

Analysis of Technical Difficulties in the Performance of Liszt' *Etude La Campanella*

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Abstract: Liszt's Paganini Etude La Campanella belongs to a high difficulty etude, which is a piano piece adapted by Liszt based on the theme of III. Rondo "La Campanella" of Italian violinist Paganini's Violin Concerto No. 2 in B Minor. The author analyzes the creative background, structure, and technical exercises targeted by various variations of Liszt's Paganini Etude La Campanella, and compares it with different adapted versions, so that performers can master each variation of the main theme of La Campanella and overcome technical difficulties in difficult parts one by one based on a thorough understanding of the work and have a preliminary understanding of the characteristics of Liszt's arrangement. By comparing different adapted versions of La Campanella, the performer can gain new inspiration from it.

Keywords: Liszt, Paganini Etude, technical difficulties, the use of pedals, version comparison

1. Introduction

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was a Hungarian pianist, composer, conductor, and music activist. He was one of the main representatives of Romantic music and held a pivotal position in the history of piano art, known as the "King of Piano". He has created a vast array of piano works, and his piano arrangements are the most numerous of them, totaling over 700 pieces. His piano adaptations surpass any previous composer, and his piano arrangements have developed piano performance techniques to an unparalleled level. He created orchestral music and rich and colorful sound effects on the piano, which greatly enriched its expressive power.

2. The Development of Piano Etude

"Etude" originates from the Latin words "stadium", "studere", and "tundere". Literally, "stadium" means the process of effort, "studere" means enthusiastic and proactive learning, and "tundere" means attack. In the current sense, the meaning of "Etude" is closer to the first two explanations, related to "hard-working practice". The definition of Etude is annotated differently in different dictionaries. The definition of "Etude" in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* is "A piece designed to aid the student of an instrument in the development of his mechanical and technical ability. An *etude* is usually devoted entirely to one of the special problems of instrumental technique, such as scales, arpeggios, octaves, double stops, trills, etc." (Apel, 1955) . The explanation for *Etude* in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Music*

is “The French equivalent of “study”, widely adopted for fairly short whose principal aim is the development or exploitation of a particular aspect of performing technique, like Chopin’s Etudes op.25. The term has also been used as a title by 20th-century composers, usually to indicate a piece exploring a specific aspect of the posers’ craft e.g. Stravinskys’s Four Etudes for Orchestra, 1929.” (Ferguson, 1980) The definition of “Etude” in the New Oxford English-Chinese Dictionary online is “A short musical composition, typically for one instrument, designed as an exercise to improve the technique or demonstrate the skill of the player.” (The New Oxford English-Chinese Dictionary online)

Performing *etudes* with a keyboard can be traced back to the Baroque period. The Prelude from Francois Couperin’s *Performance Art of Harpsichord*, J. S. Bach’s Inventions, the Prelude in the 12-Tone Equal Temperament, and Domenico Scarlatti’s Sonatas all contain a lot of technical elements. These works with distinct artistic and profound connotations, although not named “Etude”, are consistent with *Etude*’s features of simple structure and single texture and use some technical elements as music materials in the works to achieve corresponding technical training purposes. Therefore, it can be seen as the sprout of the musical form of Etudes.

With the emergence of the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the mid-18th century, people’s rational understanding of the laws of objective things greatly improved, and music aesthetics and concepts also changed accordingly. They began to oppose the excessive decoration and lyricism of the Baroque period, but to advocate for natural, simple, and rational formal beauty. At the same time, with the development of piano manufacturing technology and the emergence of new piano performance techniques, composers have specially created a large number of works that meet these requirements, namely typical etudes. From then on, piano etudes were born as an independent musical form. The piano etudes of the classical age are unprecedented in both quantity and variety, and have the same characteristics: They use classical major and minor functional harmonies, and the training content is based on modal harmonies such as scales, arpeggios, chords, etc; Each Etude repeatedly emphasizes a technical challenge to ultimately overcome it, and emphasizes the independence, flexibility, and granularity of the fingers over the expression of the content and emotions of the work itself, which ultimately led to a single theme, simple structure, and insufficient artistry in the etudes of this age to become purely technical piano etudes. During this age, the main Etude composers included Muzio Clement, Johann Baptist Cramer, Carl Czerny, and others, who had a profound impact on piano performance and the piano teaching system.

