movement to the third movement.

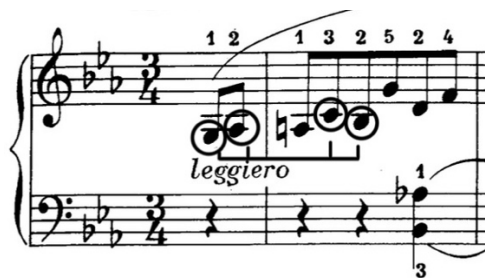
Here, instead of echoing the traditions of Haydn and Mozart, Chopin’s secret admiration for Beethoven can be detected. In Sonata op. 101, Beethoven similarly arranges a minuet and trio as the second movement, followed by a slow movement as the third. Moreover, the texture of these second movements reveals notable similarities. Beethoven constructs a fast, technical,

⁵⁶ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 481.

challenging first section that features long phrases dominated by a single rhythmic pattern, moving both ascending and descending across a wide range of registers. At the same time, the trio contains imitation and counterpoint. In a comparable manner, Chopin constructs the first part with a highly virtuosic pattern—rapid eighth notes that span four octaves featuring phrases that have eight bars in length. The trio also presents multi-voice structures and contrapuntal ideas.

In terms of motivic design, Sumono illustrates that the scherzo and trio are linked together by the same motivic idea; notes in measure 1 of the right hand and measures 61-64 of the soprano contain the same contour and intervallic structure (ex. 92).⁵⁷

Second movement mm. 1



Second movement mm. 61-64



Ex. 92. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 2nd movement, mm. 1 and mm. 61-64

⁵⁷ Sumono, "Frederic Chopin's Piano Sonata," 33.

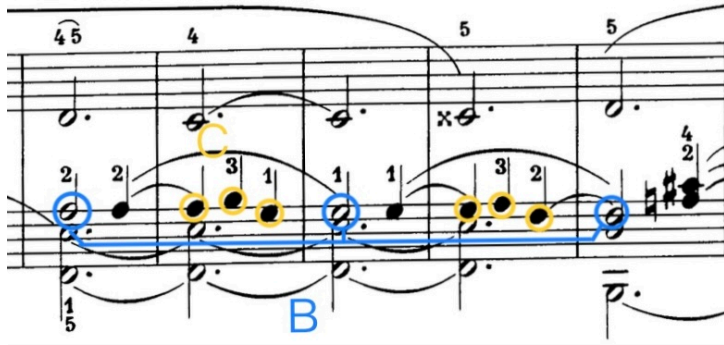
Like his predecessors Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, Chopin preserves a motivic continuity between movements. The second movement echoes the same thematic elements found in the first movement. To begin with, the first and middle sections of the scherzo illustrate a parallel in the character contrast between Motif A and Motif B. The first section resembles the character of Motif A, and the middle section displays the character of Motif B. Despite the elongated phrases with multiple directions, the running eighth notes in the right hand with its fast-paced first section echo the swift and brisk character of Motif A. Next, the main note of Motif A and Motif C can be found in the pattern of the beginning of measure 1; the right hand contains pitches A-C-B \flat , which is the retrogradation of Motif C. Right after, the same B \flat connects pitches G-D-F to form B \flat -G-D-F, which are notes from Motif A modulated into E major (ex. 93).



Ex. 93. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 2nd movement, mm. 1-2

The trio's character reflects Motif B from the first movement and carries forward the same musical ideas. The arch-like phrase structure is employed here. The longer notes and phrases contribute to a broader feeling and emotional depth.

Motif C can be found in the inner voice of measures 73-77. Pitches A \sharp -B-G \sharp and G \sharp -A-F \sharp are each derived from the pattern of Motif C, characterized by a step-up and skip-down motion. At the same time, the down-beat notes of the inner voice in the same measures are A \sharp -G \sharp -F \sharp , which is the fragmentation of the Motif B. (ex. 94).



Ex. 94. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 2nd movement, mm. 73-77

Beyond the motivic unity, the contrapuntal technique, the virtuoso aspect, and the structural reference to his precursors, the second movement attains a *leggiero* spirit and a musical simplicity that Chopin always pursued; as he described, “the simplicity is the ‘highest goal,’ achievable when you have overcome all difficulties.”⁵⁸

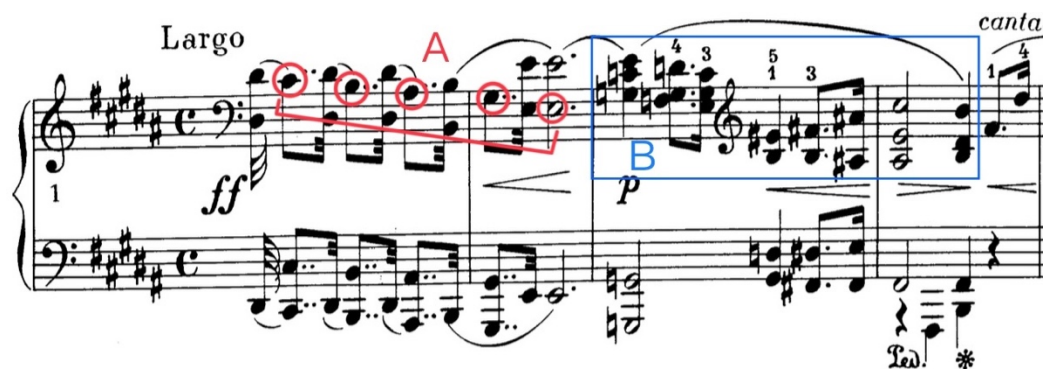
Third Movement: Largo

The third movement recalls the thematic material of the first movement in a distinctive manner. It begins with an introduction that mirrors the structure and length (four measures) of Theme I from the first movement. It transforms Motif A and Motif B from the first movement and reassembles the structure; Motif A appears in measures 1-2 followed by Motif B in measures 3-4.

