

Franz Liszt's Early Formal Excursions: Toward Two-Dimensional Sonata Forms

Primeiras digressões formais de Franz Liszt: rumo a formas de sonata bidimensionais

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Abstract: Franz Liszt reformulated the Classical sonata form by coalescing the structures of a single movement and a multimovement cycle into a two-dimensional sonata form. Most of his mature sonatas are constructed following this structure's principles (e.g., the Piano Concertos in E-flat, S. 124, and in A, S. 125; the Piano Sonata in b, S. 178; and the symphonic poems *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*, S. 95, *Tasso: Lamento e Trionfo*, S. 96, *Les preludes*, S. 97, and *Die Ideale*, S. 106). As the first two-dimensional sonata, *De Profundis: Psaume Instrumental* marks Liszt's early maturity, when he established the combination of formal paradigms necessary for the creation of this form. By conceptualizing and framing the required two-dimensional strategies (i.e., thematic transformation, frequent shifts in the musical discourse, progressive formal loosening, and formal incompleteness) in Liszt's earliest Classical sonata forms (*Duo*, S. 127 and *Malediction*, S. 121), this study traces the compositional advent of the two-dimensional sonata produced in the 1830s. These analyses link the works of Liszt's youth with his mature repertoire, a task so far neglected by the scholarly literature.

Keywords: Two-dimensional sonata form. Franz Liszt. *De Profundis*. *Duo*. *Malediction*.



Franz Liszt's early instrumental sonatas represent his beginner's musical laboratory where he progressively reformulated Classical canons and crafted his mature formal designs. Considering the Classical genres used in these compositions (e.g., piano sonata, piano concerto, and duo sonata), Liszt's early musical works already bring to the fore expectations of their structures and designs that he subsequently defied in their inner musical unfolding. One of the innovations created from this dialectic is the two-dimensional sonata form,¹ generated first in the sonata forms from the 1830s.² This structure simultaneously unfolds a single movement and a multimovement cycle,³ using "shifts in the musical discourse" (Hatten 2004, p. 47) (i.e., changes in musical consciousness) at the highest structural level to create a coherent dialogue in an otherwise conflicting space between two discrete paradigms. The different recurrences of this formal design in his mature works (e.g., the Piano Concertos in E-flat, S. 124, and in A, S. 125; the *Piano Sonata in b*, S. 178; and the symphonic poems *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*, S. 95, *Tasso: Lament and Triumph*, S. 96, *Les préludes*, S. 97, and *Die Ideale*, S. 106) shows Liszt's mastery of transforming Classical forms into novel artifices. By conceptualizing and framing the required two-dimensional strategies (i.e., thematic transformation, frequent shifts in the musical discourse, progressive formal loosening, and formal incompleteness) in Liszt's earliest sonata forms (*Duo*, S. 127 and *Malediction*, S. 121), this study traces the compositional advent of the two-dimensional sonata produced in the 1830s. Liszt first experimented with several recurrent strategies in *Duo* and *Malediction* to achieve this structure, eventually producing *De Profundis: Psaume Instrumental*, Liszt's first two-dimensional sonata form.

¹ On this term and its structural ramifications, see Vande Moortele 2009. The genesis of this form in Liszt's *oeuvre* will be explored below.

² The works in sonata form from the beginning of the decade to the composition of *De Profundis*, S. are *Malediction*, S. 121, *Duo*, S. 127, and the Piano Concerto in E-flat, S. 124. The present study excludes S. 124, however, as it was thoroughly reworked and influenced by Liszt's later compositional developments until its completion (1849) and subsequent revisions (1853 and 1856).

³ In the present study the single-movement dimension is labeled "form dimension," and the multi-movement dimension "cycle dimension." This terminology is drawn from Vande Moortele 2009, pp. 11–33.

1. *Duo* in C-sharp minor, S. 127

Listz's first attempt at a two-dimensional sonata form is *Duo* in C-sharp minor, S. 127 (see Table 1) for solo violin and piano.⁴ The composition follows the multi-movement scheme: the first movement is a sonata form, the second a triple variation, and the third a rondo. Each section's formal design is subject to pervasive deformations,⁵ promoting a dialogue between listeners' expectations and music's realizations.⁶ Furthermore, *Duo* constantly recycles its thematic materials—*pastiche* themes taken from Frederic Chopin's Mazurka in C-sharp, Op. 6 no. 2—to refresh their form-functional identities, an early example of Liszt's thematic transformation. With its multimovement scheme, *Duo*'s structure yields a stronger cycle dimension compared to its form-dimension strategies.