In the early 19th century, the Romanticism movement in European literature and art swept across the European continent, which influenced other forms of art, including music, and the Romantic period that dominated European art history for a century was formed. Musicians in the Romantic period was no longer satisfied with the conventional ways of the Classical age. They broke tradition and constantly innovated and emphasized the expression of personal subjective emotions and artistic feelings in free music creation. At the same time, the piano manufacturing technology during this period was further improved, including a spring-loaded recoil renner, a range of seven and a half octaves, a hammer wrapped in felt, improved damper pedals, and added soft pedals. The improvement of piano manufacturing technology meets the requirements of musicians for the rich timbre and various dazzling techniques of the piano, so as to provide practical possibilities for performers to express emotions and highlight personality, and prompt composers to create a large number of etudes to improve their skills and adapt to the needs of the new era. Composers cleverly integrated piano techniques into the artistic conception of these etudes, achieving not only the goal of training skills and solving technical problems, but also increasing fun and appreciation, thus developing into musical

etudes that express profound philosophical ideas and rich human emotions. Chopin and Liszt are representatives of this period.

After entering the 20th century, the creation of the piano Etude showed a characteristic of diversity. On the one hand, some composers were deeply influenced by Romantic music in the 19th century and inherited the tradition of concert etudes established by Chopin and Liszt; on the other hand, they used new music materials in their creations, pursued new sound colors and piano vocabulary, and developed the possibility of piano skills to seek breakthroughs. The main composers of this period include Claude Debussy, Alexander Nikolayevitch Scriabin, Sergei Vassilievitch Rachmaninoff, Igor Fedorovitch Stravinsky, Sergei Sergeyeovich Prokofiev, and others.

After World War II, various new creative trends emerged in the Western music circle. Among them, those schools with the most radical creative ideas and the most novel creative techniques are collectively referred to as the “Avant-garde.” Most avant-garde composers were baptized by World War II and were influenced in their thinking by surrealist painting, stream of consciousness literature, and absurd theater. They broke free from the constraints of traditional composition techniques in Etude’s creation, and pursued new ideas and techniques, and even different musical aesthetic concepts from before. Messiaen’s Serialism Piano Etude, Philip Glass’s Minimalist Piano Etude, and Gyurgy Ligeti’s Etude can all be considered classics of this period.

3. Liszt’s “Paganini Etude”

After attending a concert by Paganini in 1831, Liszt was impressed by his superb playing skills and expressive power, which led to the idea of adapting Paganini's violin Caprices and vowing to become a “Paganini” in the piano field. Afterwards, he adapted III. Rondo "La Campanella" of *Violin Concerto No. 2 in B Minor* and created the Etude *La Campanella*. Liszt named *La Campanella* and five other piano pieces adapted from Paganini’s *Paganini-24 Caprices* as *Etudes after Paganini Caprices* and dedicated them to German pianist Clara Schumann.

The *Paganini Etude* is renowned for its profound techniques and vivid imagery. In the *Paganini Etude*, Liszt not only reproduces Paganini's superb techniques on the violin, but also incorporates the musical essence into the arrangement of the work. This Etude not only requires the performer to overcome high difficulty performance techniques, but more importantly, to express its artistic effect. This set of etudes consists of six pieces, with *La Campanella* being the third and the most famous one in Liszt’s *Paganini Etude*. “Liszt employs a number of sophisticated techniques such as homophonic tremolo, long chromatic progressions, etc. to emulate the staccatos and Sopranos of Paganini's violin.” (Zhang, 2019) At the beginning of the piece, the leap of the right hand was considered “unplayable” at the time, which was intimidating, and it is compulsory for piano performers after entering the advanced stage.

4. A Brief Analysis of the Piece

La Campanella was written between 1830 and 1834, with an allegretto, 6/8 beats, and G Sharp harmonic minor, and in the form of a variation. The piece consists of an introduction, Paganini’s first theme statement A (bars 5 to 12), the second theme statement A1 (bars 13 to 21), the second theme B (bars 22 to 42), the first theme variation I A2 (bars 43 to 50), the first theme variation II A3 (51 to 60 bars), the second theme variation I B1 (bars 61 to 73), the first theme variation III (including two variations of the theme) A4 (bars 80 to 87 and A5 (bars 88

to 96), the second theme variation II B2 (bars 97 to 121), the first theme variation IV A6 (bars 123 to 130), and the coda. The introduction uses an octave ensemble of the bass and treble areas to depict the sound of bells coming from afar. After four bars of introduction, the theme of “bell” appeared in the treble areas, and the crisp and pleasant sound of the piano’s treble area formed a series of vivid and realistic bell sounds. Afterwards, the two themes underwent alternating variations to form brilliant and magnificent parts, and it was not until the coda of the piece that the author introduced new materials, ending the piece in a brilliant climax.

