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Preparing the *Ernani Paraphrase* for Performance

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts

by

Andrew John Isaac Munro

2017

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2017

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Preparing the *Ernani Paraphrase* for Performance

by

Andrew John Isaac Munro

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Elisabeth Covel Le Guin, Co-Chair

Professor Inna Falijs, Co-Chair

Piano transcriptions are often treated as superficial works, the sole purpose of which is to display the technical prowess of the performer. In this dissertation, I engage critically with this perspective by investigating the various layers present in transcriptions. The study will focus on the *Ernani Paraphrase* by Franz Liszt. The investigative question of this study is: “How can I intertwine the layered information gained through the analysis process of the *Ernani Paraphrase* with the embodied discoveries, in preparation towards performance?” I offer the palimpsest as an analogy through which to analyze the *Ernani Paraphrase*. In the palimpsest layers, dealing with the analyses, I trace a trajectory from the play and opera that inspired Liszt’s transcription, through the musical and social circumstances surrounding the transcription, and a musical analysis of the transcription itself. These layers are referred to as the ‘peeling away’ phases in the process. In the palimpsest layers, that follow the analytical phase, I engage autoethnographically with embodied explorations of the score while interacting with the piano as I prepare for an eventual performance. These embodied layers are perceived as the re-accumulation phase. Separating these various layers

provides a unique overview of the work, its influences, and origins. Ultimately, all these layers will reaccumulate into what will become the palimpsest of performance. The analogy of the palimpsest proved effective in outlining the many origins and influences of the transcription which then inform later layers in preparing for the eventual performance.

The dissertation of Andrew John Isaac Munro is approved.

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2017

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## CHAPTER 1: CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY

### 1. Introduction

Piano transcriptions have always been a favorite genre of mine, particularly because they provide access to music I would otherwise not have been able to perform and because the transcription also packages this music in an elaborate, challenging and fascinating way. This genre gives me access to a wide scope of music, from the world of opera to symphonies, lieder, concertos, and instrumental pieces.

Transcriptions have long been a part of Western musical history. Vocal pieces were transcribed for instruments and certain instrumental works (both solo works and chamber music) were transcribed for different instruments. Examples include the transcription by Beethoven of his own violin concerto in D major into a piano concerto in the same key, as well as the transcriptions that J.S. Bach made (for solo harpsichord) of several Vivaldi violin concertos.

Liszt was the composer who showed a new side to transcriptions, one that would later bring seeds of controversy to the genre: virtuosity. Virtuosity has its roots in the word 'virtue' (and Latin 'virtus'), which means "manliness or courage...goodness and chastity and moral excellence, came later"<sup>1</sup>. I would like to highlight the notion of courage; courage to play these pyrotechnics, courage to transcribe the work of other masters and the courage to perform in front of an audience. This presents courage in the act of transcribing as well as in the act of performance. Virtuosity need not be viewed as a 'superficial act' of showing off (although 'theatricality' is a major part of virtuosity) but it can be viewed as a special type of courage. It may even indeed also speak to moral excellence, as will be argued further on in this document.

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<sup>1</sup> "English Derivative of 'vir'," accessed December 10, 2016, <http://www.vocabulary-lesson-plans.com/english-derivatives-vir.html>

An abiding concern of mine (when preparing a transcription for performance) is that the audience might not look past the ‘flashy pyrotechnics’ to find the deeper musical value that many transcriptions hold. These musical values may include, for example, the structure of the work, the structure of the phrases as well as melodic contours. Even more challenging will be to expose the implicit emotional effects, affective ‘intentions’ and possibilities of this work. This study concerns itself with the *Ernani Paraphrase*. My goal in this study is to prepare the *Ernani Paraphrase* as thoroughly as possible to allow these deeper musical values (both the original material of Verdi as well as the complex arrangement of Liszt) to resonate through. In a transcription such as this *Paraphrase* the virtuoso elements should aid the musical story I am telling but not become the main feature of the performance.

The first layers to be discovered will be the piece’s place in the genre of transcriptions as well as in the life of Liszt. I will example the original play by Hugo<sup>2</sup> and the opera by Verdi in general terms before focusing on the specific scene in question and its influence on the piano transcription. Uncovering the melodic and harmonic implications as well as the textual implications (of the libretto) will add a new layer to my interpretation. This will be followed in my argument by another layer, which will focus on embodiment, how the piece informs my movements and how such different movements can affect the interpretation in turn. Thus, in this last part of the argument, the interpreter’s own proclivities might be seen to be at play in the preparation of the piece for performance.

In contrast to other paraphrases by Liszt, the *Ernani Paraphrase*<sup>3</sup> focuses on only one scene, namely ‘*O sommo Carlo*,’ which appears at the end of Act III in *Ernani*, an opera composed by Verdi in 1844. I chose this work because, from my perspective, it shows both Liszt’s reverence (and thus,

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<sup>2</sup> *Hernani* by Victor Hugo

<sup>3</sup> Revised in 1859 from a previous version composed in 1849

from the definition of virtuosity above, a sense arising from ‘moral excellence’) to the original material but also shows his creativity in expanding and adding to the original. While Liszt faithfully combines the orchestral and vocal parts within the demanding solo part (thus engaging in a change of musical genre) he also expands upon the main theme by applying different technical demands as well as including cadenzas and a tumultuous coda (changing the impact of the original, which will be discussed later in this thesis). My investigations into Liszt's plan and my preparations for performance have been guided by the notion of the layering of information, as suggested above, by the analogy of the palimpsest.

### **1.1. The analogy of the Palimpsest contributing to my preparation of the *Ernani Paraphrase* for performance**

‘Palimpsest’, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary is:

“A parchment or other writing surface on which the original text has been effaced or partially erased, and then overwritten by another; a manuscript in which later writing has been superimposed on earlier (effaced) writing”<sup>4</sup>.

The above definition clarifies for me what the palimpsest means as an analogy to describe the layering of texts across time, style and medium. The key notion that can be drawn from this definition is that the previous text remains, to some degree, intelligible ‘underneath’ and between the lines/notes of the new text. A parallel can be drawn between the transcription and the palimpsest, as the original work shines through in the finished transcription.

In this analogy, the prior musical text (in this case the scene by Verdi) may emerge in and through the later text (the transcription) and this may influence the way the work is ‘observed’ by the performer and the audience. I use the idea of the palimpsest as an analogy because this auditory

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<sup>4</sup> “Palimpsest Definition,” Oxford English Dictionary, accessed December 15, 2016, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/136319?rskey=CJMdEw&result=1&isAdvanced=false>

'layering' effect in this piece (and genre of transcriptions) bears a resemblance to the purely visual artifacts which are original palimpsests – hence the analogy of the process of layering. To extend the analogy somewhat, and to speak to the nature of performance, I argue that layers are either 'peeled away' to reveal an original<sup>5</sup>, or, alternatively, layers accumulate across time. Centrally, the act of 'peeling away' is an analytical one, whereas accumulating the layers across time is an embodied one. This dissertation engages with both these dynamics.

### **Research process**

**Investigative question:** How can I intertwine the layered information gained through the analysis process of the *Ernani Paraphrase* with the embodied discoveries, in preparation towards performance?

To answer the investigative question, this study is situated within a qualitative research paradigm, which is "aimed at developing new models and theories to explain particular phenomena"<sup>6</sup>. This is an autoethnographic study because it focuses on my experiences, observations and conclusions within my personal 'culture' of performance. It is important to note that the following phases are not exclusive to each other but are laid out separately here for clarity.

#### **Phase 1: Review of historical context and initial analysis of the score**

A successful understanding of this piece requires a thorough investigation of its history and conception/conceptualization. I will examine the history surrounding both *Ernani* the opera, and the transcription by Liszt. This phase serves as the 'peeling away' of the various layers of the palimpsest.

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<sup>5</sup> 'An original' here refers to the fact that multiple origins exist (the play, historical figures and events that inspired the play, etc.). This supports the palimpsest analogy.

<sup>6</sup> Johann Mouton, *How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral studies*, (Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers, 2001), 176.



I will explore the layers of the piano transcription by examining both the original opera libretto and score and the piano transcription score. The analogy of the palimpsest will aid in clarifying where the original aria is visible and audible beneath the new piano work. This initial analysis will stimulate my first interpretative ideas and options, which I will carry over when exploring in the next phase.

Recordings may also be consulted in analyzing performance traditions of both the opera and the solo piano work where necessary. This may provide further palimpsestic insight into aspects of performance that are not present or obvious in the score, for example, where performers take time around cadences or important words in the libretto.

## **Phase 2: Embodied explorations**

In this phase, I will examine the score with specific focus on its bodily implications. Using the knowledge and observations gained in the previous phases I will begin bringing my musical ideas to life for performance. This phase will focus on the bodily movements necessary to execute not only the notes but certain interpretative and affective possibilities as well. I will thus spend time with embodied explorations of the score while interacting with the piano. The goal is to achieve the desired result with the most efficiency and the least amount of unnecessary tension to support and crystalize the musicality embedded in the score. This phase may also provide new insights into the interpretation (or reveal new experiences) of the piece. In this phase I also wish to formulate my interpretative preferences, which will be the foundation upon which I will base my final performance of this work. This phase serves as the re-accumulation phase of my palimpsest analogy. In short, in this dissertation I will be attempting to capture how the layers of the palimpsest peeled away by the analysis and the expressive, personal, performative layers interact. Figure 1 below provides a visual representation of phase 1 and 2 of this study.

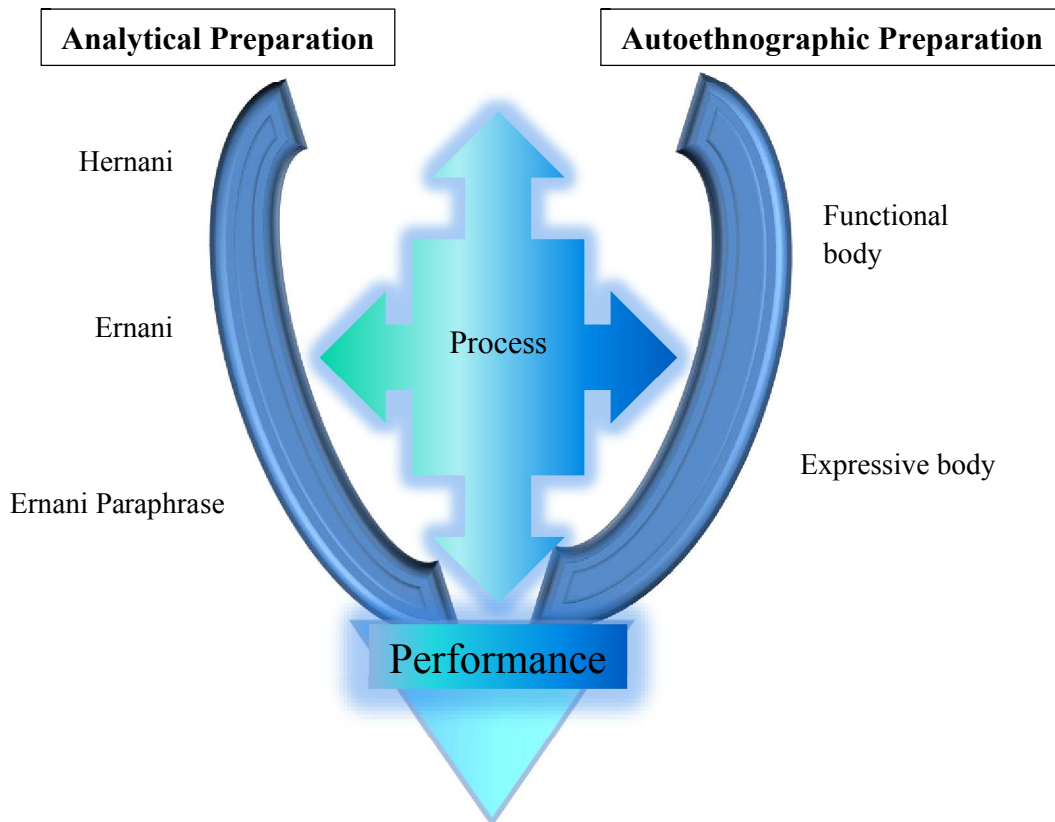


Figure 1.1: A graphic representation of phase 1 and phase 2 preparing the *Ernani Paraphrase* for performance.

### Phase 3: Critical reflection

During this phase, I will critically reflect on phase one and two (thus the ‘peeling away’ and accumulative actions) to ascertain how these separate ways of examining the piece influenced my eventual interpretative preferences. I will also reflect on how this process may help other pianists and musicians find layered meanings in addition to the ‘showmanship’ inherent in this genre. In other words, how can the analogy of the palimpsest used in this study be of possible service to other performers?

The following section begins the process with the examination of the genre of transcriptions and, more specifically, piano transcriptions and their place in the social fabric of the time of Liszt. I will take a closer look at Liszt’s transcriptions and his philosophy regarding virtuosity.

## 1.2. Virtuoso piano transcriptions

### 1.2.1. The what and why of transcriptions

For a pianist preparing to perform a transcription, it is important to understand exactly what transcriptions are, why they came to be, and how this pertains to the musical era and the transcription in question. This provides insight into the function and use of transcriptions and traces a brief trajectory of their development into which the *Ernani Paraphrase* can be placed.

Pursuing the word ‘transcription’ into its Latin origin leaves both ‘*trans*,’ meaning ‘across,’ as well as ‘*scribere*,’ which means ‘to write.’ Therefore ‘to write across’ suggests multiple perspectives on transcriptions; one can ‘write across’ mediums, languages, genres, histories, performers, styles, and so forth. This also demands consideration of what happens to the material when it is ‘written across’. How does it change? In a specifically music-oriented context, the *Oxford Dictionary of Music* defines a transcription as “[an] arrangement of music composition for a performing medium other than the original or for the same medium but in a more elaborate style”<sup>7</sup>. From this definition, I lift out three cardinal characteristics, namely:

- the contested notion of originality (with its dual meaning of having an origin and being original or ‘first’, for example) – in this specific paraphrase the trajectory from (at least) Hugo’s play, to Verdi’s opera, to the score composed by Liszt;
- the change of medium (from an opera score to a piano score, for example) – again from the Hugo play text, to Verdi’s Opera, to the score composed by Liszt,
- or a (supposed) elaboration in style – the elaborations and ornamentations that are present in the *Ernani Paraphrase*.

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<sup>7</sup>“Definition of transcription”, accessed January 2, 2017.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e10386?q=transcription&search=quick&pos=4&start=1#firsthit>

I will spend some time discussing the trajectory from the play's text written by Victor Hugo, through the opera, composed by Giuseppe Verdi to the transcription by Liszt. In phase 1 I will examine in more depth how the material is changed between these mediums. By engaging with how the orchestral score was altered to 'fit' the demands of the piano one can determine how one might approach tone color, articulation or phrasing, for example. This goes hand-in-hand with how the piano (as an instrument) influences the color, articulation, phrasing, pedaling, and so forth. I will also acknowledge and explore the various elaborations and ornamentations, and determine how best to approach these elaborations from an embodied perspective in phase two.

During the 19th century transcriptions emerged as a highly popular and versatile genre. They were meant to bring music composed for larger groups to perform to a wider audience. Not everyone was able to attend an orchestral concert or an opera production and piano transcriptions became a popular way to increase public awareness of certain genres of music. The piano became a very popular instrument to own in the 1800's for its versatility and ease of playing, unlike other instruments that may take months of study to produce a proper sound. The piano is unique in that it is a relatively mobile instrument that can imitate an orchestra or large chamber group (especially if more than 2 hands are used at once). Many households acquired a piano and it became the centerpiece of social stature, economic advancement and entertainment within social settings<sup>8</sup>. Many piano transcriptions were written for amateur musicians, enabling them to play a wide variety of works at home since concerts (especially outside of large musical hubs like Vienna) were less frequent<sup>9</sup>. This study will not concern itself with transcription literature in general, but will focus on virtuoso transcriptions written by concert artists for their own use (in particular the *Ernani Paraphrase* by Franz Liszt).

