The Romantic Era was a period in music history, when composers started to take their influences from various different sources. In the second half of the 19th century, with the rise of *Neudeutsche Schule*, the so-called *War of the Romantics* divided the composers in terms of their motives for writing new music. In this period, the pioneering of composers like Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz and later Gustav Mahler, Programme music or Programmatic Music had been defined as the main notion of writing new music. As the eponym of the term, Liszt explains the program of a musical piece as ‘a preface added to a piece of instrumental music, by means of which composer intends to guard the listener against a wrong poetical interpretation, and to direct his attention to the poetical idea of the whole or to a particular part of it’1.

Although the definition of programme music still remains open to discussion, by taking Liszt’s depiction as a valid one we can say that, a programme is a guide for the listener, the performer and most importantly the composer. But is narrating the programme in a musical sense, the only goal of the composer of programme music? In his article, *Programme Music*, Professor Niecks indicates that thinking-so would be a degradation of the genre.2 Professor Niecks states that: “Yet another misunderstanding has to be mentioned namely, that programme music is intended to express all that is in the programme. Why the programme, if the music can express all the programme contains? In fact, the very reverse is the case. The raison d'etre of the programme consists in its ability to supply what the music lacks, in its ability to express what music cannot express, or for the nonce will not express.” In this aspect, a programme can undertake various different roles in the musical composition rather than just being the story that is told.

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In this paper, I’ll focus on two pieces from the 19th century Romantic repertoire; Johannes Brahms’ Ballade Op.10 No. 1 ‘Edward Ballade’, and Franz Liszt’s Sposalizio from Deuxième Année de Pèlerinage: Italie. The obvious common trait shared by these two pieces is that both of them are influenced by a programmatic idea, which originates from an extra-musical art form. My goal is to discover how different forms of art influence the composer in terms of creating the mood, form, texture and thematic relationships in the piece. Both of the pieces are solo piano works, which in some sort of way distanced from traditional formal structures. My ultimate aim is to reveal how late Romantic composers started to bend the rules and constraints of previous formal designs in order to prioritize programmatic ideas in their pieces. While doing this, I’ll try to indicate other details in the compositions, which draw attention to their programmatic associations.

Another concept that I’ll touch upon is the symmetry within musical form. As George Rochberg comments on the subject: “The habit of thinking symmetrically was nurtured for almost the entire length of the nineteenth century.”\(^3\) The pieces I’ll analyze upon, intrinsically, indicates various features of symmetry and mirroring, which I believe derives from their related programmes. I’ll essentially use the terms and concepts which Robert P. Morgan explains in his article ‘Symmetrical Form and Common-Practice Tonality’\(^4\).

Before briefly explaining Robert P. Morgan’s categorization of symmetry in common-practice tonality, it’s important to mention his realization of symmetry in formal issues, which is more of an assumption rather than the actual mathematical aspect of symmetry. Nevertheless, the effect of symmetry in musical form is non-negligible here, and it can certainly be applied to formal issues.

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In his article, Robert P. Morgan explains the possible ‘types of symmetry distinguished by content repetition’. He divides this kind of symmetry into three categories and offers three sub-divisions to the third one, which he calls ‘Full Duplication (Complete Symmetry)’. The sub-divisions are; Literal, which is an exact repetition of a musical content right after to the original one, Transposed, which occurs when a transposition of a musical content appears after the original one, and finally Reflective which is an inversion, retrograde or retrograde/inversion in consecutive to the original piece of musical content. Reflective symmetry is basically like a mirrored image of initial musical content. The images of these ‘symmetry by content repetition’ can be seen in Figure 1 below taken from Robert P. Morgan’s *Symmetrical Form and Common-Practice Tonality.*

![Figure 1](image)

In the next sections of this paper, I’ll analyze the two pieces in detail and point out how they feed upon from their programmatic idea, and furthermore, how and why duality, trinity and symmetry are concepts which artists bethink throughout the composition.

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5. Morgan, Robert P. “Symmetrical Form and Common-Practice Tonality.” *Music Theory Spectrum,* Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring, 1998), pp. 16. On page 23, author gives examples of reflected symmetry from Bach’s various cantatas and fugues. The type of mirror imaging which I’ll touch upon is rather not as blatant as these forms of 16th century but still the generating unit and its reflection is present on the score.
1) Analysis: Brahms’ Op. 10 No. 1 ‘Edward Ballade’

German composer Johannes Brahms is recognized as a successor to the classical style. Brahms is considered to be a patriarch of absolute music in the Romantic Era and progeny to major classical composers such as Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven, in such a way that Rey M. Longyear describes his music and legacy as ‘rebirth of absolute music’ in the 19th century. But even the works of the above-mentioned 18th century classical composers have been associated with programmatic music; namely works such as Beethoven’s titled piano sonatas (The Tempest, Les Adieux), 3rd and 6th Symphonies, and Haydn’s various characteristic and dramatic symphonies. Even though Brahms’ music is as absolute as Haydn and Beethoven’s, just like they did, he had his own share of programme attached to some of his music. We can particularly see this in his solo piano works. In spite of his identification as an absolute music composer, according to the Brahms’ biographer Malcolm MacDonald: “He was the first composer who made the use of preserved folk tale and folk songs.”

Just like his Intermezzo Op. 117 No. 1 or early piano sonatas Opp. 1, 2 and 5, Ballade Op. 10 No. 1 has a poetic association. The German translation of Scottish ballad Edward, by Johann Gottfried Herder from his book Stimmen der Völker in Liedern, has been appended to the score by the composer himself. The note at the first page on the score reads: ‘Nach der Schottischen Ballade: Edward (After the Scottish Ballad “Edward”),’ and thus many music theorists associated the composition to the poem with respect to form, themes and also setting of text to the music. To comprehend the composition, first it’s important to analyze the poem, study its form and general feel, because that is where Brahms initially took his reference in terms of formal organization, mood and placement of thematic material. The Edward Ballade doesn’t just re-tell the story which is told in the poem, it also takes the poem as a model for composition.

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Modern English Translation

"Why does your sword so drip with blood,
Edward, Edward,
Why does your sword so drip with blood,
And why so sad go you O?"

"O I have killed my hawk so good,
Mother, mother,
O I have killed my hawk so good,
And I had no more but he O."

