# LISZT'S *MAZEPPA*: EXAMINING A COMPOSER'S CONCEPTION THROUGH HIS ORCHESTRATION

by

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Abstract

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Franz Liszt composed three complete versions of his *Études d'execution transcendante* over the span of twenty-five years, the *Étude en douze exercices* (1826), the *Grandes Études* (1837), and the final form of the *Études* in 1851. In addition, Liszt wrote another piano version of the fourth *Étude*, *Mazeppa*, most likely in 1840, as well as a symphonic poem in 1854. This document attempts to direct the understanding of *Mazeppa*'s compositional development, especially that of the symphonic poem, into an informed interpretation of the 1851 piano version of *Mazeppa*.

The introductory chapter details the evolution of the *Études* and discusses the extant studies. The second chapter then explores the structural and motivic developments of *Mazeppa* in its four versions for solo piano. The composition of the last of these works is intertwined with the symphonic poem's development, in that Liszt wrote the *particella* for the symphonic poem prior to completing this so-called "final" version of the piano *Étude* (1851). The relationship between these works is the basis for an analysis of the published symphonic poem in the third chapter. The analyses are followed by a comparative discussion of each version's unique features.

The final chapter offers a pianist's perspective on the interpretation of *Mazeppa* based on its numerous manifestations. By examining Liszt's lifelong devotion to

*Mazeppa* both in its pianistic and symphonic forms, this document seeks to enlighten pianists in their own performances of this *tour de force*.

To my parents

Ronald and Barbara Shinn

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Thanks to Dr. Norman Carey as well, for his assistance in the completion of this dissertation. He was always available to offer both his advice and a bit of light-hearted humor. Dr. John Graziano's meticulous attention to detail in this dissertation is remarkable. I want to express my appreciation to him for his work as well. The philosophical perspectives of Dr. Richard Kramer always deepen one's perspective. I thank him for his enlightenment.

I want to extend a special thanks to my family. From the beginning, my parents, Ronald and Barbara, have been my primary guidance not just in music but also in life, and Anne has always inspired me to reach new heights, through both example and her sisterly advice. Any success I have had is thanks to their unfailing support and guidance. Finally, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to Jessica Chow for her unending love and encouragement. Her tireless assistance, revising, and advice in this dissertation process were vital to its completion.

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# *Chapter One*

## *Introduction*

Over the course of 25 years, Franz Liszt composed and extensively revised his set of *Études d'exécution transcendante*. One of the great collections of etudes from the nineteenth century, each *Étude* offers new techniques of pianistic expression: the "three handed" technique of *Mazeppa*, the interlocking chordal technique of number 10, the fluttering double notes of *Feux Follets*, and the proto-Impressionistic blurred canvases of *Chasse-neige*, *Paysage*, and *Harmonies du Soir*.

The first version of these *Études*, written in 1826 when Liszt was in his youth and under the tutelage of Carl Czerny, extends the style of Czerny's etude writing; while comparatively primitive, this version contains the musical seeds that blossom into the more expansive and intricate *Études* widely known today. Liszt uses much of the melodic and motivic material from this set to create the subsequent versions. Moreover, many of the innovative technical demands for which the set is famous are already present in the original version. Liszt wrote the second version for the collection entitled *12 Grandes Études* (1837, published 1839), dedicated to his teacher, Carl Czerny, at the height of Liszt's performing career; these *Études* are highly expanded, both compositionally and technically. Schumann called this set "studies in storm and stress for, at the most, ten or twelve players in the world."[1] Finally, after Liszt retired from the concert stage, he revised the set a second time, toning down some of the technical demands to which Schumann was referring, and making several of the *Études* more concise. It is this

[1] Alan Walker, "Liszt and the Keyboard," *The Musical Times* 118:1615 (Sept., 1977): 717.

version of 1851, titled *Études d'exécution transcendante*, that most pianists perform today.

That we have three versions of the complete set of *Études* makes possible a rare glimpse into the compositional development of one of the most innovative composers of the nineteenth century. Previous analytic studies have compared the three sets of *Études*, and much insight can be gained through these analyses.

Furthermore, it becomes apparent that Liszt was especially predisposed towards expanding and rethinking his fourth *Étude*, *Mazeppa*, as there are a total of seven different versions of the work (including the symphonic poem, the version for four hands at one piano, and the version for two pianos). For example, Liszt wrote another isolated piano version of *Mazeppa* (1840), adding an introduction and expanding the work; it is this version to which Liszt first gave the title of Victor Hugo's poem, *Mazeppa*, published in Vienna and Paris in 1847, with a dedication to Victor Hugo, that remained attached to subsequent revisions. The date of composition for this version is under scrutiny, however. It was uncommon for such a large amount of time to pass between composition and publication, which leads Ernst Burger to argue 1847 as the date of composition as well as publication.[2] Jim Samson cites several fragments of works to which Liszt had considered affording the title, as early as 1829 and as late as 1847.[3] John Douglas Fry refers to a letter of 1834, in which Liszt alludes to a composition entitled *Mazeppa,*[4] but given the numerous fragments Liszt called *Mazeppa*, it is unclear whether it was the

[2] Ernst Burger, *Franz Liszt: A Chronicle of his Life in Pictures and Documents*, trans. Stewart Spencer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 167.
[3] Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 199.
[4] John Douglas Fry, "Liszt's *Mazeppa*: The History and Development of a Symphonic Poem," DMA diss. (Ohio State University, 1988), 52-53.

*Étude* to which he was alluding. This leads Samson to suggest, "It is almost as though this were a title in search of a piece."[5] He goes on to argue that, based on a letter to Schlesinger (dated 1839 but possibly as late as 1840) in which Liszt refers specifically to the *Étude's* introduction, the work was written by the year 1840.[6]

After completion of the third set, *Études d'éxecution transcendante* (which contains the fourth version of *Mazeppa*), Liszt orchestrated *Mazeppa,* turning it into one of his most significant symphonic poems. This is a rare example of the composer orchestrating a work originally for the piano; normally, one thinks of the large body of his transcriptions exemplifying the reverse procedure. A thorough analytic comparison of the orchestrated version of *Mazeppa* with the various piano versions will bring to light valuable information regarding the composer's private and evolving vision of the work's meaning and character.

Orchestration is an immensely personal endeavor for any composer, and Liszt was no exception. As Walker has put it, "Liszt, in short, treated the orchestra as he treated the piano, as an instrument of virtuosity, there to be conquered and turned into a tool of musical expressiveness."[7] During his years in Weimar (1848-1861), Liszt embarked on a study of orchestration, which ultimately led to the completion of twelve symphonic poems, two full symphonies, and five works for piano and orchestra. Liszt's friend and collaborator Joachim Raff (1822-1882) was indebted to Liszt, who helped further Raff's career as a musician and composer. In return, Raff joined Liszt in Weimar to aid the latter's study of orchestration. It became commonplace during this period for Liszt to

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[5] Samson, 199.
[6] Ibid., 200.
[7] Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years, 1848-1861* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 304.

produce a *particella*, "a rough score laid out in anything between two and six systems, with general indications of scoring provided by the composer,"[8] and to pass it to Raff, who would then execute Liszt's expressed intentions.

Of course, the most significant material in a study such as this are the original manuscript sources and the final published versions. For this study, the latter are five in number: the four for solo piano and the orchestrated symphonic poem. Original compositional manuscripts and facsimiles have also been consulted. In order of completion, these manuscripts are as follows: the *particella* (located in the Goethe and Schiller Archive in Weimar) of 1851 in Liszt's hand; *l'esquisse pour Mazeppa* (located in the Bibliothèque nationale de Paris), dating from 1851-1854, in Joachim Raff's hand with copious annotations by Liszt; and the *Stichvorlage* (located in the Goethe und Schiller Archiv) of 1854, also in Raff's hand.

Several writers have delved into a comparative analysis of the sets of Liszt's *Études d'Exécution Transcendante*. Georg Schütz thoroughly discusses thematic transformation as reflected in Liszt's reworking of the *Études* and the development of Liszt's technical development at the keyboard as revealed by tracing specific techniques.[9] Alan Walker describes some of the more obvious musical developments through the versions.[10] None of Walker's discussions aims at a thorough analysis, of course; his important work is a biography, not an analytic study of the music.

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[8] Samson, 208.
[9] Georg Schütz, "Form, Compositional Character, and Keyboard Technique in the Three Versions of the Grandes Etudes by Franz Liszt", in *Virtuosität und Avantgarde: Untersuchungen zum Klavierwerk Franz Liszts* (Mainz: Schott 1988), 71-115.
[10] Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years, 1811-1847* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1983), 184-185, 305-308; Walker, "Liszt and the Keyboard," from *The Musical Times*, 118:1615 (Sept, 1977), 717-721.

James Bryant Conway's dissertation[11] provides a comparative structural and harmonic analysis of the three complete sets of *Études*. Of all the published analyses, this offers the most direct comparison of the three versions; it is, in fact, the purest comparative analysis, in that it does not attempt to prove any particular point. Rather, Conway's goal is to offer an unbiased and straightforward analysis.

In her master's thesis, Helen Hall[12] argues that the first version of the *Études* is primarily a "compositional sketch," in which Liszt attempts to capture his basic ideas on paper. The two later sets, Hall asserts, show Liszt progressively working out these ideas, culminating in the definitive third version. That this third version represents Liszt's final thought accords with the perspective of Dr. Zoltán Gárdonyi and István Szelénzyi, editors of the New Liszt Edition[13] (1970), who propose that this "series presents Liszt's piano works in their final form."[14] Walker staunchly disagrees, arguing that "for Liszt, however, a composition was rarely 'finished.' All his life, he went on reshaping, reworking, adding, subtracting. To say that it progresses towards a 'final' form is to misunderstand Liszt's art."[15]

A DMA dissertation by John Douglas Fry[16] offers a thorough analysis of Hugo's *Mazeppa* and attempts to align the text with Liszt's symphonic poem.

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[11] James Bryant Conway, "Musical Sources for the Liszt Études d'exécution transcendante: A Study in the Evolution of Liszt's Compositional and Keyboard Techniques," DMA diss., (U. of Arizona, 1969).
[12] Helen Hall, "The Evolution of Liszt's Compositional Style as Reflected in the Three Versions of the Transcendental Etudes," MA diss. (U. of Victoria, BC, 1984).
[13] Franz Liszt, *Klavierwerke, Etüden I* (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1970).
[14] Dr. Zoltán Gárdonyi, editorial note to Liszt, Franz: *Klavierwerke, Etüden I* (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1970).
[15] Walker, *Liszt,* 717.
[16] Fry, "Liszt's *Mazeppa*."

Scholars have made only sporadic references to *Mazeppa*. Most of these pertain only to the three preliminary versions written for piano, and the metamorphosis into the so-called "final"[17] piano version of 1851. Walker only briefly mentions the *Étude* in his biography and in a few articles,[18] but discusses the orchestrated *Mazeppa* in reference to Liszt's extreme technical demands on the orchestra, making the understated observation that Liszt "was taking a risk when he asked the strings in *Mazeppa* to divide into eleven distinct parts."[19] Jim Samson includes one chapter[20] tracing the compositional evolution of *Mazeppa* in his book, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work*.

At the end of the 1851 version of *Mazeppa*, Liszt includes a quote from Hugo's poem: "Il tombe enfin! et se relève Roi," meaning "He falls at last, and rises as a king!"[21] Understanding Liszt's obsession with Mazeppa requires some background about the legend. As a Cossack chief, Mazeppa (1640-1709)[22] is famous for leading a revolt against Russian Tsar Peter I, who was invading Ukraine, in the Battle of Pultova.[23] However, his fame in the nineteenth century stems from an event that occurred earlier in his life. As a young man, Mazeppa was caught having an affair with the wife of a Polish nobleman. As punishment, he was strapped naked to the back of a wild horse and cast into the wilderness, where he was followed by wolves, dragged across a river, and suffered under the burning sun. The horse collapsed onto Mazeppa, dead from exhaustion, and Mazeppa found himself fighting off vultures while struggling to stay

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[17] Gárdonyi, Liszt *Etüden I*.
[18] Walker, "Liszt and the Keyboard," 719.
[19] Walker, *Liszt Weimar*, 301.
[20] Samson, 198-226.
[21] Franz Liszt, *Complete Etudes for Solo Piano, Series I: Including the Transcendental Etudes* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc, 1988), 180.
[22] Fry, 3.
[23] Ibid., 3.

alive.[24] Once a Cossack tribe saved his life, Mazeppa began his rise to power in the Cossack army.

The story of Ivan Mazeppa was well known in the nineteenth century through the works of Byron and Hugo.[25] Based on the epic ballad by Byron, Hugo's poem (see Appendix, p. 140) is in two parts: the first depicts Mazeppa's wild journey, and the second, as Samson says, "goes on to elaborate an allegory of the suffering artist, with the horse as the driving force of genius, undergoing a kind of death and resurrection."[26] Liszt included the quote from Hugo's poem, leading scholars and performers to assume that this literary work was the basis for the musical one. However, Samson argues that strophes three and four more accurately depict that of Byron.[27]

Beyond merely orchestrating *Mazeppa*, Liszt significantly recomposed his own work, nearly doubling it in length with the addition of the extensive *finale*. While some of the material used in this coda is derived from the strophic material already contained in the earlier versions, a sizable amount is entirely new. An investigation into this material, and the compositional method of *thematic transformation* that encompasses Liszt's style, will form the basis of chapter 3.

One can learn a great deal about a composer's development by tracing compositional processes. It is rare to find a work that exists in so many distinctive versions as *Mazeppa*. Liszt began writing it at the age of sixteen; his last version of *Mazeppa* was not completed until he was sixty-three. Furthermore, the symphonic poem opens up new windows into Liszt's conception of the piano work. The fact that one can

[24] Samson, 201.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., 203.

trace the evolution from the solo piano *Étude* into Liszt's orchestrated version step-by-step through the manuscript drafts, especially during the height of Liszt's period of orchestral composition, is certain to bring new insights to pianists tackling the complexities of *Mazeppa.*

Not only will this study inspect all versions of *Mazeppa* from the perspective of thematic transformation, but it will also attempt to bring new insight into Liszt's own aural concept of the music through his manipulation of the orchestra as a "tool of musical expressiveness." As Samson states, "It will be useful to trace the evolution of the [orchestral version] through its main compositional stages. This could form a major study in itself."[28] A careful analysis of the orchestration through its various stages will afford better understanding of Liszt's conception of the original work for piano, which in turn will greatly assist the pianist striving to personalize his or her interpretation of the work.

[28] Ibid., 209.

## *Chapter Two*

## *Tracing the* Études' *Structural Development*

The orchestral version of *Mazeppa* is a nearly prototypical example of Liszt's use of "thematic transformation," defined by MacDonald as the "process of modifying a theme so that in a new context it is different but yet manifestly made of the same elements."[1] The original 1826 version reveals none of this, but is rather a very straightforward work, as the table below demonstrates.

**Table 2.1. Structural analysis of *Étude en douze exercices*, no. 4 (1826).**

| | |
|---|---|
| **A-section (mm. 1-25)** | **D minor to A minor** |
| **Retransition (mm. 25-40)** | **Dominant pedal in D minor** |
| **A' (mm. 41-57)** | **D minor** |
| **Closing material (mm. 57-65)** | **D minor** |
| **Coda (mm. 65-77)** | **D minor** |

Over the course of forty-eight years between 1826 and 1874, Liszt shaped and reshaped, expanded and broadened *Mazeppa* from its unadorned bipartite original. The untitled *Étude* begins by simply and directly establishing the opening tonality of D minor, self-contained within a harmonically straightforward eight measure antecedent/consequent phrase, moving from i to V in measures 1 through 4, then V back to i in measure 5 through 8. The motivic material continues as the work modulates to the dominant (m. 13) in anticipation of the retransition (mm. 25-40), which heightens the

[1] Hugh Macdonald: "Transformation, Thematic", *Grove Music Online,* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 30/01/2007), http://www.grovemusic.com.

harmonic tension as it embellishes the dominant through stepwise motion (voice exchanges between the hands of G-A-B-flat). After a return of the opening material at m. 41, a thirteen measure coda brings the work to a close.

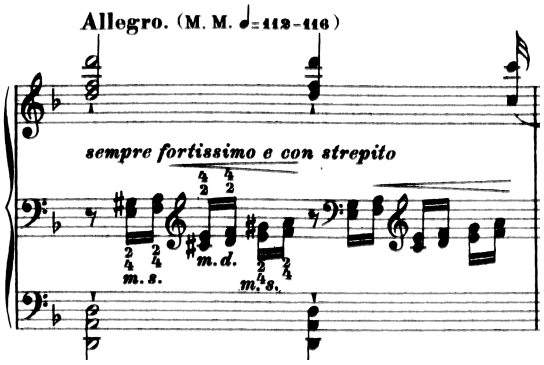
The retransition, containing an extended dominant pedal point, intensifies the return of the opening. The *Étude's* essential progression is from the tonic to the dominant and back; applied chords are sparse, augmented-sixth chords do not appear, and the only modulation is to the dominant.

The thematic material does not undergo transformation. Liszt's aim in composing this *Étude*, along with the remainder of the set *Étude en douze exercices*, was certainly less ambitious than the work's later manifestations. The *Études* are structurally simple (albeit well crafted and balanced architecturally) because Liszt's intentions here were akin to those of his teacher at the time, Carl Czerny: works suitable for development of "dexterity" and "velocity", as the titles of Czerny's *The Art of Finger Dexterity for the Piano, Op. 740* and *The School of Velocity for the Piano, Op. 299*, assert.

One might be tempted to write off the work as a trifle, to be used for early development of a student's technique. Upon further analysis, however, the significance of Liszt's motivic figures and technical features becomes apparent. The more often performed 1851 version of *Mazeppa* is famous for its ascending thirds in the accompanimental pattern for which Liszt employed an unusual—and technically difficult—fingering (see example 2.1). In a succession of three ascending thirds in each hand, the fingering indication by Liszt requires a repetition of 4-2 (for the left hand) and 2-4 (for the right hand) for each third, rather than replacing the more conventional pattern

of the 1826 version (see example 2.2). This fingering ensures that the articulation is detached rather than slurred.

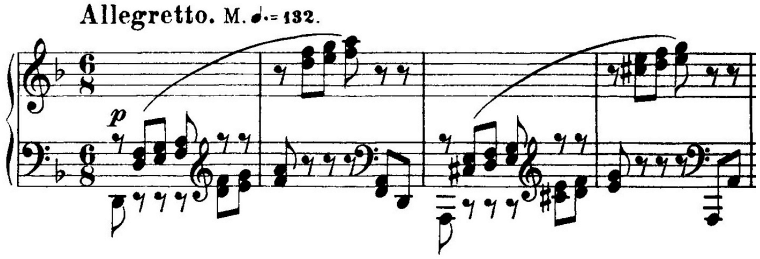
**Example 2.1.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1851), m. 7.**




Liszt had not yet developed this fingering technique for the 1826 version, but instead slurs each group of nine ascending thirds, which implies that they are to be played legato (see example 2.2). It is precisely these ascending thirds that form the accompanimental material for the 1840 version of the *Étude*.

A complicating factor that appears in the 1826 version is hand crossing; the rising motive in thirds alternates between the hands, requiring virtuosic leaps (see example 2.2).

**Example 2.2.** ***Étude en douze exercices*****, no. 4 (1826), mm. 1-4.**




Such hand crossing, interestingly, only exists in this earlier version of the *Étude* and its final manifestation as *Mazeppa* from the *Études d'exécution transcendante* of 1851. It is not utilized in versions two and three.

### *A Technical Genius Expands His Vision*

As the young Liszt began a concert career (1839-1847) rivaled by virtually no one, Liszt's need for virtuosic music at his level of technical ability became paramount. By 1839 he had developed his technique to levels surpassed by no other pianist; indeed, in 1831 Liszt heard the great violinist, Paganini, and was determined to translate such ferocity of technique to the piano:

> For two weeks my mind and my fingers have been working like two damned souls. I practice exercises four to five hours a day (thirds, sixths, octaves, tremolos, repeated notes, cadenzas, etc.) Oh! Provided I don't go mad, you will find an artist in me! Yes, an artist such as you desire, the kind that is necessary today. 'And I too am a painter!' cried Michelangelo the first time he saw a masterpiece. Although insignificant and poor, your friend has been repeating unceasingly these words of the great man since the last performance of Paganini. What a man, what a violin, what an artist! Good heavens! How much suffering, misery, and torture in those four strings![2]

Appropriately, in 1837 he turned to his early set of *Études* as the platform. In recomposing these works, Liszt extensively revised the entire set, even to the point of eliminating one of the *Études*. This version of the set omits the original No. 11 and replaces it with a transposed version of No. 7; a newly composed *Étude* took the place of No. 7. Furthermore, each one was expanded compositionally to the point of doubling the overall length of the set.

Liszt transformed *Étude No. 4* (still untitled) from its fleeting 77 measures into a large-scale work embodying thematic transformation.` The primary motivic device of the 1826 version—that of the ascending thirds—is reduced to the accompanimental pattern (see example 2.3).

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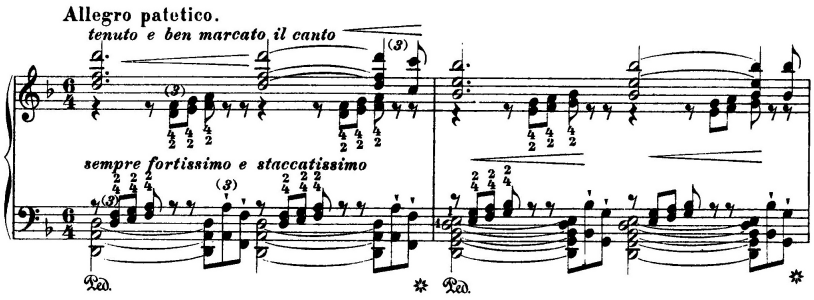
[2] J. G. Prodhomme, "Liszt et Paris," *La Revue Musical: Liszt* (May 1928), 112, quoted in Bertrand Ott, *Lisztian Keyboard Energy*, trans. Donald Windham (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), 3.

**Example 2.3. *Douze grandes études*, no. 4 (1837) mm. 1-2.**




A discussion of the 1837 version in light of programmatic elements of *Mazeppa* is not appropriate, as Liszt had not yet given a title to the work. However, its character is clear enough. Indeed, the detached, ascending thirds have a driving and forceful character reminiscent of a galloping horse. The chords on the strong beats might signify the power of the horse; that the bass holds on to the tonic pedal into measure two supports this imagery.

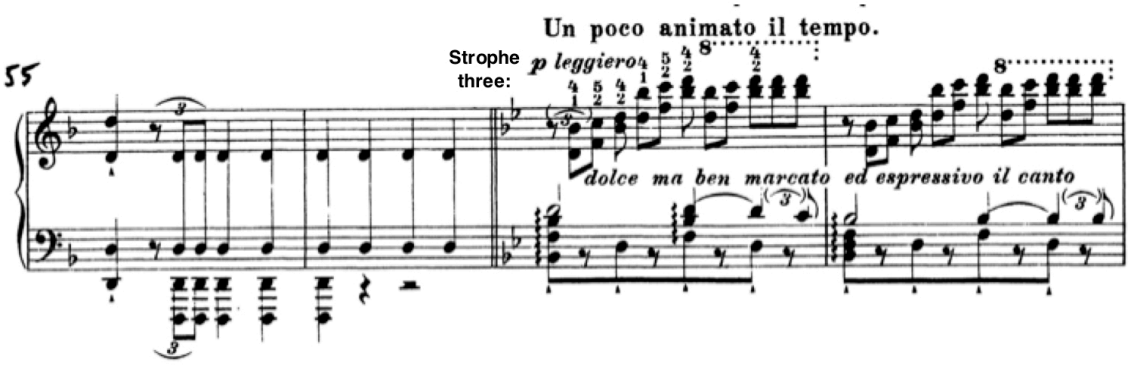
The accompanimental motive, together with the heroic right hand theme and the strong chords in the bass, combine to form the "three handed" technique. This texture is relatively consistent throughout the six thematically transformed strophes of the *Étude*, although the accompanimental material is continually developed.

Liszt's 1826 *Étude No. 4* is bipartite, and contains little, if any, development of the "thematic" material. In the 1837 version, however, thematic development becomes paramount. While most of the strophes are in D minor, the third is in the relative major, B-flat (mm. 57ff). It is this strophe that most clearly exemplifies thematic transformation. Where the first two have a very similar atmosphere—that of a driving and forceful quality, as if Liszt is portraying a wild horse's gallop—strophe three is marked *leggiero* and *dolce ma ben marcato ed espressivo il canto* (see example 2.4). Samson finds it difficult to relate strophes three and four to Hugo's poem, but suggests

that the strophes "could be fitted quite nicely to Byron's."[3] Here, the "*canto"* is now in the left hand and the accompaniment in the right, which now develops the accompanimental thirds from strophes one and two into ascending sixths, fifths, and thirds. The thinner and less abrasive basso accompaniment, with its staccato articulation of the harmony, creates a lighter and more playful atmosphere.

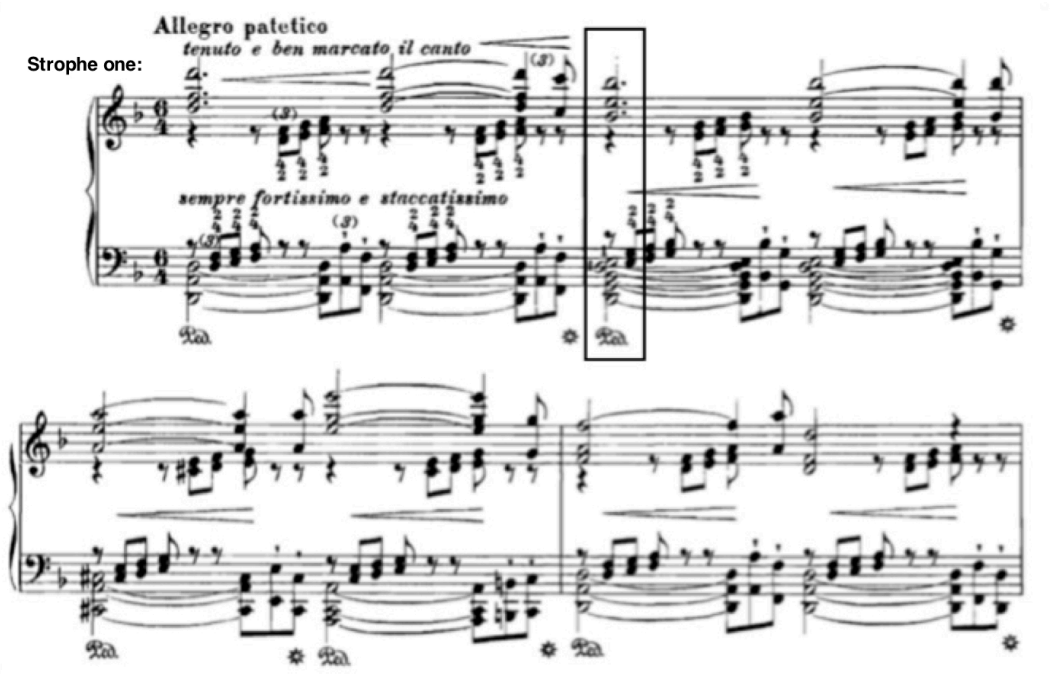
[3] Samson, 203.

**Example 2.4. *Douze grandes études*, no. 4 (1837) mm. 55-58.**



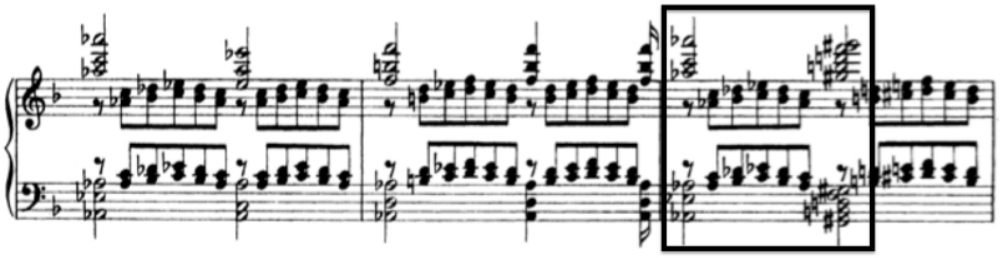

Furthermore, the harmonies in strophe one tend towards strong dissonances as the section progresses, whereas strophe three generally contains fewer dissonant chords. Exemplifying these dissonances in strophe one is the downbeat of measure two of its opening, partially as a by-product of the melodic descent to the sixth scale degree that sits atop a half-diminished-ii 4/2 chord as it leads to the dominant (see example 2.5). Liszt simplifies the dissonance of the corresponding passage in strophe three, utilizing an initial melodic descent from the third scale degree to the tonic that allows for a simple root position tonic chord sustained over the preliminary two measures.

**Example 2.5. *Douze grandes études*, no. 4 (1837) mm. 1-4.**




Texturally, strophes one and two contain similar elements, but in the latter, Liszt extends the use of the ascending thirds. In strophe one (mm. 1-16), the thirds are passed from the left to right hands as they ascend; however, for the subsequent strophe Liszt thickens the accompanimental texture by doubling these thirds between the hands and extending the motive such that it ascends and immediately descends. Marked *fortississimo* and *energico sempre*, the intention here is undoubtedly to heighten intensity. Indeed, modal shift also becomes important: strophe one includes a motion through F major to A major (mm. 4-8), whereas strophe two (in its correlating location, mm. 29-32) modulates through F minor to A-flat major, a shift requiring the use of an enharmonic modulation (A-flat to G-sharp diminished seven, see example 2.6, m. 36) to bring the harmony back to its original key of D minor.

**Example 2.6. *Douze grandes études*, no. 4 (1837), mm. 34-36.**



The change in meter is significant: strophe one is in 6/4, followed by 4/4 until strophe five, which becomes 6/8, and finally strophe six is in 2/4. While compound meter enables greater breadth of phrase, Liszt's move into the meter of 2/4 in the final strophe evokes a frenzied atmosphere through its fragmented meter. Table 2.2 traces the form and metric shifts in the three versions that we have been considering.

**Table 2.2. Musical indications for individual strophes.**

| | **1837** | **1840** | **1851** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Introduction** | n/a | mm. 1-5 | mm. 1-6 |
| **Strophe one** | mm. 1-16 | mm. 6-21 | mm. 7-22 |
| Tempo: | *Allegro patetico* | *Allegro patetico* | *Allegro* |
| Meter Signature: | 6/4 | 6/4 | 4/4 |
| Other Indications: | *tenuto e ben marcato il canto sempre fortissimo e staccatissimo* | *tenuto e ben marcato il canto sempre fortissimo e staccatissimo* | *Sempre fortissimo e con strepito* |
| **Strophe two** | mm. 25-39 | mm. 30-44 | mm. 31-55 |
| Tempo: | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Meter Signature: | 4/4 | 4/4 | (remains 4/4) |
| Other Indications: | *energico sempre* | *energico sempre* | *sempre fortissimo* |
| **Strophe three** | mm. 57-72 | mm. 62-77 | mm. 63-77 |
| Tempo: | *Un poco animato il tempo* | *Un poco animato il tempo* | *Lo stesso tempo* |
| Meter Signature: | (remains 4/4) | (remains 4/4) | (4/4) |
| Other Indications: | *leggiero (for accompaniment) dolce ma ben marcato ed espressivo il canto* | *leggiero (for accompaniment) dolce ma ben marcato ed espressivo il canto* | *il canto marcato e vibrato assai* |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strophe four** | mm. 74-91 | mm. 79-96 | mm. 80-92 |
| Tempo: | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Meter Signature: | (4/4) | (4/4) | (4/4) |
| Other Indications: | *espressivo e un poco marcato il canto l'accompagnamento piano e leggiero* | *espressivo e un poco marcato il canto l'accompagnamento piano e leggiero* | *il canto expressivo ed appassionato assai* |
| **Strophe five** | mm. 107-122 | mm. 110-125 | mm. 114-129 |
| Tempo: | *Allegro animato* | *Allegro animato* | *Animato* |
| Meter Signature: | 6/8 | 6/8 | 6/8 |
| Other Indications: | *sempre fortissimo e marcatissimo* | *sempre fortissimo e marcatissimo* | *leggiero, mezzo-piano* |
| **Strophe six** | mm. 128-151 | mm. 131-154 | mm. 136-159 |
| Tempo: | n/a | n/a | *Allegro deciso* |
| Meter Signature: | 2/4 | 2/4 | 2/4 |
| Other Indications: | *fff, staccato con bravura* | *fff, staccato con bravura* | *fortissimo* |

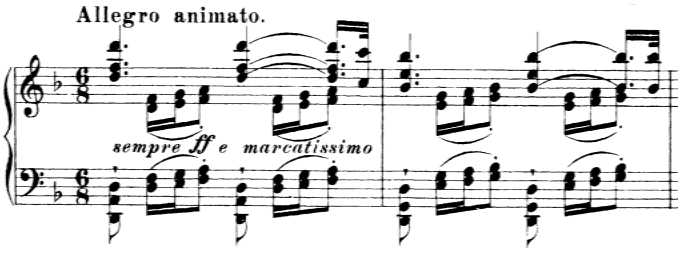
Strophes three and four form a balancing pair to strophes one and two; while the general character of the first two strophes, in D minor, is penetrating and forceful, that of strophes three and four, in B-flat major, is at times sweet, peaceful, and pensive. The same tempo and performance instructions are maintained throughout strophes three and four, and the texture is similar, the primary difference between three and four being that the melody and accompaniment are in different hands, along with a slight thickening of the accompanimental texture.

Harmonically, strophes three and four are not very different from one another. Only the endings differ significantly: strophe three arrives ultimately at a Phrygian cadence in the key of G minor (m. 72), while strophe four, beginning in B-flat major, moves towards the key of C minor (mm. 88-91), then continues via a phrase extension (mm. 92-97) into a repeat of transition material (mm. 97-106).

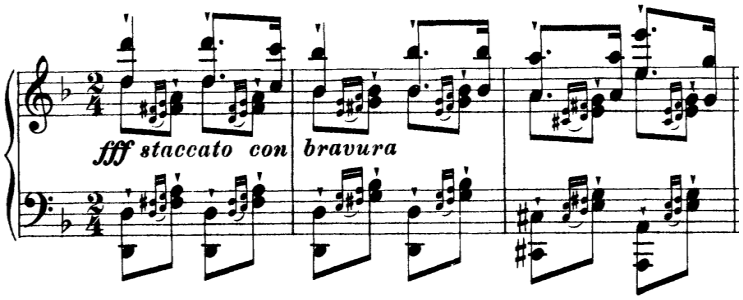
Rhythmically agitated, *Allegro animato* strophes five and six are marked successively *sempre fortissimo e marcatissimo* and *triple-forte staccato con bravura*. Rhythmically, these strophes contain virtually identical, yet progressively condensed, material (see example 2.7).

**Example 2.7. *Douze grandes études*, no. 4 (1837)**

**2.7a. Strophe five mm. 107-108.**



**2.7b. Strophe six mm. 128-130.**




The accompanimental ascending thirds form the basis for motivic continuity between strophes five and six. However, the change of meter greatly increases the intensity between strophe five and strophe six; this is a kind of metric modulation that causes the melody to become faster. The motivic/textural material that Liszt implements seems to necessitate a meter of 6/8, but strophe six changes to 2/4, creating an atmosphere of impatience. Indeed, the ascending thirds change from metrically settled sixteenths to hurried grace notes. The transitional material leading into strophe six contains the markings *accelerando* and *tumultuoso*, indicating a more dramatic and climactic final statement of the theme.

Thematic transformation in strophes five and six includes a modal shift to the tonic major. This modal shift is briefly abandoned at the beginning of the coda (into which strophe six flows smoothly), but the final measures of the 1837 version end in D major. The coda itself is a dramatically heroic passage, marked *con strepito sempre fortissisimo* and *rinforzando*, containing rapid arpeggiated chords over a thick chordal melody in the left hand.

Beyond the thematic transformation in Liszt's 1837 *Étude No. 4*, one must consider the use of transitional and concluding material. While the work does not yet contain an introduction, virtually all of the transitional material to be later used is present,

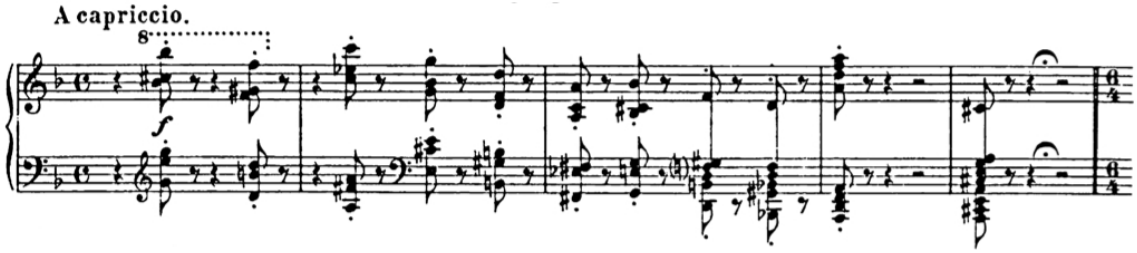
and the coda contains the basic musical material that Liszt further developed in his 1840 and 1851 versions. The development of the introduction and coda will be discussed at length below.

### *The Introduction of an Introduction: 1840*

Offering a glimpse into the symphonic poem's expanded structure, Liszt includes an introduction in the 1840 version (example 2.8a). The five bar phrase leads to a half cadence in D minor and is followed by a fermata over a rest. Harmonically and structurally, this also provides the framework for the introduction of the 1851 *Mazeppa* (example 2.8b).

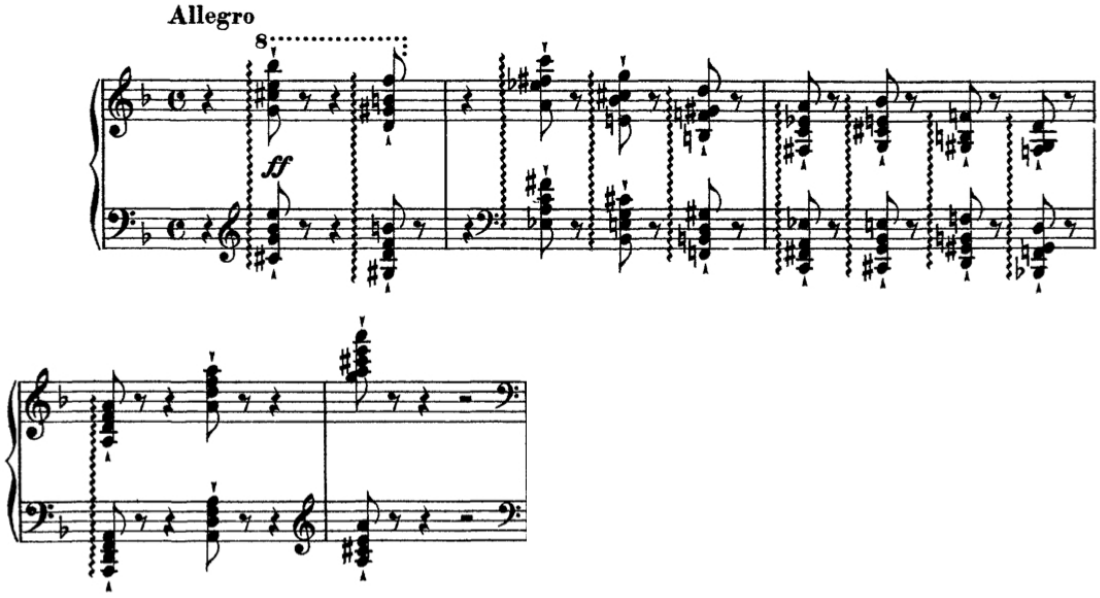
**Example 2.8. Comparison of introductions in 1840 and 1851 versions**

**2.8a. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 1-5.**



**2.8b. *Études d'exécution transcendante*, no. 4, *Mazeppa* (1851)**

**mm. 1-5.**



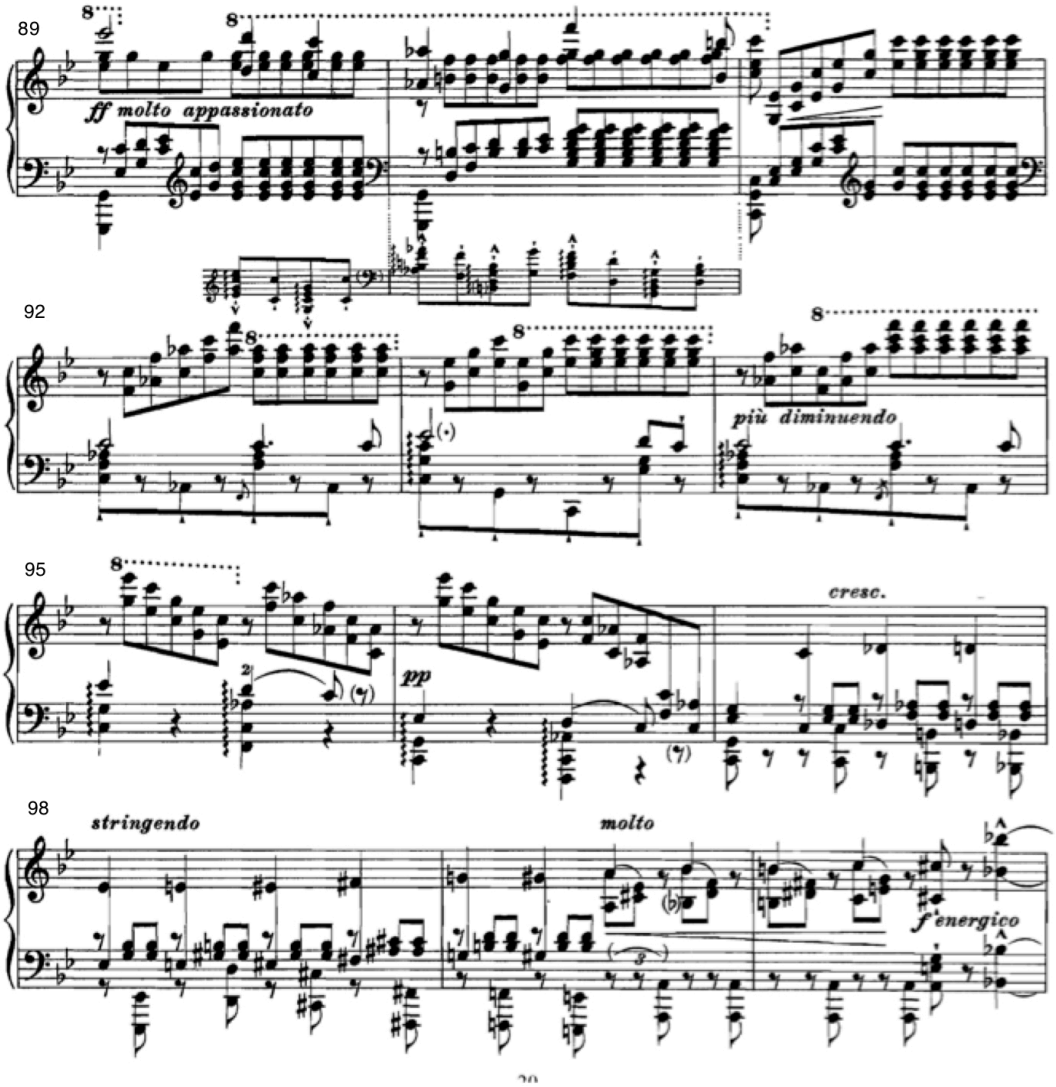

In the earlier version, the chords are each contained within the range of one octave per hand; the 1851 version, on the other hand, calls for rolled chords that span tenths, which enhance the agitated character of the introduction.