Duo's first movement is an incomplete Type 3 sonata (see Table 2).⁷ The exposition (mm. 1–62) avoids any full-cadential confirmation, impeding a compelling parsing of its internal units. An in-tempo introduction⁸ (mm. 1–18), played only by the piano, grounds C-sharp minor through a static dominant pedal and a *fortissimo* HC (m. 15), using the mazurka's introductory theme. Following the interpolation of two empty measures (mm. 19–20), P (mm. 21–30) is launched by the movement's first root-position tonic, using the thematic material from the mazurka's initial rounded binary. The sentential structure closes with a i: HC (m. 29), after which a dissolving-consequent⁹ TR destabilizes C-sharp minor with an E-major modulation. S, starting in m. 41, restates the introduction's and the P-theme's thematic materials. The music does not cadence in E major, modulating instead to G major and repeating S's first module (mm.

⁴ The following analysis uses Leslie Howard's edition of the work. See Liszt 2008. Although there are other versions of *Duo*, Howard's edition presents the undistorted rendition from Liszt's surviving manuscript (the Urtext edition).

⁵ For the definition of deformation in *Formenlehre* and its structural ramifications, see Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, pp. 614–621.

⁶ Hepokoski has labeled this process "dialogic form," differentiating it from conformational and generative approaches. See Hepokoski 2009, pp. 70–89.

⁷ On Type 3 sonata form, see Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, p. 344.

⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 292.

⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 101–102.

53–64). The chromatic inflection of F natural at the theme's end (mm. 63–64) modulates to B-flat minor through its dominant, the development's main key.

The development (mm. 65–168) constitutes the largest section of the sonata, unbalancing the proportions exhibited by the exposition's and recapitulation's lengths. A striking feature is the interpolation of a new theme (mm. 136–168) in a different tempo right before the proper recapitulation.¹⁰ Although the original tempo returns at m. 151, this passage further develops the new theme's rhetoric (alongside some kernels of P's main thematic cell), protracting the interpolation. This interpolation transports the listener to a different plane, shifting the discourse level. The thorough reworking of thematic material, pervasive chromaticism, and motivic fragmentation and decay of the *Sturm-und-Drang* development are replaced by the lyrical oasis created in this idyllic section. The shift in musical consciousness arises from the dramatic juxtaposition of musical modes. Here, Liszt juxtaposes the Classical developmental section with its episodic substitute.¹¹ Two independent agencies arise at the same time from these different aesthetic modes, which were normally separated. *Duo's* new theme contrasts other works' new themes through the rhetorical break produced at the theme's entrance. For example, in Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony in E-flat major, no. 3 Op. 55/i, the development's new theme (m. 284 ff.) arises from the ongoing *Sturm und Drang*, avoiding any rhetorical break; this new theme is dependent on the development's musical mode. In *Duo*, Liszt breaks the *Sturm und Drang* with this slower, major lyricism. The music liquidates the blissful state, however, with progressive fractures on the theme and chromaticism (m. 151 ff.), signaling the return of the original rhetoric and the forthcoming recapitulation.

Launched by the introduction's return in C-sharp minor (m. 169), the recapitulation regains the original musical discourse, returning to the main task of unfolding the sonata. The music, however, fails to restate the remainder of the expositional layout. Although P's thematic material returns (m. 185), it serves a different function: theme 2 of the triple-variation form. This thematic reinterpretation is accomplished by changing the theme's style and formal

¹⁰ The theme is derived from the mazurka's Trio section (m. 33).

¹¹ See Hepokoski 1993, pp. 6–7. A Classical example of this strategy is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's overture to his *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, K. 384.

function, yielding the complete rounded binary which begins the mazurka (mm. 9–32).¹² The abrupt halt in the thematic restatement thwarts any recapitulatory process. Liszt ignores the formal incompleteness and immediately introduces *Duo's* next movement.

Between *Duo's* first and second movements, Liszt overlaps the mazurka's thematic functions. Chopin's mazurka is parsed as a minuet (mm. 1–32) and trio (mm. 33–48), with a *da-capo* return (mm. 49–72). In *Duo's* first movement, the exposition aligns with the minuet, the development with the trio, and the incomplete recapitulation with the *da capo*. This *da capo*, as the restatement of the introductory gesture, also functions as the beginning unit of the second movement. The incompleteness of the first movement and the dual function of the *da capo*—restating the beginning as the structure's end—creates a seamless bridge between the two movements. Liszt exploits the thematic correspondence of the minuet (beginning) and the *da capo* (end) and the listener's recollection of the mazurka's structure (a case of the dialogical form) to interlock the first and second movements.

The second movement is a triple variation—i.e., each statement transforms the three different themes independently (see Table 3). Theme 1 (mm. 169–184), akin to the mazurka's introduction, is a compound sentential structure. Theme 2 (mm. 185–216), akin to the mazurka's minuet, is a rounded binary. Theme 3 (mm. 217–232), akin to the mazurka's trio, is a periodic structure with internal repetitions. For the variation's model, Liszt reuses only the minuet and trio, excluding the *da capo*. Again, the restatement of the introduction brings the advent of a new section. Liszt leaves the minuet and trio incomplete by reinterpreting the *da capo* as the beginning of the next variation, not the end of the ongoing one. The listener interlocks the ongoing variation with the ensuing one through the perception of the thematic return as both the minuet and the *da capo*. Fig. 1 illustrates the overlap of the mazurka's design (green box) in the theme and variations (blue box).

