THE EVOLUTION OF LISZT'S COMPOSITIONAL STYLE AS REFLECTED IN THE THREE VERSIONS OF THE *TRANSCENDENTAL ETUDES*

by

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an investigation of the development of Liszt's musical style through an examination of the three compositional versions of the *Transcendental Etudes*. In a sense, Liszt treats the earliest published version of the etudes from 1826 as no more than a compositional sketch for the second set of 1839. As a result, a comparison of these two versions provides an opportunity to assess the new compositional techniques which the maturing composer acquired during these years. Since the thematic material from the first set is consistently retained, however transformed, the subsequent versions offer an insight into Liszt's self-critical evaluation of his own music. Chapter I explores the relationship between the first two versions, while Chapter II focuses on the final version, completed by 1852. Here the changes are more refinement than transformation, and consequently less radical in nature. Nevertheless, they are significant for the light they shed on Liszt's changing approach to composition up to the early Weimar years.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Transcendental Etudes* of Franz Liszt exist in three separate versions. This in itself is not unusual--Liszt was an indefatigable reviser, and constantly sought to improve many of his early works by carefully reworking them.[1] Yet the case of the *Transcendental Etudes* is indeed unique, for they continued to intrigue Liszt for over twenty-five years. Consequently, they offer a musical parallel to Liszt's personal development during this time. The prodigy of fifteen, the celebrated virtuoso of the late 1830's, the mature composer of the Weimar years--all of these biographical stages are reflected in the content and style of the three versions of the etudes.

The present study is an attempt to investigate the development of Liszt's musical style through an examination of the three compositional versions of the *Transcendental Etudes*. In a sense, Liszt treats the earliest published version of the etudes from 1826 as no more than a compositional sketch for the second set of 1830. As a result, a comparison of these two versions provides an opportunity to assess the new compositional techniques which the maturing composer acquired during these years. Since the thematic material from the first set is consistently retained, however transformed, the subsequent versions offer an insight into Liszt's self-critical evaluation of his own music. Chapter I explores the relationship between the first two versions, while Chapter II focuses on the final version, completed by 1852.

Here the changes are more refinement than transformation, and consequently less radical in nature. Nevertheless, they are significant for the light they shed on Liszt's changing approach to composition up to the early Weimar years.

The 1826 etudes are best approached from the historical context of the early nineteenth century pedagogical literature for piano, a tradition to which Czerny, Liszt's teacher, made an important contribution. This period was one of unparalleled technical prowess, an era of virtuosi. Many of the compositions of these years reflect this new desire for technical brilliance. It was therefore natural for Liszt as a pianist and composer to address himself to the etude--a work designed to introduce and develop a particular technique. The tremendous outpouring of such a large body of works intended primarily for didactic purposes was a phenomenon characteristic of the nineteenth century. Earlier pedagogical compositions had combined problems of technique with those of musical expression. Technical training was thus integrated into the study of music and not divorced from it.

Many earlier keyboard composers--most notably, J.S. Bach--addressed themselves seriously to the challenge of training young musicians. A large portion of Bach's keyboard works, including the two- and three-part inventions and the preludes from the first book of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, are actually studies which focus on specific technical problems. Yet, the pedagogical intent of these compositions does not lessen their musical worth. For Bach, technical

training was an intrinsic part of the whole musical experience:

> Bach did not believe in teaching isolated elements or fragments of music. . . . He never wrote an exercise in composition or velocity that was not a fully rounded composition. Even where he set out to demonstrate a specific technical feature, he was never only a teacher. More than a third of the preludes of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* (First Part) were conceived as studies for Wilhelm Friedemann, but the very consistency with which a definite point was carried through in them is one of the secrets not only of their greatness but of their attractiveness as well.[2]

His son, C.P.E. Bach (1714-1788), continued this tradition. To exemplify the technical and interpretive problems discussed in his *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* (1753), he included eighteen *Probestücke* which fulfill their pedagogical aim without sacrificing their intrinsic musical value.

These are not isolated examples: Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757) did not distinguish between music and technique in his keyboard works. The title of his 1738 published set of sonatas--*Essercizi*--might suggest a purely pedagogical intent, yet they are considered to be his first important collection of sonatas and compare favourably in all aspects with his later works.

François Couperin's *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin* (1716) contains many directions for the proper execution of ornaments, correct fingering, and for good posture. Interspersed with these are " . . . observations for playing with taste,"[3] which the author considered an indispensable part of learning the harpsichord.

By the nineteenth century, however, technical training had become a separate entity from the study of music. This division was a direct

result of the desire to meet the new demands of the piano. The instrument underwent great changes at this time, including the use of an iron frame, thicker wire for the strings, the enlargement of the compass of the keyboard to 7½ octaves, and the use of cross-stringing to distribute the stress on the frame. It soon became apparent that the finger technique carried over from the harpsichord could not serve this new instrument with its great dynamic range and fuller sound. Not realizing that the piano demanded a different technique based on an infinite control of balance and weight, most teachers simply adopted a modification of the old style of playing.

This misconception occurred partly because of the similarities in touch between the harpsichord and the first pianos. On the harpsichord only a minimum amount of force, which the fingers alone are capable of providing, is required to produce a sound; the degree of force with which the note is struck does not vary the tone. Couperin summarized this technique in his treatise on harpsichord playing: "Beautiful playing depends a great deal more on suppleness and great freedom of the fingers rather than on force."[4] Earlier in his introduction he described the correct posture at the instrument--the body turned slightly to the right with the knees together, the feet side by side and the right foot well out to one side and the underside of the forearm, wrist and fingers on one level.[5] Such a posture involves the body only minimally and is not dependent on weight for tone production.

About 1709, the first piano, built by Bartolommeo Cristofori (1655-1731), appeared. The early instrument had a very light touch

similar to that of the harpsichord; consequently, the style of playing described by Couperin was simply transferred to the new instrument.

Improvements in the action of the piano toward the end of the century demanded a heavier touch. However, despite the need for a new technique based on arm-weight, most teachers now strove for the development of even greater finger strength. This trend is illustrated in an important piano treatise of this era, the *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte* of 1801, written by Muzio Clementi (1752-1832). Clementi employed a technique which stressed the independence of the fingers as the basis for good technique. His description of the correct hand position at the keyboard demonstrates what little change had occurred in the hundred years since Couperin's *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin:*

> The hand and arm should be held in an horizontal position; neither depressing nor raising the wrist: the seat should therefore be adjusted accordingly. The fingers and thumb should be placed over the keys, always ready to strike; bending the fingers in, more or less in proportion to their length. All unnecessary motion must be avoided.[6]

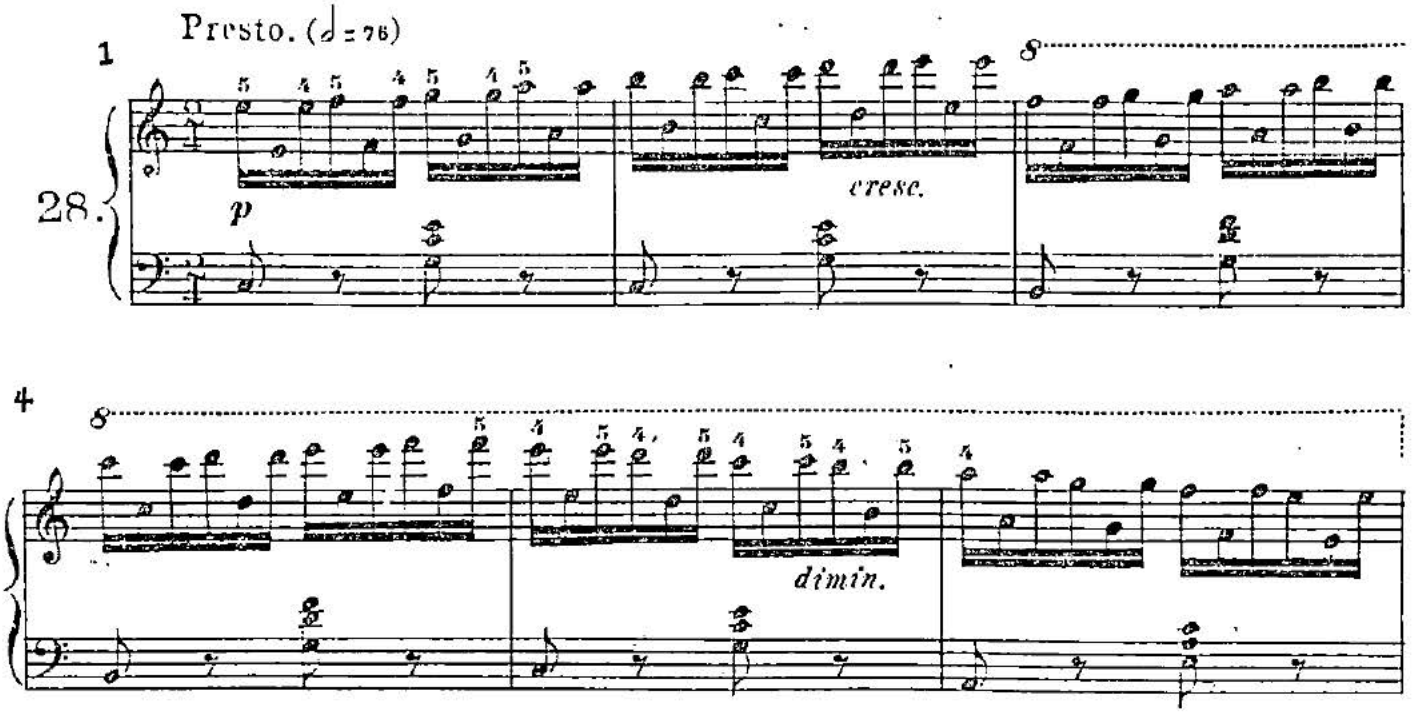
The attempt to meet the new demands of the piano in the nineteenth century through greater independence of the fingers resulted in a concentration on technique as an independent element of music. Many of the leading pedagogues, including Clementi, Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858), Carl Czerny (1791-1857), Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870), and Henri Bertini (1798-1876) attempted to codify all facets of technique in vast collections of etudes. Scores of these studies appeared, with the sole function of training fingers. This systematic approach

reached its apex with Czerny, who wrote several hundred studies, covering every aspect of keyboard technique.[7]

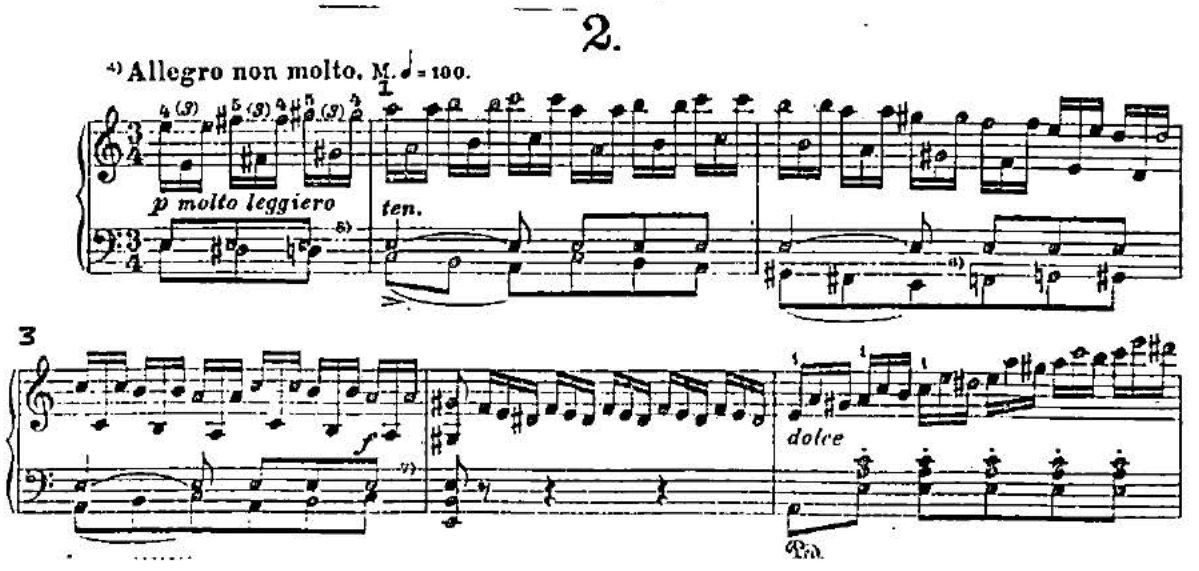
For fourteen months between 1822 and 1823, Franz Liszt was a pupil of Carl Czerny. The nature of his lessons reveals his teacher's preoccupation with technical concerns.[8] At first he was regimented exclusively to a diet of scales and finger exercises. Only later, when Liszt began to rebel, did Czerny relent and allow him to explore the works of Bach, Beethoven, Hummel, and others. These months of concentrated technical study also determined the nature of Liszt's major compositional effort from this period. This was the set of studies, the *Etude en quarante-huit exercices*, op. 6, published in 1826.[9]

These studies are clearly modelled after those of Czerny: both composers concentrate on one technical problem per etude, evolve each work from a single motive stated at the beginning, and use sequences to generate tonal movement. Yet, a comparison of two similar etudes, no. 28 in C major from the *School of Velocity*, Bk. 3, by Czerny and the second Liszt etude in A minor, already shows a more imaginative approach to the genre by the younger man.

The Czerny etude follows the same format as his other studies--a figure is introduced at the beginning and repeated systematically (see Ex. 1). In this work, which, like the Liszt etude, concerns the problem of broken octaves, the octaves are presented in various scale patterns, both diatonic and chromatic. Liszt, on the other hand, is less rigid in his application of scale patterns and varies the contour



Ex. 1: Carl Czerny, Etude no. 28 from the *School of Velocity*, Bk. 3, (New York: G. Schirmer, 1893), p. 66, mm. 1-6.



Ex. 2: Etude no. 2 (1826), mm. 1-5.

of the octave line freely, imparting to the work a melodic interest which is absent in the Czerny study (Ex. 2, mm. 1-4).

The differences in compositional approach are also highlighted in the role of the left hand in each work. A simple chordal accompaniment in the Czerny etude, consisting mainly of I, IV and V chords, functions chiefly as a harmonic outline. In contrast is the descending line of the A minor etude which complements the ascending octave melody in the treble. Liszt delays the cadence in A minor to bar 5, where he provides variety by introducing contrasting figuration of a more conjunct nature. It is then the consistent triplet rhythm which unifies this section, and not the same keyboard figuration, as in Czerny.

Liszt also introduces a broken chordal passage in the middle of the work (mm. 21-27) and a reversal of the two hands (mm. 17-21). These factors, combined with greater harmonic and dynamic resources, elevate the Liszt etude from the rhythmic monotony and limited harmonic language which characterize the Czerny study.

In the years following the publication of the Liszt *Exercices*, Europe was inundated with an unprecedented number of virtuoso performers. Pianists, in particular, dominated the musical scene, each attempting to surpass the others in technical brilliance.

> It has not been a very fecund nor pleasing year in music. If the big works are lacking, in return we have been tested by an unparalleled outbreak of pianists, so many little salon concerts served up with insistence and an abandon quite desperate. Words, words, words, said Hamlet, in criticizing the actors and their work in his time. Notes, notes, notes, we

> would write to characterize this unlucky era of eighth notes. It is necessary to recall that several talented artists are being heard very frequently . . . but how many times also these horrible floods of roulades and arpeggios which chill and smother all enthusiasm. And what pathetic dreaming in the bulk of these virtuosos--singers, pianists, violinists: so few names will survive and endure till next season![10]

It was to Paris that the greatest number of virtuosi flocked, for by 1830 it was established as the center of European culture. Already a historical site for music publishing, it also housed two of the leading piano manufacturers, the firms of Pleyel and Erard. Most important, however, was its role as the city " . . . which puts the seal on all reputations and definitely places the golden crown on the heads of young prodigies."[11]

It was therefore only natural for Adam Liszt to bring his young son, Franz, there in 1823. Here the prodigy would be able to hear the leading musicians of the day and launch his own career, for

> . . . all certificates of merit which are not countersigned by Paris have a certain informality; they lack something as regards authenticity. The approval of Italy, Germany, and England, does not satisfy an artist whose exotic renown was gained there, as to her true merit; for, in matters of art, all other capitals, compared with Paris, are merely provincial towns, and the enthusiasm of Naples, Vienna, and London has often been found to be misguided.[12]

The prototype of all these virtuosi, Niccolo Paganini (1782-1840), was, after all, not a pianist but a violinist. Contemporary reviews of his performance reflect the impact of this amazing musician:

> Paganini had so forcibly struck the imagination and heart of the Parisians that he made them forget death hovering over them.[13] Everything conspired, moreover, to increase his prestige--his strange and hypnotic appearance, the mystery surrounding his life, the tales told concerning him, even the crimes his enemies had the stupid audacity to impute to him, not to speak of the miracles performed by a talent which upset all accepted ideas, brushed aside all known methods, announced the impossible and accomplished it.[14]

L'Artiste has this note:

> The singular power of a violin! Paganini has produced a language which is understood by all men, more powerful than written poetry, than the song of the most famous virtuosi . . .[15]

Liszt was present at the Paris concert of 1832. The sounds which Paganini drew from the instrument and his technical wizardry had a profound effect on the young pianist--Liszt now applied himself assiduously to a rigorous schedule of practising:

> Here is a whole fortnight that my mind and fingers have been working like two lost spirits, = Homer, the Bible, Plato, Locke, Byron, Hugo, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, Mozart, Weber, are all around me. I study them, meditate on them, devour them with fury; besides this I practise four to five hours of exercises (3rds, 6ths, 8ths, tremolos, repetition of notes, cadences, etc., etc.). Ah! provided I don't go mad, you will find an artist in me! Yes, an artist such as you desire, such as is required nowadays!
>
> 'And I too am a painter!' cried Michael Angelo the first time he beheld a *chef d'oeuvre*. . . . Though insignificant and poor, your friend cannot leave off repeating those words of the great man ever since Paganini's last performance. René, what a man, what a violin, what an artist! Heavens! what sufferings, what misery, what tortures in those four strings![16]

The result was the attainment of a transcendental technique which is

the essence of the second version of the etudes.

A second great inspiration to Liszt and a landmark in the history of the genre were the op. 10 etudes of Frederic Chopin, published in 1833. For the first time in the nineteenth century a composer was able to fuse demanding technical problems with challenging musical invention. The resulting works were of such high musical standard that they were suitable for both private study and public performance, hence the term "concert etude."

Thus inspired by the brilliance of Paganini's playing and the poetry of Chopin's music, Liszt returned to his op. 6 studies and transformed them into the *Vingt-quatre grandes études*, which were published in 1839 and dedicated to Carl Czerny.[17] Although these etudes are derived from the 1826 studies, the earlier works are barely recognizable in their new expanded form.[18]

Liszt continued to develop his ideas through the use of motivic figures, but no longer limited himself to one motive per etude. The immense proportions of the 1839 works reflect this; many of them contain several sections displaying a variety of moods and technical problems. This last feature exposes one of the essential differences between the etudes of Chopin and Liszt. Chopin, using an ABA form, constructs each composition around one technical problem, while Liszt often addresses a variety of technical considerations in a multi-sectional form, a fact which reduces the pedagogical quality of his etudes.

By far, however, the most significant feature of the 1839 etudes is the transcendental approach to the keyboard. Here, the finger school of piano pedagogy is left far behind. In transcending the technical limitations of the keyboard, a new potential for the instrument is revealed--a potential which allows the instrument's capabilities for orchestral sonorities to be fully exploited.[19]

In 1848, Liszt retired from the concert stage and settled in Weimar. This enabled him to devote more time to composition, and in this period he revised many of his early piano works--hence, in 1852, the publication, by Breitkopf & Härtel, of the definitive version of the etudes, the *Etudes d'exécution transcendante*.[10] This third set closely resembles the second, but is distinguished by a refinement of certain musical and technical details. In addition, by the omission of certain superfluous passages, the structure is generally tightened. At this time Liszt also added titles to all but two of the etudes.[21] (The complete list of titles is given in Table 1, p. 13.

Thus the three versions of the etudes, spanning the years 1826-1852, not only provide us with insights into Liszt's revisional process, but also present a unique opportunity to examine the evolution of his compositional style. Previous studies dealing with the *Transcendental Etudes* have not inquired closely into the implications of these revisions for our understanding of this compositional evolution. For instance, the one major study by James Conway, "Musical Sources for the Liszt *Etudes d'exécution transcendante*: A study in the Evolution of Liszt's Compositional and Keyboard Techniques" (DMA

Table 1

The Three Versions of the *Transcendental Etudes*

Etude en douze exercices 1826			*Douze grandes études* 1839			*Mazeppa* 1847			*Etudes d'exécution transcendante* 1852			
No. in Set	Key	Basic Meter	No. in Set	Key	Basic Meter	Key	Basic Meter	Title	No. in Set	Key	Basic Meter	Title
1	C	C $\binom{4}{4}$	1	C	C $\binom{4}{4}$				1	C	C $\binom{4}{4}$	Preludio
2	a	$\frac{3}{4}$	2	a	$\frac{3}{4}$				2	a	$\frac{3}{4}$	
3	F	C $\binom{4}{4}$	3	F	$\frac{6}{8}$				3	F	$\frac{6}{8}$	Paysage
4	d	$\frac{6}{8}$	4	d	various	d	various	Mazeppa	4	d	various	Mazeppa
5	B^b	C $\binom{4}{4}$	5	B^b	$\frac{2}{4}$				5	B^b	$\frac{2}{4}$	Feux follets
6	g	$\frac{2}{4}$	6	g	$\frac{3}{4}$				6	g	$\frac{3}{4}$	Vision
			7	E^b	C $\binom{4}{4}$				7	E^b	C $\binom{4}{4}$	Eroica
7	E^b	C $\binom{4}{4}$	11	D^b	C $\binom{4}{4}$				11	D^b	C $\binom{4}{4}$	Harmonies du Soir
8	c	C $\binom{4}{4}$	8	c	$\frac{6}{8}$				8	c	$\frac{6}{8}$	Wilde Jagd
9	A^b	$\frac{6}{4}$	9	A^b	$\frac{6}{4}$				9	A^b	$\frac{6}{4}$	Ricord-anza
10	f	$\frac{2}{4}$	10	f	$\frac{2}{4}$				10	f	$\frac{2}{4}$	
11	D^b	$\frac{2}{4}$										
12	b^b	C $\frac{4}{4}$	12	b^b	$\frac{6}{8}$				12	b^b	$\frac{6}{8}$	Chasse-neige

dissertation: University of Arizona, 1969), carefully tabulates the differences between each published version, but does not submit the later versions to critical scrutiny. The goal of the present study, by contrast, is to examine this process of revision as part of a much larger issue: the remarkable development in Liszt's musical idiom during the quarter century before 1852. The examination will be confined to specific areas of the works--the introductions and codas, the use of variation and sequence, texture and articulation--for it was here that the most radical transformations took place. The study will begin with an examination of the thematic material.[22]

NOTES

Introduction

[1]Other works which were revised, at least once, include the *Paganini Etudes*, the *Three Petrarch Sonnets*, *Venezia e Napoli*, the *Années de Pèlerinage--Première Année*, *Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses* ("Invocation"), the *Hungarian Rhapsodies* and "Mephisto Waltz." For a complete list see *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 6th ed., s.v. "Liszt, Franz," by Humphrey Searle.

[2]Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, eds., *The Bach Reader*, 2d ed., rev. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1966), p. 39.

[3]François Couperin, *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin*, ed. and trans. Margery Halford (Paris, 1716; reprint ed., Sherman Oaks, Calif.: Alfred Publishing, 1974), p. 29.

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 30.

[5]Couperin, *L'Art de Toucher le Clavecin*, p. 39.

[6]Muzio Clementi *Clementi's Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte* (London: Clementi, Banger, Hyde, Collard & Davis [1801]), pp. 14-15.

[7]Not all muskcians of this era aspired to produce such a profusion of mechanical words, as is evidenced in Schumann's review of Czerny's *Introduction and Brilliant Variations on an Italian Theme*, op. 302:

> Not even with all one's critical speed is it possible to catch up with *Herr* Czerny. Had I enemies, I would, in order to destroy them, force them to listen to nothing but music such as this. The insipidity of these variations is really phenomenal." (Robert Schumann, *On Music and Musicians*, ed. Konrad Wolff, trans. Paul Rosenfeld [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964], p. 247).

[8]Carl Czerny, "Recollections from my Life," *Musical Quarterly* 42 (1956): pp. 315-16, cited by Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt*, vol. 1: *The Virtuoso Years, 1811-47* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), pp. 71-73.

[9]Of the proposed twenty-four studies, only the twelve of the original Paris edition appeared. They will be referred to hereafter as the *Etude en douze exercices*. See *The New Grove*, 6th ed., S.v. "Liszt, Franz," by Searle. Ferruccio Busoni, in *The Essence of Music*, trans. Rosamund Ley (London: Rockliff Publishing, 1957; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1965), p. 156, gives the first editions as appearing in Marseilles (Boisselot), Paris (Dufaut et Dubois) and later Leipzig (Hofmeister). See also Table 1, p. 13.

[10]*La Gazette Musicale de Paris*, 1 January 1848, XV (Paris: Maurice Schlesinger), p. 17, cited by Arnold B. Perris, "Music in France During the Reign of Louis-Philipe: Art as 'A Substitute for the Heroic Experience'" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1967), p. 235.

[11]Théophile Gautier, *The Romantic Ballet*, trans. Cyril W. Beaumont (London: C.W. Beaumont, 1932; reprint ed., New York: Books for Libraries, Arno Press, 1980), p. 49.

[12]Gautier, *The Romantic Ballet*, p. 83.

[13]The comment refers to the cholera epidemic which was rampant at this time and accounted for the small audience.

[14]Hector Berlioz, *Evenings with the Orchestra*, ed. and trans. Jacques Barzun (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), pp. 194-5.

[15]*L'Artiste*, 1832, X (Paris: Bureau d l'Artiste), p. 244, cited by Perris, "Music in France," p. 238.

[16]Liszt to Pierre Wolf, 2 May 1832. Franz Liszt, *Letters of Franz Liszt*, coll. and ed. La Mara [Marie Lipsius], trans. Constance Bache, vol. 1: *From Paris to Rome* (London: H. Grevel, 1894; reprint ed., New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1968), pp. 8-9.

[17]See *The New Grove*, 6th ed., S.v. "Liszt, Franz," by Searle. Busoni claims that they were published in Milan (Ricordi), Paris (Schlesinger), and Vienna (Tob. Haslinger) in 1837 and that the Italian edition was dedicated to both Chopin and Czerny. See Busoni, *Essence of Music*, p. 158.

[18]As in the case of the first set of etudes, only twelve of the proposed twenty-four were published. They will therefore be referred to hereafter as the *Douze grandes études*. They correspond to the

twelve studies of 1826 with the exception of no. 7. Even as astute an observer as Robert Schumann failed to recognize this connection in certain of the 1839 works, so great was the transformation; he believed nos. 6 and 8, as well as no. 7 to be completely new. See his review of the etudes in Schumann, *On Music*, pp. 150, 152.

Searle claims that no. 7 is, in fact, also based on an earlier piece, the introduction of the "Impromptu sur les Thèmes de Rossini et Spontini." See Humphrey Searle, *The Music of Liszt* (London: William & Norgate, 1954; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1966), p. 17.

The revised version of Etude no. 7 (1826) becomes the eleventh etude in this set. (There is no second version of no. 11 of 1826). Its new key, A♭, maintains the subdominant key relationship found in all three versions (C major, A minor, F major, D minor, etc.). (See Table 1, p. 13.)

[19]This last point perhaps partially explains a provocative statement by Ferruccio Busoni: "Bach is the foundation of piano playing, Liszt the summit. The two make Beethoven possible." It may be that Liszt, in utilizing the full orchestral potential of the piano, provided a key to the comprehension and performance of the orchestrally-conceived music of Beethoven. See Busoni, *Essence of Music*, p. 81.

[20]*The New Grove*, 6th ed., S.v. "Liszt, Franz," by Searle.

[21]Etude no. 4, "Mazeppa," had, in fact, received its title in 1847 when it appeared in Berlin and Vienna as a separate publication. See *The New Grove*, 6th ed., S.v. "Liszt, Franz." Busoni, *Essence of Music*, p. 161, claims that the editions were in Paris and Vienna. This etude is thus unique in that it exists in four versions. The title comes from a poem by Victor Hugo published in 1828. Liszt dedicated his etude to Hugo, whose poem is based on the same legend. See Victor Hugo, *Les Orientales* (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1890), p. 207. Both the titles "Paysage' (Etude no. 3) and "Vision" (Etude no. 6) are also found in the poems of Hugo. See Victor Hugo, *Odes et Ballades* (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1888), pp. 63 and 217.

The title of Etude no. 8, "Wilde Jagd" (Wild or Devil's Hunt), refers to a German legend. See Franz Liszt, *Etüden I; Etudes d' Exécution Transcendante*, ed. Zoltán Gárdonyi and István Szelényi (Budapest: Editio Musica, 1970), p. ix.

[22]The editions used for the three versions will be those found in the complete works; see Franz Liszt, *Musikalische Werke, Etüden*: T. II, Bd. 1 and 2, ed. F. Busoni (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1907-36).

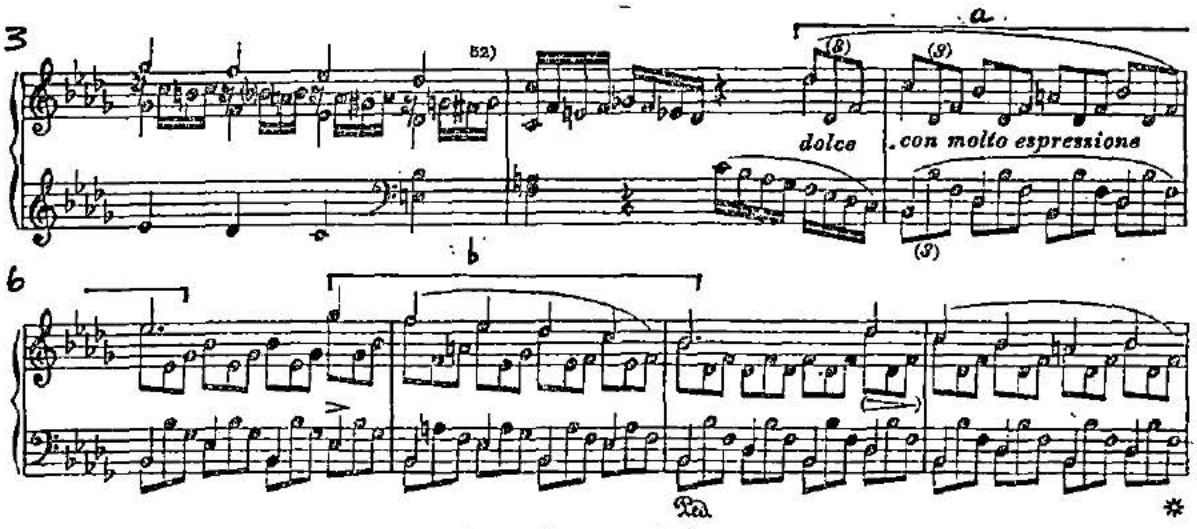
D 1826 minor changes
E 1839

THE ETUDE EN DOUZE EXERCICES (1826) AND THE DOUZE GRANDES ETUDES (1839)

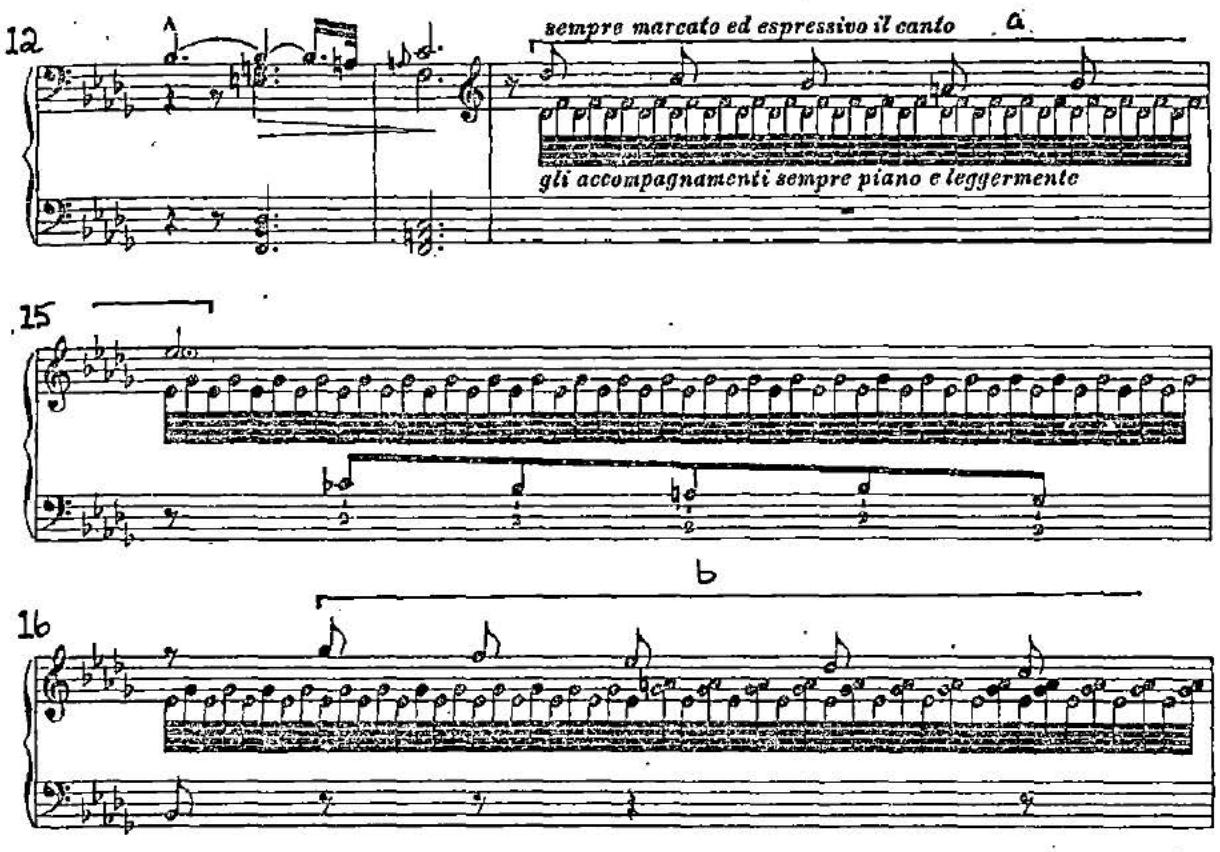
I. THEMATIC TRANSFERENCE

Even a casual glance at the first two versions of the etudes reveals the spectacular transformation which transpired when Liszt reworked the 1826 etudes more than a decade later, by 1839. It is therefore all the more surprising that the basic melodic material of the 1826 works received only minor changes, remaining clearly recognizable in almost all cases in the later pieces.

In the majority of etudes (nos, 1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of 1839) the melodic outline of the theme is simply retained in its original form. An example of such a direct transference occurs in the twelfth etude (see Ex. 3 and 4).



Ex. 3: Etude no. 12 (1826), mm. 3-9.

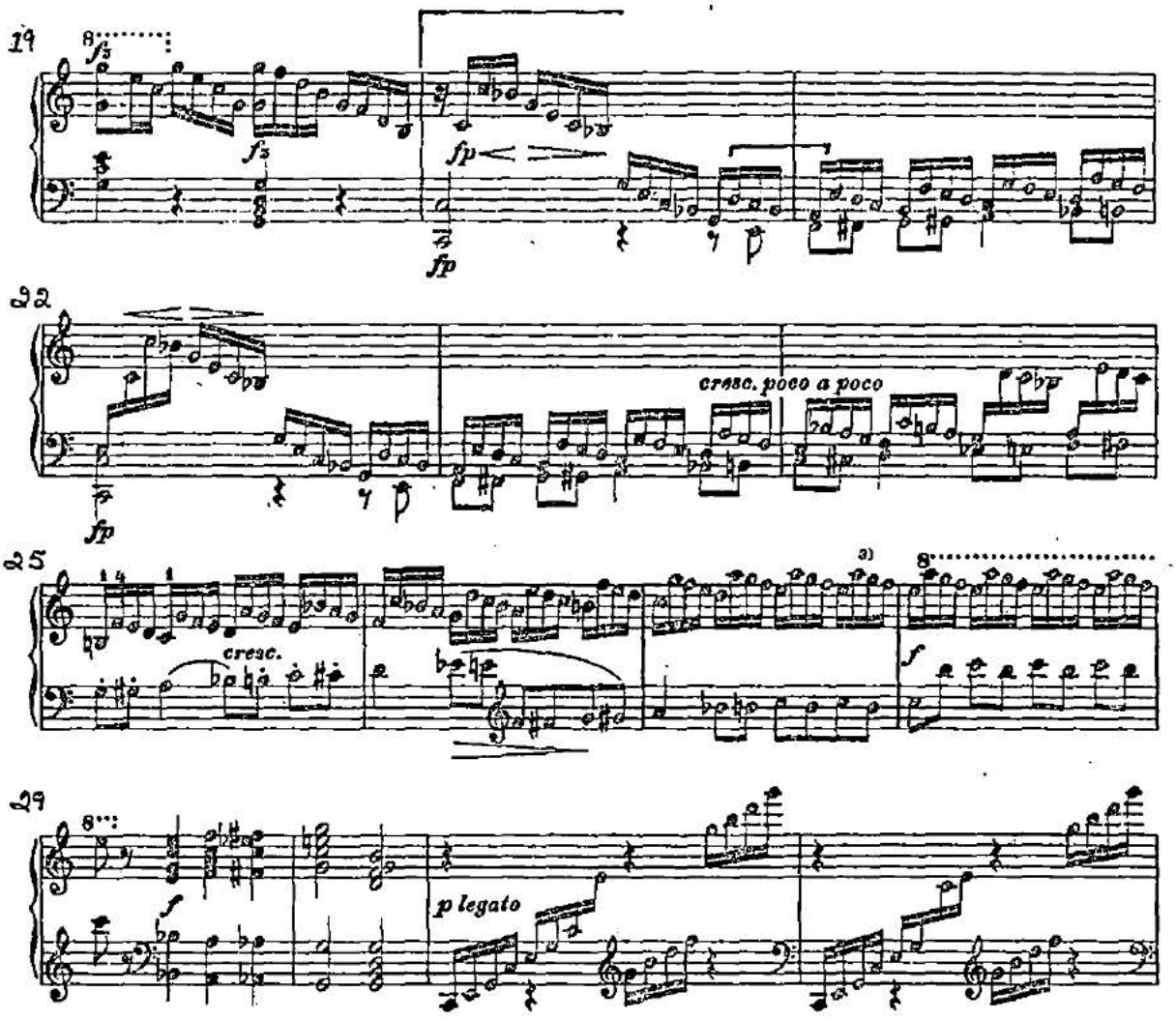


Ex. 4: Etude no. 12 (1839), mm. 12-16.

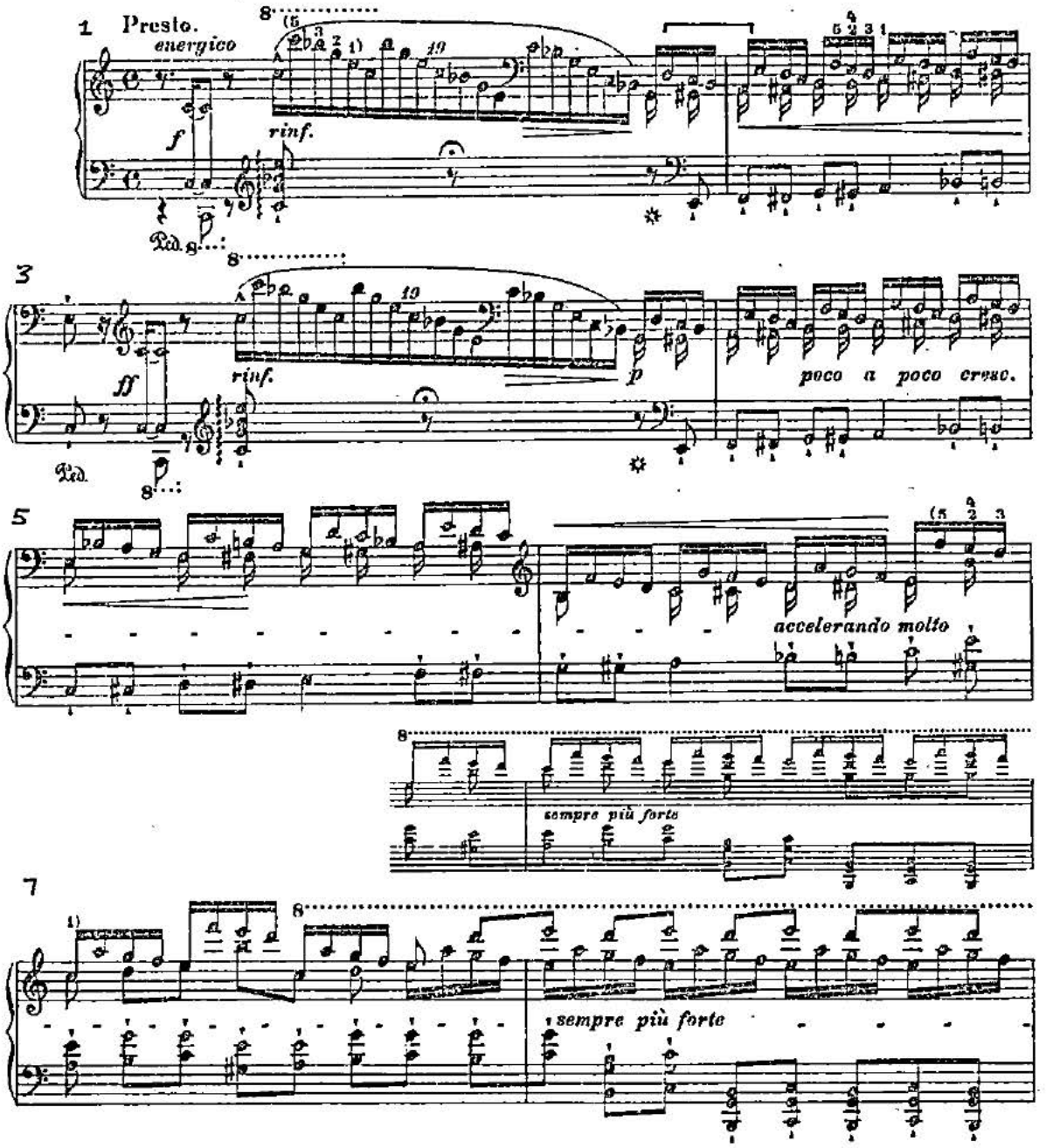
Clearly, the intervallic relationships of the melody have remained intact, despite obvious changes in the meter, which is changed to 6/8, and texture, with the triplet figuration of the early piece replaced by tremolos in the middle register. Also note the internal expansion of the melody in the second bar of Ex. 4 in the bass (b); this free imitation of the basic six-note phrase (a) was inserted by Liszt into the melodic framework of the earlier etude.

Similarly, the transference of melodic material in Etude no. 1 is quite literal. However, this etude is unique because all of the material transferred is derived from the second half of the earlier version. In this first version, the basic motive, a descending fourth, is abandoned after four bars only to reappear in the recapitulation (Ex. 5, m. 20), where it is treated more extensively. It is from this recapitulation that the entire 1839 etude receives its melodic material, for the preceding nineteen bars of the early etude are completely omitted. Thus the first nine measures of the recapitulation of 1826 constitute the opening section of 1839 (see Ex. 5 and 6).

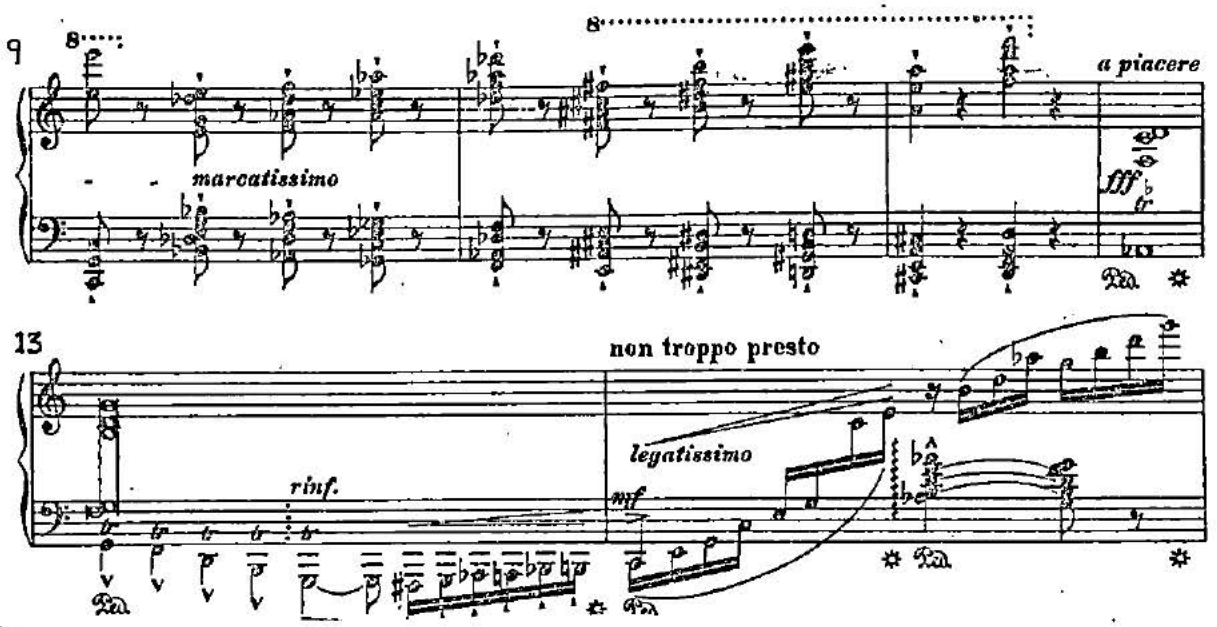
Comparison of these examples also reveals extensive revision of the material from the 1826 etude in the later work: the opening C^7 chord is emphasized as a dramatic gesture expanded over five octaves, while the cadential formula from bars 29-30 of the early work is extended and elaborated in a series of chords, passing through harmonies as remote as the D^b major and $F^\#$ major triads in measure 10 of the example.