"Your hawk's blood was never so red,
Edward, Edward,
Your hawk's blood was never so red,
My dear son I tell thee O."

"O I have killed my red-roan steed,
Mother, mother,
O I have killed my red-roan steed,
That before was so fair and free O."

"Your steed was old, and you have got more,
Edward, Edward,
Your steed was old, and you have got more,
Some other sorrow you bear O."

"O I have killed my father dear,
Mother, mother,
O I have killed my father dear,
Alas, and woe is me O!"

"And what penance will you bear, for that,
Edward, Edward,
And what penance will you bear, for that,
My dear son, now tell me O."

"I'll set my feet in yonder boat,
Mother, mother,
I'll set my feet in yonder boat,
And I'll fare over the sea O."

"And what will you do with your towers and your hall,
Edward, Edward,
And what will you do with your towers and your hall,
That were so fair to see O?"

"I'll let them stand 'til they down fall,
Mother, mother,
I'll let them stand 'til they down fall,
For here never more must I be O."

"The world is large, let them beg through life,
Mother, mother,
The world is large, let them beg through life,
For them never more will I see O."

"And what will you leave to your own mother dear,
Edward, Edward,
And what will you leave to your own mother dear,
My dear son, now tell me O."

"The curse of hell from me shall you bear,
Mother, mother,
The curse of hell from me shall you bear,
Such counsels you gave to me O."

In the poem, we are exposed to the conversation between Edward and his Mother. The narration proceeds through a couple of questions asked by the Mother and answers given to them by Edward regarding the origins of the dripping blood from his sword. Edward tries to deceive his Mother by telling lies about whom the blood belongs to but after two attempted lies, Edward reveals the truth of having killed his father. His penance for this crime is to leave everything that he possesses behind, leave his children and wife as they beg through life, and go to an exile. In the final two stanzas of the poem Mother asks Edward, what he will leave to her and the twist comes in the final stanza as Edward replies: “The curse of hell from me shall you bear, Such counsels you gave to me O”. Thus it is revealed that, the Mother was the one who gave him the counsel to kill his own father. The poem has a dark and austere narrative, which almost makes the reader feel like a twist is on the way. But the important feature of the poem lies in its use of time, and manipulation of time as a narrative tool.
In her article *From Poem to Performance: Brahms's "Edward" Ballade, Op. 10, No. 1*, Charise Hastings discusses the mirror imaging symmetry between the narrative discourse and historical chronology of the story told in the poem. As Figure 2 illustrates, the surprise factor in the poem is created due to the fact that events are narrated in an opposite order to the way that they happened chronologically. In the narrative, first thing we read is the Mother speaking to Edward about the blood on his sword. Second in discourse, Edward reveals that the reason his sword is soaked in blood is because he killed his Father with it. And last in discourse, Edward uncloaks the mystery behind the murder by stating that his Mother motivated him to kill his Father. But when events are considered chronologically, the only possible order is; first, Mother counsels Edward to kill his Father. Second, Edward kills his Father. Last, he converses with his Mother while his sword is still covered in blood and this dialogue is the event that we read in present time. All the other events in the story happened in the past, so naturally they happened prior to the dialogue of the Mother and Edward.9

![Figure 2](image)

This artifice of playing with the concept of time constitutes the main formal construction of the artwork, and this type of perceptive skill of compositional organization is something that Brahms esteems greatly. In the Ballade, form, thematic material and mood follows the model provided from the programme of the text. Especially, the placement of themes in composition is a reflection of the symmetrical positioning of chronological order and narrative discourse.

The piece is in rough ABA’ form. The A section begins with Andante marking Theme I in measures 1-8. Due to the dense use of open fifth and fourth intervals, widely spaced voicings and solemn, weighty marching of chords, Theme I delivers the austerity and gloominess of the ballad right from the beginning. Following that, marked Poco più moto, Theme II is in measure 9-13. Theme II shows both contrasts and resemblances to the first theme. Firstly, as Figure 3 illustrates, when the grace note of Theme I is omitted, the rhythmic structure of the first measures of Theme I and II is identical. Secondly, both of the themes suggest two keys which are a fourth apart from one another. Theme I begins in the home key of D minor, but at measure 5 tonality shifts to G minor. The reason to see the G minor chord in measure 5, as a shift in tonal center rather than a iv chord in the home key is the Eb note introduced in the grace note at the first beat of measure 5. Theme I ends with a half cadence in D minor, but it’s also plausible to see the A major chord in measure 8 as a V/V chord in G minor, which will be the tonal center of the forthcoming Theme II. The preceding V/V resolves to D dominant chord in the 3rd beat of measure 9, which is a V7 chord in G minor. And finally it resolves to G minor with V7-I cadence on the 4th beat of measure 9. Right after that, measure 11 begins in C minor and follows the same exact pattern. This way both themes venture two different tonal centers which are an interval of perfect fourth apart from one another. Third resemblance is that, both of the themes end at a half cadence in D at first, but end in perfect cadence in second repetition. These resemblances suggest that Themes I and II belong to the same realm, they are of same kind and are related to each other. That is why, general the A section is generally considered to serve as a representation of the dialogue between Mother and Edward. Apart from their resemblances, the tone of Theme II is quite different. Contrasting to the open fifths in the first theme, Theme II has closer voicings and introduces distinctive thirds. It tenders a warmer, gentler tone compared to the first theme. Since the A section (measures 1-26) is associated with the first four stanzas of the text, Theme I represents the questions of the Mother, and Theme II represents attempted lies of Edward.