5. Technical Difficulties in Various Variation Parts of “La Campanella”

5.1 Interval leaps

“Any long jump beyond an octave is called a leap.” (Bai, 2007) The first statement of Paganini's theme (section A), the second statement of the theme (section A1), the first theme variation I (A2), and the second theme variation II (B2) all have interval leaps. Here, the author imitates the sound of a bell by using interval leaps, with the theme woven through the long-distance intervals of sixteenth notes, which is also the main technical feature of this piece. Joseph Gatt divided leap techniques into two types: “The first method is to use a continuous key touching technique to play the two notes of the jump with even hand movements; The second method is to use a non-continuous key touching technique to play the first note and use it as a springboard to obtain the second note.” (Gatt, 1983) Performers are prone to making mistakes in the early learning stage, and accurate and slow practices of two hands separately can help overcome difficulties. The extension and contraction of the palm needs to be controlled accurately. When touching the keys with fingertips, it is important to be quick and light, and highlight the main melody while maintaining a good sound. The thumb must be deep and expressive when touching the keys, and the hand should be as close to the keys as possible. They should use the wrist to drive the finger along a small arc trajectory on the keys. There is also a difference in timbre between the two statements of the theme in the left hand accompaniment: In section A, the left hand accompaniment imitates the harp, with a softer timbre; In section A1, ornaments are added by the right hand, and the left hand accompaniment imitates the sound effect of a string instrument plucking the strings. This section has a lively personality, and the pedal needs to be stepped on in a short manner.



Figure 1: Music Example 1

Section A2 is quiet and mysterious, and when playing this section, the right hand's notes should be even without any accent. The melody of the left hand should be played with non-legatos. Although it is a staccato, the duration should not be too short, and the touch keys should be deep and soft.



Figure 2: Music Example 2

In addition, the second theme variation II (B2), which is bars 97 to 103, is a reverse leap with both hands, using a sequence technique. The speed of this section is required to be faster than before. The first bar is played with staccato, without the need to step on the pedal, and the volume gradually increases. For the subsequent continuous leaps, emphasis should be placed on the high pitches and the highest notes of the arpeggios on the strong and subsidiary strong beats, while simultaneously stepping on the pedal during the strong and subsidiary strong beats. When playing, the shoulders and arms should be relaxed, and the fingers should touch the keys deeply but not deeply, so as to make the sound linger.



Figure 3: Music Example 3

5.2 Tremolo

Tremolo refers to “increasing the density of sounds at the same time and replacing one keystroke with multiple consecutive keystrokes at the same beat, so that fingers can control each point of the melody evenly relative to each other, resulting in various changes such as gradually strengthening and weakening, light or dark, according to the requirements of psychological aesthetics after the long melody is released.” (Hou, 2002)

The two variation themes of the first theme variation I (section A2) and the first theme variation II (section A3) are both composed of the tremolo technique. The first theme variation I (section A2) is a roll of fingers 2 and 1, which creates a feeling of various bell sounds of different pitches rippling endlessly and diffusely mixed. When playing the same notes repeatedly on fingers 2 and 1, the fingers should quickly move to the right after pressing the down key on

finger 2 to prepare for finger 1. The first theme variation II (section A3) is a tremolo with fingers 4, 3, and 2. In the practice of tremolo, the wrist should be very relaxed, emphasizing the first note played with the thumb in each group. After pressing the key, the fingers should quickly slide towards the palm, and the strength should roll from the beginning to the end. The fingers should be independent, and the hand shape should be kept flat. While practicing this variation, performers can first use the 7th and 25th pieces of Cherney's *The Art of Finger Dexterity for Piano*, Op. 740 as a preparatory exercise.



Figure 4: Music Example 4

5.3 The chromatic passage and quick alternating keystrokes with both hands

The difficulty of the chromatic passage in this section (bars 74 to 79) is to maintain the uniformity, granularity, and speed of the fingers during performance. It is necessary to choose scientific fingering techniques before practicing and try to avoid using the same finger too much to cause muscle fatigue, in order to ensure smooth performance. When encountering a chord on the left strong beat, the pedal should be pressed deeply. When reaching another chord on the strong beat, the pedal can be slightly changed, which not only maintains the support of the bass chord for the chromatic scale, but also ensures clear and smooth sound of the chromatic scale.