The introduction begins with a descending gesture featuring the main notes C#-B-A#-G#-E in measures 1-2. While the rhythmic pattern of Motif A—four quick notes followed by a longer note—is elongated here, it still evokes the same grand and robust character. Next, measures 3-4 carry on with a phrase that has an arch-like gesture and dotted rhythm figure. It

⁵⁸ Samson, *Chopin*, 261.

brings out the familiar spacious character, just like Motif B. Here, the dynamic shifts abruptly from *fortissimo* to *piano*, rapidly transitioning the character to a tranquil and delicate moment. The great contrast between the two motifs continues the dramatic tension from the first movement (ex. 95).

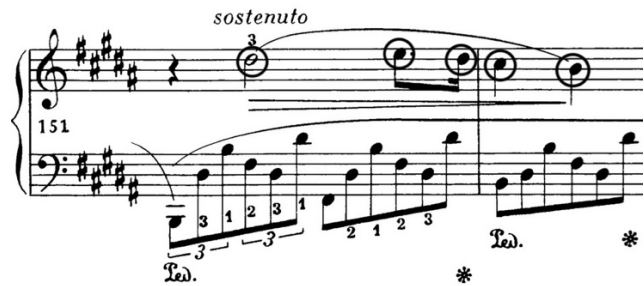


Ex. 95. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 3rd movement, mm. 1-4

After the introduction, the Largo shapes a nocturne-like *cantabile* section that starts from measure 4. The right hand continues to develop the motivic idea from the first movement. In her dissertation Sumono cites Allan Walker’s observation that primary pitches in measures 4-5—the B-C#-D#-E-D#—are the retrogradation of the opening phrase of Theme II in measures 151-152 from the first movement (ex. 96).⁵⁹

1st movement, mm.151-152

⁵⁹ Sumono, “Frederic Chopin’s Piano Sonata,” 36.



3rd movement, mm. 4



Ex. 96. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 1st movement, mm.151-152 and 3rd movement, mm. 4

Meanwhile, the first two phrases are also shaped from Motif B. Not only does it retain the same arch-like contour, the dotted rhythm, and broad characters, but the second phrase in measures 7-11 contains all the pitches from Motif B. However, the B-minor scale is modulated to B major (ex. 97). Despite the motivic connection, Chopin also creates an unforgettable moment with his lyrical expression; Rosen claims that “this is almost pure opera.”⁶⁰ He further asserts that “the main theme is as fine a specimen of Bellini’s *cantabile* technique as any that came from the original model and displays a mastery of never-ending melody for which Bellini was so famous.”⁶¹

⁶⁰ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 348.

⁶¹ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 348.

The image shows a musical score for Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58, 3rd movement, measures 7-10. The score is in B minor, 3/4 time. The right hand features a melodic line with notes E, D#, C#, B, A, G#, F#, E. The left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. Annotations include fingerings (1-5), a 'B' label, and circled notes. Pedal markings are present throughout.

Ex. 97. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 3rd movement, mm. 7-10

Next, the motivic idea keeps developing in *sostenuto*. In measures 32-33, the half notes in the right hand—E-D#-C#-B—represent a fragmented retrogradation of Motif B. The last half of Motif B, which contains notes A-G#-F# and a rhythmic pattern of a long note followed by a dotted rhythm, can be found in measures 34-36. Meanwhile, these pitches form a descending E-major scale (ex. 98).

Ex. 98. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 3rd movement, mm. 32-36

Zukiewicz points out that the *sostenuto* creates a “heterophonic accompaniment” similar to that found in Ballade No. 3.⁶² He cites Rosen’s comments: “It preserves the supremacy of the Italian-style melody while allowing a rich polyphonic elaboration. It also allows the accompaniment to become melody at any moment and maintains the implicit existence of melody in the subsidiary layers.”⁶³ This demonstrates Chopin’s unique method of developing the motivic materials to establish expressive context.

Another example of the fragmentation of Motif B is evident in the coda. This time, the second half of Motif B appears first in measures 114-115 with its dotted-rhythmic pattern and main pitches A#-G#-F#. The first half of Motif B follows next in measures 116-117, with an

⁶² Zukiewicz, “Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata,” 54.

⁶³ Rosen, *Sonata Forms*, 350.

ascending contour and main pitches B-C#-D#-E. Together, they form an E-major scale as well (ex. 99).

Ex. 99. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 3rd movement, mm. 113-119

Fourth movement: Finale

The structure of the Finale is puzzling. While Walker asserts it follows a sonata-rondo form, Zukiewicz argues that “the unusual harmonic progression of thematic material—where the contrasting theme appears in the relative key instead of contrasting key—and the absence of a development section rule out the possibility of a sonata-rondo form.”⁶⁴ In the following analysis, I adhere to the model proposed by Zukiewicz (ex. 100) but refer to themes A, B and C as Theme I, Theme II, and Theme III to avoid the confusion.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 484; Zukiewicz, “Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata,” 140.

⁶⁵ Zukiewicz, “Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata,” 141.