¹² The common strategy of reusing thematic material for different formal purposes has been further explored in other analytical writings. See, e.g., Caplin 2009, pp. 87–125.

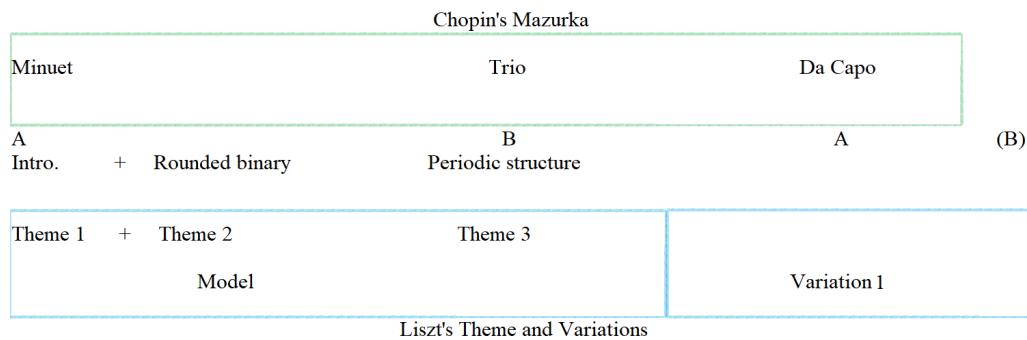


Figure 1: Structures of Chopin's Mazurka and Liszt's Theme and Variations

In each of the following variations, Liszt progressively loosens the musical fabric through several techniques. In variation 1 (mm. 233–289), Liszt unbalances theme 2 by erasing the repetition of the exposition and extending the contrasting middle with a modulation to F minor (m. 259). In variation 2 (mm. 290–369), Liszt exchanges the calm minuet for a sensuous dance full of arabesques and syncopations (m. 311). The discursive shift provokes the twofold repetition of theme 2's exposition in its new garb. The contrasting middle (mm. 327–345) is further extended and achieves a relentless drive with its *Sturm-und-Drang* style, pervasive chromaticism, and sequential activity, becoming a *quasi*-development.¹³ In variation 3 (mm. 370–430), Liszt fuses theme 2's contrasting middle and recapitulation, dwelling on the former's fragmentation process. In theme 3, the music extends the sequential activity and chromatic inflections already present in variation 2. The movement closes with a bridge based on theme 1 (mm. 431–462), preparing for the arrival of *Duo's* finale. This passage is the loosest section of the movement, leaving the theme and variations open. The tension produced by the sequential activity, harmonic instability, and fragmentation is released with the entrance of the rondo.

The finale, starting in m. 463, is a French rondo with some sonata procedures (see Table 4). The movement's entrance is signaled by the discursive shift of the mazurka's minuet from the frenzied dance to a simple-meter march. The French rondo takes the minuet as its refrain and the trio (varied) as its couplet. The rondo's refrain (mm. 463–496) is based on the rounded binary's

¹³ The *Sturm-und-Drang*/brilliant figuration in the violin recalls the opening of Franz Schubert's *Quarttetsatz*, D. 703, i.

exposition and contrasting middle. At the refrain's repetition, Liszt transforms the contrasting middle to modulate to A major, imbuing the refrain's thematic material with TR-function. The couplet (mm. 497–522), in A major, transforms the thematic material of the trio, yielding a trifold sentential structure with modal inflections that spill over into the next refrain, in D-flat major (m. 539). The second TR shifts the emphasis to the couplet through its thematic material, modulates to B-flat major, and suppresses the original TR's thematic repetition. The second couplet avoids the modal inflections, inserting instead a retransition to the final refrain, which compresses the rounded binary's exposition, contrasting middle, and recapitulation into a single unit to finish the rondo process.

The multimovement cycle concludes with a coda (mm. 595–620) that recycles the in-tempo introduction which opened the work. As in the theme and variations, the music progressively destabilizes each entrance of the refrain and the couple until the coda, where the discourse changes. Similar to the initial thwarted sonata form, this rondo presents an unfulfilled Type 4 construction.¹⁴ The presentation of TR after the first refrain cues the formation of a sonata-rondo; nevertheless, the lack of any developmental episode and a proper recapitulation generates the incipient structure. As *Duo's* last breath, the coda restates the in-tempo introduction (enlarged and varied) over a tonic pedal, the first time the work's initial gesture appears over the tonic.