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<sup>8</sup> Arthur Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos* (New York, Dover Publications, 1954), 345-349.

<sup>9</sup> Loesser, *Men, Women and Pianos*, page 117

### 1.2.2 Various transcription types and their differences

Prior to Liszt (and the Romantic era in general), the transcription served a purpose of transferring or 'translating' a piece (in terms of the pitch and the rhythm, for example) from one medium into another. Prior to the Baroque era transcriptions and arrangements were varied and could make use of previously composed material for a new musical purpose, like the Parody Mass, and for creating elaborate instrumental versions of vocal music of the time (chansons and madrigals).

Later, Bach and other Baroque Era composers routinely transcribed the works of their colleagues and even their own works for various instrument configurations while not changing the harmony, rhythms and the like. Bach famously transcribed some of his own concertos for different instruments as well as transcribing multiple violin concertos by Vivaldi for solo keyboard<sup>10</sup>. This tradition continued into the later 18th century with composers like Mozart and Beethoven. Mozart created some particularly interesting transcriptions of Bach keyboard fugues for string quartet<sup>11</sup>. In K404a Mozart composed his own preludes and then arranged a Bach fugue for each one whereas K405 is a collection of Bach fugues only. Beethoven, on the other hand, transcribed his violin concerto in D major for solo piano and orchestra (also in D major)<sup>12</sup>. These transcriptions did not contain virtuoso embellishments or altered harmonies or melodies.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century added new dimensions to transcriptions by the reintroduction of virtuosic embellishment of or to the 'original' score. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century this was a common performance practice as embellishments and improvisation were expected of the virtuosi of that era. This, however, was done in the moment in an improvisatory manner rather than from sheet music. Artists

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<sup>10</sup> RV230, 265, 299 and 310

<sup>11</sup> K404a and K405

<sup>12</sup> Op. 61a

would transcribe a piece for their instrument (often famous songs or madrigals) and would make it as virtuoso and ‘complex’ as possible following the guidelines of acceptable embellishment<sup>13</sup>. This involved not only the transcription process (from one medium to another) but also arranging the music to match new goals (like technical fireworks etc.) Liszt divided his efforts between this deliberate virtuosity and incidental virtuosity<sup>14</sup>. Good examples of incidental virtuosity are his transcriptions of the Beethoven Symphonies. These transcriptions are extremely challenging for the pianist but are meant “to serve Beethoven in every possible way”<sup>15</sup> and not to be virtuosic for the sake of virtuosity. The difficulties encountered in these particular transcriptions involve managing a many-layered score (condensed from the even more complex orchestral score), which include large chords, densely polyphonic sections and intricate voicing challenges. These were thus palimpsests of sound. The music may not ‘sound’ theatrical and pyrotechnical but the immense difficulty lies in simply performing it to ‘sound’ like the orchestra.

Liszt also introduced an original approach when it came to operatic transcriptions, which he called *Réminiscences*. These were, in effect, recollections from an opera; moments that stuck in Liszt’s mind or which were perhaps his favorite moments. In his *Réminiscences de Don Juan* Liszt rearranges Mozart’s operatic material into a completely different order, which creates a new narrative (as opposed to the one Mozart originally conceived of). Due to Liszt and other pianists of that time, piano transcriptions were becoming a completely new art form compared to previous generations<sup>16</sup>. *Réminiscences* were meant to be memories of a particular piece, not to be faithful to the original order but to present the most memorable parts. Pianists and composers were not ‘bound’ to being faithful to the original and found new and creative ways to express their artistic and

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<sup>13</sup> See: Howard Mayer Brown, *Embellishing 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976)

<sup>14</sup> A term I use to describe virtuosity that stems from necessity rather than theatricality.

<sup>15</sup> Rian De Waal, *Metamorphoses* (Delft: Eburon, 2013), 27.

<sup>16</sup> Compared to the types of transcriptions described earlier in this section

pianistic needs. From piano transcriptions of operas and symphonies to lieder and concertos, the level of technical complexity and difficulty for professional pianists increased dramatically during the Romantic era.

A general discussion of transcriptions is not the main aim of this study. The discussion above merely provides an overview of what can be an in-depth study in and of itself. To obtain even more relevant information regarding the *Ernani Paraphrase*, a closer examination of the circumstances surrounding Liszt's life and musical career during the time he wrote this transcription will be of value.

### **1.3. The transcriptions of Liszt**

#### **1.3.1. The social and musical contexts of Liszt's transcriptions**

Liszt's evolution into a pianistic legend began in earnest during his years in Paris, particularly around 1829. Liszt was fully immersed in the cultural life of Paris and, besides giving concerts, regularly attended the theatre, the opera and read every book he had access to<sup>17</sup>. It was his love for the opera that led him to write his first operatic transcription, of Auber's opera *La Fiancée*. One can clearly notice upon analyzing the score of this work that Liszt was still enamored with technical virtuosity, making use of flashy scales, arpeggios, large chords, double octaves etc. This characteristic defined much of his music before 1830.

In the 1830's, Paris played host to some of the greatest pianists in all of Europe and was one of the cultural centers of the age. Pianists like Thalberg, Dreyschock, Kalkbrenner, Chopin and Liszt all functioned in the musical scene in Paris. Alongside this strong pianistic outpouring was the opera, which the public and musicians adored alike. Pianists like Thalberg, Liszt, Chopin and others were fascinated and inspired by the operas staged at the illustrious Paris opera house and took

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<sup>17</sup> Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 138.

inspiration, not just from the singing, but also from the spectacle. Liszt and others realized that the way they performed (attitude, function and body expressiveness) was a valuable tool to reach their audiences more effectively. It was also during this time that many pianists began composing opera fantasies and transcriptions, designed not only to dazzle audiences but also as a commercial tool to further their own careers and the popularity of the operas they transcribed<sup>18</sup>.

One of the catalysts of Liszt's quest for technical virtuosity was the legendary violinist, Paganini. In 1832 Liszt heard Paganini for the first time on the stage of the Paris opera house. It was an event that changed Liszt's life and musical outlook completely. Liszt remarked in a letter to a pupil of his, "what a man, what a violin, what an artist! Heavens! What sufferings, what misery, what tortures in those four strings!"<sup>19</sup> From this point on he devoted himself even more fervently to studying the intricacies of piano technique in an attempt (later to prove very successful) at attaining the same heights of technical proficiency and showmanship as Paganini and the same impact on audiences as well. Later, Liszt diverged from the egocentric style of Paganini and formulated his firm belief that the artist "places his goals outside himself; that virtuosity is a means and never an end, and that he always remembers: GENIUS OBLIGES"<sup>20</sup>. Liszt wanted his gift to serve humanity and those less fortunate than himself<sup>21</sup>.

The *Ernani Paraphrase* was written well after Liszt made this important shift. The full circumstances surrounding the transcription will be explored later in the dissertation, but it was written at the end of the 1850's after Liszt's touring era and at the close of his Weimar era. He had settled in Weimar to be a conductor, a position which lasted until 1859. This era of conducting

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<sup>18</sup> Walker, *Liszt Vol.1*, 166.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>20</sup> De Waal, *Metamorphoses*, 19.

<sup>21</sup> Walker, *Liszt Vol.1*, 177.



indicated a desire to immerse himself in music other than piano music (although some of his important piano works were written during this time, for example his Piano Sonata in b minor).

The more mature style of this era in Liszt's life means he set about crafting his works and transcriptions with more purposes than theatricality and showmanship. One of the challenges for me in preparing the *Ernani Paraphrase* will be to expose the implicit narrative effects, and affective 'intentions' and possibilities embedded in the palimpsest of Liszt's transcription. This is one of the aims of phase two and will be explored in chapter two. This is a transcription of a scene which has words and emotions attached to specific parts in the music (and to its location in the opera, to that genre, that composer and that era). Uncovering the melodic and harmonic implications as well as the dramatic implications (of the text) will form a foundational layer to my interpretation.

Liszt gave several reasons for the transcriptions he created, which ranged from a religious adherence to the score to the titanic, virtuoso transcriptions which often transformed the original entirely:

- "To develop piano technique inspired by violin, vocal, organ and orchestral techniques and colors
- To make unknown older (18th century and early 19th century) music available
- To promote recent compositions of unknown colleague-composers
- To have popular recital pieces based on Italian and French opera, either showpieces or more serious recaps [i.e. "musical highlights" of large works]"<sup>22</sup>

Liszt refers to virtuosity as only one of the tools in a composer's toolkit, and implies that virtuosity for virtuosity's sake is not the goal. 'Genius obliges' can be interpreted in several ways.

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<sup>22</sup> De Waal, *Metamorphoses*, 9.

‘Oblige’ not only means ‘to be compelled to do something’ but can also mean ‘to be grateful to’. In the context of his transcriptions, Liszt seems to recognize the importance of remaining faithful or ‘grateful’ to the composer whose music he was transcribing. This could be a means of paying homage to the composer but also could fulfil Liszt’s concert functions, which were to entertain the public and to grow as a commercial endeavor.

Liszt does this by ensuring that his embellishments and musical additions do not interfere with the original scene and only serve to highlight and strengthen it. This ties in with my idea of incidental virtuosity as mentioned earlier in this chapter. This near-reverence for the original scene can give insight into how Liszt might have performed his own transcriptions. In fact, I would hypothesize that his reverence may have extended to the performance practices of other genres (like opera in this case) and perhaps even to the tone colors, phrasing, and articulation of the instruments in question (phrasing like a vocalist, for example<sup>23</sup>).

Liszt did indulge in ‘showing off’ with staggering technical virtuosity as can be seen in this transcription in certain cadenza-like passages as well as the 2<sup>nd</sup> arrangement of the 1<sup>st</sup> theme of the *Ernani Paraphrase*. My challenge as a pianist will be to determine what the functions of these sections are (in addition to the technical virtuosity and showmanship) and how they can support the emotional palette I aim to explore and express. I do recognize that, perhaps, the purpose of these sections is, indeed, theatricality. Liszt understood the commercial effect of ‘flashiness’, and audiences at the time (and today as well) responded very positively and with great awe at these displays. It is certainly not simply a trivial ‘gimmick’; however, I believe it takes more than simply ‘playing all the right notes’. Even the passages written with only theatricality in mind can be performed musically and with understanding of its origin (in this case, an opera). This is what I would like to discover when I analyze and prepare the *Ernani Paraphrase*.

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<sup>23</sup> This strengthens the choice of a palimpsest as the analogy for this study.

This overview provides a necessary foundation for what transcriptions are, why they became so popular (and controversial at times) and how Liszt contributed to the genre. In the next chapter, I will analyze more relevant layers of the palimpsest as these relate to the *Ernani Paraphrase*.

## CHAPTER 2: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE *ERNANI PARAPHRASE*

The purpose of this chapter is to ‘peel away’ historical and cultural perspectives surrounding the opera by Verdi and the resulting transcription by Liszt. This chapter will also explore the palimpsestic relationship between these works and what they will mean to the performer.

### 2.1. The *Ernani Paraphrase*: a palimpsestic perspective

As indicated in chapter one, I view the *Ernani Paraphrase* as a palimpsest. In the process of discovering the various levels, I must uncover each layer during the analysis so that I can layer them again in my preparation for performance. The first layer that I must be cognizant of is the origin of Verdi’s opera, which begins with the play that inspired it: Victor Hugo’s *Hernani*.

#### 2.1.1. Victor Hugo’s *Hernani*

Carlson posits that “The major period of romantic theory in France was launched by Victor Hugo ....”<sup>24</sup>. Carlson further indicates that *Hernani* was perceived by “both classicists and romantics as the key test of romantic ideas in the theatre, ...”<sup>25</sup> This fourth play by this celebrated French playwright was first presented to the public in 1830. It was a highly controversial play, basically signaling an end to the famous French Classical tradition and the initiation of a new, Romantic style and ethos. Carlson suggests that with this playtext, Hugo presented his perception that “romanticism in literature” could be equated with “liberalism in politics”<sup>26</sup>. Through his playtexts and successful productions thereof, Hugo participated in a venerable and ongoing tradition of experiments with non-classical forms and models in French public theater, one which was met with resistance from classical critics every step of the way.

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<sup>24</sup> Marvin Carlson, *Theories of the theatre: A historical and critical survey, from the Greeks to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 205.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

A brief examination of the synopsis will provide more insight into *Hernani's* 'violations' of classical expectations<sup>27</sup>.

The play<sup>28</sup> is set in 1519 over the period of about 2 months. The locales are Spain (the Palace of the King) and Aachen in Germany (seat of the Holy Roman Emperor).

Act I: The main character, Hernani (a bandit), is in love with Doña Sol who is about to be forced to wed her uncle, Don Ruy Gomez da Silva. The play begins in Doña Sol's chambers where the Spanish King (and Holy Roman Emperor to-be) Don Carlos<sup>29</sup> has hidden himself in the closet. He hears the lovers conversing about their intended elopement.

Act II: Don Carlos is smitten with Doña Sol and intends to steal her away for himself. He tries this at the rendezvous point where Doña Sol and Hernani are scheduled to meet, but she rejects him and Hernani arrives and foils the King's plans.

Act III: Ruy Gomez and Doña Sol are preparing for their wedding when Hernani shows up in disguise, all his men having been murdered by the King's men. He reveals his identity in a suicidal attempt to be arrested, but Ruy Gomez decides to protect him, even after finding out that Doña Sol and Hernani had a secret relationship. The King arrives, but Gomez refuses to hand Hernani over. The King threatens Gomez but Doña Sol steps in and the King forgives Gomez and then promptly abducts Doña Sol. Hernani, upon realizing that the King has taken the love of his life, promises to get her back and promises to surrender his life to Gomez upon the agreed signal.

Act IV: Two months later in Aachen, Don Carlos is awaiting the results of the election that will make him Holy Roman Emperor. He thwarts a conspiracy to assassinate him perpetrated by

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<sup>27</sup> "Definition of the Three Unities," accessed January 25, 2017, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/the-three-unities>

<sup>28</sup> "Hernani Synopsis," accessed April 5, 2017, <http://www.theatrehistory.com/french/hugo006.html>

<sup>29</sup> A character based on the real King Charles V of Spain (who became Holy Roman Emperor as well).

Gomez and Hernani. Hernani, however, refuses to go through with it. The King forgives the conspirators and it is revealed by Hernani that he is, in fact, a nobleman born in exile. The King announces the marriage of Hernani and Doña Sol. During their wedding celebrations Hernani hears the signal (a horn call), which indicates that he needs to end his life to fulfil his agreement with Gomez. Doña Sol cannot change his mind and decides to join him in death, drinking half the poison with Hernani drinking the other half. They die in each other's arms and later Ruy Gomez kills himself in remorse.

The next layer present in the *Ernani* palimpsest is the opera which this play inspired and the *Paraphrase* was based on: Verdi's *Ernani*.

### **2.1.2. Verdi's *Ernani***

*Ernani* was Verdi's 5<sup>th</sup> opera, composed in 1844 for the *Teatro La Fenice* in Venice. The librettist was the poet Francesco Piave who was persuaded to rework Victor Hugo's play *Hernani* despite the possible political difficulties<sup>30</sup> that the play could cause in Italy. Verdi and Piave worked very closely to shape the libretto and Verdi also handpicked the singers for his premiere. The premiere was an enormous success and the opera was often performed in the years following<sup>31</sup>.