10. Flint, Ellen Rennie. "Thematic and Tonal Imagery in Brahms' Ballade in D Minor, Op 10 No. 1." American Music Teacher; Dec 2004-Jan 2005; 54, 3; Music Database pg. 18. Here, author also suggests a different resemblance between two themes. Flint comments that; "Just as a son descends from the Mother, so Edwards theme (Theme II) descends from his Mother (Theme I). The bass-line of Edward’s theme derived directly from treble of the Mother’s theme.
Figure 4: Edward Ballade, Harmonic Analysis of Section A mm. 1-26
Mother’s questions are bare, cold and direct, so is the Theme I. Edward’s answers are smart, persuasive but deceitful, so is the Theme II. The grouping of chords is important to mention here. First theme is eight measures long and phrased into groups of eight quarter notes with slurs. In Theme I, phrases begin with a quarter note upbeat and end on the 3rd beat of the measure, so the repetition can start the same way. This grouping makes it a proper, equal dividing of phrases. Contrastingly, Theme II is five measures long and grouped into five quarter notes with slurs. Groups of five quarter notes in 4/4 time creates the hemiola-like feel in the rhythm and naturally, as Figure 5 illustrates, each phrase begins on a different beat of each measure. Due to this irregularity of phrase positioning through measures 9-13, Theme II doesn’t have a strong sense of downbeat. In accordance with the text, the theme that represents the lies of Edward, doesn’t have the same grounded feeling of time that Theme I demonstrates. Following the text that has two questions and answers in the first four stanzas, Theme I and II have an almost exact repetition in the following measures 14-26. The only difference is both themes end in tonic of home key, which is supposedly the D minor chord but the third degree is omitted at measure 26 so the major/minor mode is vague. The obvious reason for this is the parallel mode change coming in the next section.

![Figure 5: Edward Ballade, Rhythmic Irregularity of Theme II mm. 9-13](image)

Starting from measure 27, the B section is stated in the parallel key of D major. Unlike the modulatory passages in the previous section, measures 27-40 are strictly in D major. This theme demonstrates a climactic furtherance, which begins with piano (p) marking at measure 27 and reaches to fortissimo (ff) by measure 37. Major changes in dynamics were not typical of the previous A section since the only dynamic marking during measures 1-26 was p with a single pp in measure 16. This sections is by all means contrasting to the previous one, in terms of mode, harmonization and dynamics.
The basic motivic idea of the B section (measures 27-59) is the triplet motive. The voicing of the triplet motive is very similar to the voicing of the chords in Theme I, and it is the predominant element between measures 27-43. The triplet motive alternates between soprano and bass ranges and that way it becomes the center of attention, thus hiding the other motive in the tenor range which originates from Theme II (Figure 6). The contradicting factor of Theme II in this section from the previous one is rhythmic overlapping. Through measures 27-43, Theme II starts with the quarter note upbeat and ends on the 4th beat of next measure, due to the overlapping of beginning and ending notes, the rhythmic patterns continues in the same manner, thus avoiding the irregularity of Theme II in the previous A section (Figure 7).

![New Basic Motivic Idea](image)

![Rhythmic Pattern from Theme II](image)

**Figure 6: Edward Ballade m. 27-29**

**Figure 7: Edward Ballade, Theme II in bass clef m. 27-29**


12. Shih, Ting-Chu Heather. 2005. “The Four Ballades, Op. 10 of Johannes Brahms: A Song Cycle Without Words”. Doctor of Musical Arts Dissertation, Boston University College of Fine Arts. pg. 71. Author explains that; “Even though the opening of the B section utilizes the five-note motive of Theme II, it does not employ the same phrasing. Because of the overlapping of the five-note motive, it is possible to establish a four-bar phrase. However, after the climax, the overlapping is dropped and the phrases become irregular again.”
Measures 27-43 of the contrasting B section mark the center of symmetry in the piece, which will be touched upon later in detail. Contrasting new motivic material, regular phrasing of Theme II in the bass clef, and consistent harmonization in the key of D major are some of the distinctive features of this section, which separates it from the previous section and forthcoming measures 44-59 of section B. On the 4th beat of measure 41, F natural in the triplet motive, draws the scale back to D minor. In measures 44-48, music proceeds on to the repetition of the original Theme II from section A. For this transition, Brahms uses a common chord modulation because here, Theme II begins in the key of G minor. (Bb chord in measure 43 serves as a VI in D minor and III in G minor)

Just as in the A section, the repetition of Theme II in measures 44-48 occurs in G minor for the first two measures (mm. 44-45) and in C minor in following two (mm. 46-47). Similarly the rhythmic overlapping of the pattern stops here and the phrase structure becomes irregular once again. This is the part where Theme II merges into B section which is important to mention because in the traditional ABA’ form, B section should be entirely contrasting in motivic material to the A and A’ sections. Whereas in the Edward Ballade, there is an exact repetition of a thematic material from the A section in the contrasting B section. Measures 49-58 serve as a retransition to the A’ section. The Eb major chord is the pivot chord here which has a diatonic function in all used keys around this area. It is tonicized by its dominant, the Bb pedal in mm. 49-50 which resolves to Eb in measure 51. The Eb pedal stands in the lowest note through measures 51-55. As mentioned earlier, Eb major has pivotal function for multiple keys; it serves as VI chord in G minor, III in C minor, and bII or Neapolitan Chord in D minor, which in common practice tonality has the tendency to be followed by dominant harmony.13 Sure enough, V/D chord comes in measure 58, preparing the retransition to D minor in the following A’ section.

13. Gran, Jacob J. “Tonal and Topical Coherence in Brahms’s Op. 10 Ballades”. Master of Music Dissertation. Louisiana State University. pp. 57-58. In this dissertation, author also gives this section of the piece a central importance and describes the symmetrical aspects in such words: “The entire B section of op. 10 no. 1 can be seen as a large crescendo and diminuendo, with a stable key area of D major at the beginning of the crescendo and a stable key area of E♭ major at the end of the diminuendo. The tonicization of E♭ at this point in the piece is, from a Schoenberian perspective, an organic development stemming from the problematized use of that note at the outset of the piece. E♭ is the primary agent of centrifugal energy in this ballade, since it challenges the hegemony of the tonic by being both the first chromatic pitch introduced in the piece and the next-most-stable tonal region. Second, the pitch E♭ (♭II) serves in this piece as a source of tonal instability. It functions as a centrifugal pitch and tonal region, opposing the tonic d minor.”
Measures 60-71 define the A’ section in the form. It is rather short to be A’ because generally in rounded binary, A and A’ sections would be equal in length but in the Edward Ballade, the programme has greater importance than the constraints of form. Therefore, it’s safe to assume that A’ has more of a programmatic purpose than a formal one. The most obvious variation from section A is the absence of Theme II. The A’ section begins with Theme I, just as it was in the A section, the difference here is that the change of tonal center in the middle doesn’t occur. Instead, there is a tonal ambiguity in this Theme I. Although it is in D minor, there are certain measures where D major and A minor are also implied. (Figure 8)

