FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF MUSIC

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY PAGANINI: NARRATIVE ARCHETYPES IN NINETEENTH- AND TWENTIETH-CENTURY THEME-AND-VARIATION SETS

By

GILLIAN ROBERTSON

A Dissertation submitted to the
College of Music
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Degree Awarded:
Spring Semester, 2015

UMI Number: 3705915

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Gillian Robertson defended this dissertation on April 6, 2015.
The members of the supervisory committee were:

Joseph Kraus
Professor Co-Directing Dissertation

Matthew Shaftel
Professor Co-Directing Dissertation

Read Gainsford
University Representative

James Mathes
Committee Member

The Graduate School has verified and approved the above-named committee members, and certifies that the dissertation has been approved in accordance with university requirements.

// ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the unending support and guidance of my co-chairs, Drs. Joseph Kraus and Matthew Shaftel. My dissertation topic grew out of directed independent studies that I completed with each of them early on in my studies at FSU. I want to thank both of them for their invaluable insight, encouragement, patience, and kindness throughout this process. Dr. Kraus's close attention to details (both musical and editorial) heavily impacted this project and his careful instruction and comments helped to fine-tune my analyses and voice-leading sketches. Dr. Shaftel brought creativity and enthusiasm to every dissertation meeting and his insightful comments and suggestions, especially in regards to the "big picture" and the reader's perspective, were integral to the final project. My writing has improved dramatically since working with both of them, and I am appreciative of the thesis-writing exercises that Dr. Shaftel assigned in his Atonal I class. I am also grateful for the thoughtful and constructive feedback from my other committee members, Dr. James Mathes and Dr. Read Gainsford. It was a pleasure working with my entire committee and I look forward to the professional relationships and friendships with these inspiring scholars and musicians in the years to come.

I am extremely grateful for the time that I have spent at Florida State University. The theory faculty is comprised of exceptional scholars and pedagogues who have been instrumental in mentoring and shaping my education, teaching, and research. The collegial environment fostered within the theory department has provided intellectual and emotional support during my time in Tallahassee. I would like to recognize, in particular, my friends and colleagues John Peterson, Brian Jarvis, Cara Stroud, Kim Loeffert, and Judith Ofcarcik. I will cherish the experiences we shared together and I am appreciative for their positive and constructive feedback and unfailing support throughout the doctoral program.

To my music teachers and professors during all stages of my education, I would like to thank you for the integral parts you each played in my musical training and for challenging me both in the classroom and the practice room. I would especially like to thank Kevin Swinden for encouraging me to pursue a degree in music theory. Finally, I cannot begin to describe how grateful I am for my family's unwavering love and support. My parents, Lance and Catherine, have sacrificed so much to help me attain a PhD, for which I am eternally gratefully. My sisters, Heather Anne and Cailin, have always been a source of comfort and encouragement and I would like to extend my thanks to Heather Anne for helping me engrave the voice-leading sketches in the Appendices.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the applicability of musical narrative models to the genre of theme and variations focusing on large-scale structural transformations in nineteenth- and twentieth-century theme-and-variation sets. Narrative archetypes proposed by Byron Almén (2008) are useful frameworks for understanding and interpreting the types of transformations that are typical in this genre, despite the paratactic and repetitive nature of the variations. My analysis focuses on three variation sets all based on the same theme (Paganini's *Twenty-Four Caprices*, Op. 1, No. 24): Brahms's *Variations on a Theme by Paganini*, Op. 35 Book I; Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43, and Rochberg's *Caprice Variations*. This invariant theme enables me to demonstrate not only the possibility of diverse narrative readings of these works, but also how each composer treated the theme in his own setting.

Chapter one provides a review of literature on the genre of variations and the sub-discipline of musical narrative. I discuss my eclectic methodological approach, one that includes Almén's theory of musical narrative in conjunction with musical agency, Schenkerian analysis, musical borrowing, topic theory, and integration models. A short analysis of Paganini's Caprice no. 24 from Op. 1 provides context for the remaining works and demonstrates a simple narrative interpretation as a preview of the analysis in the remaining chapters. Chapters two through four offer detailed analyses of the variations by Brahms and Rachmaninoff. The second chapter explores the application of a single narrative archetype to the first book of Brahms's variations, while chapters three and four expand the narrative model to include interpretations of multiple narrative archetypes within Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody.* These two chapters focus on intra- and extra-musical narratives and present the notion of embedded narrative models, which provide nuance to an analytical interpretation. Chapter five summarizes my findings from chapters two to four and includes a sample analysis of Rochberg's *Caprice Variations* in order to demonstrate analytical questions pertinent to a post-modernist theme-and-variation set as well as the narrative or "anti-narrative" possibilities in twentieth-century Western art music.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Purpose and Scope

Narrativity in music theoretical discourse has emerged as a current interdisciplinary area of music theoretical research that intersects with literary studies and criticism. Scholars have adopted theories of narrative in order to interpret large-scale trajectories in various genres of common-practice music, including character pieces, first movements of sonatas, and other forms from multi-movement works. Indeed, the dramatic nature or programmatic associations of these genres often invite us to hear narrative trajectories. Despite this growing literature scholars have refrained from tracing narrative interpretations across theme and variations.

I address this issue by asking the following question: does the recursive nature of the theme-and-variation genre render narrative analysis an unsuitable lens through which to view this repertoire? By applying a theoretical model for narrative analysis (Almén, 2008) I will analyze and interpret large-scale narrative archetypes in two theme-and-variation sets drawn from the same thematic material, one from the mid-nineteenth century and the other from the early-twentieth century: Johannes Brahms's *Variations on a Theme by Paganini*, Op. 35, Book I (1862–63); and Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43 (1934). I will also provide a sample analysis of George Rochberg's *Caprice Variations for Unaccompanied Violin* (1970) in order to demonstrate the potential for narrative analysis of this late twentieth-century variation set. The collection of repertoire that I examine is based on the theme from Nicolò Paganini's Solo Violin Caprice in A minor, Op. 1, No. 24 (1805); these works reflect popular settings of the theme featuring various ensembles and compositional styles. With Paganini's theme functioning as the invariable component linking these compositions, I will be able to see if disparate narratives are possible among these settings. My aim in this project is to demonstrate the applicability of Almén's theory to theme-and-variation sets and to expand his model for musical narratives to include the co-existence of multiple narrative discourses, including nested narrative archetypes within a single work (or movement). By extending narrative models to variation sets, I will provide scholars and performers with a new mind-set that de-emphasizes the traditional sectionalized perspective of the genre.

In the next two subsections of this chapter I summarize and critique the theoretical and analytical literature associated with the genre of theme and variations as well as musical narratives that will be relevant for this project. The remained of the chapter is devoted to an explanation of my eclectic methodological approach and a succinct discussion regarding

Paganini's Violin Caprice Op. 1, No. 24 in A minor in order to set the stage for the intertexts with Brahms, Rachmaninoff, and Rochberg in the later chapters.[1]

1.2 Review of Literature on Theme-and-Variation Sets

Despite its prevalence and lengthy history in Western art music, the genre of theme and variations is overshadowed by the scholarship on other genres including sonatas, string quarters, concerti, art songs, symphonic works etc. The available analytical literature pertaining to variation sets appears sporadically from the early- to the mid-twentieth century and then again towards the end of twentieth century, and may can be classified under one of three general categories: 1) Descriptive and/or Paradigmatic Analysis; 2) Schenkerian Analysis; and 3) Aesthetic or Other Approaches. I will summarize and contextualize the literature within these three categories in terms of my own project; some sources broadly address the genre while others are focused on specific compositions (i.e., a particular composer's stylistic approach to the genre or a specific work).

1.2.1 Descriptive/Paradigmatic Analysis

Currently, Robert Nelson's survey of variation form in Western art music from the sixteenth to the early-twentieth century is the only comprehensive analytical approach to the genre.[2] Nelson's taxonomy of variation form addresses the twofold nature of the term *variation* (i.e., variation as form versus variation technique), methods of construction (i.e., a structural plan or a free plan), as well as typical stylistic features associated with each category. *The Technique of Variation* provides a wealth of historical terminology, including original and translated passages—all of which are supported by score incipits illustrating variation types and techniques.

Nelson's work provides a repository of terms and stylistic features that are essential for any scholar of variation form. Although the "character variation" category could be broadly applied to all three pieces I am analyzing, it is perhaps not the most apt term for Rochberg's *Caprice Variations*. Since Nelson's taxonomy only extends into the early twentieth century, methods of variation construction from the latter half of the century will need to be addressed

[1] *Intertextuality* is "any crossing of text. The term (*intertextualité*) comes from Kristeva [Kristeva, Julia."The Bounded Text" (1969). In *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez, 36–63. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.] as a definition of the text. Broadly conceived, intertextuality may be transhistorical and unlimited, so that all texts branch out infinitely to other texts." Michael Klein, *Intertextuality in Western Art Music* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), 139.

[2] Robert Nelson, *The Technique of Variation: A Study of the Instrumental Variation from Antonio de Cabezón to Max Reger*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1948.

by future scholars on an individual basis. In my conclusion, I borrow terms from Michael Klein that can be used by to interpret Rochberg's postmodern *Caprice Variations*.

Unlike Nelson's extensive coverage of the genre, Wenli Zhou's recent DMA thesis compares four variation sets based on Paganini's A minor Caprice Op. 1, No. 24 in order to demonstrate how far-removed each setting is from the original (e.g., variations by Liszt, Brahms, Rachmaninoff, and Lutosławski).[3] Her systematic examinations of various musical parameters (i.e., theme, harmony, form etc.) allow her to compare and contrast each composition with Paganini's setting, creating a spectrum from the most similar setting (Liszt) to the most remote setting of the four compositions (Rachmaninoff). Zhou does not introduce new analytical concepts to the literature on theme and variations, nor does her discussion address why certain parameters have been altered or how these alterations might impact a hermeneutic reading. Since her project intersects with my own in terms of repertoire, some of the groundwork that she has already laid will inform my own work, in particular the general treatments and historical comments regarding the Brahms and Rachmaninoff variations. My analytical focus on musical narrative enables me to differentiate my research from her work and even allows me to provide new interpretations of these compositions.

Both Nelson and Zhou's approaches tend toward taxonomy: the identification and comparison of individual variations and variation sets. These comparative studies are an ideal way to capture a glimpse of a composer's style(s) or technique(s) and they can provide a synoptic view of the work. Supporting these analyses are charts summarizing the various musical parameters of the entire set and musical incipits that typically lack analytical annotations. Descriptions of individual variations in chronological order lend a sectionalized, paratactic view of the form, whether the author intends this to come across or not. These studies are often wanting in discussions of teleology, large-scale goals or trajectories, or narratives—areas that my research seeks to address.

1.2.2 Schenkerian Analysis

Heinrich Schenker's essay on Brahms's *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by G. F. Handel*, Op. 24 from the 1923 to 1924 issues of *Der Tonwille*, is one of only a few documents providing a glimpse of the theorist's opinion on theme-and-variation form.[4] Schenker challenges

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[3]Wenli Zhou, "Piano Variations by Liszt, Lutosławski, Brahms, and Rachmaninoff on a Theme by Paganini" (DMA thesis, Rice University, 2012).

[4]Heinrich Schenker, "Brahms's Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24," in *Der Tonwille—Pamphlets/Quarterly Publication in Witness of the Immutable Laws of Music, Offered to a New Generation of Youth: Volume II: Issues 6–10 (1923–1924)*, ed. William Drabkin and trans. William Renwick, 77–114. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

contemporary thought surrounding the genre and demonstrates that a series of variations is more than a mere set of quasi-independent statements on a given theme. He systematically analyzes and sketches the theme, all twenty-five variations, and the concluding fugue, while also providing commentary for its performance.

Schenker convincingly draws connections between as many variations as possible (both contiguous and non-contiguous), most of which are surface-level events, although deeper-level events are possible too. While Schenker analyzes each variation in turn, he traces certain analytical threads throughout his prose, including variation techniques that modify the structure of the original theme in some respect. I take a similar analytical approach when analyzing Brahms's Op. 35 Book I and to some extent Rachmaninoff's Op. 43. These elements include but are not limited to: chromaticism introduced into the diatonic framework; rhythmic accelerations; changes in the harmonic support of the *Kopfton* and/or initial ascent; prolongations, delays, or omissions of notes in the fundamental line; the intensification, expansion, omission, and placement of neighbor notes; and other various parameters.

Through the exploration of large-scale structure of variation sets I consider the following question: does Brahms use similar techniques to organize his Op. 35 variations and is continuity achieved in the same manner in this work as described by Schenker in Op. 24? Schenker's analysis provides a backdrop that I will use to model and adapt my own analysis of Brahms's *Variations on a Theme by Paganini*, Book I. Schenker's demonstration of continuity within a set of variations helps bolster viewing a variation set as an organic entity, supporting the possibility of a narrative interpretation. Schenker's methodology can show with great precision how one particular element is transformed over the course of a set, aligning with Almén's syntactical approach of tracing hierarchical relationships among specific instances of musical syntax.

The popularity and dissemination of Schenkerian analysis throughout the 1970s and 1980s spurred some interest within the music theory community regarding large-scale continuity in theme-and-variation sets. Basing her work upon Schenker's writings about variations, Esther Cavett-Dunsby's dissertation presents four case studies of Mozart's variations in order to explore the interaction of variation form and structure; her secondary objective is to resituate the low status ascribed to Mozart's variations (according to the literature) to one of respectability and seriousness.[5] She postulates that variation form could be understood as a single fundamental structure where each variation represents a more remote hierarchical level, however, her own sketches follow Schenker's model of replicating the *Ursatz* in each variation. One of Cavett-Dunsby's conclusions about the structural coherence of theme-and-variation movements is the elevated role played by foreground and middleground connections. My own

[5]Esther Cavett-Dunsby, *Mozart's Variations Reconsidered; Four Case Studies [K. 613, K. 501, and the Finales of K. 421 (417b) and K. 491]* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989).

analytical sketches will focus on foreground and early middleground levels in order to trace the rank values of specific processes across the set as part of my narrative interpretation.

In contradistinction to Schenker and Cavett-Dunsby's analyses, Nicholas Marston's analysis of the finale from Beethoven's Op. 74 string quartet attempts to demonstrate that variation sets can be perceived as an organic whole, "controlled by a Fundamental Structure which is independent of the structures governing the theme and individual variations."[6] Marston relies on melodic closure and register to trace a single *Urlinie* unfolding in two registers across the entire theme-and-variation movement. Even if one is swayed by his analysis of a single fundamental structure in a variation set, I believe that this composition is an outlier and that larger independent sets are more convincingly understood as recurring statements of the theme's fundamental structure.

Craig Cummings's dissertation work applied Schenkerian analysis, along with motivic and other analytical approaches, in order to discuss how three composers of Romantic music—Beethoven, Schumann, and Brahms—deal with large-scale coherence in some of their piano variations.[7] His choice of Schenkerian analysis proves valuable in its ability to clarify structural retention and deeper-level motivic relationships. The fairly extensive review of nineteenth-century theorists and their views and classification of theme and variations is a useful supplement to Nelson's taxonomy of variation form. Cummings also summarizes taxonomies used by twentieth-century writers on theme and variations and offers a slightly different focus of nineteenth-century categories than Nelson does in his book. In addition to this historical content, it is primarily Cummings' two analyses of Brahms's *Variations on a Theme by Schumann*, Op. 9 and the *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by G. F. Handel*, Op. 24 that are most relevant to my specific project. Cummings's analytical findings will help me contextualize Brahms's Paganini Variations among similar works in his oeuvre. With three analytical examinations of Brahms's piano variations, I will be able to generalize about normative features and those that play a role in creating a narrative interpretation of the Paganini set.

1.2.3 Aesthetics and Other Approaches

Elaine Sisman's classic text, *Haydn and the Classical Variation*, takes a unique approach to understanding Haydn's variations through the lens of rhetoric theory.[8] Although her analysis is narrowly focused on Haydn (and to some extent Mozart and Beethoven), the scope of the book

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[6]Nicholas Marston, "Analysing Variations: The Finale of Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 74," *Music Analysis* 8, no. 3 (October, 1989), 306.

[7]Craig Campney Cummings, "Large-Scale Coherence in Selected Nineteenth-Century Piano Variations," (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1991).

[8]Elaine Sisman, *Haydn and the Classical Variation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

is quite broad, ranging from theories of literature and rhetoric to an exploration of contemporary writings. The latter portion of the book develops a taxonomy of Haydn's variation movements, evaluates his compositional style, and comments on his influence on Mozart and Beethoven. Sisman's idiosyncratic model and narrowly focused repertoire are not directly germane to my project. However, her short discussion of paratactical structures—borrowed from literary theory—might be a useful concept to keep in mind with regard to twentieth-century variations (such as Rochberg's *Caprice Variations*) since multiple orderings are possible in performance, thus suggesting that each variation is in effect, its own unit and does not rely on proceeding to the variation following. Sisman's later work on variation form in Brahms provides historical and stylistic information that will directly impact my narrative reading in chapter two.

Roman Ivanovitch's dissertation, "Mozart and the Environment of Variation," approaches Mozart's variation oeuvre by presenting a "theory" of a "variation mindset," rather than creating a taxonomy.[9] He describes variation as "…not so much a bundle of techniques or procedures, but, above all, a *way of looking at music*, a way of measuring its potential, of shifting possibilities and weighing relationships."[10] This particular mindset includes viewing variation as a kind of environment since "it creates conditions in which certain types of musical processes are more likely to flourish than others; the environment shapes what grows in it, its products."[11] Even though my project does not focus on Mozart variations, Ivanovitch's research paves the way for future non-traditional examinations of the theme-and-variation genre. His work provides the ultimate foundation for challenging previous analytical practices and conceptions of the genre, encouraging new analytical models and mindsets that can offer rewarding interpretations for both analysts and performers.

Judith Ofcarcik's recent dissertation addresses aesthetics and Beethoven's late variation movements.[12] Her eclectic methodological approach uses paradigmatic analysis, Schenkerian analysis, temporal analysis, but most importantly, theories of aesthetics, specifically expression and criticism. She develops models for three types of aesthetics: aesthetics of excess, aesthetics of rupture (borrowed from Adorno), and aesthetics of ending. Although these three types of aesthetics are specifically representative of Beethoven's late stylistic choices, a handful of analytical concepts are more general in nature so as to be applicable to works other than

[9]Roman Maximillian Ivanovitch, "Mozart and the Environment of Variation," (PhD diss., Yale University, 2004).

[10]This approach does not seem all that radical, especially after the interest in transformational theory that resulted in the "transformational attitude" or the change in perspective on how musical objects relate to one another.

[11]Ivanovitch, "Mozart and the Environment of Variation," 83.

[12]Judith Ofcarcik, "A Structural-Aesthetic Study of the Variation Movements of Beethoven's Late Period," (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2013).

Beethoven's. In particular, Frank Samarrotto's concepts of *temporal plasticity* and Ofcarcik's extension of this concept to the formal domain (*formal plasticity*) can be applicable to scholars wishing to address temporal modifications made to the theme in a variation set. *Formal plasticity* encompasses numerous formal techniques (e.g., phrase expansion, interpolations etc.) that create formal disjunction in the music. Although *formal plasticity* could be used to describe some of the formal alterations Rachmaninoff makes in his *Rhapsody,* there are other musical factors that contribute to the dissolution of the theme's formal structure. Instead, I borrow terminology from William Caplin (see discussion below), who has specific criteria for tight-knit and loose formal organization, which is more fruitful for the tracking of formal transformations that I will be undertaking in chapter three. Surprisingly, Ofcarcik's research is one of the only sources that specifically deals with expression and variation form. The groundwork presented in her dissertation allows me to extend hermeneutic interpretations of theme-and-variation sets, specifically through narrative trajectories and topic theory; my research will begin to fill a gap in variation scholarship, one that has by and large ignored issues of emotion, topics, and narrative.

1.3 Review of Literature on Narratology in Music

Over the past five decades, some scholars (e.g., Caroline Abbate, Jean-Jacques Nattiez) have vehemently argued against the application of musical narrative to instrumental music, citing charges such as: music's lack of referentiality; issues of temporality, including music's inability to possess a past tense; and issues of agency such as the lack of a narrator. Proponents of narrative interpretations bring a variety of views and approaches to their scholarship: Edward T. Cone, Eero Tarasti, Anthony Newcomb, Fred Everett Maus, Márta Grabócz, Michael Klein, Byron Almén, Nicholas Reyland, among others. My review addresses the narratological approaches and theories from five of these scholars who have been influential in shaping the subdiscpline of musical narrative as well as the relevance of their work to this project: E.T. Cone, Fred Everett Maus, Anthony Newcomb, Michael Klein, and Byron Almén.

Certainly one of the field's earlier contributions to the discussion of narrative in music, Edward T. Cone's hermeneutic readings focus on connecting the listener and/or performer's emotional responses to an understanding of musical narrative. In his essay, "Three Ways of Reading a Detective Story—Or a Brahms Intermezzo" (1977), Cone draws parallels between a reader's understanding and emotional reactions to a mystery novel and how an analyst (or analyst-performer) might comprehend a musical narrative. He argues that the steps that a reader takes—First, Second, and Third Readings—in reading, comprehending, analyzing, and re-reading a mystery novel would be a worthy enterprise for music scholars. The First Reading is experiential and temporal, although it does not have to literally be a reader's first read-

through since the criterion for this stage is either a partial or a complete ignorance about the narrative events. The contemplative and analytical nature of the Second Reading means that this step is atemporal; the omniscient reader steps outside the narrative in order to analyze the story's events. What Cone calls the Third Reading is essentially an ideal First Reading or a temporal reading and acceptance of the story at hand where an informed appreciation replaces naïveté.[13] Cone's complaint about the state of analytical pursuits is that they typically remain locked in the Second Reading instead of moving on to a reflective experience of the piece after this atemporal step. Cone's attempt to dislodge music analysis out of its synoptic "Second-Hearing" rut set a precedent for analysts of musical narrative not only to complete an analytical reading of a work, but also to reflect and comment upon his or her findings.

Cone's 1982 article, "Schubert's Promissory Note: An Exercise in Musical Hermeneutics" certainly departs from his earlier 1977 essay dealing with narrative "hearings." Instead, this article focuses on an in-depth narrative analysis of Schubert's Moment Musical Op. 94, No. 6 that seems to be a precursor to Byron Almén's theory of musical narrative some twenty-six years later. Cone charges scholars with defining genres by only by examining extrageneric meaning (one that deals with surface generalities); he argues that musical expression resides in the uniqueness of the composition, that is the salient or marked events in a composition.[14]

By tracing marked events, particularly the transformation of the *promissory note* E in Schubert's piano piece, Cone tracks syntactical relationships across this piece, allowing him to create a narrative reading out of the extrageneric significance. The expressive potential or narrative that Cone describes captures what Almén's theory will eventually characterize as plot archetype. I believe that Cone is correct in arguing that salient features hold expressive meaning in a piece of music, however, Cone's focus on syntax over genre and other topical features limits the nuance and depth of his narrative interpretation. Since the genre of theme and variations tends to feature surface alterations, my own analyses *will* focus on topical features and surface generalities in addition to salient syntactical elements in order to arrive at my narrative interpretations.

Fred Everett Maus's earlier writings, "Music as Drama" and "Music as Narrative," focus on the parallels between musical narrative and dramatic action.[15] In the former essay, Maus

[13]Edward T. Cone, "Three Ways to Read a Detective story or a Brahms Intermezzo" (1977), in *Music: A View from Delft: Selected Essays*, ed. Robert P. Morgan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 79ff.

[14]Robert Hatten defines a marked event as "the asymmetrical valuation of an opposition" (291). A marked term has a narrower range of meanings and represents an instance of something exceptional rather than the norm. See Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1994), 291.

[15]Fred Everett Maus,"Music as Drama," *Music Theory Spectrum* 10 (Spring 1988): 56–73; and Fred Everett Maus, "Music as Narrative," *Indiana Theory Review* 12 (Spring–Fall, 1991): 1–34.

points out an analogy between music and drama. In reference to his analysis of Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 95, I, he writes, "the analogy to drama suggests that the structure of the music is its plot. The structure could be summed up as three large actions, the second responding to the first and the third responding to both earlier actions."[16] So, in both of these essays, Maus treats musical segments as a series of events (a response, an interruption, and the re-attempt of a previous action). Since he does not develop a systematic model with which to analyze various repertoires through a narrative lens, his work will not feature in my own dissertation. Furthermore, in his most recent article on musical narrative in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, Maus addresses the importance of performance on one's interpretation of narrative while dismissing both the syntactic and semantic approaches to musical narrative.[17] Of course a performance can enhance a narrative reading, but I do not think that a single performance will change the course of a narrative reading since an analyst will interpret the structure and surface events of the music as establishing a plot or archetype for a narrative interpretation. Maus' early seminal scholarship lays down the groundwork for scholars such as Robert Hatten and Byron Almén, who have expanded the field of musical hermeneutics and branched out to explore musical narrative, topics, gestures, expressive genres etc., which in turn have shaped and influenced this current project.

Anthony Newcomb's approach to narrative is concerned with addressing the conventions and historical context of the work and to the evidence of how these works were understood by contemporary audiences. In his 1987 essay, "Schumann and Late Eighteenth-Century Narrative Strategies," Newcomb draws a general analogy between paradigmatic or conventional narrative successions in literature and history and the formal types of music.[18] Knowledge of Schumann's assimilation of literary devices into his compositional output bolsters Newcomb's narrative analysis of Schumann's String Quartet in A, Op. 41, No. 3, final movement (1842). His focus on non-syntactic elements (historical context and conventions) is attractive for my own analyses in that such a focus can demonstrate a culture's musical and non-musical values, which can reinforce a narrative reading of a composition and help to elucidate whether or not those values are upheld or destroyed. My own analyses will include discussions of the historical contexts and conventions of the theme and variation genre, especially since these conventions shift between different stylistic periods.

More recently, Michael Klein has picked up a similar methodological thread from Newcomb's approach to musical narrative, which he weaves throughout his own analytical

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[16]Maus, "Music as Drama," 72.

[17]Fred Everett Maus, "Classical Instrumental Music and Narrative," in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 466–83.

[18]Anthony Newcomb, "Schumann and Late Eighteenth Century Narrative Strategies" *19th-Century Music* 11, no. 2 (Autumn, 1987): 165.

writings. Klein's concern for narrative analysis is the necessity for an analyst to employ the semantic level. Of course, the syntactic level is required to a certain extent, but Klein is advocating for the use of topics, cultural codes and conventions. In his 2004 essay, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative," Klein advises the analyst to subscribe to both syntactical and semantic structures, the latter through intertextuality and history: "Intuition tempered by semiotic and musical structures gets us only so far in narrative analysis. The critic must position both the text and a critical viewpoint with regard to intertextuality and history."[19] In order to understand what is or what is not culturally appropriate for a particular composer, an analyst should examine the composition in question intertextually with similar pieces of that genre by the same composer. Although Klein does not put forward a theory of musical narrative, he does offer the analyst valuable tools and strategies with which to present a stylistic, nuanced, and insightful narrative interpretation of a composition. I also believe that modeling my own analyses in a similar manner to Klein's analyses—disjunct prose and a selected discussion of important moments in an analysis rather than a play-by-play account—will enable me to present succinct and interesting analytical readings, especially in a genre that could easily be presented successively in discrete sections (i.e., variation 2 followed by variation 3 etc.).

Finally, Byron Almén's theory of musical narrative will feature heavily in my methodological approach. Almén's theoretical apparatus is an amalgamation of the four *mythoi* or archetypal plots discussed by Northrop Frye with James Jakób Liszka's notion of transvaluation or changes in rank value within a cultural hierarchy. Since Almén defines narrative as "the transvaluation of changing hierarchical relationships and oppositions into culturally meaningful differences," his theoretical model is flexible enough to be applicable to a wide range of repertoire, which is ideal for the stylistic periods I am examining (the mid-nineteenth century through to the latter half of the twentieth-century). Further discussion of Almén's theoretical model follows below in the methodology subsection.

1.4 Methodological Approach

Due to the wide range of repertoire I will be analyzing, my methodological approach will necessarily be eclectic. In what follows, I explain six of the most prominent theories, constructs, and/or analytical techniques that I will employ in the dissertation and the extent to which each is appropriate for the three analytical chapters.

Byron Almén's *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (2008) will inform my analytical chapters and sample analysis. Almén's theoretical model allows the analyst to track syntactical elements and their relationships throughout a work in order to arrive at a narrative reading of the piece

[19]Michael Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade as Musical Narrative" *Music Theory Spectrum* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 52.

in question. His definition of narrative draws on James Jakób Liszka's notion of transvaluation, "the change in markedness and rank with a cultural hierarchy over time,"[20] which is used in conjunction with Northrop Frye's four *mythoi* or archetypal plots: romance, tragedy, irony, and comedy. Thus, Almén arrives at a definition of narrative that essentially involves tracking the effect of transgressive shifts or conflicts on a prevailing musical hierarchy. He writes,

> A piece's initial musical events, configured in various hierarchical relationships, establish a network of cultural values, and the asymmetries of the initial condition and/or any subsequent changes in these relationships place these values in conflict, leading to resolution in a manner significant to the culturally informed listener—a welcome confirmation of that initial hierarchy, its partial or complete overturning, an unwelcome re-imposition, or its corrosive undermining Thus, narrative meaningfully articulates hierarchical relationships and our response to them. This process is critically dependent on the…listener's interested interpretation and recognition of that change, without which a transvaluation cannot and does not occur.[21]

Two binary pairs arise within Almén's theoretical framework; the first pair includes order and transgression. Order (or hierarchy) is identified by the listener or analyst as a stable and/or controlling musical unit or process established at the outset of a piece (e.g., the theme of a variation set) while transgressions are often marked musical events that present shifts away from or defiance of the established order (e.g., changes made to the theme in various musical parameters). The manners in which the hierarchical relationships change over the course of the piece produce a second binary pair: victory and defeat that are coupled with the initial order/transgression pair. The amalgamation of narrative categories (romance, tragedy, irony, and comedy) with pairs of binary oppositions (order/transgression and victory/defeat) results in four narrative archetypes or overarching frameworks that the analyst may employ in his or her interpretation of the work (see Table 1.1).

Emphasis on victory or defeat differentiates the romance from tragedy, both of which feature the order-imposing hierarchy "winning," so to speak (the same goes for comedy and irony). Representative profiles of transvaluation in each of the four narrative archetypes are illustrated in Figure 1.1 (romance and irony are in the top two quadrants while tragedy and comedy are in the bottom two quadrants). Order begins with a high rank value in a romance and, through a series of rank decreases that are always reversed, it returns victorious by the end of the work (i.e., a profile with multiple high-low-high changes). Irony also begins with a high rank value for order, but by the end of the work, it has decreased to a low rank value (i.e., a high-low profile). The narrative archetypes of tragedy and comedy both emphasize the transvaluation of transgression, rather than order. A tragic narrative follows the general low-

[20]Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), ix.
[21]Ibid., 41.

high-low profile of the valued transgressive elements, ending with their defeat, while a comic narrative displays a general overturning of the initial hierarchy by the valued transgressive elements (i.e., a low-high profile).

Table 1.1. Almén's Four Narrative Archetypes

Narrative Archetype	Pairs of Binary Oppositions	Definition
Romance	Victory + Order	Victory of a positively-viewed order-imposing hierarchy over its negatively-viewed transgression
Tragedy	Defeat + Transgression	Defeat of a positively-viewed transgression by a negatively-viewed order-imposing hierarchy
Irony	Defeat + Order	Defeat of a positively-viewed order-imposing hierarchy by a negatively-viewed transgression.
Comedy	Victory + Transgression	Victory of a positively-viewed transgression over a negatively-viewed order-imposing hierarchy

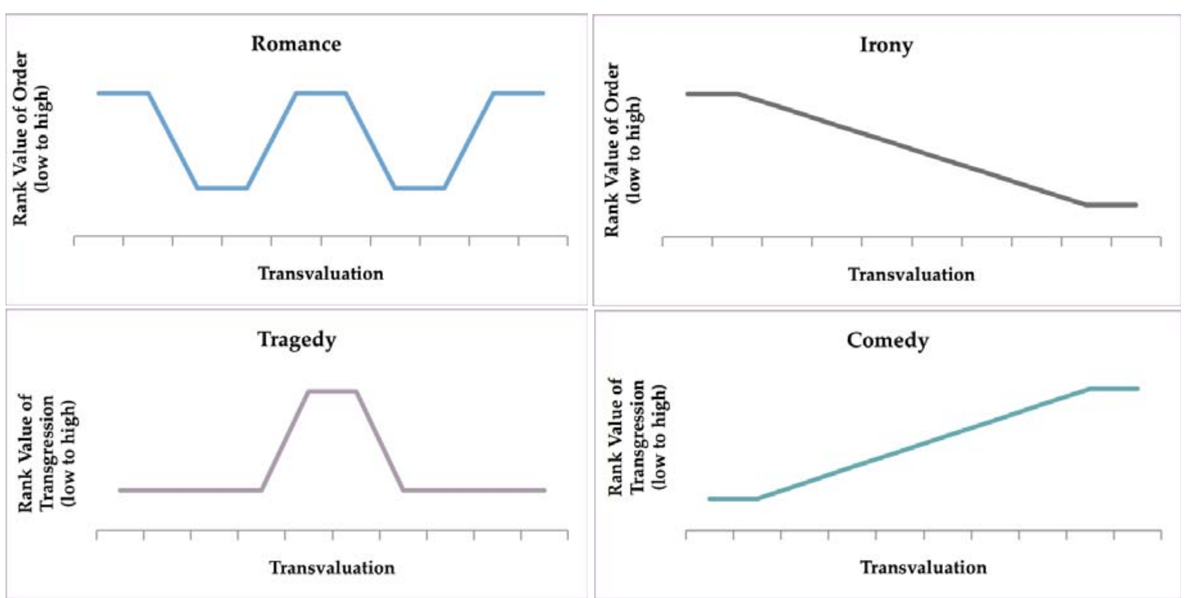

Figure 1.1. Generic Transvaluation Profiles of the Four Narrative Archetypes

Although Almén's rigorous narrative model favors syntax, there is room for an analyst to flesh out a narrative reading using topics, and cultural or historical codes and conventions. His wide analytical net allows him to address music from the early eighteenth century through

to the mid twentieth century, as long as some kind of opposition is perceived in the work.[22] My exploration of applying narrative theory to theme and variations will be facilitated by this theory, as contrast and opposition are intrinsic to the genre, even as represented by the Rochberg *Caprice Variations* from 1970.

Schenkerian analysis will feature heavily in the analytical chapter on Brahms's Op. 35 Book I variations and to a limited extent in the first chapter on Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody* Op. 43. Through foreground sketches I am able to do a comparative analysis of each variation with the original theme. Certain syntactical features of the theme will represent order in my analyses and the changes made to these features in the subsequent variations will represent transgressions. The extent to which Rachmaninoff incorporates chromaticism, modal, and other "fantastic" structures (i.e., symmetrical or equal-interval structures such as the whole-tone, octatonic, and hexatonic collections) into his music makes Schenkerian analysis an unsuitable method for examining Op. 43 *in toto*. Instead, I will employ Blair Johnston's non-Schenkerian annotations from his dissertation, "Harmony and Climax in the Late Works of Sergei Rachmaninoff," in order to represent these non-diatonic collections or similar structures.[23] The pillars of partial or complete "fantastic" collections are beamed together and labeled by name (e.g., $\text{OCT}_{0,1}$) and are illustrated using open or closed note heads depending on their structural importance.

Musical agency will play a prominent role in my analytical interpretations of Brahms's Op. 35 variations and Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody* Op. 34. In his recent article, "Action and Agency Revisited," Seth Monahan creates a taxonomy of the four most prevalent agents and agential perspectives used in analytical prose. From a top-down perspective, the second category, the Fictional Composer, is defined as "the person postulated by the analyst as the controlling, intending author of the musical text."[24] Monahan employs the term "fictional" to refer to an interpretive construct, which can be contrasted with the term "historical," describing the living composer. Monahan's sample analytical reading from the end of the development of the Eroica Symphony illustrates how the musical passage could be controlled by a fictional "Beethoven" who "…stages a recapitulatory malfunction, bringing the main theme in four bars early."[25] I will employ the fictional composer designation to represent the composer controlling the themes of these variations ("Paganini") and the newer composers who are trying to overturn this established hierarchy ("Brahms" and "Rachmaninoff").

[22]Ibid., x.

[23]Blair Johnston, "Harmony and Climax in the Late Works of Sergei Rachmaninoff," (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2009).

[24]Seth Monahan, "Action and Agency Revisited," *Journal of Music Theory* 57, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 329.

[25]Ibid., 335.

I also turn to J. Peter Burkholder's preliminary overview of musical borrowing in order to consider how I might interpret Paganini's borrowed theme for each of these variation sets.[26] I explore the ramifications of a couple of questions that Burkholder raises in his study, including: What element(s) of the borrowed piece are incorporated into or alluded to by the new work, in whole or in part, and how does the borrowed material function within the new composition?

I also borrow William Caplin's criteria for categorizing formal units of Classical music in my analysis of the *Rhapsody*. He classifies formal units on a continuum that ranges from "tight-knit" organization to "loose" organization. Tight-knit organization is characterized by "the use of conventional theme-types, harmonic–tonal stability, a symmetrical grouping structure, form-functional efficiency, and a unity of melodic-motivic material" whereas loose organization is characterized by "non-thematic conventional structures, harmonic–tonal instability…an asymmetrical grouping structure, phrase-structural extension and expansion, form-functional redundancy, and a diversity of melodic-motivic material."[27] Since Paganini theme falls under the purview of Classical music, I can adopt Caplin's criteria for tight-knit and loose organization in order to describe the fine gradations in the formal organizations of the variations.[28]

Finally, topic theory plays a significant role in my exploration of the semantic level of both the Brahms and Rachmaninoff works. I draw on the world of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century topics as presented by Leonard Ratner (1980), Kofi Agawu (2009), and Janice Dickensheets (2012), since musical topics play a role in the association of each variation with a particular fictional composer or other extra-musical program.[29]

1.5 Paganini's *Twenty-Four Caprices* Op. 1, No. 24 in A minor

When he dedicated his Op. 1 collection of violin Caprices "to the Artists" (*alli Artisti*), Paganini was unaware of the impact and legacy that this collection would have on the Western art music tradition, especially the last Caprice (No. 24), an original theme and variation set. Nearly two centuries since its first publication in 1820, the theme of Caprice No. 24—one of the most recognizable Classical themes—has inspired *at least* twenty-one additional theme-and-variation treatments on it (see Appendix A on p. 141 for a list of these works). Indeed, this

[26] J. Peter Burkholder, "The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field," *Notes* Second Series, 50, no. 3 (March 1994): 851–70.

[27] William Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 255, 257.

[28] I am borrowing the criteria from Caplin's methodology and not the philosophy of Ratz.

[29] Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer, 1985); Kofi Agawu, *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Janice Dickensheets, "The Topical Vocabulary of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Musicological Research* 31, nos. 2–3 (April, 2012): 97–137.

theme has functioned as the source for hundreds of variations, transforming the simple and infectious violin theme through harmony, texture, rhythmic figuration, form, style, and instrumentation (e.g., violin, piano, B♭ clarinet, organ, orchestra, rock band etc.). Some of the attractive features of this theme for variation treatment that may have piqued the interest of composers for generations include: its tight motivic construction, the simplicity of its harmonic and formal frameworks, and even its potential for the display of extreme elaboration and pyrotechnical virtuosity (as demonstrated by Paganini himself). Despite the popularity of Caprice No. 24 among performers and composers, there is, surprisingly little analytical prose devoted to this variation set; of course, Caprice no. 24 is referenced as the source for the intertext for multiple works, but there is little discussion about *its* construction.[30] In what follows, I present an overview of the piece while making general observations about its construction and then offer a possible narrative reading that will inform the other variation settings explored in this dissertation.

Although the autograph of the *Twenty-Four Caprices* is dated November 24, 1817, the date is not in Paganini's hand, thus the composition date is unknown.[31] Naturally then, there is much speculation as to their approximate completion among historians and scholars with most claims ranging from the late 1790s to 1809. Lillian Day suggests that the seventeen-year old Paganini had finished composing the Caprices in 1799 after returning to Genoa with his family; he may even have started sketching them prior to this date under Fernando Paër's tutelage.[32] Renée de Saussine claims that the young Italian was nineteen years old (1801), de Courcy presumes a date as early as 1801 and as late as 1807, while Jeffrey Perry points to Paganini's residence at the court of Lucca from 1801–09 as the timeframe for their inception, making the composer as old as twenty-seven.[33]

Despite the uncertainly of when precisely the collection was completed (probably within the decade from 1799 to 1809), Caprice No. 24 can be regarded as a Classical variation set of the ornamental variety (also referred to as figural or melodic-contour variations). Indeed, Paganini adheres to a number of the conventionalized features of this variation type: overall brevity, containing twelve or fewer variations; and the use of an original theme, usually a short binary or ternary structure that is simple, clear, balanced, and symmetrical.[34] Table 1.2 provides an

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[30]For an analytical exploration of some of the Op. 1 Caprices, see Jeffrey Perry, "Paganini's Quest: The Twenty-Four *Capricci per violino solo*, Op. 1," *19th-Century Music* 27, no. 3 (Spring 2004): 208–29.

[31]Alberto Cantù and Ernst Herrtrich, preface to *Paganini: 24 Capricci für Violine solo*, by Nicolò Paganini (München: G. Henle, 1990), viii.

[32]Lillian Day, *Paganini of Genoa* (New York: The Macaulay Company, 1929), 22.

[33]Renée de Saussine, *Paganini*, trans. Margorie Laurie (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), 24; G. I. C. de Courcy, *Paganini*: *The Genoese* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), 2: 373; and Perry, "Paganini's Quest," 208.

[34]Nelson, *The Technique of Variation*, 81–82.

overview of Paganini’s variations and his treatment of the theme through certain musical parameters.

Table 1.2. Overview of Paganini's Theme and Variations, Op. 1, No. 24

Variation	Key	Meter and Tempo	Form	Rhythmic Figuration: Opening measure(s)	Variation Techniques
Theme	Am	Quasi Presto (2/4)	Simple Binary ‖:A:‖B‖ 4 mm + 8 mm		
1					Arpeggiating figures; *staccato-picchetatto*
2					Neighbor notes, *legato* stepwise motion
3					*Legato* doubled-stopped octaves
4					*Legato* chromatic scalar passages
5					*Legato* compound melody
6					Double-stopped 3rds and 10ths
7					*Legato* embellished descending arpeggios
8					*Legato* triple stops
9					LH pizzicato
10					*Legato*, upper register*
11			‖:A:‖B‖ 4 mm + 7 mm		*Legato* double stops and arpeggio flourishes
Finale	Am/AM		8mm + 7 mm		*Legato* double stops and arpeggio flourishes (tuplets); trills and quadruple stop

The twelve-measure notated theme is short (4 + 8); it is the equivalent of sixteen notated measures because of the repeated opening four measures, thus creating a balanced musical unit (8 +8). Overall, the eleven variations plus finale comprise a mere 136 notated measures in total, keeping with the tradition of economy and overall brevity. Form, tempo, meter, and key remain

constant throughout the first ten variations. According to Nelson's summary of the relatively conventionalized defaults in this variation type, Paganini's choice of key goes against the predilection for themes in a major mode.[35] Not only does Paganini compose a minor-mode theme, but he avoids introducing variations in the parallel mode of A major—the finale only presents the modally mixed tonic harmony. One of the primary functions of modal variations is to interrupt the flow of the rhythmic acceleration around the middle of the work; returning to the home key after this interruption, as in a typical ornamental variation, resets the rhythmic activity, allowing it to grow to the climax, usually an *allegro* or *adagio-allegro* pair.[36] The absence of mode mixture around the middle of Paganini's variations prompts further exploration of his rhythmic figuration across the piece (refer to the second column from the right in Table 1.2).

The quasi presto sixteenth-note figuration of the theme set is rather unusual for figural variations, since their primary tactic is rhythmic variation of the theme that progressively increases over the course of the work. Paganini does not give himself much room for increased rhythmic activity because his theme focuses primarily on sixteenth notes. In fact, variation 1 displays an immediate decrease in rhythmic values while variation 3 presents the theme's rhythm in augmentation. Paganini only employs a handful of distinct rhythmic motives: (1) a dotted rhythm followed by sixteenth notes (theme, 6, 10); and tuplets (1, 7); entire measures of sixteenth notes (2, 4, 9); slower rhythmic values (3, 8); and other combinations (5, 11, finale).[37] Regardless of how these rhythmic settings are categorized, it is clear that they do not form a progressively accelerating rhythmic drive toward the finale. The rhythmic ebbs and flows within ornamental variations illustrate large-scale organization, shaping the piece and signaling the potential for narrative discourse. If this musical expectation (the increases and disruptions of rhythmic activity) is lacking however, as it seems to be in Paganini's variations, then what narratives are conceivable?

In fact, to further enhance a reading of Paganini's non-conformance with the conventional plan of ornamental variations, I draw ideas from Jeffrey Perry's article, "Paganini's Quest: The Twenty-Four *Capricci per violino solo"* in order to suggest my own modest narrative of the variations. Perry contextualizes the Op. 1 Caprices within Paganini's compositional oeuvre: "When these pieces were composed, the Paganini of legend, the diabolical stage persona of his transalpine concert tours of 1828–34, did not yet exist. The Paganini of the Caprices, although already known for flamboyance and extravagant virtuosity,

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[35]Ibid., 82.

[36]Ibid., 81.

[37]I am considering the eighth-plus-sixteenth-note rest of the theme to stand in for a dotted eighth note. There are other ways to parse these rhythms, including a demonstration of how many of these rhythmic motives are generated from the theme: variation 3 is the theme in augmentation; variations 2, 4, 5, and 9 are all derived from the sixteenth-note figure in the theme; and the eighth notes in variation 8 could be a fragment from the augmented statement or an augmentation of the sixteenth-note motive.

is a serious composer and a student of contemporary developments in music."[38] Perry continues that the "more extreme harmonic features [in the Caprices], … leads one to suspect that the Caprices represent an early avant-garde aspect of his style."[39] These passages suggest viewing Paganini as being one of the first composers to lead the way into early Romantic harmonic practices. Although Perry does not analyze Caprice No. 24, his exploration of five other Caprices addresses a synthesis of Paganini's two modes of expression: the lyrical voice and the questive voice (see Table 1.3). Paganini's lyrical mode or voice is expressed through simple harmonic progressions and "symmetrically constructed, singable lines set mostly in the range of the treble human voice."[40] In contrast, the questive impulse is a "means of traversing the immensity that is the one essential feature of early Romanticism in all of its incarnations … Romanticism is the aesthetic of distance."[41] This is to say that this "immensity" is manifest spatially and through temporal and harmonic distance. Perry attributes the following three characteristics to Paganini's questive mode: his use of the violin's entire registral space, his modulation to distantly related harmonic areas, and his developmental/*Fortspinnung* phrases that are motivically conceived. Although the questive and lyrical modes of expression may be in direct conflict with each other, they may also be synthesized in a way where one is more predominantly expressed than the other. My own narrative of Paganini's Caprice No. 24 traces the conflict between the Classical theme and the formal paradigm of ornamental variations (order) and Paganini's questive modes of Romantic expression through the work's motivic conception and wide registral space (transgression).

Table 1.3. Summary of Perry's Characteristics for Paganini's Modes of Expression[42]

Lyrical Mode	Questive Mode
Range: narrow (treble, human voice) Harmony: simple, closely related modulations Phrases: symmetrical	Range: wide (entire range of violin) Harmony: adventurous (e.g., modulation to distant harmonic areas) Phrases: developmental, *Fortspinnung*, motivically conceived

As mentioned earlier, Paganini's theme and variations *does* adhere to some conventions of traditional ornamental variations (e.g., number of variations, simple binary theme etc.). Since I am working at the primary narrative level in discussing formal conformance and non-

[38]Perry, "Paganini's Quest," 208.
[39]Ibid., 209.
[40]Ibid., 210.
[41]Ibid.
[42]Ibid., 210–11.

conformance, order is assigned to the formal paradigm (the specific variation type) rather than the initial hierarchy or process in the piece, although Paganini's theme is one of the primary determinants of the paradigm. Table 1.4 lists the ranges of each variation in the work in order to capture a portion of Paganini's questive mode of expression.

Table 1.4. Summary of Registral Space in Op. 1, No. 24

Variation	Range[43]	Approximate Number of Octaves
Theme	A3 to B♭5	2
1	A3 to A6	3
2	E4 to B♭5	1.5
3	G♯3 to A5	2
4	G♯4 to A6	2
5	G♯3 to B♭6	3
6	G3 to F7	4
7	G♯3 to F6	3
8	G3 to F6	3
9	A3 to E6	2.5
10	B4 to E7	2.5
11	G♯3 to E7	3.5
Finale	G♯3 to D7	3.5

As is evident in Table 1.4, Paganini utilizes nearly all of the violin's range (variation 6 features both the apex and nadir of the work, F7 and G3.[44] Not only does Paganini compose variations that cover the violin's four-octave range, but he also juxtaposes different registers both within and between variations (see for example the shift between variations 5 and 6 as well as variations 9 and 10). There is also a progression from variations with smaller ranges (the theme through to variation 4) followed by variations that have larger ranges (variation 5 through to the finale), emphasizing one of Paganini's questive attributes.

The second of Perry's three attributes of the questive expression is how Paganini's phrases are motivically conceived and eventually become asymmetrical. These variations, as mentioned above, lack a clear progression from simple rhythms to more complex elaborations of the theme. Paganini constructs a motivically driven theme with a *perpetuum mobile* drive; a theme comprised of half notes or quarter notes would have been more amenable to elaboration and rhythmic diminutions. Each variation in turn exhibits a similar rhythmic drive with a different rhythmic motive (most are clearly derived from theme's motives). Variation 11 and the

[43]I am using the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) octave designation system.
[44]The range of the violin for a profession player is G3 to B7.

Finale both feature the most complex rhythms in the work (e.g., 32nd notes and various 16th-note tuplets), while also loosening the symmetrical phrases of the previous variations; in both cases, an asymmetrically constructed seven-measure phrase or unit closes each variation.

Although Paganini's questive mode of expression is more predominant than the lyrical mode in Caprice No. 24, two variations do refer to the lyrical mode topically (variations 3 and 10 are in a signing style), but all of the variations share a similarly non-adventurous harmonic progression. As illustrated by Figure 1.2, Paganini does not venture away from the tonic A minor, nor does he radically alter the straightforward harmonic language: the A section alternates between i and V while the B section presents a descending fifth sequence that drives toward the cadence.[45] The chords following the sequence are the ones most often altered, especially the predominant harmony. Tonicizations of V in the opening A-section occur and tonicizations of iv and III in the sequence are realized in variation 1. The most surprising alteration could be the Neapolitan as the predominant harmony in variation 5. However, the lack of distant modulations or significant changes to the underlying harmonic progression do not support Paganini's questive impulse; rather, they draw more on the harmonic simplicity of his lyrical expression.

So how do all of these musical features shape a narrative archetype? Recall that order was defined as the formal paradigm of traditional Classical ornamental variations, which was primarily expressed as the underlying framework for this variation through the overall length of the piece and the construction of the theme. In conflict with this traditional paradigm is an "avant-garde" aspect of Paganini's compositional style. This budding "Romantic" voice challenges the preconceptions of the form by refraining from a major mode theme or its usual contrasting parallel mode internal variations. He disregards the typical measured increase in rhythmic activity from the simplest to most complex in favor of motivically chosen rhythms that are more appropriate for exploring difficult violin techniques. These transgressions are supported by attributes of Paganini's mode of expression. His budding Romantic voice is primarily questive in this work with lyrical topical references. The culmination of these questive transgressive features, especially towards the end of the work, supports a low-high trajectory of transgression across the work that defines the comic archetype. The expectation for the continued formal paradigm of Classical ornamental variations is thwarted time and again as the transgressive elements appear with more frequency, overturning the initial hierarchy and our expectation for their continuation. In this case, a comic archetype frames an interpretation of the work that captures a young, Italian composer (pre-stage persona) pushing the conventional

[45]Schenker's analysis of the theme (his sketch will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter) implies chromaticism within descending fifth sequence: V/iv-iv, V/III-III. The "i" is only an apparent tonic that passes to the implied augmented sixth chord in the penultimate measure.

boundaries of the genre and establishing his own Romantic mode of expression over a generic Classical expression.

Figure 1.2. Harmonic Analysis of Paganini's Theme, *Twenty-Four Caprices*, Op. 1, No. 24

1.6 Closing Remarks

The narrative interpretations of the variation sets composed by Brahms and Rachmaninoff in the next three chapters follow a similar methodological approach to the one presented on Paganini's variations, but on a much larger and more detailed scale. The Paganini intertext further complicates these works, resulting in multiple narrative interpretations. My analysis is grounded in the music's syntactical level (e.g., formal structures, harmony, and voice-leading) as well as the semantic level (e.g., topics, gestures, and conventional and cultural codes). Historical sources are used to contextualize these works, allowing for a more nuanced narrative interpretation, and providing insight into how these composers conceived of their own variation sets. I avoid the time-honored approach to discussing a theme-and-variation set (an exhaustive play-by-play of the similarities and differences in each consecutive variation). Instead, I opt to draw attention to only some of the variations in each set that illustrate the feature or point I am arguing in regards to the narrative reading. The extensive and exhaustive details, such as the transformations of the transgressive elements, are presented in comprehensive tables and graphs, along with complete voice-leading sketches of both works (the latter can be found in Appendix B and C).

CHAPTER TWO

BRAHMS'S *VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY PAGANINI*, OP. 35, BOOK I

2.1 Historical Overview

Brahms began composing ideas for his 'Studies for the Pianoforte – Variations on a Theme by Paganini' Op. 35 as early as 1862–63. According to Peter Roggenkamp, Brahms did not have the privilege of hearing Paganini perform in concert, but a couple of his contemporaries did, namely Robert Schumann and Franz Liszt; both were both inspired by the virtuoso to compose technically demanding and virtuosic works.[1] Unlike Liszt's virtuosic arrangement of Paganini's Op. 1, No. 24 from 1840 and later revised in 1851, Brahms composed two books of original piano variations on the same theme in the style of individual technical studies. Clara Schumann received manuscript copies of the variations as early as 1863, dubbing them the "witch variations." Her correspondence with Brahms suggests that she did not consider them suitable for public performance and she did not see the reason for publishing two books.[2] Ignoring Clara's advice about publication, Brahms eventually had both books of variations published in January of 1866, shortly after his "first public performance of the work in Zurich and Winterthur on November 25 and 29, 1865 respectively."[3] Both books state the theme at the outset and include fourteen variations: "book I contains a preponderance of variations with melodic and harmonic resemblance to the theme, as well as Baroque topics… while the variations in book 2 immediately reinterpret the theme's harmonies, even at cadence points, and contain the variation most remote from the theme in either set (variation 12, an Andante in F major)."[4]

Both Siegfried Kross and Elaine Sisman have discussed Brahms's predilection for associating characters or personae with a handful of his early works from 1852–54. At the close of these works, Brahms extended the double bar lines outward into a signature or initials. Of particular interest are the *Schumann Variations*, Op. 9 from 1854 whose "whole [form is] organized according to a synthesis…[that] is achieved partially by the purposeful association of nearly every variation with a *personae*."[5] The manuscript of Op. 9 reveals two juxtaposed personae; the first is "Brahms," designated by the initial 'B' located at the end of six variations, and 'Kr' for Johannes Kreisler, "a reference to the E. T. A. Hoffmann character [Brahms] had

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[1]Peter Roggenkamp, notes on interpretation for *Paganini Variations Op. 35*, by Johannes Brahms (Wien: Wiener Urtext Edition, Schott/Universal Edition), viii.

[2]Ibid., vi–vii.

[3]Ibid.,vii.

[4]Elaine R. Sisman, "Brahms and the Variation Canon," *19th-Century Music* 14, no. 2 (Autumn 1990): 150.

[5]Ibid.,146.

adopted as a pseudonym and alter ego within his circle of friends."[6] Sisman further details that "five autographs between 1852 and January 1854, for or including piano are signed, in addition to the 'B,' '[Joh.] Kreisler, jun.'"[7] Kross argues that the "Brahms" and "Kreisler" personae are "being used to create a typology of characters in which the 'satyr-mask of Kreisler is opposed to the calmly self-confident personality of Brahms" and indeed, the variations bearing either of these characters' initials tend to exhibit certain traits.[8] Generally, the "Brahms" variations tend to be slow in tempo with lyrical melodies that are sometimes treated in canon. In contrast, the distinguishing features of the "Kreisler" variations include their fast and impetuous nature, their general departure from the theme's structure including the addition of codas, and their frequent references to Schumann's figural patterns.[9] Despite the fact that Brahms's Op. 35 variations were composed well after he stopped signing his manuscripts with initials or signatures, there is still support for interpreting opposing personae in this work (see subsection 2.2.2).

2.2 Methodology

Contributing to my narrative interpretation of this book of variations are Seth Monahan's taxonomy of musical agents, J. Peter Burkholder's overview of musical borrowing as it pertains to the borrowed Paganini theme, and musical topics. Let us examine the concepts of each author in turn, with an eye toward identifying the most useful aspects of each approach for the present study.

2.2.1 Agency and the Fictional Composer

Seth Monahan's recent article "Action and Agency Revisited," establishes a taxonomy of the four classes of agents used in music-analytical prose (refer to Table 2.1). From a bottom-up perspective, *individuated elements* are discrete musical components (e.g., themes, motives, gestures, chords topics, pitch-classes etc.) that can be understood as a kind of dramatic "character," realized through anthropomorphic metaphors,[10] such as "***the bass outlines*** a Phrygian tetrachord that fills in the space between $\hat{1}$ and $\hat{5}$" in variation 4 of Op. 35. The *work persona* is a single continuous consciousness unique to and extending throughout a musical movement (in essence, the work personified)[11]: "***The music replaces*** the oscillating tonic and dominant harmonies with a Phrygian tetrachord in the bass." This perspective suggests that the

[6]Ibid.
[7]Ibid.
[8]Siegfried Kross, "Brahms and E. T. A. Hoffmann," *19th-Century Music* 5, no. 3 (Spring, 1982): 200.
[9]Ibid.
[10]Monahan, "Action and Agency Revisited," 327.
[11]Ibid., 328.

descending stepwise bass is an action of the work, something that it does. A *fictional composer* is described as "the person postulated by the analyst as the controlling, intending author of the musical text."[12] Monahan employs the term "fictional" to refer to an interpretive construct, one that can be contrasted with the term "historical" describing the living composer. The same passage from Brahms's fourth variation could instead be controlled by a fictional "***Brahms*** [who] deviates from the theme by altering the oscillating bass line in variation 4." From this perspective, the Phrygian tetrachord in the bass (an individuated element) is understood to be a strategic action of the fictional composer. Finally, there is the *analyst*, a first-person injection of the analyst-as-agent into the prose.[13] The following description highlights the analyst's (my own) judgments and values concerning the same Brahms variation: "***I am intrigued*** by the sudden introduction of the Phrygian tetrachord into the bass line of variation 4 in comparison to the simple oscillation of tonic and dominant found in previous variations."

