IGNOBLE AND IRRESISTIBLE:

THE GYPSY PRESENCE IN VIOLIN MUSIC, 1865–1925

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music
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Abstract

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Several of the most popular works in the violin repertory are inspired by the gypsy. Five of these are the subjects of this study: the Hungarian Dances No.1 and No.4 (1868) by Johannes Brahms (in the Joseph Joachim transcription of 1871), Zigeunerweisen (1878) by Pablo de Sarasate, La Gitana (1917) by Fritz Kreisler, and Tzigane (1924) by Maurice Ravel. The evocation of the gypsy presence in western art music is common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the violin serving as the archetypal instrument for such works. Many performers do not know much about the history of the genre, or how it manifests with subtle differences dependent upon the composer who is exploring the idiom, and the historical time period in which he is working. A thorough understanding of these issues and examination of the source materials being manipulated by a composer can enormously affect a performer's musical interpretation. It is also important to consider what motivated these composers to

write these works evoking the gypsy presence, as in many cases the answer has bearing on their other compositions, and such an exploration can thus transcend the individual works being examined.

A lexicon of musical gestures and effects used to evoke the gypsy is presented, as well as a brief discussion of the historical metamorphoses of the gypsy idiom as utilized in western art music. Each work is then studied in detail, with the goal of understanding how each composer is melding his own style and the gypsy idiom. Through a careful consideration of this question, many structural subtleties of each work are brought to light, which in turn inspire considerations for the performer. To explore how these interpretive challenges are best met, there will also be a discussion of several performances of each work. The intended result of this study is to help the performer give a stylistically accurate and informed performance of these dazzling pieces.

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Chapter I

Introduction

> In the very act of passing the bow across the violin-strings a natural inspiration suggested itself; and, without any search for them, there came rhythms, cadences, modulations, melodies and tonal discourses.... In his music [the gypsy] revealed that golden ray of interior light proper to himself, which otherwise the world would never have known or suspected. He made it dance and glitter in the fascination of wild harmony, fantastic and full of dischords; and thus, by a mixture of unexpected outline, glaring colour, sudden change and quick transformation, endowed it with its many seductive features.[1]
>
> – *Franz Liszt*

The following is an examination of five thrilling and enchanting works of the violin repertoire. They are bound together in this study by the common thread they share, namely, being inspired by, and evocative of, the gypsy in music. The works are Johannes Brahms's *Hungarian Dances* No.1 and No.4 (1868) in the Joseph Joachim transcription of 1871, Pablo de Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* (1878), Fritz Kreisler's *La Gitana* (1917), and Maurice Ravel's *Tzigane* (1924). Though some of these works exist in alternate versions, this examination will focus on the versions for violin and piano.

These works are not obscure masterpieces begging for exploration and discovery. To the contrary, they are some of the best known, most loved pieces of the violin repertory. For all of their notoriety and popularity, however, most

[1] Liszt, *The Gypsy in Music*, 102.

violinists know very little about the origins and materials of these gems. One main goal of the discussion that follows is thus to fill in many of these gaps, and lead hopefully to more informed performances of these cherished staples of the repertoire.

These works are also unique in that they present a historical narrative on the evocation of the gypsy in violin works during the transition from the romantic period into the twentieth century. From this perspective, the examination of the materials and genres used, and effects sought by these composers, moves beyond a discourse on the works themselves. Such a study can also provide unique, albeit limited perspective into the evolution, and from a certain perspective, subsequent deterioration of the gypsy idioms in western music.

These issues are the genesis of the three aims of this study: to examine the gypsy idioms which each of these composers chose to exploit, and how they manipulated these materials; to analyze in detail each of the works; and to bring forward considerations for the performer based on the above. These goals will be the purpose of the individual chapters which follow. A basic explanation of gypsy music and style as understood by these composers must, however, obviously precede all else. This introduction, drawing extensively from the research of scholars including Bálint Sárosi, Csilla Pethő, and Jonathan Bellman, seeks to identify the basic popular gypsy styles that influenced these composers and works.

I. History of the Gypsy and the Gypsy Musician in Europe

> When, therefore, the immortal vagabond – the outcast of society – the banished one… sends his melodies vibrating into our ears, they are invariably at once understood, and eagerly listened to.… [T]hese will speak in what will be as unknown a tongue to the pretentious sadness and nebulous melancholy of hearts already withered by satiety, cloyed by illusions, and blighted by factitious desires.[2]

Tomes of great complexity have been written on the subject of the gypsy in society and the gypsy in music. To employ the term gypsy is an activity fraught with hazard, as it is a word that is at once ubiquitous and elusive. Fortunately, for the purposes of the discussion that follows, what is paramount is not the exacting task of determining who should receive this moniker, nor answering the corollary question of how many subsections exist under the umbrella term "gypsy". What is at issue here is the "gypsy music" and "gypsy musicians" as understood, experienced, and recreated by the composers in question. That said, a certain historical groundwork is helpful.

The complications of any discussion of the gypsy begin immediately, with issues of nomenclature and origin.

> The gypsies use a word of Indian origin to describe themselves: Rom. This means a person, gypsy man.… The name Cigány in general use throughout East Europe is said to derive from the Greek expression Athinganoi (untouchable).…

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[2] Liszt, *The Gypsy in Music*, 103.

> In Europe the gypsies were thought for a long time to be of Egyptian origin; they themselves were also happy to spread this idea. This is where the modern Greek Gyphtos, the Macedonian Giuptzi, the English Gypsy, the Spanish Gitano and the French Gitan names for them have originated.[3]

It is now widely believed that the gypsies actually originated from a territory of Northern India, and began to move in a westerly direction in waves during the fifth through tenth centuries, though it would take them even longer to reach lands as distant as the Iberian Peninsula. The origins of these peoples are still a subject of some contention. The evidence that backs claims of an Indian origin includes a linguistics study showing the gypsy language to be very similar to that of a northern Indian territory. These initial waves of *Romani* ("gypsies" in the gypsy language) are documented as reaching the capitals of Western Europe between 1418 and 1527.[4] In his detailed history of gypsy music, Bálint Sárosi astutely observes "By the time they arrived in Europe, the gypsies themselves already knew nothing of their own origins."[5] This is important, as it exacerbates the difficulty of tracing their roots. Sárosi goes on to observe that after arriving in Eastern Europe, the large waves of gypsies broke into smaller social groupings as they continued to migrate, and went on to settle in Hungary in large numbers. Of these smaller immigrant populations, Sárosi observes the following:

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[3] Sárosi, *Gypsy Music*, 11.
[4] Ibid., 13.
[5] Ibid.

> It must be emphasized that the gypsies – if they were not persecuted – chose as their place to live not the out of the way woods and *pusztas* but preferably… near the settled community, beside the towns and villages…. It is also only in the settled community circles that some of them were in a position to learn the music with which they were later to acquire such fame for themselves.[6]

He goes on to explain that among these growing Hungarian gypsy populations "it is generally possible to distinguish two groups of gypsies depending on the degree to which they have been assimilated."[7] Of these two groups, the Magyar gypsies and the Wallachian gypsies, it is the Magyar group (*Romungros*) who assimilated more with the surrounding social structures, and from whose ranks the gypsy musicians originated.

It is important to remember that throughout Europe these gypsy populations were often considered ignoble: dirty, thieving heathens who were not always welcome to circulate in the society. While public acceptance of the gypsy musicians ebbed and flowed in Hungary, the situation was particularly difficult for the gypsy populations in other parts of Europe, where they were persecuted for centuries. For all gypsy populations the impact of these issues on their music and music-making is enormous. Despite the distrust and distaste shown them, however, the gypsy musicians' unique musical style was imminently fascinating, enchanting, inspirational, and irresistible for the art composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. An overview of their music and performance style is thus requisite.

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[6] Ibid., 17.
[7] Ibid., 20.

II. The "Gypsy Music" Question

The complications inherent to a discussion of the gypsy in music do not end with the history thereof. Equally problematic are attempts to identify what is meant by the term "gypsy music." In 1931 Belá Bartók asserted "that what you call gypsy music is not gypsy music. It is not gypsy music but Hungarian music: new Hungarian popular art music."[8] Bartók's view is echoed by Sárosi, who notes that the "Magyar gypsies do not usually use gypsy folk music but feel the music of the Hungarians living around them to be their own."[9] Both authors are speaking to an enigmatic aspect of virtually all public music making by gypsies, be it that of the flamenco singer and guitarist in Andalusia, or the gypsy violin virtuoso and ensemble in Hungary. In nearly every instance, these gypsy artists bring their own unique spirit, ornamentation, rhythms, colorings, and effects to the extant local music. It is by reworking and reweaving these extant melodic threads into a newly stylized and most effective tapestry of raw musical emotion that the gypsy musicians have demonstrated their greatest talent, and made their mark.

The great Hungarian pianist and composer Franz Liszt was at once the father of a new and purely romantic style of celebrating the gypsy and the *style hongrois* in western art music, and yet, a purveyor of misinformation concerning gypsy music. Many of the long-held misinterpretations as to the origins of gypsy music can be blamed on the writings of Liszt. He published his controversial

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[8] Belá Bartók, as quoted in Sárosi, *Gypsy Music*, 7.
[9] Sárosi, *Gypsy Music*, 24.

tome *The Gypsy in Music* in Paris in 1859. Ostensibly meant to give praise to the gypsy musicians and their music, the work served several purposes of varying virtue. One of these was its role as a vehicle for delivering a description and explanation of his *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, [10] most of which were in print and attracting much attention by that time.[11]

Although it is clear that Liszt had a genuine fondness for the gypsy musician and gypsy performers, his generalizations served to muddy some already murky waters. He does perfunctorily address a need to investigate Hungarian folk musics, and their relationship to the gypsy performances. However, he also makes broadly dramatic and romantic pronouncements – such as "[t]he entire possessions of the Gipsy consisted of a language and a scale [the "gypsy" scale, as Liszt would go on to characterize it]"[12] – which serve to over–simplify and cloud rather more complex issues. To better understand the music that Liszt and others heard the gypsy musicians performing, it is necessary to trace the development of the repertory and performance styles.

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[10] Another questionable aspect of the work is the heavy emphasis on scathing and blatantly anti-Semitic "criticism" of Jewish musicians and composers, often cloaked as a simple juxtaposition of two societal groups lacking a homeland, and their disparate creative output. Current scholarship seems to conclude, however, that the virulently anti-Semitic portions of the work were added by Liszt's mistress, Princess Carolyne, without his knowledge, and only appeared in the second edition of the book (1881).

[11] Walker, "Liszt, Franz", 14.

[12] Liszt, *The Gypsy in Music*, 298.

III. The History of Gypsy Music and Styles in Hungary

What follows is an examination of the styles of gypsy music-making that developed in Hungary, and subsequently inflamed the imaginations of the composers being studied here. The *Hungarian Dances* of Brahms, as well as Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen*, and Ravel's *Tzigane* are built almost entirely on a foundation of elements rooted in Hungarian gypsy musical performance. These elements color Kreisler's *La Gitana* as well, although there are other exotic musical influences shading that work, as will be discussed later.

Verbunkos and the *Style Hongrois*

In Hungary, the nineteenth-century gypsy performer was thrilling his audiences and inspiring all musicians with his performances. His inimitable style was in large part created by infusing the extant *verbunkos* repertory with a unique and exotic flavor. The term *verbunkos* comes from the German *Werbung*, meaning recruitment. As a musical genre, verbunkos is identified as traditional Hungarian dance music played to inspire young men to sign up for military service. It was most often played by gypsy musicians, whose job was to thrill the listeners into such a frenzy of excitement that they would be easily coerced into conscription. Csilla Pethő refers to verbunkos as the "core of 19th century Hungarian national art music", and divides the history of the genre into three main periods. Though there is some dispute among scholars with respect to this periodization, Pethő suggests that the early verbunkos works date from 1750 to 1810, the "flourishing verbunkos" from 1810 to 1840, and the late (or mature) verbunkos from 1840 to

1880.[13] It was this repertoire, more than any other, which was adopted and recreated by the gypsy musicians playing publicly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though in many senses an amalgam of an already developed style, mature verbunkos works exhibit some new tendencies and characteristics, or take extant paradigms to new extremes. The mature verbunkos style was developing in the midst of the influx of Hungarian refugees fleeing the (unsuccessful) war for independence being waged by the Hungarian population in the Habsburg Empire in 1848–49. These immigrants settled throughout Western Europe, but their greatest concentrations were in countries proximate to the empire, namely Germany. It was this mature verbunkos style that proved to be most intriguing and inspirational for so many western art music composers, and thus the elements of this style and their genesis need to be explained.

Early Verbunkos

Pethő states that "the early verbunkos dance movements coalesced into a basically unified repertory in which the pieces have no individual profile or character."[14] She also notes that "in the early verbunkos repertory the musical material filling the formal frames was nothing but a set of some typical distinct melodic turns, melodic 'building blocks' or patterns in the narrow sense of that

[13] Pethő, "Style Hongrois", 199.
[14] Ibid., 201.

phrase."[15] Some of the most common pre-cadential (Figure 1) and cadential (Figure 2) patterns she notes are shown in the examples below.[16]

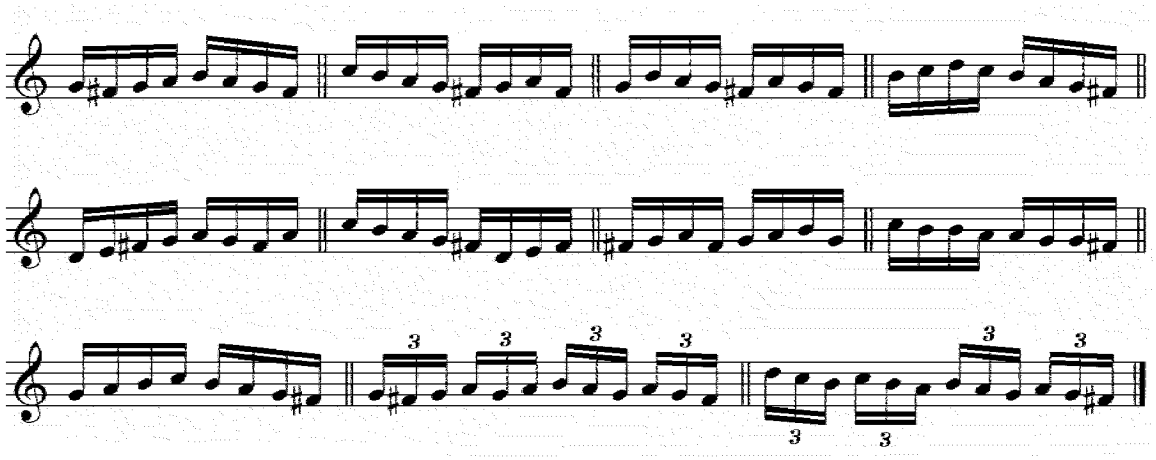

Figure 1: Pre-cadential gestures

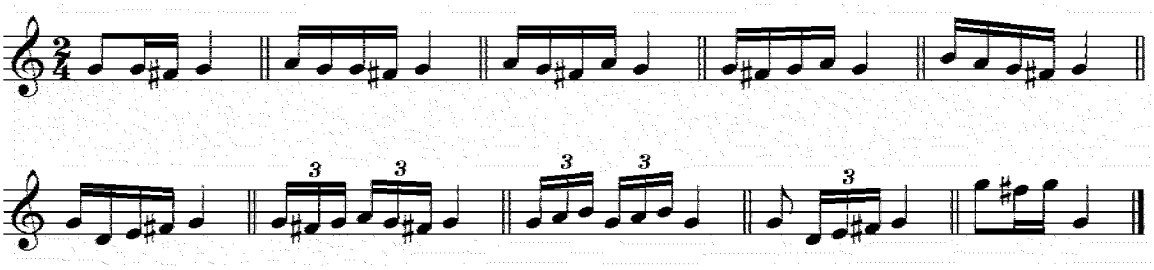

Figure 2: Cadential gestures

Related to, but not exactly the same as the cadential or pre-cadential formula, is the *figura*. As described by Pethő, the *Toldalék* (*Figura*) is a "motif-repeating coda…. This typical closing section is the adoption of a manner of folk music performance, the figurative section called the *duda apraja*. The *apraja,*

[15] Ibid., 200.
[16] Ibid., 202–03.

aprózás sections of instrumental folk music are characterized by a narrow tonal range, plenty of figurations, high register, and motivic repetition…." Though usage at the coda is particularly common, she goes on to note that the *apraja* in Hungarian folk music is "an embellished musical section which functions as an interlude, or a coda. Used equally by bagpipers and fiddlers."[17] These gestures are usually fast notes in a narrow pitch range circling around the tonic, or the root of the underlying chord. An example of this idea can be seen in the example from *Zigeunerweisen* found in Chapter 3, Figure 13.

Mature Verbunkos

The mature verbunkos witnesses an assembly of many smaller dances from the earlier output into larger wholes. These assembled works can include both verbunkos dances and *nóta*, popular songs in nineteenth-century Hungary described by Bellman as a "Hungarian middlebrow art song… a kind of response to German art songs…."[18] The cadential formulae, while still present, are relegated to a secondary level of importance, and "[s]tylistic enrichment was particularly conspicuous in rhythm, first of all in the slow pieces where the tempo allowed for passages which could equally rely on the Gypsy musicians' freely ornamental performing style and on certain elements of western music."[19]

Pethő notes three main genres of slow dance that are most frequently used as the opening of these 'compilation' works. The first slow genre introduced is the "'tight, giusto type'… [in which] the tempo is restrained and

[17] Pethő, "Style Hongrois", 206.
[18] Bellman, "The Hungarian Gypsies", 83.
[19] Pethő, "Style Hongrois", 212–13.

strictly regular."[20] Dotted rhythms are used in copious quantities to give these works the noble character they most often exhibit. The second type discussed is a more flexible and less rhythmically angular and differentiated type of dance. Pethő explains that "its gestures are less sharp… [and] its character is far calmer, as if it were the 'feminine' contrast to the 'tight, giusto' type." She goes on to explain that this calmer, more effeminate character is enhanced by the tendency towards the use of major keys in these dances.[21] The third genre of slow dance is described as follows:

> A rarer but also characteristic subtype is the 'free rubato' type, the stylized manifestation of the improvisatory solo instrumental performance of Gypsy musicians. That is the most diverse type rhythmically, containing innumerable ornaments in small notes. It is characterized by long runs and long pauses, composed agogic accents. Its rhapsodic, whimsical character comes from its improvisatory nature. The intonation is sometimes passionate and more frequently lamentoso.[22]

Bellman observes that the style of these dances is called "*hallgató* ('to be listened to' as opposed to music for dancing),"[23] and goes on to describe it as a "rhapsodic style in which there was no regular pulse, but rather wild ornamental flourishes between phrases or even individual notes of a melody…. [This style] evolved from Gypsy performances of *nóta.*"[24] Ironically, although less common

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[20] Ibid., 215.
[21] Ibid., 216.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Bellman, "The Hungarian Gypsies", 83.
[24] Ibid.

in standard verbunkos repertory, these free *hallgató* openings will be irresistible to the art composers wishing to evoke the gypsy presence.

Style Hongrois

The term *style hongrois* has come to denote the style used by western art music composers when attempting to recreate or evoke the Hungarian (or gypsy, as the two were for so long generally assumed to be synonymous) presence in their own works. Again, the elements of this style are born out of the gypsy "café" performances with which they were familiar. The elements of the *style hongrois* evince elements of both the verbunkos repertory and the performance techniques of the gypsy musicians, and will be discussed in the stylistic lexicon which follows.

IV. Commercial Music Making

It is important to understand the commercial nature of the music making of the gypsies in Europe, particularly during the time periods of the composers under examination here. To varying degrees, each gypsy group had its own unique and ancestral folk musics that would be performed at home and among their kin. However, when they were performing before *gadjo* (non-gypsies), music became very much a commercial enterprise. In the first half of the nineteenth century, gypsy ghettos (*las gitanerias*), replete with many cafés where gypsies would perform, sprang up throughout Andalusia. In the nineteenth century in Hungary, as mentioned, the gypsy performers were engaged to move and persuade their

audiences, whether it be to self-inscription, or to continued frolicking at the tavern. Bellman describes the situation of the Hungarian café gypsy musicians as follows:

> Solos are specifically demanded and paid for, songs requested.... This is entertainment, which is ideally enjoyed in a rollicking, alcohol-lubricated atmosphere; it is not music to be politely and decorously "appreciated." Many musical decisions are made on the spur of the moment, depending on the musician's "read" of the customer.[25]

With such commercial interests playing a key role, it is no wonder that gypsy musicians appropriated familiar local music to entertain their public, always, however, imbuing it with that special gypsy spirit.

A mention of the instruments favored by these performing gypsy musicians is also important, as the combinations of these sounds will inspire the composers of works exploiting the gypsy idiom.

> As with repertory, instruments used by Gypsy performers are generally those favoured by the dominant population.... In Roma-populated regions of eastern Europe, the *taraf* ensembles of Romania and *cigány banda* of Hungarian areas (expanding to areas of the former Habsburg empire), comprising violin, viola and double bass, may be combined with local instruments (e.g., *ţambal* or *cimbalom*), which are strongly, if not exclusively, associated with Roma.[26]

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[25] Bellman, "The Hungarian Gypsies", 84.
[26] Wilkinson, "Gypsy Music", 5.

Jonathan Bellman observes that "[u]nquestionably, the instrument most closely associated with Gypsies and the *style hongrois* is the fiddle."[27] This assertion clearly echoes the words of Liszt, as quoted at the opening of this chapter. It is certain that the uniquely expressive and soulful quality of the violin was intoxicating for the gypsy musician and listener. The violin is found most often as the *prímás*, or soloist leader, of a gypsy band. In combination with other string instruments, occasional wind instruments, and the ubiquitous cimbalom (a malleted string instrument similar to a dulcimer), the tonal palette of these ensembles was considered unique and exotic by western audiences, and fuelled the imaginations of many composers.

V. The Elements of the "Gypsy" Style

> [The Gypsy orchestra] began playing some violins, and a viola and bass, with a zither. It swept me off my feet; for it was not music; it was an expression of a directness too naïve, too naked and living to be music. It is something I shall never forget, and I left Budapest early for I did not wish to hear it again.[28]

From the elements of the verbunkos repertory and performance style developed the *style hongrois* so popular with many composers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The musical lexicon of the *style hongrois* is broad and involves the use of specific forms, harmonic language, melodic materials, and gypsy style effects. It is also important to mention a few musical elements that

[27] Bellman, *The Style Hongrois*, 95.
[28] Samuel Barber, as quoted in Bellman, "Hungarian Gypsies", 74.

came to represent Spain and the Spanish ethos in western art music, as these materials appear in Kreisler's *La Gitana*. Although their origin is in not specifically flamenco (i.e., Spanish gypsy music), their usage is evocative of a similar exoticism, and merits a brief discussion, which will follow in section six, "The Universal Gypsy and Clichés of Exoticism: Ubiquitous Evocations." By identifying these materials, and then investigating how they are reworked by each composer, we come to better understand the particular gypsy spirit they hope to evoke.

A. Form

The Csárdás

As the verbunkos repertory of smaller dances began to coalesce into longer, multi-section instrumental works, the csárdás was born. Jonathan Bellman describes it as follows:

> A Hungarian dance originating about 1835, derived from the verbunkos and eventually replacing it as the primary Hungarian national dance, as understood in salon, ballet and character-dance milieux.... [The csárdás] had slow sections (lassan or lassú) and fast ones (friska or friss); the former were in a heavy 4/4 metre that suggested dignity, pride and (often) grief, while the latter could achieve extremely fast tempos and was danced with abandon.... [A]s a popular form it became a staple of the Hungarian Gypsy repertory, the performing inflections of which came to define it.[29]

[29] Bellman, "Czárdás".

Many of the most famous and successful works meant to evoke the gypsy musician are constructed as csárdás, including many of the Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsodies*. It is clear that the slow openings were taken from the slow dances of the verbunkos repertory, with the very improvisational *hallgató* opening being a favorite. The fast dances maintain many of the cadential gestures and *figurae* of the earlier dances as described by Pethő. These early dance styles, and subsequent constructs, will constitute the formal basis for the works under study here.

B. Harmony

> [E]ach new harmony suggests a new emotional state…perhaps it is here that much of the power of the Hungarian-Gypsy idiom really comes into focus. The allure was not merely the titillation of shocking harmonic changes…on a deeper level, one could look at the societal outcasts performing this music and hear an almost too-desperate celebration, a bottomless grief, and a wild, kaleidoscopic shifting between moods with no attempt at (or desire for) transition between them. This music came to suggest the condition of those who played it and was thus a constant reminder of society's mixed feelings about the Gypsies, of the fear and revulsion, envy and attraction.[30]

In Hungarian gypsy performance tradition, the abrupt change to radically different keys and the use of "illegal" harmonic progressions are often encountered. Liszt attributed this wild creativity to a blissful ignorance of the rules of functional harmony. However, the true explanation might well indicate more savvy than

[30] Bellman, *Style Hongrois*, 126–27.

naïveté. For a creative musician hoping to perform an extant repertory of dances in such a way as to leave his audience awestruck, something original is needed. This seems particularly true in light of the harmonic construction of the verbunkos repertory, in which "[t]he harmonic progressions accompanying the melodies were rudimentary, almost restricted to the basic functions (T – S – D) only."[31] The composers who will emulate this style take enormous pleasure in indulging in brazen harmonic flights of fancy. How they will indulge, how much, and to what end are the foci for further exploration.

C. Melodic Materials and the Gypsy Scale

> When a melody's prevailing intervallic structure highlights scale degrees different from those stressed in more familiar music, idiosyncratic modulations are less surprising.... Note, for example, the emphasis on the fifth scale degree in the Gypsy Scale....[32]

The melodic and harmonic materials of any work are of course linked. In the case of western art music composers hoping to evoke the gypsy spirit, no tool is more immediately evocative thereof than what Liszt called the "gypsy scale" (which on C would be: C – D – E – F# – G – A – B – C). With the two augmented seconds evoking an Indo-Arabian quality, the exotic quality of the scale can spice any lackluster passage, or be segmented and used as a structural basis for a work. This ordering of intervals, therefore, opens the door to myriad compositional explorations.

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[31] Pethő, "Style Hongrois", 206. Following German practice, the "basic functions" Pethő refers to are tonic, subdominant, and dominant, respectively.
[32] Bellman, *Style Hongrois*, 125.

D. Rhythm

No work can truly evoke the gypsy presence unless it exhibits the extremely dynamic rhythms indigenous to the original repertories, be they verbunkos or flamenco. The *style hongrois* uses the *alla zoppa*, a limping short–long–short rhythmic pattern with accentuation on the first 'short,' which is thought to originate from the Hungarian language, where the accent is always on the first syllable of the word. Also common is the *bokázó* melodic and rhythmic cadential figure, a cadential 8–8–7–8 (eighth–two sixteenths–quarter) referred to by Pethő as "the most pregnantly Hungarian closure...."[33] Dotted rhythms abound, both as long–shorts and in the inverse, the short–long being particularly effective, and likely once again inspired by the accentuation pattern in the Hungarian language. These rhythmic gestures exploding with energy and motion are particularly effective when juxtaposed with plodding *éstam* (straight quarter notes alternating between the bass and treble) accompaniments, or interrupted by momentary flights of improvisational fancy. It is these elements working in concert that create the rhythmic energy.

E. Gypsy Effects

To recreate the effect of a gypsy performance is not simple. Even the great violinist Joseph Joachim, who would later transcribe the *Hungarian Dances* of his best friend Johannes Brahms, was deeply moved by gypsy performances. After hearing the great gypsy violinist Patikárus play, he is reported to have said that

[33] Pethő, "Style Hongrois", 202.

"never had his mood been so stirred by a musical performance as by this."[34] The elements of the performance must therefore be discussed and considered, as they clearly were by the composers of the works under study here.

Pedals and Drones

> Among the Gipsies of Moldowallachia the spiritual and stimulating principle of the Hungarian Gypsy melody is held in check by the continuous use of the pedal-bass. Moreover, this organ-point effect is invariably limited to tonic; which holds the harmony in such a condition of servitude that it is, as it were, painfully attached to the soil.[35]

Though the composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries do not limit themselves to tonic pedals as described by Liszt above, the use of extended pedal tones is very common in these works. The pedal tones are used primarily in the gypsy performances of Hungary and eastern countries. The genesis of this practice may stem from the use of the bagpipe as a drone in many early gypsy performances. The resultant static quality, particularly when serving as a foundation for unexpected harmonic motion or juxtaposition, will be much used by the composers writing in the gypsy style.

Ornamentation and Improvisation

As will be discussed throughout this study, the use of improvised ornamentation was extremely common in gypsy performances. Several of the composers being studied here wrote out "improvisatory," ornamental flourishes in an effort to

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[34] Joseph Joachim as quoted in Sárosi, *Gypsy Music*, 128.
[35] Liszt, *The Gypsy in Music*, 164.

recreate this effect. Although in most instances they succeeded with great aplomb, it is worth noting that this puts a particular responsibility on the performer. These gestures need to sound fresh and inspired, and the danger, as Liszt himself pointed out, is that once it is committed to paper, the flourish can lose its drama.

Slides and the Emulation of the Voice

The use of expressive slides is common among many gypsy populations, including those in Eastern Europe, Hungary, and Spain, and has thus become an important element in the *style hongrois*. Although the following observation made by Bernhard-Friedrich Schulze concerns performance of flamenco song, it holds true for many gypsy performances. Furthermore, it is an important reminder of what makes the violin, of all instruments, most uniquely suited to recreating the gypsy style:

> [T]he notes are colored by small, enharmonic intervals, which occasionally sound off-key or "impure," and... there is a tremendous diversity of vocal registers or colors.... [B]oth of these observations can equally well be made of Arabic-Islamic music and language.[36]

The composers of the works being examined here will often go to great lengths to recreate these effects. This is also an important point as it raises questions for the performer as to when the expressive slide or wobble should be employed, even though it may not be indicated in the score.

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[36] Schulze, "Guitarra Flamenca", 121.

Pizzicato and Virtuosic Effects

With the singular purpose of thrilling his audience, the gypsy performer will not hesitate to pull out all of his instrumental tricks. For the Hungarian gypsy violinist, the tricks are many. Among the most common are passages in pizzicato, and the use of unusual bowing techniques, including ricochet and staccato. Bellman includes the following as being typical of Hungarian gypsy violin playing:

> Small, jangling ornaments and grace notes… [and] non-melodic, scratching extremes of range were also common…, [as were] double stops alternating with much lower single notes.[37]

These are effects that will be put to great use by all of the composers here. That said, each composer uses these elements very differently, and the results are strikingly unique. While the point is to evoke the gypsy performance, the composers in each instance imbue that tumultuous drama with their own personal musical tastes and vocabularies.

VI. The Universal Gypsy and Clichés of Exoticism: Ubiquitous Evocations

It is important to mention that many of the elements of gypsy style mentioned in the preceding discussion were not singular to gypsy music-making in Hungary. There is a certain universality, and even cultural crossover, to many of the

[37] Bellman, *Style Hongrois*, 97–98.

elements discussed above. One example involves the gypsy scale. Although it is commonly associated with the Hungarian gypsy musician (in large part due to the writings of Liszt), a close variant of the "gypsy scale" is found, for example, in many flamenco songs. The basic scale of the flamenco repertory is in fact very similar to the gypsy scale. Scholars agree that it is based on a Phrygian scale. However, it is most often manifested with one or more raised tones. The third tone is almost always raised, and most scholars point to the most common variant being that with a raised third and seventh scale degree (E – F – G# – A – B – C – D# – E).[38] It is important to note that this version of the flamenco scale is in fact intervallically identical to the "gypsy scale," were it to begin on the A. Thus, this flamenco scale might be thought of as the "fifth mode" of the gypsy scale. This realization speaks to the universal nature of the gypsy idiom as represented by the scales in question, and to introduce either scale variant instantly transforms a plain melody into an exotic melody with a gypsy flavor.

Another example of the universality of materials involves the rhythmic intensity inherent to a gypsy performance. As discussed above, it is the use of certain rhythmic gestures inspired by language, as well as the juxtaposition of disparate rhythmic elements, that colors the gypsy rhythms so effectively. As a result of these varied accentuation patterns and syncopations, the energy and sense of the unexpected that is created is uniquely effective in any gypsy performance.

It is also true that in many gypsy musical traditions, including the Hungarian, and the Spanish, larger works are created by pasting together a

[38] Sárosi, *Gypsy Music*, 44.

series of individual dances. For example, in flamenco radically different variants of the same dances are performed *attacca* from one to the next, often introduced by particular gestures in the accompanying guitar. Decisions as to which dances to play, how many, and in what order are made while performing. This spontaneous creation of a string of dances is reminiscent of a construct like the csárdás. Hence, it seems that the compilation of multiple dances of divergent tempi, and the requisite improvisational skills are universal characteristics of gypsy performance.

Having established the aforementioned universal evocations of gypsy style, it is also important to mention idioms that become universally associated with Spain and the Spanish gypsy, as there will be some discussion of these when examining Kreisler's *La Gitana*. There are multiple works from the nineteenth-century that intend to evoke the presence of the Spanish gypsy enchantress. Without question, the most famous musical evocation of the gypsy is to be found in the last opera of Georges Bizet. The irresistible female gypsy is center stage in Bizet's *Carmen* (1875). However, even among works for the violin, there are some clear examples, including the *Symphonie Espagnole* (1875) of Eduard Lalo, and the *Spanish Dances* (1878) and *Caprice Basque*, Op.24 (1881) of Pablo de Sarasate. What is interesting in all of these works is the use of alternations of duple and triple figurations to evoke the seduction and exoticism of Spain. The themes from the first (Figure 3), and third (Figure 4) movements of the *Symphonie Espagnole* are excellent examples of this type of figuration.

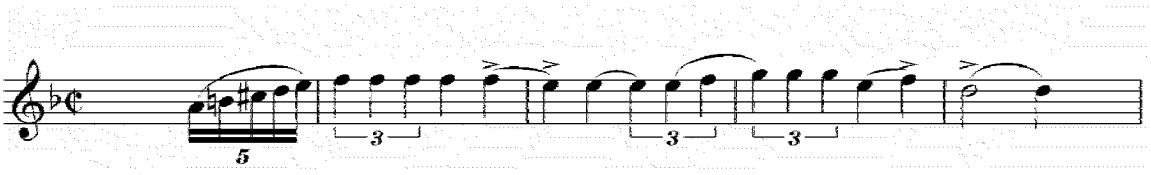

Figure 3

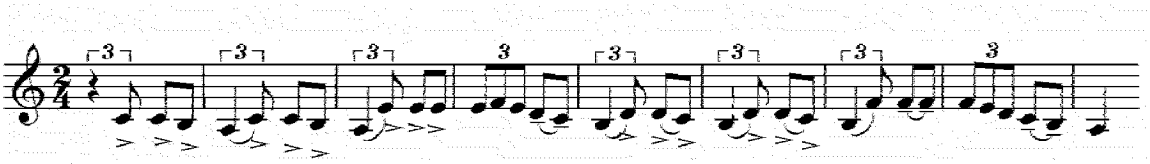

Figure 4

In the sultry *habanera* sung by *Carmen* in Act I of the Bizet opera, a similar configuration occurs (Figure 5).

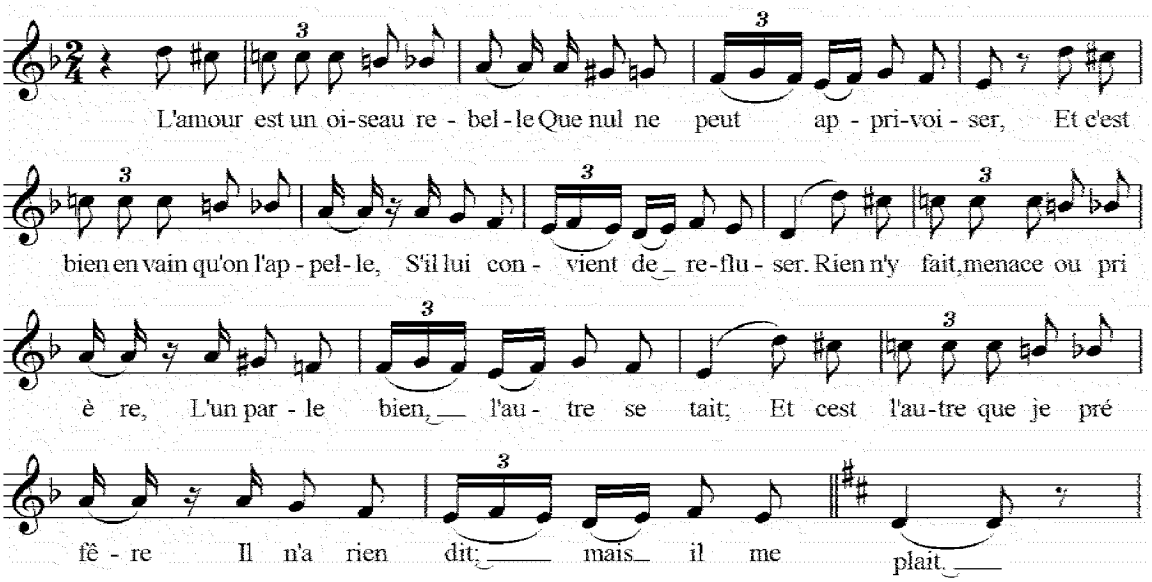

Figure 5

It seems clear that these alternating duple and triple beat divisions are treated as an evocation of the alluring *gitana* by western art music composers, much as the aforementioned gestures serve to evoke the universal gypsy presence.

VII. The Gypsy Presence in Western Art Music

The interpolation of idioms and musical ideas with gypsy associations was not exclusive to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Both Bellman and Pethő execute thorough studies of the presence of many of these materials in the works of eighteenth-century masters including Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, and Schubert. What is fascinating is to examine the manner of musical treatment across these epochs, and this dissertation will focus that examination on works for violin and piano giving titular homage to the gypsy that inspires them.

It is important to be familiar with the paradigm shifts that occur as composers evoke the gypsy presence in different eras. In the works of Haydn, Mozart, and Schubert, the evocations are often subtle melodic, rhythmic, or expressive gestures evocative of the gypsy, and are most often comprised of formulae borrowed from the verbunkos repertory. Even in moments where the reference is more overt (for example, the finale to Haydn's G-major Piano Trio, Hob. XV:25, *Rondo "In the Gypsies' Style"*), it is still limited in many ways compared to the works that come later. These evocations are most often limited to a particular section or movement of a work. The form of the movement and of the work as a whole is not altered due to the gypsy presence. A *Rondo alla*

Zingarese is still a rondo, and, as such, a traditional and expected form for a classical movement. It is also unlikely that the gypsy evocation is so overt as to be manifest in melody, harmony, and effects simultaneously. Thus, though often evoked, this more reserved rendering of the gypsy presence in western art music was the norm well into the nineteenth century.

It was the *Hungarian Rhapsodies* of Liszt that would turn this paradigm on its head, so much so that Liszt felt it necessary to publish a written explanation of "the gypsy in music" as the works gained popularity. In these works the gypsy is no longer an ethereal presence, glimpsed momentarily from the mist. The *Hungarian Rhapsodies* are an unadulterated and unapologetic homage to the spirit and music making of the gypsy. Everything about the works is meant to evoke that spirit. The form is most often that of the csárdás. There are enormous cadenza-like *lassú*, meant to evoke the improvisational spirit of the gypsy. There are multiple ornaments and effects evocative of the sounds of a violin, or cimbalom, or gypsy band. Many of the melodies present in the works were also extant materials, elements of the verbunkos repertoire often played by gypsy performers.

The impact of these works, as they were published in the 1840s and 1850s, was enormous. Romantic composers, already intrigued with the evocation of exotic locales or peoples, turned their attention to this distrusted and ostracized population living in their midst, and began to write musical works glorifying them. Thus the ignoble became irresistible, the vagabond became the victor, and the gypsy musician became the unfettered, soulful artist at his truest

essence. In turn, works in the style of Liszt, utilizing all possible means to evoke the gypsy in music, became ubiquitous, and examples of this musical trend include the Brahms *Hungarian Dances* and Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* under study here. As previously noted, the most famous musical evocation of the gypsy is to be found in Bizet's *Carmen*, and she, perhaps more than any other character, represents an absolute personification of the irresistible ignoble.