Liszt's 1837 and 1840 versions are very similar. Along with the introduction, only two other sections are distinctly altered: the transitional material from strophes four to five, and the coda, which is slightly expanded.

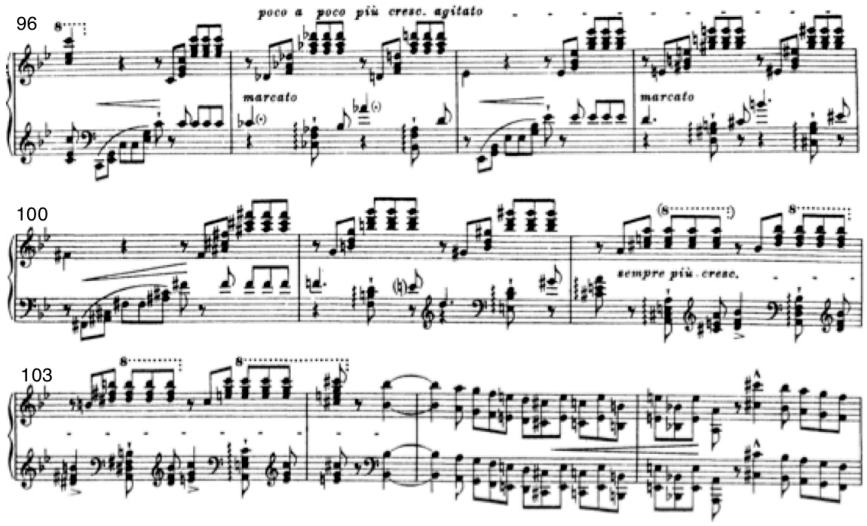
Liszt reworks the transitional material in the 1840 version between strophes four and five extensively; ten bars were excised from the 1837 *Étude* (example 2.9a, mm. 91-100) and replaced, in the 1840 *Étude*, with new material (example 2.9b, mm. 96-104). Tonally, though, the material in the 1840 version remains the same as the 1837 version, ascending through minor thirds (C minor, E-flat major, F-sharp major, A major).

**Example 2.9. Comparison of transitional material to strophe five.**

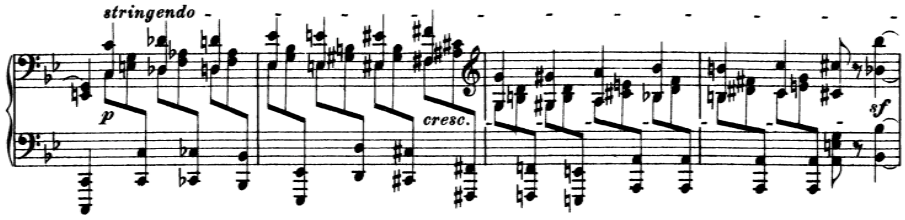
**2.9a. *Douze grandes études*, no. 4 (1837) mm. 89-100.**



**2.9b. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 96-106.**



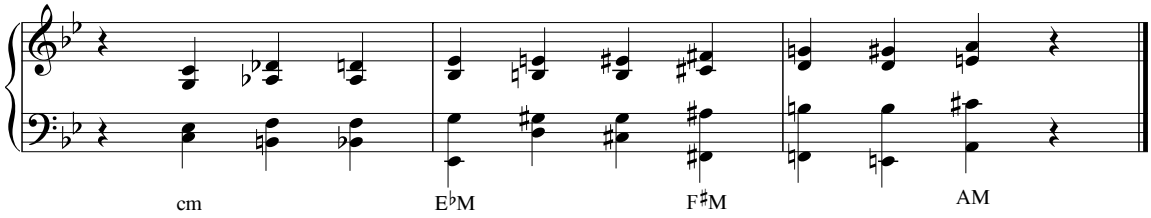

**2.9c. *Études d'exécution transcendante*, no. 4, *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 105-108.**




Liszt returns to the original material in the 1837 version (mm. 97-100) for the "final" reworking of 1851 (mm. 105-108), slightly altering the material's rhythmic structure (example 2.8c). Harmonically, each passage contains a modified omnibus progression[4] as outlined below:

[4] According to Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne in *Tonal Harmony With an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 6th ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2009), 477: "The omnibus, a coloristic sequential succession of chords traditionally used to harmonize a *nonfunctional* chromatic bass line, is also a chromatically saturated chord succession."

**Example 2.10. Omnibus progression in *Mazeppa*.**

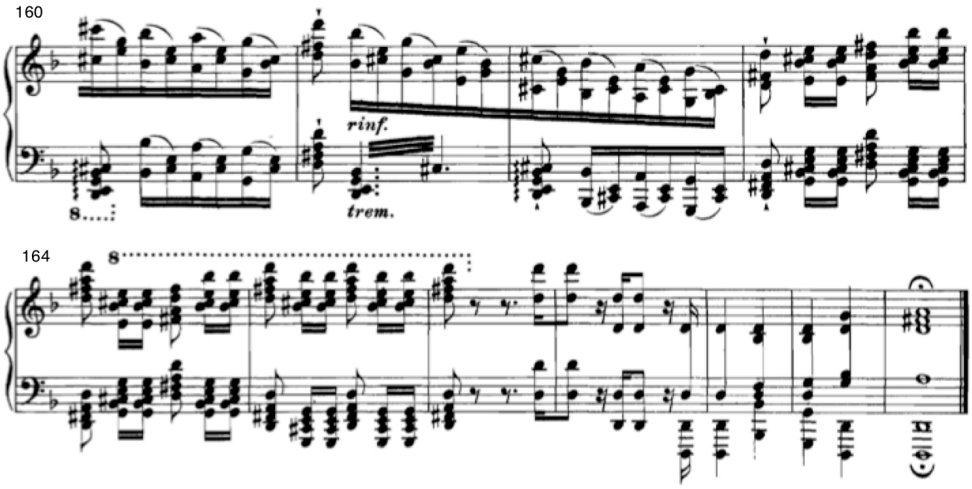



The section leads to the exact same transitional octaves Liszt uses here in the early 1837 version.

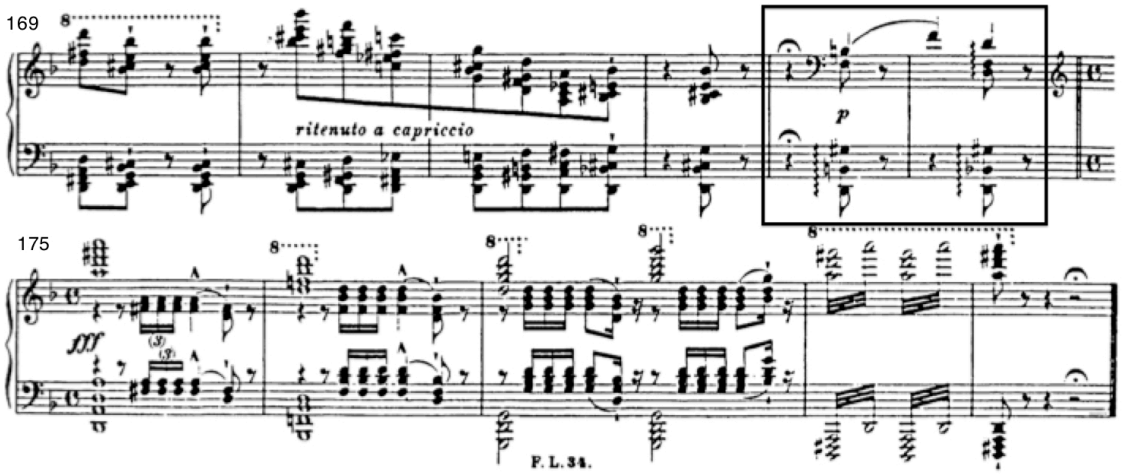
In a departure from the 1826 version, Liszt ends both the 1837 and 1840 versions with a plagal cadence (see example 2.11). While the cadential structure of the 1837 *Étude* remains intact for the first entitled *Mazeppa* (I-VI-iv-I), the coda to this 1840 version is expanded to more than twice its original length. Indeed, the final three bars that contain this simple harmonic progression are enlarged in grandeur, scope, and motivic complexity:

**Example 2.11. Comparison of final bars.**

**2.11a. *Douze grandes études*, no. 4 (1837) mm. 160-170.**



**2.11b. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 169-179.**




The 1840 version dramatically introduces two mysterious measures (mm. 173-174) that are distinctly separated from the rest of the coda (example 2.11b). Containing a slurred and ascending melodic diminished fifth, the material foreshadows the much more elaborate coda in the 1851 version. Liszt also uses this material in the symphonic poem, which is discussed in chapter three. Fry suggests that the motive, in its final form in the symphonic poem, could be a "musical depiction of the accentuation of the hero's name, Ma-zép-pa."[5] The fact that Liszt indicates a slur only from the B to the F (correspondingly "Ma-zép") supports this notion, as by necessity there is a separation between the second and third syllables ("zep-pa"). In the 1840 version, this passage is introduced by a fermata over a quarter rest and remains the only section since the middle of the fourth strophe marked *piano*. Harmonically, it moves chromatically from $vii^{o4}{}_3$ of the dominant to an inverted German augmented-sixth chord as it leads back to I for the final grandiose cadential progression.

[5] Fry, 47.

Immediately preceding this pensive moment in the 1840 version, three bars (mm. 170-172) spiral out of control (example 2.11b). Liszt uses a tonic pedal, over which successive diminished seventh chords rise chromatically in the left hand and descend through perfect fourths in the right. Marked *ritenuto a capriccio* and containing violent dissonances, the material perfectly represents the dramatic death of the wild horse.

What is the significance of this passage? Why did Liszt so boldly expand this material to the larger *Più Moderato* in the 1851 version? It seems that Liszt was striving to programmatically reflect Mazeppa's struggle to rise from his near death adventure. It is important to note that the 1840 version of *Mazeppa* is based on and, for the first time, named for Hugo's poem. The nebulous material leading to the German augmented-sixth chord seems to represent the graphic depiction in Hugo's poem of the dead horse, surrounded by vultures and lying atop the helpless, bloody and weeping Mazeppa:[6]

| | |
|---|---|
| Le cheval tombe aux cris de mille oiseaux de proie, | The horse falls to the cries of a thousand birds of prey, |
| Voila l'infortuné gisant, nu, misérable, tout tacheté de sang, | Here the unfortunate one, lying helpless, naked, miserable, all stained with blood, |
| Le nuage d'oiseaux sur lui tourne et s'arrête; | The cloud of birds turn on him and stop; |
| Maint bec ardent aspire à ronger dans sa tête, ses yeux brûlès de pleurs. | Many a burning hot beak eager to peck at his head, his eyes burn wth tears. |

Despite the brief length of this coda, its dramatic power is shocking and evocative. This material undergoes significant manipulation in the final solo piano version, leading into the entirely new second part of the symphonic poem.

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[6] Ibid., 16.

### *Refinement of an Étude for Solo Piano*

The 1851 *Mazeppa* contains more extensive reworking of the material from the 1840 version than the *Étude* from 1840 does from the 1837 version. Understanding historical events in Liszt's life will help elucidate the meaning of his great compositional output around the time of his final revision to the solo *Études.* In 1847, at the age of thirty-five, Liszt officially retired from the concert stage. As Alan Walker puts it, "In retrospect we can see that this was one of the wisest decisions Liszt ever made. By stepping down when he was still relatively young, and at the height of his powers, he kept the legend of his playing untarnished."[7] Liszt's exclamation, "Always concerts! Always to be a valet of the public! What a trade!"[8] reflects his apparent desire for more time to compose both works for piano, and—more importantly—works for orchestra. A simple glance at Liszt's works list for orchestra, which includes thirteen symphonic poems, demonstrates his feverish output of orchestral works beginning in 1847.[9]

As previously mentioned, even the first part of the introduction is slightly elaborated. Furthermore, a passage marked *Cadenza ad libitum* extends the dominant by introducing a flurry of spiraling scales (example 2.12).

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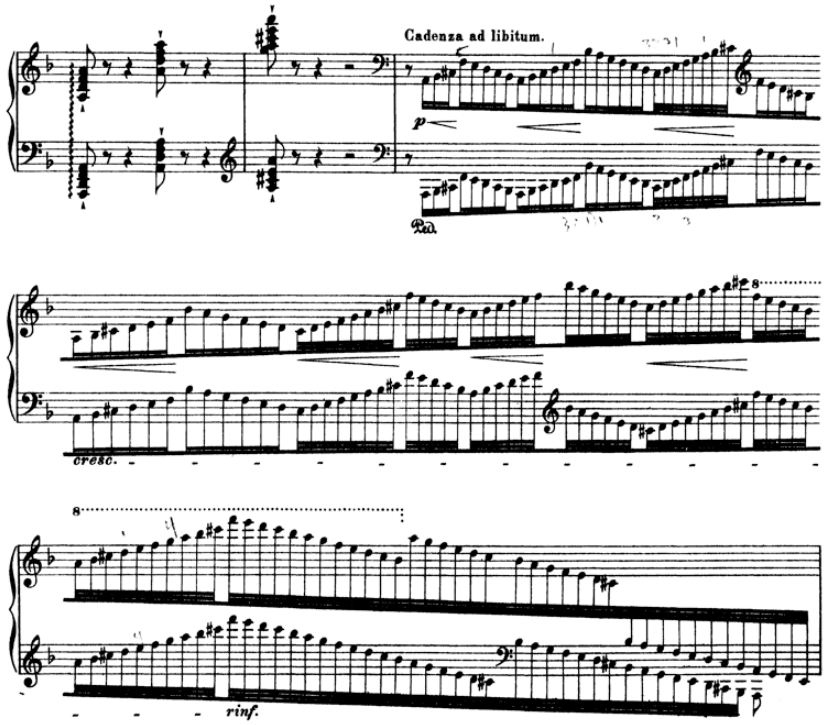
[7] Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years, 1811-1847* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 442.
[8] Margit Prahács, ed., *Franz Liszt: Briefe aus ungarischen Sammlungen 1835-86* (Kassel, 1966), 50, quoted in Walker, *Liszt: The Virtuoso Years,* 442.
[9] Alan Walker, *et al*, "Liszt, Franz" in *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.library.juilliard.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/48265pg28 (accessed June 19, 2009).

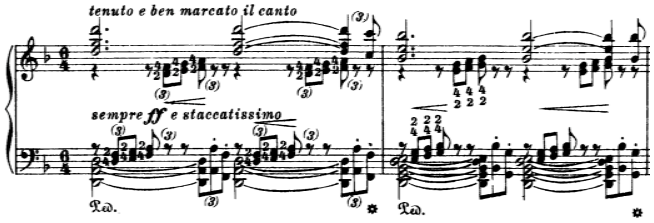
**Example 2.12.** ***Études d'exécution transcendante*****, no. 4,** ***Mazeppa*** **(1851) mm. 4-6.**



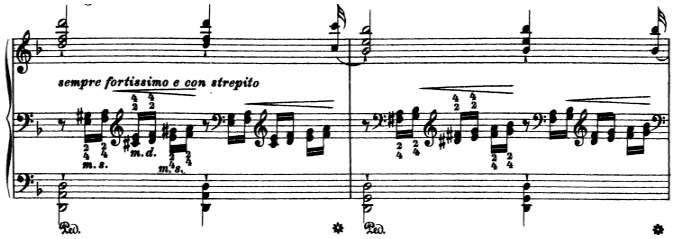

The meter signature for strophe one (m. 7) in the 1851 version is 4/4, which changes the rhythmic drive of the first strophe when compared with the 1840 version (see table 2.2). Liszt originally places this material in a compound 6/4 meter, utilizing ascending thirds in triplet eighths for the accompanimental pattern. For the final revision, though, the meter allows for much more rhythmic angularity; the ascending thirds become paired duple sixteenth notes initiated by an eighth rest, eliminating the fluidity of consistent triplets (see example 2.13).

**Example 2.13. Comparison of strophe one.**

**2.13a. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 6-7.**




**2.13b. *Études d'exécution transcendante*, no. 4, *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 7-8.**




Liszt redistributes the accompaniment: the three ascending thirds in each hand transform into three pairs of neighboring thirds, forcing the left hand to cross over the right.

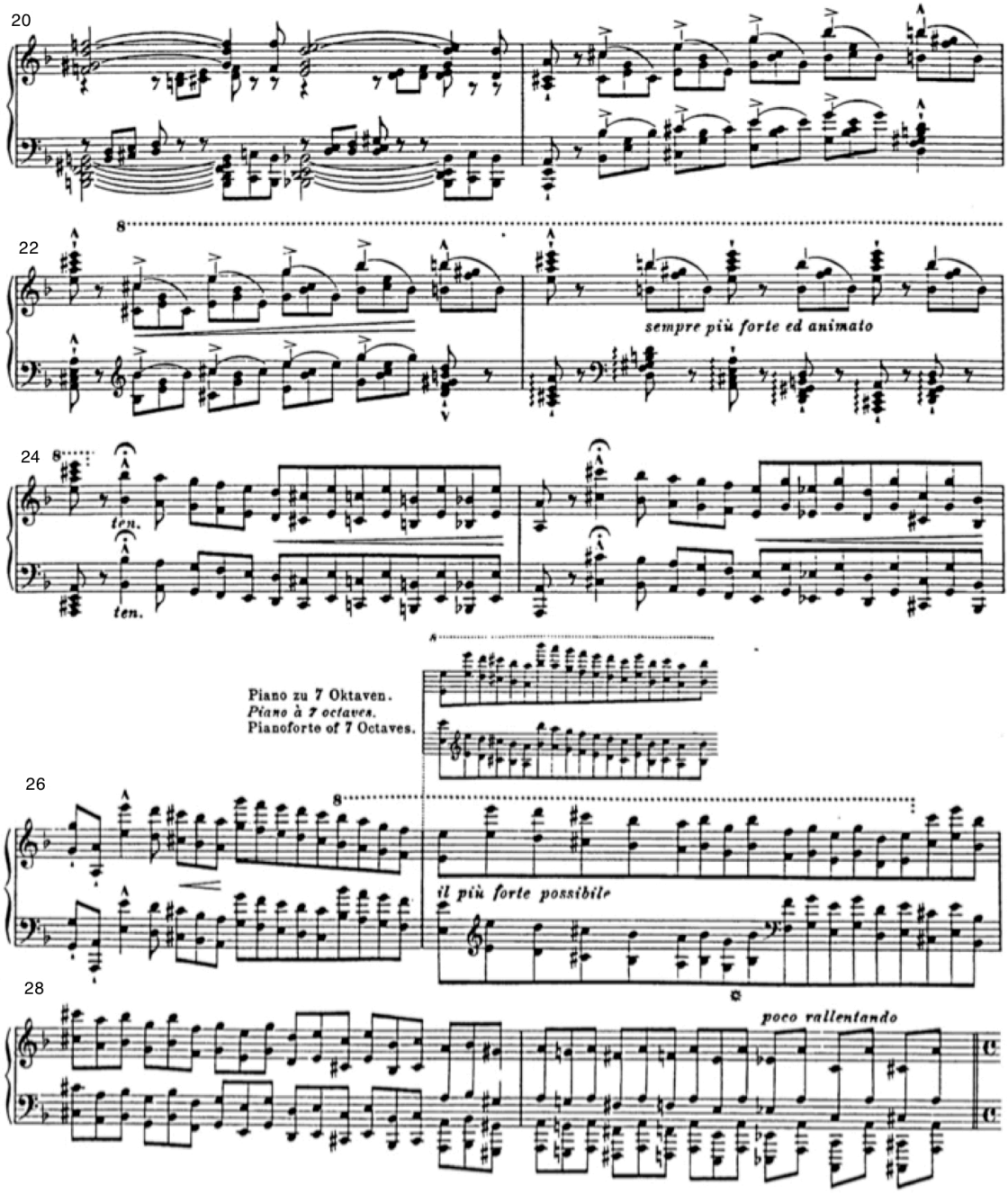
Just as he does with most of the other *Études* in the 1851 version, Liszt thins out the textures, clarifying voicing and enabling more technical fluidity through the set. *Mazeppa* exemplifies this quite immediately in the first strophe with its simplification of the bass. The reduced density of notes in the lower register draws the listener's attention towards the ascending thirds rather than to the overpowering bass of the 1840 version. Pianistically, this eases the technical demands of the passage. Furthermore, the elimination of the left hand octave arpeggiation propels the accompanimental motive's ascent to the melody and underscores the linearity of the material.

The harmonic structure of strophe one remains essentially the same in both the 1840 and 1851 versions. Arriving at a half cadence (m. 23 in 1840 version, m. 22 in

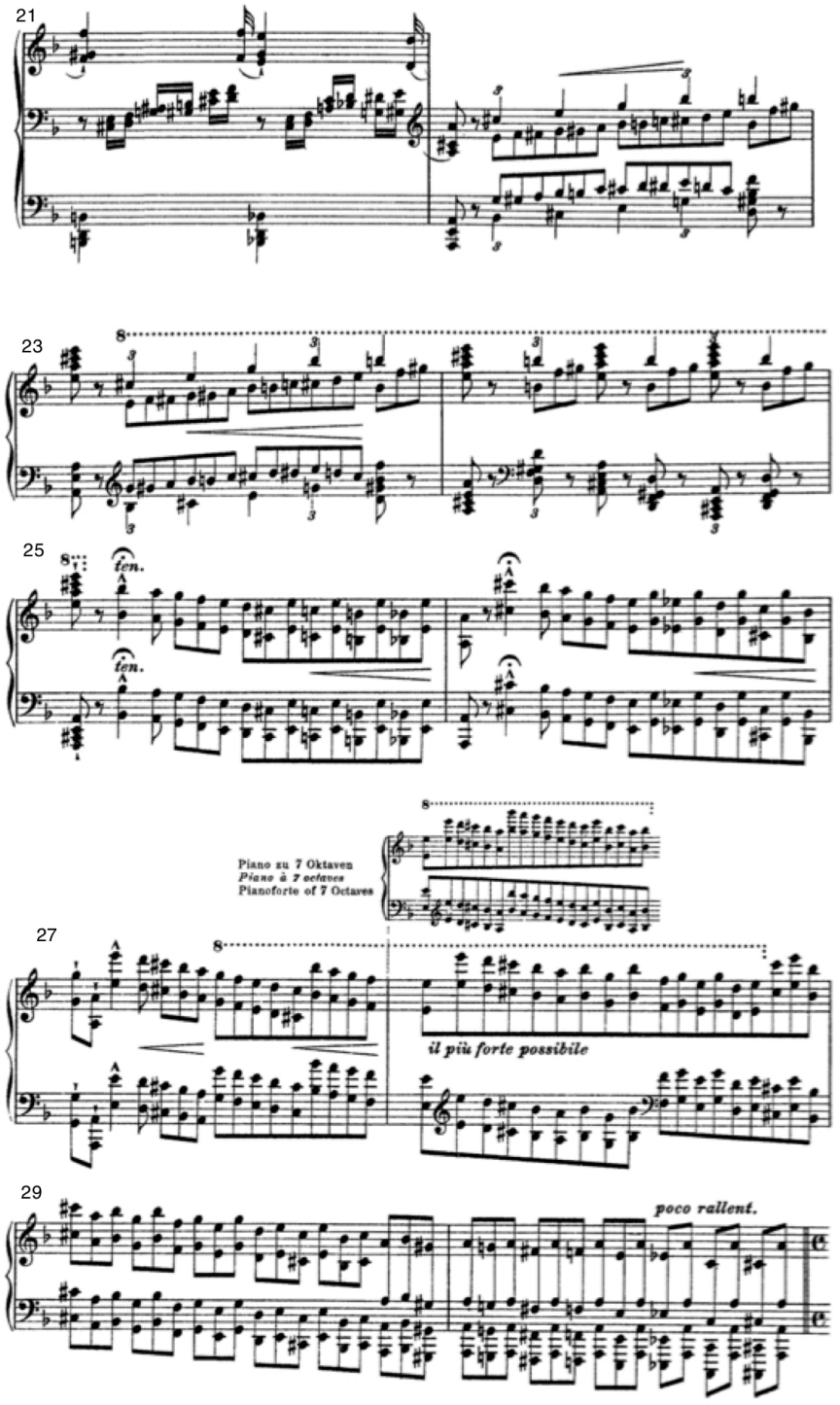
1851 version), the strophe continues into transitional material that Liszt elaborates through the use of chromatic scales ascending in parallel sixths. The reworked transition encompasses the same harmonic progression, an arpeggiated figure through a fully diminished seventh chord (see example 2.14).

**Example 2.14. Comparison of first transition.**

**2.14a. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 20-29.**



**2.14b.** ***Études d'exécution transcendante*****, no. 4,** ***Mazeppa*** **(1851) mm. 21-30.**

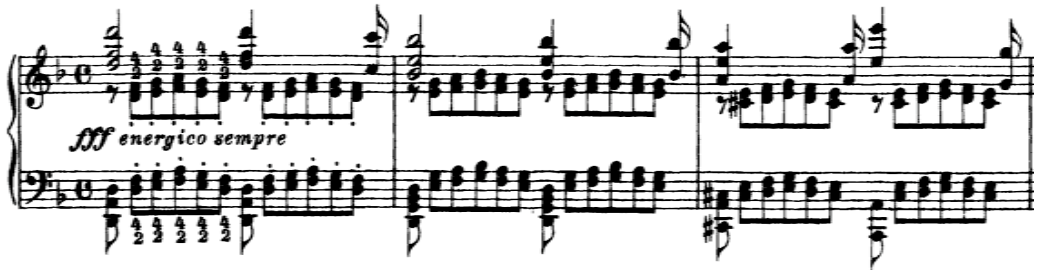



No better example of texture simplification exists in this work than the second strophe. In the 1840 version, the indication *fortississimo energico sempre* supports the

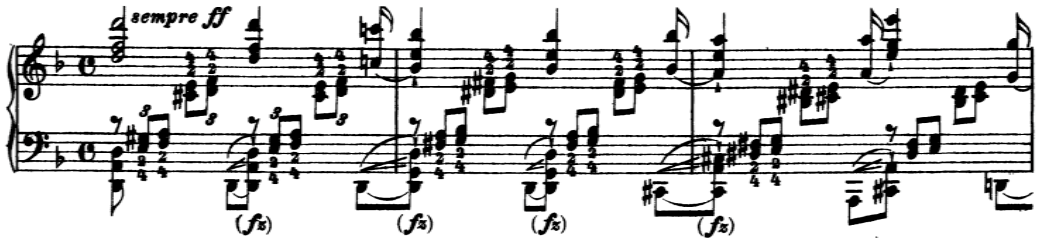
dense texture in the accompaniment. In reducing his use of thirds, Liszt was able to maintain the ascending pattern of the previous strophe (see example 2.15).

**Example 2.15. Comparison of strophe two.**

**2.15a. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 25-27.**




**2.15b. *Études d'exécution transcendante*, no. 4, *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 31-33.**




The 1851 version continues the reduction of accompanimental thirds in the concluding portion of the strophe. Aside from a brief expansion of i to vii$^{o7}$ (mm. 43-46), the second strophe also maintains the harmonic structure of the earlier version. To emphasize the tonality of D, the 1840 version ends the transition between strophes one and two with repeated D octaves; the 1851 version expands this to ascending and descending chromatic scales in interlocking octaves, all bookended by prominent D octaves. These D octaves serve a two-fold process: not only do they reinforce the final tonality of strophe two, D major, but they also anticipate the beginning of the melody in strophe three and prepare the listener for the B-flat major modality. As in the 1837 and 1840 versions, strophes

three and four depart from the previous strophes by beginning the melody on the third scale degree rather than the tonic.

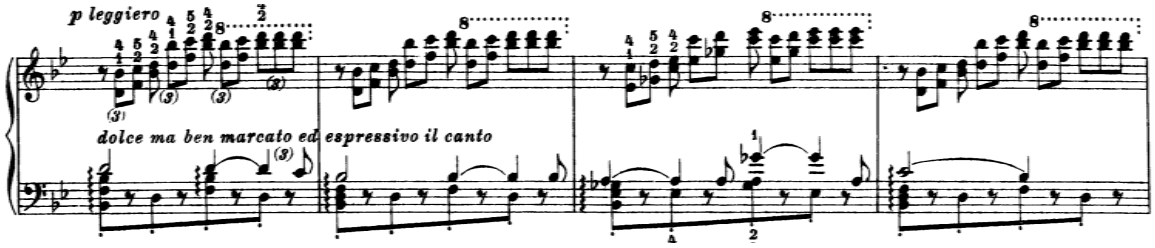
Strophes three and four remain harmonically identical in both the 1840 and 1851 versions. Significantly, the tempo for these strophes is *un poco animato il tempo* in the 1840 version, while 1851 remains *lo stesso tempo*. As Jim Samson states, "strophes three and four are translated into a real 'slow movement,' their tonal differentiation from the outer sections supplemented by contrasts of texture and character."[10] Of course, there is no tempo change for these strophes, but the changes of texture, character, and key area group them together as a contrasting secondary area.

In the 1840 version, strophe three contains a slightly more intricate right hand that mimics the accompanimental thirds, lending a degree of continuity to the entire work. Liszt simplifies the right hand of strophe three into arpeggiated harmonies. Furthermore, the triadic right hand provides a simple harmonic background that enables the left hand melody to stand out. The 1840 version more clearly draws the listener's attention to this motive through its relationship with the original stepwise ascending thirds, whereas the 1851 version simplifies the accompanimental pattern in order to redirect the listener's focus towards the left hand line (example 2.16).

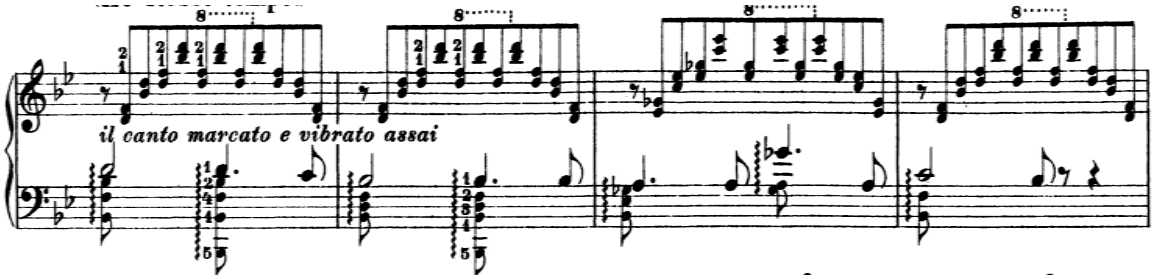
[10] Samson, 205.

**Example 2.16. Comparison of strophe three.**

**2.16a. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 62-65.**



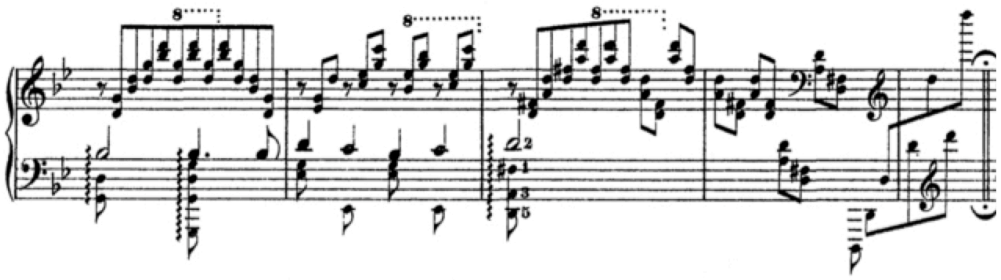

**2.16b: *Études d'exécution transcendante*, no. 4, *Mazeppa* (1851) mm 63-66.**




In the 1851 version, Liszt reworks the metric emphasis of the third strophe through a registral expansion of the bass on the third beat of the measure. As the left hand expands downward towards beat three, the right hand reaches the crest of its arch-like shape at the top of the keyboard. Thus, Liszt effectively creates waves of sound that more closely imitate a full orchestra in register and timbre. The indication *il canto marcato e vibrato assai* (see example 2.16b) is perplexing. Creating a vibrato on the piano is impossible, but bearing in mind that this version was completed after the *particella*, one might assume the original intention is for the orchestra. However, Liszt did not include the indication *vibrato* in the symphonic poem's corresponding point. This leads one to speculate as to the meaning of the marking for piano. Perhaps the *vibrato* means to let the melody ring above all other material, or the intention could be a psychological effect, supporting the waves of sound created in this strophe. Liszt also

expands the final two bars by sounding every D on the keyboard successively from the bottom to the top (see example 2.17).

**Example 2.17. *Études d'exécution transcendante*, no. 4, *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 76-80.**

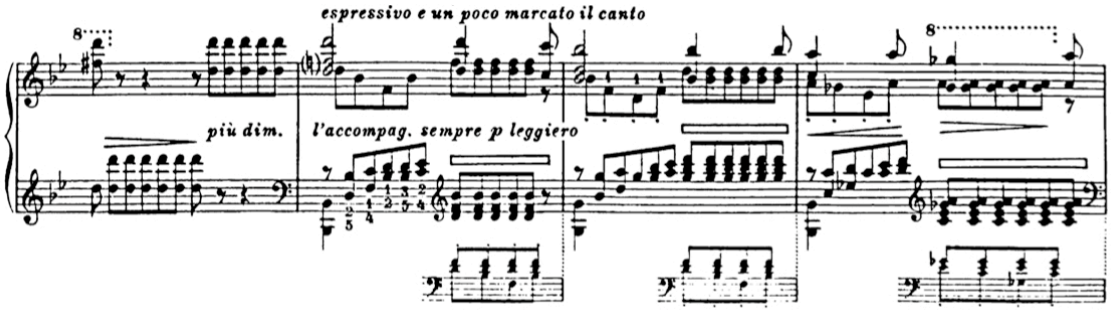


That Liszt had just finished the first draft of his orchestral version of *Mazeppa* (January, 1851) when he wrote this fourth piano version strongly indicates that orchestral timbre, registration, and instrumentation already played a huge role in this 1851 piano version.

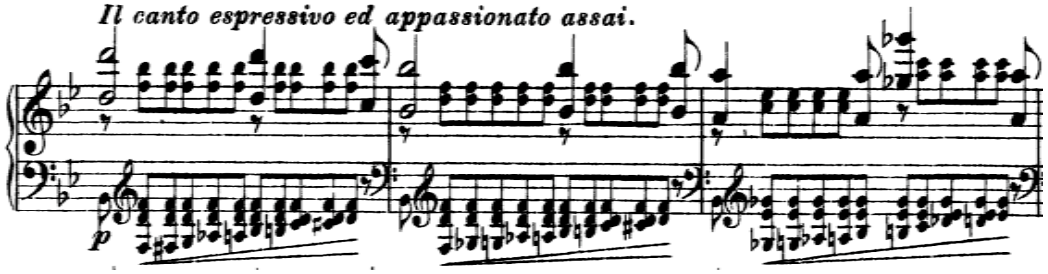
Like strophe three, the fourth contains much textural revision in the 1851 version (see example 2.18).

**Example 2.18. Comparison of strophe four.**

**2.18a. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 78-81.**




**2.18b. *Études d'exécution transcendante*, no. 4, *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 82-84.**



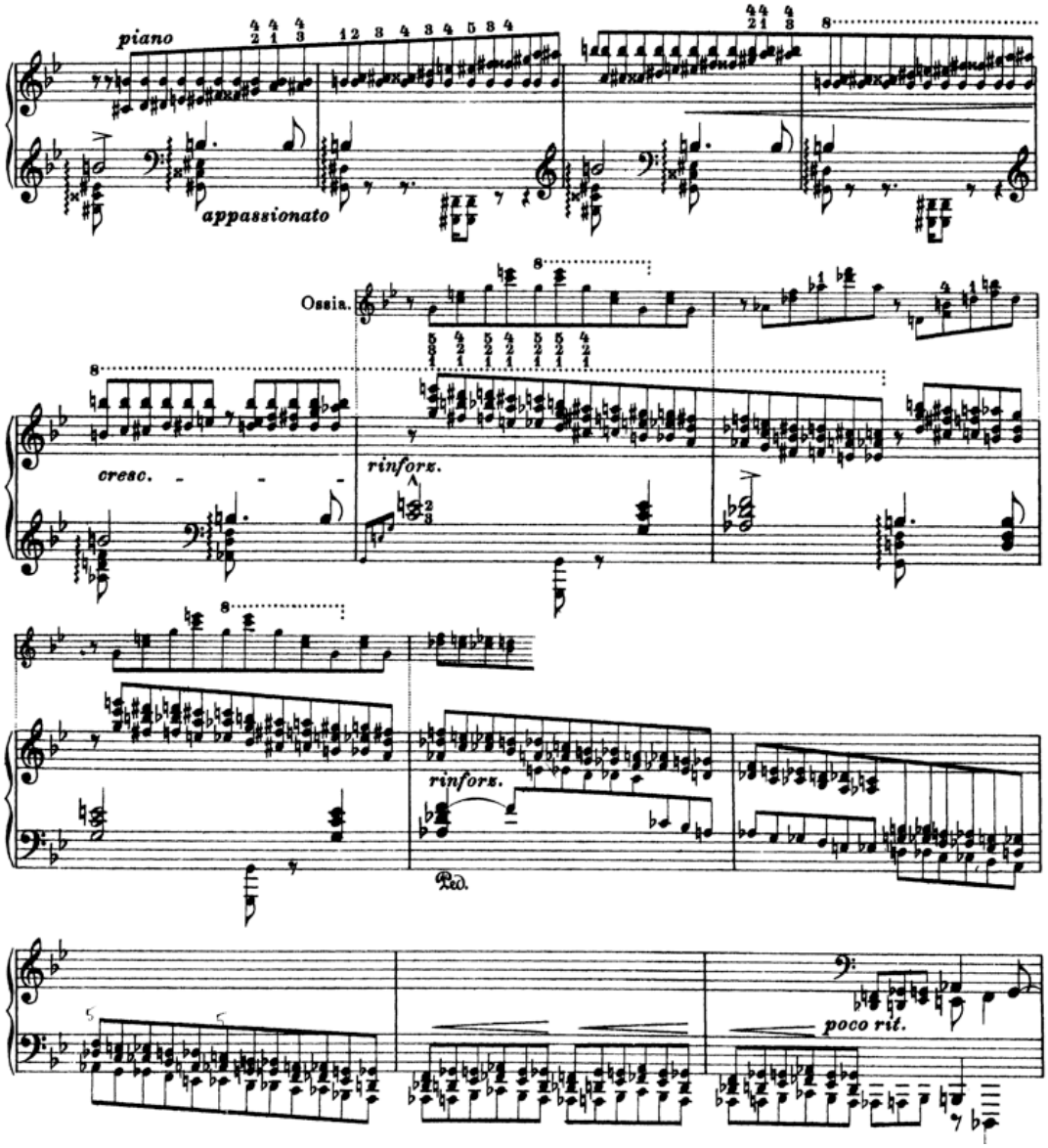

Even the melodic chords are thinned to purely octaves, just as the accompanimental bass is simplified to single notes from octaves. However, the inner accompanimental chords are "chromatically enriched,"[11] with an ascent through sixths in the lower voice of the left hand in each measure; this effectively thickens the texture and evokes a hazier atmosphere, perhaps reminiscent of a delirious and exhausted Mazeppa struggling to survive the wild horse ride.

Liszt continues his heavy use of chromaticism in this strophe in the transition into the recurring interlude (mm.94-106, see example 2.19). Whereas the 1840 version grows

[11] Ibid., 207.

in dynamic and textural intensity, the 1851 version incorporates spiraling chromatic scales and chords in the right hand across the keyboard, culminating in a chromatic descent of first inversion chords. Meanwhile, Liszt expands the registration of the left hand material similar to that of the symphonic poem. The result is a pianistic exploration of orchestral timbre (see example 2.19).

