

KRZYSZTOF PENDERECKI
ACADEMY OF MUSIC
IN KRAKOW

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PIANO FANTASY GENRE.
DIVERSITY OF EXPRESSION AND FORM THROUGH THE
CENTURIES AS A REFLECTION OF THE ERA AND THE
COMPOSER'S PERSONALITY

**Description of the artistic doctoral dissertation as part of the proceedings
for the award of the title of doctor
in the field of arts, in the discipline of musical arts**

Promoter: prof. dr hab. Gajusz Kęska

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A work of art

Robert Schumann: Fantasiestücke op. 12

- I. Des Abends
- II. Aufschwung
- III. Warum?
- IV. Grillen
- V. In der Nacht
- VI. Fabel
- VII. Traumes Wirren
- VIII. Ende vom Lied

Fryderyk Chopin: Fantasia in F minor, op. 49

Alexander Scriabin: Fantasia in B minor op. 28

Karol Szymanowski: Fantasia in C major, op. 14

- I. Grave
- II. Non troppo allegro
- III. Allegro molto

This recording was made in Florianka Concert Hall of K. Penderecki Academy of Music in Krakow in September 23-24, 2023, November 16, 2023, and February 7-8, 2024.

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Chapter 1 Origin and Development of the Fantasy Genre

1.1 Fantasy in the Renaissance

The word *fantasy* derives from the Greek term *phantasia*, meaning "imagination" or "dream". Initially, it referred not so much to a specific musical genre, but rather to an ingenious creative concept of an improvisational nature.¹ The constitutive feature of fantasy was the free form and the element of improvisation, which provided composers with a vast space of expression and invention. The origins of this genre remain closely related to the tradition of improvisation developing at the end of the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance era. Musicians often created spontaneously on keyboard instruments, such as the organ or harpsichord, or on the lute. These works, devoid of a fixed formal structure, exposed performance technique and freedom of invention, but these improvisations were rarely written down.

The earliest documented use of the title "fantasy" dates to the early 16th century. The term first appears in a manuscript of German keyboard compositions by Hans Kotter and Leonhard Kleber (1490–1556) from around 1520. Soon after, he also appeared in old musical scores from Valencia, Milan, Nuremberg and other artistic centres of Europe. These compositions were based on the principles of counterpoint, but they were not constrained by structural rigors, which allowed for greater freedom in shaping the musical material.

Other instrumental forms of this period – *canzona* and *ricercare* – showed a significant resemblance to fantasy, especially in terms of the use of imitation technique. In practice, these names were used interchangeably. These compositions were often created in a whimsical and inventive way, maintaining the openness of form and improvisational character.

Ricercare was a type of instrumental composition characteristic of the late Renaissance and early Baroque. The development of this form can be divided into two basic types: the first – with a predominantly homophonic texture, with decorative courses and passages reminiscent of the *toccata* – was present from the end of the fifteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century, after which it evolved into an independent genre of *toccata*; the second – contrapuntal and imitative – turned out to be much more important for the history of music, being the direct nucleus of fugue.

¹ Field, Christopher D. S. 2001. "Fantasia." The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, second edition, Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell. London: Macmillan Publishers.

The earliest *ricercars*, originally written for the lute, were soon adapted for keyboard instruments. They were characterized by a melodic imitation reminiscent of a motet, i.e. a vocal sacred composition.² However, there are also *ricercars* devoid of imitation elements, which can be considered close to fantasies. In general, fantasy stood out for being even more formal and expressive than *ricercare*.

The fantasies of the sixteenth century were primarily instrumental compositions, most often intended for the lute and other plucked stringed instruments. In lute improvisations, polyphonic techniques were eagerly used, and thematic motifs were developed in a free and creative way.

Of particular importance in the development of this genre was Francesco Canova da Milano (1497–1543),³ who left behind more than a hundred *ricercars* and fantasies. His compositions, based on the principles of counterpoint, are characterized by exceptional formal freedom and structural ingenuity.



Example no. 1: Francesco da Milano: *Fantasia XXXIII*, bars 1–13, Vlotho: Stefan Apke, 2017

In Spain, the composer Luis de Milan⁴ created a cycle of forty fantasies contained in a collection of instrumental works. In Italy, Giovanni Gabrieli⁵ composed organ fantasies, developing the Italian tradition of this genre.

² According to the Oxford Dictionary of Music, in the sixteenth century, instrumental fantasy was an exact imitation of a vocal motet. Kennedy, Michael. 2006. The Oxford Dictionary of Music, second edition, revised, Joyce Bourne, Associate Editor. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

³ Francesco Canova da Milano (18 August 1497 – 2 January 1543) was an Italian lute player and composer. Francesco was recognized throughout Europe as the leading composer of lute works of his time.

⁴ Luis de Milan (c. 1500 – c. 1561) was a Spanish Renaissance composer, virtuoso of playing the vihuel and writer of musicological texts.

⁵ Giovanni Gabrieli (c. 1554/1557 – 12 August 1612) was an Italian composer and organist.

Fantasia 3



Example no. 2: Luis de Milan: *Fantasy No. 3*, bars 1–12, Spencer Doidge, 2018

In the second half of the sixteenth century, especially in England, fantasies were mainly used for string or keyboard instruments. These were compositions based on counterpoint, characterized by a free structure and polyphonic texture. William Byrd ⁶(1543–1623) and John Bull ⁷(1562–1628) left numerous fantasies to the virginal. In addition to its elaborate counterpoint, *Byrd's MB27 Fantasia in A minor* feature varied, contrasting themes, distinct rhythms, and complex harmonic progressions that reveal the richness of his creative invention.

One of the most outstanding artists in the history of the genre was Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck ⁸(1562–1621), a Dutch composer, organist and teacher. His *Fantasia chromatica* is a work of exceptional importance – it combines elements of the Renaissance and Baroque styles, being one of the most important links in the evolution of fantasy.

Chromatic fantasy, originating in sixteenth-century Europe, is based on a chromatically descending tetrachord, derived from the Doric mode. For this reason, almost all works of this type are in the key of D minor (D–E–F–G–A–B-flat–C), which also applies to later compositions by J. S. Bach.

As in his other fantasies, Sweelinck constructs the entire form on one short melodic fragment, which in this case is based on a characteristic, chromatically descending fourth movement. In the tuning system of the time, the uneven distances between the semitones intensified the expressive, slightly irritating effect of this line. The sounds of E-flat and D-sharp were not the same in this outfit – D-sharp sounded clearly higher. Sweelinck's *Fantasia*

⁶ William Byrd (c. 1540 – 4 July 1623) was an English composer of the Renaissance. Considered one of the most outstanding composers of this period

⁷ John Bull (1562/63 – 12/13 March 1628) was an English composer, organist, virginist and organ builder.

⁸ Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (April or May 1562 – 16 October 1621) was a Dutch composer, organist and pedagogue whose work spanned the period from the end of the Renaissance to the beginning of the Baroque.

Chromatica is probably the second piece in history for keyboard instruments to use both of these sounds in one composition (the first was *William Byrd*).

FANTAISIE EN RÉ MINEUR

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck
(1562-1621)

VANDERHAER
 DES JOURN:

{
 Récit: Poêle et Anches de B et de A P. Cornet.
Positif: Poêle de B, A, E, Plein-Jeu.
G!Orguet: Poêle de B, A P. (Trompette, Châren et Doublette pépées.)
Pédale: Fain de B, A, E P. (Clavier pépées.) Tirasse de G! P.

(Allegro moderato) ♩ = 120

MANUEILE.

PÉDALE.

Example no. 3: Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: *Fantasia Chromatica*, bars 1–16, A. Durand, 1900. Plate A.G.
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1.2 Fantasy in the Baroque Era

In classifying musical styles, Athanasius Kircher, an outstanding Jesuit erudite of the seventeenth century, described the so-called *fantastic style* (*Stylus fantasticus*) as a distinct musical category in his *Musurgia Universalis* (1650).⁹ He defined it as follows: "*Stylus Fantasticus* is a type of music that is completely free and without limitations, resulting solely

⁹ Katalin Komlós, F. Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, „FANTASIA – MUSICAL GENRE?” <https://concert-lisztacademy-hu.translate.google/news/fantasia-a-musical-genre-119109?> 12 czerwca 2019 r.

from artistic ingenuity." In the Baroque era, fantasies often appeared in tandem with fugues – numerous combinations such as *prelude and fugue*, *toccata and fugue*, or *fantasy and fugue* are known.

The French music theorist and composer Sébastien de Brossard (1655–1730) compared fantasy to a completely free musical genre, closely related to *capriccio*. On the other hand, the German composer, critic and theoretician Johann Mattheson (1681–1764) believed that order and rigor do not fit forms based on creative freedom, especially when they take the form of elaborate fugues. On the other hand, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) – a philosopher, writer and composer from Geneva – clearly distinguished *fantasy* from *capriccio*. He argued that *capriccio* is usually written down, and despite its originality, it remains to some extent subordinated to the rules, while *fantasy* is pure improvisation. In his *Dictionnaire de musique*¹⁰ (1767), Rousseau observed that "fantasy cannot be written down – because once it is fixed in notes, it is no longer fantasy." Both genres – *fantasy* and *capriccio* – are related to each other but differ in character. Fantasy focuses on expressing the deepest feelings and is more subjective in nature, while *capriccio* exposes lightness, grace and external emotions. From a formal point of view, fantasy is usually more extensive, but the two genres often intertwine, which makes their boundaries fluid. It is worth noting that despite the apparent improvisationality, Baroque fantasies were not devoid of internal logic and order.

In the work of Johann Sebastian Bach, fantasy did not take on a fixed form, maintaining a free, improvisational character and a reflective tone. The texture was flexible and variable; There were often arpeggiated chords and figurations interspersed with recitative fragments. Baroque composers eagerly preceded the fugue with a short piece such as a prelude, toccata or fantasy. These three forms – prelude, toccata and fantasy – had a similar musical function and sometimes merged with each other.

Bach composed numerous fantasies for organ and harpsichord, both independent (m.in. *Fantasia in C minor* BWV 918–920, *Fantasia in G major* BWV 572) and combined with fugues (*Fantasia and Fugue in A minor* BWV 904, *G minor* BWV 542, *C minor* BWV 906 and *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue* BWV 903). Each of these compositions has an individual character. Bach's fantasies are characterized by "fiery, extensive scales and arpeggios combined with rich modulations."¹¹ The *chromatic Fantasia and Fugue* BWV 903, written during the

¹⁰ Dictionnaire de musique (Rousseau, Jean-Jacques), Paris: Chez la veuve Duchesne, 1768

¹¹ Xiu Hailin, Li Jiti, History and Aesthetics of Western Music, China Renmin University Press, Beijing 1999

Köthen period, represents a breakthrough in his work and one of the most famous keyboards works in history. Even contemporaries considered it a masterpiece.



Example no. 4: J. S. Bach: *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* BWV 903, bars 7–10, G. Henle Verlag, HN 1219

In the Baroque era, the use of semitones became increasingly common, which was facilitated by the deepening of emotional expression and the stabilization of the tonal system. Bach in this fantasy uses numerous semitones altered in fast scale waveforms, which leads to frequent modulations and rich chromatic consonances. Such an unstable harmonic structure was a bold and innovative procedure at the time.



Example no. 5: J. S. Bach: *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* BWV 903, bars 85–88, G. Henle Verlag, HN 1219

Bach also used the then rare technique of modulation to distant keys. On the other hand, a series of sixteenth- and thirty-two-note rhythmic values give the work an improvisational character, full of virtuosity and dramatic tension.



Example no. 6: J. S. Bach: *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* BWV 903, bars 24–28, G. Henle Verlag, HN 1219

Improvised transitional phrases and appoggiaturas strengthen the decorative character of the recitative parts and intensify the emotional expression of the entire piece.



Example no. 7: J. S. Bach: *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* BWV 903, bars 69–71, G. Henle Verlag, HN 1219

The structure of *Chromatic Fantasy* includes five tempo sections, which can be divided into two main parts. The first (bars 1–49) is of a technical nature and resembles a *toccata* with extended passages and arpeggios. It is followed by a recitative fragment.

Recitative (Italian: *recitativo*) originally denoted a style of singing in operas, oratorios, and cantatas, imitating the natural intonation of speech. It is characterized by a free rhythm and a flexible pace.¹² Bach was one of the first to transfer this technique to instrumental music, making it a tool for expressing deep emotions – especially tragic ones.

¹² Yu Runyang, *General History of Western Music*, Shanghai Music Publishing House, Shanghai 2001

Bach used numerous falling minor seconds in the recitative sections – a motif known as the "sigh motif", symbolizing lamentation, grief and sadness.



Example no. 8: J. S. Bach: *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* BWV 903, bar 49, G. Henle Verlag, HN 1219

At the end of the work, there is also a series of falling small seconds, creating the effect of successive "falls", which eventually lead to the tonic D. The combination of the motif of sighing with the key of D minor intensifies the tragic character of the work.



Example no. 9: J. S. Bach: *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* BWV 903, bars 76–79, G. Henle Verlag, HN 1219

The free use of *appoggiaturatur*, sighing figures, frequent chromatisms and speech-like melodies had a huge influence on the formation of the so-called *Empfindsamer Stil* – a style of "feelings" that appeared in eighteenth-century Germany. This style, which sought to express "true and natural emotions", was based on contrasts of moods and subtle changes of affect.¹³

Representatives of this trend were, m.in, Bach's sons – Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788). C. P. E. Bach, the most famous of them, was one of the

¹³ Hertz, Daniel and Bruce Alan Brown. 2001a. "Empfindsamkeit". *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, edited by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell. London: Macmillan

main creators of the *Empfindsamer Stil* style and the author of 23 fantasies for keyboard instruments, which had a significant influence on later composers.

C. P. E. Bach became famous for his passionate improvisations on the clavichord, often in the form of free fantasy. His style, full of contrasts and emotional intensity, has inspired generations of musicians – from the Viennese classics to Beethoven and Schubert. The *Fantasia in C minor* Wq.119/7 (1753) shows clear similarities to his father's *Chromatic Fantasia*, and at the same time constitutes a kind of tribute to the great master.



Example no. 10: C. P. E. Bach: *Fantasy and Fugue in C minor*, Wq.119/7, Holograph manuscript, 1787

As the composer himself wrote: "It is in fantasies that the pianist, more than any other musician, can practice the declamatory style, boldly moving from one affect to another in order to spontaneously master the feelings of his listeners" ¹⁴

C. P. E. Bach expanded the freedom of form, giving up bar lines and using a slow rhythm. He experimented with performance virtuosity, rich dynamics, smooth flow of music and bold modulations, which opened new perspectives for the development of fantasy. Among his most important works of this kind are *Fantasies in the Free Style* (Wq 58, Wq 61, Wq 67). They are characterized by numerous tonal changes and a complete lack of measure of time.

¹⁴ C. P.E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing the Clavier*, 1753



Example no. 11: C. P. E. Bach: *Fantasia in F sharp minor*, Wq 67, bars 3f-4c, Liam Hynes

The Fantasia in F sharp minor H. 300 (Wq 67), composed a year before the composer's death, is one of his longest works in this genre. It combines a series of contrasting sections of different tempo and texture. There are three main motifs: *an adagio* with a chord in the left hand and a triple repetition of the sound in the right; *Allegretto* with virtuoso figuration and *largo* in 12/8 time, with gently pulsating eights.

This work is the culmination of the work of C. P. E. Bach – it combines youthful imagination with mature mastery.



Example no. 12: C. P. E. Bach: *Fantasia in F sharp minor*, Wq 67, bars 1–3, Liam Hynes



Example no. 13: C. P. E. Bach: *Fantasia in F sharp minor*, Wq 67, bars 5–7, Liam Hynes

Although fantasies devoid of measure did not gain much popularity, their tradition was continued by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in his *Fantasia in D minor*, and then by Ludwig van Beethoven in *Fantasia* Op. 77 and *Choral Fantasia* Op. 80, which already foreshadow the romantic dimension of the genre.

1.3 Classicism – between form and improvisation

During the Classicist period, fantasy underwent significant changes in terms of form and structure, gradually departing from the strict rules of fugue and taking on an increasingly free character. Increasingly, it consisted of several parts, loosely connected to each other, which gave it greater formal flexibility. The fantasies of Mozart and Beethoven have shown the tendency of this genre to transform into works with a wide range and developed structure.

W. A. Mozart and L. van Beethoven – two of the most outstanding improvisers of Viennese classicism – left behind relatively few recorded fantasies, but each of them is an

important link in the development of the genre. Beethoven, who lived at the junction of two musical epochs, created within the framework of traditional forms, but his compositions are imbued with the spirit of independence and bold expression, announcing Romanticism. The term *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, which Beethoven placed on the title pages of two sonatas from 1800 to 1801, is a significant example of his innovative approach to form (it is worth noting that half a century later, Franz Liszt described his *Dante Sonata* as a *Fantasia quasi Sonata*). If some of Beethoven's late sonatas – Op. 101 and Op. 109 – had a subtitle, the word "quasi" would probably be superfluous, since their structure in fact escapes the classical order of a sonata.

Mozart left five fantasies for keyboard instruments, among which the most famous were KV 397 in the key of D minor and KV 475 in the key of C minor. Significantly, the *Fantasia* KV 475 was published together with the *Piano Sonata* KV 457 – also in the key of C minor. As the author of *Keyboard Music of the 18th Century* notes: "Perhaps only Mozart himself could have decided to publish them together. They are the most perfect examples of the composer's expression of his own world of emotions in the key of C minor – the key to anger, contemplation, seriousness and severity, standing in opposition to the magical spirit of D minor or the turbulent G minor." The *Fantasy* KV 475 therefore serves as both a preparation for a sonata and an independent work.

Beethoven, on the other hand, is a key link between the past and the future. His fantasies, especially from the middle and late periods, combine the originality of musical language with a clear break with tradition. *Fantasia for piano*, Op. 77 (1809) is a one-movement work with strong contrasts of tempos and textures, in which opposing musical ideas collide. Beethoven was the first to fully integrate and transform the form of fantasy, combining it with other genres. In two sonatas marked *quasi una fantasia* (Op. 27), fantasy was for the first time associated with the cyclical structure of the sonata, while in the *Choral Fantasy in C minor*, Op. 80 (1808), the composer went even further – he introduced the chorus part into a form that for centuries had been exclusively instrumental. This bold combination proves his courage in experimenting with musical conventions.

Mozart's *Fantasia in C minor* has a five-movement structure (*Adagio – Allegro – Andantino – Più Allegro – Tempo Primo*), while the *Fantasia in D minor* – has a seven-movement structure (*Andante – Adagio – Presto – Tempo Primo – Presto – Tempo Primo – Allegretto*). In contrast to the strict sonata form, Mozart retained only the general principles of a two-part or three-part structure, composing individual sections in a completely free way.

Beethoven's *Fantasia* Op. 77, on the other hand, shows even greater diversity in terms of tempos and rhythms (*Allegro ma non troppo*, *Allegro con brio*, *Più presto*, *Adagio*). The composer introduced elements of the variational form, including both harmony and texture, tonality and rhythm, which increases the richness and innovation of the work's structure.

Improvisation and cadence are an inseparable element of the idiom of fantasy, which can be seen in all three of the compositions discussed.



Example no. 14: W. A. Mozart: *Fantasia in D minor*, KV 397, bar 44, G. Henle Verlag, HN 22



Example no. 15: W. A. Mozart: *Fantasia in C minor*, KV 475, bars 80 - 85, G. Henle Verlag, HN 22

Improvisational fragments in Beethoven's *Fantasies* not only enrich the technical side of the work, but also intensify its expression and dynamics, giving the whole a dazzling,

virtuoso character. This was also influenced by the growing perfection of the piano instrument in Beethoven's era, which created new expressive possibilities for composers.

Dynamic markings in classical fantasies have both an expressive and a structural function. The contrasts of dynamics reflect not only internal emotional tensions, but also the formal logic of the work – resulting from motivic, harmonic and rhythmic relationships.

Much of the drama and tension in Mozart's fantasies stems from the frequent, multi-level dynamic contrasts. Already in the initial *Adagio*, the composer marks the first note of the theme as "*f*", accentuating the tonic C, and then changes the dynamics to "*p*" on the second eighth E. The chromatic sound of F-sharp blurs the sense of tonal centre, introducing anxiety and a mysterious mood.



Example no. 16: W. A. Mozart: *Fantasia in C minor*, KV 475, bars 1–2, C. F. Peters, 10817



Example no. 17: W. A. Mozart: *Fantasia in C minor*, KV 475, bars 11–12, C. F. Peters, 10817

In the *Allegro* movement, the rhythmic motif from the *Adagio* appears, but in a different context – the right hand plays a dissonant dominant chord in the staggered sixteenths with the dynamics of the *forte*, which, when resolved in pure A minor, immediately softens to the *piano*, like a whisper after an explosion of emotions.



Example no. 18: W. A. Mozart: *Fantasia in C minor*, KV 475, bars 35–42, C. F. Peters, 10817

On the other hand, the 32-note fragment of the *Più allegro* section, based on Alberti's bass pattern, gives the work an almost dramatic intensity, close to Beethoven's idiom.



Example no. 19: W. A. Mozart: *Fantasia in C minor*, KV 475, bars 123 - 126, C. F. Peters, 10817

In Beethoven's work, dynamic contrasts reach an extreme point for the Classicist era. The initial cascading gamma waveforms marked with *forte* are decisive and monumental, followed by a *fermata*, stopping the flow of music and intensifying the tension. As a result, the static pause gains an inner energy that leads to a lyrical fragment in the key of G minor, creating a dramatic juxtaposition.

