



**Pianism Reimagined: an analytical inquiry of left-
hand piano through the career and commissions of
Paul Wittgenstein**

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ABSTRACT

Proliferation of the concert repertoire for piano left-hand in the early 20th century is predominantly accredited to the one-armed pianist Paul Wittgenstein. Resolved to cultivate a musical career despite the amputation of his right arm in WWI, Wittgenstein commissioned some of the most eminent composers of this period, including Ravel, Prokofiev, Britten, Korngold, Schmidt and Richard Strauss. Despite Wittgenstein's unalloyed espousal of conservative music, he often chose progressive composers to promulgate his career; an enigmatic decision which remains unsolved. Wittgenstein's disability and opinionated nature provided a myriad of compositional obstacles culminating in a profound overhaul of stylistic, musical, technical and orchestral approaches for the composers he approached. His career and commissions construct a consequential portrait of the rarefied art of left-hand piano championed by Wittgenstein, depict the demands of this type of performance and the delineate the impact of his disability on his public reception in the early to mid – 20th century.

Academic inertia on this topic was largely due to the inaccessibility of the scores, but with the auction of the Wittgenstein archive by Sotheby's in 2002, many of these works have filtered into the public arena. Generalised inventories of his life and works have been undertaken, but little scholarly analytical work has been carried out on the musical riches he bequeathed us. Consideration of the genre of left-hand piano as a whole, its technical requirements and tropes, has likewise eluded substantial academic consideration. The composers under review in this thesis: Ravel, Prokofiev and Britten, each expounded a disparate sense of musical modernity, all in opposition to Wittgenstein's own taste. An exploration of the varying approaches to this unique compositional challenge is pertinent not only to our understanding of these venerated composers, but crucial to our growing comprehension of the genre of left-hand piano. The unique transactional relationship between the composition and performance of a left-hand work, moulded decidedly by the physical restrictions of one-hand at the piano, require the consideration of both aspects, and their relationship to one another in order to understand more comprehensively the extraordinary technical demands and compositional idiosyncrasies of left-hand piano. The central part of this thesis reviews these left-handed concertos in the context of each composers individual output, and ascertains through comparative study of earlier works, the incorporation and exposition of new left-hand techniques. Common structural, technical and musical elements employed by the composers in question are identified to work towards a more defined understanding of the external and internal workings of the left-hand piano genre.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis engages with the art of left-hand only piano and its evolution, exploring elements relevant to both its performance and its construction in order to address a shortfall of comprehensive, scholarly examination of the genre. While several catalogues of left-hand repertoire have been produced, academic analyses in the field of left-hand piano, its aesthetics, mechanics and technical fundamentals, are scarce. In-depth scholarly consideration of this unique genre and its distinctive features is significantly disproportionate to the range of extant repertoire for this mode of pianism. The research and analysis that follows, addresses this void in academic study and endeavours to identify key features, trends and tropes peculiar to the left-hand only genre. This thesis does not assert an encyclopaedic or definitive claim over the genre, rather it proposes a pathway into the wide-ranging performative and compositional characteristics of left-hand piano, the symbiotic relationship between the physicality of left-hand performance and its creative limitations, and offers a platform from which further reflection on the field of left-hand piano may bud.

WWI veteran, amputee and left-hand pianist Paul Wittgenstein offered an appropriate case-study and a common thread under which to unite the various aspects of this research as his career was both extensive and well-documented. His fame elevated the left-hand piano genre to unprecedented levels of notoriety: his performances normalized and publicised one-handed piano, and his career delineated the gradual shift in public perception of left-hand performance from unnatural acrobatic

phenomena to accredited mode of performance. Additionally, he contributed significantly to the expansion of left-hand repertoire through his various commissioning activities. Of the 51 works commissioned by him, 17 of these were ostensibly concertos. Indirectly, he served as an inspirational catalyst for other pianists and composers. As such, he represented both the performative and compositional aspects of left-hand piano that were of interest throughout this project.

Structurally, this thesis has been organised into three parts. Part III naturally harbours aggregate conclusions and findings, while Parts I and II study performative and compositional aspects of left-hand piano. Chapters 1 and 2 form **Part I: Proliferation, Performance and Perception**, and examine left-hand piano in relation to the pianist, its performance and social understanding. Chapter 1 traces the origins of the left-hand piano genre, examines Wittgenstein's cultural and familial influences as well as his personal musical preferences, studies his role in the proliferation of left-hand repertoire, provides a detailed history of his commissions and working relationships, and reviews his abiding legacy. These biographical details are interlaced throughout with a review of the relevant literature on Wittgenstein and the left-hand piano genre. With Wittgenstein's career and contributions placed historically and academically, the aims and objectives of the thesis are positioned at the end of this opening chapter, complete with the methodological approach to be applied to the works under consideration in **Part II** of this thesis. Chapter 2 adopts a cross-curricular approach and profits from consultation with the latest Disabilities Studies theories, studying attitudes towards, and prejudices against Wittgenstein as a disabled artist.

Investigation of left-hand piano as a performative art is continued, examining the latent and visible virtuosic demands of left-hand pianism as well as Wittgenstein's personal virtuosic credo. Furthermore, Chapter 2 considers the embodiment of left-hand pianism and the aesthetic of Wittgenstein's disability, confronts the problematic issue of equitable critique, and finally addresses the physical and technical demands placed on the left-handed pianist.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 focus on the internal workings of the left-hand piano genre, analysing a selection of the music commissioned by Wittgenstein. These chapters form the analytical portion of this thesis, **Part II: Compositional Challenges**. A comparative approach is adopted to examine the left-hand works for piano and orchestra as written by Prokofiev, Ravel and Britten, in relation to their previous large-scale piano-based output. This correlation between each composer's left-hand concerto and their contributions to the standard piano concerto genre unearths some of the fundamental ingredients and processes guiding these left-hand works. Simultaneously, this comparative procedure highlights substantive alteration of their individual compositional or pianistic predilections, and illuminates some of the difficulties in writing for left-hand alone at the piano. The apperceptive elements of this method are grounded in the belief that this comparative approach is more revealing than a stand-alone analysis. Criteria for inclusion within the analytical portion was thereby narrowed to those composers from Wittgenstein's commissioned concerto catalogue with comparable piano concerti for two hands whose scores would be readily accessible. It was on this basis that the appropriate concertos of Prokofiev,

Ravel and Britten were selected for analysis.

The respective compositional offerings of the selected 20th century composers have been scrupulously studied in many other contexts, but in spite of their eminence and popularity, inquiry into their piano concerti for left-hand within the framework of their characteristic output has been lacking up to recent times. Consideration of the significance and impact of these concerti in cogent detail within each composer's large-scale piano-based output has been neglected. This is in part due to the inaccessibility of required information, but the 2003 Sotheby's auction of Wittgenstein's personal collection and the subsequent gradual release of materials from the Wittgenstein archive now facilitate proper investigation into the diverging questions posed by these works.¹ These central analytical chapters seek to uncover the primary techniques of construction and development in each composer's left-hand work and illustrate within the context of prior piano concerti the degree of novel technique and original thought prompted by this unique challenge.

The concluding chapter, which additionally forms the entirety of **Part III: Observations and Conclusions**, performs a cross-comparison of these left-hand concertos and elicits a series of shared features and tropes among the works studied in **Part II**. The degree to which pianistic approach guides the other elements of each concerto's construction is considered, and debate on the idiosyncrasies of the left-hand

¹ *Music: Including the Paul Wittgenstein Archive* (London: Sotheby's, 2003). The auction of the Wittgenstein estate took place on Thursday 22nd May 2003 as listed on the title page of the Sotheby's auction catalogue.

piano concerto is continued. The investigation of the left-hand piano genre concludes with an examination of Wittgenstein's lasting legacy, current activity in the genre, and the value and legitimacy of left-hand piano in the 21st century.

**PART ONE: PROLIFERATION, PERFORMANCE AND
PERCEPTION**

CHAPTER 1: WITTGENSTEIN AND THE EMERGENCE OF LEFT-HAND PIANO MUSIC

Piano played by left hand alone is another kind of instrument, which has its own language, its own dialectics and even its own kind of harmony and technique.²

The words of Polish composer Avi Schönfeld, spoken in relation to his piano piece of 2000, *Un défi: Pièce pour la main gauche*, epitomize the transformation of technical, musical and societal perceptions which have transpired in the genre of piano for one-hand alone. Over the last 150 years, this *oeuvre* of piano repertoire has blossomed from a technical curiosity and performance spectacular, into a recognised and merited field of study and performance. Its evolution can be attributed to a number of factors, including, but not limited to, the following aspects: amelioration of technical and communicative resources have increased the notoriety of pianists operating with one-hand, further expanding this area to public scrutiny, and legitimate music therapy and disability bodies have encouraged and subsidized the production of suitable works to promote advancement in the arena of Disability Studies.³ Creative repercussions,

² Albert Sassmann, 'Paul Wittgenstein und die Klavier-Sololiteratur für die linke Hand allein', in *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, ed. by Irene Suchy et al. (Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2006), pp. 103 – 132 (p. 127).

³ OHMI, a UK based charity, provide a list of the organisations that promote advancement in the area of music and disability. *OHMI: Enabling Music-Making for the Physically Disabled*, <<http://www.ohmi.org.uk/organisations.html>>, [accessed 14/08/17]. Additionally, music and disability studies groups at the American Musicological Society and the Society of Music Theory run an interdisciplinary blog which consolidates much of the discussion and scholarly research in this area. They maintain a comprehensive bibliography of pertinent published works and dissertations, facilitate mentorship programs, advertise events and advocate for inclusion and accessibility for students, musicians and academics with disabilities, <<http://musicdisabilitystudies.wordpress.com>>, [accessed 20/03/18].

related to the above, have been felt in the form of increasingly inventive compositional solutions to this unique complication and a distension of the pragmatic and pianistic possibilities that can be achieved by one-hand alone.⁴

In the decades following WWI, Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961) approached a selection of stylistically diverse composers to commission works for left-hand only at the piano. This challenge was extended amongst somewhat prohibitive circumstances, socially and culturally. The Viennese born Wittgenstein, from a family of wealth and prominence, was preordained for a shining concert career prior to the war. A gunshot wound to his right elbow, and subsequent amputation of this arm, marred these ambitions temporarily. While still held as a prisoner of war by Russian troops, Wittgenstein resolved to fulfil his lifelong aspirations, endeavouring as a one-armed pianist to cultivate a technique and repertoire suitable for his specific requirements. The outcome of this quest was one of the most eclectic musical collections of the last century. Ravel, Prokofiev, Britten, Strauss, Hindemith, Korngold and Schmidt, among others, furnished Wittgenstein's personal arsenal with concerti, chamber and solo works. Regrettably, due to his own acute neurosis, Wittgenstein often imposed publishing and performance restrictions, impeding circulation and inhibiting the

⁴ While piano repertoire for the right-hand alone does exist, it has not flourished to the same degree. Theodore Edel has devoted a chapter to the repertoire for right-hand only at the piano in: Theodore Edel, 'Solo Works for the Right Hand Alone' in *Piano Music for One Hand* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 100 – 107. There are certain practical and physiological factors which may account, at least in part, for the disproportionate number of works written for left-hand alone in comparison to the right-hand only. See p. 149 of this thesis for a discussion of the physical advantages of the left-hand over the right when playing with a single hand at the piano.

recognition of these works.⁵ Posthumously, the Wittgenstein archive was sequestered by his wife, Hilde Schania, and it was only after her death in 2001 that these riches were revealed in full.⁶

An assessment of Wittgenstein's contributions and the resulting concerti must first be placed in historical context, in full consideration of the cultural milieu that shaped his musical and performance related inclinations.⁷ Changing tastes and standards negate contemporary examination in favour of a more equitable historical inquisition. The repercussions of Wittgenstein's privileged upbringing, set against the intense backdrop of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, offers valuable insight into his future endeavours.

BACKGROUND

Predecessors and Repertoire

Understanding of the maturation fostered by Wittgenstein in the field of piano repertoire for one-hand only derives from an acquaintance with the state of the art, its trends and collective attitudes, prior to Wittgenstein's entry into the genre. As noted by Godowsky in his 1935 article 'Piano Music for the Left Handed', genesis of this category would have been implausible prior to the Romantic era; the impediments of

⁵ Alexander Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein: A Family at War* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008) p. 164; Georg A. Predota, 'Badgering the Creative Genius: Paul Wittgenstein and the Prerogative of Musical Patronage' in *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, ed. by Irene Suchy et al. (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2006) pp.71 – 101 (p.85). Both sources attest to Wittgenstein's custodial attitude towards his commissions.

⁶ Irene Suchy et al., eds., *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2006) p. 9.

⁷ An analysis Wittgenstein's personal and somewhat conservative musical predilections is carried out in **Chapter 1, Patron: The Problem of Repertoire.**

period instruments such as limited range, sustain, articulation and tone, would have rendered experiments with one-hand quite unsatisfactory for the pianist.⁸ Adoption of the sustaining pedal, among other instrumental improvements, expanded the sonic possibilities open to the composer, resulting in a shift towards multi-layered textures, demanding leaps, arpeggios and garlands of chords operating concurrently in both hands.⁹ Elemental technical considerations, such as contrapuntal trends, habitual fingering archetypes, and the putative neglect of the thumb (notable mostly prior to the dissemination of the educational tome *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* by C.P.E. Bach) would have further exacerbated the impracticality of keyboard works for just one-hand. The emancipation of the left-hand largely took place in the 19th century. Historical hierarchical hand associations and limited figurative demands, typically produced a weaker and less malleable left-hand and accordingly a preoccupation with the equal training of hands emerged over the post-Classical and Romantic eras. The advent of wrist and arm integration, and the introduction of rotational pianistic gesture expanded standard technique beyond simple finger action, and heralded the arrival of the virtuoso pianist.

The development of left-hand technique is traced faithfully by Albert Sassmann in the most recent addition to the catalogues of piano music for one-hand only “*In der*

⁸ Leopold Godowsky, ‘Piano Music for the Left Handed’, *The Musical Quarterly*, 21 (1935), 298 – 300 (p. 299).

⁹ Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 71.

Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister”: *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*.¹⁰ Other catalogues to attempt a comprehensive bibliography of piano works penned or arranged for one hand alone include: Theodore Edel’s *Piano Music for One Hand* and Donald Patterson’s *One Handed: A Guide to Piano Music for One Hand*.¹¹ Hans Brofeldt compiled an online database of left-hand repertoire and associated biographical and incidental information, providing an online source to accommodate this expanding area of interest.¹² The historic trajectory of left-hand only piano, permeated by the catalyst of industrialisation and instrumental advancement, resulted in the distillation of four main categories within the repertoire; works resulting from compositional investigation, pedagogic interest, injury, and technical display. The lines of demarcation between these groupings blur naturally, however the most celebrated and significant examples within each division are outlined below.

The earliest known keyboard work for one hand alone, published in 1770, is the *Clavierstück für die rechte oder linke Hand allein* by C.P.E. Bach, although Sassmann contends this piece could have been written as early as the 1750s.¹³ It consists of a sole arpeggiated melody line notated on a single staff, played by either the right or left

¹⁰ Albert Sassmann, *„In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister”: Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein* (Tutzing: Verlegt bei Hans Schneider, 2010).

¹¹ Theodore Edel, *Piano Music for One Hand* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994); Donald L. Patterson, *One Handed: A Guide to Piano Music for One Hand* (London: Greenwood Press, 1999).

¹² Hans Brofeldt, *Piano Music for the Left Hand Alone*, <<http://www.left-hand-brofeldt.dk>>, [accessed 28/08/2017]

¹³ Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, p. 29.

hand. It presents a stark deviation from the epochal norm, but it seems appropriate that this first foray into single-handed play was conducted by the same composer who promoted the inclusion of the thumb as part of standardised piano technique, as without the thumb such an exercise would be much less fruitful. Piano repertoire towards the end of the Classical era moved towards a more uniform distribution of material across the keyboard, effectively moving the left-hand towards a more autonomous role. This new liberty, combined with a satisfactory sustaining pedal action and a more resonant bass allowed Friedrich Kuhlau to include an *'Andante'* movement for solo left-hand in the second Sonata of his *3 Sonatas*, Op.6a, written circa 1811.¹⁴ One of the most renowned works for one-hand borne of compositional intrigue is the *'Chaconne'* from *Partita No. 2*, BWV 1004 by J.S. Bach, as transcribed for left-hand by Brahms; his decision to rely solely on the left-hand can be attributed to his admiration for the original, as well as a desire for registral and musical coherence, as elucidated by Brahms in a letter to Clara Schumann attached to the manuscript of the Chaconne transcription:

In only one way, I find, can I devise for myself a greatly diminished but comparable and absolutely pure enjoyment of the work – when I play it with the left hand alone! [...] The similar difficulties, the type of technique, the arpeggios, they all combine – to make me feel like a violinist!¹⁵

Godowsky's *Paraphrases on Chopin's Etudes* form the most substantial and innovative contribution to this category, although these particular pieces might be

¹⁴ Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, p. 55.

¹⁵ Styra Avins, ed., *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters*, trans. by Josef Eisinger and Styra Avins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 515 – 516.

more appropriately labelled transcriptive curiosities rather than original compositional experiments. Fiendishly difficult, these pioneering transcriptions outline a comprehensive range of viable technical and textural options for the left-hand, particularly useful when forging the illusion of two hands. Godowsky could be classified as the most substantial and diverse of early contributors, and the challenge of writing for the left-hand inspired him throughout his life. Among his considerable output for piano left-hand was a work for Paul Wittgenstein entitled *Symphonic Metamorphosis of the Schatz-Walzer Themes from "The Gypsy Baron" by Johann Strauss* written in 1928 which regrettably was never performed by its commissioner.¹⁶

The steady advancement of left-hand technique can be most effectively traced through the stream of pedagogical publications which emerged in the pursuit of Lisztian-type technical perfection. Didactic manuals of the 19th century stress technical uniformity and independence of hands as the cornerstones of immaculate technique. From as early as 1797, beginning with Milchmeyer's *Die wahre Art das Pianoforte zu spielen*, the left-hand was targeted specifically as an area of weakness, a technical thread which was further developed by Louis Adam, Pollini, Kalkbrenner, Köhlers, Eduard Marxsens, Ernst Ludwig and others, in their respective instructional manuals.¹⁷ These

¹⁶ Edel, *Piano Music for One Hand*, pp. 56 – 63.

¹⁷ Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, pp. 57 – 59; Johann Peter Milchmeyer, *Die wahre Art das Pianoforte zu spielen* (Dresden: Carl Christian Meinhold, 1797); Louis Adam, *Méthode de piano du Conservatoire* (Paris: Marchand, 1804); Francesco Pollini, *Metodo pel clavicembalo* (Milan: Giovanni Ricordi, ca. 1811); Friedrich Wilhelm Kalkbrenner, *Méthode pour apprendre le piano-forte à l'aide du guide-mains*, Op.108 (Paris: Chez I. Pleyel et Cie., 1831); Louis Köhlers, *Schule der linken Hand*, Op.302 (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, 1881); Eduard Marxsens, *Sechs Etuden für die linke Hand*, Op.40 (Leipzig: Schuberth, ca. 1844); Ernst Ludwig,

volumes encouraged maturation of the left-hand by entrusting this “weaker” hand with the main melodic, thematic and technical material while the right occupied a subordinate functional harmonic role, as evidenced by Czerny’s *24 Piano Studies for the Left Hand*, Op.718 and *Die Schule der linken Hand*, Op.399. Solo left-hand exercises and studies were also issued, and an amalgamation of both developmental approaches could sometimes be seen within the same volume. This redress of left-hand technique culminated in entire volumes dedicated to the cause. *Die Pflege der linken Hand*, Op.89 by Hermann Berens, published circa 1872 appears to be the first pedagogic collection published exclusively for left-hand alone.¹⁸ It is useful to note within this context that many collections bearing the subtitle “for the left hand” may not refer to solo left-hand, but can include an accompanying right-hand. It is also of importance that these volumes, although designed to technically improve the left-hand, focused on the concerns presented by standard repertoire and still primarily addressed the challenges exhibited within accompaniment figuration. They did not forge paths into the techniques required to operate enduringly and comprehensively with one-hand alone, or devote attention to the proficiencies, stamina and physicality required to perform entire works with the left-hand alone.

Incapacitating injury has also provided the impetus to explore the possibilities extended by a single hand. After suffering severe damage to his right-hand, German

24 Clavierstudien zur Förderung der Gewandtheit und Ausdrucksfähigkeit der linken Hand, Op.13 (Wien: Doblinger, 1897).

¹⁸ Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, p. 272; Patterson, p. 11.

composer Ludwig Berger published as part of his *Etüden für Pianoforte*, Op.12, a complete study for left-hand only. A simple melody is punctuated with harmony and bass notes (often sustained by the pedal), offering the impression of a typical melody and accompaniment dynamic.¹⁹ Scriabin's hallmark *Prelude and Nocturne*, Op.9 for left-hand was the outcome of prolonged grievance with his right-hand. A further example of impairment as a type of compositional catalyst was Saint-Saëns *Six Études pour la main gauche seule*, Op.135, written for pianist Caroline de Serres (also known as Caroline Montigny-Remaury), who had lost the use of her right hand.²⁰

A final area of examination are those pieces performed within a concert setting. These works sometimes straddle one or other of the previously mentioned categories, compositional intrigue, educational intent or altered ability due to injury or illness. For example, the *Vier Spezialstudien für die linke Hand allein* by Max Reger, were conceived with educational intent as expressed in the preface to this publication, but were carried over into the concert arena by Paul Wittgenstein and other left-handed pianists.²¹ Wittgenstein's own teacher, Theodore Leschetizky, dedicated his *Andante Finale* Op.13 to Alexander Dreyschock, and the aforementioned Chopin *Études* as transcribed by Godowsky partly from compositional curiosity, make a formidable addition to any recital program.²² And then there are those pieces conceived purposely

¹⁹ Edel, *Piano Music for One Hand*, p. 43; Ludwig Berger *Etüden für Pianoforte*, Op. 12 (Leipzig: C.F. Peters, 1873).

²⁰ Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, pp. 86 – 88.

²¹ Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, p. 60.

²² Edel, *Piano Music for One Hand*, p. 74.

for exhibition purposes. Bartók sought to emulate the ostentatious leanings of *fin-de-siècle* Europe in his *Study for the Left Hand*, premiered at his Berlin debut. In a letter to his mother, there is suggestion of subversive techniques to amplify the power produced by one hand. ‘I played a new work of my own with which I achieved much success. It is a sonata movement for the left-hand only which sounds as if I played it with three hands’.²³ Alkan’s *Trois Grandes Études*, Op.76, was also designed to impress, with the opening movement, *Fantasia in A-flat major*, designed entirely for left-hand.²⁴ Such were the technical demands, that the piece was long deemed unplayable. The paltry offerings of the juvenilia of left-hand only piano may have been meagre in number, but were substantial in concept and configuration. These scant early experiments provided the basis for much of Wittgenstein's solo repertoire, but additionally proffered inspiration and technical frameworks ripe for growth and expansion by the next generation of composers, on whom Wittgenstein would call to fashion his musical miscellany. In fact, it is known he sent copies of his preferred left-hand works (Godowsky etc.) to prospective composers and recommended them for study, as they demonstrated some of the rich and varied soundscapes achievable with the left-hand only.²⁵

Cultivation of the left-hand repertoire was undoubtedly accelerated and popularized in

²³ Edel, *Piano Music for One Hand*, p. 13.

²⁴ Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, p. 56.

²⁵ This is corroborated by a letter dated August 3rd1940 (held by the Britten-Pears Foundation (*Gb-Alb*, ‘Benjamin Britten Letters’, 2Hc3.12 (34).) in which Wittgenstein announces to Britten that he is forwarding him a score by Franz Schmidt as a potential pianistic model for his *Diversions*. He also suggests ‘Chopin-Godowsky studies’ as inspirational fodder for the *cadenza* or solo variation.

concert by early proponents such as Alexander Dreyschock (1818 – 1869) and Adolfo Fumagalli (1828 – 1856), who exploited the prevailing fashion for flamboyance in the 19th century with their electrifying left-hand technique. Dreyschock ostensibly found acclaim with his formidable version of Chopin's *Revolutionary Etude*, where he performed the undulating left-hand arpeggios in octaves to stunning effect.²⁶ He further capitalised on his prodigious left-hand talent with two works for left-hand alone: *Variations for the left hand alone*, Op.22 and *Grande Variation on God Save the Queen for the left hand alone*, Op.129. Wittgenstein's own teacher, Theodore Leschetizky, dedicated his *Andante Finale* Op.13 (an arrangement of the sextet from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*) to Dreyschock and his formidable left-hand.²⁷ For the Italian Adolfo Fumagalli, success too coincided with the illustration of left-hand virtuosity set forth through popular opera variations, fantasies and paraphrases, such as his beloved *Grande Fantasie sur Robert le Diable de Meyerbeer for the left hand*, Op.106.²⁸

Dreyschock and Fumagalli generated astonishment among audiences across Europe exhibiting their extraordinary left-hand prowess, but they did not rely solely on this proficiency to glean admiration, and these works were programmed and interspersed among other two-handed favourites. The obeisance paid to Hungarian aristocrat Count Géza Zichy (1849-1924) was engendered exclusively by his proficient left-hand and

²⁶ Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, p. 76.

²⁷ Sassmann, 'Paul Wittgenstein und die Klavier-Sololiteratur für die linke Hand allein', p. 113.

²⁸ Edel, *Piano Music for One Hand*, pp. 21 – 24.

unalloyed promulgation of the genre, after a hunting accident in his teens resulted in the amputation of his right arm. Enabled in part by aristocratic connections, and with the enduring support of his compatriot Liszt, Zichy established a unique concert career, moulding and composing works appropriate to his requirements. Preeminent among his constructed repertoire was the Concerto in E-flat, composed in 1895, which is believed to be the earliest example in this category.²⁹ His prodigious accomplishments and fortitude served as sustenance to Wittgenstein in the aftermath of his amputation: while imprisoned in Russia he was sent a copy of Zichy's handbook, *Das Buch der Einarmigen*, which imparts practical advice on how to live with disability. It is plausible to suppose however, that Wittgenstein was abreast of Zichy's activities prior to his injury, considering both Wittgenstein's cultural preoccupation and Zichy's prominent career. Lesser known was the Romanian pianist Włodzimierz Dolanski, born in 1886, who garnered praise for his left-hand only performances across Europe up to 1914.³⁰ He followed the example of Count Zichy, when as a child he lost his right arm in an ammunitions accident.³¹

These early players and protagonists of piano repertoire for one-hand answered a selection of fundamental questions crucial to its survival and maturation, ranging from audience enthusiasm to physiological practicalities. Moreover, they bequeathed

²⁹ Patterson, *One Handed: A Guide to Piano Music for One Hand*, p. 11.

³⁰ In her obituary of Wittgenstein, Margaret Deneke points specifically to Count Zichy as a determining factor in Wittgenstein's decision to continue as a pianist after his amputation. See p. 34 of this dissertation for the relevant quotation.

³¹ Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, p. 89.

musical riches which formed the basis for Wittgenstein's one-handed technique and solo repertoire. Works by Dreyschock, Leschetizky, Zichy, Brahms, Saint-Saëns, Reger, Scriabin, Hollaender and Godowsky were uncovered during his initial comprehensive repertoire review of left-hand only piano works and incorporated regularly in concert, reflecting his elementary technical and stylistic preferences. Albert Sassmann estimates that over 270 solo piano works for left-hand alone were in existence by the time Wittgenstein undertook his search for left-hand only piano repertoire.³²

Modern-day Phaeacians

German poet Schiller promoted a comparison between contemporary Austrians and the culturally enlightened mythological race, the Phaeacians; this ideology was embraced by the Viennese who took singular pride in the exceptional quality of their artistic offerings and sophisticated lifestyle.³³ Suffused in the collective consciousness, lay the predisposed morals, philosophies and proclivities that would later frame Paul Wittgenstein's decisions. An examination of the influential social and familial components present in these formative years provide insight into the courage, idiosyncrasies, artistic anxieties and obtuse working relationships that shaped his legacy.

³² Sassmann, 'Paul Wittgenstein und die Klavier-Sololiteratur für die linke Hand allein', p. 103.

³³ The Phaeacians were a superior mythological Greek race with a love of song and dance, poetry, banquets and general festivities.

Industrialisation and urbanisation, in coalescence with the Biedermeier culture of the early 19th century, brought about the rise of the middle classes and an ardent surge in the pursuit of culture privately and publicly.³⁴ The new *haute bourgeoisie*, freshly moneyed from their exploits in business and engineering, sought to emulate the aristocracy, and proclaimed their social status through patronage and pursuance of the arts. Acceptable civilised recreations were enjoyed by families in the home, such as improvising verse, painting and performing chamber music. William M. Johnston in *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History 1848 – 1938*, speaks of the popularity of these new pastimes, citing a law necessarily introduced to curtail music-making after 11pm, thereby preventing neighbourhood disturbance.³⁵ The composition of public audiences also shifted proportionately with the inclusion of this new class. However, this behaviour which began as a decree of stature and an accessory to the lifestyle of the *nouveau riche*, was imbibed by the younger privileged aesthetes as the true avenue of enlightenment:

Beginning roughly in the 1860's [sic], two generations of well-to-do children were reared in the museums, theatres, and concert halls of the new *Ringstrasse*. They acquired aesthetic culture not, as their fathers did, as an ornament to life or as a badge of status but as the air they breathed.³⁶

Devotion to art as a way of life intensified further towards the end of the century, as the young sought refuge from rising political tensions in the intellectually stimulating

³⁴ William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History 1848-1938* (London: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 18 – 23.

³⁵ Johnston, *The Austrian Mind*, p. 132.

³⁶ Carl E. Schorske, 'The Transformation of the Garden' in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1981), pp. 279 – 321 (p. 298).

ambiance of the Viennese coffeehouses. Extensive discussion on the perspectives held by these young cultural disciples is carried out in *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (referring to Paul's younger brother Ludwig) by Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin.³⁷ Born in 1887, Paul Wittgenstein was susceptible to the sensibilities of his pedigreed contemporaries, and undoubtedly their views had some bearing on him, contributing to an understanding of his character and his conviction that art was tantamount to life. For instance, the speed with which he rededicated himself to his craft after the loss of his right arm, and the dogmatic determination to succeed could be partly attributed to his assimilated artistic idolatry.

Similarly, the way in which the Viennese public treated their musical commodities may have impacted on Wittgenstein's demanding attitude towards the composers he commissioned. They wielded immense authority over their artistic output, Johnston claims 'the opera and the Burgtheater suffered constant interference' from the upper classes, stipulating that roles be created or altered for aristocratic favourites, or even compelling the cancellation of operas they found distasteful.³⁸ At the pinnacle of their musical productivity, the Viennese public, confident of their discerning taste and the musical visionaries at their disposal, was in the luxurious position of setting composers in competition with one other and ruthlessly discarding the many rejects. This cavalier demeanour was feasibly absorbed by Paul, as evidenced by his easy dismissal of

³⁷ Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc., 1996), pp. 44 – 48.

³⁸ Johnston, *The Austrian Mind*, pp. 43 – 44.

commissioned concertos and large-scale changes demanded of these composers. This “right” as perceived by the nobility, to specify their cultural requirements can be traced in Wittgenstein’s imperious approach to his commissions and his intrinsic need to regulate and mould his repertoire. Espousal of conformity according to societal conventions, rather than diversity and individuality, left a discernible imprint on his musical tastes. Paul Reitter, in his article ‘Fin-de-Siècle Vienna and the Challenge of Family Biography’, notes that the Wittgenstein family biographer Alexander Waugh does not fully contextualise the family’s tensions, interactions and activities, or pinpoint the aesthetic attitudes which cultivated Paul’s ‘self-stylization as an artist’.³⁹ Such situational and cultural placement then is overdue, in pursuit of a comprehensive understanding of Wittgenstein’s career and impact on the left-hand genre.

Compliance with the principals of the moral and aesthetic value systems as elucidated by Carl E. Schorske in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* was observed by all families of stature.⁴⁰ The scruples and standards of the period were exemplified with great magnitude by the paterfamilias, Karl Wittgenstein (1847 – 1913). The epitome of Vienna’s new haute bourgeoisie, Karl’s dedication to the applied and performing arts was not at all superficial, and the wealth generated by his enterprises in the iron and steel industries allowed him to indulge his artistic appetite. He was an accomplished bugler and violinist, and amassed an astonishing art and manuscript

³⁹ Paul Reitter, ‘Fin-de-Siècle Vienna and the Challenge of Family Biography’, *American Imago*, 68 (Winter 2011), 665 – 678 (p. 675).

⁴⁰ Carl E. Schorske, ‘Politics and the Psyche: Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal’, in *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1981), p. 3 – 23.

collection including works by Bach, Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Brahms. Guests at the regular soirees held in their Winter Alleegasse Palais included Clara, Marie and Eugenie Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Richard Strauss (with whom Paul would occasionally play duets), Joseph Joachim, Alexander von Zemlinsky, Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg, Pablo Casals, Max Kalbeck, Bruno Walter, Eduard Hanslick as well as eminent scientists, diplomats, artists, writers and composers.⁴¹ In *Brahms: Life and Letters*, Styra Avins affirms the cultural status of the Wittgenstein family, indicating that the lack of extant letters between the two parties likely signified the intimacy of their relationship, communicating instead through messenger or the pneumatic postal system.⁴² Paul later recalled with delight a memory of peeping through the keyhole to glimpse Brahms when he was still a small boy.⁴³

Appropriately, all the Wittgenstein children were coached in various instruments to a high standard and they formed a remarkably talented and proficient troupe. Hermine was a skilled pianist and singer, and Hans, reputedly acknowledged by Julius Epstein as a musical prodigy, could identify the Doppler Effect from the age of four and had an extraordinary ability to memorise music. Rudi composed secretly in his youth, Kurt

⁴¹ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 32.

⁴² Avins, ed., *Brahms: Life and Letters*, p. 590. Avins also included an extract from Hermine Wittgenstein's unpublished memoir, where she gleefully recounts an occasion where Brahms doused nine-year old sister Gretl's obstinately short hair with a couple of drops of champagne, as he declared 'in such a situation only champagne would help'.

⁴³ Leonard Kastle, 'Paul Wittgenstein – Teacher and Friend', in *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, ed. by Irene Suchy et al. (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2006) pp. 67 – 70 (p. 69).

was an accomplished pianist and cellist and Helene a singer and pianist.⁴⁴ With their mother, a sight-reader of extraordinary ability, they relished playing piano duets and arrangements for four hands by Weber, Bach, Schubert and similar.⁴⁵

Karl's interest in art was encouraged by his eldest daughter Hermine, whom he affectionately referred to as his "art director". She actively promoted his commissioning habit, including a very generous contribution to the renowned Secession building.⁴⁶ His property and decorative tastes also aligned with the most refined tastes of the time, the interiors were lavishly decorated with imposing tapestries and sculptures (the foyer displayed a piece by Auguste Rodin) and he acquired a summer estate called Hochreit among the Mittelgebirge mountains of Lower Austria. This receptivity to art and disciplined conformity to the standards of good taste and action of the period were wholeheartedly embodied by Karl and transferred to his children who perpetuated associations with the Viennese elite in all cultural corners. Paul and his sister Margaret in particular sustained the tradition of creative patronage advocated by their father.⁴⁷

Karl held this same extreme level of devotion to the moral and intellectual values cherished by society, as the aesthetic ones. Autocratic rule at home and an explosive

⁴⁴ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 10, 26, 41, 43; Irene Suchy, 'Sein Werk – Die Musik des Produzenten-Musikers Paul Wittgenstein', in *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, ed. by Irene Suchy et al. (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2006), pp. 13 – 36 (p. 24).

⁴⁵ Brian McGuinness, 'The Brothers Wittgenstein', in *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, ed. by Irene Suchy et al. (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2006) pp. 53 – 66 (p. 57).

⁴⁶ Suchy, 'Sein Werk – Die Musik des Produzenten-Musikers Paul Wittgenstein', p. 13.

⁴⁷ Suchy, 'Sein Werk – Die Musik des Produzenten-Musikers Paul Wittgenstein', p. 13.

temper ensured he fervently instilled in his children these conventionally accepted principles. It was insisted that the children were educated at home in Latin and mathematics, with the exception of Paul and Ludwig who received a few years of formal education. However, this private education rendered the Wittgensteins quite isolated, friends and playmates were extremely rare. Consequently as adults they were ill at ease in many social situations and had difficulty maintaining amicable relationships. Paul and Ludwig's limited time in public school did little to foster friendships or promote more congenial behaviour so deep-seated were the effects of their formative years.⁴⁸

As a role model for his children Karl encouraged generosity, charitable and educational donations, dignified public comportment and scientific and artistic patronage. Paul never lost this sense of generosity and compassion for the plight of others, post-WWII he sent care packages back to Austria to his afflicted friends and students including Marie Soldat-Roeger, Hans Knappertsbusch and Rudolf Koder.⁴⁹ However, the seemingly meritorious qualities of perseverance, integrity, resolute determination to cause, abject rejection of self-pity, unconditional respect for authority and obeisance to social mores were expected with such severity from his children as to convince them that deviation from his specified plan was immoral. Karl displayed remarkably little compassion for the individualities of his brood: for the boys,

⁴⁸ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 36.

⁴⁹ Irene Suchy and Albert Sassmann, "...freue mich, dass ihr stück ihnen auch selbst gefällt": der Pianist und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 1 (2005), 56 – 59.

success in business and engineering was the only acceptable outcome. Hermine recalled in her family memoir ‘The only profession which my father felt really worthwhile was the double one of engineering and a business career’.⁵⁰ Accordingly, Paul did initially gain experience in a bank, which he grew to loathe, but remarked that Ludwig alone was capable of living up to their father’s excessive expectations.⁵¹

Bred in overwhelming fear of a mediocre existence, suffocating tension often reigned in the household. This deleterious atmosphere placed the mental stability of the boys at risk, and is accepted as a contributing cause for the alleged suicide of the 3 oldest boys Hans, Rudi and Kurt.⁵² Paul and Ludwig too were plagued by suicidal thoughts throughout their lives. This family loss exacerbated the acute neurotic qualities emerging individually in all the siblings, and father Karl augmented these volatile conditions by forbidding conversation about the sons who predeceased him.⁵³ See **Figure 1.1** below for the full Wittgenstein family tree.

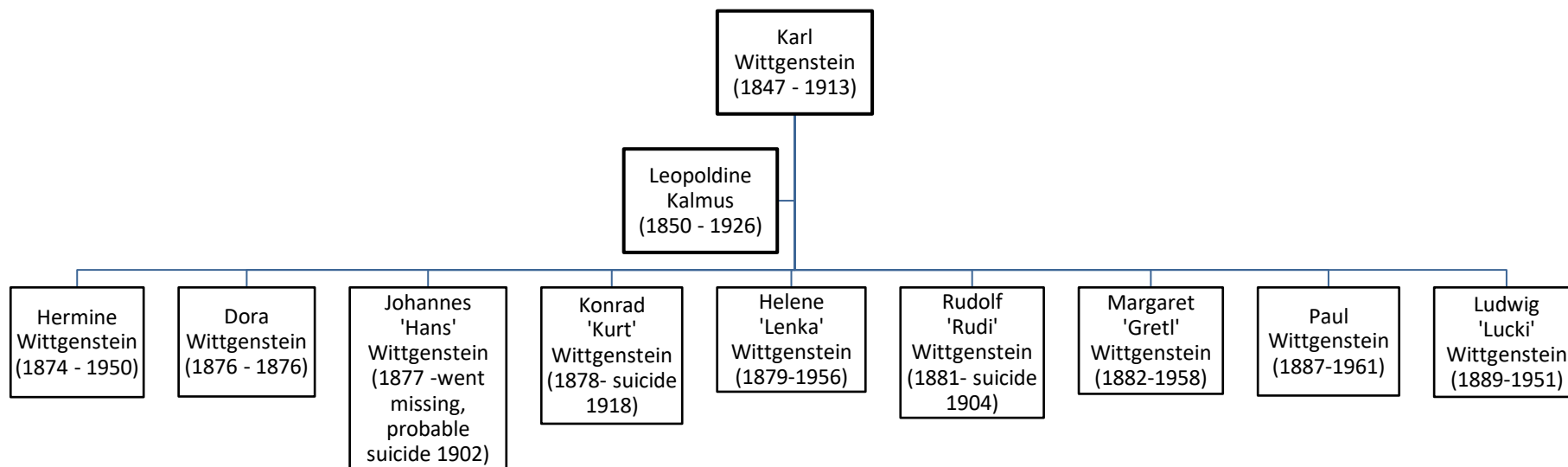
⁵⁰ E. Fred. Flindell, ‘Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist’, in *Music Review*, 32 (1971), 107 – 127 (p. 110).

⁵¹ McGuinness, ‘The Brothers Wittgenstein’, p. 53.

⁵² The circumstances surrounding Hans’ death are somewhat cloudy.

⁵³ Kurt did not commit suicide until five years after his father’s death at the end of WWI in 1918.

Figure 1.1. Wittgenstein Family Tree



Several meaningful strands can be unravelled from this complex family unit that bore consequence on the susceptible young Paul. As a family of prominence, the taste and etiquette demonstrated by the Wittgensteins was characteristic of Viennese high society, but perhaps imbibed and demonstrated in a more passionate manner. As a consequence of the suffocating and uncommunicative domestic atmosphere, the presence of music as a unifying force as well as a social statement, became integral for the family and further elevated its importance. Music became their most successful means of communication and expression.⁵⁴ Lack of juvenile social interaction established an ineptitude in maintaining personal relationships and a preference for isolation. Even the rapport between the siblings was often tenuous; Brahms once noted that they behaved towards one another as if they were at court.⁵⁵

Through music the family forged their strongest connections; it was a focal point of their correspondence and conversations.⁵⁶ It is plausible that Paul was driven to seek refuge in the piano as a solitary comfort, a socially praised confirmation of personal value, and a communal activity capable of bridging familial tensions. Irascible communications with the composers he commissioned, and the emotional difficulties which beleaguered many of his adult exchanges may stem from these pressurised formative experiences. His paralysing performance anxiety and fierce sensitivity to criticism could be attributed to his fear of inadequacy and social embarrassment

⁵⁴ Suchy and Sassmann, "...freue mich, dass ihr stück ihnen auch selbst gefällt", p. 56.

⁵⁵ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 109.

⁵⁶ Suchy, 'Sein Werk – Die Musik des Produzenten-Musikers Paul Wittgenstein', p. 24.

perhaps more so than the typical performer.⁵⁷ Undoubtedly, his upbringing also equipped him with elemental qualities vital to his survival as a prisoner of war in Russia: his abhorrence of self-pity and his dogged perseverance fuelled his convictions to persist with his musical aspirations very shortly after the loss of his right-arm. Lamentably, the restrictive and often outdated principles within which he lived his life prevented the natural growth of an individual adult identity and impeded the discovery and inclusion of modern ideas, musical and otherwise. Of course, his upbringing cannot account in full for his musical predilections, but there is no doubt that Wittgenstein struggled to understand the pluralized progressive musical language of the early 20th century, and identified more strongly with the Romantic idiom engrained from youth.

CAREER OVERVIEW AND IMPLICATIONS

Reception and Reputation

Karl's tremendous affection for music, juxtaposed with his uncompromising repudiation of the art form as a career option for his son, presented a historically normative dichotomy. In Karl's opinion, the family's pedigree precluded Paul from entertaining the piano as a profession; dissent with this etiquette would have flouted social and personal conventions, endangering the family's propriety and stature. The opposition to his chosen profession extended beyond class; it was an ill-concealed family secret that Paul was not considered the most proficient or musically

⁵⁷ Although the sisters fared a little better, they too suffered from bouts of extreme anxiety and nervousness.

sympathetic member of the family; his older brother Hans held this coveted title. Nevertheless, Paul tended to his avocation obsessively, and was allowed to indulge his passion by taking lessons with the respected Malvine Brée. Later he was granted the honour of transferring to the great pedagogue Theodore Leschetizky. Theoretical and analytical studies with the blind Viennese composer and close family friend Josef Labor complemented his piano tuition.⁵⁸ Furthermore he was occasionally designated duet partner to frequent guest Richard Strauss, or accompanist to violinist Joseph Joachim; a vote of confidence in his technical competence. Household denunciation of his virtuoso aspirations was unambiguous however, the psychological effect of this uncamouflaged, indelicate critique in all likelihood contributing to his future vulnerability and his capitulation to heightened performance anxiety.

In tandem with the family's sceptical opinion of Paul's early style, Leschetizky's affectionate nickname for him, '*Saitenknicker*' (the mighty key smasher), reveals a comparable dearth of subtlety and refinement.⁵⁹ An analogy was drawn by Hermine between the father and son, the latter evincing a hybrid of paternal traits in his archetypal performance. She wrote to Ludwig that 'The exaggerated restless Papa comes to the fore in his piano playing'. Support was not forthcoming from his mother either, she is reported to have occasionally exclaimed 'Does he have to pound the piano like that!' in reference to Paul's practice habits.⁶⁰ Another aspect of his pianistic

⁵⁸ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 38; Labor also served as a teacher to their mother Leopoldine, and as tutor to Schoenberg and Alma Mahler.

⁵⁹ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 111.

⁶⁰ Suchy and Sassmann, "... freue mich, dass ihr stück ihnen auch selbst gefällt", p. 57.

expression was divulged by his correspondence with Ludwig, with whom Paul maintained regular contact up to the 1940s. His younger sibling was often required to appease Paul's irascible temperament and ballast the family's perceptible coolness towards his musical endeavours.⁶¹ Ludwig believed that Paul spurned the role of subordinate interpreter in search of the limelight, but the younger brother was rather more considerate of Paul's feelings when expressing his opinion:

I think you are unwilling to lose yourself in and behind the composition; on the contrary, it's yourself that you want to present. I am well aware that, that way too, something comes out that's worth hearing, and I don't mean just for a hearer who admires the technique, but also for me and for anyone who can appreciate the expression of a personality. On the other hand I wouldn't turn to you if I wanted (as I usually do) to hear a composer speak.⁶²

This unwillingness to subjugate his own desire for soloistic brilliance over the musical integrity of a work was an enduring component of his concertizing career, and further evidence of an anachronistic virtuoso perspective. Acquiescence to Paul's vocational wishes arrived at a comparatively late age. It was amid failing health in late 1912 that Karl slackened his dogmatic abjuration of his son's pianistic aspirations.⁶³ Subsequently, it was at the age of 26 that Paul made his debut in the *Grosser Musikvereinsaal*, with the Tonkünstler Orchestra under the baton of Oskar Nedbal, on the 1st of December 1913.

Socially and critically his debut was a comfortable success. The selection of his programme alone formed a confident and audacious statement. It consisted of four

⁶¹ McGuinness, 'The Brothers Wittgenstein', p. 55.

⁶² McGuinness, 'The Brothers Wittgenstein', p. 58.

⁶³ Karl passed away at home in Vienna in January 1913.

consecutive works for piano and orchestra: Field's *Konzert in As-dur für Klavier und Orchester*, Mendelssohn's *Serenade und Allegro jocosum für Klavier und Orchester*, the *Variationen und Fuge über ein Thema von Czerny für Klavier* by his beloved Josef Labor, and a finale of Liszt's *Konzert in Es-dur für Klavier und Orchester*.⁶⁴ A programme of such technical difficulty verifies his prodigious pianistic capabilities. However, the exhausting and collectively combative nature of the chosen works highlight a certain insecurity; an artist seeking validation, soliciting the attention of the major critics and the approval of his sceptical siblings. Eager to appear in command, he astutely exercised his artistic prerogative in selecting an orchestra:

Quite apart from the price, I would not hire the Vienna Philharmonic. Probably they won't play as you want them to do, it will look like a horse which you can't ride; and then if the concert is a success, people might say it was only due to the orchestras' merit.⁶⁵

These initial decisions illustrate concerns which became integral to the trajectory of his career: virtuosic music with impact and brilliance, ubiquitous control over his environment and an indulgent share of the limelight. The industry and dedication exhibited by Wittgenstein was duly acknowledged and lauded by the critics, and Max Kalbeck of *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* recognised his audacious demeanour:

He undertook this hazardous adventure without knowing quite how risky it was, driven by a pure love for the task and guided by the honourable intention of placing before the public a test, both reliable and rare, of his eminent skills.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ E. Fred. Flindell, 'More on Franz Schmidt and Paul Wittgenstein and their triumph with the E-Flat Concerto', in *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, ed. by Irene Suchy et al. (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2006) pp. 133 – 170 (p. 137).

⁶⁵ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, pp. 4 – 6.

⁶⁶ Max Kalbeck, 'Konzert Wittgenstein', *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 6th December 1913, p. 16.

Julius Korngold in the *Neue Freie Presse* too confirmed Wittgenstein's zeal for the task and genuine musicianship (despite leaving the concert hall after hearing only one piece) but cautioned against 'the need for taking further risks' perhaps implying irritation with his arduous and unconventional programme.⁶⁷ The axiomatic function of the Wittgenstein family as cultural enablers may have hindered the critics' analytical freedoms and encouraged a mild censorship of more pejorative reflections. Feasibly, they may have felt compelled to submit a largely positive review to avoid eschewal by the Wittgensteins, or spied an opportunity to ingratiate themselves further with their illustrious coterie. An anonymous review in *Das Fremdenblatt*, unrestricted by the shackles of societal pressure, perhaps presents the most equitable picture. The reviewer records that 'further practice would add greater perfection to his abilities' and confirms his positive action at the piano, formerly alluded to by Leschetitzky's "*Saitenknicker*" nickname; 'the force with which the notes were struck and the unassuming precision of a healthy rhythmical sense legitimise his performing in public'.⁶⁸

The congenial response from his inner circle, is exemplified by the note from his great uncle, and art collector Albert Figdor which reads 'overjoyed at your marvellous success, which one hears everywhere' greatly bolstered his confidence.⁶⁹ Following his two-handed debut there are several documented concerts before the outbreak of the

⁶⁷ Quoted in: Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, pp. 59.

⁶⁸ Quoted in: Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, pp. 60.

⁶⁹ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 112.

war: a solo concert in Graz in February followed by a chamber music concert the following month, and on March 30th 1914 he played works by Josef Labor, John Field and Chopin alongside the Vienna Symphony Orchestra under Rudolph Réti.⁷⁰

The momentum of these early musical engagements was curtailed by the outbreak of WWI. As a junior officer in the reserves (he completed his obligatory military training in 1909) he was promptly dispatched to the front. While on a reconnaissance mission in August 1914 near Zamosc, Poland, Wittgenstein sustained a gunshot wound to his right elbow. Transferred to a nearby hospital his right arm was amputated, but shortly after was taken prisoner by the Russian army along with the entire hospital.⁷¹ He was first held captive in hospitals in Minsk and Orel, but was later relocated to a prisoner of war camp in Siberia.⁷² At this seminal juncture, Wittgenstein's peculiar blend of dogmatism and resilience enabled him to identify a solution to his irrevocable circumstances. He would remodel his left-hand technique and resume his long-anticipated concert career, but as a one-armed pianist. Presumably, the indelible example set by Count Géza Zichy and his own mentor, the blind composer Josef Labor, aided this decision. His lifelong friend, Margaret Denke, attested to this in her obituary of Wittgenstein:

Paul's gifts as a scholar might have opened up a career in musicology, but old Count Zichy, who had lost his right arm at a shooting party, and for whom

⁷⁰ Albert Sassmann, 'Aspekte der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand am Beispiel des Leschetizky Schülers Paul Wittgenstein' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, 1999), p. 31; Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 65.

⁷¹ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, pp. 70 – 74.

⁷² Flindell, 'More on Franz Schmidt and Paul Wittgenstein and their triumph with the E-Flat Concerto', pp. 138 – 139.

Liszt composed, strengthened Paul's resolution.⁷³

Allegedly, he sketched with chalk the outline of a keyboard on an old crate, and inwardly began to reshape and condense his favourite pieces into a format suitable for left-hand alone. Later, he found an old piano in the camp where he was able to practice and consolidate these theoretical techniques.⁷⁴ While still in Siberia, Wittgenstein submitted a request through a Danish Consulate to his beloved old teacher Joseph Labor to write for him a concerto for left-hand only and orchestra.⁷⁵ He received return news that Labor had independently reached the same conclusion and had already started his *Konzertstück für Klavier (einhändig) und Orchester (in Form von Variationen) in D-Dur*. As part of a prisoner exchange organised by the Red Cross, he returned to Vienna in November 1915: he had spent over a year as a prisoner of war.⁷⁶ Following his homecoming and a second, less significant, amputation to his right arm, he committed himself fervently to preparing his first left-handed concert: 'I immediately determined upon the plan of training myself to become a one-armed pianist, at least to attempt it'.⁷⁷

The Wittgensteins hosted several private concerts at their *palais* in March and October 1916, where Paul and associates performed a two-piano adaptation of the newly

⁷³ Margaret Deneke, 'Mr. Paul Wittgenstein. Devotion to Music', *The London Times*, 14th March 1961, p. 17.

⁷⁴ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, pp. 87 – 88.

⁷⁵ Flindell, 'More on Franz Schmidt and Paul Wittgenstein and their triumph with the E-Flat Concerto', p. 141.

⁷⁶ Sassmann, 'Paul Wittgenstein und die Klavier-Sololiteratur für die linke Hand allein', p. 103.

⁷⁷ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 112.

composed *Konzertstück* and a Labor quartet arranged by the composer's assistant Rosine Menzel.⁷⁸ For his one-armed debut in December 1916 he adopted identical arrangements to his debut of 1913, engaging the talents of Oskar Nebdal and the Vienna Tonkünstler Orchestra. He premiered the Labor *Konzertstück für Klavier und Orchester in Form von Variationen*, featured transcriptions of Mendelssohn, Bach, Liszt and three of Godowsky's arrangements of the Chopin *Etudes*. This return to the stage received glowing reviews. Julius Korngold who voiced certain hesitations at his 1913 debut, proclaimed Wittgenstein's achievement a triumph, an utter success.

Wittgenstein's interpretations are those of a spirited and sensitive musician. Let us, after his debut, crowned with success, clasp the courageous hand, which he has learned to use so skilfully.⁷⁹

Early in 1917 he performed more informal concerts entertaining troops and workers throughout Europe, performing at least three times the concerto written for him by Labor.⁸⁰ The work of E. F. Flindell is particularly vital and reliable as he was the only scholar to gain access to Wittgenstein's personal and professional documentation while sequestered by his widow Hilde Wittgenstein (née Schania).⁸¹ Flindell recorded a total of 5 concerts in this interim period before Wittgenstein voluntarily returned to military service.⁸² Family scepticism of his musical endeavours was temporarily neutralized by the success of these inaugural concerts, notably with respect to Paul's emotional wellbeing. A letter from Hermine to Ludwig expresses relief at the positive

⁷⁸ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', pp. 108 – 109.

⁷⁹ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 111.

⁸⁰ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 119.

⁸¹ *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, ed. by Suchy, Janik and Predota, p. 9.

⁸² Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 114.

repercussions generated by these early recitals, which spawned unforeseen sympathy and sensation:

The fact that in Berlin Paul had great success – without any publicity, because that he is one armed was not billed from sloppiness! – we have finally gotten out of trouble with him. He does not speak about it, however it has pleased him very much, because that's really something; here you could still say that, apart from his music, many circles are interested in him and his destiny, but in Berlin, he is a musician. The other day, a lady spoke to me with tears in her eyes about his poignant playing, who would have ever thought! We can be pleased therein that we were mistaken!⁸³

Brian McGuinness, in his contribution to *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, contends that Paul's continued musical activities antagonised the cynical stance of the household towards his professional efforts and exacerbated already strained relations with the family. Communications between Paul and his siblings deteriorated further under the financial and political tensions of the 1930s.⁸⁴ In later years his sister Margaret underscored the scope of this polemic dialogue after secretly attending one of his concerts in New York in 1942:

His playing has become much worse. I suppose that is to be expected, because he insists on trying to do, what really cannot be done. It is *eine Vergewaltigung*'.⁸⁵

Her final insult, '*eine Vergewaltigung*', reveals a fundamental belief that Wittgenstein's left-handed exploits somehow infringed the laws of nature and perhaps even the sanctity of music.

⁸³ Suchy, 'Sein Werk – Die Musik des Produzenten-Musikers Paul Wittgenstein', pp. 29 – 30. Translation – my own.

⁸⁴ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 114.

⁸⁵ McGuinness, 'The Brothers Wittgenstein', p. 57.

The pianistic reconditioning initiated so zealously, and the acclimation from two hands to one, was regrettably interrupted by his return to the front from the summer of 1917 to August 1918. He resumed his technical training with equal vigour following the war, spending up to seven hours a day practicing, and carrying out comprehensive searches of all available resources to locate suitable practice and performance material (the results and consequences of this investigation are discussed fully in **Patron: The Problem of Repertoire**. To a large extent he withdrew from public performance between August 1918 and April 1922 to focus predominantly on cementing his technique and building his concert repertoire. Additionally, Wittgenstein began to trust his own fecundity, producing left-hand arrangements of opera and piano favourites, modelled on the transcriptions of Godowsky and Liszt. He featured many of these personal solo transcriptions in concerts throughout his career and published a selection of them as part of his three-volume pedagogical manual *School for the Left Hand*.⁸⁶

As Wittgenstein persevered with his quest for suitable left-hand works, Labor continued to support his development as a one-handed pianist by providing him with a constant stream of new works. However, Labor's efforts could not compensate for the inadequate results of Wittgenstein's extensive repertoire search; the works for left-hand alone consisted mostly of individual pieces, studies and exercises. He yearned for substantial *bravura* style concertos imbued with the pageantry and brilliance of the Romantic era; the current collection for left-hand simply could not sustain a virtuoso

⁸⁶ Paul Wittgenstein, *School for the Left Hand* (London: Universal Edition, 1957)

career.⁸⁷ With monetary security and an established tradition of artistic patronage within the family, Wittgenstein's enterprising solution to his predicament was somewhat organic. 'I could not play the classical concertos; if I wanted to play with orchestra [...] I was dependent on new works'.⁸⁸ In the early 1920s Wittgenstein gently dissolved his symbiotic relationship with Labor, and with his blessing undertook the enrichment of the catalogue for left-hand by commissioning works from celebrated and aspiring composers of assorted nationalities and musical inclinations over the next three decades.

Undoubtedly his family's illustrious musical connections assisted in securing the obeisance of many revered names. Over the course of 1922 and early 1923 he made his overture to Hindemith, Korngold, Schmidt and Bortkiewicz with his proposal to write concerti strictly for his personal use. Waugh, in his biography on the Wittgenstein family *The House of Wittgenstein: A Family at War*, suggests that his selection of composers was a tactical manoeuvre to garner professional momentum and notoriety, recruiting both prominent popular composers (Schmidt and Borkiewicz) and radical rising stars (Korngold and Hindemith). This strategy may have taken precedence over stylistic considerations, as on several occasions he engaged composers who fostered avant-garde musical landscapes in opposition to his own proclivities. This disparity frequently bore contention between composer and patron.

⁸⁷ Only one known concerto for left-hand predates Wittgenstein's commissions: The Concerto in E-flat written in 1902 by Count Géza Zichy.

⁸⁸ E. F. Flindell, 'Dokumente aus der Sammlung Paul Wittgenstein', *Die Musikforschung*, 24 (October/December 1971), 422 – 431 (p. 423). Translation – my own.

All four composers accepted his commission and he scheduled the premieres of the Hindemith *Klaviermusik mit Orchester*, Op.29 and Bortkiewicz Piano Concerto No. 2 in E-flat, Op.28. for 1923 and Schmidt and Korngold's contributions, *Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier mit Begleitung des Orchesters* and *Klavierkonzert in Cis (für die linke Hand)*, Op.17, respectively, were set for 1924.⁸⁹

Only three of the four premieres took place however. It transpired that Hindemith's modernist tendencies were so abhorrent to Wittgenstein that he rejected the concerto outright (more detailed commentary on each of his commissioned concerti is to be found in **Patron: The Problem of Repertoire**). All traces of this score vanished for several decades, and it emerged only after the death of Hilde Wittgenstein in 2001, when the magnitude and importance of the Wittgenstein archive was fully realised. It received its belated debut performance in December 2004 with the Berlin Philharmonic, conductor Simon Rattle, and prodigious left-hand pianist Leon Fleisher.⁹⁰ The auspicious premieres of the Bortkiewicz, Schmidt and Korngold works proceeded as scheduled and bolstered his career immensely. The Schmidt concerto, *Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven*, was performed on the 2nd of February 1924 and the soloist's virtues were subsequently extolled by the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*:

Paul Wittgenstein who achieved with one hand the polyphony of two, was

⁸⁹ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein.*, pp. 158 – 162.

⁹⁰ Suchy and Sassmann, „...freue mich, dass ihr stück ihnen auch selbst gefällt“ p. 59.

encored together with the conductor in a storm of triumph which he had inspired.⁹¹

The Korngold concerto, *Klavierkonzert in Cis*, premiered in September of the same year. The *Neue Freie Presse* reported that ‘Paul Wittgenstein ensured, with verve that his solo instrument retained the predominance it deserved’.⁹² Marginal bias must be assumed among reviews of this era; the cataclysmic force of WWI elicited a common rhetoric of sympathy, admiration and glorification among critics.⁹³ In an atmosphere of communal grief and despair Wittgenstein exemplified triumph over adversity. For instance, pity plainly drives the evaluation that ‘It was a kind thought to provide a showpiece for Mr Paul Wittgenstein’: a display of compassion which serves to diminish his stature as instigator of the work, and establishes the soloist as an afflicted figure.⁹⁴ Audiences marvelled at his abilities, his ineffable tenacity and revelled in the accomplishments of the young war veteran. He had the capacity to arouse optimism and hope in an otherwise downtrodden and despondent public. Given the collation of these elements: his disability, youth, veteran status and popularity, the media were predisposed towards enthusiasm and conceivably exhibited a certain leniency against any displayed shortcomings. Despite any prejudicial colouration or over-zealous exaltations, these reviews verify Wittgenstein’s considerable skill.

Assured by the felicitous response to his struggles and subsequent pianistic exertions

⁹¹ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, pp. 163 – 164.

⁹² Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 164.

⁹³ The issue of bias in public perception is explored in more detail **Chapter 2: Virtuosity and Bodily Asymmetry**.

⁹⁴ Anonymous, ‘The Promenade Concerts’, *The Times*, 27th August 1928, p. 10.

he approached compositional icon and family acquaintance Richard Strauss. Through the latter half of the 1920s Strauss produced two works for Wittgenstein: *Parergon zur Symphonia Domestica, for piano (left-hand) and orchestra*, Op.73 (1925) and *Panathenäenzug, Symphonic Studies in the form of a Passacaglia for piano (left-hand) and orchestra*, (1927) Op.74. Strauss suffered biting castigation from several critics; in review of a 1928 Proms concert *The Times* commented that *Parergon* was ‘a lengthy and uninteresting *rechauffé* of themes taken from the least successful of Strauss’s major works’. Wittgenstein remained unscathed by this particularly disapproving reviewer, having ‘played the difficult piano part with great skill’.⁹⁵ Reputedly, Strauss began his second left-hand offering, *Panathenäenzug*, voluntarily, as a compensatory response for Wittgenstein to the lukewarm reaction elicited by his first left-hand concerto *Parergon*. The huge sum of \$25,000 was agreed for the production of the First Concerto, it is unknown whether he received remuneration for the composition of *Panathenäenzug* given its spontaneous origins.⁹⁶ However, at its Berlin premiere in February 1928 the work found even less approval than its predecessor.⁹⁷

Lesser known composers Rudolf Braun, Eduard Schütt and Karl Weigl all completed concertos for Wittgenstein during the 1920s. There are associations to be found here

⁹⁵ Anonymous, ‘The Promenade Concerts’, *The Times*, 27th August 1928, p. 10.

⁹⁶ So Young Kim-Park, *Paul Wittgenstein und die für ihn komponierten Klavierkonzerte für die linke Hand* (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 1999), p. 129.

⁹⁷ Flindell, ‘Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist’, p. 122.

beyond residential geography as noted by So Young Kim-Park: Braun, also blind, studied with Labor, and Schütt was a past pupil of Wittgenstein's revered teacher Leschetizky.⁹⁸ Ultimately these concertos did not receive many performances (the Weigl was rejected completely), and failed to secure a place in his regular repertoire.

Wittgenstein insisted on performance exclusivity for his commissioned works; lifelong exclusivity was preferable over short-term, if it could be negotiated. Often, he would arrange retention of the music rights also, protectively collecting his orchestral parts at the end of each performance. The high-calibre composers in his portfolio, in collation with his unique portfolio and appeal, ensured a high demand for his talent across Europe and further afield. Following the completion of a US tour in October 1928 he determined to look beyond Austria for his next concertos.⁹⁹ In the early 1930s he approached Ravel and Prokofiev; both accepted based on the originality of the project. Ravel was assured in his response: 'I make light of difficulties', he allegedly retorted and audiences have subsequently concurred.¹⁰⁰ Despite tumultuous beginnings, Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* is today acknowledged as the greatest work commissioned by Wittgenstein. Unable to attend the premiere in Vienna, January 1932, the composer was incensed by Wittgenstein's unique rendition of the work performed privately for him in a two-piano arrangement. Wittgenstein's

⁹⁸ So Young Kim-Park, *Paul Wittgenstein und die für ihn komponierten Klavierkonzerte für die linke Hand*, pp. 28 – 29.

⁹⁹ *Music: Including the Paul Wittgenstein Archive*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁰ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 180. Translation – my own. Madeleine Goss likens Ravel's enthusiasm for this challenge to the *gageure* he set for himself in writing *Bolero*. Madeleine Goss, *Bolero: The Life of Maurice Ravel* (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1945), pp. 245 – 246.

alterations and elaborations, coupled with his unshakable belief that such changes were within his purview, caused a deep rift between the two. Consequently, the Parisian premiere and all other planned performances of the work were delayed for a year while an agreement was reached.¹⁰¹ Initially indifferent to the concerto, Wittgenstein came to love the work and its renown precipitated its transmutation into mainstream piano repertoire.

Prokofiev's *Konzert für Klavier (linke Hand) und Orchester No. 4, Op.53*. was subject to the same conclusive trajectory as the Hindemith and Weigl concertos. The recent disclosure of Wittgenstein's personal library divulges his meticulously marked score and conscientious efforts to prevail over the material, nevertheless, whether on a stylistic or technical basis, he ultimately abandoned the work. Held silent for over twenty years, in 1956 it was premiered in Berlin by Siegfried Rapp without Wittgenstein's knowledge or consent.¹⁰² Rapp had made several attempts to obtain the score from Wittgenstein but was rebuffed; he finally secured a copy from Prokofiev's widow.

The early 1930s saw a rise in unfavourable critical commentary, although audiences remained appreciative. The sheen of his remarkable achievement and war bravery had lost its lustre after many years in the spotlight. Combined with dwindling technical precision the odds of drawing dissenting reviews increased, as can be seen in this

¹⁰¹ Arbie Orenstein, ed., *A Ravel Reader: Correspondence, Articles, Interviews*, (New York: Dover, 1990), pp. 593 – 594.

¹⁰² Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 127.

excerpt from the Warsaw Courier in 1932. ‘Performances by single-handed pianists should not be judged in the same light as two-handed interpretations, but nevertheless I have to say that the pedal was overused’. Waugh propounds that this inconsistency was exacerbated by emotional stress, as he was still grieving for his recently deceased Rumanian girlfriend, Bassia Moscovici, who succumbed to cancer in April 1932.¹⁰³ It is notable that the Prokofiev and Weigl concertos were both rejected during an interval of personal and professional tumult. Announcing his decision to Weigl that he would not perform his work, Wittgenstein claims he was already considering retirement.¹⁰⁴

This downturn was fleeting and 1934 saw a return to form. *The Times* music critic reviewing the Florence Music Festival reported that ‘Ravel’s Concerto for piano was played with the utmost brilliance by Mr Paul Wittgenstein’. Additionally, in that year he completed a second triumphant American tour. The reception was laudatory; he reputedly attracted an audience of 2500 in Boston and drew five encores in New York. Following his American success, he returned home to premiere Schmidt’s second large scale offering for piano left-hand and orchestra, *Concert für Klavier und Orchesterbegleitung* Es-Dur, as part of the celebrations for the composers 60th birthday. The reception was rapturous and Waugh suggests that this was ‘perhaps the greatest single success of his entire career’.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Quoted in: Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, pp. 190 – 194. Bassia was taken in and cared for by Margaret ‘Gretl’ Wittgenstein during her illness.

¹⁰⁴ Letter from Paul Wittgenstein to Karl Weigl dated 22nd February 1932, the Karl Weigl Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University, MSS 73 B25 F807.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in: Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 195.

However, political developments later in the decade interrupted the momentum and security he had acquired. The Wittgensteins discovered that under the new Nuremberg legislation, the family were classified as Jews. The family mounted a campaign against this claim, and lost a considerable portion of their fortune and their unique collection of artistic artefacts in the furore. Finally, Paul succeeded in negotiating ‘*Mischling*’ status for his sisters and safe passage for himself out of Austria.¹⁰⁶ The restrictions imposed by obtaining this ‘half-breed’ classification would still have prevented him from continuing his performance and teaching activities freely, an incomprehensible prospect. In order to continue his life’s work, he bought passage to America, followed closely by his prospective wife, Hilde Schania, and their children. Disagreements in the family over legal and financial proceedings over-extended the fragile familial relationships, and Paul ceased contact permanently with his siblings shortly after he emigrated.

He continued performing and teaching in America well into old age, commissioning works from Norman Demuth and Alexander Tansman, but the most successful concerto of his late career was Benjamin Britten’s *Diversions for piano (left-hand) and orchestra*, Op.21. These large-scale performances were interspersed with chamber concerts and very occasional solo concerts. Flindell lists the Sedlak-Winkler Quartet,

¹⁰⁶ Suchy and Sassmann, “...freue mich, dass ihr stück ihnen auch selbst gefällt”, p. 56. The Nazi authorities charged them 1.8 million Swiss francs plus legal fees of 300,000 Swiss francs for the privilege of the ‘Mischling’ status of Paul, Hermine and Helen. Gretl was protected by her marriage to an American man and Ludwig was residing safely in England.

the Prix Quartet, the Neues Wiener Streichquartett, the Dresden Quartet, the Rothschild Quartet and the Oxford Quartet among his frequent chamber partners.¹⁰⁷

However, the dogged determination present in his character that proved so vital to his success in his early career, led him astray as he stubbornly continued to perform beyond his capabilities at an older age. Even his close acquaintances remarked on this decline. In a letter to Margaret Deneke, conductor Trevor Harvey commented:

[...]the last time he was here he didn't create a good impression - frankly, the Britten performance with me in Bournemouth had lots of moments of brilliance but there was a good deal of hard playing and as a performance it sometimes misunderstood Britten's intentions. (Paul is not at heart a contemporary music man, of course).¹⁰⁸

Negative commentary mostly frequently references a lack of dynamic subtlety; however, the physiological difficulties faced by the one-handed pianist in achieving successful blend of technical and expressive elements given the reduced contact time with the keys would have been exacerbated by Wittgenstein's age. Academic E. Fred Flindell, in an article exploring the collaborative success of Wittgenstein and Franz Schmidt, expounds several logical theories for Paul's sometimes erratic performance record including: psychological pressure emanating from his family, personal idolatry of music, prolonged interruptions to his musical development during his formative

¹⁰⁷ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 114.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Trevor Harvey to Margaret Deneke dated 19th of August 1959, Clara/Marga Deneke collection, Catalogue No. 44395, in the Bodleian Library of Oxford University.

years, mostly due to WW1, his enrolment at Vienna's Technical University in 1910 and a brief apprenticeship in a Viennese bank.¹⁰⁹

Additionally, I would posit that as the first dedicated exponent of the left-handed concerto, he was attempting to concurrently invent and master a new technique suited to the genre, while acclimatising to modern musical idioms and trends outside of his preferred Romantic cannon, heightening his emotional and intellectual burdens. Unrefined technical displays could be partially explained from the combination of these factors alongside his severe performance anxiety. These blemished performances and a parsimonious attitude with his constructed repertoire have unjustly undermined the unique work he engineered throughout his career. Outwardly, Wittgenstein's final years maintained a high level of public success, and he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Philadelphia Musical Academy. Wittgenstein's varied and extensive playing career is visible in the representative compilation of concerto performances listed in **Table 1.1. Representative List of Performances**

¹⁰⁹ Flindell, 'More on Franz Schmidt and Paul Wittgenstein and their triumph with the E-Flat Concerto', pp. 142 – 143.

overleaf.¹¹⁰ The table below does not claim to be exhaustive; a sample number of performances were chosen to demonstrate the prominence and scope of Wittgenstein's career. As such, the concerts recorded in the table were selected to exhibit a range of dates and locations.

¹¹⁰ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist, pp. 115 – 116, p. 127; Predota, 'Badgering the Creative Genius: Paul Wittgenstein and the Prerogative of Musical Patronage', pp. 71 – 101; Flindell, 'More on Franz Schmidt and Paul Wittgenstein and their triumph with the E-Flat Concerto', p. 140; Bodleian Libraries, Oxford University; Anonymous, *Teplitz-Schönauer Anzeiger* (17 December, 1916), p. 4, < <http://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tsa&datum=19161217&seite=4&zoom=33&query=%22Wittgenstein%22%2B%22&ref=anno-search>>, [accessed 20/03/18]; Anonymous, 'Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra', *The Times*, 16th October 1950, p. 8; Anonymous, 'Final "Pop" Concert Here Thursday Night', *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 13th February 1944, p. 58; Anonymous, 'Obstacles Overcome', *The News Journal* (Wilmington, Delaware), 22nd August 1928, p. 6; Anonymous, 'One-Armed Pianist Wins Berlin Crowd', *The Scranton Republican*, 4th November, p. 12; Anonymous, 'One Armed Man Musical Genius', *Nanaimo Daily News*, 13th September 1932, p. 2; Anonymous, 'One-armed Pianist to Play; Szigeti to Appear on Friday', *The Minneapolis Star*, 8th December 1934; Anonymous, 'Reid Orchestral Concerts', *The Scotsman*, 28th October 1927, p. 8; Anonymous, 'The Promenade Concerts', *The Times*, 27th August 1928, p. 10; Anonymous, *The Musical Times*, 67 (February 1926), p. 173; Anonymous, 'To Appear in Israel', *The Pittsburgh Press*, 30th March 1952, p. 82; Anonymous, 'Week-End Concerts', *The Times*, 30th October 1950, p. 6; E.B., 'A New English Symphony: Strauss's Left-Handed Work', *The Guardian*, 27th August 1928, p. 16; Gessler, Clifford, 'Pianist Proves Electrifying', *Oakland Tribune*, 30th November 1946, p. 5; W. McN., 'The Promenade Concerts', *The Musical Times*, 79: 1147 (September 1938), 702 – 703; M., C., 'New Music in London', *The Musical Times*, 91:1294 (December 1950) 482 – 483; T.A., 'One – Armed Pianist Plays Ravel Solo', *The Montreal Gazette*, 5th November 1934, p. 6; Musikverein Concert Archive, <<https://www.musikverein.at/en/concert/eventid/34487>> [accessed 18/10/15]; Wiener Symphoniker Archive, <<https://www.wiener-symphoniker.at/en/archive/search>> [accessed 28/04/17].