<u>Section</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Harmony</u>
Introduction	1 – 8	B minor
A	9 – 51	B minor
B	52 – 75	B major \Rightarrow F# major
C	76 – 89	F# major \Rightarrow B major
Transition	90 – 99	B major \Rightarrow E minor
A'	100 – 142	E minor
B'	143 – 166	E \flat major \rightarrow E \flat major
C'	167 – 182	E \flat major \Rightarrow A \flat major
Transition (B)	183 – 195	A \flat major \Rightarrow F# ⁷
	195 – 206	F# ⁷ \Rightarrow B minor
A''	207 – 253	B minor
Coda	254 – 286	B major

Ex.100. The structure of Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, proposed by Zukiewicz⁶⁶

As Walker points out, “Compared to the first movement’s wealthy thematic contrast, the last movement has almost too few melodies for the form to contain.”⁶⁷ However, with limited thematic materials, Chopin manages to keep the motivic coherence and ends the entire sonata with great brilliance and excitement.

The introduction of the fourth movement starts with a rapid ascending octave. This whole gesture is built on the chromatic ascents on the downbeat of the left hand, including notes F#-G-

⁶⁶ Zukiewicz, “Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata,” 141.

⁶⁷ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 483.

G#-A#. It starts with the semitone F#-G of Motif A from the first movement. After the fermata, this ascending gesture resolves to a B on the downbeat of measure 9, which forms a five-note pattern, echoing Motif A in an inverted direction. Moreover, the bass line of this introduction resembles the chromatic ascending pattern of the first movement in measures 14-17 (ex. 101).

4th movement, mm. 1-9

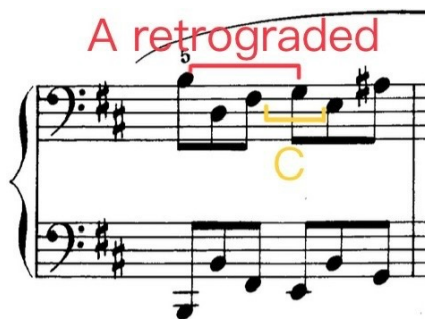
Musical score for the 4th movement of Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 3, measures 1-9. The score is in B minor, 6/8 time. It features a piano introduction with a tempo marking of "Presto, non tanto" and a dynamic of "f cresc.". The bass line shows a chromatic ascending pattern with notes circled in red, labeled "A". The introduction ends with a fermata and a "p" dynamic marking, followed by a "2 3 4" fingering and an "Agitato" tempo marking.

1st movement, mm. 13-18

Musical score for the 1st movement of Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 3, measures 13-18. The score is in B minor, 4/4 time. It features a piano introduction with a tempo marking of "ten." and a dynamic of "cresc.". The bass line shows a chromatic ascending pattern with notes circled in red, labeled "A". The introduction ends with a fermata and a "p" dynamic marking, followed by a "2 3 4" fingering and an "Agitato" tempo marking.

Ex. 101. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 1-9 and 1st movement, mm. 13-18

Chopin subtly weaves the motivic materials into the Theme I and it presents thematic materials in a multi-layered manner. The right hand in measure 9 starts with notes B-D-F#-G; by raising the B an octave higher, Chopin hides the retrogradation of Motif A from the first movement. Simultaneously, the middle of the bar contains the pitches F#-G-E, a figure with an ascending second and descending third from Motif C of the first movement. This figure is repeated multiple times in the Theme I. In addition, the pitches from the first theme again form an E-minor scale (ex. 102).



Agitato

10

15

20

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Ex. 103. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 9-24

Theme II starts in measure 52 with pitches B-D#-E-G#-F#. Sumono cites Walker's opinion that the finale has a close-knit thematic structure with the previous movement.

According to her research, two examples related to this second theme were found.⁶⁸ The first example is the closing theme of the first movement in measures 192-193. It is surprising that the finale's second theme grows from this contour. With the rhythmic diminution, Chopin transforms a lyrical melody into a swift new motif (ex. 104).

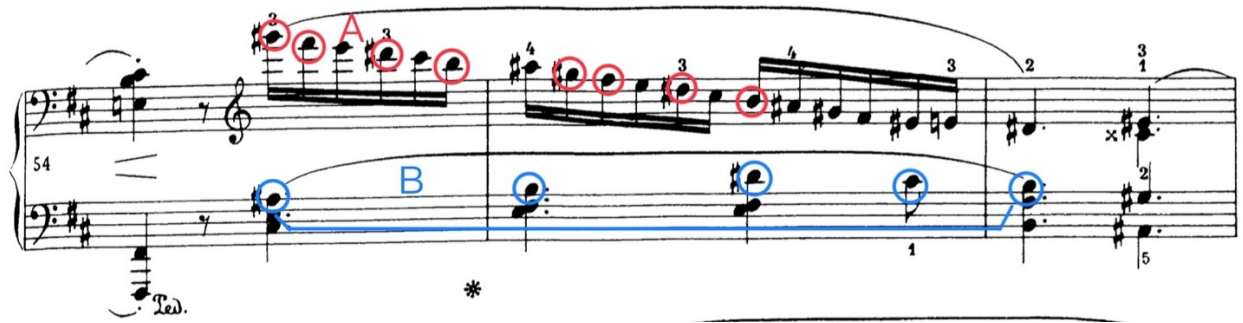
4th movement, mm. 52-53

1st in mm. 192-193

Ex. 104. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 52-53 and 1st in mm. 192-193

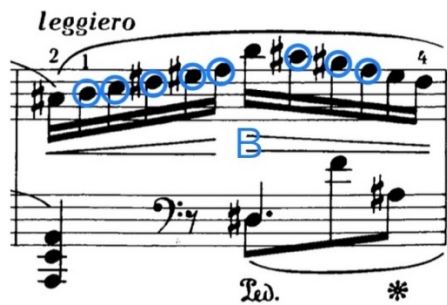
The second example is found in the trio section in measures 61-68 from the second movement. The upper voice contains the same pitches as Theme II of the finale, but the note value and the

⁶⁸ Sumono, "Frederic Chopin's Piano Sonata," 40.