![Figure 8: Edward Ballade m. 59-71](image)

In measure 64, where originally D minor should have shifted to G minor, the harmony now implies A minor chord. After that, in measures 65-66, it seems like vii\(^{6}\)\(^{7}\) chord is used to tonicize D minor but unexpectedly it resolves to D major chord on the 4\(^{th}\) beat of measure 66 and continues in following measure 67. Last measures 69-71 mark the final cadential progression in the piece which ends in D minor.
Ambiguity and suspense happen to be Brahms’ intent in the A’ section. A sudden switch to major tonality, instantaneous implication of A minor and immediate drawing away from it creates this feeling of uneasiness. Another important component contributing to this feel is the variation of triplet motive in the bass clef. In the B section, it was Theme II that was altered and hidden in the bass clef. Now in the A’ section it is the triplet motive, which was the main motivic idea of the B section that is altered, fragmented and shifted to lower register. This is one example of many symmetrical aspects in the piece. The first note of the triplet sixteenths is replaced with a rest, thus becoming a phrase that fills the gaps in between the chords of Theme I.14

Some theorists attempted to apply the story of the text literally to the piece, in other words, with the same order of events in narrative discourse. When taking that approach, the A’ section may seem very puzzling. For example, James Parakilas dismisses the programmatic approach because of this section, he says: "Since the sensational revelation at the end of the poem is an inescapable part of the poem's narrative structure, Brahms, in ending his Ballade as he did, was not taking the poem primarily as a narrative, or programmatic, model."15 On the other hand, Charise Hastings, addresses to the reversal aspect in the piece and expresses that since the narrative discourse and chronological order are symmetrically opposite to each other, Brahms, followed the same model in the formal organization of the piece. She comments as: “Our story model, however, may shed some light on this dilemma. We recall that the story began with the authoritative version of the first theme (mm. 60-71), then the second theme (mm. 27-59), and finally the shortened versions of the themes (mm. 1-26). These sections match well with the chronological events of the poem in which the mother first counsels Edward, then Edward kills his father, and finally Edward and his mother converse.”16 It is hard to fully comprehend the Ballade when the text tried to be implemented to the composition literally. In the Edward Ballade, Brahms took the programme as a model and applied the concepts of narrative planning, thematic material and mood of the poem into the composition. So it leads to misinterpretation, trying to fit the story in the poem event by event into the composition.

14. Flint, Ellen Rennie. "Thematic and Tonal Imagery in Brahms' Ballade in D Minor, Op 10 No. 1." American Music Teacher; Dec 2004-Jan 2005; 54, 3; Music Database pg. 25. The author suggests that, the triplet motive with, the first note is omitted, symbolizes the dripping of blood from the sword. Sure enough, considering the staccato indication on notes, the prolongation of phrase structure and dim. ma sempre in tempo marking, it is easy to hear it as the sound of blood dripping on the floor.
In his book *Explaining Music: Essays and Explorations*, composer and theorist Leonard B. Meyer comments: "Brahms' analogue for the ballade process embodied in the source text. The form might follow a ternary plan, or more precisely an arch form, but the expressive trajectory of the music is to be found in elements that cut across the boundaries of the design."\(^{17}\) It is crucial to look across the boundaries of formal design in order to see the Ballad as the poem in *Ballade* as the music.

![Figure 9: Formal Organization of the Edward Ballade](image)

In the formal construction, as Leonard B. Meyer suggests, ternary form is an overarching plan. Behind this overarching form, symmetry is the underlying concept of the composition, as it is in the poem. Thematic arrangement and dynamic indications point out to this mirror imaging. Just as the ordering of narrative discourse and chronology in the ballad constitutes a mirror imaging symmetry in the poem, same applies to the piece with thematic ordering and dynamics. As Figure 9 illustrates, the axis of symmetry comes around measures 37-43 in the B section. This is the actual point where reversal occurs. Up to this point, Theme I was placed first in the order of events and Theme II came after that; this succession changes after the axis point. Theme II merges in to the B section in measure 44 and Theme I comes after that in measure 59. Also dynamic level stays constantly in *pp* throughout the A and A’ sections but it starts to increase with crescendo during the B section, makes it peak in measures 37-43, with *ff* marking, which is the point of reversal, and returns back to *pp* with a decrescendo gradually around measure 58.

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This is a blazing example of reflected inversion in Robert P. Morgan’s concept of symmetry\textsuperscript{18} in form. As explained before, reflected inversion happens when there is a unit of music (which is called $a_1$), and its mirrored version occurs consecutive to that unit. In Edward Ballade, if we were to take measures 1-37 as $a_1$, mm. 37-43 as axis of symmetry and mm. 43-71 as inversion of $a_1$, the formal plan efficaciously fits into a symmetrical design.

In Op.10 No. 1, the programme is a model to follow in terms of formal organization, thematic material, and mood but it is not a case where the story is just retold with the music, thus it is impossible to trace the composition in the narrative order of events. Associating certain musical aspects with the events in the poem leads to a dead-end, and this is certainly the reason why James Parakilas’ dismissal of programme in Edward Ballade.

Brahms’ close friend and biographer Max Kalbeck comments on the Edward Ballade as follows: “The composer [of op. 10 no. 1] in no way oversteps the boundaries set forth for a musical narrator, but he may also, as a painter of the soul, ... unite the Lyricist and Dramatist with the epic poet.”\textsuperscript{19}

In Edward Ballade, Brahms’ subtly and skillfully carries out the role of a musical narrator. The dark, hoarse and archaic mood of the poem is beautifully represented in the mood of the piece. Themes I and II vividly illustrate the attitudes of characters. But most importantly the tonal, thematic and formal organization of the piece follows the formal approach to the poem as a means of narrative structure, rather than a musical recapitulation of the poem event by event.

