

REVIEW

Liszt's Representation of Instrumental Sounds on the Piano: Colors in Black and White, by Hyun Joo Kim (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2019). Series: Eastman studies in music, v. 153. Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN: 978-1-58046-946-3

Can an arrangement become as vibrant and alive as the original? This is one of the queries that H. J. Kim, musicologist of Indiana University, sheds light on in a convincing way in her book.

Style in engraving is the preeminence of drawing over color and of beauty over richness. I say "color", because the engraver, although he has only the limited, monochrome effect of black and white [available to him], has nevertheless his very own way of being a colorist.¹

This is how the book starts: with a quotation from Charles Blanc (1813–1882), an art critic contemporary of Liszt. From the first moment. H. J. Kim introduces us to the artistic and social sphere of the protagonist of her study.

H. J. Kim displays a rich, well-elaborated context based on the hermeneutic theory of reception, as well as a detailed analysis of Liszt's reworking and transferring process. This makes the book a solid, up-to-date work, including interesting new contributions to the field. The volume seems to be the result of the author's Ph. D. In Musicology "*The Dynamics of Fidelity and Creativity: Liszt's Reworkings of Orchestral and Gypsy-Band Music, 2015*", supervised by J. Peter Burkholder.

The very well-structured and historically-informed work divides itself into five chapters, framed by an introduction, conclusions and one appendix. In the introduction and conclusion one can easily appreciate a concern for communication that is also implicit in the rest of the chapters.

Arguing against the conceptions that give more value to original works than arrangements is one of the book's main ideas. The first chapter brings out the difficulty, exclusiveness and artistic creativity that lies in Liszt's arrangements through drawing aesthetic parallelism with Calamatta and Delaroche's work, among other famous engravers. These artists created "extraordinarily labor-intensive, carefully produced works". Under the perspective of his contemporary engravers and their work, the legacy of Liszt's arrangements can be better appreciated. The world of reproductive engraving presents concepts and questions as akin to music and performance as translation, fidelity, creative modifications, and justified inaccuracy. The main source is the aforementioned art critic Charles Blanc (1813–1882). Employing his texts, as well as G. Sand's and Henri Delaborde's, among others, Kim shows that translation has been used to describe the relationship to painting engravers engage in, in order to address not only its reproductive purpose but also its creative, expressive values. Art engraving does not consist of reproducing the original work as accurately as possible, but of maintaining its spirit and

¹ Charles Blanc, quoted as an epigraph in Kim 2019: 1.

being able to identify it in the new medium, which involves not only technical perfection but also the creative potential of the engraver. Fidelity is described not as a simple repetition of the original in the most accurate way possible, but as a concept that includes the aim of preserving the spirit, and that entails creative modifications.

Chapters two and three reveal the different reception Beethoven and Rossini had. It deals with the dualism of styles that the two composers embodied and presents the contrast between the score-based “text” and the performance-based “event”. First, in chapter two, Hyun Joo Kim introduces the concept of *partition*, a new method of piano arrangement that underscores its fidelity to the original. With Beethoven, the transcriber and arranger Liszt considers he is facing a sacred text. From that high level of awe and respect, he strives to create a meticulous and detailed work to adapt the original piece to a new medium: the piano. This, in turn, heightens the piano to the utmost level, as he considers it the most appropriate instrument for this aim.

Behind the overt fidelity that the term *partition* implies lies Liszt’s creativity in providing convincing solutions to the problems inherent to the transfer into a new medium. That is how fidelity and creativity are interdependent concepts in Liszt’s transferring process.

In his *partitions*, Liszt indicates the names of the orchestral instruments, as well as contrasts on string and wind instruments. It is not for the pianist to imagine the sonorities, but for him or her to acquire a hands-on utility. Knowing the orchestral instrument, the pianist can search for a determinate sonority on the piano. For example, a *staccato* on trumpets always sounds more sustained than on other instruments. The pianist is required to observe Liszt’s specific instrumental cues and render the passage under the cues in a nuanced manner, to evoke the timbres of individual orchestral instruments.

In chapter three, this opposition between text and event rapidly develops into early nineteenth-century dichotomies (see Table 1).

Historical reception analysis, especially focused on contemporary critics, shows Liszt in a considerably different attitude, whether he was arranging Beethoven’s or Rossini’s works. The chapter quotes from C. Reinecke, G. W. Fink and concert reviews from newspapers as *The Times* around 1840. It was not only the composer: the audience also expected different things in an arrangement of Rossini’s music than in Beethoven’s. In fact, a Beethoven symphony was perceived as a sacred text, whereas a Rossini opera was meant as a mere platform for performance, to show off singers’ skills and expressivity.

Chapter four studies Liszt’s two-piano arrangements of his own Symphonic Poems. Plenty of musical examples illustrate the explanations about Liszt’s compositional methods

Table 1: Dichotomies between Rossini and Beethoven

ROSSINI	BEETHOVEN
Performance-based “event”	Score-based “text”
Italian	German
Operatic	Instrumental
Surface	Depth
Music as practice	Music as text
Improvisation	Fidelity to score

in his transferring and reworking musical material. Liszt's two-piano arrangements belong to 19th-century vanguard in an unprecedented technical and aesthetic development of the pianistic medium. Kim differentiates between two attitudes expressed by Liszt regarding four-hand and two-piano arrangements (see Table 2).

Table 2: Differences between four-hand and two-piano arrangements

Four-hands	Two-pianos
More practicable for sales	Less commercial
Suitable for amateurs	Advanced pianists
Incapable of capturing the 100% of the work	Preserves the essential elements of the original

A very interesting aspect of this fourth chapter presents Liszt offering solutions to problematics derived from the change of medium, such as the lack of an original timbre. Moreover, Liszt offers virtuosic displays as a response to programmatic references as well. Beyond his conventional virtuosic figurations some particular narrative or topical meaning often highlights the programme. Kim's analyses are solid and informed: Not only Liszt's texts, but also paratexts, and also meta-texts are considered, such as Saint-Saëns's analysis of *Mazeppa*.

Last but not least, Chapter Five has been praised by critics as Rob Haskins (University of New Hampshire) or the American Record Guide (America's oldest classical music review magazine). This chapter describes *Liszt's representations of Hungarian Gypsy Cymbalom Playing*. It begins with a brief monograph on the cymbalom and clarifies Liszt's relationship with this instrument. Then it examines Liszt's renderings of the cymbalom in its work.

Liszt's reworkings of cymbalom playing [...] are set apart from the conventions of the "stylized" adaptations of Hungarian Gypsy-style music because of his methods of appropriating particular techniques of the instrument in a realistic, visible, and detailed manner. His accomplishments in capturing this distinctive instrument contribute to reorienting our understanding of the composer's use of Hungarian Gypsy-style.²

The book's contents and its clear organization make this volume exemplary. *Liszt's representation of instrumental sounds on the piano* offers inspiring ideas around Liszt's aesthetics and music, constituting a rich research source. It deserves to be read, especially by musicologists and musicians interested in the flourishing field of Liszt research.

CRISTINA GONZÁLEZ ROJO
Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya

² Kim 2019: 143-144.