Franz Liszt

Liebesträume S.541

No. 3 in A flat major

Score with barlines from MuseScore
Original 1850 score from IMSLP, annotated by Nick. H

Professional Recording

Extended Analysis by Nick Henley

Style and History of the Piece

Liebestraum No. 3 (Love Dream) is a romantic nocturne composed by Franz Liszt. Originally composed as a vocal song with piano accompaniment, it was later transcribed for solo piano. As the name suggests, Liebestraum No. 3 is the third piece in a set, titled Liebesträume. The set was originally written as a lieder (german song for piano and vocals) after poems from Ludwig Uhland and Ferdinand Freiligrath. Each poem describes three kinds of love: spiritual, physical and unconditional love. The third Liebestraum is by far the most well known of the three due to its expressiveness and dramatic quality. Written as a nocturne, the piece invokes a sense of the night. This style of writing was originally developed by John Field, but was greatly expanded upon and popularised by Frédéric Chopin. Chopin had died the year prior to the publication of the third Liebestraum, and this piece in particular bears a striking resemblance to many of his nocturnes, such as Op 48. No 1 and Op 27. No 2. Liszt and Chopin were good friends, having both lived in Paris for a period of time, and Liszt was reportedly shaken by his death, even writing his biography. This piece is a hallmark of both romanticism and “Lisztian” writing: lyrical, expressive melodies, complex harmonies, virtuosic passages, extensive rubato and more. Having said all this, Liebestraum No. 3 is an expressive, lyrical and heartbreaking piece that paints a clear picture of unconditional, post-mortem love.

Structure

Liebestraum No. 3 is built in ternary (ABA’) form, with two cadenzas separating each section. This piece can also be analysed as a theme and variation, with alternating A and B themes. The piece starts on a slow, lyrical love theme, transitions to a more emotional and intense B theme via a cadenza, then another cadenza transports us back to a variation of the A theme. Within these sections, we have many variations and parts that separate each section of the piece. The first part of the piece is the A section, and within that we have four major sections. The first is our A theme, the melody that we are now very familiar with. This lasts until measure six. At measure seven, we see our first variation on the melody, which we will mark as A1. The next section is the opening to our B theme. At this point, we have now seen the two themes that repeat and contrast in this piece. This B theme continues until measure 23, but by now a new section has emerged. The buildup to the first cadenza of the piece starts at measure 20 and lasts for 3 bars. We have now reached the first cadenza of this piece. This cadenza (as stated earlier), separates the greater

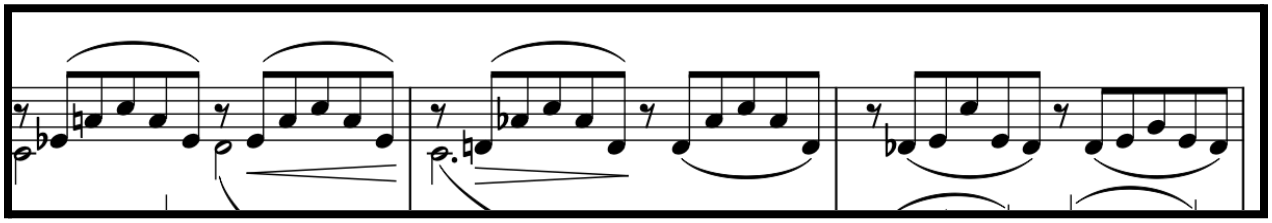
parts of A and B from each other. Cadenzas don't typically have barlines so a judgement of length cannot be made, however there is a sense of separation once it is finished.

We are now in the B section of the piece. Our first theme here is actually a derivative of the A melody, marked as A2. This lasts for 10 measures. At measure 37 we find our first variation on the B theme, marked as B1. This theme continues for four measures until we reach the climax. The climax is actually the third variation of the A melody (it is now clear why this piece is partly a theme and variations), marked as A3. This lasts until measure 59, where we find the second cadenza. This cadenza separates the greater parts of B and A' from each other. Like with the first cadenza, there are no barlines, so an assessment of musical length cannot be made.

At measure 61, the fourth variation on the A theme is found, marked as A4. This continues for 15 measures, to measure 76. At measure 77, we find the C melody of this piece as we grow closer to the end. The last few measures draw parallels to the A theme as we close the piece.

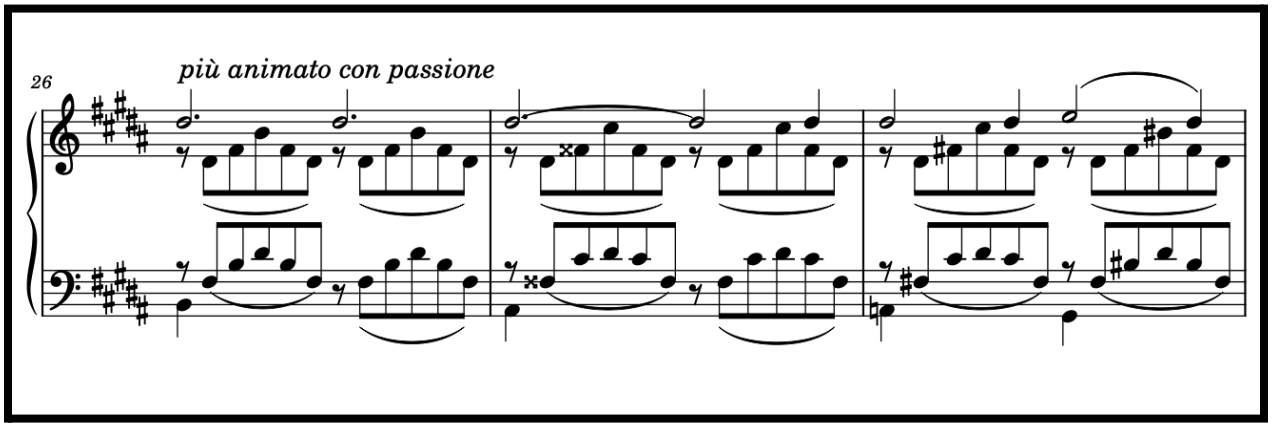
Duration

Liebestraum No. 3 is written in 6/4 with groupings of two dotted minims per bar, though the melodic phrasing often implies three pulses of two beats. The tempo at the start is marked "Poco allegro", meaning "slightly fast". Due to the mass sharing of recordings online, most performances are of a very similar tempi, although it could be felt between roughly 105 to 115 crotchet beats per minute (BPM). The accents fall on beats 1 and 4 and are often supported by chordal accompaniment in the treble range. The melody in the A theme consists of legato dotted minims and crotchets and leaves room for tasteful rubato. The arpeggiated accompaniment is made entirely of quavers.