Duo's compositional importance lies in its formal departures. Liszt's indulgences, such as structural incompleteness (the incomplete Type 3 sonata and the unfulfilled Type 4 sonata), interpolated passages (the episode in the first movement), progressive form-functional loosening techniques,¹⁵ sudden rhetorical shifts, and thematic transformation (each time a unit returns, it does so in a much looser construction), disturb the form to prepare the interjection of foreign musical discourses. The divergences loosen the musical fabric to insert short snapshots of parallel structures (i.e., different musical discourses), creating new tonal and formal journeys with different goals and dispelling previous ones. When a careful balance is sustained between distinct high-level discourses, the resulting dialogue generates a multibranch narrative. In the case of the two-

¹⁴ On Type 4 sonata form, see Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, pp. 388–429.

¹⁵ See Caplin 1998, pp. 84–85.

dimensional sonata form, the narrative branches are a single movement and multimovement cycle.

Other compositional strategies, like the constant recycling of the mazurka's thematic material and the form-functional transformations of the same unit, provide the thematic continuity the two-dimensional sonata necessitates to bind the structure. Although *Duo* is composed without divisions, the work is clearly articulated in different movements, foreshadowing Liszt's common blurring between the form and the cycle dimensions. In the case of *Duo*, the cycle dimension trumps the form dimension because of *Duo*'s discrete inner movements. Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 summarize *Duo*'s form.

| Cycle dimension | Form | Measures |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------|
| First movement | Incomplete Type 3 | 1–184 |
| Second movement | Theme and variations | 169–462 |
| Third movement | Rondo (Type 4) | 463–620 |

Table 1: Analysis of *Duo*

| Large-scale formal section | Thematic function | Tonality | Measures |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Exposition | In-tempo introduction | C-sharp minor | 1–20 |
| | P | C-sharp minor | 21–29 |
| | TR | C-sharp minor → E major | 30–40 |
| | S | E major → G major | 41–64 |
| Development | Part 1 | B-flat minor → B major | 65–136 |
| | Interpolation | B major → G-sharp minor | 136–168 |
| Recapitulation (incomplete) | In-tempo introduction | C-sharp minor | 169–184 |

Table 2: Analysis of *Duo*'s first movement (thwarted Type 3)

| Large-scale formal section | Thematic function | Tonality | Measures |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Theme (presentation) | Theme 1 | C-sharp minor | 169–184 |
| | Theme 2 | C-sharp minor | 185–216 |
| | Theme 3 | A major → C-sharp major | 217–232 |
| Variation 1 | Theme 1 | C-sharp minor | 233–243 |
| | Theme 2 | C-sharp minor | 244–272 |
| | Theme 3 | A major → C-sharp major | 273–289 |
| Variation 2 | Theme 1 | C-sharp minor | 290–301 |
| | Theme 2 (minuet style) | C-sharp minor | 302–310 |
| | Theme 2 (frenzied dance) | C-sharp minor | 311–353 |
| | Theme 3 | A major → C-sharp major | 354–369 |
| Variation 3 | Theme 1 | F minor → C-sharp minor | 370–380 |
| | Theme 2 | C-sharp minor | 381–404 |
| | Theme 3 | A major → D minor | 405–430 |
| | Bridge | C-sharp minor | 431–462 |

Table 3: Analysis of *Duo's* second movement (theme and variations)

| Formal section | Tonality | Measure |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------|
| Refrain | C-sharp minor | 463–486 |
| TR | C-sharp minor → A major | 487–496 |
| Couplet | A major | 497–522 |
| Refrain | C-sharp minor → D-flat major | 523–546 |
| TR2 (couplet version) | D-flat major → B-flat major | 547–555 |
| Couplet | B-flat major → C-sharp major | 556–570 |
| Retransition | C-sharp major → C-sharp minor | 570–580 |
| Refrain | C-sharp minor | 581–594 |
| Coda | C-sharp major | 595–620 |

Table 4: Analysis of *Duo's* third movement (rondo/unfulfilled Type 4)

2. *Malediction*, S. 121

The second composition exhibiting two-dimensional features from the same period is *Malediction*, S. 121 (see Table 5). Contrasting the emphasis in *Duo's* articulation, *Malediction* yields a stronger form dimension as a single-movement

work. The cycle dimension's features are relegated to the development's elaborations (to be discussed below). The shift to a more traditional formal approach may be due to *Malediction's* public genre of piano concerto and piano sextet, which contrasts with *Duo's* semiprivate genre of violin sonata. These tighter formal constructions present a better saturation of two-dimensional techniques in a single movement that is absent from *Duo*.

Malediction begins with an in-tempo introduction harmonized as an evaded cadential progression (mm. 1–16), unable to resolve to its proper tonic by a fermata (m. 16). The harmonic progression pulls toward the dominant, which arrives at m. 7 as a dominant six-five chord and unfolds to root position in m. 11. The dominant is abruptly interrupted in m. 16 by a fermata, frustrating any cadential resolution. The introduction lays the two recurrent gestures throughout *Malediction*: the intrinsic harmonic instability and thematic gestures in constant transformation. P (mm. 17–27) avoids any cadential articulation; its start on a root-position tonic and more conventional thematic construction provides a tighter formal organization than that of the previous section. P's chordal texture with *tenuto* parallels the introduction's thematic material. TR starts (m. 28) as a dissolving restatement¹⁶ divided into two parts. The first part (mm. 28–44) modulates to B minor without any cadential articulation—its dominant prematurely arrives in m. 36 as G flat. The second part (mm. 45–56) prepares, once again, a cadential progression in B minor. Nevertheless, the dominant is inverted at m. 55, resolving deceptively to D major (m. 57) and opening the S-space.