Table 2.1. Monahan's Four Agent Classes[14]

Agent	Definition	Example (Variation 4, Book I)
Analyst	A first-person injection of the analyst-as-agent into the analytical prose.	"***I am intrigued*** by the sudden introduction of the Phrygian tetrachord into the bass line of variation 4."
Fictional Composer	The person postulated by the analyst as the controlling, intending author of the musical text.	"***Brahms deviates*** from the theme by altering the oscillating bass line in variation 4."
Work Persona	A single consciousness unique to and extending throughout a movement (i.e., the work itself, personified)	"***The music replaces*** the oscillating tonic and dominant harmonies with a Phrygian tetrachord in the bass."
Individuated Element	Discrete musical components (e.g., themes, motives, gestures, chords etc.) that can be understood as a kind of dramatic "character"	"***The bass outlines*** a Phrygian tetrachord that fills in the space between $\hat{1}$ and $\hat{5}$."

I will employ fictional composers as the two agents in my narrative analysis of Book I: "Paganini" (representing order) and "Brahms" (representing transgression). From the reader's perspective, the established structural features of the theme and their recurrence in the variations can be understood as the strategic actions of "Paganini" while the structural

[12]Ibid., 329.
[13]Ibid., 332–33.
[14]Ibid., 327–33.

transgressive alterations made to these elements in the variations can be understood as the strategic actions of "Brahms."[15]According to Monahan, the hierarchy or matrix holds that "any musical event that can be regarded as agential can also be construed as the intentional action of any higher- (but not lower-) ranking agent class."[16] Thus, there is an explicit agential claim at the level of the fictional composer where individuated elements can be construed as the intentional actions of the fictional composer (a higher-ranking agent class). However, an *implicit* agential claim can also be made between the analyst and both the fictional composer and individuated elements (see Figure 2.1). The individuated elements (e.g., structural features that I will be examining) and the fictional "Paganini" and "Brahms" can be regarded as actions by me, the analyst, producing a "complex phenomenology…in which the fictional composer[s] can be understood as both…action[s] and…agent[s]."[17]

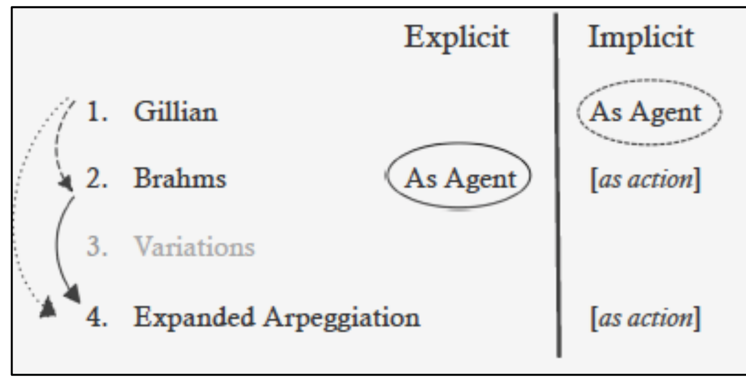

Figure 2.1. Implicit and Explicit Agential Claims at the Level of the Analyst[18]

2.2.2 Musical Borrowing

Why might a narrative interpretation, especially one involving fictional composers, be an appropriate analytical approach for a theme and variation set? To address this question I first turn to Peter Burkholder's preliminary overview of musical borrowing in order to consider how we might interpret the borrowed theme of this variation set. The primary function of borrowed material in theme-and-variation sets is thematic and the significant alteration or transformation

[15]For more details on explicit and implicit agential claims see Monahan, 333–41.
[16]Ibid., 333.
[17]Ibid., 336.
[18]Figure 2.1. is based on Monahan's Figure 3 (p. 336). The solid arrow represents explicit agencies while the dotted ones represent implicit agencies.

of the borrowed material is intrinsic to shaping the overall work. In creating a typology of musical borrowing, Burkholder asks the reader or analyst to consider the following question: "What element(s) of the borrowed piece are incorporated into or alluded to by the new work, in whole or part?"[19] In the case of theme and variations, multiple musical elements are borrowed from the pre-existing work including melody, harmony, rhythm, form, texture, and timbre. In addition to these elements, I argue that the new composer can also allude to a persona of the original composer, a fictional composer. For instance, Brahms borrows the theme from Paganini's Violin Caprice in A minor, Op. 1, No. 24—a variation set itself—for both of his books of piano variations, Op. 35. Famous for his uncanny ability to execute the most difficult passages on the violin, Paganini's demonic and virtuosic stage persona was certainly a topic of conversation in musical circles and within the public sphere. In a diary entry from 1831, Robert Schumann describes Paganini's technique and relates the virtuoso to one of his own personae: "Paganini has a wonderful effect on Cilia [Clara]. The primary personages are Florestan, the improviser—Paganini, under a different name… Hummel as the ideal of mechanics… [he is the]… ideal of skill, the ideal of expression, both are connected in Paganini."[20] As analysts, therefore, we might interpret borrowed themes in variation sets as carrying baggage with them (i.e., fictional constructs of the existing composer or their persona), especially when a pronounced association, such as Paganini's virtuosity to his violin caprices, exists with the historical composer.

Another important issue that Burkholder raises in regards to musical borrowing is the extramusical or associative function of the borrowed material in the new composition. When allusion to the original composer is understood to be one of the functions of the existing borrowed material, Burkholder offers possible manifestations of such an allusion including a *competition* created between the composer of the new work and the composer of the original work.[21] I argue that Brahms's choice of theme alludes to Paganini's virtuosity as a composer and performer and that both analysts and listeners can view this allusion as initiating a competition between the two composers. Brahms's task then would be to replace the older persona with his own. Thus, my interpretation of Brahms's theme and variation set rests in part on the prominent association of the borrowed caprice theme with its original composer and his image as a virtuoso violinist in order to initiate a narrative conflict between two fictional composers:

[9]Burkholder, "The Uses of Existing Music," 867.

[20]Paganini muss wunderbar mit auf Cilia wirken. Vorläufige personen sind Florestan, der improvisator —Paganini, under anderem Namen... Hummel als Ideal der Mechanik…—Ideal der Fertigkeit, Ideal des Ausdrucks, Verbindung beider in Paganini—das Streben Claras." Wolfgang Boetticher, *Robert Schumann, Einführung in Persönlichkeit und Werk: Beiträge zur Erkenntniskritik der Musikgeschichte und Studien am Ausdrucksproblem des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Bernhard Hahnefeld, 1941), 171.

[21]Burkholder, "The Uses of Existing Music," 869.

"Paganini" (the old/representing order) and "Brahms" (the new/representing transgression).

Precedents of characters, even conflicting characters, in Brahms's early piano oeuvre further bolster my argument for viewing a narrative conflict between two characters in the Op. 35 piano variations. As mentioned above, Brahms had a predilection for associating certain characters with some of his early works from 1852–54. Despite the fact that Brahms ceased signing his works after 1854 with either his own name or the pseudonym "Kreisler," I believe that a similar argument can be made about the Op. 35 variations, composed between 1862 and 1863; individual variations can be controlled, either in part of in full, by two fictional composers ("Brahms" and –for Kreisler—"Paganini").[22]

2.3 Comic Narrative with a Discursive Strategy of Emergence

My analysis traces a comic plot archetype in Brahms's piano variations, where Paganini's theme and his fictional composer agent ("Paganini") establish order in this variation set. Over the course of the work, a positively-viewed transgression ("Brahms's" persona) emerges slowly throughout the variations until the controlling hierarchy established at the outset of the work is overturned at the end. Applying one of Almén's discursive strategies of the comic archetype allows for a more precise and subtle reading within the larger categorical (archetypal) framework. He defines a discursive strategies as "distinct templates for achieving a particular transvaluative result, and each template is distinguished from the other according to some discursive technique; they are thus concerned with the *actantial level* of analysis."[23] Table 2.2 defines each of Almén's three comic discursive strategies: epiphany, emergence, and synthesis. My interpretation incorporates emergence in order to capture how the transgressive elements gradually and steadily acquire a higher rank value over the order-imposing hierarchy throughout the work. I first explore structural elements of the theme (order) by engaging with Schenker's sketch of Paganini's theme before tracing various transgressions through a selection of the variations, including: harmonic alterations, the arpeggiated ascent, an unveiling of the *Urlinie*, and the role of neighbor notes.

2.3.1. Order: Paganini's Theme

As the source of inspiration for Brahms's variations, Paganini's borrowed theme establishes order in my narrative reading. Looking at the original violin theme and Schenker's sketch of the theme from *Der freie Satz* in Figure 2.2, we can note the following features: (1) Paganini's *moto perpetuo* rhythmic figure (see m. 1) that pervades the theme and situates it

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[22]I will distinguish the fictional composer as "Brahms" from the historical composer Brahms (likewise, "Paganini" versus Paganini).

[23]Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 187.

topically with other etude-like pieces, (2) his simple alteration of tonic and dominant harmonies in the first four measures of the binary theme, (3) the narrow range of his opening arpeggiated gesture (ascending fifth from A4 – E5), and (4) the reversal of the opening arpeggiated gesture (descending fifths) that covers notes of the fundamental line ($\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$). As transgression, "Brahms" as fictional composer performs transgressive actions (alterations to theme) in order to overturn the hierarchy established by Paganini's theme (i.e., initiating the competition between the two composers). "Brahms" avoids, alters, or deviates from the aforementioned features of Paganini's theme in the variations that follow: (1) the *moto perpetuo* figure gives way to other non-etude topics and rhythmic treatments; (2) Phyrgian tetrachords in the bass line and chromatic harmonic progressions replace the simple diatonic chords of the original theme; (3) modifications to the narrow arpeggiated ascent; and (4) the alteration of the basic structure that exposes $\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$ of the fundamental line.

Table 2.2. Almén's Three Comic Discursive Strategies[24]

Discursive Strategy	Definition
Epiphany	"An inpasse in the narrative conflict gives way to a sudden, unexpected new development, or epiphany, that enacts the transvaluation—the victory of the transgressive elements—at a stroke." - This strategy has some overlap with Adorno's notion of "breakthrough" in the music of Mahler
Emergence	"The transgressive element gradually and steadily acquires a higher rank value until the transvaluative result has been achieved."
Synthesis	"The transgressive element merges or combines with valued elements of the initial herarchy from which it had been excluded or devalued. The transgression achieves narrative victory through reconciliation with the initial hierarchy, resulting in a newly constituted synthesis."

[24]Ibid., 188.

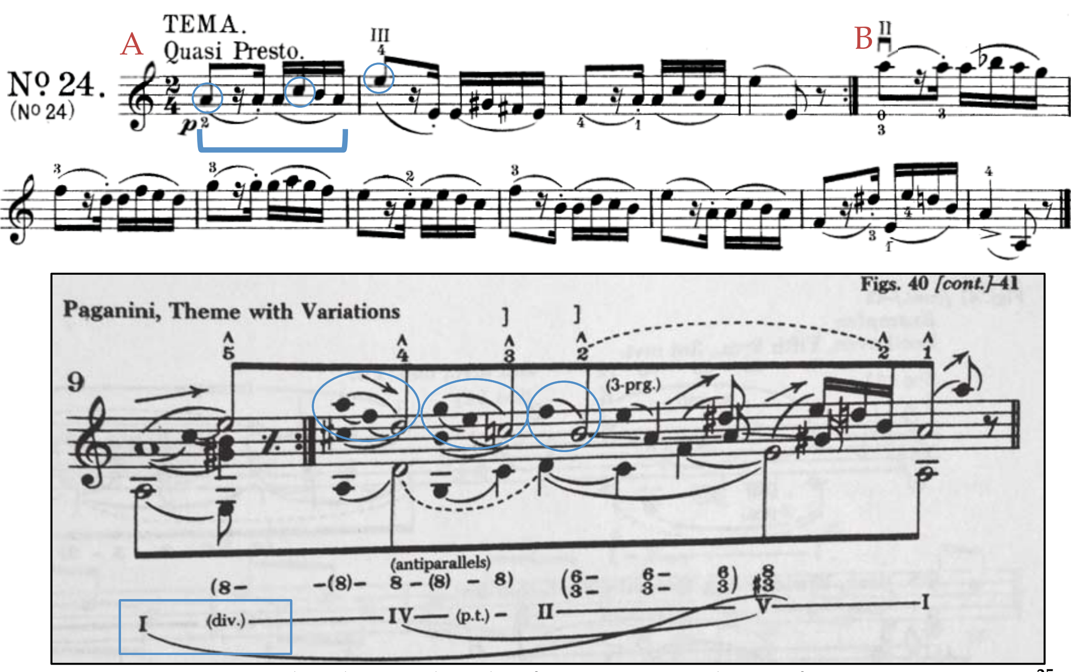

Figure 2.2. Schenker's Sketch of Paganini's Theme from Op. 1, No. 24[25]

2.3.2 Topical Transgressions

As mentioned earlier, the fast and impetuous "Kreisler" variations from Op. 9 are analogous to the fast virtuosic/étude-like variations associated with "Paganini" while the slow and lyrical variations of "Brahms" are common to both the Op. 9 and 35 variations. Table 2.3 outlines the topical references that distinguish each variation from its neighbors and the fictional composer to which each may be associated. As is evident, "Paganini" (see the blue sections in Table 2.3) controls the stylistic nature of the first three variations until "Brahms" (see the red sections in Table 2.3) appears with slower and somewhat more lyrical topics (e.g., the lament, the intermezzo, and Viennoise styles of variations 4–6). "Paganini" re-emerges to regain control of the set as two more etude-like variations impede the presentation of "Brahms's" non-etude topics. However, order loses control of the piece's topical associations as transgression surfaces in variation 9 with a fantasy-like topic. The remaining variations feature lyrical or Hungarian topics, stylistic associations of Brahms the composer, not "Paganini." Although Variation 14 is listed as being virtuosic, it is a Brahmsian virtuosity. Furthermore, the reappearance of other structural transgressions by the end of the work, which I will discuss next, are the actions of "Brahms," not "Paganini."

[25]Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition* (*Der freie Satz*), vol. 3, bk. 2 of *New Musical Theories and Fantasies*, ed. and trans. Ernst Oster (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 1977), ex. 40/9.

Table 2.3. Topical References Associated with each Fictional Composer

Section (Var. No.)	Key	Topics	Fictional Composer
Theme	a	Virtuosic/Étude	Paganini
1	a	Virtuosic/Étude	Paganini
2	a	Virtuosic/Étude	Paganini
3	a	Virtuosic/Étude	Paganini
4	a	Lament	Brahms
5	a	Capriccio (Intermezzo)	Brahms
6	a	Viennoise	Brahms
7	a	Étude (Bravura)	Paganini
8	a	Étude	Paganini
9	a	Fantasy	Brahms
10	a	Alla zoppa; Hungarian	Brahms
11	A	Music box	Brahms
12	A	Music box	Brahms
13	a	Salon	Brahms
14a Episode 14b⇒ Coda	a	Virtuosic/Étude (Lament) Style hongrois	Brahms

2.3.3. Structural Transgressions

Against this backdrop of character variations and their stylistic or topical associations with either order or transgression, I can examine structural departures from the theme as transgressive moments where "Brahms's" actions strive to overcome the hierarchy imposed by "Paganini." Note that there are instances in Table 2.4 where "Paganini" controls the topical realm of the variation but "Brahms's" actions or alterations to the structure provide glimpses of emergence. In variation 3 for example, "Paganini's" *moto perpetuo* and etude-topic continues now as the alternation of three sixteenth notes between RH and LH, but the appearance of a descending chromatic line in the bass fills in the span between $\hat{1}$ and $\hat{5}$. "Brahms" may also control the topical realm of some variations, but remnants of order (one of the structural features in question) remain intact. We can see that "Brahms" presents a Viennoise-style sixth variation, but "Paganini's" narrow ascending arpeggiation returns along with the tonic-dominant harmonies from the a-section of the theme. What should become apparent in this chart is the intensification of transgressive elements over the course of the piece in both topical and structural domains, the actions of the fictional composer "Brahms" who emerges and continually becomes more prevalent as the variation set progresses, particularly in variations featuring harmonic alterations, changes to the arpeggiated ascent, and the exposure of the *Urlinie.*

Table 2.4. Summary of Fictional Composers and Transgressive Elements in Op. 35, Bk. I

Section (Var.)	Key	Topics	Fictional Composer	Treatment of Arp. Ascent	Harmonic Changes (e.g. mm. 1–4 of Theme)	*Urlinie* Covered by Superposed Inner Voices
Theme	a	Virtuosic/Étude	Paganini	↑5th ($\hat{1}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{5}$)	i -V - i - V	$\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$ Covered
1	a	Virtuosic/Étude	Paganini	E		
2	a	Virtuosic/Étude	Paganini	E		
3	a	Virtuosic/Étude	Paganini	S	¥ Chromatic Tetrachord	
4	a	Lament	Brahms	N	¥ Phrygian Tetrachord	
5	a	Capriccio (Intermezzo)	Brahms	E		
6	a	Viennoise	Brahms	S		Mostly uncovered ($\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$)
7	a	Étude (Bravura)	Paganini	S		
8	a	Étude	Paganini	N		
9	a	Fantasy	Brahms	N	It_6 -V - It_6 - III	
10	a	Alla zoppa; Hungarian	Brahms	N		
11	A	Music box	Brahms	I	↓ Major Tetrachord	
12	A	Music box	Brahms	E		
13	a	Salon	Brahms	S		Uncovered ($\hat{4}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{2}$)
14a Episode 14b⇒ Coda	a	Virtuosic/Étude (Lament) Style hongrois	Brahms	E	↓ Phrygian Tetrachord, Plagal Progressions, LIP (5–10)	

Legend
S = same interval (↑ 5th)
E = expansion (arp., register, duration)
I = inverted arpeggiation (↓ 4th)
N = no arpeggiation (static)
Blank Box = no significant change or n/a

2.3.3.1 Harmonic Alterations

Brahms is fairly conservative in his treatment of the theme's harmonic structure in the first book of variations, especially the opening i – V harmonies—his alterations to this parameter represent moments of transgression in my narrative interpretation. Although "Brahms" presents a chromatic tetrachord in variation 3 in lieu of alternating tonic and dominant harmonies (see Figure 2.3), it is variation 4 where "Brahms" amplifies this adjustment via a chaconne-like bass line emphasizing a Phrygian tetrachord ($\hat{1}$-♭$\hat{7}$-♭$\hat{6}$-$\hat{5}$). The written out repeat of the opening four measures of variation 4 results in four statements of the Phrygian tetrachord. This transgressive bass line, evocative of an earlier musical style, is much smoother than the stark alteration of i and V from the previous variations (refer to Figure 2.4).

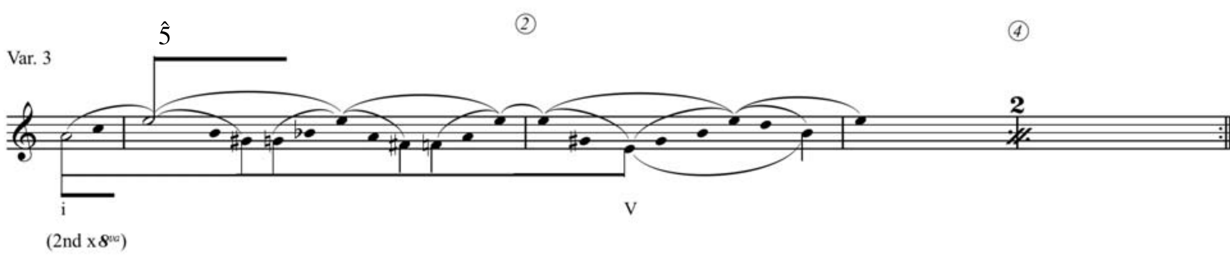

Figure 2.3. Chromatic Tetrachord in Variation 3, mm. 1–4

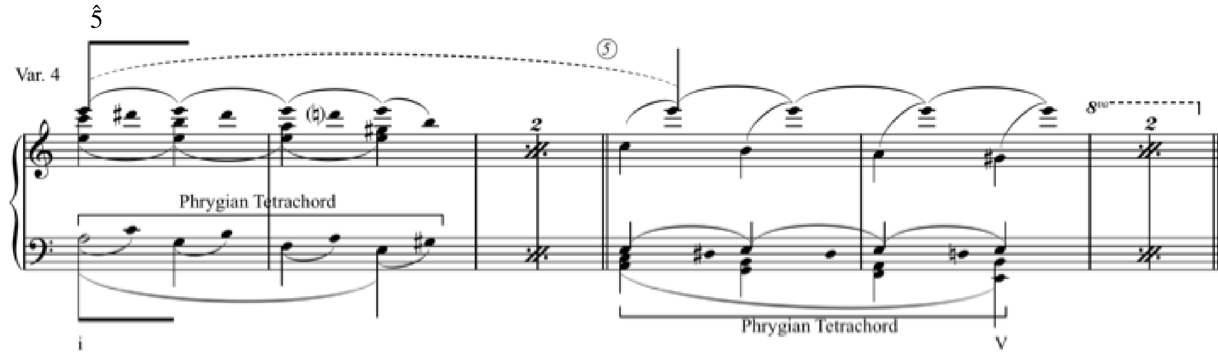

Figure 2.4. Phrygian Tetrachord in Variation 4, mm. 1–8

One other notable harmonic transgression from "Paganini's" opening is the radical transformation "Brahms" makes in variation 9. As conveyed by my sketch in Figure 2.5, the alteration of "Paganini's" tonic and dominant from the opening four is recomposed by "Brahms" to include chromaticism. Italian sixth chords realized with fantasia-like freedom resolve to two different harmonies: the first resolves traditionally to V while the second one resolves to III (C major)! As the most harmonically ambiguous opening of the entire work, I view a diminishing in rank value of "Paganini" and his theme in variation 9 as "Brahms" takes center stage. Here, the harmonic language more typical of Brahms has replaced the traditional diatonic progression.

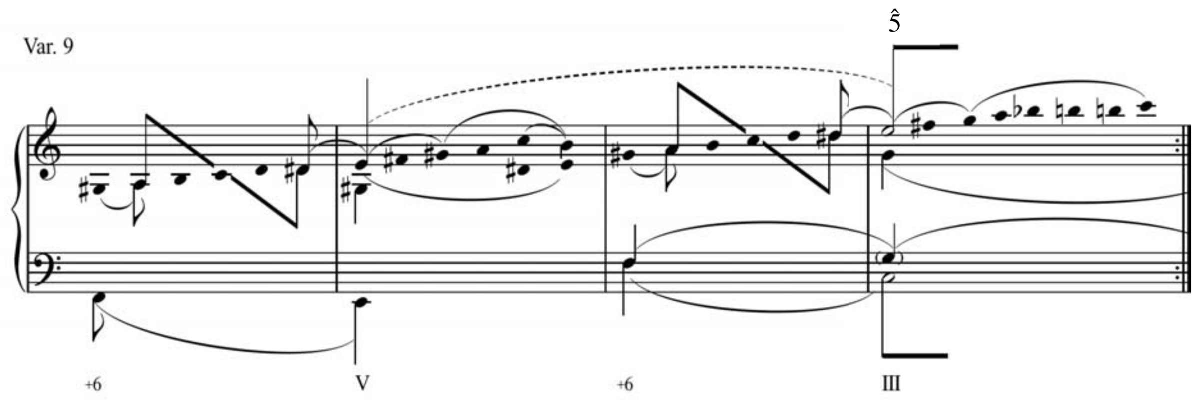

Figure 2.5. Chromaticism replaces i–V Harmonies in Variation 9, mm. 1–4

2.3.3.2 Arpeggiated Ascent

A second structural feature that undergoes substantial transformation across this work is the opening argeggiated gesture up to the *Kopfton*. As I have indicated in Table 2.4, this gesture from Paganini's theme is expressed in one of four ways across the variations: (1) the original ascending fifth of the theme is retained (S), (2) the arpeggiation is expanded beyond the original via register or duration (E), (3) the interval of an ascending fifth is inverted to a descending fourth (I), or (4) the arpeggiation is eliminated producing a static opening (N).
As is made evident by my graphs, "Brahms" immediately transgresses away from the original gesture in variations 1 and 2 (see Figures 2.6 and 2.7). In the first variation, the same arpeggiation (A-C-E) is present, however, he repeats it four times across the A-section of the

theme, allowing a middleground arpeggiation to emerge from A4 in measure 1 to the *Kopfton* (E7) in measure 8. As if gaining in confidence, "Brahms" magnifies the opening arpeggiation in variation 2 through registral expansion. He arpeggiates the opening E4 up an octave to E5 then continues its ascent up another two octaves to E7 in measure 4. Although these two variations are étude-like and represent order topically, the marked expansion of the opening arpeggiation points to a small, but clearly felt transgression against order—"Brahms" is timidly making an appearance.

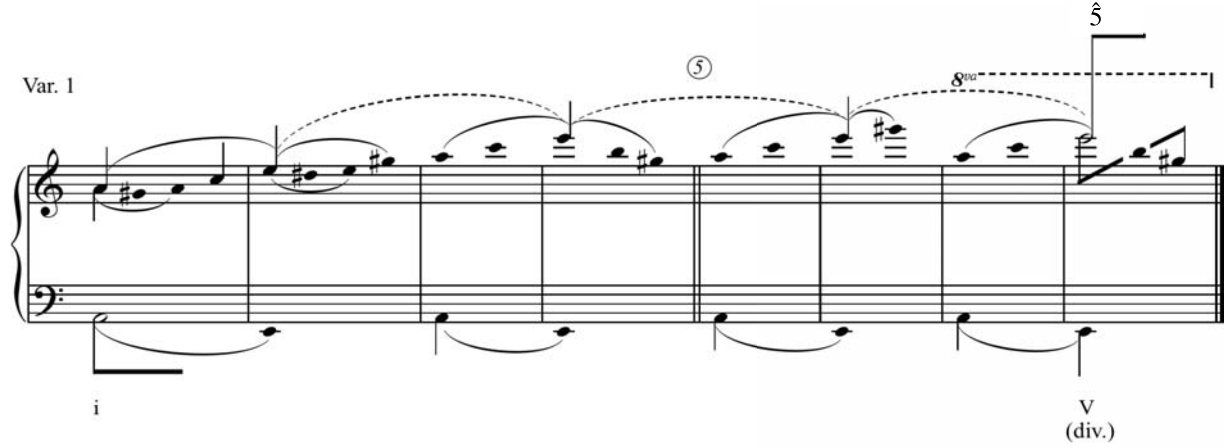

Figure 2.6. Expansion of Opening Arpeggiated Ascent in Variation 1, mm. 1–8

"Brahms" also removes the ascent to $\hat{5}$ in five of the variations, with the first instance occurring in Variation 4. Recall that the static RH texture of this variation begins with $\hat{5}$—the eliminated arpeggiation is a strategic action of "Brahms"—and is prolonged with trill figures (see Figure 2.4). In variation 11, "Brahms" inverts the ascending arpeggiation to $\hat{5}$, the only time he features this modification. He completely removes any remnants of the original theme established by "Paganini" via the descending fourth that approaches $\hat{5}$ coupled with the major mode and delicate music box topic ringing out in a high register (see Figure 2.8). By this point in the work the rank values of order and transgression have switched positions: order has decreased in value since the outset of the work while transgression has increased in value.

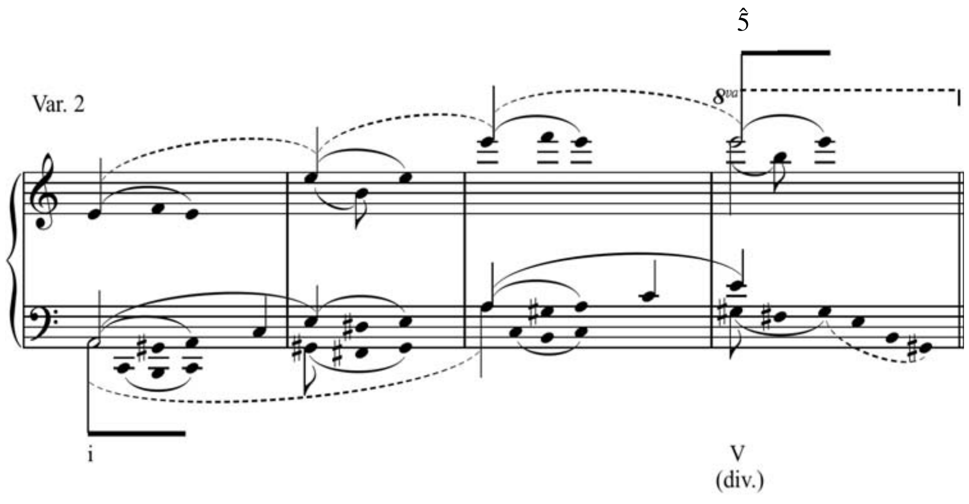

Figure 2.7. Registral Expansion of Arpeggiated Ascent in Variation 2, mm. 1–4

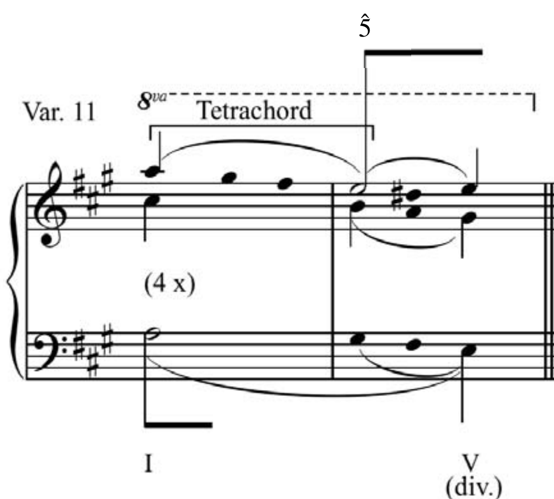

Figure 2.8. Inversion of Arpeggiated Ascent in Variation 11, mm. 1–2

2.3.3.3. Uncovering the *Urlinie*

One structural feature of Paganini's theme that I mentioned earlier was how inner voices arpeggiated down a fifth to 4̂-3̂-2̂ (D5, C5, and B4) of the Fundamental line. Unlike the other structural features discussed so far, the inner-voice activity that covers part of the *Urlinie* remains under "Paganini's" control for most of the variations. "Brahms" exposes the *Urlinie* in the penultimate variation by reversing the descending fifth gestures embellishing 4̂-3̂-2̂ to

ascending gestures (see Figure 2.9). This notable structural derivation can be viewed as a suppression of order by transgression.

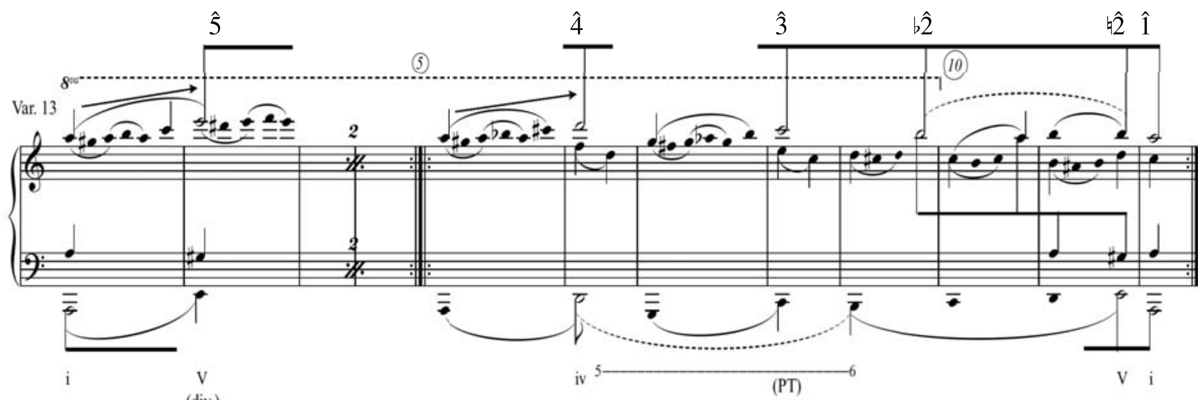

Figure 2.9. Exposed *Urlinie* in Variation 13, mm. 1–12

2.3.4. "Brahms's" Emergent Identity

At a glance, Table 2.4 illustrates the changing rank values between order and transgression across Book I of Op. 35. Within the framework of the comic archetype, the fictional composer "Brahms" as the transgressive element slowly emerges across the set, acquiring a higher rank value over "Paganini." From the early expansions of the opening arpeggiation to the later harmonic transformations and non-etude topics to the showcasing of the uncovered *Urlinie*, "Brahms" prevails over "Paganini" as the set comes to a close. The final variation culminates in the establishment of transgression over order. Although virtuosic in nature, variation 14 displays a Brahmsian virtuosity (e.g., extreme use of the piano's registers, cascading octave arpeggios, hand crossing etc.) with its hints of non-"Paganini" topics: the *style hongrois* including the alteration of $\sharp\hat{4}$-5 and the Phrygian tetrachord. The simple binary form of the theme and all of the preceding variations explodes into an enormous finale consisting of the first variation, 14a (see Figure 2.10 on p. 38), which is linked by an episode (Figure 2.11) to a second variation, 14b⇒coda (see Figure 2.12 on p. 39). In variation 14a, "Brahms" removes $\hat{3}$ (C) from the original arpgeggiation, augmenting the span from $\hat{1}$ to up to the *Kopfton*. In addition, he replaces the alternating tonic-dominant harmonies with descending scalar lines that outline G♯ and C♯ harmonies, reflecting significant transgressions from the theme. The episode in particular highlights earlier transgressions, including statements of the Phrygian tetrachord and

Brahmsian harmonies (including plagal motions—a stylistic feature foreign to "Paganini"). In addition, the reduced dynamic level and legato articulations at the outset of variation 14b present a lyrical treatment of the *moto perpetuo*, now in augmentation, paired with an inner voice alteration of $\sharp\hat{4}$-$\hat{5}$. Collectively, these features capture the Brahmsian topics of early variations, including the lament and the music box. The descent from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$ undergoes a surprising transformation: a 5–10 LIP supports the *Urlinie* instead of the iv (subdominant) and passing III (mediant) harmonies; a modified tetrachord with an augmented sixth built on G♭ (doubly lowered $\hat{7}$) supports the inflected $\flat\hat{2}$ of the *Urlinie*, a surprising alteration indeed. Thus, variation 14 culminates in the victory of the positively-viewed transgression (the fictional composer "Brahms") over the order-imposing hierarchy (the fictional composer "Paganini").

2.4. Closing Remarks and Implications

Since borrowed musical materials are an intrinsic part of many variation sets, I believe that as analysts we can adjust our both our traditional understanding of variations and our aural experience of them to include the relationships that arise between the old and new fictional composers in this genre. Narrative analyses of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century theme-and-variations based on a borrowed theme would most likely yield either a tragic or a comic plot archetype if we choose to value the subjective voice of the new fictional composer over the subjective voice of the older "fictional" composer. Employing an eclectic methodological approach that engaged both the syntactic and semantic musical levels enabled me to demonstrate that narrative analysis is not only possible in this genre, but that it also provides a novel lens through which to understand and listen to this piece.

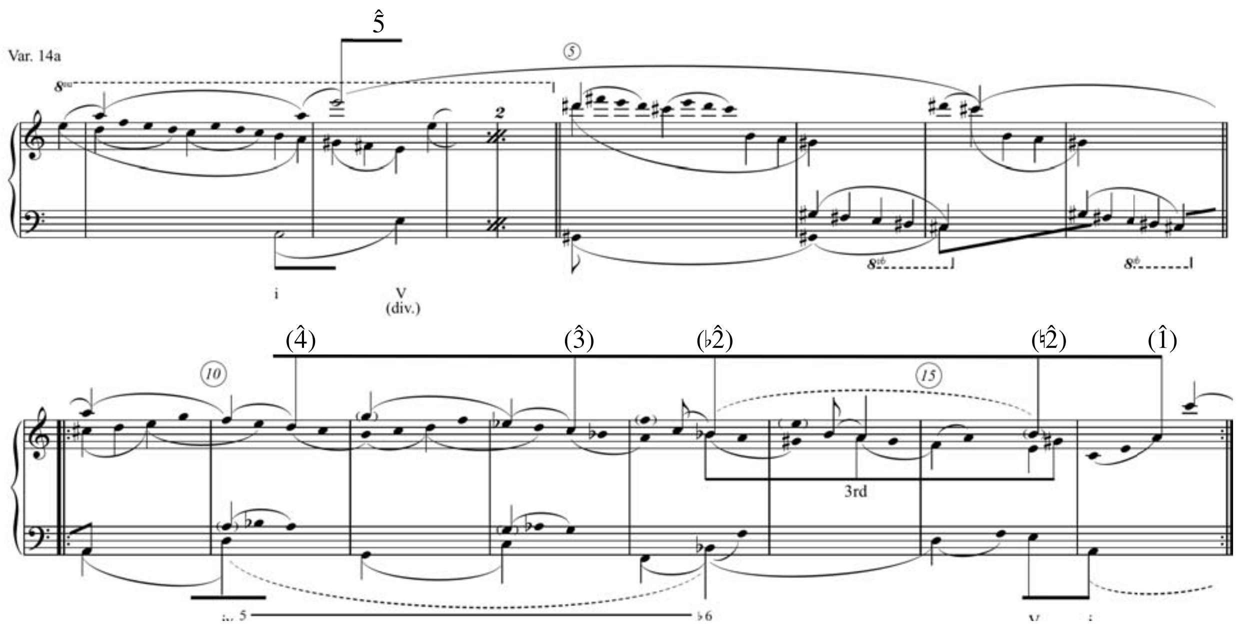

Figure 2.10. "Brahms's" Emergent Identity in Variation 14 (14a) mm. 1–16

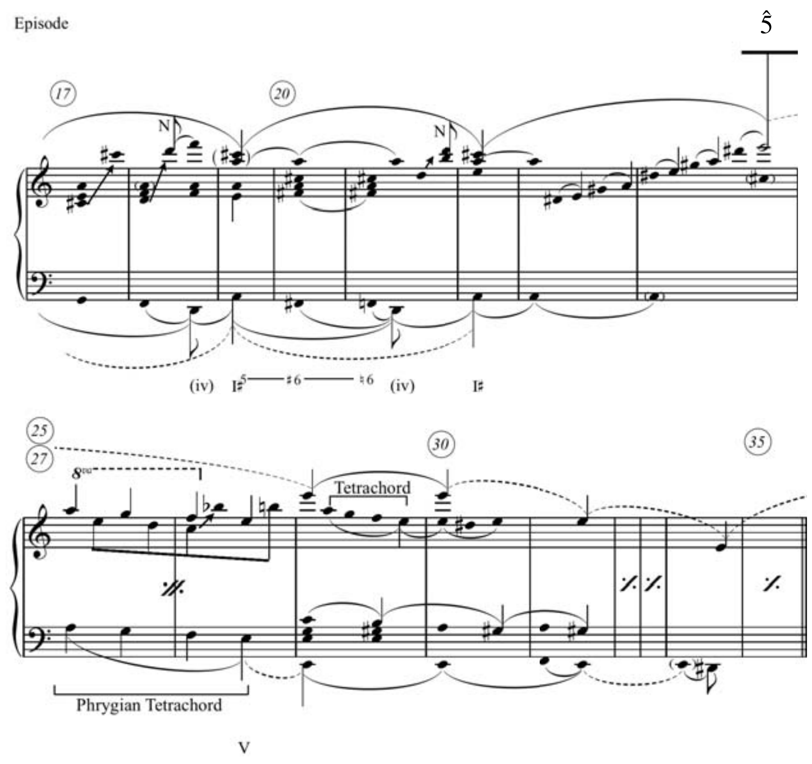

Figure 2.11. "Brahms's" Emergent Identity in Variation 14 (Episode), mm. 17–35

Figure 2.12. "Brahms's" Emergent Identity in Variation 14 (14b⇒Coda), mm. 36–83

CHAPTER THREE

RACHMANINOFF'S *RHAPSODY ON A THEME OF PAGANINI*, OP. 43

3.1 Historical Background

The first sketches of the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43 originated with Rachmaninoff's manipulation of Paganini's theme circa 1926. Unlike his predecessors (Liszt and Brahms), Rachmaninoff explored the melodic inversion of the theme, a treatment that later evolved into the famous eighteenth variation.[1] It was nearly a decade later when, in 1934, Rachmaninoff returned to this sketch material and composed the *Rhapsody* while vacationing at his Swiss Villa "Senar" near Lake Lucerne.

The final work blended elements of the concerto with variations for piano and orchestra. In fact, a number of Rachmaninoff's other piano variation sets, including *Variations on a Theme of Chopin*, Op. 2 and *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*, Op. 42, feature large-scale divisions forming continuous movements resembling the multi-movement scheme of the sonata or concerto.[2] Scholars have tended to divide the *Rhapsody* into three movements based on tempo and/or large-scale tonal structure. Movement I features the home key of A minor and lasts until variation 10 or 11, with variation 11 acting as a transition to the next movement. Variations 12–18 comprise the slower second movement that explores keys beyond tonic, and the final movement encompasses the remaining variations (19–24) in A minor.[3] I will follow Martyn's divisions in my analytical discussions. Chou, Zhou, and Kang all describe variation 11 in A minor as "preparing the dominant of D minor." While I agree with labeling this variation as transitional, I find the labeling of A minor as a *minor dominant* problematic, since truly functional dominants are major in quality.

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[1]For more information concerning the sketch materials, see David Butler Cannata, *Rachmaninoff and the Symphony* (Innsbruck: Studien-Verlag, 1999), 55–58.

[2]Barrie Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor* (Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1990), 146, 317, 328.

[3]See Martyn, *Rachmaninoff*, 328; Zhou, "Piano Variations by Liszt, Lutoslawski, Brahms, and Rachmaninoff on a Theme by Paganini," 79–80; and Heejung Kang, "Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*, Op. 43: Analysis and Discourse," (DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2004), 19. Zhang and Chou divide the work into three sections, but include variation 11 as part of the second movement, see Ying Zhang, "A Stylistic, Contextual, and Musical Analysis of Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini,* Op. 43," (DMA thesis, Rice University, 2008), 14–16 and Chien Chou, "Variation Procedure in Rachmaninoff's Piano Works," (DMA diss., Boston University, 1994), 34–41. Johnston argues for a four-movement construction where variations 12–15 comprise a second movement minuet and scherzo and variations 16–18 form a slow third movement in "Harmony and Climax," 241–42.

Although the *Rhapsody* appears to model the three movements of the concerto scheme (fast-slow-fast), Rachmaninoff did not conceive of the work as such.[4] In fact, upon its completion the composer wrote the following note to his sister-in-law Sophia: "…This piece is written for piano and orchestra, about 20–25 minutes in length. But it is no 'concerto!' It is called Symphonic Variations on a theme by Paganini…."[5] It has been well documented that the *Rhapsody* went through a number of title changes before securing the title we are familiar with today. Correspondence with his friend Vladimir Wilshaw regarding his new composition on 8 September 1934 illustrates a more verbose title, "…Two weeks ago I finished a new piece: it's called a Fantasia for piano and orchestra in the form of variations on a theme by Paganini (the same theme on which Liszt and Brahms wrote variations)…."[6] Clearly, variation form was a vital aspect of the work that Rachmaninoff wished to convey as indicated by the original title on the manuscript. According to Lawrence Gilman's newspaper column—he received an advanced copy of the manuscript for his Philadelphia program notes—Rachmaninoff's "…manuscript score originally bore the title, 'Rapsodie (en forme de Variations) sur un Thème de Paganini.' Mr. Rachmaninoff afterward struck out the parenthetical phrase—but happily, preserved the variations!"[7]

These oft-quoted correspondences and documents demonstrate how Rachmaninoff grappled with the formal implications of his work up until the premiere on November 7, 1943. David Cannata propounds the idea that Rachmaninoff chose his final title cognizant of George Gershwin's two successful rhapsodies: *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) and *Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra* (1931).[8] Since this chapter focuses on narrative trajectories based on intramusical elements (e.g., tonality, phrase structure, harmony, and background structures), I will save discussion of the work's stylistic implications (such as rhapsodic elements) and narrative based on extramusical elements for the next chapter.

3.2 Narrative Analysis: Multiple Archetypes

The eclectic analytical approach established in the previous chapter will provide the foundation for the narrative interpretation of Op. 43. Unlike the comic narrative with a discursive strategy of emergence discussed in Brahms's variations, a single narrative trajectory is less convincing in Rachmaninoff's setting of Paganini's theme. For this reason I will track transgression with respect to multiple musical parameters—tonality, phrase structure, harmony,

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[4]I will discuss Rachmaninoff's four-part formal structure proposed for Fokine's ballet in chapter four.

[5]Sergei Bertensson and Jay Leyda, *Sergei Rachmaninoff: A Lifetime in Music* (New York: New York University Press, 1956; repr., Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001): 304.

[6]Ibid., 305.

[7]Ibid., 307.

[8]Cannata, *Rachmaninoff and the Symphony*, 58.

and the background structure—across the entire work in order to demonstrate that, when viewed together, they complicate a single narrative interpretation.[9]

3.2.1 Order-Imposing Hierarchy and Transgressive Elements

Although order and transgression are still generally characterized in the *Rhapsody* by the original theme's contents versus the stylistic changes made to it (represented by each composer's fictional persona respectively) there is a shift in the specific elements being tracked simply due to the nature of Rachmaninoff's setting. In other words, although the same musical material (Paganini's theme) is the inspiration for both works (Brahms's Op. 35 and Rachmaninoff's Op. 43), different elements from this borrowed material can represent order in each case, depending on how each composer deviates from the theme. Table 3.1 summarizes the musical features characterizing order and transgression in my narrative reading of Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody*.

Table 3.1. Characteristics of Order-Imposing Hierarchy and Transgression

Order-Imposing Hierarchy	Transgression
Tonic (Am)	Keys other than tonic (Dm, FM, B♭m, D♭M)
Form Structure: aabb	- Repetitions or additions to the basic aabb structure - Other formal configurations
Diatonic, mild chromaticism	- "Fantastic" equal-interval collections (WT, HEX, OCT)
Urlinie from $\hat{5}$	- *Urlinie* from $\hat{3}$ - Other background structures

In this work, order is defined by: (1) the theme's minor tonic (A minor), (2) its aabb formal structure,[10] (3) Paganini's primary use of diatonic harmonies with mild chromaticism, and (4) the theme's *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$. Transgression is portrayed through: (1) the modulations to both closely- and distantly-related keys, (2) additions to the basic formal structure and other formal plans, (3) the emphasis on equal-division collections (e.g., hexatonic collections), and (4) background structures that negate a descent from $\hat{5}$. For the sake of comprehensiveness in Table

[9]It should be noted that although discontinuities may be present in other works, their primary and secondary musical parameters align themselves more toward a single interpretation.

[10]The form of Paganini's violin theme from *Caprices* Op. 1, No. 24 is aab. Rachmaninoff includes a written-out repeat of the b-section in his presentation of the borrowed theme.

3.1, some of the transgressive elements have been generalized (e.g., "other background structures"). I will elucidate more precise manifestations of these elements in the four short narratives that follow.[11]

3.2.2 A Tragic Interpretation of Tonality

In Brahms' Piano Variations Op. 35, Book I, tonality did not play a substantial role in my overall narrative interpretation; all of the variations remained in the home key, save for nos. 11 and 12, which only changed mode to the parallel major. This strict adherence to the tonal center of A could suggest that—at least from a tonal standpoint—"Brahms" succumbed to the authority of the theme, unable to break out and explore different keys. Tonality in Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody* becomes a more viable musical parameter in which to investigate transgressive elements since he explores various keys throughout the work. Rachmaninoff strives to break free from the governing theme's tonic A minor, a tonal feature that has persisted since the original *Caprices* were published in 1820. The variations by Paganini (24 Caprices Op. 1, No. 24), Liszt (*Grandes Études de Paganini,* S. 141, No. 6), and Brahms (*Variations on a Theme by Paganini*, Book I) all remain rooted in A minor or its parallel major. Brahms set one variation from Book II in F major (Var. 12), but returned immediately to A minor in Var. 13.

Figure 3.1 tracks the changing rank value of modulations away from and back to A minor throughout the *Rhapsody*. The *x*-axis lays out each section of the work chronologically while the *y*-axis represents rank value on a low-high spectrum based on how tonally close or distant a key is from the tonic. A criterion for assigning order to the tonic (i.e., the *governing* key of a work) of a tonal work is based on formal or genre-based conformances that are stylistically and culturally appropriate. In other words, the choice of tonic that complies with the standard practices of a genre is considered normative and therefore unmarked (as opposed to a marked term). In the case of a variation set based on a pre-existing theme, the received theme establishes order, handed down as it were to the new composer as the key of the new work. Modulations and/or extended tonicizations within a work, especially those that are surprising, unexpected, or distant would be considered marked in comparison with the overall tonic and therefore transgressive. As the order-imposing hierarchy, a work's tonic receives high rank value, while transgressions begin with a low rank value. Appointing order to the tonic A minor in Rachmaninoff's setting is particularly warranted since this tonality has persisted as a controlling

[11]For those readers who are skeptical of the narrative interpretations, the remainder of the chapter can still provide insight into the work's structure. A narrative interpretation simply provides a nuanced lens through which to make sense of the changes to the work's primary musical parameters.

element in all previous variation settings of this theme.[12] Modulations away from the tonic, especially ones of lasting duration, demonstrate a willful and transgressive action of the composer (Rachmaninoff) against the pre-established order.

In the *Rhapsody*, order is established across the first eleven variations (movement I) through the persistence of the tonic minor. The second movement (variations 12–18), however, features two closely related keys and two distantly related keys to tonic. Rachmaninoff's choice to leave the orbit of A minor and set the next seven variations in new keys conveys a positive transgressive action, one that sets a historical precedent. Variations 12 and 13 are in the closely related subdominant key of D minor. Since fifth relations, whether up a fifth to the dominant or down a fifth to the subdominant, are considered close key relations to tonic, the subdominant key in these two variations is illustrated as a small transgression, on that is on the lower-end of the rank spectrum. The change of mode and the third relation between F major and A minor—a common nineteenth-century key relation—spans variations 14–15 and is more distant from the home key; these two variations show an increase in rank value for tonality as they depart further from the home key.

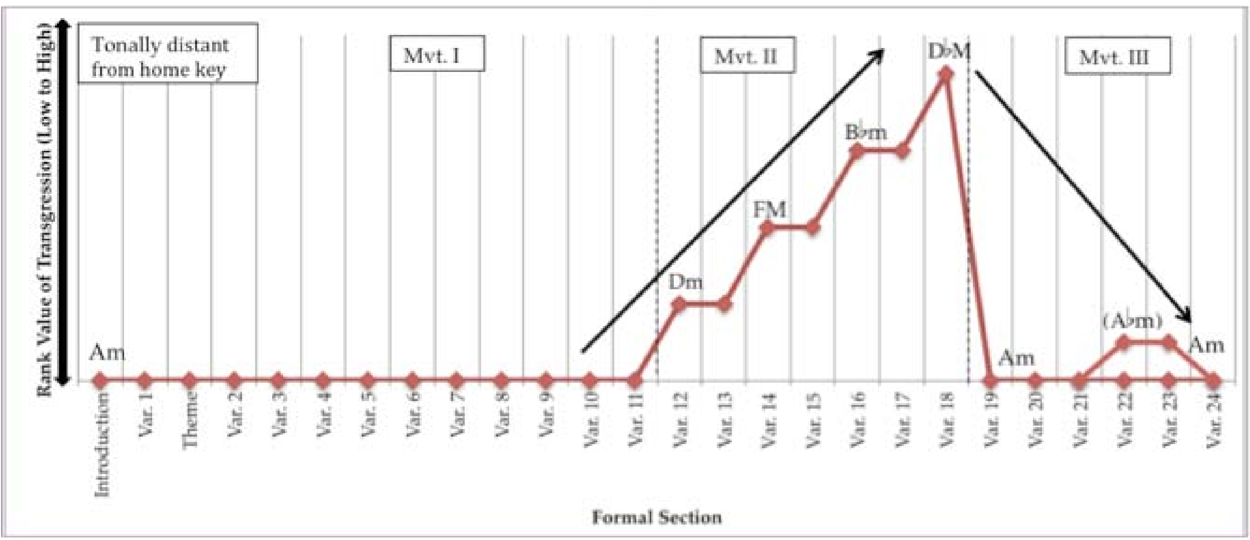

Figure 3.1. Tragic Archetype of Tonality (Low-High-Low Rank Value of Transgression)

[12]Setting the earlier works aside (Paganini, Liszt, Brahms), an argument can be made for assigning order to the tonic A minor because of the internal control of the key for the first eleven variations.

The remaining three variations of movement II diverge dramatically from the minor tonic: variations 16 and 17 are set in B♭ minor (the minor Neapolitan of A minor), which prepare the way for the famous D♭-major setting of variation 18. Indeed, as the only variation set in this key, variation 18 is so tonally distant from the home key (an enharmonically respelled, chromatic major mediant) that it forms a hexatonic relationship with the home key. In "Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions," Richard Cohn coins the term *hexatonic pole* to describe the special relationship between certain major and minor triads whose roots are a major third apart and whose combined pc content completes a hexatonic collection. According to Cohn, "two triads in a hexatonic polar relation are pc-complementary with respect to their source hexatonic collection [the 'hexatonic,' all-combinatorial set-class 6-20]: they are maximally disjunct, but together they efficiently define the entire collection of six pcs from which they are drawn."[13] Returning to the relationship between the theme (A minor) and variation 18 (D♭ major or C♯ major), the collective pc content of their respective triads {9, 0, 4} and {1, 5, 8} comprise a hexatonic collection [014589]. As the most distantly related key in this piece, D♭ major receives the highest rank value, although as (cultural) listeners, we know that this distant and unstable key cannot be sustained for the remainder of the work. Tragically, the rank value of transgression immediately reverses with the arrival of tonic (order) in variation 19. Although the *Rhapsody* culminates in A minor with the defeat of transgression, this did not happen without one final struggle. Halfway through variation 22, Rachmaninoff establishes and prolongs an E♭Mm^7 chord, which functions as V^7 of V in D♭ major (the most tonally distant key from tonic)! The pianist's cadenza in variation 22 continues the E♭^{7} harmony, setting up the expectation for A♭ major in the next variation. Friction arises between the soloist and the orchestra over the tonality of variation 23; the pianist commences with octave E♭s while the orchestra counters with octave E♮s in an attempt to re-establish the home key, derailing the soloist's transgressive effort to eventually restore the distantly related key of D♭ major. The orchestra's interjection forces the soloist to change course, prompting confused statements of the head motive in A♭ minor rather than the anticipated A♭ major. Interrupting the disoriented pianist, the orchestra resets the tonality to the governing A minor, eliminating the last transgressive threat before the work's close. In the realm of tonality, therefore, A minor (order) dominates the first movement of Op. 43, transgression (modulations to other keys) steadily increases in rank throughout the second movement but cannot be

[13]Richard Cohn, "Maximally Smooth Cycles, Hexatonic Systems, and the Analysis of Late-Romantic Triadic Progressions," *Music Analysis* 15, no. 1 (Mar., 1996): 19.

maintained for the work's entirety. Transgression suddenly reverts to a low value at the opening of the third movement when the home key (order) returns. A low–high–low path illustrating the course of transgression across the work points to a tragic archetype for this domain.

3.2.3 Comic Archetypes of Formal Structures

Formal structure in Rachmaninoff's individual variations extends well beyond the rigid patterns that Brahms follows in his own settings of the Paganini theme. Tracking changes to the overall formal structure of the theme throughout the *Rhapsody* and assigning corresponding rank values—a somewhat more subjective task than tracking modulations—can be done based on a collection of criteria for tight-knit or loose formal organization. William Caplin classifies formal units on a continuum that ranges from "tight-knit" organization to "loose" organization. Tight-knit organization is characterized by "…the use of conventional theme-types, harmonic–tonal stability, a symmetrical grouping structure, form-functional efficiency, and a unity of melodic–motivic material" whereas loose organization is characterized by "non-thematic conventional structures, harmonic–tonal instability (modulation, chromaticism), an asymmetrical grouping structure, phrase-structural extension and expansion, form-functional redundancy, and a diversity of melodic–motivic material."[14] I adopt Caplin's criteria for both types of formal organizations found on this continuum (see Table 3.2) in order to distinguish both the larger categories of formal structures present in the *Rhapsody* as well as their relative rank value.

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 list the formal structures found in each variation and organize these manifestations into nine categories. The former table lays out the variations chronologically while the latter table arranges them according to rank value, where looser, more transgressive structures are given a higher value because of their markedness. The first category includes the most tightly knit organization and is ranked the lowest while the ninth category features the most loosely constructed forms and is ranked the highest. The nine categories are: (1) the original formal structure of Rachmaninoff's setting of the theme is retained (aabb); (2) the original formal structure is retained but the a-section is stated four times instead of twice (aaaabb), the basic structure is retained but there is expansion of the b-section, or a combination of the two; (3) the basic structure is expanded, compressed, or features asymmetrical groups; (4) the basic structure is extended since closure is at first averted; (5) the basic structure is truncated; (6) the truncated form is repeated in its entirety; (7) new thematic material (c) is added to a form of the basic structure; (8) a cadenza is appended to a variation that also

[14]Caplin, *Classical Form*, 255, 257.

includes new c-material; and (9) freer structures completely replace the basic formal structure. It is important to note that I use the term "phrase structure" loosely in this piece since some of the "phrases" do not end with an authentic cadence. Also, the lowercase letters representing the formal structures in Table 3.3 and 3.4 do not necessarily represent the return of thematic material; these letter designations function as place holders, displaying the relative formal sections *within* each variation (i.e., the formal structures are reset at the outset of each variation).