Ex. 106. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 54-56

Theme III starts in measure 76 in F# major. The thematic material in this section is applied in a more subtle manner, making it difficult to identify just by listening. However, upon close examination, the entire Motif B can be found in the right hand at the start of this section. The melody in measure 76 moves up and down with running sixteenth notes and chromaticism. The pitches B-C#-D#-E#-F#-A#-G#-F# are embedded within this pattern. In this instance, Motif B is transformed into F# major with rhythmic diminution, creating an entirely new, waltz-like theme (ex. 107).



Ex. 107. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 76

In addition, the case of the left hand carrying the motivic information in a fragmented manner can also be detected in this movement. Beginning in measure 80, the left hand introduces a melodic bass line that recalls Motif B. It begins with an ascending gesture featuring the notes F#-G#-A#-B-C#, which represents the first half of Motif B transformed into F# major.

Simultaneously, this is concluded by a descending chordal gesture in measure 83, where the main notes, G#-F#, coincide with the ending of Motif B (ex. 108).

Ex. 108. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 80-85

Another example of the bass line carrying the motivic information and fragmentation can be found in Transition material in measures 183-206. Starting in measure 200, the bass plays an ascending gesture with the pitches B-C#-D-E-F#, restating the first half of Motif B. This phrase concludes with the pitches G-F# in measure 203. Motif B is then fragmented into these two notes. It is repeated several times and passed from the left hand to the right hand, ultimately leading to the final return of Theme I (ex. 109).

Ex. 109. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 200-206

At the end of the fourth movement, starting in measure 274, while the right hand engages in chromatic running sixteenth notes that resemble Motif A, the left hand first starts with a chordal gesture featuring long-note values, with primary notes of Motif A—B-F#-G#-D. This is the “heterophonic accompaniment,” the contrapuntal technique that is applied in the third Ballade and the third movement of this sonata. In measures 277-280, the left hand repeats a brief gesture with two main notes, F#-B, which are the main notes and the interval of a fourth from Motif A. Transitioning into measure 281, both hands begin to play a descending chromatic scale, which includes main pitches F-E-D-C#-B. This sequence is a retrograde inversion of the first half of Motif B from the first movement. (ex. 110)

271

8

1 4 3 1 2 4 3 1 2 4 3 1

ff

275

8

2 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 4 3 2

1 4 3 1 2

ff

277

decresc.

279

cresc.

281

ff

cadin

Ex. 110. Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844), 4th movement, mm. 271-286

Beyond the repetition of motivic pitches, the finale also combines Motif A and Motif B on a larger scale. As discussed previously, Motif A features a swift, sparkling, chromatic character, while Motif B has a broad, spacious quality with ascending and descending contours and longer note values. The contrast between these two motifs creates a tension-and-resolution effect. In the finale, Chopin combines these two characteristics in several places. In the Theme II, from measures 54-56, the right hand plays the intense, rapid falling arpeggios while the left hand carries a long phrase with the contour of Motif B. In the coda, the right hand performs a busy, running pattern spanning four registers. In contrast, the left hand plays a chorale-like gesture with a grand, expansive quality, recreating the same tension and contrast that Chopin established at the beginning of the sonata.

Summary of Chopin's B-Minor Sonata

The structure of motivic development can be summarized in the table below. It traces how the three main motifs—Motif A, Motif B, and Motif C—are transformed, combined, and developed throughout the sonata. The interrelations of motifs in different movements of the B-Minor Sonata highlights Chopin's mastery in creating thematic variation and continuity (ex. 111).

Movement	Section	Subsection	Motif and motivic interrelation
Allegro Maestoso	Principal Theme	Motif A	A quick, descending five-note figure.
		Motif B	An arch-like, extended phrase with stepwise and dotted rhythms.
		Motif C	A brief three-note motif featuring step-up and skip-down motions.
	Transition		Featuring transformations like inversion, elongation, and retrogradation of motifs A, B, and C, leading to the second theme.
	Second Theme	2A	Evolves from Motifs A, and B. Introducing a lyrical, aria-like character, with motifs reappearing in new forms.
		2B	Combines motifs A and B with B as the melody and A as the accompaniment.
		2C	Same combination of motifs A and B.
	Development		Features complex contrapuntal textures; motifs A, B, and C form four voices with modulations and stretto passages.
	Recapitulation		Omits the first theme, revisits motifs within the second theme in B ♭ major.
	Closing theme		Combines elements of motifs A, B and C.
Scherzo			Both scherzo and trio begin with the same motivic idea.
	Scherzo		Mirrors the brisk character of Motif A, subtly integrating pitches from motifs A and C.
	Trio		Reflects Motif B with broad, arch-like phrases, subtly incorporating elements from Motif C and fragments of Motif B.
Largo			
	Introduction		Resembles the presentation of motifs A and B from the first movement, featuring a grand descending gesture and arch-like figures.
	Largo		Develops Motif B into a tranquil, lyrical style, with retrogradation and references to the second themes.
Finale			
	Introduction		Features a rapid ascending gesture based on Motif A.
	First Theme		Combines motifs A and B with multi-layered textures.
	Second Theme		Evolves from the closing theme of the first movement and the trio from the second movement.
	Third Theme		Subtle transformations of Motif B in a waltz-like theme.
	Coda		Reintroduces motifs A and B, blending their characteristics to stress the sonata's initial tension and resolution.