Ex. 5: Etude no. 1 (1826), mm. 19-32.

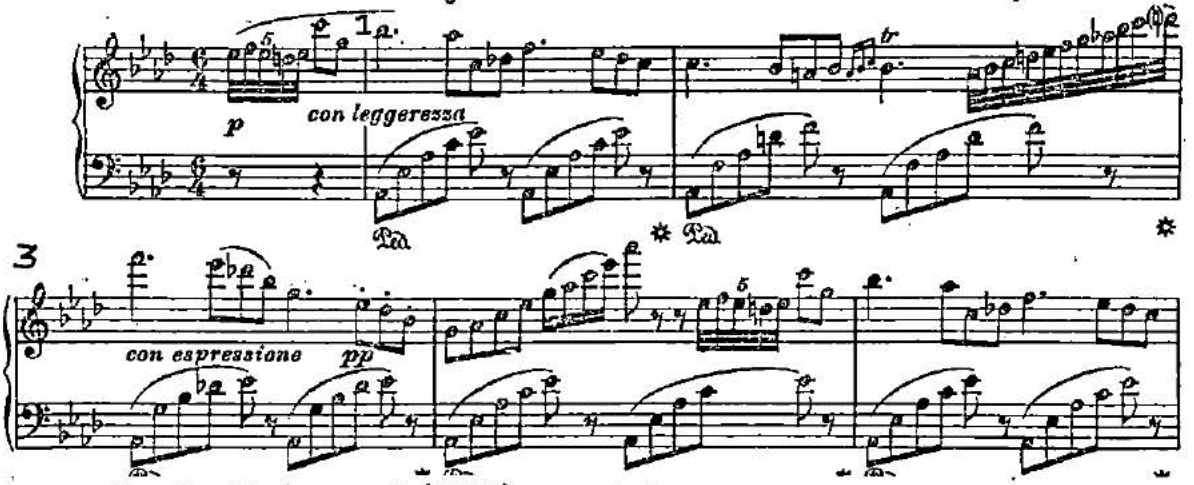


Ex. 6: Etude no. 1 (1839), mm. 1-14.



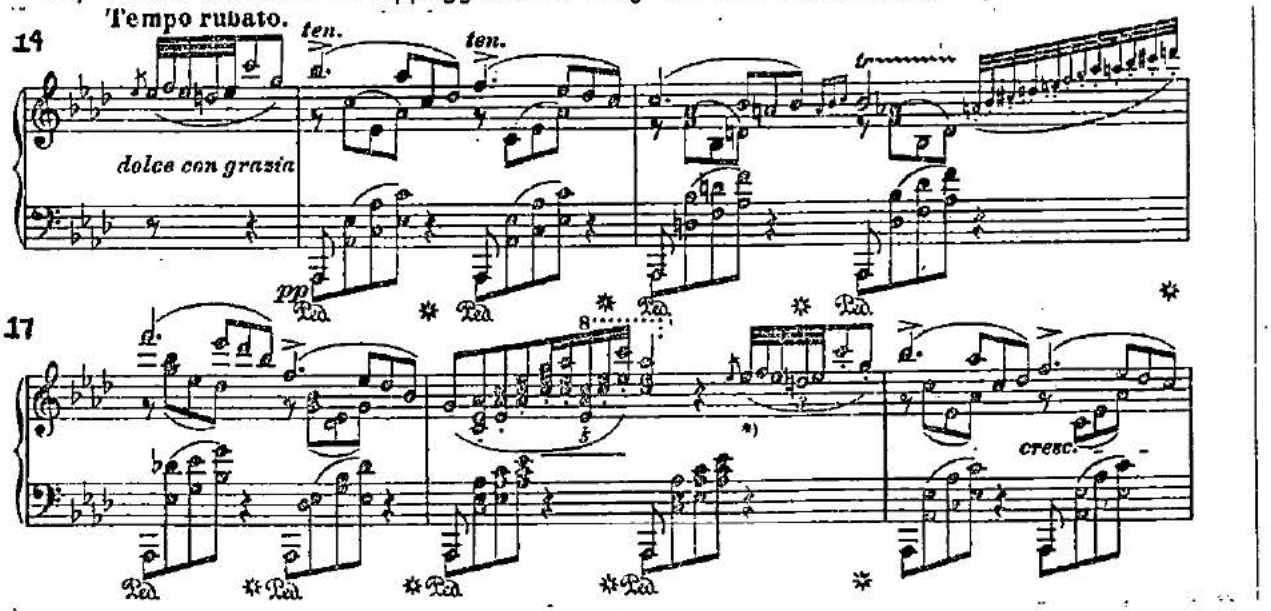
Ex. 6: Etude no. 1 (1839), mm. 1-14 (continued).

The most wide-spread transference occurs in the ninth etude, where all of the melodic material, primary and secondary, appears in both later versions. In the examples below the principal themes of 1826 and 1839 are shown; the second version contains only one major change--the substitution of F for G on the third beat of measure 17 (Ex. 8). (Compare with Ex. 7, m. 3.) The second half of the measure is now seen clearly as an imitation of the first half; the



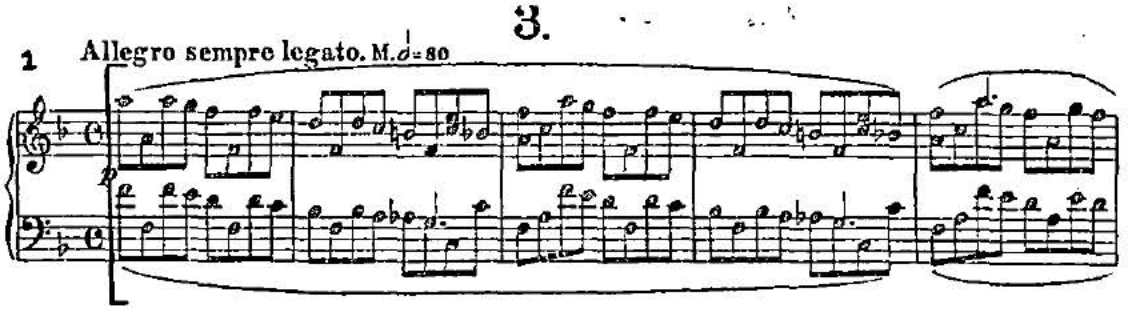
Ex. 7, Etude no. 9 (1826), mm. 1-5.

intervallic relationships are reproduced exactly. More significant, however, is the correspondence with measure 15--an appoggiatura occurs on each strong beat, contrasting with the alternate measures (mm. 16, 18) which contain an appoggiatura only on the first beat.

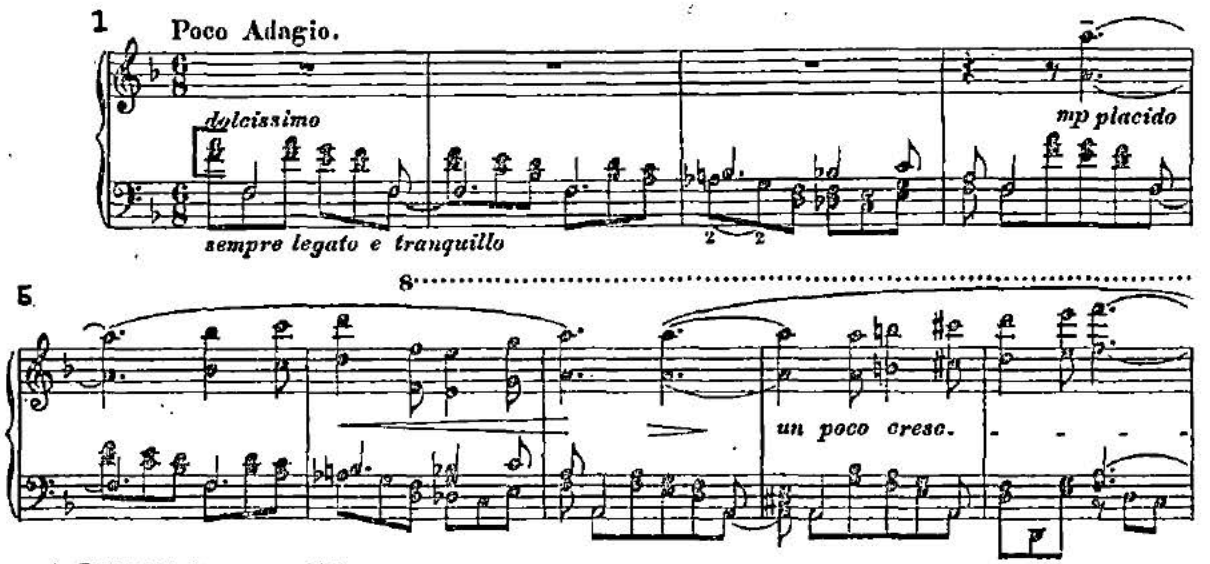


Ex. 8, Etude no. 9 (1839), mm. 14-19.

In two etudes, nos. 3 and 4, the original melody is obscured by the superimposition of a new theme which reduces the transferred melodic material of 1826 to an accompanying role. This is achieved in the third etude by combination--the melodic line of the first version, doubled in tenths, is reduced to parallel thirds in 1839. These thirds then become an accompaniment for a new melody which appears in the top voice (Ex. 10, m. 4).

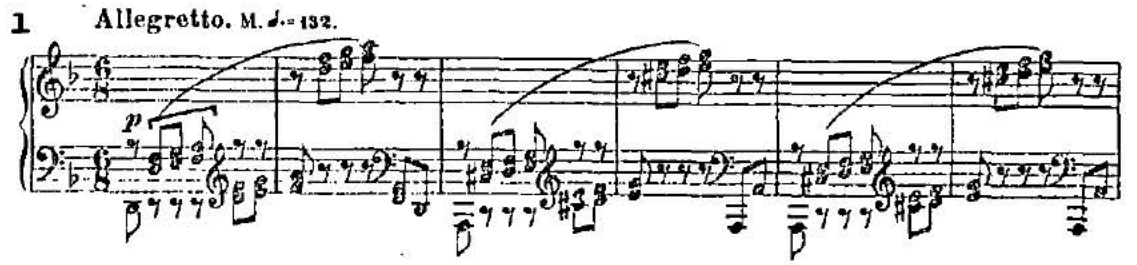


Ex. 9: Etude no. 3 (1826), mm. 1-5.

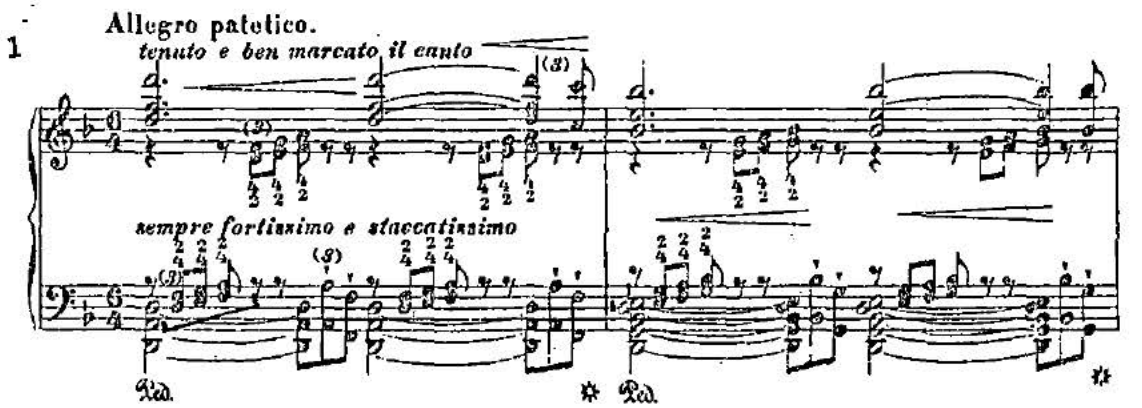


Ex. 10: Etude no. 3 (1839), mm. 1-9.

The change of character in the fourth etude is much more dramatic. In 1839 the original study in legato thirds is radically altered in mood and texture by the superimposition of the heroic "Mazeppa" theme (see Ex. 11, 12).

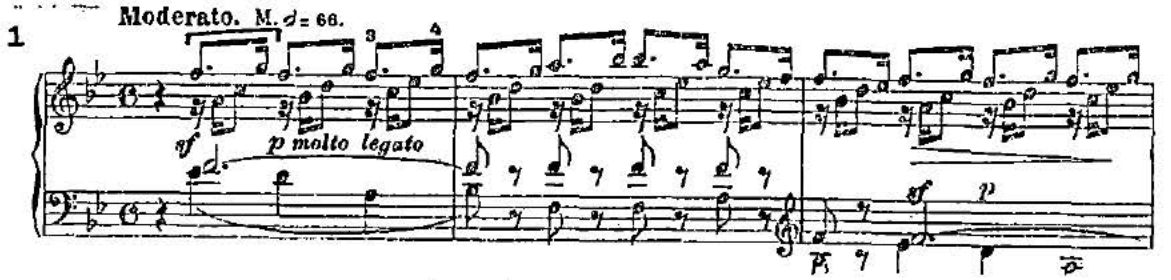


Ex. 11: Etude no. 4 (1826), mm. 1-6.

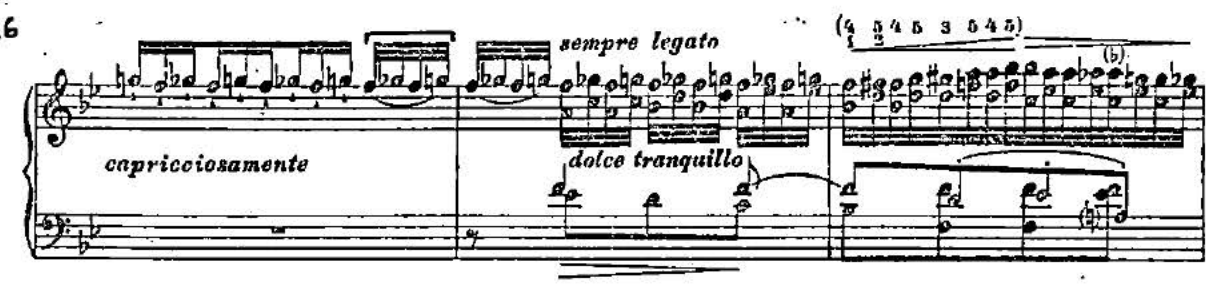


Ex. 12: Etude no. 4 (1839), mm. 1-2.

In three cases (nos. 5, 6 and 8) there are distinguishable but still rather minor changes in the melodic material that open up new possibilities for thematic development. The basic melodic motive of Etude no. 5 (1826), an ascending major second, F-G, is altered in the introduction of 1839 by the addition of a minor second, thus becoming F-G^{b}, F-G. In the later etude, this change in the basic motive links it structurally with the ascending chromatic material that follows; the ascending chromatic line might even be regarded as a linear extension of the new basic motive stressing the minor second (see Ex. 14).



Ex. 13: Etude no. 5 (1826), mm. 1-3.



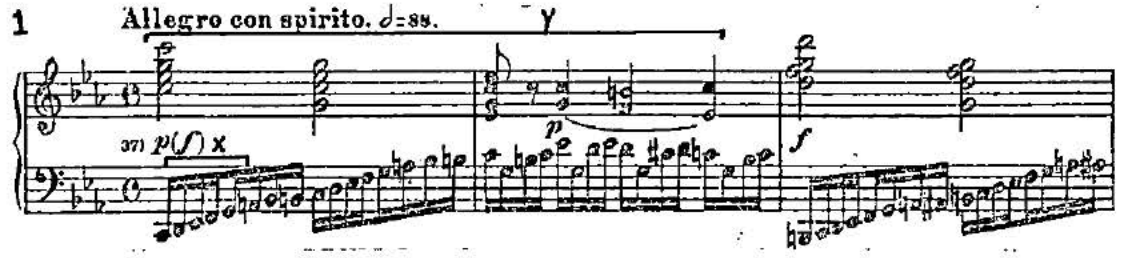
Ex. 14: Etude no. 5 (1839), mm. 16-18.

The latent harmonic possibilities of this new minor inflection are revealed in the second phrase of the work. In the first version the harmony shifts to B^b major for this phrase (m. 6), the motive thus becoming B^b - C. However, by exploiting the C^b which results when the 1839 motive is transposed, Liszt achieves a much more colourful harmonic change to E^b minor.[1]

This is not an isolated example; the chromatic motive permeates the entire structure, and even appears to have preordained certain harmonic elements of the work such as the unusual key of the recapitulation. Instead of the conventional tonic (in this case--B^b major), the melodic material returns in A major. Yet, the fact that A is the leading tone of B^b suggests an intervallic correspondence with the motive--a level of sophistication which would probably have been beyond the composer of the first version.

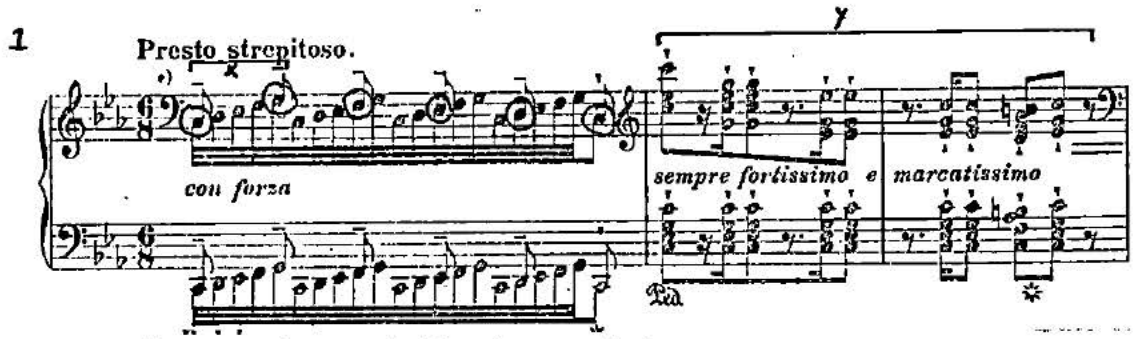
The greatest changes in melodic material occur in Etudes 6 and 8 (not surprisingly, the two works which Schumann failed to recognize as having antecedents in the 1826 etudes).[2] In Etude no. 8 (1839), the two principal motives are presented in the opening measures. Closer examination reveals that the first motive is constructed from the left

hand accompaniment of 1826 (m. 1), the tonic scale (C minor).



Ex. 15: Etude no. 8 (1826), mm. 1-3.

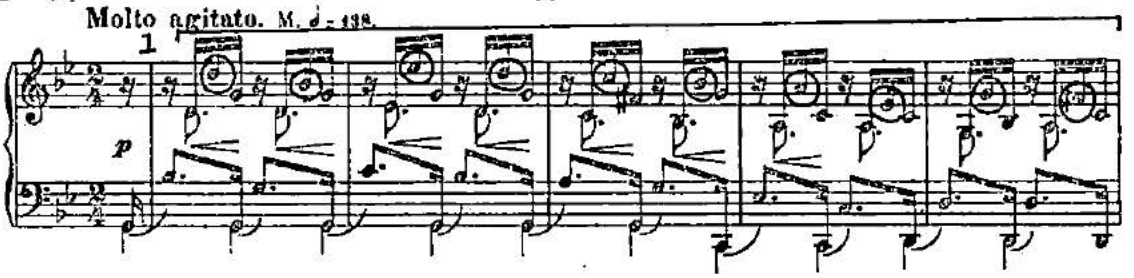
The first five notes of this ascending scale are extracted in the revised version and repeated four times. Through skillful manipulation of the new 6/8 meter, Liszt causes the rhythmic accent to fall on a different note during each of the repetitions, forming the new motive (Ex. 16, m. 1).



Ex. 16: Etude no. 8 (1839), mm. 1-3.

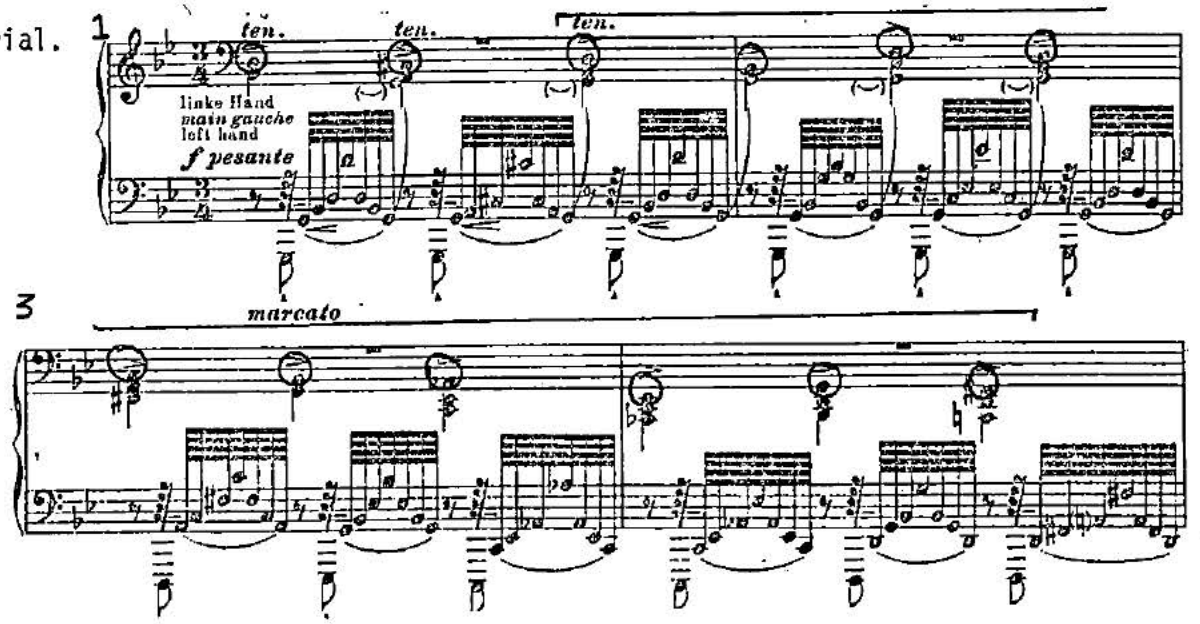
The relationship of the second motive (which follows) to the 1826 version is also somewhat obscured because of the rhythmic alteration in this version (Ex. 15, mm. 1-2, right hand and Ex. 16, mm. 2-3).

The final example, "Vision," is the only etude in which the principal theme is lengthened in the second version. Originally, the melody of ten notes was encased in a five-bar phrase, an unusual construction for the fifteen-year-old Liszt.



Ex. 17: Etude no. 6 (1826), mm. 1-5.

In 1839 he returned to the more conventional four-bar phrase by adding two notes to the beginning of the theme, and changing the meter to 3/4.[3] The lengthening of the theme, coupled with some of the most dramatic changes in texture, range and tempo probably account for Schumann's failure to discern the original source for the melodic material.



Ex. 18: Etude no. 6 (1839), mm. 1-4.

Clearly, then, Liszt found the basic thematic material from the first version generally adequate for his purposes in 1839. As indicated earlier, the first set served as a reservoir of thematic material that

was drawn upon and then dramatically altered. Therefore, it is to other aspects of these works that we must look in order to account for the remarkable transformation. The subsequent sections of this chapter will examine the growth of the introductions and codas in the 1839 etudes into major sections of the works, and the expansion of material through the use of sequence and variation.

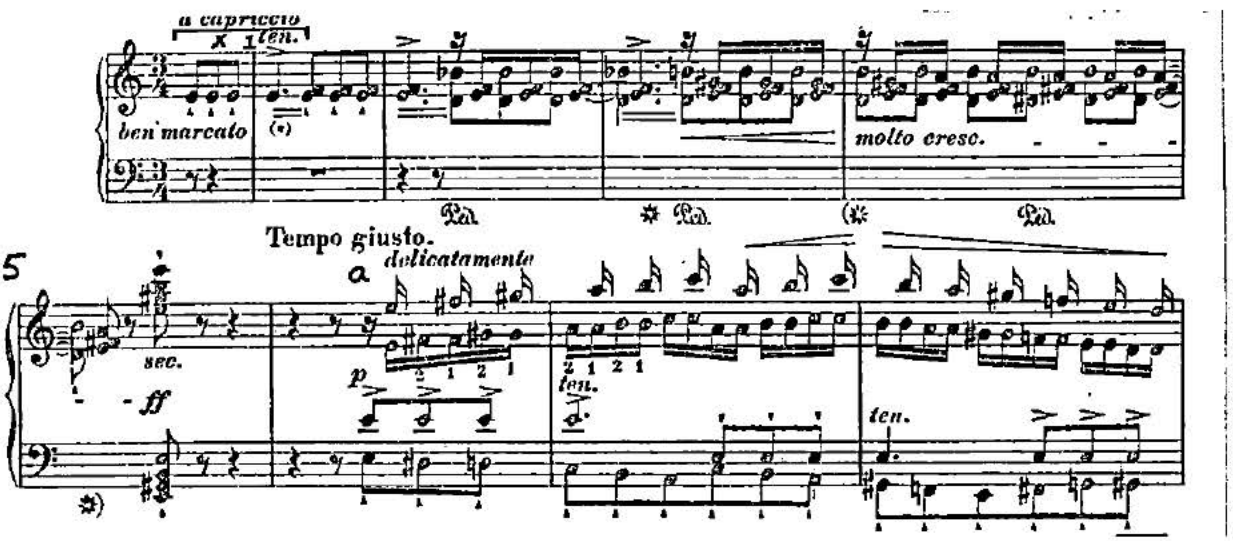
II. INTRODUCTIONS

With the expanded form of the 1839 etudes, it is not surprising that the composer felt the need to provide six of the works with an introduction.[4] These opening sections have an important structural role in the development of each work--each is based on primary material from the main body of the work and thus foreshadows the essential elements of the etude.

A survey of the six introductions reveals two distinct types. The first type consists of those introductions which serve as a dramatic opening flourish for the work (nos. 2 and 7). In the second group (nos. 9, 11, and 12) an atmospheric effect is provided by the introduction. (A separate discussion will be offered regarding no. 5, which is a unique case.) All of these opening sections are integrated firmly into the structure of the work by virtue of their anticipation of basic motives from the body of the work.

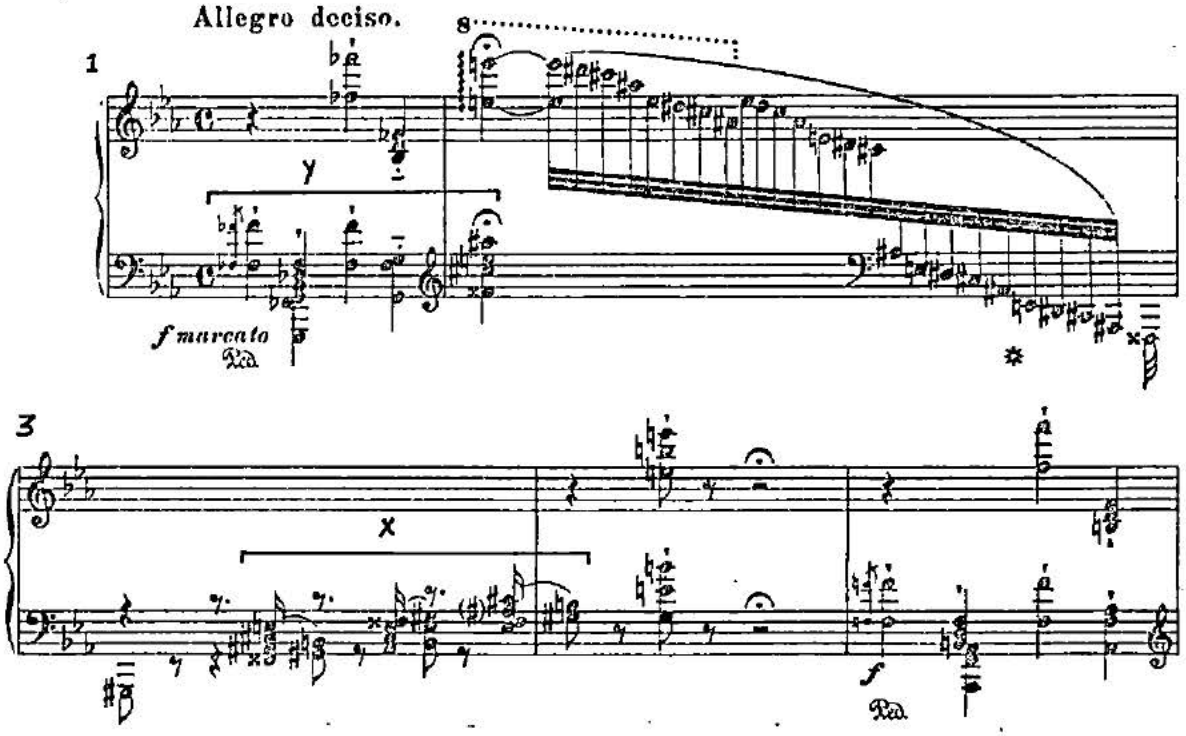
Etude no. 2 is a typical example of the first type--the work is ushered in by a grand fanfare pronouncement.[5] Yet, closer inspection

reveals that it is skillfully constructed from important elements of later sections. The opening rhythm 3/4  (x) permeates the entire etude, but is found most often as an accompaniment to the main theme (a) (see Ex. 19, mm. 6-8). Furthermore, the two main structural features of the introduction--the disintegration of the eighth note rhythm into groups of three, two, and finally one (note) (mm. 3-5)[6] and the amassing of the first four notes of the theme over a pedal note (mm. 1-5) --recur in the coda. The rhythmic breakdown also occurs at the end of the first section of the piece (mm. 24-6).

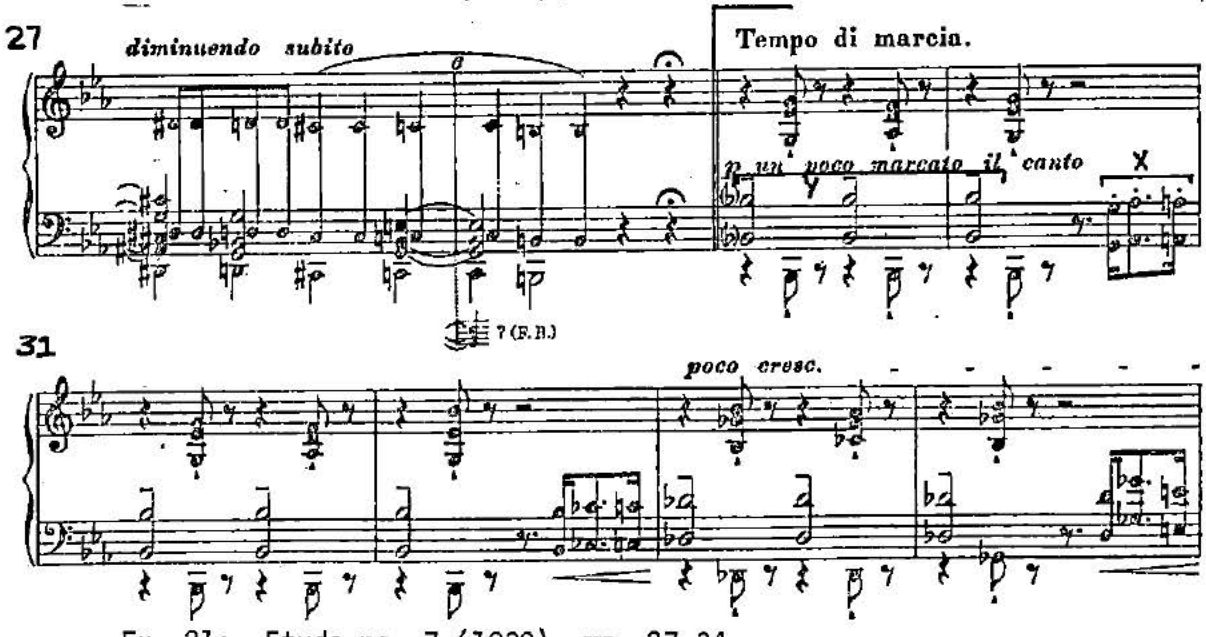


Ex. 19: Etude no. 2 (1839), mm. 1-8.

Similarly, anticipation of material essential to the body of the work may be found in the introduction to Etude no. 7. The sweeping arpeggios of mm. 2-12 (Ex. 20) reappear at m. 54, and the left hand octaves of the first bar (y) foreshadow the main theme (Ex. 21, m. 29). A second element, the rhythmically well-defined motive in m. 3 of the introduction, is derived from motive x of the theme.



Ex. 20: Etude no. 7 (1839), mm. 1-5.

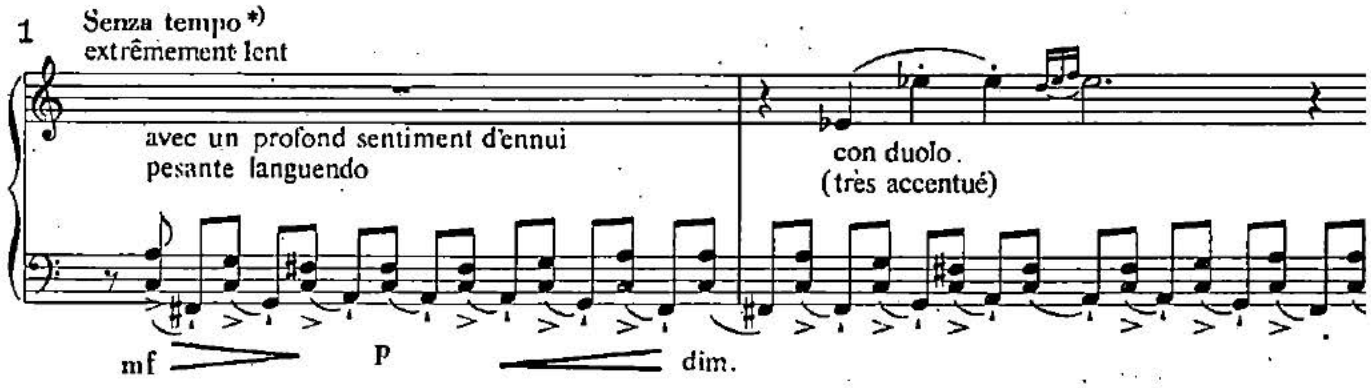


Ex. 21: Etude no. 7 (1839), mm. 27-34.

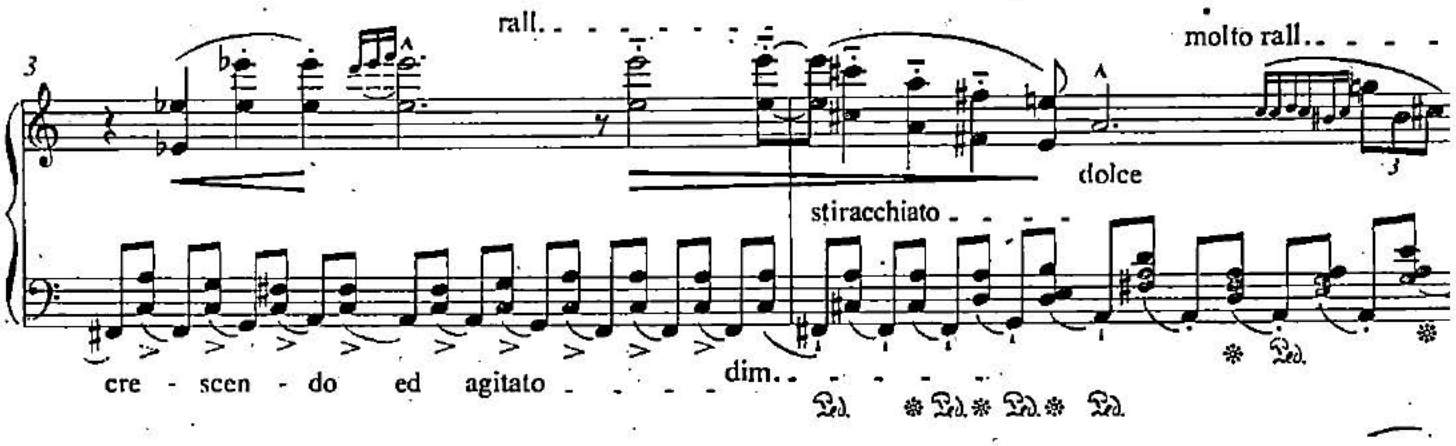
The second classification involving those introductions which provide an atmospheric effect, is distinguished by an improvisatory character, a skill for which Liszt was renowned. The following description of Liszt's extemporizations appears in George Sand's *Journal Intime* (1804-76):

> I love those broken phrases which he flings from the piano and which rest with one foot in the air, dancing off into space like little lame elves. The leaves of the linden steal the melody and complete it with mysterious whispering, as if they were confiding nature's secret to one another.[7]

This aspect of Liszt's playing, the coalescing of fragmented phrases to create a sense of improvisation, is especially striking in his earliest mature compositions. The following excerpt from the "Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses" (1834) illustrates this. Through numerous changes in tempo and mood, an omission of both key and time signatures, and the use of a melodic fragment in the upper voice, Liszt establishes exactly the type of poetical effect which Sand describes.



Ex. 22: Franz Liszt. *New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 9: *Various Cyclical Works I.* Edited by Imre Sulyok and Imre Mezo. "Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses." (Bärenreiter Kassel: Editio Musica Budapest, 1981), p. 140, mm. 1-4.

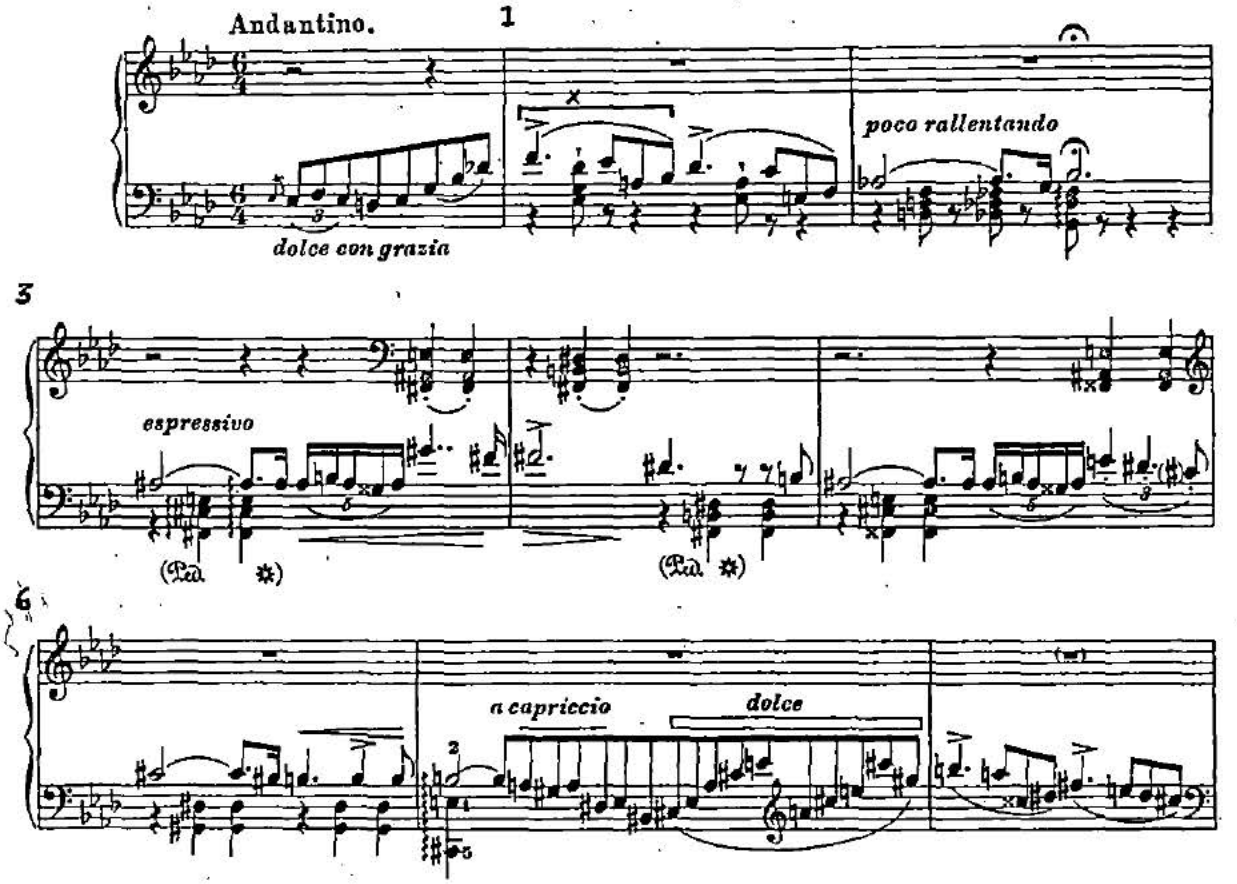


Ex. 22: Franz Liszt. *New Edition of the Complete Works*, vol. 9: *Various Cyclical Works I*.. Edited by Imre Sulyok and Imre Mezo. "Harmonies Poetiques et Religieuses." (Bärenreiter Kassel: Editio Musica Budapest, 1981), p. 140, mm. 1-4 (continued).

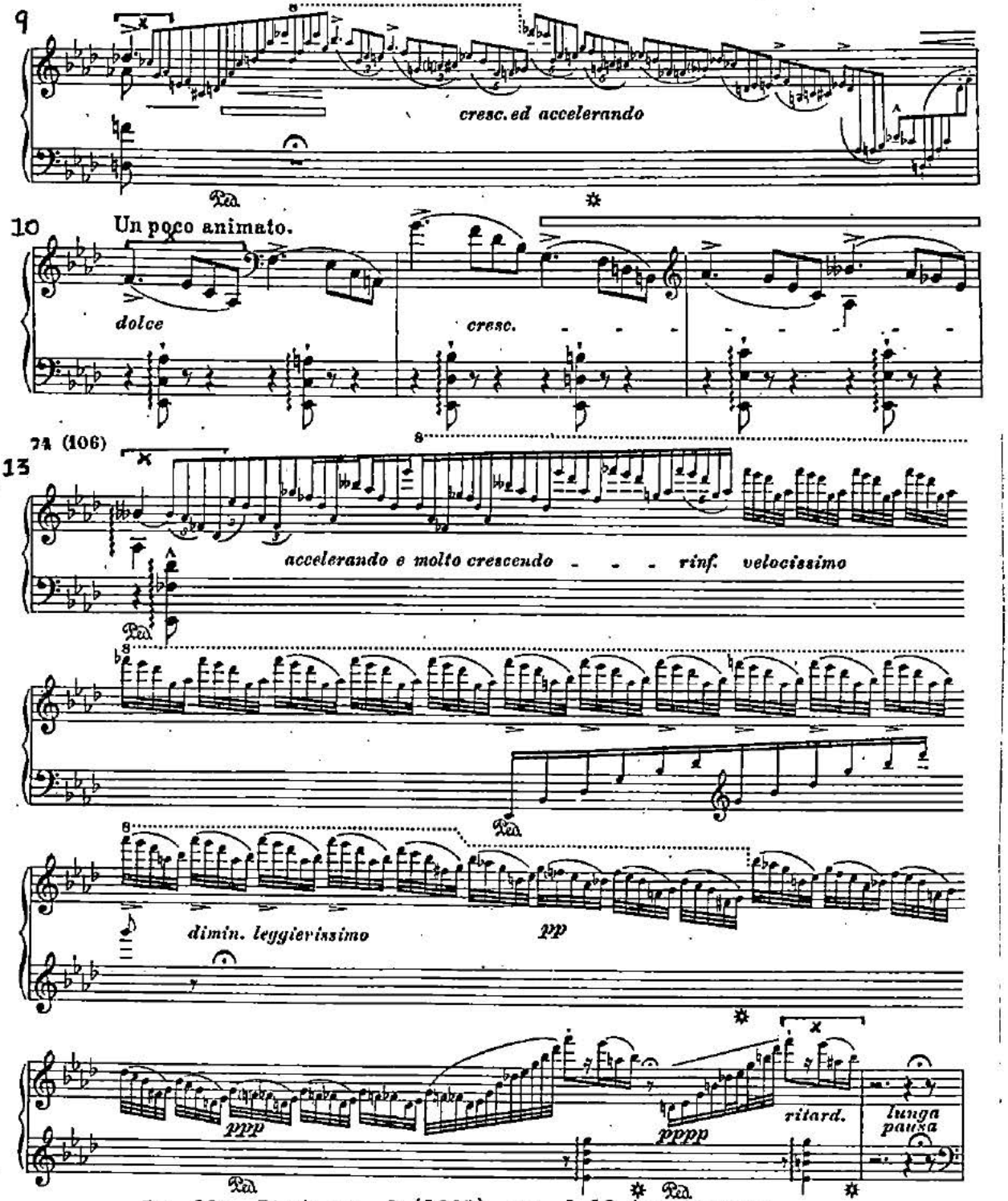
In the introductions to Etudes 9, 11, and 12, Liszt captures this effect through seemingly unprepared harmonic changes, melodic fragments, and cadential passages. Behind the apparently free form, however, is a carefully controlled chain of events which is revealed only through careful study.