\textsuperscript{18} Morgan, Robert P. Symmetrical Form and Common-Practice Tonality. Music Theory Spectrum, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring, 1998)

\textsuperscript{19} Kalbeck, Max. Johannes Brahms Vol. 1. Berlin: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1912. Pg. 198
2) Analysis: Franz Liszt’s ‘Sposalizio’ from "Deuxième année: Italie" S.161 No. 1

*Années de Pèlerinage* is a three-volume set of solo piano compositions by Franz Liszt. The work was inspired by the observations and influences that the composer had during his travels in Europe. The first volume is dedicated to Switzerland and the second is dedicated to Italy. The ‘Second Year: Italy’ is mainly inspired by great works of art and literature from the Renaissance period, which Liszt witnessed in his visits to Italy between years 1837-1839. The titles of the pieces clearly indicate such influence and furthermore the letters, which Liszt wrote during the years of his travels to Italy, reveal his admiration to the great Italian masters of art, sculpture and literature.

In *Lettres d’un bachelier ès musique*, published in *Gazette Musicale de Paris* between years 1837-1841, Liszt writes to Berlioz about his fascination with Italian art and sacred, spiritual awakenings which Italy triggered in his mind:

“If there is a place on this earth where the noise of world does not penetrate, if there is a secluded spot that the pristine remains of vain strife and trivial pursuits are missing: there is no other place than from where I am writing to you, the place where I have retreated before I say my last farewell to Italy, and where I wish to enjoy inexpressible beauty of God’s dearly beloved land one more time.”

“The beautiful, in this privileged country, appeared to me in the purest and most sublime forms. The art showed itself to me in all its splendor; it revealed itself to me in its universality and in its unity. The feeling and the thought penetrated me more each day concerning the hidden relationship, which unites works of genius. Raphael and Michelangelo helped me to better understand Mozart and Beethoven. The Colosseum and the Campo Santo are not so foreign as one thinks to the Eroica Symphony and the Requiem.”

Although some of them were revised and published years later, he wrote most of the pieces in the winter of 1839, which is the year he visited Italy. It is clear that Italy evoked religious, transcendental feelings in Franz Liszt because that sacred and serene feeling reverberates into the compositions of "Deuxième année: Italie" S.161 and especially in No. 1 Sposalizio.

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Figure 10: Raphael’s *Sposalizio Della Vergine*
As a pioneer of programme music, Liszt indisputably found such symbolism and clairvoyance when he gazed upon *lo Sposalizio della Vergine*, ‘the Marriage of the Virgin’ by the great Italian painter Raphael. He instructed for a copy of the painting to be added to the preface of the score in publication. The painting represents everything that is held dearly in Renaissance art from religious symbolism to gracefully thought-out mathematical proportions. It’s a great example of the influence Italy made on Liszt.

To understand the composition it is crucial to comprehend the painting in terms of technical and fictional aspect. The painting shows a wedding party on the foreground and a temple in the background. In the wedding party three central figures sublime; Virgin Mary on the left, Joseph on the right and, as a symbol of divine, High Priest in the middle. The story portrayed in the painting is actually taken from *The Golden Legend*, in which the rod that flourished represents Joseph being chosen by God to wed Virgin Mary. Of all suitors, he is also the only one with bare feet and beard. The High Priest in the middle is holding the hands of the two betrothed, as Joseph gives the ring to Mary. The heads of three central figures bowed down in the presence of the great temple above, representing the supremacy of faith and humbleness of man in the presence of it. Front and back doors of the temple are open revealing the vanishing point of the painting through it.

Looking at the painting from a technical perspective, the first element that is glaringly apparent is the excellent symmetry of objects, figures and colors. Raphael’s version of the painting, which was completed in 1504, was actually inspired by his master Perugino’s Marriage of the Virgin, which dates from the previous year. One striking difference in Raphael’s version from his master Perugino’s is the proportional equivalence of the wedding party in the front and the temple in the back. It seems like Raphael tried to give equal importance to the temple, which symbolizes the sacred and divine, and the man, who symbolizes the mortal and earthly.


“Anon came a voice out of the oracle and said that, all they that were of the house of David that were convenable to be married and had no wife, that each of them should bring a rod to the altar, and his rod that flourished, and, after the saying of Isaiah, the Holy Ghost sit in the form of a dove on it, he should be the man that should be desponsate and married to the Virgin Mary. And Joseph, of the house of David, was there among the others, and him seemed to be a thing unconvenable, a man of so old age as he was to have so tender a maid, and whereas others brought forth their rods he hid his. And when nothing appeared according to the voice of God, the bishop ordained for to ask counsel again of our Lord. And he answered that, he only that should espouse the virgin had not brought forth his rod. And then Joseph by the commandment of the bishop brought forth his rod, and anon it flowered, and a dove descended from heaven thereupon, so that it was clearly the advice of every man that he should have the virgin.”
In his article ‘Raphael’s ‘Sposalizio’ and A Mathematical Analysis of Its Composition’, Leendert Couprie examines the axis of symmetry and salient geometric figures in the painting. Raphael had a well-known desire for using geometric figures in his painting. He used them to create perspective, depth and also to mark certain figures or people. In this regard, as illustrated in Figure 11, *Sposalizio Della Vergine* is no exception.

First aspect to notice looking at the painting is the ratio of height and width. The size of the original painting is 170 cm in height and 118 cm in width, which yields a 3:2 ratio. Duality and trinity are important concepts in the painting, and proportion reveals this aspect. There are two important focus points; the vanishing point of the skyline through open doors of the temple (Z), and the point where the hands of Joseph and Mary unite with the ring (T). A central vertical line (XY) divides the painting symmetrically from the middle. The effect of vertical symmetry is enhanced by the same number of people in opposite sides of the XY line and also color density is equally distributed to each side. Both Joseph and Mary have five people behind them. The arrangement of the people in front forms a semicircular sweep, which corresponds to the curvature of the temple behind. Perspective lines on the ground of the temple yard gives additional depth and aligns with the semicircle of the group and the temple. Furthermore, in the back there are six groups of people standing on the yard and the groups are distributed nearly to same symmetrical points in the painting, with three groups on each sides.