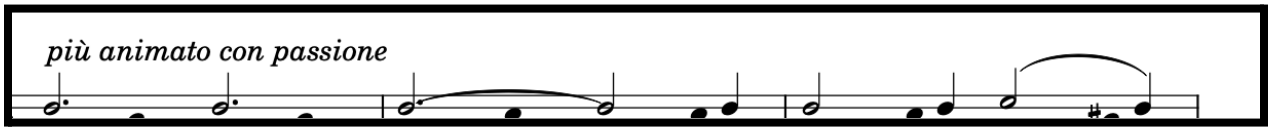


There are moments of rhythmic contrast in the A section through brief moments of syncopation such as at measure four to six, where the melody is on the offbeat. In the B theme, we start to see more rhythmic interest arise. In the emergence of the B theme, we find shorter note lengths, such as quavers. Through measures 15 to 22, it is common for performers to perform an accelerando as we are leading into the first cadenza here and the harmony is more dramatic. At measure 23, we hit a fermata, briefly stopping all movement. Leading into the cadenza, we find a walk down the keyboard in crotchets. At the beginning of the cadenza, we find an arpeggio made up of quavers. The bulk of the cadenza is made up of rising and falling semiquaver chords. In the score, these are notated similar to smaller, grace notes, but this is to distinguish the cadenzas from the main parts of the piece. These cadenzas are actually "quasi-cadenzas", as they are not improvised, but separate and bridge the gap between parts of the piece. During the cadenza, there is room for extensive and extreme rubato (like in this recording), as although it is not improvised, tempo is often more loose and up to the performer during a cadenza. In the B section, we find a slight increase in tempo to the previous section. There is no marking directly to increase the tempo, however we do find the marking "più animato con passione", meaning "more animated with passion". Among other things, this marking indicates a slight increase in tempo. While actually looking at the score for the B theme, we can draw a rhythmic parallel to the A theme; we find the exact same rhythms as

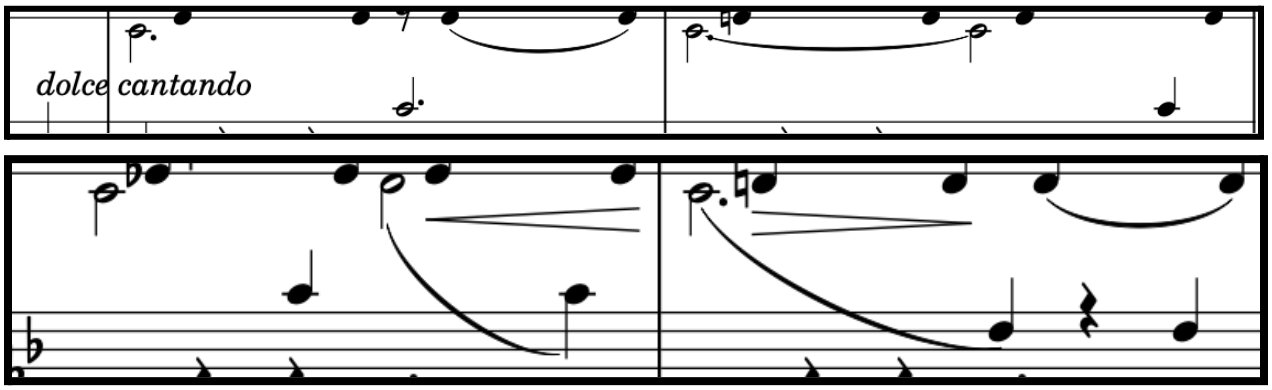
before as this is actually the same melody. The arpeggiated harmony rhythm is indeed the same as before too, with quavers.



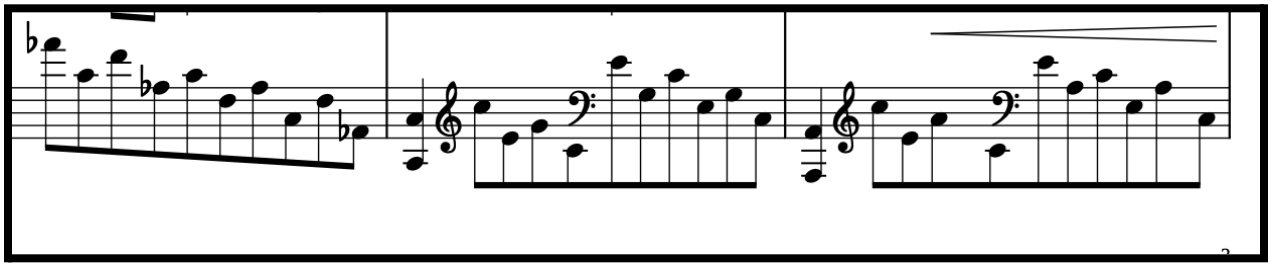
Notice how these melody rhythms are the same…



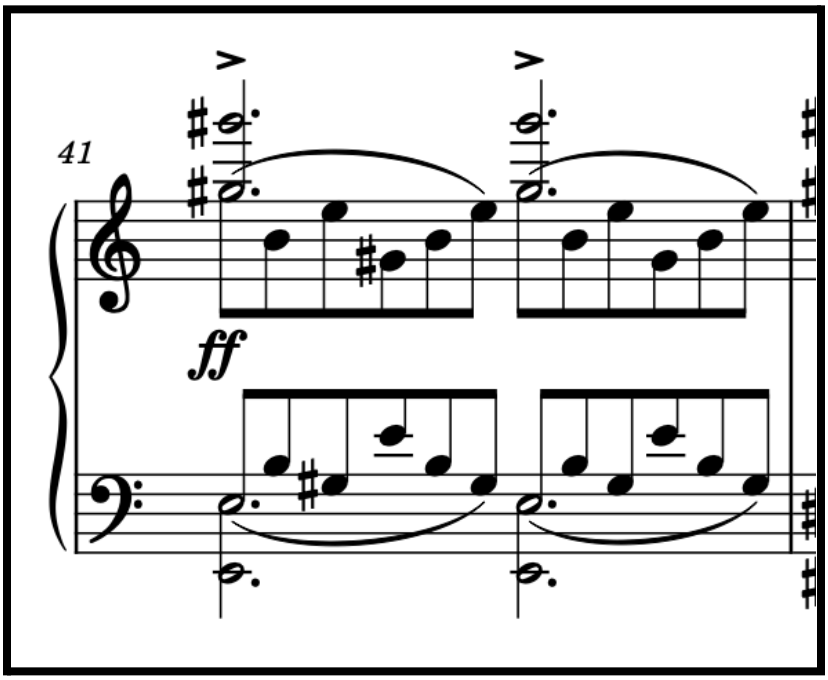
…as these:



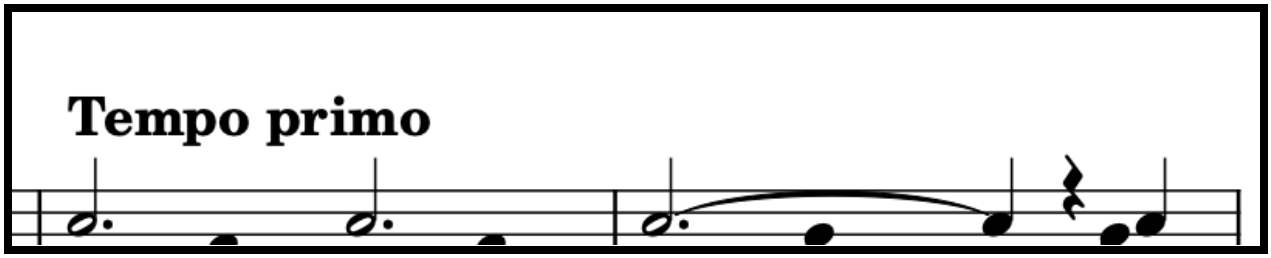
At measure 38, we find our first notated tempo increase. We find the marking “sempre stringendo”, roughly translating to “always with increasing speed”. The goal here is to build intensity as we reach ever closer to the climax, so a fast accelerando is advised. Here, we can now draw a new rhythmic parallel. The new melody established here is actually a variation on the B melody established at measure 13. The harmony in the left hand is made up of quaver broken descending arpeggiated figures.

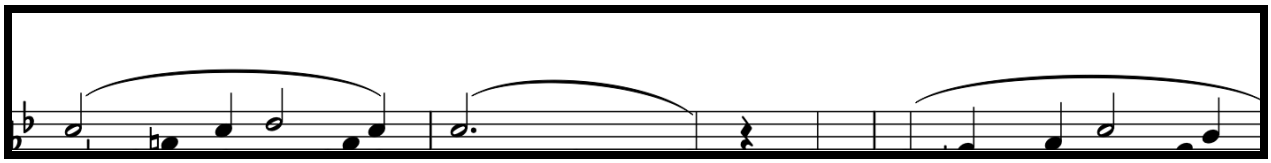


At measure 41, we find the climax of the entire piece. Once again, the rhythm from the A melody has returned. There is a rhythmic ostinato consisting of a dotted minim and five crotchets that repeats as the motif for this section. This ostinato is present in both the left and right hands.

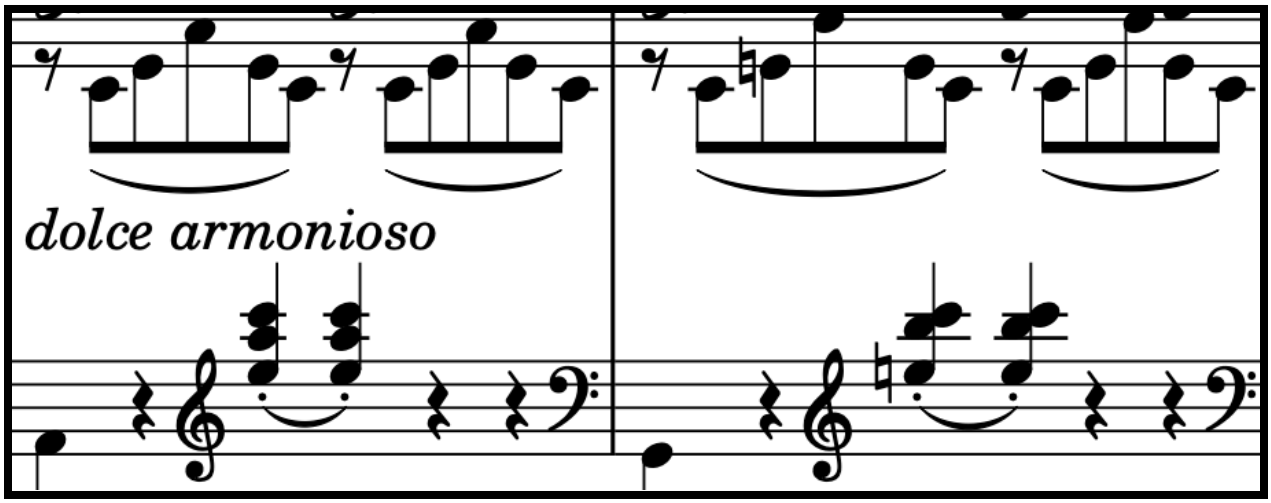


At measure 44, we find a break from this motif, where we find crotchet arpeggios in the left hand while our melody remains as the A melody from the beginning of the piece. When we return to the original motif of the climax at measure 47, we find a semibreve at measure 48, where the melody hangs and interrupts the rhythmic ostinato. At measure 50, our melody has become mostly crotchets now, with quaver arpeggios in the left hand, building intensity and contrast. At measure 52, there is a short three against two polyrhythm. At measure 55, our melody becomes a descending quaver scalar pattern, with a break from arpeggios in the left hand. Measure 56 is our second notated tempo adjustment; marked "affrettando", meaning to perform hurriedly, marking the lead up into the second cadenza of the piece. Most interpretations of this piece see this as an invitation to do an accelerando to measure 59, which is the beginning of the second cadenza. The second cadenza of the piece intends to do exactly what the first does: bridge the gap between parts B and A' of the piece. The second cadenza is a rapid descent of quavers down the keyboard. These rapid notes function as a release of tension and to guide the listener back to the A' theme. Typically, the tempo is relaxed and a diminuendo is played as we come to an end of the cadenza where there is a fermata, indicating to halt all movement. We are now at the reincapsulation of the A theme, at measure 61. Our tempo is marked "Tempo primo", which means "the first tempo", an indication to return to the starting tempo of the entire piece. This has an effect of calmness as the tempo is restored to what it was in the more tame beginning. We will find the rhythms of our A melody here one last time.

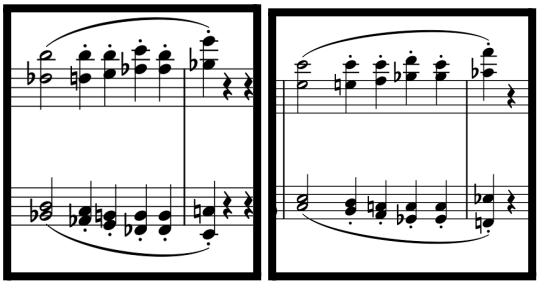




We will notice quaver arpeggios reminiscent of the beginning of the piece, but also crotchet block chords played over the melody. This forms another rhythmic ostinato.