Table 3.2. Summary of Caplin's Criteria for Classifying Formal Units[15]

Musical Criteria	Tight-Knit Organization	Loose Organization
Tonality	Formal unit begins and ends in the same key	Formal unit opens and closes in a subordinate key or it modulates
Cadence	PAC (tightly knit), IAC (less tightly knit)	HC (loose), lack of cadential closure (significantly looser)
Harmony	Authentic cadential progressions, tonic prolongational progressions	Dominant prolongations, sequences, chromaticism (tonally destabilizing)
Grouping Structure	Symmetrical grouping structures, especially ones based on exponentials of 2	Asymmetrical grouping structures
Functional Efficiency	Functionally efficient	Functions are rendered redundant through repetitions, extensions, expansions, and interpolations; ambiguity of formal function
Motivic Uniformity	Uniform melodic-motivic and accompanimental material	Diverse motives, frequently changing accompanimental patterns
Formal Conventionality	Conventional formal types (e.g., periods, sentences, etc.)	Non-conventional designs

Category one is the tight-knit formal structure of the theme (aabb) as set by Rachmaninoff. As a formal unit, the theme (a simple continuous binary) is tightly constructed based on the following criteria: it remains in the same key, closing with a PAC; it primarily features authentic cadential progressions, although a descending fifths sequence initiates the contrasting b-section; the grouping structure for each section is symmetrical (4+4, 8+8) and it is functionally efficient; a consistent motive unifies both sections of the binary form; and conventional formal types are present (one phrase that ends on V and a second that closes with a PAC). Only three variations adhere to this aabb structure, (refer to Table 3.4): variations 1 and

[15]Ibid., 85. I am privileging grouping structure, functional efficiency, harmony, and cadences in my analysis.

2 both retain the theme's tight-knit structure in the home key while Rachmaninoff's thirteenth variation illustrates the 4+4+8+8 grouping structure in the subdominant key (D minor). Although change in tonality can account for a looser formal organization according to Caplin, I will *generally* give little consideration to tonality when ranking the formal looseness of the variations, especially when other criteria such as grouping structures align with those of the order (the theme). Group two diverges only minimally from the original formal structure of the theme; the primary criteria contributing to a loosening of the formal structures in this category is the decrease in functional efficiency through repetition of the a-section (variations 12, 9, and 8) as well as the expansion of the theme's b-sections in variations 9 (12+12), 5 (14+14) and 8 (14+14). Despite the fact that I have listed additional criteria that could factor into a looser interpretation of the formal structure in variation 12, I have arranged it first in the category or closer in relation to the theme than the others. Although this variation is set in the key of D minor and one of the cadences in the first b-section is weakened by Rachmaninoff's use of the minor dominant instead of the major dominant, the lengths of its b-sections are more aligned to those of the original theme than the b-sections found in variations 5, 8, and 9 (see grouping structure column in Table 3.4). In the fifth variation Rachmaninoff begins to alter the grouping structure so that the b-section is expanded to almost twice their original length (14 measures instead of 8 measures) leading to a less functionally efficient structure. The expanded b-sections of variations 8 and 9 are also fleshed out to 12 measures and 14 measures respectively.

Rachmaninoff's alterations to the grouping structure and, subsequently, the functional efficiency of the formal organizations steadily begin to relax. In the third category, variation 4 presents expansions to both a- and b-sections (8 and 12 measures respectively) so it is slightly looser in its organization than variation 8. Asymmetrical grouping structures begin to emerge in this category, in addition to phrase expansions, demonstrating a further digression from the original structure. The asymmetrical b-phrases in variation 7 (10 + 16 measures) are paired with expanded a-phrases (8 measures each) while variation 3 features compressed a-phrases (6 measures each) and asymmetrical b-phrases of 9 and 10 measures respectively. This compression along with the asymmetrical expansion of the b-phrases reflects an inconsistency of functional efficiency and therefore a loosening of the formal organization. The remaining variations from this third category all come from the third movement: variations 19–21. Although stability is restored in these variations with the return to tonic, cadential articulation becomes significantly looser than in the previous aabb variations. Variations 19 and 21 share the same grouping structure (4+4+6+6), but the former features a tighter-knit phrase structure. Its a-sections only articulate the minor dominant instead of the major dominant, but its b-phrases end conclusively with authentic cadences. Variation 21, however, is one step closer to the loose organization end of the spectrum since the criteria for harmony relaxes the phrase structure

even more so than in variation 19. Hexatonic collections ($HEX_{0,1}$ in m. 16 and $HEX_{2,3}$ in m. 18) substitute for expected diatonic harmonies in the second b-phrase adding instability to the overall phrase organization. Since more musical criteria demonstrate loose organization in variation 20, it is the most removed from the theme out of the variations featuring the aabb formal structure. Not only does this variation feature odd-numbered phrases (5+5+9+9) and hexatonic substitutions in the first b-phrase ($HEX_{0,1}$ in m 13 and $HEX_{2,3}$ in m. 16), it also includes unconventional phrase endings; the b-phrases conclude with the Neapolitan moving directly to tonic.

Table 3.3. Relative Formal Structures in *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43

Movement	Section	Formal Structure	Form-Structure Categories	Total Length (measures)
I	Var. 1	(aabb)	Original	24
	Theme	(aabb)		24
	Var. 2	(aabb)		24
	Var. 3	(aabb)	Expansion, compression, etc.	31
	Var. 4	(aabb)		40
	Var. 5	(aabb)	Expansion of b	36
	Var. 6	(aabbbb) coda	Difficulty closing	54
	Var. 7	(aabb)	Expansion, compression, etc.	42
	Var. 8	(aaaabb)	Four statements of a	40
	Var. 9	(aaaabb)		36
	Var. 10	(abb) coda	Truncated form	31
	Var. 11	Free + cadenza	Free	9+cad.
II	Var. 12	(aaaabb)	Four statements of a	28
	Var. 13	(aabb)	Original	24
	Var. 14	(aab ext., aab) coda	Repetition of Truncated Form	37
	Var. 15	(aab, aab, c, d) coda*	New Thematic Material	59
	Var. 16	Intro (aa) Intro (abb) co	Repetition of Truncated Form	36
	Var. 17	(aabb) codetta, lead in	Difficulty closing	25
	Var. 18	Intro (aab) (aab) (aac) coda	New Thematic Material	42
III	Var. 19	(aabb)	Expansion, compression, etc.	20
	Var. 20	(aabb)		20
	Var. 21	(aabb)		28
	Var. 22	Free + cadenza	Free	65+ cad.
	Var. 23	Intro (aaaabbc) cadenza	New Thematic Material and Cadenza	52 + cad.
	Var. 24	Free + coda	Free	69

Table 3.4. Summary of Formal Structures in *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43

Form-Structure Categories	Order and Transgression	Rank Value	Section (Var.)	Grouping Structure (no. of measures)[16]	Criteria for Loose Organization
(1) Original (aabb)	Order	Low	1	4+4+8+8	n/a
			Theme	4+4+8+8	n/a
			2	4+4+8+8	n/a
			13	4+4+8+8	Tonality (variation set in a subordinate key)
(2) Four statements of a-section (aaaabb) expansion of b-section (aabb) or combination	Transgression	Low ↓	12	4+4+4+4+8+8	Functional efficiency (repetition), tonality, cadential articulation
			9	4+4+4+4+12+12	Functional efficiency (repetition, expansion)
			5	4+4+14+14	Functional efficiency (b-sections expanded)
			8	4+4+4+4+14+14	Functional efficiency (repetition, expansion)
(3) Expansion, Compression, Asymmetrical Groupings (aabb)			4	8+8+12+12	Functional efficiency (expansion in both sections)
			7	8+8+10+16	Functional efficiency (expansion in both sections), asymmetrical grouping structures
			3	6+6+9+10	Grouping structure (expansion in both sections, asymmetry of b-sections)
			19	4+4+6+6	Grouping structure (compression of b-section), cadential articulation
			21	4+4+6+6	Grouping structure (compression of b-section), cadential articulation, harmony
			20	5+5+9+9	Grouping structure (expansions), cadential articulation, harmony
(4) Difficulty Closing (aabb)			17	4+4+9+4(+2+2)	Functional efficiency (expansion of b, codetta, lead in), asymmetrical grouping structure (9+4), cadential articulation (b lacks AC), tonality
			6	7+7+8+8(+6+6+12)	Functional efficiency (expansion of a, repetition and compression of b, coda), asymmetrical grouping structure, cadential articulation (no AC in b-statements)
(5) Truncated Form (abb)			10	8+7+8(+8)	Functional efficiency (coda), asymmetrical grouping structure (7+8), non-conventional design (truncated)

[16]I have chosen to use "+" signs instead of repeat signs in order to indicate when written out repeats vary in length. Structures that are in parentheses are added on to the basic structure defined in the category column [e.g., the basic structure of category 3 is aabb but the two variations in the category feature extra closing material. The grouping structure for variation 6 is 7+7+8+8 (aabb) plus additional structures (6+6+2+2)]. The information in this column is replicated in words in Table 3.3, column 3.

Table 3.4 continued

Form-Structure Categories	Order and Transgression	Rank Value	Section (Var.)	Grouping Structure (no. of measures)	Criteria for Loose Organization
(6) Repetition of Truncated Form (aab, aab) and (aa, abb)	Transgression	(Low)	14	3+2+8(+3)+1.5+ 1.5+8(+8+2: leads to Var. 15)	Functional efficiency (repetition of truncated form, piano solos and coda), harmonic instability, cadential articulation (lacks final AC), asymmetrical grouping structure
			16	(6+)4+4(+2)+4+ 10+11(+7)	Functional efficiency (repetition of truncated form, intro and coda), tonality, asymmetrical grouping structure
(7) New Thematic Material Added (aab, aab, c, d)* (aab, aab, aac)			15	(2+)2+2+11+2+ 2+8(+30 or (9+8+13)	Functional efficiency (repetition of truncated material, additional thematic material), harmonic instability, asymmetrical grouping structure
			18	(2+)2+2+7+2+2 +7+2+2+10(+4)	Functional efficiency (repetition of truncated material, additional material), asymmetrical grouping structure
(8) New Thematic Material and Cadenza (aaaabbc, cadenza)			23	(4+)4+4+4+4+8 +9+15+ cadenza	Functional efficiency (repetition, additional material), tonality, harmonic instability, cadential articulation, asymmetrical grouping structure, non-conventional formal design
(9) Free + Cadenza or Coda (aaa, cadenza)			11	3+3+3(+3+) cadenza	Functional efficiency (repetition), cadential articulation, harmonic instability, non-conventional formal design
			22	32+33 cadenza	Functional efficiency (repetition, expansion), cadential articulation, harmonic instability, non-conventional formal design
		High	24	4+4+61	Functional efficiency (expansion), cadential articulation, harmonic instability, non-conventional formal design

Variations 17 and 6 comprise my fourth category of formal structures that still contain the basic schemata aabb, but have difficulty closing in a variety of ways. Variation 17 features an expanded first b-section that also lacks an authentic cadence whereas the b-section is reiterated four times in variation 6, each of which is wanting in cadential articulation (each of the b-statements ends with a plagal motion from ♭II to i).

A non-conventional truncated form of the original structure defines my fifth category. Variation 10 is the sole variation in this category as it features only one statement of the a-section and an asymmetrical grouping structure for the two b-sections (7+8). The a-section is harmonized with the *Dies irae* chant followed by two measures that repeat the lower neighbor motion of the chant. I placed variations 14 and 16 into a separate category (category six) since these variations repeat a truncated form of the original aabb structure, whereas variation 10 displays only a single truncated form, spanning the entire section. Functional efficiency is further diminished in category six since entire truncated patterns (aab, abb) are now repeated that produce fluctuations between a- and b-materials; additional sections (introductions, piano solos, codas, and a lead-in) further broaden the diversity of these two variations.

My seventh formal structure category builds upon the sixth—repeated truncated patterns are present—but new thematic material is now added. Tonality, asymmetrical grouping structures and further decreases in functional efficiency are the primary criteria that I use to classify the formal looseness of variations 15 and 18. Category eight is the last class of variations to retain remnants of the original formal structure. Variation 23 is the only variation in this category as it still preserves aaaabb but adds new thematic material (c) as well as a cadenza. Functional efficiency, tonality, harmonic instability, cadential articulation, asymmetrical grouping structure, and non-conventional formal design—nearly all of Caplin's criteria—are all present in this variation. In the ninth and final category, non-conventional patterns (including cadenzas) reflect Rachmaninoff's freer treatment of the theme. Although it is possible still to interpret small a-sections in variations 11, 22, and 24, each essentially abandons any of the previous seven formal patterns.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the transvaluation of formal structures across the work based upon my nine categories of formal structure present in the variations. Comparable with Figure 3.1, the variations in Figure 3.2 are laid out chronologically along the *x*-axis while the spectrum of rank values for transgression lie along the *y*-axis of the graph. I have assigned order to the phrase structure of the theme (aabb) as set by Rachmaninoff. Given that he chose to call the work a rhapsody, one would expect it to have an improvisatory predisposition and, by

extension, freer formal sections or variations.[17] Ideally then, I would expect that Rachmaninoff would loosen the formal restraints of the theme substantially throughout the work, allowing the work to live up to its name. Based on these expectations, I assign positive value to variations with looser formal structures (i.e., ones that shed the theme's restrictive phrase structure in favor of structural ambiguity).

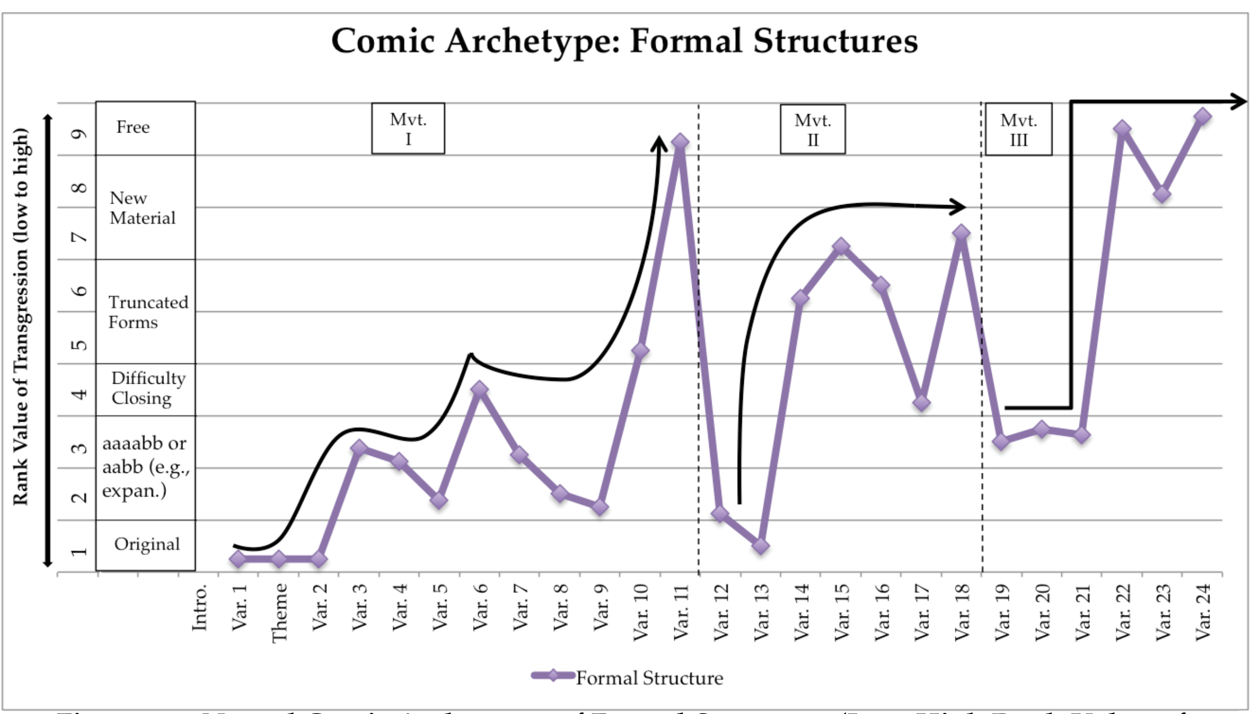

Figure 3.2. Nested Comic Archetypes of Formal Structures (Low-High Rank Value of Transgression)

Based on the low-rank value of transgression at opening of the *Rhapsody* and its high-rank-value by the conclusion (a graphic illustration of order would produce the opposite trajectory of high–low rank value across the work) it appears that a comic plot archetype best captures the transvaluation of formal structures across the piece. Although there is an overall low-to-high trajectory of transgression, this reading is perhaps lacking in nuance. What about the sudden spikes or significant drops in rank value (e.g., variation 11 and variation 19)? Are there other interpretations that can capture these somewhat radical rank-value reversals/shifts?

[17]Among other characteristics, fantasy or free variations are often structurally loose in comparison to the theme.

One alternative would be to divide the work into its three movements and track the fluctuations of this musical parameter into three shorter spans. This strategy can offer the analyst a means of comparison between the movements, which could contribute to a more insightful and nuanced understanding of transvaluation across the work as a whole (dotted vertical lines in Figure 3.2 define the boundaries of the three movements). In movement I there is a general rise in rank value for transgression up to the highly valued free formal construction of variation 11. (Rachmaninoff opens the variation with capricious piano statements and ends with the first piano cadenza.) Except for the spike in value at variation 6, this movement broadly displays a comic archetype with a discursive strategy of emergence (the intensity of rank value slowly increases as each formal category appears). An immediate decline in the rank value of variation 12 (aaaabb) and variation 13 (aabb) brings the work back into closer proximity with the form of the theme; it is as if Rachmaninoff resets the rank value of transgression to "low" for the start of the second movement. In a similar manner, the formal structures in movement II begin with a low valuation for transgression but demonstrate higher valuations by the end of the movement. Rachmaninoff differentiates the formal construction of Variation 18 to include a two-measure introduction, a coda, and three varied statements of Paganini's original aab format [Intro (a a b) (a a b) (a a c) coda]. Even though this variation's formal structure is transgressive, it continues to abide by the initial basic pattern, not quite attaining the same structural looseness as variation 11. Unlike the slowly emerging transgression in movement I, the second movement features a more sudden increase in the rank value of transgression (see variations 13–14). Unsurprisingly, the third movement also returns to the formal construction of the theme (variations 19–21), while the remainder of the movement abruptly shifts to the category of free formal construction, without presenting any gradual change in formal organization. This movement features the bulk of variations that may be categorized as the most divergent and formally loose in their construction. Variation 11 was the only other variation in either of the previous movements even to reach the status of "free." Dividing the work into movements and tracking transgression in each gives a subtlety to the overarching comic archetype that might otherwise be overlooked: smaller comic plot archetypes are nested within the overall comic archetype. Each nested comic trajectory paints a slightly different picture: the first depicts a gradual increase in rank value of transgression or, more specifically, a discursive strategy of emergence; the second illustrates a more sudden increase in rank, but one that never reaches the "free" end of the formal-construction spectrum (i.e., a retreat or withdrawal); and the third movement portrays an extreme reversal in the rank value of transgression, one that then prevails at a high rank value for multiple variations. Both movements two and three display Almén's discursive strategy of epiphany, where the

"narrative conflict gives way to a sudden, unexpected new development, or epiphany, that enacts the transvaluation—the victory of the transgressive elements—at a stroke."[18]

Returning to the overall comic archetype now—after exploring the fluctuations nested within the overall trajectory—a meta-narrative of emergence can be seen unfolding across the work, in which the presentation of freely constructed variations slowly transpires. The majority of the variations in the first movement feature tightly constructed formal designs; looser structures (see categories 4–7) predominate in the second movement, while the bulk of the free variations (three-quarters) are finally attained in the final third movement.

3.2.4 Comic Archetype of "Fantastic" Collections (HEX, OCT, and WT)

In his dissertation "Harmony and Climax in the Late Works of Sergei Rachmaninoff," Blair Johnston devotes a chapter to the composer's employment of "fantastic" chromatic collections (i.e., equal-interval collections: octatonic, hexatonic, and whole-tone).[19] Johnston studies these chromatic structures along with tonal and modal structures in order to develop a framework for interpreting the harmonic, expressive, and rhetorical associations of the composer's mature works—"fantastic" structures are signs for tonal tension and climactic moments.[20] According to Johnston, Rachmaninoff is more likely to favor "fantastic" equal-interval collections "…in passages that intensify, destabilize, and lead to climaxes on various scales."[21]

As will be discussed below, octatonic structures in the *Rhapsody* are typically presented as melodic configurations, oscillating diminished seventh chords, or as large-scale frameworks that prolong significant structural notes. Like Johnston, I follow the practice of labeling the unique transposition level of each collection type using fixed-zero labels, where pc 0 is C (refer to Figure 3.3).[22] Based on Johnston's corpus study, hexatonic structures are much more common in Rachmaninoff's works, especially earlier on in his career, unlike octatonic collections, which

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[18]Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 188.

[19]Johnston, "Harmony and Climax," 41. Richard Taruskin refers to equal-division chromatic structures as Russian "fantastic" harmonies; Johnston refers to these structures collectively as "fantastic" chromatic structures.

[20]Johnston focuses on Rachmaninoff's mature repertoire from 1909–1940 (Opp. 30–45). See also David Cannata's division of Rachmaninoff's oeuvre in Cannata, *Rachmaninoff and the Symphony*, 65–66: Opp. 1–16 (1891–99), Opp. 17–29 (1900–09), Opp. 29–39 (1909–17), and Opp. 40–45 (1917–40)—the inception of *Isle of the Dead,* Op. 29 commences in the second period while its completion falls into the third period.

[21]Johnston, "Harmony and Climax," 82.

[22]See also Joseph N. Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, 3rd ed. (Upper Sadle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 144–50.

rarely occur in his pre-1909 compositions.[23] According to Johnston, manifestations of the hexatonic collection tend to materialize implicitly through chromatic major third relations (incomplete collection statements) and through chord rotation (cycles) and oscillation, including substitutions for diatonic fifth relations. My analysis will demonstrate that hexatonic structures in the *Rhapsody* commonly embellish or substitute for expected diatonic harmonies. Finally, the whole-tone partitioning is fairly exceptional in Rachmaninoff's output; Johnston himself only briefly addresses a handful of instances across his repertoire.[24] In contrast to the other two "fantastic" chromatic collections, whole-tone structures cannot generate major or minor triads, making this collection more challenging to incorporate into a heavily tertian context. Large-scale realization of the complete collection and (0246) segments appear at climatic moments in the *Rhapsody* (see Table 3.5 which outlines *some* of the common methods for partitioning each collection).

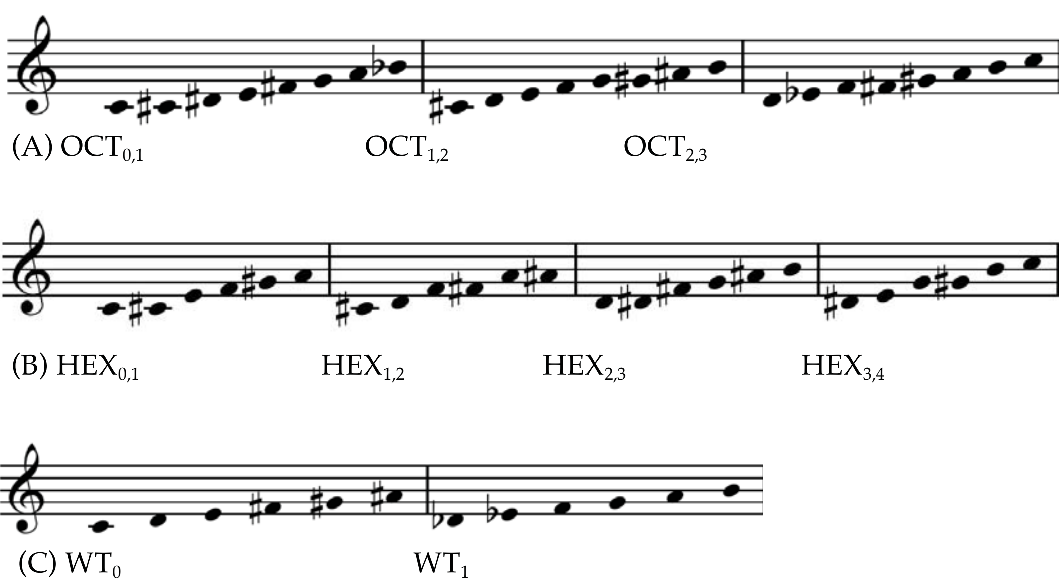

Figure 3.3: Distinct Transpositions of "Fantastic" Structures: (A) Octatonic, (B) Hexatonic, and (C) Whole-Tone

[23]Johnston, "Harmony and Climax,"142–43. For a more in-depth discussion and analysis of Rachmaninoff's melodic-harmonic techniques involving octatonic structures, see 104–35.

[24]Ibid., 154–58.

Table 3.5. Common Partitions of "Fantastic" Chromatic Collections

Collection	Common Partitions
Octatonic (0134679T)	Interlocking °7th chords
Hexatonic (014589)	Major triad cycle
	Minor triad cycle
	Interlocking major and minor triads
	Interlocking augmented triads
Whole-tone (02468T)	etc. (026) cycle
	Augmented triads
	etc. (0246) cycle

Although there is some overlap between our identification of collection types in Op. 43 (Johnston's exploration of "fantastic" structures goes beyond this work), our interpretations and analytical angles contrast considerably. In the following section I will shed light on any similarities or discrepancies between our analyses. My concern with these equal-interval structures is how they can inform a long-range narrative about Rachmaninoff's variation strategy. By tracing their frequency, type, and function, I can demonstrate how Rachmaninoff's mature-style harmonic syntax slowly supplants the Classical syntax of Paganini's theme.

As one of the transgressive elements in my analysis, "fantastic" collections start out with a low rank value, but their recurring presence and their increasing structural importance through movements two and three raises their relative rank value (see Table 3.6). I plot any surface-level or foreground occurrences of a "fantastic" collection (e.g., an embellishment, a scalar passage etc.) toward the lower end of the rank spectrum (an absence of these collections being assigned an even lower rank). I ascribe Rachmaninoff's substitution of "fantastic" collections for expected harmonies from the theme as a more willful attempt on his part to replace the original harmonic progression; "fantastic" collections functioning in this manner, therefore, receive a medium rank value. Finally, middleground occurrences (i.e., large-scale "fantastic" mechanisms) receive the highest rank value since these moments create friction with the underlying diatonic framework (this *hyperdissonance*, according to Johnston, is a hallmark of Rachmaninoff's mature compositional style). In the ensuing analytical discussion I will address the following trend: the scarcity of "fantastic" chromatic collections in movement one, but an increasing deployment of them in the last two movements, particularly the final movement. Figure 3.4 shows the instances of these "fantastic" collections throughout the work while Figure 3.5 displays the frequency with which each of the three collection-types materialize. As in my previous analyses, I will highlight only a handful of variations for discussion; additional information is available in Table 3.7.

Table 3.6. Functions and Corresponding Rank Values of the "Fantastic" Collections in Op. 43

Transgression	Function	Rank Value
"Fantastic" Chromatic Collections (HEX, OCT, WT)	Embellishing	Low
	Substitution	Medium
	Large-scale Prolongation	High

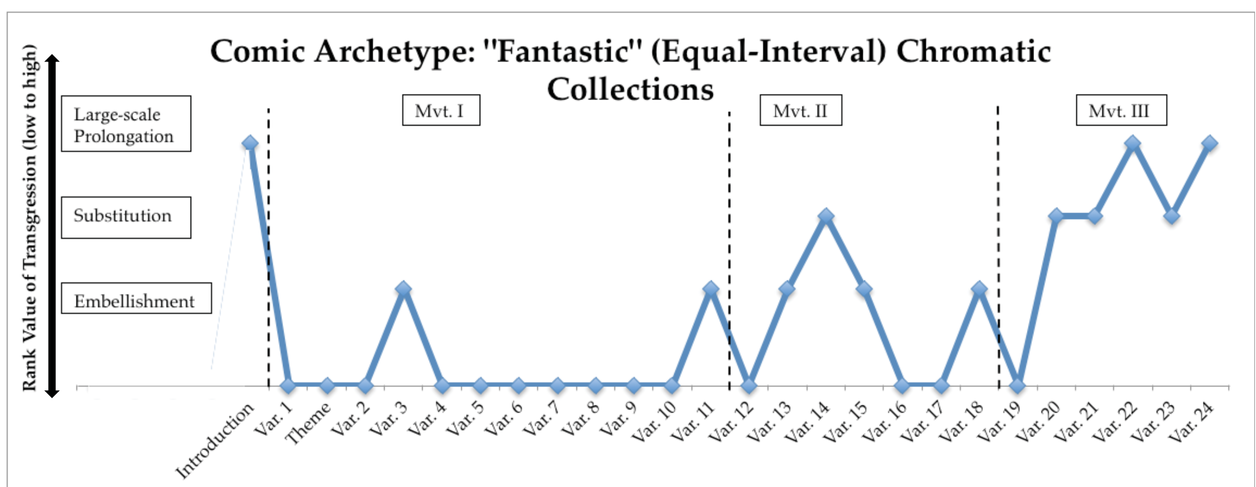

Figure 3.4. Location and Function of "Fantastic" Chromatic Collections in Op. 43

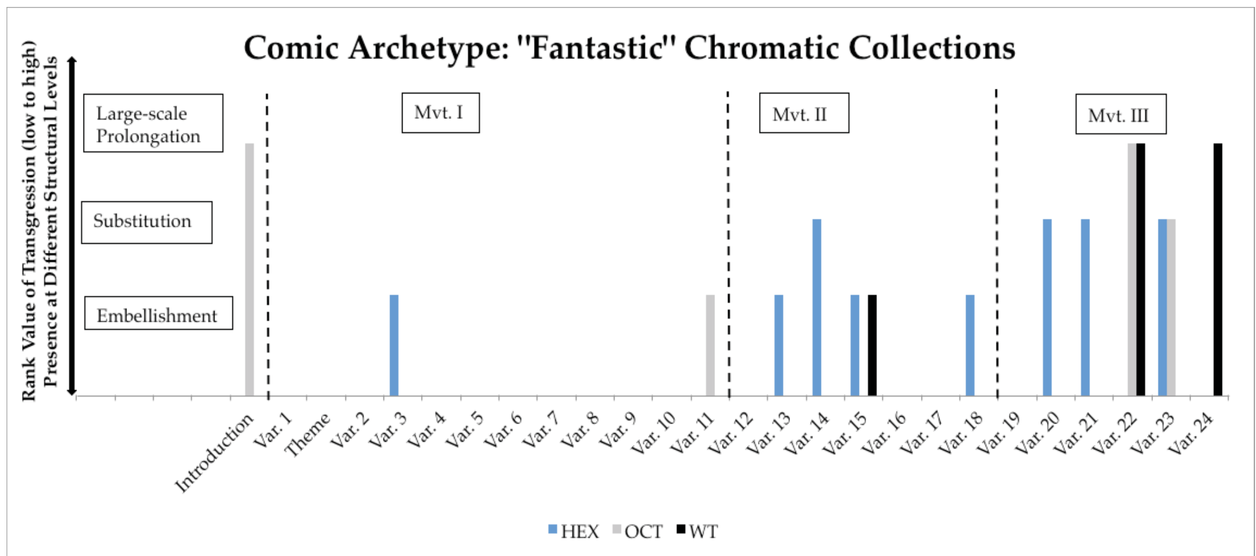

Figure 3.5. Types of "Fantastic" Chromatic Collections Featured in Op. 43

A brief examination of Figures 3.4 and 3.5, along with Table 3.7, might raise a red flag for some readers. How can a transgressive element (in this case, the presence of an octatonic collection in the introduction) precede the order-imposing hierarchy (the theme), which itself lacks this harmonic structure (recall that in Almén's methodology, order precedes any transgressions)? For the majority of theme-and-variations, this reversal is not an issue since the theme (either original or borrowed) is presented at the outset, establishing the controlling

hierarchy for the remainder of the work. Rachmaninoff plays with the ordering of a traditional set of variations by delaying the arrival of the theme until after a short introduction and a first variation. In a fashion similar to the variations in the fourth movement of Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony No. 3 in E♭, Op. 55, Rachmaninoff precedes the theme with a skeletal variation (a basic framework of what is to come). Since the theme generates the variations in this genre, regardless of where they are situated in relation to the theme, it is possible for transgressions to precede the order-imposing hierarchy, and could be understood rhetorically as a foreshadowing technique. In other words, Rachmaninoff's simultaneous presentation of diatonic and octatonic frameworks creates a focal point that anticipates the upcoming harmonic landscape for the listener; the *Rhapsody*'s harmonic syntax will engage with and negotiate between tonal and equal-division structures. Another way to account for Rachmaninoff's idiosyncratic ordering is to view the introduction as separate or outside of the theme-and-variation form proper, a kind of *parageneric* space.[25]

Table 3.7. Variations from Op. 43 that Employ "Fantastic" Chromatic Collections

Mvt.	Variation	"Fantastic" Collection	Primary Function	Descritpion
	Intro.	Octatonic	Foreshadowing	A complete $OCT_{0,1}$ collection built on an ascending octatonic scale in the bass coexists with a diatonic framework
I	3	Hexatonic	Embellishment	An (048) from $HEX_{0,1}$ embellishes iv while an (037) from $HEX_{3,4}$ embellishes III
	11	Octatonic	Embellishment	Descending $OCT_{1,2}$ and $OCT_{2,3}$ scalar passages in piano cadenza embellish $\hat{1}$
II	13	Hexatonic	Embellishment	$HEX_{1,2}$ references made by the piano (minor triad partitions with roots a M3 apart) embellish $\hat{5}$ pedal[26]
	14	Hexatonic	Substitution	Interlocking major and minor triads from $HEX_{0,1}$ (C♯m and FM) substitute for the diatonic V–i harmonies[27]
	15	Hexatonic, Whole-Tone	Embellishment	$HEX_{0,1}$ collection embellishes $\hat{1}$; re-transitional WT_0 passage derived from (048) trichords between two theme statements

[25]James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 281–305. Chapter 13 discusses *parageneric* space in sonata form, including introductions and codas.

[26]Johnston weighs the structural significance of the $HEX_{1,2}$ collection more prominently than I do, because he interprets a collection that is mitigated in the first half of the variation with the final pc of the collection (pc 10) eventually materializing in the second half of the variation.

[27] Johnston and I agree about the function and partitioning of this $HEX_{0,1}$ collection.

Table 3.7. Continued

Mvt.	Variation	"Fantastic" Collection	Primary Function	Descritpion
	18	Hexatonic	(Embellishment)	Piano states a complete $HEX_{0,1}$ collection at the climax (embellishes cadential arrival)[28]
III	20	Hexatonic	Substitution	Partial M3 cycles from $HEX_{0,1}$ and $HEX_{2,3}$ substitute for iv and III in the first statement of the b-section; partial M3 cycle from $HEX_{3,4}$ replaces V^7/III in the repetition of the b-section
	21	Hexatonic	Substitution	Partial M3 cycles from $HEX_{0,1}$ and $HEX_{2,3}$ substitute for iv and III in the second statement of the b-section
	22	Whole-Tone, Octatonic	Large-Scale Prolongation	A complete WT_1 collection prolongs $\hat{6}$; $OCT_{2,3}$ scale leads to arrival of E♭7; oscillating °7th chords (octatonic collection) harmonize *Dies irae* at climax; middle-ground $OCT_{0,1}$ (embellished by statements of the head motive) prolong E♭[29]
	23	Hexatonic, Octatonic	Substitution, Large-scale prolongation	Partial M3 cycles from $HEX_{2,3}$ and $HEX_{3,4}$ substitute for PD harmonies supporting $\flat\hat{2}$ and $\hat{2}$; C♯m and FM from $HEX_{0,1}$ substitute for V–i resolutions; large-scale (036) partition of $OCT_{1,2}$ is prolonged
	24	Whole-Tone	Large-Scale Prolongation	(0246) partitions of both whole-tone collections prolong iv and V^7

My analysis of the Introduction (refer to Figure 3.6) agrees with Johnston's analysis in terms of the presence of an ascending $OCT_{0,1}$ scale in the lower voices of the orchestra that coexists with a diatonic framework. Johnston's *tonic* framework is somewhat limiting since it shows only As and Es ($\hat{1}$ and $\hat{5}$) in the upper voices as structurally significant. This framework would be more convincing if the Cs ($\hat{3}$) were also shown at the same "structural" level, completing the tonic framework. The other major difference between our "soprano" voices is that I am highlighting the ascending arpeggios (A-C-E) of the head motive as it appears in the upcoming theme; the incomplete neighbors (E–F or $\hat{5}$-$\hat{6}$) in mm. 2, 4, and 6 are absent in Paganini's theme. One significant element missing from Johnston's analysis is the pianist's octave As that punctuate the texture on the downbeats of mm. 3, 5, and 7. My interpretation

[28]Although I do not illustrate a hexatonic structure at the climax of this variation (e.g., I interpret m. 23, beat 3 as a V^7 with an omitted 5th and added 6th rather than as an Fm sonority), Johnston's reading of *hyperdissonant exaggeration* in this passage captures a surface-level series of triads in the piano part that comprise the entire $HEX_{0,1}$ collection (e.g. Am and Fm in m. 23 and D♭M in m. 24). See pp. 245–50 for the details of his interpretation.

[29]Johnston mentions $OCT_{2,3}$ but not the large-scale collection embellished by the head motive. He also uses the $OCT_{0,1}$ collection to account for the tritone axis that frames this variation (Am and E♭[7]), although WT_1 would work too since it can be partitioned into three tritones, including this one.

argues for the inclusion of these notes, not only because they are literally present, but also because they support the diatonic framework in the upper voices.

Figure 3.13. *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*, Op. 43, Introduction (mm. 1–9), analysis

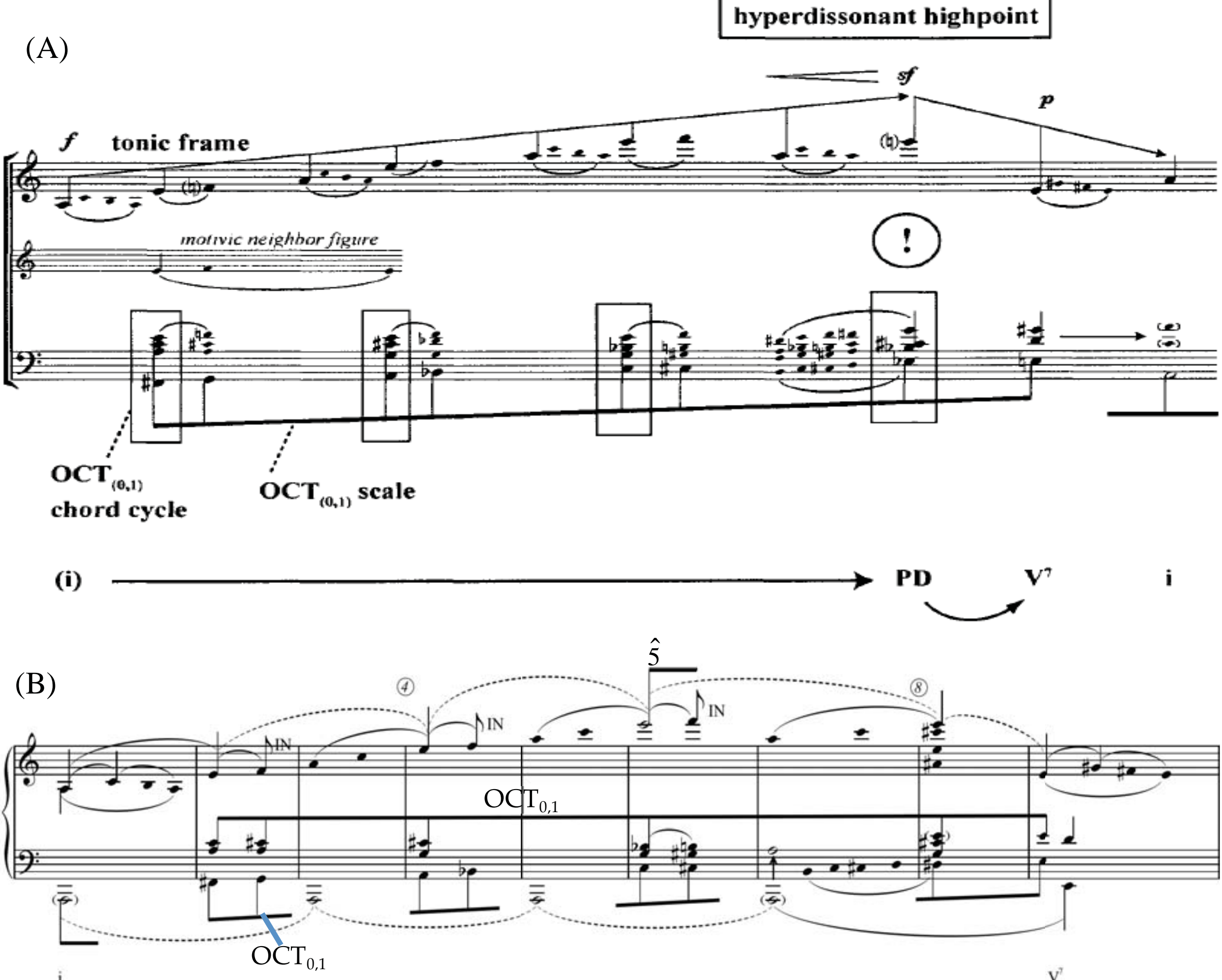

Figure 3.6: Introduction of Op. 43: Comparison between (A) Johnston's Analysis, and (B) My Analysis[30]

Johnston's analysis of the octatonic collection highlights "… a clear octatonic seventh chord cycle through roots F♯, A♮, C♮, and E♭…[which are] connected by non-$OCT_{(0,1)}$ sonorities that provide support for the motivic neighbor figure while maintaining smooth voice-leading

[30]Johnston, "Harmony and Climax," 97.

throughout the passage."[31] In other words, he interprets a series of vii°7 chords on the downbeats of mm. 2, 4, 6, and 8 that are built on the ascending $OCT_{0,1}$ scale and that harmonize the E–F neighbor figure. My own analysis favors a more contrapuntal interpretation of the octatonic collection and contrary to Johnston, I dissociate the E–F neighbor motives from the middle-ground manifestation of the "fantastic" collection (E4 functions as the 7th of Johnston's first vii°7 chord in m. 2, the 5th of the second vii°7 chord etc.). Since Johnston incorporates the incomplete neighbor motive into his realization of the octatonic structure, the vertical sonorities following each of his vii°7 chords are shown as non-$OCT_{0,1}$ sonorities. Actually, the only non-$OCT_{0,1}$ pitch class on beats two of mm. 2 and 4 *is* the incomplete neighbor note F—the remaining pcs *do* belong to the collection. A non-$OCT_{0,1}$ dyad {8, 11} does, however, elaborate the collection in m. 6. Despite the differences in our analytical readings, Johnston and I are in agreement that both types of harmonic structures (diatonic and octatonic) are subject to elaboration and that a tension exists between them, one that reappears later in the work.

After the presentation of the theme, "fantastic" collections first appear as embellishments of the underlying structure. Beginning with the first movement, only variations three and eleven feature foreground references to "fantastic" collections. Rachmaninoff begins by simply elaborating the fundamental structure of the original theme in variation three with melodic figuration drawn from two hexatonic collections. Hexatonic structures replace the secondary dominants that had previously preceded iv and III in the b-section of the theme. Starting in m. 13, an augmented triad derived from $HEX_{0,1}$ [014589] embellishes iv while a minor triad from $HEX_{3,4}$ [3478e0] embellishes III in measure 15 of the b-section of the variation (see Figure 3.7). Indeed, these "fantastic" references are themselves embellished by incomplete chromatic neighbor notes. The pianist's cadenza in variation 11 features complete statements of $OCT_{1,2}$ and $OCT_{2,3}$ that form an interlocking descending scalar passage leading to the final iteration of tonic (see Figure 3.8). The pianist's left hand outlines $OCT_{1,2}$ [124578te] through a series of descending thirds followed by an ascending step (G6–E6, F6–D6, E6–C♯6, etc.) while the right hand arpeggiates through a combination of the following tetrachords from $OCT_{2,3}$ [235689e0]: (0236), (0347), and (0148).

Rachmaninoff increasingly replaces both diatonic and chromatic harmonies from Paganini's theme with "fantastic" chromatic structures. Since these transgressive elements supplant original building blocks from the theme, their rank order is assigned a higher relative value. Hexatonicism is prevalent throughout variation 14 where $HEX_{0,1}$ structures stand in for dominant-tonic progressions (see Figure 3.9). As is demonstrated in Figure 3.9, the V of F (C major) is replaced with C♯ minor triads (the pickups to mm. 1, 4, and 6); the combined pitch-

[31]Ibid., 96.

classes from these altered V–I resolutions (C♯ minor to F major) comprise complete iterations of the hexatonic collection [014589]. Rachmaninoff closes off the variation with codetta-type modules that utilize this "fantastic" chromatic substitution in place of the traditional V–I repetitions typical of this formal section.

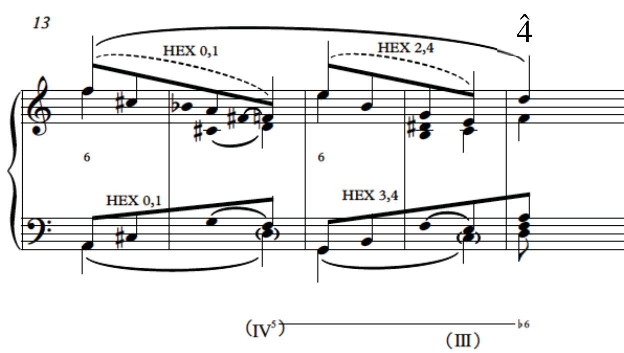

Figure 3.7: Embellishing Hexatonic Structures in Variation 3, mm. 13–17

Figure 3.8. Embellishing Octatonic Collections in the Cadenza of Variation 11, m. 16

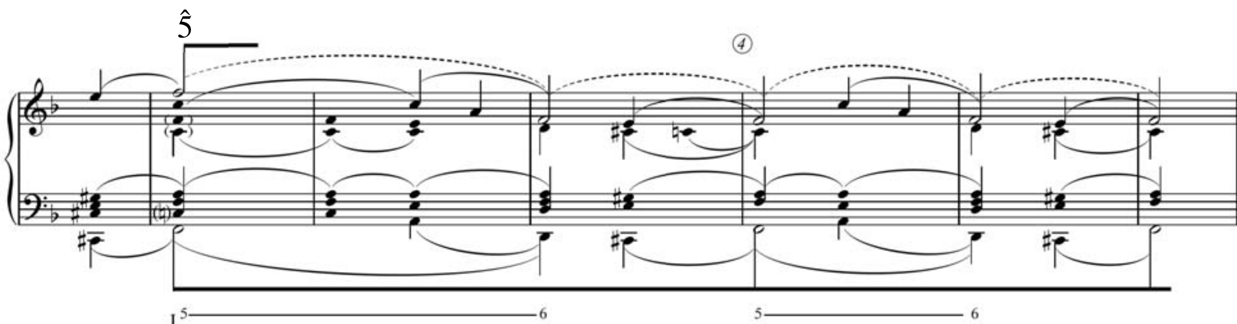

Figure 3.9. Hexatonic-Structure Substitutions for V–I progressions in Variation 14, mm. 1–6

Hexatonic middleground substitutions (changes effecting the theme's original fundamental structure) emerge in a unique pairing of variations 20 and 21. In both of these variations, Rachmaninoff repeats the b-section, incorporating hexatonicism into one of the statements. Variation 20, for example, features alterations to the first iteration of the b-section where the diatonic sonorities from the original harmonic progression (V^7/iv – iv – V^7/III – III or A^7 –Dm – G^7 – CM) are replaced (see Figure 3.10).

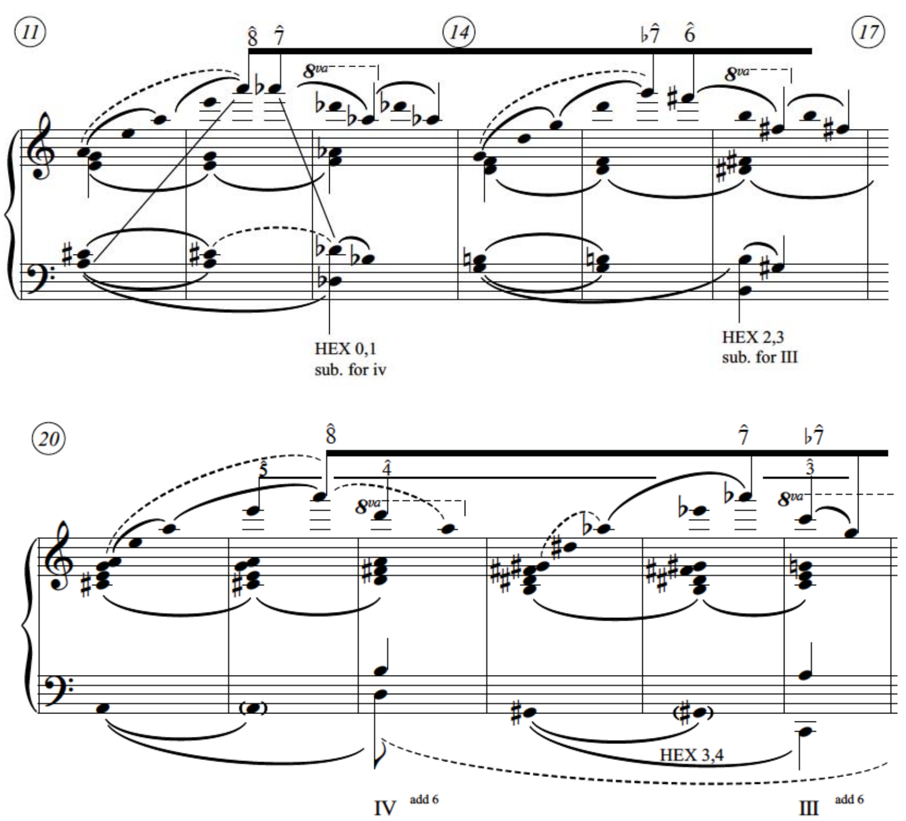

Figure 3.10: Hexatonic Substitutions in Variation 20 (B-Section), mm. 11–16 and mm. 20–25

A $D\flat^{add6}$ chord stands in for the expected D minor harmony (iv) in measure 13 ($HEX_{0,1}$). This progression is primarily hexatonic in its construction, but pc 0 is missing from A^7 and $D\flat^{add6}$ (pcs 7 and 10 are also present). In other words, the hexatonic collection is partitioned into two major triads. Continuing through the descending fifths sequence, a B^{add6} sonority ($HEX_{2,3}$) substitutes for the anticipated C major harmony (III). Again, the "resolution" of G^7 to B^{add6} involves most

members of the $HEX_{2,3}$ collection (pc 10 is missing) plus additional pcs including the added sixth (pcs 5 and 8). Upon the repeat of the initial b-section (mm. 11–19 are repeated in mm. 20–28), the anticipated iv and III harmonies materialize as D^{add6} (change of mode plus added sixth, m. 22) and C^{add6} (mm. 25). Interestingly, V^7/III (G^7) is also altered to reflect a hexatonic structure with its resolution. Rachmaninoff partitions the $HEX_{3,4}$ collection [3478e0] into two interlocking (037) trichords: a minor triad (G♯, B, D♯) with an added 7th (F♯) that stands in for G^7 and a major triad (C, E, G) with added sixth that is the expected resolution of G^7 (refer to Figure 3.10).

Unlike the previous variation where the first statement of the b-section featured hexatonic substitutions and the repetition of that section restored the original harmonies, variation 21 reverses the pattern so that the diatonic progression is stated first, followed by the hexatonic substitution in the varied repetition of the section. The first statement of b begins in m. 9 while the varied repetition commences at m. 15. When first passing through this portion of the theme, Rachmaninoff presents the anticipated (original) harmonic progression (V^7/iv – iv – V^7/III – III); the varied repetition, however, incorporates hexatonic substitutions for the expected diatonic harmonies (iv and III). Rachmaninoff draws from the same hexatonic collections ($HEX_{0,1}$ and $HEX_{2,3}$) found in the previous variation; the added sixths, however, are omitted from the D♭ major and C major harmonies. A comparison of identical locations in the two repetitions of the b-section (the unaltered progression and the altered progression with the substitution) is shown in Figure 3.11.

"Fantastic" chromatic structures also participate in large-scale prolongations in the *Rhapsody*, specifically in the final movement (e.g., variations 22 and 24). I attribute high relative rank to the appearance of these transgressive collections found at the middleground level since they suppress the original framework of Paganini's theme to create novel and surprising structures. The entire whole-tone collection (WT_1) elaborates the structural $\hat{6}$ that participates in an ascending arpeggiation ($\hat{1}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{8}$) that shapes the opening 32 measures of variation 22 (see Figure 3.12). Although $\hat{6}$ (F) first appears in m. 9 as part of the submediant harmony (F major) over a tonic pedal, it is not until m. 13 that the "fantastic" collection begins to prolong $\hat{6}$. Descending scalar passages fall from F, G, A, B and C♯ {5, 7, 9, e, 1} forming a near-complete statement of WT_1. The ascending trajectory of this upper-voice line continues chromatically from C♯ up to F, completing the collection with an E♭ (D and E function as chromatic passing tones). Immediately following this large-scale arpeggiation ($\hat{1}$-$\hat{4}$-$\hat{6}$-$\hat{8}$) is the climactic moment of the variation, harmonized by an $E\flat^7$ (V^7/A♭) in m. 33. Preceding this arrival are oscillating °7 chords—a hallmark of octatonicism—harmonizing the opening notes of the *Dies irae.* After the arrival on E♭, a pedal prolongs the sonority in the bass while the upper voices arpeggiate

through the chord (B♭ – G in m. 33, E♭ in m. 46). Pitch classes from an octatonic collection {3, T, 1, 9, 6, 4} prolong the octave transfer of E♭4 to E♭5, while statements of the head motive embellish these notes (see the beamed notes in Figure 3.13). The absence of only one quarter of the $OCT_{0,1}$ collection (pcs 0 and 7) does not diminish the transgressive framework organizing the latter half of this variation.

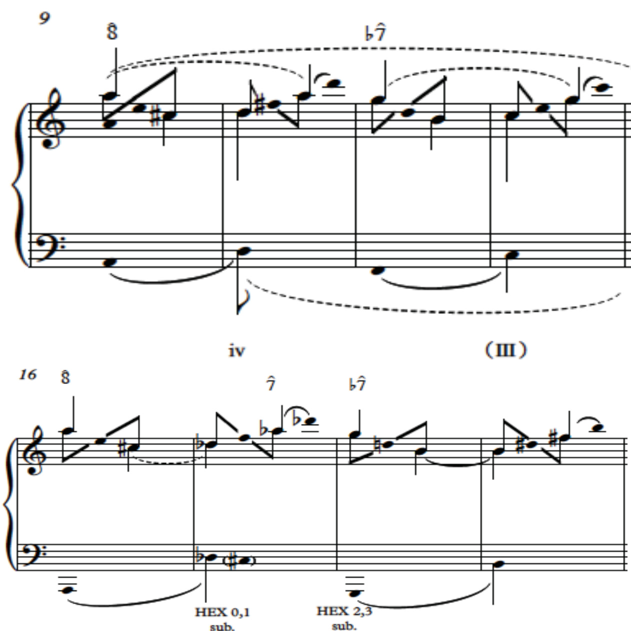

Figure 3.11. Hexatonic Substitutions in Variation 21 (B-Section), mm. 9–12 and mm. 15–18

Figure 3.12. Large-Scale Prolongation of WT_1 in Variation 22, mm. 1–22

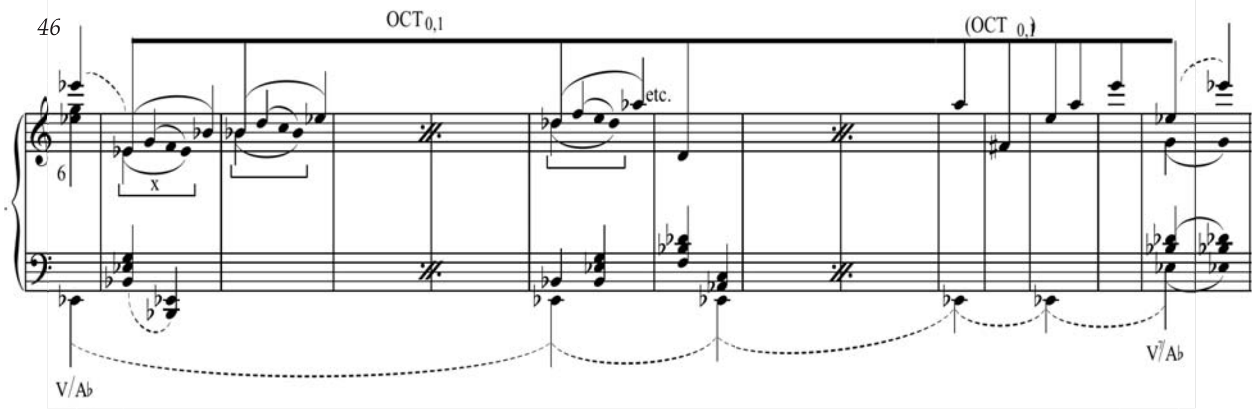

Figure 3.13. Large-scale Prolongation of Octatonic Collections in Variation 22, mm. 46–60

Variation 24 does not conform to any of the previous background structures in Op. 43 since the *Kopfton* ($\hat{5}$) descends quickly to $\hat{4}$, harmonized by iv in measure 5. The subdominant harmony returns in m. 13, now supporting $\hat{4}$ (D5 through register transfer), which continues to arpeggiate down to F4. Here, Rachmaninoff juxtaposes WT_1 and WT_2 in order to prolong the subdominant harmony through an underlying 10–10 LIP from mm. 13–19 (see Figure 3.14). Spanning a tritone from D3 to A♭3, the bass outlines a common whole-tone tetrachord (0246), which is itself embellished by chromatic lower neighbors. Similarly, the ascending upper voices also partition WT_1 with an embellished (0246) tetrachord, spanning a tritone from F4 to B4. A change in the whole-tone collection in the upper voices paired with a shift to a descending contour results in a two-and-a- half-measure embellishment of V^7, which arrives in m. 21. Again, (0246) tetrachords partitions the WT_0 collection in both upper and lower parts, while the vertical sonorities outline (026) trichords that move in descending parallel tenths to E3 and G♯4 of V^7.

