FRYDERYK CHOPIN’S MUSIC ON DOUBLE BASS:

FOUR ETUDES TRANSCRIBED FOR DOUBLE BASS AND PIANO

by

FRANCISCO GONÇALVES DE AZEVEDO

(Under the Direction of Milton Masciadri)

ABSTRACT

A significant part of the available double bass repertoire is composed of transcriptions from other instruments. Only a handful of those consist of works composed by the Polish pianist and composer Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849). The purpose of this project is to add to the double bass repertoire through the transcriptions of the Etudes Op. 10 No. 3, Op. 10 No. 6, Op. 10 No. 9, and Op. 25 No. 7, for double bass and piano. The document provides a brief historical background of the practice of transcriptions, and of transcribing pieces for the double bass, pointing out pieces transcribed by important double bassists. It also presents a connection between the music of Chopin and Giovanni Bottesini (1821-1889), who shared influence from the bel canto style. The technical and stylistic choices made in the transcription of the etudes are
explored. Performance versions of the etudes, with piano parts for the use with double bass in orchestra and solo tunings, are presented in the appendices.

FRYDERYK CHOPIN’S MUSIC ON DOUBLE BASS:

FOUR ETUDES TRANSCRIBED FOR DOUBLE BASS AND PIANO

by

FRANCISCO GONÇALVES DE AZEVEDO

B.M.Ed., Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Brazil, 2004

M.M. University of Georgia, 2011

A Document Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2014
FRYDERYK CHOPIN’S MUSIC ON DOUBLE BASS:

FOUR ETUDES TRANSCRIBED FOR DOUBLE BASS AND PIANO

by

FRANCISCO GONÇALVES DE AZEVEDO

Major Professor: Milton Masciadri
Committee: David Haas
Levon Ambartsumian

Electronic Version Approved:
Julie Coffield
Interim Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2014
DEDICATION

I dedicate this document to my better half Martina Kloss, who is always by my side; and to my parents Antonio Geraldo Gonçalves de Azevedo and Etelvina Clara Gonçalves de Azevedo, who always unconditionally supported me.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my Major Professor Milton Walter Masciadri for giving me the opportunity to study with him at the UGA for the Master’s and Doctoral degree, and to learn from his artistry and double bass playing.

I would like to thank Dr. David Haas for his thoughtful suggestions and critical guidance during the writing of this document. Consistently going beyond his graduate committee member duties, Dr. Haas invested time and interest in this document as if he were my Co-Major Professor. His orientation and invaluable commentaries helped extraordinarily in the production of this document into its final form. As my Minor Area Advisor, his teaching and wisdom are responsible for nurturing me a deeper interest in Musicology.

I would like to thank Professor Levon Ambartsumian and Professor Frederick Burchinal for funding my Teaching Assistantship through my DMA program, and to the Director of the Hugh Hodgson School of Music, Dr. Dale Monson.

Thanks to Dr. John Lynch and the UGA Wind Ensemble for help funding my Master’s degree and for some of my most remarkable moments at the Hugh Hodgson School of Music.

Thanks to Leonard Ligon for the sheet music formatting help, and to Lucy Ralston and Kim Neidlinger for proofreading my texts.

Thanks to my double bass teachers and professors, in special to Eder Kinappe, Dr. Alexandre Ritter, and Milton Romay Masciadri, some of the best musicians I have ever met.
Thanks to all my friends, in special to Joseph Brent, Emily Laminack, Claudio Esteves and Carla Glienke, Rafael and Fabiane Ferronato, Ulisses and Katia Silva, and Oliver and Rubia Yatsugafu for being my family away from home, when I first arrived in Athens.

Thanks to Arnold Schoenberg and Theodora Eleonora.

And finally, to my family and all of you, who supported and encouraged me in this very arduous and important chapter of my life.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</th>
<th>v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Project</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of Chapters</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 THE PRACTICE OF TRANSCRIPTIONS</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief History of Transcriptions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Piano and its Role in the Transcription Tradition</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcriptions for the Double Bass</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 FRYDERYK CHOPIN’S ETUDES: FUSIONS OF VIRTUOSITY AND BEL CANTO</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paths to Chopin’s Piano Etudes: The Necessity for Technical Development</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Edition Problem</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 THE TRANSCRIPTIONS OF THE ETUDES</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etude Op. 10 No. 3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcription Changes</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etude Op. 10 No. 6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Etude Op. 10 No.9 .................................................................92
Etude Op. 25 No. 7 .................................................................94
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A significant part of the available double bass repertoire is composed of transcriptions from other instruments, as shown in the *Comprehensive Catalog of Music, Books, Recordings and Videos for the Double Bass*, compiled by Murray Grodner. In many cases, transcriptions are the only way of introducing the work of significant composers into the double bass repertoire, since the soloistic possibilities of the instrument, even at this late date, have too often been neglected by major composers. This practice of overlooking could also be connected with the 19th century role of the double bass as an orchestral instrument, usually providing accompaniment, which resulted in a lack of double bass soloists. Transcriptions provide excellent instruction material for the double bass, and also help balance a recital program, since the standardization of the modern double bass only happened in the mid-19th century, much later than with the other orchestral string instruments. The Classical period concerti composed by J.B. Vanhal, F.A. Hoffmeister, and K. Dittersdorf, are actually transcriptions of works written for the Viennese violone.

Even though publishing transcribed music for the double bass was not something common during the nineteenth century, double bassists did adapt pieces or musical thematic material for the use of the double bass as soloist or as a member of chamber groups. Examples of those adaptations are found in the performance records of such reputable double bassists as

---

Domenico Dragonetti (1763-1846), Giovanni Bottesini (1821-1889) and Serge Koussevitzky (1874-1951). Important 20th-century double bass players, such as Rodion Azarkhin, Gary Karr, Lucas Drew, Thomas Martin and Stuart Sankey transcribed and recorded pieces originally written for other instruments. From their transcriptions, one can find pieces by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Joseph Haydn, Johannes Brahms, César Franck, among others. Bottesini, probably the most important double bass composer and performer in history, used arias and thematic material from operas by Bellini, Rossini and Paisiello in his compositions and performances.

In at least one case, Bottesini adapted a work from Fryderyk Chopin. His *Tutto che il mondo serra*, a trio for double bass, high singing voice and piano, is based on Chopin’s *Etude, Op. 25, no. 7*, with added words by an unknown unknown author. In his arrangement, Bottesini gave the melody of the piano left hand to the double bass and its counter melody to the voice, bringing the etude sonority closer to the aria “Dormono Entrambi”, from Vincenzo Bellini’s *Norma*. According to musicologist Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger in the documentary “*Chopin at the Opera***”, Chopin told his close friend, the German pianist friend Ferdinand Hiller, that the etude was an homage to Bellini, who had passed about two years before the composition of the etude. Eigeldinger points out that the beginning of the etude’s melody, after the cadenza-like intro, is a quotation of a moment in the opera where Norma contemplates killing her children in their sleep.