At measure 71, we find the marking “poco a poco ritenuto”, meaning “slow down little by little”. This gives the effect of closure as we grow closer to the soft coda. At measure 75, we find the marking “più smorz. e rit.), meaning “more gradual slowdown and lower in intensity”. This marks the last mention of the A theme as we enter the coda. At measure 77, we enter the coda, which features primarily dotted crotchet and minim block chords. We find another rhythmic ostinato here, with a minim and 5 dotted crotchet notes. This ostinato is repeated for 2 measures.



At measure 81, we find an arpeggiated dotted semibreve chord. The next two measures have dotted semibreves and minims in chords. Measure 84 features another arpeggiated chord made of dotted semibreves, and finally measure 85 has the final arpeggiated chord of the piece.

Pitch

NB: Despite being a late Romantic period work, figured bass was used along with roman numerals to highlight the inversions of the chords, which play an important role in this piece. I am still developing fluency in figured bass notation, so some labels may be unorthodox.

Key Signatures:

Red = Ab major

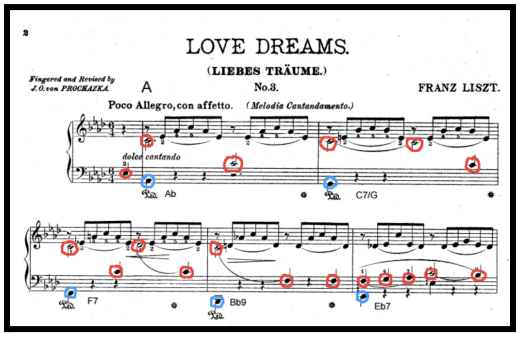
Yellow = C major

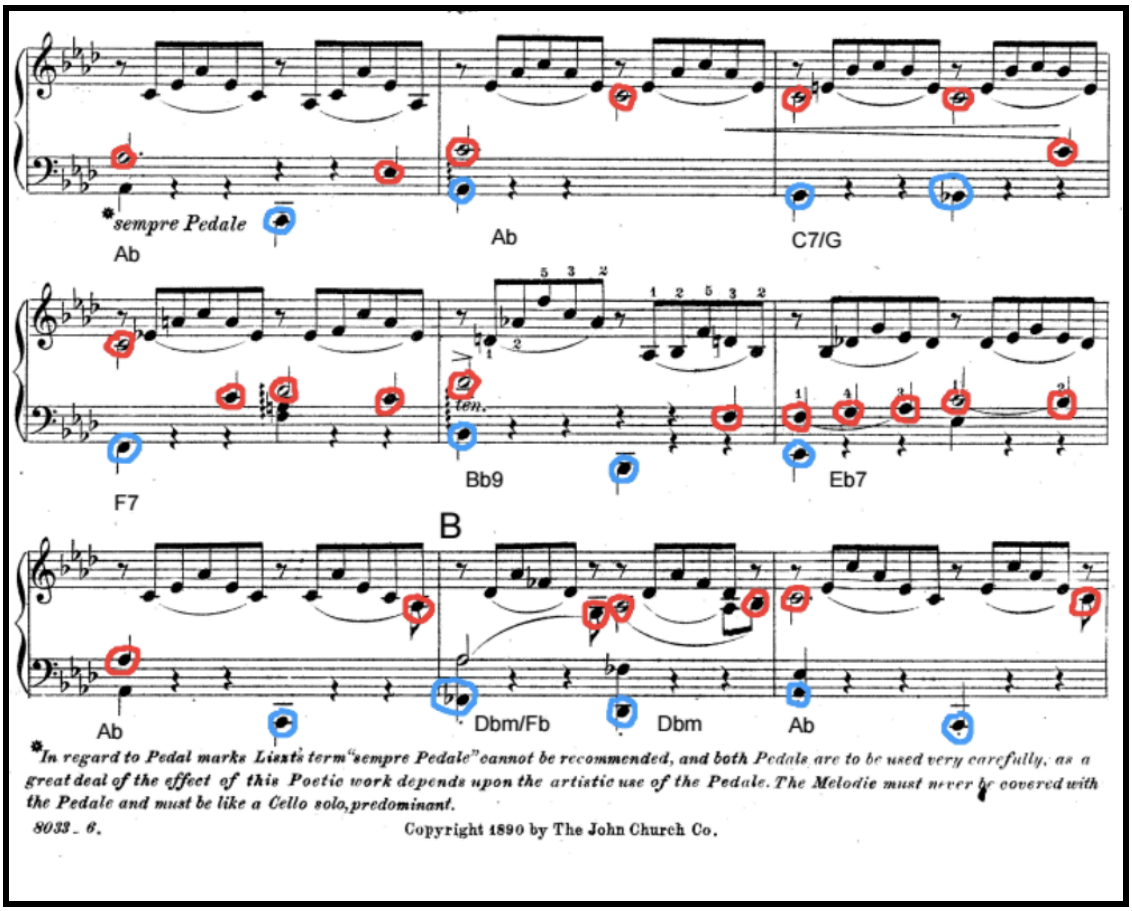
Green = E major
Blue = B major
Purple = F minor

A - Theme and Variation

Liebestraum No. 3 opens with arpeggios over the tonic chord of Ab major. The harmony shifts each measure, outlining a descending circle of fifths progression. The chord progression for the first six measures is Ab (I), C7/G (V^4_3/vi), F7 (V^7/ii), Bb9 (V^9/V), Eb7 (V^7), Ab (I)[1]. The bass line descends the Ab major scale in stepwise motion to F, then drops a fifth to Bb, rises a fourth to Eb and resolves to Ab. The melody begins as a repeated legato C embedded in the arpeggiated harmony functioning as an inner voice. It is a melodic pedal point under the Ab, C7 and F7, creating tension through voice leading as the harmony shifts. In the Ab major chord the C functions as the third, establishing the tonality. In the C7 chord it functions as the root and in the Bb9 it functions as the ninth, creating a dissonant sound. It then rises by a minor second to Db, drops by a fifth to F, and then ascends the Ab major scale (omitting Bb) up to C. The melody resolves by descending down the scale to the home note of Ab. The use of stepwise motion and repeated notes gives the melody a very lyrical and song-like quality. Measures 7 - 12 restate the same six bar chord progression and are harmonically very similar to the first six, with a more developed melody. At measure eight, the bass does a chromatic walkdown from G to Gb to F, adding tension through chromatic movement in the bass. At measure nine, the left hand introduces an F7#5 as an inner voice over the F7 harmony leading into the Bb in measure 10. At measure 10, the melodic contour inverts and rises, outlining a Bb9 chord before returning to the original shape at measure 11. The A melody is fully concluded by descending down to Ab as the B section emerges.