As the twentieth century approached, the idiom that was once so evocative of the dark, mysterious, and elusive "other," was now itself too omnipresent to remain mysterious and dramatic. Thus the musical evocation of the untamed gypsy spirit became itself too tamed, and clichéd. As a result, a couple of new trends emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. One of these was a tendency on the part of many composers to relegate the gypsy idiom to works of a less serious, more commercial nature. Examples include the operettas *The Gypsy Baron* (1885) by Johann Strauss and *Gypsy Love* (1910) by Franz Léhar, as well as songs and instrumental works by composers such as Albert Ketèlbey (1875–1959) and Victor Herbert (1859–1924).[39] The second trend was to deal with the idiom in a more personal and stylized manner, as opposed to earlier treatments. These trends continued throughout the twentieth century, setting the stage for the treatment of the gypsy idiom in that new epoch.

> Perhaps the greatest single masterpiece devoted to expressing the simultaneous plight and glory of the Gypsy may be Maurice Ravel's

[39] More will be said about the works of Albert Ketèlbey and Victor Herbert in Chapter IV, sub-section III.

> *Tzigane*, but we all find ourselves returning again and again to these [Brahms] *Hungarian Dances* as models for every later attempt to capture that style…[40]

The personalization of the gypsy idiom within the composer's own imagination and musical vernacular is dramatic in the best works of the twentieth century, and speaks to a difference in the approach to such works in the twentieth century as compared to the nineteenth. What is markedly different in this era in general, and in the Kreisler and Ravel works in particular, is the deliberate effort made to avoid the overly obvious evocation of the gypsy, by this point in history already clichéd. Thus in these works, although there is no titular ambiguity, and they are clearly intended to evoke the gypsy spirit, many of the compositional methods ubiquitous in the nineteenth-century are no longer in use. There are no direct quotations or paraphrases of extant melodies. There are far fewer passages using complete statements of the gypsy scale. In both the Kreisler and Ravel, the composers feel free to limit their evocations of the gypsy to a level of greater suggestive subtlety. This in turn allows for composers to evoke a much more personal and unique sense of the gypsy in their works.

In preparing to study these works, it is interesting to note one last idiosyncrasy vis-à-vis the musical evocation of the gypsy. There is an issue of gender in many of these works. It is noteworthy that in both Kreisler's *La Gitana*, and Ravel's *Tzigane*, as is also the case in *Carmen*, the gypsy in question is female. Mary Hunter notes the following in her discussion of gender implications in eighteenth-century *alla turca* style: "It is almost a truism of current

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[40] Shevaloff, "Dance, Gypsy, Dance!", 165.

considerations of Orientalism that "the Orient," "the Other," and "the feminine" are inextricably tied up with each other… [with the feminine embodying] the Orient's mystery, allure, and political, sexual, and commercial availability.[41] In the same way that the *style hongrois* is in many ways born of the *alla turca* style,[42] so is it true that in both instances the desire is to evoke the elusive, seductive "Other." Thus, it seems perfectly logical that although dealing with a different musical period and style, the "Otherness" of the gypsy presence is likely only to be heightened should she be female. There is a gypsy legend concerning the violin that intertwines stories of the feminine mystique, the mythical power of love, and the fine line between emotion and madness that deserves mention. It was told to Walter Starkie by the Transylvanian gypsy Farkas of Kolozsvár as follows:

> [There was once a beautiful and rich Transylvanian maiden,] but the people thought her bewitched and no man would ask her in marriage. She was head over ears in love with a farmer, and seeing that he would never cast a look her way the poor girl sighed for him from morn to eve. Can you blame her for praying to the *Beng* [devil]? "I will give you a magic instrument," said he, "but first you must give me your father, your mother, and your four brothers." The girl … gave them all up without a murmur. Then the devil out of the body of the father made an instrument, and out of the white hair of the mother's head he fashioned the bow, and out of the four brothers he made the four strings and strung them across the fiddle. "Now off with you," said he, "and play that fiddle into the youth's ear and he'll follow you to the ends of the earth!"
>
> The girl obeyed and the young man followed her with his eyes set on her as in a trance. And she took his arm and both were wending their way

[41] Hunter, "The *Alla Turca* Style in the Late Eighteenth Century", 55.
[42] Bellman, *Style Hongrois*, 44.

home full of joy, when the devil appeared in their path and said: “Now is the time for me to collect my due; both of you must come off with me to hell.” And off they went. As for the violin it lay on the ground in the forest until a ragged gypsy happened to pass that way, and he found it. And he, stranger, is playing it ever since through the world, and because it is the Devil’s instrument men and women go daft when they hear it, and the Gypsy alone knows its secret.[43]

[43] Starkie, *Scholars and Gypsies*, 232–33.

Chapter II

Johannes Brahms *Hungarian Dances* No.1 and No.4

I. Introduction

Johannes Brahms (1833–97), like many of his contemporaries, was fascinated by the gypsy and Hungarian musical styles. Elements of these styles are found in several of his works, including the G-minor Piano Quartet, Op. 25 (1861), the Violin Concerto, Op. 77 (1878), the Double Concerto for Violin and Cello, Op.102 (1887), and the Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet, Op.115 (1891). Perhaps the most obvious manipulation of these materials is found in his twenty-one *Hungarian Dances*. Brahms composed the *Hungarian Dances* for piano four-hands during the years 1868 and 1880, and they were published in two sets (1–10, 11–21) in 1869 and 1880 by Fritz Simrock. Transcriptions of all of the dances for violin and piano by Brahms's life-long friend and colleague, violinist Joseph Joachim, were published by Simrock in two sets in 1871 and 1880. The following discussion will focus on two of the most popular and frequently performed dances from the first set, numbers 1 and 4. Several recordings of these dances will also be discussed, including those by Joseph Joachim (1903), Oscar Shumsky (1998), Sarah Chang (1993), Kyung Wha Chung (1987), and Yuval Waldman (2000).

Brahms, like so many of his contemporaries, was deeply influenced by his encounters with the gypsy styles and idioms from a young age. Brahms was born and raised in Hamburg. Located close to the North Sea and Denmark,

Hamburg would seem isolated from extensive Hungarian and gypsy influences that abounded further to the south and east. However, the Hungarian presence was to enter dramatically into Brahms's universe, and play an important role. Heinz Becker describes the situation as follows:

> When the Austrians and Russians suppressed the Hungarian uprising in summer 1848 a stream of insurgents passed through Hamburg on their flight to North America, and some of them stayed on, bringing their music with them and starting a craze for all things Hungarian.... So it was that Brahms perforce came in contact with the *csárdás* and the *alla zingarese* style which were mistaken in Germany for original Hungarian folk music, and thus early in his artistic development encountered the strange world of irregular rhythms and the feeling for triplet figures that were to make such an impression on his later work.[44]

Reményi, Joachim, and Source Materials

Several features of the genesis and reinvention of these dances beg for examination, and lend merit to their inclusion here. The most important of these features involve the influences of Brahms's musician friends. Of particular import to these works were the violinists who surrounded Brahms when they were composed and rearranged, namely Reményi and Joachim. Without both of these very influential characters, the works might not have come into existence.

Coming on the heels of the Hungarian immigrant wave of 1848–49, Brahms's exposure to, and affinity for, the Hungarian/gypsy style was furthered when he heard the renowned Hungarian violinist Eduard Reményi in concert in

[44] Becker, "Johannes Brahms", 155.

Hamburg in 1850. Reményi (also known as Hoffmann – a Germanization of the Hungarian) was one of those who came to Germany in the aforementioned influx. A few years later (1853), Reményi and Brahms played an extensive tour together. Becker notes that "Brahms learnt at first hand from Reményi how to play *alla zingarese* and to use *rubato* in ensemble playing."[45]

It is well documented that the pieces in the first set of Brahms's Hungarian Dances are actually re-workings of *czàrdás* melodies attributable to specific composers. Michael Musgrave notes that "the first set [of Hungarian Dances] contained material dating from his tour with the violinist Reményi of 1853, which Reményi regarded Brahms as having no authority to use.... [Further,] it is quite possible that Brahms never saw his melodies notated, since he apparently accompanied Reményi by ear."[46] That said, the provenance of the materials used has been traced. The first dance is a setting of the *Isteni Czàrdás* of Sárközy, and the fourth is from the *Kalocsai Emlek* of Merty.[47]

In a discussion of the *Twenty-eight German Songs* and the *Volkskinderlieder* of 1858, Musgrave notes the following:

> It is important to stress the Romantic nature of Brahms' interest, for he applied none of his scholarship to his folksong choices. He loved these melodies because they identified with the deepest character in his own style. Throughout his life scholarly research was to reveal that many of his favourite melodies were fake.... Brahms' reaction shows his unconcern. 'Not really folk music? Oh well, so we have

[45] Becker, "Johannes Brahms", 155.
[46] Musgrave, *A Brahms Reader*, 60.
[47] Ibid., 61.

> one good composer the more, and for him I do not need to apologise, as for myself.'[48]

It seems clear that Brahms brought the same attitude to his Hungarian Dances. Musgrave clearly agrees, and sums up the situation nicely:

> Brahms' scholarship did not extend to the sources of the melodies which captivated his musical imagination. Like Liszt and others, the interest was not in genuine Hungarian peasant music… but in popular composed music of recent provenance played by gypsies as café entertainment.[49]

The Transcription Question

The issue of the validity of examining these works in transcription should be addressed. Brahms himself arranged the first ten *Hungarian Dances* for solo piano in 1872, and orchestrated the first, third, and tenth dances, which orchestrations were published in 1874. The transcriptions in question here are those made for violin and piano by the violinist Joseph Joachim, probably the closest friend and colleague of Brahms throughout his compositional life. It is well-documented that Brahms greatly respected Joachim, and repeatedly sought his advice when composing for the violin. Thus his violin concerto was written for and dedicated to Joachim, and Joachim had great influence on the work throughout the creative process. What is equally interesting, if less known, is the esteem in which Brahms held Joachim as a composer. Joachim had himself written a violin concerto in D minor subtitled, interestingly, "The Hungarian"

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[48] Ibid., 34–35.
[49] Ibid., 60.

(op.11) in 1858. Leon Botstein notes that "Brahms was a great admirer of Joachim's own concerto,"[50] and that he "was convinced that Joachim possessed substantial talent as a composer… [and] as part of their collaboration in the 1850s Brahms made piano reductions of Joachim's music [namely three concert overtures]."[51] Botstein notes, however, that "Joachim, recognizing the superior gifts of his friend, ultimately relinquished his own compositional ambitions by the early 1860's."[52] That said, one may surmise that Brahms would have been very comfortable with the transcription of these dances in the capable hands of his friend.

It is worth noting that in several of the dances Joachim did change the key of the original dance. These choices were careful and deliberate, and only carried out when necessary. The first dance was transcribed by Joachim in its original key of G minor. This makes perfect sense as it works extremely well on the violin, allowing the violinist to play much of the thematic material *sul G*, thus remaining true to the character and registration of the original.

The situation with the fourth Hungarian Dance is different, and required a change of key in transcription. The original key is F# minor, which Joachim changed to B minor for his arrangement. The rationales for this change are several and convincing. Perhaps the most obvious is that in the key of F# minor, the tonic pitch lies a half-step below the lowest note of the instrument. The result of maintaining the original key, therefore, would be a registration that is comparatively high. Particularly for the opening material (i.e., exactly that

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[50] Botstein, *The Compleat Brahms*, 51.
[51] Ibid., 405.
[52] Ibid., 51.

material which is in F# minor in the original), the character is very dark and soulful, and full of melancholy and longing. This character is best expressed using the lower registers of the violin, and in fact keeping as much of the material as possible on the G string. To this end, the closely related key of B minor is clearly preferable, and a good compromise. The placement of much of the opening theme on the G string (mm.1–17) also affords a better contrast of sonority in the second statement of the theme, when it is presented an octave higher (mm.17–33). In the key of B minor, much of this second statement lies on the E string, and thus affords a brilliance quite disparate from the original statement. This benefit is also evident in the 'trio' section of the dance (mm.68–114). The key of B major (as opposed to F# major) is much more flattering to the instrument, and allows for the use of open E strings and the harmonics thereof, namely the Es and Bs in the higher register.

II. Harmony, Rhythm, Meter and Tempo

Certain aspects of Brahms's compositional technique are germane to every piece he writes. His harmonic language and rhythmic drive are perhaps the most important of these. It is thus requisite to examine these issues in detail, as well as some issues of tempo choice and marking that are of import in these works.

Harmony

The Hungarian/gypsy idiom creates an interesting venue for harmonic exploration. On the one hand, the extant melodies are quite simple, and often

imply correspondingly perfunctory harmonic settings. On the other hand, the accounts of Liszt and others firmly establish that gypsy performances utilized melodic intervals, harmonic language, and abrupt harmonic shifts that could "defy his [the civilized musician's] most treasured musical tenets."[53]

In the *Hungarian Dance No.1*, the use of unexpected, and sometimes abrupt sounding harmonic sequences is present. An interesting example is the harmonic motion in mm.7–12. In this passage the harmonic outline is from a tonic (G-minor) chord to an F major-minor-seventh, followed by a G major-minor-seventh, and finally resolving to C minor. While clearly not conventional harmonic motion, the result of this series of chords is to lend a sense of urgency to the passage. This is in fact a wise decision musically as this phrase, with its touching but simple melody and hypnotically repetitive rhythmic content, risks becoming predictable without exactly such spice. In the ensuing passage (mm.13–21), dominant-seventh harmonies are repeatedly interrupted not by tonic resolutions, but by deceptive resolutions to supertonic-seventh chords (mm.15–16 and 19–20). This again helps to sustain the energy of the melodic material until its final consequent statement, and the subsequent tonic resolution in m.23.

Harmonic tensions and interest can also be gained by altering material as it is revisited. It is thus important to note as well the subtle shadings and alterations Brahms makes to repeated materials. Which of these are inspired by the performance of the melodies as directed by Reményi, and which are of his own invention we will never know, and it is likely that the result is an amalgam of

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[53] Liszt, *The Gypsy in Music*, 299.

the two. What is noteworthy, however, is the way in which he puts his favorite tools to use to create such shadings.

For example, although Brahms begins the fourth Hungarian Dance with a relatively straightforward harmonic backdrop for the theme, and with much emphasis on the half-diminished sonority of the supertonic seventh chord (mm.4–5, 12–13), this material will be harmonically enlivened in subsequent presentations. Examples of this are found in mm.51–67, which is the restatement of the opening theme, but with noteworthy harmonic changes. The extended tonic harmony of the opening bars (b: i – $ii^{ø6}{}_{5}$– V_7 – i) is replaced by a progression with a different flavor, and a brief foray into the relative major (b: i – D: I – $ii^{6}{}_{5}$ – V_7 – $V^{4}{}_{2}$ – b: V_7 – i). This revitalization of this material, now in its third statement, is imperative in the 'gypsy' idiom, where reinvention and improvisation are paramount. This instance is successful in large part thanks to the denial of the melodic C# which should come in m.54. Instead Brahms suspends the D from the previous phrase, which fits beautifully into the new harmonic landscape, and resolves it only in the following bar, creating a new element of tension. Above this there are also new colors being added. These include the chromatic B in the piano right hand of m.54, and the triplets added to the cadential figure of m.57, as well as the *con fuoco* broken tenths added to the cadence at m.63.

Another charming variant occurs with the chromatic inner voice in the right hand of the piano in mm.58–59 (D – E# – F# – G). Unfortunately, this gesture has lost most of its impact in the Joachim transcription. In the original Brahms piano version of the dance (speaking as if it were in B minor), this inner voice

appears as D – E# – F# – G – F#, with the gesture resolving to the F# on the downbeat of the next bar. This is preferable to the suspended G as transcribed by Joachim for two reasons. The melodic flourish has much more charm, and makes sense as such when the final resolution occurs on the following strong beat. This is also better as the entire gesture actually finishes while it is in the foreground, that is, while the violin is statically holding the interval of a third. Given these arguments, and the fact that it was resolved on the downbeat in the original by Brahms himself, it would make sense to suggest this modification to the Joachim version.

In the first Hungarian Dance, which is in many respects even simpler harmonically than the fourth, Brahms still takes his opportunities to jazz up the harmonic content when revisiting material. An example occurs in mm.99–104, which is a return of the melodic material of mm.7–12. In the first treatment of this phrase, the use of the modal mixing in m.9, namely, what seems momentarily to be a V_7/III, which in turn moves unexpectedly to a V_7/iv in m.10, is already harmonically colorful. When this material is revisited in m.99, it is further shaded with the subtle use of the Gb passing tone in the bass in m.100.

Rhythm and Meter

> As Romantic-century music grows ever more chromatic, lyric, and rich in harmony and melody, it tends to be increasingly regular in rhythm and meter.... Then, in the second half of the century, a few composers turned their attention to rhythm as a principal arena of innovation: among the members of this group, Brahms stands very tall, and among his pieces,

> the *Hungarian Dances* contribute greatly to his sure-footed, ever-increasing sense of mastery of this parameter of his musical language.[54]

Joel Shevaloff makes this astute observation in his article addressing hypermetric organization in these works. The words of Liszt quoted above speak to the power and drama of the sudden shifts in harmony found in many gypsy works and performances. The same, however, could be said about the dramatic and abrupt changes in rhythmic patterns and metric groupings. There is much about the structure of these rhythmic and metric patterns and shifts that holds true for both works being discussed here, and thus merits examination.

In both dances a repetitive, nearly hypnotic rhythmic pattern quickly emerges, and endures for much of the opening of the work. In the case of the first dance, each of the six-bar phrases consists of the rhythmically propulsive first four bars (2+2), and the static and "defeated" bars 5–6. As Shevaloff correctly notes, the resulting hypermetric organization in each of these phrases is by two-bar grouping, thus creating a sense of 3/1 hypermeter.[55] This is itself not so shocking. However, the stark juxtaposition to a new rhythmic/hypermetric construct is quite dramatic. This occurs when the seemingly endlessly hypnotic opening pattern ends, namely in m.49.

At this point in the *Hungarian Dance No.1*, there is no outward indication that a whole new section is beginning. There is no change of key, change of meter, or change of tempo. However, this second section of the work clearly emancipates itself from the first, and proffers its new character entirely through

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[54]Shevaloff, "Dance, Gypsy, Dance!", 153–54.
[55] Ibid., 155.

changes in rhythmic and hypermetric organization. This commences with the sudden intensity and drama created by the break with the previous rhythmic pattern, and the appearance of the sixteenth-note *figura* patterns in the violin. Also pushing the listener momentarily off balance is the overt new metric organization into four-bar phrases with the half note seeming to take on the beat value (a hypermetric 4/2). The fact that the ultimate bar of each phrase (mm.52, 56 and 60) is an *alla zoppa* eighth–quarter–eighth syncopation is the icing on this new rhythmic/metric cake.

An analogous situation appears in opening sections of the *Hungarian Dance No.4*, though the layout is somewhat more complicated. These complications involve the tempo indications, among other issues, and will thus be discussed later. Unlike the energized downbeat beginning of the first dance, the fourth dance starts with an anacrusis of three eighth-notes crucial to the melody of this opening material. Shevaloff suggests that "No.4 links tonal and hypermetric contrast: the main sections in F minor [recte: F# minor] drag along in 4/1 meter, while the middle section in F minor [recte: F# major] offers a marvelous surprise by its 3/1 meter."[56] This assertion warrants some scrutiny, particularly the claim that the opening sections 'drag along' in a 4/1 hypermetric structure.

While it is true that the changes of harmony favor such an interpretation, the melody does not. In the opening, the contours of the melody do indeed suggest hypermetric groupings of 4 bars in length. However, the three note anacrusis makes it requisite that the performer and listener 'feel' the beat off of

[56] Ibid.

which it springs, and thus this repetitive gesture suggests a hypermetric beat pattern based on the half note. This is born out even more forcefully at the cadences (mm.14–15, 30–31), where the half note seems clearly emphasized as the beat unit.

This situation changes at the *vivace* of m.34. As Shevaloff notes, "in the shift of tempo from *Poco Sostenuto* to *Vivace* at mm.33–34, the musical idea changes from an anacrustic to a powerful downbeat statement."[57] Coupled with the change in tempo, I think that the hypermetric analysis of 4/1 does finally become valid at this point in the work. This is further supported by two observations, one harmonic, and one rhythmic in nature. In this *vivace* we witness a sequence of four-bar tonicizations (mm.34–37: D major; mm.38–41: E minor; mm.42–45: D major; mm.46–50: B minor), thus emphasizing the four-bar fragmentation. Also interesting is the effect this interpretation has on the syncopations of the material, and how their exploitation is suggested. The obvious example is the *alla zoppa* rhythm occurring in the third bar of each four-bar 'measure' (mm.36, 40 and 44). The power of this syncopated effect is heightened by the strong accentuation indicated by Brahms on what is now the 'and' of 'and'; that is to say, on the second of an eight part subdivision of that hypermetric 'beat.' This analysis also has implications for the Joachim version in particular. Joachim suggests accents on each set of four sixteenth-notes (mm.37, 41, 45 and 49). In a 4/1 hypermetric structure, these are weak beat divisions as well, and thus a further sense of syncopation is achieved by accenting them. Thus the argument seems strong for a hypermetric

[57] Ibid., 161.

determination of 4/2, followed by a shift to 4/1 at the *vivace*. That said, the effective nature of the abrupt shift to a 3/1 hypermetric structure in the middle section of the dance is without dispute. It is forceful, dramatic, and analogous to the pattern shift discussed in the first Hungarian Dance.

There appears to be a stunning regularity of meter in these works, as all twenty-one of the *Hungarian Dances* are in 2/4 time. This seeming regularity is deceptive. Brahms is treating the 2/4 meter much as he will treat the *passacaglia* form many years later in his Fourth Symphony; namely, as a seemingly monotonous structure to which he will bring endless variety and life. The hypermetric and rhythmic shifts just examined are one way he effects this.[58]

Another method of varying the regularity of the meter is the sudden truncation, or elongation of a predictable pattern. One example of this occurs in the final coda of the first dance. Though it is true that from mm.141–160, the musical materials are exactly as they were in mm.49–68, it is possible that the listener senses the likelihood of a final cadential pattern that would begin in m.161. It is difficult, however, to predict what will actually occur at this moment. This final passage, which replaces mm.69–72, is not merely elongated, but lopsidedly so, namely into a seven-bar concluding phrase. Because a tonic harmony is achieved in the fourth bar of this passage (m.164), the listener could momentarily believe that it will wrap up in a manner similar to that of m.72. Thus the effect of the continued propulsion of the last three bars is almost that of a three-bar 'tag' glued onto the expected four bars of mm.161–164, and is

[58] Brahms's fondness for irregular hypermetric design was recognized by Arnold Schoenberg as one of several "progressive" aspects of his music. See Schoenberg, "Brahms the Progressive", 404.

disconcerting to the listener not only due to its unusual length, but also because of the prolongation of an E -major sonority (VI of G minor) in the third bar from the end. That the work ends in this fashion leaves the listener off balance and wanting more, perhaps a wink and a smile from Brahms to the improvisational techniques used by the performing gypsies.

Tempo

One final issue that needs to be addressed here concerns the tempo indications in the fourth dance. The first dance has one tempo marking, *Molto Allegro*, for the entire dance, and is so indicated in the Brahms and Joachim versions. The difficulty arises in the fourth Hungarian Dance. The opening of the 'A' section is marked *Poco sostenuto* in the Brahms original version, which is expanded to *Moderato e poco sostenuto* in the Joachim arrangement. The *vivace* of m.34 is so indicated in both versions. The great problem arises at the moment of transition back to the main thematic material of the opening at m.51. Though it is clearly the return of the musical material of the opening, Brahms puts no "*a tempo*", or "*tempo primo*" indication. The Joachim edition further confuses an already problematic situation by adding the phrase *sempre vivace* at the return of the primary theme (m.51). Though Joachim was undoubtedly familiar with Brahms's renderings of these works, it is hard to believe that this indication matches the composer's intention. Shevaloff concurs, stating "it is unthinkable that this material would fail to return to its original tempo."[59] Such skepticism is

[59] Ibid., 161.

supported in fact by the next tempo indication in the Brahms original. In this first version Brahms indicates *Molto allegro* in m.70. This differs from the Joachim version, which offers no guidance at this juncture, and further supports the hypothesis that the *tempo primo* indication was simply accidentally omitted by Brahms at m.51.

Ironically, this is not the last of the problems endemic to this transitional moment. Shevaloff makes the following observation:

> One requires two written measures to get one's bearings in a hypermetric environment in which both meters employ "1" as denominator. The way measure 49 [my m.51] begins seems premature or ill-considered. Performers generally improvise an extra measure of rest between measures 48 and 49 [my 50 and 51], or take measure 49 very, very slowly, hiding the extra time in a *rubato* greatcoat. Such a solution violates the spirit of so careful and calculating a musical architect as Brahms usually seems to be.[60]

This passage is a bit strange, and does require some reflection. Shevaloff's first assertion is absolutely true. However, as previously stated, I believe that a 4/2 hypermeter governs the opening material, not a 4/1. Thus at m.51, the transition is back to a 4/2 from a 4/1. Therefore, I am not sure that the argument as presented is germane to this passage. This transition's jolting abruptness also seems more ordered if the performer chooses a value for the opening hypermetric beat (the half-note) that is sustainable as the value for the beat (the

[60] Ibid.

whole-note) in the *vivace* section. If this sense of beat constancy is in place, the passage works as written.

Finally, I would argue the following two points. Being hurtled about tonally, melodically, and metrically is typical in the gypsy performer's genres, and therefore not so shocking should it occur in a work like this. Also, the gypsy artists extensively utilized *rubato* and improvisation in their playing. I therefore believe that significant artistic license, if defensible and effective, is characteristic of the genre, and incumbent upon the performer. Stretching the three-note anacrusis to the return of the opening material is thus reasonable and possibly even desirable as a means of delineating the sectional divide.

III. Gypsy Shadings

Although, as previously noted, the melodic materials of these dances (No.1 and No.4) are clearly not a creation of Brahms, there is much about the way that the materials are set and utilized that is interesting and unique to his style. In numerous instances, he uses various techniques and effects to evoke the gypsy spirit of the works.

Cimbalom

In both of the dances, he exploits cimbalom effects, though he uses them to very different ends. In the opening sections of both works, a rapid cimbalom tremolo effect is created in the piano part. In the *Hungarian Dance No.1*, with its strongly rhythmic and regular opening theme, the melodically static moments (held notes,

as in mm.5–6, mm.11–12, etc.) are enlivened by a fluttering downward cimbalom-like arpeggiation. In the *Hungarian Dance No.4* the effect is even more exaggerated, as the left hand is marked *tremolo,* and lays out the harmonies and pedals with an obvious cimbalom effect (mm.2–17). This effect is then taken over by the violin when the opening melodic material returns (mm.52, 60 and 62), and, as is the case in the first dance, lends character to the static melodic moments.

Pedals and the Gypsy Scale

The use of pedal tones in the "café" gypsy performances was common. This would most frequently occur in slow, *lassú*, sections of these works. The pedal tones serve two purposes. The first is the simulation of the sound of a bagpipe drone, which instrument's inclusion in the gypsy ensemble was common in rural gypsy performance in Hungary and Transylvania. This effect is also used to create a sense of suspended animation harmonically above which the melody, complete with improvisation of the performer, can fly freely. An example of this is found at the opening of the first Hungarian Dance, where the occasional harmonic quirk or unexpected melodic twist occurs over a rocking G pedal for the majority of the opening (mm.1–8, 25–32).

In the first dance, Brahms also flirts often with the gypsy scale. An example of this can be found in the passage in mm.81–88. The pitch materials used in the cadences of this passage (m.83–84, m.86–88) are manifestations of the G gypsy scale. This is particularly true of the latter cadence, which contains both the C# and F# indigenous to the gypsy scale.

Lower-Neighbor Grace Notes

The treatment of the simple, pastorale-like middle section of the fourth dance is an interesting example of gypsy coloring. The theme is written with half-step upward grace notes to each melodic note in the original version. In the original version for piano four-hands, these melodic notes are consistently being doubled an octave below by the left hand, where no such grace notes are indicated. The result is evocative of a slide, or 'scoop' into a melodic note from below often used by gypsy performers, and is rendered particularly dramatic by the momentary clash created between the left and right hands.

Unusual annotations to this idea occur in the Joachim edition, however. As well as indicating the grace notes in the violin melody, for the majority of this material (mm.70–97), there are additional indications printed below the melodic

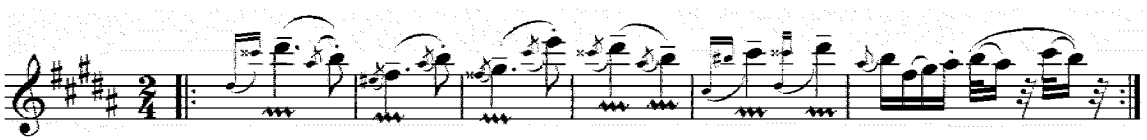

Figure 6

notes that are of at least quarter-note duration (Figure 6). These markings are difficult to understand. They resemble markings used to indicate trills or mordents, or even used to indicate vibrato as an ornament in the time of Geminiani (1687–1762). As there were no instructions to perform lower-neighbor turns in the original version, it is unlikely that this is what Joachim is trying to

indicate. A more reasonable interpretation is that these are in fact vibrato marks placed on the longer melodic notes. Joachim does indicate '*pp sempre, ma vibrato*' at m.70, which is different than the '*pp sempre, ma ben marcato*' indicated in the Brahms original, and it may be that these marks are meant simply as reminders to vibrate, or perhaps suggestions to do so in a deliberate, almost exaggerated manner.

<u>*Figurae*, Cadential Formulae, and a Glance at the G-Minor Piano Quartet</u>

The *figurae* utilized in the *Hungarian Dances* are very typical verbunkos gestures, as described in the introduction. They are employed both cadentially and sequentially by Brahms. Cadential uses abound in the fourth dance. Each final bar of the four-bar phrases of the *vivace* (m.34)

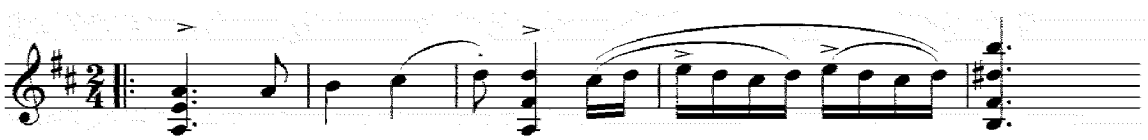

Figure 7

is nothing more than a *figura* spinning around the implied note of resolution of the phrase (Figure 7). The same principle, manifesting a slightly different, more scalar cadential pattern occurs at the ends of the phrases in the 'B' section of the dance as well (mm.75, 82, 94, etc.). Such 'spinning' gestures are also used repeatedly to ornament recurring material, as witnessed in the triplets of mm.56–57, at the close of the 'A' section of this dance.

The *figura* employed in the first dance are perhaps even more interesting, as these gestures are eerily similar to those found in the *Rondo alla Zingarese* final movement of the *Piano Quartet in G minor*, op.25. One obvious instance is the descending melodic sequence of mm.49–52 (Figure 8), and mm.53–56, a variation of which occurs in mm.61–68.

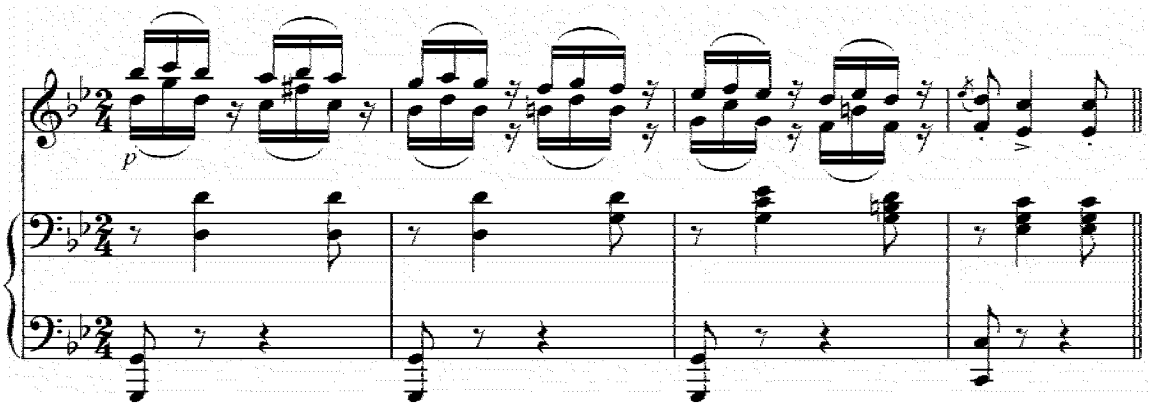

Figure 8

The first instance in particular, because of its three–sixteenth-note pattern, closely resembles mm.13–18 of the *Rondo alla Zingarese* quartet movement (Figure 9).

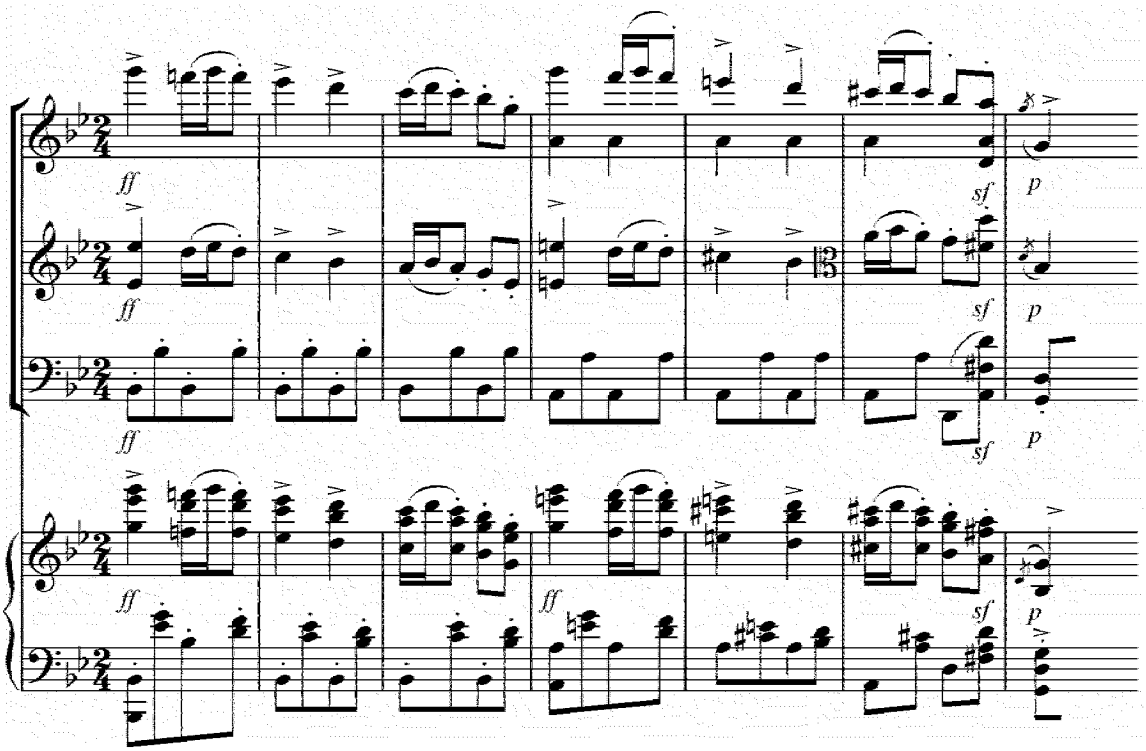

Figure 9

A juxtaposition of these two phrases furnishes a glimpse into the compositional process of Brahms. In 1861, when the quartet was published, Brahms was already nearly a decade past his tour with Reményi, and obviously intimately familiar with these tunes, and their ornaments and decorations. The fact then that a gesture so analogous to that in the G-minor Hungarian Dance occurs in this *Zingarese* movement of the G-minor Piano Quartet is no accident. That said, the twists that Brahms brings to the gesture in his own setting are fascinating.

The two phrases in the first Hungarian Dance (mm.49–52, 53–56) are harmonically simple progressions in sequence, and with the exception of the *alla zoppa* ultimate bars (echoing throughout in the piano part), rhythmically uncomplicated. In the parallel passage of the last movement of the Piano

Quartet, however, the gesture is rendered in a far less predictable manner. The hypermetric 3/2 already established is rocked by the random placement of the upper-neighbor turning pattern (beat 2 in m.13, beat 1 in m.15). This sense of syncopated and skewed rhythmic organization is furthered by the two eighth-notes that finish the descending phrase in m.15. Thus when the phrase begins anew with the return to the high G in m.16, the effect is jarring.

Adding to the jarring effect in this *Rondo alla Zingarese* theme is the harmonic setting of this climax phrase. The *subito fortissimo* of m.13 is preceded by a dominant harmony in m.12. The arrival at m.13, however, is not to the anticipated tonic, but to a deceptive E -major harmony, which is rendered more concrete in the following two measures. No sooner is this accomplished than the chaos returns, as the second half of the phrase (m.16) begins with an abrupt A-major seventh sonority, which will set up the ensuing D-major cadence. Again, no sooner is the D-major tonality reached, than the opening G-minor theme returns, this time *subito piano.* Thus Brahms is reveling in his freedom to recreate the drama of sudden harmonic shifts as popularized in these pieces and their various renderings.

This brief comparison of materials exposes an issue far more profound, namely, the elements of the 'gypsy' style most valued by Brahms when attempting to evoke the gypsy spirit in music. His uses of simple and impassioned triadic melodies, the basic *figura* gestures, rhythmic syncopation, and harmonic hairpin turns abound.

These analyses are interesting also due to the questions that surrounded these works when they were first published. As the *Hungarian Dances* gained popularity, there are multiple accounts of Reményi remarking publicly that the themes of several of the dances were actually his invention. As noted previously, any attempt to paint Brahms as a plagiarist is moot. It is clear that Brahms was not making an effort to claim all of the themes as his own. Russo quotes Brahms as writing to Simrock that the dances are "'genuine Pusta and gypsy children…not fathered by me but raised with milk and bread,' referring to his partial use of authentic Hungarian gypsy melodies and dances."
He went on in the same letter to Simrock to insist "that the dances appear without opus number, and using the phrase 'gesetzt von' (put down by) Johannes Brahms." Despite these efforts, however, when Reményi began his public assault, "things went so far that Simrock felt obliged to print a brochure referring to the fact that Brahms did not claim authorship of the melodies."[61]

In the glow of this fiery rhetoric, it is thus interesting to examine Brahms's relationship with these gestures, idioms, and materials in a work which he did claim as undisputedly his own. The G-minor Piano Quartet is quite different from the *Hungarian Dances*, and yet it seems clear that many ideas found in the Quartet grow from seeds of inspiration first germinating in the *Hungarian Dances*.

[61] Russo, liner notes for *Johannes Brahms Hungarian Dances*.

IV. Performances and Performance Considerations

There are many issues of approach to the performance of these works that will impact heavily on the success thereof. With the 1903 recording of Joseph Joachim, we have a rare opportunity to hear Brahms's favorite violinist, and the person responsible for these transcriptions, in a performance of the *Hungarian Dance No.1*. Joachim's tempo in the opening *Allegro molto* is not as fast as the marking might suggest, and is in fact the slowest of the recordings being discussed here. He does utilize the space this tempo provides to advantage, as he both delays the eighth-notes in opening phrases, and lingers on the final dotted-quarter note of the first period (m.22). His approach to the violinistically awkward passages at mm.49–56 is metric and methodical, if somewhat less lustrous than others, and his approach to the passage work at mm.61–68 is similarly cautious. What is more fascinating is the extent to which he lets his virtuosity shine in other passages, including mm.69–72, mm.81–92, and the final coda at mm.161–167. In these moments, Joachim plays with sheer brilliance and without a hint of the pedantic approach for which he is sometimes criticized. This is particularly interesting in the passage at mm.81–92. Many violinists tend to linger throughout this passage, playing in a halting and rushing manner that can be very effective. Oscar Shumsky (1998 recording) does this very well, as he lingers on the high notes that begin m.81 and m.85, subsequently rushing down and forward into the syncopation created by the ties over the following bar lines. The fact that Joachim takes a totally different approach is intriguing, and

makes one wonder whether these were personal choices on his part, or whether he was taking his cues from the performance practices of Brahms himself. Noteworthy also are Joachim's occasional ornamentations in performance which are not notated in the score. These include an upper-neighbor grace note on the B in m.16 (and the analogous passage at m.108), and a G-minor rolled chord as a grace note to the downbeat of m.57 (and m.149).