Figure 5: Music Example 5

On the technique of alternating keystrokes with both hands, in the book *Liszt* by Russian scholar Yakov Milstein, it is written that “in addition to the commonly used octaves and chord exercises, Liszt also enjoys using the octaves and chord structures of alternating keystrokes (known as “accidental octaves”). For Liszt, it is a very typical invention and creation entirely by Liszt...” Liszt’s alternating keystroke technique not only retains the characteristics of previous pursuits of speed and virtuosity, but also creatively draws on the performance

techniques of percussion instruments. Rapid alternating keystrokes of both hands can create dazzling sound effects and uplift the audience's emotions. When hitting keys alternately with both hands, it is required to have even and stable force, and the two hands should match seamlessly. While practicing this passage, performers can first use Cherney's Op. 299 No. 31 as a preparatory exercise.

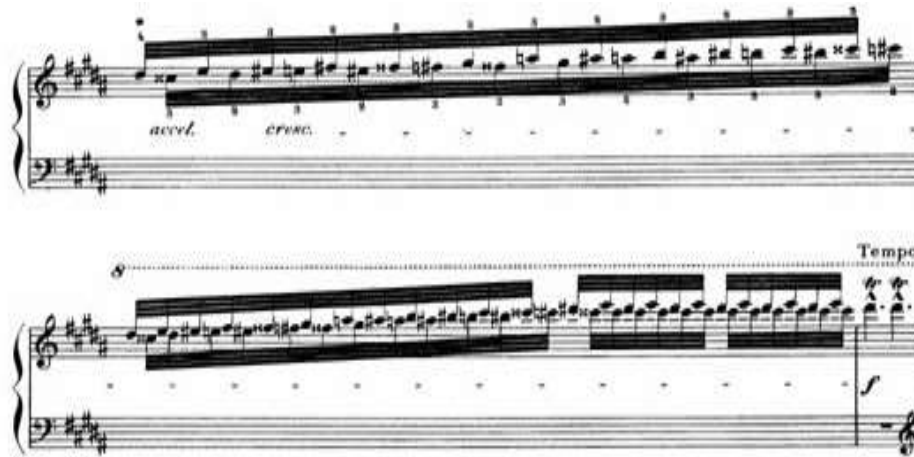


Figure 6: Music Example 6

5.4 Playing melody and vibrato simultaneously with one hand

The repeated repetition of two notes forms a vibrato. The bars 72 to 75 involve playing both melodic notes and vibratos with one hand simultaneously. When playing this section, it is required that the fingers be pressed against the keys, and when playing vibrato, it is necessary to control the uniformity of the timbre and intensity. When playing melody parts with fingers 4 and 5, it should be light and have more overtones, and the two parts must be neat and maintain a unified rhythm.



Figure 7: Music Example 7

Variation III of the first theme (sections A4 and A5) is a tremolo with fingers 4 and 5. The author seems to use these tremolo sounds to imitate the light and swaying sound of a small bell. In order to control the sound and avoid muscle tension during performance, the wrist should be slightly tilted towards 4 or 5 fingers during practice to facilitate shorter 5-finger touch keys. We should not sacrifice the expressiveness of vibrato by mechanically playing it for the sake of speed. The left hand should play the melody in the middle part with non-legatos and pay attention to the smoothness of the tone.



Figure 8: Music Example 8

5.5 Octave and chord

Romantic music in the 19th century was for composers to express their inner emotions. Romantic composers boldly and innovatively used notes to weave novel and unique harmonies and unique textures. Their move also invisibly pushed piano performance skills to the pinnacle. The “King of Piano” is doing his best to show off his skills in his piano music, at any cost to please the audience, with continuous octaves and powerful chords being one of the important means.

The second theme variation II (B2) and the first theme variation IV (A6), as well as the coda, are composed of octaves, double tones, and chords, creating a brilliant sound effect of a hundred bells ringing together.

The techniques of octaves can be further subdivided into fast scales or chromatic scales, alternating keystrokes with both hands, octave tremolo, and octave interval arpeggios.

5.5.1 Fast scales or chromatic scales.

The right hand in bars 112 to 114 is a fast scale, and during performance, fingers 1 and 5 should hold the keys. As the volume increases, arm strength should be added, and both hands should touch the keys neatly and with concentrated strength. Attention should be paid to emphasizing the octaves on the second strong beat in bars 113 and 114.



