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ALFRED CORTOT'S RESPONSE TO THE MUSIC  
FOR SOLO PIANO OF FRANZ SCHUBERT: A  
STUDY IN PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

BY

VASILEIOS RAKITZIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

City University London, School of Arts and Social  
Sciences, Department of Music; and the Guildhall School  
of Music and Drama

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During the course of this research I visited the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler in Paris in order to have access to Cortot's personal archive. I would like to thank everyone in the Médiathèque, and especially Sonia Popoff, for their will to help during my five-day stay in Paris.

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During the third year of my doctoral studies I was diagnosed with focal dystonia, an incident that led to my deferral for an academic year, which was dedicated in research on the nature of this pathology and possible methods of treatment. This research included trips to different places all over the world, from Germany and Spain to New Zealand, meeting and working with doctors, hand specialists and pianists, who are specified in the treatment of focal dystonia on the instrument. Without the precious help of all these specialists not only this dissertation would have been left unfinished, but also I would doubt if I could call myself a pianist. More

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as well as for their invaluable support, which helped me go through a difficult, yet fruitful, process.

# DECLARATION

I hereby grant powers of discretion to the Librarians of City University and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama to allow this thesis to be copied in whole or in part for study purposes, subject to normal conditions of acknowledgement.



## ABSTRACT

Alfred Cortot and Franz Schubert are two names that are rarely mentioned in the same context. Although Cortot was a renowned pianist and pedagogue of the first half of the twentieth century, his work on Schubert has remained obscure. This can be explained by the fact that his recordings of, and writings on, Schubert's works comprise only a small sample of his affinity with this repertoire, in comparison to his affiliation to the work of other composers, such as Chopin. This degree of obscurity is also increased by the fact that, to a certain extent, Schubert's works for piano remained neglected until early in the twentieth century, in contrast to his great reputation as a composer of *Lieder*. However, the study of Cortot's recordings and commentary editions of Schubert's piano music reveals that Cortot can potentially be a relevant source for the performance of this repertoire. Due to his educational background and the roots of his performance style, he can be a link to performance traditions of the late nineteenth century, which comprise important sources for the performance of Schubert's work, especially given the notable lack of primary evidence specific to this music. Cortot's editions discuss issues, which are still current regarding the performance of Schubert's works, and provide answers, which are comparable with modern and updated approaches. On the other hand, Cortot's editions and recordings of Schubert's music cover a range of time within the twentieth century (1920-1960) that encompassed some of the greatest changes in performance styles that have ever been documented in writing and in sound. His work therefore also becomes a valuable source for the study of this evolution and the way it might have been realized and influenced by leading artists of the twentieth century. This thesis aims to present Cortot's work as an inspiring source for the interpretation of Schubert's music today, and as an important testimony to the history of performance practice.



# INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 2008, in a private collection in Greece,<sup>1</sup> I came across a document that revealed an interesting and unexpected affinity between Alfred Cortot (1877-1962) and the music of Franz Schubert (1797-1828): a typewritten analysis by Cortot on Schubert's Impromptus for piano D 935 (op. post. 142) No. 2 and No. 3.<sup>2</sup> In most musical sources, Cortot is referred to as a great interpreter of the music of Chopin, Schumann, French composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and even Wagner, but the connection to Schubert has not yet been studied in depth, particularly from a pianistic perspective.

## I

The initial part of my research consisted of tracking down as much evidence as possible regarding the primary subject of this thesis: Cortot's response to Schubert's music for piano. The two main kinds of evidence, which covered the greatest part of this dissertation, were: a) Cortot's recordings of Schubert's works; and b) editions of Schubert's music, which were produced by Cortot and include extended commentary by the editor.

Cortot's recordings are easily accessible in the marketplace, but the editions remain relatively unknown, although they can be found in the United Kingdom through the United Music Publishers Ltd, who are the official representatives of the original publishers, Salabert.<sup>3</sup> Evidence was

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<sup>1</sup> Private Collection of C.P. Carambelas-Sgourdas in Athens, Greece.

<sup>2</sup> Further research showed that these texts were exactly the same as the ones Cortot used for his published *édition de travail* of these pieces.

<sup>3</sup> United Music Publishers' website is [www.ump.co.uk](http://www.ump.co.uk) (Accessed: October 15, 2010).

also found in Cortot's writings, such as the *Principes Rationnels de la Technique Pianistique*<sup>4</sup> and the *Cours d' Interprétation*.<sup>5</sup> Although they comprise a rather small sample, these references and analyses show that Cortot's work on Schubert's music was consistent and thoughtfully structured.

Further investigation led to Cortot's Archive (Fond Cortot) in the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler in Paris.<sup>6</sup> Cortot owned a huge private library and collection, following a close friendship with Henry Prunières (1886-1942), founder of *La Revue Musicale*. In the years after the First World War (1914-1918), Cortot's library had grown to such an extent as to be considered even greater than the Fond Fétis in Brussels, and in 1936 the International Society of Musicology in France asked to access his catalogues.<sup>7</sup> Cortot himself undertook the classification of his library material, which was divided into three main categories: Musical literature, including books of music theory, history and aesthetics; Music, which included scores of all kinds and ranged in time from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century; and Autographs and Letters.<sup>8</sup>

Although it is not clear where all this material ended up after Cortot's death,<sup>9</sup> the Médiathèque appears to have gathered a great part of what

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<sup>4</sup> Alfred Cortot, *Principes Rationnels de la Technique Pianistique* (Paris: Senart, 1928), trans. H. Leroy-Metaxas as *Rational Principles of Pianoforte Technique* (Paris: Senart, 1928).

<sup>5</sup> Jeanne Thieffry (ed.), *Cours d' Interprétation* (Paris: Legouix, 1934), trans. Robert Jaques as *Alfred Cortot's Studies in Musical Interpretation* (London: George G. Harrap and Co, 1937).

<sup>6</sup> [www.mediathequemahler.org](http://www.mediathequemahler.org) (Accessed: October 15, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Bernard Gavoty, *Alfred Cortot* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1977), pp. 285-286.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Hyatt King and Oliver Neighbour, 'Printed Music from the Collection of Alfred Cortot', *The British Museum Quarterly*, Vol. 31 (Autumn, 1966), pp. 8-9. The first category included, among others, biographies of composers and books on the history of instruments and musical notation. In the second category, scores of instrumental and vocal music, as well as music for dance and drama were included.

<sup>9</sup> Gavoty notes that Cortot's library was partially sold in London (Gavoty, p. 286). Frank Traficante, in his article about Cortot's collection, says that 'a major part of Cortot's library was acquired by the firm Otto Haas from which portions were purchased by the British Museum, the University of California at Berkeley, the

belonged to Cortot's collection. According to the information found on their website, at Cortot's death Henry-Louis de la Grange, one of the founders of the Médiathèque, bought his music library and, thus, nearly 10,000 books and thousands of annotated scores now belong to the collection of the Paris-based institution. The Fond Cortot comprises the following categories of material: *Correspondence*, *Partitions (Partitions de poche and Fac-similés)*, *Programmes*, *Documents divers* and *Livres*. Items from Cortot's archive that were relevant and important for this research included several programmes from master classes that Cortot gave at the *École Normale de Musique de Paris*, in which Schubert's works were performed. However, most valuable was arguably being able to access scores of Schubert's music that contained annotations that were most likely from Cortot's own hand.<sup>10</sup> Such sources revealed, at times, elements about Cortot's response to Schubert's music that would either be impossible to find in his recordings and/or editions, or that gave better explanations of specific points made in his editions.

## II

Cortot's work on Schubert can be a source used to interpret the latter's works as well as the performance style of the former. Therefore, two basic contexts, through which the material was examined and evaluated, need to

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Newberry Library and the University of Kentucky; see Frank Traficante, 'Dispersal of the Cortot Collection: 290 treatises in Lexington', *Notes*, Second Series, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Jun., 1970), pp. 713-714. In addition, the Lehmann Foundation in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York bought important manuscripts which belonged to Cortot's collection; see Martin Cooper and Charles Timbrell, 'Cortot, Alfred', *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/06587> (Accessed: May 29, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> These scores included versions of the Impromptus and the 'Wanderer' Fantasy edited by Louis Köhler and Richard Schmidt (Leipzig: Peters, c. 1890) and versions of Schubert's Dances for piano edited by F. A. Roitzsch (Leipzig: Peters, c. 1880).

be established: a) an investigation of available and updated literature regarding Schubert's music in performance; and b) a study of a specific performance style documented as heard in recordings by pianists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the period during which Cortot completed his studies and was in his prime as a performer.

Bearing in mind Cortot's dual role as a performer and editor/analyst regarding the interpretation of Schubert's music, the contextualization of his response to this repertoire should examine both aspects accordingly. As far as a scholarly examination of the work of Schubert in terms of performance is concerned, the most comprehensive study has been done by David Montgomery.<sup>11</sup> In his thorough monograph, as well as in various articles, Montgomery tries to support his arguments about the interpretation of Schubert's music through his research on as many treatises as possible from Schubert's time. Given the limited primary sources regarding the composer's performance preferences and style and a certain neglect of his piano work until early in the twentieth century, Montgomery's severe stance often has to be based on suppositions. These suppositions are due to the fact that Schubert's piano music was rarely granted a mention by the tutors of his time or because of the coexistence of various performance styles in early nineteenth-century Vienna. In addition, performance decisions often had to be based on the absence of evidence to the contrary, as, for example, in cases of the treatment of repeats or tempo fluctuation. Moreover, Montgomery strictly opposes the practice of voluntary ornamentation and improvisation in Schubert's music, although documentation might reveal that such a device was used in various kinds of compositions throughout the nineteenth century and even in the early twentieth century. As a result, Montgomery's

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<sup>11</sup> David Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2003).

strictness has usually been subject to opposition by performers/scholars, who are either connected with the movement of historically informed performance practice, such as Malcolm Bilson and Robert Levin, or are leading Schubert interpreters on the modern piano, as well as editors and/or scholars of Schubert's piano music, such as Paul Badura-Skoda and Alfred Brendel. These sources, along with studies that focus principally on the work of Schubert, such as those by Alfred Einstein<sup>12</sup> and Charles Fisk,<sup>13</sup> created the context regarding modern research on the interpretation of Schubert's piano music.

Research questions raised by the comparison of these sources, along with Cortot's approach in his recordings and editorial commentary, include: which are the main areas of performance practice that are concerned in modern approaches to Schubert's piano music? Does Cortot's approach touch upon these areas, and how? What solutions and answers are provided by modern literature and by Cortot? Where do they agree and disagree? Can Cortot's suggestions be realized as an anticipation of certain approaches found in recent analyses?

In addition, Cortot's recordings first, and his editorial comments second, demonstrate his performing style, and therefore the issue of its relation to the interpretation of Schubert's piano works is raised. Cortot was one of the leading pianists of the early and middle twentieth century, with educational roots dating back to the late nineteenth century. While he was in his formative years, performers such as Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860-1941) and Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) were two of the most influential performers worldwide. Additionally, Liszt's legacy was still strong as quite a few of his pupils were in their prime, such as Moriz Rosenthal (1862-1946)

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<sup>12</sup> Alfred Einstein, *Schubert*, trans. David Ascoli (London: Panther, 1971).

<sup>13</sup> Charles Fisk, *Returning Cycles* (Berkeley, L.A and London: University of California Press, 2001).

and Eugen d' Albert (1864-1932). Some of Cortot's most significant contemporaries included Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), Josef Hofmann (1876-1957) and Ignaz Friedman (1882-1948). Leading performers in France during Cortot's education were Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), Francis Planté (1839-1934) and Louis Diémer (1843-1919), while his contemporaries included Édouard Risler (1873-1929) and Marguerite Long (1874-1966).

The existence of a style defined by particular practices and tendencies and followed by the majority of pianists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including Cortot, can be evidenced not only by their recordings alone, but also by specific literature. One of the most detailed studies of these historical recordings has been made by Robert Philip.<sup>14</sup> Philip maintains that the study of these recordings is essential for nineteenth-century repertoire, since most of the performers heard in them were educated during that century, and therefore they can be a source for performance traditions of that time. Philip focuses on finding in the recordings those interpretive practices that feel most remote for modern-day listeners in order to define what features should be considered typical of the style of these performers. As far as piano playing is concerned, the treatment of rhythm and the use of certain types of *rubato*,<sup>15</sup> along with a number of other devices, are the main focal points.

Moreover, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson's study on the same issue is of relevance for this research, since it connects the performing styles heard in these recordings with the way these performers treated the composers'

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); and Robert Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Important details about the use of *rubato* by performers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century can also be found in: Richard Hudson, *Stolen Time: The History of Tempo Rubato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 329-355.

scores.<sup>16</sup> Such a method can be used to link the evidence upon which my investigation was actually based: Cortot's recordings and editions. In addition, Leech-Wilkinson relates directly to my investigation, since Cortot's performance style is one of the major parts of his research.<sup>17</sup> Finally, this examination could not exclude the work of Kenneth Hamilton, who has attempted an evaluation of the impact of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century practices on present-day standards.<sup>18</sup>

The questions that are raised after placing Cortot's recordings and particular editorial comments in this context are: which devices of the so-called late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century style can be heard in Cortot's recordings of Schubert's music? How is his performance style represented in his editions, and what does this reveal about his reading and editing of Schubert's scores? How can Cortot's interpretive decisions, found either in his recordings or editions or in both, inspire a present-day performer?

During the course of my research, it became apparent that in the twentieth century, and more specifically around the 1920s and 1930s, performance styles started displaying significant changes. As the recordings from these years and the aforementioned literature documented, performers from the mid-twentieth century onwards demonstrated styles that showed that the priorities in performances were different from those displayed in earlier recordings. Interestingly, quite a few of these performers were of a similar age to Cortot, such as Artur Schnabel (1882-1951) and Edwin Fischer

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<sup>16</sup> Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performance* (London: CHARM, 2009), <http://www.charm.kcl.ac.uk/studies/chapters/intro.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Making Music with Alfred Cortot: ontology, data, analysis', *Gemessene, Interpretation – Computergestützte Aufführungsanalyse im Kreuzverhör der Disziplinen*, ed. Heinz von Loesch and Stefan Weinzierl (Mainz: Schott, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth Hamilton, *After the Golden Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

(1886-1960). This part of the investigation became extremely important for the main subject of my research, since Cortot's recordings of Schubert's music are spread throughout the years of transition between the so-called earlier and later styles (the earliest recording being in 1920 and the latest in 1954),<sup>19</sup> while his editions were products of his later years (1954-1960). Therefore, more questions are raised: which areas of performance practice seem to have been more affected by the evolution of performance styles in general? Do Cortot's editorial remarks or recordings display any awareness of this evolution and, if so, how?

Despite the fact that Cortot's recordings and editions of Schubert's music might feel different from modern standards of interpretation, the examination of his work can still be of value. At first, the evidence, audible and written, offers, at least for specific works, the opportunity for comparisons and conclusions regarding Cortot's approach. Additionally, the wide timespan within which Cortot's recordings and editions were undertaken provides the opportunity for a better consideration of his response to Schubert's piano music, within the history of performing in general and of performing Schubert in particular.

Finally, Cortot's background and the period of time during which he lived, performed and wrote can be a link to performance traditions that can possibly be connected to the date of this repertoire. Particularly important, though, can be his link to performance traditions of specific periods of history for which evidence, audible and written, is limited (Liszt's time and just after), but their impact on piano playing can potentially be inspiring for present-day performers of this repertoire. In other words, as Hamilton puts it:

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<sup>19</sup> These years refer to Cortot's recordings of Schubert's works. However, he still recorded music of other composers after 1954.

Pianists from Liszt to [Horowitz] can be a potent source of inspiration. After all, these players were the first to encounter 'our piano' and the first to try out our repertoire on it. They tried to find new meanings in ever more well-worn texts and came up with viable solutions to technical problems that can still cause headaches today.<sup>20</sup>

### III

Each of the following chapters addresses specific issues that aim to aid the process of considering and evaluating Cortot's response to Schubert's music. Chapter One provides an exploration of Cortot's educational background and influences during his formative years. Such an examination is necessary in order to ascertain what sort of musician and performer Cortot was. Charles Timbrell's exceptional study on French Pianism,<sup>21</sup> as well as sources pertaining to the musical scene during the Third Republic in France, provided important material for the examination of Cortot's French-based education in the late nineteenth century and his leading role in the French musical scene in the first half of the twentieth century. The examination of Cortot's background helps us define his interpretive style and explain its origins, while also leading to his affinities with particular repertoire and eventually with the music of Schubert.

Chapter Two examines the issues of performance practice that modern research has identified as the main areas of questioning regarding Schubert's music in performance. This investigation establishes the contexts through which Cortot's recordings and editions will be compared with recent studies on the interpretation of Schubert's music in the following chapters. The ultimate goal of this chapter is to show why and how Cortot's work can be considered a relevant and important source to consult for the performance of this repertoire.

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<sup>20</sup> Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 260.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism* (London: Kahn and Averill, 1992).

In Chapters Three and Four, Cortot's commentary editions of four Impromptus (D 899 No. 2 and No. 4; and D 935 No. 2 and No. 3) and the 'Wanderer' Fantasy (D 760) respectively are explored in relation to issues of performance practice. The examination of Cortot's response to these works and the possibility of drawing general conclusions about his perception of Schubert's music are the main goals. The chapters try to determine Cortot's stance on typical Schubert questions in relation to these works. In addition, there is an effort to distinguish instances where, alongside information about Schubert's work, Cortot's commentary provides evidence about features of interpretation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In the fifth and final chapter there is an overall evaluation of Cortot's recordings of Schubert's music for solo piano and the main aim is to find out how Cortot's performance style is represented in his recordings of Schubert's works. This material is then compared with recordings of the same works made by other performers of more or less the same period, with the aim of finding out what can be concluded about the history of performing in general and performing Schubert in particular. Finally, Cortot's recordings are compared with his editions, when this is possible, in order to show how his approach was influenced by the evolution of performance styles, and how differently this is realized in both the audible and written evidence.

The main objective of this thesis is to demonstrate that Cortot can be considered an important source of consultation and inspiration for a present-day performer of Schubert's music. His work can also appear to be an interesting source for the history of interpretation and pianism in relation to specific repertoire. This research aims to reveal the importance of Cortot's way of thinking in building up a performance as a point of

departure for present-day performers. It would also be significant if this thesis results in closer attention being paid to Cortot's rather neglected work on Schubert, both from an academic and performance point of view.



# CHAPTER ONE

## Alfred Cortot's Musical Personality and Repertoire Affinities

Alfred Denis Cortot was one of the leading figures in French music in the era between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning and middle of the twentieth century. He studied the piano at the *Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris* with Emile Decombes (1829-1912) and Louis Diémer. At the age of twenty, one year after graduating and winning the *premier prix*, he made his debut in Paris with Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3. From 1899 until 1901 he worked as a choral coach and assistant conductor, under Felix Mottl (1856-1911) and Hans Richter (1843-1916) in Bayreuth, where he was introduced to the music of Wagner. Between 1902 and 1908 he conducted Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* (Paris première), *Tristan*, *Parsifal* (French première), Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* (French première) and Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* (French première).<sup>1</sup>

As a pianist, Cortot pursued a busy concert and recording life, both as a soloist and a member of his piano trio with Jacques Thibaud (1880-1953) and Pablo Casals (1876-1973). He performed throughout Europe, America and Asia and is thought to have recorded more than any other pianist of his time.<sup>2</sup> In 1918 he toured for the first time in the United States and between

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<sup>1</sup> Cooper and Timbrell, 'Cortot', *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06587> (Accessed: December 9, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Timbrell, p. 45.

1919 and 1920 gave 49 recitals in 3 months. Between 1920 and 1940 he made more than 150 recordings and gave approximately 1500 recitals in Europe, Russia and South America.<sup>3</sup> During the Second World War he was appointed High Commissioner of Fine Arts in the Vichy Government and this caused him to be considered *persona non grata* in France before the end of the War. However, he continued performing in Europe, Japan and America. He gave his farewell performance on 10 July 1958 with Casals.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from his busy performing life, Cortot was a very active teacher. He was a professor of piano at the Paris Conservatoire from 1907 until 1923, and in 1919 he co-founded, with Auguste Mangeont, the *École Normale de Musique de Paris*, where he gave courses in interpretation (master classes). In 1961, he taught his last master class.<sup>5</sup> Among his pupils were important pianists of the twentieth century, such as Clara Haskil (1895-1960), Gina Bachauer (1913-1976) and Dinu Lipatti (1917-1950).

### **1.1 Educational Background and Influences**

Cortot's pianism and conducting, and wider musical personality, were informed by a variety of different elements, reflecting the diversity of his musical background. As a pianist he emerged initially from the core of the so-called 'French School' of piano playing. A brief mention about the establishment and the main features of the French Piano School, as well as its most important contributors, is necessary here in order to identify some of the school's typical characteristics, as well as its particular impact upon Cortot's pianism.

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<sup>3</sup> Gavoty, p. 149.

<sup>4</sup> David Dubal, *The Art of the Piano* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1990), p. 74.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

### 1.1.1 The French Piano School

#### *Early French Traditions*

The French Piano School is considered to have been established in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century through the teaching methods of Louis Adam (1758-1848), Friedrich Kalkbrenner (1787-1849), Pierre Zimmermann (1785-1853) and their pupils.<sup>6</sup> These developments primarily took place in Paris, a European cultural centre from the early until the middle of the nineteenth century, in which the Conservatoire had been founded in 1795.<sup>7</sup> Typical features of piano playing that these professors transmitted were clarity and the precision of tone, rapid and clean passagework and perfect control through equally strong fingers. The importance of developing a technique that was based absolutely on the fingers, without the use of other parts of the upper limb, is also displayed in the first written teaching methods of this school.<sup>8</sup> Adam, in his *Méthode de Piano du Conservatoire* (1805)<sup>9</sup> and Kalkbrenner in his *Méthode pour Apprendre le Piano-Forté* (1830)<sup>10</sup> suggested that the correct way of playing should not involve the forearm at all and generally lightness of the physical approach should be employed. Specifically, Adam considered the movement from the forearm while playing unnecessary and even prejudicial, and he suggested the practice of scales for acquiring finger lightness. Kalkbrenner, in turn, suggested a device called *guide-mains*, a horizontal skid, which would be

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<sup>6</sup> Timbrell, pp. 15-16.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6. However, Timbrell maintains that the 'Paris Conservatoire dates from 1783 and the founding of the Ecole Royale de Chant.' (p. 5)

<sup>8</sup> Important methods of the early years of the French School, other than those written by Adam and Kalkbrenner (see footnotes 9 and 10) are: Henri Herz, *Méthode complète de piano*, Op. 100 (1838); and Pierre Zimmermann, *Encyclopédie du pianist* (1840)

<sup>9</sup> Louis Adam, *Méthode de Piano du Conservatoire redigée par L. Adam et gravée par Mme Le Roy* (Paris: Conservatoire impérial de musique, 1805).

<sup>10</sup> Friedrich Kalkbrenner, *Méthode pour Apprendre le Piano-Forté, Opus 108* (Paris: Pleyel, 1830), trans. S. Novello as *Method of Learning the Pianoforte* (London, 1862).

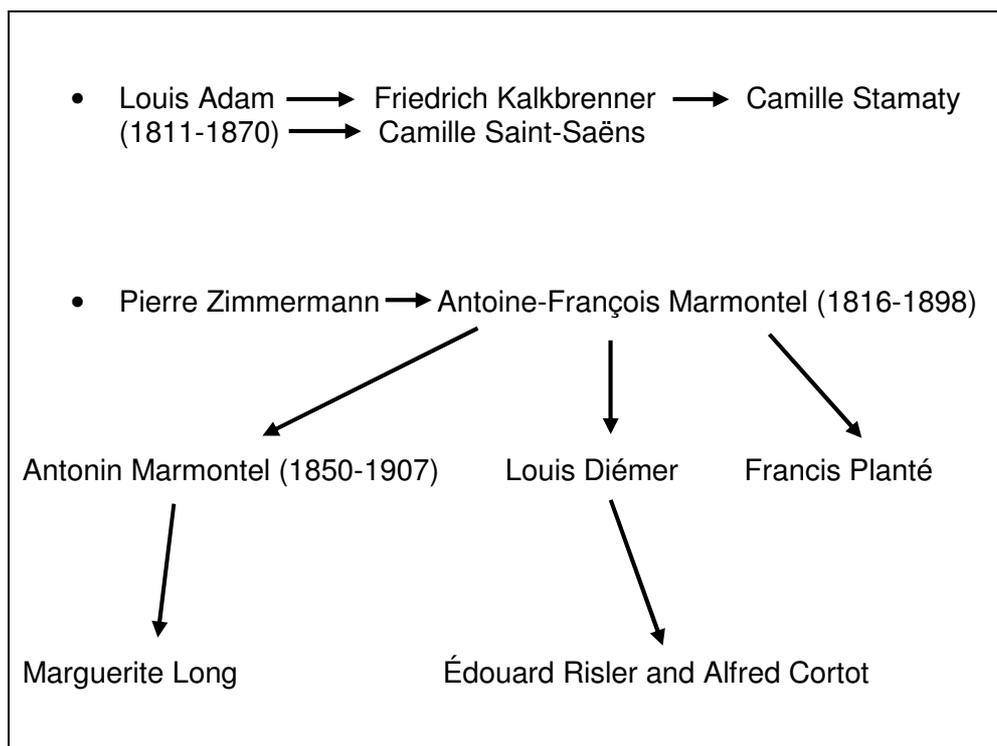
placed in front of the keyboard and on which the forearms of the pianist would rest in order to give physical freedom to the wrists and fingers to practise and play without any other involvement from the arms. The way of playing that developed as a result of these features could be summarized by the term *jeu perlé*. While neither Adam nor Kalkbrenner referred to this specific term, Timbrell maintained that ‘the metaphor “pearls” to describe rapid, clean and even passagework, as in the *jeu perlé*, was used to describe Sigismond Thalberg’s (1812-1871) playing in 1836 – and it may have been the first time that a French writer used the term’.<sup>11</sup> The *jeu perlé* has been identified with the French tradition of piano playing from as early as the establishment of the French School to as late as, at least, the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>12</sup> Especially in cases of French-trained pianists whose recordings are available, this finding is hardly debatable, as in the cases of Saint-Saëns, Diémer and Marguerite Long. A short genealogy of *jeu perlé* could display its far-reaching impact more clearly (Table 1).

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<sup>11</sup> Timbrell, p. 23. Alan Walker maintains that such a description of Thalberg’s playing appeared in *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris* on 8 May 1838. This does not necessarily reject the event mentioned by Timbrell; see Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years 1811-1847* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1983), I, p. 233n5).

<sup>12</sup> Timbrell, p. 16. According to Timbrell, Kalkbrenner should be considered the ‘founder of *jeu perlé*’, which had been the leading French tradition of piano playing for at least two centuries after him.

**Table 1 The *jeu perlé* tradition in the French Piano School**



### *Influence from Abroad – Liszt and Chopin*

Early nineteenth-century native French pianism was also influenced by the arrival of various foreign performers from the 1820s onwards. Two of the most important personalities were Franz Liszt (1811-1886) and Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849).<sup>13</sup> Liszt lived in Paris from 1823 until 1847 and alongside his busy performing and composing life he also gave piano lessons.<sup>14</sup> However, he is not known to have taught many pupils while in

<sup>13</sup> Thalberg was also one of the most prominent pianists based in Paris at that time. However – without neglecting the significance of his thoughts on piano playing, summarized in his *L' Art du chant appliqué au piano* (c. 1860) – his influence upon the French School of piano playing was not as great as Chopin's and Liszt's.

<sup>14</sup> Reginald Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique* (Newton Abbot; London: David & Charles, 1976), p. 180; and Timbrell p. 20. See also August Boissier, *Liszt Pédagogue: Leçons de piano données par Liszt à Mademoiselle Valérie Boissier à Paris en 1832* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1927); and Elyse Mach, *The Liszt Studies: Essential Selections from the original 12-volume set of Technical Studies for the piano, including the first English Edition of the Legendary Liszt Pedagogue, a Lesson-diary of the Master as Teacher, as kept by Mme Auguste Boissier, 1831-1832* (New York and London: Associated Music Publishers, 1973). Although Mme Boissier's notes do not necessarily display a systematic method of

Paris,<sup>15</sup> certainly not anyone that was to become a leading performer and/or teacher of the French School. Liszt's major pedagogical work, in the form of master classes, took place in Weimar from the early 1850s until his last years, and the main elements of his teachings can be witnessed in records by his pupils and attendees,<sup>16</sup> such as Carl Lachmund's<sup>17</sup> and August Göllerich's diaries,<sup>18</sup> and Lina Ramann's *Liszt-Pädagogium*.<sup>19</sup> Thus, his most decisive impact upon the French School must have derived from his performances rather than his teaching and was therefore indirect. Liszt's pianism was often exposed in public performances in Paris and elsewhere in France and it could not have been ignored by French pianists. He also maintained friendships with leading performers of the second half of the nineteenth century, such as Saint-Saëns and Planté, who are thought to have been influenced by his playing. However, the first French-trained pianist that is referred to have studied and transmitted the Lisztian tradition was Édouard Risler, who was taught by three of the most famous pupils of Liszt in the 1890s.<sup>20</sup> All these could be considered different aspects of Liszt's

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Liszt's teaching, they provide extremely important information regarding Liszt's ideas on technique, interpretation and musical conception, as well as general aspects of his personality. For more information see John Rink, 'Liszt and the Boissiers: Notes on a Musical Education', *The Liszt Society Journal*, ed. Elgin Ronayne, Vol. 31 (2006), pp. 34-65.

<sup>15</sup> It cannot be sure how many pupils Liszt taught during the years he lived in Paris; see Walker, *Franz Liszt. The Virtuoso Years*, pp. 130-131, 136 and 149. Also see Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Final Years 1861-1886* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1997), III, p. 228 and pp. 249-252 for a catalogue of all the pupils Liszt taught during his life.

<sup>16</sup> For a total appreciation of Liszt's teachings, see Bertrand Ott, *Lisztian Keyboard Energy*, trans. Donald H. Windham (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1992). For more details on Liszt's teaching from the master classes of his last years, see also Kenneth Hamilton, 'Performing Liszt's Piano Music', *The Cambridge Companion to Liszt*, ed. Kenneth Hamilton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 177-182; and Walker, *Franz Liszt. The Final Years 1861-1886*, pp. 228-254.

<sup>17</sup> Carl Lachmund, *Living with Liszt* (Stuyvesant, New York: Pendragon Press, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Wilhelm Jerger (ed.), *The Piano Masterclasses of Franz Liszt, 1884 – 1886; diary notes of August Göllerich*, trans., ed. and enlarg. Richard Louis Zimdars (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

<sup>19</sup> Lina Ramann, *Liszt-Pädagogium* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1910).

<sup>20</sup> Timbrell, pp. 21 and 41. A more detailed reference to Risler follows further down. An important French pianist, who studied with Liszt in Weimar in the 1880s, was Marie Jaëll (1846-1925), who actually presented several technical and physiological elements of Liszt's methods in her writings. However, her impact on

influence on French pianism, which, although strong, was not as systematic as Chopin's.

Chopin arrived in Paris in 1831 and lived there until his death in 1849. He was a very active pedagogue as well as a pianist and composer.<sup>21</sup> Chopin's suggested technique must have enriched the French style of piano playing at that time with variety of expression in the sound and the involvement of other parts of the arm, as well as the hand and wrist.<sup>22</sup> In his sketchy (and never published) *Projet de Méthode*, it is clearly stated that it is not possible to play everything from the wrist, as suggested in Kalkbrenner's *Méthode*.<sup>23</sup> In addition, ideas such as a slight twist of the wrist and lateral transmission of the arm to the direction of scale- and arpeggio-like passages in order to ensure evenness and lightness,<sup>24</sup> eloquently illustrated in the frequent use of extensions in Chopin's works, were rather new for a finger-based system like *jeu perlé*. It is obvious, then, that his approach expressed basic opposition to the main thinking of the French tradition of piano playing by that time, as known through the methods of Adam and Kalkbrenner.

Chopin's influence on the French School was direct and strong, especially through his pupil Georges Mathias (1826-1910), who taught at the Conservatoire where among his pupils were Raoul Pugno (1852-1914) and Isidor Philipp (1863-1958).<sup>25</sup> According to Gaby Casadesus (1901-1999),

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French pianism was rather weak. See Timbrell, pp. 18, 21 and p. 268n23 and Horst Leuchtmann and Charles Timbrell, 'Jaëll, Marie', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/14092> (Accessed: May 29, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> However, Chopin has often been referred to have avoided public performances and have appeared in concerts much more rarely than other great performers of his time, such as Liszt and Thalberg. See Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils*, trans. Naomi Shohet, Krysia Osostowicz and Roy Howat, ed. Roy Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 6 and 10.

<sup>22</sup> Eigeldinger, p. 29-31 and Timbrell, p, 23.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Eigeldinger, p. 195.

<sup>24</sup> Eigeldinger, pp. 18-19, 37 and 106n59.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170 and Timbrell pp. 37-38.

Mathias was the pianist and professor who introduced Chopin's technique, 'a technique of beauty, *legato*, sonority and clarity', to the French-trained pianists after him, since he was one of Chopin's 'favourite students'.<sup>26</sup> Other French-based pianists taught by Chopin were Camille Dubois (1830-1907) and Emile Decombes. Dubois, as a pupil, was as close to Chopin as Mathias and, although she never taught at the Conservatoire, she was an important link between Chopin's teachings and later French-trained pianists.<sup>27</sup> Decombes, on the other hand, has rarely been referred to as a regular pupil of Chopin and he probably received non-systematic tuition from him.<sup>28</sup> However, his role as an important link between Chopin's teachings and the French Piano School cannot be ignored, since he taught such great pianists as Rislér and Cortot.

Despite the contribution of such important pioneers to the development of piano technique as Liszt and Chopin, the *jeu perlé* style continued, at least until the middle of the twentieth century, to be the dominant French tradition. Arguments that the influence of Chopin and Liszt did not fundamentally break with this approach can be found in opinions expressed by Cortot and Long, two completely opposite, yet very influential, pianists of the early twentieth century in France. On the one hand, Cortot maintained that, from a technical point of view, Chopin's ideas displayed similarities to the suggestions provided in treatises of that time and finally his main contribution can be summarized in two elements related to expressiveness and development of tone: the use of the thumb and little finger on black keys, which was rather forbidden by pianists like Kalkbrenner or even the young

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<sup>26</sup> Timbrell, p. vii. See also Eigeldinger, pp. 164 and 170.

<sup>27</sup> Eigeldinger, p. 164.

<sup>28</sup> Eigeldinger does not refer to Decombes at all, while Timbrell describes him as 'perhaps more of a Chopin disciple than an actual student' (Timbrell, p. 21). Gavoty appears to echo Timbrell noting that Decombes probably received Chopin's advice, but it cannot be maintained that he was an actual pupil of his (Gavoty, p. 32).

Liszt; and the *legato* between fingers, which, without the intervention of the thumb, would require a crossover.<sup>29</sup> In addition, Cortot suggested that French pianism had to wait until Rislér's contribution helped it expand beyond the *jeu perlé* restrictions.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, Long in the mid twentieth century still considered the finger-based *jeu perlé* technique as the typical French style of piano playing.<sup>31</sup>

### 1.1.2 Cortot within the French Piano School

#### *Studies with Decombes and Diémer (1887-1896)*

Cortot's basic education, as a pianist, took place at the Conservatoire, initially in the *class préparatoire* of Decombes<sup>32</sup> and, from 1892, in the *class supérieur* with Diémer.<sup>33</sup> Through Decombes, he had the chance to receive the indirect influence of Chopin's teaching methods,<sup>34</sup> and as has been witnessed by his lifetime's work – concerts, recordings, editions, and writings<sup>35</sup> – this influence was important for his own musical and intellectual approach towards the art of playing the piano. Cortot himself admitted that

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<sup>29</sup> See Alfred Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, trans. Cyril and Rena Clarke (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975), pp. 29-31. Eigeldinger also considered these elements as some of Chopin's innovations in piano technique (Eigeldinger, p. 19). Interestingly, Cortot did not think of Chopin's ideas for the use of the hand and arm as radically new for, or different to, the French style of that time. However, he does not explain his thoughts further and therefore it is not clear if he meant that French pianists before Chopin had already suggested similar technical principles; or that Chopin's technique resembled the typical French tradition (*jeu perlé*). Chopin's pupil, Karol Mikuli, had described his teacher's playing in a way that could be comparable to the finger-based action of *jeu perlé*. However, it is rather unlikely that this was the only, or the basic, way Chopin played; see Eigeldinger, p. 106n58.

<sup>30</sup> See Timbrell, pp. 42-43.

<sup>31</sup> See Harold Schonberg, *The Great Pianists* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1964), p. 423. Also Timbrell, p. 44.

<sup>32</sup> Gavoty, p. 33.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>34</sup> Cortot described Decombes as 'a mine of information on matters concerning the Polish master' especially on the way Chopin performed; see Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, p. 121. Also see Roy Howat, *The Art of French Piano Music* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 351.

<sup>35</sup> Apart from his book *Aspects de Chopin*, Cortot performed, recorded and edited almost the complete piano work of Chopin.

next to Decombes, though, Dubois and Mathias helped him become familiar with Chopin's style and manner.<sup>36</sup> As described in Cortot's book *Aspects de Chopin* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1949), such influence would include information not only about Chopin's personality and character, but also his teaching methods and performance suggestions on particular repertoire.<sup>37</sup>

However, from Diémer, Cortot must have received a different pianistic influence. Diémer was a pupil of Antoine-François Marmontel,<sup>38</sup> and apart from a pianist he was also a clavecinist and important exponent of French Baroque keyboard music in late nineteenth-century France.<sup>39</sup> Although a controversial artist outside France, in his homeland Diémer was a leading performer widely appreciated during his lifetime.<sup>40</sup>

Some elements of Diémer's technique and musicianship can be found in four of his recordings, all of them dated from 1904: his own *Grande Valse de Concert*<sup>41</sup> and *Chant du Nautonnier/Caprice de Concert*,<sup>42</sup> Chopin's Nocturne Op. 27 No. 2<sup>43</sup> and Mendelssohn's *Song without Words*, Op. 67 No. 4.<sup>44</sup> The rapid, clean and dry passagework that is displayed particularly in the *Grande Valse* and the *Song without Words* could be considered as

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<sup>36</sup> 'Par Mme Camille Dubois, Mathias et Decombes, je sus ce qu' était Chopin' (Gavoty, p. 37).

<sup>37</sup> See Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, pp. 25-26, 29, 33-34 and 121.

<sup>38</sup> Timbrell considers Marmontel (father, to distinguish from his son Antonin Marmontel who was also a pianist and teacher) as the 'grandfather of the French School' (Timbrell, p. 29). Marmontel taught influential and distinguished French pianists before the turn of the twentieth century, like Planté and Diémer. His extensive pedagogical work, alongside his long-lasting professorship at the Conservatoire, is witnessed in his numerous writings, such as *Art Classique et Moderne du Piano* (1876) and *Les pianistes célèbres* (1878).

<sup>39</sup> Katherine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.89-90.

<sup>40</sup> See Schonberg, p. 269-270; Timbrell, p. 29; and Ellis, pp. 91 and 93-94.

<sup>41</sup> Paris, France 1904. British Library Sound Archive: Gramophone and Typewriter Limited G&T 35543.

<sup>42</sup> Paris, France 1904. British Library Sound Archive: Gramophone and Typewriter Limited G&T 35542.

<sup>43</sup> Paris, France 1904. British Library Sound Archive: Gramophone and Typewriter Limited 35544.

<sup>44</sup> Paris, France 1904. British Library Sound Archive: Gramophone and Typewriter Limited 35545.

typical features of a pianist who was trained with the finger-based technique of the French Piano School. On the other hand, the full tone in octave playing of the *Grand Valse*, next to the colouring of left-hand melodies against right-hand embellishments of the *Caprice*, could imply a possible reference to Liszt's writing.<sup>45</sup> Finally, the clarity of tone and the *rubato* heard in the Nocturne – with devices like the so-called dislocation between bass and treble, as well as some restlessness of the left-hand part with frequent retardations and accelerations – could recall an interpretive style that has been considered typical of pianists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>46</sup> Comparing Diémer's playing to other contemporary French pianists, it is clear that, next to the features of *jeu perlé*, practices like dislocation and tempo fluctuation were also common in performances of that period in France.<sup>47</sup>

Diémer taught at the Conservatoire where he succeeded Marmontel in 1887<sup>48</sup> and among his pupils, apart from Cortot, were also other great pianists of the early and mid twentieth century in France, such as Risler and Robert Casadesus (1899-1972). Diémer's preoccupation with music for harpsichord, as well as the *jeu perlé* technique he received from Marmontel, could explain his adherence to a rather strong finger-based action that was reflected in his playing and, perhaps equally, in his teaching.<sup>49</sup> Therefore,

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<sup>45</sup> Bearing in mind that Diémer was one of the few recorded pianists that had certainly heard Liszt's playing (Gavoty p. 37), it is not impossible that his *Caprice* might suggest influence by both Liszt's writing and playing.

<sup>46</sup> See Hudson, p. 330; and Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, pp. 37-49.

<sup>47</sup> The practices of dislocation and tempo fluctuation are notably heard in recordings by contemporaries of Diémer in France (such as Saint-Saëns and Planté) and elsewhere (such as Theodor Leschetizky (1830-1915) and Vladimir de Pachman (1848-1933)). See Neal Peres da Costa, *Off the Record* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 51, 73-74, 78-79, 89, 94, 98, 99, 229-233.

<sup>48</sup> Elisabeth Bernard and Charles Timbrell, 'Diémer, Louis', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/07754> (Accessed: October 4, 2013).

<sup>49</sup> See Gilles Saint-Arroman, *Édouard Risler (1873-1929) et la Musique Française* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2008), p. 40: 'La technique de piano que Diémer enseignait à ses élèves visait à développait chez eux un style spécifiquement

the tuition that Cortot could have received from him must have mainly been based on acquiring the principles of the typical French style of that time.

Cortot's study years at the Conservatoire must have been intensively devoted to acquiring the main features of *jeu perlé* combined with strong, yet indirect, influences from Chopin's teachings. His pianism was soon about to move away from the typical French style through influences that would help him expand his educational background and technical approach on the piano.

### 1.1.3 Cortot and Risler

Alongside the influences that Cortot received from his teachers, it is important to mention the impact upon him of his friendship and cooperation with Risler. Risler was, like Cortot, a student of Decombes and Diémer at the Conservatoire, and after completing his studies in Paris (first prize, 1889) he went to Germany, where he continued his education. In Germany, Risler studied with Eugen d'Albert, Bernard Stavenhagen (1862-1914) and Karl Klindworth (1830-1916), all students of Liszt,<sup>50</sup> and he was the first pianist to enrich his French style with the ideals of Liszt's teaching.<sup>51</sup> The main features of the Lisztian tradition that Risler might have been able to acquire were: 'the manipulation of the tone'; 'the articulation that produces a

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français, caractérisé par ce que, depuis Kalkbrenner, on appelle le *jeu perlé*. Also see Timbrell, pp. 35 and 81.

<sup>50</sup> Timbrell, p. 41.

<sup>51</sup> However, if Thomas Fielden is accurate, d'Albert and Klindworth did not always teach according to the physiological principles of Liszt's technique, such as the use of the wrist and arm. Fielden maintained that d'Albert, in particular, 'played in the Liszt way, and taught in another way'; see Thomas Fielden, 'The History of the Evolution of Pianoforte Technique', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 59<sup>th</sup> Sess. (1932-1933), pp. 48 and 51. Other French pianists that might have been able to adopt certain features of Liszt's style of piano playing, apart from Marie Jaëll (see footnote 20), were Saint-Saëns and Planté, who maintained long friendships with Liszt. Diémer was also among the French pianists that had the chance to approach and hear Liszt play. However, all three pianists remained loyal to the principles of the French School of that time (Timbrell, pp. 33 and 35).

breathing and singing melody’; and ‘the imagination in orchestral terms in piano playing’.<sup>52</sup> Risler’s playing was characterized by a wide range of dynamics and enormous physical strength, and he is thought to have had an impressive control of sound.<sup>53</sup>

Risler’s experience with Lisztian pianism is likely to have influenced the younger Cortot and helped him enrich his pianistic background with elements that he could not have received during his studies at the Conservatoire. The predominance of the typical French style of piano playing was very strong during Cortot’s student years, when perhaps Chopin’s influence had only just started to infiltrate the French School.<sup>54</sup> If it was through his teachers at the Conservatoire that Cortot was educated as a *jeu perlé* pianist and came to know features of Chopin’s style, it was mainly through Risler that he came to know Liszt’s teachings.<sup>55</sup> Cortot considered Risler as a main contributor to, generally, the evolution of French pianism, which started moving away from a well established, yet rather restricting, technique in favour of a grander approach to piano playing, both physically and musically.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Hamilton, ‘Performing Liszt’s Piano Music’, p. 182.

<sup>53</sup> Schonberg, pp. 272-273. Schonberg quotes Oscar Bie (1864-1938) who wrote that Risler ‘discovered those last delicate nuances that lie precisely between tone and silence’. Schonberg also notes that if Bie is accurate, Risler anticipated Giesecking in the use of special pedal effects.

<sup>54</sup> As previously mentioned, Diémer was a renowned teacher of the advanced class at the Conservatoire. However, the main successors of Chopin’s tradition within the French School, Mathias and Decombes, were teaching there too. Even Marmontel, who was a pupil of Zimmermann and advocate of the *jeu perlé* style, has been referred to have been ‘enormously influenced by having heard Chopin play’; see Roy Howat, ‘Chopin’s influence on the *fin de siècle* and beyond’, *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 255.

<sup>55</sup> Alongside Risler’s influence, Cortot admitted that he had heard about Liszt from many leading musicians during his Conservatoire years, such as Fauré, Saint-Saëns and Diémer; see Gavoty, p. 37.

<sup>56</sup> Alfred Cortot, ‘En souvenir d’ Édouard Risler’, *Le Monde Musical* (30 Juin 1930), p.221-222. A part of what Cortot wrote about Risler is cited in Timbrell, pp. 42-43. For more information about how Risler became a role model for the young Cortot, see Karen Taylor, ‘Alfred Cortot: His Interpretive Art and Teachings’, DMus diss. (Indiana University, 1988), pp. 121-125.

Risler's impact on Cortot was not only pianistic, but should also be considered an important link to the latter's affinity with Wagner's music. When Cortot started visiting the *Bayreuther Festspiele* after his graduation from the Conservatoire in 1896, either as a spectator or active participant, he was actually following in the footsteps of Risler, who had already worked in the festival under the direction of Felix Mottl in 1896 and 1897.<sup>57</sup> It was through Risler<sup>58</sup> that Cortot finally had the chance to be involved in what was to him at that time an unfamiliar musical sphere,<sup>59</sup> which would lead to his musical and intellectual fulfillment.

#### 1.1.4 Cortot in Bayreuth (1899-1901)

One of the first and most important experiences of Wagner's music for Cortot must have been his performances with Risler of two-piano reductions of several of Wagner's dramas at the time he was completing his studies at the Conservatoire.<sup>60</sup> The rendering of Wagner's grandiose orchestral writing and the effort to produce the timbres of different instruments on the piano could have been a central aim of that project, but it would not have been a solid part of Cortot's conception of piano playing at that time. The Conservatoire focused on the highest standard of soloists' training, but without necessarily a complete theoretical curriculum,<sup>61</sup> while also the principles of that time's typical French style of piano playing favoured a rather one-dimensional quality in pianists' sound. In search of an environment where he could widen his knowledge as a musician, Cortot, like

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<sup>57</sup> Saint-Arroman., p. 23.

<sup>58</sup> See Frithjof Haas, *Felix Mottl: Der Magier am Dirigentenpult* (Karlsruhe: Hoepfner-Bibliothek im Info Verlag, 2006), p. 178.

<sup>59</sup> Gavoty, pp. 63-66.

<sup>60</sup> Gavoty, p. 59. Gavoty mentions *Rhinegold*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. Taylor refers to Cortot's and Risler's performances of Wagner's dramas in two-piano reductions from as early as 1895 until 1898. See Taylor, pp. 124-125 and 128-129.

<sup>61</sup> Timbrell, p. 9.

many leading and upcoming French composers and performers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, would go to Bayreuth, where he could be involved in various activities relating to the preparation, interpretation and conception of music in performance.<sup>62</sup>

Cortot visited Wagner's house in Bayreuth in 1898 and had the chance to play for Cosima Wagner (1837-1930), who admitted him into the Bayreuth Festival firstly as a choral coach and then as an assistant conductor for Richter and Mottl.<sup>63</sup> Richter was one of the main conductors in productions of Wagner's operas run by the composer himself,<sup>64</sup> and notably conducted the first performance of the *Ring* cycle in 1876.<sup>65</sup> Mottl, who was one of Richter's assistants for the first performance of the *Ring* cycle,<sup>66</sup> conducted the Bayreuth premières of *Tristan und Isolde* (1886), *Tannhäuser* (1891), *Lohengrin* (1894) and *Der Fliegende Holländer* (1901).<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Gavoty pp. 56-57. Gavoty refers to many leading French musicians of that time, who visited Bayreuth, such as Saint-Saëns, d'Indy, Dukas, Diémer and Debussy.

<sup>63</sup> Frederic Spotts, *The Shameful Peace: How French Artists And Intellectuals Survived The Nazi Occupation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 192.

<sup>64</sup> Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, *The Wagner Companion* (London: W. H. Allen, 1977), pp. 113, 125, 137, 149.

<sup>65</sup> See Christopher Fifield, *True Artist and True Friend: A Biography of Hans Richter* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 105-118. Richter also conducted the premières of Brahms' Symphonies No. 2 and No. 3 and the Tragic Overture, Bruckner's *Te Deum* and Symphonies No. 4 (revised) and No. 8 and Tchaikovsky's Violin concerto; see Christopher Fifield, 'Richter, Hans', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/23402> (Accessed: August 12, 2014)

<sup>66</sup> Malcolm Miller, 'Mottl, Felix', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/19231> (Accessed: October 18, 2013); also Fifield, *True Artist and True Friend*, pp. 106, 108 and 115.

<sup>67</sup> See Miller, 'Mottl', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/19231> (Accessed: October 18, 2013). Apart from his performances of Wagner operas, Mottl presented some contemporary, as well as French, compositions to German audiences. Cortot refers to Mottl's orchestration on Emmanuel Chabrier's *Bourée Fantasque*, which was originally written for solo piano; see Alfred Cortot, *French Piano Music*, trans. Hilda Andrews (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 169.

Richter and Mottl were internationally acclaimed conductors, highly praised for their Bayreuth performances,<sup>68</sup> and Cortot's work as their assistant must have played a main part in his study of orchestral conducting and directing a stage performance.<sup>69</sup> Especially under Mottl's direction, he had the chance to study the *Ring* cycle.<sup>70</sup> These experiences led to his performances of various orchestral works of Wagner and others, which have already been mentioned, in France in the early 1900s.

However, Cortot's experience at the Bayreuth Festival ended in an unpleasant way after he was suspended from the festival forever in 1903. The reason for this was that Cortot conducted a performance of excerpts from *Parsifal* in Paris whilst it was a work that at that time was not allowed to be performed outside Bayreuth.<sup>71</sup> Despite this unfortunate event, which actually could be considered as a reason for his greater dedication to the piano,<sup>72</sup> Cortot was always inspired by his experience at the Wagnerian festival.<sup>73</sup> As he admitted almost fifty years later, 'on leaving Bayreuth I had the feeling of taking with me something very precious'.<sup>74</sup>

Cortot's piano playing, which relates more directly to this dissertation, must have been particularly influenced by his experience in Bayreuth. Basic points of this influence, which also correspond with subsequent parts of this and the next chapters, were his affinity with German repertoire and particular elements of his interpretive style. As will be discussed in the following section, Cortot's adherence to German repertoire, a debatable stance in France during his time, can be explained to a great extent by his affinity with

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<sup>68</sup> Mander and Mitchenson, pp. 181-182 and 214-215.

<sup>69</sup> Gavoty refers to various sorts of work that Cortot might have done in assisting stage performances in Bayreuth, as they were described by Albert Lavignac (1846-1916); see Gavoty, p. 61-62.

<sup>70</sup> Haas, p. 178.

<sup>71</sup> Spotts, pp. 192-193.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

Bayreuth. In addition, the concept of evoking the sonorities of orchestral instruments in piano playing, which has been linked strongly to his performing style and teaching methods,<sup>75</sup> could have the same origins. Typical examples of this conception are outlined in particular comments found in Cortot's edition of Schubert's 'Wanderer' Fantasy and are discussed in the fourth chapter. Finally, Cortot's interpretive style, contextualized with styles heard in early recordings and discussed in the fifth chapter in relation to his Schubert recordings, displays features that can be traced back to, and suggest influences from, Liszt's and Wagner's ideas on interpretation.<sup>76</sup>

## 1.2 Cortot as Author and Editor

### *Writings*

Cortot's multifaceted personality led him to embark upon other fields of musical activity, in addition to performing and teaching. He was the author of several books, through which he showed his wide range of intellectual interest with regard to the art of playing the piano. His 1928 *Principes Rationnels de la Technique Pianistique* was a comprehensive method, which aimed to be a guide to technical completion for professionally trained pianists. Cortot suggested a system of practice in which the physiology and the psychology of the pianist are equally important. The technical issues are classified in specific categories, where suggested formulae are to be

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<sup>75</sup> Timbrell, pp. 85-86.

<sup>76</sup> Liszt's and Wagner's ideas on interpretation, as expressed through their writings and performances, have been considered influential for the interpretive style of performers who were active early in the twentieth century; see Jürg Stenzl, 'In Search of History of Musical Interpretation', trans. Irene Zedlacher, *Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (Winter, 1995), pp. 683-699. A more detailed discussion on this issue will follow in Chapter Five.

practised and applied in specific examples from piano literature, ranging from early Baroque to the early twentieth century.<sup>77</sup>

Cortot's extended study of Chopin's work led him to write his *Aspects de Chopin*. In this book one can find the first transcription of Chopin's incomplete pedagogical work *Project de Méthode*, the autograph of which belonged to Cortot's personal collection,<sup>78</sup> as well as information about Chopin's life in France and programmes and incidents from his concerts.

Following his study on French music, Cortot wrote the book *La Musique Française de Piano* in three volumes, where he offered a presentation of the major literature for piano in France, ranging from the second half of the nineteenth century, with Franck and Saint-Saëns, up to almost a century later, with Stravinsky and 'The Six'.<sup>79</sup> More specifically, in the first series of essays, 'originally written for the *Revue Musicale*',<sup>80</sup> Cortot presents the piano music of Claude Debussy, César Franck, Gabriel Fauré, Emmanuel Chabrier and Paul Dukas; the second series is focused on the piano work of Maurice Ravel, Camille Saint-Saëns, Vincent d'Indy, Florent Schmitt and Déodat de Séverac; and finally, the focus of the third volume is placed on the piano works of 'The Six', Albert Roussel, Igor Stravinsky, Eric Satie, Gabriel Pierné and Gustave Samazeuilh. As Cortot states in the preface of the first volume, his aim was rather 'the expression of the poetical quality of the works concerned' than 'a rigid musical analysis'.<sup>81</sup> Resembling the form

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<sup>77</sup> See Cortot, *Rational Principles*, pp. [i] (Index) and 97-102. Cortot's idea of diminishing the technical issues into specific formulas, which need to be practised and perfected, echoes Liszt's similar advice to his pupil Valérie Boissier (See Rink, 'Liszt and the Boissiers', p. 60: "basic figurations" seen as "the key to everything").

<sup>78</sup> Eigeldinger, p. 90n.1 and p.104n.45.

<sup>79</sup> Alfred Cortot, *La Musique Française de Piano* (Paris: Rieder, 1930), I. For bibliographic details of the English translation see footnote 67.

Alfred Cortot, *La Musique Française de Piano*, (Paris: Rieder, 1932), II.

Alfred Cortot, *La Musique Française de Piano*, (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1944), III.

<sup>80</sup> Cortot, *French Piano Music*, p. v.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

of articles in musical journals and/or programme notes, Cortot's writings give interesting details about the educational background and the influences of these composers during the development of their own musical language. Usually there is information about specific compositional techniques applied, such as the treatment of form, harmony and texture, quotations of the composers' own views on their works,<sup>82</sup> and comments about their performance preferences,<sup>83</sup> or even their own style of playing.<sup>84</sup> Following an introduction regarding general tendencies in the French musical scene during each composer's time, every essay offers a presentation of selected works, where Cortot, next to his interpretive suggestions, touches upon a variety of details, including: the process of the compositions, publications and dedications; first public performances; and their reception by other leading figures of that time.

In the book *Cours d'Interprétation* written by Jeanne Thieffry, one can read Cortot's quoted teaching during his famous series of master classes in the *École Normale*. This book provides important evidence not only of Cortot's practices in terms of teaching, but also his approaches on a wide variety of repertoire. The works are presented in groups according to their forms, and the commentary touches more upon their historical background and interpretation rather than technical issues. Although Cortot is often presented as the writer of the book, in his foreword he makes it clear that he considers Thieffry the real author.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> See Cortot. *La Musique Française de Piano*, II, p.p. 46-47n1 about Ravel's thoughts on his piano concertos.

<sup>83</sup> See Cortot, *French Piano Music*, p. 166 regarding the stylistic preferences of Charbier, Dukas and Ravel.

<sup>84</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 33: 'in Debussy's circle of friends they used to be fond of saying that he played the piano like Chopin. And it is a fact that his touch was exquisitely fluent, sweet, and warm, made for delicate nuances and intimate expression, without a jarring or strident note. He used the pedal and particularly the blending of both pedals with infinite skill, and like Chopin he loved instruments of an almost slack ease of action.'

<sup>85</sup> Thieffry, p. 5.

Finally, Cortot was the author of a set of maxims, which he addressed to his son under the title *Le Livre de Jean*.<sup>86</sup> This work accentuates the moralistic aspect of his character, in general, rather than informing the reader directly about his musical profile.

### *Editions*

Cortot was also a prolific editor. He made numerous *éditions de travail* for music with which he was strongly associated during his concert, recording and teaching life. These editions, next to the score, contained Cortot's footnotes with suggested exercises to be worked on for technically demanding passages, and remarks regarding issues of interpretation. Before each piece Cortot provided a preface (*Avant-Propos*) where he explained the important historical and aesthetic elements about the edited work, the composer and the era during which the latter had lived and composed. They were certainly not critical editions, since in many cases it is not clear even what sort of sources were accessed and used for the revision of the published score.<sup>87</sup> However, the title and the content of these editions highlight their pedagogical role and give a clear idea of Cortot's teaching qualities.<sup>88</sup> They can also be seen as exceptional evidence of Cortot's thoughts on repertoire that he did or did not perform and record. Finally, they can be a revealing historical source for the interpretive styles

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<sup>86</sup> Gavoty, p. 299-310.

<sup>87</sup> Notably, the movement of producing so-called *Urtext*-editions started developing at a time when Cortot had already completed a major part of his editing project. For more details, see James Grier, 'Editing', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/08550> (Accessed: December 9, 2013).

<sup>88</sup> See Timbrell, p. 80. Cortot's pupil Marthe Morhange-Motchane said that Cortot's 'teaching was a mixture of pianism, aesthetics and history. The same mixture you find in his editions'. Similarities between Cortot's teaching and the content of his editions can also be displayed through the book *Alfred Cortot's Studies in Musical Interpretation*.

and editorial practices of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, for which the documentation available to present-day performers is limited.<sup>89</sup> Cortot's editions were published, almost exclusively, by Salabert<sup>90</sup> and in the UK can be found in the catalogues of United Music Publishers Ltd.

### **1.3 Performing and Editing Particular Repertoire**

Although Cortot's repertoire ranged from Purcell to Stravinsky,<sup>91</sup> he had a strong affinity with the works of Chopin, Schumann, Liszt and the leading French composers that arose before his era, like Franck, Saint-Saëns and Fauré, or his near contemporaries Debussy, Dukas and Ravel.<sup>92</sup> Essential elements of evidence in the search for these affinities are Cortot's recordings, his various writings and his commentary editions. It would be relevant to explore the factors through which his repertoire can be linked to his musical experience and, to a certain extent, the general artistic background of his time. The main factors are: a) the French musical scene of the late nineteenth century; and b) Ressler's influence and Cortot's experience in Bayreuth.

#### **1.3.1 Chopin and Schumann**

Cortot's affinity with the music of Chopin and Schumann seems to be linked with his French pianistic origin. The works of both composers were regularly performed by the great pianists of the French School,<sup>93</sup> especially from the

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<sup>89</sup> See Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>90</sup> Cortot's editions of Brahms' works were published by the Italian publishers Curci. See Appendix I

<sup>91</sup> Timbrell, p. 45: 'from Purcell to *Petrouchka*'.

<sup>92</sup> Roy Howat notes that Fauré was the French composer that 'Cortot worked most closely with... he knew Debussy and Ravel less well' (Howat, *The Art of French Piano Music*, pp. 338-339).

<sup>93</sup> See Timbrell, pp. 35-37. However, the music of both composers was performed outside France too. Liszt, Clara Schumann, Hans von Bülow and Brahms were regular performers of Chopin's and Schumann's music.

second half of the nineteenth century onwards. Notably, this was a period during which performers were not necessarily composers and exponents of, mainly, their own music any more.<sup>94</sup> A typical example was Francis Planté, the most important pianist along with Saint-Saëns in the late nineteenth century in France, who usually played substantial works of Chopin and Schumann.<sup>95</sup> In later years, Marie Panthès (1871-1955) included in her repertoire Schumann's first piano sonata and Chopin's second and third piano sonatas,<sup>96</sup> and Rislér played the complete work for solo piano of Chopin<sup>97</sup> and important works of Schumann, like the *Fantasy*, Op. 17 and *Symphonic Etudes*, Op. 13.<sup>98</sup>

Cortot appears to have had a special connection with Chopin's work, shown vividly not only in his numerous recordings, but also in his book *Aspects de Chopin*, and the editions he made for Salabert. Indeed, Cortot edited almost the complete works for solo piano by Chopin,<sup>99</sup> most of which he recorded too.<sup>100</sup> As Timbrell has maintained, this affinity must have been strong enough to lead, occasionally, to exaggerated verdicts and comparisons between them: '[Cortot's] variety of touch and unique combination of

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<sup>94</sup> Leading pianists in France of the early and middle nineteenth century, such as Kalkbrenner, Herz, Thalberg, Liszt and Chopin, followed the tradition of performing mainly their own music. Only after the 1850s, this tradition gave way to that of the recital consisting of primarily classic-canon works; see William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 6-7, 245-247. Liszt could be an early example of the distinction between the role of the composer and the one of the performer that was about to follow in the late nineteenth century, towards our time. Liszt, alongside the virtuosic display that he would certainly include in his public appearances, was interested in rendering with care works by other composers, especially those of earlier times. For more details, see Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 232-233 and 246. However, many leading performers of the early twentieth century were still trained as composers too; see Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 181.

<sup>95</sup> Timbrell, p. 35.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>98</sup> Saint-Arroman, p.219.

<sup>99</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>100</sup> See John Hunt, *Pianists for the connoisseur* ([Great Britain]: Hunt, 2002), pp. 106-171.

eloquence and elegance have often been compared with Chopin's own style of playing.<sup>101</sup>

Similarly, Cortot developed a strong connection with Schumann's music, as his editions and recordings reveal. He edited<sup>102</sup> and recorded most of Schumann's great works for solo piano<sup>103</sup> and he was a regular performer of his Piano Concerto.<sup>104</sup> Cortot's interpretations were so acclaimed as to allow him to be considered perhaps the greatest performer of Schumann's music during his lifetime.<sup>105</sup>

### 1.3.2 Features of the French Musical Scene in the late Nineteenth Century and their Influences on Cortot's Repertoire

Cortot's musical character fundamentally exhibits the conflicting national aesthetic tendencies of his time. After the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 and the establishment of the Third Republic, French musical life became inward-looking and started focusing on old French traditions in order to avoid the so-called '*invasion germanique*'. The leading composers of that time believed that France needed to establish a 'robust musical school',<sup>106</sup> especially as far as instrumental music was concerned.

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<sup>101</sup> Timbrell, p. 45. Notably, Edwin Fischer is referred to have detected three types of pianists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: a) the *Beethovenian* type, the *Lisztian* type and the *Chopinian* type. Cortot, along with Chopin and Arthur Rubinstein, comprised the third category; see Gavoty, pp. 232-233.

<sup>102</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>103</sup> Hunt, *Pianists for the connoisseur*, pp. 199-201. Published recordings of Cortot playing works by Schumann include the Piano Concerto, *Carnaval*, *Davidsbündlertänzen*, Symphonic Etudes, *Kinderszenen*, *Kreisleriana* and *Papillons*. Cortot is also referred to have recorded unpublished versions of the *Fantasiestücke* Op. 12 and the *Fantasy*.

<sup>104</sup> See Spotts, p. 195. See also Hunt, *Pianists for the connoisseur*, p. 199 about the number of times Cortot recorded it.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>106</sup> Camille Saint-Saëns, 'A propos de Bayreuth', *L'Estafette*, (5 Sept. 1876), cited in Timothy Jones, 'Twentieth-Century Orchestral and Chamber Music', *French Music Since Berlioz*, ed. Richard Langham Smith and Caroline Potter (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 56 n6.

This became even clearer with the *Société Nationale de Musique*, founded in 1871 by, amongst others, Saint-Saëns and Franck. The main aim of the society was to encourage and promote, as far as possible, French composers and their compositions.<sup>107</sup> Particularly with pianists, the inward-looking tendency of that period was expressed by Diémer's efforts to perform and promote the French keyboard music of such composers as Couperin, Daquin and Rameau. Diémer also edited a selection of pieces of this repertoire under the title *Les Clavecinistes Français du XVIII Siècle* (1887-1912).<sup>108</sup>

However, despite the necessity for a strong national music scene that led to the founding of the *Société*, the majority of its composers/members used the German example as the model through which the establishment of prominent instrumental music in France would be achieved.<sup>109</sup> As a result, they started working with large musical forms that were not popular before – such as the sonata (including forms like the piano trio, the piano quartet and the string quartet) and the symphony –<sup>110</sup> and applying typical features of the German style of composition, such as heavy and contrapuntal textures and chromatically inflected harmony.<sup>111</sup>

These two different inclinations led to a clash that dominated the musical scene during the Third Republic in France: on the one hand were the supporters of uniquely French music, who ignored any German influence; and, on the other hand, stood the supporters of the German canon. This clash created some confusion, which was often expressed through

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<sup>107</sup> Jones, p. 56.

<sup>108</sup> Ellis, p. 90.

<sup>109</sup> Jones, p. 57. See also *ibid.*, pp. 56 and 57 and Michael Strasser, 'The Société Nationale and Its Adversaries: The Musical Politics of "L' Invasion germanique" in the 1870s', *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Spring, 2001), pp. 225-251; particularly pp. 242-248 for information about the opposition to the society's influence by the German example.

<sup>110</sup> Jones, p. 57

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

contradicting tendencies by leading artists of that time, such as Saint-Saëns and Diémer. Saint-Saëns, although he initially appeared to be a strong Wagnerian and pointed out the importance of following the German example,<sup>112</sup> was also the one who later called for protecting French art from ‘German “contamination”’.<sup>113</sup> Diémer, in turn, although he promoted the old French music, was also the editor of the piano part of the chamber music works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.<sup>114</sup> Composers whose German style of composition served as an example for leading French composers after 1870 included Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt and Wagner.<sup>115</sup>

Cortot’s repertoire strongly represents the two tendencies in the French musical world of that time. On the one hand, he was a true advocate of French music and was keen to support and promote new compositions,<sup>116</sup> as is evidenced both in his performances and his writings. Not only did he play the music of composers that actually founded the *Société* (i.e. Fauré and Franck) or even later ones (i.e. Debussy and Ravel), but he also wrote about most of it in his three volumes of *La Musique Française de Piano*. On the other hand, Cortot was an admirer of German culture and music and had

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<sup>112</sup> See Strasser, pp. 237-238, 246, 251.

<sup>113</sup> Jane Fulcher, *The Composer as Intellectual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 30.

<sup>114</sup> Ludwig van Beethoven, *16 Sonates concertantes pour Piano et Violon ou Violoncelle*, eds. J. D. Alard, A. Franchomme et L. Diémer (Paris: Heugel, 1867). A catalogue of other works edited by the same instrumentalists is included. See also Timbrell, p. 260.

<sup>115</sup> German music of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century – such as that of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven – was already quite popular in French audiences even before 1870; see Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music* (London: UMI Research Press 1988), p. 6. However, late nineteenth-century German styles of composition, like those of Wagner and Brahms, were more closely considered by French composers in relation to the establishment of a strong national school before the turn of the twentieth century (see *ibid.*, p. 24).

<sup>116</sup> Cortot did not appear to have contributed to the revival of French Baroque keyboard music as did Diémer or Wanda Landowska (1879-1959). However, this tendency, next to the study of contemporaneous German styles of composition, was extremely influential for leading French composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; see Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music*, p. 24.

himself admitted that, during his lifetime, he had dreamed of a synthesis 'in the sphere of music between Germany and France'.<sup>117</sup> His German repertoire was broad and it was through him, and Risler perhaps first, that the repertoire of French-trained pianists started to expand towards German works more than ever before.<sup>118</sup>

### 1.3.3 Risler, Cortot and the German Repertoire

Risler, who was also nurtured in late nineteenth-century France before his German-based education, had performed the complete *Well-Tempered Clavier* of Bach and the complete piano sonatas of Beethoven at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>119</sup> Cortot, in turn, presented to Paris audiences the concert premières of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* and *Tristan* in 1902,<sup>120</sup> during a time when the reception of Wagner in the musical world of France was still ambivalent.<sup>121</sup> Additionally, his German piano repertoire was, like Risler's, comprehensive and substantial for the standards of the French pianists by that time,<sup>122</sup> as is demonstrated in his recordings. Cortot played the great majority of Schumann's substantial works, to such an extent not previously seen within the French School, Mendelssohn's *Variations Sérieuses*, Op. 54<sup>123</sup> — whereas the French

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<sup>117</sup> Spotts, pp. 195 and 197.

<sup>118</sup> Timbrell, pp. 190-191.

<sup>119</sup> See Timbrell, p. 43 and Schonberg, p. 272-273. However, Risler was not the first French pianist to perform the complete Beethoven Sonatas. Marie Jaëll had already performed them in Paris in 1893 (Timbrell, p. 18).

<sup>120</sup> Spotts, p. 192.

<sup>121</sup> See Déindre Donnellon, 'French Music Since Berlioz: Issues and Debates', *French Music Since Berlioz*, pp. 4-9.

<sup>122</sup> Important factors that could have influenced the comprehensiveness and the Germanic origin of the repertoire played by Risler and Cortot would include: a) the fact that a great part of French musicians during Risler's and Cortot's time valued the large-form works (Sonata, Symphony), following the German canon; b) the fact that complete works were performed more often than single movements (earlier manner); and c) the predominance of stage performances against the salon concerts. For more details see: Jones, pp. 53-89 and James Ross, 'Music in the French Salon', *French Music Since Berlioz*, pp. 91-115.

<sup>123</sup> Hunt, *Pianists for the connoisseur* p. 191.

pianists by that time were mainly committed to shorter works like the *Songs Without Words* — and Weber's Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 39.<sup>124</sup> Cortot also recorded the complete piano sonatas by Beethoven in sessions that took place in Paris between 1958 and 1960,<sup>125</sup> but they were never released, possibly because his playing was no longer representative of his pianism. However, it is known that even before the 1920s he had performed a great number of Beethoven sonatas, including Opp. 53, 57, 111, 81a, 101, 106, as well as the complete piano concertos and major chamber music works.<sup>126</sup> Available recordings of Cortot playing works by Beethoven for piano as a primary instrument include the 1927 piano-roll of the Sonata Op. 109,<sup>127</sup> and his 1947 performance of the first piano concerto.<sup>128</sup> Cortot was also familiar with the music of Liszt, as it is witnessed in recordings of a few works, among which was the B-minor Sonata,<sup>129</sup> and in editions that cover a great part of Liszt's solo piano literature.<sup>130</sup> Moreover, further research on Cortot's editorial work reveals that he had studied even the music of Brahms, showing that, despite certain influences from Wagnerian/Lisztian traditions, his affinity with German repertoire was uniform.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., pp. 91-102.

<sup>126</sup> Taylor, pp. 142-144. Cortot's affinity with Beethoven sonatas started during his Conservatoire years. According to Gavoty, Cortot had the chance to play the first movement of the *Appassionata* for the late Anton Rubinstein in 1894. Rubinstein's words that 'Beethoven's music should not be studied, but reinvented' are thought to have influenced the young Cortot for his lifetime (Gavoty, p. 49).

<sup>127</sup> Nimbus Records, NI 8814 (Rolls 7109 and 7110).

<sup>128</sup> Tahra TAH 610, 2007.

<sup>129</sup> Hunt, *Pianists for the connoisseur*, pp. 187-189. According to Mark Tanner, 'Alfred Cortot's recording of 1929 was, in fact, the first electric "78" of the Liszt Sonata'; see Mark Tanner, 'The Power of Performance as an Alternative Analytical Discourse: The Liszt Sonata in B Minor', *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Special Issue: Nineteenth-Century Pianism (Autumn, 2000), p. 178n32.

<sup>130</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>131</sup> Liszt and Wagner have been referred to as leading figures of the so-called 'New German School', a movement in (German) music of the late nineteenth century, which was associated with new compositional techniques, such as the development of programme music, cyclic forms and chromatic harmony. Brahms, on the other hand, has been referred to as an opponent to this movement, being adherent to older patterns. See Thomas S. Grey, 'New German School', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40621>

Cortot's affinity with German music provides the link with the last part of this chapter in which his connection to the music of Schubert in particular is discussed.

#### 1.4 Cortot and Schubert's Piano Music

In most sources, Cortot is very rarely referred to in relation to Schubert. However, there are particular types of evidence that could provide some important and remarkable material about his study of, at least, a part of the Viennese composer's work. There are four basic types of evidence: a) recordings; b) editions; c) transcriptions; and d) references to Schubert's works in other writings. Since the material provided in the recordings and the editions is greater and more comprehensive, inevitably they will dominate the following examination. Nevertheless, every kind of evidence can be important in the effort to explore as closely as possible Cortot's approach to Schubert's piano music.

##### *Recordings and Editions*

Cortot recorded the following piano works by Schubert:

- Impromptu in B-flat major, D 935 (Op. post. 142) No. 3 (unknown location, December 1920)<sup>132</sup>

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(Accessed: May 20, 2014); and John Warrack, 'New German School', *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e4711>

(Accessed: May 20, 2014). Although Cortot's affinity with Liszt and Wagner is evident through his studies and influences, his work on Brahms is rather unknown. Cortot recorded only his own arrangement for piano of Brahms' *Wiegenlied* (op. 49), as well as a performance of the double concerto for violin and cello, in which he conducted and Thibaud and Casals were the soloists (See Hunt, *Pianists for the connoisseur*, p. 104). However, his editorial work of 1950s displays a closer affinity with Brahms' work (See Appendix I).

<sup>132</sup> Hunt, *Pianists for the connoisseur*, p. 196.

- 12 *Ländler*, D 790 (Op. post. 171) (London, 19 May 1937 and London, 17 October 1951)<sup>133</sup>
- *Moment Musical* in F minor, D 780 (Op. 94) No. 3 (Tokyo, 1-3 December 1952 and London, 30 June or 1 July 1954)<sup>134</sup>

Cortot's commentary editions of Schubert's piano music include the following works:

- Fantasy, D 760 (Op. 15) 'Wanderer' *Fantaisie*, published in 1954<sup>135</sup>
- 2 Impromptus, D 935 (Op. post. 142) No. 2 and No 3, published in 1957<sup>136</sup>
- 2 Impromptus, D 899 (Op. 90) No. 2 and No. 4, published in 1960<sup>137</sup>
- 12 *Ländler*, D 790 (Op. post. 171), published in 1960<sup>138</sup>
- *Moment Musical*, D 780 (Op. 94) No. 3, published in 1960<sup>139</sup>

Although Schubert's sonatas do not feature in the above, there is evidence that Cortot was familiar with some of them. Such evidence includes mentions of the Sonatas D 568, D 784, D 845, D 850 and D 959 in relation

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. Although John Hunt gives 1952 as the year of the London recording of the *Moment musical*, the introductory booklet to the CD containing this recording (*Alfred Cortot: The Late Recordings Volume 4*, APR 5574, 2010) gives 1954. Since the Tokyo recording took place in December of 1952, and it was definitely earlier than the London one, it seems rather difficult that Cortot recorded this piece in London before the end of 1952, after the Tokyo sessions. In addition, the notes from the CD are more recent. Therefore, I will consider 1954 as the year of the London recording of D 780 No. 3 in this dissertation.

<sup>135</sup> Franz Schubert, *Fantaisie en Ut Majeur, 'Wanderer-Fantaisie' Op. 15*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert, 1954).

<sup>136</sup> Franz Schubert, *Impromptus Op. [post.] 142 No. 2 et No. 3*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert, 1957).

<sup>137</sup> Franz Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90 No. 2 et No. 4*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert, 1960).

<sup>138</sup> Franz Schubert, *Douze Ländler Op. [post.] 171*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert, 1960).

<sup>139</sup> Franz Schubert, *Moment Musical Op. 94 No. 3*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert, 1960).

to technical issues in the *Principes Rationnels*, as well as certain annotations, most likely from Cortot's hand, on D 960, which are found in an album of Schubert sonatas that belonged to his private collection and can now be accessed at the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler.<sup>140</sup> However, it is clear that he got to know more closely and perform Schubert's shorter compositions – such as the Impromptus, the *Moments musicaux* and the dances – and the 'Wanderer' Fantasy. More specifically, although evidence regarding Cortot's concert performances of Schubert's works for piano is extremely rare, it is known that between 1923 and 1924 he performed in Paris the Impromptu D 935 No. 3, the 'Wanderer' Fantasy and the *Ländler* D 790.<sup>141</sup>

Interestingly, Schubert's reception as a composer for piano in general, and particularly in France in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, is reflected in Cortot's specific choices of works. Contrary to his great popularity as a composer of *Lieder*, *Romances* and *Ballades*, only a part of Schubert's piano music enjoyed wide appreciation at the turn of the twentieth century in France and elsewhere.<sup>142</sup> On the one hand, the piano sonatas started being appreciated rather late in relation to the time Schubert lived. This happened during the twentieth century, mainly due to the efforts

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<sup>140</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 100. Other evidence is found in Cortot's mention of D 894 in his editorial preface of D 935 No. 3 (Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 8) and in his master class on D 845 (Thieffry, pp. 134-135).