The exposition's second half fashions three S-themes. S1 yields a modulating rounded binary: the exposition modulates to E-flat major (mm. 57–67) and the recapitulation returns to G major (mm. 76–82), both avoiding any cadential closure. S2 presents a modulating small binary¹⁷: part 1 (mm. 83–98) modulates from G minor to G-sharp major and part 2 (mm. 98–118) from G-sharp major to G major. Although S2 presents more tonal forays than S1, both parts 1 and 2 cadence in their final keys, tightening the S2's structure. S3 (mm. 118–162), a small binary, is the only S-theme that ends in the same key as it began (G major); it reaffirms G major as the exposition's secondary key and closes the exposition's

¹⁶ See Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, p. 101.

¹⁷ See Caplin 1998, pp. 87–93.

rotation.¹⁸ From its very exposition, *Malediction* already presents a tighter construction than its counterpart from *Duo*.

The following section reuses *Duo*'s strategy of interpolating a slow foreign passage in the development. Again, it is this distortion of the form dimension, enhanced by previous loosening devices, that ignites the interpretation of an extra level being unfolded. In *Malediction*'s case, the interpolation is longer than *Duo*'s, fitting two distinct sections in the slow movement. The *Recitativo, Patetico, Senza tempo* embodies the traditional *cadenza* at the end of the concerto's recapitulation, and the *Andante lacrimoso* recalls the aria topic and singing style closely associated with the cycle's inner movements. In m. 200, the original discourse returns to reinstate the development section. No cadential gesture appears for the rest of the development; only a sudden tonicization to F major (m. 225) concludes the section and prepares the recapitulation's entry. *Malediction* exhibits a stronger discursive interpolation by juxtaposing two distinct units from a parallel dimension.

The return of the introduction's theme (mm. 229–242) in thematic transformation launches the recapitulation. Continuing with the rotation's layout, P enters in a different guise (mm. 243–257), cadencing to close the theme (I:PAC at m. 257). As in *Duo*'s first movement, the recapitulation suffers a break after P, blurring the recapitulatory process. TR (mm. 257–286) is significantly expanded to the status of secondary development¹⁹ and loses its momentum as S1's intrusion halts its unfolding. S1 returns *in media res* (mm. 287–291), now in C-sharp minor, before being abruptly cut short by a return of TR's original thematic presentation (mm. 292–295). This restatement of TR ushers in S2 (mm. 296–311), which exhibits a transitional rhetoric through its loose construction. Both this second TR and S2 operate through sequential activity. To close the work, a bridge (mm. 312–338) leads to a compressed return of P (mm. 339–342), leading to a proto-coda. The recapitulation's only cadence is found at the end of P (a cadence that is missing from its counterpart in the exposition). The cadential punctuation and the change of texture produce a similar rhetorical break to the

¹⁸ On the rotational principle and sonata form's thematic layout, see Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, pp. 611–614.

¹⁹ See Rosen 1988, p. 106.

one in *Duo's* first movement. Liszt fuses the Classical rhetorical punctuations²⁰ at the end of P, closing the sonata process in the absence of most of the exposition's thematic modules. This fusion and closure are reinforced by the fragmentary state, chromatic forays, incomplete return, and discursive quality of the following motifs that render them more as an afterthought than as part of the sonata process proper. At this point, conventions are jettisoned to provoke another shift in the musical discourse counter to Classical tradition. The thematic layout appears but with different rhetorical functions, yielding a more conventional structure than the ones found in *Duo*. The search for E major as the final tonic in the recapitulation generates the common *ad-Astra-per-Aspera* narrative in a single movement, a strategy usually used in Classical multi-movement works.²¹ Table 5 summarizes *Malediction's* form.

Although *Malediction* presents the same deviations as *Duo*, its approach to the two-dimensional sonata is subtler. Instead of three movements in progressive formal loosening, *Malediction* offers only one movement with this approach. Furthermore, the stronger formal disruption in the development's interpolations (*Malediction's* principal change in the musical discourse) better prepares the subordinate dimension. Using the form dimension as a springboard, the structure can easily shift its discourse to a second dimension through the gradual liquidation of the sonata form, thus launching the cycle dimension. On the other hand, the multi-sectional identity of the cycle, with less precise norms, makes it difficult to ground the necessary distortions to launch the two-dimensional sonata from this perspective. *Malediction* presents a better layout for the sonata form fused with the multimovement cycle, contrasting *Duo's* approach.