Figure 9: Music Example 9

5.5.2 Playing an octave with alternating hands

This set of octaves imitates the continuous impact of a bell. The octave before the pedal symbol is a continuous impact, and the section where the pedal is pressed is the echo produced by the bell after continuous impact. Liszt often uses the octave interval of alternating keystrokes with both hands in his creations and attaches great importance to this practice. He believed that “these exercises make the arms more flexible and powerful” (Yakov, 2002) and emphasized that “these exercises should be played slowly at the beginning to avoid tension”. (Yakov, 2002)



Figure 10: Music Example 10

5.5.3 Octave tremolo

In the first theme variation IV (A6), the right hand plays the octave tremolo from bars 121 to 127. In bar 122, the two octaves of the left hand are played with strong notes, and in the following bars 123 to 127, the left hand must emphasize the octaves and single notes of the bass. Regarding tremolo, Joseph Gatt believed that “generally speaking, the volume of tremolo is uniform and the tone is beautiful, but the action of pressing the lower arm tightly when playing an octave tremolo is quite tiring and not suitable for long-term performance.” (Gatt, 1983) When playing tremolo, the fingers that do not play should naturally be placed on the keys, so that they can freely strike the keys. Regarding the practice of octaves, Liszt said that “fingers should be raised independently and easily, making clear and powerful keystrokes.” (Yakov, 2002)



Figure 11: Music Example 11

5.5.4 Octave interval arpeggios

The two-bar left and right hand octave reverse chromatic scale pushed the entire piece towards a passionate and unrestrained coda. The coda is written using new materials, marked as *Animato* (lively, vivacious, and active), which is the climax of the entire piece and the fastest speed. In many of Liszt’s piano works, the climax section is displayed using the technique of octaves, and *La Campanella* is no exception. In this section, the left hand is an unchanged octave interval arpeggio, emphasizing the first octave of each group while pressing the pedal

to the bottom. The final piece ends perfectly with several brilliant chords. The above octave techniques can be practiced in conjunction with the 49th piece from Czerny's *Die Kunst Der Fingerfertigkeit*, Op. 740.



Figure 12: Music Example 12

5.5.5 Chords

When playing the chords in the 103rd, 104th, and 128th bars and concluding parts, attention should be paid to highlighting the high pitches of the chords while ensuring that the sound is neat and concentrated.

6. Application of Pedals

“Before Liszt, piano players had fully integrated the role of the pedal in altering acoustics with the performance of musical works, but Liszt explored the timbre function of the pedal in greater depth, using syncopated, legato pedals in his older years. It could be argued that he was a piano player who used the colour function of the pedal more fully.” (Hou, 2022)

“Liszt believed that in piano playing, the pedals must be used in a way that matches the emotional and colourful needs of the piece, rather than just considering clean harmonic effects. Therefore, he made a bold breakthrough in the use of the pedal by creating a combination of dissonances and different harmonies, unexpectedly building a "rich musical world".” (Hou, 2022)

6.1 Continue low voice harmony and highlight the main melody

The right hand of this part adopts the technique of tremolo, where four thirty-two notes form a group, and the first quaver note in each group is a melodic note. Every time the right thumb plays a quaver note melody, the left hand should step on the pedal within two beats of the bass support, which not only continues the harmony support of the left hand's low voice part but also highlights the melody of the right hand.



Figure 13: Music Example 13

6.2 Highlight the main melody

In this part, the right hand is responsible for playing the vibrato of the thirty-two notes, while the left hand is responsible for playing the main melody and bass. The pedal should be replaced every half beat after the start of the main melody. The purpose of such an application is to not only highlight the main melody of the left hand, making it more three-dimensional, but also to give the right hand a vibrato embellishment that mimics the sound of a small bell.



Figure 14: Music Example 14

6.3 Connect melodies

The melody lines here are expressed in the form of staccatos. Due to their large span, it is difficult to connect the melodies. Therefore, a prolongation pedal needs to be added to extend the melody notes in order to connect them. The pedal marks marked by Liszt here are very clear, that is, press the pedal on the first note at the beginning of each harmony group until it is released on the third melody note. Then, when entering the next new harmony, performers should press the pedal again and release it at the third melody. The use of this sostenuto pedal can not only enhance the coherence of the melody, but also avoid the turbidity of the sound system.