Although he was a dedicated admirer of opera and of the bel canto style, Fryderyk Chopin composed no arias in this style. Instead, his admiration and contact with bel canto *Prime Donne* seem to have funneled the singing style into his piano writing, the medium wherein he

---

1 Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin at the Opera*, directed by Jan Schmidt-Garre, script by Georg-Albrecht Eckle (Halle: Arthaus Musik, 2010), DVD.
counts as one of the most important composers of the Romantic period. The acquaintance with the work of Donizetti, Rossini and Chopin’s reciprocal admiration for Bellini are evident in the bel canto character of his melodies. While his individual keyboard style demands a high technical level from the performer, technique alone is insufficient: a sensitivity and lyricism reminiscent of Romantic arias and Lieder are no less important. Through the genres of ballades, sonatas, mazurkas, nocturnes, polonaises, waltzes, études, preludes, impromptus and scherzos, Chopin introduced innovations in the style, harmony, and form that would be influential in the Romantic period, especially for piano technique and idioms.

Since his focus was on solo piano music, Chopin composed only a handful of works for other instruments in combination with the piano. They include the following works for cello and piano: *Introduction and Polonaise Brillante in C major Op.3*, written in 1829-30, the *Grand Duo Concertant in E Major B. 70*, written jointly with composer-cellist Auguste Franchomme in 1832; the *Cello Sonata in G minor*, op. 65, written in 1845-46; and the *Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano Op.8*, from 1829. Chopin also composed 19 Polish songs, Op. 74, for voice and piano, set to original poems by his Polish contemporaries.

**Purpose of the Project**

From Chopin’s entire *ouvre*, only a few compositions have been made available to other instruments through transcription. Of these, less than a dozen belong to the double bass repertoire, in printed music or as audio recording. Most of them are private unpublished scores of audio recorded renditions. The purpose of this project is to add to the current double bass repertoire through bass and piano transcriptions of the *Etudes Op.10 No.3, No. 6 and No. 9*, and
Op. 25 No. 7. These etudes were chosen for transcription on account of their suitability for adaptation for the double bass. Like Chopin’s Nocturnes, the etudes chosen for this project demonstrate the connection between the technically challenging piano writing and the lyric vocal quality of their melodies. Chopin’s admiration for Vincenzo Bellini’s use of long melodic lines in the bel canto style and his refined use of fioratura are reflected in his vocal-like treatment of his own melodies. The etudes chosen for this project illustrate an influence of the bel canto style that also permeates the works for double bass solo by Giovanni Bottesini.

The piano writing in the etudes employs the entire usable register of the piano. One usually finds the use of both extremes of the keyboard in the same etude. Chopin’s fondness for the bass (and even the contrabass!) register is evident. Moreover, his usage of the bass register is varied. In the Etude, Op. 10, no. 1, the lower registers are used to establish the harmonic structure and musical form. In the Etude, Op. 10, no. 9, ingenious accompanimental figures compete with the melody for the listener’s attention. In the Etude, Op. 25, no. 7, the thematic material itself resides in the bass register. The combination of Chopin’s fascination with the musical possibilities of the bass register and his fondness for bel canto melody make some of his etudes especially appealing to double bassists. In addition to providing opportunities for double bass players to perform Chopin, effective arrangements of these etudes can provide interesting challenges with respect to technique and interpretation.

Transcribing music originally written for piano for any other instrument presents idiomatic challenges that must be addressed by both the arranger and the performer. One example of specific a difference to be addressed is the difference in the sound production. While bowed string instruments are able to produce long tones, in the piano the notes begin to decay from the instant of striking, with the higher harmonics tending to die out first so that the timbre
smooths out as the loudness diminishes. On the other hand, the song-like legato that Chopin requires in his etudes is more easily obtained with instruments that do not share the sound decay quality of the piano. Another idiomatic difference to be considered in the transcription of piano music is that the piano can play more notes simultaneously than the bowed string instruments. Due to the limited ability of the bass to produce double and triple stops, the transcription of the multiple voice piano texture of the Romantic style writing in the etudes also presents issues to be considered, so as to preserve as much as possible of the instrumental technique and the musical style of the compositions. This project will help the performer of the etude transcriptions to identify and approach idiomatic issues when performing music written originally for other instruments.

Another issue to be addressed involves the existence of several editions of Chopin’s etudes. The choice of an original text of Chopin’s etudes creates a challenge in itself due to the composer’s continuous alterations to his compositions, even after their publication. For this project the musical text presented in the Wiener Urtext Edition, mainly based on the French and German editions, is used.

**Literature Review**

The secondary sources that were consulted for this document include articles, books, and dissertations. Background information related to the double bass repertoire and to transcriptions
for the double bass comes mainly from Paul Brun’s book *A New History of the Double Bass*,\(^3\) and from articles published in the *Bass World*, the journal of the International Society of Bassists.\(^4\) The writings that were authored or edited by Jim Samson, in the books *Chopin Studies*, *Chopin Studies 2*, and *The Music of Chopin*,\(^5\) together with the *Analytical Perspectives on the Music of Chopin*, edited by Artur Szklener,\(^6\) were distinctly helpful as sources for Fryderyk Chopin’s biographical and musical aspects, and for Chopin’s études historical, analytical and performance aspects. Dissertations about the practice of transcriptions for double bass were also helpful in the making of this project.\(^7\)

**Organization of Chapters**

The second chapter of the document presents background information about the practice of transcription, and about the history of transcriptions for double bass. The third chapter provides information about the influence of the bel canto opera on Fryderyk Chopin and the composition of his piano études. Following the background information, the fourth chapter presents information about the chosen études, such as analytical and performance issues pertaining to the selected études, using secondary sources. After a brief introduction to each

---

\(^4\) *Bass World* 16, no.2 (Winter, 1990); 21, no.2 (Fall 1996); 26, no. 1 (2002); 54, no.4, (Spring 1979).
etude, technical and stylistic choices made in the transcription of the etudes are explored. More than just a commentary on the transcriptions of the selected etudes, this chapter can be a useful tool for double bassists facing the challenges of transcribing pieces from other media to their own instrument. It also explores and compares the differences between the original musical text of the Etude Op. 25 No.7 and Bottesini’s arrangement Tutto che il Mondo Serra, proposing a transcribed version closer to the piano original. Musical examples will be provided to illustrate the above mentioned musical choices.

The scores for the transcriptions of the etudes are found in Appendix A, with piano versions for the use with the orchestra tuning double bass. Parts for use with double bass in solo tuning are found in Appendix B. The double bass parts are presented in the appendix C. The transcriptions for the double bass presented in this project adhere to the musical text of the original works, as presented in the Wiener Urtext Edition.
CHAPTER 2

THE PRACTICE OF TRANSCRIPTIONS

Brief History of Transcriptions

Transcribing pieces for different instruments can be connected to the sixteenth-century practice of transcription of fragments, or entire pieces from the vocal repertoire to instrumental media. At that time, transcriptions varied in the level of fidelity to the original musical source. The flexibility of instrumentation is found in the publications following the advent of movable type, in arrangements for SATB without established instrumentation, to be played by any full or broken consorts, with or without a singing voice. The works of Josquin des Prez were favored for this kind of practice. His chanson *Mille Regretz* was transcribed for lute, with small adaptations, by Luys Narváes, and published in his collection of intabulations *Los Seis Lybros del Delphin*, in 1538. His third book also includes transcriptions and arrangements of chansons composed by Nicolas Gombert and Jean Richafort. Other composers, such as Obrecht, Willaert, Sermisy and Arcadelt, to name but a few, contributed thoroughly to the vast amount of intabulations produced in the Renaissance and Early Baroque eras.\(^1\) In this context, one might also mention well-known Renaissance practice of adapting musical material from popular chansons into entire masses.