It is the ninth etude in A^b which perhaps best achieves this improvisational effect. The thematic fragment x is developed into extended cadenza-like passages (Ex. 23, mm. 9, 13) and also altered chromatically to extend the harmonic range as far afield as B major. Each presentation of the theme becomes more fragmented--suggesting a vision that is fading--until finally only the descending motive (x) remains at m. 10. This gains momentum and spirals upward into the climax of this section, which is an extended cadenza based on rapid repetitions of a variant of the basic motive (see Ex. 23, mm. 3-6). At this point, where the theme seems lost forever, the master plan is revealed; the ornamental figures descend and diminish in volume, and

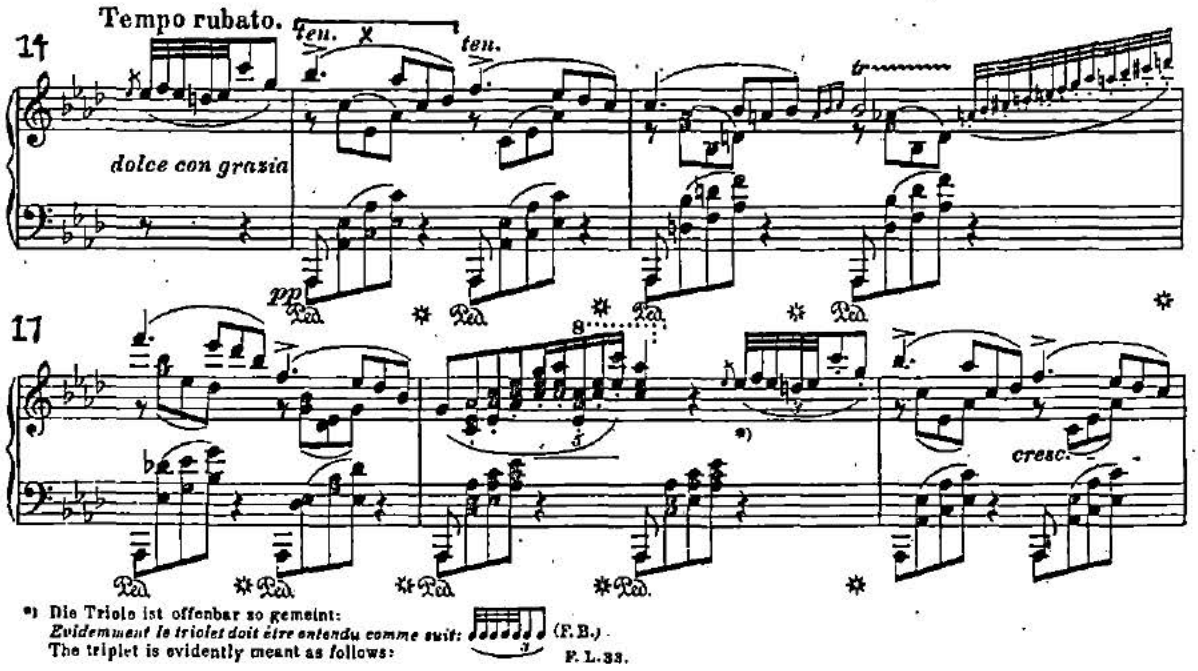
pass through an E^{b7} with raised fifth, $B\natural$, back to the opening turn and thematic period in the tonic, A^{b} major. This reemergence or recollection of the theme after the cadenza and pause creates a delicate poetic effect, which perhaps motivated the title added by Liszt in 1852: "Ricordanza."



Ex. 23: Etude no. 9 (1839), mm. 1-19.

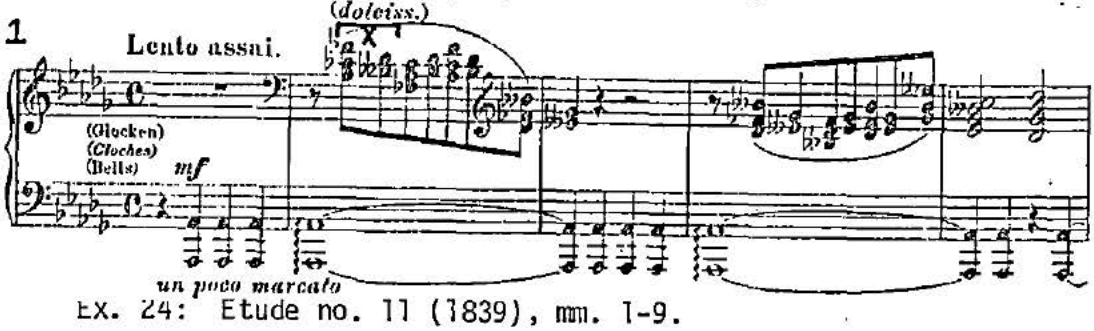


Ex. 23: Etude no. 9 (1839), mm. 1-19 (continued).

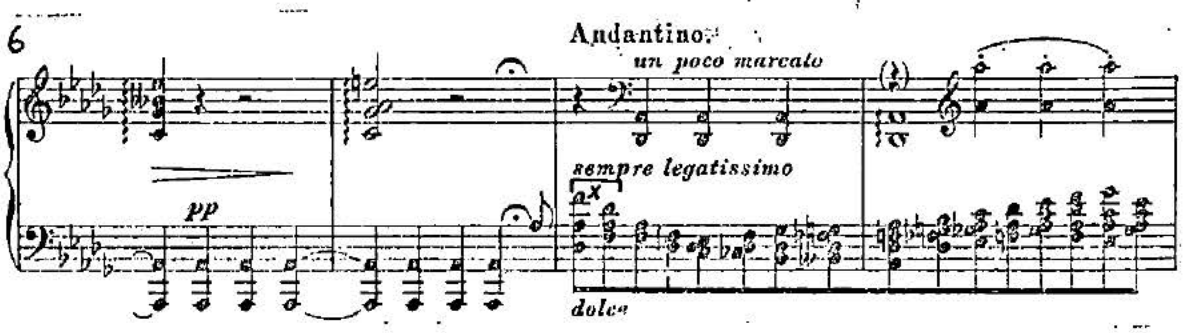


Ex. 23: Etude no. 9 (1839), mm. 1-19 (continued).

Although considerably shorter, the opening of Etude no. 11 again functions as an introduction which establishes the mood of the work. The shifting harmonies of the right hand, connected by thirds (Ex. 24, mm. 2, 4), foreshadow an important structural element of the theme, the descending third (x, m. 8). Important, also, is the A^{b} bass pedal which recurs throughout the work and is used to evoke the sound of bells. (See for example, mm. 8 and 128.)

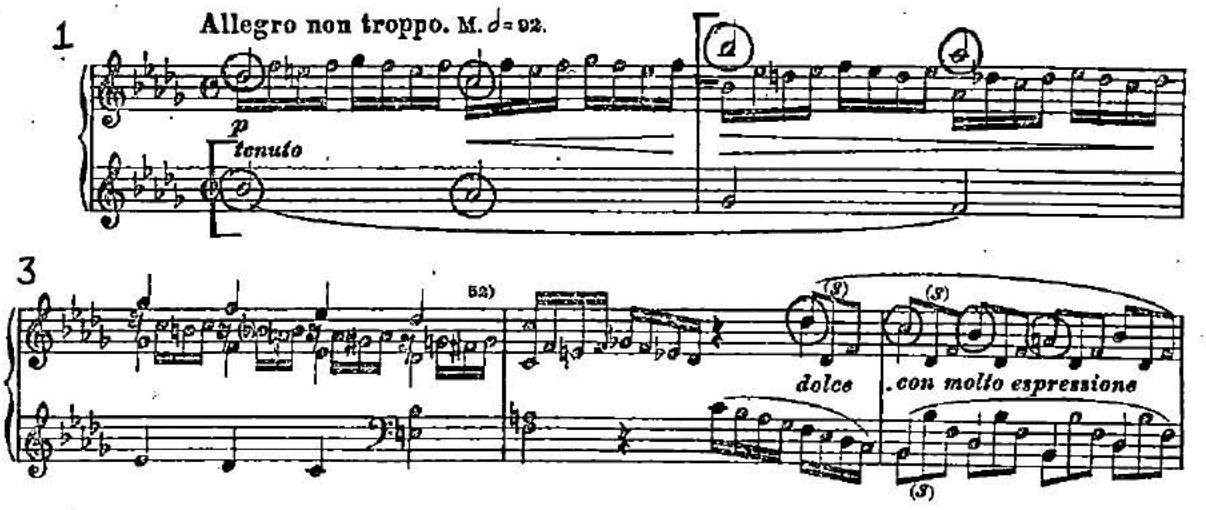


Ex. 24: Etude no. 11 (1839), mm. 1-9.



Ex. 24: Etude no. 11 (1839), mm. 1-9 (continued).

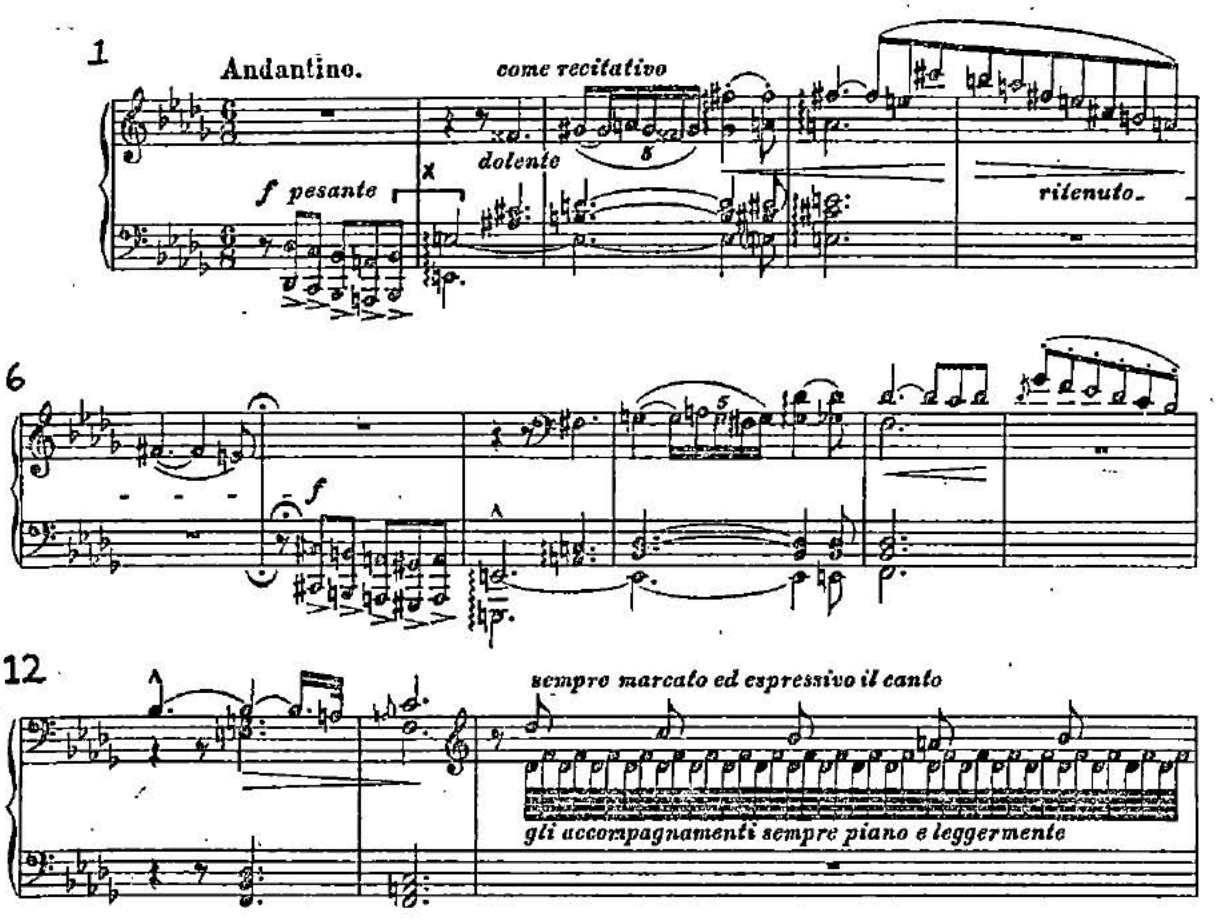
The only etude in the 1826 set that employs an introductory passage is Etude no. 12. Despite its brevity (four bars), the introduction already attempts thematic foreshadowing. Imitation between the upper and lower voices alludes to the main theme to follow, but the relationship is obscured by rhythmic displacement, augmentation, and the difference in register. (See Ex. 25, mm. 1-2, 4-5.) In the fourth measure the introduction ends and the principal melody appears in the soprano.



Ex. 25: Etude no. 12 (1826), mm. 1-5.

The diatonic harmonies of this 1826 introduction offer little suggestion of the chromatic writing which prevails in the revised version. Some examples of this new chromatic idiom in connection with the fifth and ninth etudes, among others, have already been noted. During the 1830s, Liszt's compositional style matured dramatically. The new style manifested itself in an extensive use of augmented and diminished chords and the use of chromatically-altered tones. The thirteen bars which introduce the twelfth etude of 1839 well illustrate this new harmonic language, for they contain some of the most chromatic writing in all of the etudes.

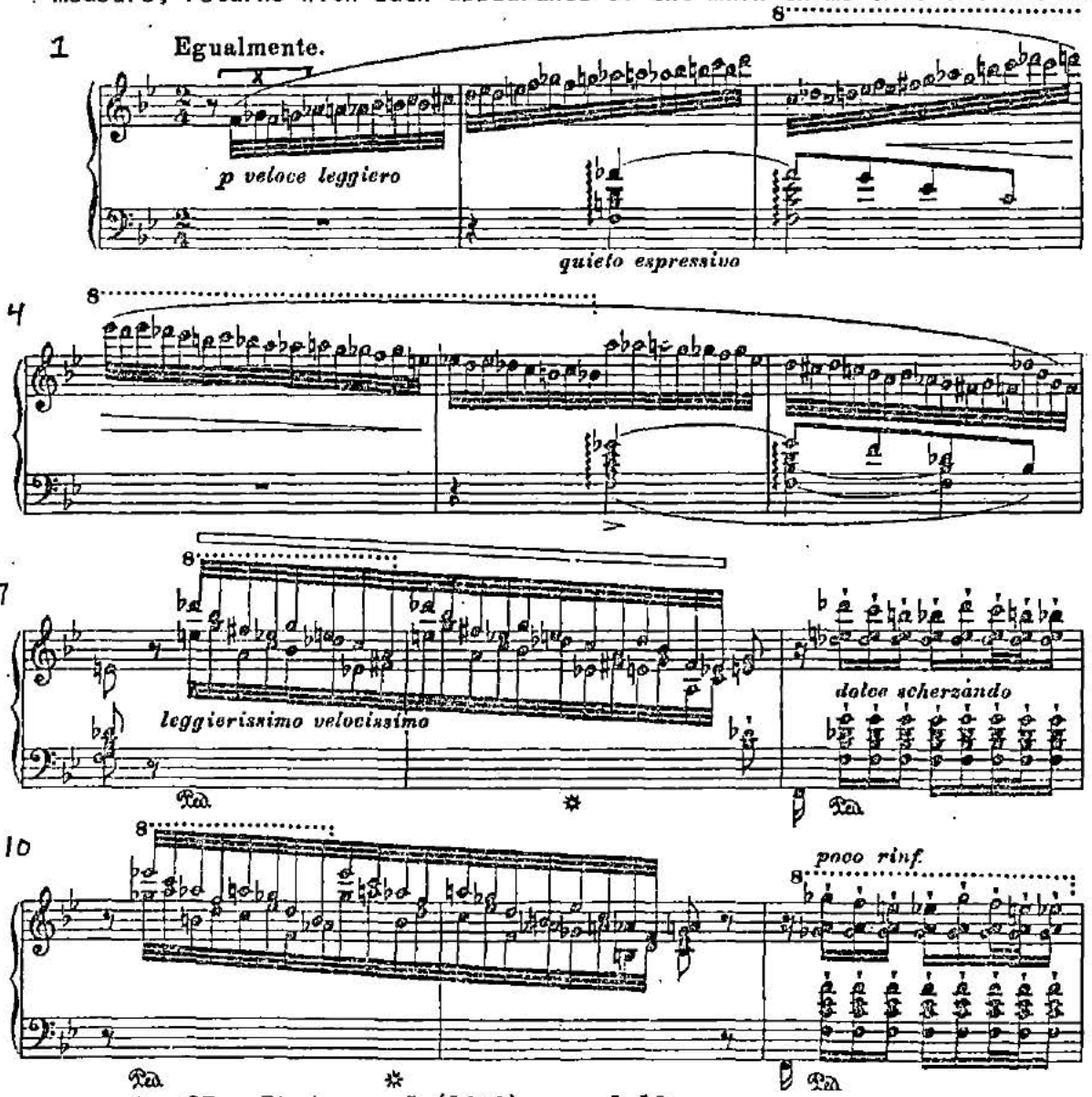
Although the main theme of the 1826 work has been transferred, the alteration of the sixth note from E^{b} to $E\natural$ (Ex. 26, mm. 1-2) is indicative of the more frequent use of chromatically-altered tones in Liszt's music of the late 1830s, for it is sustained for several bars through changing harmonies and reappears with the thematic repetition in bar 8. Until it is resolved in bar 10 and again in bar 13, this crucial pitch $E\natural$ seems to exert much influence on the harmonic progression. Furthermore, a melodic tritone (x) is created between the last two notes of the theme, which anticipates the unusual augmented fourth key relationship of this etude.



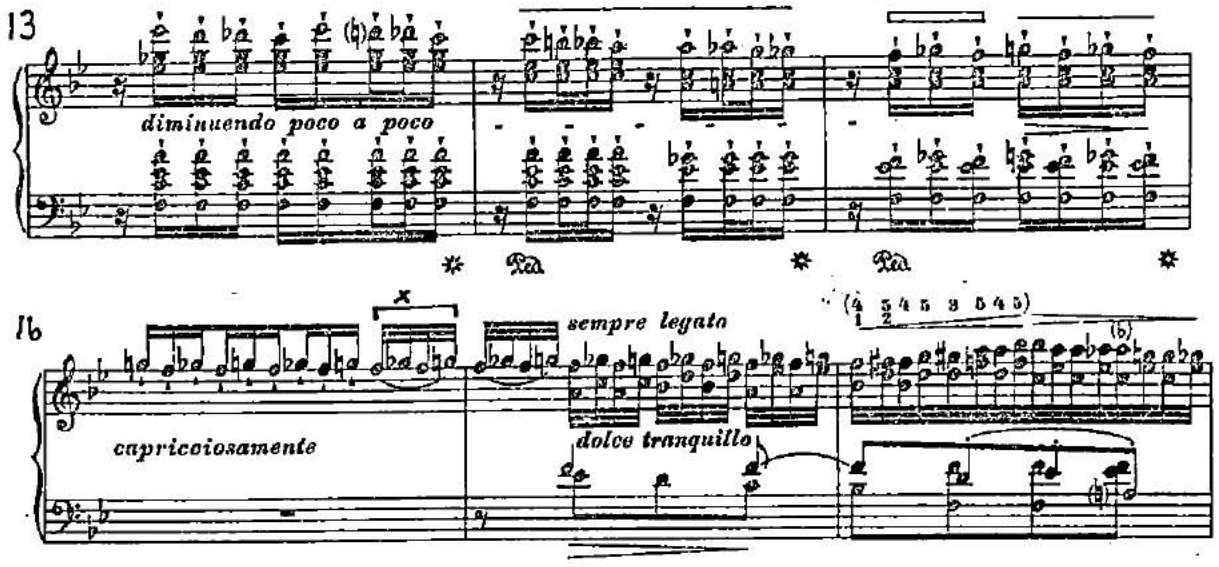
Ex. 26: Etude no. 12 (1839), mm. 1-14.

The opening of Etude no. 5 is unique to the etudes of 1839. An earlier example illustrated the chromatic embellishment of the melodic line which occurred in the second version, because of the addition of a minor second to the basic motive.[8] In 1839, the introduction prepares for the emergence of this chromatic motive (x) in the final measure (Ex. 27, m. 16). The material of the preceding bars is gradually eliminated until only the three notes of the motive remain (m. 12).

Even the seemingly extraneous elements of the first eleven measures are actually important structurally. The broken diminished chords (mm. 7, 10) reappear throughout the work (for example, mm. 41, 44) and the chromatic scales are reintroduced in the coda (m. 110). In addition, a dominant pedal, which is first employed in the second measure, returns with each appearance of the main theme (mm. 16, 29, 71).



Ex. 27: Etude no. 5 (1839), mm. 1-18.



Ex. 27: Etude no. 5 (1839), mm. 1-18 (continued).

Certainly, the addition of a substantial opening section to several of the 1839 etudes is in keeping with their increased proportions. More important, though, is the ability of the introductions to suggest musical events to follow; the principal motives and harmonic relationships from the main body of an etude are generally foreshadowed in the new introductions. An investigation of the first two versions of the etudes reveals that in writing these introductions, Liszt usually worked backwards from the main body of the work, which in most cases existed in basic outline in the 1826 published version. The role of the introduction in the 1839 pieces is to convey to the listener a foreshadowing of subsequent events, thus contributing to the more subtle and complex treatment of form characteristic of Liszt's mature style.

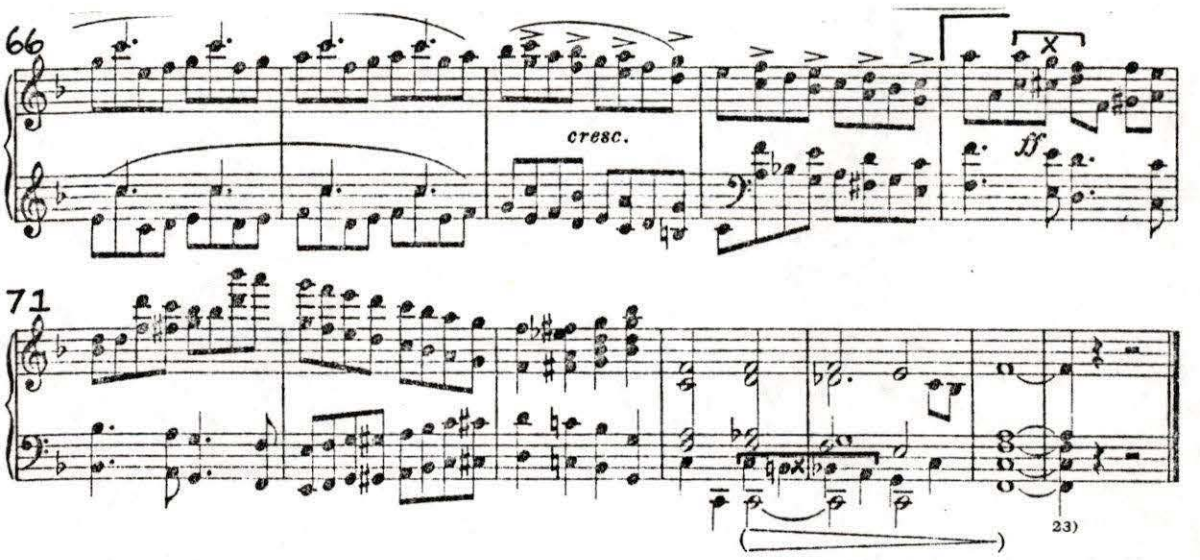
III. CODAS

The enlarged scope of the 1839 etudes is also apparent in the codas, which are now expanded into major sections of each work. In contrast to those of 1826, which usually consist of cadential passage-work, the concluding sections of 1839 restate motives and may even submit them to further development.

The various codas, like the introductions, fall into two distinct categories. Certain ones (nos. 3, 5, 9, 11, and 12) act as a reminiscence of the entire work; key references are presented at the beginning of the coda and then gradually dissolve over several repetitions. In the remaining etudes (nos. 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10), the main elements are reassembled to bring the work to a brilliant close.

A typical example of the former type is Etude no. 3. Its mood of reminiscence is already foreshadowed in the final bars of the 1826 version. This early coda begins with two fortissimo statements of the opening motive (x) (Ex. 28, mm. 70-71), preceding the approach to the final cadence. However, instead of ending here with a brilliant flourish as do most of the codas of this set, this one continues with a descending chromatic line over a dominant pedal. This alludes to the opening motive in augmentation and gradually fades away into the tonic (mm. 74-77).[9]

The corresponding coda of 1839 expands the process of recollection to eighteen bars (Ex. 29). Liszt begins with a shortened version of



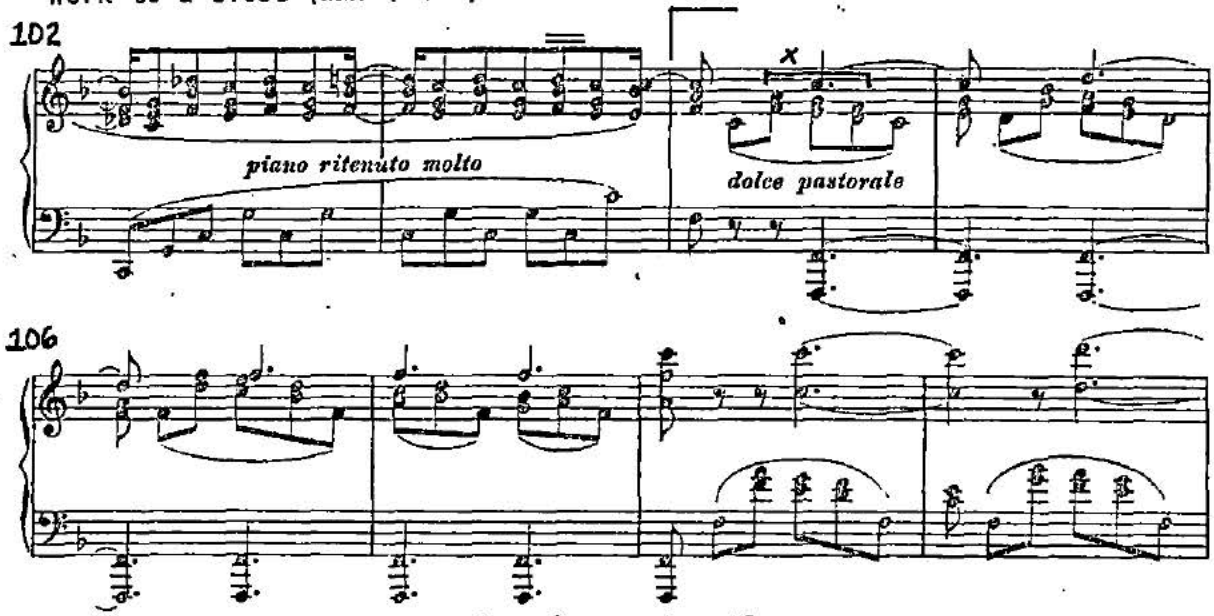
Ex. 28: Etude no. 3 (1826), mm. 66-77.

the opening phrase which recalls the previous material without quoting it completely (m. 104). The reference becomes increasingly indistinct --the left hand figure is gradually reduced to its basic motive of a descending third (x) (m. 114), and the countermelody is dissipated entirely by m. 118. This reduction of material is further underlined by a gradual rallentando and rhythmic augmentation.

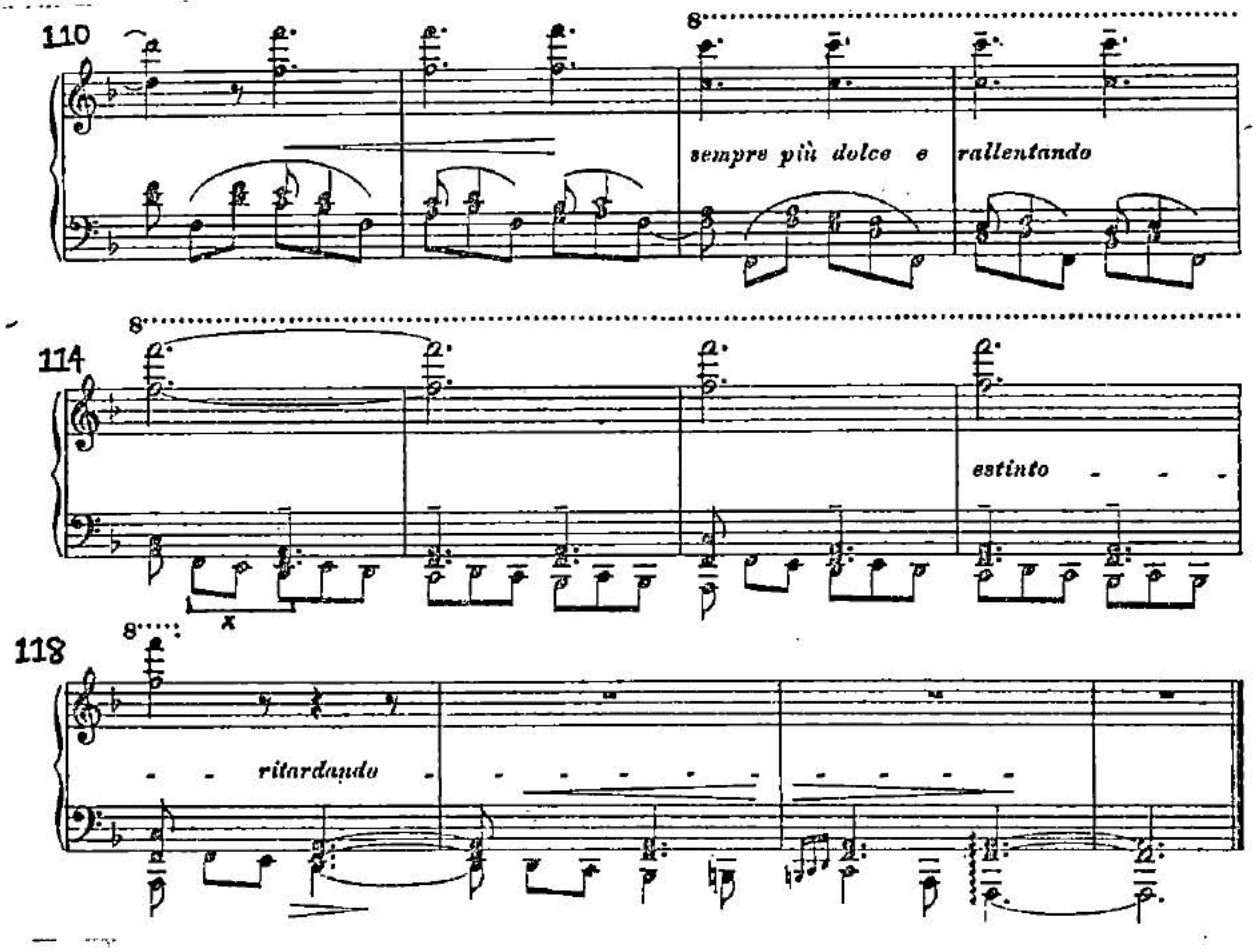
Of special interest in this group is the eleventh etude (no. 7 in 1826). A comparison of the two versions clearly illustrates the more sophisticated role of the coda in 1839. In the first version there is no attempt at further development; the coda consists merely of a short cadenza on the dominant which leads directly to the tonic (Ex. 30). A much more complex structure is found in the 1839 work. Not only does it restate the main themes of the work, but it also combines them for the first time. The vertical combination of themes

at the end of a piece was a favourite device of Liszt in his improvisations and thus occasionally found its way into his compositions.[10]

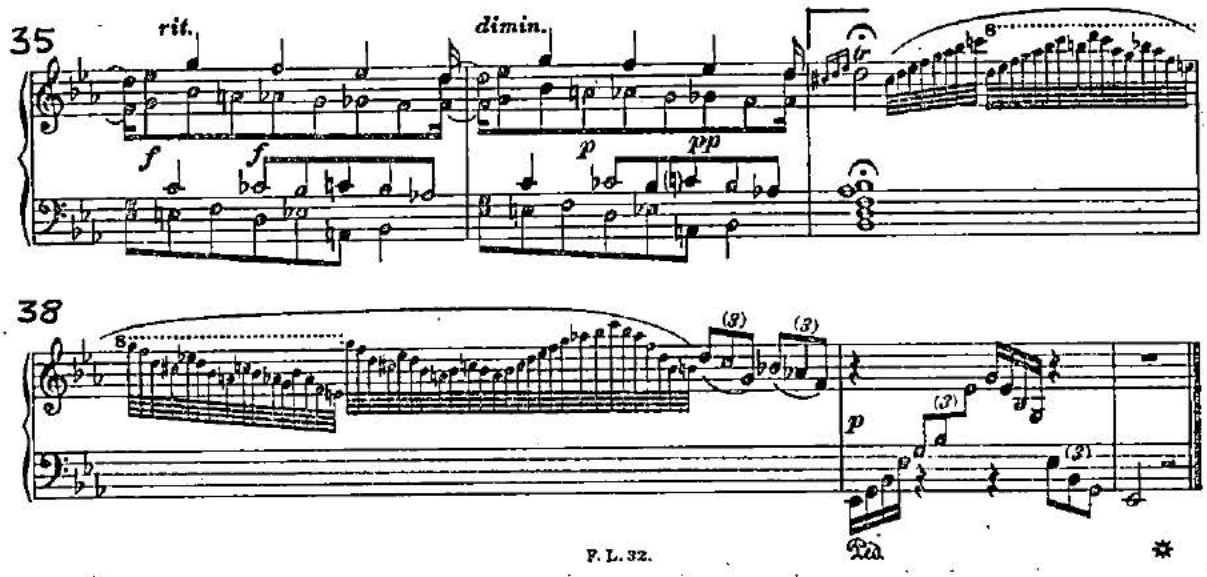
This coda begins with a musical precis of the work. Three of the basic elements--the second theme from m. 59, the opening dominant pedal, and the arpeggiated bass of the sequential passage at m. 34--are fused into one final statement (Ex. 31, m. 162). The reminiscence continues with the appearance of the main theme over this same bass (m. 165). Gradually, through rhythmic augmentation, it dissolves (mm. 173-183). A final reiteration of the pedal point brings the work to a close (mm. 184-5).



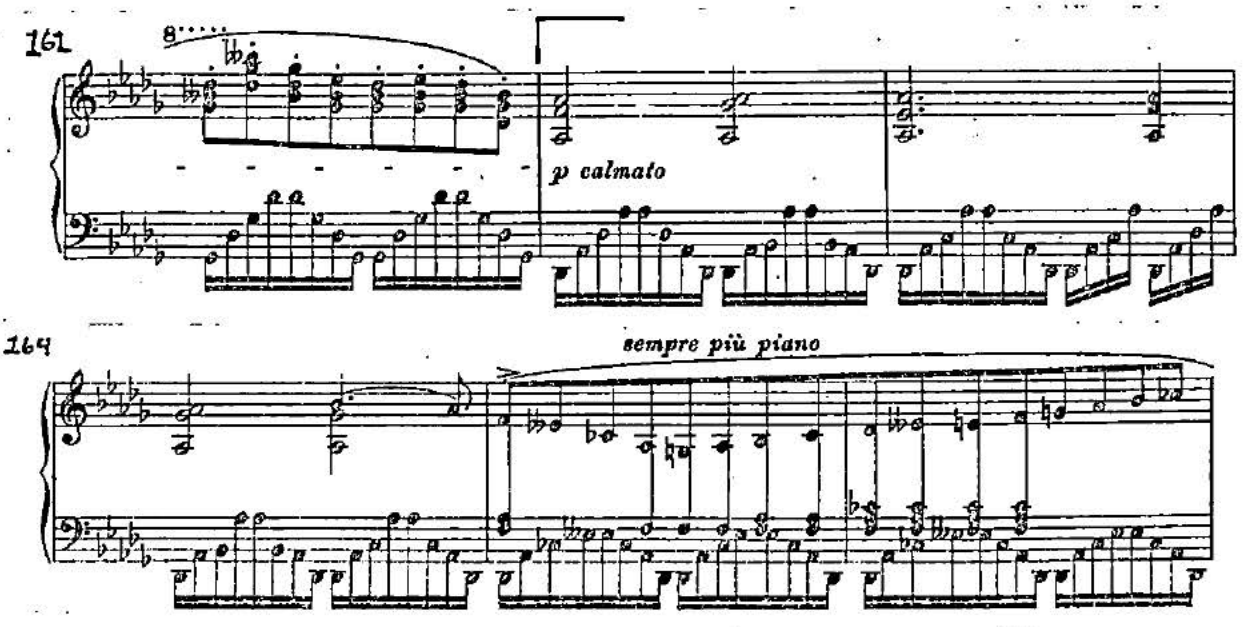
Ex. 29: Etude no. 3 (1839), mm. 102-21.



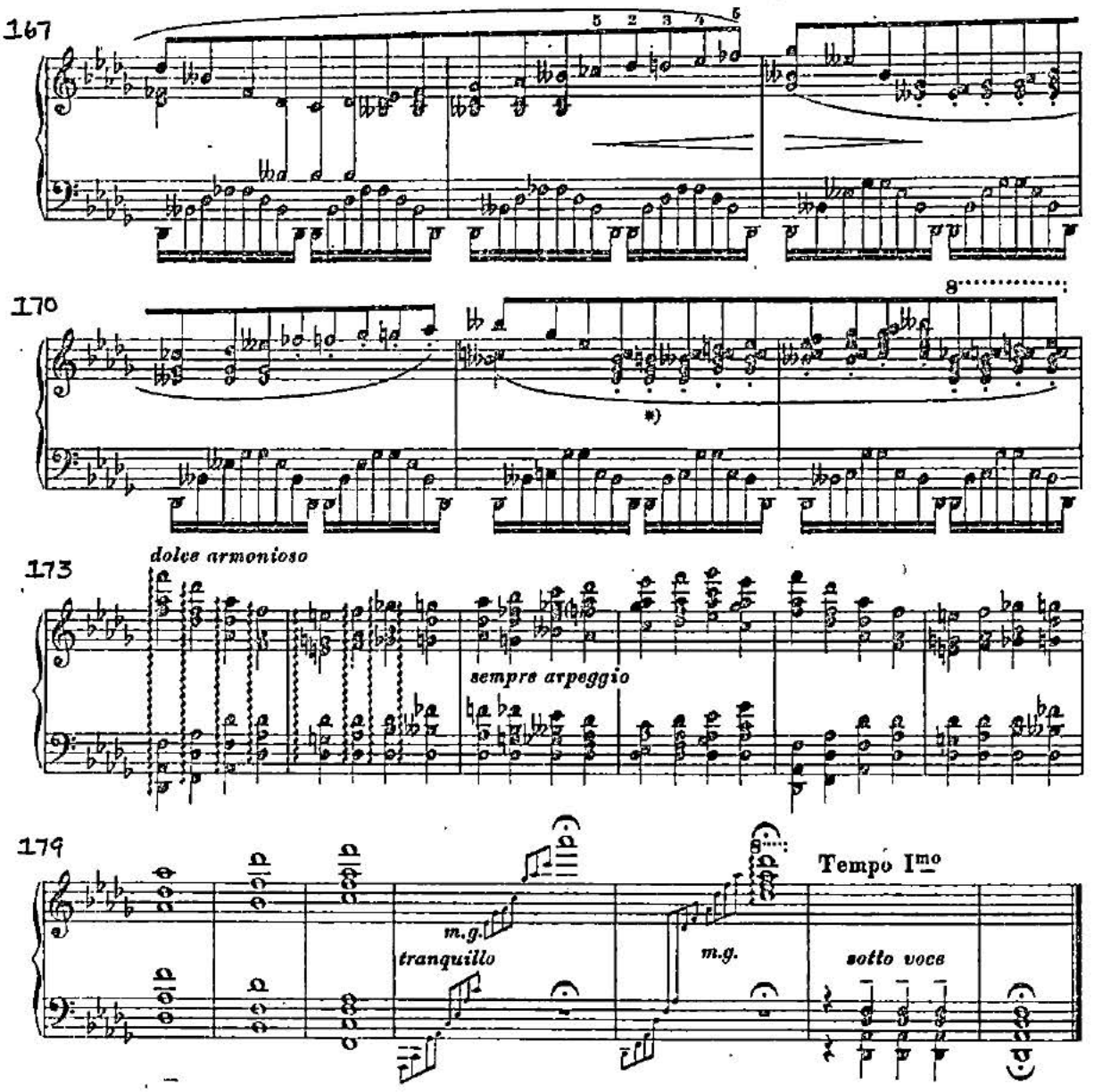
Ex. 29: Etude no. 3 (1839), mm. 102-21 (continued).



Ex. 30: Etude no. 7 (1826), mm. 35-40.



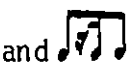
Ex. 31: Etude no. 11 (1839), mm. 161-85.

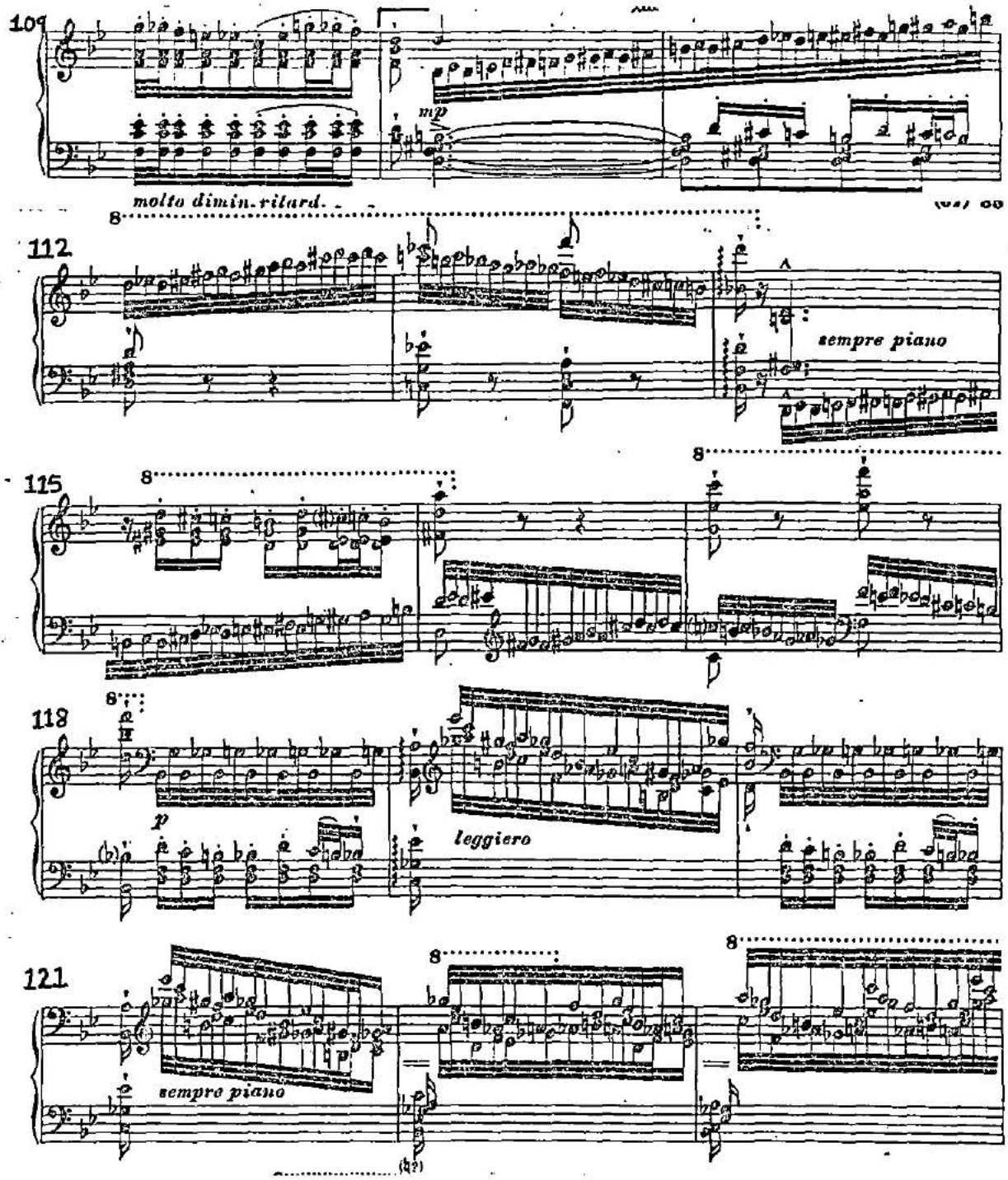


Ex. 31: Etude no. 11 (1839), mm. 161-85 (continued).