²⁰ Because of its location as the last cadence and before the musical discourse decays into fragmentary discursive statements, this closure can be considered the essential structural closure arriving before a medial caesura, conflating both rhetorical punctuations. On the essential structural closure and the medial caesura, see Hepokoski and Darcy 2006, pp. 23–50 and 232–233, respectively.

²¹ See, e.g., Beethoven's Symphonies in C minor, Op. 67, and in D minor, Op. 125.

| Large-scale formal section | Thematic function | Tonality | Measures |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Introduction | | →E minor | 1–16 |
| Exposition | P | E minor | 17–27 |
| | TR | | |
| | Part 1 | E minor→B minor | 28–44 |
| | Part 2 | B minor | 45–56 |
| | S1 | G major | 57–82 |
| | S2 | G minor→G major | 83–118 |
| Development | S3 | G major | 118–162 |
| | Part 1 | E-flat major→C-sharp minor | 163–197 |
| | <i>Recitativo</i> (interpolation) | C-sharp minor | 198 |
| | <i>Andante</i> (interpolation) | C major | 198 |
| Recapitulation | Part 2 | C minor→F major | 199–228 |
| | Introduction | →E minor | 229–242 |
| | P | E major→E minor | 243–257 |
| | TR | E minor | 257–286 |
| | S1 | C-sharp minor | 287–291 |
| | TR | → | 292–295 |
| | S2 | → | 296–311 |
| Coda | Bridge | E major | 312–338 |
| | P | E major | 339–342 |

Table 5: Analysis of *Malediction*

Duo and *Malediction* are seminal works in the creation of Liszt's two-dimensional sonata form. Each composition presents a different approach toward the genesis of the two dimensions: *Duo* approaches the two-dimensional structure as a cycle and *Malediction* as a Type 3 sonata. Nevertheless, these works are not fully formed two-dimensional structures. In both works, the compositional strategies necessary for the creation of this form are still in a proto-state: the disruptions of the foreign dimension are not sustained in dialogue and are soon extinguished by the return to the original dimension. The imperative dialogue between the two dimensions is missing. *Duo* and *Malediction* are developed until their end in their initial molds. At most, they could be perceived as incipient attempts of a young composer trying to reformulate previous conventions into a new structure.

3. *De Profundis: Psaume Instrumental*

Liszt's first fully-formed two-dimensional sonata is *De Profundis: Psaume Instrumental* (1834–1835) for solo piano and orchestra.²² As in the previous two experiments (i.e., *Duo* and *Malediction*), interpolated passages from foreign musical discourses are the activation agents that bluntly project the second dimension. This feature evolved from its use in *Duo* (one passage in each movement) and *Malediction* (two passages in the development) until *De Profundis*, where interpolated passages achieve greater independence through stronger rhetorical shifts to project different movements. The exposition's S (mm. 188–232) is the first section drawn from the second dimension. The change in tempo, style, and topic produced by the abrupt introduction of the *fauxbourdon* breaks the initial discourse to bring forth the cycle dimension. Liszt reconciles this rupture by developing both levels simultaneously: the *fauxbourdon* elaborates the exposition's S and the cycle's second movement (in this case, a slow movement). Furthermore, the *L'istesso tempo*, TR-Part 2, ameliorates the rhetoric break through the passage's recessive quality that foreshadows the following *fauxbourdon* style. Between the development and the recapitulation, the second interpolated section (mm. 510–732) exclusively develops the cycle dimension, introducing the cycle's third movement (akin to a scherzo in style). Again, it is the stylistic and functional change of this interpolation that cues the insertion of the second dimension. The form dimension freezes, delaying the launch of the recapitulation (m. 733) and providing an independent space for the cycle. In this instance, Liszt does not reconcile both levels, creating a stronger disruption in the musical fabric. *De Profundis* presents the two possible strategies for elaborating the second dimension: unfolding it independently or together with the original dimension. Each scenario presents a different degree of formal dislocation, the former option being the more extreme one.

Regarding the form dimension and its sonata structure, Liszt expands each sonata space into multi-modular sections. The P-theme is a self-contained rounded binary with a written-out A repetition. The TR-space is divided into two parts according to their tonal and thematic functions: Part 1 modulates from D minor to F major, and Part 2 liquidates any formal momentum with its thematic and harmonic circularity and hefty, introductory fanfare to herald the beginning

²² The following analysis uses Jay Rosenblatt's edition of the work. See Liszt 1990.

of *De profundis*'s fauxbordon. The S-theme (*De profundis*'s fauxbordon) is stated twice, first by the piano solo and then accompanied by the orchestra, both times closing with an IAC in F-sharp minor. The second of these cadences elides with the return of the P-theme's A section, signaling the beginning of the development.