**Example 2.19. Cadenza ending strophe four, *Études d'exécution transcendante*, no. 4, *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 94-106.**



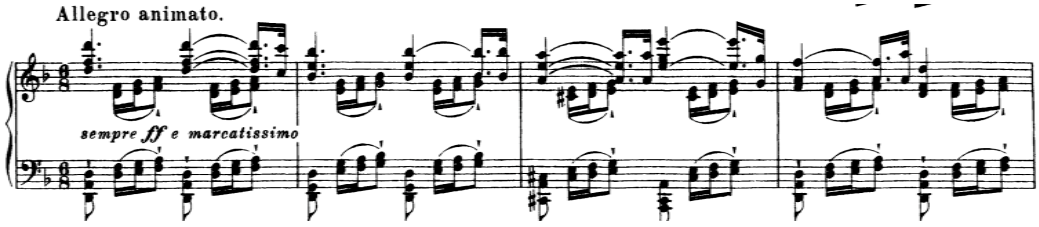

This "slow movement,"[12] comprised of the combination of strophes three and four, is isolated from the other strophes due to this almost fantasia-like expansion of material. While each of the other strophes leads straight into the interlude material, strophe four contains this expansion prior to a return to the octaves of the interlude.

[12] Ibid., 205.

Just as strophes one and two, and three and four are grouped together structurally and stylistically, the final two strophes of *Mazeppa* present a final vision of Mazeppa and the wild horse's journey. Liszt's ability to build dramatic intensity in the 1851 version reflects a more refined and mature compositional style. A glance at table 2.2 above demonstrates a huge shift from the *sempre fortissimo e marcatissimo* fifth strophe of the 1840 version to that of the 1851, where Liszt marks *mezzo-piano* and *leggiero*. Furthermore, Liszt revises the marking *Allegro animato* to *Animato* for the 1851 version. However, the most significant revision to this strophe is, once again, in the accompanimental pattern: the 1840 version contains three stepwise ascending thirds in each hand, whereas the 1851 version vastly simplifies this texture to one third in each hand preceded by a grace note of unprepared lower neighbors (example 2.20). This duplicates the previous transformation of the second strophe from the 1840 to the 1851 versions.

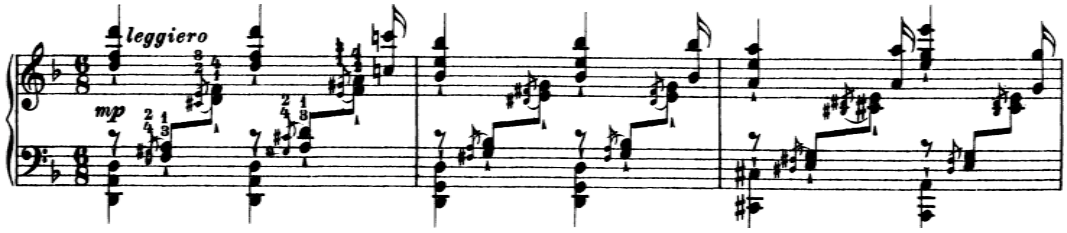
**Example 2.20. Comparison of strophe five.**

**2.20a. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 110-113.**



**2.20b.** ***Études d'exécution transcendante*****, no. 4,** ***Mazeppa*** **(1851)**

**mm. 116-118.**

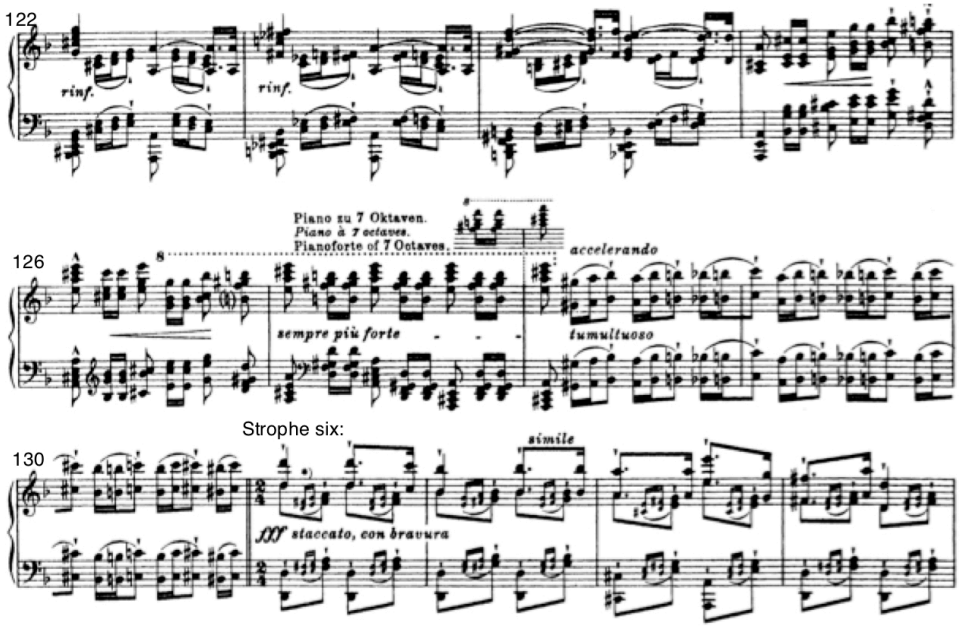



This textural modification, coupled with the indications of tempo, dynamic, and character, create a more scherzando-like atmosphere, which prepares the climactic final strophe of the 1851 version with a greater degree of anticipation. The real arrival point of drama is the *Allegro deciso* of the final strophe, as opposed to the seemingly unending barrage of sound in the 1840 version.

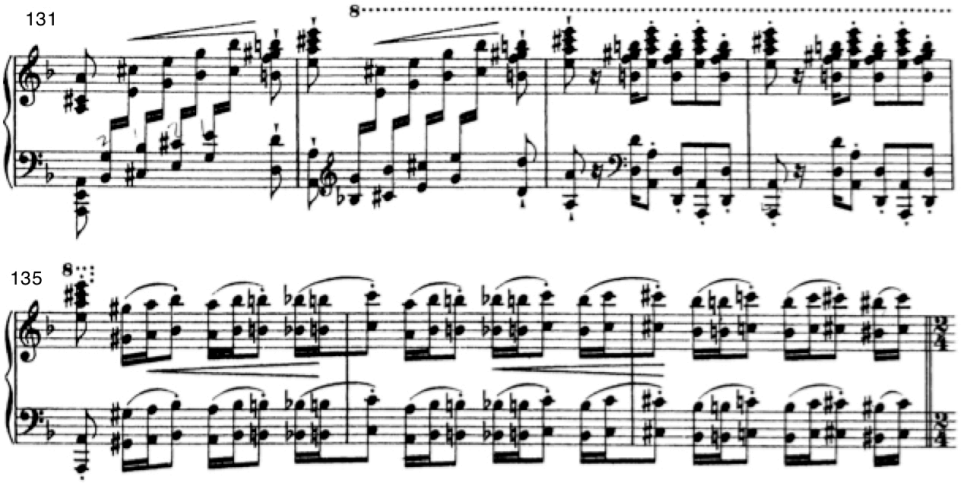
To emphasize this new scherzando character, Liszt also simplifies the cadential extension after the half cadence near the end of strophe five (example 2.21). The 1840 version contains more repeated chords, heightened by the indications *accelerando* and *tumultuoso*, whereas the 1851 version firstly has an alternation of ascending sixths through the $vii^{o7}$ chord, followed by the rhythmically simplified $vii^{o7}$/V to V chords:

**Example 2.21. Comparison of transition between strophes five and six.**

**2.21a. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 122-134.**




**2.21b. *Études d'exécution transcendante*, no. 4, *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 131-137.**

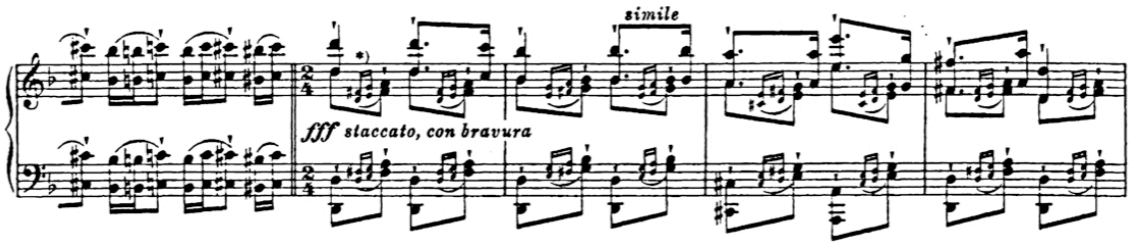



Harmonically, the fifth strophe is nearly identical to the 1840 version, but there is more chordal density in both hands.

Regarding the 1840 version of *Mazeppa*, Samson observes that the "most crucial distinction between [strophes five and six] lies not so much in their varied melodic or harmonic profiles, however, as in the progressive compression of their accompaniment patterns."[13] Indeed, this is the primary focus of Liszt's revisions here in the 1851 version as well. As discussed with regard to the fifth strophe, the accompaniment is simplified in the 1851 version, just as it is in the sixth and final strophe of the 1840 *Mazeppa*. Here, Liszt maintains the notation of grace notes, but reduced from two to one; effectively, this creates a greater degree of continuity from the fifth to the sixth strophes in the 1851 version, as the same lower neighbor relationship exists in the grace notes (see example 2.22).

**Example 2.22. Comparison of strophe six.**

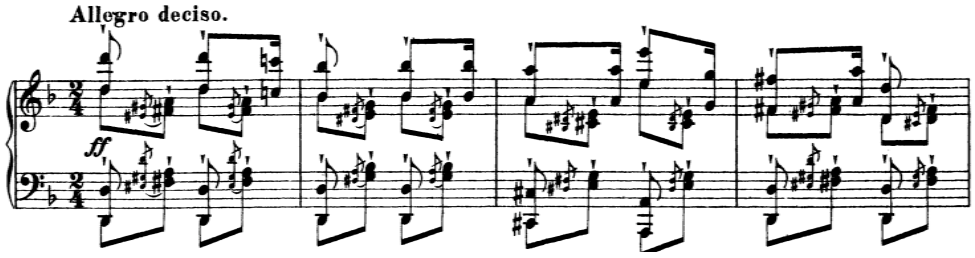
**2.22a. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 130-134.**




[13] Ibid., 203.

**2.22b. *Études d'exécution transcendante*, no. 4, *Mazeppa* (1851)**

**mm. 138-141.**



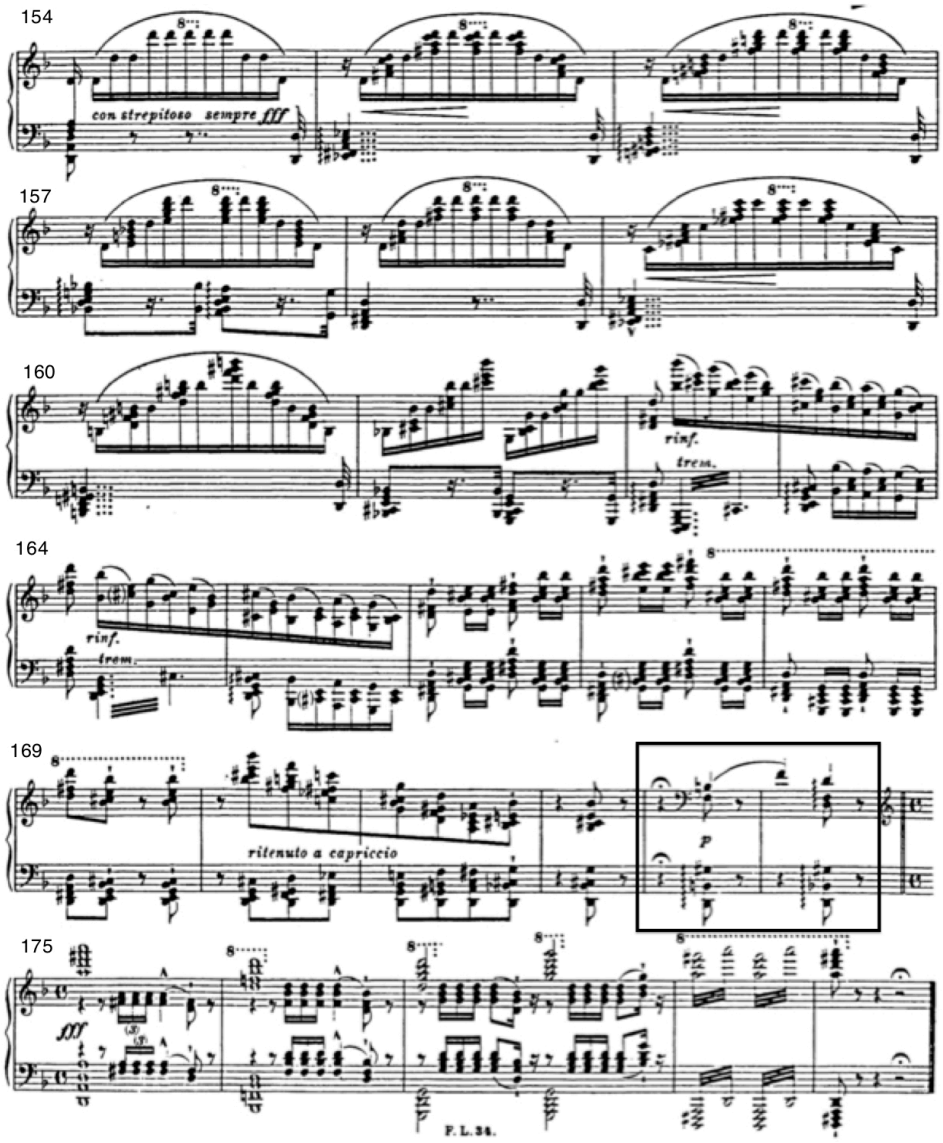

Furthermore, Liszt compresses the accompanimental pattern in the 1851 version through a realignment of the hands in strophes five to six. This corresponds to the intensification of the wild horse ride as it reaches its completion and the horse collapses, dead from exhaustion.

The harmonic progression of strophe six remains identical in both versions. However, the density of chords in the upper and lower registers is increased in this final strophe. Also, Liszt enhances the descending diminished-seventh chords with increased chromaticism as before (mm. 153-158). This rebalancing of textural thickness towards the end of the work supports Liszt's recasting of the dramatic climax in the 1851 version of *Mazeppa*.

Most significant of all in this final solo piano version is the dramatically heightened coda. The 1840 version (example 2.23a) contains only a glimpse into the programmatically diverse moments immediately after the final chordal frenzy representing the collapse of the wild horse. The 1851 version (see Example 2.23b) expands this material.

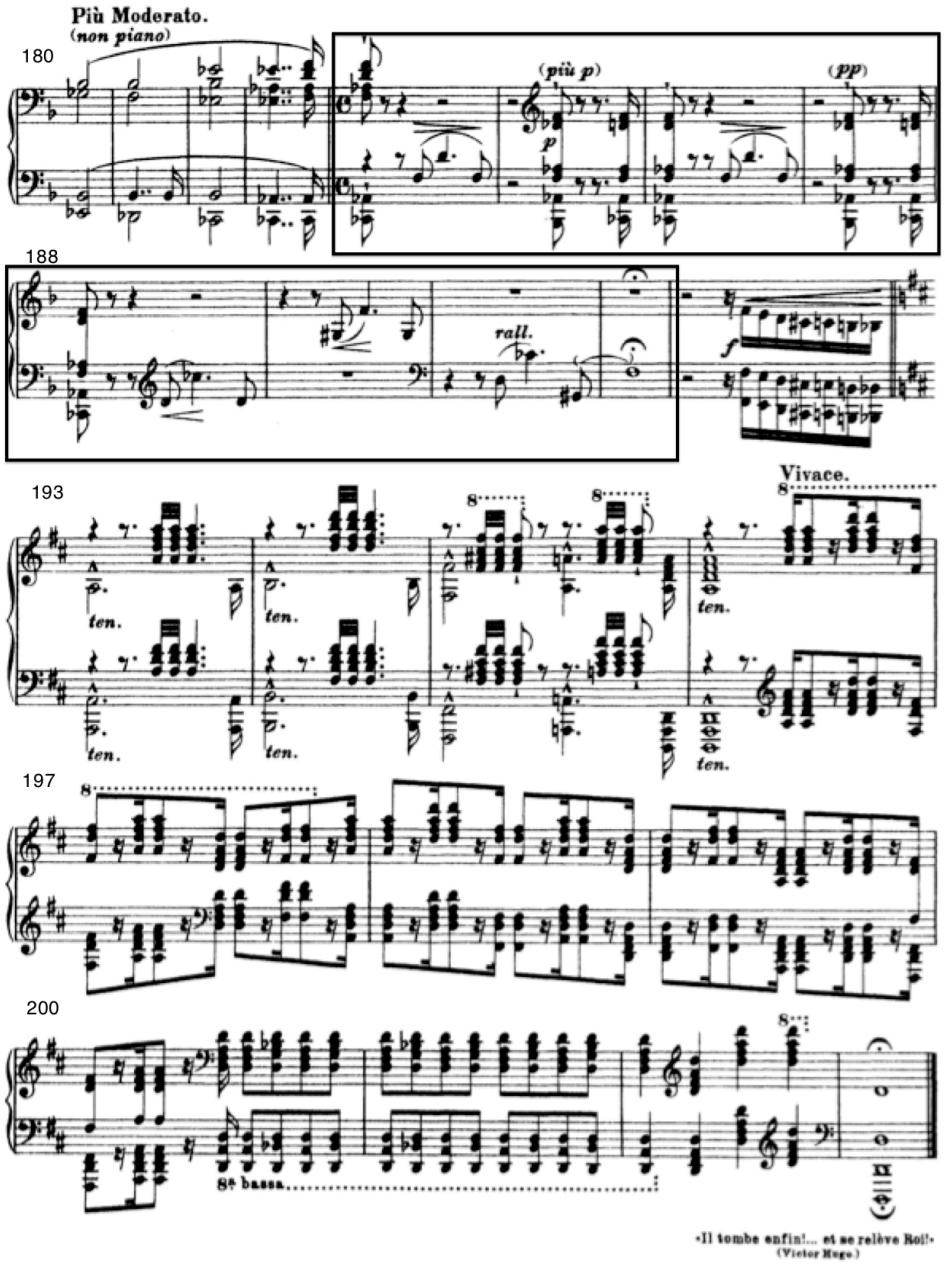
**Example 2.23. Comparison of endings of *Mazeppa.***

**2.23a. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 154-179.**



**Example 2.23b.** ***Études d'exécution transcendante*****, no. 4,**

***Mazeppa*** **(1851) mm. 180-203.**




Samson describes the moment, in its more fully realized 1851 version:

> But in the fourth version Mazeppa's cry is expanded into a very much fuller, more poignant, recitative, echoed by a contemplative, chorale-like phrase and punctuated by *secco* chords. This is rather obviously a depiction of Mazeppa helpless on the ground, as he struggles to release himself and then to drag himself across the ground ('ce condamné qui hurle et qui se traîne ce cadaver vivant…'). And following it Liszt gives us a full eleven bars of triumphant peroration ('la

> fanfare éclatante'), representing the hero's subsequent return as the ruler of the Cossack tribes. This greatly extends the chordal flourish of the earlier versions, though it still falls a long way short of the full-scale martial finale he composed for the symphonic poem.[14]

The *Più Moderato* section contains the "poignant recitative" to which Samson refers. Motivically, the ascending and descending melodic sixths that alternate with the "*secco*" chords become a significant element of the symphonic poem at critical moments. One could make a strong argument that they are derived from the fleeting ascending diminished fifth just after chordal flourish in the 1840 version, which serves to outline the diminished-seventh chord (see example 2.23a, mm. 173-174). Furthermore, the ascending melodic fifth and descending melodic sixth are the most significant motives of the main theme of *Mazeppa*, sitting as the first striking leaps in the theme.

The *Vivace* portion of the coda is expanded from the earlier version, consisting of heroic D major chords across the gamut of the keyboard. The work ends on an extended plagal cadence, after which Liszt included a quote (see example 2.23b) from Hugo's *Mazeppa*: "Il tombe enfin!...et se relève Roi!" (He falls at last…and rises a king!)

[14] Ibid., 207.

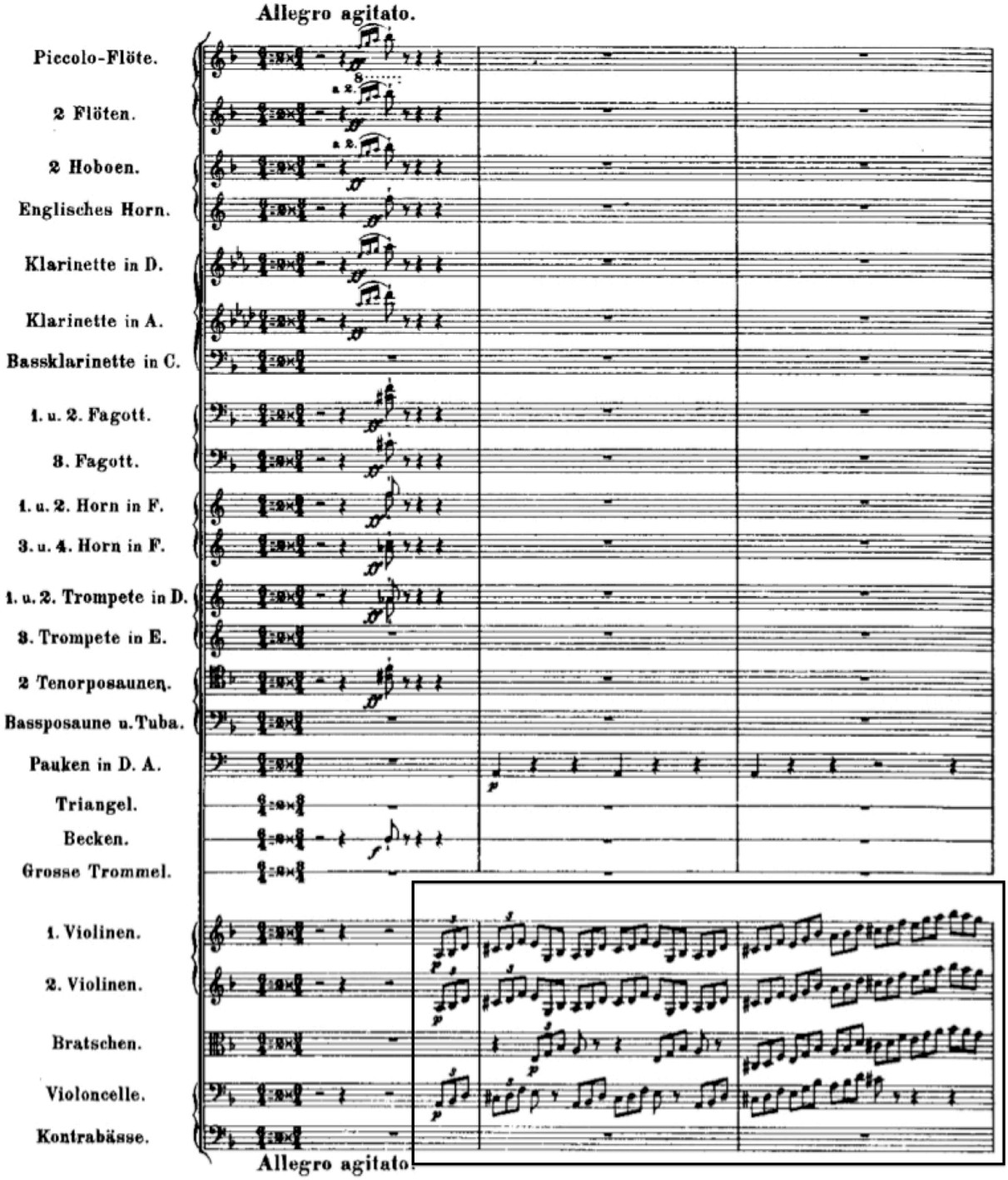
# *Chapter Three*

# *Orchestration and Transformation*

## *Introduction to the Symphonic Poem*

As discussed in chapter two, Liszt only included an introduction to *Mazeppa* once he titled it. From the start, the versions of 1826 and 1837 delve straight into the strophic material. With the 1840 version, though, Liszt wrote a five bar chordal introduction, which he expanded registrally for the 1851 *Étude*; for this final solo piano version, he follows the brief expansion with a *cadenza ad libitum,* which flows towards the first strophe in this 1851 version. It is material from this cadenza, now reworked into triplets, that forms the accompaniment for the introduction of the symphonic poem (see example 3.1).

**Example 3.1. *Mazeppa*, symphonic poem no. 6 (1854) mm. 1-3.**




Of crucial importance for this study is a chronology of composition (Table 3.1 below): Liszt completed the *particella* of the symphonic poem in January of 1851, and

the *Études d'exécution transcendante* were completed later that year. Undoubtedly some overlap of thought existed between these two compositions; the degree to which one version influenced the other is discussed in the next chapter. Before moving ahead, however, an analysis of the symphonic poem with discussion of its relationship to the previous versions of *Mazeppa* is necessary.

**Table 3.1. Timeline of compositional stages for *Mazeppa*.**

| DATE | VERSION, PUBLICATION |
|---|---|
| 1826 | *Étude en Douze Exercices* (Paris and Marseilles: Dufait and Dubois-Boisselot, 1827) |
| 1837 | *Grandes Études* (Vienna: Haslinger, 1839/Paris: Schlesinger, 1839) |
| 1840 | *Mazeppa* (Vienna: Haslinger, 1847/Paris: Schlesinger, 1847) |
| 1851 (January) | *Particella* for symphonic poem (Weimar: D-WRgs N2) |
| 1851 | *Études d'Exécution Transcendante* (Leipzig: Boosey and Hawkes, 1852) |
| 1851-1854 | *Esquisse pour Mazeppa*, draft by Joachim Raff with annotations by Liszt (Paris: F-Pc Ms. 155) |
| 1854 | *Mazeppa Stichvorlage* (engraver's copy) prepared by Raff (Weimar, D-WRgs A6) |
| 1854 | *Mazeppa*, symphonic poem (Leipzig: Boosey and Hawkes, 1856) |
| 1855 | *Mazeppa*, arranged for two pianos (Leipzig: Boosey and Hawkes, 1857) |
| 1874 | *Mazeppa*, arranged for piano, four-hands (Leipzig: Boosey and Hawkes, 1875) |

In the overarching design of the orchestral version of *Mazeppa*, the strophes are organized into three groups of two, where the first and third groups are related. The third group, or strophes five and six, then, is something of a recapitulation in the larger

structure of *Mazeppa*, both in the symphonic poem and in the 1851 piano version. Furthermore, the symphonic poem is framed by an expansive introduction (mm. 1-35) and an enormous coda (mm. 465-610). Table 3.2 details the structure of the work.

**Table 3.2. Structural chart of symphonic poem.**

| Section: | Measure numbers: | Significant Content: |
|---|---|---|
| **Introduction, Part 1** | mm. 1-19 | Triplet eighths in strings, introduction of motive "x" |
| **Introduction, Part 2** | mm. 20-35 | Motive "x" inverted, introduction of "rhythmicized horn motive" |
| **STROPHE One (D minor)** | mm. 36-50 | *Mazeppa* theme in trombones, frequent emphasis of second beat (beat 4 in the 6/4 meter) |
| Transition 1, Part 1 | mm. 51-58 | Chromaticized version of motive "x", also stated in inversion |
| Transition 1, Part 2 | mm. 59-68 | Running eighth notes from earlier piano versions, now largely in the strings |
| **STROPHE Two (D minor)** | mm. 69-96 | Fuller orchestration than previous strophe, harmonically more adventurous than previous versions |
| Transition 2, Part 1 | mm. 97-107 | Similar material to TR 1, Part 2 |
| Transition 2, Part 2 | mm. 108-121 | New |
| **STROPHE Three (B-flat minor)** | mm. 122-153 | Marked *espressivo dolente*, some minor harmonic inflections compared with 1851 version |
| Transition 3, Part 1 | mm. 154-170 | Parallels TR 2, Part 1 |
| Transition 3, Part 2 | mm. 171-183 | Parallels TR 2, Part 2 |
| **STROPHE Four (B minor)** | mm. 184-215 | Parallels strophe three, transposed |
| Transition 4 | mm. 216-262 | Developmental, containing fragmented versions of the main theme, retransition at mm. 257ff. |

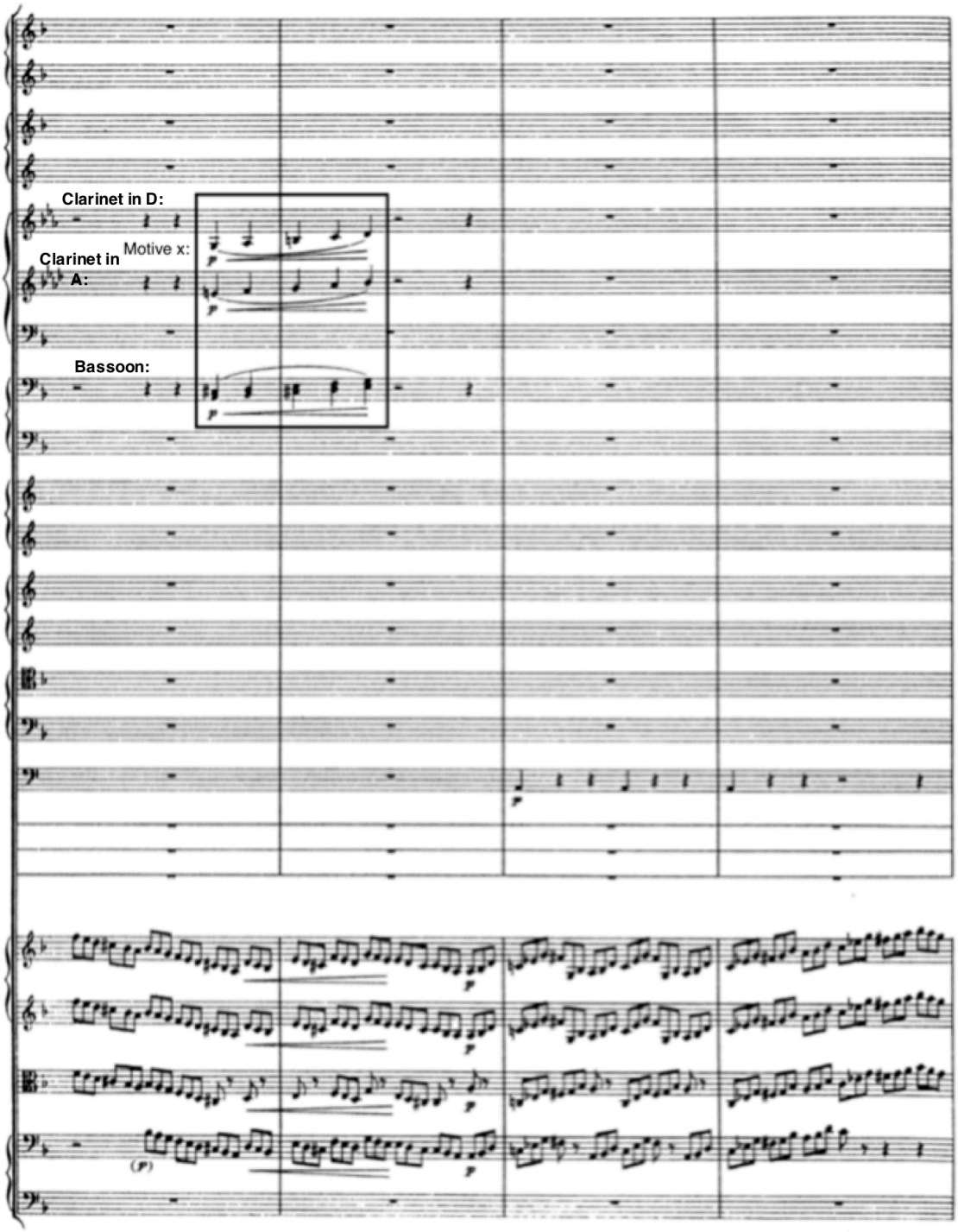
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **STROPHE Five (D minor)** | mm. 263-292 | 3/4, parallels strophe one |
| Transition 5, Part 1 | mm. 293-208 | Parallels TR 1, Part 1 |
| Transition 5, Part 2 | mm. 309-332 | Parallels TR 2, Part 2 |
| **STROPHE Six (D minor, moves to D major)** | mm. 333-382 | As in 1851 version, moves to major almost immediately |
| Transition 6, Part 1 | mm. 383-402 | Contains chromaticized motive "x", leads to prolongation of diminished-seventh chord on "A" |
| Transition 6, Part 2 | mm. 403-435 | Introduces motive "z" |
| Intro to Coda | mm. 436-464 | Introduces bugle call like theme in trumpets |
| **Coda (D major)** | mm. 465ff | Introduces new march like material (m. 465), brings back *Mazeppa* theme (m. 578) |

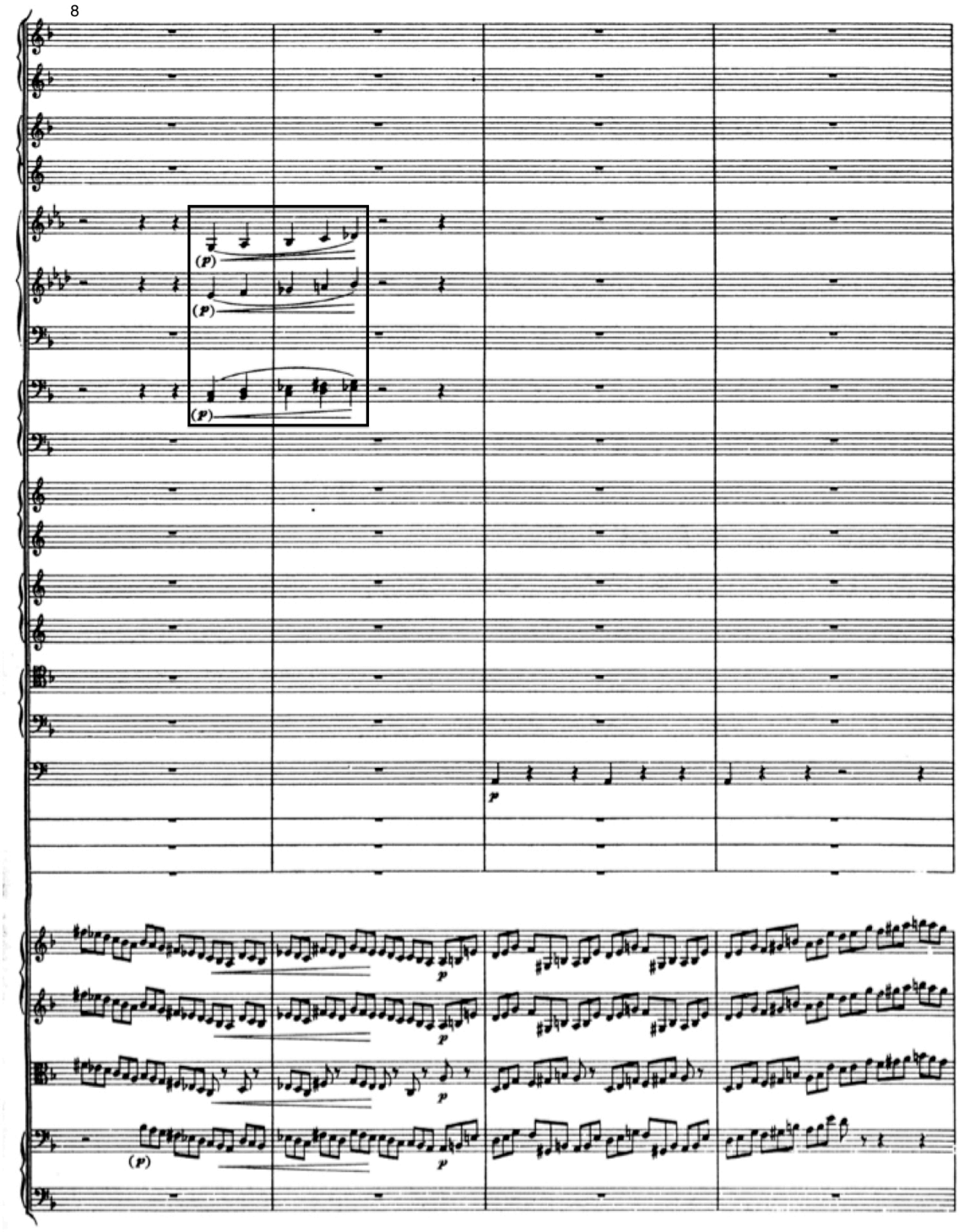
The introduction can be readily divided into two parts, mm. 1-19 and mm. 20-35. The *Allegro agitato* marking testifies to the character of the introduction, which is one of nervousness, anxiety, and apprehension. Fry asserts that "this introduction is an unsettling piece of writing, recreating the turbulent, storm-like atmosphere of the Hugo poem: 'the sound of a whirlwind of dust' or 'a black cloud' or 'serpent of fire.'"[1] Part one of the introduction is motivically uniform, although the second part (see example 3.3 below) develops the ideas and begins to sculpt the main theme of the work.

The first part of the introduction begins with a shriek in the winds and brass that is a highly condensed rendering of the opening chordal flurry from the 1840 version. Immediately following, the accompanimental triplets begin in the strings. The two-beat anacrusis to m. 5 introduces a new idea in the clarinets and bassoons: a motive of stepwise ascending quarter notes that emphasizes the dominant in the harmonic minor scale. The motive (which I call "*x*") is usually five quarter notes in length, and always begins as a two-note pickup. Harmonically, the opening three statements of motive *x* tonicize D minor, then G minor, and again D minor (example 3.2).

[1] Fry, 22.

**Example 3.2. *Mazeppa* (1854) mm. 4-15.**

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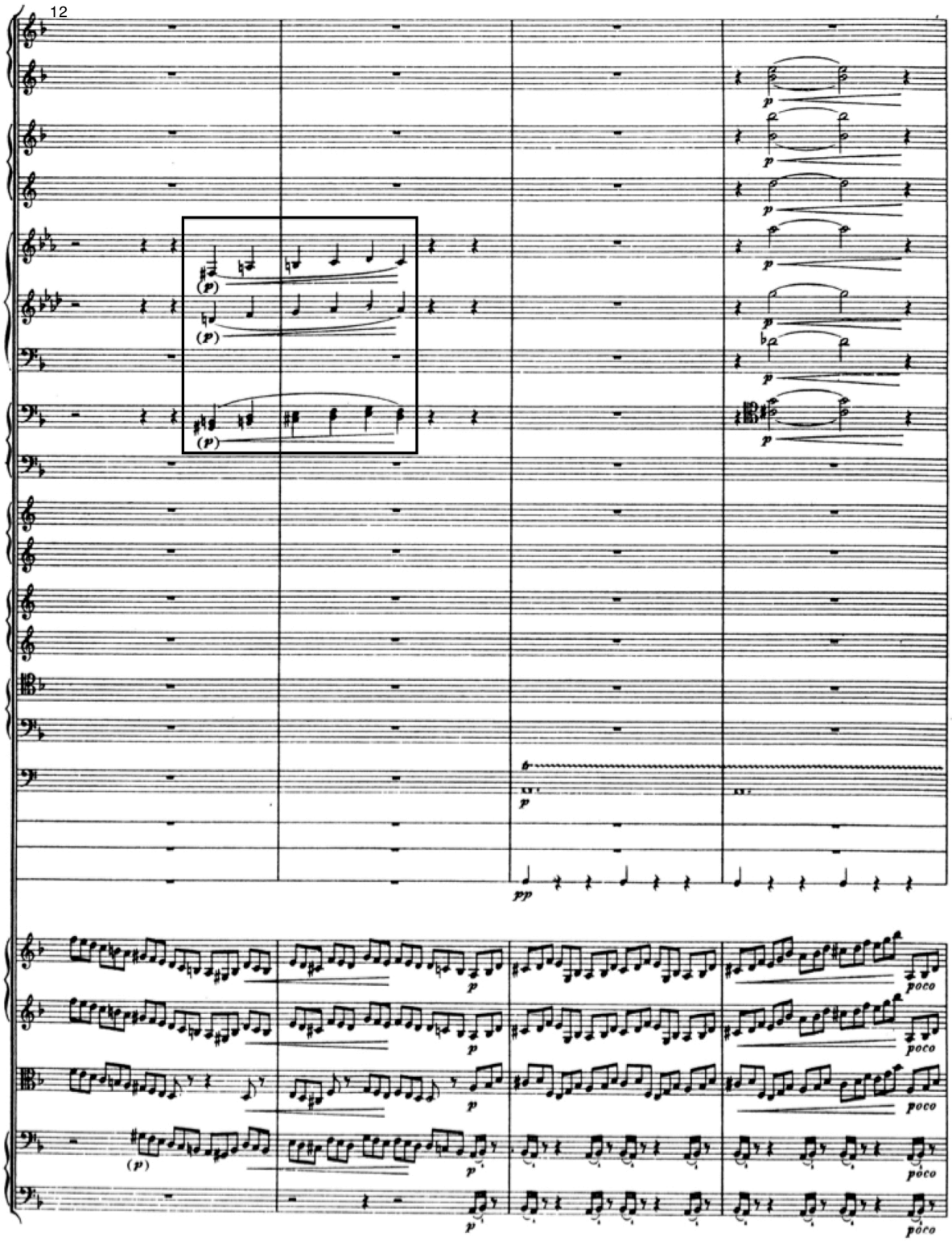



The texture thickens slightly in m. 14 through a more rhythmically agitated cello and double-bass pedal on the dominant of D minor, along with rolls in the timpani and

strong beat attacks in the bass drum. Furthermore, motive *x* is temporarily abandoned and replaced with sustained diminished-seventh chords in the winds in mm. 15, 17, and 19. This final sustained chord is a sharp-ii$^{o7}$ resolving to i$^{6}$ in measure 21 (see example 3.3).