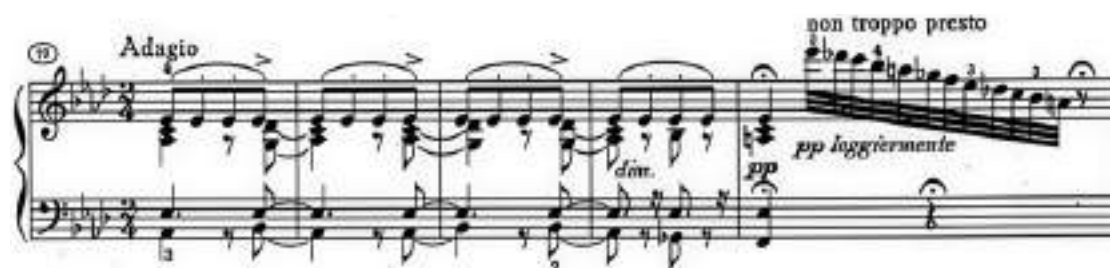


Example no. 20: L. van. Beethoven: *Fantasia in G minor*, Op. 77, bars 1 - 4, G. Henle Verlag, HN 12

Throughout the work, Beethoven used the symbol of the fermata as many as 27 times – each with a different meaning and function. This is a unique procedure in his work, showing the unlimited expressive possibilities of the genre.



Example no. 21: L. van. Beethoven: *Fantasia in G minor*, Op. 77, bars 39 - 43, G. Henle Verlag, HN 12



Example no. 22: L. van. Beethoven: *Fantasia in G minor*, Op. 77, bars 79 - 83, G. Henle Verlag, HN 12



Example no. 23: L. van. Beethoven: *Fantasia in G minor*, Op. 77, bars 229–237, G. Henle Verlag, HN 12

The book *Introduction to Western Piano Music* points out that works of a tragic nature are a special phenomenon in the history of music, being a reflection of the spiritual and emotional experiences of man.¹⁵ This type of music is dominated by minor keys, the third structure of which is conducive to the expression of melancholy and sadness. In harmonic keys, the increased seventh degree amplifies the leading tension, intensifying the drama. In this context, Mozart's *Fantasies in D minor* and *C minor* are among the few of his piano works with a clearly tragic colour.

1.4 Romantic Fantasy idea

During the Romantic period (nineteenth century), when keyboard instruments became popular and the need for personal expression and subjective experiences increased significantly, program music flourished, combining sound with literature and other arts. By improving their performance techniques, composers have strived for increasingly individualized expression. After freeing itself from the rational rigors of the eighteenth century, the dominance of forms with a fantastic, free character became a natural and almost inevitable direction for the development of music. Romantic art and culture have created a broad background conducive to diversity and innovation in this repertoire.

Characteristic pieces and piano miniatures became the basis of the era. Fantasy – combining programmatic, emotional and virtuoso motivations – often went beyond the framework of typical characteristic works; it gave greater freedom in the selection of thematic material, in the development of the structural scale and in the technical notation. In the Romantic era, fantasy ceased to be perceived only as the realization of improvisation or its

¹⁵ Zhang Shigu, Mr. Yifei, *Introduction to Western Piano Music*, People's Music Publishing House, Beijing, 2006.

opposite: it became a form that gave the possibility of freely processing the material, combining it with different genres and formal expansion.

A large-scale illustration of these tendencies is Franz Schubert's *Piano Fantasy in C major "The Wanderer"*, D. 760 – a work in which the leitmotif runs uninterruptedly through all four movements, continuing the idea of cyclical form initiated by Beethoven. The title refers to Schubert's song *Der Wanderer*; it is one of the first independent, large-scale fantasy works composed in a sonata-like arrangement. Schubert also composed other fantasies, m.in. *Fantasia for piano for four hands in F minor*, D. 940 and *Fantasia for violin and piano in C major*, D. 934, which show Beethoven influences (m.in. *Piano Sonata in A major*, Op. 101 and *Cello Sonata No. 4*, Op. 102) and realize a cyclical form.

Schubert's *Fantasies* heralded the development of great cyclical forms and one-movement compositions in this genre in Schumann and Liszt. Schumann realized the idea of the integrity of form by combining the traditional four movements in his *Symphony No. 4 in D minor*, Op. 120, resulting in a more coherent, continuous structure of musical flow. The process of transformation of the motif, initiated in this symphonic context, involves the use of short motivic chambers (e.g., the first five notes of the introduction), which then appear in various rhythmic and melodic transformations throughout the score. Liszt enthusiastically adopted this method; his thematic transformations became the foundation of symphonic poems of the late nineteenth century.

Robert Schumann is one of the most creative representatives of Romanticism. He reformed musical forms, sought to express the mental states and characters of the characters, and used literature and poetry as inspiration for program music. He founded a music magazine and proposed the idea of the *Davidbund* association, which would promote new artistic solutions in opposition to conservative tendencies. His internal personality divisions - the impulsive, extroverted Florestan and the introverted, reflective Eusebius - were reflected in his fantasy compositions. His most important works of this type include the large-format *Fantasia* Op. 17 and the *Fantasiestücke* op. 12.

After reading Dante: Liszt's *Sonata Quasi-Fantasy* is a one-movement sonata (often called the "*Dantean Sonata*"), which is in essence to be understood as a sonata fantasy. The work is based on two main themes, the second of which arises as a transformation of the first. As in the *Sonata in B minor*, Liszt uses the technique of thematic transformation - the motif returns in different versions and roles, which serves to achieve the principle of "unity in diversity". As a work of high virtuosity and significant compositional value, this work occupies a special place in piano literature.

Liszt also adapted Schubert's *Fantasia "The Wanderer"* for orchestral versions; his own fantasies - often virtuoso - include, m.in., *Spanish Fantasia* p. 253 and numerous fantasies based on operatic and song themes: *Fantasy on themes from Figaro and Don Giovanni* p. 697, *Fantasia on themes from Beethoven's "The Ruins of Athens"*, the great *Fantasia on motifs from Niobe* p. 419, *The Grand Fantaisie di Bravura* on Paganini's "Campanella" or *the Hexameron Variations* – works that delighted the audience with the richness of the melody, the virtuosity of the performer and the personal charm of interpretation.

The form of operatic fantasy usually took the scheme of a theme with variations, preceded by a free introduction and ending with a brilliant coda. The Austrian pianist and composer Sigismond Thalberg (1812–1871) played an important role in the development of this variety, creating m.in. *Fantasia and Variations* Op. 1 on a theme of Weber's "*Euryanthe*", *Rossini's Fantasia on a Semiramide* op. 51 or *Grande Fantaisie et Variations sur Norma* op. 12.

Virtuoso adaptations of fantasy also appear in the work of other performers: *Fantasia from Faust* by Henryk Wieniawski or *Fantasy on Themes from Eugene Onegin* arranged by Walter-Khun for harp. Bizet's opera *Carmen* inspired numerous fantasies (m.in. Sarasate's *Carmen Fantaisie* Op. 25, Jeno Hubay's *Carmen Fantaisie Brillante* Op. 3, Franz Waxman's *Fantaisie*), and its influence persisted even into the twentieth century (Ferruccio Busoni's *Fantasia da camera super Carmen*).

In addition to thematic adaptations, Romantic composers freely combined fantasy with other forms and genres, creating original structures and innovative formal ideas.

In orchestral music, Hector Berlioz introduced elements of literary narrative into symphonic form - the most famous example being the *Symphonie fantastique*. Berlioz gave the work a detailed plot: the story of an artist overwhelmed by unrequited love, who experiences hallucinations and dreams under the influence of opium. Thanks to this, the title "fantasy" refers not only to musical ideas, but also to the composer's personal, literarily shaped emotional creation.

Structurally, the *Symphony Fantastique* broke with the classical four-movement model; each movement was given a clear title and plot description. Berlioz used the technique of a leitmotif representing the beloved, a motif that transforms in subsequent movements, reflecting the protagonist's changing emotions. The score also features dramatic and symbolic effects (m.in. the guillotine march or the scene of the witches' sabbath), which expand the scope of musical imagination and emphasize the dramaturgy of the work.

In the late Romantic repertoire, Tchaikovsky composed the *Concert Fantasia in G major*, Op. 56 (1884) - the third piece for piano and orchestra in his oeuvre. Initially planned as an ordinary concert, the work took the form of a two-movement (a combination of the free movement and the finale), and the title "*Fantasia*" gave the composer formal freedom. The first theme has a light, danceable character "*à la russe*", while the second serves as a lyrical contrast; The middle movement takes the form of an extensive piano cadence, in which the weight of the symphonic argumentation rests on the solo part. The second part, entitled *Contrastes*, juxtaposes motifs of a different nature (an Italian-style song versus dance episodes with the rhythm of a tambourine), creating scenes of a carnival-like cinematic character.¹⁶

The orchestral repertoire also includes Tchaikovsky's fanciful overtures: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* Op. 67, *The Tempest* Op. 18 and other works with fantastic timbres, such as the *Scherzo-Fantaisie* op. 72.

Fryderyk Chopin, the "poet of the piano", occupies a special place in fantasy literature. He composed *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, *Fantasia-Impromptu in C sharp minor*, (Op. 66), and the *Polonaise-Fantasia*, Op. 61 – a work combining the heroic gestures of the Polish polonaise with dreamy, nocturne melancholy, the title of which was published only in the final stages of editing.

Similar to Chopin's fantasy based on Polish motifs is Ignacy Jan Paderewski's *Polish Fantasy in G sharp minor*, Op. 19 (original title: *Fantaisie polonaise sur des thèmes originaux*). This work is distinguished by the richness of its melodic imagination: the extensive themes refer to the spirit of Polish folk music, despite the fact that the composer does not directly quote folklore. Lasting nearly thirty minutes, the one-movement form contains essentially four fragments connected by the leitmotif of the mazurka, which in the finale transform into a living *krakowiak*; the intense piano part is supported by colourful orchestration. Along with the *Concerto in A minor*, *Polish Fantasy* is one of the most famous Polish concert works.

In his later years, Johannes Brahms composed a collection of 7 *Fantasien*, Op. 116 – *intermezzo* and *capriccios*, which form a coherent, melancholic whole. The four "dreamy" pieces contrast with the three "deeply passionate" *capricci*, all characterized by a high stylistic unity and emotional richness, from intimate reflection to violent elation. In Brahms' music, especially in works from the last period, one often finds a tone that confronts the thought of transience and death.

¹⁶ From notes by Marina Frolova-Walker © 2010, CD Hyperion CDA67711/2, P. Czajkowski – Concert Fantasy G major op. 56, Sir Stephen Hough - piano

The precedent of Beethoven's "*Moonlight Sonata*" enabled Alexander Scriabin to open his *Second Sonata in G minor*, op. 19 a slow movement, which the composer himself called a "sonata-fantasy". Unlike Beethoven's models, Scriabin's work is not a sonata "reminiscent of fantasy", but rather a fantasy arranged according to the rules of sonata structure. Scriabin drew up a short "program" describing the first part vividly: the calm of the night on the southern shore of the sea, then the gloomy agitation of the depths, then the moonlight in E major; The second part (Presto) shows the stormy turmoil of the ocean. Inspiration from nature (the sea) becomes a symbol of mental states in Scriabin, announcing his later tendency to identify the outside world with the inside of his own psyche.¹⁷

1.5 Transformations of the genre in the twentieth century

At the beginning of the twentieth century, composers again reached for the traditions of old musical forms, giving them a new, modernist meaning. Motifs based on Bach's name (B–A–C–H), treated as a tribute to the contrapuntal tradition, were particularly popular. Already at the end of the nineteenth century, there were announcements of this retrospective trend, such as the *Fantasy and Fugue on the theme B-A-C-H* p.529 (1871) and the *Prelude and Fugue on the theme B-A-C-H* for organ by Franz Liszt. Important works continuing this line include *Symphonic Fantasy and Fugue in D minor*, Op. 57, *Choral Fantasies*, Op. 52 and Op. 40, as well as Max Reger's *Fantasia and Fugue for Organ on Bach*, Op. 46 (1873–1916), and Ferruccio Busoni's *Fantasia Contrappuntistica* (BV 256, published in 1910 in a version for solo piano, and arranged for two pianos in 1922). The same spirit is also maintained in the *Fantasia on the Theme of J. S. Bach*, K. 253.

On the other hand, the composers of the twentieth century embarked on a series of radical experiments that changed the way music was composed and perceived. Among the innovations were: more frequent use of modalities, exploration of non-European scales, development of atonality and neotonality, acceptance of dissonance as a means of expression, introduction of the dodecaphonic technique, as well as polyrhythms and complex meters. These phenomena also had a significant impact on the development of the fantasy genre.

Karol Szymanowski's *Fantasia*, Op. 14, composed in 1905, is an example of the composer's early period. It is characterized by a rich, harmonic-saturated sound language,

¹⁷ Simon Nicholls, A. Scriabin: Complete Piano Sonatas – Hyperion Records CDA67131/2 (program note)

combining romantic expression with modern tonal ambiguity. The work combines explosive temperament with poetic lyricism, announcing Szymanowski's mature style.

Arnold Schönberg's *Fantasia for Violin and Piano*, Op. 47, is a one-movement, virtuoso rhapsody, in which there are episodes referring to the archetypes of classical forms, including a scherzo and a trio with a lively 6/8 rhythm. The basis of the composition is the variation principle, based on a twelve-tone series; The leitmotif undergoes numerous transformations, leading to a compact, dramatic recapitulation maintained in the spirit of *stile concitato*.

Benjamin Britten's *Fantasy Quartet for Oboe and String Trio*, Op. 2 (1913–1976) is a one-movement chamber work that combines elements of 16th-century fantasy with the arched form and principles of the sonata. The piece refers to the tradition of fantasy on the viola da gamba, popular in seventeenth-century England. Walter Wilson Cobbett pointed out that a characteristic feature of old fantasies was the juxtaposition of sections with different rhythms and tempos in one continuous structure – and Britten transferred this principle to the realities of twentieth-century music, condensing several contrasting sonata parts into one coherent formal arc.

Olivier Messiaen's early *Fantaisie burlesque* (1932) already reveals the features of his individual musical language. The rhythm of the piece is full of freedom and complexity, and the themes are subject to improvisational processing. The variability of harmony and rhythm gives the music a playful, grotesque character, which – despite the complexity of the texture – creates an impression of spontaneity and humour.

In the United States, which became one of the major centres of modern music in the twentieth century, significant examples of piano fantasy also emerged. *Piano Fantasy* (1956) by Aaron Copland (1900–1990) is an elaborate work based on a ten-tone series, in which the strictly constructed dodecaphonic material acquires a seemingly improvisational character.

On the other hand, *Étude-Fantasy* (1976) by John Corigliano is a cycle of five études combined into an episodic form reminiscent of fantasy. Each fragment explores a different piano technique – from left-handed playing, through thirds and fifths passages, to trills and melodic lines. The sound material is organized around the interval of the second (and its inversions and extensions to the seventh and non), which has both melodic and harmonic functions, providing structural unity to the piece.

Night Fantasies by Elliot Carter (1908–2012), composed in 1980, is a one-movement piano piece lasting about 24 minutes. The composer described it as "a musical reflection on the changing thoughts and emotions that arise during the night vigil". Carter sought to capture the

poetic variability of moods, analogous to that found in Robert Schumann's Romantic cycles *Kreisleriana* Op. 16, *Carnival* Op. 9 and *Dauidsbündlertänze* op. 6. The mood of the work oscillates between introspection and violent outbursts of emotions, creating a kaleidoscope of psychological expression.

John Eaton's *Microtonal Fantasy* went even further in sound experiments – a piece for two pianos performed by one pianist. The composer uses the second instrument's damper to bring out resonances and achieve the effect of 176 different pitches. The result is an extremely bold, sonoristic exploration of piano colours, typical of the second half of the twentieth century.

In this way, the fantasy of the twentieth century became not so much a genre with a specific form, but an idea – a space of compositional freedom, combining elements of tradition with modernity, improvisation with construction, expression with intellectual experimentation.

Chapter 2 Robert Schumann and his concept of Fantasy

2.1 Life and artistic activity of Robert Schumann

Robert Alexander Schumann was one of the most outstanding representatives of European musical romanticism of the nineteenth century – a German composer, pianist and respected music critic. He was born on June 8, 1810, in Zwickau, a small town located near Leipzig in eastern Germany. His father, August Schumann, was a bookseller, publisher and writer with broad intellectual horizons, which had a significant influence on the development of young Robert. His mother, Johanna Schumann, came from the family of the writer Griesing – from her he inherited a lyrical, reflective and emotional temperament, which became the basis of his musical personality.

From an early age, Schumann showed exceptional sensitivity and musical talent. In 1817 he began piano lessons with Johann Gottfried Kuntsch, an organist from his hometown of Zwickau. Although Kuntsch soon decided that he could no longer teach his student anything more, Schumann maintained a deep respect and gratitude for him. He was a versatile student – active in school performances, recitations and concerts. At the age of 12, he composed his first work – *Psalm 150 of the Old Testament*.

In 1819, after listening to a performance by the famous pianist Ignac Moscheles in Karlsbad, Schumann decided that he wanted to become a piano virtuoso. His father planned to send him to study with Carl Maria von Weber, but Weber's death and his father's subsequent illness thwarted these plans. In 1826, Schumann experienced a deep personal drama - his father and sister died in a short period of time. These events left a lasting mark on his psyche, reinforcing the fear of death and transience, which often permeated his later work.¹⁸

Thanks to his father's inheritance, Schumann was able to start studying at the university. In 1827, he met Agnes Carus, the wife of a local merchant, who encouraged him to write songs. It was in the Caruso house that Schumann first encountered the late works of Mozart and Beethoven, and his fascination with Schubert's music deepened his sensitivity to emotional expression and the form of artistic song.

¹⁸ Barbara Mayer: Robert Schumann, translation: Du Xinhua, People's Music Publishing House, Beijing, 2004

During this period, his literary interests surpassed his musical ones. He read Goethe,¹⁹ Schiller²⁰ and, above all, Jean Paul²¹ with passion, whose style and symbolism had a lasting influence on Schumann's thinking about music as a poetic art. In 1828, at the urging of his mother, he began studying law at the University of Leipzig but quickly abandoned it under the influence of his piano teacher, Friedrich Wieck, who saw great artistic potential in him.

Encouraged by Professor Thibaut of Heidelberg and supported by Wieck, Schumann obtained his mother's consent to devote himself entirely to music. He studied composition theory with Heinrich Dorn. At that time, in pursuit of technical perfection, Schumann developed a device to immobilize the fourth finger of his right hand to help with finger independence – however, the experiment ended with permanent damage to his hand and ended his career as a pianist.

In 1831, the publication of *the Abegg Variations*, Op. 1, and his review of the Chopin *Variations* brought Schumann recognition as both a composer and a critic. In 1834, he founded the prestigious magazine "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik", which he managed for the next ten years. The magazine became a platform for promoting new musical ideas and fighting against artistic conservatism. In his texts, the allegorical League of David appears – a community of idealists fighting against the "philistines" representing mediocrity and commercialism in art.

In 1835, Schumann fell in love with Clara Wieck, the daughter of his teacher. Their relationship faced strong opposition from Clara's father, which led to a lengthy court dispute. With the support of outstanding musicians, m.in. Franz Liszt, the Schumann's finally obtained permission for the wedding, which took place on September 12, 1840 – the year in which Schumann also received an honorary doctorate from the University of Jena.

In 1843, Felix Mendelssohn invited Schumann to teach composition and piano at the newly founded Leipzig Conservatory of Music. Despite his professional recognition, his mental state became increasingly unstable.

After an unsuccessful stay in Dresden and conducting failures in Düsseldorf, Schumann increasingly isolated himself and fell into depression.

In 1853, through the violinist Joseph Joachim, he met the young Johannes Brahms, whom he considered the spiritual successor of Beethoven and Liszt. In an article entitled *Neue*

¹⁹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (28 August 1749 – 22 March 1832) was a German erudite, widely regarded as the most influential German-speaking writer.

²⁰ Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (10 November 1759 – 9 May 1805) was a German playwright, poet, philosopher and historian.

²¹ Jean Paul (born Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, March 21, 1763 – November 14, 1825) was a German romantic writer, best known for his humorous novels and short stories.

Bahnen ("A New Way"), he highly recommended his work as a harbinger of a new era in German music.²²

However, the following year there was a breakdown – Schumann began to experience auditory hallucinations and tried to take his own life by throwing himself into the Rhine. After being saved, he was placed in a psychiatric institution in Endenich, where he died on July 29, 1856, at the age of only 46.

2.2 Characteristics of the compositional style

Most of Schumann's piano works were written between 1830 and 1840 – the period of his greatest creative activity – and were widely appreciated by his contemporaries. They are dominated by piano cycles and program pieces,²³ in which Schumann combined music with a poetic idea, creating a coherent whole with a strong emotional charge.

In his view, the piano cycle was a collection of independent miniatures, connected by a common title, idea or motif, which together formed a larger formal structure. Each part was autonomous on the one hand and organically connected to the whole on the other through recurring motifs, contrasts of moods and thoughtful dramaturgy.

The most representative are: *Papillons* Op. 2, *Carnival* Op. 9, *Davidsbündlertänze* Op. 6, *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12, *Kinderszenen* Op. 15, *Kreisleriana* Op. 16, *Noveletty* Op. 21, *Faschingsschwank aus Wien* Op. 26. These cycles are distinguished by their richness of emotional expression, subtle irony and extremely evocative musical language, combining literary narrative with innovative harmony and rhythm. They show Schumann as a poet of the piano, who was able to convey the subtlest shades of human feelings with the help of sounds.

In addition to the *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12 cycle, the composer also created other works of a fantasy nature, m.in. the monumental *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 17, the late *Drei Fantasiestücke* Op. 111, *Fantasiestücke* Op. 73 for piano and cello, and *Fantasia for violin and orchestra in C major*, Op. 131.

²² Robert Schumann, *Music of Our Time*, translated by Ma Jinsong, Li Jiang Publishing House, Gui Lin, 2013.

²³ Program music refers to music with a specific plot, scenes, or concepts, as opposed to absolute music, which does not describe specific, non-musical content.

All these works show the different faces of his musical world – from lyricism and intimacy to drama and inner tension – and at the same time are an expression of his deeply romantic concept of fantasy as a form of artistic and emotional freedom.

2.3 *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 17 – origins and analysis of selected aspects

Schumann's Fantasia Op. 17 occupies a unique place in the history of music and remains one of the key piano works for understanding the transformations that the fantasy genre has undergone. Its significance is manifested primarily in a specific concept of form, in extremely complex emotional expression and in a characteristic sound language, the meaning of which in many places exceeds the existing framework of the genre.