In summary, the embellishing “fantastic” collections primarily appear earlier on in the *Rhapsody*, often decorating $\hat{1}$ and $\hat{5}$ in the a-section or iv and III from the b-section of the theme. Rachmaninoff begins to replace diatonic harmonies with sonorities belonging to hexatonic collections in movements II and III. Hexatonic collections have the capacity to function as substitutes in a diatonic context since they can easily be partitioned into major or minor triad cycles or an interlocking pair of major/minor triads, making them convenient chromatic substitutes. Rachmaninoff utilizes hexatonic collections to replace V–I progressions (primarily from the a-section of the theme) or the mediant and subdominant harmonies from the b-sections of variations 20 and 21. Rachmaninoff chiefly employs whole-tone and octatonic collections to prolong (elaborate) significant structural notes or harmonies in variations from the final

movement. Choosing these equal-interval collections to help build the frameworks of variations 22 and 24, Rachmaninoff distinguishes his own late-style of writing from the earlier setting of the Paganini theme. The gradual appearance of "fantastic" collections—divergences from the theme—become more prominent in their function (surface level embellishments to middle-ground frameworks) and frequency, allowing a truly characteristic harmonic syntax of Rachmaninoff's mature style to emerge over the course of the work, realized as a comic archetype. As mentioned earlier, Rachmaninoff anticipates the emergence of this harmonic palette (coexistence of diatonic and equal-interval structures) in the introduction thereby providing a listening framework or guide for the listener.

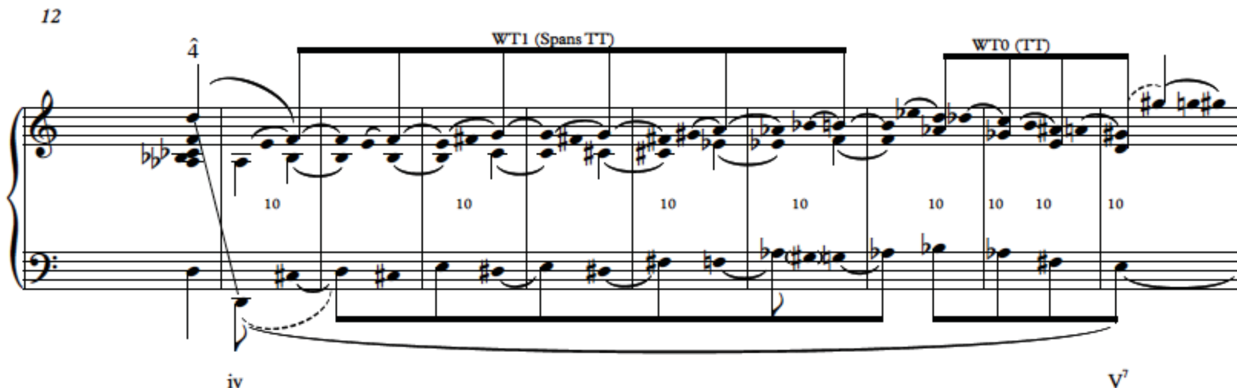

Figure 3.14. Large-scale Prolongation of WT$_0$ and WT$_1$ in Variation 24, mm. 12–21

3.2.5 Comic Archetypes of Background Structures

Heejung Kang's DMA dissertation, "Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini, Op. 43: Analysis and Discourse," explores the large-scale tonal structures in the work using Schenkerian analysis; she chooses to read the theme from $\hat{3}$ rather than from $\hat{5}$.[32] Schenker originally considered $\hat{3}$ as the *Kopfton* of Paganini's theme, but eventually chose to read it from $\hat{5}$ (as seen in his published sketch from *Der freie Satz*). Since I base my own voice-leading sketches on Schenker's published sketch, my analysis of the work's tonal structures differ substantially from Kang's analysis. First, my analysis is not an orthodox Schenkerian reading because Rachmaninoff's harmonic syntax is not strictly common practice (as demonstrated in the

[32]Kang, "Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*, Op. 43."

previous section) and therefore requires a modified analytical approach. Second, I have interpreted seven categories of varying tonal structures throughout the *Rhapsody* that capture Rachmaninoff's divergent background structures. Table 3.8 lists the seven structures with a general description of each type while Table 3.9 categorizes each variation based on these framework types. I will discuss at least one variation from each of the seven categories listed in Table 3.8 and then provide general commentary on how these changing structures inform a comic plot archetype (voice-leading sketches of each variation can be found in Appendix B).

Table 3.8. Traditional and New Background Structures

Type of Framework	Traditional vs. New Frameworks	Description
1. *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$		- *Kopfton*: $\hat{5}$ - The *Urlinie* may contain $\flat\hat{2}$ and/or $\natural\hat{2}$
2. *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$ with competing Voice from $\hat{8}$	Traditional	- *Kopfton*: $\hat{5}$ - *Urlinie* descends in the b-section - A competing inner voice descends from $\hat{8}$ down to $\hat{6}$ or $\flat\hat{6}$ and back up to $\hat{8}$ (third descent + ascent)
3. *Urlinie* from $\hat{3}$		- *Kopfton*: $\hat{3}$
4. Incomplete Descent	Transitional	- *Kopfton*: $\hat{5}$ or $\hat{3}$ - *Urlinie* fails to descend to $\hat{1}$ in either or both statements of the b-section
5. Static		- *Kopfton*: $\hat{5}$ - The overall framework begins and ends with $\hat{5}$ over tonic
6. Ascending Structures (*Urlinie* or Arpeggiation)	New	- Large-scale ascending arpeggiation of tonic and/or dominant harmonies - Ascending *Urlinie* from $\hat{1}$ to $\hat{5}$ or $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{8}$
7. Other		- Frameworks feature "fantastic" structures as well as elements from other categories

Table 3.9. Background Structures in Op. 43

Mvt.	Section	*Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$	$\hat{5}$ vs. $\hat{8}$	*Urlinie* from $\hat{3}$	Incomplete *Urlinie*	Static	Ascending Structures (*Urlinie* or Arpeggiation)	Other
	(Intro.)							
	Var. 1	✓						
	Theme	✓						
	Var. 2	✓						
	Var. 3	✓						
	Var. 4				✓			
I	Var. 5	✓						
	Var. 6					✓		
	Var. 7	✓						
	Var. 8	✓						
	Var. 9			✓				
	Var. 10				✓			
	Var. 11					✓		
	Var. 12			✓				
	Var. 13	✓						
	Var. 14						✓	
II	Var. 15						✓	
	Var. 16						✓	
	Var. 17					✓		
	Var. 18						✓	
	Var. 19		✓					
	Var. 20					✓		
III	Var. 21						✓	
	Var. 22							✓
	Var. 23							✓
	Var. 24							✓

Urlinie from $\hat{5}$: The traditional *Ursatz* with $\hat{5}$ as the *Kopfton* has already been discussed in Chapter 2 with Schenker's analysis of Paganini's theme. I will briefly recount the basic structural features of the theme and then discuss a couple of variations that retain an *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$, but feature other alterations to this basic *Ursatz*. In the a-section of the theme, the *Kopfton* is approached through an arpeggiation ($\hat{1}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{5}$) and is supported by the tonic and a dividing dominant. The descending fifths sequence initiates the descent to $\hat{4}$ and $\hat{3}$ (iv harmonizes the former while a passing III supports the latter). The supertonic provides harmonic support for the arrival of $\hat{2}$, which is itself elaborated by a *Leittonterzug*. The dominant harmonizes $\hat{7}$ of the *Leittonterzug* and the re-stated $\hat{2}$ before resolving to the tonic. As is evident in Table 3.9 more than half of the variations in the first movement adhere to the same *Ursatz* as the theme, while only a couple of variations from the second movement share the same

background structure; in other words, the later variations shed or replace the theme's *Ursatz* for new ones.

Variation 3 is an early variation in the set that establishes $\hat{5}$ as its *Kopfton*, but also showcases a substantially different realization of the background structure than the opening variations. Recall that this variation was discussed in the previous section with regard to Rachmaninoff's employment of hexatonic embellishments; this chromaticism illustrated a harmonic transgression. In the opening of variation 3 an ascending arpeggiation from $\hat{3}$ introduces the arrival of the *Kopfton* ($\hat{5}$) in measure 4. Tonic and dominant harmonies continue to harmonize the first section of the variation, although a first inversion tonic chord replaces the root position tonic chord and the dominant is embellished with a 5–6 motion. Rachmaninoff expands this opening portion of the variation by two measures (six measures are repeated instead of the four measures from the theme). The hexatonic embellishment of the descending fifth sequence in the second half of the variation can be interpreted in two different ways: (1) the original *Urlinie* is favored, resulting in the implication of some of the structural notes ($\hat{4}$ and $\hat{3}$); or (2) preference for highlighting the additional hexatonicism shifts the descent to measure 17 (see Figure 3 in Appendix C, p. 149). In the first interpretation, the original descending arpeggiation (fifths) to notes of the *Urlinie* from the theme is shortened to just descending thirds to implied $\hat{4}$ and $\hat{3}$ (e.g., $\hat{4}$ would have materialized in m. 14). Likewise, the bass overshoots the roots of iv and III, proceeding up to the thirds of both chords instead (see the implied D3 and C3 roots in measures 14 and 16). At this point, the *Urlinie* continues its descent to ♭$\hat{2}$, which is itself embellished by an upper neighbor before it is transferred up an octave to an implied ♮$\hat{2}$ in measure 20. The second (alternate) reading of the variation discards the implied descent in order to capture the hexatonic structures present in the passage. An (048) partition of $HEX_{0,1}$ and an (037) partition of $HEX_{3,4}$ displaces the arrival of $\hat{4}$ and $\hat{3}$. In measure 17 the Neapolitan supports $\hat{4}$ while a vii°7/V harmonizes $\hat{3}$ in measure 19. The two readings of this variation demonstrate the similarities with the original *Ursatz* but also the transgression, which in this case is primarily caused by harmonic changes.

$\hat{5}$ versus $\hat{8}$: Variations in this second category share elements with those in the first category, especially a descending *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$. Unlike the first category though, these variations display a significant transgressive addition to the *Ursatz* in the b-section. A competing descending third trajectory from $\hat{8}$ vies for the listener's attention. Variation 19 in the third movement is the first instance of this framework in the *Rhapsody*. Rachmaninoff establishes the *Kopfton* ($\hat{5}$) immediately in this variation without the characteristic ascending arpeggiation (refer to Figure

20 on p. 167). Instead he introduces an upper-voice tonic pedal ($\hat{1}$ or $\hat{8}$) that is present throughout both sections of the variation. It is not until the *Urlinie* descends to $\hat{2}$ over the altered supertonic harmony in measure 13 that the upper voice, the one rearticulating tonic, begins its own descent to $\flat\hat{7}$. It continues down to $\hat{6}$ (F♯5)—a minor third from its starting point—before it ascends back to $\hat{8}$ in measure 14 while the *Urlinie* completes its descent to the same note ($\hat{1}$). This brief opposition returns when this portion of the variation is repeated (see mm. 19–20).

Urlinie from $\boldsymbol{\hat{3}}$***:*** Only two variations in the *Rhapsody* feature $\hat{3}$ as their *Kopfton* and represent a transgression from the structure of the theme, which emphasizes $\hat{5}$. Despite a different *Kopfton* in variation 9, Rachmaninoff still adheres to the basic harmonic progression of the original theme (see Figure 10 on p. 156). A primarily static upper voice is prolonged throughout the a-section of the variation with a dominant pedal present in the written-out repeat of the opening eight measures. An implied subdominant supports $\hat{1}$ in the upper voices through an implied 6–[5] motion; the mediant also participates in a 6–5 motion with III arriving in measure 24 (the secondary dominants have been replaced from the original progression). The *Urlinie* passes down to $\hat{2}$ (an enharmonically respelled C♭), which functions as ♭II of the Neapolitan. The Neapolitan materializes in measure 27 supporting $\flat\hat{2}$, which is elaborated with a *Leittonterzug* in an inner voice before completing its descent to $\hat{1}$ over tonic.

Incomplete Urlinie**:** In my fourth category of background structures, a *Kopfton* (either $\hat{3}$ or $\hat{5}$) is unable to fulfill its trajectory to $\hat{1}$ in either or both statements of the b-section. The lack of strong cadential closure points toward Rachmaninoff's substantial reworking of Paganini's materials. Variation 4 is an early example of just such a background structure that is left incomplete (refer to Figure 5 on p. 151). An expanded first section (four measures repeated four times) establishes $\hat{5}$ as the *Kopfton* while tetrachords fill in the bass line between i–V. The motion to the subdominant harmony in the second section—originally two measures—is augmented to four measures with a covering $\hat{5}$ acting as a suspension to $\hat{4}$as a covering tone. The Neapolitan supports $\flat\hat{2}$ in measure 25 and a chromatically descending diminished fifth span connects $\flat\hat{2}$ to $\hat{5}$ in an inner voice, a new elaboration of $\text{iv}^{5\text{–}6}$. Structural closure occurs in measure 28 with an implied V–I resolution in the bass and $\hat{2}$–$\hat{1}$ in the soprano. A varied repetition of the second section reintroduces the head motive that initiates a larger descending third progression ($\hat{8}$ in m. 29, $\flat\hat{7}$ in m. 30, $\hat{6}$ in m. 31, and $\flat\hat{6}$ in m. 32) over the secondary dominant of iv and its resolution; the overall pattern is sequenced down a second so that the secondary dominant of III supports a

descending third from $\hat{7}$ in measure 33 to $\hat{5}$ in measure 36. The passing III harmony does not continue on to a predominant harmony as it does in the theme. Instead, it moves to the minor dominant (v), leaving the variation structurally open (see the broken beam in Figure 5). A D6 is present from measures 37–40, which can be interpreted as $\hat{4}$, but iv or ♭II are not clearly articulated, especially since $\hat{5}$ acts as a covering tone from measures 29–37.

Chronologically, variation 4 is one of the earliest examples of some of the structural transgressions that proliferate throughout the work. This variation specifically illustrates a new harmonization of the *Urlinie* and expansions of the opening section as well as an extensive static *Kopfton* and a truncated repetition lacking structural closure.

Static Framework**:** In the *Rhapsody*, a handful of variations present static background structures in which $\hat{5}$ is prolonged over tonic harmony; there is no fundamental descent to $\hat{1}$ in these atypical structures. Obviously other harmonic processes are at play in these examples if deep middleground descents to the tonic are absent. In variation 6, the first variation that displays a static framework, fifth progressions in the home key and in the key of the minor dominant (E minor) provide local descents, each with an implied [$\hat{4}$]. Both keys lack strong authentic cadential closure since plagal progressions substitute ♭II in for V, resolving directly to tonic. At a deeper level, the descent in A minor becomes a fifth progression into an inner voice E to A) while the same fifth descent in E minor approaches the global $\hat{5}$ an octave lower (see Figure 7 on p. 153). Measures 43–54 simply prolong the tonic, which continues to prolong $\hat{5}$ for the remainder of the variation. In variation 17 Rachmaninoff establishes $\hat{5}$ as the *Kopfton* (F in the key of B♭ minor) and prolongs it throughout the entirety of the variation (see Figure 18 on p. 165). The original ascending arpeggiation to the *Kopfton* is hollowed out here (there is no dividing third) and a tonic pedal supports $\hat{5}$ for the first seven measures. During this passage ascending inner-voice lines provide motion to counter the static framework. A fourth-progression spanning from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$ in an inner voice (piano part) is followed by a third-progression continuing on from $\hat{1}$ up to $\hat{3}$ (D♭). In the second section of the variation, a tonicization of III (D♭ major) supports a local $\hat{1}$, which at a deeper level acts as $\hat{3}$ in the home key and initiates an ascending third progression upward to recapture the *Kopfton* through $\hat{4}$ over iv in measure 13 (the order of mediant and subdominant harmonies are reversed in this variation compared to the original theme). Locally, a vestige of the *Urlinie* appears in measure 18 in an inner voice, although the line participates in a larger prolongation of the dominant (V^{5-6-5}) in measures 16–21.

***Ascending Structures* (*Urlinie or Arpeggiation*):** A few variations, particularly a handful from the second movement, demonstrate unusual ascending background structures. As shown in Figure 15 on p. 161, variation 14 is the first variation to feature such a structure (recall that this variation was mentioned in the previous section as an example of hexatonic substitution for V–I resolutions). Rachmaninoff immediately alters the ascending arpeggiations associated with the head motive by inverting the gesture so that descending arpeggios fall in an inner voice ($\hat{5}$–$\hat{3}$–$\hat{1}$); emphasis falls on $\hat{1}$ in the upper voice rather than $\hat{3}$ or $\hat{5}$, both of which functioned separately as the *Kopfton* in earlier variations. Repeated 5–6 motions over tonic harmony followed by an extended tonic pedal support $\hat{1}$ from the opening through to measure 6. Ascending third progressions embellish $\hat{1}$ until $\hat{3}$ is reached in measure 10 and prolonged over $I^{5–6}$. An arpeggiation up to $\hat{5}$ is reached at measure 14. The consonant skip between $\hat{3}$ and $\hat{5}$ is filled in by ♯$\hat{4}$ over $II^{6–[5]}$ before reaching V in measure 14. This ascending middle-ground arpeggiation of a fifth is restated in a varied repetition from measures 20 to 28. The third between $\hat{3}$ and $\hat{5}$ is filled in chromatically with $\hat{4}$ in measure 24 and ♯$\hat{4}$ in measure 25. Unlike the PD–D progression supporting the first large-scale arpeggiation ($II^{6–[5]}$ in measure 13 moving to V in measure 14), the second arpeggiation is supported by a hexatonic substitution. An expected V chord (C major) in measure 27 would provide harmonic support for the retained $\hat{5}$ in the upper voice. Rachmaninoff replaces this diatonic chord with a C♯ minor triad, creating a $HEX_{0,1}$ substitution between the C♯ minor triad in measure 27 and the tonic triad in the following measure. Whereas the first arpeggiation ended at $\hat{5}$, the second arpeggiation continues its upward trajectory to $\hat{8}$ (F5) in measure 28. For this reason, I interpret the pair of arpeggiations as an "interrupted" structure since the first one does not complete the final skip up to tonic; only on the second pass is the arpeggiation completed.

In a variation with limited harmonic change (a static harmonic profile), especially one heavily revolving around tonic, an ascending arpeggiation as a first order structure is a novel framework. I believe that this ascending structure in variation 14 prepares for other ascending frameworks, especially the one in variation 18. Since Rachmaninoff famously inverted the Paganini theme to create this variation, it would be logical to assume that variation 18 will be constructed with inverted background structure, one that ascends rather than descends. Indeed, Rachmaninoff showcases Paganini's theme in inversion so that the original ascending head motive becomes a descending fifth arpeggiation beginning on $\hat{5}$, now in the key of D♭ major (refer to Figure 19 on p. 166). A large-scale arpeggiation through the dominant (Ab4–C5-Eb5–Ab5) spans the b-section from the theme (mm. 6–13); its initial third from Ab4 to C5 in mm. 6–10 is composed out through an ascending fifth sequence with 5–10- LIP. As the LIP traverses the

third upward, tonic harmony moves up to the mediant. Reachings-over embellish the upper voice, which generate the tenths with the bass. The remaining three measures of the b-section tonicize V (A♭ major): the melody reaches over to F5 (supported by ii^7/V), then resolves to E♭5 in measure 12, harmonized by V^7/V. The middleground melodic arpeggio is completed with a leap from E♭5 up to A♭5 in measure 13, accompanied by V. With the piano statement of the inverted theme now completed, the orchestra enters with its own statement (a varied repetition of the piano's thirteen-measure statement). The orchestra mimics the opening four measures of the inverted head motive prolonging $\hat{5}$. Upon starting the theme's b-section, Rachmaninoff chooses to state the head motive from $\hat{1}$ instead of $\hat{5}$ (as he did with the piano statement). In effect, this alteration creates a new ascending framework controlling the b-section of the varied repetition. At m. 17 the upper voice begins an ascending fifth-progression from D♭5 to A♭5; its first third from D♭5–F5, embellished by reachings-over, is supported by tonic and mediant harmonies (see mm. 17–21). The fifth-progression continues its upward trajectory with $\hat{4}$ over IV and $\hat{5}$ over V. At a deeper level this ascending fifth progression fills in an arpeggiation of the tonic harmony, $\hat{1}$–$\hat{3}$–$\hat{5}$, by step, the arpeggio continues up to $\hat{8}$ with the completion of the structure aligning with the authentic cadence in measure 24.

The combination of an ascending background structure and large-scale arpeggiation results in frameworks that are atypical in the tonal art music repertoire. These highly transgressive structures can be associated with the ever-growing presence of Rachmaninoff's manipulation of Paganini's theme and the emergence of his mature compositional style.

Other: Variations categorized as "other" incorporate large-scale "fantastic" collections into their overall frameworks and they do not adhere to traditional *Ursätz* patterns. Variation 22 is one of two variations exhibiting a new structure. It can be divided into two large sections: the first is a large-scale arpeggiation that leads to the climax in measure 33 and the second section is a post-climactic V pedal of A♭ (see Figure 23 on pp. 170–71). In the first section Rachmaninoff embellishes a subdominant arpeggio ($\hat{1}$–$\hat{4}$–$\hat{6}$) with descending scalar runs (mm. 1–13) all over a tonic pedal. As mentioned in the previous section on "fantastic" structures, a complete whole-tone collection embellishes $\hat{6}$ from measures 13 to 22. Rachmaninoff continues to decorate $\hat{6}$ with the *Dies irae* topic harmonized by oscillating fully-diminished sevenths, a hallmark of the octatonic collection. The oscillations intensify moving up chromatically from $\hat{6}$ to $\hat{8}$, completing the arpeggiation at measure 28. The climax ushers in $E\flat^7$ (V^7 of A♭) at measure 33 with $\flat\hat{2}$ in the soprano. At a deeper middleground level, an upper-voice $\hat{1}$ is transferred up an octave through

a subdominant arpeggiation (mm. 1–31), which then steps up a semitone to $\flat\hat{2}$ over E♭[7] (mm. 32), all of which hinges on a tritone axis in the bass (A and E♭). The remainder of the variation features an arpeggiation through the E♭ harmony: $\flat\hat{2}$ (B♭) skips down to $\flat\hat{7}$ (G), which is embellished by a rising chromatic sixth up to E♭. An octatonic structure elaborates a passage of repeated head-motive figures (mm. 47–58). The E♭ harmony is prolonged from measures 58 to 66 until the piano commences its cadenza. The most prominent structural transgressions occur when Rachmaninoff introduces equal-interval frameworks in place of the traditional *Ursätz*; these structures are hallmarks of the composer's late compositional style.

Variation 23 shares common elements with categories two ($\hat{5}$ vs. $\hat{8}$) and four (incomplete *Urlinie*), but also contains middleground level "fantastic" structures. Conflict abounds in variation 23, not only between two voice-leading strands $\hat{5}$ and $\hat{8}$, but also from the apparent confusion between the piano and the orchestra concerning the key of the variation (refer to Figure 24 on pp. 172–73). An expectation for the arrival of A♭ major or minor was established in variation 22 through a salient prolongation of an E♭ dominant harmony; the pianist prepares for an A♭ tonic by rearticulating E♭s in two registers. The orchestra attempts to shift the variation up a half step in order to return to the home key of A minor by countering the pianist with E♮-interjections. After stating the opening head motive in A♭ minor the pianist eventually synchronizes with the orchestra in the home key. The *Kopfton* $\hat{5}$ is prolonged with i–V and i–IV[9] statements for the first section of the variation that corresponds with the a-section of the theme. The second voice-leading strand from $\hat{8}$ (a competing third line, $\hat{8}$-$\flat\hat{7}$-$\flat\hat{6}$-$\natural\hat{6}$-$\natural\hat{7}$-$\hat{8}$) is a P5 higher than primary *Urlinie* and commences in measure 22.[33] In contrast to variation 19 where the *Urlinie* descended from $\hat{5}$ to $\hat{1}$, the arrival on $\hat{2}$ in measure 26 of variation 23 is harmonized with major-triad partitions from the $HEX_{2,3}$ collection (refer back to Table 3.7 on p. 60 from the previous section). The presence of the descending third progression from $\hat{8}$ is intensified in this variation (as compared to variation 19) when it acquires aural prominence in measures 26–28 while the *Urlinie* halts on $\hat{2}$; the ascending third reaches $\hat{8}$ in measure 28. The varied repeat of measures 21 to 28 reveals that $\hat{4}$ and $\hat{3}$ are further elaborated with their own descending fifth progressions in addition to the descending arpeggios to these structural notes. Rachmaninoff reintroduces the $HEX_{0,1}$ substitution for V–I from variation 14 (C♯ minor to F major) while both upper-voice trajectories culminate on $\hat{1}$ ($\hat{8}$) harmonized by the submediant (F major). A sixteen-measure octatonic ending—an (036) trichord outlined in the bass harmonized by F major and

[33]Although $\flat\hat{7}$ and $\flat\hat{6}$ are implied in the upper register, they are literally present only in the lower octave (G4 and F4).

(0258) partitions (D^7 and B^7) of the $OCT_{2,3}$ collection—elevates Rachmaninoff's own mature style over the Classical-era setting of the original theme.

Figures 3.15 and 3.16 summarize the types of background structures present across the work in two graphs (these figures present the same information found in Table 3.9 on p. 71). Graph (A) summarizes whether the structures are traditional, transitional, or new (see Table 3.8 on p. 70, which also lists this information). Each movement in graph (A) captures a slightly different picture of the changing background structures across the work. Movement I presents structures from all three categories (traditional, transitional, and new) with two nested emergent comic archetypes (a gradual change from a low to a high rank value of transgression): the first one builds up through to variation 6 while the second one starts at variation 7 and continues through to the variation 11. The second graph shows that the two "new" structures (variations 6 and 11) from the first graph are also both static structures. Another way to understand the transformations taking place in movement I is to view Rachmaninoff's artistic hallmarks slowly emerging when traditional structures give way to transitional structures (*Ursätz* lacking completion) before attaining new, in this case, static structures. Movement II does not illustrate a continuous increase in rank value of transgression so Almén's discursive strategy of epiphany more aptly captures the sudden change in rank value between variation 13 and 14. Variations 12 and 13 return to more traditional structures (*Urlinie* from $\hat{3}$ and $\hat{5}$ respectively) while variation 14 presents the first ascending arpeggiation framework in the *Rhapsody*. Likewise, movement III illustrates epiphany as a discursive strategy, but the change is heightened in the third movement since the newer background structures appear sooner than in the second movement (variation 19's *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$ paired with a descending–ascending third from $\hat{8}$ gives way to a static structure in variation 20).

3.3 Conclusions

Examining various parameters in Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43 through the lens of narrative theory allows for a rigorous investigation of the transformations and compositional procedures at play in this theme-and-variation set. Both tragic and comic plot archetypes helped to shape close readings of the work's primary musical parameters. Unlike the single comic narrative interpreted in Brahms's setting of Paganini's violin theme, Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody* on the same theme challenges the applicability of an all-encompassing narrative reading of any work, particularly those in the theme-and-variations genre. What are the advantages of interpreting multiple archetypes in a single work? Not only do they enable focused analytical investigations of individual musical parameters, but these general frameworks facilitate an accessible means of listening to and understanding large-scale

transformations across a piece. When viewed collectively, numerous narrative archetypes can highlight significant moments of climax, agreement, or friction between different parameters, prompting additional analytical questions or issues about interpretation and performance. Furthermore, multiple narrative archetypes can capture a more nuanced view of the structural changes taking place within a work than a single archetype might be able to represent or emphasize individually.

The tragic archetype depicting the distant modulations in Op. 43 illustrates characteristics that are not accounted for or apparent in the other comic narratives examined in this chapter. Tonality is perhaps the most compelling parameter for delineating formal divisions in the work, and the low–high–low profile of its transvaluation demonstrates a commonality between the first and third movements—tonal stability—that contrasts with the unstable, mercurial tonal character of the second movement. The bulk of the comic narratives depict significantly different pictures of all three movements and their relationships to one another as compared to the tragic narrative (e.g., the stark difference in the rate of transvaluation between movements I and III). It is this incongruity between the rank-values of various transgressions (modulations, looser formal structures, etc.) that foregrounds musical tensions that might otherwise be overlooked. In Op. 43, the comic archetypes not only revealed some predictable trends and correlations between musical parameters—form, equal-interval structures, and background structures—across the work (e.g., variation 11 displayed high rank values in all three domains), but they also showcased some disconnects between these parameters, suggesting that a high rank value in one parameter is not necessarily contingent on a high rank value in another (e.g., the "fantastic" substitutions in variation 21 are of high rank value and have no bearing on its formal structure, which happens to be more closely aligned with that of the theme). Chapter 4 will delve into issues of extramusical programs and characters as well as topical and stylistic associations, and will address some of the trends, outliers, and climactic moments highlighted by the narrative archetypes presented in this chapter.

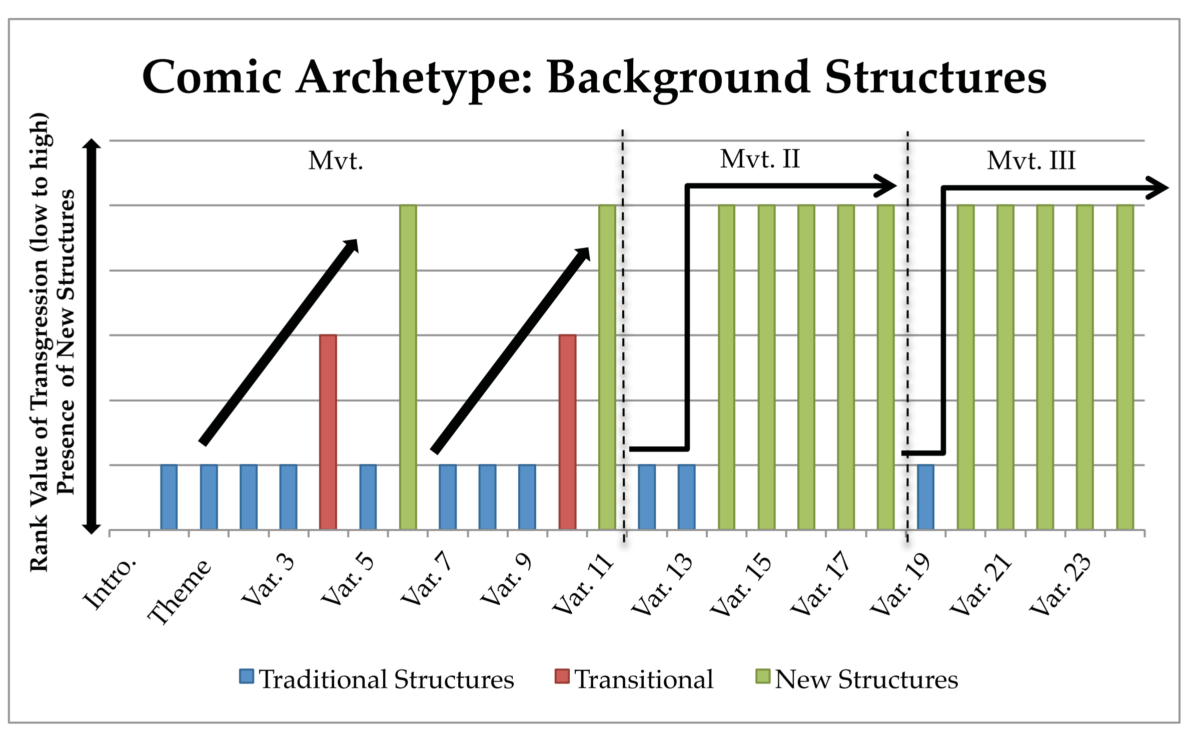

Figure 3.15. Generalization of the Background Structures in Op. 43 (Traditional to New)

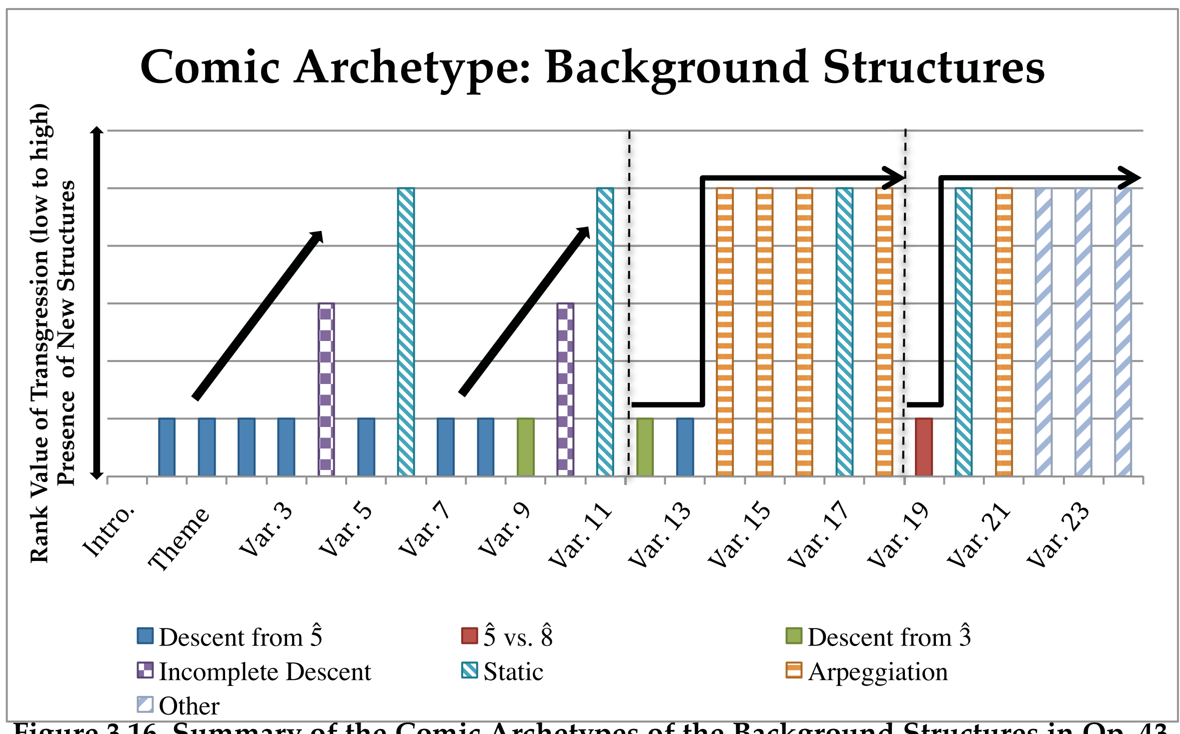

Figure 3.16. Summary of the Comic Archetypes of the Background Structures in Op. 43

CHAPTER FOUR

EXTRA-MUSICAL NARRATIVES: EXPLORING THE *DIES IRAE* AND NOSTALGIA IN THE *RHAPSODY*

4.1 Introductory Remarks

In the previous chapter, I pursued an Alménian narrative reading of Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody* Op. 43. Since a single narrative reading did not afford the most enlightening perspective through which to view this work's complexities, I traced multiple narrative trajectories (some via a multi-movement division of the work) as well as metanarratives of the three implicit movements. Some of the most audible and memorable alterations of the Paganini theme are topical or stylistic (e.g., *Dies Irae*, the minuet, the military march), and were not addressed under the purview of the previous analysis. In this chapter I seek to tease out some of these topical and stylistic associations by examining extra-musical programs associated with the work after its completion. I discuss these associations in conjunction with two extra-musical characters (the Evil Spirit and the Florentine Girl) by exploring Rachmaninoff's use of the *Dies Irae* chant and creating a theoretical framework for nostalgia in music.

4.2 Rachmaninoff's Narrative and "Paganini" the Ballet

In 1937 choreographer Michel (Mikhail) Fokine proposed that he and Rachmaninoff collaborate on a ballet together; Rachmaninoff thought that his *Rhapsody* would provide a suitable musical and programmatic setting for such a production. In a letter to Fokine, Rachmaninoff suggested the following scenario:

> Last night I was thinking about a subject and here is what came to mind. I'll give you only the main outlines, for the details are still foggy. Consider the Paganini legend—about the sale of his soul to the Evil Spirit in exchange for perfection in art, and for a woman. All variations on the Dies Irae would be for the Evil Spirit. The whole middle from the 11th variation to the 18th—these are the love episodes. Paganini himself makes his first appearance at the "Theme" and, defeated, appears for the last time at the 23rd variation—the first 12 bars—after which, to the end, is the triumph of his conquerors. The first appearance of the Evil Spirit is in the 7th variation, where at #19, there can be a dialogue with Paganini during his theme as it merges with the Dies Irae. Variations 8, 9, 10—progress of the Evil Spirit. Variation 11 is the transition to the realm of love. Variation 12—the minuet—is the first appearance of the woman—through the 18th variation. Variation 13 is the first understanding between the woman and Paganini. Variation 19 is the triumph of Paganini's art, his diabolic pizzicato. It would be good to show Paganini with a violin—not, of course, a real one, but some devised, fantastic violin. And it also seems to me that at the conclusion of the play the several personages [representing] the Evil Spirit should be caricatures, absolute caricatures, of Paganini himself. And they should here have

violins that are even more fantastically monstrous. You're not laughing at me? How I wish I could see you, to tell you more fully about all this—if my ideas and subject seem interesting and of value to you.[1]

Table 4.1. Rachmaninoff's Proposed Scenario of the *Rhapsody* for Fokine's Ballet

Tragic Narrative	Tragic hero exchanges soul for virtuosity and success						Hope of redemption through love				Hope of redemption through artistic perfection			Redemption unattained	
Episodes	Protagonist Introduced			Progress of Evil Sprit			Love				Triumph and Defeat				
Scenario		Paganini appears for the first time		*Dies Irae*; dialogue between Evil Spirit and Paganini		*Dies Irae*	Transition to the realm of love	Minuet; First appearance of the woman	First understanding between the woman and Paganini		Triumph of Paganini's art		*Dies Irae* (Evil Spirit)	Paganini's last appearance (defeated) Triumph of his conquerors (at m. 13)	*Dies Irae* (Evil Spirit); triumph of Paganini's conquerors
Variation	**1**	**Th.**	**2–6**	**7**	**8–9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14–18**	**19**	**20–21**	**22**	**23**	**24**

Table 4.1 summarizes this narrative and aligns the composer's commentary with the specific variations mentioned. This program certainly enticed the choreographer because he completed a four-scene ballet production, "Paganini," that premiered on June 30, 1939 in London's Covent Garden Theater. Rachmaninoff aided Fokine with the libretto while Serge Soudeikine was responsible for the costumes and scenery. Fokine's son, Vitale, complied and translated some of his father's materials and correspondences in *Fokine: Memoirs of a Ballet Composer*; the memoirs contain the original libretto of the ballet rather than the one that was typically published in the performance programs. The former included more detailed illustrations of the setting and actions (see Table 4.2 for a summary of the libretto).

[1]Bertensson and Leyda, *Sergei Rachmaninoff*, 333.

This proposed scenario for the ballet, loosely based on the Faustian legend, is suggestive of a literary tragedy: the tragic hero relinquishes his soul in exchange for virtuosity, the perfection of his craft, and a woman. Despite the hope of the hero's potential redemption (first through love and then through his artistic perfection), Paganini falls into eternal damnation after being defeated by his conquerors and being incapable of achieving redemption. The final ballet program portrays a different interpretation of the protagonist's fate—a romantic narrative depicting the hero's life journey and quest for the divinity of his art. In the first scene, Paganini's spectators see the controlling hand of evil during his performance (the rumored supernatural force responsible for his virtuosity). Paganini is only able to convince his audience for a short time in the "divinity of his art, which is the result of his dedicated work and gift of genius" (i.e., not the result of supernatural intervention).[2] Unable to play his instrument in scene three, Paganini walks around "meditating, as if tuning in to a higher harmony, to the heavenly music which his soul craves."[3] Gentle spirits appear and encourage the uninspired and struggling artist to start playing again. In the final scene when Death claims the life of the old virtuoso, the Evil Spirits vanish and the artist's soul transcends to a "world beyond." Despite his worldly struggles (e.g., the mocking imitators, the malicious gossip and lies of the spectators and critics, the lack of inspiration to perform etc.), Paganini's quest to serve humanity is fulfilled, leaving a lasting artistic legacy. According to Vitale, his father's discovery of an allegorical parallel between the violinist and himself stirred a desire in the choreographer to depict an authentic characterization of Paganini the man. "Paganini" Vitale explains,

> was faced with the hatred of his enemies, who attributed his consummate technique to the supernatural aid of the Devil himself; while his jealous competitors were trying to imitate his style, music critics were endeavoring to find faults, and gossip and the double-faced lies plagued him without end.
>
> Father looked back on his own life in the theater. He had revolutionized the art of ballet…and yet no choreographer had even been so victimized by plagiarism, encroachment, or plain thievery…
>
> Like Paganini, he had his share of applause and a glorious recognition, but he also was the subject of the same evils and sufferings as the great violin virtuoso."[4]

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[2] Michel Fokine, *Fokine: Memoirs of a Ballet Master*, trans. Vitale Fokine, ed. Anatole Chujoy (Boston: Little Brown, 1961), 283.

[3] Ibid., 284.

[4] Ibid., 282.

Table 4.2. Summary of Original Libretto for Fokine's ballet, "Paganini."[5]

	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4
Romantic Narrative	- Ideal: the divinity of an artist's art (dedication and genius) - Hero's quest: life journey, serving humanity through music - Struggles: his character is defamed and mocked; musical abilities are challenged and attributed to supernatural forces	- Life journey continues	- Life journey continues - Struggles: inspiration wanes (inability to perform or compose)	- Death of hero - Transcendence of hero's soul - Exaltation of hero's duty to humanity (his legacy will live on)
Setting	Dark stage with platform (painted canvas with rows of spectators whose backs are turned to the audience)	Meadow (May morning)	Paganini's Home	(Paganini's Home)
Characters	- Young Paganini - Gossip, Lies, Slander, Jealousy - Devil, grimacing figure, sinister spirits, apparitions - Classicists and critics	- Paganini - Crowd of young people - the Girl (a Florentine beauty)	- Paganini - Gentle and Evil Spirits - Paganini caricatures	- Old Paganini - Evil and Divine spirits - Death - Gossip and Jealousy
Program	- Gossip, Lies, Slander, and Jealously run between the spectators and mockingly imitate Paganini - The spectators see the hand of the Devil directing Paganini's playing - Arms are seen controlling his violin (e.g. moving his bow, tuning his strings, etc.) - Sinister spirits surround Paganini ("it looks as if the graves had opened and released their dead") - At first Paganini is able to convince his audience in the "divinity of his art, which is the result of his dedicated work and gift of genius") - The Evil Spirits disappear when Paganini's enemies (classicists and critics) parade around; the spectators disappear - Paganini begins to play again and his enemies join leagues with Gossip and Lies - Apparitions rise from his violin and the audience rush toward the platform except the first row who are under the influence of Slander) - Paganini stands motionless and exhausted on the platform	- Boys play guitars and a "typical Florentine beauty" dances - Paganini enters unaware of the crowd - Girl is transfixed under Paganini's hypnotic stare - Paganini approaches the crowd and grabs a guitar - His playing "evokes such marvelous music from the guitar" that everyone is enchanted - Girl subconsciously dances until she collapses from exhaustion - The Girl eventually rises and continues dancing - Paganini leaves while still playing the guitar and the crowd follows him	- Paganini leans over a table covered with manuscript paper - He tears up and throws the paper away - He is unable to play his violin, so walks around "meditating, as if tuning in to a higher harmony, to the heavenly music which his soul craves - Gentle spirits surround him and his violin "sings of happiness and joy" - In a nightmare, Paganini sees himself as his audiences imagine him and devilish Paganini caricatures begin to multiply ("they look like devils holding violins") - They dance and play with "infernal virtuosity" - Paganini is completely surrounded by the Evil Spirits and "horrible shadows" (he is engulfed "in a whirlpool of mad dance")	- Paganini is old and dying - He watches as Death approaches him from among the Evil Spirits - Paganini holds his violin close for protection while divine spirits surround him - The Evil Spirits disappear - Paganini dies and "his soul departs into a world beyond, with the knowledge that he has fulfilled his duty by serving humanity through beauty."

[5]Ibid., 283–85.

From an extra-musical literary perspective, the libretto provides a romantic balletic portrayal of the Paganini legend. The superposition of this libretto over the composition is supported by topical and stylistic features not discussed in the previous chapter and demonstrates interesting interactions with the narratives proposed in Chapter 4. In the remainder of this chapter, I explore the employment of the *Dies Irae* in the *Rhapsody* along with a theoretical framework for interpreting moments of nostalgia. Various musical topics associated with two extra-musical characters (the Evil Spirit and the Florentine girl) are discussed at length below.

4.3 The *Dies Irae* ('Day of Wrath') and the Evil Spirit

Although the variations in the *Rhapsody* are based on Paganini's violin caprice theme, the work also features a secondary theme or countersubject—the medieval *Dies Irae* chant. With its Latin text dating as far back as the thirteenth century, the *Dies Irae* chant melody has undergone significant musical setting transformations of its musical setting and its signification over the centuries (see a brief summary of its history below in Table 4.3). With its origins in the sacred setting of the Requiem Mass, the *Dies Irae* chant was associated not only with death, fear, and Judgment Day, but also the hope of eternal rest. Beginning in the early nineteenth century composers such as Berlioz, Liszt, Saint-Saëns, and Tchaikovsky began quoting portions or fragments of the chant melody and placing it into new, secular contexts.[6] Whether these quotations were used for motivic, thematic, or programmatic reasons, the *Dies Irae* in secular compositions came to signify elements of the supernatural, the fantastic, and even the macabre.

According to Susan Woodard, Rachmaninoff encountered the *Dies Irae* and its supernatural connotations both as a concert pianist (he performed Liszt's *Totentanz* in 1939) and as a conductor (he conducted Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* in 1912).[7] Indeed, Rachmaninoff's fascination with the *Dies Irae* is notable throughout most of his career both as an explicit, intentional reference—as in the *Symphonic Dances,* Op. 45, III and the *Rhapsody*—and in compositions where an intentional allusion is unclear: the Piano Sonata Op. 28, No. 1, I; the choral symphony, *The Bells*, Op. 35; and the symphonic poem, *The Isle of the Dead*, Op. 29.[8] In

[6]Specific works featuring the *Dies Irae* (e.g. phrases, fragments, motives) by these composers include: Berlioz, *Symphonie fantastique*, Op. 40; Liszt, *Totentanz* and the *Dante Symphony,* S. 109; Mussorgsky, *Songs and Dances of Death*; Saint-Saëns, *Danse macabre,* Op. 40; and Tchaikovsky, *Francesca Rimini*, Op. 32. See also a list of other secular references to the *Dies Irae* in Malcolm Boyd, "'Dies Irae': Some Recent Manifestations," *Music & Letters* 49, no. 4 (Oct., 1968): 355–56.

[7]Susan Woodard, "The Dies Irae As Used By Sergei Rachmaninoff: Some Sources, Antecedents, and Applications" (DMA thesis, The Ohio State University, 1984), 32, 39.

[8]Robin Gregory, "Dies Irae," *Music & Letters* 34, no. 2 (Apr., 1953): 133–39. Gregory views intentional *Dies Irae* allusions in *The Isle of the Dead*; the Third Symphony, Op. 30; the *Rhapsody*; and the *Symphonic Dances*, Op. 45 (see p. 138); Boyd is dubious about the classification of the four-note figures from the *Dies Irae* in *The Isle of the Dead* as intentional allusions to the melody and points to *The Bells* as another composition that features the same short four-note figures, which may be unintentional (see pp. 353–56); in her chapter "Documentable Use of the Dies Irae," Woodard cites the Piano Sonata No. 1, *The*

these works Rachmaninoff employs the first phrase of the borrowed chant for motivic, episodic, thematic, and programmatic functions (see Figure 4.1 for the first phrase of the *Dies Irae*). In the *Rhapsody* the *Dies Irae* primarily functions formally and thematically, but if we extend our intertextual web outward to Rachmaninoff's post-publication scenario and Folkine's ballet, then it also serves a programmatic function as well.

Table 4.3. Brief Overview of the Sacred and Secular Settings of the *Dies Irae*[9]

	Sacred (pre-1700)	Sacred (post-1700)	Secular (post-1800)
Musical Setting	Plainchant melody from Requiem Mass; retained by Council of Trent in the 16th century as part of the Mass	Polyphonic settings of Requiem Mass (plainchant melody or alternation of plainchant melody and polyphonic verses); *Dies Irae* as independent piece	Concert Requiem Mass and other programmatic works; polyphonic settings
Length	17 stanzas (triple rhymes) + 2 pairs of rhyming lines		Quotations: first stanza, phrase one of the first stanza, or the opening four notes
Signification	Final Judgment, fear, mourning, solemnity; hope and absolution		Death, the supernatural, the fantastic, the macabre

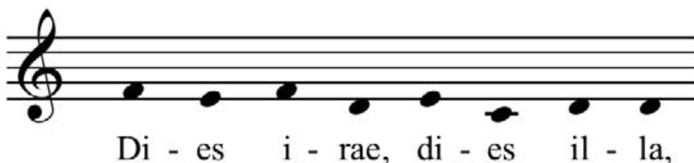

Figure 4.1. *Dies Irae*, Phrase One

In one form or another, quotations or allusions to the *Dies Irae* typically receive some sort of acknowledgment by scholars examining the *Rhapsody*, whether historically or

Isle of the Dead, *The Bells*, and the *Rhapsody* as works with intentional allusion or quotation of the chant (see pp. 43–61).

[9]See Woodard, Gregory, and *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, s.v. "Dies irae" (by John Caldwell and Malcom Boyd), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/40040 (accessed September 19, 2014).

analytically. Observations regarding the quotation range from cursory comments addressing its presence in the work to more detailed discussions of its manifestations throughout the piece (e.g., orchestration, harmonization, rhythmic profile, intervallic transformations, etc.). Very little discussion, however, is devoted to the semantic level of discourse surrounding the reference. One exception is Heejung Kang's 2004 DMA dissertation, "Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*, Op. 43: Analysis and Discourse." Chapter three focuses on the topics of death, love, and humor as part of Rachmaninoff's narrative and draws a parallel between the *Rhapsody* and Ingmar Bergman's 1957 film, *The Seventh Seal*.[10] Kang attempts to locate biographical evidence of Rachmaninoff's preoccupation with death in order to demonstrate the likelihood of his being familiar with the Dance of Death iconography and she compares specific musical passages as analogs for events or symbols in the film.[11] Kang posits a generalized narrative (pre-Almén) that can inform our understanding of the piece's structure: "while contemplating on the existential questions concerning life and death, Rachmaninoff includes humor throughout the *Rhapsody*…[it] is a magnificent allegory embracing 'love,' 'death,' and 'humor.'"[12] My own interest in a narrative reading of this work lies more with Rachmaninoff's *own* post-publication narrative and whether it can be reconciled with or somehow inform an Alménian narrative interpretation.

Before summarizing the various settings of the *Dies Irae* in Table 4.4, let us return to Rachmaninoff's comments about the *Dies Irae* in his correspondence with Fokine: "all variations on the Dies Irae would be for the Evil Spirit… [beginning] in the 7th variation, where at #19, there can be a dialogue with Paganini during his theme as it merges with the Dies Irae. Variations 8, 9, 10—progress of the Evil Spirit…And it also seems to me that at the conclusion of the play *the several personages [representing] the Evil Spirit* should be caricatures, absolute caricatures, of Paganini himself."[13] From this statement we can make the following assumptions: (1) the *Dies Irae* is a sign for the Evil Spirit, which manifests itself as numerous figures or caricatures; (2) there is an interaction between the Evil Spirit and Paganini in variation 7; (3) and throughout variations 7–10 the Evil Spirit displays an increasing influence on Paganini. As mentioned above, Rachmaninoff's Evil Spirit assumes numerous guises in the ballet. In scene one Gossip, Lies, Slander, and Jealousy mockingly imitate the young virtuoso; the Devil's hand guides Paganini's playing and sinister spirits surround him. Devilish replicas of the artist playing violins appear in a nightmare in the third scene (Paganini sees how his

[10]Kang, "Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*, Op. 43," 79–100.

[11]One such parallel that Kang posits between the movie and the *Rhapsody* is "just as Bergman's Knight took a long time to figure out what 'his last meaningful deed' should be and achieved love… so too, in Rachmaninoff's tonal discourse, the upper voice [in variation 18] must travel a long and difficult path to realize its goal [the delayed *Kopfton*]," 86–87.

[12]Ibid., 94.

[13]Bertensson and Leyda, *Sergei* Rachmaninoff, 333 (emphasis is my own).

audiences imagine him) while in the final scene, Death approaches Paganini and Gossip and Jealousy vanish.[14]

Table 4.4 summarizes Rachmaninoff's setting of the *Dies Irae* throughout the *Rhapsody* including the length of the quotations, how they are orchestrated, their rhythmic/tempo/ dynamic-level profiles, the method of harmonization, and how the quotations function within the variation. The first appearance of quotation in variation 7 is a solemn setting of the chant-melody's first phrase (e.g. slow half-note pacing, *poco pesante* and *cantabile* indications with simple 10–5 LIPs) played by the pianist as a countermelody to a simplified version of Paganini's theme played by the orchestra (the first dialogue between the artist and the Evil Spirit). Variation 10 opens with piano statements of the first phrase of the *Dies Irae* followed by its opening three-note figure; the solemn character has been replaced with a more sinister/threatening tone. The piano's louder *poco marcato* quotation in the opening a-section intensifies in the b-section through off-beat syncopation in the *f* statement of the phrase by the piano and trombones. Motivic statements of the melody's opening four notes break off from the full phrase, sounding first in the trombones and then in the horns (mm. 13–14). The glockenspiel, harp, upper strings, and tuba also state the *Dies Irae* phrase, usually in octaves marked *poco marcato*. The lower tessitura of the brass instruments and the less common setting of the glockenspiel and harp suggest not only an ominous *ombra* topic but also a shimmering, fantastical element reminiscent of earlier settings of the chant with fantastical overtones (e.g., Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*). Rachmaninoff does not quote the *Dies Irae* again until the second climax of the work in variation 22 (movement III). Two statements of the truncated phrase are harmonized by syncopated º7 chords, which then fragment and rise chromatically until the pent up tension breaks. A final triumphant brass statement of the opening *Dies Irae* phrase is presented in variation 24—the conquering Evil Spirit. Further discussion of the *Dies Irae* within a larger narrative is discussed below.

[14]Fokine, *Fokine: Memoirs of a Ballet Master*, 283–85.

Table 4.4. Settings of the *Dies Irae* in the *Rhapsody*, Op. 43

Variation	Length of Quotation	Orchestration	Rhythm, Tempo, Dynamics	Harmonization	Function
7	mm. 1–8: phrase 1 (last 2 notes tied together)	Piano	Half notes, *poco pesante*, *mf*	10–5 LIP from i down to VI	Formal and thematic (countermelody to Paganini theme)
	mm. 9–16: embellished repetition of mm. 1–8		Half and quarter notes, *cantabile*, *mf–p*	10–5 LIP	
	mm. 17–33: 4 fragments (first 5 notes of phrase 1)		Half and quarter notes, *mf–dim*., and *f*	10–8 LIP	
10	mm. 1–6: phrase 1 (last 2 notes tied together)	Piano	half notes, *poco marcato*, *mf–f*	i and V	Formal; thematic and motivic
	mm. 7–8: first three notes repeated on $\hat{3}$ and on $\hat{5}$		quarter notes, *marcato*, *cresc.* (from *f*)	i and V	
	mm. 9–12: phrase 1 (last 2 notes tied together)	Trombones, piano	syncopation (eighth-quarter), *marcato*, *f* or *ff*	tonic pedal, trombones (parallel P4s), chromatic alterations	
	mm. 13–14: first 3 notes (x2)	Trombones (1st); Horns (2nd)	syncopation (quarter, eighths, half), *marcato*, *mf* and *dim.*	Trombones (parallel P4s), Horns (contrary motion: upper neighbor)	
	mm. 16–19: phrase 1 (last 2 notes combined into longer duration)	Glockenspiel, harp, violin, viola	syncopated Glockenspiel and harp parts (eighths), (*poco marcato*), *p*	Glockenspiel and harp in octaves; strings F^6 down to D^6 over tonic pedal	
	mm. 24–27: 2x phrase 1 (last 2 notes combined into longer duration)	Trombones (1st), tuba and horns (2nd)	quarter notes, *poco marcato*, *p*	tonic pedal, chant melody (octaves)	
22	mm. 23–29: 2x phrase 1 (last note removed) + repeated fragments	Piano	Syncopation (ties), quarter notes, *un poco piu vivo (alla breve)*, *legato*, *cresc.* from *mf*	^{o}7 chords rising chromatically	Formal: climax #2
24	mm. 39–46: phrase 1 (last 2 notes tied together)	Brass (Cor., Trb., Tuba)	Half notes, *pesante*, *ff*	Am down to FM	Thematic

4.4 The Florentine Girl, Nostalgia, and the "Love Episode"

In Rachmaninoff's proposed ballet libretto, Paganini sells his soul for perfection of his craft and for a woman. As mentioned above, the "love episodes" (movement two) delineate a three-movement structure within the *Rhapsody* and Rachmaninoff associates the first appearance of the woman with the minuet variation (variation 12); her presence remains through variation 18. The only other specific reference to the woman is in variation 13 where both she and Paganini come to an agreement. Of course, the final ballet libretto depicts a more detailed scenario of the love episode and the woman. Paganini first encounters the Florentine beauty in a meadow on a spring morning. She is bewitched by Paganini's guitar playing and dances in a hypnotic, unconscious state to his music (refer back to Table 4.2). Whereas the Evil Spirit would be directly linked to the *Dies Irae* theme and motives, the woman is not associated with a specific theme that recurs throughout the second movement (the ballet program was, after all, conceived years after the music was composed). An attempt to correlate specific moments within the second movement with either the early or final ballet program would be misguided. A more productive way to view the "love episode" instead would be to examine the topics and styles used by the composer to signify love, longing, or yearning, which can be indexical of the love interest in the ballet.