A final point worth mentioning concerns the timing of phrase articulation in the first Hungarian Dance. As previously discussed, the opening melodic material establishes a hypnotic 3/1 hypermetric construction. It is easy, however, to allow this metric vitality to suffer by being inaccurate when articulating the next phrase, for example when moving from m.6 to m.7. A performer can be tempted to delay these moments ever so slightly, as the "defeated" quality of the descending cimbalom passage in the piano seems almost to beg for a moment of repose. Unfortunately, to take this moment is to do so at the expense of the overall rhythmic vitality of what is, after all, an *allegro molto*. In the recordings of Kyung Wha Chung (1987) and Yuval Waldman (2000), there are slight hesitations as described above, and while the playing itself is beautiful, it might be argued that the rhythmic intensity is somewhat lessened. It is noteworthy that Joachim fights very hard against this inclination to hesitate, and if anything, almost rushes into each next phrase. Given the relatively moderate tempo performers take in this opening, I think this approach is a good idea, as it preserves the metric integrity, and lends a sense of urgency to the melodic materials.

The fourth Hungarian Dance, as already discussed in detail, is riddled with problematic issues of tempo, metric groupings, and ambiguous score indications. In my opinion, the performance that deals best with these issues is that by Oscar Shumsky. His 1998 recording stands as an excellent example of how to navigate these treacherous waters. The tempo Shumsky chooses for the opening *Moderato e poco sostenuto* is perfect, as it allows for the requisite vitality of each quarter beat as discussed earlier, and yet has a flowing moving quality. It is interesting that Sarah Chang takes a virtually identical tempo in her 1993 recording. The flow of this opening is important, as is a sense of motion through the three-note anacrusis. In the recording by Yuval Waldman (2000), the tempo is a bit slower than that of Shumsky. What really renders it less effective, however, is that within this slower tempo, the performer begins to exaggerate the importance of the grace-note upper-neighbors, rather than tossing them off as Shumsky does so effectively. The undue emphasis on these grace notes in turn bogs down the rhythmic momentum of each musical phrase.

Each of the aforementioned performers follows the *a tempo animato* indication as given in m.20, arriving at a *vivace* when indicated in m.34. What is interesting is how the *vivace* tempo of each performer relates to the preceding *moderato e poco sostenuto*. The tempo decision that Shumsky makes for the *vivace* (m.34) is very clever, as it facilitates the complicated tempo issues of the following section (m.51). It has long been my opinion that the preferred tempo for the *vivace* is exactly twice as fast as the *moderato e poco sostenuto*; in other words, the eighth-note value from the opening becomes the quarter-note value

for the *vivace*. Many performers, including Chang and Waldman, choose a tempo even faster than this for the *vivace*, which might seem momentarily exciting and musically effective. However, on a larger scale, and particularly with the incumbent ambiguities of tempo demarcation at m.51, I now believe that the *vivace* tempo chosen by Shumsky is the best. He arrives at a tempo in m.34 that is somewhat deliberate, and not quite twice as fast as the opening tempo. He plays the *vivace* very effectively nonetheless, utilizing the time this tempo provides to render more prominent the accentuations indicated throughout the passage (mm.34–50). Even more importantly, when the opening musical material returns at m.51, he is uniquely able to maintain some of the velocity of the *vivace*, and yet still pull the tempo back a bit so that the treatment of this analogous material more closely resembles the opening.

The final issue that merits consideration concerns the musical approach to the trio section of the fourth Hungarian Dance (mm.68–113). The ambiguous wavy-line indications added in the Joachim edition are essentially ignored by all performers, a decision which I find wise, as they have no precedent in the original piano four-hands version. Still problematic, however, are the decisions concerning the most effective treatment of both the grace notes, and the main melodic notes of this passage. Sarah Chang perhaps adheres most closely to the score, as she attempts to bring out the grace notes, and play the articulations as indicated over the main melodic notes, including the dots indicated over many of the quarter and dotted-quarter notes that form the melody (mm. 89–105) of this section. Although the result is quite attractive, once again I believe that the

approach of Oscar Shumsky is more effective. Although he does not truncate the main melodic notes as much as the score may suggest, he does adhere to the Joachim indication suggesting that the vibrato be constant. This, in conjunction with his aforementioned light treatment of the grace notes, renders this pastoral and simple section of the fourth Hungarian Dance at once elegant and innocent, and as such, irresistible.

Chapter III

Sarasate *Zigeunerweisen*

I. Introduction

Pablo de Sarasate (1844–1908) was undoubtedly the most famous Spanish musician of the nineteenth century. A virtuoso violinist and composer of many works for the instrument, he had a great impact on both the violin repertoire and playing style. His virtuosity and charisma spurred many contemporary composers to look to the exotic songs and dances of Spain for inspiration. As a result Sarasate was the dedicatee of many favorite works of the repertoire, including the *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso* (1870) of Saint- Saëns, and Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole* (1875). Though most of the pieces that Sarasate wrote remain staples of the repertoire, by far his best known and most loved work is his *Zigeunerweisen*, Op.20 (also known as *Airs Bohémiens*, or *Gypsy Airs*), and it is this work that will be the focus of the following discussion. *Zigeunerweisen* was published in 1878 by Bartholf Seinff in Leipzig, and a signed manuscript with editor's markings (circa 1877) was examined as part of this study. A notation from this manuscript in Sarasate's hand will be mentioned in the concluding chapter. There are literally hundreds of recordings of *Zigeunerweisen*, including those by Sarsate himself (1904), Efrem Zimbalist (1935), Jascha Heifetz (1951), Aaron Rosand (1959), Anne-Sophie Mutter (1993), and Sandor Lakatos (1999), which will be discussed.

Zigeunerweisen is overflowing with ideas and gestures evocative of the gypsy virtuoso. However, the gypsy that Sarasate celebrates in *Zigeunerweisen*

is not the Andalusian *gitana* of his homeland. The focus of Sarasate's attention in this work is the Hungarian gypsy, the breathtaking virtuosity of the *prímás* of a gypsy band. The elements of the *style hongrois* imbue every aspect of the work, and serve most successfully to evoke the gypsy presence. There are several aspects of the work that further indicate that Sarasate was looking eastward for his inspiration. The dedicatee is an interesting clue. Frédéric (Frigyes) Szarvady was a Hungarian ex-patriot and diplomat living in Paris, and signatory to a document given to the Deutsche Nationalversammlung (national congress) condemning the mistreatment of the Hungarian population in Austria in 1849 (during the failed Hungarian uprising). It is also noteworthy that this was the first work of Sarasate that was not published in France, but in Germany. Finally, conspicuous by its absence in *Zigeunerweisen* is any overt reference to the flamenco style of the gypsies indigenous to his homeland. One must look at works such as the *Malageña*, Op.21, or *Zapateado*, Op.23, to discover how Sarasate, himself from Navarra, immortalized the *duende* of flamenco in his works for violin.

The fact that *Zigeunerweisen* is a Spaniard's representation of the Hungarian gypsy ideal in no way diminishes the value or popularity of the work. In fact, quite the contrary is true. As discussed in the introductory chapter, the Hungarian gypsy spirit was in the air and all the rage across Europe in the 1850s and 1860s. This was the case in France as well, and Sarasate found himself surrounded by this movement. His mother wanted him to study at the Conservatoire de Paris, and accompanied him on his journey to Paris in 1856,

when Pablo was just twelve years old. She died of a sudden heart attack en route, and young Pablo was left in the tutelage of his professors and colleagues at the conservatory to guide his musical upbringing. Speaking of the 1850s in France, Alexandre La Cerda observes that it was "les temps où la France se passionait pour *La Marche de Radetzky* de Berlioz et où la Hongrie était décidément le pays préféré...."[62] The Berlioz *Marche de Rákóczi* to which he refers was published in 1854, part of the tidal wave of Gypsy/Hungarian inspired works composed on the heels of the publication of the Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsodies*. It is thus not surprising that Sarasate, destined to be the most renowned Spanish violinist, yet living in France, was swept up and away by the Hungarian gypsy wave that swirled through Europe. It is only much later however that we see the fruits of these slowly germinating seeds in his *Zigeunerweisen*, printed twenty-three years after his arrival in France.

James Parakilas writes about an interesting symbiotic relationship between Eduard Lalo (1823–92), Sarasate the violinist, and Sarasate the composer. His discussion centers on the fascination with "Spanish" themes among composers of the late 1800s and early 1900s. In an examination of Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole*, Op. 21, Parakilas poses an interesting question. "So where does the 'Spanish' bravura of the violin writing in Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole* come from?"[63] Parakilas discounts the possibility that it is the result of Spanish influences, instead reaching the following conclusion:

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[62] La Cerda, *Pablo de Sarasate*, 75 ("the time when France was crazy about the *Radetzky March* of Berlioz, and when Hungary was decidedly the preferred country").
[63] Parakilas, "How Spain got a Soul", 162.

> It seems most likely that Lalo was drawing on the rhapsodic violin style of another European exoticism, the celebrated style of the Hungarian Gypsy fiddlers, reconstructing that style around the traits of Spanish dance and vocal music.[64]

He goes on to propose an interesting after-effect of this composition:

> Lalo can be said to have invented Sarasate in this work – to have invented for Sarasate the style on which he would build his career.... [C]ompositions Sarasate wrote for himself before the *Symphonie Espagnole*... [were] mostly fantasies on popular operas.... [I]mmediately afterward, though, he began a long series of his own Spanish numbers with the *Gypsy Melodies* (*Zigeunerweisen*) and *Spanish Dances*.[65]

The observed change of direction in Sarasate's output is clearly demarcated and thus noteworthy. However, it is surprising that this author proceeds to summarily group together the *Gypsy Melodies* (*Zigeunerweisen*) and *Spanish Dances* as "Spanish numbers." In doing so, he essentially clouds the issue he has just attempted to clarify. For, where the *Spanish Dances* do evoke more of the Spanish and flamenco spirit, *Zigeunerweisen* is imbued with the pure essence of the Hungarian gypsy fiddler. The great violinist and pedagogue Carl Flesch referred to *Zigeunerweisen* as "probably the most popular and most grateful virtuoso piece of all time."[66] Because of this enduring popularity, a careful study of the materials and construction of the work is in order.

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[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Flesch, *Memoirs,* 41.

II. Form and Structure

Zigeunerweisen is constructed as a *csárdás*, which, as previously discussed, is a Hungarian national dance comprised of two main sections: a slow opening (*lassú*), and a fast second part, (*friska*, or *friss*). When examining this type of construction, it is important to recall that the *verbunkos* repertory was the historical predecessor to the *csárdás*. This is important for several reasons. As mentioned in the introduction, it was the tradition in the mature *verbunkos* to "paste" together several dances to create one larger work, a method clearly integral to the creation of a *csárdás*. Further, the materials used in the piece will make more sense when considered in this context.

In *Zigeunerweisen*, the opening eleven measures, marked *Moderato* (and set off by Sarasate with a double bar) serve as a declamatory, yet improvisatory introduction to the piece. It is, in fact, the introduction to what proves to be a two-part *lassú*. It is difficult to place this introduction into one of three categories put forth by Pethő, as explained in the discussion of *verbunkos* in the opening chapter. The categorization is rendered difficult as Sarasate willfully juxtaposes rhythmically exact and whimsically improvisatory writing to create the drama of this opening section.

The first *lassú*, which begins at the *lento* of m.12, is seemingly the only section of the work based on a melody composed by Sarasate himself. Though the melody may be original, the category of dance it evokes is well known, and easy to determine with only a brief glance at the page. Sarasate quickly establishes a pattern in which the deliberate, simple, and yet painfully *lamentoso*

phrases are consistently interrupted just before they cadence. These interruptions afford an opportunity for the violin to tear into wild flourishes with a very improvisational and virtuosic quality. These improvisational gestures will be examined in detail in the discussion of 'Gypsy Materials' which follows, but the style being established here by Sarasate is clearly the *hallgató* as described by Bellman and Pethő. The phrase construction is simple, with four-bar phrases forming eight-bar periods, and a repeating melody. However, it is not the phrase structure, nor the simple and repetitive melodic materials that keep listeners at the edge of their seats. The thrilling excitement of this *lassú* exists by virtue of the ever-changing improvisatory virtuosic treatment it receives.

The second *lassú* is very different from the first, as it is from the introduction. This *lassú* begins at the *Un peu plus lent* indicated in m.45, where the meter changes to 2/4. Based on an extant melody, as will be discussed later, it has a much calmer mood. This, coupled with a lyrical quality, and a notable absence of rhythmic intensity, would imply that it is more of the second variety of dance described by Pethő. While this seems to be the case, the melancholy character and minor key are atypical to the second genre Pethő describes.

Although this *lassú* might seem quite simple on its surface, there are some interesting structural issues. For example, it is not merely the aforementioned tempo marking that indicates the change of tempo for this section. There is great import to the change of meter as well. The 4/4 indication of the first *lassú*, regardless of the *lento* tempo indication, results in the well known hierarchical structuring of the beats, with less emphasis on beats two and four. This

hierarchy, were the second *lassú* to remain in 4/4 time, would completely undermine the melody for several reasons. Each four-bar phrase begins with a first measure that 'grows' to the second (the D to the E in mm.45–46, the second G to the C in mm.49–50, the E to the appoggiatura D in mm.53–54). Lest the performer not grasp this fact, Sarasate even adds the 'hairpin' indications in mm.49–50 and mm.53–54. This sense of increasing importance of the second beat is enhanced by setting up a meter in which each beat is given more equal emphasis. Also noteworthy is the use of the 'reverse' of what Bellman calls the *bokázó* rhythmic figure (dotted-eighth – sixteenth). In the third measure of each four-bar phrase, there is an occurrence of the inverse of this figure (sixteenth – dotted-eighth). To bring the requisite emphasis to the gesture each time it happens, it is again preferable to be in a 2/4 meter, so that both figurations receive an accent.

Another interesting issue in this *lassú* is the unusual phrase structure. It seems at first utterly simple, with obvious four-bar phrases. The melodic structure, however, proves idiosyncratic. The first of the idiosyncrasies is the fact that the piano plays the first phrase (antecedent) alone, and thus the solo violin enters mid-period to play only the consequent phrase. An even greater sense of unbalance is created by the following phrase which begins in m.53. It is very similar to the opening phrase of mm.45–48, with the exception of the reversal of the D and E in the opening gesture of the melodic line, creating the effective appoggiatura the second time. Despite that small variation, however, it is clearly a rendering of the antecedent phrase, but this time no consequent phrase

follows. Instead, in m.57, we are taken back to the music of the opening phrase, but this time with violin and piano together. This antecedent is then graced with a consequent phrase, and both repeat. The effect here is as follows: Antecedent + Consequent + [Antecedent]‖: Antecedent + Consequent :‖+ Codetta ‖. Thus while remaining very consistent in its adherence to a four-bar phrase structure, this addition of the extra antecedent phrase is momentarily confusing, and certainly unexpected. In the midst of this simple folk-like melodic material, this setting is reminiscent of a responsorial folk song, in which the first phrase is sung alone once, and then repeated by a larger group. In this instrumental treatment, however, the unusual period structures being created seem unexpected, and yet again evocative of the odd twists and turns of gypsy style, this time occurring even in the most atmospheric and lyrical of moments.

In the *friss* section of *Zigeunerweisen*, the duration and structure of the phrases is noteworthy. After two substantial *lassús* in which the phrases are always four bars in length, there is a sudden shift to six-bar phrases. This shift, preceded by the two-bar introduction, adds yet another dimension to the deliberate and multi-faceted abruptness of this transition. More will be said about the implications of this in the discussion of rhythm and meter.

III. Melodic Materials

> En dehors de ses "pièces de salon," Sarasate composa essentiellement à partir de matériaux déjà existants, provenant soit du folklore, soit des grandes thèmes d'opéra.[67]

The melodic materials of *Zigeunerweisen* are extremely evocative of the gypsy song. They are also, more often than not, borrowed. There is a legend, most recently retold by Walter Starkie, which proposes an unusual connection between the opening theme of the eleven bar introduction (Figure 10), and the *Marcia Funebre* of the *Eroica* Symphony of Beethoven (Figure 11).

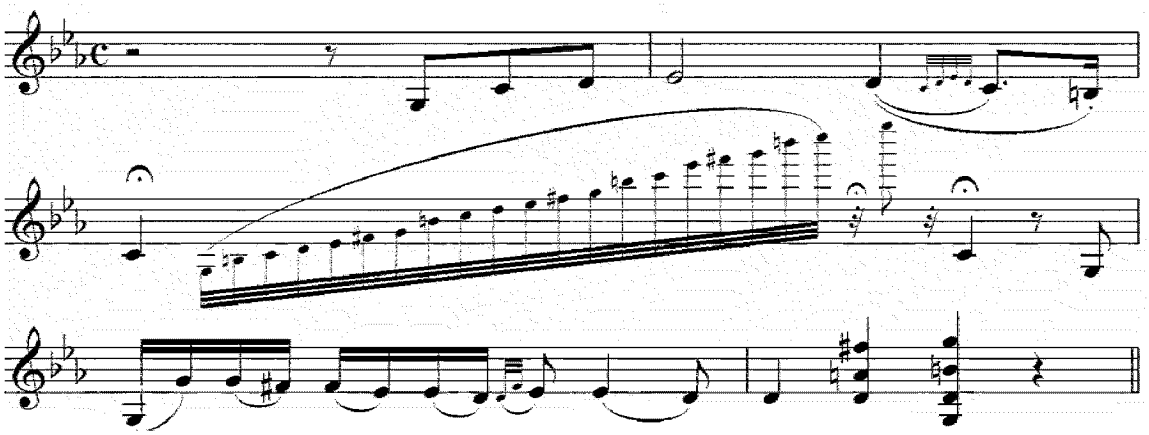

Figure 10

[67] La Cerda, *Pablo de Sarasate*, 73 ("Outside of his 'salon pieces,' Sarsate composed essentially from a base of pre-existing materials, coming either from folklore, or from the grand themes of operas.").

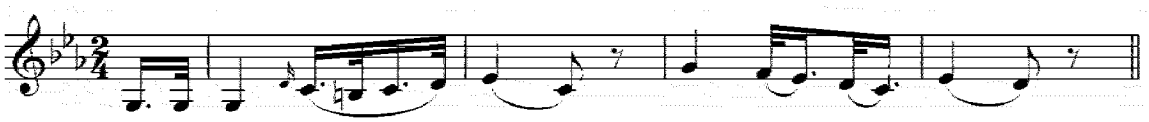

Figure 11

The story purports that upon the death of his son, the famed Rom musician and band leader, János Bihari, who was known to parody the works of western "art" composers regularly, wrote a lament based on the aforementioned theme of Beethoven. It is further proposed that Sarasate later took this Bihari lament theme as the melody for the introduction of *Zigeunerweisen*.[68] The plausibility of this story is somewhat enhanced by the first-hand accounts recounted by Csilla Pethő. She acknowledges the simultaneity of the composers' lives and notes that "according to Gyula Káldy, even Beethoven heard Bihari play."[69] That the reverse would be true, that is to say that Bihari would be familiar with the works of Beethoven, is therefore probable. Pethő goes on to note the following: "[T]hat [Beethoven] knew some of [Bihari's] compositions is proven by a melody of his being treated in the incidental music *König Stephan*."[70] Though the true source of the lament material used by Sarasate is unverifiable, if this story of its origins is true, there is a certain irony in the journey that this music has taken, namely, from art music, to popular Hungarian gypsy fiddle music, and back to the art music arena.

There is no doubt that the theme of the second, *Un peu plus lent* section of the *lassú*, is from a popular Hungarian *nóta* composed in 1873 by Elemér

[68] Starkie, *In Sara's Tents*, 142.
[69] Pethő, "Style Hongrois", 213.
[70] Ibid., 222.

Szentirmay (1836–1908), titled *Csak egy szép lány van a világon* (There is only one such beautiful girl in the world). The tune is shown in Figure 12, and the text is as follows:

Czak egy szép lány van a vilagon,
Az én kedves rózsám galambom.
A jo Isten be nagyon szeret,
Hogy én nékem adott tégedet.

There is only one such beautiful girl in the world,
And that is you my little rose.
Oh, how the good lord must have loved me,
to have given you to me.[71]

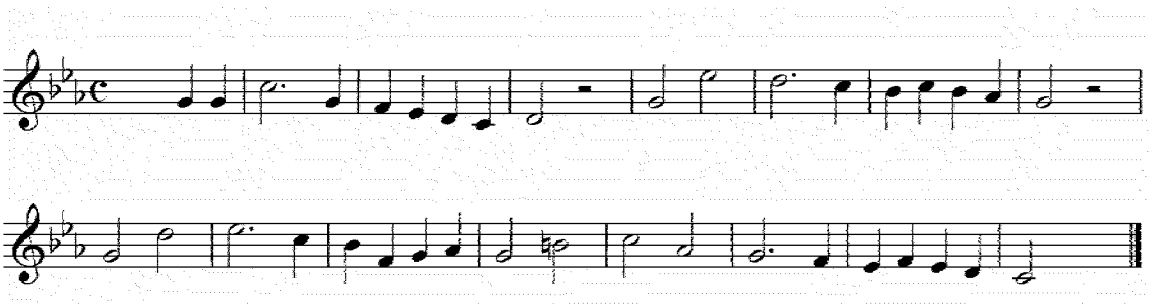

Figure 12

Evidently, Sarasate saw the song in an album of works at the 1878 Paris World Exposition, and, according to Kodály, believed it was a folk song with no known composer. When later contacted by Szentirmay, Sarasate apologized to him, promising due credit in future publications, and for a number of years, scores of

[71] Thomson, *The Gypsy in Violin Music*, 23.

Zigeunerweisen did credit Szentirmay.[72] However, judging from current editions, this credit has clearly been dropped once again.

Another important element of the melodic materials of *Zigeunerweisen* is the use of *figura* gestures. Repeatedly throughout the work Sarasate makes use of coda or cadential configurations that simply repeat one motive again and again. These motif-repeating codas, as mentioned in the introduction, are called *Figura* or *Toldalék* (addition). Pethő observes that "[These] sections of instrumental folk music are characterized by a narrow tonal range, plenty of figurations, high register and motivic repetition."[73] This explanation perfectly describes the sixteenth-note passages that end the piece (mm.162–169 – Figure 13).

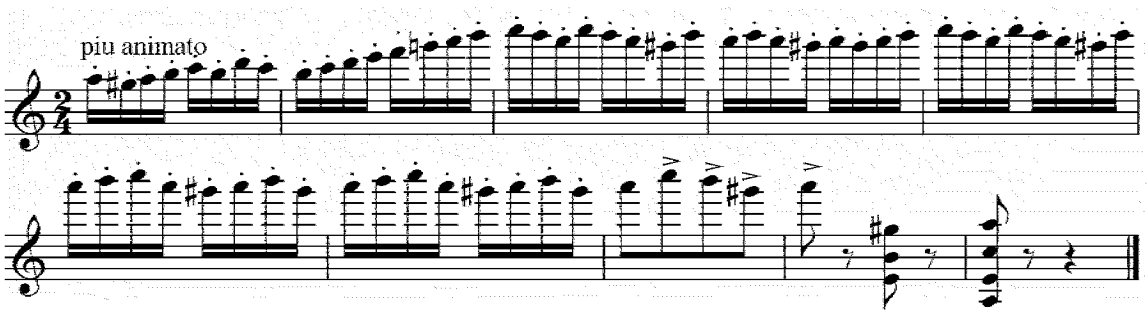

Figure 13

Sarasate marks these repeating figures with the instruction *plus animez*, so as to drive through this final coda in an escalating frenzy. He also uses these

[72] Johnson, *Kodály and Education III*, 55.
[73] Pethő, "Style Hongrois", 206.

repetitive twisting *figurae* throughout the *friss* sections of this work, as in the opening of the A-major section at mm.116–129.

IV. Harmony, Melody, and Tonality

On first glance, the harmonic structure of *Zigeunerweisen* seems very simple and thus unobtrusive to the virtuosic melodic gestures occurring above it. However, Sarasate uses some interesting techniques to enhance the gypsy flavor of this work. As previously noted, inherent to the scale are the two augmented-seconds, and thus a 'multi-directional leading tone' quality (to scale degrees 1 and 5). This allows the gypsy scale to pull equally well towards the tonic or dominant chord. Sarasate seems to revel in employing this scale more than any of the other composers under examination here. An example of Sarasate's manipulation of this dual leading-tone quality occurs in the opening introduction of the piece. It begins with a strong opening gesture firmly establishing the key of C minor, and culminating in an authentic cadence in m.4. After this initial confirmation of key, Sarasate starts to liven things up a bit. The violin subsequently presents two versions of the same melodic materials, namely the C gypsy scale [C – D – E – F# – G – A – B – C]. Once these gypsy scale materials are presented, each of the following cadential passages in the introduction results in a half cadence (mm. 6 and 11). Thus Sarasate is exploiting the ability to consistently pull to the 'other' tonal axis (i.e. to the dominant as well as tonic resolutions). This is important as it enhances the

sense that this entire opening passage is acting as an introduction, and an extended dominant, to the resolution found at the start of the two-part *lassú* to follow.

Sarasate continues to flirt with these directional ambiguities regularly and intentionally, often to create the effect of an improvised figure, or to extend drama by denying the listener the expected cadence. An example of this occurs in m.15. After the first-inversion tonic cadence on beat three, the flourish which follows systematically employs the B-natural, while failing to utilize the F-sharp. This creates the sense of an impending, stronger tonic cadence. However, the listener is robbed of the expected arrival to tonic, as the flourish sweeps instead into a half cadence at m.16 This dominant arrival is then decorated with yet another gesture typically associated with Hungarian Gypsy playing, namely the melodically, then ornamentally employed *Kuruc fourth*.

The bi-directional pull of the gypsy scale is again employed by Sarasate in mm.68–71, though to a different end than previously witnessed. In m.65 there is a short-lived tonic cadence, which quickly transforms into an A-diminished triad, and subsequently an F-sharp diminished-seventh chord in m.66. After chromatically creeping from tonic to the F-sharp diminished-seventh chord ($vii°_7/V$), he presents the same version of the gypsy scale as in m.4. Without the A , the scale is less definitively C gypsy, and could be leading to either I or V. This presentation occurs over a tonic chord in m.68, thus failing to resolve the $vii°_7$. Because of the bi-directional pull of this scale however, the whiplash from

this harmonic lurch is somewhat tempered. That said, this smoothing-over of harmonic lurches will be very short-lived, as will be examined below.

One of the most interesting harmonic anomalies of this work is found on a large scale. Pethő makes the following observation in her discussion of the mature *verbunkos*.

> Chord treatment is also diverse.... [U]nexpected changes of key at times may also crop up. The most popular of these are third-related changes, probably a recent western effect in *verbunkos* music, but other changes – not common in western music – were also used. [74]

The tertiary key relationship between the opening introduction and two *lassú,* which are in C minor, and the *friss,* in A minor, is quite colorful and dramatic. The manner of arrival at A minor renders the situation even more so. Figure 14 shows the first eight bars of the *friss* (from mm.71–78), marked *Allegro molto vivace*.

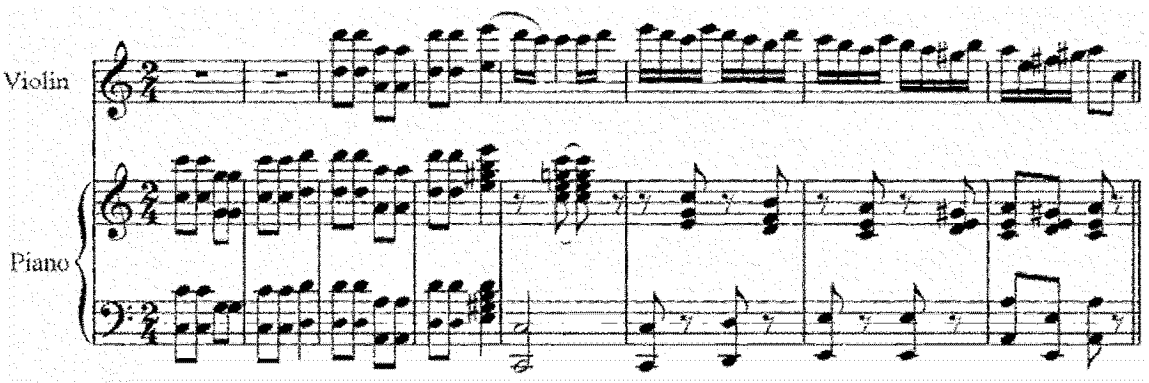

Figure 14

[74] Pethő, "Style Hongrois", 214.

The abrupt interruption of the aforementioned ephemeral ending to the second *lassú* is sudden and declamatory, with a series of fast, staccato octaves in the piano. This abruptness makes perfect sense, as it heralds the beginning of the exciting and virtuosic final *friss*. Here too, however, Sarasate uses harmonic lurching to increase the drama of the passage, and in keeping with the style of the *friss*, there is nothing smooth about these lurches. In fact, the ear can only process in retrospect what is and is not happening in the opening of this *friss*. That is to say, the pattern of mm.71–72, which serves as a mini-introduction to the *friss*, can only be understood after hearing the remainder of the opening phrase. After hearing mm.73–78, it becomes clear that the octave gestures which momentarily sound like I–V–I in D minor are actually starting the musical phrase on the subdominant of the real key of A minor. Thus, working backwards, one understands that the implied tonic of the two bar introduction on mm.71–72 is actually C (minor or major). Though this reasoning process can be argued, the fact is that all of this flies by much too fast for any sense to be made of it on the run, with the result that only after a small amount of harmonic confusion, it is understood that the new key for the *friss* is A minor. That this holds a tertiary relationship to the C minor from which it came is surprising enough. The tumult Sarasate puts the listener through to understand the new tonal center merely enhances the momentary sense of anarchy, and thus the excitement of the transition.

Throughout *Zigeunerweisen*, modal mixing is used to create color. In the quotation above, the tertiary relationships described by Pethő are two-fold. She

is citing evidence of both large-scale tertiary tonal relationships, and prominent usage of chords with this relationship. As noted, the former is clearly used to delineate the two main sections of this work. The latter is also prominent. An example is the harmonic treatment of the cadences in the second *lassú*. In the cadence of each antecedent phrase, the melodic line arrives on a G, implying a dominant harmonic treatment. The dominant chord eventually occurs, but only as a passing sonority on the weaker second beat. The first beat of each of these cadential bars (mm.48, 56 and 60) emphasizes the mediant chord, which has been prepared by its own secondary dominant. While not in any way outrageous harmonic language, this repeated emphasis on the mediant chord does lend a sense of unrequited hopefulness to each phrase, as they inevitably fall back to C minor.

Emphasis on mediant harmonies and unusual harmonic structures is put to great use in the *friss* as well. After the dizzying path taken to establish the key of A minor, Sarasate introduces the main melody of the *friss* in m.73. There are two harmonic idiosyncrasies here. The first is that the antecedent phrase (examples occur at mm.73, 79, 130 and 158) always begins on the subdominant. The other interesting aspect is the emphasis again placed on the mediant chord. It receives the most emphasis of any of the harmonies, as it occurs in the third bar of each antecedent phrase, is held for the longest duration, and has an accentuated syncopation occurring in the violin line above (mm.75–76). Each arrival of the mediant chord is also preceded by a dominant chord, rendering its arrival that much more surprising, as the expected resolution is to tonic.

V. Rhythm and Meter

The rhythmic materials in use throughout *Zigeunerweisen* have a distinctly Hungarian flavor. The cadential figure of the opening phrase presented by the piano, and subsequently the violin, is a typical verbunkos cadence, and appears in Pethő's lexicon of cadential closing formulae. The combination of the dotted rhythm and the lower-neighbor melodic construction give such cadences their uniquely Hungarian flavor.

Sarasate continues to deliberately choose rhythmic gestures associated with the verbunkos. As discussed earlier, Bellman suggests that the *hallgató* style evolved from Gypsy performances of *nóta*. He goes on to discuss typical rhythmic variants, including:

> [t]he reverse dotted rhythm, a splendidly brusque and percussive gesture that is also typical… [and] the syncopated *alla zoppa* rhythm, short–long–short…. In general, all of these rhythms have their bases either in dance figures or in the Hungarian language, which as a text originally helped to shape the rhythms of the songs the Gypsies played.[75]

This is an important observation. In the Hungarian language, the accent is always on the first syllable of the word, so it does indeed make sense that these gestures, with their inherent energy and syncopation, might well have evolved from the emphasis patterns of the actual words of the *nóta* being performed by the Hungarian Gypsies. Thus it is no surprise that we find these gestures

[75] Bellman, "The Hungarian Gypsies", 93.

utilized throughout *Zigeunerweisen*. In the second *lassú*, the *Un peu plus lent* at m.45, the penultimate bar of each phrase (ie. mm.47, 51, 55, 59 and 63) contains the 'inverted' dotted rhythm of sixteenth + dotted-eighth (the 'reverse' *bokázó*). Sarasate clearly wants to milk the dramatic flavor of this gesture, as with each presentation, he makes a point of putting accents on the syncopated notes of the pattern. The *alla zoppa* is also used throughout the piece. In the slower introduction and first *lassú* it is used repeatedly as a cadential figure (mm.5, 18, 35 and 43), and in the fast *friss* Sarasate employs a variant of it (two sixteenths – quarter – two sixteenths) in the main melody (m.75).

The juxtaposition of duple and triple figurations is also typical of the mature verbunkos, and is often utilized by composers to evoke the gypsy *prímás*. In the case of *Zigeunerweisen*, the alternation of duple and triple groupings occurs in the gestures of the opening eleven-bar introduction. In the passages of mm.8–10, the effect of these alternations is interesting. The triplet thirty-second notes that begin m.8 have a sense of forward propulsion. However, the fact that they are followed by lesser groupings of thirty-second notes, and then triplet sixteenth-notes, creates an unexpected slowing that has an almost visceral effect, as if one is riding in a car and the brakes are suddenly applied, causing the rider's body to continue to move forward momentarily until forces have reached equilibrium. Two bars later, the effect, though rendered much gentler, occurs in reverse, as the eighth-notes of m.10 move into triplet eighth-notes at the end of the bar. The approach to these passages will be discussed in the examination of performance considerations which follows.

The final issue of import is that of metric and hypermetric organization in this work. As noted above, the change from a quadruple metric grouping to a duple at the second *lassú* is important. It is also critical, in every section of this work, to understand the potential hypermetric structure. The opening of the work, though marked *moderato*, and in a quadruple meter, is a difficult question from the hypermetric standpoint. It could be argued that there is a 4/2 hypermetric structure. However, even though there are slower sections which follow, I think that the declamatory nature of the opening demands that each quarter-length beat be felt. To push along feeling only the half note is antithetical to the character of this opening, and leaves it sounding 'fluffy.' For the same reasons, I would also argue against any hypermetric reinterpretation of either of the *lassús*. Their important diversity of meter signatures shows careful thought on the part of Sarasate, and their slow tempi and melancholy characters demand that performer and listener feel each beat.

The *friss* is a different story. The metric patterns, which had to this point been duple meters organized into duple groupings (i.e., four-bar phrases), suddenly change. The phrases are now six bars in length from the opening of the *friss* (m.73) until the A-major section (m.116), and again from mm.130–142. Due to the velocity of this section, there is a clear hypermetric 3/2 that imposes itself. The fact that Sarasate returns to an eight-bar phrase structure from mm.116–130, and again from mm.142–149, thus interjecting moments of 4/2 hypermeter, is effective. It is a macrocosmic presentation of the duple versus triple juxtaposition that had been visited already in microcosmic instances. This

trick will be utilized by all of these composers, in their own styles, to enhance the feeling of absolute uncertainty as to what will come next. The trepidation provoked by these 'lawless' transitions of the gypsy player gives this music its dramatic appeal.

VI. Gypsy Materials

Many of the effects used to evoke the gypsy presence in *Zigeunerweisen* have already been discussed at some length. The frequent use of the gypsy scale, and rhythms associated with gypsy performances of the verbunkos repertory, including the *alla zoppa* and *bokázó* have been noted. So too have the use of *figura* style passages in the *friss*, and the cadential usage of a repeating *kuruc fourth* in m.16. There are, however, a few remaining gypsy effects that merit mention.

Virtuoso Improvisatory Effects, Gypsy Band Style, and Cimbalom

In the playing of the gypsy bands of the nineteenth century, it was commonplace for the *prímás* to play improvisatory passages over cimbalom tremolos. This effect is created repeatedly by Sarasate with examples including mm.1–3, 5, 8–10. It is noteworthy that throughout the entire opening section, the role of the piano is simply to create a cimbalom effect over various harmonies. The use of sparkling and virtuosic arpeggios and scales (mm.4 and 11) adds to the *prímás'* improvisatory effect, as does the arrival into m.7. The run in m.4 is meant as a mixture of scale and arpeggio, again clearly intended to create the sense of an

improvised gesture. The approach to m.7 is noteworthy because it demonstrates one version of a gypsy performance practice often used in slower works. In *The Gypsy in Music,* Liszt refers frequently to a daring style of playing where the gypsy orchestra musicians would have to "catch" the *prímás* at the end of a passage, and marvels at their ability to do so. The manner in which the violinist has to catch the pianist going into m.7 is reminiscent of this technique, though in this instance it is rendered in reverse, as it is the *prímás* catching the pianist.

Sarasate very cleverly alternates three different approaches to these improvisatory gestures which lead into, or conclude phrases. There are several instances where Sarasate forces the piano to catch the violin as it rushes towards the end of a flourish. Examples of this include the arrival on the G-major chord in m.16, and again on the downbeat of m.40. Sarasate makes particularly clear his desire for this dangerous catching effect in m.19 (and presumably, the analogous passages) when he writes the indication *pressez* in the chromatic violin line moving into m.20.

Conversely, there are multiple examples of the opposite effect, where the violin slows tremendously towards the cadence. This occurs in m.23 going into m.24, and in m.43 going to m.44 (as well as the analogous passages). The final method used by Sarasate is in evidence at instances such as mm.4, 10 and 16, and 40. In these moments, the violinist is left alone to flourish, and then finish the phrase. To what extent and with what nuance these varied renderings of written 'improvisation' are exaggerated is a decision that must be made by the performer.

Instrumental Effects

Sarasate employs several interesting violinistic effects to emulate the whimsy and abandon of the gypsy performer. He uses the *glissando* frequently in the first *lassú*, and to great effect. Though the chromatic passages in question (mm.19, 24 and 27) are written out, the intention that they be performed as *glissandi* is made clear both in the occasional demarcation to that effect (for example the "*en glissant*" indication in m.24), as well as by the performance by Sarasate himself.

The use of other violinistic effects also adds sparkle and drama to *Zigeunerweisen*. The harmonics that end the phrases in mm.30 and 38 add an unexpected color to these *pianissimo* moments. The use of the mute for the second *lassú* (mm. 45–70) also adds an additional subtlety and ethereal quality to this soulful melody. Finally, the use of pizzicato in the final *friss* is most effective. This is true both of the double-stop pizzicato chords that begin the phrases in mm. 100, 108, 150, and that end the piece in mm.170–171, as well as the fiendishly difficult pizzicato passage at mm.136–141, which combines *arco*, left and right hand pizzicato for a dazzling effect.

When discussing fiddle techniques ubiquitous in Hungarian gypsy violin playing, Bellman notes that "[n]onmelodic, scratching extremes of range are also common, almost as if the composer were poking fun at a relatively unrefined Gypsy approach to fiddle playing in general."[76] Sarasate also plays with this idea in the *friss*. The second statement of the theme in the violin (mm.79–80) is decorated by a two octave displacement, and is taken to an even greater

[76] Bellman, *The Style Hongrois*, 97.

extreme in mm.130–135, where the use of harmonics creates a three octave displacement, which at this speed poses a challenge to even the greatest virtuosi.