<sup>141</sup> Taylor, p. 171. According to Taylor the Sonata D 845 was possibly included in Cortot's performances during that time. In general, however, Schubert's works did not appear frequently in Cortot's concert repertoire. For more details on Cortot's repertoire in years 1908-1924, see Taylor p. 176.

<sup>142</sup> See Christopher Gibbs, 'German reception: Schubert's "journey to immortality"', *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, ed. Christopher Gibbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 241-253; John Reed, 'Schubert's reception history in nineteenth-century England', *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, pp. 254-262; and Xavier Hascher, 'Schubert's reception in France: chronology (1828-1928)', *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, pp. 263-269. For more details on Schubert's popularity as a song composer in late nineteenth-century France, see Hascher, pp. 267-268 and Jacques-Gabriel Prod'homme, 'Schubert's Works in France', trans. Frederick H. Martens, *Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Oct., 1928), p. 513.

of Arthur Schnabel, who was the first to regularly perform the then-neglected sonatas;<sup>143</sup> Wilhelm Kempff (1895-1991), who regularly performed and actually recorded all of them;<sup>144</sup> and more recently Alfred Brendel (1931), who recorded most of them and contributed generally to the recognition of Schubert as a composer for piano.<sup>145</sup> On the other hand, the shorter compositions had been performed regularly and were, thus, already known to a wider public. In addition, Liszt's arrangements for solo piano of several of Schubert's *Lieder* and his transcription of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy for piano and orchestra helped these works to become largely accepted and recognized.<sup>146</sup>

Particularly in France, Schubert's piano sonatas were rather neglected at the turn of the twentieth century, although some of them had already been published and/or performed since the 1870s. Such works were the G-major (D 894) and the B-flat major (D 960) sonatas, which were played by Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813-1888) in 1875 and Gustave Pradeau in 1876 respectively.<sup>147</sup> However, shorter pieces and the 'Wanderer' Fantasy were already quite popular before the end of the nineteenth century. The *Moments musicaux*, D 780, must have been some of the most well-known compositions,<sup>148</sup> a selection of which Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894) performed in Paris in 1875.<sup>149</sup> In addition, the 'Wanderer' Fantasy was one

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<sup>143</sup> Cesar Saerchinger, *Artur Schnabel: A Biography* (London: Cassel and Company, 1957), p. 192. Schnabel recorded only three complete Schubert Sonatas: D 850 (1939), D 959 (1937) and D 960 (1939). See John Hunt, *Giants of the keyboard* (London: Hunt, 1994), pp. 365-366.

<sup>144</sup> Kempff recorded most of the sonatas between 1967 and 1969. However, D 845 was recorded in 1953 and in 1965; D 894 in 1965; and D 960 in 1950 and 1967; see Hunt, *Giants of the keyboard*, pp. 67-69.

<sup>145</sup> Stephen Plaistow, 'Brendel, Alfred', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/03928> (Accessed: December 9, 2013).

<sup>146</sup> András Schiff, 'Schubert's Piano Sonatas: Thoughts about Interpretation and Performance', *Schubert Studies*, ed. Brian Newbould (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p. 191. See also Saerchinger, p. 192.

<sup>147</sup> See Hascher, pp. 267-288 and Prod'homme, p. 510.

<sup>148</sup> Hascher, p. 267.

<sup>149</sup> Prod'homme, p. 510.

of the most popular pieces of Schubert in France, and it was usually performed in Liszt's arrangement for piano and orchestra with Saint-Saëns playing the solo part.<sup>150</sup>

Alongside the general tendencies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in performing particular piano pieces of Schubert,<sup>151</sup> Liszt's preoccupation with Schubert's work appears to have been a significant influence on Cortot's connection with this repertoire. Liszt was one of the first and most important musicians who widely performed Schubert's music in France,<sup>152</sup> and therefore his approach must have been essential for its perception by French audiences and particularly by pianists throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. This fact becomes quite evident in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, for which Liszt had developed a special affiliation.<sup>153</sup> Cortot's edition of the Fantasy (discussed in Chapter Four) comprises an important testimony to how Liszt's impact on this work was particularly influential for Cortot, and potentially for performers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in general.

### *Transcriptions and Writings*

Mention should be made of Cortot's transcriptions of Schubert's songs, which provide a little, yet nevertheless informative, evidence for his approach. Cortot arranged for piano Schubert's *Lieder* 'Litanei auf das Fest Aller Seelen' (D 343) and 'Heidenröslein' (D 257).<sup>154</sup> The 'Litanei' apparently

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<sup>150</sup> Hascher, p. 267.

<sup>151</sup> The fact that Cortot's choices to perform and edit specific works of Schubert echoed a general tendency of pianists of the early twentieth century can also be evidenced in Saerchinger, p. 192.

<sup>152</sup> Prod'homme, p. 496.

<sup>153</sup> Liszt's arrangement for piano and orchestra (1851) and his edition (1871) of Schubert's 'Wanderer' Fantasy will be discussed in Chapter Four.

<sup>154</sup> Franz Schubert, *Heiden-Röslein (d'après Goethe)*, Op. 3 No. 3, adaptation pianistique par Alfred Cortot (Lausanne: Foetisch, 1953).

formed part of his concert repertoire,<sup>155</sup> as he recorded it seven times in total:

- [London?], 1920
- Camden, NJ, 21 March 1925
- London, 6 December 1927
- London, 19 May 1937
- London, 19 April 1948
- Tokyo, 1-3 December 1952
- London, 9 May 1953<sup>156</sup>

The transcription of vocal pieces for solo piano was a technique also applied by some of the leading pianists of Cortot's time, like Ferruccio Busoni and Leopold Godowsky, and might be considered the continuation of a tradition that began and was perfected by pianists/composers during the nineteenth century. Piano compositions based on songs and/or operatic numbers could already be found in theme and variations by Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin, which later gave way to the virtuosic display of fantasies and paraphrases of Thalberg and Liszt.<sup>157</sup> However, alongside completely new compositions inspired by vocal music, Liszt, in particular, also made arrangements for solo

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<sup>155</sup> Bryan Crimp highlights Cortot's special attachment to this piece describing it as 'his much-loved transcription of Schubert's *Litanie*' (*Alfred Cortot: The Late Recordings Volume 4* – APR 5574, 2010. Introductory Notes, p. 5). The fact that Cortot's recordings of this arrangement date from as early as 1920 possibly indicates that this work was part of his concert repertoire from the late 1910s, which interestingly coincides with end of World War I. Its religious and funeral character may have been a reason why Cortot was so attracted to it, since other works of similar atmosphere, such as Liszt's *Deux Légendes*, S 175, or Franck's *Prélude, Choral and Fugue*, were also prominent pieces of his repertoire around that time (Taylor, pp. 176-178).

<sup>156</sup> Hunt, *Pianists for the connoisseur*, p. 197.

<sup>157</sup> See Charles Suttoni, 'Piano Fantasies and Transcriptions', *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/O005677> (Accessed: October 14, 2013).

piano of songs by, among others, Schubert and Schumann. Cortot's transcriptions appear to be more in line with this kind of arrangements, and specifically in the case of the 'Litanei', Liszt's own arrangement (S. 562, No. 1) must have been a major influence. Despite the small sample, these transcriptions provide additional evidence that Cortot's approach to Schubert's music has a strong link to the late nineteenth century and in particular to Liszt.

Cortot's references to Schubert in his writings, other than in his editions, are quite rare and therefore comprise only supplementary evidence regarding his response to the work of the Viennese composer. Information that can be found in these relate entirely to Schubert as a composer of songs and refer to either well known facts, such as Adolphe Nourrit's contribution to the appreciation of Schubert's *Lieder* in France;<sup>158</sup> or less discussed ones, like Franck's preoccupation with Schubert's songs at an early stage of his career.<sup>159</sup>

The most important mention, perhaps, is found in Cortot's supportive response to a critique by Léon Escudier, published in *La France Musicale* on 2 May 1841 after Chopin's recital at the salon Pleyel in Paris, where the author compared Chopin's personality and music with those of Schubert.

Escudier wrote that

There are those individuals whose heart is uneasy in the midst of the world's clamor. They are born for solitude and contemplation just as glistening pools of dew are meant for cool shadows and the song of the warbler. Look at Schubert, whose all-too-brief life was passed in tears far from the world of love songs and dirges. The glare of lights burned his eyes; the bustle of the crowd stifled his heart and suffocated him. Accolades and applause dizzied him and dried up the flow of soft, tender melodies in his soul. And yet didn't Schubert go right on expressing those passions which stir the whole world?... We have

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<sup>158</sup> Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, p. 120. For information regarding Adolphe Nourrit's (1802-1839) contribution to the appreciation of Schubert as a song composer in France, see Hascher, pp. 263-265 and Prod'homme, pp. 502-506.

<sup>159</sup> Cortot, *French Piano Music*, pp. 39-40. Cortot refers to Franck's transcriptions of four songs by Schubert in 1844.

spoken of Schubert because there is no one else so similar to Chopin. The one has done for the piano what the other has done for the voice. Both have drawn their many-splendored, tender, sad, and passionate inspirations from the same well. Their characters even resemble each other. Listen to Chopin and you will quickly see that he does not bow to fashion or vulgarity to achieve fame and fortune. This artist, this poet, has not like so many others over the past fifteen to twenty years, striven by every means imaginable to please the public. On the contrary, he has avoided pretensions, preferring the quiet life devoid of ostentation, competitiveness, or emotional displays. While so many artists strive for notoriety he dreams away in silence, turning inward to his soul for thoughts of youth and love, for objects of beauty and endearment. Poetry is such a noble companion in solitude!<sup>160</sup>

And, after further praise of Chopin's individuality as a pianist and composer, the reviewer concluded that some of the performed works were 'masterpieces, destined to become as popular as the most beautiful Schubert's melodies'.<sup>161</sup> Cortot, after acknowledging this 'illuminating statement', goes on to agree with Escudier considering 'how Schubert valued the precious combination of spontaneity and emotion.'<sup>162</sup>

While this critique could be seen as an additional testimony to the popularity of Schubert's vocal music in mid nineteenth-century France, it could also relate to the interesting similarity that several scholars have discussed regarding the reception of Schubert and Chopin in Europe before the turn of the twentieth century. Additionally, Cortot's response to this critique can also initiate some exploration regarding certain characteristics that he might have detected in both composers' music.

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<sup>160</sup> Quoted and translated in William Atwood, *Fryderyk Chopin: Pianist from Warsaw* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 234-235.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, p. 235.

<sup>162</sup> Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, p. 131-132. Interestingly, Cortot does not provide Escudier's name. He refers to him as an 'anonymous critic, certainly of less authority than Liszt', who also attended and reviewed the same recital of Chopin. The fact that Escudier was the writer of the critic mentioned above is also confirmed by Scott Messing; see Scott Messing, *Schubert in the European Imagination: The Romantic and Victorian Eras* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), I, p. 109 and p. 253n21.

Scott Messing and Jim Samson have maintained that historic references to the feminine character and illness of Schubert and Chopin explain, to a great extent, the specific way that these composers were received in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>163</sup> Such parameters have been considered important for Schubert's recognition as a *Lieder* composer, or a successful creator of short pieces and dances for piano,<sup>164</sup> while for the same reasons Chopin has been thought of as a genius who mastered small-scale compositions, but did not proceed to higher spheres of artistic accomplishment.<sup>165</sup> It is also particularly remarkable that the way Schubert's and Chopin's personalities were understood appeared to relate to the sentimental manner in which their music was approached, a tendency that started to wear off during the twentieth century.

In the case of Schubert, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson has shown how the understanding of his songs moved from the naïve and sentimental approach of the early twentieth century to a tendency to explore hidden meanings and deep psychological connotations after the Second World War.<sup>166</sup> Similarly,

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<sup>163</sup> In the first volume of his book *Schubert in the European Imagination* (see previous footnote), Messing gives an overview about Schubert's reception in Europe during the mid and late nineteenth century, and how this was influenced by various references to Schubert's 'feminine' character, including Schumann's *Mädchencharakter* essay. The similarity between Schubert's and Chopin's reception in late nineteenth century is evidenced in Messing, *Schubert in the European Imagination*, pp. 4 and 207 and in Jim Samson, 'The great composer', *The Cambridge History of the Nineteenth-Century Music*, ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 272. For an overview on Chopin's reception, similar to Messing's work on Schubert, see Jeffrey Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries: Sex, History, and Musical Genre* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1998). Particularly for Chopin's reception in late nineteenth-century England, see Derek Carew, 'Victorian Attitudes to Chopin', *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, pp. 227-229.

<sup>164</sup> Messing, *Schubert in the European Imagination*, p. 210.

<sup>165</sup> See Kallberg, pp. 144-145. Kallberg also refers to Schumann who maintained that Chopin's art, despite his marvelous achievements, was 'limited to the narrow sphere of piano music'. See also, Carew, 'Victorian Attitudes to Chopin', p. 229 regarding the description of Chopin's Second and Third Piano Sonatas as 'failures of a genius'.

<sup>166</sup> See Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Compositions, Scores, Performances, Meanings', *Journal of the Society for Music Theory*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (April, 2012), p. 2, paragraph 1.6, <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.12.18.1/mto.12.18.1.leech-wilkinson.pdf> (Accessed: July 17, 2015); and Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Musicology and Performance', *Music's Intellectual History: Founders, Followers, and Fads*,

Christopher Gibbs has discussed the fact that Schubert's reception from the *fin-de-siècle* towards the end of the twentieth century can be reflected in the transition from the 'merry' and 'gay' to a more serious approach both in his *Lieder* and instrumental music.<sup>167</sup> On the other hand, Jeffrey Kallberg has remarked that Chopin's devotion to the piano only and to miniature forms, an area of criticism in the late nineteenth century, has been turned into a virtue of one of the most central composers in the repertoire of pianists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.<sup>168</sup>

Cortot's positive response to Escudier's text, maintaining that the values of 'spontaneity and emotion' were features that encouraged a comparison between Schubert and Chopin, could possibly imply traces of a nineteenth-century approach to both composers. The combination of these two elements would reasonably comprise advantages of such compositions as songs or dances, and short character pieces for the piano, rather than large and symphonic constructions.<sup>169</sup> We should not forget that Cortot was educated in *fin-de-siècle* France and certain tendencies of that time must have been important in the formation of his own musical conception and

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ed. Z. Blazekovic (New York: RILM, 2009), pp. 792 and 799-801, <http://www.rilm.org/historiography/leech.pdf> (Accessed: July 17, 2015).

<sup>167</sup> Christopher Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 187-188.

<sup>168</sup> Kallberg, pp. xi, 135 and 145. However, Kallberg maintains that remnants of a nineteenth-century mentality regarding Chopin's devotion to small forms can still be found today.

<sup>169</sup> The values of spontaneity and emotion are mentioned by Cortot as central features in the interpretation of Chopin's Preludes, Op. 28. See Thieffry, p. 43: '... [the interpreter] should always keep... spontaneity of expression, for the nervous sensitiveness of the composer is reflected in these pieces... The preludes are sufficiently rich and vocal in emotion.' On the other hand, regarding Schubert's sonatas for piano, Cortot remarked that the composer's spontaneity and creativity was not always supported by a successful handling of structure. Cortot asserts that in the Sonata in A minor, D 537 'certain formulae still smack of the amateur – granted that the amateur is a genius. We ought to excuse its *naïveté* when we remember that at that time a great number of the melodies constituting Schubert's glory had already been written.' Although Cortot considers the Sonata in A minor, D 845 a more successful work in terms of structure, he still suggests that 'the spontaneous and natural genius of the artist is unfolded in the first movement... the place assigned to feeling is so large that the Romantic spirit overshadows the conventionally classical form', maintaining, finally, that in this work 'the musical ideas are repeated, rather than developed'. See Thieffry, pp. 134 and 136.

taste.<sup>170</sup> However, it would be an incomplete, if not misleading, conclusion to maintain that this was the manner that would most efficiently describe Cortot's approach to both Schubert and Chopin. Commentary from Cortot's editions, as well as his ideas particularly on Chopin's reception in the *Aspects de Chopin*,<sup>171</sup> could even reveal a tendency to restore the reputation of both composers.

The issue of sentimentality as a negative feature in the interpretation of both Schubert's and Chopin's works appears to be central in Cortot's editions, especially in compositions that because of their title and size would have invited sentimental approaches in the nineteenth century, like the Impromptu. In the B-flat major Impromptu, D 935 No. 3, by Schubert and the *Fantaisie-Impromptu*, Op. post. 66, by Chopin Cortot's suggestions are strikingly similar. In the theme of Schubert's piece he recommends the adoption of a rather straightforward pulse as a means to avoid an execution in the style of a 'sentimental romance'.<sup>172</sup> (In the following chapters, it will be shown how tempo decisions like this could relate to the evolution of performance styles and tastes before, during and after Cortot's time.) Similarly, in the middle section of Chopin's piece Cortot makes clear that the

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<sup>170</sup> Especially regarding Chopin, Kallberg refers to Antoine-François Marmontel's quote that the Polish composer 'has preserved over the years the double halo of poetry and suffering' as typical of the understanding of Chopin's music in late nineteenth-century France (at least); see Kallberg, p. 84. Cortot, in his book *In Search of Chopin*, also spends an extensive part of the last chapter in order to explore Chopin's poor physical and mental health as an important and inspiring aspect for the reception and interpretation of his music; see Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, pp. 152-155, 176-177 and 179-186.

<sup>171</sup> Although Cortot attempts to explore the facts regarding Chopin's disease, he also intends to focus on Chopin's work without certain prejudices of the past. See Cortot, *In Search of Chopin*, p. 152: 'Curiosity and research have added little to our knowledge of his [Chopin's] artistic message, and the objection can justly be made that the important thing is what he created and not what he was.'; and pp. 216-217: 'It is this legendary Chopin that we must cherish. By disregarding the deprecatory facts of his daily life, but going to the heart of the essential truth, we preserve the image of a Chopin who answers all our aspirations, a Chopin who existed in a world created by his imagination, who had no other existence save that of his dreams, no other desire than to relive the enchantments of the past, who by outpourings of his genius was able to immortalize the dreams and longing of countless human souls.'

<sup>172</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 9n1.

*alla breve* time signature should lead to a forward-thinking pace, structured in two, which would allow a sensitive and discreet manner of playing, and prevent inappropriate sentimentality.<sup>173</sup>

In addition frequent suggestions for a non-virtuosic approach in textures by both Schubert and Chopin shows that Cortot felt it necessary to note that interpretive superficiality should not be part of the music of these composers. In one of the rare remarks where Schubert and Chopin are referred to in the same context in his editions,<sup>174</sup> Cortot makes a remarkable comment that not only testifies to the similarities he detected in the ways these composers should be understood and interpreted, but also provides general facets of his philosophy on music making. In the introductory text to Chopin's Prelude, Op. 28 No. 15, Cortot writes:

The technical realisation of this prelude may seem easy for pianists who believe that difficulties in the interpretation lie in the amount, or rapidity, of the notes and in the complication of the texture. We have pointed out before the disadvantages of this totally superficial conception that can expose the most regrettable disappointments [in performance]. An *Andante* by Mozart, a melodic phrase of Schubert or Chopin, the punctuation of a piece from Schumann's *Kinderszenen*, demand, in our opinion, a more profound knowledge of the instrument's resources than just the ability to respond to the most demanding textural layouts. Such a virtuoso, however successfully he/she deals with the most challenging pianistic requirements, will probably be unable to render the emotion that emerges from the simple virtue of a sensitive and natural musical eloquence. And this will happen, not only because the refinement of such a poetic perception can be reduced through a purely instrumental study that, unfortunately, very often replaces the love for music with a cult for the piano, but even

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<sup>173</sup> Frédéric Chopin, *Impromptus (Opp. 29, 36, 51 et 66)*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert, 1934), p. 33n8: 'Il n'y a là aucun élément de mouvement ou de nuance qui puisse légitimer des pamoisons, ces élans d'exaltation, cette expression tortuée par quoi l'on revêt généralement l'interprétation de cet intermède d'un caractère d'agonie sentimentale. De la morbidesse, oui, mais teintée d'espoir. De la sensibilité, certes, mais discrète. Et qu'il règne encore dans l'élan expressif qui anime cette mélodie si simple et directe, un peu de la tendre fébrilité du début, le rythme y demeurant, - ce sur quoi des lecteurs négligent s'abusent fréquemment - à deux temps et non à quatre.'

<sup>174</sup> Schubert and Chopin are also referred to in the same context in Cortot's editorial remarks on Schubert's Impromptu D 899 No. 2 and *Ländler* D 790 No. 8. These remarks are discussed in Chapter Three and Five respectively. See Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus, Op. 90*, p. 3n1 and Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 11n13.

more because he/she will be lacking the art specifically related to the declamation of the melody.<sup>175</sup>

In this text Cortot maintains that a purely technical approach to the performance of Schubert's and Chopin's works can be inappropriately superficial and harmful to the most profound essence of music making, which is the perception of music as a language that is able to express emotions. In addition, I suggest that such a remark shows Cortot's belief that this repertoire invites a 'rhetorical' interpretive style that aims to transmit the performance of music as an emotionally communicative action comparable to speech and declamation.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Frédéric Chopin, *24 Préludes, Op. 28*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert, 1926), p. 42: 'La réalisation technique de ce prélude peut paraître aisée, aux pianistes pour qui la difficulté d'interprétation ne se manifeste qu'en raison du nombre ou de la rapidité des notes et de la complication d'écriture. Nous avons déjà souligné par ailleurs les inconvénients de cette conception toute superficielle et qui peut exposer aux plus regrettables déconvenues. Un andante de Mozart, une phrase mélodique de Schubert ou de Chopin, la punctuation d'une des *Kinderscenen* de Schumann, exige selon nous une connaissance plus approfondie des ressources de l'instrument, que les dispositions graphiques les plus chargées et tel virtuose, cependant rompu aux exigences pianistiques les plus décidées, sera peut être impuissant à rendre l'émotion qui naît de la simple vertu d'une élocution musicale sensible et naturelle. Et ceci, non seulement parce que la finesse de sa perception poétique a pu s'émousser au contact d'une étude trop exclusivement instrumentale et qui malheureusement remplace trop souvent l'amour de la musique par le culte du piano, mais encore parce que la technique spéciale liée au souci de la déclamation mélodique lui fera défaut.'

<sup>176</sup> The fact that Cortot considered the performance of music as a communicative action comparable to speech is evidenced in several quotations from his master classes where music is described as a language. See Thieffry, p. 79: '*Every note must speak to us...* remember that the instrumentalist's art is similar to the vocalist's'; p.101: '*...all the notes ought to speak*'; p. 173: 'Mattheson, a contemporary of John Sebastian [Bach] and the foremost theorist of his time, speaks to us about the music of this epoch in terms which assure us that musicians thought and felt as intensely then as do those of our day. No doubt we can believe that, but those who will yield only when confronted with the text would not be able to resist Mattheson's, in which it is clearly stated that music is *nothing else but a language*, and that musical discourse ought to provoke a *movement of the soul*.' Nicholas Cook has discussed the idea of the perception of musical performance as speech, and its emotional and sociological connotations, in relation to what he calls the 'rhetorical' interpretive style of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performers; see Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 73-76 and 248. In Chapter Five several features of the styles of early and mid twentieth-century performers, including Cortot's, are discussed.

On the other hand, the avoidance of virtuosic display is also suggested by Cortot in Schubert's and Chopin's textures that would reasonably comprise technical challenges for the performers. While this issue, as far as Schubert's works are concerned, is part of the discussion in Chapters Three and Four, it is worth mentioning here Cortot's warnings against any sign of virtuosic ostentation in the A-flat major Impromptu, D 899 No. 4, where he even reminds the performers that Schubert's tempo indication is *Allegretto* and not *Presto vivace*.<sup>177</sup> Similar comments are also frequent in Chopin editions, as in the Impromptus No. 2, Op. 36, and No. 3, Op. 51, where Cortot advises against a purely technical approach that would lead to superficiality in the performance, reminding us again, in the second example, that the tempo should be *Vivace giusto*.<sup>178</sup> The issue of technique and style, certainly in the works of Chopin, and perhaps in those of Schubert, appears to be an area where Cortot intends to break not only with earlier approaches, but specifically with typical French pianistic tendencies. As James Methuen-Campbell has maintained, Cortot appeared to understand and perform Chopin's music in a more intellectual and sophisticated manner than older French pianists (Planté was a significant exception) because he had moved away from a colourless style that was strongly related to the dry, finger-based system of the French Piano School: in other words the *jeu perlé*.<sup>179</sup> The correlation of this technique with a superficial kind of virtuosity could actually explain, to a certain extent, the ways through which

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<sup>177</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 13.

<sup>178</sup> Regarding Chopin's Impromptu No. 2 see Cortot-Chopin, *Impromptus*, p. 13n2: '... éviter toute haste intempestive... éviter l'impression du passage de virtuosité ostentatoire'; and regarding the No. 3, see *ibid.*, p. 21n1: '“Vivace giusto” nous paraît être un amendement judicieux et de nature à mettre en garde contre un fâcheux excès de précipitation'.

<sup>179</sup> See James Methuen-Campbell, 'Chopin in Performance', *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, p.202. However, this does not mean that one cannot find (rare) cases where Cortot appears to favour the *jeu perlé* style, as for example in the section starting at bar 124 in Chopin's Ballade No. 3, Op. 47. See Frédéric Chopin, *Ballads (Opp. 23, 38, 47 et 52)*, ed. Alfred Cortot, trans. D. Ponsoyby (Paris: Salabert, 1931), p. 40n13.

performers can avoid the inappropriate virtuosic display, as is so frequently suggested in Cortot's Schubert editions.

Cortot's preoccupation with Schubert's works for piano provides interesting material for a study of the history of performance of this music. It is interesting not only because it has not been previously examined in depth, but also because of Cortot's educational and intellectual background and specific pianistic and wider musical origins, which can be traced back to the late nineteenth century. These origins, which are informative of Cortot's interpretive approaches and performance style, will allow us to evaluate more clearly the issues of performance practice that are raised in his Schubert editions and recordings. Finally, they will help us define Cortot's stance, revealed in both the editions and recordings, in relation to the areas of research that will be contextualized in the next part of this dissertation.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Issues of Performance in Schubert's Piano Music

### 2.1 Primary Sources and Schubert's Piano Music

Schubert's piano music was not fully appreciated until the first decades of the twentieth century, and therefore very little was known or studied about how it might have been or should be performed. As David Montgomery notes, there is very little primary evidence relating to Schubert's music, owed, firstly, to the scant amount of Schubert's own written thoughts about his and/or others' performances.<sup>1</sup> An important testimony is Schubert's letter to his parents dated 25 July 1825, where he described his performance of a movement from his A-minor Sonata D 845 (Op. 42):

[...] several people assured me that under my fingers the keys were transformed into singing voices; which if it be true, pleases me very much, as I cannot abide that cursed hacking of the instrument to which even first-class pianists are addicted: it pleases neither the ear nor the heart.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, only a few sources from Schubert's time refer to his style of piano playing. The most important documentation comes from Schubert's friends Albert Stadler (1794-1888) and Leopold von Sonnleithner (1797-1873).

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<sup>1</sup> David Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance: a brief history of people, events, and issues', *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> Otto Erich Deutsch (ed.), *Franz Schubert's Letters and Other Writings*, trans. Venetia Savile (London: Faber and Gwyer, 1928), p. 98.

From the former we learn that Schubert had ‘a beautiful touch, a quiet hand [and] clear playing, full of soul and expression. He belonged to the old school of pianists, where the fingers did not attack the poor keys like birds of prey.’<sup>3</sup> And from the latter we find out that Schubert as an accompanist ‘kept strict time, except in those few instances where he had specifically marked a *ritardando*, *morendo*, *accelerando*, etc. Furthermore, he permitted no excessive expression [...] poet, composer and singer must conceive the song as *lyrical*, not *dramatic*.’<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, during Schubert’s own lifetime there was not one leading performing tradition, and hence few primary sources. Alice Hanson, attempting to give an overview of the musical life in early nineteenth-century Vienna, distinguishes three major tendencies of composition and performance that were exposed in either public or private concerts: the so-called ‘serious art music’, which included instrumental or vocal works by composers such as Beethoven and Schubert, or even older composers like Mozart and Salieri; the ‘commercial’ music of such outstanding virtuosos as Paganini and Thalberg; and the popular dance-music of Johann Strauss and Joseph Lanner that would typically be played in ballrooms.<sup>5</sup> Montgomery has particularly focused his study on the first two tendencies (he calls them ‘serious’ and ‘brilliant’ style respectively), the differences between which have led to many of his conclusions regarding performance issues in Schubert’s piano music.

In piano playing in particular during Schubert’s time, various styles ran concurrently and were very different.<sup>6</sup> Only a small part of Schubert’s piano

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<sup>3</sup> Cited in Montgomery, ‘Franz Schubert’s music in performance’, p. 276

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Alice Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 92-102 and 182-189.

<sup>6</sup> The distinction between what Montgomery called ‘serious’ and ‘brilliant’ styles will be analyzed in Chapter Four. Regarding the styles of piano playing which were current during Schubert’s time in Vienna, Montgomery mentions at least four

music was known before the composer's death,<sup>7</sup> and important pianists who would perform it were Karl Maria von Bocklet (1801-1881) and Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847).<sup>8</sup> Not even in later eras were many new sources from this time discovered, although after Schubert's death performers of his piano music included Liszt,<sup>9</sup> Sir Charles Hallé (1819-1895),<sup>10</sup> Clara Schumann (1819-1896) and Brahms (1833-1897).<sup>11</sup> Schubert's work was not discussed or referred to in treatises of his time and even before the end of the nineteenth century evidence specific to the performance of his works was still very rare.<sup>12</sup> As a result of this researching handicap, Montgomery has said that 'the only reliable body of evidence we have concerning Schubert in performance is the recordings'.<sup>13</sup> The early recordings in particular comprise valuable resources, since the performers heard in them can potentially be links to performance traditions and styles of the nineteenth century, which have not been sufficiently recorded in documentation.<sup>14</sup> The use of recordings as sources for the analysis and history of performance, albeit a rather recent tendency in musicology,<sup>15</sup> can actually lead to new

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different tendencies: a) one represented by Joseph Wölfl and other earlier keyboard tutors, such as Carl Philip Emanuel Bach and Daniel Gottlob Türk; b) Beethoven's unique idiom; c) Johann Nepomuk Hummel's virtuosic and embellished style that made use of innovations in piano-making; and d) Schubert's succinct manner. See Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. xiv, xviii and xviii n8.

<sup>7</sup> Schubert's major works for solo piano which were published during his lifetime included: the 'Wanderer' Fantasy (D 760); the *Six Moments musicaux* (D 780); two out of eight Impromptus (D 899 No. 1 and No. 2); and three sonatas (D 845, D 850 and D 894).

<sup>8</sup> Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 276. See also Gibbs, 'German reception', p. 248.

<sup>9</sup> Liszt was a regular performer of Schubert's music, either in transcribed or original versions; see Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, pp. 76, 217, and Prod'homme, p. 496.

<sup>10</sup> Reed, 'Schubert's reception history in nineteenth-century England', p. 256-259.

<sup>11</sup> Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 277.

<sup>12</sup> See Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. xiii; also David Montgomery, 'Modern Schubert Interpretation in the Light of Pedagogical Sources of His Day', *Early Music*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Feb., 1997), pp. 100-104 and 106-118; and Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 270.

<sup>13</sup> Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 270.

<sup>14</sup> Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 227.

<sup>15</sup> See Cook, *Beyond the Score*, p. 142; and Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 1, paragraphs 1-15,

insights regarding the interpretive affordances of music that we think we know well. Projects like those by Sigurd Slåttembrekk and Tony Harrison on Grieg's recordings, and by Anna Scott on recordings made by pianists that were close to Brahms, show that the study of sound material can inform a modern performer in more effective, and at times less misleading, ways than written documentation.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.2 Cortot's Connection to Schubert

Cortot's work on Schubert, both audible and written, currently rather unknown and unexplored, presents an interesting source regarding the interpretation of Schubert's music, not only because Cortot was educated in the last decades of the nineteenth century, but more specifically because particular influences on his performance style could link him with performance traditions associated with Schubert's work, such as Liszt's tradition. Additionally, Cortot belongs to the first generations of recorded pianists and particularly his Schubert recordings, ranging from 1920 to 1954, could be considered part of what Montgomery calls a 'reliable body of evidence'. It is noteworthy that he recorded Schubert's Impromptu D 935 (Op. post. 142) No. 3 in 1920, possibly being one of the first French pianists to record a work of Schubert, while his recording of Piano Trio in B-flat major, D 898 (Op. 99), with Thibaud and Casals, was undertaken in 1926,<sup>17</sup> a period when Schubert as a composer was still little appreciated in France

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<http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap1.html> (Accessed: July 29, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> For Slåttembrekk's and Harrison's study, see [www.chasingthebutterfly.no](http://www.chasingthebutterfly.no) (Accessed: July 28, 2015); and for Anna Scott's work, see Anna Scott, 'Romanticizing Brahms: Early Recordings and the Reconstruction of Brahmsian Identity', PhD diss., University of Leiden, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Hunt, *Pianists for the connoisseur*, p. 198.

and elsewhere.<sup>18</sup> Other pianists that played Schubert's music in the first decades of the twentieth century were Artur Schnabel and Edwin Fischer, whose recordings of Schubert's works were mainly done between the 1930s and 1950s.<sup>19</sup>

Alongside his recordings, Cortot's *éditions de travail*, with their extended technical and interpretive analyses, can also be a helpful source to consult during research on the performance practice and history of Schubert's music. Being products of Cortot's later years (1954-1960) these editions can provide information about the editorial and performance tendencies of earlier times, generally and specifically regarding Schubert's works, and how these evolved according to more recent standards.

Both Cortot's recordings and editions may be revealing sources more for performing styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in relation to Schubert's piano music than for the styles of Schubert's time. However, given the absence of sufficient primary evidence, they provide an important mechanism for helping present-day performers to interpret and try to understand Schubert's approach to playing his music.

#### *Why these Editions and these Recordings?*

Of the works of Schubert that Cortot edited, I have elected to study closely, in separate chapters, the Impromptus and the 'Wanderer' Fantasy. Both the

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<sup>18</sup> Schnabel's project to present comprehensively Schubert's piano music climaxed in 1928 and marked the centenary of the composer's death. Particularly in France of the early twentieth century, Schubert's instrumental music was not very popular; see Hascher, p. 268.

<sup>19</sup> For more detailed information about the years of Schnabel's and Fischer's recordings of Schubert's works, see Hunt, *Giants of the keyboard*, pp. 359-367 and 234-239. Hunt refers to three piano rolls made by Schnabel in 1905 which included Schubert's D 899 No. 4, an unspecified piece from the *Klavierstücke*, D 946 and the 12 *Valses nobles*, D 969.

cycles of Impromptus and the Fantasy were among the few piano works of Schubert that have enjoyed recognition since they were first published, and it would therefore be interesting to ascertain what Cortot's approach could add to this acknowledged part of the pianists' repertoire. The Impromptus, edited and published in selections, are treated as individual compositions which, despite their non-grandiose style and size, discuss questions of interpretation that are pertinent in equally short pieces, like the *Moments musicaux*, as well as in larger works, like the Sonatas. The Fantasy, on the other hand, is the only substantial piano piece by Schubert that was edited and published by Cortot as a complete work, and as a composition raises a greater variety of performance issues than any other work by Schubert that Cortot edited and/or played. Moreover, due to the absence of Cortot's available recordings, with the exception of D 935 No. 3 (1920), the editions become for these works the most essential part of the investigation. Although these editions were published in the second half of the twentieth century, Cortot's commentary refers to various approaches that encompass a long period of time, starting from as early as Schumann's review for the Impromptus D 935, or Liszt's versions for the Fantasy,<sup>20</sup> and reaching later approaches, which Cortot displayed as an internationally acclaimed performer and teacher.

The works of Schubert that Cortot both recorded and edited comprise examples where audible evidence can be compared with the editorial commentary. Therefore, the *Ländler* (D 790) and the *Moment musical* (D 780 No. 3) are examined in the last chapter, where Cortot's recordings are studied in the context of interpretive styles heard in historic recordings.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Both piano solo and piano and orchestra versions.

<sup>21</sup> In the same chapter a comparison between Cortot's editorial remarks and recorded performance of the Impromptu D 935 No. 3 is attempted.

### 2.3 Montgomery's Investigation, Critics and Cortot

Montgomery's study comprises an essential source in search of the most important questions of performance practice in Schubert's music. His examination is based on specific classifications of issues where, reasonably, he integrates all sorts of vocal and instrumental music. However, since the present research is concentrated exclusively on Schubert's works for piano, certain adjustments in these classifications might be needed. This process will help to create the context for the investigation of Cortot's editions and recordings, and particularly to organize Cortot's editorial commentary in similar classifications allowing, thus, useful comparisons with more recent approaches. For this reason, alongside issues of performance practice, which Montgomery addresses extensively in his study, the issue of piano technique will be added, since it is discussed quite thoroughly in Cortot's editions.

In his article 'Franz Schubert's Music in Performance' and the homonymous monograph, Montgomery follows slightly different ways of classifying the areas of examination.<sup>22</sup> Although the categories of Sound of Period Instruments, Tempo and Structure seem to be solidly independent subjects in both sources, there are other areas of questioning that are classified differently. The issue of Notation in the article is divided into four subdivisions: a) articulation; b) rhythmic alteration; c) expressive marks; and d) choice and treatment of texts (scores). However, in the monograph the articulation and the expressive marks appear to belong to a completely independent category of Expressive Devices and, thus, the rhythmic

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<sup>22</sup> See Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', pp. 281-283 for the classification of issues in the article; and Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance* pp. v-vi for the classification of his examination in the monograph.

alteration and the texts remain the main issues of Notation, along with a specific chapter on Voluntary Ornamentation and Improvisation. Finally, the issue of *rubato* is mentioned as part of the Expressive Devices in the monograph, although it seems to touch more upon rhythmic treatment and will be examined here as an extension of the category of Tempo. Considering these minor differences, Montgomery's classification could be summarized as follows: Tempo, *Rubato*, Structure, Notation, Voluntary Ornamentation, Sound of Period Instruments and Expressive Devices.

The main part of Montgomery's methodology, because of the lack of sufficient primary sources, is the reference to methods, tutors and treatises of Schubert's time.<sup>23</sup> In many instances specific performance decisions based on particular sources have provoked interesting debates between Montgomery and other scholars and performers of Schubert's piano music, such as Paul Badura-Skoda, Malcolm Bilson and Robert Levin.

Apart from the fact that Montgomery's work comprises the most comprehensive study on issues that pertain to the performance of Schubert's music, through a remarkably detailed exploration of the most important written sources of Schubert's day, its strong presence in this thesis is based on one further reason. Montgomery's study represents perhaps the most common philosophy for the perception of music and performance, at least from the mid twentieth century onwards, as well as the leading approach in the education and training of present-day performers. In other words, his ideas are not very dissimilar to what Nicholas Cook has described as the 'structuralist' style. Montgomery's reliance upon written documentation, considering the recorded performances, particularly those

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<sup>23</sup> See Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 277-306; also Montgomery, 'Modern Schubert Interpretation in the Light of Pedagogical Sources of His Day', pp. 111-117.

by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performers, as not equally important sources for issues of performance practice, and his attempt to base his arguments mainly on (Schubert's) notational practices, usually with peremptory language, are features of his work that would justify this characterization.<sup>24</sup> However, because of these characteristics, Montgomery's study becomes an exceptional example to put next to Cortot's work, which is an unknown source for Schubert's music today, since their contrasts or similarities can demonstrate the impact of a rather unfamiliar approach to performance on modern interpreters of Schubert's music.

### 2.3.1 Tempo

The tempo issue, for Montgomery, has two parts: a) cases where Schubert's quotations of early pieces in his later works could dictate the tempi of the latter, as for example in the case of the song 'Der Wanderer' and the second movement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy; and b) tempo modifications as might be applied in structurally different sections within the same pieces or movements of large-scale works, in Trio sections of Scherzos or Minuets and between themes and variations.

Regarding the first part, Montgomery supports the consistency in tempo between specific pieces of Schubert and movements or parts of later works

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<sup>24</sup> Montgomery's adherence to the score (he even advises musicians to perform Schubert's music always from the score: Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 269) and his usually strict approaches, particularly regarding the issues of tempo modification, *rubato* and additional ornamentation and improvisation (these issues are subsequently discussed), correspond with many of the characteristics Cook has attributed to the 'structuralist' style. Some of them are: the assumption that this style represents the correct way of how music should be performed, the idea that the music's character and structure are inherent in the notation and the perception of performance as a 'reproduction' of the score. See Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 56, 79, 91, 126, 217 and 398. Cook also mentions the fact that the 'structuralist' style has been a leading approach in education throughout the second half of the twentieth century until now; see *ibid.*, p. 87.

in which he used them again. Additionally, Montgomery also attempts to show that proximity in chosen tempi for works of similar texture and tempo indications can be justified by recommended metronome markings.<sup>25</sup> Cortot raises this question in the Impromptu D 935 No. 3 in relation to *Rosamunde*, as well as in the second movement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy in relation to the homonymous *Lied*.

In the second part of the issue – which can be expanded to the middle sections of short ternary forms, like some of the Impromptus – Montgomery maintains that it could not be completely clarified by the sources of Schubert's time and has therefore seen a wide range of approaches.<sup>26</sup> In addition, he seems to consider it an issue that possibly derived from: a) the fact that Schubert has often been characterized as a classic-romantic composer;<sup>27</sup> and b) performance traditions developed quite a few years after Schubert's death, such as those of Wagner.<sup>28</sup> Montgomery clearly rejects uninstructed tempo alterations in Schubert's music, noting that the composer specified precisely the places where such a device was needed and usually indicated shifts in character through devices different to tempo alteration.<sup>29</sup> Montgomery's views are echoed by William Newman, who considered uniformity of tempo in Schubert's works a feature that can be justified by documented sources about Schubert's ideas on performance and by expressive devices he indicated on his scores.<sup>30</sup>

Regarding tempo alterations between different structural sections, Cortot's remarks for the works he edited seem to be mostly in accordance with

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<sup>25</sup> Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 283; also Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 211-212 and 254-267.

<sup>26</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 243.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 247. Montgomery cites parts from Wagner's *Über das Dirigieren* (1869).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 244, 246-247 and 251.

<sup>30</sup> William S. Newman, 'Freedom of Tempo in Schubert's Instrumental Music', *Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (Oct., 1975), pp. 528-530, 532-538 and 541-542.

consistency of tempo. Typical examples are the B-minor section of D 899 No. 2 and the first variation in D 935 No. 3 where his remarks advise against a change of the original pace. However, there are also places where change of tempo is clearly suggested, like in the E-flat major section of the first movement in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, or can be implied, as in the Trio of the Fantasy's Scherzo. The issue of tempo alteration between structurally different sections is particularly highlighted through the comparison of Cortot's commentary with his recorded performance of the B-flat major Impromptu (1920). Pianists of Cortot's time, including him, commonly applied unmarked tempo alterations between sections, as heard in recordings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>31</sup> However, in his Schubert editions it is possible that he wanted to note a certain change of rhythmic treatment as part of the evolution of interpretive styles towards the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>32</sup>

### **2.3.2 Rubato**

The issue of tempo modification can also be examined in the sense of occasional changes of tempo, as might be applied within phrases or small sections, an interpretive device that was already associated with the term *rubato* from Schubert's time.<sup>33</sup> Montgomery maintains that this kind of tempo fluctuation could not be applicable to Schubert's music because it was developed by composers different from or later than Schubert, like Hummel

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<sup>31</sup> For information about tempo fluctuation heard generally in early twentieth-century recordings, see Hudson, p. 330 and Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, pp. 6, 15 and 26.

<sup>32</sup> In Chapter Five there will be a more detailed consideration of rhythmic treatment heard in early twentieth-century recordings, as well as a reference to the evolution of interpretive styles within the twentieth century. Cortot's response to this evolution, as evidenced in his editions and recordings, will be discussed.

<sup>33</sup> See Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 123-125; also Hudson, pp. 139-153.

or Chopin.<sup>34</sup> For Montgomery, the only type of *rubato* that can possibly be applied occasionally in the works of Schubert is that of agogic accents and *tenutos* on single notes, which could also be considered, though, as a kind of accentuation.<sup>35</sup>

However, it has been a matter of common sense that some freedom in tempo is required for musically defined performances. Montgomery, despite his severe stance against uninstructed tempo alterations in Schubert, maintains that 'the impression of regularity makes a surprisingly generous allowance for those habitual devices which belong naturally to music-making', including some freedom in the execution of ornaments and *tempo rubato*.<sup>36</sup> Newman, in turn, although he maintains that Schubert's music generally is to be played in strict tempos, without modifications unless they are indicated, cites Hummel and Czerny in order to justify the need for moments of some freedom of timing in performances.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, Bilson and Levin, criticizing Montgomery's rigidity, say that certain flexibility of tempo should definitely be a part of performances of Schubert's scores. More specifically, Levin, in accordance with the *Neue Schubert-Ausgabe*, pointed out that Schubert's *diminuendo* should be interpreted as an indication also for slowing down,<sup>38</sup> while for Bilson imperceptible tempo changes should be considered necessary 'tools' for expression and not arbitrary 'liberties' on a composer's score.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, Roy Howat has also remarked that 'Schubert straddles the border of a particular nineteenth-

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<sup>34</sup> Montgomery suggested that various types of *rubato* should be considered inappropriate for Schubert's music; see Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 121-125.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125 and 132.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>37</sup> Newman, p. 544.

<sup>38</sup> See Robert Levin, 'Performance Prerogatives in Schubert', *Early Music*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue; Listening Practice (Nov., 1997), pp. 726 and 727n23.

<sup>39</sup> See Malcolm Bilson, 'The Future of Schubert Interpretation: What Is Really Needed', *Early Music*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue; Listening Practice (Nov., 1997), pp. 718-720.

century tradition in which a consistent metre entails some unmarked fluctuation.<sup>40</sup>

Local and imperceptible tempo modifications are clearly indicated in Cortot's editions of Schubert's works. Although Cortot did not use the word *rubato*, the fact that this device was associated with the term by performers of the early twentieth century can potentially show his perception for its applicability in Schubert's works.<sup>41</sup> Cortot usually suggests flexibility of tempo through the indication *poco cedendo*, which calls for small retardation, notably at the end of sections and before the entrance of a new structural episode. Examples of Cortot suggesting this practice are the connections between the main sections in the Impromptus D 899 No. 4 and D 935 No. 2. In many instances this flexibility in time is followed by suggestions for immediate re-establishment of the original pace, showing that its role is to connect sections and not to initiate further tempo alterations. In such cases, Cortot's commentary can be seen as a warning against practices of frequent tempo modifications, which characterized performers of his time and previously. Similarly, his remarks advising against any tempo flexibility can reveal his stance against tendencies that must have been widely used during his time and before, but might have become inappropriate or tasteless according to more recent approaches. Examples of this approach are Cortot's rejection of slowing down in bars 50-51 in the Impromptu D 899 No. 2 and in bars 161-164 of the first movement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy.

Particularly in Cortot's recordings, the issue of *rubato* and its applicability to Schubert's music can be realized not only in occasional tempo fluctuations,

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<sup>40</sup> Roy Howat, 'What do we perform?', *The Practice of Performance*, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 14.

<sup>41</sup> See Hudson, pp. 316-340 and Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, pp. 38-40.

but also in other devices such as the dislocation between treble and bass and the arpeggiation of chords.<sup>42</sup> As will be examined in the fifth chapter, Cortot's recordings can possibly show the expressive role that he thought these devices could have in Schubert's works. In addition, the comparison between recordings and editions of the same pieces can reveal how these devices might have evolved according to more recent performance standards, since the editions were, sometimes notably, later works of Cortot. In particular, the Impromptu D 935 No. 3 (recording 1920; edition 1957) and the *Ländler* D 790 (early recording 1937; edition 1960) provide important material for this investigation.

### 2.3.3 Structure

In the category of Structure, Montgomery emphasizes the issue of 'repeats in dance forms', either as movements of Schubert's sonatas or as separate works, like his numerous *Ländler*, *Waltzer* and *Deutscher*. Although Montgomery notes the lack of 'authoritative studies' on this subject for the music of the early nineteenth century, his main point is that repeats should be played consistently 'in the absence of evidence to the contrary'.<sup>43</sup> This issue relates to both Cortot's editorial commentary and recorded performances and could also be expanded, through them, to the repeats in works of theme and variations. Particularly relevant for possible conclusions are the comparisons between Cortot's commentary and performances of works he both edited and recorded. The examination of both sources can show more precisely his perception of repeats and how this can relate to

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<sup>42</sup> See Hudson, pp. 331-335 and Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 47. More details about the use of such devices by performers of the early twentieth century, including Cortot, are provided in the fifth chapter.

<sup>43</sup> See Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 282; also Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 37-39.

interpretive practices of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century owed to the time limitations of the recording technology of that time.<sup>44</sup>

Another question pertaining to the category of Structure concerns the performance of parts/movements of large-scale works individually. Although Montgomery mentions that such a practice was typical of the nineteenth century, he considers its inapplicability nowadays too obvious for further analysis.<sup>45</sup> Such an issue relates to Cortot's choice to edit and publish only two impromptus from each cycle, as well as his recording of only D 935 No. 3 out of the whole opus.

A relevant issue arises particularly for the *Ländler* D 790 regarding their conception as a cycle and/or as dances, which Schubert did not necessarily intend to publish as a complete work. Since his small dances for piano are usually thought of as pieces that Schubert improvised at informal social occasions and wrote down the following day, the publication of several dances in sets (often posthumously) should reflect decisions made by the editors rather than the composer.<sup>46</sup> The Twelve *Ländler* D 790, composed in 1823 and published as a set in 1864 edited by Brahms, have been discussed in this context by several Schubert scholars. While Alfred Einstein and David Brodbeck have described them as a complete work that could hardly be the product of casual improvisation, Margaret Notley has argued that there are no structural and harmonic features that would definitely justify

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<sup>44</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 37: 'We cannot say exactly when or why the practice of ignoring repeats arose. Presumably it happened in the course of the mid-to-late nineteenth century, but certainly by the early recording age, when the impetus for doing so became entwined with considerations of limited roll or disc space.'

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> See Winter et al., 'Schubert', *Grove Music Online*, [http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109\\_pg2](http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109_pg2) (Accessed: July 14, 2014); and Margaret Notley, 'Schubert's social music: "the forgotten genres"', *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, pp. 139-144.

such an approach.<sup>47</sup> Cortot's edition and recordings of D 790 (discussed in Chapter Five) interestingly appear to consider the issue of improvisation as a key point for the conception of these dances as a complete set.

Finally, Montgomery touches upon Schubert's treatment of small motifs and their transformation within a variety of rhythmic and harmonic backgrounds in large compositions, a technique that Charles Rosen has also discussed in relation to Schubert's response to features of form used by earlier composers, including Mozart and Beethoven.<sup>48</sup> This issue is discussed in Cortot's edition of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy as a major feature of the structural characteristics of this work. Additionally, Schubert's conception of multipartite works is an important issue not only in relation to the particularities of form in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, but also regarding the second set of Impromptus. Schumann's description of the whole D 935 as a kind of sonata in his 1838 review leads to interesting comparisons between Cortot's editorial comments and other analyses.<sup>49</sup>

#### **2.3.4 Notation**

##### *Rhythmic Alteration*

A typical area of examination of this subject is the execution of dotted rhythms in melodic parts combined with triplet accompaniments, which are often seen in Schubert's works. This has long been an issue for discussion

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<sup>47</sup> See Einstein, p. 244; David Brodbeck, 'Schubert's Twelve Ländler, op. [post.] 171 (D. 790)', *Schubert: Critical and Analytical Studies*, ed. Walter Frisch (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 37; and Notley, pp. 141-143.

<sup>48</sup> See Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 36 and Charles Rosen, 'Schubert's inflections of Classical form', in *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, pp. 92-98.

<sup>49</sup> John Daverio, 'One more beautiful Memory of Schubert: Schumann's critique on the Impromptus, D. 935', *Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 84, No. 4 (Winter, 2000), pp. 604-618.

and argument in performance practice for the repertoire of the nineteenth century, in general, and ambiguity in terms of interpretation can vary between controversial piano works, such as: Beethoven's first movement of the 'Moonlight' Sonata (Op. 27 No. 2), Schubert's Impromptus D 899 No. 1 and D 935 No. 3 and Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, Op. 61, to name but a few.<sup>50</sup> Written sources from the nineteenth century concerning this question are limited,<sup>51</sup> and particularly regarding Schubert's works the examination becomes more difficult since: a) Schubert's autographs in this concern were rather unreliable;<sup>52</sup> and b) the Viennese publications were not consistent enough.<sup>53</sup> Thus, we might consider looking for answers in the recordings of the early twentieth century and in more recent analyses that have attempted to shed light on this issue. In particular, as far as these recordings are concerned, they comprise important sources, since the performers heard in them can potentially be a link to performance tendencies of the nineteenth century.

Citing particular passages from Viennese tutors of Schubert's time, such as Czerny and Hummel, Montgomery seems to consider the assimilation of the small note of the dotted figure with the last note of the triplet-accompaniment as only a solution for technical inadequacy.<sup>54</sup> Hence there should never be a doubt about the placement of the small value after the last triplet-note. However, such a suggestion finds strong opposition in opinions expressed

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<sup>50</sup> Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, pp. 223-224.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>52</sup> Franz Schubert, *Impromptus [D 899; D 935]; Moments Musicaux [D 780]*, ed. Walter Gieseking (München, Duisburg: Henle, 1950), p. IV. Montgomery disagrees with this although he considers it a 'popular opinion' (Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 11). See also Bilson, 'The Future of Schubert Interpretation', p. 721.

<sup>53</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*. pp. 93-94. Montgomery maintains that Skoda, in his preface to the Wiener Urtext Edition, is not completely right about the consistency of the Viennese publishers until 1860, specifically regarding this issue.

<sup>54</sup> See Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 282 and Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 89-99.

by leading Schubert performers like Badura-Skoda, Giesecking and Bilson. Badura-Skoda, in his preface to the Wiener Urtext Edition of the Impromptus D 935, clearly states that in the third variation of the B-flat major Impromptu assimilation between the semiquaver of the melody and the third quaver of the accompaniment's triplets is suggested.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, Giesecking, in his preface to the Henle Edition of the same set, suggests that the placement of the semiquaver with or after the last quaver of the accompaniment can vary 'according to tempo and expression' allowing, thus, the performer to decide.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, Bilson, strongly opposing Montgomery's stance, considers the assimilating practice as possibly an effective reading of the notation.<sup>57</sup>

Interestingly, Cortot did not make any special remarks about the execution of such rhythmical figures in the works of Schubert that he edited. There is no specific suggestion either in the third variation of D 935 No. 3 or in the second variation of the Adagio in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, and therefore possible conclusions about Cortot's approach could be drawn from other pieces of evidence. The most important source in this investigation could be his recording of the B-flat major Impromptu (1920), as well as recordings and editions of other works in which he might have given more details about his interpretation of this figure, like Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantaisie*. As will be shown in the following chapters, the general conclusion is that Cortot did not have a fixed approach on this issue and his interpretation seemed to vary according to tempo and textural features of a particular passage.

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<sup>55</sup> Franz Schubert, *Impromptus D 935 (Op. [post.] 142)*, ed. Paul Badura-Skoda (Wien: Wiener Urtext Edition, 1973), p. VII.

<sup>56</sup> Henle, *Impromptus*, p. IV.

<sup>57</sup> See Bilson, 'The Future of Schubert Interpretation', pp. 720-721. For further discussion regarding the execution of such notation in Schubert's music, see Desmond Shawe-Taylor et al., 'Schubert's as Written and as Performed', *Musical Times*, Vol. 104, No. 1447 (Sep., 1963), pp. 626-628.

In this area, Montgomery questions the reliability of the *Urtext*-labelled editions of our time and raises the issue of the clash between “‘authenticity’ and common sense’ as part of the interpreter’s procedure.<sup>58</sup> Similar concerns have been discussed by Arnold Feil who argues that modern critical editions should not only aim for reproducing the originality of the sources, but also offer an edited text that provides ‘the incentive and the stimulus for a conscious [and] critical performance’. Feil explains that specific editorial practices, such as the exact placement and the reprint of accents or dynamic indications, are essential for an edition that can be used for a convincing and informed performance of a work.<sup>59</sup> This subject relates directly to opinions that have expressed the importance of decision-making by performers when interpreting musical texts, such as those by Bilson and Edward T. Cone,<sup>60</sup> and to arguments made by Cook and Leech-Wilkinson, who have maintained that musical notation cannot sufficiently represent a work, and therefore performances should not be thought of as merely reproductions of scores. Cook argues that performers usually have to do more than just follow the instructions of the scores in order to achieve a musical performance, and the fact that notation is insufficient is proven by the diversity of performances of even the same score.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, Leech-Wilkinson maintains that musical notation cannot be thought of as more than a ‘set of suggestions in the form of some notes (aptly named) and (in later scores) some hints on how to play them’, and the evidence of more than one

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<sup>58</sup> See Montgomery, ‘Franz Schubert’s music in performance’, p. 283 and Montgomery, *Franz Schubert’s Music in Performance*, pp. 65-73.

<sup>59</sup> Arnold Feil, ‘Rhythm in Schubert: some practical problems’, *Schubert Studies: Problems of Style and Chronology*, eds. Eva Badura-Skoda and Peter Branscombe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 334-336 and 344.

<sup>60</sup> Regarding this issue, see Edward T. Cone, ‘The pianist as critic’, *The Practice of Performance*, pp. 241-253; also Bilson, ‘The Future of Schubert Interpretation’, p. 721.

<sup>61</sup> See Cook, *Beyond the Score*, p. 125, 234-235 and 265.

century of recordings shows that the 'expressive content' of a score is greatly dependent on the performer's responses to it.<sup>62</sup>

This issue becomes relevant to the fact that Cortot's editions in many instances reproduce the scores differently from the *Urtext*-labelled editions, like Henle or Wiener Urtext. Comparisons between Cortot's editions and more reliable editions of our time can reveal important details about editorial practices followed by Cortot or even by earlier editors of Schubert's music. On the other hand, they can also make Cortot's performance suggestions clearer and show how consequential his intervention on Schubert's texts was. Although sometimes when Cortot suggests something different from what was known to him to be the original version he makes a relevant note or uses a different font, in many cases it is ambiguous if differences between *Urtext*-labelled and his editions are owed to editorial mistakes or performance suggestions. Such ambiguity can often be reconciled through the examination of editions to which, as evidence shows, Cortot might have had access. In examples where editorial mistakes are less likely, it is evident that his aim was not necessarily an accurate reproduction of Schubert's text,<sup>63</sup> but rather a description of his suggested interpretation and reading of the score.

### **2.3.5 Voluntary Ornamentation and Improvisation**

One element that also touches upon the issue of authenticity is the use of additional ornamentation and improvisation in Schubert's works.

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<sup>62</sup> See Leech-Wilkinson, 'The Emotional Power of Musical Performance', *The Emotional Power of Music: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Musical Arousal, Expression, and Social Control*, eds. Tom Cochrane et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 41-43; and Leech-Wilkinson, 'Compositions, Scores, Performances, Meanings', pp. 1-7.

<sup>63</sup> Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 283: 'What is an urtext?'

Montgomery, following a comprehensive exploration of (Viennese) treatises of the nineteenth century,<sup>64</sup> clearly opposes additional improvisation and embellishment in the works of Schubert, considering these practices appropriate in other compositional genres of that time, like the opera and Hummel's 'brilliant' style.<sup>65</sup> However, leading Schubert interpreters like Bilson, Levin and Dürr have suggested that improvisation and embellishment is not only applicable, but also comprises what would usually happen in performances of Schubert's music during the composer's time. More specifically: Bilson maintains that most of the treatises examined by Montgomery suggest that additional improvisation would be applicable if it was used sparingly and in appropriate places and followed the stylistic features of the composer and the character of the composition;<sup>66</sup> Levin remarks that changing the musical material in works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert would be appropriate, especially in repeated texts;<sup>67</sup> and, finally, Dürr, maintains that performances that reproduce scores from Schubert's time plainly, without including additional material of relevant style in appropriate places, cannot be considered historically informed.<sup>68</sup> Dürr supports his argument by referring particularly to Gustav Schilling's treatise *Musikalische Dynamik* (1843),<sup>69</sup> according to which additional improvisation in repeated texts is necessary and certainly more preferable

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<sup>64</sup> Some of the most frequently cited treatises in Montgomery's work are: Friedrich Starke, *Wiener Pianoforte-Schule, op. 108*, 3 vols. (Vienna, 1819-21); August Swoboda, *Allgemeine Theorie der Tonkunst* (Vienna: Strauss, 1826); Johan Nepomuk Hummel, *Ausführliche theoretisch-practische Anweisung zum Pianofortespiel* (Vienna: Haslinger, 1828); and Carl Czerny, *Vollständige rhetorisch-praktische Pianoforte-Schule, op. 500*, 3 vols. (Vienna: Wolfenbüttel, Holleshe Buch-Kunst- & Musikalien-Handlung. 1839).

<sup>65</sup> See Montgomery, 'Modern Schubert Interpretation in the Light of the Pedagogical Sources of His Day', p. 111.

<sup>66</sup> Bilson, 'The Future of Schubert Interpretation', p. 716.

<sup>67</sup> Levin, p. 724.

<sup>68</sup> See Dürr's letter cited in Levin's response to Montgomery; David Montgomery et al. 'Exchanging Schubert for Schillings', *Early Music*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Aug., 1998), p. 534.

<sup>69</sup> Gustav Schilling, *Musikalische Dynamik* (Stuttgart, 1843).

than mere repetitions.<sup>70</sup> However, Montgomery questions the validity of Schilling's writings, maintaining that *Musikalische Dynamik* was an undocumented mixture of information about various styles and periods of history and therefore cannot be 'authoritative for Schubert' and his time.<sup>71</sup>

Cortot clearly considered the issue of additional improvisation relevant to the performance of Schubert's music, as shown particularly in the edition of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy and both the edition and the recordings (1937 and 1951) of the *Ländler*. A suggested improvisatory variant for the Trio of the third movement of the Fantasy along with several improvisations given in the edition and played in the recordings of the dances comprise important evidence for Cortot's stance on the applicability of this device in Schubert's works. Although the absence of Cortot's recording of the Fantasy limits the research on this work within the editorial comments, the consistency between the edition and the recordings of the *Ländler* can be enough for drawing conclusions in a broader sense. Further analyses in the last two chapters will examine closely the way that Cortot considered appropriate for the use of additional improvisation in Schubert's music and his principles for the validity of this device.

### **2.3.6 The Sound of Period Instruments and Expressive Devices**

There can be no doubt that the differences between the pianos for which Schubert most likely composed his works and the pianos of our time comprise an essential component in performance practice.<sup>72</sup> Since this kind

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<sup>70</sup> See particular passages from Schilling's treatise cited in Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 205.

<sup>71</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 207-208.

<sup>72</sup> Bilson has underlined the importance of studies and research on the great changes in piano-making between 1780 and 1880, particularly in relation to the performance practice of repertoire from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century; see Preethi de Silva (trans. and annot.), *The Fortepiano Writings of*

of investigation often touches upon the issue of managing dynamic indications and specific parts of articulation, accentuation and pedalling, it would be logical to examine together the categories of Sound of Period Instruments and Expressive Devices.

### *The Pianos of Schubert's Time*

Although Schubert, according to Montgomery, never had his own piano, he must have been familiar with the so-called 'Viennese' type of keyboards of his time.<sup>73</sup> Important information about the features of that period's Viennese pianos and their main differences from other contemporary instruments, as well as the modern ones, can be found in Derek Carew's comprehensive study about piano-making and pianism in Europe between 1760 and 1850,<sup>74</sup> and in Bilson's article on the pianos of Schubert's time.<sup>75</sup> Both Carew and Bilson point out the differences between Viennese and English pianos at the end of the eighteenth up until the second half of the nineteenth century – firstly, because these differences led to two distinct styles of composing and performing works for the piano,<sup>76</sup> and also because of the association of the English model of piano-making in the nineteenth century with the pianos of our time.<sup>77</sup>

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*Streicher, Dieudonné, and the Schiedmayers. Two Manuals and a Notebook, Translated from the original German. With Commentary* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2008), p. ix. Also see Paul Badura-Skoda, 'Playing the Early Piano', *Early Music*, Vol. 12, No. 4, The Early Piano I (Nov., 1984), pp. 477-480.

<sup>73</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 6.

<sup>74</sup> Derek Carew, *The Mechanical Muse: The Piano, Pianism and Piano Music, c. 1760-1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

<sup>75</sup> Malcolm Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music and the Pianos of His Time', *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, T. 22, Fasc. ¼ (1980), pp. 263-271.

<sup>76</sup> See Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, p. 11 and Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music', p. 264.

<sup>77</sup> Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music', p. 265.

The Viennese piano at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century was overall of more delicate construction than the English one. It had thinner strings, sometimes two for every note,<sup>78</sup> and a lighter action that would give a direct connection between keys and hammers and therefore a greater sense of sound control. On the other hand, the English piano had three strings for one note and a heavy action that would produce a strong sound, although the mechanism that provided an indirect connection between keys and hammers would reduce the effect of sound control for the performer.<sup>79</sup> The main difference in the style of playing and composing for piano as a result of different instruments was a perfectly articulated, yet fine, style for the Viennese type, and a heavier *legato* style for the English.<sup>80</sup>

The need for more and more *legato* playing in the sense of long phrasing lines and for more powerful instruments to be played in large venues were highlighted by Bilson as the reasons for the predominance of the English model of piano-making from 1850 onwards, which led to the present-day's concert grand.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, the differences that a Viennese piano of Schubert's time would display compared to an English one of that time would also apply, and possibly to a higher degree, in comparison to a modern instrument. Bilson concentrates on two main issues regarding the production of sound that are related to the type of instrument and, consequently, help explain composers' notations and influence performers' decisions: a) the touch that produces a singing tone; and b) the duration of

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<sup>78</sup> Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, p. 29.

<sup>79</sup> See Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, p. 29-30 and Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music', p. 264.

<sup>80</sup> Carew refers to Hummel's observations about the differences between the Viennese and English pianos of his time, and the music that was composed for, and performed on, each of them. For Hummel the perfect articulation produced on Viennese instruments was essential for the expressive qualities of German music (Carew, *The Mechanical Muse*, p. 30).

<sup>81</sup> Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music', pp. 265-266.

sound.<sup>82</sup> It is clear that the light Viennese piano would require much less effort in order to sing, but its sound would be much thinner and shorter than that of a grand piano nowadays. These particular features of the Viennese instrument should, therefore, provide a specific background for the interpretation of expressive devices in Schubert's piano music.

Cortot did not mention in his editions any of the particularities of the pianos of Schubert's time.<sup>83</sup> However, his commentary and additional signs on the score usually show the need for specific decisions when interpreting expressive marks that were given for instruments of different sound qualities from the modern ones. In many instances this leads to significant differences between *Urtext*-labelled and Cortot's editions, which can reveal features of Cortot's editorial work or clarify his intentions in particular interpretive suggestions.

Cortot's specific response to issues of articulation, accentuation, dynamics and pedalling that are discussed consequently in this and the following chapters could potentially be related also to his special preference for Pleyel pianos. Cortot was an advocate of Pleyel from the beginning of his performing career until the mid-1930s when he decided to switch to Steinway for his public performances, though it is likely that he continued to practise on the Pleyel he owned.<sup>84</sup> The Pleyel of the late nineteenth and

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<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 266.

<sup>83</sup> This is logical, since the movement of historically informed performance practice only started becoming strong in the second half of the twentieth century; see Andrew Parrott and Neal Peres da Costa, 'Performance Practice', *The Oxford Companion to Music. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e5090> (Accessed: June 15, 2014). Interestingly, as seen in the first chapter, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France saw the revival of early (Baroque) keyboard music played on the modern piano and harpsichord. However, the use of fortepianos for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century repertoire was not included in that tendency. The rediscovery of the fortepiano for the performance of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century piano music is quite recent; see Badura-Skoda, 'Playing the Early Piano', p. 477, and Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music', pp. 263-264.

<sup>84</sup> Taylor, pp. 227-228.

early twentieth century differed from other French pianos, like the Erard and the Gaveau, as well as from those made by Steinway, which was already the dominant figure in the area of piano making worldwide,<sup>85</sup> on a few points. It had a significantly lighter action (actually the lightest of the usually light pianos in France), and offered a remarkable refinement of touch that invited pianists to explore a wide range of possibilities in the quality and differentiation of tone. It was a less powerful and brilliant instrument than both the Erard and Steinway, but it allowed particular clarity of sound (especially in the bass), lightness of articulation and a singing manner of playing with less effort.<sup>86</sup>

Despite these differences, though, the Pleyel pianos at the turn of the twentieth century were hardly similar to those of Chopin's time,<sup>87</sup> and they should not be thought of as extremely different from other contemporary instruments. Following the increasing popularity and international success of Steinway, the Pleyel makers attempted to increase the volume capacity and strength of their instruments compared to the early nineteenth century by adopting some of the innovative techniques of the American-based firm, like the overstringing and the use of metal frames. However, it is believed that they did not entirely follow Steinway's technology, staying rather loyal to a typical French style of piano making that primarily valued delicacy and elegance of tone, a move that could also be seen as indicative of the

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<sup>85</sup> See Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 53-55. Ehrlich refers to many of the leading pianists and composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that expressed their admiration for Steinway pianos, like Liszt, Wagner, Leschetitzky, Saint-Saëns and Paderewski.

<sup>86</sup> See Taylor, pp. 228-229; Methuen-Campbell, p. 203; and Ehrlich, pp. 64 and 117. Both Taylor and Ehrlich mention Pleyel's superiority over Steinway in the clarity of the low register.

<sup>87</sup> Taylor, p. 228 and Methuen-Campbell, p. 203.

nationalistic tendencies of the French Third Republic, and especially at the Paris Conservatoire.<sup>88</sup>

Cortot's preference for Pleyel pianos, apart from being a reflection of his French-based education, appeared to be a choice that suited his physical characteristics, as well as his interest in exploring a wide variety of sound qualities in piano playing.<sup>89</sup> It is true that frequent suggestions in his Schubert editions for a careful treatment of powerful dynamics and dense textures, especially in low registers, could originate in the particularly refined sonorities produced by a Pleyel piano on which he practised most of his life. However, it is also evident that he did not think that Pleyel pianos were significantly dissimilar to other pianos of his time. In the 1926 edition of Chopin Preludes, Op. 28, Cortot suggests that a sort of fluttering pedal technique in order to allow the thinning out of the left hand chords and the clarity of the right hand's melodic shape in the Prelude No. 4 would be applicable to both 'French and American pianos'.<sup>90</sup> Such a remark shows not only that Cortot did not find major discrepancies between different pianos of his time, but also that he did not believe that the music of one composer should be played exclusively on a particular instrument, even though it is well known that he preferred Chopin's music being performed on a Pleyel.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Taylor, p. 228: 'In all basic features of construction, the fin-de-siècle Pleyel was a modern instrument not unlike those manufactured today'. See also Ehrlich pp. 64-66 and 117. For a discussion particularly on French nationalistic tendencies as shown in piano making and the role of Paris Conservatoire, see Ehrlich, pp. 121-125.

<sup>89</sup> Ehrlich, p. 123; Taylor, pp. 228-229. Taylor also quotes Cortot's pupil Yvonne Léfèbure who maintained that Pleyel pianos varied between each other in terms of lightness of their action and Cortot preferred the lighter models.

<sup>90</sup> Cortot-Chopin, *24 Préludes*, p. 12n1: 'Nous conseillons même sur les pianos français et américains'.

<sup>91</sup> Methuen-Campbell, p. 203: '[Cortot] favoured a Pleyel grand piano... It was on such piano that Cortot made his legendary Chopin recordings of the 1930s.' Cortot's comment on the Prelude No. 4 shows remarkable flexibility regarding the choice of instrument, given his preference for Pleyel for the performance of Chopin's music.

On the other hand, Cortot appeared to be much more concerned with the significant differences between the modern instruments, in general, and the keyboards of the early nineteenth century, or even before. In a master class on Beethoven's 'Moonlight' Sonata. Op. 27 No. 2, Cortot suggested that performers on modern instruments should ignore the indication *senza sordini* in the first movement, since Beethoven's 'pianos differed as much from ours as horse-drawn vehicles differ from motor-cars', and 'the instrument we play possesses a soft pedal allowing of expressive tone, and in the present instance it helps to produce a frozen, wraith-like tone — the almost unearthly accents which the music demands'.<sup>92</sup> It becomes clear, thus, that Cortot's comments and indications on the expressive devices in his Schubert editions should be understood not only as demonstrative of the differences in sound capacity between today's pianos and the Viennese keyboards of Schubert's time, but also as an effort to suggest the use of particular characteristics of the modern pianos in favour of a great expressive variety that could not be achieved on the instruments of Schubert's day. Cortot's familiarity with Pleyel may have informed much of the sensitivity of sound that he suggests in his Schubert editions — actually the lightness of action and an easily achieved projection of tone would be some obvious similarities between a Viennese fortepiano of the early nineteenth century and a *fin-de-siècle* Pleyel. However, it is also important to note that most of his Schubert recordings were done on a Steinway grand, even though it appears that the option of a Pleyel was not unavailable.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Thieffry, p. 103.

<sup>93</sup> In the booklet that accompanies the Naxos CD (Naxos 8.112012, 2008) with Cortot's 1937 recording of Schubert's *Ländler*, D 790, we find out that Cortot used a Steinway grand for the sessions held in EMI Abbey Road Studio No. 3 and a Pleyel for those that took place at Small Queen's Hall. Therefore, Cortot played Schubert's dances on a Steinway, but Liszt Sonata (1929) and Chopin Ballads (1929) on a Pleyel. For more information, see *Great Pianists – Cortot*, Naxos 8.112012, 2008, Introductory Notes by Jonathan Summers, pp. 2-3. Additionally, Bryan Crimp's introductory notes to the fourth CD from the Appian series of Cortot's late recordings (APR 5574, 2010) inform us that the 1951 recording of the

### *Articulation*

Montgomery maintains that the tendency of present-day performers to treat articulation signs in Schubert's music as a matter of taste or experience is based on erroneous studies that maintained that Schubert's notation was inconsistent or even careless.<sup>94</sup> Although doubts about Schubert's accuracy as 'a proofreader' have been raised by such a Schubert scholar and performer as Alfred Brendel,<sup>95</sup> Clive Brown appears to agree with Montgomery underlining Schubert's careful notational methods. Brown refers to Schubert's practice of clarifying the articulation of unmarked notes by using verbal instructions, such as *legato* and *staccato*, as well as his precision in the way he used simple *staccato* marks and sharper stroke signs in his piano works.<sup>96</sup> Montgomery, on the other hand, attempts to define as accurately as possible the effect of particular articulation marks (such as dots, wedges and strokes) and their clear differentiation from those of accentuation.<sup>97</sup> Thus, he refers to rules that are mentioned in particular treatises and methods of Schubert's day regarding the fraction of time that a specific sign removes from a note. Although these descriptions can be quite informative, it is clear that to a certain extent a performer has to make

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*Ländler* D 790 and the 1954 recording of the *Moment musical* No. 3 took place in the same studio as the 1937 session. Thus, it is more likely that Cortot played again on a Steinway grand than a Pleyel. See *Alfred Cortot: The Late Recordings Volume 4 – APR 5574*, 2010, Introductory Notes, pp. 2-9.

<sup>94</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>95</sup> Alfred Brendel, *On Music* (London: JR Books, 2007), p. 149: 'The problem starts with Schubert himself. If Beethoven has been called a bad proofreader, Schubert, in the case of the first print of his *Wanderer* Fantasy and his Sonata Op. 42, appears to have been no proofreader at all.'

<sup>96</sup> See Clive Brown, *Classical and Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 195-198.

<sup>97</sup> Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 282 and Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 158-162. However, Clive Brown argues that the tendency to use articulation marks as accents was prevalent in early nineteenth-century composers, including Beethoven and Schubert. See Brown, pp. 102-103 and 253.

decisions about the intensity in the execution of articulation marks based on other musical factors too, such as the character of a piece, its tempo, the dynamic context and the differences between period and modern instruments.

An interesting, yet personalized notion about Schubert's notation regarding note lengths in piano texts comes from Brendel, who maintains that there are two types of notation:

Either the composer writes down how long the note should sound or he indicates how long the finger should or can be kept on the key. We could call these the musical notation and the technical notation. The two can, but do not have to be identical, because the pedal can make the sound continue after the finger has left the key. Schubert's notation is technical. The value of the notes, as Schubert wrote them down, does not always apply to the duration of sound as musically necessary.<sup>98</sup>

In his editions, Cortot raises the issue of articulation usually in a personalized way, at times similar to Brendel's, through specific commentary and additional signs and pedal markings on the score. Cortot's suggestions often take into consideration the variety of sound achieved on modern instruments and indicate gestures that can potentially be justified by Schubert's textures, as is shown in the editions of both the 'Wanderer' Fantasy and the Impromptus.

### *Accentuation*

For Montgomery, the plethora of accents found in Schubert's scores calls for an ingenious manner of interpretation.<sup>99</sup> Although the simple accent (>) was the 'only integral accentuation sign that Schubert used',<sup>100</sup> the

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<sup>98</sup> Brendel, p. 144.