The first important aspect is the free structure and form of the work, clearly breaking the traditional sonata form. Although the *Fantasia* consists of three movements, none of them realizes the classical architecture of the sonata. Schumann uses a much more flexible form, in which individual segments permeate each other through common motifs and related emotional states, creating an organic, coherent whole. This method of "thematic penetration" announces a later cyclical form, characteristic of Romanticism. As the following examples show, the descending melodic motif in the right hand in the first movement corresponds significantly with the contrapuntal motif in the left hand in the second movement.



Example no. 24: R. Schumann: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 17, Part 1, bars 181–189, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 55



Example no. 25: R. Schumann: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 17, Part 2, bars 22–24, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 55

The second dimension that gives the work a unique rank is the depth and complexity of emotional expression. The *Fantasy* was created during a period of acute conflict between Schumann and the Wieck family; the composer's emotional torn and his longing for Clara were directly reflected in this work. Schumann made *Fantasia* a kind of intimate "diary of feelings", which is one of the dominant features of Romantic aesthetics. The combination of fragments full of passion with parts of an extremely lyrical, introspective character and an extensive system of contrasts make the affective richness of the work something extremely innovative in its time.

The third element of great importance is the title itself, the suggestiveness of which directs the listener's perception. The term "Fantasie" does not introduce a specific program, but opens a space of intense, poetic imagination, in accordance with the romantic ideal of creative freedom.

The fourth distinguishing feature of *Fantasy* is its symphonic piano language. Schumann brings out both monumental sound and the smallest shades of expression from the instrument, using rich texture, elaborate dynamics and dense consonances, the intensity of which brings the piano closer to the orchestra. The final bars of the second movement are one of the most spectacular examples of this symphonic sonic power.



Example no. 26: R. Schumann: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 17, 2nd movement, final bars, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 55

Finally, *Fantasy*, Op. 17, is a conscious tribute to Beethoven, and at the same time a confirmation of romantic transcendence over classicism. At the end of the first movement, Schumann quotes Beethoven's song *An die ferne Geliebte*, which should be read as an act of appreciation for his great predecessor, but also as a symbolic inscription of his own work into a tradition that he himself creatively transcends. Schumann, although inspired by Beethoven, goes further in the direction of free expression and personal emotionality, relaxing classical structures and opening the way for later Romantics.



Example no. 27: R. Schumann: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 17, 1st movement, bars 295 - 300, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 55

To Fürst Joseph von Lichkowitz.
An die ferne Geliebte.
To the Distant Beloved.

The poems by
A. Jellissalea.

No 1. Ziemlich langsam und mit Ausdruck.
Lento ed espressivo.

Original key:
Composed in April, 1808.

Auf dem Hü - gel sitz' ich, spä - hend in das blau - e Ne - bel -
From the moun - tain wing my gaz - es Toward a far - off, a - zure

Example no. 28: L. van Beethoven: *An die ferne Geliebte* op. 98, bars 1 - 4, edition by G. Schirmer

To sum up, Schumann's *Fantasia in C major* is an extremely innovative work in terms of form, affect, technique and musical language. It is not only one of the most important pieces in the piano repertoire, but also one of the milestones of Romanticism. With this composition, Schumann liberated the form of fantasy from classicist limitations, giving it an intense emotionality, poetic and multidimensional depth, which significantly influenced the development of music of the nineteenth century.

2.4 *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12 – a cycle of miniatures as a form of fantasy

The *Fantasiestücke* is a cycle of eight piano miniatures composed in 1837, during one of the darkest and most painful periods of Schumann's life – shortly after the death of his mother and at a time of intense opposition from Clara's father to their marriage. In the same year, *Davidsbündlertänze* Op. 6 was also written, in which the duality of the composer's personality was revealed exceptionally clearly. The *Fantasiestücke* also reflect this contrast in an extremely suggestive way: the tension between the impulsive Florestan and the reflective Eusebius becomes the dramaturgical axis of the entire cycle. The piece was dedicated to the British pianist Anna Robena Laidlav, with whom Schumann had a deep and unusual friendship.

Each miniature has a separate title and its own emotional idiom. They can be made individually, but together they form a well-thought-out stylistic whole. The series embodies the most important properties of Schumann's musical language: drama, humour, lyricism, sensitivity, subtle non-obviousness and moments of almost neurotic excitability. Liszt wrote about this collection: "Flowers blooming in a strange and mysterious atmosphere... changing colours like neon lights, sometimes bright as the sun, sometimes mysterious as moonlight, always loved by happy couples." Anton Rubinstein called the miniatures "particularly inventive and naturally communicative."

The idea of the *Davidsbund* was of fundamental importance to Schumann - both as an intellectual construction and as an artistic tool. The composer, extremely rich internally and sensitive to literature, in a way compensated for his disappointment with the real world with the world of imagination. He wrote: "The smaller the external world becomes, the more my imagination expands."²⁴ His literary alter egos – Florestan, Eusebius and Raro – allowed him to formulate different points of view and incorporate them into music. Florestan was impulsive,

²⁴ Robert Schumann, *Music of Our Time*, translated by Ma Jinsong, Li Jiang Publishing House, Gui Lin, 2013.

violent, and aggressive; Eusebius – gentle, introspective and poetic; Raro was a synthesis of them. In *Fantasiestücke*, this duality is creatively transposed into musical language.

No. 1 Des Abends (*In the evening*)

A delicate, tender and contemplative piece. Schumann described it as "to be played very intimate". The texture is based on triplets centred around the F sound, which creates a 2/8 time feel, while the smooth melody of the upper voice led in eighths suggests a 3/8 meter. This subtle "rhythmic penumbra" is one of the most ingenious means of the cycle.



Example no. 29: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke*, op. cit. 12, part 1, bars 1 - 20, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

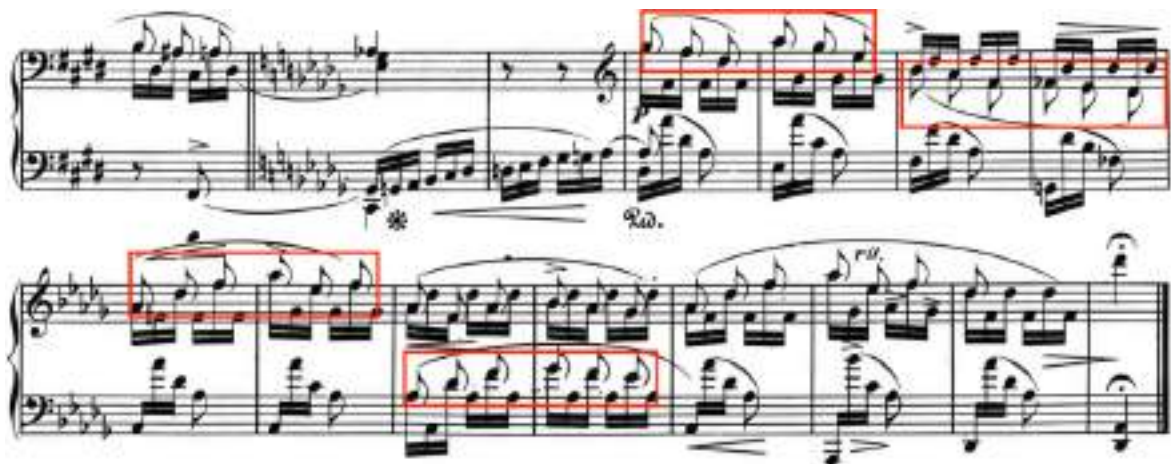
The atmosphere is serene, intimate, and the dynamics are maintained consistently within *piano*, which corresponds to the introspective nature of Eusebius. Long, four-bar phrases imitate a gentle stream of thought.

In bars 21–24, the melody passes to the middle voice, creating an internal dialogue - as if Eusebius were talking to himself.



Example no. 30: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 1, bars 15 - 28, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

The same dialogic idea returns in the coda.



Example no. 31: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 1, bars 74 - 88, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

No. 2 *Aufschwung* (Rise)

The title suggests an impulse, a sudden elation - and this is exactly the nature of the work. It is music of violent gusts, full of dramatic contrasts, in which Florestan's tense temperament is revealed. The work has a three-part structure, although Schumann subtly uses elements of sonata form.

The first theme, based on punctuated rhythms and strong accents, produces an intense sense of momentum.



Example no. 32: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 2, bars 1 - 4, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

The second theme unexpectedly passes into D flat major, becoming more singing, although still saturated with emotional tension.



Example no. 33: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 2, bars 16 - 21, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

Section B is a stark contrast – it is more lyrical, albeit full of harmonic tensions and sudden modulations.



Example no. 34: Texture A: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 2, bars 51 - 56, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50



Example no. 35: Texture B: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 2, bars 65 - 70, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50



Example no. 36: Texture C: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 2, bars 93 - 110, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

Rich dynamics, constant contrasts and sudden changes complete the dramatic idiom of the work. In the endings of parts 4 and 5, he again evokes Florestan's impulsiveness.



Example no. 37: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 2, bars 151–154, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50



Example no. 38: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 2, bars 151 - 156, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50



Example no. 39: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 2, bars 218 - 223, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

No. 3 *Warum?* (Why?)

The atmosphere of the work is introspective and reflective – almost philosophical. The title "Why?" suggests an existential question. The tripartite form is based on two motifs that return in different variants.



Example no. 40: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 3, bars 1 - 8, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

In Part B, the interrogative motif passes between the voices, a counterpoint appears, and the half-tone bass descents give it a colour of anxiety.



Example no. 41: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 3, bars 17 - 24, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

From bar 25 onwards, the motif is shortened and repeated in two *crescendos*, intensifying the character of the work.



Example no. 42: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 3, bars 26 - 31, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

The return of Part A leads to an open ending, leaving the question unanswered.

No. 4 *Grillen* (Grilling)

The title suggests whims and peculiar fantasies. The track has the structure of the ABACABA roundabout. Section A is light, bouncy and full of humour.



Example no. 43: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 4, bars 1 - 8, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

Section B introduces tonal and dynamic contrast.



Example no. 44: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 4, bars 17 - 28, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

Section C combines Eusebius' lyricism with Florestan's sudden, dramatic energy.



Example no. 45: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 4, bars 62 - 67, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50



Example no. 46: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 4, bars 69 - 72, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

Bars 76–80, on the other hand, show a humorous character through syncopated ornaments.



Example no. 47: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 4, bars 76 - 80, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

No. 5 *In der Nacht* (At night)

Schumann's night is not peaceful or soothing. It is a stormy night, full of tension, passion and dramatic gestures. The work has the form of a complex tripartite part. Section A is based on a three-voice texture and 3:4 polyrhythm, building a dense, turbulent atmosphere.



Example no. 48: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 5, bars 1 - 4, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

Section B brings first mute, then intense dynamic and chromatic contrasts.



Example no. 49: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 5, bars 67 - 74, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. P. 50



Example no. 50: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 5, bars 85 - 88, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

The return of *Tempo I* leads to growing tension.



Example no. 51: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 5, bars 109 - 113, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. P. 50



Example no. 52: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 5, bars 124 - 128, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. P. 50



Example no. 53: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 5, bars 134 - 138, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. P. 50

Coda culminates in a powerful burst of energy.



Example no. 54: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 5, bars 210 - 223, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

No. 6 *Fable (Fairy Tale)*

The musical "fairy tale" combines the simplicity and lyricism of Eusebius' theme with the dramaturgy of the narrative. A four-voice texture and a fermata at the end of the theme introduce an element of suspension.

After a slow, four-bar "introduction", Schumann sets the *Schnell* tempo (fast). While developing a contrasting theme, staccato articulation and short rhythmic motifs, transmitted alternately between the left and right hands, intensify the humorous character of the music. The impression of dialogue is created, as if the witty, fairy-tale characters are racing and responding to each other's change. Sudden dynamic contrasts and modulations enhance the narrative tension. Accentuated chords in the left-hand part accentuate unexpected harmonic turns within the key of C major, giving the whole a distinct dramatic and contrasting feature.



Example no. 55: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 6, bars 1 - 6, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

The middle movement moves into the relatively gloomy key of A minor, in which the melody led in the upper voice and the scattered motifs of the accompaniment remain in a close rhythmic relationship with each other.



Example no. 56: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 6, bars 26 - 33, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

Arpeggios, performed alternately with both hands, move consistently in the same direction, which maintains the impression of constant tension.



Example no. 57: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 6, bars 59 - 68, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

At the climax, when the process of build-up reaches its climax, the music returns to a light theme, preserving the overall character of children's play and fantasy.

No. 7 *Traumes wirren* (Dream's Confusion)

Chaotic dream vortices are depicted in fast hexadecimal groups. Bars number 8 brings a sudden stop, as if a "crack" in the structure of the dream.



Example no. 58: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 7, bars 1 - 6, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50



Example no. 59: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 7, bars 7 - 8, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

Section B becomes more lyrical, but the harmonic tension does not fade.



Example no. 60: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 7, bars 63 - 78, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S.

No. 8 *Ende vom Lied* (End of the Song)

The closing of the cycle is at the same time joyful and melancholic, as described by Schumann himself.²⁵ Octave jumps symbolize the wedding motif, and tonal changes symbolize emotional tension.



Example no. 61: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 8, bars 1 - 8, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50



Example no. 62: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 8, bars 9 - 13, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

Section B brings a dialogue between the voices, and the final coda – silence and nostalgia.



Example no. 63: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 8, bars 37 - 41, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S. 50

²⁵ Schumann wrote to Clara: "I think that at this point, after all the difficulties have been resolved, we are entering into a joyful marriage. But at the end, the pain of longing for you comes again. So wedding and funeral bells ring at the same time." Letters of Robert Schumann, edited by Karl Storck, London, J. Murray, 1907.

Coda.

f Pedal *p* *pp* *ppp*

rit.

rit.

Fine.

R. S. 50.

Example no. 64: R. Schumann: *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, part 8, bars 85 - 117, Breitkopf & Härtel, 1879. R. S.
50

Chapter 3 Fryderyk Chopin – the idea of fantasy in the composer's work

3.1 Life and work of Fryderyk Chopin

Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin – the most outstanding Polish composer and pianist – was born in the village of Żelazowa Wola in the Sochaczew district. Although the composer himself and his family gave the date of birth as March 1, 1810, the baptismal certificate from the parish in Brochów is dated February 22.²⁶ Chopin's mother, Justyna Krzyżanowska, was Polish, while his father, Mikołaj Chopin, was a French emigrant, teacher and humanist. The family home was characterized by an atmosphere of warmth, cordiality and culture – for Chopin it became forever a symbol of peace, security and love. In 1811, the family moved to Warsaw. Fryderyk began composing at the age of seven, and from the age of eight he performed in public. He studied with Adalbert Żywny (1756–1842), but was largely self-taught in piano playing, developing unconventional techniques, such as playing the black keys with his thumb.

At the age of 16, Chopin began his studies at the Warsaw Conservatory with Józef Elsner (1769–1854). In 1829 he went to Austria for a short time. Upon his return, he devoted himself more to composition than to performances, composing, for m.in, two piano concertos (1829–30). Enthusiastically received by the audience, he toured Central Europe – he performed in Breslau, Dresden and Prague in 1830, and then in Vienna in the spring of 1831. His improvisations and innovative style of playing made a special impression. The planned route was interrupted by the outbreak of the November Uprising. When Warsaw collapsed in September 1831, Chopin – according to the traditional interpretation – reacted emotionally by composing *the Etude in C minor*, Op. 10 No. 12, known as the "*Revolutionary*" *Etude*.

At the end of 1831, Chopin settled in Paris, which was then the centre of European musical culture. He performed there in front of an elite audience, gaining recognition and prestige. He published his works with great success and earned a considerable income from teaching. In the artistic community, he became friends with outstanding artists: Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791–1864), Hector Berlioz (1803–1869), Franz Liszt (1811–1886) and Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863). From 1834 onwards, his compositions appeared regularly in the "*Neue Leipziger Zeitschrift für Musik*", edited by Robert Schumann. It was Schumann who once described Chopin's music with the famous metaphor "cannons hidden in flowers".²⁷

²⁶ Biography Chopina, https://chopin.nifc.pl/en/chopin/etap-zycia/1_fryderyk-franciszek-chopin

²⁷ Robert Schumann, *Music of Our Time*, translated by Ma Jinsong, Li Jiang Publishing House, Gui Lin, 2013.

In his personal life, Chopin tried to achieve stability. The third significant relationship – with the writer Aurore Dudevant (George Sand) – turned out to be the most lasting. In 1838, the couple left for Mallorca with Sand's children. The initial fascination with the southern climate soon gave way to disappointment: the incessant rains worsened Chopin's health, although in these difficult conditions he composed the cycle of *24 Preludes* op. 28. Until 1847, Chopin and Sand spent four months each year at the Nohant estate – she wrote novels, he composed. The relationship eventually fell apart due to family conflicts.

Since the mid-1840's Chopin suffered from increasing symptoms of tuberculosis. His last public concert took place in 1848 for Polish refugees. He died on October 17, 1849, in Paris. During the funeral, the *Funeral March* from the *Sonata in B flat minor*, Op. 35 and Mozart's *Requiem* were played. Soil from Polish was poured on his grave at the Père Lachaise cemetery, while his heart – in accordance with the composer's wish – was laid to rest in the Church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw.²⁸

Chopin's individual style remains one of the most perfect embodiments of Romanticism, although at the same time it transcends its canons. The piano is the centre of his musical thinking – almost all his works were written for this instrument, often in chamber or orchestral company (Chopin's oeuvre includes two piano concertos, several pieces for piano and orchestra, chamber compositions and 19 songs to Polish texts). His works expanded the technical and expressive possibilities of the piano; Chopin's performances were considered to be exceptionally subtle, full of nuances and refined sensitivity.

The development of Chopin's style took place in several stages and can be divided into eight phases:²⁹

1. Postclassic phase, 1817–1823

The first three polonaises (WN 1 - 3) are created. Maintained within the framework of classicist models of applied music, they are an imitation of the textural and formal schemes of the time.

²⁸ Alan Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin: life and time*, Social Sciences Literature Press, 2022

²⁹ Mieczysław Tomaszewski, *Chopin. Man, His Work and Its Repercussions*, Fryderyk Chopin Institute

2. The sentimental phase, 1823–1826

It falls on the years of high school education and further learning of the game. Chopin creates dances, rondos and variations – works that are still immature, but more texturally diverse, revealing the first features of individuality.

3. The Warsaw-Viennese phase of the brilliant style, 1826–1829

The virtuoso texture typical of the fashionable brilliant style, preferred by virtuoso pianists, dominates. This period brought works full of lightness, brilliance and ornamental freedom, such as *the Sonata in C minor*, Op. 4, *Rondo*, Op. 5 and 14, *Variations in B flat major*, Op. 2, *Fantasia on Polish Themes*, Op. 14, and *Polonaise brillante in C major*, Op. 3 for piano and cello.

4. Early Romantic Phase, 1829–1831

It was a time of radical transformation of musical language – Chopin began to express himself in a deeply personal way. Sentimentality gives way to pure lyricism, which becomes the hallmark of his miniatures, and virtuosity acquires a dramatic dimension (*Etudes*, Op. 10, *Concerto*, Op. 11 and Op. 21, *Mazurkas* Op. 7, *Nocturnes*, Op. 9).

5. Parisian variation of the brilliant style, 1831–1835

Influenced by Parisian fashion, Chopin returned to neo-virtuoso genres. He wrote m.in *Variations in B flat major*, Op. 12, *Rondo in E flat major*, Op. 16, *Grande Valse brillante in E flat major*, Op. 18, *Bolero in C major*, Op. 19, and *Andante spianato and the Grand Polonaise in E flat major*, Op. 22. These works are impressive, light and salon-like, and at the same time develop virtuoso texture and ornamentation.

6. The peak phase of Romanticism, 1835–1840

This is the culmination of Chopin's style – a period of full artistic maturity. The work of this time integrates lyricism, drama, virtuosity and sonoristic innovation within as many as ten genres. The most important are *the Sonata in B minor*, Op. 35, *Scherzo in B minor*, Op. 31, *Scherzo in C sharp minor*, Op. 39, *Nocturnes*, Op. 27.

7. Late Romanticism, 1841–1845

Chopin makes an introspective synthesis of his own language. He composed 27 pieces in 19 opuses, m.in. *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, *Sonata in B minor*, Op. 58, *Ballade in A flat major*, Op. 47, *Ballade in F minor*, Op. 52, *Scherzo in E major*, Op. 54, grand polonaises, a series of mazurkas and nocturnes.

8. Post-Romanticism phase, 1846–1849

It opens a period of experiments announcing post-Romantic aesthetics: accelerated harmonic changes, tonal digressions, weakening of the dominant function and tonal shifts instead of classical modulations. The work becomes more static, introspective, and markings such as *lento* or *sostenuto* appear much more often. For m.in, he created nocturnes, mazurkas and waltzes op. 62 - 64, song WN 60, *Sonata in G minor* Op. 65 for piano and cello, *Barcarolle in F sharp major* Op. 60 and *Polonaise-Fantasia* Op. 61.

3.2 The place of fantasy in the composer's oeuvre

As mentioned in the first chapter, the history of fantasy before Chopin was extremely long and rich. The Classical-Romantic fantasy took over and developed many earlier structural techniques, while retaining a degree of formal freedom while transforming and expanding its function. As a result, an extremely diverse and absorbent species has been formed. In Chopin's compositional practice, there are at least three types of fantasies: fantasy on folk themes, fantasy on operatic themes, and "free" fantasy.

During his lifetime, Chopin composed three piano pieces, which he gave the title of "fantasy". The first of these is the *Fantasia on Polish Themes in A major*, Op. 13 for piano and orchestra (1828), also known as *the Fantasia Brillante* op. 13. It is in this work that the national element appears for the first time – later so important for Chopin – although here still in a clearly sentimental way. The composer used three motifs taken from the Polish musical tradition: the melody of the romance about Laura and Philo, the dumka attributed to Kurpiński (although revealing his folk origin), and the *kujawiak* with a clearly danceable character. They were presented in a variational form and preceded by an extensive introduction. These three melodies complement each other, creating a coherent and authentically "national" whole, which gives the work a distinct dramaturgy and a distinct formal structure. The introduction at the tempo of

Largo ma non troppo not only announces the birth of Chopin's nocturnes but also anticipates the adagio from both piano concertos. Already here a fantastic, free flow of narration is revealed - oscillating between dream, contemplation and lyrical reverie.