[1]This could also be notated as I, V/V/V/V, V/V/V, V/V, V, I to highlight the dominant chain but was omitted for brevity.

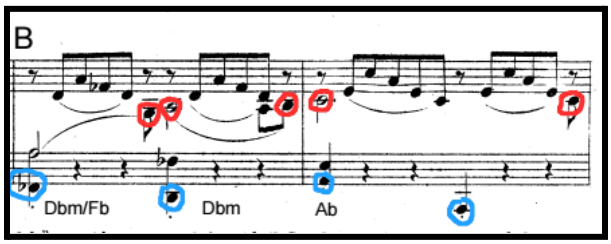


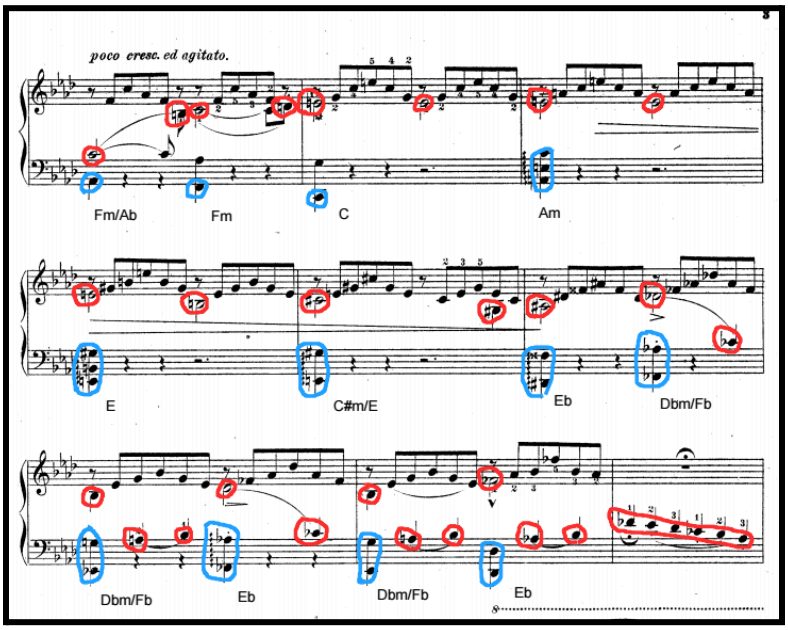


The B theme is a darker and more intense variation of the A theme, beginning on the first minor chord of the piece: the minor subdominant. The chords are far more complex this time around: **Dbm/Fb (iv^6)**, Dbm (iv), Ab (I), Fm/Ab (vi^6), Fm (vi), **C ($\frac{\text{I}}{\text{III}}$)**, Am (vi), **E ($\frac{\text{I}}{\text{bVI}}$)**, C#m/E (vi^6), **Eb (V)**, Dbm/Fb (iv^6), Eb (V), Dbm/Fb (iv^6), Eb (V), Dbm/Fb (iv^6). This chord sequence is slightly unusual in that the key shifts to C major, E major, then back to Ab. These changes are distinct from full modulations in that they last for a short amount of time and there is no cadence to justify the new key, a process known as tonicization. Evidence for leaving Ab major is also shown in the two submediant chords, A minor and C# minor. These chords are both non-diatonic in Ab major, showing we have briefly left the key. The tonal shift is notable enough to justify it as its own tonic, represented in the chord progression above. However, as they are not full modulations, reference to the original key must be made. The notation used at the beginning of each new tonic signifies the tonic of the new key and what the chord is in Ab major. The resolution of the iv chord to the I at the beginning of the section is a minor plagal cadence and reinforces the darker colour of the B theme. The bass line of the B theme begins on Fb, descends a minor third to Db, then leaps up to Ab and sustains it for a measure before outlining a double stop: first a minor tenth from F and then a twelfth from C. Here, the piece shifts to C major. The melody here is similar to the repeated C note in the beginning of the piece, although now it has shifted up a major third to E. The bass becomes chordal now; the proceeding A minor chord is in root position, with the third voiced a tenth up from the root^2. This idea continues into the next key, E major, featuring the same voicings. The root of the C#m chord is omitted entirely by the left hand and is instead played by the right, resulting in an implied first inversion voicing. At measure 20 the buildup to the first cadenza begins, with alternating Eb and Dbm chords. Here the

melody shifts from the repeated E to the fifth and root of the Eb and Db, respectively. At measure 23, there is a final walkdown from E to G acting as a leading tone into the first cadenza.

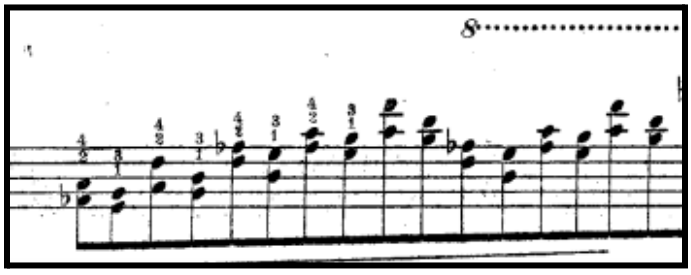
[2]Many editions of the score (including this one) instruct the pianist to roll this and many other chords as opposed to playing them as block voicings, since most performers cannot comfortably span intervals larger than an octave. This was done to accommodate hand size limitations and is not necessarily what Liszt intended.