Figure 15: Music Example 15

6.4 Enhance sound effects

This is the coda of the piece, as well as the climax and most brilliant part of the piece. The author also noted the pedal marking here, which can make the chords marked with the staccatissimo mark stand out and connect with the previous chord. There is a long pedal marker at the end of the last two chords in the fourth to last section, which mixes the sound of all chords within the marker, allowing the music to subliminate and greatly stimulating the emotions of both the performer and the audience.



Figure 16: Music Example 16

7. Version Comparison

7.1 Comparison between “Grand Fantasia de Bravoure” and Liszt’s Etude “La Campanella”

The *Grand Fantasia de Bravoure* is a piano piece adapted by Liszt based on the theme of III. Rondo “La Campanella” of Italian violinist Paganini’s *Violin Concerto No. 2 in B Minor*. The full name is *A Gorgeous Fantasia Based on Paganini’s “Bell.”*

7.1.1 Virtuosity

The *Grand Fantasia de Bravoure* vividly embodies Liszt’s dazzling style, with alternating keystrokes, third scale, chromatic scale, vibrato, tremolo, octave, chord, and leap, covering almost all piano techniques, and its difficulty can be imagined. Liszt added ornaments in both statements of the theme but did not apply the technique of leap. The first statement of the theme and the Etude *La Campanella* are both played in a single tone, while the second statement is played in an octave interval.



Figure 17: Music Example 17

In the second theme, Liszt replaced the technique of stroking keys with a single tone and abandoned the technique of leap.



Figure 18: Music Example 18

7.1.2 Artistic quality

After a long introduction, the theme of “bell” appeared in *Grand Fantasia de Bravoure*. Afterwards, the composer skillfully made variations in different tones, areas, and parts of the theme, forming a huge structural paragraph. We cannot help but marvel at Liszt’s inexhaustible source of inspiration and superb creative techniques.

7.1.3 Intuitiveness

The *Grand Fantasia de Bravoure* provides detailed notes on the speed markers, musical expression terms, and pedal markers in each part, making it easier for the performer to get close to the composer’s creative intention. However, markers on fingering are rare in the work and require the performer to make multiple attempts to choose the appropriate finger technique.

7.2 Comparison between Busoni’s arrangement and Liszt’s Etude "La Campanella"

Ferruccio Dante Michcclangiolo Benvenuto Busoni (1886-1924) was a musician who was also a pianist, composer, and educator. As a piano performer, Busoni’s performance is breathtaking. As a composer, Busoni enjoyed adapting the works of many great musicians and greatly admired and supported Liszt. In 1892, Busoni performed Liszt’s *Grandes Etudes de Paganini* in Boston. Busoni's arrangement of Liszt’s Paganini Etude *La Campanella* injected new vitality into this work.

7.2.1 Virtuosity

Busoni added many complex techniques and added many colors to this etude. He added 8 bars to the colorful section of bars 77 and 78 of Liszt's Etude *La Campanella*.

In these 8 sections, Busoni used various high difficulty performance techniques such as alternating keystrokes, third intervals, and fast scales. Liszt used the same leap technique in the first statement (section A) and the second statement (section A1) of the theme. In order to avoid the singularity of this technique, Busoni first played the first statement (section A) of the theme in an octave interval, while in the second statement (section A1), he maintained the same performance style as Liszt. Busoni's arrangement added difficulty to the piece.

7.2.2 Artistic quality

Busoni's arrangement based on the original work adds difficulty to the piece while showcasing his personal musical style.

7.2.3 Intuitiveness

Busoni added many reasonable new elements during the arrangement, such as markings on pedals and fingering. In terms of notation, Busoni presented the music score more clearly to the performers based on Liszt's original work.

Regarding pedals and fingering: Liszt's etudes leave more space for the performer, while Busoni highlights fingering in some complex areas. In terms of pedals, Busoni is also more detailed than Liszt. He believed that "the potential role of pedals has not been fully utilized yet, as they have been constrained by narrow and foolish harmony theories, and some even reject pedals. Any foolish behavior that violates customs should be condemned, but it is necessary for us to conduct experiments that breakthrough customs wisely." (Jiang, 2003)