The *ab* line divides the painting horizontally. This line goes tangential to top of three central figures, creating two planes in the painting. A triangle drawn from base *a'b'* to the Z point at the top creates an isosceles triangle with base angle *y''.* An interesting detail is, that if an exact same isosceles triangle is drawn from base *ab* line with the same base angle *x''=y''*, side lines meet up at point X, which is outside the painting, but the side lines of that *abX* triangle go tangential to the side of the temple dome. Also another inner isosceles triangle can be formed with points *a'b'T*. All in all, triangular and dual symmetrical visual cues are all over the painting. Symmetry, being an important ideal in Renaissance art and Trinity, a highly esteemed value in Judeo-Christian doctrine, both represented in great mathematical perfection in the painting.

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Figure 11: Geometrical Analysis of *Sposalizio Della Vergine*
The piece begins with a plain presentation of two main motivic ideas, which will predominantly come across in the piece. Motivic transformation and development is an important aspect in Liszt’s compositional style and *Sposalizio* is a piece that uses this technique to full extent. Motive I (mm. 1-2) is built on an E major pentatonic scale with a vague metric pulse. It starts on a weak beat and lacks a strong sense of rhythmic regularity. Motive II (mm. 3-4) continues in the same key but ends with a half cadence. Rhythmically, even though it begins on a weak beat, it is more grounded. The following measures repeat the two motives; Motive I is repeated in octaves but Motive II is in G# minor and reaches a half cadence in measure 8. Other than rhythmic regularity, another contrasting feature of these two motives is the harmonic progression. Motive I lacks a harmonic progression, it is rather like a free floating scale. But Motive II has I-V harmonic progression and makes a half cadence first time in E major, second time in G# minor.

After the presentation of main motivic ideas, the first section (mm. 9-37) begins in measure 9. This A section is where Motive I is used as primary material. In measures 9-19 tonal harmony leaves itself to suspended tonality, which means that a distinct tonal center is avoided for this particular part. Instead, chords are related by a different means here. As Figure 12 illustrates with notes circled in red, when Db in measure 15 is omitted, lowest note in bass clef of every two measures forms a descending whole tone scale. Whole-tone scale is interesting here because even though it started to be used by 19th century composers, it’s still an unusual way in Romantic tradition to begin a primary section with suspended tonality in harmony and a descending whole-tone movement in the bass. The whole-tone scale has a symmetrical feature because in terms of set classes there are only two possible different whole-tone scales, one starting from C and another from C#. So the whole-tone scale divides the twelve tones used in Western notation in two equal sets with six notes each. It is a symmetrical division of twelve notes and since all the notes are a major second apart from each other, there is no inclination to a tonic or dominant. Section A also serves a programmatic purpose; the harp-like arpeggios in the left hand, and instant distancing from the realms of tonality give, the feeling of entering a transcendental experience. It is almost like this section drifts the listener away from the realm of reality and exposes the listener to this biblical story told in the painting.

25. Lang, Paul Henry. "Liszt and the Romantic Movement". *Musical Quarterly* XXII.3 (1936): p. 320. Paul Henry Lang sees this Motive I as a sound phenomenon, forming basis of whole piece; ‘The whole composition is based on one sound phenomenon: a chord. From it, Liszt derives both his melody and his accompaniment. He presents this dissected chord sometimes slowly and majestically, sometimes fast and imperiously, and at the end the arabesques, formed from the same material, envelop a melody in the middle parts.’

26. Plantinga, Leon. *Romantic Music*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1984. Print. Pg. 188. Plantinga also suggests that another descending whole tone scale occurs enharmonically in treble clef going from Bb, (m. 15) to Ab, G# (m. 16) to F# (m. 18).
In the second half of measure 17, B\textsuperscript{6} chord serves as V in E major, which brings the tonal center back to E, and between measures 17-29, a cadential progression in E continues with crescendo and accelerando markings. The arpeggio goes higher in register as the progression strolls between dominant and subdominant harmonies, and eventually resolves to an E octave in measure 29 after one last powerful statement of Motive I. This section takes a developmental function between measures 9-17, which is Motive I area, and measures 30-37 which is Motive II area. It can be plausible to consider Motive I area (mm. 9-17) as main theme or primary subject group and Motive II area (mm. 30-37) as subordinate theme or secondary subject group because they are connected through a developmental section in between. Due to this construction of the A section, Joan Backus considers implication of sonata form in the piece\textsuperscript{27}, but there is also strong contradictory evidence against defining the piece as a sonata.

\textsuperscript{27} Backus, Joan. “Liszt’s “Sposalizio”: A Study In Musical Perspective”. 19\textsuperscript{th}-Century Music 12.2 (1988): Pg. 174. “In addition to this kind of evolving musical process, however, is a very fundamental reliance in Liszt's music on the basic precepts of sonata form-namely, the dramatic move to a secondary key area, and a heightened emphasis on the moment of recapitulation followed by a sustained tonal resolution.”

\textsuperscript{28} Street, Donald. “The Modes Of Limited Transposition”. The Musical Times 117.1604 (1976): 819. Web. “For example, any transposition of the whole-tone scale will be confined to one of the following groups of notes.” “The attraction of the modes limited transposition is in the tonal ambiguity which results from their symmetry.

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**Figure 12: Harmonic Analysis of Sposalizio, measures 9 – 17**

In the second half of measure 17, B\textsuperscript{6} chord serves as V in E major, which brings the tonal center back to E, and between measures 17-29, a cadential progression in E continues with crescendo and accelerando markings. The arpeggio goes higher in register as the progression strolls between dominant and subdominant harmonies, and eventually resolves to an E octave in measure 29 after one last powerful statement of Motive I. This section takes a developmental function between measures 9-17, which is Motive I area, and measures 30-37 which is Motive II area. It can be plausible to consider Motive I area (mm. 9-17) as main theme or primary subject group and Motive II area (mm. 30-37) as subordinate theme or secondary subject group because they are connected through a developmental section in between. Due to this construction of the A section, Joan Backus considers implication of sonata form in the piece\textsuperscript{27}, but there is also strong contradictory evidence against defining the piece as a sonata.

\textsuperscript{27} Backus, Joan. “Liszt’s “Sposalizio”: A Study In Musical Perspective”. 19\textsuperscript{th}-Century Music 12.2 (1988): Pg. 174. “In addition to this kind of evolving musical process, however, is a very fundamental reliance in Liszt's music on the basic precepts of sonata form-namely, the dramatic move to a secondary key area, and a heightened emphasis on the moment of recapitulation followed by a sustained tonal resolution.”