Antonio Vivaldi also made use of transcription, when adapting some of his concerti for a different soloist than in the original source. Versions of violin concertos are found for oboe and cello soloists. Musical material from movements of a concerto can also be found in other

---

concerti, where sometimes the entire movement is used. Jean-Philippe Rameau shows similar instrumentation flexibility, with the possibility of playing his concerti with the flute, violin or cello as soloists.

The development of music printing, with the extensive commercial use of engraving in the 18th century, influenced the music publishing market. People interested in music making, either in professional or amateur environments, could find music that would suit their taste and abilities. Due to the market competition, music publishers appealed to their public by arranging and transcribing works from large instrumentation to the ones that could be reproduced at social occasions and salons. Pieces such as the Largo from the opera Xerxes by George Frideric Handel, the Air on the G string by Johann Sebastian Bach, the minuet from Luigi Boccherini’s String Quintet in E Major, operatic airs, Beethoven’s “Moonlight” Sonata, and many other pieces have undergone transcription for various instruments, resulting in ever increasing market demand.

**The Piano and its Role in the Transcription Tradition**

The advent of the fortepiano increased the possibilities of transcribing and bringing home any musical material. One important figure in the popularization of the household piano was Muzio Clementi (1752-1832). More than just a performer and composer for the instrument, Clementi was also a partner in a company that made pianos and published music. In 1801, his

---

company published *Clementi’s Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte*, an introductory method for adults and children, introducing the piano to those who had never learned to play any keyboard, as well as converting the playing technique of those who had played harpsichord.\(^3\) Clementi’s method was not merely aimed at pedagogy, but also to creating a market for the new popular instrument. For that purpose, it included transcriptions and arrangements of popular theater songs, chamber music by Corelli, oratorios by Handel, as well as keyboard music by Scarlatti, J.S. and C.P.E. Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. James Parakilas and Gretchen Wheelock point out that “the *Introduction*, in other words, shows piano students the full range of musical experiences that the piano can open to them, from the classic to the popular and from orchestral and vocal transcriptions to the natively pianistic.”\(^4\)

Clementi’s *Introduction* is one of the several examples of publications available from the beginning of the nineteenth century that used arrangements and transcriptions to bring together the concert life and the domestic music-making, in an era where the musical entertaining industry revolved around the piano.\(^5\)

The rise in number and prosperity of the European and American middle class, driven from the beginning of the nineteenth century, was matched by the rise in the domestic importance of the piano. The instrument had become more available due to its increased production and decreased price. Thus, the piano became a cultural symbol that was present in public institutions like schools and hotels, and above all, at home. The orchestral possibilities embodied in a single instrument became the center of household cultural gatherings, being the

---


\(^4\) Ibid, 86.

\(^5\) Ibid, 93.
major source of music making in domestic environments. It is important to note that, in the domestic environment, the music was made by ordinary people, amateur musicians usually with limited or no formal musical training. Other than folk songs, their repertoire was now increased to the popular tunes from major cultural events, to be reproduced to the best of their musical abilities. The domestic keyboard “became the vehicle of an almost new art.”

Transcriptions for the piano played a major role in popularizing a wide array of music. Franz Liszt’s transcriptions of symphonies by Ludwig van Beethoven and Hector Berlioz, songs by Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann, and his operatic fantasies of works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Vincenzo Bellini, and Gaetano Donizetti, totaling roughly two hundred pieces of same nature had an important role in the piano’s golden era. Liszt’s transcriptions fall into four categories: marches and rhapsodies; arrangements varying the degree of fidelity with the original pieces, such as the Six Preludes and Fugues by J.S. Bach; note-by-note reductions of symphonic works; song and lieder transcriptions, where he managed to maintain the importance of vocal melodies inside the piano texture; and his fantasies and paraphrases of opera and other themes, where he expanded the piano possibilities to accommodate the operatic forces.

Transcriptions for the Double Bass

In an article for The Musical Times, published in 1925, Alexandre Cellier and Fred Rothwell comment on the situation that certain performers find when looking into the repertoire for their own instruments:

---

Certain instruments, such as the viola, so deserving of admiration, are catered for so poorly as regards repertoire, that they are compelled to borrow from those more richly endowed. What is less comprehensible, however, is to find the latter borrowing from the former.\textsuperscript{8}

As mentioned before, transcriptions from other instruments constitute an important part of the available repertoire for the double bass.\textsuperscript{9} Through transcriptions, double bassists are able to play concerts written for a string bass instrument before the standardization of the modern double bass, in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century.

The Classical period concerti performed on the double bass were, generally, composed for its 18\textsuperscript{th} century predecessor, the Viennese violone. With its similar construction and register, the Viennese violone diverges from the modern double bass in the number of strings and their tuning, and in the use of movable frets. Its five strings where usually tuned F A d f# a, but scordatura was used to facilitate the playing of chords and arpeggiation in keys away from its D major tuning.\textsuperscript{10}

The Viennese violone reached its golden age through the concerti composed by K. D. Dittersdorf, J. B. Vanhal, F. A. Hoffmeister, J. Sperger. Sperger, being the chief travelling virtuoso for the instrument, had contact with several courts and composers. J. Haydn, while in Esterháza, had contact with violone players such as Johann Georg Schwenda, Carl Schiringer, and used violone in solo passages of his Symphonies No.6, 7, 8, 31, and 72.\textsuperscript{11} Haydn also composed a concerto for the instrument that was lost in a fire, but still included in his thematic catalog. W.A. Mozart also used the violone for composition. The concert aria \textit{Per Questa Bella}

\textsuperscript{8} Cellier and Rothwell, “Is Transcription Permissible?,” 900.
Mano, for bass and violone obligato, was premiered in Vienna, in 1791, by Friderich Pischelberger on the violone and Franz Xaver Gerl, Mozart’s first Sarastro.

The first internationally celebrated player of the double bass, Domenico Dragonetti (1763-1846), was known for playing from parts composed for other instruments when he performed chamber music with friends. His virtuosic technique allowed him to perform the violin parts in J. Haydn quartets, and to premiere some of G. B. Viotti’s violin duos, alternating first and second violin parts with the composer. In his encounter with Beethoven, Dragonetti played the cello part of the Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, Op.5, No.2, delighting the composer, who played the piano part. Georges Onslow (1784-1853) was even more impressed with Dragonetti’s technique and rescored some of his thirty-four string quintets to include the double bass, after watching the cello parts being played by the Italian virtuoso. Dragonetti’s own transcriptions of Mozart’s Grand Waltz, Two Celebrated Pollacas by J. Järger and Friedrich Himmel, and arrangements of some organ fugues by J.S. Bach stand out among the few late Classical period transcriptions for double bass that were published at that time.