VII. Performances and Performance Considerations

It seems clear that of the myriad recordings of *Zigeunerweisen* one could discuss, the first that should be addressed is that made by Sarasate himself. The recording dates from 1904, and the quality of the sound speaks to the technical difficulties still being resolved at that time. There is much background hiss, and the changes of wax roll are audible. Despite all of this, however, the electric brilliance of Sarasate shines clearly through. In the opening, he absolutely rips through all of the virtuosic, improvisatory writing in mm.4, 8, and 11. His fierce and constant acceleration throughout these passages renders them even more precarious, and there is not one modern performance that comes close to duplicating the ferocious sparkle and speed of Sarasate's playing. It is also interesting that even in the instances where he writes indications suggesting that the performer should linger (for example the fermatas in m.4 and m.11) he himself chooses not to do so.

This pattern continues in the first *lassú*, as all of the virtuosic flourishes (m.15, m.16, the turning figure at m.23, etc.) are played at incredible speed. Again also, even when fermatas or *ritardandi* are indicated, such as in mm.16, 17, and 19, Sarasate does not really do them himself. This virtuosic style and

breakneck speed continues into the *friss*, where it is of course most welcome and appropriate. In the introduction and first *lassú*, however, one wonders at the effectiveness of this approach, the result of which is that while breathtakingly brilliant, the performance seems a bit hurried, and in my opinion argues for a stricter adherence to what he wrote than what he played. It is also possible that the rushed nature of the performance results from technical recording concerns, and a desire to fit the whole introduction and first *lassú* onto one roll. The change of roll is audible, and occurs after the piano has played only four bars of the second *lassú*. The new roll then starts immediately at the *friss* (m.71), and as a result we are deprived of the opportunity to hear Sarasate play the second *lassú*.

It is also noteworthy that at a couple of cadential moments in the first *lassú* Sarasate does not play what is written in current editions. In m.35, he repeats the staccato diminished-seventh gesture of the third beat three times, as opposed to the one indicated in the score. He repeats this gesture (again three times) in the third beat of m.43, in lieu of the multi-octave diminished-seventh arpeggio indicated in the score. In his recording dating from 1935, Efrem Zimbalist plays m.43 as does Sarasate. The source of this practice can clearly be seen in the manuscript of *Zigeunerweisen*,[77] where Sarasate writes "trois fois" over both of these passages. Why these indications have been left out of subsequent editions is unclear.

[77] This score, as will be mentioned again later, exists in an editor marked-up manuscript form at the New York Public Library in the Toscanini Memorial Archives, Albrecht census no. 1608, and on microfilm (MM: *ZZ-17918 reel 1).

There are many fine performances of *Zigeunerweisen* available. The greatest variations between them occur in the opening introduction and first *lassú*. In my opinion, the requisite intensity of spirit and drama is best captured in the recordings of Aaron Rosand (1959) and Anne-Sophie Mutter (1993). Rosand has an impeccable sense of timing, and creates the right balance between virtuosic fireworks and dramatic melancholy in his approach to the first *lassú*. He is also adept at shading his intonation for dramatic effect, as with the painfully low E of the first violin phrase (m.3). Rosand's performance is also that which adheres most strictly to every indication of Sarasate. Some of the indications feel a bit unnatural to the performer, and the convincing manner in which Rosand plays them is vindication for these interesting suggestions so oft ignored by other performers. Examples of this meticulous reading include observation of the fermata on the penultimate note of m.4, the *rallentando* that begins m.15, and the *ritardando* indicated in the second half of m.30 (which Rosand wisely replicates in the analogous passage at m.38, although Sarasate does not have it marked the second time).

Mutter's performance is from the outset more driven and flamboyant than that of Rosand, and though different, equally effective. Unlike many of her colleagues, she chooses not to sit on the A in the final sextuplet of m.8, instead lingering on the first two notes thereof. Similar interesting choices abound in her treatment on the cadential figures of the first *lassú*. In many performances, the ornamented cadential gesture in the violin (occurring on the third beat of measures 20, 28, 36, 44) is treated the same each time it occurs. In Mutter's

performance, however, this is not the case, and she is quite thoughtful in varying these figures.

There are some idiosyncratic liberties taken in several performances which lack any substantive explanation. In the recordings by Jascha Heifetz (1951) and Efrem Zimbalist (1935), and more recently, Sandor Lakatos (1999), additional Bs are played in the cadences at mm.20 and 28. Mutter, Heifetz, and Rosand all play a dotted-eighth – sixteenth rhythm in m.25. While the passage is somewhat analogous to m.17, which does have the dotted rhythm, Sarasate deliberately writes and plays the straight rhythm at m.25, and the variety created therewith seems worthy of an accurate adherence to the score.

While essentially a race to finish, the final *friss* that begins at m.71 affords interesting opportunities for the performer to enhance the gypsy feel of the work. Rosand doubles the cadential A at m.94 and E at m.98 by playing a stopped note and open string simultaneously. The sonorous effect is at once a bit crude and harsh and evocative of the primal gypsy playing style. Heifetz adds interest and flair to the repetitions of mm.116–121, and mm.123–128. In each instance, on the repeat of the phrase, he adds accents (on beat two of m.117, and beat one of m.118, and likewise on beat two of m.124, and beat one of m.125). These unexpected kicks give this repetitive material an extra spark. At m.158, Mutter executes perhaps the most contentious styling. At this very moment where Sarasate indicates *animez* in the score, Mutter (and the orchestra) become *subito meno vivace*. While seeming to fly in the face of the composer's intentions, this does in fact allow for a dramatic *accelerando* until the end of the

piece, which is very effective. Although I acknowledge the enhanced effect of this approach, I nonetheless remain unconvinced that such drastic measures are necessary to achieve the breathless finish the work so richly deserves.

Chapter IV

Kreisler *La Gitana*

I. Introduction

> For me he was a god.... [H]e was one of the most original violinists that ever lived. He played like no other violinist. They stood in awe of him.... [H]is playing was absolutely original. It was not Viennese; it was Kreisleresque.[78]
>
> – Joseph Fuchs

Fritz Kreisler (1875–1962) was one of the most influential violinists of the twentieth century. The position of Kreisler in the history of violin playing was enigmatic and pivotal. He was perhaps the last great, old world violinist, and yet in many respects his style of playing was revolutionary, evidencing a unique technical approach to the instrument that was to define modern violinistic style. He composed prolifically for the violin, and his miniature works are universally considered gems of the repertoire. Among the most beloved of Kreisler's compositions is his gypsy-inspired work entitled *La Gitana: An Arabo-Spanish Gypsy song of the 18th Century*, published by Carl Fischer in 1917. A second edition of the work was issued in 1948 with the qualifier "revised and as played by the composer." With the exception of some added ornaments in four measures of the piece, and two additions of notes in the violin line, it is identical to the original printing. These ornaments and additions will be mentioned in the

[78] Joseph Fuchs as quoted in Biancolli, *Fritz Kreisler*, 275.

discussion of performances of the work. The performances being discussed will include two made by Kreisler himself (1938, 1942), and those of Josef Gingold (1976), Kyung Wha Chung (1987), Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg (1992) and Joshua Bell (1996).

La Gitana proves to be far more than a wonderful lollipop violin work. In this early–twentieth-century example of the evocation of the gypsy in violin music, we witness an important paradigm shift in the treatment of an idiom which has been widely manipulated, and is by this point considered cliché and over-exploited. The resulting work is in many ways less "authentic" than those of the nineteenth century. However, it proves equally fascinating as an encapsulation of a gypsy presence, the styles of the epoch, and the personal elements of the composer.

Kreisler's impact on the violin playing style of the twentieth century was huge, and deserves mention as a prelude to any discourse on his compositions. The renowned violinist and pedagogue Carl Flesch wrote about his new approach as follows.

> What has become of the day of Joachim and Sarasate, when one was permitted to vibrate only on those tones whose importance with regard to the melodic line seemed to justify this special expressional garnish? Kreisler defends the principle of lending soulfulness even to the passagework that seems apparently the driest, by means of a slight vibrato which fuses with the actual tone to make one indivisible unit. On this basis, he has formed for himself a style of performance which

> represents the contemporaneous ideal of beauty in violin playing in its perfection.[79]

The incredible beauty, style and sensitivity of Kreisler's playing heralded a new era. Not only was his approach to vibrato revolutionary, but so also was his perfectly controlled and expressive approach to bow strokes. Even through the background hiss on the old recordings of this great master, his bow artistry is obvious. His legato playing has an enviable smoothness and expressive quality, his spicatto sparkles, and he handles moments of virtuosic staccato and ricochet writing with effortless grace and gleaming accuracy. The elegance of his playing is constantly suggestive of a purity of musical intent and spirit that all sought to attain.

This elegance flowed forth in his compositions as well, which were for the most part miniatures of perfect scale, and utmost charm. Kreisler possessed a unique ability to create these stylized masterpieces. Like a Fabergé egg, or an ornate miniature music box, the works are pinnacles of the genre, and loved by violinists and audiences alike. David Oistrakh speaks to these sentiments in the following passage from a letter he wrote to Kreisler.

> Throughout my life I have been a deep admirer of your artistic genius. The style which you have created and immortalized in your many compositions and transcriptions has had a tremendous influence on all the

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[79] Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing*, 75.

violinists of our time without exception and has given joy to countless music-lovers all over the world.[80]

Above accolades aside, his "compositions and transcriptions" also show the enigmatic side of Kreisler. More than a decade before Oistrakh wrote these words, a scandal surrounded these "transcriptions" that Kreisler claimed to have made of works by Corelli, Vivaldi, Pugnani, and others. The scandal erupted upon the discovery, in 1935, that the works were not transcriptions at all, but in fact original compositions by Kreisler himself, a fact he sheepishly admitted. Many admirers were left wondering how such a consummate artist could willfully execute such a hoax. According to Kreisler, he wrote the pieces under the guise of "transcriptions" when he was just starting out, so that people would not balk at his inclusion of his own compositions in his programs. This explanation aside, the fact that he did not confess until discovered remains an unfortunate footnote to a career otherwise filled with great artistic integrity.

It is somewhat ironic that the tale of the hoax transcriptions does, in fact, argue well for Kreisler's keen ability to evoke the style, expression, and musical language of others in his compositions. In the case of *La Gitana*, which he claimed from the outset as his own original composition, one can appreciate these talents without hesitation.

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[80] David Oistrakh, letter to Fritz Kreisler dated December 26, 1959, as quoted in Biancolli, *Fritz Kreisler*, 278.

II. The Genesis of *La Gitana*, and the *Style Hongrois* in the Twentieth Century

Kreisler gives *La Gitana* the subtitle "An Arabo-Spanish Gypsy song of the 18th Century." The reference to the eighteenth century, while never specifically explained by Kreisler, is perhaps homage to the great Hungarian gypsy violinists of that time. Living in Vienna, Kreisler was, as were Haydn and Beethoven before him, surrounded by all of the Hungarian influences immortalized in the former capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is therefore likely that he was well aware of the glory and heroic status that surrounded violinists such as János Bihari, Antal Csermák, and Panna Czinka in the second half of that century, and as a violinist, wanted to pay tribute to those epic violinists of "gypsy" fame. As for the "Arabo-Spanish" attribution, research to date has not indicated that any of these melodies existed before appearing in *La Gitana*. That said, they are evocative of both Spanish and Arabic influences, and these will be examined and discussed. The work has some rhythmic gestures and ostinati reminiscent of Spain and flamenco song and guitar style, and the use of both gypsy scale fragments and various modal shadings are evocative of the exotic, Arabic origins oft attributed to these elements.

More important than the subtitle, however, are the means employed by Kreisler to summon the essence of the gypsy in this work. Kreisler's infusion of the gypsy presence into *La Gitana* is similarly constructed and effective as are his evocations of the spirit of baroque and classical masters in his

"transcriptions." In each case, Kreisler creates the intended style not through a meticulous study of works, or by quoting or paraphrasing extant materials. In each instance he sets out merely to use what all know intuitively, instinctively, as the elements of the given style, and to manipulate these subtly into a musical apparition, be it that of a composer of a foregone era, or a singing gypsy enchantress.

As discussed in the introductory chapter, the means of evoking the gypsy in music is dramatically different in compositions of the twentieth century as compared to the nineteenth. As the examination of the materials used in *La Gitana* continues, one finds nothing more than ingenious bric-a-brac of gestures somehow remotely evocative of the gypsy performer. There are no direct quotations or paraphrases of extant melodies, and only one passage using a complete statement of the gypsy scale. The more subtle means of evoking the gypsy spirit in these works allows for a much more personal and unique rendering of the mysterious and elusive gypsy. In *La Gitana* this is perhaps most obviously born out in the final rendering of the melodic materials in a compound metric variant reminiscent of a Viennese pièce de salon.

III. Stylistic, Contextual, and Formal Considerations

La Gitana, as noted by Kreisler in the subtitle, is intended to be more evocative of song than a complex instrumental work. Despite this, however, to more fully understand the structural and contextual genesis of the piece, it is helpful to

know something about the music surrounding the composer in this time period, and how he viewed himself in that context.

The end of the nineteenth and dawn of the twentieth centuries witnessed new trends in public musical consumption. In his article on "Mass Media and the Cultural Economy of Popular Music," Richard Middleton notes the following: "At the same time [the late nineteenth century], the provision of and access to public performances also increased. In pleasure gardens and dance halls, popular theatres and concert rooms, ordinary people – no doubt for the first time, in many cases – could enjoy music commercially provided by professionals."[81] In the last decades of the nineteenth century the café-concert in France, the cabaret in Germany, and the coffee clubs and music halls of England began to take on a new societal role, and gain in popularity as places to experience music of value.

> [In Germany] there was a desperate need for an entertainment form that pandered neither to the philistine taste in concert song nor to the inanities of tingel-tangel airs and music. German artists wanted to ennoble both.... There always was an aspiration towards high standards as understood by the artists who supported the cabaret idea.... Cabaret provided an atmosphere in which innovation could flourish and the opportunity for it to do so; it is not surprising that avant-garde experimentation often dominated the performances. Much that went on was improvised.... Many composers of considerable fame joined in. Debussy once conducted a chorus, and Milhaud, Satie, Jean Wiener and Schoenberg played active roles. Satie is credited with having composed more than 50 pieces when he was pianist at the 'Chat Noir' and at the 'Auberge du Clou'. Schoenberg

[81] Middleton, "Popular Music", I.2.

> conducted the orchestra at the 'Überbrettl' and composed seven Brettllieder.[82]

These popular venues became the setting both for stylistic experimentation by well known composers, and for performances of light orchestral works and ballads whose melodies formed the common musical vernacular of the time.

The composers and performers of the first decades of the twentieth century were thus often engaged in cultural 'crossover' between writing serious classical compositions, and lighter works for the mass audience. Composers including Albert Ketèlbey (1875–1959) and Victor Herbert (1859–1924) were achieving great notoriety for their popular operettas, ballads, and light classics. The works of these composers are germane to an examination of *La Gitana* both for reasons thematic and structural. These works were often based on exotic ideas and imagery, and meant to evoke distant lands or peoples, and the popularity of such works likely had an influence on Kreisler. Furthermore, many instrumental works of this period took inspiration from these light works and ballads, and as such were often in song forms, if not actual transcriptions of extant songs. The influence of these styles and constructs on Kreisler's miniatures in general, and *La Gitana* in particular, is clear.

Both Ketèlbey and Herbert were classically trained; the former as a pianist, organist and composer, and the latter as a cellist who went on to play principal cello at the Metropolitan Opera and conduct the Pittsburgh Symphony. However, it was their light compositions, often evocative of exotic lands and

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[82] Wachsmann, "Cabaret".

people, which garnered them the greatest acclaim. Examples abound, and include works with titles such as *In a Monastery Garden* (1915), *In a Persian Market* (1920), and *In a Chinese Temple Garden*: *Oriental Fantasy* (1923). In his discussion of Ketèlbey's works, Philip Scowcroft observes that "The most popular of his hundreds of pieces emphasize emotionalism and sometimes exaggerated effects at the expense of structure and harmonic subtlety."[83] While these criticisms are perhaps justified, they do not acknowledge the impact that these compositions had on many of the more traditional classical composers and performers of the day. For many more traditional composers of the early twentieth century, the exotic evocations were already sufficiently overused and cliché, so that relegating such materials to works of a less serious nature seemed both obvious and commercially advantageous.

Fritz Kreisler was not at all a musical elitist. In 1919 he wrote an operetta, *Apple Blossoms*, which ran for a year on Broadway, and featured Fred and Adele Astaire in leading roles. He was clearly aware of, and influenced by, popular musical styles and trends of the period, as were many other successful performers. During the first decades of the twentieth century violinists such as Kreisler, Misha Elman, Efrem Zimbalist, and the young Jascha Heifetz were appearing in musical events more closely resembling grand public spectacles than serious classical performances. It was the norm to program single movements of multi-movement works, to play works composed for violin and orchestra with piano reduction, and to include multiple miniatures on the program, particularly at the end. All of these programming devices were meant

[83] Scowcroft, "Ketèlby, Albert W.".

to give the concertgoers a greater variety of works, and thus enhance the entertainment experience for the mass audience.

Given this historical and cultural context, it is not surprising that the structure of *La Gitana* follows a song formal pattern similar to the works mentioned above, with a few melodic sections in minor keys followed by a charming and innocent closing in major. What is uniquely Kreisler is the way in which he colors and shades these various sections, a fact which is born out even more poignantly when his recordings of the work are considered, as they will be in section VII of this chapter.

The multiple sections of the *La Gitana* evoke different moods, and differ in rhythmic and metric organization, as well as in tonality. Each of these tiny sections evinces different aspects of the 'gypsy' as evoked musically, and the treatments become increasingly personal as the work progresses.

La Gitana begins with a cadenza-like introduction marked *Allegro Moderato, quasi Recitativo*. The opening violin gestures are improvisatory in character, in direct contrast with the rigid dotted rhythms of the piano interjections (mm.2, 4). The violin flourishes begin each time with an anacrusis of an ascending fifth, lending credence to the characterization of this opening as *quasi Recitativo*. In the first of these flourishes, only the initial pentachord of the tonally appropriate 'gypsy scale' fragment is used (F–G–A –B–C in bars 1, 3), and it is rendered less predictable and clichéd by the use of the upper-neighbor ornamental D, which is not a part of the scale. Even when a complete statement of the tonally appropriate gypsy scale is presented (C#–D#–E–F^{x}–G#–A–B#–C#

in bars 5–7), again the ornamental upper-neighbor A# adds an element of unpredictability to the passage. It is also important to note that although this opening is only seven measures long, the conflict between the strict double-dotted rhythmic gestures in the piano, and the flashy improvisational flourishes of the violin part creates a great propulsive energy and forward momentum.

The tonic key of D minor is finally established at the *Allegro giusto e ritmico* that begins in m.8. The difference between this material and the introduction is striking. The *Allegro giusto e ritmico* is characterized by an extremely strict rhythmic ordering, and adherence to such is dictated by the '*e ritmico*' instruction added to the tempo indication. The writing in this section is clearly meant to establish an almost militaristic rhythmic intensity. Kreisler only indicates one possible moment for artistic indulgence, at the cadence in m.13. Even here, however, he stipulates only *pochissimo rallentando*, so as to avoid too much distortion of the rhythmic structure. It is also important to mention here the extent to which Kreisler deviates from his own markings in his performances. In both his recording with orchestra and that with piano, Kreisler plays the material beginning at m.8 with a somewhat irregular rhythmic approach. It is his wont to hold the ties for a fraction too long, and compensate by occasionally rushing the shorter values that follow. This approach, while absolutely exciting and effective, seems to work better with piano than with orchestra. In both recordings, those accompanying him attempt to be sensitive to these machinations. The result, however, in the version with orchestra, is ensemble that is occasionally muddy. It seems that when performing the orchestrated

version, the best strategy for this material is for the conductor to adhere strictly to the '*e ritmico*' indication, and for the soloist to manipulate the melodic materials within that framework.

The nine bars from mm.26–34 are somewhat enigmatic in the overall structure of *La Gitana*. They are not a separate musical section as such, but serve as the end of the *Allegro giusto e ritmico*, and as a transitional passage into the *più lento, quasi Andantino* section that begins at m.35. Kreisler writes *poco più lento e tranquillo* into both parts at this moment, and both the melodic materials and the key change. It is interesting to note that in both recordings of Kreisler playing *La Gitana*, the tempo he sets here is in fact suddenly and dramatically slower. Furthermore, when he arrives at the larger sectional division indicated at the *più lento, quasi Andantino* of m.35, he has actually already established a tempo even slower than the one he plays from m.35 onward.

The *più lento, quasi Andantino* at m.35 has a melodic and harmonic structure that, while beautiful, feels deliberately static. This sense is in large part created by the trance-like repetitive accompanimental figure in the piano. The sense of stasis is enhanced by an unsettled, yet lethargic harmonic structure that underlies this melody, as will be examined further in section VI of this chapter. The final section of the piece is the *Allegretto grazioso* that begins at m.44. This last section is in the relative major and is lilting and charming, as was so often the case in the ballads of the era. What is unusual here is not the upbeat reworking of earlier melodic elements in a major key, but the change of the overriding beat division to that of triple subdivisions, and the resultant infusion of

Viennese charm in this closing. A brief echo of the materials from the opening cadenza occurs at m.74, serving as a coda, and a return to the D-minor tonic of the work.

IV. Structural and Rhythmic Materials

The structural building blocks of *La Gitana* are above all its rhythmic elements. As previously mentioned, an excellent example of the rhythmic intensity of the work comes at the very opening. The juxtaposition of the strictly dotted piano declarations with the sweeping, rhythmically free violin gestures of the opening creates a dramatic contrast immediately evocative of the gypsy band and prímás leader thereof. The rhythmic elements employed most often by Kreisler are sequential alternations of duple and triple beat divisions, and syncopated melodic structures. As discussed in the introduction (Chapter I), the alternation of duple and triple figurations and beat divisions was an established means of adding a Spanish flavor to a melody. The frequent use of these figurations here is thus consistent both with established practices, and with the titular homage given to Spain and the nationality of the *gitana* being evoked. These constant flirtations with duple and triple juxtapositions and the manipulation of the principles of syncopation are brilliantly used by Kreisler. His use of these rhythmic idioms evokes both the universal gypsy, and the exotic Spanish seductress. These rhythmic elements also tie the sections of the work together, and lend energy and spice to even the most seemingly sedate moments.

Duple and triple juxtapositions are an important key to the rhythmic language of *La Gitana*. Not only was the practice evocative of Iberia, but there was also a verbunkos standard of using duple meters, and duple beat divisions, with frequent injection of triple divisions as a bit of zest. In this work, however, the use of the triple beat divisions goes beyond being an occasional injection of spice. In *La Gitana* the alternation between the duple and triple divisions permeates the fabric of the entire work. The genius of the piece is the manner in which Kreisler incorporates these rhythmic elements into every melodic and accompanimental gesture.

Examples of melodic manifestations of the duple and triple alternation abound. In the *Allegro giusto e ritmico* section of the work, there are multiple instances in the violin melody, such as mm.11, 13, 19, and 21. In the *più lento, quasi Andantino* section that begins in m.35, the melody is itself built entirely out of sequential duple and triple beat divisions (Figure 15).

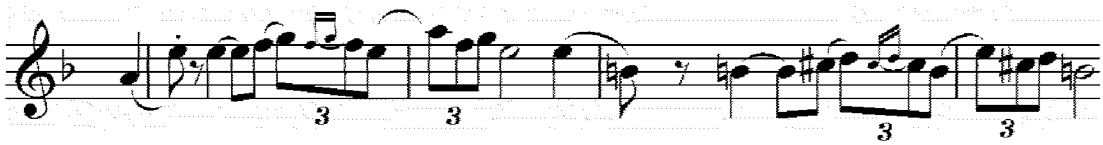

Figure 15

This focus on the juxtaposition of duple and triple is even in evidence metrically, as is the case in the final *Allegretto grazioso* section of the work, where for twenty-nine measures (mm.44–73), the violin is in 6/8 meter, while the

piano is in 2/4 (albeit with triplet figurations). Although the rule here becomes the triple subdivision of the beat, Kreisler purposefully uses a duple subdivision at each cadence (mm. 55, 57, and 73) for two reasons. One senses a desire on his part to continue to flirt with this juxtaposition. The second reason for the inclusion of these duple figurations is to create an effective sense of "winding down" at the cadential moments where they occur. As this closing section has a certain "pièce de salon" feeling, the performer could be inspired to certain liberties, among them, *rallentandi* at the ends of these phrases. The duple divisions utilized by Kreisler at the cadences serve to create this effect brilliantly, yet subtly, and have the added benefit that they link the materials of this section to those of the rest of the work. That he wanted no more slowing than that which is afforded by these duple gestures is indicated by his deliberate indication of *senza ritardando* in both the violin and piano parts at m.56. It is worth noting that Kreisler does adhere to these indications in his recorded performances of *La Gitana.*

The allure of opposing duple and triple figuration continues to be the driving force of the work at all levels. An example occurs with the rocking piano gesture that begins at the *più lento, quasi Andantino* of m.35. This section is hypnotic in its stasis for several reasons, one of which is the repeating alternation of triplet and duple eighth-notes in the piano. The establishment of this pattern is important, as it will govern the piano part for the rest of the piece with the exception of only a couple of measures, and it is over this foundation that the stage is set for the melodic manifestations of the same basic idea.

Another important rhythmic element that Kreisler manipulates is the sense of syncopation and misplaced accentuation. A typical and yet effective use of syncopation occurs with the misplaced accents in the violin melody of mm.40–43. An ancillary means of creating a sense of syncopation is present in the opening violin melody beginning in m.10. In this melodic construction the emphasis is consistently placed on beats two and four, reminiscent of the "back beat" often used in popular music. This manifestation is ubiquitous throughout the melody lines of the work, and is in fact an important melodic structural element in the *Allegro giusto e ritmico*. The melody presented in the violin beginning in m.10 is constructed to enhance this sense of syncopation. The skeleton of the melody is the sustained notes which are dotted-quarter in length. These consistently occur on beats two and four, and are marked by Kreisler with a (^), to insure that they be given appropriate emphasis. This deliberate displacement of the accentuated elements of the melody to beats two and four, and the resultant ties obscuring beats one and three, adds an important sense of tension to the melody, despite the regularity of the supporting piano gestures. Kreisler utilizes this method of obfuscation of strong beats by tying over them again in the melody of the *più lento, quasi Andantino* of m.35. In this instance, although the arrival to the first beat of the measure is emphasized (and in fact even more so by the slow slides Kreisler plays into each first beat in his recordings), there is still a consistent use of the tie into the third beat of each bar.

V. Harmonic Materials

The harmonic language used by Kreisler in *La Gitana* is both evocative of the gypsy song, and yet personal in its treatment. Liszt credits the gypsy musician with a "system of modulation [that] seems to be based on a total negation of all predetermined plan for the purpose in question."[84] Kreisler does seem to take inspiration from these words, as he revels in the harmonic non sequitur several times in this work. The first of these harmonic idiosyncrasies occurs at the very opening of the piece, in the cadenza-like introduction marked *Allegro Moderato, quasi Recitativo*. It begins with what appears to be a clear statement of tonic in the declamatory piano chord that opens the piece. The confident F-minor chord which begins this introduction, however, is soon rendered less so by the addition of a 'D' in the second measure. This D can be seen as being borrowed from the upper neighbor figure that ornaments the violin flourishes of the first and third bars. This 'borrowing' of melodic neighbor tones into the underlying harmonies becomes a significant element of this opening. Kreisler uses this technique again in the following bars (mm.5–7). The basic harmony is C# minor, which is sufficiently shocking in its juxtaposition with the F minor that came before. The use of the neighbor tone A# in the chord only serves to further estrange it from the previous harmonies. This construction also allows Kreisler to set up a doubled resolution (A# to A, G# to A) to the dominant chord (A_7 at the end of m.7) of what is to be the actual key of the work, namely D minor. It is interesting to

[84] Liszt, *The Gypsy in Music*, 297.

note also that this same chord, albeit respelled, returns at the end of the work (m.78), again resolving to the dominant-seventh, and subsequently tonic of D minor. The recycling of the gypsy scale-like gesture in the violin (from m.7, reused in m.77), followed by this now familiar cadential close, serves to round off the piece, bringing it full circle.

Another important tool utilized by Kreisler to evoke the gypsy essence is modal mixing. From this perspective, the entire opening tonicization in F minor is no more than a prolonged instance of secondary modal mixture: an 'incorrect' modal shading of F major, the relative major of the overall tonality of D minor. Instances of such modal mixing abound. One such example occurs at the *più lento, quasi Andantino* of m.35. While the overriding tonality here remains D minor, there is a prolonged stasis over an A pedal. What is interesting here is the modal shading of the melody in the violin, for, despite the occasional C# in the piano part, it has a distinctly A-minor feeling. This is thus again an evocation of a 'wrong' harmony, namely A minor in lieu of the actual dominant of D minor. Even the charming closing *Allegretto grazioso* at m.44 is an example of modal mixing, as Kreisler plants it firmly in the parallel key of D major until m.74, where the descending sequence leads back to the D-minor tonic.

A final interesting technique Kreisler uses to evoke the exotic is the extension of triadic harmonies. At multiple moments in the work, he adds sixths and ninths over otherwise mundane harmonic patterns to spice them up a bit. A good example of this occurs at the transitional *poco più lento e tranquillo* of mm.26–34. In this passage, the A-major harmony of m.26 and m.30 is spiced by

an added ninth (B), prominently featured in the violin melody and piano accompaniment. Even in the 'resolution' bars that follow (mm.27 and 31), the chord of resolution is spiced in two ways. In another example of modal mixing, the resolution is to D major, not the expected D minor. Greater zest is added to the resolution in the form of the addition once again of a prominent B in both parts, though this time acting as the added sixth of the chord.

VI. Gypsy Effects

Extended Tonic Passages Over the Dominant

As will prove to be the case also in Ravel's *Tzigane*, Kreisler uses extended pedals on the dominant in *La Gitana*. Examples include the entire *più lento, quasi Andantino* section (mm.35–43). Here, although the actual key is D minor, there is a prolonged rhythmic E to A gesture with emphasis on A that is static throughout the entire section. The emphasis on an A pedal does not stop at the end of this section, but in fact continues straight through the following *Allegretto grazioso* (mm.44–73), though in a different rhythmic organization. In this instance, the A occurs on the second beat of each bar, remaining a static underpinning of this entire D-major section. As we will see again in the Ravel, these prolonged pedals on the fifth scale degree serve several purposes. One of these is to develop the inherent tension of a seemingly never-resolving dominant pedal, such that it creates an uneasy foundation to what might otherwise be simple harmonic materials. The second purpose may be the desire to emulate the drone, particularly when the fifth scale degree is presented as the root of a

recurring perfect fifth, such as in mm.35–43. As previously noted, the droning fifths were inherited from the sound of the bagpipes, and "in the *style hongrois*, these low fifths remained; in the Gypsy bands they would have been played by a double bass rather than a bagpipe, but the sound remained."[85] As will be further elucidated in the discussion of Ravel's *Tzigane*, there are also shared common tones (and tetrachords) between the gypsy scale based on tonic, and that based on the dominant. Prolongations of dominant pedals are therefore also useful in allowing melodic materials of both incarnations of the scale to be used.

Upper Neighbor Cadential Embellishments

Melodic embellishment through the use of an upper neighboring tone occurs throughout *La Gitana*. Perhaps most striking are the instances involving cadential passages, where the figuration occurs over a descending cadential line. Examples of this occur at mm.33–34, and again at mm.74–76. The neighbor figure is indicated as a triplet in both of these instances, giving it more rhythmic substance than the many non-cadential melodic instances where the upper-neighbors occur as grace-notes secondary to the main line (mm. 27, 31, 35, 37, 39, 40, 49, and 54). The cadential figurations of the gesture as framed in mm.33–34 and mm.74–76 are also pertinent as they are highly reminiscent of analogous cadential treatments from Bizet's *Carmen*, and as such point once again to bric-a-brac of gypsy elements assembled from a variety of sources.

[85] Bellman, *The Style Hongrois*, 106.

Gypsy Scale

There is no doubt that Kreisler was well aware of the power of the augmented second to evoke the sense of the exotic, or gypsy. He uses this interval, and gypsy scale fragments, throughout *La Gitana*. That said, It is interesting that although he often has the opportunity to do so, for example at the opening (Figure 16), Kreisler almost never utilizes a complete statement of the gypsy scale.

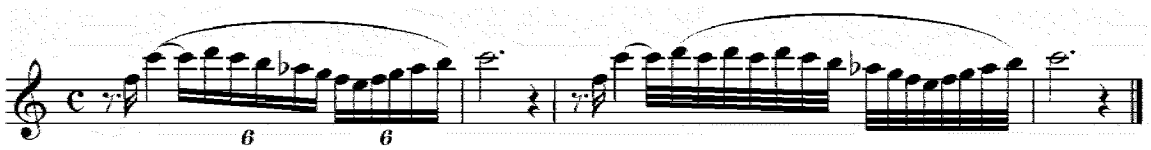

Figure 16

The only exception to this is in the analogous passage which follows in mm.5–7, where he finally introduces an entire gypsy scale on C# (Figure 17), though, as discussed previously, the repetitive use of the A# upper-neighbor tempers what might otherwise be an overly obvious usage of "clichéd" materials.

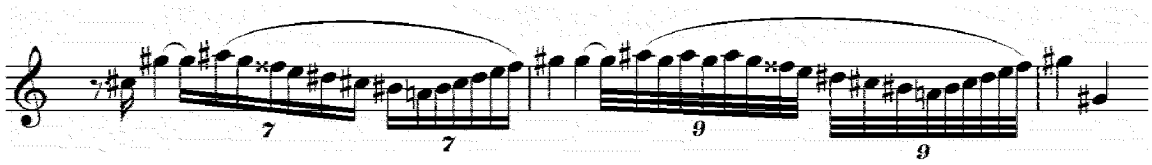

Figure 17

The deliberate avoidance of the gypsy scale in its complete form actually affords the opportunity to flirt with an exotic sonority, while avoiding the classic cliché of

the idiom. It also provokes some interesting harmonic ambiguities, as evidenced in the quasi-cadenza passage at m.7.

Guitar-like Gestures

There are examples of gestures in *La Gitana* that are evocative of the Spanish guitar style. The most dramatic of these occurs in the piano ostinato that begins the *Allegro giusto e ritmico* section at m.8. This opening gesture in the piano is striking in its drive, and serves as the propulsive rhythmic force for the *Allegro giusto e ritmico* (mm.8–25).

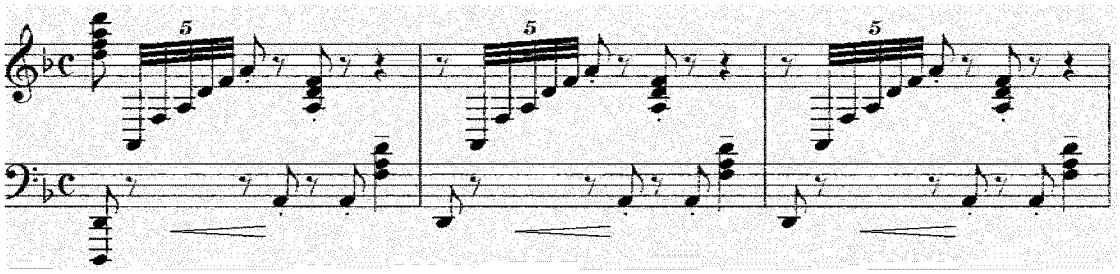

Figure 21

The use of the sweeping quintuplet (Figure 21) to bridge the gap from the bass to treble registers is an interesting choice on the part of Kreisler. In many of the most standard Flamenco dances, including the *alegrías caracoles*, and *soleares*, the fast quintuplet is used as a sweeping gesture, most often meant to be played *rasgueado* by the guitarist.[86] This gesture is thus another element of a delicate macramé of threads of disparate gypsy styles being woven together in this exquisite miniature.

[86] Baime, appendix to *The Language of Spanish Dance*, 271.

VII. Performances and Performance Considerations

The opportunity to hear composers perform their own compositions is always invaluable. In the case of *La Gitana*, there are two recordings of Kreisler, one with violin and piano dating from 1938, and an orchestrated version recorded in 1942. Both are excellent, and much can be learned from them. One important and somewhat surprising feature of both performances concerns the approach Kreisler takes to the ornaments and ornamental passagework. Throughout both recordings, the ornamental passagework, namely the passages of the opening cadenza, are played very clearly and cleanly, and at a speed sufficiently controlled to allow for such clarity. This is particularly true of the turning passagework in the opening cadenza at m.7, where Kreisler plays the turns quite deliberately. When playing the other ornaments, such as the grace note upper-neighbor turns in the *più lento, quasi Andantino* and the final *Allegretto grazioso*, he is more fickle in his approach and the recordings do differ. What remains constant, however, is that these figurations are more deliberate in the *più lento, quasi Andantino*, and much quicker and lighter in the *Allegretto grazioso*.

In both recordings, as previously mentioned, the transitional moments from the *Allegro giusto e ritmico* to the *più lento, quasi Andantino* (mm.26–34), and from the *più lento, quasi Andantino* to the *Allegretto grazioso* (mm.41–43) are slower than the page would seem to indicate. Also interesting is the playing style Kreisler brings to the *più lento, quasi Andantino* m.35. Kreisler plays virtually every interval of a fourth or fifth with a very deliberate, almost overstated

slide between the notes. In this interpretation, the melody loses some of its naïveté, becoming almost a caricature of the old haggard gypsy violinist. Furthermore, in the recording with orchestra, these slides are emulated by the lower strings every time the triplet gesture resolves up a perfect fourth (mm.35, 36, 39), indicating that the effect was really desired by Kreisler, although not originally notated in the score.

It is also important to mention that in both recordings, the accompaniment does include the added accompanimental notes indicated in the 1948 edition of the work. These changes are simply ornamentation added to the top voice of the accompaniment of m.47 (Figure 18), m.51 (Figure 19), and mm.58–59 (Figure 20). The ornamented versions of these bars are indicated in the three figures that follow.

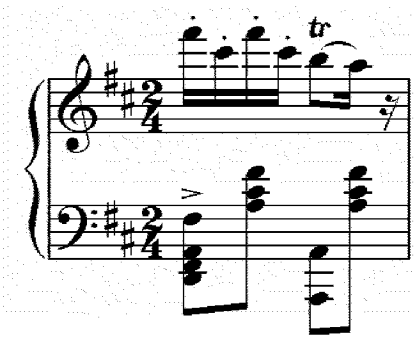

Figure 18

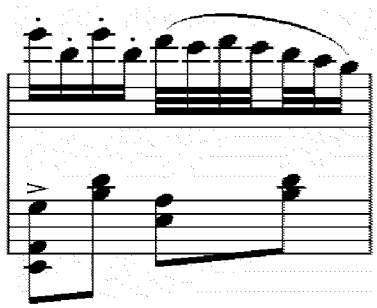

Figure 19

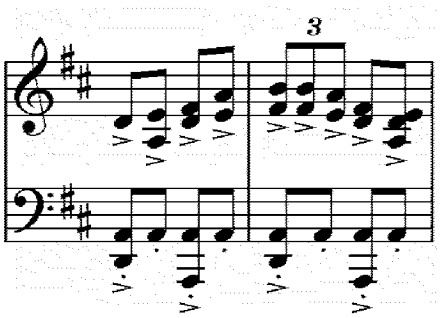

Figure 20

There is one idiosyncratic change in the 1948 edition that is not, however, present in either of the Kreisler recordings. This edition indicates that the violin line should duplicate the top of the piano line of mm.62–63, and again in mm.66–67 (an octave higher than the piano). Given the fact that Kreisler does not do this in either of his extant recordings, it seems that most other artists have been leery to play these additional notes. The exception is Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, who does play the violin part as indicated in this edition. Sonnenberg makes another interesting, if questionable decision to ignore the ricochet bow stroke as indicated in both editions at m.15 and m.23. This stroke is sorely missing when absent, as it lends a velocity and ferocity to the thirty-second notes which matches the sparkle of the glissandi in the piano.