Ex. 111. Motivic structure of Chopin Piano Sonata No. 3 in B Minor Op. 58 (1844)

The table above illustrates Chopin's motivic construction in the B-Minor Sonata, which highlights the traditional aspect of his compositional style. Motifs present at the beginning of the first movement are reimagined in various ways, permeating every movement of the sonata. Chopin inherited the idea of creating motivic consistency between the movements cultivated by Classical composers.

Chopin applies various Classic techniques of composition. Chopin employs Haydn's monothematic technique, where the accompaniment is derived from the motif. In the opening of the first movement, when the main theme is introduced, Chopin crafts the left-hand accompaniment based on the rhythmic pattern of the right hand, with notes moving in parallel or contrary directions. This approach achieves a concise and coherent sense of the music.

Chapter 1 discussed how Mozart's motifs contain great contrasts and multiplicity. In his *Fantasie K. 475*, Mozart creates motivic contrasts within the first two bars, where the first motif contains a bold, grand character, while the second motif is light and swift. Once established, this contrast forms a cohesive thread throughout the movement. The same motivic contrasts are also evident in *K. 570* and *K. 576*. As a great admirer of Mozart, Chopin adopts this approach in his B-Minor Sonata. The significant contrast between Motif A and B creates a sense of tension and resolution immediately in the first four bars. Beyond that, Chopin preserves the contrast created by these opening motifs and allows them to resonate throughout the entire sonata.

Chopin's contrapuntal writing is also inherited and developed from his Classical precursors. As discussed in Chapter 1, Mozart employs contrapuntal elements in a subtle and light manner. It often appears in short episodes with straightforward counterpoint techniques such as a canon. These elements serve to enhance the variety of melodic structures, and each voice can be distinctly heard. Balance and simplicity remain the main subject, and the

counterpoint is not designed to dominate the music. Beethoven elevates counterpoint to the next level. In his sonatas, counterpoint is not merely decorative but plays a crucial role in achieving emotional depth, complexity, and sophisticated musical concepts. Fugue passages and intricate voice leadings in Beethoven's sonata set the stage for Chopin's explorations. In his B-Minor Sonata, Chopin expands the possibilities of motivic development by drawing inspiration from his predecessors. The swift modulation in the contrapuntal episode of the first movement creates a dazzling harmonic progression. The highly intricate contrapuntal writing is not merely present in the development of the first movement but integrated into the entire sonata. Beyond that, Chopin manages to maintain his strong personal style, characterized by pure and expressive musicianship. His *bel-canto* style, combined with the unique lyricism, naturally blends with the complex texture of counterpoint.

Chopin expanded the horizon of sonata writing by creating several innovations. The first is his exploration of the key center within the sonata. Rosen highlights that Chopin's innovations in large-scale harmony involve a change of mode rather than a change of key. "He does not oppose tonalities by the Classical technique of modulation but uses related tonalities for coloristic purposes as if they were different modes of the same tonal region."⁶⁹ In the B-Minor Sonata, the principal theme of the first movement is in B minor, the second theme is in D major, and the recapitulation is in B major instead of the traditional D major. Chopin treats B minor, D major, and B major as essentially the same key, with the mediant shifts serving as the change of harmonic colors. This approach allows him to move back and forth between major and minor, transcending the traditional limitations of modulation.

⁶⁹ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 342.

The structures of each movement in the B-Minor Sonata also challenge the traditional convention of sonata form. The recapitulation of the first movement begins directly with the second theme, creating an asymmetry in the overall structure. However, as Walker indicates, “The first subject is developed so exhaustively that its reappearance in the recapitulation would have amounted to a tautology.”⁷⁰ Here, Chopin prioritizes the aural aesthetics over the symmetry of structure. Chopin also shifts the fast scherzo to the second movement and the slow largo to the third. The absence of a development section in the fourth movement raises questions about whether it follows the sonata-rondo form. As Walker points out, “the form is what all pieces of the same genre have in common, while their structure is what makes them unique.”⁷¹

Another technique that Chopin applies to the composition of B-Minor Sonata is the blending of genres. The *cantabile* section of third movement features a lyrical melody with a sense of long phrases and an accompaniment with a fixed rhythmic pattern, which is reminiscent of his nocturnes. In addition, Zukiewicz’s research illustrates the presence of the balladic elements in the B-Minor Sonata.⁷² For instance, at the end of the development of the first movement in measure 133, Chopin constructs an imitation counterpoint based on the motivic material. This passage starts with a single voice and gradually builds up, leading to the return of the second theme. A similar imitative passage appears in his fourth Ballade, where the short motivic elements develop into a *fugato*, culminating in a climax based on the main theme. In the fourth movement of the B-Minor Sonata, Theme III features a *leggiero* character, with the left-hand accompaniment emphasizing the feeling in three beats while the right-hand melody has a

⁷⁰ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 480.

⁷¹ Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 481.

⁷² Zukiewicz, “Chopin’s Third Piano Sonata,” 37.

playful, light-hearted quality, evoking a waltz-like character. This also recalls Chopin's first Ballade, where he infuses the waltz-like section—a post-Classical brilliant style that was popular during his time.