<sup>99</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 139-145.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

expressive message that is implied by this and other sorts of accentuation marks could vary. Apart from cases where an increase of volume is meant, Montgomery and Feil consider Schubert's accents potentially as indicators for a specific phrasal or even metrical shape.<sup>101</sup> Brown also discusses the need for careful consideration in the interpretation of Schubert's accents not only due to the variety of signs that the composer used in his piano works, but also because of often dubious interpretations of his handwriting in the printed editions. A certain confusion between the simple accent sign and a short *diminuendo* hairpin appears to be a typical issue. On the other hand, Brown also maintains that Schubert's accented notes should often be seen as specially expressive and important moments in the music that can imply the use of various performance devices, and not necessarily as merely louder tones.<sup>102</sup>

Cortot, in his editions and recordings, seems to agree with a creative way of reading Schubert's accentuation, as in both kinds of evidence there are a lot of cases where a non-literal execution of accents is suggested or implied. This can be interpreted as Cortot's warning that the volume capacity of a modern piano is much greater than that of Schubert's era and therefore some adjustments are needed. In addition, it can show his consideration of Schubert's accents possibly as places where expressive devices other than simple increase of volume might be required. Such devices could include the variety in the quality of tone, as it is meant by Cortot's usual suggestion to execute an actual accent as a *tenuto*; a specific voicing effect; or even some flexibility in timing. Typical examples of Cortot's creative reading of Schubert's accents appear in his editorial comments regarding the middle section of the Impromptu D 899 No. 2 and the first and third movement of

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp. 139-143. See also Feil, pp. 332-345.

<sup>102</sup> Brown, pp. 75, 86, 107 and 113-114.

the 'Wanderer' Fantasy. Likewise, the same issues are raised by Cortot's playing, particularly in the *Ländler* (especially No. 10) and the *Moment musical*.

### *Dynamic Indications*

Montgomery has mentioned the great range of dynamics that appears in Schubert's scores that, more often in piano than in orchestral or chamber works, requires performers' decisions regarding the sound balance.<sup>103</sup> Next to the issue of balance, the adjustment of Schubert's dynamic indications on the present-day's pianos is also an important issue. Cortot's editions offer an interesting range of discussion through editorial comments on the execution of specific dynamic marks, or with suggested dynamic plans for small sections. One of Cortot's most frequent remarks relates to a careful and rationalized rendition of powerful nuances in particular places. In such cases, apart from the dynamic capacity of modern instruments, other factors that appear to have been taken into account include the character of the pieces or even the idiosyncrasy of Schubert, as could be historically evidenced. A good example of this approach is found in the Impromptu D 935 No. 2, where Cortot points out the frequency of strong dynamic indications within an undoubtedly tender and delicate character. Similarly, Cortot discusses the need for refinement of loud dynamics in the excessively virtuosic and dense texture of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, showing an approach that echoes modern concerns of performance practice.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 135-139.

<sup>104</sup> See Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music' p. 270; also Badura-Skoda, 'Playing the Early Piano', p. 480.

## *Pedalling*

Despite the fact that Schubert included pedal indications only in very few places in his scores, Montgomery accepts that they should not be considered as the only ones where the use of pedal is applicable. However, Montgomery has been rather strict with the use of pedal – especially in other than slow movements – which, he believed, should be seen rather as means for ‘specific atmospheric or rhetorical effects’ than a solution to technical issues, such as *legato*.<sup>105</sup> On the contrary, Hans Gal and Brendel have maintained that an unreserved kind of pedalling is necessary for both the sensitive warmth and the orchestral richness that Schubert’s piano writing demands.<sup>106</sup>

Pedalling is an issue that touches particularly upon the differences between the instruments for which Schubert composed and modern pianos.<sup>107</sup> Next to their aforementioned light dynamic qualities, Viennese pianos of Schubert’s time offered a great range of variety in sound/colour through the use of pedals. Alongside various effects that some of them could provide, Bilson highlights:

The three or four pedals that did become standard [...]: a damper pedal to lift all the dampers (occasionally there was an extra pedal to lift just the treble dampers), a shift pedal to change over from three strings to two and one (more dramatic than the shift pedals to be found on modern pianos), and a so-called “Moderator”, which was a leather or cloth strip brought between hammers and the strings to create a special soft effect.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert’s Music in Performance*, pp. 169 and 170-172.

<sup>106</sup> Brendel, pp. 144-145 and Hans Gal, *Franz Schubert and the Essence of Melody* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1974), pp. 124-125.

<sup>107</sup> Badura-Skoda has discussed the expressive possibilities that fortepianos of Mozart’s or Beethoven’s time offered, and how these can be influential for performances of that time’s repertoire on modern instruments; see Badura-Skoda, ‘Playing the Early Piano’, pp. 479-480. Perhaps a similar consideration can apply to Schubert’s works.

<sup>108</sup> Bilson, ‘Schubert’s Piano Music’, p. 270: ‘it is clear that at least in some instances [Schubert’s] indication **ppp** or *sordino* will refer to the “Moderator”.’

Cortot, in many cases, appears to agree with Montgomery, since the suggested fingering and pedalling indications usually call for a smooth finger *legato*, even in quite difficult passages, like the first variation of the Impromptu D 935 No. 3 or the E-major episode at the beginning of the Adagio from the 'Wanderer' Fantasy. Cortot's remarks also raise the matter of subtle pedalling in passages with particularly powerful or low-register texture, which can be realized as an effort to adjust Schubert's writing to the features of modern instruments. Typical examples of this practice are the last bars of the Scherzo in the Fantasy and the whole third variation of the Impromptu D 935 No. 3. Finally, Cortot's general ideas for experimentation in combining the use of pedals (soft and sustained) on a modern piano with a variety of articulation and touch could find great applicability in Schubert's texts. Suggested practices – found in his editions and/or witnessed by his pupils – like half or fluttering pedal and the use of soft pedal while playing at medium volume can be important tools for particular sound effects.<sup>109</sup>

### 2.3.7 Technique

Pointing out their educational role, Cortot's editions discuss thoroughly issues of piano technique, addressing specific problems and suggesting solutions, usually through recommended preparatory exercises. Cortot's comments on technical issues in his editions are usually relevant to the ideas expressed in his book on piano technique *Principes Rationnels de la Technique Pianistique*. In this comprehensive study Cortot detected five fundamental categories of technical issues that correspond to technical difficulties in the majority of works of the basic piano repertoire up to the end

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<sup>109</sup> See Timbrell, pp.83-84. The practice of 'fluttering pedal', which Cortot is thought to have often recommended, has been described by Montgomery as a way to 'thin out the sound on modern grands'; see Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 170.

of the nineteenth century.<sup>110</sup> Examined in individual chapters, these were: '1) Equality, independence and mobility of fingers; 2) Transmission of the thumb (scales and arpeggios); 3) Double notes and polyphonic playing; 4) Extensions; 5) Wrist technique, execution of chords.'<sup>111</sup>

For Cortot, Schubert's writing for piano required performers of finished and complete technique, since his works displayed a complexity that combined various technical issues from the aforementioned classification. This feature was typical of composers from 'Beethoven onwards' following the definite predominance of the piano over the harpsichord, as well as other developments related to piano-making, such as the extension of the range of the keyboard at both ends.<sup>112</sup> According to Cortot's classification of composers in relation to their textural styles,<sup>113</sup> Schubert should be included in those who prepared the ground for the utterly demanding writing for piano found in the works of succeeding composers such as Liszt.<sup>114</sup>

More specifically, of Schubert's works that Cortot edited and/or recorded, the one that displays technically visionary attributes, compared to its antecedents and successors, is the 'Wanderer' Fantasy.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, most

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<sup>110</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 102.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>112</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 23 and 99. See also Cortot's list of composers and works mentioned in pp. 99-102. Vladimir Horowitz also noted how the evolution of instruments influenced the textures of the composers and, inevitably, the technical approaches of the performers: 'The early classics were not written for the grand piano, but for piano with a much lighter action'; see Florence Leonard, 'Technique: The Outgrowth of Musical Thought', *Etude* (March, 1932), [http://www.sfinstituteofmusic.org/horowitz\\_interview.pdf](http://www.sfinstituteofmusic.org/horowitz_interview.pdf) (Accessed: June 29, 2012).

<sup>113</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, pp. 99-102.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23. Schubert's influence on Liszt's writing for piano, from a technical point of view, has been highlighted by Paul Badura-Skoda and Brendel; see Franz Schubert, *Fantasie C-Dur, "Wanderer Fantasie" (D 760)*, ed. Paul Badura-Skoda (Wien: Universal Edition, 1965; Wiener Urtext, 1973), p. IV; and Brendel, pp. 145-146.

<sup>115</sup> Such an opinion echoes the views of several scholars and performers, such as: Einstein (Einstein, p. 93, p. 232-234), Badura-Skoda (see note 94), Brendel (see note 94) and Cortot. Notably Cortot described Schubert's D 760 as a work of 'complete technique' (Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 100), similar to Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata (*ibid.*, p. 100) and Liszt's B minor Sonata (*ibid.*, p. 102).

of the technical analysis based on Cortot's commentary in this dissertation will refer to this piece, bearing in mind that the non-grandiose writing of the Impromptus or the *Ländler* usually causes fewer major technical problems.

Cortot's editions and recordings touch upon and reveal certain and current issues of performance practice in Schubert's music and show what a relevant and interesting source his work is. In addition, they reveal features of performance styles and tendencies of Cortot's time or earlier and the way these were evolved or lost part of their authority during the development of modern approaches and the movement of historically informed performance. The chapters that follow will concentrate on particular examples from Schubert's works that Cortot edited and performed in order to substantiate his arguments and implications for performance in relation to the context of modern approaches established in this chapter.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Schubert's Impromptus as Seen through Cortot's Editions

Schubert composed the eight pieces known as the two sets of Impromptus in the last year of his life. The first four, D 899, were composed in the Summer/Autumn of 1827 and the second four, D 935, in December of the same year.<sup>1</sup> Both sets were, however, only published as complete works after Schubert's death: the first, as Op. 90, by Tobias Haslinger, in 1857;<sup>2</sup> the second as posthumous Op. 142, by Diabelli, in 1839.<sup>3</sup> Schubert may well have been one of the older composers to have written an impromptu, but he was certainly not the first. It is generally held that he was inspired by the Bohemian composers Wenzel Johann Tomaschek (1774-1850), in particular by his 'Eclogues', 'Rhapsodies' and Dithyrambs', and Johann Hugo Worzischek (1791-1825), who had already composed an 'Impromptu' in 1822.<sup>4</sup> 'Impromptu' was a formal term, which was already current in Prague, Vienna and Germany, before Schubert was to compose his homonymous pieces, and it is most probable that he was, at least, aware of the relevant Viennese publications.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Winter et al., 'Schubert, Franz', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109pg2> (Accessed: November 5, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Fisk, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> Einstein, p. 270. Although Einstein gives 1838 as the year of publication, *Grove Music Online* gives 1839.

<sup>4</sup> Einstein, pp. 323-324.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

The character and substance of each of these eight pieces correspond with what has generally come to be described as an impromptu: a composition, 'the nature of which may occasionally suggest improvisation, though the name probably derives from the casual way in which the inspiration for such a piece came to the composer'.<sup>6</sup> However, it is not clear whether Schubert originally intended to name each of the pieces of both sets as 'Impromptus'. Nor is it clear whether Schubert conceived of his Impromptus as complete cycles, or as pieces, which could also stand as individual compositions in their own right. According to Charles Fisk, all four pieces of the first set (D 899) were composed 'in a single manuscript and submitted for publication in this form'. However, Haslinger only published the first two impromptus, 'providing, himself, the title for them', in 1827. Thirty years later, the two remaining pieces from that manuscript were to complete the first set of Schubert's Impromptus.<sup>7</sup> The four pieces of the second set (D 935) appear to have been named 'Impromptus' by Schubert, as is evident in both the manuscript<sup>8</sup> and Schubert's letter to the publishing house B. Schott's and Sons, dated 21 February 1828.<sup>9</sup> Schubert even permitted the option of publication of the Impromptus as separate movements, a move that has frequently been interpreted as an attempt by Schubert to convince his publisher as to the saleability of his work.<sup>10</sup> The question that arises, concerning Schubert's conception of the Impromptus as individual pieces and/or as larger-scale works, would appear to have significance in this analysis, since Cortot had edited only two out of the compositions from each cycle.

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<sup>6</sup> Maurice J. E Brown, 'Impromptu', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/13736> (Accessed: November 5, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Fisk, p. 115.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>9</sup> Deutsch, *Franz Schubert's Letters and Other Writings*, p. 134.

<sup>10</sup> See Einstein, p. 318 and Fisk, p. 142.

The investigation will begin with a detailed examination of Schumann's review of the first publication of D 935, which not only implied that particular pieces from this set might comprise a piano sonata, but is also given a special reference in Cortot's edition.

In the 14 December 1838 issue of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* Schumann wrote:

Yet I can hardly believe that Schubert really called these movements "impromptus"; the first is so obviously the first movement of a sonata, so perfectly executed and self-contained that there can be no doubt. I consider the second impromptu to be the second movement of the same sonata; in key and character it is closely related to the first. As far as the closing movements are concerned, Schubert's friends must know whether or not he completed the sonata; one might perhaps regard the fourth impromptu as the finale, but while the key confirms this supposition, the rather casual design speaks against it. Of course, these are suppositions that only an examination of the original manuscript would clarify [...] So as far as the third impromptu is concerned, I would have hardly taken it to be one of Schubert's efforts, except, perhaps, a youthful one; it is a set of by-and-large undistinguished variations on an equally undistinguished theme. The variations are totally lacking in invention and fantasy, qualities that Schubert has displayed so creatively in other works of this genre. If one plays the first two impromptus in succession and joins them to the fourth one, in order to make a lively close the result may not be a complete sonata, but at least we will have one more beautiful memory [Erinnerung] of Schubert.<sup>11</sup>

Over a century later, Schumann's supposition was to remain the subject of continuing debate amongst prominent scholars. Alfred Einstein, in his book-portrait of Schubert, published 113 years after Schumann's review, appears to support Schumann's observations, without excluding consideration of Impromptu No. 3.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, as late as 2001, Fisk sought to maintain a moderate position, based principally on the evidence in the original manuscript,<sup>13</sup> which, according to Schumann, most reliably revealed

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<sup>11</sup> Daverio, 'One more beautiful Memory of Schubert', p. 606.

<sup>12</sup> Einstein, pp. 318-319.

<sup>13</sup> Fisk, p. 142, Einstein also examined this manuscript, but he considered this naming as a good plan by Schubert to give his pieces a better chance of 'being sold as impromptus than as a sonata' (Einstein, p. 318).

Schubert's true creative intentions. Fisk takes the investigation a step further by raising a more general question concerning Schubert's conception of his large-scale compositions:

The conception of opus 142 as a sonata is easily enough dismissed, finally, to be of little interest in itself. It can, however, lead to a more interesting question: that of whether the ideas and procedures that Schubert associated with the sonata might have had a role in the creation of an alternative – a work in some respects like a sonata, but only enough like one to stand as its opposite.<sup>14</sup>

In summary, what appears to be more important for Fisk is that both sets of Impromptus were written in single manuscripts, and musically there is insufficient evidence to allow Schubert's conception of them as complete cycles to be questioned.<sup>15</sup>

Cortot appears to have anticipated Fisk in pointing out the fact that Schumann's considerations were too personal and dubious to merit examination in relation to the possible connection and similarities of D 935 with sonata works.<sup>16</sup> For Cortot, Schubert's treatment of features of the sonata form is worthy of exploration in relation to his large-scale works. A relevant example might include the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, which he describes as a work that follows some principles of the traditional sonata form, despite its title.<sup>17</sup> Regarding the Impromptus, however, Cortot maintains that it is essential to examine the individuality of each piece and its ability to effectively stand outside the cycle as a single composition in its own right.

Cortot's decision to edit particular pairs of Schubert's Impromptus might lead to the conclusion that he definitely considered that some of Schubert's short compositions could be performed individually, separate from the set to which

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<sup>14</sup> Fisk, p. 144.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 123 and 142.

<sup>16</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*. p. 8: 'Hypothèse fragile'.

<sup>17</sup> See Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 2.

they belong. Especially where the B-flat major Impromptu is concerned, Cortot distinctly maintains in his edition that it is essential to treat the composition rather as a 'perfectly autonomous' piece and not necessarily to try to discover its possible role, or function, as a single movement of a large-scale work.<sup>18</sup> Such an approach is clearly echoed by the fact that he recorded only this piece out of all Schubert's Impromptus. A similar conception of Schubert's shorter works might also extend to encompass the *Moments musicaux*, as Cortot's edition and recordings of only the third piece of the set would appear to bear out.<sup>19</sup>

As far as editions of Impromptus are concerned, there are examples of publications in separate movements before Cortot's time. The first publication of D 899 (1827) comprised only the first two impromptus of the set, while Schubert's suggestion to Schott for separate publications of the D 935 pieces, although open to debate, should also not be neglected out of hand. We cannot be certain that Schubert would have sacrificed the main principles of his compositions merely in order to secure their publication. A number of years after the first publication of D 935 as a set (1839), Charles Hallé, edited and published the Impromptus numbers 1, 2 and 4 (1864), having already published No. 3 as a single composition in 1861. Such a practice might give credence to Schumann's opinion that numbers 1, 2 and 4 could have comprised a complete work, if not a sonata in F minor,

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<sup>18</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p.8: 'Il convient donc de ne voir ici, non pas le fragment de mouvement modéré susceptible de détenir le rôle de l'Andante traditionnel dans une suite de pièces reliées entre elles par une donnée formelle implicite, mais bien une composition parfaitement autonome'.

<sup>19</sup> The practice of performing parts/movements of large-scale works, though common in the nineteenth century, is rarely prevalent today, at least where structurally definite forms, such as the sonata and its relatives (i.e. symphony, concerto, quartet), are concerned. However, it is still accepted for cycles of shorter character pieces, like Schubert's Impromptus and *Moments Musicaux*, which are occasionally performed in selections. Likewise, this can be true for other nineteenth-century piano works that display similarity to Schubert's sets of short pieces, like Schumann's two sets of *Fantasiestücke* and Brahms' several cycles of *Klavierstücke*.

excluding the third one as possibly the weakest piece of the set. Other examples are provided by Karl Klindworth, who edited and published D 935 No. 3 (Novello, 1902) and Felix Swinstead (1880-1959) who edited and published D 899 numbers 3 and 4, and D 935 numbers 2 and 3 (London: Murdoch, 1920). However, by 1957 and 1960, when Cortot's editions of D 935 numbers 2 and 3, and D 899 numbers 2 and 4 respectively appeared, Gieseeking had already edited the complete Impromptus for Henle and, particularly in France, editions of the complete sets of Impromptus had already been published by Roger-Ducasse (1873-1954)<sup>20</sup> and Lazare Lévy (1882-1964).<sup>21</sup>

It is pertinent to this analysis to examine the underlying reasons for Cortot's decision to edit and publish the particular pairs of impromptus in place of the two complete sets. The principal purpose of this research is to examine the relationships and similarities that Cortot may have determined between the pieces of each pair, as well as to question whether his decision might possibly imply a suggestion for programming in performances of these pieces as selections.

### **3.1 The *Avant-Propos*: Why these Pairs?**

In the *Avant-Propos* to each of D 899 numbers 2 and 4 and D 935 numbers 2 and 3, Cortot provides rational grounds to substantiate his selections. As far as the first pair is concerned, apart from their apparent structural

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<sup>20</sup> Franz Schubert, *Moments Musicaux, Op. 94 (D.780) and Impromptus, Op. 90 and 142*, ed. Roger-Ducasse ([S.l.]: Durand, [n.d.]). Despite the lack of year of publication there is no evidence that this edition might have been issued after Ducasse's death, so in any case it appeared before Cortot's editions of Schubert's Impromptus.

<sup>21</sup> Franz Schubert, *4 Impromptus [op. 90]*, ed. Lazare Lévy (Paris: Senart, 1915); and Franz Schubert, *4 Impromptus op. [post.] 142*, ed. Lazare Lévy (Paris: Senart, 1915). Cortot certainly consulted Lévy's editions of Schubert's Impromptus since he often mentions them in his own revisions of the same pieces.

similarity (ABA), the technically demanding textures, which have led to the characterization of these pieces as *étude-impromptus* by several Schubert scholars,<sup>22</sup> are highlighted, usually with implications regarding decisions on tempo. In spite of the recurrence of certain technical difficulties, Cortot appears to support the fact that both pieces require imaginative and poetic renditions and should not be treated as merely demonstrations of quick scales and arpeggios. Such a restrained approach is particularly evident in his comments that D 899 No. 4 is not a ‘piece for the fingers’<sup>23</sup> and, actually, Schubert’s tempo indication is *Allegretto* and not *Presto vivace*,<sup>24</sup> criticizing perhaps a tendency amongst his contemporaries to execute this piece at an excessively fast speed. For Cortot, both impromptus appear to comprise a challenge to avoid virtuosic display, which would ‘shrink the most significant purpose’ of D 899 No. 2,<sup>25</sup> or lead to a ‘superficial instrumental virtuosity’ in D 899 No. 4.<sup>26</sup> The idea of exercising restraint in the face of demanding textures was apparently for Cortot an important aspect in the performance of Schubert’s music, as will be seen later in relation to the ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy.

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<sup>22</sup> See Einstein, p. 324: ‘The second [Impromptu from Op. 90] would be somewhat in the nature of an *étude*... The last [Op. 90 No. 4], in A flat major, is a variant of the second, but the last remnant of its *étude* character has vanished in the cello melody of the main-section and in the elegiac character of the Trio’; Montgomery, *Franz Schubert’s Music in Performance*, p. 262: ‘D 899/2 Impromptu (*étude* type): Allegro’ and p. 264: ‘D 899/4 Impromptu (*étude* type): Allegretto; and William Kinderman, ‘Schubert’s piano music: probing the human condition’, *The Cambridge Companion to Schubert*, p. 167: ‘The second and fourth impromptus of Op. 90 are in ternary form, and display similarities in character and structure. In both, rapid passagework based on descending scales or arpeggios dominates the outer sections... The contrast between these sections is most pronounced in the second impromptu, where appearances of an etude-like moto perpetuo in E flat major encloses a central episode’.

<sup>23</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 13: ‘“morceau du doigts”’.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2: ‘qu’elle y contracterait, à nos yeux tout au moins, sa plus appréciable raison d’être’.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13: ‘d’une exécution qui n’a pour objet que le témoignage d’une superficielle virtuosité instrumentale.’

In the *Avant-Propos* of both pieces from the second pair, Cortot detects common elements in terms of expression.<sup>27</sup> These elements are particularly evident in the sensitive and simple character of the principle themes.<sup>28</sup> More specifically, in D 935 No. 2, simplicity in the execution would create ‘the atmosphere of abandonment and peaceful tenderness expressed through the melodic details of this piece’;<sup>29</sup> whilst in D 935 No. 3, a simple musical theme will become the starting point for five variations of ‘linear perfection and eloquent sensitivity’.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, Cortot discusses the forms of these pieces, which obey principles of classical compositional style, and can be strong reasons for their conception as individual works, as well as parts of selections. This approach is vividly manifest, specifically in the case of the third impromptu, which in fact is a theme and variations. In Cortot’s opinion this was, actually, sufficient grounds not only to permit the third impromptu to stand as an autonomous composition,<sup>31</sup> but also to put aside Schumann’s considerations. Similarly, the second impromptu follows the principles of a minuet with trio,<sup>32</sup> a dance form that Schubert actually used in his work both as a movement of his sonatas and as a separate composition.<sup>33</sup>

Cortot’s particular selections from both sets of Impromptus also provide the performer with reasoned and practical programming suggestions. The first

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<sup>27</sup> Paul Badura-Skoda also detected similarities between the Impromptus No. 2 and No. 3 from the second set; see Wiener Urtext, *Impromptus D 935*, p VI.

<sup>28</sup> Cortot’s approach is similar to Fisk’s; see Fisk, p. 169.

<sup>29</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 2: ‘L’ atmosphère de confiant abandon, de paisible tendresse qui règne dans tous les détails mélodiques de ce touchant feuillet d’album, suffit à en déterminer l’interprétation [= interprétation] empreinte d’ une absolue simplicité.’

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 8: ‘au contact des cinq paraphrases accordées par Schubert aux successives métamorphoses de ce motif ingénu, ainsi que du renouvellement expressif qui fait de chacune d’ elles un modèle de perfection linéaire et de l’ éloquente sensibilité.’

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 8: ‘une composition parfaitement autonome obéissant au principe de la variation.’

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 2: ‘une modalité de forme qui l’ assimile à un genre spécifique quelconque de la production classique, c’est évidemment à la coupe du Menuet.’

<sup>33</sup> Schubert was a par-excellence composer of dances for piano and – alongside his numerous *Waltzes*, *Ländler*, *Ecossaises* and *Deutscher* – he composed *Minuets* (with Trios) as separate works.

pair, set side by side with its identical structural plan and technically demanding texture, displays interesting similarities in terms of proximity and treatment of keys. The E-flat major Impromptu (D 899 No. 2) finishes in its parallel minor, while the fourth (D 899 No. 4) opens in A-flat minor and finishes in its parallel major. The second pair, in turn, apart from their sufficiency of form and similarity in character, draws an interesting correlation between music and dance: D 935 No. 2 is in fact a dance<sup>34</sup> and D 935 No. 3 uses the theme of the entr'acte No. 3 from Schubert's incidental music for the play *Rosamunde* (D 797).

### 3.2 The Classification of Issues

Cortot's editions discuss numerous issues of performance in relation to Schubert's Impromptus, and the classification of them will be based, to a great extent, on the categories analysed in the previous chapter. For the purpose of this investigation, I will follow the following classification: a) tempo adoption, as in pieces where tempo is directed by another of Schubert's compositions; and tempo modification, as might be applied in different sections of particular forms – this section will consider also issues of tempo flexibility (voluntary retardations), as a kind of *rubato*, in relation to the expressive message that this might signify; b) treatment of repeats; c) notation issues separated into two parts: (i) the interpretation of dotted rhythms against triplets and (ii) the comparison between *Urtext*-labelled and Cortot's editions; d) issues of technique; and e) the interpretation of expressive devices, often in the concept of adjusting Schubert's music to present-day instruments.

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<sup>34</sup> While for Cortot it is a *Minuet*, Einstein considered it a *Sarabande* probably because of the emphasis on the second beats (Einstein, p. 319).

### 3.2.1 Tempo Adoption

The question of tempo adoption is usually raised for instrumental works by Schubert that suggest a distinct relationship with other works of his (orchestral or *Lied*). This discussion applies particularly to the B-flat major Impromptu with its connection to *Rosamunde* and Cortot's editorial comments discuss Schubert's tempo indications in both works.

In the opening of the impromptu, Cortot emphasizes that the principal issue is the adoption of a tempo suitable for the expressive qualities of the theme.<sup>35</sup> As he further explains, the main impediment to the performer's decision on effective tempo would appear to be the contradiction between the indication *Andante* and the time signature  $\text{C}$ , which often, perhaps erroneously, leads to the interpretation of this theme as 'a sentimental romance'.<sup>36</sup> This remark would seem to be a clear recommendation for the avoidance of the adoption of a slow pace, which might then also lead to an inappropriate change of the fundamental beat from 'in two' to 'in four'. On the other hand, Cortot suggests that the tempo indications of the original source of inspiration for Schubert, that is the  $\frac{2}{4}$  *Andantino* from *Rosamunde*, should rather dictate the tempo for the theme of this impromptu.<sup>37</sup> Thus, as Cortot maintains, a 'rather vivid and graceful pace' would be necessary in order to effectively establish an appropriate phrasal structure and allow the 'caressing expressive meaning' of this opening to

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<sup>35</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 9 n1: 'Il ne sera pas inutile, pour l'adoption d'un tempo conforme au caractère tendrement persuasif du motif générateur'.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.: 'La mention d'Andante, bien qu'implicitement contredite par le  $\text{C}$  ... se voit souvent interprétée dans le sens de la romance sentimentale'.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.: 'de s'inspirer de l'indication d'Andantino qui lui est accordée par Schubert, dans la version initiale dont les premières mesures sont reproduites dans l'avant-propos.'

emerge.<sup>38</sup> In this impromptu, a straightforward tempo would make complete sense not only for the simplicity of the theme's character, but also potentially for tempo decisions in the following variations.

Interestingly, Cortot arrives at similar conclusions as Montgomery with regard to the tempi of Schubert's piano pieces, guided by other works, as well as in the instances of particular phrasal decisions, which might need to be adopted in pieces with *alla breve* time signatures. On the one hand, Montgomery supports the consistency between tempi in piano pieces and other works of Schubert, even suggesting similar metronome markings.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, with specific regard to the *alla breve* sign, he maintains that it has been mistakenly compared with 4/4 time, simply because a duple and a quadruple structure are not comparable, and, therefore, its counterpart would rather be 2/4 time.<sup>40</sup> Cortot's interpretation of the *alla breve* sign in this piece seems to relate closely to the duple metre from *Rosamunde's* theme, since in the second movement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy (discussed in the next chapter), the same indication can lead to a different approach.

### 3.2.2 Tempo Modification

On the matter of tempo modification, Cortot's commentary is investigated in relation to the structure of the impromptus in question. Thus the focus, firstly, will be on tempo relations between contrasting sections of ABA forms and between theme and variations.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.: 'assigne d'origine une cadence relativement vivante et dégagée ... sa caressante signification expressive.'

<sup>39</sup> Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 283; see also Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 254-267.

<sup>40</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 228-229.

### *Ternary Forms*

Where different sections in ternary forms are concerned, Cortot's editorial remarks on the first three impromptus are enlightening. Regarding the tempi of the middle sections in both D 899 numbers 2 and 4, Cortot clearly maintains that no tempo change should be applied either for the B-minor section (starting at bar 83) in the former,<sup>41</sup> or the C-sharp-minor episode (starting at bar 107) in the latter.<sup>42</sup> These observations indicate that, for Cortot, voluntary tempo alteration should not be used to highlight texture and character changes between main sections of ternary forms. Moreover, they would perhaps appear to be indicative of Cortot's criticism of the practice of pianists either during and/or before his time, who might have played in different tempi in such instances.

On the other hand, no warnings or relevant comments are found with regard to the beginning of the middle section of D 935 No. 2 (starting at bar 47). However, the indication *poco cedendo* added by Cortot at the end of this section (bars 97-98) could lead to ambiguous interpretations. While it could be interpreted as an indication for a smooth and seamless transition from the conclusion of this episode to the reprise of the opening, it cannot be certain that Cortot did not also intend a return to the minuet's original tempo, after a possible increase of speed for the trio. The practice of playing this trio at a faster speed than the opening might have been considered by Cortot to be too generally accepted to mention. As Edward Cone has shown, recordings of pianists of around Cortot's time provide a good idea of how

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<sup>41</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 6n8: 'Ne pas banaliser la signification de ce chaleureux intermède par l'adoption d'une cadence moins animée que précédemment.'

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19 n7: 'Aucune modification de tempo n'est à prévoir pour l'interprétation de cet épisode médian'.

common a practice it was to voluntarily shift the tempo in the trio: Edwin Fisher (Opening: crotchet = 100, Trio: crotchet = 132), Walter Giesecking (Opening: crotchet = 100, Trio: crotchet = 132) and Artur Schnabel (Opening: crotchet = 100, Trio: crotchet = 144).<sup>43</sup> In the absence of Cortot's specific comment, however, and in view of his thoroughness, especially with regard to tempo changes, we can assume that if any tempo alteration were implied, it should not be as noticeable as in these examples.

Therefore research would suggest that Cortot favoured the adoption of uniform tempo between sections in ABA forms. The evidence to suggest Cortot's recommendation for tempo modification in anticipation of a greater change of texture, as in the case of D 935 No. 2, is tenuous. Arguably, one would expect similar treatment of tempo as in other comparable cases of Schubert's works, such as the *Moment musical* D 780 No. 2, which greatly resembles the A-flat major Impromptu from the second set.

### *Theme and Variations*

Likewise, Cortot is largely consistent in supporting uniform tempi, in principle, in the form of theme and variations. His remarks at the beginning of both the first and second variations in the B-flat major Impromptu are revealing: the first variation (starting at bar 19) should strictly follow the pace of the theme;<sup>44</sup> and in the second one (starting at bar 37), the shift in liveliness and texture should not be accompanied by any sign of

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<sup>43</sup> See Cone, pp. 241-253, particularly pp. 248-250.

<sup>44</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 10 n3: 'conservant strictement le mouvement du thème'.

precipitation, since such a tendency would ‘remove some of the refinement of the melodic element in favour of virtuosic demonstration’.<sup>45</sup>

In the next three variations, although Cortot does not provide such clear descriptions, it can be reasonably concluded that no significant tempo alterations should be applied to any of the subsequent episodes. In the beginning of Variation III (starting at bar 55), he suggests that the ‘feeling of pathetic anxiety, which dominates this episode, should not be accompanied by dramatic excitement, as has been often the case with its interpretation’.<sup>46</sup>

This would appear to be a distinct warning that one should not allow oneself to be drawn by the dramatic intensity of this variation and lose control, especially in tempo. In the fourth variation (starting at bar 81), although Cortot’s comment that ‘the rhythm needs to be gently (‘doucement’) balanced with the musical suggestions’<sup>47</sup> might imply tempo alteration in response to the new texture, there is no clear sign that more than imperceptible speeding up is required. Moreover, although there are no specific tempo indications for the last variation (starting at bar 102), Cortot is clearly averse to a ‘competition of anxious virtuosos who strive to confirm their technical abilities’.<sup>48</sup> Such a remark implies that the tempo should not be so fast as to turn the scale-like passages into a virtuosic display. Cortot does not comment that this tempo should be exactly the same as in the opening of the piece. However, taking into account the fact that he suggests the adoption of a relatively straightforward pace for the theme, the comment

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 12 n4: ‘Un engageant caractère de spirituelle désinvolture se doit d’animer le comportement mélodique délié de cette seconde variation, sans toutefois qu’une fâcheuse précipitation de la cadence fondamentale en vienne compromettre le subtil raffinement mélodique, au profit d’une quelconque démonstration de virtuosité anonyme.’

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 14 n11: ‘Le sentiment d’inquiétude pathétique dont s’anime l’émouvant caractère expressif de cette admirable variation mineure n’y doit pas susciter le déploiement d’exaltation dramatique dont s’accompagne trop fréquemment son interprétation.’

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 16 n13: ‘et la cadence doucement balancée de la proposition musicale’.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 19 n20: ‘que le concours du virtuose soucieux d’y témoigner des ressources d’une technique éprouvée’.

would appear to be sufficient recommendation to the performer that no significantly faster speed should be necessary for the fifth variation.

As with the observations on D 935 No. 2, tempo changes in performances of D 935 No. 3 have been commonly applied, especially for the fourth and fifth variations, and particular examples that demonstrate these practices will be discussed in the final chapter. Badura-Skoda, in his critical notes for the Wiener Urtext Edition, provides a clear indication about the performance of the fifth variation: 'This variation is often played *poco piu mosso*. Although Schubert did not specify a change of tempo, there can scarcely be any objection to the practice'.<sup>49</sup> Cortot's comments on the fourth and fifth variations do not recommend any perceptible change of speed, but nor do they contain his usual warnings for maintaining the same pace as held previously. It is possible that faster tempi for the last two variations were too common practices to mention and the absence of any contraindication or criticism could indicate that Cortot accepted them. On the other hand, his insistence upon the musical features of both episodes<sup>50</sup> could also imply that Schubert's change of texture is sufficient enough and, therefore, if tempo alterations are to be applied, they should only be imperceptible. Such an approach would echo Newman's assertion that a steady pulse should normally be maintained in Schubert's themes and variations.<sup>51</sup>

Finally, we can conclude that generally no tempo differences are advocated by Cortot in sections of ternary forms or between themes and variations, as evidenced in his editorial comments on Schubert's *Impromptus*. Although there are frequent warnings about upholding uniformity of tempo, there do

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<sup>49</sup> Wiener Urtext, *Impromptus D 935*, p. XI.

<sup>50</sup> For the fourth variation, see Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 16n13: 'le changement complet de physionomie expressive'; and *ibid.*, p. 17n14: 'sans toutefois avoir à s'y recommander d'une sonorité trop accusée'. For the fifth variation, see *ibid.*, p. 19n20: 'sonorités caressantes, dont les fuyantes arabesques s'inscrivent, au gré d'une aérienne fantaisie'.

<sup>51</sup> Newman, p. 539.

appear to be slight implications for tempo changes in some instances, such as in the middle section of D 935 No. 2 or in the fourth and fifth variation of D 935 No. 3. However, in the absence of detailed remarks the performer should assume that, if tempo changes are implied, they should be minimal. Although, Cortot's 1920 recording of D 935 No. 3 displays substantial tempo changes between the theme and the variations, his editorial comments could be interpreted as indicative of a shift towards modern principles of performance practice, or even towards self-criticism.

### **3.2.3 Tempo Flexibility**

As an extension of the subject of tempo modification and potentially relative to questions of phrasal and dynamic attenuation, Cortot's editions on Schubert's Impromptus give the opportunity to examine the applicability of flexibility in time as a form of *rubato*. Cortot's remarks and editorial additions on the score will be examined again in relation to ternary forms and theme and variations.

#### *Transitions between Main Sections (ABA)*

In two out of the three impromptus that follow a similar ternary structure, Cortot is consistent that flexibility in time might be applied in order to allow smooth transitions between principal sections, especially if there is a textural and emotional shift. Thus, we can see his indication *poco cedendo* in bars 106 and 163-164 of D 899 No. 4 and in bars 97-98 of D 935 No. 2.

The transitions at the end of bar 106 in D 899 No. 4 and bars 97-98 in D 935 No. 2 display textural similarities and the recommended flexibility-retardation in both instances leads to interesting conclusions. In both cases: a) there is

a prolongation of the dominant seventh chord of the key of the following section, interestingly enough in the first inversion (Fig.1-4); b) the last melodic note of the ending section is the same as the first melodic note of the entering one (Fig. 5-7); and c) there is a direct connection between an energetic section of quicker note-values and a more reflective episode. In other words, although harmonically and melodically the links are relatively smooth, the contrast in terms of character and texture is great and, therefore, flexibility in order to assist emotional attenuation can be appropriate.

**Figure 1 Schubert D 899/4 bars 105-106, Henle Edition**



**Figure 2 Schubert D 899/4 bars 105-106, Cortot's Edition (1960)**



Figure 3 Schubert D 935/2 bars 97-98, Henle Edition



Figure 4 Schubert D 935/2 bars 97-98, Cortot's Edition (1957)



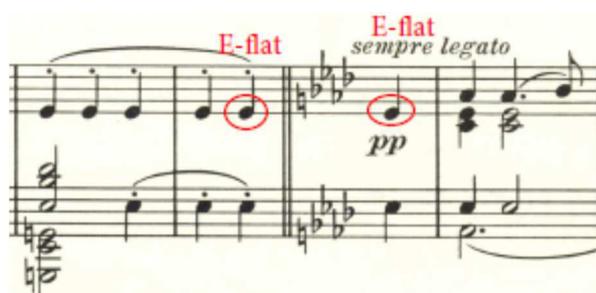
Figure 5 Schubert D 899/4 bar 106, Henle Edition



Figure 6 Schubert D 899/4 bar 107, Henle Edition



Figure 7 Schubert D 935/2 bars 97-99, Henle Edition



In both cases Cortot's *poco cedendo* does not mean a huge retardation, but rather an imperceptible flexibility in order to allow the lowest point of activity to be heard just before the beginning of the following section. Especially in the first case, his suggestion would also appear to reveal practices followed in editions that he had probably consulted, such as Lazare Lévy's edition, which indicated *rit.* in bar 106.<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, the transition in bars 163-164 of D 899 No. 4 comprises a slightly different case. At first, this time a reflective episode comes to an end and gives way to an energetic one. In addition, the subsequent bars (165-170), although returning to the figuration of the first section, still prolong

<sup>52</sup> Lévy-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 34. However, there is no indication for slowing down in bars 105-106 in the album of Schubert works which Cortot owned and is thought to contain his own annotations (Médiathèque Musicale Mahler – Cortot's Archive).

the dominant seventh chord with the right hand moving from the middle register of the keyboard towards the higher part, only to enter the reprise of the opening in bar 171 (Fig. 8-10). Cortot's *poco cedendo* (Fig. 11) points out the emotional attenuation of the C-sharp minor episode and the following textural shift, which, however, does not lead directly to the beginning of the upcoming episode (reprise), as in the previous transitions.

**Figure 8 Schubert D 899/4 bars 163-164, Henle Edition**



**Figure 9 Schubert D 899/4 bars 165-168, Henle Edition**

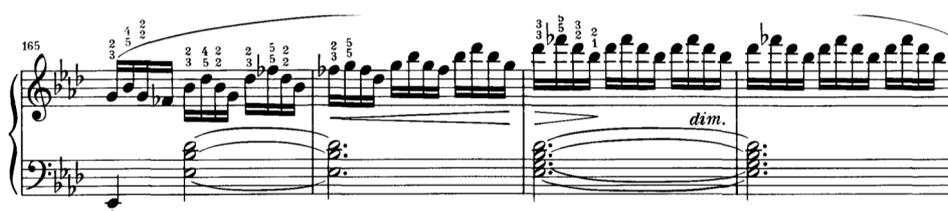


Figure 10 Schubert D 899/4 bars 169-171, Henle Edition



Figure 11 Schubert D 899/4 bars 163-164, Cortot's Edition (1960)



Cortot's perception of this somewhat indirect connection between sections is clearly reflected in his edition: once the texture of the section that is about to follow has been established, even though melodically and harmonically a few bars will be needed until it finds its way back, no retardation should be applied. Specific remarks that seem to confirm this approach are the indications *Tempo* in bar 165 and *senza rit.* in bar 171 (Fig. 12 and 13).

Figure 12 Schubert D 899/4 bars 165-166, Cortot's Edition (1960)



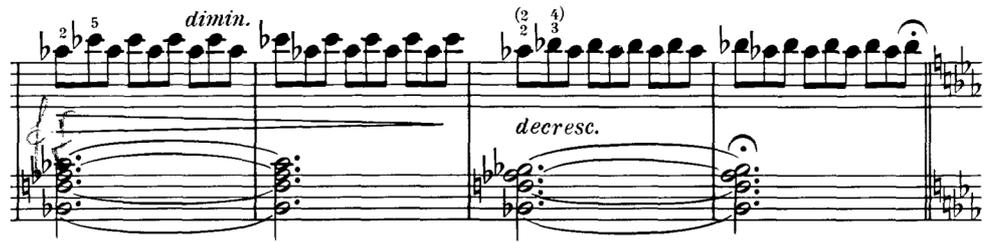
Figure 13 Schubert D 899/4 bars 170-171, Cortot's Edition (1960)



A similarly indirect connection between two main sections can also be seen before the reprise of the first section in D 899 No. 2. Specifically, bars 165-168 (Fig. 14) suggest a return in terms of texture (triplet quavers trembling around the restarting notes), but still with a four-bar prolongation of the dominant seventh chord until the triplets find their way back in bar 169. Cortot is again clearly against retardation in bar 168, although, this time, as will be discussed later, his interpretive decision might have been owed to an editorial mistake.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 9n14: 'ne pas céder ici à la tentation d'un ritardando de caractère sentimental sur ces deux mesures'. As will be discussed later, it is very likely that Cortot's interpretation in this transition was based on the omission of the pause-signs in the first edition of this impromptu, a practice that was followed also by later editions including Cortot's.

**Figure 14 Schubert D 899/2 bars 165-168, Henle Edition**



*Avoid the Habit*

In the E-flat major Impromptu especially, Cortot's view on flexibility of time in transitions between episodes, which do not suggest (great) changes in texture and character, is clear. Therefore, apart from his admonition against any 'sentimental' retardation in bar 168, with bars 50-51 (Fig. 15) the performer should also avoid any sign of slowing down.<sup>54</sup>

**Figure 15 Schubert D 899/2 bars 50-51, Henle Edition**



These remarks are not only to be perceived as warnings for maintaining the direction of phrasing and simplicity of character that Cortot detected in this piece. They can also stand as a form of direct or indirect criticism of

<sup>54</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 5n6: 'Se garder de tout ritardando dans l'énonciation de ces deux mesures amorçant la reprise du motif initial.'

interpretive practices, which were common before and during his time. Cortot's comments, in this 1960 edition, although produced by a performer from a late nineteenth-century background, highlight and emphasize the need for uniformity of tempo, contrary to the practices of voluntary tempo variation applied by performers of earlier times. However, even in more recent approaches, such interpretive habits do not seem to have lost authority. Badura-Skoda in the Wiener Urtext Edition of 1973 refers to these two passages from D 899 No. 2 as examples for occasional, yet necessary, tempo modifications,<sup>55</sup> whereas recordings from the second half of the twentieth century, some of them quite recent – such as those by Barenboim and Perahia –, demonstrate that flexibility in at least one of these passages is preferable to a metronomic execution.<sup>56</sup>

### *Within the Same Section*

Whereas bars 50-51 in D 899 No. 2 might clearly demonstrate Cortot's stance against freedom of tempo in a local transition within the same main section, this does not mean that flexibility should always be avoided in main sections of ABA forms. An interesting example is found in bars 24-30 of the A-flat major Impromptu, D 935 No. 2 (Fig. 16). After a decisive arrival in D-flat major (bar 24), the music seeks its way to return to the initial theme in A-flat major, which does not appear before bar 31. The intervening bars provide a tension suggesting harmonic and dynamic struggle and

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<sup>55</sup> Franz Schubert, *Impromptus D 899 (Op. 90)*, ed. Paul Badura-Skoda (Wien: Wiener Urtext Edition, 1973) p. VI.

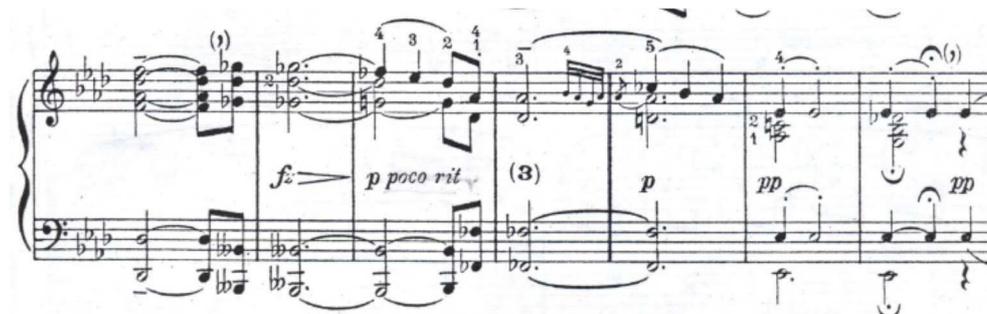
<sup>56</sup> Schnabel, in his 1950 recording (Music and Arts Programs of America, CD – 1175, 2005), plays both passages without slowing down. In more recent recordings, there is usually clear retardation only in bar 168 (Barenboim, Deutsche Grammophon – 02849 4158492 2 GGA, 1990; Pires, Deutsche Grammophon – 0289 457 5502 1, 1997), probably following the correction on the first edition's omission of the pause-signs. However, slowing down in bars 50-51 can still be heard in modern performances (Perahia, CBS – IM 37291, 1983; Zimerman, Deutsche Grammophon – 0289 423 6122 5, 1991).

indecision: a G-flat minor chord in the first inversion (bar 25), in loud context, is followed by a suddenly softened bar that tries to set up a cadence in D-flat minor (bar 26); and then an equally loud arrival of a D-flat minor chord, again in the unstable first inversion (bar 27), which through a sudden transformation (bar 28) leads to a perfect cadence in A-flat major (bars 29-30). Cortot's indications on the score are informative: there are comma signs in the last beat of bar 24, before the G-flat minor chord, and after the pause sign in bar 30, along with *poco rit.* in bar 26 (Fig. 17).

**Figure 16 Schubert D 935/2 bars 24-30, Henle Edition**



**Figure 17 Schubert D 935/2 bars 24-30, Cortot's Edition (1957)**



The fact that the slowing-down device engaged in bar 26 is not Cortot's habitual indication *poco cedendo*, next to the absence of any additional remark, could comprise sufficient evidence that here both an interpretive suggestion and a practice from earlier editions are revealed.<sup>57</sup> In addition, the lack of indication for a return to the initial tempo in bar 31 could also lead to ambiguous renditions of this section. It cannot be certain whether slowing down was intended merely for bar 26 or gradually from bar 26 to the end of the phrase in bar 30. However, the comma signs that encircle the whole passage provide a strong evidential argument for the second interpretive option. In whichever case, Cortot's suggestions can be comprehended as distinct signs that he considered this passage a point where the use of *rubato* would be applicable.

To sum up the investigation for ternary forms in the Impromptus, it can be reasonably concluded that, primarily, Cortot would advocate unmarked retardation-flexibility in order to assist natural and fluid transition between main sections. However, the exact places for the application of the device are chosen very carefully, taking into account the intensity of the ending episodes and the changes of character and texture. Imperceptible slowing-down might assist picking out complete attenuation and release for a passionate or vivid section, which gives way directly to a calmer one. On the contrary, when a calm episode is followed by a lively one, and the shift in texture does not immediately lead to the main theme of the latter, flexibility in tempo would be used to underline only the textural change and not the actual entrance of the new section. In addition, there is a clear distinction between passages where *rubato* is recommended or dissuaded, within the

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<sup>57</sup> The indication *poco rit.* in bar 26 can also be found in the version of D 935 No. 2 included in the album of Schubert's works that Cortot owned and used (Médiathèque Musicale Mahler – Cortot's Archive), as well as in Lévy's edition. This can be a sign that retardation was widely used in that passage by editors and performers during Cortot's time.

same main section. Retardations that would destroy the simplicity in phrasing are to be avoided, whereas some freedom in harmonically and emotionally complicated passages is advised. Although Cortot emerged from a performance tradition in which flexibility of tempo was a typical feature, his editorial comments approximate more to the needs and principles of modern performance, which more generally demand uniformity of tempo. As Cook and Leech-Wilkinson have suggested, it is not unusual to detect features of modern performance styles in performers of similar age (or even older) and background as Cortot. On the contrary, such a phenomenon confirms that different, or even contrasting, practices are equal options in the action of performance and have always been, to a variable extent, at the performer's disposal independently of stylistic direction or historical period.<sup>58</sup>

#### *Theme and Variations – Postludes*

In the B-flat major Impromptu, the question of freedom in tempo relates to the connections between the theme and the first variation and between the following variations. At the end of each episode Schubert included two bars, which, in most cases, texturally and harmonically suggested a conclusion rather than a link to the next episode. This lack of real transitions was further supported by: a double bar-line at the end of the theme; double bar-lines and pause-signs at the end of the first four variations; and a pause-sign at the end of the last variation. Although Schubert gave *ritardando* only at the postlude of the last variation, the question is whether flexibility of time would

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<sup>58</sup> See Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 129-131; and Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 6, paragraph 25, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap6.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap6.html) (accessed: August 15, 2015). Leech-Wilkinson refers to Raoul Pugno as an example of a late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century pianist that played in a manner similar to modern performers.

also be appropriate in the other endings, in order to underline the sense of conclusion and the withdrawn emotional intensity of each section.

Cortot's remarks and additions on the score clearly suggest that the completion of each episode should be highlighted through flexibility of tempo. At the end of the theme, he maintains that the closing bars (bars 17-18) should ensure the 'melodic attenuation' of this section,<sup>59</sup> through small retardation, indicated by *poco cedendo* on the score. Similar interpretive suggestions are also provided for the postludes of each variation: Cortot adds *rit.* at the end of the first variation (bar 36); *poco cedendo* and a comma sign at the last bar of the second variation (bar 54); *rit.* and a comma sign at the end of the third variation (bar 80); and a breathing sign at the last bar of the fourth variation (bar 101). He did not add anything at the end of the fifth variation (bar 119), since he presumably found Schubert's *ritardando* before the pause-sign sufficiently effective.

Although these indications show that slowing down would be necessary in order to accentuate the structural role of these postludes, it is worth noting that at the end of the fourth variation no significant retardation is implied. This postlude is, actually, the only one that leads more smoothly to the next variation, as it ends on a prolongation of the dominant seventh chord of the key of the following episode. Although it is inconceivable to imagine that Cortot would have recommended a strictly *a tempo* execution, this passage is the place where, in all probability, the slightest tempo flexibility could be required. In addition, Cortot's indications display similarities with

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<sup>59</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 9n2: 'Bien assurer le caractère délicatement transitoire de ces deux mesures, émanation de plus en plus atténuée du dernier élément mélodique du thème.'

suggestions found in Lévy's edition of this impromptu in which slowing down was recommended at the end of all the variations apart from the fourth.<sup>60</sup>

The particular structure of this Impromptu does not allow generalization of the interrelationships between themes and variations in Schubert's music. The seamless transitions in the second movement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy (of which more in Chapter Four) require a different approach, in Cortot's view, and freedom of tempo is not always recommended. However, the question of slowing down at the end of each variation in this impromptu could relate also to other issues of performance practice, such as: a) whether Schubert's choice of *diminuendo* instead of *decrescendo* could potentially have an effect on tempo flexibility in these postludes; and b) whether the presence of pause-signs could imply that retardation is meant to be applied.

Regarding the first issue, scholars and performers of Schubert's music have given special significance to *diminuendo* in Schubert's notation. Specifically, Levin, following Dürr's remarks from the *Neue Schubert-Ausgabe*, maintains that Schubert's *diminuendo* should be considered a combined indication calling for both dynamic and rhythmic attenuation.<sup>61</sup> In this impromptu it may be possible that Schubert used *diminuendo* to imply retardation. It appears at the end of the theme and of all variations apart from the third and the fifth, where *decrescendo* is used instead. However, at the end of the fifth variation *ritardando* is also given, which would imply that all variations must finish with retardation except for the third one. Such an interpretation would, in effect, feel strange, as musically this is the most passionate of all the variations and

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<sup>60</sup> Lévy gave *rit.* at the end of Var. I, *poco rit.* at the end of Var. II and *rit.* at the Var. III.

<sup>61</sup> Levin, p. 727n23.

certain emotional release would be necessary for the transition to the ethereal fourth variation.

Cortot's suggestions do not provide proof of his considering there to be any difference in the meaning of *diminuendo* and *decrescendo*. Slowing down is suggested whenever emotional attenuation is needed and, especially, in order to accentuate the structural completion of all episodes in this piece. Particularly enlightening is the ending of the fourth variation since, although Schubert's *diminuendo* could have been an additional reason for flexibility in tempo, Cortot's indications imply only the smallest modification, if any at all.

Regarding the role of pause-signs, Cortot would appear to be more consistent, displaying also differences from remarks found in more recent studies. As Newman maintains, although Schubert often used pause-signs in relation to tempo changes, it cannot be taken for granted that retardation must be included in every passage leading to a pause-sign, especially when this is not followed by an *a tempo* indication.<sup>62</sup> However, Cortot appears to consider pause-signs as possible indicators for slowing down. This is evident in his suggestions at the ends of almost all the variations of D 935 No. 3. Such an approach could possibly explain the absence of any indication for slowing down at the end of the fourth variation, since the slightest inflection of tempo could have already been implied by Schubert's pause-sign in bar 101. Finally, a possible connection between slowing down and pause-signs in Schubert could further explain Cortot's rejection of any manner of tempo alteration at the end of the middle section of D 899 No. 2, following the absence of pause-signs in his edition, as discussed subsequently.

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<sup>62</sup> Newman, pp. 531-533.

Cortot's suggested retardations at the end of the theme and the variations are clear signs for the particular structure of the B-flat major Impromptu. It is not always the case, though, that all sorts of transitions in works of similar form must be accompanied by similar flexibility in tempo. On the other hand, the interpretation of these endings provides strong evidence that Cortot advocates slowing down before pause-signs, in instances where emotional attenuation and structural completion are to be achieved. On the contrary, Cortot is not as insistent on a distinction between *diminuendo* and *decrescendo*, a matter that is frequently debated in the performance of Schubert's music.

#### **3.2.4 Structure – Repeats**

The matter of repeats normally applies to ternary forms and to theme and variations, and Cortot's editions of the Impromptus can be, in places, as enlightening as they are contradictory. The absence of indications with reference to the repeats in D 899 No. 4 and D 935 No. 3 might safely lead to the assumption that all repeats are to be played. However, in D 935 No. 2 Cortot maintains that the repeat of the second part of the trio (bars 59-90) is 'not recommended in the interest of expression in this work'.<sup>63</sup> Such a remark, although it may appear somewhat arbitrary, would seem to relate to the practice of omitting repeats in dance forms or variations, which was frequently applied by pianists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. One of the reasons behind such a practice would seem to be connected with the mechanical limitations of the recording technology of that time. Before the introduction of the vinyl discs of 33 rpm, around the middle

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<sup>63</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 6n9: 'Cette reprise de la seconde partie du Trio n'est pas à conseiller, dans l'intérêt expressif de l'œuvre.'

of the 1940s, performances that were recorded on wax cylinders or shellac discs of 78 rpm, during both the acoustic (late 1890s until mid-1920s) and the electrical era (1925 onwards), suffered from significant time restrictions. Discs of even the late stages of the 78s era could not record music lasting more than four and a half minutes on each side, and therefore performers usually had to apply serious cuts to longer pieces, especially in repeats.<sup>64</sup>

In general, we can maintain that Cortot does not usually recommend the omission of repeats, as shown in most of the cases in the editions of the *Impromptu*. A similar approach is also followed in the editions of the *Moment musical* No. 3 and the *Ländler* D 790, as well as in his recordings of these pieces where the repeats are played consistently.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, Cortot's recording of D 935 No. 3 (1920), which was actually a piano roll, comprises an interesting case as far as the treatment of repeats is concerned, since it is true that piano rolls did not impose significant time limitations, and therefore the performers were at ease with the length of the recorded pieces.<sup>66</sup> However, in this recording Cortot omitted all the repeats apart from those in the fifth variation, which is notably the fastest and shortest one, as if he was not free enough to fit in all the repeats of the piece.<sup>67</sup> Such a performance decision, along with Cortot's suggestion for

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<sup>64</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 3, paragraphs 19 and 82-86, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html) (Accessed: August 13, 2015). Also see Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>65</sup> As will be shown in Chapter Five, in the early recording of Schubert's *Ländler* D 790 (1937) Cortot omits the repeat of the first part in the eleventh dance. Such a performance decision would be difficult to explain, since it is not followed in the 1951 version. However, the time restrictions of the 78-rpm discs may provide a logical reason, as the playing of this repeat would add an extra eight to nine seconds in a performance that lasts a little less than nine minutes, which means almost precisely twice the limit of four minutes and a half. The fact that Cortot may have had to stop the recording session for changing discs or sides after the first four and a half minutes is very likely, as that moment coincides with the ending of the sixth dance, a place that would invite a natural breathing even in an uninterrupted, concert-like, performance of D 790.

<sup>66</sup> Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 112 and 120.

<sup>67</sup> Cook has similarly wondered why Carl Reinecke decided to make significant cuts in his 1905 piano roll of Mozart's Rondo 'Alla Turca'; see Cook, *Beyond the Score*, p. 120.

omitting the repeat in the second part of the trio of D 935 No. 2 without providing further explanation, can be very revealing about how arbitrarily and freely performers of the early twentieth century decided to ignore repeats in their performances. Therefore, the omission of repeats could be considered rather an intentional artistic practice of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performers than merely the consequence of certain technological limitations.<sup>68</sup>

### **3.2.5 Notation**

#### **3.2.5.1 Rhythmic Alteration**

In this section, I wish to examine the question of the execution of dotted rhythms against triplets, as they appear in the third variation of Impromptu D 935 No. 3, which, notably, was not discussed in Cortot's edition. The interpretation of this texture generally varies in piano works of the nineteenth century, and particularly in the instance of Schubert it has been a continuing matter of debate between scholars and performers. I refer briefly back to Badura-Skoda's and Bilson's opinion that the assimilation practice is generally held to be an appropriate rendition for this notation. By contrast, Montgomery asserts that such an execution can only be realized as a means of technical facilitation. Moreover, Giesecking suggests a more flexible approach, permitting the performer to decide the method of execution, according to the expressive particularities of a specific passage. In the absence of any remark on this figuration in Cortot's edition of this particular impromptu, his recording of the work (1920), along with his editions and recordings of comparable pieces provide us with compelling evidence of his

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<sup>68</sup> For a relevant discussion, see Brendel, p. 160.

approach, in performance. Written evidence that casts light on Cortot's most probable interpretation can be found in his commentary to the edition of Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantaisie* (1939). Here Cortot maintains that in the coda, dotted rhythms 'are used in a traditional way to indicate triplet rhythms'.<sup>69</sup> This clearly gives weight to the assimilation theory. If this comment is not sufficient to conclude that Cortot would have applied this same approach in the third variation of D 935 No. 3, in my view he would most surely not have been averse to the notion of assimilation.

On the other hand, Cortot's recording of the impromptu provides evidence of concise synchronization between the semiquaver of the dotted figure and the last quaver of the triplets in most instances. However, in the same recording there are also examples where simple quavers of the melody are played as literal dotted figures, with the last melodic note clearly placed after the triplet of the accompaniment, corresponding with early twentieth-century practices heard in historic recordings, such as overdotting.<sup>70</sup> Cortot's treatment of the note-values in the recording cannot be taken as unquestioned evidence of his approach to this impromptu, especially at the time at which he wrote his editorial comments. The recording and edition of this particular composition derived from significantly different periods of Cortot's life and therefore, quite understandably, there are many instances of opposition and inconsistency throughout.

In attempting to establish the *via media* that I believe Cortot is suggesting, and bearing in mind that: a) he applied many differing approaches, witnessed in both his recordings and his editions; b) in this impromptu, specifically, he has decided not to comment on this issue at all; and c) a certain freedom in the execution of dotted rhythms that we hear in recordings

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<sup>69</sup> Cited in Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 223.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.70-93.

of the early twentieth century could potentially be traced back to the nineteenth century,<sup>71</sup> so we might reasonably conclude that Cortot's stance would be comparable to that of Giesecking. Cortot most certainly appears to favour a flexible interpretation based on other factors, such as tempo and texture. A clear similarity in density of texture and tempo, found between the third variation of Schubert's B-flat major Impromptu and the coda from Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantaisie* (Fig. 18-19), might suffice to suggest that Cortot would most probably have approved of the assimilation practice in both compositions. However, the absence of a specific editorial remark in the impromptu might also be a reminder to the reader that such an ambiguous figuration would, potentially, vary between different performances.

**Figure 18 Chopin *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, Op. 61 bar 244**



**Figure 19 Schubert D 935/3 bar 65**



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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

### 3.2.5.2 A Comparison of *Urtext* and Cortot's Editions

The scores in Cortot's editions frequently display differences when compared with the *Urtext*-labelled editions now available to us. By means of the following analysis, I hope to emphasize how significant the subtle and suggestive manner of Cortot's reproduction of the scores in his editions can be, to encourage the effective performance of Schubert's Impromptus.

#### *Early Editions and Suggestions*

Very often, it would seem that in Cortot's editions Schubert's texts contain editorial mistakes, which, while they may originate in earlier and/or erroneous editions, can at the same time be indicative of Cortot's personal interpretation of a particular passage. Frequently such errors can be traced back to specific editions of the Impromptus, but other times not. In the Impromptu D 899 No. 2 there are instances where an error can be found in an edition that Cortot may have consulted, but it certainly might also be a deliberate interpretive suggestion on his part. An example of this practice appears in bars 9 and 17. Both the Henle and Wiener *Urtext* editions give *forte* in bar 9, whilst no indication is given in bar 17. Cortot gives *mezzo-forte* in bar 9 and *forte* in bar 17. This would seem to infer that the climax should be reached only when the theme appears in the highest register and for the last time before moving to the E-flat minor episode (bar 25). Although this might appear to be a reasonable suggestion as a gradual dynamic plan, in this particular instance Cortot might also have been following a practice found in some earlier edition. In the version of the impromptu contained in the album of Schubert's works (Peters Editions), which Cortot owned and

most probably annotated,<sup>72</sup> *forte* was given in both bars 9 and 17. Therefore, Cortot may have simply intended to demonstrate that the same dynamic indication in these two bars should not necessarily be interpreted in the same way.

A similar example can be found in the note-values of the inner voice (second and third beats) in the main theme throughout the middle section of the same impromptu. Cortot's edition always notates the second and third beats as a quaver-triplet, and a quaver followed by a quaver-rest, respectively. He also joins them with a slur that ends on a *staccato* dot for the last quaver. However, by contrast, the *Urtext*-labelled editions notate these beats as a quaver-triplet and a crotchet, except for bar 90, where the third beat appears as a quaver with a quaver-rest, and always without slurs or dots (Fig. 20 and 21).

**Figure 20 Schubert D 899/2 bar 83, Henle Edition**



<sup>72</sup> Accessible in Médiathèque Musicale Mahler – Cortot's Archive.



Figure 22 Schubert D 899/2 bar 83, Liszt's Edition (1868-1874)



In addition, it would appear that Cortot definitely wished to secure the lightness of this motif, principally where it appears as a middle voice, since when the motif acquires a leading thematic role (bars 157-158 and 161-162) his notation betrays a distinct similarity with the notation in the critical editions. However, the added slur with a dot on the last crotchet would suggest that, even here, this motif should never lose its uplifting quality (Fig. 23 and 24).

Figure 23 Schubert D 899/2 bars 158-159, Henle Edition



Figure 24 Schubert D 899/2 bars 157-159, Cortot's Edition (1960)



Still concentrating on the same passage, the connection between bars 158 and 159 also presents an interesting example. Cortot provides a *crescendo* hairpin, starting from the end of bar 157 and leading to *subito piano* in bar 159. While such indications do not appear in either Henle or the Wiener Urtext editions (Fig. 23 and 24), in the album of Schubert's works in Cortot's collection there is *piano* in bar 159, showing that this practice was prevalent in editions during Cortot's time, or before. As a performance suggestion, this indication is well reasoned, owing to Schubert's *crescendo* in bar 160 and the unusual modulation from B-minor to E-flat minor. In fact, recordings from Cortot's time, or even today, reveal that this practice must have been widely adopted by performers.<sup>76</sup>

### *Erroneous Editions*

<sup>76</sup> Edwin Fischer's 1938 recording (Documents 290855, 2010) could be a typical example from Cortot's time. Barenboim's 1990 recording (Deutsche Grammophon) also demonstrates the survival of such interpretation today.

Cortot's editions also contain mistakes, which reveal earlier erroneous editorial practices, without necessarily implying a special interpretive suggestion. This is evident in the middle section of D 899 No. 4, where many of the errors, which Badura-Skoda spotted in older editions, also appear on the score of Cortot's edition.<sup>77</sup> A typical example is found in the passage in bars 116-118, where Cortot gives accents on the top right-hand notes, possibly following earlier editions that had erroneously interpreted Schubert's quaver-rests in the right hand's middle voice for the second and third beats of bar 116.<sup>78</sup> The fact that Cortot did not provide similar accents in equivalent places later in the episode (bars 147-154), where the dynamic climax is even more pronounced, might provide ample grounds for the interpreter to assume that, here, it is a matter of error rather than specific suggestion.

A case of an interpretive suggestion, owing to an earlier editorial error, is displayed at the end of bar 168 in D 899 No. 2, where all critical editions give pause-signs, which are not displayed in the Cortot edition (Fig. 25 and 26). Although Cortot provides an additional comment that no retardation, or other means of tempo fluctuation, should be applied,<sup>79</sup> it is most probable that a version without pause-signs was known to him, since such pause-signs were missing in the first print (1827) and also in later editions of this impromptu.<sup>80</sup> Thus, although Cortot's recommendation that there should be no freedom of tempo might appear to be a logical execution owing to the simplicity of the character in question, it cannot be certain that the advice

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<sup>77</sup> Wiener Urtext, *Impromptus D 899*, p. XI.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 9n14.

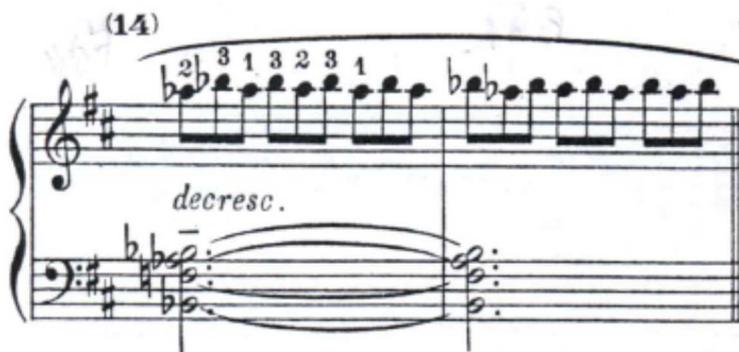
<sup>80</sup> Franz Schubert, *Werke für Klavier zu zwei Händen – Band 5 – Klavierstücke II*, ed. Christa Landon and Walther Dürr (Kassel, Basel, London: Bärenreiter, 1984), p. 163. Notably, there are no pause-signs displayed in bar 168 in the version of this impromptu included in the album of Schubert's works which belonged to Cortot (Médiathèque Musicale Mahler – Cortot's Archive).

would have been the same had Cortot been aware of the existence of the pause-signs.<sup>81</sup>

**Figure 25 Schubert D 899/2 bar 168, Henle Edition**



**Figure 26 Schubert D 899/2 bars 167-168, Cortot's Edition (1960)**



### **Deliberate Alterations to Schubert's Text**

Cortot's interpretive suggestions are more clearly shown in cases where an error seems not to have been derived from another edition, but is rather the result of his editorial intervention. Although an apparently minor remark, an important example that underlines Cortot's editorial process can be found in bar 110 of D 935 No. 3 (fifth variation). Whereas in the *Urtext*-labelled

<sup>81</sup> As was shown earlier, Cortot often suggested retardation before pause-signs.

editions, the first note of the right hand in this bar appears as a quaver with a wedge sign, in Cortot's edition it appears as a semiquaver followed by a semiquaver rest. This modification of the text would imply a logical, yet rather self-evident, suggestion for the articulation and uplifting gesture of that note. Yet the extent of Cortot's insistence on this notation can be witnessed in his own annotation to the Lazare Lévy edition of the same piece, held in his collection. Although Lévy's edition gives the first right-hand note of bar 110 as a quaver, Cortot had 'corrected' this, turning it into a semiquaver plus a semiquaver-rest.<sup>82</sup> This example shows that Cortot's intention was, primarily, to employ this notation as a means to describe particular features of a suggested execution, even if this might lead to an alteration of Schubert's text.

### *Breaking Phrases*

Phrasing is an issue that is usually highlighted throughout Cortot's intervention in his editions of the Impromptus. This is particularly evident in the modulating, choral-like passage in bars 23-30 of D 899 No. 4 and in the coda of D 935 No. 3 (bars 120-128). Cortot's suggested phrasing in both examples, using either slurs or comma signs, implies emotional attenuation through the breaking of phrases into gradually smaller portions. In the first example, the main difference between the *Urtext*-labelled and Cortot editions is found in bars 27-30, since in the previous bars the descending lines leading to unexpected cadences (bars 25 and 27) are less doubtful. Cortot's slurs appear from the second beat of bar 27 up to the first beat of bar 29; from the second beat of bar 29 up to the first beat of bar 30; and,

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<sup>82</sup> Cortot's annotations on the Lazare Lévy edition were accessed in the private collection of C.P. Carambelas-Sgourdas in Athens.

finally, in the last two beats of bar 30. However, by contrast, the critical editions give one slur from the second beat of bar 27 up to the third beat of bar 28 and finally one slur for bars 29 and 30 (Fig.27-30). Cortot's suggestion for breaking the phrase into smaller pieces would appear to be an effective way of enunciating the unexpected emergence of the actual tonality of the piece, for the first time (A-flat major), in bar 31.

**Figure 27 Schubert D 899/4 bars 23-27, Henle Edition**



**Figure 28 Schubert D 899/4 bars 28-30, Henle Edition**



Figure 29 Schubert D 899/4 bars 23-27, Cortot's Edition (1960)

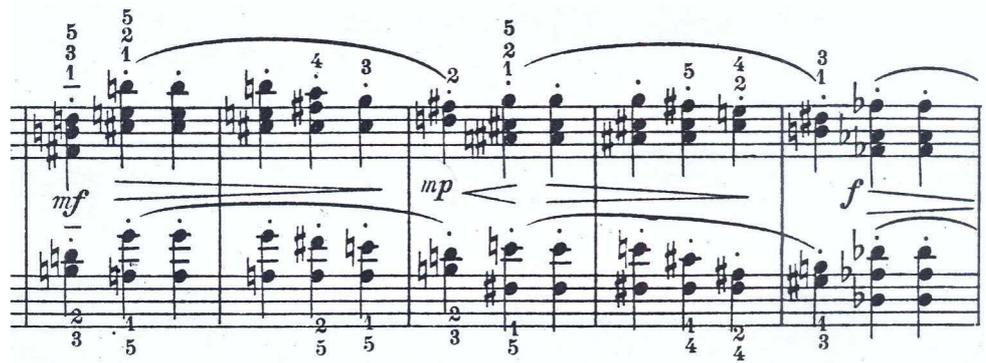
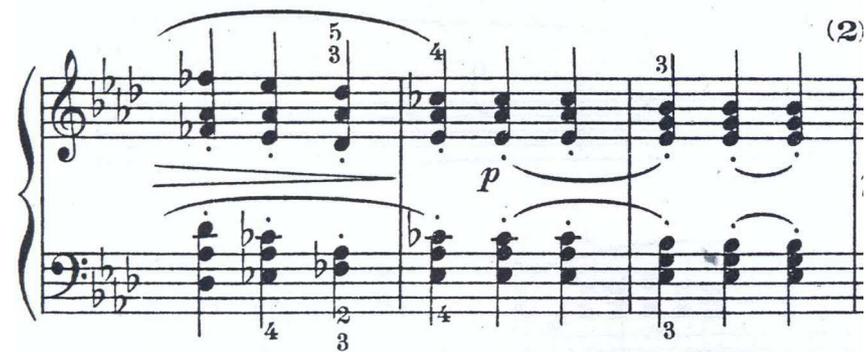


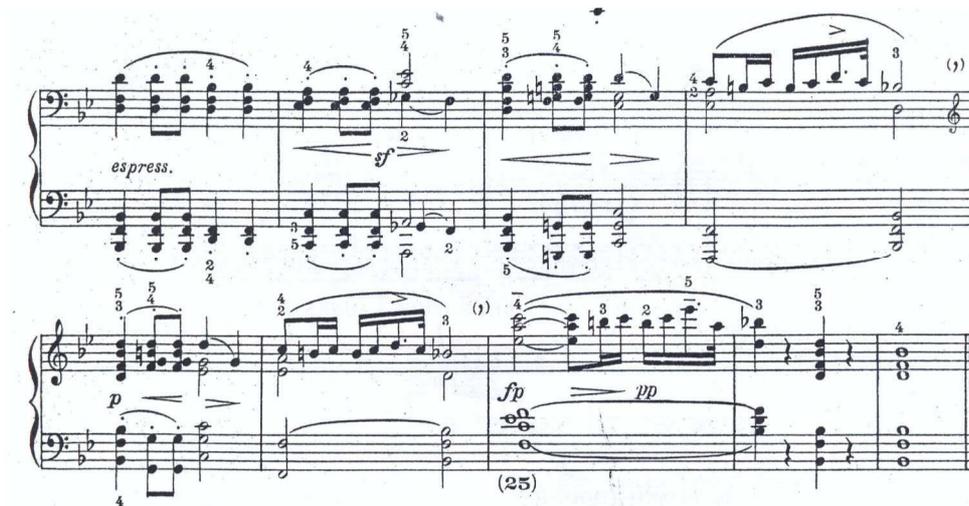
Figure 30 Schubert D 899/4 bars 28-30, Cortot's Edition (1960)



Similarly, in the coda to the B-flat major Impromptu, the breathing signs, which Cortot gives at the end of bars 123 and 125, might be held to imply that the phrasing of this epilogue can be structured as follows: a four-bar phrase in bars 120-123, which presents a complete version of the main thematic element; a two bar-phrase in bars 124-125, as a first attempt at closure, echoing the last two bars of the previous phrase; and finally, an actual closure in bars 126-128, which echoes the conclusive bar of the last complete statement of the theme (Fig. 31). Cortot's phrasing plan would suggest an interpretation of this section, as finally dissolving in its own material, which, whilst it might have been implied by Schubert in his use of

gradually smaller portions of the same theme,<sup>83</sup> was not entirely supported by his slurring. On the other hand, Cortot's phrasing underlines the sense of emotional release, which Schubert had already suggested in his indication *Più Lento* (bar 120) and in the rests in the penultimate bar of the piece.

**Figure 31 Schubert D 935/3 bars 120-128, Cortot's Edition (1957)**



### *Dynamically Gradual Attenuation*

Similarly to the gradually dissolving phrases, Cortot's editorial indications would, in some cases, appear to suggest a gradual attenuation of dynamics, even if this was not necessarily implied by Schubert, as is evidenced in the *Urtext*-labelled editions. Such an approach becomes apparent in the closure of the A-section in D 899 No. 4 (bars 99-107) and in the return of the D-flat major theme of the trio in D 935 No. 2 (bars 69-79).

In the first case, the critical editions, after noting *forte* in bar 99, give the indication *piano* in bar 103. This is then followed by a *decrescendo* in bar

<sup>83</sup> For more information about the use of this practice in Schubert's compositions, see Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 46.

105, only to return once more to *piano* in the beginning of the middle section (bar 107). As opposed to this, Cortot gives no *piano* in bar 103, but a *diminuendo* hairpin in bar 104, a *decrescendo* in bar 105, *poco cedendo* in bar 106 and, finally, *piano* in bar 107 (Table 1). Cortot's indications clearly suggest a smooth link between the first and the middle sections, both dynamically and rhythmically. His suggested dynamic plan, although it might lose the possibility of *subito piano* in bar 103, might well be interpreted as continuous attenuation, which will not reach its lowest point until the arrival of the next episode.