While most other recorded performances of *La Gitana* use the 1948 edition of the score, not all do. The recording by Josef Gingold utilizes the original piano version, and to a surprisingly successful effect. The piano clearly takes a completely secondary role in this edition, rendering a part that is simple and relatively static. However, the pianist performing with Gingold brings an excellent and appropriate twist to the repeating piano formula. This is

accomplished by deliberately delaying the second eighth-note of each duple slightly, an effect reminiscent of the way the third beat is held back in a Viennese waltz. The effect is in fact very Viennese, and lends a special charm to this performance.

Violinists take very different approaches to the different sections of *La Gitana*. Kyung Wha Chung and Joshua Bell tend to play the *Allegro giusto e ritmico* with a relatively sweet tone, and understated articulation. The approach from Kreisler is totally different, and his tricks of timing and vigorous articulation of the melody are much more in keeping with the spirit being summoned. Even among the performances that capture that spirit, none comes close to reproducing the minute, yet effective pushing and pulling of the tempo that renders the Kreisler recordings so uniquely wonderful. It is of course only appropriate that violinists bring their own ethos and aesthetic understanding to a work, particularly a work which pays homage to the ultimate improvisers on the instrument. However, it seems that there is a lot to be learned from the extant recordings by the composer, and I feel any performer would be irresponsible not to listen to them before setting out to choose their own musical path.

Chapter V

Ravel *Tzigane*

I. Introduction

> To really understand Ravel it is necessary to know his heritage, which is a strange Basque combination of Spanish ardor and French restraint, together with the precise attention to detail which is characteristic of the Swiss.[87]

Tzigane: Rhapsodie de Concert by Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) stands as one of the masterworks of the twentieth-century violin repertoire. It was composed in March of 1924, and premiered by the dedicatee, Jelly d'Arányi, barely a month later on April 26th, 1924, in London. It was published by Éditions Durand in 1924, in three versions. The first was for violin and luthéal. The publisher's catalog explains that "[the luthéal is an] apparatus, invented in 1919 by Georges Cloetens, which produces different timbres on the grand piano without in any way limiting its usual range or other strictly pianistic qualities. The 'luthéal' was used by Ravel in the original version of Tzigane to produce a harpsichord-like sound."[88] Arbie Orenstein describes it similarly as "a short-lived attachment to the keyboard which produces the approximate timbre of a Hungarian cimbalom or a harpsichord."[89] The other versions were for violin and piano, and subsequently, violin and orchestra. As the violin and piano version is the most often played, it will be the basis for the following discussion, which will include

[87] Goss, *Bolero*, 13.
[88] Editions Durand, "Catalogue des Oeuvres, 2002".
[89] Orenstein, *Ravel*, 193.

analysis of performances by Ginette Neveu (1949), Michael Rabin (1958), Christian Ferras (1962), Henryk Szeryng (1969), Salvatore Accardo (1982), Itzhak Perlman (1987), and Anne-Sophie Mutter (1993).

Rhapsodie de Concert was not a revolutionary subtitle in the year 1924. The term has its origins in the Greek *rhapsodos* (performer who recited epic poetry). John Rink points out that the term has been used colloquially in Europe since the sixteenth century to mean "an extravagant effusion of sentiment or feeling." By the end of the nineteenth century the term is established in musical vocabulary to identify "a large-scale nationalist 'epic'," the most famous examples of this meaning certainly being the Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsodies* (nos.1–15 composed 1846–47, nos.16–19 composed 1882–85). The *rhapsody* as a musical genre is not, however, so easy to define. When used as a title for a musical composition, the term simply suggests a rapturous, highly emotive, improvisatory work. It is thus difficult to categorize the genre in terms of rules governing structure or instrumentation, as the term is used in such varied contexts, and disparate works. Nonetheless, the key elements of the rhapsody are clearly "an inspired, rapturous character often expressed in an idiosyncratic, even improvisatory form."[90]

The aforementioned subtitle is only one of the elements of *Tzigane* that might suggest mention of Liszt. Hints of Liszt are also present in Ravel's technical approach to the piano, as observed by Martin Cooper: "[Ravel] was an excellent pianist…Schumann, Chopin and Liszt – especially Liszt – provided

[90] Rink, "Rhapsody".

starting-points for his technical experiments, but his sensibility was wholly modern."[91] It is also noteworthy that many of the tools employed to evoke the gypsy essence in *Tzigane* are discussed in detail by Liszt. In his *The Gypsy in Music*, Liszt mentions many harmonic and melodic aspects of gypsy performance that Ravel clearly takes to heart when composing *Tzigane*.

Like Sarasate, Ravel also had ties to Spain. His mother was from the Basque region of France, just across the border from Spain. This was where Ravel was born, and he frequently returned for visits.

> Among [Ravel's] earliest memories were the Spanish folk melodies sung to him by his mother, and through her, he inherited a love of the Basque country, its people, and its folklore, as well as a deep sympathy for the music of Spain.[92]

It is therefore not surprising that Ravel would go on to create many works that evoke the Spanish spirit. One of his first works was the *Habanera* of 1895, and later Spanish masterpieces include the *Rhapsodie Espagnole* (1908), and the *Alborada del Grazioso* (1905).

Despite his familial ties to and musical interest in the Iberian Peninsula, *Tzigane* is not an exploration of the flamenco gypsy tradition. As was the case with Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen*, Ravel's intent in this great virtuoso work is to evoke the Hungarian gypsy. The origins of the work make this clear. Ravel

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[91] Cooper, *French Music*, 128.
[92] Orenstein, *Ravel*, 8.

seems to have had Hungarian ideas floating in his mind and works as early as 1921. At this time he was working on the Sonata for Violin and Cello (finished in March 1922, and premiered the following month). Arbie Orenstein, perhaps the most renowned Ravel scholar, describes the last movement of this work, *Vif, avec entrain*, as follows:[93]

> Following a decisive cadence in C major, a folklike melody in Hungarian style is presented in F# minor (14/2/6).... The spirit of the Hungarian school may be seen in the fact that the melody (14/6/5) evolves around the tonal center of A and contains the characteristic interval of the augmented fourth, while the accompaniment outlines boldly contrasting triads.... Further manipulations of the themes lead to an insistent F# (16/8/7), which abruptly resolves to C major, once again suggesting the spiritual influence of the Hungarian school.[94]

These observations are very interesting for two reasons. First, they suggest some striking similarities in materials and manipulations used by Ravel when crafting *Tzigane*. Secondly, this discussion pertains to a work finished in March of 1922. This is relevant as it predates what is often cited as the 'inspirational moment' for *Tzigane.*

The oft-cited beginning of encounters and collaborations that grew into *Tzigane* occurred in April, 1922. This was when Ravel first met the Hungarian violinist Jelly d'Arányi, at a performance of the Bartók First Sonata, with Bartók at

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[93] The parenthetical numbers refer to the page, system, and measure number, respectively, of the musical material being discussed.
[94] Orenstein, *Ravel*, 191.

the piano. At the time, Ravel had a close friendship and collaboration with the violinist Hélène Jourdan-Morhange, and was working on his Sonata for Violin and Piano, which he was dedicating to her. However, he was very impressed by the young d'Arányi. D'Arányi was a favorite of Bartók, and a former student of the legendary Jenö Hubay. She also came from an exclusive violinistic lineage, as she was the niece of Joseph Joachim. When Ravel and d'Arányi met again in July, she was performing his aforementioned Duo for Violin and Cello. The tale of that evening is legendary, as d'Arányi took out her violin after a late dinner, and "entertained Ravel for half the night afterwards with an apparently inexhaustible repertoire of Hungarian Gypsy melodies." Larner goes on to say, as many scholars have, "That was the initial inspiration of *Tzigane*, the concert rhapsody which he would dedicate to Jelly d'Arányi. It would take him nearly two years to complete it."[95] Though this is clearly a pivotal moment, I would argue that the musical materials and ideas of *Tzigane* had already been tossing around in Ravel's mind (and works), and his encounter with d'Arányi simply gave them an indisputable *raison d'ètre*.

Ravel faulted his own depressed state for the lack of productivity he experienced in 1923, and by the spring of 1924, he was under enormous pressure to complete several works for a showcase concert in London. As Jourdan-Morhange had developed rheumatism, he asked d'Arányi to premiere his sonata on this program, but found himself unable to finish it. At the last moment he changed his mind, and instead set himself to writing *Tzigane*. "He

[95] Larner, *Maurice Ravel*, 180.

asked Lucien Garban at Durand to send Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies* to Montfort and Jourdan-Morhange to bring Paganini's *Twenty-Four Caprices* and her violin as well."[96] He them worked furiously to complete the piece, leaving d'Arányi just days to learn it before the debut.

II. Structural Materials and the Implications of the Gypsy Scale

Tzigane is structured as a typical *czárdás*. The opening *lassú* is formed by a lengthy cadenza for violin alone. The character of this opening cadenza is highly dramatic and increasingly virtuosic as it reaches its conclusion with the piano entrance at Rehearsal 4. The nebulousness of this opening is extended a bit further by Ravel, as he writes a brief *Quasi cadenza* passage for both players (Rehearsal 4–5), before moving into the first *friss* (*friska*) at Rehearsal 5.

The rest of the work is comprised of multiple small sections of varying tempi. It is clear that these are all *friskas*, as the meters and rhythmic organization are very precise from this point forward, and the key areas are clearly indicated and structured. That said, at first glance it can be tricky to determine how many *friskas* there actually are, and what processes govern the relationships of the various sections. Csilla Pethő notes that "the main formal characteristic of the mature *verbunkos* is the increase in compositions in which pieces of various tempo and character are arranged into larger structural units."[97] She also observes that "it is a fundamental precondition for the many part form to

[96] Ibid.
[97] Pethő, "Style Hongrois", 214.

have sharply distinct tempo and character types included in the repertory."[98] *Tzigane* fits this pattern, and yet it is structured from a surprising economy of materials, which in turn indicate the true sectional divisions.

This entire second section of *Tzigane* can be broken into two large *friskas*. The first of these goes from the *Moderato* of Rehearsal 5 until Rehearsal 17. The second runs from the *Meno vivo, Grandioso* of Rehearsal 17 until the end of the work. Within each of these sections there are obviously many smaller units, but the support for these being the two main sections is strong. In the case of the first section, as will be examined in the discussion of melodic materials, all of its melodic content stems from one main phrase presented in the opening violin cadenza at Rehearsal 1 (Figure 22), thus recalling the construction of a theme and variations form.

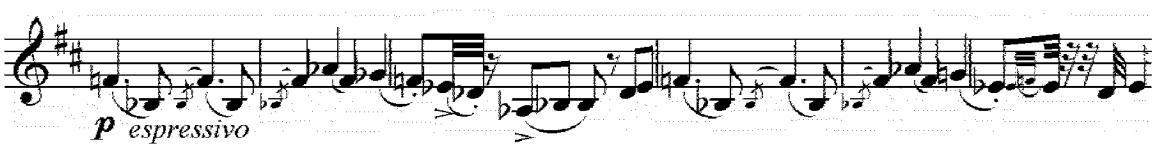

Figure 22

In the case of the second *friss*, it is the perpetual recycling of the opening harmonic progression that unifies this long and varied section. It is also noteworthy that, harmonic idiosyncrasies aside, there are basically two key areas in these *friskas*. The first is the D-minor section that runs from Rehearsal 5–17. The second key area is D major, which becomes the new key at Rehearsal 17,

[98] Ibid., 215.

and endures for the remainder of the piece, again supporting the divisions as put forth.

The unique brilliance of this work is found on a more profound structural level, and involves Ravel's exploitations and manipulations of the gypsy scale. While all of the composers discussed here have utilized these materials to varying degrees, Ravel literally deconstructs the scale to its most basic intervallic elements, and weaves the entire work from those elements. To better understand this process, it is important to re-examine the complete list of intervals extant in the gypsy scale.

^	^	^	^	^	^	^	^
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	w.s.	h.s.	a.s.	h.s.	h.s.	a.s.	h.s.

The double occurrence of the augmented second between scale degrees 3–4, and 6–7, and thus the ability of the gypsy scale to pull equally effectively towards scale degrees 1 and 5, has been a favorite tool employed in works under study here, and thus already examined. Ravel too exploits this property, but looks deeper into the intervallic construction of the scale for other ideas to explore.

One of these ideas of these stems from the identical intervallic structure of the tetrachords formed by scale degrees 2–3–4–5, and 5–6–7–8. While this is part and parcel of the 'bi-directional pull' to tonic and dominant, as discussed, there is another facet to the story. The peculiar intervallic structure of the scale results in one uniquely occurring interval, namely the whole-step between scale degrees 1–2. Thus, it is really impossible to understand which of two possible

scales (keys) is tonic until the appearance of the whole-step establishes its lower member as tonic. This seemingly perfunctory realization actually has profound consequences, and opens up for Ravel a new dimension of harmonic ambiguity and intrigue.

An example of these intrigues occurs with the main theme as it is presented for the first time in the opening *friss*. The *Quasi cadenza* section of Rehearsal 4 ends with a somewhat ambiguous cadence in mm.66–67, provoked by the juxtaposition of a strong A-major harmony (implying A as tonic) and the trill of A–B in the piano (hinting at D minor). With this ambiguity already in place, the violin begins to play the main theme from Rehearsal 1 in m.76. In the same way that the theme seemed to be comprised of scale degrees 5 and 1 at Rehearsal 1 (F and B), so too there is nothing to contradict the listener's belief that the key area at Rehearsal 6 is now A minor. However, with the continued and insistent use of G, not G# in the melody and the addition of the C# in m.88, it becomes increasingly clear that A is not the tonic. Thus as the phrase ends with the final cadence of the violin part (mm.89–91), it appears to be to D minor, though all the while taking place over the hypnotic A pedal in the piano.

At Rehearsal 7, the secondary melody begins as the prevailing key remains a tenuous D minor, due both to the somewhat ambiguous nature of the cadence in mm. 90–91, and the continuation of the A pedal (this time in the violin). It is noteworthy that it is the forceful insistence of the twice repeated whole-step from E–D in the downward stepping of the melody in m.93 and m.95 that helps to more firmly establish the D-minor (D gypsy) tonic. These moments

of nebulosity created by extensive emphasis on A pedals are ubiquitous throughout this first *friss*. It is consistently the case as well that the appearance of a whole step down to the tonic D helps to strengthen the sense of tonal center on D.

There is another interesting dimension to the structural incorporation of the gypsy scale intervals into *Tzigane*. Upon analysis, it becomes clear that in certain brief passages of the piece, the tonal framework is built more on the gypsy scale than on an actual traditional major or minor mode. Thus in phrases such as mm. 21–28 (B gypsy, then E gypsy), 120–133 (D gypsy), it is easier to analyze the materials referencing "gypsy key" areas. The result is as if Ravel is incorporating the soul of the gypsy into the skeleton of the composition.

III. Melodic Materials

Though totally immersed in, and inspired by the character and moods of Hungarian gypsy folk melody, *Tzigane*, unlike many earlier works, never directly quotes extant melodic materials. It is instead a completely original composition diffused with the gypsy spirit. As previously discussed, this is not surprising for a work dating from 1924, as the more clichéd treatments of the gypsy idiom, including reworking of extant materials, have long since been abandoned by more serious art composers. The main melody of the work is first introduced in the violin cadenza and Rehearsal 1, in B minor. The melody starts out rhythmically and harmonically simply. From the opening gesture there is a strong

emphasis on the fifth scale degree. This is created by its consistent placement on the strong beat, and by its extended duration compared to that of the tonic pitch (mm.15–16, 18–19). The phrase structure of this melody quickly proves to be irregular, an attribute Pethő notes to be in fact a common feature of the mature verbunkos. The first two phrases are three bars in length, although the second phrase has two pick-ups that do not occur in the initial statement. The third phrase is only two bars in length, and is melodically different from the second. From this third fragment onward, the statements become increasingly truncated as Ravel begins to travel harmonically. The fourth phrase is a two-bar fragment, followed by a one-bar statement, and a final three-bar gesture. As the gestures shorten and shift harmonically, Ravel uses the same turning figures he used in the opening violin statements of the work to cadence each fragment (mm.22, 24 and 25).

Thus in this [3 + 3 + 2 + 2 + 1 + 3] fourteen-bar phrase (mm.15–28), there are actually two sub-melodies being presented. The material of the first six bars can be considered the principal melody, and is the main thematic material for the following first *friss* of the piece (Rehearsal 6 – Rehearsal 17). This melody dominates this entire section with the exception of the passages from Rehearsal 7–8, and Rehearsal 9–10. This material is also brought back by Ravel at the end of the second *friss* which closes the piece (the melody reappears at Rehearsal 32), and affords an exciting and cyclical conclusion to the frenzied coda.

The concise application of materials is not to be underestimated in the structure of this work, however. Another example of this involves the passages

at Rehearsal 7 and Rehearsal 9. While seemingly unrelated to the original theme of Rehearsal 1, they are in fact born of this same melodic material from the opening cadenza. The fragmented second part of the original melody discussed earlier, sporting the two eighth-note anacrusis (mm.20–22), is the basis for the secondary melody presented first in the piano in m.90 (Rehearsal 7), and again in the violin at Rehearsal 9.

The second *friss* section of this work, as previously noted, begins at the *Meno vivo, Grandioso* of Rehearsal 17 (m.202, Figure 23). The melody here, as was the case of the two previously presented themes, is likewise born of material from the opening cadenza, namely the *espressivo* melody presented in mm.42–49 (Rehearsal 3). At Rehearsal 17, however, the melody reminiscent of the rhythms and intervals used at Rehearsal 3 in the opening cadenza is rendered more complete and structured, and more evocative of the gypsy idiom. The *alla zoppa* rhythm (eighth – quarter – eighth) presented in the second half of m.42 is the opening gesture for every phrase at m.202, and used repeatedly within the phrases as well. At Rehearsal 17, this rhythmic pattern is further emphasized as this syncopated gesture is repeated consistently in the right hand of the piano, and when it occurs in either part, Ravel puts an accent on the syncopation. The turns used to cadence m.43 and m.45 are also important, as they are the inspiration for the cadential formulae used in mm.205, 209, 213 and 217. Because of the importance of this passage to the final *friss* of the work, Figure 23 includes the entire section from Rehearsal 17 until Rehearsal 19.

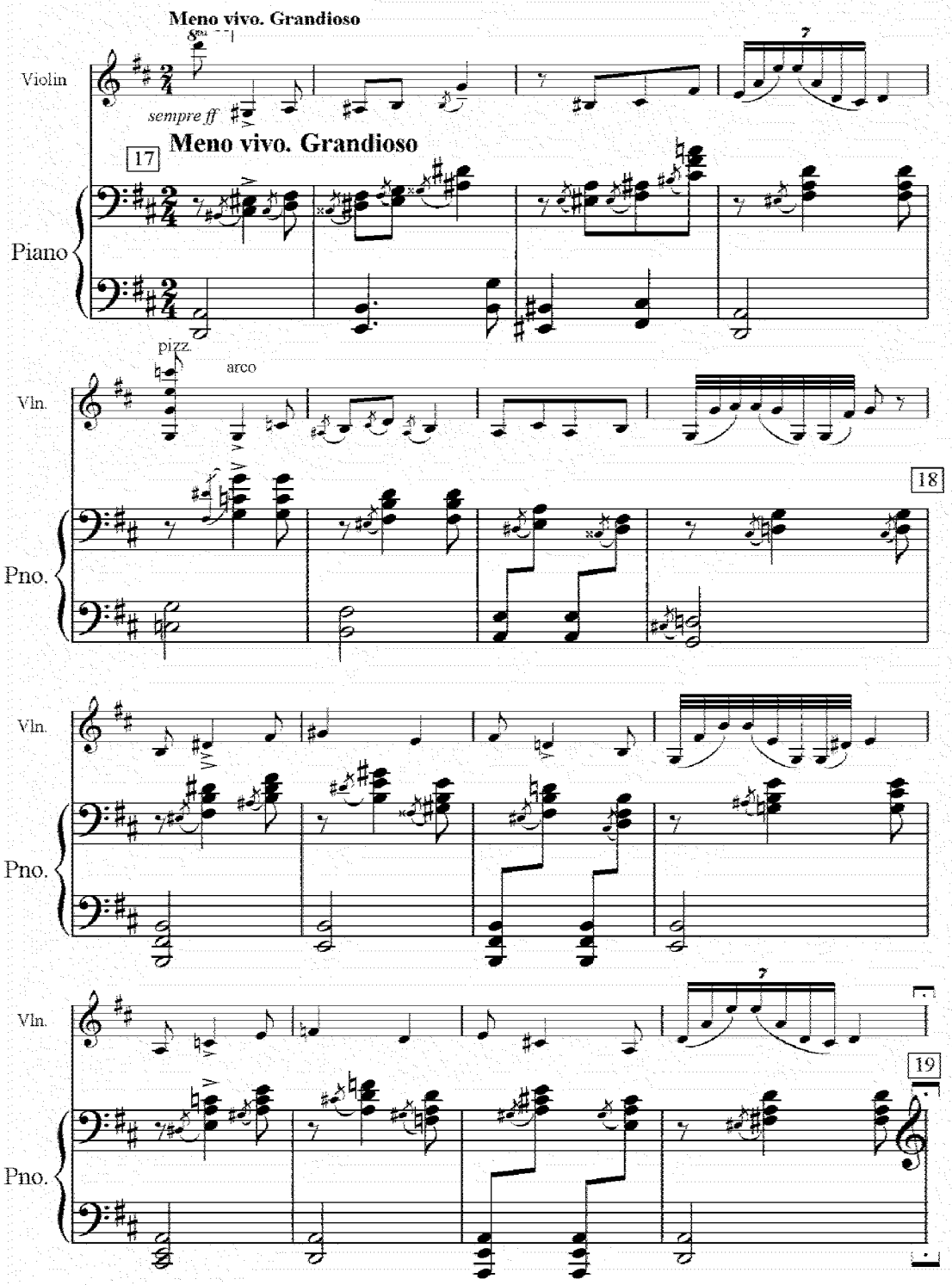

Figure 23

At first glance the melodic materials of this section at Rehearsal 17 seem relatively simple structurally, being comprised, as was previously noted, of four four-bar phrases. That said, Ravel uses a device here which was already touched upon in the discussion of the opening violin cadenza, and which should be addressed. In the presentation of the main thematic materials at Rehearsal 1 of the cadenza, the phrase structure is roughly [6 (3+3) + 2 + 2 + 1 + 3]. Thus the longer periods are deliberately and increasing truncated as the phrase unfolds. This fragmentation is to be found even at Rehearsal 17, for though the periods appear to be regular and 4 bars in length, the first two are actually truncated into two two-bar fragments. In her examination of the stylistic characteristics of the *verbunkos* repertory, Pethő notes that "…occasionally even tiny two-bar motifs may also cut up the eight-bar unit as internal closes."[99] This use of truncation is thus stylistically appropriate, and what is more, Ravel manipulates it brilliantly. In the first case of the cadenza, the strong melodic material of the first six bars is giving way to a modulatory process which also introduces the secondary thematic material, and thus the truncations in the second half of the period are evocative of this 'disintegration' process. He uses this internal truncation process again in mm.241–244, which ends up with a 2 + 2, rather than four-bar phrase structure. In this instance as well, the purpose is to underscore and facilitate a harmonic shift, and one which is particularly pertinent, as it is breaking with a recurring pattern that preceded it.

[99] Pethő, "Style Hongrois", 204.

The concise usage and organization of melodic material is also born out in the closing, 'moto perpetuo' parts of the second *friss*, beginning with the *Moderato* at m.227 (Rehearsal 20). In this instance, however, the discussions of melodic and harmonic elements merge, as these final melodic gestures themselves are born not from melodic material of the opening cadenza, but in fact from the harmonic materials presented at the *Meno vivo, Grandioso* of Rehearsal 17. The violin gestures are quite simple, and merely outline the underlying harmonies with frequent emphasis on the interval of the fourth (for example mm.227, 253, 276, etc.). What is interesting is the harmonic rhythm and phrase structure. The material of the *Moderato* at Rehearsal 20 is presented in a somewhat lopsided 4 + 6 bar phrase structure, with what could almost be considered a *toldalék*, or *figura* gesture of the last two bars creating the inequality. It is noteworthy, however, that after a harmonically perfunctory, rhythmically interesting I – IV I V – I – in the first half of the phrase, the second, six-bar period is in fact harmonically identical to the twelve bars from mm.206–217 in the *Meno vivo, Grandioso*. These six bars are obviously a rhythmic diminution of that original twelve bar progression, but otherwise the same [C – b – a_7 – G – B – e_7 – B – e_7 – – A – D A D –]. This is important because that progression, similarly to the one discussed above at the *Allegro* of Rehearsal 12, contains examples of deliberately 'incorrect' harmonic motion, though in this instance, it does make its way to a clear D-major cadence. This progression, and the *moto perpetuo* violin filigree it inspires, becomes the basis for much of the rest of the piece. For example, the *meno vivo* at Rehearsal 23–24, and the

following ten bars from Rehearsal 24–25, are simply a repetition of the harmonic materials from Rehearsal 20–21 with varied violin passages going on above.

It is pertinent to note the exception to the aforementioned conclusion that the entire *friss* section from Rehearsal 17 until the final *moto perpetuo* (which begins one bar after Rehearsal 25) is based solely on the progression discussed above. This 'exception' occurs at the sixteen-bar *Esitando* section from Rehearsal 21–22, and is important for two reasons. The first is that although it begins with what seems to be the same progression for six bars [I – IV – I – V – I, followed by C – b– a_7 – G], this familiar pattern is abruptly broken. The remainder of the passage takes a different harmonic direction [F – C – d_7 – C – B – F B F B – b – F# – b – – E – A – – – – D] which is 'F and B -centric', as opposed to the 'E-centric' quality at the middle of the original progression. The other important difference is the resulting sixteen-bar period (4+2+2+8), which is again different from the ten-bar structure associated with the original progression. This exception is important as it shows Ravel willfully destroying what would have been a perfect repetition of the preceding sections of the work. This is interesting, and prescient, as he will use this deliberate 'wrong turn' again to begin the final *moto perpetuo* section of the piece (mm.272–285). In this context it becomes the perfect launching pad for the increasingly frequent and frenetic shifting of tonal areas that occurs as the violin and piano race towards the return of the opening theme.

IV. Harmonic Materials

The harmonic language that Ravel uses in *Tzigane* is not outrageous, and certainly not shocking when compared to some of the more radical examples of the new tonal vocabulary being used by the impressionist and expressionist composers. It does, however, have its idiosyncrasies, all of which are expressly chosen to evoke the gypsy spirit.

Once again we have an example of a composer inspired by the bi-directional pull of the gypsy scale. The idea of pulling in two tonal directions simultaneously will in fact be an important aspect of the harmonic construction of the entire work. However, as previously noted, Ravel expands on the multi-directional pull as utilized by composers such as Sarasate, and revels in the unique collection of intervals indigenous to the gypsy scale. He is fascinated by the implications of the lone whole step, as well as the three-note bunching of two half steps that occurs with scale degrees 4, 5 and 6. Thus his manipulations, permutations, and combinations of these materials are almost exhaustive when compared to those of the other composers discussed herein.

Tonal ambiguities begin right at the outset of the huge violin cadenza that opens the piece. The melody of the opening phrase seems to tonicize B minor, for although there is certain emphasis on the C-natural, particularly in bar 2, it is easily initially interpreted as a chromatic upper neighbor to the B around which the melody circles. This circling is created utilizing a fragment of the gypsy scale on B (G–A#–B), with the turn in m.3 leading to the cadence in m.4. The key

signature of two sharps, while not evident to the listener, serves to further the suggestion of B minor. However, although all of this does suggest a tonal area on B, Ravel is once again flirting with the bi-directional pull afforded by the two identical tetrachords of the gypsy scale. In this very first phrase the violin plays, Ravel exploits a series of two half steps indigenous to the gypsy scale to evoke the proud gypsy virtuoso. The resulting melody (mm.1–4) ends up, however, with its most prominent notes being B–C–A#–B. Thus, although the note clearly being afforded the most emphasis is B, the ordering of half steps being used occurs only in the E gypsy scale.

No sooner is this phrase completed, than we have two two-bar phrase fragments based on the same cadential turning idea, except that they lead to E-minor, and D-minor cadences, respectively (mm.5–6, 7–8). At the *espressivo* *'Tempo rubato'* that begins with the repeating A anacrusis figure (m.8 going into m.9), it is possible to believe that the key of D minor is finally being established as tonic. The strong emphasis on the A pick-ups, and subsequent utilization of a D gypsy scale fragment (E – F – G# – A – B) in m.9 support this conclusion. And yet in the next bar the E – F becomes an E# – F#, interjecting once again hints of the B gypsy scale, albeit with a lingering 'incorrect' A-natural. As the passage progresses through m.12–13, the presence of the A-natural is explained, as these final gestures become clearly indicative of the F# gypsy scale. Thus, as this passage (mm.10–14) accelerates to its furious conclusion, the three scales appear, and are subsequently displaced (D by B, then B by F#). The final arrival into the key of F# minor (although we stop short of a tonic

cadence, and end on a dominant C#-major chord) in m.14 seems reasonably tame compared to the activity preceding it. However, more surprises are to follow.

It is a fact, well established in the writings of Liszt and others, that gypsy performances often included bizarre harmonic language.

> Their habit of passing suddenly to a remote key, combined with their use of intervals and facility in the use of semitones and quarter-tones (such instances including the quarter- tones which generally strike us as wrong notes).... Chords of transition, so essential with us, are, with very few exceptions, completely left out in the bold attack of one key after another which occurs in all genuine Bohemian music.[100]

These words of Liszt form the perfect backdrop to m.15, where after a half cadence on C#, the main theme of the work is suddenly introduced in B minor. As discussed in the section dealing with melodic materials, this theme quickly unravels. As it does, a strange modulation back to B minor via the E gypsy scale continues to carry the listener on a bizarre harmonic journey, though this time to a more predictable conclusion.

The juxtaposition of key areas continues in full force when the piano finally enters in m.58. While the violin tremolo seems clearly C-major at the start of this *Quasi cadenza* section, the strong emphasis on F# and A# in the piano lend a feeling of C battling F#. As previously quoted from his analysis of Ravel's *Sonata for Violin and Violoncello* (1920–22), Arbie Orenstein observes that in the last

[100] Liszt, *The Gypsy in Music*, 298.

movement of that work, "further manipulations of the themes lead to an insistent F#, which abruptly resolves to C major, once again suggesting the spiritual influence of the Hungarian school."[101] Thus the use of the tri-tone both as a conflicting sonority, and as an unexpected cadential destination is widely considered evocative of the 'Hungarian' or 'gypsy' flavor. This tri-tonal conflict is again implied in m.62, where B violin tremolo is juxtaposed with an E and G# in the piano part. The conflicts are finally worked out when both violin and piano arrive to the cadence on A-major in m.66.

It is noteworthy that Ravel puts no pedal indication into this entire *Quasi cadenza* section (mm.59–67). The composer of imposing piano masterpieces including *Gaspard de la Nuit* and *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, Ravel was clearly adept and meticulous when writing for the piano. It is thus intriguing that he has no pedal indication here, particularly given that it is almost always played with *sostenuto* pedal (changing at the important harmonic shifts). In this instance, one would be tempted to agree with that common performance practice, for although it deviates from the score, it is justifiable for two reasons. The use of the pedal allows the sweeping piano gesture to more closely resemble and support the gestures in the violin part. It also allows the initial bass notes, which set up the harmonic conflict with the violin part, to ring through the bar, intensifying the sense of conflict, and subsequent resolution.

With the resolution on A major in m.67, the opening *lassú* cadenza of the piece ends, and we move into the first *friss* at the *Moderato* in m.68 (Rehearsal

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[101] Orenstein, *Ravel*, 191.

5). As previously observed, this entire first fast section is based on the theme presented in m.15 (Rehearsal 1), and as the piano trills on A, the key signature changes to that of D minor. Although it looks on the page as if the new key is D minor, this key center does not feel stable for a long time. This is because Ravel uses this first fast section to set up the other major tonal juxtaposition around which the work is built, namely the bi-directional pull to tonic and dominant created by the gypsy scale. As previously noted, much of this first *friss* (mm.68–201) seems to imply the key of A minor. The melody from the cadenza is presented in A minor, supported by hypnotically static piano parts in mm.72–91 and mm.104–118 which are nothing but perpetual 'A'. There are flirtations with melodic cadences on D several times in the first part of this *friss*, such as in mm.88–91 and mm.116–119, and the melody does seem to confirm a D-minor tonality at these moments. However, it is weakened both times by the A pedal in the underlying piano part. It is not until the third such cadential attempt in mm.145–148 that we finally get a cadence on a root-position D-minor chord.

Almost as if to apologize for finally cadencing in such a clear manner, the following *Allegro* played by the piano in mm.150–164 (Rehearsal 12) is rife with abrupt harmonic shifts. After the fermata on the bar of silence (m.149), we abruptly find ourselves in B major. While not a distantly related key, the sudden change in texture, style, and key that occurs at the *allegro* of Rehearsal 12 is still jarring to the listener. From here Ravel spins thorough a bizarre chord progression of B – g – f – E – G – C – E – b – E – A (mm.153–161). In this instance, the G-minor chord in m.154 is not a pivot chord, as might be expected,

but the kickoff of a 'wrong' modulatory process that alternates E -major sonorities with the descending C–b –A motion. This 'wrong turn' harmonic motion is prescient, as it is similar to that which Ravel will employ in the second *friss* in mm.243–252. Particularly unnerving is the motion from an E -major chord to an A-major in mm.160–161 (again a tri-tone flirtation) that abruptly yanks us back to an A-major cadence. The listener of course assumes that the A-major is half cadence signaling the impending return to D minor. Once again, Ravel emulates the moves of a gypsy *prímás*. Lest the listener ever be allowed to feel too confident in presupposing what lies ahead, hairpin harmonic shifts are scattered about. In the case of mm.165–168, the shift is certainly abrupt, as the A-major cadence is followed by the return of the principal melody, but in the unexpected key of B minor. The return to D minor does not occur until the *allegro* of Rehearsal 15.

The principal melody returns again *fortissimo* and with trills in the violin part at m.192. In this instance, however, the piano accompaniment is not the static A pedal of the first statement. At this climax of the first *friss* section, the piano part is comprised of whirling scale fragments. This fury leads to the next section of the work, the second *friss*, marked *Meno vivo, Grandioso*, and characterized by a shift to D major.

As discussed above, the second *friss* (Rehearsal 17 – end) is structurally based on a single harmonic/rhythmic progression. The resultant materials are thus sparse and easily understood. The outstanding exception to this is found in the accelerating *meno vivo* from Rehearsal 25–32. Here Ravel again evokes the

spirit of the gypsy *prímás*. The passage is a *moto perpetuo* driving through a series of non-traditional harmonies, and odd metric groupings, meant to create exponentially increasing tension. The key motion from D – B – f# – D – C is certainly bizarre, as are many of the passing harmonies tossed into that larger structure. All of this is of course calculated to develop the requisite tension such that the arrival of the principle theme at Rehearsal 32 is the dramatic catharsis it should be. To this end, "the bold attack of one key after another which occurs in all genuine Bohemian music"[102] is recreated most effectively by Ravel.

V. Gypsy Effects

Gypsy Scale

This particular ordering of intervals, as noted, is of such structural importance to *Tzigane* as a whole, that it might seem an exercise in the obvious to cite specific examples of the occurrence of the scales. To the contrary, it is important to do so, as the role they serve is so pivotal. An example of this importance can be witnessed at mm.129–133. After an extended bout of tonal ambiguity, the piano gestures of m.129 and m.131 clearly define the D gypsy scale. The dramatic descending violin figure which follows in m.133 is subsequently the closest we come to a cadence on D. However, once again it is D gypsy more than it is D minor.

[102] Liszt, *The Gypsy in Music*, 298.

The sweeping rendering of a gypsy scale is used again by Ravel at Rehearsal 16 (m.192). In this instance the scale is again the underpinning for the seemingly A-centric principal melody. The scales in the piano are serving two purposes at this juncture. These piano gestures are implying D-centricity. In the case of the gesture lacking D and F, the implication is of a dominant harmony. With the addition of the pattern including the D in m.195 the implied harmony is tonic (be it gypsy, or D minor, as the G-naturals sprinkled in with G-sharps leave some room for doubt). These sweeps are also performing a modulatory function, as the appearance of F-sharp in both hands of the piano at m.198 hints at the impending movement to D major, which occurs five bars later at Rehearsal 17.

Quarter-Tone Emulations

Franz Liszt had the unique experience of growing up surrounded by the sounds of gypsy musicians in his native Hungary. As noted previously, observed that the gypsies regularly "[demonstrate] facility in the use of semitones and quarter-tones (such instances including the quarter-tones which generally strike us as wrong notes)...."[103] It is interesting to note the extent to which the art composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were familiar with this practice, and to examine the way in which they try to recreate it in their gypsy-inspired works. In the case of *Tzigane*, Ravel repeatedly uses a couple of techniques to create this effect.

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[103] Ibid.

The most prevalent is his use of simultaneous half-steps (either as grace notes or as regular members of chords) to create this sonority of the 'wrong notes' to which Liszt refers. Examples of this abound throughout the work, but the most obvious include the grace notes in the violin melody (and piano accompaniment) at m.76, and in the piano in mm.134–149. Similar treatment occurs in the piano melody of mm.91–96, and the subsequent violin melody of mm.119–124. An even more pronounced 'doubled–half-step' effect occurs between the G# and B in the piano part, and the A in the violin part at mm.184–190. We have witnessed these techniques before, namely in the trio to the *Hungarian Dance No.4* of Brahms, and the treatment here, though at times harsher than that of Brahms, is equally effective.

The *Kuruk fourth*

The *Kuruk fourth*, a repeated gesture utilizing the interval of a fourth, is a famous 'gypsy' musical gesture. It is acknowledged by Pethő, and other scholars, as being a typical melodic or closing gesture in mature verbunkos music. This gesture is also exploited by Ravel in several guises. He employs it unabashedly at the ends of phrases, like a *figura*. Examples of this include the violin harmonics ending the phrase in m.41 of the opening cadenza, and the closing piano gesture of mm.102–103. It is also noteworthy that in the same way Ravel deconstructs the intervallic components of the gypsy scale to give himself more compositional seeds, he does so as well with the *Kuruk fourth*. It is not only treated cadentially, but the interval of the fourth itself is favored throughout the

piece. Notable examples include the construction of the violin materials at Rehearsal 20, 21, 23, and at the start of the final *moto perpetuo* at m 276. In each instance, there is a significant and recurrent melodic emphasis placed on the interval of the fourth, certainly meant to further the gypsy essence of the phrase.

Virtuosic Effects and Cimbalom

As noted, Ravel wrote a version of *Tzigane* for violin and luthéal. Though the version was quickly abandoned by performers, the fact that the desired sonority was that of a cimbalom remains clear. There are several gestures in the piano writing that recreate this sense as well. The sweeping arpeggiated gestures in the piano writing of Rehearsal 4–5, and the first bar of Rehearsal 25 are reminiscent of the cimbalom, as is the *glissando* at m.183.

Ravel also writes many virtuosic effects evocative of the gypsy improvisation and embellishment for the violinist. The use of both natural and fingered harmonics is frequent and effective. At Rehearsal 7, the violin takes over the role of playing the A pedal from the piano. There is nothing boring about the treatment of this pedal tone, however. To make this potentially mundane moment sparkle, Ravel creates these repeating As by using a variety of natural violin harmonics, and the occasional left-hand pizzicato of the A string. Further examples of the use of harmonics include the melodic lines at Rehearsals 14, 21, and 24. In each of these instances, the violin is presenting a melody already

familiar to the listener, and thus these repetitions using harmonics create a sense of improvised spicing evocative of the gypsy performer.