The development restates in thematic transformation all the exposition's thematic modules, altering their functions and changing their original position. Some of the modules are fused to create layered patterns in their intra-thematic units.²³ As in *Malediction*, Liszt interjects two non-developmental sections in the *Recitativo* and the *Cadenza*. The development decays after these two passages into shorter units with static harmonic progressions in a recessive character, hinting at the Classical codetta process commonly found at the end of large-scale formal functions. Nevertheless, instead of closing the development and launching the recapitulation, the codettas are halted by a fermata, launching the *non-sequitur* scherzo-and-trio movement embedded in the work.

After the scherzo, the recapitulation compresses the P-theme to only its A section. The S-theme, *De profundis*'s fauxbourdon, returns now as a celebratory march in D major. The theme's presentation and compressed repetition fail to achieve a satisfactory D-major PAC, as the former closes in A major and the latter is thwarted by the concluding diffusing passage. The fauxbourdon style returns in this final recessive section. This time, however, the fauxbourdon is transformed by its fragmentary state and chromatic surrounding. As an initial experiment regarding two-dimensional forms, *De profundis* severely undermines the closure of its form and cycle dimensions. By avoiding strong formal punctuations, Liszt prevents the sonata process to overcome and suppress the second dimension. The formal openness in both dimensions is imperative to sustain the permanence of their discourse active in the ongoing fluctuating musical space.

²³ See, e.g., mm. 272–304. Although the driving motivic material of this section is drawn from the fanfare in TR-Part 2, a second layered is created by the solo piano that interjects motivic fragments drawn from the P-theme's A section.

| Large-scale formal section | Thematic function | Intra-thematic function | Thematic rotation | Measures |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------|
| Exposition | P | A | 1 | 1–28 |
| | | A rep. (modulatory) | | 28–48 |
| | | B | | 48–102 |
| | | A' | | 103–130 |
| | TR | Part 1 | | 130–162 |
| | | Part 2 | | 162–187 |
| | S | Presentation | | 188–209 |
| | | Repetition | | 210–231 |
| Development | | A | 2 | 231–244 |
| | | A' | | 244–272 |
| | | TR-Part 2 | | 272–304 |
| | | TR-Part 1 Fragmentation | | 304–328 328–354 |
| | | A | | 354–383 |
| | <i>Cadenza</i> | A | | 384 |
| | <i>Recitativo</i> | (<i>De profundis</i>) | | 385–425 |
| | | B | | 425–457 |
| | | Orchestra's repetition of the <i>Recitativo</i> Codettas | | 458–481 481–509 |
| Recapitulation | P | A | 3 | 733–757 |
| | TR | Part 1 | | 758–790 |
| | | Part 2 | | 790–822 |
| | S | Presentation | | 822–861 |
| | | Repetition | | 862–871 |
| | | Recession | | 871–900 |

Table 6: Analysis of *De Profundis: Psaume Instrumental's* sonata-form section

Several features frame the scherzo as an external section to the underlying sonata form: it does not participate in the work's sonata process as it does not partake in the thematic working and tonal instability of the previous development or recapitulate the exposition's themes; it yields an independent formal process without any impact on other formal sections; it presents two new themes in a scherzo-trio repetition scheme, halting the ongoing thematic transformation of the sonata form; and its thematic rotations counteract the ongoing sonata process. To link both dimensions, the last phrase acts as a bridge to connect this scherzo with the sonata form's recapitulation, launching again the original sonata process.

| Large-scale formal section | Thematic function | Intra-thematic function | Thematic rotation | Measures |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| | A | | 1 | 510–552 |
| | B | | | 553–585 |
| | A | | 2 | 586–623 |
| | B | | | 624–644 |
| | A | | 3 | 644–662 |
| | (A) | Bridge | | 663–670 |
| | B | | | 671–689 |
| | A | | 4 | 689–705 |
| | B/A/Cadenza | Transition to the recapitulation | | 706–732 |

Table 7: Analysis of *De Profundis: Psaume Instrumental's* scherzo-and-trio section

In *De Profundis*, Liszt carefully invokes the cycle dimension by activating it alongside the form dimension in the S-space; then, grounding the cycle in an independent space as an interpolation after the form's development; and finally, fusing both levels to close the composition in the form's recapitulation and the cycle's fourth movement. The several shifts and simultaneous unfoldings create a gradual and constant dialogue between dimensions that is imperative to maintain both levels operative throughout the work. The cycle dimension is kept active by the interpolation of the scherzo and the return of the *fauxbourdon* in the recapitulation. This dialogue between the two dimensions is missing in *Duo* and *Malediction*. The interpolations of the second dimension are too short and hastily suffocated by the return of the original discourse. The other compositional strategies associated with the two-dimensional sonata are still present in *De Profundis*, easing the ongoing musical fabric for the dimensional disruptions: (1) the progressive loosening in the multi-modular construction of each theme, with internal deformations, reversals, and denials; (2) the thematic transformation in the frequent recycling of the initial thematic layout, binding the form dimension's sonata action-spaces and the cycle dimension's movements;²⁴ (3) and the formal incompleteness in open-ended themes (without a cadence) and the compressed recapitulation. Only the sudden shift produced by the *fauxbourdon* launches this