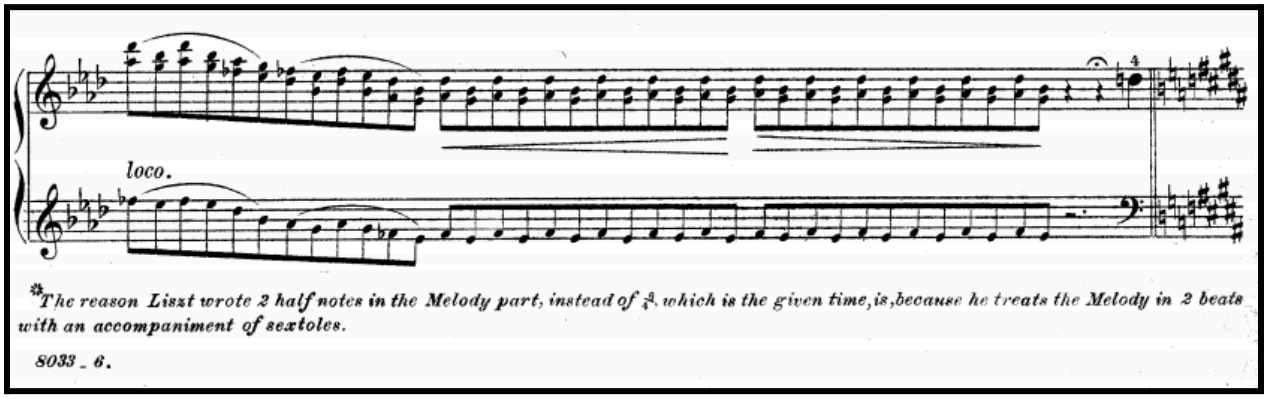


Cadenza 1

The first cadenza of the piece is centered around the chords Eb (V) and Dbm (iv). The arpeggio leading up to the cadenza forms an Eb7 chord. The main idea of the cadenza is the Dbm and Eb chords alternating through inversions up and down the keyboard. Liszt alternates between the dominant and minor subdominant extremely quickly, creating a persistent level of tension only resolved at the end of the cadenza. This was seen earlier in the buildup to the cadenza but is now faster and is the focal point of the section. In the ascending part, the chords shuffle through first inversion Dbm, root-position Eb, second inversion Dbm, second inversion Eb, root-position Dbm, second inversion Eb and so on.



At the top of the cadenza the pattern repeats down the keyboard but with one small change: every second inversion shift is repeated once more, thickening the texture. At the bottom of the cadenza there is a fast alteration between a root position Eb and a first inversion Dbm chord which eventually resolves to Eb. This marks the end of Part A of the piece, where we enter Part B and modulate to B major.



B - Theme Variation and Climax

Here we find our first full modulation: Ab major to B major, once again a chromatic mediant shift by a minor third[3]. Like the earlier section, the chords shift tonal centres, but here it is not as subtle as the tonicizations from before. There is a key change to C major at measure 37 notated in the score leading up to the climax. However, there is actually an *earlier* modulation to C major at measure *34* due to the presence of a german sixth chord, which tends to resolve to the I^6_4 (in this case, C/G). Even without this prior knowledge, the chords proceeding the German sixth are diatonic to C major, *not* B, and the dominant of C shortly follows, proving we are in C major. The key signature only changes at measure 37 due to the beginning of the buildup to the climax as a new section. This is the chord sequence *up to measure 34* (where the modulation to C major takes place), marked blue for B major: B (I), D#7/A# (V^4_3/vi), D#ø/A (iii$ø^4_2$/V), G#7 (V^7/ii), C#9 (V^9/V), C#7 (V^7/V), F#7 (V^7), B (I), G#m9/B (vi^6_5), B (I), D#/A# (V^4_3/vi), B#dim7/A (#vii$°^4_2$). The first thing here that becomes apparent in the B major section is the voice leading in the bass in the opening chords. In a similar fashion to the bass in the A section, the bass notes descend chromatically from B to A# to A. This voice leading is what allows the D#ø to work after the D#7. The second key element of these chords is the melody. The melody here is actually very similar to the melody in the beginning of the piece. If we recall the repeated C that was present over the changing chords in Ab major, we now see a repeating D# in B major, functioning as a pedal point over the harmony. This melody continues to remain the same and actually has the same intervals as the melody from the A section. The only difference in the melody is the shift up an augmented second, giving the piece a sense of transposition, or that it has shifted up in pitch. This sense is exacerbated by the fact that the melody now sits on *top* of the arpeggios (which are now in both hands) as opposed to below them. The next chord is a G#7. This chord is not diatonic to B major and is instead the dominant of C# major. If we look to the proceeding chord, we see a C#9, indicating the use of a perfect cadence in C#, despite being in B major. Directly after there is an F#, (notice that C# is the secondary dominant of the V chord of B major, whilst F# is the dominant, indicating the circle of fifths movement like at the beginning). The next chord is the tonic, B, indicating that the piece is still in B major. The G#m9 breaks this pattern of moving through the circle of fifths, as the submediant of B major, creating a warmer colour. The melody begins its ascent and descent down the B major scale similar to the melody in measure 4. It moves in stepwise motion up the scale, omitting the C# in the ascent. There is a B major chord following this that reinstates the melody at a D# again. There is now a B#dim7, where the modulation to C major starts. The

diminished chord acts as a leading tone to an Ab#6, which resolves to C major in second inversion. But with this context, and knowing that a second inversion triad is a $^{6}_{4}$ chord, we can be certain that the Ab#6 is actually a German augmented sixth chord (Ger+6), which resolves into the I^{6}_{4} in *C* major. The German sixth resolves to the I^{6}_{4} to avoid the presence of parallel fifths and to intensify the strength of the dominant which often comes directly after the tonic. However, instead of resolving to the dominant sequentially after the tonic, the V is delayed by moving first through the cadential I^{6}_{4} and ii chords. This marks the completed modulation into C major. The chords from measure 34 to 37 are as follows: Ab#6 (Ger+6), C/G (I^{6}_{4}), Dm7/G (ii^{6}_{5}), Dm/G (ii), G7 (V^{7}). Over these chords our melody starts to differ and modulate into C major with the harmony. At measure 34 the repeated note alternates between a D# and an E. At measure 35, we see an F natural over the harmony of Dm7/G, then a melody up the A minor scale in octaves over the G7 harmony in measure 36. Right after the G7, we finally get a perfect cadence into C where the key signature in the score changes.

[3]An augmented second, but it is enharmonic and harmonically functions the same.

We are finally at the *notated* modulation to C major in the score. It actually marks the beginning of the buildup to the climax. The melody has become octaves now, and is actually a transposition of the B theme leading up into the first cadenza. The harmony is also very similar. We begin on the tonic, then move to the minor subdominant, back to the tonic (minor plagal cadence) and then to the submediant. If we think back to our harmony in the B theme before the first cadenza, we find the minor subdominant, the tonic, the submediant and the tonic of the modulated new key. This is exactly what happens here, so while also considering the transposed melody, we can safely think of this section as a variation of the B theme.