There are few differences between the opera's libretto and the original play. Superficially, Doña Sol was renamed Elvira, and Hernani was translated to the Italian spelling. In terms of the story the settings change slightly as well. The opera begins in the mountains where the bandit Ernani is with his men, singing about his love for Elvira. The second part of Act I takes place in Don Ruy's palace where Elvira laments her impending marriage to the Don. The King enters in disguise trying to

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<sup>30</sup> Which are expanded upon later in this section.

<sup>31</sup> Roger Parker. "Ernani." *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press. Accessed March 20, 2017.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/O901401>.

woo Elvira but she rejects him. He tries to force her to come with him, but Ernani arrives. The Don also shows up to find the strange scene before him. The King reveals himself and the scene ends.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Acts follow the original play until the very end. The scene on which the *Paraphrase* is based takes place at the end of Act III and is scored for baritone (solo voice), orchestra, and chorus. The aria is sung by the King, Don Carlo, at the tomb of Charlemagne where he awaits the news of his impending election as Holy Roman Emperor. Don Carlo subsequently uncovers a conspiracy against himself headed by Ernani. This is in revenge for Don Carlo's kidnapping of Elvira. Upon confronting the conspirators, it is revealed that Ernani is, in fact, a nobleman called Don Juan of Aragon. Upon hearing this, the King sings an aria (joined by the whole cast in the end) in which he swears to Charlemagne that he will emulate his virtues, announces his forgiveness of the conspirators and, after leading Elvira to Ernani, provides the happy news that their wedding may now take place<sup>32</sup>. The text and translation of the scene are included below.

Original Text	Translation	Comments and Remarks
<p>O sommo Carlo, più del tuo nome le tue virtùdi aver vogl'io, sarò, lo giuro a te ed a Dio, delle tue gesta imitator.</p> <p>Perdono a tutti. (a sé) Mie brame ho domate. (guidando Elvira tra le braccia di Ernani) Sposi voi siate, v'amate ognor.</p> <p>A Carlo Magno sia gloria e onor!</p>	<p>O supreme Charles, more than your reputation I wish I had your virtues, in your name and God's, I swear that I shall follow your example.</p> <p>I pardon everyone. (to himself) I have tamed my desires. (leading Elvira into Ernani's arms) May you be wed, and love each other always. Honor and glory to Charlemagne!</p>	<p>CARLO (staring at Charlemagne's tomb)</p>
<p>A Carlo Quinto sia gloria e onor! Sia lode eterna, Carlo, al tuo nome!</p>	<p>Glory and honor to Charles the Fifth! Eternal praise, Carlo, be to your name!</p>	<p>Elvira and Ernani sing this after the King has vowed that they shall be allowed to marry.</p>

<sup>32</sup> "Ernani Plot Synopsis," accessed April 20, 2017,  
<http://opera.stanford.edu/Verdi/Ernani/synopsis.html#atto4>

<p>Tu, re clemente, somigli a Dio, perche l'offesa copri d'oblio,</p> <p>perché perdoni agli offensor – lode! Il lauro auguste sulle tue chiome, acquista insolito, divin fulgor.</p> <p>A Carlo Quinto sia gloria e onor! ... ecc.</p>	<p>You, merciful king, resemble God, for you cover the offence</p> <p>with oblivion, and you forgive the offenders – praise! The august laurel over your hair takes on an unusual and divine hue. Glory and honor to Charles the Fifth! ... etc.</p>	<p>They are joined by the chorus at first.</p>
<p>A Carlo Quinto sia gloria e onor! Sia lode eterna, Carlo, al tue nome! Tu, re clemente, somigli a Dio, perché l'offesa copri d'oblio,</p> <p>perché perdoni agli offensor – lode! A Carlo Quinto sia gloria onor! ... ecc.</p>	<p>Glory and honor to Charles the Fifth! Eternal praise, Carlo, be on your name! You, merciful king, resemble God, for you cover the offence with oblivion and you forgive the offenders – praise! Glory and honor to Charles the Fifth! ... etc.</p>	<p>Chorus</p>
<p>Vendetta gridami l'offeso onor! Oh, mie speranze vinte non domate, tutte appagarvi saprò ben io.</p> <p>ella vendetta, per l'odio mio avrà sol vita in seno il cor!</p> <p>Canute gli anni mi fer le chiome, ma inestinguibile è il mio livor! Vendetta grida l'offeso onor! ... ecc.</p>	<p>My offended honor cries out for revenge! Oh, my vanquished hopes which are not suppressed well do I know how to soothe you all, only with revenge and my hatred will my heart find life in my chest! The years may have turned my hair white but my malice is inexhaustible! My offended honor cries out for revenge! ... etc.</p>	<p>Silva, the treacherous uncle, has text which is in opposition to the others but the notes he sings are supportive of the music. This is not reflected in the piano transcription.</p>
<p>Sarò, lo giuro a te ed a Dio, delle tue gesta imitator.</p> <p>A Carlo Magno gloria e onor! ... ecc.</p>	<p>By your name and God's, I swear that I shall follow your example. Glory and honor to Charlemagne ... etc.</p>	<p>Carlo. After his initial verses the King repeats this text in his next phrases, thus reinforcing his commitment.</p>

Table 2.1: Text and translation of the scene featured in the transcription



This is an example of where reality and fiction intertwine (perhaps palimpsestically in perception). Charlemagne was the great European unifier, and the first Holy Roman Emperor, 'crowned' in 800 C.E. Leitch indicates that Charles V made "genealogical demands"<sup>33</sup> on Charlemagne by tracing his lineage back to the great unifier, wishing to connect himself to the unparalleled power that Charlemagne wielded. The idea of unification and nationalism would have been an attractive theme to the politically unstable European nations, still recovering from the Napoleonic Wars and various revolutions which reshaped the political landscape. The Italian states (which would become Italy in the late 1800's) were involved in heated revolutions and battles, both physical and political, on their path to unification. This idea of a single unifier would have been very attractive to them.

In 1846, Pope Pius IX was appointed head of the Catholic Church. He was a very popular in Italy due to his views on unification and nationalism and the final scene of Act III was appropriated to celebrate the new pope. It went as far as to insert the name of the Pope into the text so that the aria gave glory to him instead of Charlemagne. This scene took on a new political function and became very popular, even being used on its own (out of the context of the opera) in concerts<sup>34</sup>.

The ending of the opera differs from Hugo's play in that when Ernani hears the fatal horn call he stabs himself in the chest and dies in Elvira's arms while telling her to live. Don Ruy does not take his own life<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Stephanie Leitch, *Mapping Ethnography in Early Modern Germany: New Worlds in Print Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 49.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Stamatov. Interpretative Activism and the Political Uses of Verdi's Operas in the 1840's. *American Sociological Review*. 67(2002): 349-350.

<sup>35</sup> "Ernani Plot Synopsis."

This is a very significant layer in the palimpsest since it is so closely intertwined with the next layer which is the transcription by Liszt. It is now possible to examine the palimpsestic dynamics which are found in the piece that I will perform.

### **2.1.3. Liszt's *Ernani Paraphrase***

Liszt only wrote three transcriptions with the title "Paraphrase" (the others being the *Paraphrase de Rigoletto* and *Miserere du Trovatore de Verdi: Paraphrase de Concert*). All three are on operas by Verdi and each one focuses on a single item from its respective opera, expanding on the original music by adding to and embellishing it. The *Paraphrase de Rigoletto* focuses on the quartet "Bella figlia dell'amore"; the paraphrase of *Il Trovatore* focuses on the Miserere (a duet with accompanying chorus part). The *Ernani Paraphrase* focuses on an aria, namely "O sommo Carlo"<sup>36</sup>, and ensuing choral scene, which appears at the end of the opera's Act III as indicated above.

The transcription was written around 1859 – 1860, during a challenging time for Liszt. This was when he decided to step down from his position in Weimar. This position of *Kapellmeister* at the Weimar court offered Liszt the chance to focus on composition and to conduct the resident orchestra. It was during this period that Liszt composed many of his large orchestral works and began teaching masterclasses in piano which became famous the world over<sup>37</sup>. Part of the reason Liszt turned to composition and conducting during this period was by suggestion of his mistress Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein with whom he lived in Weimar<sup>38</sup>. Liszt was very much in love with the Princess and wished to marry her, but due to many complications of a political nature this was deemed impossible by the early 1860's. Liszt also lost his son Daniel (from an earlier union)

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<sup>36</sup> "O sommo Carlo text," accessed March 15, 2017, [http://www.aria-database.com/libretti/ernani09\\_somno.txt](http://www.aria-database.com/libretti/ernani09_somno.txt)

<sup>37</sup> Alan Walker. *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 8.

<sup>38</sup> Walker. *Liszt Vol. 2.*, 74.

in 1859 and, facing much opposition and little support from his employer in Weimar, decided to resign his post.

During Liszt's time at Weimar he conducted three performances of *Ernani* between 1852 and 1854<sup>39</sup>, which confirms his familiarity with this opera and the music of Verdi. George Eliot and George Henry Lewes, writing about the 1854 performance, noted that "Liszt looked splendid when conducting [*Ernani*]. The grand outline of his face and floating hair were seen to advantage as they were thrown into dark relief by the stage lamps"<sup>40</sup>. The author of that letter might have been quite enamored of Liszt (as evidenced by this observation) but it provides us with a brief snapshot of how, even at the conductor's podium, Liszt's presence had a profound effect on any performance of which he was a part.

Walker describes the three paraphrases (as well as 2 Wagner transcriptions and one of Gounod's *Faust* waltz, all written around the same difficult time) as a "nostalgic coda to his Weimar years, as performances by proxy"<sup>41</sup>. Liszt lost access to the conducting podium and did not return to the concert stage as a pianist, preferring to play (infrequently) for friends at small parties he held at his house in Weimar. These transcriptions were another way for him to revisit his conducting days and the works that he knew so well. While we do not have direct testimony as to whether Liszt ever performed the *Ernani Paraphrase*, it can be assumed that he would have only played this for friends or at a small, private concert, rather than in a large recital.

As is evidenced by my short synopsis of the act provided earlier, this aria is emotionally complex and encompasses many different facets. The music itself (specifically Verdi's original) conveys these emotions in clever ways, which will aid me (as a pianist) in conveying this complexity

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<sup>39</sup> James Deaville. Giuseppe Verdi in Brendel's *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*: Toward the Identification of a New - German Reception of Mediterranean Musical Culture. *Revista de Musicología*. 16, no. 3(1993): 1808.

<sup>40</sup> Walker. *Liszt Vol. 2.*, 251.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 534.

without the 'luxury' of words or physical interactions with other singers. Having this knowledge will also aid me in understanding Liszt's context when he wrote his transcription, and how his listeners may have related to it due of their potential familiarity with the opera.

## 2.2. The *Ernani Paraphrase* as a palimpsest in the making

A useful place to begin this analysis is how the sound of the original opera, the 'source text', can be detected through the new piano transcription, or the 'target text'.



Example 2.1: Liszt's introduction, upbeat – mm. 1

The introduction, which is freely composed and has no direct counterpart in the opera, is reminiscent of the opening rhythms of the overture at the beginning of Act I. Liszt starts in A-flat major and progressively works his way to F minor by the third rising sequence. Descending, staccato octaves lead into the start of the aria. In the opening phrase where the vocal line enters there is (apart from the baritone solo line) the harp accompaniment underneath. Liszt includes extra chords in the right hand which still follow the original harmony and moves the harp part to the bass clef. When comparing example 2.1 and example 2.2 the differences are obvious. Here, Don Carlo is praising the virtues of Charlemagne and vows to follow his example<sup>42</sup>. The solemn and somber theme and harmony indicate a man who has come to the sudden realization of the enormous

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<sup>42</sup> As mentioned earlier, the words of this aria have been changed for political reasons in the past. Here the name Charlemagne would have been replaced with Pope Pius IX

responsibility now on his shoulders. The hymn-like nature of the theme reflects not only the setting in the tomb where the king pays homage to the eternal figure of Charlemagne, but also the formal and ceremonial ‘passing of the torch’ in his new role as emperor and his relinquishing of his desire for Elvira.

The image shows a musical score for the opening of an aria. It consists of three staves. The top staff is for the piano (A.), marked 'Adagio' and 'p' (piano). The middle staff is for the voice (DOÑ CARLO), with the instruction '(fissando la tomba di Carlo Magno)' above it. The lyrics are 'Oh som-mo Car-lo, più del tuo no-me le tue vir.' The bottom staff is for the violin (Vc.), marked 'Adagio' and 'PIZZ.' (pizzicato). The rehearsal mark '93' is indicated at the beginning of the piano and violin parts.

Example 2.2: the original opening to the aria<sup>43</sup>, rehearsal mark 93.

The image shows Liszt's transcription of the aria's opening. It features a piano accompaniment with a vocal line. The piano part is marked 'il canto sostenuto e marcato' and 'sempre staccato'. The vocal line is marked 'ten.' (tenuto). The transcription includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Example 2.3: Liszt's transcription of the aria's opening<sup>44</sup>, mm. 6 – 8.

An interpretative question that deserves attention is how far the original instrumentation in the “source text”, would influence the way I perform the transcription. Do I play the melody in the same way as the singer would phrase it? Or would I choose longer lines that are potentially not possible for a singer? Playing the melody as the singer would (in terms of where they would breathe)

<sup>43</sup> Giuseppe Verdi, *Ernani*. (Milan: Ricordi, n.d.).

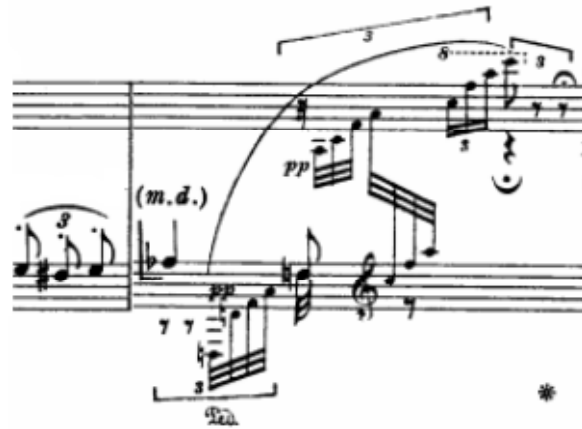
<sup>44</sup> Liszt, F. *Piano transcriptions from French and Italian Operas*. (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1982)

makes the most sense as this is how the melody was written to be performed. However, since a pianist is not limited by breath, a slower tempo can be chosen that would not be possible for a singer. If the difficulty of this work is considered, then taking a slower tempo has the added benefit of making the technical demands slightly more manageable. A slightly slower tempo will also allow the various details surrounding the virtuoso embellishments to be clearly audible. Although the rests in Example 2.3 indicate where a singer would breathe, the pedal markings mean that there would be no hiatus in the piano sound.

Each of these sections in the opera begins with the baritone alone with sparse orchestral accompaniment, before the choir and remaining orchestra members join in in the next phrase or section. This resembles the call-and-response pattern (or priest-and-congregation) of liturgical music and rituals. The music naturally increases in dynamics, intensity, and complexity before returning to the solo baritone again and beginning the process anew.



Example 2.4: Verdi's accompaniment, upbeat to 6 before rehearsal mark 94.



Example 2.5: Liszt's embellishment, upbeat and m. 16.

In the above examples, Liszt embellishes Verdi's simple accompaniment figure, introducing a harp-like effect. The vocal line remains unchanged, in the same register as the original, and is woven into the arpeggio figure. The emphasis, in my opinion, should be on the melody line with the

embellishments treated as a quiet flourish rather than strictly adhered to in terms of the rhythmic accuracy.

