

Abstracts

DAVID CHUNG, *The Perpetual Evolution of Johann Sebastian Bach's «Chromatic Fantasia» (BWV 903): A Study of Style and Interpretative Strategies*

Johann Sebastian Bach's *Chromatic Fantasia* (BWV 903) has, since its traceable origins (from ca. 1720), been considered a *unica*. It made a lasting impression on the composer's circles and was cited by historians such as Johann Nikolaus Forkel as a key representation of Bach's *Originalgenie*. BWV 903 has been counted among Bach's most enigmatic and puzzling works, partly due to lost autograph and partly due to its unique attributes (BEHRINGER 1999). Stylistically, the two-part structure (a prelude followed by a recitative) has no precedents, and has been considered both as the descendant of the seventeenth-century *stylus phantasticus* (STAUFFER 1989) and a precursor of the *Sturm und Drang* of the 1770s (SCHLEUNING 1992). Nowadays, BWV 903 is an ideal work to explore how the historically-informed performer can maintain the essence of improvisation in a work that was composed, for three main reasons. First, there exists no definite text that can be unarguably ascribed to Bach's original work, since the most authoritative source of this music derives from Forkel's version (c.1770) of Wilhelm Friedemann's copy (c.1730). Secondly, the notation, especially in the arpeggio passages, is manifestly incomplete. Thirdly, the scope for the performer's discretion in matters such as flexible timing and melodic embellishments is plentiful, especially in the "Recitativo" section. In this article, I discuss how an awareness of the structure and a study of stylistic issues could illuminate both technical and musical considerations leading to performances that are creative and spontaneous, yet scrupulous to the notational detail. On a deeper level, understanding the music as language is crucial for making sense of the chromatic, dissonant and sometimes atonal harmonies, for organising notes into coherent and meaningful groups, and for crafting rhetorical gestures in the recitative section. While Leisinger's critical edition (1999) provides the principal text for modern interpretation, the variant readings in both concordant manuscripts and modern recordings offer numerous ideas for refinements of melodic embellishments and rhythmic nuances.

MAGDALENA OLIFERKO-STORCK, *Between Europe and America: Public Concerts as a Product in the Market in the First Half of the 19th Century*

Around 1750, along with the gradual emergence of the commercial market, the industrial revolution, and social changes, the musical world turned into an enterprise, allowing individual actors to compete for recognition and economic success. The public concert became a good on the market: sellable and a subject of competition. Deprived of patronage, artists were forced to listen to the needs of the general audiences and influence their consumer decisions. The strategy for

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reaching the recipients consisted of offering both an elite product intended for a small group as well as a product intended for the masses, guaranteeing quantitative success. High art remained elitist but, observing the commercial success of popular music, it boldly reached out to wider audiences, using a variety of sophisticated marketing means that referred to social codes. High culture did not operate solely in the area of the market economy, but also in the economy of exchange, referring to the anthropology of the gift. This paper offers a cross-sectional view of the elite public concert in the first half of the 19th century as a part of a complex socio-economic process in which the recipient of art is in focus. It examines high music culture in the first decades of the fascination with making art public in its sociological, anthropological, and economic context, taking a close look at early forms of music marketing.

ARABELLA PARE, *Whose Music? Interpreting Authorship and Identity in Brahms's Variations on a Theme of Robert Schumann Op. 9*

The Variations on a Theme of Robert Schumann, composed by Johannes Brahms in 1854 and dedicated to Clara Schumann, occupy the intersection of a complex web of biographical and musical relationships. Schumann's suicide attempt and subsequent hospitalisation in February of 1854 was deeply felt by the young Johannes Brahms, who soon afterwards began composition of the Variations Op. 9. In addition to the unusual choice of a minor-key theme, taken from Schumann's Op. 99 *Albumblätter* (a theme previously chosen by Clara Schumann for her Variations Op. 20), the rhetoric, texture and musical treatment of the variation cycle itself may be read as an homage to Schumann. Furthermore, the variations display an intricate set of layered identities, both through referentialities in the musical text (the theme is only a single, explicit example of the deliberate invocation of the 'compositional voice' of another person), and through explicit notation in the manuscript delivered to Clara Schumann. In the midst of this cloud of references, the concept of interpretation takes on a new significance. It is clear that Brahms is, on multiple planes, distanced from his own authorial voice. He is engaged in what may be termed compositional interpretation: Johannes Brahms interprets Robert Schumann — or Johannes Kreisler, or an idealised and reinterpreted self. These are questions of compositional identity that remain relevant for the modern interpreter, as alterations to this identity necessarily produce differences in interpretation and performance practice. Brahms is not 'varying' Schumann's theme in his own compositional voice, but differentiating his authorial identity by altering and at times almost dissolving his otherwise already strongly-characterised pianistic writing; what then is the primary point of orientation for a pianist engaging with traditions of nineteenth-century performance practice? In essence, does, or should, one aim to perform Brahms, Schumann, or someone else entirely?