Table 1.1. Representative List of Performances

Place	Date	Work	Orchestra	Conductor
Vienna, Austria	12/12/1916	Premiere – <i>Konzertstück für Klavier und Orchester in Form von Variationen</i> – Labor	Wiener Tonkünstler	Oskar Nedbal
Teplitz-Schönau, Czechoslovakia	19/12/1916	<i>Konzertstück für Klavier und Orchester in Form von Variationen</i> – Labor	Kurorchestre	J. Reichert
Vienna, Austria	23/4/1922	<i>Konzertstück Nr. 2 für Klavier und Orchester</i> – Labor	Vienna Ladies' Symphony Orchestra	J. Lehnert
Vienna, Austria	10/11/1923	Premiere – <i>Konzertstück in Es dur für Klavier (einhändig) und Orchester</i> – Labor	Vienna Symphony Orchestra	R. Nilius
Vienna, Austria	2/2/1924	Premiere - <i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt.		J. Brüwer
Vienna, Austria	?/9/1924	Premiere - <i>Klavierkonzert in Cis</i> , Op.17 – Korngold		E. Korngold
Hartberg, Austria	1925	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt		
Dresden, Germany	6/10/1925	<i>Parergon zur Sinfonia Domestica</i> , Op.73 – Strauss	Staatskapelle Weimar Orchestra	F. Busch

Leipzig, Germany	?/11/1925	<i>Parergon zur Sinfonia Domestica</i> , Op.73 – Strauss	Gewandhaus Orchestra	W. Furtwängler
Berlin, Germany	2/11/1925	<i>Parergon zur Sinfonia Domestica</i> , Op.73 – Strauss	Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	W. Furtwängler
Vienna, Austria	21/9/1926	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt	Vienna Philharmonic	F. Schmidt
Prague, Czechoslovakia	9/1/1927	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt		F. Stupka
Berlin, Germany	18/1/1927	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt		I. Prüwer
Berlin, Germany	19/1/1927		Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	F. Gatz
Salzburg, Austria	11/10/1927			B. Paumgartner
Arnhem, Netherlands	16/10/1927			
Edinburgh, Scotland	27/10/1927	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt		D. F. Tovey

Basel, Switzerland	12/11/1927	Klavierkonzert in Cis, Op.17 – Korngold	Orchester der Basel Orchestergesellschaft	F. Weingartner
Vienna, Austria	12/12/1927	Premiere - <i>Klavierkonzert A-moll für eine Hand</i> - Braun	Vienna Ladies Symphony Orchestra	J. Lehnert
Vienna, Austria	8/1/1928	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt	Vienna Symphony Orchestra	A. Konrath
Vienna, Austria	9/1/1928	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt		F. Schmidt
Berlin?	16/1/1928	<i>Panathenäenzug</i> , Op.74 – Strauss	Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra	B. Walter
Hamburg, Germany	18/1/1928	<i>Panathenäenzug</i> , Op.74 – Strauss	Hamburg Philharmonic	E. Papst
Vienna, Austria	11/3/1928	<i>Panathenäenzug</i> , Op.74 – Strauss	Vienna Philharmonic	F. Schalk
Frankfurt, Germany	25/3/1928			C. Krauss
Vienna, Austria	7/5/1928	Piano Concerto No.2 in E-flat – Bortkiewicz	Vienna Ladies' Symphony Orchestra	S. Bortkiewicz
London, England	25/8/1928	<i>Parergon zur Sinfonia Domestica</i> , Op.73 – Strauss. English premiere	Promenade Concert. Henry Wood Symphony Orchestra	H. Wood
Bucharest, Romania	31/10/1928	Piano Concerto No.2 in E-flat – Bortkiewicz		D. G. Georgescu
Munich, Germany	11/1/1929	Piano Concerto No.2 in E-flat – Bortkiewicz		F. Munter

Vienna, Austria	20/1/1929	<i>Klavierkonzert in Cis</i> , Op.17 – Korngold	Vienna Symphony Orchestra	A. Konrath
Trieste, Italy	31/1/1929	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt		F. Schalk
Birmingham, England	17/2/1929	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt		W.H. Reed
Paris, France	24/2/1929	<i>Panathenäenzug</i> , Op.74 – Strauss	Pasdeloup	R. Baton
Vienna, Austria	11/3/1929	<i>Panathenäenzug</i> , Op.74 – Strauss	Vienna Symphony Orchestra	R. Baton
Vienna, Austria	18/3/1929		Vienna Ladies' Symphony Orchestra	J. Lehnert
Arnhem, Netherlands	4/4/1929	<i>Panathenäenzug</i> , Op.74 – Strauss	Arnhem Philharmonic Orchestra	M. Spanjaard
Rotterdam, Netherlands	13/4/1929	<i>Panathenäenzug</i> , Op.74 – Strauss	Rotterdam Philharmonic	A. Schmuller
Bad Kissingen, Germany	27/6/1929	<i>Paraphrase für Klavier und Orchester</i> – Schütt		F. Munter
Vienna, Austria	11/11/1929		Vienna Ladies' Symphony Orchestra	J. Lehnert
Vienna, Austria	17/11/1929	<i>Konzertstück für Klavier und Orchester in Form von Variationen</i> – Labor	Vienna Symphony Orchestra	A. Konrath

Berlin, Germany	26/1/1930	Piano Concerto No.2 in E-Flat – Bortkiewicz		E. Kunwald
Zagreb, Croatia	28/3/1930			K. Baranovic
Baku, Azerbaijan	27/7/1930		Symphony Orchestra	N. Sokolov
Arnhem, Netherlands	2/11/1930			
Vienna, Austria	21/11/1930		Vienna Ladies' Symphony Orchestra	J. Lehnert
Vienna, Austria	20/1/1931	<i>Klavierkonzert in Cis</i> , Op.17 – Korngold	Vienna Symphony Orchestra	L. Reichwein
Vienna, Austria	5/1/1932	Premiere – <i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Vienna Symphony Orchestra	R. Heger
Berlin, Germany	8/1/1932	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Staatsoper	E. Kleiber
Vienna, Austria	18/1/1932		Vienna Ladies' Symphony Orchestra	J. Lehnert
Vienna, Austria	29/1/1932	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Vienna Symphony Orchestra	R. Heger
London, England	16/8/1932	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel. English premiere.	Promenade Concert. BBC Symphony Orchestra.	H. Wood
Athens, Greece	21/11/1932		Symphony Orchestra	D. Mitropoulos
Brno (Brünn), Moravia	2/12/1932	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Philharmonic Orchestra	R. Heger

Lviv, Poland	1932	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Philharmonic Orchestra	M. Glinskięgo
Warsaw, Poland	9/12/1932	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Philharmonic Orchestra	G. Höberg
Poznan, Poland	18/12/1932	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Symphony Orchestra	F. Fall
Paris, France	17/1/1933	Parisian Premiere – <i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Symphony Orchestra of Paris	M. Ravel
Paris, France	16/1/1933		Orchestre Lamoureux	A. Wermelinger
Bucharest, Romania	3/2/1933			
Vienna, Austria	27/2/1933	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op. 24 – Schmidt	Vienna Ladies' Symphony Orchestra	J. Lehnert
Paris, France	26/3/1933			A. Wolff
Monte Carlo, Monaco	12/4/1933	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	National Opera Orchestra of Monte Carlo	M. Ravel
Florence, Italy	4/4/1934	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel		
Montreal, Canada	4/11/1934	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Montreal Orchestra	D. Clarke
New York, USA	17/11/1934	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Boston Symphony	S. Koussevitzky
Minneapolis, USA	9/12/1934	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra	E. Ormandy

Cincinnati, USA	14/12/1934	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel <i>Parergon zur Sinfonia Domestica</i> , Op.73 – Strauss	Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra	E. Gossens
Havana, Cuba	27/12/1934			A. Roldán
Vienna, Austria	10/2/1935	<i>Concert für Klavier und Orchesterbegleitung Es-Dur</i> – Schmidt	Vienna Philharmonic	F. Schmidt
Linz, Austria	3/12/1935	<i>Concert für Klavier und Orchesterbegleitung Es-Dur</i> – Schmidt		R. Keldorfer
Salzburg, Austria	16/8/1936	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt	Vienna Philharmonic	A. Rodzinski
Vienna, Austria	26/10/1936	<i>Konzertstück Nr. 2 für Klavier und Orchester</i>		G. Gruber
Amsterdam, Holland	28/2/1937	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Concertgebouw Orchestra	B. Walter
Brno (Brünn), Moravia	12/12/1937	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt		G. Wiese
Vienna, Austria	18/1/1938	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Musica Viva Orchestra	H. Scherchen
Cleveland, USA	2/2/1939		Symphony Orchestra	A. Rodzinski
New York, USA	19/3/1939		Federal Symphony	E. Plotnikoff
Vienna, Austria	21/11/1939	<i>Konzertstück Nr. 2 für Klavier und Orchester</i>		J. Lehnert

York, PA., USA	22/4/1941	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester, Op.24 – Schmidt</i>		L. Vyner
Philadelphia, USA	17/1/1942	<i>Diversions, Op.21 – Britten</i>	Philadelphia Orchestra	E. Ormandy
New York, USA	8/2/1942		Federal Symphony	E. Plotnikoff
New Orleans, USA	5/1/1943		Symphony Orchestra	O. Windigstad
New Orleans, USA	18/1/1943		Symphony Orchestra	O. Windigstad
St. Louis, USA	17/2/1944	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche – Ravel</i>	St. Louis Symphony Orchestra	V. Golschmann
New York, USA	14/10/1946		City Symphony	L. Bernstein
Seattle, USA	18/11/1946			C. Bricken
Seattle, USA	19/11/1946			C. Bricken
San Francisco, USA	29/11/1946	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche – Ravel Parergon zur Sinfonia Domestica, Op.73 – Strauss</i>	San Francisco Symphony Orchestra	P. Monteux
Philadelphia, USA	17/1/1947	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche – Ravel</i>	Philadelphia Orchestra	E. Ormandy
Montreal, Canada	3/5/1947			
Vienna, Austria	13/3/1949	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester, Op.24 – Schmidt</i>	Vienna Philharmonic	K. Böhm

Oxford, England	22/7/1949	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier und Orchester</i> , Op.24 – Schmidt		E. Walker
Bournemouth, England	15/10/1950	<i>Diversions</i> , Op.21 – Britten	Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra	T. Harvey
London, England	29/10/1950	<i>Diversions</i> , Op.21 – Britten	London Symphony Orchestra	M. Sargent
London, England	13/8/1951	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel; <i>Diversions</i> , Op.21 – Britten	Promenade Concert. BBC Symphony Orchestra	J. Hollingsworth
Pueblo, Colorado, USA	1951	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel		
Tel Aviv, Israel	2/4/1952	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Israel Philharmonic Orchestra	
Tel Aviv, Israel	17/4/1952	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel	Israel Philharmonic Orchestra	
Bad Gastein	1953	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel		
Buffalo, USA	19/2/1954	<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i> – Ravel		

Patron: The Problem of Repertoire

The most recent inventory of piano works for left-hand alone, Sassmann's *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, lists a total of 47 concertos in the genre of left-hand piano, 18 of which are recognised as part of Wittgenstein's collection. This represents an extraordinary 38% of the entire repertoire dedicated to a single patron, an incomparable statistic across the annals of music history. As noted throughout **Reception and Reputation**, Wittgenstein rejected a portion of his commissioned works, largely, it has been postulated, on the basis of stylistic incompatibility. Accordingly, inspection of his individual musical inclinations is paramount in establishing the criteria by which Wittgenstein adjudicated his works. United with his family on most aspects of musical taste, he concertedly worshipped Beethoven, Bruckner, Schumann, Brahms, Mendelssohn and Labor.¹¹¹ Former student, Erna Atter-Ottermann, confirmed his love of Beethoven and Bach; to her professor, 'Beethoven war der Gott', and in her opinion, he had made no substantive effort to understand contemporary repertoire. Devoted friend, Margaret Deneke, vividly recalled his adoration of, and fidelity to, these canonical composers:

He played Haydn and Mozart symphonies and quartets from the piano-duet arrangements, spending hours adjusting the *Primo* to his hand and choosing with utmost care which of those beloved works he would play with Ernest Walker or Donald Tovey.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Suchy, 'Sein Werk – Die Musik des Produzenten-Musikers Paul Wittgenstein', p. 24; McGuinness, 'The Brothers Wittgenstein', p. 57.

¹¹² Miss Margaret Deneke, 'Mr Paul Wittgenstein. Devotion to Music', *The Times*, 14th March 1961, p. 17.

His entrenched stylistic predilections spawned a biased stance within his commissioned musical miscellanea:

My conviction is: the concerti written for me by Labor, Schmidt, and Richard Strauss (as different as they are from one another) are musically worth more, stand on a higher plane and hence in the end are more durable than Ravel's Concerto.¹¹³

He continues, issuing a peremptory dismissal against allegations of nationalist loyalty, nevertheless his musical propensities, both historical and contemporary; reveal a partiality to the Germanic treatment of Classical and Romantic styles. His eschewal of twentieth century music was selective rather than exhaustive; Atter-Ottermann recalled bringing to her lesson a work by Poulenc which won Wittgenstein's approval, but Debussy, he intimated, was lacking in substance.¹¹⁴ An interview with the *Montreal Gazette* in 1934 elucidates his position on the matter of musical style:

When questioned about contemporary European composers, Mr Wittgenstein said he himself was quite unable to appreciate the kind of music that had been written during the past few years by such people as Schonberg, Hindemith, Honegger and Stravinsky. He emphasized, however, that this was only his personal taste, based, he though [sic], on the fact that he had been rigidly schooled in the classic and romantic tradition and he did not wish it to be thought that he was condemning this style of composition.¹¹⁵

He goes on to insist that he has not shunned the work of these composers entirely, and incidentally considers part of their earlier works quite agreeable; it is their recent

¹¹³ Paul Wittgenstein, "Über einarmiges Klavierspiel", N.Y.: The Austrian Institute, 1958, quoted in Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 123.

¹¹⁴ Erna Otten-Attermann, 'Der Musiker im wunderschönen Schloss Paul Wittgensteins Klavierschülerin Erna Otten-Attermann, 1919 in Wien geboren, im Interview mit Irene Suchy', in *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, ed. by Irene Suchy et al. (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2006) pp. 37 – 43 (p. 41).

¹¹⁵ Anonymous, 'Left hand better, says Wittgenstein', *The Montreal Gazette*, 3rd November 1934.

output he has struggled to comprehend. Leonard Kastle confirmed Wittgenstein's broad-minded approach to novel styles right up to his death, Wittgenstein would visit Kastle in his New York apartment with the sole purpose of scrutinising on record, personally unexplored musical works.¹¹⁶

Emboldened and enabled by immense financial resources, assuming the role of musical philanthropist came naturally to Paul. Wittgenstein's ideal concerto corresponded to the traditional Romantic format, and he fashioned over 30 years a selection of concerti branded with his preferred virtuosic Romantic style. In this manner Wittgenstein did not operate as a patron in the traditional sense. No creative conditions were stipulated prior to their composition, but during its construction or on receipt of a completed score he frequently requested alterations of textural, orchestral, structural and harmonic elements.¹¹⁷ This entitlement could stem from, but is not limited to: his extensive knowledge of music, the leverage afforded by his monetary benefaction, personal and unique insight into the issues encountered by the one-handed pianist as well as the glaring matter of class-based authority. The sense of ownership he assumed over his commissioned works was confirmed by former student Erna Otter-Attermann, and he often exercised this autocratic rule by inserting changes where he felt appropriate, without full consideration for the composers' intentions. The concertos by Britten, Strauss, Ravel, Schmidt and Korngold were all subject to

¹¹⁶ Kastle, 'Paul Wittgenstein – Teacher and Friend', p. 69.

¹¹⁷ Predota, 'Badgering the Creative Genius: Paul Wittgenstein and the Prerogative of Musical Patronage', p. 81.

Wittgenstein's specified modifications.

The coupling of Wittgenstein's capricious, headstrong metting and the composer's indignation at the proposed revisions often led to friction in his working relationships. The conflict that frequently occurred between composer and patron was often resolved by the reduction of orchestration or the addition of brilliant passages for the piano, but Wittgenstein found it extraordinarily difficult to acquiesce on matters of musical style. Of the list of commissioned concerti, the works by Hindemith, Prokofiev and Weigl were never performed by their benefactor. Otter-Attermann also suggested that the repudiation of completed commissions did not perturb him as he was so wealthy.¹¹⁸ A full list of works commissioned by, and dedicated to, Wittgenstein is provided in **Table 1.2. Works written for Wittgenstein.**¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Otten-Attermann, 'Der Musiker im wunderschönen Schloss Paul Wittgensteins Klavierschülerin Erna Otten-Attermann, 1919 in Wien geboren, im Interview mit Irene Suchy', pp. 41 – 42.

¹¹⁹ Title and dates in Flindell, 'More on Franz Schmidt and Paul Wittgenstein and their triumph with the E-Flat Concerto', p. 140; Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*; Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 127; Kim-Park, *Paul Wittgenstein und die für ihn komponierten Klavierkonzerte für die linke Hand*, pp. 36 – 37, Wendy Wong, 'Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, 2016), p. 253, p. 262.

Table 1.2. Works written for Wittgenstein

Composer	Solo Works	Chamber Works	Concerti
Sergei Bortkiewicz (1877 – 1952)	<i>Etüde</i> , Op.15/5, <i>Etüde</i> , Op.15/10, <i>Gavotte – Caprice</i> , Op.3/3, <i>Nocturne</i> , Op.24/1. ¹²⁰		Piano Concerto No. 2 in E-flat, Op.28.
Rudolf Braun (1869 – 1925)	<i>Drei Klavierstücke für die linke Hand</i> (<i>Nocturno</i> , <i>Á la zingarese</i> , <i>Walzer</i>); <i>Drei</i> <i>Klavierstücke für die linke Hand</i> (<i>Scherzo</i> , <i>Perpetuum mobile</i> , <i>Serenata</i>).		<i>Konzert a-Moll</i> . ¹²¹
Walter Bricht (1904 – 1970)	<i>Drei Stücke</i> (<i>Lied ohne Worte</i> , <i>Albumblatt</i> , <i>Perpetuum Mobile</i>); <i>Fantasie über Themen aus Die</i> <i>Fledermaus</i> ; <i>Fantasie über Themen aus</i> <i>Gounods Faust</i> ; <i>Fantasie über Themen</i> <i>aus Tannhäuser</i> ; <i>Vier Klavierstücke für</i> <i>die linke Hand allein</i> , Op.30.	Variations on an Old German Children Song for Pianoforte (left hand alone), Flute (or Violin) and Violoncello.	
Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)			Diversions for piano (left-hand) and orchestra, Op.21.
Norman Demuth (1898 – 1968)	Three Preludes		Concerto for Piano (left-hand) and Orchestra
Hans Gáls (1890 – 1987)		Klavierquartett A-Dur	
Leopold Godowsky	Symphonic Metamorphoses of the <i>Schatz</i>		

¹²⁰ These pieces bear the inscription ‘edited for the left hand’, therefore they may not have been written specifically for Wittgenstein but rather arranged for his use.

¹²¹ Patterson lists the conflicting key of F minor but Flindell, Sassmann and Edel all specify A minor.

(1870 – 1938)	– <i>Walzer Themes from “The Gypsy Baron”</i> by Johann Strauss (For the left-hand alone)		
Paul Hindemith (1895 – 1963)			<i>Klaviermusik (Klavier: linke Hand) mit Orchester, Op.29</i>
Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897 – 1957)		<i>Suite für 2 Violinen, Violoncello und Klavier (linke Hand), Op.23</i>	<i>Klavierkonzert in Cis (für die linke Hand), Op.17</i>
Josef Labor (1842 – 1924)	<i>Fantasie in fis moll</i>	<i>Sonata E-Dur für Klavier und Violine; Klavierquartett Nr. 2 c-moll; Trio e-moll für Klavier, Klarinette und Cello; Quintett (Divertimento) für Klavier, Flöte, Oboe, Viola und Violoncello c-moll</i>	<i>Konzertstück für Klavier und Orchester in Form von Variationen; Konzertstück Nr. 2 für Klavier und Orchester; Konzertstück in Es dur für Klavier (einhändig) und Orchester</i>
Sergei Prokofiev (1891 – 1953)			<i>Konzert für Klavier (linke Hand) und Orchester Nr. 4, B-Dur, Op.53</i>
Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937)			<i>Concerto pour la main gauche Pour Piano und Orchestre</i>
Felix Rosenthal (1867 – 1936)	<i>Impromptu für die linke Hand; Romanze für die linke Hand</i>		
Moriz Rosenthal (1862-1946)	<i>Neuer Wiener Carneval nach Themen von Johann Strauss (für die linke Hand allein); Fantasie über Gounods “Faust”</i>		
Franz Schmidt (1874 – 1939)	<i>Toccata in d-Moll</i>	<i>Quintett in G-Dur für Klavier, Klarinette, Violine,</i>	<i>Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier</i>

		<i>Viola und Cello; Quintett in B-Dur für Klavier, Klarinette, Violine, Viola und Cello; Quintett in A-Dur für Klavier, Klarinette, Violine, Viola und Cello</i>	<i>und Orchester; Concert für Klavier und Orchesterbegleitung Es-Dur</i>
Eduard Schütt (1856 – 1933)			<i>Paraphrase für Klavier und Orchester</i>
Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949)			<i>Parergon zur Symphonia Domestica, for piano (left hand) and orchestra, Op.73; Panathenäenzug, Symphonic Studies in the form of a Passacaglia for piano (left-hand) and orchestra, Op.74</i>
Alexandre Tansman (1897 – 1986)			<i>Pièce concertante pour piano (main gauche) et orchestre. Completed and orchestrated by Piotr Moss in 2008. Never performed by Wittgenstein</i>
Ernest Walker (1879 – 1949)	Study for the Left-Hand, Op.47; Prelude for Left-Hand, Op.61;	Variations on an Original Theme for Piano, Clarinet and String Trio	
Karl Weigl (1881 – 1949)			<i>Klavierkonzert für die linke Hand.</i>

Following WWI and Labor's first foray into the genre of left-hand piano, Wittgenstein undertook a comprehensive search of music shops, museums and libraries to locate suitable piano works for left-hand. As intimated in the preceding section, **Predecessors and Repertoire**, the majority of pieces centred on the left-hand took the form of pedagogical exercises and *études*, few of which were suitable for the concert hall. With wounded veterans returning from the front, this niche within the piano repertoire was acquired a real importance and several publications emerged in the shadow of WWI to cater for the interest in this category. Collections such as *Klavieralbum für eine Hand 17 erwählteste Stücke aus den Werken von Gluck bis Wagner* produced by Clemens Schultze-Biesantz in 1916, or *Album für das einhändige Klavierspiel* in 1917 by Caesar Hochstetter emerged consequently, but were once again filled with brief unsubstantial works.¹²² The viable options among the 270 extant solo pieces estimated by Albert Sassmann to have accumulated by this time, decreases rapidly when considered against the yardstick of quintessentially appropriate recital material. Wittgenstein's prerogative to include only works of value and distinction whittled this number down further. He rejected works by Alexander Dreyschock and Count Géza Zichy finding them antiquated and lacking in substance.¹²³ However, works by Brahms, Godowsky, Saint-Saëns, Reger, Skriabin, Leschetizky and Alexis Hollaender met his approval and were embraced fully. According to Sassmann, Wittgenstein also cited commendable works by Carl Reinecke, Felix Petyrek and

¹²² Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, pp. 94 – 95.

¹²³ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 114.

Emile-Robert Blanchet in a letter written to fellow left-hand pianist Otakar Hollmann outlining available repertoire.¹²⁴ These gems formed the nucleus of Wittgenstein's solo repertoire and contributed to the foundations of his burgeoning left-hand techniques.

(i). Josef Labor

Premiered in December 1916 at Wittgenstein's one-handed debut, the blind composer was so thrilled at the response to his *Konzertstück in Form von Variationen* and its subsequent performances, that he undertook a second left-hand concerto, the *Konzertstück in f-Moll*, unprompted.¹²⁵ Labor was to supply Wittgenstein in total with three concertos, seven chamber works and a solo *Fantasie in fis-Moll*. The variation form utilized by Labor in his first piano concerto anticipates a structural device favoured by many composers, including Schmidt and Britten, which protects against the pitfalls of textural and tonal tedium attained more rapidly with the reduced capacity of one hand. Labor's Second and Third Concertos for left-hand employ the traditional three-movement structure. Labor was certainly sensitive to concerns faced by the young trailblazer nominating a reduced orchestra in the Third Concerto, *Konzertstück in Es-Dur*. Undoubtedly, he was very proud of them, holding them above the Ravel concerto in quality. In his thesis, *Paul Wittgenstein und die für ihn komponierten Klavierkonzerte für die linke Hand*, So Young Kim-Park concludes that Labor probably undertook many of the works independently as the autograph scores of his

¹²⁴ Sassmann, 'Paul Wittgenstein und die Klavier-Sololiteratur für die linke Hand allein', p. 103.

¹²⁵ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 119.

left-hand output (with the exception of the third left-hand piano concerto: *Konzertstück in Es-Dur*, and two chamber works) are located in the Vienna City and State Library Music Collection unlike the vast majority of Wittgenstein's commissions which were stored in his private archive.¹²⁶

(ii). Erich Wolfgang Korngold

A remarkably prolific young composer, at the time of Wittgenstein's commission Korngold had already completed 3 operas, a ballet and a string of orchestral, chamber and solo pieces. He broke ground on the Concerto for piano (left-hand) and orchestra in C-sharp, Op.17, in 1923, finalizing the orchestration the following year. The absence of tonal certainty here Harold Truscott deems deliberately ambiguous; a calculated mechanism to incite harmonic tension. The key signature, displayed as C-sharp minor, battles against its parallel major throughout the piece, with the latter claiming supremacy at the work's end.¹²⁷ Constructed in one extended movement and divided in four distinct sections, the work applies a broad sonata structure underpinned with intricate thematic unity.¹²⁸

The episodic nature of the work enriches its programmatic quality; Korngold manipulates its divergent characters to inhabit soundworlds, both verdant and sinister, throughout the 30 minutes of the concerto. From the portentous opening theme,

¹²⁶ Kim-Park, *Paul Wittgenstein und die für ihn komponierten Klavierkonzerte für die linke Hand*, pp. 24 – 26.

¹²⁷ Harold Truscott, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold's Concerto for piano (left-hand) and orchestra in C sharp, Op.17 (1924)*, (Wilfion Books: Scotland, 1985), p. 3.

¹²⁸ Brendan G. Carroll, *The Last Prodigy* (Amadeus Press: Oregon, 1997), p. 166.

Heldisch mit Kraft und Feuer, foreboding and harmonically taut, through to the lush Romantic leanings of the slow section *Ruhig weich und gesangvoll*, he exhibits distinct intensity subsequently evident in his cinematic style. Driving through fleeting waltz and scherzo elements, Korngold's colourful selection of percussion, including celesta, xylophone, glockenspiel and tam-tam, elevates the surreal aspects of the concerto's conclusion, *geheimnisvoll, nebelhaft*. The result is an immensely taxing and impressive work. Gary Graffman, although highly complementary of the concerto, confirms the magnitude of the demands placed on the soloist, finding it akin to 'a keyboard *Salome*'.¹²⁹ The work becomes all the more extraordinary when you consider how little comparable material was available to Korngold in the genre of piano concertos for one-hand. He contrived to amplify the effects achievable by one-hand, and aurally create the impression of a second hand by incorporating glissandi, octave pedal notes, skilful pedalling, extravagant arpeggiated flourishes. Carroll denotes the Concerto for piano (left-hand) and orchestra in C-sharp, as 'one of the most uncharacteristic and original of all Korngold's compositions'.¹³⁰ This brings to mind the old *adage* 'Necessity is the mother of invention', and supports this philosophy that limitations and restrictions can encourage creative thought.

Wittgenstein was characteristically concerned about the effects of Korngold's elaborate orchestration and suggested several cuts to the composer.¹³¹ In later years, in

¹²⁹ Quoted in: Jessica Duchon, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold* (Phaidon Press Limited: London, 1996), p. 102.

¹³⁰ Carroll, *The Last Prodigy*, p. 165.

¹³¹ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 163.

a letter to former student Leonard Kastle imparting his advice on the subject of balance within a concerto he recollected his impressions of the work:

The contrast between the sound of the orchestra and the solo-instrument mustn't be too great. I had a concerto by Korngold [...] which had this disadvantage. Of course one heard the piano, f.i. in the Cadenzas, but the contrast between the sound of the piano and the preceding sound of the orchestra was so great, that the piano sounded like a chirping cricket.¹³²

In this instance Wittgenstein's unease is ostensibly justified and appropriately reinforced by scholarly opinion as Harold Truscott, alluding to the enormity of the work, concludes it is 'in reality, a large symphony for piano and orchestra'.¹³³

(iii). Sergei Bortkiewicz

The Ukrainian born composer was forced into nomadic way of life in the early part of the century due to the Russian revolution and the ensuing World War. His education was divided between St. Petersburg Conservatory and Leipzig Conservatory, finally settling in Vienna in the 1920s acquiring his Austrian citizenship in 1926.¹³⁴ There are no documented interactions between Bortkiewicz and Wittgenstein that give insight into the creation of this work, nor are there references to alterations in orchestration or technical material. Bortkiewicz's personal brand of late Russian Romanticism would have appealed to Wittgenstein, likewise his accomplished orchestral writing and idiomatic piano style.

¹³² Letter from Paul Wittgenstein to Leonard Kastle on June 13th, 1960. Quoted in: Kastle, 'Paul Wittgenstein - Teacher and Friend', p. 70.

¹³³ Truscott, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold's Concerto for piano (left-hand) and orchestra in C sharp, op.17 (1924)*, p. 3.

¹³⁴ Michael Carter, 'Symphonies: No. 1 in D, "From My Homeland;" No. 2 in Eb', *Fanfare: The Magazine for Serious Record Collectors*, 30 (2007) 344 – 345.

With a running time of nearly 30 minutes, Bortkiewicz successfully overcame the hurdle which troubled many composers: inventive and extensive development of material with limited resources. Governed by four broad tempi indications: *Allegro drammatico* - *Allegretto* - *Allegro drammatico* - *Allegro vivo*, the work is in two main movements. Although not applied as extensively as in the Korngold concerto there is an attempt at motivic interconnectivity, for instance the chromatic opening theme returns briefly to proclaim the beginning of the second movement. The work boasts a unique structure, supplementary evidence to contribute to the theory that ingenuity can arise from reduced resources. Following early performances by Wittgenstein the work lay untouched by other performers in accordance with his mandatory exclusivity clause. It wasn't until 1952 when Siegfried Rapp once again breathed life into the score performing the work in Reichenhall and thereafter in Dresden.¹³⁵

(iv). Franz Schmidt

In interview with the Musical Courier, in December 1939 Wittgenstein stated that Franz Schmidt was 'The greatest Austrian composer of the last twenty years'.¹³⁶ The collision of subtle folk material and neo-Romantic sympathies found in Schmidt's music aligned healthily with Wittgenstein's own preferences. Schmidt's tolerant nature and Wittgenstein's admiration ensured the pair maintained a successful and mutually respectful working relationship. When Wittgenstein proposed reductions in the scoring of the *Concertante Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven für Klavier*

¹³⁵ Steven Haller, 'Bortkiewicz: Piano Concertos 2+3', *American Record Guide*, 72:4 (2009), 64 – 65.

¹³⁶ Quoted in: Flindell, 'More on Franz Schmidt and Paul Wittgenstein and their triumph with the E-flat Concerto', p. 133.

und Orchester, Schmidt complied without remonstrance. Similarly, he acquiesced when in 1935 Wittgenstein inserted ancillary embellishment in the third movement ('*Vivace*') of the *Concert für Klavier und Orchesterbegleitung Es-Dur*. Wittgenstein wholly endorsed the first and second movements, (*Allegro moderato un poco maestoso*, '*Andante*'), and in a letter to friend Donald Francis Tovey, labelled them as 'really great music'.¹³⁷

The charming content of the *Concertante Variationen* was also consonant with Wittgenstein's tastes. The theme is taken from the *Scherzo and Trio* of Beethoven's "Spring" *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, Op.24 in F major. Schmidt resourcefully manipulates Beethoven's sprightly melody; right from the opening phrase of the work he stretches the subject tonally, rhythmically, and harmonically. He supplies plenty of contrast between variations, offering a colourful interpretation of the motif set against dance based accompaniment (*Tempo di Bolero*) through to the gravitas of the fugal setting towards the end of the concerto. Schmidt wrote a total of seven works for Wittgenstein, six commissioned by Wittgenstein and a seventh solo piece, a Toccata, of his own accord; this makes him Wittgenstein's second most prolific composer behind Labor. Wittgenstein played Schmidt's works widely throughout his career, as can be gleaned from the table of performances provided in E. Fred Flindell's article on the working relationship between Schmidt and Wittgenstein in *Empty Sleeve: Der*

¹³⁷ Quoted in: Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 195.

*Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein.*¹³⁸

(v). Paul Hindemith

It was after a performance with the *Amar Quartet* in Vienna, on December 5th 1922, that Hindemith evidently agreed to the conditions of his commission with Wittgenstein. He commenced work on the concerto directly, posting the score, with the omission of the first movement, to Wittgenstein in May of the following year. In a letter preceding the arrival of the manuscript Hindemith discloses his apprehension to Wittgenstein, ‘you might find it a bit strange to listen to at first’. He expands on this concern in a note attached to the score:

I hope that your shock will subside after perusing the score. It is a simple, completely unproblematic piece, and I am sure that you will enjoy it after a time. (Perhaps you are appalled at first, but that does not matter.)¹³⁹

Wittgenstein’s rationale behind the rejection of the work is undocumented, however from our understanding of Wittgenstein’s acknowledged stylistic preferences we can deduce some of the more contentious elements. Composed in four uninterrupted sections: ‘*Einleitung. Mäßige schnelle Halbe*’ – ‘*Sehre lebhaft Halbe*’ – ‘*Trio, Basso ostinato*’ – ‘*Finale, Bewegte Halbe*’ the piano did not command the spotlight at all times, rather it worked frequently as part of the orchestra. The issue of soloistic preemience vexed Wittgenstein with the Korngold concerto (see p. 70) and with future commissions from Richard Strauss (see p. 81), it’s likely that this aspect of the

¹³⁸ Flindell, ‘More on Franz Schmidt and Paul Wittgenstein and their triumph with the E-flat Concerto’, pp.133 – 135.

¹³⁹ Hindemith, *Klaviermusik mit Orchester (Klavier: linke Hand)*, Op.29 (London: Eulenburg, 2006) pp. iii – v.

Hindemith's concerto was problematic also. Additionally, the work, although virtuosic, was encased by Hindemith's specific brand of modernity:

The result is a hard, agile, aggressive, uncommonly concise, completely novel-sounding orchestration without "late-romantic" filler voices or mixed colors through instrumental couplings... and producing a definite negation of "late Romantic" music making.¹⁴⁰

Hindemith's *modus operandi* for this concerto prioritises horizontal processes over vertical, which is to say that the piano part unravels in an unremittingly linear format, with the result that the score doesn't require concurrent use of both treble and bass clef, but a single staff to denote the solo piano part. However, it is technically exhausting, the first extensive rest occurring at the beginning of the final movement. It's possible that the technical demands of this concerto also figured in Wittgenstein's ultimate rejection of the work. In some ways the concerto preserves the traditional role of the left-hand as it would have appeared within a typical two-handed texture: use of octaves, sixths and thirds, arpeggio and scale-like sequences, and clean rhythmic figures. However, Hindemith's austere use of harmony and his linear approach is significantly bereft of the lavish ornamental and rich harmonic elements preferred by Wittgenstein, and proffered by Korngold and Schmidt.

Hindemith offered to answer any queries he may have, and to personally elucidate and illustrate the work musically for him: 'In case of any doubt I will always be there to

¹⁴⁰ Giselher Schubert, 'Hindemith's Klaviermusik mit Orchester für Paul Wittgenstein', in *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, Irene Such et al., eds., (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2006), pp. 171 – 180 (p. 179).

give you precise information'.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless Hindemith's proposals of explanation could not assuage Wittgenstein's consternation, the scheduled premiere in 1923 did not take place, and for the remainder of Wittgenstein's life the manuscript was stored in his personal archive. Only when Wittgenstein's papers became accessible in 2002 was a copy of the entire score uncovered, albeit with a number of errors.¹⁴² The autograph score and parts had been lost, but with the aid of extant sketches at the Hindemith Institute, the piece was resurrected. This early exuberant work by Hindemith has enjoyed remarkable success since its premiere in 2004, receiving performances with the New York Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, the Curtis Symphony Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Exponent Leon Fleisher has expressed admiration and affection for the work:

It's highly inventive, with a very special third movement [...] there's an extraordinary duet between the piano and English horn that anticipates Ravel by 10 years.¹⁴³

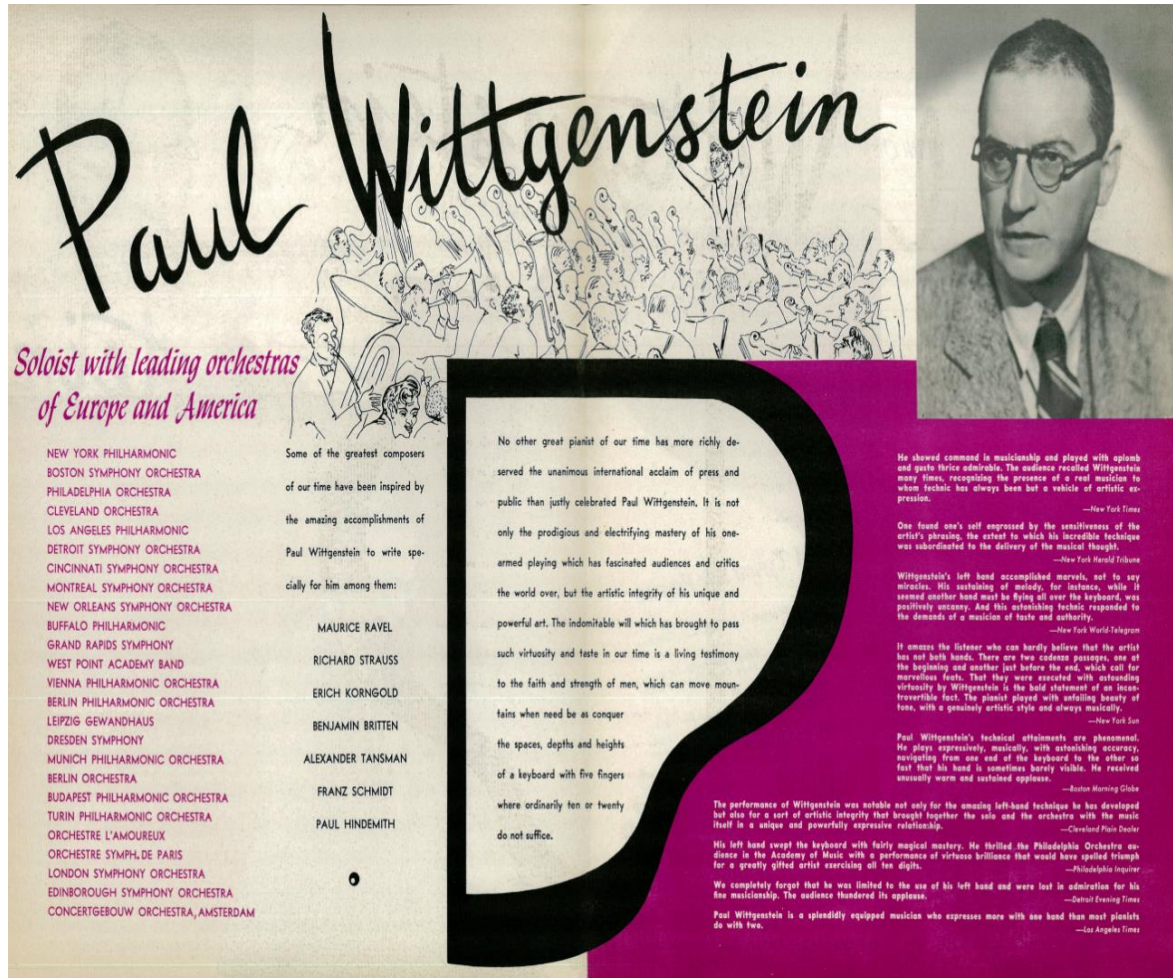
Interestingly, Wittgenstein continued to trade on Hindemith's notoriety later in his career, listing him in his promotional material despite the exclusion of *Klaviermusik mit Orchester* from his performance repertoire. Hindemith's name is visible at the bottom of the list of composers in the second column of the leaflet in **Figure 1.2.** below.

¹⁴¹ Hindemith, *Klaviermusik mit Orchester (Klavier: linke Hand)*, Op.29, pp. iv.

¹⁴² Hindemith, *Klaviermusik mit Orchester (Klavier: linke Hand)*, Op.29, p. v.

¹⁴³ David Patrick Stearns, 'Local premiere, first recording of the elusive Hindemith', <http://articles.philly.com/2008-04-24/news/25251566_1_pianist-orchester-paul-wittgenstein>, [accessed 10/02/15].

Figure 1.2. Promotional Leaflet for Paul Wittgenstein.¹⁴⁴



(vi). Rudolf Braun

There are few documents left relating to the commission and performance of Rudolf Braun's *Klavierkonzert in a-Moll für die linke Hand*. scant. However, a concert programme held by the Bodleian Libraries, Oxford University details a performance

¹⁴⁴ An electronic version of the leaflet in Figure 1.2. was personally obtained along with a collection of recordings of Wittgenstein (and his wife Hilde Schania) from a collector who purchased select residual items from the Wittgenstein archive.

of the work on December 12th 1927 at the Militärkasino, with the *Wiener Frauen-Symphonie-Orchester* under the direction of Julius Lehnert.¹⁴⁵ On the programme the performance specifically advertised this performance as the premiere of the work (see **Figure 1.3.**). As Braun passed away in December 1925, this premiere took place posthumously.

This concert programme forms part of the collection of documents donated by Margaret Deneke to Oxford University. Wittgenstein sent this leaflet directly to Deneke with a short letter inscribed on the reverse of the programme. Wittgenstein notes in his letter that he has several concerts over the next month, including a concert with the Berlin Philharmonic under Bruno Walter and comments that he ‘will then be able perhaps to write more interesting letters than now’. The full letter is shown in **Figure 1.4.**

¹⁴⁵ Oxford University, Bodleian Libraries, MS Eng Lett c.620 (shelfmark) From catalogue No. 44395 *Literary Papers of Clara Sophie Deneke.*

Figure 1.3. Concert Programme from the premiere of the Braun Concerto

GROSSER FESTSAAL DES MILITÄRKASINOS
I. SCHWARZENBERGPLATZ 1

Montag, den 12. Dezember 1927, um 1/2 8 Uhr abends

I. KONZERT

des
Wiener Frauen-Symphonie-Orchesters

Dirigent:
JULIUS LEHNERT

Mitwirkend: OTTI HEY (Gesang)
PAUL WITTGENSTEIN

+

PROGRAMM:

1. HAENDEL	Concerto grosso (Bearbeitung von Bachrich) Andante — Larghetto — Allegro — Menuett — Largo — Allegro ma non troppo
2. HAENDEL SCHUBERT	Arie aus „Acis und Galathea“ a) Dem Unendlichen b) Der Jüngling an der Quelle
3. ARENSKY	Variationen über ein Thema v. Tschaikowsky
4. RUDOLF BRAUN	Serenade für Streich-Orchester und zwei Harfen Moderato — Andante — Adagio quasi recitativo
5. RUDOLF BRAUN	Klavierkonzert A-moll für rechte Hand, mit großem Orchester (Erstaufführung)

PAUL WITTGENSTEIN

Klavier: Bösendorfer

© Nächstes Konzert Montag, den 23. Jänner 1928

Preis des Programmes 30 Groschen

Figure 1.4. Letter from Paul Wittgenstein to Margaret Deneke written on the reverse of Concert Programme from the premiere of the Braun Concerto

Dear Miss Deneke!

Many thanks for
your kind letters & all
you have done for my
next year tour.

In the next month
I am playing several
times, among others in
the Berliner Philharmonie
under Bruno Walter conducting
I will then be able perhaps to
write more interesting letters than
now.

With my best wishes for
a happy Christmas to you & your
family yours sincerely & gratefully
P. W.

(vii). Eduard Schütt

There's little knowledge remaining on the circumstances surrounding the commission of Eduard Schütt, and his resulting left-hand contribution *Paraphrase für Klavier und Orchester*, apart from the awareness of a performance of the work in Germany in June 1929.¹⁴⁶

(viii). Karl Weigl

Karl Weigl's *Klavierkonzert für die linke Hand*, completed in July 1924, did not meet Wittgenstein's requirements at the time, although the reasons for his rejection remain unclear. In this case however Wittgenstein sends a polite rejection to the composer. He explained to Weigl in February 1932:

I am quite willing to leave the piece at that time kindly dedicated me to another one-armed colleague for the premiere[...]as I have already thought about giving up my public playing slowly.¹⁴⁷

Whether there is truth in his consideration to retire, or this is simply a polite means of rejection is unknown. The difficulties he was experiencing in his personal and professional life during the early 1930s (as noted in **Reception and Reputation**) lend credit to the unsubstantiated claim of retirement. The Weigl concerto did not receive its premiere until 2002 with the pianist Florian Krumpöck and the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra under Horia Andreescu.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 180

¹⁴⁷ Letter from Paul Wittgenstein to Karl Weigl dated 22nd February 1932, MSS 73 B25 F807, the Karl Weigl Papers in the Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University. Translation – my own.

¹⁴⁸ Karl Weigl Foundation, <<http://www.karlweigl.org/works.php?work=9>> [accessed 10/2/15]

(ix). Richard Strauss

Richard Strauss was one of the many regular guests and participants at the Wittgenstein's musical evenings. Paul's former duet partner was the venerable grandfather of German music and a natural addition to his enviable list of commissions. Strauss based his concerto on material from his *Symphonia Domestica* written in 1903. The theme of family life connects the two, the original orchestral work portraying idyllic young family life, the *Parergon* expressing his distress at family illness over twenty years later - his son Franz had contracted typhus while on honeymoon in Egypt. The child's theme from the original Symphony was reworked in *Parergon*, branching into areas of polytonality and atonality, reflecting his emotional alarm and distress. These dissonant agitated episodes rotate with reminiscences of happier times, harping back once again to his *Symphonia Domestica*.¹⁴⁹ Characteristically, Wittgenstein identified several flaws in *Parergon*, specifically shortcomings in the piano part and the corpulent orchestration. The piano part was not brilliant enough for his taste, and he urged Strauss to heighten the opulence and grandeur of his solo part. The composer also reluctantly agreed to dilute the orchestration.¹⁵⁰ In this case his observations were well-founded as Strauss had scored the work very heavily.

That the concerto had been received favourably by audiences was expressed in a letter from Strauss to Wittgenstein in late 1925: 'I am very pleased that *Parergon* brings such fine success and that your piece you also like yourself'.¹⁵¹ But the mixed reviews of

¹⁴⁹ Kurt Wilhelm, *Richard Strauss, An Intimate Portrait* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), p. 92.

¹⁵⁰ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 165.

¹⁵¹ Flindell, 'Dokumente aus der Sammlung Paul Wittgenstein', p. 426.

the composition itself dismayed Strauss, and perhaps due to the handsome remuneration he had received for the *Parergon* (\$25,000), he began a Second Concerto for left-hand unprompted. This time a set of variations called *Panathenäenzug* was completed, this work however fared worse than the first as a letter from Strauss to Wittgenstein from February 1928 indicates:

I am very sorry that the Press: i.e. (Herr) Possowitz in Berlin tore my work to pieces. I know that the *Panathenäenzug* is not bad, but I didn't expect it would receive the honour of unanimous disapproval.¹⁵²

Their further correspondence refers to a failed attempt to engage Toscanini to conduct the work, citing his poor eyesight as the reason for its rejection. Wittgenstein continued to perform *Parergon* throughout his career, recording the work as late as 1959.¹⁵³

(x). Maurice Ravel

George Kugel, Wittgenstein's manager, approached Ravel in 1929 with a request to write a concerto for Wittgenstein. Ravel was intrigued by the challenge, and set to work earnestly over the summer. 'I'm gestating a concerto: I'm at the vomiting stage' he wrote to his cousin Marie Gaudin on the 10th of August.¹⁵⁴ The single-movement work is economically constructed, the morose and murky introduction exploiting the lower registers of the piano and orchestra, later balanced by gentle lyricism and wild scherzo rhythms. In preparation for the solo piano part he reputedly studied the left-

¹⁵² Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 165, p. 426.

¹⁵³ Richard Strauss, *Parergon zur Sinfonia Domestica, Op. 73*, Paul Wittgenstein, Boston Records Orchestra, cond. by Eric Simon (Boston Records, B 412, 1959).

¹⁵⁴ Gerald Larner, *Maurice Ravel* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1996), p. 205.

hand works of Saint-Saëns, Alkan and Czerny.¹⁵⁵ Ravel was adamant that sincerity in his piano writing was key in producing a satisfying, comprehensive work:

The concerto must not be a stunt. The listener must never feel that more could have been accomplished with two hands. The (l.h.) piano part must be complete, beautiful and transparent.¹⁵⁶

However, when Ravel first played the resulting work for Wittgenstein, despite the extensive cadenzas and overwhelming virtuosity required, it was not received with enthusiasm.¹⁵⁷ It took several months of study and practice before Wittgenstein grew to appreciate the work and it received its world premiere in Vienna at the *Grosser Musikvereinsaal* with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra under Robert Heger in January 1932.¹⁵⁸ Ravel, unable to attend the premiere, first heard Wittgenstein's rendition of *Concerto pour la main gauche* at a private *soiree* held by the Wittgenstein's in Ravel's honour.¹⁵⁹ Ravel was appalled to hear Wittgenstein's modifications to his meticulously wrought concerto. Wittgenstein had supplemented with additional arpeggios and glissandi, removed percussion parts, embellished the first cadenza, cut the orchestra for 12 bars, and included an additional cadenza.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Lerner, *Maurice Ravel*, p. 209. Ravel specifically mentions Saint-Saëns *Six Etudes for the Left Hand* in an article written for *Le Journal*, January 14th, 1933 in advance of the Parisienne premiere of *Concerto pour la main gauche*. 'Concerto for the Left Hand', in *A Ravel Reader: Correspondence, Articles, Interviews*, ed. by Arbie Orenstein, pp. 396 – 397.

¹⁵⁶ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 122.

¹⁵⁷ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 183.

¹⁵⁸ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 184.

¹⁵⁹ Orenstein, ed., Appendix F: 'Paul Wittgenstein', in *A Ravel Reader: Correspondence, Articles, Interviews*, pp. 593 – 595.

¹⁶⁰ Predota, 'Badgering the Creative Genius: Paul Wittgenstein and the Prerogative of Musical Patronage', pp. 85 – 90. Wendy Wong and Clare Hammond have also examined Wittgenstein's sketches and proposed additions to the Ravel and Britten works for left-hand. Wong, Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain', pp. 389 – 424; Hammond, 'To Conceal or Reveal: left-hand pianism

A dispute arose between the two over the alterations; Wittgenstein, proclaiming that ‘Performers must not be slaves!’ was assured by an incensed Ravel that he was of the opposite opinion: ‘Performers are slaves!’.¹⁶¹ The Parisian premiere, originally planned for April 1932, was delayed until the following year while an agreement was reached. For a fee of \$6000, Wittgenstein had guaranteed exclusive performing rights to the concerto for six years (1931 – 1936), soon after this clause expired Ravel engaged pianist Jacques Février to perform the work as he had intended, working personally with the pianist to ensure an accurate representation of the work.¹⁶²

(xi). Sergei Prokofiev

Prokofiev undertook his Concerto No.4 for Piano (left-hand) and Orchestra in the spring of 1931.¹⁶³ Correspondence between the two reveals that requests were made by the pianist before the work was even complete. ‘As you asked me, I tried to add piano solo in the slow movement’. They also divulge the difficulty experienced by the composer in trying to maintain interest in the piano part without orchestral accompaniment. ‘As you requested, I tried to add piano solo in the slow movement. I managed to make you play alone for 18 bars - this is something!’.¹⁶⁴ Organized in four movements, the final movement, a ‘*Vivace*’, presents a miniature, ephemeral snapshot

with particular reference to Ravel's Concerto pour la main gauche and Britten's Divisions’, pp. 122 – 138.

¹⁶¹ Larner, *Maurice Ravel*, p. 212.

¹⁶² Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 183; Madeleine Goss, *Bolero: The Life of Maurice Ravel*, pp. 245 – 246.

¹⁶³ Lawrence and Elizabeth Hanson, *Prokofiev: The Prodigal Son* (London: Cassel & Company Ltd., 1964), p. 152.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in: Flindell, ‘Dokumente aus der Sammlung Paul Wittgenstein’, p. 428.

of the opening movement, a busy, quirky inquisition of linear finger technique. A languorous and somewhat austere *'Andante'* and a sardonic scherzo-like *'Moderato'*, full of witty chromaticisms, form the second and third movements. These middle movements expose more readily Prokofiev's idiosyncratic and obtuse harmonic language. Prokofiev anticipated the difficulties Wittgenstein might encounter in digesting his work. He expressed himself diplomatically in a letter to his patron on the 11th of September 1931, delineating the disparities between them and communicating his concerns about reconciling their stylistic perspectives. He urges him not to 'judge the piano part too hastily, if certain moments seem to be indigestible at first, don't press yourself to pronounce judgment, but wait a while'.¹⁶⁵ A letter from Wittgenstein to Olin Downes three years later gives insight into his hesitations, and the reason for his delay in performing the work:

Even a concerto Prokofiev has written for me I have not yet played because the inner logic of the work is not yet clear to me and of course, I can't play it until it is.¹⁶⁶

However, he never resolved his conceptual deadlock with the work, and the premiere was eventually left to another pianist. It was Siegfried Rapp, having obtained the score from Prokofiev's widow, who gave the premiere in Berlin in 1956 against Wittgenstein's will and knowledge.¹⁶⁷

(xii). Benjamin Britten

Britten chose to complete a set of variations in fulfilment of his commission from

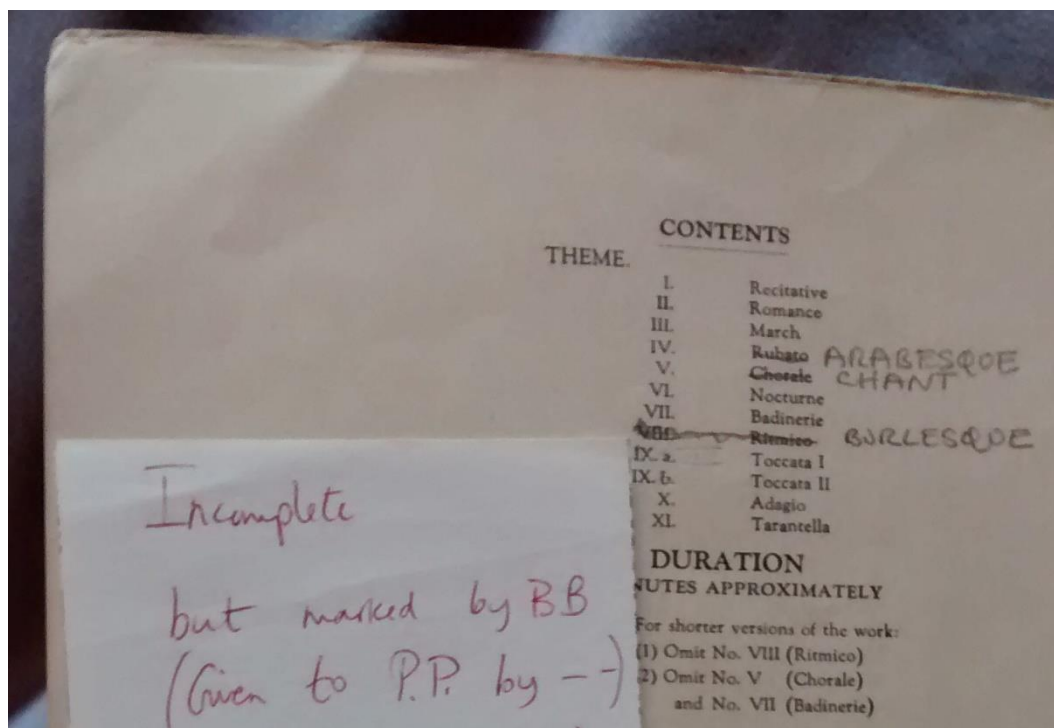
¹⁶⁵ Flindell, 'Dokumente aus der Sammlung Paul Wittgenstein', p. 428.

¹⁶⁶ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 120.

¹⁶⁷ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 190.

Wittgenstein, first called *Concert Variations*, he later settled on the title *Diversions*. Many of the variations bear descriptive titles: *Romance*, *Badinerie*, *Tarantella*, using their peculiar characteristics to facilitate his comprehensive exploration of linear piano technique, while simultaneously precluding stylistic monotony. In his revision of the work, published in 1955, he replaced some of the original movement titles with more evocative alternates. Variation IV, once titled *Rubato*, became *Arabesque*, variation V originally called *Chorale* became *Chant*, and for variation VIII *Ritmico* was replaced with *Burlesque*.

Figure 1.5. Revisions applied to a first edition score of *Diversions*, BBM/diversions/2/3, in Benjamin Britten's own hand.¹⁶⁸



He clarified his pianistic approach in the preface to the first published score: ‘In no place in the work did I attempt to imitate a two-handed piano technique, but concentrated on exploiting and emphasizing the single line approach’.¹⁶⁹ Britten was satisfied with his technical solutions to the one-handed predicament describing the piece as ‘not deep-but quite pretty!’.¹⁷⁰ As was typical of Wittgenstein’s working relationships, rapport between performer and composer became strained close to the

¹⁶⁸ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/2/3, Contents page. The full autograph score to *Diversions* is lost, the first edition score shown above is a photographic reproduction of the autograph score as printed by Boosey and Hawkes in 1941. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

¹⁶⁹ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/2/3, Preface.

¹⁷⁰ Humphrey Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten, A Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), p. 163.

premiere; Wittgenstein demanded changes and Britten remained stalwart against them.¹⁷¹ In a letter to his publisher Britten wrote:

I'm having a slight altercation with Herr von Wittgenstein over my scoring - if there is anything I know about, it is scoring so I am fighting back. The man really is an old sour puss.¹⁷²

Wittgenstein identified his main areas of concern in terms of orchestration:

No human strength on the piano can be a match for 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones and double woodwind, all making noise at the same time.¹⁷³

Even now, at the pinnacle of his career, celebrated worldwide for his achievements, Wittgenstein's insecurities, his fear of inferiority and desire for the limelight took precedence over compositional intent and timbral effect. Under protest Britten eventually agreed to several small changes, and the work was premiered in January 1942 with Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugène Ormandy.¹⁷⁴ There was further conflict in advance of the 1950 British premiere in Bournemouth when Britten applied some initial revisions to the work without consulting Wittgenstein. He was startled and incensed to receive an amended score directly from the publishers approximately 3 weeks before the premiere with no contact at all from the composer. These initial amendments formed the basis for further revisions undertaken in the mid-1950s after Wittgenstein's exclusivity contract had expired. This reworking of *Diversions* was

¹⁷¹ Wittgenstein also proposed an additional cadenza interpolated between the two final variations, as well as the inclusion of many other solo passages. Wendy Wong, 'Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain', p. 391. Wong also details the subsequent 'battle' between performer and composer.

¹⁷² Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 278.

¹⁷³ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 278.

¹⁷⁴ Paul Banks, ed., *Benjamin Britten: A Catalogue of the Published Works* (Aldeburgh: The Britten-Pears Library, 1999), p. 52.

featured in a recording with Julius Katchen in 1954 and subsequently published in 1955.¹⁷⁵ These revisions will be examined in detail in **Chapter 5: Britten**.

(xiii). Alexandre Tansman

After repeated struggles with modern musical tendencies and misunderstood intentions, Wittgenstein was cautious in selecting his next composer. He stated in *Musical America* in 1944 that:

Before I commissioned this work I made sure that the style of the composer would be congenial to my own method of performance. I found that Tansman's modernism of the more conservative type, made me feel at home.¹⁷⁶

He disclosed their close collaborative relationship, and stated that he felt he had 'absorbed the composer's idiom thoroughly'. Polish composer Alexandre Tansman wrote his Concert Piece for the Left Hand for Wittgenstein, whilst exiled in America in 1943. Regrettably for Wittgenstein, it was left incomplete, simply in the form of a piano score. Composer Piotr Moss undertook the orchestration of the concerto decades later, and the piece received its premiere in January 2009 with Christian Seibert on piano, conductor Howard Griffith and the *Brandenburgisches* State Orchestra.¹⁷⁷

(xiv). Norman Demuth

Of the two works that Demuth wrote for left-hand and dedicated to Wittgenstein no correspondence or evidence of formal commissioning procedures exists to provide

¹⁷⁵ Wendy Wong, 'Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain', p. 359.

¹⁷⁶ Paul Wittgenstein in *Musical America*, May 1944. Quoted in: Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 127.

¹⁷⁷ Gérald Hugon, *L'œuvre D'Alexandre Tansman Catalogue pratique*, 2012, p. 50; also listed on <<http://www.alexandre-tansman.com/fran%C3%A7ais/catalogue/%C5%93uvres-concertantes/>> [accessed 11/08/17].

insight into their origins. Wong suggests that Demuth is more likely the instigating party here, as he had more to gain from composing a piece for a famous pianist, than Wittgenstein would in commissioning a composer who, once again, dealt in a musical language alien to him.¹⁷⁸ The Concerto for Piano (Left-hand) and Orchestra, written in 3 movements, was completed in November 1946, and unfortunately was neither performed by Wittgenstein nor published in the intervening years. The full score and two-piano reduction are housed in the Paul Wittgenstein Archive in Hong Kong. Wong, who had the opportunity to study these manuscript sources, deemed it ‘a highly original and personal work’.¹⁷⁹

Wittgenstein as a Teacher

Rudolph Koder, a friend of Ludwig’s, was the grateful recipient of Paul’s musical guidance from 1930, and it was in volunteering his expertise that he uncovered a love of teaching. He became cognizant of his ability to successfully teach standard piano repertoire using the physical memory of his right-hand to introspectively evaluate the finest fingering choices. By the following year, in 1931, he was valued professor at the New Vienna Conservatory and he continued to teach there until 1938 when the looming political situation forced him to curtail his teaching. He taught a combined total of 30 students at the Conservatory and several recorded private students, including Rudolf Koder, Georg Mezöfi and Erna Attermann. These private students

¹⁷⁸ Wong, ‘Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain’, pp. 251 – 252.

¹⁷⁹ Wong, ‘Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain’, p. 275.

were also invited to take part in Conservatory recitals or events.¹⁸⁰ He preferred teaching in his own residences on the Allegasse and in Neuwaldegg, and expected his painstaking, concentrated efforts to be reciprocated in full by his students, demanding exemplary discipline and full application to task.¹⁸¹ Following his emigration to America he continued to teach, first at the Ralph Wolfe Conservatory of Music from 1938-1943, and later in the Manhattanville College in New York City. He also gave private lessons in his residence on Riverside Drive.

His dedication to his students was absolute: a letter dating from after the annexation of Austria in 1938 to his student Ernst Schlesinger (who later changed his name to Henry Selbing) offered him lessons at home at the Palais on Argentinierstrasse if the *Neue Wiener Konservatorium* remained shut. An extract from this letter reiterates Wittgenstein's artistic priorities, 'I do not want the teaching of my students to suffer interruption through the political upheaval'.¹⁸² Very generous with his students, he awarded scholarships from his own financial reserves, he never charged for lessons, and in one instance gave a pupil several thousand dollars to allow him to attend the Spoleto Festival in Italy.¹⁸³ He is also known to have sent care packages to friends and pupils back in Austria when he became aware of the difficult living conditions there.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Sassmann, 'Paul Wittgenstein und die Klavier-Sololiteratur für die linke Hand allein', pp. 121 – 123.

¹⁸¹ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 118.

¹⁸² Paul Wittgenstein's letter to Schlesinger dated 14/3/1938 in the archive of Albert Sassmann as quoted by Suchy, 'Sein Werk – Die Musik des Produzenten-Musikers Paul Wittgenstein', p. 22. Translation - my own.

¹⁸³ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, pp. 117 – 118.

¹⁸⁴ Suchy, 'Sein Werk – Die Musik des Produzenten-Musikers Paul Wittgenstein', p. 16.

Erna Otten-Attermann remembers from her lessons at Paul's home in Vienna that if he was pleased with a rendition of a prelude and fugue, she was allowed to play this again later on the organ.¹⁸⁵ As a restless person he was perpetually fidgety during lessons, and in the summer when he held lessons at the beautiful house in Neuwaldegger he opened all the doors out to the garden and would walk around outside, running back in when a mistake was made, no matter the distance.

His mercurial temperament could manifest itself in extraordinary kindness or extreme displeasure: he was known to shout regularly at his pupils. Former student Leonard Kastle attests to his contrary disposition. 'I have seen him throw pupils out, their books after them'.¹⁸⁶ Reputedly, he always apologized profusely for his irascible outbursts and ultimately gleaned ample respect from his students. Kastle was particularly appreciative of his support and encouragement; when he later delved into composition, Wittgenstein provided him with support and advice, even performing a three-handed arrangement of his work (*Music for a Ballet*) at a meeting of the Leschetizky Association in New York.¹⁸⁷

His pedagogic legacy, *School for the Left Hand*, was published by Universal in 1957 in three volumes. The first volume contains nearly 200 developmental technical studies; the second contains suitable study excerpts from the concert repertoire by Beethoven, Chopin, Brahms, Bach and many others transcribed for left-hand. The

¹⁸⁵ Otten-Attermann, 'Der Musiker im wunderschönen Schloss Paul Wittgensteins Klavierschülerin Erna Otten-Attermann, 1919 in Wien geboren, im Interview mit Irene Suchy', p. 39.

¹⁸⁶ Kastle, 'Paul Wittgenstein – Teacher and Friend', p. 68.

¹⁸⁷ Kastle, 'Paul Wittgenstein – Teacher and Friend', pp. 69 – 70.

third volume contains 27 full pieces by Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schubert and Grieg that formed the backbone of his own solo repertoire. A short preface provides justification for the alterations and modifications of the musical texts. With reference to his own version of the Bach *Chaconne* arranged for left-hand by Brahms he notes:

I have taken the liberty of making rather extensive changes in this piece, not of course in the contents, but merely in the piano arrangement. I believe this to be justified [...] because the arrangement itself is a transcription of a violin composition, and in the case of such transcriptions from one instrument to another a certain latitude is not only permissible but even necessary.¹⁸⁸

Novel technical manoeuvres as devised by Wittgenstein were denoted by his own notational system and included:

- 1.) Small circles over notes that should be struck with several fingers on the one key.
- 2.) Half-pedalling.
- 3.) Horizontal lines out of a note head either left or right to signify the anticipation or delay of this note to accommodate a prioritized note out of physical range.
- 4.) A vertical slur connecting a significant chord with a bass note out of range. In this instance, the chord should be played on time and the bass note struck *pianissimo* subsequently, to create the illusion of the full chord being played

¹⁸⁸ Wittgenstein, *School for the Left Hand* (London: Universal Edition, 1957), preface.

together.

Kong Wong-Young's doctoral thesis, *Paul Wittgenstein's Transcriptions for Left Hand: Pianistic techniques and performance problems*, elaborates on the innovations and techniques specified in his pedagogical manual and contends that the volume forms a unique survey of left-hand techniques informed by his experiences as a performer and teacher.¹⁸⁹ Wong-Young surmises that the number of exercises attributed to individual skills (for instance there are 73 exercises devoted to trills) equates to their importance in Wittgenstein's opinion. He varied his approach to broken chords depending on their size and placement within the phrase, for example, occasionally in a row of successively rolled chords he would recommend breaking the second chord in the row from the top down. He promoted a range of unusual fingerings, from placing the thumb in the middle of a chord to assist projection of a specific note, to unexpectedly widely spaced consecutive fingerings, facilitating a legato impression. Treacherously difficult, with finger twisting patterns, maintenance of multiple parts and rapid motion across the breadth of the keyboard, one would wonder if the inclusion of some of these more difficult exercises and arrangements reflected Wittgenstein's aspirations for left-hand technique, rather than the reality of the physical limitations of one hand. Wong-Young pinpoints Wittgenstein's transcriptions of chamber works as

¹⁸⁹ Kong Wong-Young, 'Paul Wittgenstein's Transcriptions for Left Hand: Pianistic techniques and performance problems, A lecture recital, together with three recitals of selected works of R. Schumann, S. Prokofiev, F. Liszt, M. Ravel, and F. Chopin' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of North Texas, 1999).

being the most unattainable, citing the copious interruptions in polyphonic texture as the main reason for their impracticality.¹⁹⁰ The volumes in full represent Wittgenstein's attempt to reinvent the inner-workings of piano technique for one-hand, while maintaining the aural effect and notational appearance of two hands.

Archive and Legacy

As previously mentioned, in the late 1930s Paul negotiated successfully with the NAZI authorities in obtaining '*mischling*' status for his two sisters Hermine and Helene, following the exchange of a large portion of the family fortune.¹⁹¹ The transaction gave Paul permission to leave the country and he successfully transported a considerable portion of his manuscript collection to America to where he had emmigrated, via Switzerland and Cuba. Since so little of Wittgenstein's enviable commissioned repertoire was publicly available due to the specified exclusivity clause in his commissioning contracts, he received repeated requests throughout his career to relinquish his sole rights to these works, supply other pianists with his manuscripts, and endorse supplementary performances. Attempts to acquire performance rights to the Wittgenstein concertos continued after he moved to America; as patron and collaborator he felt strongly that these works were his property alone. In a letter to fellow one-handed pianist Siegfried Rapp in 1949 he wrote: 'As for your desire to

¹⁹⁰ Wong-Young, 'Paul Wittgenstein's Transcriptions for Left Hand', p. 35.

¹⁹¹ Margaret was married to an American citizen so was out of immediate danger, and Ludwig had settled in England.

obtain the piano concertos written for me by Franz Schmidt and Benjamin Britten for performance, I regret to flatly say no'.¹⁹² An in-depth familiarity with the obstacles Wittgenstein faced throughout his career, and the self-sufficing attitude that enabled him to broach this challenge originally, partly explains his outlook: disapproval from his family, the stigma of disability, a lack of appropriate concert materials, anachronistic musical preferences, severe performance anxiety, difficult working relationships, and finally expulsion from his homeland. All this he endured to actively pursue his passion: music and the piano. The consolidation of these obstacles depicts a perspective from which Wittgenstein's decision to control the repertoire he fought for becomes much more comprehensible. There is no denying the loss collectively to the musical community, and individually, to the pianists who could have benefitted from his philanthropic legacy half a century earlier. But from Wittgenstein's vantage point, the collection represented far more than a journey through the development of left-hand piano at the hands of the greatest musical minds of the early 20th century; it represented his struggle, his victory and his life's work.

The whereabouts of numerous valuable paintings and instruments in his collection are unknown, but the manuscripts, autographs and letters which formed the Paul Wittgenstein collection were disclosed in the auction following his widow's death in

¹⁹² Giselher Schubert, 'Hindemith's Klaviermusik mit Orchester für Paul Wittgenstein', in *Empty Sleeve: Der Musiker und Mäzen Paul Wittgenstein*, p. 171. Rapp was persistent in his efforts to acquire copies of the Hindemith and Prokofiev concertos either from Wittgenstein or from other sources; he finally succeeded in the case of the Prokofiev concerto obtaining a copy from Prokofiev's widow.

2002. Paul donated some of his autograph manuscripts and fragments to the New York Public Library including works by Brahms, Bach, Leschetizky, Korngold, Mendelssohn and Johann Strauss. The Leschetizky letters Paul had received from Malvine Bree he gave to the Leschetizky Foundation.¹⁹³ Prior to the Sotheby's auction another group was purchased by the Austrian National Library; 5 letters by Franz Schmidt, 16 by Marie Soldat-Roeger, a letter and a map of Prokofiev's, 4 letters by Richard Strauss as well as autograph manuscripts by Strauss, Sergei Prokofiev, Josef Labor, Theodor Leschetizky and Carl Czerny. The remainder of the collection, a total of 3.5 tonnes, were sold in auction to the Octavian Society in Hong Kong.¹⁹⁴ However, the founder of the Octavian Society recently passed away and the collection is currently in the hands of estate lawyers and closed to the public. The future of this part of the collection is currently unknown. The Octavian Society acquired many of the autograph, scribal and printed manuscripts in Wittgenstein's personal library including works by Maurice Ravel, Sergei Prokofiev, Benjamin Britten, Richard Strauss, Erich Korngold, Franz Schmidt, Alexander Tansman, Sergei Bortkiewicz, Eduard Schütt, Walter Bricht, Norman Demuth, Rudolf Braun and Hans Gál.¹⁹⁵ His insistence on exclusivity resulted in a unique collection of orchestral scores and parts bearing the hand of many iconic conductors such as Bruno Walter and Franz Schalk.¹⁹⁶ Oddities

¹⁹³ Flindell, E. Fred, 'Dokumente aus der Sammlung Paul Wittgenstein', p. 431.

¹⁹⁴ Suchy, 'Sein Werk – Die Musik des Produzenten-Musikers Paul Wittgenstein', pp. 17 – 18.

¹⁹⁵ Predota, 'Badgering the Creative Genius: Paul Wittgenstein and the Prerogative of Musical Patronage', p. 81; Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, pp. 179 – 180.

¹⁹⁶ *Music: Including the Paul Wittgenstein Archive*, p. 152.

in the archive include a sketch of Brahms by Paul's uncle and namesake, during one of the composer's visits.¹⁹⁷

His was simply a boundless idealism, one embodying devotion, endurance, and temerity in the service of music - E. Fred Flindell.¹⁹⁸

Flindell's plaudits are entirely justified upon inspection of his accomplishments, which would be remarkable for any ordinary soul; the peculiar combination of tribulations he endured through his lifetime make the incredible index of his achievements all the more exceptional. He performed with the finest orchestras, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics, and the leading conductors of the era, Bruno Walter, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Leonard Bernstein, Eugene Ormandy, Pierre Monteux and Serge Koussevitzky. His worldwide success was galvanised in popular culture: television series MASH drew inspiration from Wittgenstein for one of their characters, and novelist John Barchilon based his book *The Crown Prince* on Wittgenstein's life. Wittgenstein even served as an inspirational figure to younger composers; Waugh contends that he would receive propositions or even completed works for left-hand by young hopefuls.¹⁹⁹

Piano music for the left-hand is such a specialised niche of piano repertoire that its growth into the substantial, meaningful category of today seems improbable if it had been left to the natural incentives of compositional intrigue and technical development.

¹⁹⁷ Predota, 'Badgering the Creative Genius: Paul Wittgenstein and the Prerogative of Musical Patronage', p. 72.

¹⁹⁸ Flindell, 'Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961): Patron and Pianist', p. 113.

¹⁹⁹ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, pp. 179 – 180.

To produce such a wealth of material for this unusual genre, especially in terms of concerti and chamber pieces, it was only the personal dedication and involvement of a dedicated proponent that could have propelled this category into the spotlight and expanded it to such a degree. The extensive catalogue for left-hand produced over the remainder of the 20th century, must be attributed in part to his example and stimulus. Without Wittgenstein's instigation and dedication to cause, the list of left-hand works would be far leaner. Though his actions and performances remain contentious, he broke boundaries in the field of disability and the arts, gave courage and opportunity to other disabled musicians, and challenged the contemporary notions of acceptable and valid aesthetic presentations for performance. By commissioning his battery of concerti, chamber and solo works he, perhaps unintentionally, encouraged a new way of thinking about piano technique and composition. For pianists of the 20th century and beyond, those that have suffered injury, temporary or permanent to an arm or hand, or those that wish to explore more abstract presentations of pianistic technique and timbre, he left a wealth of valuable material. The last years of his life Wittgenstein lived near New York, during the week in a studio on Riverside Drive and on weekends with his family in Great Neck. He died on the 3rd of March 1961 in Manhasset (Long Island) of heart failure.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

(i). Conceptual Framework

A convergence of factors, the centenary of WWI, the progression of disabilities studies and the auction of the Wittgenstein archive, has, over the past fifteen years brought a

resurgence of interest in a career once world-famous. The varying factors subject to scholarly study thus far can be largely collated into two groups: those relating directly to Wittgenstein's life and career, and those that concentrate solely on the resulting music, unravelling the technical and structural devices used to produce the desired result. Wittgenstein's tragedy and courageous rebuttal, his fascinating acquaintances and illustrious coterie, his complex family and working relationships have provoked much contemplation and re-examination of his personal life. Henry Kingsbury confirms the allure:

The career of Paul Wittgenstein is likely to be thought of merely as a curiosity, a personality-story with only a minimum of "musical" significance, and this, because Wittgenstein's musical taste was "conservative," and not in keeping with the harmonically "progressive" developments of "the twentieth century".²⁰⁰

Research considering the commissioned music unequivocally has been slower to emerge, with few consequential dissertations which scrutinize his commissioned concerti, and a handful of papers on the topic.²⁰¹ So Young Kim-Park's thesis, 'Paul Wittgenstein und die für ihn komponierten Klavierkonzerte für die linke Hand' provides a small-scale analysis of selected concerti, parsing traditional elements of structural and thematic development from a compositional point of view. Clare Hammond's thesis, 'To Conceal or Reveal: left-hand pianism with particular reference

²⁰⁰ Henry Kingsbury, 'The Gift', in *The Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal*, 4 (2008), 20 – 29 (p. 24).