Giovanni Bottesini (1821-1889), possibly the most influential double bass soloist in history, used his experience with the bel canto style of the Italian operas that he conducted as a direct influence in his compositions, which consisted mainly of operatic paraphrases and fantasies. A recognized opera conductor, he also often performed his arias transcriptions during the intermissions of operas he conducted. His transcriptions are based on operatic material from Vincenzo Bellini, as found in his fantasies on La Sonnambula, Beatrice di Trenda, Norma, and

---

12 Fausto Borém de Oliveira, Henrique Oswald’s..., 30.
the *Duo Concertante on Themes From “I Puritani”*; on thematic material from Gioacchino Rossini, in the *Fantasia on Rossini’s Canzonette*; from Gaetano Donizetti, in the *Fantasia “Lucia di Lamermoor”*, and “*Una Furtiva Lagrima*”; and from Giovanni Paisiello, in *Variazione sulla ”Nel cor più non mi sento”*. Bottesini also transcribed musical material from J.S. Bach, in his *Meditazione (Aria di Bach)*, a transcription from Bach’s Air from the Orchestral Suite No.3, and rearranged his *Gran Duo Concertante* for double bass and violin after the original composition for two double basses. Bottesini was one of the most prolific composers for the double bass. However, most of his music was not published during his lifetime.

In the twentieth century, the composer and double bassist Serge Koussevitzky (1874-1951) was the first double bass soloist to give entire recitals. Some of them featured a program compiled only from his own transcriptions. The following transcriptions were at the heart of his repertoire: Mozart's bassoon concerto, Max Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* Op. 47, Henry Eccles's gamba sonatas, John Galliard's cello sonata, two preludes from Scriabin's Op. 74, and Ravel's *Pièce en Forme de Habanera*. Ukrainian double bassist Rodion Azarkhin (1931-2007) pushed the limits of the double bass transcriptions when he began touring as soloist with orchestra, performing his transcription of Antonin Dvorak's Cello Concerto in B minor Op. 104. He was the first double bassist to transcribe, perform and record P. Sarasate’s *Zigeunerweisen* Op.20 No.1, Paganini’s violin caprices, and J.S. Bach’s partitas and the Chaconne in D Minor, BWV1004. Azarkhin was the principal bass player of the State Symphony Orchestra of Moscow, a position he held from 1975 until 1989. He also included in his recital repertoire transcriptions of works by Mendelssohn, Rossini, Massenet, Rachmaninoff, and Tchaikovsky.

---

16 Thomas Martin, “In Search of Bottesini”, 11.
Azarkhin’s interest in expanding the double bass repertoire is shared by important double bassists such as Stuart Sankey, Lucas Drew, Thomas Martin, and Gary Karr, to name but a few. They are responsible not only for recordings of transcriptions, but also for editing and publishing music from significant composers, transcribed for the double bass. Through the transcriptions and editions by bass players as the mentioned above, pieces like J.S. Bach’s Cello Suites, F. Schubert’s *Arpeggione Sonata*, J. Brahms’ Cello Sonata in E Minor, No. 1, Op. 38, C. Franck’s Violin Sonata, and R. Schumann’s *Adagio and Allegro Op. 70* are transcriptions established as standards in today’s double bass repertoire.

Michael J. Morelli, in his article “The Importance of Transcriptions”, points out that transcriptions for double bass are historically acceptable, are a source of excellent instructional material, raise the performance standard, and as mentioned before they could help in balancing a recital program.\(^{19}\) Double bass professor Fausto Borém de Oliveira also defends transcriptions as stimulus for innovative techniques.

Another important aspect of double bass transcriptions is the dynamic interaction between the innovative techniques stemming from the performance of transcribed music and the evolution of original writing for the instrument. Practices such as artificial harmonics and unusual double-stops of seconds, sixths, sevenths, and octaves, etc., are becoming part of the common double bass solo vocabulary.\(^{20}\)

---


CHAPTER 3

FRYDERYK CHOPIN’S ETUDES: FUSIONS OF VIRTUOSITY AND BEL CANTO

The light and facile action of the Viennese pianos inspired the composition of virtuosic music, with rapid ornament-like figures, creating a stylistic trait that permeated the end of the Classical Period and the first half of the Romantic period. The *stile brillante*, with its variety of nuances, clarity of articulation, sharpness of contrast, and rapid execution found in the piano writing of Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837) and Carl Czerny (1791-1857), among other composers, influenced the young Chopin from his early compositions. It is not the intention of this project to provide a biography of Fryderyk Chopin and his influence from the *stile brillante*, subjects already explored by a significant number of musicologists, theorists, and performers. However, due to the nature of this project, a brief biographical background of the composer’s connection with the bel canto style is necessary.

As mentioned in the introduction, Fryderyk Chopin was not only an opera goer, but a devotee. His interest in the genre put him in contact with his important contemporary composers, in particular with Vincenzo Bellini. Commentary on their mutual admiration is found in all of Chopin’s biographies. While in Paris, Chopin made contact with opera singers. His contact with the main *prime donne* of the time may be a heavier influence in his composition style than the actual contact with composers. Emily Gretsch, one of his favorite pupil in the early 1840, described her lessons in a letter to her father saying that “his playing is entirely based on the
vocal style of Rubini, Malibran and Grisi, etc.: he says so himself.”¹ In Chopin’s letters, he would compare singer's performances, with special attention to female roles, with comments about their singing ranges and ornamentation styles. Chopin left letters commenting on his fascination with the opera environment. Other than just talking about the music, his letters mention opinions about the looks, costumes and fees of the opera stars.² From early age, in his native Poland, Chopin was already familiar with the style of ornamentation and interpretation of opera singers. When he first heard Henriette Sonntag, he noted an “entirely original and effective ornamentation style, but in a different way from Paganini.”³ From Chopin’s letters, one can find comments about the major opera performers he had contact:

“only here can one discover what singing really is.” He hears and admires many singers: Laura Damoreau-Cinti (“she sings such as cannot be excelled […] she seems to puff on the audiences”), Giulia Grisi, Giuditta Pasta (“I have never seen anything more sublime”), Maria Felicia Malibran-Garcia (“wonderful! wonderful!”), Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient (“she does not cause such a furor as in Germany”), Luigi Lablache (“You could not imagine what it is!”), Nicolas-Prosper Levasseur, Adolphe Nourrit (“astounding in his feeling”) and Giovanni Battista Rubini (“his mezza voce is beyond compare”)…⁴

The 1830’s saturated Paris with the opera in the best possible way. As one of the main cultural centers in Europe, it received some of the most important productions of the time. Living in that Paris, Chopin had contact with Laure Cinti-Demoreau, Rossini’s leading singer in Paris at the time; Giuditta Pasta, Donizetti’s first Anna Bolena and Bellini’s first Norma; and also with Giulia Grisi, Maria Malibran and her sister Pauline Viardot, and Luigi Lablache. Although bel

² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
canto-like melodies on the piano were already present in John Field’s nocturnes (1782-1837), Chopin’s admiration for the style was reinforced by the some of the best available performers and would be reflected in his piano writing.