**Table 1 Dynamics given in Schubert D 899/4 bars 99-107, Henle and Cortot's Editions**

Bar Number	Henle	Cortot
99	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>
103	<i>p</i>	none
104	none	<i>diminuendo</i> (hairpin)
105	<i>decrescendo</i>	<i>decrescendo</i>
107	<i>p</i>	<i>p</i>

In the second example, a similar intervention is displayed, despite the consistency between Cortot's edition and critical editions, in giving *fortissimo* in bar 69, the *fz*'s in bars 69-73 and *decrescendo* in bar 77. According to the *Urtext*-labelled editions, after *fortissimo* in bar 69, *piano* is given in bar 75, without *diminuendo* being preceded. By contrast, Cortot already gives *diminuendo* from bar 71, and continues with *mezzo-forte* in the upper part of bar 73, a *diminuendo* sign in bar 74 and *mezzo-piano* in bar 75, which, through the *decrescendo* in bar 77, leads to *piano* for the reprise of the trio (bar 79) (Table 2).

**Table 2 Dynamics given in Schubert D 935/2 bars 69-79, Henle and Cortot's Editions**

Bar number	Henle	Cortot
69	<b><i>ff</i></b>	<b><i>ff</i></b>
71	none	<i>diminuendo</i>
73	none	<b><i>mf</i></b>
74	none	<i>diminuendo</i> (hairpin)
75	<b><i>p</i></b>	<b><i>mp</i></b>
77	<i>decrescendo</i>	<i>decrescendo</i>
79	none	<b><i>p</i></b>

This suggestion might be taken as a subtle calculation of dynamics appropriate to the harmonic structure of the trio, where again the lowest point, dynamically, is meant to be achieved, only just before the beginning of a new phrase. Similarly to the previous example, a possible *subito piano* in bar 75 is rejected, although on this occasion the absence of ***fz***'s in bar 74 would prepare for the smoother arrival of a soft nuance. These two suggested dynamic plans would appear to reveal a general tendency in Cortot towards a gradual attenuation in ending phrases, wherever these follow strong developments and are to lead to quieter episodes. Especially interesting is Cortot's rejection of *subito piano* as rather too irregular, or perhaps inappropriately Beethovenian, for the sensitivity of such passages in Schubert's Impromptus

Notation in Cortot's editions of the Impromptus, apart from providing a revealing source for the study of practices followed by performers and editions of his time, might be perceived as an eloquent manner of substantiating his own views on performance issues, which remain subject to continuing debate. Although there is no shortage of written analysis, most frequently Cortot's musical signs and terms on the main score constitute an important commentary in themselves. This is particularly evident in cases

where literal descriptions could not deliver as clear messages as those provided by specific annotations before the eyes of the performer, especially in terms of articulation, phrasing and dynamics.

### 3.2.6 Technique

As I will demonstrate more fully in the analysis of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, Cortot's commentary usually underpins his challenge to the performer to avoid virtuosic display in Schubert's music. In the Impromptu, such an approach would also appear pertinent to very particular decisions to be taken by the performer on tempo and sound quality. Typical examples in this consideration are the opening sections of the Impromptu D 899 numbers 2 and 4, and the fifth variation from D 935 No. 3. Cortot's comment on the execution of the latter emphasizes his underlying belief: the performer, who hopes to convey the 'enchantment' and poetic quality of this part of the music,<sup>84</sup> 'should not try to confirm his technical abilities', but must become a 'musician-Ariel'.<sup>85</sup> Such a comment, as previously observed, would appear to be an intentional admonition to the (eager) performer that a not very fast tempo should be adopted in this variation. A tendency toward restraint is supported by further decisions on tempo advised generally in the commentary to this impromptu. A similar approach was followed in D 899 No. 4, where Cortot had warned that the tempo indication was *Allegretto* and not *Presto vivace*.

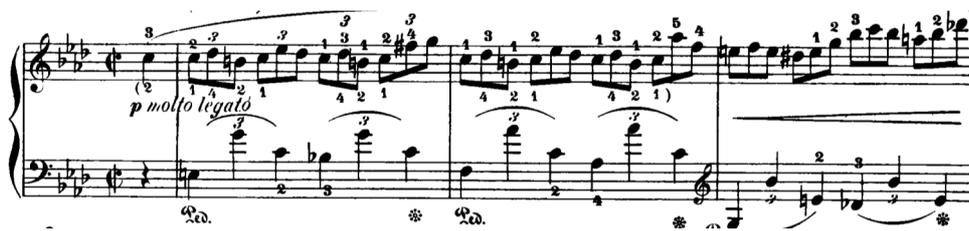
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<sup>84</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 19 n20: 'Il est à peine besoin de souligner à quelles subtiles exigences poétiques se devront d'obéir les prestes égrègements de ces gammes glissantes et de ces arpèges arachnéens qui, mieux que le concours du virtuose soucieux d'y témoigner des ressources d'une technique éprouvée, semblent ici devoir requérir la présence d'une sorte d'Ariel-Musicien illusoire, dispensateur d'enchantements sonores appelés à transcender les données purement digitales de l'exécution sans défauts.'

<sup>85</sup> It is very likely that Cortot refers to Ariel, the airy spirit from Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*.

In the E-flat major Impromptu, the means of avoiding inappropriate virtuosic demonstration is to be achieved through specific attention to the actual quality of the sound. Cortot quotes Lazare Lévy's editorial remark that an over-articulated execution of the triplets of the right hand would harm the charm and expression of this motif, which should not 'cease, at any time, to be melodic'.<sup>86</sup> In addition, Cortot points to an interesting textural similarity between this particular impromptu and Chopin's Etude Op. 25 No. 2 (Fig. 32 and 33). Notably, in the Cortot editions of both pieces, we find the same remark denoting that the overriding objective is the actual suppression of any trace of overt virtuosity in favour of the theme's 'charm, its winged character and its aristocratic grace'.<sup>87</sup>

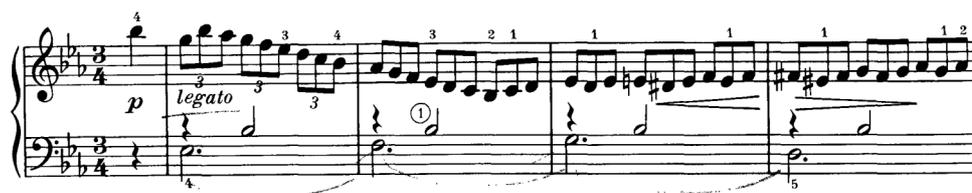
**Figure 32 Chopin Etude Op. 25/2 bars 1-3**



<sup>86</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 3 n1: 'Lazare-Lévy, dans son excellente révision de ces Impromptus, fait remarquer, avec justesse, que « l'articulation exagérée des doigts ne peut que nuire au charme et à l'expression » de cette première idée « qui ne doit jamais cesser d'être mélodique.»'

<sup>87</sup> Frédéric Chopin, *12 Études, opus 25*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert – Collection Maurice Senart, 1916), p. 13 and Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 3 n1: 'supprimer l'apparence de la virtuosité... son charme, son caractère ailé, la grâce aristocratique'.

Figure 33 Schubert D 899/2 bars 1-4



With regard to the Impromptu D 899 No. 4, however, Cortot's analysis of technical issues might also invite comparison between the response of modern instruments and the instruments of Schubert's time. The main technical issue for the opening of the piece, according to Cortot's remarks in his edition, as well as in his *Principes Rationnels*, is the repetition of the same keys with different fingers,<sup>88</sup> and especially the substitution between the thumb and index, or third finger. Cortot maintains that the practice of 'finger dexterity and flexibility could allow an execution without rhythmical inaccuracy and clumsiness, potentially caused by the successive displacements of the hand in different positions'.<sup>89</sup> Additionally, an essential technical point that is emphasized is a close contact between the fingers and the keys,<sup>90</sup> in order to ensure a clear and controlled articulation without undue heaviness. This analysis most certainly underlines the degree to which the features of keyboards of Schubert's time might be a contributory factor to the technical peculiarities of specific textures, when these are played on modern instruments. As Bilson maintains, passages of light and

<sup>88</sup> For further details, see Cortot, *Rational Principles*, pp. 18-19 in comparison with Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 14n1.

<sup>89</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 14 n1: 'On y mettra au premier plan, l'étude des substitutions de doigts sur les mêmes touches, dont la dextérité et la souplesse conjuguées conditionnent la qualité d'une exécution qui se doit de supprimer totalement la tentation du heurt rythmique involontairement provoqué par les déplacements successifs de la main sur les positions constitutives de la formule thématique.'

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Effectuer la substitution du pouce et du second doigt au contact immédiat des touches qui leur sont dévolues, et s'exercer, de même manière, sur toutes les propositions ultérieures de cet argument générateur.'

rapidly repeated notes could be executed more easily on Viennese pianos of the nineteenth century because their light action and single escapement system had the facility to prevent the clumsiness that heavy actions can cause in modern instruments.<sup>91</sup> Cortot's suggestion for the proximity between fingers and keys is actually critical in practice for the precision of repeated notes, given that on the heavy keys of modern pianos, the rapid movement of the fingers from a close distance leads to greater sound control, which is essential for the momentum of the quick speed and soft context of this delicate passage.

The predominantly intimate writing of the Impromptus would appear to present few significant technical problems by comparison with other works of Schubert, such as the sonatas and the 'Wanderer' Fantasy. However, where Cortot might appear to the reader all too frequently, to insist upon close technical analyses, which appear almost disproportionate to the task, it is my belief that this emphasizes the principle educational purpose of Cortot's editions.

### **3.2.7 Expressive Devices**

Cortot's editorial remarks and indications on the score illustrate his concerns about the treatment of different types of expressive devices in Schubert's music in performance. Cortot frequently appears to take note of the particular acoustic features of the modern piano in his interpretation of notation, purposely written for instruments of very different sound capabilities. Regarding the treatment of the Impromptus, I have identified

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<sup>91</sup> Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music', pp.267-269. Also see Robert Winter, 'Orthodoxies, Paradoxes, and Contradictions: Performance Practices in Nineteenth-Century Piano Music', *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, ed. Larry R. Todd (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 28.

four principle areas of discussion: a) adjustment of loud dynamics; b) non-literal execution of accents; c) articulation; and d) pedalling.

### 3.2.7.1 Loud Dynamics on the Modern Piano

The most common remarks that occur in Cortot's editions concern the careful and sensitive rendition of Schubert's loud dynamics, especially taking into account the register and response of the instrument, and the thickness of texture(s).<sup>92</sup> Such concern is clearly emphasized in instances where Cortot suggests that particularly powerful indications need to be executed as softer nuances in order to elicit a better quality of sound. Examples in which such suggestions are logical, expressively, and/or helpful, technically, are found in: a) bar 103 of D 899 No. 2 and its equivalents (Fig. 34), where Cortot maintains that the interpretation of **ffz** as **fz** will assist in obtaining the appropriate level of sonority for the inherent dissonance to emerge;<sup>93</sup> and b) the second part of the fifth variation in D 935 No. 3 (bar 110), where he replaces Schubert's *forte* with *mezzo-forte* to prevent inappropriate heaviness and/or percussiveness, which can all too easily be produced in playing the busy and low-registered left-hand part literally loudly.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Regarding this discussion, see Winter, 'Orthodoxies, Paradoxes, and Contradictions', pp. 30-38.

<sup>93</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 7n9: 'Là encore l'indication **fz** devrait suffire à déterminer la qualité de sonorité nécessaire à la mise en valeur de ce détail de rédaction.'

<sup>94</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 20n22: 'Ne pas excéder ici, dans la volubile énonciation de la figuration de main gauche, non plus que dans l'articulation rythmique des accords de main droite qui en avivent les joueuses inflexions, un degré d'intensité sonore plus rapproché du **mf** de caractère entreprenant que du **f** pesamment affirmatif, lequel serait en contradiction expressive avec les particularités d'interprétation de ce fragment'.

Figure 34 Schubert D 899/2 bar 103, Henle Edition



Furthermore, the acuteness of sound in the high register of modern pianos, not necessarily accompanied by thick textures, also gives ample reason for certain adjustments and restraint in loud contexts. Typical examples are found in: a) the section between bars 59 and 69 of D 935 No. 2, in which Cortot suggests that Schubert's *forte* (bar 59) and *fortissimo* (bar 69) should be interpreted as *mezzo-forte* and generous *forte* respectively, in order to highlight the 'audacious modulation',<sup>95</sup> and b) in bar 85 of the fourth variation from D 935 No. 3 (Fig. 35 and 36), in which he considers that *mezzo-forte*, in place of Schubert's original *forte*, would underline more effectively the gracious character of the episode.<sup>96</sup> Cortot clearly considered that in such instances Schubert's indications would be excessively strong for both the character of the passages and the sound qualities produced by modern instruments.

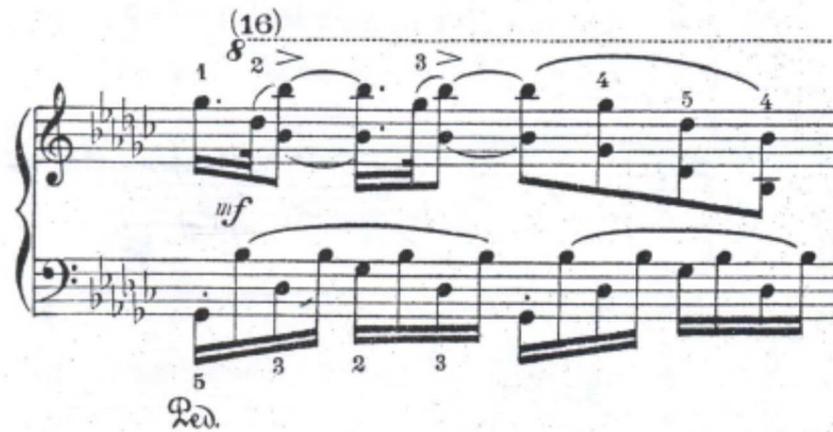
<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 5n5: 'remplacer le *f* initial par un *mf* soutenu, et, de même, de ne prévoir qu'un *f* généreusement expansif à la place du *ff* admis comme point culminant du crescendo ultérieur qui situe peu à peu la progression mélodique des triolets dans le registre suraigu de l'instrument au moyen d'une audacieuse modulation.'

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 17n16: 'L'indication du *f* attribuée par l'édition originale à l'interprétation de cette réplique motif dans le registre suraigu du clavier paraît en contradiction flagrante avec le caractère d'amabilité souriante qui prédomine dans toute cette variation. Un *mf*, aussi chantant que le permet la tessiture, nous paraît mieux convenir à l'esprit de gracieux enjouement dont témoigne cet épisode.'

Figure 35 Schubert D 935/3 bar 85, Henle Edition



Figure 36 Schubert D 935/3 bar 85, Cortot's Edition (1957)



However, on occasions, Cortot considered the brilliance in the high register of modern pianos to be conducive to the character of specific passages. Such an approach is evident in the comment to the conclusion of the A-section in D 899 No. 2 (bars 64-82), and especially in the bars where the right hand reaches the top register of the keyboard. Cortot does not comment on Schubert's *fortissimo* in bar 68, but we find that already in bar

64 he suggests that from that point onwards to the end of the section a stronger articulation in the right hand would be applicable.<sup>97</sup>

Apart from certain dynamic adaptations related to textural particularities, Cortot appeared, in general, to question the applicability of literal execution of loud dynamics in Schubert's music, especially for the intimate writing of most of the *Impromptus* he edited. In the *Avant-Propos* to D 935 No. 2 in particular, he maintained that a considerable rendition of powerful indications, like **ff**, **ffz**, and accents, is necessary so that not only the sensitive character of the piece is delivered, but also certain aspects of Schubert's musicianship are brought to the fore.<sup>98</sup> Especially for the latter, it is noteworthy that Cortot referred to one of Schubert's aforementioned letters, in which Schubert described his performance of his Sonata D 845 (Op. 42), and elucidated particular features of the style of piano playing he favoured.<sup>99</sup> As shown at least in this piece, Cortot's specific conception of dynamics was intended to allow certain elements of Schubert's character and musical taste to emerge in the performance of his piano works.

### 3.2.7.2 Non-literal Execution of Accents

#### *Schubert's Accents in Cortot's Editions*

As in the previous section, the interpretation of Schubert's accents in Cortot's editions of the *Impromptus* points to the need for adjustments by

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<sup>97</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 6n7: 'Ce n'est qu'à partir d'ici, conformément à la nuance indiquée par Schubert, que l'on pourra donner libre cours à une articulation digitale plus accusée génératrice de l'étincelante sonorité qui doit prédominer dans la conclusion de ce premier épisode, et jusqu'à la modulation en si mineur.'

<sup>98</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* Cortot provides a French translation of this letter of Schubert.

the performer in specific areas. Particularly critical would appear to be the treatment of accentuation in soft contexts, where the challenge to the performer is to sustain the singing tone of the accent, whilst preventing any harshness of sound. Cortot's suggestions invariably call for smoothed and restrained executions and would appear to consider that accents performed on modern pianos can all too easily sound clumsy. Examples typifying this include: a) the accents in the left-hand melody starting in *pianissimo* in bar 47 of D 899 No. 4;<sup>100</sup> b) the accents in the endings of the scale-like passages of the right hand in the fifth variation of D 935 No. 3, mainly also in *pianissimo* (bar 102 and equivalents; Fig. 37);<sup>101</sup> c) the left-hand accents, which appear as *piano* in the opening of the fourth variation of the same impromptu;<sup>102</sup> and d) the **fp** mark, which appears in the right-hand chords in the third variation of the same piece (bars 56, 60 and 64), also as *piano*.<sup>103</sup>

In each of these examples Cortot's comments would suggest that accents should be seen as signs requiring a distinct expressiveness of sound, rather than a straight increase in stress, and hence harm to the tone. Of particular significance in this discussion is Cortot's indication that accents (>) in the second example should be played as *tenuti* (–) in order to ensure an appropriately sustained singing quality of the notes (Fig. 38). Such a remark would perhaps be applicable in all of the above mentioned cases, and

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<sup>100</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 16n3: 'doit s'insinuer dans la trame de la composition, et non en le dotant d'une accentuation exagérée'.

<sup>101</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 19n21: 'On croit bon de mettre en garde contre le danger d'une interprétation littérale du caractère des accents apportés par Schubert aux repos des broderies vocalisantes sur les noires qui en marquent les points de chute mélodiques.'

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17n14: 'Il va de soi que les inflexions mélodiques de la main gauche doivent prédominer dans l'exposition de ce nouvel épisode, sans toutefois avoir à s'y recommander d'une sonorité trop accusée, non plus que des particulières d'un rythme trop volontairement accentué.'

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14n11: 'celle-ci, au demeurant, s'employant plutôt à souligner un élan mélodique particulièrement expansif qu'à en revêtir l'énonciation d'un éclat sonore disproportionné.'

certainly in the similar accents found in the second variation of the B-flat major Impromptu (bar 37 and equivalents).

**Figure 37 Schubert D 935/3 bar 102, Henle Edition**



**Figure 38 Interpretation of the accent of bar 102 and equivalents in Schubert D 935/3, Cortot's Edition (1957)**

le signe discret du “\_” et non du “>”

However, in certain cases, apart from the singing quality of the accented notes, Cortot's interpretation of Schubert's accents would also appear to infer, if not to directly refer to, the application of other expressive devices, echoing recent tendencies in performance practice. As Montgomery has noted, Schubert's accents – including the familiar sign (>), a slightly longer hairpin and *fp* – could often be executed as 'agogic delays', rather than as perceptibly louder tones.<sup>104</sup> Examples in which Cortot's suggestions might seem to concur with Montgomery's observations are: a) the aforementioned case from the third variation of D 935 No. 3, where the *fp* to the chords themselves would seem to urge a slight broadening of pace ('élan expansif'),

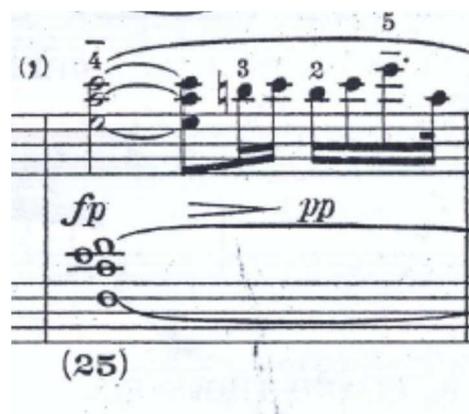
<sup>104</sup> See Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 152-156.

to suit the passionate character of this passage; and b) the placement of the dominant seventh chord in bar 126 in the coda of the same piece (Fig. 39 and 40), in which Cortot gives not only Schubert's *fp* and hairpin, but also a comma before and a *tenuto* on the chord, along with a specific comment encouraging a sensitive execution.<sup>105</sup>

**Figure 39 Schubert D 935/3 bar 126, Henle Edition**



**Figure 40 Schubert D 935/3 bar 126, Cortot's Edition (1957)**



<sup>105</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 21n25: 'C'est par une sensible pression des doigts sur les touches que l'on obtiendra la qualité de sonorité émue qui convient à l'énonciation de cet accord, et non par une attaque délibérément percutée.'

### *Cortot's Added Accents*

In his editions Cortot frequently employs accentuation marks to suggest the application of specific interpretive devices. This would seem to be the case even in places in which Schubert did not provide accents, as shown in *Urtext*-labelled editions. The sign that Cortot uses most frequently in such circumstances is the *tenuto* dash, whereas devices that are potentially implied are: a) an intensity of melodic notes in soft contexts, especially directly consequent to loud, or louder passages; b) a slight delay in the placing of particular notes; and c) specific voicing effects.

In the first case in particular, Cortot's additions would seem to reflect concerns regarding the differences in touch between modern pianos and the instruments of Schubert's time. As Bilson has maintained, although accents on a modern piano can sound rough, the tone of the instrument can also too easily sound shallow and lacking in substance because it requires a very specifically controlled application of 'pressure' in order to sing. By contrast, the nineteenth-century Viennese pianos could sing more effortlessly and this most certainly would have had an effect upon both the presence and absence of accents on composers' scores. For this reason, the difference in the sound characteristics of instruments for which the music was written should always be considered in our interpretation.<sup>106</sup> Places where Cortot's added *tenuti* should be considered as warnings against a toneless sound appear in the middle section of D 899 No. 2 and, more specifically: on the softened dotted minims in bars 99 and 100, immediately after the loud passage of bars 95-98; in bars 104 and 108 and their equivalents (bars 148 and 152); and on the dotted minims in bars 127, 128, 131 and 132. This

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<sup>106</sup> Bilson, 'Schubert's Piano Music', pp. 266-267.

practice should act as a constant reminder that the original intensity in sound of this motif should be maintained and respected, even within a quiet dynamic context (Fig. 41).<sup>107</sup>

**Figure 41 Schubert D 899/2 bars 123-135, Cortot's Edition (1960)**

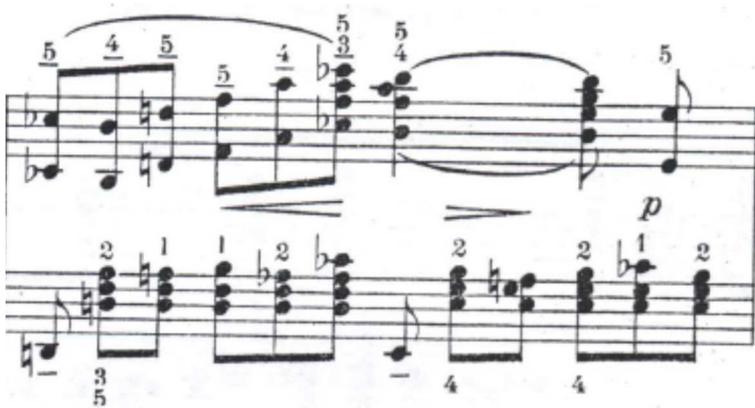
On the other hand, in places where Cortot's *tenuti* call for imperceptible delay, or hesitation in the placement of specific notes, or special voicing effects, this would appear to relate to the application of *tempo rubato* and the improvisatory approach, which would have characterized the performance styles of pianists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>108</sup> Cortot's descriptive additions would, therefore, most commonly be found in passages where a specific emotional tension, or release, is already implied in Schubert's texture. Such cases are: a) the right-hand

<sup>107</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 90*, p. 8n11: 'La reprise dans la nuance *p* du motif de l'intermède ne doit, en rien, lui faire perdre de ses entreprenantes modalités d'origine. La puissance sonore des attaques antérieures y sera simplement remplacée par la mise en valeur expressive caractéristique du dessin mélodique, les articulations assourdis des rythmes d'accompagnement y conservant toute leur précision initiale.'

<sup>108</sup> For information about how pianists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century used to intervene in composers' scores, especially with textural additions or special voicing effects, see Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, pp. 218-223.

triplets in bars 71 and 76 in the third variation of D 935 No. 3 (Fig. 42), where Cortot's *tenuti* underline the emotional intensity of the passage; and b) the last chords of the left hand in bar 80 of the same variation (Fig. 43), where similar markings assist the ultimate emotional release at the end of this episode. Likewise, the emotional attenuation at the end of the middle section in D 935 No. 2 can be highlighted by slightly projecting the descending line F – F-flat – E-flat, as Cortot's *tenuti* for the thumb notes of the right hand in bars 91-96 would suggest.

**Figure 42 Schubert D 935/3 bar 76, Cortot's Edition (1957)**



**Figure 43 Schubert D 935/3 bar 80 (LH), Cortot's Edition (1957)**



### 3.2.7.3 Articulation

Specific comments, directly discussing matters of articulation in Schubert's Impromptus, are rarely to be found in Cortot's editions. A particularly interesting observation, which is also debated in the edition of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, regards the execution of left-hand broken octaves, such as those appearing in the second variation (bar 45) of the B-flat major Impromptu. Here, Cortot advises that the octaves should be played as melodic lines nonetheless, avoiding inappropriately heavy execution that the low register and the excessive use of the pedal would cause.<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, Cortot is suggesting that they should not be interpreted in the full *legato* manner, but rather as pairs of broken octaves, where the lower note has a little more weight and the higher one is lighter and more uplifting.<sup>110</sup> According to Cortot, his favoured approach would not only elicit a more sensitive quality of sonority, but would also be true to 'the tradition of Schubert's time' (Fig. 44, 45 and 46).<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 13n7: 'Il importe ici, « d'aérer » en quelque sorte l'exécution des quatre mesures suivantes, en évitant l'empâtement sonore trop fréquemment engendré par un emploi abusif de la pédale forte, et par la pesante énonciation de la figuration octaviée de main gauche.'

<sup>110</sup> In the album of Schubert's works that Cortot owned (Médiathèque Musicale Mahler – Cortot's Archive) there are three annotations (slurs), most likely of Cortot's hand, which suggest the execution of the first three pairs of broken octaves in the same way as recommended in Cortot's edition.

<sup>111</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 13n7: 'On obviara à ce défaut en tenant compte de la ponctuation suivante, rigoureusement conforme, au demeurant, à la tradition d'époque'.

Figure 44 Schubert D 935/3, bars 45-46, Henle Edition



Figure 45 Schubert D 935/3 bars 45-46, Cortot's Edition (1957)



Figure 46 Suggested interpretation of broken octaves, Cortot's Edition (1957)



et non en fonction du legato appuyé représenté par la rédaction d'origine .

Although Cortot does not provide further commentary on the validity of this remark, his suggestion would appear to be in conformity with the light and capricious nature of this variation. On the other hand, evidence from particular recorded performances shows that he would normally evoke this practice in works by Austro-German composers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, or, in other words, in music from what musicology often calls the 'Classical period'.<sup>112</sup> Cortot's live recording of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 15, (1947), specifically in bars 529-534 and 537-542 of the finale, offers an example that plausibly demonstrates the sound effect that is suggested in the Impromptu.<sup>113</sup> The lower notes of the broken octaves are played significantly heavier, whereas the higher notes are lighter and slightly shorter, allowing neatness in the articulation, and leading to a technically accomplished execution for the fast tempo of the last movement. Similarly, an extended excerpt from Cortot's master classes, recorded between 1954 and 1960 at the *École Normale*, in which he is heard demonstrating a great part of Mozart's Rondo 'Alla Turca' from the A major Sonata, K 331,<sup>114</sup> comprises a valuable source for the execution of similar texture. In bars 88-95 (Fig. 47), Cortot differentiates between the two parts of each pair of broken octaves to a great extent, not only in terms of sound (heavier/lighter), but also in terms of rhythmical value, making the higher notes significantly shorter than the lower ones. Such a sound effect, actually not very dissimilar to *notes inégales*, could possibly be thought of as unfamiliar for the values of regularity and normality that modern standards of performance have ascribed to the music of Mozart's time. However, as

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<sup>112</sup> See Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 99, 122 and 127. Also see Daniel Hertz and Bruce Alan Brown, 'Classical', *Grove Music Online*, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/05889](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/05889) (Accessed: August 20, 2015).

<sup>113</sup> Tahra TAH 610, 2007.

<sup>114</sup> *Alfred Cortot, The Master Classes: Featuring Works by Bach, Mozart and Beethoven*. Sony Classical – S3K89698, 2005.

Leech-Wilkinson has remarked regarding Carl Reinecke's acoustic recordings and piano rolls of Mozart's works, the study of recorded performances by artists that were educated in the nineteenth century can often raise doubts about 'everything we imagine as Classical'.<sup>115</sup>

**Figure 47 Mozart K 331, Rondo 'Alla Turca', bars 88-92**



It is notable that in Cortot's recording of D 935 No. 3 the execution of the left-hand broken octaves in the second variation is not a very representative example of the practice that is suggested in the edition. However, it is also true that, apart from the uncompromisingly fast tempo that makes it hard to distinguish such details in this passage, this recording is a reproduction from piano rolls, which means that conclusions regarding sound, articulation and touch cannot be securely drawn.<sup>116</sup>

While I do not intend to use Cortot's editorial remark to investigate whether he would consider Schubert a 'Classical' composer, as opposed to 'Romantic' – not a very profound debate anyway, as it is based on rather vague and ill-defined terminology – it appears that, at the very least, Cortot suggests that this texture should be played in a similar way in Schubert, as well as in earlier pianistic traditions, like those of Mozart and Beethoven.

<sup>115</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 6, paragraph 24, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap6.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap6.html) (Accessed: August 20, 2015).

<sup>116</sup> Peres da Costa, pp. 27 and 35; and Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 3, paragraph 74, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html) (Accessed: August 20, 2015).

The suitability of Cortot's advice for the execution of melodic broken octaves could, in fact, be appreciated in the rendition of a considerable number of examples from available piano literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, as: in the first and third movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20, K 466 (bars 108-111 in the first, and bars 318-324 in the third movement); in the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata Op. 2 No. 3 (for example in bars 86-87, Fig. 48); and in the third movement of his Piano Concerto No. 3, Op. 37 (bars 451-456).

**Figure 48 Beethoven Sonata Op.2/3 1st movement bars 85-86**



In general, it can be asserted that lightness of sound and the application of uplifting gestures in particular passages is a main concern for Cortot with respect to articulation, even in places where additional indications on the score are not explained further through relevant commentary. Cortot appears to choose this sort of editorial input, especially regarding the manipulation and control of touch, in order to guide the performer to the refinement of sound that is usually required in Schubert's Impromptus. In such cases, as has been seen, minor differences between *Urtext*-labelled and Cortot's editions can be identified and reveal Cortot's deliberate alterations. Typical examples would be the gestures suggested for eliciting the inner voice in the main theme of the B-minor section in D 899 No. 2, and

also for the first right-hand note in the second half of the fifth variation of D 935 No. 3 (bar 110). In both instances, although avoidance of inappropriate heaviness is very clearly intended, there is also a clear adaptation to the qualities of modern instruments in terms of power and decay of sound. Such an approach effectively stresses the approximate and flexible character of musical notation and encourages the performer to experiment, by constantly attempting to 're-notate' the composer's score when trying to achieve the desired sonority, which certainly cannot be fixed in any kind of written form.<sup>117</sup>

#### 3.2.7.4 Pedalling

Schubert's own markings on his scores for the use of pedals are very rare and this is especially the case where his Impromptus are concerned. Critical editions display indications for the use of the right pedal in the opening of the Impromptu in G-flat major, D 899 No. 3, and in bar 69 of the Impromptu in F minor, D 935 No. 1.<sup>118</sup> However, following Montgomery's reasoning, this should not mean that the use of the pedal is unnecessary, or impossible, in places where there is no specific indication. Cortot was also sparing with pedal markings in his editions of Schubert's Impromptus. However, in a significant number of places, his indications for the use of the right pedal alone, or in combination with the soft pedal, do provide us with some idea of his perception of the role of pedals on modern instruments in the performance of Schubert's music. Moreover, it can reasonably be assumed

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<sup>117</sup> The idea of 'renotation' of the composers' texts, which is so relevant to Cortot's editorial practices, is mentioned by John Rink as an essential analytical method for preparing and building up the performance of a composition. See John Rink, 'Analysis and (or?) Performance', *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, ed. J. Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 41 and 53-55.

<sup>118</sup> Bärenreiter edition gives a pedal marking also in bar 182 of D 935 No. 1, while Henle and Wiener Urtext do not.

that pedals were not necessarily to be avoided in places where no pedal markings appear.<sup>119</sup>

Generally, Cortot tends to provide pedal markings in the opening of an impromptu, or a section, which shows the pattern to be followed throughout similar texture. Typical examples are found in both the opening of the A-flat and the B-flat major Impromptus from the second set, and in the middle section of the one in E-flat major (D 899 No. 2). A rather obvious and harmonically logical use of the right pedal, indicated in the first bars, is to be applied in similar passages throughout the rest of each episode.

Particularly interesting, however, are Cortot's suggestions for the use of *una corda*, seen always together with the right pedal. Textural similarities between the first and fourth variations in D 935 No. 3, where the use of the soft pedal is recommended, allow some conclusions as regards interpretation. In both cases, a melody of dotted rhythms is to emerge delicately out of busy accompanying figuration within a generally soft and gentle context. The transparency of the accompaniment and the clarity of the melody,<sup>120</sup> which are definitely required in these variations, are effectively aided by the use of the soft pedal. It is also possible that in similarly thick and technically demanding textures in Schubert, where an equally ethereal timbre is required, the use of the soft pedal would be appropriate. Such a case can be made for the section in bars 63-70 from the first movement of the E-flat major Sonata (D 568).

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<sup>119</sup> See Winter, 'Orthodoxies, Paradoxes, and Contradictions', p. 40.

<sup>120</sup> For the first variation, see Cortot-Schubert. *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 10n3: 'L'emploi simultané des deux pédales est à recommander dans l'exécution définitive de cette variation, comme correspondant, avec le timbre adouci nécessaire'; and for the fourth, *ibid.*, p. 17n14: 'confiante à un subtil emploi conjoint des deux pédales'.

However, Cortot's suggestions for the use of the soft pedal can also be seen in less complicated passages, implying a specific quality of sound. A relevant example would be the interpretation of Schubert's *pianissimo* as *piano* combined with the use of the left pedal in the opening of D 935 No. 2. As his pupil Vlado Perlemuter has noted, Cortot 'would often prefer the sound that one got by playing strongly with the soft pedal, if he wanted a sonorous soft sound'.<sup>121</sup> The suitability of this conception could hardly be ignored in this opening, as indeed in other similar cases in Schubert's writing for piano, such as in the opening of the G-major Sonata, D 894 and the second *Moment musical*.

The Impromptu, which in essence displays the most extensive and, therefore, noteworthy pedal markings, is the D 899 No. 4. This is especially so in the C-sharp minor episode. Cortot insists on extremely economic pedalling, where the right pedal is used to highlight particular melodic notes and the presence of a fundamental bass note in the left hand (Fig. 49).

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<sup>121</sup> As cited in Timbrell, p. 83.

Figure 49 Schubert D 899/4 bars 107-128, Cortot's Edition (1960)

Interestingly, the palpitating accompaniment is left dry quite a few times, and the *legato* of the melody is to be achieved rather with subtle fingering. In this example, Cortot's advice is notably similar to Montgomery's opinion that pedalling in Schubert's music should be used for 'atmospheric and rhetorical

effects' and certainly not only as a practicality to facilitate *legato*.<sup>122</sup> However, certain performance issues arise, even though Cortot's suggestion may be a sound reminder to the performer to attend to the clarity of this section, which is usually harmed by overuse of the pedal: a) it would be hard to imagine smooth *legato* without any pedal in bars 143 and 144 (Fig. 50 and 51); similarly in bars 125 and 126, unless here the absence of a *legato* indication (slur) in critical editions is to be interpreted literally; b) the consistency of sound quality in both the melodic part and the accompaniment would be almost impossible to obtain with one bar played with pedal and the following bar played without (in example bars 107 and 108); and c) repeated chords without any pedal at all in a low register of the modern piano might sound inappropriately clumsy and harsh for the sensitivity required in this episode. Cortot's pedalling indications should be taken as an important warning that the effect we achieve on a modern instrument, by using too much pedal, would not be truthful to the mellow and/or muted tone of the pianos of Schubert's time. However, a discreet use of half-pedal in order to assist *legato*, or even fluttering pedal in order to thin out the heaviness of chords, would be necessary, if not essential, were the essence of Schubert's lyrical intention to be conveyed.

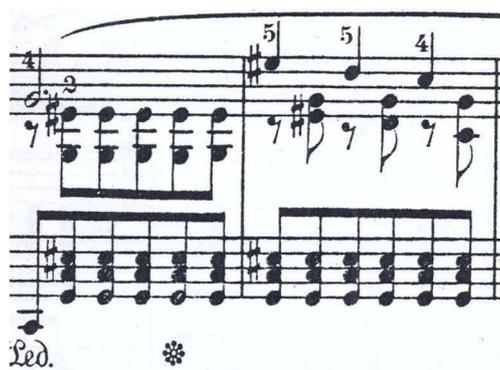
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<sup>122</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 169.

**Figure 50 Schubert D 899/4 bars 143-144, Henle Edition**



**Figure 51 Schubert D 899/4 bars 143-144, Cortot's Edition (1960)**



In general, Cortot's editorial remarks regarding certain expressive devices, even not necessarily intentionally expressed, point out particular differences between modern pianos and the keyboards of Schubert's time. These differences might conceivably explain specific choices on thickness of texture, accentuation or dynamic context by the composer, and very often should lead to adjustments by performers on modern pianos. Cortot's concerns regarding the suitability of loud dynamics and his search for uplifting gestures, which can so easily be lost in the heavy action of modern

instruments, make complete musical sense, especially for the refined texture of the Impromptus. Moreover, his thoughts that specific devices, other than just increase of volume, might be implied by Schubert's accents resemble recent views of performance practice, such as those by Montgomery, Brown and Brendel. Montgomery and Brown suggest that Schubert often appears to have used accents to reinforce expression and, therefore, agogic executions comprise for pianists the best solution in places where string players or singers would apply such devices as differentiation of timbre or *vibrato*.<sup>123</sup> On the other hand, Brendel, speaking specifically about the accented chord of bar 126 in D 935 No. 3, maintained that a special handling of voicing is usually the key to the rendition of Schubert's accents without producing a harsh tone.<sup>124</sup> Finally, Cortot's few pedalling indications are not merely representative of recent opinion, but rather suggest to the performer that experimentation in the use of pedals on modern instruments could assure a broader and richer variety and quality of sound in the performance of Schubert's works today.

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<sup>123</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 151-155 and Brown, pp. 113-114.

<sup>124</sup> Brendel, *On Music*, p. 394. Brendel also appears to interpret Schubert's accents as indicators for agogic executions as it can be heard in bars 69-70 of the Impromptu D 935 No. 2 in his 1967 recording (Musical Concepts – ALC 1109, 2010) and in his performance of the same work for the German Television ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1rCDLGcVhs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1rCDLGcVhs) around the 14:00 and the 14:45; accessed: August 16, 2015). The interpretation of accented notes by means of imperceptible flexibility in timing can also be heard in Zimerman's recording of the Impromptu D 935 No. 3 (Deutsche Grammophon – 0289 423 6122 5, 1991), particularly in the second and fifth variation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The 'Wanderer' Fantasy: A Repertoire Work Over The Years

Schubert composed his Fantasy in C major, D 760 (Op. 15), normally referred to as the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, in 1822. It appeared after a long period of experimentation, unsuccessful and/or incomplete compositions, mainly of dramatic genres,<sup>1</sup> and has been described as the 'first completed large-scale instrumental work of Schubert's maturity' along with the 'Unfinished' Symphony.<sup>2</sup> It can be maintained that it also heralds Schubert's mature period, particularly as a composer of piano music. The works that preceded the Fantasy included incomplete sonatas, as well as minor works for both two and four hands,<sup>3</sup> although works like the sonatas D 537 and D 664, both published posthumously, were important harbingers of what was to follow.<sup>4</sup> The Fantasy sets the beginning of an impressive build-up in

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<sup>1</sup> Schubert's works that preceded the 'Wanderer' Fantasy include: the opera *Alfonso und Estrella*, which was premiered by Liszt in 1854 in Weimar; the rather neglected now *Die Zauberharfe* (D 644); and the incomplete operatic project *Sacotala* (D 701). See Elizabeth Norman McKay, 'Alfonso und Estrella', *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/O900087> (Accessed: January 14, 2014); Fisk, pp. 7 and 60; and Einstein, pp. 209-210, 213 and 225.

<sup>2</sup> Fisk, pp. 60-61.

<sup>3</sup> See Gerald Abraham (ed.), *The New Oxford History of Music: The Age of Beethoven 1790-1830* (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), VIII, pp. 363-365. Also see Winter et al., 'Schubert', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109pg2> (Accessed: February 4, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> More specifically, the Sonata in A major D 664 (1819) can be considered Schubert's most significant piano work before 1822. See Abraham, p. 365; Brendel, p. 135; and Eva Badura-Skoda, 'The Piano Works of Schubert', *Nineteenth-Century Piano Music*, pp. 100-101.

Schubert's piano compositions, which combine the grand approach in texture and structure of the sonatas<sup>5</sup> with the intimacy of shorter pieces, like the Impromptus and *Moments musicaux*.

The 'Wanderer' Fantasy was first published, almost immediately after it was completed, in 1823 by Cappi and Diabelli in Vienna, and was dedicated to Emmanuel Karl Elder von Liebenberg, a rich landowner and pupil of Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837). Einstein has maintained that this dedication could explain the unusually virtuosic character of the piece as Schubert's effort to compose in the brilliant and quite successful (at that time) style of Hummel.<sup>6</sup> However, Elizabeth Norman McKay has mentioned that Schubert's work was not only a commission by his dedicatee, but also an homage to Hummel's writing for piano, which he greatly admired.<sup>7</sup> The Fantasy received critical acclaim by *Wiener Zeitung* and *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in Leipzig within a year of its publication<sup>8</sup> and it was premiered by Schubert's friend Karl Maria von Bocklet.<sup>9</sup> Despite the fact that Schubert was not recognized as a composer of large-scale piano works until at least the first half of the twentieth century, D 760 was the only major work that survived this neglect. This might have happened because of its original – for that time –textural and structural particularities, but also due to the impact that it had on the work of later composers. However, there should be

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<sup>5</sup> The piano composition that followed the Fantasy was the Sonata in A minor D 784 (Einstein, p. 243). Within the next six years (1822-1828), Schubert produced his most substantial works for piano, such as the sonatas D 845, D 850, D 894 and the last three sonatas.

<sup>6</sup> Einstein, pp. 232-233.

<sup>7</sup> See Elisabeth Norman McKay, 'Schubert and Hummel: Debts and Credits', *Musical Times*, Vol. 140, No. 1868 (Autumn, 1999), pp. 30-31. Apart from similarities between certain works of these two composers noted by McKay, Schubert's admiration for Hummel can be witnessed in the fact that the latter was the original dedicatee of the former's last three sonatas.

<sup>8</sup> Eva Badura-Skoda, p. 138.

<sup>9</sup> Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 276.

no doubt that this was mainly owed to the strong connection that Liszt developed with this work.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.1 Schubert and Liszt

In general, Liszt was a great admirer of Schubert's music and, throughout his life as a composer and performer, had developed a strong affinity with the latter's work, as demonstrated in his numerous transcriptions of Schubert's *Lieder*.<sup>11</sup> Liszt was a regular performer of Schubert's music and the work of the Viennese composer was very influential in the development of his own musical language. According to Paul Badura-Skoda, such influence includes fundamental areas of Liszt's style, such as the use of the piano as an instrument, 'the form of his symphonic poems' and 'the new harmonic language using tonalities related by the third'.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, Brendel has noted that elements that Liszt possibly owed to a great influence by Schubert were the idea of monothematic construction, the way of using the pedal and the use of tremolos in piano compositions.<sup>13</sup>

It would not be an exaggeration to maintain that of all Schubert's works, the 'Wanderer' Fantasy had the greatest impact on Liszt, as evidenced in several important features: he arranged it for piano and orchestra, as well as for two pianos; he made an edition for solo piano in which he offered

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<sup>10</sup> Apart from Liszt, Schumann, Berlioz, Franck and Wagner can also be notable examples of composers who were influenced by Schubert's work. See Kenneth Hamilton, *Liszt: Sonata in B minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 11-12; Eva Badura-Skoda, p. 138 and Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, pp. 42-43, 51 and 56. Liszt's admiration for Schubert went probably beyond the strictly musical appreciation, since he is believed to have attempted to write a biography of the Viennese composer. However, this project was never completed; see Franz Schubert, *Fantaisie C-Dur, "Wanderer Fantasie" (D 760)*, ed. Paul Badura-Skoda (Wien: Universal Edition, 1965; Wiener Urtext Edition, 1973), p. IV. See also Brendel, p. 151.

<sup>12</sup> Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. IV

<sup>13</sup> Brendel, pp. 136 and 143-145.

alternative ways of playing some parts of the first, second and third movements and the whole fourth;<sup>14</sup> and he was one of the first pianists to perform it at a public concert (1846, in Vienna).<sup>15</sup> In addition, Liszt is believed to have used Schubert's D 760 as a model piece for one of his own masterpieces for piano, the Sonata in B minor.<sup>16</sup> Several elements in terms of structure that appear in Liszt's sonata could, actually, be traced back to Schubert's Fantasy. These include the double role of a gigantic, single-movement piece and, simultaneously, of several movements of a multipartite work; the cyclic form reinforced by motivic transformations; and the use of fugal development as a recapitulative element. Liszt's preoccupation with the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, combined with his dominant presence in the performing and teaching scene of the second half of the nineteenth century, could explain to a certain extent the popularity of this piece during and after his time.

#### 4.2 Lisztian Tradition and Cortot

Some of the most important pianists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who might have been directly or indirectly influenced by Liszt, seemed to have approached Schubert's D 760 following the impact that Liszt had on it. Before moving on to Cortot – whose edition of the Fantasy provides important evidence of Liszt's influence – performers of

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<sup>14</sup> Liszt's piano and orchestra arrangement of the Fantasy was produced in 1851 (Vienna: Spina, 1857); the two-piano arrangement was made after 1851 (Vienna: Spina, 1862); and the edition was part of Liszt's editorial project on works of Schubert which took place between 1868 and 1874 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1871). See Alan Walker et al., 'Liszt', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/48265pg28> (Accessed: February 4, 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 217.

<sup>16</sup> See Hamilton, *Liszt: Sonata in B minor*, pp. 11-12; Brendel, p. 265; and Thieffry, pp. 151-152.

previous generations will be mentioned in relation to the existence of a Lisztian performance tradition that particularly pertains to this work.

Prominent pianists at the turn of the twentieth century, who certainly had the chance to be in direct contact with Liszt and were apparently regular performers of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, were Camille Saint-Saëns and Eugen d' Albert. Saint-Saëns, who was a friend of Liszt,<sup>17</sup> has been referred to as a regular performer of Liszt's arrangement for piano and orchestra, a piece that was particularly popular in France in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, d'Albert, who was one of the most exceptional pupils of Liszt,<sup>19</sup> was not only a regular performer of the Fantasy, but also provided an edition<sup>20</sup> in which Liszt's influence specifically on this work is made clear. Typical examples are d'Albert's choice to include Liszt's cadenza from the piano and orchestra arrangement in bar 108 of the first movement<sup>21</sup> and the adoption of Liszt's variant from his edition in the opening of the finale (Fig. 1). Regarding the latter, d'Albert not only recommended this variation, but also provided important evidence that this was actually the way Liszt played this passage.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Sabina Teller Ratner et al., 'Saint-Saëns, Camille', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/24335> (Accessed: February 2, 2014).

<sup>18</sup> Hascher, p. 267.

<sup>19</sup> Liszt's admiration for d'Albert can be witnessed in various sources. See Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, pp. 242-243; and Schonberg, p. 292.

<sup>20</sup> Franz Schubert, *Phantasie über den Wanderer, C-dur, Op. 15*, ed. Eugen d' Albert (Leipzig: Forberg, 1911). This edition was part of a series of works which d' Albert included in his concert repertoire.

<sup>21</sup> D' Albert-Schubert, *Phantasie*, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28: 'the same mode of executing as Fr. Liszt'.

Figure 1 Schubert D 760/IV bar 1, Liszt's Edition (1871)



Among pianists who were not friends or pupils of Liszt, but still their performances and/or editions of the Fantasy suggested they were strongly influenced by him, were Ferruccio Busoni and Ignaz Friedman.<sup>23</sup> Busoni was probably introduced to aspects of the Lisztian tradition through Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894)<sup>24</sup> and, next to a great editorial work on Liszt's compositions,<sup>25</sup> his playing had also occasionally been compared to Liszt's performing style.<sup>26</sup> As far as the 'Wanderer' Fantasy is concerned, he was a regular performer of both Liszt's solo and piano and orchestra versions.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, Friedman, who was a pupil of Leschetitzky,<sup>28</sup> must have

<sup>23</sup> It is believed that Busoni at the age of 11 (1877) had the chance to play for Liszt. However, as Edward Dent maintains, 'no account of the meeting has survived'; see Edward Dent, *Ferruccio Busoni: A Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 24. In any case Busoni did not have the chance to develop a direct and close association with Liszt.

<sup>24</sup> Dent, pp. 102-103; and Schonberg, p. 349. Rubinstein himself was a great admirer of Liszt and is thought to have imitated many features of the latter's performing style. See Schonberg, p. 255; and Edward Garden, 'Rubinstein, Anton', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/24053> (Accessed: February 2, 2014). Busoni had also the chance to play for Liszt's pupil Arthur Friedheim, from whom he might have been able to know a part of Liszt's teachings; see Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 227.

<sup>25</sup> Antony Beaumont, 'Busoni, Ferruccio', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/04438> (Accessed: August 26, 2014).

<sup>26</sup> See Jean Chantavoine and Harriet Lanier, 'Busoni', *Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (July, 1921), p. 331: 'Even Liszt did not play as well'; and Cortot's assertion that 'perhaps Busoni came nearest to [Liszt's] style' (Thieffry, p. 153).

<sup>27</sup> Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, pp. 217 and 229n12; and Dent, p. 112.

<sup>28</sup> Schonberg, p. 309. Friedman received lessons from Busoni too; see Allan Evans, 'Friedman, Ignacy', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/10268> (Accessed: February 2, 2014).

also regularly performed Liszt's piano and orchestra arrangement, as his edition of the parts of a two-piano reduction of it might suggest.<sup>29</sup>

Cortot did not have the chance to hear or meet Liszt, although he is thought to have familiarized himself with certain aspects of the Lisztian tradition through Rislér. His affinity with Liszt's work is evident in numerous recordings and editions, as well as his general pedagogical work. Comparisons between sources that provide basic features of Liszt's and Cortot's approaches on teaching can reveal striking similarities, and can confirm how great Liszt's general impact on the pianism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was for Cortot. Apart from the idea of a masterclass, which Cortot established in the *École Normale*, resembling the group lessons Liszt gave in Weimar, similarities can also be observed in specific features related to piano playing, such as the evocation of orchestral qualities on the piano; the experimentation with pedalling; the rejection of pure technical display when it is not accompanied by musical understanding;<sup>30</sup> and an overall conception that leads to non-literal renditions of musical texts.<sup>31</sup>

As far as the 'Wanderer' Fantasy is concerned, next to the fact that it was the only large-scale and substantial work of Schubert that Cortot edited, Liszt's influence is particularly shown in Cortot's edition. Frequent references to Liszt's solo and piano and orchestra versions can confirm that

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<sup>29</sup> Franz Schubert, *Grosse-Phantasie (Wanderer-Phantasie)*, arr. 2 pianos, ed. I. Friedman, orchestra reduction J. V. von Woess ([S.l.]: Universal, [n.d.]).

<sup>30</sup> This conception refers to an approach Liszt developed late in his life, especially when he devoted himself more to teaching (1870s and 1880s). Liszt confessed that for much time in his early years he preferred to show off his virtuosity in order to gain public success, an approach that he declined later, especially as a teacher (Hamilton. *Liszt: Sonata in B Minor*, pp. 74-75). Cortot thought of Liszt as 'too great a virtuoso not to use virtuosity, as an element of colour... virtuosity enters into [Liszt's work] only as a *means*: it is not cultivated for itself' (Thieffry, p. 152).

<sup>31</sup> For more information about similarities between Liszt's and Cortot's teachings one should consult and compare a summary of Liszt's teachings (Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, pp. 242-253) and basic elements of Cortot's approach (Timbrell, pp. 100-112 and Thieffry, pp. 19-21).

Cortot was in line with pianists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, for whom Liszt's impact was an essential part of performances and editions of Schubert's D 760. In addition, bearing in mind the popularity of Liszt's piano and orchestra version and a certain neglect of Schubert's work at the turn of the twentieth century in France, it is also possible that Cortot came to know the piece through Liszt's arrangement.

However, Cortot's edition of the Fantasy, published in 1954, can also be an important source for critical evaluation of interpretive practices of earlier times, no matter how devotionally Liszt is mentioned in it, especially regarding the work's popularity.<sup>32</sup> Liszt's approach is discussed as an important testimony to the history of performance of this work, and is analysed as an option, within various interpretive possibilities, regarding aspects of performance practice relevant also to other works of Schubert. In sum, this edition can show Cortot's role in the history of performance styles, as a link between interpretive practices of the early twentieth century or before, and the way these might have been treated or evolved later in the twentieth century.

### **4.3 The *Avant-Propos***

In the preface of his edition, Cortot touches upon certain points that have to do with the particularities of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy as a composition, leaving specific interpretive suggestions for the footnotes on the score. However, issues discussed in the *Avant-Propos* and analysed below, will

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<sup>32</sup> The issue of changes in performing styles during the first half of the twentieth century, particularly as shown in pre-War and post-War recordings, will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

relate to the classification and the examination of Cortot's remarks later in this chapter.

### 4.3.1 Structure

The structure of the Fantasy is possibly the primary element that must be examined, and Cortot's commentary focuses on three major points: a) Schubert's use of the term 'Fantasy'; b) possible references and relation of the work to the sonata form; and c) the visionary feature of cyclic form.

#### *Fantasy*

Cortot maintains that, although Schubert's D 760 is called a Fantasy, no elements of improvisation can be detected, probably meaning that the composition is based on a specific plan rather than instinctive freedom.<sup>33</sup> Although it is true that the title 'Fantasy' for keyboard works had been affiliated with the element of improvisation in the early eighteenth century, as in works by Johan Sebastian and Carl Philip Emmanuel Bach, homonymous works of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century had already started moving away from this tendency.<sup>34</sup> In particular, Mozart's fantasies in D minor (K 397) and in C minor (K 475), and Beethoven's Sonatas Op. 27, numbers 1 and 2, labelled 'quasi una Fantasia' by the composer, could be considered forerunners of Schubert's D 760. In these works the term 'Fantasy' was used to describe a composition in which

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<sup>33</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 2: 'malgré la dénomination de « Fantaisie » nulle trace de caractère improvisateur dans cette œuvre'.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher D. S. Field et al., 'Fantasia', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40048> (Accessed: February 2, 2014).

contrasting sections and individual movements were interlinked in one piece, particularly associated with the sonata form.<sup>35</sup>

### *The 'Wanderer' Fantasy and the Sonata*

For Cortot, the 'Wanderer' Fantasy follows the traditional structure of a grand sonata in four movements, Allegro-Adagio-Scherzo-Finale, with the difference that these movements are interconnected and do not display autonomy, which is especially true from a harmonic point of view.<sup>36</sup> Although Beethoven had already introduced the practice of linking different movements without breaks in his fantasy-like sonatas, in these works, especially in Op. 27 No. 2 and in the first two movements of Op. 27 No. 1, the sense of complete movements is rather obvious, and the breaks are avoided by indications *attaca*. On the contrary, in Schubert's Fantasy, not only are harmonic links provided in the transitions between movements, but also usually the end of one movement preludes the opening of the following.<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, the attempt to correlate the 'Wanderer' Fantasy with principles found in sonata-works leads to the question whether its movements follow strictly the structural characteristics of individual movements of a four-part sonata. This can refer particularly to the first

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. Particularly for Mozart's C-minor Fantasy, its structural particularities, and the impact it may have had on Schubert's 'Wanderer' Fantasy, see Einstein, pp. 39-40.

<sup>36</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 2: 'solidement charpentée à l'image de la Sonate classique dont elle emprunte l'articulation traditionnelle —Allegro, Adagio, Scherzo, Finale et dont elle ne se sépare que par l'enchaînement obligatoire des quatre parties'. At this point, Cortot displays great similarity with Einstein's view; see Einstein, p. 232.

<sup>37</sup> Note that the first and the third movement end on the dominant chord of the key of the second and the fourth movement respectively. Additionally, the ending of the first movement anticipates the opening of the second, whereas the first bars of the third movement are preannounced in the closing section of the Adagio. More details about such structural characteristics of Schubert's D 760 are discussed later in this chapter.

movement, in which, although the areas of first and second subject groups can, more or less, arguably be defined,<sup>38</sup> exposition, development and recapitulation sections can hardly be distinguished.<sup>39</sup> However, in the second and third movements, common practices from the traditional/classical sonata are followed by the use of theme and variations and scherzo with trio respectively. Notably, in the second movement, the variations are based on a theme that quotes an episode (bars 23-30) from Schubert's *Lied* 'Der Wanderer' (D 489, Op. 4 No. 1), which is a practice that Schubert also used in other works, such as the fourth movement of the 'Trout' Quintet, D 667 ('Die Forelle'); the third movement of the Fantasy in C major for Violin and Piano, D 934 ('Sie mir Gegrüsst'); and the second movement of the String Quartet in D minor, D 810 ('Der Tod und das Mädchen'). The common element of all these movements, including the second one from the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, is that they are all slow movements of large-scale works in the form of theme and variations. However, in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, the second movement also brings out the main thematic idea, which is present in all the parts of the work, and underlines the most special characteristic of its form – that is its cyclic-monothematic structure.

### *The Cyclic-monothematic Form*

The cyclic-monothematic form is an original and visionary attribute of Schubert's D 760, since it was the first work that followed this structure to a great extent and influenced later composers accordingly. Although

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<sup>38</sup> Cortot considered the E-major episode as the second subject of the Fantasy's first movement; see Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 5n6.

<sup>39</sup> Concerns about the structure of the Fantasy's first movement and its relevance to the sonata form were also expressed by Donald Tovey; see Donald Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis: Illustrative Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972 (1937)), IV, p. 71.

Beethoven had again introduced this feature with the reprise of the opening phrase of the first movement just before the finale of Op. 101, in Schubert's work this development is followed throughout the entire composition. One particular motif, taken from 'Der Wanderer', is constantly transformed in order to appear in different guises throughout all four movements. Cortot is specifically commenting on the fact that Schubert drew more upon the piano accompaniment than the vocal part of the *Lied*,<sup>40</sup> creating, thus, the fundamental, yet simple, rhythmical pattern of the whole Fantasy (one crotchet – two quavers). Such a remark appears to anticipate Montgomery's note that the transformation of very simple motifs was a typical feature of Schubert's large constructions, especially in his works after 1820.<sup>41</sup>

In more recent analyses regarding the Fantasy's form, Paul Badura-Skoda<sup>42</sup> and William Kinderman<sup>43</sup> have attempted to show the function of its movements as structural units of a single gigantic sonata movement, similarly to what has been called the double function theory in Liszt's Sonata.<sup>44</sup> More specifically, Badura-Skoda considers the first movement of Schubert's Fantasy as the exposition, the second movement as the development,<sup>45</sup> the third one as the recapitulation and the fourth as the coda. Fisk seems to disagree partially on the recapitulative qualities of the third movement, mainly because harmonically it remains closer to the C-sharp/D-flat context of the slow movement.<sup>46</sup> In fact, this is true in comparison with the fourth movement, which actually is the one that suggests a return to the

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<sup>40</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 2: 'Ce seront tour à tour, les impulsions rythmiques de l'accompagnement, et les inflexions mélodiques de la partie vocal —et les premières interrogées plus fréquemment que les secondes— qui fourniront les motifs caractéristiques de chacune des nouvelles propositions, et l'exécution de tout nouvel apport thématique.'

<sup>41</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 36.

<sup>42</sup> See Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. IV.

<sup>43</sup> See Kinderman, p. 165.

<sup>44</sup> Hamilton, *Liszt: Sonata in B Minor*, pp. 31-32.

<sup>45</sup> Kinderman appears to agree with Badura-Skoda on the roles of the first two movements, without, however, providing his view regarding the next ones.

<sup>46</sup> Fisk, p. 67.

opening in terms of key and metre.<sup>47</sup> Although Cortot mentions the so-called double function in his edition of Liszt's Sonata,<sup>48</sup> he does not do so for Schubert's D 760. Indications found in his footnotes, where the fourth movement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy is described as 'peroration' and the part after the fugal development as a sort of coda,<sup>49</sup> could be influential, but not as strong as to comprise signs of an approach similar to Badura-Skoda's or Kinderman's.

In conclusion, it is true that Schubert went a few steps forward, compared to Beethoven's aforementioned piano works, in creating a piece that would hover between the freedom of the Fantasy and the conventions of the sonata form. The order, tempi and the character of the movements of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy could comprise a clear reference to a large-scale sonata work, but at the same time none of the movements follows the traditional sonata form. Moreover, these movements are linked in such a way as to emerge from, and lead to, each other, allowing us perhaps to maintain that this work is rather a fantasy, *quasi una sonata*. On the other hand, Schubert's use of cyclic-monothematic structure, through the practice of motivic transformation, could only inspire Liszt for his sonata, since signs that the theory of double function could be applicable in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy are debatable. Certain principles of the sonata form on the scale of a single gigantic movement, such as the first and second subject groups that are exposed and recapitulated, are not clearly distinguished and therefore Skoda's and Kinderman's opinions could only be suppositions, albeit interesting ones that are supported by the succession of the Fantasy's

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<sup>47</sup> A similar sort of debate pertains to the double function theory in Liszt's Sonata, where some scholars described its fugue as a Scherzo, while others considered it as part of the Finale (Hamilton, *Liszt: Sonata in B Minor*, pp. 31-33, 45).

<sup>48</sup> Franz Liszt, *Sonate en Si Mineur*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert, 1949), Avant-Propos, [p. i].

<sup>49</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 38 n71: 'Cette vivante péroraison'; and *ibid.*, p. 40 n74: 'la fin de la composition va se mouvoir dans une atmosphère de "Coda"'.

movements, but not necessarily substantiated through further structural evidence similar to the one in Liszt's sonata.<sup>50</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Virtuosity and Orchestral Power

Cortot refers to Schubert's inventive use of piano texture as the feature that not only allows a primitive thematic idea to be developed throughout the Fantasy, but also lends the instrument the ability to compete with, and be compared to, orchestral qualities.<sup>51</sup> Although he does not provide much detail, it is apparent that performers should not only focus on the amount of virtuosity required in order to play this work, but also search for those textural devices that would give to the instrument orchestral capacity and power. While further analysis is left for specific passages, which are discussed later, Cortot's ideas appear to display similarities with remarks underlined by leading Schubert interpreters. Both Badura-Skoda and Brendel have maintained that the originally virtuosic writing of the Fantasy is a medium through which the sound of the piano can be realized in orchestral terms.<sup>52</sup> Particularly important is the device of tremolo, which appears extensively in the second movement and elsewhere in the piece, and suggests an increasing intensity through the evocation of string textures.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, exuberant full chordal writing, potentially compared with equally heavy

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<sup>50</sup> For instance, in Liszt's Sonata exposition and recapitulation, in terms of the tonalities of the first and second subject groups on the scale of a single movement, are in accordance even with strictly classical principles; see Hamilton, *Liszt: Sonata in B minor*, pp. 45-48. In Schubert's Fantasy, if we follow Badura-Skoda's view, we can only suppose that the third movement comprises a recapitulation. The key is different to the opening and the first and second subject groups are in ternary metre, thus appearing as transformations of the motives that played these roles in the first movement, which Badura-Skoda described as the exposition.

<sup>51</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 2: 'la richesse d'un moyen instrumental nourri des constantes ressources d'une virtuosité inventive, et qui, par moments, semble vouloir rivaliser le puissant tonus de modalités orchestrales.'

<sup>52</sup> See Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. IV and Brendel, pp. 142-143.

<sup>53</sup> Brendel, p. 145.

textures written by that time as in Beethoven's 'Hammerklavier' Sonata or in the 'Emperor' Concerto, helps the piano to express the effect of *tutti* in orchestral playing.<sup>54</sup>

### *The Brilliant and Serious Styles*

On the other hand, although there are also examples of technically challenging writing in other piano works by Schubert, there is no doubt that the texture of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy is unusually demanding.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, the conception of the work, in relation to compositional traditions current in Vienna in the early nineteenth century, becomes quite relevant. Montgomery has maintained that leading tendencies in Vienna during Schubert's time were a brilliant and a serious style of composition, particularly for piano, which differed significantly in the way virtuosic textures were used. Works of the brilliant style highlighted virtuosity in the notation and further improvisatory elaboration would be expected in performances, aiming to impress and please the public. On the other hand, in works of the serious style, virtuosity was not necessarily a key to success and, therefore, additional improvisation becomes debatable.<sup>56</sup> Although the issue of additional improvisation in Schubert's music will be discussed later, without necessarily suggesting that it is applicable only in the brilliant style, the virtuosic writing of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy has led to various conceptions by Schubert scholars. Einstein describes it as a 'brilliant' composition in the

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>55</sup> Typical examples can be the outer movements of the C-minor Sonata, D 958, and the last movements of the A-minor Sonata, D 784, and the Piano Trio No. 2, D 929.

<sup>56</sup> See Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 189-209. Representatives of the former style were Hummel and (the young) Liszt, while Beethoven was the most prominent example of the latter. However, it is worth noting that Beethoven, as a performer, has been referred to have used virtuosity in his improvisations in order to gain popularity (See Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 202).

style of Hummel,<sup>57</sup> while McKay, although she agrees on Hummel's influence, shows that Schubert's use of virtuosic writing in the Fantasy is significantly different.<sup>58</sup> Finally, Montgomery maintains that Schubert's music was never exceedingly virtuosic, and, since it was coming from a non-virtuoso composer/performer, could only belong to the serious style.<sup>59</sup>

Although Cortot comments quite exhaustively on technical issues in the Fantasy, there is no evidence that differences between brilliant and serious music of the early nineteenth century in Vienna are addressed. This must not necessarily be considered a sign of his ignorance regarding the subject, but more likely as a sign that there is no doubt that Schubert's work should be considered serious and not brilliant. Similarly to the Impromptus, Cortot usually advises against virtuosic display in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, especially when the texture is quite demanding, such as in the octaves at the end of the first movement or the runs in the fourth variation of the second movement. Moreover, Cortot's consideration of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy as a serious and not brilliant work is further supported by his note that it follows a specific compositional plan displaying no signs of improvisation.

In conclusion, technical demands alone in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy are not enough to turn the work into a brilliant composition. It follows a specific structural development, and the use of virtuosic writing aims to challenge the sound capacity of the instrument and/or reinforce emotional climaxes. Finally, as also Badura-Skoda pointedly maintains, the texture of the work justifies its visionary quality in terms of use of the instrument, similar to its originality in terms of form.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Einstein, p. 232-233.

<sup>58</sup> McKay, 'Schubert and Hummel', p. 32.

<sup>59</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 192-193 and 201-203.

<sup>60</sup> See Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. IV.

### 4.3.3 The Issue of Programme

Cortot completes his *Avant-Propos* discussing the issue of programme in the Fantasy, potentially deriving from Schubert's quotation of the particular passage from the song 'Der Wanderer' in the second movement. The words from that passage, which are cited in Cortot's introduction, could be translated as follows: 'The sun seems so cold to me here; the flower is faded, the life is old; and what men say has an empty ring; I am a stranger everywhere'.<sup>61</sup> Although motivic and harmonic features of that passage were essential for the emotional intensity and structural coherence of the whole composition,<sup>62</sup> Cortot maintains that there is not enough evidence to show that this verse can comprise a kind of 'programme' for the Fantasy.<sup>63</sup>

The term 'programme music' was introduced by Liszt describing his symphonic poems, although features that might have influenced and anticipated this expression can be detected in earlier works, such as Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony.<sup>64</sup> Despite certain confusion in the definition of the term,<sup>65</sup> it could be maintained that in programme music

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<sup>61</sup> As cited in John Reed, *The Schubert Song Companion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p.137.

<sup>62</sup> These features include the rhythmic motif of one crotchet-two quavers, which is apparent in many sections in the first, second and fourth movements, and the use of the augmented sixth chord leading to the dominant, which was an element used in the conclusion of the first and the third movement of the Fantasy.

<sup>63</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 2: 'il n'y a pas lieu, de toute évidence, de rechercher dans le sens des paroles dolentes [...] un sens idéologique susceptible d'y déterminer une quelconque tendance programmatique à quoi devrait se conformer l'ensemble de la traduction pianistique.'

<sup>64</sup> Roger Scruton, 'Programme music', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/22394> (Accessed: January 31, 2014).

<sup>65</sup> This can be clear in several writings regarding the concept of programme music. See Michel Dimitri Calvocoressi, 'The Problem of Programme-Music', *Musical Times*, Vol. 54, No. 844 (Jun. 1, 1913), p. 372; William Wallace, 'The Scope of Programme Music', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 25<sup>th</sup> Sess. (1898-1899), pp. 139-140; and Scruton, 'Programme music', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/22394> (Accessed: January 31, 2014).

composers clearly aim to present specific images, situations and emotions through a particular plot, usually explained in an introductory text. Practices that could justify the existence of 'programme' in a composition can be literary texts mentioned before the music; titles of specific scenery; and techniques of imitating and describing, through sound, specific objects which, in relation to each other, tell the story of the work.<sup>66</sup>

Although Schubert's works have very rarely been rendered as examples of programme music,<sup>67</sup> the 'Wanderer' Fantasy has usually been discussed in this context. While this has mainly aimed to show how Schubert anticipated compositional practices used in programmatic works by Liszt and Wagner,<sup>68</sup> some scholars have implied the existence of programme in the Fantasy itself. More specifically, Einstein does not hesitate to use the term, maintaining that the first movement particularly 'has an underlying and undivulged "programme" [illustrating] a "storm", the clearest indications of which are the *tremoli* and the chromatic surge of the first subject'.<sup>69</sup> In addition, Fisk maintains that, while the work is associated with the feeling of alienation that is intensively present in the song, in terms of harmonic and textural development it provides a 'happy ending' for the song's protagonist.<sup>70</sup>

There is no doubt that particular structural, harmonic, and textural devices used in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy later became typical of programmatic works, especially those by Liszt and Wagner. The idea of a large-scale composition built on a single motif, transformed into various representations, clearly

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<sup>66</sup> See Calvocoressi, p. 372 and Scruton, 'Programme music', *Grove Music Online*, 2014, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/22394> (Accessed: 31 January, 2014).

<sup>67</sup> See Frederick Niecks, *Programme Music in the Last Four Centuries* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1969 (1907)), p. 145; and Tovey, pp. 1 and 63-73.

<sup>68</sup> See Tovey, pp. 70 and 72-73; and Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. IV.

<sup>69</sup> Einstein, p. 233.

<sup>70</sup> Fisk, pp. 6-7 and 71.

anticipates Wagner's *leitmotiv*;<sup>71</sup> the connection between sections of remote tonalities, especially mediant and submediant keys, anticipates harmonic processes of Liszt's symphonic poems;<sup>72</sup> and the extensive use of tremolo introduces a device which Liszt used in order to provide the depiction of various objects in his works.<sup>73</sup> However, the use of these devices alone cannot be enough to make Schubert's Fantasy an undoubted example of programme music. The quotation from the song does not necessarily suggest that the composer intended to tell the story of the 'Wanderer', and notably the nickname of the piece was not Schubert's invention. Efforts to describe poetically, and discover a storytelling in musical textures, similar to how Fisk did or Cortot usually does in his editions, can be extremely inspiring and helpful for imaginative and convincing performances. However, they cannot be enough to give programmatic quality to a work that lacks clear signs of depiction and representation of objects in the music.

#### **4.4 The Classification of Issues**

Cortot's commentary in his edition of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy will be examined in the following categories, some of which will be the same as in the previous chapter: a) tempo adoption in relation to each movement separately, and tempo modification, as it might be applied between different sections, or as tempo fluctuations in the manner of *rubato*; b) sound and interpretation of expressive devices; c) orchestration, as an extension of the previous section, where Cortot discusses the possibility to realize the Fantasy's texture in orchestral terms; d) Liszt's versions of the Fantasy, discussed by Cortot as a source for a certain performance style and

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<sup>71</sup> See Tovey, p. 70 and Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. IV.

<sup>72</sup> Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. IV.

<sup>73</sup> Brendel, p. 145-146.

tradition; e) technical issues; and f) structure, where the practice of motivic transformation is discussed in relation to Schubert's treatment of the cyclic-monothematic form.

#### 4.4.1 Tempo Adoption

##### *Outer Movements – 'in four'*

In the opening of the Fantasy, Cortot maintains that, although Schubert's accents on the first and third beats (bar 1) may suggest a phrasal structure in minims, it should be noted that the time signature is 4/4, and not *alla breve*, and the tempo indications are *Allegro con fuoco ma non troppo*. Therefore, the adoption of too fast a tempo, ignoring the significance of *ma non troppo*, would be harmful for the 'peremptory' character of this opening.<sup>74</sup> Cortot's warning against a paced execution is based on the importance of thinking in four beats, and offers a sensible suggestion for the beginning and, perhaps, the rest of the movement. Additionally, it also anticipates precisely Montgomery's points regarding the same passage.<sup>75</sup>

On the other hand, in the absence of any particular remark regarding the fourth movement, it can be assumed that he considered it as a clear case of an Allegro 'in four', which can be confirmed through the note-values and the accentuation given by Schubert.

##### *Second Movement*

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<sup>74</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 3n1: 'La notion du « quatre temps » y est indispensable à la signification résolue de la cadence propulsive, et l'indication liminaire de Schubert « Allegro con fuoco » s'y voit judicieusement amendée par l'emploi du « ma non troppo », qui en souligne le caractère péremptoire.'

<sup>75</sup> See Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 236.

Cortot's approach to the tempo of the second movement appears to relate to an important error that his edition contains in terms of time signature. While in *Urtext*-labelled editions the time signature is  $\text{♩}$ , in Cortot's edition the metre is not changed and, therefore, it continues with the first movement's **C**. The possibility that this is an interpretive suggestion that neglects Schubert's notation, and not an editorial mistake, seems to be stronger in this case.

Particular editions of the Fantasy, which Cortot owned and consulted, appeared to contain the same mistake in the metre of the Adagio. These sources, which included a copy of Liszt's edition and an album of Schubert's piano compositions published in the late nineteenth century by Peters,<sup>76</sup> comprise strong evidence that an erroneous version of this movement's metre was established during Cortot's time and before. However, it is almost impossible that Cortot could not have known that the time signature of the movement is *alla breve*, since he owned a copy of the first publication of the Fantasy in his private library.<sup>77</sup> It would be inconceivable to imagine that Cortot considered both Liszt's version and a Peters Edition of the late nineteenth century more valid and up-to-date than the first print.<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, the fragment of the song 'Der Wanderer', which was printed in the introduction to Cortot's edition, in order to set up the connection between the Adagio and the *Lied*, appeared also mistakenly in 4/4, showing that possibly an erroneous version of the song was known to him. Taking into

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<sup>76</sup> The year of publication of that album could not be confirmed. However, a collection of Schubert's *Lieder* that appeared to be of the same series can be informative, since it contained a critical note by Max Müller (1823-1900), which read 'Oxford, October 1883', and a Foreword (*Vorwort*) by Max Friedlaender, which read 'Frankfurt a/M, Juli 1884'. Therefore, we can assume that these albums were published possibly around the 1880s and 1890s or at least before the end of the nineteenth century.

<sup>77</sup> Accessible in the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler – Cortot's Archive.

<sup>78</sup> In many cases in his edition Cortot criticized Liszt's version(s) of the Fantasy. In addition, practices from the version included in the annotated album were also not followed precisely and consistently in Cortot's edition.

account the version of the *Lied* Cortot allows to appear in his *Avant-Propos*, the time signature of the *Adagio* in his edition would most likely appear to reveal an interpretive suggestion.

This suggestion could, at first, imply that the tempo of the *Adagio* in the *Fantasy* should be in accordance with the tempo of the song and, if the latter was supposed to be in 4/4, the same should be applied in the former. Cortot appears to follow an approach similar to the one suggested for the tempo of the *Impromptu D 935 No. 3* and its relation to *Rosamunde*, although this time the interpretation of the *alla breve* sign is different in order to match the rhythm of the correlated works. The idea of setting the crotchet as the fundamental beat in the *Adagio* could actually correspond to the metronome marking from the first publication of the quoted *Lied* (crotchet = MM 63), which Montgomery considers essential for justifying the relationship between the tempos of these two works.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, Cortot provides a potentially effective interpretive suggestion for the pace and the serious character of the slow movement of the *Fantasy*. A rhythmical structure 'in four', rather than 'in two', could lead to a heavier execution of the crotchets, which would risk, perhaps, an inappropriate lighter touch owed to the *alla breve* sign.

### *Third Movement*

For Cortot, the third movement of the *Fantasy*, in both the scherzo and the trio sections, was clearly dominated by the element of dance, which at times was described as the Viennese waltz.<sup>80</sup> Although such a remark is similar to

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<sup>79</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 221 and 224; and Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 283.