²⁰¹ There are several other dissertations which research other aspects of Wittgenstein's career, notably, Albert Sassmann's 'Aspekte der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand am Beispiel des Leschetizky Schülers Paul Wittgenstein' and Kong Wong-Young, 'Paul Wittgenstein's Transcriptions for Left Hand: Pianistic techniques and performance problems'.

to Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* and Britten's *Diversions*', endeavours to engage with the Ravel and Britten left-hand works from a pianistic perspective.²⁰² Identifying certain typical left-hand techniques in the Godowsky-Chopin transcriptions, she applies similar categories of inquiry to the Britten and Ravel concertos for left-hand. Broadly these categories incorporate melodic use of thumb, multi-layered textures within the hand, contrary motion, span and style brisé with some reference to large-scale structure, register and aural effect.

Beyond the imbrication of specific left-hand concerti, my analysis aligns with Hammond's work in some respects: at a conceptual level, they both examine these left-hand works with a certain duality of purpose, scrutinizing specific compositional components alongside performance related demands. Although Hammond does not elaborate on her conceptual framework or methodology, her choice of analytical categories (as listed above) plots some of the demands on the pianist as can be gleaned from the score, rather than live or recorded performance. Despite similar overarching goals there are extensive differences between Hammond's work and my own, mainly in terms of analytical approach. As shall be elucidated in the methodology section, this thesis redevelops and extends existing frameworks encompassing a much broader range of musical features and considerations than Hammond's thesis. Additionally, the comparative aspect of this

²⁰² Clare Hammond, 'To Conceal or Reveal: left-hand pianism with particular reference to Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* and Britten's *Diversions*', (unpublished doctoral thesis in partial fulfilment of PhD, City University, London, 2012).

thesis is entirely original.

Most recent is the contribution from Wendy Wong, *Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain*.²⁰³ She retraces Wittgenstein's performing career in Britain and examines the works written for him by British composers Ernest Walker, Norman Demuth and Benjamin Britten recreating the timeline of events and construction of these works through archival work. Through her inspection of primary sources throughout libraries and archives in the UK, and crucially the Paul Wittgenstein Archive in Hong Kong, she traced the history of these works, furnishing left-hand enthusiasts with a more detailed picture of the pieces themselves, the extant manuscript sources and the interaction between composer and performer.

Performance is traditionally considered the acme or culmination of the compositional process, and as such is viewed as part of a linear system from score to stage, where compositional and performance-related issues are largely regarded as separate entities. The reality is more convoluted. The practicalities of performance to some degree must often feature in the composer's deliberations, and therefore the interaction between performative and compositional aspects is more interwoven. However, reflections on the limits of the performer (and indeed the instrument) by the composer, and the impact on their output, have largely been left unvoiced except in special circumstances. Once the performative boundaries have been skewed, fresh

²⁰³ Wendy Wong, *'Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain'*, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, 2016).

pressure is placed on the composer to consider, at all times, the capacities of the pianist and the trickle-down repercussions. Theoretically, this results in a stronger link between the compositional and performative aspects of these concerti as the unique nature of left-hand pianism moulds and steers compositional outcomes in a peculiar fashion. In other words, compositional choices cannot be assessed without the hand that shaped them.

Therefore, contemplation of the physical and practical dimensions which circumscribes left-hand technique is essential in working towards a broader understanding of these works. Melodic, rhythmic and textural design would have been bound by the physiological capacity of a single hand at the keyboard, the consequences extending to registral and temporal selections as well as large-scale structure. Standard pianistic approach would have been entirely inadequate, so new pedalling techniques and methods of integrating melody and accompaniment were often explored. My analysis of these left-hand works will be conducted in correlation with the composer's previous piano-based output, not, as Hammond executed, on a selection of left-hand mechanisms established by Godowsky. I will assess the compositional approach as adopted by each composer in relation to their earlier work, to unearth the pianistic devices chosen to form the technical framework of their left-hand output. The categories of inspection will be justifiably augmented to include aspects so far neglected (such as pitch span and phrase structure) in order to present a complete portrait of the requisite pianistic techniques.

(ii). Aims and Objectives

This approach (the specific details of which will be outlined in greater detail in the **Methodology** section) enables the overarching aim of this research project: to critically interrogate the inner and outer workings of left-hand pianism in order to collate and classify the tropes and trends inherent in this genre. Placing Wittgenstein at the centre of this investigation offers insight into many performative and disability-related issues as well as subsidiary categories related specifically to left-hand piano. Crucially, this also offers the opportunity for contemplation of his commissioned works. A series of specific objectives will target varying aspects of the left-hand genre from an internal perspective from the construction and technical functionality of left-hand works, to the antipodal spheres of performative procedures and aesthetics. This thesis will be sectioned accordingly: in pursuance of the goal outlined above, Chapters 3 – 5 of this thesis shall focus exclusively on the analysis of relevant scores, while Chapter 2 will explore left-hand piano further with particular reference to physical considerations, perception and reception.

The comprehensiveness of the overall aim of this thesis extends the scope of analytical focus beyond the score and embraces the plurality of concepts and considerations associated with current critical musicology. It is through deliberation of these topics (e.g. embodiment, disabilities studies, aesthetics, perception, performance studies etc.,) readily embraced within the plurality of postmodern and poststructuralist discourses, that generates much of the material that forms **Chapter 2: Virtuosity and Bodily**

Asymmetry. While the first chapter undertook the cultural and societal placement of Wittgenstein's career and the significance of his commissions within the genre of left-hand piano, the second chapter prods the questions and theories raised by the younger discipline of Disabilities Studies in an attempt to construct the most comprehensive and nuanced investigation of Wittgenstein's career to date.

The objectives for **Chapter 2**, set in motion by the background information and contextualisation provided in the opening chapter, can be summarised as follows.

- To fully depict the performative challenges, cultural and physical, faced by Wittgenstein.
- To deconstruct attitudes towards disability from a historical perspective, and unravel the inferable repercussions on his career and his legacy.

An investigation of left-hand technique and an examination of the significance of the transition from standard pianism for both composer and pianist is enabled by Wittgenstein's commissioned repertoire. Of these works, the left-hand concerti by Prokofiev, Ravel and Britten are ideally situated for study as each has a standard counterpart.²⁰⁴ The basic components of each concerto shall be parsed according to the methodology outlined below, and thoroughly evaluated. This methodology attempts to balance consideration of compositional and performative issues. Once the

²⁰⁴ Ravel wrote his sprightly Concerto in G more or less in parallel with work on the *Concerto pour la main gauche*. Although subject to subsequent revisions, Britten's Piano Concerto was initially conceived in 1938 a couple of years prior to completing *Diversions*; Prokofiev had completed 3 Piano Concertos in advance of his left-hand offering.

technical building blocks underpinning these works have been presented, an extensive study of each composer's previous piano-based endeavours will be carried out in comparison with their concerto for left-hand, to deduce whether the techniques incorporated were distilled from customarily integrated elements, or devised specifically for these concertos. This is to review any deviations in, or manipulations of, personal pianistic habits, and to recognise the provocation of individual original thought in comparison with previous output. Stylistic deviations or anomalies made more probable under the restricted compositional and technical devices, and lack of stylistic consistency between left-hand and habitual piano productivity, will be highlighted appropriately. Consideration of Wittgenstein's own modifications are not included in this analysis as they did not form part of the composers' original intent and were vigorously opposed by the relevant composers, Ravel and Britten.

Textural quality within a left-handed piece may be the most significant determining factor in the overall character of the work in pianistic terms. Two main textural approaches have been observed in composing works for the left-hand. The first presents an imitation of a two-handed texture, while the second explores the linear aspect presented by one hand alone on the piano.²⁰⁵ Wittgenstein's stylistic preference leaned towards the florid stratified textural options which helped to project the lush, rich, Romantic-style impression he desired. He fought the stigma of his disability and pursued physical normality through the chicanery and manipulation of texture, the

²⁰⁵ Several sources confirm these categories including; Sassmann, 'Paul Wittgenstein und die Klavier-Sololiteratur für die linke Hand allein', p. 125.

music forming an auditory prosthesis. An investigation of textural options in particular will exhibit the varying degrees of success Wittgenstein experienced in trying to create his musical prosthesis. The **Pianistic Considerations** portion of each analytical chapter will order the discussion of pianistic texture according to the following subheadings.²⁰⁶

1. Direct Linear
2. Complex Linear
3. Contrapuntal Activity
4. Traditional Dual-Handed Exchange

Enhanced awareness of the wide range of orchestral scoring, balance, voicing and instrumental colour would have been essential in order to meet with the piano's reduced capabilities. Contrast with analogous orchestral settings will aid in the recognition and classification of modified orchestral procedures and deviation from standard timbral patterns. An analysis of orchestral treatment as an accompaniment to the solo piano in its altered form shall be realised and pertinent inconsistencies in musical coherence collated. In summary, five primary objectives can be collated as follows for the central analytical chapters:

- To expose the fundamental techniques employed in the construction of the solo piano part in the left-hand concertos by Prokofiev, Ravel and Britten.

²⁰⁶ A full discussion of the parameters of these categories as they relate to the works analysed follows in **Chapter 6**.

- To deduce if these techniques (established by the first objective) constitute reinvented or manipulated versions of previously endorsed standard piano techniques, or are the result of original technical thought, through a process of comparison with previous piano-based output.
- To ascertain whether the main textural selections emulated standard two-handed piano techniques and thereby assisted Wittgenstein in his creation of a musical prosthesis.
- To recognise, and subsequently assess any discrepancies in style or quality as a result of reduced compositional choices.
- To appraise the outcome of altered orchestral timbral selections in accompanying a pianist of altered means.

Each of the three composers selected will have an entire chapter dedicated to the development and accomplishment of these five primary objectives across their completed piano repertoire. The final part of this study (**Chapter 6: Tropes, Trends and Conclusions**) will consist of a cross comparison of the left-hand works by Prokofiev, Ravel and Britten. Correlations between the piano concertos for left-hand as written by these composers shall be explicated. Consideration of supplementary issues such as the structural and technical commonalities reached independently or as a result of influence and cross-pollination of style, across all three concertos, shall be undertaken. The secondary goals approached in the final chapter are encompassed by two concluding objectives:

- To determine, through cross comparison of the concerti for left-hand by Prokofiev, Ravel and Britten, whether the challenge of writing for one-hand stimulated similar or diverging solutions.
- To collate recurring features or techniques specific to these left-hand works, pianistic, structural or orchestral, and to uncover the tropes and trends specific to these left-hand concerti that may have been driven or shaped by that mode of pianism.

METHODOLOGY

(i). Methodological Approach

The guise of objectivity and its associated positivistic outcomes which clad the musicological activities of much of the last century have (by and large) slipped away in favour of more subjective ideologies. Nicholas Cook, in his introduction to a 2012 issue of *Music Theory Online* specifically dedicated to performance studies, reflected on the interdisciplinary augmentation of the field and the metamorphosis of the traditional analyst-performer relationship over the past number of decades. This dichotomous relationship had been steered largely by the analyst; concepts of the performer's role in this network were often limited to the absorption and projection of the analyst's assertions.²⁰⁷ Adherence to analytical directives could even be viewed as a necessary avenue of validation in performance; without a guiding analysis the

²⁰⁷ Nicholas Cook, 'Introduction: Refocusing Theory', *Music Theory Online*, 18:1 (April 2012), <<http://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.12.18.1/mto.12.18.1.cook.html>> [accessed 16/07/16]

performance somehow suffered a loss of credibility. As intimated by Joel Lester 'If a given performance failed to articulate the points made in the analysis, the performance, not the analysis, would be deemed somehow inadequate'.²⁰⁸ While the 'basic topography of the relationship [...] has not been entirely erased', new musicological directions, integrative and multidisciplinary, have emerged, challenging our ingrained assumptions about the score as the primary (or sole) valid analytical repository and the legitimacy of the analytical monopolization over the creative act and insights of performance.²⁰⁹

The terminology 'performance analysis' represents a myriad of analytical approaches: according to Edward Latham by the mid-1980s this term could signify analysis executed by performers, for performers, or of performance in and of itself.²¹⁰ This methodology shall subscribe to the first of those listed above, implementing the type of analysis that would typically be of relevance to the performer in anticipation of performance, to identify meaningful structural and musical features within the fabric of the piece in order to enrich and shape their performance. However, it must be stated with some clarity that the term 'performance', is meant in a general sense; the trials, tribulations and peculiarities of preparing and playing these left-hand works in

²⁰⁸ Joel Lester 'Performance and analysis: interaction and interpretation', in *The Practice of Performance*, ed. by John Rink, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 197 – 216 (pp. 197 – 198).

²⁰⁹ Cook, 'Introduction: Refocusing Theory',
<<http://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.12.18.1/mto.12.18.1.cook.html>> [accessed 16/07/16]

²¹⁰ Edward D. Latham, 'Analysis and Performance Studies: A Summary of Current Research' in *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Musiktheorie*, 2/2-3 (2005),
<<http://www.gmth.de/zeitschrift/artikel/521.aspx>> [accessed 22/08/16]

comparison to their forebears. It is not intended to be prescriptive or advisory in any capacity, and does not delve into issues of interpretation or attempt to issue forth performative or technical edicts. Accordingly it consciously steers away from the overbearing, peremptory analyst – performer dynamic of times past. Rather it attempts to elucidate the main pianistic features of these concerti through a series of categories devised by John Rink in pursuit of the intersection between analysis and performance.²¹¹ There is no claim towards an ideal blend of particulars here, no optimal balance of perspectives, simply an awareness of the tension between these fields historically, and the solicitation of a more equitable and reciprocal exchange.²¹² In other words, and more succinctly, 'my Performer analyses and my Analyst performs'.²¹³

Often, performance analysis strategies focus on the comprehension and translation of the surface structures that might influence or inform a performer's interpretation. However, notable scholars, including Nicholas Cook and John Rink, acknowledge a wider range of categories pertinent to the performer. Nicholas Cook attests that the:

[...] insights into compositional choice and strategy, the extent to which a given choice entails others, the defining and solving of problems, the contribution of conventional schemata towards such definition - all these approaches are as

²¹¹ John Rink, 'Analysis and (or?) performance', in *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, ed. by John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 35 – 58.

²¹² To claim the realization of a consummate balance in language and perspective between the analytical and performative spheres not only displays an implicit arrogance but is also inherently flawed. As any form of musicology or performance is bound up intrinsically with empiricism, these enterprises are also highly subjective. For more on this see **(iv). Limitations**

²¹³ Janet Staffeldt, 'Response to the 2004 Special Session "Performance and Analysis: Views from Theory, Musicology, and Performance"', *Music Theory Online*, 11: 1 (March 2005)
<<http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.05.11.1/mto.05.11.1.schmalfeldt.html>> [accessed 18/07/16]

applicable to performances.²¹⁴

In this way it represents a ‘practice-informed research conducted by the music analyst’ intimated by Rink as contributing to a form of research so far insufficiently perused: ‘Performance analysis also has the potential to reveal unprecedented insights into what music is and how it is created’.²¹⁵ Given the unique demands of one-handed pianism a broader survey of compositional tools and techniques from a performance perspective will elucidate the difficulties and anomalies of one-handed pianism, and disentangle the unique technical and physical challenges of the left-handed piano repertoire from those of the standard *oeuvre*. Comparison with musical practices as previously maintained by the pertinent composers, decodes the requisite adjustments and extended techniques freshly invented and modified for one hand, thereby exposing the original claims on the capabilities of the pianist. In short, this acknowledges how the decisions taken by the composer encumber, or facilitate the pianist, through disparate musical and technical avenues. An approach of this nature, as with all methodologies, cannot be considered exhaustive, but supplements progressive discourse on performance-related analytical agendas, which is subject to further expansion by the active performer and alternative analytical methods. An encyclopaedic review of all fundamental elements, bar none, would be over-reaching within the purview of this dissertation. The focus accordingly will concentrate on

²¹⁴ Nicholas Cook, ‘Music Minus One: Rock, Theory and Performance’, in *Music, Performance, Meaning*, (London: Routledge, 2016) pp. 119 – 138 (p. 136).

²¹⁵ John Rink, ‘The (F)utility of Performance Analysis’, in *Artistic Practice as Research in Music: Theory, Criticism, Practice*, ed. by Mine Doğantan-Dack (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014) pp. 127 - 148 (p. 131, p. 145).

elucidating the components which bore significant consequence on the soloists and orchestral members, and take note furthermore of any stylistic compromise, obligatory or elective, stemming from creative or pragmatic constraints.

(ii). Strategy and Research Design

My intention is to review these concertos in the context of each composer's individual output and ascertain through comparative study of earlier works the necessity and use of new left-hand techniques or compositional mechanisms, or alternatively to establish the adaptation of previously favoured approaches. It may be possible to say that this analysis is approached both synchronically and diachronically, although of course not simultaneously. The examination of the left-hand works themselves is synchronous, the breakdown of compositional components or processes is initially treated in an isolated fashion, yet the comparison with prior and subsequent works traces a certain amount of pianistic progression diachronically.

It is imperative to observe the typical interplay between orchestra and pianist in relation to each composer's previous large-scale piano works, in order to establish baseline criterion against which the works for left-hand can be held. Although these three composers overlap chronologically, musical rhetoric was so diverse over the course of the 20th century that periodized musical style cannot be applied in this context. The disparity of styles and concepts calls for a formalist approach where a

strategy is devised to isolate and appraise each musical element.²¹⁶ Furthermore, a comparison of this type, which contains mismatched pragmatic parameters, necessitates the promotion of physical realities over empirical descriptions of the piano concertos. This rules out conventional modes of pianistic analysis in favour of a systemised dissection of fundamental solo and orchestral components of each of the relevant piano concertos. Once established, each ingredient will be evaluated separately, in relation to one another and to the work as a whole. Some of the indispensable constituent parts, as labelled by Joel Lester in his *Analytic Approaches to Twentieth Century Music*, include:

Phrasing, form, the interaction of melody and harmony, texture, orchestration, dynamics, articulation, the structuring of time (rhythm, meter, and the sense of continuity and motion).²¹⁷

This elemental dissection of works has many benefits, as described by Jim Samson:

It is when we come to examine individual exercises that analysis can most helpfully complement history. Here we move from an investigation of musical materials, where the orientation is towards genres rather than works, to a focus on form and structure, strengthening the sense of work character, of individuation, and of singular authorship.²¹⁸

In this instance, the scrutiny of fundamental components within each concerto contextualised against earlier works informs specific compositional style as well as tracing the development of a unique piano repertoire. A large portion of this

²¹⁶ Formalism here does not reference to the ideological stance of this thesis, which is grounded within the concepts of post-structuralism, but alludes to the methodical application of chosen analytical techniques.

²¹⁷ Joel Lester, *Analytic Approaches to Twentieth-Century Music* (London: W.W.Norton, 1989) p. 2.

²¹⁸ Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 55.

investigation will require score based analysis, as ‘scores are central [...] not just to music theorists, but also to performers’.²¹⁹ However, attention will be devoted regularly to the anatomical and technical requirements imposed by the notation for ‘in most cases [...] analysis will benefit from integrating the body in precise ways’.²²⁰ The selection of a performance based foundation for comparative analysis allows for the appraisal of each element in a thorough fashion, without overlooking its contribution and musical value within the piece. Contrarily, comparison of theoretical elements alone would disregard the incommensurate practical specifications and limitations placed on the composer with the reduced means of a single hand. Ultimately, in my mind, lies the notion that an investigation of pianism of any sort requires the inclusion of pianistic insight, for to seek revelation on an exclusively analytical basis negates some of the most crucial aspects of that pianism.

The charts depicting the intervallic breakdown of the primary themes in Chapters 3 and 4 form a prime example of this methodological approach as they engage with compositional and pianistic concerns. Additionally, they form one of the most original features of this type of comparative analysis. Examination of the intervals employed in the construction of primary themes in each piano concerto by Prokofiev and Ravel are integral to an analysis of melody when considering both physical and stylistic

²¹⁹ Daphne Leong, ‘Analysis and Performance, or wissen, können, kennen’, *Music Theory Online*, 22:2 (June 2016) <<http://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.16.22.2/mto.16.22.2.leong.html>> [accessed 16/08/16]

²²⁰ Peter A. Martens, ‘Ways of Knowing the Body, Bodily Ways of Knowing’, *Music Theory Online*, 22:2 (June 2016) <<http://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.16.22.2/mto.16.22.2.martens.html>> [accessed 20/08/16]

matters.²²¹ A full dissection of all intervals used in the piano part throughout an entire work would be both meaningless and misleading; the popularity of certain intervals would reveal more about the internal structure and development of a movement or work than it would about that composer's melodic approach. In order to highlight notable modifications to melodic construction attributable to the shift from two hands at the piano to left-hand only, it's more useful to isolate and analyse each primary theme in terms of intervallic construction.

Physical boundaries introduced by using left-hand alone may preclude typical intervallic choices. Depending on the tempo and textural setting of a given melody, the number of large leaps, or distances covered overall by the left-hand may require careful management, judicious distribution or general reduction. These sorts of physical and pragmatic concerns are not limited to left-hand piano of course, but they do become more conspicuous bearing in mind the additional practical concerns associated with left-hand pianism. Conservation of physical stamina, technical viability and ease of expression must be weighed particularly carefully when performing a substantial work with just one-hand. Moreover, as the fundamental source material for the overall construction of a work, individual melodies often bear certain stylistic and technical hallmarks. From a melodic perspective these hallmarks emerge in part from a distinct selection or arrangement of intervals, as these choices

²²¹ The overall structure of Britten's *Diversions* and the interconnectivity of the variations that form this work preclude a similar intervallic assessment of this work. This will be addressed further in Chapter 5.

may be influenced by the shift to left-hand, the prevalence of interval based stylistic signifiers may fade.

The interval charts collate percentages of each interval type across each concerto to form a general picture of interval use, highlight established trends or procedures unique to specific works. Charts relating to each composer's standard piano concerto or concerti identify preferred intervallic practices in the construction of a melody. Comparison with the equivalent charts of interval use in the left-hand works of Ravel and Prokofiev pinpoint disruption or exclusion of these established practices or hallmarks, potentially due to the challenge of accommodating the left-hand. Certain conventional intervallic practices are expected; frequent use of semitone, the major 2nd, and the major and minor 3rd would be unsurprising as these intervals form the basis of traditional western harmony, diatonic scales and modes. The results of this study of intervallic practices reveals some interesting features.

While frequent use of the major and minor 3rd is generally unremarkable, the increase in the employment of these intervals in the construction of primary themes in Prokofiev's Concerto No. 4 is notable in comparison to earlier works (see **Figures 3.18 – 3.21**). This suggests that Prokofiev's habitual approach to melodic construction (as demonstrated by his first 3 concerti) required modification in order to cater to the left-hand alone. Additionally, certain intervallic cells and sequences are subjected to varying degrees of manipulation, the variants of these cells are arranged systematically to adhere to fixed patterns. Furthermore, this type of compositional procedure does not

have precedent among his concerti reinforcing the notion these changes have been motivated in part by the shift to left-hand alone. As the interval charts in Chapter 4 demonstrate, Ravel's compositional approach was not acutely affected by the demands of writing for a single-hand when compared to Concerto in G (see **Figures 4.12 – 4.13**). However this close inspection of interval use does draw attention to the distribution of intervals, in Ravel's case larger leaps within the melodic line are often cushioned on either side by stepwise movement. This illustrates deliberate management of the main melodies in the *Concerto pour la main gauche* that does not find equivalence in the Concerto in G.

(iii). Analytical Methods and Categories

The eight-point analytical groupings below broadly follow the strategy for performance analysis as defined by John Rink in his article 'Analysis and (or?) Performance' in *Musical Performance, A Guide to Understanding*, with some proposed additional categories.²²² These categories will be studied from a notational and textual perspective in addition to their pragmatic results: the extent to which gestural and embodied response is taxed and shaped by these compositional decisions. Numbers one to five, and additionally point eight, involve the analysis of the complete score, solo and orchestral parts, to be carried out across the piano concertos for left-hand by Prokofiev, Ravel and Britten and their respective preceding large-scale works

²²² John Rink, 'Analysis and (or?) Performance', *Musical Performance, A Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 35 – 58.

for piano and orchestra. Points six and seven require examination of the piano part only.

1. Identification of formal divisions and basic tonal plan: determination of the music's principal sections and subsections, innovative structure was conceivably utilized to combat tedium in the solo piano part as the reduced means of the player diminish the opportunities for textural variance.

2. Analysis of melodic shape and constituent motifs/ideas: Main melodic register, pitch span, interval use, phrase structure, interaction of melody and accompaniment.

3. Temporal considerations: Choice of meter, use of rhythm, sense of continuity and motion shall be scrutinized.

4. Tempo: Portrayal of the explicit tempi subdivisions proportional to each work will be illustrated with the use of graphs where appropriate, displaying these conclusions pictorially through the use of graphs and diagrams allows for a more impactful and accessible juxtaposition of concertos regardless of duration or size.

5. Orchestration and dynamics: An investigation of textural and timbral selections will attempt to highlight departure from individual standard orchestration patterns, expose expressive ramifications, inspect orchestral interaction with the solo piano and evaluate the overall consequences on the balance of the ensemble.

A full understanding and assimilation of these works at a performance level extends beyond musically contingent factors into the corporeal, tangible dexterity and stamina demanded of the pianist. Physiological imperatives must be parsed accordingly, alongside the technical manoeuvres and compositional processes required to elicit certain aural impressions. To consider this fully, some further elements must be included in the analysis such as:

6. Pianistic solutions: Chord formation, role of the thumb, hand span, rotation of the wrist and arm, articulation, pitch and positioning, principal range, common intervals and leaps, and finally pedalling techniques.

7. Compositional solutions: Where appropriate, sections of the music may be renotated, rewriting sections left-hand music as separate melody and accompaniment, or vice-versa. This may uncover some of the hidden manipulation of definitive piano technique and provide evidence of a truly innovative pianistic or stylistic device. Also, this may ultimately clarify whether the composer opted for the mirage of a two-handed texture or adhered to the exposure of a predominantly linear strategy.

However, these self-constructed boundaries are in danger of overlooking some of the vital meaning and metaphor lurking within these works. These interpretative suggestions shall be dealt with separately from the musical and technical analysis in an appropriate fashion.

8. The musical concerns, emotional and symbolic content shall be observed

across the work as a whole.

These complete data sets will provide a solid base for equitable comparison between the corresponding works for one or two hands, and in the final chapter will facilitate the identification of common structural, technical or musical elements used by the composers in question reached independently of each or as a result of the influence, contact and dissemination of each other's work.

(iv). Originality and Limitations

Each of the three composers discussed in detail in this thesis have been afforded varying amounts of academic attention toward their respective piano works for left-hand and orchestra. Prokofiev's Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand has been particularly neglected. However, some significant and recent scholarly work contributing to our understanding of the left-hand genre, established some foundations from which this thesis could grow. Albert Sassmann's catalogue of left-hand works, *In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister*": *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, also contains a comprehensive introduction to the history of left-hand piano. Clare Hammond scrutinized Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* and Britten's *Diversions* according to a select set of techniques employed by Godowsky in his *Paraphrases on Chopin's Etudes* to highlight specific pianistic procedures and techniques. Wendy Wong's thesis, *Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain*, filled a significant gap in Wittgenstein's performing and commissioning activities, and undertook a comprehensive review of the revisions applied to *Diversions*, but did not

enter into any analysis of the material. Max Midroit performed an in-depth analysis in *Elements of Symmetry and Stratification in Benjamin Britten's Diversions, Op.21* but did not have the necessary scope to address the questions associated with the left-handedness of the work. However, none of these sources listed have attempted to codify these works contextually within each composer's own output, nor have they been subject to the specific ideological approach, pianist criteria and performance based methodology outlined in **Chapter 1**. A new methodological approach would elicit new perspectives and conclusions in any event, but this process of internal comparison to a composer's piano repertoire, and cross-comparison of largescale works for the left-hand and orchestra, works towards a larger task: general categorization of the techniques and tools of use in the left-hand piano genre.

As such, this is the first study of left-hand works to examine those contributions both within each composer's catalogue and across the left-hand genre. This elicits a unique perspective on the pianistic approach of each composer and the position of their left-hand work chronologically within their output, and suggests stylistic traits, technical features, language and movements that pervade left-hand music, and potentially contribute to a successful left-hand work. The methodology, geared towards understanding the performative demands on the pianist, illuminate aspects of these works overlooked by other methodological approaches. This comparative process highlighted the fundamental tools and organizational techniques effective within these works for left-hand, and emphasized the restructuring and rebalancing of elements required in adjusting to a single hand at the piano. This research contributes to

knowledge of left-hand music, as well as the body of knowledge on each individual composer, their working methods, techniques and preferences. Additionally, with specific reference to Paul Wittgenstein, surveys of his legacy and musical contributions have been pursued largely from either a musicological and disabilities studies viewpoint previously. Blake Howe's article 'Paul Wittgenstein and the Performance of Disability' is to date the only other detailed study that examines some of the common Disability Studies tropes within Wittgenstein's career, engaging perspectives from both disciplines, prospering from the complementary relationship between the two disciplines. My application of Disability Studies theory to our comprehension, past and present, of the implications of disability in performance attempts to expand upon Howe's observations and broaden understanding of left-hand piano performance as artistic production.

However, as with all research and analysis projects, this thesis bears certain limitations. It would be remiss to assume that the data, patterns and themes that arise from the analysis conducted in the following chapters reveal new truths about these composers, their aesthetic and their pianism in a conclusive, positivistic sense. Certainly, contributions emerge within this thesis to Wittgenstein scholarship, and on a broader scale to the spheres of Disability Studies, performance and analysis studies, and piano technique, as well as to the fields of study on individual composers. However, delicacy is imperative, these outcomes must not be overstated, not least because they are cultivated from an interpretive stance. Subjectivity borders all aspects of this project. Some categories of examination superficially bear the rigour and formalism

of objectivity. Take for example the intervallic patterns extracted from the primary themes of all relevant concerti: while the process of calculating these intervals is guided purely by established music theory guidelines, the selection of the melodies in and of themselves is without question an interpretive act. In a setting where a given melody morphs and shifts with each subsequent rendition, the idea of uncovering or classifying the baseline theme from which all further developments emanate becomes even more notional, and acutely personalises the act of melodic selection that will be subject to mathematical practices. Intervallic calculation as an objective act is therefore rendered invalid. On a broader level, Beard and Gloag argue that the selection of a theoretical framework or ‘structural model for any musical work is an act of interpretation, and as such it is always loaded with its own issues of subjectivity and ideology’.²²³ This assertion supports my conviction above, that all elements of this analysis are rooted in subjectivity and interpretation. This interpretational empiricism is also evident in the approach to external factors such as aesthetic considerations and audience perception. Far from devaluing these contributions, or undermining the validity of the research however, this perspective aligns with post-structuralist conceptual frameworks and contributes to the richness and diversity of the contemporary musicological tapestry.

Additionally, it must be noted that the academic field on each composer is so vast that it is nigh impossible to consider every scholarly contribution on all aspects of each

²²³ David Beard and Kenneth Gloag, *Musicology: The Key Concepts*, (London: Routledge, 2005) p. 170.

composer's composition within a reasonably proportioned thesis. All sources concerning the left-hand piano works directly, and all relevant materials concerning Wittgenstein were certainly consulted. There are also a number of variables to be considered when delineating conclusions from the performed analysis, or defining the causality of any technique in evidence owing to difficulties in defining certain components precisely. For example, when scrutinizing phrase length, one cannot exclude all external factors, bar the stimulus of writing for left-hand, as the catalyst for compositional innovation. The categories under examination throughout the thesis are necessarily broad, as to juxtapose such stylistically diverse compositional output requires these generic theoretical divisions across which to compare. Additionally, as discussed earlier, interpretation of analytical data and observations is necessarily subjective. Far from devaluing these contributions, or undermining the validity of the research however, this perspective aligns with post-structuralist conceptual frameworks upon which this thesis is built. In terms of extracting definite conclusions from the analysis performed, the difficulties listed in the above paragraph impinge on the scope and definition of certain features or trends decisively. However, these impediments do not inhibit to any significant degree the overarching goal of this thesis: to expand the knowledge base of the left-hand pianism in terms of technique, compositional approach, and performance.

CHAPTER 2: VIRTUOSITY AND BODILY ASYMMETRY

Aspects of Pianistic Virtuosity in the 20th Century

In the first half of the 20th century a burgeoning tendency towards orchestral virtuosity was evident in the works of many composers, for instance Bartok and Stravinsky. For the concerto genre, this prompted an expansion of the typical orchestral accompaniment role beyond harmonic and timbral support, and ushered the symphonic ensemble into the arena of thematic development and soloistic discourse. This signified a metamorphosis in the hierarchical construction of composite aural structure with the instrumental soloist occupying a role of integrated dialogue and decreased prominence. The balance and interaction between soloist and orchestra morphed into a collaborative industry, servicing, and culminating in, the chrysalis of a musical ideology. Compositional intent displaced the interpretational precedence of the 19th century; a new generation of refined and textually conscientious pianists gradually abandoned the last vestiges of ‘the grand manner’ of Romantic pianism with its impetuous expressivity.

In an interview in 1946 Wittgenstein clarified his approach to a single-handed technique:

The requirements of a one-armed professional pianist are more easily named than acquired. If he comes into this category at all, it is to be supposed that he has already mastered a finished virtuosi [sic] technique, that is to say, from the purely technical or pianistic point of view, he must thoroughly have mastered the études of Czerny and Clementi, as well as those of Chopin. He must have at his disposal the classical as well as romantic techniques [...] His present task,

then is to adapt the technique he already possesses to one-armed use.²²⁴ Wittgenstein's Romantic predilections, stood in contradiction with the redirected performance and compositional practices of the 20th century, representing concurrently a pianistic tradition in decline, and the consummation of an epochal display, as his pedagogic heritage can be traced through Leschetizky and Czerny directly back to Beethoven.²²⁵ We cannot subjugate this brand of performance-centred practice to mere acrobatics however, as most archetypal performers of this era savoured and accentuated the poetic thematicism and sublime emotional gradation equally with the technical brilliance present in a work. Wittgenstein's devotion to the works of Bach and Beethoven demonstrate his assimilation of these artistic principles, alongside his penchant for technical brilliance. Jim Samson describes the credo of the virtuoso, as imbibed by Wittgenstein: 'The romantic virtuoso was above all an individual [...] In his search for innovation, he will respect no convention, balk at no challenge, stop at no frontier'.²²⁶ Samson also expounds the convention of interpretational freedom as asserted by the virtuoso, an authority frequently wielded by Wittgenstein much to the discontent of his collaborators, and most famously in the case of the Ravel concerto. This perceptual divergence over strict adherence to the text exhibits clearly the clash between two historically conflicting ideals, and the difficulty experienced by both composer and performer, in inculcating the acceptable limitations

²²⁴ Quoted in: Flindell, 'More on Franz Schmidt and Paul Wittgenstein and their triumph with the E-flat Concerto', p. 136.

²²⁵ See **Patron: The Problem of Repertoire**, pp. 59 – 60, for further discussion of Wittgenstein's musical preferences.

²²⁶ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, p. 76.

on either party.

Georg Predota, in his paper ‘Badgering the Creative Genius: Paul Wittgenstein and the Prerogative of Musical Patronage’ identifies this inherited tradition of virtuosity as contributing to the perceived authority Wittgenstein exerted over his repertoire. That Wittgenstein’s original ambition in pursuing a musical profession was to echo the trajectory of his virtuosic idols is apparent from the hundreds of carefully marked scores (in several different hands, presumably some belonging to his teachers) acquired by the Octavian Society in Hong Kong. Czerny, Thalberg, Godowsky and Schütt are among those works with transparently ostentatious inclinations, and the extensive annotations throughout are indicative of thorough preparation. Launching his career as a one-handed pianist he tailored hundreds of similar pieces to his requirements with such allegiance that, as noted by Predota, the exactitude of his transcription occasionally overrules ‘any consideration for the musical content of a composition’.²²⁷ They also exhibit the resolve with which he fought to obtain the status of technical renown and admiration that he had targeted prior to the war, despite his newly altered circumstances. In fact, he took it upon himself to increase the difficulty of the original pieces in several instances as his transcriptions of selected Chopin *Etudes* confirms; the accompaniment patterns were expanded texturally and harmonically, flourishes and acrobatics added, sometimes to the detriment of the

²²⁷ Predota, ‘Badgering the Creative Genius: Paul Wittgenstein and the Prerogative of Musical Patronage’, p. 73 - 76.

melody, which is emblematic of his aforementioned disregard for musical fidelity.²²⁸

An examination of his transcription of the *Brahms-Bach Chaconne* reveals a similar preference for harmonic, registral and textural augmentation. Wittgenstein regularly doubles the bass note an octave below (or in some cases two octaves below) to add depth and registral variation, relying on this technique particularly at cadential junctures. The impracticality of such intervals prevents simultaneous execution and necessitates the division of certain chords, these ornamental garnishes disrupting the textural solemnity of the original.

Figure 2.1. Brahms' transcription of the Bach 'Chaconne' from *Partita No. 2* Bars 1 – 9 as arranged by Paul Wittgenstein

From bar 41 – 49, Wittgenstein takes the entire phrase in octaves, rather than

²²⁸ Predota, 'Badgering the Creative Genius: Paul Wittgenstein and the Prerogative of Musical Patronage', pp.76 – 78.

maintaining the simple monophonic texture of the violin part as preserved by Brahms. Enhanced embellishment, expansion of range, redistribution of balance: these ingredients remained consistent in his arrangements and vital to his construct of a virtuosic repertoire. Clare Hammond, who in her thesis conducted a survey of his markings on the extant piano reductions of Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* and Britten's *Diversions*, concludes that his modifications 'In most cases results in a heightened virtuosity, which often significantly impacts and alters the melodic or harmonic trajectory of the original'.²²⁹

While the rationale and success of Wittgenstein's textual alterations fall outside the purview of this thesis, they expose the characteristics and stylistic patterns with which he was at ease. Additionally, this treatment of musical material displays a consolidation of technique which unites towards another primary concern: impact of presentation. Samson elucidates how visuality was a significant tool in the dramaturgy of virtuoso performance: 'It was charismatic, a spectacle to be observed and wondered at. Much of its power lay in its presentation, its appearance, the immediacy of its impact'.²³⁰ In this regard Wittgenstein had the capacity to bewilder audiences more than most; the sight of a single hand skimming across the keyboard, eliciting the power and flamboyance typically achieved by two, was at odds with the powerful image of his empty right sleeve, and made an indelible impression on audiences.²³¹

²²⁹ Hammond, 'To Conceal or Reveal', p. 122.

²³⁰ Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*, p. 55.

²³¹ This topic will be considered in more detail later in this chapter: **The Aesthetic and Critique of Disability.**

Sassmann has gauged that Wittgenstein's appearances in relation to piano concerti amount to about two-thirds of his recorded public performances. Of the remainder, a quarter can be attributed to chamber music recitals and only about 5% were solo concerts. He capitalized on the aesthetic and theatrical benefits offered by the symphonic ensemble offering further evidence of the personal import of showmanship.²³² However, audiences and critics have never sustained an irrefutably positive relationship with virtuosity, intermittently renouncing bravura style performance on the basis of cosmetic chicanery and superficiality. Piano music for left-hand during the 19th century was intelligibly placed in this category owing to the immense technical skill required and the lack of compositional development of the genre to this point: 'Such pieces have always savoured more or less of charlatanism, because they have been written with the sole aim of dazzling through a display of finger dexterity'.²³³ The celebrity of the virtuoso declined in the early 20th century as a preference for 'serious art' flourished, in a cyclical pattern evident since the 14th century. Wittgenstein's antiquated stylistic and performance practices could account for some of the more disdainful critical remarks of his later years. Paradoxically though, amid former social and cultural ideals, this identical brand of virtuosity contributed largely to the success of his early career. Wittgenstein drew gravitas to an otherwise lightweight category, securing credence in the face of scepticism by

²³² Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, p. 96. Further research is required to support Sassmann's estimation as a full account of Wittgenstein's performances has yet to be completed.

²³³ Charles Kunkel quoted in: Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, pp. 79 – 80.

commissioning the most esteemed composers of the early twentieth century, softening the distrust and suspicion of his undertaking with the comforting hallmark of conventional embellishment.

Attitudes to Disability

Disability Studies challenges the notion of what Michael Davidson refers to as the ‘universal theory of justice’ as an ideal that is practical and viable in the face of differently abled bodies.²³⁴ Social and cultural interaction is predicated on the assumption that all parties present themselves as equal, however to admit to being disabled is to acknowledge difference, with distinct requirements ancillary to the typical individual. The varying vantage points and imperatives presented by those with physical or mental restrictions, or the elitist pragmatic access to varied cultural amenities exposed by those with economic struggles, debunks the ideal of a level playing field. The archetypal construct of our social interactions have been tailored to average competencies, and although they champion inclusion, it’s atypical to find persons with disabilities and certain disadvantages within quintessential community collectives. Conventional social perceptions can ultimately define our enjoyment and understanding of various cultural forms, when confronted with nonconforming or extraordinary examples of artistic activity our response to these cultural forms is naturally altered, and ultimately colour the meaning extracted from the artistic action or display.

²³⁴ Michael Davidson, *Concerto for the Left Hand: Disability and the Defamiliar Body* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), p. xv.

For the artist, with whatever bodily, sensory or cognitive impairment they possess, personal experience of their individual aesthetic and creative productions is entirely individual. For instance, in Beethoven's twilight years, his deteriorating hearing would have spawned a compositional experience and an embodied musical relationship quite distinct from his youth and his audiences, as the creative process of his mature content encompassed a mixture of perceived and imagined sounds.²³⁵ Disability in the arts is a largely underdeveloped component of musicology, past and present. According to Anne Piotrowska, the first published volume linking musicians with certain medical conditions didn't appear until the 1980s (A. Neumayr, *Musik und Medizin*, (Wien: J & V Edition, 1988).²³⁶ However this area of study is rapidly gaining traction as it allows music to be parsed and examined in new ways, uncovering narratives in performance, reception and composition previously unconsidered. The experience of music, either as a performer or listener, is unequivocally shaped by disability and other nonnormative factors, physical or cognitive. These influences and their subsequent implications demand adequate attention as they contribute to our social, personal and cultural understanding of the performance and creation of music. Viewed through the

²³⁵ The theory of embodiment in music is debated more fully in Joseph N. Straus, 'Normalizing the Abnormal: Disability in Music and Music Theory', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 59 (2006), pp. 121 – 126. According to experientialism, we use our direct, concrete, physical knowledge of our own bodies as a basis for understanding the world around us; our knowledge of the world is thus embodied. The mind and body are not separate; rather the body is in the mind.

²³⁶ Anne G. Piotrowska, 'Disabled Musicians and Musicology', in *Imperfect Historian: Disability Histories in Europe*, ed. by Sebastian Barsch, Anne Klein and Pieter Verstraete (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition, 2013), pp. 235 – 244 (p. 243).

artistic lens, disability becomes ‘not so much a property of bodies as a product of cultural rules about what bodies should be or do’.²³⁷

Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus in the seminal volume *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, outline four persistent tropes traceable within music history in relation to disability.²³⁸ The defined narratives of ‘overcoming, cure, normalization, or expulsion’ are not only applicable to Wittgenstein’s own path but can be viewed as a generative force within his career, shaping his decisions, image and output. Likewise, these thematic threads were discernible in his public and critical reception, an additional influential factor. This hypothesis, in parallel with the unique structures that governed Wittgenstein’s life, demands consideration to elicit a full understanding of the motivations and complications that faced him during his lifetime. It also creates an understanding of the view history has taken of him, and presents a more rounded version of this pianist for consideration. Given the connotational fluctuations of disability through time, it is imperative to contemplate his concert career in a historically contingent context.

Understanding of aesthetic and somatic normalcy as established by societal structures dates back to the early 19th century; formerly, physical or mental restriction was seen as a sign from the heavens, a stamp of celestial displeasure.²³⁹ This comprehension of

²³⁷ Rosemarie Garland Thomson, ‘Disability, Identity and Representation: An Introduction’, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) pp. 5 – 18 (p. 6).

²³⁸ Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus, ‘Introduction: Theorizing Disability in Music’, in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, ed. by Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 1 – 12 (p. 5).

²³⁹ Straus, ‘Normalizing the Abnormal: Disability in Music and Music Theory’, pp. 118 – 119.

disability as an unequivocal, unchangeable and unnatural state gradually shifted to an awareness of abnormality versus normality in the early 1800s. The concepts of impermanence, regeneration and reversibility came to be associated with physical impairment, and can be understood as an attempt to homogenize or normalize corporeal disparities. Subsequent to WW1, the predicament facing the infirm was given prominence with the large numbers of incapacitated soldiers returning from the front. For the first time, concerted efforts were made to aid the readjustment and re-assimilation of wounded veterans into society. Magazines and textbooks were published to guide and inspire, from outlining suitable occupations such as beekeeping, to performing everyday tasks such as writing with the left-hand or shaving. The appalling repercussions of the war gave credence to an area of piano repertoire previously eyed sceptically: previously, showpieces conceived for left-hand were cited disparagingly as the shallow occupation of the dilettante. The plight of the disabled musician did not go unnoticed, as noted by Albert Sassmann, and several volumes of piano pieces for one-hand were published over the course of the war including *Klavier-Album für eine Hand*, edited by Clemens Schultze-Biesantz, a volume of Grieg's *Lyric Pieces* arranged for one-hand by Fritz Teichman, and Caesar Hochstetter's piano album adapted for one-hand and 'dedicated to the wounded'.²⁴⁰ This reaction was not confined to Europe as the Boston Music Company also published a volume for left-hand alone in 1917 containing pieces by Hollaender, Scriabin and Donizetti.²⁴¹ Anne

²⁴⁰ Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, pp. 94 – 95.

²⁴¹ The Boston Music Company *Digest of Piano Pieces: for the Left Hand Alone* (Boston: The Boston Music Co., 1917).

Piotrowska stresses that Paul Wittgenstein's high profile feasibly implemented substantial amelioration in normalizing the approach to disabled musicians and drawing the subject into general discourse.²⁴²

It is reasonable also, to assume an inspirational link between Wittgenstein's prominent musical activities and several other pianists who endeavoured to realise their pianistic aspirations following grievous right arm wounds sustained in the war. Veterans Rudolf Horn and Karl Wiener both undertook left-hand performances, but most significant among Wittgenstein's contemporaries was Otakar Hollmann. Hollmann was a personal acquaintance of predecessor Count Géza Zichy and it is noted that he attended at least one concert given by Wittgenstein in 1917, which bolstered his confidence. The two maintained a cordial correspondence and Wittgenstein advised him on the core piano literature for left-hand listing the works by Bach-Brahms, Chopin-Godowsky, Alexis Hollaender, Carl Reinecke, Theodor Leschetizky, Alexander Scriabin, Felix Petyrek and Emile-Robert Blanchet to be the most worthwhile.²⁴³ Hollmann followed Wittgenstein's example too in commissioning works specifically for his requirements and the resulting literature includes works by Tomášek, Martinu and Janáček.²⁴⁴

²⁴² Piotrowska, 'Disabled Musicians and Musicology', p. 244.

²⁴³ Sassmann, 'Paul Wittgenstein und die Klavier-Sololiteratur für die linke Hand allein', p. 103; Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein*, p. 97.

²⁴⁴ For further information regarding Janáček's works for Otakar Hollmann see: John Tyrell, *Janáček: Years of a Life, Volume Two (1924 – 28): Tsar of the Forests* (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), p. 147, p. 341, pp. 383 – 384.

Public and Private Reception

Public stigmatisation of disability continued into the 20th century, limiting afflicted individuals to the fringes of society. Those of less discernible imperfections, for instance reduced sight or hearing could perhaps attempt to conceal their disability thus reducing the probability of public scorn. Espousal of a Romantic ideology offered a further alternative, ephemeral transcendence of seemingly insuperable constraints through artistic production. Wittgenstein's belief in the Romantic doctrine offered opportunity for public and private transformation. Aligned with contemporary views, Wittgenstein was very sensitive to his disability, feeling emasculated or tainted by his amputation. His long-held association between social value and artistic merit presented an avenue of restitution, an opportunity to reclaim honour and respect from his peers, and confirm personally his usefulness and validity. Wittgenstein's repertoire selection, as well as his personal arrangements and transcriptions reveal discomfort with his corporeal disfigurement similar to that held by the public. Attempts were made at every juncture to masquerade as a two-handed pianist, choosing aurally deceptive textures, and thereby 'overcoming' musically, his physical flaws.²⁴⁵ Stratified textures and rapid registral leaps 'pass' for a two-handed texture, the music becoming a kind of invisible prostheses to camouflage his bodily limitation. Present in the family documentation is a reluctance to embrace Wittgenstein's performing activities, as demonstrated by Hermine in a letter to brother Ludwig very early in his

²⁴⁵ The term 'masquerade' here is used in the conventional sense as opposed to the notion of 'disability as masquerade' promulgated by Tobin Siebers which seeks to expose and claim disability.

career:

You were quite correct to suppose that he had already formed an opinion about his misfortune, and even though I fear that his sole aim is still to become a virtuoso I am nevertheless happy for him that he doesn't have to look for a completely new field of activity.²⁴⁶

Waugh considers this a protective statement; Hermine wished to protect Paul from further hurt and failure. A reading of this nature suggests that Hermine expects an amount of resistance from the public, further indication of societal discomfort with physical abnormalities. It could also be postulated that this quote reveals Hermine's own dismay at Paul's concertizing, and predicts embarrassment for her and the family. Waugh recounts an anecdote which reveals Paul's awareness at his familial opposition. His brother Ludwig, on a visit home to Vienna, was reading peacefully when, entirely unprovoked, Paul rushed in from the neighbouring room where he had been practicing and shouted: 'I cannot play when you are in the house as I feel your scepticism seeping towards me from under the door'.²⁴⁷ Consternation at the prospect of social demotion and rejection fuelled an amount of the negative commentary found in the family documentation. The stigma towards disability still prevalent in the early 20th century further expounds our understanding of this often pessimistic attitude. Later family correspondence continues to disparage his musical activities. In the 1940s his sister Margaret secretly attended one of his concerts in New York and wrote harshly of his performance to Ludwig:

His playing has become much worse. I suppose that is to be expected, because

²⁴⁶ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 90.

²⁴⁷ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, pp. 57 – 58.

he insists on trying to do, what really cannot be done. It is *eine Vergewaltigung* (a kind of rape/violation).²⁴⁸

This pejorative strike by his sister unveils several imperative considerations; primarily that he was at one time a far more capable pianist, corroborating the evidence provided in some early reviews, redeeming his respectability as an artist and endorsing his years of extraordinary success. Secondly, underpinning this excerpt is the assumption that his failure was inevitable. Her final exclamation corroborates Neil Lerner's estimation that amputation poses 'not only a threat to the normal body' but also a 'horrific threat to the symbolic body of classical music and its implicit messages of perfect form and perfect execution'.²⁴⁹ Reviewers recognised and praised his illusory ability to project this two-handed impression, reinforcing Wittgenstein's belief in metamorphosis and fulfilment through musical virtuosity. Here are some examples of the reviews that commented on the 'able-bodied' sound Wittgenstein could convey. 'Bold chords that began the piano solo section sounded two-handed in their power and bravura'.²⁵⁰ '[...] such wealth of sound that one was by no means conscious -more particularly in view of Wittgenstein's playing- of the problem of technique or indeed of any problem'²⁵¹.

Blake Howe in his article 'Paul Wittgenstein and the Performance of Disability'

²⁴⁸ McGuinness, 'The Brothers Wittgenstein', p. 57.

²⁴⁹ Lerner, 'The Horrors of One-Handed Pianism: Music and Disability in "The Beast with Five Fingers"', in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, ed. by Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 75 – 90 (p. 86).

²⁵⁰ Moses Smith, 'Mozart, Ravel, Moussorgsky and a Pianist: American Premiere of the Concerto Written for Paul Wittgenstein', *Boston Evening Transcript*, 10th November 1934.

²⁵¹ Press review of the Schmidt E-Flat Concerto in *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* from 1935, quoted in: Flindell, 'More on Franz Schmidt and Paul Wittgenstein and their triumph with the E-Flat Concerto', p. 154.

explores the extent to which the historical negative connotations of disability influenced his presentation of his public image and personal acceptance of his situation.²⁵² The narrative of ‘overcoming’, of presiding victory over his physical limitations, spans throughout his career in various guises, present in the verbose discourse of critical reception and his emblematic bravura style preferences. As the headlines demonstrate he was effectively defined by the loss of his right arm; ‘One-Armed Pianist Undaunted by Lot’, ‘Wittgenstein a One-Armed Piano Marvel’, ‘One-Armed Pianist Features Symphony’.²⁵³

Articles, interviews, reviews and even his own press releases are filled with rhetoric that praises his will to conquer, while simultaneously classifying him as abnormal, perpetuating the idea that a body altered or different must strive for ‘normalcy’, to cover up or compensate for his deformity. Literature repeatedly insists on declaring his triumph over adversity, of successfully giving the illusion of becoming whole. This insistence in the declaration of his somatic asymmetry signifies a mutual fascination and discomfort with his actions. After all, in words of Neil Lerner:

To claim the title pianist, one must have two-functioning hands. With only one functioning hand, someone who wishes to play the piano becomes not a pianist but a one-handed pianist.²⁵⁴

At a time when freak shows were still in operation and disability still heavily

²⁵² Blake Howe, ‘Paul Wittgenstein and the Performance of Disability’, in *The Journal of Musicology*, 27:2 (Spring 2010), pp. 135 – 180 (p. 136).

²⁵³ ‘One-Armed Pianist Undaunted by Lot’, *New York Times*, 4th November 1934; ‘Wittgenstein a One-Armed Piano Marvel’ *New York Daily News*, 19th November 1934; ‘One-Armed Pianist Features Symphony’, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 20th February 1944; Howe, Paul Wittgenstein and the Performance of Disability’, p. 136.

²⁵⁴ Lerner, ‘The Horrors of One-Handed Pianism: Music and Disability’, p. 75.

stigmatised Wittgenstein was always in jeopardy of being marginalised in this way. Many reviewers found it necessary to defend his legitimacy and validity as an artist, despite their emphatic need to classify him only in terms of his preternatural condition and abilities:

[Wittgenstein] has been praised all over Europe, not merely as a freak, but as a musician and virtuoso whose performances are legitimate and artistically fruitful.²⁵⁵

Statements such as these, are, in Howe's words 'both revealing and damning' as the reviewer elicits a view which openly refers to Wittgenstein as abnormal. (The San Francisco chronicle announced that there was 'nothing freakish and nothing pathetic about [Wittgenstein's] piano playing'). There is comfort in their usage of such irreverent and insulting language implying unstated general acceptance of this terminology plus an unconscious connection between Wittgenstein as a disabled performer and the abnormal specimens of the freak show.²⁵⁶ In all likelihood, Wittgenstein's adoption of pianistic texture and techniques to construct his musical prosthesis made his endeavours more palatable not only to the public, but also to himself. If he had chosen to exploit his unique stature rather than drive towards the aspirations of a conventional two-handed pianist, chances are he would not have achieved the same level of notoriety, critical success or general acceptance.

Despite attempts by the media to 'normalize' Wittgenstein and his endeavours, other cultural and media outlets have unconsciously continued the process of 'enfreakment'

²⁵⁵ Howe, 'Paul Wittgenstein and the Performance of Disability', p. 142

²⁵⁶ Howe, 'Paul Wittgenstein and the Performance of Disability', pp. 140 – 142.

to capitalise on the communal revulsion and stigma attached to amputation. Take for instance the horror movie genre: reworkings of the story of the disembodied hand such as *The Addams family*, *Evil Dead 2*, and *The Beast with Five Fingers* expose a perceptual commonality towards physical impairment and serve to strengthen the concepts of normalcy versus freakery. In fact, *The Beast with Five Fingers*, made in 1946, can be understood as a partial reflection of attitudes faced by Paul Wittgenstein throughout his life as evidence uncovered by Neil Lerner highlights Wittgenstein as a source of inspiration for the film's main protagonist. Research logs examined by Lerner show the Ravel *Concerto pour la main gauche* and its pianist as a topic of interest, and a possible title for the film, until that was thwarted by legal foibles. In modifying the short story for screen, the profession of the protagonist was nevertheless changed from naturalist to pianist despite the enforced exclusion of the Ravel concerto.²⁵⁷

It could be argued that Wittgenstein's contribution to normalization of disability in society was imparted rather unwittingly. With regards to his bodily difference, his concerns were frequently directed towards the neutralization of his disability; he wished to bypass societal impediments to his art rather than challenge them. However, his very appearance on stage destabilized the cultural and musical barriers around him. This spawned an unusual tension between his personal views and societies fascination with his disability. Ironically, it was through his desire to conform to the mould of

²⁵⁷ Lerner, 'The Horrors of One-Handed Pianism: Music and Disability', pp. 77 – 78.

preceding virtuosi and his determination to uphold the ideology of artistic production imbibed in his youth, that gradually loosened the metaphorical stays that bound disabled bodies, physiologically and culturally.

The Aesthetic and Critique of Disability

Retrospectively, Wittgenstein's career is replete with perplexing tensions and contrasts. His figure was redolent of extraordinary violence, whether the lower half of his right sleeve was pinned up to the shoulder, or left loose and noticeably hollow, his image was representative of human suffering. Even if Wittgenstein's appearance had not carried the same emotional weight for contemporary audiences, his physical difference alone would have attracted intense inspection. There is ample commentary within disabilities studies on the trope of staring and the particular nature of this observation within the lived reality of disability, the everyday 'performance' of disability. When unique or unorthodox bodies are placed on stage, an unspoken permission has been granted to audience members to satisfy their curiosity about these figures:

In a situation like this, audiences come to hear a performer not despite the performer's disability but precisely because of it; they seek the pleasures of staring.²⁵⁸

As Wittgenstein represented a particularly potent mixture of socio-cultural factors (his emotional symbolism, the residual fascination with freak shows, his transcendent 'overcoming'), the responses elicited were imbued with a corresponding intensity.

²⁵⁸ Joseph Straus, *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 129.

Rosemarie Garland Thomson has undertaken classification of the ‘primary visual rhetorics of disability: the wondrous, the sentimental, the exotic, and the realistic’.²⁵⁹ Additionally, in Garland-Thomson’s view, the performer can nudge audiences towards their desired reaction.

Rather than passively wilting under intrusive and discomforting stares, a staree can take charge of a staring situation, using [...] humor, formidability, or perspicacity to reduce interpersonal tension and enact a positive self-representation.²⁶⁰

It seems Wittgenstein sought this control over his projected image through repertoire selection; appropriate works would normalise his disability and neutralize the threat of his abnormal aesthetic. As mentioned previously the projection of a musical prosthesis through skilful management of textures and registers was a vital component of his performance strategy. Removing or softening the impact of his visual impairment through the aural fabrication of a second-hand, likely guided audiences towards Garland Thomson’s ‘wondrous’ or ‘sentimental’ modes of staring, transforming Wittgenstein into a figure to admire or behold with compassion. His artistry was constructed by and for his disability, with the overarching goal of diffusing it, potentially rescinding its significance altogether in the observer’s mind. However, as his disability was the primary determinant of his performance practice, Wittgenstein and his disability remain inextricably linked at a critical level.

²⁵⁹ Rosemarie Garland Thomson, ‘Seeing the Disabled: Visual Rhetorics of Disability in Popular Photography’, in *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, ed. Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 2001), pp. 335 – 374 (p. 339).

²⁶⁰ Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Staring: How We Look* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 84.

The notion of the musical prosthesis is a slippery concept. That the pertinent ingredients must be written into the score and performed with fitting consideration for the juxtaposition of balance, dynamic, articulation, and even body language, is implicit. However, a musical prosthesis cannot be fully defined or recognised by these categories and draws on elements less tangible. A certain distribution of register and texture may emulate a two-hand texture, this may be adequately projected by the performer, but these factors ultimately require coalescence in the unconscious mind or imagination of the observer in order to assemble the chimera of a second-hand. Viewed from this perspective, the prosthesis cannot be identified as a specific element, but embodies the consolidation of a multifaceted sensory exchange. These components are certainly not limited to, but include: the auditory perception of speedy registral change and interlaced textures, the visual magnetism of the body as ‘the scriptor’, the emotional alacrity of observers and a certain suspension of disbelief.²⁶¹ Three agents emerge as fundamental to the successful fabrication of a phantom right-hand: the composer, performer and observer are all required to commit actively to this analogous narrative. The value and meaning of this process is ultimately generated by the audience, by the spectator, it is in its interpretation that the action or projection engenders or assumes its significance. These theories and reflections are limited to visual performance: they form a potential response to the visual prompt of the empty

²⁶¹ A phrase borrowed from Roland Barthes: ‘confronting the keyboard or music stand, the body proposes, leads, coordinates – the body itself must transcribe what it reads; it fabricates sound and sense: it is the scriptor; not the receiver; the decoder’ Roland Barthes, ‘Musica Practica’ in *The Responsibility of Form: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans by. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) p. 261.

sleeve.

Examining the aesthetics of left-hand piano in isolation, the connection between gesture, movement and left-hand performance (whose interplay will be discussed below in **Bodily Asymmetry: Technical and Physical Considerations**) makes for an exceptionally compelling visual performance practice. In a recent study by Harvard graduate Chia-Jung Tsay, tests were conducted on a range of participants, including accomplished musicians, to ascertain the ramifications of presentation and visibility in our evaluation of musical performance. Presented with excerpts of performances from international competitions in three different formats: Audio clips, video clips without audio and visuals with audio, the volunteers were asked to identify the winner. Participants were most accurate in their deductions when choosing from the silent video clip category:

What this suggests is that there may be a way that visual information is prioritized over information from other modalities. In this case, it suggests that the visual trumps the audio, even in a setting where audio information should matter much more.²⁶²

While this gave Wittgenstein an advantage in the concert hall as his disability only contributed to the poignancy of his performance as ‘[...] attention to disability and impairment brings greater attention to music as a manifestation of our embodiment’,

²⁶² Chia-Jung Tsay quoted in: Peter Reuell, ‘The look of music’, *Harvard Gazette*, 19th August 2013, <<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2013/08/the-look-of-music/>> [accessed 18/10/15]. The full article detailing the study: Chia-Jung Tsay, ‘Sight over sound in the judgement of music performance’ in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 110: 36 (September 2013) <<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1221454110>>, [accessed 04/04/18]

it sets him at a contemporary disadvantage.²⁶³ The observations set forth above dissect the manner in which Wittgenstein's performative aesthetic moved, influenced, and manipulated his audiences at a sociocultural level. The inclusion of this recent sensory research revealing that we possibly prioritise the visual sense over the aural, adds the biological sphere to those emotional, cultural and cognitive fields that were targeted in Wittgenstein's contemporary audiences.

To strip the picture away from Wittgenstein's performances excludes the aspect of his actions that fascinated and impressed his public most. Observable evidence of his disability was synonymous with his virtuosity, at a socio-cultural level the consequences of his individual physicality and gesture imbued his performances with greater meaning. To evaluate his playing on record alone inescapably sets him in relief against other pianists of his generation, leaving him vulnerable to inequitable comparison and bringing us back to the problematic 'universal theory of justice' clarified by Michael Davidson (discussed on p. 132). How can we be viewed equally when we are not all equal? To reduce it to physicality only, when human anatomical configurations differ so greatly, through accident or nature, how can direct comparison between two differently abled bodies be considered legitimate? Retrospectively, Wittgenstein is subject to this uneven playing field, which is populated with players such as Horowitz and Schnabel, who endured wholly different struggles technically,

²⁶³ Lerner and Straus, 'Introduction: Theorizing Disability in Music', in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, ed. by Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 1.

pragmatically and musically. Theirs was an inherited technique, built on centuries of technical experimentation, revision and progression with countless pioneers and contributors.

Contrarily, left-hand piano was barely a hundred years old in concept at the beginning of Wittgenstein's career, the products of those years mostly pedagogic volumes. There was only a handful of suitable concert pieces available to him when he was forced to undertake a rapid revision not only of his technique but his entire physicality. The technical mechanisms he applied in order to construct his musical prosthesis were often untested and unrefined. Yet he was ultimately defined not by the prodigious work of his left-hand, but by the absence of his right. Herein lies the paradox: subjugating his bodily limits he was reduced publicly to his limitations, and permanently designated 'the one-armed pianist', a label that represents everything Wittgenstein fought to overcome. But to replace it simply with the title 'pianist' is to situate him in a category negligent of his most remarkable achievements.

Bodily Asymmetry: Technical and Physical Considerations

The standard pianist makes particular selections and employs certain tactics, consciously and unconsciously, motivated by interpretational or physical factors. Varying degrees of movement and muscular action contribute to the timbral spectrum and expressive avenues of standard pianism. Oftentimes, the pianist has the option to manage the use of movement subtly or flamboyantly according to their own prerogative. The virtuosic left-hand repertoire is far more reliant on bodily movement, a small movement performed by two hands concurrently often translates into a larger

action for just the left-hand, involving a more integrated physical approach from the entire body. Left-hand pianists by and large do not have the same physical options, for instance, many works offer only one method of fingering, and it could be argued that the torso of the left-hand pianist is more actively involved in the performance. Appropriate movement therefore forms an integral part of the interpretative approach.

Wittgenstein stated that:

‘If a pianist has to lose either of his arms, then let it be the right one [...] of course the right arm would be much more useful to me as an ordinary man, but a pianist can do a great deal more with his left hand alone than with his right hand alone’.²⁶⁴

There are certainly anatomical advantages to playing solely with the left-hand over the right, most notably when pursuing the facade of a two-handed texture. With the melody typically projected at the top of the texture, the thumb and index finger of the left-hand are more physiologically suited to this activity than the fourth and fifth fingers of the right hand. This in turn leaves the remaining three fingers of the left-hand free to sustain the accompaniment in the middle and lower registers of the piano. Continually traversing the body to strike the lower registers of the piano is a precarious operation for the right arm, especially when speed and power are required. While crossing in front of the body create issues for the left-hand also, the torsion demanded is far less, as typical registral balance within the one-handed repertoire requires more regular support from the middle and bass registers than the treble. The player can be assured of greater stability and accuracy in accessing these lower regions with the hand

²⁶⁴Anonymous, ‘Left Hand Better, Says Wittgenstein’, *The Montreal Gazette*, 3rd November 1934, p. 6

adjacent to the areas of the piano most in use. Covering greater distances at shorter speeds naturally bears repercussions for the hand and wrist, requiring a freer rotation of the wrist, use of unorthodox arpeggiated figures and agile and secure jumps. Some of the fingering devices incorporated into left-hand playing includes the use of a single finger to maintain a musical line, or alternatively the use of two fingers on one note for accentuation. The thumb can also be used to strike two notes at once, and the alternation of fingers on one note while keeping it depressed will release other parts of the hand to carry out figuration concurrently with the held note. All of these approaches, particularly in a concerto setting require excellent digital stamina and control, features which work in opposition to the flexibility and looseness required throughout the left wrist, arm and shoulder to cultivate adequate velocity.

There is general concurrence in relevant texts that a positioning further to the right at the keyboard allows for a much smoother transition from bass to treble. To maintain the normal orientation point, middle-C, would be to restrict action in the upper half of the keyboard as the left arm would be drawn closely across the body and likely demand a steep incline of the entire body to the right in order to maintain full range across the keyboard. This would disrupt the natural balance and stability provided by the spine and hips, and put undue pressure on the torso, back and legs. Sassmann suggests sitting about an octave higher than middle-C. Extant pictures of Wittgenstein at the piano demonstrate his similar conclusion as he positions himself slightly to the right, consequently granting easier range of motion to the left-hand by reducing the area of the keyboard blocked by the torso.

However, even if this special adjustment is incorporated, with only the body to counterbalance the left arm's necessarily rapid movements across the keyboard, an unobserved function ordinarily provided by the right-hand, it is a mode of playing that requires constant muscular support and therefore a great deal more tiring. Consequently, solo programs of left-hand music are often shorter than a standard piano recital, as are the works for left-hand alone. This could be attributed to a combination of factors, firstly the number of activities relentlessly sustained by the left-hand is far more exhaustive on the hand, and secondly the tendency of composers to choose shorter forms for the left-hand due to creative restrictions. Wittgenstein learned to box one-handed and took long walks daily.²⁶⁵ This would have helped to build the physicality and stamina required to maintain a concert schedule of physically exhausting works.

The rapid movement required of a single hand maintaining multiple lines is antithetical to subtle tonal and dynamic variation. In looking to present dense, homophonic or contrapuntal texture as he so often did, other elements of Wittgenstein's playing sometimes suffered. In achieving a run of widespread chords, sometimes over a span of four octaves, the textural and temporal integrity of a piece could be compromised. Notes intended concomitantly as block chords were broken or 'rolled', and a slight *rubato* was often required to accommodate a dash across the keyboard to incorporate the full chord. Syncopated rhythms of course posed less of a problem. In chamber-

²⁶⁵ Suchy and Sassmann, "...freue mich, dass ihr stück ihnen auch selbst gefällt", p. 57.

music however there is evidence to suggest he limited these rhythmic irregularities, and Wittgenstein reorganised and deleted material appropriately (within reach) in order to maintain a stable ensemble with his fellow musicians.²⁶⁶ In other instances, he risked portraying an inadequate sense of legato while maintaining multiple parts. For example, the fourth and fifth fingers were often reserved for scalar patterns while the other three fingers provided the ‘right-hand’ part. The physiological difficulty in completing a run smoothly with only these two weak fingers, or sometimes by the 5th finger or thumb alone, would significantly disrupt the *legato* quality of a piece, and overcompensation with the sustain pedal would be equally damaging. It has been repeatedly noted in the literature that a sophisticated use of the pedal is paramount, especially when aiming to transmit the impression of a two-handed texture.²⁶⁷

Wittgenstein underlines its significance in the preface of his *School for the Left Hand*:

It is evident that the proper use of the pedal in general, and particularly a skilful application of the half change of pedal is of the utmost importance for the one-armed pianist.²⁶⁸

The inherent danger posed by this abundant use of pedal for depth and sustaining, can, used inattentively, whitewash subtle tonal and dynamic variation with an array of overheld, undesirable notes. The altered physiological approach that one-handed pianism entails, makes for a wholly different tactile and physical experience, the somatic strains and expressive considerations of which amount to more than a style of

²⁶⁶ Howe, ‘Paul Wittgenstein and the Performance of Disability’, p. 148.

²⁶⁷ For instance, Wong-Young, Kong, ‘Paul Wittgenstein’s Transcriptions for Left Hand’, p. 58; Predota, ‘Badgering the Creative Genius’, p. 79.

²⁶⁸ Wittgenstein, *School for the Left Hand*, preface.

play amended for one-hand, but an entirely transformed technique. Each joint, muscle and ligament of the left-hand and arm, alongside the more actively involved torso, have functions of performance and reaction in a spectrum quite disassociated from the demands of two-handed pianism.

PART II: COMPOSITIONAL CHALLENGES

CHAPTER 3: PROKOFIEV

Written in the summer of 1931, Prokofiev's vision for his Piano Concerto for Left-Hand Only was shaped by prior offerings in this unconventional category. With reference to his peers, Prokofiev wrote to patron Paul Wittgenstein of his aim 'to find something clearer than Strauss and less immature than Franz Schmidt'.²⁶⁹ These comments may in part be justified, as the murky, dense orchestration of the left-hand works produced by Richard Struss in the 1920s, *Parergon zur Symphonia domestica* and *Panathenäenzug*, may have been ill-conceived as the weighty accompaniment to a single hand at the keyboard. The derision of Franz Schmidt's *Variationen über ein Thema von Beethoven* for left-hand, may be attributed to Prokofiev's distaste for the conventional. Prokofiev chose to take the path less travelled in drafting his concerto for left-hand, opting to employ a linear approach for large swathes of the work over the standard illusionary tactics that fervently seek to refute the absence of the right hand. Bereft of the typical trove of compositional devices for textural and melodic variation, and in pursuit of the optimum orchestral balance, Prokofiev imbued his melodic lines with innate tension and responsibility.

Long before his move to the RSFSR, Prokofiev reduced and refined his musical language, but he justified the change as an on-the-spot reaction to the

²⁶⁹ David Nice, *Prokofiev: From Russia to the West 1891-1935*, (London: Yale University Press, 2003) p. 278. The acronym RSFSR stands for the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic.

conditions in his homeland.²⁷⁰

The concerto for left-hand could justifiably form part of this simplified musical language, therefore the transparent orchestration and clear structures of the work cannot be attributed solely to concessions or alterations necessary in writing for one-hand alone at the piano. It does however provide us with a compressed version of Prokofiev's signature pianistic style. The following analysis will first consider his concerto for left-hand under the categories outlined in the methodology, and subsequently address the similarities and disparities to his previous piano concerti within each section. Reviewing this work from this chronological standpoint and as part of an evolutionary set, highlights the compositional trends and customs established in the first three concertos, while setting in relief the use of procedures or compositional mechanisms newly adopted in the concerto for left-hand. Alternatively, this allows for the identification of previously favoured techniques, now re-clothed to accommodate the constraints presented by a concerto for only one-hand.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAL PLAN

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand

Writing for a Russian newspaper in 1934, Prokofiev outlined his personal compositional cornerstones. He wrote that music:

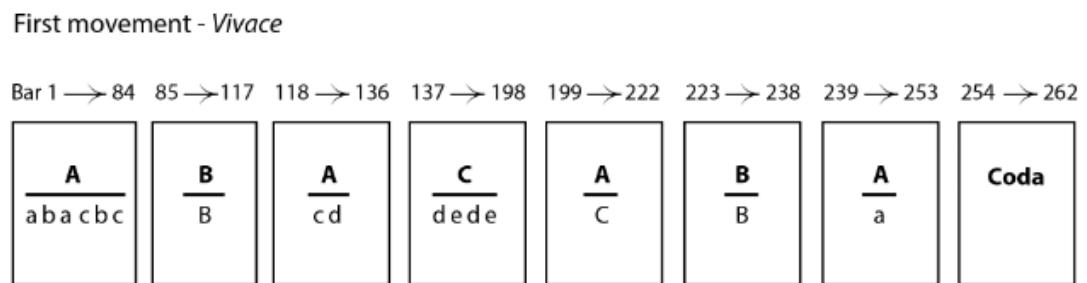
[..] should be primarily melodious, and the melody should be clear and simple

²⁷⁰ Simon Morrison, *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) p. 50. Whether this shift in his musical language was implemented in anticipation of his return to Soviet Russia in accordance with his understanding of the musical landscape there is not known. Equally, it may have been a reaction to his highly complex musical language of the late 1920s.

without however becoming repetitive or trivial. [...]The same applies to the technique, the form - it too must be clear and simple, but not stereotyped.²⁷¹

Considering his particular musical doctrine, careful reflection on the architectural and developmental techniques utilized throughout his piano concerti may reveal significant structural hallmarks pertinent to the overall Prokofievian style. The Concerto No. 4 in B-flat for piano (left-hand) and orchestra is constructed in 4 movements: a fleet, toccata-like *'Vivace'* to open, a yearning *'Andante'*, a loping, snickering March simply titled *'Moderato'*, and a *'Vivace'* finale, a curious reduced reprisal of the opening movement. A recurrent issue in construction of a large-scale work for left-hand is the early exhaustion of musical resources; to counteract this, many composers for left-hand have adopted different structural formats, variation form in particular has been popular in order to stretch thematic efficiency. In this vein, Prokofiev applied a seven-part Rondo form to the opening *'Vivace'*, and a five-part Rondo to the *'Andante'*, to exploit his melodic material fully. A comprehensive diagram of the seven-part Rondo form *'Vivace'* which opens the concerto is located overleaf in **Figure 3.1**.