At this point in the scene, Don Carlo promises to pardon everyone involved in the conspiracy, leads Elvira to Ernani, and finally gives glory to Charlemagne once more. The line which translates to “I have tamed my desires”<sup>45</sup> is written in brackets by Verdi. In available recordings<sup>46</sup> the singer treats this line introspectively, or as if the King is quietly speaking to himself, before addressing the people once more in the next line. Liszt adds the indication *sotto voce* to the piano score. Details like this would not have been lost upon Liszt’s listeners, many of whom would have been quite familiar with the opera and this particular scene (due to the political connotations it had during that time).



Example 2.6: Liszt’s transcription of the first chorus entry, mm. 20 – 23.

In the first chorus entry, the other main characters (backed by a full chorus) enter and sing praise to Don Carlo. Liszt imitates the entrance of the full orchestra and the chorus using *forte* chords in both hands with the left hand playing the triplet figure found in the string section. Liszt divides the registers of the chorus between both hands and changes the ending of this phrase slightly with the last three melody notes (original G-G-F) being obscured in the middle of the chords.

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<sup>45</sup> *Mi brame ho dome.*

<sup>46</sup> “Carlos Alvarez, *O sommo Carlo*,” accessed December 2, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6AOS5PF9A>

Liszt further thickens the texture by including extra chords in both hands and using the triplet figure in the right hand as well as the left (Example below).



Example 2.7: Even fuller texture for the second phrase, mm. 23 – 24.



Sia lo. - de e - ter. - na, Car. - lo, al tuo

Sia lo. - de e - ter. - na, Car. - lo, al tuo

Sia lo. - de e - ter. - na, Car. - lo, al tuo

Sia lo. - de e - ter. - na, Car. - lo, al tuo

Oh mie spe - ran - ze vin - te, non

Sia lo. - de e - ter. - na, Car. - lo, al tuo

Sia lo. - de e - ter. - na, Car. - lo, al tuo

Sia lo. - de e - ter. - na, Car. - lo, al tuo

Sia lo. - de e - ter. - na, Car. - lo, al tuo

Example 2.8: Verdi's chorus part with sextuplet accompaniment, 2 bars before rehearsal mark 94.

Example 8 contains full chorus and an interesting sextuplet figure in the cellos, bassoons and the double basses. Liszt transcribes these passages as double octaves, which occur in between the melody tones, and does not use the original sextuplet pitches. Therefore, there is not a continuous line of sextuplets in the piano transcription but small groups of sextuplets interspersed within the melody. Liszt also alters the rhythm of the melody to turn it into a trumpet-like fanfare:

Example 2.9: Liszt's transcription of both sextuplet figures and chorus part, mm. 25-27.

It is easy to see where Liszt altered the theme and the important sextuplet figures. By interspersing these two elements, he gives the illusion that the sextuplet figures do not cease but rather are forced into the background by the 'chorus entry'. This is similar to what happens in the opera: when the chorus enters the listener automatically focuses on their part, which is more melodic. Even though the sextuplet figure is unceasing in the opera setting it fades from the listener's conscious attention until the chorus has a rest in their part. This is the effect being reproduced here on the piano.



Example 2.10: Return of the first theme with harp-like flourishes, end of m. 32

The original triplet accompaniment in the harp (at the beginning of the aria) is transformed into a sextuplet figure when the main theme returns. Liszt has transformed this into a rapid (marked *piano* and *rapido*) figure comprising of 8 notes (three 32<sup>nd</sup> notes followed by a quintuplet) and maintains the original triplet figure in the bass. This flourish of notes is again reminiscent of the quick arpeggio that is so characteristic of harp writing in opera and symphonic works. The main theme remains in the same register as before mirroring the baritone soloist. The text is a repeat of the first phrase where the King sings to Charlemagne.



Example 2.11: Liszt’s cadenza before the entry of the second theme, m. 40.

This cadenza added by Liszt is, again, seemingly harp<sup>47</sup> inspired. The descending chromatic scales combined with cross-rhythms create a ‘chromatic glissando’ effect which, combined with the markings of “always very light and very soft” create a shimmering effect. Blending these two lines equally in terms of dynamics and applying pedal will create the desired effect. The descent from the very top of the keyboard may also allow the pianist to push the tempo slightly to create a cascade of notes.

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<sup>47</sup> For more information regarding Liszt’s history with the harp see: Vanessa Renee Sheldon, “Franz Liszt and the Harp: An examination of his lifelong interactions with harpists and transcriptions of four solo piano compositions for harp” (DMA diss., University of Arizona, 2005).



Example 2.12: Liszt's transcription of the second theme, mm. 41 – 44.

The second theme begins in F major with the harp figure played in the bass and the baritone theme in the right hand. Don Carlo repeats his earlier affirmations of his intent to change. The second bar of this section is not full chorus yet (in the original opera) but is sung by Elvira and Ernani, doubled by the flute, oboe, and clarinet. They are admiring and praising the new King: “Il lauro auguste sulle tue chiome, acquista insolito, divin fulgor”<sup>48</sup>. Liszt imitates this passage by keeping the chords in the higher registers and calling for a color change with the *dolcissimo* marking. He also makes use of three-note chords whereas when transcribing a section of full chorus, he uses four-note chords. The *ritardando* and *fermata* Liszt includes are not written in the score but can be a typical interpretative gesture to make the most of this cadence.

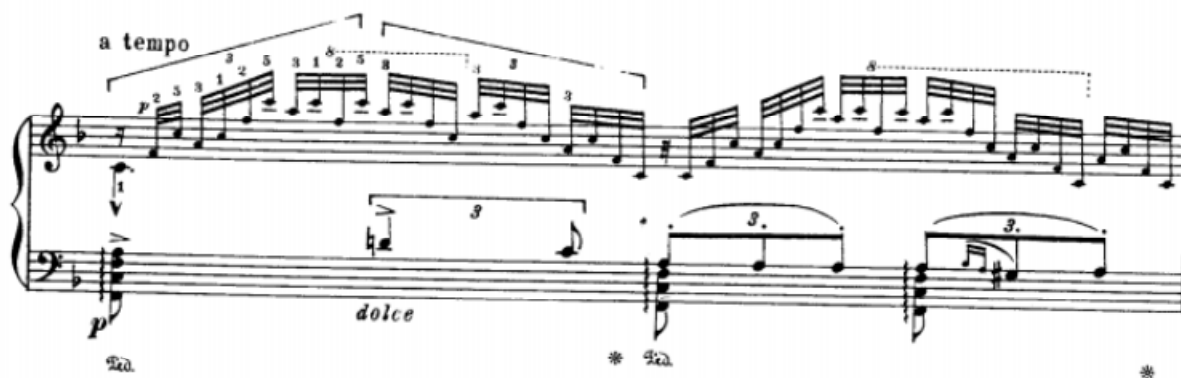
<sup>48</sup> The august laurel over your hair takes on an unusual and divine hue.

The image displays two systems of a piano score. The first system begins with the tempo marking 'a tempo' and dynamic markings 'ten.' (ritardando) and 'ff' (fortissimo). It includes the instruction 'marcatissimo' (marked). The second system features 'rit.' (ritardando), 'con somma passione' (with great passion), and 'più rit.' (more ritardando). It also includes 'rinforzando' (rinf.) and 'fff' (fortississimo). The score is characterized by intricate rhythmic figures, such as triplets and sixteenth-note runs, and large, wide-ranging chords.

Example 2.13: Liszt’s transition of the full chorus part after the second theme, mm. 45 – 48.

Liszt adds a transition bar leading towards the fortissimo chord in bar 46 which signals the entry of the full chorus and orchestra. The chorus praises Don Carlo again with the words “A Carlo Quinto sia gloria e onor!<sup>49</sup>” Again, Liszt makes use of large chords spread out over the range of the choir and orchestra to encompass nearly the full note range used by Verdi. The chromatic double octaves in the bass are an embellishment of the rising scale found in some of the lower-range instruments like the cellos, double basses, bassoons, and harps. Liszt also adds the *fermata* on the D-flat and the slight *ritardando* which is similar to the earlier excerpt in example 2.12 that exhibits similar markings and interpretative affect.

<sup>49</sup> Glory and honor to Charles the Fifth!



Example 2.14: Second theme returns with new accompaniment figure, m. 49.

The second theme returns and a new embellishment is used above the theme, which remains in the baritone register. The text here is the same as in example 2.12, affirmations of change from the King and the promise to pardon all. Each of these sections in the opera begins with the baritone alone with sparse orchestral accompaniment before the choir and remaining orchestra members join in in the next phrase. Liszt foregoes the original harp accompaniment in the bass and, instead, provides a variation of the same figure in the treble clef.



Example 2.15: Liszt adding chromatic harmonies, m. 52.

Liszt alters the cadential phrase by including chromatic movement and richer harmonies in the final four chords. He adds the marking *con slancio*, which means “with enthusiasm” and then *rinforzando* to drive home the final cadence of this section.

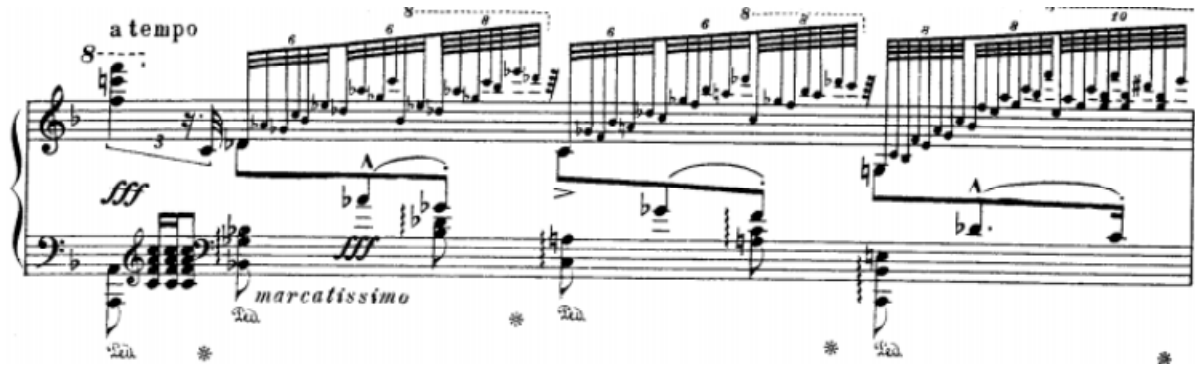


Example 2.16: Development of the sub-phrase (see example 2.17), mm. 57 – 58.

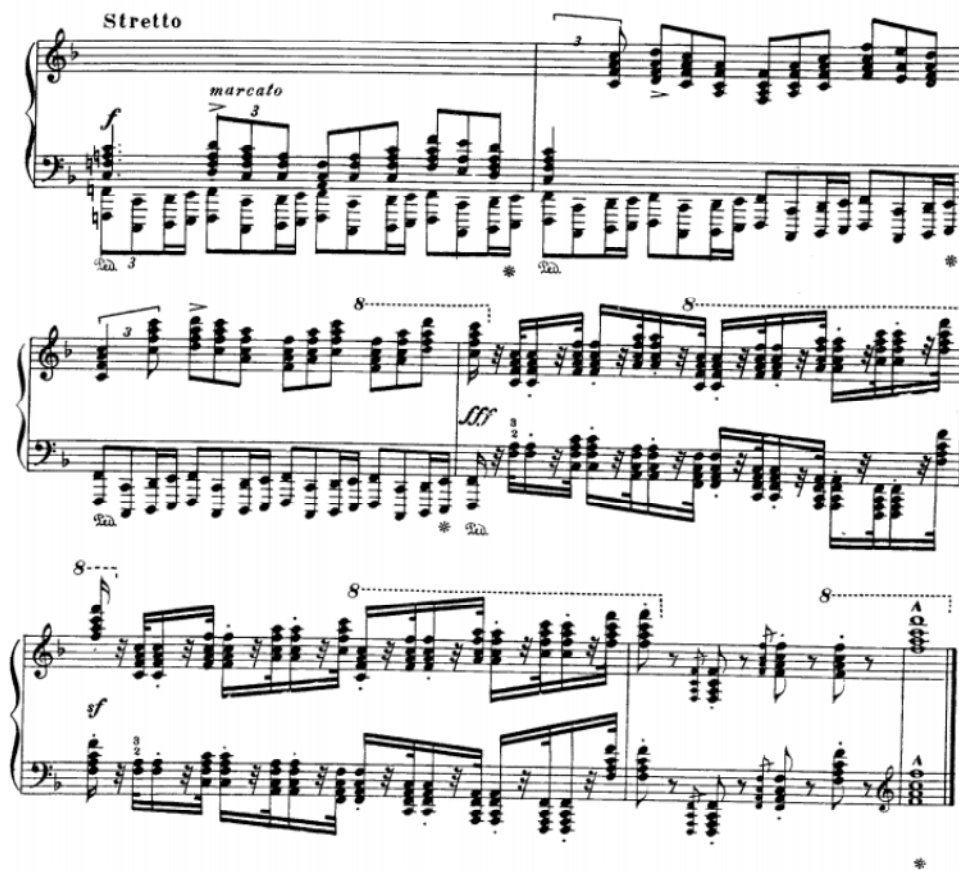
Example 2.17: The sub-phrase that Liszt chooses for his rising sequences, 6 bars before the end.



Liszt takes a sub-phrase (3 triplet figures with the last one containing a dotted rhythm) leading into bar 49 and expands and develops it. This motif forms a sequence that rises and modulates before returning to F major at the climax (example below), which heralds the sub-phrase in its original form.



Example 2.18: Same sub-phrase returns with virtuoso scale passages in the right-hand, m. 64.



Example 2.19: Liszt's finale, mm. 73 – 79.

Liszt takes the second phrase of the theme and turns it into a rising sequence. This sequence is capped off by two, contrary-motion chord passages (all are the tonic chord), which lead to the final declamatory chords. Verdi's ending is much more understated with two, short fanfare rhythms signaling the end. This particular scene is not the conclusion of the story, but rather a climactic moment within the story, which will then continue. Thus, I assume, Verdi would not have wanted to create a feeling of completion by writing a drawn-out cadence. It is most likely that Liszt, on the other hand, played this transcription along with unrelated pieces in a salon setting. The cadence in the transcription fulfills both the ending of a 'story' but also the theatrical function of a grand finale. These two different contexts inform the degree of closure at the end of these two pieces (the opera scene and the piano transcription). This rapid, rising sequence with an *ostinato*-type bass is typical of Liszt's finales and brings an exciting conclusion to a tumultuous transcription.

### 2.3 On Pianos and Pedaling

When considering the pedal markings of the opening (and indeed the rest of the work) the type of piano Liszt wrote for is of interest. Of all the piano makers that lived and operated in Europe during Liszt's time, he vastly preferred Erard. He once exclaimed in a post-concert letter to Erard that "...never before has a piano created such an effect"<sup>50</sup>. The Erard piano (pre-1860) was one of the more powerful pianos on offer in mainland Europe. There were several reasons why Liszt preferred this piano to its main rival, Pleyel. What he enjoyed most about the Erard was the projection power that it had. The Erard was a longer piano and had a new, sophisticated double-escapement action, which, thanks to the added leverage of the hammer, aided in sound projection. Erard also manufactured their hammers (using felt and buckskin for the head) to increase the amount of fundamental tone heard with each hammer strike<sup>51</sup>. The Erard piano was perfectly suited

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<sup>50</sup> Walker, *Liszt. Vol. 1*, 316.

<sup>51</sup> Robert Winter, "Orthodoxies, Paradoxes and Contradictions: Performance Practices in Nineteenth-Century Piano Music," in *19<sup>th</sup> Century Piano Music*, ed. R. Larry Todd (New York: Routledge, 2004), 24-29.

to larger halls, while the Pleyel was designed with the comforts of the salon in mind. The Erard fitted Liszt's exuberant, virtuosic style and catered to his need to be heard in the large concert halls by audiences of hundreds (sometimes thousands). Over the course of the century the piano's design increasingly evolved towards greater projection, more sustained sound, and uniform timbre across the registers.