Rachmaninoff *evokes* a minuet, a high-style courtly dance of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries, in variation 12 (it is labeled *tempo di menuetto*). Typically described as "dignified," "graceful," "elegant," and "charming," the minuet was a slow or moderate tempo dance in triple meter. According to Leonard Ratner, "as a style, [the minuet] was used in first movements, slow movements and finales."[15] Rachmaninoff launches the second (slow) movement of the *Rhapsody* with an allusion to this former stylized dance, set in a characteristic simple triple meter (3/4). The presence of the head motive from the Paganini theme is transformed and romanticized in the minuet variation. Instead of a wild and virtuosic treatment, Rachmaninoff assigns the motive to a handful of solo—primarily pastoral—instruments (e.g., clarinets, horns, celli, and oboes), instructing them to play legato, *cantabile* and/or *dolce*, with soft or swelling dynamic markings. These lyrical melodic fragments also exhibit a simplification of the head motive to just its ascending arpeggiation in the repeated a-sections ($\hat{5}$-$\hat{1}$-$\hat{3}$-$\hat{5}$) with slower rhythmic durations (mostly quarter and half notes). These features, along with the slower tempo relative to the previous variations (e.g., moderato in variation 11), create a dreamlike episode, the memory of a minuet but not an actual minuet (a more detailed discussion on nostalgia will follow below).

[15]Ratner, *Classic Music,* 11.

As evidenced by reception history, variation 18 has functioned both as a love theme and an indexical sign for desire and passion in numerous movies including *Somewhere in Time* (1980), *Groundhog Day* (1993), *Sabrina* (1995), and *Ronin* (1998). The lush, sweeping, lyrical melody—first heard by the solo pianist in mm. 1–13 and then restated in mm. 14–24 by the strings—is to be performed *andante cantabile* with subtle touches of *rubato*. This dramatic outpouring of emotion and feeling can be classified under the nineteenth-century style, *stile appassionata*.[16] With its associations of love, desire, nationalism, or even religious fervor, the *stile appassionata* features "operatically derived melodies [that] are often written in octaves (although a single soaring line can create the same effect) and are underscored by throbbing, repeated chords—most frequently in eighth-note or triplet patterns—that represent the pounding heartbeat of barely repressed passion."[17] Indeed, variation 18 presents a soaring melody (though perhaps not of operatic heights), a "throbbing" eighth-note triplet pattern in the piano accompaniment with occasional triplets figures in the melody. When the orchestra states the inverted Paganini theme (rehearsals 50–51 or mm. 14–24), the first and second violins play the yearning melody in octaves, and this *stile appassionata* variation invokes what John Culshaw describes as the "[return] to Rachmaninov's old lyrical style."[18] Another parameter supporting Rachmaninoff's *stile appassionata* variation is the distantly related key of D♭ major (refer back to Chapter 3 for further discussion pertaining to the relationship between this local key area and the global tonic of A minor). This particular key held special significance for the composer across all of his stylistic periods both as a global tonic and at "interior climax events and expressively-packed lyric episodes."[19] Johnston's in-depth Rachmaninoff corpus study led him to generalize about the use of D♭ major as a structural and expressive point, particularly in the composer's final works. "In Opp. 43, 44, and 45," Johnston claims, "D♭ major represents a realm of the interior—distant, often lyrical, usually introspective by comparison with the more active music on either side, and expressively packed."[20] Johnston's claim suggests that this variation, along with other passages in D♭ major, could be interpreted as a deeply personal for the composer. The fact that the key relationship of D♭ major to the global tonic is so harmonically distant lends credence to it being interpreted in a different temporality. Johnston's description of this key area being "distant…with the more active music on either side" further supports my

[16]A style is the "figures and progressions within a piece" that "evoke a single affect." See Ratner, *Classic Music*, 9 and Dickensheets, "The Topical Vocabulary of the Nineteenth Century," 104–105.

[17]Dickensheets, "The Topical Vocabulary," 109.

[18]John Culshaw, *Sergei Rachmaninov* (London: D. Dobson, 1949), 98.

[19]Johnston, "Harmony and Climax," 238. See also Johnston's Figure 6.1. Marked D♭ Events in Well-Known Rachmaninoff Works from all Periods, p. 237.

[20]Ibid., 238.

interpretation of this variation functioning as a nostalgic moment in the work (more details on temporality in the *Rhapsody* is presented below).

Charles Rosen, Michael Klein, and Emily Gertsch have mapped temporality in musical narratives onto tonal key areas (Table 4.5 summarizes their mappings). The passivity that Rosen assigns to the subdominant is correlated with the past for both Klein and Gertsch. While Klein correlates Rosen's passive/active binary with a past/future binary, Gertsch expands the analogy to a third mapping that includes a tonic/subdominant correlation with a present/past binary. In an essay on the troping of temporality, Robert Hatten argues, "theorists are familiar with many of the cues for temporal perspective in music" citing as an example, "the reversal of the leading tone to the seventh of V^7/IV aptly symbolizes not only the avoidance of closure but also the compensatory move to the subdominant side that is more relaxed and hence more suitable for reflection and reminiscence."[21] Klein explores two types of time signified during the nineteenth century and their manifestation in Chopin's music: (1) lyric time is "signified in those presentational sections in which melody comes to the fore, and in which harmonic and phrase structures are relatively stable;" and (2) narrative time, which is "signified in those sections in which harmonic and phrase structures become more complex, and in which there is generally an increase in rhythmic activity."[22] Furthermore, Monelle maps this temporal metaphor onto A.B. Marx's *Satz–Gang–Satz* (rest–motion–rest), equating lyric time with rest and narrative time with motion or action.[23] For Klein, lyric time in Chopin's music is associated with genres that evoke the salon style (e.g., nocturnes, poeticized waltzes, and mazurkas) while the virtuosic style of the etudes, concertos, and even polonaises are associated with narrative time.[24] Key relationships, harmonic progressions, phrase structure, and genre inform how Klein and Gertsch define the musical past (or nostalgia in Gertsch's case), but I believe that a framework with more specific musical criteria is necessary in order to avoid conflating nostalgic musical moments with allusions to the past absent of yearning.

[21]Robert S. Hatten, "The Troping of Temporality in Music" in *Approaches to Meaning in Music*, ed. Byron Almén and Edward Pearsall (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 63. The association of the subdominant being "soft," has its roots in early scale solmization where the 'hard' *cantus durus* employed B♮ and the 'soft' *cantus mollis* employed B♭.

[22]Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade," 37. Klein borrows this conception of time from Raymond Monelle. See Raymond Monelle, "Genre and Structure" in *The Sense of Music: Semiotic Essays*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 115–21.

[23]Klein, "Chopin's Fourth Ballade," 38.

[24]Ibid., 38–39.

Table 4.5. Summary of Authors' Mapping Time in Narrative onto Tonal Areas[25]

Harmonic Function (Key Area)	Mapping	Rosen (1971)	Klein (2004)	Gertsch (2014)
Tonic	⇔	–	–	Present (Reality)
Subdominant	⇔	Passive	Looking back to the Past	Past (Nostalgic State)
Dominant	⇔	Active	Movement to the Future	–

Originating in the Greek *nostos* (to return home) and *algos* (pain), nostalgia was first coined by seventeenth-century Swiss physician Johannes Hofer as a medical condition afflicting Swiss mercenaries fighting away from their homeland (i.e., extreme homesickness). Since then, nostalgia has lost its medical connotations and now describes sentimentalized memories of the past: the online Oxford Dictionaries define nostalgia as "a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past, typically for a period or place with happy personal associations," while the Merriam-Webster dictionary adds an element of loss to its definition ("a wistful or excessively sentimental yearning for return to or of some past period or irrecoverable condition.)"[26] Fred Davis's 1979 sociology of nostalgia claims that nostalgia is a "personally experienced past" and that nostalgia can be categorized into three orders or stages of reaction (the Ascending Orders of Nostalgia). His *First-Order* or *Simple Nostalgia* defines the term as "a positively toned evocation of a lived past in the context of some negative feeling toward present or impending circumstance, … a subjective state which harbors the largely unexamined belief that THINGS WERE BETTER (MORE BEAUTIFUL) (HEALTHIER) (HAPPIER) (MORE CIVILIZED) (MORE EXCITING) *THEN* THAN NOW."[27] What is furthermore evident by this first reaction is "the warm glow the speaker…imparts to some past era: the celebration of now ostensibly lost values, the sense of some ineffable spirit of worth or goodness having escaped time, the conviction that, no matter how far advanced the present may be…it is in some deeper sense meaner and baser. The emotional posture is that of a yearning for return, albeit

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[25]Emily S. Gertsch, "Narratives of Innocence and Experience: Plot Archetypes in Robert Schumann's Piano Quintet and Piano Quartet" (PhD diss., The Florida State University, 2013), 84. See Table 4.3 "Mapping the Time Aspect of Narrative onto Tonal Areas."

[26]*Oxford Dictionaries,* s.v. "Nostalgia," http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/nostalgia (accessed January 30, 2015); *Merriam-Webster Online*, s.v. "Nostalgia," http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/ nostalgia (accessed January 30, 2015).

[27]Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 18 (punctuation, upper-case, and italics belong to Davis).

accompanied often by an ambivalent recognition that such is not possible."[28] Three necessary characteristics of nostalgia can be abstracted from these definitions and will serve to define nostalgia in a musical context: the past (period, place, individual, society), a sense of yearning for that past, and a recognition that the past experience (which never took place the way we remember it) can never be recaptured or relived (i.e., wishful thinking, fantasy). Ryan Kangas recently explored childhood and nostalgia in Mahler's Fourth Symphony, laying the cornerstone for a theoretical framework of nostalgia in music. In an attempt to pin down how nostalgia may be signified musically without conflating it with a non-past longing, Kangas suggests starting with the following: "for a passage to sound convincingly nostalgic, it should offer a musical analogue of nostalgia: the music should not only suggest a yearning mood but should also specifically evoke a past that is somehow irretrievable."[29] To this end, I propose that the following three requirements need to be present in order to distinguish a convincingly nostalgic musical passage from one of simple yearning:

1. **Demarcation of Time (Past):** a frame separating the past memory from the present through (a) a shift of temporality and/or (b) a parenthetical insertion that interrupts the linear narrative (i.e, a musical passage is bracketed off from its surroundings, almost as if it is in quotation marks).
2. **Allusion to an Idealized Past (Yearning):** the presence of certain topics, styles, harmonies, melodies, instrumentation, etc. are indexical of a particular idealized past—see the four broad categories of nostalgic recollections in Table 4.6.
3. **Artificiality of Allusion (Fantasy):** the allusion to the past is forced, exaggerated, or features elements of fantasy, revealing its artificial construction (e.g., the recollection is false or impossible or the allusion insufficiently or incorrectly references the past—it is too sophisticated, too simple, incongruous with the style, etc.). Kangas infers from a number of reviewers of Mahler's Fourth Symphony that "true simplicity could never be cultivated; any attempt to cultivate simplicity will invariably betray the underlying artificiality."[30] The unrealistic memory, unfortunately, forces the individual to re-evaluate the authenticity of the memory.[31]

[28]Ibid., 20–21.

[29]Ryan R. Kangas, "Classical Style, Childhood and Nostalgia in Mahler's Fourth Symphony," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 8, no. 2 (2011): 225.

[30]Ibid., 220.

[31]For scholarship that places sociologist Fred Davis's three orders of nostalgia (simple, reflexive, and interpretative) within a semiological process (iconic, indexical, and symbolic), see Matthew R. Shaftel, "Performing Ives' Musical Borrowing: a Semiotic Model for the Interpretation of Art Song" in *Semiotics 2008*, ed. John Deely and Leonard Sbrocchi (Ottawa, Canada: Legas Publishing, 2009), 825–37.

In order to illustrate how these three criteria apply in a musical context, I will continue with my earlier discussion of Rachmaninoff's variations 12 and 18.

Table 4.6. Possible Strategies and Techniques for Nostalgic Moments in Music[32]

Type of Nostalgic Recollection	Harmony	Melody	Instrumentation	Topic, Style	Simple Nostalgia (Iconic)
1. Memories of Childhood or Youth (idealized)	Simple, Diatonic	Simple, Modal or Diatonic, narrow range, stepwise	Voice (solo or accompanied), *Kinderinstrumente*, toy piano, sleigh bells, melodic instrument (e.g. solo violin)	Lullaby, nursery rhyme, music box, march, *Kinder-march*, pastoral	Innocence, naïvité, youth, simplicity, inexperience, faith
2. Idealized Past: Rural Setting (Low Style)	Simple, Diatonic	Simple, folktune, narrow range, stepwise	Flute or pan-pipes, drone bass (e.g. bagpipe), solo woodwinds (pipes), brass (horns calls), strings	Bucolic (musette), pastoral (siciliana), contredanse	Arcadia, rusticity, nature, peasants and shepherds
Idealized Past: Urban Setting (Middle to High Style)	Diatonic, some chromaticism, contrapuntal	Varied; imitation, controlled dissonance (e.g., suspensions)	Strings, woodwinds, brass	Gallant, Biedermeirer styles; Minuet, waltz, polonaise; learned style, *stile antico*, chivalric style	Old-fashionedness, elegance, nobility, aristocracy, religion
3. Memory of a Loved One	Throbbing, repeating chords; diatonic chords colored with chromaticism	Sweeping, lush, soaring, legato, *cantabile*, *dolce*	Violin, other instruments that simulate the human voice	*Stile appassionata*, salon, lied (singing) style, *cantabile*	Love; past desire, longing, or passion; youth, sentimentalized past
4. A Specific Composer's Earlier Compositional Style	Contextual				

The two methods of demarcating time listed in my first requirement for a nostalgic passage are borrowed from Robert Hatten's four tropes of temporality. A shift in temporality

[32]All strategies are indicated by a demarcation of time

occurs when "a presumably continuous idea is broken off, or its clearly projected goal is evaded, as in certain rhetorical gestures or shifts in level of discourse…By interrupting the unmarked or expected flow of events…time is problematized as neither strictly sequential nor smoothly continuous."[33] This first trope suggests a sudden or even potentially violent change in the continuous flow of a musical idea problematizing the continuity of time. A clear instance of this kind of temporal shifting occurs between variation 18 and variation 19 in the *Rhapsody*. Rachmaninoff abruptly interrupts the nostalgic eighteenth variation (Memory of a Loved One), shifting the subject from the recollection of the past back into the present moment. The memory fades with the solo piano quietly stating the inverted head motive for the last time with *ritardando*, *pianissimo*, and use of fermata over the last tonic chord. Abrupt pizzicato chords in the strings, accompanied by horns and bassoons, initiate a six-bar introduction to variation 19; it is as if this introduction functions as a musical trigger—startling the subject out of its reverie. A *sforzando* first inversion A-major triad presents a stark harmonic contrast to the previous D♭-major tonic in variation 18; the entire six-measure introduction into variation 19 features the progression I^6–i^6–III–vi in A minor. Rachmaninoff's unexpected reversion to the global tonic and the contrast in dynamic levels (*pp* versus *sf*), tempi (*Andante cantabile* versus *A tempo vivace*), meter (3/4 versus 2/4), and articulation (*legato* versus *staccato*) impede the local unmarked trajectory of the work.

Hatten's second temporality trope that differentiates time in a nostalgic musical excerpt involves "an interruption that ultimately returns to the music left behind—in other words, parenthetical insertion."[34] As described above in the criteria, a nostalgic musical passage is one where boundaries set the music apart from its surroundings, as if it were an aside. The whole second movement of the *Rhapsody*—the "love episode" in variations 12–18 as per Rachmaninoff's correspondence with Fokine—can be viewed as a large parenthetical insertion between the implicit first and third movements. If variations 12–18 were to be excised from the work along with the transitional variation 11, a coherent continuation from variation 10 to variation 19 would be possible.

In Figure 4.2 the parenthetical second movement is removed along with variation 11 and the six-measure introduction into variation 19, to demonstrate how variation 10 *could* conceivably progress directly to variation 19. Table 4.7 lists musical parameters that demonstrate the continuity between these variations. Rachmaninoff reestablishes the key, meter, tempo, register, texture, and even the dynamic level of variation 10 at the outset of variation 19, suggesting a logical progression from one to the next. Although the theoretical

[33]Hatten, "The Troping of Temporality in Music," 68.
[34]Ibid., 70.

removal of movement II discards the Florentine Girl from the ballet libretto, the basic Faustian legend of Paganini remains intact: the violinist is in league with the Evil Spirit (the *Dies Irae* quotations in variation 10 are indexical of this persona) in order to acquire perfection of his art which is achieved, according to Rachmaninoff, through Paganini's "diabolical pizzicato" playing is evoked in the piano at variation 19.

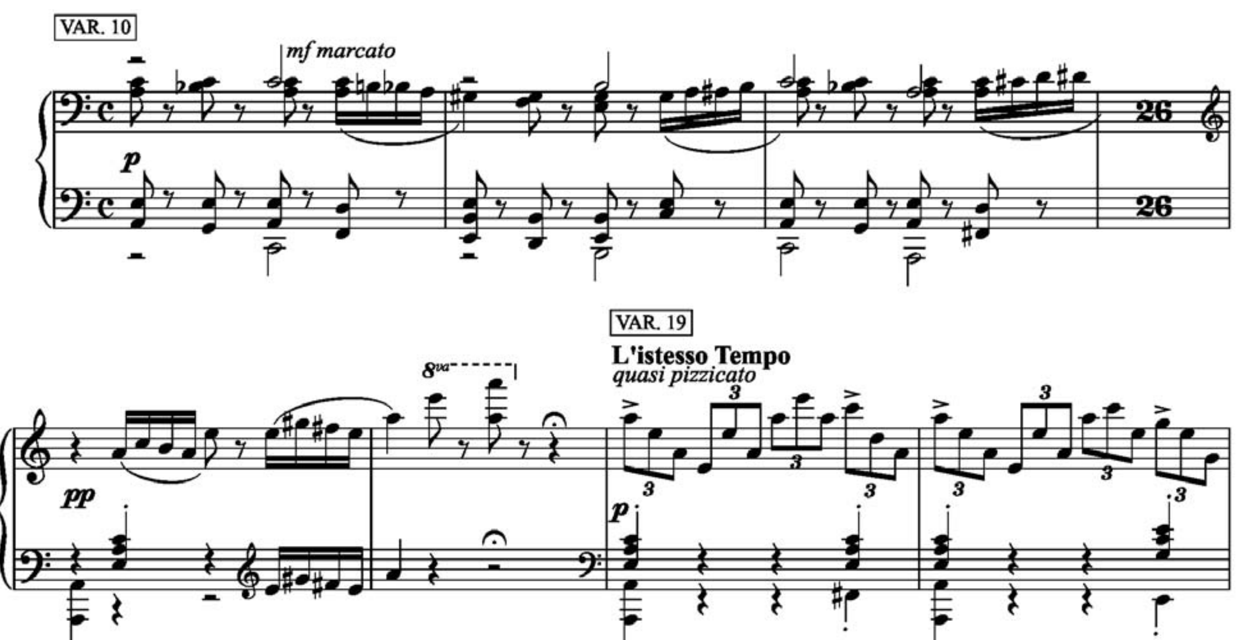

Figure 4.2. Recomposition of the *Rhapsody*: Removal of Variations 11 to 18 and the Introduction to Variation 19

Table 4.7. Continuity between Variations 10 and 19

Parameters	Var. 10	Var. 19
Key	A minor	A minor
Meter	Common time	Common time
Tempo	(*Allegro vivace*)[35]	*L'istesso tempo* (*A tempo vivace*)
Dynamic-Level	Soft (*pp*)	Soft (*p*)
Register	mm. 30–31 (downbeat): A1 to A5	m. 1: A1 to A5
Texture	End: thin	Beginning: thin

[35]Although there is no specific tempo marking in variation 10, it is played *Allegro vivace*: variation 8 is labeled Tempo I (*Allegro vivace*) and variation 9 is marked *L'istesso tempo*, which continues without alteration in variation 10.

Parenthetical insertion can be achieved in this work because of the intrinsic paratactic nature of the theme-and-variation genre itself. Theoretically then, sectional variations are a series of self-contained unit and any variation *could* be inserted without compromising the overall structure. That being said, ordering does matter in the majority of common-practice variation sets and for a parenthetical insertion to be convincing in this genre, continuity needs to be retained between variations on either side of the inserted material. Although Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody* is a set of sectional variations with clear divisions demarcating one variation from another (Variations 7, 11, and 12, for instance, are preceded by literal caesuras), lead-ins also link variations 13–14, 14–15, and 17–18 (all within movement II) while elisions connect variations 21–22 and 22–23, forging some continuity between units within the piece. Rachmaninoff's use of these linking devices demonstrates that the overall arrangement of variations is crucial to the work. Notice that the variations comprising the "love episode" are clearly partitioned from the remainder of the work. A quarter rest with a fermata caesura separates variation 10 from variation 11 (see Figure 4.2) and the six-measure introduction to variation 19 mentioned above demarcates variation 18 as the end of a larger unit. Furthermore, all of Rachmaninoff's lead-ins from one variation to the next occur within the second movement, suggesting continuity amongst this group of variations.

Typically the insertion of parenthetical musical material leads to an abrupt and unprepared disparate musical unit, halting the continuous flow of the music preceding and following it. While this is true of how Rachmaninoff moved out of the parenthetical second movement (see discussion above), he employed a different strategy (one involving a transitional variation) for introducing the parenthetical "love" movement. Labeled a transition by the composer in his 1937 letter, variation 11 functions as a gateway from the present in variation 10 to an idealized past in variation 12. A combination of harmonic, melodic, formal, and stylistic cues evoke a timeless dreamlike state where the present melts away. The pianist opens the variation with three cantabile, *a capriccio* flourishes of the head motive. A free formal setting emerges due to the rhapsodic nature of the variation (recall from the previous chapter that all of the other variations up to this point in the work remained closely tied to the formal organization of the theme). Shimmering string tremolos, harp arpeggios and glissandi, and the oscillations and arpeggiations in the piano (e.g., $^{o}7$ chords, "fantastic" octatonic collections) create a timeless-sounding atmosphere or reverie that serves to transport the listener from the present to the past (i.e., the static environment halts the linear progression of the narrative as nostalgic recollection slowly transports the subject back to the past). Rather than solely demonstrating a sudden shifting in temporalities (as in Hatten's tropes), the *Rhapsody* also presents an instance of *transitioning between* temporalities where the change from the present to the past is facilitated through, in this case, the timeless, dreamlike nature of the eleventh

variation; the key of A minor links variation 11 with the previous variation, but its 3/4 meter and opening *cantabile* piano melody are signs of the past coming into focus, connecting it to the nostalgic "love" movement.

Turning to the second and third requirements for recognizing a nostalgic musical passage—allusion to an idealized past and artificiality of allusion—we can now return to the earlier discussion of variation 12 (minuet) and variation 18 (*stile appassionata*) in terms of specific nostalgic recollections. The minuet is associated with the high style, and belongs to a nostalgic idealized past, specifically of an urban nature, but which persona is experiencing nostalgia for this past musical style? It is certainly not the Paganini of the ballet who is experiencing nostalgia; rather, it is "Rachmaninoff," the fictional composer who is fondly recalling this past musical style. Based solely on musical cues, variation 12 suggests the idealized musical high style of a previous century through allusion to the courtly minuet, set in the subdominant key of D minor (a sign for the past). Disregarding the ballet libretto momentarily, "Rachmaninoff" establishes a yearning (his yearning) for the antiquated dance form through the characteristics of meter and tempo mentioned above; yet the *cantabile* and/or *dolce* directions assigned to those playing the melodic fragments (clarinet, oboe, horn, and cello) also revive the lush, lyrical melodies common to *nineteenth*-century compositions. Thus, despite the found remembrance of this elegant eighteenth-century social dance, there are characteristics of this setting that are false or artificial to the creation of this allusion (the third criteria for nostalgia in music). Davis's second-order of nostalgia (reflexive nostalgia) ties directly into this false realization of the past, where subjects question and critique the authenticity of their own recollections. He explains that the subject goes beyond sentimentalizing the past and "summons to feeling and thought certain empirically oriented questions concerning the truth, accuracy, completeness, or representativeness of the nostalgic claim."[36] Although the harmonic language in variation 12 is fairly typical of a Classical minuet, the passage from mm. 22–24 is more characteristic of a later Romantic harmonic style with a secondary Neapolitan of the subdominant and a minor dominant that undermines the cadence: $\flat II^{5-6}$/iv | iv–v | i |. Ratner's description of the minuet dance type characterizes it "as noble, charming, lively, expressing moderate cheerfulness by virtue of its rather quick triple time. In classic music, compositions entitled *minuet* or *menuetto* covered a wide range of expression, from the frankly humorous to the deeply pathetic."[37] He provides examples of elegant, popular and rustic, pathetic, and even breathless and headlong, but never romantic or lyrical. As listeners, we soon come to realize the falseness of the nostalgic

[36]Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday*, 21.

[37]Ratner, *Classic Music*, 9–10. Ratner's "pathetic" minuets may also be suggestive of nostalgia [see Mozart's Violin Sonata in E minor, K. 304, II (Tempo di Minuetto) written shortly after his mother's death in 1778].

allusion. Rachmaninoff's allusion to a high-style dance type quickly reveals its artificial and constructed nature (i.e., a *cantabile*-style minuet with Romantic-era harmonic language, situated within a set of variations).

Unlike the nostalgic-framing twelfth and eighteenth variations, the inner variations (13–17) of the second movement are not overtly nostalgic. Table 4.8 briefly summarizes moments from each that allude to an idealized past. Out of these five variations, variation 14 demonstrates the most convincing reference to a past style that is at the same time artificially constructed. Rachmaninoff conjures up a "*valse militaire*," a hybrid style consisting of elements from the military topic and the waltz. Triadic melodies sounded by the brass, strings, and woodwinds with a rhythmic profile of triplet-eighth notes driving towards half-note downbeats evoke military trumpet calls. Figure 4.3 reproduces the opening F-major melody of variation 14 (played by violin I, clarinets, oboes, and flutes) while Figure 4.4 reproduces a Prussian trumpet call, a "march pour la parade," that illustrates the same rhythmic profile seen in variation 14, but in cut time. The 3/4 meter of variation 14 is not common for a military march, but it is more common for a waltz; in fact, both the meter and tempo of the waltz from variation 13 carry over into variation 14 (variation 13 has a tempo marking of allegro).[38] What is clear about this fantasy *valse militaire* is that Rachmaninoff is alluding to two earlier musical styles: the heroic associations of militaristic endeavors and the heyday of the popular nineteenth-century ballroom dance. When elements of fantasy begin to emerge in the nostalgic recollection, the accuracy of the past event needs to be called into question. Besides the fact that a military waltz is a fictional dance, other musical cues reveal the artificiality of the musical allusion in variation 14: Rachmaninoff's "fantastic" harmonization of the, mostly triadic, "military" melody (interlocking major and minor triads—FM and C♯m—from HEX $_{0,1}$ substitute for V–I resolutions), his uncommon instrumentation for a military band (percussion limited to the timpani and the trumpet does not play at the beginning or the ending of the variation), and the lack of a duple or quadruple march-meter.

Refer again to table 5.8 for descriptions of the allusions and the types of idealized pasts present in the second movement's inner variations. Unlike variations 12–14, variation 16 only features nostalgic *moments* (e.g., memory of a loved one), which are situated within the context

[38]The waltz was a fast, lively dance that involved partners whirling about the ballroom. A quarter note = 70 became the benchmark tempo for waltzes in the early 1800s. See *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online,* s.v. "Waltz" (by Andrew Lamb), http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/29881 (accessed August 11, 2014).

of the *ombra* topic (i.e., the supernatural).[39] Rachmaninoff creates the overall *mysterioso* affect of the topic through the following: a flat minor key (B♭ minor, which is a remote key in relation to the global tonic); a dark, quiet timbre; a tip-toeing chromatic third outlined by the strings at the opening of the a-sections; and the numerous repeated motivic figures [e.g., mechanical-sounding piano figures (mm. 5–9), "fluttering" thirty-second neighbor notes in the upper strings (mm. 9–11)]. Within this eerie environment, Rachmaninoff's melodic fragments recall the theme's head motive in a yearning manner. His sentimentalized rendition of the head motive, which has been absent since variation 13, is distributed to a solo violin and the clarinets (i.e., the instrumentation can signal the third type of nostalgia, the memory of a loved one). A solo violin is assigned a *mf cantabile* setting of the head motive (*senza sordino*) in the first b-section of the variation (mm. 23–31). The singing nature of the solo violin's narrow legato melody is reminiscent of the *cantabile* melodies found in minuet variation.[40] The first clarinets take over the violin's melody in the repeated b-section (mm. 33–41). Rachmaninoff creates a sense of distance and space when the solo violinist enters (a reduced texture consisting of the piano, violin, and accompaniment interjections by other members of the orchestra) that further suggests the idea of a single memory of longing. The simple nostalgic past is twofold in this case: a contextual idealized past (i.e., the minuet within the *Rhapsody*) and the memory of a loved one (i.e., the dance where Paganini and the Florentine Girl first meet). It becomes apparent that the allusion is false because the specific melodies from variation 12 are not referenced in variation 14 and the romanticized version of the theme's melody never existed in the first place.

Figure 4.3. (A) Military Trumpet and Bugle Calls, "Marche pour la parade,"[41] and (B) Military Topic in Variation 14, mm. 2–6

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[39]A detailed exploration of the *ombra* topic is available in Clive McClelland, *Ombra: Supernatural Music in the Eighteenth Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012).

[40]This is an altered version of the theme's sixteenth-note motive that skips down a third from $\hat{3}$ and then returns back to it instead of arpeggiating down a fifth from $\hat{5}$ as in the original theme.

[41]Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 287.

Table 4.8. Nostalgic Moments in Variations 13–17

Variation	Allusion	Type of Idealized Past
13	- *Valse risoluto* - Key: D minor (references the past) - 3/4 meter, allegro - *molto marcato, ff,* head motive in augmentation	Idealized past (high style)
14	- *Valse militaire* - Military: triadic melody (brass, strings, woodwinds), some timpani; allegro, triplet eighth notes lead to strong half-note downbeats (rhythmic profile of a Prussian trumpet call) - Waltz: 3/4 meter, allegro	Idealized past (middle to high style)
15	- Rhapsody: evoking the rhapsodic piano writing of Liszt or Gershwin[42]	Specific compositional style
16	- *Ombra* topic - Key: B♭ minor (distantly related to home key) - Oboe and English horn play the head motive *dolce e gracioso* - Violin and clarinet solos: play melodic material in the b-section *cantabile*: sounds distant, recalls the head motive in a sentimentalized manner (singing style)	Memory of a loved one and an idealized past (high style)
17	- Key: continuation of B♭ minor (distantly related to home key) and references variation 16	Continuation of 16

Unfortunately, the ballet libretto provides little extra-musical support for interpreting these inner variations (I will address the libretti's interactions with the four narratives, traced in the previous chapter, in the conclusion of this chapter). Rachmaninoff originally suggested that the woman (i.e., Folkine's Florentine Girl) appears to Paganini for the first time during variation 12 and that the two come to an understanding in variation 13. Although this encounter further supports Rachmaninoff's inclusion of the minuet (an elegant couple's dance) at the outset of the nostalgic recollection, the ballet adds elements of a low-style through the pastoral scenery and characters (e.g., springtime in a meadow, a crowd of youth, boys playing guitars, dancing, etc.) as well as the elements for the memory of a loved one (i.e., the Florentine Girl). This pastoral scenery contradicts the high style associated with the minuet in variation 12, further adding to the dance's artificial quality. The Evil Spirit, represented by the *Dies Irae* theme or motives, is entirely absent throughout the second movement; in hindsight (after viewing the second movement as a past nostalgic memory) this is unsurprising since the sentimentalized memory does not recall any unpleasant events surrounding this evil character. Paganini's life and musical journey, depicted in a linear narrative, supplements the nostalgic moments established

[42]Mentioned in the previous chapter, David Cannata has suggested that Rachmaninoff's awareness of Gershwin's two piano rhapsodies (1924 and 1931) was the impetus behind the final title of his Op. 43.

in the music, which can even be interpreted as the nostalgic recollections of Rachmaninoff himself (i.e., recollections of past Romantic musical styles—including his own lyrical post-Romanticism).[43]

4.5 Conclusions: Comparing Narratives and Considering Formal Boundaries

What is the importance of comparing narrative archetypes? What information or insights does such a comparison afford us? By comparing the ballet libretto narratives (one romance and one tragedy) with the structural narratives that I mapped out in Chapter 4 (one romance and three comedies), I can demonstrate moments of convergence and divergence across the various interpretations. The following discussion will proceed through each of the *Rhapsody*'s three movements, summarizing how the multiple narrative perspectives interact with each other. The *Dies Irae* quotations and the nostalgic variations addressed earlier in this chapter will be explored in conjunction with the narrative archetypes presented in Chapter 4. I also consider the formal boundaries that arise within each movement based on the libretto and whether these subsections contradict or lend insight into the changes of rank value for the four musical parameters I examined in the previous chapter.

4.5.1. Movement I: Introduction to Variation 11

The ballet libretti (both the proposed and finalized versions) provide additional insight into the parameters that I tracked in Chapter 4. Figure 4.5 illustrates how Rachmaninoff's proposed libretto partitions the first movement into two subsections: (1) Paganini's introduction and establishment (Introduction to variation 6) and (2) the entrance and progress of the Evil Spirit (variations 7–10); the two quotations of the *Dies Irae* book-end the second subsection. Based on these formal divisions one would expect there to be contrasts between variation 6 and 7 as well as 10 and 11. Although not specifically detailing the formal boundaries in the *Rhapsody*, Woodard remarks upon Rachmaninoff's use of *Dies Irae* motives to help define formal boundaries in Op. 43 and in his first piano sonata.[44] The notion that variation 7 acts as a formal boundary is bolstered by other structural elements discussed in the previous chapter (e.g., tonality, "fantastic" structures, formal, and background structures), including the variation's formal and background structures. In the comic trajectory of formal structures (each movement presented its own nested comic narrative) throughout the *Rhapsody,* there is a reversal in the

[43]Precedents of expressive lyrical melodies can be found in Rachmaninoff's earlier stylistic periods. Some representative examples from each period include: (1) "early Russian" (1890–96): *Moment Musicaux*, Op. 16, No. 3 (Andante cantabile) and Trio élégaique in D minor Op. 9, ii; (2) "middle Russian" (1900–08): Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18, ii and Ten Preludes Op. 23, No. 4 (D major); and (3) "late Russian" (1909–17): "Vocalise," Op. 34, No. 14 and Sonata No. 2 in B♭ minor, Op. 36, ii.

[44]Woodard, "The Dies Irae As Used By Sergei Rachmaninoff," 32.

rank value of transgression (the looseness of the formal structure) between variations 6 and 7 (refer back to Figure 3.2 and Table 3.4). Categorized as formal type 4 (aabb has difficulty closing), variation 6 is more transgressive than variation 7, which belongs to category 3 (aabb is expanded, compressed, or features asymmetrical groupings). Rachmaninoff favors displaying elements that are more aligned with the original theme (i.e., musical elements that are less transgressive than the variation that precedes them) at the beginnings of new formal units or sections. Similarly a sudden shift in the rank value of transgression in the comic narrative of the variations' background structures (transgression is signaled by the presence of non-traditional background structures) demarcates a division between variations 6 and 7. Whereas variation 6 features a "new structure" (in this case a static background framework), variation 7 returns to a "traditional structure" that features an *Urlinie* with a descent from $\hat{5}$. In other words, the sharp musical divergence between variation 6 and variation 7 in the areas of form and their related background structures supports a local formal subdivision.

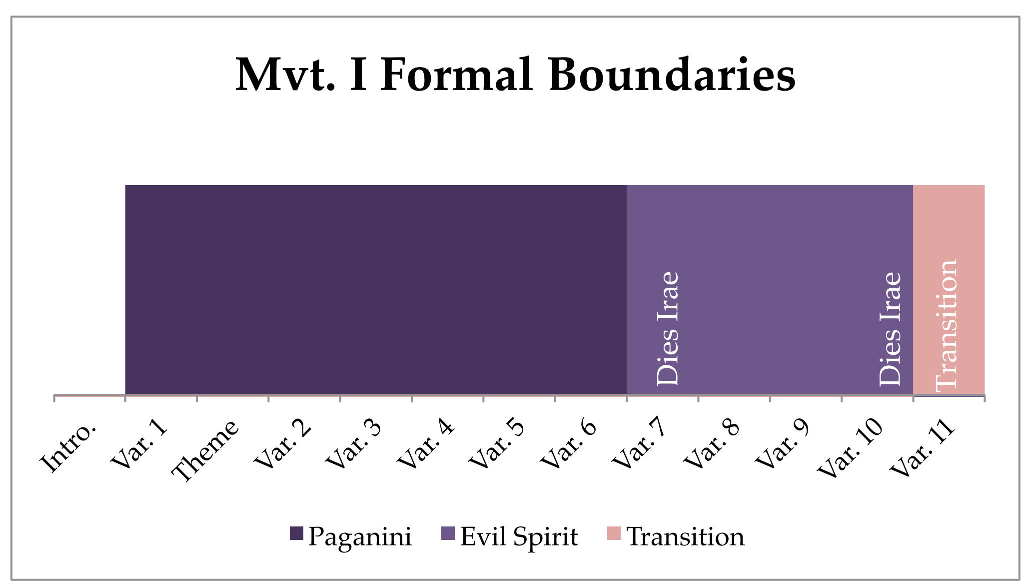

Figure 4.4. Rachmaninoff's Implicit Formal Boundaries of Movement I

Neither the tragic archetypes of tonality nor the comic archetype of "fantastic" chromatic collections support the presence of a formal division at variations 6 and 7 (see Figures 3.1, 3.4, and 3.5). There is no change of tonality throughout the entire first movement (A minor) and only variations 3 and 11 present "fantastic" chromatic embellishments. This suggests that

tonality and harmony do not play a role in shaping formal boundaries, at least *within* the first movement of the *Rhapsody*. Oftentimes tonality and harmony are the musical parameters employed as structural devices in the creation of larger musical units (e.g., the "fantastic" chromatic embellishments in variation 11 help create the transition between the movements I and II). In the first movement, however, Rachmaninoff employs a new kind of structural device that goes beyond harmony in order to delineate larger formal units—the introduction of the Evil Spirit character through *Dies Irae* quotations creates a formal subsection within the movement, even a character-episode (the Evil Spirit episode from variations 7 to 10). It is possible that this division between variations 6 and 7 also aligns with the appearance of the Devil or Paganini's enemies (classicists and critics) at this juncture in the ballet.[45]

My interpretation of the second movement as a nostalgic recollection helps to account for the (highly) transgressive trends that I found in variation 11 in the four narratives of the previous chapter. Based on Rachmaninoff's assessment of this variation as a transition to the "realm of love" for his libretto, I demonstrated that variation 11 slowly transports the subject from the present (variation 10) back to the past (variation 12). The home key links variations 10 and 11 in the present (as can be seen in the tragic archetype of tonality in Figure 3.1); the key of A minor could even be understood as representing the present while any other key areas evoke the past. The other three comic narratives ("fantastic" collections, formal structures, and background structures) all mark variation 11 as a highly transgressive and a significant moment of change in the work in their own respective musical parameters—"fantastic" collections, form, and background structures. Along with topical elements mentioned above (e.g., *a capriccio* flourishes, harp arpeggios and glissandi, piano oscillations employing °7 chords and "fantastic" octatonic collections, and a fairly static harmonic progression), the freely constructed formal and background structures of variation 11 evoke a dreamlike passage that transports the subject from one temporality to another. Table 4.9 summarizes how the six narratives (the two libretti and the four archetypes from Chapter 3) align in terms of supporting formal boundaries at variation 7 and variation 11.

[45]Although there is uncertainty as to how the music aligned with the action of the ballet, it is possible that variation 7 helped introduce the Devil's hand or Paganini's critics (the classicists and critics).

Table 4.9. Formal Boundaries within Movement I: Agreement and Disagreement between the Six Narratives

Narrative Archetypes	1	Th.	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Tragic (Original Libretto)								✓				✓
Romantic (Final Libretto)								(✓?)[46]				✓
Tragic (tonality)												
Comic ("Fantastic" Collections)												✓
Comic (Formal Structures)								✓				✓
Comic (Background Structures)								✓				✓

4.5.2. Movement II: Variations 12 to 18

Whether viewing this movement through a nostalgic lens, as I have done in this chapter, or simply as a collection of love variations, all six narrative archetypes explored in Chapters 3 and 4 agree on the boundaries of movement II, substantiating my interpretation that this section is a nostalgic, parenthetical insertion. Two of the most salient ways that Rachmaninoff demarcates the middle "love" movement of the *Rhapsody* is through tonal and stylistic changes. Figure 4.6 illustrates the events and characters of Rachmaninoff's original libretto and, unlike the first movement, there is no suggestion of internal subdivision within this movement. From the romantic narrative suggested by the ballet libretto, the second movement supports the entire second scene of the ballet, which is distinguished from the rest of the work by its setting (e.g., spring morning in a meadow) and characters (the Florentine Girl who is enchanted by Paganini's music).

In terms of the musical narratives, the tragic archetype of tonality clearly illustrates the separation of variations 12 to 18 from the rest of the work. Tonal changes (e.g., D minor, F major, B♭ minor, and D♭ major) represent transgressions away from the established order of the home key. Figure 3.1 illustrates the steadily increasing rank value of tonal transgressions from variations 12 through variation 18. The immediate return to the tonic key of A minor at variation 19, especially from the remote key of D♭ major, creates a formal boundary and distinguishes these seven variations as one large unit (i.e., collectively they demonstrate a whole-scale departure from the home key of A minor). In the previous chapter, I posited a comic narrative in which the presence of "fantastic" chromatic collections (e.g., embellishments, substitutions, or large-scale structures derived from partitions of hexatonic, octatonic, and

[46]The (✓?) refers to the uncertainty as to which characters appeared on stage during variation 7.

whole-tone collections) appeared with more frequency over the course of the *Rhapsody*. One trend displayed by Figures 3.4 and 3.5 is that all three movements begin with variations that do not possess "fantastic" equal-division collections (variations 1, 12, and 19). Additionally, all three of these variations are preceded by variations that *do* present "fantastic" collections: the introduction preceding variation 1 presents a complete $OCT_{0,1}$ collection that coexists alongside the diatonic framework, embellishing scalar passages involving $OCT_{1,2}$ and $OCT_{2,3}$ partitions close off variation 11, and the climax of variation 18 is decorated by a complete $HEX_{0,1}$ collection. Furthermore, in Chapter 4 I attributed the increased frequency of "fantastic" chromatic moments in the second movement to Rachmaninoff's emerging late compositional style in the *Rhapsody*. When these "fantastic" moments are perceived through the lens of nostalgia, an additional layer of meaning is made manifest. In this chapter, I attributed the "fantastic" chromatic occurrences in variation 14 to the artificial nature of the military topic to which Rachmaninoff was alluding, thereby fulfilling the third criteria for viewing the variation as nostalgic. In other words, the presence of these collections shows shifts in the nostalgic episode.

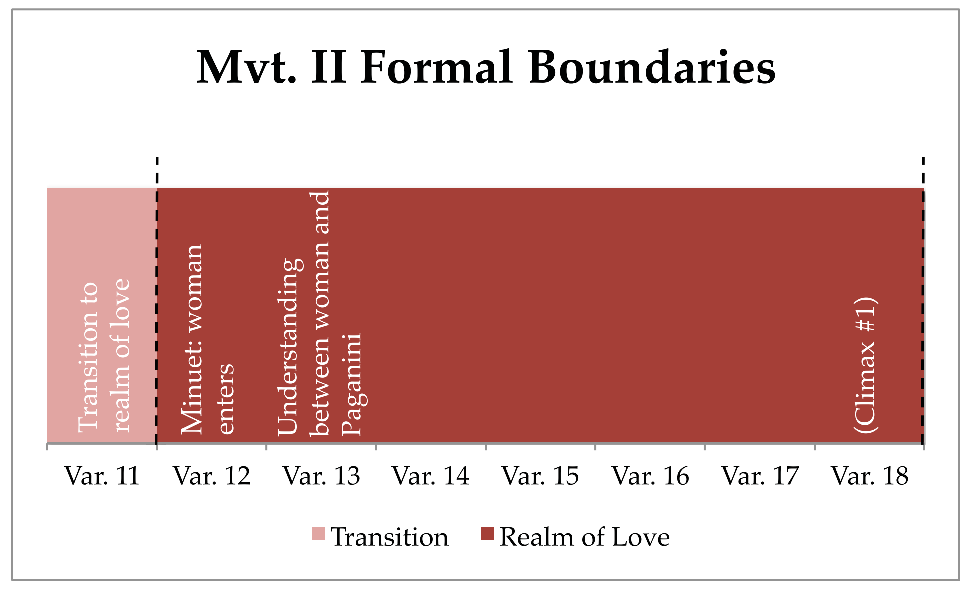

Figure 4.5. Rachmaninoff's Implicit Formal Boundaries of Movement II

The three nested comic archetypes depicting formal structures across the *Rhapsody* in Chapter 3 illustrated a trend in the changing rank values of transgression in each movement that supports the formal division of movement II (refer back to Table 3.4 and Figure 3.2). Each

movement begins with a low-ranking formal structure (e.g., formal structures from categories 1–3 that more closely resemble the form of the theme) an end with a formal structure that is transgressive and of high rank value (e.g., categories 7–9). Variation 12 marks the outset of movement II, featuring a low-ranking (non-transgressive) formal structure, specifically the aaaabb of category 2 which retrains the length and grouping structure of the theme but includes additional repetitions of the a-section. The formal structures of the variations between number 12 and 18 display a loosening of the original theme's design, but the end of the second movement is marked by the presence of the highest ranking transgressive structure from category 7 in variation 18 (new thematic material is added, in this case, aab + aab + aac). In other words, Rachmaninoff resets the form of the first variation in each movement so that it is more reflective of the theme's original structure.

In conjunction with formal structures, the nested comic narratives of the variations' background structures also endorse the division of the second movement from the remainder of the work. Each movement presents a traditional background structure at its outset that corresponds to order (i.e., a descending *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$ similar to theme) that progresses to a transgressive new structure. Movement I, for example, begins with a traditional *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$ in variation 1 and ends with a static structure in variation 11, while variation 12 at the beginning of movement II resets to a traditional descending *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$ while variation 18 closes off the movement with its new ascending arpeggiated structure. A summary of how all six narratives support the boundaries for movement II is listed in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10. Formal Boundaries of Movement II: Agreement between all Six Narratives

Narrative Archetype	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Tragic (Original Libretto)	✓						✓
Romantic (Final Libretto)	✓						✓
Tragic (tonality)	✓						✓
Comic ("Fantastic" Collections)	✓						✓
Comic (Formal Structures)	✓						✓
Comic (Background Structures)	✓						✓

Not only does the nostalgic recollection (memory of a loved one and a sentimentalized past) run its course by variation 18, this variation also functions as one of the *Rhapsody*'s two climaxes (the second one occurs in variation 22). According to Johnston's corpus study that was referenced in the previous chapter, "Rachmaninoff's works are climax-centric. Form is organized around

climax events to a degree matched perhaps only in the works of Mahler."[47] Although a little premature to be *the* formal climax of the work, variation 18 functions as the expressive climax of the second movement and creates a formal division before variation 19 (the start of the third movement). Set in the key of D♭ major, variation 18 is stylistically marked from the rest of the work with its intense outpouring of expression and emotion (*stile appassionata*) establishing the pinnacle of the second movement and nostalgic state of the subject ("Rachmaninoff" or the listener). As I discussed earlier in this chapter, the entire nostalgic second movement can be understood as a large parenthetical insertion within the overall piece. Even if this section were to be removed (along with the expressive climax that is variation 18), the remainder of the *Rhapsody* would still successfully produce a climactic variation (variation 22). Although we can only speculate as to why Rachmaninoff composed two climaxes in Op. 43, an interpretation of the work that includes nostalgia can at least offer a motivation for the presence of both.

4.5.3. Movement III: Variations 19 to 24

While Paganini is the protagonist in the recreation of the Faustian legend presented by both ballet libretti, Rachmaninoff's narrative and the Fokine–Rachaminoff narrative differ in their outcomes. Paganini is defeated by his conquerors in Rachmaninoff's version (see Figure 4.7 for the three main events in this narrative that define formal boundaries), but he dies in the Fokine-Rachmaninoff libretto and his soul transcends to the world beyond (he is not defeated by the evil spirits and his enemies). Rachmaninoff views the triumph of Paganini's art through his "diabolical pizzicato" in variation 19 and his narrative suggests formal boundaries at variation 22 (the second climax of the work when the *Dies Irae* returns), and variation 23 (the tragic hero makes his final appearance for the first twelve measures after which he is defeated). All four musical narratives mark variation 19 as a formal boundary (the beginning of a new movement), but they also support the tragic narrative that this variation is meant to invoke the famed violinist. Rachmaninoff is able to accomplish this by resetting many musical parameters (tonality, "fantastic" collections, formal, and background structures) in a manner that is less transgressive and more aligned with order and the original Paganini theme (remember that this borrowed theme can allude to its historical or fictional composer). The tonic key of A minor returns with variation 19 along with a low-ranking category 3 formal structure (aabb with compression in the b-sections), a traditional descending *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$ (there is also a competing descending third from $\hat{8}$), and the absence of "fantastic" chromatic collections. Figures 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.24, and 3.25 clearly illustrate the dramatic declines in the rank values of the four transgressions between variations 18 and 19 traced in the previous chapter.

[47]Johnston, "Harmony and Climax," 22.

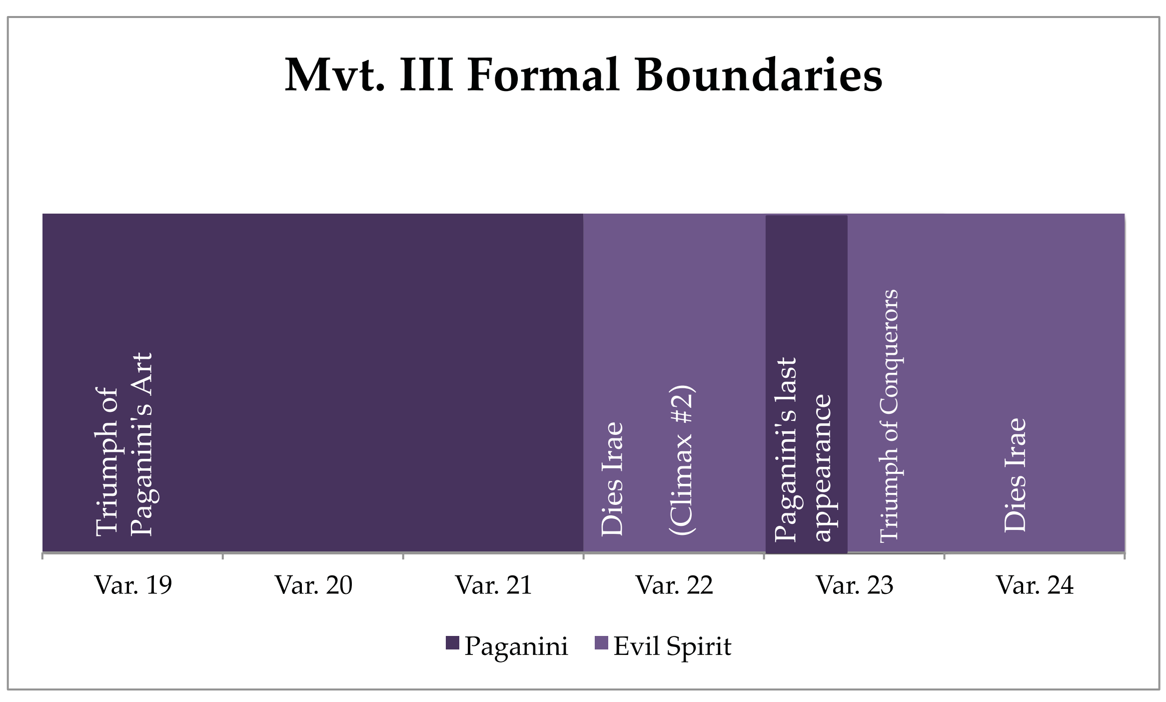

Figure 4.6. Rachmaninoff's Implicit Formal Boundaries of Movement III

The reappearance of the *Dies Irae* during the second climax of the work—it is harmonized by fully-diminished-seventh chords creating a "fantastic" octatonic setting of the chant—at the pickup to rehearsal 63 in variation 22 further recalls the first movement's use of this material and supports the argument that this quoted material helps define important formal boundaries. Three of the four musical narratives from the previous chapter demonstrate that this variation is highly transgressive in the overall scheme of the *Rhapsody*, especially when compared to the low rank values of transgressions in variation 19. The "fantastic" octatonic setting of the *Dies Irae* along with large-scale prolongations of $\hat{6}$ by the WT_1 collection and $OCT_{0,1}$ collection demonstrate that these transgressive "fantastic" chromatic collections become a significant component of the variation's framework; the rank value of this transgression switches from low in variation 19 to high at variation 22. Form and background structure go hand-in-hand at variation 22. Unlike the more traditional aabb structure and *Urlinie* from $\hat{5}$ in variation 19, variation 22 is marked by a highly transgressive free formal structure that no longer references the theme (the only other time this formal type appeared was in variation 11) and a new "other" background structure, one that hinges on a large-scale tritone relationship (variation 22 is the first time that the "other" structure is featured). Indeed, the high rank values of the large-scale prolonged "fantastic" structures, the free formal structure, and the non-standard ("other")

background structure all align in variation 22, supporting the return of the *Dies Irae* and the second climax (or first if viewing the work through the nostalgic lens) as a significant formal arrival.

Both libretti have the potential for another internal division within the last movement. In Rachmaninoff's tragic libretto, Paganini appears, for the last time, at the beginning of variation 23 and is defeated by his conquerors, while the romantic narrative of Fokine-Rachmaninoff includes two additional scenes (four scenes in total across three musical movements) that would suggest another division. The one musical narrative that suggests a final division within the movement is the tragic narrative of tonality, which features a shift to A♭ minor from the end of variation 22 to variation 23. Since the music presents a tonal struggle at this moment, I will use Rachmaninoff's libretto as support for a significant division at variation 23. Figure 3.1 exhibits a slight transgressive shift of key from A minor to A♭ minor between variations 22 to 23 (following the climax in variation 22 is a prolongation of V^7 of A♭ minor). A reversal of association between persona and key area appears at the outset of variation 23. In chapter three, "Paganini" was associated with order and the tonic home key, while "Rachmaninoff" was associated with transgression and modulations away from tonic. The willful assertion of the soloist (the artist) against the orchestra (society, Paganini's conquerors) requires a slightly different mapping. Rachmaninoff might be identifying with the Paganini character put forth by the libretti (the independent, creative artist), in which case a brief reversal of key association (the non-tonic key of A♭ minor) with "Paganini" is warranted. The eventual resignation of the soloist to the proper A minor tonic is suggestive of Rachmaninoff's libretto the ends with Paganini's defeat. In Table 4.11 I summarize how the six narratives align with the internal formal divisions of the third movement.

Table 4.11. Formal Boundaries of Movement III: Agreement and Disagreement between all Six Narratives

Narrative Archetype	19	20	21	22	23	24
Tragic (Original Libretto)	✓			✓	✓	
Romantic (Final Libretto)	✓			(✓)		
Tragic (tonality)	✓			✓	✓	
Comic ("Fantastic" Collections)	✓			✓		
Comic (Formal Structures)	✓			✓		
Comic (Background Structures)	✓			✓		

The denouement of the *Rhapsody* (three measures after rehearsal 64) presents the listener or analyst with three possible narrative outcomes. Rachmaninoff's correspondence with Folkine (the adapted Faustian legend) suggests that the tragic hero has fallen by the end of the piece and is defeated by his conquerors. Not only does tonality aid in representing this outcome (as demonstrated above), but the final emphatic brass statement of the *Dies Irae* in variation 24 (*pesante* and *ff*), along with the suppression of musical features relating to Paganini's theme, bolsters this narrative reading of the work where the Evil Spirit is victorious. *Paganini* the ballet approaches the Faustian-inspired legend of the violinist from a slightly different angle—the quest of the virtuoso to prove the divinity of his art. Although Paganini dies from old age in the ballet (the *Dies Irae* chant, in this case, is an indexical sign for death), he leaves this world with the knowledge that he served humanity through his lifelong dedication to music; this twist in this narrative suggests a romantic archetype. At the close of the *Rhapsody* is one final statement of the theme's head motive, almost as if Paganini himself is left with the last word—"my name and music will live on."

Yet a third outcome is possible, one that is grounded in the music, rather than extra-musical libretti. Employing Almén's model for interpreting narrative archetypes, a comic narrative unfolds across the *Rhapsody* in which the composer is in dialogue with Paganini. Of the four musical parameters tracked through the piece in Chapter 4 (tonality, "fantastic" chromatic structures, form, and background structures), all but one suggest a comic archetype (tonality suggests a tragic narrative). Tonality, it would seem, is an outlier in this third reading, even though it does play a significant part in structuring large-scale formal boundaries and enhancing a nostalgic reading of the second movement, it is not the most influential transgression (i.e., it is not the primary delineator). What the other three comic plot archetypes reveal is this dialogue between a fictional Rachmaninoff and the Paganini persona. Rachmaninoff's compositional style gradually emerges at different rates in various parameters until the transgressions of "fantastic" chromatic collections, formal structures, and background structures have replaced order by the end of the work (refer back to Figures 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.24, and 3.25). My reading of the Rachmaninoff-Paganini triumph dichotomy is that Rachmaninoff's art—his late compositional style—triumphs in the last movement of the work, rather than Paganini's art, which only triumphs momentarily at the beginning of the movement (as per the libretti). Rachmaninoff's late style of writing supplants the Classical elements of the original theme as demonstrated by the three comic archetypes of Chapter 3. I view the final variation's head-motive statement (the last two measures of the *Rhapsody*) in my narrative reading as Rachmaninoff's tip-of-the-hat to Paganini, since it was his theme that served as the inspiration for the *Rhapsody* and it leaves the work on a humorous note, one that hints at the enduring status of the Paganini legend.