The second type of fantasy, extremely popular in Paris, was the fantasy on operatic themes. Chopin himself made such an attempt when he wrote *the Grand Duo concertant*, on themes from the opera *Robert le Diabolo*, a work that has a potpourri character, typical of the pianist practice of the time.

On the other hand, *Fantasia-Impromptu in C sharp minor* [Op. 66] (WN 46), composed during the first years of Chopin's stay in Paris (1834), belongs to the category of "free" fantasies. The composer did not designate this work for printing; it was published posthumously by Julian Fontana in 1855 as op. 66 and - as we know - gained extraordinary, even timeless popularity.

However, it is the two later works that most fully embody the essence and spirit of the fantasy genre: *the Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49 (1841) and *the Polonaise-Fantasia in A flat major*, Op. 61 (1846). These are works in which Chopin achieved the highest degree of synthesis of form, narration and poetic freedom, elevating the genre of fantasy to a level never seen before.

3.3 Analysis of selected works

3.3.1 *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49

The Fantasia in F minor, Op. 49, was written at the peak of Chopin's oeuvre, in the phase of reflective synthesis, and is a work indisputably belonging to the fantasy genre. It is one of the composer's most unusual works, in which Chopin consciously refers to the tradition of free fantasy, previously nurtured by Mozart, Schubert and Schumann. By subsequent generations of researchers, this work was rated extremely highly. In the book *Interpretation of tragic content in Chopin's music* by the Chinese musicologist Yu Runyang, it is emphasized that "this fantasy is rare both in terms of spiritual and emotional content and in terms of the technical aspects of artistic expression."³⁰ Fryderyk Niecks described it as "a masterpiece created with power and passion",³¹ while Ludwik Bronarski considered it "one of the greatest works in all piano literature".³²

³⁰ Yu Runyang, *Interpretation of Tragic Content in Chopin's Music*, Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press, 1998

³¹ Niecks F., *Fryderyk Chopin as a Man and a Musician*. London, 1880

³² F. Chopin, *Fantasy in F minor* op. 49, <https://chopin.nifc.pl/en/chopin/kompozycja/112>

At the same time, this work has been arousing numerous interpretations of the fantasticity of its narrative for years. Some scholars claim that the work has the character of a narrative song, because the dramaturgy, understood almost in terms of the plot, prevails over the traditional idiom of fantasy. Leichtentritt described the construction of *the Fantasy* as "vague", characterized by a "lack of logic and continuity", while others saw in it "a series of disorienting images", "presented with great euphoria" and "slipping before the listener's imagination at a frantic speed". The following analysis of form, motifs, melody shaping and tempo variation aims to show how *Fantasia* Op. 49 inherits and reworks earlier solutions of the genre and how it puts the idea of the fantastic into practice.

In the creative process, Chopin attached great importance to the selection of keys, aware that each of them carries a specific affect and emotional colour. The key of F minor, chosen as the tonal axis of the work, has an extremely tragic aura. Glenn Gould jokingly stated that if he could "become a key", he would be in F minor, because "it is rather gloomy, situated between complex and stable, between right and lascivious, between grey and intense saturation;³³ carries a certain ambiguity". Hermann von Helmholtz described it as shocking and melancholic, while Christian Friedrich Schubart associated it with "deep depression, mournful lamentation, groans of misery and longing for the grave".

In Western music, F minor has often been used as a space for dramatic and tragic emotions. It is enough to mention the *Piano Sonata in F minor*, Op. 57, *the Egmont Overture*, Op. 84, *the String Quartet* Op. 95 by L. van Beethoven, *the Fourth Symphony* by P. Tchaikovsky, Op. 36, *the Third Piano Sonata* Op. 14 by R. Schumann, *the Third Sonata* Op. 5 by J. Brahms, as well as numerous works by Chopin: *Ballad* Op. 52, *Nocturne* Op. 55 No. 1, *Prelude* op. cit. 28 No. 18, late mazurkas, *Piano Concerto No. 2* op. 21. A similar idiom is also maintained in *F. Liszt's Funérailles* or Schubert's *Fantasia in F minor*, D. 940 for four hands. Significantly, both fantasies – Chopin and Schubert – begin with the gesture of a descending F - C fourth.

As in Bach's *Chromatic Fantasia analysed in the first chapter*, Chopin introduces numerous falling small seconds in the recitative part, i.e. the classic "motif of sigh", associated with the affect of grief and tragedy. In the bass, there is a consequence of falling fourths, creating a dark colour scheme and a feeling of constant falling, devoid of a clear purpose. The culmination of this gesture is a final "sigh" in the form of a small second, stopping the music

³³ Cathering Meng, *Tonight*, Apostrophe Books, 2007

on the dominant C. Two-bar unison of both hands sounds like a dramatic question, the answer to which appears only in the next phase of the piece, when the descending seconds G–F and Des–C (bars 4–5) appear in the high register, confirming the tonic chord.



Example no. 65: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 1–5, PWM edition, 1992.

In creating the *Fantasia in F minor*, Chopin improved the existing solutions concerning tonality and harmony. Of particular importance is the use of the interval of thirds as the basis of tonal transitions - a solution characteristic of his mature style and testifying to an extremely sublime sense of harmonic timbre.

Structure	Bars	Tonality
<i>Introduction</i>		
March I	1–20	F minor
March II	21–42	F major
<i>I: Exposition.</i>		
	43–67	f - A-flat – c - E-flat – G - B-flat - D-flat - f
Primary theme	68–76	F minor
Subsidiary motive	77–84	A-flat major
Contrasting theme	93–99	C minor – E-flat major
Climax theme	99–126	E-flat major
Closing motive	127–142	E-flat major
<i>II: Sudden ending</i>		

Primary theme	155-163	C minor – E-flat minor
Subsidiary motive	164-171	G-flat major
Epiphany	199-222	B-flat major
<i>III: Climax</i>		
Initial theme	235-243	B-flat minor
Subsidiary motive	244-251	D major
Contrasting theme	260-263	F minor
Climax theme	264-293	A major
Closing motive	294-309	A major
<i>Closing section (quasi coda)</i>	322-332	A-flat major

Based on this tonal structure, it can be noted that although the whole work is based on the key of F minor, in reality relatively few fragments remain in it for longer. Dual tonal organization combines cadences based on fourth-fifth relationships with sequences based on thirds. It is this second element that introduces the phenomenon of tonal dualism: not only does it lead to the transition from the initial, "elegiac" key of F minor to the "triumphant" key of A major, but it also reveals a consistent modulation tendency in the course of the work – the transition from minor keys to their major counterparts.

The work thus develops primarily in the space of tonal thirds. It begins with a tragic and contemplative phrase about a descending line, and ends in a brilliant, luminous key in A flat major. The modulations between the related major and minor keys create a strong contrast of light and shadow, giving the music a narrative character with distinct phases: difficulty – victory – difficulty – triumph. This enriches the melodic and harmonic colour and strengthens the drama of the whole.

The narrative structure of *Chopin's Fantasy* is characterized by a constant play between composed, clearly defined thematic sections and quasi-improvised fragments of a figural nature. Improvisationality is one of the oldest and most recognizable features of the fantasy genre, and Chopin's work fully upholds this tradition. After all, the composer himself was famous for his extraordinary virtuosity and exceptional improvisational skills.

The whole piece is dominated by a triplet texture, based on chord arpeggios that are natural for a pianist, gradually climbing up the keyboard; frequent fermatas give the impression of a pianist stopping, as if planning another narrative turn. In Chopin's era, improvised preludes

of a similar nature often served as introductions to the actual works, so it can be considered that here too they serve a function announcing a larger musical structure. Such a textural model is typical of classical piano fantasies – it is enough to mention Mozart's *Fantasia in D minor*, KV. 397.



Example no. 66: W. A. Mozart: *Fantasia in D minor*, K. 397, bars 1–3, G. Henle Verlag, 1955

The improvisational fragments show not only Chopin's pianistic virtuosity but also perform an important structural function – they are a glue connecting various musical ideas and leading the listener to the main themes of the work. For example, the section from bars 43–67 connects the marching introduction with the first theme in the key of F minor. This section gradually accelerates with the designation *poco a poco doppio movimento* and uses imitation sequences in several pairs of related keys. The harmonic progression leads from C minor through E major to G minor, bypassing the maintained dominant note and stopping at the dominant in B flat major (B-flat – D – F – A-flat) in bars 50–53, which creates a growing tension and sense of anticipation. In bar 60, both hands move in opposite directions, and the descending fifth motif of the left hand (F – A – G) lays the foundation for the brilliant runs of the right hand, together creating a dynamic climax. Then, through a chromatic drop, the main line leads to the *agitato theme*.



Example no. 67: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 47–53, PWM edition, 1992.

The following sequences – in bars 85–88 and 89–92 – combine the supplementary material with the contrasting theme, using reduced seventh chords for smooth modulation from A flat major to C minor.





Example no. 68: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 85–93, PWM edition, 1992.

In bars 143–155, there is a cadence combining the first repetition of the final theme with the opening theme in a new key, retaining the marching character. The four-fold passage hills depict, in an identical texture, a series of spectacular climbs. From the point of view of tonal organization, the four phases of this sequence form a presentation-conflict-resolution arrangement, based on a consistent sequence: a dominant seventh chord with A in the bass → a diminished seventh chord based on A → a dominant seventh chord with A^c as the basic tone. This solution shows Chopin's artistry in consistently developing a single texture while achieving logical harmonic consequences.



Example no. 69: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 142–147, PWM edition, 1992.

From bars 179 to 198, the improvisational fragment takes the narrative from the previous, energetic phase to the most calm, oneiric and delicate episode in the entire piece. In this section, the emotional tension gradually disappears. Bars 180–181 and 182–183 are dialogue-related: phrases correspond to each other in different registers while maintaining the

same key. Then the harmony clashes the bright E major with the gloomy E minor (bars 184–187), creating a clear sonic contrast. From bar 188 onwards, the ascending arpeggios of the right hand do not tend to culminate, but gradually fade away, as if receding until they were completely silent.



Example no. 70: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 179–190, PWM edition, 1992.

At the end of the oneiric episode, the musician returns to "reality" with a cadence like that of bars 143–155, preparing the final repetition of the initial theme. Bars 310–309 (written retrospectively) combine the marching final theme with the *Adagio sostenuto*, in which the episodic motif returns for a moment. In bar 321, a free, immeasurable fragment appears, where the right hand performs three ascending phrases leading to the climax in *the Allegro assai* and the closing of the piece.



Example no. 71: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 316–323, PWM edition, 1992.

The form of a work can be interpreted on many levels – both at the level of musical language and its originally formed elements, and at the level of the overall architecture of the work as an autonomous musical expression. In Chopin's work, the form is never schematic, but it is also not accidental; Its apparent freedom results from the rigorous logic of developing the material and from the tensions between themes, musical syntax and the curve of dramatic intensity.

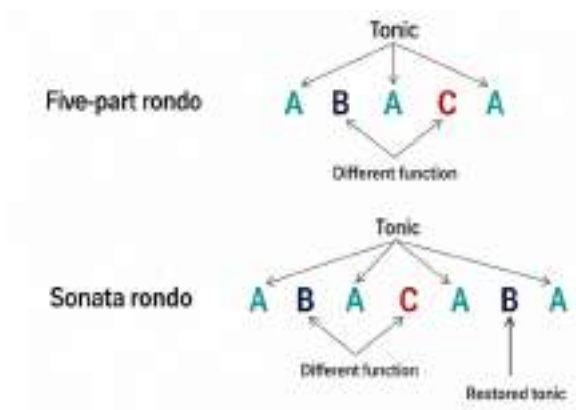
The fantasy begins with a "funeral march" – let's call it theme A – which never returns. It contains two main segments: the first march (bars 1–20) in the key of F minor, and the second march (bars 21–36), in which F major dominates. The short *codeta* in bars 37–42 returns to F minor. Importantly, this part has surprisingly little to do with the "introduction" function it theoretically performs. Funeral marches are associated with finality, not with opening a narrative. The well-known nineteenth-century precedents – the march from Beethoven's *Symphony Eroica* or the funeral march (*Maestoso andante, marcia funebre sulla morte d'un eroe*) from the *Sonata* Op. 26 – were well known to Chopin, as was their dramaturgical role. In

the case of the *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, the opening march is maintained in a raw punctuated rhythm and a uniform pulse, with a closed tonal organization and numerous authentic cadences.



Example no. 72: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 21–24, PWM edition, 1992.

Conceptually, the rondo is relatively simple: the form consists of a recurring chorus A, interspersed with contrasting episodes (b, c, etc.). Typical layouts are ABACAB or ABACABA.



Of course, in this fantasy Chopin did not strictly adhere to the traditional scheme of the roundabout form, but in the structure of individual sections one can see clear traces of this model. If we consider bars 68–92 as section A, then its repetitions then appear twice in different keys: A1 (bars 155–179) and the final A2 (bars 235–259). Similarly, the equivalent of episode B (bars 93–154) is B1 (bars 260–319). On the other hand, bars 180–234 can be seen as episode C, introducing completely new material. The sonata form is reflected in the return of the key of F minor in section B1. Although section A does not return definitively, this procedure alone allows us to conclude that Chopin consciously used elements of the roundabout form.

F minor:



Example no. 73: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 67-68, PWM edition, 1992.

C minor:



Example no. 74: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 155-157, PWM edition, 1992.

B-flat minor:



Example no. 75: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 235-237, PWM edition, 1992.

If, on the other hand, we analyse *the Fantasy* from the perspective of the sonata form, then the exposition covers bars 68–143, containing two contrasting themes and the final theme.

Initial theme:

Example no. 76: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 68-72, PWM edition, 1992.

Complementary motive:

Example no. 77: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 77-81, PWM edition, 1992.

Contrasting motive:



Example no. 78: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 93-96, PWM edition, 1992.

Climax theme:



Example no. 79: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 109-116, PWM edition, 1992.

Final theme:



Example no. 80: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 127-136, PWM edition, 1992.

From bar 180 onwards, the improvised material moves from the key of E flat major through E flat minor to G flat major; in cyclical terms, it can be considered that this is where the third rotation begins. However, the music introduced in bar 199 complicates this assumption. The tempo slows down to *the Lento sostenuto*, the two-part meter gives way to a smooth 3/4, and the appearing chorale in the key of B flat major (enharmonic $\flat$ III in A-flat) introduces a mood of almost contemplative calm.



Example no. 81: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 179-190, PWM edition, 1992.

This middle movement in the key of B flat major, referring to the choral topos, also appears in the later *Polonaise-Fantasia* Op. 61, another work in the key of A flat major.

Example no. 82: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 199–209, PWM edition, 1992.

Example no. 83: F. Chopin: *Polonaise-Fantasia in A flat major*, Op. 61, bars 152–159, Fryderyk Chopin's National Work, Series A, Vol. VI. PWM, 1995.

Due to the different meter, tempo, texture and character, as well as the significant tonal distance, everything in this fragment seems to be deliberately constructed so that the listener has a sense of maximum "distance from home". Telos, who has achieved an almost unbearable tension in the exhibition, is completely suspended here. Given that this section never returns in the further course of the work (apart from a brief reminiscence in bars 320–321), one might be tempted to consider *the Fantasy* as a tripartite structure, in which the chorale serves as a contrasting middle part. At the same time, however, *Lento sostenuto* reinforces the psychological trajectory of the sonata form: it intensifies the impression of being distant from the exposition, and at the same time subtly refers to the earlier material (choral elements already appeared in the introduction).

In bar 235, we return to the initial theme, this time in a particularly dark sound of the key of B minor. According to the logic of rotation, from bar 244 onwards, we hear a supplementary theme in D flat major; the contrasting theme appears from bar 260, starting in F minor and then moving on to A flat major. It is already clear here that the entire material from the initial theme is an almost literal transposition of the first rotation by a fifth up (or a quarter down). It is continued by the climactic theme, heard from bar 276 in the tonic in A flat major – the same one that marks the final key of *the Fantasia* – as well as the closing theme in bars 294–310.

From a formal perspective, we are dealing not only with the third rotation, but also with a full sonata reprise: all the material from the exhibition returns, with – in accordance with the principle of sonata form – the secondary and closing modules, originally kept in C minor and E flat major, now appear in the basic keys: F minor and, above all, A flat major.

After that, we are logically led to the game of code, which begins in bar 310. The descending chromatic scales in the sixths lead to a reminiscence of the theme of *the Lento sostenuto* in bar 320, transposed into A flat major, but retaining a slow tempo and triple meter.

Thus, bars 310–321 – which originally appear at the beginning of the development – can serve as a short, fourth rotation. It can also be read as a conscious reference to the practice of classical sonata forms, in which the repetition of development and reprise was sometimes used.



Example no. 84: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 319–324, Fryderyk Chopin's National Works, Series A, Vol. XI. PWM, 1992.

An analogous "false repetition" appears in the first movement of L. van Beethoven's "*Pathetic*" Sonata, where a fragment of the introductory *Grave*, recalled at the beginning of the development, returns in the code.

Example no. 85: L. van. Beethoven: *Piano Sonata in C minor*, Op. 13, 1st movement, bars 288–303, G. Henle Verlag.

Chopin drew his improvisational material primarily from national songs – from historical to the latest insurgent songs – both in his youthful years and in his mature period. Eustachy Marylski recalls that the young Chopin improvised in the school run by his father on the themes of Niemcewicz's Historical Songs. More than a decade later, he repeated this gesture in Paris in the presence of Niemcewicz himself. Franz Liszt noted this in his book on Chopin, and Bohdan Zaleski, Eustachy Januszkiewicz and Count Józef Krasiński also wrote about improvisations on national themes. The "Chronicle of Polish Emigration" published an account of one of the evenings at Prince Czartoryski's, during which Chopin "improvised charming fantasies about Polish melodies". These memoirs clearly indicate that the *Fantasia in F minor* may reflect this improvisational practice. The melodic idiom of the main themes reveals a kinship with insurgent songs.³⁴

Goldberg put forward a different interpretation of the dramatic potential of the work, pointing to a possible reference to Karol Kurpiński's song "Litwinka" ("Song of the Lithuanian Legionnaires", 1831), written in the atmosphere of the November Uprising and maintained in the style of a soldier's march. It was published in several songbooks, m.in. in "Songs of the Polish Revolution" of 29 November 1830 (Paris 1832, Wojciech Sowiński) and in a similar collection published in Leipzig a year later (Felix Biliński). Richard Wagner quoted several of her phrases in his overture "Polonia". The convergence is particularly noticeable in the second part of the introduction to *Fantasia*, although its character is more like a reminiscence than a triumphant gesture.



Example no. 86: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 1–4, Fryderyk Chopin's National Works, Series A, Vol. XI. PWM, 1992.

³⁴ Mieczysław Tomaszewski, A series of programmes entitled "All the Works of Fryderyk Chopin", <https://chopin.nifc.pl/en/chopin/kompozycja/112>

The piece combines the distinct rhythm of the polonaise with an improvisational spirit reminiscent of *the Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, using an introduction and a slow middle movement. Jeffrey Kallberg aptly explains this synthesis: "The similarity between fantasy and Polish dance is that both contain a certain proportion of introductions and lyrical middle movements. Incorporating Polish dance material into the fantasy form is the most appropriate choice."³⁶ Compared to other Polish dances, the work is devoid of sharply outlined contrasts of musical images; thanks to the free development and stretching of the form, the structure becomes complex and, in some places, approaches the sonata form. Improvisational expression blurs the boundaries of the polonaise itself, creating a tension between the heroic main theme and the melancholic, "nocturne" fantasy of the melody – this is how a genre hybrid style is created, providing the listener with new aesthetic experiences.

Analogous to Chopin's other "hybrid" projects, the *Polonaise-Fantasia* uses a combination of formal principles: while maintaining the framework of the tripartite form, the composer integrates elements of the sonata form, variation techniques and the features of the rondo, transcending traditional limitations and increasing the formal capacity of the work. As Zhao Xiaosheng notes in *The Way of Piano Performance*, "Chopin was not limited by fixed forms and restrictions. He integrated the different organizational principles of different structures, but he never created simple repetitions."³⁷

Structure diagram (sonata reading):

Introduction: bars 1–23

Exposition: bars 24–115

Development: bars 116–213

Recap + code: bars 214–228

In her book *Chopin's Compositions*, A. Solovtsov emphasizes the diversity of melodies as an important feature of Chopin's style:³⁸ in the variation technique, changes of theme include harmonic, melodic, tonal, textural, contrapuntal and colourful transformations. In the *Polonaise-Fantasia*, variational transformations are clearly applied.

³⁶ Mieczysław Tomaszewski, series of broadcasts "Fryderyk Chopin's All Works", <https://chopin.nifc.pl/pl/chopin/kompozycja/129>

³⁷ Zhao Xiaosheng, *The way of Piano Performance*, Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2007

³⁸ A. Solovtsov, *Frédéric Chopin*, Music Publishing House, 1964

Presentation of the *Polonaise* theme:



Example no. 88: F. Chopin: *Polonaise-Fantasy in A flat major*, Op. 61, bars 24-31, Fryderyk Chopin's National Edition, Series A, Vol.VI. PWM, 1995.

Variation I: bars 94–101 – Chopin uses a smooth triplet texture in the bass line, which gives the theme a lyrical and song-like quality while increasing the internal impetus.



Example no. 89: F. Chopin: *Polonaise-Fantasy in A flat major*, Op. 61, bars 92–97, Fryderyk Chopin's National Edition, Series A, Vol.VI. PWM, 1995.

Variation II: bars 108–115 – the phrase uses a harmonic variation (A minor), with the triplet texture of the bass limiting the singing and intensifying the tension. Rhythmic accents and syncopations in the melodic voice enrich the harmony and propel the song towards a climax.