**Paths to Chopin’s Piano Etudes: The Necessity For Technical Development**

The popularization of the piano as a household instrument for amateur music making, and the development of the increasingly difficult piano writing, along with the musical aesthetics from the beginning of the Romantic Style period, led to the necessity of technical development for the amateur player, especially the young one. It is no coincidence that this was the great age of etude writing, resulting in celebrated collections by Cramer, Clementi, Chopin, Czerny, and Hummel, among others. The purpose of such etude collections was to teach the performer to maintain an even touch while carrying a given figuration through the most awkward dispositions and dramatic transformations on the keyboard.

From those books, the least purely mechanical, and thus more musically significant etudes are found in the ones composed by Fryderyk Chopin. In his etudes, Chopin gets closer to the Romantic pedagogical idea supported by Robert Schumann, where learning the keyboard should be of a general education in musicianship, and that children should not be drilled to become virtuosos so as to impress adults, but should play music that would awaken their own, distinctly childish imaginations. The connection between the visits of Niccolò Paganini to the teenager Chopin’s Warsaw and the increase of his interest in piano technique development seem

---

7 Ibid, 140.
8 Ibid, 141.
to be a justification for some of the Op. 10 etudes, even though there is evidence that they have ever met. More than exercises to develop one’s technique, the Chopin etudes from Op. 10 and from Op. 25 present a high level of musical refinement, bringing them closer to the character pieces well established on the Romantic period.

Most of Chopin's 27 etudes rank with the most difficult piano pieces ever written. But many of their difficulties are often hidden from the non-pianist. Some - many - are clearly virtuoso pieces, which are hard even to play badly. In others, the difficulties may be more subtle. These aren't just studies in speed, endurance, leaps, trills, octaves and so on. Several are studies in rhythm, others in articulation, but the great majority are also studies in sound, in the control, variation and uses of tone color.

Chopin’s Etudes, Op. 10 act like a bridge between the brillante style of the young composer and the emergence of his musical maturity. Although just a few of the etudes have been precisely dated, Chopin composed his Op.10 between 1829 and 1833, the period in which he probably already worked on the material for his Etudes Op. 25. In both collections, Chopin focuses not only on the pure technical quality present in several other short piano etudes of his era, like the exercises by Czerny and Thalberg. Instead, his etudes reveal musicianship never presented in pedagogical material up to his date.

To a degree barely approached in earlier piano studies he gave substance and poetry to the genre, conquering virtuosity on its home ground, and doing so lifting himself clear of the surrounding lowland of mediocrity. Later flirtations with the stile brillante were no more than the calculated concessions to public taste of a composer secure in his own aims and skills.

Chopin still remained true to the didactic idea, addressing one principal technical problem in each piece, approaching them through the use of motivic elements. Individual etudes

---

10 Jeremy Siepmann, Liner note to Jeremy Siepmann Life and Works: Frédéric Chopin, Naxos Educational, 8.558001-04, CD.
12 Ibid, 59.

French pianist Alfred Cortot (1877-1962) published his editions of Chopin’s études with instructions and technical comments about each étude. Following the commentaries, Cortot provides a series of technical exercises to help in the learning of the études. The technical issues addressed by Cortot aim to enhance the development of a flexible wrist and a supple hand, where the wrist and not the arm is in motion. However, the main technical issues addressed by Cortot are the independence and imbalance of the fingers. To approach the post-Beethovenian piano polyphony found in the études, his exercises develop the dexterity of playing different dynamic levels and articulations with each finger. This multi-tasking technique is necessary to bring out the Bachian polyphony balanced with the vocal inflexions of the études’ melodies, thus providing a different character to each polyphonic line. As one example, Cortot introduces the Étude Op. 10 No. 3 as follows:

The Student should concentrate on: Improving both the polyphonic (individual tone-value of the fingers) and legato playing – Expressive merging of the rubato tempo with the musical phrasing – Development of Extension – Melodic Use of the Pedal.

Difficulties to overcome: Intense expressiveness imparted by the weaker fingers and the particular position of the hand arising therefrom. Legato by portamento (finger-substitution). Firmness of attack in striking the double notes when these are widely spaced.\footnote{Alfred Cortot. Foreword to the Etude Op.10 No.3 Student Edition, (Paris: Editions Salabert, 1930): 21.}
In Chopin’s etudes, one also finds examples of the composer’s interest in the development of pedal control and in the development of the fluidity of movement and evenness of tone, to be achieved through Chopin’s unorthodox proposed fingerings.\textsuperscript{15}

**The Edition Problem**

In accordance with a publisher’s agreement in force at the time, many of Chopin’s works were published almost simultaneously in Leipzig and in Paris.\textsuperscript{16} For the making of most of the German editions, a very careful and precise copy was sent to the publishers as the engravers copy. Many of those were made by his pupil Julian Fontana and revised by the composer himself. In the case of Op.25 the composer sent his own autograph to the French editors. That would create two different original sets for the same work, with several small detail differences, but no major textual changes. For the etudes of Op. 10, it seems that either a set of proofs or an earlier print from the French edition served as source for the German edition, since the disposition of staves and notes in Etudes, No.1 to No.11 are exactly the same. However, there are several discrepancies, mostly concerning the use of accidentals, between the two editions. The German edition conforms to corrections made by the composer, found in the French copy of his pupil Camille O’Meara (Dubois).\textsuperscript{17}

Most of the dissimilarities between the different editions involve modified notes, mainly in arpeggiations or in the use of accidentals. Inconsistencies in the use of slurs and articulation

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
symbols are also found in the different editions of the etudes. Chopin’s hand-written accent symbols are longer than expected, a fact that created uncertainty in the use of accents or of small diminuendo symbols.
CHAPTER 4

THE TRANSCRIPTION OF THE ETUDES

This project presents the transcriptions of four selected etudes with one accompaniment part each for use with double bass in orchestra or solo tuning.¹ Thus there are a single double bass part and two different piano accompaniment parts for each etude. The process of transcription of etudes such as these presents several challenges to the arranger. The challenges and choices made for each transcription are discussed below. The transcriptions still offer some technical challenges to the performer learning them. It is also important to pay attention to the interpretation of style and expression for each etude, since the transcriptions are character pieces, no less than the piano originals.

The original versions of the etudes present an elaborate polyphonic texture. Since the double bass material was created out of lines in a piano texture, its part should blend with the remaining layers of that texture. The indication of a continuous legato on the melody, from the piano originals, should also be respected. The double bassist should use dynamic contrast, tone color, articulation, and vibrato to expose the character changes, especially the changes that coincide with formal sections. Concerning the tempo of the etudes, one should not be concerned about a strict metronomic pulse. The melodic contour and peaks of the phrases should be the main factors influencing the expressive rubato. In keeping with stylistic conventions of the

¹ The double bass in solo scordatura becomes a transposing instrument, sounding a whole step higher than the written pitch.
Romantic period, Chopin’s appoggiaturas (whether they consist of one or more notes) are not played before the beat, but on it, and usually unaccented;\(^1\)

The fingerings and bowings in this edition of the double bass part are presented merely as authorial suggestions.