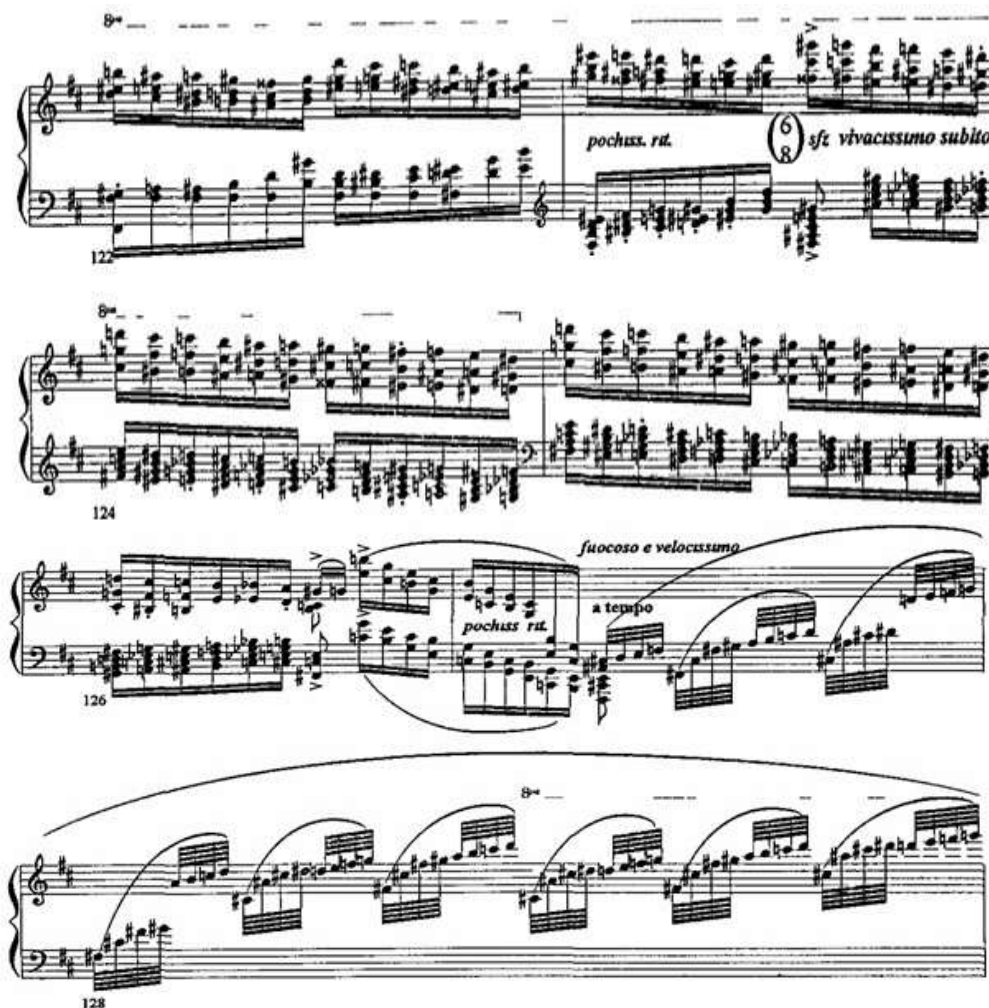
Figure 19: Music Example 19

7.3 Comparison between Hamelin’s arrangement and Liszt’s Etude “La Campanella”

Marc Andre Hamelin (1961-) was born in Montreal, Canada in 1961 and later moved to the United States. He has French ancestry, and his father is a pharmacist and an excellent pianist. When Hamelin was young, his father introduced him to the works of special masters such as Alkan, Medtner, and Sorabji. Hamelin started learning the piano at the age of five and won a Canadian music competition at the age of nine. He first studied at the Dandy Conservatory of Music in Montreal, and then obtained his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Temple Community in Philadelphia, USA. He mainly followed the renowned musician Russell Zihlman, and quickly rose to fame after winning the gold medal at the Carnegie Hall Piano Competition in 1985. He held several concerts in important cities in the United States and Canada and was also invited to perform at the Grammy Awards ceremony in 2001, beginning his performance career. Hamelin is known for his virtuosity and is a rare repertoire expert. His recorded records often win awards, and he is praised by the senior music critic of *The New York Times*, Schoenberg, as a “super performer with virtuosity.”

7.3.1 Virtuosity

As a pianist with virtuosity, Hamelin utilized a significant amount of chord descent in bars 123 to 130, followed by fast and passionate forty-eighth notes and six sets of eleven legatos surging and undulating towards the end of the piece.