Example no. 90: F. Chopin: Polonaise-Fantasia in A flat major, op. 61, bars 108-113, National Edition of Fryderyk Chopin's Works, Series A, Vol.VI. PWM, 1995.

Variation III: bars 242–249 — Appearing in the coda as the last occurrence of the theme, this variation uses block chords in the right hand and octaves in the left, restoring the polonaise to its heroic, triumphant scale.



Example no. 91: F. Chopin: Polonaise-Fantasia in A flat major, Op. 61, bars 242-247, Fryderyk Chopin's National Works, Series A, Vol.VI. PWM, 1995.

Although metrical regularity is the rule in dance compositions, Chopin often suspended or modified it: the work features non-metric sections, polymetrical phenomena and a constant play between the metrical pulse and rhythmic motifs, which in performance practice is combined with the use of tempo *rubato*.

The first eight bars of the introduction briefly reflect the "fantastic" way of thinking of the work: fermatas and fragments devoid of a clear bar line intensify the improvisational, hesitant-atmospheric character. A series of sounds left to reverberate signals the search for the right tone, motif and rhythm, introducing moments of reflection.

Two interesting points should be mentioned: firstly, the two chords that begin some groups of the introduction create the motif of "sighing" in the form of a descending quarter interval in the melodic line – A-flat–E-flat / G-flat–D-flat / F-flat–C-flat and E-flat–B-flat / D-flat–A-flat. This motif corresponds to the beginning of the introduction of *Fantasia*, Op. 49, and has a solemn, lofty emphasis, as if an epic had evolved.

Polonaise-Fantaisie A Madame A. Veyret op. 61

All.
gro-maestoso

The image shows the first seven bars of the introduction to Chopin's Polonaise-Fantaisie, Op. 61. The music is in A-flat major and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked 'All. gro-maestoso'. The score is written for piano. The first measure has a fermata. The second measure is marked 'p'. The third measure is marked 'pp'. The fourth measure is marked 'p'. The fifth measure is marked 'p'. The sixth measure is marked 'p'. The seventh measure is marked 'p'. The score includes a descending quarter interval motif highlighted in red boxes, which is described in the text as a 'sighing' motif. The motif consists of a descending quarter interval in the melodic line: A-flat–E-flat / G-flat–D-flat / F-flat–C-flat and E-flat–B-flat / D-flat–A-flat.

Example no. 92: F. Chopin: *Polonaise-Fantasia in A-flat major*, Op. 61, bars 1–7, Fryderyk Chopin's National Works, Series A, Vol.VI. PWM, 1995.



Example no. 93: F. Chopin: *Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49, bars 1–4, Fryderyk Chopin's National Work, Series A, Vol. XI. PWM, 1992.

The second element is an ascending monophonic pattern, analogous to the triplet improvisation and cadence in *the Fantasia in F minor*, Op. 49: thanks to its free rhythm, it achieves the effect of prolongation and stimulates the imagination. The use of the pedal here is ingenious – keeping the tonal base chord with "dreamy" non-harmonic sounds, as well as giving up the full disintegration of the pedal at the end, creates a hazy, at times pre-impressionist timbre, which Gerald Abraham wrote about as "hazy, almost impressionistic pedal effects".

Ornamentation in Chopin's language is not just a technical show, but an important means of expression. Emotional character and freedom of phrasing are given: two ornaments in bars 123–127 show an improvisational character, combining distant intervals and introducing interpretative flexibility within precise rhythms.

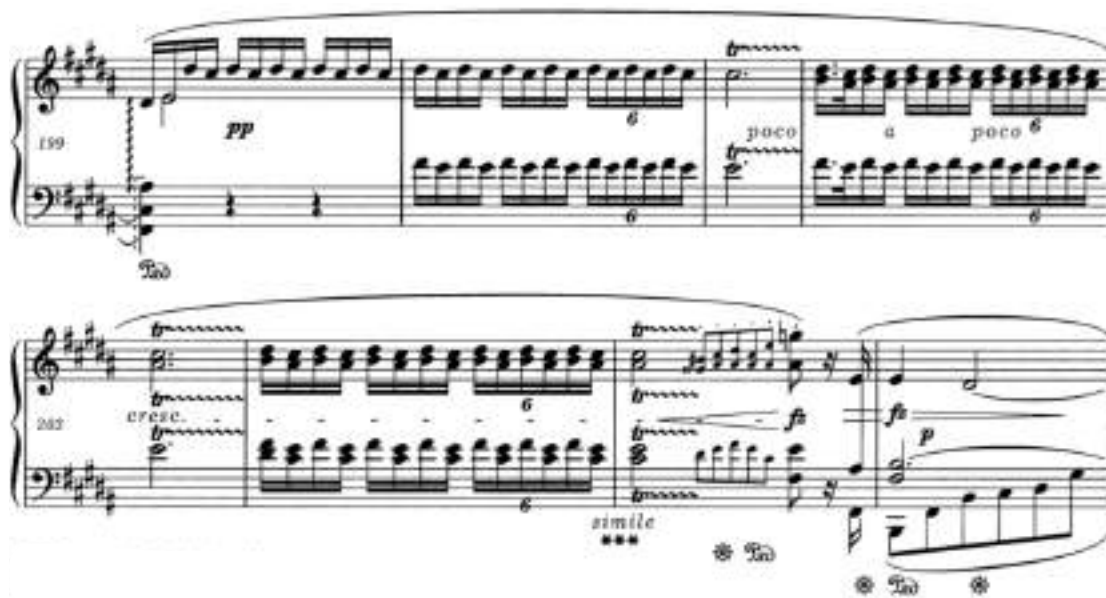


Example no. 94: F. Chopin: *Polonaise-Fantasia in A flat major*, Op. 61, bars 122–125, Fryderyk Chopin's National Work, Series A, Vol. VI. PWM, 1995.



Example no. 95: F. Chopin: *Polonaise-Fantasia in A flat major*, Op. 61, bars 126–127, Fryderyk Chopin's National Work, Series A, Vol. VI. PWM, 1995.

In bars 199–205, Chopin gradually builds up the tension that prepares the dominant before the reprise by means of a layered use of trills: first a single trill with both hands, then the addition of a third trill with the right hand, and finally the addition of a third trills with the left hand – this mechanism intensifies the wait for a harmonic solution in B major.



Example no. 96: F. Chopin: *Polonaise-Fantasy in A flat major*, Op. 61, bars 199–206, Fryderyk Chopin's National Work, Series A, Vol. VI. PWM, 1995.

One of the features of the "last style" was the increased use of chromatics. In bars 128–144, Chopin uses dense chromatic transitions leading to the climax preceding the middle movement, which blurs the unambiguous sense of key and intensifies the drama. In the *poco più lento* section, in the harmonic progressions of bars 164–167 and 176–181, the chromatics allow for smooth modulations and expand the tonal space, increasing the mystery of the middle section. In bars 187–196, the first note of the bass in the accompaniment creates a hidden melodic line through a half-tone descent, juxtaposed with the rising melody of the right hand — this procedure emphasizes the tension and announces the end of the fragment.

In the context of the comparison with Op. 49: while the *Fantasia in F minor* uses patriotic motifs and reminiscences of insurgent songs in an indirect way, the clear rhythm of the polonaise in Op. 61 more directly manifests the national character of Chopin's music. Dance genres – polonaise, mazurek, kujawiak – played the role of carriers of national identity in his work; in the *Polonaise-Fantasia*, the polonaise as a form provides an external, rhythmic skeleton, while the fantastic dimension concerns the inner layer – lyricism, reflection and fantasy.

The interweaving of a "pure" polonaise with fantastic singing causes the work to simultaneously expose external tension and internal reflection. The monumental final chords give the polonaise a heroic and triumphant character, accentuating the patriotic message and leading to an affirming ending. Although there are melancholic and oneiric fragments, the main motif retains the rhythmic constancy of the polonaise. For example, in bars 181–198, the melody of the right hand is multi-layered, has a narrative language and suggests the turbulent history of the nation – at the same time manifesting Chopin's love for his homeland and his unwavering faith in the final victory.

Chapter 4 Alexander Scriabin and his *Fantasia*, Op. 28

4.1 Life and work of the composer

Alexander Nikolayevich Skriabin (January 6, 1872 [December 25, 1871, Old Style] – April 27 [April 14 Old Style] 1915) was an outstanding Russian composer and pianist, one of the most characteristic figures of the Russian school of music at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He was born in 1872 in Moscow, into a noble family: his father was a lawyer, and his mother was a valued concert pianist. Her untimely death from tuberculosis, when Scriabin was only one year old, marked his early childhood. Soon after, the father went on a business trip to Turkey, leaving his son in the care of his grandmother and aunt. Even as a child, Scriabin revealed his extraordinary talent as a pianist, studying with Nikolai Zverev – a demanding pedagogue who was also a mentor to Sergei Rachmaninoff and other outstanding young pianists of the era.³⁹

In 1888, Scriabin began his studies at the Moscow Conservatory, where he perfected his piano playing under Vasily Ilyich Safonov, and composition and theory under Anton Arensky and Sergei Taneyev. In the years 1898–1903 he was a professor of piano at the same university, although with time he increasingly lost his motivation for pedagogical work.

On March 13, 1904, Scriabin and his wife left for Geneva, where he benefited from the financial support of a wealthy patron. During this period, he travelled extensively in Switzerland, Italy, France and Belgium. From 1906 to 1907 he toured the United States, collaborating with Vasily Safonov and conductor Moisey Altshuler. From 1908 onwards, he became more and more active in the activities of Theosophical circles in Brussels. Encouraged by Sergei Koussevitzky, he returned to Russia in 1909, where the conductor performed and published his compositions. At the time, Scriabin's interests went far beyond music, encompassing the idea of a universal "mystery"—a monumental, ritualistic work synthesizing music, poetry, dance, color, and smell to lead participants toward a state of "supreme, ultimate ecstasy." His poem, which is a literary sketch of this vision, has been preserved, while the musical fragments have remained only in the form of notes.

³⁹ Boris de Schloezer, SCRIABIN, Chinese translation by Gu Chao, Guangxi Normal University Press, 2023

Scriabin struggled with depression throughout his life and died prematurely at the age of 43 in Moscow because of sepsis caused by an infection of the lip wound. In the last years of his life, he developed the concept of a multimedia work to be performed in the Himalayas, which – in his opinion – was to usher in the "end of the world" understood as the symbolic arrival of a new era. However, this project remained in the sphere of unrealized ideas.

After his death, Sergei Rachmaninoff, an outstanding Russian pianist and composer, paid tribute to him by including Scriabin's works in his concert repertoire. Sergei Prokofiev, present at these performances, commented: "When Scriabin played, every note seemed to float in the air, irritating the listener, but when Rachmaninoff played Scriabin's pieces, it seemed that all the notes were firmly embedded in the ground"⁴⁰

Scriabin's legacy includes monumental symphonies and highly refined, often introspective, and complex piano music. Although his early style showed a clear influence of Fryderyk Chopin, the composer developed his own idiom at the beginning of his career. As his philosophy became increasingly enigmatic and introspective, the harmonic language became progressively more complicated and distant from traditional tonal structures. As M. Aranovsky notes, "Scriabin's life's work was his mysticism".⁴¹ Despite this complexity, his work continues to inspire scholars and performers, opening up new interpretative perspectives in the area of extraordinary harmonies and symbolic expression, and arousing the lasting interest of modernists.

4.2 Musical Creativity, Style and Aesthetics

Scriabin was a composer full of contradictions: short and filigree in stature, he saw himself as a titanic, Promethean figure, a rebel rising against the heavens and leading humanity towards a new stage of spiritual evolution. Although he was an individualist, he showed a tendency to seek relationships with older, dominant men, such as his piano teacher W. Safonov or the publisher M. P. Belaieff. He composed five symphonies and ten sonatas, although at the same time he considered it pointless to create music limited to classical forms. He was a cosmopolitan, spending much of his adult life abroad and avoiding the use of folk material, and at the same time he was concerned when the Russian identity of his music was questioned. Although his sonatas respect the basic framework of the traditional sonata form, the

⁴⁰ Faubion Bowers, *The New Scriabin: Enigma and Answers*, 1973, s. 202

⁴¹ Zhang Hongmo, *Russian Composers and the Twentieth Century*, Beijing: Central Conservatory of Music Press, p. 140

development of the composer's harmonic language led to a gradual undermining of the dynamic tonal relations on which the rule of sonata form was based. In his attitude and work, he was at the same time the culmination of late Romanticism and one of the pioneers of twentieth-century music. Many viewers may feel confused as they observe the rapid transformation of his language – from the elegant romanticism of the turn of the century to the enigmatic, almost demonic avant-garde. The ecstatic nature of his works often exceeded the boundaries of what was considered "rational", provoking the impression that his audience was as elated as the music itself. This is illustrated by a cycle of ten piano sonatas: the first of which Scriabin wrote at the age of fourteen, while studying at the Cadet Corps in Moscow, and the tenth – just two years before his death. They constitute a compact development chain, showing the process of transformation of his style.

Scriabin's work is basically divided into three stages: early, preceding 1900; a transitional period (1903–1910), in which the composer began to assimilate his characteristic mystical style; and late (1910–1915). The first two phases were dominated by piano work. His reputation was built by monumental symphonies and subtle, sensual piano music. His pianist output includes ten sonatas (1892–1913), an early concerto, and numerous preludes, mazurkas, and other short forms. Although Scriabin was an ardent admirer of Fryderyk Chopin in his early period, he developed his own idiom relatively quickly. His music, although remaining in the tradition of the Russian school, was characterized by an individual language, in which there were no unambiguous references to the "Russian style" or folkloric nationalism. Many of his early works – mazurkas, preludes, etudes, as well as the only piano concerto – are sometimes juxtaposed with Chopin's works. However, this comparison turns out to be superficial: even these compositions bear features characteristic of the later Scriabin, especially the characteristic dark overtone. He emphasized the melodiousness of the melody, used the traditional harmonic language, at the same time bringing out the tension and virtuosity of the texture, imbuing the music with romantic passion and a fantastic element. During his teaching period at the Moscow Conservatory (1888–1903), he treated Chopin's genres as a point of reference, composing ten mazurkas, preludes and several nocturnes. In them, he combined lyricism with drama, transferring Chopin's elegant, sublime style into the area of the Russian tradition, contributing to its continuation.

In *Sonatas I and III* and in the unfinished youthful *Sonata in E flat minor* (written between 1887 and 1889; its first movement was later published as *Allegro appassionato*, op. 4), Scriabin referred to the tradition of multi-movement known from the works of Beethoven, Schumann and Chopin. In Beethoven's oeuvre, one can find sonatas consisting of two closely related movements. The *Sonata in C sharp minor* and *Sonata No. 2*, Op. 19, composed by Scriabin in 1886, initiated a new trend: the introductory movement (*adagio*) serves as an introduction to the *allegro* that follows it, as in *the Sonata of Fantasy* of 1886 and, to a certain extent, in op. 19.

During the transitional period (after 1903), Scriabin's harmonic language developed significantly, and his music became more chromatic and saturated with dissonances, while maintaining the foundations of functional tonality, from which, however, it gradually moved away. The dominant chords lengthened, gradually losing their tense function. Scriabin strived to achieve a radiant and luminous sound, which he achieved by enriching the structure of chords with new components. At this time, the mystical chord (also called *the Prometheus chord*) begins to appear – a six-note synthetic chord with its corresponding scale. In the tonic C, it includes the pitch classes: C, F-sharp, B-flat, E, A, D. It is sometimes interpreted as a quart hexachord: an increased fourth, a reduced fourth, an increased quarter and two pure fourths. Scriabin referred to it as a "pleroma chord" (аккорд плеромы), which – as he claimed – was supposed to enable the immediate grasp of what is beyond the possibilities of human cognition; His "supernatural silence" was a gnostic announcement of hidden otherness. During this period, Scriabin's music, inspired by Nietzsche and Theosophy, became a tool for expressing "cosmic unity" and spiritual awakening.

Representative works include the *Fourth Symphony "Poem of Ecstasy"* (1907) – a twenty-minute call to spiritual liberation, imbued with performance instructions such as "ever greater intoxication" or "almost delirious" – and *the Third Symphony in C minor*, Op. 43, "*Le Divin Poème*", whose three-movement structure (*Luttes*, *Voluptés*, *Jeu divin*) shows the way of spiritual elation. The *Fourth Piano Sonata in F flat major*, Op. 30, as well as the *Fifth Sonata*, Op. 53, both representing the middle period of his work, are maintained in a similar style. Harmony in them still remains in relation to tonality, although many features foreshadow the late style. Slow and fast sections intertwine, and the whole piece begins and ends with a fragment of a purely sonoristic character, creating an antitonal effect, although still based on the mode. From *the Fifth Sonata* onwards, the movements merge into a uniform sequence, which refers to the radical reinterpretation of the sonata form made by Liszt in *the Sonata in B minor* or in the "*Fantasia quasi sonata*" (*Après une lecture du Dante*). Scriabin drew particular

inspiration from the opening bars of the latter, built on the diabolus in musica, which became one of the pillars of his later style. In both cases, the traditional sonata form is subordinated to psychological development, and the reprise is hidden under a layer of variation and transformation of thematic material.

In the last years of his life, Scriabin entered a phase of pioneering experiments: he almost completely abandoned tonality, basing his harmony on mysterious chords and synthetic sound collections. His melodies became fragmentary, his rhythms became more complex, and his music sought to synthesize the senses and the spiritual sphere. Late works are often interpreted in the context of synesthesia – a state in which the stimulation of one sense provokes a reaction from another. Under the influence of Theosophy, the composer created a system of correlation of colours and sounds, which he intended to use in the monumental multimedia spectacle *The Mystery* – a week-long ritual at the foot of the Himalayas, combining music, smell, dance and light, to bring the world to an end in a state of ecstasy.

In *Prometheus: Poem of Fire*, Op. 60 (1910), Scriabin used rich colour symbolism, assigning colours to specific sounds (culminating, m.in, in the deep blue of F major). His late works include Piano Sonatas No. 6–10 (Op. 62–70). Among them, *the IX Sonata* Op. 68 (*Black Mass*) is one of the most famous. Its title, proposed by Alexei Podgorny – a pianist, theosophist and close friend of the composer – aptly captures the essence of the music: the short, imitative structure is dominated by a demonic aura. The repeated sounds, marked as a "mystical whisper", correspond to the first sharply dissonant climax, reminiscent of the "Mephisto motif" in F. Liszt's *Sonata in B minor*, while the lyrical second theme takes on more and more seductive shapes, finally transforming into a grotesque march – a parody of *A Sabbath Night's Dream* from H. Berlioz' s *Fantastic Symphony*. *Vers la Flamme*, Op. 72, is a condensation of late harmonic experiments.

Scriabin's entire creative path reflects the transformation from the romantic-poet to the mystical prophet, and his late works proved to be important precursors of radical innovations in twentieth-century music.

4.3 Characteristics of *Fantasia* op. 28. Formal and harmonic analysis

Fantasia Op. 28 was composed in 1900, during the transitional period of Scriabin's work. As an elaborate composition in sonata form, it is a bridge between *Sonatas III* and *IV* and is the only piano work of such considerable size created during the composer's tenure as a professor at the Piano Department at the Moscow Conservatory. The work not only reflects the influences of the Romantic style characteristic of his early works, but also exhibits features inspired by the philosophy of Nietzsche's "superman", announcing the mystical direction in the composer's work – the pursuit of self-expression and the fantasy of achieving unity with God and divinity. Around 1900, Scriabin's music featured many bold harmonic and rhythmic experiments, fully present in this work as well. At the same time, his work focused on symphonic music, which resulted in three symphonies. Although op. 28 is intended for solo piano, it has a distinctly symphonic sound. In the next part, the author will attempt to characterize *Fantasia* Op. 28 from the perspective of various musical parameters.

In the early period of Scriabin's work, in addition to his professional music studies, his higher education and the influence of Russian literature played an important role. Already as a young artist, he made attempts to combine literary ideas with music, enriching it with literary references and striving to integrate music with poetry. He was interested in Greek mythology and maintained close contacts with Symbolist writers; He also sometimes wrote his own poetic texts for symphonic works.⁴²

Symbolism – a literary trend that originated in France in the nineteenth century and spread in Europe and America at the beginning of the twentieth century – was closely related to Scriabin's music in all periods of his work. "The writers and painters of this school focus on showing subjective feelings, enabling the individual to transcend reality and enter the illusory world of the ideal. That is why in the works of the Symbolists one can feel the abstractness and instability of the images, as well as the strong subjectivity and ambiguity of meaning."⁴³

In the context of the relationship between symbolism and *Fantasia*, Op. 28, scholar Dorothy Robbins notes that Scriabin drew inspiration from Nietzsche's philosophy already at this stage, and the work itself can be seen as a bridge between Romanticism and Symbolism.⁴⁴ The composer's works – directly or indirectly – reflect his personal experiences. Although he has not yet abandoned the romantic idiom, the mysterious musical ideas, violent contrasts and

⁴² Song Lili, "Reflecting Your Era in Music – Exploring the Historical Causes of Scriabin's Musical Concepts", *Journal of Nanjing University of the Arts*, 3/2011

⁴³ Song Lida, *Art – A Source*, Jin Cheng Publishing House, 2006)

⁴⁴ Robbins D., *Turning Sound into Ecstasy: Symbolist Aesthetics in Scriabin's Fantasy in B Minor*, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I

mood swings present in op. 28 reflect both the cultural climate of the time and the influence of philosophical inspirations alien to it.

Despite the suggestions of freedom and improvisationality contained in the title *Fantasia*, the work is in fact a clear (even schematic) sonata allegro. The foundation of the composition are two thematic sections with clearly outlined features, and the development and narration of the work are woven around the relationship between these themes.

First theme:



Example no. 97: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 1–4, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

Second theme:



Example no. 98: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 30–34, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

As the above examples show, the themes differ not only in tone, but also in pace. The first theme, marked *Moderato*, in the key of B minor, introduces a tense and mysterious atmosphere. The second, labelled *Piu vivo*, moves to the light key of A major, introducing a fluidity of narration and a more melodic, lyrical line. In the classical approach to the history of sonata form, in its early stages, the contrast of the arrangement was based mainly on tonality, with the thematic material playing a secondary role. In Beethoven's era, fixed thematic models were formed while maintaining a homogeneous tempo within the sonata allegro. In Romanticism, contrast shifted to differentiation of tempo and rhythm, which led to stylistic discrepancies between themes.