**Etude Op. 10 No. 3**

Composed in August 1832 as one of the last composed etudes of the collection that would become Op.10, the Etude in E Major, op. 10/3 is a piece intended for the technical development of the pianist’s *legato*. The earliest autograph has the tempo marking of *vivace*. This was later changed to *vivace ma non troppo*, and changed again in the first edition to *lento ma non troppo*. Like the first of Chopin’s Op.15 Nocturnes, this etude opens and closes with a lyrical melody that frames a contrasting middle section. In the melody of the A sections, Chopin displays a development and refinement of the early nineteenth-century traditions of lyrical pianism influenced by the so called “London School”.\(^2\) Another typical aspect of Chopin’s melodies emerges in the transformations of the opening motive, building the shape of the melody on a bar-by-bar basis, bringing the melody to its peak in m. 17 and back to its initial register in m. 21.

In the dance-like beginning of the B section of the etude, Chopin inverts the material from the motive of the accompaniment and from a motivic fragment of the melody, found in mm. 6 and 8, to present a new technical challenge. Through motivic sequence, Chopin leads the

---


melodic line to a point where the melody itself sacrifices its primary role of importance to the harmonic qualities of each of its sequential appearances, changing the homophonic texture into a chordal one without a distinctive melody.

The contrasting section could be approached as an etude itself. The parallel sixths and tritones of this section are not unseen in the etude repertoire to the date, but here Chopin gives the section structural importance through harmonic prolongation. The sophistication of the harmony of this section announces the composer’s attainment of his stylistic maturity. The parallelism of the passage in chordal texture creates a sense of harmony dissolving into tone color due to the suppression of diatonic functions, through the use of heavy chromaticism.³

In *The Music of Chopin*, Jim Samson pointed out the importance of the proportional distribution of the musical material in the etude.⁴ Referencing the rhythmic division of the piece, Samson demonstrated that the A section is formed by 33+8 beats of quarter notes, while the B first section has 66 quarter note beats, and its second section has 16 quarter note beats. Also, the major structural point of the B section, i.e., the downbeat of m. 42, is 41 quarter note beats away from the beginning of the B section, the same amount of quarter beats as the entire A section. The A’ section can be divided into 17 + 16 quarter note beats, adding to the total of bars of the first part of the A section.

![Figure 1 - Jim Samson’s formal scheme for the Etude Op. 10 No. 3.](image)

⁴ Ibid, 65.
In his essay about the rhythmic structure of the Etude Op.10/3, John Rink expanded on Samson’s idea of proportional balance, suggesting that it develops from the material of the first measure of the piece. Rink claims that the 1:2:1 ratio found in the overall structure is rooted in the syncopation of the sixteenth-eighth-sixteenth figure of the bass voice. This rhythm clearly shows the balanced ratio of the overall form and could also be used to explain the character changes found in the piece.

Chopin is clear when marking accents on the eighth note of each figuration of the bass line, in the first bars of the melody accompaniment. While there is disagreement on how to interpret Chopin’s accents, there can be no doubt that they are presented so as to emphasize the syncopation on the longest note of the rhythm, which is surrounded by two short notes. The emphasis on the central rhythm of the figure is reflected in the overall dynamic plan. The main dynamic of the A section of the etude is piano, with crescendos and diminuendos, while the overall dynamic of the B section is forte, containing the peak of intensity of the piece, before the return of the A material. Thus, the shape of the structural form also presents the ratio of 1:2:1, in the manner of a formally syncopated climax. Texturally, one can find connections between the relationship of the light accompanied melody texture of the A section with the heavy chordal texture of B.

---

6 Ibid, 131.
7 Ibid, 132.
Transcription Changes

The first choice made in the transcription of the Etude Op. 10/3 concerns the key. Chopin’s original piano version is in the key of E Major. For this etude, the choice was made to keep the original key for the piano in the solo tuning version, making the D Major double bass parts more comfortable for the performer. With the orchestra tuning, the double bass will still perform in D Major, the sounding key of the piano version.

In the first bar of the etude, Chopin gives the indication of legato. Since the double bass is capable of producing different legato articulations, the transcription presents the same indication as the original version, but it also uses bowing slurs to articulate legato.

As shown in figure 1, the group of 16\textsuperscript{th} notes, slurred in groups of two and then in four notes, was transcribed as two separated notes and then two groups of two slurred notes. This choice was made to help in the crescendo dynamic of the phrase.

The main melodic voice of the etude is clearly presented in the first section of the etude and is the voice presented in the double bass with a few adaptations. One subtle change in the voice choice is found in the last 16\textsuperscript{th} note of m. 22, which is considered there as a pickup to the motive in the following measure. The repetition of the motive presents the same idea.

Figure 2 - Etude Op.10 No. 3 Urtext, mm. 21-23.
For the next voice changes, occurring in mm. 30-31 and 34-35, the stepwise motion was given to the double bass, instead of holding the double bass in one written top voice of the piano original. This choice is explained by the fact that the top voice does not sound stationary, even though the piano writing suggests it.
On the last full beat of m. 29, the double bass material was transposed one octave lower to accommodate the following arpeggio in a register which would be comfortable for the instrument.

In mm. 42 and 44, the double bass is silent, creating a dialogue between the two instruments. The same idea was used in the passage from mm. 54 to 61, where the repeated motives of the bottom and top voices are exchanged between the piano and the double bass.
To avoid chord inversion problems due to the sounding quality of the double bass, the passage from mm. 46 to 54 has the double bass playing the lowest voice of the written original, keeping the original intervals.

The right hand of the original piano version had presented the material transcribed for the double bass. Therefore, in the transcribed version, the remaining voices were split into both hands of the piano.

**Etude Op.10 No. 6**

In the Etude in E-flat Minor op. 10 no.6, the superimposition of a simple melodic line and a chromatic, yet repetitious, accompaniment results in a surprisingly complex and melancholy sonority. The lower voice plays its structural and harmonic role, reserving changes in its slow rhythm only when necessary. The dual nature of the inner voices creates harmonic complexity. The delicate chromatic fluctuations make it expressive, while preserving the simplicity of the ostinato rhythm. The top voice is the most responsible for equally simple, but highly expressive melody, producing an operatic duet with the semi-melodic tenor voice. In his practice instructions for this etude, Alfred Cortot mentioned that the expressive power of the melodic part, in the upper voice, must predominate throughout the whole etude. The gloomy mood of the Eb minor key builds momentum until the harmony is led to the distant key of E Major. The careful voice leading, along with the new major mode sonority, creates the sensation of relief when the piece reaches the B section, where the drama is intensified. After a weak attempt at

---

8 According to standard writing, double bass music is usually written one octave higher than the sounding pitch.
relief in the E Major section, the melancholy Eb minor mood returns, with its passionate lament. However, the Picardy third at the end of the etude somehow resolves its built-up tension.