The second part of the introduction moves from D minor, through E-flat minor, B-flat minor, and G minor (all except D minor enharmonically), and finally to the dominant pedal at measure 32, supporting a V$^{9}$ chord (see example 3.4 below). While the two sections maintain some elements of harmonic consistency, part two of this introduction is delineated from its counterpart motivically, texturally, and rhythmically.

Most importantly, motive *x* is inverted and relegated to the bassoons, while being doubled by the cellos and double-basses (see example 3.3). The motive now begins on the second quarter note beat and is melodically inverted, which effectively weakens the forward momentum of the idea. In keeping with the inversion, whereas the original motive *x* is marked with a crescendo, this new manifestation of the motive is marked with a decrescendo.

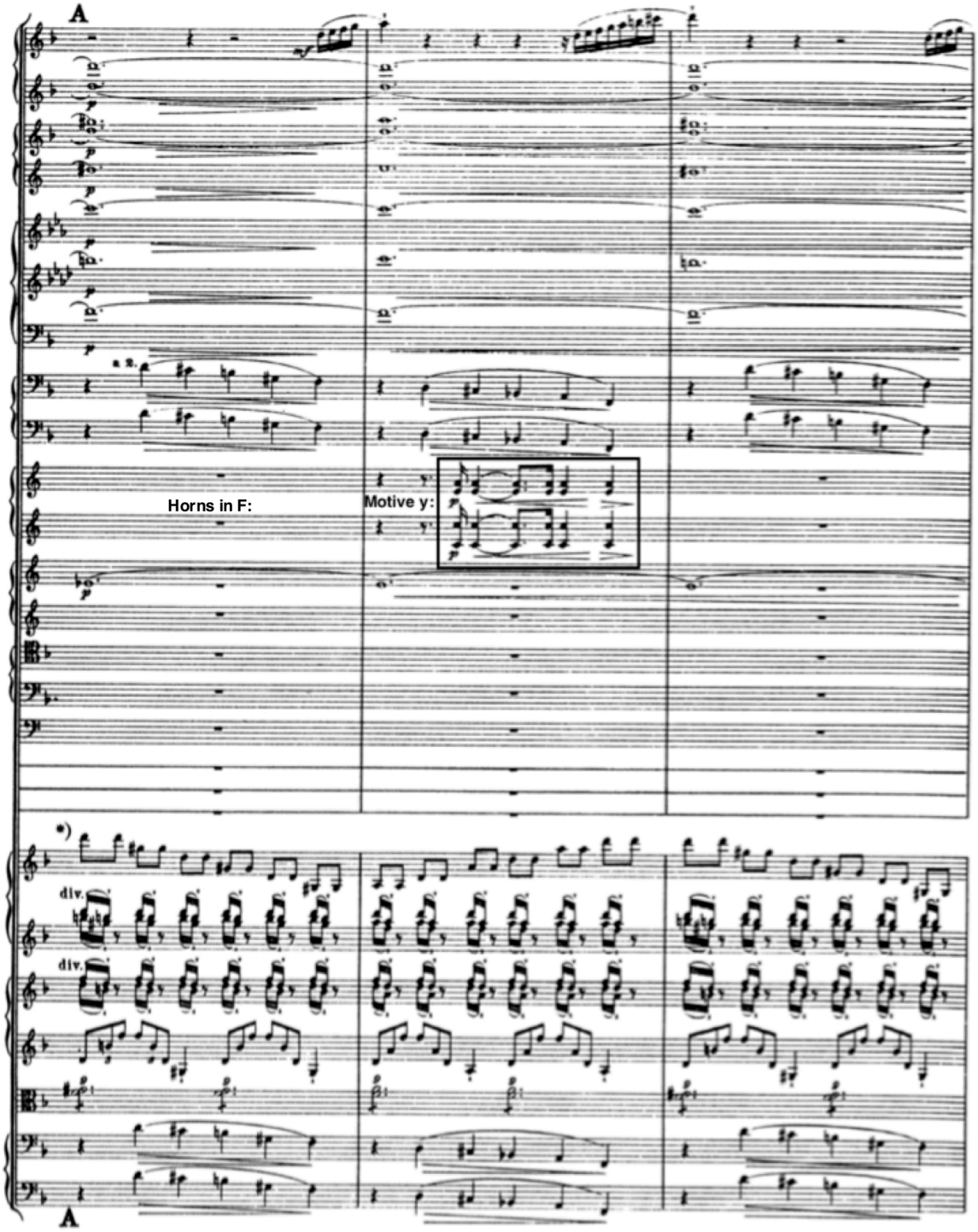
While the lower strings accompany motive *x* (see example 3.3), the violas continue the triplet eighths from earlier, with repeated notes. The violins are divided into three parts: arpeggiated triplet eighths, which rhythmically emphasize beats 3 and 6; a slightly altered continuation of the rhythm (two sixteenth notes and an eighth rest), which enriches the harmonic background; and finally, more rhythmically fluid eighth notes that outline the harmony.

By contrast, the winds maintain the sustained chords from before, although with more continuity of sound. Liszt calls for the bass clarinet, clarinets in A and D, English

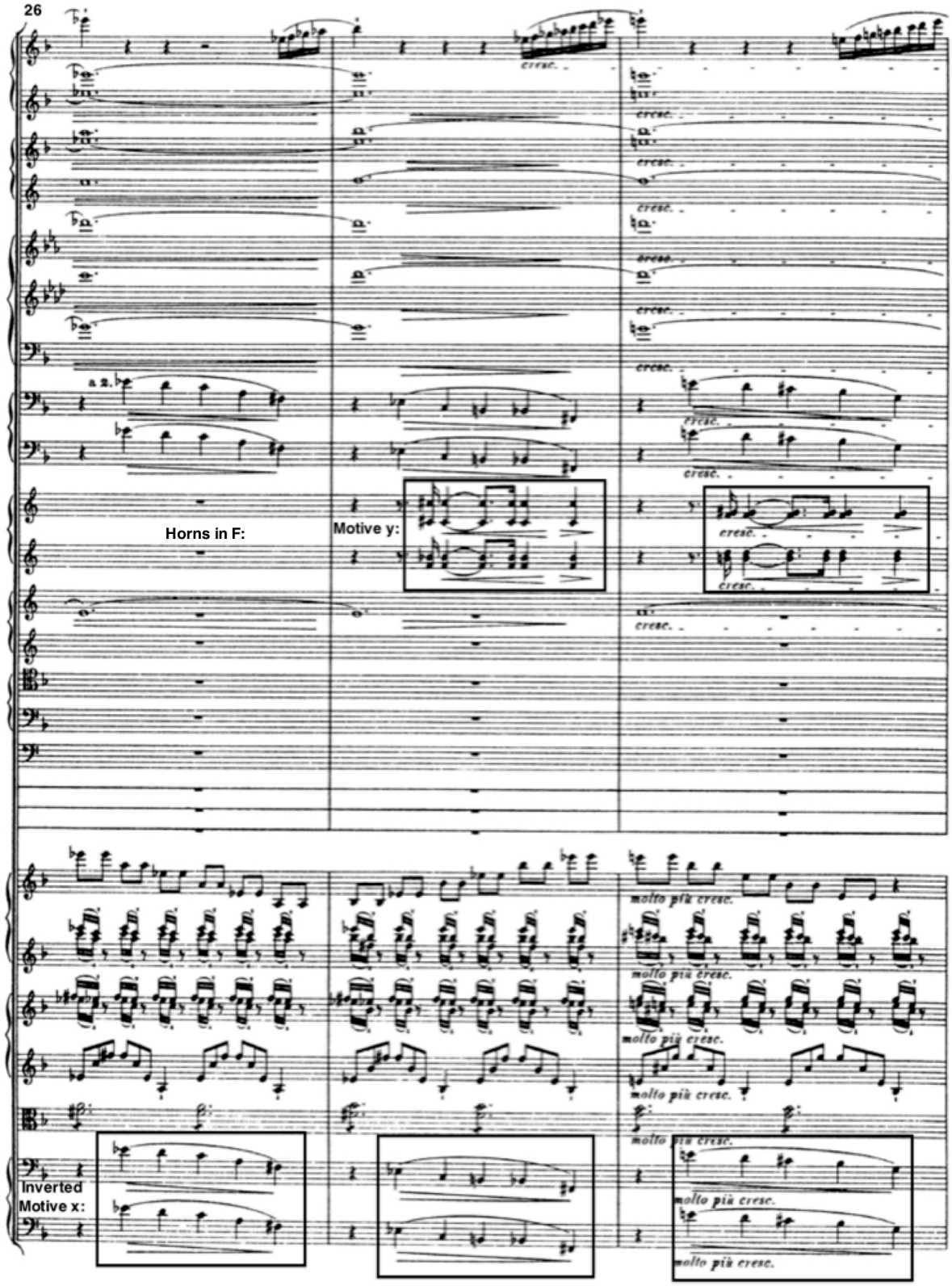
horn, oboe, and both flutes to create a sustained halo effect, where the harmonies float above the more agitated strings. The bassoons and horns, meanwhile, develop the motivic material. Supporting these harmonic shifts, the piccolo restates the ascending flurry of sixteenth notes from the opening.

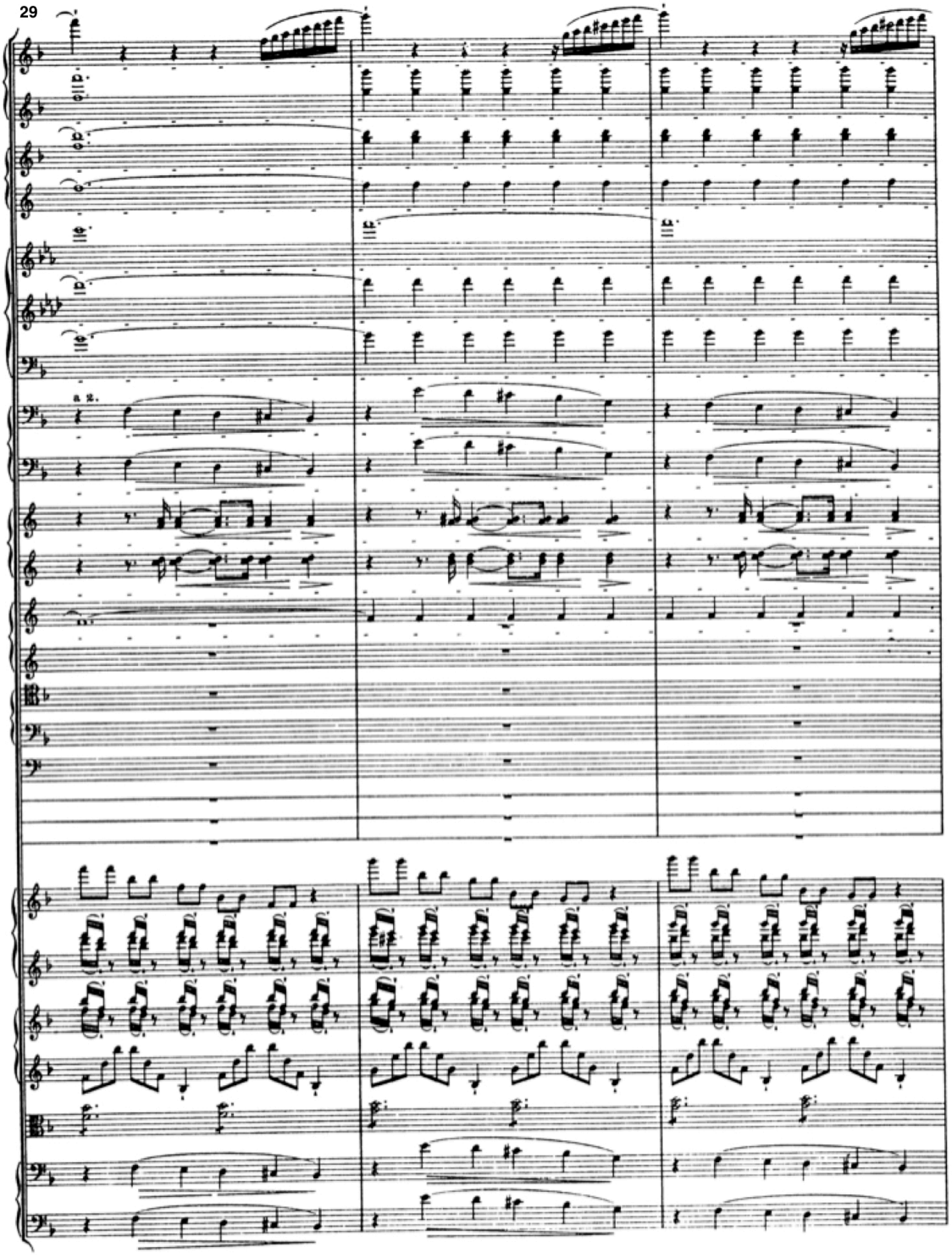
The sonic effect of the introduction is more rooted in timbral effects than motivic and melodic development. Part one introduces only motive *x*, but emphasizes orchestral color above thematic development. Part two expands these timbral effects, taking advantage of the rich orchestration Liszt employed. However, the main theme of *Mazeppa* begins to take shape in the second part of the introduction. As if ascending out of the chaos of timbre, the horns begin in m. 21 (see example 3.3) to accompany motive *x* with a rhythmic idea (which I call motive *y*) containing a dotted eighth and sixteenth, a rhythmic characteristic of *Mazeppa's* main theme. Initially occurring every second measure, this rhythmic idea in the horns increases the tension beginning m. 27 (see example 3.4 below) by its relentless repetition every measure. Liszt takes his preliminary two bar phrase (see example 3.3, mm. 20-21) and fragments it at this point as the material approaches its climactic dominant pedal at m. 32 (see example 3.4 below).

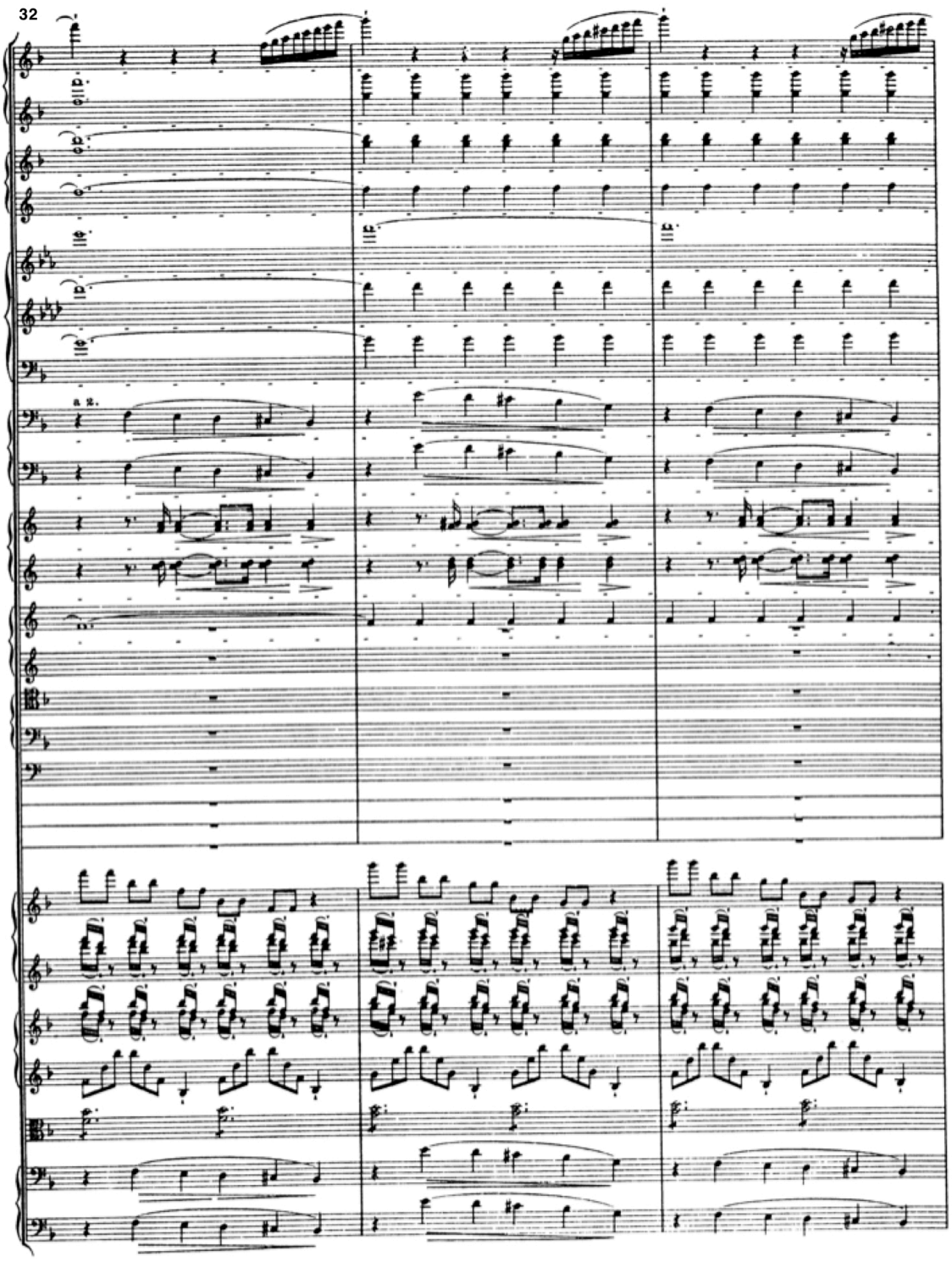
**Example 3.3. *Mazeppa* (1854) mm. 20-22.**

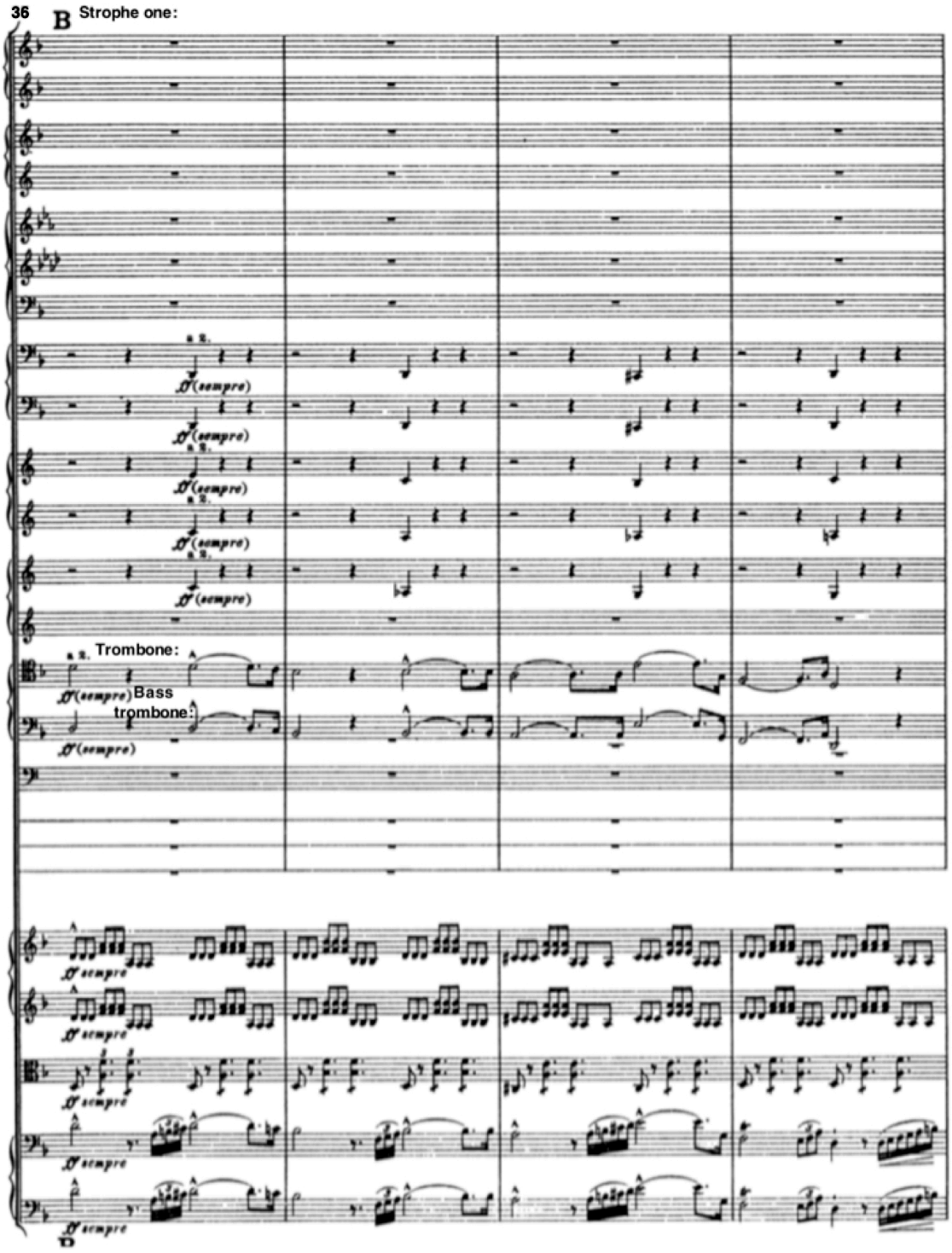


**Example 3.4.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1854) mm. 26-39.**




29


32




At this point (see example 3.4, m. 36), what previously had been a division of the upper strings into eight parts now reduces to three, but with absolute unanimity of

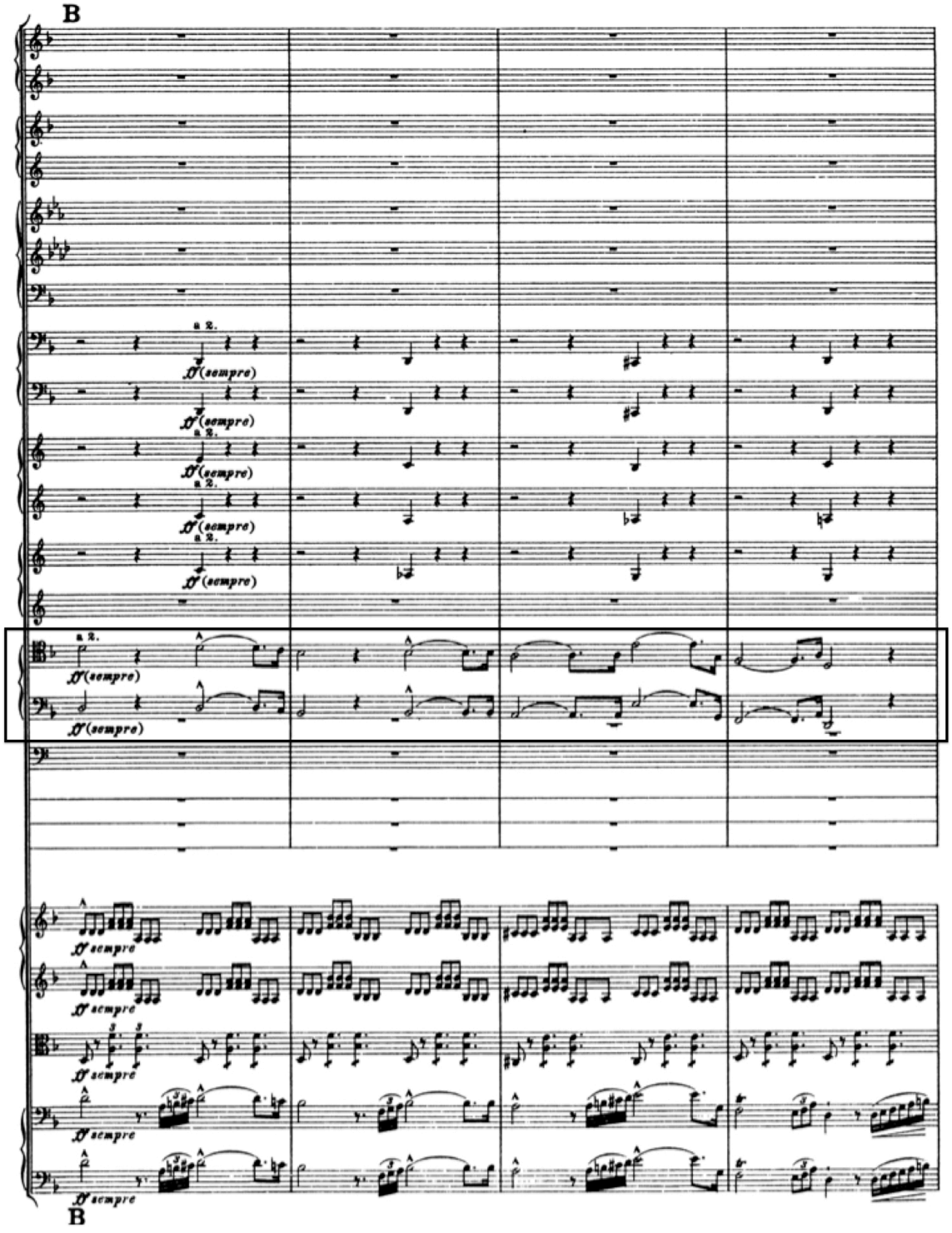
rhythm. In the winds, the clarinet in A, oboe, flutes, and piccolo contain repeated flurries towards beats four and one. The two bars before strophe one contain unison strings, with melodic material that is derived from motive *x* in its stepwise ascent through the augmented second, B-flat to C-sharp. The leading tone's lack of resolution, despite its metric emphasis in the middle of the measure, heightens the harmonic tension preparing the first strophe at m. 36 (see example 3.4 above).

In chapter four I discuss the interpretive significance of the relationship between Liszt's 1851 *Étude* and the symphonic poem, but for now it suffices to draw a few preliminary comparisons between them as concerns the orchestral introduction. At the time Liszt completed the 1851 piano *Étude*, he had put to paper only the preliminary *particella* of the symphonic poem, just months before (see Table 3.1 above). In the introduction of the *particella*, Liszt reduced the opening chords from the 1840 *Étude* down to one. The introduction from the particella is fleeting, only nineteen measures long. It does not yet contain motive *x*, and part two of the introduction does not exist in this preliminary draft. However, Liszt's musical ideas in the *particella* influenced the recomposition of the 1851 piano work: specifically, the *cadenza ad libitum*. Furthermore, the relationship between these works raises the question of why Liszt did not include motive *x*, which he positioned so prominently in the symphonic poem, in his piano *Étude*. As I discuss later, this motive not only saturates the introduction, but also forms the backbone for certain transitional passages in the final version of the symphonic poem.

### *Strophes One and Two*

Strophe one of the symphonic poem (mm. 36-50), containing nearly identical material to the previous piano versions, boldly presents *Mazeppa's* main theme in trombones and bass trombones (example 3.5).

**Example 3.5.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1854) mm. 36-39.**



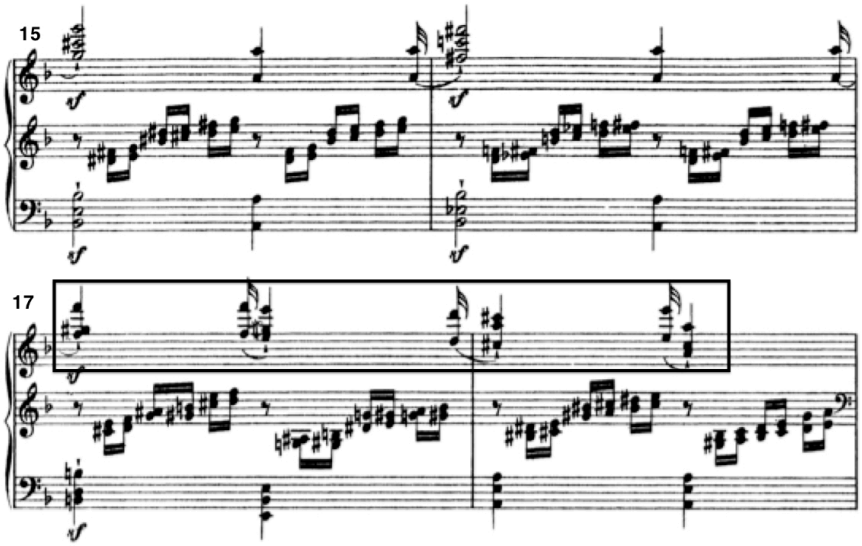
The cellos and double-basses ornament the theme; of note, Liszt refocuses the attention to this ornamented material by placing it in the entire wind section for strophe two. Adding to the texture, the upper strings accompany the theme with triplet eighths, filling out the harmonies. These ascending thirds from the 1851 version (see example 3.6a) turn into registrally expansive arpeggios at m. 44 (example 3.6b below). Every instrument is marked *fortissimo (sempre)* for the entire strophe. Only fleeting *crescendos* and *decrescendos* are marked, usually to emphasize flurries of notes or the resolutions of slurs. As in the introduction, the meter remains in 6/4.

Harmonically, the strophe is identical to its counterpart in the 1851 piano version. Only one significant change occurs melodically: in m. 46 of the symphonic poem, Liszt outlines the harmony in the trombones rather than utilizing stepwise motion (compare mm. 17-18 of 1851 version with mm. 46-47 of symphonic poem, example 3.6).

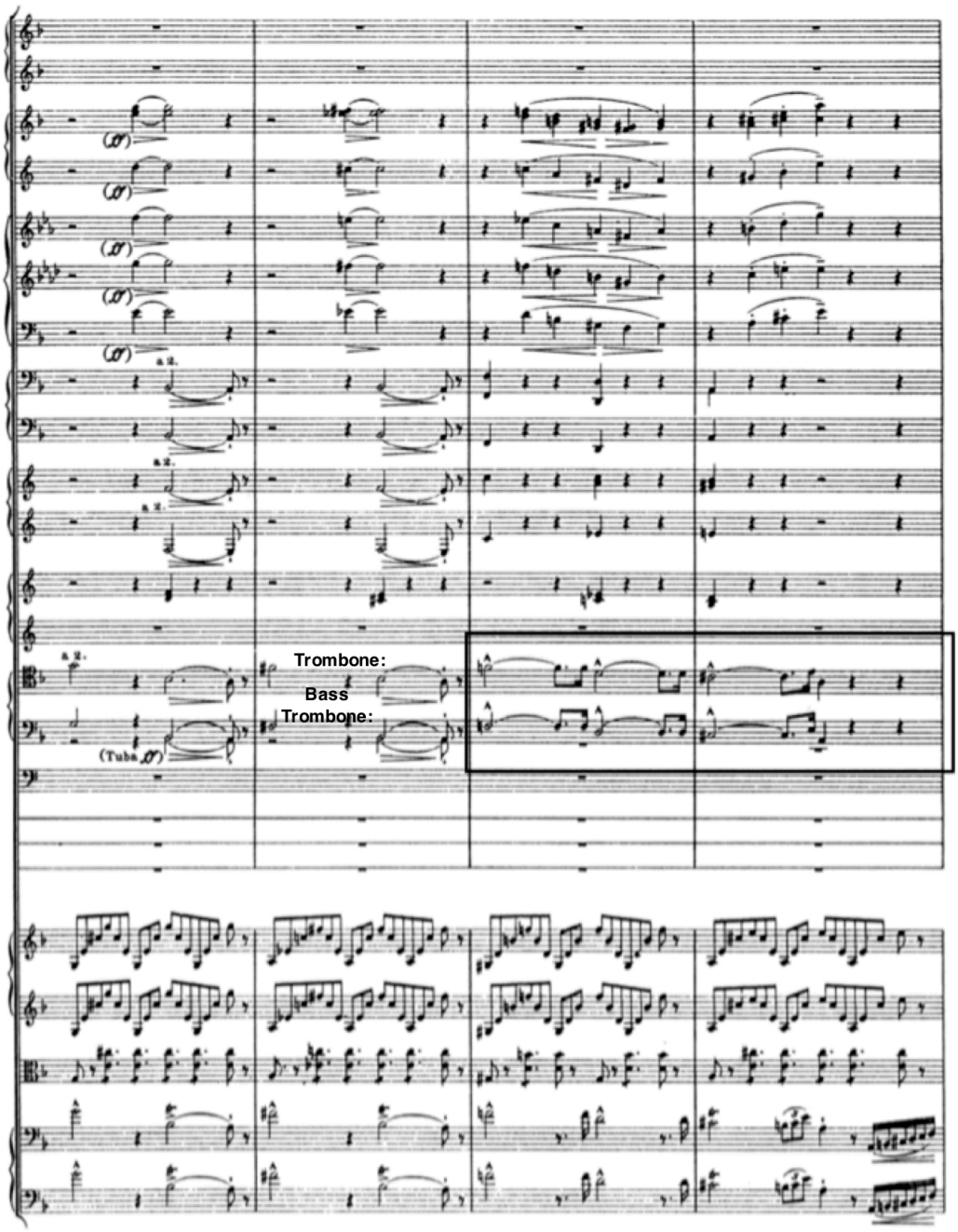
**Example 3.6. Comparison of strophe one.**

**3.6a.** ***Études d'exécution transcendante*****, no. 4,** ***Mazeppa***

**(1851) mm. 15-18.**



**3.6b. *Mazeppa* (1854) mm. 44-47.**

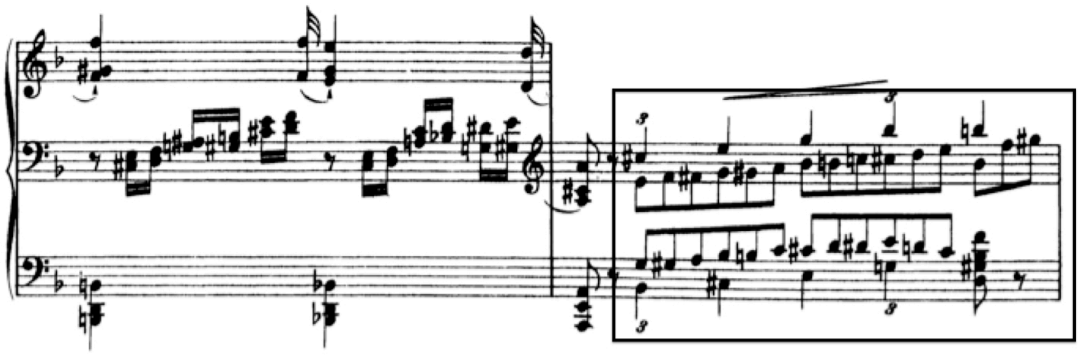


Unique for this strophe, Liszt repeatedly emphasizes the second half of the measure. The bassoons, horns, and trumpets all have attacks only in the middle of the measure (mm. 36-43), and the ornamented thematic material in the cellos and double-basses contains flurries of notes leading to the middle of each measure (mm. 36-38, 40-42). For Liszt, this is a very conscious departure from previous versions. The 1851 *Étude*, at least in the first strophe, contains no emphasis on the second half of the measure; rather, Liszt reserves this metric emphasis for strophe three, where the arpeggiation of both hands expands to the middle of each measure. A detailed discussion tracing the evolution of Liszt's rethinking of metric significance through the various symphonic poem drafts is discussed at the end of this chapter. Strophe one in the symphonic poem did not contain this element until after the 1851 piano *Étude*.

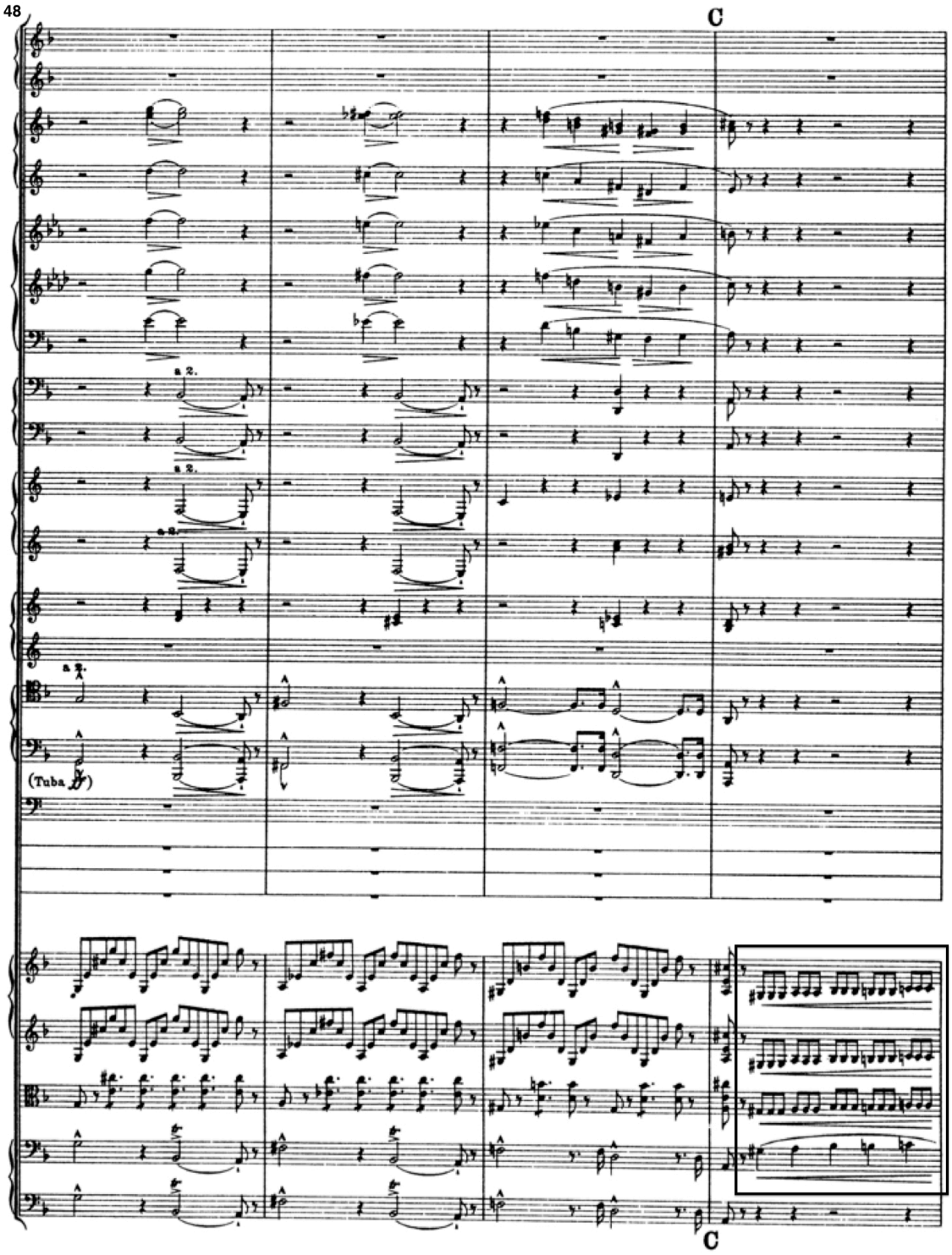
Similarly, the symphonic poem contains a transition between strophes one and two that can be divided into two parts (mm. 51-58 and mm. 59-68). The material in part one of the symphonic poem contains a chromatically ascending motive (mm. 51ff.) that begins on the second quarter note beat of each measure (example 3.7b). This motive is related to both the material from the piano version (example 3.7a) and motive *x* from the introduction of the symphonic poem.