Figure 3.1. Piano Concerto No. 4, First movement structure– *'Vivace'*



²⁷¹ Sergei Prokofiev, 'The Path of Soviet Music', *Izvestia*, 16th November 1934.

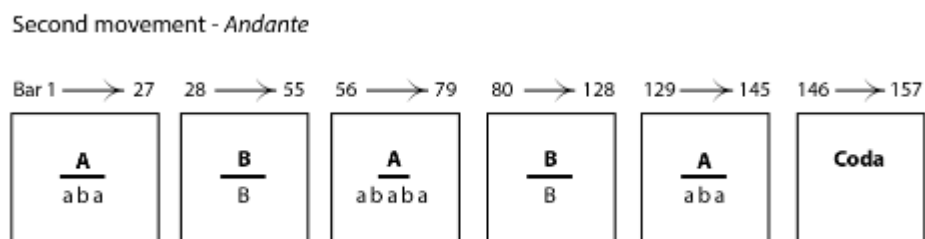
Principal theme A is comprised of three contrasting thematic fragments (a), (b) and (c), not all of which are employed in the various repetitions of theme A: this serves to obscure this seemingly straightforward structure.²⁷² The first rendition of A can be divided into two small ternary forms using these thematic fragments, [aba] [cbc], with short orchestral transitions in between. Both the overall structure, and the internal design of principal section A, display an inclination towards rounded or symmetrical arrangements, a preference which permeates the deepest structural levels of the piece. Much of this corresponds to the framework suggested by Sahlmann in his thesis *The Piano Concertos of Serge Prokofiev; a stylistic study*, but here the material relating to section C has been reclassified. Sahlmann categorised bars 137 – 151 as a transition leading into the main C section.²⁷³ The melody here is of a particularly forceful nature: winding chromaticisms are restrained by a pedal A-flat, the witty grotesquery and surprising chromatic shifts characteristic of Prokofiev. The extended nature of this transition, in combination with the significance and originality of the material (later restated in full by the piano), suggests a slightly different reading of this section. Viewing the transitional melody as a part of theme C instead, a repeated binary form becomes evident. Theme C now encompasses two main melodies, (d) and (e): (d) is presented by the orchestra in bar 140, theme (e) begins at bar 152, rife with distended dissonant intervals consisting of two individual chromatic lines progressing at varying

²⁷² All structural diagrams and primary themes from the Concerto for Left-Hand can also be found in Appendix A.

²⁷³ Fred Gustav Sahlmann, 'The Piano Concertos of Serge Prokofiev; A Stylistic Study' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, 1966). I have also labelled, collated and tracked the transition sections which Sahlmann did not attempt in a constructive way.

speeds. The aggressive theme (d) is repeated in full by the piano from bar 170, and after a brief two-bar link, theme C closes with a rhythmically altered theme (e) shared between piano and orchestra. Several comparisons can be drawn on structural level between the first and second movements of this concerto. As mentioned previously, both movements manipulate to their advantage an interpretation of Rondo form (the five-part Rondo structure of the second movement is elucidated below, in which the typical second episode is replaced by a development of the first), but moreover both movements divide their principal subject into three individual fragments: (a), (b1) and (b2) These melodies are employed and developed independently of one another.²⁷⁴ While the fragmentary nature and copious transitional figures utilised in the first movement cloud the underpinning simple structure, the framework of the second movement is more readily obvious as shown in **Figure 3.2**.

Figure 3.2. Piano Concerto No. 4, Second movement structure – ‘Andante’



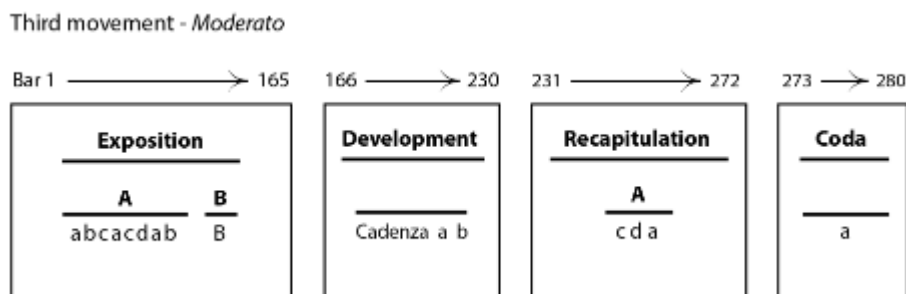
Prokofiev deviates from Rondo form for the third movement only, adopting Sonata form as the architectural basis for this colourful ‘*Moderato*’ with militaristic hues and

²⁷⁴ The division of theme (b) is not represented in the **Figure 3.2**. as is does not impact the overriding structure of the second movement.

hints of grotesquery. The first principal subject A is explored in the first 110 bars, and four main thematic fragments can be extracted and labelled (a), (b), (c), and (d). Theme fragment (a) is nestled at the beginning, middle and end of the first subject to synthesise this thematic group as a whole (see **Figure 3.3.**). Notable also is the division of theme fragment (d), and its subsequent arrangement into a small ternary form: [d1 d2 d1] in the exposition and recapitulation.²⁷⁵ The second subject, theme B, like the preceding movements, comprises of a single melody and is repeated three times in total, varying the theme in its second and third airings. The flourishes present in the altered versions of theme B hark back to the assorted scalar passages which introduce theme (b), and the embellishment of (d2). The development section opens with a short cadenza most likely based on rhythmic extensions of theme (a) from the first subject (see bars 56 – 59). Snippets of themes (a) and (b) are explored alternately by the orchestra whilst the piano embellishes, and the development section closes with a fantastical waltz. The closing bars of the waltz, bars 212 – 217, have direct correlation to the earlier transition, bars 114 -118. A hint of theme (a) leads back into the recapitulation where themes are stated in full, with the exception of (b), and second subject B is left out entirely. The Coda is built from theme (a), once more embracing a balanced schema, and rounding off the movement with a reference to the opening.

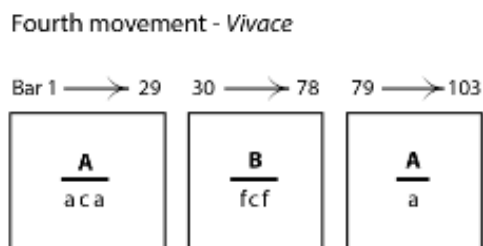
²⁷⁵ Likewise, the ternary form arrangement of (d1) and (d2) is not included in **Figure 3.3.** as it does not affect the superstructure.

Figure 3.3. Piano Concerto No. 4, Third movement structure – ‘Moderato’



Unusually, the 4th movement is a miniature version, or diminution, of the 1st movement. At only one and a half minutes, the finale presents an ephemeral vignette of the opening movement with large quantities of recognisable material. Only one new theme is presented during the course of the finale, theme (f), the remainder is comprised of ingredients transplanted from the opening movement. Indeed, the opening bars of these two movements are identical, and bars 44 – 59 of the fourth movement appear to be transplanted directly from bars 55 – 68 of the opening movement. This familiar thematic material is moulded into ternary form, with two smaller ternary forms emerging from the melodic boundaries in the first two sections. The themes in **Figure 3.4.** are labelled identically to the first movement with the new material forming theme (f).

Figure 3.4. Piano Concerto No. 4, Fourth movement – ‘Vivace’

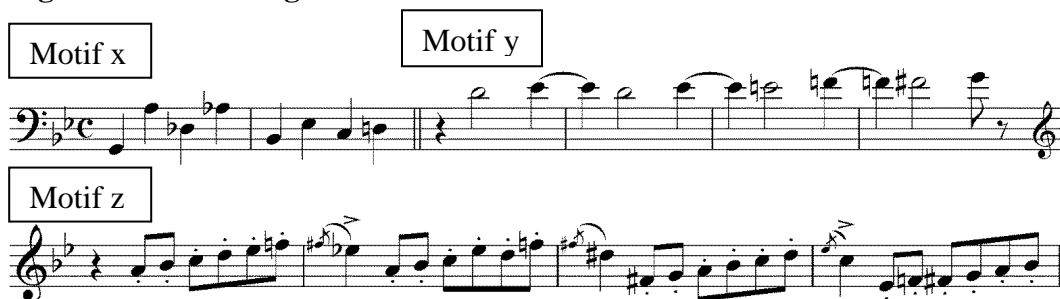


The decision to bookend the concerto with identical melodic material solidifies the proportional and balanced approach to form maintained throughout the concerto as a means of unification internally and externally. The work is bound together in a cyclical manner, launching and closing the concerto with the same melody, as if to continue perpetually in our mind's eye, the work concludes with theme (a) trickling up into the ether. Throughout this concerto it is clear that Prokofiev favours a multifarious first subject or episode which offers him both versatility and opportunities for unification. Contrarily the second subject consists of a single theme, it follows then that this theme receives much less attention on the whole as a single melody provides fewer options for the left-handed pianist.

Comparative Analysis

The four-movement structure employed in his left-hand concerto was not in itself an innovation for Prokofiev, having previously employed such a layout in his second piano concerto. However, direct transplantation of such a significant portion of material from one movement to another across a multi-movement work was, superficially at least, a fresh strategy for the composer. Yet buried in the integrated structure of his earlier piano concerti lie recurrent motifs and devices with a similarly consolidating effect. Evidence of this procedure is incontrovertible throughout his Piano Concerti: for example, in the third movement '*Intermezzo*' from his Piano Concerto No. 2, the orchestral introduction proffers three distinct thematic ideas which I have labelled (x), (y) and (z) in **Figure 3.5.** below.

Figure 3.5. Recurring motifs from Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 2 – 'Intermezzo'



These motifs are reiterated at the end of the movement but exposed in reverse order, z, y, x, thereby completing the attractive symmetry presented by the introductory and concluding sections. A predilection towards this type of unifying structural device is perhaps most notable in his First Piano Concerto: a one-movement work, it is studded at the beginning, middle and end by the triumphal, ebullient opening motif, a unifying technique which cements the work together. 'It is the threefold repetition - at the beginning, in the middle and at the end - of this powerful thematic material that assures the unity of the work'.²⁷⁶ The episodic nature of this concerto benefits undeniably from the synthesising force of this recurrent motif.²⁷⁷

While these examples illustrate a partiality towards balanced schemes visible also in the Concerto No.4, thematic transplantation across an entire work, rather than within a movement, was a departure from Prokofiev's standard structural approaches. In

²⁷⁶ Anthony Phillips, ed., *Sergei Prokofiev: Diaries 1907 – 1914: Prodigious Youth* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 237.

²⁷⁷ The fragmentary construction of Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 1* is explained by its genesis; originally conceived as a Concertino, Prokofiev inserted the 'Andante' (intended for another unrealised piano concerto) and the Scherzo-like development section when the original material outgrew its intended genre. The aggregate result was a substantial one-movement work bearing the title *Piano Concerto No. 1 in D flat major*.

surveying his solo piano repertoire however, it appears that this juxtaposition of material from disparate movements may have been favoured among his piano sonatas, where cyclical relationships abound. In the fourth movement of his Sonata No. 2 for Piano, Op.14, in D minor (1912), Prokofiev inserts, in a highly recognisable format, the principal lyrical subject from the first movement.²⁷⁸ This schematic practice, though more discrete than the thematic mirroring of his Fourth Concerto, indicates a stylistic and architectural preference for this technique, and rules out the technical or musical exhaustion attributed to the use of left-hand alone as the primary motivating factor.

Perhaps the quote above referring to his First Concerto hints towards another possible explanation: to promote stylistic cohesion within a musical work whose fragmentary fabric may otherwise be subject to criticism. Given the placement of this work within the evolution of Prokofiev's personal artistic doctrine, this could also be interpreted as a symbol of progression towards the simplified musical language Prokofiev spoke of in the early 1930s. He frequently lamented the lack of empathy throughout Europe for his idiosyncratic style; repetition of this nature could have been a ploy to bring recognition and understanding to his musical idiom through repeated airings.

The Rondo schema which forms the skeleton of the opening '*Vivace*' and '*Andante*' from the concerto for left-hand, contrasts with Prokofiev's earlier structural selections. This form is not visibly conspicuous in his previous concerti, only in the *Andante Assai*

²⁷⁸ Boris Berman, *Prokofiev's Piano Sonatas* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 64

of the first piano concerto is there a brief dalliance with Rondo form, but only loosely applied in that instance. **Table 3.1.** below provides a full list of the structural designs observed in Prokofiev’s first four piano concerti.

Table 3.1. Structural Outline of Piano Concerti No. 1 – 4

Concerto	Movement	Form
No. 1	n/a	Sonata form (incomplete)
No. 2	Mvt 1	Ternary form
No. 2	Mvt 2	Ternary form
No. 2	Mvt 3	Ternary form
No. 2	Mvt 4	Sonata form
No. 3	Mvt 1	Sonata form
No. 3	Mvt 2	Variation form
No. 3	Mvt 3	Ternary form
No. 4	Mvt 1	Rondo form – 7 part
No. 4	Mvt 2	Rondo form – 5 part
No. 4	Mvt 3	Sonata form
No. 4	Mvt 3	Ternary form

Comparison with previous schematic designs discloses a clear preference for sonata and ternary forms, although their principles were often loosely applied. Prokofiev was seldom strict in his application of these forms, which naturally clouds the structural classification of these works, a difficulty he himself acknowledged. In relation to his first piano concerto he wrote that: ‘The canvas on which the basic formal design is

drawn is sonata form, but I so far departed from it that my Concerto cannot be described as being in sonata form'.²⁷⁹ He voiced on numerous occasions his great respect for the traditional forms, but had trust in his own instincts for architectural balance while stretching the boundaries of these established designs.

In spite of the complications facing direct codification, the extended use of Rondo form in the Fourth Concerto is a clear aberration from the established precedent. The coalescence of reduced textural options in the solo part, and the ensuing dilemma of melodic development and variation may have led him to adopt Rondo form as a metamorphic tool. The repetition integral to the form offered a mechanism for melodic reinforcement whilst exploiting avenues open to evolution, augmentation and embellishment in solo and orchestral parts. From this perspective, it is possible to concede in this instance writing for left-hand only, bore direct consequence on the typical Prokofievian structural blueprint.

²⁷⁹ Phillips, ed., *Sergei Prokofiev: Diaries 1907-1914*, p. 234.

MELODIC SHAPE AND APPLICATION

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand

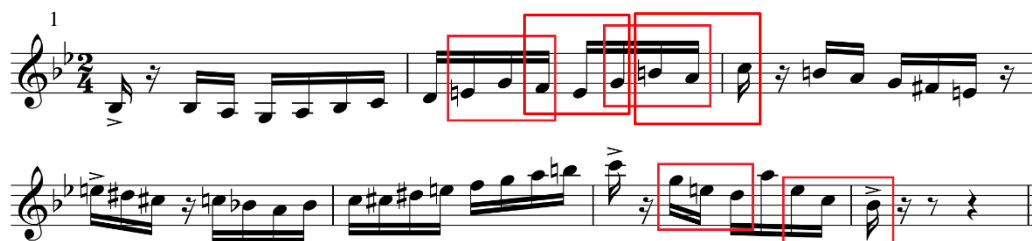
(i). Interval Use

As discussed in Chapter 1, interval use and distribution can be directly impacted by the shift from standard pianism, to left-hand only at the piano, as this type of pianism is more closely tied to the physicality of the performer. Whether a pianist leaps to a given note moving the entire arm, or stretches the hand to reach a note while keeping the arm position fixed, the range of the melody and its internal intervallic distribution must be weighed carefully against practical, somatic and musical concerns generated by the switch to left-hand only. Factors such as tempo, expression, orchestral balance and any accompaniment figures that the piano maintains concurrently will all affect melodic configuration. Accordingly, I conducted a survey of interval use throughout the concerto for left-hand in comparison with the first three concerti to underline customary intervallic patterns, to highlight any notable modifications to typical interval use in the works for left-hand, and consider reasons for the changes of these practices, and the subsequent ramifications for the performer. The charts comparing the intervallic breakdown of the main melodies in Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand to earlier concerti are presented in **Comparative Analysis: (i) Melodic Range**. The section below examines the intervallic construction of the primary themes in Concerto No. 4 and demonstrates the thematic connections that emerge at this elemental level.

In the '*Vivace*' first movement the minor 3rd (and to a lesser extent the major 3rd)

holds great developmental significance. The opening phrase (a) is built on scalar movement primarily, both diatonic and chromatic. However, a pairing of three note cells bears immediate sequential significance. In the 2nd bar of the phrase, beginning on the second note of each semiquaver grouping, the cell is identified by a rising minor 3rd followed by a descending tonal step. The second cell in the pair follows the same pattern but augments the minor 3rd by a semitone turning it into a major 3rd. At the close of the phrase, the pairing is repeated, maintaining their order, but inverting the direction of the minor and major 3rd's. Additionally, the pitch relationship between these cells cement the importance of the minor 3rd interval: initially the cells rise by a minor 3rd starting on E and G respectively, the second grouping not only inverts the intervals used, but inverts the order of the starting notes beginning on G and falling to E. See **Figure 3.6.** of the identification of these intervals in the first phrase.

Figure 3.6. ‘Vivace’: Theme (a) with cell blocks highlighted, bars 1 – 7



The bulk of the fragment theme (b) amounts to chains of minor and major thirds, exposed descending thirds in the winds further underlines the tertian anatomy of the core musical material.

Figure 3.7. ‘Vivace’: Theme (b) with major and minor thirds highlighted, bars 9 - 17

The image displays a musical score for 'Vivace', specifically Theme (b) from bars 9 to 17. The score is written in 2/4 time and features a treble and bass clef. The key signature is B-flat major. The melody in the treble clef is characterized by a series of intervals, with major and minor thirds highlighted by red boxes. The bass clef provides a sparse accompaniment, often consisting of single notes or rests. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering bars 9-12 and the second system covering bars 13-17. The final bar (17) ends with a double bar line.

The orchestral transition leading back to the first reprise of theme (a), bars 18 – 19, subsists entirely on the interval of the major 3rd. Connections can be drawn on a broader scale also. While the sparse nature of the accompaniment is not particularly functional in design, tonal centres are often implied at the start of each theme. On this basis, the inflection of G major at the beginning of theme (b) in bar 8, and the tonal centre of D-flat for the repeat of theme (a) in bar 20, both bear a minor third relationship with the opening key signature, B-flat. A similar intervallic connection is found between both iterations of theme (b): the reprisal appears a minor 3rd higher in the first violins, while the piano performs a composite imitation of the wind accompaniment from the first rendition of (b). In the second principal subject, Theme B, it's evident there is strong reliance on the major and minor third throughout also.

Dubious at first about the significance of these thirds, the insistence of their repetition, their importance in the construction of the primary themes and the connections that exist not only within but across these themes, have eradicated any doubt that these

thirds did not just emerge as a harmonic by-product, but were a deliberate part of the blueprint. Neil Minturn describes Prokofiev's music as 'super-complete' in the sense that it can be correctly interpreted in more than one way simultaneously.²⁸⁰ In that sense, this poses only one solution to the music under consideration, however as my primary objectives relate to the altered physical and kinaesthetic sense of left-hand piano, the interval is the most direct route to the calibration of average melodic distances as it impacts the pianist. The increased use of the third represents a deviation from the melodic procedures of his preceding piano concerti as will be illustrated in more detail in the corresponding comparative study. As a premediated selection, the multifarious applications of the third are highly appropriate for the task of composing successfully for one-hand alone. As a small interval it sits easily within the span of the hand, and subsequently could be used freely to spin out figuration and to facilitate traversal of the keyboard. The final melodic fragment of the first principal group, theme (c), consists of a series of arpeggiated triads (**Figure 3.8.**). Naturally, the major and minor third will feature prominently once more. The tritone forges a link between these unrelated chords, with every second bar featuring a semitonal shift in this pattern, augmenting the link interval to a perfect fifth. The resulting chromatic displacement and abrupt directional shifts are characteristics typical of Prokofiev.

²⁸⁰ Neil Minturn, *The Music of Sergei Prokofiev* (London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 66.

Figure 3.8. ‘Vivace’: Theme (c), bars 29 - 36



Although transposed up a perfect fourth, the repetition of theme (c) starting at bar 40 maintains the original sequence of intervals for the first four bars. The two patterns diverge in the 5th bar of the sequence. **Table 3.2.** overleaf, and subsequently **Table 3.4.**, demonstrate the intervallic sequence of theme (c) from bar 29 – 36 and bars 40 – 46 respectively. A comparison of both tables shows an identical intervallic sequence for the first four bars, however on closer inspection the latter sections bear cogent correlation also. Similarities emerge not just within the intervallic patterns, but in the way certain processes are utilized, and the order in which they are applied.

Table 3.2. ‘Vivace’: Intervallic pattern of theme (c), bars 29 - 36

Bar No.	Link Interval				Link Interval			
B. 29		Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th	Tritone	P. 4 th	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd
B. 30	Tritone	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th	P. 5 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th
B. 31	Tritone	P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	Tritone	P. 4 th	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd
B. 32	Tritone	P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 5 th	St	T	T

B. 33	T	Min 6 th	Min 3 rd	P. 5 th	Tritone	Min 6 th	Min 3 rd	P. 5 th
B. 34	P. 4 th	Min 6 th	Min 3 rd	P. 5 th	Maj 6 th	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd	
B. 35	T	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd	P. 4 th	Maj 6 th	P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd
B. 36	P. 4 th							

The colour coding I have applied unveils aspects of the latent pattern contained within the unrelenting figuration of theme (c). The fundamental elements of construction appear to be the major and minor 3rd and the perfect 4th with the aforementioned tritone or perfect 5th acting as a transitional interval. This link interval functions as a means of tonal variation, but does not affect the pattern which follows and therefore can be viewed as unessential to the sequential process. Stripping away the transitional or modulatory components reduces the passage to its core material, allows for categorisation of compositional tools and processes and a more defined chronological sequence.

The table overleaf, **Table 3.3.**, displays this same sequence after the extraneous link material has been eliminated. The results confirm the building blocks of the pattern and illuminate their application and variation. Equilibrium is of paramount concern: each bar or subsection is delicately balanced and a conscious symmetry is applied to the order in which these mechanisms are used. The manifold strategies to stretch, combine and rearrange the fundamental components to best effect, grounded in Russian structural formality, epitomises Prokofiev the chess player. In the first bar, the

initial statement of the original triadic pattern is immediately answered by its mirror image, followed by the repetition of the sequence in its prototypical form. The next set of sequences fall into three sections rather than two: the retrograde pattern of the original sequence introduced in the first bar is sandwiched between a further variant on the cell which places the perfect 4th at the start of the sequence rather than the end. Repetition of the original sequence once again follows this symmetrical arrangement, with the inversion of the outer intervals turning the major 3rd into a minor 6th, and the perfect 4th into a perfect 5th. The sequence is completed with another symmetrical arrangement: the retrograde version of the first variation is answered by its original. This process elucidates the symmetry that exists beyond the individual subsections, but governs the entire theme as symmetrical or mirroring arrangements alternate with passages of repetition.

Table 3.3. ‘Vivace’: Theme (c), bars 29 – 36: reduced to elemental components

Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th	Mirror image: Original answered by Retrograde	P. 4 th	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd
Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th	Repeat of Original	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th
P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	Variation – Retrograde – Variation	P. 4 th	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd
P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	(Var. 1)/ Repeat X 3 of Original with outer intervals inverted	Min 6 th (Maj 3 rd)	Min 3 rd	P. 5 th (P. 4 th)
Min 6 th (Maj 3 rd)	Min 3 rd	P. 5 th (P. 4 th)	Repeat X 3 of Original with outer intervals inverted	Min 6 th (Maj 3 rd)	Min 3 rd	P. 5 th (P. 4 th)

Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd	P. 4 th	Mirror image: Retrograde of Variation answered by original Variation	P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd
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A similar reductive process carried out on the second presentation of theme (c), bars 40 - 46, yields comparable results. As previously noted, the first four bars are modelled on the same sequence as the original presentation of theme (c). Subsequently, the inverted intervals from the first sequence are eliminated, and the second pattern continues to exploit the core sequential arrangement. The absence of inverted intervals laid out solely in corresponding pairs provides a more explicit version of these progressions and their arrangements. Observation of the order in which various procedures are enforced reveals results congruent with the first rendition of theme (c), as symmetrical and repetitious arrangements rotate throughout, with the exception of two mirroring operations back to back in the middle of the sequence. This could be interpreted as an attempt to create yet another dimension of symmetry as the first three processes: mirroring, repetition and a variation answered by the retrograde of the variation, are answered directly by the same three processes in reverse order. The arrangement of **Table 3.5.** accentuates this further level of internal symmetry. This detailed level of intervallic organisation and the symmetry and concern for proportionality evident at all structural levels seems to be unprecedented in prior piano concerti.

Table 3.4. ‘Vivace’: Intervallic pattern of theme (c), bars 40 - 46

Bar No.	Link Interval				Link Interval			
B. 40		Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th	Tritone	P. 4 th	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd
B. 41	Tritone	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th	P. 5 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th
B. 42	Tritone	P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	Tritone	P. 4 th	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd
B. 43	Tritone	P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 5 th	St	T	T
B. 44	T	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd	P. 4 th	Tritone	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th
B. 45	P. 5 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th	Min 6 th	P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd
B. 46	T	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd	P. 4 th	Min 3 rd			Min 7 th

Table 3.5. ‘Vivace’: Theme (c), bars 40 – 46: reduced to elemental components

Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th	Mirror image: Original answered by Retrograde	P. 4 th	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd
Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th	Repeat of Original	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th
P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	Variation answered by Retrograde Original	P. 4 th	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd
P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	Variation answered by Retrograde of Variation	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd	P. 4 th
Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th	Repeat of Original	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	P. 4 th

P. 4 th	Maj 3 rd	Min 3 rd	Variation answered by Retrograde of Variation	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd	P. 4 th
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Themes (d) and (e) break from the established inclination toward the major and minor third, and gravitate toward wider intervals. They both rely heavily on chromatic movement with elongation and manipulation of chromatic passages to facilitate the gradual ascent or descent of each passage as can be seen from the extract of theme (e) below.

Figure 3.9. ‘Vivace’: Theme (e) ascending, bars 152 - 159



The beautifully languid ‘*Andante*’ contains another reciprocal relationship between corresponding passages when the final two phrases of principal theme A are unveiled. In keeping with the first movement, the ‘*Andante*’ exhibits strongly triadic melodic contours, so comparable intervals are to be expected. Nevertheless, bars 6 – 8 proffer a set of intervals that are repeated almost identically in the subsequent bars. The only discrepancy is the movement of one chromatic step from the beginning of the pattern in the first instance, to the end in the following phrase. This aside, the two sequences align perfectly, and are disguised by the converse trajectory of many of the intervals in the second rendition. **Figures 3.10.** and **3.11.** below illustrate the intervallic repetition within theme (b).

Figure 3.10. ‘*Andante*’: Theme (b1), bars 5 – 8

Vln I

5

Min 3rd ST ST

Perf. 5th Perf. 4th Min 3rd ST Perf. 4th

Figure 3.11. ‘*Andante*’: Theme (b2), bars 9 – 12

Vln I

9

Min 3rd ST Perf. 5th

Perf. 4th Min 3rd ST Perf. 4th ST

Similar processes could be suspected throughout the concerto, however Prokofiev’s success at obfuscating his methods with incomplete phrases and sudden semitonal shifts, make his compositional processes nebulous. The transition section in the ‘*Andante*’, bars 20-27, offers a prime example (see **Figure 3.12.**). Once again, this passage has a strong triadic foundation with the majority of quavers beamed together forming a diatonic chord. Upon closer inspection, there is evidence of systematic augmentation and diminution of intervals, octave displacement, and non-sequential presentation of the potential fundamental pattern. However, this data could be interpreted in a number of ways and groupings – therefore a solid strategy cannot be unearthed in the same way as theme (c) from the ‘*Vivace*’.

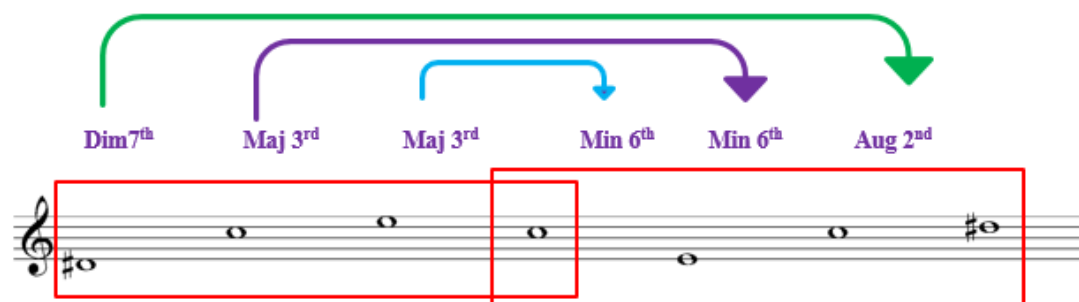
Figure 3.12. ‘Andante’: Transition 1, bars 20 - 27

More evidence of symmetry and intentional proportional affinity lies in the third movement. Within the loose Sonata form structure, the principal theme, like the preceding movements can be split into smaller melodic fragments. Theme (d), noted previously for its ternary form arrangement [d1 – d2 – d1], holds further mirroring processes. Charting the pattern of intervals in the central theme of the triptych, (d2), it emerged that the first two bars and the last two bars used an identical sequence: diminished seventh, major third, major third, two consecutive minor sixths and an augmented second (see **Figure 3.13**).

Figure 3.13. ‘Moderato’: Theme (d2), bars 75 - 82

Thus (d2) begins and ends with the same intervallic sequence, but there is yet more symmetry afoot. If this intervallic sequence is split in two, it appears that the second part of the sequence is the retrograde inversion of the first half. **Figure 3.14.** demonstrates the internal symmetry of this sequence using the first 2 bars of theme (d2). With C-natural as a pivot point, the diminished seventh and major third are followed by their respective inversions, the augmented second and the minor sixth. However, the inverted sequence follows in reverse order, so the second half of the sequence is in effect the mirror image of the first part, employing the inversion of each individual interval.

Figure 3.14. ‘Moderato’: Theme (d2), bars 75 – 75 pitches only, internal symmetry



(ii). Phrase Structure

Prokofiev’s phrasing is often irregular and unpredictable throughout this work, as if it is working to counteract the calculated intervallic patterns and measured structural balance. Where a complete theme amounts to a more typical length, the division into smaller phrases may prove challenging as often cadence points can be obfuscated or omitted due to incomplete or dovetailed phrase endings. Moreover, there are frequent

time signature fluctuations which often disrupt the natural equilibrium of the most archetypal phrase lengths of 4 or 8 bars.

In the opening '*Vivace*' theme fragment (a) is initially presented as just over 7 bars. With inclusion of a new bar in its repeated airing the theme is augmented, albeit in a new tonality from bar 20. Likewise, the second component of subject group A, theme (b), is extended in its second rendition. In its reprisal, the grace note which opened the initial statement of theme (b) is transformed into a full quaver, effectively making the switch from an 8-bar phrase with preceding upbeat, to 8 and a half full bars. The third element of this first theme group follows a reductive process. Theme (c) appears four times throughout the principal theme of the Rondo, and the length of the theme is steadily reduced with each repetition. The chart below details this process.

Table 3.6. '*Vivace*': Reduction of theme (c) with each statement

Statement	Bar No.	Total Phrase Length
First statement	b.29 – b.33	7 bars + 1 semiquaver
Second statement	b.40 – b.46	6 bars + 1 crotchet
Third statement	b.57 – b.61	4 bars + 1 semiquaver
Fourth statement	b.65 – b.68	3 bars + 1 semiquaver

The exquisitely restrained '*Andante*' is considered by David Nice to be the most undervalued of all Prokofiev's slow movements. Equal phrase lengths throughout the first episode contribute to the yearning lilt of the first subject, however Prokofiev furnishes the second subject with scope for development. The first complete delivery of theme B reveals an additive process within the phrase structure: 15 bars in total,

phrases of 4 bars, 5 bars and 6 bars are unveiled sequentially. This last phrase of 6 bars is elongated or truncated in various renderings throughout the movement. The ‘*Moderato*’ maintains this inclination towards uneven phrase lengths within the first subject, with the exception of (d1) and (d2) which are 4 and 8 bars respectively. The second subject of the ‘*Moderato*’ appears to form a regular 8-bar phrase in 3/4 time. However, the inclusion of a 4/4 bar within this phrase interrupts the metric flow and moreover this 8-bar phrase occurs only in its first rendition, subsequent to which it is augmented and ornamented with each airing.

(iii). Melodic Development

Throughout most of the concerto, Prokofiev obtains maximum mileage from his core musical material. Working in tandem with the phrasing, augmentation and diminution is a recurring developmental tool melodically also. During the orchestral presentation of theme (d) in the ‘*Vivace*’ in the lower strings, bassoon and trombone, the piano provides the only contrast to the main melody, with the exception of an ostinato pedal A-flat. An excerpt is shown below.

Figure 3.15. ‘*Vivace*’: Piano part, theme (d), bars 137 – 145

The musical score for piano part, theme (d), bars 137-145, is presented in two staves. The key signature is G-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The first staff begins at bar 137 and ends at bar 141. The second staff begins at bar 141 and ends at bar 145. Red boxes highlight specific intervals: a Perfect 4th in the first staff (bar 139), a Dim 5th in the second staff (bar 141), a Perfect 5th in the second staff (bar 142), and a Min 6th in the second staff (bar 144). Octave markings (8va) are present above the notes in bars 139, 141, 142, and 144.

The underlying circuitous chromatic movement is segmented by dramatic octave leaps; expansion of the lumbering chords follows the apex of each group. The widest interval increases with nearly every statement, beginning with a perfect fourth in bar 138, and reaching a diminished seventh by the end of the theme.

The subsequent theme (e) (the first 8 bars of which were illustrated in **Figure 3.9**.) follows similar guidelines. It is composed of a series of major and minor 9ths, and through semitonal movement traverses the keyboard from middle to high registers. Following the same pattern, it descends back to its starting pitch with only small rhythmic adjustments. Although many themes, fragments and transitions can be identified and classified as separate entities, Prokofiev creates broader connections and affinities between many of these elements. This reinforces the textural and melodic cohesion within the movement, and displays Prokofiev's economical use of thematic material. The many orchestral transitions which bind the first movement together share close ties with the principal subject, particularly themes (a) and (c). These transitions are all repeated in very recognisable forms several times each throughout the movement and successfully marry the main themes and transition sections together stylistically. A full list of the orchestral transitions in the opening '*Vivace*' can be found in **Table 3.7**. alongside a short description of each transition and recognition of any thematic affiliations.

On examination two facts surface: the most significant transitional sections, labelled and colour coded here as T1, T2 and T3, are all repeated in very recognisable forms

several times each. Furthermore, these main transitions share close ties with the themes (a) and (c). Not only were orchestral transitional passages recycled, but they drew thematic and rhythmic inspiration from the '*Vivace*'s' main melodies: these transitions simultaneously exploit two unifying mechanisms in order to achieve stylistic consolidation. Prokofiev's concern for cohesion and closure within each movement is once again visible. The '*Andante*' also bears the imprint of this thematic efficiency, both major transitions and the Coda derive from the same melodic material. On the whole, the '*Moderato*' is less focused and demonstrates less integration than the first two movements.

Table 3.7. ‘Vivace’: Orchestral Transitions

Transition/Bar No.	Description	Association with primary themes
B. 7 – 8	Altered 3 note cell from theme a, with the addition of a tritone in the second cell.	Continuation of a.
B. 18 – 19	Strings only. Very sparse, based entirely on alternating major 3rds.	
B. 27 – 28	3 note cell used previously in the first transition (b.7 – 8) complete with tritone in the second iteration of the group.	Continuation of a. In direct imitation of the piano.
T1 B. 37 – 39	The first transition which goes on to form an important part of the structure.	Draws from a and c. Semiquaver in the piano part and violins draw in character and motion from theme’s a and c.
T2 B. 55 – 56	Two-bar imitation of the movement’s opening figure – except it continues the ascending scale.	Imitation of a.
T2 B. 62 – 63	Direct repeat of the previous transition, this time in the piano with lower strings accompanying and transposed up a perfect fifth.	Imitation of a.
T3 B. 69 – 84	16 bar transitional passage leading into theme B. The lyrical melody played in the clarinet softens the motoric like semiquavers ploughing forward in the piano.	Draws heavily from c. Texture, rhythm and arpeggiated figuration reminiscent of theme c.
T2 B. 118 – 119	Imitation of the scalar passage used to open the movement for the third time. In strings only, back to the original starting pitch of a-flat.	Imitation of a.

T1 B. 126 – 129	Bar lines are arranged differently, the first version has one bar of 3/4 before reverting back to 2/4, this stays in 2/4 throughout. Otherwise it is identical to the first iteration of this transition, starting just a tone lower.	Draws from a and c.
B 181 – 183	Brief chordal link in the strings.	
T2 B. 199 – 202	Strings only scalar passage inspired by the opening, this time extended by two bars. This transition always leads into theme c.	Imitation of a.
T1 B. 213 – 215	Back to the original time signature arrangement and original pitch. The instrumentation remains the same each time it is played strings and piano.	Draws from a and c.
T3 B. 217 – 222	Leading back into the recap of theme B is a shortened variant on the transition that preceded the first statement of B. Back to back with the previous transition. Piano figuration with languid clarinet solo and lower strings.	Draws heavily from c.

Comparative Analysis

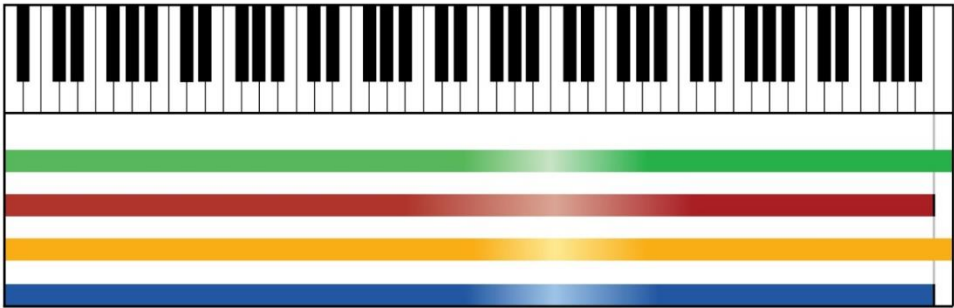
(i). Melodic Range

To determine whether the use of the instrument and subsequently whether melodic choice or variety was altered by the pragmatic issues surrounding performance with left-hand only, I carried out a comparison of the overall pitch range in each relevant work. Prokofiev consistently exhausts the range of the piano throughout his first three piano concerti, a trend continued throughout his fourth endeavour in the genre undeterred by the physical delimitations posed by playing in higher regions with the left-hand. The pitch span is in no way compromised due to the reduced resources, and the left-hand range is increased accordingly to maintain this full coverage. Only an incremental augmentation of range was required as the left-hand range of his earlier concerti was similarly complete. See **Figures 3.16.** and **3.17.** below for the comparison of overall and left-hand range throughout the first four piano concerti.

It is notable however that in his second and Third Concertos, the top octave was seldom used by the left-hand, and then only as the peak of a hand crossing sequence or glissando, so although the left-hand probed freely into the highest pitches of the piano, Prokofiev did not undertake this exploration of the extremes of the piano independently of the right-hand until his Fourth Concerto.

Figure 3.16. Melodic range of Piano Concerti No.'s 1 - 4

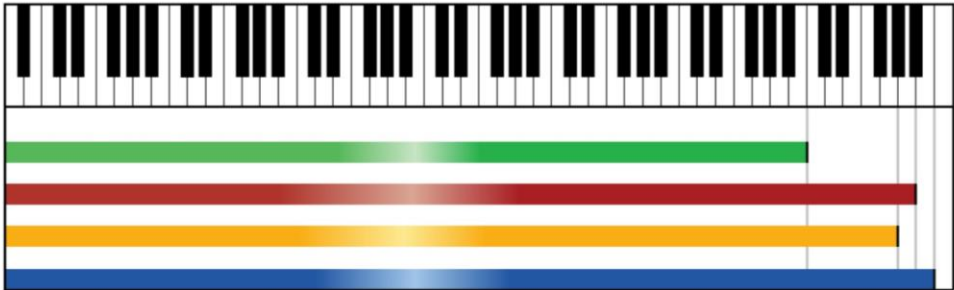
OVERALL RANGE



- Concerto No. 1*
- Concerto No. 2*
- Concerto No. 3*
- Concerto No. 4*

Figure 3.17. Left-hand range of Piano Concerti No.'s 1 - 4

LEFT HAND RANGE



- Concerto No. 1*
- Concerto No. 2*
- Concerto No. 3*
- Concerto No. 4*

An audit of the individual phrase range and commonly employed intervals generated similar results to the overall range issuing some persistent trends across all four piano concerti. **Figures 3.18. – 3.21.** depicts interval use as observed in the principal themes of each concerto. It must be noted that the compilation of data required for this type of study is, naturally, a subjective act: Prokofiev's melodies are often difficult to define and extraction of these themes requires a degree of personal interpretation. The primary themes within each concerto, once identified (all the themes from Piano Concerto No. 4 can be found in Appendix A) were analysed and parsed according to their intervallic makeup. The charts that follow depict the regularity with which each type of interval was used in the construction of a primary theme. Percentages were calculated according to the frequency of each interval within each individual melody and consolidated to show the prevalence of each interval across the work as a whole in terms of melodic construction.

Figure 3.18. Interval Study – Piano Concerto No. 1

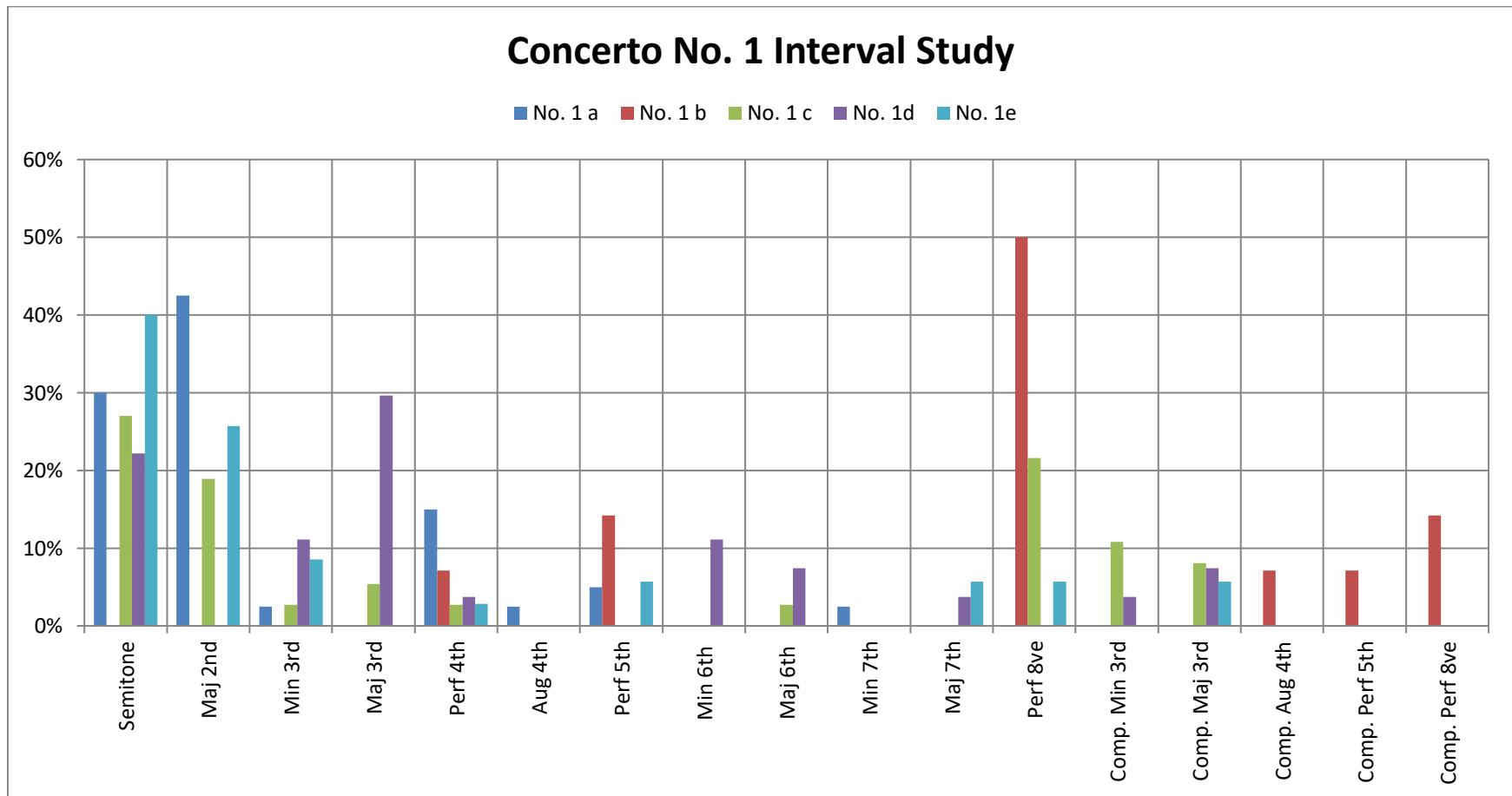


Figure 3.19. Interval Study – Piano Concerto No. 2

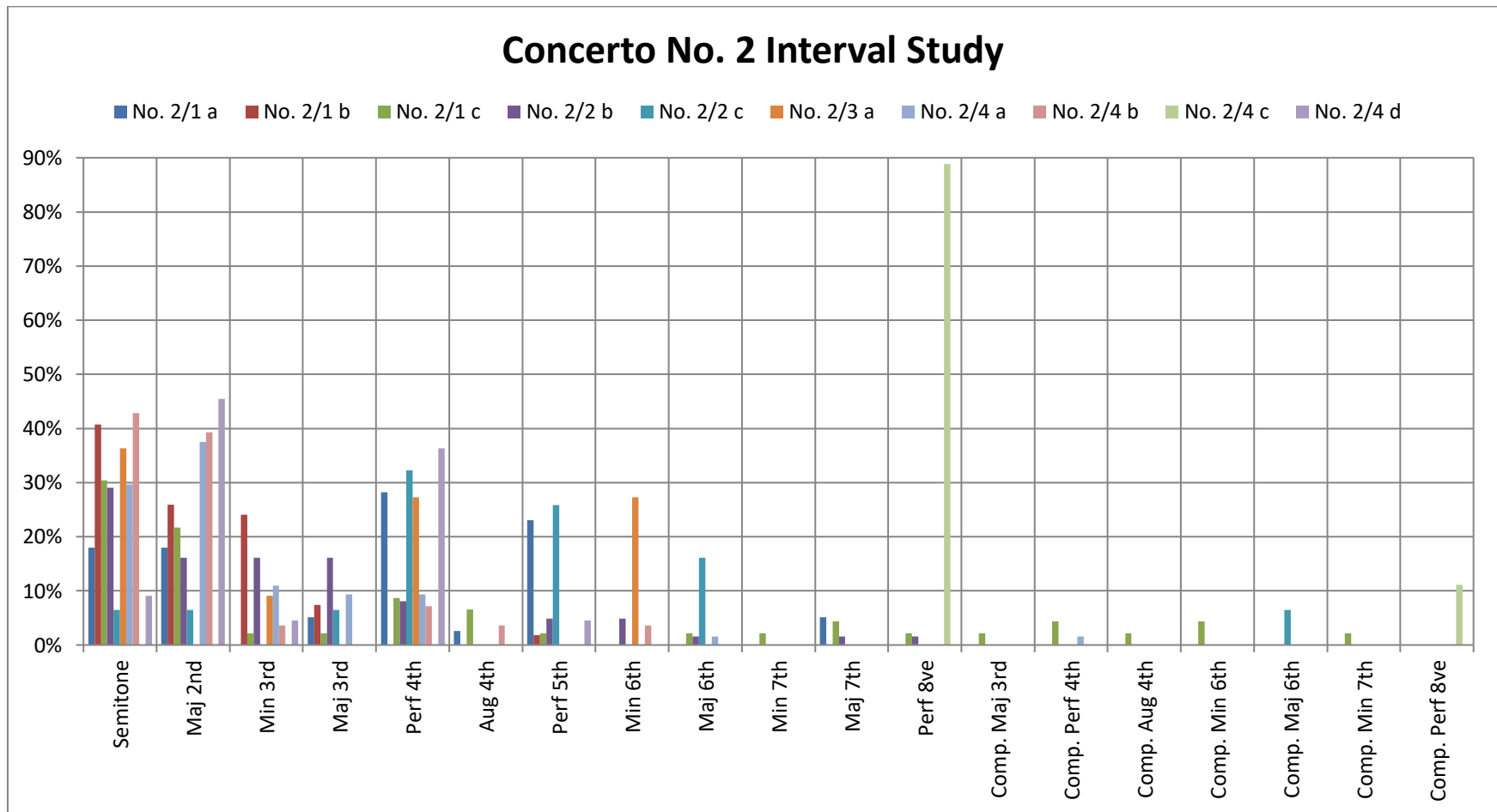


Figure 3.20. Interval Study – Piano Concerto No. 3

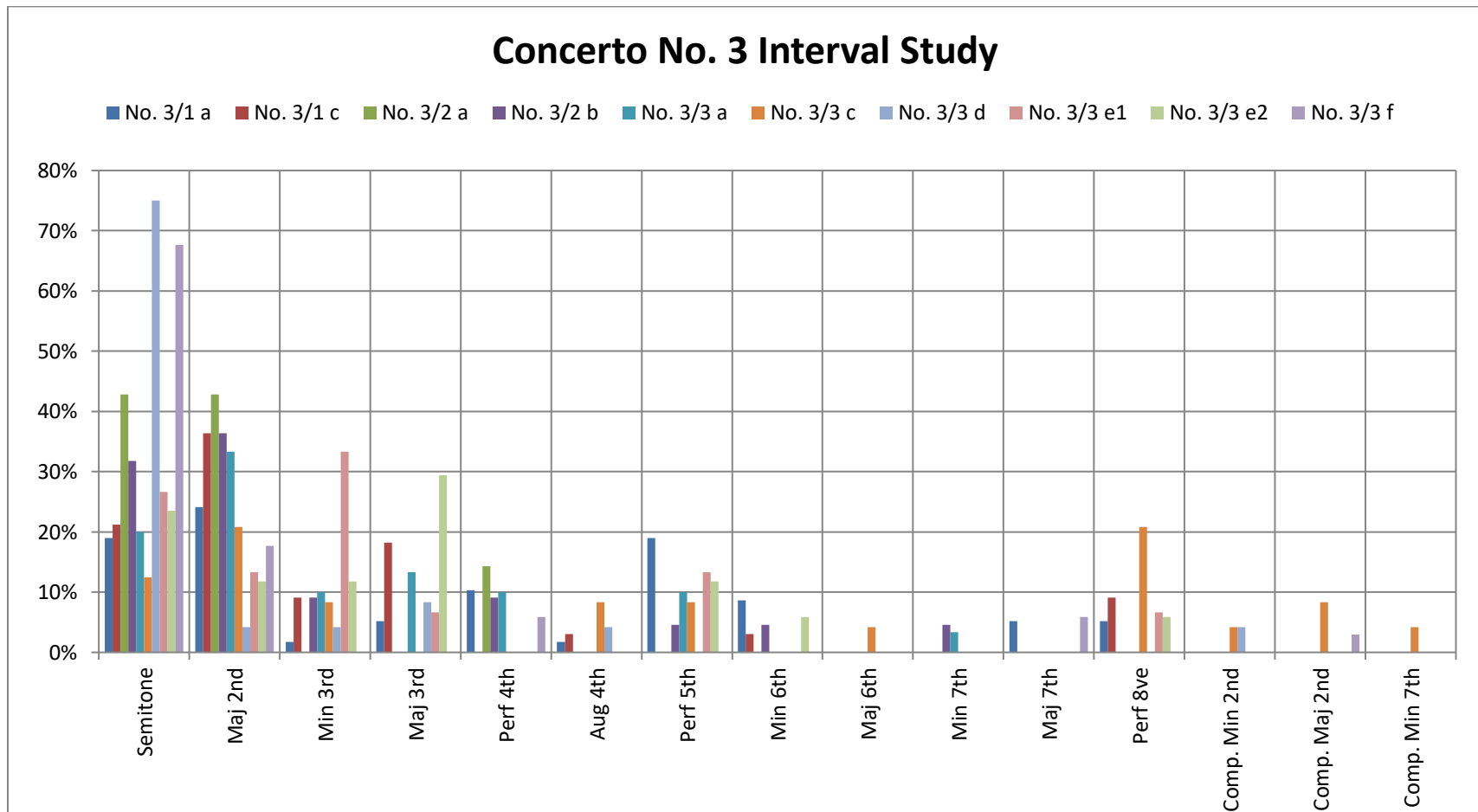
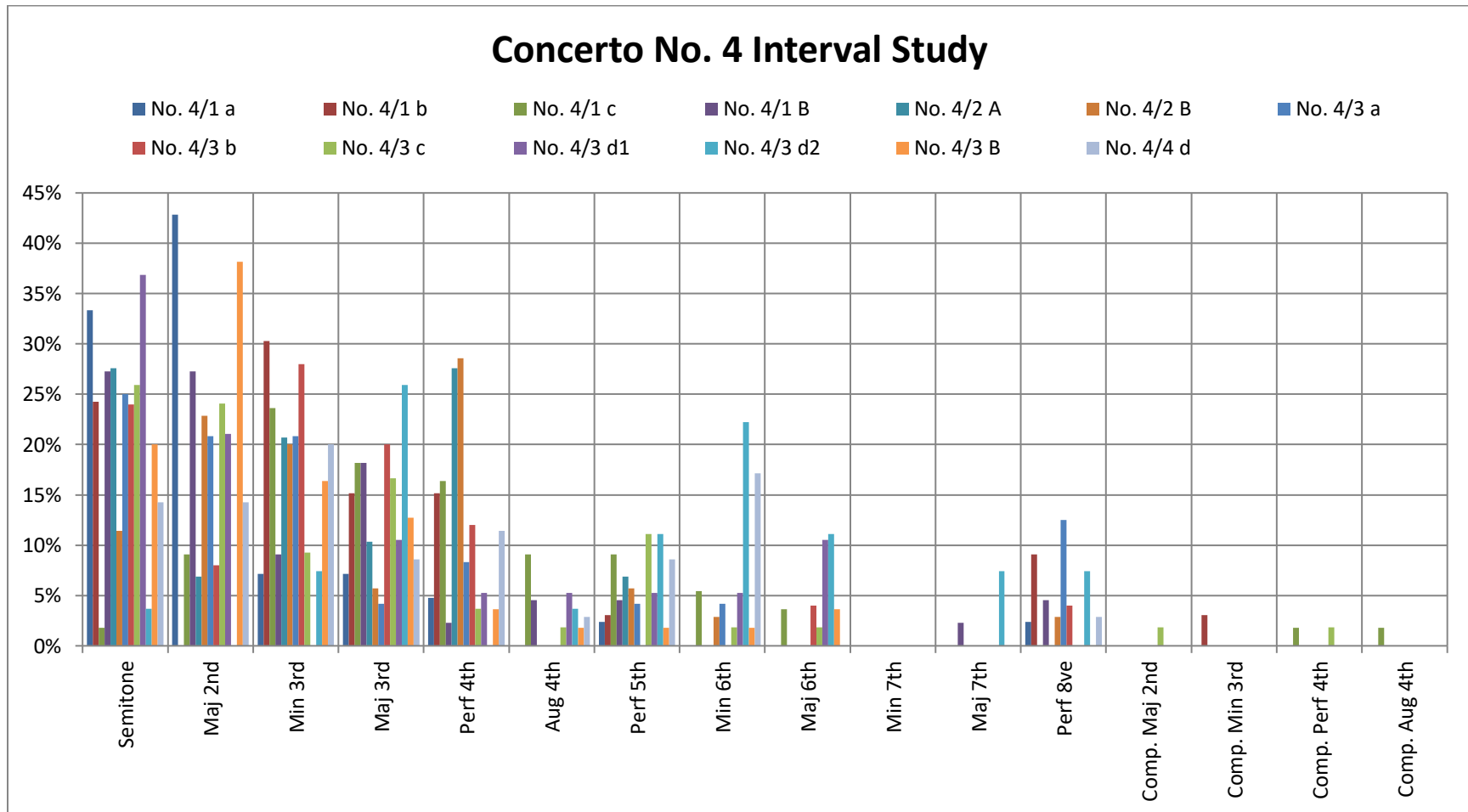


Figure 3.21. Interval Study – Piano Concerto No. 4



Unsurprisingly there is a peak of activity around the semitone and major second, and employment of the major and minor seventh is consistently sparse. The First Concerto shows a broad spectrum of intervals and given the small number of themes within this one-movement work, the proportion of compound intervals within Prokofiev's melodies is quite high. The Second Concerto maintains a similar level of compound intervals but in relation to a much larger number of themes, across four movements. The phrase range of the main melodic material seems to shrink slightly in the Third Concerto: with the exception of one compound minor seventh, thematic presentation is confined to the range of a major ninth. There is a slight expansion of phrase range in his Fourth Concerto which occupies a middle ground somewhere between the first and third concerti. Distinct to his left-hand concerto however, is an increase in the incorporation of the major and minor third: the frequency of use of these intervals both across and within the main themes exceeds the preceding works. Although this study was only carried out across the primary themes of each concerto, this finding aligns with the detailed dissection of the entire concerto discussed above. These results must be interpreted cautiously due to the substantial number of variable factors: duration, tonal preference, number of themes etc.

A closer examination of the themes extractable from his first three concerti show less complexity than some of those present in the concerto for left-hand. Sequencing forms part of earlier comparable themes and contributes towards similar compositional intent, such as melodic unity and balance, but the level of manipulation applied to set intervallic cells or sequences does not have precedent among his concerti. A selection

of themes from earlier concerti highlight the self-evident idioms that shape the melodic anatomy, they exhibit pronounced repetitive melodic and rhythmic features, and intervallic modification of a pre-established pattern.

Figure 3.22. 'Andantino': Concerto No. 2 theme (a), bars 4 - 12

Musical score for Figure 3.22, 'Andantino': Concerto No. 2 theme (a), bars 4 - 12. The score consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. A measure rest is followed by a quarter rest, then a series of eighth and quarter notes. The second staff continues the melody with similar rhythmic patterns and includes a trill-like figure in the final measure.

Figure 3.23. 'Allegro ma non troppo': Concerto No. 3 theme (f), bars 170 - 177

Musical score for Figure 3.23, 'Allegro ma non troppo': Concerto No. 3 theme (f), bars 170 - 177. The score consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a series of eighth notes, a triplet of eighth notes, and a sixteenth-note triplet. The second staff continues the melody with similar rhythmic patterns and includes a trill-like figure in the final measure.

Figure 3.24. 'Andantino': Concerto No. 2 theme (b), bars 12 - 23

Musical score for Figure 3.24, 'Andantino': Concerto No. 2 theme (b), bars 12 - 23. The score consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a series of eighth notes and quarter notes. The second and third staves continue the melody with similar rhythmic patterns and include a trill-like figure in the final measure.

These techniques are equivalent to the processes identified in the concerto for left-hand. However, the surface features of these earlier concerti are easily detected with a wealth

of timbral and textural options at his disposal, more pervasive methods of sequential extension, elaboration or development were unnecessary. Neil Minturn also contests that Prokofiev draws heavily on the idea of structural sets, either harmonic or melodic, and its descendants, derivatives and subsets. He concedes the fluidity of these sets, as:

There is no strictly methodical procedure for determining structural sets; structural sets emerge after one studies the entire piece. To determine the structural sets, one searches for a congruence between characteristic surface features and aspects of voice leading which play out and express processes inherent in those surface features.²⁸¹

Minturn likewise recognises the significance of ‘intervallic makeup’ as ‘a store of potential transformations upon which the music may draw’. However, in terms of the evolution of his piano concerti, the left-hand concerto displays greater degrees of organisational intricacy and a more comprehensive, discrete development of intervallic patterns, working within the delimiting confines of linear piano technique. Prokofiev’s musical aesthetic ascribes to the substantive world, an exploration of one-hand at the piano rather than the fictional projection of two hands. Sequential intricacy is not visible to the same degree in the areas which exploit the impression of a two-handed texture. The intermittent episodes that adopt a two-handed texture in this concerto support this claim, as they do not engineer the intervallic components towards a similar outcome. For example, when theme A from the ‘*Andante*’ (Concerto for left-hand) is executed in the piano, it often masquerades within a standard two-handed texture. While the major and minor third and the perfect fourth may form the nucleus from which the primary theme A spawns, the context in which these are deployed suggests

²⁸¹ Neil Minturn, *The Music of Sergei Prokofiev*, p. 65.

the juxtaposition of disparate broken chords or arpeggios, rather than a circumscribed or systematic evolution of intervallic patterns or derivatives (see **Figure 3.25.** for a rendition of theme A from the *'Andante'*). When Prokofiev chose to operate within typical pianistic textures, the manipulation applied to his linear themes may have been deemed redundant or overly complex within the two-handed context.

Figure 3.25. *'Andante'*: Theme A, bars 56 - 64

The musical score for Figure 3.25 consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the beginning of the piece at bar 56, marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The left hand plays a series of broken chords and arpeggios, while the right hand plays a more melodic line with some grace notes. The second system continues the piece, showing the right hand playing a more active melodic line with some grace notes, while the left hand continues with broken chords and arpeggios. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 6/8.

Taking into account any maturation of style in between the Third and Fourth piano concertos, it is still possible to conclude that the process of writing for one-hand had a sizeable impact on his typical melodic procedures within the context of the piano concerto, and that these techniques of intervallic manipulation are connected with the adoption of a linear texture. It's plausible that Prokofiev deliberately increased the complexity of the melody to maintain interest in the sections where the piano operates in a linear capacity. Elements of his intervallic procedures draw parallels with serialism: his original pattern serves as both a generative and unifying force for the sequence that

follows. His employment of retrograde and inverted permutations have more conspicuous associations with the Serialist movement, but as ever Prokofiev was reluctant to align himself with any particular movement, and applied these principles as he saw fit.

(ii). Phrase Structure

Further investigation into Prokofiev's melodic organisation prompted a cross-examination of the small-scale structure within the concerti, the phrasing length and arrangement of the main thematic material, especially when presented by the piano. However, Prokofiev's themes sometimes defy complete definition, veering towards motivic fragments rather than intact melodies. These fragments are then frequently cloaked in inventive, vigorous figuration, or embedded in the orchestration: this is quite prevalent in movements where the orchestra bears the brunt of melodic presentation and development, and the function of the soloist is mainly to provide contrasting colour and embellishment. Further difficulties arise in determining thematic components, and thereby establishing patterns of phrasing, when faced with Prokofiev's disinterest in conventional forms of melodic repetition. In many cases the original statement of the melody is the only full rendition of the theme unaltered, extended or dichotomized in orchestral dialogue. It is for these reasons that you may notice a small number of themes missing from the table in **Table 3.8.** below charting the results of the survey of phrasing trends.

Table 3.8. Phrase lengths of principal themes

Concerto	Movement	Theme	Phrase
No. 1	n/a	a	8 bars
No. 1	n/a	1b	4 bars
No. 1	n/a	2b	4 bars
No. 1	n/a	c	4 bars
No. 1	n/a	d	4 bars
No. 1	n/a	e	8 bars
No. 2	Mvt 1	a	8 bars
No. 2	Mvt 1	b	11 bars +1 beat
No. 2	Mvt 1	1c	4 bars
No. 2	Mvt 1	2c	4 bars
No. 2	Mvt 3	a	4 bars
No. 2	Mvt 3	b	4 bars
No. 2	Mvt 3	c	4 bars
No. 2	Mvt 3	d	8 bars
No. 2	Mvt 4	a	8 bars
No. 2	Mvt 4	b	8 bars
No. 2	Mvt 4	c	2 bars
No. 2	Mvt 4	d	8 bars
No. 3	Mvt 1	a	6/8 bars
No. 3	Mvt 1	c	8 bars
No. 3	Mvt 2	a	4 bars
No. 3	Mvt 2	b	8 bars
No. 3	Mvt 2	c	4 bars
No. 3	Mvt 3	a	9 bars
No. 3	Mvt 3	b	11 bars +1 beat
No. 3	Mvt 3	c	8 bars + 1 beat
No. 3	Mvt 3	d	6 bars + 1 beat
No. 3	Mvt 3	1e	8 bars
No. 3	Mvt 3	2e	11 bars
No. 3	Mvt 3	f	8 bars
No. 4	Mvt 1	a	6 bars + ¼ beat
No. 4	Mvt 1	b	8 bars
No. 4	Mvt 1	c	7 bars + ¼ beat
No. 4	Mvt 1	B	16 bars
No. 4	Mvt 1	C	11 bars
No. 4	Mvt 2	a	4 ½ bars
No. 4	Mvt 2	b	7 ½ bars
No. 4	Mvt 2	B	15 bars
No. 4	Mvt 3	a	9 bars + 1

No. 4	Mvt 3	b	7 bars + 1
No. 4	Mvt 3	c	9 bars
No. 4	Mvt 3	1d	4 bars + 2 beats
No. 4	Mvt 3	2d	8 bars
No. 4	Mvt 3	B	8 bars
No. 4	Mvt 4	1d	7 bars + upbeat
No. 4	Mvt 4	2d	8 bars

The evolution of melodic structure is glaringly evident on inspection of the aggregate results. There are a number of anomalies: for instance, theme (b) in the second movement of the Second Concerto exhibits an irregular pattern, but on the whole the phrasing of the earlier concerti is quite foursquare, consisting of rounded numbers and symmetrical arrangements. Of the 16 themes extractable from the Fourth Concerto, 11 engender irregular, unbalanced numbers, 69% of the melodic and motivic components present in Prokofiev's concerto for left-hand form unorthodox phrase lengths compared with 45% in the third piano concerto. It is perhaps pertinent to consider the chronology of the concerti at this juncture.

Prokofiev's First Concerto was written in 1911, and the Second Concerto soon followed in 1912, finishing it the following year. The Third Concerto had a much more haphazard and protracted development. The composer dates one particular passage from a rejected work in 1911, and a theme written in 1913 intended as a basis for a number of variations later became the backbone of the second movement. Over 1916 – 1917 he returned to the concerto, but WWI and the unstable political situation in Russia made working circumstances intractable. Settled in Brittany in 1921, material from an abandoned string quartet joined the elements accumulated thus far and the fabric of the Third Concerto was finally completed. Unfortunately, the manuscript to

the Second Concerto had been left behind when Prokofiev made his exit from Russia in 1918 and in the intervening years it had been destroyed. Consequently in 1923, Prokofiev reconstructed the work making alterations and improvements. Although these modifications predominantly affected the orchestration, the Second Concerto cannot be accepted as pre-dating the Third Concerto conclusively. Prokofiev signed a contract with Wittgenstein to write a concerto for left-hand in 1931.²⁸² The 8-year gap between the reformation of the Second Concerto and the initiation of the Fourth Concerto could certainly account for the shift towards uneven phrase permutations. Exposure to the progressive concepts and techniques that reigned in Europe undoubtedly had their bearing on the modernisation of Prokofiev's musical language. However, the unique challenge posed by this work cannot be discounted as an influential factor. The sustainability of melody with one-hand within various temporal constraints feasibly contributed to his choice of thematic material.

(iii). Melodic Development

In comparing the overall use of thematic and melodic material, a sense of greater economy prevails in his Fourth Concerto. Taking as an example the '*Andante*' second movement, all content stems from three thematic groups, forming both episodes A and B, transitional sections and the Coda. As many as five separate themes, plus unrelated bridge, motif and coda material appear in the earlier piano concerti, although the Third

²⁸² Sergei Prokofiev, *Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences* (Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific Honolulu, 2000), p. 29, pp. 58 – 59; Phillips, ed., *Sergei Prokofiev: Diaries 1915 – 1923*, p. 536, pp. 711 – 712.

Concerto shows a step towards this future economy, and displays a greater affiliation between the motivic and thematic material. The weight of transitional material engendered by the core musical material is also without compare in Prokofiev previous concerti. Contrary to the sense of musical frugality that pervades the structure, the number of discernible fleeting melodies presented throughout has increased. These melodies are banded together in groups: several short melodies combine to form the principal subjects. This procedure may reveal the difficulty in writing a melody of sustained length just for the left-hand.

TEMPO AND OTHER TEMPORAL CONSIDERATIONS

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand

Prokofiev's frequent espousal of the *moto perpetuo* style in his piano repertoire has been well documented, and reliance on this action in the opening and closing movements of the concerto for left-hand was a typical choice texturally and rhythmically.²⁸³ Although the toccata line of these movements is perforated and obscured by fleeting rests and changes in melodic complexion, an unrelenting pulse underpins the entire movement. Devoid of any changes in tempi, both 'Vivace' movements strictly maintain a consistent beat through to the last note. Many of the themes lend themselves to the toccata principle, featuring rapid figuration, a fervent sense of exertion or vivacity and virtuosic dexterity. The orchestra often maintains this mechanistic aesthetic in discourse with the solo piano, or in transition sections,

²⁸³ Stephen Fiess, *The Piano Works of Serge Prokofiev* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1994), p. 36.

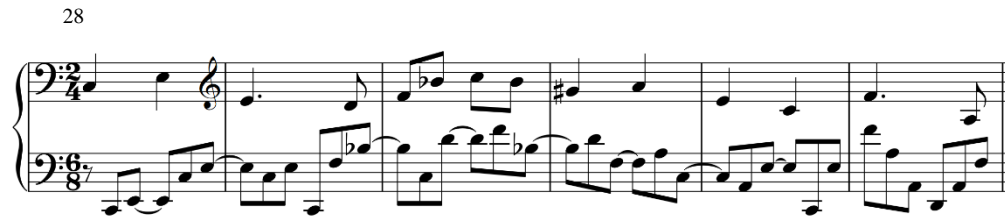
resulting in an unyielding drive throughout.

Theme (b) is a notable exception (see **Figure 3.7.**), the rhythmic profile, grace notes and angular melody exemplify the archetypal *scherzo*, another elemental facet of Prokofiev's compositional identity. Changes in metre from 2/4 to 3/4 occur intermittently, most adjustments in time signature only last for a bar. However, theme (d) brings more substantial sections in triple time. Whimsical, unpredictable placement of accents and erratic orchestral entries in conflation with the fluctuating metre, creates a rhythmic tension within an otherwise orderly framework. The wide registral leaps and angularity exhibited across the parts supply further irregular accentuation as a natural result of the melodic contour. All Romantic vestiges present in Prokofiev's pianistic style have been expunged; irregular groupings and polyrhythms have been replaced by simple, foursquare rhythms, there are few flourishes or superficial embellishments, lyrical material is placed in a much drier context, with staccato or motoric style accompaniment. Silence forms an integral part of the rhythmic landscape in these movements, the recurrent use of short rests contributes to the mechanical aspect of the compositional aesthetic and instances of mercurial implementation fragments the orchestral lines and offsets rhythmic predictability, especially within theme group A.

The '*Andante*' also adheres to a single tempo for the entire movement. However, a certain temporal flexibility is implied, befitting the languid, lyrical melody. This *rubato* approach signifies a return to particular Romantic pianistic traits: hemiolas and

polyrhythms are combined with the selective projection of a two-hand texture and derive from familiar textural and rhythmic procedures.

Figure 3.26. '*Andante*': Theme B, bars 28 - 33



Trickling embellishments are few however, and the use of more elaborate figuration is often repetitive and largely juxtaposed with the clear-cut rhythms of the principal melodies, presented uniformly by the orchestra. Visually the presence of manifold expressive ornamental devices harks a return to Romantic techniques, but the context, placement and ostinato-like treatment of these figures echo's Prokofiev's penurious development of his melodic material. Wastefulness is abhorred, superficial decoration shunned, each note has a function. This approach, shown overleaf in **Figure 3.27.**, could also be pertinent to the development of his simplified musical language.

The opening 6/8 time signature of the '*Andante*' is elongated or truncated briefly on occasion, but an extended shift into 2/4 (bars 80 – 118), temporarily expunges the natural undulation of the compound metre. The use of polymetre intermittently, 6/8 in the piano over 2/4 in the lower strings, could be interpreted as an editorial decision, rather than an effort to fuel the creation of cross-rhythms. The melody in the strings is certainly in 2/4: that only the piano remains in 6/8 is probably due to the high

preponderance of compound rhythms. All parts return to 6/8 after the full statement of Theme B by the lower strings, the beginning of which is shown in **Figure 3.27**, overleaf.

This page of a musical score contains the following parts and their musical content:

- Fl. (Flute):** Treble clef, playing a melodic line with a long slur across the first measure and a sharp sign in the second measure.
- Ob. (Oboe):** Treble clef, playing a whole rest in both measures.
- Cl. (Clarinet):** Treble clef, playing a whole rest in both measures.
- Bsn. (Bassoon):** Bass clef, playing a melodic line with a long slur across the first measure and a sharp sign in the second measure.
- C Hn. (Cor Anglais):** Treble clef, playing a melodic line with a long slur across the first measure and a sharp sign in the second measure.
- Pno. (Piano):** Grand staff (treble and bass clefs), playing a complex, fast-moving accompaniment with frequent quintuplets (marked with '5') and a sharp sign in the second measure.
- Vln. I (Violin I):** Treble clef, playing a melodic line with a long slur across the first measure and a sharp sign in the second measure.
- Vln. II (Violin II):** Treble clef, playing a melodic line with a long slur across the first measure and a sharp sign in the second measure.
- Vla. (Viola):** Alto clef, playing a melodic line with a long slur across the first measure and a sharp sign in the second measure.
- Vc. (Violoncello):** Bass clef, playing a melodic line with a long slur across the first measure and a sharp sign in the second measure.
- Db. (Double Bass):** Treble clef, playing a whole rest in both measures.

The '*Moderato*' is the only movement that draws on multiple tempi throughout in lieu of a singular pulse for the duration. The martial connotations implied by the opening fanfare and steady beat are undermined by the 3/4 time signature, which yields a rather lopsided gait. Fantastical scalar runs contribute to the grotesquery of the anomalous fanfare, and adorn the accompanying static crotchets. The use of rhythmically intricate figuration atop a fixed or passive accompaniment is deployed periodically throughout this movement, perhaps to its detriment. David Nice suggests that:

If Prokofiev had difficulties shaping this singular work, it shows only in the third movement, blessed with a plethora of striking and well-defined ideas which can be convincingly coherent only when played by the most compelling interpreter.²⁸⁴

This lack of cohesion is borne out by further rhythmic study. The laconic and integrated rhythmic concepts of the preceding movements have been replaced by variance on all temporal levels with an assortment of tempi, irregular rhythmic groupings and metres.