An examination of the *Rhapsody* through the lens of narrative theory has provided a unique manner in which to view and understand this work, one that embraces multiple narratives. The ballet libretti suggest either tragic or romantic narratives of the Faustian-inspired legend of Paganini (protagonist). The musical narratives, following Almén's model, illustrate both single and nested comic narratives where elements of the original Classical theme are supplanted by Rachmaninoff's late compositional style (e.g., "fantastic" chromatic collections, formal structures, and background structures). A single tragic narrative captures the tonal shifts that diverge from and ultimately return to the home key, differing from the tragic libretto (the fall of the tragic hero, defeated by his conquerors). The co-existence of multiple narratives in the *Rhapsody* not only produces a multi-faceted interpretation of the work, but multiple narratives suggest how other theme-and-variation sets *might* be interpreted and the potential in-depth insights they can bring to an analytical interpretation or a performance. We can filter our listening experience of the *Rhapsody* through the two Faustian-inspired programs of Paganini provided by Rachmaninoff and Fokine. Rachmaninoff's ex post facto libretto reveals structural and programmatic decisions that he may have made unconsciously while composing work; the libretto supports and helps nuance the trends already suggested by various musical parameters. The scenes from the final *Paganini* ballet mirror how the composer and his contemporary heard the *Rhapsody*; taking their events and characters into account in my reading of the work in this chapter helped me to provide a context within which to interpret transgressive changes that I tracked in Chapter 3 (e.g., the *Dies Irae* character-episode in movement I and the nostalgic episode). Multiple intra- and extra-musical narratives, rather than a single narrative, allow me to grasp the most complete picture of the *Rhapsody,* one that captures dialogues between "Rachmaninoff" and "Paganini" (fictional composers); Rachmaninoff-Fokine and the work; and between me, as analyst, and both the fictional composers and work persona.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1. A Consideration of this Study

This dissertation stems from a curiosity surrounding the absence of narrative interpretations of theme-and-variation sets in music-theoretical scholarship. Perhaps scholars assumed that interpreting theme and variations through a narrative lens would simply result in a recurring narrative over and over again within a work (akin to the retracing the same fundamental structure from the theme in every variation). I demonstrated in this project that narrative *is* an apt lens for variation analysis, one that still explores structural alterations of the theme (traditional approach to variation analysis), but one that also engages with expression, topics, agency, and large-scale transformations.

Byron Almén's model for musical narrative formed the bulk of my methodology, which I then supplemented with Schenkerian analysis and voice-leading sketches, Seth Monahan's taxonomy of musical agents, J. Peter Burkholder's work on musical borrowing, William Caplin's criteria for formal units, and topic theory. Since the borrowed Paganini theme functioned as the source material for the Brahms and Rachmaninoff variations, I assigned it as the order-imposing hierarchy in my analyses. I also argued that the Paganini intertext in these new variations incorporated the persona of the original composer Paganini, generating a dialogue or competition between fictional-composer agents (i.e., "Paganini" versus "Brahms" and "Rachmaninoff"). I traced transformations of the theme (order) through various parameters—tonality, form, topics, fundamental structures, etc.—across Brahms's Op. 35 and Rachmaninoff's Op. 43 as transgressive shifts. The transgressive oppositions were understood to be the strategic actions of the new fictional composers "Brahms" and "Rachmaninoff"; the original order-imposing hierarchies were overturned by the transgressions at the end of both works, replaced by the subjective voice of the new composers. I will summarize my findings and conclusions from chapters 2 through 4, following a brief exploration of how my methodologies might (or might not) illuminate a postmodernist theme-and-variation set based on the same Paganini theme.

5.1.1 Summary

Chapter 2 contained a brief discussion of the historical background surrounding Paganini's impact on Brahms and his contemporaries as well as Brahms's early autograph practice of signing individual variations with different personalities ("Kreisler" and "Brahms"). The latter discussion bolstered my argument for viewing shifting fictional composer agents

(“Paganini” and “Brahms”) in the Op. 35 variations. Using Almén’s model of musical narrative, I traced a comic plot archetype where Paganini’s theme and his fictional composer agent (“Paganini”) established order in this variation set. Over the course of the work, positively-viewed transgressions (“Brahms’s” persona) slowly emerged throughout the variations until they replaced the controlling elements of the theme.

The complexity and non-alignment of various musical parameters in Rachmaninoff’s *Rhapsody*, Op. 43 proved problematic for a single Alménian narrative archetype in chapter 3. Hence, I expanded Almén’s narrative model by tracing *multiple conflicting* narrative archetypes in Rachmaninoff’s *Rhapsody*, Op. 43. While a tragic archetype captured the long-range tonal changes throughout the work, comic archetypes illustrated the ever-growing presence of Rachmaninoff’s late compositional style superseding the Classical-style theme. In order to nuance the comic trajectories of formal and background structures, I tracked embedded comic archetypes within the *Rhapsody*’s three implicit movements, accounting for the drastic shifts in the rank value of the transgressions.

Chapter 4 was devoted to exploring extra-musical programs and elements of expression in the *Rhapsody*. Romantic and tragic Faustian-inspired narratives of the Paganini legend presented by the ballet libretti enriched my narratives from the previous chapter. My engagement with these two narratives allowed me to confirm or deny structural support in my narrative interpretations. The libretti supported topical changes in the second movement and enabled me to interpret this portion of the work as a nostalgic recollection.

5.2. Introduction to Further Research Possibilities: George Rochberg’s *Caprice Variations for Unaccompanied Violin* (1970)

Paganini’s theme (Op. 1, No. 24) inspired not only Brahms and Rachmaninoff, but also a host of other composers throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Table 5.1 lists the composers who have borrowed Paganini’s caprice theme as the source material for their own variation sets up until 1970. Beginning first with Liszt’s piano arrangements of Paganini’s twenty-fourth caprice during the mid-nineteenth century and ending with Rochberg’s 1970 *Caprice Variations* for solo violin, all of these works have the potential for fruitful narrative possibilities. The Szymanowski and Lutosławski variations take the original caprice variations as their point of departure (i.e., these compositions more or less progress through Paganini’s own caprice variations in order, but express each variation in a new way), while the Blacher and Rochberg variation sets are less reliant on restating the order of the original variations in a new guise. Rochberg, especially, presents a variation set that returns to the solo violin, but with new harmonic languages and variable large-scale formal possibilities. I will briefly speculate as to how the methodologies in this dissertation might elucidate processes in Rochberg’s unusual

take on the theme. The goal is not a comprehensive study, but to probe the boundaries of the theme-and-variations genre for future research, particularly in relation to a postmodernist approach to the profound intertexts generated by the Paganini theme.

George Rochberg's *Caprice Variations* for solo violin is a theme-and-variation set that is fertile ground for future exploration. Composed in 1970 and later published in 1973, the *Caprice Variations* are comprised of fifty variations that *precede* the famous Paganini theme, resulting in a crystallization of the actual thematic statement by the end, akin to a cumulative process. Indeed, the breadth of this work poses a challenge for the performer and for concert programming, a concern that Rochberg addresses in his performance notes.[1] Not only can a performer choose to "…omit some of the repeats in order to reduce the duration of performance time to manageable length…" but a player may also omit variations entirely:

> A player choosing not to perform the entire set is at liberty to select those sections which will add up to a satisfying whole in musical terms and still represent the intentions of the work. In a shortened performance version, it is strongly urged, though, that the performer include as many of variations 5, 18, 19, 33, 34, 35, 39, 41, 42, 45, 47, 48, 49 and 50 as possible, so as to preserve a balance in the stylistic spread which is a fundamental premise of this work.[2]

At the very least, Rochberg encourages the performer to include the fourteen variations—I will refer to these as the *required* variations—mentioned above along with the theme. Rochberg's performance notes elicit interesting questions for both the performer and analyst regarding the possible constructions and narrative trajectories that may arise in a given performance of this work. First, a performer choosing to omit variations is tasked with creating an overarching selection that creates a "satisfying whole" (i.e., a choose-your-own-adventure approach). Second, Rochberg considers the required variations stated above to be integral to any performance since they preserve a "stylistic spread" that is fundamental to the work. An initial examination of these fourteen variations and their unique relationship with the rest of the variations has prompted epistemological questions regarding theme-and-variation sets and narrative options:

(1) How are all of the variations in the set actually variations of the theme? What are the recognizable identity markers of the theme in each variation?

(2) How might we categorize or define Rochberg's new variation techniques? How should we categorize variations that quote other variation sets based on the Paganini theme or variations that are allusions or arrangements of other specific compositions?

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[1] Peter Sheppard Skaerved, *George Rochberg: Caprice Variations*, Métier MSVCD92065, 2004. The total time for his performance of the complete work is 1:30:02.

[2] George Rochberg, George, *Caprice Variations for Unaccompanied Violin*, ed. Lewis Kaplan (Boston, MA: Galaxy Music Corporation, 1973), 52.

(3) What narrative implications arise based on the unique formal design of the work? Are traditional eighteenth- and nineteenth-century narrative archetypes (romance, tragedy, comedy, or irony) still viable in this piece? Are narrative models even possible in the *Caprice Variations* or can particular "stylistic spreads" of select variations have more narrative potential than others?

I provide a cursory examination of Rochberg's fourteen required variations as a preface for future study, focusing on how they even constitute variations of the Paganini theme. I speculate about the narrative potential (or lack thereof) in this collection of variations and how this can shift depending on a performer's inclusion of the remaining variations.

Table 5.1. Select Variation Sets based on the Theme from Paganini's Violin Caprices, Op. 1, No. 24

Publication Date	Composer	Title	Setting
1820	Nicolò Paganini	Violin Caprices Op. 1, No. 24	Violin
1840; 1851 (rev.)	Franz Liszt	*Grande Étude de Paganini*, No. 6	Piano arrangement
1866	Johannes Brahms	*Variations on a Theme by Paganini*, Op. 35, Books I and II	Piano
1918	Karol Szymanowski	*Three Paganini Caprices*, Op. 40	Violin, Piano
1934	Sergei Rachmaninoff	*Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43	Piano and orchestra
1941 and 1978	Witold Lutosławski	*Variations on a Theme of Paganini*	Duo pianos (1941) Piano and orchestra (1978)
1947	Boris Blacher	*Variations on a Theme by Paganini for Orchestra*, Op. 26	Orchestra
1970	George Rochberg	*Caprice Variations for Unaccompanied Violin*	Violin

5.2.1 What Constitutes a Variation? Identity Markers in Twentieth-Century Theme-and-Variation Sets

How is Rochberg's 48th variation (Moderately fast, fantastic) a variation on Paganini's violin theme? Any aural relation to the theme seems to be obscured by the harmonic language and the violin's extended techniques. This prompts the question: what is the minimum amount of retained thematic material for a passage to qualify as a variation? If elements from the original theme are no longer (aurally) recognizable in a "variation," then it would seem that the name "variation" is misguided or inappropriate. Further research could explore whether there

is some measurable limit or threshold to variation technique that, once breached, would no longer qualify a passage as being a variation. How many musical parameters of a theme can be altered before a variation can no longer be perceived as related to a theme (or previous variation)? In order to address how the required variations in *Caprice Variations* are indeed variations, I propose tracing the preserved identity markers of the theme by employing Lawrence Zbikowski's conceptual models (a tool that will prove a productive means of mapping out the most basic elements intrinsic to a theme's identity in theme-and-variation sets).

In his book *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis*, Zbikowski explores the importance of identity in a listener's perception of various stylistic performances of "I Got Rhythm" and "Bye, Bye, Blackbird."[3] Since performers in aural traditions "base their performance[s] of a given tune on a cognitive construct that is stored in memory and that represents essential features of that tune,"[4] then the application of conceptual models can be used to illustrate those specific elements that constitute a typical rendering of a song, regardless of the performance style. Zbikowski also observes that "when people share the conceptual model for a song…they will tend to make similar judgments about what counts as a typical or an atypical rendering of the song (or whether a succession of sounds should even be counted as an instance of the song)."[5] This powerful tool can be extended to twentieth-century theme-and-variations; a simple recomposition of Zbikowski's statement demonstrates the validity of this concept to the genre: "when people share the conceptual model for a *theme*…they will tend to make similar judgments about what counts as a typical or an atypical *variation of that theme*." Any number of conceptual models could be created in order to capture the identity markers of a particular theme. For Paganini's theme (see the score in Figure 5.1), I have created the following five conceptual models broken down into specific musical parameters (modified from Zbikowski's models): form (Figure 5.2), tonality/harmony (Figure 5.3), figuration (Figure 5.4), register (Figure 5.5), and "marked" intervallic relationships (Figure 5.6).[6] Moving through the models from left to right corresponds with a move from a general representation of the theme to more specific markers of the particular parameter within the theme. Also, the further to the right a marker is placed on the model, the more generalized the relationship of that detail

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[3]Lawrence Zbikowski, *Conceptualizing Music: Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 201–42.

[4]Ibid., 217.

[5]Ibid., 216.

[6]Robert Hatten defines a marked event as "the asymmetrical valuation of an opposition" (291). A marked term has a narrower range of meanings and represents an instance of something exceptional rather than the norm. See Robert Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1994), 291. When I refer to a "marked" intervallic relationship, I will drop the quotation marks.

becomes to the theme. As details refer to the theme in less specific ways, characteristics can be generalized to identify connections between a variation and the theme upon which it is based (focal pcs A and E in a variation can substitute for the specific A minor and E major triads of the theme). By employing the five conceptual models outlined above I identified markers from the theme present in each of the fourteen required variations; my findings are summarized in Table 5.2 below. Although I will not exhaustively explain each of the identity markers in the fourteen variations, I will provide a few representative examples of each musical parameter in order to demonstrate the range of identity markers Rochberg is privileging in his variations; these markers can be expanded in future study.

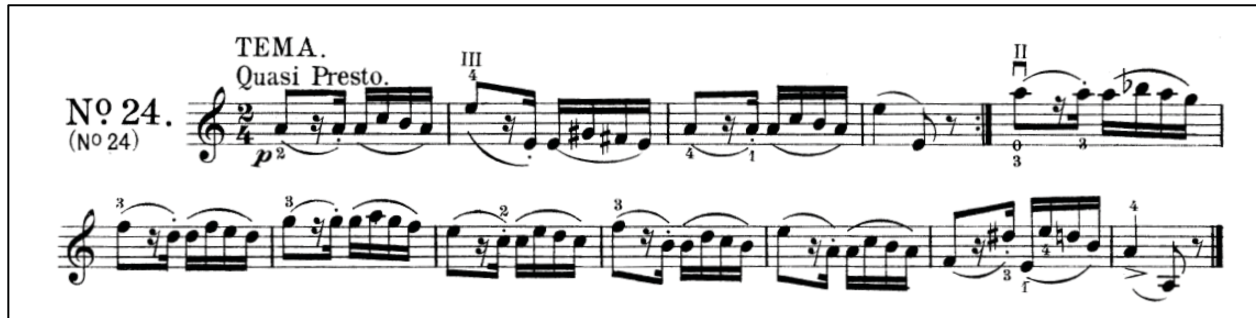


Figure 5.1. Paganini, Violin Caprice Theme in A minor, Op. 1, No. 24

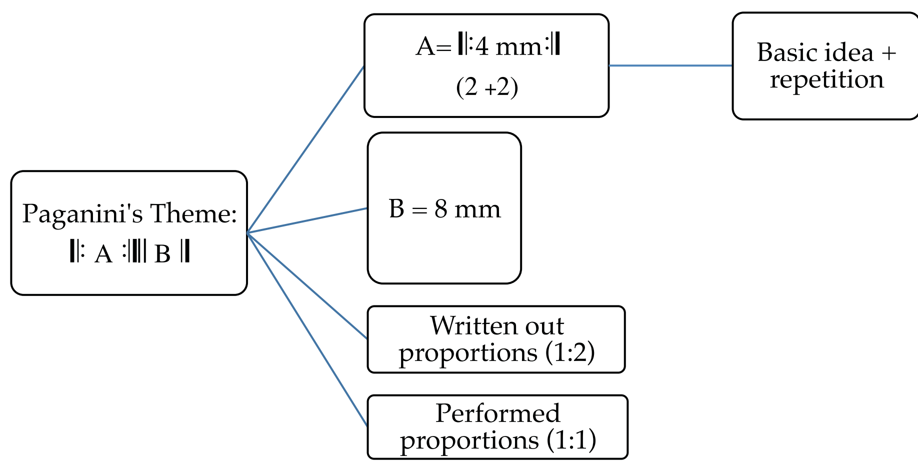


Figure 5.2. Form Model for the Category Paganini's Caprice Theme

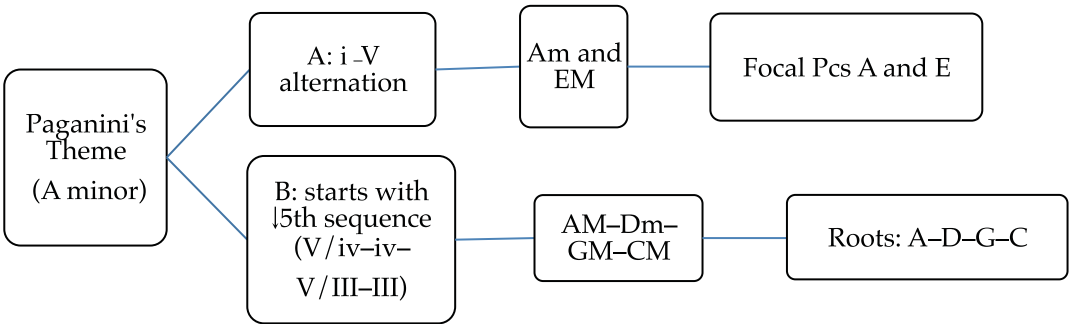


Figure 5.3. Harmony Model for the Category Paganini's Caprice Theme

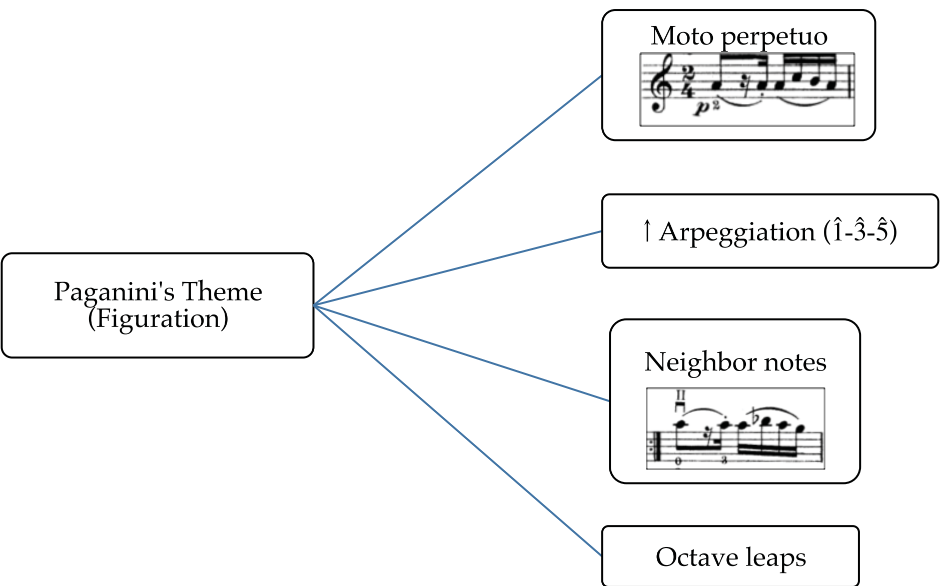


Figure 5.4. Figuration Model for the Category Paganini's Caprice Theme

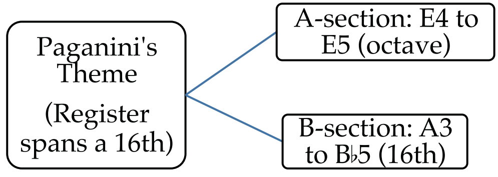


Figure 5.5. Register Model for the Category Paganini's Caprice Theme

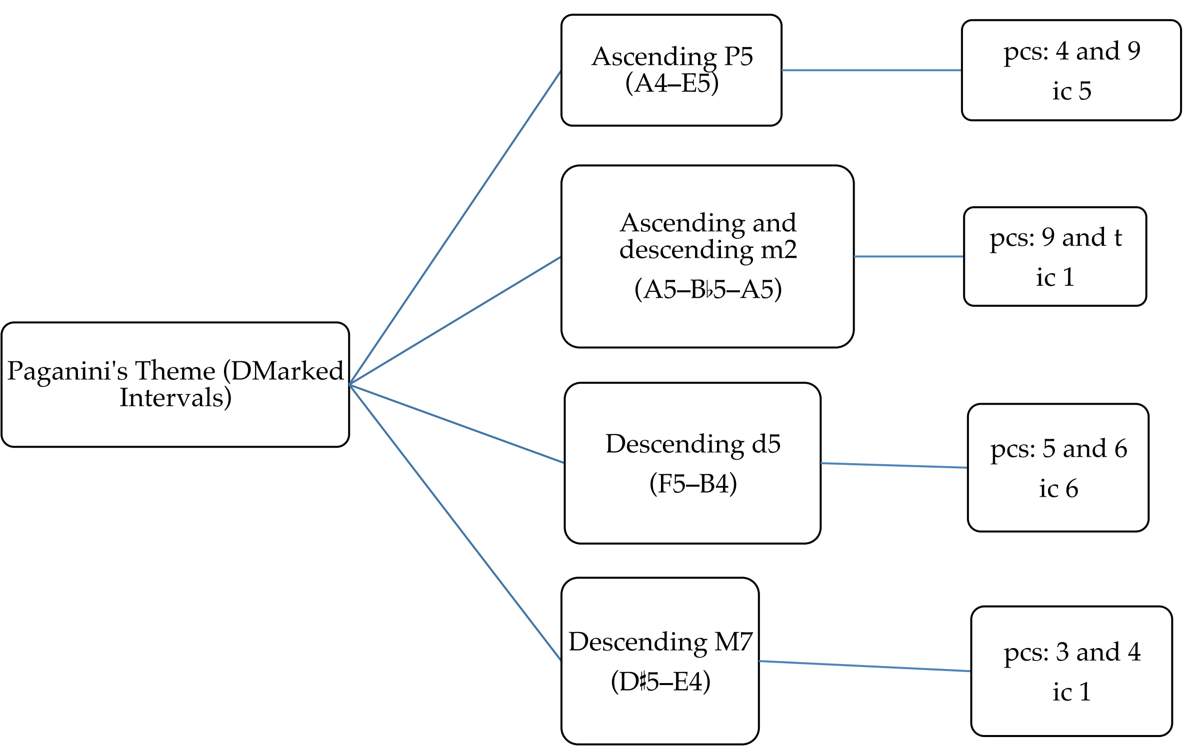


Figure 5.6. Marked Interval (Pitch/Pitch-Class Reference) Model for the Category Paganini's Caprice Theme

Generally, the more boxes that are filled in for each of the fourteen variations in Table 5.2 and the greater the specificity of the identity markers, the stronger the resemblance of that variation to the theme (e.g., variations 5 and 45 exhibit five out of six identity markers with the theme).[7] It is evident that Rochberg retains formal elements of Paganini's theme in nearly three-quarters of the fourteen variations. Variation 5 is the most similar in its relation to the theme with its repeated four-measure A-section (further divided into a two-measure idea and a repetition) and its repeated eight-measure B-section. Variation 42, although harmonically distant from the theme, still retains the binary framework with two unmetered repeated sections. In addition, the A-section maintains a basic idea, an (026) trichord from the WT_1 collection, which is transposed and repeated up a P5 (T_7) to the WT_0 collection. Both (026) trichords even retain the focal pitch-classes A and E as their starting notes, paralleling the fifth relationship between the Am and EM triads of the original Paganini's theme. Tonality is a marked feature in Rochberg's variations—only the first variation (no. 5) of the required set

[7]One exception is variation 18 that also features five out of six identity markers, but its markers for form and harmony are only related through specific pitch classes (harmonic language is atonal) and only the framework for a basic idea and its repetition connects it to the theme's formal markers.

preserves the key of A minor from the theme. Centricity around A occurs with a little more frequency, as in variation 34 where an A-pedal is sustained throughout variation (see Figure 5.7). However, Rochberg's predilection in the fourteen required variations is to retain only focal pitch-classes A and E as the harmonic identity marker from the first section of the theme. Figure 5.8 shows the opening of variation 48 with its prominent focal pcs A and E, both of which are embellished by their chromatic upper and lower neighbors (pcs 8 and t around 9 and pcs 3 and 5 around 4).

Table 5.2. Identity Markers from Paganini's Theme in the Fourteen Required Variations from Rochberg's *Caprice Variations*

Required Variation	Form	Tonality/Harmony	Register/ Range	Meter and Rhythmic Figuration	Intervallic Relationships	Other
5	Two repeated sections: A-section (4 mm.); B-section (8 mm. with 2 endings)	A minor	Notated: G3 to D♯6 (harmonics go up to E7)	2/4; constant sixteenth notes (*moto perpetuo*)		Etude-like (tremolo sixteenth notes)
18	Basic idea + varied repetition in A-section	Focal pcs: A and E		2/4	Ic 1 between A and B♭ at the beginning of the B-section	Allegro fantastico
19			G3 to B♭5		- Cell 1: ic 6 (pcs 5 and e) - Cell 5: ic 1 (t and 9); – 11 from E♭4 to E4	Vivace; etude-like
33	A-section (8 measures): 4 x 4	A-section: A-Ionian B-section: A-centric Coda: A-Ionian	A3 to C♯6			
34		A-centric throughout; an A-pedal throughout; A minor triad = basic framework	E♭4 to C5			
35		Focal pcs: A (opening repeated motives) and E♭ (slow, elegiac passages)			B♭ (grace note) to A	Allegro molto; fantastico
39	Two repeated sections		G3–G5		Pcs E♭ and B♭	Various 32nd-note figures

Table 5.2. continued

Required Variation	Form	Tonality/Harmony	Register/ Range	Meter and Rhythmic Figuration	Intervallic Relationships	Other
41		First two measures of Webern's 7th variation transposed from Dm to Am (not entirely in Am)		2/4; constant sixteenth notes (*moto perpetuo*)		Allegro molto; "after Webern Passacaglia, Op. 1")
42	Two repeated sections; A-section (b.i. + repetition at T_7)	Focal pcs: A and E; 3 eight-note statements transposed related by T_{10} (opening of B-section)				
45	Two implied sections: A-section (4+ 4) + B-section (16 mm.)	A-section: OCT_{01} and OCT_{23} (both have pc A); A = last notes of mm. 4 and 8	A3 to E6	2/4; constant combo of dotted rhythm + sixteenth (*moto perpetuo)*		Presto
47	Two repeated sections: A-section (b.i. + varied repetition)	Focal pc A				
48	Two sections: A-section (b.i. + varied repetition); B-section (repeated)	Focal pcs: A and E				Moderately fast; fantastico
49	Two sections: A-section (b.i. + varied repetition); B-section (repeated); return of A (motives)	Focal pcs: A and E Lowest note of each wedge references the roots of the descending fifths sequence A–D–G		*Moto perpetuo* (sixteenth-note triplets)		
50	Two sections	A-centric				Reinterprets gestures from Paganini's finale (e.g., harmonics)

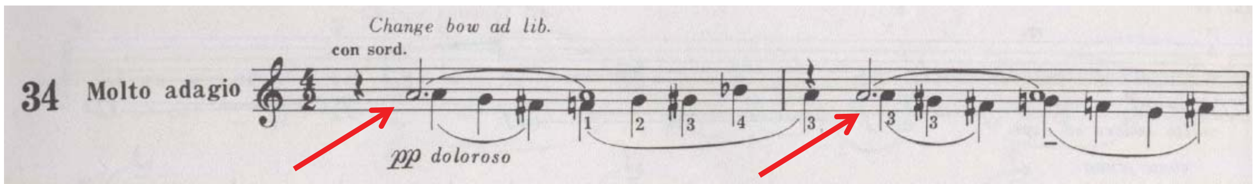


Figure 5.7. Centricity around A (pedal) in Variation 34, mm. 1–2[8]

Figure 5.8. Focal pcs (A and E) in the opening of Variation 48

For variations such as 19 and 34, register is one of the primary parameters that Rochberg preserves from the theme; register appears to be paired with centricity in variations 5, 33, 34, and 45. The exceptions are variations 19 and 39, which are not centric, but are instead where register and either marked intervals or form are the only resemblances with the theme. The registers and ranges of these two variations are essentially identical to the theme (a range of a sixteenth from A3 to B♭5); the range of variation 19 expands to a seventeenth (G3–B♭5), while variations 39 spans a fifteenth from G3 to G5. Although the identity of a theme's register (its overall *registral space*) may not immediately seem like a parameter worth examining in variations, when it becomes a marked featured it creates a more obvious link between a variation and a theme upon which it is based.[9] Rochberg's fourteen required variations tend to exploit the violin's upper register, so the variations that maintain the theme's register become marked in comparison. The combination of Paganini's simple duple meter and a *moto perpetuo* rhythm (see Figure 5.3) only appear in three variations from the required set (nos. 5, 41, and 45). Despite its octatonic framework, two identity markers that make the relationship between variation 45 and the theme discernible is its 2/4-meter and driving rhythmic profile. Figure 5.9

[8]For Figures 5.7 to Figure 5.9 see George Rochberg, *Caprice Variations for Unaccompanied Violin*.

[9]See Theisen's term, *registral space* in his Ph.D. dissertation on Elliot Carter. Alan Theisen, "A Multifaceted Approach to Analyzing Form in Elliot Carter's Boston Concerto," (PhD diss., The Florida State University, 2010).

compares the *moto perpetuo* figures between Paganini's theme and Rochberg's variation 45. Paganini's theme is comprised of two rhythmic motives (*x* and *y*) that are consistently presented in this order throughout the theme. Rochberg removes the rest from motive *x* (now a dotted rhythm) and varies the ordering of these two motives, creating a two-measure palindromic structure (*y* + *x*; *x* + *y*).

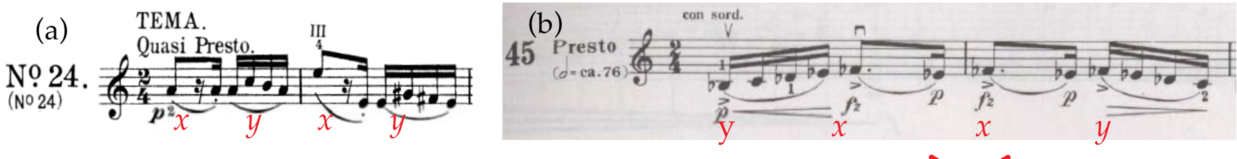


Figure 5.9. ***Moto perpetuo*** **Rhythmic Figuration in: (a) Paganini's theme; and (b) Rochberg's Variation 45**

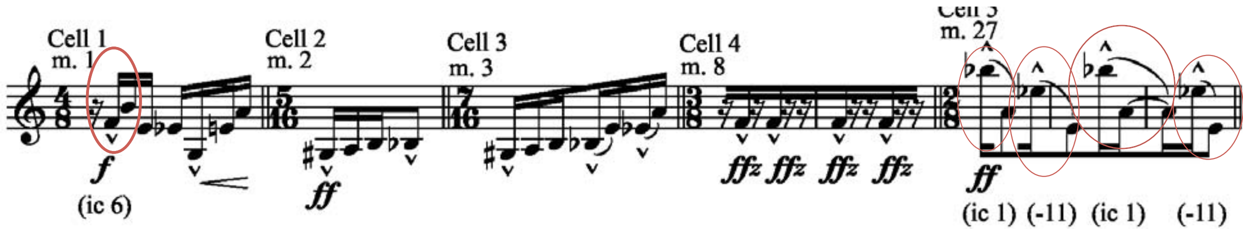


Figure 5.10. Marked Intervals from Variation 19

Unlike the Brahms and Rachmaninoff variations from the previous chapters, an identity marker that Rochberg utilizes in his variations is specific intervallic relationships from Paganini's theme. Variation 19 in particular explores prominent marked intervals including one ordered pitch interval (-11 from E♭4 to E4) and two unordered pitch-class intervals (ic 6 between pcs 5 and e; ic 1 between pcs t and 9) in two of the five basic recurring cells structuring this variation. Figure 5.10 identifies all of the recurring basic cells from variation 19 along with the ordered pitch and interval classes preserved from the theme (refer also to the interval model from Figure 5.5). Cell 1 features ic 6 between pcs 5 and e (the same ic 6 from m. 9 of the theme, F5–B4), while cell 5 maintains ic 1 between pcs t and 9 (from m. 5) and the -11 between E♭5 (enharmonic of D♯5) and E4 (from m. 11). In order to further draw connection with the initial

theme, Rochberg also preserves the register, tempo, and even étude-like effect from the theme in variation 19.

While an exhaustive exploration of how each variation contains stylistic markers of the theme is certainly possible, I envision using this model primarily for variations that do not have a readily apparent or audible connection with the theme. These conceptual models can also provide listeners, performers, and analysts with an awareness of a composer's variation technique: whether it relies on general, specific, or a combination of both types of stylistic markers in the new treatment of a theme. The identity markers that I examined in Rochberg's fourteen required variations provide insight into those parameters from the theme he maintained in some capacity (primarily form and harmony), and those parameters that were less commonly employed, such as rhythmic figuration and marked intervals. Some variations bear little resemblance indeed to the original theme. For example, how is variation 41 ("after Webern Passacaglia, Op. 1") a variation of Paganini's theme in any respect? As listed in Table 5.2, the first two measures of Webern's seventh variation from the Passacaglia is transposed from its original key of D minor to the key of Paganini' theme (A minor, at least initially). In addition, the duple meter and *moto perpetuo* figuration from Paganini's theme is incorporated into variation 41 (e.g., constant sixteenth-note figuration in 2/4).

Table 5.3: Borrowed Material (Allusions or Arrangements) in Rochberg's *Caprice Variations*

Variation No.	Rochberg's Description	Type of Musical Borrowing
7	"After Beethoven Op. 74 Scherzo"	Arrangement/Allusion
8	"after Schubert Waltz Op. 9, No. 22"	Arrangement/Allusion
9	"after Brahms Op. 35, Bk. I, No. 2"	Arrangement
10	"after Brahms Op. 35, Bk. I, No. 3"	Arrangement
11	"after Brahms Op. 35, Bk. I, No. 11"	Arrangement
12	"after Brahms Op. 35, Bk. I, No. 12"	Arrangement
13	"after Brahms Op. 35, Bk. II, No. 10"	Arrangement
21	"after Beethoven Symphony No. 7, Finale"	Allusion
41	"(after Webern Passacaglia, Op. 1)"	Allusion
44	"(after Mahler Symphony No. 5, Scherzo)"	Allusion

Rochberg's variations for solo violin provide a postmodern formal plan that feature the successive juxtapositions of independent musical styles, including allusions to and arrangements of pre-existing music (twenty percent of the variations fall into this category and

are listed in Table 5.3).[9] I envision further expansion of the conceptual models that would eventually include topics and styles, as well as pre-existing variation settings of this theme.

5.2.2 Issues of Structure, Performance, and Narrative

What kind of narrative implications do these fourteen variations impart if they were to comprise an entire performance? Is a traditional romantic/tragic/comic/ironic narrative trajectory viable in this work? Since the Paganini theme previously functioned as the order-imposing hierarchy in the Brahms and Rachmaninoff variations, the transvaluation of its transgressions allowed for narrative interpretations. The *rhetorical modes* that I, as the interpreter, established in these chapters were interpersonal narratives, which enacted "conflict[s] among individuals actorially represented by themes, motives, or other musical units."[10] With the Paganini theme reserved for the conclusion of the work, Rochberg's *Caprice Variations* deny the establishment of a *thematic* hierarchy from the outset (i.e., an initial hierarchy is lacking). The only logical way of employing Almén's theoretical model to interpret the *Caprice Variations* would be through the *primary narrative level* ("the musical domains within which the narrative conflict is articulated"[11]). Using the strategy of formal conformance versus nonconformance, a primary narrative level interpretation relies on a formal paradigm as the initial cultural hierarchy (in this case the genre of theme and variations) and our expectations for its conventional unfolding. Indeed, it the very dialogue of *nonconformance* with the cultural expectation of theme-and-variation that generates the narrative conflict. How does Rochberg conform to or diverge from the theme-and-variations genre and what sort of narrative trajectory can be measured based on the confirmation or denial of our formal expectations?

This form of primary narrative level interpretation would most likely yield an ironic narrative, where the order-imposing hierarchy is defeated by transgression at the end of the piece. Conventions such as establishing the theme up front, presenting variations in a manner that suggests a predictable progression or series of events (i.e., most similar to most distinct, rhythmic acceleration, etc.), and performing all variations from start to finish are replaced by unorthodox treatments of the genre: saving the theme for the end to be presented in a cumulative dénouement, presenting numerous orderings of variations in a manner that favors juxtaposition rather than coherence, providing endless performance possibilities based on a set number of required variations, and creating specific references to other pre-existing compositions (some from variations on the same theme and some with no apparent connection).

[9] I am borrowing the term "plan" from Robert Nelson who distinguishes between variation plans (categories) in contradistinction from variation techniques (the compositional changes applied to the theme). See Nelson, *The Technique of Variation.*

[10] Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative*, 162.

[11] Ibid.,164.

An ironic narrative will only create an awareness of Rochberg's nonconformance with the theme-and-variation genre. Are there other narrative possibilities that could capture what the piece *does* do rather than what it *does not* do?

Michael Klein and Nicholas Reyland separately propose additional narrative discourses for twentieth-century repertoire in their recently edited collection of essays, *Music and Narrative since 1900* (summarized in Table 5.4). Klein advances a semiotic square of narrative discourse that expands the binary opposition between *narrative* and *non-narrative* to include *neo-narrative* and its opposition, *anti-narrative*. Based on Klein's broad descriptions for these four types of discourses, an anti-narrative appears to hold the most potential for capturing the discourse(s) in Rochberg's unique theme-and-variation set. In an anti-narrative, "composers take on the conventions of musical narrative discourse in order to deny our expectations for their continuity."[12] In other words, elements that would be present at the beginning of a traditional narrative—tonality, themes, motives, agents, etc.—are presented but their interactions and transformations are denied throughout the rest of the work.

Rochberg establishes tonality at the beginning of work, suggesting the potential for a narrative discourse; even the first required variation (no. 5) is tonal, set in Paganinil's original key, A minor. Even though the theme is not stated explicitly at the outset, the first seventeen variations imply that the Paganini theme is the source material for the work, especially since variations 9–13 are all allusions to Brahms's Op. 35 variations on the same theme (discussed in Chapter 2). Rochberg's choice of genre and tonal setting at the outset establish the expectation for the conventions of a nineteenth-century narrative discourse; their continuation, however, is quickly denied based on the composer's conception of the work's stylistic underpinning and internal organization. Fundamental to the premise of the *Caprice Variations* is, as Rochberg states, its "stylistic spread." This highly disparate approach challenges the premise of the theme-and-variation genre, where coherence and intensification of variation techniques transform across the work. I demonstrated in previous chapters that narrative discourse is possible in this genre through large-scale coherence and transformations. The internal organization of the *Caprice Variations* is dependent on the performer, who can add as many or as few variations to the fourteen essential variations as he or she wishes. This organizational freedom could offer significantly different interpretations of the work that shift along the spectrum between narrative and anti-narrative. For instance, if a performer chose to include only variations 1–17 (tonal variations including all of the Brahms allusions), then the conventions of a narrative discourse would be established much more convincingly (rather than just in variation 5) before being denied (i.e., we could examine the possibility of a narrative

[12]Michael Klein, "Musical Story," in *Music and Narrative since 1900*, ed. Michael Klein and Nicholas Reyland (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 6.

discourse up until non-centric variation 18, where an anti-narrative emerges, denying what came before it).

Table 5.4. Possible Narrative Models for Twentieth-Century Repertoire

Author	Type of Narrative Discourse	Definition
Michael Klein[13]	Narrative	"Music that largely accepts the tonal, topical, and thematic premises of the nineteenth-century, including moments of thematic transformation, crisis and catastrophe, transcendence and apotheosis."
	Non-narrative	"Music with no tonality, no themes, no transformation, no organizing principle whatsoever, in fact: just a set of independent sound worlds, textures, or blips of acoustic matter."
	Neo-Narrative	"Music in search of new ways to tell stories" - Rhythmic drive might create a sense of musical plot - Ever-changing orchestral timbres might replace transformation - A sense of musical agency may be created through gradual motion through register
	Anti-Narrative	"Music that serves as the critique of nineteenth-century discourse…composers take on conventions of musical narrative discourse in order to deny our expectations for their continuation"
Nicholas Reyland[14]	Denarration	The denial of certain significant narrative aspects that had originally been presented as a given. "One must either accept that one cannot know the true version of the fictional story or, alternatively, entertain the possibility of multiple truths."
	Disnarration	Passages in a narrative that offer the possibility of a fictional reality
	Subjunctive Narration	A narrative marked by uncertainty in which "significant information is not epistemologically secure"
	Bifurcating Narration	The coexistence of two narrative strands

Whether attempting to map a traditional ironic narrative in the *Caprice Variations* or viewing this work as an anti-narrative (a critique of narrative), it is clear that Rochberg's postmodernist approach to theme and variations problematizes and challenges the possibility of narrative discourse in this genre. Rochberg's *Caprice Variations*, with its nearly endless formal constructions, present performers with the opportunity to critically engage with postmodernist narrative discourse and construct their own stories around "Paganini" and his theme.

* * *

[13]Ibid., 4–6.

[14]Nicholas Reyland, "Negation and Negotiation: Plotting Narrative through Literature and Music from Modernism to Postmodernism,"in *Music and Narrative since 1900*, ed. Michael Klein and Nicholas Reyland (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013), 35–46.

It is my hope that, the research in this dissertation provides a substantial contribution to the ever-widening filed of narrative interpretation in music, specifically as it applies to the genre of theme and variations. My analyses demonstrated novel ways of interpreting and understanding well-known variation sets, allowing agency to drive the large-scale transformations of the Paganini theme. My goal was to provide analysts and performers with a better understanding and appreciation of the genre along with the necessary tools to enhance this kind of interpretation. Ultimately, I hope that this project has challenged the reader's preconception(s) about theme and variations, and has opened up the range of possible stories that they can tell.

APPENDIX A

VARIATION SETS BASED ON PAGANINI'S THEME, OP. 1, NO. 24[1]

Composer	Publication Date	Title	Setting
Franz Liszt	1840; 1851 (rev.)	*Grande Étude de Paganini*, No. 6	Piano arrangement
Johannes Brahms	1866	*Variations on a Theme by Paganini*, Op. 35, Books I and II	Piano
Ignaz Friedman	1914	*Studien über ein Thema von Paganini*, Op. 47b	Piano
Karol Szymanowski	1918	*Three Paganini Caprices*, Op. 40	Violin, Piano
Sergei Rachmaninoff	1934	*Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43	Piano and orchestra
Witold Lutosławski	1941 and 1978	*Variations on a Theme of Paganini*	Duo pianos (1941) Piano and orchestra (1978)
Wiktor Labunski	1943	*Four Variations on a Theme by Paganini*	Piano
Boris Blacher	1947	*Variations on a Theme by Paganini for Orchestra*, Op. 26	Orchestra
Leon Kartun	1948	*Caprice rhythmique pour le piano*	Piano
Nathan Milstein	1954	*Paganiniana*	Violin
Eugène Ysaÿe	1960	*Paganini Variations Op. posth. for Violin and Piano*	Violin and piano
George Rochberg	1970	*Caprice Variations for Unaccompanied Violin*	Violin
Bronislaw Przybylski	1975	*Variazioni sopra un tema di Paganini*	Violin and piano
David Baker	1976	*Ethnic Variations on a Theme by Paganini*	Violin and piano
Andrew Lloyd Webber	1977	*Variations for Cello and Rock Band*	Cello, Rock Band
Keith Cole	1978	*Excursions, Variations on a Theme of Paganini for Bass Clarinet and Piano*	Bass Clarinet and piano
Hans Bottermund	1979	*Variations on a Theme of Paganini for Unaccompanied Cello*	Cello
Bryan Hesford	1986	*Variations of a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 68	Organ
Gregor Piatigorsky	1986	*Variations on a Theme by Paganini*	Cello and piano
Robert Muczynski	1995	*Desperate Measures*, Op. 48	Piano
Kenneth Wilson	2000	*Variations on a Theme of Paganini for Four B♭ Clarinets*	B♭ Clarinets

[1]Some of these works are listed in Zhou, "Piano Variations," 8–9 and Hokyung Yang, "12 Variations on Paganini's 24th Caprice: An Analysis," (DMA diss., University of Washington, 1994).

APPENDIX B

SCHENKERIAN SKETCHES OF BRAHMS'S *VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY PAGANINI*, OP. 35, BOOK I

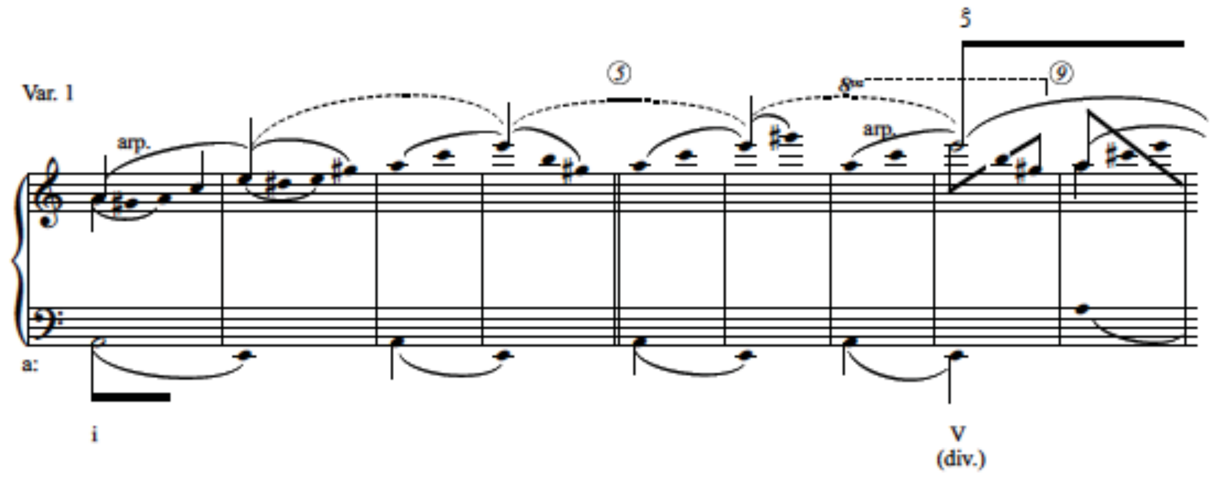
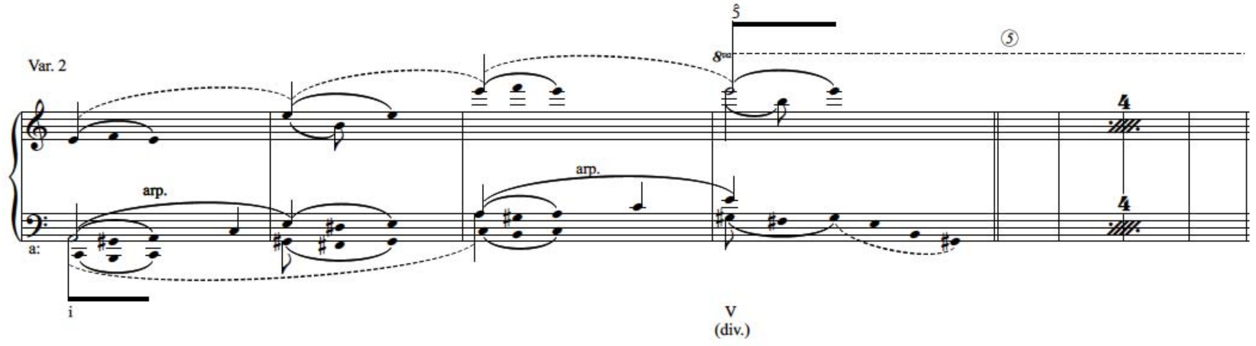
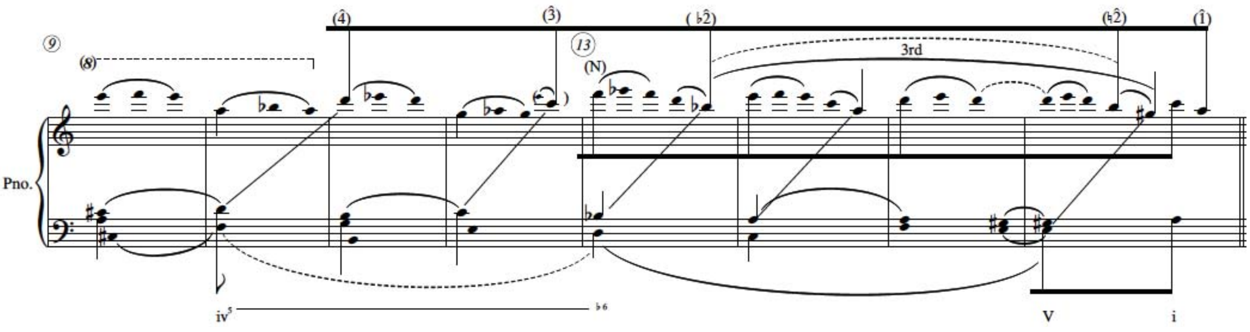


Figure 1. Variation 1





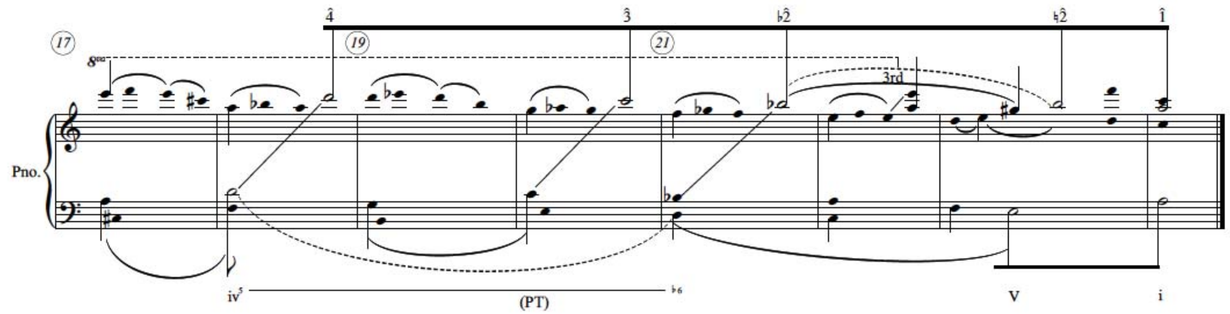


Figure 2. Variation 2

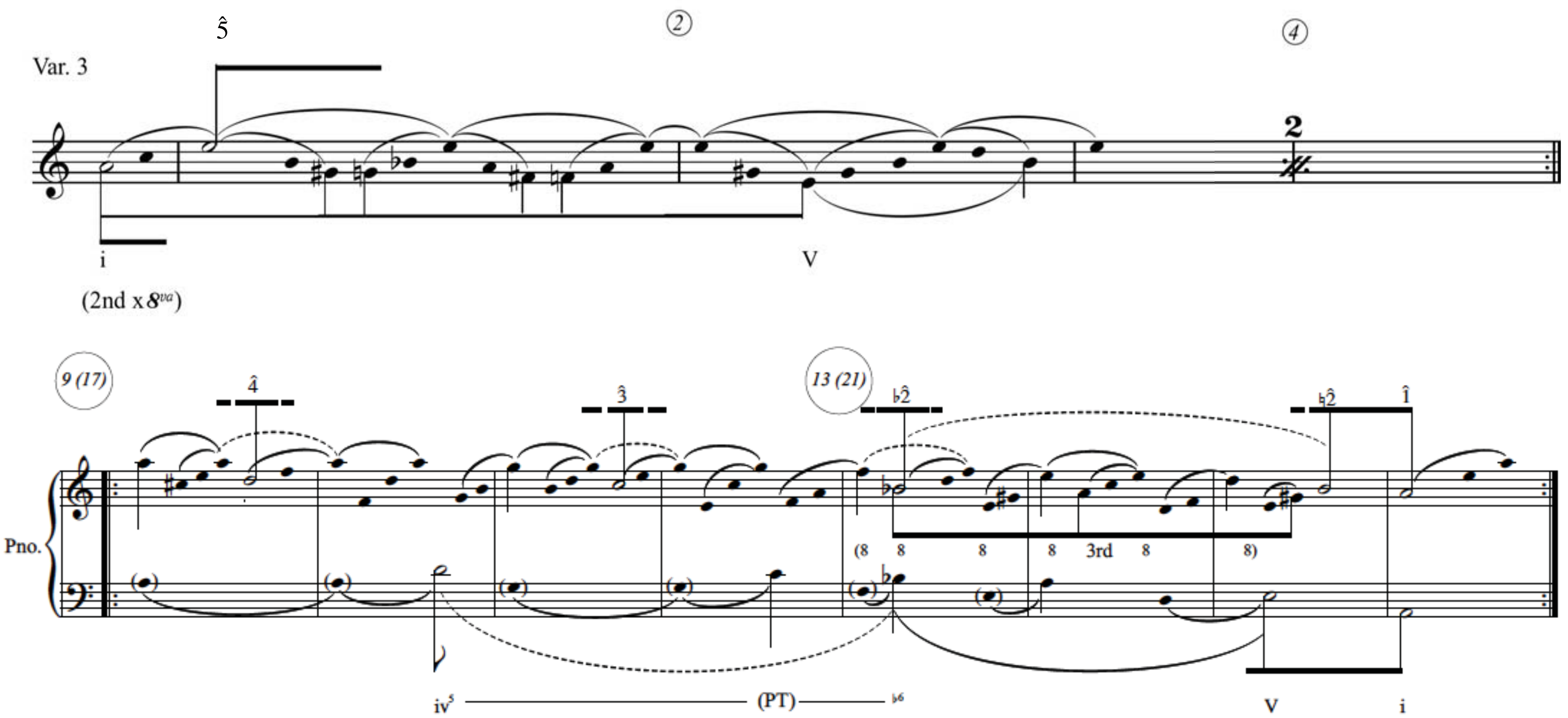
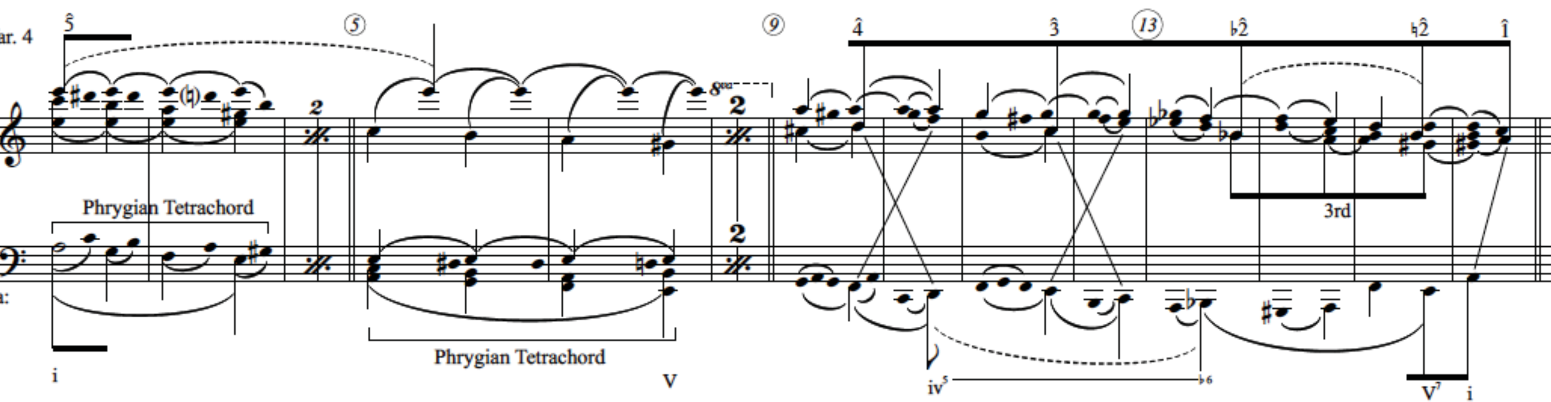


Figure 3. Variation 3



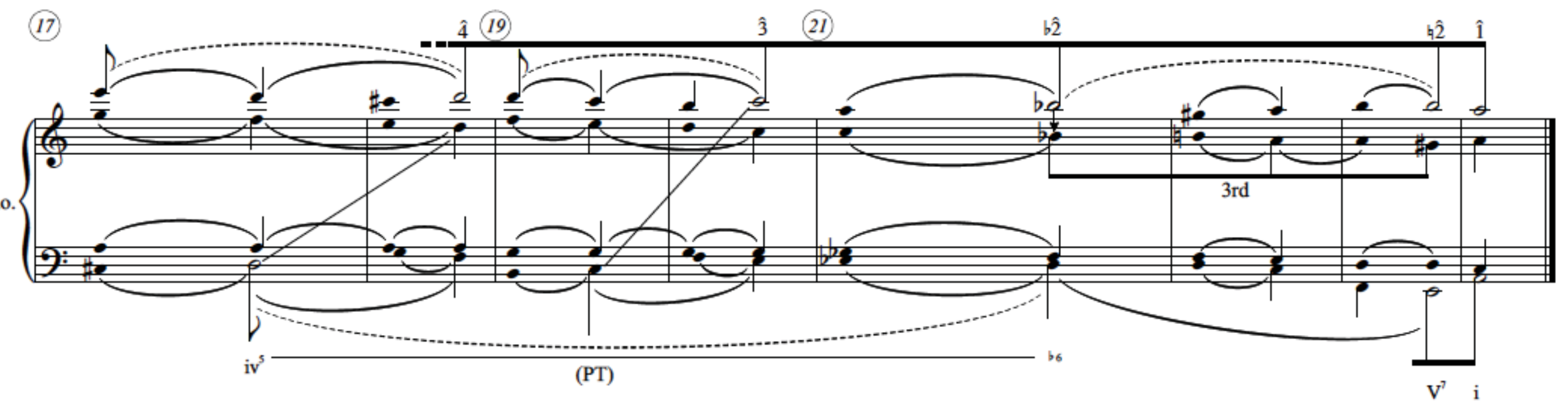
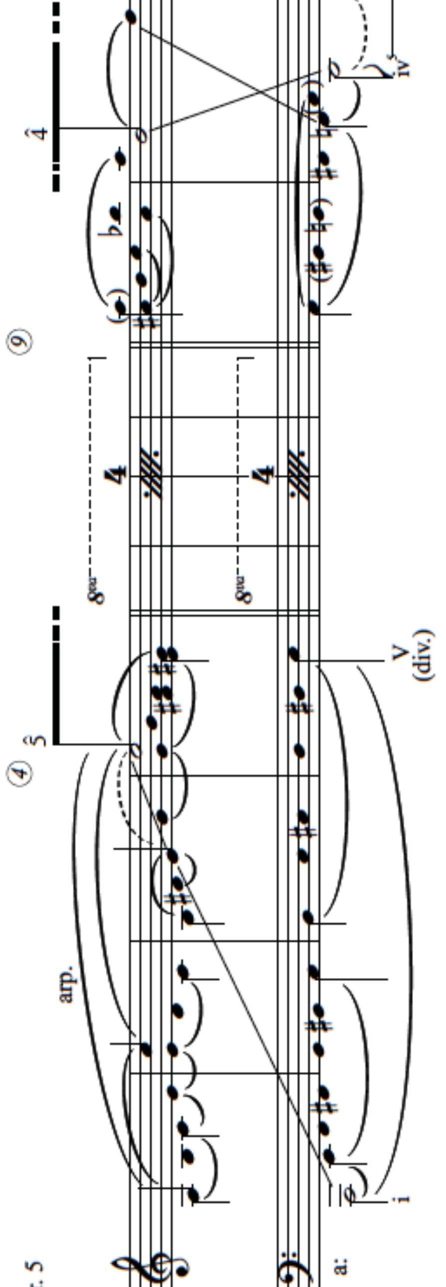