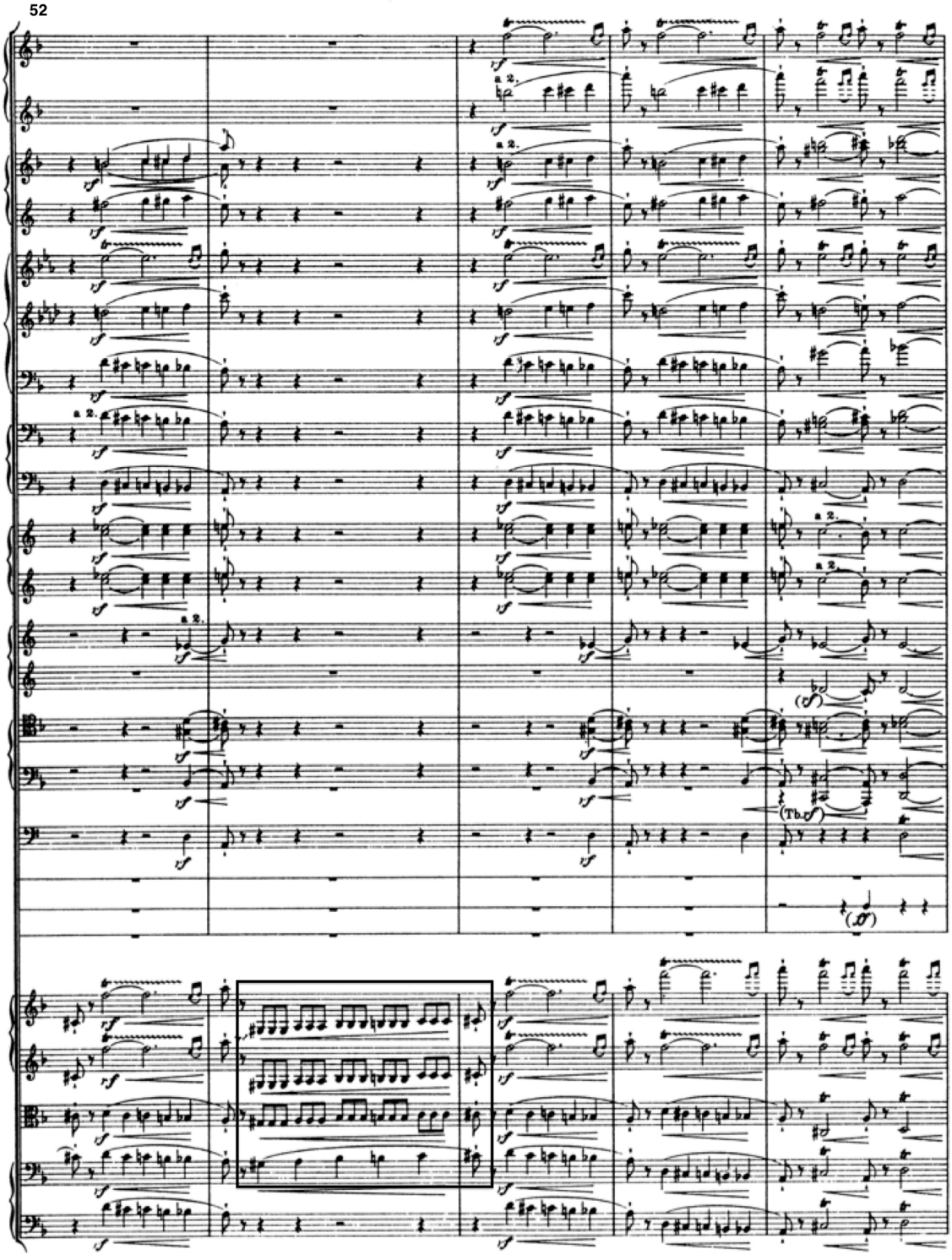
**Example 3.7. Comparison of transition after strophe one.**

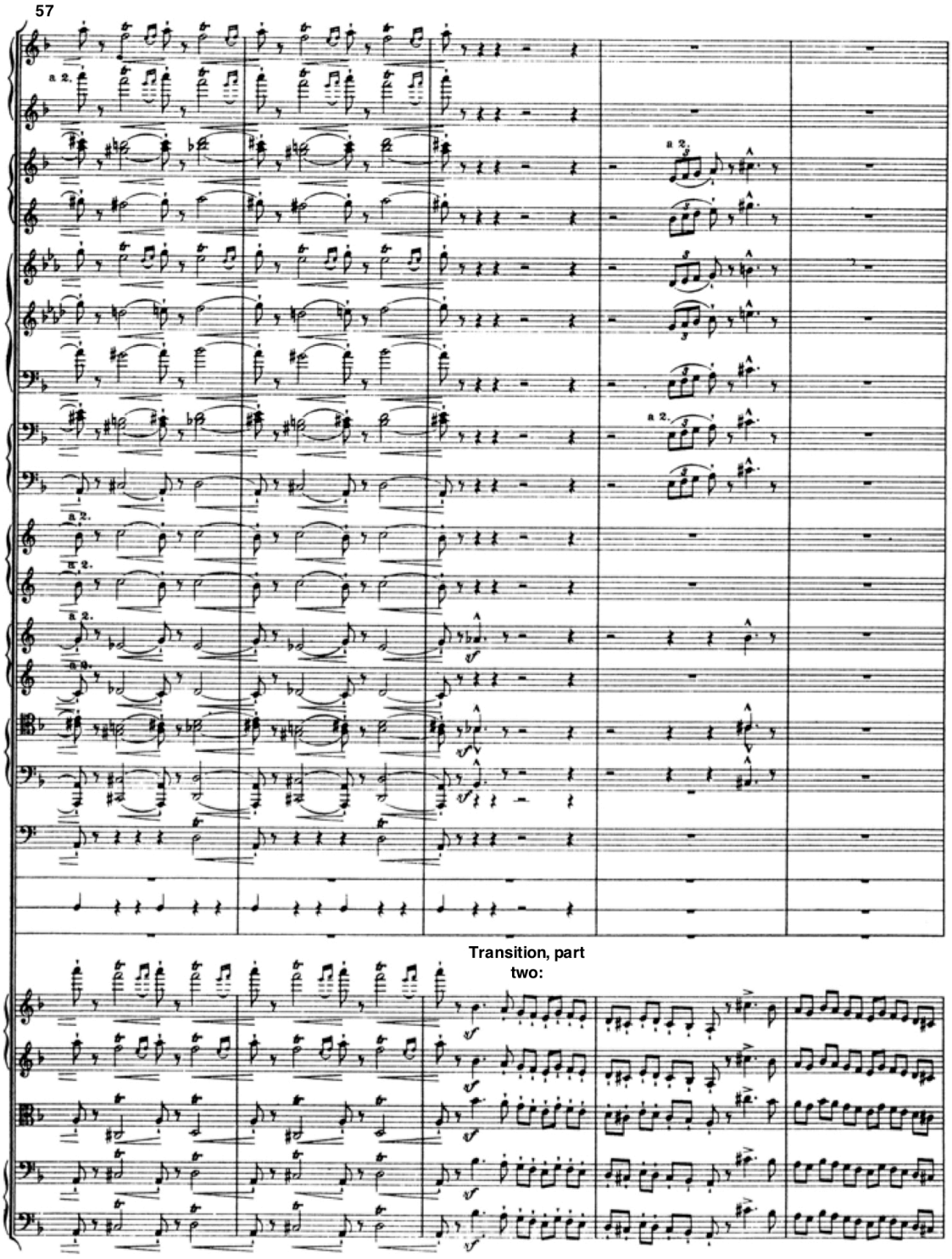
**3.7a. *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 21-22.**



**3.7b. *Mazeppa* (1854) mm. 48-61.**




52
a 2.
(Tb.)

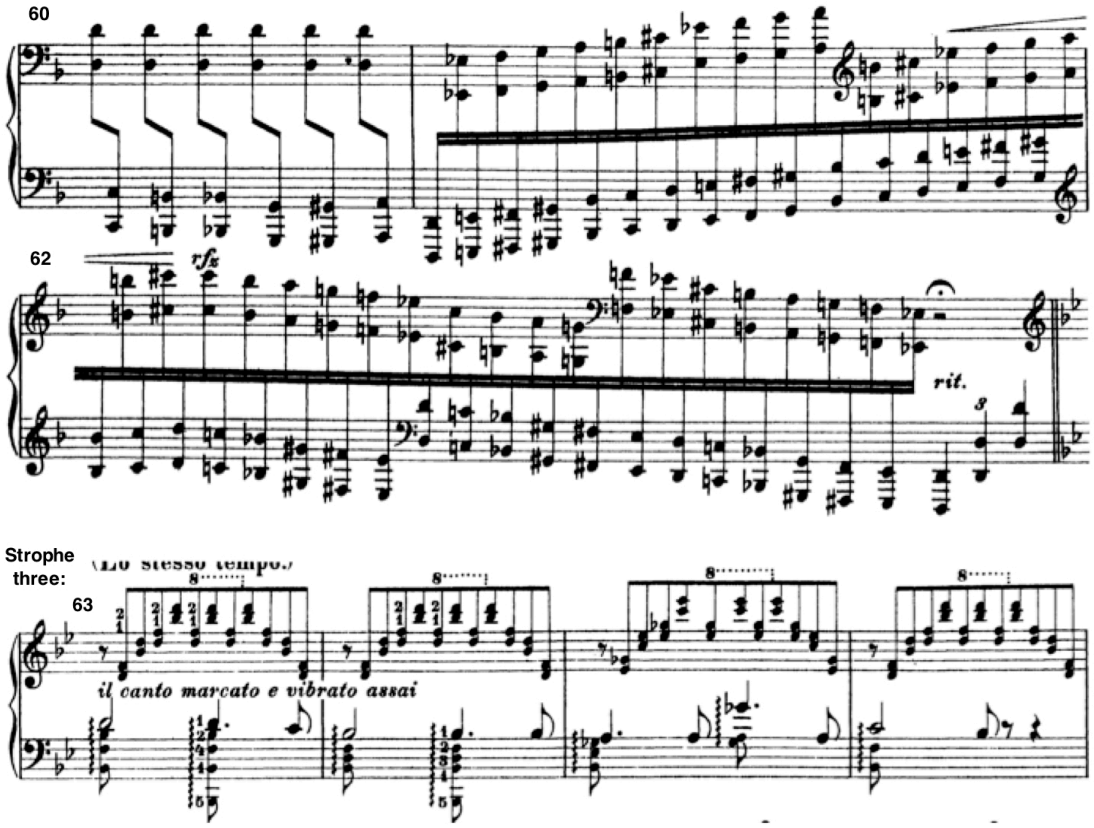

57
a 2.
Transition, part two:

The piano version (example 3.7a) also contains ascending chromatic scales, but the rhythm is that of triplet eighths, and the outer voices outline the arpeggiated diminished-seventh chord. However, the motive in the symphonic poem ascends through quarter notes (accompanied by triplet eighths in other voices), and because it begins on beat two, it relates to motive *x*. Liszt inverts the motive while simultaneously stating it in its original form at m. 52 and m. 54. Following this, a cadential extension in which Liszt repeatedly compresses this material leads to the second part of the transition (example 3.7b, mm 54-58).

Part two of this transition (example 3.7b, mm. 59-68) is an orchestrated version of the octaves in the 1851 piano *Étude*. The primary divergences here concern rhythm: instead of triplet eighth notes, Liszt uses duple eighths, and he does away with the fermatas over the beginnings of each phrase. Furthermore, the ending of this material is slightly altered; Liszt reuses the ascending chromaticism from part one of this transition in a similar way, creating a greater sense of continuity through the section.

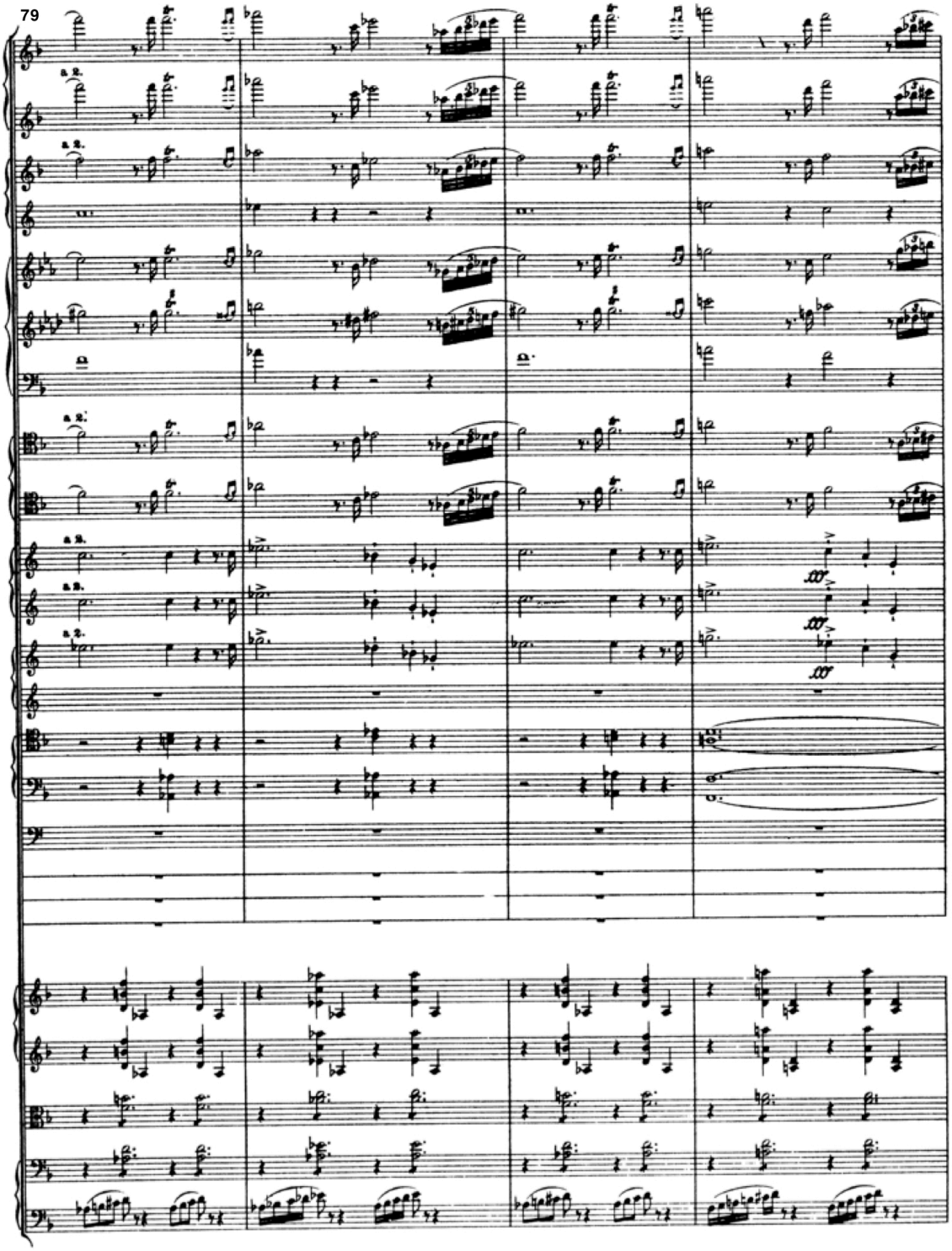
The main body of strophe two, which begins in m. 69 in the symphonic poem, remains relatively consistent with the 1851 piano *Étude* (there are two brief extensions, mm. 90-91 and mm. 92-93). However, the similarities are much fewer as this strophe moves towards the subsequent transitional section. Most significantly, all of the strophic piano versions of *Mazeppa* remain in the key of D (initially minor, then major), except for strophes three and four in B-flat major (see example 3.8).

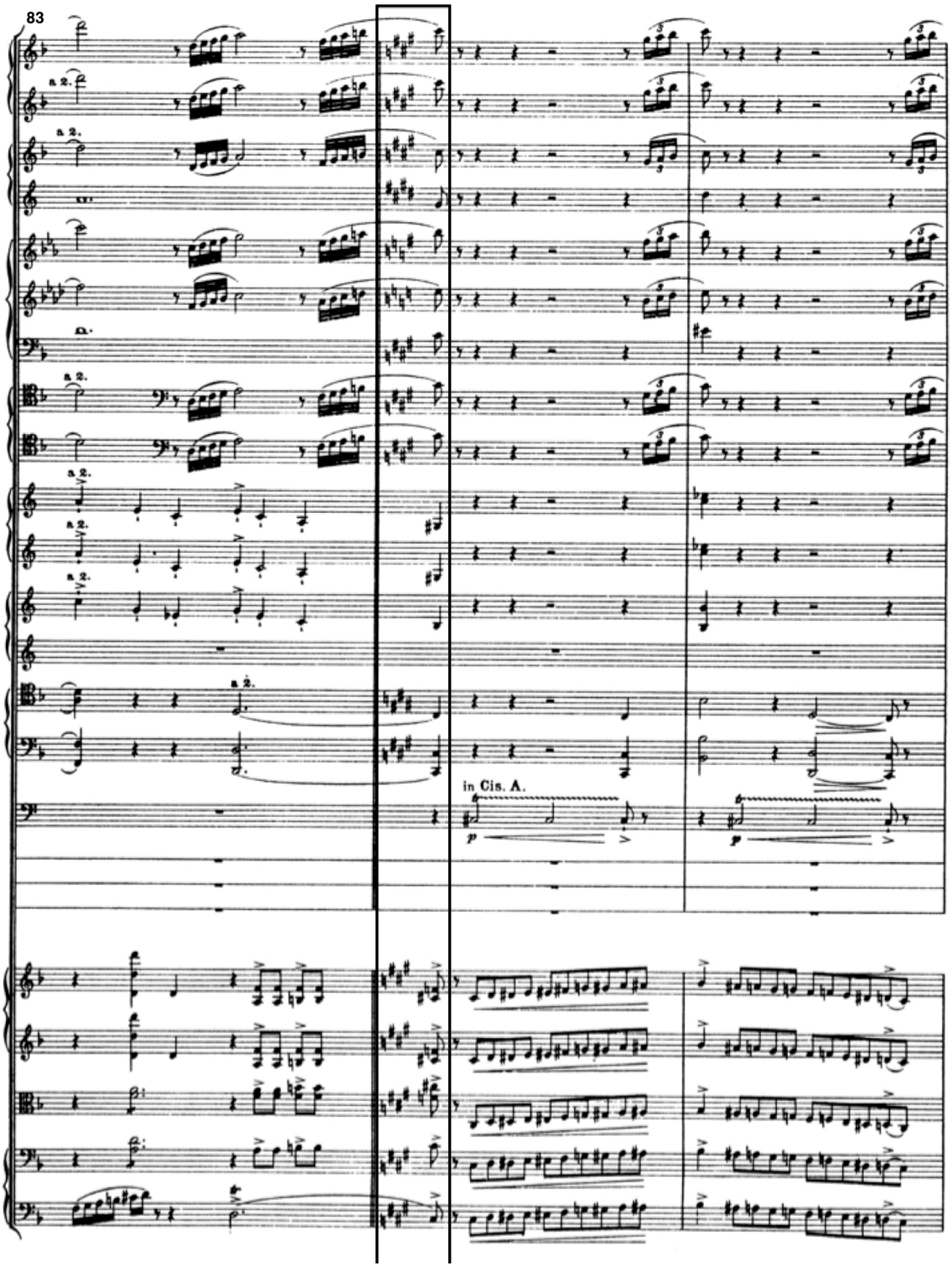
**Example 3.8. *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 60-66.**




In the corresponding section of the symphonic poem, however, the D minor chord moves chromatically to a half cadence in F-sharp minor at m. 84 (example 3.9). The underlying harmonic progression in the 1851 *Étude* is to the submediant (B-flat major), whereas the symphonic poem moves to the chromatic mediant (F-sharp minor).

**Example 3.9. *Mazeppa* (1854) mm. 79-85.**




83
a 2.
in Cis. A.
p

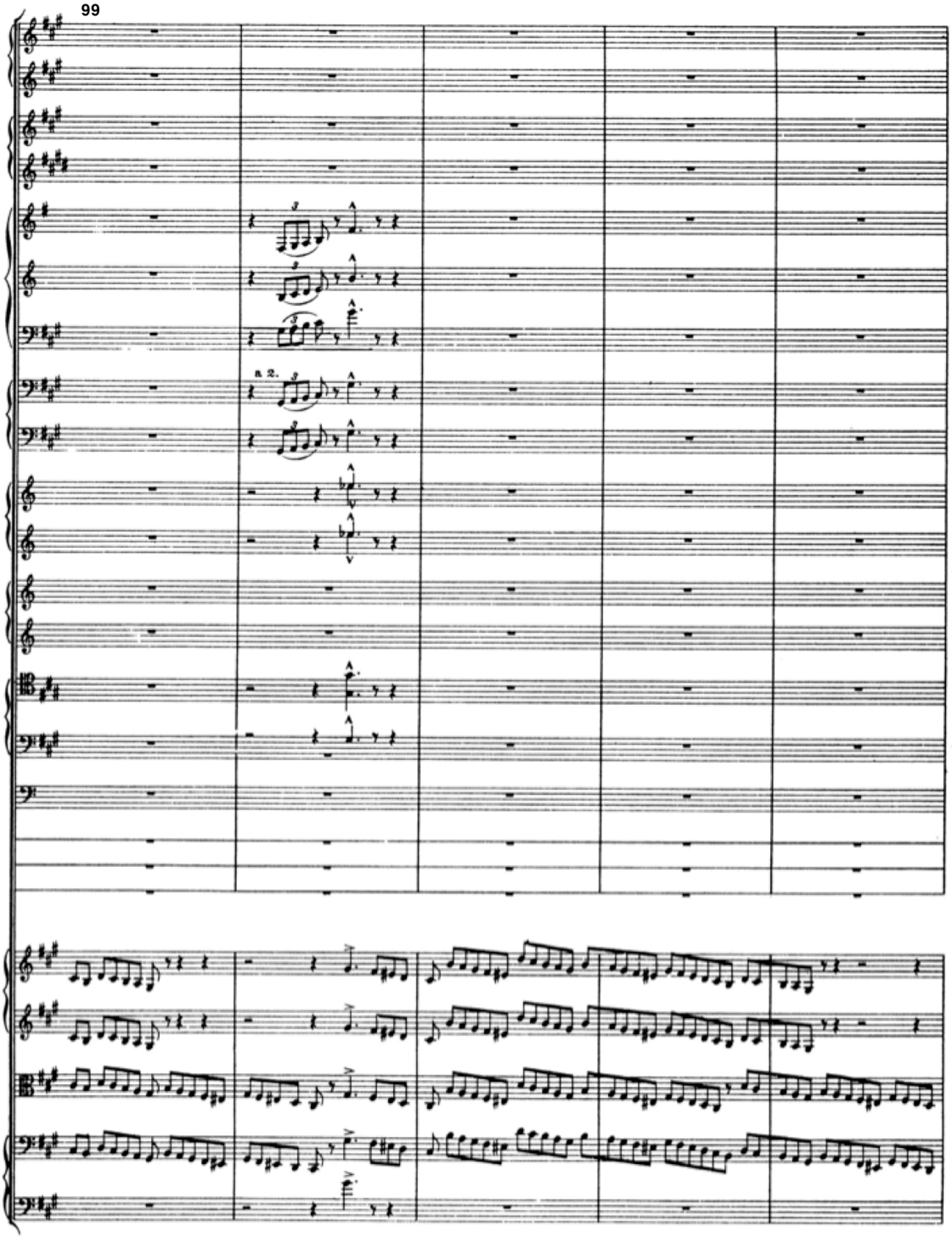
Ultimately, Liszt maintains the key of F-sharp minor throughout the end of this strophe and all the way through the subsequent transition section. Similar to his use of a mediant relationship to transition into strophe three of the 1851 piano *Étude* (D minor to B-flat major), Liszt uses the dominant of F-sharp minor (C-sharp) as an enharmonic mediant to B-flat minor for the central key of strophe three in the symphonic poem. In the tonal scheme of this work, it is this modal shift from B-flat major to B-flat minor for strophe three that differentiates this version from all others.

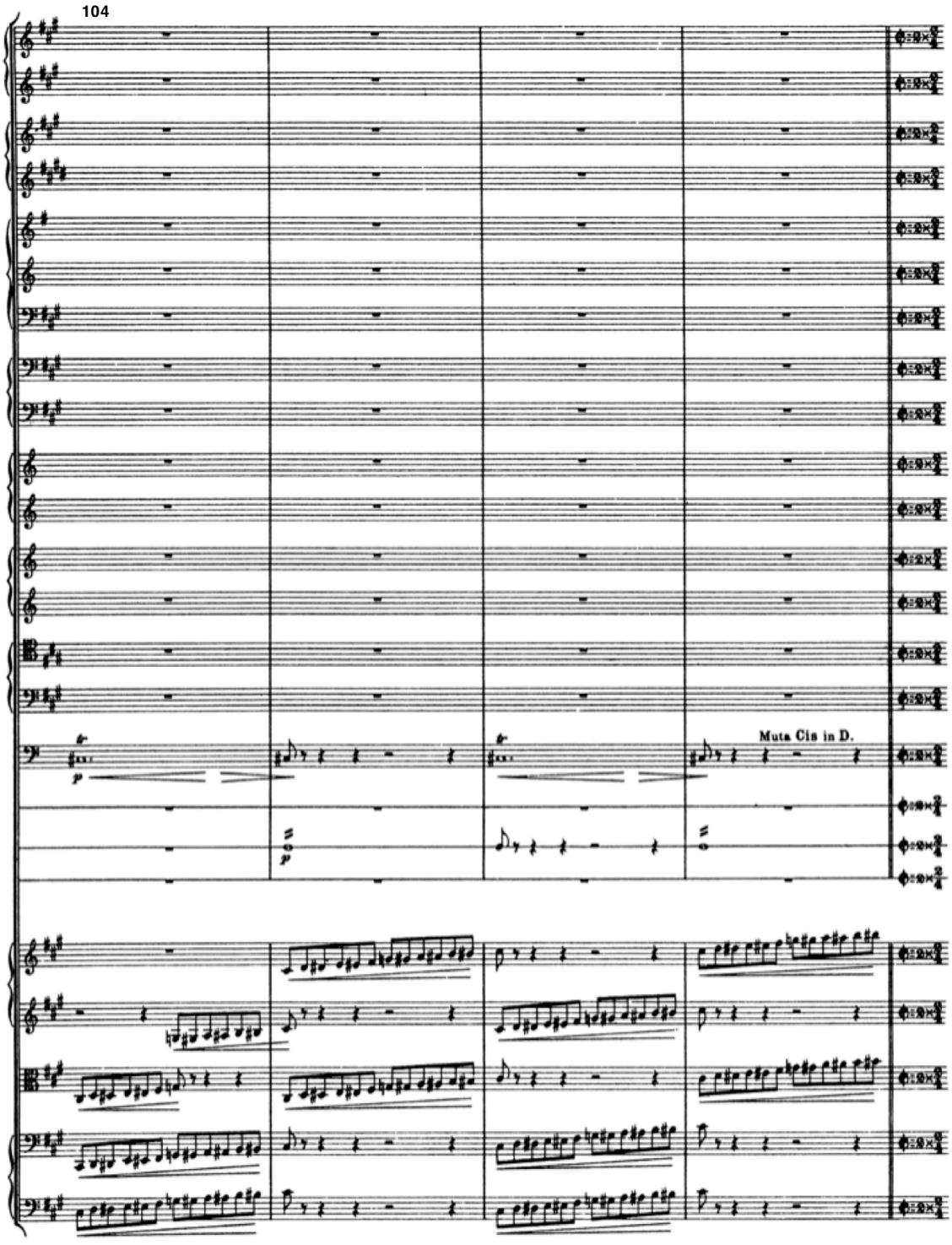
As in the 1837 and 1840 versions of the piano *Étude*, the second strophe of the symphonic poem has a greater degree of intensity than the first. Liszt now uses the full orchestra. The ornamented theme is played by the wind section instead of the two lower strings, and the horns, bass clarinet, and English horn fill out the theme. Beats two and five contain syncopated attacks in the upper strings. Finally, there is more frequent use of trills and grace notes. As before, all instruments are marked *fortissimo sempre*. Harmonically, this strophe follows the 1851 version almost exactly until the motion towards F-sharp minor.

The transition beginning at m. 97 (transition number two, continuing through m. 121) brings back the octaves previously reserved for transitions between strophes one and two and strophes four and five. In the symphonic poem, however, Liszt repeats this passage four times. Aside from the tonal shift to F-sharp minor, the material (mm. 97-103) is almost identical to its corresponding passage in transition one (mm. 59-65). However, as mentioned above, Liszt condenses the chromatic ascent (mm. 66-68) back into thematic material and passes these motivic cells through various sections of the orchestra. Here, though, the chromatic ascent is more uniform in its instrumentation and

consistency of phrasing; the strings maintain the material into the next section (example 3.10).

**Example 3.10.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1854) mm. 99-107.**



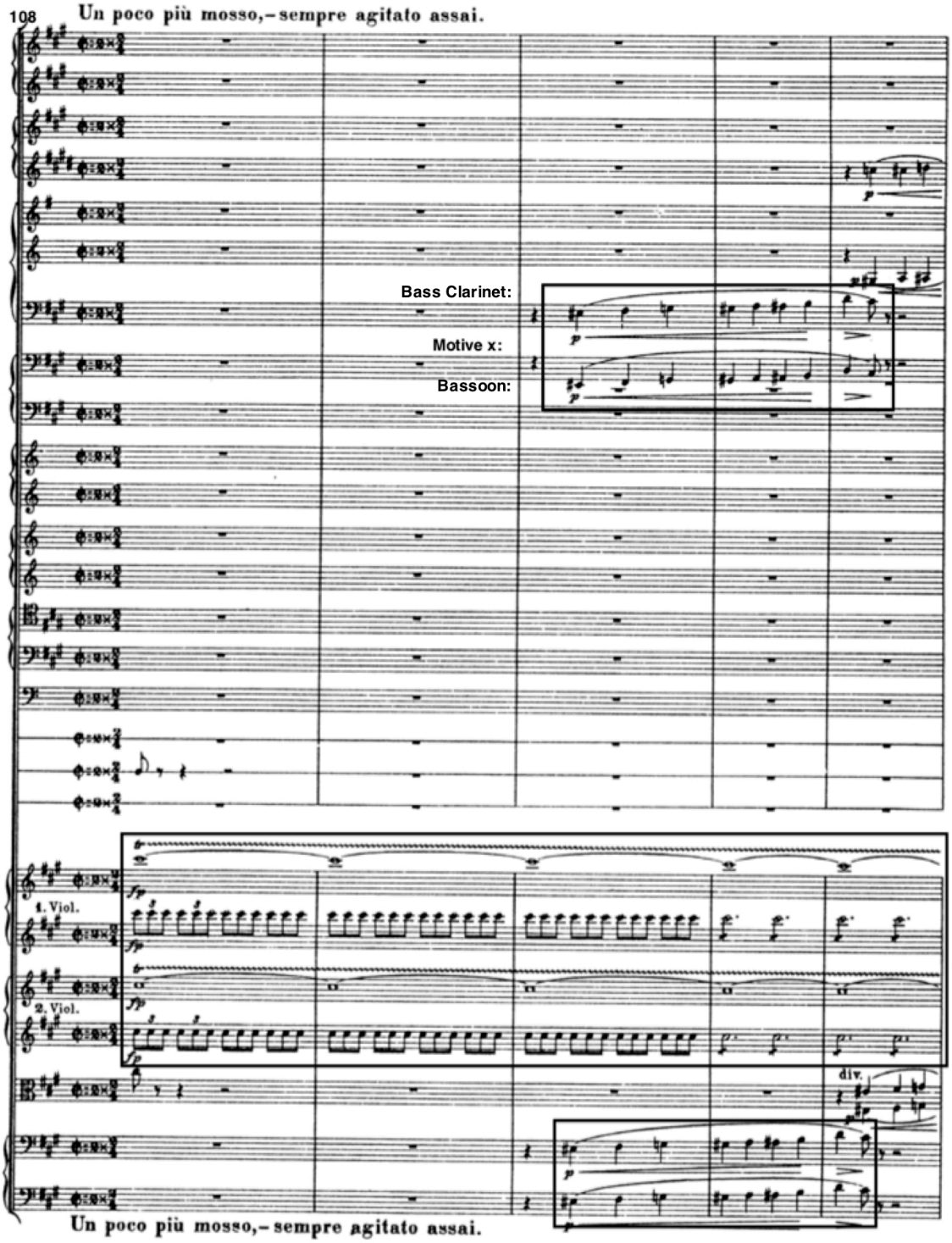


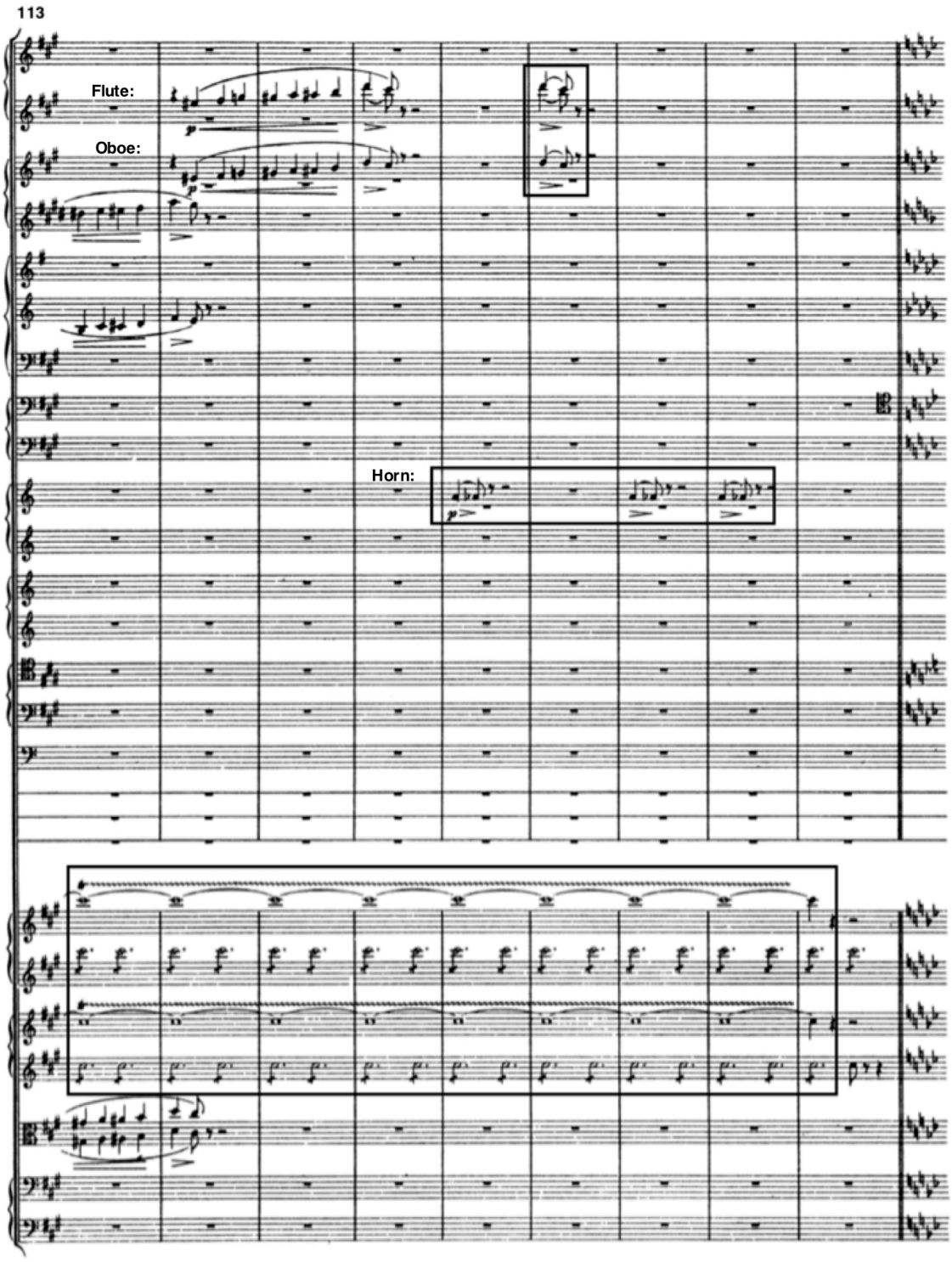

Up to this point in the symphonic poem, Liszt has represented the story of Mazeppa's wild horse ride by adding layer upon layer of textural, harmonic, and melodic intensity. The frenzied ride is apparent in the forward driving momentum of the work.

However, Liszt alters the character of the theme in the third strophe (mm. 122-153) in a significant way, exemplifying his use of thematic transformation. The tonal shift to B-flat minor is only the beginning of the atmospheric shift. The meter changes to 4/4, the dynamic drops to *forte*, the character indication is *espressivo dolente*, the texture is greatly thinned out, and the timbral effect created by the strings is of a more fluid and ethereal character.

For Liszt to transition quickly into this alternate sound world would undercut the narrative purpose of the strophe. Therefore, Liszt adds an entirely new section. Measures 108-121, marked *Un poco più mosso, sempre agitato assai*, is an extension of the dominant pedal in the key of F-sharp minor, even though the tonic is never reached in that key and rather moves to B-flat minor for strophe three. Containing C-sharp trills and repeated notes, this additional passage serves to restrain the momentum. Ascending chromatic scales predominate, reminiscent of motive *x*. This idea passes through the winds and is accompanied by the lower strings, with various wind doublings. Each of these phrases ends with the descent of a step, which Liszt fragments and uses repeatedly in the final five bars of the section (example 3.11).

**Example 3.11.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1854) mm. 108-121.**




113
Flute:
Oboe:
Horn:

### *Strophes Three and Four*

Following the 1851 piano version, strophes three and four have a distinctly different character from one and two. The middle section of the work, strophes three and four are marked *espressivo dolente*, defining the character as somber and expressive. As a performer, transforming the character from the higher energy in strophe two to the more atmospheric character of strophe three can be a challenge in the 1851 *Étude*. Liszt interjected this preparatory material (mm. 108-121) to aid in this transformation of character in the symphonic poem.

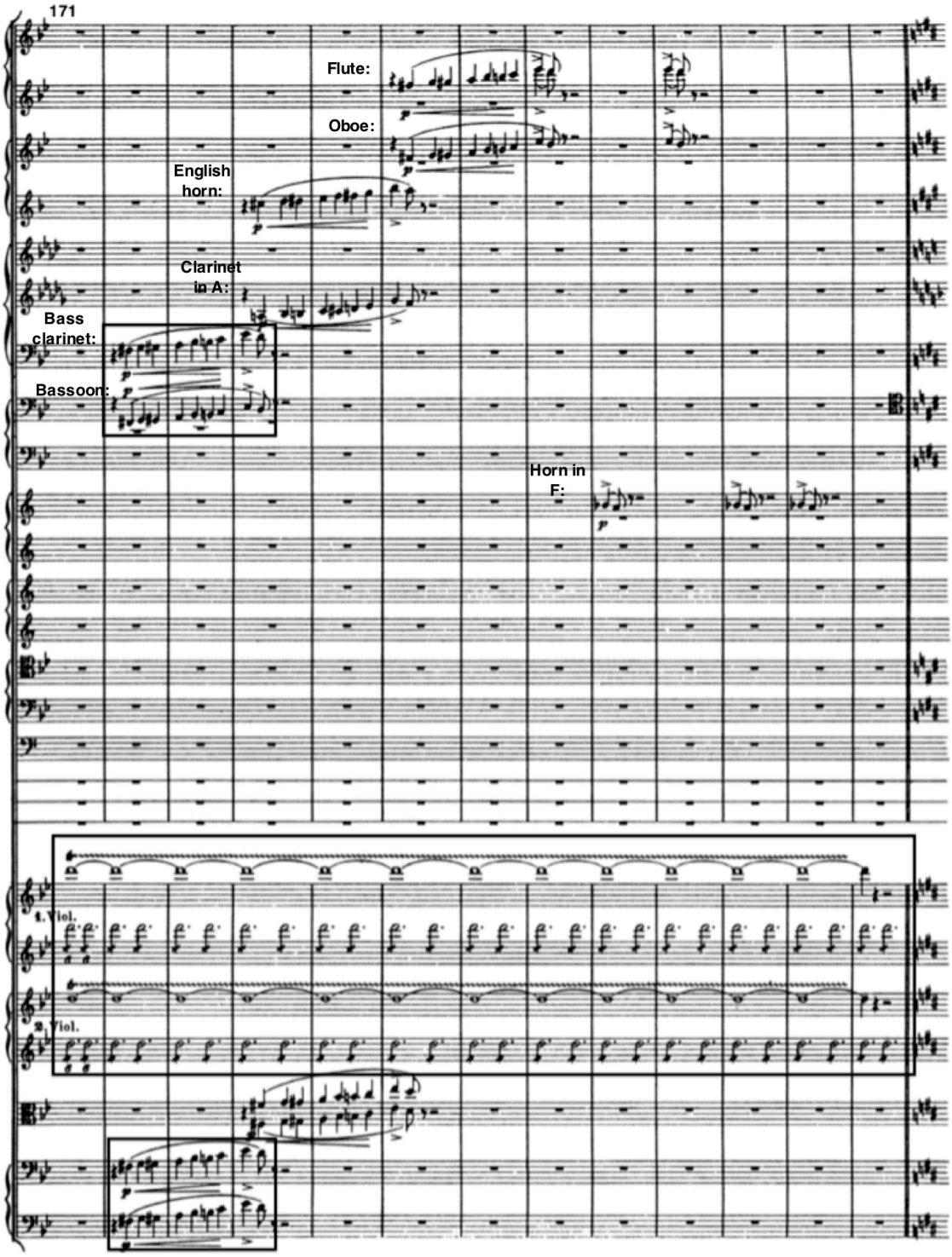
For the symphonic poem, Liszt dramatically restructures the relationship between strophes three and four (mm. 122-153 and 184-215, respectively). In the solo piano versions, the key of these strophes remains B-flat major throughout; however, there is both textural and accompanimental variance between them, even though the melodic material is almost identical. Unlike the relationships between strophes one and two and strophes five and six, the piano versions contain almost no transitional material between strophes three and four. Instead, Liszt repeats a series of D octaves, the dominant of the key, to which strophe four modulates and ends on a half cadence (e.g., mm. 77-79 in the 1851 version).

Liszt expands this nearly non-existent transition in the symphonic poem (mm. 154-183). There is surprisingly no new material introduced here; instead, Liszt recalls, successively, both the transitional octaves used already twice in the symphonic poem, and the transition marked *Un poco più mosso, sempre agitato assai* that preceded strophe three. This draws a greater degree of separation between strophes three and four. As a

result, Liszt is able to maintain textural and accompanimental continuity between the strophes without being overtly repetitive.