There is a subsidiary correlation between the internal reflective and proportional procedures that shape the melody, and the analogous considerations that guide the rhythmic arrangement of two distinct themes from the first and fourth movements respectively. Rhythmically speaking, the two bars which open Theme (a) from the first movement also conclude this theme, but are applied in reverse order so theme (a) begins and ends with an almost identical rhythmic figure. **Figure 3.28.** overleaf highlights these two rhythmic groupings, and their subsequent reversal.

²⁸⁴ Nice, *Prokofiev: From Russia to the West*, p. 290.

Figure 3.28. ‘Vivace’: Theme (a) – rhythmic properties, bars 1 - 7

This compliments the inversion and reverse application of the melodic cells discussed above in **Melodic Shape and Application**. Theme (f) introduced in the final ‘Vivace’ has yet stronger repetitive practices, as the melodic and rhythmic patterns work in tandem. The two patterns which appear at the beginning of the theme highlighted in **Figure 3.29**. below, are repeated verbatim at the end of the phrase, with the exception of two miniscule rhythmic variances.

Figure 3.29. ‘Vivace’ (Finale): Theme (f), bars 29 - 36

The additional rhythmic rigidity visible in the concerto for left-hand could be attributed to a desire for deliberate thematic unification within a linear structure comparable to his melodic operations, or it could be attributed to his quest for a simplified musical language, or perhaps a renunciation of Romantic rhythmic flamboyancy as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Comparative Analysis

The First Concerto lacks the rhythmic sophistication of later works; orchestral rhythms are typically unadventurous, the work deviates from the common time mould for only one bar, and stitches the divergent segments of the concerto together with pronounced temporal devices (*rallentando*, *accelerando*, *fermata*). My reading conforms with the sentiments purported by Stephen Fiess, that:

The rhythms in Prokofiev's Russian Period piano music are not on the whole innovative [...] they are always metrical, are usually unsyncopated, and rarely use note-values smaller than a sixteenth-note.²⁸⁵

It could also be argued that Prokofiev's First Concerto fits into his 'classical' strand and certainly there are aspects which set a precedence for future output. For instance, the core rhythmic idioms present in this concerto would become characteristic of Prokofiev's pianistic style, and occupy crucial space in the rhythmic outline of future concerti. Crisp motoric sections can be observed prevalently and routinely from the First Concerto onwards, most conspicuous in this category is the demonic and unrelenting 'Scherzo' from the second piano concerto. This toccata aesthetic finds correlation in the dispassionate *stile mécanique* dominant in the 'Vivace' that opens and closes the Fourth Concerto. As noted earlier, this line is sometimes fragmented both in the piano part and in the orchestra, but the underlying sense of continuity is unaffected. Within the melodic context and linear texture of the solo piano, sporadic placement of short rests function as an antidote to the monotony of a single continuous line and offer timbral variance as the orchestra peeps through this breath in the solo

²⁸⁵ Fiess, *The Piano Works of Serge Prokofiev*, p. 36

piano part. The disjointed orchestral parts are deliberately transparent to allow the piano to transcend the orchestra's power in its reduced capacity. The rest holds a responsibility and value in the *'Vivace'* distinct from the preceding concerti, although there is an interesting association with the Second Concerto. The fierce *'Allegro tempestoso'* from the finale (Concerto No. 2) consists of a single melodic line presented by the orchestra and piano in continuous quavers (the strings duplicate some of the pitches as semiquavers). However, intermittent unexpected rests puncture the otherwise homogenous texture and movement, but the rests occur in different places for different instruments creating variance in the texture, timbre and rhythm in the same way as the *'Vivace'*. The excerpt below contains only select orchestral instruments.

Figure 3.30. 'Finale': Concerto No. 2 theme (a) – select instrumentation, bars 1 - 2

The musical score for Figure 3.30 shows the first two bars of the 'Finale' of Concerto No. 2. The score is written for five instruments: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The piano part (Pno.) features a melodic line with quavers and rests, while the woodwinds (Fl., Ob., Cl., Bsn.) provide harmonic support with similar rhythmic patterns. A first ending bracket is marked above the piano part in the second measure.

The rhythmic devices of the second and Third Concertos reveal startling rhythmic evolution from his first piano concerto. They engage with many more uneven rhythmic groupings, rhythmically varied layers, and Romantically-inspired polyrhythms and polymeters. Romantic approach to rhythmic movement in his slow movements forms a temporal trend alongside his mechanistic aesthetic. Both qualities were acknowledged by Prokofiev as integral to his basic lines of composition, combined with his 'classical line' and his 'modern line'.²⁸⁶ The haunting melody which opens the second piano concerto engages a lyricism tantamount to the yearning *Andante Assai* from the First Concerto, or the poignant pianistic development of the '*Andante*' in the first movement of the Third Concerto.

While Prokofiev eschews the bulk of his Romantically oriented tendencies in the left-hand concerto, but the second movement '*Andante*' bears the imprint of these sentimental leanings in his rhythmic selections and elaborations. Long, arching melody lines are accompanied by rocking triplets, florid sweeping demisemi-quavers, and similar virtuoso style figurations. Unlike previously however, this Romanticism is somewhat reticent, and overbearing mawkishness is neutralized by the systematic arrangement of rhythm groupings. The complexity of rhythmic layering, the intricate embellishment interlaced with elementary rhythmic patterns, the improvisatory style cadenzas of the second and Third Concertos, are replaced in the Fourth Concerto with measured rhythmic regulation. The concerto for left-hand is reluctant to embrace this

²⁸⁶ Prokofiev, *Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences*, p. 36.

vacillating rhythmic approach; many of the more elaborate passages adhere mainly to one rhythm selection, melodic sections do not integrate diverse rhythmic groupings in the same neighbourly fashion. Bars 80 – 92 of the ‘*Andante*’ from the concerto for left-hand draw primarily on continual demisemiquaver quintuplets (see **Figure 3.27.** for bars 80 – 83 of the ‘*Andante*’); while the coda (in **Figure 3.31.** below) relies solely on semiquavers for the first 5 bars.

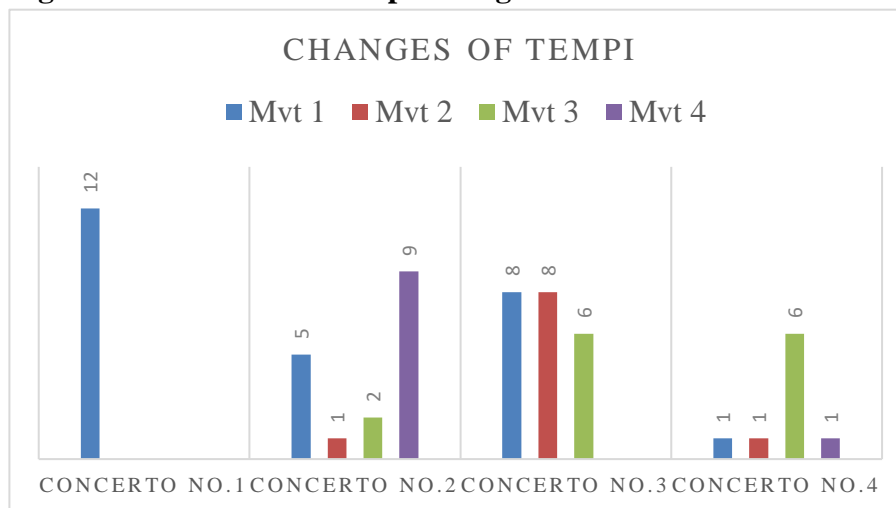
Figure 3.31. ‘*Andante*’: Coda, bars 146 - 148

The musical score for the Coda of the 'Andante' movement, bars 146-148, is presented in 6/8 time. It consists of five staves: Piano (Pno.), Violin II (Vln. II), Viola (Vla.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Db.). The Piano part begins with a demisemiquaver quintuplet marked *pp legato*. The other instruments play a melodic line marked *pp tranquillo*. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Prokofiev adheres to a single tempo for three movements of the concerto for left-hand. For a work already operating within in strict confines, limiting creative scope further with the imposition of static tempi throughout these movements, is an unusual decision. It is also exceptional within the context of previous piano concerti. The number of directed tempo changes in each concerto have been itemized in **Figure 3.32.** according to movement. The volume of temporal permutations in the First Concerto must be

considered within its one-movement format, if presented in three movements, four changes of tempo in each movement would not seem excessive. Further reflection on the supplementary category of performance duration confirms that the number of tempo changes within the First Concerto are not disproportionately high in relation to the second and third concerti. In fact, the Third Concerto, which lasts approximately thirty minutes, nearly twice as long as the First Concerto's sixteen minutes, also contains double the number of shifts in tempo, 24 to the First Concerto's 12.

Figure 3.32. Number of tempo changes in each concerto



The first three concerti could be considered broadly consistent therefore in their ratio of tempo change to performance duration. In light of these considerations, the concerto for left-hand represents a change of tactic in Prokofiev's approach towards temporal stability. While the 'Scherzo' from the Second Concerto maintains one speed throughout, the movement lasts only two and a half minutes, and more significantly, an unerring beat is required in the delivery of this *moto perpetuo*. The internal logic behind the steadfast tempi of the concerto for left-hand once again points towards the

facilitation of stylistic cohesion: alteration of pulse would prohibit seamless weaving of thematic material. Comparable to his newly restrained approach to rhythmic groupings, this could also be interpreted as a reaction to the extravagant metrical leeway eked out by the Romantics and another facet of his simplified musical language.

ORCHESTRATION AND DYNAMICS

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand

Prokofiev excludes or reduces the more penetrating instruments from his accompanying orchestra: piccolo and tuba are omitted completely and a skeletal brass section of only two horns, and a single trumpet and trombone is employed. Percussion is drastically downsized; it consists of a sole bass drum. A full string section and a desk each of flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons form the main body of the orchestra. Both the collective sonorous output and the lean deployment of instrumentation throughout the concerto is more suggestive of a chamber orchestra than a symphony orchestra. In the *'Vivace'* the lower strings, viola, cello and double bass are the most consistently utilized, with various combinations of woodwind, and to lesser extent brass, interjecting the flecks of timbral colour. Their contributions are typically short lived, crisply articulated and segmented by regular rest bars. The bass drum provides interesting and effective support to the piano's rendition of Theme (d) (bars 170 – 181) reinforcing rhythmic elements of the melody and adding further depth and clout to the linear melody located in the extreme bass register of the piano. The violins maintain a discursive relationship with the piano, although this interaction diminishes towards the end of the movement. When the soloist is highlighted they are frequently tacet, but

respond to the main melodic activities when the piano peddles material of minor importance or falls silent. The violins often provide momentum through transition sections also.

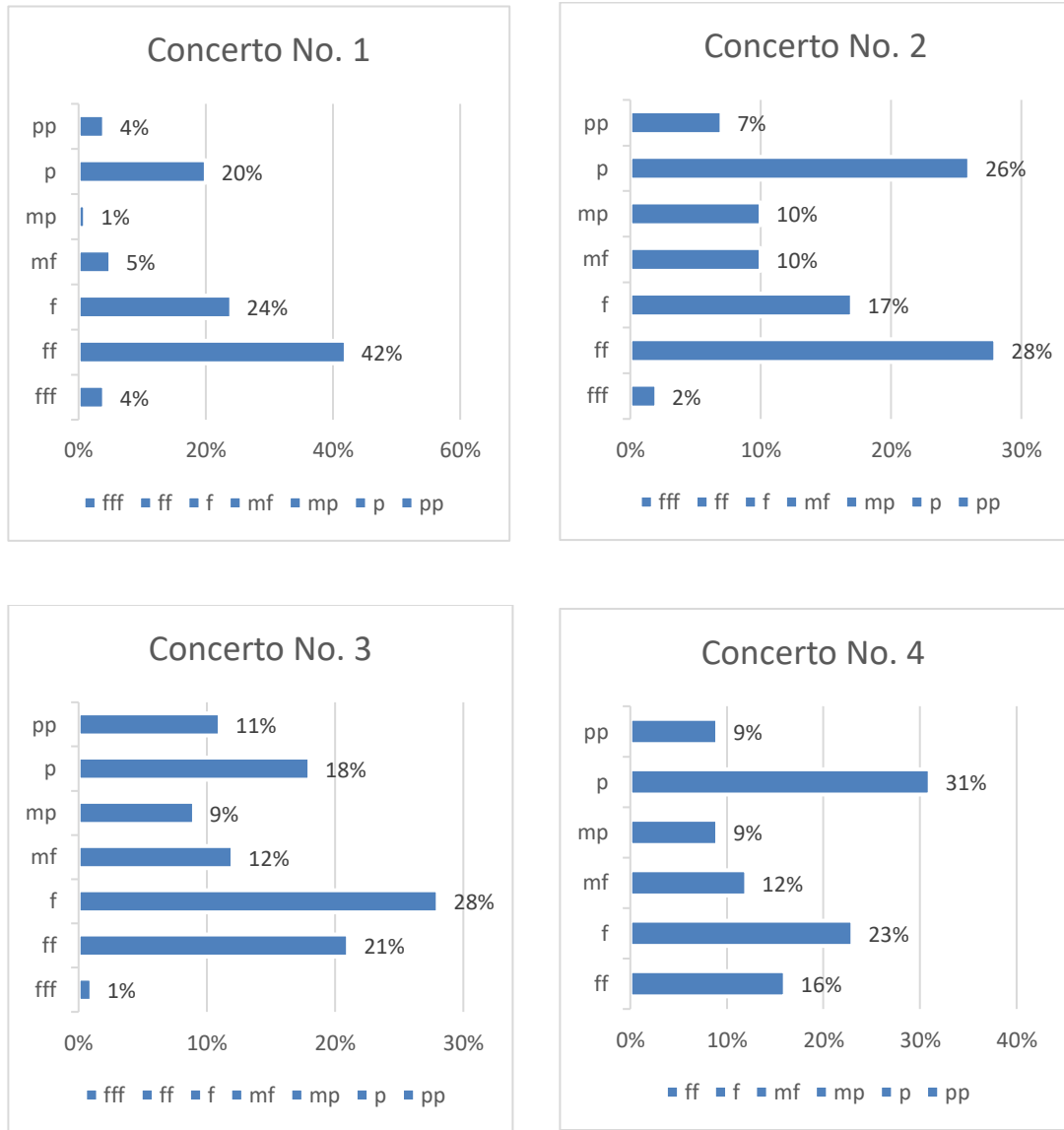
In the '*Andante*', where the piano assumes a two-handed texture, orchestral offerings are subtle and minimal, or non-existent. When the piano resumes linear or ornamental activities the orchestra functions as the melodic carrier, or in the capacity of contrapuntal contrast. In these sections, the orchestra carries a more prominent role than in the '*Vivace*': the fragmentation of the vivacious first movement has given way to unified melodic and rhythmic practices, sustained lyrical lines and a more full-blooded tone. There is a curious contrast between the stratified, lush sections of *divisi* string playing (i.e. bars 35 – 40) with sighs of unexpected harmony, and the timbral, textural and harmonic hollowness delineated by the juxtaposition of unison orchestral sequences at differing pitch classes and rapid pianistic embellishment (bars 80 – 91). In line with melodic and rhythmic findings, the orchestration in the '*Moderato*' is the most lacklustre of the concerto despite some wonderfully characterful and programmatic melodies. Ostinato patterns and homophonic formations feature routinely, with prevalence of imitative procedures or melodic fortification increasing throughout the movement. These last practices come to the fore particularly in the development section, scattered with selective contrapuntal passages, the movement reaches its apogee as the strings unite to deliver the melody of a strange, ephemeral waltz, with uncouth interjections from the bass drum, clarinet and bassoon that heighten the macabre or grotesque aspect of the dance.

Dynamically the finale movement makes an interesting case study since it illustrates the delicate tracery within his linear themes by abstaining from heavier volumes, and adopts an understated expressivity within the softer dynamic range. The solo piano does not venture above *mf*, and spends 70 % of the movement within a specified *p* dynamic. Fresh life is breathed into the melodies of the first movement, placed within this different expressive context. This frothiness and lightness of touch is highlighted by an increase in imitative and contrapuntal practices, weaving an airy web of gossamer linearity.

Comparative Analysis

You would expect a concerto with delicate balance issues to bolster the solo part with ample robust dynamic expression to ensure optimum balance. However, use of gentle expressive direction is slightly proportionally higher within the Fourth Concerto than in previous piano concerti as can be seen from the pie charts overleaf. The percentages allocated to each dynamic level in **Figure 3.33**. were calculated by noting the main dynamic indicated to the pianist in each relevant bar, and measuring the ratio of bars containing a single expressive performance direction to the overall number of bars played by the piano in each concerto. While the percentage difference is not vast, it's plausible Prokofiev was considering the pragmatics of performing this work; projection of a *f* or *ff* dynamic would fatigue the hand more quickly in an effort to reach an impact of presentation equivalent to the standard pianistic interpretation of *f*, additionally it would be wearing on the audience to listen to long episodes of forceful piano playing particularly in his preferred linear style.

Figure 3.33. Dynamic use in each concerto



Despite busy orchestration, the First Concerto is a little flat in tone and timbre when held alongside its colossal successors. The orchestral palette of the Second Concerto is far more varied and colourful, Prokofiev recorded in his diary that he was aiming for a

'light and transparent accompaniment.'²⁸⁷ Just as there is a broad textural resemblance between the '*Andantino*' from the Second Concerto and the '*Andante*' from the Fourth Concerto (see **Pianistic Considerations**), there is an additional correlation in texture and motion between the overlapping, slithering *divisi* strings especially apparent between bars 6 – 8 of the '*Andantino*' and bars 34 – 40 in the '*Andante*' from the concerto for left-hand. However, in the '*Andantino*' this accompaniment underpins the piano's lyrical melody but the analogous melody and string accompaniment are presented independently of one another in the '*Andante*'. Other reliable orchestral techniques serve him well, the cushion of rhythmic ostinato, discursive periods between orchestra and soloist, colourful dramatic expression and unexpected accents. Perhaps the most obvious change from earlier concerti is the reduction in the size of the orchestra, but there is also a difference in the way the orchestra and soloist are used throughout the concerto for left-hand. Previous concerti saw more independent use of both orchestra and pianist: the orchestra might present material unaided by the soloist and the piano could also operate in a solo capacity for extensive periods. Neither of these approaches can be seen in the concerto for left-hand. orchestra and pianist operate in a more integrated fashion, and individual ventures are short-lived.

²⁸⁷ Phillips, ed., *Sergei Prokofiev: Diaries 1907-1914*, p. 359.

PIANISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand

The design and application of pianistic textural devices and chord formations can be gathered broadly into four categories; the linear approach (labelled as **Direct Linearity**), reinforcement of predominantly linear textures (**Complex Linearity**), contrapuntal approaches (**Contrapuntal Activity**), and standard pianistic operations (**Traditional Dual-Handed Exchange**). The technical ramifications of these groupings impact the physical, mechanical and kinaesthetic demands on the pianist. Hence, the various divisions shall also consider the somatic and technical requirements, especially those peculiar to Prokofiev's left-hand technique.

Direct Linearity

Most conspicuous in terms of textural treatment is the domination of linear enterprises, a stylistic hallmark of this concerto which is applied extensively throughout. While the second and third movements lean on additional textural devices, the core melodic material presented in both '*Vivace*' movements is distinctly linear (see **Figures 3.6.**, **Figure 3.7.** and **Figure 3.8.** for the first 3 themes of the '*Vivace*', all of which are linear). Where the onus of linear melodic exposition falls to the orchestra, the piano may accompany or elaborate employing differing textures. Similarly, subsequent iterations of themes may be represented in flexible textural formats, but is nearly always presented first as a single line in either the solo piano or orchestra. The only deviation in the '*Vivace*' from this maxim is theme (e), within theme group C, which is presented in the context of two contrapuntal lines (for theme (e) see **Figure 3.9.**).

While the upper line is more indicative of the melody, the contrapuntal setting of this theme disguises its linearity.

Within their linear capacity, each of the thematic fragments within Theme Group A proffer distinct technical challenges. All three melodies must be cleanly articulated, with only small dabs of pedal potentially required. Generally, interpretations are kept very dry with an almost percussive approach. The rapid figuration of theme (a) is enclosed within a graduated melodic contour, ascending action is interspersed with motion in the opposite direction, which minimises the lateral strain on the torso. However, the scalar and arpeggiated layout utilises formations more familiar and more convenient to the right-hand. Semiquaver groupings are largely kept within the hand span but require rapid rotation of the wrist and thumb. This swift action is best assisted by a relaxed shoulder and arm, yet requires enough tension to achieve the *fortissimo* dynamic indicated. The abrupt registral shifts within theme (b) solicit further support from the core, while the velocity of theme (c) echoes the technical demands of theme (a). There is a curious intersection between linear and standard pianistic textures in the piano's rendition of the second episode, Theme B from bars 101 – 117. Proffered originally by the first violins, the piano's delivery of this melody is visually suggestive of a linear theme, but the registral and temporal relationship between the notes of this passage implies aurally a crisply articulated melody and accompaniment. The *staccato sempre* directive negates the use of pedal in the passage and the entire left arm is engaged in constant vacillation between the bass and middle registers. See theme B below in **Figure 3.34**.

Figure 3.34. 'Vivace': Theme B, bars 101 – 106



The 'Andante' demonstrates its linearity in a slightly different way to the opening 'Vivace'; it selects certain Romantic traits and textures but applies them in an isolated and exposed manner. Waves of rippling, theatrical broken chords race across the length of the piano, each semiquaver quintuplet constructed to fit within the hand to promote seamless movement and action. Once again, the technical success of this passage lies in gestural alacrity and speed, the continual rotational and crossover actions must be seamless in order to produce the desired effect. It would also benefit from light, continuous pedalling. However, there is no melodic suggestion within this figuration, nor are there any other grand gestures or chords that typify Romantic pianism. From bars 80 – 91 this embellishment is juxtaposed at varying octaves with a monophonic offering of the melody by the orchestra: this in essence is the stark combination of two individual lines (see **Figure 3.27.**). This approach conveys a textural and harmonic vacuity, a desolate lyricism whose purity and clarity of expression is replicated repeatedly throughout this movement. All instances of linear arpeggiation or elaboration in the piano in this movement are set against clean orchestral lines moving in a unified fashion, although staggered entries, imitative procedures and harmonic deviations cloud the clarity of these lines briefly as the movement progresses.

Complex Linearity

While the first movement of Prokofiev's Concerto for Left-Hand relies almost solely on linear patterns in the piano, the second movement knits trickling scalar passages and sweeping arpeggiation with passages of more conventional pianistic texture. The most elementary of these is a thickening of the melodic line; doubling at the octave is selected frequently to bolster melodic prominence and dynamic, and may proceed in octaves for entire passages, for example bars 93 – 102 of the '*Andante*'. Prokofiev employs this close relation of the linear narrative throughout the concerto to great effect and in the first movement the repetition of theme (d) in octaves at bar 170, increases the angularity of the melody, and leans into the extreme bass register which enhances the portentous quality of the theme. At a brisk pace this would be extremely tiring on the hand, wrist, arm and torso if the pianist is unable to use the right hand to support the rapid traversal of the keyboard either on the side of the piano, or on the piano bench. The '*Moderato*' also sees the inclusion of open octaves in both the exposition and recapitulation. A further variation on this linear discourse is the occasional addition of one or more harmonic notes which serves to highlight certain tonal progressions, but does not constitute an accompaniment or contrapuntal line.²⁸⁸

Contrapuntal Activity

The contrapuntal operations on display within this concerto represent another descendent of the linear narrative, albeit a more elaborate one. Few of these

²⁸⁸ Throughout the concerto for left-hand these harmonic additions occasionally amount to a full chord interspersed with a linear melody, this is most prevalent in the 3rd movement, *Moderato*.

occurrences represent true contrapuntalism in the sense that all lines bear equal melodic weight, but rather seek to represent contrapuntal texture within a melodically hierarchical layout. The return of the transitional figure at bar 118 in the piano part of the ‘*Andante*’ adopts such contrapuntalism: the upper line plainly outlines the melody presented in a thickened linear format during the first transition starting at bar 20, the lower part consists of a line chosen for its primarily chromatic contour and harmonic colour rather than its thematic significance. See **Figure 3.35.** below.

Figure 3.35. ‘*Andante*’: Transition 1 extended, bars 118 – 121



As mentioned previously, Theme (e) from the ‘*Vivace*’ adopts a similar approach (see **Figure 3.9.**). Here, the immiscibility of juxtaposing contrapuntal lines results in some more awkward technical operations. The two independent lines of theme (e) measured horizontally consists entirely of compound intervals. The stress and stretch on the hand to maintain the *pesantissimo forte* instruction during this rising series of major and minor 9ths, is facilitated by the insertion of minims at regular junctures in each contrapuntal line, to ease fatigue and assist repositioning. Within the piano part, contrapuntal techniques are administered least frequently, they feature particularly rarely in the ‘*Moderato*’. There is a sense, when contrapuntal textures are employed, that the vertical collision or assemblage of notes is secondary in general to the linearity and continuity of horizontal operations.

Traditional Dual-Handed Exchange

Textures that relate most closely to conventional pianistic approaches are expounded chiefly in the inner movements, exploring traditional and cluster chord formations, and melody and accompaniment patterns. The latter mode is more naturally perceptible where the melody and accompaniment parts adhere to registral norms; where a sense of distance exists between the parts. Theme B from the '*Andante*' fabricates a phantom right-hand texturally, the first exploitation of two-handed texture in the concerto (see **Figure 3.26.**). Balance between the melody and accompaniment is crucial to the Romantic portrayal of this yearning lyrical melody atop a rocking triplet accompaniment, but the tempo, *tranquillo e molto cantabile*, and the typical allocation of register to melody and accompaniment aid the creation of this false reality.

The delivery of this technique varies in technical difficulty. The example of Theme B above (see **Figure 3.26.**) demonstrates this approach in its most modest form; the following presentation of Theme A (**Figure 3.36.**) from the same movement invokes a comparable two-handed texture but requires greater speed and agility: the range covered is more expansive, various vertical pitch arrangements are physically impossible to produce and must be split up, and the balance of melody and accompaniment simultaneously within the hand demands far more control than the above Theme B, which alternates between melody and accompaniment lines.

Figure 3.36. 'Andante': Theme A, bars 56 - 64

The musical score for Figure 3.36, 'Andante': Theme A, bars 56 - 64, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece at bar 56, marked with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The music is in 6/8 time and B-flat major. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and ties, while the left hand plays a complex, rhythmic accompaniment of semiquavers. The second system continues the piece, showing the intricate interplay between the two hands as they move through the bars.

In the opening 'Vivace', the repeat of Theme B at bar 223 also emulates a two-hand texture, but the registral proximity of the two parts, and the intertwining semiquavers produce a more contrapuntal impression (see **Figure 3.37.**) Additionally, it is not without precedent in standard piano repertoire to observe a texture such as this allocated to one hand, although the right hand would typically undertake this task as the thumb, index and middle fingers would be more suited to the maintenance of scuttling semiquavers, while the fourth and fifth fingers perpetuated the melody above. While the left-hand thumb may be appropriate to the projection of a melodic line, this leaves the weaker fingers to control the underlying rapid figuration. This would create acute technical difficulties for most pianists, given the reduced stability and stamina of the fourth and fifth fingers, and the unpredictable patterns outlines. Potentially, the pause in ostinato semiquavers (bars 228 and 230) was an attempt to ease technical strain, in order to prevent undue fatigue in the lower part of the hand, and assist in the

maintenance of the theme above, which may include swift changes of hand position and swivel motions from the wrist.

Figure 3.37. 'Vivace': Theme B, bars 223 - 230



Further examples of two-handed strategies abound in the *Moderato*, for example the return of theme (a) at bar 87, or Theme B beginning at bar 130. However, the textural classification of all sections is impractical as the lines between these groups are often blurred as they can draw on more than one textural technique. For instance, Theme B above, exploits elements of contrapuntalism under the guise of a melody and accompaniment-style blueprint.

Typical chordal expression is fragmented and infrequent, customarily tailored to fit within the hand span, and rarely consist of more than three notes. Only the *Moderato* includes more densely populated chords, see for instance bar 105, or for the most congested, climatic chords see bar 173. The clusters found in the latter set of chords would require the two notes to be struck simultaneously by the thumb, a reference to another textural singularity peculiar to this movement (see **Figure 3.38.**). The first cluster chords are introduced as part of a virtuosic scalar sequence in bars 22 and 23, and contribute to the grotesquery of the subsequent anamorphic fanfare. The

construction of bars 221 – 223 subsists almost entirely on clashing pairs of notes as shown in **Figure 3.39**.

Figure 3.38. ‘Moderato’: Excerpt from cadenza, bars 173 - 174



Figure 3.39. ‘Moderato’: Cluster chords, bars 221 - 223



Comparative Analysis

Two textural factors relevant to originality and construction of the concerto for left-hand emerge from the pages of the First Concerto. Distinct among Prokofiev’s textural choices are the large portions of unison performance, in octaves in both hands, octaves in triplicate, or as a single line in each hand. Many motivic figures are spun out in the piano in this way, while the orchestra elaborates or builds tension: the *Animato* from the First Concerto provides the lengthiest display of octave doubling or tripling of a single line. In essence, this approach aligns with the reinforcement of linear motion found in the concerto for left-hand. However, the linear structures of the First Concerto cover particular harmonic functions, many times outlining diatonic chords. The delineation of the linear aesthetic of the Fourth Concerto rarely bears the directional

responsibility of harmonic function in this way.

Contrarily, other principal textural features unfurled in the First Concerto depend on a state of reciprocity between the hands; this reliance on the interaction and integration of motion between hands contributes not just to the theatricality of the performance, but results in subtle timbral variations, speedy changes of register, and imbricated layers of embellishment. Rising arpeggios or scalar figures are actualized by frequent hand-crossing. Networks of large chords or octaves culminating in clangorous, bell-like sequences are achieved through rapid alteration of hands in differing registers, or intertwining positions where one hand is raised above the other. Related methods of elaboration and textural interplay dependent on the complimentary action between hands are broadcast extensively in the Third Concerto. Bars 101 - 140 in the opening '*Andante*' subsist only on these interdependent actions, and the *Poco Meno Mosso* from the same movement draws heavily on analogous co-dependent vigour. Although in some cases these enterprises result in a linear contour, analogous left-hand-only derivatives of such embroidery would be inconceivable without the corresponding limb.

The '*Andantino*', '*Intermezzo*' and '*Finale*' from the Second Concerto contain more autonomous motion, resulting in a higher quantity of material and textural approaches that could not be satisfactorily replicated by just the left-hand. Melody and accompaniment blend seamlessly with contrapuntal elements, these components are integral to the textural skeleton of the Second Concerto. The independent operation of the hands issues more complex textures, opposing gestural activities and wide-ranging

angular melodic contours. Indeed, the cadenza from the *'Andantino'* offers some of the most challenging textural and rhythmic combinations within the piano concerto repertoire. Melodic and textural exchange between hands for atmosphere and effect is employed in a similar manner to the First Concerto, but application is more restrained. However, these independent operations could also be viewed as a step towards the linear juxtapositions present in the concerto for left-hand, and while the composite textural effects could not be effectively duplicated by the left-hand, elements of these respective movements, particularly the contours of right-hand practices, are visible in the left-hand concerto.

The entire second movement *'Scherzo'* and the opening theme of the *'Finale'* provide glaring statements of Prokofiev's continuing propensity towards linearity. In unison octaves for the entire movement, the static textural mode is self-evident throughout. The *'Finale'* likewise exhibits an unashamed horizontal aesthetic, this time in collation with the orchestra. Consolidation of the orchestral and solo parts (disregarding pitch class and small rhythmic variances) yields the single line shown in **Figure 3.40.** below, and further illustrates Prokofiev's predilection towards linear formats.

Figure 3.40. *'Finale'*: Concerto No. 2 theme (a), solo and orchestral parts amalgamated, bars 1 - 8



The Second Concerto unveils a more concentrated application of this linearity: while in the First Concerto these passages were typically interspersed with other textural tactics, here linear concepts are expounded in more protracted forms. There are other moments of simplicity and clarity which anticipate the unadorned textural outlines of the concerto for left-hand. A reproduction for left-hand only of the basic melody and textural interplay of the solo piano section from the *Meno Mosso* (**Figure 3.41.**) in the 'Finale', would be plausible with some adjustments.

Figure 3.41. 'Finale': *Meno mosso*, bars 83 - 90

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, labeled '83', is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The right hand plays a melody consisting of eighth and quarter notes, while the left hand provides a bass line of quarter notes. The second system, labeled '5', continues the piece with similar rhythmic patterns and includes a fermata over the final note of the melody. The notation is presented in a clean, black-and-white format.

Traces of the textural skeleton of the 'Andantino' (from the second piano concerto) are imprinted on the first rendition of theme B by the piano in the 'Andante' from the Fourth Concerto. Some harmonic richness is naturally sacrificed in the reduction of the underlying chords to a single bass line, but the addition of ties and the removal of the semiquavers in the melody would produce a comparable textural outline (**Figure 3.42.** overleaf).

Figure 3.42. Textural comparison of the ‘*Andante*’ from the concerto for left-hand and the ‘*Andantino*’ from the second piano concerto

‘*Andante*’ from the concerto for left-hand, Theme B, bars 28 – 33

28



‘*Andantino*’ from the second piano concerto, bars 3 – 6



Similar connections could be drawn to the textural treatment of the beautiful ‘*Andante*’ from bar 148 from the Third Concerto. The work is densely populated with the similar motion and unison passages in a manner comparable to the First Concerto, though often replete with lush, concentrated harmony and with a somewhat frenetic approach to textural diversity. Unashamed open octaves maintain a considerable presence throughout the concerto also, for instance Variation III in the second movement, or the strenuous double octaves of Variation V. An interesting precedent for the cluster chords present in the ‘*Moderato*’ from the concerto for left-hand is discernible in the ‘*Allegro*

ma non troppo’ of the Third Concerto, the effervescent glissandi style sequences from bar 369 onwards illustrate the tonal combinations and textures achievable with only one-hand playing at a time. A final feature which is common to all four concerti is Prokofiev’s distinctive use of grace notes. Single grace notes or cascading curlicues of grace notes imbue Prokofiev’s themes idiosyncratic flavours of grotesquery or capriciousness, and are used freely in the creation of his pianistic aesthetic.

MUSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Each of the four movements of Prokofiev’s concerto for left-hand could be seen as representative of distinct facets of Prokofiev’s musical aesthetic. The opening and closing movements typify the toccata line, with a pervading mechanical relentlessness and hints of *scherzo*. However, the rather fragmented framework of both ‘*Vivace*’ movements are lacking in explicit expressivity, a quality Wittgenstein sought. This almost mathematical approach to the construction of the work would have actively distanced its patron. Additionally, the transfer, wholesale, of large portions of the opening movement into the finale, culminating in a rather lacklustre conclusion could be interpreted as rather perfunctory and at worst, lazy. The ‘*Andante*’ explores the lyrical, Romantic aspects of Prokofiev’s style and musically-speaking, is probably the most successful movement in the concerto. While the ‘*Andante*’ aligns more closely with Wittgenstein’s preferred musical aesthetic, there is no doubt that its overriding impression of the complete work is quite dry.

The third movement displays Prokofiev’s predilection towards musical irony,

parodying march and waltz elements. The selection of genres in the '*Moderato*' is intriguing. There are strong military connotations; the march-like opening announced by blaring brass and the distorted minor fanfare introduced by the piano. There is an obvious play on military themes here: might they reference the war that maimed Wittgenstein, the misshapen fanfare theme an allusion to his injury? The brief flicker of a waltz in the development section, potentially a parody of the Viennese waltz, adds credence to the theory of an extra-musical association. However brief the waltz dalliance may be, its appearance is pointed and coherent. Although these theories can never move past conjecture, these appearances are conspicuous enough to warrant consideration of a connection with the concerto's patron.

CONCLUSION

Structurally, the use of Rondo form for two movements of the Fourth Concerto without real precedent in earlier comparable works, hints towards the need for creative organisation in crafting a work for one-hand. The reuse of thematic material in the closing movement reveals the metamorphosis of a typical structurally consolidating technique. Pianistically and melodically speaking, his prior use of the piano was to his advantage in approaching a left-hand work: from his first piano concerto and throughout the genre he assumed a confident, inquiring stance towards the extreme echelons of the keyboard. Despite the divergent phrase structure discernible in his Fourth Concerto, Prokofiev's individual pianistic style and range remains perceptibly intact, this evidence suggests the many novel factors of his left-hand concerto are

outweighed by the subtle adjustment of his personal, quirky techniques and traits. The structural sets which govern aspects of melodic construction in previous works assume new significance in terms of melodic regulation and development. Overall, orchestral and piano textures are kept sparse and simple. Although some pianistic approaches are disguised visually or aurally, the underlying directional focus is horizontal rather than vertical. The *'Andante'* and the *'Moderato'* target equally linear explorations, and more compact textural imitations of standard pianistic techniques. The *'Vivace'* which opens and closes the concerto however fixates predominantly on the invention, development and convergence of linear enterprises. Alongside the exploitation of characteristic and traditional pianistic textures, the concerti preceding the concerto for left-hand demonstrate Prokofiev's repeated adaptation and exploration of linear approaches to produce his desired aesthetic. He was well placed to contribute to the left-hand repertoire in that sense, and his decision to pursue this untapped line of composition becomes more intelligible.

While the reduced orchestration may lack depth, it was essential that the balance between orchestra and soloist took precedence, and in this Prokofiev succeeded. In the *'Andante'*, this leads to a style of orchestral lyricism incomparable to that of his prior piano concerti. There is careful calculation of dynamics also which contributes not just to the effectiveness of the performance, but potentially considers the physical requirements of the pianist. It could be argued that the final movement shows a degree of carelessness or even apathy, but personally I feel it shows a flash of brilliance: through his exploration of linearity Prokofiev elected not to refute Wittgenstein's

disability by means of musical prosthesis, but opts to parade his dissimilarity to the audience. The final '*Vivace*' does not shy away from its technical disparities but revels in them by simply containing the volume, highlighting the piquancy of a single-hand frothing up and down the piano, conversing with the orchestra. The apparent weakness has been transformed into an original feature, and could even be seen as an asset by the end of the concerto.

CHAPTER 4: RAVEL

The field is teeming with sources that document Ravel's musical and extra-musical influences; his affinity with his Basque heritage, his admiration for and espousal of the creative principles of Edgar Allan Poe, and his experimentation and absorption of the jazz that exploded in Europe subsequent to WWI. The compositional consequences of these predilections has been deftly extricated and parsed by reputable scholars and can be traced right through his catalogue of works.²⁸⁹ Absent from this inventory of empirical and theoretical observations however, is substantial consideration of the coeval genesis of his two piano concerti and the compositional ramifications of the synchronous germination of these two works. Indeed, working simultaneously on two works effectively of the same genre, albeit with differing concerns, conceivably induced a certain technical kinship between the concerti. Additionally, the maturation of one concerto could have generated mechanisms and practices adaptable to the other. Contrarily, recognition of the risk of conceptual or technical overlap may have actively encouraged diversity within his approach to the formation of both concerti. The resulting concerti live at opposite ends of the spectrum stylistically and atmospherically, but comparison of the respective technical procedures utilised, unveil furtive pianistic reciprocity.

²⁸⁹ To name but a few: Richard Orledge, 'Evocations of Exoticism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, ed. Deborah Mawer, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 27 – 46; Arbie Orenstein, 'Musical Aesthetics' and 'Ravel's Musical Language', in *Ravel: Man and Musician*, (London: Columbia University Press, 1975) pp. 117 – 129, and pp. 130 – 206 (pp. 130 – 131).

Through assembly and inspection of extant interviews and writings Steven Huebner verified Ravel's compositional ideals and idols: he crowned Mozart and Saint-Saëns as his principle gurus of form and technical excellence, although Saint-Saëns was placed on a slightly lower pedestal.²⁹⁰ Critics and contemporary reviewers highlighted the intricate workings of his music and the restrained emotional sensibilities as features shared with the classicists. Personally, Ravel saw his compositional mission as the pursuit of technical perfection. This objective was inextricably bound up with the artists' craftsmanship, and his musical and national identity. Further clarification can be gleaned from the comments of his contemporary Calvocoressi who recalled that Ravel strove for 'points of originality in idiom and texture' within his meticulous workmanship.²⁹¹ As a teacher of composition, above all else he encouraged his students to think critically and originally.

It's well established that Saint-Saëns's *Six Etudes for the Left Hand* provided stimulation and inspiration in the creation of Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche*. He also studied Godowsky's transcriptions of the Chopin *Etudes* for left-hand, and works by Czerny, Alkan and Scriabin. Research of this kind was common practice for Ravel; the piano concerti of Mozart and Saint-Saëns were his elected study materials during the composition of his Concerto in G, therefore this inquiry of earlier left-hand works for piano aligns with his standard preparatory means and practices, and were not

²⁹⁰ Steven Huebner, 'Ravel's Perfection', in *Ravel Studies* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010) pp. 9 – 30 (pp. 11 – 12).

²⁹¹ Quoted in: Orenstein, *Ravel: Man and Musician*, p. 119.

exclusive to the problematic notion of a left-handed concerto.²⁹² He adhered to these painstaking, diligent processes despite the detrimental impact on his output, particularly in later years:

I'm not among those who compose quickly. I mistrust facility. I place a somewhat scientific stubbornness on constructing with solidity, seeking the purest material, and consolidating it well. My Concerto cost me two years of labor.²⁹³

In lieu of an unmitigated homage to the bombastic 19th century concerto Ravel interlaced components of the 'traditional' concerto with more contemporary modernistic techniques and settings in his *Concerto pour la main gauche*. Michael Russ astutely observed that 'Ravel is not so much participating in the nineteenth-century tradition as viewing it from a distance' in his concerto for left-hand.²⁹⁴ Roy Howat contends that Ravel's individual brand of pianism was closely tethered to his favoured *Erard* pianos. *Erard* instruments boast distinct timbres peculiar to each registral area of the piano, and Ravel drew on these special timbral qualities and contrasts in his piano-based compositions. Ronald Woodley attests to the special quality and possibilities afforded by *Erard* pianos in his assessment of Marguerite Long's 1932 recording of the Concerto in G.²⁹⁵ *Erard's* signature light action was also integral to the foundations of his piano concerti; they facilitated rapid repeated notes and sweeping

²⁹² Orenstein, *Ravel: Man and Musician*, p. 202.

²⁹³ Nino Frank, 'Maurice Ravel entre deux trains', *Candide*, 5th May 1932. The Concerto in question here is the Concerto in G major.

²⁹⁴ Michael Russ, 'Ravel and the Orchestra', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, ed. Deborah Mawer, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 118 – 139 (p. 125).

²⁹⁵ Ronald Woodley, 'Style and practice in the early recordings', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, ed. Deborah Mawer, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 213 – 239 (p. 233).

glissandi with greater ease than current standard pianos.²⁹⁶

STRUCTURE AND FORMAL PLAN

Concerto pour la main gauche

Ravel conceded that structure was the linchpin upon which the success of this work rested. During an interview, he acknowledged his primary concern was in maintaining 'interest in a work of extended scope while utilizing such limited means'.²⁹⁷ As noted previously, the architecture of many large-scale left-hand works are frequently fashioned in order to wring the greatest worth from their musical material, however for Ravel, the necessity for heft and duration should not take priority over the musical appeal. Friend and music critic Calvocoressi recalled Ravel's views on structure:

The one and only test of good form, he used to say, is continuity of interest [...] But, on the other hand, he was very sensitive to what he considered to be defective form.²⁹⁸

This confirms the placement of structure within Ravel's hierarchical paradigm of musical elements; while the form must remain logical it is subservient to the music. In a superficial sense *Concerto pour la main gauche* is a one-movement work, an unorthodox form for Ravel, yet internally the many contrasting styles contained within the concerto are suggestive of three movements. Gerald Larner likens this one-

²⁹⁶ Roy Howat, 'Ravel and the piano', *The Cambridge Companion to Ravel*, Deborah Mawer, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 71 – 98 (pp.77-78). Howat makes special mention of the prevailing significance of certain intervals in the tenor register in *Jeux d'eau* and *Sonatine* played on an *Erard*, that do not present so individually on a standard piano.

²⁹⁷ Article written by Ravel in *Le Journal*, January 14th, 1933 in advance of the Parisienne premiere of *Concerto pour la main gauche*. 'Concerto for the Left Hand', in Orenstein, ed., *A Ravel Reader: Correspondence, Articles, Interviews*, pp. 396 – 397.

²⁹⁸ Quoted in: Orenstein, *Ravel: Man and Musician*, p. 119.

movement outline to the formal workings of Liszt's Sonata in B minor, or Schoenberg's First Chamber Symphony, where traits typically associated with specific movements, such as *scherzo* elements, were incorporated into a single movement structure.²⁹⁹ Russ has also recognised that the stylistic diversity of the main themes align with the archetypal blueprint of the conventional concerto:

Ravel's single movement draws together the contrasting moods of a multi-movement structure. An introduction precedes a sonata form whose development section is replaced by a mechanistic scherzo [...] The opening *Lento* and lyricism of the second subject compensate for the absence of a slow movement.³⁰⁰

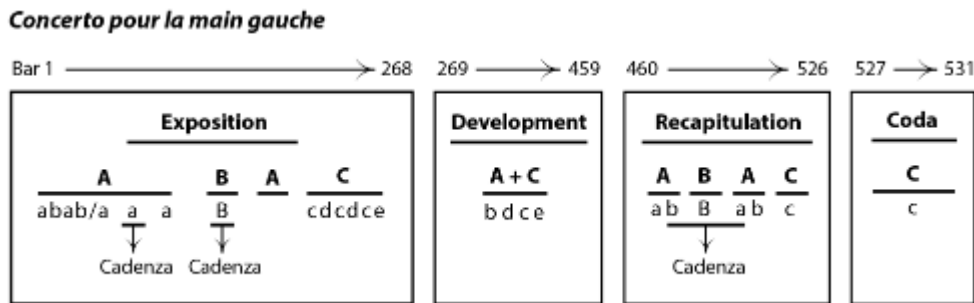
Russ' perspective presents one viable reading of the structure, whereby an introduction leads into the exposition section and the development section is absent. However, upon examination there is an alternative interpretation of the concerto's internal design, one in which a development section is indeed evident and the opening orchestral introduction is integrated into the exposition, initiating a dialogue between orchestra and soloist that is revisited periodically throughout the concerto. In this context, the typical anatomical makeup of sonata form expands to encompass three main thematic groupings, as opposed to the traditional first and second subject, but still undergoes the conventional sonata form processes of exposition, development and recapitulation.

Figure 4.1. broadly delineates this interpretation of the concerto's structure.

²⁹⁹ Gerald Larner, *Maurice Ravel* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996) pp. 209 – 210.

³⁰⁰ Russ, 'Ravel and the Orchestra', p. 126.

Figure 4.1. Concerto pour la main gauche: Overall Structure



The first principal subject, which shall be referred to as theme group A, consists of two independent melodic elements: theme (a) and (b). The initial exploration of theme group A can be divided into three segments. The 32-bar orchestral introduction which oscillates between statements of theme (a) and theme (b) forms the first portion. This culminates in an ostentatious and vociferous amalgamation of themes which skilfully escalates the suspense that anticipates the grand entrance of the awaited soloist. The second section, a grandiose, weighty piano cadenza, immediately seeks to refute any allegations of inferiority and proclaims the arrival of the pianist in heroic fashion. Theme (b) has been omitted entirely, and references to theme (a) are increasingly truncated throughout. The cadenza is bookended by impassioned virtuosic flourishes and gestures. Theme group A comes to a close with an orchestral reprise of this first principal subject once again shorn of the dialectical opposition of theme (b).

Following a gentle swaying introduction, the soloist presents the heartrending,

languorous theme B.³⁰¹ The Romantic sensibilities of this 14-bar melody are thwarted occasionally through melodic extension and resistance to predictable cadential closure. The melody is presented only once in full before moving into a repeat of theme group A; interrupting the exquisite theme B, the orchestra's statements of theme (a) become increasingly agitated while the piano provides embellishment. In fact, this forms the first *tutti* of the work. Through this metamorphosis of theme (a) the Romantic sheen of the preceding section is shed amid the approach to the trenchant *scherzo*, or theme group C, which begins at bar 270. This third subject group initially seesaws between the snappy descending parallel triads of theme (c), and the distorted, dance-like tread of theme (d). While theme (d) is continually varied, theme (c) remains comparatively static until its last appearance before the entrance of the final contributing melody of the concerto, the joyous, pithy theme (e). Analogous to the treatment of Theme B, theme (e) consists of an extended melody, 24 bars in total, and is played through only once.

The onset of the development section is not instantly apparent, as the *scherzo* accompaniment perseveres menacingly underneath the rotation and juxtaposition of themes, gradually swelling towards a hectic climax. Theme (b), which makes an ominous return in bar 278 (rehearsal number 28), resists development and remains

³⁰¹ It would also be possible to label Theme B as a bridge which would appoint Theme A and C as first and second subjects respectively and would align more closely with traditional sonata structure. However, the reprise of Theme A after Theme B (the bridge) in combination with the pianistic significance of Theme B both in the exposition and recapitulation builds a case that merits true thematic status.

quite discernible throughout, a column of stability around which all other themes strain. Every one of the primary themes of the concerto, with the exception of theme (a) and B, are employed either opposingly or interchangeably, to tumultuous effect. The recapitulation beginning at bar 460 (rehearsal number 46) provides a shrunken glimpse of the exposition, restating the thematic groups in the selfsame sequence. The chronological equivalence of thematic presentation between the exposition and recapitulation consciously benefits the equilibrium of the work, and successfully bridges the heterogeneous assortment of styles which produces the impression of a multi-movement work in performance.

The solutions devised by Ravel to overcome the obstacles imposed by a left-hand work are curious, even counter-intuitive. With his established concern in the maintenance of musical intrigue, one would expect a greater number of movements of shorter duration, where the introduction of new melodic material in each new movement and the subsequent appeasement of thematic monotony combats so many of the difficulties encountered in the configuration of a large-scale work for left-hand piano. Yet he opted for a one-movement structure, intent on highlighting the dominance of the pianist through extended cadenzas, orchestral recolouring and an equitable distribution of *tutti* and solo segments.

Comparative Analysis

Ravel was not prolific within the concerto genre: prior contemplation of a piano concerto based around Basque themes resulted in sketches for *Zaspiak-Bat*, but was

abandoned as a result of his military service in WWI.³⁰² *Tzigane*, written in 1924, is sometimes assigned to concerto category. However, as it was originally conceived for violin and piano, and only subsequently arranged for violin and orchestra, structurally and proportionally it was oriented towards objectives disparate from those of the concerto.³⁰³ The sole legitimate work suitable for comparison with the *Concerto pour la main gauche*, is the wonderful Piano Concerto in G. Consequently, there is insufficient data to determine patterns with regards to Ravel's preferred configuration of movements in a concerto style work. The inception of the Concerto in G was sidelined following Wittgenstein's commission and was fully realized only after delivery of Wittgenstein's concerto. Accordingly, some components predate the left-hand concerto, but it is not possible to establish the compositional chronology of specific elements and movements.

Howat posits that Ravel's forms for piano have been viewed as 'conventional' contemporarily and retrospectively. He contends that the majority of Ravel's larger works adhere, by and large, to a traditional sonata-type schema, and certainly this imprint is discernible on the formal outline of both concerti.³⁰⁴ The '*Allegramente*' first movement and the '*Presto*' third movement of the Concerto in G both unfold according to certain sonata form principles. There is a marked resemblance in approach to sonata form in the *Concerto pour la main gauche* and the relevant movements of the Concerto

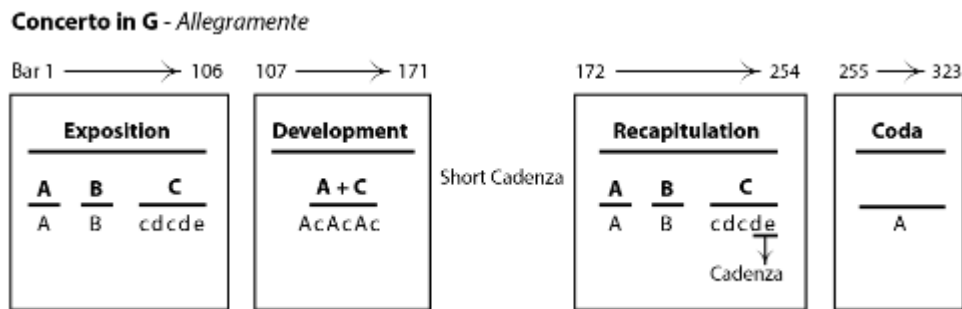
³⁰² Orenstein, *Ravel: Man and Musician*, p. 72.

³⁰³ Roger Nichols, *Ravel* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 260.

³⁰⁴ Howat, 'Ravel and the piano', p. 71, p. 80.

in G. A comparison between the construction of the *Concerto pour la main gauche* in **Figure 4.1.** and the structural diagram of the '*Allegramente*' in **Figure 4.2.** below, clarifies the architectural kinship between the two.³⁰⁵

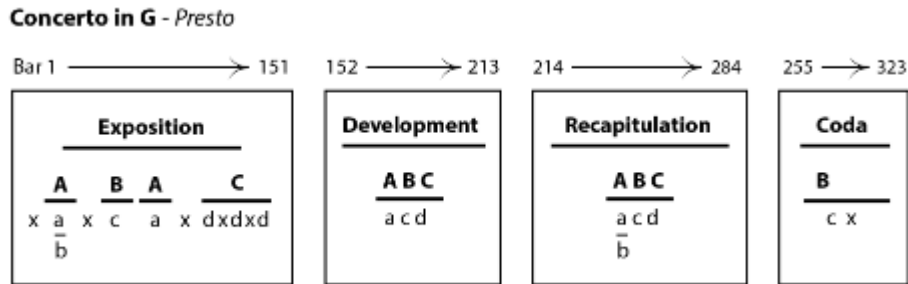
Figure 4.2. Concerto in G, '*Allegramente*': Overall Structure



Both recapitulations adhere faithfully to the thematic chronology of the exposition: ABAC in the concerto for left-hand, and ABC in the '*Allegramente*'. It is notable also that these two movements draw primarily on theme groups A and C during their respective development sections. A numeric breakdown of melodies and thematic groups unveils further structural correlations. All movements which utilise sonata form, that is the *Concerto pour la main gauche*, and the '*Allegramente*' and '*Presto*' from the Concerto in G, lend themselves to an arrangement of three thematic groups. Moreover, in the case of all three, the exposition of group C consists unanimously of a sequence of alternating fragments. **Figure 4.3.** below demonstrates the vacillation between theme (d) and the opening fanfare motif (x) in the '*Presto*'.

³⁰⁵ All structural diagrams of the Concerto in G and the *Concerto pour la main gauche* are compiled in **Appendix B.**

Figure 4.3. Concerto in G, 'Presto': Overall Structure



In both the *Allegamente* and the *Concerto pour la main gauche*, theme group C balances the rotation of three melodic elements which exhibit decidedly similar organisation. In both, the concluding melody theme (e), is only stated once following a passage of alternation between theme (c) and theme (d).

This is not to imply structural similarities between the concerti arose from deliberate co-ordination, nor does it demonstrate a set structural approach to the concerto genre. This would be an egregious oversimplification of the intricate aesthetic and compositional considerations enmeshed within the structural depths of these works. Neither does this minimise the significance of alternative formal interpretations, but instead proposes one reading of the architectural predilections governing these works, and illuminates the particular structural arrangements that Ravel found most conducive to the production of an effective piano concerto. Furthermore, it exhibits Ravel's dedication to formally balanced and elaborately planned structures.

The unconventional manipulation and deployment of cadenzas forge a further shared structural characteristic. *Concerto pour la main gauche* features three protracted and

extraordinarily virtuosic cadenzas. The soloist's initial entry forms a cadenza endowed in part with the demeanour of extemporized performance and this atypical opening statement serves to accentuate the prowess and daring of the soloist. It is worth noting that Ravel's earlier showpiece for violin and orchestra, *Tzigane*, opens with an extended cadenza, playing unaccompanied for 58 bars.³⁰⁶ In the concerto for left-hand the second protracted solo area supplies the only rendition of the sublime theme B within the exposition, its singular reoccurrence in the final electrifying cadenza is likewise handled solely by the piano. Deborah Mawer attributes this structural innovation to jazz influences, and likens these cadenzas to jazz 'breaks'.³⁰⁷ Indeed, while the concluding cadenza occupies a more conventional position towards the culmination and close of the concerto, the placement of the earlier cadenzas deviate from standard practices. This malleable approach to the function and positioning of solos and cadenzas is also evident in the Concerto in G. Solo segments in the '*Allegramente*' are quite fragmented, and the dialectical exchange between orchestra and piano is underlined emphatically throughout theme group C. Theme B receives treatment equivalent to the Theme B from the *Concerto pour la main gauche*; it is issued only once by solo piano and does not reappear until the recapitulation.

³⁰⁶ Maurice Ravel, *Tzigane Rapsodie de Concert* (Paris: Durand & Cie, 1924).

³⁰⁷ Deborah Mawer, 'Crossing borders II: Ravel's theory and practice of jazz', in *Ravel Studies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) pp. 114 – 137 (p. 126).

Figure 4.4. Concerto in G, 'Allegramente': Theme B, bars 44 - 51

In his preface to the score of the G major concerto, Arbie Orenstein also referenced the unusual structure and placement of the solo piano cadenza in the 'Allegramente', noting that two cadenza-like sections in the harp and woodwind sections precede the pianists cadenza.³⁰⁸ Mawer's theory of jazz-directed solo structure is vindicated further by these three consecutive solos: the promotion of disparate soloists during the recapitulation mirrors the successive improvisations carried out by jazz musicians supported by the continuity of the basic chordal sequence. The solo piano section immediately prior to the harp cadenza, bars 191 – 203, which renders themes B and (c) in full, could also legitimately qualify as a short cadenza. The harp and woodwind cadenzas are ultimately sandwiched between solo piano sections from this perspective, and results in a recapitulation engendered and constructed almost entirely by soloists. The 'Adagio' and 'Presto' contain a less demonstrable eschewal of typical cadenza practices. The former rejects an overwrought, splashy cadenza near the end of the

³⁰⁸ Maurice Ravel, *Piano Concerto in G major*, ed. by Arbie Orenstein (London: Eulenberg, 2011), p. vii.

movement in favour of the unadulterated delivery of the melodic narrative, almost spartan in its simplicity, yet crystalline and transcendental in its beauty. The '*Presto*' is notable for the absence of a true cadenza within the movement.

The structural apportionment of independent and accompanied pianistic activity was elicited further by Claire Hammond in her thesis '*To Conceal or Reveal: left-hand pianism with particular reference to Ravel's Concerto pour la main gauche and Britten's Diversions*'. Hammond calculated the ratio of solo piano passages to orchestral and *tutti* passages across both concerti, working aurally from recordings that were personally approved by Ravel. She concluded that in the Concerto in G the pianist operates unaccompanied for approximately 22% of the work, but in the *Concerto pour la main gauche* this increases to 36%.³⁰⁹ This growth in solo activity becomes even more significant when considered in relation to the length of the work. Performances of the concerto for left-hand typically run to about 16 or 17 minutes while the Concerto in G is closer to 22 minutes. The perception of this smaller percentage of solo activity (22%) within a longer work (22 minutes) dilutes the prominence of the unaccompanied passages, the potency of the solo passages in the concerto for left-hand are strengthened proportionate to the comparatively shorter overall duration. Mathematically and aurally, solo material monopolizes the structure of the *Concerto pour la main gauche*. Accordingly, Russ has highlighted the expositional burden placed on the pianist and

³⁰⁹ Hammond, '*To Conceal or Reveal*', pp. 73 – 74.

stark exposure of the soloist for lengthy sections of the work.³¹⁰

The most revealing inequality unmasked by Hammond's study was in the *tutti* category; the joint enterprises of soloist and orchestra in the Concerto in G amount to about 70% of the overall duration, while the commensurate *tutti* passages of the *Concerto pour la main gauche* occupy less than 40% of the piece temporally speaking.³¹¹ Hammond concludes that this strategy is geared towards the negotiation of timbral differentiation. Potentially this also conveys the difficulty in achieving a successful orchestral balance against a soloist of limited power, supplementary or elongated solo passages provide the pianist with the status that is implied by the genre and simultaneously limit problematic balance issues.

That structural similarities emerge between these two works from the depths of architectural design is then confirmed. From this perspective, the challenge of writing for left-hand alone with orchestra did not significantly alter Ravel's internal structural approach. The discernible effects on Ravel's structural practices in writing for one-hand are visible in the proportion of unaccompanied solo activity and in the reduction of overall movements, and consequently on the overall length of the work. The rationale behind this remains unclear, but among the possible reasons are practical pianistic concerns (performance-related fatigue which is accelerated for the left-handed pianist) and possible difficulty in rendering appropriate balance levels between soloist

³¹⁰ Russ, 'Ravel and the Orchestra', p. 126.

³¹¹ Hammond, *To Conceal or Reveal*, pp. 74 – 75.

and orchestra. Ravel's own comments on the problem of maintaining musical interest with a player of 'limited means' are certainly germane to the shorter overall length of this work.³¹² A mixture of these concerns ostensibly fuelled Ravel's determination to maintain his typical structural practices but include within his thematic groupings a distinct stylistic shift to issue the illusion of multi-movement work, encased within the structure of one-movement.

MELODIC SHAPE AND APPLICATION

Concerto pour la main gauche

(i). Interval Use

The inaugural delivery of theme (a) presents the melody in somewhat condensed form but incorporates the primary components vital for the future growth of this melody. The leisurely tempo deflects from the density of musical material within these opening phrases. A pair of tonal steps, the major and minor 3rd, the perfect 4th and perfect 5th emerge as the most crucial elements of this theme. **Figure 4.5.** exhibits theme (a), while **Table 4.1.** provides a full intervallic breakdown of this passage in sequential order from left to right.

Figure 4.5. *Concerto pour la main gauche*: Theme (a), bars 2 – 6



³¹² See p. 239 of this chapter for the full quote from an article written by Ravel in *Le Journal*, 14th January 1933.

Table 4.1. Concerto pour la main gauche: Theme (a), Intervallic pattern,

bars 2-6

T	T	Min 3rd	st	Min 3rd	P4	Min 3rd	Maj 3rd	P5
st	Min 3rd	P4	T	T	Min 3rd	P4		

The subsequent presentation of theme (a) unravels the component parts of the melody more gradually, and introduces a process of registral ascension. A rising tonal step is retracted immediately falling back to the starting note, this becomes an aural signifier for the beginning of each new phrase or arrangement of theme (a). This tonal gesture is highlighted in the excerpt below: rising and falling tonal movement initiates each phrase. The intervallic procedures that follow vary slightly with each rendition although a high level of uniformity guides thematic progression and contributes towards strong sense of melodic continuity. The subtle modifications implemented with each phrase are elucidated by the chart below in **Table 4.2**.

Figure 4.6. Concerto pour la main gauche: Theme (a), bars 14-22



Table 4.2. Concerto pour la main gauche: Intervallic pattern, Theme (a),

bars 14 – 22

T	T	Maj 3rd	T	P4	T	P4	Min 3rd	T	Maj 6th	Maj 3rd
---	---	------------	---	----	---	----	------------	---	------------	------------

T	T	Maj 3 rd	T	P4	T	P4	T	Min 3 rd	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd
T	T	P4	T	P4	T	Min 3 rd	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd		
T	T	P5	T	P4	T	Min 3 rd	Min 3 rd	Maj 3 rd		

Each row in the chart above represents a new phrase, and each phrase differs only minutely from the passage that precedes it; the understated adjustments applied with each rendition fall within the realms of intervallic augmentation and thematic truncation. The dramatic portrayal of theme (a) by the pianist in the first cadenza (shown in **Figure 4.7.**) illustrates the physical and kinaesthetic significance of the intervallic components of this melody and its piecemeal mutation. The melodic outline, situated at the top of the chordal texture, is confined to smaller intervals; the largest leap employed is the perfect 5th. The left-hand only pianist invariably benefits from the omission of more expansive intervals as it allows the hand to travel more sinuously across the piano, and to reserve energy and stamina concurrently. The steady advance of the melody becomes even more imperative within the context of this cadenza as harmonic saturation requires extravagant, lush chords whose reconfiguration and progression must be within reasonable distance of the hand. A more angular melody would be intractable within a similar homophonic landscape; Ravel has already pushed left-hand technique towards its limits here with the rapid distension and contraction of the hand, and the repositioning of fingers required to cater to the vacillation between outspread chords (some of which are technically beyond normal hand span and will need to be broken) and tighter chordal shapes.

Figure 4.7. *Concerto pour la main gauche*: First cadenza, bars 36 - 43

A study of the remaining contributing themes exposes a predilection for semitonal and tonal stepwise movement and additionally the major and minor 3rd are central to manifold melodic configurations.³¹³ Lateral and oblique steps are particularly prevalent in the *scherzo* themes, for example, the descending triads of theme (c) outline a descending scalar form. Intervals larger than a 3rd are seldom seen in succession; leaps are generally separated by stepwise movement. Evidence of this is discernible in the except from Theme B shown in **Figure 4.8.** overleaf. The rising perfect 5th at the end of bar 83 is approached and quit by step, the falling major sixth from c# down to e at the end of bar 85, is cushioned on either side by tonal movement. This practice is not consistently adopted however and the sudden registral shift and octave leap in bar 88 of the example overleaf does not conform to the precedent set by other preponderant intervals, moving from the f# to the a above, rather than one of its neighbour notes.

³¹³ Theme (e) is excluded from this survey as it is never played by the piano in any form and this study of melodic intervals is limited to melodies undertaken by the piano.

The rolling ascent of the undulating accompaniment, the relaxed tempo and the duration of the low f# prior to the octave leap in bar 88 of the phrase above provides ample time and gestural momentum to handle the arc of this phrase comfortably. Furthermore, although the connecting interval of a minor 3rd deviates from the customary pairing of stepwise movement and expansive intervals, the variation featured is only marginally larger than the prevailing tonal movement. Notable also within this exquisite melody, is the descending tonal step that indicates the closure of nearly every phrase (one of which is highlighted by the red boxes in **Figure 4.8.** below).³¹⁴ This aural signifier yields the expectation of suspension and release required to preserve the tranquil ambience and Romantic foundations of this melody, set within an irregular arrangement of phrases.

³¹⁴The closure of the phrase in bar 91 is delayed considerably by the interpolation of virtuosic embellishment, however the melodic phrase ending fundamentally consists of g# falling to the final f# of bar 91.

Figure 4.8. *Concerto pour la main gauche*: Theme B, bars 83 – 90

The musical score for Theme B, bars 83-90, is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 83-86) shows the right hand playing a series of chords and moving lines, with a red box highlighting a phrase. The left hand accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the bass and a more active line in the treble. The second system (bars 87-90) continues the right hand melody, with a red box highlighting a phrase. The left hand accompaniment continues with a steady eighth-note pattern in the bass and a more active line in the treble. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and triplets.

(ii). Phrase Structure

Ravel exhibits a flexible disposition towards phrasing arrangements and employs multifarious strategies from conventional and predictable schemas, to unruly, shapeshifting and anomalous frameworks. A number of the primary themes lend themselves to elongation or truncation; accordingly, the phrasing of these melodies demonstrates their pliability. The opening contrabassoon solo that pervades the murky brume of grumbling double basses cites theme (a) within a 2-bar framework, alternatively, untethered from the time signature this could be heard as six crotchet beats. The accumulating agitation of theme (a) in its return eliminates the tied crochet and reduces the phrase length to 5 beats at first, and then subsequently to four crotchet beats (see **Figures 4.5.** and **4.6.** for the relevant extracts of theme (a)). The latter half of the first solo piano cadenza also displays a reduction of phrase length in

correspondence with a sense of escalating frenzy, the 4-bar phrases in operation between bars 46 – 53 are thereafter cropped to 2-bar phrases propelling the audience towards the tumultuous upsurge that ensues. The lyrical theme B is also subject to expansion: comprised of 4 phrases in total, interpolated arpeggiated ornamentation extends the third phrase beyond the established 3-bar pattern of the first 2 phrases. The final phrase is extended once more, although changes of time signature and the *rubato* implicit in the spirit of Romantic performance distorts any sense of consistency, and injects the passage with a sense of extemporised embellishment, melodic protraction and cadential postponement.

Theme (b) from subject group A and melodic components that form subject group C (the *Scherzo*), thrive on consistency and uniformity of presentation. The blueprint of Theme (b) remains consistent across all renditions, the rhythmic formula is extended within the development section but the overall syncopated aural effect remains the same. The need for the homogenous repetition of the entire theme was perhaps rendered necessary by the inherently skewed and capricious phrase lengths. Succinct slurred fragments are knocked askew by unexpected syncopation, yet the instability of these varying snippets is somehow appeased by the longer length of the final phrase (see **Figure 4.9.** below)

Figure 4.9. *Concerto pour la main gauche*: Theme (b), bars 8 – 14



While modifications and innovations emerge throughout, the phrasing in the *Scherzo* section functions most conventionally both across and within the primary themes. The complete version of theme (c) most frequently falls into 7 bar phrases despite minor disparities between renditions. **Figures 4.10** and **4.11** feature two consecutive presentations of theme (c) which demonstrate the minor variations within restatements of theme (c) delivered nevertheless within the 7-bar framework.

Figure 4.10. *Concerto pour la main gauche*: Theme (c), bars 139 – 145



Figure 4.11: *Concerto pour la main gauche: Theme (c), bars 146 – 152*

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The outstanding melodies of subject group C adhere to the most archetypal formats; Theme (e) is neatly packaged into 2 and 4-bar phrases, while statements of theme (d) are marshalled into 8 and 16-bar configurations.

(iii). Melodic Development

An assessment of melodic maturation and growth over the course of the concerto separates the primary themes into two factions; those that morph and evolve with each rendition, and those that resist development and remain true to their original form. The opening theme (a) aligns with the precepts and behaviours of the first category; no two statements of theme (a) are completely alike. See **Figure 4.5.** and **4.6.** for the first two versions of theme (a). Roger Nichols commented on the plasticity of this melody in breadth and duration:

[...] the expansive theme is never heard as a continuous whole. Either it is developed into something different or it is heard only in part. Thus the work seems to possess a vast potential for a kind of dramatic lyricism which Ravel had not given voice since *Daphnis*, but this is continually suppressed by other

material which is either malevolent or *quasi-banal*.³¹⁵

The developmental techniques applied to theme (a) align with the trends of thematic expansion and reduction noted previously for their employment in the diversification of phrasing. Theme (d) also subtly reforms its constituent parts with each presentation, however its modifications are less conspicuous than the reimaginings of theme (a); moreover development is facilitated through tonal and harmonic digression rather than the reduction or expansion of thematic duration. The remaining themes belong to the antithetical tier of inert melodies: they do not progress far beyond their original state and remain highly recognizable. The principle developmental and transformative portions of the concerto are generated by the juxtaposition of themes. It appears the main fabric of the concerto is constructed through an open weave of the five main themes.

This confluence of contrasting musical ideas results not just in shifting combinations of thematic material, but also in the repositioning of melodies. The Basque, French and jazz lineage ascribed to the main themes produces a unique stylistic dichotomy when they appear simultaneously or in rotation. The perpetual struggle between the melodies of theme group A pits the martial sobriety of the opening fanfare against the modernity of the jazz inspired theme (b). Other military and jazz motivated clashes which potentially could have arisen earlier in the work are separated by the unremitting Romanticism of theme B. The development section sees an intensification of these

³¹⁵ Roger Nichols, *Ravel* (J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1977), p. 141.

stylistic tensions: new melodic amalgamations, altered orchestrations, and fresh harmonic and timbral settings repeatedly recontextualise familiar themes and generate original soundscapes.

Comparative Analysis

(i). Melodic Range

The opening of the *Concerto pour la main gauche* is notable immediately for its profound bass-heavy calibration. Hammond shrewdly notes that this may not be an exposition or admission of the left-handedness of the work, but rather a calculated use of register for projection and power in order to defy expectations with this grandiose, magisterial opening.³¹⁶ Realistically it could be interpreted in either way: as an acknowledgement of singularity by situating a spotlight on the solo-hand through registral selection, or as an attempt to deceive the audience with an entry of such muscle and intensity that the listener would overlook the pianist's disability, obscuring the impairment, and thereby 'passing' as able-bodied. There is a case to be made for an amalgamation of these theories: a statement of unique stature is produced by the opening cadenza, but with such vim and vigour that could not be surpassed by a conventional pianist. Projected to the audience is an admission of somatic incongruity alongside a forceful repudiation of the inevitable dilution of the dramatic or virtuosic aspects of the piano concerto.

Virtuosic gesture and rapid coverage of registral distance enjoy a firm affinity, a tool

³¹⁶ Hammond, 'To Conceal or Reveal', pp. 77 – 78.

which Ravel uses to great effect to convey the prowess of the performer. The stark difference in registral treatment in the opening of both concerti substantiates the view that Ravel's registral selections were calculated for soloistic impact. The *Concerto pour la main gauche* immediately establishes a wide range, while the opening of the Concerto in G is registrally confined. In the opening bars of the Concerto in G, where both hands overlap to produce bitonal arpeggios, the range covered by the two hands extends to just over an octave.³¹⁷ With glissandi of expanding breadth Ravel gradually increases the range and prominence of the piano from bar 14, finishing with a of the keyboard that covers practically the entire length of the piano with one gesture in bars 23 – 24.

A dizzying pace of registral change is evident also in the opening and closing sections of the *Concerto pour la main gauche*, and additionally within the cadenzas, where it is most critical to establish the soloist's authority and virtuosity. In contrast to the Concerto in G, the opening passage and the concluding cadenza of the *Concerto pour la main gauche* also feature extended use of the subterranean regions of the piano, often placing both accompaniment and embellishment within the two lowest octaves of the piano. Throughout the *Concerto pour la main gauche* however, this type of prolonged activity in the lower registers is unusual. Generally, the bass register of the keyboard is visited only briefly to provide the harmonic and timbral underpinning to chordal

³¹⁷ Daphne Leong and David Korevaar, 'The Performer's Voice: Performance and Analysis in Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche*', *Music Theory Online*, 11:3 (September 2005) <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.05.11.3/mto.05.11.3.leong_korevaar.html> [accessed 10/05/16]

activity or figurative patterns. The higher registers of the piano are lightly employed and pianistic endeavours are focused largely around the alto and tenor registers. Hammond concurs with this synopsis, and posits that the piano's registral use throughout the *Concerto pour la main gauche* largely complies with more traditional tessitural selections, rather than exploiting the lower bass registers commonly associated with the left-hand.³¹⁸ Although coverage of the keyboard is quite exhaustive and the middle registers are routinely engaged in both concerti, the Concerto in G naturally features a higher portion of activity in the upper half of the keyboard.³¹⁹

An interval study carried out across the main themes of both concerti reveals an equivalent frequency and selection of intervals utilized. The results of this inspection are presented overleaf in **Figures 4.12.** and **4.13.** It's evident that the limited use of larger intervals is not confined to the *Concerto pour la main gauche*, and the Concerto in G recoils equally from larger leaps within a melody. It seems unlikely then that this eschewal of extended intervals within the main themes was geared solely towards the accommodation of a single hand at the piano. Overall, the popularity of each interval type is generally similar in both concerti. For example, use of the major 3rd in the construction of the primary themes of the *Concerto pour la main gauche* amounts to roughly 10%; in comparison, the major 3rd holds 9% share of the main melodies in the

³¹⁸ Hammond, *To Conceal or Reveal*, p. 77.

³¹⁹ In fact, Ravel sometimes notated pitches that did not exist – the last bar of the Concerto in G has a low G which is still not commonly included on the standard grand piano. Howat, 'Ravel and the piano', p. 77. *Jeux d'eau*, *Une barque sur l'océan* and *Scarbo* also use notes that were beyond the typical bass range of the piano.

Concerto in G.