Performance Considerations

“It is essential for performers to spend time in analyzing musical works they will perform for the purpose of a more musically convincing rendition.”⁷³ In her dissertation, Kim emphasizes this importance by citing Schmalfeldt's words, “Whereas the analyst can speak and write about a work without having to perform it, the performer's presentation will, for better or worse, reflect his ‘analysis;’ the performer commits himself to a compositional re-creation, in which his physical skills as well as his intellectual and spiritual rapport with the work are on the line.”⁷⁴

Researchers have explored performance suggestions from historical and analytical perspectives. However, the consideration of motivic development, which can significantly aid the practice process, has been rarely discussed. In fact, identifying the core motifs can enhance the efficiency of learning and the accuracy of performing. Tackling a substantial repertoire like Chopin's B-Minor Sonata demands considerable time and energy, and one can easily feel overwhelmed by complicated elements such as harmony, rhythm, and counterpoint.

Understanding that the entire sonata is developed from the same short motifs will help

⁷³ Yereum Kim, “A Performance-and-Analysis Approach to a Cadential Ambiguity: Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 35, First Movement” (DMA diss., University of North Texas, December 2019), 44.

⁷⁴ Janet Schmalfeldt, “On the Relation of Analysis to Performance: Beethoven's ‘Bagatelles’ Op. 126, Nos. 2 and 5,” *Journal of Music Theory* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 1.

performers establish a coherent musical map and narrative, leading to an efficient studying process.

In his book, Berman notes that “the performer’s understanding of the structural role of the material influences his perception of its emotional content. In the sonata form, where the contrast between themes usually serves as the principal dramatic force of the composition . . . observing how the composer varies the same material later in the piece helps our comprehension of the overall structure.”⁷⁵ As discussed in chapter 3, Motif A and Motif B from the first movement in the B-Minor Sonata possess contrasting characters that create the driving force throughout the entire sonata. Understanding differences in their character—Motif A should be executed with precision and crispy articulation while Motif B should be played with a sustained tone, clear harmonies, and spacious *forte* sound—allows the pianist to make informed decisions about their performance.

Chopin continues these similar characteristics and contrasts throughout the remaining movements. In the scherzo of the second movement, the fast-running feature of Motif A requires a swift, clear, and accurate touch. The trio section, which showcases Motif B’s character, requires sensitive *legato* playing and a sense of long phrases to establish the contrast. In the introduction of largo, measures 1-2 echo the Motif A; therefore, the descending downbeats should be emphasized. The following chordal gesture of measures 3-4 should be played with a slow touch and a great balance, reflecting the contour of Motif B. In the Theme II of the fourth movement, transformations of Motif A and Motif B are combined and presented simultaneously. Therefore, the right hand should deliver the rapid descending scales with glossy and decisive

⁷⁵ Boris Berman, *Notes from the Pianist’s Bench* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 155.

execution, while the left hand should provide a longer touch and great emphasis on the top voice of the chord. Recognizing these core motifs and identifying the distinct characters, moods, and emotions that they convey is crucial as they guide the performer in applying the specific approaches in touch, articulation, and dynamics to effectively highlight the role that Chopin intends to express.

Chopin employs abundant contrapuntal writing in this work, making it essential for a performer to understand the motifs and how they developed into intricate counterpoint. For instance, in the first movement, Motif B transforms into transition through imitation in measures 17-18. Not only should the motif in the right hand be brought out, but the echo in the left hand must also be clearly emphasized. In measure 23, the right hand features an imitation between the soprano and alto voices based on Motif B while Motif A is presented as chromatic scales in the left hand's lower register. Therefore, a well-balanced interplay between two hands is crucial.

A similar but more complex voice structure is developed in measure 31. Here, the right hand contains two voices with different motivic content; the inner voice plays rapid sixteenth notes that evolved from Motif A, while the upper voice presents Motif B and Motif C. To perform this effectively, the inner voice must be delivered with smoothness and consistency, while the upper voice must be clearly highlighted simultaneously. Achieving a clear and orderly sound requires understanding the origin of each voice and practicing each voice separately.

The development section consists of even more challenging contrapuntal textures. Before practice, a detailed analysis of different motifs and the entry of each voice is necessary. Careful attention should be given to shaping proper dynamics, directions, and tone colors. The entry of each voice should be emphasized, and the dialogue should be consistent. By practicing each voice and section individually, the performer can better establish a disciplined musical effect.

Understanding the development of motivic material can help solidify memorization and foster confidence in performances. Goldberg reveals Chopin's influence from his teacher, Józef Elsner, who regarded music as the "language of emotion."⁷⁶ Chopin shared this view, and he expressed a similar idea in his sketch for a *Piano Method*, writing, "We use sounds to make music just as we use words to make a language."⁷⁷ Chopin's students emphasized that their master thought of music in rhetorical terms, "For him, it was a language following the rules of punctuation and elocution."⁷⁸ Given how strongly Chopin stressed the logic of music, understanding his work through the aspect of linguistic narrative becomes even more essential. Comprehending the motifs and their development is like following a character in a novel or movie through their journey of adventures and evolution. This narrative approach allows the performer to infuse the music with meaning and concentrate on the richness of musical context while performing. By doing so, the performer attains enhanced assurance and cohesion in their interpretation.

⁷⁶Halina Goldberg, "Phrase Structure in Chopin's Early Works in the Light of Elsner's Instruction," *Indiana Theory Review* 28, no. 1/2 (2010): 2.

⁷⁷ Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher, As Seen by His Pupils*, trans. Naomi Shohet, Krysia Osostowicz, and Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 42.