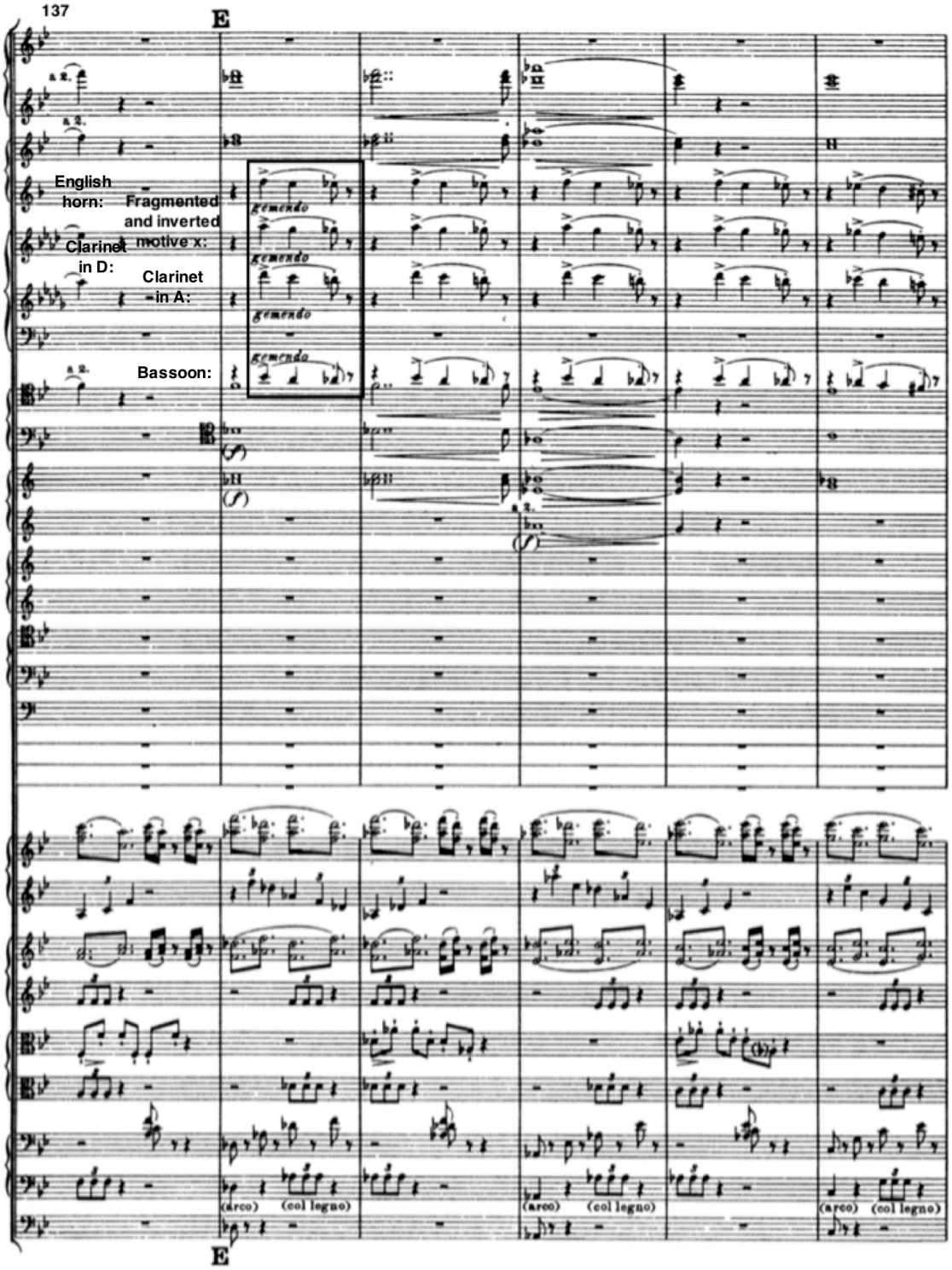
Whereas the material for strophes three and four is virtually identical, their tonalities differ. Strophe four is in the distant key of B minor. Both strophes are approached harmonically in the same way: just as the C-sharp pedal in measures 108 through 121 becomes the enharmonic third scale degree in the new key of B-flat minor, a pedal on D in measures 171 through 183 leads to the third scale degree of B minor for strophe four (see example 3.12).

**Example 3.12.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1854) mm. 171-183.**



Marked *espressivo dolente*, these strophes characterize a new emotion in the symphonic poem. As in the previous solo piano versions, the melody now begins on the third scale degree as opposed to the tonic. This explains Liszt's move to F-sharp minor towards the end of strophe two: the dominant of F-sharp becomes the melodic starting point for the subsequent strophe. The melody is scored mostly for the winds. The strings accompany, but the complexity of string writing creates a rich background tapestry. The violins contain oscillating thirds and sixths in triplet eighths. Two solo violins articulate the harmonic progression by descending through pizzicato triplet quarter notes, and the lower strings are divided into repeated triplets, ascending pizzicato eighths, and *marcatissimo* melodic fifths. A fragmented and inverted version of motive *x* appears in m. 138 in the winds (see example 3.13).

**Example 3.13.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1854) mm. 137-142.**

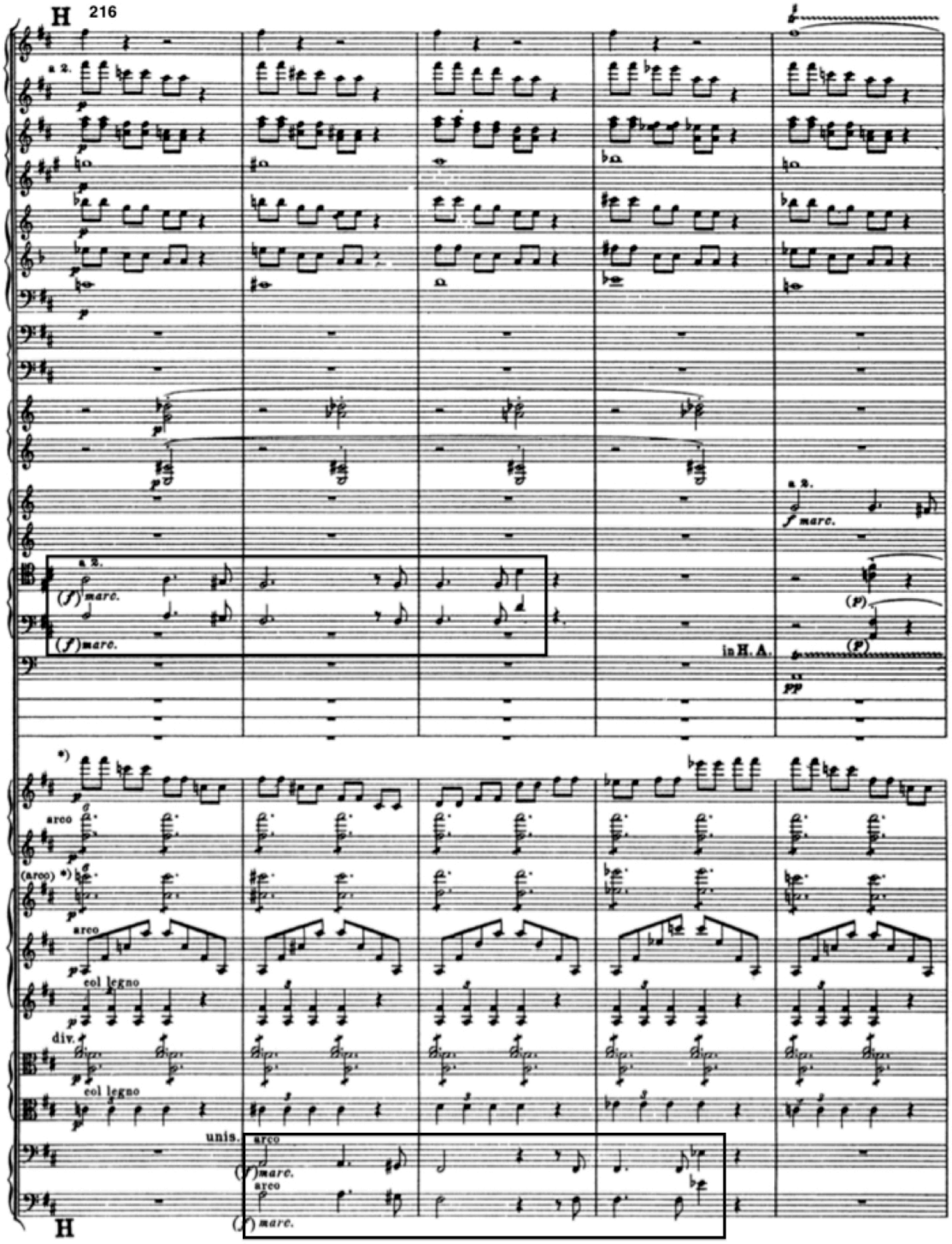


This motive recurs in strophe four at m. 200, and also signifies the end of a lengthy sequence at m. 215. The material serves to fill out the texture as the sequence begins. Furthermore, the function of this passage is to make a transition from the *dolente* character of strophe four (mm. 184ff.) into the high energy of strophes five and six.

Liszt maintains the somber character and instrumentation in strophe four, again indicating this with the marking *espressivo dolente*. This passage is expanded from its appearance in the 1851 version through the use of sequence (mm. 208-215).

Liszt reworks and expands the transitional material from the piano version between strophes four and five in the corresponding section of the symphonic poem (mm. 216-262). The material is based primarily on a fragmented and rhythmically diminished version of *Mazeppa's* main theme, in the trombones, bass trombones, and strings (see example 3.14).

**Example 3.14.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1854) mm. 216-220.**



As mentioned in the previous chapter, this material is introduced in the 1851 piano version, and the material is presented similarly in the symphonic poem. It would seem that Liszt was already thinking about the orchestral expansion of this material in his recomposing of the 1851 piano *Étude*.

In the symphonic poem, Liszt treats the fragment of the theme sequentially, arriving at the key of E major in m. 232. As the passage reaches its climax in m. 247, Liszt prolongs a $vii^{o7}$ of A minor, ultimately leading back to the key of D minor for strophe five through a cadence in mm. 257-263.

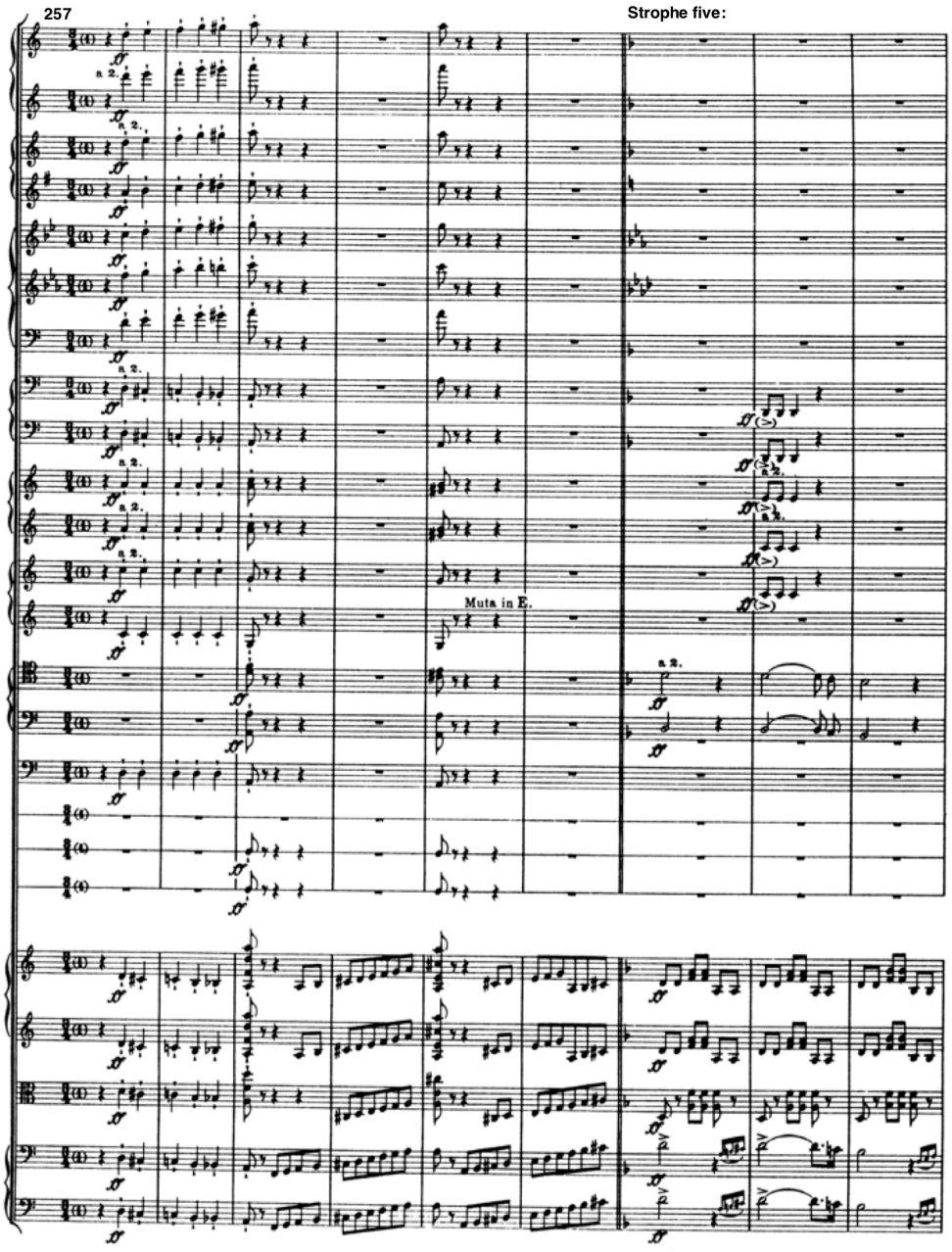
Structurally, this passage is significant. The main strophic portion of all versions of *Mazeppa* is an alternation of thematic material and transitional material. However, with the fragmentation of the main theme in m. 216 (and its corresponding passage in the piano *Étude*), thematic material is embedded within a transitional passage. Measures 216-262 can be seen as a very short development, containing compositional procedures and structural elements such as fragmentation, diminution, sequence, motion to foreign keys, and a distinct retransition at m. 257 that initiates the return to D minor.

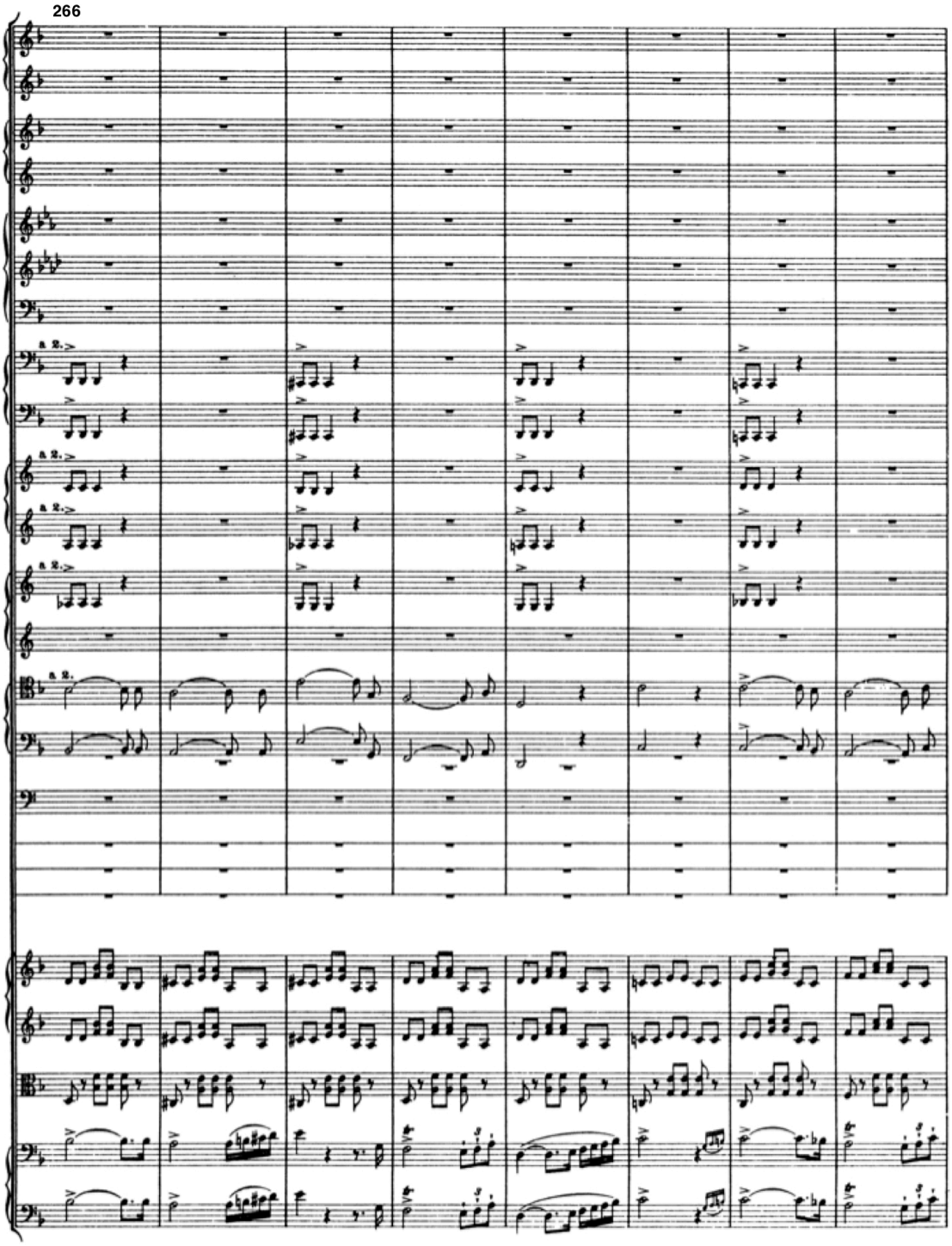
Through this development section, Liszt intensifies the return to the strophic material in the home key of D minor. The compositional procedures employed in the passage from mm. 216-262, coupled with harmonic meandering and subsequent dominant preparation beginning at m. 247 are entirely new in the versions from 1851 and 1854. This type of recomposition for the purpose of formal integrity exemplifies the refinement of Liszt's compositional style at the time.

### *Strophes Five and Six*

The fifth strophe (mm. 263-293) recapitulates the main theme from strophe one in almost every way (example 3.15).

**Example 3.15.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1854) mm. 257-273.**




266
a 2.

The changed element is meter: strophe one is in 6/4, while the fifth is in 3/4. However, Liszt retains the basic rhythmic structure for the theme, thus extending it over twice the number of measures.

The question remains as to Liszt's intention for this metric shift. As a meter, 6/4 gives a feeling of expansiveness. One thinks of other significant works in 6/4, such as the Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1, also in D minor, where breadth of line is paramount. A shift to 3/4, provided the composer retains the rhythmic structure, slices the measure in half, doubling the number of accents. The result is a more frenetic character, representing the wild horse as it nears its end.

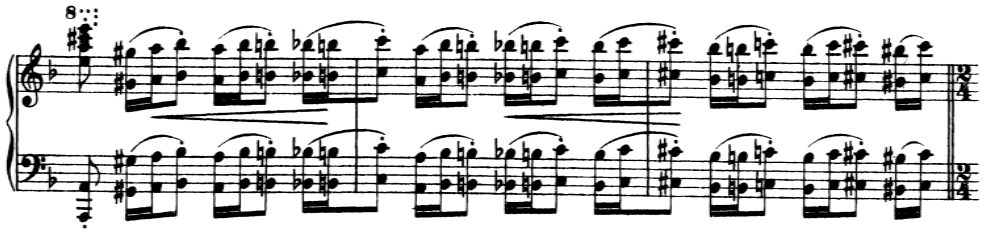
When placed in the context of the earlier versions, the symphonic poem presents a greater degree of cohesiveness due to the close relationship between strophes one and five. The earlier versions of *Mazeppa* (1837 and 1840) have a meter of 6/8 in this strophe and are marked *Allegro animato*. The accompanimental texture is thick, with rapidly rising thirds doubled between the hands. For the 1851 version, Liszt maintains the marking *Animato* but eliminates the word *"Allegro."* The dynamic becomes *mezzo-piano* and the character indication is *leggiero*. Furthermore, the accompanimental texture is greatly thinned out.

In borrowing the material from the first strophe for that of the fifth strophe in the symphonic poem, Liszt unifies the formal aspects of the symphonic poem.

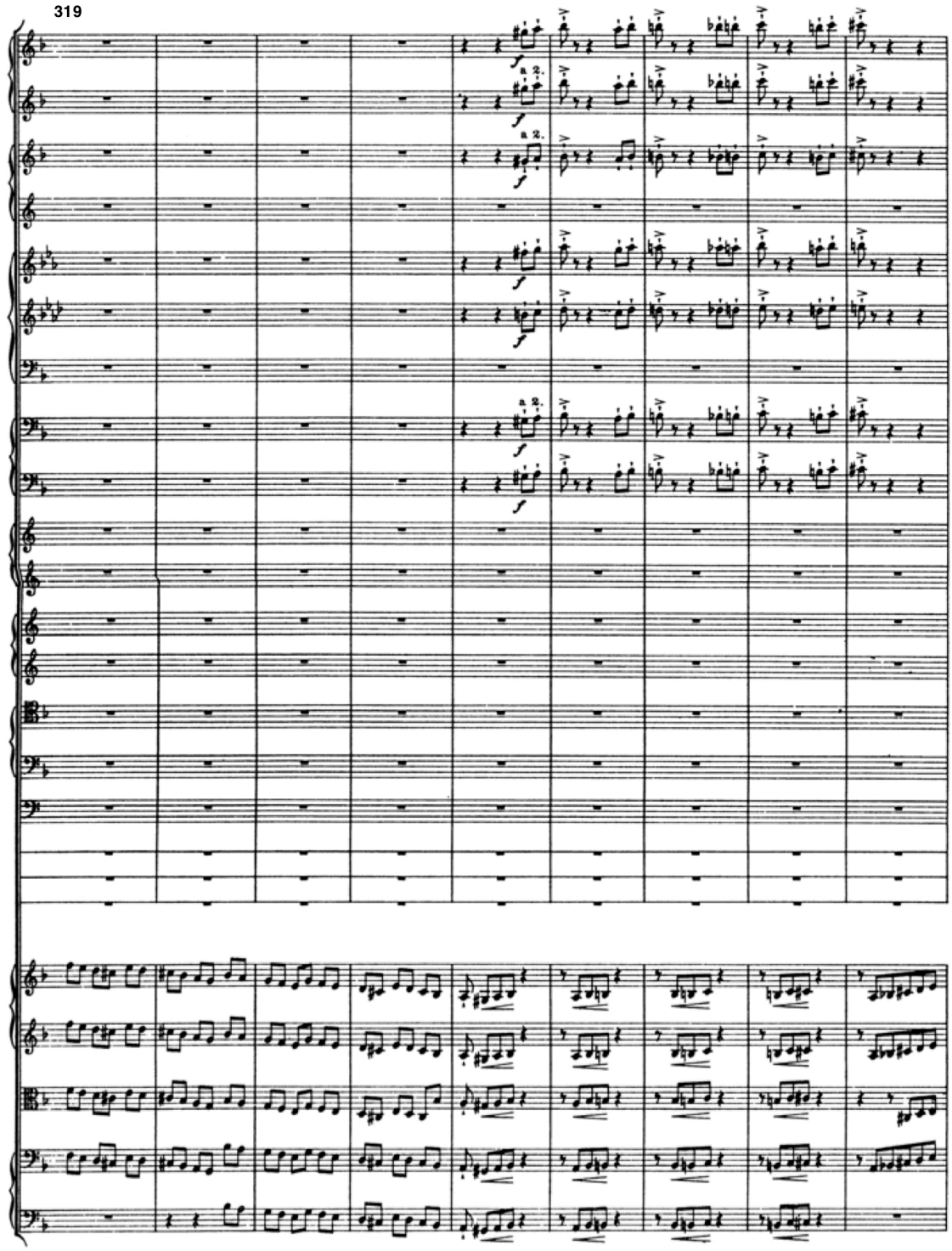
The transition (mm. 293-332) between strophes five and six closely resembles the transition between strophes one and two. Liszt alters only the ending of this passage. The last three bars of this transition contain material drawn from the 1851 piano version (example 3.16).

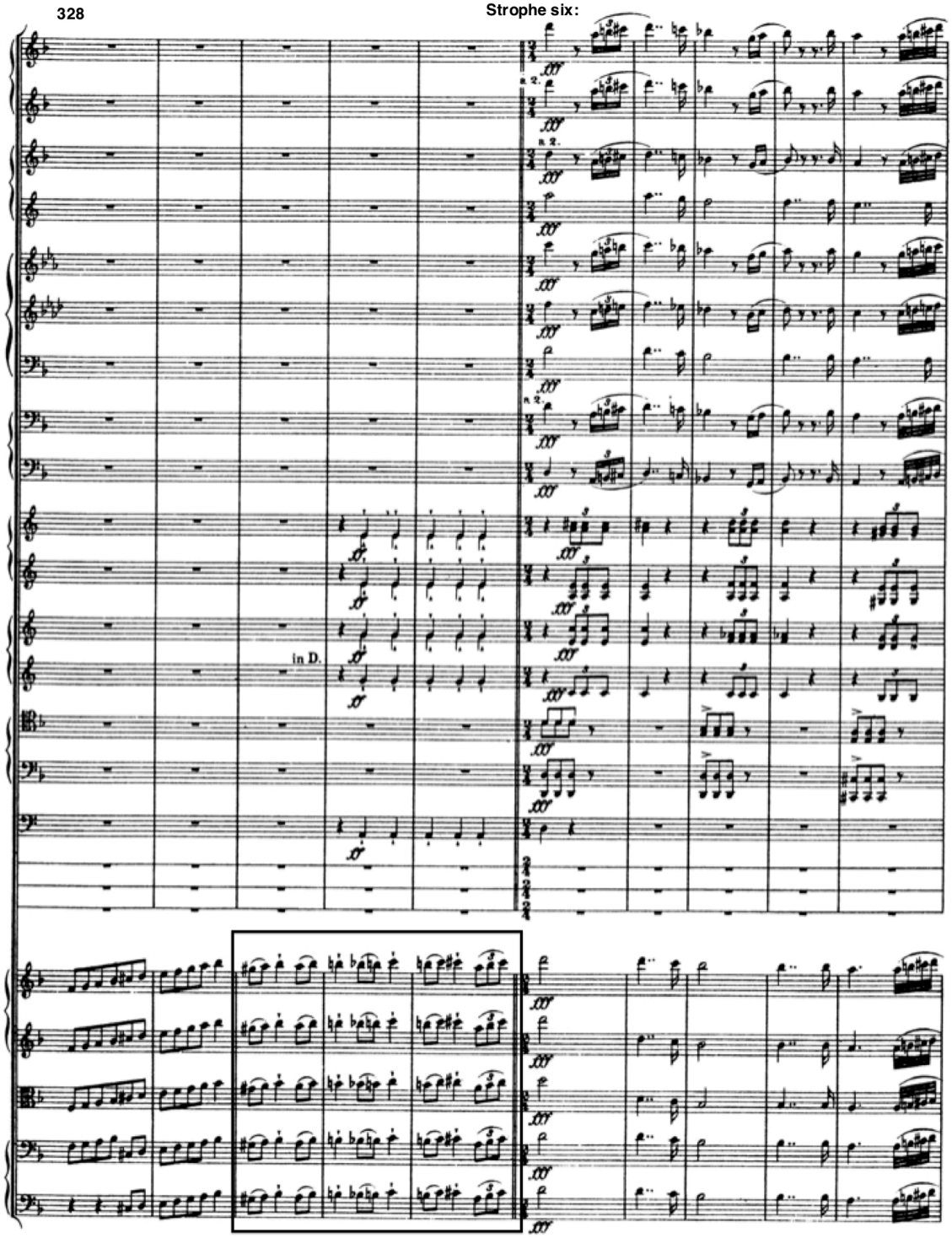
**Example 3.16. Comparison of transitional material between strophes five and six.**

**3.16a. *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 133-135.**



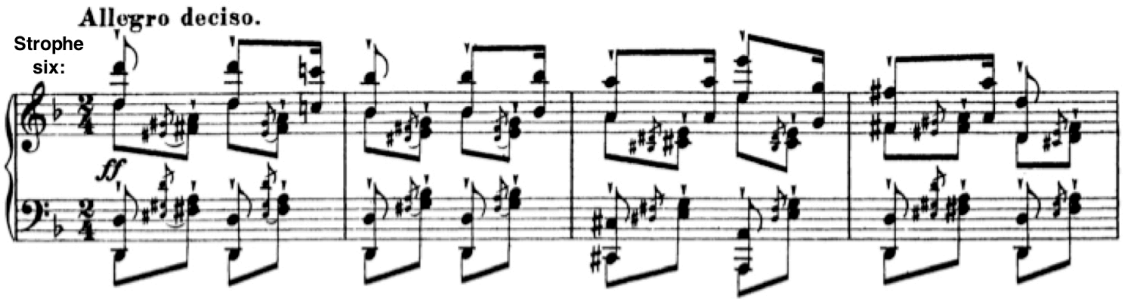
**3.16b.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1854) mm. 319-337.**




328
Strophe six:
in D.

This material leads directly into the sixth and final strophe (see example 3.16b, mm. 333-382), which also follows strophe six of the 1851 piano version (see example 3.17), both in meter (2/4) and character. Marked *fff* and with dense orchestration, this strophe moves into the parallel major, just as the 1851 version does.

**Example 3.17. *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 138-141.**




Just as the piano version thins out the strong beat articulations into octaves, the symphonic poem articulates only the melodic notes on the strong beats. The piano *Étude* consistently articulates entire chords as grace notes to the actual harmonies, which creates a denser sound; the symphonic poem relies on the brass section to fill out the harmonies through triplet eighths, while the melodic material is ornamented with ascending flurries of thirty-second notes and triplet sixteenth notes similar to earlier strophes.

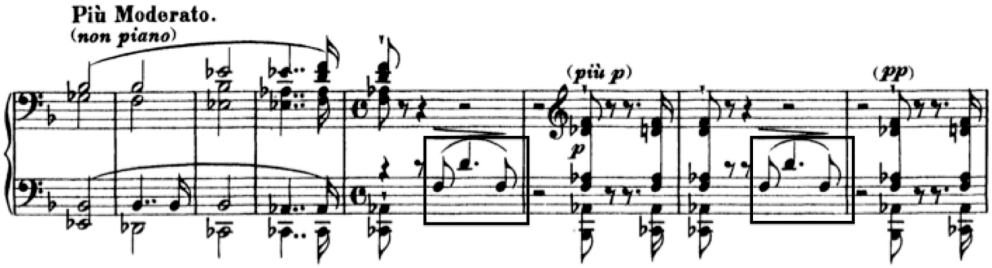
The essential difference, however, is that the symphonic poem extends the theme over twice as many measures. The impatient atmosphere in the 1851 piano *Étude* transforms into a more expansive, richly orchestrated, character. Furthermore, the ending of this strophe in the symphonic poem (mm. 382-402) is quite different from all previous versions of the work: instead of articulating a perfect authentic cadence as the material moves into the coda, the symphonic poem moves towards an extended $a^{o7}$ chord (mm. 391-402) before a long transition marked *Andante* (mm. 403-435). Fry asserts that this

prolonged a$^{o7}$ chord is the horse's fall,[2] but perhaps a more accurate reading would be the dramatic realization of Mazeppa's nearly hopeless situation, trapped underneath the dead horse and barely hanging on to life. The *Andante* passage (mm. 403-435) is an enlarged version of the *Più Moderato* towards the end of the 1851 piano *Étude*, and will be discussed at length below. The most significant element here is that the *Andante* leads not merely to a final codetta of eight measures, as in the 1851 *Étude*, but rather to a *finale* long enough for Liszt to "suggest to Wilhelm Wieprecht that this march finale might lend itself to an arrangement for military band."[3]

The *Andante* section in the symphonic poem is much larger in scope than its corresponding passage marked *Più Moderato* in the piano version. These sections are related motivically, containing the motive of an ascending and descending sixth or seventh (example 3.18).

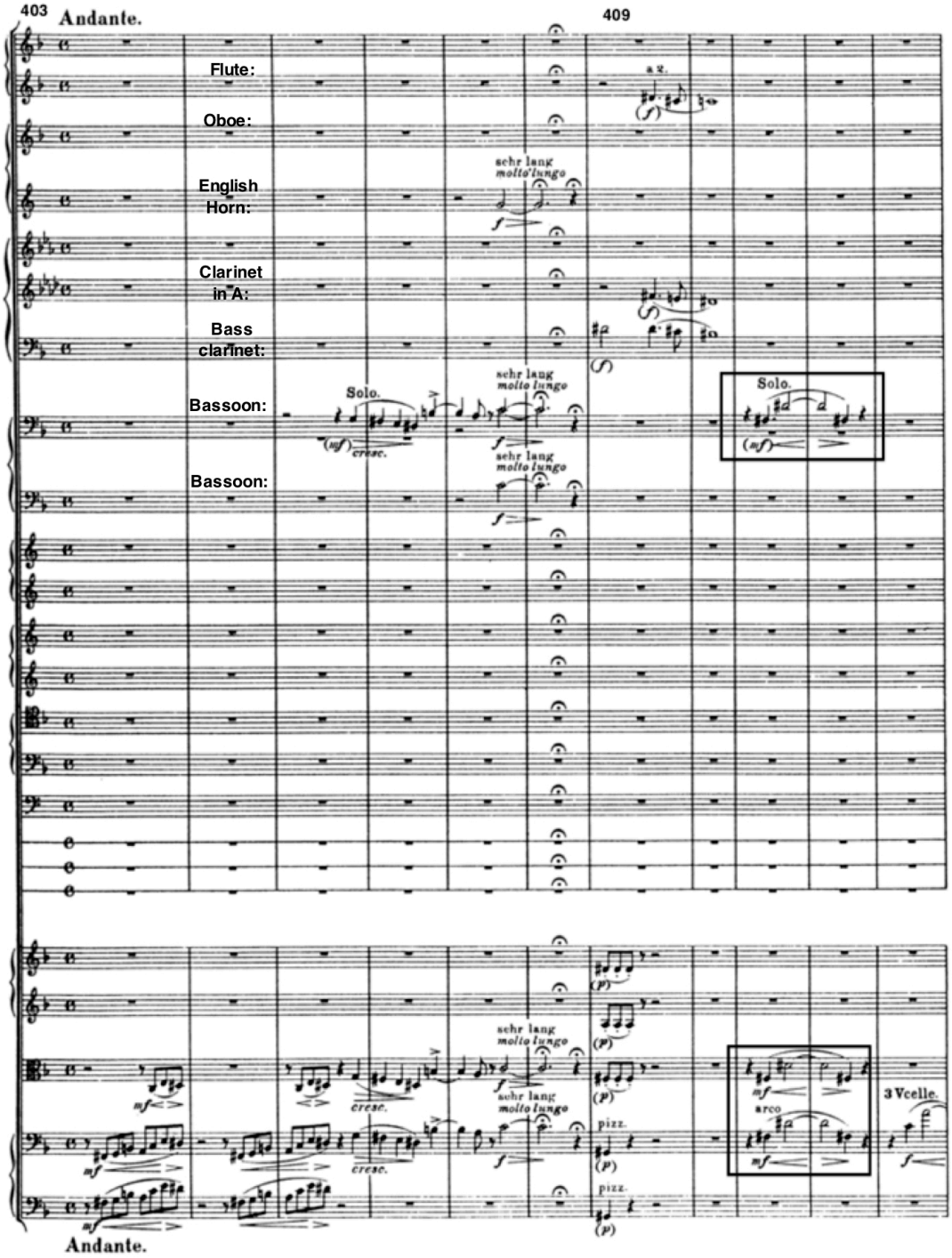
**Example 3.18. Comparison of *Più Moderato* (1851) with *Andante* (1854).**

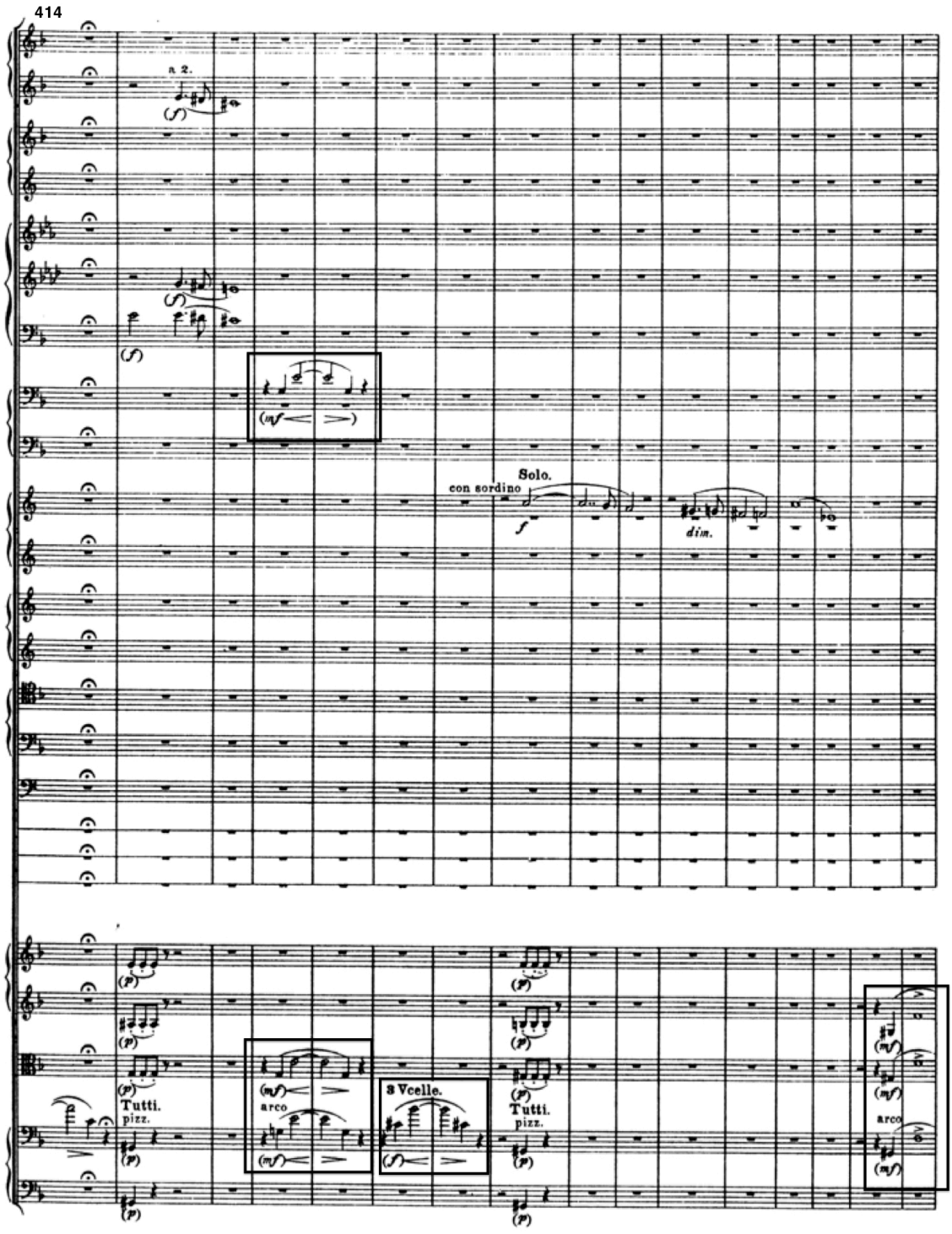
**3.18a. *Mazeppa* (1851) mm. 178-185**

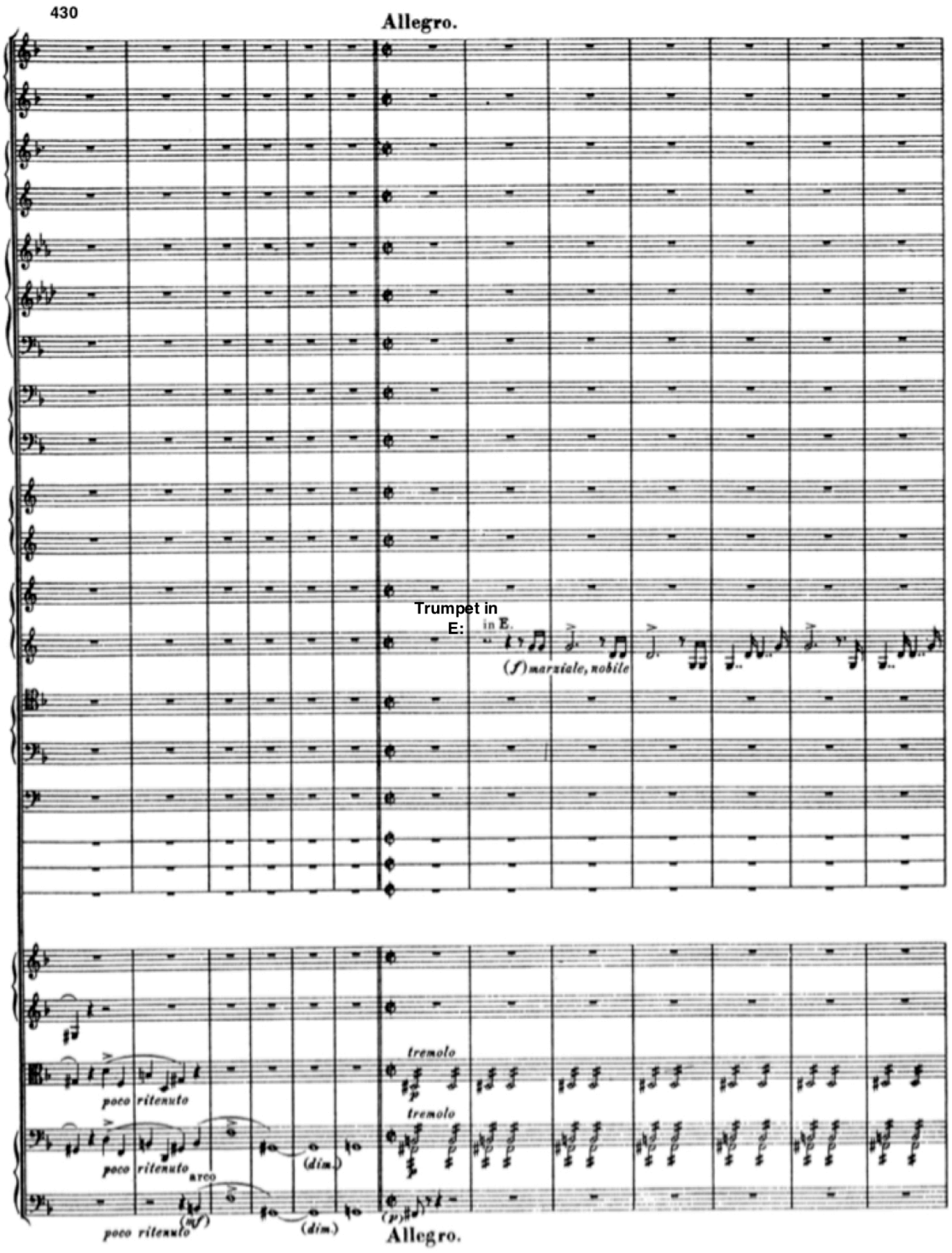



[2] Fry, 34.
[3] Samson, 211.