\textsuperscript{28} Street, Donald. “The Modes Of Limited Transposition”. The Musical Times 117.1604 (1976): 819. Web. “For example, any transposition of the whole-tone scale will be confined to one of the following groups of notes.” “The attraction of the modes limited transposition is in the tonal ambiguity which results from their symmetry.
First of all the key scheme is an essential characteristic of sonata form. Even though composers in the Romantic period started to violate the I-V relationship between main theme and subordinate theme, still there must be a tonal relationship between those subject groups, which then would return as I-I relationship in the recapitulation. Whereas in *Sposalizio*, the so-called main theme subject group isn’t in any key but suspended in tonality. This is certainly a case where means of programme overcome the constraints of tradition and form because Motive I area functions as an imaginary portal to the virtual scene in Raphael’s painting, more than it functions as a section in the larger form. Secondly, in sonata form subordinate theme group must be in subordinate key (which is traditionally V of home key), but here Motive II area is in E major which is the home key. Lastly, the A section doesn’t get a recapitulation because Motive I area doesn’t return at the last section of the piece but only Motive II area does. For these reasons it is far fetched to look for sonata form in *Sposalizio*.

The *Andante quieto* marks the Motive II area in section A of the piece. It uses Motive II as primary material but there isn’t much thematic development here it is rather an exact repetition of Motive II. As Figure 13 illustrates, a remnant of Motive I fills in the rests between two. The rhythmic pattern is the same but intervals are retrograded. Here, B goes up major second to C# and down a perfect fourth to F#. This section is also quite in contrast with previous one. It’s equally divided into a sentential structure. Mm. 30-31 contains the main idea and its repetition, mm. 32-33 provide the continuation and cadential progression. This whole structure repeats in the following four measures resolving to a half cadence in E major in measure 37. Another contrasting feature of this part is it stays strictly in basic functional chords in E major. The only chords used are I, V and a brief V/V at measure 36 before it settles to a half cadence.

![Figure 13](image-url)
The second section begins in measure 38. A new thematic material (Motive III) is presented here and it’s the first time a theme starts on the downbeat of the measure. This section is in G major, which is a radical distance from the home key of E major. Chromatic mediant relationship has been implied before in the piece and it has a key role in the composition. The first section was in E major but G# major and minor were implied as secondary key areas. In the first bars where the motivic material presented, the repetition of Motive II in measures 7-8 was in G# minor, and also the following section where tonality was suspended began with G# major. Here, Liszt makes a minor third chromatic leap to G major and this type of chromatic mediant relationship will continue to occur in this section as the material from motive III is used and extended repetitively.

Motive III begins with \textit{ppp} dynamic marking and \textit{dolcissimo} indication. It signals to a rhythmically stable and texturally calm and serene theme. For an instant, it tonicizes B major in measures 45-50 but tonality resolves back to E major in measure 52.

\textbf{Figure 14: B Section, Motive III}

Liszt doesn’t intend to disrupt the minor 3\textsuperscript{rd} modulation, which began with the shift to G major in the first place. On the contrary, he uses it to return to the home key through various chromatic mediant modulations in measures 57-67. In measures 52-56, the first five bars of Motive III are repeated exactly but in the following measures 57-67, a series of chromatic mediant modulations occur. As Figure 15 illustrates, harmony modulates to \textit{Bb} in m. 57 and makes a V-I cadence on \textit{Bb} in m. 60-61. After that it modulates once again to \textit{Db} in m. 62. And finally, it makes a half cadence with $I_{6}^{5}$ - V chords in E major at m. 66-67. As this section began with the key, a minor third above the home key, it returns to home key with three local minor third modulations. All the modulations in measures 57-67 are minor third apart; from G to Bb, Bb to Db, and Db to E. Chromatic mediant relationship, especially minor thirds, is an important aspect in the piece because it’s a musical way to represents the triangular visuals cues in the painting.
Figure 15: Sposalizio m. 52-67 Chromatic Mediant Modulations

The following measures 68-73 are standing on the dominant of E major with B as a pedal tone in lowest register. In measure 74, there is an accelerated variation of Motive II just before the Quasi Allegretto mosso marking and the first peak point of this section occurs here with ff dynamic marking. Measures 75-76 restate Motive I and after that repetition, Motive III is added to Motive I accompanying it in the bass clef. The harmony remains in E major with a brief tonicization of B major. Again a cadential progression comes in measures 88-91 and the dynamic buildup of this section continues in measure 92 with ff dynamics marking once again. With the third repetition, Motive I is now in octaves and Motive III goes higher in register thus produces a thicker texture. After basic I - IV\(^6\) - V chords, D and Eb are tonicized in m. 97-101. Measures 102-105 are tonally ambiguous, oscillating between E major and C# minor chords but finally settle in C# major in measure 106. Another chromatic mediant modulation occurs here since C# is a minor third below E.

29. Backus, Joan. "Liszt's "Sposalizio": A Study In Musical Perspective". 19th-Century Music 12.2 (1988): Pg. 174. Joan Backus defines this section as ‘transitional’, which is a fitting definition because of unstable harmonic structure. And also it corresponds to other previous transitional (measure 68) section of biclimactic form in second part.
In measures 109-112, Motive II is repeated once again as it was in the Motive II area of the first section (m. 30-37) and this is the second peak point of the B section. Motive II is now in C# major and fuller in terms of texture. It repeats in the following measures 113-115 texturally, returning back to its original form and modulating back to E major with a common chord in m. 115. Measures 116-119 present the final cadential progression in E major before the piece moves on to a coda. In the coda section, relaxed, calm plagal cadences accompanied by Motive I bring the piece to its closure. Dynamic is softer with \textit{pp} marking. One last repetition of Motive II is hinted in m. 130-131 as the piece comes to an end.