Virtuosic expectations are made of the violinist even when the bow is not in use. The combination left-hand and right-hand pizzicato variation of the principle melody that occurs at Rehearsal 11 requires much coordination and skill, and is extremely reminiscent of the pizzicato variation in the *Twenty-Fourth Caprice* of Paganini (Figure 25). This similarity lends credence to the story of Ravel asking Jourdan-Morhange to race over to his summer home, with her Paganini *Twenty-Four Caprices* and violin in tow. Ravel clearly took inspiration from this caprice when attempting to create his own styling of the ferociously talented, yet whimsical, improvising virtuoso (Figure 24).

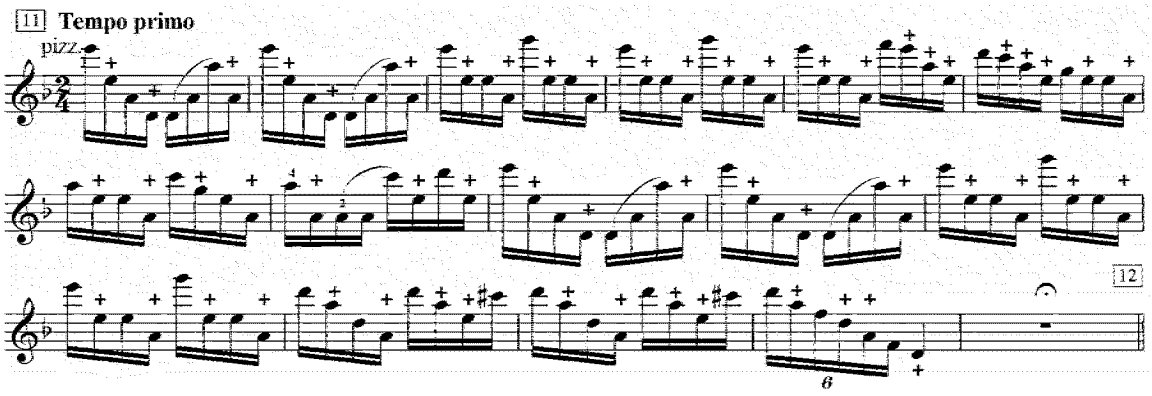


Figure 24

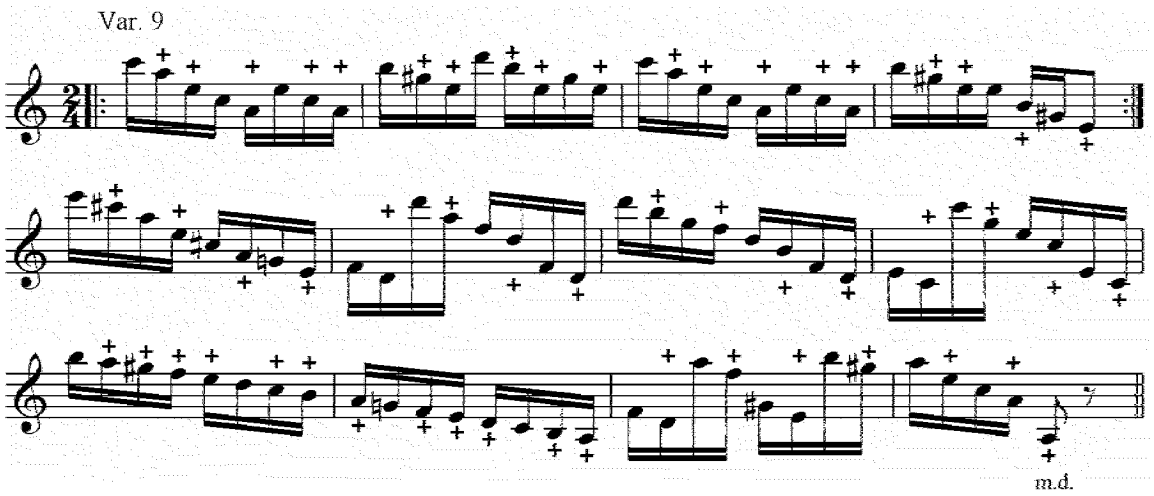


Figure 25

VI. Performances and Performance Considerations

Tzigane is a work that poses several unique musical and violinistic challenges to the performer. The first of these is the conundrum created by the antithetical natures of the gypsy and Maurice Ravel. As mentioned throughout this discussion, Ravel is a most meticulous craftsman, which seems diametrically at odds with the evocation of a whimsical, haphazard, temperamental, and improvisatory apparition. Ravel is a master of color, lighting, and rhythmic intensity in every work he writes, and to do justice to his musical vision, it is imperative that the performer scrupulously follow every indication in the score. What makes this work particularly daunting from this perspective is that the first indication in *Tzigane* is the *Lento, quasi cadenza* marking at the beginning of the piece. Therefore, issues of balancing the freedom afforded by the *quasi cadenza* marking, and the otherwise meticulously notated opening cadenza are

destined to pose a challenge to performers as they approach this opening. Most performers take considerable liberties in the opening section of the cadenza (beginning until Rehearsal 1), and these tend to be similar in nature. Violinists as stylistically diverse as Ginette Neveu (1949) and Itzhak Perlman (1987) take similar approaches to this opening, both truncating certain long notes (like those in mm.1, 3 and 4), and occasionally elongating certain rests, particularly those that precede a significant tonal or mood change (as at the end of m.6, going in to m.7).

One consideration I do believe is important, regardless of the durational liberties being taken, concerns the short notes which start every gesture. There are two aspects to these notes that must be carefully handled. First, they must always be played in a manner clearly demonstrative of their beat placement. As previously discussed, the *alla zoppa*, "Scotch snap" rhythmic gestures are meant to be evocative of the Hungarian language, and therefore the first beats of mm.1, 3, 5 and 7, third beats of mm.5 and 7, and fourth beat of m.2 must be played such that the listener understands that the short note is not an anacrusis. To this end, it is also important to play the pick-up notes (particularly that to the second beat of m.4) perhaps a bit exaggeratedly as such. Ravel helps with this, and his means of doing so brings me to the second point concerning this opening. It seems vitally important to make a clear difference between the thirty-second notes and the sixteenth notes in this opening. In an otherwise tremendous performance by Michael Rabin (1958), it is unfortunate that he plays all of the aforementioned gestures the same way. It seems a very deliberate choice on

the part of Ravel that the first sixteenth note followed by a held note is also the first placement of the short note in the role of an anacrusis (leading to a strong beat). In the following bars (mm.5, 7), the accented short note continues to be a sixteenth, and should be played as such.

Another idiosyncrasy of this opening involves tempo relationships between the sections of the opening. Performers have very different opinions of the relationship of the *Tempo rubato* (m.8) to the tempo of the opening. An extreme example is to be found in the 1993 recording by Anne-Sophie Mutter. In this reading, the tempo of the *Tempo rubato* is virtually half as fast as the tempo of the opening. Most performers do not make such an extreme shift of gears, but many do begin this section at a slower tempo than the opening. Another question that then arises is how the tempo of the main thematic material arriving at m.15 should relate to the opening. Ravel writes *a Tempo* at m.14; however, coming on the heels of the *accelerando* and *vivo* in the previous bars, it can be ambiguous as to which tempo to resume. In his 1962 recording, Christian Ferras retakes his opening tempo as the tempo for the main theme at Rehearsal 1. Henryk Szeryng (1969) does the same, and many other performers come reasonably close to matching these tempi. I find this a very effective means of bringing cohesion to this opening cadenza, and it is my belief that it makes sense in fact to chose the tempo for the opening based on that which is desired for the thematic material at m.15. This in turn then facilitates the return of the opening material (in octaves) at Rehearsal 2, and this tempo can easily be retaken at Rehearsal 3, after the whimsical m.41.

Issues of pedaling for the *Quasi cadenza* at Rehearsal 4 have been discussed previously, and are important. Also at issue again are questions of tempo and rhythmic freedom in these sweeping gestures. It is the practice of many violinists to let the pianist lead this cadenza, and I thoroughly agree. The role of the violin is clearly secondary at this point, and this is the moment for the 'cimbalom' to enter with a series of flourishes.

Tempo and adherence to the score are the major issues that can plague the success of the first *friss*. Many performers choose a reasonably fast tempo for the *Moderato* at Rehearsal 5; Christian Ferras's being one of the fastest. There are a variety of tempi that can work for the opening of this *friss*, but because it is the initial statement of a theme that will experience a series of variations and transformations, the choice must be made such that one can adhere to the score indications that follow. In the recording by Michael Rabin, for example, he takes a slightly more moderate tempo at the start of the *friss*, but perhaps as a result thereof, does not play a different tempo at the *Un poco più moderato* at Rehearsal 8. I think it is important to follow this marking at this moment, particularly because in the following section at Rehearsal 9, violinists tend to wish to milk this gypsy thematic material replete with slides, grace-notes and ubiquitous augmented-seconds. What many overlook is the fact that this material has already been presented in the piano at Rehearsal 7. Thus, to suddenly take a different tempo when it appears in the violin part is somewhat self-indulgent. A solution lies in carefully executing the *Un poco più moderato* at

Rehearsal 8. If this indication is followed, one arrives at Rehearsal 9 in a tempo affording the desired time for certain liberties.

There are some indications in the violin part of the first *friss* that are worthy of discussion. The discussion is in part a result of the frequency with which these indications are ignored, and the possible rationales for ignoring them. The first of these is the issue of the bowings indicated in the violin theme, mm.76–91. The Durand edition (the only one as the copyright is still in force) has a series of down-bows indicated in mm.78–80, and a series of up-bows indicated in the analogous passage from mm.86–87. There is no indication as to an editor (other than Ravel) for the violin or piano parts of the edition, and Ravel was not a violinist. That said, he did work very closely with Jelly d'Arányi in preparing the score, and it seems likely that the indications in the violin part are a result of that collaboration. In the case of the aforementioned passage, most violinists do not bother to do the indicated bowing. It is a difference easily heard on a recording, as is the case with the recording by Perlman, where there is a smooth quality to the passage that would not be there if the indicated bowing were being executed. Some performers attempt to grasp the spirit of the bowing without actually executing it. Such is the case in the recording of Salvatore Accardo (1982). He attempts to create lift between the ornamented quarter notes in mm.78–80 and mm.86–87, and adds an extra accent to the grace-note gestures. Despite these efforts, the sound is still not the same as it would be if the printed bowing were followed. The bowing as printed requires constant retaking of the bow, and as such feels and sounds a bit awkward. However, given the extra effort made by

Ravel to notate it thusly, it seems clear that this is the effect he wishes to evoke in this phrase, and I think it is incumbent on the performer to execute the passage as written.

Another passage of the first *friss* prone to reinterpretation by performers is the flourish at m.133, and the pizzicato variation that follows it at mm.134–149. In the instance of the flourish in m.133, I will concede that the violinistic notation is a bit odd. The ascending chromatic scale at the end of the passage is marked as a slur, followed by an extended up-bow staccato, all of which is to occur simultaneous with a diminuendo. This is awkward for a couple of reasons. First, the overall sense of the run is that it has propulsive momentum as it goes on, and yet this is more difficult to achieve with an up-bow staccato than it is with a slur. Secondly, it is very difficult to do a diminuendo on an up-bow staccato of that length. Faced with these issues, performers deviate wildly in their recreations of this passage. Henryk Szeryng plays the bowings as indicated, but plays a huge crescendo in lieu of the indicated dynamic. Ferras plays the entire run as a down-bow ricochet (an option that many performers choose in lieu of the up-bow staccato), but again plays a crescendo at the top. I think the best alternative in this instance is to disregard the up-bow indication, and instead play the second half of the run as a ricochet. Other than that, the slur that begins the run and the dynamic markings should be observed. One final idiosyncrasy of this passage is an added note. Many performers play a G# at the beginning of the scalar passage, and this has become so ubiquitous as to be considered common practice these days.

One last issue worth mentioning concerning the first *friss* involves the pizzicato variation already mentioned. Most performers play it as written: Ravel indicates *pizzicato* at m.134 (Rehearsal 11), and then indicates (+) for the pizzicato to be played with the left hand. The exception is Anne-Sophie Mutter, who in her 1993 recording plays the passage as if the *pizzicato* indication had not been written at the beginning; thus everything that is not indicated as a left-hand pizzicato, she plays with the bow. It is clear that these notes are the melody notes, and obviously playing them *arco* adds emphasis to them. It is also true that the Paganini caprice variation that inspired this passage combines *arco* and pizzicato playing. However, the accompanying texture of this passage is so light, and the indication in the score so clear, that to play otherwise than as written seems unjustifiable.

The second *friss* is far less problematic than either of the first two sections; however, there are a couple of issues worth mentioning. The first of these again involves setting a tempo, namely that of the *Meno vivo, Grandioso* that begins the second *friss*. Many performers take a tempo that is *meno vivo*, but somehow lack the sense of improvisation, of a new section of music being composed as it is being played, which is requisite in this passage. I find the performance by Ginette Neveu particularly successful in this regard. She achieves this success by hesitating a bit at the finish of each gesture (mm.203, 205, 207, etc.). She also has a wonderful sense of timing such that the size of her hesitation is always varying, again reinforcing the improvisational effect.

The last major issue that plagues the performer of *Tzigane* concerns the pacing of the final *moto perpetuo* that closes the work (Rehearsal 28–end). The first major question the performer has to decide is the starting tempo for the long accelerando that will run essentially from the *meno vivo* of m.274 until the end of the work. It is the choice of many performers to start the *meno vivo* with a very conservative tempo so as to reap the greatest drama from the following *accelerando*. Ironically, though I once thought that this was the most effective means of performing this final section of *Tzigane*, my opinion has changed, due in large part to the influence of the particularly effective performance of Christian Ferras. Although the tempo with which he begins the *meno vivo* is faster than many, there are elements to this performance that render it exemplary. The first is that despite starting with a quick tempo, he still manages to do a sizeable and effective *accelerando*. The second, and most unique, is that both Ferras and his pianist play every single accent and *sfortzando* as indicated in the score. The result of this is that they capture perfectly the sense of simultaneous improvisation and reckless propulsion that is the goal of the passage. For example, by playing the accents as written in m.286 and m.288, one feels the "misplaced" nature of the ¼ bar at m.287 without needing to beleaguer the fact. The same is true for the analogous passage at mm.292–294. The emphasis created by the accents as written in mm.294–307 is also very effective, for although the arrival at m.294 is to a strong D-minor cadence, the constancy of the displaced accents in the piano, followed by another lopsided figuration in the

violin at m.301, serve to keep the listener on edge even as the harmonic pattern begins its repetition at Rehearsal 29.

Finally, it is important to choose a tempo for the *Poco meno vivo* at m.320 that will be the starting tempo for the final push to the end. Henryk Szeryng slows to a tempo at the *Poco meno vivo* that is in fact too slow, and finds it necessary to speed up at the return of the thematic material two bars later. Again, the sparkling finish of Christian Ferras is a favorite, though Mutter and Perlman also do a wonderful job of driving the work to a frenzied, brilliant close.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

In the New York Public Library for Performing Arts, there is a signed original manuscript of Sarsate's *Zigeunerweisen*, with editor's marks in a different hand, and in pencil (probably dating from 1877). On the front page of the manuscript, below the signature, and in Sarsate's own hand, is a "note" that he had clearly wished to be included in the original printing. It is not present in any current editions, but merits discussion here:

> Il est impossible d'indiquer éxactement l'interpretation de ce morceaux. Il doit être executé très librement, presque ad libitum selon l'individualité de chacun, se rapprochant tout fois le plus possible de la manière des "Zigeuner."[104]

This translates as follows:

> It is impossible to indicate exactly the interpretation of this piece. It must be executed very freely, almost 'ad libitum' according to the individuality of each [performer], all the while playing as much as possible in the "gypsy" style.

I begin my final remarks here, because couched in this notation is the problem faced by violinists as they prepare to take on these staples of the

[104] Editor marked-up manuscript at the New York Public Library: Toscanini Memorial Archives, Albrecht census no. 1608 (microfilm: MM: *ZZ-17918 reel 1).

repertoire. It is fine, and of course stylistically accurate for the performer to take a free and personally expressive approach to these works. However, Sarasate's admonishment that one should play "all the while as much as possible in the gypsy style" is important, and should give us pause. Virtually all violinists play these pieces, but what do we understand to be the intent of the composers when they refer to, or more importantly, compose in the "gypsy style?" It was the interesting dichotomous relationship between the frequency with which these works are played, and the scarcity of study put forth to answer this question that initially inspired me to investigate the subject.

No one would argue that the opening several bars of any of these works are immediately and profoundly evocative of the gypsy. The question I sought to elucidate further is the one that immediately follows from the above observation; namely, what materials and techniques are composers manipulating to evoke that presence? Thus my first aim was to comprehend the gypsy style as it was understood by the composers in question, and present a lexicon thereof. With this in place, we are better able to understand the context and materials of these works, and the information garnered from a detailed study of these materials proves invaluable.

The next step, of course, is to analyze the works within this context. For example, the theme from the second *lassu* of *Zigeunerweisen* is a musical passage that deserves a more informed reading than it often receives. The fact that it is based on a song borrowed by Sarsate, who presumed it to be a simple folk melody, argues for a simpler, gentler interpretation. The fact that we can see

in the manuscript that he himself added the *con sordino* indication to the passage (ignored by some performers), coupled with the provenance of the melody, argues for adherence to this marking, and an interpretation without undue drama. Even moments that seem to be simply virtuosic flash have a greater meaning when examined contextually. The rapid octave displacements that occur in the *friss* of *Zigeunerweisen*, as mentioned, are not just empty virtuosity. Study reveals that they are an emulation of a playing style frequently used by gypsies to add interest to their performances.

The final goal of this study was to offer performance suggestions based on information gathered and analysis done. The greatest difficulty of these works stems from the very freedom the idiom seems to afford. The process of deciding when to be exactingly mindful of the score and when to add one's own shadings to the composer's indications is at once exciting, liberating, inspiring, and intimidating. It is my belief that this study aids in this process by elucidating the genesis, elements, and performance practices associated with these pieces. It is my hope that this knowledge allows for more informed and meaningful performances of these works as violinists of today and tomorrow strive to capture the ethereal and irresistible gypsy presence.

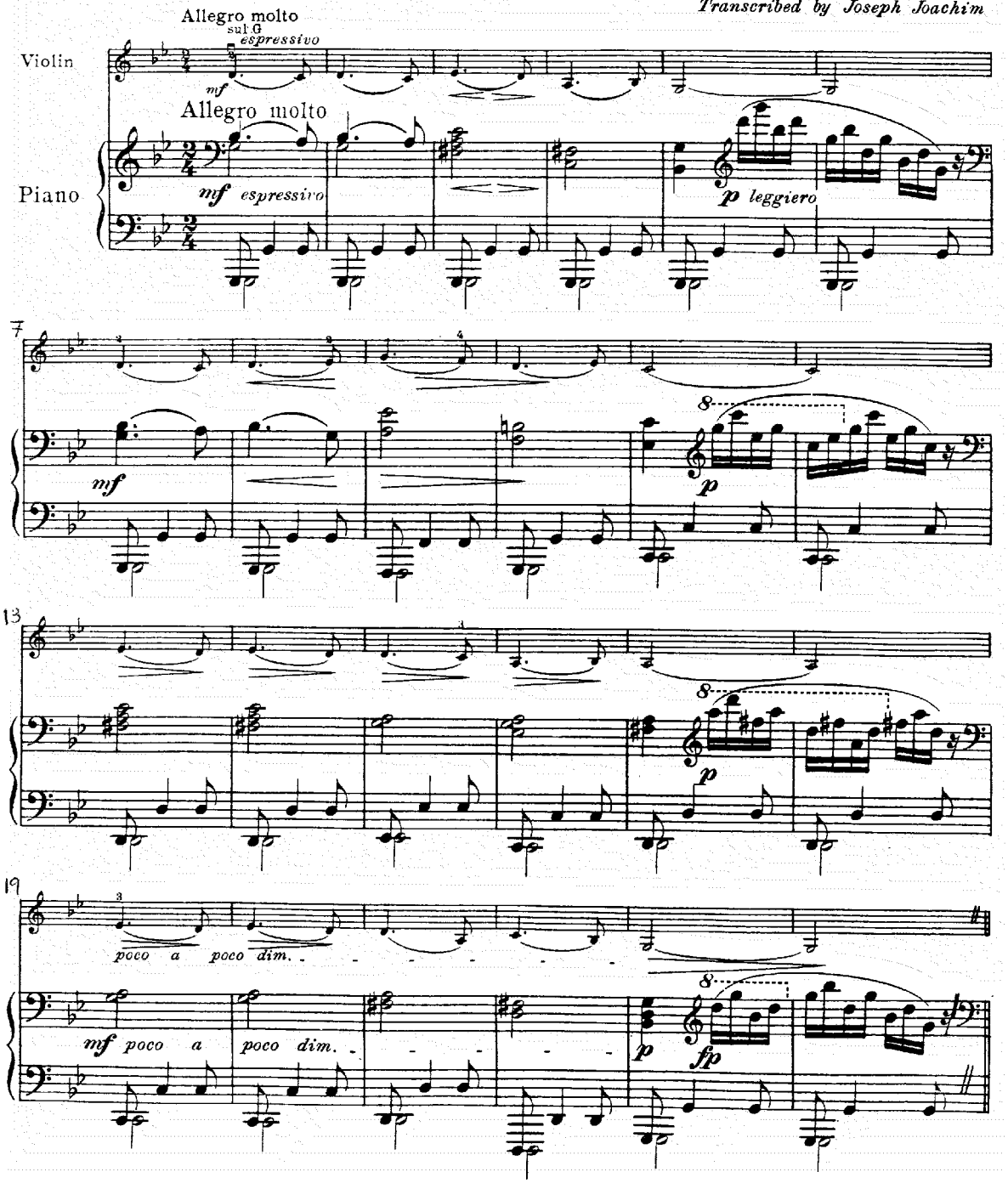
APPENDIX I

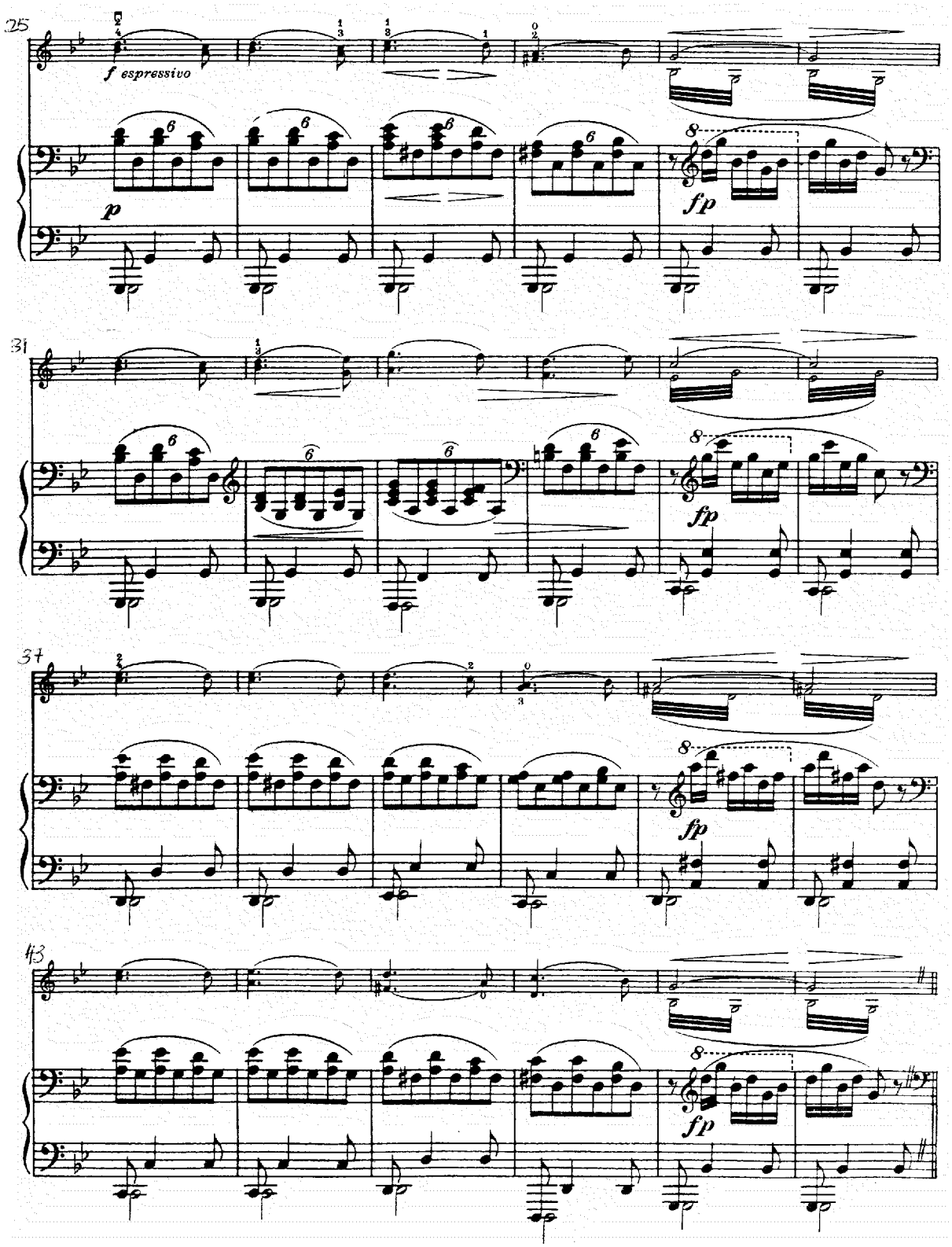
Musical Scores

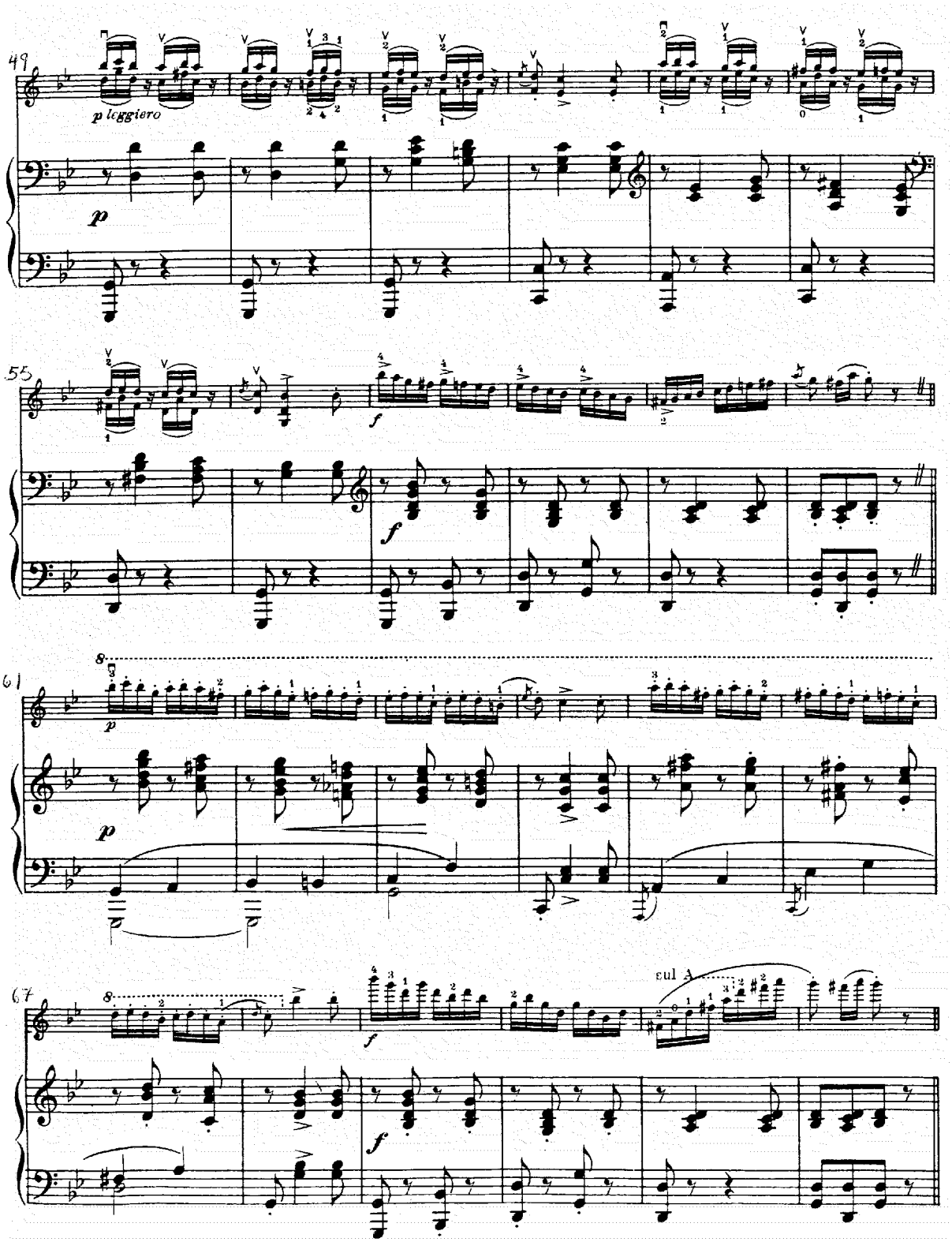
Note: Still under copyright protection, the score for Ravel *Tzigane* is not included here. Please refer to the score as published by Éditions Durand, exclusive rights holder as of 2006

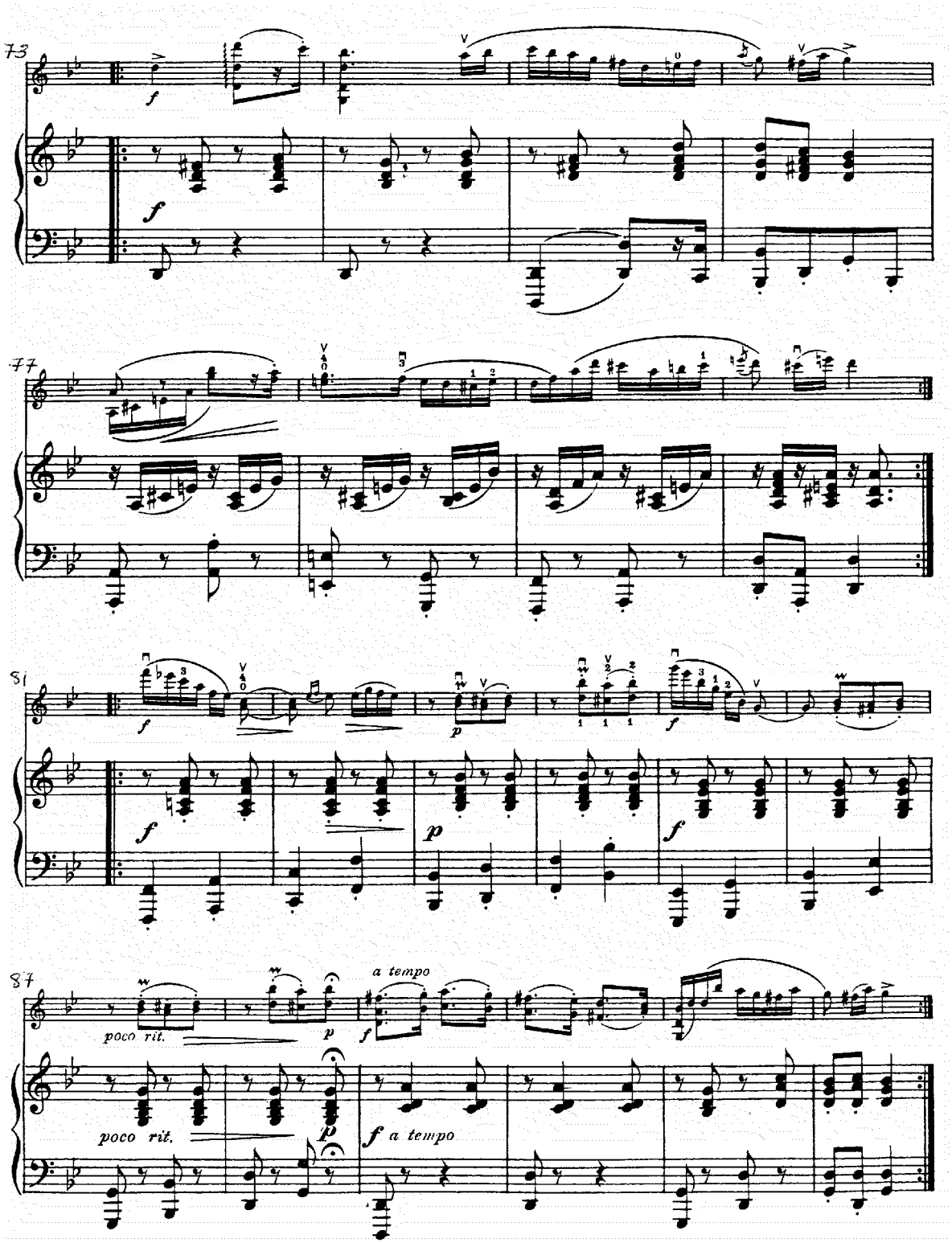
Hungarian Dance
(No. 1)

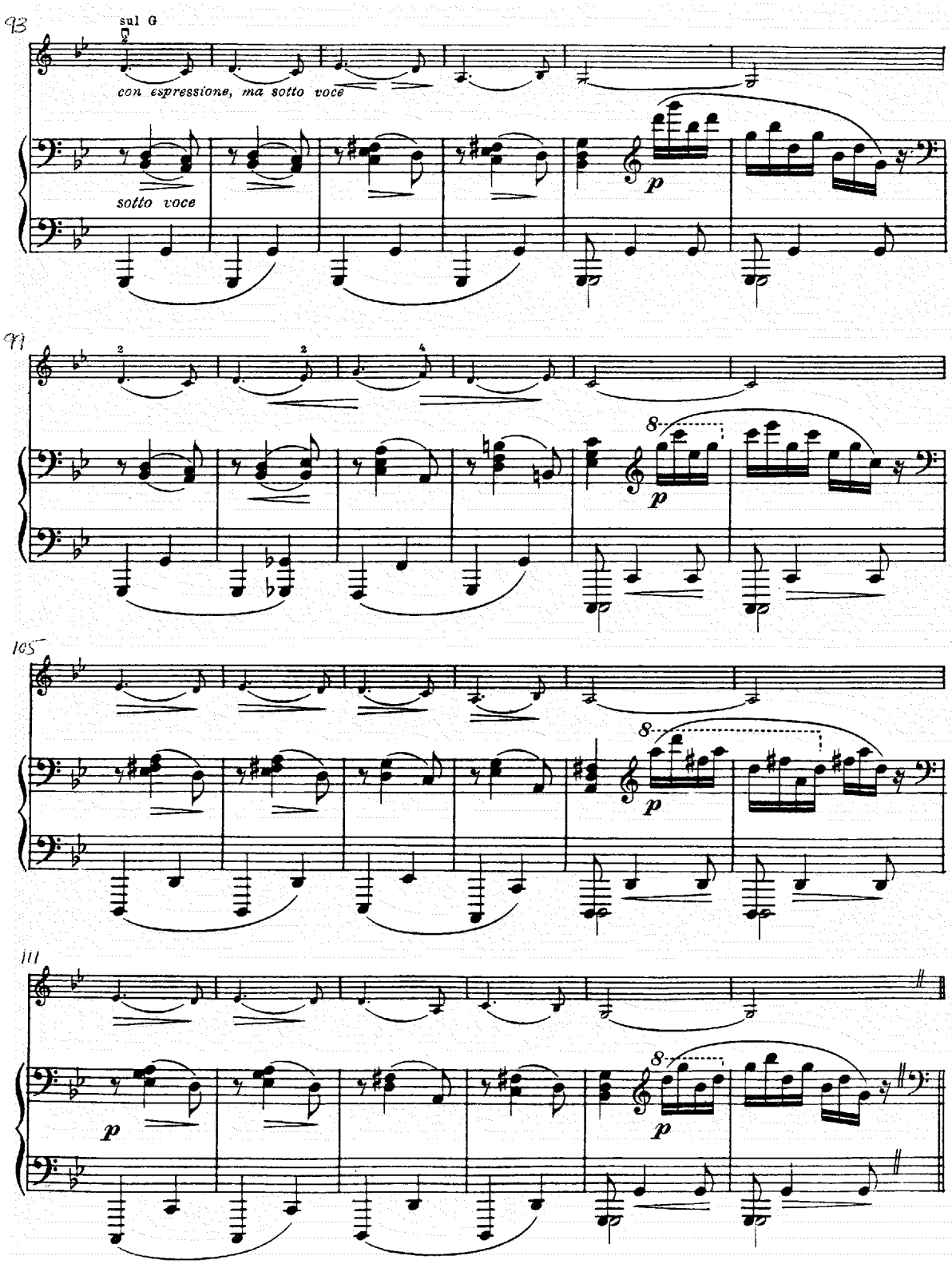
JOHANNES BRAHMS
Transcribed by Joseph Joachim