As was stated earlier, Liszt may never have performed the *Ernani Paraphrase* in a public recital; in all likelihood, he performed it for friends in the comfort of his home. Liszt's home in Weimar contained a few different pianos, including Liszt's personal Erard grand piano, a Broadwood piano (which had belonged to Beethoven), and two Viennese grand pianos by Streicher and Bösendorfer<sup>52</sup>. It is not specified which piano was used for his home-based concerts but I assume it was his Erard which he still preferred. He was emotionally very attached to this piano as it had travelled everywhere with him during his touring years<sup>53</sup>.

Playing the pedal as marked on a modern piano makes the phrase sound very 'muddy'. Although I have not played on a Liszt-era piano before, I think that the Liszt-era piano would sustain the sound less effectively than a modern piano and that the indicated pedaling may have been adequate. Thus, a useful guideline would be to change the pedal on the strong beats when the harmony is the same or to change the pedal when the harmony changes. This will prevent the sound from becoming too chaotic and will improve clarity.

This can be viewed as another palimpsestic relationship, between performance traditions of Liszt's time and the contemporary performance tradition of which I am a part. Bearing this knowledge in mind will aid me as a modern performer in interpreting the markings in the score. For example, knowledge of pianos' capabilities in the middle 1800's will allow the realization that the

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<sup>52</sup> Walker. *Liszt Vol. 2*, 76-77.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

pedal markings in the opening were to maximize the resonance without compromising harmonic clarity. On the modern piano, to attain the same goal, a different pedal usage is required. The example below suggests a new pedaling to ensure maximum clarity on the modern piano. The added markings (by myself) are indicated inside a red box.



Example 2.20: New pedaling, mm. 6-8.

## 2.4 Conclusion

This chapter peeled away the various elements that provide the initial layers of the palimpsest. Understanding the place of the genre (piano transcriptions) in history, their place in the life of the composer, and then the place of the *Ernani Paraphrase* in relation to both, set up the historical and social context of the work. The relationship between the play, the opera, and the transcription form deeper layers of the palimpsest. In the next chapter a further layer will be added. This is a deeply personal layer, as it concerns itself with my functional and expressive embodiment of the various layers discovered thus far in the score.

### CHAPTER 3: EMBODIED EXPLORATIONS AS PREPARATION

The previous chapter concerned itself with an analysis of the score. Such engagement is an extremely important part of preparing a piece for performance. In this study, this analytical approach provides the first phase or the 'peeling away' of the layers of the palimpsest. Yet, all of this 'information' needs to be 'trans-formed' ('per-formed') across the medium of analysis into the medium of embodied acoustic presence. My embodied learning process (phase two) in the preparation of this piece is the focus of this chapter. It contributes to the 're-accumulation' of the layers of the palimpsest.

An integral part of my preparation is the exploration of how I will *embody the music in preparation for performance*<sup>54</sup>. This chapter thus documents, autoethnographically, my process of preparing the *Ernani Paraphrase* during my practice sessions. During this process, I deliberately engaged in embodied explorations as part of the learning process. As a bodyminded being<sup>55</sup>, my mindful engagement with functional information perceived through the body will influence my emotions and lead to expressive movements that will, in turn, influence my functional movements. From this perspective, it is thus apt to first provide definitions/descriptions of key concepts referred to in this chapter: embodiment, mindfulness and the interrelationship of function and expression.

#### 3.1 Embodiment

"Embodiment in performative pedagogical practices ... describes teaching and learning in acknowledgment of our bodies as whole experiential beings in motion, both inscribed and inscribing subjectivities"<sup>56</sup>. This is particularly relevant to the act of music making because the way we

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<sup>54</sup> A strong scholarly discourse around this process exists. See for example LeGuin (2006) as well as Chaffin and Imreh (2002).

<sup>55</sup> Following the monist approach of Spinoza, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. See for example Carrie Noland, *Agency and Embodiment: Performing gestures/producing culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009)

<sup>56</sup> Mia Perry and Carmen Medina, "Embodiment and Performance in Pedagogy Research" *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 27, no. 3 (2011): 63.

musicians listen to and perceive our actions during the practice sessions and in performance on stage may affect our performance. Thompson and Luck refer to this process as embodied music cognition and offer that it is a “...perpetual action–perception relationship involving the mind, body, and environment. At the crux of embodied music cognition, there is the gesture, which is produced in the physical world but is deemed meaningful through mental activation”<sup>57</sup>. Performing musicians constantly adjust their bodies to alter these gestures which, in turn, affect tempo, dynamics, timbre, and other elements as they perceive such adjustment to be necessary. As performers, we are reacting to our own experiences of ourselves in action. We do not separate our minds from our bodies; the realization that one *cannot* separate the two contributes significantly to the learning process. The body becomes the physical manifestation of the decisions the mind makes while simultaneously providing information to the mind. Body and mind are thus interlinked — a bodymind. They cannot be separated in life and therefore, *ipso facto*, are inseparable during music making. It is the inherent task, thus, of the performer to mindfully engage in the moment during practice sessions as well as during performance.

### 3.2 Mindfulness

Mindfulness, for the purpose of this project, is defined as “an active state of mind characterized by novel distinction-drawing that results in being (1) situated in the present; (2) sensitive to context and perspective; and (3) guided (but not governed by) by rules and routines”<sup>58</sup>. This implies that I must consciously and deliberately attend to the moment, drawing on the information I have gained through my analysis of the score and the various contextual layers unveiled by that process as well as my knowledge and skills as a pianist, in order to make small

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<sup>57</sup> Marc R. Thompson and Geoff Luck. “Exploring relationships between pianist’s body movements, their expressive intentions, and structural elements in music” *Musicae Scientiae* 16, no. 1 (2012): 3, accessed March 25, 2017, doi: 10.1177/1029864911423457

<sup>58</sup> Ellen J. Langer, Amande Le and Christelle T. Ngnoumen. *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Mindfulness*. West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons. 2014.n.p., accessed April 14, 2017, [https://books.google.com/books?id=0bMZAAQBAJ&pg=PT39&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=0bMZAAQBAJ&pg=PT39&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false)

distinctions in the embodied learning process. Such mindfulness is necessary in all phases from practicing to performance. By remaining in the present, the musician can reflect on<sup>59</sup> what they are doing and can modify their actions accordingly. This reflection-in-action is indeed the norm for performing musicians<sup>60</sup>. It is this mindfulness that will allow me to consider what my body is doing while I play and consciously adjust my movements to decrease tension<sup>61</sup>, be more economical with my functional movements that will contribute to enhanced expression, and simultaneously be open to any emotional experience. It is the interrelationship between function and expression, as a continuous bodymind feedback loop, that is mindfully engaged with in this process.

### 3.3 Function and Expression

Hackney<sup>62</sup> indicates that function and expression are interrelated and that this interrelatedness facilitates meaning. Halprin offers that "...the physical body gives us a literal and concrete structure that expresses who we are, so every part and function of the body can also be understood as metaphors for the expressions of our being"<sup>63</sup>. From the field of music, Windsor<sup>64</sup> refers to the functional and expressive actions or gestures in music making<sup>65</sup>. In the embodied learning process of the piece/music, these two interwoven dynamics thus gain prominence:

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<sup>59</sup> See Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in Action* (New York: Basic Book Inc., 1983), 46.

<sup>60</sup> Terry Clark, Tania Lisboa and Aaron Williamon. 2014. "An investigation into musicians' thoughts and perceptions during performance," *Research Studies in Music Education* 36, no. 1(2014): 19-37. Accessed April 30, 2017, doi: 10.1177/1321103X14523531.

<sup>61</sup> De la Cruz & Rodríguez-Carvajal comment on mindfulness combatting "music performance anxiety" and contributing to "music performance quality" (2014: 28, 31)

<sup>62</sup> Peggy Hackney, *Making Connections: Total Body Integration through Bartenieff Fundamentals*. (New York: Routledge Publishers, 2002), 48.

<sup>63</sup> Daria Halprin, *The Expressive Body in Life, Art, and Therapy* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 2003), 17.

<sup>64</sup> W. Luke Windsor, "Gestures in music-making: action, information and perception" in *New Perspectives on Music and Gesture*, ed. Anthony Gritten and Elaine King (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 46-47.

<sup>65</sup> It should be noted that he does not use the terms 'function' and 'expression' but refers to "Action in Music". Action, according to Windsor, is either responsible for the actual making of the sound or for feeding into the musicality of the sound.

the 'functional body' in relation to the piano and the 'expressive body' that understands and responds to the emotional qualities captured in the music. These two strands are in an active relationship during performance, as they determine what I physically need to do to achieve the auditory ideas and choices conjured by my preliminary analysis of the opera aria and the score of the transcription. A further layer accumulates through appropriate observations of how I, in the moment of playing, emotionally respond to the impulses of the sound that I am creating. LeGuin<sup>66</sup> posits the interrelationship between the musician's movement and emotional engagement with, or experience of, the music which in turn influences movement. This concept attests to the importance of embodiment and the importance thereof in music making. I assume that the mindful, interactive process will affect me once I am not consciously paying attention to the embodied functional and expressive processes, but am engaging in the music making experience. My assumption is based on the four levels of learning, namely unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence and unconscious competence<sup>67</sup>. Once I have reached the level of unconscious competence, the mindfulness feedback loop becomes ingrained and I will immerse myself in the music making moment to such an extent that I will, seemingly automatically, enter an affective state.

In my mind, this concept does not refer to 'theatrical' movements, possible 'add-on' movements intended to convey, demonstrate or 'signal' emotion to the audience 'eye', but to expending only enough functional and expressive movements, and gestures to realize the auditory soundscape of the story that I aim to tell<sup>68</sup>. Any excess energy added for pure 'showmanship' with the purpose of impressing the audience only serves as an obstacle and either has the potential to

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<sup>66</sup> Elisabeth LeGuin, *Boccherini's Body: An Essay in Carnal Musicology* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 5.

<sup>67</sup> These four levels are used in NLP (Bob G. Bodenhamer and L. Michael Hall, *The User's Manual for the Brain: The complete Manual for Neuro-Linguistic Programming Practitioner Certification* (Wales: Crown House, 2007), 191.). The origin of these levels is vague but is contributed to Maslow (Howard Hendricks, *Color Outside the Lines* (Nashville: W. Publishing, 2002), 75.).

<sup>68</sup> This is aligned with Nusseck and Wanderley's (2009: 335) argument that such movement should support musical expressivity.



remove me from my musical narrative. This may manifest itself as unnecessary tension which may lead to lack of musical control (and, in effect, possible loss or lack of musicality) or, over time, impede my health. In my opinion, playing virtuoso music in an economical but efficient way (that is, through an optimal functional and expressive interaction) is a very effective ‘theatrical’ effect, thus giving the illusion of absolute ease<sup>69</sup>. In this sense, I recognize that I am possibly at odds with Liszt’s usage of “theatricality and showmanship”<sup>70</sup>. According to Leistra-Jones, Fay posits that Liszt was “flamboyant [and made use of] larger-than-life gestures”<sup>71</sup> to engage his audience, an approach that served Liszt’s needs.

### **3.4 The movement approaches accessed in my embodied preparation**

With consideration of embodiment one should acknowledge the role of anatomy and physiology, thus the body as instrument. The biomechanics of muscle movement, joints and tendons are the fundamental elements that form and inform the movements. Within the field of piano playing this is a well-established area of research<sup>72</sup>. This study is however not focused on this mechanical aspect of movement in piano playing and will, instead, focus on the function and expression of various movements and how they affect the music. The score places certain demands on my unique body. In reading the score and executing the knowledge gained so far through the analytical research done, I must draw on certain functional movements to support my expressive choices. Many of the functional choices I make are influenced by the uniqueness of my body in

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<sup>69</sup> I acknowledge the work of Davidson in the field of the effect of the pianist’s gesture on the experience of the audience (see for example Davidson 2007 as well as 2002). A discussion on this aspect of performance falls outside the scope of this study.

<sup>70</sup> Janita R. Hall-Swadley, trans., *The Collected Writing of Franz Liszt: F. Chopin* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 33.

<sup>71</sup> Karen Lesitra-Jones, “Staging authenticity: Joachim, Brahms, and the Politics of *Werktreue* Performance,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 66, no.2(2013): 425.

<sup>72</sup> See Jennifer MacRitchie, “The art and science behind piano touch: a review connecting multi-disciplinary literature,” *Musicae Scientiae* 19, no.2(2015):171-190, accessed March 20, 2017, doi:10.1177/1029864915572813.

terms of, for example, build, height and length of arms. Thus, inevitably, what occurs in this study is that I share of myself, and the approach is based on my personal uniqueness (and therefore is a case study) in how these various principles may be applied. Due to each pianist's personal uniqueness, unique choices will be made. My decision-making process may be of value to other pianists.

### 3.4.1 Alexander technique

The Alexander Technique is an approach often employed by musicians<sup>73</sup> to release tension. I had training in this approach prior to and during my DMA studies. The official description of the approach from the American Society of Alexander Teachers is as follows: "The Alexander Technique is an educational method used worldwide for well over 100 years. By teaching how to change faulty postural habits, it enables improved mobility, posture, performance and alertness along with relief of chronic stiffness, tension and stress"<sup>74</sup>.

I engage with concepts within the Alexander Technique with the specific purpose of enhancing my body integration and mobility during my piano performance. There are two concepts from Alexander that are particularly useful to me when considering the body, and more specifically, body integration during music making. These are Primary Control and Inhibition. *Primary Control* refers to the relationship between the head, neck and torso. Alexander found that the head-neck-torso relationship has a profound effect on how the body functions as a whole. As Gelb states: "The Primary Control is a dynamic, ever-changing relationship that functions all the time, for better or worse, in every position"<sup>75</sup>. Consciously using Primary Control to inform movements during performance will allow my entire body to work more effectively and with greater ease.

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<sup>73</sup> Evidence of this can be found in various sources such as Edzard and Canter (2004), Kleinman and Buckoke (2013) and Valentine (2004).

<sup>74</sup> "Overview of the Alexander Technique," accessed March 3, 2017, <http://www.amsatonline.org/overview-alexander-technique>

<sup>75</sup> Michael J. Gelb, *Body Learning* (Holt Paperbacks: New York, 1994), 44.

*Inhibition*<sup>76</sup> refers to consciously halting a stereotypical (and typically negative) habitual response to a certain stimulus, allowing the time for a more appropriate (and functionally positive) response to be initiated. Inhibition should be mindfully activated before the performance takes place but can also happen during the performance. For example, my initial reaction to making a mistake will be to tighten my shoulders. By being aware of this and practicing inhibition I can mindfully override this habitual tension pattern and consciously remind myself to stay relaxed.

### **3.4.2 Laban Movement Studies (LMS)**

LMS is a comprehensive movement approach for (among other things) describing, interpreting, and eliciting human movement patterns in their infinite variations towards a multimodal efficiency and ease. Laban Movement Studies is gaining popularity amongst musicians as it is an action-based movement approach that provides musicians with a skillset that supports both functionality and expressivity during music making<sup>77</sup>. The official website of the Laban Institute of Movement Studies in New York indicates that this approach makes “a difference in the way people perform, communicate, observe, learn, and negotiate”<sup>78</sup>.

I have experience applying LMS to piano performance<sup>79</sup>. From my personal experience with LMS, I agree that it influences the way I learn and perform. The approach is multi-dimensional and consists of four main categories. The division between the four categories is acknowledged as artificial and for the sake of description and acquisition only. The four categories are Body, Effort,

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<sup>76</sup> Gelb, *Body Learning*, 59.

<sup>77</sup> Evidence of this can be found in the use of LMS in piano playing (Davidson 2007), conducting (Aubin 2010), marimba playing (Broughton & Stevens 2012; Broughton & Davidson 2016), cello performance (Schacher, Järveläinen & Strinning 2015) and clarinet playing (Chagnon, Campbell & Wanderley 2005).