Figure 4. Variation 4



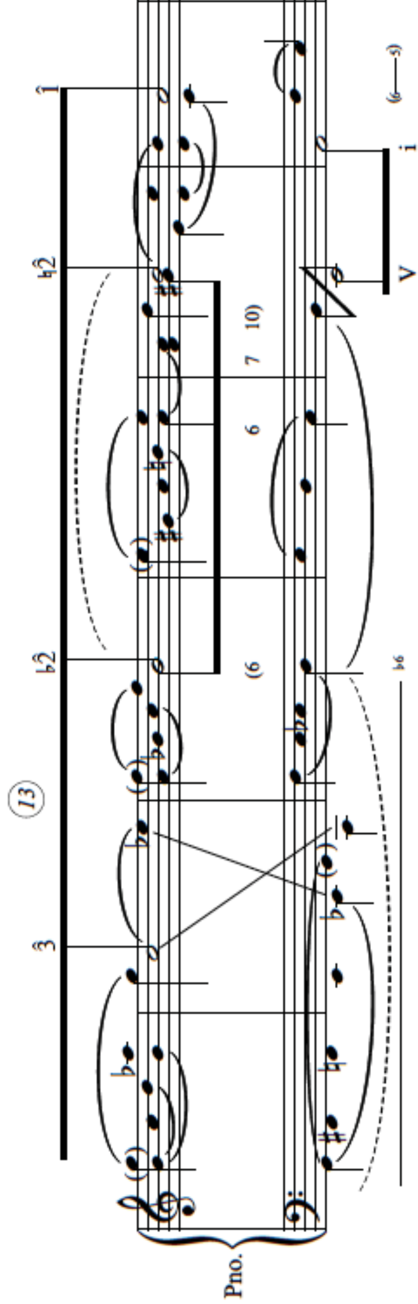


Figure 5. Variation 5

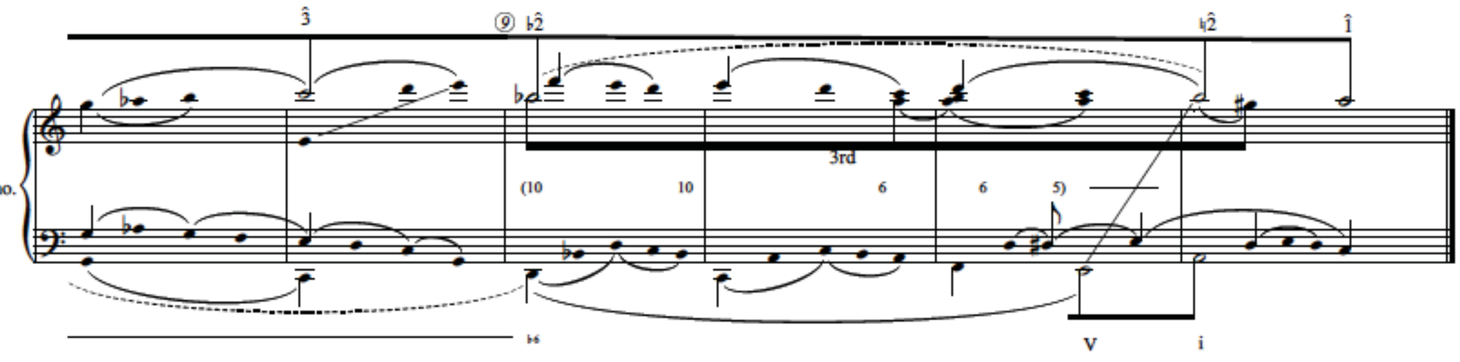
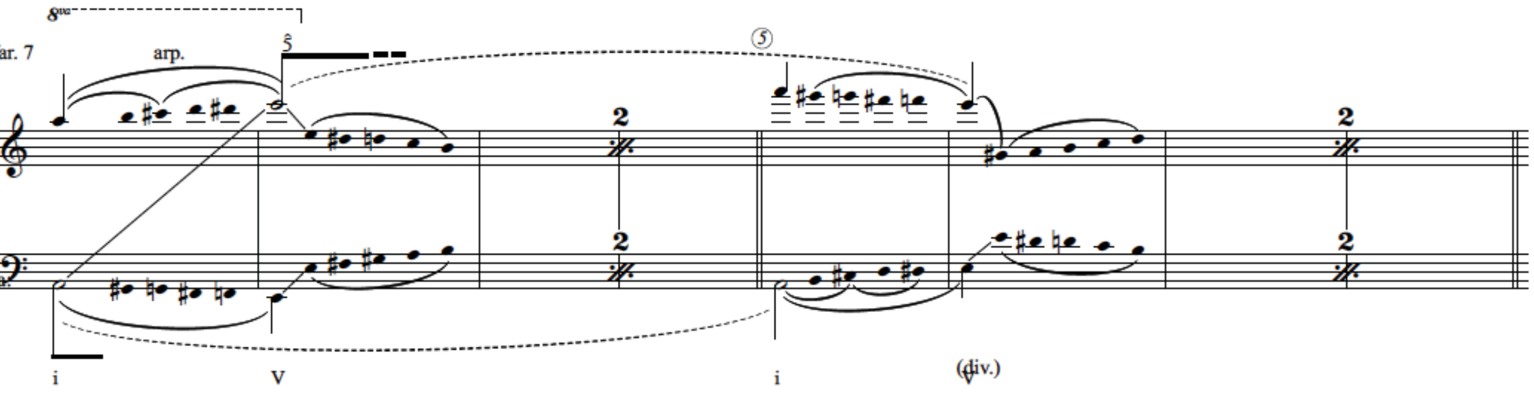


Figure 6. Variation 6



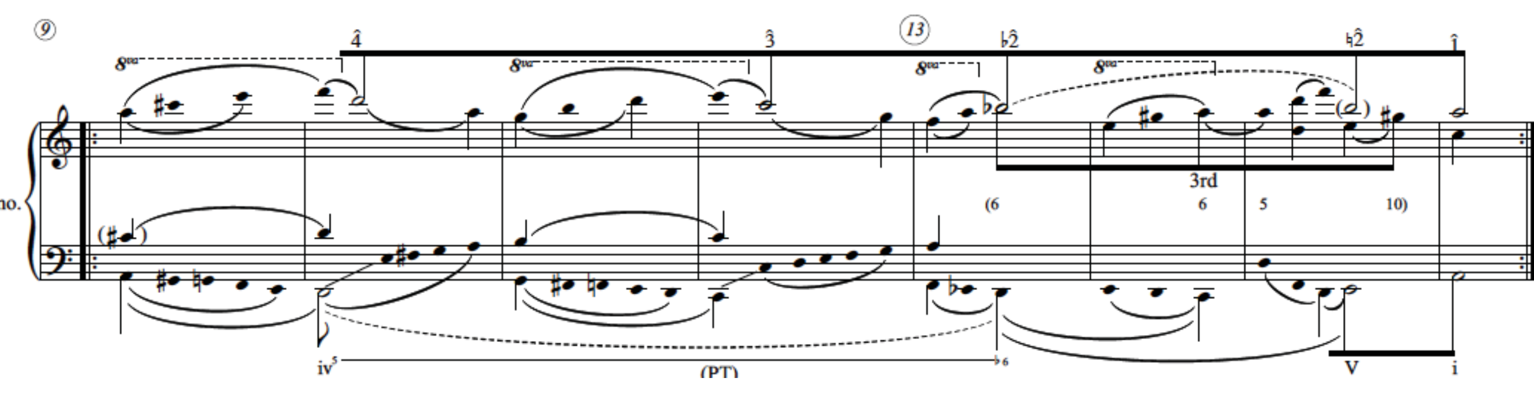
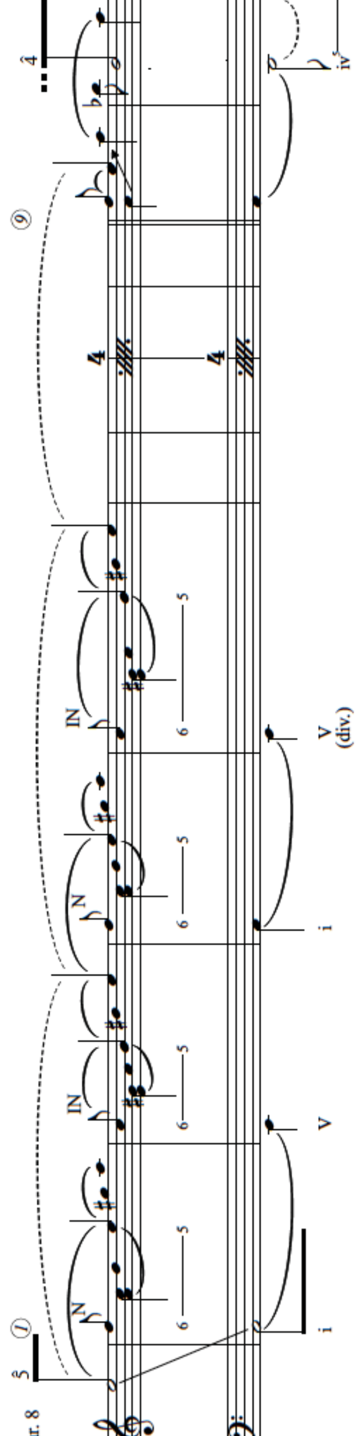


Figure 7. Variation 7



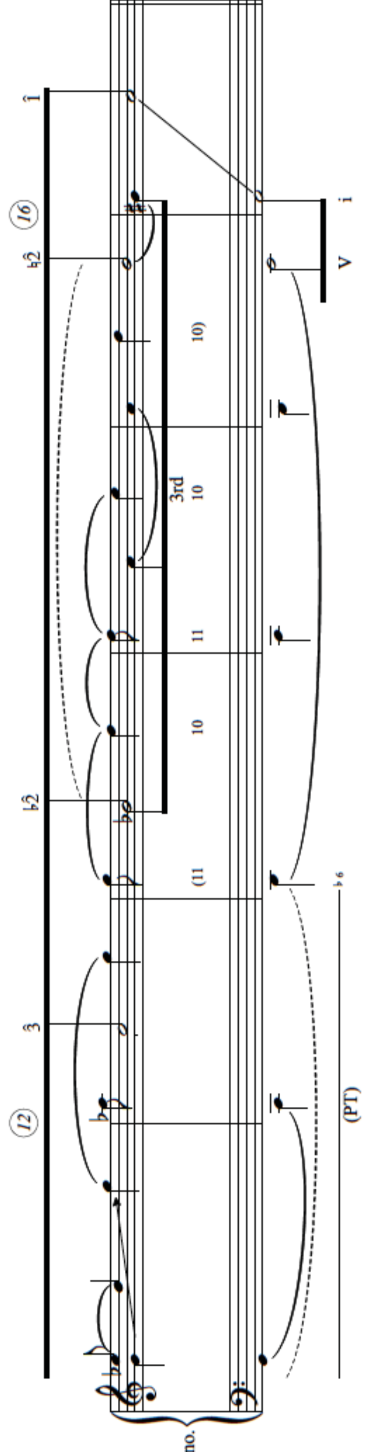
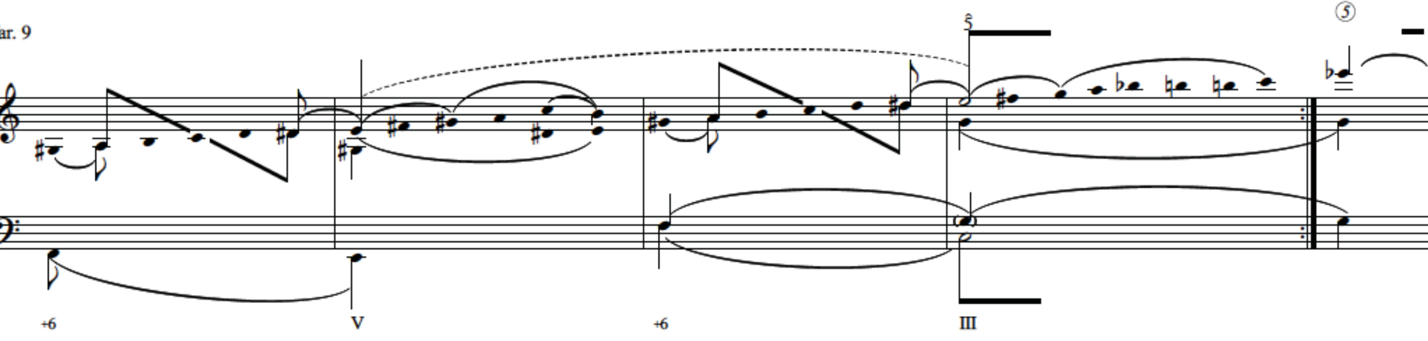


Figure 8. Variation 8



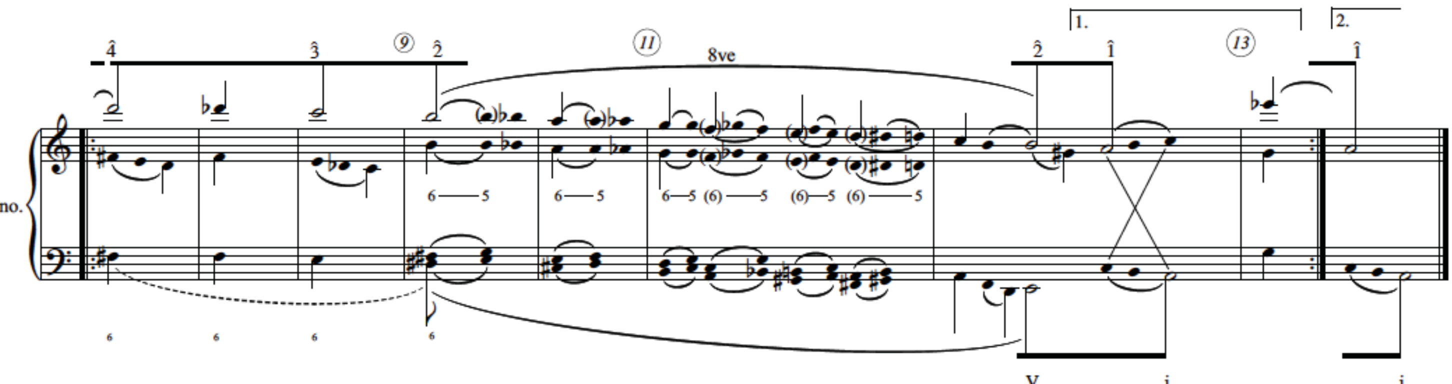
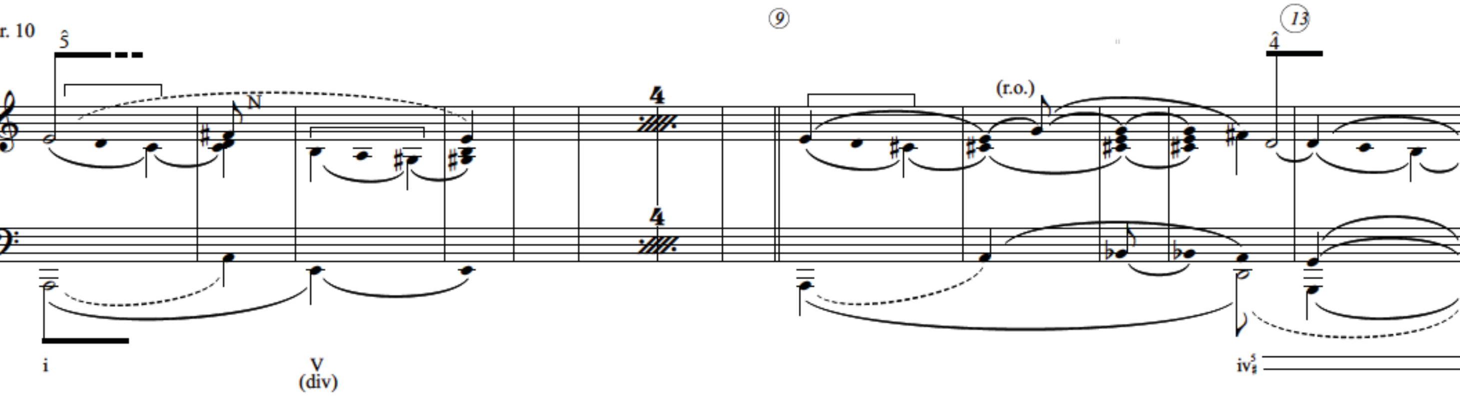


Figure 9. Variation 9



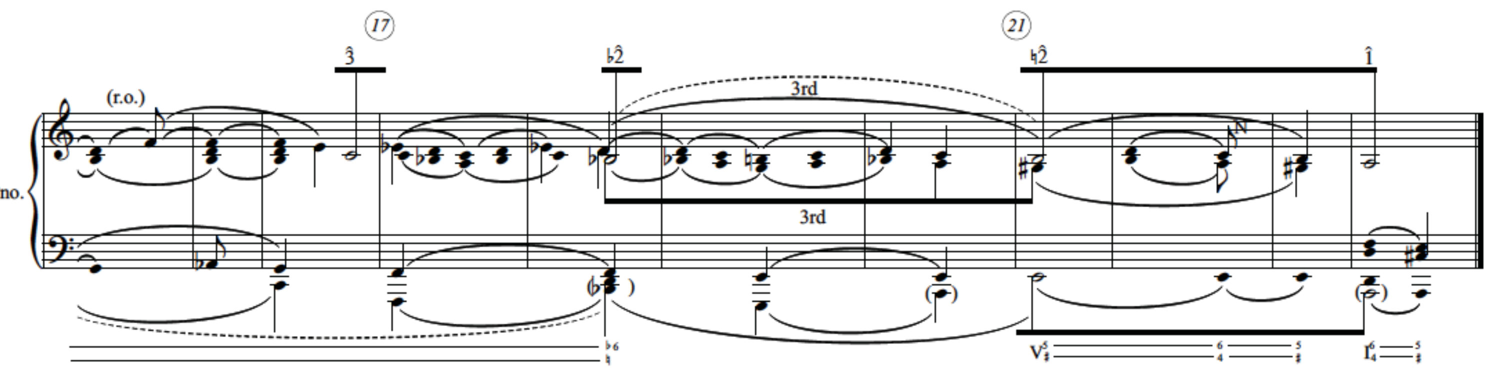
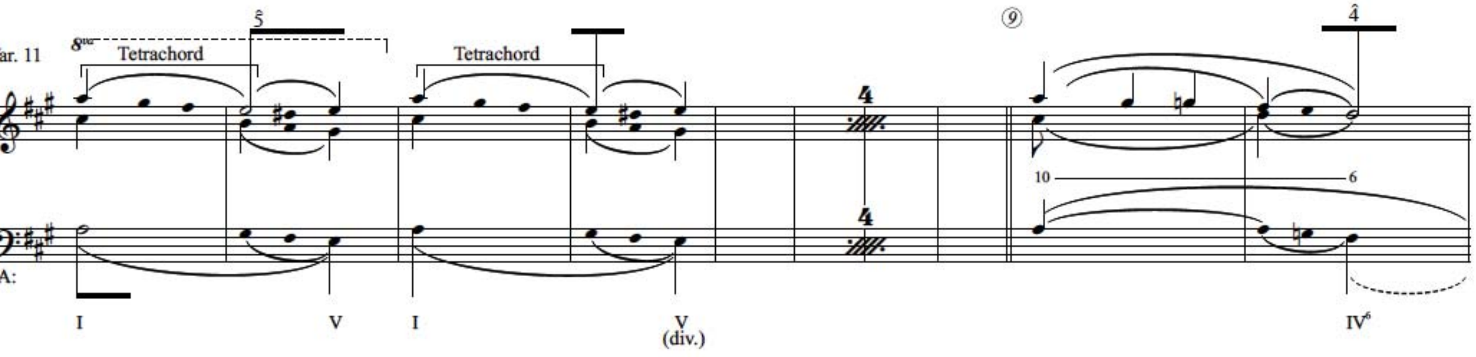


Figure 10. Variation 10



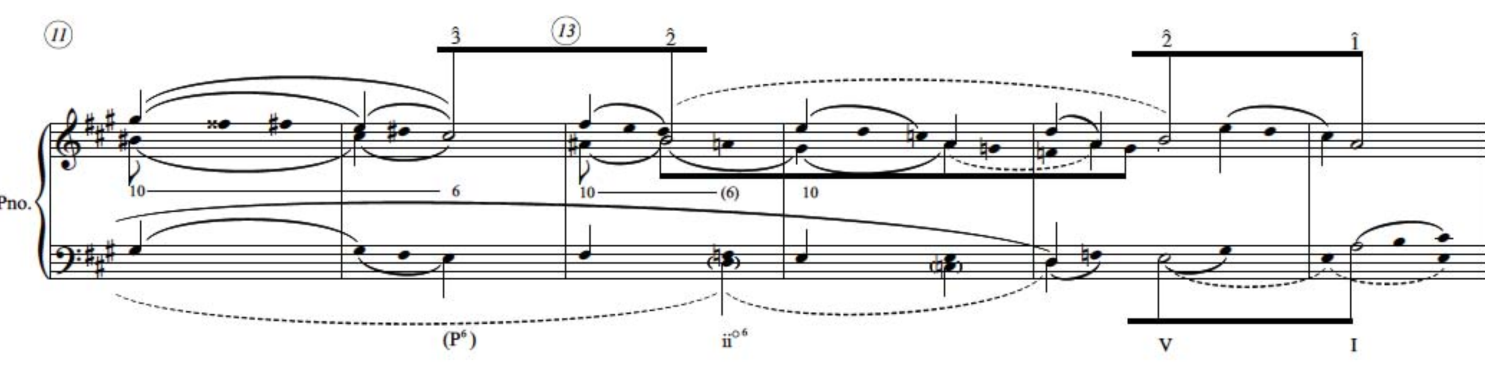
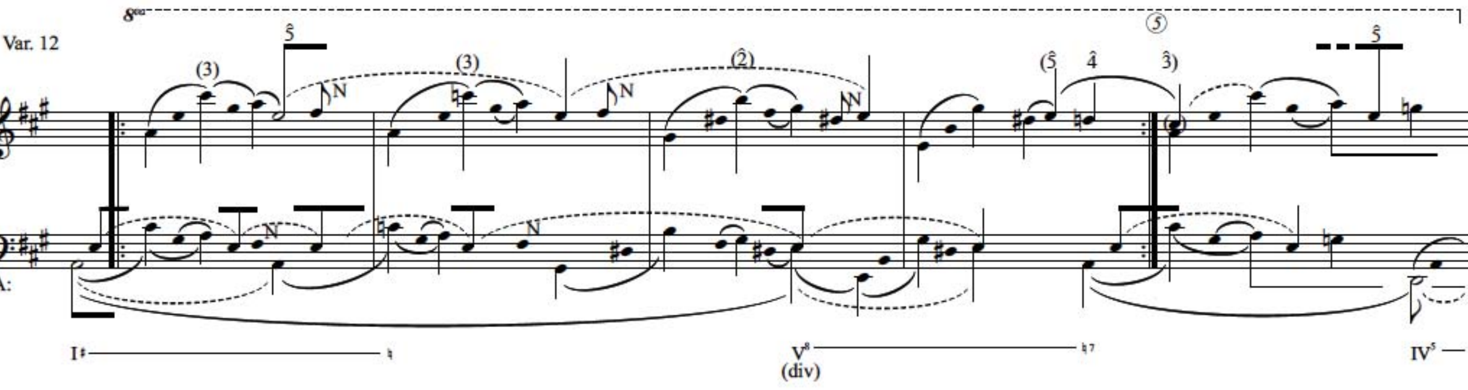


Figure 11. Variation 11



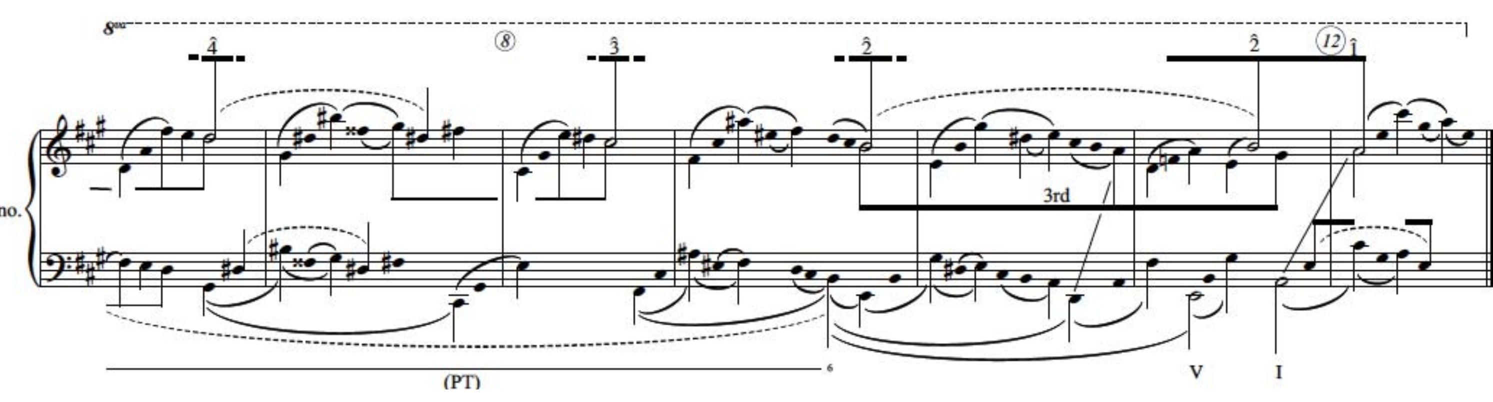


Figure 12. Variation 12

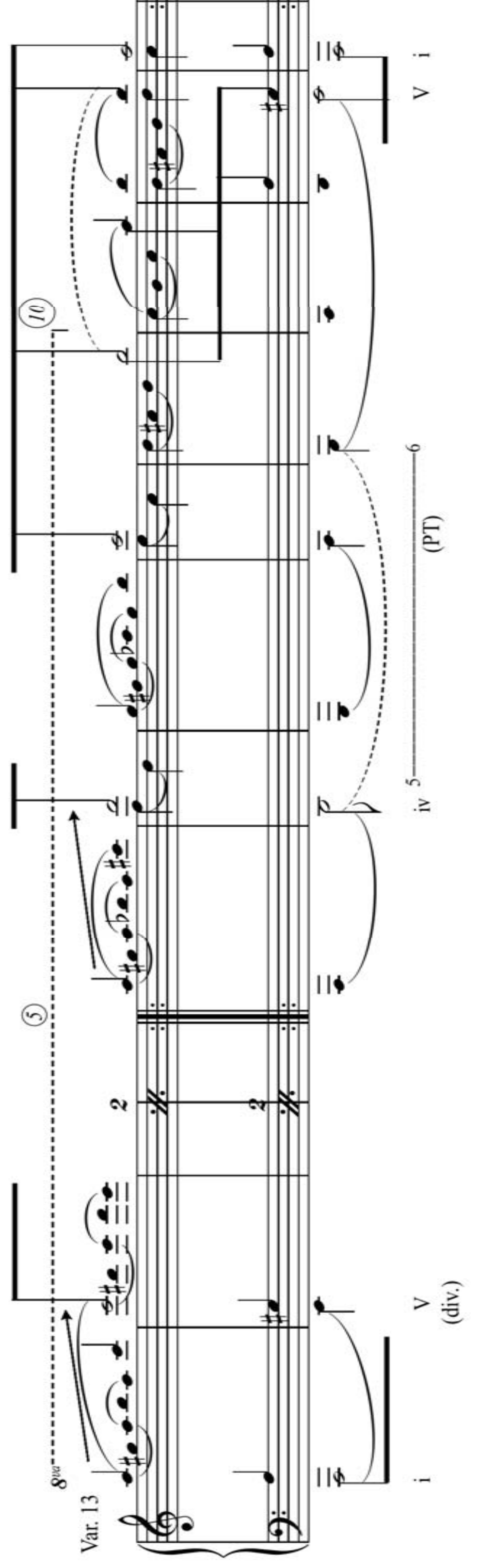
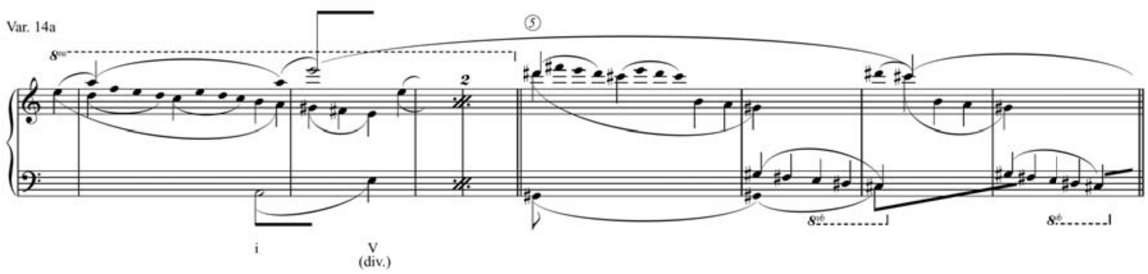
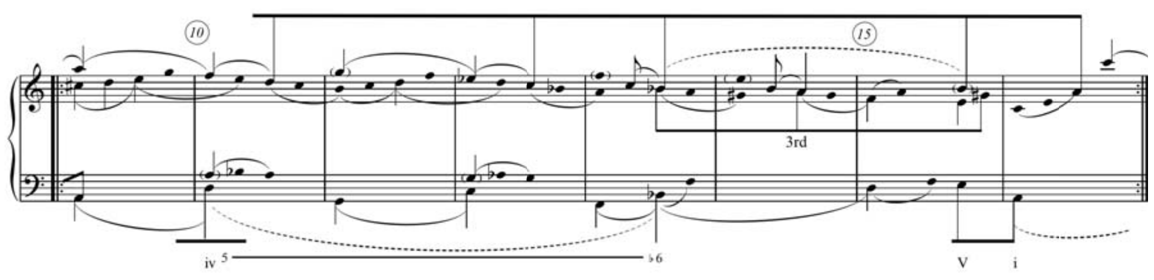
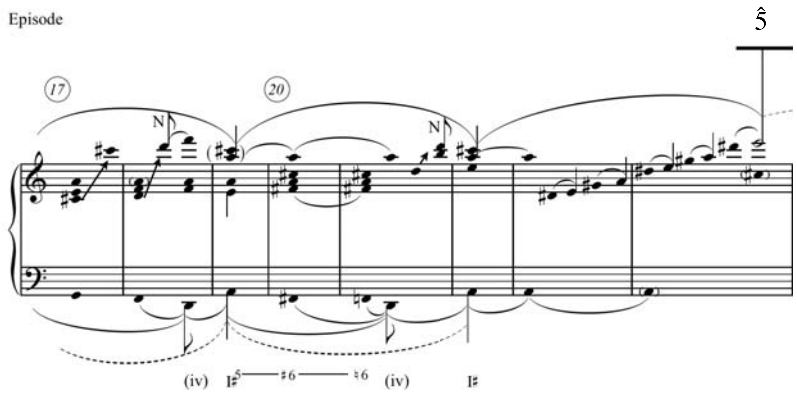


Figure 13. Variation 13







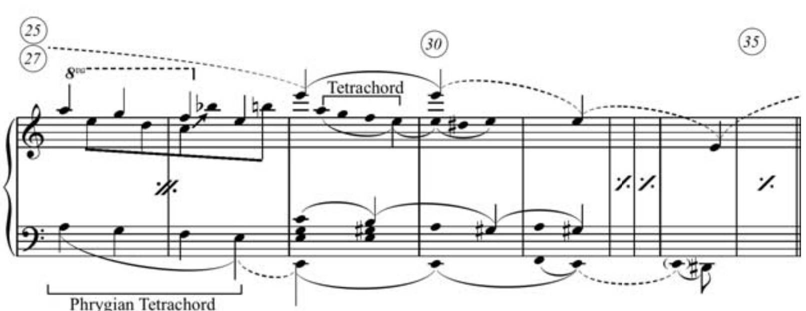


Figure 134. Variation 14 + Episode

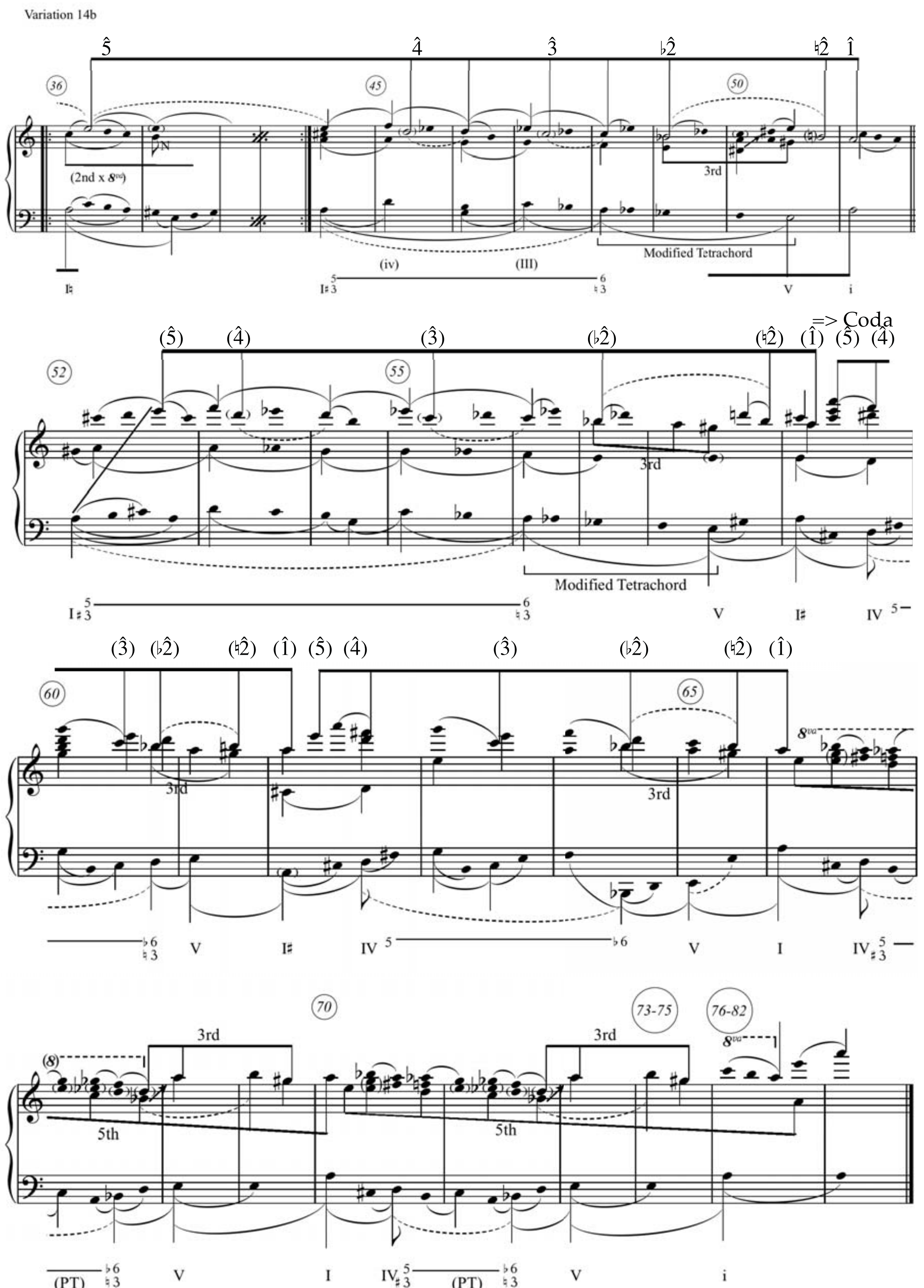


Figure 15. Variation 14b => Coda

APPENDIX C

VOICE-LEADING SKETCHES OF RACHMANINOFF'S *RHAPSODY ON A THEME OF PAGANINI*, OP. 43

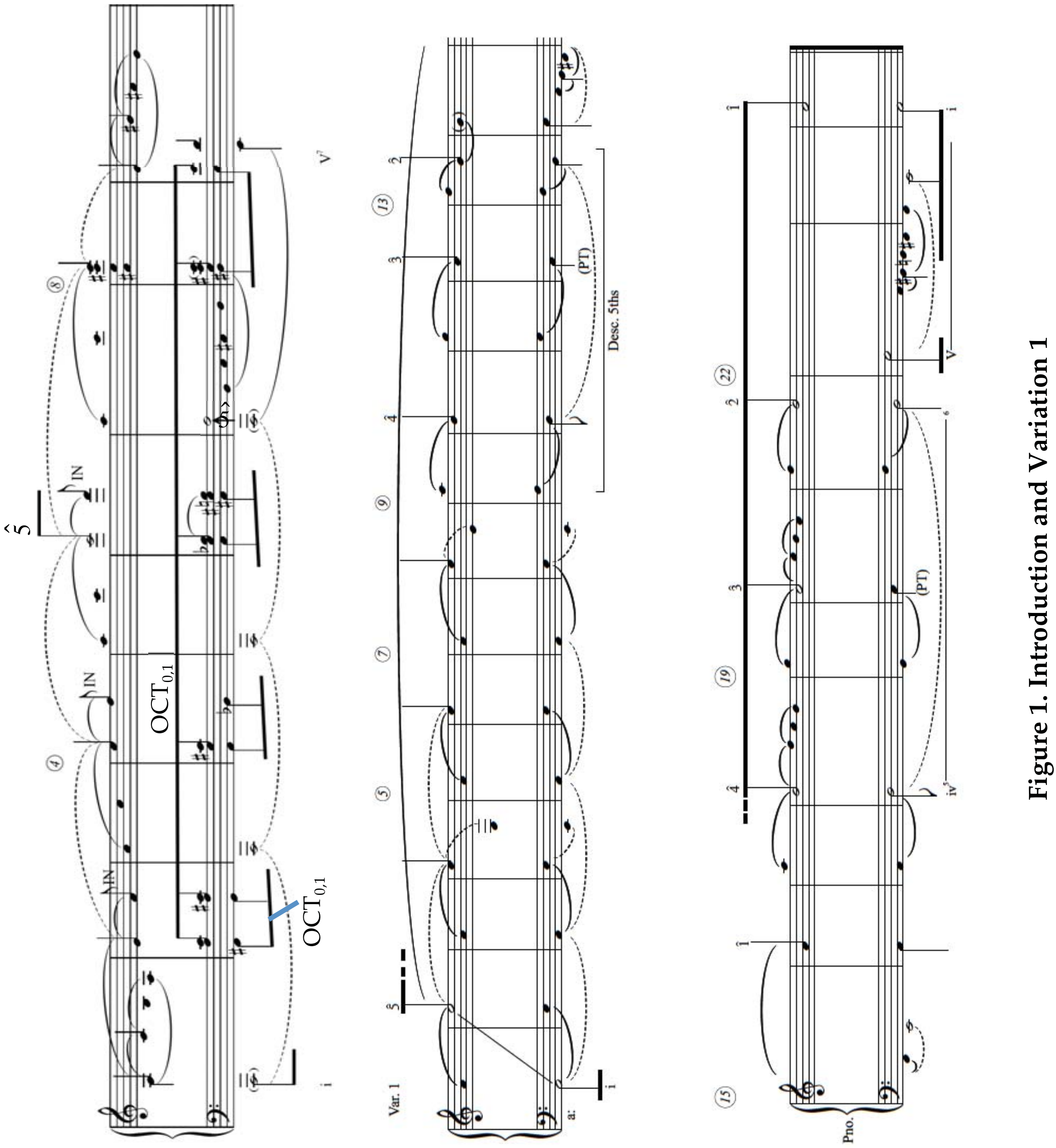
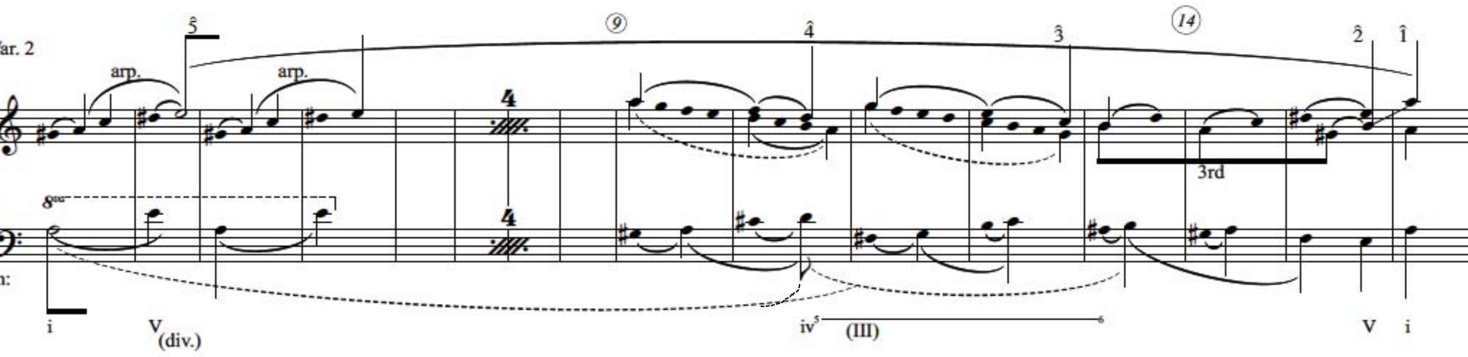


Figure 1. Introduction and Variation 1



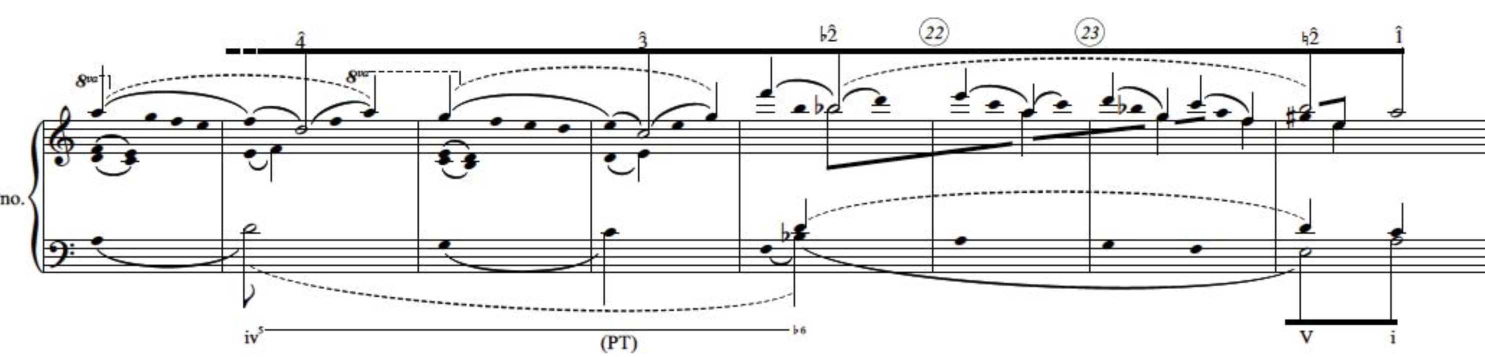
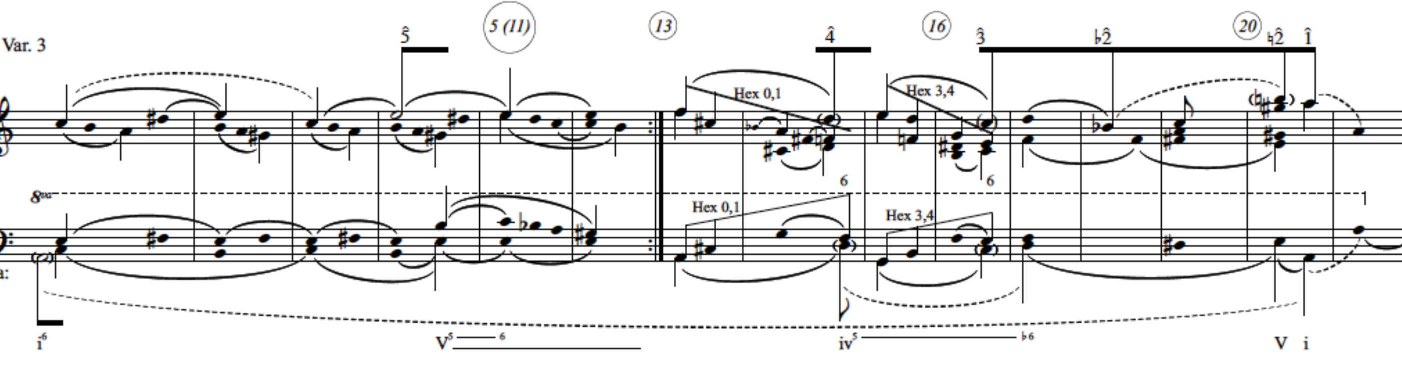


Figure 2. Variation 2



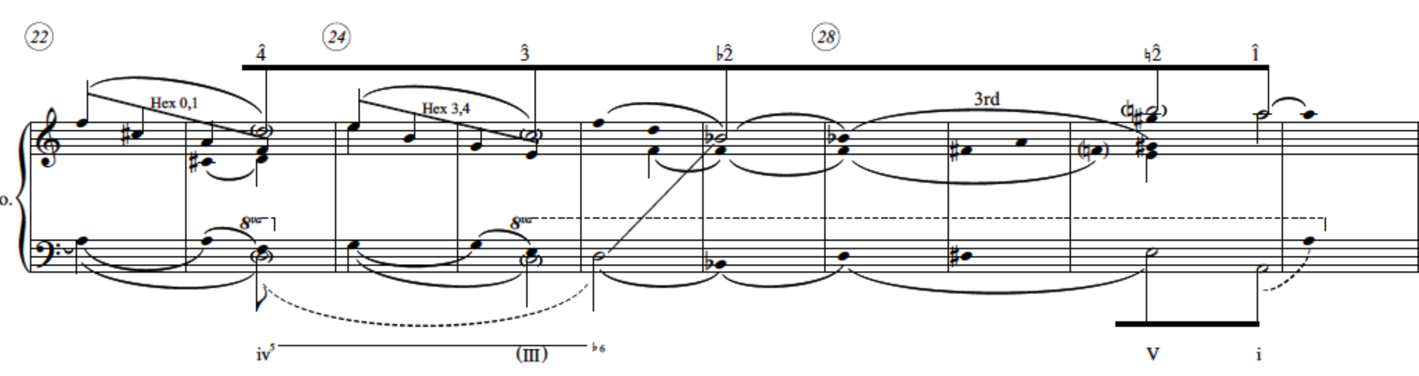
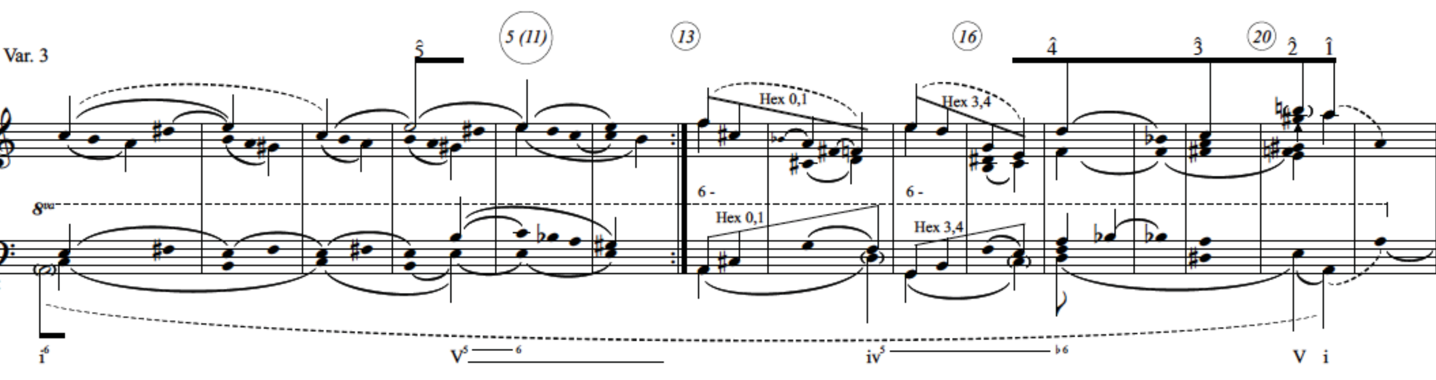


Figure 3. Variation 3



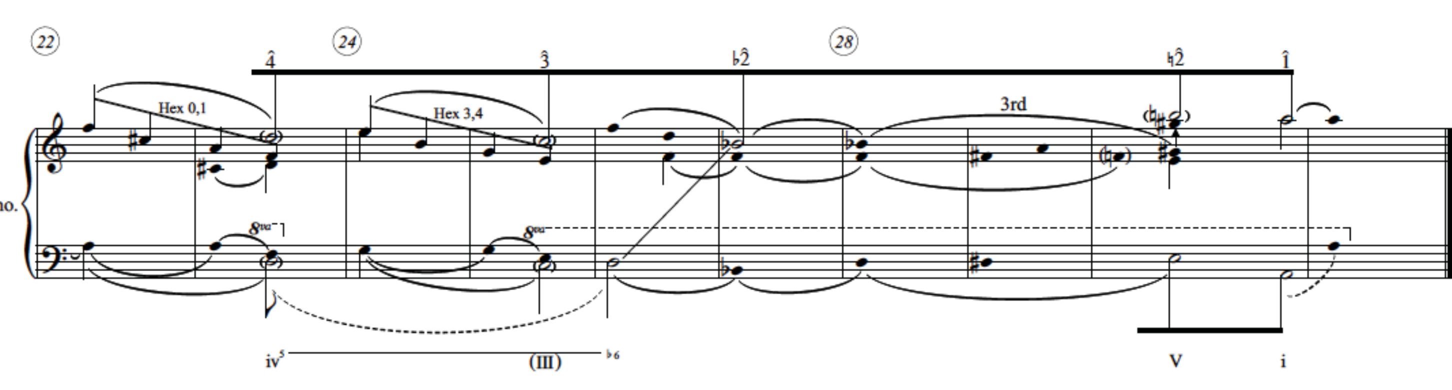
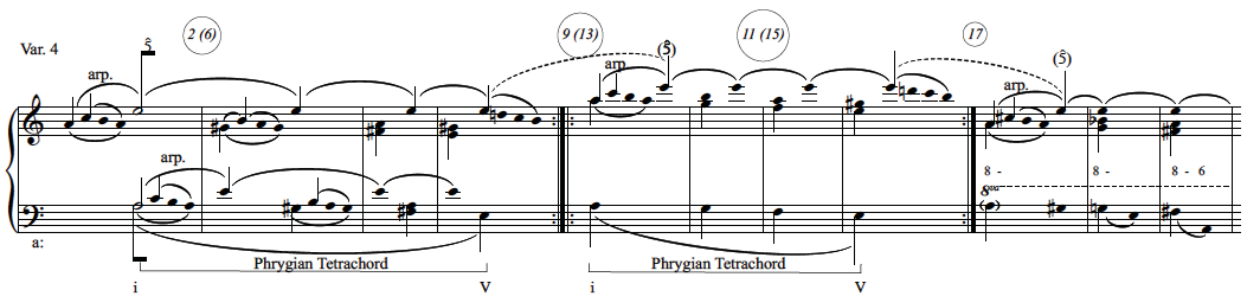
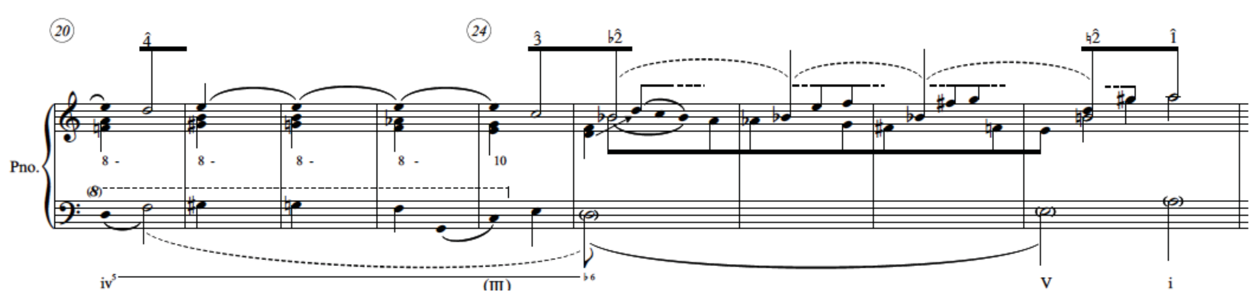


Figure 4. Variation 3 with ossia for mm. 13–16





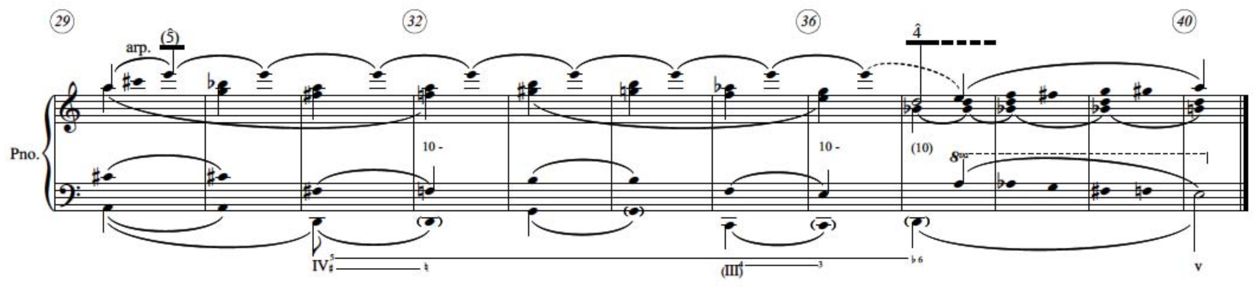


Figure 5. Variation 4

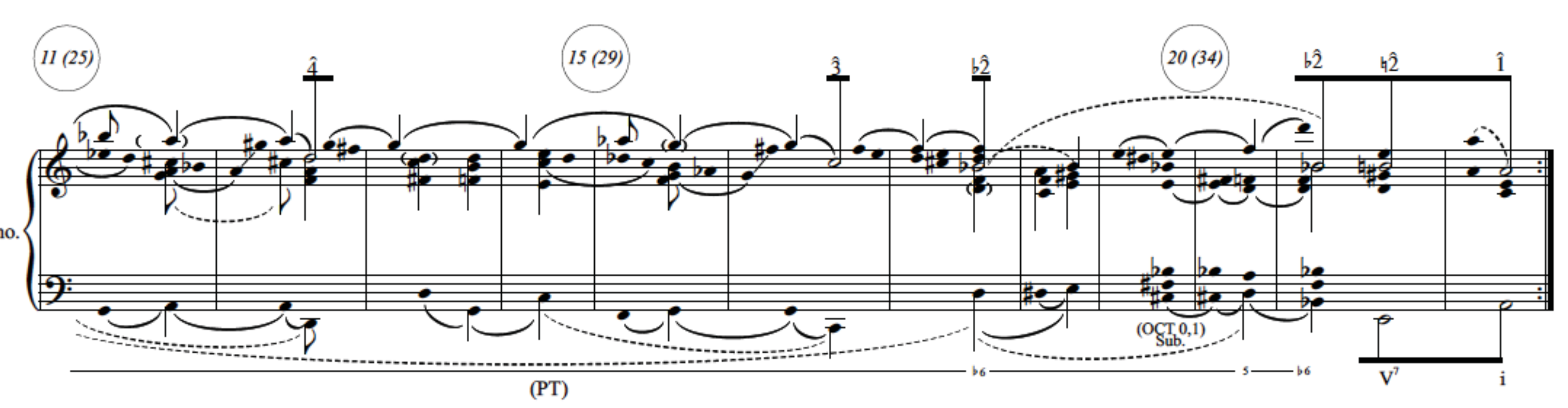
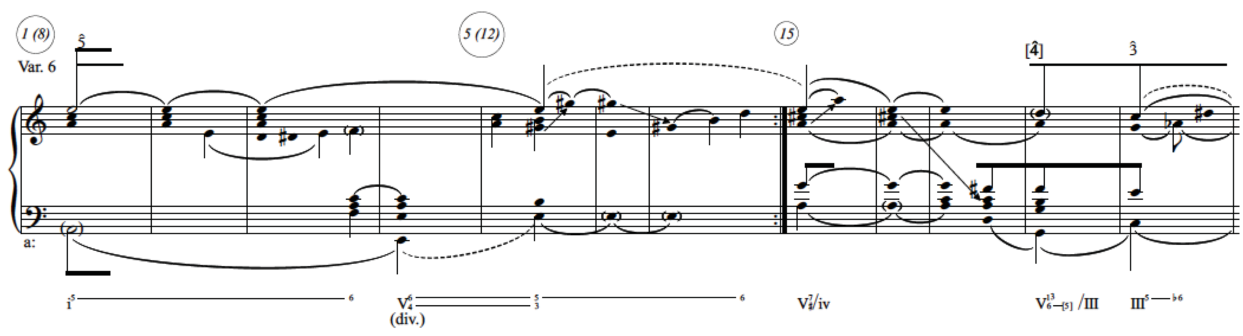
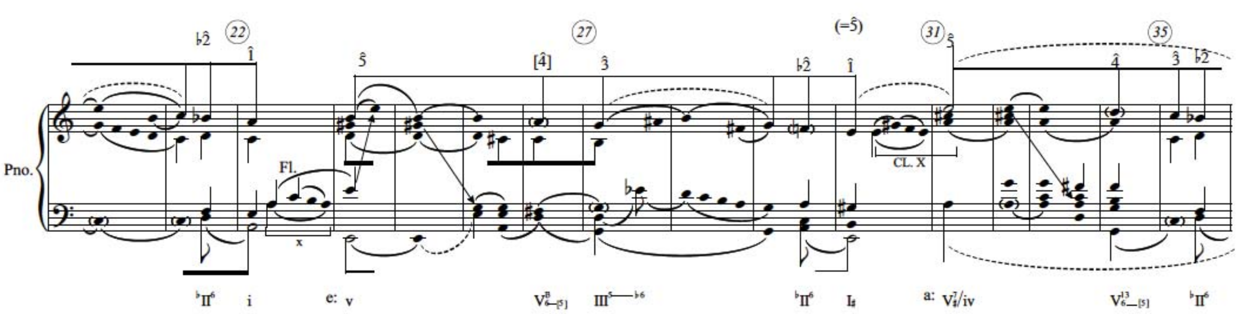
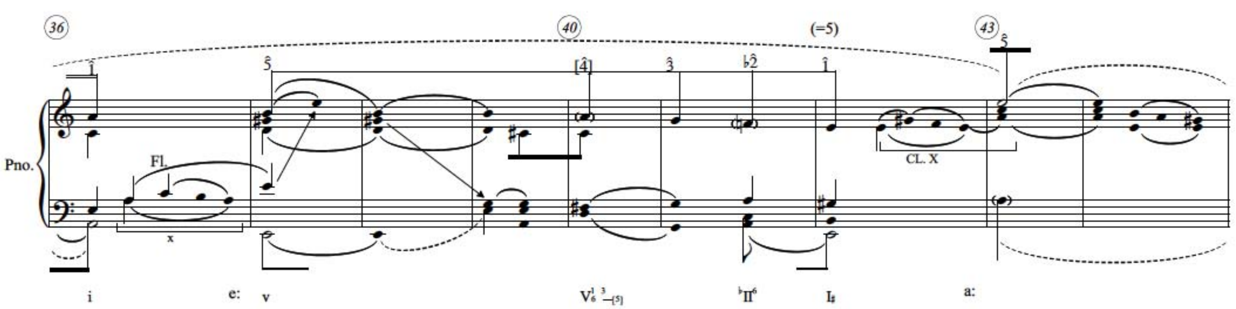