²⁴ This process of thematic transformation intersects with Hepokoski and Darcy's rotational principle. Thematic transformation, however, hinges on the form-functional evolution of the themes, rather than the ordering of these.

dual form; the other deviations simply prepare the musical fabric for the interpolated intrusions. Fig. 2 details the two dimensions in *De Profundis*.²⁵

| | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|---------|------------|----------------|
| Exposition | | Development | X | | Recapitulation |
| 1–161 | 162–231 | 232–509 | 510–732 | 733–900 | |
| First mov. | Second mov. | X | | Third mov. | Fourth mov. |

Figure 2: Analysis of *De Profundis: Psaume Instrumental*

The two-dimensional sonata starts as a traditional sonata until it is sufficiently disrupted to fit a second dimension where rhetorical and formal strategies foreign to the original discourse are grouped.²⁶ The second dimension acts as a platonic embodiment of a cycle—the movements are labeled flexibly according to their position and style, with their form-functional, tonal, and rhetorical aspects aiding the separation of each movement. For example, the second and third positions can allocate a slow- or scherzo-like movement without any formal imperatives. Then, the first movement is placed retroactively after the second dimension is launched, and the last movement is settled in the recapitulation as it restates the exposition's themes.²⁷ Due to the loose projection of the second dimension over the first one, the formal conventions are usually subordinate to the parsing of the first dimension, often rendering incomplete forms in each movement.

Not every disruption is grouped in a second dimension to invoke a multi-movement cycle. Disruptions must be in dialogue with the style and aesthetic of a generic paradigm and interlace this property between them to generate a secondary dimension that binds these disruptions in a secondary structure. In the case of the two-dimensional sonata, the disruptions present the style and

²⁵ Fig. 1 uses Steven Vande Moortele's analytical format. See Vande Moortele 2009, p. 23. Here, the top row presents the form dimension, and the bottom row the cycle dimension.

²⁶ A similar view is discussed by Vande Moortele in *ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁷ In *De Profundis*, the return of the *fauxbordon* provides an exemplar of a functional change in the two-dimensional sonata form's structure. Now restated in the home key as part of the recapitulatory process and in a celebratory march style, the *fauxbourdon* loses part of its independence as the discourse is not sufficiently disrupted by this second appearance. Hence, in both dimensions, the *fauxbourdon* is bound to the second part of the recapitulation to form a single section.

aesthetic of the movements of a multi-movement sonata, which are already tied to the structure of the original single-movement sonata form. The genre, structure, style, and aesthetic are constrained by the tradition the composer is “thrown in,” (i.e., the customs and norms he is subjected to). The disruptions are also constrained by this tradition. Using Heideggerian philosophy, J. P. E. Harper-Scott discusses how human beings are thrown at birth into already-existent structures that “suggest (and limit) [the] possibilities for future ways of being” (Harper-Scott 2007, p. 182).²⁸ In the case of Liszt, he was a composer thrown into the hegemonic tradition of the sonata form. Nevertheless, Heidegger conceives the possibility of an authentic interaction (an existential mode of being) inside the present constrictive structures: the being can participate in personal development even though there is a pre-ordained script of behavior. Liszt, as a nineteenth-century German composer (thrown into this social and cultural space), consciously or unconsciously created the two-dimensional sonata form by transforming sonata form and its conventions. This process is achieved through dialogue with the Classical conventions inherent in the genres and forms he decided to use.

In his recent *Sonata Theory Handbook*, James Hepokoski tackles the issue of how to apply norms, customs, and conventions of the Classical practice to later repertoire. He resorts to the use of the dialogic form as an analytical tool,

to explore how individual composers created personalized, often idiosyncratic works in dialogue with the more traditional norms of the genre—and, increasingly, with the newer models provided by an emerging canon of exemplary works from the past—as they understood them in their own historical circumstances (Hepokoski 2021, p. 179).

I followed this approach in the analysis and framing of the two-dimensional sonata form because the structure only arises from the interaction of internal compositional strategies with sonata form’s customs and norms. The dialogic approach helps the analysis to avoid dogmatisms and casualisms by establishing a firm base where compositional decisions can be examined through the lens of the overriding hermeneutic circle.

The purpose of this study was to trace the conception and development of the two-dimensional sonata form in Liszt’s *oeuvre* through historical lenses. By conceptualizing the two-dimensional strategies in *De Profundis*, I was able to

²⁸ The concept of “thrownness” functions in parallel to the dialogical form.

identify their forebearers in previous works and detail their development. Although *Duo* and *Malediction* have been neglected in analytical writings regarding their two-dimensional features, they illustrate Liszt's early attempts to reshape sonata form, which lead to the creation of *De Profundis*. By identifying the hallmarks of two-dimensional structures in Liszt's early sonatas, this study links Liszt's early sonata-form transformations with the idiosyncratic practices of his mature two-dimensional forms, a task so far neglected in the literature.

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