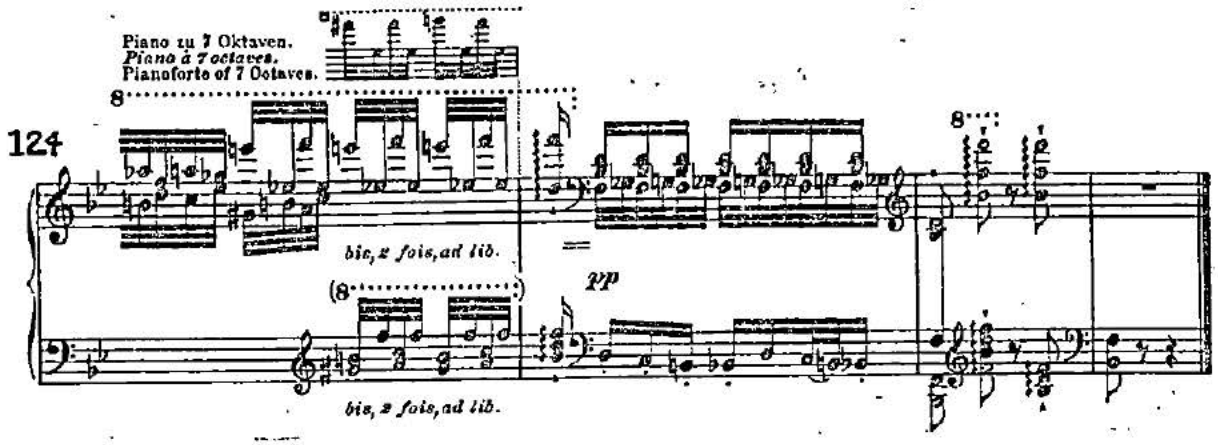
One final example in this group needs discussion--Etude no. 5. It differs slightly from the rest because the reminiscence of previous events is not accompanied by a gradual reduction of material or a ritard. All of the material recalled in the coda (with the exception of the right hand in Ex. 32, m. 118, which is found in the development at m. 41) is first presented in the introduction: the chromatic scales

(m. 110), the descending chromatic figure (m. 111, in the middle voice) and the broken diminished chords (m. 119). Earlier it was noted that the focal point of the introduction is the gradual emergence of the basic motive from the seemingly unrelated material which precedes it. Therefore, it is appropriate that the work concludes with a return of this motive in combination with one of the anticipatory elements, the descending chromatic figure (m. 125). Throughout the coda the evanescent nature of this etude (later entitled "Feux follets") is exploited by sudden changes in register and staccatissimo chords which dart over the keyboard. Following the final momentary return of the motive, the music vanishes entirely.

In sharp contrast to these examples is the brilliant, assertive character of the codas of the second category (nos. 1, 2, 4, 6-8, and 10). Here the restatement and further development of motives results in a final, powerful climax. Three of these (nos. 1, 4, and 8) are similar to the 1826 works as they rely heavily on cadential passagework and make only slight reference to the rest of the work. In the first etude this is an harmonic correspondence--the interplay of C major/A minor (mm. 16-21) which occurs in mm. 7-9. Both of the other two works have themes which are distinguished by a prevalent rhythmic pattern--  in no. 4 and in no. 8--which is used as an accompaniment in the coda, thus establishing a rhythmic association.

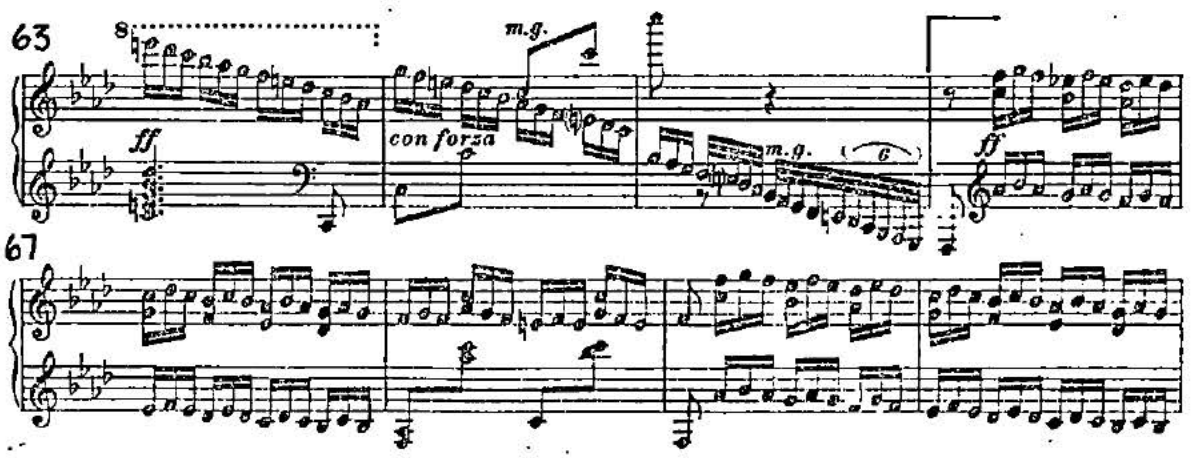


Ex. 32: Etude no. 5 (1839), mm. 109-27.

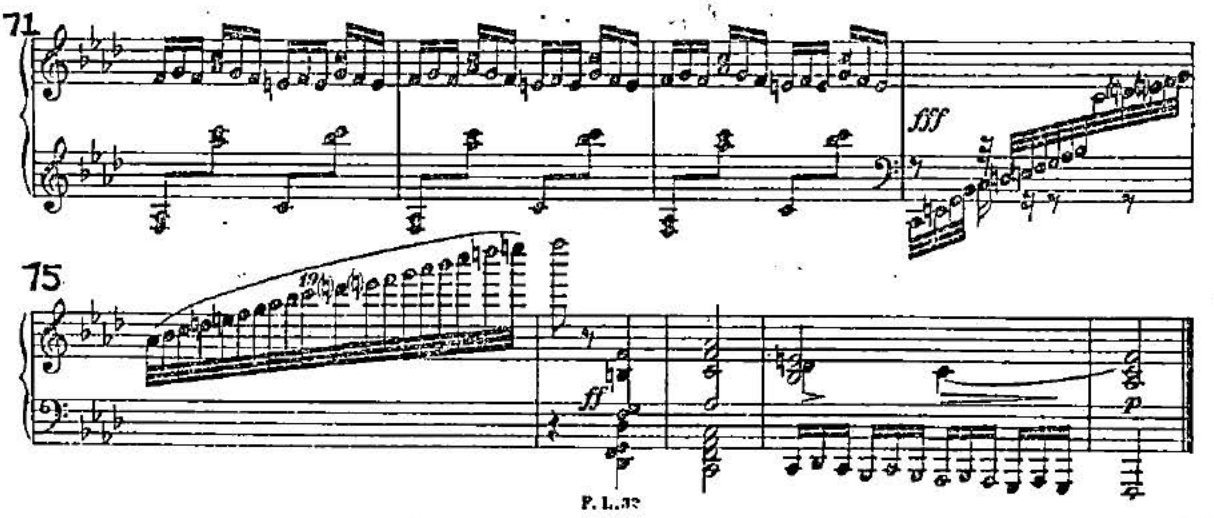


Ex. 32: Etude no. 5 (1839), mm. 109-27 (continued).

Etude no. 10 is typical of the codas of these remaining etudes--those which make a much more extensive use of previous material. The 1826 version of this work already contains the most brilliant coda of this set. It begins with the opening theme and introduces a new accompaniment, involving hand crossings in the second phrase (Ex. 33, mm. 68, 71-3). The dynamic marking of *fff* and a cadential flourish on the dominant spanning five-and-one-half octaves (mm. 74-5) are extreme gestures for these early etudes. The work ends with the descending triplets, now in the bass, fading into the tonic (mm. 77-8).



Ex. 33: Etude no. 10 (1826), mm. 63-79.



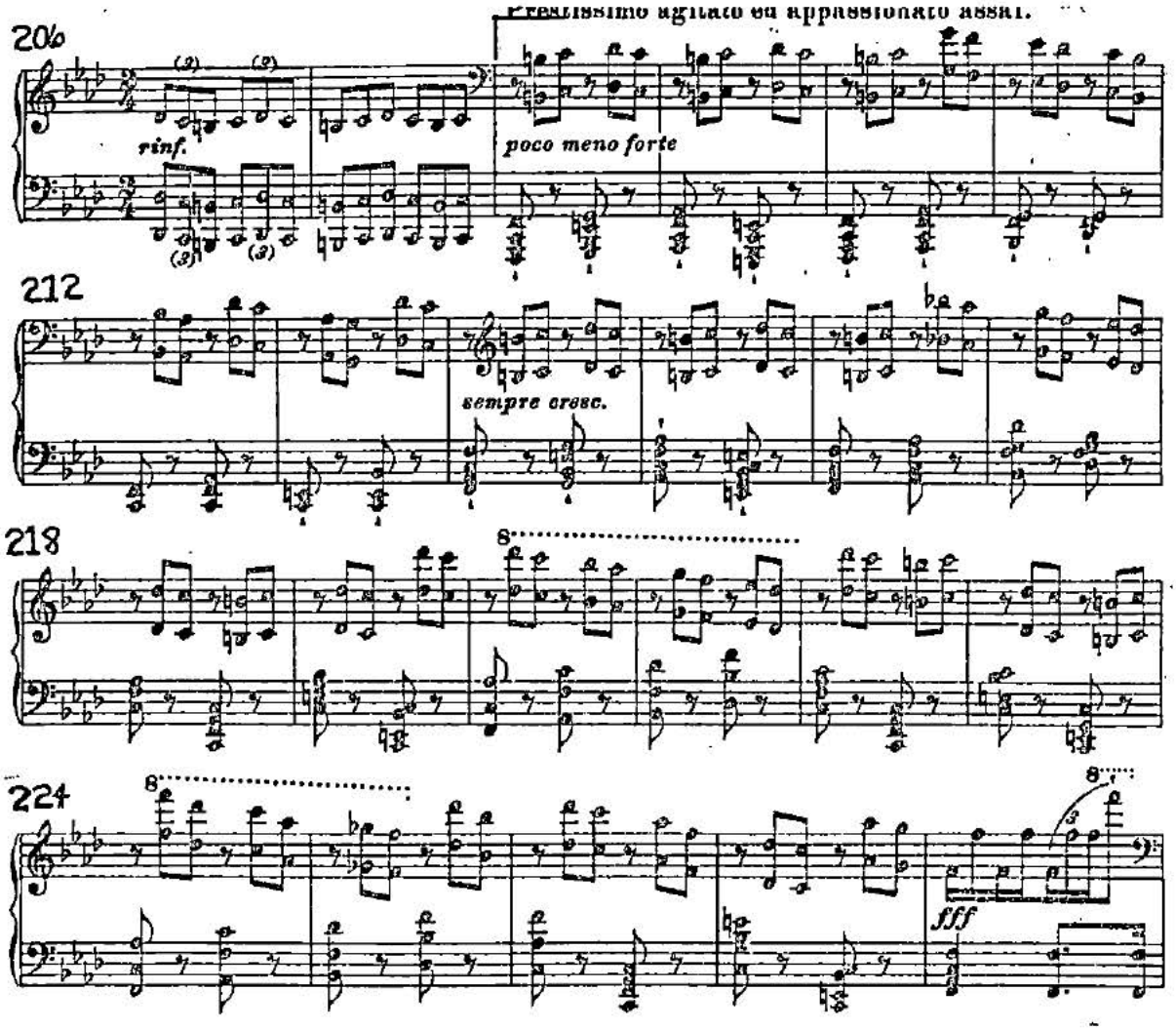
Ex. 33: Etude no. 10 (1826), mm. 63-79 (continued).

It is possible that Liszt may have later considered the final diminuendo to be anticlimactic, since there is nothing comparable in the 1839 version. The later coda begins with the main theme in a new form; it is now punctuated by staccato chords which create greater excitement (Ex. 34; n. 208) and maintain the momentum through the final chords.

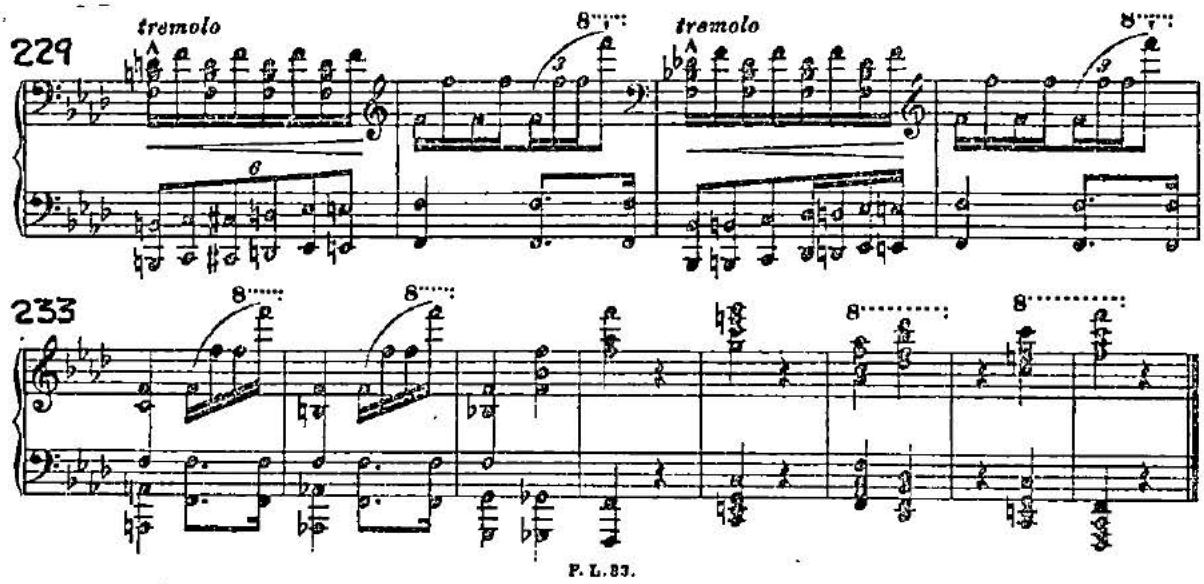
The second theme appears at m. 228 and is repeated two bars later. In the repetition the harmony of the second measure is changed from the diminished seventh of the dominant to the subdominant. This necessitates the addition of an extra note in the left hand run to reach the F, thus creating a rhythmic accelerando (m. 231). A process of foreshortening achieved through the omission of this bar in the third repetition (between mm. 232 and 233) and the gradual reduction of the remaining measure to chords which lead directly into the final cadence, also contribute to the sense of compression which drives the

music forward.

Thus, the expanded codas of 1839 are yet a further response to the epic proportions of this second version. They may take one of two forms depending on the poetic intent of the work. By providing each etude with a succinct summation, Liszt strengthens both the coherence of these works and their rhetorical power.



Ex. 34: Etude no. 10 (1839), mm. 206-40.



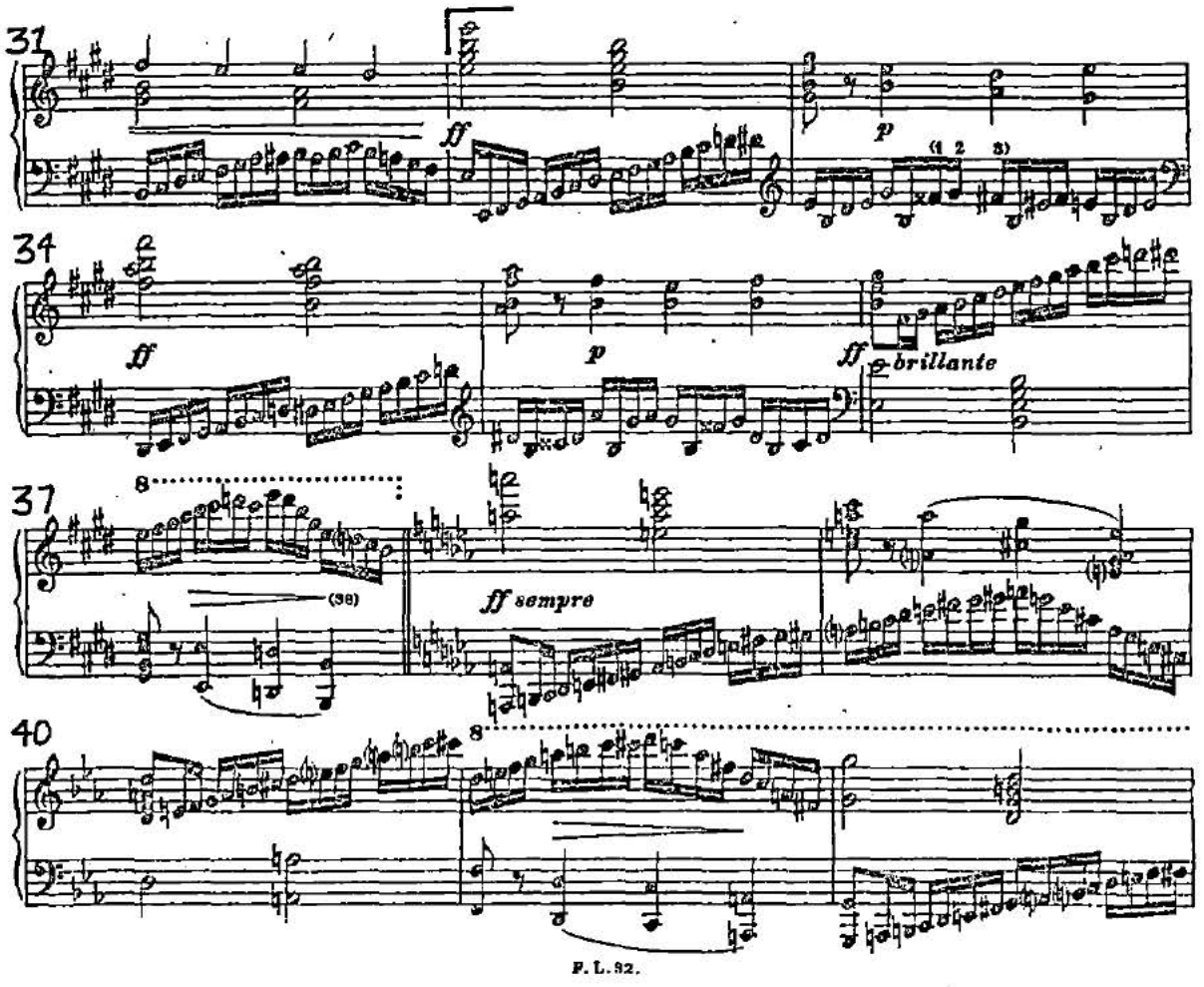
Ex. 34: Etude no. 10 (1839), mm. 206-40 (continued).

IV. SEQUENCES

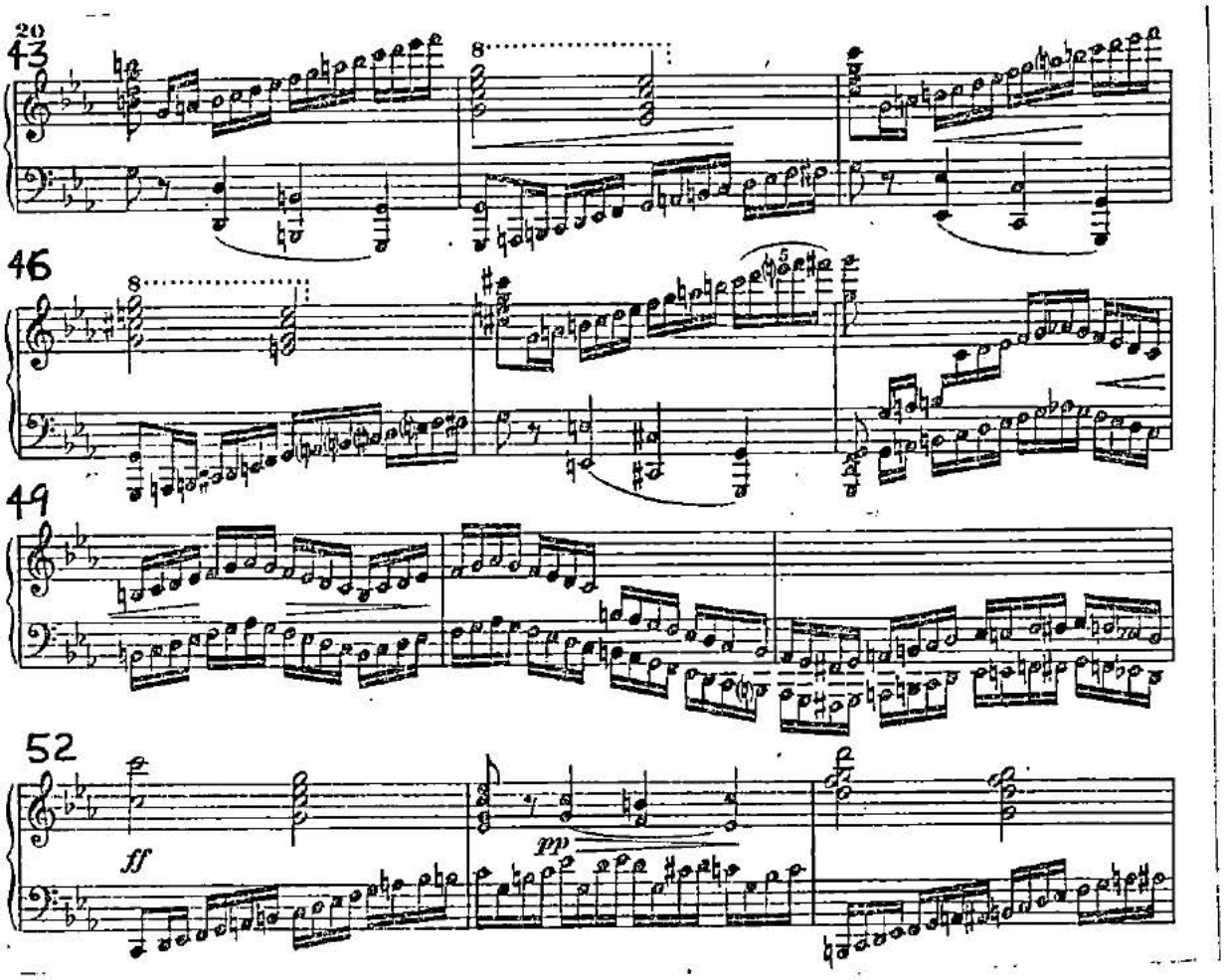
In all three versions of the etudes, the sequence is an important means of elaborating and extending the basic material. The earliest examples from 1826 conform for the most part to the model of Czerny: a short melodic segment is presented and then repeated systematically through the circle of fifths or by step.[12]

The 1839 etudes abound in sequential passages, many of which are of considerable length. However, the basic pattern is no longer subjected to a predictable series of harmonic changes. Instead, Liszt ranges freely through a number of keys which may be only distantly related to the tonic.

The sequential passage which prepares the recapitulation of Etude no. 8 of 1826 (Ex. 35, mm. 32-48) is typical of the earlier works. Its harmonic structure is very simple: movement is confined to the circle of fifths (with the exception of mm. 46-7) and the changes occur regularly every two bars. At one point (m. 36), Liszt tries to create variety by reversing the two parts, but in so doing merely establishes a new pattern; the two parts are now reversed regularly every alternate measure (mm. 34-44).



Ex. 35: Etude no. 8 (1826), mm. 31-54.



Ex. 35: Etude no. 8 (1826), mm. 31-54 (continued).

The harmonic movement of the analogous passage in 1839 is no longer confined to the circle of fifths. Here (Ex. 36, mm. 135-54), the sequence clearly reflects the greater harmonic range and increased use of chromaticism which had by now become an integral part of Liszt's harmonic language. By exploiting the harmonic ambiguity of each chord and the various chromatic inflections of single notes, Liszt is able to maintain this sequence over numerous measures. Although the harmonic

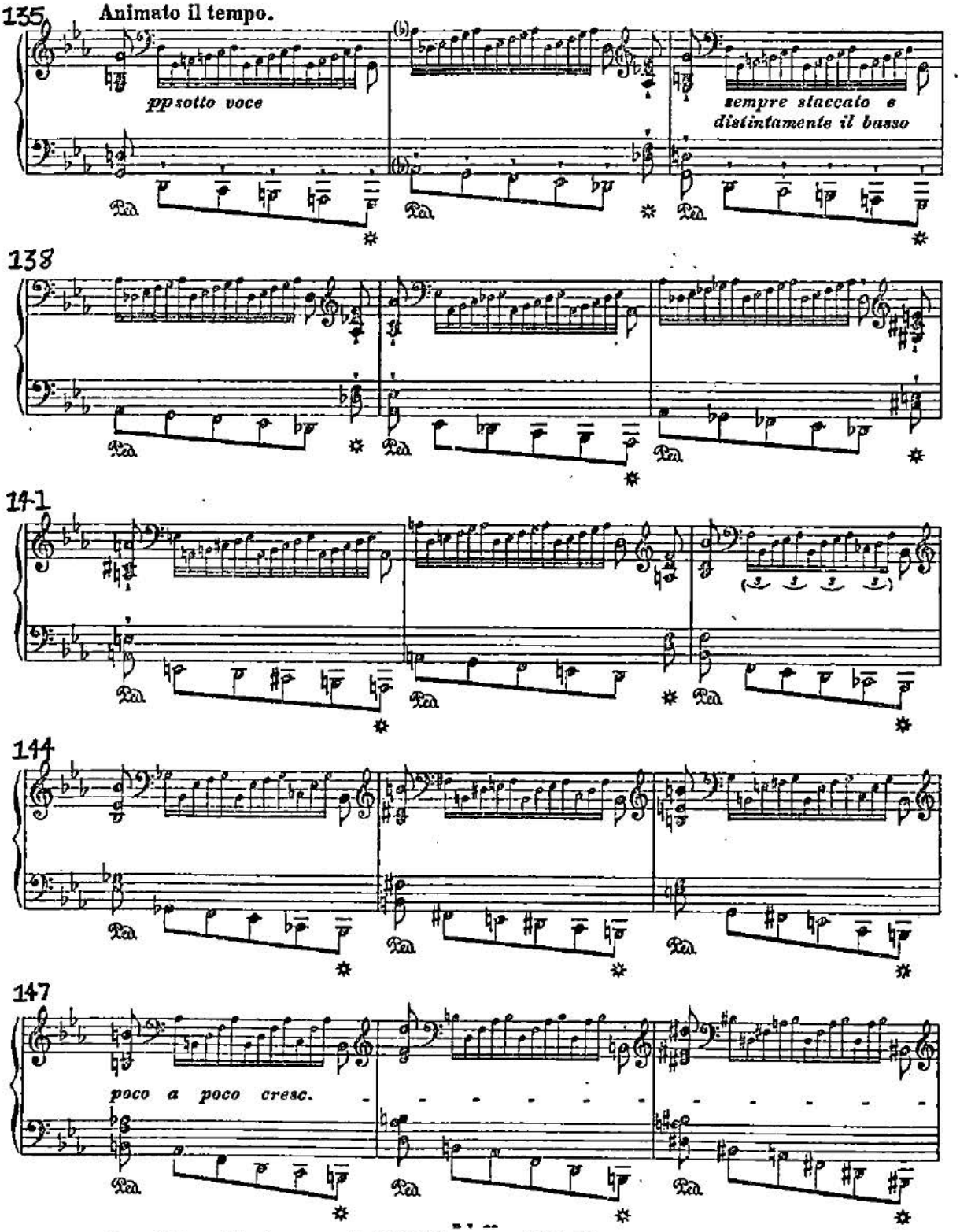
changes of 1839 still mainly occur in a regular pattern of half-steps, a more adventurous progression unfolds. The following table illustrates the expanded harmonic range.

Table II

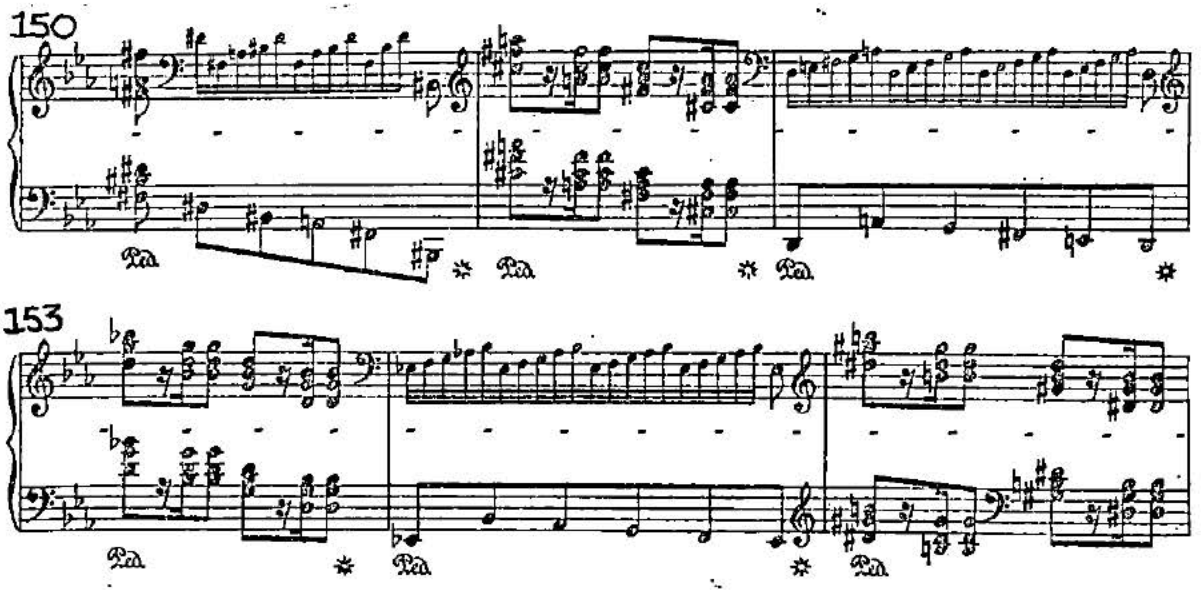
Sequence from Etude no. 8 (1826), mm. 32-48 and Etude no. 8 (1839), mm. 135-55

1826		1839	
Measure Number	Harmony	Measure Number	Harmony
32	E major	135	[G] major
33		136	D^{b} major (with a raised fourth, G♮)
34	V_7/E major	137	[G] major
35		138	D^{b} major (with a raised fourth, G♮)
36	E major	139	[A^{b}] major
37		140	D^{b} minor/C# minor (enharmonic)
38	A minor	141	[A] major
39		142	D minor
40	D minor	143	[B^{b}] major (with a lowered second, C^{b})
41		144	E^{b} minor
42	G major	145	[B] major (with a lowered second, C♮)
43		146	E minor
44	C minor	147	[B] diminished
45		148	
46	C# diminished	149	[B] dominant seventh
47		150	B# diminished
48	V_7/C minor	*151	F# minor
		152	D major
		*153	G_{b} minor
		154	E^{b} major
		*155	G# minor

* new sequence



Ex. 36: Etude no. 8 (1839), mm. 135-55.



Ex. 36: Etude no. 8 (1839), mm. 135-55 (continued).

Harmonic movement is generated in this sequence by numerous repetitions of a five-note bass pattern (a variant of the descending motive of m. 1) which are constantly reinterpreted harmonically. By changing the accidentals within the pattern, Liszt is able to suggest many keys. (See the chart on p.57.) Solid chords in both hands punctuate the harmonic progression. They are almost never employed in a traditional dominant-tonic role; their function varies continuously. (See, for example, mm. 136-7 and 140-1.) These chords drive the music upwards by semitones from G, until the rising chromatic progression reaches B in m. 145.

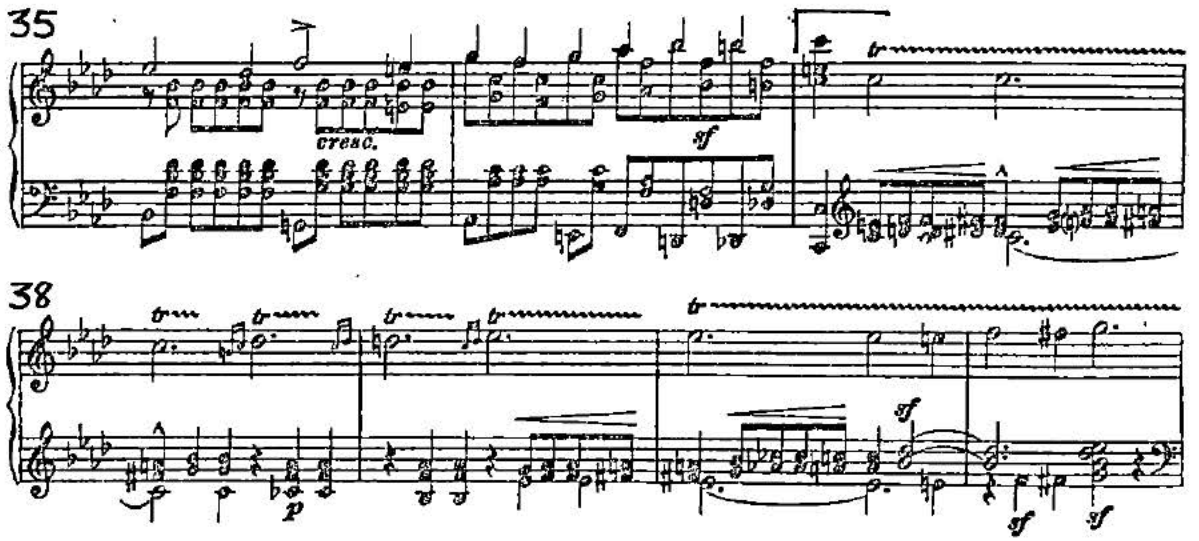
Yet it is the exploration of such a rich harmonic palette which creates the major weakness of this sequence. The original passage from 1826 of seventeen bars (one of the longest sequences in these works) is now extended to twenty measures. In addition, further sequential

development follows, delaying the return to the tonic until m. 195--a total of sixty measures. In sequences of such length the goal of the progression inevitably becomes unclear and the structural coherence of the music is weakened.

In certain sequences this problem has been avoided by employing foreshortening--an important technique in composition which involves the repetition of a musical idea in a more concise form, thus tightening the musical structure. When applied to a sequence, the elements treated may be melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, or there may be some combination of these features. Foreshortening provides more than a kind of musical shorthand--its most significant effect is the intensity created from the compression of these elements.

It is likely that Liszt may have adopted the use of foreshortening from his experience in playing and studying the works of Beethoven, whose compositions contain numerous examples of this technique.[13] Liszt was introduced to the music of this composer in 1819 by his teacher, Carl Czerny, who was a former student of Beethoven. At the height of his concert career (1838-48), Liszt included in his repertoire a large number of works by Beethoven including three piano concerti (nos. 1, 3, and 5), ten piano sonatas (including all of the late ones), the E^{b} quintet and other chamber pieces, and the Diabelli Variations. During these years he also transcribed many of Beethoven's works for the piano, including all nine symphonies.[14] It would not be surprising, therefore, if the compositional model of Beethoven is felt in these revised etudes of 1839.

The employment of this technique, foreshortening, requires a sophisticated level of compositional skill; therefore, few examples exist in the 1826 works.[15] In the following passage from Etude no. 9 (1826), the sequential pattern consists of an initial trill of one and one half measures on C (Ex. 37, mm. 37-8) followed by a series of shorter trills which ascend chromatically every half measure. However, in the first repetition on E^b (m. 39) foreshortening can be observed--the chromatic ascent of the shorter trills now occurs twice in each half-measure.



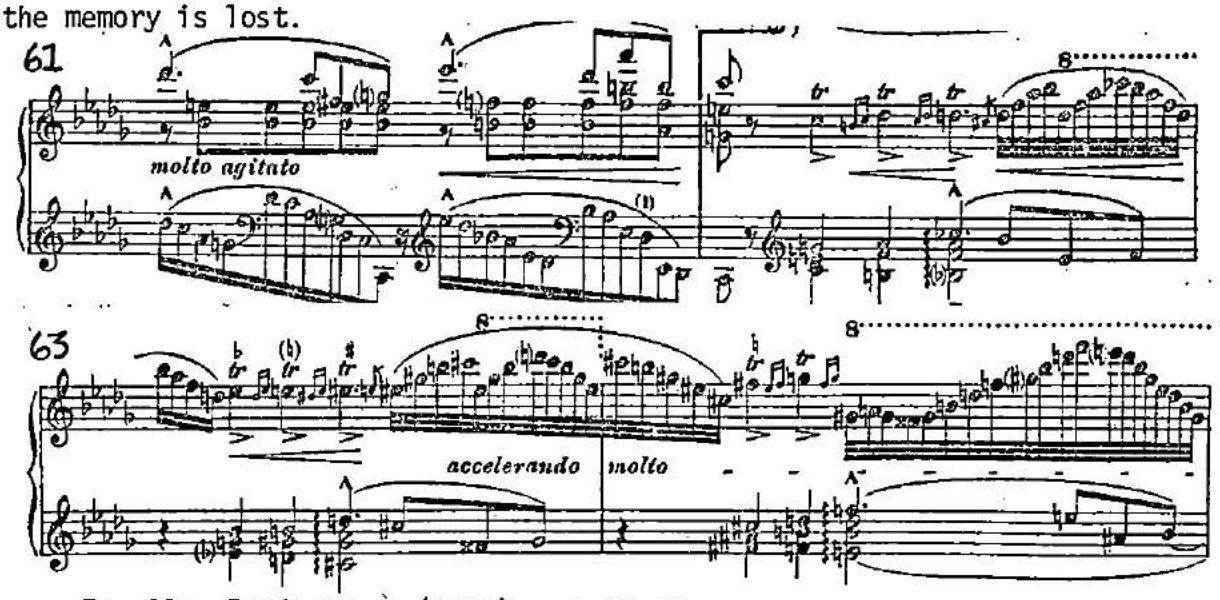
Ex. 37: Etude no. 9 (1826), mm. 35-41.

The corresponding passage in the 1839 version (beginning at m. 62 in Ex. 38) has been thoroughly transformed, yet still retains the chromatic ascent with the trills from the early version. As in 1826, the trills begin on the dominant of F. Here, however, the chromatic ascent is even more rapid; the dominant of E^b (which precedes the first repetition in 1826--Ex. 37, m. 39) is attained in the middle of

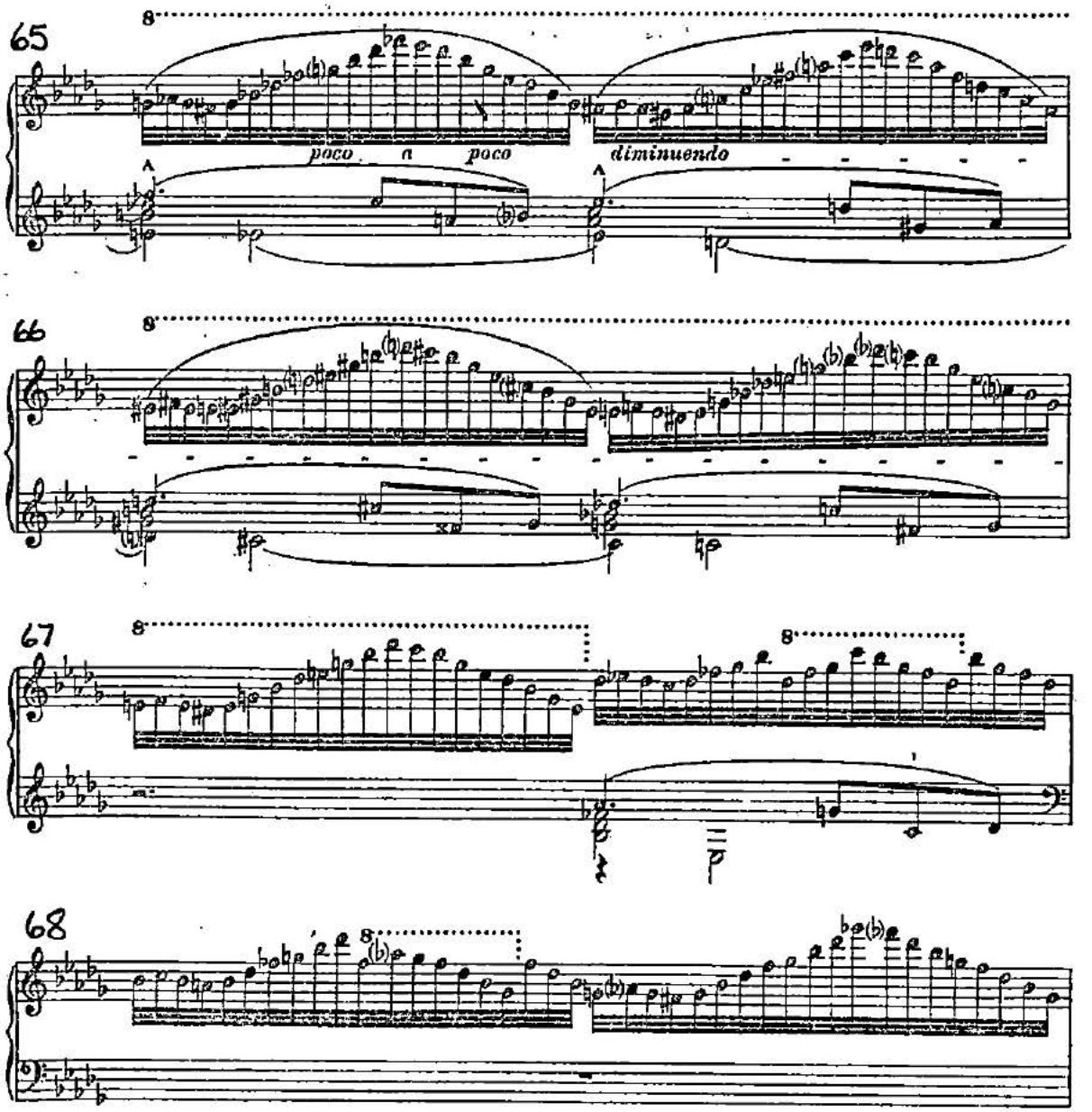
the first measure.

At this point, the revised version departs radically from its predecessor. The V^7/E^b, given added color here by the addition of a $^b9$ (C^b), generates a new sequential pattern--two sets of trills leading to a third which is ornamented in the right hand by an arabesque figure in thirty-second notes spanning almost two octaves. In the second repetition of this new pattern, the first indications of foreshortening appear; the trills are reduced from three chords to two. The sweeping arpeggios of the right hand now begin to gain prominence until they eventually prevail and the trills disappear completely (mm. 64-8).

Thus, the passage from 1826 merely follows a pattern through one repetition. Even the introduction of foreshortening stimulates only limited interest. In 1839, by contrast, a powerful programmatic effect is created. As the process of foreshortening evolves, the right hand gains intensity and eventually obliterates the image in the left hand; the memory is lost.



Ex. 38: Etude no. 9 (1839), mm. 61-68.



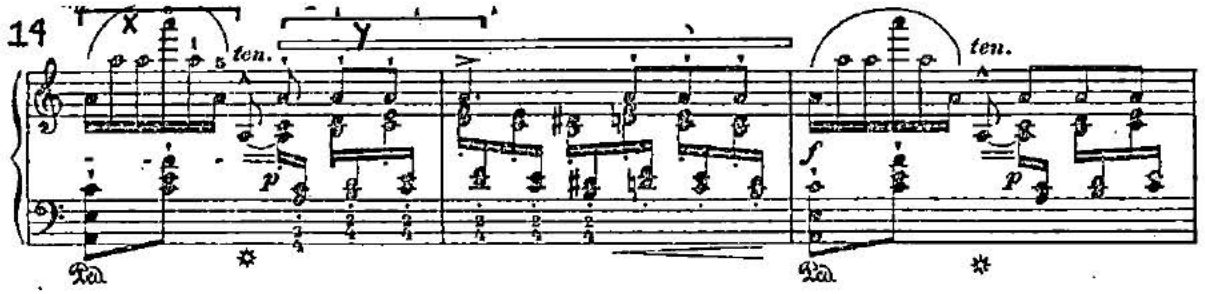
Ex. 38: Etude no. 9 (1839), mm. 61-68 (continued).