<sup>80</sup> Several footnotes for both the scherzo and the trio section mention the dance, and particularly the waltz, as a main element of the third movement. See Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 28n52: 'la cadence du morceau dans son ensemble doit

observations by Newman<sup>81</sup> and Brendel,<sup>82</sup> Cortot notes this relation in order to refer to a work that he considered equivalent in terms of texture, character and rhythmic structure, and could potentially relate to the tempo of the scherzo. This work is Weber's *Invitation to the Dance*,<sup>83</sup> which is the additional name for the *Rondo Brillante* in D-flat major, Op. 65.<sup>84</sup> Weber's *Invitation* (1819) was published in 1821,<sup>85</sup> a period when the 'Wanderer' Fantasy may have been in development, and it is a piece Schubert might have known, since he has been referred to as a close friend of Weber during the latter's visit to Vienna in early 1822.<sup>86</sup> The similarity between the two pieces can easily be heard in their lively characters, metrical structures (ternary metres) and harmonic backgrounds (A-flat major and D-flat major keys), and it can be noticed in specific textural motifs, as the following examples show (Fig. 2 and 3). The presence of dotted rhythms in chords, followed by quavers in broken chords, is obvious in both the opening of Schubert's movement and the entrance of the main section of Weber's piece.

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demeurer constamment tributaire du rythme tournoyant de la valse viennoise'; *ibid.*, p. 29n55: 'les dansantes impulsions seront délicatement soulignées par l'adjonction d'un léger et scintillant staccato'; *ibid.*, p. 29n56: 'Bien conserver l'élan impulsif de la valse dans la figuration arpégée de la basse'; and *ibid.*, p. 32n62: 's'il implique toujours l'idée de la danse'.

<sup>81</sup> Newman, p. 538.

<sup>82</sup> Brendel, p. 137.

<sup>83</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p.28n52: 'la cadence du morceau dans son ensemble doit demeurer constamment tributaire du rythme tournoyant de la valse viennoise dont l'Invitation à la Valse de Weber propose par ailleurs un exemple célèbre'. Cortot mistakenly translated Weber's *Aufforderung zum Tanz* as *Invitation to the Waltz*. This mistake has often been seen regarding this piece.

<sup>84</sup> 'Aufforderung zum Tanz', *The Oxford Companion to Music*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e462> (Accessed: March 18, 2014). See also Otto Kinkeldey, 'Schubert: Dance-Composer', *Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Oct., 1928), p. 610; and Robin Langley, 'Weber and the Piano', *Musical Times*, Vol. 127, No. 1726 (Nov., 1986), p. 605.

<sup>85</sup> Kinkeldey, p. 610.

<sup>86</sup> See Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert*, p. 84. Especially regarding examples of Schubert's piano compositions, which could suggest references to earlier works by Weber, see Langley, pp. 606-607.

Figure 2 Schubert D 760/III bars 3-7, Wiener Urtext Edition



Figure 3 Weber *Rondo Brillante*, Op. 65 bars 35-38



The comparison between the two works could clarify Cortot's rhythmical conception of the Fantasy's third movement, most likely suggesting the adoption of a quick pace and setting the dotted minim as the fundamental beat. Such metrical treatment would again appear to anticipate Montgomery's approach, as witnessed in his metronomic suggestions for this movement.<sup>87</sup>

Summarizing Cortot's remarks about the tempi of the Fantasy's movements, a basic issue for the first two and the finale was to set the rhythmic and

<sup>87</sup> See Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 260.

phrasal structure in four beats, no matter if several signs, such as accentuation and/or time signature, may have suggested a metre in two. A similarly interpreted rhythmical pattern throughout different movements can be a medium through which structural coherence is achieved, and Schubert's monothematic conception is delivered. On the other hand, in the third movement, which suggests a radical transformation of the monothematic idea, Weber's work provides a relevant example for acquiring a tempo that would facilitate the dancing qualities of its character to emerge.

#### **4.4.2 Tempo Modification**

Cortot's remarks regarding the issue of tempo modification will be examined in three sections. The first two discuss the applicability of imperceptible, or radical, change of tempo within the same movement, and in the transitions between the first three movements, while the third one provides examples of where freedom of tempo is altogether discouraged.

##### **4.4.2.1 Sections, Episodes and Variations**

###### *First Movement*

In the first movement, the episodes in E major (starting at bar 47) and in E-flat major (starting at bar 112) are discussed in relation to treatment of tempo. Both episodes display a calm character and singing contours, and follow, and give way to, active passages. In the first example, Cortot clearly suggests some rhythmical freedom in the introductory bars (45-46; Fig. 4-6), while a change for the actual tempo of the episode is less likely, though it might be imperceptibly implied. The *tenuto* signs given to the right-hand crotchets in bar 45, followed by *Poco rit.* in bar 46, show that some flexibility

in the transition to the new episode is necessary. On the other hand, the indication *a Tempo (tranquillo)* at the beginning of bar 47 could comprise an implication that a slightly slower pace should be adopted for the entering section, but could also be interpreted as a change of character, rather than a radically slower tempo. Cortot explains that the pace of this episode ‘might relax but it should not be slower than the original tempo leading, thus, to a sentimental *Andante*’,<sup>88</sup> possibly implying that the undoubted contrast of character could be delivered through the use of devices other than tempo modification. Such devices could include a significant differentiation of articulation/touch, realized as a less accentuated projection of the rhythmical impulses of the theme, which can provide appropriate tranquillity. In addition, in bar 67, where the E-major section leads to the C-major return, Cortot suggests a return of the ‘activity’,<sup>89</sup> carefully avoiding terms that would definitely mean a re-establishment of the original tempo.

**Figure 4 Schubert D 760/I bars 45-47, Wiener Urtext Edition**



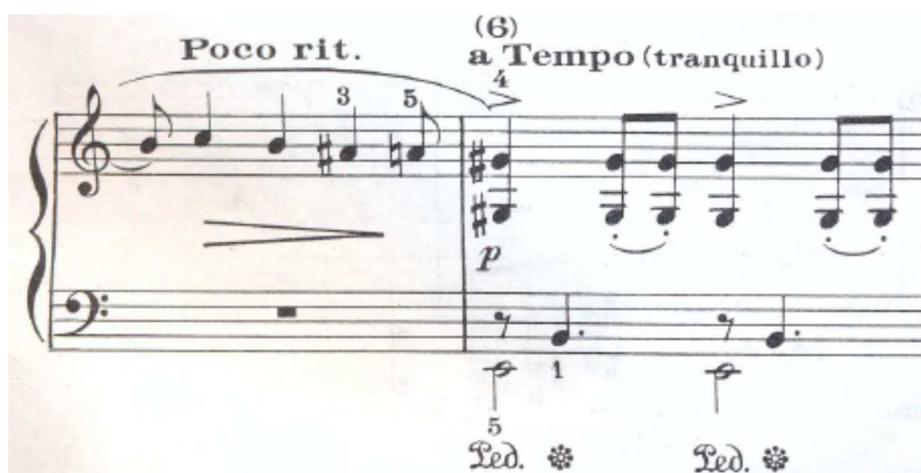
<sup>88</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 5n6: ‘la cadence rythmique y soit détendue, main non ralentie, et que le vivant tempo de toute cette première partie ne s’y affadisse pas, même momentanément, dans les alanguissements inconsidérés d’un *Andante* exagérément sentimental.’

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7n9: ‘Un subit renouveau d’activité frémissante doit accompagner l’impétueux élan du crescendo qui ménage ici, dans un enthousiaste retour à la tonalité principale’.

Figure 5 Schubert D 760/I bar 45, Cortot's Edition (1954)



Figure 6 Schubert D 760/I bars 46-47, Cortot's Edition (1954)



In the E-flat major episode, though, some freedom in timing not only for the transition, but also for the actual section, is more likely. At first, the indication *poco cedendo* given by Cortot in bar 111 shows that the entrance of the new episode again requires a smooth link with the previous section. However, in the beginning of the episode (bar 112), Cortot adds *a Tempo* that, as is further explained, means that 'the tempo of this episode, lasting for twenty

bars, should be slightly relaxed'.<sup>90</sup> This time it is more likely that a real change in tempo is suggested in comparison to the E-major episode, because what is described as possibly relaxed is 'le tempo' and not 'la cadence rythmique'. In addition, when the E-flat major episode gives way to the appearance of the theme in D-flat major (bar 132), Cortot clearly suggests a return to 'the determined rhythm of the beginning'<sup>91</sup> and not just 're-establishment of the activity', as at the end of the E-major section (bar 67). Although, in both cases, a slower tempo for the execution of the new episode might be implied, in the second example this change should be more significant.

The execution of the E-flat major episode of the first movement in a slower tempo, and then re-establishing the original pace in bar 132, has not been an unusual practice, as recordings by pianists of the early and late twentieth century suggest.<sup>92</sup> In terms of texture, combined with the ethereal – or in Cortot's words 'airy' –<sup>93</sup> character, a slightly relaxed pace would prevent inappropriate agitation and clumsiness, usually caused by the uninterrupted semiquavers of the left hand and the peculiar right-hand appoggiaturas in bars 124 and 127. In addition, it could be realized as an effective adjustment to the particularities of modern instruments, since the thick left-hand part

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 11n19: 'tempo légèrement détendu, qui va s'étendre sur les vingt mesures suivantes'.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 13n23: 'Reprendre exactement, à partir d'ici, la cadence résolue du début du morceau, mais en se gardant de toute tendance à l'agitation.'

<sup>92</sup> Recordings by Edwin Fischer (1934; APR 5515, 1996) and Claudio Arrau (1957; EMI Classics, Icon 9184322, 2011) show the use of this practice (quite subtly though) by pianists that were active in the early twentieth century. Interestingly, despite the shift towards uniformity of tempo in the second half of the twentieth century, in recorded performances by Alfred Brendel ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXycS\\_0w\\_pU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXycS_0w_pU); accessed: July 31, 2015), Murray Perahia (CBS, 42124, 1990) and Evgeny Kissin ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgg0qrjypac](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgg0qrjypac); accessed: July 31, 2015) the E-flat major episode is played in a radically slower tempo than the previous and following passages.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 11n19: 'en quelque sorte atmosphérique, d'un aérien enveloppement'.

would not necessarily cause the same clumsiness on the light Viennese fortepianos of Schubert's time.

### *Theme and Variations*

In the second movement, the issue of tempo modification becomes more specific, since it refers particularly to the form of theme and variations. The question concerns possible differences in tempo between the variations, or the predominance of an unvarying beat throughout consecutive episodes. Cortot's editorial comments, and additions on Schubert's notation, appear to call for a uniform tempo throughout the variations, despite the constant modification of mood and texture and the successions of C-sharp major and C-sharp minor keys. There are no indications or signs that could imply tempo changes in any variation and, especially in the last one, where the texture could easily lead to a sense of haste, Cortot warns that 'one should not allow the idea of virtuosity to emerge instead of the appropriate poetic expression'.<sup>94</sup> The idea of an unaltered pulse in this movement, taking into account specific features of the texture, is in complete agreement with Newman's observation that, generally in theme and variations, Schubert suggested shifts in movement not through tempo modifications, but through change of note-values.<sup>95</sup> This remark actually applies perfectly to the texture of the variations in the Fantasy, where smaller values appear from one episode to the other. However, this approach should not necessarily apply to all other pieces or movements by Schubert in the same form, even if note-values are similarly shortened. In the Impromptu D 935 No. 3, different tempi between the variations can be appropriate, as a result of the individuality

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 21n42: 'Rien en somme, ici, qui se doit d'éveiller la notion de la virtuosité instrumentales, si ce n'est sur le plan de l'évocation poétique'.

<sup>95</sup> Newman, p. 539.

and autonomy of each variation, a feature which is contrary to the continuous flow displayed in the Fantasy.

Despite the uniform tempo in the variations, suggestions for flexibility in timing can still be found in the second movement, showing mainly that Cortot used this device in Schubert's music in order to connect contrasting sections without further differentiation in tempo, or to aid emotional attenuation. Such a case appears at the end of bar 26 (Fig. 7), where Cortot's edition next to Schubert's *diminuendo* gives also *poco cedendo*, underlining the end of certain emotional climax (bars 21-26) before the entrance of the tranquil first variation (bar 27).

**Figure 7 Schubert D 760/II bar 26, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



As is explained further in the commentary, the *poco cedendo* should be realized rather as 'imperceptible retardation and not *ritenuto*, which has been suggested by a certain number of commentators',<sup>96</sup> and which 'would

<sup>96</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 19n38: 'Ne pas confondre ici la mention d'un imperceptible « cedendo » avec celle du « ritenuto » prescrite par nombre de commentateurs'.

work against the simplicity required by Schubert's style'.<sup>97</sup> While some flexibility, which would smoothen the link between these, greatly contrasting, structural units is absolutely reasonable, Cortot's suggestion could also appear to anticipate Levin and Dürr, who have considered Schubert's *diminuendo* an indication that calls for both dynamic and rhythmical attenuation. However, as seen in the Impromptus, Cortot did not seem to follow such a rule consistently, even though this particular place can comprise an example for the validity of this practice.<sup>98</sup> On the other hand, Cortot is consistent in using flexibility in tempo at the end of intense sections when these give way to calmer episodes, a practice he also suggested in similar instances in the Impromptus D 899 No. 4 and D 935 No. 2.

### *Scherzo – Trio – Scherzo*

Similar to the second movement, the issue of tempo modification in the third movement is closely related to its particular form, which is a scherzo with trio. The main question regarding ternary forms is whether different sections should be played at different tempi. As far as the middle section in the third movement of the Fantasy is concerned, Cortot appears to follow the same path as in the Impromptus, suggesting some flexibility for the transition to the trio (bars 179-186), and not necessarily an overall change to the original tempo. More specifically, as is noted in the edition:

One should not exaggerate slowing down in the eight bars leading to the section which plays the traditional role of a classical trio and should be slightly relaxed and emotionally relieved [... also,] the tempo should

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.: 'et qui ne paraît pas s'accorder avec la caractéristique simplicité du style schubertien, ennemie résolue de toute emphase superflue.'

<sup>98</sup> According to the critical editions, the *decrecendo* of bar 25 leads to *pianissimo* already in the beginning of bar 26, where a *diminuendo* leads again to *pianissimo* in bar 27. Therefore, one of the possibilities is that this particular *diminuendo* could be seen as both a dynamic and tempo indication.

be re-established with the resolution in D-flat major, nine bars later [(bar 187)].<sup>99</sup>

Similarly to previous cases, like the E-major section in the first movement, or the middle section of the Impromptu D 935 No. 2, while Cortot is clear about the transitional bars, he can be ambiguous as regards the tempo of the new episode. Although he avoids terms that would definitely lead to a radical change of speed, an imperceptibly slower tempo for the trio could possibly be implied. However, it is equally possible that Cortot would like to suggest that contrasts in character, like this one, could be delivered effectively through change of touch and dynamics, without necessarily being accompanied by tempo alterations. Such an approach could possibly comprise indirect criticism of the frequency in the use of this device by pianists of Cortot's time, or even before.

At the end of the trio and the transition back to the scherzo, Cortot's approach is again similar to comparable cases from the Impromptus. As is explained in the commentary, the 're-introduction' to the first section (bars 269-276) should suggest 'a deliberate return to the original tempo of the scherzo without being affected by an implicit, melodic relaxation of the previous episode'.<sup>100</sup> While imperceptible retardation is clearly suggested at the end of the trio (bars 267-268), in order to assist its structural and emotional completion, the transition to the scherzo should be played strictly in the original tempo, no matter if the actual reprise comes nine bars later

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<sup>99</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 32n61: 'Sans être exagérément ralentie, la cadence de ces huit mesures de transition, préparant l'apparition du divertissement qui détient dans ce Presto en forme de Scherzo ou Menuet le rôle traditionnel du Trio classique, doit être légèrement détendue et revêtue d'un certain abandon expressif [...] le tempo se rétablissant se soi même sur la résolution en ré bémol majeur de la 9ème mesure'.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p. 35n65: 'l'imminence de la réintroduction... Il ne s'agit pas tant ici pour l'interprète d'assurer le retour délibéré au tempo initial du Scherzo, lequel en fait n'a pas été mis en cause par l'incidente détente mélodique de l'épisode précédent'.

(bar 277). This approach is in complete accordance with Cortot's suggestions for the return of the A-section in the Impromptu D 899 No. 4, where the indirect connection between a calm and an energetic episode requires tempo flexibility, only for marking the textural shift and not the actual entrance of the new section.

#### 4.4.2.2 Transitions between Movements

The transitions between the first two movements, and between the second and the third, display some similarity, since in both cases the links are rather seamless – contrary to the transition to the finale where rests intervene – and there are no indications for tempo modification apart from pause-signs. More specifically, the pause-signs at the end of the first movement appear above the last crotchet of bar 188, and at the end of the second one above the double bar-line of bar 56. Whereas Newman doubts whether Schubert's pause-signs should be accompanied by retardation when they are not followed by a *tempo* indications,<sup>101</sup> Cortot's suggestions show a different approach.

At the end of the first movement, Cortot's edition includes a *rallentando* at the last two and a half bars of the movement (bars 186-188), being possibly a reference to Liszt's edition of the Fantasy, in which *poco a poco ritenuto* is displayed in the same bars. While such a practice works effectively for the emotional attenuation of the movement, and as preparation for the entrance of the 'Wanderer's' theme, it could also be Cortot's response to Schubert's pause-sign. On the other hand, it is worth noting that further editorial remarks show that Cortot was really careful in specifying the place where

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<sup>101</sup> Newman, pp. 533-534.

freedom in tempo should be applied, criticizing longer and bigger retardations applied, perhaps, in performances during his time or before. Thus, *Tempo preciso* in the beginning of this transition (bar 165), followed by *senza rallentare* further down (bar 181), could be signs that a restrained use of time flexibility is recommended.

Similarly, in the last bar of the second movement, Cortot's edition displays not only Schubert's *diminuendo*, but also *poco rit.* and *perdendosi* in the second half of the bar, most likely again following Liszt's edition. While Cortot offers a logical interpretive suggestion, his approach can show again that Schubert's pause-sign could be enough to imply that some retardation should be included.<sup>102</sup>

#### 4.4.2.3 Avoid the Habit

Alongside cases where tempo modifications are implied or clearly recommended, there are passages in the Fantasy where Cortot advises strongly against any change of pace. In the famous octave passage towards the end of the first movement (bars 161-164) – which has traditionally caused problems to pianists of all levels – Cortot maintains that certain technical difficulty leads most performers 'to the solution of slowing down. Thus, the octaves are played, one's consciousness about the technique is satisfied, but the sense and the meaning of the composition are lost'.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> This place could also comprise an example for the interpretation of Schubert's *diminuendo* as both a dynamic and rhythmical indication.

<sup>103</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 15n30: 'la solution la plus généralement envisagée consiste à ralentir le mouvement: les octaves sont jouées, la conscience technique est satisfaite, mais le sens de la composition n'y est plus'. Examples of great pianists slowing down in this passage, as evidenced in recordings of the Fantasy, are: Claudio Arrau (rec. 1957, EMI Classics Icon 9184322, 2011) and Vladimir Sofronitsky (live rec. 1953, Brilliant Classics – 8975, 2009). It is also worth mentioning Eugen d'Albert, who suggested *allargando* for these bars in his edition of the Fantasy. See D'Albert-Schubert, p. 9.

Cortot insists so much on the consistency of tempo in this passage that he even considers it more appropriate to the intentions of the composer, and the character of the music, to apply technical facilitation rather than to slow down.<sup>104</sup>

Moreover, Cortot strongly opposes any change of tempo between bars 130 and 131 of the third movement, where the main theme of the scherzo returns after the development of the secondary idea of the A-section. As is explained in the commentary, there should not be any retardation leading to this reprise, since this practice would harm 'the natural joint of two fragments' within the same large structural part.<sup>105</sup> This suggestion shows Cortot's consistency against retardation for transitions between episodes that belong to the same structural unit and do not indicate significant textural changes, as was shown in bars 50-51 from the Impromptu D 899 No. 2.

In conclusion, Cortot's remarks on tempo in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy reveal a consistent approach, bearing in mind similar cases discussed in the Impromptus. Firstly, there is a clear notion that the tempo of a movement or piece by Schubert, which quotes a part from an earlier work, should be in accordance with the tempo of the quoted passage. This idea refers to the second movement of the Fantasy in relation to 'Der Wanderer', as it did to the B-flat major Impromptu in relation to *Rosamunde*. Cortot is similarly consistent regarding tempo changes. Freedom in timing is used for smooth transitions between contrasting and major structural sections or movements,

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<sup>104</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 15n30: 'il faut choisir, et savoir rendre justice à l'intention du compositeur... Demeure sans résultat satisfaisant, en dépit de la contraction nerveuse du poignet et des doigts accordée au début de chaque propulsion, on se résignera à l'emploi du subterfuge qui, s'il n'a pas pour lui le privilège de l'exactitude digitale, ne traduit pas moins au plus près de sa signification musicale, le caractère d'ardeur entreprenante de ces quatre mesures'.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31n58bis: 'Se garder de tout ritenuto avant la reprise du thème principal, à nouveau discrètement énoncé, et qui doit s'enchaîner avec le fragment antérieur d'une manière absolument dégagée et naturelle.'

and not simply for highlighting change in character or end of phrases. Retardation that assists structural and emotional attenuation appears to be recommended particularly in places where Schubert has given a pause-sign or, sometimes, a *diminuendo*. Similar to the Impromptus, after slowing down at the end of a reflective episode, the appearance of a lively texture should coincide with the re-establishment of tempo, even if the main motif of the new episode comes slightly later. In general, clear differences in tempo between sections are rare, although imperceptible modifications are usually implied, showing in a way that, if needed, they should be minimal. Finally, acceleration seems not to be an option and, particularly in technically demanding passages, Cortot warns that quicker execution might lead to inappropriate virtuosic demonstration.

#### **4.4.3 Sound and Expressive Devices**

As also seen in the Impromptus, equally important in this area of examination are Cortot's analyses in the footnotes and his indications directly on the score. Cortot's editorial intervention gives the opportunity for interesting comparisons with *Urtext*-labelled and other editions, which can lead to conclusions regarding his editorial process and his interpretive suggestions. The examination will be divided into the following categories:  
a) Articulation – Touch; b) Accentuation; and c) Suggested Dynamic Plans.

##### **4.4.3.1 Articulation – Touch**

The variety of touch, which can be achieved on modern instruments, must have been for Cortot an important aspect of piano playing that shows the richness of Schubert's music. In the 'Wanderer' Fantasy there are passages

where variety of touch can be applicable, even in places where this is not necessarily indicated in Schubert's text.

Such an approach can be found in Cortot's suggestions regarding the sound of the theme moving from one variation to another in the second movement (Table 1). At the beginning of the first variation (bar 27), the so-called *Urtext* editions give *pianissimo*, with no other dynamic indication before the appearance of another *pianissimo* at the beginning of the fourth variation (bar 39). In the first edition of the Fantasy there are no dynamics in bar 27, but probably *pianissimo* is meant to be played following the indication in bar 26, with the next dynamic indication appearing in bar 39, which is another *pianissimo*. In the album of Schubert's piano works (Peters Editions), which Cortot owned and most likely annotated, in bar 27 there is *dolce* and still not *pianissimo*, and in bar 39 there is *pianissimo*, possibly following the first print.

Cortot's edition contains a few indications showing the variety of sound that could possibly be produced without necessarily distorting the music. More specifically, at the beginning of the first variation (bar 27), there is *dolce*, probably following the practice from the album Cortot owned; at the beginning of the second variation (bar 31), there is *mezzo-piano* with *espressivo* on the right hand; at the entrance of the third variation (bar 35), there is *mezzo-piano* with *cantando*, again on the right hand; and finally, at the beginning of the last variation (bar 39), there is *pianissimo* with *delicatamente* for the right hand and *piano* for the left. These indications suggest a creative and effective way of execution for a place where there is scant notation, implying that phrases or sections that display fundamental differences in terms of harmony, texture and character could be played with different sound qualities, even though there are no different dynamics given by Schubert.

**Table 1 Dynamic and Expressive indications for Schubert D 760/II Variations, Wiener Urtext Edition, First Edition, Annotated Album, Cortot's Edition (1954)**

Bar number	Wiener Urtext	First Edition	Annotated Album (Peters)	Cortot
27 (1 <sup>st</sup> Var. C-sharp major)	<i>pp</i>	none ( <i>pp</i> from bar 26)	<i>dolce</i> ( <i>pp</i> from bar 26)	<i>dolce</i> ( <i>pp</i> from bar 26)
31 (2 <sup>nd</sup> Var. C-sharp minor)				<i>mp espressivo</i> (RH)
35 (3 <sup>rd</sup> Var. C-sharp major)				<i>mp cantando</i> (RH)
39 (4 <sup>th</sup> Var. C-sharp minor)	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i>	<i>pp</i> ( <i>delicatamente</i> ) – RH <i>p</i> – LH

Different qualities of sound can be achieved through various devices relevant to articulation/touch, such as balance, voicing and pedalling. The difference between the right-hand part of the first and second variation is specifically explained further in Cortot's commentary. The theme of the first variation (C-sharp major) should have an 'immaterial substance in the sound, coming out as a vision of life after death, and promising a heavenly bliss',<sup>106</sup> while in the second variation (C-sharp minor) it should display the 'hidden anxiety through a more penetrating, exact and painfully realized sonority'.<sup>107</sup> These eloquent descriptions, next to the aforementioned dynamic and expressive additions, could be realized as a deeper touch and more sharply projected tone on the top voice of the octaves in the minor variation, and a warmer touch, with the two parts of the octaves being closer in terms of volume, in the major. Further differentiation could be achieved

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 19n39: 'Une sorte de transfiguration immatérielle de la sonorité s'impose sur ce majeur, qui métamorphose momentanément, en une vision de l'au-delà, et comme prometteuse d'une céleste béatitude'.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 19n40: '... la secrète inquiétude... Employer, à la main droite une sonorité plus pénétrante, ou, plus exactement, plus douloureusement sensibilisée que dans l'épisode majeur antérieur.'

through Cortot's pedal indications, which highlight the serenity of the first variation through rich pedals for every crotchet, and the anxiety of the second with shorter pedal only in the first half of each crotchet (Fig. 8 and 9).

**Figure 8 Schubert D 760/II bar 27, pedalling in Cortot's Edition (1954)**



**Figure 9 Schubert D 760/II bar 31, pedalling in Cortot's Edition (1954)**



## *Articulation and Pedal*

In the third variation, the variety of touch is discussed mainly regarding the different parts of this episode's texture. Cortot focuses on the layering of Schubert's writing, where 'three different sonorities should emerge: a) the top voice of the right hand as a singer's part'<sup>108</sup> – described poetically as a 'consoling voice that echoes the sense of infinite compassion';<sup>109</sup> b) the middle part of the right hand as a 'murmuring accompaniment';<sup>110</sup> and c) the bass line as 'harmonic arpeggios'.<sup>111</sup> Additionally, he points out the role of the pedal for the intended sonority and articulation, since, although the bass notes should be played 'detached',<sup>112</sup> the sound should be enriched by 'constant changes of pedal, even in the same harmonic positions, in order to avoid undesired slurred sounds'.<sup>113</sup> Cortot's suggestion makes sense, since the pedal effectively assists the smooth movement of the singing top line, while it also highlights the harmonic richness and warmth of the variation's major key, in contrast to the anxiety of the surrounding minor-key episodes.

On the other hand, Cortot's remark displays great similarity with Montgomery's and Brendel's views regarding the use of the pedal in places where Schubert's articulation signs would make it ambiguous. Montgomery, referring particularly to the second movement of Schubert's Sonata D 960,

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 20n41: 'Trois sonorités différentes sont à prévoir dans ce fragment: celle de la partie vocale'.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.: 'comme si une voix humainement consolatrice... s'y faisant l'écho d'un sentiment d'infinie compassion.'

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.: 'celle, murmurante, des batteries qui lui servent d'accompagnement'.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.: 'celle des harmonies arpégées de la main gauche'.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.: 'la main gauche, dont chaque note se verra onctueusement détachée' However, Cortot may have missed the possibility of detecting four parts in the texture of this variation, since the left hand part could be separated in the first bass notes of each harmonic position, which contain wedge signs, and the remaining notes of the arpeggios, which contain *staccato* dots.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.: 'Veiller à l'emploi constamment renouvelé de la pédale, dont le maintien indument prolongé sur les mêmes positions harmoniques est un inévitable facteur d'empâtement sonore.'

maintains that in the opening a kind of ‘fluttering pedal’ should be applied in order to highlight the melodic smoothness of the theme, while the exact articulation of the left-hand part is not missed.<sup>114</sup> Such an approach is echoed precisely in Cortot’s pedalling suggestion in the third variation.

Furthermore, in relation to the note-values and use of the pedal, Cortot seems to anticipate Brendel’s interesting remarks regarding Schubert’s notation in his piano music. As seen in Chapter Two, Brendel maintains that, in Schubert’s piano music, the duration of notes is not necessarily indicated by the written values since, in many instances, the pedal can and/or should prolong the sound once the fingers have left the keys. Typical examples for Brendel’s arguments are, in fact, the third variation from the slow movement of the ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy and the opening from the second movement of the Sonata D 960. In the ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy, there are, at least, another two cases where Cortot’s comments approach the issue of articulation similarly to Brendel’s observations. However, as these two cases will show, Cortot is not as dogmatic as Brendel in describing how Schubert possibly notated his music.

In bar 48 of the second movement, the arrival of the C-sharp major chord marks the beginning of the movement’s closing section, giving, thus, an end to the clash between the C-sharp major and C-sharp minor keys of the variations, and to the climactic passage of bars 43-47. This chord, although it is the result of an extremely intense prolongation of its dominant seventh with added dissonances in bar 47, within *fortissimo* (bar 46), is notated as a demisemiquaver (Fig. 10).

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<sup>114</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert’s Music in Performance*, p. 170.



notation could also be approached in a different way from which Brendel describes (Fig. 12).

**Figure 12 Schubert D 760/IV bar 70, Wiener Urtext Edition**



According to Cortot, the chords in dotted quavers should be executed as quavers followed by semiquaver rests, and helped by short metronomic pedal (Fig. 13).<sup>116</sup> This way the pedal would not prolong the duration of the notes, but would rather ensure they will not sound any shorter. Interestingly, this suggestion, similar to the one before, could also be a way to avoid inappropriate heaviness, especially on modern pianos, caused by thick textures and loud dynamics.

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 43n79 and n80.

**Figure 13 Suggestion for Schubert D 760/IV bars 70 and 74, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



### *Legato Octaves*

The execution of octaves, by either hand, when they play an important thematic role and are marked *legato*, is an issue that frequently occurs in the texture of the Fantasy, and Cortot has been most consistent on the way these should be played. Briefly, one can mention the octave passages in bars 48, 50, 54, 59, 61 (right hand), 63-65 (left hand,) 96, 98, 114-123 and 128-131 (right hand) of the first movement; in the first and second variations and in bars 50 and 53 (right hand) of the second movement; and in the trio of the third movement in bars 215-216, 219-220, 223-224 (left hand) and 257-268 (right hand).

The major shared element concerning the suggested manner of execution in all these cases is a way of fingering that assists the *legato* for the top voice of the right hand and the low one of the left, allowing also for an imperceptible shortening of the thumb-notes. Although this issue will be discussed again in the section on technique, the impact on sound quality is worth exploring. Following Cortot's observations in his *Principes Rationnels de la Technique Pianistique*:

In octaves, legato playing is necessarily fictitious, since it is a material impossibility for the thumb to insure an uninterrupted continuity of tone

between the various notes in its part. Only the illusion of it can be created, and this is achieved by conferring a slight predominance of tone on the part of the octave which can be fingered, and which, consequently, is really capable of being bound.<sup>117</sup>

Although this can cause physical difficulty for performers who have to rely more on the outer part of the hand, which is naturally weaker, Cortot suggests that such an impediment can be overcome with the intervention of the wrist, which can distribute the arm weight to the intended area of the hand.<sup>118</sup>

This way of playing gives, at first, a clear idea about a specific kind of voicing, which actually, according to Cortot, is an essential way to achieve clarity and transparency between two simultaneously played parts.<sup>119</sup> In addition, bearing in mind that Schubert's texts usually call for thinning out the sound on modern instruments, this voicing would be effective for the execution of *legato* octaves and, perhaps, other double notes. On the other hand, this suggestion can be informative about Cortot's perception for the use of pedal, showing that, even in octaves, it should not be applied necessarily to aid *legato*, but rather be saved for special colouristic effects, resembling again Montgomery's ideas.<sup>120</sup> Thus, for example, in the E-major section of the first movement, pedal markings are given for pointing out the accents of the first and third beats of bar 47, but not for helping the *legato* octaves of bar 48 (Fig. 14).

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<sup>117</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 88. See also *ibid.*, pp. 89-93 for Cortot's suggested preparatory exercises.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>120</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's in Music in Performance*, p. 6.

**Figure 14 Schubert D 760/I bars 47-48, pedalling in Cortot's Edition (1954)**



### *Broken Octaves*

Broken octaves, similar to the ones in the Impromptu D 935 No. 3 (second variation), appear at the end of the third movement of the Fantasy (bars 342-349), and Cortot's comment is almost identical, suggesting that they should be played as pairs of heavier/longer (low part) and lighter/shorter notes (high part). Similarly to the impromptu, Cortot maintains that such a way of execution would be in accordance with the performance practice of Schubert's time,<sup>121</sup> but in the absence of further explanation it is rather unclear on what basis he makes this assertion.<sup>122</sup> However, the suggested method shows Cortot's consistency for the interpretation of certain types of texture within Schubert's music.

<sup>121</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 38n70: 'Il convient de se référer, pour l'exécution de cette vétilleuse figuration de basse et en dépit de la liaison d'origine qui semble en prescrire la traduction sous le signe du mouvement mélodique continu, aux errements traditionnels qui, du temps de Schubert'.

<sup>122</sup> Well-known treatises from Schubert's time, such as those by Starke (*Wiener Pianoforte-Schule*) or Türk (*Klavierschule*) do not appear to make any special mentions on this figuration. Daniel Gottlob Türk, *School of Clavier Playing*, trans. and ed. Raymond H. Hagg (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982). For bibliographic details of Starke's treatise, see Chapter Two, footnote 64.

Cortot's remarks on articulation in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy allow conclusions regarding his approach on Schubert's music, and offer sensible performance suggestions. Certain features of modern instruments are considered carefully, sometimes with an economic approach, as in thick and loud textures, and sometimes taking advantage of their wide expressive range, as in varying the touch of thematic material. In addition, consistency is displayed as regards the treatment of similar textures, such as *legato* or broken octaves. Finally, a special role of the pedal is highlighted in relation to note-values, anticipating modern approaches regarding the performance of Schubert's music.

#### **4.4.3.2 Accentuation**

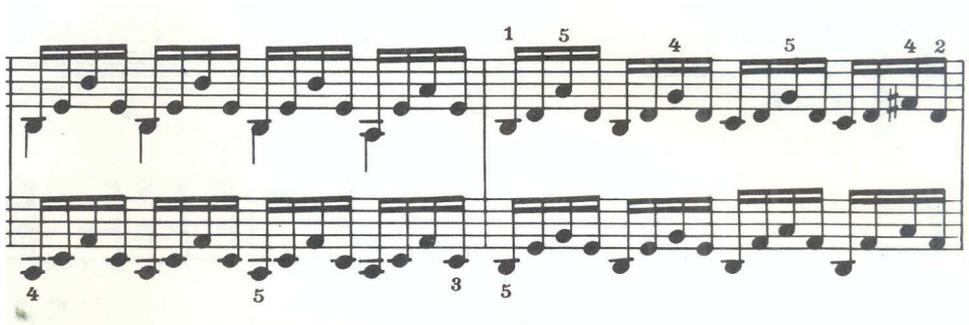
As far as issues of accentuation are concerned, Cortot's comments, and additional marks on the score, appear to relate to two kinds of suggestions: special voicing effects; and smoothened executions of Schubert's accents. As with the Impromptus, Cortot's remarks show the need for a thoughtful and non-literal interpretation of Schubert's accentuation, and can be realized as an effort to adjust Schubert's notation in the features of present-day instruments.

##### *Accentuation for Voicing*

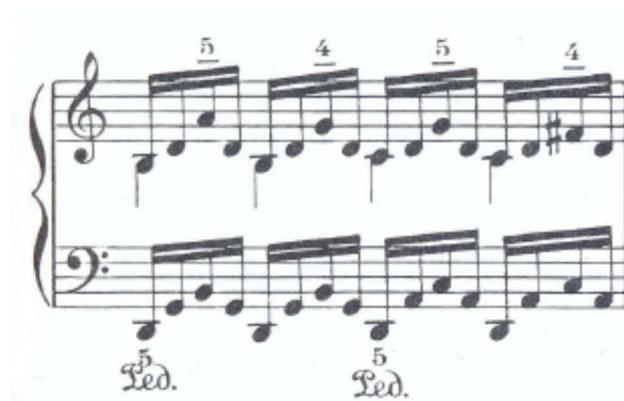
Examples where Cortot's use of accentuation marks suggest a particular way of voicing can also lead to comparisons with critical and other editions. In bar 37 of the first movement, while the *Urtext*-labelled editions do not give any indication or mark, Cortot's edition displays a crotchet stem for the first

note of each group of four semiquavers of the right hand and a *tenuto* sign for the third note of the same groups (Fig. 15 and 16).

**Figure 15 Schubert D 760/I bars 36-37, Wiener Urtext Edition**



**Figure 16 Schubert D 760/I bar 37, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



This notation presents strong evidence that Cortot not only followed the practice of the first print, but also provided an additional interpretive suggestion. As far as the crotchet stems are concerned, Cortot clearly follows the Cappi and Diabelli edition which, contrary to the autograph, in

bar 37 contains crotchet stems similar to bar 36.<sup>123</sup> On the other hand, the added *tenuti* – highlighting main scale degrees of an upcoming, yet firstly interrupted (bar 38), perfect cadence in G major – suggest a voicing effect that perfectly anticipates Badura-Skoda’s note that in bar 37 ‘an addition analogous to bar 43 is more advisable’.<sup>124</sup> Indeed Cortot’s recommended voicing in bar 37 anticipates Schubert’s writing in bars 43-44 (Fig. 17), where finally the perfect cadence in G major is completed before giving way immediately to the E-major episode.

**Figure 17 Schubert D 760/I bar 43, Wiener Urtext Edition**



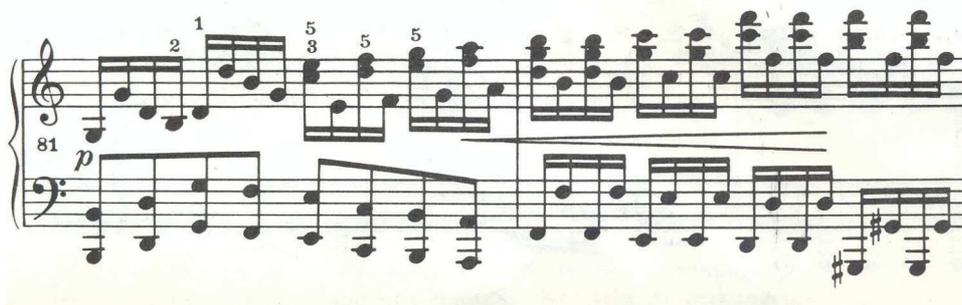
Another example where specific accents added by Cortot suggest voicing, along with phrasing this time, is the period within bars 81 and 91 of the fourth movement. In this passage the phrasing, both in terms of harmony and melodic line, is structured in three pairs of bars (81-82, 83-84, 85-86), plus the remaining five bars (87-91). The first three pairs contain the same motif in three different keys and, thus, Cortot gives the same marks: in the first

<sup>123</sup> Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. IX.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

bar of each pair, he gives *staccato* dots on the double thirds of the right hand, as well as on all the left-hand quavers; and in the second bar of each pair, he gives in both hands *tenuto* on the first semiquaver of the first and the second group, accent (>) on the first semiquaver of the third group, and no indication in the fourth group (Fig. 18 and 19).

**Figure 18 Schubert D 760/IV bars 81-82, Wiener Urtext Edition**



**Figure 19 Schubert D 760/IV bars 80-83, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



As is explained in the commentary,<sup>125</sup> the additional accentuation suggests that: a) a particular melodic line should be shaped by projecting the top line

<sup>125</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 44n81.

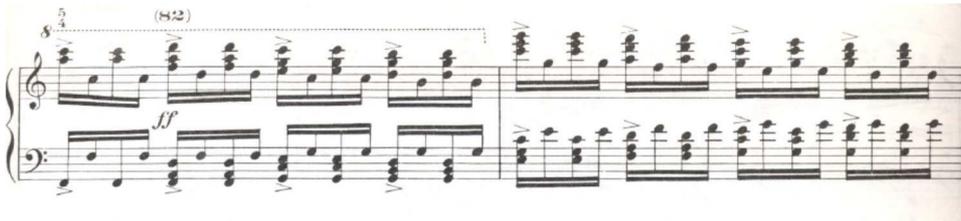
of the right hand's double notes (Fig. 20); b) the first bar of each pair should come out lighter while dynamically leading to the second one; and c) the dynamic climax of each phrase should be reached towards the second half of the second bar of each pair.

**Figure 20 Suggestion for Schubert D 760/IV bars 81-82, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



The remaining five bars of this passage start with two bars (87-88) similar to the previous pairs, yet immediately differentiated, since the phrase this time continues up to the arrival of the C-major key (bar 92), after a period of harmonic wandering. Greater dynamic development is suggested in bars 89-91 through normal accents and not *tenuti*, highlighting descending scale degrees towards a perfect cadence in C major. More specifically, the accents on the first semiquaver of both the first and third group in bar 89 somehow prolong the manner of accentuation given to the last part of the previous pairs of bars. On the other hand, the accents on the first semiquaver of each group in bars 90 and 91 point out that the melodic line moves stepwise in every single beat, leading to the harmonic conclusion (Fig. 21). Cortot's use of accentuation in the first semiquavers of groups of four, alongside the practice of projecting the top voice, could help a passage of seemingly motoric texture come out in a more melodic manner. Additionally, subtle distinction in the use of *tenuti* and accents can be important for performance decisions in terms of dynamic climax and phrasal structure.

**Figure 21 Schubert D 760/IV bars 90-91, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



### *Interpreting the Accents*

Schubert's frequent use of various types of accentuation in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy can be an issue that requires experimentation by present-day performers, and Cortot's comments seem to confirm such an approach. Bearing in mind the differences between modern instruments and the keyboards of Schubert's time in terms of sound capacity, the following examples display, mainly, an effort to prevent any harshness of sound, which can be easily produced by literal interpretation of accents on modern pianos.

### ***fz***

The coda of the first movement (bars 165-177), where there is a contrasting succession of strongly accented and soft parts, is a clear example of this tendency. The accented parts appear gradually from every two bars to every single bar and, eventually, every half a bar displaying ***fz*** each, both in

Cortot's and in *Urtext*-labelled editions, while the soft ones follow in *piano* or *pianissimo*. However, in Cortot's edition the accented chords, next to **fz**, also contain a *staccato* dot with *tenuto* dash, and an indication for short metronomic pedal. This notation suggests a sensible execution that combines the uplifting gesture of *staccato* with the smoothness of *tenuto* and the pedal. Although Cortot's edition provides the same marks for these chords from bar 167 onwards, where the general dynamic mark is *piano* (bar 166), the chord of bar 165 contains **fz** with *staccato*, but without *tenuto*. Such differentiation could be an implication for a stronger gesture, particularly on this chord, following the conclusion of the preceding powerful section (bars 161-164). Cortot's interpretation of Schubert's **fz** in this section, while it is similar to Montgomery's, who considers it an indicator for powerful accentuation within loud passages,<sup>126</sup> also provides a helpful suggestion for managing it within a rather soft context.

The fact that Cortot was concerned about the applicability of very powerful sound qualities in Schubert's music can also be seen in suggestions that seem more arbitrary than others, as in bar 143 of the third movement. While the Wiener Urtext Edition, similar to the first print and other editions of the Fantasy that Cortot owned, gives *fortissimo* for the whole bar, Cortot's edition displays a diverse notation: **fz** with an accent (>) on the chord in dotted crotchet; a small *crescendo* hairpin, probably for the left-hand quavers; and *leggero* for the last part of the bar, implying a rather obvious feature of a typical ternary metre (Fig. 22 and 23).

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<sup>126</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 145.

Figure 22 Schubert D 760/III bar 143, Wiener Urtext Edition



Figure 23 Schubert D 760/III bar 143, Cortot's Edition (1954)



As explained further in the commentary, in this bar 'simple and light accentuation of **fz** should be applied and not **ff**, which is mentioned in all the editions, deriving from a mistake in the original gravure'.<sup>127</sup> It is not clear what kind of mistake Cortot referred to, since Badura-Skoda, who examined the autograph of the Fantasy for the Wiener Urtext Edition, does not mention this bar at all in his critical notes. However, the Bärenreiter Edition,<sup>128</sup> which gives **ffz** instead of **ff** in this bar, seems interestingly, yet rather unintentionally, to justify Cortot's choice. Cortot appears to have suggested

<sup>127</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 31n59: 'Il s'agit ici d'un simple **fz** d'accentuation légère et non **ff** mentionné dans toutes les éditions, conformément à une erreur de la gravure originale.'

<sup>128</sup> Bärenreiter, *Werke für Klavier zu zwei Händen – Band 5 – Klavierstücke II*, p. 20.

that bar 143 should be played analogously to bar 145 and, if *fortissimo* was finally Schubert's marking, a literal execution was to be avoided. In addition, it becomes clear that **fz** can also be executed as a more graceful gesture, even in loud contexts, compared to what was implied in the previous example by both Montgomery and Cortot.<sup>129</sup>

### **fp**

A sign of accentuation that appears in the Fantasy and has given rise to ambiguity about the way it should be interpreted, especially by pianists, is **fp**. Badura-Skoda maintains that **fp** should be played as *forte-diminuendo-piano*,<sup>130</sup> while Montgomery responds that this mark is typical of Schubert's thinking in non-pianistic terms, and therefore 'such makeshift solutions do not address the central issue'.<sup>131</sup> Cortot's stance is demonstrated clearly in the first movement in bars 40-41, which are almost identical pairs to bars 34-35. Although Schubert gave **fp** in the beginning of bar 40 and **p** in bar 41, in Cortot's edition **fp** of the former is followed by a *diminuendo* hairpin that leads to **p** in the latter, thus anticipating Badura-Skoda's interpretation (Fig. 24 and 25).

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<sup>129</sup> However, it is also worth noting that Cortot, and perhaps Bärenreiter, may have misread Schubert's creativity in altering unexpectedly the dynamic marks within a short period: *pianissimo* from bar 131 to bar 142, *fortissimo* in bar 143, *piano* in bar 147, *forte* in bar 149 and *fortissimo* in bar 151.

<sup>130</sup> Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. 2.

<sup>131</sup> See Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, pp. 144-145.



of the Fantasy. Cortot's suggestion not only anticipates Badura-Skoda in terms of gradual attenuation that *fp* could possibly imply, but also makes sense in order to prevent harshness of sound, caused by a loud and thick texture in a low register of the instrument.

#### *Accents in Soft Contexts*

Cortot's consideration of Schubert's accents, which appear in soft contexts, is clearly shown in the echo of the first movement's opening (bars 18-23), particularly in the interpretation of the accented minims in bars 20 and 23. While in *Urtext*-labelled editions these minims display only accents (>), in Cortot's edition they contain signs that show, as thoroughly as possible, the technical way to achieve the intended sonority. In bar 20 a *tenuto* dash and a *tenuto* indication (*ten.*) are given in the right hand and a normal accent (>) in the left, while in bar 23 *tenuto* dashes are given for both hands (Fig. 26 and 27). Moreover, further commentary explains that these chords 'should be played with a delicate pressure of the fingers and not with a percussive attack, which would work against the intended, quasi immaterial, sonority; [moreover] the application of *una corda* would be absolutely necessary'.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 4n3: 'Les accords tenus du registre supérieur qui prolongent d'une manière si mystérieuse les résonances du temps précédent, sur les 3ème et 6ème mesures de ce fragment, seront énoncés par une délicate pression des doigts, et non par une attaque percutée qui en compromettrait la signification quasi immatérielle; l'adjonction de la pédale « *una corda* » étant ici absolument nécessaire.'

Figure 26 Schubert D 760/I bars 18-20, Wiener Urtext Edition



Figure 27 Schubert D 760/I bars 18-25, Cortot's Edition (1954)



Cortot's suggestion for the execution of these chords can be helpful practically since: a) by replacing the attack of a normal accent with the smoothness of *tenu*, the performer would already be prepared for a more delicate execution; b) the particular smoothness of the upper part, especially shown in bar 20, could lead to a more harmonious kind of voicing, which can be more appropriate for the immaterial sonority of these chords than the usual practice of projecting the top notes; and, finally, c) the use of *una corda*

in such a high register could provide additional help for a special colour in the sound.

It is also worth noting that, in the version of the Fantasy included in the album of Schubert's works, which Cortot owned, a pencil annotation '2 Ped.', most likely from Cortot's hand, appears in bar 18, possibly meaning that *una corda* should be applied from the beginning of the section. However, in the edition, the '2 Ped.' indication appears only on the high-registered chords and consistently in bars 20, 23, 25 and 26. Although it is unclear whether the annotation was a later decision, these differences display Cortot's experimentation in sound quality, while interpreting Schubert's accents, especially in such a soft context. However, the differentiation on the sound that the left pedal would provide specifically on the unexpectedly high-registered chords is quite appropriate, bearing in mind that Schubert, apart from the accents, gave *pp* individually for these minims, even though *pianissimo* was already given in the section at bar 18.

Similarly as regards articulation, in the area of accentuation Cortot seems to suggest effective ways of execution that consider the qualities of modern instruments. Schubert's accents are interpreted in relation to the texture and the dynamic context, and, interestingly, at times the special characteristics of modern pianos, in terms of variety of touch and the use of pedals, are highlighted. Additionally, as in the Impromptus, his commentary reveals interesting elements about his editorial process, as well as his consistency in considering similar performance issues. Notably, in quite a few cases, specific signs, either added or neglected by Cortot, make his suggestions come closer to approaches found in more updated editions and/or mentioned by scholars and performers of our time.

#### 4.4.3.3 Suggested Dynamic Plans

The examples that follow show Cortot's consideration that, in specific passages of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, literal interpretation of the dynamics can prove inefficient, especially on modern instruments, and therefore certain adjustments are needed. In this area, again, major differences between Cortot's edition, *Urtext*-labelled scores and the first print can be displayed, and potentially explain more clearly Cortot's intentions.

In the second movement, bars 21-24 suggest an intense dynamic and emotional development before a certain attenuation that leads to the peaceful first variation (bar 27). Schubert's indications, as seen in *Urtext*-editions of our time, support this development through a *crescendo* hairpin (bar 21), *forte* (bar 22) and *fortissimo* (bar 23). Cortot's edition, though, provides a different notation: Schubert's *crescendo* in bar 21 is followed by *mezzo-forte* (bar 22), *forte* (bar 23) and *fortissimo* (bar 24), implying that the highest degree of tension and volume must come only at the top of the ascending progression. Cortot's suggestion appears to make a sensible calculation of the dynamics, since the high-registered texture of bar 24 could hardly compete in power with bar 23, which mainly occupies the middle and low register of the keyboard. On the other hand, Cortot's rendition leads to striking similarities between his edition and editions that nowadays are considered more reliable than the first print or other versions of the Fantasy that Cortot might have consulted. As Badura-Skoda maintains, critical editions today give *ff* in bar 23 and not *fp*, which appeared in the first print possibly due to Schubert's unclear writing.<sup>133</sup> Although the first print was probably the most reliable source Cortot might have consulted, in his edition he chose to ignore it and give *f*, which actually can be realized as an

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<sup>133</sup> Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. X.

adjustment of Schubert's *fortissimo* in the sound capacity of modern instruments.

A similar case in terms of an adjusted dynamic plan can be found in bars 43-46, still in the second movement. In critical editions, the dynamics in this thunderous passage in unison appear as follows: *forte* at the beginning of bar 43, followed by *crescendo*,<sup>134</sup> and leading to *fortissimo* in the middle of the same bar; *crescendo* at the beginning of bar 45; and *fortissimo* at the beginning of bar 46. On the other hand, in Cortot's edition we see *più crescendo* in the beginning of bar 43, followed by *forte* in the middle of the same bar; *diminuendo* hairpin at the beginning of bar 44 leading to *mezzo-forte*, which indicates the starting point of the ascending and modulating passage, where *crescendo* hairpins are added for each harmonic progression; *poco a poco crescendo* and *molto crescendo* in bar 45; and finally *fortissimo* at the beginning of bar 46, leading to *triple-forte* in the middle (Table 2).

**Table 2 Dynamic indications in Schubert D 760/II bars 43-46, Wiener Urtext Edition and Cortot's Edition (1954)**

Bar Number	Wiener Urtext	Cortot
43	<i>f cresc. ff</i>	<i>più cresc. f</i>
44	none	<i>diminuendo</i> hairpin - <i>mf</i> - <i>crescendo</i> hairpins for each harmonic progression
45	<i>cresc.</i>	<i>poco a poco cresc.</i> - <i>crescendo</i> hairpins for each harmonic progression – <i>molto crescendo</i>
46	<i>ff</i>	<i>ff</i> - <i>crescendo</i> hairpins - <i>fff</i>

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.: '[In bar 45] the words "poco a poco" were added after the *cresc.* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the bar [in the first print]. They do not appear in the Autograph.' This is possibly why Wiener Urtext does not include 'poco a poco', whereas Bärenreiter does so.

Cortot's suggestion could be seen as a sensible dynamic plan, since it considers the strengths of the low register of modern pianos, and puts the music in a reasonable context of direction and structural and harmonic climax. It actually shows that a certain intervention from the performer is needed in order to deliver an enormous, yet gradual, build-up, which, while it is implied by textural and harmonic features, is not supported completely by Schubert's dynamic indications.

### *The Third Movement*

The third movement of the Fantasy, particularly the scherzo sections, could be considered as an example of where special treatment of dynamics is required. According to Cortot, 'it would be advisable to replace, in general [in this movement], the *fortissimos* of the original edition, with *forte*, which seems to be more appropriate for the accentuation of the movement's uplifting pace'.<sup>135</sup> Typical examples where Cortot follows this practice are the first two bars – as well as bars 55, 59, 95, 107, 151 and 277 – and climactic progressions, like the one within bars 23-30, which never exceed *forte* in Cortot's edition, whilst in critical ones they always reach *fortissimo* or more.<sup>136</sup> Actually, in Cortot's edition *fortissimo* appears only four times (bars 115, 320, 350 and 352), mainly towards the end in order to prepare the ground for the movement's conclusion and the onset of the finale. Moreover, Cortot's dynamic adjustments, at times, appear to include even Schubert's single *forte* – as in bars 51 and 303 where *mf* replaces *f* – or

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<sup>135</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 27n50: 'en y remplaçant, d'une manière générale, les *ff* de l'édition originale, par des *f* mieux appropriés semble-t-il aux accentuations rythmiques de sa désinvolte cadence.'

<sup>136</sup> In Bärenreiter edition the nuance of *fff* appears in bars 271 and 350.

lead to peculiar adaptations, even though the intention of managing a graceful character within a thick texture is definitely appropriate. Such a case is found in the closing chords of the A-section of the movement (bars 177-178) where Cortot's *mf*, instead of Schubert's *ff*, could possibly lead to less satisfactory results than intended. However, most of Cortot's observations can be very helpful as a reminder that the mainly uplifting and brilliant character of this movement, expressed in heavy textures, along with frequent and strong accentuation, perhaps requires a restrained approach to the dynamics.

#### *Building up within the Finale*

Finally, the conception of the last movement in terms of dynamics can be summarized in two points made by Cortot. Firstly, the opening phrase 'should not exceed the limits of a sonority that would make the successive entrances of this fugato unable to suggest the same vigour as in the first bars'.<sup>137</sup> Secondly, from bar 34 the finale 'moves into the atmosphere of a coda, which is full of bravura [writing] [...] and it is up to the interpreter to consummate the decorative character of this conclusion, which is formed of demonstrative virtuosity'.<sup>138</sup>

Although regarding the first point Cortot's edition does not provide much detail in terms of performance devices that should be used, suggested dynamic plans make his intentions regarding the second point clear. Apart

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<sup>137</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 38n71: 'On se gardera donc d'outrepasser ici les limites d'une sonorité qui se verrait au reste fâcheusement amenée à céder de son arbitraire intensité initiale dans le moment que les entrées successives du bref Fugato ultérieur ne permettent plus aux doigts de se manifester avec la même vigueur que sur ces mesures « unisono ».'

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40n74: 'la fin de la composition va se mouvoir dans une atmosphère de « Coda » pleine de bravoure... et il ne reste plus à l'interprète qu'à parfaire le caractère décoratif de cette conclusion quelque peu formulaire par l'apport d'une virtuosité démonstrative'.

from passages that bring back the fugal writing,<sup>139</sup> after bar 34 there is mainly a succession of episodes that highlight the thematic idea of the ‘Wanderer’, embellished with frenzied virtuosity, and maintain for rather a long span the same, usually strong, dynamic indication. Cortot’s suggested plans aim to accentuate the sense of climax by pointing out the places where a dynamic drop, not necessarily implied by Schubert’s indications, could be applied in order to allow a brilliant and triumphant outcome within or towards the end of sections. Although some of Cortot’s indications appear in places where *Urtext*-labelled editions display no marking at all, his suggestions can give an effective sense of direction. Such cases are the pairs of bars 38-39 and 43-44, where Cortot gives *mf* with *crescendo* hairpins in the former and *f* in the latter bar of each pair; and in bar 68 where his *mf* could effectively underline the sudden appearance of the accented chord (*fz*) in bar 69.

Similar to bars 43-47 of the second movement discussed above, Cortot suggests an adjusted dynamic plan for the section within bars 83 and 91 in the finale (Table 3). While the critical editions display just *cresc.* in bar 83, followed by *f* in bar 85 and finally *ff* in bar 87, Cortot’s notation is more informative: he gives *mf* with *cresc. poco a poco* in bar 83; a *crescendo* hairpin in bar 84; *f* in bar 85; a *crescendo* hairpin in bar 86; *più f* in bar 87; a *crescendo* hairpin in bar 88; and *ff* in bar 90, leading to the perfect cadence in C major (bar 92).

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<sup>139</sup> Like bars 52-57 and bars 62-69.

**Table 3 Dynamic indications in Schubert D 760/IV bars 83-91, Wiener Urtext Edition and Cortot's Edition (1954)**

Bar Number	Wiener Urtext	Cortot
83	<i>cresc.</i>	<b><i>mf</i></b> – <i>cresc. poco a poco</i>
84	none	<i>crescendo</i> hairpin in third beat
85	<b><i>f</i></b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
86	none	<i>crescendo</i> hairpin for the whole bar
87	<b><i>ff</i></b>	<i>più f</i>
88	none	<i>crescendo</i> hairpin in third and fourth beats
89	none	none
90	none	<b><i>ff</i></b>
91	none	none

Cortot's suggested plan again appears to calculate precisely the dynamic development of this passage, considering the structural and harmonic progression, which peaks at the arrival of C major in bar 92.

Although they can feel, at times, too descriptive, Cortot's dynamic plans, in most cases, suggest expressive gestures that feel natural. Considering the texture and character of the passages, along with the features of modern instruments, they could be quite strong options for performers' decisions that seem necessary, especially in the face of usually sparse notation. At the very least, they can remind the performer that no matter how important it is to respect the musical text, there is always room for creative initiative within it,<sup>140</sup> which, undoubtedly, is something that makes works like the 'Wanderer' Fantasy such a challenge to perform.

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<sup>140</sup> If it is possible that the score, which is used, can bring the performer close enough to the composer's intentions. For relevant discussions, see Cone, pp.241-253; and Bilson, 'The Future of Schubert Interpretation', pp. 720-722.

#### 4.4.4 Orchestral Suggestions

Cortot's edition of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy can be a source for his orchestral conception in piano playing. Following a general observation in the *Avant-Propos* about the work's orchestral writing, Cortot's commentary suggests that specific instruments, or groups of instruments, can be imagined and evoked in particular passages. Although these suggestions are not accompanied by further analysis of technical terms, decisions related to sound quality, like voicing and articulation, and general character, could be implied. In the absence of suggestions for orchestral conception in the editions of the Impromptus, it can be maintained that the grandiose style of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy was important for Cortot's approach, and therefore it is likely that this would be the same for other similar textures in Schubert's works, like some of the sonatas.<sup>141</sup>

Cortot's orchestral conception in piano playing is evidenced, quite vividly, in references by his pupils, according to whom a basic part of his teaching methods addressed the evocation of orchestral qualities in piano textures.<sup>142</sup> However, particularly in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, his remarks on the closing section of the slow movement (bar 48) are quite revealing for his perception, not only of this passage, but also in general regarding piano playing. Cortot maintains that this section should be realized as

A pianistic redaction inspired by the spirit of the orchestra rather than the limited resources of a percussive instrument, which is unable to express effectively the character of the composition, [here] the devastated horizon and the thrilling uproar after the storm [(bars 43-47)]. Such passages are, actually, difficult in this Fantasy, because the inventive imagination of the performer is required.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Regarding the orchestral conception of other piano works of Schubert, see Brendel, pp. 142-143.

<sup>142</sup> Cortot's pupils Eric Heidsieck and Magda Tagliaferro provide information about their teacher's orchestral thinking in piano playing; see Timbrell, pp. 85-86.

<sup>143</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p.25n46: 'A dire vrai, la rédaction pianistique de cet admirable épisode final s'inspire de plus près de l'esprit de l'orchestre et de

On the one hand, this remark clarifies Cortot's implication in the *Avant-Propos* that even more challenging than dealing with virtuosic demands of this work would be to explore in the texture the devices through which the sound of the piano can acquire orchestral qualities. On the other hand, it shows that, for Cortot, the piano can prove quite limited in rendering a texture of such complexity, if unimaginative approaches in terms of sound are to be applied.<sup>144</sup>

Being more specific on the texture of bar 48 (Fig. 28), Cortot suggests that the left-hand part should resemble 'dissonant tremolos of violas, supported by mysterious *tenuti* of muted trumpets',<sup>145</sup> while the right-hand *tremolando* should evoke a 'string tremolo near the bridge (*sul ponticello*) supported by stopped horns'.<sup>146</sup>

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l'évocation de ses timbres savamment maléfiques que des ressources limitées spécifiquement d'un instrument à percussion, incapable d'y suggérer, comme l'ordonne la composition, l'image d'un horizon dévasté, où bruissent encore les menaçantes rumeurs de l'orage qui s'éloigne... Il est des passages d'exécution difficile dans cette Fantaisie ; il n'en est pas qui mettent à l'épreuve d'une manière aussi exigeante les facultés d'invention imaginative de l'interprète.'

<sup>144</sup> The limitations of the piano in comparison with the orchestra, as far as the variety of sound is concerned, were also highlighted in writings by pianists of more or less the same time as Cortot, like Ferruccio Busoni and Josef Hofmann. See Ferruccio Busoni, *The Essence of Music and Other Papers*, trans. Rosamond Ley, (London: Rockliff, 1957), p. 86; and Josef Hofmann, *Piano Playing with Piano Questions Answered* (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser, 1920), p. 4. However, both pianists maintained that the piano was able to resemble and evoke orchestral sonorities, and this can make it superior to other instruments. See Busoni, p. 79; and Hofmann, pp. 4-7.

<sup>145</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 25n46: 'Ces pulsations bourdonnantes de la figuration des basses, ces inquiétants frémissements des tremolos dissonants dont l'imagination se plait à confier les sonorités équivoques aux archets des altos, soutenus par de mystérieuses tenues de trompettes en sourdine'.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25n47: 'l'articulation de ce tremolo, auquel une mordante attaque initiale doit conférer, en dépit du *pp* prescrit, les caractéristiques d'une maléfique intervention de cors bouchés, prolongée pas le grinçant frottis « ponticello » des archets sur les cordes'.

Figure 28 Schubert D 760/II bar 48, Cortot's Edition (1954)



Particularly interesting, in terms of performance decisions, for the execution of this bar is Cortot's distinction between a simple string tremolo for the left hand, and a tremolo near the bridge for the right. String tremolo in orchestral writing usually lends an agitated and feverish character, similar to this passage and, specifically when execution near the bridge is instructed, a more rough sound, and often the projection of dissonant notes, is intended.<sup>147</sup> This difference is particularly echoed in this bar, since the left hand provides the main harmonic background in measured tremolo, while the right hand's unmeasured *tremolando* joins in dissonance, creating a terrifying effect. Cortot's reference to different types of tremolo could imply that a significant contrast in the articulation of these two figurations is needed, despite the *pianissimo* indicated for both in *Urtext*-labelled editions. Therefore, a lighter touch for the left hand, and a more intense articulation for the right, could potentially show the distinct roles of these two parts in the same bar.

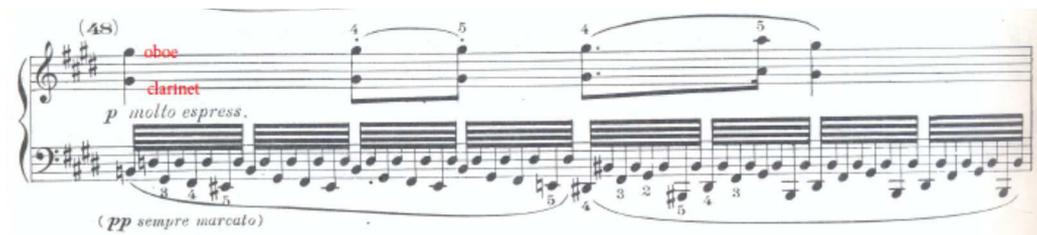
Moreover, Cortot's suggestions for the intervention of muted trumpets and stopped horns, within the string tremolos of the left and the right hand respectively, could have further expressive implications. In the left-hand

<sup>147</sup> See Hugh Macdonald, *Berlioz's Orchestration Treatise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 14-16. Berlioz's treatise on instrumentation and orchestration was published in 1844: Hector Berlioz, *Traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes* (Paris: Schonenberger, 1844). See also Alfred Blatter, *Instrumentation/Orchestration* (New York and London: Longman, 1980), p. 35.

part, the discreet sharpness of muted trumpets could be realized as a light projection of the melodic notes of the figuration. Such a suggestion becomes clearer in Cortot's edition in the next bar (bar 49), with the indication *marcato* for the left hand. Additionally, the stopped horn in the right-hand *tremolando* can be realized through the accent added by Cortot on the first B, which can give to this texture a distinct colour, similar to the one that can be given by horns on specific notes within a rough string tremolo.<sup>148</sup>

Moving to the next bar (bar 49, Fig. 29), Cortot suggests that the memoir of the 'Wanderer's' theme in the right hand should come out as 'the plaintive sonority of oboes and clarinets, highlighting the image of infinite desolation and overwhelming solitude'.<sup>149</sup>

**Figure 29 Schubert D 760/II bar 49, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



The evocation of oboe and clarinet in the right-hand octaves could signify a particular sonority to be portrayed. Both instruments are considered middle-part voices of the woodwind family, in contrast to the soprano-like flute, as well as typical melodic instruments that can be combined in unison or in

<sup>148</sup> See Blatter, p. 138.

<sup>149</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 25n46: 'thème de Wanderer, exprimée par les plaintes des hautbois et des clarinettes, à l'image d'une désolation infinie et d'une solitude accablée'. This description is similar to Fisk's remark that the feelings of 'alienation' and 'banishment' are main features of the atmosphere created in the second movement of the Fantasy. Fisk also considered these characteristics as common elements between the Adagio and the song 'Der Wanderer'; see Fisk, pp.3, 6-7, 60-71.

octave-doubling. Especially in octave-doublings, when the low part is played by the clarinet, the darkness of its timbre in this register provides a rounded support to the sound of the ensemble.<sup>150</sup> Particularly in this example, Cortot's suggestions, if they are appreciated as the evocation of oboe for the upper note and of clarinet for the low, can lead to specific voicing effects. The clarity of the oboe in its middle-upper register could be achieved through the projection of the top notes of the octaves, while the thumb notes should not be significantly weaker, so that the full-body effect of the clarinet is not lost. In addition, the dry and exact articulation that would be required for the imitation of the woodwinds could also imply more frequent pedal changes than the ones Cortot suggests in the noisier bar 48.<sup>151</sup> The great contrast in terms of agitation and transparency of the texture that Schubert appears to have underlined in bars 48-49 could effectively be delivered by means of Cortot's suggestions.

Still in the second movement, which contains most of Cortot's comments regarding his orchestral conception of the work, a suggested evocation can lead to specific performance decisions for the section starting at bar 18 (Fig. 30). As a representation of the 'Wanderer's' theme appears in low-registered chords of the right hand in *pianissimo*, Cortot suggests that the 'cavernous sonority of muffled trombones should be evoked'.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> See Blatter, pp. 92-93, 99-102; and Macdonald, pp. 103-104 and 125.

<sup>151</sup> This could also be implied by the indication *marcato* in Cortot's edition.

<sup>152</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 18n36: 'S'efforcer, à la main droite, dans l'énonciation du rythme thématique, d'évoquer la caverneuse sonorité de trombones assourdis'.

Figure 30 Schubert D 760/II bar 18, Cortot's Edition (1954)



In orchestral scores, trombones are typically used in chordal textures and, particularly in low registers and soft contexts, provide a rich and warm sonority.<sup>153</sup> More specifically, as Berlioz maintains in his treatise on orchestration and instrumentation, the sound of trombones in *pianissimo* passages of minor keys can be horrifyingly dark, especially when their chords are 'short and interspersed with rests'.<sup>154</sup> Schubert's use of texture, harmony and dynamic context in this bar, suggested an undoubtedly dark character, which could be effectively rendered through the imitation of trombones. This evocation appears to be further supported in Cortot's edition by articulation marks, which do not appear in *Urtext*-labelled editions. Dotted slurs indicated on the pair of quavers suggest a smooth separation of the chords, and could be an additional feature for the suggestion of trombones in this, extremely gloomy, passage, echoing strikingly Berlioz's observations.<sup>155</sup> Moreover, the fullness of sound that this evocation would require could further imply that the parts of the chords should be equally

<sup>153</sup> Blatter, p. 161.

<sup>154</sup> Macdonald, p. 223.

<sup>155</sup> It is worth noting here the great textural similarity between this passage from the Fantasy and the example which Berlioz provided in order to describe the atmosphere that trombones can create in *pianissimo* chords. See Macdonald, p. 223 for the texture of the funeral march ('Périsse la Vestale impie!') from *La Vestale* by Spontini.

voiced in order to provide a homogeneous sound, instead of the common practice of projecting the top notes.

In the first movement, although Cortot's orchestral suggestions are not as descriptive as in the second, specific remarks regarding the repeated chords of bar 144 appear to suggest particular performance decisions through an orchestral evocation. In bar 143, the right-hand chords provide a representation of the 'Wanderer's' theme, leading to the climax of the motif in the middle of bar 144, which is completed with an idiomatic repetition of chords (Fig. 31 and 32). Cortot suggests that the repeated chords with the 'required rhythmical nerve and determination should resemble the dry and proud sonorities of trumpets'.<sup>156</sup> Bearing in mind that repeated figures are typical textures played by trumpets in orchestral writing, Cortot would appear to provide an accurate suggestion in this passage.<sup>157</sup> This evocation seems to be further reinforced in Cortot's edition by *staccato* dots, added on the last two chords of bar 144, which are not displayed in *Urtext*-labelled editions. Such an indication would not only ensure the precision of the repeated figures, but could also mean that no pedal should be applied, in order to imitate the clarity and dryness of the trumpets.

Further accentuation and articulation marks added by Cortot in bar 143 demonstrate that this evocation could be the starting point for a creative consideration of the sound in this phrase. Specifically, the accents and *tenuti* given on the chords of bar 143 could imply that a more thematic and melodic sonority is required for these parts, where a distinct projection of the upper notes, assisted perhaps by metronomic pedal, would be appropriate.

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<sup>156</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 14n27: 'capable d'évoquer, avec la nervosité et la décision rythmique nécessaires, les sèches et fières sonorités de trompettes dont l'imagination de Schubert entendait provoquer l'illusion.'

<sup>157</sup> Regarding the use of trumpets in textures with repeated chords in orchestral scores, see Macdonald, pp. 189-190 and Blatter, pp. 154-155.

Cortot's indications in bars 143-144 could imply that, in this phrase, the right-hand chords, although mostly in the same register, could be separated into clear melodic and rhythmic parts, the distinct roles of which would be delivered through different means of sound quality. This approach could lead performers to further experimentation for delivering this differentiation, since other expressive devices could also be considered, such as: more distinct dynamic differences between the melodic and the rhythmic parts; imperceptible breathing before the trumpet-like repeated chords; or even additional orchestral evocations for bar 143. Cortot's suggestions show that the orchestral conception in the interpretation of this texture can lead to appropriate performance decisions, even though these are not necessarily implied by the composer's notation.

**Figure 31 Schubert D 760/I bars 143-144, Wiener Urtext Edition**

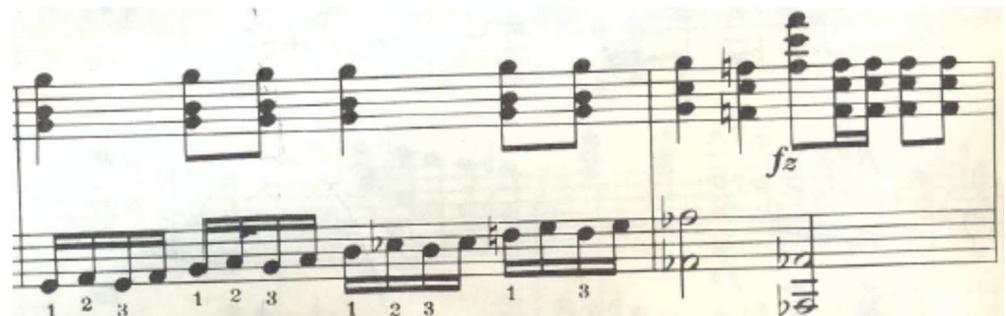


Figure 32 Schubert D 760/I bars 143-144, Cortot's Edition (1954)



### Further Discussion

Strangely, Cortot does not make orchestral suggestions for the last two movements, despite the fact that the writing in both the scherzo and the finale displays a complexity similar to the first two movements. This might be a sign that specific textures, which were 'orchestrated' before, and are used again, should be imagined in similar ways. This approach can be particularly appropriate for such figurations as in bars 23-24 from the third movement (Fig. 33) and bars 58-59 from the fourth (Fig. 34), which, similar to specific passages from the second movement, could also evoke string tremolos.

Figure 33 Schubert D 760/III bars 23-24, Wiener Urtext Edition



Figure 34 Schubert D 760/IV bars 58-59, Wiener Urtext Edition



Moreover, the evocation of trombones, which was suggested, in combination with tuba, for the low-registered octaves in bars 83-84 of the first movement (Fig. 35),<sup>158</sup> could also be applicable in similar passages in the finale, like the left-hand octaves in the sections starting in bar 62 (Fig. 36 ) or in bar 92.

Figure 35 Schubert D 760/I bar 83, Cortot's Edition (1954)

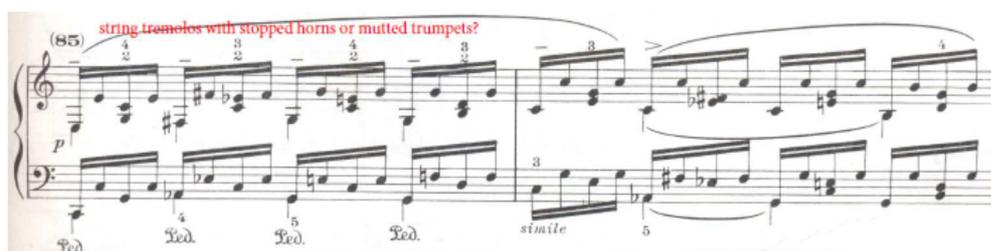
<sup>158</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 8n12: 'à l'apparition du motif thématique, clamé ici, à l'imitation du timbre du trombone et du tuba d'un orchestre imaginaire, par les tonitruantes octaves de la basse'.

Figure 36 Schubert D 760/IV bars 62-63, Wiener Urtext Edition



Finally, in the coda of the finale (bars 107-112) the *quasi-tremolo* texture, in which certain voices are highlighted in Cortot's edition, could suggest a similar orchestration to bar 48 from the Adagio, where string tremolos were to be supported by stopped horns or muted trumpets (Fig. 37).

Figure 37 Schubert D 760/IV bars 107-108, Cortot's Edition (1954)



Cortot's suggestions for the evocation of orchestral qualities in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy can be informative regarding his own conception and style of performance, as well as Schubert's allowance for such an approach

in his texture.<sup>159</sup> Cortot's orchestral thinking can be realised as specific performance decisions, which can lead to effective executions. At the same time, it can show that the musical text can, potentially, facilitate a certain interpretive freedom for delivering the richness of the work's texture, as well as discovering expressive possibilities on the modern instrument.

#### 4.4.5 Liszt's Versions in Cortot's Edition

A certain number of remarks in Cortot's edition of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy examine practices suggested in editions of this piece made, mainly, by Liszt and others.<sup>160</sup> Although Cortot clearly highlights Liszt's role in the popularity of the Fantasy over the years,<sup>161</sup> he also attempts an evaluation of particular features of Liszt's approach, according to more recent standards of performance practice. Cortot's commentary discusses both Liszt's edition of the Fantasy and his arrangement for piano and orchestra. However, it focuses more on the former,<sup>162</sup> since it refers more directly to the performance of Schubert's work than does the arrangement, which in fact is rather a piano concerto by Liszt *d'après* Schubert.<sup>163</sup> In his edition Liszt

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<sup>159</sup> As Liang-Fang Chang showed in her dissertation, the study of Schubert's piano sketches of the *Unfinished Symphony*, in relation to the orchestration he subsequently applied, can be informative about the evocation of orchestral qualities in the texture of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy. See Liang-Fang Chang, 'The orchestral elements in Franz Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy – with implications for piano performance', PhD diss. (University of Iowa, 2011). <http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/2680>, pp. 21-92.