Figure 6. Variation 5







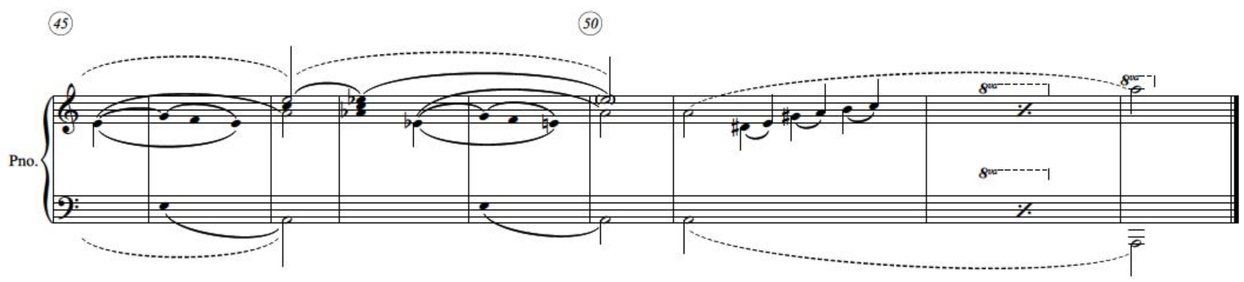
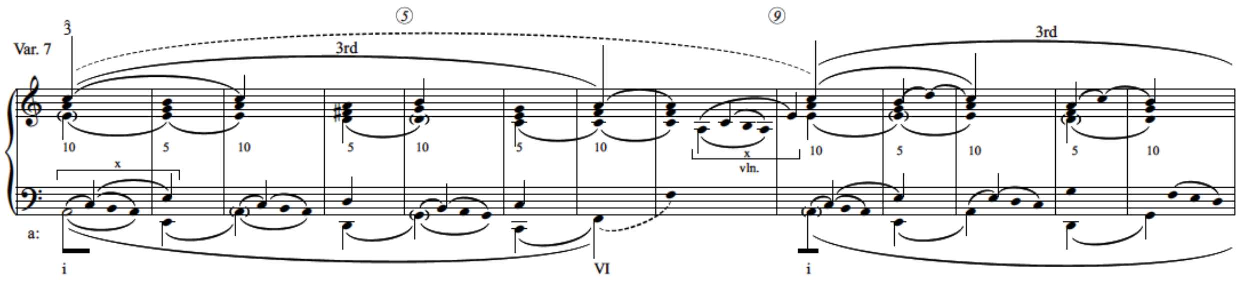
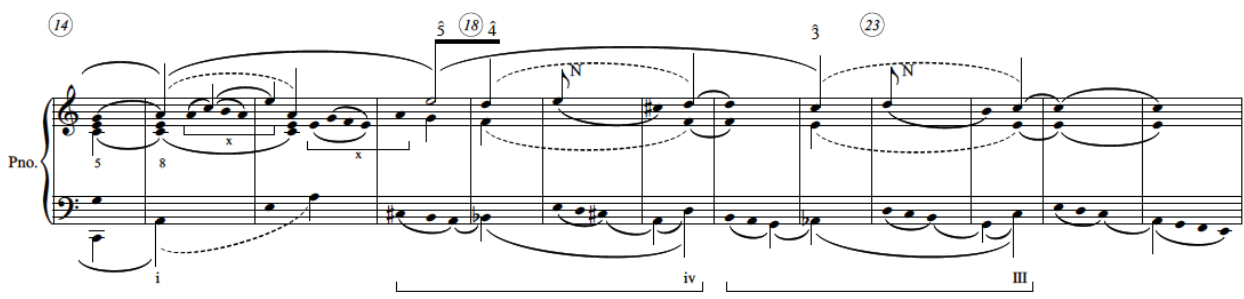


Figure 7. Variation 6





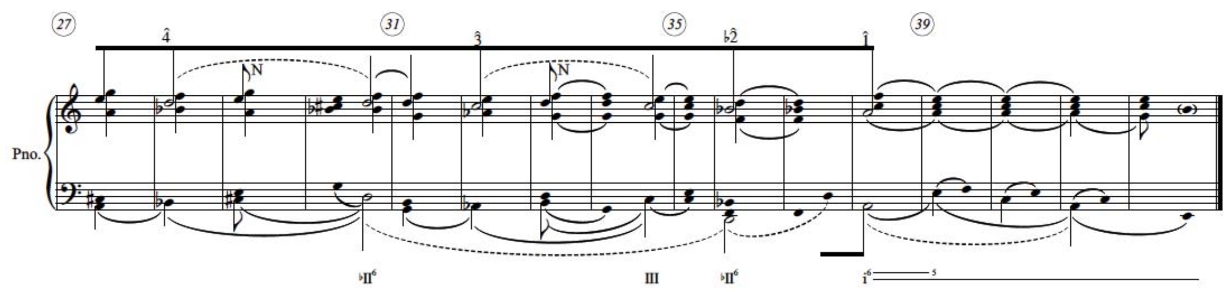
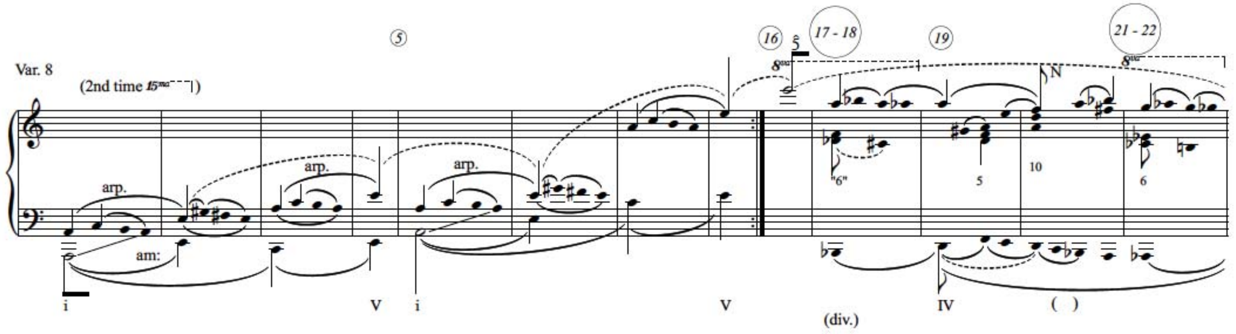


Figure 8. Variation 7



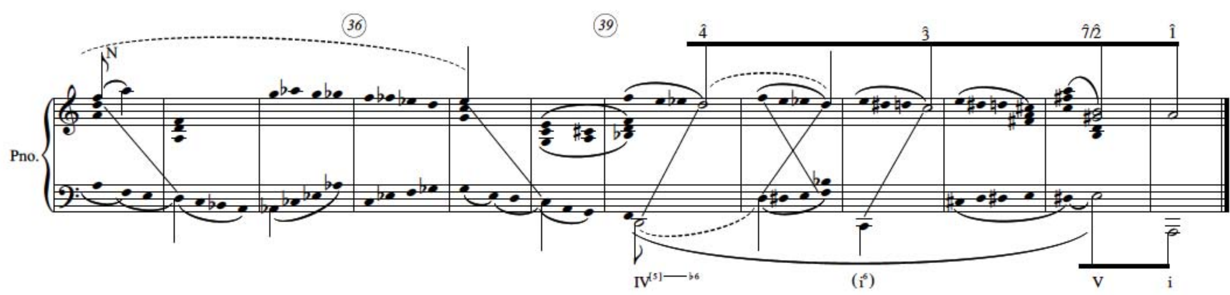


Figure 9. Variation 8

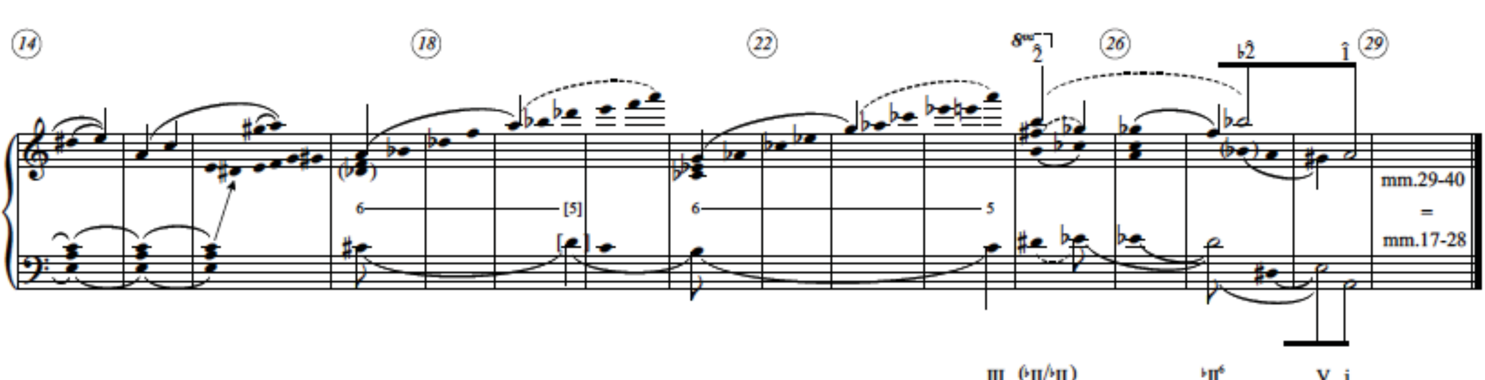
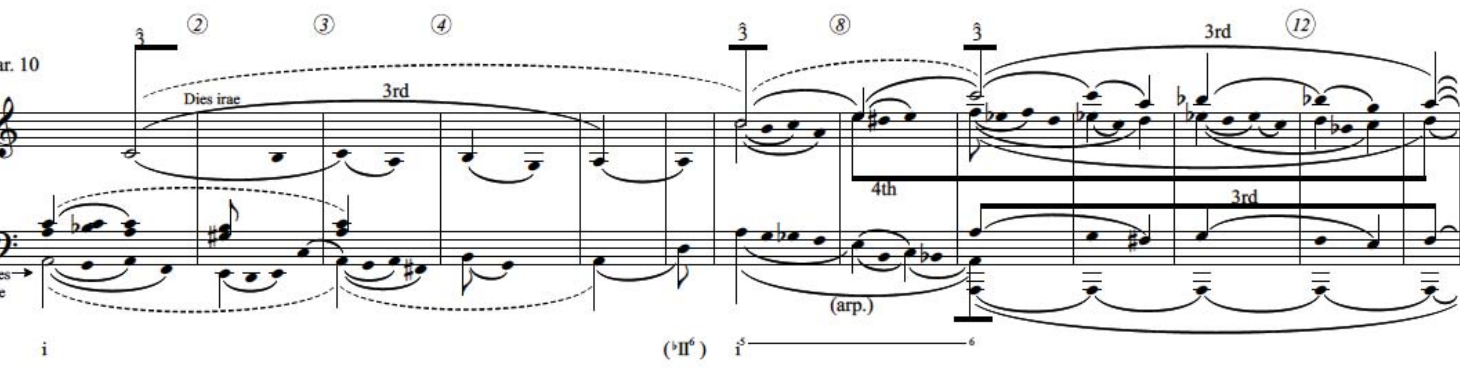


Figure 10. Variation 9



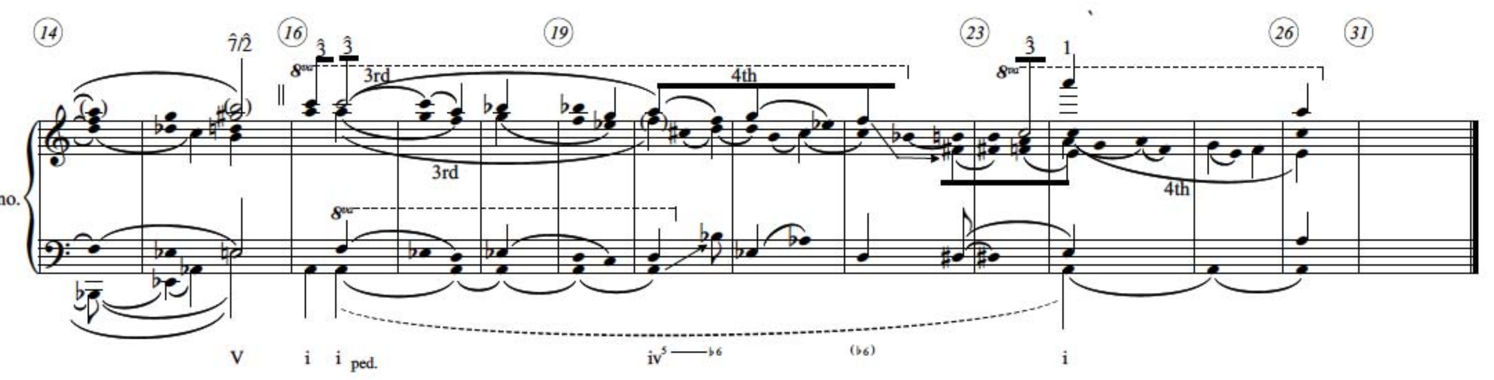
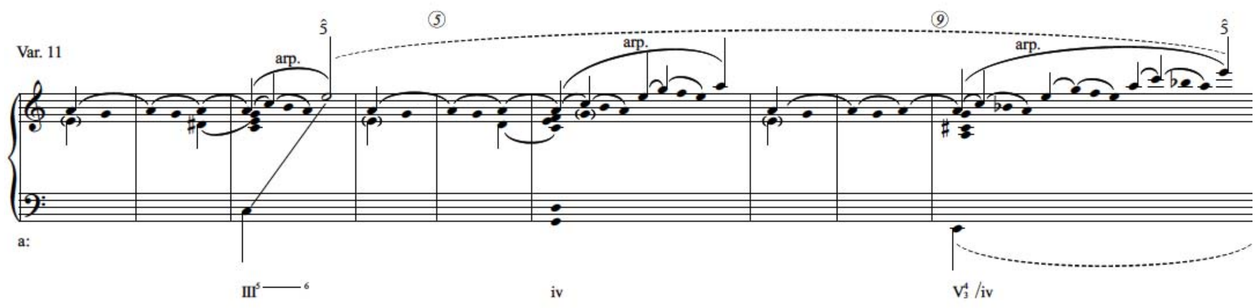
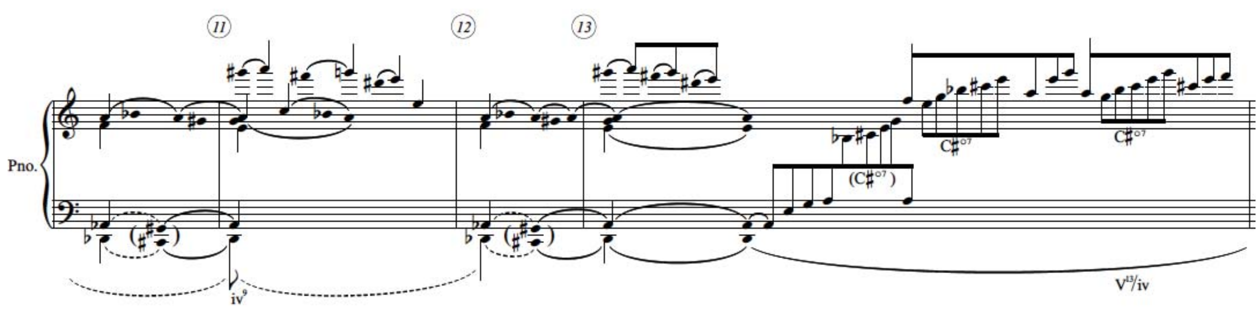


Figure 11. Variation 10





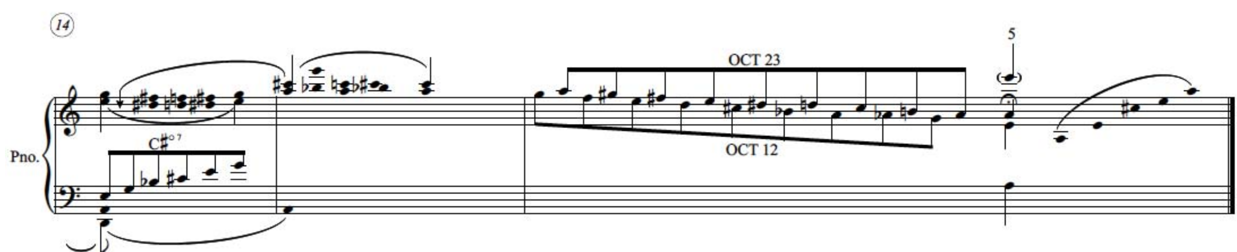
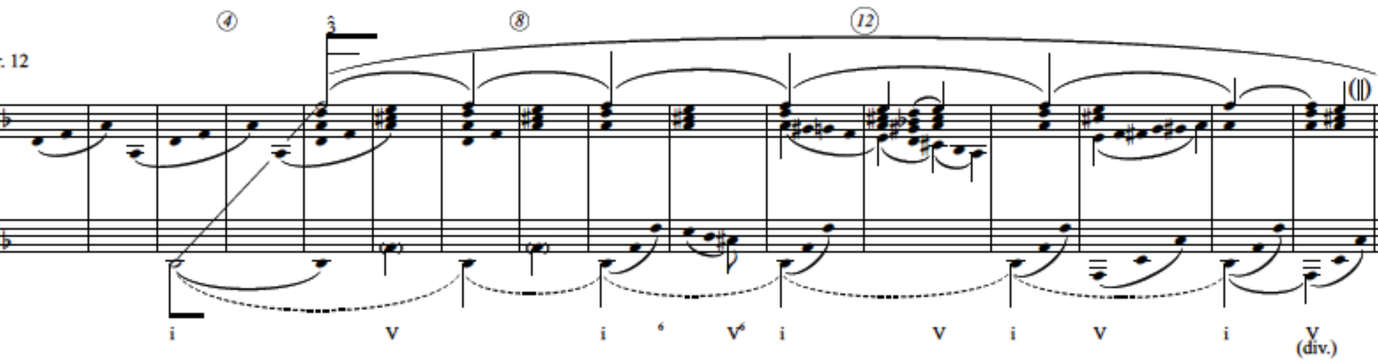


Figure 12. Variation 11



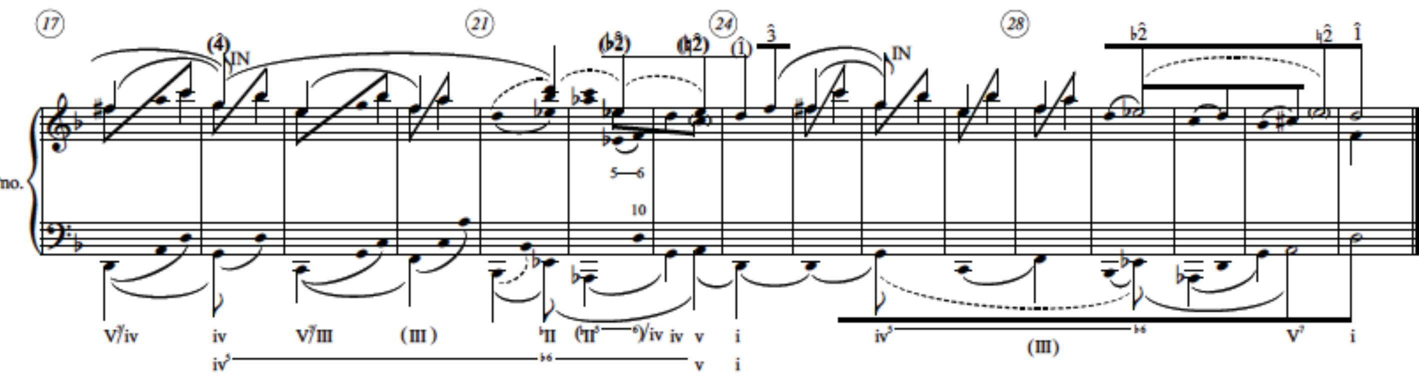


Figure 13. Variation 12

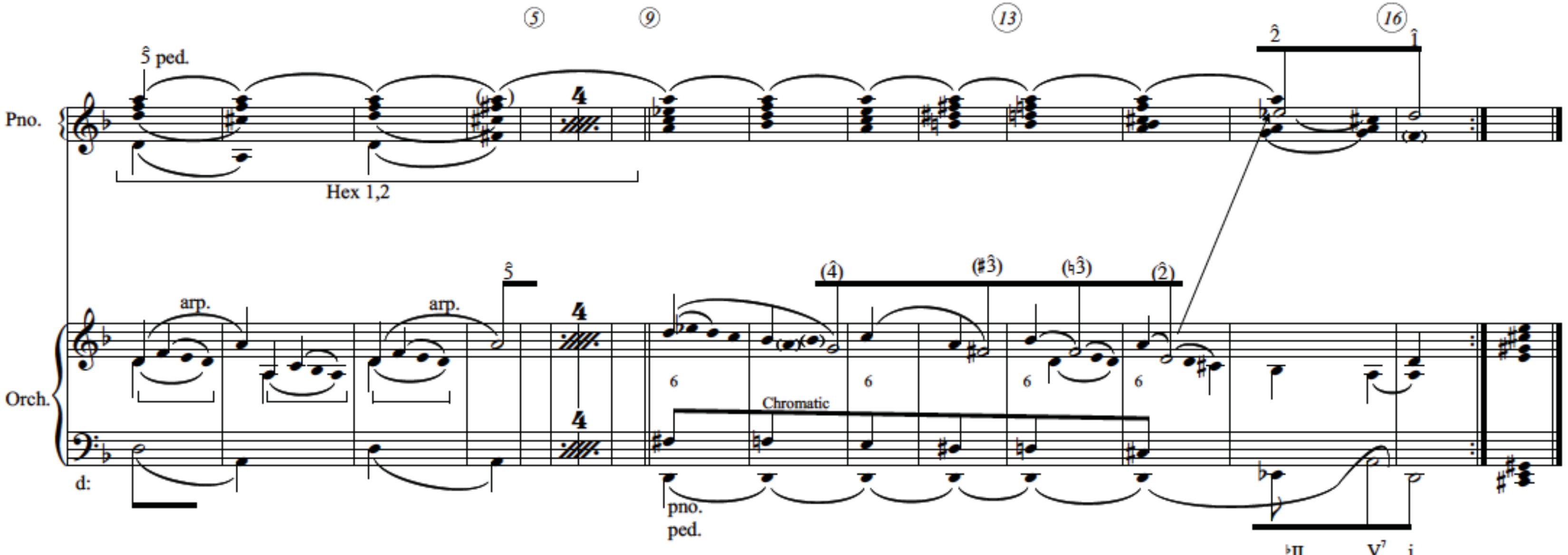
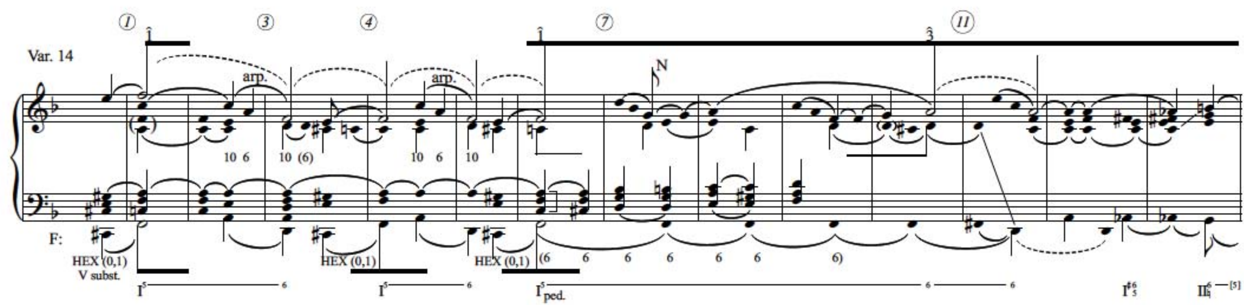
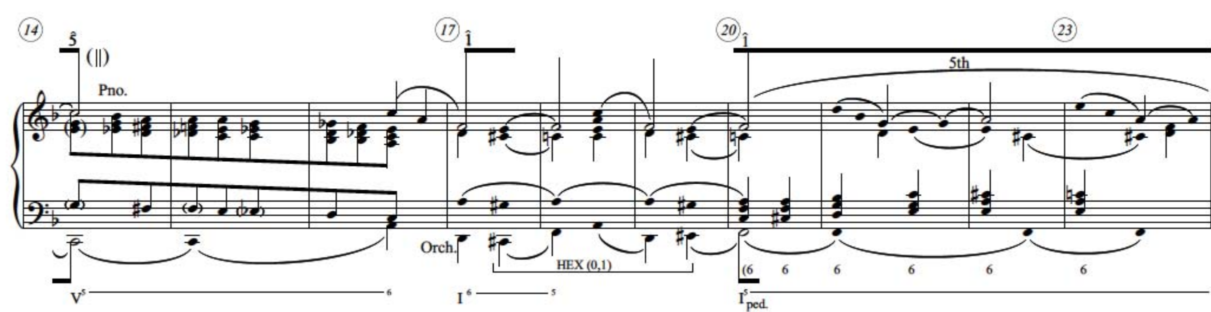


Figure 14. Variation 13





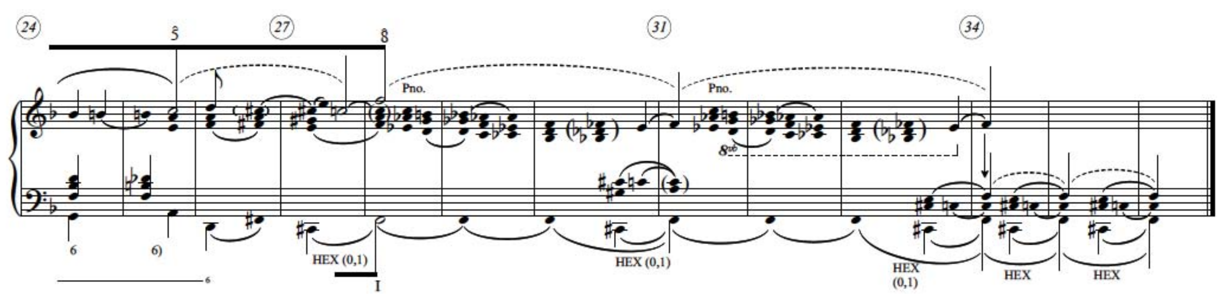
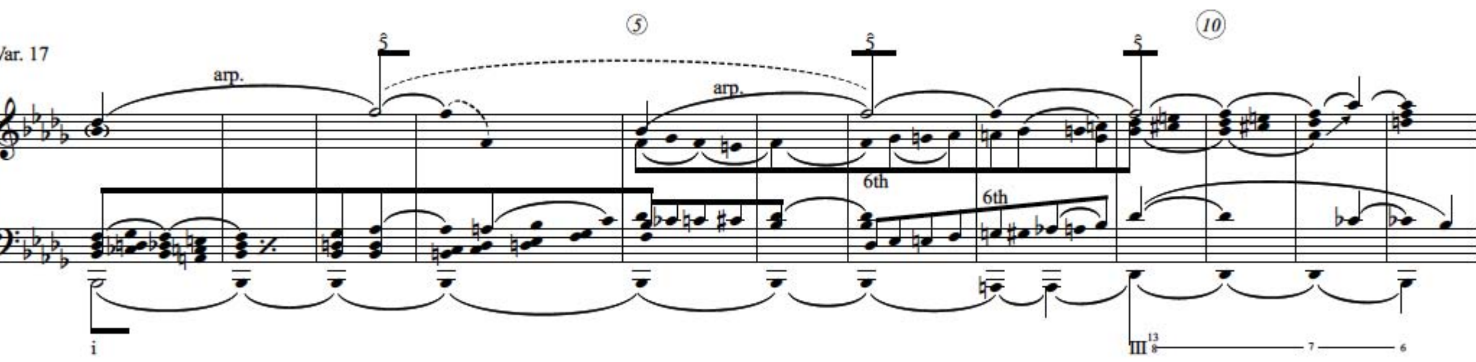


Figure 15. Variation 14

Figure 16. Variation 15

Variation 15 continued

Figure 17. Variation 16



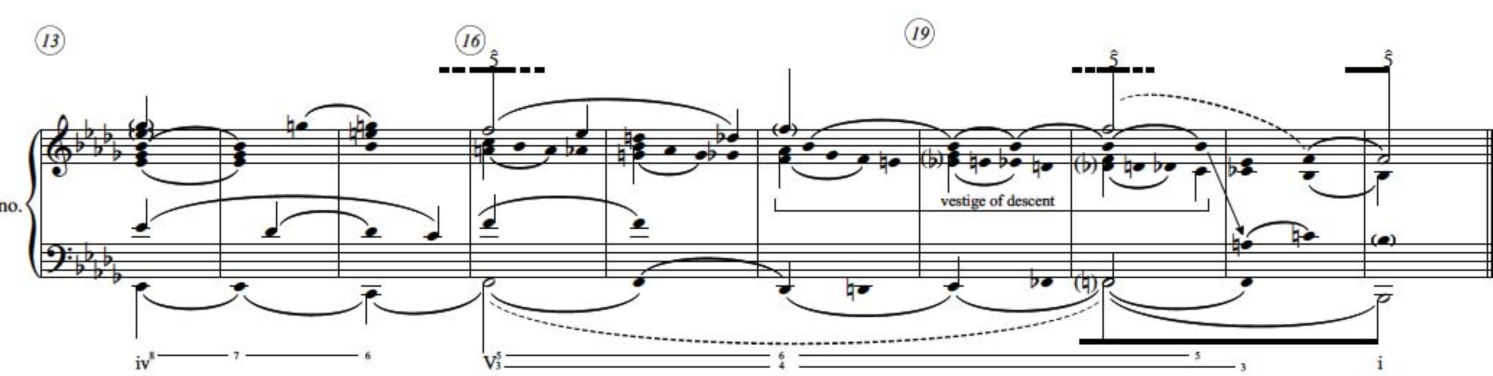
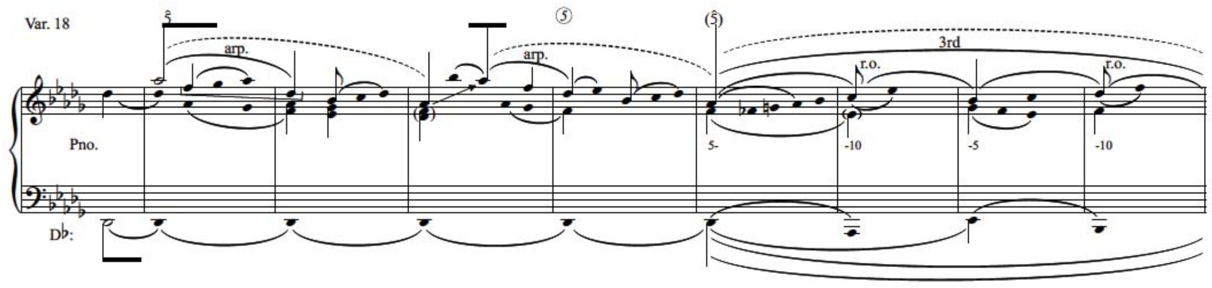
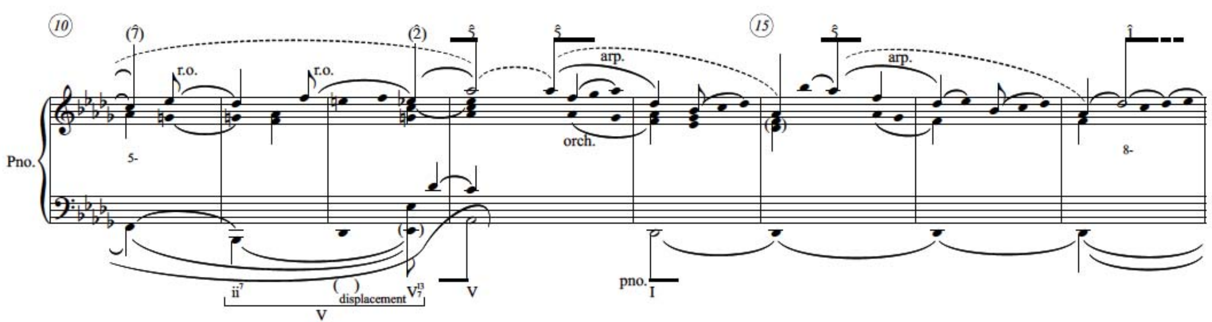


Figure 18. Variation 17





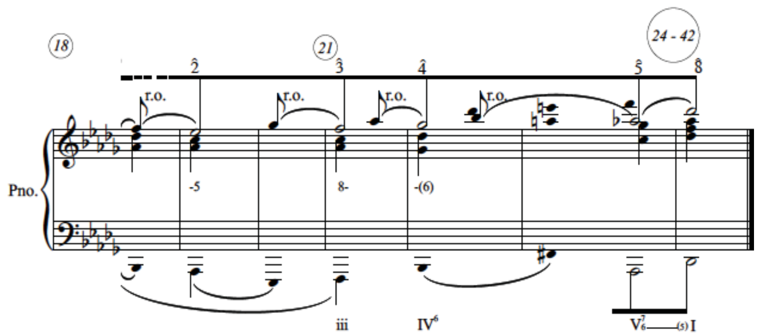
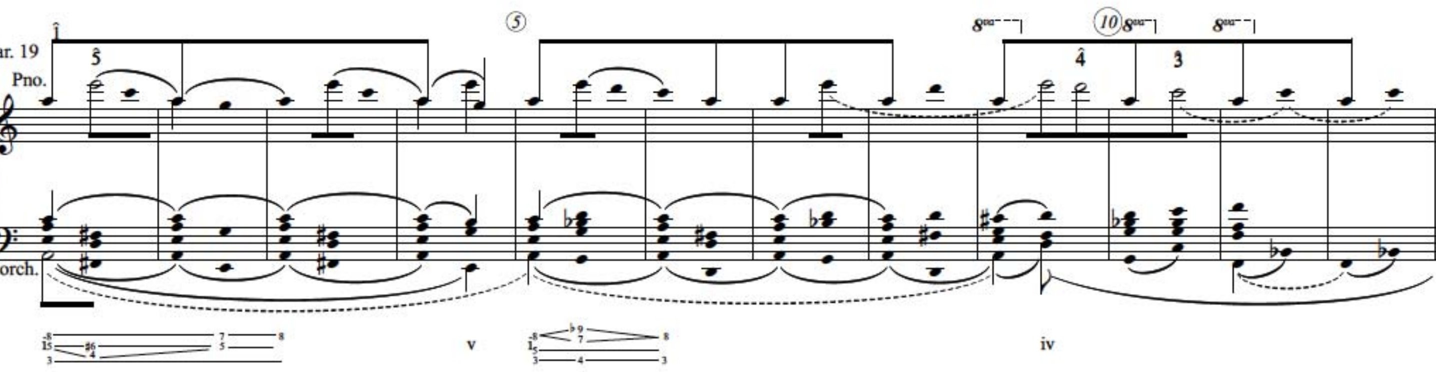


Figure 19. Variation 18



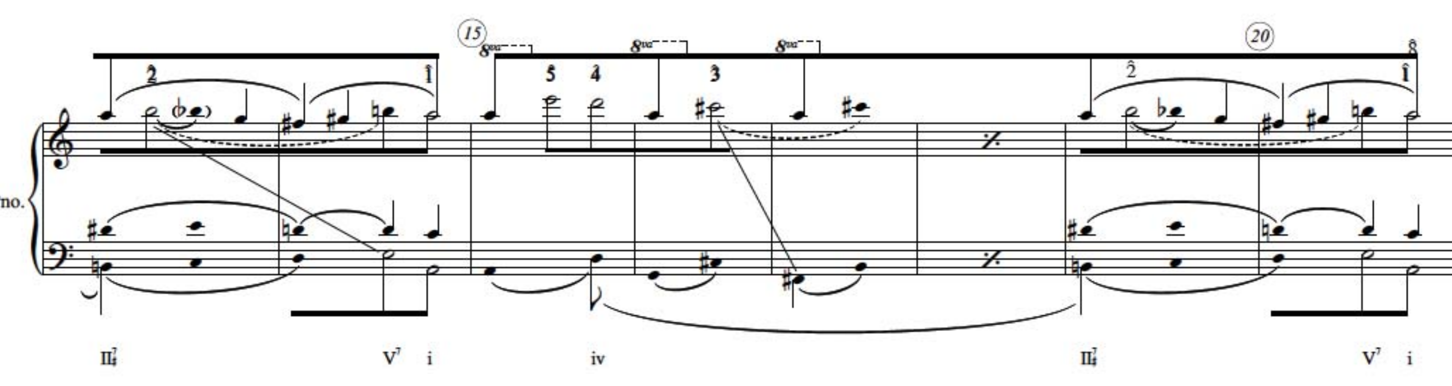
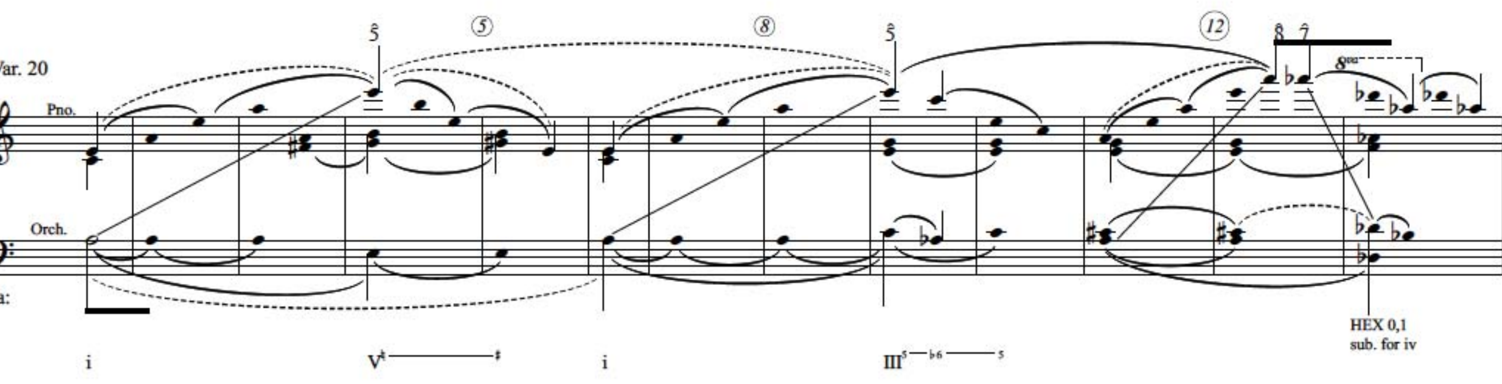


Figure 20. Variation 19



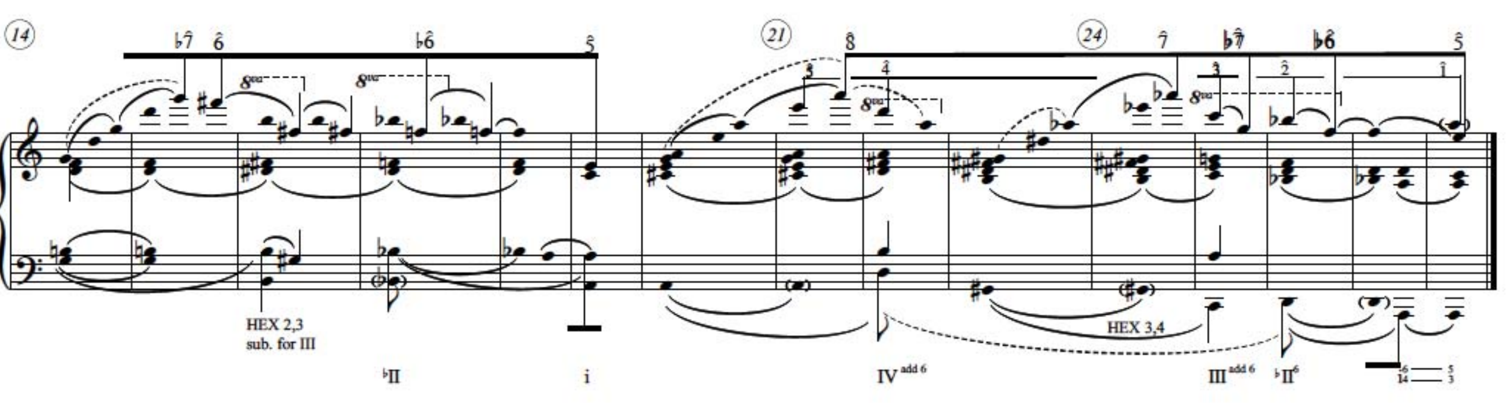


Figure 21. Variation 20

Figure 22. Variation 21

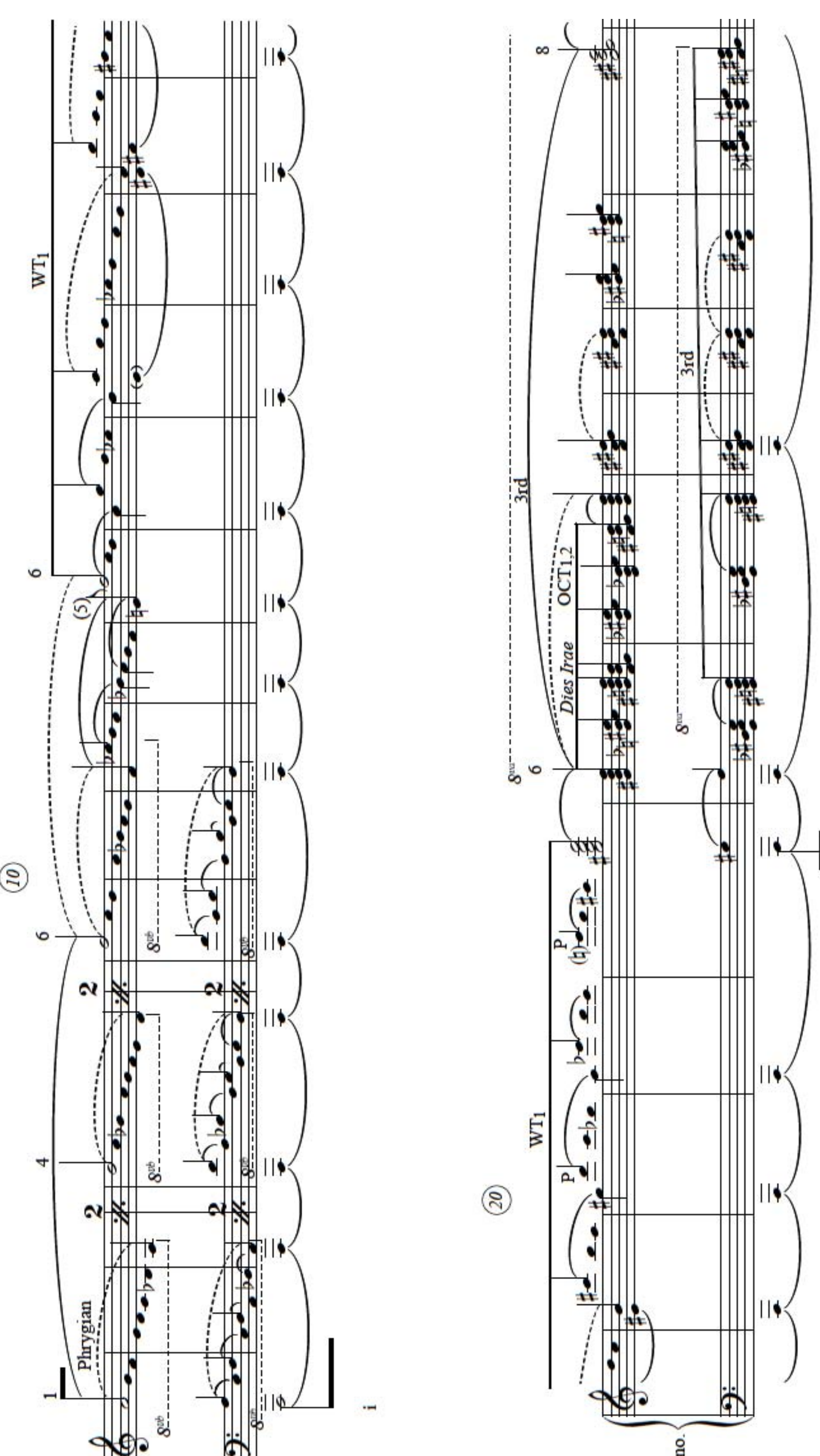
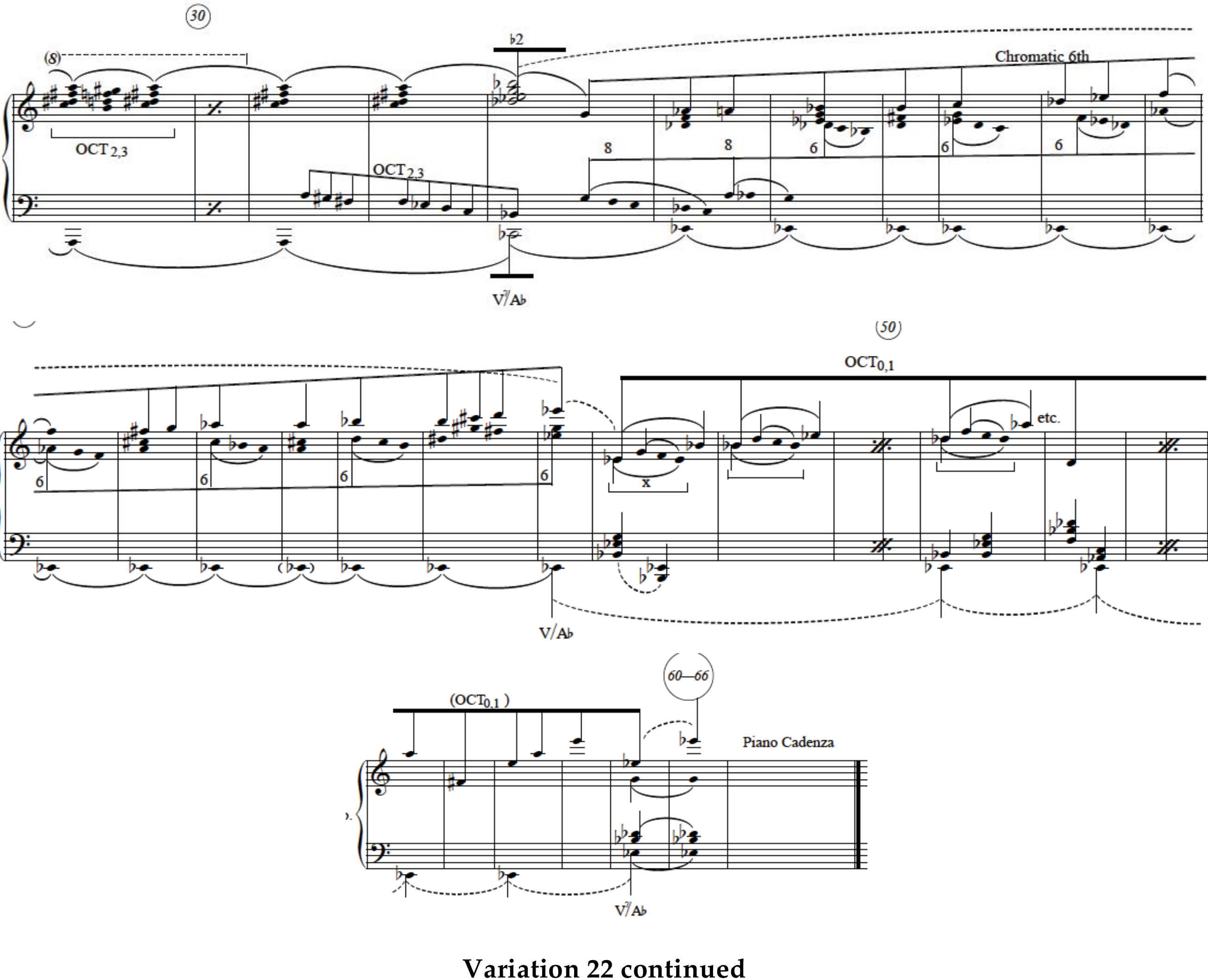
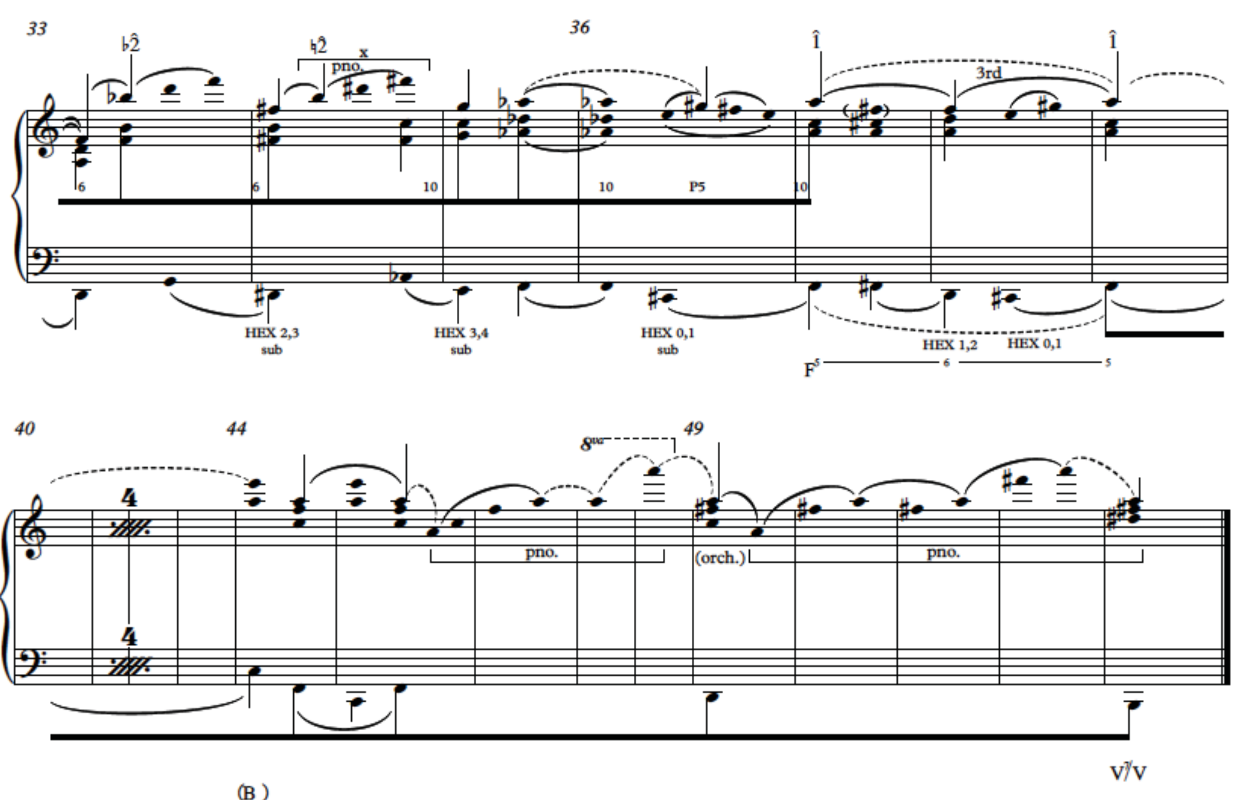


Figure 23. Variation 22



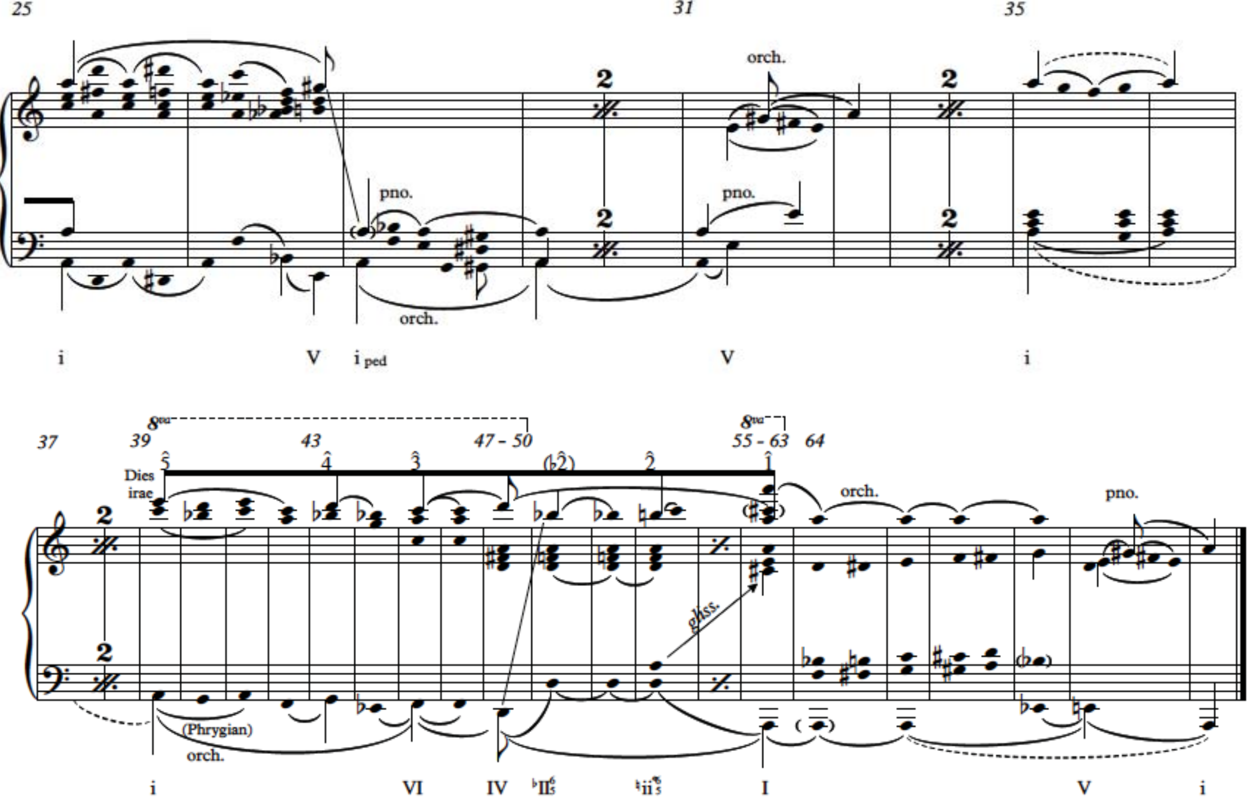
Variation 22 continued

Figure 24. Variation 23



Variation 23 continued

Figure 25. Variation 24



Variation 24 continued

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Gillian is a native of Renfrew, Ontario Canada (near Ottawa). She completed her Grade 10 piano through the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) in 2005. She graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo, Canada) in 2009 with a Bachelor of Music in Honors Theory with Distinction. Gillian attended the University of Western Ontario (London, Canada) for her M.A. in Music Theory, which she completed in 2011. She was awarded a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for her degree. Gillian began her doctoral studies in music theory at Florida State University in 2011. While at FSU, she taught the core undergraduate music theory and aural skills curriculum as an instructor of record. Gillian has presented her research at the Florida State University Music Theory Forum, the Texas Society for Music Theory (TSMT), Music Theory Southeast (MTSE), and at the national Annual Meeting of the Society for Music Theory (SMT). Gillian's current research interests include: models for musical narrative, nineteenth- and twentieth-century theme-and-variation sets, Schenkerian analysis, nineteenth-century form and harmony, nostalgia in music, intertextuality, and the music of Rachmaninoff.