One of the most striking examples of Liszt's use of foreshortening occurs in the A minor etude of 1839. The two-measure sequential pattern which begins at m. 14 (Ex. 39), moves upward chromatically every two bars until m. 24 where it is foreshortened.[16] In this example, the compression of the sequential pattern affects two elements: the octave sextuplet figure (x) is diminished to four sixteenth notes

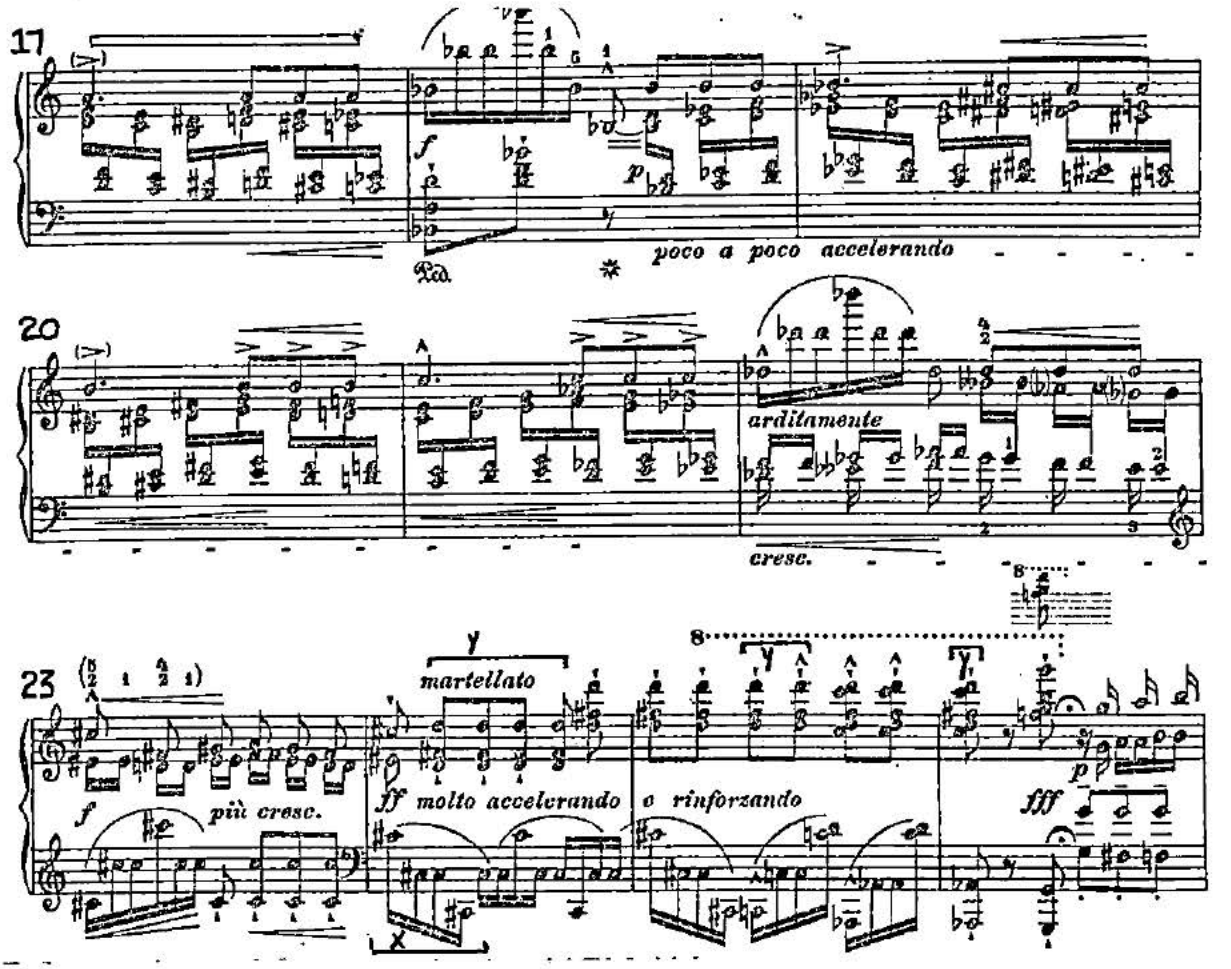
(mm. 23-4), and the opening rhythm (y) is ultimately reduced to an eighth note (m. 26).

Foreshortening is also found in the coda of this etude. The ascending third motive over a pedal note appears at m. 83 and is compressed into two measures. Following a second repetition, it reappears in diminution, thus reduced to one bar. The final climax of the work is achieved through repetitions of this diminished version which build to a *fff* level (mm. 89-91). Thus much of the expressive power of this etude is achieved from the foreshortening of rhythmic figures--the hammering away at one rhythm (the expressive marking at m. 24 is *martellato*) until it is broken down into increasingly smaller units.

Sequential passages, then, appear frequently throughout the etudes to extend and connect various sections of each work. However, the very nature of sequential writing--a series of repetitions--can induce tediousness in an extended passage if it is not skillfully applied. This problem is largely overcome in 1839 by more varied harmonic progressions and the use of foreshortening.



Ex. 39: Etude no. 2 (1839), mm. 14-26.



Ex. 39: Etude no. 2 (1839), mm. 14-26 (continued).

V. USE OF VARIATION

Many of the similarities existing between the 1826 etudes of Liszt and those of Czerny have already been mentioned in previous sections of this study--the use of one figure throughout, systematic sequential treatment of this figure and technical training aimed at developing independence of the fingers. There is one further area--that of form--in which the young Liszt closely follows the model of his teacher. Like Czerny, Liszt constructs these etudes in two main sections. In the first part the thematic material is presented in the tonic before a harmonic shift to a closely related key (usually the relative major or minor or the dominant) signals the beginning of the second section. This section which comprises the bulk of the etude, develops the material of the first part before closing with the return of the opening section (often abbreviated) in the tonic.[17]

Yet, even in these early works, there are already efforts to expand the form. There is no repetition sign or double bar at the end of part one; the music flows smoothly into the next section, eliminating the obvious seams of the Czerny etudes. Furthermore, in certain etudes the amount of material devoted to development constitutes a major portion of the work. (See, for example, the 1826 versions of Etude no. 8, mm. 24-52, Etude no. 5, mm. 20-61, and Etude no. 3, mm. 23-56.)

It is this last characteristic which is the most prophetic. By 1839, the development is no longer a clearly articulated section.

Development most often begins as soon as the thematic material has been stated, creating a sense of continuous development.

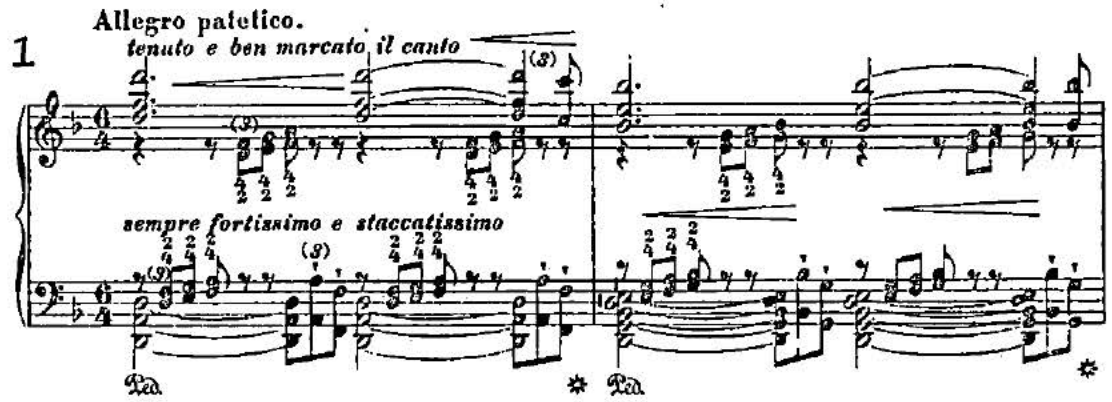
In the previous section the importance of sequence as a means of formal expansion was discussed. There is a second important technique--that of variation. It is used in different degrees in the etudes (with the exception of Etude no. 1): certain works are cast entirely as a theme with variations (nos. 4, 6, 7, and 12), while the remaining ones contain elements of variation only in certain sections of the work.

The etudes of 1839 illustrate the many facets of Liszt's variation technique. Sometimes the principal theme remains virtually unchanged (Etude no. 4), while in others the relationship between the different guises of the theme is much less obvious (Etude no. 9). Etude no. 8 offers yet another example: in this work several themes are evolved from motives presented in the introduction. The final example from Etude no. 11 presents this technique in its most developed form, as thematic transformation.

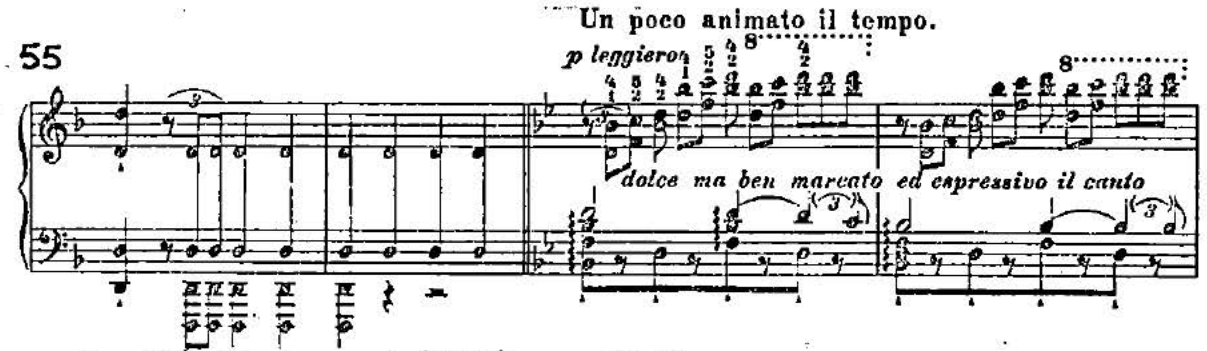
One of the best examples of Liszt's variation procedure is provided by the fourth etude in D minor. In this work Liszt tends to keep the theme relatively intact and to apply variation to the accompaniment, much as an orchestral composer might change the instrumentation. Although the theme may undergo small harmonic and/or rhythmic changes, its melodic outline always remains obvious to the listener.

The six variations of this etude are presented in pairs, so that a three-part structure exists. A new key (B^{b} major) and mood is provided

for the two middle variations. In this middle section the dotted rhythm of the main theme is relaxed from 4/4 ♩ ♩ 𝅘𝅥𝅯 (var. 2) to 4/4 ♩ ♩ 𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯 (var. 3) and its heroic quality is subdued, as the new expressive markings reveal. (See Ex. 40, m. 1 and Ex. 41, m. 57 below.)



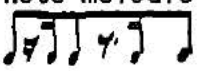
Ex. 40: Etude no. 4 (1839), mm. 1-2.

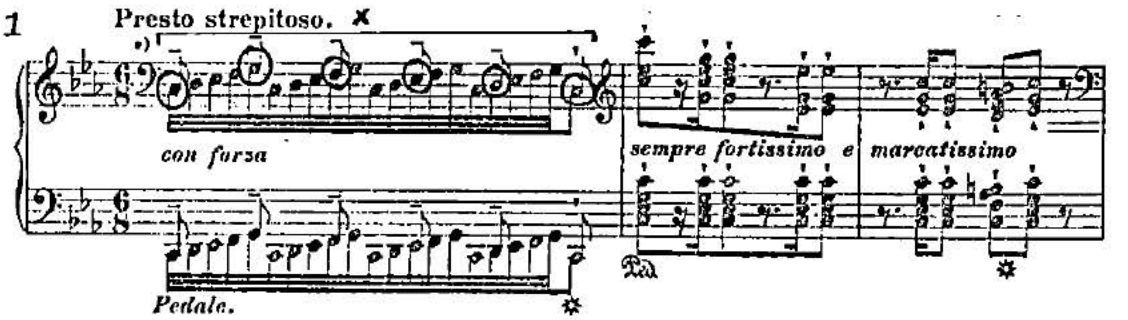


Ex. 41: Etude no. 4 (1839), mm. 55-58.

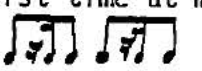
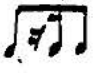
Etudes 6, 7, and 12 follow a similar plan. The theme and one or two subsequent variations are presented in the tonic, followed by a modulation to a contrasting key for the middle section. This modulation usually inaugurates a change in mood. Thus the climactic variation is saved for the return to the tonic, bringing the work to a dramatic close. In each case Liszt provides a coda which may either continue

(nos. 4 and 6) or dispel (nos. 7 and 12) the tension of the recapitulation.

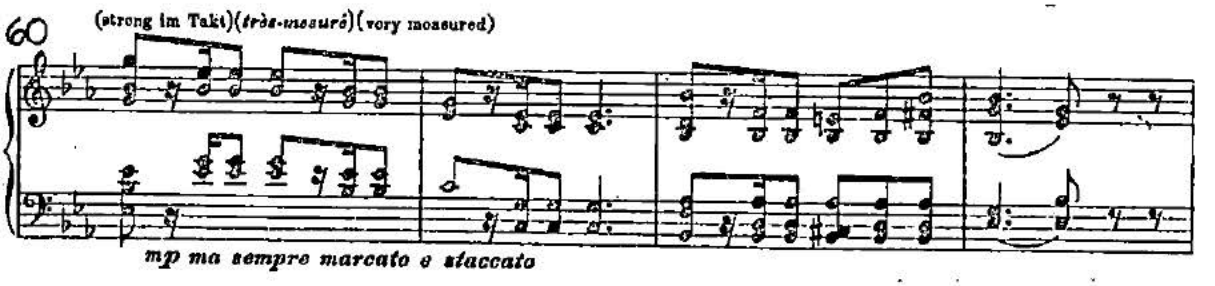
In the eighth etude the shared melodic and rhythmic material in each section creates a sense of evolution for the listener. All of the themes are constructed from two basic motives found in the first two measures of the work, the six-note melodic cell of the first bar (x) and the subsequent rhythm 6/8  (Ex. 42). However, this procedure differs from a true theme and variations because there is no complete melody with a fixed harmonic structure presented at the beginning and then subjected to further treatment, but rather two motives from which the themes are evolved.[18]



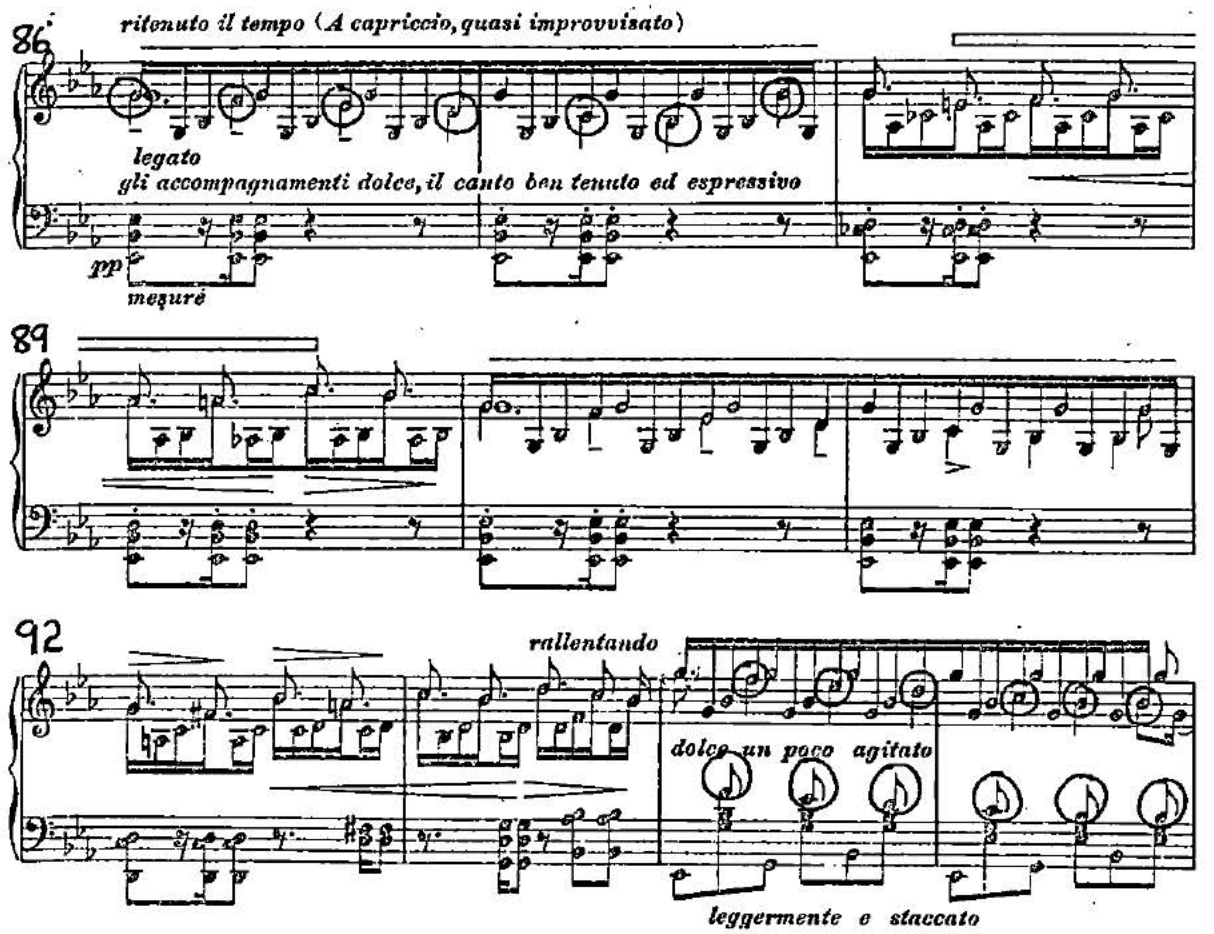
Ex. 42: Etude no. 8 (1839), mm. 1-3.

The first theme which appears for the first time at m. 60 (Ex. 43) owes both its triadic outline and rhythm 6/8  to the opening bars of the work (Ex. 42, mm. 2,3). Similarly, the third section (Ex. 44, m. 86) presents a melody constructed from a variation of the first motive (x), now stretched over two bars (Ex. 42, m. 1). Later, its rhythmic accompaniment (again employing the rhythm ) is omitted, and a canon develops between the two voices. The lower

voice initiates this with another version of the opening sequence (m. 94), which is echoed in the right hand.

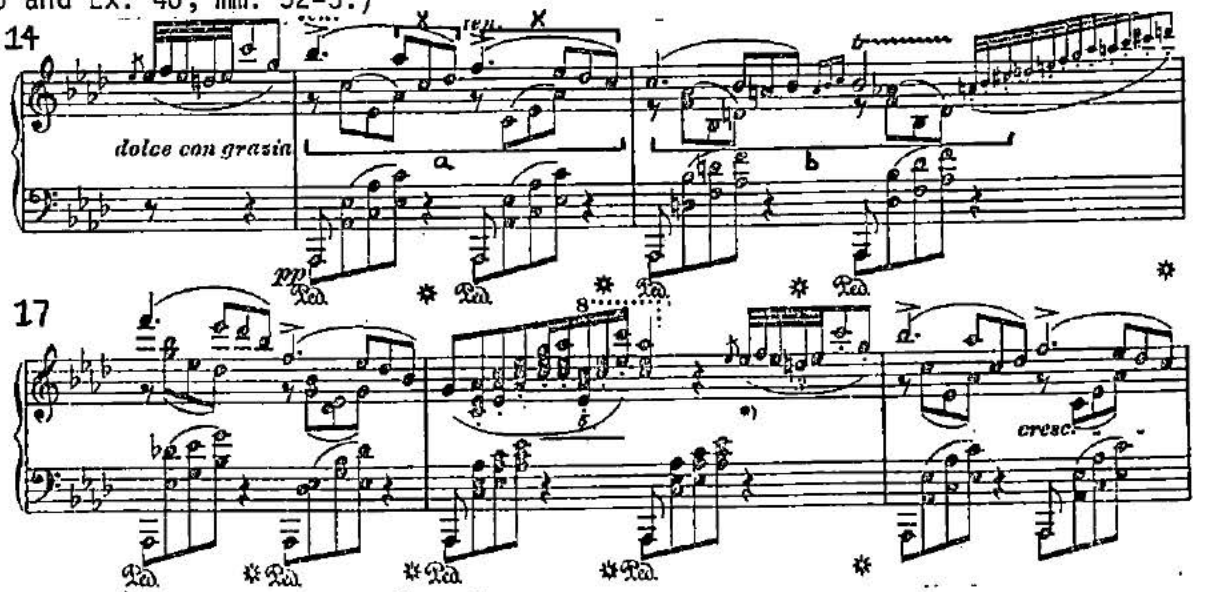


Ex. 43: Etude no. 8 (1839), mm. 60-63.

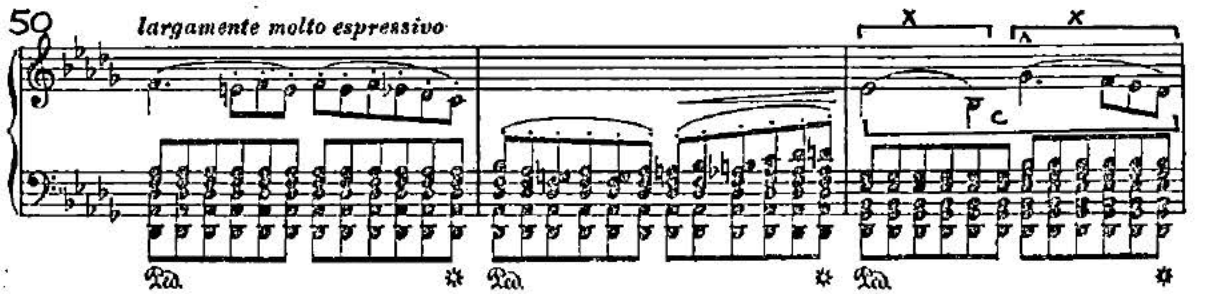


Ex. 44: Etude no. 8 (1839), mm. 86-95.

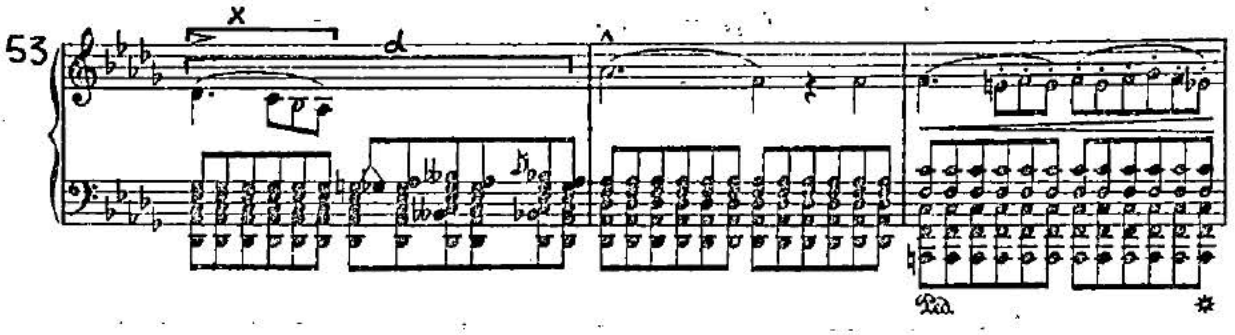
The nature of variation in Etude no. 9 is the most difficult to perceive aurally (with the exception of no. 11). Here Liszt exploits the mutability of the first theme (Ex. 45, m. 15) to create the second (Ex. 46, m. 50). Careful comparison reveals that each of the two themes has the same melodic shape and is built on descending fourths (x in Ex. 45 and 46). In particular, the first and second complete bars of the first theme (a and b) and the third and fourth bars of the second theme (c and d) must be noted; here the rhythm is almost identical, and the melodic lines are very close.[19] (See Ex. 45, mm. 15-16 and Ex. 46, mm. 52-3.)



Ex. 45: Etude no. 9 (1839), mm. 14-19.

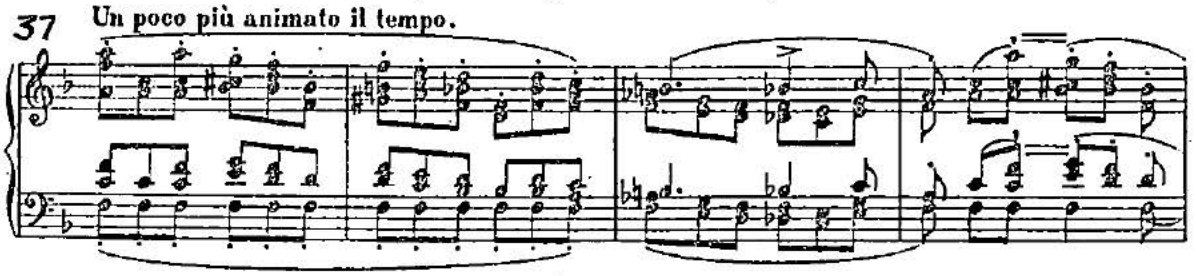


Ex. 46: Etude no. 9 (1839), mm. 50-55.

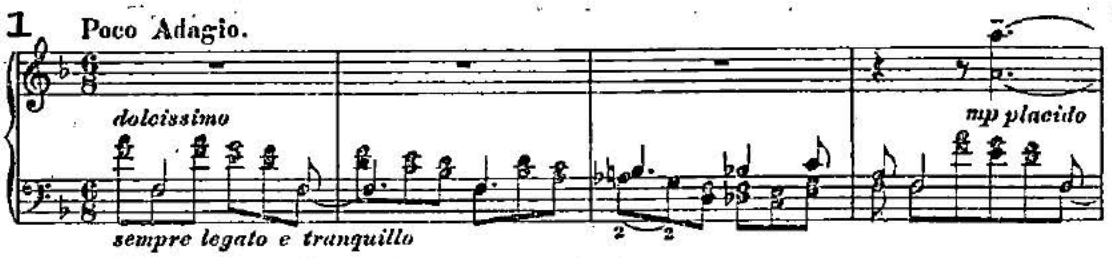


Ex. 46: Etude no. 9 (1830), mm. 50-55 (continued).

Certain other etudes (nos. 2, 3, 5, and 10) contain specific sections which are variations of the main theme. Two examples are cited below. In the following variation from Etude no. 3 (Ex. 47) the pedal F of the original (Ex. 48) is now no longer sustained throughout the measure, but reiterated on each beat, while the articulation has been changed and the tempo made faster.

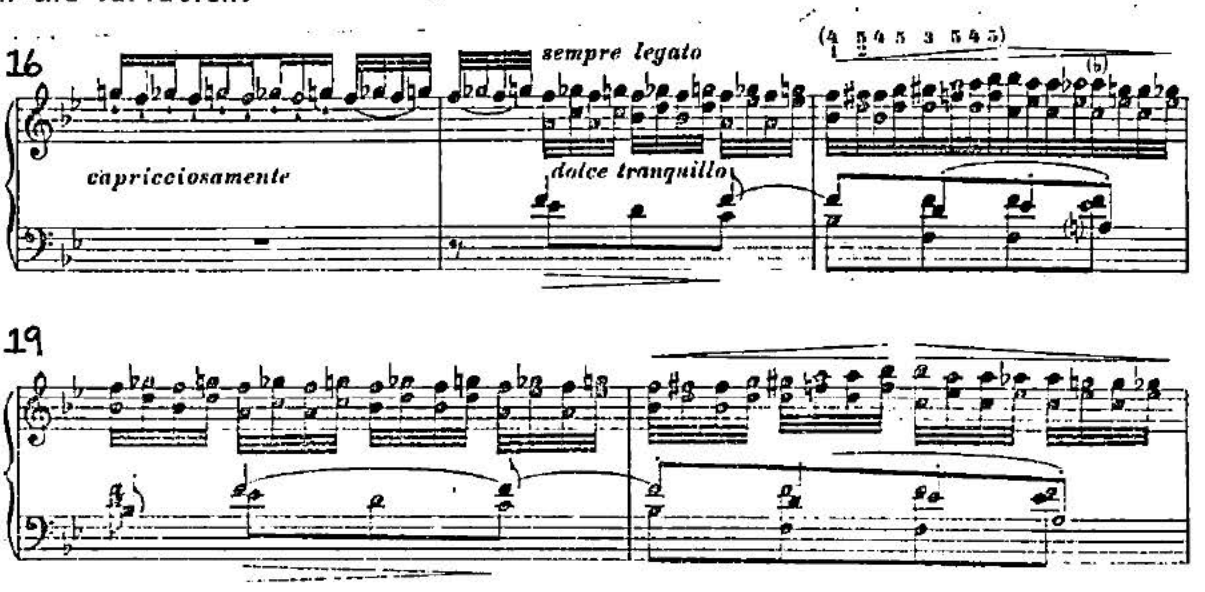


Ex. 47: Etude no. 3 (1839), mm. 37-40.

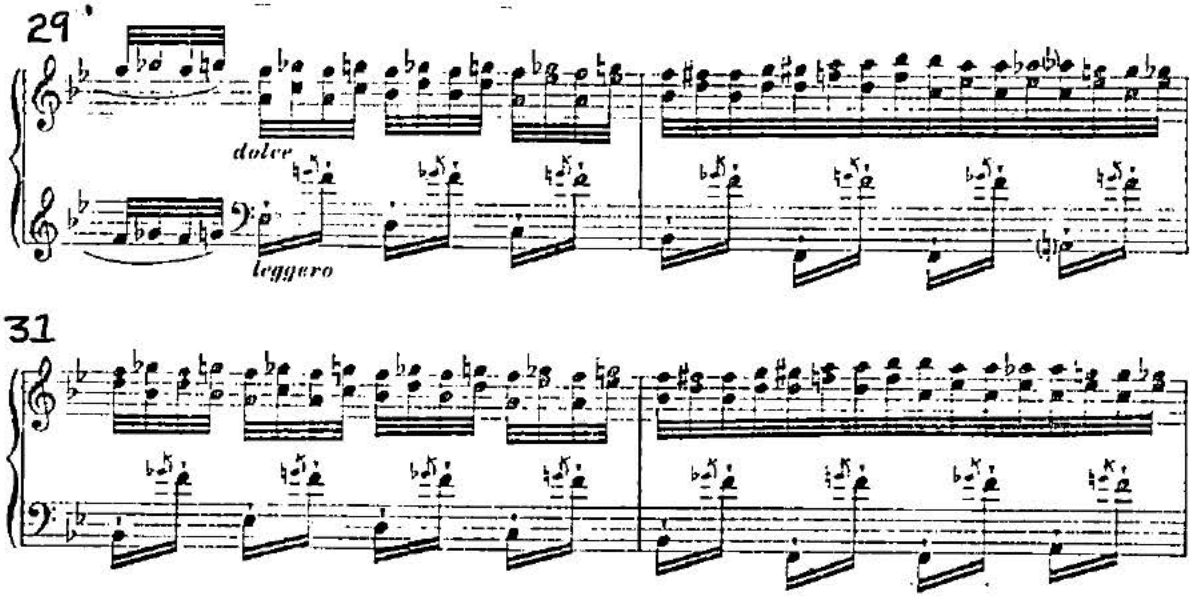


Ex. 48: Etude no. 3 (1839), mm. 1-4.

In the second variation from Etude no. 5 (Ex. 50) all of the alterations occur in the lower parts; the right hand remains as before. The left hand has been changed from a sustained melodic line (Ex. 49) to a lively bass punctuated by wide leaps. This change in character (from *dolce* to *leggero*) is heightened by the addition of a grace note in the variation.



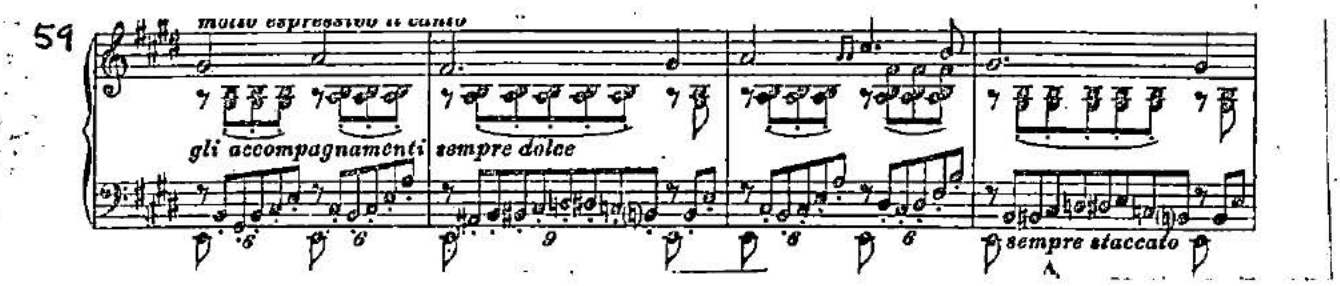
Ex. 49: Etude no. 5 (1839), mm. 16-20.



Ex. 50: Etude no. 5 (1839), mm. 29-32.

There is one etude in which the change in mood is so dramatic that it surpasses the bounds of normal variation. The term applied in such instances--thematic transformation--is one now generally associated with Liszt. It describes the modification of a theme to such a degree that its previous character is completely altered, while the essential structural elements remain intact.

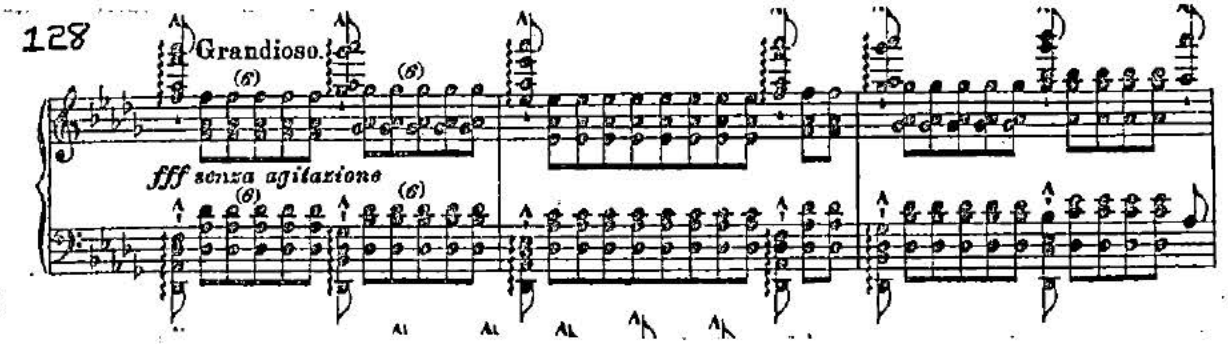
It is the second theme of Etude no. 11 (1839) which undergoes this transformation. In its first appearance in the work it is marked *molto espressivo il canto--gli accompagnamenti sempre dolce (Tempo rubato)* (Ex. 51, m. 59). This tender, amorous melody with its pizzicato accompaniment and new key (E) contains no hint of its subsequent transformation.



Ex. 51: Etude no. 11 (1839), mm. 59-62.

As in the other etudes which employ a theme with variations throughout, the climactic variation of this etude is reserved for the return of the tonic. At this point (Ex. 52, mm. 128) the second theme, now combined with the opening pedal point, is unveiled in its new form.[20] Large repeated chords are written for both parts, the top note of which carry the melody. Octave leaps outward separate each new pitch of the theme. In addition, the markings *fff senza agitazione*

and *Grandioso* are indicative of the extent of the departure of this theme from its initial appearance.



Ex. 52: Etude no. 11 (1839), mm. 128-30.

Thus, variation technique is employed in 1839 in varying degrees, ranging from small defined sections to entire works. In one etude, no. 11, it is carried to a new dimension. Here the apotheosis of the second theme is a clear example of thematic transformation.[21] It is not surprising that this technique is employed in these etudes from 1839, for it is already recognizable in the "Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses" from 1834, although it reached its greatest flowering in the B minor Sonata of 1854 and the *Faust Symphonie* of 1861.

VI. TEXTURE AND ARTICULATION

It is not surprising that Liszt expanded his harmonic language and acquired a more sophisticated understanding of form between 1826 and 1839--such changes are typical of any composer leaving apprenticeship and approaching maturity. However, the most dramatic changes in his style--the changes in texture--are unique to Liszt and must be

attributed to other influences.

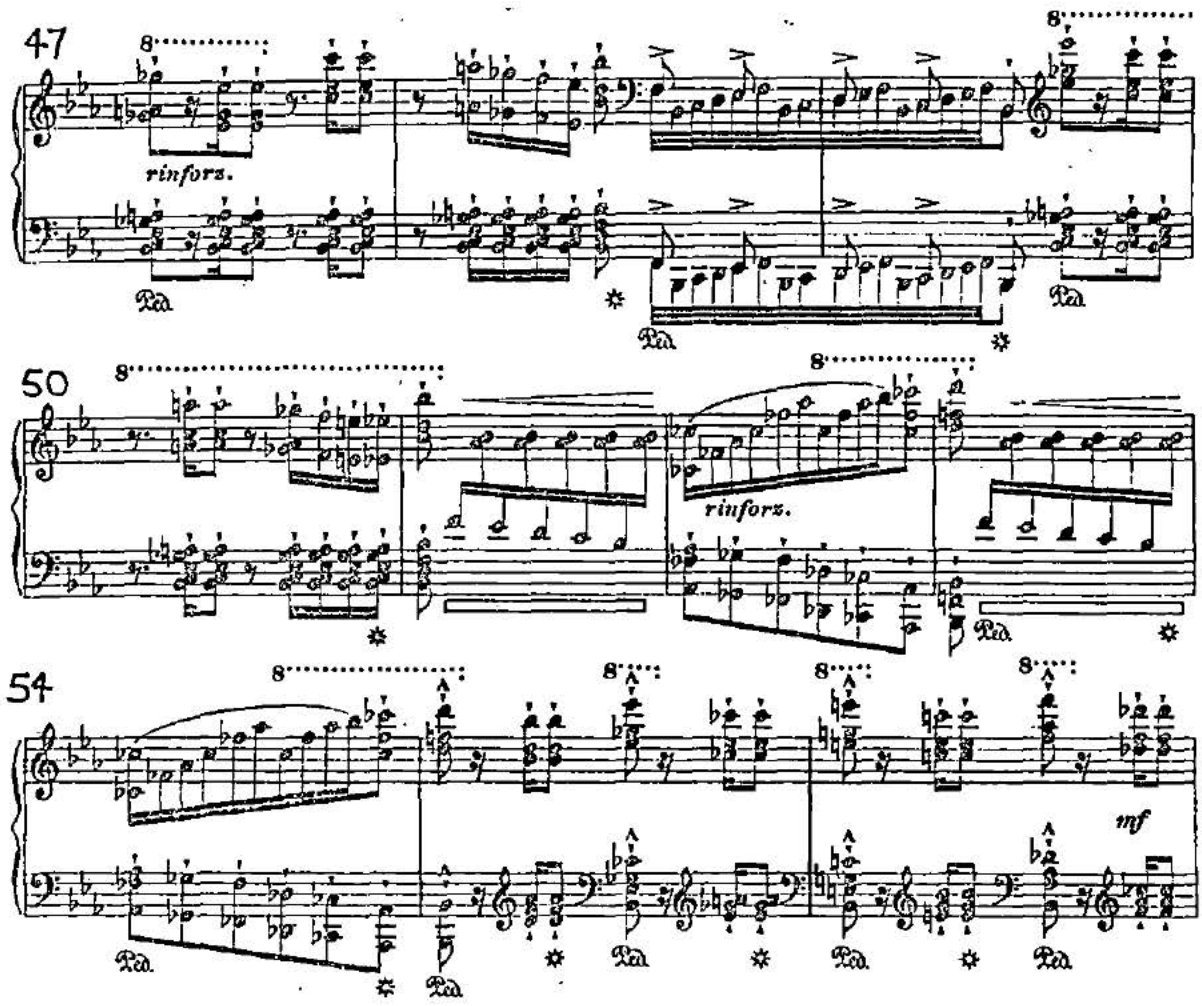
The first of these is the composer's experience in transcribing orchestral works. Although Liszt did not actually turn his compositional skills to the orchestra until the late 1840s, his knowledge of its tonal palette was awakened early by his transcriptions of various symphonic works, including the nine Beethoven symphonies. This accomplishment merited the following remark from Sir Donald Tovey:

> In the 'forties Liszt published, or at all events played in public, arrangements of Beethoven's nine symphonies, introducing them with a declaration to the effect that it was possible to produce on the pianoforte all the essentials of an orchestral score, except those of sheer mass and varieties of timbre. The arrangements are still in print, and prove conclusively . . . that Liszt was by far the most wonderful interpreter of orchestral scores on the pianoforte that the world is ever likely to see.[22]

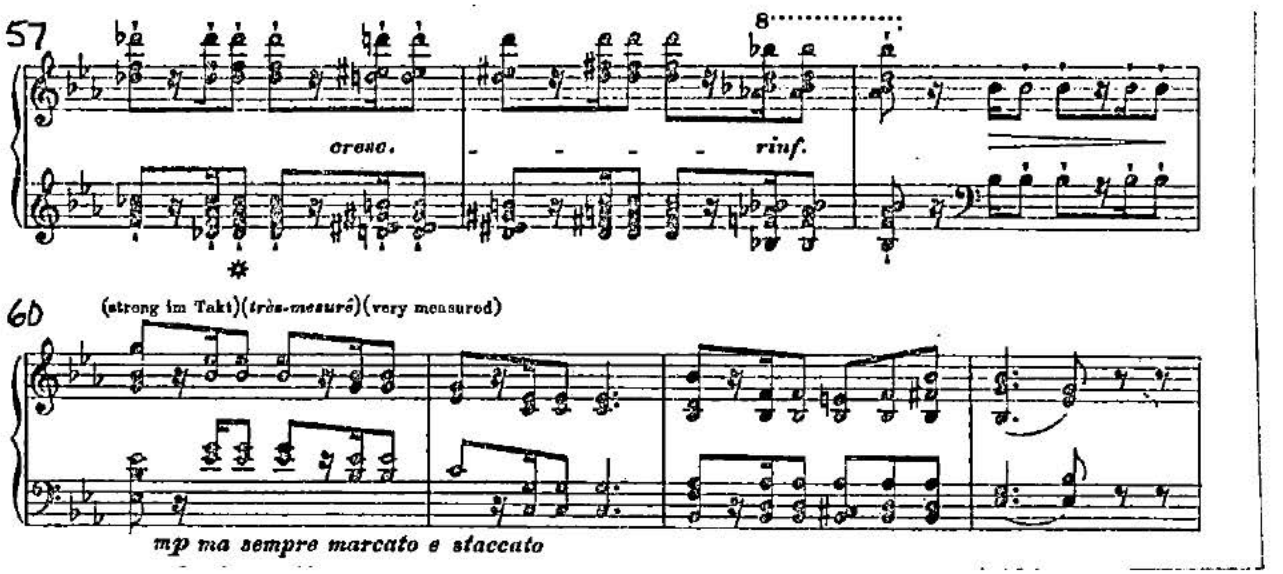
His greatest achievement in this capacity, though, was the transcription of the *Symphonie Fantasique* of Berlioz, which Schumann describes as " . . . a practical pianoforte school in score playing."[23] In fact, the music provides such a brilliant evocation that Schumann was able to grasp from it a thorough understanding of the work, including the orchestration.[24] His review of 1835 is based solely on Liszt's transcription.

The knowledge which Liszt acquired from these numerous transcriptions gradually penetrated his solo compositions of the 1830s. Thus the etudes of 1839 are the first of the three versions to contain the evocation of specific orchestral sounds, as illustrated in the following passage from Etude no. 8. The strongly marked 6/8 rhythm

which predominates is characteristic of a brass fanfare and is reinforced by the marking *sempre marcato e staccato* (Ex. 53, m. 60) and the use of the open fifths (m. 61). Figures evoking string textures--both rapid scales (m. 48-9) and tremolos (m. 51)--also appear.



Ex. 53: Etude no. 8 (1839), mm. 47-63.



Ex. 53: Etude no. 8 (1839), mm. 47-63 (continued).

In addition to the tremendous variety of timbre available to a symphonic composer, there is also a wide range of pitch. This led Liszt to explore the outermost limits of the keyboard. (See, for example, m. 48 in Etude no. 12 and m. 41 in Etude no. 9.) In particular, the wide spectrum of pitch is captured in numerous octave passages encompassing the entire keyboard. (See Etude no. 4, mm. 102-6 and Etude no. 8, mm. 186-93.)

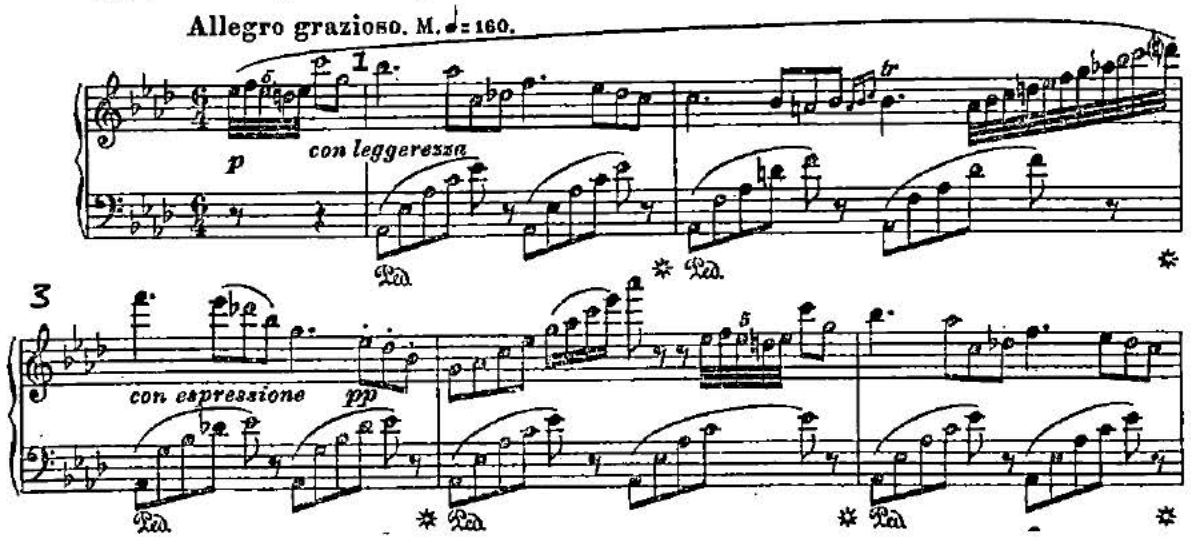
This change in texture demanded a new way of playing. The instrumental doublings so characteristic of any symphonic work are reflected in the widespread use of octaves and large chords. Stretches of a tenth (Etude no. 5, mm. 25-6 and Etude no. 10, mm. 87-94 and 93-100) and even an eleventh (Etude no. 3, mm. 62, 64) appear in these works. The old school of playing, which stressed the independence of the fingers, was now totally inadequate. Gradually Liszt developed a

new technique which involved the whole body. This not only created greater volume but also provided greater tonal variety.