The form of \textit{Sposalizio} is not a conventional one. Instead of following the norms of classical form, Liszt embraces the technique of thematic transformation and chromatic mediant modulation. He uses them to full extent to reflect the geometrical visual cues of the painting. In that sense Liszt takes the formal structure, right from the programme itself. Nola Davidson explains this issue of form in \textit{Sposalizio} as follows: “This is not to say, however, that \textit{Sposalizio} lacks logical formal structure, and is merely a "stream of consciousness" type of musical writing dependent upon a programmatic map to make any sense of it. But perhaps programmatic associations with the actual content of the painting will be more valuable in terms of offering an explanation for the formal structure of the piece rather than the manipulation, by procrustean means, of those associations to fit the form, albeit an "evolved" one. After all, Liszt was keen to "create new forms for new ideas, put new wine into new bottles."\textsuperscript{30}

Section A of the piece provides a musical transition to the painting, an introduction to this biblical marriage scene. This is where Liszt introduces the leading actors of the piece, Motive I and Motive II. It is hard to rule out the resemblance of Motive I to the bells of northern Italy, which Liszt himself described in a letter to Louis de Ronchaud posted in the \textit{Gazette musicale}: “I have mentioned the village festivals to you . . . are announced on the eve by the continuous ringing of a clear little bell called the campanella difesta, whose rapid notes, sounded in a capricious and infinitely varied rhythm, fill the air with gaiety and high spirits. North of the Alps we know nothing of these playful bells, ours are so grave and serious.”\textsuperscript{31} All these features of section A, the bell-like theme, harp-like entrance to a dream sequence with use of suspended tonality and introduction of two main actors of the piece, illustrate that this section serves as an introduction to the calm and serene feel in Raphael’s painting.

After drawing the listener to Raphael’s canvas, Liszt introduces Motive III in section B, which symbolizes the divine, and this theme with its strong downbeat, stands as concretely as the temple in the painting up until the coda. Another effectual reason to associate Motive III with divinity in the painting is the fact that, Liszt rearranged this piece for organ and chorus in 1883, and published it with the title *Zur Trauung*, meaning ‘for wedding’. In this rearrangement the choir enters with “Ave Maria” part in the *Piu lento* section, which corresponds to section B.\(^32\)

In the B section, Liszt places various musical cues to aurally incarnate the three triangular shapes at the heart of the painting. Firstly a chromatic minor 3rd modulation from E to G major bring this section to its sacred position like the temple standing behind the three figures in the painting. But more importantly three consequent minor 3rd modulations, Bb – Db – E (Fb), bring this section back to the home key.

Elizabeth Way proposes that the B section has a climactic structure. The same Motive III pattern repeats three times, first one starting at m. 38, second at m. 77, and third at m. 92. Each repetition of Motive III advances the music to another level, heightening the dynamic, thickening the texture and expanding the register. Within this stream of three repetition of Motive III, there are two peak points where Motive II is played, one in m. 74 with dynamic marking ff and the other in m. 109 with fff. This is a musical representation of Raphael’s symmetrical and triangular visual cues; two instances of peaks, dividing the B section into three parts of Motive III. Here Liszt corresponds to the ratio of 2:3, which is greatly significant for the formal composition of the painting. Furthermore, Way proposes that Motive II stands as a stable anchor, unifying Motive I and Motive III, which is an appropriate proposition because Motive II occurs in two major peak points in the B section creating the two climaxes while Motives I and III accompanying each other in their three repetitions in between those peak points.

Here, same question applies one more time. Is the composition merely a description the painting with music, or is the composer interpreting the programmatic preface? In her dissertation Grace Chung-Yan Yu answers this question: "Indeed, Liszt draws an association to the artwork through the use of relevant musical topics, such as the religious and pastoral themes in both media. And these topics draw their meaning through historical conventions, both in music and in art. However, Liszt’s depiction of the marriage between Joseph and Mary is quite different from that of Raphael. While Raphael's captures mainly calmness, serenity, and the static perfection of the scene, Liszt’s depiction is overall a much more dramatic one. The build up of the drama is achieved by means of repetition, transformation, and juxtaposition of themes, and through the gradual variation of accompaniment and thickening of texture. This musical-dramatic narrative appears to reflect Liszt’s own subjectivity rather than a mere depiction of the legend as captured by Raphael’s painting."

33. Way, Elizabeth. "Raphael As A Musical Model: Liszt’s Sposalizio". Journal of the American Liszt Society 40 (1996): 106. “Motive b effects unification and stability in the same way that the triangle in Raphael’s painting (formed by the open doorway and the heads of Mary, Joseph, and the Priest) spans the neutral space separating the two halves of the canvas and offers the only potential unification of conflicting components. Liszt depicts both the biclimactic nature of Raphael’s composition and the unifying function of the central triangle by juxtaposing the stability of motive b and the mutability of motives a and c.”

3) Conclusion

Although they are programmatically very different from each other, Franz Liszt’s *Sposalizio* and Johannes Brahms’ *Ballade Op. 10 No. 1 ‘Edward’* shares a mutual understanding of treating the programme as a model while leaving room for artistic interpretation in the composition. Poetry and painting are two very different media of narrative and thus, they have different ways of creating drama, conveying the mood or applying the concepts of dual symmetry or trinity. What is prioritized in both compositions analyzed is to take the programme as a model; this means that programme source is looked upon when creating the feel of motivic or thematic material, textural formation, voicing, tempo and dynamics. And more importantly, in both pieces the programme overrides the traditional norms of form, which in both cases bended significantly.

Both pieces can be seen as in rough rounded binary form and can be segmented accordingly, because they both have an introductory section, a contrasting middle section and a closing recapitulatory section which uses the musical material from section A. In both pieces the contrasting middle sections introduce new motivic material exclusive to those sections. Furthermore, both contrasting middle sections feature constantly intensifying dynamic plans. But it would be a limiting point of view to start discussing these pieces from the traditional formal window, since it certainly wasn’t the intention of either composer to fit these programmatic ideas into canonical forms.

One of the reasons why programme music gained popularity in the 19th century is that, composers found ways to express their artistic potential without facing any restriction by programme, just like in *Edward Ballade* and *Sposalizio*. Thus, music didn’t become a slave to the programme, on the contrary it enriched its content in a unique way. Furthermore, taking an extra-musical form of art as a programmatic idea evoked other possibilities of formal structure and thematic development in music. As mentioned before, poetry and painting has its own way of creating drama and animating a certain mood or ambiance, that’s why reflecting those aspects of extra-musical sources to musical compositions helped broadening the possibilities of musical narrative and partook in the venture of ‘creating new bottles for new wines’.