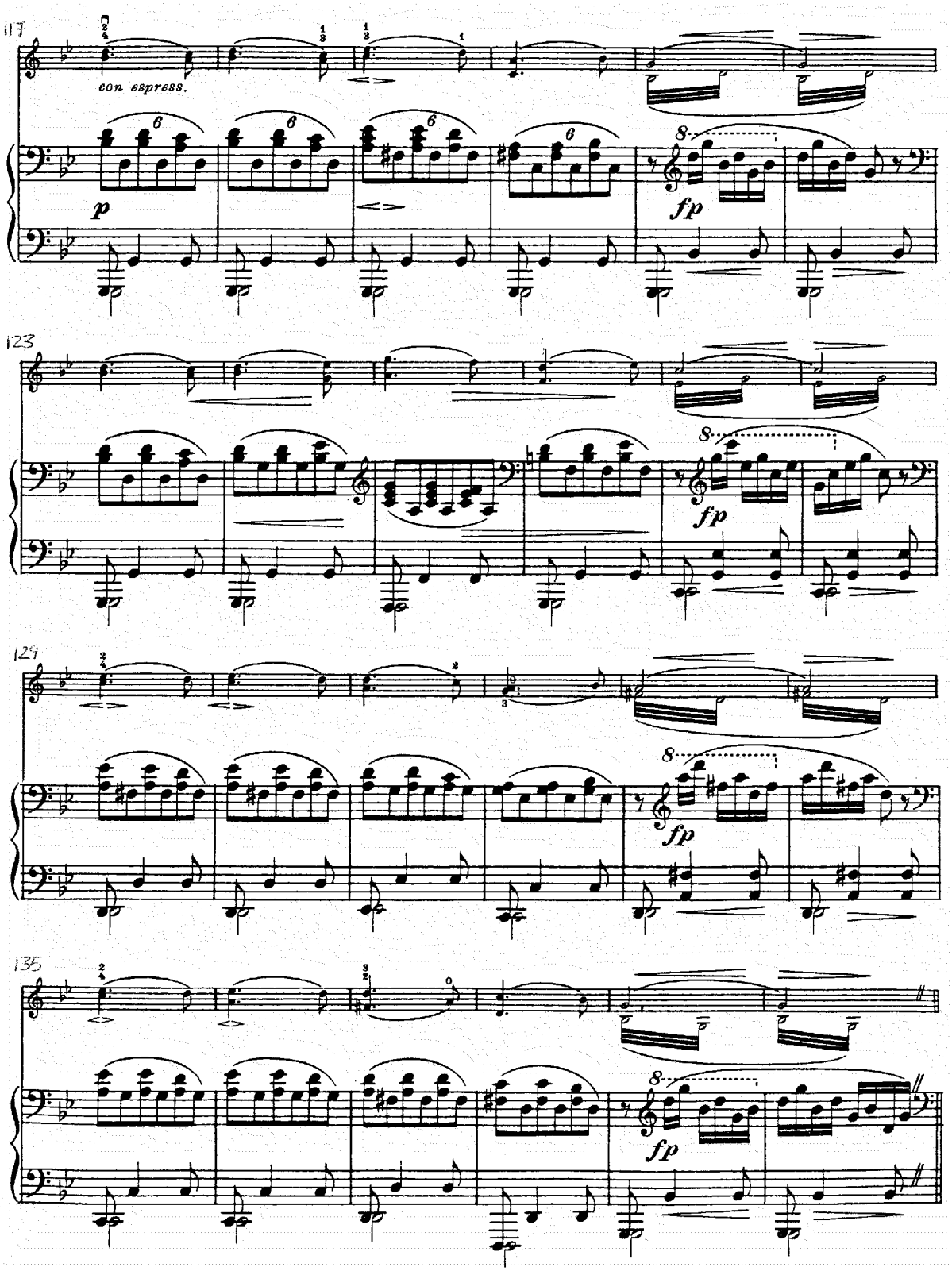


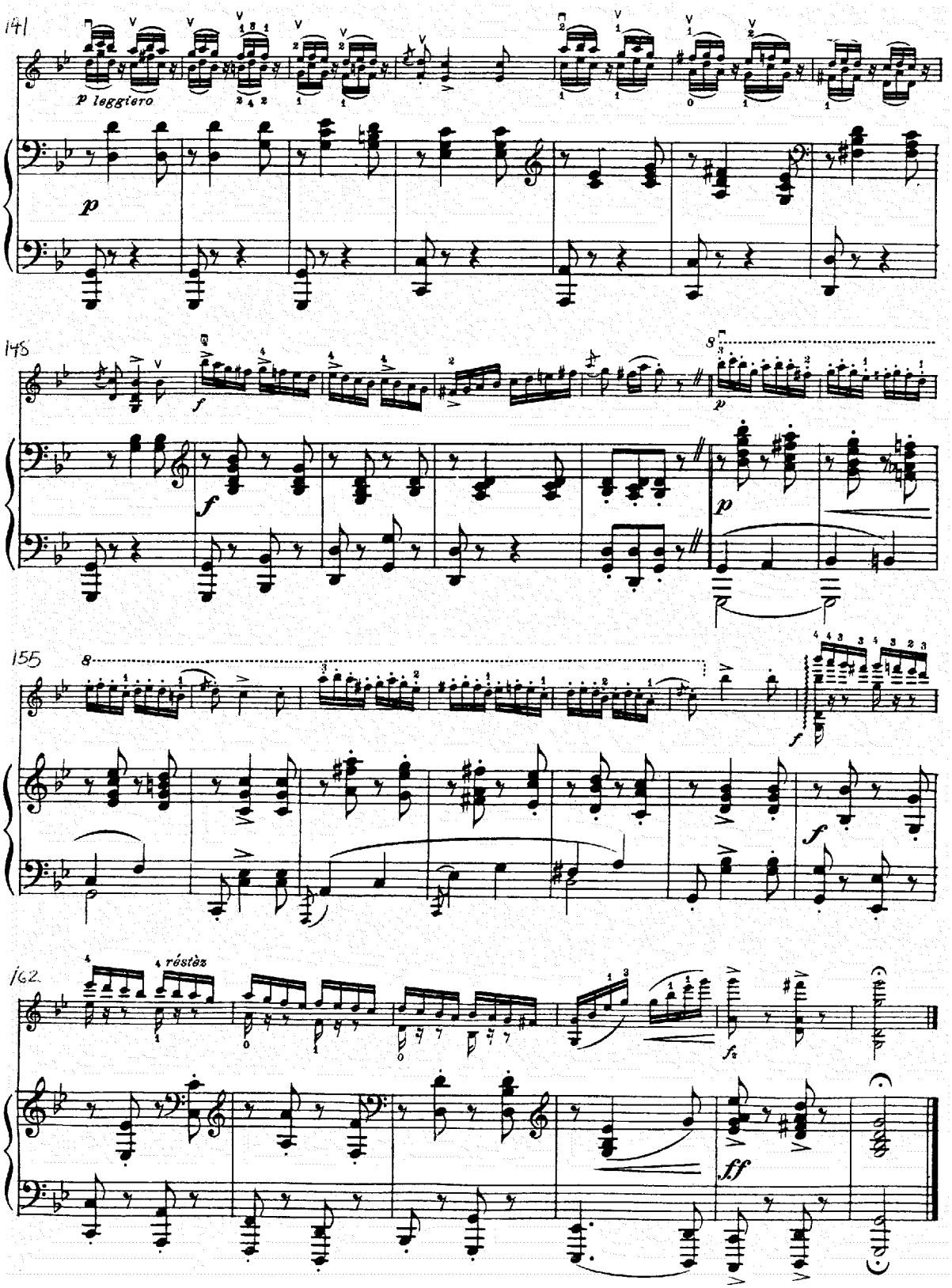












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(No. 4)

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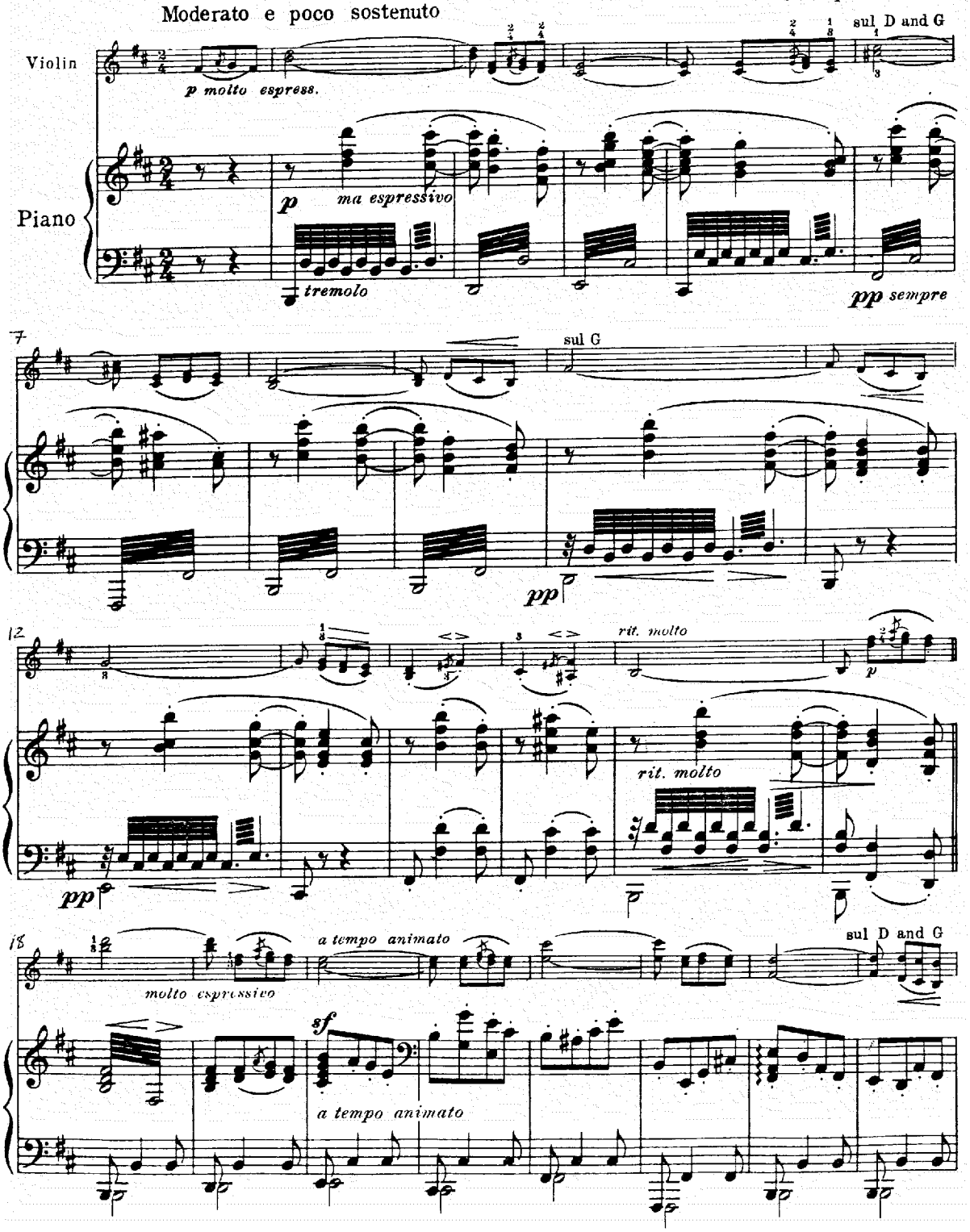
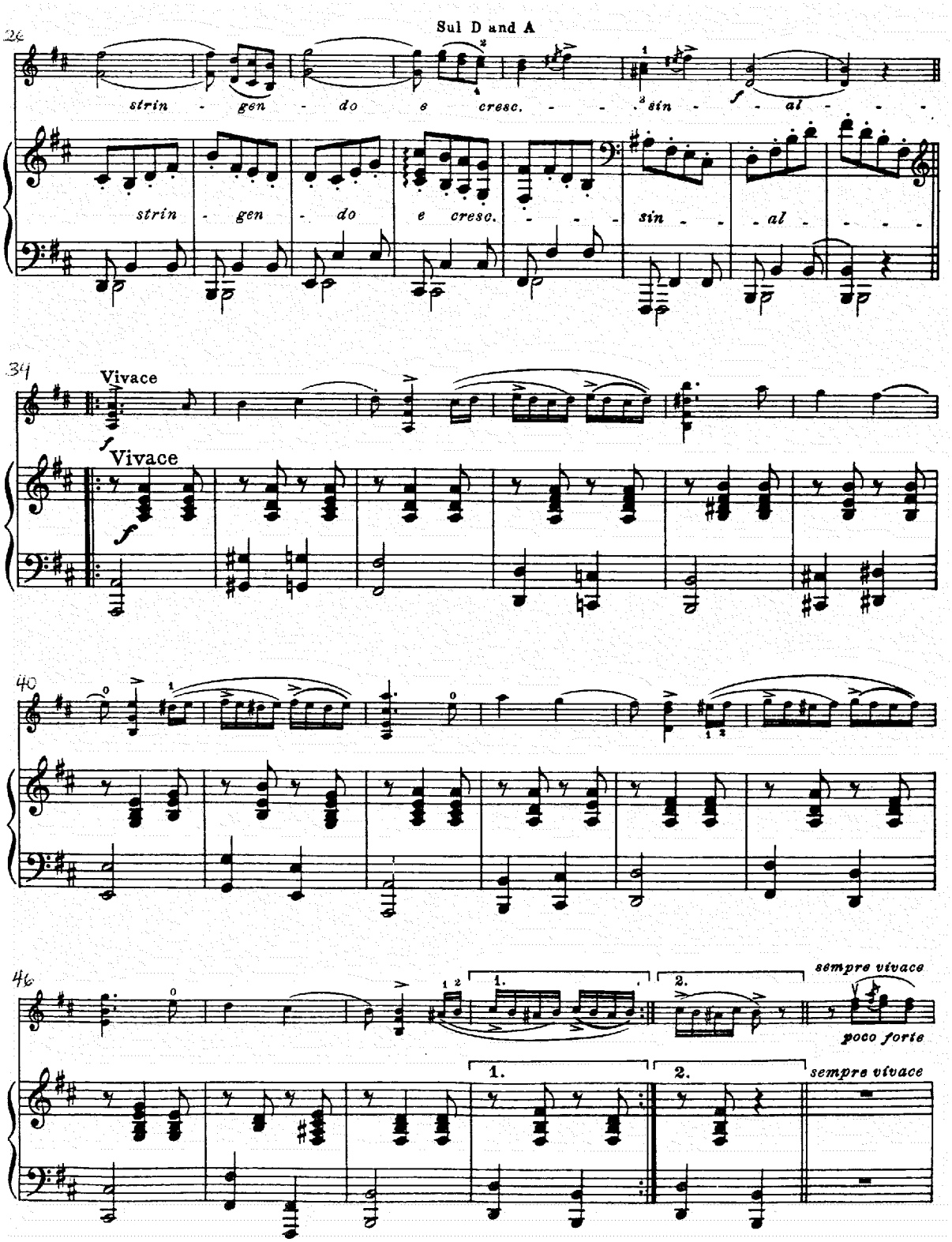
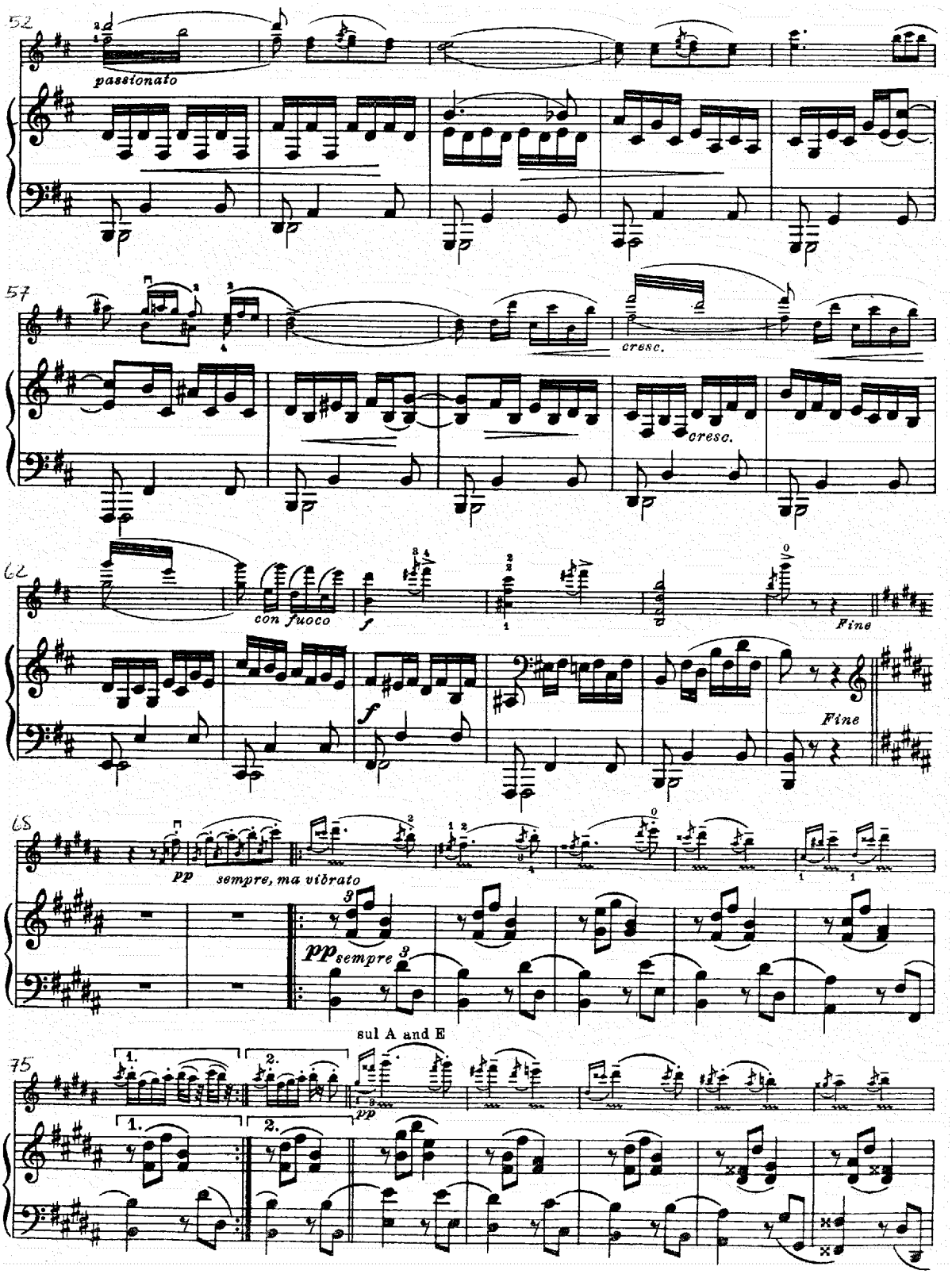
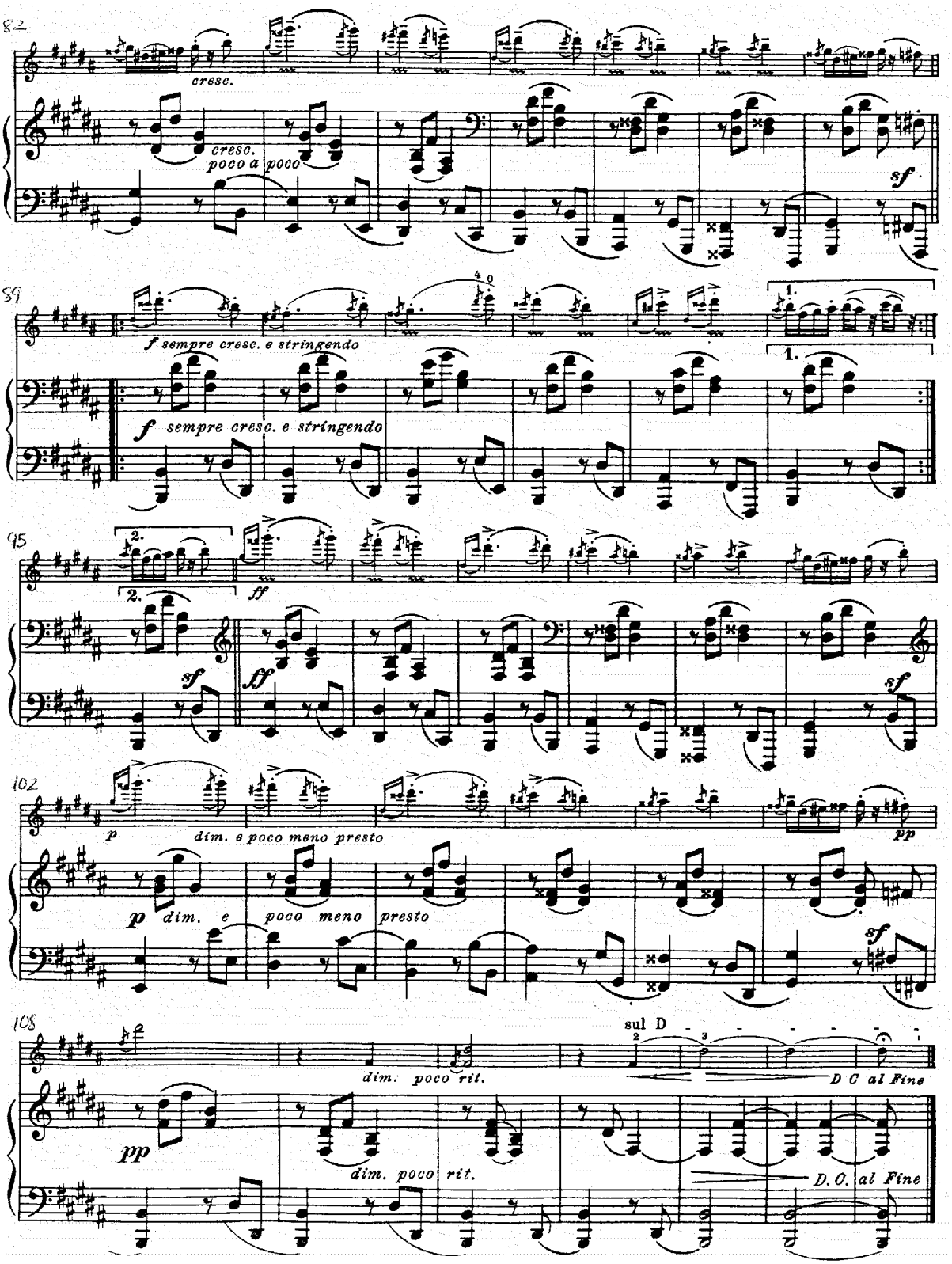