**3.18b.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1854) mm. 403-442.**

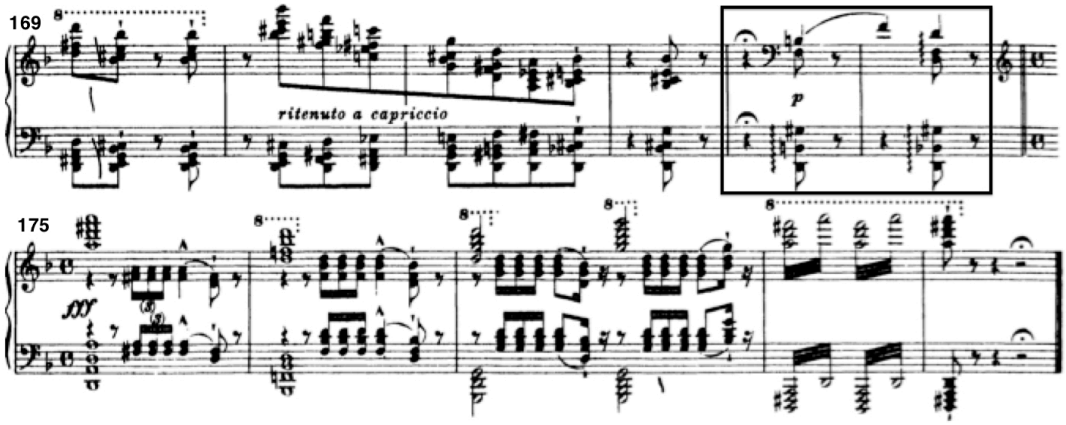



414
a 2.
Solo.
con sordino
dim.
Tutti.
pizz.
arco
3 Vcelle.
Tutti.
pizz.
arco


430
Allegro.
Trumpet in E:
in E.
(f) marziale, nobile
tremolo
tremolo
poco ritenuto
poco ritenuto
arco
(dim.)
poco ritenuto
(mf)
(dim.)
(p)
Allegro.

Liszt greatly expands this material in the symphonic poem, originally presented in the 1840 version of *Mazeppa* merely as a preliminary motivic seed (see example 3.19).

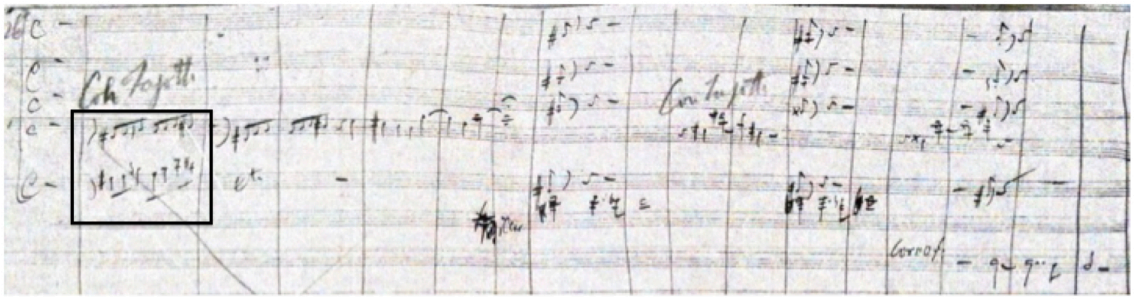
**Example 3.19. *Mazeppa* (1840) mm. 169-179.**




While the original melodic gesture in the 1840 version is only a diminished fifth followed by a descending third, the placement of this material following a fermata, just before the grand ending of the work, remains consistent throughout the succeeding versions. When one compares it with the surrounding material, the motive is distinct, and it is one that Liszt fully realizes in the next version of the work: in the 1851 *Mazeppa* he presents the motive more than five times successively. The passage, as mentioned in the previous chapter, likely represents Mazeppa's attempt to rise up and overcome death after the traumatic journey.

The so-called *Equisse pour Mazeppa*, the second draft of the orchestrated version that is held at the Bibliothéque nationale de Paris, furthers the expansion of this material. An introductory passage of rising eighth notes that first appears in this draft is retained in the final symphonic poem, followed by the passage's primary motive in alternation with a new chromatically descending idea (example 3.20).

**Example 3.20. *Esquisse pour Mazeppa*, p. 26.**[4]



This version does not yet contain the symphonic poem's use of the 1851 version's *secco* chords, which consists of a combination of *pizzicato* and *portato* articulation in the strings (see example 3.18b, measure 409).

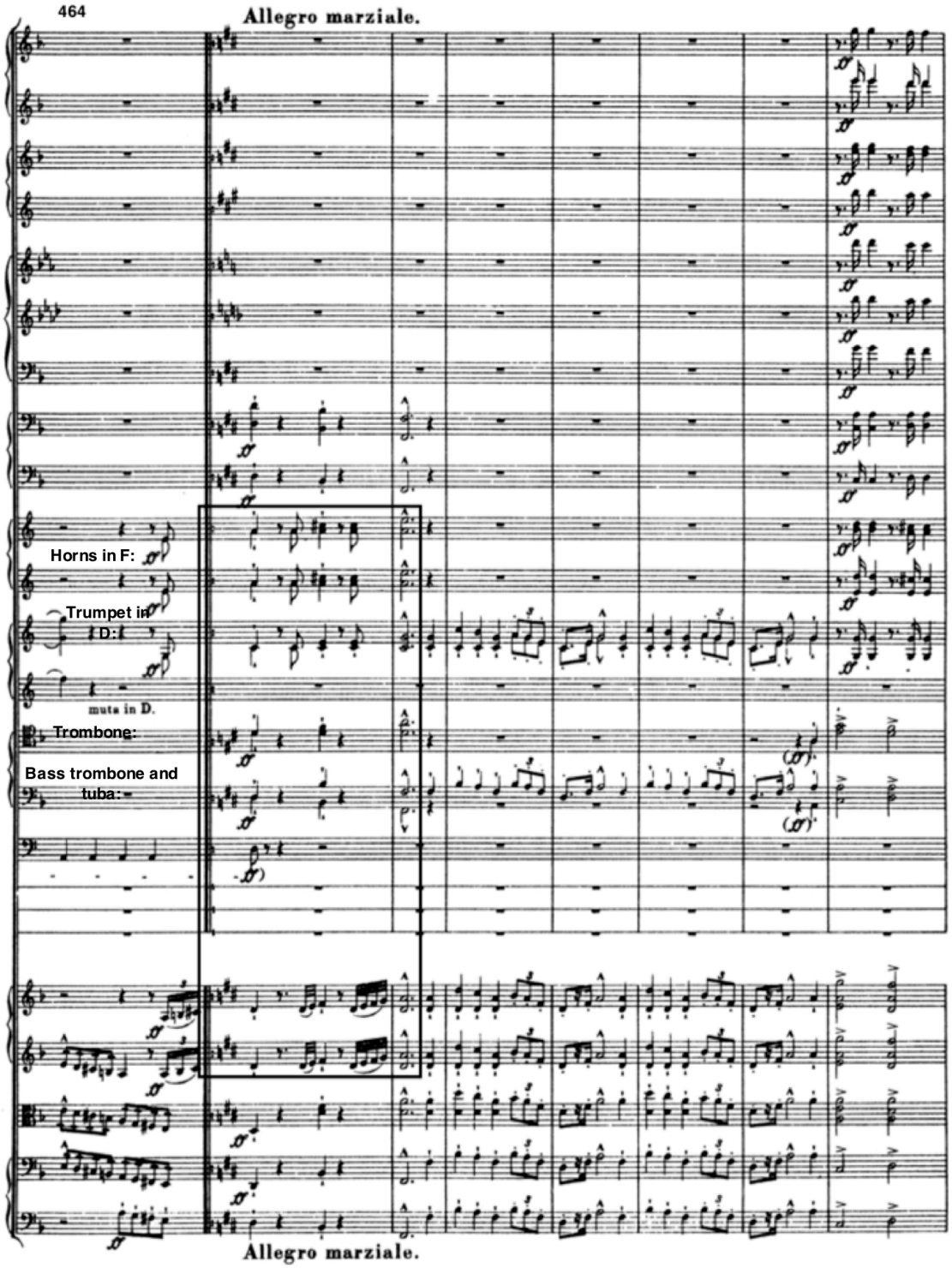
As the *Andante* passage comes to a close, the motivic material articulates a vii$^{o7}$/V chord in D minor (initially in m. 421, and then melodically spelled out in mm. 428-430 and mm. 432-433), but after extending the root of this chord over two bars, the G-sharp descends chromatically to a B major 6/4 chord (mm. 433-435). After such an extended emphasis of the dominant of D minor (the *Andante* section grows out of a pedal point on A, and largely remains on the G-sharp pedal point as a vii$^{o7}$/V), this lack of resolution to the dominant creates the tension necessary for such a finale. A twenty-nine measure *Allegro* introduction to the coda ensues, with a theme marked *forte marziale, nobile.* Supporting this theme are continuous tremolos in the celli and violas, along with melodic flurries in the violins reminiscent of the embellished main theme of *Mazeppa*. Programmatically, this represents the arrival of the Cossacks and the glorification of Mazeppa the hero.

[4] Franz Liszt, *Esquisse pour Mazeppa*, Bibliothèque nationale de Paris (F-Pc Ms. 155).

### *The Finale*

The main first theme that is presented in the *Allegro marziale* (mm. 465ff) coda is now fully in the key of D major. The melodic ascent through the tonic triad, coupled with the ornamentation in the winds (see example 3.21), create a character of elation appropriate for the celebration of Mazeppa's glory. This material is profoundly different in character from the main theme of *Mazeppa*.

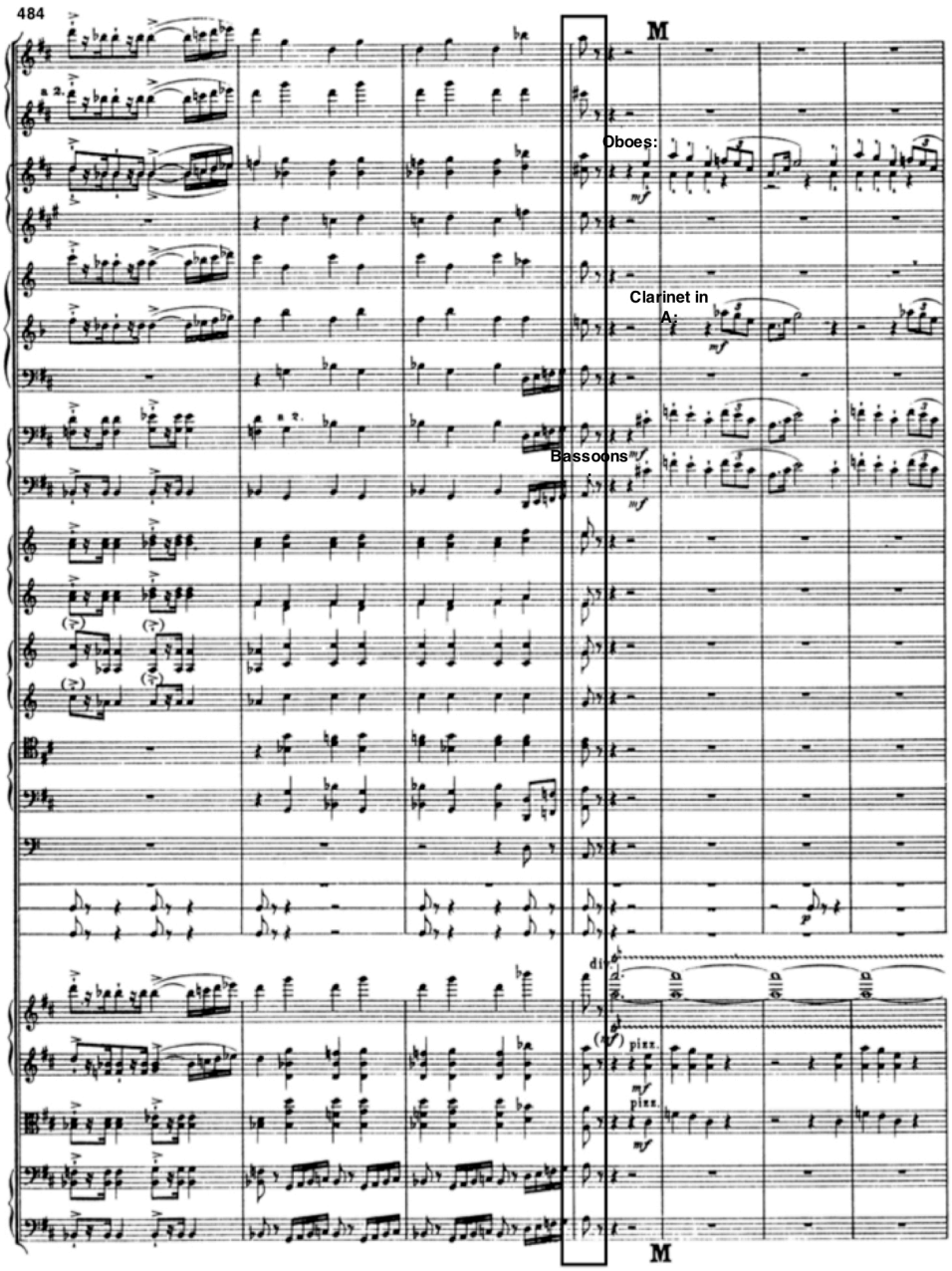
**Example 3.21. *Mazeppa* (1854) mm. 464-471.**




A half cadence at measure 487 in the key of D minor brings the opening section of the finale to a close. Here the instrumentation thins out, with sustained octave trills on

the dominant in the first violins accompanying a rapid transformation of the theme in the winds (example 3.22).

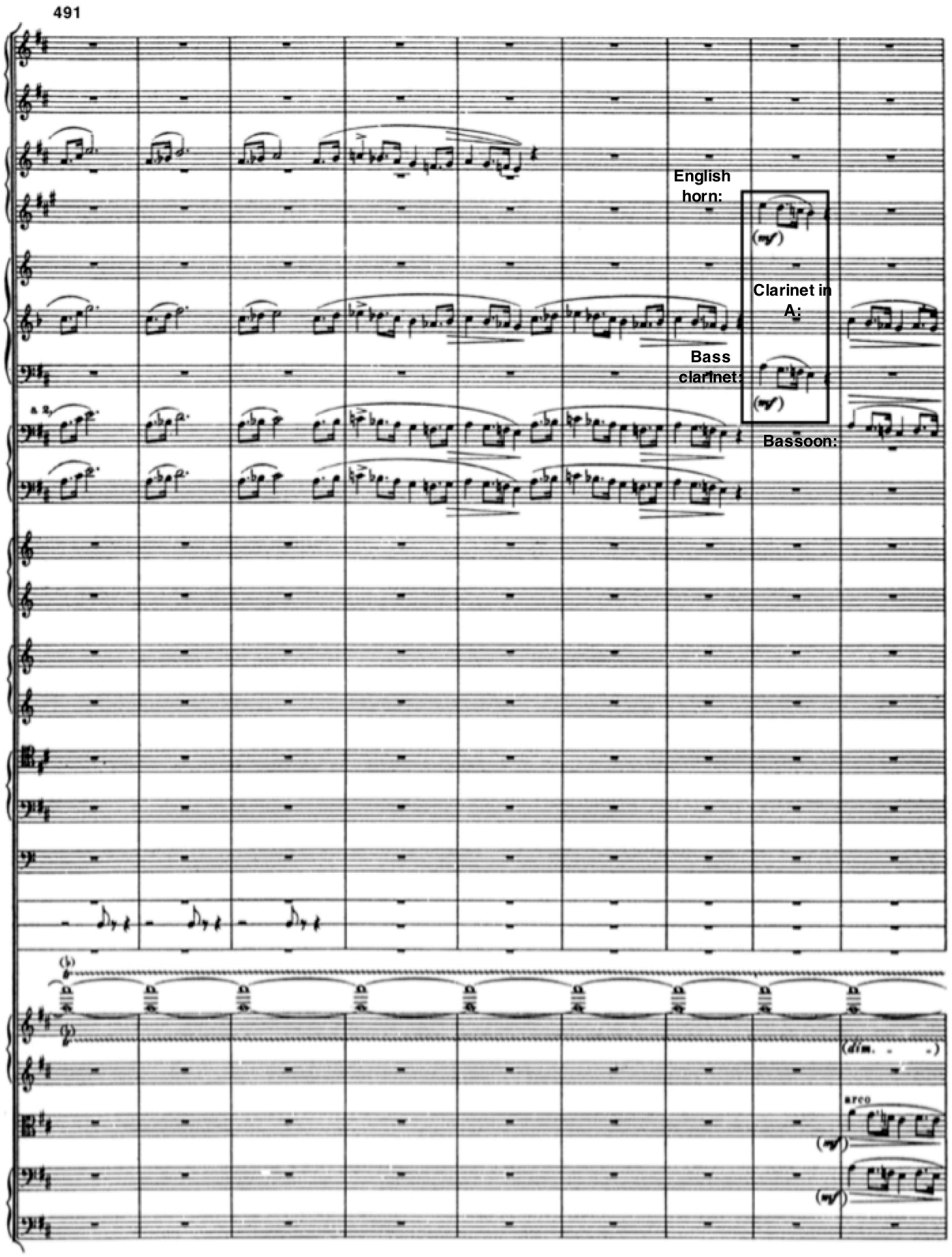
**Example 3.22. *Mazeppa* (1854) mm. 484-490.**




Upon close examination, the tail of the first theme undergoes both fragmentation and intervallic diminution, from ascending thirds to ascending stepwise motion (example

3.23, mm. 491-493). Once the motive is intervallically contracted, Liszt uses it as a transitional theme into the finale's most prevalent theme two at measure 500.

**Example 3.23. *Mazeppa* (1854) mm. 491-499.**




Just as the contrast of character between *Mazeppa's* main theme and the first of the finale is rather pronounced, the theme at measure 500 offers an altogether new sound. As Samson describes it:

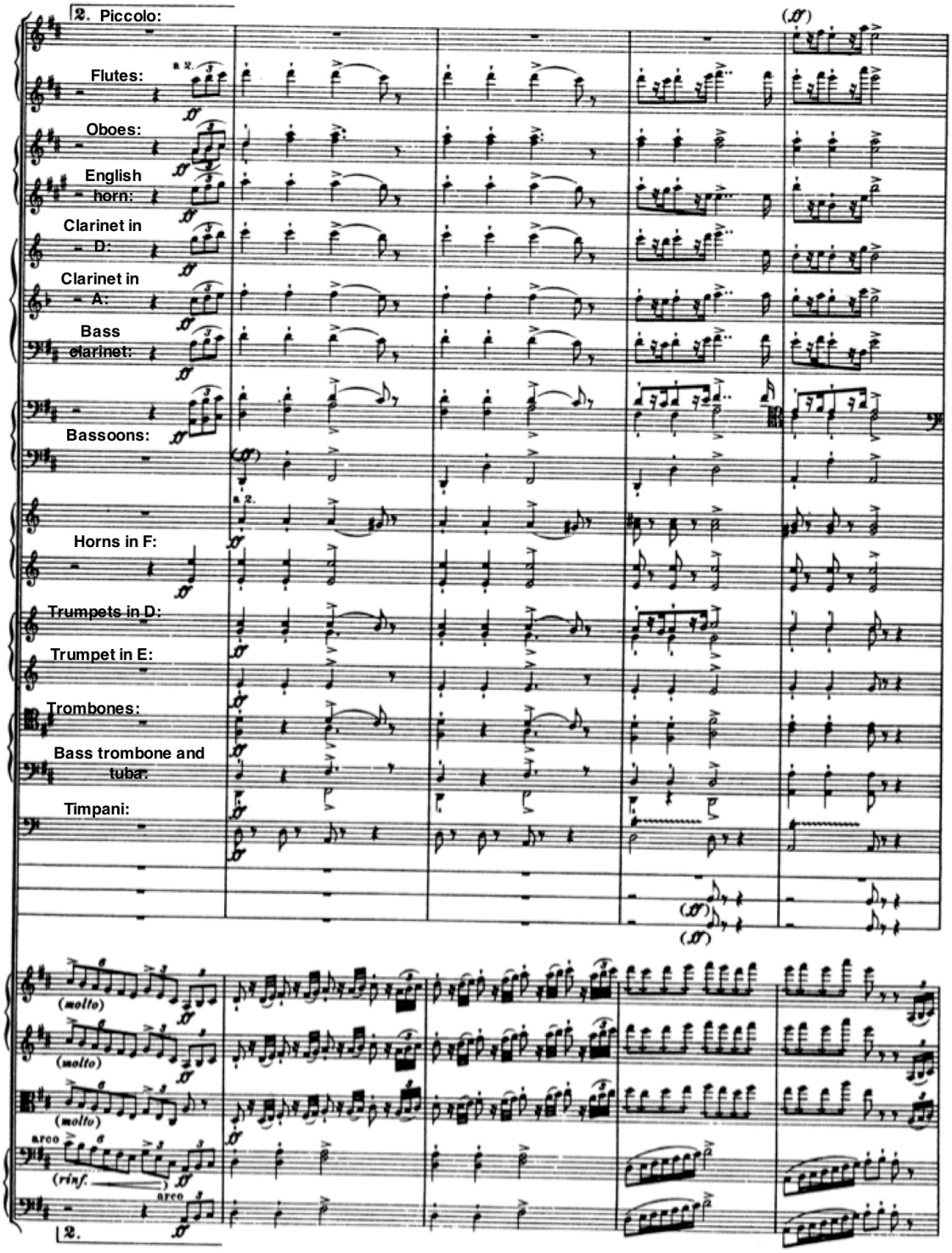
> This theme, with its modal inflection, ornamentation and triangle accompaniment, both echoes the 'Turkish' music of a Classical repertory and strikingly anticipates a soundworld characteristic of Russian composers such as Balakirev and Borodin.[5]

Liszt conveys a sense of playfulness in the high registration of the winds together with the trills and subsequent staccato accompaniment in the upper register of the violins.

However, any sense of modal shift disappears at m. 528. The mode is clearly in the tonic major now, and the orchestration returns to the richness of theme one of the coda (example 3.24).

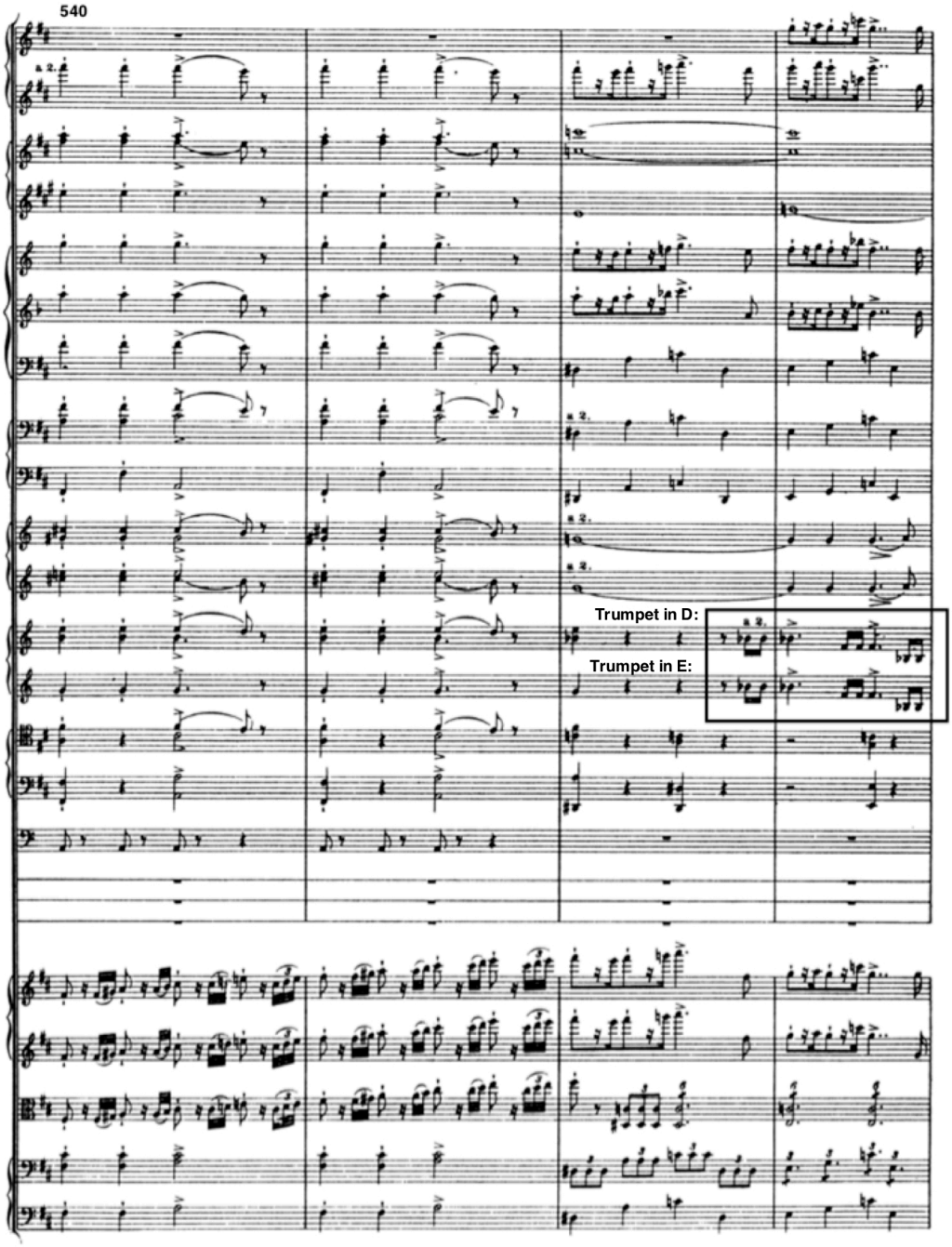
[5] Samson, 211.

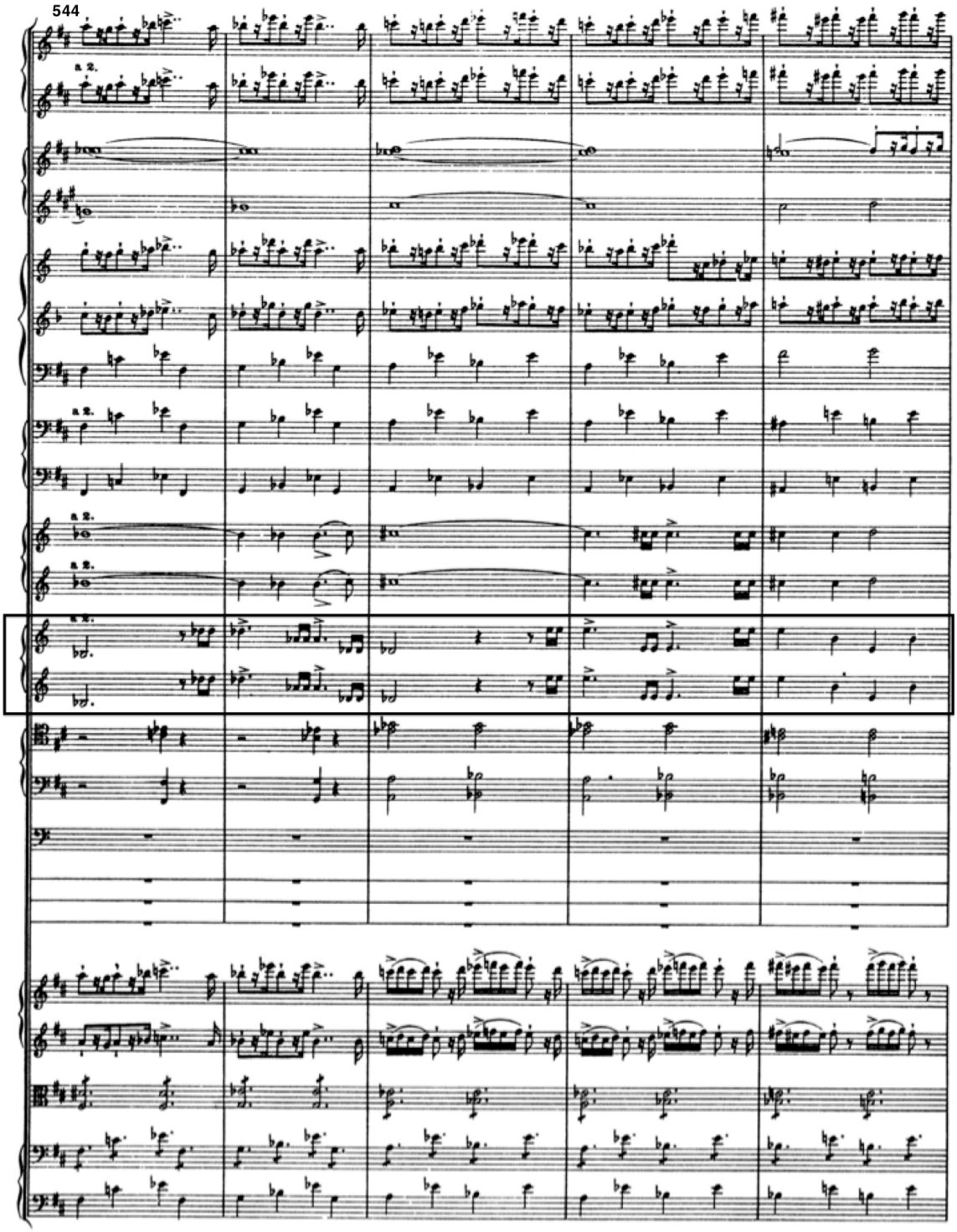
**Example 3.24.** ***Mazeppa*** **(1854) mm. 527-531.**



Liszt reworks this orchestration, anticipating the combination of themes at m. 543. Here, the trumpets enter in full force with the theme from the coda's introduction (example 3.25).

**Example 3.25. *Mazeppa* (1854) mm. 540-548.**

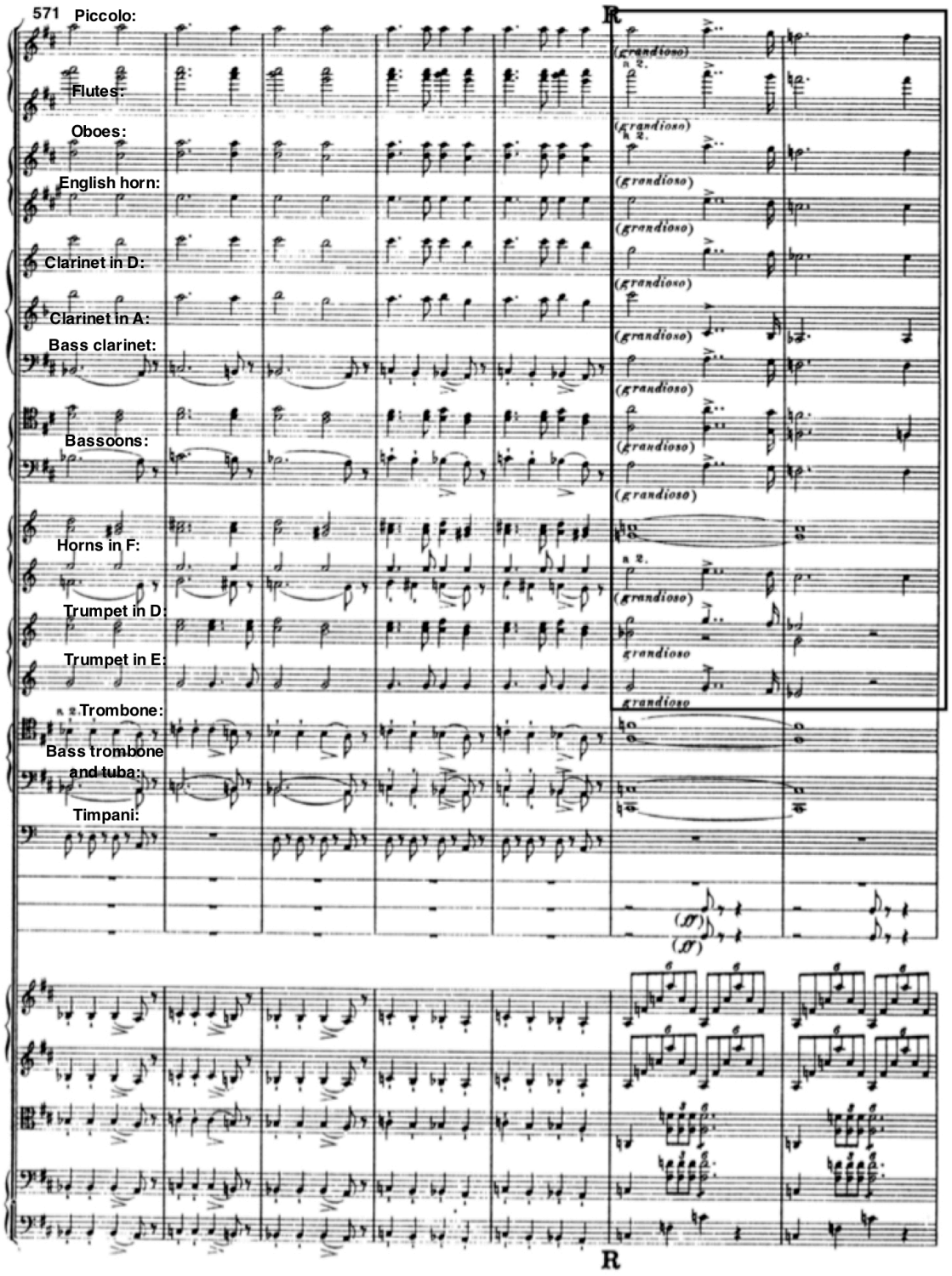



544
a 2.

This material is interrupted only by a pause on a half cadence in B minor (m. 554), enabling another previous idea to return, that of the transitional octaves (mm. 554ff.) from the strophic portion of the work.

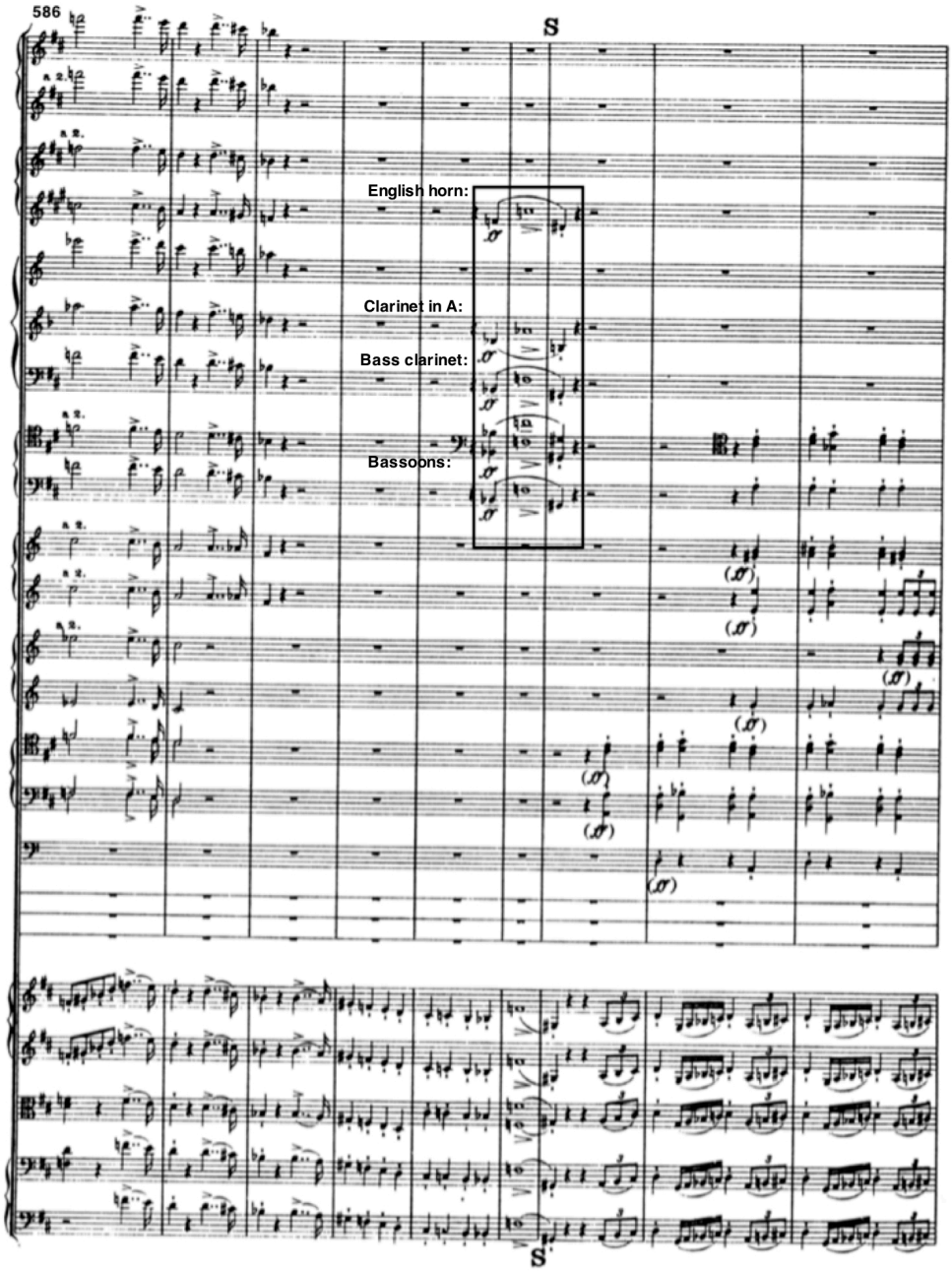
At this point, a return to the main theme of *Mazeppa* is almost obligatory. Liszt delivers it at m. 578, orchestrated richly, with the melody articulated by no less than twelve wind and brass instruments and accompanied by the strings and remaining brass. The primary marking is *grandioso* in the trumpets, along with the same term in parentheses for the entire wind section (example 3.26).

**Example 3.26. *Mazeppa* (1854) mm. 571-579.**



Just as Liszt closed the 1840 and 1851 versions, along with the symphonic poem's first part, one last pause on the *Andante's* primary motive prepares the closing section of the finale (example 3.27).

**Example 3.27. *Mazeppa* (1854) mm. 586-594.**



Liszt effectively treats the coda of this symphonic poem as a compendium of the work's thematic material. The return of the main theme "at the end of the finale [is] a gesture of cyclical return that is at the same time a potent representation of the triumphant elevation of Mazeppa as a Cossack Chief."[6] Furthermore, the work remains a shining example of Liszt's thematic transformation, in, among other examples, its strophic and systematic development of the theme and subsequent transformed return as a statement of Mazeppa's glory.