In this context, some scholars have assigned specific symbolic meanings to both themes, interpreting them in the spirit of Scriabin's explorations of symbolism: the first theme represents the masculine principle, and the second – the feminine one. The first theme, characterized by austerity, economy and monumentality, appears in a low register, creating an atmosphere of rootedness. The punctuated rhythm gives it a recalling power and emphasizes the momentum of the movement, contrasting with harmonic progressions of a static nature. The second theme embodies femininity: its lyrical line – slow, sentimental, constantly climbing towards the upper register – evokes the impression of longing. The canon used by the composer blurs the endings of phrases, reinforcing their seductive aura. Later on, there is a short marching motif symbolizing the conflict between the two principles.⁴⁵

From this point of view, the differences between the themes concern not only the key and tempo, but also the characters and musical connotations, which gives the work a distinct contrast. A sudden change in the musical image when moving on to the second theme causes the effect of freshness, as if the listener suddenly found himself in a changed world. If the contrast of the characters of the subjects reflects the emotional side of Scriabin, then the clarity of structure and brevity of form represent his propensity for logical thinking and rationality. Despite the freedom of the motivic material and some formal differences, the sonata form of *Fantasia* Op. 28 is clear and legible.

	Bar	Tonality	
Exposition:	<i>I theme</i>	1 – 20	<i>B minor</i>
	<i>Connector</i>	21 – 39	
	<i>II theme</i>	30 – 55	<i>D major</i>
	<i>Conclusion</i>	55 – 72	
Development:		73 – 76	<i>D minor</i>
		77 – 84	<i>F major – C major</i>
		85 – 92	<i>G major – B minor</i>
Recap.:	<i>I theme</i>	93 – 100	<i>B minor.</i>
	<i>Connector</i>	101 – 108	
	<i>II theme</i>	109 – 133	<i>B major</i>
	<i>Conclusion</i>	133 – 147	
Connector:	147 – 150		

⁴⁵ Robbins D., *Turning Sound into Ecstasy: Symbolist Aesthetics in Scriabin's Fantasy in B Minor*, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses A&I

Codetta:	<i>I theme</i>	{ 151 – 154	<i>A minor</i>
		{ 155 – 164	<i>A minor – B minor</i>
	<i>II theme</i>	165 – 181	<i>C minor – B minor</i>
		{ 181 – 184	<i>B minor</i>
	<i>Coda</i>	{ 185 – 197	<i>B major</i>

On the basis of the presented structure, it can be noted that in the second part of the work, not only the two main thematic fragments return, but also the entire secondary material, in the form of a full reproduction combined with tonal regression. This is one of the key features of the sonata form. In addition, in the middle movement, the composer repeatedly presents the materials of the first and second themes in different keys, which corresponds to the typical properties of the processing movement. However, it is worth noting that Scriabin significantly expands the code – it consists of three segments after the reprise is completed, and some researchers even see it as a second development. The first segment of the code uses a variant of the thematic material from the processing part; in the second, the transformed material of the second theme appears, while the last segment refers to the transformation of the material from the first part of the coda, consistently leading to the dominant chord in B major.

I believe that the reason why *Fantasia* Op. 28 maintains a clear narrative and internal logic with such diverse musical images is primarily its carefully planned form. In the spirit of the principle of "look for common ground while preserving differences", Scriabin, thanks to the use of sonata structure, allows two separate thematic sections to fully reveal their individual character, and at the same time subordinates them to a clear line of development, merging them into a coherent and monumental whole.

At the same time, the work reveals the composer's clearly personal style. The final coda in a sense symbolizes his own fantasy: in the first part of it, the keys change almost from phrase to phrase, as if the music were possessed by a demonic impulse; The second part – in contrast to the slower pace of the second theme from the exhibition – takes on a more insistent character, like a fleeting, precious, but irreversible memory. In the final section of the coda, full of passionate and violent expression, the phrases move between major and minor keys, unfolding like a violent gust of wind, until they finally achieve stabilization on the chord of the tonic in B major, expressing unambiguously triumph and final light.

4.4 Selected aspects of compositional technique

4.4.1 Shaping musical images

As mentioned earlier, both themes of the *Fantasy in B minor*, Op. 28, are characterized by a distinct profile, and the transformations of their musical images remain closely related to the way in which melody, harmony and texture are shaped. Analysing the main theme of the exposition – in the first four bars – at a moderate pace, both hands successively present the motif, respond to each other and conduct a dialogue, followed by the first explosion and dynamic conflict. The octave melody in the right hand extends from a small second F-sharp–G to a pure fourth F-sharp–B, while the bass in the second bar shows a descending direction: F-sharp–E, F-sharp–D, and then gradually descends to a c-sharp, which resembles careful probing leading to further development. All this announces a sharp jump and explosion in bar five. When the tension weakens on the dominant chord of F sharp major in bar seven, it builds up again, reaching a climax in bar eight through a semitone build-up in the octave. The opposition of the movement of both hands creates a distinct effect of dialogue and spatial tension.

This motif appears for the first time in a processing, in *Tempo I*, in bars 73–83, in the same hand configuration and in the octave dialogue texture. The material from bar 5 is transferred to the left-hand bass line and unfolds in three two-bar phrases. The motive is then shortened to a bar and repeated twice, culminating in bar 81 in the right hand, marked *ff*. It is worth noting that Scriabin referred to this section as "*accel. poco and poco*"; Compared to the mysterious beginning, emotions are much more volatile and urgent here.



Example no. 99: A. Scriabin: *Fantasy in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 73–75, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano*, part 2



Example no. 100: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 79–81, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

The second appearance of the motif begins in bar 93 (tempo *I*). The thematic material here undergoes textural and harmonic transformations: both hands perform fast, opposing hexadecimal arpeggies. The first chord of each bar is determined by a harmonic background, while arpeggios create a colourful sound effect. Thanks to the changes in harmonic timbre in each bar, the music develops in blocks, creating a rich and varied effect.



Exempleno. 101: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 93–96, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

For the third time, the motif appears in the reprise, from bar 151. It is still marked by an octave melody, but the accompaniment of the middle voice in the right hand transforms into fast hexadecimal figures with dense chromatzation, generating the effect of turbulent, restless and ambiguous music. The left hand uses the rhythmic motif from the previous marching section, undergoing a three-fold upward modulation; The dynamics increases from *P* through *MF* to *F*.



Example no. 102: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 151–152, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

Example no. 103: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 155–160, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

The last appearance of the thematic material occurs in the code (Tempo *I*), where the theme is presented alternately by both hands. The chord texture transforms into arpeggiated forms of open chords, and the parallel movement of the hands gives the music a thrilling, "windy" impetus.



Example no. 104: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 181–183, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano*, part 2

In bars 179–187, the left hand drops three times: from d-sharp to h, then to f-sharp, and finally again to h - tonic in B major. Each descent is accompanied by a shortening of the texture of the right hand: from nine-note waveforms to six-note and then five-note, thanks to which the individual accented sounds become more and more pronounced. The song ends with a luminous, decisive sound effect.



Example no. 105: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 89–92, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano*, part 2

If the complex interweaving of melody and harmony in the first theme surrounds the exhibition with a dark, unsettling aura, like a night shrouded in chaos, then after a short passage – lasting less than five bars – the work opens like a dawn, introducing the warmest and most lyrical secondary theme in all of Scriabin's piano oeuvre. The tempo changes to *Piu vivo*,

reinforcing the fluidity of the melody and preparing for a further acceleration of the narrative. The theme moves from B minor to the related key of D major – in the synaesthesia system of Scriabin corresponding to the light-yellow timbre – emphasizing the brightness and warmth of the sound, like the sun breaking through the clouds. The melody is free of chromatism symbolizing tension.

In the bass, the composer distributes the chords, using triplets of individual notes and modifying the order of the chord components, so that the accompaniment is not a strict arpeggio, but is a "second melody" under the main melody. The upper voice is exceptionally clear – almost without chord complements – with a smooth, singing line reminiscent of a string instrument. Lyricism and broad accompaniment combine in a way reminiscent of Chopin's nocturnes, reflecting the composer's subjective sensitivity.

From bar 39 onwards, there is a temporary darkening of the timbre. In a delicate *piano* in the key of E minor, the accompaniment of the left hand gives impetus to the development of the music, and the first bass note in each bar creates a hidden ascending line, leading to a passionate D major in bar 48.



Example no. 106: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 39–48, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

When the second theme returns in processing, Scriabin greatly enriches the texture of both hands, creating a fuller harmonic effect. This completely changes the original lyrical character of the theme. With *ff* dynamics, the sound resembles the climactic tutti of an orchestra, and the emotions reach an almost "ecstatic" state. Despite the high harmonic density, frequent changes in chord arrangement and a wide range of sounds make the texture not heavy; Only the first chord in each bar of the left hand sounds like a bell. The wide ambitus of both hands gives the music a majestic momentum and leaves a strong auditory impression.



Example no. 107: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 109–111, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

From bar 117, the texture of the right hand becomes more complex than in bar 39 – the chords of the middle voice appear, enriching the harmonic expression. The left hand expands to wide hexadecimal figures, increasing the drama and initiating an increase in tension. This leads to the central climax of the piece: *fff appassionato* with dense major chords in both hands.





Example no. 108: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 117–129, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

The third presentation of the second theme takes place in bars 165–172, again at *Più vivo tempo*, faster than the first time. The melody is clear in the right hand, while the left – in *pp* dynamics – quickly moves across the keyboard, reminiscent of a returning dream.



Example no. 109: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 165–172, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

In bars 173–178, the texture of the left hand takes the form of energetic *staccato* chords and octaves. The character of this section is reminiscent of the second movement of *Presto* from Scriabin's *Second Sonata*. Although marked as *pp*, it pulsates with anxiety and perpetual motion energy.



Example no. 110: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 173–174, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

Coda analysis is also noteworthy. In this part, the contrast between the high and low registers is particularly pronounced. Unlike the previous accompaniments in the upper register, this time the low voice – so far subordinate – gains clear activity. The relationship between the registers transforms from an initial interweaving to a sharp confrontation: the left hand plays fast staggered chords in the low register, while the right moves in a way that is not harmonically compatible with the bass.

The chromatic line also has an important function here. In the coda, chromatism appears both in the melody of the right hand and in the octave responses of the left hand. In Romanticism, the descending chromatic line was sometimes a symbol of death and lamentation; Scriabin uses an ascending direction here, creating a chromatic octave as a hidden melody. This gives the whole fragment the character of a movement "against the current", intensifying the impression of a growing conflict.



Example no. 111: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 137–140, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

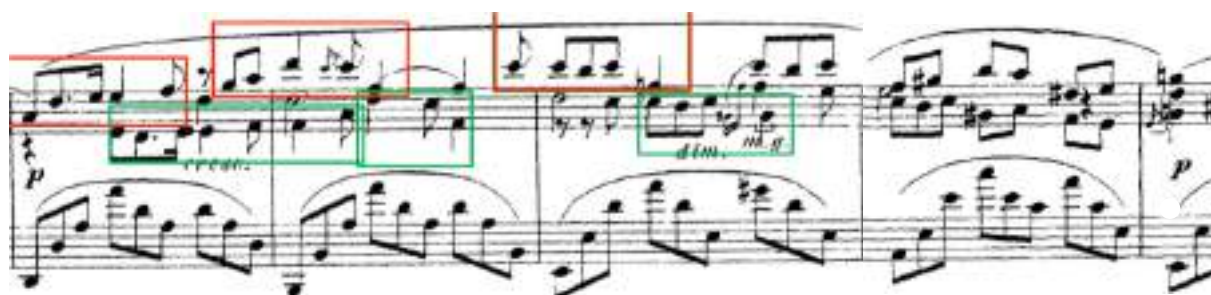
4.4.2 Application of counterpoint

Under the influence of his first professional piano and composition teacher, Gyorgy Konyus, Scriabin composed the extraordinary *Canon in D minor in his youth*. The habit of

contrapuntal accompanied him throughout his life, and it is easy to see traces of it in many works: for example, the finale of the *Third Sonata* contains chromatic extensions (overlapping parts in which different voices perform the same figure), reminiscent of César Franck's solutions; the beginning of the *Ninth Sonata*, on the other hand, refers to a strict canon.

Although Stravinsky was sometimes critical of Scriabin's music, he credited him with high contrapuntal skills – which he explained by the influence of the teachings of Sergei Taneyev (1856–1915),⁴⁶ an ascetic figure with a deep interest in counterpoint, and his involvement resulted in a monumental treatise published in 1908. It may seem that the didactic habits of these pedagogues stand in opposition to the romantic spontaneity of Scriabin's work, sometimes criticized for its attachment to regular four-bar phrases and external procedures of sonata form; However, it can be argued that this is exactly the framework he needed to give shape to his ideas.

The *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, is no exception. In bars 35–38, in the second performance of the melody in D major, counterpoint is used in the upper and middle voices of the right hand, which enhances the dialogue and reaction between the phrases compared to the earlier monophonic presentation, giving the texture greater richness and multidimensionality.



Example no. 112: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 35–38, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

This technique maintains the repetition of the theme also in later fragments, e.g. in bars 113–116, where, after interweaving chord textures and harmonic middle voices, the left and right hands emphasize the contrapuntal character of the octave melody – which undoubtedly emphasizes the technical difficulty of the piece.

⁴⁶ L. S. Sinyaver, *An Outline of the History of Russian Music*, translated into Chinese by Liang Xin, Shanghai Times Press, 1947



Example no. 113: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 113–115, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

Similarly, in bars 165–168, the melody of the right hand branches into three voices, forming a complex contrapuntal arrangement,



Example no. 114: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 165-168, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

and in bars 173–176, the echo of the middle voice is performed jointly by the left and right hands, intensifying the polyphonic effect.



Example no. 115: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 173-176, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

4.4.3 Chromatics as a means of expression

Scriabin had an innate talent for drama and mystery. Initially inspired by Chopin, he gradually broke with the literal continuation of tradition, creating music that was emotionally intense, colourful and full of unexpected harmonic solutions. He was fascinated by the idea of combining sound with colour; his aesthetics evolved towards almost "otherworldly" concepts, in which mysticism, spirituality and philosophy became a means of expression. As a result, he developed a personal chromatic style – at the same time erotically expressive and impressive. Chromaticism appears already in the early works, e.g. in the second link of the *First Piano Sonata in F minor*, Op. 6 (1893), where the extended middle parts contain "lamenting" chromatic descending passages.



Example no. 116: A. Scriabin: *Piano Sonata No. 1 in F minor*, Op. 6, Part II, bars 36–43, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 1

In *Fantasia*, Op. 28, the key of B minor creates a wide field for the use of chromatism and the interval of a small second. The presentation of the first theme uses only a few notes (F-sharp minor–G minor–F-sharp minor) in the middle register in the opening bars, building an aura of mystery – as if the music were taking a half-step, and then retreating, preparing further rehearsals.



Example no. 117: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bar 1, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

In the fifth bar, the first chord of each beat contains a dissonant little second, the sharpness of which, emphasized by the dynamics of *forte*, enhances the conflict and drama. In bars 1–12, the octaves of the right hand form a chromatic line of a meandering character: E-sharp – F-sharp – G – G-sharp – G-double sharp – A – A-sharp – H – C-sharp – D, which reflects the inner intertwining of emotions and contradictions.



Example no. 118: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 1–11, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

In bars 20–25, when the tension increases, the half-tone line of the right hand (in octaves) intensifies the drive of the piece: B-sharp – C-sharp – D – D-sharp – E – E-sharp – F-sharp – G – G-sharp – A. Hence, Scriabin forms the arc of the phrase not as standard four bars (bars 21–

24), but from the final beat of bars 20 to the second beat of bar 25, which affects the perception of phrasing.



Example no. 119: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 20–25, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

In the second half of the second theme (bars 39–50) we find a chromatic, circular line in the upper voice: A-sharp – B – (A – A-sharp) – C-sharp – D – (C – C-sharp) – E – E-sharp – F major; at the same time, in the triplet accompaniment of the left hand, the first notes of the next bars form a hidden line: E – F – G – A – B, and the octave melody runs: C-sharp – C – B – B-flat – A. In the middle voice, chromatic fragments are scattered, which enrich the texture.



Example no. 120: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 39–50, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

In bars 51–54, a circular, descending line appears: D – C-sharp – (G – G-sharp) – B – B-flat – (E-sharp – F) – A – G – F-sharp – E – D.



Example no. 121: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 51–54, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

A similar phenomenon can be observed in the *coda* part (bars 55–66): the octaves of the right hand unfold upwards, meandering (A – A major [+ minor second] – B – C – D – E – D), after which the chromatic scale continues the sequence C-sharp–D–D-sharp–E–E-sharp–F-sharp–G, and then – after the climax – there are three descending chromatic scales repeating the motif of the left hand.



Example no. 122: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 55–66, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

In short: the development of the chromatic line strongly correlates with the increasing tension and intensity of the musical content. Chromatic ascent usually goes hand in hand with an increase in tension (*p – cresc. – mf – cresc. – f – cresc. – ff*, etc.), and chromatic descent is accompanied by silence (*dim.*). This drive is expressed more often by an increase in dynamics than by direct acceleration, creating a "spiral" character of development – metaphorically similar to the "spiral ascent" described in philosophical considerations. As a result, Scriabin's *Fantasy* transcends the purely musical dimension, also carrying philosophical and teleological connotations.

4.4.4 Evolution of Harmony – Fourth Chord

Scriabin's interest in harmony was a central aspect of his aesthetic. Although some later commentators marginalized this thread – as Stravinsky's quote on the history of harmony suggests – interest in Scriabin's harmony recurred many times both in Russia and abroad. Although the greatest interest is aroused by his late works, his entire work turns out to be valuable material for study; in a sense, its solutions occupy an important place in the development of the harmony of the twentieth century. Scriabin was one of the pioneers of the "new harmony", opening the door to the harmonic experiments of the twentieth century.

In his harmonic language, the quart chord plays a significant role – and especially the tendency to build structures by superimposing fourths. At an early stage, it included overlapping four quarter notes as part of a traditional system; In the middle and late periods, the mystical (Promethean) chord becomes the basis of some harmonic solutions. In the key C, the mystical chord includes the following classes: C, F-sharp, B-flat, E, A, D – it is sometimes interpreted as a fourth-quarter hexachord (an increased fourth, a reduced fourth, an increased fourth and two pure fourths).⁴⁷

The *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28 – a transitional piece – is still based on the Romantic harmonic system, but one can see the appearance of fourth arrangements. For example, the first chord in bar 7 forms an inversion of the sounds G – C-sharp – F-sharp – B, which can be read as the overlap of the reduced fourth and the pure fourths; the presence of a second interval favours the solution towards degree VII in B-flat minor (A-sharp).

⁴⁷ P. Sabbagh, *The Development of Harmony in Scriabin's works*, University Publishers, Florida 2003



Example no. 123: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bar 13, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano*, part 2

The first chords in bars 40 and 42 contain the arrangements E – A – D – G-sharp (pure fourth – pure quarter – increased fourth) and G – C-sharp – F-sharp – B-flat (increased fourth – pure quarter – reduced fourth), which blurs the unambiguity of the key and builds an atmosphere of harmonic conflict.



Example no. 124: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bars 40 and 42, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano*, part 2

The last chord in bar 54 (E -sharp – A – D – G) (diminished quarter – pure quarter – pure fourth) hides in its voices a hidden chromatic line C – C-sharp – D, the climax of which falls in D; at the same time, it initiates a section – largely maintained in D major – giving a strong impression of solution.



Example no. 125: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bar 54, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano*, part 2

The harmony in bar 78 contains the arrangement C – F -sharp – B – E – A (increased quarter – pure fourths), and after passing through the tonic in E minor, the third bar introduces G – C -sharp – F – B (increased quarter – reduced quarter – increased fourth).



Example no. 126: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bar 78, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

In the second bar (bar 82) there is a direct overlay of C – F -sharp – B-flat – E (increased quarter – reduced quarter – increased quarter) for both hands, which brings the harmonic tension to its apogee.



Example no. 127: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bar 82, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

In addition, in bar 107, Scriabin weaves the tonic in B major as a long note in the dominant chord, allowing the chords of the middle voice to form pure fourths (C-sharp – F-sharp – B – E). Compared to the previous variants, the effect of imposing clean quarts in this place seems particularly spacious.



Exempleno. 128: A. Scriabin: *Fantasia in B minor*, Op. 28, bar 107, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii dlia piano, part 2

In *Fantasia*, although the fourth arrangements do not yet form a fully autonomous scale or reach the degree of organization known from later "mystical chords", their presence brings a new auditory experience and adds a note of mystery to the work. This can be read as a signal

of Scriabin's transition to mysticism and to systemic harmonic experiments, which later acquire a fuller character.

Chapter 5 Karol Szymanowski – Fantasia in C major op. 14

5.1 Life and work of the composer

Karol Maciej Szymanowski, born on 21 September 1882 in Tomaszówka (Ukraine, Chehryn County, former Kiev Governorate), died on 29 March 1937 in Lausanne, was one of the most outstanding Polish and world composers of the 20th century.⁴⁸ He came from a noble family settled in Ukraine in the eighteenth century. His father, Stanisław Bonaventure Marian (1842–1905), the owner of the Orlova Balka estate (former Kherson Governorate), inherited the village of Tymoszkówka from his father Feliks, becoming one of its four co-owners. The composer's mother, Dominika Teodora Anna née Taub (1853–1943), came from Courland, but since the nineteenth century she had lived in Ukraine.

At the age of seven, Szymanowski began homeschooling, focusing primarily on music. He was accompanied by a slight disability (leg impairment), which limited his physical activity, but did not prevent him from developing his talent. He grew up in an environment with a high intellectual and artistic level, nurturing the Polish patriotic tradition, and at the same time open to new phenomena in science and art. His siblings also showed great artistic predispositions.