⁷⁸ Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher*, 42-44.

Conclusion

Chapter 1 introduced the evolution of motivic synthesis by looking at this technique in the work of four composers—C.P.E. Bach, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. It first discusses the origins of motivic writing, mentioning J.S. Bach’s use of motifs in his dance suites and focusing on C.P.E. Bach’s pioneering extension of this technique into the sonata form. An analysis of C.P.E. Bach’s *Württemberg Sonata No. 1 in A Minor* demonstrates how his motifs undergo a series of developments, appearing in the transition, closing themes, and development sections. Additionally, the second movement of this sonata illustrates a motivic connection to the first movement.

Next, Chapter 1 highlights two of Haydn’s critical contributions to motivic development: interchangeability and monothematicism. Haydn’s interchangeability demonstrates his method of transforming accompanying motifs into melodic figures. Analysis of Haydn’s works also reveals his use of monothematicism—deriving the accompaniment from the motif. Furthermore, Haydn’s work presents a coherent motivic language across movements in a sonata, with motifs in subsequent movements derived from the first.

The chapter then examines Mozart’s continuation and refinement of Haydn’s methods, which elevated motivic development to a higher artistic level. Like Haydn, Mozart employed monothematicism and interchangeability, but his transformations exhibit greater delicacy and surface smoothness. Mozart also developed the concept of “concealed motivic repetition,” where recurring patterns of motifs are subtly or completely disguised, especially in contrasting sections. This deeper level of repetition enhances the structural coherence of his works, raising the artistry of motivic development to exceptional heights. Additionally, Mozart incorporated contrapuntal

techniques in his sonatas, such as imitation, parallel motion, contrary motion, inversion, diminution, and augmentation. While contrapuntal writing became more prominent in Mozart's late works, the texture remained relatively light. His later works also exhibit a continued use of similar motivic contrasts, with several compositions sharing identical features. This continuation between different sonatas likely inspired Beethoven and foreshadowed the sonata cycles.

Beethoven's Sonata Op. 101 is then analyzed to showcase his integration of monothematicism and interchangeability in the styles of Haydn and Mozart. Beethoven blends them into an even more complex presentation of motivic ideas. A single motif can be divided into multiple layers, and each layer is developed individually through the movement. Beethoven also employs bold techniques of fragmentation throughout the development of motivic material; his sonata emphasized motivic consistency across movements. Beethoven's exploration of contrapuntal writing reaches its pinnacle, culminating in a four-voice fugue developed from motivic material in the fourth movement of Sonata Op. 101.

Chapter 2 analyzes four of Chopin's pieces, three Ballades and the Barcarolle, to explore his stylistic development. Examination of Ballade No. 1 demonstrates a significant shift in Chopin's departure from Viennese Classicism and post-Classical genres. In this work, Chopin blends popular elements, such as the waltz-like theme and the sonata form, to create a new compositional style that is infused with his poetic narrative, dramatic tension, and lyrical *cantabile* phrases. The motivic material is presented in the brief introduction, which is monothematic. Like Mozart, Chopin has both hands play parallel phrases with identical rhythms and notes. The subsequent themes, transitions, and developments are derived from this introduction motif. However, the transformations are mainly based on the exact notes of the motifs. This means that the same notes from the opening motifs are borrowed and rearranged in

different orders and rhythmic patterns, making them relatively easier to perceive. Additionally, Chopin incorporates some simple contrapuntal techniques during the development of the motifs, such as diminution and augmentation.

Analysis of Ballade No. 3 showcases Chopin's precise use of motivic material from the opening. The first two bars introduce the two intervals of the sixth and second. These intervals engage in a contrapuntal dialogue between the soprano and bass, forming the basis for the transition, Theme II, and Theme III. In this work, Chopin's incorporation of polyphonic writing increases; a single motif can appear in both hands, forming a transition passage using contrapuntal techniques such as contrary motions and heterophonic accompaniments. Although the motivic material penetrates the entire Ballade, Chopin begins to transform the motifs in more subtle ways. The concise motifs, with various inversions, modulations, decorations, and ornamentations, allow the motivic technique to blend more seamlessly into the music.

Exploration of the motivic processes in Chopin's Ballade No. 4 and Barcarolle highlight the further development of his compositional techniques. In the Ballade No. 4, Chopin constructs an extended introduction featuring two motivic elements—a five-note scale and intervals of a fourth and fifth. The Barcarolle incorporates two similar motifs in the introduction—intervals of a fourth and fifth, along with an F#-major scale. Notably, not only do these motifs appear later in the pieces, but the rhythmic texture established in the introduction is also applied throughout the works. In the introduction of Ballade No. 4, the right hand contains two voices—a legato line of eighth notes on top and an inner voice of a sixteenth-note accompaniment. This pattern evolves into a contrapuntal passage later in the piece. In the Barcarolle, the rhythmic pattern of a dotted-half note followed by moving eighth notes in the soprano from the introduction is similarly developed later. Furthermore, in the opening measures of Ballade No. 4, the left hand introduces

a melody line fragmented from the motif of the right hand, establishing a polyphonic texture right from the start. The value of contrapuntal writing is significant in Ballade No. 4; the theme is decorated with various polyphonic techniques, including an intricate four-voice contrapuntal passage.