Figure 4.12. Interval Study – *Concerto pour la main gauche*

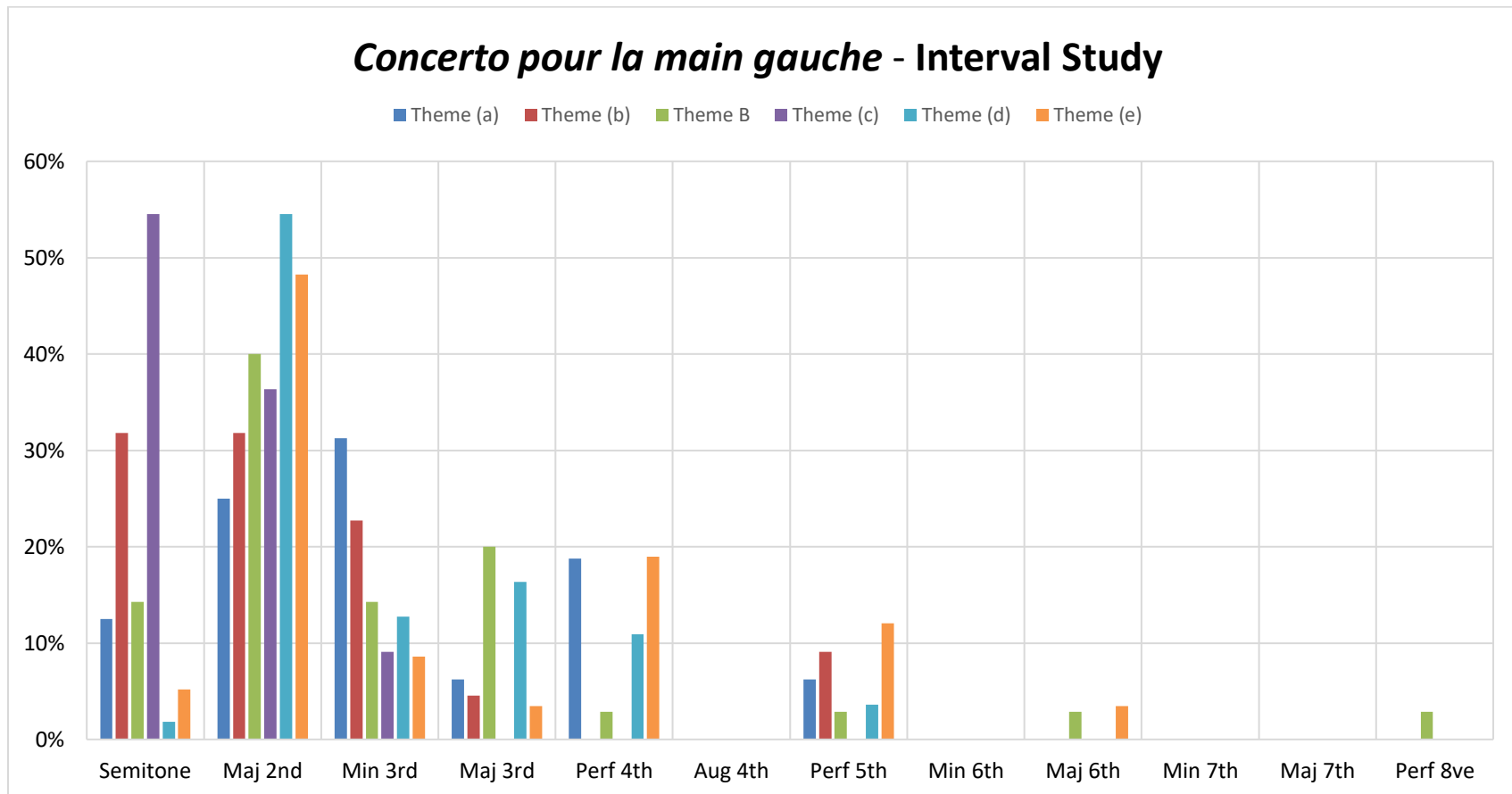
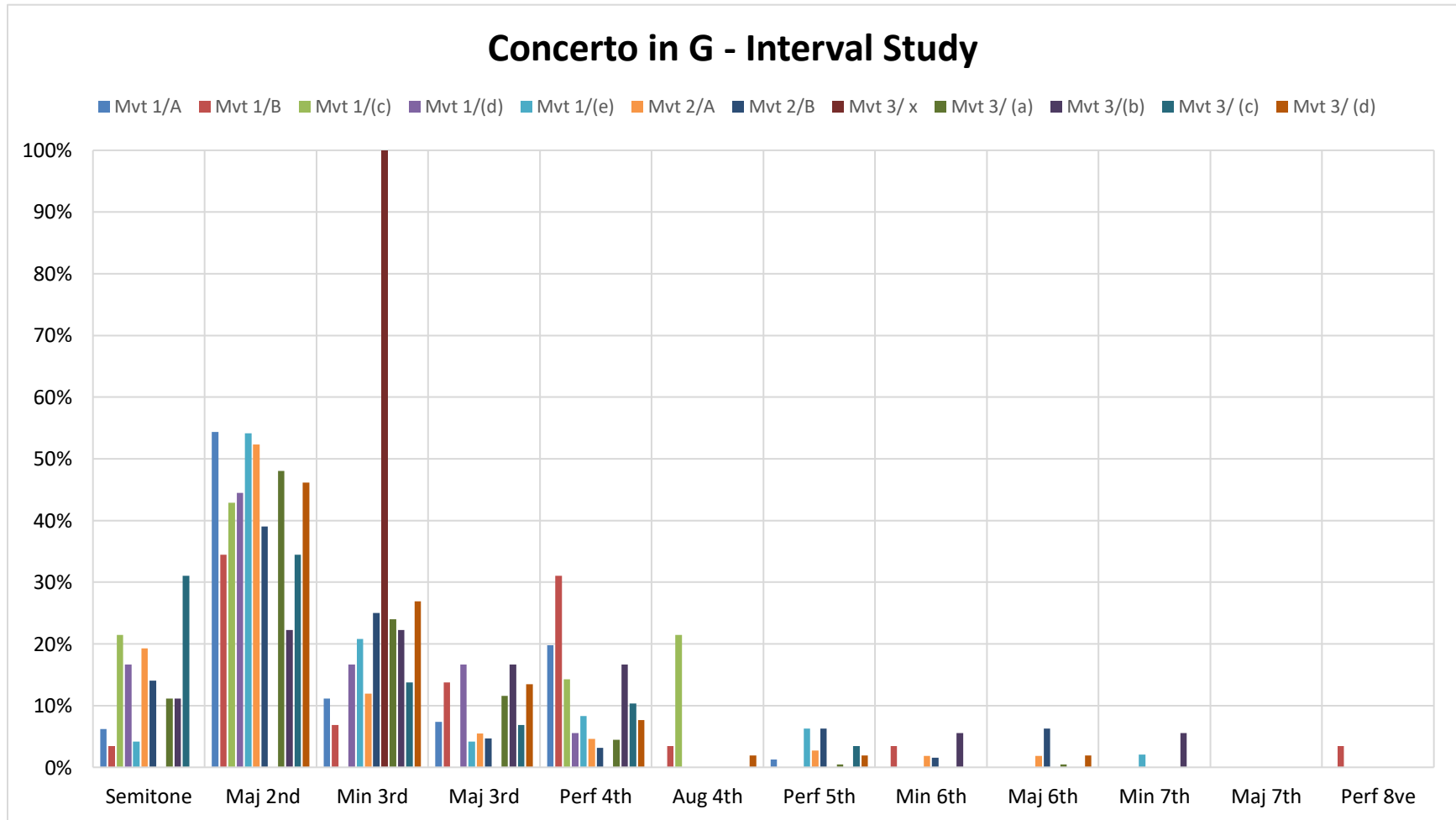


Figure 4.13. Interval Study – Concerto in G



However, while the selection of intervals may not have been notably affected by the demands of writing for a single-hand, the order and placement of wider intervals was carefully managed throughout the main melodies in the *Concerto pour la main gauche*. Divested of these physical constraints, the Concerto in G exhibits a more relaxed treatment of small stretches and leaps, and does not seem compelled to bookend jumps with stepwise movement or govern intervallic movement as cautiously.

Howat conducted a poll of the opening or closing intervals of Ravel's solo piano works and discovered that almost three-quarters of all his solo piano works, plus the first and third movements of Concerto in G major rely on the minor second or major seventh for their opening or closing gesture. Whilst Ravel was inclined towards thematic and intervallic interconnectivity, for instance all five *Miroirs* are connected by descending fourths, this is an extraordinarily high number of works to rely on these intervals for the most memorable moments.³²⁰ In the concerti however, it is the major second rather than the minor second that takes precedence both in the full sequence of intervals and in isolated opening and closing gestures, whilst the major seventh is omitted entirely within the principal themes.

(ii). Phrase Structure

The opening theme of the Concerto in G is rather ambiguous in length, and could be read as either a 15-bar phrase or a 12-bar phrase.³²¹ The inaugural rendition of theme

³²⁰ Howat, 'Ravel and the Piano', p. 78.

³²¹ For a structural synopsis the *Allegramente* and 'Presto' in the Concerto in G see **Figures 4.2.** and **4.3.** See Appendix B for the formal layout of the Adagio.

A in the piccolo continues for 15 bars, however, when the trumpet assumes the solo role for the second statement of theme A, it is shortened to 12 bars. See **Figure 4.14.** for the first two iterations of this theme as it is presented by the piccolo initially and subsequently by the trumpet. As this the A is subsequently repackaged into 4-bar sequences during the development section, and the recapitulation of this theme on the piano, bars 172 – 184, applies the 12-bar format, the evidence supports the 12-bar phrase as the fundamental structure of this melody. The remainder of the *‘Allegramente’* avails of traditional balanced phrasing predominantly.

Figure 4.14 Concerto in G, ‘Allegramente’: first and second presentations of Theme A

First rendition of Theme A, bars 2 - 16

The musical score for the first rendition of Theme A, bars 2-16, is presented in four staves. The first staff, labeled 'Piccolo', shows a melodic line starting with a fermata on the second measure. The second and third staves, both labeled 'Picc.', provide rhythmic accompaniment. The fourth staff, also labeled 'Picc.', continues the accompaniment and concludes with a double bar line.

Second rendition of Theme A, bars 25 – 36

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Trumpet in C' and begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/2 time signature. It starts at bar 25, indicated by a '25' above the first measure. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a fermata over the eighth measure. The middle and bottom staves are both labeled 'C Tpt.' and provide accompaniment with eighth and quarter notes. The bottom staff ends with a double bar line.

As theme A is subsequently repackaged into 4-bar sequences during the development section, and the recapitulation of this theme on the piano, bars 172 – 184, applies the 12-bar format, the evidence supports the 12-bar phrase as the fundamental structure of this melody. The remainder of the *‘Allegramente’* avails of traditional balanced phrasing predominantly; for an example see Theme B (**Figure 4.3.**).

Determining phrase lengths in the *‘Adagio’* is more precarious: Ravel periodically veers away from cadence points and pushes through anticipated expected rest points offering a melody ripe with interpretational possibilities. Those of definite duration sway most frequently between groups of 2, 3 and 4 bars. Theme B consists of groups of expanding fragments whose summation corresponds to the ebb and flow of a 4-bar phrase. The *‘Presto’* contains a couple of phrasing peculiarities. Theme (a) defies definition as it unfolds as a continuous, toccata-like progression. The unrelenting motion and directional shifts don’t resemble the typical undulations or patter of expected phrasing, either visually or aurally. The figurative nature of the theme permits a flexibility in development where the references can be elongated or truncated as

necessary. The imperceptible phraseology of theme (a) is exhibited in **Figure 4.15**. overleaf, which strips away the exterior harmonic trimmings to broadcast the principal theme only.

Themes (c) and (d) feature vacillating dimensions. Consistently theme (c) operates within irregular numbers of bars, its debut appears in a 9-bar configuration, subsequently it is elongated to 11 and even 17 bars, but the most prevalent adaption, applied regularly in the development section, falls into 7-bar groupings. The contraction and expansion of theme (d) throughout the *'Presto'* is equally drastic: references vary between 2 to 14 bars. All things considered, Ravel's approach to phrasing is quite consistent; adopting a mixture of standard patterns and anomalous schemes of protean breadth across both concerti and utilising augmentative and reductive phrasing procedures throughout both works.

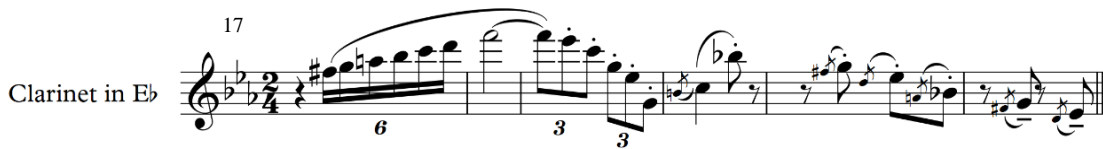
Figure 4.15: Concerto in G 'Allegramente': Theme (a), bars 5 – 33, inner line only

5

(iii). Melodic Development

As with the *Concerto pour la main gauche*, Ravel favoured some themes for melodic development over others. Many of the principal melodies in the Concerto in G forgo significant metamorphosis: for instance, the motivic fanfare that launches the 'Presto' or the squealing, snickering theme (b) laid over the babbling action of theme (a) (see **Figure 4.16**). Subsequent renditions of theme (b) alter the instrumentation and vary the answering phrase fractionally, but the fundamental structure remains recognisable.

Figure 4.16. Concerto in G, 'Presto': Theme (b), bars 17 – 22



Other melodies are altered through textural diversification, sequential processes, melodic compression, modulation, additional embellishment and reorchestration. Theme (a) from the *'Allegramente'*, and themes (c) and (d) from the *'Presto'* encounter many of these developmental procedures: identifiable fragments of melody are extracted from the fundamental theme, various sequential actions are subsequently applied to these excerpts in sympathy with tonal agendas, and mixed instrumentation provides timbral diversity. Those melodies that undergo more radical change still remain recognisable, perhaps with the exception of those in the *'Adagio'* whose developmental processes and modulations sometimes blur connections to the provenance of certain elaborations. Orenstein attests to the timbral renovation and revitalization of familiar material in this Concerto:

The outer movements of the Concerto clearly indicate Ravel's dual proclivity for classical symmetry coupled with fresh, unexpected timbres for the reprise of the thematic material.³²²

The treatment of theme (e) in the *'Allegramente'* is perhaps one of the more acute transformations of the work. **Figure 4.17.** illustrates the clean and transparent debut of theme (e), while **Figure 4.18.** demonstrates its ensuing metamorphosis.

³²² Maurice Ravel, *Piano Concerto in G major*, p. viii

Figure 4.17. Concerto in G, 'Allegramente': Theme (e), bar 75 – 79

75

Figure 4.18. Concerto in G, 'Allegramente': Theme (e), bar 245 – 246

245

Now starting a minor third higher, the melody line (circled in the example above) faithfully traces the original contours of theme (e) whilst smoothing the asymmetrical rhythmic edges and enriching the accompaniment with broken chord figurations, filling it to capacity. Nevertheless, the candid and triumphal articulation of theme (e) is easily discernible atop the latterly loquacious and sentimental accompaniment.

Ravel's development of melody in both his Piano Concerti fall into roughly the same categories: those that defy overt development and are resituated timbrally to create variety, or those that grow or diminish in length according to the composer's discretion. The thematic stratification employed in the *Concerto pour la main gauche* is employed once again in the final movement of the Concerto in G. Snippets of contrasting melody

are juxtaposed with increasing prevalence, persistence and intensity throughout the development section, contributing to an escalating sense of turmoil and ebullience notable also in the concerto for left-hand. Collectively, this evidence suggests that writing for left-hand only did not alter Ravel's approach to, or treatment of, melody. That he was able to retain his preferred methods of melodic development could be attributed to his selection of a two-handed approach in the piano part, by and large. The reciprocal action between two-hands creates a deeper level of musical interest, less inclined towards monotony than a single line. Moreover, the textures accompanying the melody line could be varied without implementing drastic changes. A linear approach to the melody would have required a greater level of evolution more quickly and more regularly, for the sake of musical interest.

TEMPO AND OTHER TEMPORAL CONSIDERATIONS

Concerto pour la main gauche

Rhythmically and temporally the *Concerto pour la main gauche* is a work of two halves: the pliant, restless opening section and the steady crisp *Allegro* (or *Scherzo* section). Theme group A brings about an interesting juxtaposition of rhythmic styles: Theme (a) brings to mind the repeated dotted rhythms of the regal Baroque French Overture, while the syncopated rhythms of theme (b) advertise Ravel's interest in jazz elements. The tutti reprise of theme (a) after the first piano cadenza, with complete brass section now, reinforces the French overture connections. Regular pulse is regularly abandoned through all cadenzas, the solos display the kind of temporal pliancy inherited from the Romantic concertos. The pianist is allowed considerable leeway temporally in solo

passages and extravagant use of demisemi-quavers and tempestuous embellishment is once again reminiscent of the ‘grand manner’ of pianism. This improvisatory style manipulates active and energetic rhythms of varied configuration: semi-quavers and demisemi-quavers are interspersed with compound groupings, and are subject to temporal artistic license as well as fastidiously indicated gradations of tempo. For example, the piano’s first entry immediately abandons regular meter, rhythmic groupings are congested but yield with dramatic solemnity to the temporal spontaneity encouraged by the performance direction, *a piacere*.

This rhythmic and temporal elasticity works towards certain stylistic goals and simultaneously tempers the technical difficulties posed by certain passages. During the cadenzas it becomes apparent that the rhythmic design has been constructed to allow internal space for accompaniment patterns, ornamental embroidery and harmonic gilding to be woven through, under and around the main melodies. Particular widespread chords or leaps may further disrupt the sense of pulse as the separation they demand fractionally lengthens the beat, and creates rhythmic anomalies. In the words of Leong and Korevaar:

The single-hand nature of the work decrees that registrally-distant bass and melody be articulated separately. Thus beats "split" between melody and harmony, creating characteristic metric structures.³²³

Following the opening cadenza, the orchestra mimics the interaction of melody and accompaniment presented by the piano. The orchestra provides a rhythmically unified

³²³ Daphne Leong and David Korevaar, ‘The Performer’s Voice: Performance and Analysis in Ravel’s *Concerto pour la main gauche*’, <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.05.11.3/mto.05.11.3.leong_korevaar.html> [10/05/16]

rendition of the majestic theme (a), formerly, there were tiers of assorted rhythms operating concurrently. This serves to promote the robust and complex nature of the piano part: it takes the entire orchestra to produce the same complex harmonies and accentuated bass line as rendered by the pianist.

The *scherzo* inverts many of the rhythmic and temporal trends established in the first half of the exposition. An irreverent, march-like accompaniment pattern in 6/8 maintains a strict, brisk pulse throughout the remainder of the exposition and for the duration of the development (see **Figure 4.19.**). The type of rhythms employed here change dramatically from what preceded the *scherzo*; polyrhythms and Romantically inspired figuration are largely replaced with crisp, clean sparse rhythms. Syncopation is perhaps the only penchant to drift over from the first section. Rests and tied notes occupy a more significant role rhythmically in the *scherzo*, unwittingly contributing to the unexpected accentuation of weak beats playfully challenging the unfaltering tread of boots present in the accompaniment owing to the march-like style.

Figure 4.19. *Concerto pour la main gauche*: Theme (d), bars 153 – 167

153

The musical score consists of three staves of music in bass clef, with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 6/8 time signature. The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a *spiccato* articulation. The second and third staves show a steady accompaniment pattern with some syncopation and rests. The third staff includes an *8^{va}* marking with a dashed line, indicating an octave shift.

Comparative Analysis

The Concerto in G appears rhythmically and temporally rigid in contrast to the extemporised flexibility of the *Concerto pour la main gauche*. The '*Allegramente*' immediately establishes a cleaner rhythmic aesthetic to the busy sextuplets, dotted rhythms, and grumbling undercurrents of the *Concerto pour la main gauche*. The rhythmic patterns, both in the orchestra and the piano, consist primarily of crotchets, quavers and triplets over glimmering tremolo celli. The deployment of their respective rhythmic patterns also differs greatly, the Concerto in G operating in almost ostinato-like fashion; once a rhythmic precedent has been set, subsequent activity will not deviate quickly from this pre-established pattern. Contrarily, the concerto for left-hand does not concede to certain arrangements or models but continually varies its rhythmic output. Common to both concerti, is the use of irregular accents and syncopation. Jazz-inspired syncopation helps to obfuscate these simple rhythms and protect against predictability. Capricious accents are often placed to highlight certain aspects of the melodic profile such as repeated notes in a deliberate fashion in the case of the Concerto in G. However, the source of accentuation in the *Concerto pour la main gauche* does not always stem from expressive markings or performance indications, but from the inclusion of rests where the subsequent entry lands on a weak beat, creating unanticipated accentuation at a brisk tempo.

Carefully adjudicated speeds and faithfully observed metronome markings are critical

to a successful performance Ravel's work according to Vlado Perlemuter.³²⁴ For instance, in the Concerto in G the dancelike quality of the opening theme can be lost if taken too fast. Congruent with the concerto for left-hand, the '*Allegramente*' swings primarily between two main tempi; the spritely opening tempo which returns during the development characterised by mechanical imitation, and a more relaxed *meno vivo* which tolerates a small amount of rubato, but not to the degree of the left-hand concerto. No changes of tempo are indicated in the '*Adagio*' and '*Presto*'. There are isolated examples of Romantic inspired rhythm and embellishment visible particularly in theme

Figure 4.20. Concerto in G, '*Allegramente*': theme (e), bar 83 – 86



Rhythmically drawn thematic connections assist with the cohesion of the opposing styles and materials. In the Concerto in G, the chuffing train journey depicted by the offbeat pairs of quavers in theme (d) and (e) (the tail end of which is visible in bar 83 of **Figure 4.20.** above) imitates the intermittent weak beat interjections from the orchestra during the opening sequence. Theme (d) and (e) also provide the sole example of partitioned blocks of melody and accompaniment, that is to say where internal space

³²⁴ Vlado Perlemuter and H el ene Jourdan-Morhange, *Ravel According to Ravel*, ed. by Harold Taylor, trans. by Frances Tanner, (London: Kahn & Averill, 1988), p. 85.

is designed into a melody, to allow accompaniment figures to surface temporarily. Howat also highlights Ravel's preference for 'grace-note figurations that interrupt and fall outside the indicated metre', this predilection is notable in both concerti.³²⁵

ORCHESTRATION AND DYNAMICS

Concerto pour la main gauche

Ravel spurned the guarantee of appropriate instrumental balance through reduced orchestral numbers and elected instead to place the full spectrum of orchestral instruments at his disposal. In pursuance of a full Romantic sound this arrangement is perfectly logical, but as an accompaniment to a one-handed pianist economization of orchestral power would have eased concerns of dynamic equity. Thus, orchestral organization and distribution is of critical importance in order to counteract a mire of balance-related struggles. In anticipation of these issues, *tutti* passages are employed sparingly and solo sections maximized (full analysis of the role of structure in pursuit of optimum soloistic exposure was examined earlier in **Structure and Formal Plan**). The arrant timbral contrast between the sombre instrumental selections of the peripheral sections and the strident choices of the *Scherzo* are designed to complement and emphasize the piano's activities, without overshadowing it. The instrumental soloists are chosen to complement the mood, register and timbral balance of the section. For instance, the emphasis of the left-hand's natural bass register during the piano's first cadenza is anticipated by the contrabassoon and horns, supported by murmuring

³²⁵ Howat, 'Ravel and the piano', p. 77.

celli and bass. Registrally, the chosen instruments normalize the sounds of the bass register, they prepare soberly for the soloists' entry and the rounded timbres in evidence allow the piano to cut through and dominate as soloist. Conversely, the *Scherzo* employs skittish trumpets and flutes as the soloists of choice, and this not only matches the shift in atmosphere, but also complements the *spiccato* piano melody placed in the middle and high registers.

Another technique perhaps designed to ennoble and exalt the efforts of the piano is the direct repetition of passages played by the soloist, duplicating the complex chords and underpinning accompaniment as if to state that the complexity and gravity of the material is such, that no more could be achieved by the orchestra than had already been stated by the soloist. As noted by Michael Russ 'the strings [are] confined to providing background and reinforcement.'³²⁶ Percussion is used sparingly in general, but the snare drum is a leading protagonist in the pursuit of the march-like tread and goading escalating frenzy of the development, with an insistence reminiscent of Bolero. The capabilities of the brass and woodwind sections are tested frequently and prominently. The orchestra's main function within the *Concerto pour la main gauche* is the recontextualisation and recolouring of primary themes, resulting in the heightening of emotional and musical tensions at appropriate moments throughout the work.

Comparative Analysis

The original divertissement concept for the Concerto in G is disclosed by its light and

³²⁶ Russ, 'Ravel and the Orchestra', p. 127.

buoyant instrumentation. While the *Concerto pour la main gauche* operates with a full complement of woodwind and brass, the Concerto in G slashes the number of wind players required quite literally in half: the *Concerto pour la main gauche* demands a combined total of 24 woodwind and brass players, while the Concerto in G only calls for 12.

Table 4.3. Instrumentation of both Piano Concerti

<i>Concerto pour la main gauche</i>	Concerto in G
Woodwind	
Piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, cor anglais, piccolo clarinet in Eb , 2 clarinets in A, bass clarinet in A, 2 bassoons and a contrabassoon.	Piccolo, 1 flute, 1 oboe, cor anglais, clarinet in Eb , clarinet in Bb , 2 bassoons.
Brass	
3 trumpets, 4 horns, 3 trombones, tuba.	1 trumpet, 2 horns, 1 trombone
Percussion	
Timpani, bass drum, cymbals, snare drum, woodblock, tam-tam and triangle	Timpani, cymbals, snare drum, woodblock, tam-tam, triangle and whip
Harp	
Piano	
Strings	

In the vein of a Mozart concerto, the Concerto in G draws on an orchestra of chamber proportions. Only a skeletal brass section is required, and the bass clarinet, contrabassoon and tuba have been excluded entirely. In the hands of a less competent orchestrator the substantial instrumental numbers in the *Concerto pour la main gauche* may have brought about calamitous balance issues, but the role of the orchestra is primarily one of abutment rather than opposition or antagonism. The concerti are

comparable in their treatment of the string section: they perform a supportive role and are not granted much prominence. Extreme demands are made of many of the wind players, another commonality between the concerti. Norman Demuth observed of the '*Allegramente*' in his early monograph on Ravel, that 'If the pianist is to be a virtuoso, so is the trumpet player'.³²⁷ Mawer theorizes that certain instrumental groups that foreground combinations of brass and percussion whilst subjugating the strings, were constructed to replicate a jazz band type ensemble. In certain instances, she suggests pizzicato strings may be used to imitate or represent the guitar within this ensemble. Similarly, Orenstein attributes the special tonguing effects in the first movement of the G major concerto to jazz influences.³²⁸

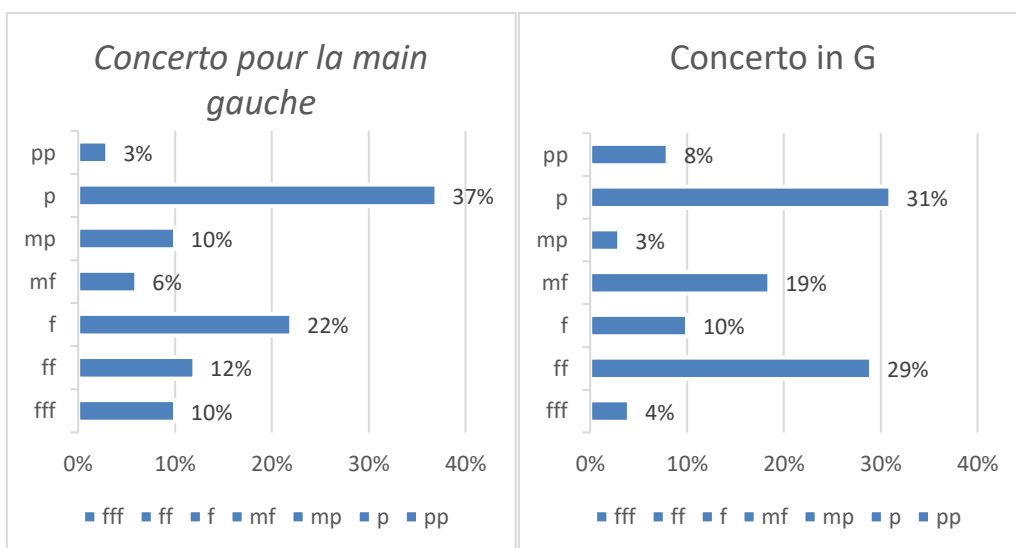
A conspicuous preference for the cor anglais is evident in both concerti. Following statements of their slow movement lyrical themes, the cor anglais is chosen as secondary soloist to sustain a principal melody over the decorative patterns issued by the piano. In the *Concerto pour la main gauche* the cor anglais solo found between bars 97 and 101 plays a relaxed version of dotted theme (a) immediately following the piano's heartrending account of theme B. In the Concerto in G the cor anglais rendition of theme (a) in the '*Adagio*', bars 74 – 96, eases the modulatory tensions of the development section and administers the necessary succour after the tensions of chromatic wilderness. On closer inspection, it appears that the piano's embellishments against the cor anglais are located primarily in the treble regions of the keyboard, so

³²⁷ Norman Demuth, *Ravel* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1947), p. 84.

³²⁸ Orenstein, ed., Maurice Ravel, *Piano Concerto in G major*, p. vii.

registrally cor anglais may have been selected to balance the scales so to speak, and to penetrate through the piano elaborations without overshadowing them. Furthermore, the E-flat clarinet and the piccolo feature significantly in both concerti. Generally, while the principal use of individual instruments and orchestral sections is very much alike, the role of the orchestra, and its primary function in both works, is diametrically opposed. The subservient, accommodating orchestra of the *Concerto pour la main gauche* operates very differently to the discursive and enterprising orchestra of the Concerto in G.

Figure 4.21. Dynamic use in each concerto



Concerto pour la main gauche prefers a *p* dynamic over *pp* as this quieter dynamic would not suffice against the orchestra with only one-hand. The Concerto in G can forgo use of the most extreme *fff* in favour of longer periods of time within a *ff* or *f* range, more fitting of course within the neoclassical orientation of the piece. The proportions of the stronger dynamics in the *Concerto pour la main gauche* are adjusted

to maximise the impact of the soloist, but also to maintain the pianist's stamina.

PIANISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

Concerto pour la main gauche

Despite the use of two-handed textures, the concerto for left-hand is uniquely fashioned around the physiology and movement of the left-hand. Sandra Wing-Yee Lau believes that the overriding popularity for the performance of the concerto in its original form, over Cortot's arrangement for two hands, is likely due to the unsuccessful physical and gestural translation of the work from one hand to two, as the concerto is so closely moulded around the anatomy and movement of the left-hand:

Even the simplest of melodies in the piano part is custom-fitted for the left-hand, calculated so that the natural weight of the thumb brings out the natural curves of the line.³²⁹

Leong and Korevaar therefore classified the concerto's left-handedness as 'essential' to its successful performance.³³⁰ The technical demands on the pianist in this work are of the highest. Orenstein considers its particular virtuosity a scion of Lisztian enterprise, and certainly the showmanship, aureate figuration and flamboyant technique required, imply this specific brand of artistry.³³¹ According to Vlado Perlemuter, the broad leaps and wide stretches form the greatest technical challenges of the concerto, although, the difficulties posed by the latter depend entirely on the natural hand span of the player.

³²⁹ Sandra Wing-Yee Lau, 'The Art of the Left Hand: A Study of Ravel's "Piano Concerto for the Left Hand" and a Bibliography of the repertoire' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Stanford University, 1994), p. 4.

³³⁰ Leong and Korevaar, 'The Performer's Voice: Performance and Analysis in Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche*', <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.05.11.3/mto.05.11.3.leong_korevaar.html> [10/05/16]

³³¹ Orenstein, *Ravel: Man and Musician*, p. 202.

The smaller the hand, the greater the difficulties; in particular, the grievances presented by an array of widespread chords would multiply in accordance with hand span. Wing-Yee Lau suggests a rotational movement from the elbow when attempting rapidly arpeggiated figures, rather than relying on finger action and dexterity, as this would only serve to tire the hand. She contends that ‘with the elbow as the basis of all finger action, the left-hand can bear the greater number of motions demanded of it’.³³² She also suggests incorporating angled or diagonal directional movement across a number of keys in preparation for black note passages. Perlemuter advises ubiquitous use of the thumb wherever feasible to assist with projection, this would also guard against the premature fatigue of the other fingers as they would need to work harder in order to produce the appropriate dynamic.³³³ The thumb is predisposed towards the role of melodic projection not only by its weight but also by its position: as a peripheral digit it benefits from the rotational torque and clout of the whole arm, while the other fingers rely extensively on finger action alone.

In some instances, particularly low pedal notes, it may not be physically and aurally possible to achieve what is notated, i.e. where pedal notes are held through rising arpeggios or other virtuosic gestures it may be necessary to clear the pedal at various stages, continuance of a pedal note or chord throughout may not be feasible. For instance, faithful portrayal of all chord values featured in the cadenza in **Figure 4.22**.

³³² Wing-Yee Lau, ‘The Art of the Left-Hand: A Study of Ravel’s “Piano Concerto for the Left Hand” and a Bibliography of the repertoire’, pp. 9 – 10.

³³³ Perlemuter and Jourdan-Morhange, *Ravel According to Ravel*, pp. 84 – 86.

below would produce a melody enshrouded by muddy harmonies. Passages such as this may accommodate more than one solution: the pianist has licence to select the most stylistically and technically appropriate strategy. As Leong and Korevaar astutely state: ‘the pianist's pedalling choices determine harmonies, lines, and gestures heard’.³³⁴

Figure 4.22. *Concerto pour la main gauche*, bars 36 – 43

The musical score for Figure 4.22 shows two systems of music. The first system (bars 36-38) features a right hand with a melodic line and a left hand with dense, arpeggiated chords. Pedal markings (8vb) are indicated below the left hand. The second system (bars 39-43) continues the texture, with a triplet of eighth notes in the left hand in bar 41. Pedal markings (8vb) are also present in this system.

Many interpretations therefore can be judged valid and legitimate as the performer seeks technical and conceptual resolution to the issues under scrutiny. These varied approaches may involve the introduction of the middle pedal to prolong a pedal note or chord, pedalling situated according to certain harmonies or cadential points, or an amalgamation of these procedures. Perlemuter advocated judicious vibrato pedalling as an aid to harmonic and textural congruity.³³⁵

³³⁴ Leong and Korevaar, ‘The Performer's Voice: Performance and Analysis in Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche*’, <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.05.11.3/mto.05.11.3.leong_korevaar.html> [10/05/16]

³³⁵ Perlemuter and Jourdan-Morhange, *Ravel According to Ravel*, pp. 84 – 86.

Traditional Dual-Handed Exchange

The representational and aural significance of the textural selections was highlighted by Ravel himself:

In a work of this kind it is essential to give the impression of a texture no thinner than that of a part written for both hands. For the same reason I resorted to a style which is much nearer to that of the more solemn kind of traditional Concerto.³³⁶

While there is no doubt that Ravel was seeking to fulfil the potential of two hands, his commentary on the subject could be easily misconstrued. Admittedly the challenge of writing for one-hand steered him towards the model of the Romantic concerto, to fulfil the possibilities of the left-hand. However, he does not explicitly state that he wished to consistently emulate a two-handed texture, or create the illusion of a second hand, but rather that the listener must not feel the absence of a hand. That no more could be achieved by two hands. Although visually the piano part is predominantly notated on one stave at a time and may present a linear appearance for large swathes of the work, this does not necessarily conform to the type of linear format adopted by Prokofiev. It could be that the melody and accompaniment are contained within the same figuration, so visually linear, but with the correct articulation and emphasis, they are aurally separated into melody and accompaniment. In terms of performance, registral leaps and the alternation of range subliminally suggests to the audience the representation of the roles of both hands. Working from these perspectives Ravel's pianistic approach is typically categorised as a two-handed, that is to say an illusion of two-hands working

³³⁶ Michel D. Calvocoressi, 'M. Ravel Discusses His Own Work', *Daily Telegraph*, 11th July 1931.

reciprocally.

Direct and Complex Linearity

However, there is evidence to suggest that Ravel's pianistic approach stretches beyond the duality of handedness and function. There are sections where a linear approach is unabashedly embraced, for instance theme (d) from the *Scherzo* (see **Figure 4.19**). This linearity may opt to occupy the role of a single hand at a time, for instance theme (d) mentioned above speaks to the audience as the left-hand due to its deep register and weighty feel, however other areas of linearity may briefly contribute within a typical right-hand capacity. Decorative additions such as the descending flourish at bar 186, or the extended rippling ornamentation over theme (e) (bars 247-268) in the flutes, cosmetically and texturally correspond to the conventional criteria of right-hand responsibilities. A two-handed impression does not always require the expansive chords of the opening cadenza, or the dispersed melody and accompaniment patterns of theme B, as Ravel succeeds in eliciting the sense of bilateral action within a linear context. Vaulting regularly between registers aurally conveys two hands, as the tessitural associations and functions relating to either hand are both regarded intermittently. The example below conveys the appearance of two hands due to the speed at which it is performed and the regular leaps between registers which transmits an air of dialogue between right and left hands.

Figure 4.23. *Concerto pour la main gauche*, bars 107 – 109



This perspective conforms to the conclusions drawn on the type of statement projected by the opening cadenza, it acknowledges its left-handedness but also addresses the doubts towards its limited role and capabilities. Switching between these various roles, the divisions and associations with handedness become blurred. The left-hand becomes more than dual-functional, but multi-functional or alternatively omni-competent, as it can occupy the role of either hand singly, or both hands simultaneously within varying contexts.

Comparative Analysis

As mentioned previously the concerti occupy vastly different plains stylistically, even so, Orenstein was surprised by the pianistic disparities between them: ‘rather curiously the Concerto for the Left-Hand shows a fuller texture than its counterpart for two hands’.³³⁷ Despite many incongruities between the two, under the surface there are in fact several intriguing connections. Possibly the most glaring evidence of cross-pollination of pianistic approach takes place in the cadenza of the ‘*Allegramente*’. Between bars 230 and 237 the left-hand holds responsibility for both the melody and

³³⁷ Orenstein, *Ravel: Man and Musician*, p. 205.

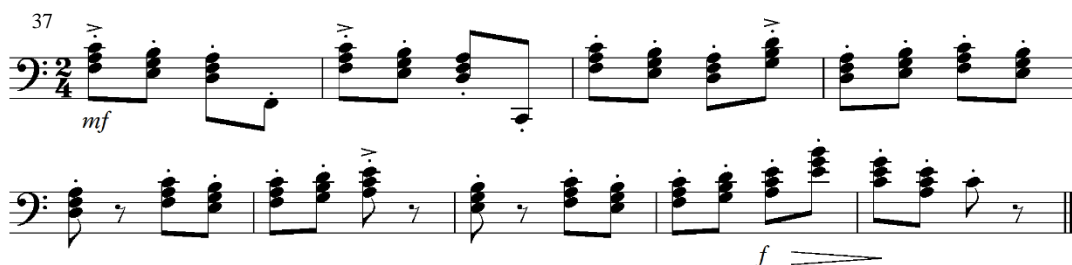
accompaniment: the melody is projected by the thumb of the left-hand atop a flowing, arpeggiated figure. Ornamented by right hand trills, the passage is a clear display of left-handed technique that he similarly used in the sister work.

Furthermore, there are passages in the Concerto in G where the music is easily adaptable for one-hand. Theme (c) from the *'Presto'* is particularly significant as no changes are required in order to transfer this passage to one-hand as it is particularly exposed in its first rendition. **Figure 4.24.** shows the original version presented over two staves, its distribution places the melody line on the top staff and accompaniment or bass on the lower staff. **Figure 4.25.** contrarily, demonstrates how easily the two staves meld into a single line achievable by one-hand at moderate speed.

Figure 4.24. Concerto in G, 'Presto', Theme (c), bars, 37 – 45

The image displays a musical score for two systems of piano notation. The first system, labeled with the number 37, covers bars 37 through 40. It features a melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. The melody is characterized by a series of eighth notes with trills, while the accompaniment consists of a flowing, arpeggiated figure. The dynamic marking *mf* is present. The second system covers bars 41 through 45. The melody continues with similar trills, and the accompaniment features a more complex, arpeggiated pattern. The dynamic marking *f* is present. The score is written in 2/4 time and uses a grand staff format.

Figure 4.25. Concerto in G, 'Presto', Theme (c) integrated onto one staff, bars 37 – 45



Theme (d) from the 'Presto' could also be adapted for a single hand, although it would require some rearrangement or redistribution of notes to render it kinaesthetically pleasing at tempo. The excerpt below does not attempt this recomposition but simply shows how this theme also lends itself to one hand alone. Once again two figures exhibit a comparison of the printed score alongside the rearrangement for one hand.

Figure 4.26. Concerto in G, 'Presto', Theme (d), bars 95 – 108

Figure 4.26 displays three systems of musical notation for the piano accompaniment of the 'Presto' movement, Theme (d), bars 95-108. The music is in G major (three sharps) and 6/8 time. The first system (bars 95-98) features a right-hand part with chords and a left-hand part with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system (bars 99-102) shows the right hand playing a melodic line with accents and the left hand continuing the accompaniment. The third system (bars 103-108) continues the melodic and accompanimental patterns, ending with a double bar line.

Figure 4.27. Concerto in G, 'Presto': Theme (d) integrated onto one stave, bars 95 – 108

Figure 4.27 shows the same piano accompaniment as Figure 4.26, but with the right-hand and left-hand parts integrated onto a single staff. The notation is more compact, with the right-hand part (chords and melodic lines) and the left-hand part (accompaniment) written on the same staff. The key signature and time signature remain the same as in Figure 4.26.

Hammond notes that the main melodies in the *Concerto pour la main gauche* are projected almost exclusively by the thumb. To elect the thumb as principal melodic carrier anoints it with an amount of creative culpability; physical restrictions presented by melodic use of the thumb governs the resulting output. She records that all major

melodic statements in Ravel's G major piano concerto similarly place the melody at the top of the texture, and concludes that the analogous stratification of his concerto for left-hand indicates personal preference for this arrangement. Whether this was a strategic or stylistic decision, the fact still remains that placing the melodic at the top of the texture allocates predominant melodic responsibility to the thumb.

MUSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

[...] one must sometimes wait years before the real intimate significance of the music becomes clear to an audience, the means of its expression having then exposed all its secrets - Ravel³³⁸

Ravel inscribed 'musae mixtae' on the cover of the autograph piano reduction of the *Concerto pour la main gauche* which translates as 'mixed muses'.³³⁹ When considering the amalgam of styles within this one-movement work, lyrical, jazz, scherzo, martial and fanfare elements, the motivation for this inscription becomes clear. There has been a tendency to associate the martial elements and drama with a retrospective glance towards WWI, which both Ravel and Wittgenstein participated in, or alternatively, perhaps a portentous premonition of WWII. The work easily lends itself to these psychological and programmatic interpretations. While there is no written proof for either claim, and Orenstein has noted a preoccupation with themes of death 'insistently in the composer's *oeuvre*', certain musical features undoubtedly lend themselves to these military associations.³⁴⁰ For instance, the concentration of brass instruments

³³⁸ Marguerite Long, *At the Piano with Ravel* (London: Orion Publishing, 1974) p. 66.

³³⁹ Orenstein, *Ravel: Man and Musician*, p. 239.

³⁴⁰ Orenstein, *Ravel: Man and Musician*, p. 203.

employed prompts martial connotations, additionally the musical landscape emboldens these programmatic undertones, for example, the rapid fire repeated demisemiquavers at bar 71 which conjures a compelling impression of stuttering gunfire. As with the concerto for left-hand, military references are observable within the Concerto in G also. The opening theme of the '*Allegramente*' bears certain martial connotations through its instrumentation, the piccolo at the lower end of its range more closely resembles a fife, in combination with prominent percussion and trumpet this gives a *quasi-fanfare* feel to the opening.

Ravel's predisposal towards jazz inspired themes emerges clearly in both. More significantly the '*Allegramente*' and the *Concerto pour la main gauche* also share certain structural parallels in the application, function and positioning of these particular styles. It is the third principal subject group, namely themes (c) and (d), in both the left-hand concerto and the '*Allegramente*' that bear the most prominent jazz influence. Russ's pronouncement that in both concerti the development sections are replaced by mechanical-type sections elucidates further style-based structural comparability. This remains so, regardless of the classification or terminology used to describe these regions, as conflicting structural interpretations are extractable from the underlying framework. Ultimately, the underpinning structural similarity between the two remains, where an industrial, mechanistic segment is placed centrally in each movement.

Orenstein groups the concerto for the left-hand alongside *Gaspard de la nuit* and *La*

Valse for their dramatic content, a less common stylistic trope throughout Ravel's output.³⁴¹ It is notable however that the palpable sentimentality, poignancy and drama exuded by the *Concerto pour la main gauche* was not an anomaly, nor was all prior output equally emotionally inscrutable. However, Orenstein classifies the *Concerto for Left-Hand* as the most 'dramatic' and 'tormented' of all Ravel's works.³⁴²

CONCLUSION

Questions once circulated about the legitimacy of these concerti as a true reflection of Ravel's compositional and constructive thought, as early symptoms of the neurological disease that would inevitably consume him were emerging by the early 1930s.³⁴³ If certain areas of the brain had been compromised, the repercussions for critical analysis on Ravel's creative mind would be complex: disentangling the real Ravel, from the judgements induced by his deteriorating processing capabilities would be an impossible task. This would render any study of the special aspects of the *Concerto pour la main gauche* moot, as deviations from typical procedures could be explained by the compositional and structural challenges accompanying the limitations of Wittgenstein's stylistic and technical demands, but equally could be the result of early cognitive changes. However, Erik Baeck argues conclusively against the impact of illness on his concerti drawing examples from the repertoire to show similar breadth of

³⁴¹ Orenstein, *Ravel: Man and Musician*, p. 121.

³⁴² Orenstein, *Ravel: Man and Musician*, p. 202.

³⁴³ L. Amaducci, E. Grassi and F Boller, 'Maurice Ravel and right-hemisphere musical creativity: influence of disease on his last musical works?', *European Journal of Neurology*, 9:1 (Jan 2002), 75 – 82.

timbre, harmony and rhythm. He asserts most convincingly that:

If the Left-Hand Concerto showed features of a latent left-hemisphere impairment, then these supposed traits should be even more prominent in *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*, written 1932-33. However, these three songs do not display melodic fragmentation, or any harmonic or rhythmic inconsistency.³⁴⁴

The features of these concerti are then entirely the result of Ravel's unchanged creative capacity. Differences in technique, style and orchestra can be attributed either to the challenge of writing for left-hand, or to the stylistic routes taken by the composer. By Ravel's own admission (see **Structure and Formal Plan** and **Pianistic Considerations**) the structure and style of the *Concerto pour la main gauche* were prescribed by the textural limitations and the musical engagement possible with the left-hand.

The external characters and moods emitted by these concerti are indeed vastly polarized, yet subsequent to this comparative study what becomes even more remarkable are the number of commonalities between the two despite their contradictory facades and mien.³⁴⁵ The internal and thematic frameworks are constructed around a surprising number of shared core structural principles. Both concerti draw on the manipulation of three thematic groups within a Sonata form blueprint, furthermore the '*Allegramente*' and the *Concerto pour la main gauche* show marked similarities in the internal arrangements of their third thematic groups. The unusual treatment and implementation of *Cadenza* sections form another structural correlation. The flexible temporal

³⁴⁴ Erik Baeck, 'The longstanding medical fascination with 'le cas Ravel', *Ravel Studies*, Ed., Deborah Mawer (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010) pp. 187 – 208, (pp. 206 – 207).

³⁴⁵ Gerald Larner expresses a similar sentiment in *Maurice Ravel*, pp. 208 – 209.

approach to *Concerto pour la main gauche* aligns with its stylistic principles, so here a distinct divergence can be drawn between the two concerti, as the Concerto in G employs rhythms and tempi associated with the culture of 20th century composition. In terms of orchestration, the aggregate number of instruments and their respective methods of deployment varies necessarily according to requirement, yet specific instrumental preferences and groupings shine through in both concerti. The solo piano parts also share quite a few similarities once the analyst digs beyond superficial features. Moreover, the classification of a two-handed pianistic approach seems over-simplified in the case of Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche*, the pianistic procedures used are more nuanced than this, fulfilling several roles alternately. As with so much of Ravel's output, it is often simply wrought but ingeniously assembled. In fact, enough flexibility was found within the confines of a single hand that certain aspects of that technique may have bled into the Concerto in G. Ravel found space and flexibility enough within some of his preferred compositional and pianistic methods that they could be made applicable to a single-hand with orchestra, and as a result there is more that unites these two works than divides them.

CHAPTER 5: BRITTEN

From a chronological standpoint, review of Britten's large-scale works for piano has been complicated by his revisionist tendencies. His Piano Concerto, Op.13 was composed in 1938 and revised in 1945; his left-hand work *Diversions*, Op.21 was composed in 1940 – 41, revised in 1950 and again in 1953 – 54.³⁴⁶ To accurately trace Britten's pianistic approach from the Piano Concerto, Op.13, through *Diversions* and beyond, the adaptations and amendments effected on relevant works had to be chronicled sequentially and scores reconstructed apropos to specific points in Britten's compositional narrative. To fulfil the objectives laid out in the first chapter establishing the originality of Britten's left-hand work in the context of earlier piano-based offerings, both works first had to be restored to their original format.³⁴⁷ In other words, the 1938 version of the Piano Concerto had to be held against the 1941 version of *Diversions* to trace any connections between these two works. Rewinding the clock on these works was essential in order to complete a valid comparison between the two scores, highlight possible manipulation or reinvention of established pianistic techniques and preferences, and subsequently inform current scholarship on Britten's left-hand piano procedures. The revisions to both works are dealt with separately. This prompted engagement with many primary sources, documents, manuscripts and original scores held by the Britten-Pears Foundation in Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

³⁴⁶ Banks, ed., *Benjamin Britten: A Catalogue of the Published Works*, p. 43, p. 52.

³⁴⁷ See **Chapter 1**, pp. 104 – 109.

So as to retroactively strip away later modifications and base my analysis on the first completed iteration of both these works I consulted all of the pertinent and original *Diversions* materials held by the Britten-Pears Foundation, in addition to many of those relevant to the development of the Piano Concerto. A full list of the manuscript and primary sources personally examined can be found in the 2 tables overleaf, **Table 5.1.** and **Table 5.2.**

As part of her recent thesis *Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain*, Wendy Wong also carried out a meticulous audit of all *Diversions* related sources held by the Britten-Pears Foundation.³⁴⁸ My archival work, in combination with Wong's observations, elucidates certain aspects of Britten's working processes, some of which illustrate his trials with left-hand technique. Most crucially however these revisions illuminate the changes applied to the 1954 2nd edition of *Diversions*. A comparison of the discrepancies between the facsimile autograph full score of 1941 and the scores of the revised 1954 version generate an inventory of the subsequent alterations. Wong undertook the comparison of these sources, and classified modifications or inconsistencies according to pitch, tempo and metronome markings, notational differences, scoring, composition and movement titles. Wong's fastidious comparison of these primary sources, allied with personal study of the relevant archival manuscripts enabled retroactive restoration of the *Diversions* score to its original form, insofar as is possible with the available sources. It is from this reconstructed 1941 score that the

³⁴⁸ Wendy Wong, *Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain*, pp. 296 – 354.

following analysis stems; the differences that exist between the original and revised scores shall be illustrated at each topically suitable juncture.

Table 5.1. Studied *Diversions* sources, held by the Britten – Pears Foundation

Reference	Date	Description	Comments
BBM/diversions/1/2; 2-9300886	24 Aug 1940	Composition draft. Holograph. Titled <i>Concert Variations</i> .	Annotated composition draft with date, signature and place of composition with crossings out and rehearsal marks. Dedicated to Paul Wittgenstein. Accompanied by a letter to Donald Mitchell from Hans Harnik of 'Wachtell Manheim & Grouf' regarding the whereabouts of Britten's autographed score.
BBM/diversions/1/3; no ref no. listed	Circa Jul- Oct 1940	Photographic score. Titled <i>Concert Variations</i> .	Photographic score substantially annotated by Paul Wittgenstein. Black ink with annotations in pencil and red crayon. The whereabouts of the original 2-piano score are unknown, but this photographic copy was sent to Wittgenstein in Cuba.
BBM/diversions/1/4; 2-9300886	Circa Aug 1940	Discarded material. Holograph.	Untitled draft sketch with minor crossings out and rehearsal mark 44 at the start of page 3r.
BBM/diversions/1/5; 2-9300886	Circa Jul- Oct 1940	Discarded material. Holograph.	Short discarded draft from 'Toccatà II' in pencil.
BBM/diversions/1/6; 2-9300886	1954, date is that of the second revised edition	Instrumental part [fair copy piano solo]. Holograph.	Piano solo with rehearsal marks on the final page. Blue and black ink manuscript with photocopied cover.
BBM/diversions/2/1; 2-9000038	Copyright date on score is 1941	Editor's proof. Made as facsimile of the full score of the first version in 1941, but in the 1950s they became one of the working scores in which	First American printing of the score with annotations by Britten and an unknown other. Printed from the holograph with annotations in pencil, red and blue crayon. Corrections and markings seem to be less

		Britten marked his corrections at different stages, which in turn served as the editor's proof(s) for the definitive revised version of 1955.	extensive in this score.
BBM/diversions/2/2; 2-9000037	Copyright date on score is 1955	Dyeline full score.	Dyeline full score with very minor pencil annotations. Printed in black ink with pencil annotations. Pre-publication copy of the 2 nd edition.
BBM/diversions/2/3; 2-9000036	Copyright date on score is 1941	Editor's proof – incomplete. Made as facsimiles of the full score of the first version in 1941, but in the 1950s became one of the working scores in which Britten marked his corrections at different stages, which in turn served as the editor's proof(s) for the definitive revised version of 1955.	First American printing of the score with revisions by Britten and paste-overs. The words 'Master Copy' are struck through on the front cover at the top right-hand corner. Printed from the holograph with annotations in pencil, red and blue crayon.
BBM/diversions/2/4; 2-9100126	Copyright date on score is 1955	Full score. Post-publication revisions.	Revised version of the full score heavily annotated in Britten's hand. Printed in black ink with annotations in pencil, red, blue, purple and green crayon. Wong asserts that these were not post-publication 'revisions' but Britten's own conducting markings.
5B4 ID: 2-9501142	Circa Jul 1940	One-page sketch from his 'American sketchbook'. Holograph.	Brief sketches to 9 mvts. Brought this sketch to the dinner with P.W. on 12 July 1940.
Correspondence	1940 - 1950	Series of handwritten and typed letters from Paul Wittgenstein to Benjamin Britten.	Depicts Wittgenstein's preparation of <i>Diversions</i> and outlines disputes between composer and performer prior to performances in 1942 and 1950.

Table 5.2. Studied Piano Concerto sources, held by the Britten – Pears Foundation

Reference	Date	Description	Comments
BBM/piano_concerto/1/1; no ref no. listed	Circa 7 Feb-26 Jul 1938	Composition draft.	Draft including the original third movement with rehearsal marks, paste overs, crossings out and pages struck through.
BBM/piano_concerto/1/3; 2-9500571	Jan-Jul 1938. Completed on 26 July 1938	Full score [fair copy] Original full score with signature, date and place of composition.	List of instrumentation and annotated with corrections and rehearsal marks. The original third movement <i>Recitative and Aria</i> has been removed at some stage and replaced by the revised version 'Impromptu'.
BBM/piano_concerto/1/4; 2-9300878	Circa 7 Feb-26 Jul 1938	Full score [fair copy].	Full score of the original third movement with corrections in red crayon and rehearsal marks.
BBM/piano_concerto/1/5; 2-9300878	Circa Aug 1945	Composition draft.	Draft of the revised third movement 'Impromptu' and discarded sketch of the opening at the top of the page.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAL PLAN

Diversions

In the preface to the original full score edition of *Diversions* Britten detailed his approach to his left-hand work:

It takes the form of eleven straightforward and concise variations on a simple musical scheme [...] I was attracted from the start by the problems involved in writing a work for this particular medium, especially as I was well acquainted with and extremely enthusiastic about Mr. Wittgenstein's skill in overcoming what appear to be insuperable difficulties.³⁴⁹

The structural outline of the work and stylistic breadth of the variations were evident from its inception. Based on the preliminary contact between Britten and Wittgenstein regarding a possible commission, the composer brought an assortment of possible melodic and figurative ideas to dinner when Wittgenstein invited him to his home on July 12th, 1940.³⁵⁰ This one-page sketch was somewhat prophetic, featuring future themes in forms abridged and unvarnished, but in embryonic schemes that would change little over the course of the work's realization. The main theme and primary motivic material from 8 out of the eventual 11 variations are featured in this vignette (see **Figure 5.1.** overleaf for this sketch).³⁵¹ Only one movement, 'Badinerie', received substantive reworking subsequently.³⁵² The elemental scaffolding of Britten's *Diversions* was remarkably coherent and complete from the outset.

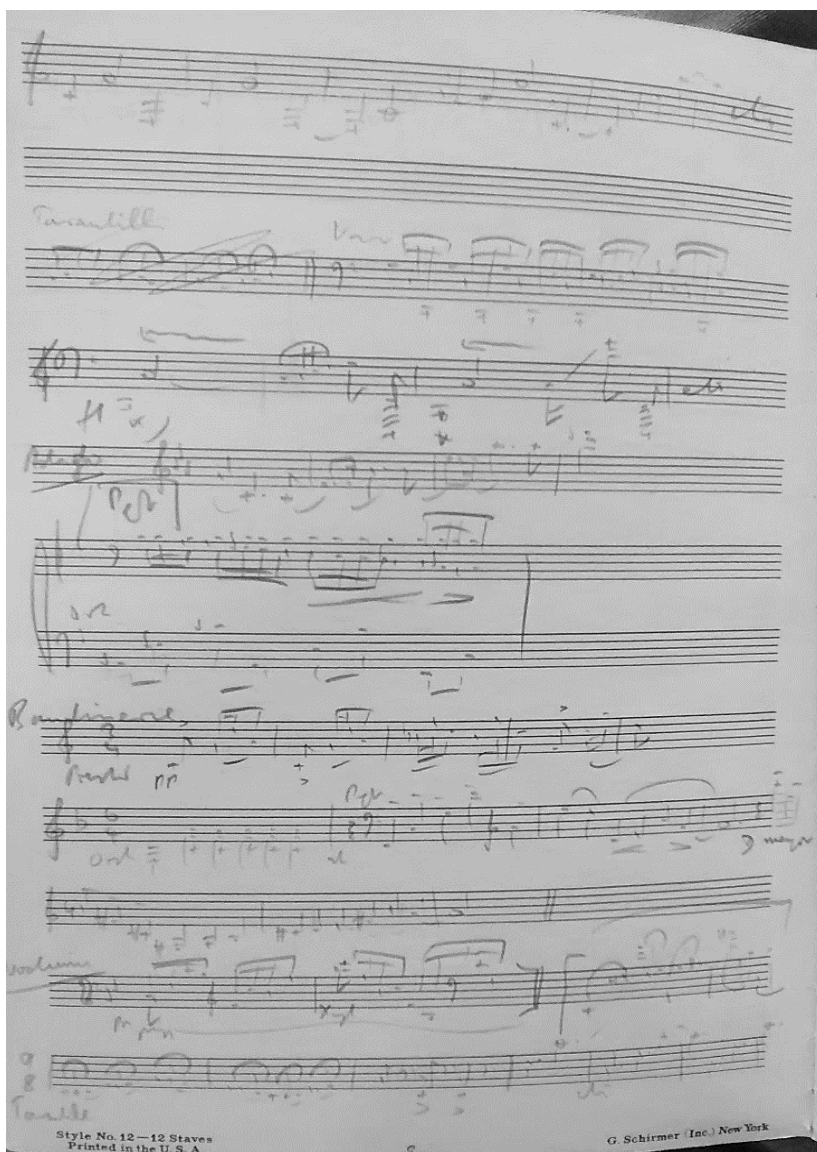
³⁴⁹ This preface was also subsequently republished in the volume Paul Kildea, ed., *Britten on Music*, (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003) p. 369.

³⁵⁰ Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein*, p. 277.

³⁵¹ There are in fact 12 separate movements that follow the opening Theme, however in his numbering of the movements, and in his preface to the work, Britten tallies 11 variations, counting 'Toccata I IXa' and 'Toccata II IXb' as two halves of the same overall movement.

³⁵² For a full list of the movements included in this sketch see: Wong, *Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain*, p. 303.

Figure 5.1. One-page sketch for *Diversions* from Britten's 'American Sketchbook' ³⁵³

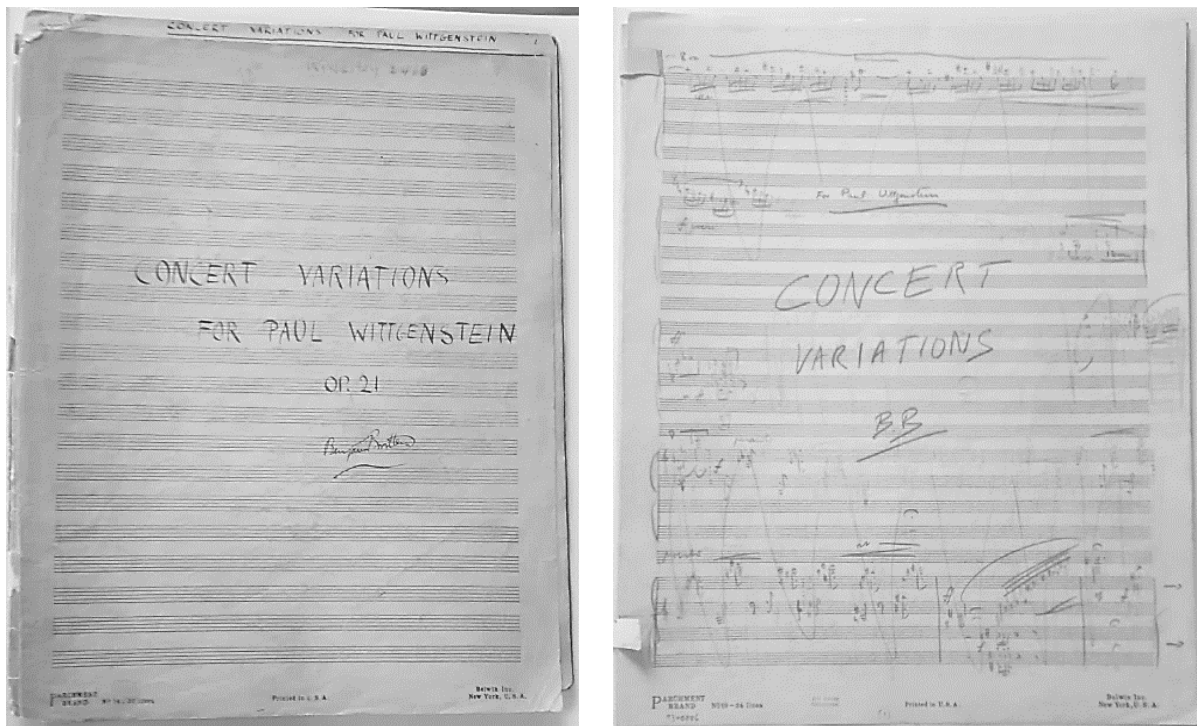


Neither in format nor in name does Britten's left-hand piano work qualify as a traditional

³⁵³ *Gb-Alb*, 2-9501142, Holograph sketch of *Diversions* from Britten's 'American Sketchbook'. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

Concerto in the ‘grand manner’.³⁵⁴ However, the earliest drafts of *Diversions* show a composer still grappling with the final vestiges of conventional norms: both the composition draft and the 1941 photographic two-piano score adhere to traditional nomenclature practices, with the more conventional title ‘Concert Variations’ (see **Figure 5.2.** overleaf).

Figure 5.2. Title pages of the Photographic Two-Piano Score (left) and Composition Draft (right) of *Diversions* ³⁵⁵



The revised movement titles in later years similarly illustrate a shedding of traditional designations and a gradual espousal of more contemporary labels and characterizations.

³⁵⁴ Michael Oliver, *Benjamin Britten* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1996), p. 82: ‘The work for Paul Wittgenstein is in no sense a concerto’.

³⁵⁵ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/1/3; BBM/diversions/1/2. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

Three of the 11 movements were allotted more evocative titles in the revised score, as can be seen in the comparison of original and revised movement titles in **Table 5.3.** overleaf. Additionally, the suggested condensed format, with proposed cuts and omissions printed on the contents page of the original score, was removed in the revised score. The preface written by Britten and the title page dedication to Paul Wittgenstein were likewise excluded. However, the dedication to Wittgenstein remained on the inside title page.³⁵⁶

Table 5.3. Original and Revised Movement Titles

Movement	Original score - 1941	Revised score - 1955
Theme	Theme	Theme
Variation I	Recitative	Recitative
Variation II	Romance	Romance
Variation III	March	March
Variation IV	Rubato	Arabesque
Variation V	Chorale	Chant
Variation VI	Nocturne	Nocturne
Variation VII	Badinerie	Badinerie
Variation VIII	Ritmico	Burlesque
Variation IXa	Toccata I	Toccata I
Variation IXb	Toccata II	Toccata II
Variation X	Adagio	Adagio
Variation XI	Tarantella	Tarantella

³⁵⁶ Wong suggests that the change of wording in the dedication from 'to Paul Wittgenstein' printed in the original score, to 'for Paul Wittgenstein' in the revised score was indicative of Britten's efforts to reclaim control over the piece after Wittgenstein's interference, as Wittgenstein himself had twice expressed preference for the former dedication. Wong, *Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain*, p. 388.

The variations are arranged to promote a staggered escalation of momentum and intensity while maintaining stylistic diversity between movements. Individually, these short movements do not lend themselves to complicated structures, many defy classification within the most straightforward of Classical forms, ternary or binary form for example, as they consist of a repeated exploration, timbrally, texturally, and harmonically of a single musical idea. They could be classified as characteristic variations; where components and derivatives of the theme adopt a new stylistic mantle with each movement in a manner similar to his 1937 work, *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*, Op.10.³⁵⁷ Each variation is essentially self-contained, with a new incarnation of the ‘theme’ the primary focus of respective movements. While the orchestral and textural organisation of these variations sometimes suggest certain sectional delineations internally, and fragments of principal melody occasionally converse with motifs or idioms specific to that movement, more often than not, individual movements remain monothematic. This corresponds with the traditional schema of variation form and would seem appropriate given the brevity of the individual movements.

It is possible to separate the individual movements of *Diversions* into two groups according to the treatment and development of each movements’ sole melodic subject. The larger proportion of variations fall into a type of sectional or strophic organisation; where a movement can be divided into several parts according to repetition or

³⁵⁷ With only 3 years between these 2 works, speculation of an inspirational link between *Diversions* and *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* could be appropriate.

development of the movement's primary melody or whose sectional delineations are often emphasized by changes in orchestration and texture. The opening '*Theme*', '*Romance*', '*March*', '*Chant*', '*Nocturne*', '*Burlesque*', '*Toccata II*' (with the *cadenza* at the tail of this movement as a caveat), '*Adagio*' and the finale '*Tarantella*' all fall into this category, where phrasing, timbre, texture and melodic repetition or development divide each variation into two or three separate sections. Take for example variations 5 and 6, '*Chant*' and '*Nocturne*'. The former falls into two halves naturally by way of the orchestral and melodic handling: in the first half of the movement, bars 192 – 207, the piano is notably absent and the melody is presented by the strings, clarinets and bassoons.³⁵⁸ Accompaniment from the harp and lower strings is minimal and forms a skeletal harmonic outline. The beginning of the second section is signified by the entry of the piano in a solo capacity and a full repeat of the melody from bar 208. The omission of the orchestra during the first section of the piano's statement highlights the transfer of the melodic baton from the orchestra to the solo piano. Modifications are applied to the melody during its repeat; the sighing, descending step of the opening phrase is inverted which culminates in a disparate arch and apex to the subsequent, sustained ascending phrase. See **Figure 5.3.** and **Figure 5.4.** For a comparison of the melodic outline of these two passages.

³⁵⁸ It may be useful at this juncture to clarify that when performing analysis on *Diversions* I have used the revised score numbers so that these observations may be traced in the current printed score. Only in referring to the original score do I use the correlating, original score bar numbers, in each case however a photographic or musical example is provided for clarification.

Figure 5.3. ‘Chant’, Melodic outline, bars 192 – 199



Figure 5.4. ‘Chant’, Melodic outline, bars 208 – 215



There is a clear rhythmic and intervallic affinity between the two iterations of the melody. The piano remains in melodic control until the end of the movement, with orchestral contributions waning in preparation for the conclusion. ‘Nocturne’ is divisible into three sections based on its orchestration and melodic repetition. The melody is eked out through orchestral dialogue over the piano’s sparkling triplet embellishment. The orchestration thickens at bar 253, where the solo instruments who undertook the first full statement of the melody are joined by their respective instrumental sections. The piano’s activity heightens correspondingly, reinforcing rhythmically and texturally the onset of this second section. Additionally, the bar preceding the beginning of this second section contains an ascending scale which anticipates the arrival of the repeated melody. This scale is employed again to lead in to the third and final segment of this movement, which begins in bar 268. This last section, or coda, sees a dramatic reduction in orchestration and a return to the solo instruments of the opening passage. The piano also reverts to the swaying triplets of the first section. The melody is profoundly truncated and the number of participating instruments continues to diminish rapidly. In contrast to ‘Chant’, the melody remains firmly under

orchestral control, internal divisions are conveyed through dynamic shifts, the augmentation or diminution of embellishment in the piano, the expectant ascending scale a harbinger of each subsequent rendition of the lyrical melody.

Some movements are not completely monothematic but include additional motivic material. Variation 3, '*March*', employs a biting militaristic motif in its introduction which supplements the actions of the main melody throughout the movement. The introductory figure later infiltrates the piano and orchestral parts, ultimately forming a rhythmic underlay that drives the variation towards its climax from bar 152 onwards.

The most structurally nuanced of the variations is the '*Tarantella*', which weaves the opening '*Theme*' into the second half of the finale in addition to several apparent structural divisions. From bar 549 the piano shifts dramatically from the contained, repetitive scalar motion of the opening section to bristling octave leaps, ricocheting back and forth across the keyboard. An analogous shift is detectable in the orchestra who move from a restrained, supportive role to that of antagonist, featuring grotesque leaps and highly dissonant intervals. The melody is manipulated almost beyond recognition, Midroit suggests that although the opening section and this second section 'appear to be somehow connected, there seems to be no satisfactory symmetrical or tonal explanation for these collections'.³⁵⁹ Rhythm is a common factor here, although melodic connections do gradually emerge, it is the piano's insistent quaver movement that

³⁵⁹ Max A. Midroit, 'Elements of Symmetry and Stratification in Benjamin Britten's *Diversions, Op. 21.*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The Steinhardt School of Education, New York University, 2004), p. 411.

facilitates stylistic consistency between the two segments. According to the diversity of the two sections I have labelled bars 520 – 548 as A, and bars 549 – 569 as B in **Figure 5.5.** below.³⁶⁰ The piano part of section A is shown in **Figure 5.6.** overleaf.

Figure 5.5. Structure of Finale – ‘Tarantella’

Finale - *Tarantella*

b. 520	b. 549	b. 570	b. 584	b. 607	b. 624	b. 640	b.657
A	B	A/B	A in dialogue perc. & piano	A/Theme	A/Theme	A/Theme	Coda
						(Animato)	

The piano remains tacet during a repeat of A in the strings, which is subtly opposed at first by traces of B, imitating the curling semitone snarl of the orchestral accompaniment. Bars 584 – 606 bring about a further manipulation of A, with periodic exchanges between percussion and piano. It is from bar 607 that the strain of the opening ‘Theme’ can be heard in the violins above the piano’s further development of A. Conflation of A and the ‘Theme’ continues to the end of the movement, with distinguishing adjustments in orchestration signifying the remaining structural boundaries at bar 624.

³⁶⁰ It may be possible to internally divide A into two halves in accordance with a repeat of the melody, slightly modified, a 10th higher, from bar 536. However, as this doesn’t bear any of the significant orchestral, dynamic, timbral or textural shifts of other sectional boundaries, it does not overtly portray the delineations of other movements, I don’t feel there is evidence enough to classify the repeat of A as a separate section.

Figure 5.6. 'Tarantella', piano part, section A, bars 520 - 548

520

A smaller group of movements consists of those variations that are through-composed, where the melody undergoes a continuous nomadic or meditative process of evolution throughout the movement, or does not feature overt repetition of a clearly identified melody. The first variation, 'Recitative', is the most explicit example of this, in keeping with the improvisatory spirit and virtuosic styling of the movement. 'Arabesque', however, purports a different kind of self-contained movement. While certain repeated actions and motifs are certainly detectable within the fabric of this movement, the

shifting time signature disrupts any sense of predictability or consistency. Orchestration remains constant throughout: chains of fifths plucked by the celli in various combinations, intermittent silky slurred fifths in the violins placed strategically throughout, juxtaposing the languorous study of chromatic action in the piano. The exact parameters of the ‘*Arabesque*’s’ melody are so ambiguous from the outset that the perception of probable augmentative and diminutive processes throughout the movement are obscured. The ‘*Arabesque*’ bears a type of uniformity of purpose and movement not visible in the ‘*Recitative*’, but devoid of clear textural or timbral boundaries the movement is a continual, peripatetic examination of certain repeated actions in the strings and piano.

‘*Badinerie*’ falls between two stools structurally. In performance, it conveys a sense of continuous melodic exploration similar to the ‘*Arabesque*’, however ‘*Badinerie*’ enjoys a more regular meter and the stability of a clearly defined opening theme (shown in **Figure 5.7.**).

Figure 5.7. ‘*Badinerie*’, bars 283 – 286



Subsequent pianistic action in this movement adheres faithfully to this opening motif which unfolds in a spirited and extemporaneous manner. At a granular level however, the appearance of spontaneity disintegrates, and an architectural blueprint emerges: practically every diversified manipulation and extension of this theme is prefaced with

a statement of the motif. It appears 5 times in the piano throughout the short movement, in its original form bars 283 – 286, transposed and inverted bars 306 – 309, an octave higher than the original bars 323 – 326, shortened and transposed bars 340 – 342, and finally, slightly altered and transposed it closes the main body of the movement bars 365 – 368. Two primary factors contribute to the capricious veneer of the variation despite its mindful internal structure. Firstly, the uniformity of motion and texture in the piano (which is confined to quartal and quintal motion) promotes a sense of continuity across the movement. The lack of colour and variety in the supporting orchestration forms the second factor as light accompaniment from the strings is the principal underlying accompaniment. The textural, tonal and dynamic shifts that illuminate the divisions in other movements are much more subtly drawn in the '*Badinerie*'. It could be argued that '*Toccata I*' falls into this self-contained group, where the entire movement is seen as one extended passage pursuing snippets of recurring melody through various chordal progressions. The function of this movement is simply to build intensity, energy and suspense in preparation for '*Toccata II*', the first '*Toccata*' simply an extended introduction to the main event. Their relationship is so pronounced that it would have been entirely appropriate for Britten to combine these movements. To this end, the economy and transience of '*Toccata I*' does not warrant prolonged, strophic development.

In terms of future structural revisions to *Diversions*, later modifications to the work were minor and did not conspicuously alter the structure of the concerto. Refinement was a guiding principal of structural revision; periodically, idle or ineffectual bars were

weeded out. Their removal generally facilitated the momentum of the movement, or enabled cleaner phrasing. In total, 15 bars were deleted from the original score, with the opening and closing movements fielding most cuts. A full list of cuts and structural revisions is supplied overleaf in **Table 5.4**.