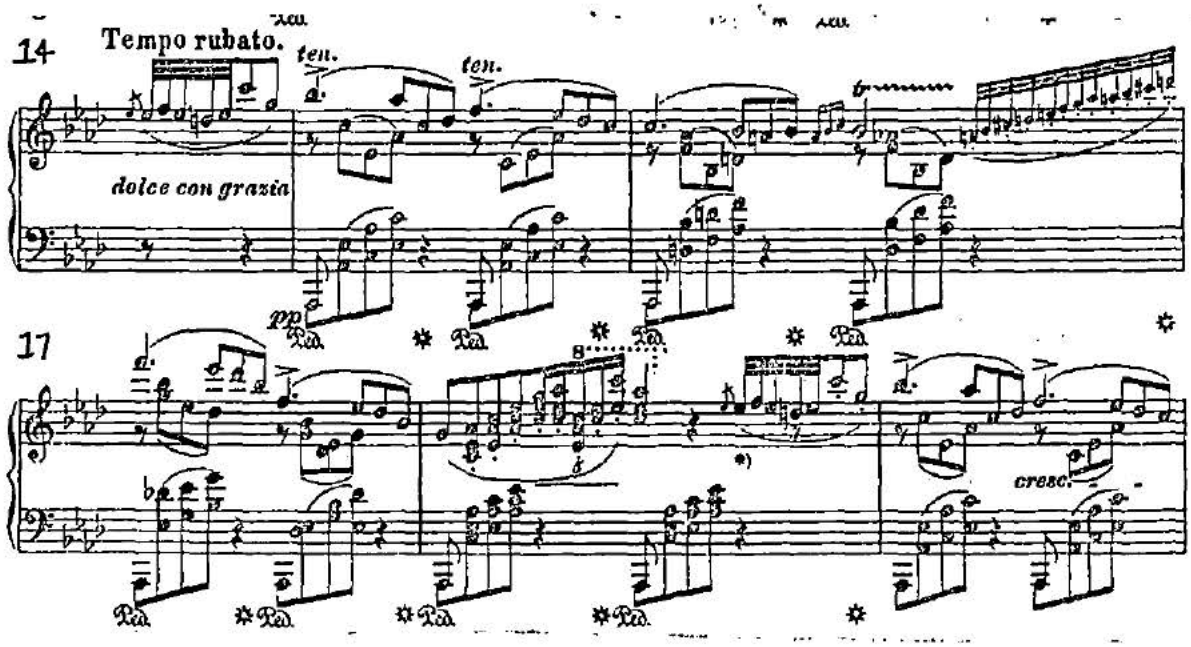
A second sphere of influence, improvisation, was responsible for the appearance of fragmented phrases, cadenza-like passages, and ambiguous harmonies in his compositions--all hallmarks of extemporization. In an attempt to notate the tremendous rhythmic freedom and variety of moods which are possible in improvisation, Liszt employed numerous and often original expressive markings. In the ninth etude sixteen different markings are indicated between mm. 27 and 33. Short passages containing such successive indications as *rinforzando--poco a poco diminuendo e rallentando - smorz.* (Etude no. 3, mm. 31-6) are common. The entire gamut of dynamic markings from *pppp* (Etude no. 9, m. 13) to *tutta forza* (Etude no. 8, m. 186) is employed. Furthermore, if Liszt was unable to convey his ideas with traditional markings, he created new ones: ⎓ (a pause shorter than a fermata), ⎔ (accelerando), and ⎕ (ritenuto).[25] He also augmented the musical vocabulary with imaginative terms such as *mit Verzuckung* (with rapture) and *Largo Patetico* in Etude no. 6 (mm. 33 and 1, respectively), *delirando* in Etude no. 10 (m. 142) and *estinto* (barely audible) in Etude no. 3 (m. 117).

Some revisions in the 1839 set clarify the melodic articulation through the addition of phrasing and expressive markings, even if the notes of the melody itself are not changed. The ninth etude of 1839 illustrates this trend towards greater declamation in the melodic line. Although the pitches of the main themes of 1826 and 1839 offer an almost

exact correspondence, closer examination reveals significant differences in articulation. In the 1839 etude the vocal inflection is emphasized by new phrasing and directions for articulation. Liszt added the tenuto on the chief melodic notes, the use of small notes for the run leading out of the trill, and a ritenuto at the end of the phrase.[26] (See Ex. 54, mm. 1-2 and Ex. 55, mm. 15-16.)



Ex. 54: Etude no. 9 (1826), mm. 1-5.



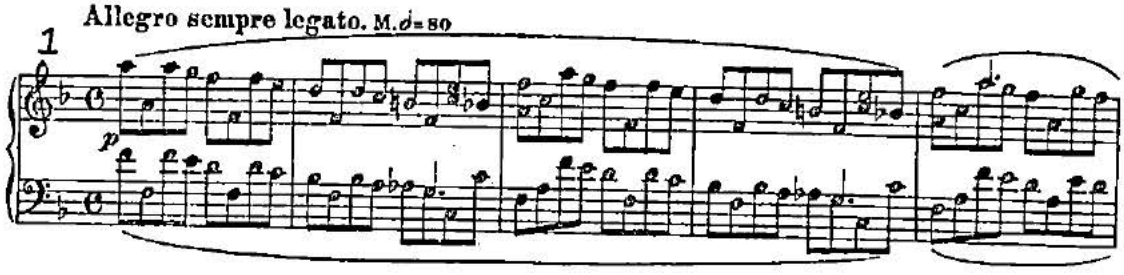
Ex. 55: Etude no. 9 (1839), mm. 14-19.

Articulation markings such as those in Ex. 55 infuse the melodic line with subtle rhythmic nuances which enhance its expressive powers. This rubato, so characteristic of operatic melody, coupled with the rhythmic freedom of improvisation also produced greater flexibility within the phrases of 1839. In certain cases, as in the example below from Etude no. 3, this led to a substantial increase in the breadth of the line.[27] The first version of this work contains eighth notes which fall uniformly into groups of 3+1 (the first group is incomplete), causing the last note in each group to always land on a strong beat. (See Ex. 56.) This stress on the first and third beats is compounded by the nature of the theme itself; the line consistently descends so that there is a constant "falling into" the strong beat.

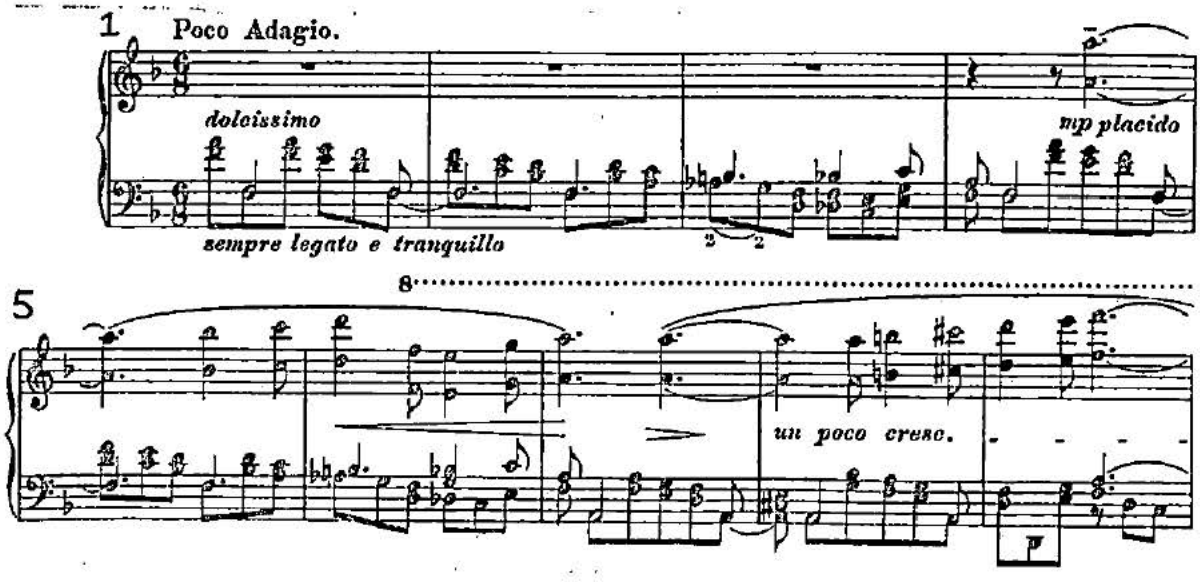
By changing the meter to 6/8 in the 1839 version, Liszt is consistently able to shift the position of the note-groupings within the bar. A downbeat, coinciding with the last note of a group of three, is avoided until m. 3 (Ex. 57). Yet even then, the tension of the B♮ disrupts the anticipated rest on the strong beat. Not until the theme begins again is there a feeling of resolution.

The destruction of the rhythmic regularity of the 1826 etude results in a longer line in the revised version. A sense of rhythmic ambiguity is created in the very first bar by the illusion of an upbeat. It is further heightened by the addition of the countermelody in the second repetition which also avoids a downbeat by beginning on the second beat of the bar and then being tied over the barline.

In the 1826 version, the theme fits uniformly, albeit mechanically, into the 4/4 meter. The last note falls on the first beat of the third bar, so that there is a simultaneous ending and beginning. In the 6/8 meter, on the other hand, such symmetry is not possible; the pattern ends on the fifth eighth note of the third bar. Liszt extends the melodic material at this point to fill up the entire measure so that the second repetition begins on the first beat of the fourth bar. This process of stretching has two results: it leads to a greater rhythmic ambiguity as the regular grouping is disrupted, and it eliminates the symmetrical four-bar phrasing found in the 1826 etude.



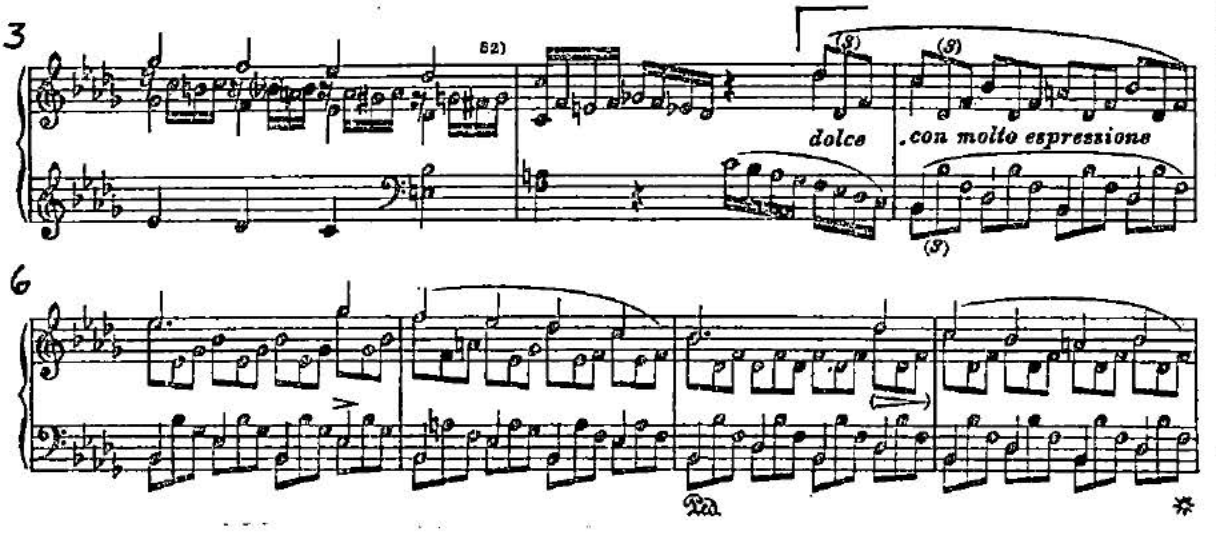
Ex. 56: Etude no. 3 (1826), mm. 1-5.



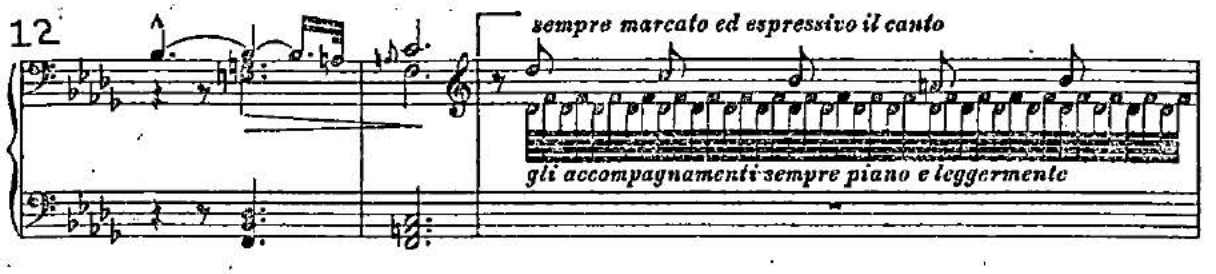
Ex. 57: Etude no. 3 (1839), mm. 1-9.

The introduction of a new meter in Etude no. 12 gives the main theme more buoyancy, increasing the breadth of the line from two to four bars.[28] In the original version in 4/4, the first beat of each bar is clearly felt in the melody (Ex. 58). This is avoided in 1839 by the new 6/8 meter; the melody now starts on a weak beat as before, but here five notes are heard before the downbeat is reached. Yet,

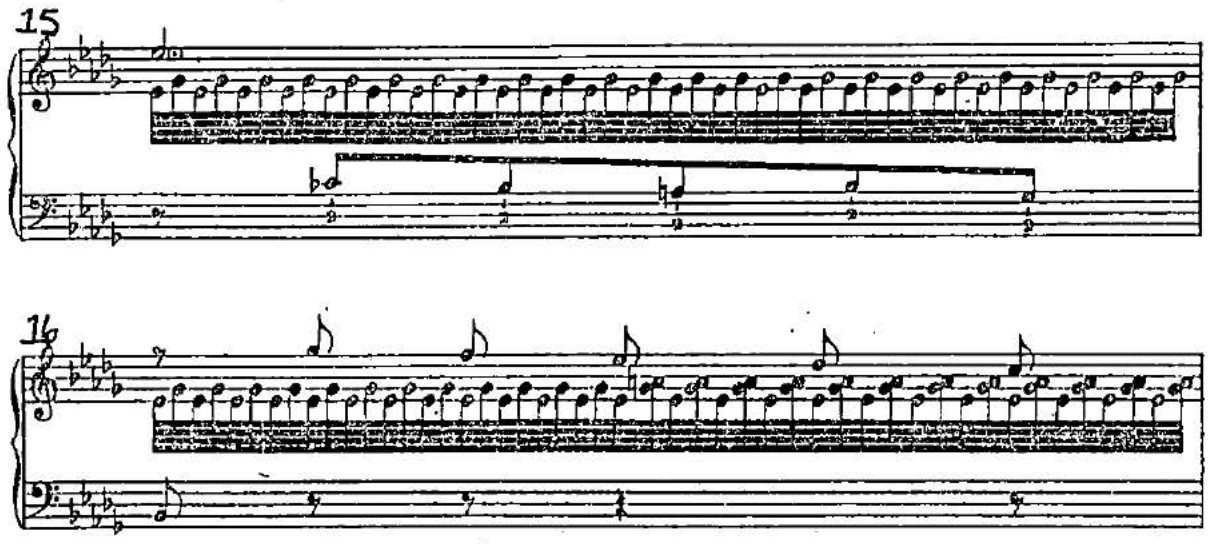
even then the security of this arrival is destroyed by the shape of the theme itself; the end of the first measure ascends so that a feeling of up, not down, is felt on the E^{b} (Ex. 59, m. 15). The music does not land on an unequivocal downbeat until m. 17. The rhythmic ambiguity of 1839 is compounded by the accompaniment--a continuous tremolo which heightens the feeling of anxious searching expressed by the melody.



Ex. 58: Etude no. 12 (1826), mm. 3-9.



Ex. 59: Etude no. 12 (1839), mm. 12-16.



Ex. 59: Etude no. 12 (1839), mm. 12-16 (continued).

As we have seen, the remarkable metamorphosis which transpired in the second version of the *Transcendental Etudes* was made possible by the combination of many new compositional resources, involving the harmonic, rhythmic, thematic, and tonal parameters of music. At the same time, these works show a very striking advance in their exploitation of the sonority of the piano. In these etudes from 1839 " . . . he [Liszt] surpassed all available and imaginable possibilities of the piano and he never made such an immeasurable stride again."[29] Yet it was this very abundance of means which also created the major weakness of these words--the tendency to extend ideas beyond reasonable lengths, to luxuriate in an effect so that a sense of proportion is lost.

By contrast, the final version of the etudes departs yet again from the basic motives in their expanded form of 1839. The refinement of sound and formal sophistication which characterize this final version indicate a new maturity in Liszt's compositional style.

Historical hindsight has tended to relegate the second version to the status of a curiosity, a set of museum pieces. Yet there is much of lasting interest in this version of the etudes. Much of the poetry of the 1852 version lies latent behind their formidable technical demands. The next chapter will concern the manner in which Liszt was able to draw out the musical essence of the 1839 etudes while subordinating their technical extravagances.

NOTES

THE ETUDE EN DOUZE EXERCICES (1826) AND THE DOUZE GRANDES ETUDES (1839)

[1]The similar texture of the Chopin etude op. 25, no. 6 and the existence of this same harmonic shift up a fourth in the second phrase, might suggest that Liszt modelled his etude after Chopin's, which appeared two years earlier in 1837. However, this same harmonic shift is already present in the first version of the Liszt etude from 1826.

It is, perhaps, not the similarities of the two works, but the different approaches to the etude by the two composers, which are of more significance. Although both works are concerned with the execution of double notes, Liszt employs them much more freely and does not hesitate to modify the texture. The double thirds of the Chopin etude are continued throughout the work while Liszt uses various combinations of double notes and inserts sections which abandon them entirely. Thus, the pedegogical intent of the Chopin etude is maintained more consciously throughout the work.

[2]See the discussion above of Schumann's review, pp. 16-17, n. 18.

[3]Although the phrase length of 1839 is certainly more conventional, Liszt achieves greater rhythmic interest by a subdivision within the bars of 4+4+4.

Conway proposes that the lengthened theme of 1839 suggests a quote from *Dies Irae*. See Conway, p. 69. However, he does not explore the significance of the quotation in this particular etude. The text of *Dies Irae* corresponds to that of Hugo's poem, "Vision," from which this etude received its title. See p. 17, n. 21, above and Hugo, *Odes et Ballades*, pp. 63-7.

[4]Although Etude no. 12 already had an introduction in 1826, it is radically altered and expanded in 1839 and can therefore be considered completely new.

[5]A similar gesture is found in the Liszt-Paganini Etude no. 2. Each work begins with a fanfare motive, which ends triumphantly on the dominant seventh chord (followed by a short cadenza in the

Paganini Etude). After a dramatic pause, a complete change of mood is provided by the main theme of each (marked *piano* and *delicamente* in the 1839 etude and *con delicatezza* in the Liszt-Paganini work).

[6]For a more complete treatment of this technique, see the discussion above regarding sequences, p. 60.

[7]George Sand, *Journal Intime*, trans. and ed. Marie Jenney Howe (New York: Loring & Mussey, 1929), p. 54.

[8]See the discussion above regarding transference of thematic material, p. 26.

[9]Although the decrescendo is an editorial marking by Busoni, it would appear to be justified as the antecedent of the 1839 coda. (See the following paragraph.)

[10]See Walter Schenkman's discussion of "Reminiscences de Robert le Diable" and other works in: "Combination of Themes as a Hallmark of Romantic Style," *Music Review* 37 (1976): 184-8.

[11]For a more complete treatment of this technique, see the discussion regarding sequences, p. 60.

[12]Examples of third-related patterns are found in Etude no. 10 (mm. 48-53) and Etude no. 7 (mm. 13-16).

[13]See for example the discussion of the first movement of the piano sonata, op. 2, no. 1 in Erwin Ratz, *Einführung in die Musikalische Formenlehre* (Vienna: Universal Editions, 1968), p. 23. In this sonata the opening two-bar tonic-dominant sequence is diminished three times in the ensuing measures.

[14]*The New Grove*, VI, S.v. "Liszt, Franz," by Humphrey Searle.

[15]In addition to the passage below from the ninth etude, examples may be found in Etude no. 8 (mm. 21-4 and mm. 25-31), Etude no. 10 (mm. 30-43), and Etude no. 11 (mm. 43-55).

[16]An analogous passage exists in the introduction. See the discussion above regarding introductions, p. 31.

[17]Two etudes introduce new material in the second section. See Etude no. 4, mm. 25-40 and Etude no. 11, mm. 27-63.

[18]Conway describes this as a theme with continuous development and variation on a ternary plan, p. 164.

[19]This correspondence is also found in the first version, for it is this etude which contains the most widespread transference of thematic material. See the discussion ahove regarding transference of thematic material, p. 23. Conway does not recognize any correspondence between the two themes, describing the formal plan as a five-part sectional form, p. 105.

[20]Although a tonic pedal is employed here, Liszt must have later reconsidered its effectiveness, because it was replaced by the more dramatic dominant pedal of the opening in the final version. A similar example occurs in the coda of the third etude, mm. 104-8 (1839) and mm. 81-85 (1852).

[21]Conway describes the work simply as a theme with continuous development and variation in an arch form, p. 165.

[22]Sir Donald Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis*, vol. 1: *Symphonies and other Orchestral Works* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935-9; reprint ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 441.

[23]Schumann, *On Music*, p. 178.

[24]In certain key places the orchestration is indicated on the score.

[25]Liszt, *Etüden*, T. II, Bd. 1, p. 36.

[26]Liszt uses his own marking (_____) here.

[27]See also the discussion above regarding Etude no. 6 in thematic transference, pp. 28-9, 87, n. 3.

THE ETUDES D'EXECUTION TRANSCENDANTE (1852)

In his 1840 review of the *Douze grandes études*, Robert Schumann implied that Liszt's amazing powers as a pianist had been achieved at the expense of his development as a composer. It was Schumann's belief that Liszt should revise his works in an effort to reattain the simplicity of the *Etude en douze exercices* of 1826.

> But I sincerely believe that had Liszt, with his eminently musical nature, devoted the same time to composition and to himself that he has given to his instrument and to the works of others, he would have become a very remarkable composer. . . . To win the favor of his fatherland, he would, above all things, have had to return to serenity and simplicity, which so agreeably express themselves in these older etudes; he would have had to initiate the reverse process with his compositions--that of simplification rather than of complication.[1]

Eight years later, Liszt established permanent residence at Weimar, a move which marked the end of his career as a virtuoso: Liszt was now free to dedicate himself to composition. During the next few years he improved many of his earlier works through careful revision, including several of the pieces which would later constitute the first two books of the *Années de Pèlerinage*, the *Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses* and the *Paganini* and *Transcendental Etudes*.

It is Humphrey Searle's opinion that the etudes were revised in order to eliminate an inherent danger--that they could become mere technical showpieces. Liszt therefore sought to pare down some of the more difficult passages.[2] Certainly, few contemporary musicians realized

the full musical potential of these etudes. Schumann himself was only able to appreciate their intrinsic value through Liszt's own performance. He recommended that " . . . all these should be heard played by a master, and, if possible, by Liszt himself."[3]

An even more extreme view was held by Berlioz: "Unfortunately one cannot hope to hear music of this kind often; Liszt created it for himself, and no one else in the world could flatter himself that he could approach being able to perform it."[4] Moreover, Liszt himself wrote to the Abbé de Lamennais in 1845 that a work could not be understood unless it was well performed: " . . . but unfortunately it is not with music as with painting and poetry: body and soul alone are not enough to make it comprehensible; it has to be performed, and very well performed too, to be understood and felt."[5]

Certainly there were few pianists able to subjugate the technical difficulties to the musical intent. Such matters were, however, of little concern to Liszt. He was never a promoter of his own music and even tried to discourage his students and friends from performing it.[6]

It was in a letter to his former teacher, Carl Czerny, that Liszt disclosed what was probably his true motive for the revisions: he simply realized the weaknesses of certain passages and sought to correct them.

> . . . I have gone through a rather severe work of revision, and have remodelled entirely several of my old works (amongst others the Studies which are dedicated to you, and of which I will send you a copy of the definitive edition in a few weeks . . .[7]

For Liszt, the process of revision was a valuable one.

> In literature the production of very much altered, increased, and improved editions is no uncommon thing. In works both important and trivial, alterations, additions, varying divisions of periods, etc., are a common experience of an author. In the domain of music such a thing is more minute and more difficult--and therefore it is seldom done. None the less do I consider it very profitable to correct one's mistakes as far as possible, and to make use of the experiences one gains by the editions of the works themselves. I, for my part, have striven to do this; and, if I have not succeeded, it at least testifies to my earnest endeavour.[8]

The third and definitive version of the *Transcendental Etudes*, a product of these years of revision, was published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1852. Liszt was obviously satisfied: the earlier versions were declared invalid.

> The Hofmeister edition of the twelve Studies (with a lithograph of a *cradle*, and the publisher's addition "*travail de jeunesse*"!) is simply a piracy of the book of Studies which was published at Frankfort when I was thirteen years old. I have long disowned this edition and replaced it by the second, under the title "Etudes *d'exécution transcendante*," published by Haslinger in Vienna, Schlesinger in Paris, and Mori and Lavener in London. But this second edition has now been annulled several years ago, and Haslinger has, by my desire, put aside my copyright and plates, and bound himself by contract not to publish any more copies of this work henceforth. After a complete agreement with him I set to work and produced a third edition of my twelve Studies (very materially improved and transformed), and begged Messers. Härtel to publish it with the note "*seule édition authentique, revue par l'auteur, etc.*," which they did.[9]

The differences between the final two versions are considerably less dramatic than those between the first two: there are no radical transformations as occurred in 1839. Yet, the subtle changes which did transpire produced significant results. These modifications will be

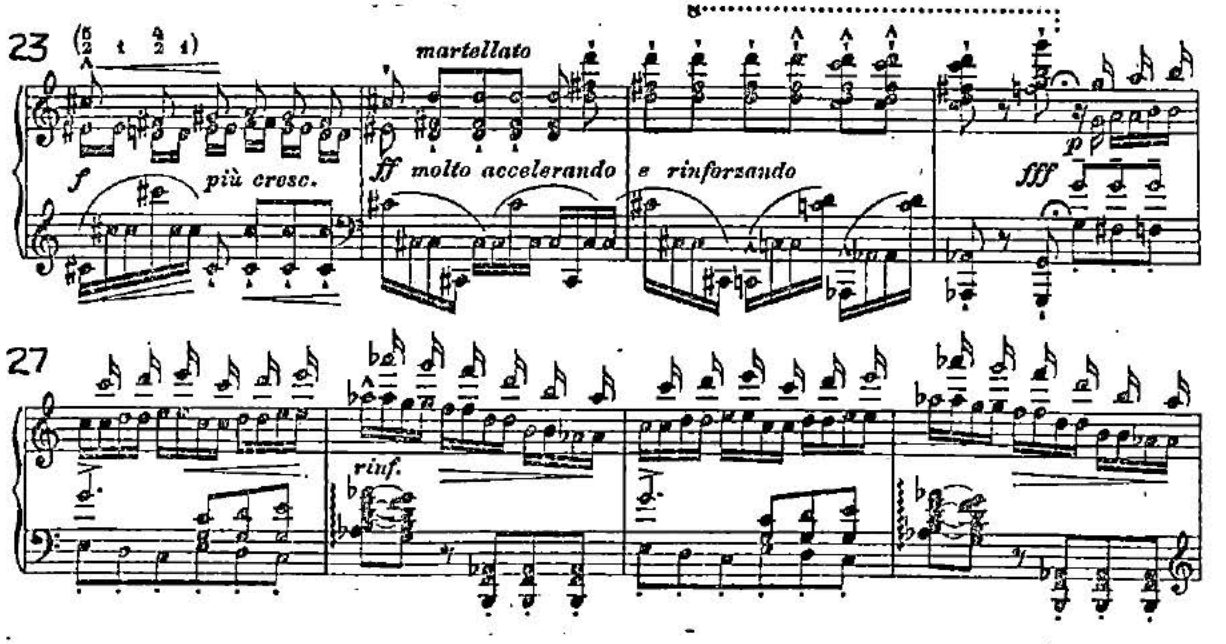
discussed in terms of two broad categories--those changes which are directed towards the refinement of sound, and those which promote a greater sense of formal integrity.

I. REFINEMENT OF SOUND

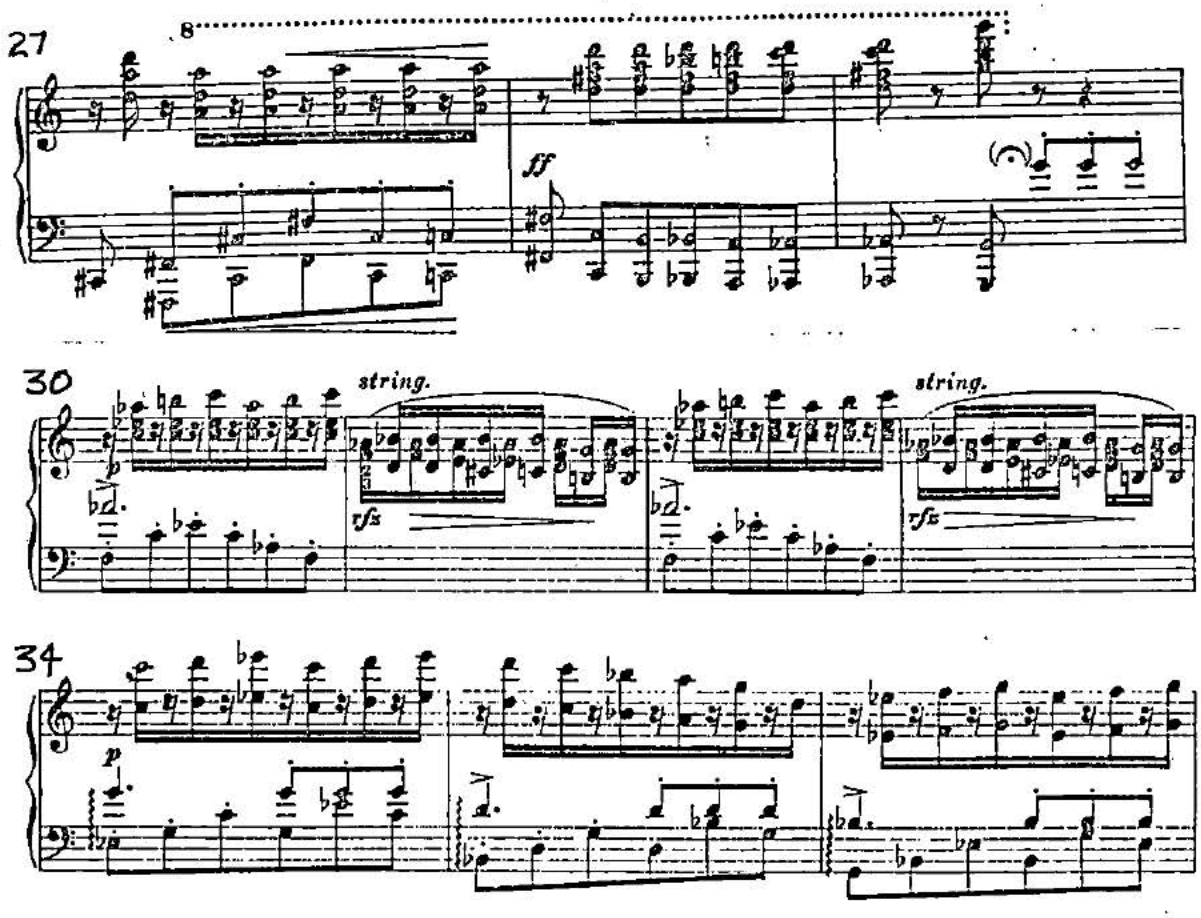
In his discussion of Liszt's contribution to the romantic movement, Paul Henry Lang proposes that "The promotion of sonority to an element of inspiration is perhaps the most important single factor in musical Romanticism."[10] This statement is surely true of the final version of the etudes, which in most cases are really tone poems for the piano. Liszt's consciousness of their new identity is demonstrated by his decision to give titles to nine of them.[11] Everywhere in the final version a greater emphasis on the quality of sound predominates. The vast experience in composition which Liszt gained in the thirteen years between the two final versions showed the extent to which sonority could be used as a basic focus of detail and even of organization. Many of his changes are clearly the result of a more refined sense of the latent possibilities of colour and texture which he had realized with only partial success in the etudes of 1839.

The increased richness of harmonic colour in these works is typified in Etude no. 2. At the close of the first section, C major is implied in both versions through the resolution of the augmented sixth to the dominant G (Ex. 60, m. 26 and Ex. 61, m. 29). In 1839,

this expectation is confirmed in the subsequent measure which is clearly in C major (Ex. 60, mm. 26-27). In the final version, however, the harmonic progression is far less straightforward. Here the passage begins with an F minor seventh chord rather than the anticipated C major (Ex. 61, m. 30). Four measures later a weak cadence on C minor suggests some tonal stability, but this is almost immediately undermined by a sequential passage. In its initial appearance, following an established dominant, this minor seventh chord results in tonal surprise and ambiguity. Its use is colouristic rather than truly functional.



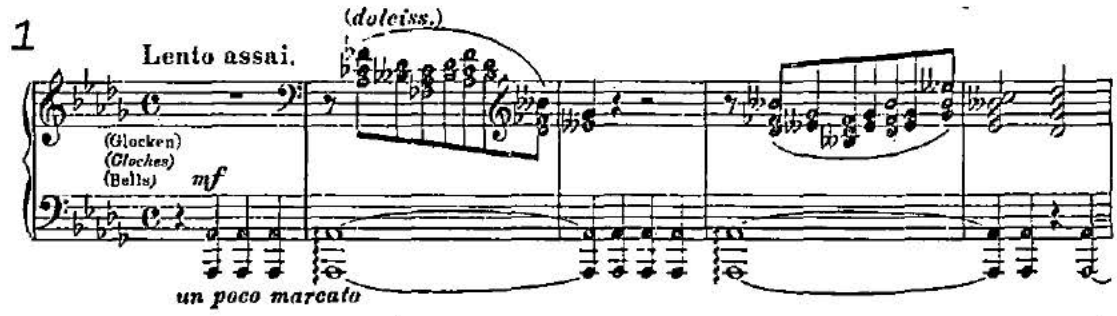
Ex. 60: Etude no. 2 (1839), mm. 23-30.



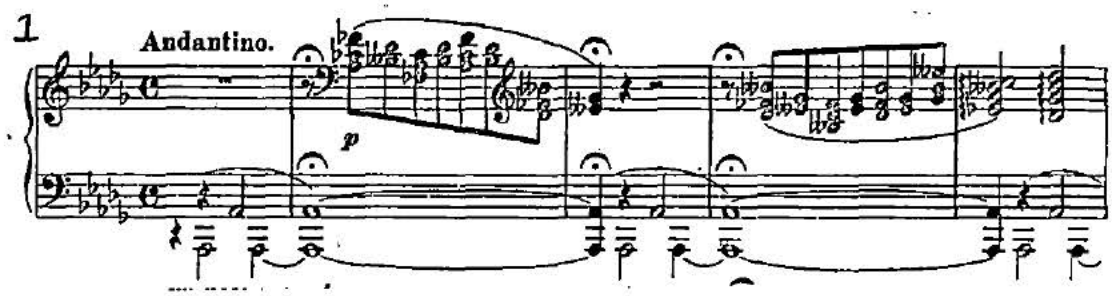
Ex. 61: Etude no. 2 (1852), mm. 27-36.

Other sonorities convey more than an undefined colouring--they evoke specific images. Etude no. 11, which Liszt titled "Harmonies du Soir," contains several striking examples. The imitation of bells is already attempted in this work in 1839 (see Ex. 62, m. 1). Yet Liszt was obviously not satisfied with his solution--a series of repeated octaves--for he varied it tellingly in the final version (Ex. 63, m. 1). Here the earlier hammer-like strokes are replaced by

broken octaves. The resulting overlapping and continuous ringing of the sound is a true evocation of distant bells rather than a mere imitation. Significantly, Liszt omitted the programmatic indication "Glocken" in 1852.



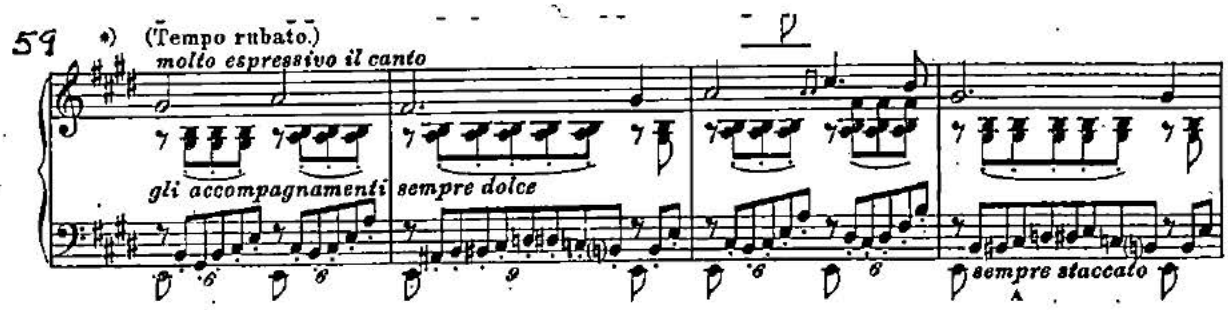
Ex. 62: Etude no. 11 (1839), mm. 1-5.



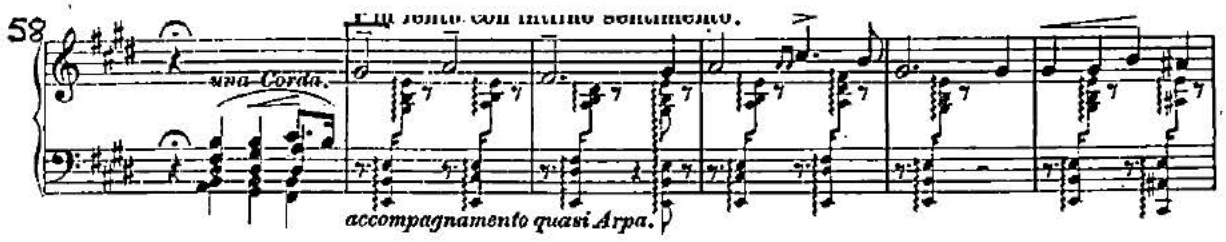
Ex. 63: Etude no. 11 (1852), mm. 1-5

The second theme of this etude is surely one of Liszt's most sensuous melodies. In 1839 it is graced with an accompaniment suggestive of pizzicato strings (Ex. 64, m. 59). Yet the conflicting rhythmic patterns of the middle voices reduce the effectiveness of the passage--the melody is obscured rather than highlighted. To ensure the proper *cantando* quality, Liszt found it necessary to append the following

advice: " . . . the greatest care must be taken not to confound the rhythms of the accompaniments for the right hand with those for the left hand, and distinguish clearly the quaver movement from the triplet movement." Liszt's solution in 1852 was a purely *musical* one, as was his solution regarding the evocation of bells in the opening measures. He provided the melodic line with a new accompaniment of rolled chords "quasi arpa" (Ex. 65, m. 59). In this version, the expressive and intimate nature of the melody is more apparent; the reduction of the secondary material allows it to sing out unaffectedly, *semplice*. Furthermore, the delicacy of the "quasi arpa" accompaniment evokes an almost celestial image.



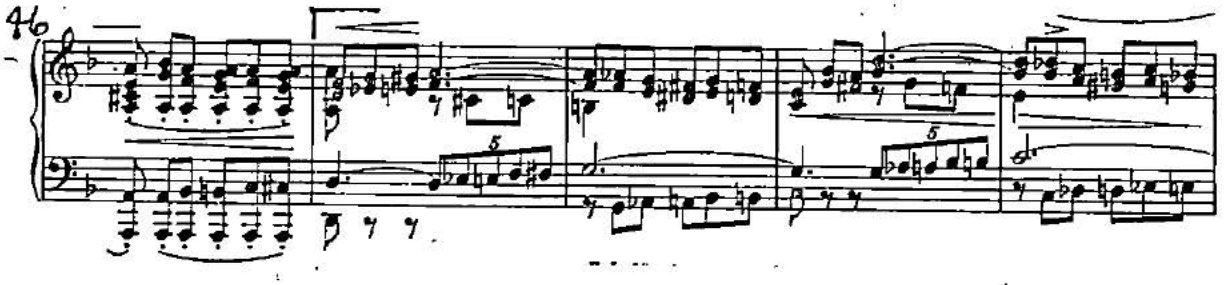
Ex. 64, Etude no. 11 (1839), mm. 59-62.



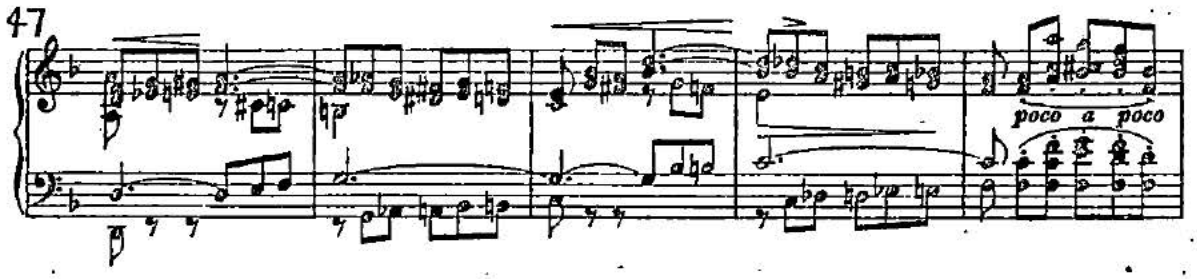
Ex. 65, Etude no. 11 (1852), mm. 58-63.

Liszt was evidently very concerned with the clarity of line in all of his revisions. In addition to the example just discussed,

a further and perhaps more subtle change occurs in Etude no. 3, "Paysage." In the 1839 version it is not the melody but rather the counterpoint in the alto which is obscured by complex rhythmic patterns in a close range (Ex. 66, mm. 47, 49). The synchronization of these two rhythms in the final version produces a much clearer delineation of the voice-leading (Ex. 67, mm. 47, 49).



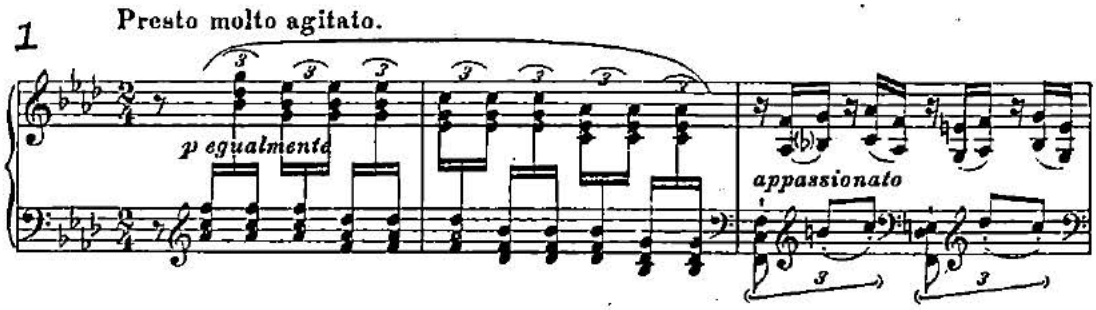
Ex. 66: Etude no. 3 (1839), mm. 46-50.



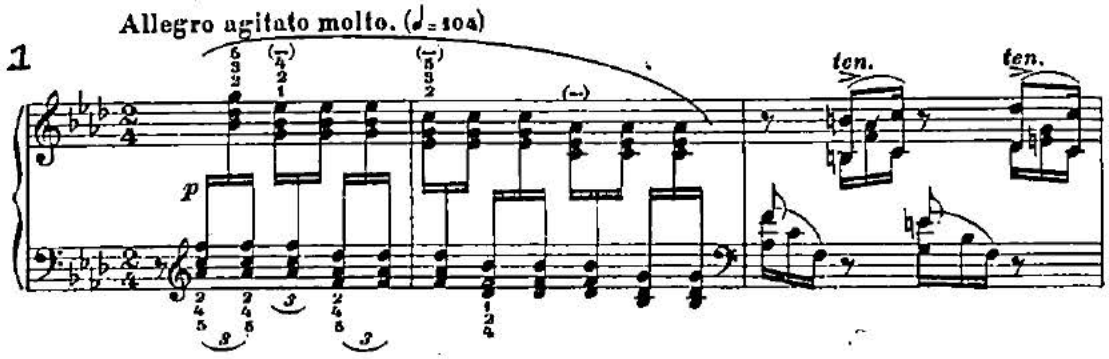
Ex. 67: Etude no. 3 (1852), mm. 47-51.