Finally, we reach the climax of the entire piece. This part of the piece is in E major and F minor, although only the latter is notated in the score. So how can we be certain it starts in E? Let's look at the chord sequence up to the second cadenza: E (I), G#7/D# (V^{4}_{3}/vi), G#ø/D ($Vø^{4}_{3}$/vi), C#7 (VI), F#7 (II), B7 (V^{7}), E9 (I^{9}), E (I), G#7/D# (V^{4}_{3}/vi), E#dim7/D (i°), Db#6 (Ger+6), Fm/C (I^{6}_{4}), Db/Cb (VI^{6}), Bb7 (IV^{7}), Fm7/Eb (i^{4}_{2}), Bb7 (IV^{7}), Fm7/Eb (i^{4}_{2}), Ddim7/Cb ($bvii°^{4}_{2}$), Bb7 (IV^{7}), Fm7 (i), Eb (VII), Fm (i), Eb9 (VII^{9}). At the start of the sequence, we see an E major chord. This is just the major mediant of C major, so how can we be certain we are in E? If we follow the sequence, we find a set of chords that are non-diatonic to C major, indicating that we have modulated to a new key. At measure 45, we find a B7, which is the dominant of E. Directly after the B7 we resolve to an E9, proving we are in E major. So how did we get to F minor? In the score, we arrive at Fm at the Bb7 chord, but looking at the chord sequence, we see that the modulation has happened already. This is due to the German sixth chord that prepares us to move to F minor, in a very similar fashion to the B to C modulation earlier. The Fm chord here cements us in F minor harmonically. The change to Fm in the score happens at measure 50 (Bb7) which then resolves to F minor. The melody is now an octave above the chords and is identical to the A melody in the last section. Again, very similarly to the last section, the voice leading is very important. In the bass in the E major section we see the same V/vi to Vø/vi with a minor second descent in the bass note. This again is what allows the G# half diminished chord to work as a leading tone in E. Near the end of the chord sequence, we see a pattern of alternating i and VII chords to build tension for the second cadenza.

Cadenza 2

The second cadenza of the piece separates parts B and A' from each other. The second cadenza is a chromatic dominant 7th walkdown broken up into the outer and inner voices. The top chord is a C7, played in 3rd inversion, with the G and E played first as the outer voice, then the Bb and C come in after

as the inner voice. This pattern continues chromatically down the keyboard for close to 2 octaves where the pattern stops at a G half diminished chord, where a fast pattern of falling minor second intervals is played up and down the keyboard as we return to the main theme.

A' - Theme and Coda

Here is the reappearance of the A theme found at the beginning of the piece. We are now in Ab major again and the harmony is very similar to the beginning of the piece. Our chord progression is the same circle of fifths movement as before for the first six measures and the voice leading in the bass is the same. The melody is now an octave higher and the arpeggio harmony is played beneath the melody, while block chords play as an alto voice above it. At measure 67 the harmony changes slightly with more diminished chords to add tension for the next nine measures: Ab (I), C7/G (V^4_3/vi), F (V/ii), Adim7/Eb (vii^3_4/ii), Dø (bvø), Bdim7/D ($bii^{\circ 6}$), Bbø/Db ($iiø^6$), Gdim7/Db ($viiø^4_3$), Cø (iiiø), Adim7/C ($bii^{\circ 6}$), Abm#11 (i), Ddim7/Cb ($bv^{\circ 4}_2$), Bbm7 (ii^7), Bbø (iiø), Eb7 (V^7). The circle of fifths movement from before is still present for the first three chords, but we diverge into a series of full and half diminished chords to build tension directly after. Although the harmony is much tenser, the melody remains as a pedal point of C and is supple enough to where the dissonant harmony does not stand out when playing through the piece. The voice leading in the bass, like in the A and B sections, allows the dissonant harmony to change smoothly. There are now 10 measures left of the piece, and we have reached the coda. To be clear, unlike most codas (like the infamous Chopin Op. 23), this actually intends to bring *down* the intensity and end with a soft mood. Our final chord sequence is: Ab (I), Ab, (I), C7/G (V^4_3/vi), F (V/ii), Adim7/Eb ($bii^{\circ 4}_3$), Ddim7 (bv°), Gb (bVII), Bbø (iiø), Eb (V), Gm7sus (viisus), Gø (vii), Adim7 (bii°), A (bII), Bbm7 (ii), Eb7 (V^7), Ab (I), Abmaj7 (I^7), Ab (I). The first Ab is an arpeggiated chord from the bass up to the treble. The subsequent chords up to the A major triad are all played in block form. The melody is not distinct from the chords and is actually the top note of each chord. At the A triad, we start arpeggiating the chords up to the Eb, where they return to block form again. Finally, at the last chord of the piece, there is a slow arpeggio and we end on the tonic note of Ab.

Tone Colour

The opening of Liebestraum No. 3 is marked "dolce cantando", meaning to play "sweet and singing", and "con affetto", meaning "with affection". This is reflected in the opening measures, where the melody is at its most supple and lyrical. In our beginning A theme, the *una corda* (soft) pedal is used to create this sweet, small tone as well as creating tonal contrast to the darker B theme. As well as the una corda pedal, there are sustain pedal markings that allow the melody to exhibit its flowing and lyrical quality when shifting hands. As Liebestraum is a solo piano piece, tonal differences are more nuanced and come from the dynamics, pedal use, phrasing and register rather than instrumentation. During the B theme, the melody becomes darker and more heavy handed, and is established as the antithesis of the A theme. The una corda pedal is lifted here, especially as we get closer to the first cadenza. The descending line into the cadenza is played very supple just like the opening measures. The harmonies in the cadenza have an effect of a transition.

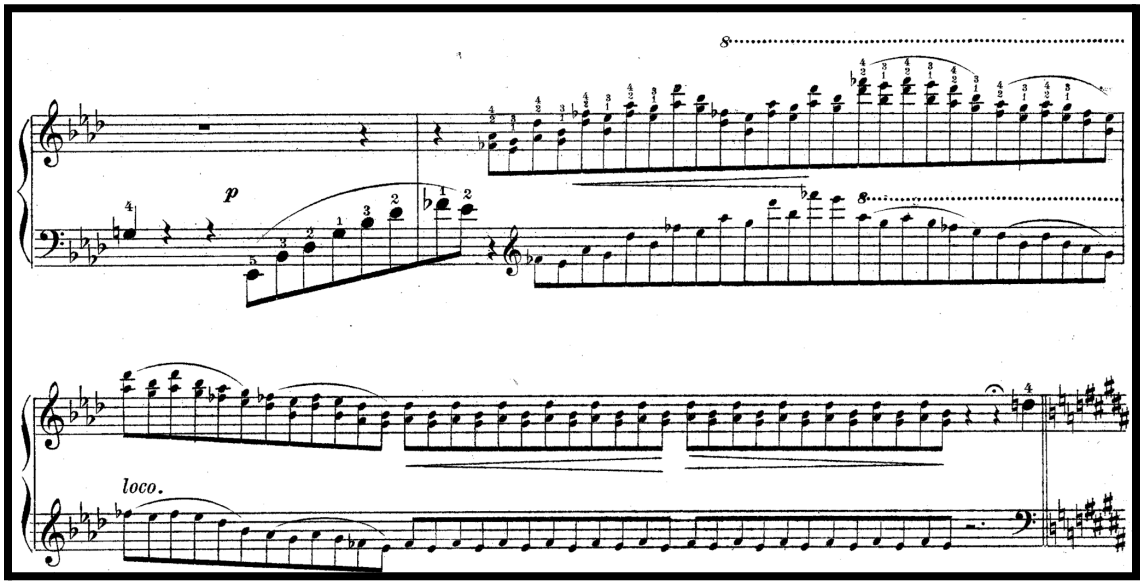
Now at the B section of the piece, we see the marking "più animato con passione", meaning to play "more animated with passion". Although this is just the A theme again, this marking as well as the harmonies contribute to a more dramatic and intense feel. At measure 37, the buildup to the climax starts, and a far darker and more intense tone and feeling is created through the use of arpeggios and harmony. Although the melody is once again the same loose melody from the A section, it has become a much more dramatic