Table 5.4. Structural Changes to *Diversions*

Variation	Bar No.'s removed according to original score.	Original – 1941 (Autograph full score)	Revision undertaken	Revised – 1955	Comments
Theme	1- 4	Contained a 4-bar orchestral introduction to the entry of the main theme at bar 5 based entirely on a pedal C. Piano was tacet throughout this introduction.	Bars 1 – 4 cut.	The work now begins with the theme, on what was bar 5 of the original score.	It appears Britten may have considered the possibility of extending the note values of these opening crochets before cutting the passage, as some of the crotchet note heads are overlaid with minim noteheads marked in pencil.
	32	Final bar of the theme. Extended chord in woodwind with widely spaced quaver chords in the lower strings and harp.	This final bar is cut.	Final chord in the woodwind is now held for 2 bars instead of 3.	
Variation I <i>Recitative</i>	39 – 40	Two separate and complete bars, each corresponding exactly to the printed time.	Barline removed, several rhythmic modifications.	The two bars have merged into one bar with no specified time signature. This bar up to the next dashed	Details of these rhythmic changes and their implications are discussed further under: Tempo and other temporal

		signature of 2/2.		barline now totals 10 crotchet beats.	considerations.
Variation IXa <i>Toccata I</i>	428, 433 and 442	There are 28 bars in the original score.	Bar 428 was removed and rehearsal mark 27 was moved a bar later. Bars 433 and the final bar 442 were also cut.	There are 25 bars in total in the revised score.	As the movement now concludes with a different bar, the last 3 semiquavers of the piano part were rewritten to satisfy its new position and facilitate the transition, <i>attacca</i> , into <i>Toccata II</i> . ¹
Variation IXb <i>Toccata II</i>	444	Nothing notated in the piano part.	What was once the final note in <i>Toccata I</i> was superimposed over the first beat of <i>Toccata II</i> .	Piano now plays a B-flat octave on the first beat of the bar.	With adjustments made to the end of <i>Toccata I</i> and the beginning of <i>Toccata II</i> , the two movements now overlap, where before there was a clear handover from one movement to the next.
Variation XI <i>Tarantella</i>	530 and 532	Bars 530 and 532 originally contained a single note on the downbeat of the piano part and a tied chord in the orchestra.	Bars 530 and 532 cut.	The introductory rhythmic pattern is now 2 bars shorter.	The passages under observation here are effectively the same, the second forming a recapitulation of the opening section. The revisions discard correlating bars within the sequence so both sections remain identical.
	596 and 598	Contained a single note on the downbeat of bar 596 on the side drum and a held chord in the	Bars 596 and 598 cut.	This rhythmic pattern has been shortened by two bars to match the changes made to the	

		orchestra in bar 598.		cuts made to the opening sequence above.	
	612 and 615	Minimal notation in bars 612 and 615.	Bars 612 and 615 cut.	The passage between Figure 40 and Figure 41 is 2 bars shorter.	

The opening movement, '*Theme*', from which all other variations were derived, was trimmed by 5 five bars in total: a 4-bar introduction, and the final bar of the movement were cut in the revised score. They did not contain any significant melodic material nor did they establish character or atmosphere; retrospectively these bars are entirely disposable. The original 4-bar introduction was sparsely populated with a series of alternating unison crotchets and rests. Their deletion expels, or at least reduces, the predictability of melodic entry fostered by the original introduction. The omission of the final bar of the movement also seeks to sidestep calculable or conventional patterns: the quavers that intermittently punctuate the concluding chord held by the woodwind now desist on the 3rd beat of the bar, rather than the downbeat of the following bar as printed in the original. See **Figures 5.8.** and **5.9.** for excerpts of the opening and closing sections of this movement.

Figure 5.8. Original 1941 Score (BBM/diversions/2/3) containing Britten's revisions to the opening page of *Diversions* ³⁶¹

³⁶¹ Gb-Alb, BBM/diversions/2/3, *Theme*. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

Figure 5.9. Original 1941 score (BBM/diversions/2/3) containing Britten's revisions to the final page of the *Theme* ³⁶²



³⁶² *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/2/3, *Theme*. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

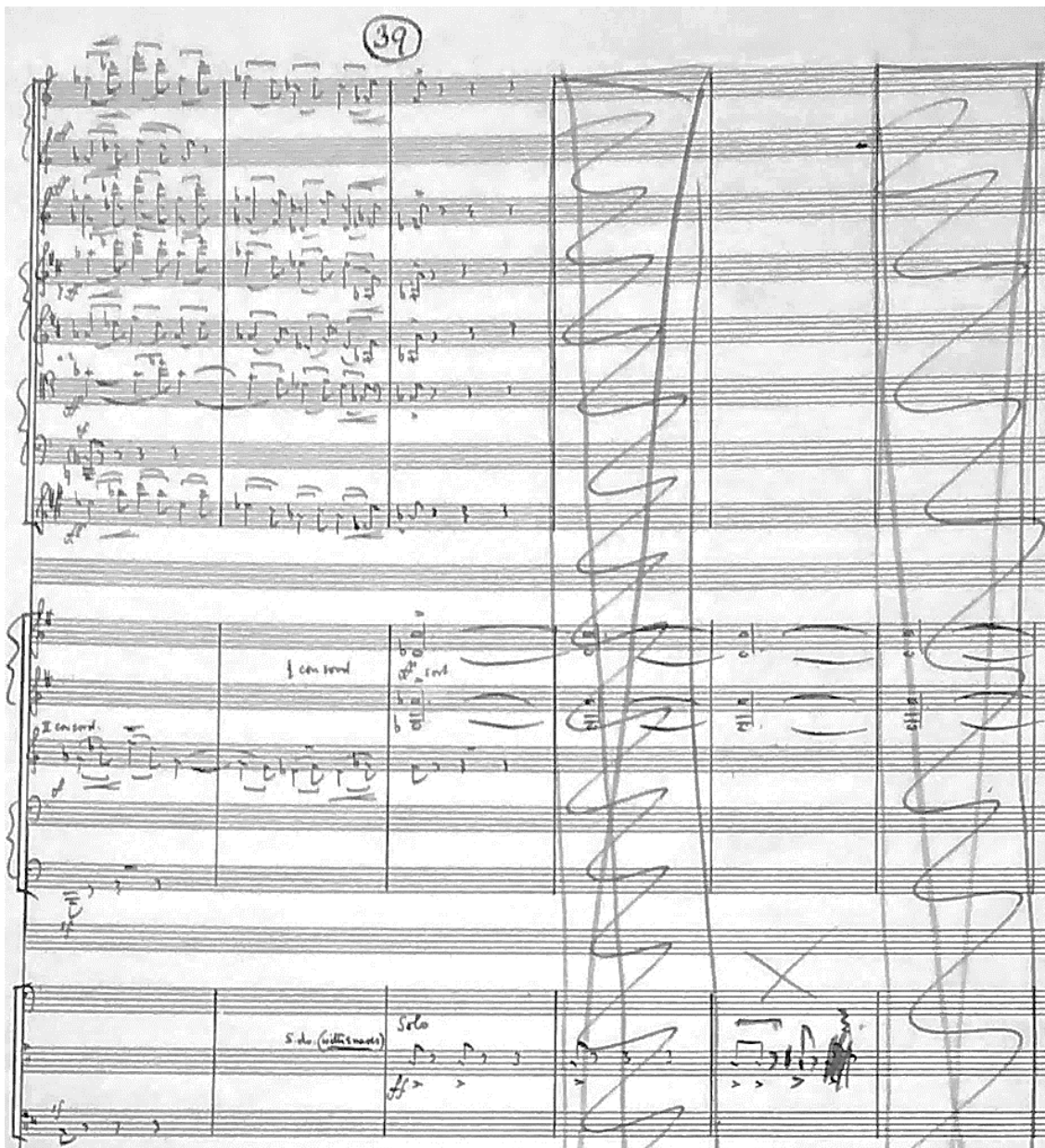
Modifications were made to both Toccatas in order to increase levels of tension and promote momentum. The final bar of ‘*Toccata I*’, which previously closed off the movement and brought the work to a brief halt, was removed. What was once the piano’s final note of ‘*Toccata I*’ was interpolated into the first bar of ‘*Toccata II*’. With the addition of an *attacca* instruction at the end of ‘*Toccata I*’, the two movements now effectively overlap. Likewise, the 2nd and 4th bars (bars 530 and 532 of the original score) of the final movement, ‘*Tarantella*’, are removed to offer a more compelling opening statement and to propel the movement forward. These bars (shown in the excerpt below from the 2-piano photographic score, **Figure 5.10.**) are paltry in terms of their musical contribution, and serve only to suspend the rattling propulsion of the *Tarantella*. The corresponding section in the recapitulation was altered to similar effect, the analogous bars are crossed out down the length of the score as seen in **Figure 5.11.** overleaf.

Figure 5.10. Excerpt from the Photographic Two-Piano Score (BBM/diversions/1/3) with annotations in Wittgenstein’s Hand, bars 530 and 532 cut.³⁶³



³⁶³ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/1/3, *Tarantella*. *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/2/3, p. 5. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

Figure 5.11. Excerpt from the Original 1941 Score (BBM/diversions/2/3), bars 596 and 598 cut ³⁶⁴



³⁶⁴ Gb-Alb, BBM/diversions/2/3, rehearsal mark 39. Gb-Alb, BBM/diversions/2/3, p. 5. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

Comparative Analysis

Britten's use of the all-encompassing variation form was neither inspired by, nor confined to *Diversions*. The configuration of the 3rd movement of his Violin Concerto (written 1938 – 1939 and subject to later revisions) conforms to the framework of a *passacaglia*: a series of 9 variations follow the main theme.³⁶⁵ Many scholars, including Michael Oliver, Eric Roseberry ('*Diversions* mark a return to Britten's perennial fascination with variation form') and others pointed to the *passacaglia* as a favoured model for structural governance.³⁶⁶ Earlier examples of Britten's fecundity within this type of structure may include his 1936 *Temporal Variations* for oboe and piano, or *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* for string orchestra produced a year later in 1937. Of the variation's structure Evans has said: 'such variety prevents the sense of inadequacy that might result from pursuing a sonata argument in persistently idiosyncratic textures'.³⁶⁷ Viewed from this perspective, Britten's adoption of this form would avoid the thematic fatigue Ravel feared would be easily felt within the circumscribed limitations.³⁶⁸

At a local level, comparisons can be drawn between the character inspired titles applied to the individual movements of his Piano Concerto, Op.13, and the analogous

³⁶⁵ Banks, ed., *Benjamin Britten: A Catalogue of the Published Works*, p. 49.

³⁶⁶ Oliver, *Benjamin Britten*, p. 79; Eric Roseberry, 'The concertos and early orchestral scores' in *The Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Britten*, ed. by Meryvn Cooke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 233 – 244 (p. 241).

³⁶⁷ Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten*, p. 53.

³⁶⁸ See **Chapter 4**, p. 239.

designations and stylistic proclivities present in *Diversions*.³⁶⁹ In chronological order, the Piano Concerto, written in 1938, featured a ‘*Toccata*’, a ‘*Waltz*’, ‘*Recitative and Aria*’, and closed with a ‘*March*’.³⁷⁰ In name and genre there is obvious overlap between several movements of the Piano Concerto and the variations of *Diversions*: variations IXa and IXb both hold the ‘*Toccata*’ title, the piano’s opening statement, variation I, is labelled ‘*Recitative*’, and variation III takes the form of a ‘*March*’. Britten’s 1945 revisions to his Piano Concerto saw the expulsion of the entire third movement, ‘*Recitative and Aria*’, in favour of the newly composed ‘*Impromptu*’. However, as these revisions took place after the completion of *Diversions*, the earliest version of this Piano Concerto is the most valid and complete precursor to his left-hand work.

While the character titles of his Piano Concerto might draw from dance suites and genre pieces in a manner similar to *Diversions*, the underlying construction of the concerto is firmly rooted in the concerto tradition and for the most part bear no similarity to the internal framework of *Diversions*. The structure of the second movement of the Piano Concerto, *Waltz*, clearly exhibits a ternary form, while the opening and closing

³⁶⁹ Evans notes that despite the application of the Concerto title ‘he did much to invalidate the comparison by adding movement titles’, Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten*, p. 44. Roseberry believes that this attempt to destabilise connections between certain classical conventions may have been calculated. ‘The character-piece titles given to each of the four movements suggest that the composer was deliberately underplaying the importance of his most substantial work to date in a suite-like disclaimer of the German heavy-weight sonata tradition’. Eric Roseberry, ‘Britten’s Piano Concerto: The Original Version’, *Tempo*, 172 (March 1990), 10 – 18 (p. 11).

³⁷⁰ Evans suggests that use of these movement titles in his *Piano Concerto* may have been an attempt to discourage comparison with ‘classical models’. *The Music of Benjamin Britten*, p. 44.

movements of the Piano Concerto reflect a loose sonata form. Allusions towards this underpinning sonata structure are intimated by language used in Britten's programme note for the BBC Proms concert, 18th August 1938.³⁷¹ Jung-Eun Lee's analysis of the opening '*Toccata*' proposes a monothematic reading of the movement with additional motivic material; however, this contradicts Britten's explicit reference to a 'second subject in dialogue...'.³⁷² Furthermore, scrutiny of the structure within the context of a first and second subject produces a framework that aligns more closely with the traditional sonata movement layout. The significance of the opening 4-bar phrase as a subject rather than a motif becomes truly apparent during the development section (bars 109 – 214) where both subjects are fragmented, extended, manipulated and conflated with approximately equal attention. The stark reiteration of the opening motoric theme at the beginning of the recapitulation (bar 215) solidifies its function as a principal subject rather than a motif.

The original third movement, '*Recitative and Aria*', assumes a kind of theme and variations structure, where the '*Aria*' functions as a coda. The '*Recitative*' segment features a recurring theme which alternates with increasingly complex commentary on the central melody. Common usage of this format, albeit on a smaller scale, is the only major structural affiliation to be found between *Diversions* and the Piano Concerto, something Britten later eradicated by replacing the '*Recitative and Aria*' with the

³⁷¹ This programme note was reprinted in Kildea, ed., *Britten on Music*, pp. 362 – 364.

³⁷² Jung-Eun Lee, 'Aspects of Piano Performance: Stylistic Analysis of the Concerto in D, Op.13, for piano and orchestra by Benjamin Britten' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Ball State University, 2006), pp. 42 – 44.

‘Impromptu’.

MELODIC SHAPE AND APPLICATION

Diversions

A full list of the pitch inconsistencies between the 1941 and 1955 versions, subsequent conclusions and actions performed on the score to recreate the 1941 version are laid out in **Table 5.5**. As can be divined from this table any inconsistencies in terms of pitch between the original 1941 score and the revised 1955 score are confined entirely to the usage of accidentals, and represent the correction or clarification of flaws or omissions in the original 1941 facsimile score. Fundamentally therefore the pitch structure and melody of the solo piano part remained wholly intact. This speaks to the subtle nature of Britten’s revisions to *Diversions* and suggests a level of satisfaction with the original structure and melodic development. The most significant change in terms of notes is modified to facilitate the new ending to *‘Toccata I’*.³⁷³

³⁷³ See **Chapter 5**, p. 322.

Table 5.5. Pitch differences between 1941 facsimile full Autograph Score and 1955 2nd edition revised score

Movement	Bar No: Original (Revised)	Original – 1941	Revised – 1955	Comments/Actions
Variation II	78 (72)	7 th quaver: B	7 th quaver: B \flat	As a B \flat is found in earlier sources (BBM/diversions/1/2 and BBM/diversions/1/3) it seems probable that the exclusion of the flat sign from the 1941 score was an oversight and that B \flat was intended. Action: 7 th quaver left as B \flat .
	80 (74)	9 th quaver: E	9 th quaver: E \flat	As in the case of the B \flat above, E \flat is found in the earlier sources and it seems most likely that accidental was erroneously excluded from the 1941 score. Action: 9 th quaver left as E \flat
Variation III	119-120 (113-114)	1 st and 5 th quavers in both bars: G and A	1 st and 5 th quavers in both bars: G \natural and A \natural	The addition of the \natural signs in the revised score does not change the pitch of the notes, and is included only for the sake of clarification. No action required.
	150 (144)	6 th chord: C \sharp – E – A \sharp	6 th chord: C \sharp – E – A \natural	Earlier sources (the composition draft and 2 piano score) use an A \natural , the use of the A \sharp in the 1941 in presumably a mistake corrected in the revised 1955 score. Action: 6 th chord left as C \sharp – E – A \natural

Variation IV	186 (180)	10 th chord: C - A \sharp - F \natural	10 th chord: C - A \natural - F \natural	Another likely mistake; once again earlier sources correspond with the 1955 revised score, presumably the \natural was mistakenly interpreted and copied as a \sharp in the 1941 score. Action: 10 th chord left as C - A \natural - F \natural
	194 (188)	14 th chord: C - G \sharp	14 th chord: C - G \natural	A further instance where a \natural was mistakenly interpreted and copied as a \sharp in the 1941 score. Earlier sources agree with the G \natural present in the 1955 score. Action: 14 th chord left as C - G \natural
Variation VI	251 (245)	1 st and 4 th quavers: D	1 st and 4 th quavers: D \natural	The addition of \natural in the revised score does not change the pitch of the notes, and is included only for the sake of clarification. No action required.
Variation VII	313 (305)	6 th quaver: C	6 th quaver: C \natural	The addition of \natural in the revised score does not change the pitch of the notes, and is included only for the sake of clarification. No action required.
Variation IXa	441 (433)	10 th semiquaver to the end of bar: F - B \flat , C, B \flat , C, F - B \flat , B \flat , C	10 th semiquaver to the end of bar: C - F, B \flat , F, C – F, octave F, octave G, octave A	From the 10 th semiquaver onwards the passage is rewritten to enable newly conceived imbrication of the two toccata movements.

(i). Interval Use and Melodic Development

In previous chapters the topics of interval use and melodic development have been broached separately, however the two are inextricably linked in *Diversions* as the interval and its cooperative organisations and collections is recognised as a significant generative tool in Britten's compositions. Even at this early stage of his career, intervallic symmetries were an established tool in Britten's compositional arsenal. Among some of his earliest works, the *Sinfonietta*, Op.1 and the final movement of the *Holiday Diaries*, Op.5, both exhibit similar intervallic mirroring processes.³⁷⁴ The intervallic material and its various iterations feeds into, and in some cases directly fashions, the structure of his works.³⁷⁵ The circle of fifths is likewise acknowledged as a vital developmental mechanism, although not in the traditional functional sense 'but in terms of changes of diatonic collection'.³⁷⁶ Whittal and Mark concur on the significance of the fifth and the tritone within Britten's output, and acknowledge the tritone as meaningful within his inclinations towards symmetrical organisations, often functioning as the central axis from which various operations are mirrored. Max Midroit enumerated in great detail the components of Britten's musical language with specific reference to *Diversions*, in his thesis: *Elements of symmetry and stratification in Benjamin Britten's Diversions*, Op.21. Midroit provides substantial evidence to

³⁷⁴ Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten*, p. 27.

³⁷⁵ Christopher Mark, Early Benjamin Britten: A Study of Stylistic and Technical Evolution, *Music Analysis*, 16:3 (October 1997) 409 – 415 (p. 27).

³⁷⁶ Christopher Mark, 'Britten and the Circle of Fifths', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 119:2 (1994), 268 – 297 (p. 270).

support his theory of symmetry within the work. Within each variation, he highlights Britten's attention to balance and interconnectivity, his handling of certain intervals and pitch collections, and their derivatives, reflections and points of axes.³⁷⁷

These organisational and developmental preferences are starkly displayed in the opening movement of *Diversions*, simply titled 'Theme'. The melodic contour of bars 1 – 8 mushroom from the opening gambit of a perfect fifth C – G. This cell is subsequently extended through the circle of fifths to issue a five-note pitch collection (F C G D A) by the end of the first phrase (see **Figure 5.12.**).

Figure 5.12. Opening phrase, 'Theme', bars 1 – 4



The 2nd phrase resumes this outline of ascending fifths to produce a second pitch collection (D A E B F \sharp) echoing the contour of the 1st phrase. The F \sharp can be seen as a central axis point for this progression, its arrival signifies the reversal of the inaugural developmental mechanism and the inversion of the established sequence is delineated in bars 9 – 16. Vertically speaking, the intervallic pattern which unfolds throughout the 3rd and 4th phrases is the mirror image of the sequence that transpired in the 1st and 2nd phrases. The intervallic arrangement of bars 1 – 8 and its subsequent inversion in bars 9 – 16 is illustrated in **Table 5.6.** below.

³⁷⁷ Max A. Midroit, 'Elements of Symmetry and Stratification in Benjamin Britten's *Diversions*, Op. 21.' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The Steinhardt School of Education, New York University, 2004).

Succinctly summarised by Joan Chissell: ‘The theme is not so much a self-significant melody as a pregnant note-series built out of the stark intervals of the fifth and its inversion’.³⁷⁸ Midroit highlights use of the term ‘pregnant’ in this statement as particularly appropriate in terms of the ‘vast potential for growth within the opening cell’.³⁷⁹ Subsequent thematic action from bars 17 – 22 is confined to the timpani who enacts assorted renditions of the F - C - G cell from the first pitch collection, tethered to the C major tonality by the orchestra.

Table 5.6. Intervallic sequence, ‘Theme’, bars 1 – 16

Bars	Link Interval	Link Interval	Link Interval
1 – 4	C G P. 5 th	F C G Min 7 th P. 5 th P. 5 th	F C G D A Min 7 th P. 5 th P. 5 th P. 5 th P. 5 th
5 – 8	A E P. 5 th	D A E Min 7 th P. 5 th P. 5 th	D A E B F# Min 7 th P. 5 th P. 5 th P. 5 th P. 5 th
9 – 12	F# B P. 4 th	C# F# B Maj 2 nd P. 4 th P. 4 th	C# F# B E A Maj 2 nd P. 4 th P. 4 th P. 4 th P. 4 th
13 – 16	A D P. 4 th	E A D Maj 2 nd P. 4 th P. 4 th	E A D G C Maj 2 nd P. 4 th P. 4 th P. 4 th P. 4 th

The closing bars of the ‘Theme’ illustrates afresh the symmetrical organisation of

³⁷⁸ Joan Chissell, “The Concertos” in *Benjamin Britten; a Commentary on his Works from a Group of Specialists*, ed. by Donald Mitchell and Hans Keller, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1972), pp. 257 – 265 (p. 264).

³⁷⁹ Midroit, ‘Elements of symmetry and stratification in Benjamin Britten’s *Diversions, op.21*’, pp. 65 – 66.

these pitch collections and strengthens their significance, as the original sequence of fifths and its inversion is presented by the clarinet in its most raw configuration. The fluctuating orientation of these intervals results in a mixture of 4ths and 5ths.

Figure 5.13. Full statement of pitch collections, bars 23 – 26.

(F) C G D A E B F# C# F# B E A D G C

Clarinet in B \flat 

In addition to the vertical inversion of intervals and idiomatic reflection evident in the opening 16 bars, this latter sequence (bars 23 – 26 in **Figure 5.13.** above) illustrates the palindromic qualities inherent in the uninterrupted delivery of Britten’s pitch collections. Interpreted as a palindrome, and excepting the opening F which is absent from the end of the inverted collection, the C-sharp acts as a pivot from which the sequence is refracted. The omission of the F at the end of the clarinet solo is exculpatory: while not functionally tonal ‘Theme’ has been actively tonicized by a pedal C for the greater part of the movement. The concluding C of the inverted pitch collection coincides with the first of 3 rippling C major chords that complete the movement: the exclusion of the F can be understood within this context and corresponds to the opening note of the movement.

F-sharp occupies the next most significant role, its arrival in bars 7 and 24 (accompanied by its corresponding major triad) functions as the fulcrum from which

the mirroring process begins: intervals are flipped vertically, and a retrograde reflection of notes engenders horizontal symmetry. This contextual emphasis on the F-sharp highlights its position as the ‘central axis of symmetry of the (C – C) octave’, and apportions a level of structural weight in the sculpture of melodic contour to the tritone.³⁸⁰ The cello and flute parts in the final 5 bars further underline the organisational import of the tritone as noted by Midroit: the former delineates a descending 4-note whole tone scale from C to F-sharp in bars 23 – 24, before reversing this procedure to conclude on a C major chord in bar 27.³⁸¹ The flute performs trills on an F-sharp and C concurrently with the cello’s arrival on these pitches supported respectively by F-sharp and C major chords in the harp and violas. Together, they reflect the clarinet’s descension through the inverted pitch collection to alight on C. Thus, all instruments performing in these final bars are guided by the tritonal movement which bisects the pitch collection at its fullest and functions as a pivot or axis point for symmetrical operations in this movement.

The implications of the intervallic and sequential predilections identified in the opening movement impact profoundly on the variations that follow. Variation I, ‘*Recitative*’, trifles regularly with linear quartal and quintal movement and proceeds successively through the established pitch collections. Trills, rapid scales and glissandi embellish the space between an accented C to a perpetually climbing G, octave F’s act as a

³⁸⁰ Midroit, ‘Elements of symmetry and stratification in Benjamin Britten’s *Diversions, op.21*’, p. 66.

³⁸¹ Midroit, ‘Elements of symmetry and stratification in Benjamin Britten’s *Diversions, op.21*’, pp. 70 – 71.

springboard back up to each downbeat C. The overall motion and rhythmic placement readily accentuate the margins of the passage and emphasise the 3-note cell C – G – F from the original pitch collection. From the 7th bar of the ‘*Recitative*’ onwards (bar 34 in the score) Britten begins to incorporate the remaining notes from the circle of fifths pitch collection. The pre-eminence of the tritone is underlined once more by the descending scale patterns of bar 36 whose semiquaver groupings alternately feature C and F-sharp as their starting note. The prominent descending scale movement at the end of bar 36 from C seems to echo the distinctive whole-tone passage in the cello in the ‘*Theme*’.

The melody of Variation II, ‘*Romance*’, is candidly formulated through assorted rotations of the circle of fifths. Excluding the brief interruption of decorative grace notes, the opening phrase (**Figure 5.14.**) delineates a chain of fifths from F as far as E. The 2nd phrase is directionally inverted, the descending profile of the phrase consequently outlining a series of fourths, this spans the relevant progression from A as far as G-sharp (**Figure 5.15.**).

Figure 5.14. ‘*Romance*’, bars 48 – 50



Figure 5.15. ‘Romance’, bars 52 – 54



The subsequent phrases lengthen the orbit of this sequence, with some passages virtually completing a full revolution of the circle of fifths as shown in **Figure 5.16**.

Figure 5.16. ‘Romance’, melodic rotation through the circle of fifths, bars 56 – 59



The manipulation and deployment of the circle of fifths in the ‘Theme’ and these early variations can be seen a microcosm of his operating procedures for the whole work.³⁸²

On many occasions, Britten’s use of the circle of fifths is unabashed, for example in the ‘Romance’ as shown above. Oftentimes it is built into the harmonic and orchestral support structure, very often the provenance of these passages is quite transparent. For instance, the *pizzicato* accompaniment figure sustained by the celli throughout the ‘Arabesque’ subsists almost entirely on the interval of a fifth. Similar trends are to be

³⁸² It may be pertinent at this juncture to assert once more that intervallic use and relationships are analysed for their impact on physical performance and playability rather than their tonal or harmonic implications.

seen in the harp and lower strings in Variation V, '*Chant*'; this harmonic outline is later subsumed by the piano. In the '*Nocturne*', the accompaniment role assigned to the piano for the movement is assembled from 3-note blocks lifted from the circle of 5ths. The opening 3 bars (bars 231 – 233) utilises the cell F – C – G, the same pattern is then lifted by a tone to use the cell G – D – A, two bars later the sequence is raised once again to A – E – B. Small deviations occur as part of cadence-style punctuation, and the texture thickens in the middle section, but compliance with this sequence is almost total throughout the movement. The main melody, confined to the orchestra for this movement, is built around, or superimposed on the structure of the accompaniment. The chronology of these events is borne out by Britten's initial one-page sketch (**Figure 5.1.**), where the preliminary version of '*Nocturne*' consists of the piano's accompaniment part, rather than the melody.

Superficially it may seem unusual to confine the base compositional components to stark pitch collections, tritonal axis points and symmetrical devices when already working within the limited means of a single hand. However, the mechanism by which Britten assembled his material, the circle of fifths (notably divorced from its traditional tonal functions), served not only as a generative tool but as a transformative channel, all the while spinning the strands of interconnectivity. Malleable and inherently sympathetic towards symmetrical actions, the intervallic relationships and metamorphic qualities required to construct a diverse and performatively satisfying set of variations were deeply enmeshed in the circle of fifths. Many of his methods of melodic development were allied with his manipulation of interval collections:

transposition, augmentation, diminution, reversal and inversion.

(ii). Phrase Structure

The phrasing models employed in the various movements of *Diversions*, naturally entwined as they are with stylistic milieu of each variation, are comparatively diverse and somewhat resistant to categorisation. There are those movements ('*Recitative*', '*Arabesque*', the *cadenza* in '*Toccata IXb*') whose phrasing is entirely irregular, congruent with the genre or character portrayed in those respective movements. Across the remaining movements there are two observable trends. A specific mixture of phrase lengths occurs intermittently throughout *Diversions*: short phrases are often juxtaposed with a successive longer phrase. The opening of '*Romance*' (inclusive of opening bars rest in the piano part) consists of two 4-bar blocks, followed by a passage of 8 bars. In the repeat of this entire melody any sense of routine is quickly disrupted due to an overlap of melodic presentation between the piano and the orchestra, creating an echo effect from bar 63 onwards. However, the underlying abutment of a longer phrase succeeding a pair of shorter melodic arcs remains. '*Chant*' features a similar admixture of phrase lengths and is perhaps the most prominent example of this approach. A pair of 2-bar phrases are counterbalanced with an answering 4-bar phrase, this pattern is repeated 3 times in total before any variation in the sequence occurs. Each phrase is quite distinctly detached from the one that follows with the use of *tutti* rests; this amplifies the distinctive short – short – long phrase pattern.

While '*Nocturne*' does not exhibit the same consistency in phrase length as '*Chant*' or

'*Romance*', a divergent longer phrase is still employed as a stabilizing force at sectional boundaries forecasting and easing the conclusion of each melodic section. A phrase of 4 full bars (or 24 quaver beats) is used to bring the first section of *Nocturne* to a close at bar 253. The average phrase length preceding this is just over 2 bars (13 quaver beats), with one notable exception: the 2nd phrase, bars 234 – 237, lasts just over 3 full bars (19 quaver beats). Similarly extended phrases, at odds with typical phrase length in the movement, are used at the end of the second section (41 quaver beats, just under 7 full bars) and the movements' end (47 quaver beats, just under 8 full bars).

'*Burlesque*' likewise features contrasting phrase blocks but in this instance each melodic passage elicits a short improvisatory style response from a different instrument. This solo riposte, although confined to a single bar each time, does not adhere to a time signature in consonance with its *ad hoc* spirit, therefore the length of this phrase will vary according to the interpretation of the performer. Additionally, this movement engages a system of phrase extension: this augmentation is overtly applied to the longer phrases where each passage (with the exception of the final passage) is extended by a bar. This extension is more subtly realized in the solo *rubato* bars where the internal length of each bar increases with each appearance. The breakdown of bars produces the following table:

Table 5.7. *Burlesque*, phrasing pattern

Bar Numbers	Section	Length of phrase
Bars 375 – 379	Introduction	5 bars
Bars 340 - 385	Rhythmic sequence on piano extended by a bar with melody on alto saxophone	6 bars
Bar 386	Single <i>cadenza</i> style bar	1 bar
Bars 387 - 383	Rhythmic sequence on piano extended by two bars with melody on alto saxophone	7 bars
Bar 394	Single <i>cadenza</i> style bar	1 bar
Bars 395 - 402	Rhythmic sequence on piano extended by three bars with melody entering later in the oboe	8 bars
Bar 403	Single <i>cadenza</i> style bar	1 bar
Bars 404 – 409	Coda - Rhythmic sequence on piano reduced	6 bars

Protracted passages without proper cadential punctuation or definable breaks form the second of the recurring phrasing trends. This aspect is sometimes enmeshed with the style of that particular variation, for example in ‘*Toccata I*’ and portions of the ‘*Tarantella*’ the implacable momentum of the movement aligns with the motoric countenance of those genres. Other movements that feature prolonged, continuous phrasework are sometimes impenetrable from an analytical perspective. In ‘*Badinerie*’, repeated rhythmic and melodic features imply elongation and truncation of themes in turn, however the piano babbles along without proper punctuation or discernible rest for the entire movement.

Phrase divisions in the *'Adagio'* are also obfuscated. The exquisite, yearning melody of this movement is at its first iteration, 12 bars long. This theme is rendered as one complete, extended melody that could be spliced into, and indeed hints at, many smaller component sections, yet does not completely commit to those smaller internal phrases. An elision has taken place between the last note of the current phrase and the first note of the subsequent phrase (for instance on the 2nd beat of bar 469) which fields conflicting impressions of closure and inception simultaneously.

Comparative Analysis

(i). Melodic Range

The conflation between pianistic range and the composer's assurance of the validity of left-hand only piano, are as prevalent in scholars' considerations of *Diversions* as they were in the *Concerto pour la main gauche*. Michael Oliver draws a correlation between these two factors, stating that opening of *Diversions*:

at once contradicts any expectation that in writing for a one-armed pianist Britten will confine himself to ideas of a narrow range: his angular sequences of fifths and fourths stalks boldly across a compass of five octaves.³⁸³

Oliver's assumption is immediately borne out by the pianist's inaugural statement in *'Recitative'* which broadens the melodic area scaled by the orchestra in the *'Theme'* from the 5 octaves, to over 6 octaves in *'Recitative'* by the piano alone. Audacious assertion of command as this is, pianistic dimensions are gradually stretched outward in subsequent movements until the entire length of the piano is covered excepting the

³⁸³ Oliver, *Benjamin Britten*, p. 82.

very lowest note. That being said, Britten's exploitation of the outermost regions of the keyboard is extremely sparing. His handling of register is quite measured throughout, adopting melodic contours and accompaniment patterns within his prescribed linear approach that repeatedly canvas large swathes of the keyboard in a brief period of time. The '*Romance*', '*Nocturne*', '*Badinerie*' as well as substantial portions of the '*Adagio*' and '*Tarantella*' employ curvilinear configurations of varying amplitudes through sweeping arpeggiated motion, vaulting chordal action and rebounding skips and leaps traversing the piano. This deliberate effort to succinctly cover the expanse of the piano, perhaps as an attempt to camouflage the use of a single hand, ran beyond conventional pianistic capabilities in the original version of the '*Toccata I*'. The volubility of the continuous semiquavers at a brisk tempo was endangered by frequent double octave leaps.³⁸⁴

'Burlesque', as the only movement that resides mainly in the lower half of the keyboard, is strategically placed. Its central position offers stability in amongst the predominantly mid and high range pianistic activity of the other variations. A similar equilibrium is identifiable within many variations internally; the modest inclusion of lower regions of the piano are calibrated to just satisfy the exigency for timbral balance.

Expansive range and speed of coverage were likewise essential to the construction of the Piano Concerto. This is supported not only by analytical consideration of the Concerto but by Britten's own statement. The work, he says:

³⁸⁴ This passage is discussed further in **Pianistic Considerations**.

was conceived with the idea of exploiting the various important characteristics of the piano, such as its enormous compass, its percussive quality, and its suitability for figuration.³⁸⁵

The specific reference to the range of the instrument illustrates an effort to exploit this feature pointedly and in this endeavour, Britten succeeds.³⁸⁶ The mid and upper regions of the piano are promoted more frequently than the lower registers; the left hand spends a considerable amount of time in treble clef. The disproportion between mid and high range enterprises to bass activity, foreseeable as part of a scheme for balance and soloistic pre-eminence within a symphony orchestra, corresponds to the utilisation of range in *Diversions*.³⁸⁷

(ii). Phrase Structure

The 'Tocatta' of the Piano Concerto shares two prominent phrasing techniques (or lack thereof) with *Diversions*, namely, prolonged motoric passages and the measured augmentation of phrase length. As the title allocated to the first movement suggests, continuous motion in the piano trumps neatly parcelled phrases. Vigorous *moto perpetuo* style figuration populates sizable portions of the piano part while the orchestra exchange snippets of principal subject material in various guises and rhythmic formations. Ambiguous phrase divisions are a ubiquitous trait of *Diversions* and the

³⁸⁵ Kildea, ed., *Britten on Music*, pp. 362 – 364.

³⁸⁶ This remark is also revealing in terms of the analysis of employed piano technique certainly, but this will be considered at a later juncture.

³⁸⁷ A chart comparing of interval use as seen at this juncture in **Chapters 3 and 4** does not seem appropriate for Britten as it is too precarious to determine precisely the most basic structure, or primary format, of each of his themes. The fundamental intervals that guide his melodic choices however are abundantly clear and they are discussed at length throughout **Melodic Shape and Application**.

extended passages that form the backbone of the Piano Concerto's *Toccata* find significant equivalence in the latter work, impervious in its indefatigable oscillation to segmentation. In *Diversions*, both '*Toccata*' variations and the '*Tarantella*' are the most pronounced kindred spirits of the Piano Concerto's opening '*Toccata*' in terms of continuous motion. Portions from the Piano Concerto's 2nd and 4th movements could also sit comfortably in this category: the central section of the '*Waltz*' with its hurtling quavers, and the flamboyancy and virtuosity of the '*March*', feature similarly indivisible passages.

Augmentative procedures, such as those featured in '*Burlesque*' from *Diversions*, emerge also within the Piano Concerto, although these elements can be more difficult to extract from orchestral discourse. The second principal subject of the first movement '*Toccata*' mutates continually, to form phrases of increasing length with each iteration. The first statement of this lyrical theme (starting at bar 50) demonstrates Britten's calculated augmentation of phrase length. Adding the total number of beats together in each phrase, the first segment of this melody as played by the 2nd violins and cellos amounts to 3 full bars. Dovetailing slightly with the end of the first phrase, the 1st violins and violas present the 2nd portion of the melody over 4 bars. Finally, the string section joins forces to articulate the last phrase now extended to fill 5 bars. The final movement also exhibits augmentative procedures. The primary '*March*' theme falls into two halves, part (a) is a 2-bar phrase, while part (b) is a 4-bar phrase. However, in the immediate repeat of this theme, part (b) is extended to 5 bars.

It is in general problematic to attempt to discern the exact parameters of the phrasing used in both these works. However, the shared features considered above demonstrate that Britten's approach to phrasing was not drastically altered by the challenge of writing for left-hand only. The ambiguous nature of the phrasing in both works could in itself be seen as a further commonality. Notwithstanding these equivalencies, there is a point at which the two diverge. Overall, the Piano Concerto relies on traditional phrase structures to a greater degree than *Diversions*. The 'Waltz' and the 'March' are heavily indebted to conventional balanced formations at their most fundamental level. By accident or design *Diversions*' internal divisions are more difficult to distinguish. This could be a symptom of Britten's evolving style, but the trouble of writing for one-hand could also be held responsible, at least in part. All textural, timbral, rhythmic, melodic innovation now incumbent on one hand, the compression of the required musical elements within a more limited space inevitably changes the shape and contour of that space. In an environment where each note holds a fraction more responsibility, the marginally more consistent phrasing of the Piano Concerto may have fractured the pianistic activity of *Diversions* too regularly. The resulting loss of impetus, density and soloistic pre-eminence would have sapped accruing musical momentum. A more integrated, flowing style of phrasing was undoubtedly the wiser choice.

(iii). Melodic Development

Comparison of melodic development in both *Diversions* and the Piano Concerto reveals the significance of interconnectivity and cyclical features, often attained

through the reinvention of short motifs or manipulation of singular intervals. While the circle of fifths does not feature so prominently in the Piano Concerto, this earlier work is similarly guided and unified by a core group of elements. Taut intervallic and thematic connections between all movements of the Piano Concerto are realized through ‘the all-pervasive twin-chordal motto of the concerto’.³⁸⁸ A two-bar chordal progression, a kind of morose fanfare, featured in the first movement of the Piano Concerto (shown in **Figure 5.17.**) is subsequently reimagined and reprised in each of the ensuing movements.

Figure 5.17. Piano Concerto, *Toccata*, Fanfare motif, bars 26 – 27

26

The musical score for Figure 5.17 shows the fanfare motif for bars 26 and 27. The score is for a brass section and includes parts for Horns in F (1-4), Trumpet in C (1-2), Trombones (1-3), and Tuba. The key signature is two sharps (D major). The first four bars show the fanfare motif, which consists of a two-bar chordal progression. The horns and trumpets play a series of chords, while the trombones and tuba play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The score ends with a double bar line.

Furthermore, primary themes are derived from this motif: the second half of the opening theme from the ‘Waltz’ (2nd movement) is certainly in debt to this motif, as is

³⁸⁸ Roseberry, ‘The concertos and early orchestral scores’, p. 237; Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten*, p. 47.

the second subject in the final movement, ‘March’.³⁸⁹ Excerpts illustrating appearances of this chordal motif in the 2nd and 3rd movements respectively are demonstrated in **Figures 5.18.** and **5.19.**

Figure 5.18. Piano Concerto, ‘Waltz’, Fanfare motif, bars 32 – 38

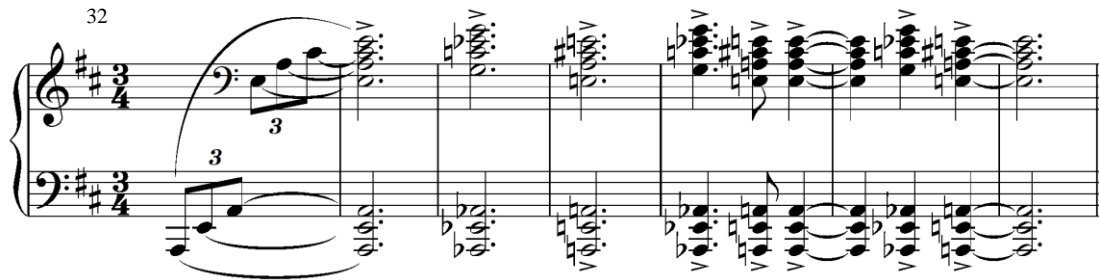
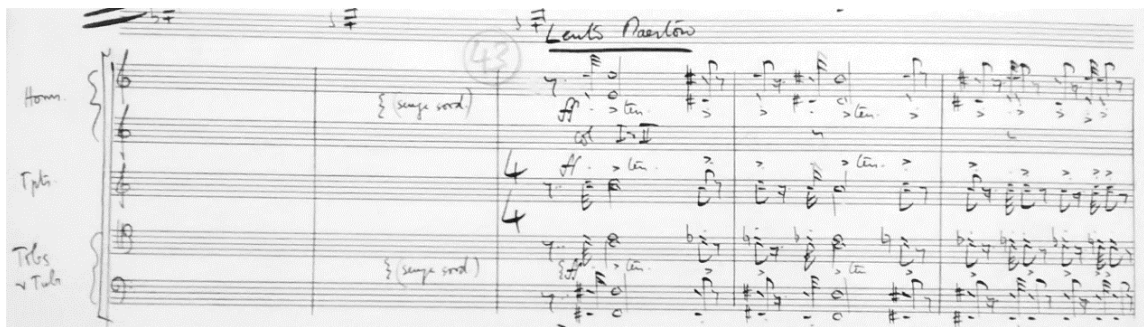


Figure 5.19. Piano Concerto, ‘Recitative and Aria’, bars 93 – 95



The manipulation and metamorphic potential realised through singular intervallic motifs exhibited in *Diversions* distinctly resembles the treatment of the interval and its subsequent transformation in the Piano Concerto. Compounding the cyclical unification of the Piano Concerto is the re-emergence of the lyrical second subject from the opening ‘Toccata’ towards the end of the finale. An identical procedure is applied to *Diversions* in order to cement the work as a whole; toward the conclusion of the final

³⁸⁹ Roseberry, ‘Britten’s Piano Concerto’, pp. 15 – 17.

variation '*Tarantella*', the opening '*Theme*' reappears. Timid at first, this encore of the opening movement gradually sheds its modesty.

Jung-Eun Lee suggests a connection in interval use between the Piano Concerto and earlier works, highlighting the associated use of the 4th and the 7th. The import and placement of these intervals is subsequently discussed:

The interval of the seventh appears in the first two notes at the beginning in the piano part, functioning as a cyclical motion throughout this concerto; the same interval also appears prominently in the second and the last movement. The interval of the fourth is consistently emphasized by the sforzando.³⁹⁰

The elemental priority devoted to these intervals becomes blatantly clear in other sections of the '*Toccata*'; for instance at the beginning of the development (bar 109), while the majority of the orchestra is unified in its rendition of the lyrical second subject, lower brass stubbornly persist with a series of leaping 4ths and 7ths, concurrently referencing the skeleton of the first principal subject, and supporting the orchestra's melodic activities. The piano in turn reveals the significance of these intervals in the unadulterated contour of the first subject at the beginning of the recapitulation.

While the Piano Concerto does not draw on the circle of fifths in the same unaltered fashion, the evidence suggests Britten's melodies originate from the most basic intervallic actions in both his Piano Concerto and *Diversions*. Principal interval pairings or motions form the basis for many of his melodies and engender small and large-scale connections across the breath of the work. It is primarily in thematic conflation, or in the juxtaposition of melodies that the two piano-based works differ in

³⁹⁰ Jung-Eun Lee, 'Aspects of Piano Performance', p. 37.

terms of melodic treatment. The melodies in his Piano Concerto are handled in customary fashion; themes are explicated separately and subsequently developed individually, synchronously and in a dialogic fashion through figuration, rhythm, harmony, texture, tone and colour. Derivatives and metamorphoses of limited material are vital to the development of both the Piano Concerto and *Diversions*, however this technique is neither confined to his piano-based works, nor is it restricted to works of a certain period. The Violin Concerto and *Sinfonia da Requiem* display increasing interconnective tension and resourcefulness, Roseberry draws a line from *Diversions* to ‘the similar intervallic construction of the twelve-note theme of *The Turn of the Screw*.³⁹¹ It may be that in writing for left-hand it was necessary to peel back some of the layers of orchestration and texture in the piano which allows the analyst to view the interconnective tissue of the work all the more vividly. *Diversions* may provide us then with one of the more obvious realizations of these techniques, but these intervallic networks and cyclical techniques were an essential part of Britten’s compositional approach, and a feature ubiquitous in his compositional output.

TEMPO AND OTHER TEMPORAL CONSIDERATIONS

Diversions

Generally speaking, the approach to tempo in *Diversions* is largely reflective of Britten’s structural format; most variations adhere to a single, overarching tempo throughout, akin to the monothematic stance of many of the individual movements.

³⁹¹ Roseberry, ‘The concertos and early orchestral scores’, p. 241.

Only 3 variations feature a marked shift in tempo: ‘*Badinerie*’, ‘*Toccata II*’ - *Cadenza* and ‘*Tarantella*’. The direction of *L’istesso tempo* where the ‘*Toccata II*’ cedes to the *Cadenza* is maintained for only a few bars, any pretense of temporal rigidity is swiftly abandoned in favour of extemporaneous flexibility. The *Cadenza* is subject to several more recommended changes in pace, and concludes with 7 minim-length broken chords marked *Andante come sopra*, tempering rhythmic urgency and creating a seamless bridge to the next variation, ‘*Adagio*’. Changes in tempi in the ‘*Tarantella*’ and the ‘*Badinerie*’ are well-defined in contrast to the piecemeal fluctuations of the *Cadenza*. *Badinerie* highlights its opening thematic exchange between horn and trumpet with a stately *Grave* indication. The bulk of the movement’s splashy pianowork is subsequently promoted with the help of the *Vivacissimo* designation, the contrast in velocity and spirit drawn more sharply by a repeat rotation of these tempi, 6 bars from the end of the movement. Although a break in momentum is not signified through typical tempi indications, the fabric of ‘*Burlesque*’ employs diametrically opposed tempi as a tool of contrast and variety in the manner similar to ‘*Badinerie*’. Improvisational flourishes set into bars of unspecified and ever-increasing length, separate each rendition of the ‘*Burlesque*’ theme. The fleeting plumes of ornamentation executed by the flute, clarinet and piano respectively, interrupt the obdurate tread of the ‘*Burlesque*’ and provide variety within an otherwise repetitive and musically slight movement. The gear change toward the end of the ‘*Tarantella*’ announced by the *Animato* at bar 640, is perhaps the most straightforward and most conventional of tempo changes, it engenders the ebullience and energy that propels the work to its

thrilling conclusion.

In reviewing the discrepancies between the original and revised scores of *Diversions*, Wong observed a trend towards the exaggeration of the pre-existing tempi, slow movements became slightly slower and vice versa. This was evident in the revision of metronome markings and indicated tempi. These minor temporal adjustments served a function beyond metronomic precision, they naturally accentuated the disposition of the musical content and sharpened the emotional and stylistic gamut of the work.³⁹² In addition, the consequential increase in technical difficulty for the pianist in the movements whose speed was increased, served to elevate the excitement of the performance musically and aesthetically. Escalation of temporal extremes were most notably implemented towards the end of the work; in *'Toccata I'* and *'Finale – Tarantella'*. The table below details the modifications applied to the opening tempo markings assigned to each movement.

Table 5.8. Original and revised tempo indications

Movement	Original tempo	Revised tempo
Theme	Maestoso	Maestoso (minim = 50)
Recitative	L'istesso tempo (Maestoso)	L'istesso tempo (Maestoso)
Romance	Allegretto	Allegretto mosso (crotchet = 156)
March	Allegro con brio	Allegro con brio (crotchet = 144)
Arabesque	<i>'Andante'</i>	Allegretto (quaver = 120)
Chant	<i>'Andante'</i> solennemente	<i>'Andante'</i> solennemente

³⁹² Wong, 'Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain', p. 359.

	(minim = 60)	(minim = 56)
Nocturne	'Andante' piacevole	'Andante' piacevole (dotted crotchet = 52)
Badinerie	Grave	Grave (crotchet = 46)
Burlesque	Molto moderato	Molto moderato (crotchet = 100)
Toccata I	Allegro ma non troppo (crotchet = 112, added in blue pen to first edition score)	Allegro (crotchet = 128)
Toccata II	L'istesso tempo	L'istesso tempo
Adagio	Un poco adagio (crotchet = 50)	Adagio (crotchet = 42)
Tarantella	Presto non troppo ma con fuoco (crotchet = 160)	Presto con fuoco (crotchet = 172)

'Toccata I', marked *Allegro ma non troppo* in the 1941 score was altered to just *Allegro* in the 1955 revised score. This increase in speed was reflected also in the amendment of the metronome marking. In BBM/diversions/2/3, one of the first edition scores held by the Britten-Pears Foundation in which Britten penned some of his revisions, the originally printed '*ma non troppo*' was crossed out in blue pen and a metronome marking of crotchet beat equal to 112 inserted next to the tempo marking. These alterations functioned as transitional step towards the final version, as an increased metronome marking of a crotchet beat equal to 128 was printed next to the newly christened *Allegro* tempo marking in the revised 1955 score.

The same first edition score (BBM/diversions/2/3), likewise features an intermediary level of temporal modification to the '*Finale*' prior to the 1955 score. The printed instruction *Presto non troppo ma con fuoco* in the original 1941 score is altered in blue

ink blocking out the words ‘*non troppo ma*’. Once again, a metronome marking is inserted as part of this early revision and reads: crotchet beat equal to 160. The tempo marking in the 1955 score reflects this revision, appearing as *Presto con fuoco*, however the metronome marking has again been increased with a dotted crotchet beat now equal to 172.³⁹³

‘*Recitative*’, the opening cadenza-like variation for solo piano, is in the minority in terms of its temporal approach. Improvisatory in style, from his composition draft (BBM/diversions/1/2) through to the revised score, temporal fluidity was key to this movement.³⁹⁴ In many cases dotted barlines are used in place of solid barlines, these dotted barlines seemingly planted as visual aids rather than a true indication of metre. The printed time signature of 2/2 does not change despite many occasions when the length of the bar disagrees with this denomination.

The abstention from printed changes in time signature, and the sympathetic rather than prescriptive employment of barlines seemingly work together towards a common goal: the realization of a fully notated improvisation, a conversational ebb and flow of dialogue as suggested by the movement’s title, ‘*Recitative*’. Naturally Britten’s written directions also take a crucial role in the creation of this extemporaneous *fantasie*, and the guidance supplied by the composer mindfully leads the pianist through the peaks and troughs of shifting tempi. The use of dotted (or dashed) barlines allows the pianist

³⁹³ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/2/1, *Toccata I* and *Tarantella-‘Finale’*.

³⁹⁴ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/1/2, *Recitative*. Many of the dotted barlines were employed even at this early stage of composition.

to play through the barlines, as opposed to the natural placement of strong and weak beats when playing by the barlines. In other words, barlines are not employed for their metronomic stipulations, but instead for geographic and organizational utility. This allows for the uninterrupted visualization of each passage.

Britten's only revision to the '*Recitative*' in the 1950s would seem to work further towards this flexibility of time: the 7th bar of the variation (bar 34 in the 2nd edition score) was initially split into two separate bars, with each bar corresponding exactly to the prescribed time signature. In the original score, on the treble clef stave, the top C was held for the entire 7th bar of the movement (bars 39 – 40 in the original score), and the bass clef stave showed a minim rest, a pair of semiquavers, a quaver rest and a crotchet rest with a fermata before the barline. As part of his revisions Britten removed the barline entirely, shortened the semibreve C to a minim, changed the minim rest in the bass clef from to a crotchet and deleted the crotchet rest with the fermata. Three excerpts are shown below to corroborate this: **Figure 5.20.** is taken from the composition draft (BBM/diversions/1/2) and shows the original notation of this section. The second excerpt, **Figure 5.21.** exhibits the subsequent revisions applied to the original score in Britten's hand (BBM/diversions/2/3).³⁹⁵ The final excerpt (**Figure 5.22.**) shows this passage in its revised form as it appears in the score today.

³⁹⁵ The quaver rest immediately following the pair of semiquavers in the bass clef appears to be scribbled out in **Figure 5.21.**, however this quaver rest does appear in the revised score.

Figure 5.20. Excerpt from *Diversions* Composition draft (BBM/diversions/1/2), *Recitative*³⁹⁶

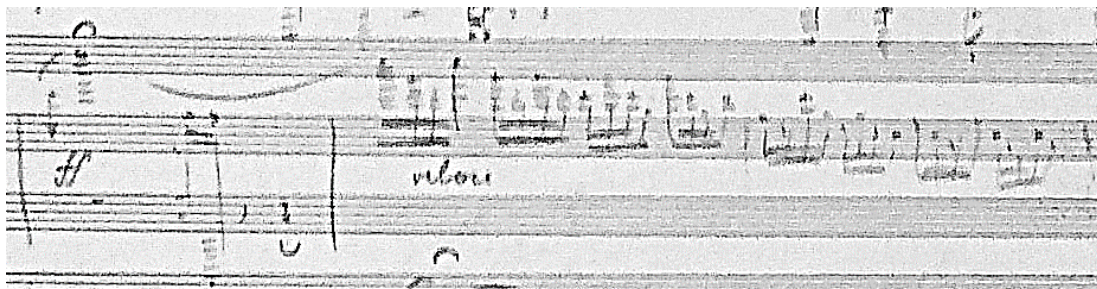
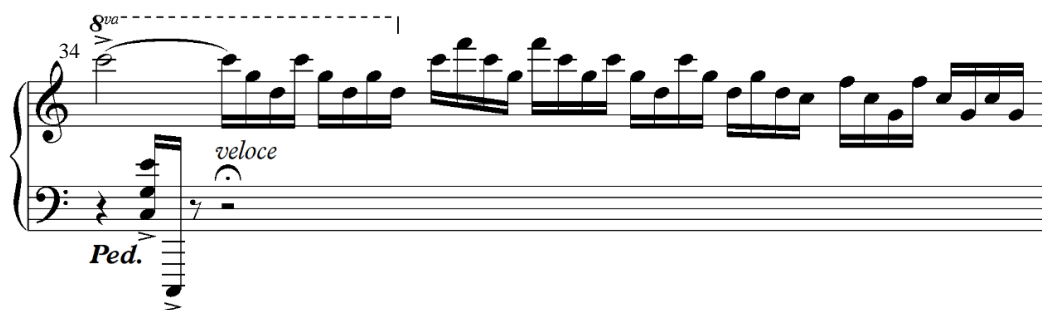


Figure 5.21. Excerpt from the original 1941 *Diversions* score (BBM/diversions/2/3) containing Britten's revisions³⁹⁷



Figure 5.22. *Diversions, Recitative*, bar 34



³⁹⁶ Gb-Alb, BBM/diversions/1/2, *Recitative*. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

³⁹⁷ Gb-Alb, BBM/diversions/2/3, *Recitative*. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

The minor modifications applied to these bars may have been motivated by more than rhythmic fluidity, but out of consideration for timbre and continuation of sound, and out of a desire to condense the action of the first bar and cascade organically into the ensuing series of semiquavers. These alterations could be viewed as symptomatic of the problems inherent in writing for left-hand, calibrating the power achievable with one-hand, and gauging successive enterprises appropriately in order to capitalize on the energy and resonance of larger gestures.

There is a natural correlation between certain techniques applied in the *Recitative*, the solo instrumental sections (bars 386, 394 and 403) in the '*Burlesque*', and the *Cadenza* at the end of '*Toccata II*' as all three appear to be spontaneously shaped. Despite performative parallels, these passages are arranged slightly differently. Regardless of inconsistent bar length in the '*Burlesque*' and '*Recitative*' changes of time signature are not specified, indicating the transcendence of pianistic fluency over the strong – weak gait of specific meters. However, the *Cadenza* is segmented into 4/4 groupings by dashed barlines. Any sense of rigor in performance is offset by the temporal pliability of an *ad lib* style performance. Britten's sense of rhythmic virtuosity does not borrow manifestly from the cloying Romantic spirit of improvisation, but observes the cleaner declamatory Baroque roots of the '*Recitative*' rubric.

Rhythmic augmentation or intensification is also employed judiciously to build tension in all three of these movements. This can be seen in the progressive extension of certain bars, for instance, the durations of bars 36(a), (b), (c) and (d) in the '*Recitative*'

increases from 4 crotchet beats, to 6 beats, to 9 beats, and finally to 10 crotchet beats.³⁹⁸

The improvisational style bars included in '*Burlesque*' likewise expand with each recurrence at bars 386, 394 and 404. In the *Cadenza*, this augmentation takes the form of notational proliferation without any expansion in the duration of the bar. The pulsating semiquavers of the '*Toccata II*' give way to triplet semiquavers, trills and lastly demisemiquaver adornment in the *Cadenza*. The level of rhythmic activity escalates in accordance with rising levels of tension and excitement, rhythmic enterprises reflect structure in this way. Analogous rhythmic organization is evident in the '*Recitative*': in the opening 6 bars alone, the number of notes increases, the duration of these notes contract, and melodic range expands. Collectively, these operations direct the momentum of the piece toward the climatic leap from the octave F to an accented C, before dissolving into further semiquaver machinations. This increase in rhythmic activity, in part, functions as a replacement for typical phrasing conventions, directing the ebb and flow of the movement through tempo and rhythmic escalation.

The '*Burlesque*' was later subject to several rhythmic changes; the most significant of these is in the reprisal of the piano part in bar 395. The opening F-sharp, which had begun on the second beat (inconsistent with earlier presentations of this pattern), was shifted in its entirety by a crotchet beat so as to start on the downbeat of the bar. An extra quaver plus a quaver rest were added at the end of the phrase so the following

³⁹⁸ These bars are so labelled because full barlines are not used, instead, dashed barlines are used to subdivide the bar.

bars were not affected.³⁹⁹ Wong contends that this phrase began only half a beat later in the 1941 score, and was latterly moved back by a quaver beat in the revised score. On this point we must diverge, not least because the inclusion of a quaver rest instead of a crotchet rest would amount to an incorrect number of beats in the bar which would be very unusual in the context of this melody, but also on the basis that the first rest corresponds (in my view) much more closely with a crotchet rest format, and differs notably from subsequent quaver rests. **Figure 5.23.** demonstrates the original format of this passage with annotations in pencil, while **Figure 5.24.** overleaf illustrates the revised version of this passage.

Figure 5.23. Excerpt from the original 1941 score (BBM/diversions/2/3), *Burlesque*⁴⁰⁰



³⁹⁹ This rhythmic adjustment is also discussed by Wong, p. 369, however the movement seems to be mislabelled as Variation III instead of Variation VIII in her discussion of the topic and in her subsequent examples.

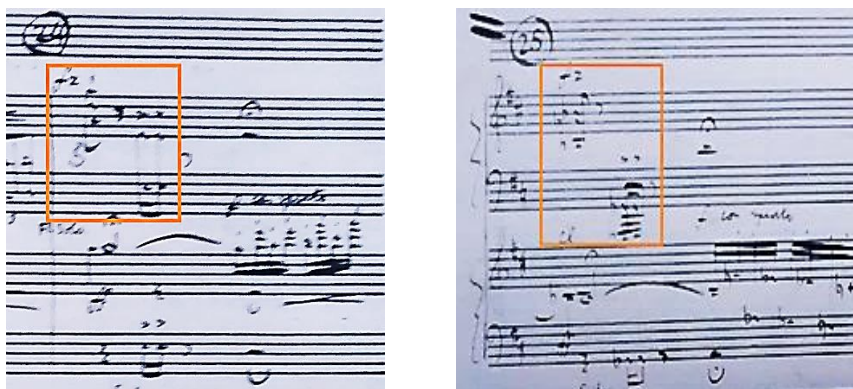
⁴⁰⁰ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/2/3, *Burlesque*. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

Figure 5.24. Revised score, *Burlesque*, bars 395 – 397



The impetuous instrumental solos in ‘*Burlesque*’ were also subject to rhythmic revision. The changes applied at bars 386 and 394 were identical. As exhibited in **Figure 5.25**, these bars initially consisted of a quaver chord and a quaver rest in the treble clef, duly answered by a pair of octave semiquavers notated on the bass clef.⁴⁰¹

Figure 5.25. Excerpt from the Photographic Two-Piano score (BBM/diversions/1/3), opening of bars 386 and 394⁴⁰²



⁴⁰¹ Once again this differs slightly from Wong’s interpretation of the manuscript, she categorises this rhythmic pattern as ‘One quaver triad followed by two semiquaver octaves’ (p. 363) and does not mention the quaver rest in between the quaver and the pair of semiquavers. I have interpreted the pen stroke after the quaver chord in treble clef visible in both examples in **Figure 5.25.**, as a quaver rest, as it corresponds with other examples of quaver rests in Britten’s hand. Moreover, understood in this way, the pair of semiquavers in the piano aligns with the semiquavers on the second beat visible in the reduced orchestral score on the stave underneath.

⁴⁰² *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/1/3, *Burlesque*. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

In both cases the pitches used remain unchanged, the bass clef part now enters a quaver beat earlier (now on the latter half of the first beat), and the note values are simply extended to fill the entire bar. These chords then in turn accompany the short flute solo or clarinet solo that follows. The treble clef quaver chord is replaced with a semibreve chord with a fermata, and in the bass clef double dotted minim also with a fermata. The original rhythmic pattern in the piano at bar 403 underwent a similar change. The original pattern was identical to those at bars 386 and 394: A quaver chord and quaver rest in the treble clef, answered by a pair of semiquaver octaves on the second beat (see **Figure 5.25.**). The solution here is similar, the treble clef chord is extended, and the bass clef enters a quaver beat earlier and is likewise elongated (shown in **Figure 5.26.** below). However, this time the piano undertakes the subsequent cadenza style solo and the length of these chords must be adjusted accordingly to the technical requirements of the bar. Therefore, the quaver chord and rest become a minim with a fermata (as opposed to a semibreve with a fermata as in the revised versions of bars 386 and 394), and bass clef answers with a dotted crotchet (a doubly dotted minim is featured at bars 386 and 394.).

Figure 5.26. *Diversions, Burlesque, bar 403*

In '*Toccata II*', bar 473 of the original score (464 of the revised score), five sextuplets and four triplets were scored for the piano in this cadenza section. In the revised version one sextuplet was removed from the group. The sextuplet that was omitted was simply a clone of a previous pattern, so the melodic sequence is not altered as such. Additionally, as this occurs during the cadenza of '*Toccata II*' the structure and timing remain unaffected. This revision is relatively inconsequential as a result.

The '*Recitative*', '*Burlesque*', '*Toccata II – Cadenza*' and to a lesser extent the '*Badinerie*' are connected primarily because of their improvisational qualities. The remaining movements could also be grouped together according to some shared rhythmic balance between soloist and orchestra. Variations are quite rigidly constructed from a rhythmic perspective, definable rhythmic cells are explicated at the beginning of each variation. These cells are consequently juxtaposed or varied throughout the movement. The effect of this technique is two-fold: stratified rhythmic patterns played by opposing orchestral groups forge internal tensions, furthermore, shifts in established rhythmic ostinato of a particular movement can signify certain sectional divisions. Thus, the application and arrangement of these rhythmic cells regulates structure, a trope shared with the more temporally flexible movements ('*Recitative*', '*Burlesque*', etc.), but achieved through different means. In the opening section of '*Romance*', for instance, the syncopated rhythm in the strings offsets the orderly melodic crotchet sequence. The beginning of the second section (bars 63 – 74) is announced not only by a repeat of the melody, but by a trade of rhythmic resources. The piano subsumes the syncopated rhythm into its melodic contour while the orchestra

appropriates the lyrical sweeping crotchet arc, displacing this crochet pattern in some instruments to create an echo of the melody. This clearly defines the boundaries of the passage and achieves texture and timbral diversity within the confines of two rhythmic cells.

The rhythmic layers for each movement are often designed for their interlocking effect. When combined, many of the rhythmic cells accent alternate beats of the bar. For example, in the opening ‘*Theme*’ the accompanying instruments strike on the third beat of the bar where those instruments presenting the theme are sustaining a minim (**Figure 5.27.**). Comparable rhythmic reciprocity is evident throughout *Diversions*, but becomes particularly apparent in slower movements. The primary rhythmic cells for ‘*Adagio*’ are shown in **Figure 5.28.** The weaving action of both primary rhythmic cells in ‘*Chant*’ allows the piano to subsume both patterns from bar 208, facilitating a rare episode of bilateral piano technique (**Figure 5.29.**).

Figure 5.27. ‘*Theme*’, bars 1 – 4

The musical score for Figure 5.27, 'Theme', bars 1-4, is written in 2/2 time. It consists of three staves: Tuba, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The Tuba part begins with a first ending bracket over the first two bars, indicating a melodic line. The Violoncello and Double Bass parts play a steady eighth-note accompaniment pattern, with the Double Bass part starting on a lower pitch than the Violoncello. The Tuba part features a series of eighth notes, with some notes beamed together and others separated by rests, creating a rhythmic pattern that complements the accompaniment.

Figure 5.28. ‘*Adagio*’, bars 465 – 469

465

Clarinet in Bb

Violin II

Figure 5.29. ‘*Chant*’, bars 208 – 213

208

The ‘*Arabesque*’ stands as an exception to the primary categorization of movements according to rhythmic and temporal approach. It features an amalgamation of procedures: the static repetitive rhythmic sequences utilized in the majority of variations, exoposed with temporal flexibility of ‘*Recitative*’, ‘*Burlesque*’ and the *Cadenza*. The main rhythmic groupings consist of the pulsating semiquaver movement in the piano, the consistent *pizzicato* quaver action in the lower strings, and a pair of slurred, sustained notes, the length of which depends on their placement. The tempo fluctuates regularly according to Britten’s regular *rubato* directions. The time signature changes at the beginning of practically every bar with no discernible sequence. The *rubato* phrasing and the fluctuating time signature have a destabilizing effect on an these otherwise stagnant rhythmical cells, uniting the fundamental rhythmic procedures of this work usually applied separately.

This technique of rhythmic stratification enables considerable mileage from a limited amount of material through the rotation, extension and diminution of rhythmic cells. Britten's stratification of rhythmic groupings assists in the struggle against thematic exhaustion, an issue of concern considering the preponderance of variations are monothematic, and simultaneously works towards cohesion within each movement.

Comparative Analysis

Observations drawn from comparison between the Piano Concerto and *Diversions* in terms of their chosen tempi and their rate of change cannot be entirely equitable. That the opposing architectural form and organisation of these works merit disparate modes of momentum and pacing, both internally and across the work, is axiomatic. On the whole, this comparison would be redundant considering its unequal basis. Identification and juxtaposition of rhythmic practices form a more legitimate source of information about Britten's standard and left-hand techniques. Indeed, use and application of rhythm across both works unveils some striking contrasts. The sense of pastiche that pervades both works governs a certain amount of rhythmic selection. In this stylistic imbrication, temporal and rhythmic collections too overlap.⁴⁰³

In particular, temporal and stylistic affiliations can be seen between the 'Recitative' and the *Cadenza* from *Diversions* with the 'Recitative' portion of the original third movement in the Piano Concerto in the extemporaneous style riposte from the piano, the dramatic shifts in tempo, and the attentively governed gradation of temporal

⁴⁰³ The stylistic imitation that permeates both works is discussed in further detail in **Structure and Formal Plan**.

response. Dotted barlines are employed to separate out bars of varying length in the first movement *Cadenza*. Analogous with the ‘*Recitative*’, these dotted barlines are dictated by certain pianistic figures and flourishes rather than adhering to any particular system or time signature. However, the original third movement ‘*Recitative and Aria*’, clings to a more structured format; all changes of time signature are sign posted, the many temporal nuances are meticulously graded.

The higher percentage of polyrhythms, ornamentation and grotesque embellishment found in the Piano Concerto, says more about the ‘neo-baroque-classical’ lineage of *Diversions*, than it does about Romantic influences on the Concerto.⁴⁰⁴ The dissolution of these decorative features in *Diversions* is representative overall of the rhythmic differences between the two works. *Diversions* employs the minimum number of rhythmic cells to maintain interest in each variation. In pursuit of economy and cohesion, rhythmic designs are confined to these primary components. The level of uniformity demonstrated in *Diversions* would lead to monotony within the Concerto framework, rhythmic diversity and multifarious tempi are required within extended structures. There is also the issue of balance; disparate rhythmic activity in the orchestra robustly opposing the piano part, might endanger the delicate instrumental balance imperative to the successful realization of a work for orchestra and a single hand at the piano.

While many disparities between the two works could be attributed to the maturation of

⁴⁰⁴ Roseberry, ‘The concertos and early orchestral scores’, p. 233.

Britten's craft and the desire to move towards a more cohesive musical language, Britten's economical, layered approach to *Diversions* would appear to be related to the adjustment to one-hand at the piano. The interlocking rhythmic cells of his left-hand work don't find precedent in his Piano Concerto, the rhythmic frugality of *Diversions* borne of a duty to uphold the sovereignty of the soloist within the context of an integrated and consolidated musical work.

ORCHESTRATION AND DYNAMICS

Diversions

It is worth noting that the growth of the opening 'Theme', from the depths of the lowest instruments of the orchestra, through the mid-range and higher instruments, is reflective of the piano's entry in 'Recitative'. The typical registral domain of the left-hand is first exposed, with rapid expansion of range in the first 6 bars to proclaim the length of the piano within the left-hand's jurisdiction. Despite the piano's reduced capacity, Britten elects to preserve the timbral and dynamic palette of a full orchestra, streamlining and sculpting their contributions to facilitate appropriate levels of balance with the soloist. Roseberry noted that 'the scoring for large orchestra, though massive enough in effect when necessary, is at the same time lithe and frequently solistic'.⁴⁰⁵

This statement is borne out by further analysis. Some movements such as 'Badinerie' and 'Burlesque' simply cut the number of instruments involved in the movement dramatically. The former relies on the support of the string section only, and in the

⁴⁰⁵ Roseberry, 'The concertos and early orchestral scores', p. 241.

latter the *cantabile* solo is rotated between a series of wind instruments (alto saxophone, flute, clarinet and oboe), each solo instrument juxtaposed in turn with the buoyant piano accompaniment. In other variations, instrumental usage and deployment is weighed against current piano activity. Levels of orchestration increase when piano is tacet, or when it is operating as part of the ensemble. The first half of '*Toccata II*' for instance, features one of the most dynamically charged and continuously bustling episodes in the orchestra, as the piano rests in preparation for the *Cadenza*. More often however, these undulating and carefully tailored levels of scoring take the form of notable orchestral commentary between phrases, or during transition sections. The '*Romance*' features the support of syncopated hushed strings throughout the movement, this landscape only briefly punctuated by horns and bassoons between phrases. The '*March*' too, increases instrumentation towards the ends of phrases, and the only idiom conflicting with the chromatic motion of the piano in *Arabesque* bridges the start and end of the soloist's phrases.

The opening of '*Chant*' features more sustained orchestral contributions, but this ceases entirely when the piano enters. When the orchestra rejoins they work in alliance with the piano, bolstering the sighing melody, or supporting the bass line, without adding any conflicting textures or idioms. The orchestra peters out toward the end of the movement to highlight the supremacy of soloist. This illustrates another continued feature of Britten's approach to orchestration in *Diversions*: the consolidation of instruments and unification of texture into a single line. This cooperative orchestral offering will sometimes reinforce the piano's melody as in '*Chant*', or alternatively

present a contrasting line through which the piano's activities transparently permeate. For example, the overlapping echoes in the central section of 'Romance' espouse minimal accompaniment, some sustained chords in the trombones and harp for underlying harmonic support in order to crystallise the staggered imitative melodic phrases between the orchestra and the piano. Strings are *pizzicato* for the duration of this central section, fluctuation of orchestration is aligned with instrumental register according to the rise and fall of the melodic arc. 'Nocturne' divides a single melody among solo instruments and soli sections and positions them in succession against the rippling arpeggios in the piano. This technique of *Klangfarbenmelodie* offers timbral richness without textural density.

Percussion or percussive undertakings feature markedly throughout. Wong suggests that the pianist is assigned the role of percussionist in the 'March'. She cites the 'extensive use of accents, rhythmic repeated block chords and series of fast-running scale patterns played *staccato* or even *staccatissimo*' as evidence of the piano's percussive role.⁴⁰⁶ The strings also assume a percussive identity with the adoption of certain added effects, *con sord*, *con legno*, *pizzicato*, at various junctures. Percussion features prominently in the opening and closing movements including a 6-bar timpani solo in the 'Theme', and snare drum, tambourine and triangle solos in the 'Tarantella'. Other instruments operate percussively in certain movements as they are employed not for their individual timbre or colour, but as a delineating force, appearing only to accent

⁴⁰⁶ Wong, *Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain*, p. 391.

the main beat of the bar or to highlight certain rhythmic patterns.

Large stretches of the orchestration were unscathed by Britten's later revisions, Variation I through Variation VII did not undergo instrumental changes. The modifications applied to other movements were generally subtle, and could be seen to serve one of two functions: minutely recalibrating instrumental contributions to vary timbre, texture and underscore certain rhythmic features, or judiciously pruning heavier instruments to advertise the sovereignty of the pianist.⁴⁰⁷ One of the more significant additions took place in '*Toccata I*'; a passage once tacet for strings (excluding the double bass) was replaced with a series of scrappy upbeat semiquaver interjections leading to an accented quaver on the subsequent downbeat. Delineating the melodic outline, the added strings highlight the intensifying writhing tension of each progressive step and act as a support to the pianist, who throughout this taxing movement is required to build volume and anticipation consistently towards the opening of the ensuing movement. A static tremolo section scored for strings in the original version was similarly replaced with regular semiquaver figures, which are doubtless more valuable in reinforcing the piano's suspenseful march towards resolution, than a block of *tremolando* strings. The '*Tarantella*' underwent the greatest number of changes, but the majority of these were quite minor. The excerpts shown in **Figure 5.30.** and **5.31.** overleaf are the most consequential of the scoring modifications undertaken in this movement. In both instances the brass section has been completely

⁴⁰⁷ Full list of scoring modifications available in Wong, *Paul Wittgenstein in Britain*, pp. 376 – 381.

expunged, woodwind parts were temperately rearranged and alternative percussion parts issued. These changes would have made the jangling single-line piano part more plainly and consistently perceptible.