Contacts with the Blumenfeld and Neuhaus families had a significant impact on the composer's development. Like his siblings, Szymanowski was educated at the music school of G. Neuhaus and his wife Olga (Feliks Blumenfeld's sister). He began composing around 1896, but the earliest works (songs, operas "The Golden Peak" and "Roland") have not survived. After studying with Zygmunt Noskowski, he made his debut as a composer at concerts of the Polish Publishing House of Young Composers in Warsaw and Berlin. He was quickly recognized as one of the most talented young artists, who was clearly looking for his own artistic language.

Between 1901 and 1905 he studied harmony with Marek Zawirski and counterpoint and composition with Zygmunt Noskowski in Warsaw. At the same time, together with Grzegorz Fitelberg, Ludomir Różycki and Apolinary Szeluto, he founded the Publishing House of Young Polish Composers, operating under the patronage of Władysław Lubomirski and promoting the work of contemporary Polish composers. This group quickly received the name "Young Polish".⁴⁹

Szymanowski's aesthetics were shaped by modernist ideas at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His style was constantly evolving, but he remained in constant dialogue

⁴⁸ Teresa Chylińska, *Karol Szymanowski and his times*, t. 1, Kraków: Musica Iagellonica, 2008, s. 37

⁴⁹ In music, the term "Young Poland" refers to an informal group of composers, almost all of whom were students of Zygmunt Noskowski. This group of foreign composers such as Richard Strauss, Richard Wagner and members of the "Mighty Five" group, such as Modest Mussorgsky, Alexander Borodin and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.

with the most important tendencies of European music. The composer was open to new artistic ideas but always assimilated them in a creative and selective way, in accordance with his own imagination and value system. He was inspired by the culture of ancient Greece, Rome and Byzantium, as well as by Islamic tradition; he identified with high Polish culture, and at the same time drew on the folk music of Podhale.

Szymanowski's work is usually divided into three periods. Until 1913, it covers the stage of maturation and the search for individual expression. The years 1914–1919 are characterized by strong inspiration from the cultures of the Orient and antiquity. The last period, from about 1920 to 1937, expresses a turn towards Polish folk legends, especially from Podhale. This division is conventional but remains useful in research on the stylistic development of the composer.

From an early age, Szymanowski was associated with the classics of Western European culture, especially the music of Bach, Mozart and Chopin. At the school of Gustav Neuhaus, he became acquainted with Romanticism, especially German. Tymoszkówka – his birthplace – was located on the borders of the former Republic of Poland and was a multicultural environment, which also influenced the formation of his sensitivity.

The first operatic experiences played an important role. As a child, Szymanowski saw Aleksander Dargomyżski's *"Rusalka"*, which strongly stimulated his imagination – together with his siblings, he staged his own plays and composed music for them. At the age of 12, during a family trip to Switzerland, he watched Wagner's *"Lohengrin"* in Vienna. In 1905 he went to Berlin, where he was impressed by the work of Richard Strauss; at that time, the *"Concert Overture"* and the *First Symphony* were created.

Szymanowski's oeuvre includes a wide range of genres: operas and ballets, symphonies, instrumental concertos, string quartets, chamber works for violin and piano, solo and choral songs, cantatas, as well as a rich piano repertoire. The composer also tried his hand at literature – he wrote poems, short stories and novels, but not intended for publication, which were rather an expression of his reflections on life, art, love and religion.

The earliest published piano works bear a strong Chopin stamp, although in harmony and expression they already reveal a late Romantic intensity. They are often compared to the early works of Aleksander Scriabin (e.g. Szymanowski's *Etudes* Op. 4 and Scriabin's *Etudes* Op. 8), as both composers grew out of the Chopin tradition. Among the important works of this period are *Preludes* Op. 1, *Variations in B flat minor*, Op. 3, as well as later works: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, *Piano Sonata No. 1 in C minor*, Op. 8, *Sonata No. 2 in A major*, Sonata No. 36, *Metopes* Op. 29, *Masks* Op. 34, *Mazurkas* Op. 50 and Op. 62.

The *Fantasia* Op. 14, which is analysed in this chapter, bases its structure on a common thematic material, with elements reminiscent of Liszt's *Sonata in B minor*. Apart from clear inspirations, Szymanowski reveals in it a melodic talent, knowledge of variation techniques, harmonic courage and pianistic proficiency.

In the years 1906–1916, the composer travelled extensively. In the years 1906–1907 he visited Berlin and Leipzig many times, and in 1908 he went to Italy again. In 1912 he settled in Vienna, but his stay there and in Berlin began to tire him; needed new impulses. One of them was the work of Igor Stravinsky, which he encountered in Vienna in 1913 (the ballet "*Petrushka*").

In 1914 he travelled to Italy, Sicily, North Africa, as well as Paris and London. In the years 1915–1916 he visited Kiev, Moscow and St. Petersburg. These trips, especially two expeditions to Italy, Sicily and Africa, had a great influence on his work. After returning home, Szymanowski read a German translation of the poetry of the fourteenth-century Persian poet Hafiz and composed *the Songs of Hafiz*. In 1917, as a result of the October Revolution, he left Tymoszwówka forever. After a short stay in Yelizavetgrad, in 1919 he settled in Warsaw.

It was a period of exceptional productivity. Numerous works inspired by the Orient were created at that time, such as *The Song of the Mad Muezzin* or *The Song of the Sorceress Princess*. These inspirations did not take the form of literal borrowings, but of Orientalist impressionism. During his stays in Africa and Sicily, the composer experienced an intense mysticism that fascinated him. The Orient evoked romantic associations with ruins, harems, sultans, sensuality and the ahistorical world of dreams. From this period come the *Masks*, Op. 34, *Myths*, Op. 30 and *Symphony No. 3, Song of the Night*. In these works, the tonal centre of the major-minor system almost completely disappears; The composer uses the twelve-tone scale, pentatonic, whole-tone scale, overlapping scales, clearly exposes tritones and minor seconds, and avoids traditional cadences.

The strongest influence on Szymanowski's work from this period was Impressionism (Debussy, Ravel, Scriabin), although his music retained full originality. The culmination of this stage was the opera *King Roger*, combining the features of musical drama and symbolic drama.

In August 1922, Szymanowski came to Zakopane for the first time; From then on, he visited them regularly. His creative interests were increasingly focused on Polish folk music, especially Podhale and Kurpie music. Already in his childhood, he had contact with the folk musical culture of Ukraine, although he did not use its melodies directly. After Poland regained its independence, interest in rural culture increased. As a patriot and social activist,

Szymanowski saw the value of art in national integration. His friends encouraged him to visit Zakopane, and musicologists (m.in. Zdzisław Jachimecki, Adolf Chybiński) introduced him to the techniques of highlander music, encouraging him to use them creatively.

Szymanowski's mazurkas are the most representative fruit of this period. In them, the composer juxtaposed the rhythms of Mazovia and Kujawy with elements of Podhale folklore. Compared to Chopin's *Mazurkas*, he expanded the ABA form; the theme that returns after the middle movement always appears transformed. Szymanowski's mazurkas are characterized by a richness of melodies and original consonances. The composer used highlander scales, double tonality and combinations of different modal scales. Particularly significant is the cycle of *20 Mazurkas* op. 50.

In the last years of his work, Szymanowski departed from both the style of the early period, inspired by German music, and the style of the "oriental" period, represented among the other by the *Second Violin Concerto* and the *Fourth Symphony Concertante*. He avoided exaggerated expression, subjectivism and mysticism; he abandoned the Dionysian current in favour of a more Apollonian attitude. He simplified the harmonic language, reduced chromatism, simplified texture and form.

Although some stylistic elements bring his late works closer to the neoclassicism of the time (Stravinsky, Bartók), their colours and the way in which the musical material is shaped are so individual that it is difficult to consider them fully neoclassical or vitalistic. In November 1935, Szymanowski left "Atma". In 1936 he stayed several times in the sanatorium in Grasse, and in March 1937 he went to the sanatorium in Lausanne. Tuberculosis attacked the composer's throat, because of which Szymanowski was unable to eat food. He died on March 29, 1937, in his sleep, in the Du Signal clinic in Lausanne. The funeral took place on April 7, 1937, in Krakow.

5.2 Structural Analysis of Fantasies op. 14

Fantasia Op. 14 was composed in the early period of Szymanowski's work. Completed in Warsaw in 1905, it is a response to Liszt's music, the influence of which is visible in the texture and imagery of the work. This composition is undoubtedly the most complex and

sophisticated work that Szymanowski has created to date.⁵⁰ Cascading arpeggios that often "break free" from accompaniment serve passionate rhetoric leading to powerful climaxes – rhetoric that partially masks the occasional sparing of the base material. Even the softer textures in the slower passages are more likely to recall Liszt than Chopin. As a result, the work reveals strong inspirations from Liszt's form and style, while showing Szymanowski's original solutions.

The work has in fact a three-part cyclical structure: it uses two main thematic elements, and the final part serves as a synthesis of earlier material. Although the differences between the elements can be subtle, there is no doubt that Liszt is an important point of reference both in the sphere of form and means of expression.

5.2.1 Cyclic form

Cyclical form is a formal structure in which a musical motif appears in more than one part of a work – sometimes in a modified form – to unify the whole.⁵¹ The need for such a procedure arose in the nineteenth century with the postponement of the classical rules of Mozart and Haydn in favour of increasingly strong individual expression; the model of the romantic novel replaced classical drama as a point of reference for the architecture of instrumental works. In musical literature, this technique was already developed in the works of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Berlioz, and a mature form of thematic transformation was raised to heights by Liszt.

5.2.2 Thematic transformation

Thematic transformation (thematic metamorphosis) is a technique that involves processing a motif through transposition, inversion, retrogradation, augmentation, diminution or fragmentation. This technique was particularly developed by Liszt and Berlioz and plays a key role in the cyclical approach to the material.

⁵⁰ Anna Iwanicka-Nijakowska, <Karol Szymanowski, "Fantasia in C major, op. 14">, <https://culture.pl/pl/dzielo/karol-szymanowski-fantazja-c-dur-op-14>, 2007

⁵¹ Randel, Don Michael. 2003. "Cyclic Form". The Harvard Dictionary of Music, fourth edition, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press.

5.2.3 Relations between cyclical form and thematic transformation

I. First part

Although the first movement has only 63 bars, it contains a condensed sonata form with an introduction and a coda. The structure is as follows:

Introduction (Grave — Subito energico e adirato): bars 1–20

Exposition (Tempo I Maestoso): bars 21–27

Development (Piu mosso): bars 28–44

Recapitulation (Furioso): bars 45–53

Coda (Trionfando): bars 63

Two main elements were used in the whole part:

I: Five-tone melodic motif based on the key of F-sharp major



Example no. 129: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 1–4, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

II: Harmonic motif based on the relationship of the sixth (including the diminished sixth) to the previous note and the fifth (pure or reduced); The second note of the sixth and the first note of the fifth form a minor second. This is accompanied by the rhythm of an eight – an eight with a dot.



Example no. 130: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 16–17, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Part One

The introduction is divided into two parts: bars 1–11 expose the melodic theme. In bars 12–13, the rhythm of the right hand turns into syncopated eights; if you treat the first two notes of each bar as an octave, the right hand forms a cycle D–B-flat (minor sext) + A–E-flat (reduced fifth), with a minor second B-flat–A in between.



Example no. 131: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 12–13, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

The modulation sequence in bars 14–16 is based on an analogous principle; it is possible to recognize the Bb–F (pure fifth) + E–Cb (diminuted sixth) arrangement.



Example no. 132: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 18–19, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

The harmonic motif in the right hand (bars 16–17) is clear, while the rhythm with the rescored eight and thirty-two intensifies the feeling of suddenness. The first and last notes of the hexadecimal waveforms in the left hand form a descending pattern D–F-sharp (minor sext) + G–C-sharp (reduced fifth). At the same time, the relationship between the second note of the sixth and the first note of the fifth creates a small second in the inversion – in fact, an inverted, descending version of the second motif.



Example no. 133: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 20, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In the exposition, the first theme appears in a wonderful and clear way (bars 21–22); bars 23–24 develop the material and move into the rhythm of eights with a dot, leading to the second theme.



Example no. 134: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 21-23, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In bars 25–26, the motif passes to the left hand.



Example no. 135: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 25-26, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

The development (bars 28–34) can be divided into 3+1+3; The right-hand party quotes the motif of the second theme and develops it twice.



Example no. 136: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 28–34, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Volumes 35–38 form a 2+2 structure in a transposed sequence. An analysis of the octaves of the left hand indicates that the first four notes form a harmonic motif: B-flat–G-flat (rising minor sext) + G-flat–F (minor second) + F–B-flat (pure fifth), with the fifth changing direction from rising to falling, and the rhythm unifying into ordinary eights.



Example no. 137: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 137, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In the reprise (bars 45–46), the melodic motif appears in the bass in a strong octave form; bars 47–53 repeat the path to the second motif according to the exposition and lead through the final sequence to the code.



Example no. 138: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 45, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In the code, the theme from bars 59–60 is briefly explored twice and ends the first part through the third developmental section, leading directly to the second part (without a break).

Example no. 139: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 59–63, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

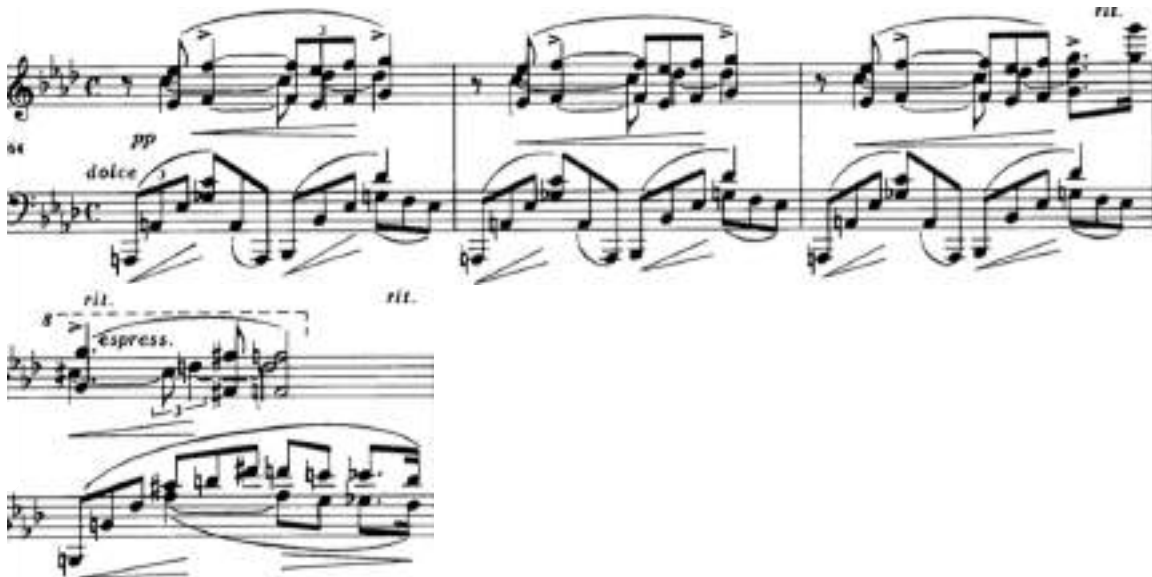
Second part

Bars 64–108 of the second movement also develop on the material of two motifs, forming two cycles with the structure A–B–A1 (bars 64–85 and 86–108). The repetition of section B of the second cycle leads to a return to the key of C major, giving the whole a character like the sonata form.



Example no. 140: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 94, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Detailed breakdown: bars 64–71 (part B) presents the first theme in the regular phrase 1+1+2; bars 72–79 expose a second theme with a 2+2 structure; bars 80–85 (A1) are based on the material of the first topic.



Example no. 141: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 64–67, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

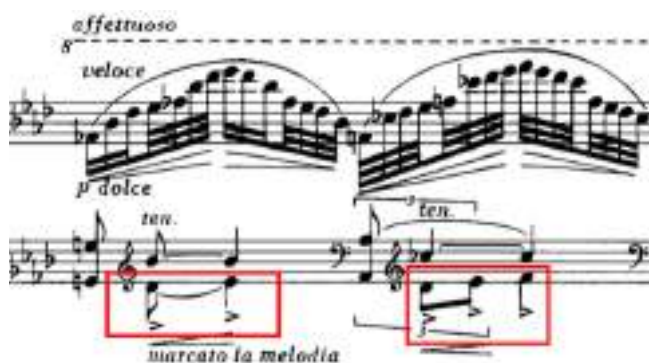


Example no. 142: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasy in C major*, Op. 14, bar 72, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296



Example no. 143: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 80–81, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Bars 86–93 repeat section A with a textural shift: the melodic motif moves from the upper voice to the lowest voice, while the other hand offers different accompaniments.



Example no. 144: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 86, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In bars 101–102 of the repeated section B, the motif of the second theme from the first movement appears, integrating both thematic circuits and leading to the repetition of A1 (bars 103–108).



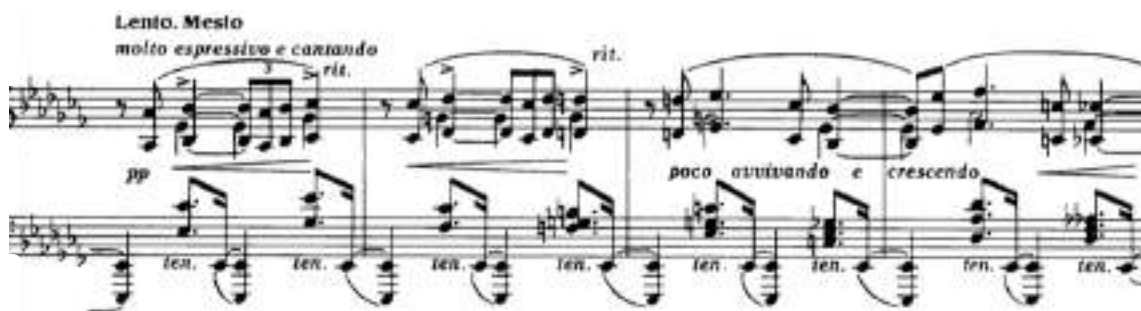
Example no. 145: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 101–102, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Bars 109–112 repeat the recapitulation of the first movement, and the Grave coda (bars 113–120) again refers to the melodic motif of the first movement.



Example no. 146: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 109–110, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Since the first and second parts are executed continuously, they form a connected structure that smoothly transitions into the final *Lento* code. *City*. This coda is a variation and development of the motif of the second movement, with a phrase structure of 6+2+4.



Example no. 147: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 121–124, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Bars 133–134 use the technique of the canon of the melodic motif from the first movement.



Example no. 148: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 133–134, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Part Three

The third part is a synthesis of the thematic motifs that appeared in the first two parts, with the use of each motif becoming more complex and frequent. In bars 1–4, the left hand part is the melodic motif from the first movement, while the right hand part is the motif of the second theme from the second movement. The musical character also changes from the previous lyrical singing to a decisive and full of energy.



Example no. 149: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 139-140, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In the bar 151 of the cadence section, a rhythmic variation of the thematic motif of the second movement appears.



Example no. 150: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 151, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Bars 154–162 as a whole are a development of the harmonic motif of the first movement, and by shortening this rhythmic motif, bars 163–175 are a development



Example no. 151: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 154, 157, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Bars 176–194 are a development of the melodic theme of the first movement, with variations including rhythm, canon and repetitions.



Example no. 152: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 177-179, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In bars 195–198, the first theme of the second movement is developed through counterpoint in the first two bars, and then the triplets in bar 197 evolve into the motif of the second theme in the next bar.



Example no. 153: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 195, 197-199, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In bars 200–201, the melodic motif of the first movement with triplets transforms into the motif of the second theme of the second movement.

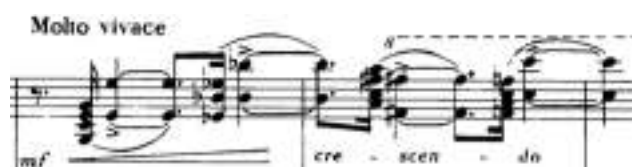


Example no. 154: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 200-201, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Bars 203–206 present four developments of the motif of the first theme of the second movement, and the harmonic motif of the first movement reappears in bar 207.

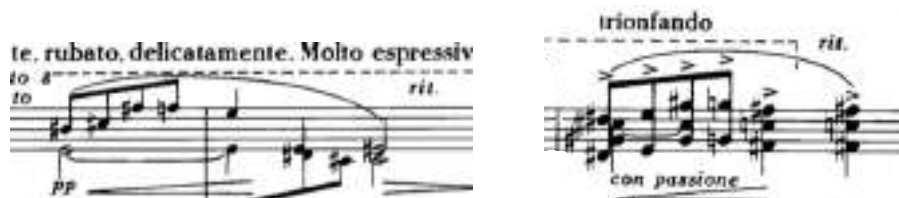


Example no. 155: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 203, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296



Example no. 156: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 208–209, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

The high melodic motif in bar 213 comes from the cadence.



Example no. 157: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 143-144 and 213, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In bars 214–221, the motif of the second theme of the second movement appears through sequence or repetition.



Example no. 158: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 214-215, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Adagio. The *Mesto* in bar 232 is a modulation of the melodic motif of the first movement, changing from F flat major to F sharp minor.



Example no. 159: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 231-232, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Finally, it connects with the motif of the second theme in bar 240, ending the entire piece.