<sup>78</sup> “About LIMS.” <http://www.limsonline.org/about-lims%C2%AE>, accessed March 2, 2017.

<sup>79</sup> The LMS group in South Africa is actively doing research on the application of LMS in various embodied performance practices for example Acting, Physical Theatre, Ballet, Piano teaching, Screendance and Scriptwriting. I acknowledge that I have been influenced by them. I specifically refer here to the work of Anchen Froneman on embodied well-being for musicians (2014) and musical performance (2015).

Space and Shape (BESS)<sup>80</sup>. For the purpose of this study, I will discuss them in the order of Body, Space, Shape and Effort as it is the order in which I initially utilize them when preparing a piece for performance. Similarly, I only highlight the aspects of the four categories that contribute to my embodied learning process.

## Body

Body draws upon the 12 Fundamental principles of movement as described by Bartenieff<sup>81</sup>. They describe movement structurally and intrinsically while acknowledging the physical characteristics of movement. Body deals with what is moving and how it is moving. The principles that will be most relevant to me as a pianist (and provided here in no specific order) are:

1. **Total Body Connectivity:** the idea that the entire body is connected and all parts of the body are related to each other in symbiosis. A change in one part will, therefore, affect the other parts in turn.
2. **Breath Support:** Breath brings energy and phrasing to movement but also serves to support brain activity and can regulate a performer's energy. This fosters the development of states like calmness or excitation. One can increase or decrease one's energy through breath while performing. Breath can thus also be used as a 'relaxation-in-motion' tool while performing.
3. **Intent:** Having a clear intent behind every movement allows for the most efficient movement pattern to be identified on neuromuscular levels, bringing that intent to life. Intent allows for function to support expression. Intent also influences the use of Body, Space, Shape and Effort and determines phrasing of movements.

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<sup>80</sup> Karen Bradley. *Rudolf Laban*. (New York: Routledge Publishers, 2009), 67.

<sup>81</sup> Hackney. *Making Connections*, 42-43.

4. **Stability-Mobility:** Effective movement consists of body parts that stabilize and body parts that are mobile. For example, in piano playing the shoulders stay relatively stable while the elbows, wrists and hands remain mobile. It is important not to confuse stability with rigidity. Stability and mobility are continuously present due to the constant effect of gravity on the body.
5. **Exertion-Recuperation:** This is an essential part of effective movement. Without a recuperation phase the neuromuscular system can simply not continue to function at its highest level. Recuperation, however swift, is a necessary. Exertion-recuperation leads to effective agility, phrasing and musicality in playing.
6. **Personal Uniqueness:** This refers to the personal nature of an individual's movement patterns. My personal uniqueness is constructed (and continuously being constructed by) my lived experiences, thus by my personal history. It is also determined by my physical body shape, length, depth, and width. This will influence how I move in relation to the piano and the demands of the piece. My lived experiences, for the purpose of this study, do not need to be examined in depth but the movement goals I seek to attain when performing will need to be specifically tailored according to my personally unique attributes, just as they would need to be for any pianist.

Body furthermore promotes a dynamic alignment (including for example, an awareness of a head-tail orientation) that allows for optimal function and expression as the “architecture of our body exists harmoniously within the larger context of the architecture of space”<sup>82</sup>. In this process, I add the architecture of both the piano and of the *Ernani Paraphrase*.

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<sup>82</sup> Karen Studd and Laura Cox, *Everybody is a Body* (Indianapolis: Dog Ear Publishing, 2013), 45.

## Space

Space refers to the environment in which the movement takes place. It deals with where the body is moving in relation to itself. Within the Laban lexicon there is a difference between the “kinesphere”<sup>83</sup> as personal functional ‘reach space’, ‘general space’ which is the general environment and the ‘dynamosphere’ which is the space that the mover engages with through intent, thus also the sphere in which one expresses emotion. This spatial orientation and use are determined by the instrument that I play. In my case, I access a specific area of my ‘kinesphere’ and this area is also my ‘dynamosphere’. My movement is limited to my seat on the piano bench, to my legs which extend to the pedals, and to the extremities of the keyboard upon which I perform. As limiting as it may seem, I am often surprised by how much space for function and expression I actually have at the piano. As a pianist, I am generally more occupied with the technical difficulties of piano playing and generally do not consider the reach space I possess within which to perform these technical demands. Before actively engaging with this approach, I perceived myself as only a pair of hands at a keyboard. Thinking about my body in its ‘kinesphere’, my relation to the piano and the necessary movement within a larger reach space gives me a sense of freedom in movement and contributes to my use of exertion-recuperation and stability-mobility.

With Space, various orientations in the spheres are acknowledged, for example the three dimensions of vertical (high and low), horizontal (right and left) and sagittal (forward and backward). Two dimensions can combine to form a plane. The Horizontal plane is a combination of the horizontal and sagittal dimensions, with horizontal being the primary dimension e.g. left forward as an orientation. The other two planes are the Sagittal plane (Sagittal and Vertical i.e. forward low as an orientation) and the Vertical plane (Vertical and Horizontal e.g. right side high)<sup>84</sup>. Three

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<sup>83</sup> Ciane Fernandes, *The Moving Researcher: Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis in Performing Arts Education and Creative Arts Therapies* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishing, 2015), 199.

<sup>84</sup> Studd and Cox. *Everybody is a body*, 107 – 113.

dimensions combine to create a diagonal for example right-forward-high or left-forward-low. The three dimensions are of equal importance in the diagonals. An awareness of where in space I must execute a movement, assists in how I prepare and use my body on a functional level. This also contributes to economy as well as to supporting expressive possibilities. Due to the design and placement of the piano, the 'dynamosphere' that I function in during playing is forward, with an orientation towards left forward middle and right forward middle. My active use of weight<sup>85</sup> takes place in a vertical high and low or forward-low orientation. There is thus an active relationship between my intent and the use of my body for both function and expression in space.

### Shape

Shape refers to how the body responds in relation to an external stimulus, usually another individual or the environment<sup>86</sup>. Shape is determined by actively engaging in relationships. With specific reference to piano playing, shaping of the body happens in relation to the piano and the musical demands of the piece. Shaping is determined by the relationship between the inner and the outer (in Laban terms) and is not something that is added from the outside to create an emotive effect. Shaping thus takes place between the body and the space in which the body functions. This implies that the personal and unique physical attributes of my body will strongly influence how I will shape in relation to the piano when playing. The physical reaction, the shaping of the body in space in accordance to the demands of the music and my emotional response to it, is thus positively contributing to the shaping of the sound. Shape serves both the functional body and the expressive body in performance.

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<sup>85</sup> To be illuminated upon under Effort below.

<sup>86</sup> Hackney. *Making Connections*, 221.

Studd and Cox offer that directional shape is a result of the “mover’s intent directed outward to the world”<sup>87</sup>. Directional shape changes are referred to as being ‘spoke-like’ or ‘arc-like’. Spoke-like directional shape changes are straight/linear movements with a body part or body parts<sup>88</sup> that create a linear pathway from the center of the body. Due to the hammer action of the piano, spoke-like movements will always be present in playing the piano. Arc-like directional shape changes are movements with a body part or body parts that create a curved pathway in space<sup>89</sup>. Arc-like movements during piano playing may be present when one must move laterally to cover a specific range, for example in an arpeggio. An arc-like movement may result in rotation of the specific body part. Directional shape changes will thus be prominent in music making where there is a relationship with an instrument.

Shape qualities within the Laban lexicon are rising, sinking, enclosing, spreading, advancing, and retreating<sup>90</sup>. Shape qualities are present when the performer mindfully engages with the music for both functional and expressive reasons. As Studd and Cox indicate: “Shape is simultaneously expressive and functional”<sup>91</sup>. This is the type of shaping that I will be mindfully engaging with when I am in the process of learning this piece.

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<sup>87</sup> Studd and Cox, *Everybody is a body*, 97.

<sup>88</sup> Fernandes, *The Moving Researcher*, 188.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>90</sup> Hackney. *Making Connections*, 242-243.

<sup>91</sup> Studd and Cox, *Everybody is a body*, 102.



## Effort

Effort is related to the German word *antrieb*<sup>92</sup>, and refers to both the emotional and cognitive intent of the mover. Effort, according to Studd and Cox is the “quality and dynamics”<sup>93</sup> of movement and it embodies intent through the interrelationship of function and expression. Effort deals with the “mover’s attitude”<sup>94</sup> during the action. Laban defined ways in which intent is executed and provides four Effort factors which describe various facets of the movement. These are flow, weight, space, and time. *Flow* describes the continuum of the movement; for example, is the movement uninterrupted or does it stop before continuing? The poles of flow are ‘free’ and ‘bound,’ where free flow suggests a continuity of movement, whereas bound flow offers a regularity of stopping and starting. *Weight* refers to the active relationship with gravity and the application of power<sup>95</sup>. Put another way, weight refers to the application of ‘force’ to achieve a goal. The poles of weight are ‘strong’ and ‘light’. Weight is an essential element of piano playing as it embodies dynamic intent and thus will be a very important element for me to consider. How much weight or power do I want for a big sound? Or how lightly should I play to achieve a delicate sensitivity? The Effort category of *space* refers to how the body engages with the space to embody intent – in a single, directional or multi-focused manner. The polar elements of Effort space are referred to as ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’. Do I have a direct or indirect orientation to the piano, acknowledging that, for accuracy of notes, my orientation will always have to be somewhat direct? *Time* refers to how slowly or quickly a movement takes places. Is it a very quick movement (like an accent) or is it a sustained movement (e.g. a legato phrase)? How do these time opposites feel in my body? Effort directly relates to the expressional embodied understanding of (and responding to) the intent embedded in

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<sup>92</sup> Irmgard Bartenieff and Dori Lewis, *Body Movement: Coping with the Environment* (Langhorne: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1980), 51.

<sup>93</sup> Studd and Cox, *Everybody is a body*, 81.

<sup>94</sup> Hackney. *Making Connections*, 218.

<sup>95</sup> Studd and Cox, *Everybody is a body*, 84.

the music. Combinations of the various effort categories such as strong weight, direct effort space and quick time, may be used to effectively embody the intent of a phrase.

My experiencing of, and engagement with, the concepts of Body, Space, Shape and Effort are, of course, dependent upon my personal uniqueness (see above). Thus, it is certain that this will resonate with my discoveries of the performance possibilities of the transcription, as will my actual performance. This will also provide insight into how these principles and techniques may be applied by other musicians.

During my embodied explorations in engagement with the transcription (and the impulses and insights that have arisen from the analysis) I will, for example:

- consider when to purposefully, with functional and expressive intent/effort, following the palimpsestic analysis and the performative/personal impulses, lean forward to actively engage with more strong weight in a *forte* passage;
- determine where to apply mindful relaxation of my muscles and ‘soften’ in my body to support optimal function (performative functionality with regards to the particular passage) towards expression (the ‘shaping’ of the sound) when I find a passage particularly challenging;
- determine where I need to actively engage in the lateral shifting on the piano seat to access the extremes (matter of space, thus engaging with the ‘kinesphere’ and the ‘dynamosphere’) of the keyboard – a functional/bodily demand for playing, as well as an exploration of my personal and musical ‘dynamosphere’ at that moment<sup>96</sup>;

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<sup>96</sup> It is reasonable to assume that Liszt, as he prepared his transcription, would have, either physically or virtually, placed himself (with his ‘performance body’) in front of the piano to engage with a similar type of process that I will need to go through. Yet his ‘lived experience’ is not mine, and his body is not mine, of course. Therefore, personal uniquenesses are going to be present.

- determine how I will shape my body in relation to the piano to shape the sound that I want to portray.

At the piano, functionally, I need freedom to pivot my upper body (the Body category of LMS), shift laterally to reach the extremes of the keyboard (the Space category of LMS) and expressively engage the orientation of my upper body relative to the piano to achieve different sounds, qualities and dynamics. This knowledge can only be determined through a process of embodied exploration regarding both my functional body and my expressive body

### **3.5 Embodied practice and autoethnographic process**

As this part of the preparation is autoethnographic and intensely personal, I made use of journaling as a way of reflecting in and on action<sup>97</sup>. Journaling is “a purposeful process and framework for helping expose and explore various models of practice, encourage interdisciplinarity and collaboration, extend professionalism and have more effective communication with ourselves”<sup>98</sup>. Journaling is a useful way of documenting and tracking the trajectory of the learning process, and identifying processes and anomalies. At times, during the learning process I made cryptic notes while I was practicing, thus reflecting in action. On most occasions, though, I wrote down directly after the practice session what I recalled, thus reflecting on action. Revisiting the journaling assisted me to determine where my focus was during each session, which obstacles I encountered, and how I mindfully engaged BESS to overcome them. It also tracks how I used and perceived my body in both its functional and expressive uses, and how these two categories coalesce. It certainly contributed to my personal understanding of the process of embodied learning where my bodymind was actively engaged in action.

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<sup>97</sup> Carole Gray and Julian Malins, *Visualizing Research: A guide to the research process in Art and Design* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), 114.

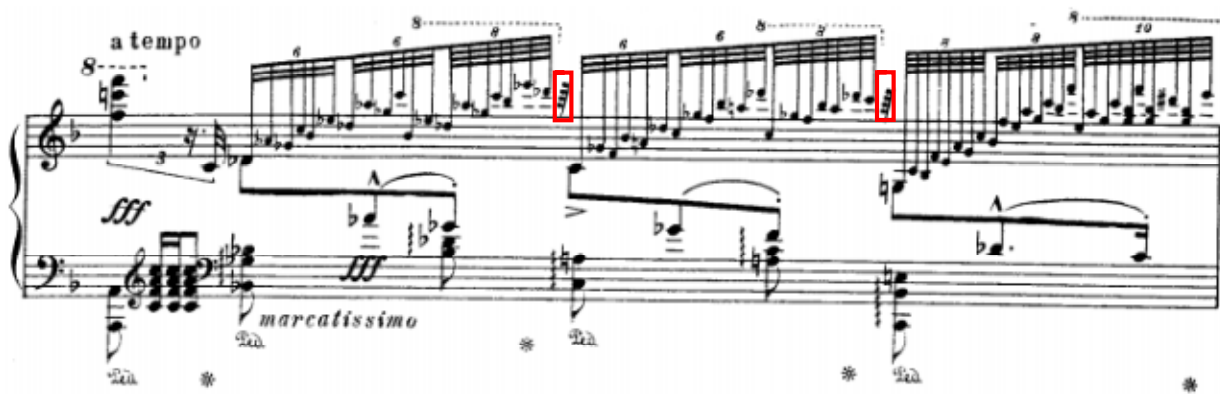
<sup>98</sup> Gray and Malins, *Visualizing Research*, 113.

The next two sections use my journal entries to capture my mindful engagement with the functional and expressive demands of the *Ernani Paraphrase*, through a process of embodied learning in practice.

### 3.5.1 Drawing on the Alexander Technique during my embodied practice process

In general, I mindfully engage with the two Alexander principles that I have mentioned above, namely primary control and inhibition. Revisiting my journal entries, I observe that I start each practice session focusing on primary control, thus releasing my head-neck-torso relationship. I center myself by focusing on my breathing and mindfully checking that there is no unnecessary tension in my body. My anxiety is often generated by focusing on the future which is, inherently, uncertain. Thus, focusing on my body and how it feels, and consciously relaxing my muscles where necessary, allows me to situate myself in the present. In this way, mechanical obstacles are addressed and removed, so that I can function optimally, and in so doing, preparing my body for expressive engagement.

I observed that when I found a passage difficult, I deliberately engaged with Alexander's concept of inhibition. An example of this is bar 72.



Example 3.1: m. 72.