Figure 5.30. Excerpt from the original 1941 score with orchestral revisions (BBM/diversions/2/3), *Tarantella*⁴⁰⁸



⁴⁰⁸ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/2/3, *Tarantella* - 'Finale'. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

Figure 5.31. Excerpt from the original 1941 with score revisions
(BBM/diversion/2/3), *Tarantella*⁴⁰⁹

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for the piece 'Tarantella'. At the top, there is a handwritten note: 'see MS for Ww Perc & strings'. A circled number '38' is written above the first system of staves. The score consists of several systems of staves, including a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a piano part. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. There are some scribbles and corrections in the lower systems, indicating revisions to the original 1941 score.

Comparative Analysis

A comparison of the main dynamics assigned to the pianist through both works exposes a notably disparity between the two. The Piano Concerto invests more time at extreme dynamic levels; the pianist plays at a *pp* dynamic for approximately 16% of the Piano

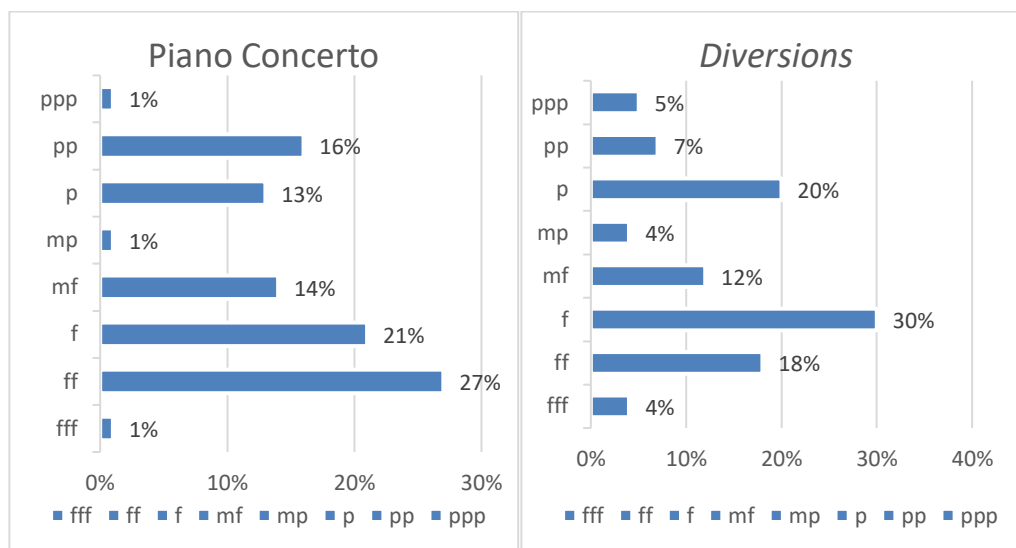
⁴⁰⁹ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/2/3, 'Tarantella' - Finale. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

Concerto, this in contrast to the meagre 7% spent at this dynamic in *Diversions*. The dissimilitude is just as prevalent at higher volumes, the soloist of the Concerto is directed to play *ff* for 27% of the time, in comparison to just 18% in *Diversions*. The left-hand work instead contains its dynamic efforts, featuring much higher percentages of activity at the *p* and *f* level than the Piano Concerto. The avoidance of the most subdued dynamics is logical within the context of a left-hand work as a single-hand may not achieve optimum instrumental balance at this volume. The steep decline in usage of louder dynamics, a feature likewise noted in Prokofiev's concerto for left-hand, cautiously avoids depletion of physical stamina.⁴¹⁰ According to Hammond's calculations, both the Piano Concerto and *Diversions* spend the same proportion of time in solo, orchestral and tutti endeavours.⁴¹¹ The distribution of dynamics across both works is exhibited in **Figure 5.32**.

⁴¹⁰ This concern for performance-related fatigue is further corroborated by the analysis of piano techniques in **Pianistic Considerations**.

⁴¹¹ Hammond, 'To Conceal or Reveal', pp. 103 – 104: 'in *Diversions* the orchestra plays alone for 23% of the time and in the concerto, op. 13, for 22% of the time'.

Figure 5.32. Dynamic use in the Piano Concerto and *Diversions*



Curiously Britten makes no orchestral concessions to meet the limited power of a single hand; in comparison with his Piano Concerto the size of the ensemble actually expands slightly with the addition of a double bassoon and an alto saxophone. The instrumentation of both works is listed in **Table 5.9**.

Table 5.9. Comparison of Orchestration

Piano Concerto, Op. 13	<i>Diversions</i>, Op.21
Woodwind	
2 flutes (both doubling piccolos), 2 oboes (2 nd doubling cor anglais), 2 clarinets in A, 2 bassoons	2 flutes (2 nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (2 nd doubling cor anglais) 2 clarinets in Bb, 2 bassoons, double bassoon
Brass	
2 trumpets in C, 4 horns in F, 3 trombones, tuba	2 trumpets in C, alto saxophone in Eb, 4 horns in F, 3 trombones, tuba
Percussion	
Timpani, glockenspiel, tambourine, side drum, tenor drum, bass drum, cymbals, whip	Timpani, xylophone, triangle, tambourine, side drum, bass drum, suspended cymbals, cymbals, gong

Harp
Piano
Strings

The soloistic orchestrative tendencies acknowledged by Roseberry in reference to *Diversions* are almost as prevalent in his Piano Concerto: the ‘*Recitative*’ portions of the original third movement ‘*Recitative and Aria*’ hosts a series of improvisatory style solos presented by alternating wind instruments (oboe, clarinet, cor anglais, flute, French horn) and separated by extended sardonic commentary on the piano. The lower strings are brought to prominence with the lyrical ‘*Aria*’ melody, later transformed into a gentle, chiming waltz by the flute. The 2nd movement ‘*Waltz*’ features another sequence of conspicuous solos (viola, piccolo, clarinet) at the beginning and end of the movement. A review of the premiere of the Piano Concerto endorses these findings: ‘The orchestra was anything but accompaniment. It was the main instrument and source of ideas’.⁴¹²

Rhythmically and melodically the orchestra works to accentuate the piano’s activities and melodic contours in a manner similar to *Diversions*. However, textures are often more diverse in the Piano Concerto, offering a more timbrally dense landscape. The rate of textural and rhythmic change in the concerto in contrast with *Diversions* adds to this feeling of industry. The end of movements in the concerto, recapitulation or points of climax, often demonstrate more internal contrapuntalism than the analogous

⁴¹² W. McN, ‘The Promenade Concerts’, *The Musical Times*, 79: 1147 (September 1938), 702 – 703 (p.702.).

areas of *Diversions*. From this perspective, writing for left-hand required the anticipated dilution of orchestral activity in order to construct an appropriate level of balance with the soloist.

PIANISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

Diversions

Diversions is without a doubt an extraordinarily challenging work pianistically, Roseberry noted that ‘the virtuosic piano part [is] a challenge to two hands, let alone one.’⁴¹³ A specific technique or motion is explicated and probed in each movement, as intimated by Britten in his foreword:

I have tried to treat the problem in every aspect, as a glance at the list of movements will show: special features are, trills and scales in the Recitative: wide-spread arpeggios in the Nocturne: agility over the keyboard in the Badinerie and Toccata: and repeated notes in the final Tarantella.⁴¹⁴

Britten’s teacher, Frank Bridge, composed a collection of pieces for left-hand only in 1918 for pianist Douglas Fox who suffered a fate similar to Wittgenstein in WWI. Bridge’s collection for left-hand alone was known to be in Britten’s library.⁴¹⁵ The extent to which these pieces served as a source of inspiration is unknown, but there are commonalities which imply their significance in Britten’s formulation of *Diversions*. A primary technique or texture is explored in each of the *Three Improvisations*, an approach that corresponds with the isolated exposition of individual techniques throughout *Diversions*. The final piece in Bridge’s set, *A Revel*, exudes a brand of

⁴¹³ Roseberry, ‘The concertos and early orchestral scores’, p. 241.

⁴¹⁴ Kildea, ed., *Britten on Music*, p. 369.

⁴¹⁵ Hammond, ‘To Conceal or Reveal’, p. 89.

rippling linearity that demonstrates the puissance effectively incorporated into a single line. It is somewhat reminiscent of the *moto perpetuo* of the 'Nocturne' or 'Toccata'. Bridge's segregated treatment of textures coincides with Britten's intentions with regards to the piano technique as laid out in the foreword to *Diversions*. 'In no place in the work did I attempt to imitate a two-handed piano technique, but concentrated on exploiting and emphasising the single-line approach'.⁴¹⁶

Traditional Dual-Handed Exchange and Contrapuntal Activity

At first glance it may appear that *Diversions* is a purely linear enterprise pianistically, and indeed the pianist is not required to balance many multi-layered textures or execute complex contrapuntal action. However, there are glimpses of more traditional two-handed textures presented within a linear format, as alternation of register and function implies a reciprocal two-handed endeavour aurally. The successive leaps between the bass and treble regions of the piano to produce the outward creeping dramaturgy of the accelerating chords in bar 38 of the 'Recitative', would, in performance, render the impression of two hands working in tandem (**Figure 5.33.**).

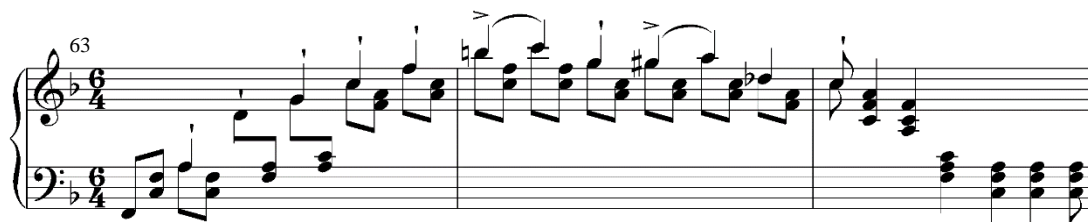
⁴¹⁶ Kildea, ed., *Britten on Music*, p. 369.

Figure 5.33. ‘*Recitative*’, start of bar 38



Instances of traditional pianistic operations are also discernible in the central section of ‘*Romance*’, where the melody is embedded in the rocking quaver accompaniment, bars 63 – 74 (**Figure 5.34.**). ‘*Chant*’, bars 208 – 230 (see **Figure 5.29.**), and fleeting moments in the *Cadenza* could also be assigned to this category. However, the brevity and infrequency of these episodes halts the potential agency of a texturally constructed musical prosthesis. These incidents generate textural diversion, but their ephemeral nature quickly dismantles the chimera of a second hand at work.

Figure 5.34. ‘*Romance*’, bars 63 – 65



‘*Arabesque*’ and ‘*Chant*’ provide an island of physical respite in advance of the relentless figuration of ‘*Nocturne*’. Slower tempi and a more leisurely rate of registral change provide a recovery space for fatigued muscles, the techniques in demand do not overextend the hand, tire the arm or wrist, or require vigorous attack. The placement

of these movements is of benefit to the pianist therefore in terms of somatic management. 'Chant' issues one of the few episodes of two-handed texture in the work, while 'Arabesque' stands alone within *Diversions* in terms of its contrapuntal approach. It features chromatic extension and diminution of *rubato* phrases against a pedal note. However, these two movements also highlight the deficiencies of Britten's textural approach: repetitive textural operations alongside static rhythmic strata stagnate easily. A break from Britten's strict textural stasis would have broken this tedium.

While the melody presented by alternating solo instruments may embrace the typical single-line aspect, the clipped chordal accompaniment of 'Burlesque' enjoys overt solidarity with traditional left-hand functions. In this way, 'Burlesque' represents a conventional pianistic endeavour where each of the solo instruments in turn performs the role of the absent right-hand. This movement is therefore something of an oddity, pianist and orchestra each representing one-half of typical pianistic interplay.

The added technical difficulty of rapid registral change and preservation of typical melody and accompaniment equilibrium within one-hand may have dissuaded Britten from overindulging in the projection of a standard two-handed hierarchy. The rapid figuration and hastily expanding range of the 'Recitative' would swiftly prove tiring on the hand and torso of the pianist. Concurrent but opposing actions within the hand, for instance, the maintenance of the opening trill between index finger and thumb, while the lower half of the hand extends to intersect the trill with a pair of accented semiquavers is not only arduous physically but challenging to execute evenly. The

rapid regional shifts across the keyboard through rapid scales, arpeggios, glissandi and leaping chordal action, demands core strength without a stabilizing force on the right-side. The level of somatic fatigue precipitated by the range of techniques and gestures compressed into the piano's opening statement, creates a level of exertion unsustainable across a work of this length. Stamina, while likely a mitigating factor in his propensity towards linear activities, was certainly not the only guiding force in textural selections. The initial one-page sketch from his American sketchbook reveals that the outline of pianistic activities at that embryonic stage was envisioned mostly in linear format, exposing and exploring, unabashedly, the virtues and peculiarities of single-handed piano performance.

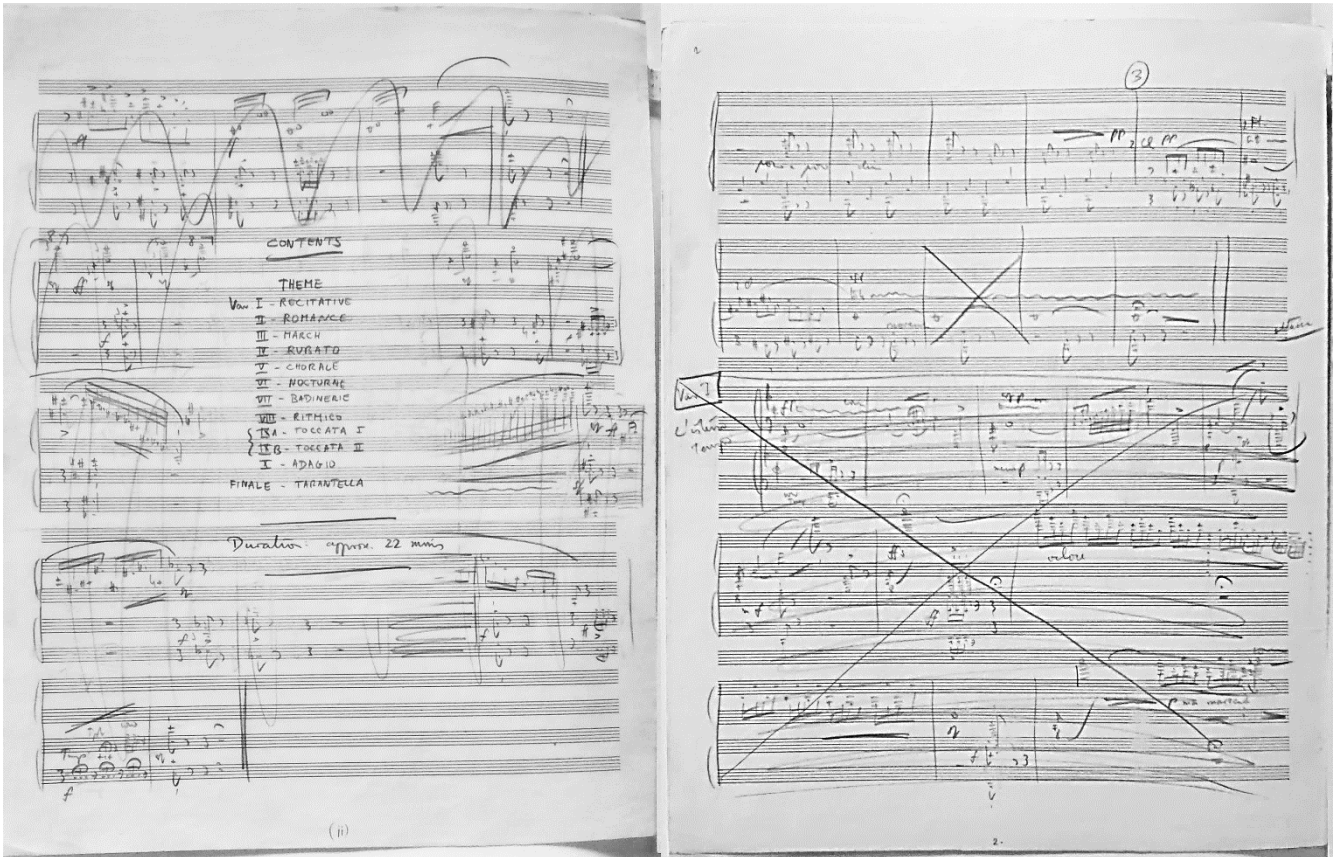
The minority status of conventional pianistic textures may have been consolidated by his early experiments with the genre. For example, the early composition draft dated August 24th, 1940 (BBM/diversions/1/2), at this early stage still bearing the title 'Concert Variations', contains several rejected drafts of the first variation, 'Recitative'.⁴¹⁷ The manuscript page that now forms the cover page for the composition draft of *Diversions* was initially part of the draft itself. Wong concluded that the redrafted 'Recitative' was edited down for a shorter overall movement, the repurposed title page once part of an extended draft of *Diversions*.⁴¹⁸ The pages from which

⁴¹⁷ Visible on the repurposed manuscript paper used as a title and contents page to this draft, is an earlier draft of the 'Recitative'. Three lines crossed out on p. 2 of the score were probably the opening of this earlier draft, with pp. 3 – 4 being removed entirely and recycled as the title page, and the contents listed on the reverse side. Further into the composition draft, p. 34 shows a further reworking of the 'Recitative' once again crossed out. For further details see: Wong, *Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain*, pp. 314 – 315 and p. 320.

⁴¹⁸ Wong, 'Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain', p. 315.

Recitative has ultimately been assembled show further cuts from the movement (see **Figure 5.35.**). As the only solo piano movement, these working drafts demonstrate Britten's trials in left-hand technique without orchestral support. Of consideration also is the position of the movement: as the opening statement from the pianist the motivation to refine the cadenza-like *Recitative* may have more dramatic than technical, endeavouring to cast the pianist in the most impactful and favourable light.

Figure 5.35. Composition draft (BBM/diversions/1/2). Contents page and pg. 2 showing a discarded section of *Recitative* ⁴¹⁹



We cannot be sure that as many drafts or sketches did not exist for other movements. However, repeated attempts at this first variation, during which the piano performs solo, does show that Britten worked through several experiments or stages to present the piano positively in its opening statement.

⁴¹⁹ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/1/2, *Contents page* and *Recitative*. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

Direct and Complex Linearity

The linearity of the variations can be further categorized according to their melodic or decorative function. The piano is in control of the melody in *Romance*; the long ascending and descending lyrical arcs, flickering ornamental acciaccaturas and *legato* fluency require a continually outstretched hand with regular rotation of the wrist and arm. While the outer sections of ‘*Romance*’ fit firmly into a single-line format, the rocking melody and quaver accompaniment embedded in the central episode of the ‘*Romance*’, classified as an imitation of a two-handed texture (see **Figure 5.34.** above) issues one of the only instances of a thumb-led melody throughout the work. While the thumb is naturally employed regularly for its strength and peripheral positioning, reliance on the thumb as the main melodic protagonist adopted in other left-hand works is not a feature of *Diversions*.

In the ‘*March*’, the piano’s role is divided between melodic elucidation and percussive antagonism. The equidistant melodic spacing of ‘*Romance*’ is offset with a mixture of angular skips and creeping triplets in the ‘*March*’, alleviating the strain induced by continual distension of the hand in the previous variation. Instead, more energy is channelled into articulation: the fluidity of the ‘*Romance*’ is countered with combatively charged accents and *staccatissimo* directions. Large swaths of the ‘*March*’ are distinctly linear, but once again there are passages which incorporate other textures. Moving in octaves, bars 160 – 165 veer into the deceptively linear category; additionally there are some short chordal passages. Many of the chords which open the movement (bars 82 – 87) are typically impossible to play synchronously due to their

range and require division although this is not distinctly specified. A later chordal episode, bars 144 – 145, likewise proves technically challenging as a result of the brisk tempo.

'Nocturne' abides by Britten's edict of pianistic linearity in an accompaniment or decorative fashion. The innocent, chiming undulation of the piano part disguises its internal difficulty, prudently crafted to glide back and forth across the keyboard, the dexterity and velocity required would be challenging on this continual basis for the most adept pianist. Repeated extension and closure of the hand span, persistent hand crossing action and movement from one end of the keyboard to the other, present a strain on each of the primary joints and muscles on the left-side, from hand to torso. The technical and unrelenting demands of *'Badinerie'*, *'Toccata I'* and *'Tarantella'* are quite similar, once again in a perpetually linear context the keyboard is traversed rapidly, although the function of the pianist in this movement has reverted to melodic soloist. Some hand position changes can be achieved by hand crossing action with freedom of movement in the wrist and elbow, other position changes require a precise leaping action. The predominant intervals, as with *'Nocturne'*, are the fourth and fifth, which fit within the hand span but facilitate quick movement across the range of the piano.

Hammond commented that 'the absence of sustained melodic writing in the piano part of *Diversions* seems to reflect his [Britten's] approach to writing for the left hand'⁴²⁰

⁴²⁰ Hammond, 'To Conceal or Reveal', p. 93.

To this I would add, a distinct lack of contrapuntal action. Chordal patterns and formations are included judiciously, situated in the movements where they would bear greatest consequence. For example, the gently pulsating chords of the '*Arabesque*' are set against strings only, the pageantry of the chordal display in the '*Adagio*' (broken chords, arpeggiated chords etc.) confined to the offbeat much of the time, working in syncopation with the melody presented in the orchestra.

Textural Revisions

Britten's left-hand approach could be considered largely figurative. The linear contours written most frequently for the pianist call for the rotation of the hand and arm, and rapid leaps across the keyboard. However, in reviewing Britten's revisions to the solo part there were occasions where the exclusively linear approach was later reconsidered and the piano part was subsequently reinforced. In '*Recitative*', between rehearsal marks 4 and 5, the oscillation of the high-pitched melody line was later buttressed by 2 low lying *piano* chords as shown pencilled in **Figure 5.36**. below.

Figure 5.36. Excerpt from the Original 1941 score (BBM/diversions/2/3) containing Britten's revisions ⁴²¹



Manifold alterations applied to ‘*Toccata I*’ acknowledge the difficulty of this *moto perpetuo* movement, and attempt to ease the technical burden on the pianist. The largest distance between any two semiquavers in bars 416 and 417 today is an octave, but in the 1941 photographic score intervals between semiquavers could be as large as two octaves as the lowest note of this passage, a B-flat, was notated an octave lower. B-flat was again the guilty party in the passage between bars 418 – 429. Each B-flat was originally notated in octaves, but during revisions the lower B-flat was dropped from the score. In both instances these changes were likely made for technical reasons, a jump of this distance would presumably disrupt the pace and rhythmic consistency prescribed by the movement’s ‘*Toccata*’ title. These octaves can be seen partially or completely crossed out in the excerpt below from BBM/diversions/1/3. The 1941 photographic two-piano score annotated by Wittgenstein and indicates his difficulty with this passage (see **Figure 5.37.**). Brackets visible around the bottom note of each

⁴²¹ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/2/3, *Recitative*. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

octave group illustrates Britten's awareness of the strenuousness of this passage and prediction that these octaves may have to be reduced to single notes.

Figure 5.37. Excerpt from the Photographic Two-piano score (BBM/diversions/1/3) with annotations in Wittgenstein's hand ⁴²²



Similarly, in the revised edition of the movement many short transitional passages feature added brackets, suggesting that these three-note sections function as preamble to each melodic statement and can be omitted for ease of facility. These brackets can be seen at the end of bars 413, 414 and 415 for example. This option was not available in the original score. The bar before rehearsal mark 28, (original score bar 438, revised score 430) was conceived as a harmonic dyad of A and E-flat alternating with a single B-flat and an octave B-flat. The dyad was latterly split apart to be notated separately and only one B-flat included in the sequence. Original and revised versions of this bar can be seen in **Figure 5.38**.

⁴²² *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/1/3, *Toccata I*. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

Figure 5.38. Excerpt from the Photographic Two-piano score (BBM/diversions/1/3) and the analogous bar in the revised score ⁴²³



Another comparable example of revisions made in the interest of easing pianistic challenges can be seen in the *'Tarantella'*. Bars 602 – 605 in the original score (bars 589 – 591 revised score) were rewritten, removing bar 604 completely and renotating bars 602 and 603. These revisions, written on the staff above the piano part in the original score as shown in **Figure 5.39**, narrow the spread of some chords and reduce movement overall: the first and second triplets of bar 603 are reset within the hand span, the second triplet simply marked as a repeat of the first. The rapid 3 octave traversal stipulated by the original version of this bar was replaced by something more temperate in range and difficulty.

⁴²³ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/1/3, *Toccata I*. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

Figure 5.39. Bars 601 – 605 from the Original score (BBM/diversions/2/3) with revisions in Britten’s hand ⁴²⁴



Comparative Analysis

Evans commented on ‘the textural rigidity of the toccata’, and the ‘brittle clangour through patterned figurations’ throughout the opening movement of Britten’s Piano Concerto. These words could have been mistaken for a description of *Diversions* such is their applicability to both works.⁴²⁵ Particularly germane to both is the reliance, perhaps to excess, on pianistic figuration, a proclivity noted and discouraged in reviews of his piano concerto: ‘There are effective and brilliant things both in the last movements [...] but they sound like essays in texture rather than a direct expression of musical thought’.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ *Gb-Alb*, BBM/diversions/2/3, ‘*Tarantella*’ - *Finale*. Reproduced by permission of the Britten-Pears Foundation, ©The Britten-Pears Foundation. All rights reserved.

⁴²⁵ Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten*, pp. 45 – 46.

⁴²⁶ Constant Lambert, *The Listener*, 25th August 1938, quoted in: Evans, ‘Britten’s Piano Concerto’, p. 11.

Mr Britten, as pianist, spent a great deal of his time in rapid splash-work, largely of a harmonic order [...] that contributed little to the musical interest and was moreover overborne by the orchestra.⁴²⁷

While *Diversions* could not be denounced to the same degree for pianistic acrobatics, the two works share several key commonalities: concentrated textural experimentation and a brand of pianism whose frequent purpose is the adornment of orchestra-led melodic activity. The triumph of horizontal and linear actions over traditional vertical hierarchies, a correlating feature with Prokofiev's Concerto No.4 for Left-Hand, is prevalent in both works. Whittall contended that 'vertical characteristics [...] are determined by interacting linear forces – [...] rather than by the vertical juxtaposition of distinct harmonic elements'.⁴²⁸ This observation on linearity was uttered in relation to a survey of his choral music, so this aspect is not confined to, nor is it inspired by, composition for piano, or piano left-hand, but is ubiquitous in Britten's output. In the same manner as Prokofiev then, Britten was well-positioned to adapt his conventional pianistic style to the capabilities of one-hand.

While *Diversions* shows 'substantial technical advances and a purification of style' according to Christopher Mark, the technical logic that governs both *Diversions* and the Piano Concerto is surprisingly similar.⁴²⁹ The opening *staccato* quaver theme can be reduced to a single line, it is simply doubled or tripled at the octave for impact, similarly many of the swift running passage of semiquavers of the opening '*Toccata*'

⁴²⁷ W. McN, 'The Promenade Concerts', p.702.

⁴²⁸ Arnold Whittall, 'The Study of Britten: Triadic Harmony and Tonal Structure' in Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association, 106 (1979-1980), 27 – 41 (p. 38).

⁴²⁹ Christopher Mark, *Early Benjamin Britten: A Study of Stylistic and Technical Evolution* (New York: Garland, 1995), p. 246.

movement are in unison. A single pattern (runs, arpeggios, etc) may also be distributed between the hands, a type of reciprocal pianism that encompasses more of the range of the keyboard, but that reductively amounts to a linear sequence once again. On the whole, homophonic or polyphonic labours would seem to be in the minority.

The Piano Concerto features an unusual friction between technique and content: Britten's meticulous compositional processes were smothered by his satirical interpretation of 'popular' or anachronistic styles according to contemporary critique. The mantle of the genre piece was seen as derivative and pernicious by the musical *au courant*.⁴³⁰ The character-based movement titles of *Diversions* position the work in a category vulnerable to cognate criticism of caricature-like deviancy, actively devalued by its mimetic expression. However, the relative austerity of the piano part in *Diversions* wrestles against this classification. The linear format of the piano part demands the excavation of familiar genres; oftentimes texture and harmony are hollowed out and whittled down to a bare frame. This naturally skews common perception of these garden variety character pieces. Rather than forming a tongue-in-cheek imitation of certain styles, the piano articulates a more detached stylistic commentary, dispossessed of certain familiar trite associations.

MUSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It's curious that *Diversions* does not overtly channel themes of war, death or violence given Britten's known pacifism and frequent expression of opposition to armed conflict,

⁴³⁰ Roseberry, 'Britten's Piano Concerto', pp. 12 – 13.

a narrative that was explicitly rendered in works of this period. The *Violin Concerto*, Op.13 of 1939 and the *Sinfonia da Requiem* of 1940 comment on the Spanish civil war and the impending WWII respectively.⁴³¹ Furthermore, Wittgenstein was representative of the horrific nature of war which Britten protested with his earlier works. Roseberry goes so far as to suggest that ‘it would be uncharacteristic if his orchestral music of the war years did not reflect the anxiety, the contraindications, the pain [...] of self-imposed exile in wartime’. By this measure *Diversions* is certainly ‘uncharacteristic’.⁴³² The only movement that does point towards any level of socio-political commentary, the ‘*March*’, is approached from a satirical vantage point. Perhaps Britten suspected that such a subversive political message would be viewed as exploitative of Wittgenstein’s situation, as graceless and tactless. On this we can only speculate, but it is nonetheless peculiar that for Britten this did not constitute an ideal moment for commentary on the bloodshed and futility of war, a message that would have been amplified by Wittgenstein’s aspect and mode of performance.

CONCLUSION

That *Diversions* elicited and nurtured the germ of certain technical strategies which would mature to form compositional frameworks for future works, has been duly acknowledged among Britten scholars.⁴³³ For instance, Michael Kennedy suggested

⁴³¹ Donald Mitchell, ‘Violent Climates’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Britten*, ed. by Meryvn Cooke (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge) 188 – 216 (pp. 203 – 204).

⁴³² Roseberry, ‘The concertos and early orchestral scores’, p. 235.

⁴³³ Midroit, ‘Elements of symmetry and stratification in Benjamin Britten’s *Diversions*, op.21’, p. 7. Midroit lists the scholars who have pointed to *Diversions* as a hotbed of future ideas.

that *Diversions* 'is crammed with pointers to works that are masterpieces' specifically connecting 'Chant' with the 'Moonlight Interlude' of Peter Grimes.⁴³⁴ Max Midroit highlighted in particular the body of work connecting the systems of pitch organisation evident in *Diversions* to his 1954 opera *The Turn of the Screw*.⁴³⁵ Following the premiere of *Diversions* with the Philadelphia Orchestra in January 1942, Britten appeared quite satisfied with the work describing it as 'not deep-but quite pretty!'.⁴³⁶ Roseberry's assessment of the work 'primarily for entertainment, but there are fleeting beauties and reflective depths to be encountered on the way' is an appraisal I find fitting.⁴³⁷ Intervals as metamorphic tools are essential to both works as evolution and transmutation of themes are realized largely through manipulation of favoured intervals. Both feature a brand of pianism that reductively, or blatantly, favours linear activity. In essence the same tools have been used to construct both the Piano Concerto and *Diversions*, but structurally and pianistically the latter is more rarefied in its textural rigidity. The success of *Diversions* does not lie in any singular element of action but in the aggregate, in the strategic arrangement of movements to increase intensity and momentum, and in the colourful, sympathetic scoring.

⁴³⁴ Michael Kennedy, *Britten* (London: Dent Master Musicians, 1993) p. 145.

⁴³⁵ Midroit, 'Elements of symmetry and stratification in Benjamin Britten's *Diversions*, op.21', p. 7.

⁴³⁶ Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten: A Biography*, p. 163.

⁴³⁷ Roseberry, 'The concertos and early orchestral scores', p. 241.

PART III: OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 6: TROPES, TRENDS AND THE LEFT-HAND GENRE

Cross-comparison of Concerti for Left-Hand

Superficially, few correlations emerge architecturally in the formal construction of piano works for left-hand by Prokofiev, Ravel and Britten. However, within the context of each composer's output, comparison with respective procedures in previous or contemporary piano concerti illuminates structural differences potentially motivated by the shift to left-hand only piano and their chosen textures and pianistic techniques. Deviations from previously used formats were necessary for both Ravel and Prokofiev, while Britten deemed his favoured variation form appropriate to a left-hand work. In accommodating Wittgenstein's requirements, these composers proposed diverging structural solutions, yet these solutions shared common goals, and consequently emphasized the necessary reorientation of structural priorities when writing for left-hand only. The way in which each composer modified their structural approach reveals the ingredients, proportions and hierarchies they found critical to an auspicious large-scale left-hand work with orchestra.

Both Ravel and Britten manipulated structure in order to establish and enhance soloistic pre-eminence: contrary to their respective standard piano concerti, their left-hand works introduce the soloist with an eye-watering *cadenza*. The most technically astonishing moments, pianistically speaking, required the elasticity of extemporaneous-style workmanship in the left-hand works of Ravel and Britten. The breakdown of relationships and dependencies between various technical factors and their role in the audience's perception of virtuosity is highlighted by these areas of

pianistic sorcery. Firstly, these cadenza passages are overwhelmingly two-handed in their approach. Interpreted as the most impressive type of technical work, this establishes a link between virtuosity and the chimera of two-handed machinations. Linear output, while it may be of equal technical difficulty, does not exude the same brilliance and mastery. Secondly, there is a link between the rendition of these illusory acrobatics, and a flexibility of tempo. Granted, the cadenza and improvisational tempi are inextricably linked, however in the left-hand work this stylistic handling of tempo assumes a greater burden. The spontaneity of temporal fluctuation facilitates at once the adoption of a two-handed technique, creating the space to allow the hand to rapidly change register and role, and subsequently renders our commonplace understanding of pianistic virtuosity achievable. The temporal pliancy inherent in improvisatory or cadenza style passages, and the adoption of a two-handed technique, are both crucial it seems to the projection of typically impressive piano work.

Therefore, the use of time implicit within the *cadenza* framework is crucial to technical and dramatic aspects of the performance. The fluidity and extemporaneous style of these opening statements enable the pianist to perform impressive runs, arpeggios and leaps with implicit flexibility. *Rubato* style phrasing and melodramatic pauses are frequently incorporated into similar passages and are essential to the *ad hoc* impression of a *cadenza*. Practically, the pertinent stylistic traits, the pregnant pause after a widespread broken-chord, or the dramatic pacing of a series of alternately low and high chords, benefit the left-handed pianist technically, and persuasively cement the dominant position of the soloist. The placement of a cadenza at the beginning of the

concerto is tremendously theatrical, a treasure chest of startling technique and extraordinary ability is broken open, captivating the audience from the beginning of the work. Both composers pointedly cover as much of the piano's range as possible in these opening bars to heighten the drama further. Combined, these features empower the soloist, the opening *cadenza* is a proclamation of equality, lest the audience or musicians doubt the pianist's proficiency or worth.

The most striking outcome in the cross-comparison of these works for left-hand is the degree to which pianistic approach may guide other aspects of these works. Piano technique emerges as a sort of centrifugal force from which other elements of compositional approach derive. The correlations between pianistic approach, specifically linear techniques, and particular compositional means and methods are prevalent in the comparison of pianistic approach and structural selections. For Prokofiev and Britten, writing successfully for left-hand only within the confines of a linear pianistic approach, invited piecemeal, segmented architectural frameworks to counteract melodic exhaustion. Prokofiev's Concerto No.4 for Left-Hand engendered atypical formats for the composer in the context of his earlier piano concerti; prior works had relied primarily on loose sonata and ternary structures. The rondo format chosen for the two opening movements of his Concerto No. 4 indulged many different melodies or melodic fragments and facilitated their repetition and transfiguration. The disjuncture of Prokofiev's many disparate melodies was challenged through cyclical or balanced deployment of these melodic fragments within movements, and additionally across the entire work in the transplantation of material from the first movement into

the last. Conversely, Britten's use of the variation structure is in keeping with his prior structural predilections. While Prokofiev's disparate, yet subtly interconnected themes depend upon their organization to stabilize their symmetry and equilibrium within the work's structure, Britten established a broader level of interconnectivity through the stylistic and motivic metamorphosis of the same basic thematic material in every variation. Despite the diverse approach and realization of these structures, the underlying division of the larger whole into many, small diverse sections as a means to combat thematic and textural tedium is common to both composers. As textural options are reduced further by the selection of predominantly linear pianistic outlines in both of these works, the adoption of sectional, multifaceted structures become essential to the continued engagement of the audience. In this way, pianistic or textural approach can be seen to guide structure and subsequent melodic development.

Ravel opted for an integrated one-movement structure in contrast to the multi-movement structure of his Concerto in G. Firstly, this allowed him to magnify the heft of the work, to present a concerto that appeared as robust as any traditional piano concerto. Internally, *Concerto pour la main gauche* negotiates the stylistic shifts of a typical multi-movement concerto, from lyrical Romanticism to a biting *scherzando*. However, strung together successfully, the overall impression is more impactful than isolated presentation of these sections. Individually, these 'mini-movements' may have been partly drained of their effectuality. Additionally, this approach facilitates the intermingling and exchange of melodies through repetition and recall of earlier thematic material more freely than individually packaged movements. This controlled

weave of thematic material not only forms the overarching macrostructure of the concerto and consolidates the work as a whole, but also significantly diminishes the danger of thematic exhaustion, a vulnerability so explicitly noted by Ravel.

Potential repercussions of phrasing lengths or patterns are less discernible than on the detailed modelling of appropriate formal structures. All three composers opted for a mixture of traditional, balanced and unpredictable phrase lengths. Britten's phrasing is often vague, obfuscating or eliding phrase endings, a feature which is apparent in *Diversions*. Prokofiev also constructs less definable phrase structures in his left-hand work, however, considering the context of these works, this shift could be attributed to the modernization or maturation of their musical language, for both composers. Ravel's weighting of conventional and irregular phrase lengths within both his Piano Concerto and his *Concerto pour la main gauche*, does not change markedly. A technique prevalent in all three left-hand works is the occasional use of augmentative or diminutive procedures in terms of phrase length.

Wong suggests that Britten's handling of register is unique in the cannon of left-hand works because of its comprehensive use of the piano; following scrutiny of registral use in the Ravel and Prokofiev left-hand works I would disagree with this observation.⁴³⁸ The full length of the keyboard is incorporated into all three left-hand works, with the middle registers proving most fruitful. The typical domain of the left-hand, the mid to lower regions of the piano, is used for dramatic effect on occasion, but

⁴³⁸ Wong, *Paul Wittgenstein in Great Britain*, p. 390.

otherwise scarcely employed. Range in the left-hand piano work becomes a marker of equality and validity. The deliberate coverage of the piano's compass relates directly to our perception of soloistic legitimacy, extensive coverage confounds preconceptions of a reduced ability. In particular Britten and the Ravel capitalised on the established connection between virtuosity and rapid registral change: their respective virtuosic opening statements have been interpreted by scholars and observers as an assertion of the validity of the one-handed pianist, as a proclamation of their rightful authority as soloist and of their immense capabilities, despite the modified boundaries of their pianism. Set within the context and social climate of that era (as discussed in **Chapter 2**) this unique brand of pianism, in combination with a virtuosic handling of register, made an indelible impression on observers.

Interval choice was naturally crucial to the construction and evolution of melodic material as the somatic limitations of the performer had to be carefully considered. Prokofiev displayed a preference for triadic foundations, Britten, for the manipulation of the circle of fifths, and Ravel was inclined towards stepwise movement and use of the major and minor third. Reliance on these smaller intervals in the composition of primary themes was deemed necessary by all composers, regardless of pianistic approach (linear or multi-textured) in order to fit neatly within the hand and facilitate movement across the keyboard. There is a distinct method of intervallic manipulation significant in Prokofiev and Britten's output, where a pitch collection or specific intervallic pattern is subjected to various measures. Inversion and refraction of these sequences is particularly prevalent. In Prokofiev's left-hand work this is particularly

apparent in the opening '*Vivace*' movement on a number of levels; certain intervallic cells and sequences guide melodic construction but also facilitate consolidation across the movement and the work, creating bonds between disparate themes and implied tonal centres. Britten's Piano Concerto relies similarly on a number of unifying features such as singular intervals or short motifs the prevalent of which is 'twin-chordal motto' that permeates every movement.⁴³⁹ While *Diversions* relied on a differing set of pitch collections and intervals, the treatment and function of those intervals or interval cells is very similar in both his left-hand work and his earlier Piano Concerto.

Prokofiev and Britten inculcated their melodic lines with the added burden of textural innovation through linear configurations, rather than the illusory effect of two-hands at the piano. This is achieved through shifting permutations of primary thematic material, rhythmic mutation and alternation of melodic range. Their repudiation, for the most part, of standard pianistic textures and the 'musical prosthesis' adopted by other composers, impregnates their melodic lines with additional responsibility and tension as they inherit the duties traditionally shared between separate melody and accompaniment lines.⁴⁴⁰ This approach emphasizes the horizontal, both at the piano and on the page, over the vertical priorities of functional harmony. Deliberately or not, because of this re-orientation toward the horizontal or linear actions of the instrument, the resulting manipulation of pitch collections or intervallic patterns by Prokofiev and

⁴³⁹ Roseberry, 'The concertos and early orchestral scores' p. 237

⁴⁴⁰ There are episodes of typical pianistic textures in both Prokofiev's Concerto No. 4 and Britten's *Diversions*, figurative and linear activities are simply employed most frequently across both works.

Britten in their respective works for left-hand share some of the compositional techniques of Serialism. The processes applied to a 12-tone row can be seen to similarly regulate the administration of pitch collections or intervallic patterns through shared utilization of inverted, retrograde or transposed permutations of the prime. The physical limitations of the player benefited from the ideological delimitations of Serialism; melodies originally constructed to fit within the reach of the left-hand were offered avenues of evolution with strong correlations to the primary thematic material. Evidence of this only becomes apparent however when some of these techniques are applied strictly, for instance in the mirroring procedures of theme (c) from the opening 'Vivace' in Prokofiev's Concerto No. 4, or the extension and immediate inversion of the circle of fifths in 'Romance', from *Diversions*. Other areas may imply such methods, yet evade strict analytical definition due to their loose application.

Additionally, Prokofiev and Britten appear similarly mindful of the internal symmetry of the work, and while aspects of symmetry may pervade Britten's musical language, Prokofiev's previous concerti do not explicitly exhibit similar intricate mirroring procedures presenting a distinct aberration from his established approach. It is curious that symmetrical processes should feature so prominently as part of an inherently asymmetric performance. The fixation with mirroring techniques in these works, and the internal balance achieved through various unifying and cyclical techniques is somewhat ironic. It's possible that an unconscious impulse to complete, to repair, or to compensate for Wittgenstein's loss manifests itself through the music; aesthetic imbalance offset by internal stability, the realization of a musical prosthesis in this case

achieved not through texture but through horizontal musical sequences. The attraction toward somatic equilibrium here is established and fed through horizontal symmetrical processes. Even within these works that are constructed to highlight the singularity and unique offerings of the left-hand, it's plausible that the psychologically driven compulsion for the left-hand to undertake the role of both hands seeps through to the surface in another way. This observation does not attempt to dismiss technical preferences as the primary motives for these symmetrical structures, concern for unification and balance were undoubtedly the driving force behind their construction, but presents an interesting dichotomy between notation and physical performance in this case.

The outstanding features of Britten's and Prokofiev's melodic strategies; the treatment of their thematic material, the overlap with Serialist techniques, and conscious application of symmetrical processes are most likely connected with their adoption of a linear pianistic approach. Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* adopts a more flexible, multi-faceted pianistic texture, maintaining in part traditional melody and accompaniment hierarchies, thus preserving some of the more recognisable methods of melodic development through adaptation of rhythm and texture, juxtaposition of themes and orchestral dialogue. This, partially, may explain the Wittgenstein's connection to, and understanding of, the Ravel concerto over the Prokofiev concerto; Ravel's melodies always remain tuneful and familiar, while Prokofiev's themes sometimes mutate beyond obvious recognition. While Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* does exhibit a compressed and clarified pianism, this is more likely a result of

its chronological placement within Ravel's stylistic evolution. Ultimately the similarities that emerge between Prokofiev and Britten's left-hand output, and the contrast with Ravel's concerto, suggests that a textural approach may be responsible for much more than the resulting linear or standard pianism, but can be a governing force in terms of structure and melody at overarching and granular levels.

Where the piano more frequently adopts a linear pattern, the orchestra too is more inclined to be horizontally focused. Both Prokofiev and Britten feature a level of consolidation between their instrumental parts in comparison to their standard counterparts. In the majority of cases this unified texture supports the melody in the piano, serves as melodic commentary, or more rarely, a disparate contrapuntal line. Prokofiev reduces his orchestra to chamber orchestra proportions, but Ravel and Britten choose to maintain a full complement, opting to adjust the balance internally on a continual basis, and employ *tutti* passages sparingly and judiciously. The orchestral role for all three composers could be summarized as supportive, discursive and above all subservient to the pianist; this is antithetical to the independent orchestral enterprises of their corresponding standard concerti. This forms one of the more anticipated conclusions perhaps, as recalibration of instrumental balance alone was not sufficient, reformation of the overall function and behaviour of the orchestra as accompanist rather than protagonist was deemed necessary by all three of these composers in accommodating a single hand at the piano.

All three left-hand works pose uniquely challenging techniques and scenarios for the

pianist. While each composer's output has generally been referred to in this chapter by its most prevalent textural applications, naturally pianistic disposition and the essential textures engaged fluctuate throughout. In relation to texture there are, I believe, four definable categories in relation to which all three composers employ to varying degrees:

1. Direct linear: where the piano engages in single-line melodic or figurative activities. Included within this is the reinforcement of linear textures, doubling at the octave or the inclusion of the occasional harmony note, but where the fundamental content of the passage can be reduced easily to its linear skeleton.
2. Complex linear: these passages visually portray a linear contour, yet in performance, rhythmic and dynamic placement elicit a more bilateral aural impression, constructing the mirage of a melody and accompaniment relationship, through the musicality and subtlety of touch and phrasing, rather than a texturally borne musical prosthesis.
3. Contrapuntal activity: due to the physical constraints of working within one-hand, attempts at contrapuntal devices are limited by all composers. Furthermore, these rare episodes do not represent contrapuntalism in the truest sense, but attempt to feign the animation and synchronism of contrapuntal activity, with the use of a repeated pedal note or a meandering chromatic scale.
4. Traditional dual-handed exchange: Alternation between treble and bass regions of the keyboard, concurrent with the appointment of conventional melody and accompaniment parts to those registers, generates the chimera of a recognizable

two-handed interaction. This strategy is employed most frequently by Ravel but features in all three works to varying degrees.

Where episodes of direct linearity appear, the issue of ‘handedness’ may be of associated interest, that is to say whether the passage alludes to a role typically affiliated with one- hand or the other. These passages may impersonate conventional respective left-hand or right-hand functions, asserting an alternative breed of two-handed mimicry. Ravel adopted this technique periodically, assigning the quintessential role of either hand at intervals to the pianist, or both hands concurrently in a traditional melody and accompaniment type exchange. To this end, I designated the term ‘omni-competent’ as appropriate to the role of the left-hand as portrayed by Ravel.⁴⁴¹ Prokofiev and Britten appear more neutral in the assignation of function in their direct linear passages, the question of handedness less relevant to their output.

A pre-existing pianistic style prompted the approach to their left-hand work for all three composers. A clarification or compression of style is certainly evident, but radical changes in pianistic approach are not conspicuous. Prokofiev and Britten, whose left-hand works are predominantly linear, exhibit evidence of their horizontal proclivities in earlier piano concerti. The leap to more sustained linear activities then, not quite as large as might have been imagined. Ravel too, approaches textural writing in his *Concerto pour la main gauche* in a manner similar to his Concerto in G; for example, the projection of the melody at the top of the texture. The concurrent development of

⁴⁴¹ See **Chapter 4, Pianistic Considerations.**

Ravels two concerti may be partly responsible here, but essentially this affirms the skilful navigation from two hands, to one and back, without dramatic recalibration of his pianistic approach.

Many compositional and technical connections have been drawn between Prokofiev and Britten. For example, Mervyn Cooke asserts that the passage at Fig. 43 in the revised (published) slow movement of Britten's Piano Concerto, '*Impromptu*', was undoubtedly inspired by Prokofiev's Third Concerto (cf. third movement, Fig. 124 – bar 232).⁴⁴² Lyn Henderson also alleged the Prokofiev's percussive brand of pianism and figuration-based *moto perpetuo* style propulsion bore influence on the many of Britten's works of early maturity. She highlights in particular the sardonic March from *Diversions*:

for it strongly evokes a typical Prokofiev mood of mocking irony, expressed in a theme with a quirky proto-Prokofievian melodic outline and rhythmic eccentricity, whose initial pitch contour is, in fact, a near-quotation of the opening of the third movement of Prokofiev's Fourth Piano Sonata.⁴⁴³

That some Prokofievian hallmarks should infiltrate Britten's *Diversions* then is logical as a formative influence on his writing for piano. However, rather unanticipated was the subsequent fallout in terms of structure and melodic evolution which seems to have a connection to that composer's main selection of pianistic techniques and textures. The linear approach, for Prokofiev and Britten, narrowed the range of suitable compositional direction to a point where both composers ended up driving in the same

⁴⁴² Mervyn Cooke, 'Early Benjamin Britten: A Study of Stylistic and Technical Evolution by Christopher Mark', in *Music Analysis*, 16:3 (October 1997), 409 - 415 (p. 412).

⁴⁴³ Lyn Henderson, 'His Influence on Britten: The Vital Prokofiev', *The Musical Times*, 144:1882 (Spring 2003) 16 – 19 (p. 19).

lane to a certain degree. The selection of linearity as the primary pianistic tool has a greater fallout than just reduced textural options, but focuses increasingly on the horizontal stratification of events over vertical collaboration. This linearity is conducive to certain figurative and stylistic modes, *toccata* and *moto perpetuo*, over the simple presentation of melody. Subsequently this affects phrasing and timbral selections, melodic development and unifying devices, and ultimately, the overarching structure. Essentially, this linearity sets in motion a different line of dominos than the traditional multi-textured piano concerto. As considered above, Prokofiev is an acknowledged influence on Britten's output, this explicates some stylistic similarities. However, as Prokofiev's Concerto No. 4 was not premiered until after *Diversions* had been written any previous recognition of the influence of Prokofiev on Britten cannot be held entirely responsible for the parallels between their left-hand works. Additionally, comparative study with Prokofiev's earlier piano concerti illuminated significant divergence from his established norms. Hence, responsibility for these affinities must be attributed, at least in part, to the challenge of writing for left-hand in a predominantly linear fashion.

Wittgenstein's personal traumatic history is expressed in all three concerti through military idioms and Viennese references. Intimation of Wittgenstein's military service permeates all three of these left-hand works with the incorporation of martial and fanfare components. His subsequent disfigurement seemingly insinuated by the grotesque and distorted fashion in which these elements are incorporated. Britten's *March* satirical to the point of farce, conceivably a comment on the futile nature of war

within the context of Britten's pacifist views. The distorted fanfare of Prokofiev's third movement '*Moderato*' potentially alludes to Wittgenstein's own impairment as a result of the war. Idiomatic and instrumental military references saturate Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* but are most prevalent in the snarky gait of the *Scherzo*.

Britten described his *Diversions* as 'pretty, but not deep', a similar criticism could be directed towards Prokofiev's Concerto No. 4 with specific reference to the intermittent vacuity of the piano's figurative activities.⁴⁴⁴ Though meticulously calculated internally, this does not always translate into an emotive or engaging performance. Indeed, Prokofiev and Britten faced similar criticism with regards to expressive aspects of their music.⁴⁴⁵ Whether this perceived lack of depth is simply representative of their respective styles, or emerges as a repercussion of writing for a single hand at the piano is a topic that would require further investigation, and additional cross-comparison with other works for left-hand to assess if impassioned depths are similarly eschewed. However, if asked to identify a feature that prevents *Diversions* from assuming greater levels of gravitas, I would suggest that the lack of lyrical grandiosity emerges as the primary culprit, as this mode of performance is typically associated with emotional depth. Without the textural elaborations of standard pianowork, such technical and figurative machinations can ring hollow. In all likelihood syrupy outpourings were skirted due to its associations with outmoded styles of performance. His twice revised

⁴⁴⁴ Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten: A Biography*, p. 163.

⁴⁴⁵ Whittall, 'The Study of Britten: Triadic Harmony and Tonal Structure', pp. 27 – 28.

violin concerto, in 1950 and in 1958 'to prune some of the virtuoso luxuriance he had admitted into the score at [Antonio] Brosa's urging' certainly admits discomfort with saccharine or overblown locution.⁴⁴⁶ When held against Ravel and Prokofiev's left-hand concerti, their respective moments of pianistically focused tenderness or magisterial command, anchor these works in terms of popular style and convention to the canon of great piano concerti. *Diversions* does not possess lofty, lyrical aspirations, nor does it suggest conventional stylistic connections to the canon of piano concerti. Contrarily, Ravel's left-hand offering is bubbling over with emotive and evocative innards, our typical perceptions of sentimental or thrilling music bound up with the traditional approaches to pianism exemplified through *Concerto pour la main gauche*.

Left-Hand Piano into the 21st Century: Developments and Legitimacy

Activity in the genre of left-hand only piano in the mid to late 20th century is frequently linked, directly or indirectly, with the legacy, inspiration, notoriety and musical offerings of Paul Wittgenstein. Many veterans of WWI and WWII, who sustained similar right-side injuries, owed much to Wittgenstein's pioneering and unflinching pilgrimage for acceptance among his peers. Otakar Hollmann, who suffered trauma to his right hand in 1916, was encouraged to persevere with his pursuit of left-hand pianism following attendance at a Wittgenstein concert in 1917. A slew of composers, Jaroslav Tomášek, Bohuslav Martinu and Leoš Janáček among others, wrote works for left-hand only at the piano for Otakar Hollman.⁴⁴⁷ Another WWI veteran, English left-

⁴⁴⁶ Michael Steinberg, *The Concerto: A Listener's Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 138 – 139.

⁴⁴⁷ Sassmann, *Technik und Ästhetik der Klaviermusik für die linke Hand allein.*, p. 97.

hand pianist and organist Douglas Fox became renowned for his performance of Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* following the expiration of Wittgenstein's exclusivity clause over the work. Confronted with the hardship experienced by his contemporaries laden with permanent disability during his time as a POW the end of WWII, Kurt Leimar chose to make a statement on the issue using Wittgenstein's commissioned repertoire: nearly 20 years after its premiere Leimar revived Strauss's *Panathenäenzug Symphonic Etude in the Form of a Passacaglia for Piano (left hand) and Orchestra Op. 74.*, originally composed for Wittgenstein.⁴⁴⁸ Between 1944 and 1945 Leimar also composed his own Piano Concerto for the Left-Hand, with recordings of this concerto available on the EMI label.⁴⁴⁹ Another WWII veteran, Siegfried Rapp, ultimately gave the premiere of Prokofiev's Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand in Berlin 1956, 3 years after the composer's death, having obtained the score from Prokofiev's widow.

Recent left-hand pianists such as Leon Fleisher, Gary Graffman, Keith Porter-Snell, Takeo Tchinai and Nicholas McCarthy have benefitted from the enterprises of previous left-hand only pianists, as well as the astonishing repertoire bequeathed to them. These contemporary left-hand pianists have revived and promoted many of the works from Wittgenstein's commissioned collection. With the exception of McCarthy, the other

⁴⁴⁸ Kurt Leimar Foundation, <http://www.kurtleimer.ch/300_e_biography.htm> [accessed 02/06/17]. Despite being commissioned and paid for by Wittgenstein, Strauss later dedicated this left-hand work to Leimar.

⁴⁴⁹ Kurt Leimar Foundation, <http://www.kurtleimer.ch/520_e_news_cd1.htm> [accessed 28/03/17]. Liner notes from 2005 EMI issued recording under the direction of Herbert von Karajan.

pianists listed above stumbled into the repertoire as a result of right-hand injury, specifically focal dystonia.⁴⁵⁰ This condition affects about 1 in every 200 musicians according to a recent scientific study, and in the most severe cases it can cut short a career.⁴⁵¹ Nicholas McCarthy, having been born without a right hand, is the only known pianist to date that began his career subsisting entirely on his left-hand. Hans Brofeldt, building on the catalogues created by Theodore Edel and Albert Sassman, created an online catalogue ‘Piano Music for the Left-Hand Alone’ (<http://www.left-hand-brofeldt.dk/>), dedicated to Wittgenstein’s memory. He estimates that up to 700 hundred composers have contributed works to the catalogue of works for left-hand alone.⁴⁵² Takeo Tchinai has also built a website to gather, house and promote recordings, videos and scores of historical and contemporary left-hand piano music; he began publishing volumes of graded piano pieces for left-hand in 2012.⁴⁵³ The first festival of left-hand piano music, Leftitude, was held in 2013.⁴⁵⁴ Together with an increased awareness of the dangers of repetitive strain and movement related injuries in pianists, articles and recitals commemorating the centenary of WWI have underscored the music and musicians that emerged on account of this horrendous war, and consequently highlighted the skill of contemporary left-hand pianists in

⁴⁵⁰ Lefthandpianomusic.org, <<http://lefthandpianomusic.org/?p=2805>> [accessed 25/05/17]; Alfred Hickling, ‘Pain stopped play’, *The Guardian*, 9th March 2007, <<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2007/mar/09/classicalmusicandopera1>> [accessed 25/05/17]; Keith Porter-Snell, Pianist <<http://www.keithsnellpianist.com/bio.html>> [accessed 26/05/17].

⁴⁵¹ Roberto Erro et al., ‘Mental rotation and working memory in musicians’ dystonia’, *Brain and Cognition*, 109 (2016), 124 – 129 (p. 125).

⁴⁵² Piano Music for the Left Hand Alone, <<http://www.left-hand-brofeldt.dk/index.htm>> [accessed 20/06/17]

⁴⁵³ Lefthandpianomusic.org, <<http://lefthandpianomusic.org/?p=2805>> [accessed 25/06/17]

⁴⁵⁴ Leftitude 2013, <<http://leftitudefestival.com/>> [accessed 24/08/17]

championing this undervalued genre today.

Left-hand piano has also provided inspiration for recent performance projects. Anri Sala's *Ravel Ravel Unravel* employed Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* as the basis for his exhibition piece at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. The piece fixates on 'the choreography of the left-hand' as demonstrated in two films playing concurrently of pianists Louis Lortie and Jean-Efflam Bavouzet playing the Ravel concerto. The 'Unravel' portion of the piece takes place in another room which two more films are featured playing simultaneously. This time both films are of a single figure; DJ Chloé remixing the performances of the Ravel concerto observed in the first room.⁴⁵⁵ Wittgenstein's story and associated music has also been introduced to new audiences with Michael Pinchbeck's 'Concerto', a 'musical experience' that dramatically weaves elements of Wittgenstein's narrative with live performance of Ravel's *Concerto pour la main gauche* by left-hand pianist Nicholas McCarthy.⁴⁵⁶

Musical manuscript will fall from the sky. Doctors will persuade shell-shocked soldiers to play again. An apple crate will become a piano keyboard. A conductor will become an assassin. An audience will become an orchestra. And a pianist will play.

The World Wars and the immense population of injured and disabled men seeking re-assimilation into society, hunting utility and personal value in suitable therapeutic and recreational activities, brought about an unanticipated expansion in the catalogue of works available for one hand at the piano in the first half of the 20th century. Curiously,

⁴⁵⁵ Lara Almarcegui, '55th Venice Biennale. Anri Sala at the French Pavilion' <<http://moussmagazine.it/55vb-french-pavilion/>> [accessed 26/03/17]

⁴⁵⁶ <<http://michaelpinchbeck.co.uk/concerto/>> [accessed 28/03/17]

this imparted far more meaning and significance to these works, these performances were not, as was the case in the past, an act of egotistical virtuosity or arrogant dilettantism; here skill was juxtaposed with a visual reminder of sacrifice, violence and valour. Symbolic of light and darkness in equal measure, their presence and form was a reminder of the horrors of war, but also the immeasurable mental and physical resourcefulness of mankind. Their triumph was a beacon of hope in an otherwise troubled society. It was with the weight of their great sacrifice that these works landed with their audiences, somewhat estranged from their prior virtuosic associations.

However, the validity of these left-hand piano works in terms of their musical substance continues to fluctuate among academics and critics. In an early treatise on the topic of left-hand piano, Bruce Ashton was dismissive of those works who sought complexity and potency through ostentatious pianistic machinations. He alleged that figuration and technical feats were not:

Directly related to the musical value of the piece [...] It might seem almost preferable for a pianist thus handicapped to adapt great concertos for a single-line instrument, thus giving his hearers a valid musical experience, rather than to burden his audience with an almost scholastic outline of the technique which his left-hand achieved.⁴⁵⁷

This is an attitude that I disagree with fundamentally on many levels, but most disconcerting is the autocratic appropriation of all musical meaning for all people. Meaning is subjective, generated by context, personal perspectives, experiences and inclinations. There is no body of people, however academically qualified, that have the

⁴⁵⁷ J. Bruce Ashton, 'Music for Piano Left-Hand and Orchestra: A Study of Technical Solutions to a Musical Problem' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1971), p. 2.

right to dictate what type of music is valid and suitably meaningful. This attitude codifies left-hand music as the weaker sibling of standard piano repertoire, unworthy of exploration and development, and betrays a deeper bias toward the imperfect in music: the aesthetic of disability. The very notion of left-hand piano simultaneously acknowledges and flouts the deep-rooted principles of balance and taste implicit in musical production and ingrained in the fabric of Classical music. It suggests that the asymmetry of left-hand music is inherently flawed and the adoption of the traditional 'great concerti' is the only avenue of restitution. Written in 1971 these words are likely representative of contemporary popular attitudes, supported by mid-20th century socio-cultural norms. While this demonstrates the rate of cultural progression to date, a similar conundrum still persists: can the field of left-hand piano be found musically valid on its own merits? From where does the significance bestowed on these works originate? Is it attributable to their artistic quality, or simply a by-product of historical and social advancement? In other words, do we consider these works important as music, or simply because of how they originated?

We do know however, that music can present a partial history of certain shared groups, periods and movements. Embedded in our Western Art music are the long and short arc narratives of these groups; the personal, societal, political, environmental, philosophical, cultural and spiritual stories, experiences and revelations of our forebears. In this analogy of music as a mirror of history, the left-hand repertoire offers a unique perspective into the world of a disabled performer carving out a path within an 'ableist' society. The challenge of forging this career and its associated repertoire,

the technical, physical and prejudicial challenges are uniquely illuminated by the type of comparative process carried out in this thesis. General understanding thus far of the origins and associated historical perceptions of the left-hand genre has frequently focused on ways the left-hand could fulfil the role of two-hands. Recent reflections in the sphere of Disability Studies encourages a reversal of this notion of disability in music as a flaw to be accommodated or masked, but as "a source of creative identity".

Under the sociocultural model of disability, the critical response to [...] disabilities would focus less on what they did in spite of their disability and more on what their disability enabled them to do.⁴⁵⁸

For a non-disabled performer, creativity, according to the performer's unique set of abilities and artistic approach, is encouraged and embraced. Yet a seal of approval for the disabled performer is awarded for 'passing' as non-disabled, for the appearance of normalcy. Why do we expect our disabled performers to conform, when our non-disabled performers are prompted to think outside the box?

CONCLUSION

This thesis is in part a meditation on the wellspring of creativity and the originality that lives at the margins of artistic production. It is a reflection on the ingenuity and resourcefulness that foments original thought and design within the most prohibitive circumstances. A celebration of the metamorphosis of an apparent barrier into a springboard. A contemplation of the legitimacy and recognition of these unusual, marginal activities within the mainstream professional music circuit. The work within

⁴⁵⁸ Strauss, *Extraordinary Measures*, pp. 16 – 17.

Disability Studies to change our perspective of disability into ‘a difference, not a deficit’, has enormous potential to embolden and exhort singular performances, perspectives and compositions from all intersections of the human experience.⁴⁵⁹ Over the last half century there has been a gradual shift in attitudes towards disability which I believe will foster this area of performance to a greater degree, and perhaps see greater inclusion, and therefore greater understanding of our peers with disabilities.

Wittgenstein, I believe, has in the past fallen victim to the instinctive human compulsion for categoric definition. The assignation of courageous amputee in his early career, lauded by the press and supported with a public wave of sympathy, surely smothered balanced critique of his performances. Later, the anecdotal evidence of his difficult character and churlish grip on his repertoire which silted down into the general musical community, eclipsed his pioneering achievements and decades of diligent work. Wittgenstein wilfully focused on building the reputation of a respected musician in spite of his amputation, whether he achieved this aim or not is debatable, by virtue of his amputation and ambition he was inadvertently shunted into an ambassadorial role for disabled performers in the arts. The routes and byways of the Paul Wittgenstein story are likely to be retread in time because of their fascinating juxtaposition to a tumultuous period in history, in music and in social development.

⁴⁵⁹ Joseph Strauss, *Extraordinary Measures*, pp. 7 – 19.

APPENDIX A: PROKOFIEV: STRUCTURAL DIAGRAMMS AND PRIMARY THEMES

Structural diagrams: Concerto No.4 for Left-Hand

Piano Concerto No. 4, First movement structure - *Vivace*

First movement - *Vivace*

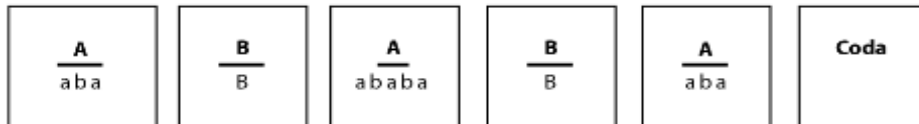
Bar 1 → 84 85 → 117 118 → 136 137 → 198 199 → 222 223 → 238 239 → 253 254 → 262



Piano Concerto No. 4, First movement structure - *Vivace*

Second movement - *Andante*

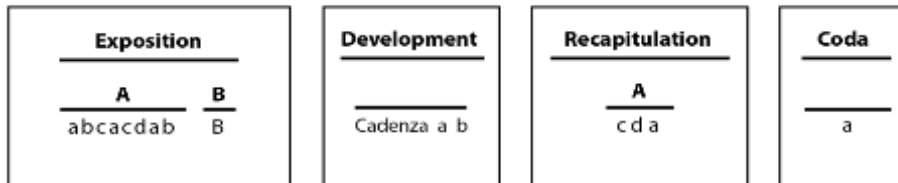
Bar 1 → 27 28 → 55 56 → 79 80 → 128 129 → 145 146 → 157



Piano Concerto No. 4, Third movement structure - *Moderato*

Third movement - *Moderato*

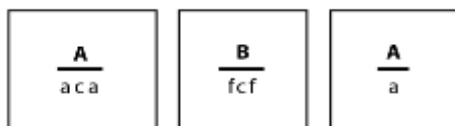
Bar 1 → 165 166 → 230 231 → 272 273 → 280



Piano Concerto No. 4, Fourth movement structure - *Vivace*

Fourth movement - *Vivace*

Bar 1 → 29 30 → 78 79 → 103



Primary themes: Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, First Movement: 'Vivace'

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Vivace': Subject group A, theme (a), bars 1 – 7

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Vivace': Subject group A, theme (b), bars 9 – 17

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Vivace': Subject group A, theme (c), bars 29 – 36

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Vivace': Subject B, bars 85 – 100

Musical score for Subject B, bars 85-100. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of two staves. The first staff contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, including rests and slurs. The second staff contains a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Vivace': Subject group C, theme (d), bars 137 – 151

Musical score for Subject group C, theme (d), bars 137-151. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three flats and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of three staves. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with frequent changes in meter (2/4, 3/4, 2/4, 3/4) and includes dynamic markings such as *8^{va}* and *8^{va}-----*.

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Vivace': Subject group C, theme (e), bars 152 – 170

Musical score for Subject group C, theme (e), bars 152-170. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three flats and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of three staves. The music is primarily chordal, featuring sustained chords and moving bass lines. The key signature changes to two flats (B-flat, E-flat) in the final measure.

Primary themes: Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, Third Movement: 'Moderato'

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Moderato': Subject group A, theme (a), bars 1 – 10

Musical notation for theme (a), bars 1-10. The score is written in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some slurs and accents. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Moderato': Subject group A, theme (b), bars 13 – 20

Musical notation for theme (b), bars 13-20. The score is written in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some slurs and accents. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Moderato': Subject group A, theme (c), bars 34 – 42

Musical notation for theme (c), bars 34-42. The score is written in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some slurs and accents. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Moderato': Subject group A, theme (d), bars 70 – 82

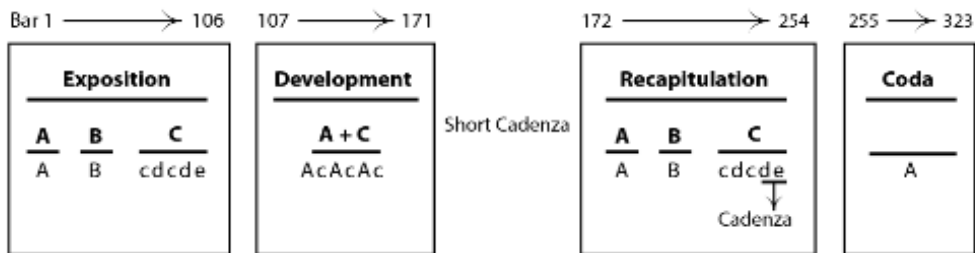
Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Moderato': Subject B, bars 130 – 137

Primary themes: Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, Fourth Movement: 'Vivace'

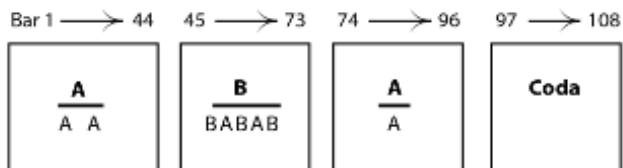
Concerto No. 4 for Left-Hand, 'Vivace': Theme (f), bars 29 – 36

APPENDIX B: RAVEL: STRUCTURAL DIAGRAMS AND PRIMARY THEMES

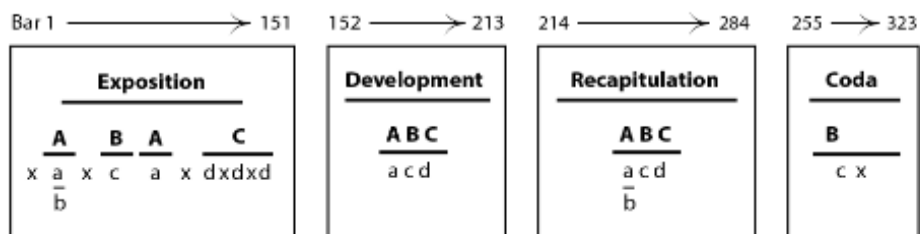
Concerto in G - Allegramente



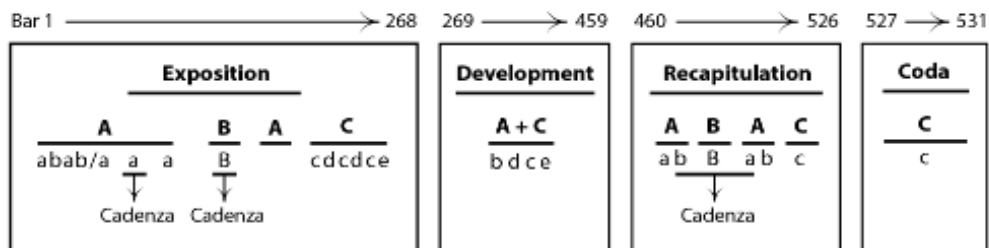
Concerto in G - Adagio



Concerto in G - Presto



Concerto pour la main gauche



Primary themes: Concerto pour la main gauche

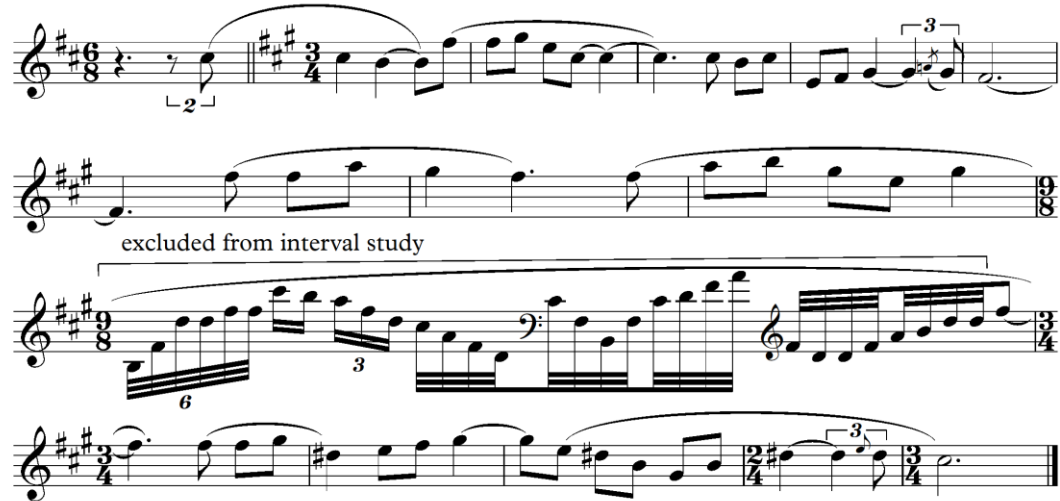
***Concerto pour la main gauche*: Subject group A, theme (a), bars 2 – 6**



***Concerto pour la main gauche*: Subject group A, Theme (b), bars 8 – 14**



***Concerto pour la main gauche*: Subject B, bars 82 – 96**



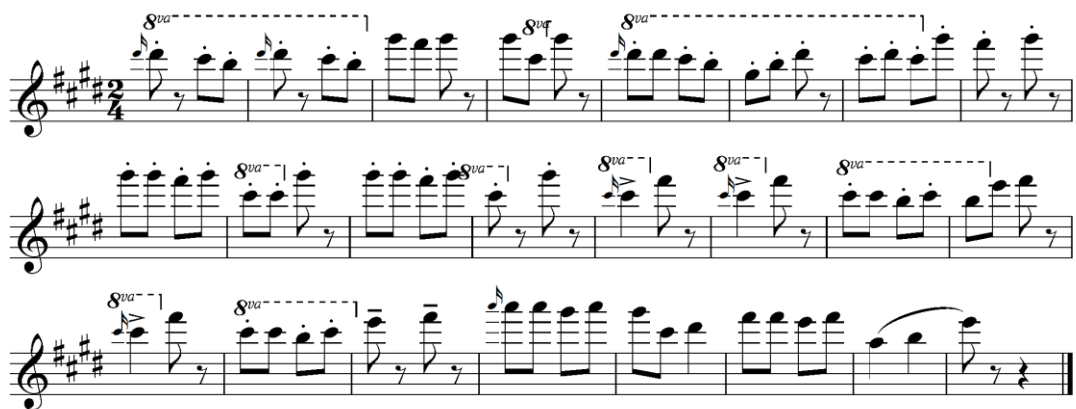
Concerto pour la main gauche: Subject group C, theme (c) bars 139 – 145



Concerto pour la main gauche: Subject group C, theme (d), bars 153 – 167



Concerto pour la main gauche: Subject group C, theme (e), bars 247 – 270



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