The image displays a musical score for Liszt's Etude "La Campanella". It consists of four systems of piano and bass staves. The first system starts at measure 122 and includes the tempo marking "pochiss. rit." and a circled "6/8" time signature, followed by "sfz vivacissimo subito". The second system starts at measure 124. The third system starts at measure 126 and includes the tempo marking "fuocoso e velocissimo" and "a tempo". The fourth system starts at measure 128. The score features complex chordal textures, rapid sixteenth-note passages, and dynamic contrasts.

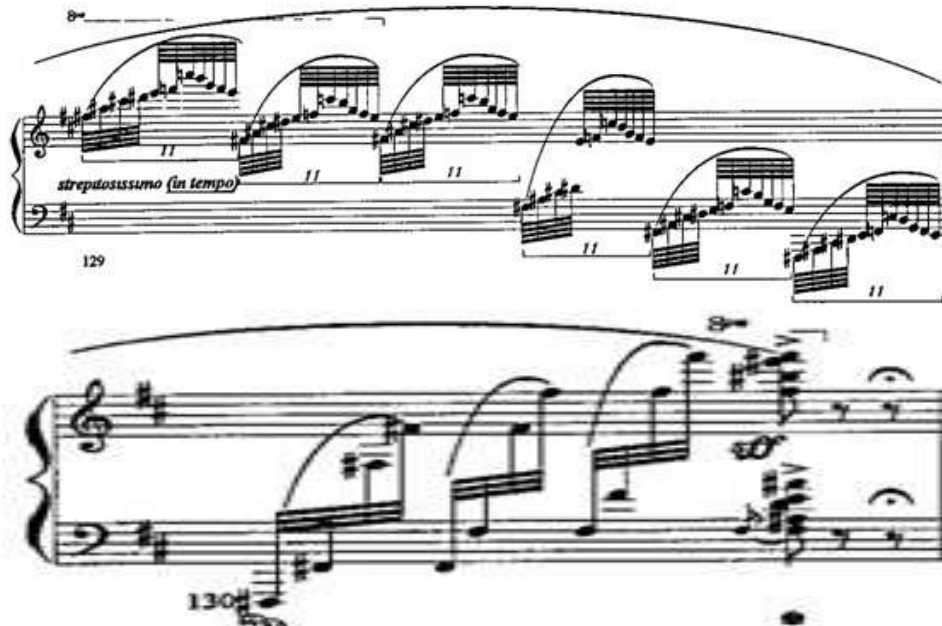


Figure 20: Music Example 20

In the final statement of the theme of the final section of the piece, exquisite techniques were used: The theme of “bell” in the right hand was expressed in octaves and chords, while the accompaniment of the left hand was carried out using octaves. The final section also used a large number of fast and circuitous thirty-two notes to push the piece to its final climax, and the piece ended brilliantly on a strong chord.





Figure 21: Music Example 21

7.3.2 Artistic quality

Hamelin also used 6/8 beats at the beginning of the piece but used D major in tonality. In the 140th bar, there was a modulation, and the piece shifted to B major. The piece also features the theme of “bell” in the treble area after the introduction of four bars. The texture of the second theme in bars 84 to 87 is different from Liszt’s Etude *La Campanella*, where the left and right hands use reverse arpeggios, and the melody is faintly visible in the dense thirty-two notes. In the final section of the piece, Hamelin introduced new materials for Liszt’s Etude *La Campanella* and played it in an octave with his left hand, while his right hand varied the theme of the “bell”. The fusion of different materials collided and created a novel spark at the end of the piece.

7.3.3 Intuitiveness

The adapted version of Hamelin is annotated in great detail in terms of speed, force, and musical terms, but appears to be stingy in terms of pedal and fingering markings. It leaves a lot of room for performers to play, but also adds a lot of difficulty. Performers must constantly try to determine scientific fingering and reasonable pedals.

8. Conclusion

Liszt’s *Paganini Etude* has a dazzling style, rich musical connotations, and exploration of the potential of sound. Behind the magnificent techniques lies profound philosophy, and in the symphonic sound, Liszt’s infinite passion for art is overflowing. He transplanted Paganini’s high difficulty techniques, wonderful sound effects, and magical artistic expression on the violin to the piano and explored the development of piano performance skills. Through the analysis, research, and comparison of the technical difficulties of Liszt’s Etude *La Campanella*, we can feel Liszt’s unparalleled creative talent, and also gain a deeper understanding of Liszt’s piano music.

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