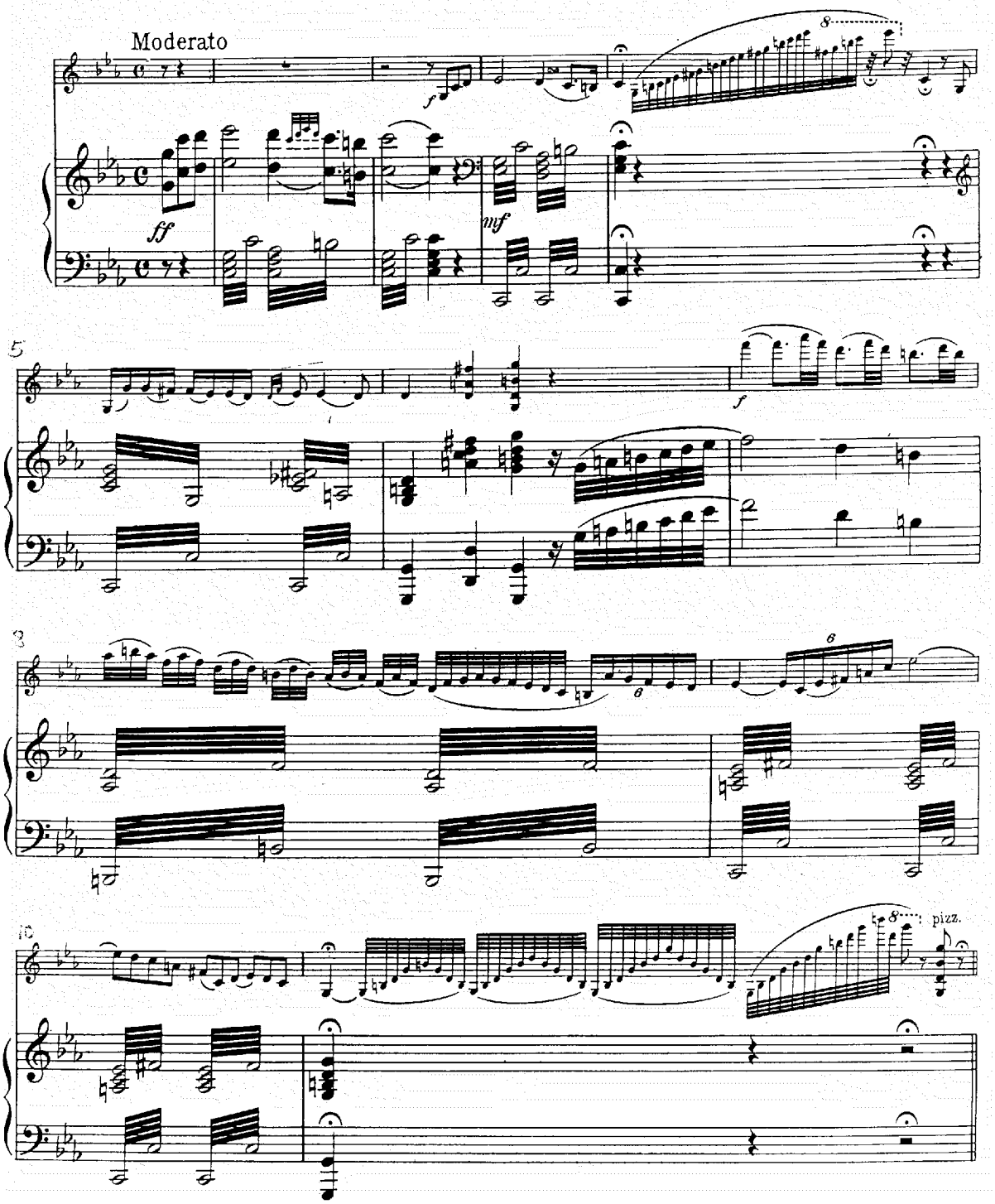


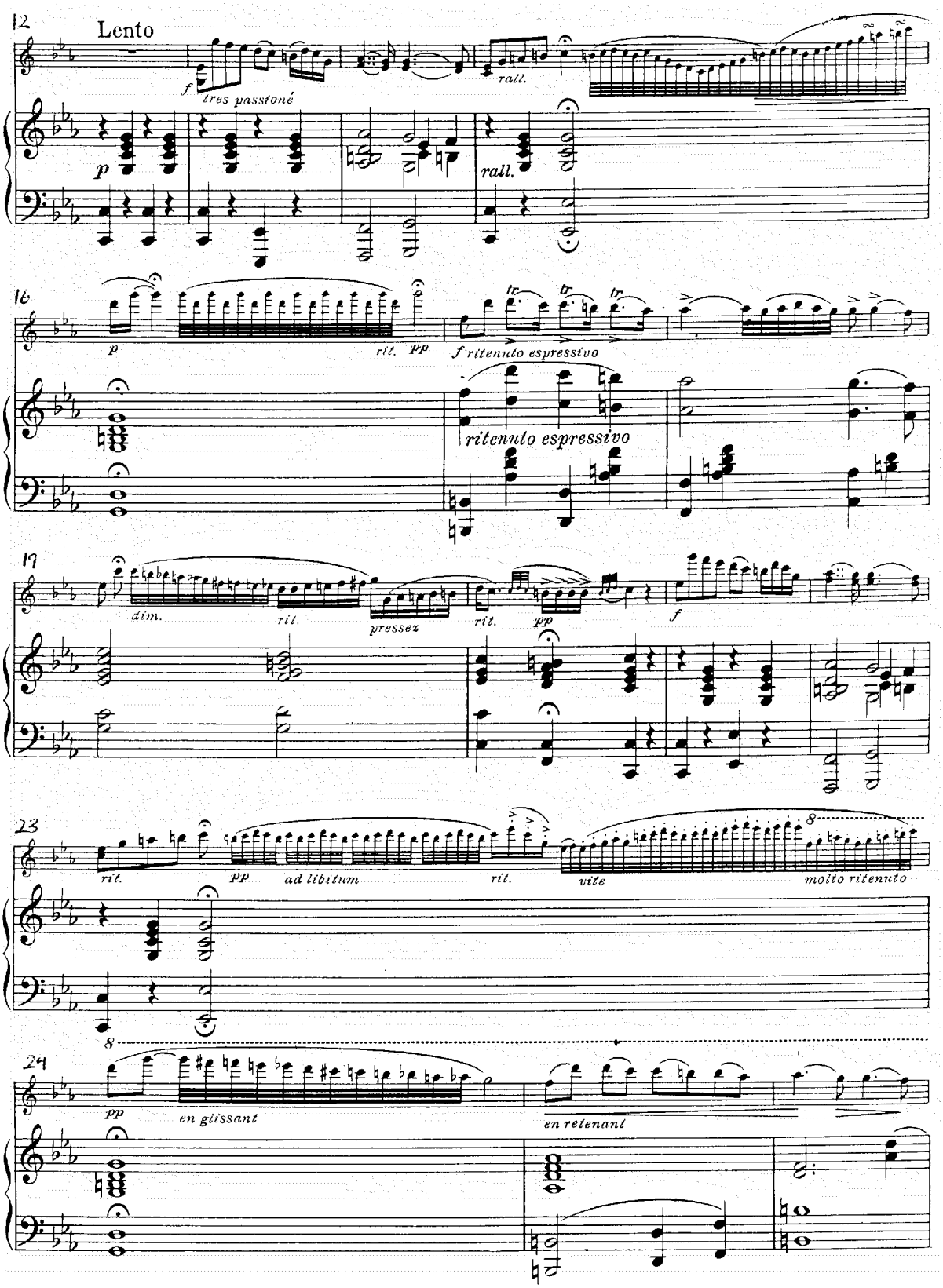


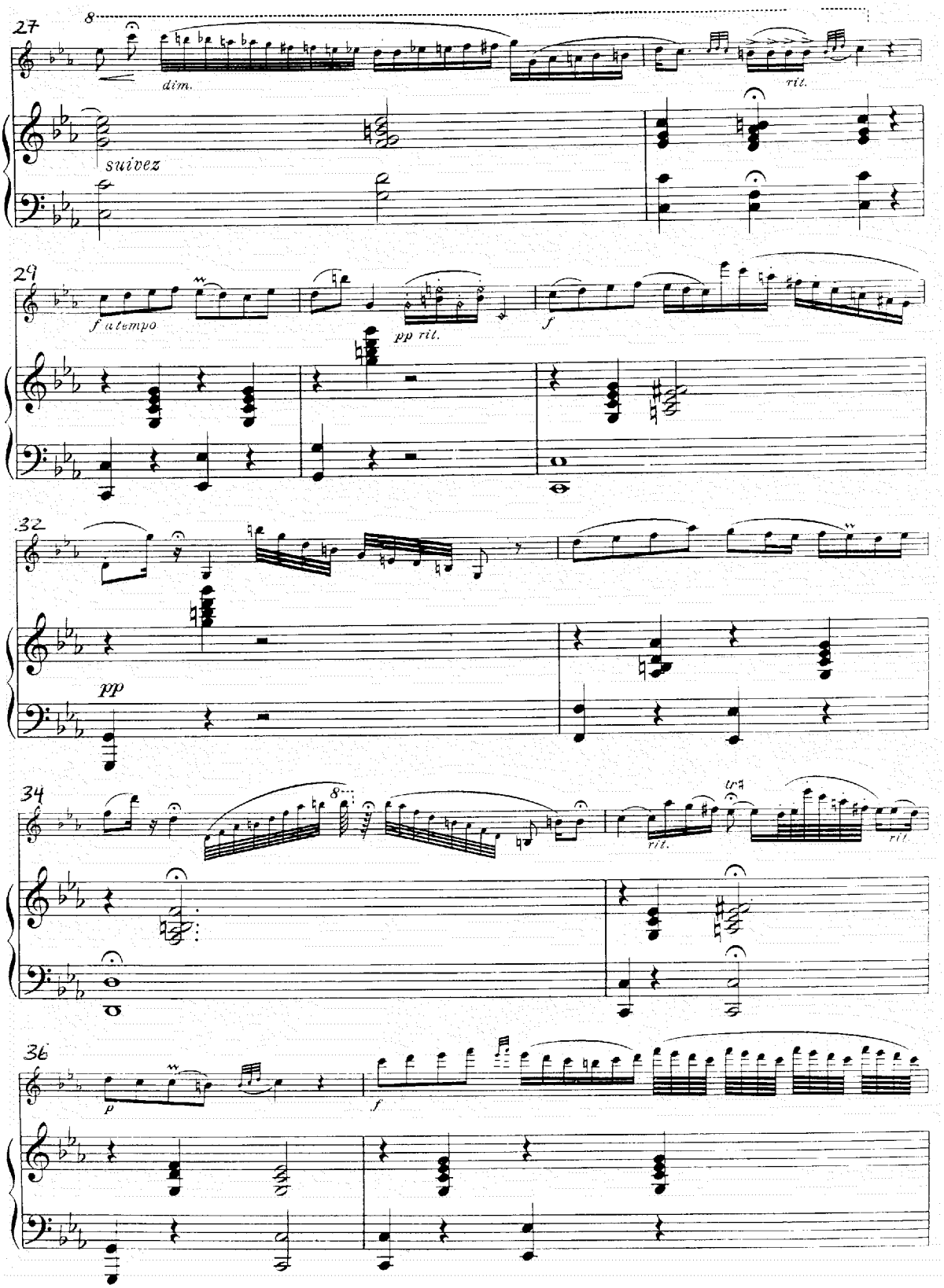


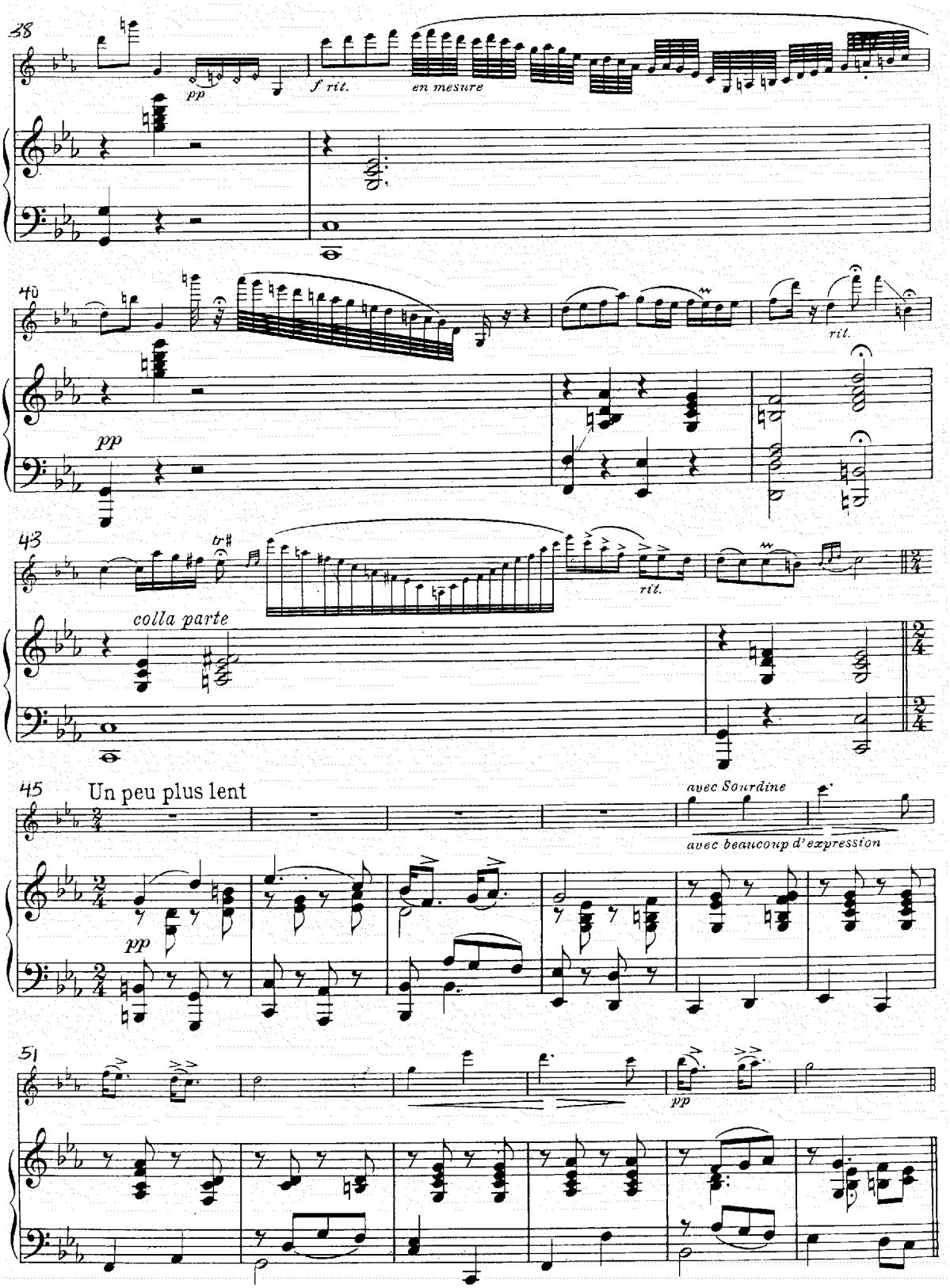
ZIGEUNERWEISEN

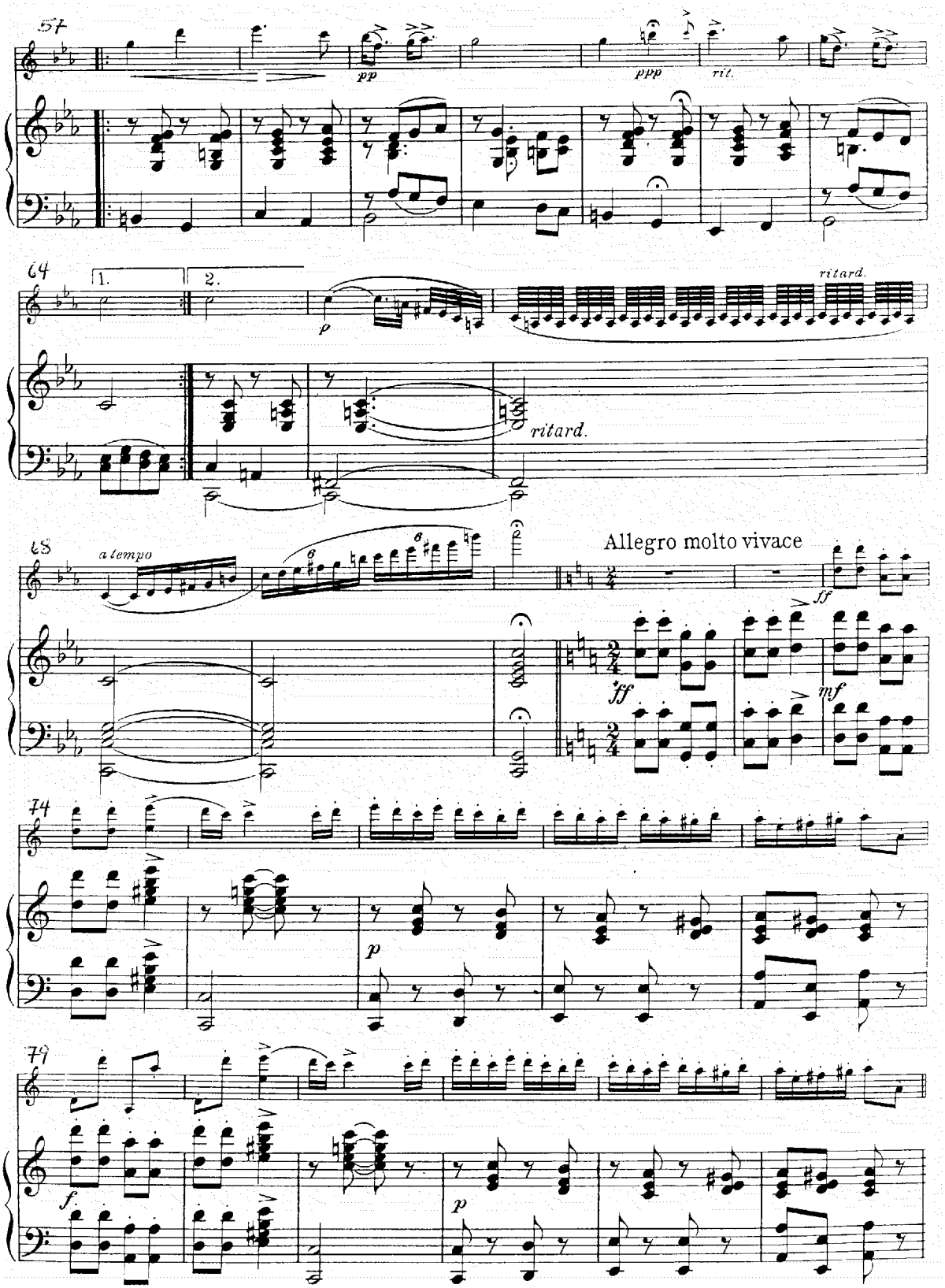
PABLO DE SARASATE, Op. 20

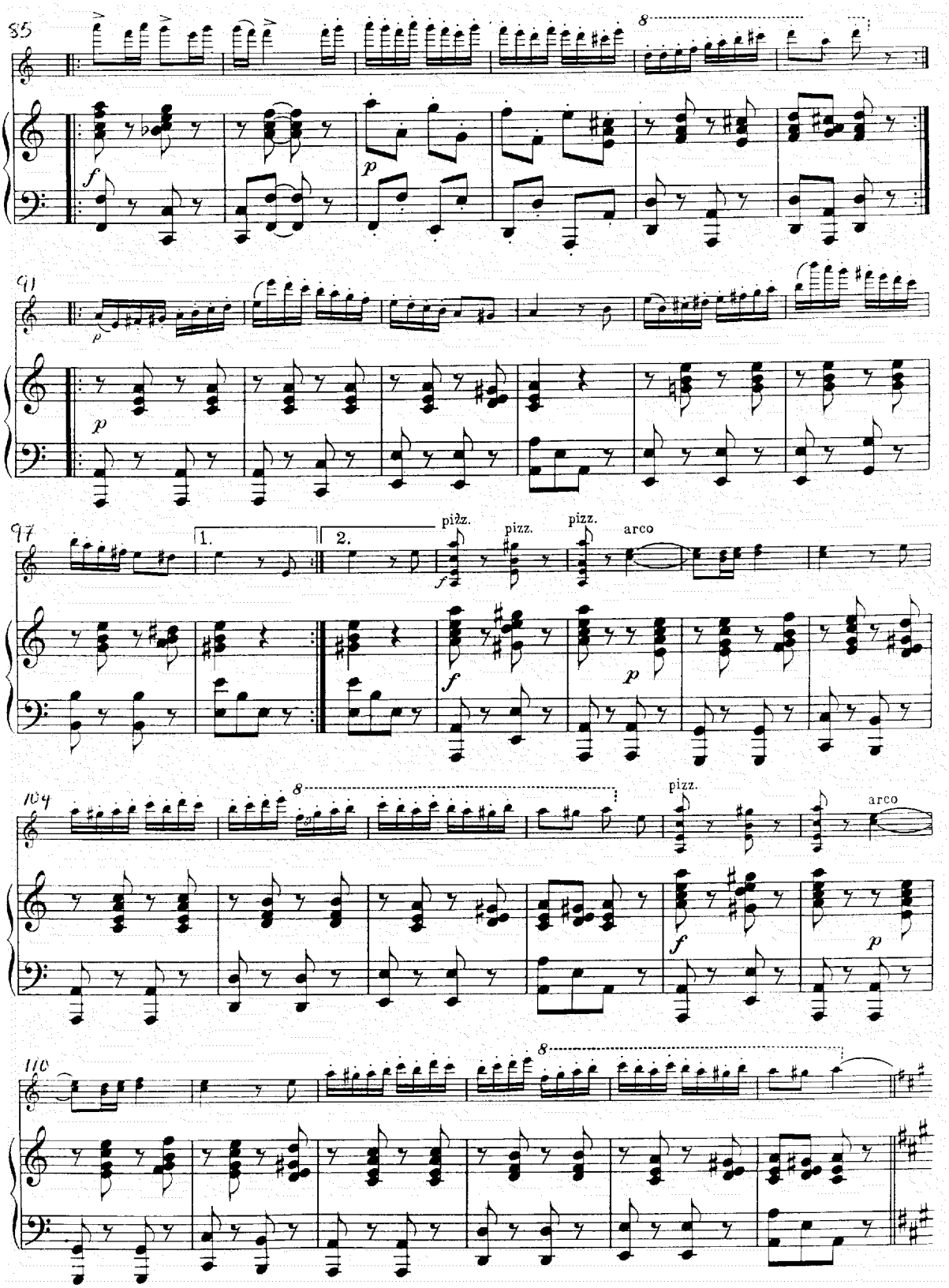


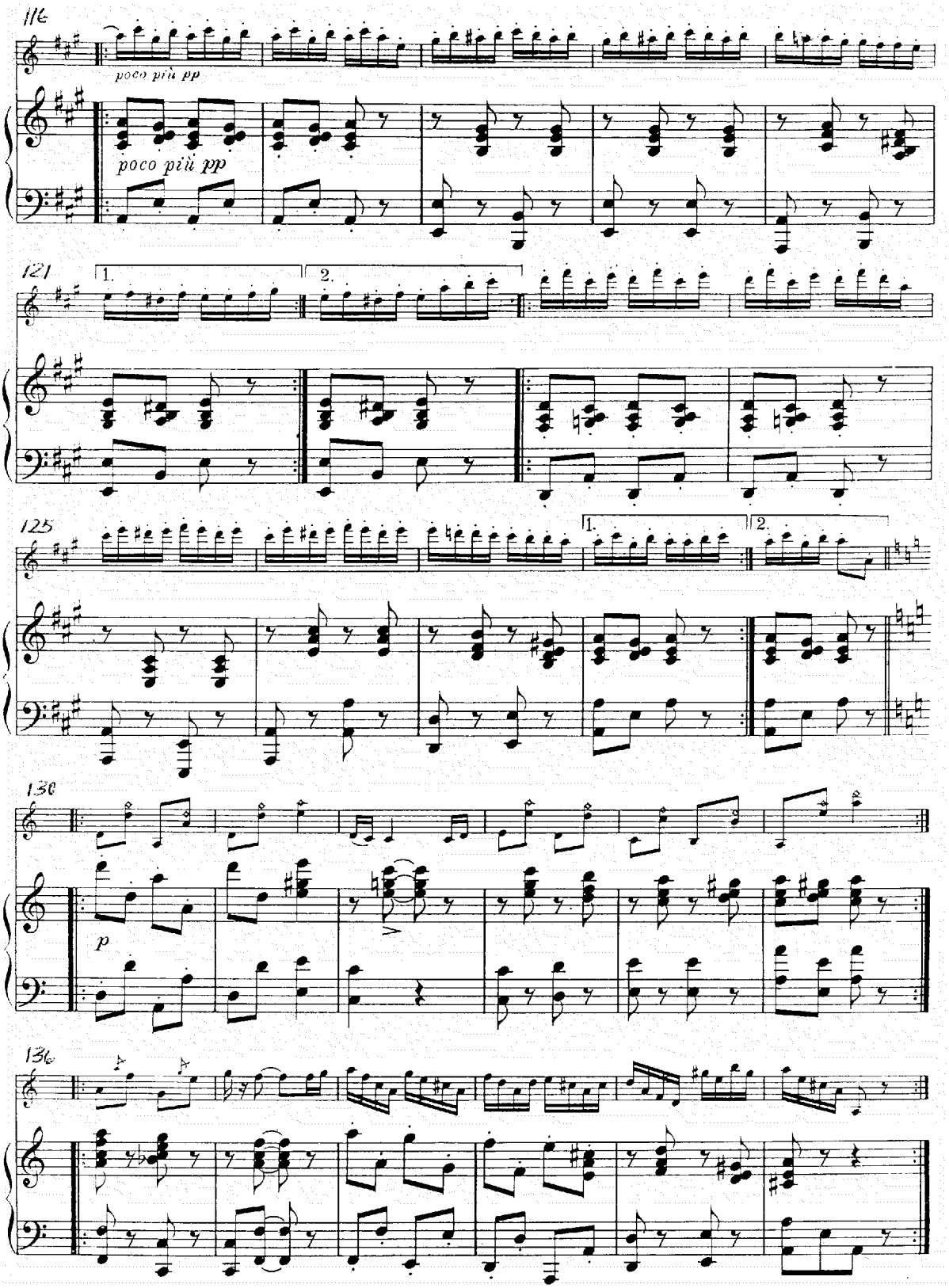


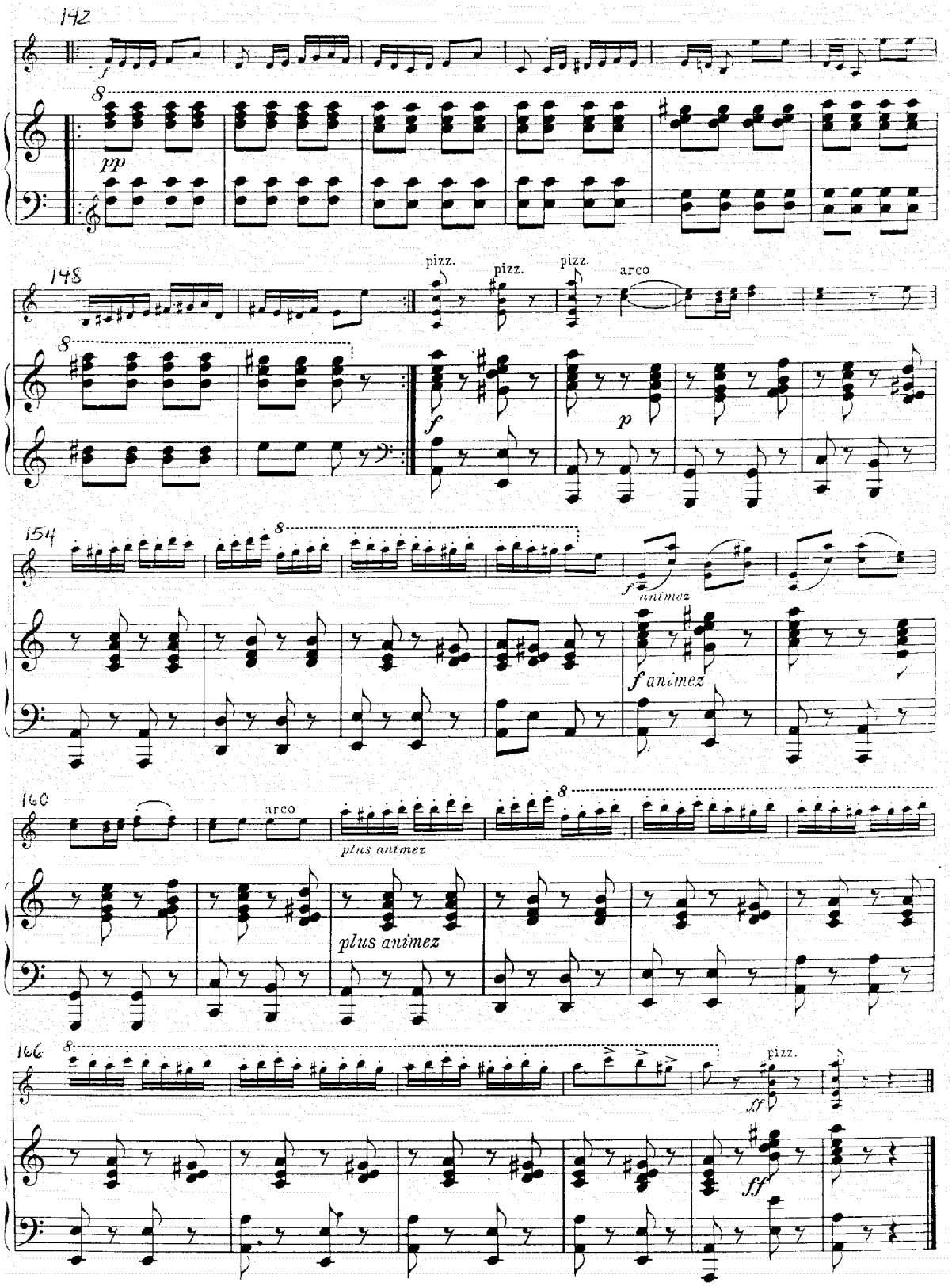










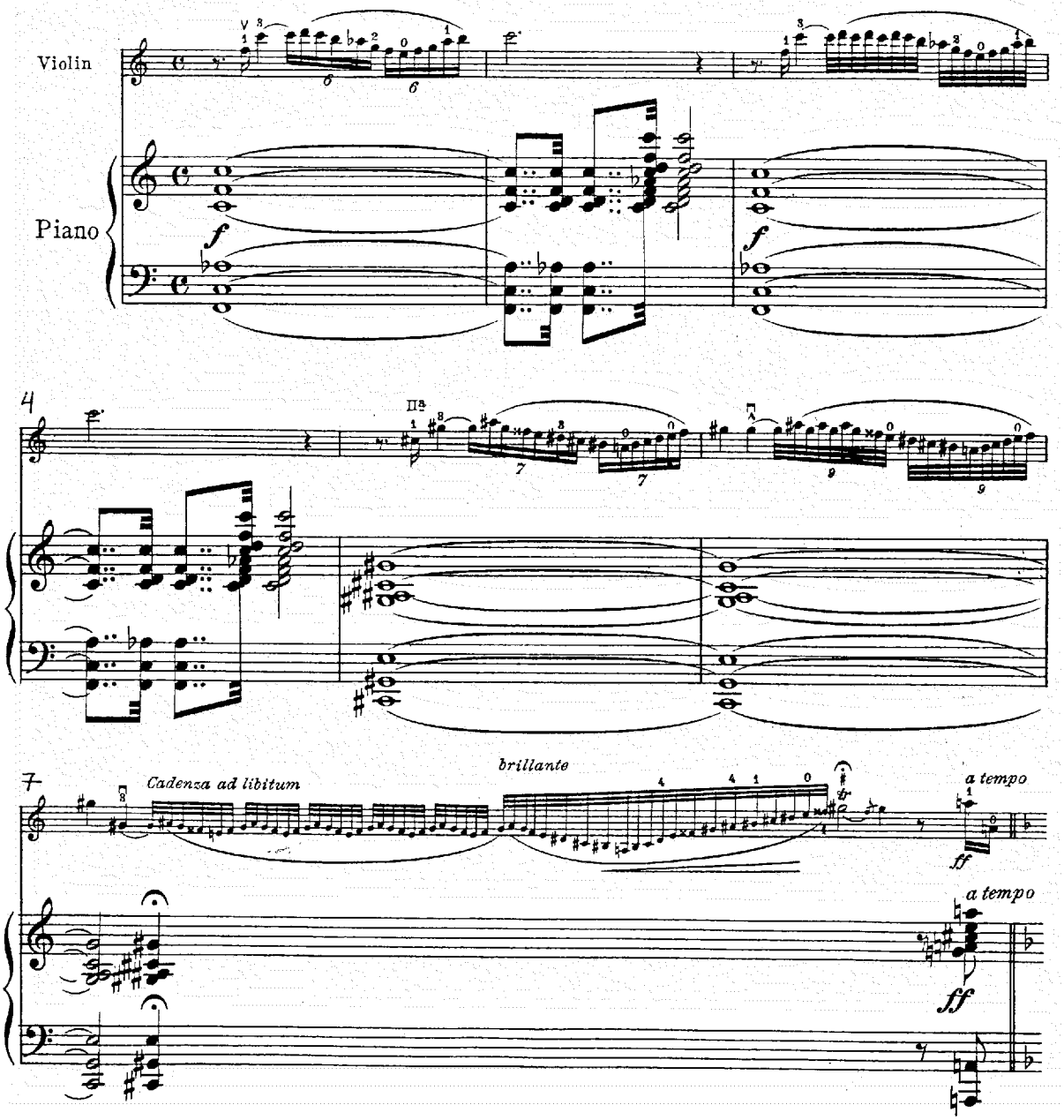


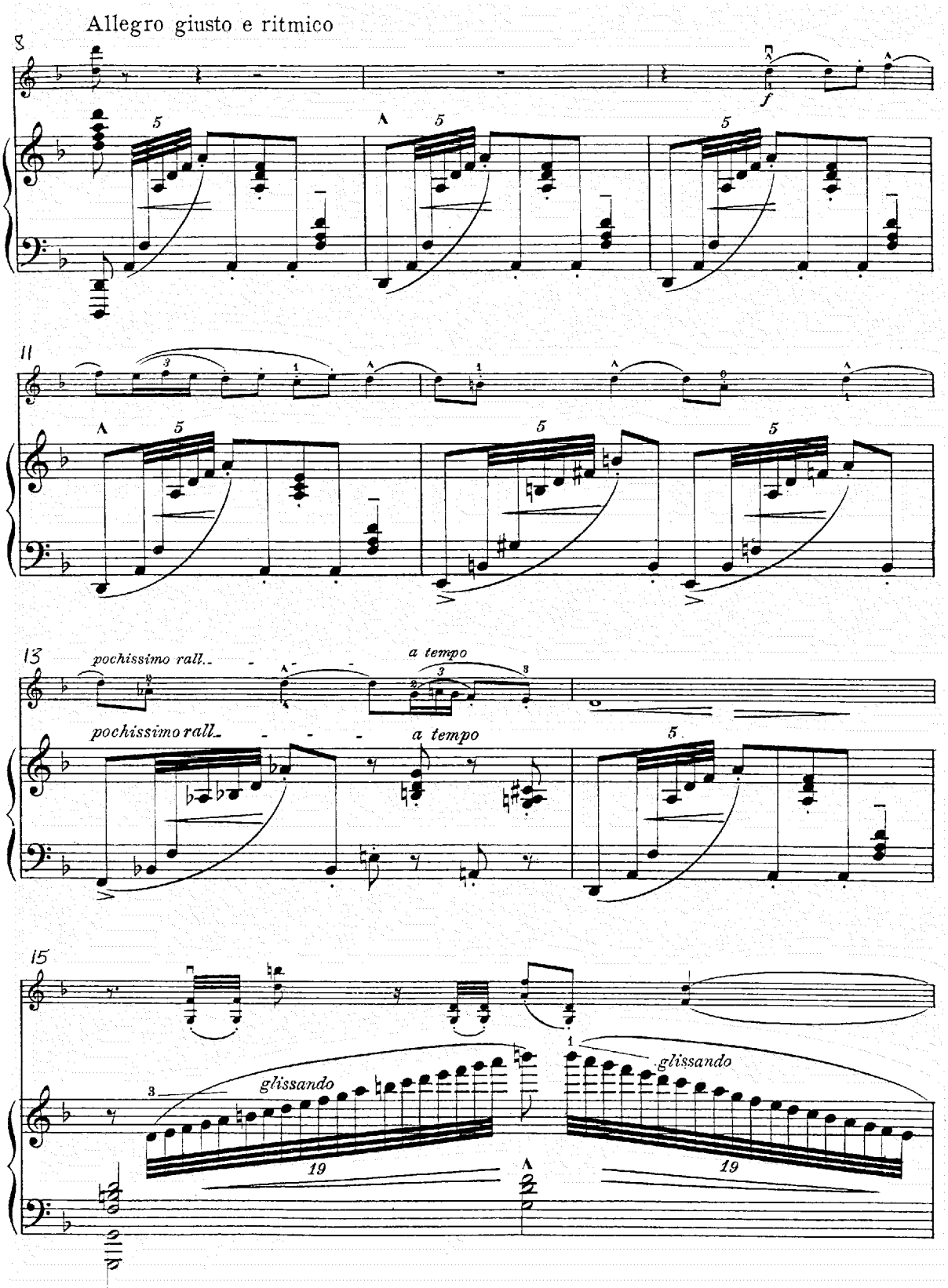
La Gitana

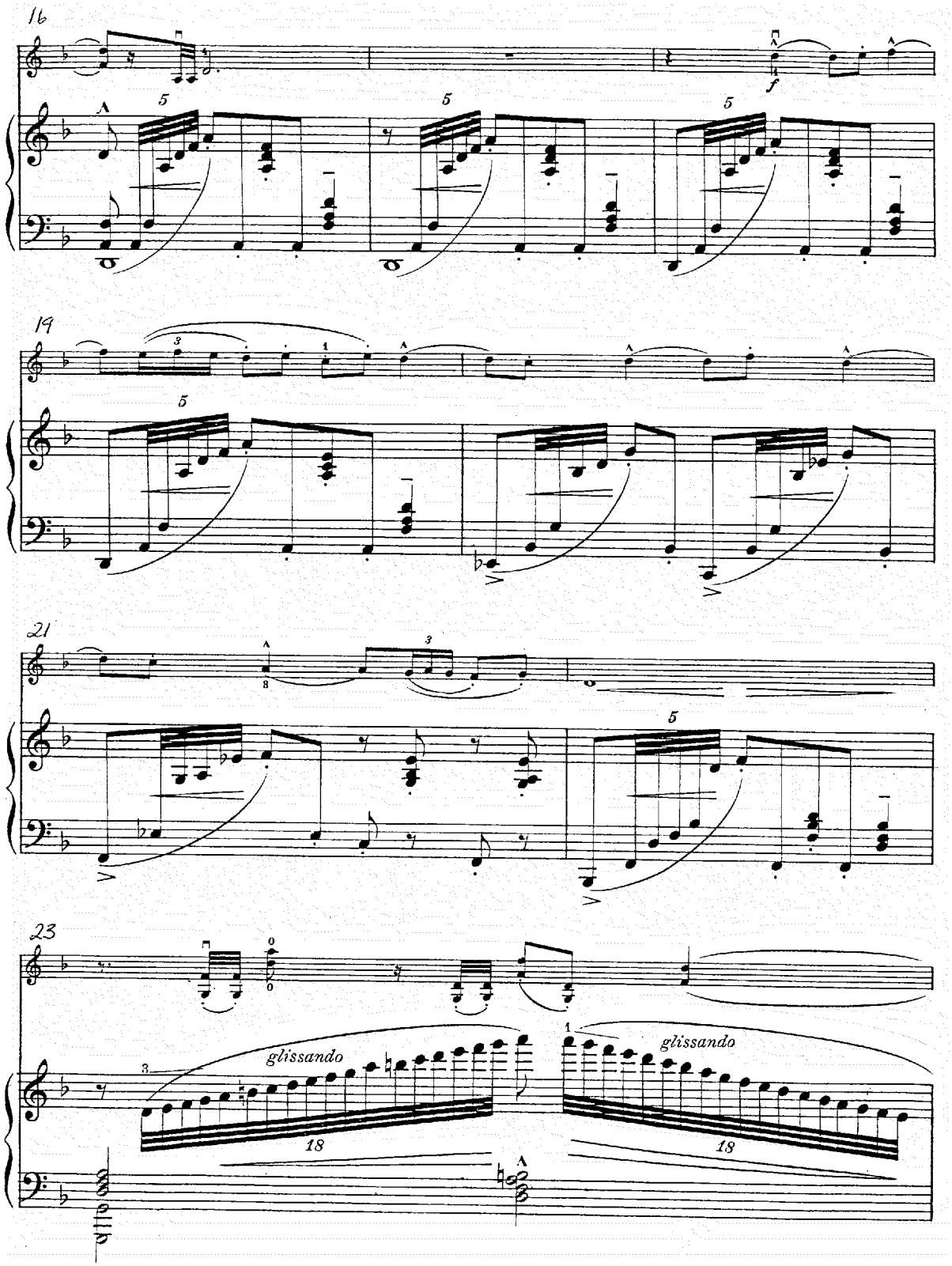
(Arabo - Spanish Gypsy Song of the 18th Century)

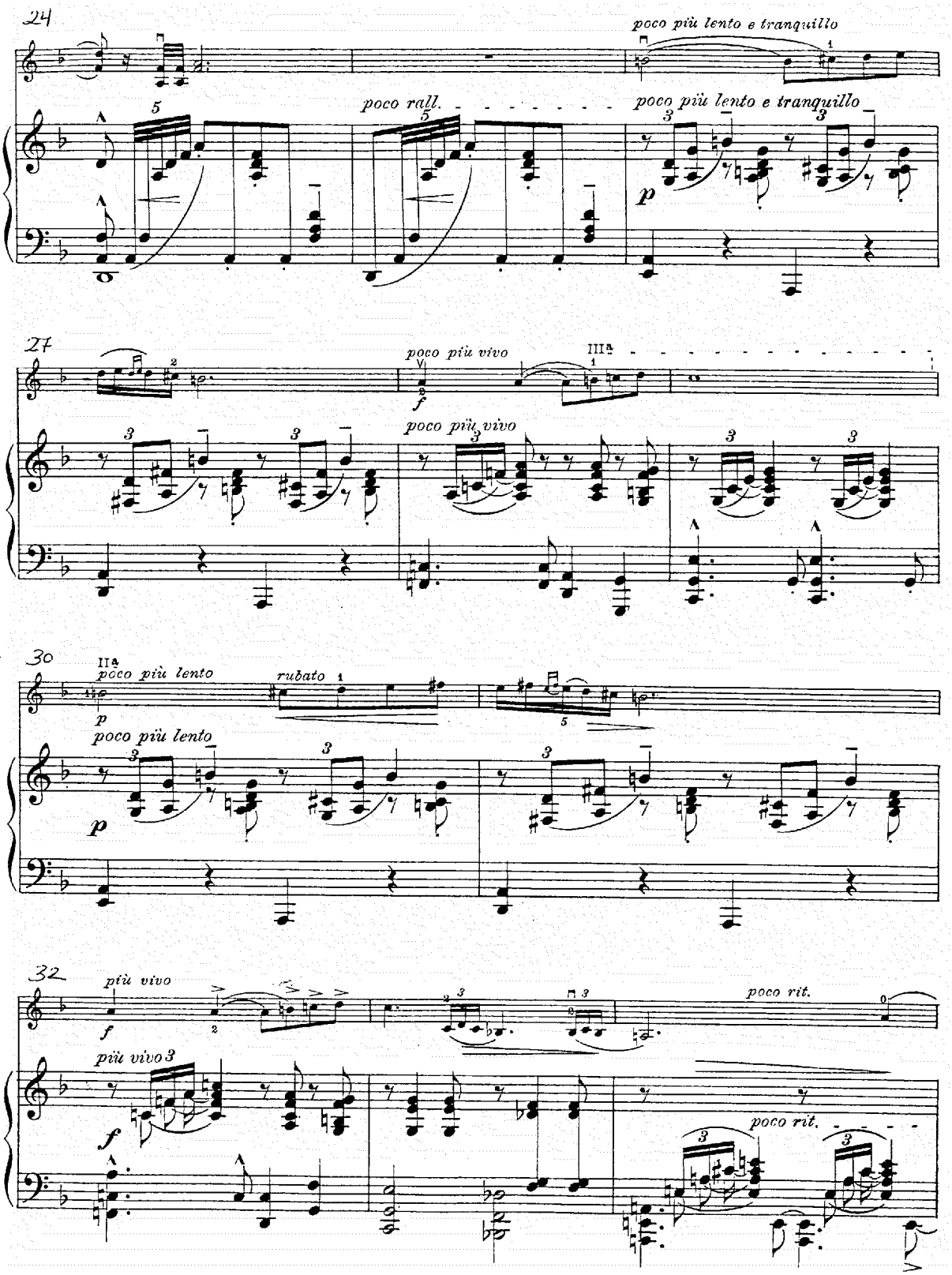
FRITZ KREISLER

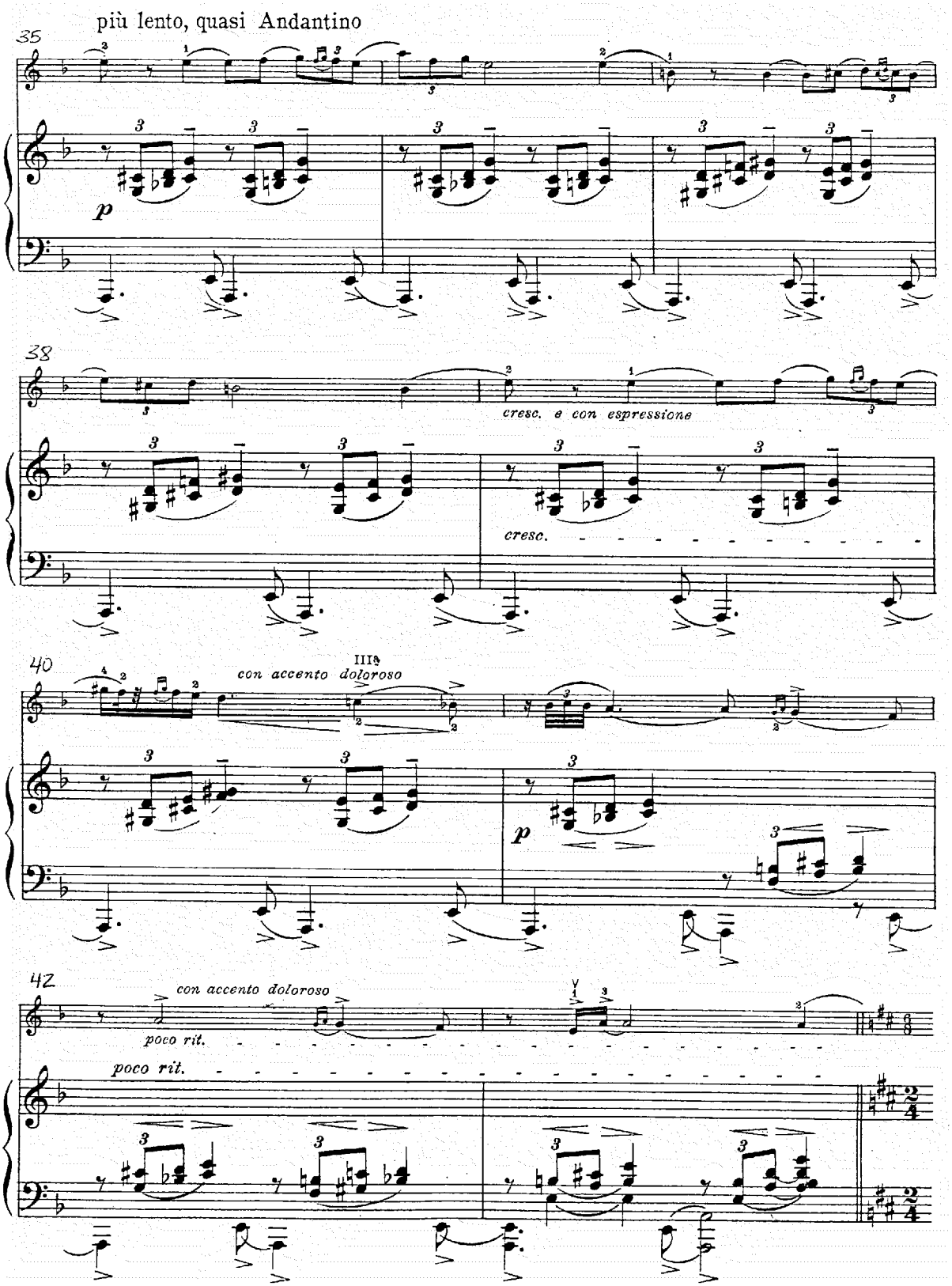
Allegro moderato, quasi Recitativo

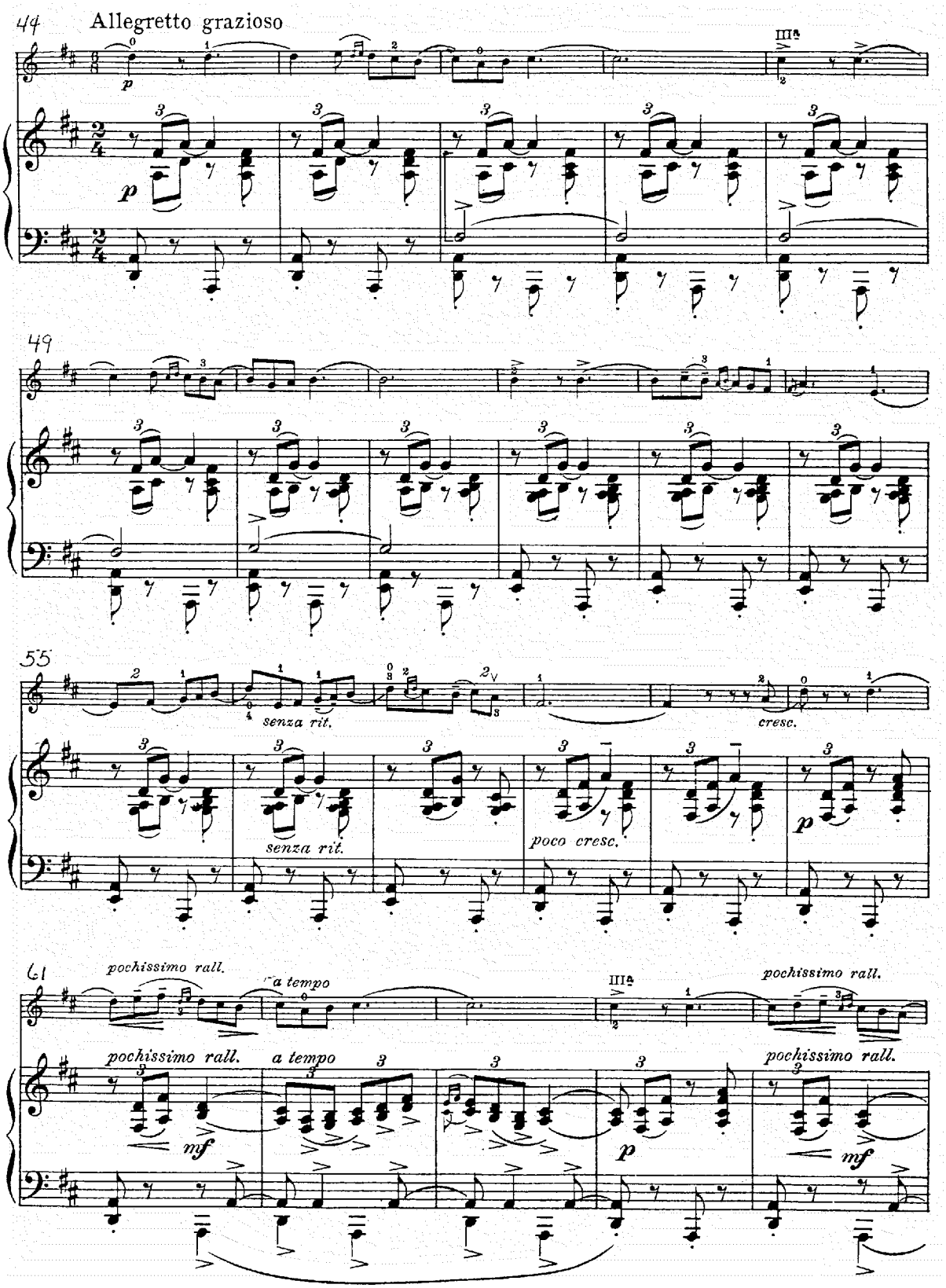


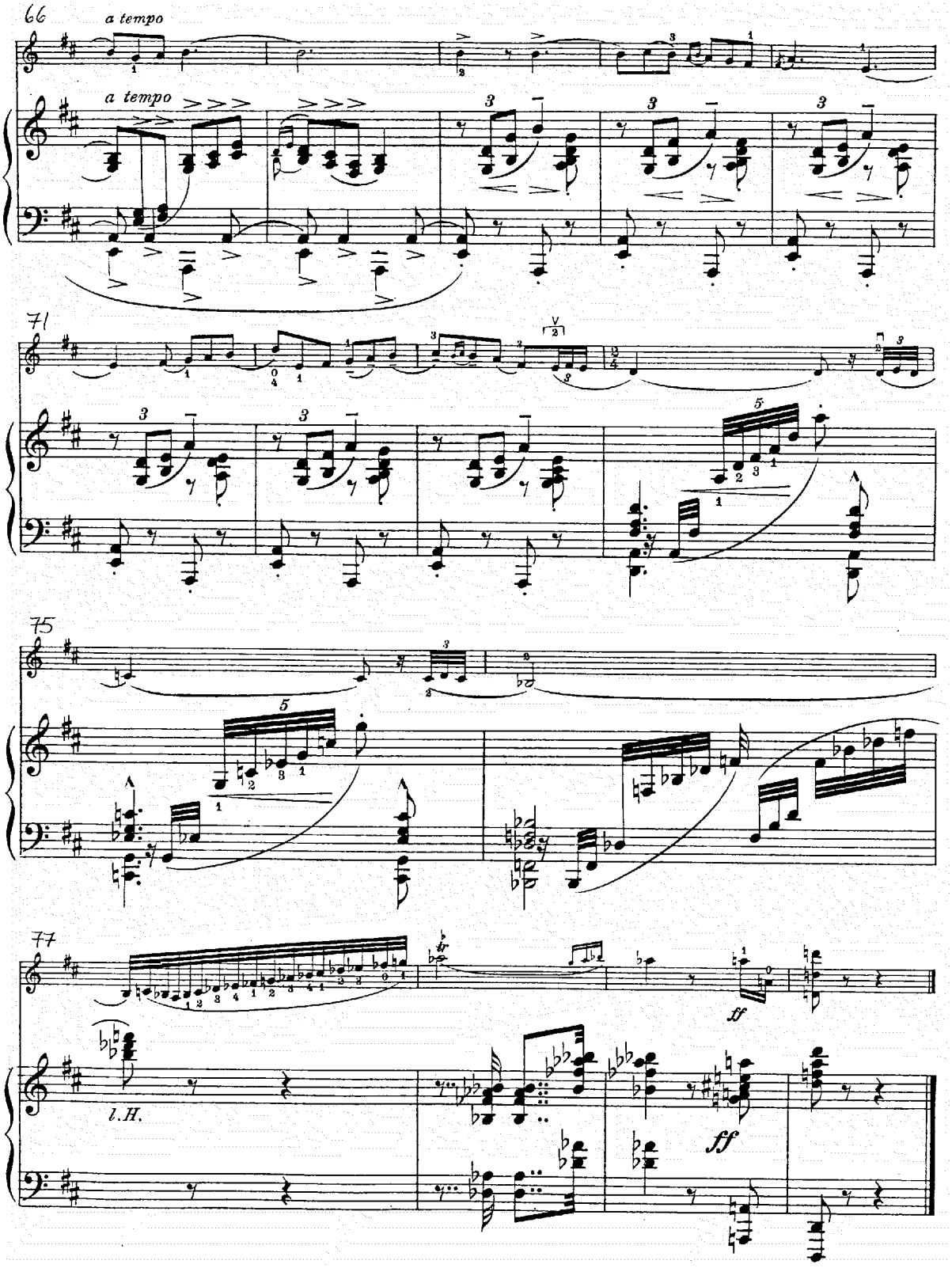












APPENDIX II

Discography of Illustrative Performances

Brahms, Johannes. *Hungarian Dance No.1* (arr. Joseph Joachim). Joseph Joachim, violin. Opal CD 9851 (remaster of 1903 recording).

Brahms, Johannes. *Hungarian Dance No.1* (arr. Joseph Joachim). Kyung Wha Chung, violin. Decca London CD 417 289-2 (includes various showpieces). 1987.

Brahms, Johannes. *Hungarian Dance No.1 and No.4* (arr. Joseph Joachim). Sarah Chang, violin. EMI CD CDC 7 54753 2 6 (includes Tchaikovsky Concerto with London Symphony). 1993.

Brahms, Johannes. *Hungarian Dance No.1and No.4* (arr. Joseph Joachim). Oscar Shumsky, violin. MusicMasters CD 01612-67190-2 (includes all *Hungarian Dances*). 1998.

Brahms, Johannes. *Hungarian Dance No.1and No.4* (arr. Joseph Joachim). Yuval Waldman, violin. Campion CD RRCD 1347 (includes all *Hungarian Dances*). 2000.

Kreisler, Fritz. *La Gitana*. Fritz Kreisler, violin. Membran International CD 222141-444/A (1938 recording with piano). 2004.

Kreisler, Fritz. *La Gitana*. Fritz Kreisler, violin. BMG Classics 9026-68448-2 (1942 recording with RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra). 1997.

Kreisler, Fritz. *La Gitana*. Josef Gingold, violin. Music and Arts Program of America CD 286 (includes various showpieces). 1976.

Kreisler, Fritz. *La Gitana*. Kyung Wha Chung, violin. Decca London CD 417 289-2 (includes various showpieces). 1987.

Kreisler, Fritz. *La Gitana*. Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, violin. EMI Classics CD CDC 0777 7 54576 2 9 (includes various showpieces). 1992.

Kreisler, Fritz. *La Gitana*. Joshua Bell, violin. Decca London CD 444 409-2 (includes various showpieces). 1996.

Ravel, Maurice. *Tzigane*. Ginette Neveu, violin. EMI CD CDH 7 63493 2 (remastered compilation). 1990.

Ravel, Maurice. *Tzigane*. Michael Rabin, violin. EMI Classics CMS 7 64123 2 B (remasrered compilation). 1991.

Ravel, Maurice. *Tzigane*. Christian Ferras, violin. Disky Communications Europe CD DCL 706852 (remastered from 1962 EMI recording). 2001.

Ravel, Maurice. *Tzigane*. Henryk Szeryng, violin. Phillips Classics CD 422 274-2 (remastered from 1969 recording). 1970.

Ravel, Maurice. *Tzigane*. Salvatore Accardo, violin. Deutsche Grammophon CD 427 314-2. 1989.

Ravel, Maurice. *Tzigane*. Itzhak Perlman, violin. Deutsche Grammophon CD 423 063-2. 1987.

Ravel, Maurice. *Tzigane*. Anne-Sophie Mutter, violin. Deutsche Grammophon CD 437 544-2. 1993.

Sarasate, Pablo de. *Zigeunerweisen*. Pablo de Sarasate, violin. Opal CD 9851 (remaster of 1904 recording).

Sarasate, Pablo de. *Zigeunerweisen*. Efrem Zimbalist, violin. Pavillion Records CD GEM 0127 (remaster of 1935 recording).

Sarasate, Pablo de. *Zigeunerweisen*. Jascha Heifetz, violin. BMG Classics CD 09026-61753-2 (remaster of 1951 recording). 1994.

Sarasate, Pablo de. *Zigeunerweisen*. Aaron Rosand, violin. VOX Allegretto CD ACD 8160 (remaster of 1959 recording). 1993.

Sarasate, Pablo de. *Zigeunerweisen*. Anne-Sophie Mutter, violin. Anne-Sophie Mutter, violin. Deutsche Grammophon CD 437 544-2. 1993.

Sarasate, Pablo de. *Zigeunerweisen*. Sandor Lakatos, violin. Capricco CD 49 277 1. 1999.

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Baime, Peter. Appendix to *The Language of Spanish Dance*, by Matteo Marcellus Vittucci (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 271.

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