In contrast to Ballade No. 1, which focuses on developing specific motivic notes from the introduction, and Ballade No. 3, which primarily contains motifs of two-note intervals, Chopin's shift to scales and intervals of fourths and fifths in Ballade No.4 and Barcarolle provides greater freedom and flexibility in motivic development. They are easier to modulate, and the use of scales allows Chopin to construct lyrical and *cantabile* melodic phrases, which are somewhat lacking in Ballade No. 3. Consequently, the motivic development is more disguised in these works; it is difficult to discern the motivic relationship between the introduction and first theme in both Ballade No. 4 and Barcarolle. This subtlety contributes to the distinct characteristics and the extreme tension, culminating especially in the closing theme of the Ballade No.4. Chopin's development of Mozart's "concealed motivic repetition" and his uncompromising pursuit of a unique musical identity overshadowed the Classical tradition he carefully adhered to, leading his contemporaries to misunderstand his works as unconventional and exotic.

Chapter 3 provides an in-depth analysis of Chopin's B-Minor Sonata, Op. 58. The first movement is based on two main motifs that echo Chopin's preferences from Ballade No. 4 and Barcarolle—the use of intervals of fourths and fifths and scales. However, this time both elements are presented with slight disguises. Based on the intervals of fourths and fifths, Motif A starts with a semitone and forms a crisp descending five-note pattern. Motif B, which alters the order of scale notes, presents an arch-like grand phrase. This illustrates Chopin's growing proficiency in constructing motivic material based on the experience and experimentation he

accumulated in prior compositions. The subtle transformations of the same intervals and scales create entirely different themes with great contrast while providing Chopin with significant flexibilities and possibilities for further development. Consequently, these two elements are highly elaborated throughout the remaining movement, resulting in a grand and majestic first theme, a dreamy and beautiful second theme, kaleidoscopic transitions, and a strikingly intricate fugue in the development section.

The B-Minor Sonata showcases Chopin's deep connection to Bach's contrapuntal language, reflects his inheritance of Haydn's concise monothematism, and demonstrates his proficiency of Mozart's fluid multiplicity in constructing motifs. Moreover, it reveals Chopin's admiration for Beethoven's profound emotional intensity and epic narrative. The intricacy and proportion of the fugue in the first movement resemble Beethoven's sonata Op.101, where the counterpoint serves not just as decoration but as a vital role in achieving emotional depth. Meanwhile, similar to Beethoven's sonata Op. 101, Chopin composed a virtuosic scherzo as the second movement, characterized by a lightning-fast tempo of *molto vivace* and a contrapuntal trio. However, Chopin's careful construction of motifs presents a lightweight texture, a sense of long phrases, and nuanced harmonies, which create an effect distinct from Beethoven's style. As Rosen observes, "His large works, even the most violent, never lose a sense of intensely refined poetry."⁷⁹

The third movement begins with a dramatic transformation of the main theme from the first movement, maintaining a strong connection to its motivic roots. This movement showcases Chopin's lyricism at its height. The *largo*, which Rosen notes directly borrows the *cantabile*

⁷⁹ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 344.

technique from Bellini's operas, conveys a nocturne-like beauty and intimacy.⁸⁰ The *sostenuto*, constructed from the fragmentation and retrogradation of motivic materials, is enriched with a polyphonic elaboration named heterophonic technique. This technique creates a sense of flow and fluidity between the accompaniments and melodies. The final movement highlights a striking level of virtuosity that evokes fear in performers, yet Chopin elevates this display of technical prowess with his unique aesthetic and artistic depth. Regarding the motivic structure, he continually combines and transforms motifs from the first movement and emphasizes the intensity between them. The first theme of the finale contains a tight connection with the first movement. The second theme also references the closing theme of the first movement and the trio from the second movement. The third theme, which is reminiscent of Chopin's Ballade No. 1, incorporates a waltz-like quality. By drawing on connections to the popular genres of his time, Chopin may have aimed to amplify the audience's enthusiasm and excitement when experiencing the ending of the whole sonata. This level of exhilaration continues to resonate today.

How did Chopin come to realize these monumental compositions? As Allan Walker's article reveals, attributing them merely to his unparalleled talent would be a misconception.

Chopin's composing process was slow and often painful. A glance through his manuscripts reveals signs of a continual struggle, with heavy corrections on every page. George Sand tells us that he would sometimes scratch out a phrase half-a-dozen times in his search for the right construction, only to finish with the version he had originally started with. Isolated in his room with a piano as his sole companion (Chopin invariably composed at the keyboard), it was not unusual for him to spend six weeks on a single page, pacing back and forth and breaking his pens in frustration. This quest for perfection was a lifelong characteristic, and it produced a dividend.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 348.

⁸¹ Alan Walker, "Chopin: The Voice of the Piano," *American Music Teacher* 59, no. 6 (2010): 25.

While Chopin's adherence to the traditions of Classical genres remains unwavering throughout his compositional process, as Rosen claims, "Chopin's most radical genius came directly out of his most conservative skill."⁸² These conservative elements lie beneath the musical surface, delicately incorporating his boundless imagination, organic poetry, fluid musicianship, and profound individualism. This sophisticated synthesis culminates in a harmonious balance between structural coherence and the innovative representation of Romanticism.

So, what is the purpose of all this microscopic analysis? Certainly, one hopes to understand and perform the music with more knowledge, reverence, and intentionality. But beyond this, is a notion of irrepressible circularity and spirituality that transcends all of our study. It is this orbit of wonderment about creativity and genius that fascinates and astounds us.

Perhaps T.S. Eliot leaves us with the best attempt at this realization:

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.

...

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.⁸³

⁸² Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, 342.

⁸³ T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, "Little Gidding," V (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 35.

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