Example no. 160: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 239-240, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM Plate 8296

5.3 Aesthetic and Performance Aspects of the Work

5.3.1 Tonality and Harmony

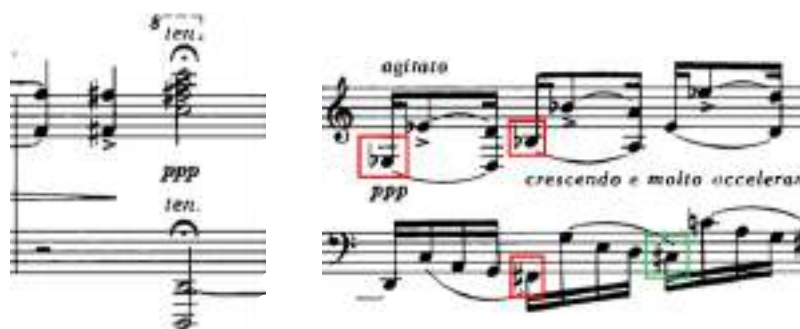
The most unique aspect of *Fantasia* Op. 14 in terms of key is the fact that although Szymanowski titled it *Fantasia in C major*, the main key of C major does not appear clearly until the end of the third movement. Numerous incidental signs are used throughout the work to express frequent and rapid changes of key or unconventional harmonies. Overall, tonality is clearly felt in the sonic effect, and in some clearly defined tonal sections, the traditional Western logic of functional harmony is still followed. However, chromatic is also widely used in harmony, which blurs tonality and creates dissonant effects.

This cannot be separated from the influence of the "musical revolution" initiated by Richard Wagner during the Middle Romantic period. Wagner not only brought Romanticism to its peak but also had a profound influence on later modernism. He revolutionized opera by calling his works "Musikdrama", moving away from the traditional operatic framework focused

on arias and proposing the concept of "Gesamtkunstwerk", advocating the integration of music, poetry, drama, set design and performance. Innovations included leitmotifs, which are short musical themes symbolizing characters, emotions, objects, or abstract concepts that intertwine and change as the plot develops, creating a complex narrative network.

Innovations also included groundbreaking changes in harmonic language. Wagner's opera (or rather musical drama) *Tristan und Isolde* (1859) is considered the starting point of the decline of the Western tonal system. Wagner made extensive use of chromatic harmonies, dissonant chords (such as the famous Tristan chord), and delayed solutions, blurring the centre of tonality and pushing the music toward atonality. This had a direct influence on composers such as Mahler, Richard Strauss, and Schoenberg.⁵²

However, Szymanowski's *Fantasia* has not yet completely departed from the harmonic tonal system. It uses only many chromatic means within this structure, thus creating a distinct musical timbre. In the first movement of the *Fantasia*, from bars 11 to 13, where there is a transition from *Grave* to *agitato*, the harmony is based on the chord D–F-sharp–A–C. This can be considered the dominant seventh chord in B flat major or G minor. Although B flat major, E major, and F major in bar 12 suggest G minor, the auditory effect is not obvious, as it also contains the chromatic notes of C major and A major, creating an impression of dissonance and mystery.



Example no. 161: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 11-12, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

The left hand, corresponding to the interval motif, uses a chromatic melody. This chromatic melody also appears in the following parts of the second and third movements, in bars 51–52, 59, 209–211.

⁵² Li Xiujun, *Western Music History Course*, Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2013



Example no. 162: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 51 and 52, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296



Example no. 163: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 58-59, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296



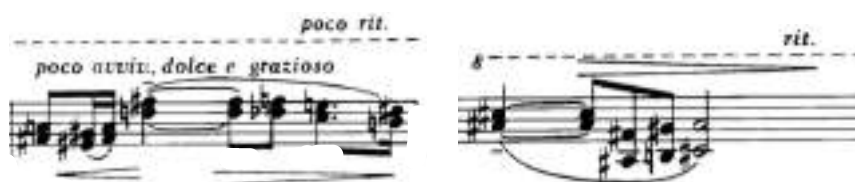
Example no. 164: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 209, 210-211, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In the four phrases of the second thematic part of the second part, the right hand modulates itself to different distant keys each time through a chromatic descending melody:

D major – F-sharp major/F minor

D-flat major – F minor/E major

D major– F-sharp major



Example no. 165: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 72-73, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

D Major – F Minor



Example no. 166: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 72-77, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

The melodic motif based on F major clearly uses a pentatonic scale with an oriental character. In the reprise section, bars 45–46, the first note, marked by an accent in the right hand, continues the pentatonic harmonic system, but the notes running within the harmonic structure are staggered reduced triplets. The clash of these two harmonic systems creates the impression of a dissonant conflict.



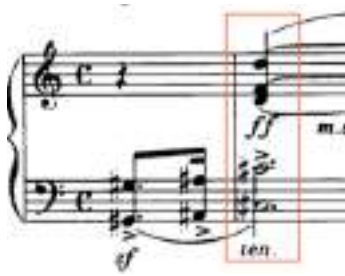
Example no. 167: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 44-45, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

A similar conflict also occurs in the code of the first part, where the right hand plays a diminished seventh chord.



Example no. 168: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 59, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

At the beginning of the third movement, the melodic motif in the key of F -sharp major and the motif of the second theme in the key of D major from the second movement mix, creating a distinct interval of a small second.



Example no. 169: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 138-139, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

The cadence of the third movement, with its wandering chromatic harmonies and the use of a pedal, puts a veil of mystery over the music. Ambiguous harmonies seem to lead to an ethereal, illusory world, which to some extent evokes Wagner's "Unendliche Melodie".



Example no. 170: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 143-144, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

5.3.2 Dynamics and pace

In *Fantasia*, Op. 14, Szymanowski meticulously defined the musical terms corresponding to the character of each section, as well as numerous dynamic and tempo markings, indicating a clear concept and shape of the work in the composer's mind. The dynamic changes in this work are almost constantly frequent and expressive, which undoubtedly strengthens the expression of the musical mood, the drama of the sound and the contrast of musical characters. Moreover, changes in dynamics are often accompanied by changes in pace; for example, when approaching the climax, the tempo usually accelerates, while at the ends of phrases, when the tension weakens, *diminuendo* is required. Tempo changes throughout the song are frequent and flexible.

At the beginning of the first part, the melodic theme develops at a wide *Grave* pace, as if opening a great historical curtain, and the dynamics of the entire section remain almost

exclusively in the *pp-ppp* range, giving mystery to the slow narrative in the bass register, i.e. "misterioso".



Example no. 171: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 1 and 8-9, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

The composer often allows the dynamics to move abruptly from one extreme to the other in just one or two bars. After the "mysterious" section, bars 16–17 seem to suddenly gain strength from nothingness, reaching *sff* with *p* in five beats through *crescendo e accel. molto*, and then – accompanied by *ff furioso* arpeggios – they rise like a cascade in the tempo of *Presto*, in one stroke.



Example no. 172: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 16-20, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

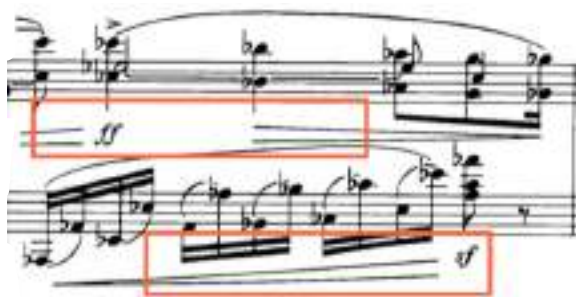
In bars 25–27, based on *ff*, through the double *crescendo* of the left-hand motif, the dynamics increase and change again, and the tempo gradually accelerates until it reaches the octave of *sff* in bar 27, presenting a brilliant chord in a wide space.

However, in the next bar 28, the dynamics suddenly drop to *piano*. The right hand continues to develop the ascending intervals, while the chromatic melodies of the left hand, rising and falling, complement the long rhythmic values of the right hand, forming a response with it. At the same time, the chromatic scale introduces a hint of mystery and opens space for further development, while the whole thing remains full of energy and vitality.



Example no. 173: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 27-28, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In bar 30, both hands reach a dynamic peak spread out over time, reflecting the different phrasing directions of both voices.



Example no. 174: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 30, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

When the reprise of the first movement returns in the second movement, the dynamics reach its peak in the middle part of the piece. From *ff* follows a *crescendo* to the *fff* + *sff* chord in bar 113 in *Grave pathetic*, while the left-hand bass provides a solid tonic foundation for all the harmony in *sff*. Once the climax is reached, the left-hand melodic motif continues to *crescendo*, while the syncopated right-hand melody reinforces the sense of rhythm, and the opposing movements of the two hands create spatial tension, giving the chords exceptional breadth and strength.



Example no. 175: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 113-116, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In bars 151–153 of the third movement's cadence, the composer creates an extremely dreamy, mysterious and ethereal atmosphere through harmony and delicate dynamics, and all the changes take place in the range of *pp*, a slight *crescendo* and a return to *ppp*. In bar 151, the number of metric cells is deliberately obliterated, which lengthens the bar line and expresses the idea of infinite extension at a free, fanciful pace.



Example no. 176: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 151-153, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Bars 176–177 also show the composer's precise requirements for performance details.



Example no. 177: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 176, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

The second half of the entire third part is almost entirely saturated with *ff*, *sff* and *fff* dynamics, with each *crescendo* and each change leading the music to the next climax. This continuous sonoristic effect of very high energy is rare even in the pianistic work of the Romantic era. The piece ends decisively in the key of C major, achieving extreme *fff*.



Example no. 178: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 187-188, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296



Example no. 179: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 130-132, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296



Example no. 180: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 140-141, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

5.3.3 Piano Means and Expression

Fantasia, Op. 14, is a work of high technical difficulty, which Szymanowski himself emphasized in a letter to Stefan Spiess: "I would not like 'Fantasia' [...] was still printed. It is so

extremely difficult that it would cement my reputation as an “unspiel- und unsingbarer” composer [a composer whose works cannot be played or sung].”⁵³ It was primarily a response to Liszt's music. On one level, this influence is evident in the texture and figuration of *Fantasia*, undoubtedly the most complex and virtuoso work that Szymanowski wrote during this period. As with Liszt, cascading arpeggios often liberate themselves from the function of accompaniment, leading the music to powerful climaxes with passionate rhetoric that masks the occasional poverty of the underlying material.

In terms of rhythm, Szymanowski uses complex asymmetrical arrangements, such as thirty-twos (preceded by a rescored eight) against sixteenths (bar 17):



Example no. 181: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 17, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

and octal triplets against hexadecimal quintoli in bars 92–93, which undoubtedly increases the difficulty of performing fast passages.



Example no. 182: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 92–93, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

There are also wide jumps in chord arrangements against octaves (bars 131–132):

⁵³ Karol Szymanowski. Correspondence, Volume I: Years 1903–1919, p. 248, letter dated 11 December 1910 to Stefan Spiess, ed. Teresa Chylińska, PWM, Kraków 1982



Example no. 183: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 131-132, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

as well as contrapuntal rhythms in both hands in bar 151:



Example no. 184: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 151, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In bar 234, each of the four voices leads a different rhythm:



Example no. 185: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 233-235, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Large chord jumps are also a significant difficulty, especially in combination with a scoring rhythm, which requires greater precision and articulation conciseness.



Example no. 186: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 23-24, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

octave figuration with asymmetrical rhythm (bars 42–43):



Example no. 187: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 42, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

right-hand passages, running in different positions and undulating up and down, juxtaposed with left-hand trills (bars 166–172):



Example no. 188: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 163-165, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

and the descending arpeggios in bars 227–229 – both in terms of sound effect and texture – are reminiscent of fragments of Liszt's *Sonata*. As mentioned earlier, they reflect Liszt's influence on Szymanowski's musical language, and at the same time give the whole thing an effective and spectacular sound.



Example no. 189: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 228-229, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

As shown earlier, *Fantasy* is a three-part cyclical form, dominated by various motifs, and thus the sound material is limited. However, numerous variations of these four main thematic elements give them different musical characters, creating variability and dramaturgy throughout the narrative.

For example, the melodic theme in the key of F flat major appears several times:

1. Calm and subdued narration:



Example no. 190: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 1, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

2. Rich and magnificent:



Example no. 191: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 21-22, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

3. Decisive and specific:



Example no. 192: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 59-60, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

4. Sharpened and energetic:



Example no. 193: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 139-141, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

In the minor key, the tempo is extended to *the Adagio mesto*, giving the music a funeral and heavy atmosphere, like the third movement of F. Chopin's *Sonata in B flat minor*, Op. 35. The sixteenths with a dot recall a funeral procession, and the triplets in the low bass register, played with the left hand in *ff* dynamics, sound like lamenting bells – deaf and loud. This creates a stark contrast to the brilliance and brightness of the major key.



Example no. 194: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 134-136, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Other themes include:

1: mysterious and empty



Example no. 195: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bars 142-143, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

2: passionate and full of tension



Example no. 196: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 213, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

3: Determined and full of energy



Example no. 197: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 237, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

The first theme of the second part:

4: mysterious, foggy



Example no. 198: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 64, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

5: passionate, dreamy



Example no. 199: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 80, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

6: tragic, funeral



Example no. 200: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 121, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

7: Fervent, passionate



Example no. 201: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 206, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

8: Disturbing, Hurried, Restless



Example no. 202: K. Szymanowski: *Fantasia in C major*, Op. 14, bar 224, Polish Music Publishing House, 1982. PWM 8296

Chapter 6 Synthesis and conclusions

6.1 Freedom and rigor — structural evolution of the species

Going beyond traditional forms, the organic unity of fantasy should be understood, although this genre does not always show a clearly separated exposition, development and reprise, it is not devoid of internal logic. In many cases, coherence is achieved through the transformation, development and repetition of thematic motifs, through tonal organization, emotional cues or narrative consistency. The task of the performer is therefore to conduct a detailed analysis in order to find these hidden connections and to understand how composers build unity in a seemingly free form. An example of ingenious and at the same time free structural logic remains a part of the fantasy from J. S. Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* BWV 903.

Based on previous analyses, it can be noted that since Bach's chromatic fantasy, this genre has had a clear, ingenious musical core, visible in the construction of the form. In general, fantasies are devoid of a rigid, unified form and are characterized by considerable freedom in structural design. At the same time, even the earliest fantasies of the sixteenth century show sectional thematic phrasing and the use of polyphonic techniques, emphasizing the improvisational character. In the Baroque, fantasy often served as a prelude and was technically close to the *ricercar*, but it was more flexible – it did not adopt its strictly imitative model.

This freedom is manifested, m.in, in a multi-part structure. Examples such as Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy* and the *Fantasies* of Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and Scriabin illustrate multi-part and multi-thematic models. The individual movements are usually matched by different tempos determined by the composer, which enhances the contrast and allows for the construction of a varied character. Fantasy thus offers greater possibilities for expression than many other formal genres; in Schumann's *Fantasia*, Op. 12, this sectional character is particularly intensified and takes the form of a cycle of miniatures forming a unified whole.

At the same time, the freedom of the genre is manifested in the ability to combine it with other forms, which is an important aspect of its innovativeness. In Classicism, composers eagerly used sonata, three-part, rondo or variational techniques, but fantasy retained its improvisational and sectional character. Beethoven, who was a link between tradition and innovation, introduced choral elements into fantasy and integrated fanciful language with the rigor of the sonata form (e.g. in the *Sonata in C sharp minor*, Op. 27). His practice of combining parts through a common motif and creating a "form of continuous motion" had a significant influence on the later work of Schubert, Liszt and Szymanowski.

However, this does not mean that fantasy is completely devoid of rules. Even Romantic artists such as Schumann saw the need to preserve the spirit of classical models. In his fantasies, structural clarity and connections with traditional harmonic functions are visible. Similarly, in Chopin's improvisation, his improvisational nature does not contradict internal logic – his phrases often remain clear and balanced, in accordance with the classical principles of construction. Scriabin's *Fantasia*, on the other hand, shows that even radical transformations of harmonic language can coexist with rigorous formal construction; romantic expression is sustained here by classical discipline. Therefore, the analysis and execution of fantasy should consider both the element of freedom and the hidden but essential order.

6.2 The individuality of composers and the form of fantasy

Each composer uses his own musical vocabulary. Fantasy – thanks to its flexibility and ability to transcend the boundaries of traditional forms – becomes an ideal area for the presentation of this individuality, allowing the expression of strong subjective expression and rich imagination. As can be seen from chapter 6.1, Schumann, Chopin and Scriabin share an attachment to the classical structural core, while the sphere of colour and expression of their imagination reveals different sound worlds.

Schumann's *Fantasies* are deeply rooted in literature; their titles and character directly refer to poetic associations. This artist eagerly operated with contrast and multi-layered texture, while showing a taste for polyphonic techniques. Particularly significant is Schumann's personality dualism (Florestan and Eusebius), which gives his works a tension between impulsiveness and contemplation.

Chopin's *Fantasy* shows the ability to combine various formal models: the principles of the sonata, rondo elements or improvised cadences. Coherence is achieved through thematic work and thoughtful harmony. Its freedom, however, remains rooted in classicism – hence the metaphor of "dancing in chains". Chopin avoided programmatic; his *Fantasia* focuses on the pure musicality of the piano, on the expressive melodic line and subtle emotionality.

Scriabin's *Fantasy* occupies a place on the border between late Romanticism and his own mystical aesthetic. Although the structure exhibits sonata elements, the harmonic language clearly foreshadows later transformations: changing functional relationships, fourth chords (including the seeds of the "Promethean chord"), variants of the "French six", and sounds

treated as autonomous timbre elements. Chromatics gives music instability and mystery, as if it were balancing between reality and vision. Intense rhythms and dissonances, which are supposed to cause physiological tension, serve to achieve a state of spiritual "ecstasy".

Szymanowski's *Fantasia*, on the other hand, shows an original combination of post-Wagnerian influences, impressionist colours and Eastern inspirations. In terms of structure, the composer reaches for Liszt's cyclical form, connecting the three parts by transforming motifs and creating an extended, coherent whole. In the sonic layer, it uses a wide range of effects – from crystalline passages to intense *fortes* – while expanding the use of *pianissimo* and *ppp* dynamics, which gives the music ethereality and subtlety. In harmony, pentatonic elements and inspirations from Eastern culture appear. Szymanowski does not imitate external styles, but creatively synthesizes them, building an original and deeply personal musical language.

6.3 Implications for piano performance

The fantasy genre occupies a special place in piano literature. Unlike the sonata, it is not based on strict formal rules, it differs from the etude by the lack of concentration on one type of technical problem, and from the fugue – by the lack of absolute subordination to polyphonic logic. However, it can contain elements of sonata form, show polyphonic thinking in polyphonic phrases, and include demanding piano techniques. It can draw on program music, reflecting non-musical influences, as well as remain absolute music, achieving a high level of freedom and individualization. Its consequences for piano performance are multifaceted and affect both technique and expression, understanding of structure and artistic imagination of the performer.

Technical parts in fantasies are often designed in a freeway, requiring a departure from traditional exercise schemes and mastering more diverse, sometimes unconventional technical combinations. In Schumann's *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12, there are advanced rhythms, virtuoso passages, rapid transitions between distant positions, lightning-fast staccato, smooth singing that requires controlled key pressure, as well as complex textures with the major, middle and bass voices within fast passages.

Chopin's *Fantasy*, on the other hand, are characterized by varied harmonic combinations, improvisational arpeggios and the avoidance of linear, conventional progressions. The phrasing is often meandering, with inverted octaves in both hands, 3-on-2

rhythms, stretched passages of double notes played with the right hand, and large jumps, while maintaining the singing of the highest voice and the clarity of the texture.

Scriabin's *Fantasy* requires even more complex techniques. The music abounds in numerous incidental signs, variable harmonies and wide textures, which makes it difficult to read notes and play *a vista*. There are dense chords played *forte*, open passages, overlapping polyphonic lines that must be skilfully distributed between the hands, as well as contrasting rhythms, irregular accents and extensive chord jumps.

Against this background, Szymanowski's *Fantasy* is a bit more direct in terms of technology, although still demanding. It features cascading passages, sequences of octaves, octaves with chords and scoring jumps that require speed and precision, *glissandos* and long runs of extensive chords played *fortissimo*.

Fantasia, striving for a wealth of contrasts and expressive variation of timbre, is an ideal material for the performer to explore different sound shades. It requires a variety of touch techniques – from very gentle to decisive – and sophisticated pedal methods (half-pedal, vibrato pedal, long pedal) that allow you to shape dreamy, hazy, shiny or intense soundscapes.

The roots of fantasy lie in improvisation. Despite the existence of musical notation, its free structure, emotional variability and cadence sections require the performer to have a "sense of improvisation": spontaneity, natural fluidity and readiness to take risks. The interpretation must give the impression that the music is created "here and now".

6.4 Expressive dimension of the genre

Fantasy is one of the forms that allows composers to express their deepest, most intense and complex emotions. It allows for extreme contrasts and violent turns: from melancholy to ecstatic outbursts, from meditative calm to demonic energy. This requires strong emotional involvement, drama and precise control of internal tension from the performer. Scriabin and Szymanowski provide examples with a particularly high expressive charge.

The very name "fantasy" indicates the role of imagination. The performer must create internal images, narratives, emotional atmospheres or abstract associations hidden behind the music. This encourages personalized interpretation, giving the work an individual dimension. Each miniature from Schumann's *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12 series is a kind of poetic drama, requiring the performer's imagination to fill in the details.

The free structure of the fantasy naturally supports the wide use of *rubato*. The performer must maintain an overall formal plan, while responding flexibly to the breath of phrases, harmonic tensions, and emotional fluctuations. This freedom – properly controlled – is one of the basic elements of the execution of fantasy; Chopin's work is an example of mastery here.

Fantasies also exhibit an epic, narrative, or psychological character. The performer should clearly outline the main direction of the music's development, while maintaining sensitivity to details such as small expressive markings, local harmonic changes or subtle interpenetration of voices. Details must contribute to the overarching narrative.

6.5 Fantasy as a space for the development of piano art

Many outstanding fantasies – such as the works of Liszt or Scriabin – served to explore the symphonic possibilities of the piano, striving to obtain a wide range of colours, monumental sound planes and rich textures. This contributed to the development of piano techniques and the improvement of the sound of the instrument, including the expansion of the dynamic scale.

The fantasy genre is inherently inclusive. It can combine old forms, such as fugue or chorale (as in Bach and Mozart), elements of folk music (e.g. Eastern European or Spanish) and modern harmonic and sound means (as in Scriabin and Medtner). Performing a fantasy requires a broad stylistic perspective and the ability to adapt to a variety of idioms.

The free structure of fantasy creates an interpretive field in which performers can strongly emphasize their own artistic personality. The same song can sound completely different depending on the performer – and this is where one of the biggest attractions of the genre lies.

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