Another case of rhythmic simplification in the service of greater clarity occurs in Etude no. 10. In the second (1839) version the accompanying sixteenths are in the same range as the soprano melody, making it difficult for the listener (and the performer) to extract the primary material, the important motive B-C, D^{b}-C (Ex. 68, m. 3). This difficulty is compounded by the complex rhythmic pattern and the hand-crossings at the tempo of *presto molto agitato*.

Liszt's solution in 1852 is to alternate the accompaniment between the two hands, while always keeping the melodic notes in a higher range (Ex. 69, m. 3). For further emphasis, the melodic line is doubled at the octave and provided with both *tenuto* markings and accents. The melodic structure is thereby clarified, and the bass notes F and E♭ are now clearly heard as a continuation of the descending figure in mm. 1-2. Furthermore, the use of syncopation in the right hand generates greater agitation in this version.



Ex. 68: Etude no. 10 (1839), mm. 1-3.

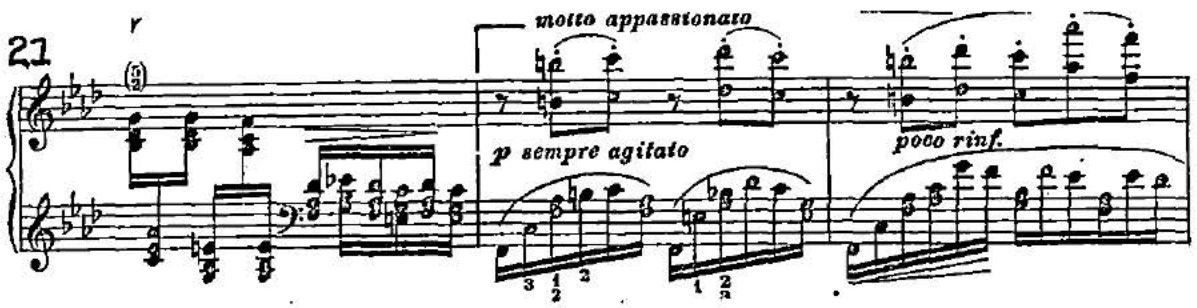


Ex. 69: Etude no. 10 (1852), mm. 1-3.

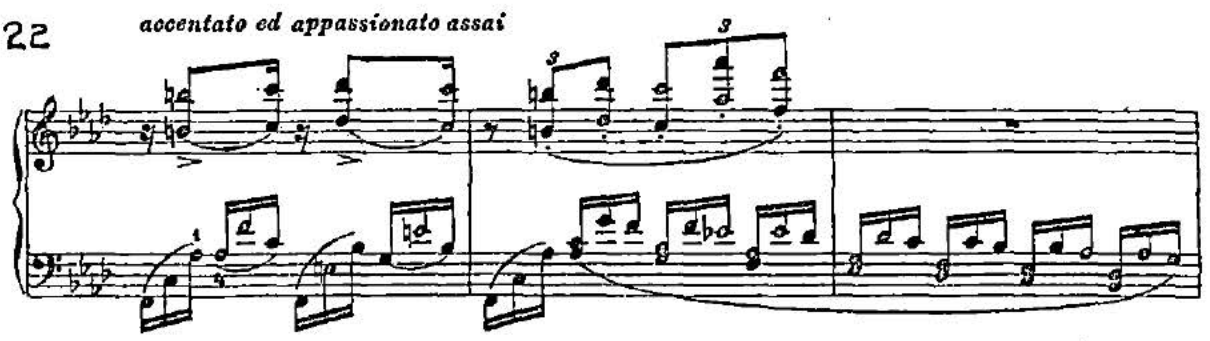
Throughout this etude there are several further subtle rhythmic changes that contribute to an intensification of this agitation. Busoni entitled this work the "Appassionata" because of its key, F minor,

and mood, *Allegro agitato molto*. The title is particularly apt for this final version which Liszt carefully revised to strengthen its impassioned character.

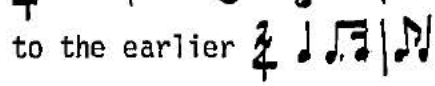
This refinement is illustrated in the following excerpt where the triplets in the right hand in 1839 (Ex. 70, m. 22) are replaced by a syncopation in the final version (Ex. 71, m. 22). The shorter rest (now a sixteenth) also imparts a greater sense of urgency and drives the music forward. Reinforcing this is the more punctuated phrasing in the left hand.

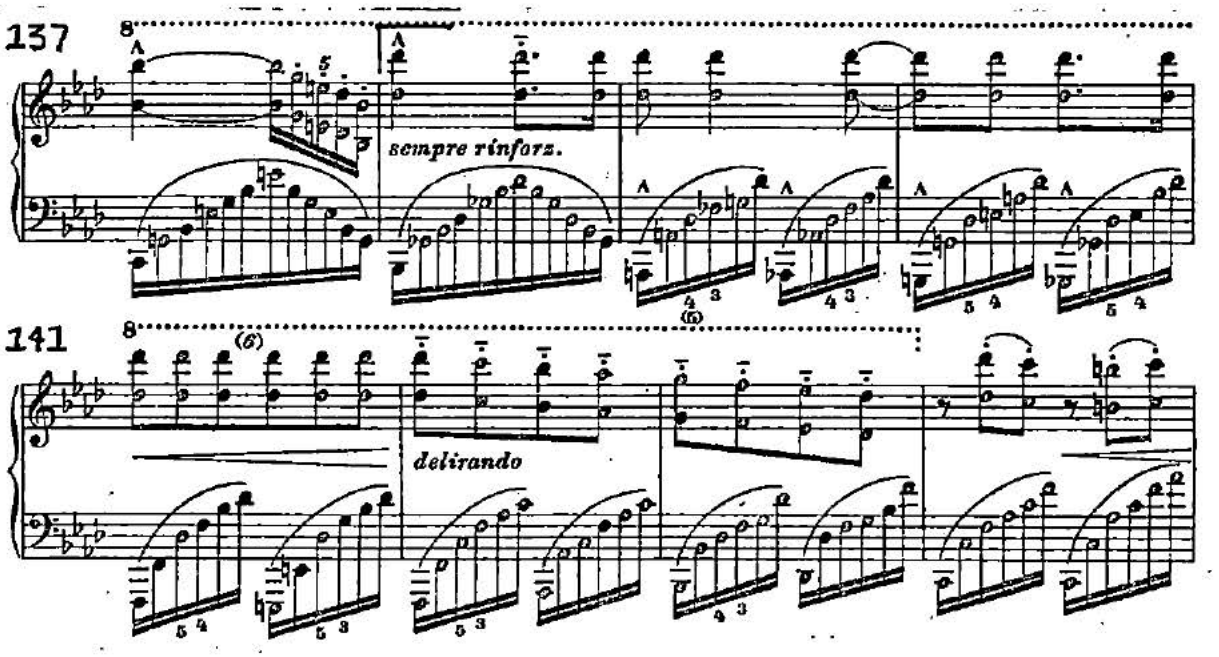


Ex. 70: Etude no. 10 (1839), mm. 21-23.

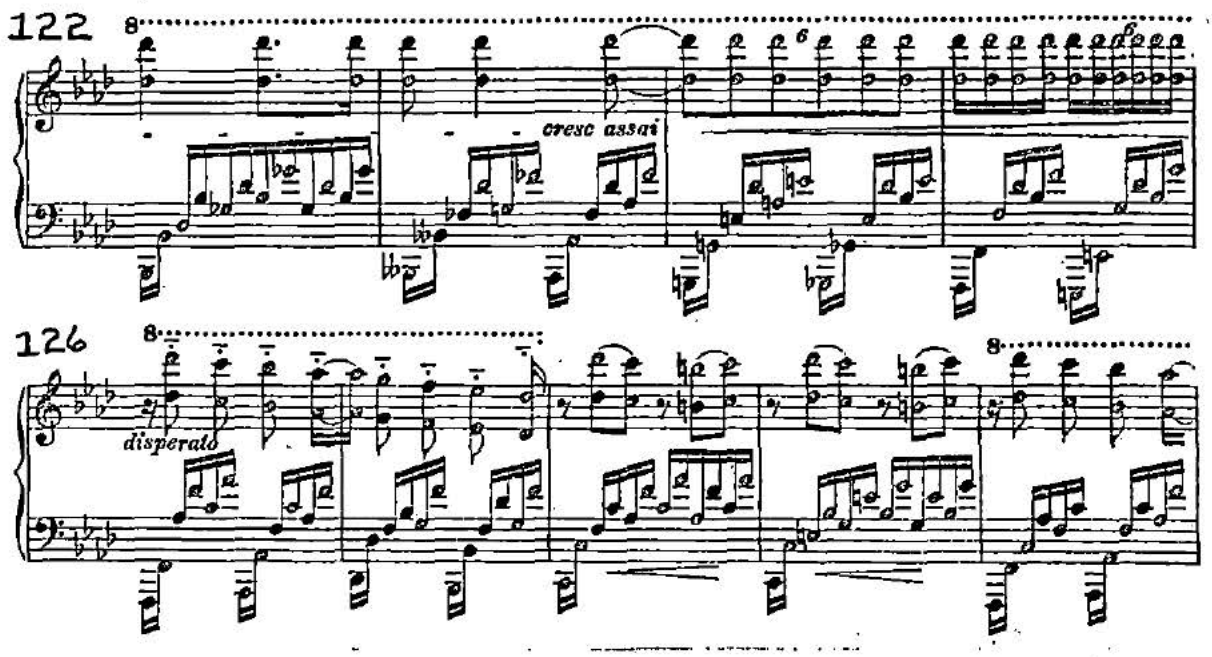


Ex. 71: Etude no. 10 (1852), mm. 22-24.

At m. 122 in the final version (see Ex. 73), the octave D^{b} initiates one of the most agitated sections of this etude. At this point, the music is hurled forward by a written-out accelerando. It has more drive in 1852 because of the greater rhythmic diminution:  (Ex. 73, mm. 122-5) in contrast to the earlier  (Ex. 72, mm. 138-41). Moreover, the ensuing *disperato* section is intensified in 1852 by a new syncopated version of the melody (see Ex. 72, mm. 142-3 and Ex. 73, mm. 126-7).

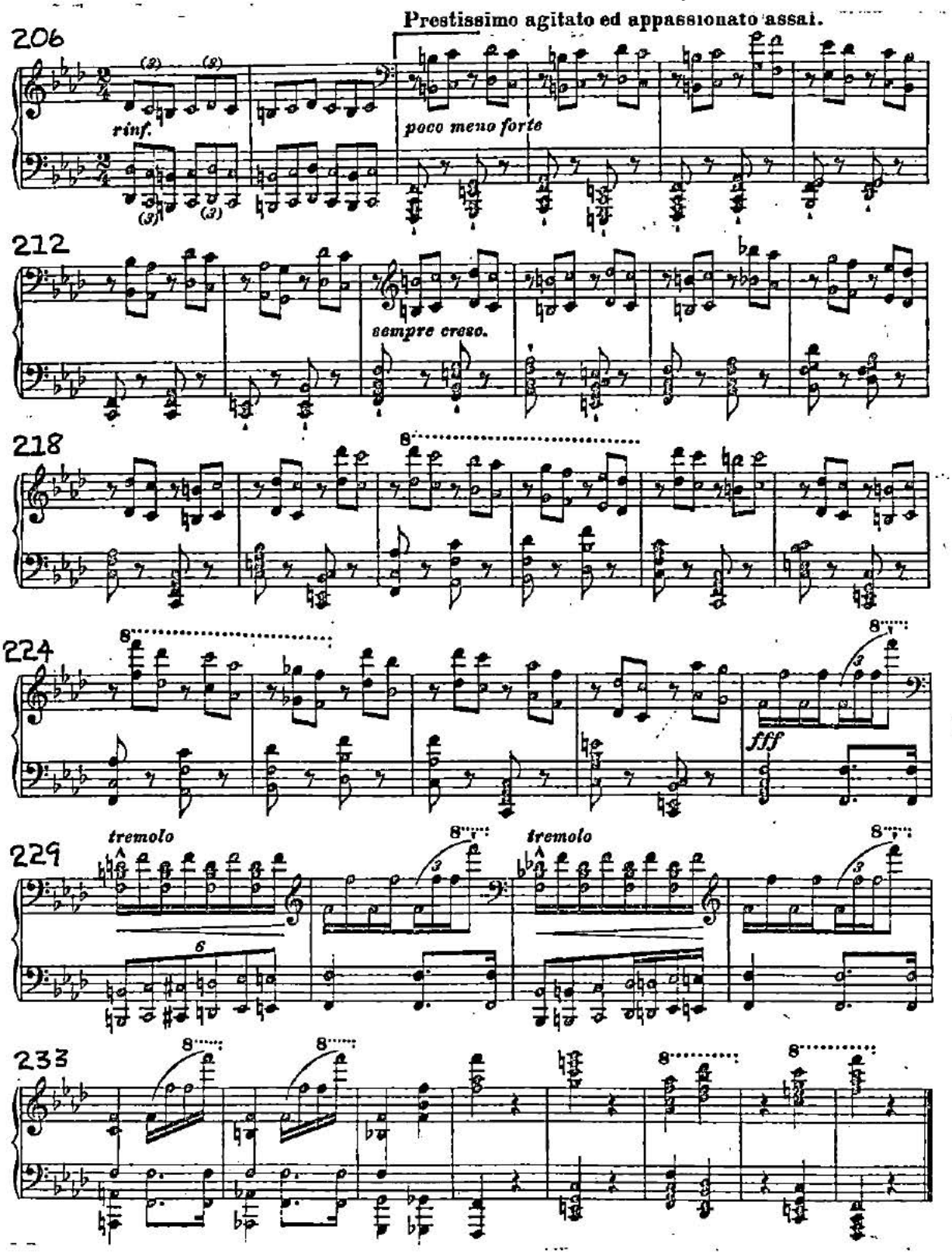


Ex. 72: Etude no. 10 (1839), mm. 137-144.

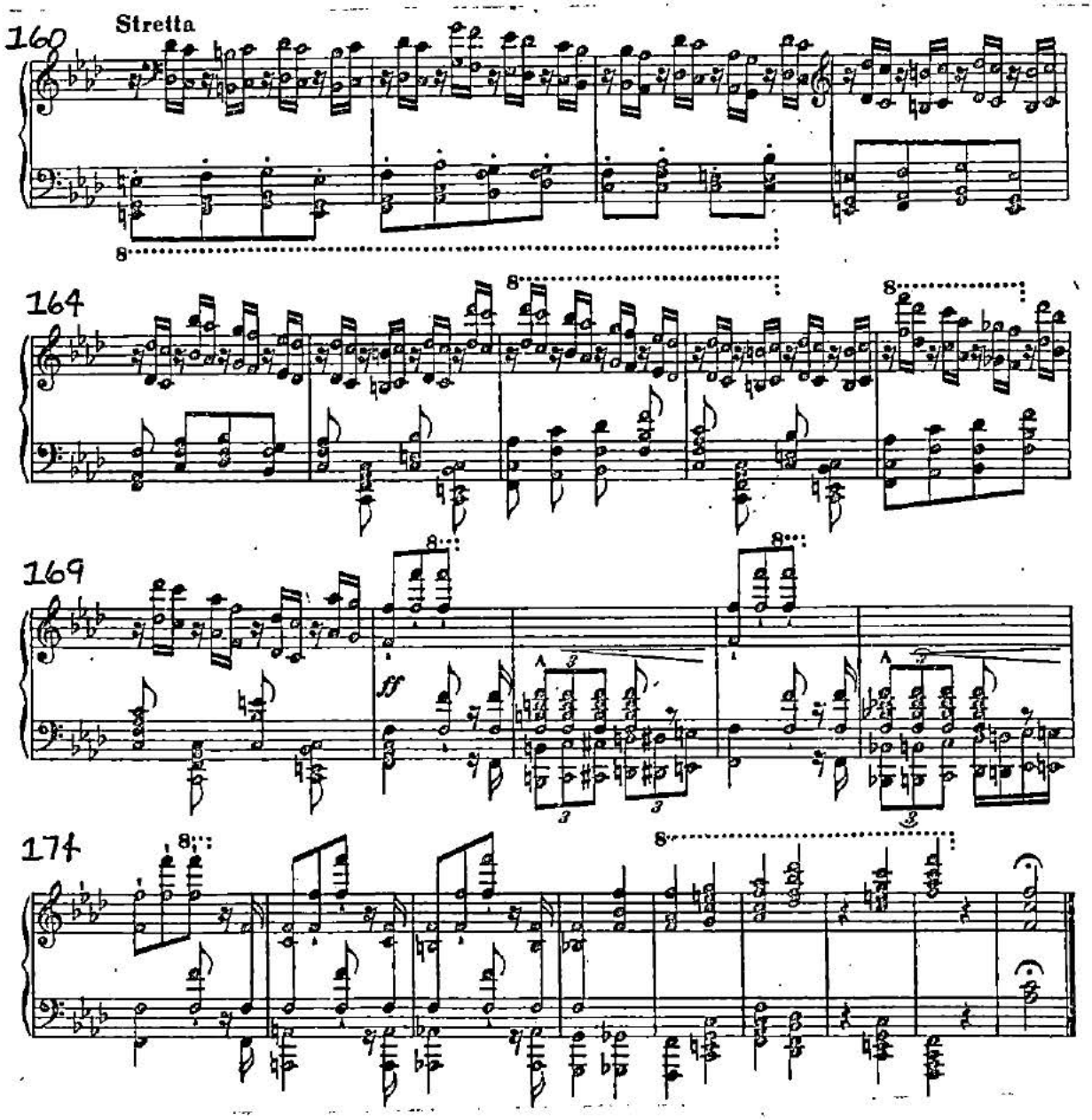


Ex. 73: Etude no. 10 (1852), mm. 122-130.

The impact of the coda has also been strengthened through the use of rhythmic diminution. A sense of breathlessness results from the doubled time values (see Ex. 74, mm. 208-227 and Ex. 75, mm. 160-169). This is maintained through the final measures; the omission of several rests propels the music with greater force into the final chord (Ex. 74, mm. 235-240 and Ex. 75, mm. 176-182).



Ex. 74: Etude no. 10 (1839), mm. 206-240.

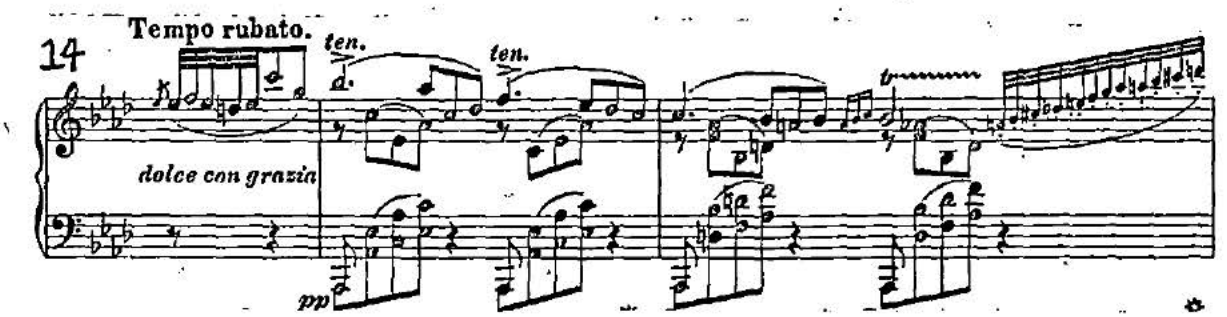


Ex. 75: Etude no. 10 (1852), mm. 160-182.

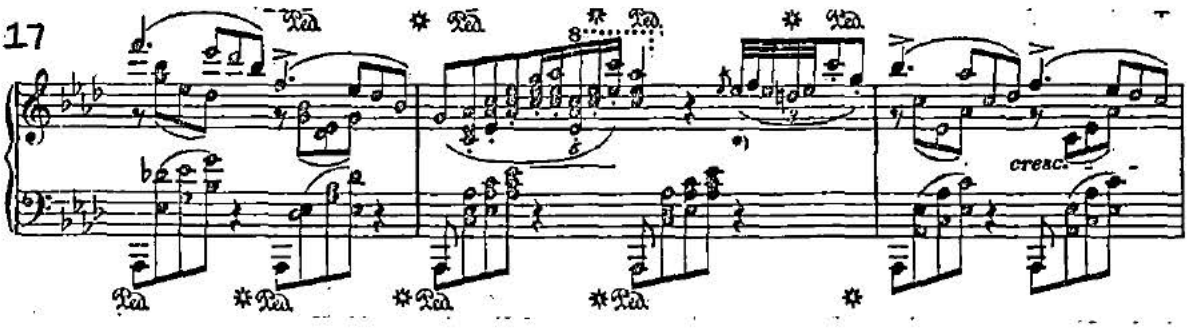
The intensification of mood in Etude no. 9, "Ricordanza," is especially striking. Like the previous example, it is a subtle rhythmic change in the theme which has such a telling effect. The

syncopation of the melody in 1852 by the insertion of an eighth rest before each phrase gives the immediate effect of more stress on the appoggiatura (see Ex. 76, mm. 15-16 and Ex. 77, mm. 15-16). More significant, however, is the slight delay incurred before each entry of the right hand.[12] It thrusts the line forward, in contrast to the earlier version which emphasized the smaller units. This hesitation--an uncertainty as the memory dims or a catch in the throat between images--heightens the nostalgic mood. The extended pedal markings, now lasting the entire measure, reinforce this--purposefully blurring the successive tableaux and enriching the harmonic texture.

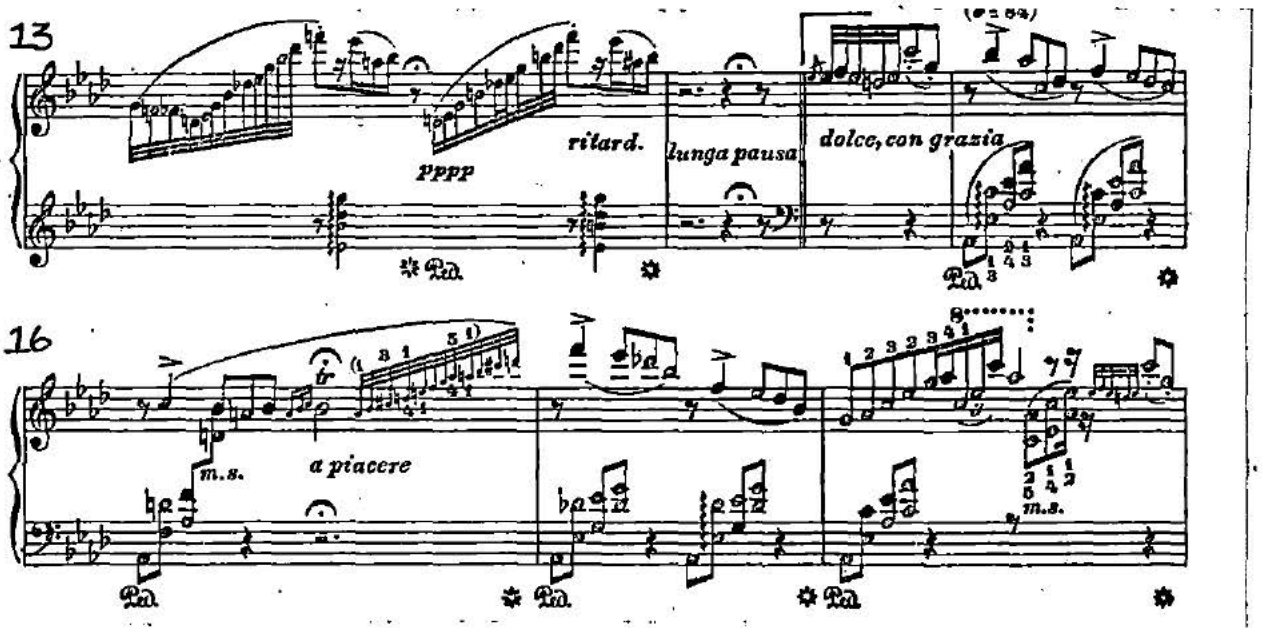
There is one further change which, like the refinement of the second theme in Etude no. 11, is directed towards an increased emphasis of the melodic line. By redistributing the melody and accompaniment, Liszt creates greater distance betwene the two parts (see Ex. 76, m. 15 and Ex. 77, m. 15). The resultant poetic refinement is impressive--the new transparency of the texture allows a clearer articulation of the theme.



Ex. 76: Etude no. 9 (1839), mm. 14-19.



Ex. 76: Etude no. 9 (1839), mm. 14-19 (continued).

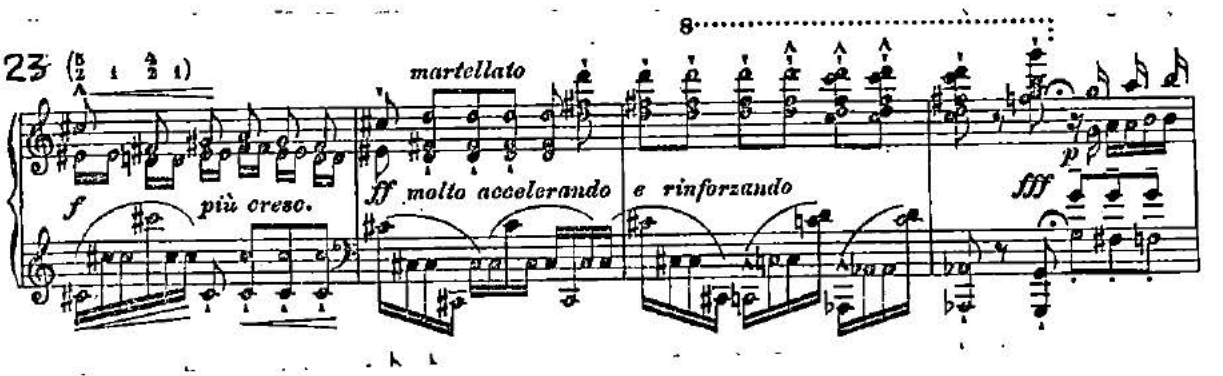


Ex. 77: Etude no. 9 (1852), mm. 13-18.

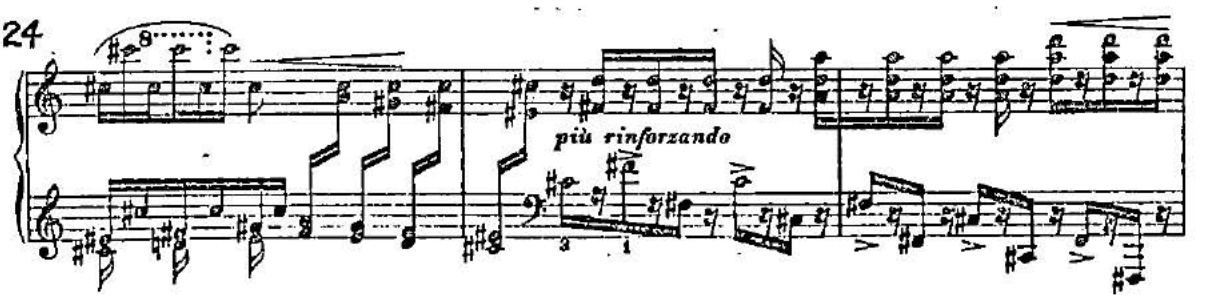
In several of the examples above, the changes in 1852 allow greater ease of execution. However, it was not a desire for technical simplification that motivated the revisions of 1852. Previously, it was noted that the relative inaccessibility of Liszt's music, caused by its high degree of technical difficulty, did not concern the composer.[13]

It is, therefore, not surprising to discover that the facilitations in this version occurred mainly as by-products of the musical refinements. This occurs even when Liszt is striving for a bigger sound.

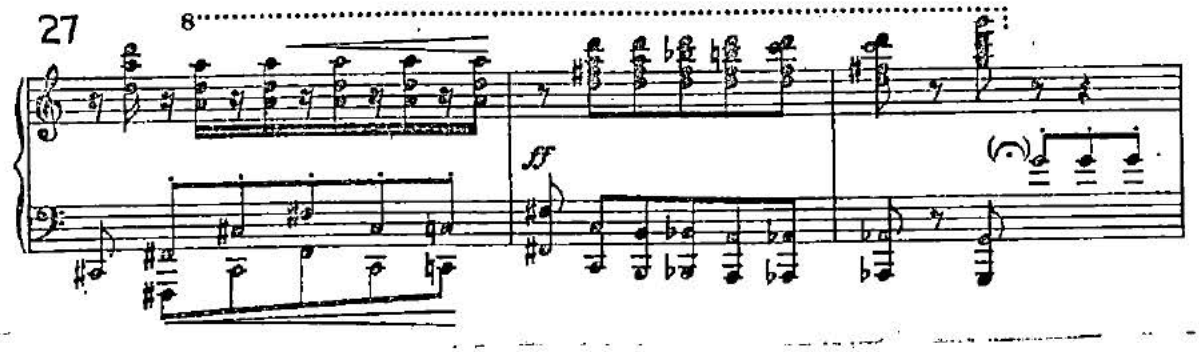
The passage which ends the first section of Etude no. 2 contains the indications *martellato, ff molto accelerando e rinforzando* (Ex. 78, mm. 24-26). These are difficult to achieve with the broken octaves of the left hand. Liszt's solution of 1852 is to insert single notes which can be executed with a percussive stroke of the whole arm (Ex. 79, mm. 25-29).[14] Much greater volume and stronger accents are possible in this version than with the rotary motion required for the octaves of 1839. It is this greater ease of execution, though, which probably partly accounts for Liszt's decision to extend this passage by one measure in the final version.



Ex. 78: Etude no. 2 (1839), mm. 23-26.

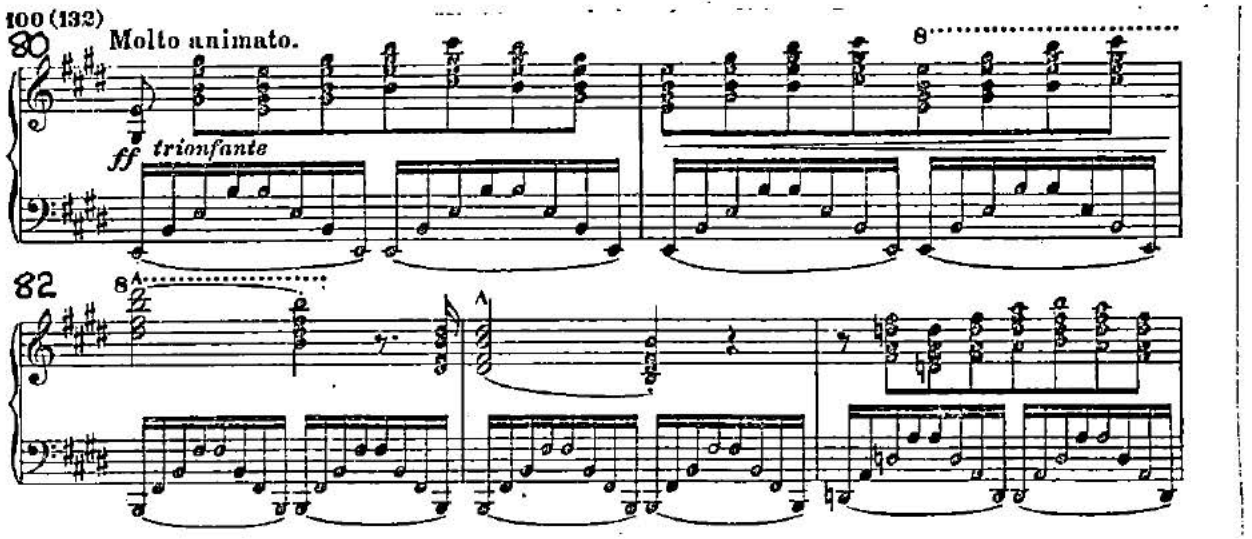


Ex. 79: Etude no. 2 (1852), mm. 24-29.

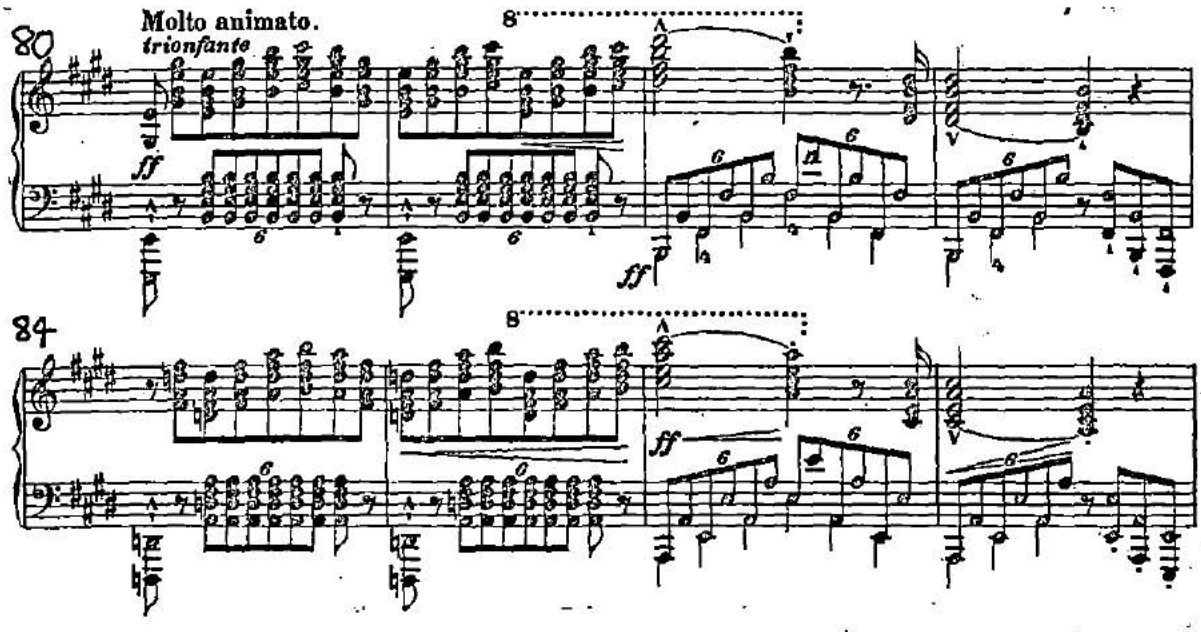


Ex. 79: Etude no. 2 (1852), mm. 24-29 (continued).

In Etude no. 11, the search for a sonority better suited to the musical context caused Liszt to replace the arpeggiated bass of 1839 (Ex. 80, m. 80) (also used in the sequence at 34) with solid chords in 1852 (Ex. 81, m. 80), producing with these solid chords, a fuller sound; the resulting evocation of the quality of brass instruments is appropriate to the *trionfante* character of this passage.



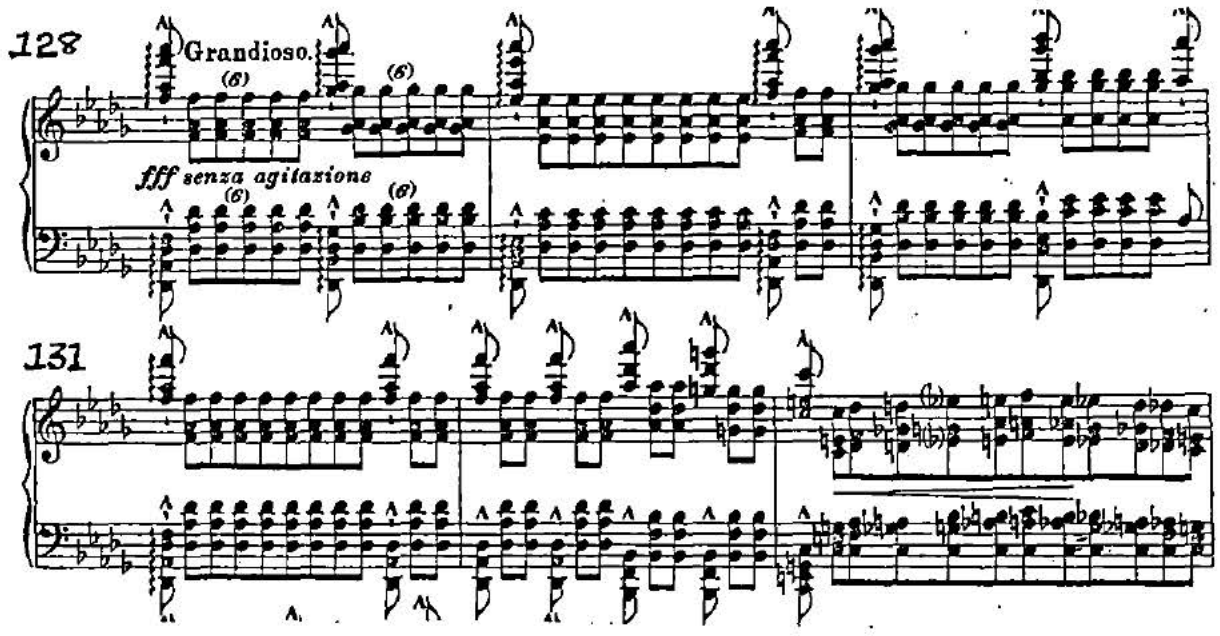
Ex. 80: Etude no. 11 (1839), mm. 80-84.



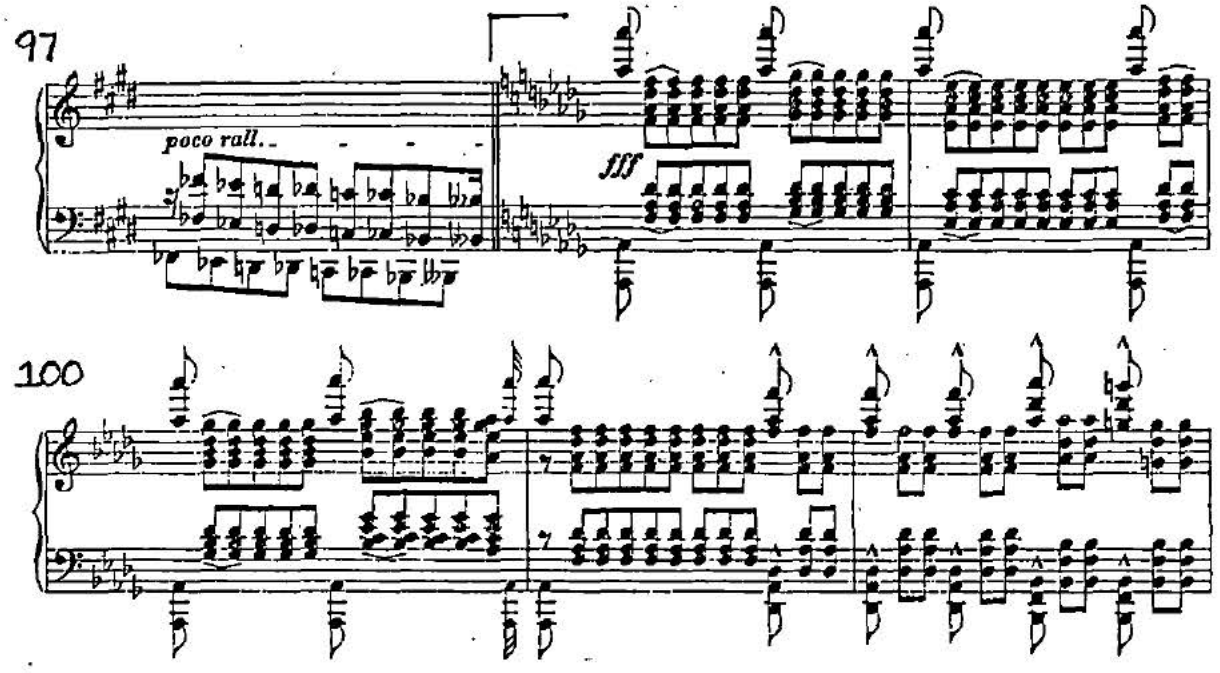
Ex. 81: Etude no. 11 (1852), mm. 80-87.

Certainly, the technical demands are still formidable, and place these works on a technical level with the etudes of Chopin, Schumann and Brahms. It would appear that in certain instances that the musical demands must be paralleled by the technical ones.

One notoriously difficult passage is the climax of Etude no. 11. Although it has been altered--many of the large chords in the middle voices have been rearranged and the outer ones rewritten as octaves--the degree of difficulty, exacted by the indicated tempo and dynamic markings (*molto animato* and *fff*) as well as the very nature of the passage (simultaneous leaps in both hands), remains very high (Ex. 82, m. 128 and Ex. 83, m. 98).



Ex. 82: Etude no. 11 (1839), mm. 128-133.



Ex. 83: Etude no. 11 (1852), mm. 97-102.

The musical significance of this passage--the unveiling of the second theme in its new guise[15]--is paralleled by the technical demands. Such a dramatic transformation cannot be effected here without some real effort. The spectacular leaps convey the efforts of the second theme to cast off the delicacy of its former nature.

The observations of Edward T. Cone on the second movement of the Schumann Fantasy, op. 17, could apply equally well to this passage.

> . . . if we regard the coda as the gesture of a pianistic persona that adopts extreme methods in order to express extreme attitudes, pushing musician-*cum*--instrument to unprecedented efforts, the virtuosity required for its realization becomes a symbol of the strenuous musical content.[16]

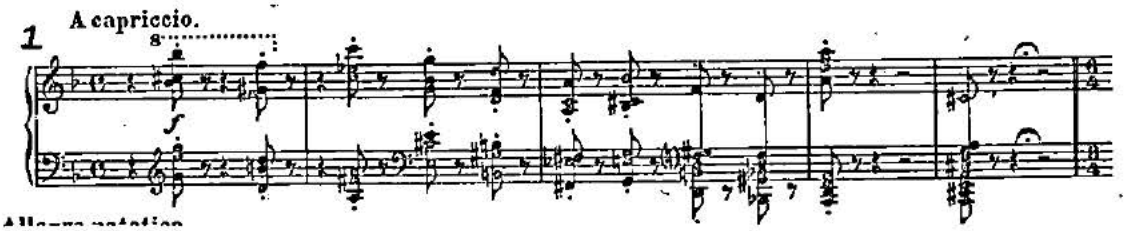
This statement provides a clue, perhaps, to the interpretation of Liszt's music. Technical difficulties, which have become synonomous with the name of Liszt, often indicate exacting *musical* demands. It is only when the former are subjugated to the latter that the musical potential can be fully realized.

II. FORMAL CONSIDERATIONS

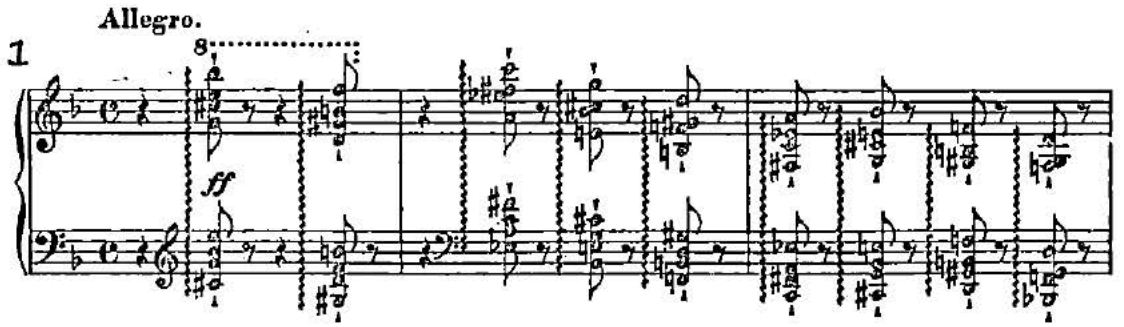
The changes discussed above are largely concerned with the refinement of detail and an emphasis on a particular moment of sound. Yet there are other changes in the 1852 version which address broader structural modifications and thus affect the overall formal design. These alterations manifest the far greater sophistication in structural and formal clarity which Liszt had attained by 1852.

Formal changes in the second version consisted mainly of the expansion of material through the development of motives. This was especially notable in the formation of introductory and closing sections.[17] By contrast, there is only one etude in the final set which is considerably lengthened, Etude no. 4, "Mazeppa."