and emotional sequence due to the use of octaves, loud dynamics and a wider register across the keyboard. The sustain pedal is also heavily used here to have the melody notes ring out, creating an airy quality to the melody. As we grow closer to the second cadenza, the feeling of rushing and tenseness grows more intense due to gradual tempo increases. The second cadenza moves up and down the register of the keys and invokes a new sense of separation from the B and A' sections of the piece.

We are now back at the original A theme of the piece and in the score, we see the marking "dolce armonioso", meaning to play "sweet and harmoniously". This is reflected in the melody, which is now back to the sweet and innocent tone from the beginning at a piano dynamic. This continues into the coda, where the effect deepens. The use of block chords highlight the stillness and tranquility of the piece and the final few arpeggiated chords incur a sense of finality as we close the piece.

Texture

The majority of Liebestraum No. 3 is homophonic, but there are some sections where multiple voices are heard, often the bass complimenting the head melody in the treble. The density gradually thickens over the course of the piece, reaching its thickest at the climax. After the climax, the density gradually thins out with the recurrence of the A theme and the coda. Inner voices are often heard sprinkled throughout the piece, often used as a call and response to the head melody. In the A theme, we find the head melody with a bass voice outlining the chords, although depending on the performance, it could easily be heard as a countermelody, if emphasis is put onto the descending line. In the B theme the texture thickens slightly, with a more developed bass, filling out the harmony. The first cadenza is at a medium level of density as although it is very fast, most of it is at a very high register, making it sound less full.



The B theme features a fuller and denser texture as the arpeggios from in the first section are present in both hands and the voice in the bass is more prominent now, cementing this section as polyphonic. The buildup to the climax is very dense as it is in the low register with arpeggios that are strongly pedalled. The extra voice is gone now, but it will return in the climax. The climax is where the piece is the most dense. The octaves, pedalling and low bass jumps make this section sound very full. The arpeggios at measure 44 range from the low bass to mids adding fullness to the texture. The chromatic countermelody in the bass is most audible here. At the second cadenza, the piece starts to thin out. This, as with the first

cadenza, is not due to a lack of speed here. This cadenza is very high in register and travels between the highest notes of the piano and the mids, and aims to gradually thin out the texture for the next section. The A' section is texturally very similar to the beginning of the piece. It is *slightly* thicker than the beginning due to the presence of chords above the melody and arpeggios, however coming from the climax it feels comparatively much thinner. This section can be seen as polyphonic due to the chords and bass acting as separate voices contributing to the main melody. The coda is the thinnest section of the entire piece. The coda has a single melody line made entirely up of chords in the treble range. The last measure features a slow rolled chord with the texture as thin as the piece gets.

Dynamics and Expressive Techniques

Dynamics and expressive techniques are perhaps the *most* crucial element of a well-rounded performance of Liebestraum No. 3. They function as the primary way performers can display emotion in their performances and to craft their own interpretations. In classical music (as the broad term), a truly special performance of any piece is one with emotion and the performer's personal voice clearly shown; a recount of the notes with no expression is not a good performance. This can be accomplished through a variety of expressive techniques, such as staggered entrances, use of dynamics, phrasing (this is *extremely* important), rubato usage, pedalling and more. Many of these techniques are notated in the score, such as pedal marks and dynamics, however the more nuanced and expressive techniques such as musical phrasing and rubato are more ambiguous and must be controlled and developed by the performer. Solo pieces on any instrument have the most liberty for expression, and the same piece played by two different performers can sound drastically different. If we use Liebestraum as an example, we can contrast this performance by Khatia Buniatishvili to Annique Göttler's performance. While both playing the same piece, they have drastically different moods. Buniatishvili's performance is calmer and softer than Göttler's, which is more episodic and more clearly divided into sections, clearly seen after the cadenzas. Göttler's performance is more intense due to her use of stronger dynamics and stronger rubato, while Buniatishvili's is more soothing due to her dynamic range being much smaller, generally using softer dynamics and less pronounced rubato. Both interpretations derive from the score and are equally valid, but display different moods of the piece. The opening of Liebestraum should have the melodic line sing over the accompaniment arpeggios. This is reinforced by the marking at the beginning of the piece "dolce cantando," to be "sweet and singing". Rubato is typically used sparingly and at the end of phrases here. Pedalling up to the cadenza is switched each chord change in order to not muddy the sound. In the B theme, the melody intensifies and the accompaniment arpeggios and bass notes become more noticeable. Rubato is more common here, especially in the leadup to the first cadenza. As we tonicise into C and E major, both the accompaniment and melody increase in dynamics to accompany the brighter tonality. At the beginning of the leadup to the cadenza, rubato is more prominent and a slight crescendo is applied up until the fermata. The walkdown to the cadenza has the first group of staccato notes in the entire piece. However, many interpreters (including me) forgo these markings to play it legato and slurred, while applying a diminuendo and ritardando. The opening of the cadenza is played with extreme accelerando and accents on the C#m 2nd inversion, root position, 1st inversion, 2nd inversion and 1st inversion chords on the descent.

The B section starts very similarly dynamically to the A section with a melody voiced above arpeggios. The marking "più animato con passione" is an invitation to play louder and more intensely than before. The bass notes should be voiced slightly louder than before due to the more developed movement. As this part of the piece is thicker than before, rubato is more appropriate here as there is more musical content to

be manipulated. At measure 32 there is a crescendo lasting for 3 measures and a dynamic marking indicating to play forte. At measure 36 there is a marking to return to forte as we transition into the buildup to the climax. Here we find the marking “sempre stringendo”, indicating the use of an accelerando.