**Transcription Changes**

Like the Etude in E Major, the Etude No. 6 in E-Flat Minor presents its voices in a clear way in the original piano version. In this project, the melodic top voice was transcribed for the double bass. Again, necessary changes were made. One example of voice change is found in the last 16\textsuperscript{th} note of the second bar where the F is written as a sustained inner voice in the texture. It is very difficult to not hear it as part of the top voice, because of its first appearance happens in the top and in the tenor voice simultaneously. Also, the long rhythmic value and sustain of the note requires a stronger stroke from the player, resulting in the most prominent sound in the texture, followed by the return of the top melody.

![Figure 7 - Etude Op. 10 No. 6 Urtext, mm. 1-5.](image-url)
The original key of the etude, Eb minor, is not a common key in the realm of the double bass repertoire. In order to make the etude less awkward for double bassists, I decided to transpose it one half step lower. The D minor key appears far more frequently in the double bass solo repertoire. It facilitates the performance of leaps, such as the D octave in the pickup to m. 6. Since the double bass part is transposed to D minor, the solo tuning accompaniment part is presented in E minor.

After comparing several recorded performances of the etude on piano, I concluded that a tempo slower than the original Andante would enhance the lyrical quality of its melody, in the particular configuration of double bass and piano. The tempo marking chosen for the transcription was the Larghetto.

Another change from the piano original is the omission of some accents, such as the one in the octave mentioned above. The change in the bow direction combined with the string and register change would be sufficient for articulating the top note. Preserving the original accents would break the goal of a flowing legato line.
The repeated motive at the end of the etude allows for a rescoring of the voices. At this point, the moving inner voice shifts back and forth from the piano left hand to the double bass. The third and last repetition is presented by the double bass, with the piano reinforcing the arrival of the Picardy third.

![Figure 9 - Etude Op.10 No. 6 Urtext, mm. 50-53.](image)

**Figure 9 - Etude Op.10 No. 6 Urtext, mm. 50-53.**

![Figure 10 - Etude Op. 10 No. 6 Transcription, mm. 50-53.](image)

**Figure 10 - Etude Op. 10 No. 6 Transcription, mm. 50-53.**

**Etude Op.10 No.9**

The texture of the Etude in F Minor, op. 10 no.9 resembles that of the Etude in E-flat in E-flat Minor, op. 10/6, with an upper voice in the right hand and an agile arpeggiated accompaniment in the left hand. At first sight, one could say that the two lines are the only voices of the etude. However, the arpeggiated voice contains in itself an inner voice in counterpoint to the upper melody. As in the Etude Op. 10/6, the left hand’s perpetual motion accompaniment resembles the spinning wheel sonority found in F. Schubert’s *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. It requires significant endurance from the pianist to maintain the character of the line.
throughout the entire piece. The intensity of the right hand melody, and the fortissimo repeated note passages and their sudden echoes, as found in mm. 29-36, give a dramatic pathos to the etude and make it a piano miniature version of a tone-poem, with a very delicate conclusion.\textsuperscript{11}

**Transcription Changes**

Once again, the original key of etude, F minor, is not advantageous for double bassists. As in the previous transcription, the double bass part was transposed one half step down, resulting in a piano accompaniment part in F# minor for the solo tuning, and E minor for the orchestra tuning. Again, the higher of the two etude voices was transcribed for the double bass part. The musical material from the left hand was split into both hands in the transcription accompaniment.

Due to idiomatic limitations, the octaves in the melody of mm. 25-28 were reduced to the bottom note and placed one octave lower, so that the melody would arrive in the proper register for the next section. The octaves in mm. 29, 31, 33 were reduced to a single-note line consisting only of the upper notes.

\textsuperscript{11} Malcom MacDonald, Liner notes to Luiza Borac’s *Chopin Etudes, Six Polish Songs (transcribed Liszt)*” CD, Avie Records, AV2161, 2009, CD.
The repetition of motivic material, at different dynamics, created the possibility of dialogue between the piano and the double bass. The double bass plays mm. 29, 31, 33, and 35 at fortissimo, and the piano alone responds in mm. 30, 32, 34, and 36 at pianissimo. The accented notes of this section were preserved in order to maintain the original phrase gesture.
At the return of the A section, the mordent of the third 8th note of mm. 38-39 was. The octave leaps in mm. 57, 59, 61 were also reduced to a line derived from the original uppermost notes. As in its first appearance in the piece, the echoed material of mm. 57 to 64 is presented only in the piano.

The last three bars of the piece present the double bass doubling the moving line of the piano’s right hand in harmonics. Due to the extreme high register of the last harmonic, and the resulting difficulties in intonation, the alternative of playing the last note in octave lower has been offered in the transcription.

Figure 13 - Etude Op. 10 No. 9 Urtext, mm. 64-67.

Figure 14 - Etude Op. 10 No. 9 Transcription, mm. 64-67.
Etude Op. 25 No. 7

In this etude, the influence of Romantic-period bel canto prevails more than in any other of Chopin’s 24 etudes. After the brief introductory recitative, a descending lament-like melody focuses the interest on the material presented in the left hand. As was found in the Etude in E Major, Op. 10/3, the main pianistic focus of the Etude in C-sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 7 is the control of the legato and the phrasing of the pianist’s left hand, while the right hand supplements the harmony and the accompaniment.

For this etude, Chopin echoed the mournful motive and sonority in Vincenzo Bellini’s aria “Dormono Entrambi,” from the beginning of the second act of Norma. In this scene Norma is contemplating the murder her children, in order to spare them from living with their stepmother. The transcription of musical motives and, above all, the psychological state of Norma is soberly transferred to the piano. The imitation of the bass melody by the soprano line creates the sensation of a fugal texture, carefully crafted in counterpoint. In the B section, the composer inverts the roles of the voices, with an arpeggiated accompaniment in the left hand, while the right hand contrasts the initial melodic idea with a light upward motion.

The Etude, Op. 25/7 was used by Giovanni Bottesini as musical material for a trio for piano, high voice and double bass. The title Tutto che il Mondo Serra comes from the first words of the text, probably authored by the composer himself. In his manuscript Bottesini did not attach a title to the piece, nor did he specify the type of voice required for it. However, due to its range, one can conclude that it is suitable to both high types of male and female voices. The original manuscript is found in the same book that presents Bottesini’s Elegia in Re.
Bottesini was very cautious in his adaptation of the piano original. He rescored the parts, with the double bass playing the musical material of the left hand of the piano part, and the voice part presenting the counter melody found in the right hand of the piano part. However Bottesini also altered some passages, such as the runs in mm. 27 and 28, due to idiomatic differences of the two instruments. Some other differences seem to be just small personal interpretive choices.

In the initial cadenza, Bottesini adds four octaves of the note G# in the first beat of the piano part, with the duration of a half note. Then he changes the duration of the first, fourth and fifth note, so that the whole passage would become four bars with a 4/4 time signature. In general, the other dozen or so other differences between Chopin’s original piano part and Bottesini’s arrangement involve the reading of ornamentations and rhythmic subdivisions. Although there is no substantial change to the original musical text of the etude in the arrangement, the small discrepancies along with the nonexistence of a piano part for the accompaniment of the double bass without the singer, in either orchestra or solo tuning, gave a reason to include the Etude Op. 25/7 in this project.