### *The Drafts*

What remain to be discussed regarding the orchestrated version are the three preliminary drafts: the *particella* of 1851, the *esquisse* in the hand of Joachim Raff, and the final *Stichvorlage*, also in Raff's hand. A brief summary of these drafts is included in Samson's *Virtuosity and the Musical Work.*[7] While a detailed exploration of the manuscripts is beyond the scope of this dissertation, further investigation of key points will help elucidate the origin and derivation of certain musical traits of the final symphonic poem.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, motive *x* plays a significant role in the symphonic poem, whereas the motive is not present in Liszt's 1851 piano *Étude*. Samson points out that the *particella* does not contain the "rising scalar motives from bars 4-5 *et seq*," but that they "were added in [the *esquisse*], but clearly as an afterthought."[8] Indeed, Liszt boldly writes the ascending version of this motive at the top

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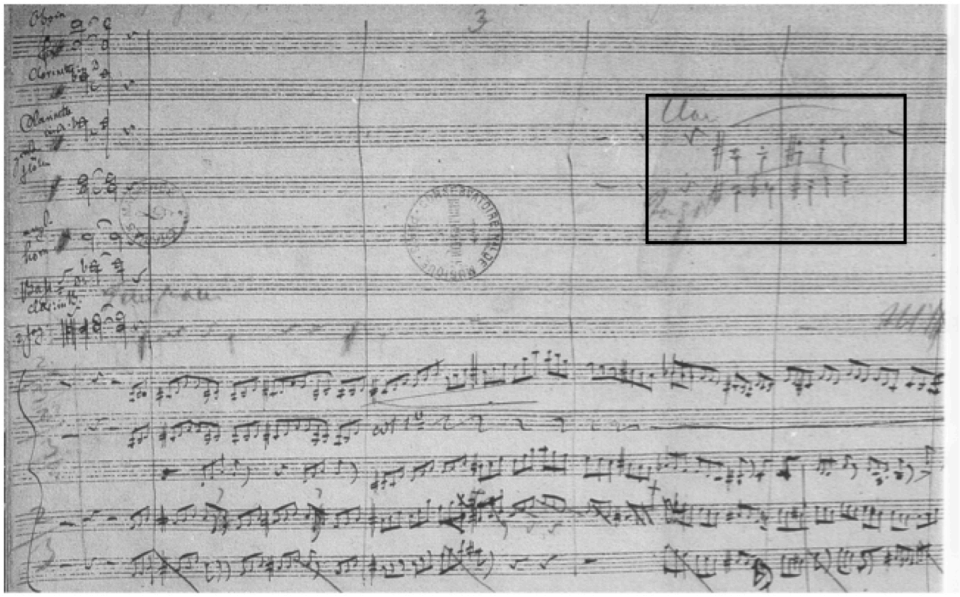
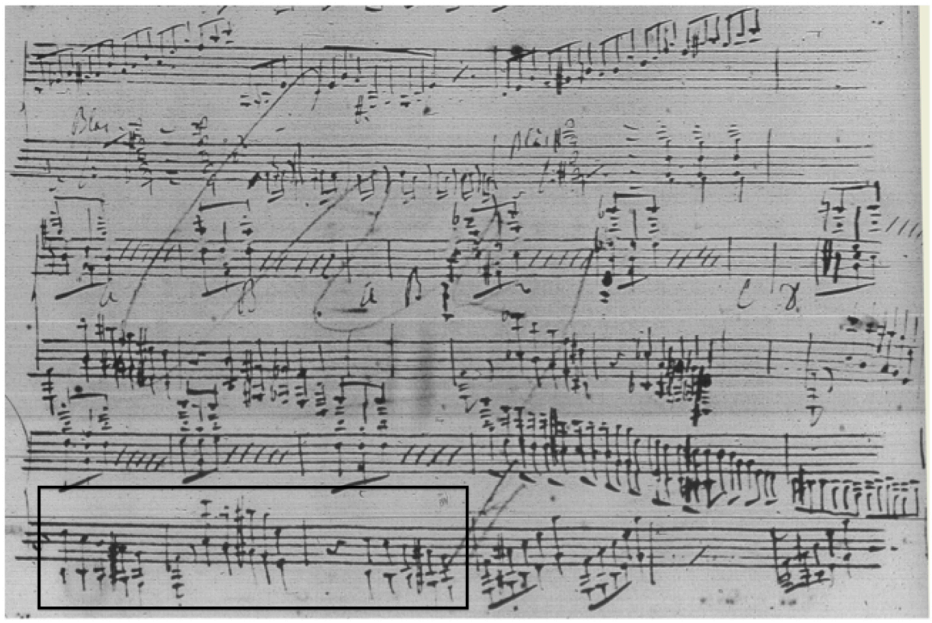
[6] Ibid., 211.
[7] Ibid., 209-211.
[8] Ibid., 209.

of page one of the *esquisse* (example 3.28), but further investigation of the *particella* reveals the inversion of the motive on the third page (example 3.29).

**Example 3.28. *Esquisse pour Mazeppa*, page 1.**



**Example 3.29. *Particella*, page 3.**[9]



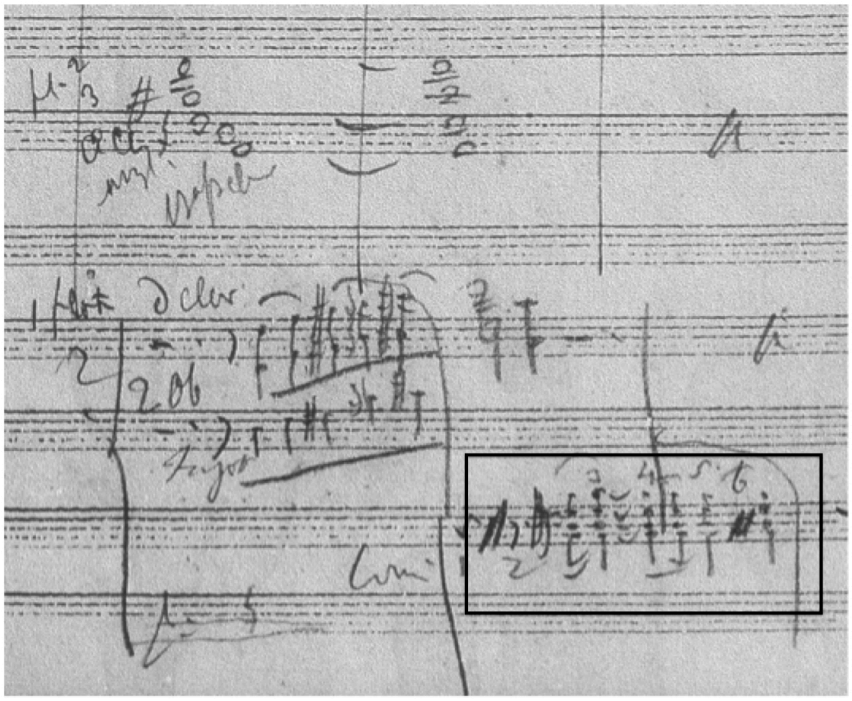
[9] Franz Liszt, *Particella* in the "*Mazeppa* draftbook," (D-WRgs N2).

These two ideas are related. The true origin of motive x, therefore, is what listeners of the final symphonic poem perceive as its inversion. Furthermore, as Table 3.1 indicates, the *particella* was written just before composition of the piano version. That Liszt had already conceived of this motive and yet not included it in the piano version indicates either that he did not consider it to be significant enough for both versions, or that he intended to truly develop two simultaneous paths for the material of *Mazeppa*.

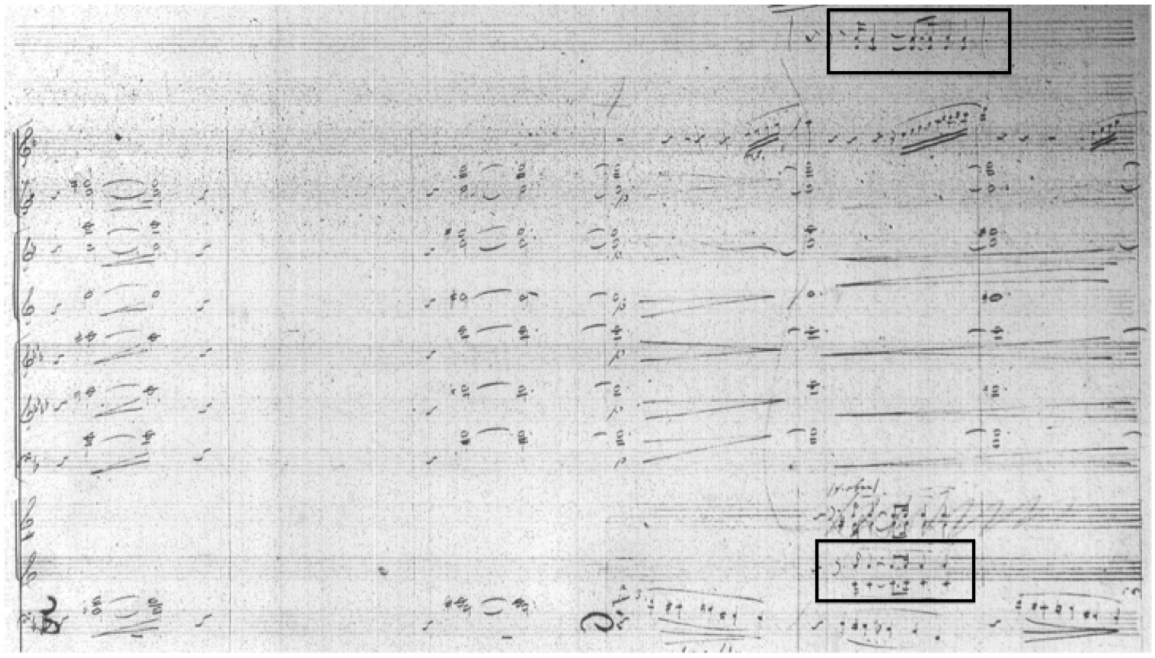
Accompanying this motive, Liszt incorporates a rhythmic motive (identified earlier as *y*) for the horns (m. 21 *et seq.*) that introduces the basic rhythmic design of *Mazeppa's* main theme. Samson points out the "rhythmicised horn motive [is] added only in [the *Stichvorlage*],"[10] and it is true that Raff incorporated the motive into the texture for this final manuscript version. The origin of the rhythmic motive, though, is in the *esquisse* (example 3.30), at the bottom of page three: Liszt adds the motive below the score, indicating to Raff to include it into the *Stichvorlage* (example 3.31).

[10] Samson, 209.

**Example 3.30.** ***Esquisse*****, page 3.**



**Example 3.31.** ***Stichvorlage*****, page 3.**[11]



[11] Franz Liszt, *Mazeppa*, Goethe and Schiller Archive (D-WRgs A6).

Divergences between Liszt's 1851 piano *Étude* and the final symphonic poem also include the following:

One, the significant shift of mode from B-flat major to B-flat minor for the third strophe (and, for that matter, the motion to B minor in the sixth strophe from that of B-flat major) is already present in the *particella*.

Two, earlier in this chapter, a discussion of the so-called development section prior to strophe five revealed a greatly expanded final version compared with the piano *Étude*. According to Samson, "the approach to the E major climax is different in all three manuscript versions, proceeding in the direction of a gradual refinement where [the *esquisse*] already suggests the formulation in [the *Stichvorlage*] and [the final published score]."[12] Furthermore, the *particella* and the *esquisse* both contain the opening triplet eighths from the introduction in the development section. This seems to be an attempt by Liszt to both enlarge the proportion of the return to strophe five and create an increased sense of unity throughout the work, a noble cause exemplified elsewhere in the final symphonic poem.

Three, evidence of the depth of Liszt's conception of the symphonic poem already reflected in the *particella* is the striking similarity of strophes five and six to that of the final symphonic poem. It is important to recall that the 1851 piano version and the symphonic poem diverge significantly here, in that strophe five of the *Étude* is marked *Animato, leggiero,* and *mezzo-piano*, whereas the symphonic poem utilizes the full force of the orchestra, marked *fortissimo*.

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[12] Samson, 210.

Four, following the sixth and final strophe of the symphonic poem, Liszt inserts an *Andante* section that is gradually expanded throughout the three manuscripts. The *particella* contains most of the motivic elements in the final version of the symphonic poem, but is a mere eighteen bars in length. The *esquisse* adds an introductory eighth note passage in the lower strings and expands the passage to twenty-four measures. The *Stichvorlage*, as to be expected, contains the full regimen of thirty-three measures, along with the final layout of material found in the published score.

Just as strophes five and six of the *particella* already contain the characteristics of the final published score, the coda of the symphonic poem is quite thoroughly developed in this early manuscript. Significantly, though, both the *particella* and the *esquisse* do not contain the epic return of the main *Mazeppa* theme in the coda, as does the *stichvorlage* and the published score. As Samson writes, "The *dénouement* is the grandioso return of the Mazeppa theme in the closing moments of the work, a powerfully synthetic gesture that is not present in either of the earlier versions."[13]

[13] Ibid., 211.

## *Chapter Four*

## *A Pianist's Perspective: Influence of the Numerous* **Mazeppa** *Manifestations*

Pianists overwhelmingly choose the 1851 version of *Mazeppa* over its earlier versions. Several factors influence this choice: numerous editions cite the *Études d'Exécution Transcendante* as the so-called "final"[1] version of the work; perhaps the daunting technical difficulties of the 1837 and 1840 versions prove too much for most pianists; and undoubtedly the compositional refinements of the 1851 version make it more attractive as a work. It is important for pianists to at least know the previous compositions that lead up to the 1851 version, however, as careful inspection of these works deepens one's interpretive understanding of the "final" work.

Three main issues need to be addressed in determining an interpretive approach based on the previous analysis of *Mazeppa's* solo versions:

1. Liszt's implementation of the program for *Mazeppa*, and how this determines such issues as musical character, articulation, phrasing, and pacing.
2. The addition of the introduction and coda, especially in light of the programmatic elements. If direct comparisons with the program can be made, how does this affect the newly added material in the introduction and coda?

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[1] Zoltán Gárdonyi and István Szelényi, preface to *Liszt*: *Klavierwerke, Etüden I*, (Budapest: Editio Musica Budapest, 1970), IX.

3. The progressive refinement of the strophes as a representation of Liszt's compositional development. Elements such as phrasing, texture, tempo, dynamics, rhythmic elements, fingering, and voicing are important in this regard.

Already having undergone an enormous expansion of material in the 1837 version, the newly entitled *Mazeppa* of 1840 primarily adds a brief introduction and coda, while maintaining virtually all of the rest of the work in its 1837 state. Perhaps the act of naming the work *Mazeppa* seemed to require additional material beyond merely the strophic portion to frame the work. Indeed, a prototypical etude focuses on a particular technical aspect, such as some arrangement of arpeggios or scales, which is then sequenced through numerous harmonies to pinpoint a specific harmonic progression. In this light, unrelated technical material announcing the beginning of the work might seem unnecessary. Even a brief introductory chordal passage such as the one in this 1840 work announces the strophic material as programmatic. This opening chordal flurry could be interpreted as the outcry and beginning of Mazeppa's journey: "Un cri part, et soudain voilà que dans la plaine, Et l'homme et le cheval, emportés, hors d'haleine."[2]

The harmonic progression in this brief introduction to the 1840 version rushes towards the climactic dominant arrival that leads into strophe one. In the 1851 *Étude*, Liszt expands the opening chords from the range of an octave to that of tenths and includes the notation that the chords are to be rolled. Enhanced by the rolled chords and begun on a weak beat, the series of expanded diminished seventh chords creates a tremendous amount of momentum towards the half cadence at m. 5. As an interpreter,

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[2] Hugo, *Mazeppa*, in Fry, 10-11.

emphasizing the first two chords as syncopations helps to create this energy. This requires a staccato attack on the upper notes of the rolled chords, supported by a release of pedal immediately as these notes are attacked. This more incisive attack and release emphasize the rests after the chords and create the syncopated approach necessary. After this measure, Liszt doubles the number of chords (mm. 2-3) as the progression approaches the cadential 6/4 in m. 4. Perhaps the most effective way to propel the momentum forward is by dropping back dynamically at the beginning of m. 2 and including a crescendo throughout the two bars.

Just as the introduction deepens the programmatic legitimacy of the work, a coda offers final thoughts and gestures relating to the story, in which the Cossacks symbolically hail Mazeppa as their king as he collapses dead from the tumultuous journey: "Chaque pas que tu fais semble creuser sa tombe. Enfin le terme arrive il court, il vole, il tombe, Et se relève roi!"[3] Prior to Mazeppa's death, though, the horse collapses, vultures begin circling and attacking, and Mazeppa makes feeble attempts to free himself from the dead horse and survive: "Le cheval tombe aux cris de mille oiseaux de proie, Et son ongle de fer sur la pierre qu'il broie Eteint ses quatre éclairs, Maint bec ardent aspire à ronger dans sa tête Ses yeux brûles de pleurs! Eh bien! Ce condamné qui hurle et qui se traîne, Ce cadaver vivant, les tribus de l'Ukraine le feront prince un jour."[4]

The 1840 version already represents Mazeppa's struggle in these events. As discussed in chapter two, this version contains a new motive—that of the ascending diminished fifth and descending third, occurring just after the final climactic *a capriccio* chords—that signifies Mazeppa looking up at the vultures from under the dead, collapsed

[3] Ibid., 20.
[4] Ibid., 16-17.

horse. Liszt indicates this moment with a fermata over the downbeat rest just before the motive enters, and this rest must be a moment of complete silence, without pedal, and without motion of any kind. Accordingly, a rest also separates the motive from the grandiose finale of five bars.

Furthering the significance of this material in the 1851 version, Liszt "punctuated" the motive of now ascending and descending sixths with rhythmically distinctive chords (mm. 183-184, 185-186), which are the equivalent of the extended rests in the 1840 version. To successfully characterize this moment in the "final" version, a pianist must utilize an extreme contrast of articulation between the legato motive and the rhythmic chords. Furthermore, Liszt stated this motive three times in a row, extending the third through a phrase expansion (mm. 187-189); statements one and two are accompanied by a decrescendo, whereas the final extended statement contains a series of crescendos. This represents Mazeppa trying to rise again, and on the third attempt, barely clinging to life after his torturous experience.

While the end of Part I of Hugo's poem discusses what is to come of Mazeppa, that of his glory as the leader of the Cossacks and a great military general, Part II symbolizes Mazeppa's mythical glory and greatness, likening him to a comet to which his followers looks up. Accordingly, the coda is triumphantly expanded in the 1851 version to accompany this moment. This coda is so suddenly contrary to the main body of the work that, as a performer, understanding the programmatic inspiration could facilitate a more commanding interpretation.

Samson points out that the strophes undergo a "progressive compression of their accompanimental patterns"[5] in the 1837 version, an element that is continued into the 1840 version and, a bit less systematically, in the 1851 *Mazeppa*. This broad perspective of the work has implications for interpretation, and supports the work's programmatic unfolding, the increasing tension of Mazeppa's journey as the horse nears the end of its life. Interpretively, this implies a progressive freneticism with each successive strophe, unflinchingly moving towards the chaotic climax at the end of the strophes. One should bear in mind at all times the overall trajectory of the work, maintaining a degree of control early in the strophes.

For the pianist, Liszt makes this easier to achieve in his 1851 version by thinning out the texture of each strophe, enabling one's technique to fly forward without a sense of being weighted down by an over-density of notes. Fry mentions that the evolution of the piano may have played a factor in this revision.[6] The second strophe in each of the 1837 and 1840 versions, for example, contains thirds in each hand that are doubled in order to fill out the texture. This technical challenge can easily throw off one's physical balance, making the marking *triple-forte energico sempre* rather difficult to achieve. In revising the work for its 1851 version, however, Liszt reduced the textural density by alternating the thirds between the hands, thus evening out the weight transfer in the accompaniment and enabling a faster and more fluid execution of the material. A further example is the final strophe, where the initial density of accompaniment becomes simplified towards the end of the material to enable faster motion towards the cadence.

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[5] Samson, 203.
[6] Fry, 57-58.

Liszt characterizes Mazeppa's more delirious moments in the third strophe of the work, beginning with the 1837 *Étude* and continuing through the 1851 version. A clear example of thematic transformation is found in Liszt's manipulation of material here. Each melodic phrase now begins on the third scale degree rather than the tonic. This element is important to the tonal structure of the symphonic poem, in that this strophe and the subsequent one are both in minor keys, which is emphasized by the melodic focus on the third scale degree. However, in all the solo piano versions of the *Étude*, the strophe remains in the major mode. The changes to the accompanimental pattern and character indications alter the overall nature of this strophe, as discussed in chapter two. The elimination of the forceful ascending thirds, the reduction of dissonance, and the addition of floating arpeggios in the right hand support the *dolce*, dreamy, and peaceful character of this strophe.

To create this atmosphere, a pianist must first focus on articulation. For the 1837 and 1840 versions, Liszt specified a staccato articulation for the bass and left hand accompanimental material, and the pianist must balance this with maintaining a more legato approach to the melody, which Liszt recast into the upper part of the left hand. Rolled chords are common on the strong beats, which can soften the character of the strophe. In the 1837 and 1840 versions, the ascending thirds in the right hand become a pattern of sixth-fifth-third that is repeated all the way to the upper register of the instrument. Liszt reworked accompanimental material in the 1851 version as arpeggiated thirds. When executed with lightness of attack and fluid legato, this creates a halo effect around the theme.

The most significant revision in the 1851 version, however, is the fifth strophe. Taking a panoramic look at Liszt's treatment of all the various versions of *Mazeppa*, including that of the symphonic poem, it is apparent that this strophe has a special significance, in that Liszt wavered between treating it like a recapitulatory arrival and a scherzando-like preparation for the sixth and final strophe. Indeed, the 1837 and 1840 versions present the strophe in all its grandeur as a return to the opening tonality and character, just as the symphonic poem presents the strophe as an identical replica of the first one, after an extended development section which serves to heighten the strophe's return. Only the 1851 version presents the material in a scherzando-like fashion, perhaps in support of the more grandiose sixth strophe, marked *Allegro deciso*.

The fifth strophe in the 1851 version is marked *Animato* and *leggiero* under the dynamic *mezzo-piano*, with a greatly thinned texture compared with the rest of the work, furthered by staccato markings on all the accompanimental attacks. Perhaps one successful method of performance would be a reserved use of pedal, particularly with regard to the accompaniment. This will allow for the staccato articulation to support the *leggiero,* and implied scherzando-like, character. Furthermore, a focus on voicing becomes paramount here. Whereas in strophes one and two a *fortissimo* dynamic requires a more supported and thick sound to the strong beat chords, the *Animato* fifth strophe needs a lighter and crisper attack, supported by a greater focus towards the melody rather than the bass. This more incisive approach to articulation and voicing will aid in reinforcing the climactic arrival of the sixth and final strophe.

Just as an interpretation of *Mazeppa* without a thorough knowledge of its previous versions might prove uninformed and potentially weak, an understanding of the end

result of Liszt's years of *Mazeppa* composition is essential to deepen the interpreter's insight. Not only is the symphonic poem's significance in the *Mazeppa* lineage enormous, but also the very fact that its compositional stages intertwine historically with the 1851 piano *Étude* offer weight to the argument. The complexity of compositional stages for *Mazeppa* further leads to issues of completion: as discussed briefly in chapter one, which version is truly 'final?' Did Liszt ever even consider a work to be finished? These are philosophical issues that are beyond the scope of this dissertation, but when considering the numerous works by Liszt that exist in multiple versions (one thinks of the *Sonneti di Petrarca* or the *Sonata in B Minor*), must be at least considered. An investigation into any influence from the symphonic poem on the 1851 piano *Étude* includes the following:

1. An influence of the motivic, melodic and accompanimental material in the *particella*. Why did Liszt decide to include—or not to include—particular elements into the 1851 piano *Étude*?
2. Instrumentation of all material from the piano versions. The piano can imitate other instruments quite effectively; attempting to do so could greatly enrich one's interpretation.
3. Expansion of material. Which elements did Liszt deem significant enough for further evaluation? How might this aid in a rethinking of the original material in the piano *Étude*?

The *cadenza ad libitum* in *Mazeppa's* 1851 version is one of the most significant additions to the work. As previously discussed, the origin of this material is the *particella*, where the material permeates the entirety of the first part of the introduction.

While the material of these two versions is very similar, the stylistic indications differ significantly. "*Ad libitum*" allows the pianist freedom to manipulate shape, phrasing, and timing in an improvisatory way, which is furthered by the fact that the scalar passage is unmetered. The symphonic poem, on the other hand, by necessity locks the rhythmic aspect of the material into consistent triplet eighths, strictly metered in a time signature of 6/4. It would be chaotic, to say the least, if the string choir was asked to play the material *cadenza ad libitum*; this marking is one that is best reserved for a solo piano passage.

The string writing lacks any slurs, so a *détaché* articulation becomes the default. As Samuel Adler points out, "This basic *non legato* bowing is performed on all bowed string instruments by changing the direction of the bow for each note."[7] The result of this bowing is that the articulation of the individual notes is crisp, clear, and direct. When considering the method of attack for the piano version, the pianist is now presented with a more informed option: perhaps an imitation of this more articulated style is more appropriate. In order to achieve this more orchestrally based approach, the pianist must give more directness of articulation to each individual note, perhaps sacrificing the sweep of the phrases, but allowing for a greater degree of intensity within each note.

A more pianistic approach to the *cadenza*, however, is to blur the delineation of individual notes through a softer articulation, supporting the overall shape of phrases and permitting a greater diversity of dynamic range from the lower register to the upper.

It is interesting to note the difference of the introduction's proportion between the 1851 piano *Étude* and the symphonic poem. The opening chordal flurry of the piano version is reduced to a single strike in the symphonic poem, whereas the triplet eighths in

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[7] Samuel Adler, *The Study of Orchestration*, 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 2002), 21.

the strings, spanning 19 measures, are encompassed within the brief *cadenza* of the piano version. Neither a hint of the motive *x* nor part two of the symphonic poem's introduction can be found in the piano work.

The primary instruments that carry the *Mazeppa* tune are the trombones and the bass trombone, often, as is the case in strophe one, with the support of the cellos and basses as ornamentation. The trombone works quite well as the melodic instrument for the theme. Furthermore, the warm, rich, and full-bodied sound produced by the trombone supports the heroic character of the theme. A pianist who imagines this sonority while performing can much more effectively interpret the strophic material in the *Étude*. Adler describes the sound of the trombone as "warm" and "mellow,"[8] but it is also important to keep in mind that this is a brass instrument whose directness in the initial production of sound does not exist in instruments such as the violin or viola. Therefore, the pianist must take care to imitate the quickness of attack without creating an abrasive sound. The rhythm must be absolutely precise, and richness of tone is paramount.

Throughout the symphonic poem, Liszt consistently emphasizes the middle of the measure in the strophes (if we allow that the 3/4 of strophe five is still influenced by the 6/4 of strophe one). He achieved these emphases through a variety of means, such as flurries of ascending thirty-second notes, the addition of entire sections of the orchestra only on these specific beats, additional accents, and a reemphasis of *fortissimo* dynamics at key points.

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[8] Ibid.

For the pianist, the significance of the symphonic poem's phrasing cannot be understated. When one views the strophic material in this way, the downbeat of each measure ceases to be the start of the phrase. Instead, the anacrusis to the next measure must be emphasized. In this way, the middle of the measure leads into the subsequent downbeat, forcing the energy of the passage forward.

Perhaps this is the germinal concept behind Liszt's reworking of strophe three in the 1851 *Étude*. This passage, unique among all strophes in all versions of the *Étude*, emphasizes the middle of the measure through a registral expansion, both in the left hand accompaniment and in the right hand arpeggios. As a result, very little is needed to achieve this emphasis as a pianist, but an understanding of its context reveals its significance for phrasing.

Strophe three is in B-flat major, the theme begins on the third scale degree, and the accompaniment is completely reworked. Achieving the stark contrast between this strophe and its previous one can be a challenge for a pianist, especially considering the chromatic flurry of octaves spanning the entire keyboard that immediately precedes the strophic material. While neither the *particella* nor the *esquisse* contains an extensive transition into the third strophe, Liszt adds an entire section marked *Un poco più mosso, sempre agitato assai* for the final version of the symphonic poem that softens the impact through the addition of this meandering and pensive material.

In the symphonic poem, Liszt added more material to the transition leading up to the *finale.* The content of this section is based largely on the motive originally introduced in the coda of the 1840 *Mazeppa* that has been discussed at length. As this motive originated in the piano, Liszt's orchestration of it could prove insightful for the pianist as

interpreter. To imitate the sound of the solo bassoon doubling the violas and celli, the pianist might utilize both a softer attack and finger pedaling, along with using the pedal. Liszt contrasted this instrumentation with that of three solo celli for the motive's sequential restatement, and added the dynamic indication *forte* rather than *mezzo-forte* as in the first statement.

This careful instrumentation calls for an increased intensity in the piano version for the extended third statement of the motive. Bearing in mind the vocal nature of the cello, this material will still require a molto legato quality.

The final twelve bars of the 1851 *Étude* illustrate the final lines of Hugo's *Mazeppa*, "Il tombe enfin!...et se relève Roi!" This ending is fleeting in light of the *Allegro marziale* of the symphonic poem, but when executed with a brilliance of technique and command of character, the stormy repeated chords spanning the entirety of the keyboard serve their purpose well.

While this analysis of *Mazeppa* deepens one's interpretive insight, further investigation into Liszt's later versions for two pianists could reveal insight into the composer's final thoughts on the symphonic poem. The 1855 arrangement for two pianos was based on the symphonic poem and composed a year after the symphonic poem was completed. One might then consider this to be Liszt's clearest pianistic approach to the work. The later version for one piano, four hands, was written a full twenty years after the symphonic poem's completion. Both of these works are direct transcriptions of the 1854 symphonic poem. Neither one adds significantly new material to the work, but how Liszt arranged the material might be worthy of additional study.

Broadening the topic, one might investigate Liszt's orchestration technique through his collection of symphonic poems, such as *Les Preludes*, *Prometheus*, and *Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo*. An examination into the development of Liszt's technique as an orchestrator through the assistance of Joachim Raff and August Conradi, both of whom worked closely with Liszt during this time period, could reveal much about his style and influences on it.

Liszt scholarship and analysis is constantly revised and deepened. This study has aimed to benefit the performer of *Mazeppa* through analysis of these resources. Tracing the development of *Mazeppa's* piano versions has revealed a refinement of Liszt's compositional style, including innovative techniques and fingering, and a deeper sense of structural coherence. Investigation into the manuscript drafts of the symphonic poem has demonstrated the influence of motivic, melodic, and accompanimental material on the last version of *Mazeppa* for piano. Finally, tracing the instrumentation of specific themes and motives in the symphonic poem has offered tangible justification for certain interpretational approaches to the 1851 piano version. Further work towards the same end will hopefully add to the interpretive depth of Liszt's music.

# Appendix

## Text and Translation

### *Mazeppa* from *Les Orientales* by Victor Hugo[1]

**I.**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Ainsi, quand Mazeppa, qui rugit et qui pleure,* | Thus, when Mazeppa, who howls and cries, |
| *A vu ses bras, ses pieds, ses flancs qu'un sabre effleure,* | Had seen his arms, his feet, his flanks that a saber grazed, |
| *Tous ses membres liés* | All of his limbs bound |
| *Sur un fougueux cheval, nourri d'herbes Marines* | On a spirited horse, nourished from seaweed |
| *Qui fume, et fait jaillir le feu de ses narines* | Which smoked, and shot fire from his nostrils |
| *Et le feu de ses pieds;* | And fire from his feet. |
| *Quand il s'est dans ses nœuds roulé comme un reptile,* | When he is rolled in his bonds like a reptile |
| *Qu'il a bien réjoui de sa rage inutile* | That he has well delighted of his useless rage |
| *Ses bourreaux tout joyeux,* | His executioners all joyful, |
| *Et qu'il retombe enfin sur la croupe farouche,* | And that he finally falls on the fierce rump, |
| *La sueur sur le front, l'écume dans la bouche,* | The sweat on his brow, the foam in his mouth, |
| *Et du sang dans les yeux:* | And the blood in his eyes: |
| *Un cri part, et soudain voilà que dans la Plaine* | A cry goes forth, and suddenly there they are in the plain |
| *Et l'homme et le cheval, emportés, hors d'haleine,* | And the man and the horse, quick-tempered and out-of-breath, |
| *Sur les sables mouvants,* | On the shifting sands, |
| *Seuls, emplissant de bruit un tourbillon de Poudre* | Alone, full of the sound of a whirlwind of dust |
| *Pareil au noir nuage où serpente la foudre,* | Like the black cloud where the serpent of fire, |
| *Volant avec les vents!* | Flying with the winds. |

[1] Translations by John Douglas Fry in *Liszt's Mazeppa: The History and Development of a Symphonic Poem*, 9-20.

*Ils vont. Dans les vallons comme un orage ils passent,*
*Comme ces ouragans qui dans les monts s'entassent,*
*Comme un globe de feu;*
*Puis déjà ne sont plus qu'un point noir dans la brume.*
*Puis s'effacent dans l'air comme un flocon d'écume*
*Au vaste océan bleu.*

They go. In the valley they pass like a thunderstorm,
Like this tempest which is accumulating in the mountains
Like a ball of fire.
Then already they are no more than a black dot in the fog.
Then fading away in the air like a tuft of foam
In the vast blue ocean.

*Ils vont. L'espace est grand. Dans le désert immense,*
*Dans l'horizon sans fin qui toujours recommence.*
*Ils se plongent tous deux.*
*Leur course comme un vol les emporte, et grands chênes,*
*Villes et tours, monts noirs liés en longues chaînes,*
*Tout chancelle autour d'eux.*

They go. The space is great. In the desert immense,
In the horizon which has no beginning or end.
They are both immersed.
Their course like a flight carries them, and large oaks,
Towns and towers, black mountains lying in long chains,
All waver around them.

*Et si l'infortuné, dont la tête se brise,*
*Se débat, le cheval, qui devance la brise,*
*D'un bond plus effrayé*
*S'enfonce au désert vaste, aride, Infranchissable,*
*Qui devant eux s'étend, avec ses plis de Sable*
*Comme un manteau rayé.*

And if the unfortunate one, whose head is broken,
Struggles, the horse, which precedes the breeze,
Of a hold more frightening,
Plunges into the vast, arid, impassable desert
Stretching before his eyes, with its pleats of sand
Like a striped cloak.

*Tout vacille et se peint de couleurs inconnues,*
*Il voit courir les bois, courir les larges nues,*
*Le vieux donjon détruit,*
*Les monts dont un rayon baigne les intervalles;*

All flickers and is painted in colors unknown,
He sees the woods running, the large clouds running,
The destroyed old castle,
The mountains bathed by sun at intervals;

*Il voit; et des troupeaux de fumantes cavales*
*Le suivent à grand bruit!*

He sees; and the herds of fuming mares
Follow with a great noise!

*Et le ciel, où déjà les pas du soir S'allongent,*
*Avec ses océans de nuages où plongent*
*Des nuages encor,*
*Et son soleil qui fend leurs vagues de sa proue,*
*Sur son front ébloui tourne comme une roue*
*De marbre aux veines d'or!*

And the sky, where already the steps of night lengthen,
With its oceans of clouds plunging
Into still more clouds.
And its sun which splits their billows with its prow,
On its dazzled brow turning like a wheel
Of marble with veins of gold!

*Son œil s'égare et luit, sa chevelure traîne,*
*Sa tête pend; son sang rougit la jaune arène,*
*Les buissons épineux:*
*Sur ses membres gonflés la corde se replie,*
*Et comme un long serpent resserre et multiplie*
*Sa morsure et ses nœuds.*

His eye wanders and glimmers, his hair drags,
His head hangs; his blood reddens the yellow sand,
The thorny bushes:
On his swollen limbs the rope coils,
And like a long snake contracts and multiplies
Biting him and holding him fast.

*Le cheval, qui ne sent ni le mors ni la selle,*
*Toujours fuit, et toujours son sang coule et ruisselle,*
*Sa chair tombe en lambeaux;*
*Hélas! voici déjà qu'aux cavales ardentes*
*Qui le suivaient, dressant leurs crinières pendantes*
*Succèdent les corbeaux!*

The horse, which feels neither bit nor saddle,
Flies as ever, and always his blood flows and streams,
His flesh falls in shreds;
Alas! here still are those ardent mares
Which follow him, tossing their hanging manes
Followed by crows!

*Les corbeaux, le grand-duc à l'œil rond qui S'effraie,*
*L'aigle effaré des champs de bataille, et L'orfraie*
*Monstre au jour inconnu,*
*Les obliques hiboux. et le grand vautour fauve*

The crows, the screech owl with frightening round eyes,
The eagle, fearful of battlefields, the huge osprey
Monster of an unknown day,
The swooping owls, and the great wild vulture

*Qui fouille au flanc des morts où son col rouge et chauve*
*Plonge comme un bras nu!*

Which digs in the flanks of the dead where his neck red and bare
Plunges like a naked arm!

*Tous viennent élargir la funèbre volée!*
*Tous quittent pour le suivre et l'yeuse isolée,*
*Et les nids du manoir.*
*Lui, sanglant, éperdu, sourd à leurs cris de joie,*
*Demande en les voyant qui donc là-haut déploie*
*Ce grand éventail noir.*

All come to enlarge the flying funeral!
All leave in order to follow and the isolated oak,
And the nests of the manor house.
He, bleeding, distraught, is deaf to their cries of joy,
He doubts his sight and asks who is unfolding over him
This great black fan.

*La nuit descend lugubre, et sans robe étoilée.*
*L'essaim s'acharne, et suit, tel qu'une meute ailée,*
*Le voyageur fumant.*
*Entre le ciel et lui, comme un tourbillon sombre,*
*Il les voit, puis les perd, et les entend dans L'ombre*
*Voler confusément.*

The gloomy night descends, and without its star-studded robe,
The swarm persists, and follows, like a winged mob,
The seething voyager.
Between the sky and him, like a dark whirlwind,
He sees them, then loses them, and hears them in the darkness
Flying confusedly.

*Enfin, après trois jours d'une course insensée,*
*Après avoir franchi fleuves à l'eau glacée,*
*Steppes, forêts, déserts,*
*Le cheval tombe aux cris de mille oiseaux de proie,*
*Et son ongle de fer sur la pierre qu'il broie*
*Eteint ses quatre éclairs.*

Finally, after three days of a course insane,
After having crossed rivers of frozen water,
Steppes, forests, deserts,
The horse falls to the cries of a thousand birds of prey,
And his iron hoof which grinds on the stones
Extinguishing his four sparks.

*Voilà l'infortuné, gisant, nu, misérable,*
*Tout tacheté de sang, plus rouge que L'érable*
*Dans la saison des fleurs.*
*Le nuage d'oiseaux sur lui tourne et S'arrête;*

Here the unfortunate one, lying helpless, naked, miserable,
All stained with blood, more red than the maple
In the season of flowers.
The cloud of birds turn on him and stop;

*Maint bec ardent aspire à ronger dans sa tête*
*Ses yeux brûlés de pleurs!*

Many a burning hot beak eager to peck at his head
His eyes burn with tears.

*Eh bien! ce condamné qui hurle et qui se traîne,*
*Ce cadavre vivant, les tribus de l'Ukraine*
*Le feront prince un jour.*
*Un jour, semant les champs de morts sans sépultures,*
*Il dédommagera par de larges pâtures*
*L'orfraie et le vautour.*

Now then! this condemned man who howls and crawls,
This living cadaver, the tribes of the Ukraine
Will make him prince one day.
One day, sowing the graveless battlefields,
He will compensate with abundant fodder
The sea eagle and the vulture.

*Sa sauvage grandeur naîtra de son supplice.*
*Un jour, des vieux hetmans il ceindra la pelisse,*
*Grand à l'œil ébloui;*
*Et quand il passera, ces peuples de la tente,*
*Prosternés, enverront la fanfare éclatante*
*Bondir autour de lui!*

His wild grandeur will be born of his punishment.
One day, some old Cossack chief will put the fir-lined coat on him,
Great to the dazzled eye;
And when he will pass by, these peoples of the tent
Bow down, against the piercing fanfare
Leaping about him!

**II.**

*Ainsi, lorsqu'un mortel, sur qui son dieu S'étale,*
*S'est vu lié vivant sur ta croupe fatale,*
*Génie, ardent coursier,*
*En vain il lutte, hélas! tu bondis, tu L'emportes*
*Hors du monde réel dont tu brises les portes*
*Avec tes pieds d'acier!*

So, as a mortal, who is possessed by his god,
He is destined to be tied living to your deadly flanks,
Inspiration, ardent steed,
He struggles in vain, alas! you leap, you carry him away
Out of the real world the doors of which you smash
With your feet of steel!

*Tu franchis avec lui déserts, cimes chenues*
*Des vieux monts, et les mers, et, par delà les nues,*
*De sombre régions;*

You cross deserts with him, white-topped summits
Old mountains, and the seas, and, beyond the clouds,
Of dark regions;

*Et mille impurs esprits que ta course réveille*
*Autour du voyageur, insolente merveille,*
*Pressent leurs légions!*

And a thousand impure spirits that are evoked by your ride
Around the voyager, marvelously insolent,
Throng their legions!

*Il traverse d'un vol, sur tes ailes de flammes,*
*Tous les champs du possible, et les mondes de l'âme;*
*Boit au fleuve éternel;*
*Dans la nuit orageuse ou la nuit étoilée,*
*Sa chevelure, aux crins des comètes mêlée,*
*Flamboie au front du ciel.*

He travels like a flock of birds, on your wings of flame,
All the realms of possibility, and the worlds of the soul;
Drinking from the eternal river;
In the stormy night or the starry night,
Its mane, mixed with the tails of comets,
Blazes on the face of the sky.

*Le six lunes d'Herschel, l'anneau du vieux Saturne,*
*Le pôle, arrondissant une aurore nocturne*
*Sur son front boréal.*
*Il voit tout; et pour lui ton vol, que rien ne lasse,*
*De ce monde sans borne à chaque instant déplace*
*L'horizon idéal.*

The six moons of Herschel, the rings of old Saturn,
The north pole, circled by a nocturnal aurora
On its arctic face.
He sees everything; and for him your flight, that never tires,
Of this world without boundaries where each instant shifts
The ideal horizon.

*Qui peut savoir, hormis les démons et les anges,*
*Ce qu'il souffre, à te suivre et quels éclairs étranges*
*A ses yeux reluiront,*
*Comme il sera brûlé d'ardentes étincelles,*
*Hélas! et dans la nuit combien de froides ailes*
*Viendront battre son front!*

Who can know, except the demons and angels,
Which torment him, which follow you and are like strange flashes of lightening
Before his shining eyes,
Like he will be burnt by scorching flashes,
Alas! and in the night how the frozen wings
Come beating against his face!

*Il crie épouvanté, tu poursuis implacable.*
*Pâle, épuisé, béant, sous ton vol qui L'accable*
*Il ploie avec effroi;*
*Chaque pas que tu fais semble creuser sa tombe.*

He cries in terror, you persevere relentlessly.
Pale, exhausted, gaping, under your flight which overwhelms him
He bends with terror;
Each step that you make seems to dig his grave.

*Enfin le terme arrive . . . il court, il vole, il tombe,*
*Et se relève roi!*

Finally the end comes . . . he runs, he flies, he falls,
And he stands up again as king!

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