<sup>160</sup> Cortot refers to 'other editions' or 'commentators' in his edition without providing further details.

<sup>161</sup> Cortot highlights the impact of Liszt's arrangement for piano and orchestra; see Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 23n44: 'la version pour piano et orchestre qui devait, sous ses doigts magiques, être la première à assurer, auprès du grand public, la popularité de ce chef-d'œuvre'.

<sup>162</sup> Cortot owned in his private library a copy of Liszt's edition and his work on that, when undertaking his own edition of the Fantasy, is evidenced in certain annotations on the score which are thought to be of his hand. Bibliographic details: Franz Schubert, *Fantasia Op. 15 C major for Pianoforte*, ed. Franz Liszt, trans. Percy Goetschius (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta, 1899 (1871)). Accessible in Médiathèque Musicale Mahler – Cortot's Archive.

<sup>163</sup> Regarding the change of physiognomy of the Fantasy through Liszt's arrangement for piano and orchestra, see Einstein, p. 93 and Tovey, pp. 70-71.

provides quite a few changes, additions and variants for several passages of the first three movements, as well as a complete alternative version of the whole finale,<sup>164</sup> showing an approach of adapting Schubert's text to his own style of performance and composition.<sup>165</sup> The fact that both Liszt's versions were widely performed during and after his time led to a certain tradition for the interpretation of the Fantasy, typical of a particular period of history (the late nineteenth and early twentieth century). However, this approach would not necessarily be entirely acceptable at a different period of time (the late twentieth century or nowadays) nor, above all, be in accordance with Schubert's intentions. Cortot's commentary on Liszt's suggestions – whether he approves or rejects them – reveal the approach of a pianist who, despite himself coming from a background that would justify the acceptance of Liszt's practices, is aware of the evolution of styles. Moreover, it shows that a certain, and strong, tradition had already been under question in favour of different priorities in performance. The examination that follows will discuss Cortot's remarks in the following, separate categories: Additions and Variants; Verbal Indications; and Additional Improvisation and Embellishment.

#### **4.4.5.1 Additions and Variants**

Cortot's approval, or rejection, of Liszt's variants appears to be based mainly on how Liszt used the instrument in relation to stylistic features of Schubert's writing for piano, and how the physiognomy and the character of particular passages was, consequently, affected. This evaluation can show the

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<sup>164</sup> See Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 217.

<sup>165</sup> A similar treatment of scores can be seen in Busoni's 'interpretive editions' (not transcriptions) of works of other composers. Typical example is his edition of Chopin's Polonaise in A-flat major, Op. 53 (Frédéric Chopin, *Polonaise en la bémol, oeuvre 53*, ed. Ferruccio Busoni (Trieste; Leipzig: Schmidl and Co, 1909)). See also the aforementioned edition of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy by d'Albert.

evolution of certain interpretive practices of earlier styles, as well as Cortot's perception regarding their applicability to modern performances of, at least, the 'Wanderer' Fantasy.

### *Approval*

The return of the opening's theme in the first movement (bar 70), after the E-major episode, this time in a higher register but still in *fortissimo*, led Liszt to provide a variant for the descending arpeggios in bars 71 and 74. More specifically, Liszt suggests a doubling, where both hands would play in unison one octave apart, as shown in the following example (Fig. 38).

**Figure 38 Schubert D 760/I bars 70-74, Liszt's Edition (1871)**

The image shows a musical score for Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy, Liszt's edition, covering bars 70 to 74. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems of staves. The top system has a treble clef and a bass clef, while the bottom system has a treble clef and a bass clef. The music is in E major and 3/4 time. The score features a variety of textures, including dense chords, arpeggios, and descending lines. The dynamic marking *ff* (fortissimo) is present throughout. The score includes fingerings, accents, and slurs. A bracket at the bottom of the score indicates a specific performance instruction for the descending arpeggios in bars 71 and 74, where both hands play in unison one octave apart.

For Cortot this suggestion should not only be accepted, but could also provide the 'best solution' for the problem of 'sonic equivalence' between the bare arpeggios and the preceding rich chords of bars 70 and 73.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>166</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 7n10: 'La solution la meilleure paraît bien être celle préconisée par Liszt, dans sa révision du texte schubertien, à savoir:

Cortot justifiably highlights certain difficulties in making a single arpeggio line comparable to the power of full chords, especially on modern pianos, which are voiced in order to provide homogeneity of sound capacity through the different registers.<sup>167</sup> However, although Liszt's variant, which makes sensible use of the instrument for the character of this passage, could work as an adjustment to the features of modern instruments, one might be unsure whether it complies with the composer's intentions. Schubert also wrote single arpeggio lines after full chords at the beginning of the piece, both in *fortissimo* and in *pianissimo*, leaving the doubled arpeggios for the reappearance of the theme in D-flat major (bars 132-139). This could be a strong sign that he preferred this particular texture in order to underline that, probably, the highest degree of volume should not come before bars 132-139.<sup>168</sup>

Similarly, Cortot considers Liszt's variant for the left-hand part in bars 88 and 89 of the first movement 'hectic, but appropriate for the effervescent nature of this passage'.<sup>169</sup> In these two bars, Liszt substitutes the octaves in crotchets with a motif in quavers, as shown in the following example (Fig. 39).

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l'adjonction à l'octave supérieure d'un arpège de main droite formant unisson descendant avec celui de la main gauche... les difficultés d'exécution par rapport à leur équivalence sonore avec les accords puissamment martelés qui les précèdent et qui les suivent.'

<sup>167</sup> It could be maintained that the problem of equivalence between these chords and the single arpeggios would be less obvious on a Viennese fortepiano of Schubert's time. The chords in the middle and high register would not be as rich as they are on a modern piano, which provides tone equality in all registers. Moreover, a well-articulated arpeggio on a fortepiano, even in a single form, could avoid the clumsiness of modern instruments when trying to equal the volume of the preceded chords.

<sup>168</sup> In bars 132-139 Liszt replaces Schubert's double arpeggios with successive octaves between the two hands in the form of ascending broken chords. Although Cortot does not comment on Liszt's variants at these bars, we can understand that they could not be considered appropriate for Schubert's style and the texture of the rest of the Fantasy.

<sup>169</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 8n13: 'Variante trépidante dont l'emploi paraît s'accorder fort justement à la nature effervescente de ce passage.'

Figure 39 Schubert D 760/I bars 88-89, Liszt's Edition (1871)



Although Cortot may have underlined the suitability of Liszt's suggestion for the character of this passage, it is again uncertain that this squares with Schubert's intentions. Liszt's texture would probably lead to some lack of the melodic aspect in the left-hand part, and turn a fundamental bass line, which in fact is the continuation of the theme in bars 83-87, into a more dramatic, yet less thematic, accompaniment.

### *Rejection*

In bar 18 of the second movement, Liszt suggests that the left-hand part should be executed as 'Trille ad libitum' and, as Cortot maintains, this was a practice followed by the 'majority of editions',<sup>170</sup> probably during or before his time. However, Cortot does not approve of this practice, since it would give an inappropriate sense of 'haste' to the significant tension of this

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 18n36: 'Tant dans cette mesure que dans les deux mesures suivantes, et dont le maintien dans le plupart des éditions (même dans celle de Liszt, qui lui ajoute la surprenante mention: « Trille ad libitum !») provoque quelquefois, chez l'interprète inattentif, son exécution sous le signe d'un tremolo de valeur rythmique indéterminée'.

passage, and therefore the demisemiquavers should be played 'strictly measured' in order to underline their 'mysterious menace'.<sup>171</sup> Cortot's comment seems logical and appropriate since, if the demisemiquavers of the left hand were turned into a trill, the melodic movement of this bass line, which continues in a somewhat contrapuntal way in the next few bars, would be destroyed. In addition, it would lose its thematic role, which can be recognized as a variation of the inner voices of the previous E-major episode (bars 9-17) in shorter notes, and as a precursor of even shorter values in the explosion of bars 43-46. Finally, Cortot shows that here Schubert wrote something more than an atmospheric background for the choral theme of the right hand.<sup>172</sup>

Similarly, in the thunderous passage of bars 43-46 in the second movement, Cortot considers Liszt's rewriting unacceptable. Liszt replaces Schubert's figuration in unison with left-hand octaves and right-hand chords played successively in hemidemisemiquavers, mainly in the low register of the keyboard (Fig. 40).

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.: 'nul sentiment de hâte ne s'y fera jour [...] de triples croches strictement mesurées [...] dont la mystérieuse menace prendra'.

<sup>172</sup> A comparable case appears in the left-hand parts of bars 19 and 234 in the first movement of Schubert's Sonata in B-flat major, D 960. Martino Tirimo maintains that in the autograph Schubert 'does not write out the trill in full perhaps in order to discourage too measured an execution. In this instance the trill creates a special effect'; see Franz Schubert, *Sämtliche Klaviersonaten*, ed. Martino Tirimo (Wien: Wiener Urtext Edition, 1999), III, p. 221. However, bearing in mind that a trill was clearly given at bar 8 of the Sonata, this case seems to be different to the example from the 'Wanderer' Fantasy.

Figure 40 Schubert D 760/II bars 43-45, Liszt's Edition (1871)

For Cortot, such a variant displays a somewhat ‘catastrophic’ use of the (modern) instrument and, ‘despite the admiration for the master’s contribution to the art of playing the piano’, it was way too far out of context.<sup>173</sup> In this example Cortot detects not only a complete change in the physiognomy of the passage, but also a kind of texture that was entirely alien to the musical language used by Schubert throughout the composition.

The last example of a variant rejected by Cortot comes in the fugal opening of the fourth movement, for which Liszt had provided a complete alternative version. According to Liszt’s version, the octaves of the left hand should be

<sup>173</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 23n44: ‘une variante tumultueuse dont il suffira de détacher, à titre d’exemple, le fragment initial, pour s’aviser de la tendance instrumentale, en quelque sorte, catastrophique [...] Malgré l’admiration que l’on professe pour le génial initiateur de la technique moderne du piano et pour les dons de coloriste visionnaire [...] on ne peut s’interdire de penser qu’ici il va trop loin’.

doubled, as shown in the following examples (Fig. 41 and 42), suggesting the highest possible degree of dramatic power.

**Figure 41 Schubert D 760/IV bars 1-6, Wiener Urtext Edition**



**Figure 42 Liszt's version of Schubert D 760/IV bars 1-6, Liszt's Edition (1871)**



This might have been a particularly popular practice in performances of the Fantasy, as it was previously seen in d'Albert's editorial suggestion, and potentially because of the lack of other references to Liszt's version of the finale in Cortot's edition. Cortot maintains that Liszt's doubling, although it 'dramatizes the beginning of the movement', would be harmful for the sound qualities of the piece, and particularly for the 'organic development' of the fugue, since the following entrances of different voices would not be able to achieve a comparable intensity.<sup>174</sup> While Cortot's arguments are sensible,

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, p. 38n71: On ne croit pas superflu de mettre en garde contre la tradition interprétative proprement inconsidérée, encore qu'elle se réclame de l'exemple

they also echo Schubert's dynamic indications, which suggest that the entrance of the fourth movement should not be realized as a further increase of volume after the end of the scherzo. Even though these indications can vary between *Urtext*-labelled editions of our time, the expressive message is the same: Wiener Urtext gives **ff** at the end of the third movement and **f** in the opening of the finale; and Bärenreiter gives **fff** and **ff** respectively.

A somewhat unique case regarding Cortot's evaluation of Liszt's variants appears in the fourth variation of the second movement (bar 39), where the question is not about the applicability of an interpretive device, but rather about the way it should be used. Although Schubert did not indicate the existence of a tenor line in the left-hand part of this variation, several top notes of the left-hand chords imply a reference to the movement's opening. However, in Liszt's edition, specific voicing suggestions and minor additions in the left hand create a complete memoir of the 'Wanderer's' theme below the right-hand runs. Cortot clearly approves the Lisztian example and recommends such a voicing effect,<sup>175</sup> but his suggestion does not go as far as Liszt's, since it preserves Schubert's texture, even though the thematic memoir remains fragmented. Cortot's attempt to use Liszt's intervention in a more rationalized way is clearly displayed in this example, since the idea of a creative reading is not discarded, but it is shown that the expressive device should not be accompanied by a change of texture.<sup>176</sup>

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lisztien, qui consiste à dramatiser l'exposition de cette ultime variante en style fugué du thème générateur de la composition [...] On se gardera donc d'outrepasser ici les limites d'une sonorité qui se verrait au reste fâcheusement amenée à céder de son arbitraire intensité initiale dans le moment que les entrées successives du bref Fugato ultérieur ne permettent plus aux doigts de se manifester avec la même vigueur que sur ces mesures « unisono ».

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 21n42: 'éléments accessoires des batteries d'accompagnement, ceci au reste en conformité avec la tradition lisztienne, permettra d'assurer, avec moins de difficultés techniques, et sans être obligé d'en forcer le ton, un relief vocal plus expressif'.

<sup>176</sup> The use of special voicing effects was a typical feature of pianists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, like Hofmann, Godowski and Rachmaninoff. Liszt must have been particularly influential, and not too distant an

Cortot's commentary on Liszt's variants and additions displays an attempt to examine how the latter's intervention does justice to the piece by Schubert. Approaches that lead to a radical change of the composer's score are not approved, showing that practices that might have been acceptable and tasteful in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century should be treated differently according to standards of the mid and late twentieth century. However, Cortot's interpretation, although it demonstrates the evolution of performing styles, should be considered only a transitional stage towards the critical approaches of the late twentieth century, since practices that would scarcely be heard in a performance of the Fantasy today were still described as suitable and appropriate.

#### **4.4.5.2 Verbal Indications**

Similarly to the previous examination, Cortot evaluates Liszt's verbal indications regarding the interpretation of specific passages from a critical point of view, which leads either to approval or rejection. Notably, the examples that follow are all taken from the second movement, showing the substantial role that both Liszt and Cortot attributed to it in terms of the emotional development of the Fantasy.

##### *Approval*

Cortot had already underlined in the *Avant-Propos* the special role of the Adagio by referring to Liszt's comment that it should be played 'from the

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example, for these pianists. See Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, pp. 218-219. Cortot can also be considered a performer of that style and his recordings of Schubert's *Ländler* D 790 (1937 and 1951), examined in the next chapter, show that he used voicing effects for expressive variety.

innermost heart'.<sup>177</sup> However, more practical suggestions found in Liszt's edition also appear to be approved. Cortot considers the indication *Sostenuto assai*, which Liszt gave for the opening, appropriate both in terms of tempo and sound quality.<sup>178</sup> The *Sostenuto* marking could be helpful for the rhythmical accuracy of the funeral chorale (bars 1-8), especially after the preceding thunderous section, as well as for preventing acceleration in the following E-major section (bar 9-17), owed usually to the motion of the inner voices in semiquavers. In this section particularly it could also be realized as a rounded sonority, achieved through a non over-articulated touch and unforced finger *legato*, smoothed by the pedal whenever needed.

Cortot also appears to approve Liszt's indications regarding the end of the Adagio, as in the opening. Although Schubert did not provide further tempo indications, apart from a pause-sign at the end of the movement (bar 56), Cortot suggests retardation following precisely Liszt's version, which displayed *poco rit.* and *perdendosi*.<sup>179</sup> It is important to mention here that *poco rit.* in bar 56 also appears in the album of Schubert works, which Cortot owned and most likely annotated. Although it is not clear if that edition followed Liszt's version or another source, this fact shows that the practice of slowing down at the end of the second movement of the Fantasy was as common in performances during Cortot's time as it is nowadays.

### *Rejection*

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<sup>177</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 2: 'la pathétique évocation de thème du Wanderer, que Liszt souhaitait voir interprétée « ab imo pectore »'. See also Liszt-Schubert, p. 18

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17n32: 'Et c'est avec justesse que Liszt adjoint à la mention de la résonance voilée, le correctif « Sostenuto assai », pris ici, autant dans le sens du tempo que par rapport à la qualité du timbre.'

<sup>179</sup> The only difference between Liszt's and Cortot's edition is the dynamic mark at the end of bar 56, where Liszt gave **ppp** and Cortot **pp**.

Cortot is more critical of Liszt's suggestions in places where these could lead to a possible distortion of Schubert's text, as for example in bar 22 of the second movement. Cortot notes that the *Agitato*, which appears in this bar in a 'certain number of editions, had nothing to do with Schubert and therefore the original tempo should be strictly maintained in order to express this transition's dramatic meaning'.<sup>180</sup> Although Cortot fails to underline that this indication could be found in Liszt's edition, indirectly he rejects the manner of execution recommended by Liszt and which was apparently widely applied, at least during Cortot's time.<sup>181</sup> This comment could be also interpreted as a warning against unmarked tempo fluctuations, which might have been commonly used by performers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in similar textures, but were not necessarily acceptable in more recent approaches.

#### **4.4.5.3 Additional Improvisation and Embellishment**

Liszt's edition of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy gave Cortot the opportunity to discuss, in his own edition, the issue of additional improvisation and embellishment in this piece, allowing possible conclusions to be made about Schubert's music in general. In this section, Cortot's stance will be compared with modern approaches specific to additional improvisation, notably different from Liszt's rewriting in the Fantasy that aimed to suggest textural alternatives, or replacements, according to his personal style of writing for piano and/or performance.

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<sup>180</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 18n37: 'L'indication « Agitato », qui figure dès les début de cette mesure dans un certain nombre d'éditions, n'est pas du fait de Schubert, et il semble, au contraire, que le maintien rigoureux de la dramatique cadence antérieure ne donne que plus se signification pathétique à la palpitante articulation de ces accords'.

<sup>181</sup> This practice was also suggested in Giuseppe Buonamici's edition of the Fantasy (Schirmer, 1897).

The practice of adding improvised material in Schubert's texts has been an area of contention for the scholars of our time. Montgomery strongly opposes this practice, considering it appropriate only for the virtuosic style of Hummel and the opera, which were contemporary, but significantly different, genres from Schubert's music.<sup>182</sup> On the other hand, Bilson, Levin and Dürr disagree with Montgomery, suggesting that additional improvisation is a necessary tool for historically informed approaches to Schubert's music if it is applied in specific contexts and according to specific principles.<sup>183</sup> Such requirements include a sparing use of the device, mainly in repeated sections, and following the style of the composer's writing in general, and particularly in the performed composition.

The issue of additional improvisation in Cortot's edition of the Fantasy is discussed with regard to the third movement, specifically the last appearance of the trio's theme (bars 257-268) where, apart from the variant suggested by Liszt, Cortot provides his own improvised passage (Fig. 43). Cortot explains further that his simplified variant 'would be, in terms of character, more relevant to the stylistic features of [Schubert's] time',<sup>184</sup> showing that additional improvisation in Schubert's music is applicable if used in a specific way. The basic principles of Cortot's plan for the use of additional improvisation in the Fantasy are: a) the trio of the third movement is the only place in the work where the option of improvisation is considered;<sup>185</sup> b) the suggested embellishment comes only in the fourth, and last, time that the same phrase is repeated; and c) his variant aims to point

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<sup>182</sup> See Montgomery, 'Modern Schubert Interpretation in the Light of the Pedagogical Sources of His Day', p. 111.

<sup>183</sup> See Bilson, 'The Future of Schubert Interpretation', p. 716; Levin, p. 724; and Montgomery et al., 'Exchanging Schubert for Schillings', p. 534.

<sup>184</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 34n64: 'Le rédacteur de ces commentaires en propose la réplique ci-après, dont la notation simplifiée s'accorde, semble-t-il, d'un plus juste caractère avec les discrètes particularités poétiques de l'époque'.

<sup>185</sup> Excluding here the one or two places where Cortot would agree with the applicability of a variant suggested by Liszt, like the doubling of a single arpeggio.

out the style of Schubert's composition, contrary to Liszt's which, possibly, displays a more elaborate and/or irrelevant manner. In conclusion, Cortot makes quite sparing use of improvisation, notably in repeated material, and aims to follow the style of both the composer and the composition. Such an approach, at least in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, displays striking similarities with the aforementioned Schubert interpreters and, consequently, with certain treatises of the nineteenth century.<sup>186</sup>

**Figure 43 Liszt's and Cortot's variants for Schubert D 760/III bars 257-268, Cortot's Edition (1954)**

The image shows a page from Cortot's 1954 edition of Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy, D. 760, III, bars 257-268. It features two musical variants side-by-side. The top variant is Liszt's original, characterized by dense ornamentation and complex fingerings (e.g., 5 3 4, 3 4, 1 1 1, 1 1 1). The bottom variant is Cortot's simplified version, which is more direct and uses fewer ornaments. Between the two variants, there is a block of French text: "Le rédacteur de ces commentaires en propose la réplique ci-après, dont la notation simplifiée s'accorde, semble-t-il, d'un plus juste caractère avec les discrètes particularités poétiques de l'époque :". To the right of this text is a small musical example of the simplified notation, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic and fingerings 1 3 2.

Although more concrete conclusions about Schubert's music in general will be drawn in the next chapter, where Cortot's additional improvisation in his edition and recordings of Schubert's *Ländler* D 790 is discussed, the

<sup>186</sup> Although Cortot does not provide extensive theoretical analysis on the use of additional improvisation, he was a performer of nineteenth-century background and a collector of treatises and academic sources, and, therefore, it is not impossible that his stance might follow a specific tradition. Cortot's approach in the Fantasy echoes Schilling's passage mentioned in Chapter Two regarding the embellishment of repeated texts, or even Friedrich Starke's passages from *Wiener Pianoforte-Schule* (1819-21), as cited in Montgomery 'Modern Schubert Interpretation in the Light of Pedagogical Sources of His Day', p. 107.

'Wanderer' Fantasy is a work in which Cortot would approve this practice. The fact that he decided to suggest his own improvisation at a specific point could be enough to assume that he would also include it in his performances of this piece, especially given the consistency between the improvisations suggested in his edition, and those played in his recordings of the *Ländler*. However, this does not mean that Cortot would definitely consider this device an indispensable feature for a performance of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy. Similar to previous comments, he could also have aimed for a critical evaluation of practices of earlier times and styles, showing that, if improvisation were to be applied, it should be done through a particular concept. Although comparing Cortot's variant with the one suggested by Liszt could possibly be seen as sacrilege, the principles according to which Cortot decided to provide another embellishment can be justified by important documentation from Schubert's time and the views of respected performers of Schubert's music today.

#### **4.4.6 Technique**

The 'Wanderer' Fantasy raises many different technical issues, not only in comparison with other works of Schubert on which Cortot worked, but also within the entire piano literature of the composer. As seen in Chapter Two, in his *Principes Rationnels de la Technique Pianistique*, Cortot detected five categories of technical problems found in piano repertoire up to the late nineteenth century. The Fantasy was described as difficult in the categories 'Equality, independence and mobility of fingers' and 'Extensions'; and as very difficult in the categories 'Transmission of the thumb (scales and arpeggios)', 'Double notes and polyphonic playing' and 'Wrist technique,

execution of chords'.<sup>187</sup> Such a classification implies that essential technical issues in the piece are the rapidity and evenness of numerous scales and arpeggios; the polyphonic texture in particular passages; and the execution of octaves and chords. The following investigation will examine, in separate sections, these issues as they are discussed by Cortot both in the *Principes Rationnels* and the edition. Additionally, facilitations (variants) given for several difficult passages by Cortot and other performers/editors of the Fantasy will be mentioned as important evidence for the degree of technical demand traditionally attributed to this piece.

#### **4.4.6.1 Transmission of the Thumb**

Cortot maintained in the *Principes Rationnels* that the role of the thumb in quick scales and arpeggios, both ascending and descending, 'as an agent for the multiplication of the fingers, should neither cause any inequality of tone, any modification in the position of the other fingers, nor any diminution of speed in rapid playing', Therefore, 'the preparation of the thumb's attack and rapid lateral displacement of the hand' become important features for a smooth execution.<sup>188</sup> In addition, the need for hand displacements, especially at fast speeds, makes the movement ('impulsion') of the wrist equally important to the action of the fingers.<sup>189</sup> Cortot's insistence on the mobility of the wrist and a rather restrained finger articulation, especially in scales, can be considered as quite a contrast to the finger-based system of the French Piano School.

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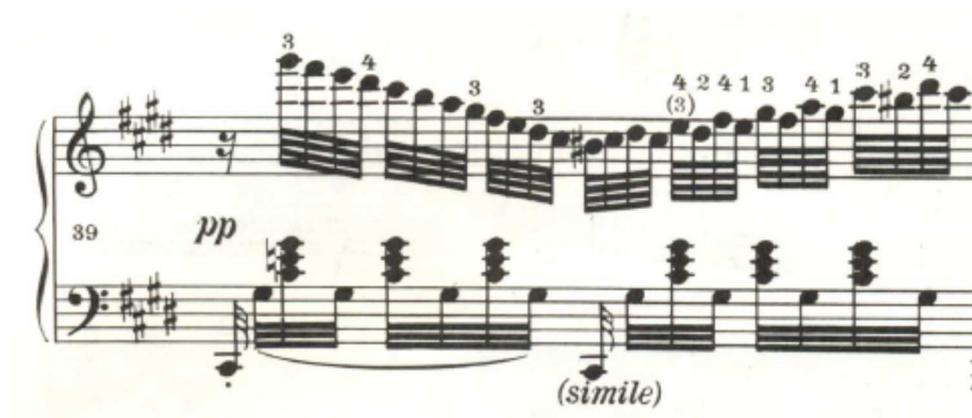
<sup>187</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 100.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

Rapid scale-like passages in the ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy are frequent in both hands, as in bars 83, 85, 90 and 92 of the first movement, and in the last variation of the second movement (bar 39, Fig. 44).

**Figure 44 Schubert D 760/II bar 39, Wiener Urtext Edition**



Especially for the latter, Cortot maintains that flexibility in the displacement of the hand, and the transmission of the thumb, is essential in order to play perfectly *legato*, and avoid heavy articulation that can lead to accents inappropriate for the poetic significance of the passage.<sup>190</sup> The extremely light touch required for the rapidity and the dynamic context of these runs is a particularly suitable case for Cortot’s ideas on combining the action of the fingers and the wrist. An execution that would allow the fingers to run lightly, without pressure, along the keys, at the same time as the wrist flexibly transmits the hand in different registers of the keyboard, can be effective for the technical and, consequently, the expressive qualities of this episode.

<sup>190</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 21n42: ‘Préconisés en vue de l’assouplissement maximum des mouvements de déplacement de main et de passages de pouce, susceptibles d’opposer aux exigences d’une articulation digitale, pour ainsi dire, dérobée aux lois de la pesanteur et tributaire d’un legato si parfaitement uni que le moindre « à coup » de nervosité ou d’accentuation en compromettrait délibérément toute la caractéristique signification poétique.’

As far as arpeggios are concerned, Cortot considers the role of the wrist in the transmission of the thumb even more important than in scales, because of the wider intervals played by the fingers in consecutive hand positions.<sup>191</sup> The need for using the wrist in the displacements of the hand is quite obvious, especially in such extremely rapid arpeggios as at the end of the third movement (bars 336-341). Next to the rapidity in changing hand positions, required within each bar, the quick and huge leaps in the transitions between the bars create a tremendous technical difficulty in this passage (Fig. 45).

**Figure 45 Schubert D 760/III bars 336-339, Wiener Urtext Edition**

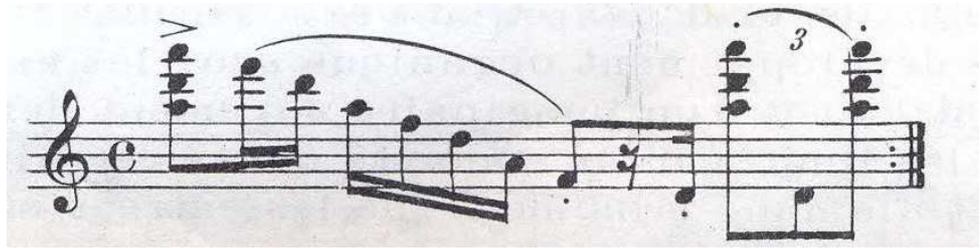


For Cortot, preparatory work for this passage should aim to set up the hand position for the first part of each bar in a chordal manner, and exercise the wrist rebounds for transferring the hand in different registers (Fig. 46).<sup>192</sup>

<sup>191</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 27.

<sup>192</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 37n69.

**Figure 46 Cortot's suggested exercise for Schubert D 760/III bars 336-341, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



However, while this exercise can be helpful for the anticipation of different hand positions, certain facilitations and variants, found in various editions of the Fantasy, show the problems that this passage might have caused even for renowned virtuosos. Badura-Skoda and Cortot recommend octaviation at the beginning of each bar, possibly in order to secure the accuracy of, at least, the first time that the thumb has to anticipate a displacement of the hand (Fig. 47 and 48).

**Figure 47 Facilitation given by Badura-Skoda for Schubert D 760/III bars 336-341, Wiener Urtext Edition**



**Figure 48 Facilitation given by Cortot for Schubert D 760/III bars 336-341, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



On the other hand, in his edition, d'Albert suggests more radical facilitation, allowing the omission of the last two notes of the right hand in every bar, thus making the transitions between the bars much easier.<sup>193</sup> Moreover, in Liszt's suggested variant (Fig. 49) – in fact not simply facilitation, but rewriting – the right-hand arpeggios are replaced by descending chords in both hands. This variant, along with others, presents a strong argument to support Kinderman's opinion that, in his edition of the Fantasy, Liszt 'offered a solo version which for once makes portions of the piece easier to play.'<sup>194</sup>

**Figure 49 Schubert D 760/III bar 336, Liszt's Edition (1871)**



The accuracy in the displacement of the hand through the movement of the wrist is also a technical challenge in the closing bars of the finale (bars 114-118), where the difficulty is increased by the fact that the arpeggios appear

<sup>193</sup> D' Albert-Schubert, p. 27.

<sup>194</sup> Kinderman, p. 166.

in both hands in parallel motion.<sup>195</sup> The most important point in Cortot's suggestion for this passage is the choice of fingering that would make the impulsions of the wrist appear at the same time in both hands, and not as in the traditional manner, where the transmission of the thumb comes at different moments for each hand (Fig. 50 and 51). The suggested fingering places both hands in positions of four-note chords,<sup>196</sup> the rotations of the wrists are synchronized and reduced and, thus, the evenness and clarity of the arpeggios become more secure. While the efficiency of this fingering is evidenced in similar suggestions made also by other editors, like Badura-Skoda<sup>197</sup> and Lazare Lévy,<sup>198</sup> the idea of minimizing the times that the wrist has to move, and initiate a displacement of the hand, must have been a basic feature of Cortot's technique.<sup>199</sup> Another passage where this kind of fingering could be appropriate, although not suggested in Cortot's edition, is the arpeggios in bars 133 and 135 of the first movement.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Scales and arpeggios with both hands in parallel motion usually cause more problems than in contrary motion, because a non-symmetrical kind of fingering is needed. This means that the thumb has to play and anticipate a displacement of the hand at a different moment in each hand if the traditional fingering is followed. In addition, quite opposite movements of the thumb and the wrist are required in each hand when they ascend and descend in parallel motion.

<sup>196</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 47.

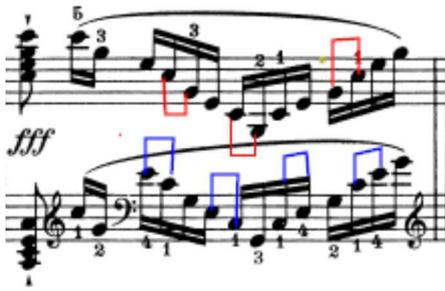
<sup>197</sup> Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. 28.

<sup>198</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 47n87: 'On souscrit entièrement à l'usage du doigté uniforme, permettant le déplacement simultané de deux mains sur les positions successives de ces rutilants arpèges, tel qu'il est préconisé par Lazare-Lévy dans son excellente révision de cette œuvre.'

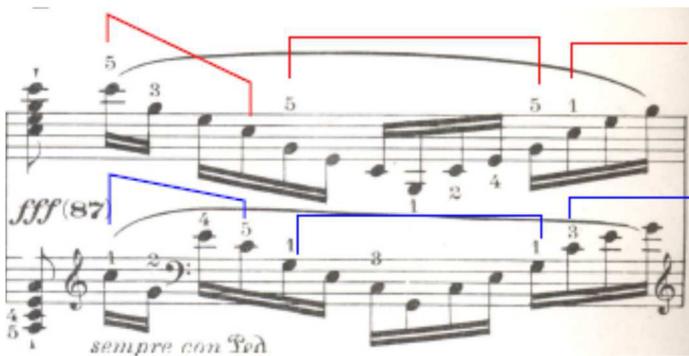
<sup>199</sup> See Timbrell, p. 90. A similar kind of fingering is suggested by Cortot for the ascending C major seventh arpeggio in both hands (bar 52) in Chopin's Polonaise in A-flat major, Op. 53. See Frédéric Chopin, *Polonaises (Opp. 26, 40, 44, 53, 61)*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert, 1939), p. 67.

<sup>200</sup> Fingering similar to the end of the fourth movement is suggested in these bars of the first movement by Badura-Skoda in the Wiener Urtext Edition. This kind of fingering seems also to be a convenient solution for extended arpeggio-like figurations in several *Klavierstücke* by Brahms, like in opp. 76 No. 1, 76 No. 8, 119 No. 4. This could be a sign that this sort of technique was part of Brahms' style of playing.

**Figure 50 Schubert D 760/IV bar 114, moments of hand displacement for each hand with traditional fingering**



**Figure 51 Simultaneous hand displacements in Schubert D 760/IV bar 114 with Cortot's fingering, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



#### 4.4.6.2 Polyphonic Texture

Similar to most of Schubert's piano writing and compositional style in general,<sup>201</sup> polyphony is not a typical feature in the texture of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy. Apart from a fugato in the opening of the finale, there are only a

<sup>201</sup> See Winter et al., 'Schubert', *Grove Music Online*, [http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109\\_pg2](http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109_pg2) (Accessed: April 10, 2014). Piano pieces of Schubert that display features of polyphonic writing, apart from the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, are the Fantasy in F minor for four hands, D 940 and the finale from the E-flat major Sonata, D568.

few polyphonic textures that display, perhaps, greater complexity, and these will be mentioned in this section.

According to Cortot, from a technical point of view, difficulties in the execution of polyphonic textures are owed to 'the complexity of the rhythms allotted to the fingers of a single hand, and the divergent movements of these fingers on the keyboard'.<sup>202</sup> Therefore, the choice of convenient fingering is usually the solution. Examples that correspond with these observations are the passages in bars 51 and 63-66 in the E-major episode of the first movement and in bars 9-17 of the second movement, which is actually a typical four-part texture. Especially in the latter, Cortot suggests the practice of finger substitution, which occurs when a finger takes over silently a note that was played by another finger. This practice can be helpful for technical accuracy, and also necessary for the independent control of the voices, which is, essentially, the most challenging problem in such passages.

#### **4.4.6.3 Octaves**

One of the technical issues that can justify the revolutionary character that has often been attributed to the texture of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy is the extensive use of various kinds of octaves. Octave writing in this piece can be divided into three categories: a) *legato* octaves; b) broken octaves; and c) fast and detached octaves.

##### *Legato Octaves*

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<sup>202</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 53.

In *legato* octaves, the examples are exactly the same as the ones discussed in the section on sound. These are the octaves in bars 48, 50, 54, 59, 61 (right hand), 63-65 (left hand), 96, 98, 114-123 and 128-131 (right hand) of the first movement; in the first and second variations, and in bars 50 and 53 (right hand) of the second movement; and in bars 215-216, 219-220, 223-224 (left hand) and 257-268 (right hand) of the third movement.

Cortot maintains that literal *legato* in octaves is physiologically impossible and, therefore, a satisfactory execution can be ensured through a ligature of the outer parts, using the fifth and fourth finger (and third, if possible), and the movement of the wrist.<sup>203</sup> Especially as far as the wrist is concerned, three different sorts of movements are equally important for the execution of *legato* octaves:

The movement of suspension, that is to say, the alternate raising and lowering of the wrist, without letting the fingers that play the octaves leave their keys [...] the backward and forward movement from the white to the black keys and vice versa [...] and] the movement of lateral displacement in ascending or descending motion.<sup>204</sup>

Bearing in mind the singing quality that the octaves of the aforementioned examples should have, Cortot's ideas can be very helpful. Particularly essential is the practice of lateral displacement of the wrist, pivoting on the outer part of the octave, especially for the connection of octaves moving in wide intervals and not stepwise, as in bar 129 of the first movement or in bars 257-258 of the third (Fig. 52).<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Claudio Arrau argued against the impossibility of joining the thumb-notes in *legato* octaves. He suggested a sort of climbing technique through which one joint of the thumb holds the first note, while the other plays the next note to ensure a smooth connection. However, it is most likely that this technique could only be applied in moderate and slow speeds and in stepwise motion. See Joseph Horowitz, *Conversations with Arrau* (London: Collins, 1982), p. 101.

<sup>204</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 88.

<sup>205</sup> Cortot appears to recommend the same technical approach and fingering for the *legato* octaves in bars 37-45 of Chopin's Ballade No. 4, Op. 52: See Cortot-Chopin, *Ballads*, p. 51n5.

Figure 52 Schubert D 760/III bars 257-258, Cortot's Edition (1954)



Equally important for Cortot is the technique of 'sliding fingers in both voices',<sup>206</sup> which can be applied in chromatic successions from black- to white-key octaves only, like the octaves G-flat-F in bars 215 and 265 of the third movement.

### *Broken Octaves*

The most typical example of broken octaves, discussed before in terms of articulation, appears in the end of the scherzo (bars 342-349), for which Cortot suggests a succession of heavy/long and light/short notes for the low and the high note of each pair respectively.<sup>207</sup> From a technical point of view, however, and following a general explanation in the *Principes Rationnels*, 'the mechanism of lateral displacement of the wrist',<sup>208</sup> especially for variants 'in disjunct motion',<sup>209</sup> is essential for an accurate execution. Bearing in mind the distant leaps in the melodic motion of the

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., p. 91. See Exercise No. 2e.

<sup>207</sup> See Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 38n70.

<sup>208</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 91.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

octaves at the end of the scherzo, Cortot's suggestions offer an effective solution.

### *Fast and Detached Octaves*

The famous octave passage at the end of the first movement (bars 161-164) is the most notable case in this category, and probably the best example of the visionary character of the Fantasy's texture.<sup>210</sup> The technical problems in this passage, caused mainly by the required speed, have led the majority of pianists to the solution of slowing down, which Cortot considers inappropriate, since 'the vivacious spirit of the music is sacrificed for a literal display of its material'.<sup>211</sup> As explained in the edition, rhythmical preparatory exercises (Fig. 53)<sup>212</sup> should aim for 'muscular contraction of the wrist and the fingers in every propulsion of octaves',<sup>213</sup> leading probably to strong rebounds of the wrist in the beginning of every block of four semiquavers. In addition, fingering that seems to follow the principles of *legato* octaves (1-5 for white keys; 1-4 for black) appears to be equally significant.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Regarding these octaves Cortot mentions Busoni's description of them as 'lightning octaves'; see Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 15n30: 'que Busoni désignait, dans ce cas, par le qualificatif de « Blitz-Oktaven » (c'est à dire Octaves-Eclair)'.

<sup>211</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 15n30: 'la composition n'y est plus... et savoir rendre justice à l'intention du compositeur, en préférant l'esprit vivifiant de la musique à la littéralité anonyme de ses moyens matériels.' A good example of this practice is provided by d'Albert who suggests *allargando* for this passage in his edition of the Fantasy (See d'Albert-Schubert, p. 9).

<sup>212</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 15n30.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.: 'la contraction nerveuse du poignet et des doigts accordée au début de chaque propulsion'.

<sup>214</sup> See also Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 92, Exercise No. 4. A similar kind of fingering, and the use of wrist impulses, are suggested by Cortot in the fast and detached octaves in bars 119, 121 and 123 of Chopin's Ballade No. 1, Op. 23. This remark shows that Cortot certainly considered the way of fingering in *legato* octaves suitable for rapid and detached octaves moving stepwise. See Cortot-Chopin, *Ballads*, p. 11n17.

**Figure 53 Cortot's suggested exercises for Schubert D 760/I bars 161-164, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



Since the importance of using the wrist is not really questioned, the choice of fingering can be a critical point for the execution of these octaves. Cortot's suggestion could be helpful in relation to the difference of 'geographical' levels between white and black keys, as the different fingering teaches the hands to stay 'down' for the former and move 'up' for the latter. However, Cortot's ideas appear to display notable opposition to approaches expressed in the early twentieth century, according to which the use of larger parts of the upper body, like the upper arm and the shoulder, are also required for the execution of such textures. These ideas can be found in methods by, among others, Rudolf Breithaupt (1905),<sup>215</sup> Walter Giesecking and Karl Leimer (1938),<sup>216</sup> and more recently by Gyorgy Sándor (1981),<sup>217</sup>

<sup>215</sup> Rudolf Breithaupt, *Die natürliche Klaviertechnik (Band II)*, trans. John Bernhoff as *Natural Piano-Technic* (Leipzig: Kahnt Nachfolger, 1909) (1905), II.

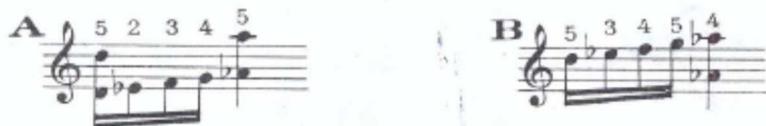
<sup>216</sup> Walter Giesecking and Karl Leimer, *Rhythmik, Dynamik, Pedal und andere Probleme des Klavierspiels*, trans. Frederick C. Rauser as *Rhythmics, Dynamics, Pedal and Other Problems of Piano Playing* (New York: Dover, 1972 (1938)).

<sup>217</sup> Gyorgy Sándor, *On Piano Playing* (New York: Schirmer, 1981).

and are echoed in Badura-Skoda's remark that octave writing in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy demands 'a way of playing from the shoulder'.<sup>218</sup>

The trouble that these octaves might have caused to pianists over time can be witnessed in facilitations found in several editions, or applied by celebrated pianists.<sup>219</sup> Cortot suggests that if the preparatory exercises do not lead to satisfactory results, the use of a simplified variant would be preferable to slowing down, as the delivery of the 'musical significance and intensity of the character' should be the primary goal in the performance of this passage.<sup>220</sup> Cortot provides two variants for the right hand: the first one omits the upper note of the last three octaves of each block of four semiquavers; and the second one omits the lower note of all semiquavers in every block. According to Cortot, the former is more energetic, while the latter is brighter (Fig. 54).<sup>221</sup> In addition, Cortot also suggests a simplification for the left-hand octaves that omits the lower note of the second and fourth semiquaver in each block, thus allowing the top part to be fingered 1-2-1-2 (Fig. 55).

**Figure 54 Cortot's suggested facilitation (RH) for Schubert D 760/I bars 161-164, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



<sup>218</sup> Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. IV.

<sup>219</sup> See Alfred Brendel's performance for the German Television; [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXycS\\_0w\\_pU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXycS_0w_pU) (Accessed: July 15, 2012).

<sup>220</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 15n30: 'on se résignera à l'emploi du subterfuge qui, s'il n'a pas pour lui le privilège de l'exactitude digitale, ne traduit pas moins au plus près de sa signification musicale, le caractère d'ardeur entreprenante de ces quatre mesures.'

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.: 'La première plus énergique, la seconde plus brillante.'

**Figure 55 Cortot's suggested facilitation (LH) for Schubert D 760/I bars 161-164, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



On the other hand, Liszt's rewriting replaces the octaves in semiquavers with octaves in quaver triplets, not only showing a possible solution that Liszt would provide for his disciples – if not for himself – but also proving quite emphatically Kinderman's opinion that Liszt made many things simpler in his solo version of the Fantasy (Fig. 56).

**Figure 56 Schubert D 760/I bars 161-164, Liszt's Edition (1871)**



#### 4.4.6.4 Chords

With respect to technical issues related to chords, the texture of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy can be divided into: a) rapidly repeated chords; and b) different sorts of broken chords. Cortot thought that, for the execution of chords, the movement of the hand is more important than that of the fingers, although different techniques need to be applied for different functions of chordal writing.<sup>222</sup> More specifically, in repeated chords, vertical movements from the wrist are essential for repetitions with the same fingers and intensity in the sound, while in broken chords – such as the Alberti-bass figuration, arpeggiated chords and tremolo – lateral movements are appropriate.<sup>223</sup>

##### *Repeated Chords*

In the Fantasy, repeated chords appear quite frequently, although not all of them display the same degree of difficulty, which usually depends on the required speed. Based on Cortot's edition, the most demanding passages of this kind appear in bars 144, 146, 148 and 149 of the first movement, in bars 46-47 of the second, and in bars 77-80 of the finale. In the examples from the first movement (Fig. 57), Cortot suggests a way of facilitation contributed by the left hand (Fig. 58), while in the one from the second movement (Fig. 59), preparatory exercises (Fig. 60) point out the importance of vertically rebounding movements of the wrist. Similar exercises are also suggested for the example from the finale.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 73.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73 and 78.

<sup>224</sup> See Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 24n45 and p.43n80.

Figure 57 Schubert D 760/I bar 144, Wiener Urtext Edition



Figure 58 Cortot's suggested facilitation for Schubert D 760/I bar 144, Cortot's Edition (1954)

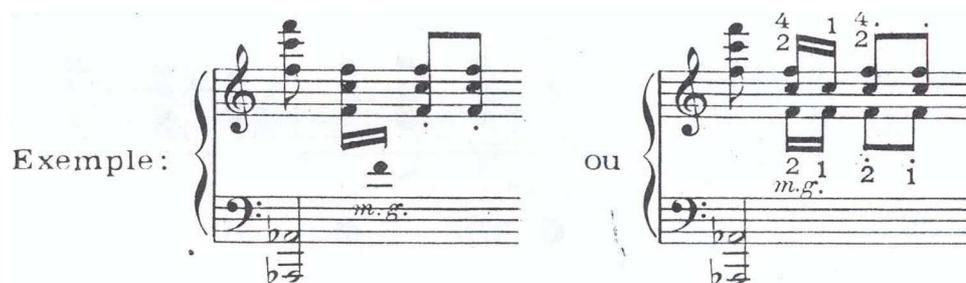
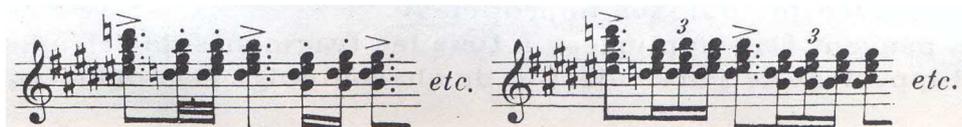


Figure 59 Schubert D 760/II bars 46-47, Wiener Urtext Edition



Figure 60 Cortot's suggested exercises for Schubert D 760/II bars 46-47, Cortot's Edition (1954)



Alongside these examples, the repeated chords in bars 23-26 of the second movement, and in various places in the scherzo (bars 3-4 and equivalents), could be added as equally demanding in terms of rapidity of the repetition, although they are not discussed in Cortot's edition.

### *Broken Chords*

If Cortot's observations regarding broken chords in the *Principes Rationnels* were adjusted to the texture of the Fantasy, two types of this device could be detected: 'broken chords in scale form';<sup>225</sup> and Alberti-bass figurations.<sup>226</sup>

<sup>225</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 85. See Exercise No. 5bis.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86. Cortot used the term 'batteries' for Alberti-bass figurations.

Regarding the former, Cortot notes that a combination of lateral transmission and vertical rebounds of the wrist are required for the scale-like melodic motion, and for the playing of normal chords at certain parts of the figuration respectively.<sup>227</sup> Typical examples for the applicability of this technique are the broken chords within bars 62-69 (Fig. 61) and 81-91 in the finale of the Fantasy, where Cortot highlights the importance of acquiring the combined movements through suggested exercises (Fig. 62).<sup>228</sup>

**Figure 61 Schubert D 760/IV bars 62-63, Wiener Urtext Edition**



**Figure 62 Cortot's suggested exercise for Schubert D 760/IV bars 62-64, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



On the other hand, Cortot considers the Alberti-bass figuration 'a kind of measured tremolo', where the formation of the hand in a chordal manner,

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>228</sup> See Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 42n78.

and 'rocking movements' from the wrist, are equally important.<sup>229</sup> The Alberti-bass was a norm in the keyboard music of composers who preceded and, notably, influenced Schubert – such as Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven –<sup>230</sup> and, therefore, it appears quite often in his own works for piano. Especially in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, it is used not only in the conventional way of an accompaniment, as in the left-hand parts of the A-minor (bars 96-99 and 103-104) and the E-flat major (bars 112-131) episodes of the first movement, but also in a more thematic role. Such cases are the extended run in unison of bars 43-46, the left-hand part of bars 48-56 in the second movement, and the grandiose build up of the finale (bars 107-113). In particular, regarding the examples from the second movement, Cortot's description of this figuration as a measured tremolo can be comparable to Brendel's remark that, despite Schubert's measured writing, the execution should not remove the quality of tremolo.<sup>231</sup> Although the idea of tremolo – technically, as in the use of wrist rotations, and texturally, as an antecedent of the Lisztian tremolos –<sup>232</sup> is appropriate, equally important would be to play these passages in a precisely measured manner. The technical command would be achieved by rhythmical control of the wrist's impulses and, consequently, the great intensity created by the consistency of the pulse would not be ruined by any signs of haste, as in *tremolando* playing.

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<sup>229</sup> Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 86.

<sup>230</sup> See Winter et al., 'Schubert', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109pg2> (Accessed: April 10, 2014). Regarding the use of the Albert-bass by composers before Schubert, see 'Alberti bass', *The Oxford Companion to Music*, ed. Alison Latham. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e152> (Accessed: August 17, 2014). Particularly for Beethoven, see Alexander Brent-Smith, 'Ludwig van Beethoven', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 53<sup>rd</sup> Sess. (Taylor & Francis, 1926-1927), p. 87.

<sup>231</sup> Brendel, p. 145.

<sup>232</sup> Regarding the idea that the use of tremolo by composers of the mid and late nineteenth century can be connected with the ways composers of earlier times used the Alberti-bass figuration, see Brendel, pp. 145-146 and Brent-Smith, p. 88.

As a general conclusion, it is worth noting that, in the majority of Cortot's remarks, different approaches in the technique of the wrist are highlighted. This can be informative not only about Schubert's texture and the sort of technique it requires, but also about Cortot's own ideas regarding piano technique.<sup>233</sup> Cortot's suggestions for using movement from the hand combined, at times, with restrained activity from the fingers – even in passages where the function of the latter is essential, as in scale-like runs – show how extensively he had moved away from the principles of the French Piano School. However, it is also evident that he did not adopt technical approaches that in the early twentieth century suggested the use of the upper arm and shoulder in piano playing. Moreover, despite the comprehensiveness of the *Principes Rationnels*, and the exhaustive commentary on technique in the edition of the Fantasy, Cortot never ceases to underline his conception of technique as a medium for musical expression. Editorial remarks against virtuosic display, caused by fast and digital executions, alongside suggested facilitations in order to ensure that the character of a passage is delivered, can be clear signs of this conception, reminding us that performance decisions should not be directed by technical demands, even in a work of such complexity as the 'Wanderer' Fantasy.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> This approach echoes Vladimir Horowitz's ideas about the importance of the technique of the wrist in piano music by Beethoven and later composers; see [http://www.sfinstituteofmusic.org/horowitz\\_interview.pdf](http://www.sfinstituteofmusic.org/horowitz_interview.pdf) (Accessed: June 29, 2012): 'Before Beethoven's time, the wrist had not had much to do in technique. But since that time the use of the wrist has been one of the chief elements of technique. Now the ideal equipment for the pianist consists in movement in the wrist and relaxation in the arm. The touch itself must reside in the finger. This is the secret of avoiding a harsh tone'.

<sup>234</sup> See Cortot, *Rational Principles*, p. 97: 'It will be well not to forget in referring to these qualifications that, in the perfect interpretation of a musical work, it is not the number of notes contained in it which constitutes its real difficulty. As far as we are concerned, we consider the execution of an "andante" by Mozart or of a Bach Fugue as a higher token of virtuosity than that of a Liszt Rhapsody'.

#### **4.4.7 Structure – Motivic Transformation**

Cortot's commentary on the structure of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy mainly refers to the practice of motivic transformation, through which Schubert reinforced the unity and coherence of the work's cyclic-mothematic form. The investigation that follows examines Schubert's use of this technique, as discussed by Cortot, in several episodes within the same or different movements, as well as in transitions between the first three movements.

##### **4.4.7.1 Modified Motif in the First Movement**

###### *Transformation*

In the first movement, Cortot's remarks appear to suggest that the succession of different episodes is accompanied by consecutive transformations of a particular motif from the theme of the 'Wanderer'. As Fisk maintains, the 'Wanderer's' theme, both in the song and in the opening of the second movement of the Fantasy, displays two basic features: the repetition of the first notes (G-sharp) and the stepwise motion of the melodic line (G-sharp-A-G-sharp; Fig. 63 and 64).<sup>235</sup> Both principles were also followed in the opening of the first movement, although the stepwise motion was only ascending (Fig. 65).

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<sup>235</sup> Fisk, pp. 68 and 72.

Figure 63 Schubert 'Der Wanderer' (D 343) bars 23-24

Musical score for Schubert's 'Der Wanderer' (D 343) bars 23-24. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The vocal line (treble clef) has the lyrics "Son - ne dünkt mich hier so — kalt,". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a *pp* dynamic marking. The melody in the vocal line consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a fermata over the final note.

Figure 64 Schubert D 760/II bar 1, Wiener Urtext Edition

Musical score for Schubert's D 760/II bar 1, Wiener Urtext Edition. The tempo is marked *Adagio*. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a *pp* dynamic marking. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melody of quarter notes, while the left hand (bass clef) plays a bass line of quarter notes.

Figure 65 Schubert D 760/I bars 1-3, Wiener Urtext Edition

Musical score for Schubert's D 760/I bars 1-3, Wiener Urtext Edition. The tempo is marked *Allegro con fuoco ma non troppo*. The score is in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a *ff* dynamic marking. The right hand (treble clef) has a *Repetition* marking over the first four notes. The left hand (bass clef) has a *stepwise (ascending)* marking over the first four notes. The score includes various fingering and articulation markings.

With the arrival of the E-major section (bars 47-66), Cortot maintains that Schubert presents a 'hidden adaptation of the Wanderer's motif which acquires also the role of the second subject of the movement'.<sup>236</sup> In this episode, Schubert applies a transformation of the opening's theme, through which, although the rhythmical pattern remains the same (one crotchet-two quavers), the melodic motion, in terms of intervals, is modified. More specifically, while the first part of the original theme (repetition) is maintained, the second part (stepwise motion) moves now as 'a third up-a second down' (Fig. 66).

**Figure 66 Schubert D 760/I bars 47-48 (right hand), Wiener Urtext Edition**



Although such a modification of the melodic motion had already been pre-announced in the right-hand chords of bars 29 and 31 (Fig. 67), it only acquired a certain structural and thematic role in the E-major section.

<sup>236</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p.5n6: 'cet emprunt dissimule au contour vocal de la première mesure du motif de Wanderer, dont la citation est reproduite dans l'avant-propos, et qui fournit ici la substance d'un second sujet thématique'. See also Brendel, p. 136: '[In Schubert's large-scale works for piano] of 1824 and 1825 the subsidiary theme is conceived as a variant of the principal theme.'

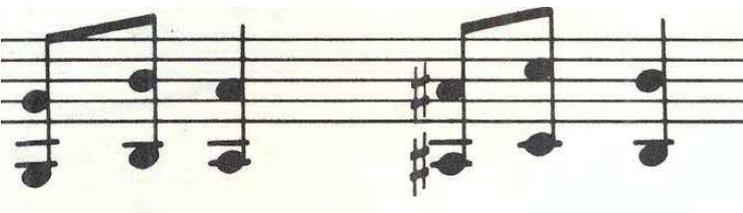


**Figure 69 Schubert D 760/I bar 91 (right hand), Wiener Urtext Edition**



Further down in the movement, Cortot clearly connects the transformation, introduced and carried on in the E-major and A-minor sections, with the new representation of the theme, which appears in the E-flat major episode (bars 112-131).<sup>237</sup> More specifically, the insistent left-hand octaves in bars 100-101 and 105-107 (Fig. 70), and the introductory bar 111 (Fig. 71), serve as precursors to the new guise of the theme. Notably, in this episode the modified second part of the original theme now becomes the first part of the new representation (Fig. 72).

**Figure 70 Schubert D 760/I bar 100/105 (left hand), Wiener Urtext Edition**



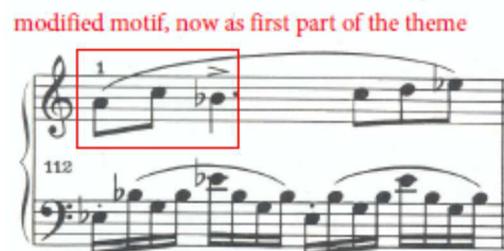
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<sup>237</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 11n19: 'Schubert y prend texte, pour en faire l'objet d'un séduisant divertissement mélodique, de l'incidente inflexion mélodique sur laquelle conduit la proposition sensibilisée du thème générateur, lors de son apparition en Mi majeur (voir note 6), laquelle, plus tarde, se voit appelée à fournir impétueux mouvements de basse des mesures antérieures, un argument impulsif d'une singulière énergie, avant que de se témoigner, dans la mesure de préparation à laquelle se rapporte, la note (18)'.

**Figure 71 Schubert D 760/I bar 111, Wiener Urtext Edition**



**Figure 72 Schubert D 760/I bar 112, Wiener Urtext Edition**



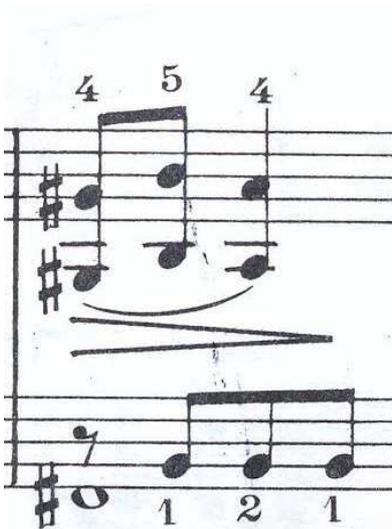
*Implications for Execution*

The connections, set by Cortot, could imply a certain manner of playing these motifs, in terms of sound and phrasing, in order to suggest that the later representation of the 'Wanderer's' theme is always related to the earlier. However, it becomes particularly challenging to explore how Cortot shows that these motifs, despite their common origin, are used in different contexts. The basic factors through which these themes differ are: a) the character, the texture, and the harmonic background of the section to which

they belong; and b) the accentuation and articulation marks they contain. Especially regarding the latter, comparisons between Cortot's and *Urtext*-labelled editions can reveal important features of Cortot's editorial process and interpretive suggestions.

The E-major episode displays quite a peaceful character and a rather polyphonic texture. The articulation and accentuation given to the modified motif (a third up-a second down), as seen in *Urtext*-labelled editions, is suggested by a slur above the two quavers and the crotchet of the right-hand part (bar 48). This slur would call not only for a real *legato*, but also for a stronger first rather than second beat, or in other words for a *diminuendo* from the beginning until the end of the slur.<sup>238</sup> In Cortot's edition, an added *diminuendo* hairpin, along with Schubert's slur, suggests the natural and appropriate gesture of this motif (Fig. 73).

**Figure 73 Schubert D 760/I bar 48, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



<sup>238</sup> See Bilson's remarks about slurring in music of, at least, Austro-German tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth century with examples from Mozart, Schubert and Brahms; Bernard Sherman, *Inside Early Music* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 303-308.

On the other hand, the character of the A-minor section is dramatic, with ‘thundering octaves’ in the left hand projecting the theme, accompanied by stormy semiquavers of scale-like passages in the right hand.<sup>239</sup> A few bars further down, the roles of the two hands become reversed. Although the critical editions display no signs of articulation and accentuation for the transformed motif, the execution of a typical quadruple metre would logically call for stronger first and third beats, unless differently indicated. Cortot’s suggestion for this motive – as in bars 84, 86-87 and 93-96 – similar to the previous section, is given by slurs in pairs of beats of every bar, followed this time by a dot on the last note under each slur (Fig. 74).

**Figure 74 Schubert D 760/I bar 84 (left hand), Cortot's Edition (1954)**



Cortot’s notation, apart from rather self-evident features like the succession of strong-weak beats and the *legato* touch, could also imply a more energetic ending for the modified motif, which could be appropriate for this episode’s frenzied pace. Moreover, his editorial accents on the first quaver of the first- and third-beat octaves in bars 100-101 and 105-107 (Fig. 75) would reinforce the suggested phrasing, and intensify the modified part of

<sup>239</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 8n12: ‘les tonitruantes octaves de la basse, cependant qu’une fulgurante figuration de main droite prodigue à cet étonnant épisode la déferlement de ses tumultueuses doubles croches’.

the original theme, which is about to become the starting part of the melody in the upcoming E-flat major episode.<sup>240</sup>

**Figure 75 Schubert D 760/I bar 100/105 (left hand), Cortot's Edition (1954)**



The E-flat major episode, which comes in after a rather unexpected strike of its dominant seventh chord (bar 108), although it displays a similar texture to the A-minor episode (homophonic melodic line and accompaniment of uninterrupted semiquavers), has a dreamy character.<sup>241</sup> In terms of articulation, the slurring per bar for the right-hand part in the whole section, in both *Urtext*-labelled and Cortot's editions, suggests a true *legato* and perhaps, similar to the E-major episode, dynamic attenuation at the end of each slur. On the other hand, although the accents in bar 111 initially suggest a consistent shape of the modified motif as 'strong-weak', suddenly this changes into 'weak-strong', following Schubert's accents on the second beats in almost every bar of the episode. This simple change of accentuation

<sup>240</sup> The accents for the left hand octaves in bars 100-101 and 105-107 also appear as pencil annotations, possibly of Cortot's hand, in the Fantasy's version from the album of Schubert's piano works which belonged to Cortot (Accessible in Médiathèque Musicale Mahler – Cortot's Archive).

<sup>241</sup> See Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 11n19: 'Veiller au caractère délié du volubile accompagnement de la main gauche, lequel doit être fonction d'un discret effleurement du clavier, dépourvu de toute pesanteur, et proposant à la sensible conduite du sujet mélodique le support, en quelque sorte atmosphérique, d'un aérien enveloppement.'

displays not only the particularity of the new representation of the modified motif, but also a simple tool that Schubert used for expressive variety in his monothematic construction.

The accentuation for the right-hand melody in this episode, as it appears in Cortot's edition, displays differences in comparison with *Urtext*-labelled editions, the first print, and other editions of the Fantasy, which Cortot may have consulted. The following tables (Tables 4-6) present the accentuation specifically for the second-beat notes of the right hand in bars 125/126/127, 129 and 131, as given by four different sources: a) the Wiener Urtext Edition, which was the first edition that examined both the first print and the autograph; b) the first print of the piece, which was possibly the most reliable source that Cortot may have consulted; c) the album of Schubert's works (Peters Editions), which belonged to Cortot and most likely contained his annotations (annotated album); and, finally, d) Cortot's edition. Important differences between those sources in these bars can potentially reveal features of Cortot's editorial work and interpretive decisions.

**Table 4 Accentuation in Schubert D 760/I bar 125/126/127 (right hand - second beat)**

<b>Wiener Urtext</b>	Accent on E-flat
<b>First Edition (Cortot's copy)</b>	No accent on E-flat
<b>Annotated Album</b>	Accent on E-flat
<b>Cortot</b>	Accent on E-flat

In bar 125, and similarly in bars 126 and 127, Cortot decides to neglect the first print, most likely in order to suggest consistency in the accentuation of the melody, and not necessarily due to the reliability of the annotated album. However, his decision notably resembles a practice given by a rather reliable source today (Wiener Urtext).

**Table 5 Accentuation in Schubert D 760/I bar 129 (right hand - second beat)**

<b>Wiener Urtext</b>	Accent on A-flat
<b>First Edition (Cortot's copy)</b>	Accent on A-flat
<b>Annotated Album</b>	Accent on A-flat
<b>Cortot</b>	No accent on A-flat

Although Cortot was consistent in giving accents on all second-beat notes of the right hand in this episode, in bar 129 there is no accent. Given Cortot's consistency, along with the accentuation provided, particularly in this bar, in all sources to which he may have had access, a printing error might be the most possible explanation for his omission. Such an argument could be further supported by Cortot's accent in the equivalent place, in terms of harmony and phrasing, within the same episode (bar 121).

**Table 6 Accentuation in Schubert D 760/I bar 131 (right hand - second beat)**

<b>Wiener Urtext</b>	No accent on D-flat
<b>First Edition (Cortot's copy)</b>	No accent on D-flat
<b>Annotated Album</b>	Accent on D-flat
<b>Cortot</b>	Accent on D-flat

Finally, in bar 131, Cortot again neglects the first print and decides to give an accent on the D-flat, suggesting that the accentuation of the motif should not necessarily change because the phrase, and eventually the episode, comes to an end in an extremely soft context. However, particularly in this bar, significant differentiation in the accentuation could imply that the highest degree of attenuation, perhaps both dynamically and rhythmically, is required before the sudden entrance of the powerful chords in bar 132.

A general note about the accentuation given by Cortot in this episode is that he consistently bestows accents on the second beats of the right hand, even in cases where certain sources might have implied the opposite. This

approach shows that he considered the peculiarity in the syntax of the modified motif as something that needs to be projected intensively throughout the whole section.

In conclusion, the representations of the modified motif from the 'Wanderer's' theme in the first movement display elements of consistency and differentiation, throughout the three episodes in which Cortot mentions its presence. While the *legato* touch is suggested for all three representations, significant disparities in the character of the episodes also lead to notably different performance decisions. In the peaceful E-major section a smoothly phrased execution of the motif is required, while in the stormy A-minor episode more energetic articulation, and gradually accentuated gestures, are suggested. On the other hand, Schubert's accentuation in the third representation was so unpredictable and special, that Cortot insists on its projection, even in places where the dynamic context would make it hard to achieve, particularly on modern instruments.

#### **4.4.7.2 Modified Motif in Different Movements**

##### *Transformation*

Proceeding to the next movements, the focus is placed on the motivic connections between two particular episodes in the first and third movement. More specifically, Cortot maintains that the main subject of the trio (starting at bar 187) is 'the ternary transformation' of the E-flat major episode of the first movement, and a great example of 'the constructive unity of this composition' (see Fig. 72 and 76).<sup>242</sup> Notably, Cortot's observations

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<sup>242</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 32n62: 'n'est autre chose que la transformation en rythme ternaire de l'épisode mélodique de l'Allegro, analysé note (19); l'unité constructive de la composition se voyant ici à nouveau affirmée par un détail imaginaire particulièrement caractéristique.'

would appear to anticipate Hans Gal's remarks regarding the motivic correlations between certain episodes of the first movement and the trio twenty years later.<sup>243</sup>

**Figure 76 Schubert D 760/III bars 187-188, Wiener Urtext Edition**



When trying to examine the features that would justify the connection between these two themes, several factors examined in the previous discussion shall be referred to. Similar to the E-flat major theme from the first movement, the trio's subject not only displays the already transformed motif from the 'Wanderer's' theme (a third up-a second down), but it also uses it as its starting part. Further similarities are also displayed in the articulation, phrasing and accentuation of the melodic lines, as shown both in Cortot's and *Urtext*-labelled editions. The slurring in both episodes would appear not only to imply a similarly smooth and rounded *legato* of the melodic contours, but also to indicate the length of the thematic module of each theme: one bar in the first movement's episode; and two bars in the trio. In terms of accentuation, similar to the accents given on the second beats of almost every bar in the first movement's episode, the dotted minims of the right hand in every second bar in the trio (bars 187-194) are accented too. It is worth noting, finally, that in both cases the melodic notes that display the accents are the longest of each thematic module.

<sup>243</sup> See Gal, pp. 122-124.

### *Implications for Execution*

The particularity in the accentuation of these two subjects could be a reason for performers to consider applying a similar way of execution of the accents, in order to suggest the structural connection between two, far apart, thematic elements. Accents in Schubert's scores usually call for a thoughtful and, at times, non-literal interpretation. Particularly in the trio's theme, the intervallic leap towards the accented note could potentially justify the interpretation of the accent by means of timing – either imperceptibly delaying its placement, or prolonging its duration – rather than just an increase in volume. The applicability of this device in the singing quality of this episode could be a strong reason for considering a similar interpretation in the representation of the same theme in the first movement. This performance decision could perhaps also provide an effective solution for certain difficulties in highlighting the accents within extremely soft contexts. Such an approach would resemble Montgomery's suggestion for a so-called 'agogic execution' of Schubert's accents as the best solution for pianists to achieve as closely as possible the expressive qualities of *vibrato* in singing-like textures.<sup>244</sup>

#### **4.4.7.3 Transitions**

Cortot's remarks mention structural features found in the transitions between the first and the second movement (bars 165-188), and between the second and the third (bars 48-56). Although these comments do not

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<sup>244</sup> Montgomery, *Franz Schubert's Music in Performance*, p. 153-154.





Figure 79 Schubert D 760/I bars 187-188, Wiener Urtext Edition



Figure 80 Schubert D 760/II bar 1 (right hand), Wiener Urtext Edition



However, in terms of harmony, the links provided in these transitions are not that similar, especially as shown in Cortot's edition, which does not reproduce the second transition as accurately, due to certain obstacles in the editorial process. Cortot's edition, similar to other editions published before the autograph of the Fantasy was accessible, misses the D-natural in the second half of bar 56 (Fig. 81 and 82).<sup>248</sup> Thus, for Cortot, the opening of the scherzo would be an identical imitation of the second movement's ending, shifted from E major to A-flat major, and, therefore, notably different

<sup>248</sup> Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, pp. X-XI.

from the smooth harmonic connection established before the entrance of the second movement.

**Figure 81 Schubert D 760/II bar 56, Wiener Urtext Edition**



**Figure 82 Schubert D 760/II bar 56, Cortot's Edition (1954)**



At the end of the first movement, the dominant seventh chord in C-sharp minor, definitely established in bar 177 after an augmented-sixth chord in bar 176, prepares the entrance of the second movement in a, seemingly, remote key quite naturally.<sup>249</sup> However, as Badura-Skoda maintains, the presence of D-natural in the ending of the second movement could eventually change the harmonic function of the second transition, and make the connection to the third movement equally smooth. More specifically, the dominant seventh chord on E, realized as the enharmonic augmented-sixth chord in A-flat major, establishes, arguably, a perfect cadence in the third movement's key, providing a connection similar to the previous transition.<sup>250</sup>

<sup>249</sup> See also Fisk, p. 72.

<sup>250</sup> Wiener Urtext, *Wanderer-Fantasy*, p. XI.

Therefore, not only are perfect cadences in the upcoming tonalities set up in both transitions, but these are also achieved through the use of augmented-sixth chords.<sup>251</sup> Although it is unlikely that Cortot could have known this version of the second movement's ending, the similarity he detects between these two transitions can unintentionally also prove correct in terms of harmony.

Cortot's comments on the practice of motivic transformation in particular passages of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy appear to clarify his arguments in the *Avant-Propos* regarding Schubert's exceptional treatment of the cyclic-monothematic form. In a few instances, concepts of later scholars of Schubert's music are anticipated, and features of Cortot's editorial process are revealed. Finally, particular interpretive suggestions – regarding mainly articulation, phrasing and accentuation – show that Cortot's conception of the structural particularities of the Fantasy is delivered through specific performance decisions.

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<sup>251</sup> The augmented-sixth chord is used also in bars 178 and 180 of the first movement. Regarding the use of augmented-sixth chords generally in the Fantasy, see Fisk, p. 67.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **Cortot's Recordings of Schubert's Music**

Following the study of Cortot's editions of particular works of Schubert, along with several references from Cortot's writings and other evidence, I shall examine his recordings of Schubert's piano music. Although these recordings are not so many as might allow general conclusions about Cortot's conception of Schubert's entire piano work, they comprise important material to examine regarding his response to Schubert's particular works and/or forms. They can also be informative about Cortot's performance style and can potentially suggest interpretive options in the performance of Schubert's music.

#### **5.1 Studying Early Recordings**

Following some of Robert Philip's conclusions in his extended work on the history of recordings, we find some important reasons why present-day performers and scholars should study early recordings, especially for repertoire from the first half of the nineteenth century such as the works of Schubert:

The supposition that many of the practices of the early twentieth century derive from the nineteenth century is really no more than common sense, and nineteenth-century documents seem to confirm it. [...] And it would certainly be naïve to imagine that musicians performed in the 1820s as they did in the 1920s, just because the documents suggest some similarities. Comparison between documents and recordings in the early twentieth century has already shown some of the problems of reconciling writings with actual

practice. But in attitudes to vibrato, portamento, tempo fluctuation, rubato, and the interpretation of note values, nineteenth-century documents time and again suggest a strong link with the habits of the early twentieth century. So it does seem that early recordings, which are, after all, as close as we can really get to the nineteenth century, provide a vital key to the performance practice of the more distant past.<sup>1</sup>

Trying to focus particularly on Schubert, Montgomery notes that the neglect of a big part of Schubert's piano music until early in the twentieth century, along with the lack of primary sources, made the early recordings a 'reliable body of evidence' for the performance of this repertoire.<sup>2</sup> However, for Montgomery the majority of early twentieth-century recordings did not do justice to Schubert, since particular features of the performance styles heard in them, alongside the increasing popularity of specific works, led to the establishment of a false manner in the interpretation of his music.<sup>3</sup> Although Montgomery's disapproval is based on features which, as we will see further down, included flexibility of tempo and additional improvisation, leading Schubert interpreters of our time associated with historically informed performance practice, like Levin and Bilson, have maintained that such devices can be applicable to Schubert's music.<sup>4</sup> In addition, as Philip has maintained, early recordings will always remind us that 'styles and practices of musical performance are in constant flux' and that their study can be of great value for present-day performers, especially in terms of how this evolution can influence the interpretation of repertoire of the distant past.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> Montgomery, 'Franz Schubert's music in performance', p. 270.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 270-271.

<sup>4</sup> See Levin, pp. 723-727; and Bilson, 'The Future of Schubert's Interpretation', pp. 715-722. Bilson, in particular, maintains that early twentieth-century recordings can inspire present-day performers in terms of spontaneity of expression (see p. 715 for Rachmaninoff's recording of Mozart's music).

<sup>5</sup> Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording*, p. 250. For a similar consideration, see Peres da Costa, p. 310 and Bilson, 'The Future of Schubert's Interpretation', p. 721.

Completing the introductory part of this chapter, I shall make reference to the recordings of Schubert's music that Cortot made throughout his life and that are accessible today: Impromptu in B-flat major, D 935 No. 3 (1920); 12 *Ländler*, D 790 (1937; 1951); *Moment musical* in F minor, D 780 No. 3 (1952; 1954); 'Litanei auf das Fest Aller Seelen', D 343 (piano arrangement by Cortot, 1920; 1925; 1927-unpublished; 1937; 1948; 1952; and 1953); and Trio for Piano and Strings in B-flat major, D 898 (1926).<sup>6</sup> However, before proceeding to the examination of this material, a brief mention of the history of recordings in relation to performance styles is necessary.

Cortot's recordings of Schubert's works, like those of other composers such as Chopin and Schumann, should be examined in relation to the changes in performing styles documented in the twentieth century. Cortot recorded Schubert's music – sometimes even the same works more than once – within a period (1920-1954) that has been considered important for the evolution of performance. By looking at the stylistic changes that can be discerned from piano recordings of that time, some interesting conclusions can be drawn about: a) whether we could divide Cortot's Schubert recordings into 'early' and 'late'; and b) understanding better the origins of Cortot's interpretive style and possibly connect it to his educational background, as was described in the first chapter.

### **5.1.1 Features of Early Twentieth-century Style and Years of Change**

Firstly, following several studies on the evolution of performance styles in piano playing, as heard in recordings from the early to the late twentieth century, I shall begin with: a) spotting those particular features and habits

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<sup>6</sup> See Appendix II for a summary of full discographic details.

that characterized the playing of pianists heard in early twentieth-century recordings – of whom Cortot should be considered a typical representative –<sup>7</sup> and are found less frequently or not at all in recordings of later years; and b) trying to define when such changes in performing styles started to become established. As Daniel Leech-Wilkinson maintains, ‘performance style is generated by what performers habitually do with the notation to make a musical performance’<sup>8</sup> and therefore the treatment of scores should be a basic thing to explore.<sup>9</sup> In an attempt to summarize Philip’s and Leech-Wilkinson’s observations I will focus on the features that have to do with rhythmical treatment and the so-called embellishment of musical texts.

### *Features of the Early Style*

As far as piano playing is concerned, Philip mainly focuses on the differences between the performing styles of early twentieth-century musicians and later performers in terms of how representatives of each group interpreted rhythm.<sup>10</sup> More specifically he remarks that:

Rhythmic habits have changed very greatly over the twentieth century. To a late twentieth-century listener, recordings from the early part of the century at first sound rhythmically strange in a number of ways.

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<sup>7</sup> See Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 12; Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 6, paragraphs 33-49, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap6.html> (Accessed: August 13, 2014); Schonberg, p. 383; and Peres da Costa, p. xxxi.

<sup>8</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 8, paragraph 3, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap8.html> (Accessed: August 13, 2014)

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 7, paragraph 8, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap7.html> (Accessed: August 13, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Paderewski, de Pachmann and Rosenthal are some of the oldest pianists associated with the early style. Arthur Rubinstein, Fischer and Schnabel could be considered as some of the first pianists who started demonstrating features of the late style. In Philip’s study even performers of our time are mentioned, such as Barenboim and Perahia. Cortot should be considered a pianist closer to the early style. See also footnote 7.