![Figure 15 - Giovanni Bottesini’s Tutto Che il Mondo Serra, mm. 1-3.](image)
Transcription Changes

Chopin’s original key for the etude is C# minor. This transcription follows Bottesini’s choice of transposing it a whole step down, making the solo tuning piano accompaniment to sound at the original key. The orchestra tuning accompaniment is transposed to B minor. A strong reason to support Bottesini’s choice is found in the cantabile section of mm. 31 to 37, where the key of B minor better suits the double bass writing than the original one with respect to harmonics and open strings.

The original phrasing of the melody has been followed, but new slurs have been added for bowing suggestions. In the piano score, the right hand musical material is split into the two hands, with the lament counter melody in the right hand, and the harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. Since the original melody dwells in the lower half of the piano range, there is no need of changing octaves due to voice crossing and chord inversion problems.

The main challenge of this transcription was found in the reinterpretation of the runs from mm. 25 and 26. There are two main reasons for changing the melodic material of those two bars: the problem of aligning the rhythm of the double bass and the piano in a heavily ornamented passage; and the technical challenge of articulating fast stepwise motion notes, in fortissimo, in the lower register of the double bass. In this transcription, the general shape of the line was kept,
with its departing and arrival notes in m. 27. For the next bar, the first downward motion was used to bring the line to a lower register. Then, the line ascends to its highest note and then descends to its final point of arrival. As a solution to the rhythmic alignment problem, the number of notes in the bar was reduced, limiting them to a maximum subdivision of 32\textsuperscript{nd} notes, aligning each four 32\textsuperscript{nd}s of the melody with one 8\textsuperscript{th} note of the accompaniment. The reduction in the number of notes is reflected in the final range of the passage. The original version presents the passage of m. 27 spanning three octaves and a third, while the passage in the transcription spans one octave and a seventh. However, since the previous bar uses the upward motion to push the start of the descending movement to a higher octave, the range of almost three octaves is reached over the course of the consecutive bars. The same treatment, aligning the 32\textsuperscript{nd}s with the 8\textsuperscript{th}s of the accompaniment, was used in the chromatic scale of m. 53. At this point the range was reduced from two octaves and a seventh to one octave and a seventh.

Figure 17- Etude Op. 25 No. 7 Urtext, mm. 26-28.
Conclusion

Unlike the piano originals, the double bass transcriptions of the etudes do not present an advanced set of specific technical issues for the double bass. The difference in sound production of the piano and of the double bass, and thus their particular articulation possibilities, are the main issues for the transcriber and for the performer. While the piano articulations depend on the beginning and on the end of the produced sound, the bowed string instruments are capable of governing not only the duration of the attack or decay of a note, but also certain aspects of its internal shape. Since there seems to be no available literature with precise instructions on how to transcribe music from the piano to the double bass, I have chosen to find a way that could connect double bass playing traditions to the selected Chopin etudes. The etudes transcribed in this project present examples of the bel canto style influence over Fryderyk Chopin’s melodies. The same style influence is found in the compositions of Giovanni Bottesini. With that in mind, the performer learning the pieces should pay attention to the technical and interpretational tools that could bring a singing-like quality to the melodies of the etudes.

If Chopin’s pianistic challenges are lacking, other technical challenges are found in the double bass parts. Examples of those challenges can be found in the Etude Op. 10/3, where the
development of a solid hand position and smooth string changes are called for the passage in mm. 45-51; in the Etude Op. 25/7 register changes are at issue. Other than occasional technical challenges, the transcribed etudes present musical aspects that would help develop one’s interpretive skills. All four etudes have at least one change in the expressive character. The performer is encouraged to use technical parameters such as tone color and vibrato variations to enhance each of the proposed characters. The musical character of the long melodic gesture in the beginning of the Etude Op. 10/3 should be contrasted with the character that emerges during the string crossings of mm. 45-51. The character of the melodic material of Etude Op.25/7 should not be the same in the accompaniment in mm. 29-36. Moreover, the character that brings the melody to its climax should not be the character created as the melody is brought back to the initial material in Etude Op. 10/6.

It is my hope that the double bass performer will benefit from the opportunity of having this transcriptions of Fryderyk Chopin’s music to enhance technical skills and expressive gestures using the works from one of the most important composers of the Romantic period.
REFERENCES

Bibliography


MacDonald, Malcom. Liner notes to Luiza Borac’s Chopin Etudes, Six Polish Songs (transcribed Liszt)” CD, Avie Records, AV2161, 2009, CD.


**Dissertations**


**CD-ROM’s**


**DVD**


**Music Scores**


_______. “Chopin Terzetto”. Digital copy of original manuscript of “Tutto Che il Mondo Serra”.

47
APPENDIX A

SCORES FOR THE USE WITH ORCHESTRA TUNING

In this Appendix A the reader will find the musical scores for the performance of the Etudes number 3, 6, and 9 from Op. 10, and Op. 25 No. 7. The following scores are presented for the accompaniment of double bass in orchestra tuning.
Etude Op.10 No. 9
for Double Bass and Piano

Fryderyk Chopin
trans. F. Azevedo

F Azevedo 2014
Etude Op.25 No.7
for Double Bass and Piano

Fryderyk Chopin
trans. F. Azevedo
APPENDIX B

SCORES FOR THE USE WITH SOLO TUNING

In this Appendix B the reader will find the musical scores for the performance of the Etudes number 3, 6, and 9 from Op. 10, and Op. 25 No. 7. The following scores are presented for the accompaniment of double bass in solo tuning. Since the double bass in solo tuning becomes a transposing in D instrument\(^1\), sounding a major second above the written pitch, the piano part for the solo tuning accompaniment was transposed up a major second.

\(^1\) The solo tuning double bass is still transposed at the octave, meaning that it will sound one octave lower than the written pitch.
Etude Op. 10 No. 3
for Double Bass and Piano

Fryderyk Chopin
trans. F. Azevedo

Piano

Adagietto

Double Bass

Piano

F. Azevedo
Etude Op.10 No.6
for Double Bass and Piano

Fryderyk Chopin
trans. F. Azevedo

Larghetto
con molto espressione
sempre legatissimo

F. Azevedo 2014
APPENDIX C

DOUBLE BASS PARTS

In this Appendix C the reader will find the double bass parts for the performance of the Etudes number 3, 6, and 9 from Op. 10, and Op. 25 No. 7. The writing for the double bass respects the transposition at the octave standard. The double bass sounds one octave lower than the written pitch. The double bass in solo tuning becomes a transposing in D instrument, without changing in the written pitch. The double bass parts presented below are to be used with orchestra or solo tuning accompaniment.
Etude Op. 10 No. 3
for Double Bass and Piano
F. Azevedo 2014
Double Bass

Etude Op.10 No.6
for Double Bass and Piano

Larghetto

with mezzo espressione

f dim.

poco a poco cresce.

fp

poco a poco dim.

poco riten.

sworz.

F. Azevedo 2014