Examples of using inhibition in this bar may be found both at the beginning of the bar (before the arpeggios begin) and the momentary rests for the right hand (see the rests in the two

red rectangles). I breathe deeply before beginning these arpeggios, attempting to take one breath per arpeggio. The left-hand chords in the first beat allow me the opportunity to mindfully inhibit my habitual response to a difficult passage, which is to 'tense up' when I have to play at such a speed and over such a range of the piano. These chords allow me to focus my mind, relax my body (particularly my right arm which is about to perform the difficult arpeggios), and to center my body in preparation for the following passage. Furthermore, although these rests are both very quick and thus afford almost no time, I can inhibit my habitual response before each arpeggio as well. They may also be evidence that Liszt understood the need for these lightning-quick recuperation moments as these rests are barely audible in the actual performance.

### **3.5.2 Drawing on Laban Movement Studies during my embodied practice process**

While revisiting my journal entries, I realize that my initial concern was with function and as such, most of my attention was on Body and Space, thus the *what* and the *where* of the movement. As the embodied practice process progresses, my attention shifts towards expression and I deliberately engage with the active use of Shape and Effort. The journal analysis suggests that I shift focus to the emerging relationship between myself and the piece/score, and to my dynamic physical engagement with this process. As the process continues I engage all four LMS categories simultaneously (BESS). At times, I seem to pay more mindful attention to one aspect rather than another but mostly the use of BESS becomes interwoven and acts as an impulse for my emotional involvement with the piece.

Below I present three examples taken from the score to demonstrate how I mindfully engaged with Body, Space, Effort and Shape in order to find effective function and expression in the embodied learning process. I am not providing an in-depth analysis of all the BESS elements that I do draw on but only those that I mindfully accessed to reach effective function and expression. Following these examples, I will then proceed to summarize what elements of these four sections

were prominent throughout this process.

Example 3.2: upbeat and mm. 1 – 4.

In the introduction, I begin centered on both sitzbones<sup>99</sup>, mindfully aware of my dynamic alignment. In the upbeat, I access strong weight and direct effort space. I use my breath to both center myself and prepare for the *forte* passages. Breathing in on the upbeat and out on the triplets leading to the *sforzando* markings aids my need for releasing weight ‘into’ the keyboard. With the *tenuto* in bar one I am aware of a strong, direct and sustained effort orientation. As the chords rise to their climaxes I will make a lateral weight shift towards the right side of the keyboard, playing in the higher registers while maintaining an optimal relationship with the piano relative to my personal unique body frame. I play the first chord of the triplet with a lighter weight, after which each subsequent chord will be played with a stronger weight than the one before to create a broad crescendo to the *sforzando* chord. Leaning forward from the hip joint, slightly rocking forward on my sitzbones and grounding through my feet allows me to access more power. Releasing my shoulders

<sup>99</sup> Colloquially, within the Laban lexicon, the ischial tuberosities are referred to as the sitzbones. ‘Sitzbone’ is the spelling that Hackney (*Making Connections*, 9) provides and will be used here.

and engaging with relative stability, allows me to add more weight to each action. With the *sforzando*, I mindfully engage with bound flow and then retreat. In the rest on the second half of beat 3, I afford myself a moment of recuperation and mindfully engage with my breath. Before each new sub-phrase, I re-center myself before repeating the process. The *fermata* (marked with a red rectangle in example 3.2) is a wonderful moment for recuperation before delving into the main theme. It can also be used to create expectation and curiosity in the audience which is a powerful affective tool — both expectation and curiosity are classical purposes for the *fermata*. The descending double octaves (in bar 4) to the entry of the left-hand accompaniment will require a lateral weight shift to the left.



Example 3.3: mm. 25-27.

In the phrase above, there are two elements to consider: the fanfare motif in the upper registers and the sextuplet figure in the lower registers. Once again, lateral weight shifts are necessary to adequately position myself in front of the required notes during the shifts in register and maintain an effective relationship with the piano. These lateral weight shifts are specifically necessary due to the design of my physical body. This implies that I shift my weight more towards

my left sitzbone for the lower register sextuplet and gradually execute a lateral shift through my center towards the right for the fanfare motif. A mindful engagement with my dynamic alignment and awareness of a head-tail connectivity is necessary to execute this movement with fluidity. In this passage, it is important to maintain flexible wrist movement and relaxed forearms. I thus need mobility in my arms and relative stability in my shoulders. To play these repetitive motions and notes, the movement is initiated from my core abdominal area, drawing on the concept of total body connectivity. After each note the forearm tension is released momentarily before the next spoke-like attack which is executed with a direct effort space and slight bound flow for preciseness. This action relies on an exertion/recuperation pattern which occurs with each repetition of this particular movement.

Weight differentiation between the fanfare motif and the sextuplet figures highlight their respective orchestral origins i.e. full chorus and full orchestra vs. low strings and woodwinds (small part of the orchestra). I actively employ stability through my heels, I shape my trunk towards right-forward-middle, accessing full embodiment of strong weight and a direct effort space towards right-forward-low on the fanfare in the upper registers (see for example the red rectangle in bar 25), to maximize volume and power. I embody a lighter use of weight at the start of the sextuplets allowing for a crescendo towards the end of the sextuplet.

For the last 5 chords in bar 27, I increase in direct effort space and strong weight usage with an awareness of sustained time and bound flow while playing each chord. I physically release after each chord towards vertical high with passive hands and fingers for recuperation as well as musical intent. It is important throughout this section to maintain stability through the feet and sitzbones. When playing the chords in the upper registers, the crown of the head will be orientated to right-forward-high and my torso will be orientated towards the right as I mindfully shape in relation to the piano.



This was one of the sections where I deliberately paid attention to my breath as a way to stay focused in the moment, reduce my tension and support the musical phrasing. I breathe in on the sextuplets and out on the fanfare motifs to aid in the releasing of strong weight into the keyboard.



Example 3.4: m. 52.

The chords in the above example are uncomfortable for me due to my hand size and finger length which can easily cause me to play them with too much tension. I use my breath to calm myself before this uncomfortable passage and breathe out as I play it to maintain my relaxation. The *fermata* affords me a chance to breathe in and catch my breath again. Although I can stretch a 10<sup>th</sup> on the piano, this chord configuration causes tension in my hand due to the outward rotation and the major third interval above the root note. My fingers should remain stable but not rigid and my wrist should maintain flexibility to allow a release after each chord. A direct effort space, a slight bound flow and a spoke-like orientation with an awareness of spreading through my palm aid in preciseness. The *con slancio*<sup>100</sup> indication calls for active engagement with strong weight which increases through the marked *crescendo*. The *rinforzando* calls for an active engagement with a sustained time orientation and direct effort space.

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<sup>100</sup> With enthusiasm.

### 3.6 Overview of mindful engagement of BESS in the embodied learning process

I have provided above (as indicated before) three examples from the score to demonstrate how I draw upon Body, Space, Shape and Effort in my embodied learning process. What I am providing now is another ‘reflection-on-action’ layer where I summarize what elements of each category I have mindfully engaged with, to maintain the “perpetual action-perception relationship”<sup>101</sup> in the embodiment of the *Ernani Paraphrase*.

#### 3.6.1 Body

I have previously offered the fundamental principles that I thought would be of specific importance during this process. Revisiting my journal notes and reflecting on how I play the piece now, I realize that I engage with some of them more than with others. They are all interwoven with or used in combination with the other LMS categories.

Total body connectivity is an important principle for me during piano playing in general. My experience is that all body parts are related and that a change in one part of my body does influence the other parts of my body. If I do a lateral shift on my sitzbones to change my relationship to the piano, I have more freedom of movement in my hands and fingers. I experienced dynamic alignment, with a specific awareness to my head-tail connection, contributing to effective functioning of my total body. It is here where, in my opinion, the Alexander Technique and LMS intersect. Primary control leads to an optimal head-tail relationship and to body connectivity. A lack of primary control impedes functionality in my whole body. Inhibition contributes to dynamic alignment and has a positive effect on my total body connectivity.

Actively engaging with breath is a failsafe way for me to facilitate inhibition. I used breath mindfully, before I start playing, but also during the piece as a ‘relaxation-in-motion’ strategy to calm

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<sup>101</sup>Marc R. Thompson and Geoff Luck. “Exploring relationships between pianist’s body movements, their expressive intentions, and structural elements in music” *Musicae Scientiae* 16, no. 1(2012): 3, accessed March 25, 2017, doi: 10.1177/1029864911423457

myself down. I also mindfully engage with breath to support and crystalize musical phrasing. From my journal entries and reflecting on how I now play the piece, I realize that I deliberately make use of breath for recuperation.

The principle of exertion-recuperation is one that I am in general aware of. It is necessary to mindfully make use of exertion-recuperation while playing the *Ernani Paraphrase*. Exertion in this piece is present physically, emotionally and intellectually, in the palimpsestic layers of operatic context and dramatic connotations. On a technical level there are moments that, due to my personal uniqueness, place demands on me as pianist. I must deliberately recuperate physically after certain phrases to be able to play the next phase effectively.

Again, here I am aware of the intersection between Alexander and Laban. The moments where I use recuperation are often the moments that I mindfully breathe and use inhibition to ensure that I do not carry tension over from the one phrase to the next. I often recuperate with actively shifting my body back to center to stabilize and ground my lower body so that I have mobility in my upper body.

The principle of stability-mobility is one that I mindfully accessed often in this embodied learning process. My personally unique physicality in relation to the piano does not allow for ease when dynamically reaching to the extremes of the piano or when I have to play with both hands in a single register. I do not have long arms or a long torso and thus must engage with lateral shifts and shaping in my torso to maintain an effective relationship with the piano. I cannot effectively execute a lateral shift, shape in my torso or reach with both hands to one side of the piano if I do not stabilize on my sitzbones and through my heels. Another very important aspect that I often mindfully engage with is the relative stability of my shoulders in order to have optimal mobility through my elbows, wrists, hands, and fingers.

During this embodied learning process, I was deeply aware of my personal uniqueness, especially my physical design and how that determined how I use all aspects of LMS. My length, depth and width, the size of my hands, length of my fingers, my habitual responses, anxieties, and tension patterns all directly influenced how I access the space in which I move and how I shape my body to maintain an optimal relationship with the piano. Without primary control, inhibition, and the four BESS categories, being so acutely aware of my personal unique attributes might have been negative. With the information and skills that these approaches provide, I was “guided by rules and routines”<sup>102</sup> to use my personal uniqueness as a positive in this embodied learning process of the *Ernani paraphrase*.

As BESS provides me with an action-based approach, I mindfully engaged in the embodied learning process and now when I play the piece, I mindfully employ the various actions to create the soundscape that I intend to share with my audience. In this process, I have an intention with each phrase and sub-phrase of the piece. Liszt had certain intentions when he composed this paraphrase. He drew from intentions that were embedded by Verdi in the aria. It is through my understanding and subsequent embodiment of these various intents that I create my auditory palimpsest of the *Ernani Paraphrase*.

### **3.6.2 Space**

Where in my ‘kinesphere’ I am orientated is determined by the structural demands of the piano. I primarily access four spatial orientations (forward-low, vertical low, left-forward-low and right-forward-low) when playing piano. As the piano is situated in front of me I am accessing my forward dimension. I do not pay deliberate attention to this as I take it as a given. I do, however at

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<sup>102</sup> Referring to the quote about mindfulness that I referred to from Ellen J. Langer, Amade Le and Christelle T. Ngnoumen, *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Mindfulness* (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2014), n.p., accessed April 14, 2017, [https://books.google.com/books?id=0bMZAwwAAQBAJ&pg=PT39&source=gbs\\_toc\\_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=0bMZAwwAAQBAJ&pg=PT39&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false)

times, mindfully engage with the forward-middle orientation when the score demands that I play in the middle register of the piano. The horizontal plane and specifically left-forward-middle and right-forward-middle were orientations in space that I paid attention to if the score required me to play in either the lower or higher registers (or both at the same time). These requirements determined that I orientate my body in relation to these spatial points.

I mindfully engage with spatial orientations during the embodied learning as awareness of these spatial orientations supported expressiveness, and lead to how I shaped my body in relation to the various areas on the piano. When I mindfully engage with these spatial orientations to express my intent, I thus created my 'dynamosphere'.

For preparation and recuperation before and in between playing actions, I mindfully engage in an orientation towards vertical high which counterbalances the low and forward-low orientations while aiding in releasing tension in my body. This recuperation is supported by orientating the crown of the head to forward high as I lean forward, rocking forward on my sitzbones to increase my engagement in my 'dynamosphere' and active use of strong weight. An awareness of my center provides a way to recuperate and prepare for the next exertion since the playing action (particularly when accessing strong weight) originates in my core.

### **3.6.3 Shape**

Shaping in my body primarily takes place in my torso and in my hands and lower arms. Due to my muscular build and short height I must mindfully shape my torso when playing in the extremities of the keyboard. Therefore, when doing a lateral weight shift on my sitzbones to a specific end of the keyboard I must also slightly rotate my torso to the same side to maintain an effective relationship between the piano and myself.

Directional shape changes are presented within LMS in two broad categories: spoke-like and arc-like. Spoke-like actions are present in playing due to the structure of the piano as instrument and

consequently how the piano is played (keys are depressed vertically and the release is vertical). Spoke-like actions are thus primarily functional and I do not pay attention to the functional use of directional spoke-like movements. I do, however, mindfully engage with directional spoke-like movements when they crystalize expressive elements, for example, *marcato* and *sforzando* markings or where accentuation of certain notes or chords is necessary — often in combination with strong weight and direct effort space.

Arc-like movement mimics how the music itself is written, in ‘horizontal’ (temporally extended) lines and phrases, again supporting the functional element. Simultaneously, arc-like movements provide fluidity and connectivity between notes and, in this manner, crystalize expression. This is often accessed during *legato* phrases or arpeggios where the arc-like motion aids in expression but also in accommodating the stretch between the individual notes.

Mindfully shaping my torso embodies two shape qualities namely spreading and enclosing. Spreading is mindfully executed when playing on opposite extremes of the piano simultaneously in order to optimally crystalize both functional and expressive needs. Enclosing as a shape quality is mindfully accessed when both hands play in same area of the piano (as close together as possible). Shape is indeed experienced by me as creating and maintaining an active and therefore dynamic relationship between myself and the piano. It is in this dynamic relationship that I mindfully embody effort.

#### **3.6.4 Effort**

As indicated before, Effort provides an action orientated way to embody dynamics and crystalize intent with specific emphasis on the emotional intent implied in the layers of the palimpsest. Mindful engagement of the effort actions provides an embodied way for me to share the emotions present in the aria, the emotions that Liszt foregrounded with this composition and my

responses to these. Through mindful engagement with effort actions I thus engage with the dynamics indicated in the score and my affective response to it.

The active use of weight (thus 'force'), within LMS, as indicated above, moves between two poles namely strong and light. Thus, weight refers here to an attitude adopted towards using the 'weight' of the body in a particular way (with a strong orientation or a light orientation and any gradations between). In this piece, I actively engage with a strong weight usage for the *forte* passages as well as for highlighting the melody through the accompaniment figures and embellishments. Light weight usage is reserved for these embellishments, light cadenza passages and *piano* passages.

Effort space, as indicated above, is how I actively engage with the space around me. The two poles here are direct and indirect. On a functional level, I make more use of direct effort space because the nature of the instrument requires that Effort space always be, at least slightly, direct for precision. An example of this is when increased accuracy is needed when executing large leaps. I mindfully access a direct focus towards space when I perform *forte* passages or when a direct effort space orientation supports the dynamics indicated in the score, for example *sforzando* or *marcato* indications.