They seem hasty, slapdash and uncontrolled, in a manner which now sounds incompetent.<sup>11</sup>

Philip detects three different areas of rhythmic treatment found in this performance style and the expressive message that is implied through each of them: a) frequent tempo alterations, which were used as an expressive medium in order to highlight contrasting characters between sections and therefore 'lyrical and reflective passages would be played more slowly and energetic passages more quickly'<sup>12</sup>; b) *tempo rubato*,<sup>13</sup> including habits such as the so-called dislocation between bass and treble, which was applied individually by every performer and, therefore, delivered various expressive messages;<sup>14</sup> and c) frequently modified execution of note-values, including the overdotting practice, which was a tool to underline the contrast between more and less emphasized notes.<sup>15</sup>

Next to Philip's findings about rhythm, Leech-Wilkinson, concerning the embellishment of texts, notes that: 'changing a composer's text was absolutely normal among many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century pianists'.<sup>16</sup> More specifically, the most typical practices were: 'octave doublings, chords in place of notes, glissandi in place of scales, modulating

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<sup>11</sup> Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6. Philip considered the dislocation between melody and accompaniment a kind of *rubato* which he actually described as 'melodic rubato'. For further details on *rubato*, its representations and the way these were used in piano playing heard in recordings of the early twentieth century, see also Hudson, pp. 330-340.

<sup>14</sup> Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 69. Interestingly, Peres da Costa considered the dislocation a device different to *rubato* 'as its purpose is more likely to have been to enhance dynamic rather than rhythmic variation' (Peres da Costa, p. 56). Peres da Costa has also attempted to show possible connections of this device with vocal and keyboard practices of the seventeenth and eighteenth century (*ibid.*, pp. 56-72).

<sup>15</sup> Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 70.

<sup>16</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 6, paragraph 26, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap6.html> (Accessed: 13 August 2014)

improvisations between items, elaboration of all sorts; [therefore] the line between interpretation and arrangement is impossible to place'.<sup>17</sup>

Last, but not least, a very frequent device in the piano playing of the early twentieth century that could be considered as hovering between the so-called dislocation of melody and accompaniment and the freedom in the execution of texts was voluntary arpeggiation of chords.<sup>18</sup> This practice was as prevalent as the aforementioned devices that characterized the style of early twentieth-century pianists and also seemed to be discarded by later performers.<sup>19</sup>

### *Years of Change*

To pinpoint a period in history that could be considered the borderline between the so-called early and late twentieth-century styles is problematical, since it is clear that changes in the perception of musical performances go through a complicated process that is influenced by several factors of human culture.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, it is clear that we should not look for a chronological line as if changes in musical performance happen overnight.

According to research studies already referred to, and also opinions expressed by performers who actually witnessed these changes, the chronological turning point should be placed somewhere between the two

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., paragraph 27.

<sup>18</sup> Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 142. See also Peres da Costa, p. 102 and pp. 106-129. Peres da Costa has shown that the arpeggiation of chords was a device current in piano playing throughout the whole nineteenth century with roots in even earlier keyboard practices. See also Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 47.

<sup>19</sup> Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 142.

<sup>20</sup> See Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 7, paragraph 7, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap7.html> (Accessed: August 13, 2014).

World Wars, around the 1920s and 1930s. Both Philip and Leech-Wilkinson maintain that comparisons between recordings made before and after the Second World War reflect very clearly that priorities in performances have changed. The later recordings display uniform tempi, contrary to the frequent fluctuations heard in earlier ones; seem free of habits such as dislocation of treble and bass and arpeggiation of chords; and avoid additional and unmarked improvisation.<sup>21</sup> However, it is reasonable to assume that these changes had already started being established before they could make their way to the recording industry as an artistic tendency.

Philip notes that the practice of dislocation in particular was still applied during the 1920s, mainly by pianists who were already quite old, such as Paderewski and Rosenthal, and tempo alteration, especially acceleration of agitated textures, was normally to be found in performances of the 1930s.<sup>22</sup> However, prominent artists who were active in the period of change – such as Claudio Arrau, Edwin Fischer and Walter Gieseking – maintained that during the 1920s and 1930s rising performers started following different principles in their performances. Arrau placed the chronological border between the so-called early and late styles in the years between the two World Wars, underlining that during that time upcoming artists aimed to interpret composers' scores carefully, and without the 'arbitrary' practices of older performers who seemed to 'use the work of art as a pretext for self-expression or for 'sensationalism'.<sup>23</sup> Gieseking, in the 1930s, highlighted the need for following the composers' intentions in performances of the highest

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<sup>21</sup> See Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 26; and Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 2, paragraph 16; *ibid.*, chapter 2, paragraph 26; *ibid.*, chapter 2, paragraph 27, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap2.html> (Accessed: August 13, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> See Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, pp. 26 and 47.

<sup>23</sup> Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 160-161.

level were to be achieved,<sup>24</sup> while Fischer noted that performers who emerged in the 1920s and 1930s seemed, contrary to older generations, to exclude from their playing 'all unnecessary trimmings'.<sup>25</sup>

Since it becomes quite clear that performance tendencies started to change in the 1920s and 1930s, and taking into account that Cortot's recordings of Schubert's works were done between 1920 and 1954, it is reasonable that we can talk about his early and late Schubert recordings – early and late not in relation to Cortot's age, as in 1920 he was already forty-three, but early and late in relation to the chronological point that separates the recordings that were done within the predominance of, respectively, the so-called early and late twentieth-century performing styles. Therefore, Cortot's early Schubert recordings could be considered to be: the *Impromptu* (1920); the *Trio* (1926); the *Ländler* (1937) and the 'Litanei' (1920; 1925; 1937); and the late ones: the *Moment musical* (1952 and 1954); the *Ländler* (1951); and the 'Litanei' (1948; 1952; and 1953).

### **5.1.2 A Clash of Styles and Cortot's Stance**

This classification of Cortot's Schubert recordings leads to further questions that consider: a) particular personalities and events in music history that appeared to inspire and influence the features and the strength of these styles; and b) Cortot's stance on this clash of styles and how it can be explained through his formative years and experiences. Finally, I shall look for a first impression, before getting deeper into particular examples from the discography, about whether or not Cortot modified at all his performing

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<sup>24</sup> Peres da Costa, p. 305.

<sup>25</sup> Day, p. 161.

style in correspondence with the changes that were initiated towards the end of the first half of the twentieth century.

### *Performance Tendencies and Styles*

According to studies on the evolution of performance styles – as witnessed in recordings and in relation to important theoretical and historical events – like those by Stenzl, Day, Haynes and Cook,<sup>26</sup> three major tendencies can be perceived in relation to performance during the twentieth century. The lack of specific terminology has led to various descriptions, though the similarities of the terms used can be important for the reliability of the arguments.

The first tendency has been called romantic, *espressivo* or rhetorical,<sup>27</sup> and is thought to have been based on the ideas expressed by Liszt's and Wagner's writings and performances in the late nineteenth century.<sup>28</sup> A major feature of this performance style was the frequency of tempo fluctuation corresponding with contrasting characters and moods of phrases and sections. As Wagner had specifically maintained, music from Beethoven onwards became more complex in terms of combining in one movement motivic, harmonic and rhythmic contrasts that before existed in separate movements. Therefore, tempo modifications and flexibility were necessary for allowing the shaping and the expression of different musical ideas.<sup>29</sup> Bearing in mind that: a) the roots of such an approach can be traced

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<sup>26</sup> Bruce Haynes, *The End of Early Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). For bibliographic details of Day's book see footnote 23. Bibliographic details of Jürg Stenzl's article and Cook's book are provided in Chapter One, footnotes 76 and 176 respectively.

<sup>27</sup> Stenzl, p. 688; Day, p. 144; Haynes, p. 32; and Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 4-5, 86-87 and 126.

<sup>28</sup> Stenzl, p. 688 and Day, p. 153-154.

<sup>29</sup> See Richard Wagner, *On Conducting*, trans. Edward Dannreuther (New York: Dover, 1989), pp. 34-67. Wagner also discusses examples from particular works

back to the late nineteenth century; and b) the use of various types of *rubato* and frequent tempo alterations were documented in early twentieth-century recordings, it is clear that this tendency should be associated with the so-called early twentieth-century performance style.

The second tendency has been called neo-objective, modern, neoclassical, anti-romantic or structuralist,<sup>30</sup> and is thought to have appeared in the 1920s – initially as a reaction to the romantic style – based on Stravinsky's ideas on performance as expressed in his writings such as 'Some Ideas about my Octuor'<sup>31</sup> and 'The Performance of Music'.<sup>32</sup> Stravinsky clearly distinguished the meaning of execution from that of interpretation and the main feature of his suggested style was a careful and accurate treatment of scores, especially in terms of rhythm.<sup>33</sup> Another composer of that time who could be considered in line with Stravinsky's new style was Ravel, who famously preferred his works to be played and not interpreted.<sup>34</sup> The accuracy and strictness of this performance style corresponds precisely with the so-called late twentieth-century style that appeared in post-war recordings to reject practices of the earlier style, such as *rubato* and unmarked tempo fluctuation.

The third tendency has been associated with the movement of historically informed performance practice and has been called restorative, historicizing

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of Beethoven, such as the Third Symphony, the 'Kreutzer' Sonata for piano and violin, and the String Quartet Op. 131.

<sup>30</sup> Stenzl, p. 689; Day, pp. 161-162; Haynes, p. 32; and Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 4-5, 86-87 and 126.

<sup>31</sup> Igor Stravinsky, 'Some Ideas about My Octuor', reprinted in Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 574-577.

<sup>32</sup> This essay is one of the six lectures Stravinsky gave at Harvard University in 1939-1940; see Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, trans. Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 119-135.

<sup>33</sup> Stenzl, p. 689; Day, pp. 161-162; and Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 219-220.

<sup>34</sup> Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 187.

or period style.<sup>35</sup> Being the 'most recent of the three' and perhaps sharing more with the precision of the second tendency,<sup>36</sup> it does not relate directly to the examination here, since the change of performance styles documented basically in the first half of the twentieth century is illustrated, chronologically and stylistically, mainly in the clash between the first two tendencies.

It would not be possible to explore in depth the reasons that led to the predominance of the new principles of performance practice against the so-called (late) romantic style.<sup>37</sup> However, as I wish to remain consistent in considering the recordings as the main part of my discussion, next to the reaction to the romantic approach, an important factor in the evolution of styles was itself the development of recording technology. On the one hand, Day maintains that the evolution of technology, which gave to the performers the possibility to achieve executions without inaccuracy and imprecision, was crucial for the change in tastes and preferences for both recorded and live performances.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, Philip similarly remarks that the recordings initiated the change of styles, suggesting a transmission from the spontaneous and only-once-heard attitude of the earlier towards the 'available and repeatable' later twentieth-century recordings.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Stenzl, p. 692; and Haynes, p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> Stenzl, p. 692. Also see Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 27-28 and 222-223; and Parrott and Peres Da Costa, 'Performance Practice', *The Oxford Companion to Music*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e5090> (Accessed: June 15, 2014).

<sup>37</sup> Stenzl, pp. 692-695.

<sup>38</sup> Day, p. 156.

<sup>39</sup> Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, pp. 230-235. Mark Katz also discusses the ways recordings influenced the change in performance styles during the twentieth century, referring to what he calls the 'phonograph effect'. Katz maintains that such developments as the elimination of frequent tempo fluctuation by performers of the mid and late twentieth century, and an increasing preference for more accurate executions by performers and listeners today, originate in particular features of the recordings, such as their repeatability and the invisibility of the performers. See Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 2010), pp. 26-36.

### *Cortot's Stance*

Considering Cortot's educational background and influences, discussed in the first chapter, there should be no doubt that he belonged to the romantic group of interpreters.<sup>40</sup> There are a few facts, some of which are almost self-explanatory in his life, which justify this characterization. At first, Cortot was indirectly associated with the performance tradition created by Liszt,<sup>41</sup> who was, especially regarding piano playing, the pioneer for the development of the so-called romantic performance style.<sup>42</sup> In addition, through his participation in the Bayreuth festival (1899-1901) he was also introduced to Wagner's suggested performance style, which could not be more eloquently reflected than in performances of the German composer's music. After all, Cortot was a performer who experienced in his formative years the peak time of the romantic style of Wagner and Liszt, which, given the absence of the reaction (neoclassic movement) that had to wait another two decades, was a leading artistic tendency of that time. It is, therefore, reasonable that he would most likely acquire such interpretive qualities, especially bearing in mind that he was not particularly involved in the revival of harpsichord music that flourished in late nineteenth-century France with the efforts of his teacher, Diémer; and the appearance of the neoclassic movement found

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<sup>40</sup> Cortot's pupil, Thomas Manshardt, attempted to establish Cortot's interpretive style in a way relevant to the differences between certain performance tendencies documented in the twentieth century. See Thomas Manshardt, *Aspects of Cortot* (Hexham: Appian, 1994), p. 40: 'For hundreds of years now there have been two opposing views concerning the making of music. The first view is that it is no business of the performer to feel the music; his or her job is to make them, the hearers, feel. The second view is that only what comes from the heart can hope to reach the heart. Cortot had no patience whatsoever with the first view; to him anyone who held such a view had no understanding of the nature of music. The second view dictated the whole course of his teaching in music'.

<sup>41</sup> Next to the facts mentioned in Chapter One and Chapter Four, it is worth noting that when Cortot graduated from the Conservatoire (1896) it was only ten years since Liszt had died.

<sup>42</sup> Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, pp. 9-10.

him rather too old for reconsidering his style, although his response to the new ideas could not be described as hostile.<sup>43</sup>

It becomes clear that Cortot belonged to those performers who had already formed their artistic profile before the turn of the twentieth century, and therefore, as Philip maintains, can be considered an important link to performance styles of the nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup> Various types of evidence actually show that he admired, and was influenced by, pianists that certainly could be considered performers of the so-called romantic style, whether they can be heard now in recordings or not. These pianists were: Anton Rubinstein, for whom Cortot played when he was still a student at the Paris Conservatoire;<sup>45</sup> Ferruccio Busoni, whom he described as the pianist that most resembled Liszt's style after the latter's death;<sup>46</sup> and, most notably, Ignacy Jan Paderewski.

Paderewski was for Cortot perhaps one of the strongest influences that has been documented.<sup>47</sup> In his preface to Henryk Opienski's book on Paderewski's life,<sup>48</sup> Cortot expressed the general notion of pianists of his generation, at least in France, who considered Paderewski the most influential pianist of that time.<sup>49</sup> Writing in 1948, when it was already clear that performance tendencies had started moving in a different direction from

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<sup>43</sup> See Graham Griffiths, *Stravinsky's Piano: Genesis of a Musical Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 268n85.

<sup>44</sup> Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> See Chapter One, footnote 126.

<sup>46</sup> Thieffry, p. 153.

<sup>47</sup> Apart from the preface that Cortot wrote to Paderewski's biography (see next footnote), Cortot's admiration for Paderewski is also evidenced in Spotts, pp. 192-198.

<sup>48</sup> Henryk Opienski, *I. J. Paderewski: esquisse de sa vie et de son oeuvre* (Lausanne: Éditions Spes, 1948), pp. XVI-XVIII.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. XVI: 'En un mot, la réalisation de notre idéal, l'avènement du pianiste de notre temps'; and p. XVII: 'Nous sommes nombreux de ces étudiants à devoir au fougueux Paderewski'. Cortot described Paderewski as an equally great pianist as Liszt, Anton Rubinstein, Planté and Bülow (*ibid.*, p. XVI). Additionally, Cortot maintained that Paderewski's 'genius and musical poetry' was exceptionally expressed in performances of music by German composers, such as Bach, Beethoven and Schumann (*ibid.*, p. XVII).

what Paderewski's style might have represented, Cortot praised Paderewski's 'inventive spirit'<sup>50</sup> which showed to younger pianists the way to be 'free from academic constraint'.<sup>51</sup> Such an assertion could very likely express Cortot's view that the severity of new interpretive ideas and approaches could be harmful for the creativity of upcoming performers if certain qualities of important artists of the past were forgotten.

Returning to Cortot's performing style, the next issue that occurs is to examine if any significant differences could be found between his early and later recording years, and particularly between his early and late Schubert recordings. Consulting again Leech-Wilkinson's remarks in a broad context regarding the styles heard in recordings from the early to later mid-twentieth century, we can discover that cases of performers who displayed notable change in their style throughout their career are very rare.<sup>52</sup> Cortot is a typical example of a performer who did not show a willingness to change his approach, despite the stylistic changes documented around the middle of the century, as he 'played in much the same way throughout his recording career.'<sup>53</sup>

Regarding his Schubert recordings in particular, the following part of this chapter will attempt to shed light on the consistency of his performing style in order to explore how similar and how different Cortot's playing is in his early and late Schubert recordings, and how these findings could be linked with his style in general. After this investigation I shall proceed to the next and final part of the chapter where I will examine: a) Cortot's recordings of particular works by Schubert in comparison with recordings of the same

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. XVI: 'prescience d'un art libre, inventif, audacieux'.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. XVII: 'il nous libérait de la contrainte scolaire'.

<sup>52</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 6, paragraph 3, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap6.html> (Accessed: August 13, 2014).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., paragraph 50.

works made by other pianists of roughly the same era; and b) how the comparison between Cortot's specific recordings and his editions could explain his stance regarding the evolution of styles – a stance that might have been translated in particular approaches in his editions, which came out later than his recordings and have also a pedagogic role, but perhaps was expressed differently in his recordings.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that the study of recordings produced between the early 1920s and the early 1950s, like those discussed consequently, needs to be very careful in drawing conclusions. These recordings do not always comprise reliable sources for the examination of performers' decisions, since many of them may have been forced on them by the technological limitations of a specific time period. Recordings produced during the so-called acoustic era (before 1925) were usually done under extremely uncomfortable conditions and, due to the equipment used, were not able to transmit reliable data regarding the sound qualities of a performance. After 1925, when microphones started to be used (electrical era), the quality of the recorded sound improved, but problems of the acoustic period, such as background noise, were still not overcome. In addition, the performers, due to the serious time limitations that were imposed by the use of 78 rpm discs, often had to apply cuts in the performed work, or split it into several parts to fit onto different sides or discs. In CD re-issues of 78s, for example, slowing down in the middle of a piece could be a natural way to end a disc side during the original recording process, and not necessarily a deliberate decision that the performer would have made in a concert performance of the same work.<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, recordings

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<sup>54</sup> For more information about the features and characteristics of the acoustic and electrical recordings, and the potential problems related to the CD re-issues of early 78-rpm discs, see Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 3, paragraphs 13-51, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html) (Accessed: August 19, 2015) and Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 140-141.

that used the method of piano rolls, though they are extremely important sources that preserve the performances of artists in relatively less stressful conditions, at least as far as the time restrictions are concerned, cannot be considered reliable for conclusions regarding the treatment of dynamics and quality of sound. This is mainly because what the performers did with sound, touch and pedalling was their response to the characteristics of the piano on which they originally performed and, therefore, when the rolls are played back on different instruments the results cannot be entirely representative. In addition, it is not possible for researchers and sound engineers today to clarify the amount and the sort of editing that was applied to the rolls before they were finalized. However, the piano rolls do offer remarkable data about how performers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century used such devices as dislocation between treble and bass, arpeggiation of chords, tempo fluctuation and *rubato*, and therefore they comprise invaluable sources for the study of performance styles.<sup>55</sup>

## 5.2 The Recordings

### 5.2.1 Cortot's Consistent Style

The consistency of Cortot's style, as far as Schubert's piano music is concerned, can clearly be seen if we examine performances of works that he had recorded more than once over a wide time frame. Therefore, I will discuss the recordings of Twelve *Ländler* (D 790) of 1937 and 1951; and the ones of Cortot's own arrangement of Schubert's *Lied* *Litanei auf das Fest*

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<sup>55</sup> For a comprehensive discussion on the way piano rolls were produced, their disadvantages, and the ways they can inform researchers of recorded performances, see Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 3, paragraphs 69-81, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html) (Accessed: August 19, 2015). Also, see Peres da Costa, pp. 27-40, Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 59 and 112, and Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 143.

Aller Seelen' (D 343). Regarding the 'Litanei' transcription, which he recorded many times, those that were possible to access and comprised a sufficient source for the goals of this research dated from 1920, 1937 and 1953.

Both a set of miniature dances, composed or possibly worked out directly by Schubert for amusing his friends during certain informal occasions,<sup>56</sup> and a sensitive transcription of a song, made by a romantic-style performer, possibly for using it as an encore,<sup>57</sup> could seem, at first, questionable models for this exploration. This is because the character of these works, and their nature in terms of form and texture, offer the opportunity to a pianist of Cortot's spontaneity to give very differing performances in relation to practices that can define the style of a performer of late nineteenth-century origins. Such practices are: the use of *tempo rubato* and devices like dislocation between bass and treble and unmarked arpeggiation of chords; voicing and quality of sound; the treatment of repeats; and the use of additional improvisation. However, basic similarities and rather minor disparities heard in Cortot's performances within a period of almost twenty or – in the case of the 'Litanei' – thirty years, could prove these examples vastly enlightening in the search of Cortot's style in Schubert and in general too.

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<sup>56</sup> Winter et al., 'Schubert', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109/pg2> (Accessed: July 14, 2014).

<sup>57</sup> The nature and the duration of the 'Litanei', alongside Cortot's very few arrangements, could possibly substantiate the role of an encore for his transcription of this particular song by Schubert.

### 5.2.1.1 Twelve *Ländler* D 790: Early and Late Versions

As far as the *Ländler* are concerned, the differences can be spotted in one or two cases of tempi, which in the late version are either more relaxed or more uniform, and in performance decisions that may have originated due to certain limitations of early recordings. Regarding the tempi, such remarks apply mainly to the rhythmic treatment of the first and the sixth dance. In the early version the first dance sounds a little more nervy and excited than in the later one. In addition, the sixth dance displays a much more uniform tempo in the late version, while in the early one the calm passages of crotchets (bars 1-4, Fig. 1; similarly in bars 9-12) are played notably more slowly

Figure 1 Schubert D 790/6, bars 1-4



than the overexcited passages of quavers (bars 5-7, Fig. 2; similarly in bars 13-15).

Figure 2 Schubert D 790/6 bars 5-7



The following two graphs, which were created with the computer-based programme for visual analysis of recorded music Sonic Visualiser,<sup>58</sup> demonstrate Cortot's rhythmic treatment in the first eight bars of D 790 No. 6 in the 1937 (Fig. 3) and the 1951 recording (Fig. 4) respectively. In each graph, the horizontal axis corresponds to the time (in seconds) of the analysed excerpt, the vertical axis shows time values in seconds, and the purple vertical lines indicate the beginning of each bar. The red curve is created by joining the points that correspond to the duration of each bar and thus demonstrates how the performer modifies the tempo throughout the phrase. When the curve of each graph goes up it means that the performer slows down the tempo, and when it goes down it indicates speeding up.

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<sup>58</sup> Chris Cannam, Christian Landone, and Mark Sandler, *Sonic Visualiser: An Open Source Application for Viewing, Analysing, and Annotating Music Audio Files*, in Proceedings of the ACM Multimedia International Conference 2010. [www.sonicvisualiser.org](http://www.sonicvisualiser.org) (Accessed: July 22, 2015).

Figure 3 Schubert D 790/6 bars 1-8, Cortot's tempo (1937 recording)

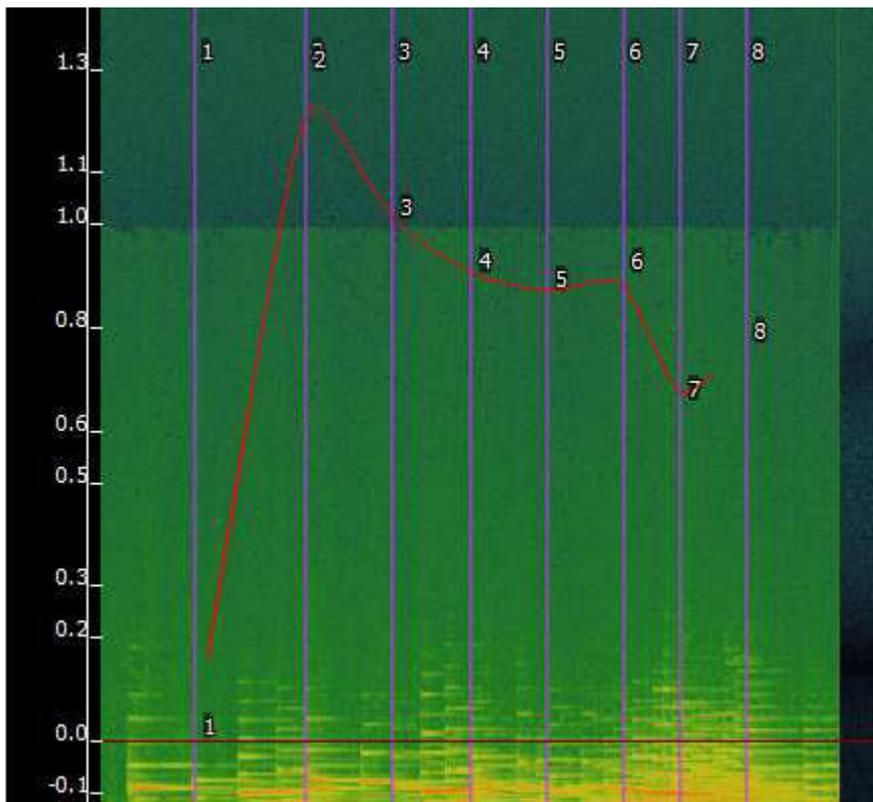
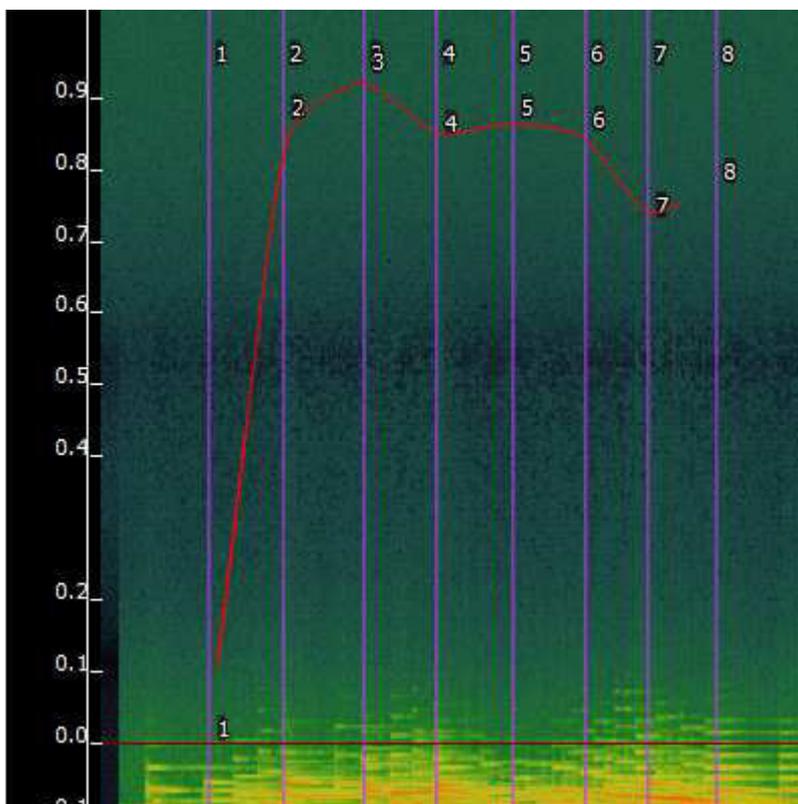


Figure 4 Schubert D 790/6 bars 1-8, Cortot's tempo (1951 recording)



While it is clear from these graphs that Cortot varied the tempo of this eight-bar phrase in both recordings, the 1951 version displays a significantly narrower range of tempo flexibility, which is probably the reason why we feel that Cortot's tempo in the late recording is more uniform. In both recordings the dance starts with a hesitating first bar, as shown by the ascending part of the curves, which display that Cortot in both cases similarly began in a *poco a poco a tempo* manner. However, in the earlier recording this hesitation feels greater since it is followed by a more notable acceleration, as shown by the descent of the first graph's curve from bar 2 until bar 4, where it seems that the tempo is established for at least the next couple of bars. On the contrary, the graph of the late version displays a more natural flow, without great tempo modifications, in the first four bars. The exact time values that Sonic Visualiser is able to provide demonstrate in even more detail this difference: the ratio of the longest bar against the shortest in the first four bars of the 1937 recording is 1.29/0.86 seconds, whereas in the 1951 version it is 0,93/0,86.

The more hesitant opening in the 1937 recording most likely explains why we also feel that the tempo between the first and the second half of this phrase is much more contrasting in the earlier version. Although it is true that Cortot speeds up towards the end of this phrase in both recordings, in the earlier version the acceleration is again significantly greater, as shown particularly in the curve's dip in bar 6. The exact values of that bar, which is actually the quickest of the opening in both recordings, show how a minimal difference in duration can have a great impact on the way we listen to and perceive the music: in the 1937 version the sixth bar of the phrase lasts 0.65 seconds, while in the 1951 recording it lasts 0.72 seconds. These graphs, and the exact time values, appear to confirm that, while a tendency for

frequent and unmarked tempo fluctuation was generally apparent in Cortot's playing, the later version shows a more restrained approach which could be considered a reaction to the stylistic changes that had undoubtedly been established by 1951, but were perhaps not as common in 1937.

A difference that possibly originated in the time restrictions of 78 rpm discs occurs in the first section of the eleventh dance (bars 1-8), which in the early version is the only section that is not repeated, while in the later recording all repeats are played consistently. The 78 rpm discs were able to record music that lasted around four and half minutes on each side, if a double sided twelve-inch disc was used, or somewhat more than three minutes per side when a ten-inch disc was chosen. One of the most common tactics by recording artists to deal with this limitation was to apply cuts to the performed works, especially in repeats.<sup>59</sup> It is notable that the 1937 version of the *Ländler*, with the omission of the first repeat of dance No. 11, lasts only a few seconds less than nine minutes (around 08:51), which means that it would fit perfectly on the two sides of a twelve-inch 78-disc of that era. It is very likely, therefore, that Cortot would have had to cut the extra seven or eight seconds of that repeat due to the specific time restrictions.

However, it is evident that the 1951 version was also recorded on 78 rpm sides, despite the fact that the use of 33 rpm vinyl LPs, which allowed the recording of long symphonic movements or operatic acts, had already been introduced.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, it is reasonable to ask why Cortot would omit the repeat of dance No. 11 in 1937, but not in 1951. Leech-Wilkinson maintains that recording times for 78-sides could vary depending on how loud the

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<sup>59</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 3, paragraphs 19 and 82-86, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html) (Accessed: August 13, 2015). Also see Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 140-141.

<sup>60</sup> See Bryan Crimp's notes in *Alfred Cortot: The Late Recordings, Vol 4* (APR, 5574, 2010), Introductory Notes, p. 4.

music was, or through techniques applied by sound engineers who 'did have the ability to vary the lathe's transit speed resulting in closer groove spacing and longer playing time.'<sup>61</sup> Since the difference in the duration between Cortot's 1937 and 1951 performances is no more than seven to eight seconds, it is possible that a disc with slightly more time space was used in the later version, but such a view would be impossible to support with certainty judging from CD re-issues. On the other hand, this case, along with those in the Impromptus D 935 No. 2 and No 3, could provide additional proof for the way late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performers treated the issue of repeats, which has been, perhaps disproportionately, attributed to the limitations of early recordings. It might be more enlightening for present-day performers, and their close attention to features of structure, to consider the freedom and spontaneity that performers from earlier times showed in their performances.<sup>62</sup>

On the other hand, important similarities that would be revealing for Cortot's consistent style are displayed in both the early and late versions. At first, two things that are almost identical are the practice of arpeggiation of chords and the one of additional improvisation. Regarding the first device, this seems to be applied in almost exactly the same places and relates to the execution of accented chords, either loud or soft and in various registers. Typical examples of such a practice are the left-hand chords of bars 1 and 3 and their equivalents in the eighth dance (Fig. 5); the chords in both hands

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<sup>61</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 3, paragraph 19, note 17, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html#fn17](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html#fn17) (Accessed: August 29, 2015)

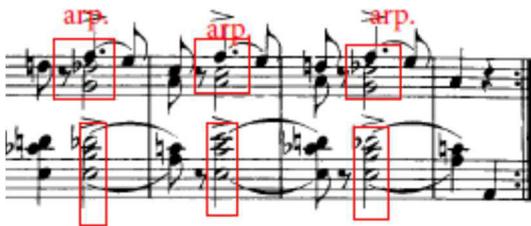
<sup>62</sup> Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 169-170: '... it would be wrong-headed to seek an explanation for everything... The terminology of choice and decision invokes the values of declarative rather than procedural knowledge, arguably representing the same prioritisation of theory over practice that we saw in Chapter 2. It is not, obviously, that performers do not make choices or decisions, but that in the real time of performance you cannot pore over each note in the way a composer or poet might. You do not have time.'

of bars 5, 6 and 7 in the eleventh one (Fig. 6); and the F-major chord in the repeat of the second part in the first dance.

**Figure 5 Schubert D 790/8 bars 1-3, Cortot's arpeggiation (both 1937 and 1951 recordings)**



**Figure 6 Schubert D 790/11 bars 5-8, Cortot's arpeggiation (both 1937 and 1951 recordings)**



As far as the additional embellishment is concerned, Cortot is consistent, not only in both early and late recordings, but also, as will be discussed later, between his playing and in his edition of these *Ländler*. The places where additional improvisation is applied are the repeat of the second part in the first dance where the bass figuration is enriched;<sup>63</sup> the last statement of the triplet theme of the seventh dance (bars 24-26) where Cortot plays it the way Schubert somehow embellished it in the first part of the piece (bars 8-10); the very last bar of the ninth dance where Cortot finishes on a higher B than Schubert indicated, not only in the repeat as suggested in the edition,<sup>64</sup> but

<sup>63</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 4n2.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12n15

each time in both recordings; and in the very end of the last dance where Cortot plays the variant that appears in his edition,<sup>65</sup> and which, through a simple passagework, leads back to the eighth dance to complete the cycle. A small disparity between the 1937 and 1951 recordings appears in the execution of the last two bars of the eighth dance before closing the cycle. In the early recording, Cortot doubles the melody with a sixth lower, whereas in the late version this is done with a third and an octave higher, exactly as he suggests in the edition. It is worth noting here that the edition was published in 1960, which means that, chronologically, it is much closer to the late recording. However, the consistency in the way Cortot applies the additional variants could be very informative about his stance on this matter, at least for a certain kind of pieces in Schubert's music.

Other similarities in the *Ländler's* early and late versions have to do with Cortot's treatment of repeats and the use of *rubato*, including the practice of dislocation between melody and accompaniment, and a somehow uneven execution of the ternary rhythms of the dances. As far as repeats are concerned, the most notable idea displayed in Cortot's conception in both recordings is that they should not feel the same. In some cases the dynamics or the rhythm are treated with some freedom and in other ones, which are more frequent, the voicing. Typical examples of subtle voicing in repeats are the highlighting of inner voices in the fifth dance and, particularly, in the repeat of the second part in the eleventh dance.

In terms of *rubato*, the dislocation of treble and bass is infrequent and it seems to be applied in order to underline a textural or emotional shift, like the beginning of the sequence of quavers in the first phrase of the sixth

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14-15n19.

dance (bar 5) and in the beginning of the second phrases of the fifth (bar 9; Fig. 7) and eighth dances (bar 17; Fig. 8).

**Figure 7 Schubert D 790/5 bar 9, Cortot's dislocation (both 1937 and 1951 recordings)**



**Figure 8 Schubert D 790/8 bar 17, Cortot's dislocation (both 1937 and 1951 recordings)**



In addition, the execution of uneven beats is very obvious in both versions in the fourth and tenth dances. In the fourth one there is usually a stress on the second beat, in the manner that is often applied in the Viennese Waltz, which is exactly what Cortot suggests in his edition.<sup>66</sup> In the tenth dance there is almost a cut at the end of the first beat of the first bar, and its

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 7n5: ' il importe de mettre en veiller cette particularité traditionnelle de la valse viennoise, qui consiste à assigner, au second temps de chaque mesure de l'accompagnement, une imperceptible anticipation rythmique, au demeurant sans effet sur la durée totale de la mesure'.

equivalents, which creates a capricious character and can also echo some of the suggestions found in Cortot's edition.<sup>67</sup>

### 5.2.1.2 'Litanei': Early and Late Versions

Regarding the 'Litanei', due to the lack of accessibility – or existence of – the score of Cortot's transcription, it has been difficult to go into too much detail. Another obstacle, particularly regarding the earliest accessible recording (1920), is that it is actually a reproduction from piano rolls. This means that certain devices, such as voicing and quality of sound, cannot be heard to a reliable enough level.<sup>68</sup> However, even under these circumstances, the three versions of the 'Litanei' (1920; 1937; 1953) could lead to important observations about Cortot's style of playing. The general approach is quite similar in all performances. There is an improvisatory and casual style, which is characterized by a relaxed pace and frequent retardations in climaxes or endings of phrases. The sound is quite warm and singing, and the different layers of the texture are quite well distinguished, with the exception maybe of the 1920 version. There are certain places in all three recordings where the tempo moves forward in more exciting passages, in some of which dislocation between melody and bass is heard. The practice of arpeggiating the chords is applied in low-registered chords, especially at the beginning of the piece, or in thick textures, in order to allow the independence of voices to come out. There are rather minor differences, usually in terms of timing as for example in the length of fermatas or the extent to which retardations are applied, which could be considered decisions that have a lot to do with the spontaneity of the moment. It is true

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 13n16: 'en pregnant un appui caractéristique sur la première note de basse de chaque mesure'.

<sup>68</sup> See Peres da Costa, pp. 27-40; and Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, p. 143.

that, of all three, the latest version (1953) is the most relaxed in pace and simplest in rhythmic alteration, as well as the darkest in timbre, but not so much as to allow spotting a significant difference in the style. Additionally, we should not forget that in 1953 Cortot was already seventy-six years old, which means that, alongside relatively poor health, we must expect to hear moments of simple and subtle artistry that characterizes senior performers.

When attempting to place the findings regarding the consistency of Cortot's playing in early and late recordings of Schubert's *Ländler* and 'Litanei' in a context referring generally to his interpretive style, important remarks made by Leech-Wilkinson should be recalled. Leech-Wilkinson maintains that Cortot's consistency over the years is clearly shown if one compares his performances of the same works from different periods in his life, such as 'Der Dichter Spricht' from Schumann's *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15<sup>69</sup> and Chopin's Preludes, Op. 28. The study of his recordings of the preludes in particular, made in 1926, 1928, 1933, 1942 and 1955, has led to conclusions that could possibly apply to the previous discussion. According to Leech-Wilkinson 'what makes Cortot unusual, perhaps, is first the extent to which he did reproduce interpretations almost exactly, and secondly this curious contrast between the exactness of the reproduction and the sense of interpretative freedom which we experience when we listen to him.'<sup>70</sup> Such an assertion could echo not only the same improvisatory character heard in different versions of the *Ländler* and the 'Litanei' transcription, but also the consistency of Cortot's playing of the dances with his edition, in terms of devices that would normally determine a performer's freedom from the constraints of the score, such as additional improvisation and *rubato*. On the

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<sup>69</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 6, paragraph 50, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap6.html> (Accessed: 14 August, 2014).

<sup>70</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, 'Making Music with Alfred Cortot', p. 135. See also Manshardt, p. 124.

other hand, as we also found earlier, Leech-Wilkinson maintains that differences between earlier and later performances of the preludes usually included slowing down of the fast pieces and minor changes in the slower ones to an extent that there is no doubt, however, that Cortot is the performer.<sup>71</sup> Finally, we could conclude that Cortot's Schubert recordings, similarly to other cases, display minimal differences and show a performer whose conception of particular works remains mainly unchanged over a long period of time.

### **5.2.2 Comparison and Contextualization**

In the next part of my examination, I will compare Cortot's recordings of particular works by Schubert with recordings of the same works made by performers of roughly the same generation as him. By placing his recordings in this context it will be possible to understand how Cortot's performances of Schubert's music can be perceived within the history of performing styles – as this has been documented in the twentieth century – and in relation to styles represented by other celebrated pianists of his time.

It would be helpful to recall here Philip's remark that, if early twentieth-century recordings were to comprise, even partially, evidence for aspects of performance practice that go back to the nineteenth century, this assumption should refer firstly to practices that feel the most distant to a present-day listener.<sup>72</sup> Therefore, in the material which is examined and takes us from as early as the 1920s to as late as the start of the second half of the twentieth century, we should look for particular devices of piano playing, whose presence or absence characterize the performance styles in

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<sup>71</sup> Leech Wilkinson, 'Making Music with Alfred Cortot', p. 136.

<sup>72</sup> Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 207.

relation to the distinction between early and late twentieth-century styles. Such devices are the dislocation between melody and bass; the arpeggiation of chords; the change of pace – forward and backward – as a means of phrasing; the practice of overdotting; and the additional embellishment. In a more general context, issues that pertain to performance practice in Schubert will also be discussed. These are tempo and tempo fluctuation, as this occurs in different structural parts as, for example, between the variations in the Impromptu D 935 No. 3; quality of sound and voicing; and treatment of repeats.

### 5.2.2.1 Impromptu D 935 No. 3

I will start my examination with the Impromptu in B-flat major D 935 No. 3, which was Cortot's earliest recording of a work by Schubert for piano that was accessible throughout the research.<sup>73</sup> The material that was used was a 33 rpm LP, which was a reproduction by Decca (1968) of Duo-Art Piano Rolls recorded in 1920.<sup>74</sup> The fact that here again we have to make do with a reproduction from piano rolls could be an obstacle for judging certain elements of piano playing. However, conclusions about most of the aspects of performance practice mentioned above can still be drawn.

The recordings, with which Cortot's performance of the Impromptu is compared, were made by Paderewski (1924),<sup>75</sup> Backhaus (1928),<sup>76</sup> Fischer (1938)<sup>77</sup> and Schnabel (1950).<sup>78</sup> This material displays not only some

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<sup>73</sup> Cortot's performance of his transcription of the 'Litanei' (1920) was included in the same recording. However, the Impromptu is a work originally written for piano by Schubert.

<sup>74</sup> Hunt, *Pianists for the connoisseur*, p. 196.

<sup>75</sup> Naxos Historical – 8.112011, 2008.

<sup>76</sup> Pearl – 0046, 1999.

<sup>77</sup> Documents – 290855, 2010.

<sup>78</sup> Music and Arts Programs of America – CD-1175, 2005.

performers of significantly different and/or similar styles but includes performances of the same piece during the years that have been considered critical for the evolution of performing styles in the twentieth century. Although Cortot's recording is the earliest of the ones examined here, it should not be considered as the one that represents most notably the so-called early style. Paderewski might have recorded the same piece four years later, but he was also seventeen years older than Cortot. Therefore, it is reasonable that Cortot's performance contains fewer places where devices like dislocation between treble and bass, arpeggiation of chords and change of pace within phrases are applied in comparison with Paderewski's recording.

#### *Early Style Devices*

As far as arpeggiation of chords is concerned, Cortot seems to use it in order to aid the independence of voices. Examples of such practice are found in bars 8, 16 (Fig. 9) and 17 of the theme where, through arpeggiation, the resolution of the upper and lower voice of the dominant seventh chords in the right hand is highlighted.

**Figure 9 Schubert D 935/3 bar 16, Cortot's arpeggiation (1920 recording)**



Paderewski, on the other hand, seems to be the most frequent user, while Backhaus and Fischer are much subtler, and Schnabel is the only one who does not use it at all. In Paderewski's performance the full dominant seventh chord, marked *fp*, in bar 126 (Fig. 10) is clearly arpeggiated, most likely in order to avoid harshness in the sound. The same principle seems to motivate Fischer in arpeggiating the same chord, and Backhaus's arpeggiation of the final chord of the piece.

**Figure 10 Schubert D 935/3 bar 126, Paderewski's (1924 recording) and Fischer's (1938 recording) arpeggiation**



As far as dislocation between melody and bass is concerned, Cortot seems to use it in order to underline significant emotional shifts, like the beginning of the second part of the third variation (bar 71, Fig. 11) or two bars later with the *subito pianissimo* (bar 73, Fig. 12). The same practice also seems to be used to give to the melody the quality of a singer, who would feel the required effort in joining long intervals like the ones in the upbeat to bars 63 (Fig. 13) and 67 of the third variation.

**Figure 11 Schubert D 935/3 bar 71, Cortot's dislocation (1920 recording)**



**Figure 12 Schubert D 935/3 bar 73, Cortot's (1920 recording) and Backhaus's (1928 recording) dislocation**



**Figure 13 Schubert D 935/3 bar 63, Cortot's dislocation following the upbeat from bar 62 (1920 recording)**



Paderewski again appears to use the practice of dislocation to an even greater extent than Cortot and the other pianists mentioned here. A typical example is almost the complete theme of the Impromptu, where both hands

are non-synchronized in almost every beat. On the contrary, Schnabel and Fischer do not apply this device at all. Backhaus, whose performance is closer to the strictness of time heard in Fischer's and Schnabel's recordings, uses the dislocation, but even more sparingly than Cortot. However, for Backhaus, too, the *subito pianissimo* in bar 73 (Fig. 12) of the third variation is a suitable place for the melody to be placed after the bass.<sup>79</sup>

The freedom of tempo, within phrases, is a device that Cortot uses much more frequently than arpeggiation and dislocation, and for various reasons. Thus, in order to give to the melodic pattern of the theme the quality of declamation, the pairs of quavers in bars 1 (Fig. 14), 3 and 9 are played with a stress on the first quaver and, similarly, the semiquaver-rest of bar 3 causes a slight hesitation (Fig. 15).

**Figure 14 Schubert D 935/3 bar 1, Cortot's rhythmic freedom (1920 recording)**



<sup>79</sup> According to Peres da Costa, the practice of dislocation can be heard in recordings from the first half of the twentieth century, not only by pianists of the older generations, like Paderewski and Rosenthal, but also by younger performers, such as Cortot and Horowitz (Peres da Costa, pp. 97-100).

**Figure 15 Schubert D 935/3 bar 3, Cortot's hesitation (1920 recording)**



In addition, the crescendo that is followed by a *subito piano* in bar 28 in the first variation is accentuated by a slight retardation, and the accents in bar 10 of the theme and in bars 123 (Fig. 16) and 125 of the coda cause a small delay in order to come out expressively and not harshly.

**Figure 16 Schubert D 935/3 bar 123, Cortot's hesitation as interpretation of the accent (1920 recording)**



In terms of freedom of tempo in order to aid phrasing, Cortot seems closer to Paderewski, although his performance is more straightforward. However, even in the strictest execution in terms of timing like Schnabel's, we might find places where some flexibility is used in order to underline details of the texture, in a way similar to Cortot's. Thus, we can hear Schnabel taking time before the *subito pianissimo* of bar 73 in the third variation, or interpreting the accents of bar 125 of the coda, rather as a slight delay than an increase

of volume. Additionally, a commonplace with all these recordings, apart from Schnabel's, is the speeding up at the beginning of the second part of the fifth variation (bar 110), which is probably caused by the excitement of the strong dynamics and the modulation to the minor key.

Along with the use of typical early twentieth-century practices, issues of performance regarding specifically this impromptu will also be discussed. These are: the treatment of repeats; tempo relations between the theme and the variations; tempo alteration in the postludes; and the execution of dotted rhythms against triplets, which appear in the third variation.

### *Repeats*

As for the repeats, each of the five recordings examined here displays a unique treatment. The two extremes are taken by Backhaus, who plays no repeats at all, and by Schnabel, who plays all of them. Fischer plays each part of the theme only once, but in the variations does all the repeats. Paderewski seems the most unpredictable, as he chooses to, or not to, do the repeats quite randomly: he plays no repeats at all in the first, third and fourth variations; he plays all the repeats of the theme and the second variation; and he plays only the first half's repeat in the fifth one. Cortot, in turn, does not play any repeats apart from the ones in the fifth variation. As it is rather difficult to surmise the principles upon which these performers decided to play or omit the repeats, we might conclude that the farther we go into the past, the more casual the treatment of repeats becomes. While the time restrictions of the 78s era is usually an obvious reason, Cortot's treatment of repeats in his piano roll, which did not impose great limitations in terms of recording time, interestingly shows that the omission of repeats

was probably a deliberate decision of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performers.

### *Tempo Alteration*

Regarding the tempo relations between the theme and the variations of the Impromptu, one of the interpretive decisions that seems to be similar in all five recordings is the increase of tempo in the first variation. Cortot's performance generally tends to suggest an increase of speed every time it moves from one variation to another, in a manner that does not happen in the other four recordings. His tempi are notably the fastest in the second and fifth variation, with Paderewski's performance being quite similar. On the other hand, neither Fischer nor Backhaus seem to alter significantly the tempo between the first and second variations, although both of them are faster than the theme. The fifth variation especially seems to be significantly faster than the other variations on all the recordings examined here, with the exception of Schnabel's, where the fourth and fifth variations are quite close in tempo.

Cortot is also unique in making the third variation quite agitated and restless, an effect which, along with the dryness of sound, was also displayed in Paderewski's performance. In contrast, in Fischer's recording the tempo of the third variation is significantly slower than its previous, and subsequent, variations, while in Schnabel's it is allowed to escape for a moment the strictness of rhythm, and hover freely within its palpitating emotion.

### *Postludes*

As far as the execution of postludes at the end of the theme and each variation is concerned, Cortot does not apply big retardations and he is more straightforward than Paderewski. With the exception of the third variation's closure, all the other postludes are given some time only at the very end, and only in order to suggest each unit's autonomy. As we move towards later in the century, Backhaus and Fischer are much more straightforward than Cortot, but still freer than Schnabel. Being a little more specific about these postludes, in the transition between the third and fourth variations Cortot's performance displays some similarity to Paderewski's. Apart from the fact that this postlude is the slowest in both recordings, the way both pianists play the D-flat anacrusis to the fourth variation (bar 80) might reveal a similar interpretation. The fermata, which is clearly heard on that note in Paderewski's recording, can be heard in Cortot's performance not only as a fermata, but also as a moment of slight improvisation, since Cortot plays this D-flat three times in total before proceeding to the fourth variation. It is indeed notable that a moment of hesitation for that note is also suggested in Cortot's edition of this impromptu.<sup>80</sup>

### *Triplets and Dotted Rhythms*

If Cortot's edition on the Impromptu proved unclear about the interpretation of the dotted rhythms against triplets in the third variation, his recording can shed some light about his view on this issue. Although Cortot's rhythmic treatment in the whole Impromptu would be far from being described as strict, the semiquaver of the dotted rhythm in the melody is played consistently, and clearly, with the third quaver of the triplet-accompaniment, apart from the one in the last bar of the variation. In contrast, the executions

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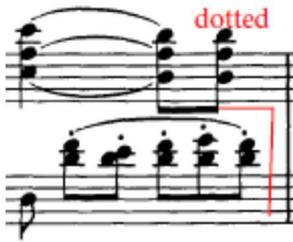
<sup>80</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 16n13.

heard in the other recordings discussed here place the semiquaver of the melody after the triplet of the accompaniment. The quite strict timing that the performances of Backhaus, Fischer and Schnabel share would possibly lead us to assume that their interpretation is based on the principle of bringing out literally the note-values, as was observed in performances from later in the twentieth century. In Paderewski's case though, given certain rhythmical restlessness that characterizes his performance, the typical early twentieth-century practice of overdotting could also be the reason for his execution. Notably, a practice of rhythmic alteration, similar to the early twentieth-century's overdotting, is heard also in Cortot's execution, in cases where duplet- or triplet-quavers of the right hand are executed unevenly, with usually the last one being shorter, and the one before slightly prolonged. Such a practice is heard in the triplets of bars 58, 66, 68, 76, 77 (Fig. 17), 79 and in the duplet of bar 63 (Fig. 18).

**Figure 17 Schubert D 935/3 bars 76-77, Cortot's rhythmic alteration similar to overdotting (1920 recording)**



Figure 18 Schubert D 935/3 bar 63 second half, Cortot's rhythmic alteration similar to overdotting (1920 recording)



It is worth noting that for such a debatable issue as the execution of dotted rhythms against triplets, it would be hard to arrive at general conclusions, as Cortot does not seem to follow a fixed way of interpreting such texture. At the same time as we hear him in the Impromptu (1920), playing the semiquaver of the dotted rhythm with the last quaver of the triplet-accompaniment, we see no comment at all in his edition of 1957. At the same time as we are directed to an assimilating way of execution in Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, in his recording of the same piece (1947) there are a few places where the semiquavers of the dotted rhythms are played after the last triplet-note. In addition, literal placement of the semiquavers after the triplets are heard clearly in his recordings of the first piece of Schumann's *Kinderszenen*<sup>81</sup> and Chopin's E-major Prelude (Op. 28 No. 9).<sup>82</sup> What can be learnt from Cortot's approach is that the interpretation of this particular figuration should not be taken as *per se*. Although this might be a good reminder that there is not only one effective execution, we can conclude that the tempo and thickness of texture are factors that should affect one's performance. In both the third variation of Schubert's Impromptu and the coda from Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantaisie*, Cortot's tempi, as well as

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<sup>81</sup> Same in 1935 and 1953 versions.

<sup>82</sup> Same in 1926, 1933 and 1955 versions.

tempi usually heard in performances, could easily make the placement of the semiquaver after the triplet sound clumsy and, therefore, inappropriate for the sensitive and grandiose character respectively. In addition, the thick and polyphonic textures, along with the need for a fluid and linear execution in both cases, could, at times, make the consistency of a non-assimilating execution impossible without taking time. On the other hand, in neater textures or in slower pieces, the placement of the semiquaver after the triplet would be an appropriately precise way of execution, as for the naivety of Schumann's piece or the grandeur of Chopin's Prelude.

### **5.2.2.2 *Moment Musical* D 780 No. 3**

Continuing with comparisons between the recordings of Cortot and other celebrated pianists of the early and mid twentieth century, I will focus on the *Moment musical* in F minor D 780 No. 3. Cortot recorded this piece once in Tokyo in 1952 and once in London in 1954. Of these two recordings I have chosen to use the one made in London, following Bryan Crimp's introductory notes to the particular series of Cortot's 'Late Recordings', which inform us that the recording session held in Tokyo in 1952 should not be considered representative, even of the late Cortot's playing.<sup>83</sup> The 1954 recording will be compared with those made by Schnabel (1937)<sup>84</sup> and Fischer (1950).<sup>85</sup>

As far as devices strongly connected to the earlier twentieth-century style are concerned, only the arpeggiation of chords could be discussed through Cortot's recording. The practice of dislocation between melody and bass is not used at all and, similarly, the rhythmic treatment is quite simple, without accelerations and retardations within phrasing. Other aspects of

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<sup>83</sup> See *Alfred Cortot: The Late Recordings, Vol. 4*, APR 5574, 2010, p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> Music and Arts Programs of America – CD-1175, 2005.

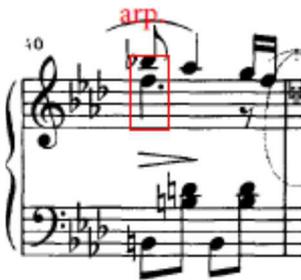
<sup>85</sup> Warner Classics-Parlophone – 0724356749450, 2005.

performance practice that are discussed are tempo adoption; the character of the piece; and the quality of sound and voicing.

### *Early Style Devices*

Cortot applies the practice of arpeggiation on a few occasions in the same manner as he does in the Impromptu. So, it is again the independence of voices and the required tension, created by *crescendo* and *diminuendo* hairpins, that lead to arpeggiation in the first beats of bars 24, 36 and 40 (Fig. 19).

**Figure 19 Schubert D 780/3 bar 40, Cortot's arpeggiation (1954 recording)**



In contrast, neither Fischer nor Schnabel makes use of this practice. At this point it is worth noting that a later recording, as happens here with Cortot in comparison with Fischer and Schnabel, does not necessarily represent a later style, and two completely different performers are usually dissimilar regardless of the period from which their discussed performances were taken. Thus, Cortot and Schnabel will contrast so significantly no matter if

we hear Cortot of the 1920s and Schnabel of the 1950s (*Impromptu*) or Schnabel of the 1930s and Cortot of the 1950s (*Moment*).

### *Tempo Adoption*

Regarding performance issues that are set by this *moment musical*, the first to be mentioned is the one of tempo adoption. Cortot's performance is characterized by a relaxed and comfortable tempo that feels slower than both Fischer's and Schnabel's. It might be true that in this piece both approaches could be effective, but nevertheless Cortot's playing could be a good reminder that the tempo indication is *Allegretto moderato*.<sup>86</sup>

Schnabel's and Fischer's tempi correspond with nervier and more capricious executions, which are heard, particularly, in the tension given to the left-hand staccatos, the dotted rhythms and grace notes. In contrast, Cortot's performance is calmer and gentler, and his relaxed tempo is supported by sensitivity of character. On the one hand it could be maintained that Fischer's and Schnabel's rhythmic peculiarity underlines a possible representation of the *style hongrois* in this piece.<sup>87</sup> According to Jonathan Bellman, a particular Gypsy rhythm, called *bókazó*, which usually accompanied accentuated dancing gestures like strongly beating heels and/or spurs,<sup>88</sup> is clearly evoked in this *moment*. On the other hand, although Cortot has underlined Schubert's influence by Gypsy idioms in various compositions including this piece,<sup>89</sup> his simpler and more sensitive approach

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<sup>86</sup> See Franz Schubert, *Impromptus [D 899; D 935], Moments Musicaux [D 780], Drei Klavierstücke [D 946]*, ed. Paul Badura-Skoda (Wien: Universal Edition, 1969), Editor's Report, p. 11. In Cortot's edition of the *Moment musical* the tempo indication is *Allegro Moderato*, possibly following the first edition or another edition based on the first print.

<sup>87</sup> See Bellman, p. 162.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 118-119 and 162.

<sup>89</sup> Apart from this *moment musical*, Cortot has mentioned the eighth dance from the *Ländler* D 790 and the *Divertissement à l' Hongroise*, D 818 as compositions

seems to be echoed by Bellman's remark that 'while it is clearly evocative of the Hungarian-Gypsy ethos, the piece does not venture into emotional extremes generally associated with it.'<sup>90</sup>

### *Sound*

In terms of sound quality, Cortot's performance is more imaginative and unpredictable than Schnabel's and Fischer's, although it is kept somewhat within a narrow range of dynamics, whereas Fischer is the one to point out a bigger gesture with his performance, as his wider dynamic range, along with his decisions on tempo, could possibly suggest. Cortot plays much more with the lights and shades of the timbre, most notably as he repeats the sections of bars 11-18 and bars 19-26. In both cases, the first time is given a bright and luminous colour, and the repeat a darker one. On the other hand, Schnabel and Fischer do not significantly alter their repeats, which is something particularly notable for Schnabel's execution also of the previously discussed Impromptu, although he was the only pianist mentioned here who played all of them. Finally, in terms of voicing, Cortot is again more creative, displaying the transparency of the texture's layers very clearly, particularly within bars 42-52. Fischer seems to be more consistent in the predominance of the top voice, whereas Schnabel is somewhat more in the middle.

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significantly influenced by Hungarian/Gypsy music. See Cortot-Schubert, *Moment Musical*, p. 3 and Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 11n13.

<sup>90</sup> Bellman, p. 162.

### 5.2.2.3 Twelve *Ländler* D 790

Regarding this set of German Dances, the recordings that were compared to Cortot's were made by Marcelle Meyer (1897-1958) and Eduard Erdmann (1896-1958). Meyer was a French pianist who had studied with Cortot,<sup>91</sup> and therefore her recording (1949)<sup>92</sup> of a work that Cortot knew well could reveal things in her performance that might have been influenced by her teacher. Moreover, Erdmann's recording (1940)<sup>93</sup> could also constitute an interesting example to refer to since he has been thought of as a key Schubert interpreter when this repertoire still remained obscure.<sup>94</sup>

#### *Early Style Devices*

As far as typical practices of the early twentieth-century style are concerned, Meyer's and Cortot's recordings display great similarity in terms of dislocation between melody and bass. In the beginning of the quaver passages of both the first and second parts in the sixth dance (bars 5 and 25), and in the beginning of the second parts in both the fifth (bar 9), and the eighth (bar 17) dances, important textural and emotional shifts are suggested, through dislocation both in Cortot's and Meyer's performances. However, Meyer uses this practice much more abundantly, as can be heard particularly in most of the beats in the second half of the fifth dance (bar 9 onwards), in the crotchet passages of the sixth dance (bar 1 and equivalents), and in the closing phrase of the eighth dance. On the other

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<sup>91</sup> Charles Timbrell, 'Meyer, Marcelle', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/41421> (Accessed: July 14, 2014).

<sup>92</sup> EMI Classics – 3846992, 2007.

<sup>93</sup> Documents – 203174, 1999.

<sup>94</sup> Klaus Jungk, 'Erdmann, Eduard', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/44906> (Accessed: July 14, 2014). See also Schiff, p. 191.

hand, Erdmann does not apply this practice at all, sounding, in a way, similar to approaches such as Schnabel's and Fischer's.

Other typical elements of early twentieth-century performance practice, which are heard in both the early and late recordings of Cortot, such as the arpeggiation of chords and additional improvisation, are not applied at all by Meyer and Erdmann. In particular, the improvisation might be considered as a practice much more affiliated to the distant past, since it comprises a much more radical change of the notation than the arpeggiation.

### *Tempo*

In terms of tempo and rhythmic treatment, the recordings of all three performers display interesting similarities and differences that, next to the simple form and casual character of the composition, would not allow definite conclusions in relation to the clash between early and late styles. The slow opening of crotchets followed by a quicker pace of quavers in the first section of the sixth dance is commonly found in Meyer's and Cortot's earlier (1937) recordings. However, Cortot's uniformity of pace in this opening, heard in his later version (1951), sounds much closer to Erdmann's. Additionally, Cortot sounds more relaxed than Meyer in lyrical dances, such as the third and eighth, and more hectic than Erdmann in vivid ones, such as the ninth and twelfth. Moreover, Meyer and, especially, Erdmann are much more accurate than Cortot in the evenness of the ternary rhythm in waltz-like dances, such as the third and the fourth. Interestingly enough, though, Erdmann's strictness in the evenness of the beats is somehow removed in the first dance, which is contrary to both Cortot and Meyer.

### *Structure*

Structurally, Cortot and Erdmann display some similarity in the conception of these dances as one work, since, contrary to Meyer, they play all of them and not just a selection. More specifically, their conception is similar also in distinguishing groups of dances to comprise sections within the cycle, mainly depending on their tonalities and characters.

Erdmann seems to detect three sections in these twelve dances (Table 1). The initial section consists of the first five dances, as some retardation and a small pause at the end of the fifth dance would suggest. In this section, the dances move around the key of D major with a lively character, only to give way, at the end, to the relative minor key (B minor, dance No. 5) and its melancholy mood. Then, the second section includes the next three dances, as slowing down in the closure of the eighth dance would imply. In this section, the relative minor of B major (G-sharp minor, dance No. 6), which was the key at the end of the first section, and its enharmonic major (A-flat major, dance No. 7) and minor (A-flat minor, dance No. 8) keys, create a calmer and more nostalgic atmosphere. Finally, the third section consists of the remaining dances, which, through the return to B major (dances No. 9 and No. 10) and the vivid characters, lead to the end in the neighbouring tonality of E major (dance No. 12).

**Table 1 Erdmann's structural grouping of dances in Schubert D 790**

<b>First Section – Vivid</b>	<b>Second Section – Reflective</b>	<b>Third Section – Vivid</b>
No. 1 in D major	No. 6 in G-sharp minor	No. 9 in B major
No. 2 in A major	No. 7 in A-flat major	No. 10 in B major
No. 3 in D major	No. 8 in A-flat minor	No. 11 in A-flat major
No. 4 in D major		No. 12 in E major
No. 5 in B minor (ending in B major)		

Cortot's structural approach is not completely different from Erdmann's in terms of grouping the dances (Table 2). However, his performance suggests a more dramatized, almost theatrical, conception of the work, as well as the use of additional improvisation as a structural device. The first dance comes out as an introduction, since there is a noticeable break before proceeding to the second. The sudden increase in tempo for the second dance marks the beginning of the first section in the manner of a significant announcement. The first section in Cortot's interpretation ends with the fourth dance (No. 4 in D major), as a little time is taken before entering the fifth (dance No. 5 in B minor). This approach is probably based on the vividness in the character of the preceding dances and their strong association with the key of D major. The fifth dance suggests a turning point, a piece that belongs both to the first and the second section. Harmonically, it starts closer to the first section (B minor being relative to D major) and ends nearer the second section (B major being relative to G-sharp minor, the key of dance No. 6), while, in terms of mood, it makes the transition from the lively start to a more introvert middle part. The second section for Cortot, as for Erdmann, seems to start with the sixth and end with the eighth dance (dance No. 8 in A-flat minor). The entrance of dance No. 9 (in B major, relative major of the enharmonic key of dance No. 8) marks the beginning of the third and final section with a significant shift in pace and liveliness, similar to the transition between the first and second dance. However, for Cortot, the twelfth dance does not comprise a satisfactory ending, and is used as a transitory movement, at the end of which a *quasi cadenza* improvised passage in the right hand leads back to the eighth dance, with which Cortot ends the cycle. This practice, along with Cortot's editorial comments (discussed later), comprises important evidence for his approach on the applicability of additional improvisation in Schubert's music.

**Table 2 Cortot's structural approach in Schubert D 790**

<b>Introduction</b>	No. 1 in D major		
<b>First Section – Vivid</b>	No. 2 in A major	No. 3 in D major	No. 4 in D major
<b>Transitory Movement</b>	No. 5 in B minor (ending in B major)		
<b>Second Section – Reflective</b>	No. 6 in G-sharp minor	No. 7 in A-flat major	No. 8 in A-flat minor
<b>Third Section – Vivid</b>	No. 9 in B major	No. 10 in B major	No. 11 in A-flat major
<b>Transitory Movement</b>	No. 12 in E major; plus improvised passage <i>quasi cadenza</i>		
<b>Epilogue</b>	No. 8 in A-flat minor		

It is again worth noting here the consistency of Cortot's approach, as it is displayed in the way he structures his performances in both the 1937 and the 1951 version, despite the time limitations of the 78 rpm discs. The time limitations of 78s, which were apparently used in both cases, should always be acknowledged when we listen to CD re-issues of early recordings. Sound engineers who transfer early 78s into CDs usually have to apply serious editing work, particularly in joining excerpts of a piece that, due to its length, had to be separated onto several sides or discs. Apart from cutting passages and repeats, recording artists often had to apply pauses or slowing down at convenient places, like cadences or the end of sections, in order to allow a change of a side or disc before continuing their performances. Although in CD transfers the editing provides an outcome that resembles the natural flow of a performance that was not forced to stop at any point, one should always be aware that particular technical limitations may have urged specific

performance decisions, especially in terms of tempo fluctuation.<sup>95</sup> However, since the *Ländler* in both the 1937 and 1951 recording do not last more than nine minutes, it is most likely that they would fit on two 78-sides. Therefore, performance devices that are applied at the beginning, or the very end, are less likely to relate to a change of a side or disc. Apart from the obvious case of the last dance and the improvisatory ending, which manifests its structural role in both recordings, other features of Cortot's playing that are displayed in both versions are: a) the noticeable break between the first and the second dance, which allows the former to function as an introduction and the latter as the beginning of the first main section of the cycle; and b) some timing between the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth dance, which shows that the latter does not belong to the first group, but is a transitory movement. Such similarities, indeed, show that Cortot had a strong idea about the structure of Schubert's D 790, and this was allowed to come through despite certain restrictions in the recording process.<sup>96</sup>

### *Repeats*

Finally, in the issue of repeats Cortot appears to be as creative and imaginative as in the *Moment musical*. Not only does he play all the repeats,<sup>97</sup> but also varies the repeated material by means of dynamics, freedom of tempo, voicing and additional improvisation. In contrast, Meyer plays the repeats of the dances she selected, but does not alter significant

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<sup>95</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 3, paragraphs 19, 32-35 and 47, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html) (Accessed: August 18, 2015).

<sup>96</sup> Peres da Costa has noted that recorded performances of the same works by the same artists often display similarities even when different recording methods were used, citing as an example Saint-Saëns's 1904 acoustic recording and 1905 piano roll of his *Valse mignonne*, Op. 104. See Peres da Costa, p. 38.

<sup>97</sup> With the exception of bars 1-8 of the eleventh dance that are not repeated in the 1937 recording.

features the second time. Erdmann, in turn, not only omits several repeats, sometimes in the first part (No. 3 and No. 12) and sometimes in the second (No. 2, No. 6 and No. 8), but also, when he repeats, he seems not to vary the expression as much as Cortot.

In general, these comparisons show that Cortot's playing displayed certain interpretive practices that are typical of the so-called early style. He made use of them much more than pianists who were slightly or significantly younger, like Schnabel and Erdmann respectively, but still more sparingly than older performers, like Paderewski. Interestingly, at times Cortot's performances suggested the use of devices of the early style in order to manage issues that frequently occurred in Schubert's music. Thus, tempo fluctuation became a medium for articulating contrasting and different sections, as in the variations of the Impromptu, and additional improvisation, as in the *Ländler*, was a device through which structural cohesion was achieved and the playing of repeats became essential.

### **5.2.3 Recordings vs. Editions**

In the final section of this chapter, I will examine those pieces by Schubert for which there are available both a direct representation of Cortot's interpretation (recording) as well as a testimony that presents his ideas, at least partially, on how these pieces should be played (edition). Therefore, the works that will be discussed are the Impromptu D 935 No. 3, the Twelve *Ländler* D 790, and the *Moment musical* D 780 No. 3. Basically, the questions that are raised, by examining Cortot's recordings alongside his editorial remarks, are whether his decisions on managing certain issues of his performances agree with his own written suggestions; and what his

consistency and/or inconsistency might reveal about his approach to these pieces.

Before proceeding, we need reminding that the available material is limited – only three pieces – and therefore it is not always possible to draw general conclusions. In addition, although the editions are products of Cortot's later years (1957 and 1960), his recordings were made in different periods of his life (*Impromptu* 1920; *Ländler* 1937 and 1951; *Moment Musical* 1952 and 1954). This does not create significant problems in defining his performing style, which did not differ much over his recorded years. On the contrary, it can make the comparison between recordings and editions – especially in cases where the time lapses are significant, like the *Impromptu* – an interesting source for the evolution of performance styles, which was documented in the twentieth century. These comparisons could reveal Cortot's stance, which could be seen, in these late editions, as criticism of early practices and/or as an effort to adjust the application of them to suit more recent performance standards.

On the other hand, there are also factors that should be considered in relation to how we perceive Cortot's playing, such as his state of health,<sup>98</sup> especially regarding his late recordings; and, more importantly, the different technological features that might apply to recordings of disparate periods of time.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> See Bryan Crimp's notes on the CD *Alfred Cortot: The Late Recordings Volume 4* (APR 5574): 'although Cortot more than squared up to the demands of the chosen repertoire [of the late recordings] his always fallible fingers were at this time further undermined by illness... late Thomas Manshardt, one of Cortot's last pupils, [maintained] that this period of Cortot's career 'is his greatest in thought and warmth and mastery, never mind the progress of Parkinson's disease' (p. 5).

<sup>99</sup> We should always have in mind, for instance, that the recording of the *Impromptu* (1920) is a reproduction from piano-rolls.

### 5.2.3.1 Impromptu D 935 No. 3

The Impromptu is an extreme case, since the compared items come from significantly different periods in Cortot's life. We have a recording of 1920, when Cortot must have been in his prime as a performer, aged forty-three, and the edition that was published in 1957, a year when he had already given up his performing career.<sup>100</sup> According to his pupil, Thomas Manshardt, Cortot, in his later years, had the time to devote himself to teaching and general pedagogic work to a greater extent than while in full concert activity,<sup>101</sup> and this is certainly reflected in his editions of Schubert's works, which all came out during the last eight years of his life.

Comparing particular suggestions and comments in Cortot's edition with his recorded performance of the Impromptu, significant inconsistency is clearly displayed. Although this recording is an early one and the limitations of that era's technology must be taken into account, this could be a sign that Cortot intended to inform performers and scholars regarding the changes in performing styles by not adhering to, possibly, anachronistic approaches. Moreover, discrepancies between the edition and the recording might also suggest indirect criticism of particular aspects of a performing style, including his,<sup>102</sup> which had already been questioned and re-evaluated as part of the natural evolution of performance tendencies.

#### *Inconsistency*

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<sup>100</sup> Manshardt, p. 16.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> See Ibid., p. 93: 'Yes the records *are* beautiful, particularly those made in the last ten years of [Cortot's] life, though he expressed astonishment that I had come to study with him simply from having heard his earlier recordings, caricatures, as he called them.'

Cortot's inconsistency is notably displayed in relation to issues of tempo adoption and tempo fluctuation, which, were essential features of performance practice in studies that documented and evaluated the evolution of interpretive styles. Recalling Cortot's comments on the tempo of this impromptu, in the theme, one should be aware of the *alla breve* time signature and, imaginatively, replace the *Andante* indication with *Andantino*. This would not only agree with *Rosamunde's* tempo indications, but would also result in a tempo that is not so slow as to create the false, yet frequently heard, impression that the piece is 'a sentimental romance'.<sup>103</sup> However, in the recording, Cortot's tempo is rather slow in terms of pulse and direction of the phrasing for an *alla breve Andantino*. Interestingly, if we recall the recordings examined above, the tempi of this opening become faster and more straightforward as we move towards later in the twentieth century. Cortot's tempo (1920) resembles Paderewski's (1924) and Backhaus's (1928), but later, Fischer's (1938) and Schnabel's (1950) tempi are significantly faster. Therefore, a tempo, and consequently a character, for the Impromptu's theme, which might have felt appropriate early in the twentieth century, might have been considered ineffective fifteen or twenty years later. Cortot's suggestion for a paced tempo, thirty-seven years after a recording that displayed quite an opposite practice, could be a sign of his awareness of the change in performing principles or even tastes.

Moving to the first variation, the obvious question concerns the relation between its tempo and the tempo of the theme. In the edition, Cortot is clearly against any modification of the opening's tempo,<sup>104</sup> although in his recording the significantly different texture of the variation leads to a great increase of speed. Cortot's commentary might have shown the need for

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<sup>103</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 9n1.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10n3.

uniformity of tempi, which was a principle of a later twentieth-century style. However, the adoption of a faster tempo in the first variation, though to a different degree, was a common element of all the aforementioned recordings, some of which display a strong affiliation with the so-called late style.

In the second and fifth variations, Cortot's remarks in a similar vein warn against the adoption of very fast tempi in order to let the sound of quick runs come out expressively, and not purely as a virtuosic display. Specifically, in the second variation, there should not be any speeding up compared to the 'fundamental tempo',<sup>105</sup> meaning, most likely, the tempo of the theme, since the first variation should also follow the original pulse; and in the fifth, the extremely demanding texture should call rather for 'enchancing sonorities' of 'poetic imagination', than for 'confirmation of virtuosity' and 'mechanically brilliant execution'.<sup>106</sup> However, in Cortot's recording, the tempi of both the second and fifth variations are much faster than implied in the edition. The second variation is not only played at a faster tempo than the original, but it is also notably quicker than the already accelerated first variation. In the fifth variation, Cortot's tempo is extremely fast, yet impressively clear. Although his performance can sound a little like virtuosic display, we should not disregard the fact that one can definitely hear the caressing sonorities of the 'gammes glissants' and 'arpèges arachnéens',<sup>107</sup> which were mentioned in his edition.

Recalling the recordings of the Impromptu examined earlier, the fifth variation was, in all of them, the fastest in the piece, while the second was played in various tempi which were consistently faster, though, than the

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 12n4.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 19n20.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.: 'ces gammes glissantes et de ces arpèges arachnéens.'

tempi of the opening. Interestingly, Cortot's and Paderewski's recordings, which were the earliest, displayed the fastest tempi in both the second and fifth variations. Next to the possible impact that the age of these recordings might have had on the tempi, as interpretive choices or as a result of the reproductions,<sup>108</sup> one should bear in mind Philip's observation that the acceleration in more exciting textures was a typical practice of the so-called early twentieth-century style. Therefore, Cortot's advice for uniform tempi, adjusted to the need for expressive and poetic sonorities, could be seen as a warning against practices that should not be considered appropriate and tasteful anymore.

Apart from the tempo demonstrated in individual structural parts, I will also refer to tempo modifications as part of the phrasing, which was a typical device of the so-called early twentieth-century style. In his recording, Cortot applies some retardation in particular places, in order to emphasize special moments within phrases. Examples of such a practice are the first half of bar 28 in the first variation, in order to underline the *crescendo* followed by *subito piano* (Fig. 20); the last beat of bar 30, in order to mark the end of a phrase and the return to the initial motif; the second half of bar 32, in order to highlight the *crescendo* and *diminuendo* hairpins (Fig. 21); the second half of bar 72 in the third variation, in order to emphasize the emotional tension of the melodic curve, the harmony, and the presence of similar hairpins to the previous example; and the second half of bars 105 and 113 in the last variation, in order to mark the end of a phrase and the return to the original motif of the variation.

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<sup>108</sup> Especially with respect to Cortot's recording which was a reproduction from piano rolls.

Figure 20 Schubert D 935/3 bar 28, Cortot's tempo flexibility (1920 recording)



Figure 21 Schubert D 935/3 bar 32, Cortot's tempo flexibility (1920 recording)



With the exception of the indication *poco cedendo* in bar 113 of the fifth variation, Cortot's edition does not provide any suggestions for the flexibility of tempo heard in his recording. Although the practice of rhythmic freedom in some of these examples can also be heard in the recordings of the other performers mentioned, Cortot's selectivity in indicating additional retardation in his edition could be considered as an adjustment to the stricter rhythmic treatment required by a later twentieth-century style.