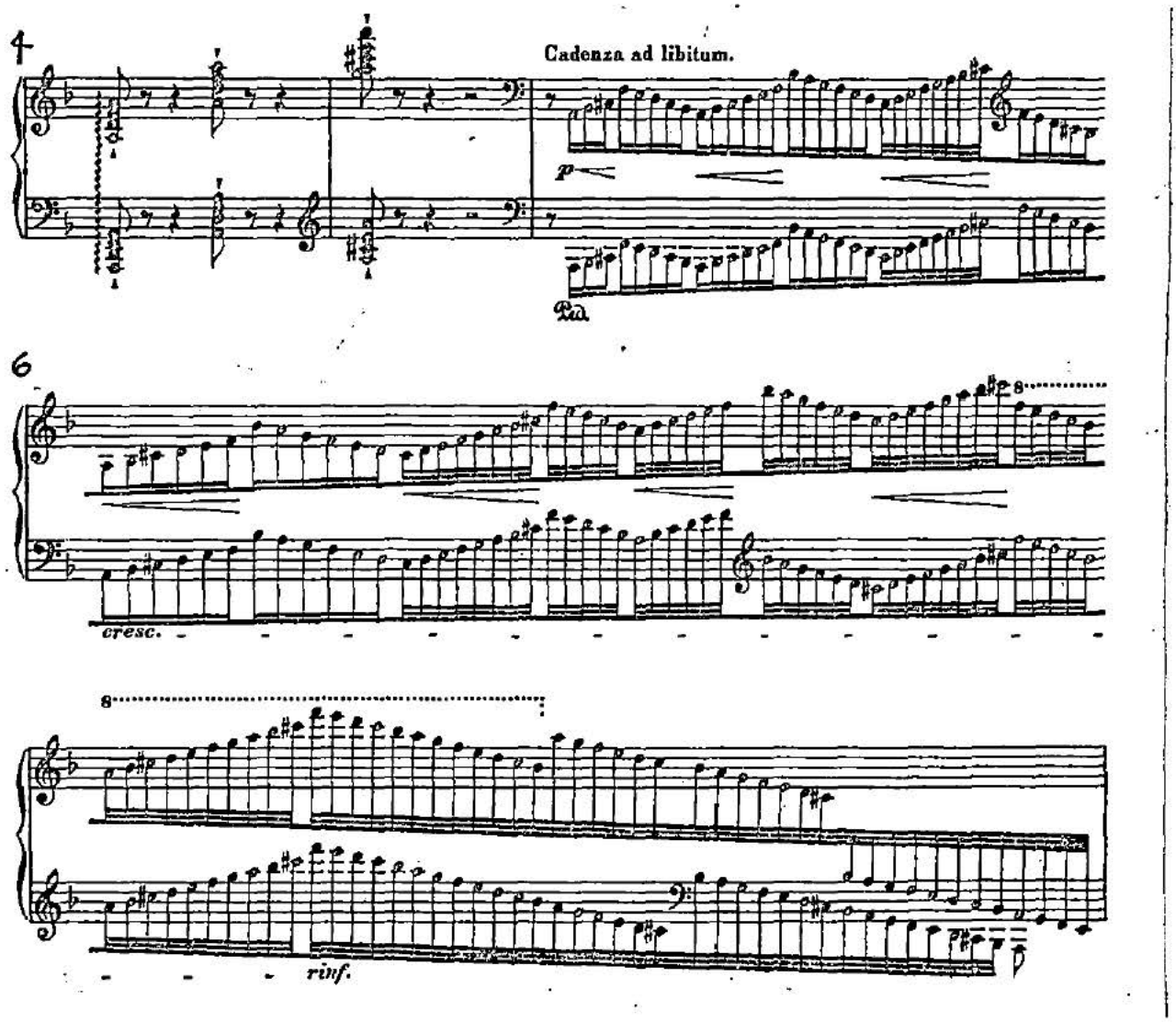
Of immediate interest is the extension of the introduction to this etude in 1852. A rudimentary version of the opening, consisting of five bars of diminished chords, already appeared in the 1847 work (Ex. 84, mm. 1-5), but it is greatly expanded here by the addition of a cadenza *ad libitum* (Ex. 85, mm. 1-6). This brilliant outburst, a series of scales which cover the entire range of the keyboard, is perhaps a programmatic allusion to the charging horse to which Mazeppa has been bound.[18]



Ex. 84: Etude no. 4 (1847), mm. 1-5.



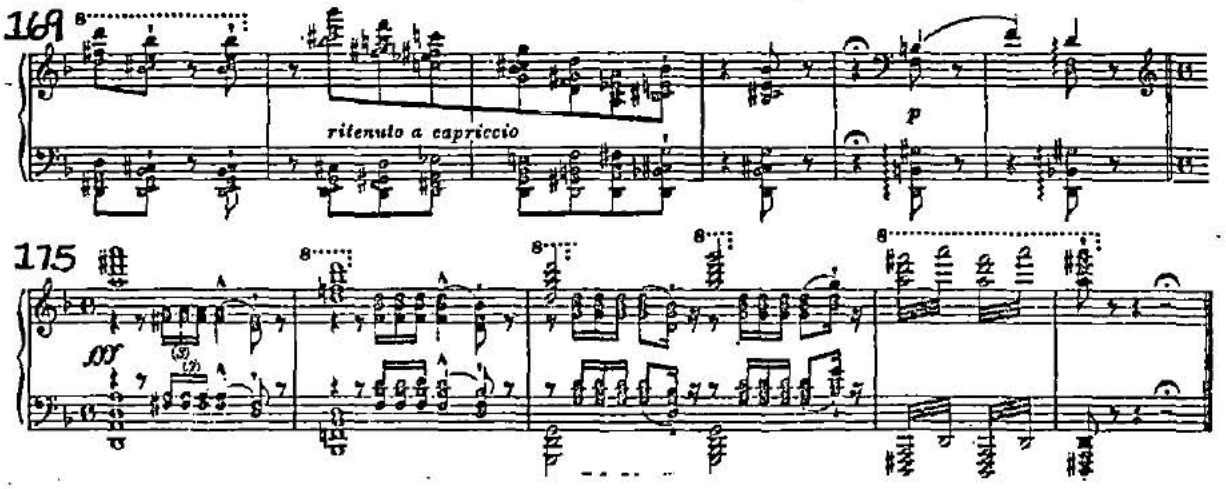
Ex. 85: Etude no. 4 (1852), mm. 1-6.



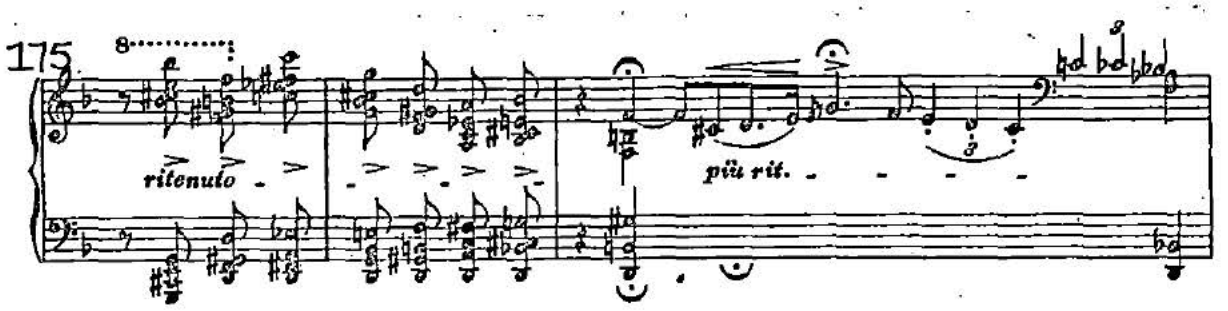
Ex. 85: Etude no. 4 (1852), mm. 1-6 (continued).

A prototype for the expanded coda of this version is also found in the 1847 work. The earlier model begins with the restatement of the opening diminished chords. After a dramatic pause, the music focuses on two chords--the $^{o}7/V$ and the German sixth on B^{b} (Ex. 86,

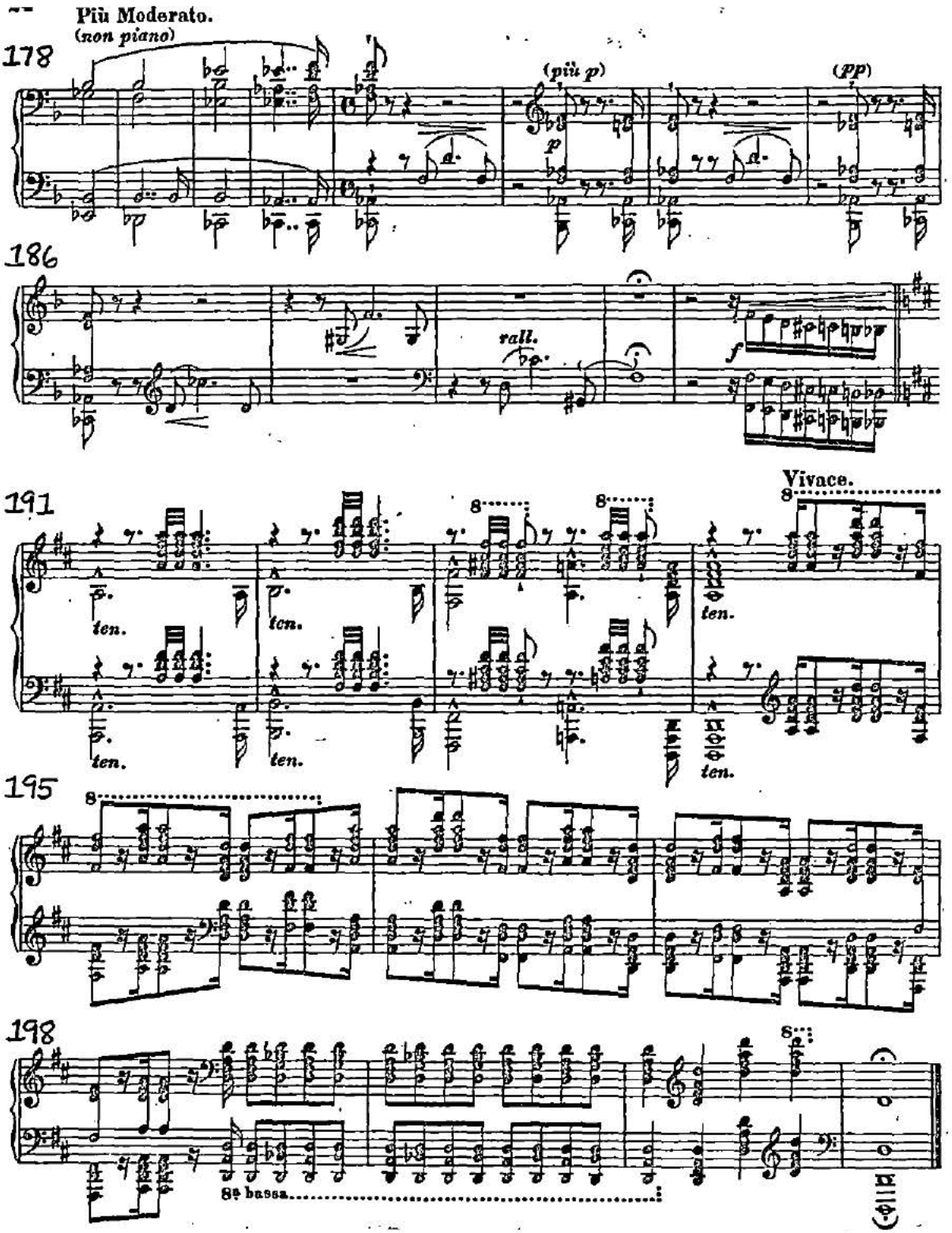
mm. 174-5). It is at this point that the expansion occurs in the final version. Here the music is poised on the $^{o}7/V$, a point of reflection, before the harmonic ambiguity of this chord is exploited in a twelve-bar recitative which follows (Ex. 87, mm. 177-89). A sudden return to the tonic major reestablishes harmonic stability and brings the work to a triumphant conclusion (Ex. 87, mm. 190-201).



Ex. 86: Etude no. 4 (1847), mm. 169-179.



Ex. 87: Etude no. 4 (1852), mm. 175-201.



Ex. 87: Etude no. 4 (1852), mm. 175-201 (continued).

In this final version, the dotted rhythm associated with the theme is inserted at m. 191. Its appearance here, together with the foregoing recitative and restatement of the diminished chords, suggest a possible programmatic correspondence with the second part of Hugo's poem. Mazeppa (the poet) rides forth bound to his steed (genius). The creative process is likened to a tortuous journey, during which the writer endures great suffering. At last, however, he succeeds and a new work of art is born. Liszt's quotation of the final line of the poem at the end of the work supports this association: "Il tombe enfin . . . et se relève Roi!"[19]

Conway provides a similar interpretation but fails to see the connection to Liszt.[20] The Mazeppa theme was one which fascinated Liszt throughout his life. Besides the four etudes, he wrote a symphonic poem based on this theme[21] and later arranged it for both two pianos and for one piano, four hands. It is quite possible that Liszt recognized himself in the poem, for his own motto was "génie oblige." Perhaps the personal association with this poem was the reason for his obsession with it.

Although Liszt's progressive expansions of "Mazeppa" provide a fascinating study, it is the deletion of material which is of far greater consequence in the *Transcendental Etudes*. The elimination of certain passages of the 1839 version acknowledges their major fault--the tendency to extend ideas beyond reasonable lengths.

Between the years 1826 and 1839, Liszt gained a new maturity in composition and acquired his transcendental technique. Inspired by this

veritable wealth of material, he allowed his exuberance free rein, occasionally to the detriment of the music. In 1840, Schumann noted such places in his review of the etudes: "Even then, some passages in them might offend us, where he exceeds all limits, where the effect attained does not compensate sufficiently for the sacrifice of beauty."[22] However, in the years of revision between 1839 and 1852, Liszt sought to correct this by eliminating much of the superfluous material. As Busoni tersely remarked: "At first he learnt how to fill out and afterwards he learnt how to leave out."[23] In almost every case this elimination is directed towards a tightening of the structure--most often to focus attention on the recapitulation.

The point of recapitulation, signifying the return of tonal and thematic stability, is one of the most dramatic moments in the classical sonata form. The structure is usually carefully organized to focus the listener's attention on this return as a climactic moment.[24]

Liszt's music is not bound by conventional forms. As Carl Dahlhaus has written about later nineteenth-century music, "Musical form now presented itself primarily (though by no means exclusively) as a consequence drawn from thematic ideas, not as a system of formal relations."[25] Liszt generally employs flexible forms whose shape evolves as the music unfolds. Nevertheless, there is an unmistakable tendency for Liszt to dramatize the recapitulation, making it a focal event in the musical form. By making it the climax, the sense of form is better articulated for the listener; he is provided with a point of reference.

The recapitulation of Etude no. 3 (1852) has much greater impact than its predecessor. In the 1839 version, the return of the opening (m. 65) is followed by a lengthy sequential passage (mm. 82-103). This latter section attempts to heighten the excitement of the recapitulation with syncopated rhythms in the right hand, a faster tempo--*presto agitato assai*, and an increasing dynamic level which reaches *fff* at m. 97.

Conway proposes that this passage is eliminated because its agitated character corresponds too closely to the subsequent work, Etude no. 4.[26] This seems unlikely; the lengthy coda (eighteen measures) dispels all previous sense of anxiety in both versions.

The function of this passage is supposedly to increase the impact of the return--in actual fact, it decreases it. At the point of recapitulation, F major is finally reestablished and the descending theme is heard in its original form. In 1839, however, this stability is immediately confounded by the ensuing section which is harmonically unstable and which presents only fragments of the melodic material. By eliminating this section in 1852, the return to F has greater finality. The coda, which now follows directly, maintains the tonic in an extended pedal point.

The elimination of this sequential passage also highlights the return to F major. Because of the nature of the subsequent material in 1839, the effect of the recapitulation is almost overpowered in the ensuing measures. In 1852 it is clearly established as the sole climactic moment.

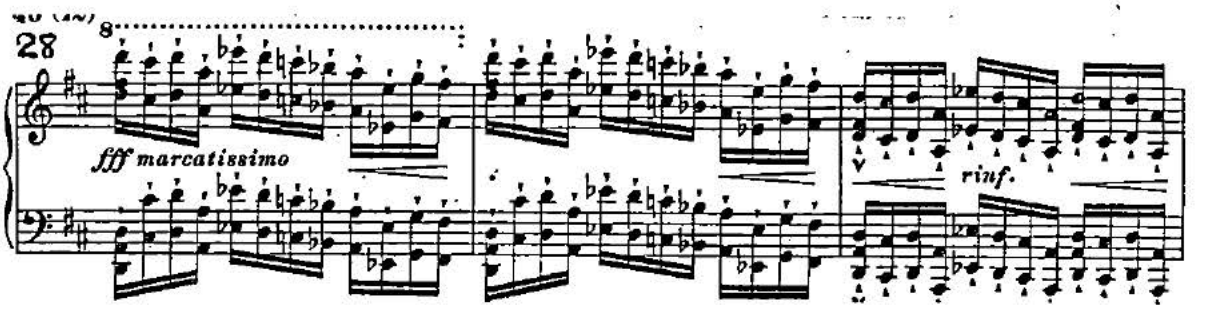
A similar passage is omitted from the final version of the eleventh etude. In this instance, however, the deleted material had preceded the climax in 1839. In both versions, the preparation for the return to the tonic begins after the initial statement of the second theme. The first theme reappears, initiating a confrontation of the two ideas. A sequential pattern based on the first theme generates further intensity through continuous crescendo and constant harmonic movement (m. 80, 1839 and 1852). The sequence moves downward at first from E to D and then C (mm. 80-90, 1839 and 1852), but at m. 91 it begins an ascent by half-steps. At this point the excitement is escalated by rhythmic diminution in the bass and sequential foreshortening in the upper part. The latter marks the disintegration of the first theme as the return of the second theme becomes imminent. It is here that the two versions differ. The final version continues directly to the climax (m. 98). In 1839, however, Liszt delays this return until m. 128 by imposing two additional sequential patterns based on the first theme.

Conway concludes that the suppression of these last two sections (mm. 97-128) in 1852 places greater emphasis on melody rather than development. Yet in this work and in Liszt's style generally, there is a continuous sense of development arising from the constant variation and evolution of earlier material. Conway's observation that the time-gap between the two appearances of the second theme has been lessened, giving it more focus, is more significant.[27] The relationship of the climax, the transformation of the second theme, to

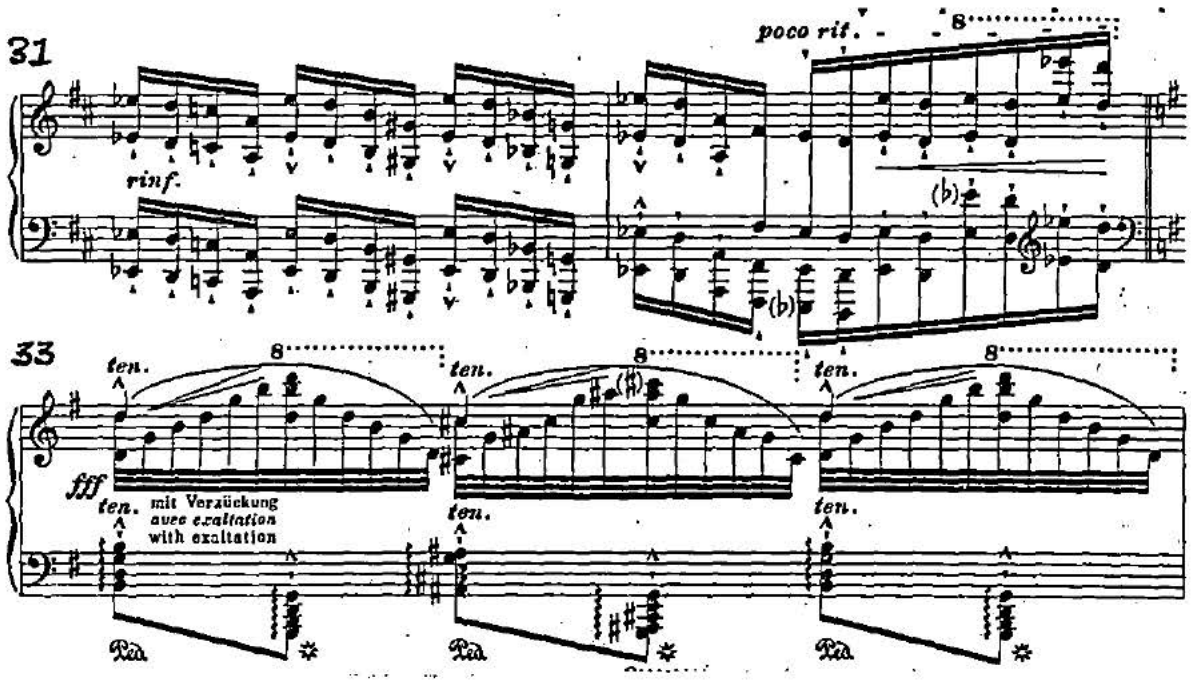
its initial appearance is more readily apparent because of the closer proximity in time.

The most important result of this omission, though, is the greater sense of drama obtained in 1852. In the second version much of the excitement which usually accompanies the return of the theme is lost. The anticipation of this moment gradually wanes over such an extensive preparation.

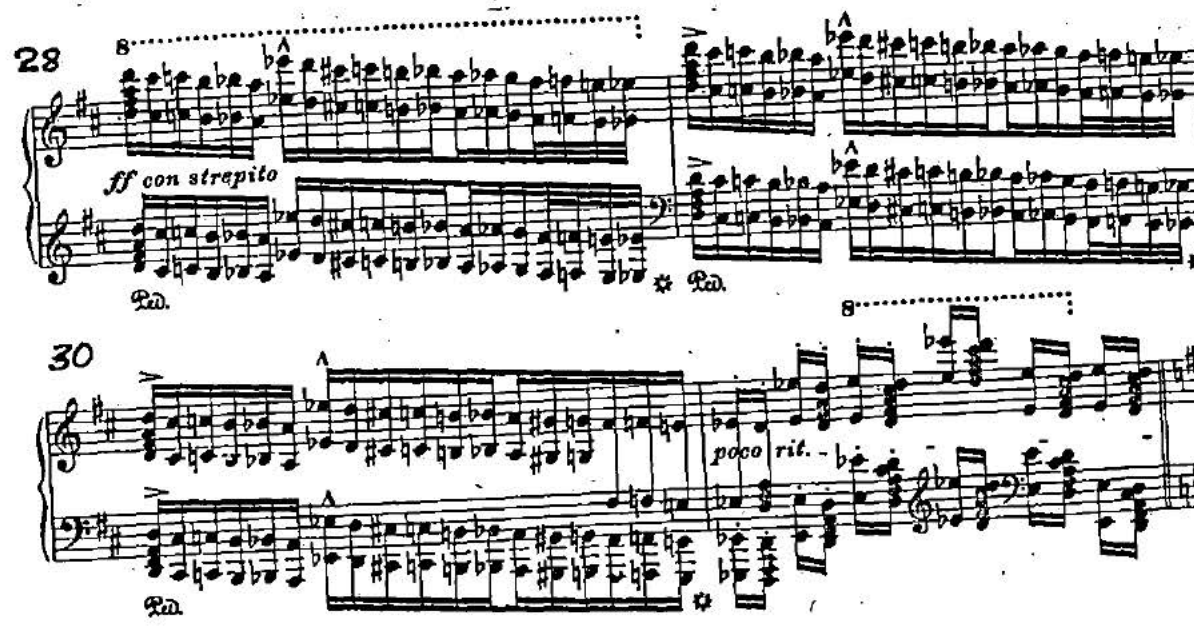
The recapitulation of Etude no. 6, in contrast to the examples above, has largely been given preeminence not by the deletion of material but by a subtle change in dynamics. In 1839 the passage preceding the return of the theme in the major is marked *fff* (Ex. 88, m. 28). This series of disjunct octaves is replaced in the final version by a descending chromatic scale in octaves (Ex. 89, m. 28). The veritable roar of sound produced by this spectacular three octave descent with its copious pedal indications generates greater excitement than its predecessor. Yet it is the subtle reduction in dynamics to *ff* which allows the performer to reserve his ultimate power for the subsequent return of the theme (marked *fff* in both versions).[28]



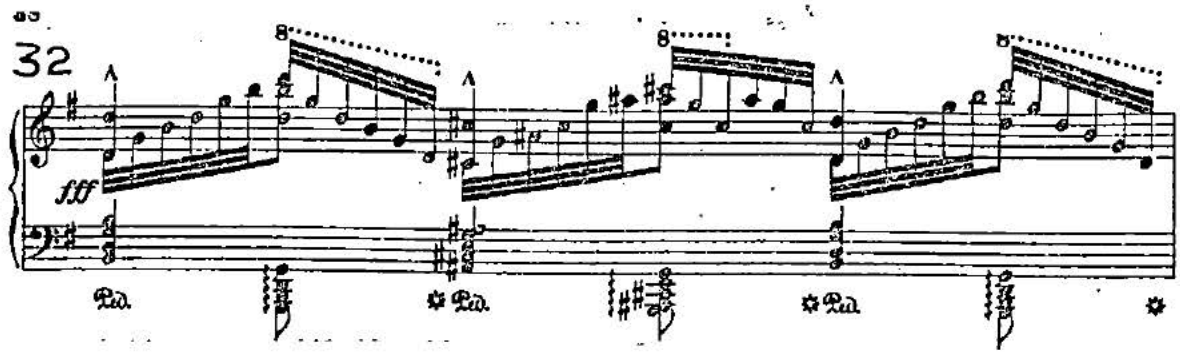
Ex. 88: Etude no. 6 (1839), mm. 28-33.



Ex. 88: Etude no. 6 (1839), mm. 28-33 (continued).



Ex. 89: Etude no. 6 (1852), mm. 28-32.



Ex. 89: Etude no. 6 (1852), mm. 28-32 (continued).

In Etude no. 12 material is again deleted in the final version. Here, however, the passage in question, the introduction of 1839, is arguably a loss to the final version. This progression of shifting chromatic harmonies foreshadows the unusual key relationship of this work (B^b - E - B^b). The mood of uncertainty, which arises from its harmonic ambiguity, is particularly fitting for this etude.[29]

Two possible reasons have been put forward for its elimination in the final version.[30] Liszt may have felt that the similarity in mood between this passage and the end of Etude no. 11 would detract from the success of both works in a performance of the complete set. Secondly, the introduction may not have satisfied Liszt's programmatic conception of the work.

It is possible that the most important consideration is not the initial appearance of the introduction in 1839, but its return just before the recapitulation. In the passage preceding its reappearance there is a premature return to the tonic (m. 48, 1839). The first phrase of the theme bursts forth in a slightly altered version--the last note has been raised a step. After a shift to the dominant for the second phrase (m. 49), the music seems unable to go on.

Over several measures it gradually disintegrates; the melody becomes increasingly fragmented until only one pitch (A, from m. 9 of the theme) remains (m. 57). Even this disappears at m. 59, leaving only a dominant arpeggio (F major), the last vestiges of the tremolo accompaniment. At this point the introduction returns. Its harmonic wanderings and melodic fragments seem to be leading away from the inevitable return, which then suddenly bursts forth at m. 71.

A more successful return is accomplished in the third version. After the premature return to tonic stability, the melody again falters on the dominant. A new figure, a chromatic scale in the left hand, gains increasing prominence from m. 38 onwards. Eventually, both the theme and accompanying tremolo are obliterated by this scale. The feeling though, is not so much of disintegration as in 1839, but of submersion.[31] The abortive recapitulation is covered, as it were, to allow the true return to emerge. The scale then hovers in the base, creating a sense of imminent action. This is quickly realized: it becomes doubled in the right hand, and both its range and dynamic level are extended. The scale finally reaches D^{b}, the first note of the theme, which is then brought forth triumphantly in the bass.

It is this chromatic scale which contributes to the greater success of the return in 1852. In both versions, the melodic material becomes increasingly fragmented and harmonic movement becomes fixed on the dominant. This cessation of movement becomes total in the 1839 version; the rhythmic motion also halts prior to the return of the introduction, where it continues sporadically. However, in 1852, the

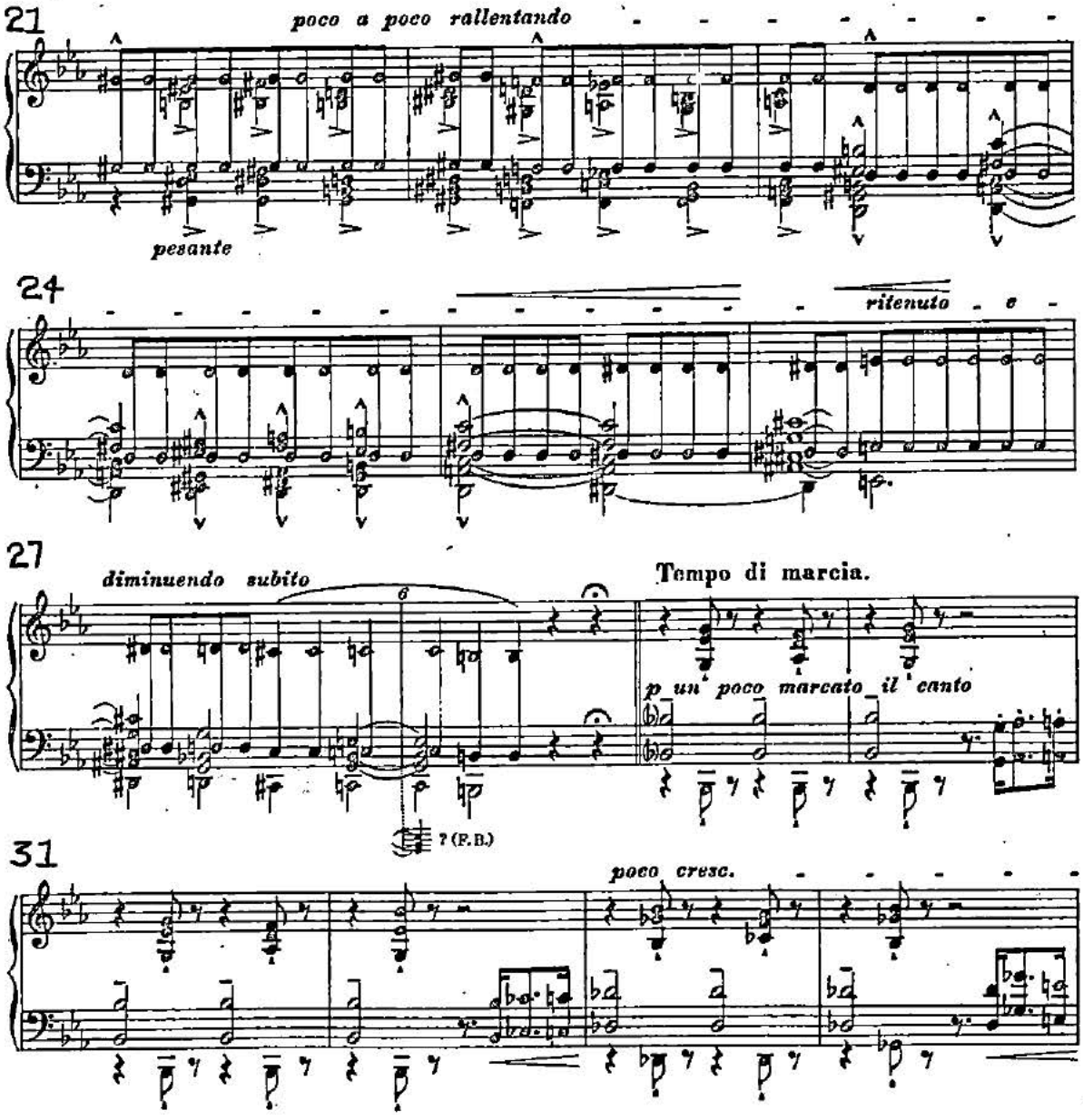
hovering of the chromatic scale maintains the listener's anticipation of the recapitulation, which is rewarded subsequently. Thus, it is again a desire to intensify the impact of the recapitulation which prompted the elimination of the opening measures at this point in the final version.

It is also conceivable that the changes in this section influenced those at the beginning. The return of the introduction in 1839 balances the recapitulation with the opening of the work--in both cases the theme is preceded by this chromatic section. Liszt may have then decided that the form was better balanced by the total deletion of the introduction. Both sections now begin directly with a statement of the main theme.

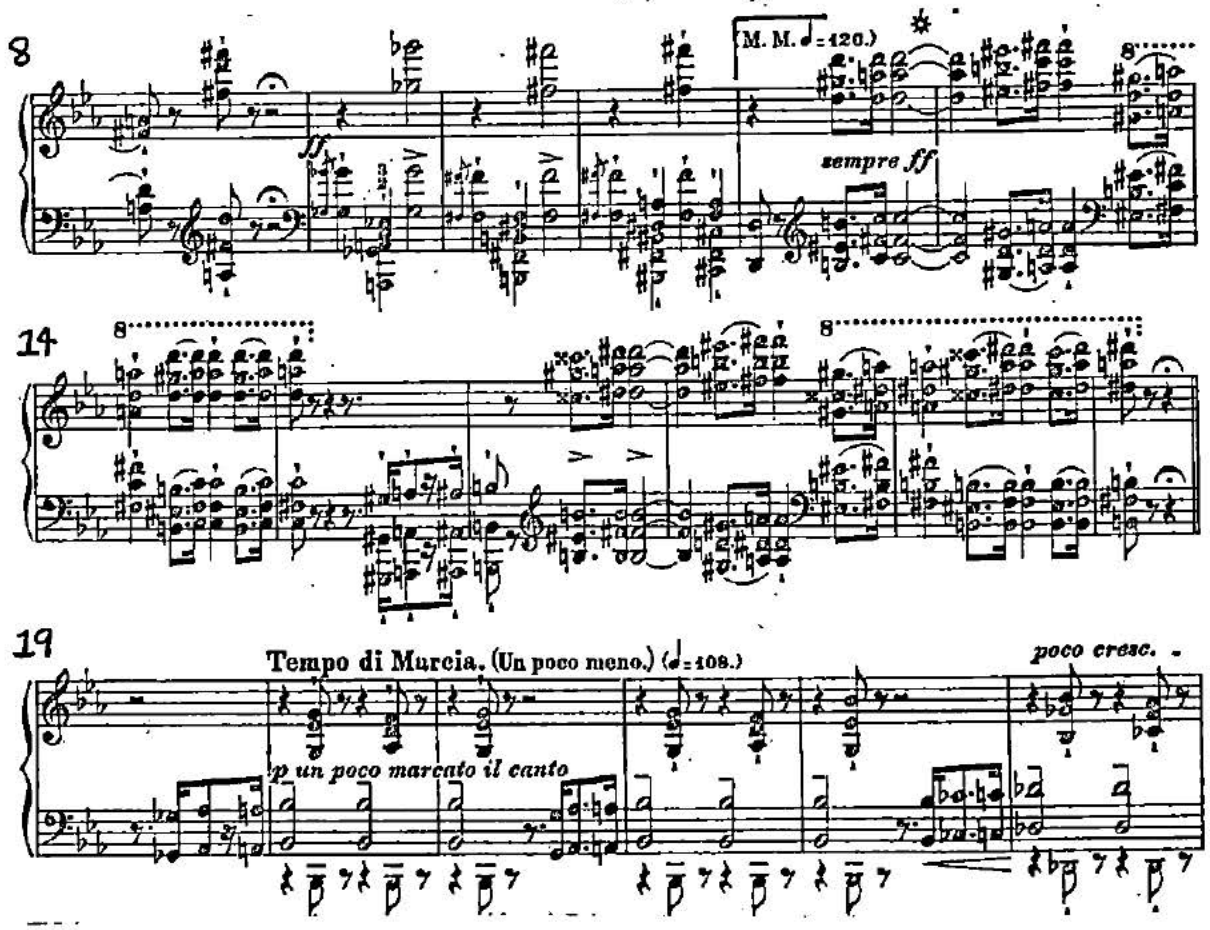
Etude no. 7 is a direct contrast to the example above. In 1852 Liszt provides a new introduction which reappears before the recapitulation, heightening our anticipation of the return of the principal theme. He further focuses the climax by eliminating the final variation of the 1839 version (mm. 98-107).[32]

The second half of the 1839 introduction is not strongly suggestive of the subsequent theme.[33] (The chromatic line of the left hand (Ex. 90, mm. 21-28) bears a resemblance to the upbeat of m. 30 while the right hand (Ex. 90, mm. 21-28) alludes to the repeated octaves of the theme (mm. 29-30).) This relationship is greatly reinforced in the third version. The two main motives of the new introduction (second half)--the dotted rhythm and half-step ascent (Ex. 91, mm. 12-19)--are clearly heard as anticipating the ensuing measures. A second change

is in dynamics. There is no diminuendo as the theme approaches; the *sempre forte* (m. 12) is maintained until the end of the opening, providing a sharp contrast when the theme enters, *piano* (mm. 19-20).



Ex. 90: Etude no. 7 (1839), mm. 21-34.



Ex. 91: Etude no. 7 (1852), mm. 8-24.

These two factors--the motivic foreshadowing and the change in dynamics--contribute to the more powerful climax of 1852. The last portion of the introduction, which is inserted just before the return to E^{b}, heralds the approaching theme. This anticipation is strengthened by the very substance of the opening, which is constructed from the theme itself. The succeeding *ff* outburst of the melody in octaves is a natural consequence of the foregoing dynamics: the theme must overpower the anticipatory material.

The recapitulation is also more focused in this version. In 1839 the octave theme is followed by a final variation. This passage corresponds to the one omitted from Etude no. 3; its increased tempo and intensified mood lessen the importance of the previous section.

In 1839 the introduction returns after this final variation. Its long decrescendo and gradual reduction of material prepare the end of the work. Yet its placement here, before the final statement of the theme (in the coda) suggests a second recapitulation. Moreover, a dramatic contrast is made in the final version by the omission of this passage. The octave variation ends suddenly at the top of the keyboard, a pause ensues, and the theme in its original form appears, *mf*. By placing the return of the introduction before the recapitulation in 1852, Liszt creates greater expectation. The climactic ambiguity of 1839 is avoided by omitting the final variation and proceeding directly to the coda.

One final example, Etude no. 8, also displays greater motivic integration in 1852 with a view to strengthening the recapitulation. The main themes of this work (mm. 60, 86 of 1839 and mm. 59, 85 of 1852) are evolved from two motives which appear in a lengthy opening section (mm. 1-59, 1830 and mm. 1-58, 1852). It is the return of this introductory passage which is omitted in 1852.

The recapitulation of 1839 is prepared in several successive sequences lasting sixty measures. As in Etude no. 11, the anticipation of the return is dissipated in such a prolonged preparation. This is especially obvious in the final portion; the dominant is reached at

m. 171, and the remaining measures consist of an extended pedal point. The reduction of this passage in the final version allows the tension to be maintained.

There are additional weaknesses in the recapitulation of 1839. The return of the opening section (m. 195) before the first theme (m. 223) undermines the effect of the latter. Although the climax is clearly reserved for the first theme with its *fff* markings, the listener recognizes the return of previous material and, more important, the tonic key. In the third version, the opening section is deleted here, clearly designating the return of the first theme as the climax.

Motivic integration is used in the final version to dramatize the recapitulation. The sequential passage preceding the return is based on the descending motive (m. 131), but at m. 146 Liszt introduces the second motive, a dotted rhythm, from which the first theme is constructed. Twice the two motives are pitted against each other (mm. 145-150 and mm. 156-159), but each time the dotted figure emerges triumphant. Having established predominance, it is reiterated in an ascending bass pattern (mm. 160-9) which culminates in the emergence of the first theme in C major. The tension of this moment is played out in the subsequent measures--the dotted rhythm is pounded out in its regular form and in diminution (mm. 172-3). Liszt has so saturated the music with this motive (mm. 164-193) that it is found in every measure except three. The tension eases at m. 186 but quickly builds up again to end just as suddenly with the return of the second theme.

The examples above illustrate Liszt's attempts in 1852 to more clearly articulate the recapitulation as the climactic moment. In the 1839 version, the climax is often ambiguous because of the corresponding mood of the subsequent passage. These sections are simply eliminated in the final version (Etudes 3 and 7).

Liszt also sought to dramatize the return to the tonic. In Etude no. 6 this is achieved through a subtle change in dynamics, while in other works careful refinement of the preceding material produces telling results. In some cases, this material is shortened (Etudes 8 and 11); in others, a new passage is inserted which heightens the anticipation (Etudes 7 and 12). The result is a more clearly articulated form which focuses the listener's attention on the recapitulation as the moment of greatest drama.

The three versions of the *Transcendental Etudes* thus provide a unique opportunity to examine the evolution of Liszt's compositional style. Yet, they also reflect the multifaceted nature of their composer.

Liszt was still a student when he composed the *Etude en douze exercices* of 1826. Although they are remarkable for a fifteen-year-old boy, they imitate rather than innovate; the unique voice we usually associate with their composer had yet to develop.

By 1839, however, Liszt had become the pianistic legend of Europe. His awesome technique and remarkable ability to transcribe orchestral textures enthralled his audiences and contributed significantly to the

transformation which occurred in this second version.

Yet Liszt was to return to these works again in a new guise--the mature composer of the Weimar years. In this capacity, he cultivated a sense of craftsmanship which manifested itself in formal integrity and a telling refinement of detail. The results must have satisfied even Liszt, for there is no fourth version--the *Transcendental Etudes* remain the definitive statement.

NOTES

THE ETUDES D'EXÉCUTION TRANSCENDANTE (1852)

[1]Schumann, *On Music*, p. 148.

[2]Searle, *Music of Liszt*, pp. 15-16.

[3]Schumann, *On Music*, p. 152.

[4]Cited by Searle, *Music of Liszt*, p. 15.

[5]Liszt to Abbé de Lamennais, 28 April 1845. *Letters*, 1:68.

[6]Eleanor Perényi, *Liszt: The Artist as Romantic Hero* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), pp. 324-5.

[7]Liszt to Carl Czerny, 19 April 1852. *Letters*, 1:130.

[8]Liszt to Alfred Dörffel, 17 January 1855. *Letters*, 1:231.

[9]*Ibid.*, 1:230.

[10]Paul Henry Lang, "Liszt and the Romantic Movement," *Musical Quarterly* 22 (1936), p. 317.

[11]"Mazeppa," Etude no. 4, had already been named when it was separately published in 1847.

[12]Conway, p. 104, states that this delay was referred to by students of Liszt as a "breaking of the hands" (not documented).

[13]See above, p. 91.

[14]Conway compares this to the strokes of a tympanist, p. 18.

[15]See the discussion above regarding use of variation, pp. 74-5.

[16]Edward T. Cone, *The Composer's Voice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 107.

[17]See the discussion above regarding introductions and codas, pp. 30-54.

[18]See Hugo, *Les Orientales*, p. 207.

[19]A conflicting and rather more literal interpretation of this passage is found in the article "Liszt's Mazeppa-Werke" by August Stradel. The author has carefully analyzed the specific poetic image from Part I of Hugo's poem represented by the various sections of the coda: Mazeppa endeavours to spur his steed onwards by repeated lashings (mm. 175-6). These are, however, to no avail as the unfortunate animal collapses completely at m. 177. In the ensuing recitative, the anguished cries of Mazeppa are heard as he lies on the plain still bound to the dead horse. Yet he is rescued and triumphantly declared king of the Cossacks in the final measures. See August Stradel, "Liszt's Mazeppa-Werke," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 78 (1911), pp. 597-8.

[20]See Conway, p. 37. There are other possible interpretations. Houston describes the second part as developing " . . . an analogy between Mazeppa's ride and ultimate rise to power with genius bearing its possessor." See John Porter Houston, *Victor Hugo*, *Twayne's World Author Series*, Sylvia E. Bowman, gen. ed.; *France*, Maxwell A. Smith, ed. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974), p. 30.

[21]Liszt returned to this etude in 1851 and transformed it into his sixth symphonic poem. Although the original theme is transferred to the orchestral version, this new work is a much grander conception of the Mazeppa legend than its predecessors. In particular, the introduction is once again expanded--the opening scales depicting the ride of Mazeppa are extended over nineteen bars and a new section based on the dotted rhythmic figure of the theme is introduced. Even more dramatic is the expansion of the final section: the reiteration of the tonic has been extended to a triumphant march. Yet the basic form of the previous three versions remains intact. There are still six variations grouped in pairs, with the two middle ones acting as a contrast to the outer pairs. A change in this version is the use of B♭ only in variation three; the fourth variation is in b minor. (Originally both were in B♭.)

[22]Schumann, *On Music*, p. 152.

[23]Busoni, *Essence of Music*, p. 158.

[24]See the discussion above regarding use of variation, pp. 68, 74.

[25]Carl Dahlhaus, "Issues in Composition," *Between Romanticism and Modernism*, trans. Mary Whittall (Berkeley: University of California Press, c. 1980), p. 42. In this discussion Dahlhaus is contrasting the musical style of the mid and later nineteenth century to musical practice from the first decades of the century.

[26]Conway, p. 30.

[27]See Conway, p. 134.

[28]Conway discusses this in terms of progressive dynamic levels, p. 167.

[29]It is largely the melodic and rhythmic structure of the theme which creates a sense of uncertainty. See the discussion above regarding texture and articulation, pp. 83-4.

[30]See Conway, pp. 147-8.

[31]One is reminded here of Busoni's description of this work: "'Chasse-neige', . . . a sublime and steady fall of snow which gradually buries landscape and people." Busoni, *Essence of Music*, p. 162. Conway denotes a similar effect, p. 146.

[32]Conway discusses this in terms of dynamics on pp. 167-8.

[33]It is only the second half of the introduction which does not anticipate the theme. The first half (mm. 1-12) is clearly related to the subsequent material. See the discussion above regarding introductions, p. 31.

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