Another factor of Effort is time and, as indicated above, the two poles here are quick and sustained. Due to demands of the score, I access quick time orientation often, particularly in the passages with fast scales and other embellishments. In this sense, the way I accessed time contributed to function but simultaneously contributes to expression as the use of time in music cannot be separated from intent. A few times, especially with dynamic indications like *dolce* or tempo indications like *ritardando* and *ritenuto*, I mindfully engaged with a sustained orientation towards time.

As indicated above, another Effort factor is flow or the 'goingness' of movement. The two poles are free and bound. I use both free flow and bound flow to embody the intent. When I do engage mindfully with flow it is to crystalize expression for example an awareness of bound flow for a *rinforzando* or *marcatissimo* or an awareness of free flow for the arpeggios and scale passages.

My primary mindful engagement with Effort was by actively embodying strong and light weight.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

Reflecting on the embodied learning process, I realize that the various actions that I mindfully engaged with cannot be separated. The use of the Alexander Technique and Laban Movement Studies provided me with an action-oriented way to navigate my embodied learning of the *Ernani Paraphrase*. It is an autoethnographic experience and the uniqueness thereof cannot be duplicated, however, the process outlined above may provide insight for other musicians wishing to explore embodiment in these terms. The embodied learning process interacts with the previous layers of the palimpsest which open the piece to interpretation based on the story, orchestration, and their effect on the transcription. This by no means leads to a static interpretation but it provides guidelines to effectively and efficiently perform the score, the markings in the score and the inherent intent behind them. This process leaves space for in-the-moment affective impulses that may call for the expression of further, personal musical intent and provides the physical cues to perform them. The affective impulses will, in turn again, influence how I will embody the music in the moment.



## CHAPTER 4: CRITICAL REFLECTION, TRANSFERABILITY AND CONCLUSION

The previous chapter traced my embodied learning process of the *Ernani Paraphrase* autoethnographically. The embodied learning phase (phase 2) was a re-accumulation process, while the historical and analytical process reported on in chapter 2 was perceived as the ‘peeling away’ of the various layers of the *Ernani* palimpsest (phase 1). I thus initially delved into the various layers embedded in the *Ernani Paraphrase* after which I executed an embodied compilation of the layers with an orientation towards performance. The eventual performance is thus my personally unique palimpsest of the *Ernani Paraphrase*.

The purpose of this current chapter is threefold:

- to report on phase 3 of this project,
- to discuss the use of the palimpsest as an analogy and
- to conclude by indicating the potential transferability of the process, and possible research that may result from this project.

I now turn to a critical reflection on the use of the palimpsest analogy as an approach (or strategy) towards preparing a piano transcription for performance. This report will be aligned with the investigative question from chapter 1:

How can I intertwine the layered information gained through the analysis process of the *Ernani Paraphrase* with the embodied discoveries, in preparation towards performance?

### 4.1 Phase 3: My critical reflection on the palimpsest as process

As I worked through the analysis and explorations captured in the previous chapters, in search of a possible overarching strategy or a coherent approach, the palimpsest appeared to consist of seven layers. Seeing that I have provided several examples in both chapters 2 and 3 regarding the Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this process, demonstrating the various layers separately, I

now turn to a single example that is intended to provide an overview of the entire palimpsest model and my progress through it.

The image shows a musical score for piano, Example 4.1, covering bars 6-19. The score is written for two staves (treble and bass clef) and is in G major and 3/4 time. The score is divided into six systems. The first system is marked "il canto sostenuto e marcato" and "sempre staccato". The second system is marked "cresc." and "rinforsando". The third system is marked "largamente" and "sotto voce". The fourth system is marked "espressivo". The fifth system is marked "len.". The sixth system is marked "len.". There are two red boxes: one in the first system highlighting a chord in the right hand, and another in the third system highlighting a melodic line in the right hand.

Example 4.1: bars 6-19

#### 4.1.1 Phase 1: Peeling away (layers 1 – 4)

Phase 1 consists of various layers embedded in the *Ernani Paraphrase*. These layers are either historical or analytical in nature.

The *first layer (historical context)* of the *Ernani* palimpsest for me is the historical and political ambience in which Liszt composed the transcription (section 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 in chapter 2). Valuable information that presented itself here is that during the time the *Ernani Paraphrase* was composed, there was political turmoil in Europe and that Italy was seeking unification. The figure of Don Carlo represented a Charlemagne-type figure, and in the scene referred to in this example, he finally abandons his need for revenge and becomes the unifying, forgiving figure that was wanted at that (historical) time.

In the life of Liszt, it was the end of the Weimar Era. This paraphrase (and the others he composed during this period) may be a nostalgic reminiscence of, or arising from, the performances of the operas he conducted in Weimar (see Chapter 2, section 2.1.3). These paraphrases are presentations of the pyrotechnics that Liszt was most famous for and demonstrate his intense appreciation for the music he came to know so well as a conductor.

A last consideration for this level is the piano that Liszt preferred most, namely the Erard (see Chapter 2, section 2.3). Although the modern piano possesses, to a larger degree, the qualities Liszt loved about the Erard (notably the large sound, great projection and so forth) the pedal markings will need to be carefully assessed.

The *second layer (source text)* is Victor Hugo's *Hernani*. The specific part of the play text relevant to this section is Act IV where the relevant scene takes place. As this scene is reflected faithfully in the libretto of the opera it is present in the performance of the transcription but it does not have a separate presence in the palimpsest analogy – it strengthens, and resonates with, the first layer of the palimpsest and paves the way for the third layer.

The *third layer (dynamics of the fragment)* is the scene from the opera and has a strong presence in the example. This specific extract refers to Act III in the opera where the King stands before the tomb of Charlemagne, hearing the bells that signify his ascension to the throne. After hearing the conspirators and confronting them he finds out that Ernani is, in fact, a nobleman in disguise. He decides to forgive them and leads Ernani to Elvira. The text<sup>103</sup> of this extract is given complete in Chapter 2, section 2.1.2; the most relevant part is as follows:

Original Text	Translation	Bars
O sommo Carlo, più del tuo nome le tue virtùdi aver vogl'io,	O supreme Charles, more than your reputation I wish I had your virtues,	6 – 10 (beat 1)
sarò, lo giuro a te ed a Dio, delle tue gesta imitator.	in your name and God's, I swear that I shall follow your example.	10 (beat 3) – 14 beat 1.
Perdono a tutti. (a sé) Mie brame ho domate. (guidando Elvira tra le braccia di Ernani) Sposi voi siate, v'amate ognor.	I pardon everyone. (to himself) I have tamed my desires. (leading Elvira into Ernani's arms) May you be wed, and love each other always.	14 (beat 4) – 18 (beat 1)

Table 4.1: Text and translation

As detailed in Chapter 2, section 2.2, page 25, the harp opens the scene. The solo baritone intones the opening phrases with a hymn-like quality. A simple arpeggio accompaniment from the harp is joined with quiet support from the strings. A line of the text that appears in the opera in brackets is usually sung *sotto voce*<sup>104</sup>.

<sup>103</sup> Stephen Jay-Taylor, *Verdi Ernani Synopsis & Libretto* (EMI The home of Opera, 2007), 46-47.

<sup>104</sup> "Mie brame ho domate" (I have tamed my desires).

The *fourth layer (transcription score)* is the actual *Ernani Paraphrase*. It demonstrates Liszt's engagement with this scene in the opera and through that, with layers 1 and 2. View section 2.2 in chapter 2 for an in-depth view of how the layers of the opera and the piano transcription intertwine.

This layer is the pivotal and most crucial layer of the palimpsest analogy as it is the actual score that will come alive in the eventual performance. As the pianist preparing to perform this piece I am tasked with providing a musical and personally meaningful performance of this work. To do this I need to uncover the origins and influences of the work and gain an understanding of it, thus the necessity of the peeling away of the various layers (1-3).

#### **4.1.2 Phase 2: the re-accumulation of the layers of the palimpsest through embodied explorations**

The embodied preparation phase has two layers, namely the embodied choices determined by *function* and the embodied choices made due to *expression*.

The *fifth layer (embodiment of function)* concerns itself with the embodiment of function, to determine optimal technical and mechanical operations of the body. As indicated in chapter 3, I mindfully explored the Alexander principles and elements of Body and Space in this layer. The *sixth layer (embodiment of expression)* deals with expression, thus with Effort and Shape. During the explorations in this layer, I pursue embodied engagement with the shaping and emotion of the potential performance. Choices during the embodied explorations made here were based on the narrative (main melody) that I want the audience to perceive. Inevitably it is difficult to separate layers five and six from each other in the preparation, and are offered here to demonstrate the sliding emphases during stages of preparation. Therefore, as these two layers were intertwined and formed a continuum, I report about them together in a table form below.

5 <sup>th</sup> Layer: Embodiment of Function	6 <sup>th</sup> Layer: Embodiment of Expression
<p>When the main melody enters (indicated by the red bracket), I execute a slight lateral weight shift to the left as both hands are performing in the lower half of the keyboard. This lateral shift ensures an optimally effective relationship between the piano and myself.</p> <p>A slight lean towards forward-left, good grounding through my feet and sitzbones, and with an awareness of a reach with my crown of my head towards left forward high.</p> <p>The section remains in the same register of the keyboard, thus the same applies until bar 11 where the new section begins.</p> <p>This section features the melody, in a similar register to the previous sections, accompanied by quick arpeggios spanning the length of the keyboard. Each arpeggio's passage (see, for example, the red rectangle in bar 14) will require a lateral weight shift to the right and then re-centering for the new portion of the melody.</p>	<p>Following this lateral shift, I shape in my trunk, rotating it slightly towards the left to maintain an effective relationship with the piano.</p> <p>Accessing left forward high allows me to maximize the control I have and to access more dynamic use of strong weight and more power. Drawing on the analytical layer of the palimpsest (section 2.1 in chapter 2), the melody needs to have the most weight behind it and the accompanying figures should be lighter.</p> <p>A slight emphasis on the deep, bass chords will provide added resonance to the sound. I execute this with a mindful awareness of active engagement with strong weight, a direct effort space orientation and a left-forward-low spatial orientation with my left hand. The accompaniment arpeggios (see example in red rectangle in bar 6) are executed with an arc-like directional movement allowing for the freedom to slightly rotate as needed in my forearm.</p> <p>The A-flat <i>tenuto</i> at the beginning of bar 14 is played with a downward release of weight into the note.</p> <p>The arpeggios must be played with the lightest weight possible while maintaining clarity, thus I execute them with a direct effort space and a free flow orientation. I will also mindfully engage with an arc-like directional shape change when playing the arpeggios, thus allowing for an active relationship between my hand and the piano. The melody should have a strong weight. The <i>fermatas</i></p>

	are executed with an awareness of a time and effort space interplay to allow for expressive phrasing.
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Table 4.2: Layers 5 and 6

As I move from conscious competence in phase 2 to unconscious competence, function and expression intertwine and there is a melding of all the various layers. Through this process, readying myself for performance, a *seventh layer (developing a ‘holistic’ performance)* occurs. This is the performance layer. When I perform this section I often sing the aria text in my head as I play the melody. I am also constantly focused on what my body is doing so that I may remain relaxed. In this performance moment, I ‘become one with the music’, clock time has no significance, and afterwards I cannot recall exact emotions that I have experienced. I speculate that I enter a trance-like state<sup>105</sup> which can possibly be the state known as ‘flow’<sup>106</sup>.

#### 4.2 The efficacy of the palimpsest analogy

When dealing with a transcription there are many layers to consider. The palimpsest analogy lends order to the learning process and provided me, as performer, permission to make choices regarding the prominence of the various layers. In the ‘peel away’ phase of the process (layers 1-4), I discovered what was already present in the score, with layers 3 and 4 being the most prominent and obvious in the preparation.

In the embodied re-accumulation phase, I not only explored how I was going to create my auditory ‘narrative’ but also took my personal uniqueness into account. This resulted in layers 5 and 6. Below is a table which summarizes each layer and its function.

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<sup>105</sup> Roger Chaffin and Anthony F. Lernieux, “General perspectives on achieving musical excellence”, in *Musical Excellence: Strategies and Techniques to Enhance Performance*. ed. Aaron Williamon (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 31.

<sup>106</sup> A discussion of the performance state performing musicians experience falls outside the scope of this study.

Layer Number	Layer Name	Summary
Layer 1	Historical Context	Provides the historical and social contexts surrounding the work.
Layer 2	Source Text	Deals with the entire original work that was the inspiration for the transcription; in the case of the <i>Ernani</i> it deals with both the Hugo play and the Verdi opera.
Layer 3	Dynamics of the Fragment	This layer hones in on the specific section of the source text(s) that resonate in the transcription; in the <i>Ernani</i> this deals with the scene from the opera.
Layer 4	Transcription Score	Uses musical analysis to engage with the transcription itself.
Layer 5	Embodiment of Function	Explores the necessary demands on the body's function to physically play the notes.
Layer 6	Embodiment of Expression	Explores the physical motions which add expressive qualities to the sound and the musical narrative.
Layer 7	Developing a 'Holistic' Performance	Collates all previous layers into a larger whole for the performance. This layer moves the preparation to unconscious competence of performance.

Table 4.3: Overview of Palimpsest Layers

In conclusion, layer 1 provides the overarching context within which the transcription was created. Layers 2 and 3 provide more relevant context with layer 3 being the most relevant (the source text of the transcription). Layer 4 is the accumulation of these previous layers which form the



transcription itself. Layers 5 and 6 deal with the embodiment of the transcription which leads into layer 7 which is my performance of this transcription.

#### **4.3 Transferability of process**

The analogy of the palimpsest can possibly be of use to other pianists as it provides strategic and directional order to the learning process. It contributed to the effectiveness of my preparation of the score for performance. It provided a clear differentiation of preparation done away from the piano and preparation done at the piano. The 'peeling away' phase took place away from the piano. Layers 1 to 3 place the score, and therefore the 4<sup>th</sup> layer, in context. I experienced this process as contributing to my understanding of the score. This was necessary preparation for the re-accumulation phase. I believe the 'peeling away' phase can positively contribute to another pianist's preparation for practice at the piano when learning a transcription.

The embodied exploration process can possibly be transferable to another piano performer. Both techniques described and used in chapter 3 have enormous potential for any performer. The Alexander Technique is particularly useful for its ideas of inhibition and primary control. These are outlined in chapter 3. LMS (Laban Movement Studies) is an action-based approach which takes the personal uniqueness of the performer into account. This approach provides the performer with a way to discover what performance style suits them best, both functionally and expressively. A combination of these two approaches provides a comprehensive way for performers to analyze their bodies, movement, and performance 'habits', searching out patterns that inhibit their performance. Other patterns sought out are those that may hinder their performance of particular moments (and finding embodied ways to reach optimal, functional pianistic performance), and finally to use the strategy as a way of accessing the expressive in the music for performance.

#### 4.4 Future research that can emanate from this project

Further research opportunities that can flow from this project are threefold and depart from the necessary limits of this study:

- When I prepare other transcriptions for performance, I can again use the palimpsest analogy as a preparatory and strategic approach. I will then be able to compare the efficacy of that preparation process with what I have experienced in this process. Should the outcomes align, that may contribute to demonstrating the efficacy and transferability of this approach.
- Another possible research project will be to conduct a research study with multiple participants / more pianists to execute such a study (as single case studies); their experiences can be compared and contrasted.
- Extending this research study could introduce an eighth layer, which will be audience experiences and perception, and the performer's reactions to, and interactions with, such responses. Speculatively, one might call the *eighth layer* 'audience interaction'. Provocatively, all performance is prepared, also, with the audience in mind.

It is my hope that this study may be taken further, whether in my hands or those of others, to explore the full potential of this theoretical framework and preparation process. The exciting possibilities that this study may reveal in the preparation of any piece of music would certainly make a worthwhile endeavor and provide a learning tool for both amateur and professional musicians.

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