Of particular interest is the issue of rhythmic freedom in the postludes of the theme, and of each variation in this impromptu, which was also discussed in the third chapter. Although Schubert indicated *ritardando* only in the end of the fifth variation, and just pause signs and/or double bars in all other postludes, it is commonplace in all the recordings discussed that some

retardation, of differing degrees, should be applied in all endings. Cortot's rhythmic treatment of the postludes in his recording agrees with his suggestions in the edition, but in the postlude of the fourth variation, although the edition does not contain any of the indications that he often used in order to suggest retardation, such as *poco cedendo* and *rit.*, Cortot clearly slows down a little in the last bar. While one cannot be certain why no editorial signs of retardation are included specifically at the end of the fourth variation,<sup>109</sup> this practice makes sense harmonically since this postlude is the only one that does not suggest a conclusion in the variation's tonality, but leads to a prolongation of the dominant seventh chord of the next variation's key. In other words, the postlude of the fourth variation is the only one that does not lead to a real closure and, therefore, Cortot's change in the interpretation of this passage between his recording and his edition perhaps intends to point out this special role. Interestingly, Cortot's suggestions regarding this ending display a notable similarity to the way it was played in Schnabel's recording, which, compared to other recordings discussed earlier, represents quite significantly many features of the so-called late twentieth-century style.<sup>110</sup>

Apart from the tempo, the issue of character, as a result of the interpretation of dynamics and accentuation, is raised particularly in the fourth variation. In his first editorial remarks about that variation, Cortot suggests that the left-hand theme should not display peculiarity in the quality of sound, caused by

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<sup>109</sup> As mentioned earlier Cortot might have followed the way of retardation suggested in the Lazare Lévy edition of this impromptu; see Chapter Three, footnote 60.

<sup>110</sup> Indeed, of all the recordings discussed here, Schnabel's was the one in which almost no retardation is heard in the postlude of the fourth variation. However, some flexibility is applied at the end of bar 99 in order to underline the modulation from G-flat major to B-flat major, displaying another similarity with Cortot, who commented on the 'dreamy tenderness' of this modulation; see Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 19n19: 'l'impression de tendresse rêveuse qui émane de ces trois mesures modulantes'.

the particular rhythmic motif and the accentuation given by Schubert.<sup>111</sup> In addition, when the theme appears in the right hand (bar 85), he adds that, in general, this variation should carry the character of a 'smiling kindness'.<sup>112</sup> Quite emphatically, Cortot's execution displays a considerable inconsistency with the suggestions given in the edition. The motif of dotted rhythms sounds quite clumsy and the accents are played quite harshly, thus creating a character that is completely opposite to the gentle image described in the edition.<sup>113</sup> Cortot's performance in this variation is notably different from all the other recordings mentioned before and, actually, Backhaus's and Fischer's interpretations appear to resemble the immaterial and ethereal sonority that is described in his edition. Although Cortot's performance might intend to point out the returning hopefulness of the Impromptu after the minor variation, his editorial comments suggest a subtler and more sensitive treatment of the dynamics and accentuation.

### *Consistency*

Although significant discrepancies can be noted between Cortot's editorial comments and his recording of the Impromptu, mainly regarding tempo and character, this does not mean that there are not areas of notable consistency. While Cortot's performance in the recording does not agree with his suggestions in the edition regarding the postlude of the fourth variation, in all the other postludes, Cortot is consistent not only in slowing down, but also in applying it right at the very end, as indicated in his edition. Additionally, in the recording, it is also clear that the postlude of the third

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<sup>111</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 17n14.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17n16: 'le caractère d'amabilité souriante qui prédomine dans toute cette variation.'

<sup>113</sup> However, such features of piano playing might have been affected by the fact that this recording is a reproduction from piano rolls.

variation displays the biggest retardation of all, echoing precisely the editorial suggestions for the conclusion of the most dramatic episode of the Impromptu. Such a practice was, actually, a common element of almost all the recordings discussed here, particularly those of Paderewski and Backhaus.

Another interesting example, where consistency between Cortot's recording and his edition can be detected, appears at the beginning of the second part of the third variation (bars 71-72, Fig 22). In the recording Cortot clearly dislocates the downbeats of bars 71 and 73, and he applies some retardation in the second half of bar 72, while in his edition simply the indication *espressivo* appears in bar 71 (Fig. 23).<sup>114</sup>

**Figure 22 Schubert D 935/3 bars 71-72, Cortot's use of early style devices as *espressivo* playing (1920 recording)**



**Figure 23 Schubert D 935/3 bars 71-72, Cortot's Edition (1957)**



<sup>114</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus Op. 142*, p. 16.

Cortot's approach to playing this passage, which he described many years later as *espressivo*, could shed some light on the principles according to which early twentieth-century performers used specific devices. Peres da Costa and Hudson maintain that evidence shows a possible correlation between terms like *espressivo*, *dolce*, *con anima* and *rubato*, and the use of devices frequently heard in recordings of the early twentieth century, like dislocation, arpeggiation of chords and tempo fluctuation.<sup>115</sup> Interestingly, both Cortot's playing and editorial remarks appear to display a remnant of this practice.

As for the meaning that could be implied by this *espressivo*, and its translation into certain interpretive practices, Hudson's remarks would appear to clarify Cortot's performance decisions. Pianists of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century seemed to use various types of *rubato*, particularly dislocation, in order 'to articulate the beginning of a new section, emphasize expressive passages, accent strong beats or strengthen the singing quality of *portato* touch'.<sup>116</sup> It is obvious that at least the first two – if not all – principles could be echoed in Cortot's execution of this passage. On the other hand, the absence of other *espressivo* indications in the edition does not necessarily mean that Cortot suggests a lack of emotionally special moments in the piece, or that expressive playing should be achieved only through practices of the early style. Nor should it be thought that he considered this the only place in the Impromptu where *rubato* could be applicable, since he made use of the device elsewhere in his recorded performance. However, this example can prove informative about Cortot's

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<sup>115</sup> See Peres da Costa, pp. 122-125, 136, 155 and 297 for the correlation between particular interpretive devices and specific expressive terms, as evidenced in writings of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and in editions and recordings of the early twentieth century. See also Hudson's remark about the connection between the term *espressivo* and practices of the early twentieth-century performance style (Hudson, p. 340).

<sup>116</sup> Hudson, p. 334.

approach regarding the purpose of using certain devices that are associated with earlier tendencies, as well as his concerns about how frequently they should be used now.<sup>117</sup>

The use of these expressive devices by Cortot in this passage, and in the third variation in general, also appear to correspond with specific emotional connotations as shown in the commentary from his edition of the Impromptu, where the third variation is described as indicative of the 'feeling of pathetic anxiety'.<sup>118</sup> The sense of restlessness that the practices of dislocation between the two hands, overdotting and *rubato* create could effectively render the agitated character that is evoked in this editorial remark.<sup>119</sup> On the other hand, Cortot also appears to use the same practices in other passages from Schubert's works, which display textural similarities with the minor variation of D 935 No. 3. A typical example is the C-minor episode (starting at bar 48) from Schubert's Piano Trio, No. 1 (D 898) which Cortot recorded with Thibaud and Casals in 1926.<sup>120</sup> In that episode, similarly to the third variation from the Impromptu, a palpitating motif in the strings and the left-hand part of the piano accompany a sorrowful tune played by the pianist's right hand until bars 52-53, where an emotional climax is reached

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<sup>117</sup> It is worth noting that Cortot as a performer has been referred to have applied such practices more sparingly than older performers; see Hudson, p. 335.

<sup>118</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Impromptus, Op. 142*, p. 14n11: 'Le sentiment d'inquiétude pathétique...'

<sup>119</sup> Patrik Juslin has maintained that performers are able to express specific emotions in their performances through the use of particular 'expressive cues'. Such emotions are: tenderness, happiness, sadness, fear and anger. Cortot's way of playing in the minor variation of D 935 No. 3 appears to correspond with several cues from the emotional areas of 'fear' and 'anger', which are arguably a combination of emotions that can signify anxiety and agitation. Specifically, the practice of overdotting could correspond with the cues of 'sharp duration contrasts', 'abrupt tone attacks' and 'accents on unstable notes'; the *rubato* could signify 'large tempo variability' and 'large timing variations'; and the dislocation between the two hands could also produce the cue of 'abrupt tone attacks'. For further discussion, see Patrik Juslin, 'Communicating Emotion in Music Performance: A Review and Theoretical Framework', *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research*, eds. Patrik Juslin and John Sloboda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 309-337, particularly p. 315 for a 'Summary of cue utilization in performers' communication of emotion in music'.

<sup>120</sup> Naxos – 8.110188, 2002.

and the piano plays in unison. Cortot highlights the peak of this phrase through dislocation and overdotted in bar 52 and an emphatic rubato in bar 53, which, as shown in Figure 24, remarkably resemble his playing and editorial additions in the example from the Impromptu (Fig. 22 and 23). These two cases could efficiently demonstrate the way Cortot used certain expressive devices for the signification of particular emotions in performance, which could arguably originate in the performer's emotional response to the musical text.

**Figure 24 Schubert D 898/II bars 52-53, Cortot's dislocation, overdotted and *rubato* (1926 recording)**



### 5.2.3.2 Twelve *Ländler* D 790

The Twelve *Ländler* is a work for which, contrary to the Impromptu, along with a late edition (1960) we have an early (1937) and a late (1951) recording by Cortot. Therefore, the question of consistency becomes a little harder to interpret, since there are several issues where each one of these recordings correlates differently to his editorial suggestions. Although these recordings are not radically dissimilar, the later one can feel closer to the editorial remarks in terms of tempo uniformity. It is interesting that there are

some places in the early recording where Cortot clearly highlights an emotional or textural shift with a significant change of tempo, which in the later version is notably subtler, and in the edition is translated into a warning against any modification. Typical examples of such a practice are the dances numbers 2, 3 and 6.

In the early recording, the whole of the second dance is much faster than the first, while in the late version the tempo is quicker, but only for the first phrase, and then it returns almost to the original pace. However, in the edition, Cortot suggests that the 'deliberate character' of the dance should be delivered with a *marcato* way of playing,<sup>121</sup> implying that no change of tempo is required. The third dance, in the early recording, is played at a significantly slower tempo than the second, while in the late recording the third dance's tempo is barely different from the tempo in which the second dance ends. In the edition, though, Cortot maintains that the third dance should not be played at a slower tempo, and the significant change of the character should be brought out by different means, such as articulation.<sup>122</sup> It is similar in dance No. 6 where, as mentioned before, in the early recording the opening displays a clear difference in tempo between the first four bars of crotchets and the following four of quavers, while in the late recording the tempo between these two four-bar sections is much more uniform. Cortot's comment in the edition detects the existence of two contrasting thematic elements in this opening, but very carefully avoids suggesting that their contrast should be underlined by tempo difference. Specifically, he

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<sup>121</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 5n3: 'Ce second épisode de la suite figure déjà dans le *Deutsche Tanz*, Op. 33, dont il inaugure la série, accompagné de l'indication "marcato" qui, ici comme là, convient à son caractère délibéré'.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6n4: 'On évitera de sentimentaliser l'énonciation mélodique de ce nouvel élément thématique par un ralentissement quelconque de la cadence propulsive. Le tempo doit demeurer semblable à celui du fragment précédent; mais on s'y efforcera à y suggérer, par l'articulation dégagée du motif conducteur et en plaisant contraste avec la martèlement signatif du Ländler antérieur, l'impression de la valse "glissée", animée du gracieux tournoiement.'

maintains that the 'sentimental significance' of the first element should be delivered by 'the delay of its harmonic resolutions', and 'the trembling mood' of the second one 'by a vivid execution'.<sup>123</sup> Although descriptions such as 'incidents retards harmoniques' and 'vivante exécution' could create doubts about whether imperceptible tempo modification is implied or not, the general tendency in these examples shows Cortot's editorial/pedagogical advice for uniformity of tempo, associated more with a later twentieth-century style.

### *Consistency*

Despite these cases of slight difference between, mainly, the early recording and the edition of the *Ländler*, it is true that Cortot's response to this work is notably similar in both the audible and written evidence. This may be partially due to the absence of restrictions of piano rolls productions, as in the case of the *Impromptu*, allowing a more reliable and representative result. On the other hand, it could be a sign that the form and the casual character of these dances comprised a work for which Cortot did not consider the need to significantly re-evaluate features of his performance style within a range of twenty-three years (early recording: 1937; edition: 1960).

### *Tempo and Rhythm*

As far as tempo and rhythmic treatment are concerned, Cortot's performances, in both recordings, are usually in accordance with his

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 9n9: 'Le premier, en noires expressive auquel une succession d' incidents retards harmoniques confère une signification d'ordre sentimental; le second, en croches frémissantes... dont la vivante exécution se devra de compléter le caractère impulsif'.

editorial comments. Apart from obvious cases like the notable shift of tempo, which is heard in the entrance of the ninth dance and is suggested in a particular comment,<sup>124</sup> there are cases where audible and written evidence appear to clarify each other. In the opening dance, the results heard in both recordings are in accordance with what Cortot describes as his perception of Schubert's indication *Deutsches Tempo*: a 'moderate Allegretto that resembles the pace of a minuet and emphasizes the first beat of the ternary metre giving to the piece a rustic character'.<sup>125</sup> Actually, what can be heard on the recordings could be a demonstration of Cortot's description in the edition.

On the other hand, the unevenness of the beats of ternary metres, heard in both recordings of several dances, like the fourth and the eighth, is something mentioned in the edition too. More specifically, in Cortot's executions of the fourth dance one can clearly hear 'that traditional particularity of the Viennese Waltz, where there is an imperceptible anticipation of the second beat without, though, changing the total duration of each bar' (Fig. 25).<sup>126</sup> Likewise, in the eighth dance, the unequal beats appear to echo the connection to Hungarian folk music and Chopin's mazurkas, which was attempted through the editorial remarks.<sup>127</sup>

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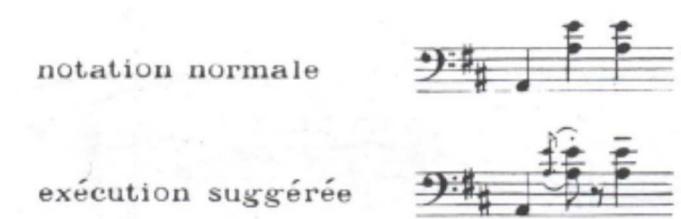
<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 12n14: 'On reprendra ici le mouvement animé'.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 3n1: 'Il s'y agit d'un Allegretto modéré, dont la cadence tient encore de celle du Minuet rituel, avec des appels de pied fortement appuyés sur le premiers temps de chaque mesure, et qui supposent, de la part des danseurs, imaginaires ou non, des évolutions empreintes d'une certaine pesanteur rustique.'

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 7n5: 'il importe de mettre en valeur cette particularité traditionnelle de la valse viennoise, qui consiste à assigner, au second temps de chaque mesure de l'accompagnement, une imperceptible anticipation rythmique, au demeurant sans effet sur la durée totale de la mesure'.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 11n13: 'certainement inspiré d'un emprunt inconscient au style des bohémiennes nomades... Ces quelques mesures empreintes d'un subtil sentiment nostalgique semblent préfigurer les accents des plus parfaites mazurkas de Chopin'. For certain particularities in terms of rhythm and accentuation in Mazurkas, see Stephen Downes, 'Mazurka', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/18193> (Accessed July 14, 2014).

**Figure 25 Schubert D 790/4, Cortot's interpretation of the Viennese Waltz shown in Cortot's Edition (1960)**



### *Additional Improvisation*

Along with the subject of time and metre, the consistency between recordings and the edition in terms of additional improvisation is particularly important in the examination of Cortot's approach regarding, and not necessarily limited to, specific works or forms in Schubert's music. Cortot played improvised passages and variants in several places throughout the cycle, which appeared precisely in his edition as footnotes. Recalling an earlier reference, these places were the left-hand part in bars 33-42 of the first dance, which was enriched in the repeat (Fig. 26-29);<sup>128</sup> the right hand of bars 24-27 in the seventh dance, which was embellished similarly to bars 8-11;<sup>129</sup> the last right-hand note in the last bar of the ninth dance, where a higher B was to be played instead;<sup>130</sup> and the end of the twelfth dance, where a cadenza-like improvisation (Fig. 30 and 31) led back to dance No. 8 before the end of the work.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>128</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p.4n2.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10n12bis.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12n14. As previously noted, although this variant was suggested in the edition only for the repeat, in both recordings Cortot played it twice.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14-15n19.

Figure 26 Schubert D 790/1 bars 33-34



Figure 27 Schubert D 790/1 bars 33-34, Cortot's improvisation shown in Cortot's Edition (1960)



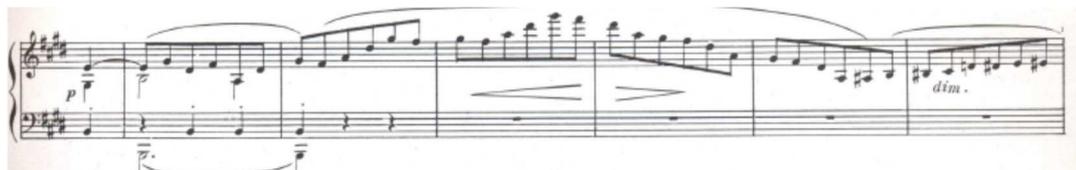
Figure 28 Schubert D 790/1 bars 38-40



**Figure 29 Schubert D 790/1 bars 38-40, Cortot's improvisation shown in Cortot's Edition (1960)**



**Figure 30 Schubert D 790/12, Cortot's cadenza-like improvisation at the end shown in Cortot's Edition (1960)**



**Figure 31 Figure 30 continues**



Cortot's comment about his addition at the end of the last dance points out the debatable nature<sup>132</sup> of the issue as to whether improvisation is applicable in Schubert's music, which was also discussed in the previous chapter in

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.: 'une terminaison qui remette en question'. One should not forget that the edition was published in 1960. We cannot be sure if Cortot thought the same half a century earlier.

relation to Cortot's suggested variant in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy. Contrary to the case of the Fantasy, the existence of Cortot's recordings alongside the edition of these *Ländler* allows us to conclude that he would support the applicability of improvisation in Schubert's music. However, apart from a rather obvious connection of this practice to the late nineteenth-century origins of his performing style,<sup>133</sup> the questions that are inevitably raised could be: in what kind of pieces by Schubert would Cortot consider using additional improvisation; what are the reasons to do so; and how.

Firstly, both these pieces by Schubert, for which there is evidence that Cortot would have added improvised material, are associated with dance. Next to the self-explained case of these *Ländler*, Cortot had detected a dancing character in the trio of the Fantasy's third movement, a remark which actually agrees with points made by several experts such as Newman and Brendel.<sup>134</sup> On the other hand, especially regarding the *Ländler*, Cortot also noted in his edition that Schubert usually made up his numerous cycles of small dances for social events in the manner of improvisation, implying, perhaps, that a casual treatment in performance could be justified.<sup>135</sup> Therefore, based on this evidence, we might conclude that, for Cortot, works by Schubert that could be subject to additional improvisation are dances that are referred to as having been products of informal social events and, consequently, carried a rather spontaneous and amusing character;<sup>136</sup> and,

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<sup>133</sup> As shown earlier in this chapter through Leech-Wilkinson remarks, the voluntary change of scores was a common practice for performers heard in early twentieth-century recordings.

<sup>134</sup> Newman, p 538 and Brendel, p. 137.

<sup>135</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 2: 'ce cycle de gracieuses pièces, dont l'engageante cadence n'avait d'autre dessein que de fournir un motif d'heureuse animation aux ébats de son entourage familial... ces brèves improvisations'.

<sup>136</sup> See Winter et al., 'Schubert', *Grove Music Online*, [http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109\\_pg2](http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109_pg2) (Accessed: July 14, 2014).

possibly, parts of large-scale works, which, in terms of form and character, could potentially comprise an indirect reference to these dances.

The goals that seem to be met by means of Cortot's use of additional improvisation are the need for varying repeats, which applies to the case of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, and to all the cases in the *Ländler* apart from the last variant; and the structural completion of a succession of dances, as at the end of the *Ländler*, which may not necessarily have been conceived as an autonomous work just because they were published like that.<sup>137</sup>

The first principle could possibly feel less extraordinary than the second, because avoiding identical repetition is not a feature that was completely lost with the evolution of performing styles in the twentieth century. We can still hear today performers varying repeats in works by Schubert, or of Schubert's time, the only difference being that they do so by means other than improvisation, such as dynamics, voicing and, more subtly, freedom of tempo. The second case, however, seems much more strongly connected to the distant past and, in a way, could be compared to the typical practice of pianists during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, who usually improvised preludes before, or transitions between, works of the same concert.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> David Brodbeck maintained that the *Ländler* D 790 might have been conceived by Schubert as a cycle, in contrast with other similar sets of dances, due to: certain particularities of the autograph, compared to other dances which were published in one set; motivic and harmonic connections between the dances; and the composer's health condition in the year of composition (1823). However, Brodbeck admits that Brahms' decision to publish them as a whole played the most important role for their conception as one, pointing out also some weaknesses of this practice, such as the ambiguous nature of the closing piece (Brodbeck, pp. 32, 37, 39, 42-45). As previously mentioned, Cortot appears to question not the conception of D 790 as a cycle, but mainly the conclusive character of dance No. 12. See also Daniel Barolsky, 'Romantic Piano Performance as Creation', PhD diss. (University of Chicago, 2005), p. 181: 'Cortot's performance paradoxically brings together the *Ländler* [D 790] as a collection at the same time that he implicitly questions the cohesive nature of the set; the final dance serves both as a unifying agent while presenting the unity in doubt.'

<sup>138</sup> See Hamilton, *After the Golden Age*, pp. 101-138.

In these *Ländler* particularly, as in other similar cycles by Schubert, Cortot maintains that the last dance does not have an effectively conclusive character,<sup>139</sup> but rather seems a piece that could allow endless repetitions of previous episodes in order to entertain the social occasion for which it was composed.<sup>140</sup> This observation, alongside the harmonic background of the twelfth dance – it is the only dance in E major – motivated Cortot to include an improvised passage, which would lead back to the dance of ‘the most engaging message in the whole cycle (dance No. 8)’<sup>141</sup> and complete the work. Although Cortot’s practice certainly and clearly reveals his view about the role of additional improvisation, particularly in this kind of works by Schubert, it is interesting to see whether, with his specific choices, the requirement of structural completion is met.

It is true that the key of E major in the twelfth dance could feel more of a point of departure than a conclusion. As seen earlier, when we compared the structural conception of the work heard in recordings by Erdmann and Cortot, the whole cycle is hovering between keys of a third apart, following the journey shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 Tonalities associated with the dances of D 790**

<b>Tonality</b>	<b>Dances</b>
D major	No. 1 – No. 4
B minor/major	No. 5
G-sharp (A-flat) minor/major/minor	No. 6 – No. 8
B major	No. 9 and No. 10
A-flat major	No. 11
E major	No. 12

<sup>139</sup> Such an approach is echoed in Brodbeck, pp. 42-43.

<sup>140</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 14n19: ‘ce dernier épisode qui, de même que les autres séries de danses de Schubert, se garde bien de conclure au ton principal, et laisse place à d’infinies reprises des motifs antérieurs, pour le divertissement de société à quoi il est destiné.’

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*: ‘Cette considération et la licence tonale qui l’autorise, m’ont amené à envisager une terminaison qui remette en question, sous forme de postlude expressif et porteur du plus attachant message de cette série de notations arbitrairement réunies, l’épisode no 8’.

As the dances prior to the last one appeared to suggest a return to keys established throughout the cycle, the twelfth dance's E major could logically function as the beginning of a new round of changing tonalities, which was actually never completed. Therefore, Cortot's choice to go back to the eighth dance could possibly work effectively for the completion of the cycle, since it brings back a tonality that was strongly established in the cycle; is the parallel minor of the penultimate dance; and is the relative minor of the key of the two dances (No. 9 and No. 10) that marked the beginning of the last section of the work. Moreover, Cortot's choice, in terms of succession of tonalities, can echo the harmonic journey that Schubert used in the *Six Moments Musicaux* (D 780), a work that has not really raised doubts about its existence as a complete cycle (Table 4).<sup>142</sup> Thus, Cortot's structural plan could make sense and the use of improvisation could be a helpful medium.

**Table 4 Tonalities associated with each of the *Moments Musicaux* D 780**

<b>Tonality</b>	<b>Moment</b>
C major	No. 1
A-flat major	No. 2
F minor	No. 3
C-sharp minor (enharmonic D-flat minor)	No. 4
F minor	No. 5
A-flat major	No. 6

In search of how Cortot would suggest additional improvisation to be applied in Schubert's works, particular editorial comments can be quite enlightening.

<sup>142</sup> Although Schubert had allowed the publication of D 780 No. 3 and No. 6 individually, in two different volumes of a Viennese collection in 1823 and 1824 respectively, the *Moments musicaux* were published also as a complete cycle (11<sup>th</sup> July 1828) consisted of two books (Book I: No 1- 3; Book II: No 4-6). See Otto Erich Deutsch, *Schubert: A Documentary Biography*, trans. Eric Blom (New York: Da Capo, 1977), pp.306, 388, 943.

Firstly, I should recall a general, and therefore very important for this exploration, remark that referred to his suggested variant in the third movement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy: 'additional improvisation should be in accordance with the character of the work which is embellished and the compositional characteristics of that time.'<sup>143</sup> This stance is in accordance with advocates of the practice of additional improvisation today, as well as with treatises of Schubert's era.

Focusing on the edition of the *Ländler*, apart from the obvious quality of simplicity that all variants display, corresponding with the texture of the whole cycle, specific comments provide interesting information about how particularly the improvised ending was conceived. As Cortot explains, the keys of the twelfth and the eighth dance, and a possible textural correlation between them, were the main factors that led to the suggested variant. More specifically, Cortot's improvisation, firstly, connects two episodes, which point out something that has been considered a typical feature in the harmonic language of Schubert, i.e. the connectivity of sections, or even whole movements, in the same work of tonalities of a third apart.<sup>144</sup> Thus, the key of E major in the twelfth dance is connected to the one of A-flat minor (enharmonic of G-sharp minor) of the eighth.

In addition, the texture of the twelfth dance could effectively suggest a return to the eighth for the conclusion of the cycle. Throughout the last dance, Cortot detects a hidden inner voice in the right-hand part, not very clearly suggested by Schubert's writing, which highlights the notes G-sharp, A and B (Fig. 32, 33).

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<sup>143</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Fantaisie*, p. 34n64: 's'accorde, semble-t-il, d'un plus juste caractère avec les discrètes particularités poétiques de l'époque'.

<sup>144</sup> See Winter et al., 'Schubert', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109pg2> (Accessed: July 14, 2014).

**Figure 32 Schubert D 790/12 bars 1-3**



**Figure 33 Schubert D 790/12, detection of inner voice as shown in Cortot's Edition (1960)**



These notes might have been a colouristic echo in the harmonic background of E major and this dance's figuration, but in Cortot's imagination and interpretation they could also comprise the first three scale-degree notes of the key of G-sharp minor (enharmonic of A-flat minor, the key of dance No. 8) with a flattened second. The eighth dance, in turn, is not only in the key of A-flat minor (enharmonic of G-sharp minor), which is implied by the inner voice of the twelfth dance, but also contains the harmony of the flattened second in a particularly emotional moment of the dance (bars 21-22, Fig. 34). Therefore, alongside the tonalities of a third apart, the harmonic effect of the flattened second is a very strong factor in Cortot's suggested improvisation.

**Figure 34 Schubert D 790/8 bars 21-22, flattened second**



Although there is little material on which to base this discussion, what we can conclude about Cortot's stance regarding additional improvisation in Schubert's music is: a) additional improvisation is not an indispensable part of performance practice in Schubert's music; b) it could be applied in dances that carry a rather amusing character and a miniature-like form, or in movements of large-scale works that refer to these dances; c) if it is applied, it should be done in accordance with the character of the rest of the piece and take into account that period's compositional features and the particular harmonic language of the composer; and d) it is a device that, apart from expressive variety in repeats, can be used to reinforce the structural conclusion of a work that was not necessarily conceived as a complete set.

### *The Theatrical Conception of D 790*

The examination of the *Ländler* will end with the discussion of the theatrical element that Cortot detected in the character of these dances. I will attempt to show how this element is described in the edition, and how Cortot's commentary could be reflected in his recordings of the cycle.

In the *Avant-Propos* to the edition of the *Ländler*, Cortot establishes his dramatized conception of these miniatures through a fictitious connection, and a felicitous resemblance, between Schubert's D 790 and Schumann's

*Carnaval*, Op. 9.<sup>145</sup> Although there is no direct proof that Schumann's work was inspired by these particular dances, important evidence could actually show that Cortot's remark is relevant.

Along with the fact that Schumann's early preoccupation with Schubert's *Sehnsuchtswalzer* was probably a precursor to the first piece from his Op. 9,<sup>146</sup> his essay on Schubert's 'German Dances' for piano D 783 (Op. 33) reveals a strong influence, particularly on the *Carnaval*.<sup>147</sup> It is not only through descriptions of Schubert's cycle as an 'entire carnival [of] dances' or a 'masked ball',<sup>148</sup> but more so through particular illustrations for every dance, which could resemble the parade of characters displayed in Schumann's piece.<sup>149</sup> Particular examples where Schumann's descriptions of these dances reveal striking similarities with parts from his *Carnaval* are in dance No. 3, which was described as a 'Harlequin with his hand on his lips [who] turns a somersault out of doors',<sup>150</sup> bringing to mind *Arlequin* from his Op. 9 (No. 3); and in No. 7, which was described as 'two reapers merrily waltzing together [... and] they recognise each other',<sup>151</sup> reminiscent of the *Reconnaissance* (No. 14). Such evidence shows not only how influential for Schumann's *Carnaval* were Schubert's small dances, but also how this influence relates specifically to the *Ländler* discussed here, since Schubert's

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<sup>145</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 2. Brodbeck also referred to Schubert's D 790 and Schumann's Op. 9 in the same context; see Brodbeck, pp. 43-44. For more information about possible relations between Schubert's sets of dances and Schumann's works for piano, such as the *Carnaval*, see Peter Karminsky, 'Principles of Formal Structure in Schumann's Early Piano Cycles', *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Autumn, 1989), pp. 207-225.

<sup>146</sup> John Daverio and Eric Sams, 'Schumann, Robert', *Grove Music Online*, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.wam.city.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40704pg5> (Accessed: July 14, 2014).

<sup>147</sup> Fanny Raymond Ritter (ed. and trans.), *Music and Musicians: Essays and Criticisms by Robert Schumann* (London: William Reeves, 1877), pp. 327-330.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

<sup>149</sup> The *Carnaval* consists of small pieces – usually in the form of dance – which were named *scènes mignonnes* by Schumann and were supposed to express the presence of particular characters and incidents in a masked ball.

<sup>150</sup> Ritter, p. 329.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

D 783 and D 790 are not only similar sets of dances, but also contain common passages in certain parts.<sup>152</sup>

Cortot, in his editorial commentary, appears to agree with Schumann's theatrical conception of Schubert's dances, as quoted parts of the picturesque renditions from the aforementioned essay of Schumann would suggest: 'intriguing masks, a cheeky harlequin, a professor wearing a wig, an elegant cavalier flirting with his partner, a clown who makes comic comments in the occasion of diverse events, an inflamed statement etc'.<sup>153</sup> Although it is not clear if Cortot mistakenly thought that Schumann referred to D 790 instead of D 783, or if he simply believed that one's conception of the two sets should not be very dissimilar, these descriptions give a clear idea about his interpretation of D 790.

Cortot maintains in his *Avant-Propos* that, although Schubert most likely did not intend to give to these dances the dramatic and fantastic quality that Schumann attributed to them, an interpretive approach similar to works like the *Carnaval*, could give to these *Ländler* substance that would allow simple – at least technically – compositions to come out as a 'seductive piece of art'.<sup>154</sup> While it is true that a dramatic concept is not evidenced in these

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<sup>152</sup> D 783 No. 1 is almost identical to D 790 No. 2, while D 783 No. 10 and D 790 No. 9 are almost the same pieces, but in different keys. Cortot noted these similarities in his editorial comments; see Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 5n3, p. 11n13.

<sup>153</sup> Compare the texts in Ritter, p. 329 with Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 2: 'des masques qui s'intriguent malicieusement; un Arlequin désinvolte; un docte professeur à perruque; un élégant cavalier faisant la cour à sa danseuse, un pâtre facétieux qui ne cesse de se gratter comiquement l'oreille en présence des incidents les plus divers; une déclaration enflammée, etc'.

<sup>154</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 2: 'Nul doute que Schubert n'ait en aucune manière songé à l'illustration de semblables particularités évocatrices en rédigeant ce cycle de gracieuses pièces... Mais, et sans aller si loin que Schumann dans son interprétation imagée, on ne peut que souhaiter à l'exécution de ces brèves improvisations, la coloration expressive supplémentaire qui se pourrait d'en souligner les séduisants contrastes, et par delà la correction matérielle de la traduction instrumentale, se verrait ainsi appelée à renouveler la physionomie caractéristique de chaque fragment... l'étude des problèmes d'ordre technique s'y voyant réduite au minimum, à raison d'une rédaction pianistique sans recherché ni prétention, et parfaitement accordée à la simplicité organique

works, the fact that Schubert's dances were usually made up in, or referred to, social occasions, possibly similar to a masked ball in terms of incidents and atmosphere, could make Schumann's and Cortot's approaches quite effective. However, Cortot's commentary is not really clear about how his interpretive approach could be translated into specific practices in one's playing, since descriptions such as 'expressive colouration', found in the edition, sound rather vague.<sup>155</sup> Thus his recordings, in comparison with the editorial analysis, could show better how the fantastic and theatrical element can be applicable to Schubert's D 790.

Performance devices of piano playing, through which Cortot appears to have attempted in his recordings to highlight the *Ländler's* theatrical character, could be: the structure of groups of dances in sections that would give to some of them particular roles in the plot of the set; the variety of sound and mood between different dances; and the rhythmic variety, as in tempi and in different ways that *rubato* is applied in pieces that are supposed to display the same dancing pattern (*Ländler*).

Recalling some of the features of the way Cortot structured his performances of the *Ländler*, it can be noted that some dances comprise sections where different characters and moods succeed each other, and others play different organic roles in the evolution of the storytelling. Through Cortot's interpretation, we can conclude that the performer of D 790 should look not only for the representation of different characters in the dances, but also for those pieces that play a transitory role, similar to the *Préambule* and/or the *Pause* from Schumann's Op. 9. Such an approach shows how Cortot's performances echo his editorial remarks in terms of possible

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de genre choréographique populaire interrogé dans ces quelques pages, et métamorphosé, par l'effet du génie, en une séduisante oeuvre d'art.'

<sup>155</sup> See previous footnote.

similarities in the interpretation of these dances and Schumann's *Carnaval*. Thus, in Cortot's executions, the first dance works as an introduction to the events that are about to follow:<sup>156</sup> the fifth dance is a slight moment of reverie, or in Cortot's words 'a dreaming nostalgia', between the dances of the first and the second section;<sup>157</sup> and the last dance, with the additional improvisation, leads to the repeat of the most engaging of them all in order to complete the set.

As far as the representation of characters and events is concerned, Cortot's variety in sound quality, in tempi and in *rubato* within or between dances, are the main devices, displaying, at times, consistency between his recordings and his editorial comments. In quite a few instances the differences in sound and tempo are combined in order to suggest the transition from one event to the other. Typical examples of such shifts are the entrance of the second dance, where strongly detached articulation and significantly increased tempo follow the graceful sound and pace of the opening dance; and the vivacious movement of the ninth dance, coming in after the melancholy and emotional hesitation of the eighth. In both cases, the practices applied in the recordings are in accordance with the editorial suggestions.<sup>158</sup>

Examples where mainly alteration in sound quality is applied, in order to underline the changes of character, can be found in the fifth and seventh dance. In the fifth dance, the ethereal sonorities with unexpected differentiation in the voicing allow the dreamy effect discussed in the edition to come out after a quite decisive ending in the fourth dance. In the seventh dance, following the dramatic ending of the sixth, Cortot's transparency in

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<sup>156</sup> See Brodbeck, p. 43: 'number 1 [of D 790] is a *préambule*'.

<sup>157</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 8n8: 'rêveuse nostalgie'. Brodbeck also detected the transitional role of dance No. 5, see Brodbeck, p. 39.

<sup>158</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler* p. 5n3 and p. 12n14.

the voicing creates a neutral sonority that echoes perfectly his description of this dance in the edition: 'a pastoral trio of a classical minuet where no expressive complication should destroy its bucolic atmosphere.'<sup>159</sup>

The cases of tempo alteration and application of *rubato* are realized more empirically in Cortot's executions, since such expressive devices are difficult to illustrate in writing.<sup>160</sup> However, these kinds of rhythmic treatment in Cortot's performances are important signs through which we can perhaps understand the scenic qualities he detected in these *Ländler*. A typical example of rhythmic alteration, more clearly heard in the earlier recording (1937), is the opening of the sixth dance, where the first four bars (crotchets) are played in a slower and inwardly anxious manner, and the next four (quavers) at a quicker and more agitated pace. Although the editorial comment about the 'contrast between two thematic ideas'<sup>161</sup> could be a starting point for the structural understanding of this dance, Cortot's performance develops this idea into a concept of two interacting characters and/or events.

Similarly, the *rubato* within phrasing, heard in Cortot's executions of the fourth, the eighth and the tenth dance, gives a clearer idea about the drawing of characters and events, which is implied in the edition. More specifically, in the fourth dance, the 'character of coquetry' was created not only by applying the 'traditional rhythmical particularity of the Viennese Waltz anticipating the second beat' (see Fig. 25),<sup>162</sup> but also, as heard in Cortot's

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 10n12: 'assimiler à la proposition pastorale du Trio en musette du Menuet classique... dans lequel nulle complication expressive ne s'emploie à dénaturer la paisible atmosphère bucolique qui en régit le comportement.'

<sup>160</sup> Peres da Costa refers to particular problems in explaining *rubato* through musical notation, as these were expressed in literature from the eighteenth up to the twentieth century; see Peres da Costa, pp. 230-236.

<sup>161</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Douze Ländler*, p. 9n9: 'le contraste entre les deux éléments thématiques'.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p. 7n5: 'Un caractère de coquetterie... il importe de mettre en valeur cette particularité traditionnelle de la valse viennoise, qui consiste à assigner, au

recordings, through devices that suggest a more complex rhythmic treatment, such as a clear hesitation in adopting the actual tempo until almost the fourth bar; and the contrast between a *sostenuto* execution of the dotted rhythms (e.g. bars 1, 3 and equivalents) and a more straightforward movement of the groups of quavers in the right hand (e.g. bars 6, 10 and equivalents) ( Fig. 35).

**Figure 35 Schubert D 790/4 bars 1-10**

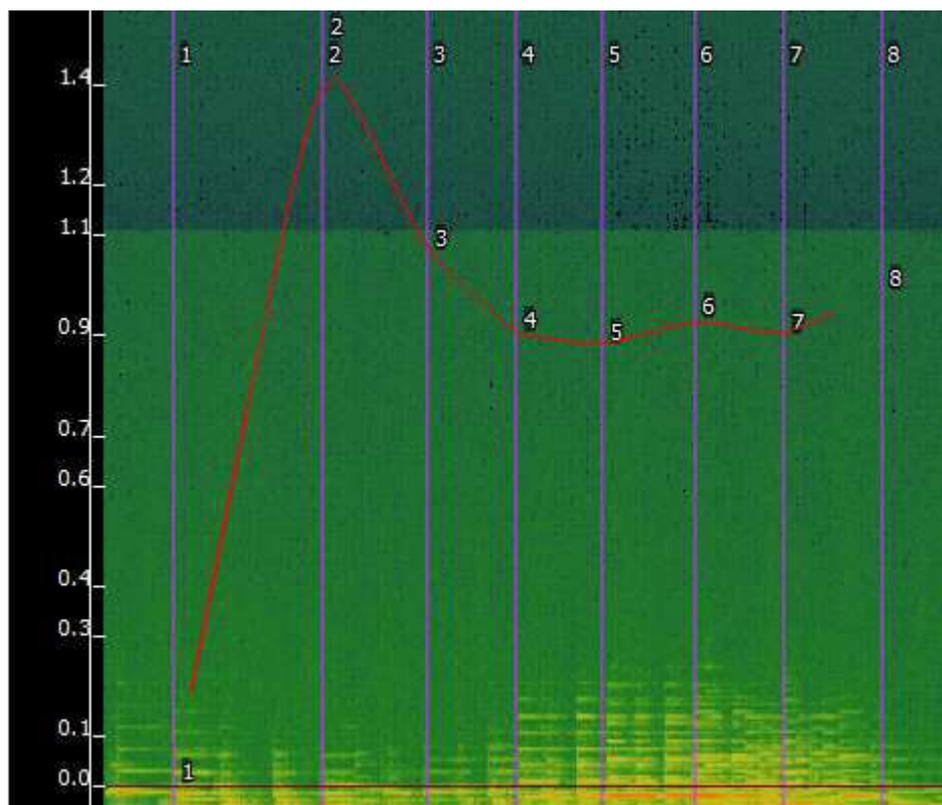


In the following graph from Sonic Visualiser (Fig. 36) we can see Cortot's treatment of tempo in the first eight bars of this dance from his 1937 recording.

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second temps de chaque mesure de l'accompagnement, une imperceptible anticipation rythmique'.

Figure 36 Schubert D 790/4 bars 1-8, Cortot's tempo (1937 recording)



The red curve, which maps how the tempo is modified in the performance of this phrase, shows that Cortot's tempo is not really established before the end of bar 3. The significant delay displayed in bar 1 is followed by an acceleration in bars 2 and 3 that leads to a rather steady pulse between bars 4 and 7 before the cadential slowing down at the end of the seventh bar. Cortot's hesitation to establish the tempo, along with a capricious *rubato*, expressed through the unevenness of the beats within the bars, could be an effective way to illustrate the shyness in the character of 'coquetry' that he ascribed to this dance in his editorial comments.

The unevenness of the beats within the same passage is clearly displayed in Table 5. Through this table it is possible to see not only on which bars Cortot chooses to, or not to, accentuate the metrical particularity of the Viennese Waltz, with the anticipation (and usually prolongation too) of the

second beat, but also to find out about the textural characteristics on Schubert's score that may explain his decisions.

**Table 5 Duration of each beat in Schubert D 790/4 bars 1-8 using Sonic Visualiser (Cortot's 1937 recording)**

	Duration in seconds for each beat in every bar		
Bar number	1 <sup>st</sup> beat	2 <sup>nd</sup> beat	3 <sup>rd</sup> beat
1	0.41	0.51	0.47
2	0.36	0.35	0.36
3	0.31	0.34	0.29
4	0.25	0.38	0.24
5	0.25	0.30	0.32
6	0.37	0.29	0.23
7	0.24	0.29	0.46
<b>Average</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>0.33</b>

A look at the bars in which Cortot clearly anticipates and/or prolongs the second beat shows that the rhythmical motif that invites such an interpretation is the dotted quaver and semiquaver followed by two crotchets, as in the right hand of bars 1, 3 and 4. Especially in bars 1 and 4 the particularity of the Viennese waltz is strongly highlighted, as shown by the significantly longer second beats and the shorter first and third. However, in bar 5, where the same motif is displayed in the right hand, Cortot does not give clear predominance to the second beat which, while it comes after a shorter first, is followed by a slightly longer third beat. Although the ratio between the first and second beat here is still enough to

deliver the Viennese character, it seems that Cortot prefers rather to accentuate the modulating D-sharp in the left hand chord of the third beat, which chromatically leads to the subtonic in the next bar, and unexpectedly differentiates the second crotchet of the motif, unlike in bars 1, 3 and 4. On the other hand, the fact that Cortot chooses to play in a straightforward and more flowing manner when the right hand moves in groups of quavers is clearly shown in bar 2, which displays a very balanced ratio between its three beats. Cortot's use of *rubato* in relation to the rhythmical motifs of the melody is displayed even more emphatically in bars 6 and 7, which combine dotted rhythms and groups of quavers. The duration of the beats in bar 6 shows that Cortot clearly lingers on the dotted rhythm of the first beat before moving forward with the second and third beat quavers. Similarly, in bar 7, where the quavers and the dotted rhythm are placed in reverse compared to bar 6, the significantly longer third beat shows that Cortot saves a small *ritardando* only for the dotted rhythm that leads to the perfect cadence at the beginning of bar 8.

In the eighth dance, Cortot detects a Hungarian influence and a correlation with the nostalgic atmosphere usually found in Chopin's mazurkas, which could be underlined not only by the melodic/harmonic material, but also by Schubert's accents in the third beats of several bars (e.g. bars 1, 3, 5 and their equivalents, Fig. 5).<sup>163</sup> In Cortot's executions, the images suggested in the edition appear to be brought about by a rhythmic treatment that highlights the unevenness of the beats in each bar and the accentuation with slight delay, hesitation and, at times, even arpeggiation on the accented third beats.

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<sup>163</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 11n13.

Similarly to the eighth, in the tenth dance Cortot's execution reveals again the special role of the accents for the application of *rubato*, which would be important for creating the suggested image for this episode. The editorial comment does not mention more than the rather obvious practice of emphasizing the first beat of each bar as a feature of the rustic character of the *Ländler*.<sup>164</sup> However, this character in Cortot's recordings is not only created by an emphasis on the first beats, but also by the interpretation of the accents on the second quaver of bar 1 and its equivalents (Fig. 37).

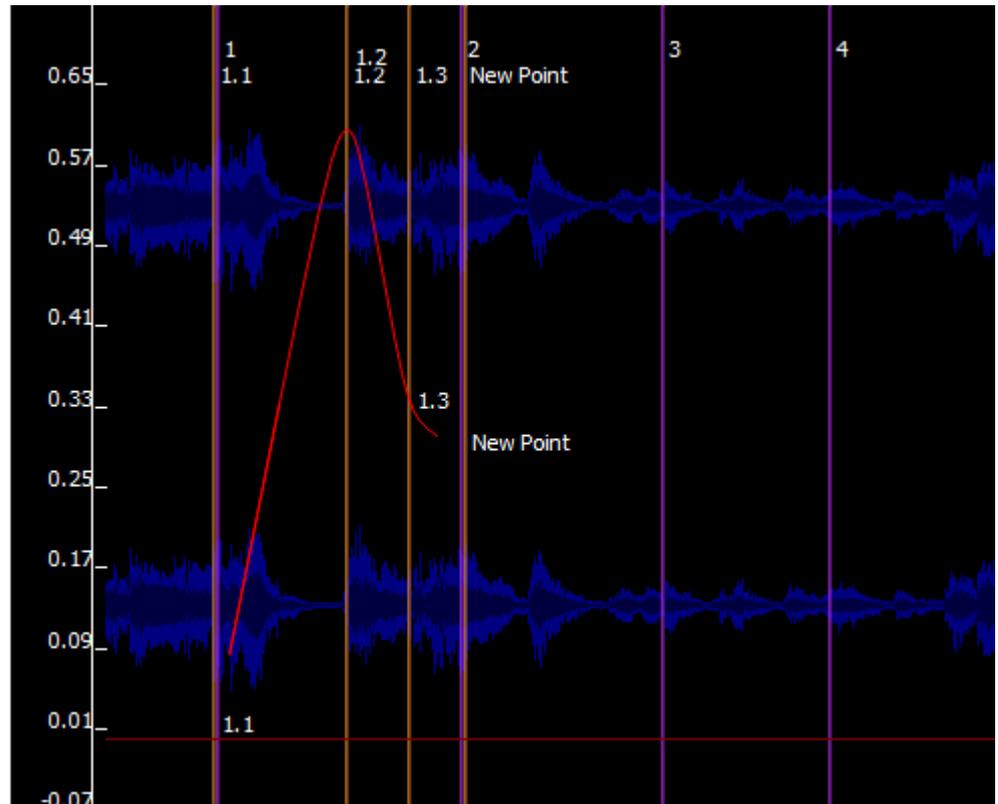
**Figure 37 Schubert D 790/10 bar 1, Cortot's interpretation (both 1937 and 1951 recordings)**



The following graph (Fig. 38), created with Sonic Visualiser, shows in detail how Cortot delivers the capricious character of this dance with a unique *rubato* in bar 1. Again the horizontal axis of the graph corresponds to the time of the first four bars and the vertical one indicates time values in seconds. The purple vertical lines that contain the numbers 1-4 show the entrance of each bar, whereas the orange ones that follow the numbering 1.1-1.3 show the entrance of each beat in the first bar.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 13n16: 'en prenant un appui caractéristique sur la première note de basse de chaque mesure... concernant les particularités rythmiques de ce divertissement rustique.'

Figure 38 Schubert D 790/10 bars 1-4, Cortot's *rubato* (1951 recording)



The red curve makes clear that Cortot plays a significantly longer first beat and then compresses the following two as he proceeds to the second bar. The exact time values for each beat in bar 1 show that the first beat is more than twice as long as the second and a little less than three times as long as the third beat (first beat: 0.66 seconds; second beat 0.32 seconds; and third beat: 0.27 seconds). In addition, the blue waveform that visualizes the sound of this excerpt forms a straight line just before the second orange line (it is clearer in the lower part of the graph) which, in fact, means that there is a notable moment of silence between the first and the second beat. This is particularly indicative of Cortot's special response to Schubert's accentuation in the first bar by means of timing rather than increase of tone,

which comprises a very effective way of portraying the animated and capricious character of this dance.

### 5.2.3.3 *Moment Musical D 780 No. 3*

The shortness of the *Moment musical*, played and edited by Cortot outside the cycle of the whole D 780,<sup>165</sup> does not permit a lengthy discussion and the parallel examination of the recording (1954) and the edition (1960) shows generally that there is significant consistency between these two sources. As this was, for the most part, the case mainly with the late recording (1951) and the edition (1960) of the *Ländler*, this fact could be explained by the chronological proximity between the recordings and the editions of these works.

#### *Consistency*

Concentrating on particular issues, features of Cortot's playing heard in his recording of the *Moment* that correspond to a great extent with the editorial comments are found in the areas of tempo adoption, tempo modification and sound quality. Cortot's tempo in the recording is relaxed and comfortable, especially in comparison with Fischer's or Schnabel's performances. This is perfectly echoed in the edition, where Cortot points out the importance of avoiding a very vivacious pace, and notes the significance of *Moderato* in the double tempo indication.<sup>166</sup> Through this remark and the result heard in

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<sup>165</sup> Cortot's choice to perform and edit only the third piece out of all the *Moments musicaux* should not be considered too arbitrary a decision, given that Schubert allowed its publication individually in 1823, before including it in the publication of D 780 as a set (1828). A similar consideration applies, perhaps, to the *Moment musical* No. 6. See footnote 142.

<sup>166</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Moment Musical*, p. 4n2: 'on évitera l'adoption d'un mouvement trop vif, en s'avisant que "l'Allegro" indiqué par Schubert se voit amendé par la

the recording, the issue of the actual tempo indication – created by the difference between the version of the *Moment* published individually in 1823 (*Allegretto Moderato*) and the one included in the first edition of the whole cycle, published in 1828, (*Allegro Moderato*) – is solved, since the suggested tempo could be applicable for any of these markings.

In terms of tempo modification, Cortot's playing and editorial remarks are again in full accordance. The steady and unaltered tempo, dominated by rhythmic precision of the accompaniment, as heard in the recording, demonstrates precisely the editorial advice that the 'pulsation of the left hand should keep a uniform pace and it should not be subject to rhythmic alteration at any time during the piece'.<sup>167</sup> The same principle is applied at the very end, where the *senza rit.* indication, added by Cortot in the penultimate bar and underlined in a specific comment,<sup>168</sup> is rendered faithfully in the recording. Finally, Cortot's consistency is displayed so clearly that even the imperceptible breathing that helps a delicate placement of the very last chord, suggested in the edition by a comma, is heard in the recording (Fig. 39).

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mention "Moderato" '. In the same footnote Cortot suggests a metronome marking for this piece (crotchet = MM 80-86).

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 4n1: 'cette pulsation de main gauche, dont la cadence uniforme ne doit être l'objet d'aucune altération rythmique durant toute la durée de la pièce'.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 6n9: 'et sans qu'aucun ritardando'.

Figure 39 Schubert D 780/3 bars 53-54, Cortot's Edition (1960)



Similar to tempo issues, particular sound qualities heard in the recording are in accordance with the editorial suggestions. Typical examples are the treatment of grace notes, like the ones in bars 3 and 4 and their equivalents, and the variety of colour demonstrated in repeats. Regarding the ornamental *petites notes*, Cortot's gentle and delicate playing, which was quite opposite to the nervy style of both Fischer and Schnabel, is underlined quite emphatically in the edition: 'the different motifs of the right hand should be dominated by a delicately realized sonority and one should avoid the usually heard practice of executing them inappropriately wildly, for they contain a rather discrete, poetic and refined significance.'<sup>169</sup>

Likewise, the practice of varying the colour of the melody's tone, which is clearly heard on the recording in bars 11-18 and 19-26, is also mentioned in the editorial comments regarding the former period. It is not only the *dolce* (*cantando*) marking, added by Cortot for the right-hand part in bar 11, but also a specific remark, which calls for 'accentuation' in the melodic element,

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p. 4n2: 'l'adoption d'une sonorité délicatement sensibilisée dans l'énonciation des différents motifs épisodiques de la main droite... Ce qui revient à dire que, loin de se manifester sous les allures d'un divertissement d'allure semillante et d'esprit entreprenant – ce qui est trop fréquemment le fait d'une traduction pianistique égarée sur de fautives données d'allégresse intempestive – il importe de réserver à cette page le privilège d'une exécution discrètement stylisée, et de laquelle on bannira tout éclat sonore qui ne saurait qu'en vulgariser la séduisante signification poétique, si naturellement raffinée.'

followed by some 'attenuation' in the repeat, that shows his consistency.<sup>170</sup> The fact that for the next period (bars 19-26) such a suggestion is left out in the edition, while it is heard in the recording, could be a sign that the practice of altering the sound in repeats was, for Cortot, an interpretive decision to be taken and delivered by the performer.

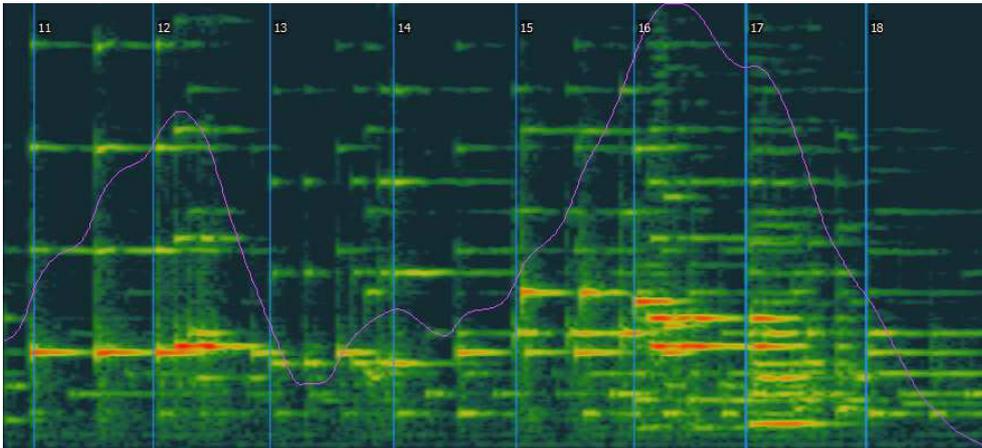
A more analytical approach to Cortot's playing of these two passages from his 1954 recording reveals that certain differentiation of the dynamics in the repeats can also be related to further differentiation, of various degrees, in the phrasing as a means of expressive variety. However, such a performance decision is more an implication rather than an explicit suggestion in Cortot's editorial comments.

The following two figures, created with Sonic Visualiser, display Cortot's treatment of timbre and dynamics in bars 11-18, in the first time and in the repeat (Fig. 40 and Fig. 41). The horizontal axis of each graph corresponds to the time of the excerpt and the vertical one to the frequencies of the sound. The fieriness of colours in each spectrogram indicates loudness and brightness of sound, meaning that the colours that are closer to orange and red indicate louder and brighter playing and the green-like colours indicate softer and darker tones. Additionally, the purple curve of each figure depicts the dynamic process of the performance, indicating increase of volume when it moves up and attenuation when it moves down. Finally, the blue vertical lines, as in previous examples, specify the beginning of each bar.

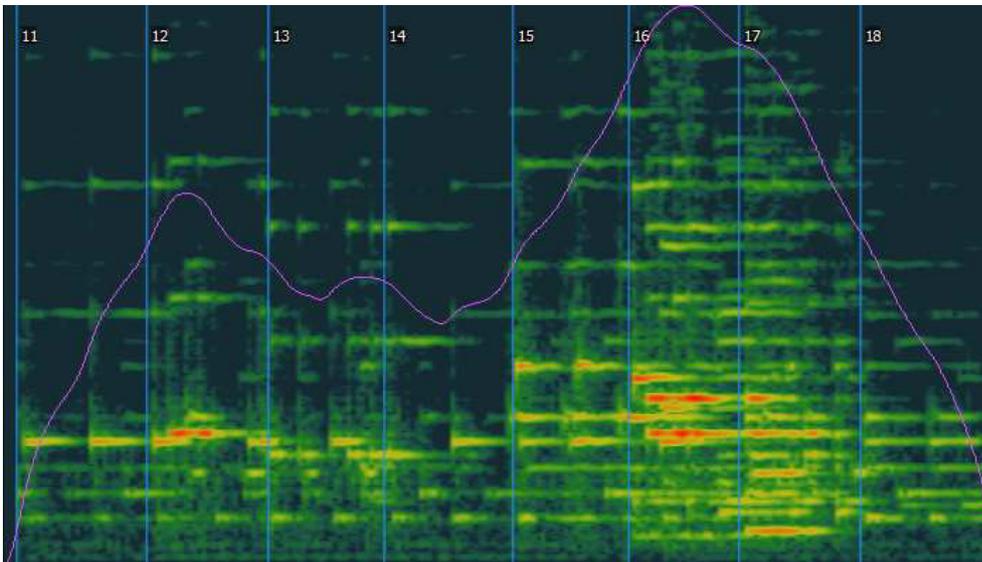
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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 5n5: 'Accentuation un peu plus soutenue du dessin mélodique... Atténuer la sonorité lors de la reprise de ce motif'.

**Figure 40 Schubert D 780/3 bars 11-18 (first time), Cortot's dynamics/phrasing (1954 recording)**



**Figure 41 Schubert D 780/3 bars 11-18 (repeat), Cortot's dynamics/phrasing (1954 recording)**

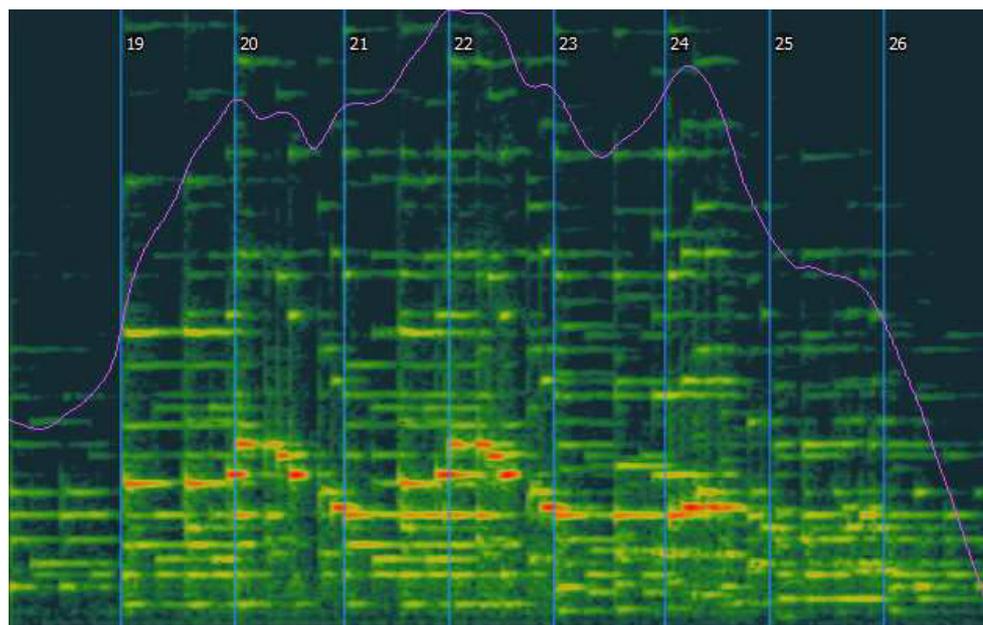


The fact that Cortot clearly plays louder in the first time and softer in the repeat is particularly shown in the colours of these spectrograms in bars 11 and 12. Additionally, the way that he decides to start the passage each time also appears to lead to subtle divergences in the phrasing which

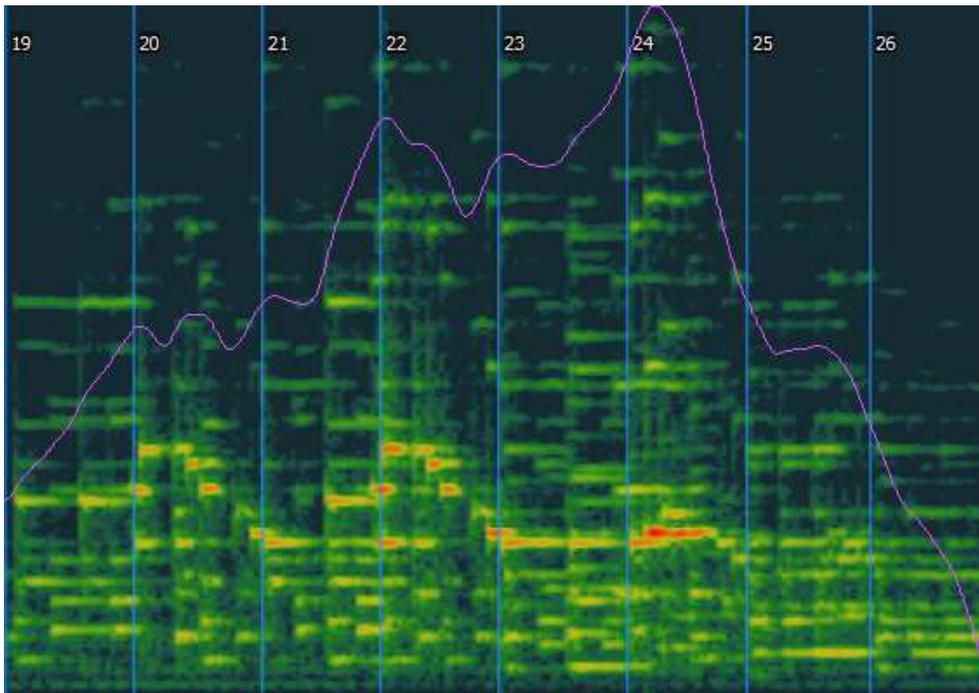
nevertheless, is remarkably similar both times. As the curves in these figures show, Cortot decides to structure this eight-bar phrase as a succession of two four-bar parts, where the second one that peaks in bar 16 is more intense than the first. Cortot's brighter start in the first time appears to be a reason for a more sudden *diminuendo* in bar 13, which is needed before the build-up towards bar 16, whereas in the second time the softer start results in a smoother development within the first four bars, and a slightly higher peak in terms of volume at bar 16. In this example, it is clear that Cortot chooses mainly to vary the loudness and brightness of timbre in the repeat of this passage without radically modifying the structure of the phrase.

In the next two spectrograms, though, which show Cortot's playing in bars 19-26 for the first time and the repeat (Fig. 42 and Fig. 43), the differentiation of the dynamics appears to be related to a notable modification in the structure of the phrase.

**Figure 42 Schubert D 780/3 bars 19-26 (first time), Cortot's dynamics/phrasing (1954 recording)**



**Figure 43 Schubert D 780/3 bars 19-26 (repeat), Cortot's dynamics/phrasing (1954 recording)**



In this example (Fig. 42 and 43), not only does Cortot play the first half of the phrase more softly in the repeat than in the first time, as is particularly displayed in the colours of the spectrograms for bars 19-22, but he also appears to follow each time a different phrasing plan, as the purple curve shows. In the first time, Cortot structures the passage as an eight-bar phrase which builds up halfway through (bar 22) and smoothly ebbs in the following four bars. Such a method is also in accordance with Schubert's dynamic indications that are *forte* in bars 19-22 and *piano* in bars 23-26. In the repeat, though, Cortot decides to highlight a different point in the passage: the significantly softer reprise of bars 19-20 is followed by a slightly louder pair of bars (21-22) which altogether appear to build up towards the peak of the phrase that this time is reached at bar 24. It becomes clear, therefore, that Cortot uses different dynamics between the first and the second time in order to also vary the placement of the important moments within the same passage.

The way that Cortot uses the dynamics in relation to the phrasing in these two passages is an issue that could be particularly relevant to the analysis that Nicholas Cook presents regarding the practice of 'phrase arching' in recordings by pianists from the very early until the late twentieth century. Introduced by Neil Todd, but, remarkably, having been anticipated in writings and treatises by theorists of the nineteenth century like Hugo Riemann (1849-1919), the theory of 'phrase arching' provides a model of musical expression according to which particular works of music can be structured in phrases – or, in Cook's words, 'metrically based groups' – of two, four, eight or even sixteen bars.<sup>171</sup> The main idea of the theory is that performers tend to suggest an increase of dynamics and/or tempo towards the middle of the phrase and an attenuation towards the end of it. Cook maintains that the way performers phrase in works that would fit perfectly into structures of four or eight bars (the *Moment musical* No. 3 can be seen as a typical example) is significant of their performance style, and he concludes that 'phrase arching' should be considered a typical feature of mid and late twentieth-century performers.<sup>172</sup>

In the examples above, Cortot appears to use the idea of 'phrase arching', though not always in the same metrical levels. In the passage within bars 11-18 Cortot's phrasing is clearly structured in two four-bar parts where each one peaks towards the middle and withdraws towards the end. In the passage within bars 19-26, his phrasing in the first time is again quite symmetrical, though in this case within the full range of the eight-bar group.

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<sup>171</sup> See Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 61 and 177-182. In the sixth chapter of his book (pp. 176-223), Cook discusses the practice of 'phrase arching' in recordings of Chopin Mazurkas from the 1920s until the early twenty-first century.

<sup>172</sup> Cook connects the increase in the use of 'phrase arching' after the Second World War with the predominance of the modern/neoclassical style against the romantic one. This kind of phrasing appears to associate with the sense of naturally flowing playing and the more structure-orientated approaches of modernist performers. However, Cook maintains that even today there are performers that follow phrasing patterns different to 'phrase arching'. See *ibid.*, pp. 205-212.

However, in the repeat Cortot decides to lead the intensity of the phrase towards a point that is closer to the end, thereby going against the symmetry of the 'phrase arching'. Although his phrasing again follows the idea of thinking in groups of two and four bars, Cortot shows a tendency to play differently from what would be the predictable way. As Cook has maintained, this is an approach that was quite prevalent in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performers who, although many of them made use of 'phrase arching' to a certain extent, displayed a less structure-orientated style of playing that intended to highlight the transition from one moment to the next.<sup>173</sup> While Cortot in his 1960 edition suggests only a subtle change of dynamics for the repeat of the passage in bars 11-18, his modification of the phrasing in the repeat of bars 19-26, as heard in the recording, could display an element of earlier tendencies in his own performance style.<sup>174</sup>

In general, in both the recording and the edition of the *Moment musical*, Cortot seems to consistently suggest a moderate interpretation that focuses more on subtle alteration of sound qualities. Thus, main elements of the

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<sup>173</sup> The tendency to play repeated material in a different way to what would have been expected, and, generally, to highlight salient moments – as opposed to large structural units – in the performance of a piece has been considered a typical feature of the style of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performers. See Cook, *Beyond the Score*, p. 68: 'After all, both d'Albert and Sapellnikoff, in their different ways play what is in immanent terms the same music [Schubert's Op. 90 No. 3] quite differently – and within their performances, each plays the same music quite differently when it comes back. Perhaps then – as Rothstein suggested – there is a problem with the basic idea of a piece of music embodying a structure that performers can bring out.' And *ibid.*, p. 190: 'The artistry [of Friedman's playing in Chopin's Mazurka Op. 63 No. 3] lies in the transition from each moment to the next.' Also see Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 7, paragraph 12: 'expressivity operated typically from moment to moment earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century', <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap7.html> (Accessed: July 24, 2015).

<sup>174</sup> See Leech-Wilkinson, 'Making Music with Cortot', p. 142: '[Cortot] is not predictable... and that is one of the things that make his playing seem free and interestingly capricious, as if responding to the fancy of the moment... This is very much a feature of Cortot's personal style.' Cortot's use of 'phrase arching' along with practices that refer to older performance styles in these examples is reminiscent of Cook's findings regarding Horowitz's recording of Chopin's Mazurka Op. 63 No. 3 (1949) which, next to a consistently symmetrical kind of phrasing, displayed features that are typical of late nineteenth- and early twentieth century performers. See Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 196-197.

piece's expressive message become the contrasts between luminous and shaded sounds (repeated phrases) and the combination of discreetly marked left-hand accompaniment and gracefully ornamented melodies, interrupted only momentarily by the 'boldness' of chords in bar 19.<sup>175</sup> Such an approach shows Cortot's consistency also in relation to the folkloric features of this work, implying that, although certainly present, they should not lead to an exceedingly accentuated and heavy execution.<sup>176</sup> Cortot's interpretation that gave to possible Gypsy influences a referential, rather than a primary, role in this *moment*, although it clashed with bigger gestures suggested by Fischer and Schnabel, agrees with Bellman's observations that Gypsy idioms in this piece are evoked discreetly.<sup>177</sup>

To conclude, Cortot's consistency and inconsistency appears to be a subject strongly influenced by the years between a recording and the edition of a specific work by Schubert. It is, therefore, reasonable that the Impromptu displays quite a few cases of inconsistency which can, partially, be explained by the limitations owed to the technology of the recording's time and the process followed in piano rolls. In addition, the year of the recording (1920), and that of the edition (1957), could be the reason for Cortot's reconsideration of particular issues in the latter, as a result of the changes in performance styles documented in the meantime. Equally logical is the

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<sup>175</sup> Cortot-Schubert, *Moment Musical*, p. 5n6: 'Ici, sonorité franche'.

<sup>176</sup> Cortot noted that Schubert was possibly influenced by certain features of the *style hongrois* in this *moment*. See Cortot-Schubert, *Moment Musical*, p. 3: 'caractéristiques alternatives mineures et majeures ajoutent un indéfinissable élément de saveur folklorique ...les modalités significatives de la musique populaire bohémienne'. However, he implied that this was a rather 'latent' element of this piece. See *ibid*: 'sans cesser d'interroger les expressions d'une sorte de secrète nostalgie latente'.

<sup>177</sup> Certainly the influence of the *style hongrois* in this *moment* was much milder than in other pieces of Schubert, like the *Divertissement à l'Hongroise*, D 818. Cortot and Bellman, actually, agree that the *Divertissement à l'Hongroise* is a more significant example of Schubert's music influenced by the Gypsy style. See Cortot-Schubert, *Moment Musical*, p. 3: 'le Divertissement à la Hongroise de 1824 s' avère le plus frappant exemple'; and Bellman, pp. 159-161. Bellman echoes Cortot also in considering the *Moment musical* No. 3 a less fiery example. See Bellman, p. 162.

fact that the *Moment musical* and the *Ländler* display significant consistency between audible and written evidence, as the recordings<sup>178</sup> and the editions were mainly products of his later years. Especially as far as remnants of earlier tendencies are concerned, Cortot's consistency can be seen as an attempt to substantiate their applicability, despite certain modifications in terms of performance styles and tastes.

Cortot's recordings of the works of Schubert are, along with his editions, indispensable material in the search for his response to the piano music of the Viennese composer. In many cases, the audible result explains more clearly some editorial descriptions, which alone could seem vague and general. On the other hand, they can also reveal the performer's approach that does not have to necessarily coincide with the one of the pedagogue, which is underlined in the editions. These recordings also shed light on Cortot's consideration of the applicability of certain features of the early twentieth-century style to the music of Schubert, and generally in relation to the evolution of performance practice. After all, without these recordings, the process of exploring Cortot's perception of some repertoire with which he has rarely been affiliated in the past would be extremely difficult and inefficient.

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<sup>178</sup> As seen earlier, the late recording of the *Ländler* (1951) was much more in agreement with the edition than the earlier one (1937), at least, in terms of tempo uniformity. This can display Cortot's response to interpretive features of a later twentieth-century style.

## CONCLUSION

One of the most important developments in modern musicology during the last few decades has been that the action of performance has started being highlighted as a fundamental aspect of the existence of music, contrary to the widely accepted view during the second half of the twentieth century and, to a certain extent, today that music exists in composers' scores.<sup>1</sup> The availability of recordings from the turn of the twentieth century onwards has allowed us to directly access historical performance styles and, in fact, realize that musical notation alone is unable to sufficiently convey the structure and meaning of musical works. The recordings themselves confirm that the same scores were understood and performed in significantly different ways during notably earlier historical periods in comparison with later times. As a result, the duty to inform musicians about how music can and/or should be played has become the privilege not only of the composers and the theorists, but also of the performers. The existence of recordings, along with commentary editions and writings by performers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, allows us to explore the approaches of artists from much earlier times to the same works that we study and perform today, and examine how their interpretive ideas interact with their

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<sup>1</sup> Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 1-2 and 10. In his book Cook discusses the distinction between the perception of music as writing and the perception of music as performance. Music-as-writing, represented by what Cook calls traditional musicology, suggests that music exists in scores where the structure and the meaning of a musical work are inherent. Cook also maintains that the perception of music as writing has been a dominating approach during the second half of the twentieth century and, to a lesser extent, today. On the other hand, music as performance is a more recent tendency that has used evidence from early and late recordings in order to show that performance is a vital aspect of the existence and realization of music and not merely a reproduction of a pre-existed idea which is inherent in the notation. Also see Leech-Wilkinson, 'The Emotional Power of Musical Performance', p. 1-4; Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 2, paragraphs 1-26, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap2.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap2.html) (Accessed: September 6, 2015); and John Rink, 'Analysis and (or?) performance', p. 39: 'The score is not 'the music'; 'the music' is not confined to the score.'

performances.<sup>2</sup> An attempt to discover the relation between theory and practice through written and audible evidence from different historical contexts can inspire present-day performers, and lead them to new insights about musical performance in general, and in particular regarding repertoire with which they believe they are familiar.

In my investigation I attempted to explore how Cortot's editions and recordings of Schubert's music can influence and inform performances of this repertoire today. In the editions, I considered how Cortot's commentary on issues of performance can be compared to approaches represented by modern scholarship, and particularly by the historically informed performance movement. In addition, I compared the way Schubert's texts are reproduced in Cortot's and in *Urtext*-labelled editions of our time, a subject which, I believe, is key to the potential impact of Cortot's editions on present-day performers. In the discussion of the recordings, I attempted to discover the way Cortot's playing signifies his response to specific performance issues, and also how his performance style can be understood in relation to the stylistic changes documented in the first half of the twentieth century. This historical context helps present-day performers familiarize themselves with styles that are rarely exposed in modern performances, and understand the possibilities that different approaches offer in the interpretation of the same works.

The use of scores in order to discuss performances is a rather traditional approach in musicology and has usually been affiliated with conservative views that consider performance to be a reproduction of the score, where

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<sup>2</sup> It is notable that written advice that can be found in performers' writings and commentary editions does not always concur with the audible result as heard in their recorded performances. See Peres da Costa, p. 309 and Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style*, p. 227.

supposedly the work and the composer's intentions are inherent.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, modern opinion has suggested that musical notation should only be understood as a body of sketchy instructions that cannot adequately signify essential aspects of performance, which often depend on performers' responses.<sup>4</sup> Cortot's editions comprise an interesting case study on the connections performers develop between scores and performances of musical works because, contrary to the *Urtext*-labelled editions, they provide a version of the composer's text that displays extended commentaries and deliberate alterations to the notation by the performer/editor. Such an approach should not be understood as merely the consequence of editorial inadequacy, although the previous chapters showed cases where Cortot's editions repeat errors from older and inaccurate publications of Schubert's works, which may have occasionally influenced Cortot's interpretive suggestions. The omission of pause signs in the Impromptu D 899 No. 2, which were missing from the first print and, consequently, from later editions, is a typical example.

However, Cortot's editorial intervention should rather be understood as a descriptive way to show that changing the composer's score is, in fact, an important part of what performers do when they give a performance of a musical work, because it generates one of the most vital aspects of musical performance which is expressivity. As Cook and Leech-Wilkinson have observed, the invention of MIDI allows us to conclude that literal renditions of musical texts, as in just accurate executions of pitches and durations of

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<sup>3</sup> The features of this approach to musicology are discussed by Cook in what he calls the 'theorist's analysis'; see Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 33-42. For a relevant discussion, see also Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 2, paragraphs 11-20. [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap2.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap2.html) (Accessed: September 6, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 125, 234-235, 243 and 265; Leech-Wilkinson, 'The Emotional Power of Musical Performance', pp. 41-43; and Leech-Wilkinson, 'Compositions, Scores, Performances, Meanings', pp. 1-7. Cortot has also been described as an advocate of this opinion, see Manshardt, p. 11.

the notes, produce an outcome that is far from what would be described as musically convincing and expressive.<sup>5</sup> This happens because such a type of execution lacks some variability in main features of the musical structure, such as the quality of sound and the rhythm, which differentiates a performance that is human and, to a certain extent, expressive from a performance that is artificial and mechanical.<sup>6</sup> This variability is, in fact, the result of the application of these expressive means that performers use, depending on their instruments and voices, in order to give shape and meaning to the musical texts. The musical texts, on the other hand, do not usually ask for the application of these expressive means as frequently as they are actually used in expressively engaged performances, as for example the variance of volume and/or rhythm when phrasing, or when they do so, the instructions provided, such as those concerning tempo, dynamics and articulation, are usually open to various interpretations.

It is, therefore, through the performer's deliberate inflections on the composer's notation – in timing, loudness, timbre or pitch – that expressivity in performance is achieved; or in Leech-Wilkinson's words through the performer's 'expressive gestures', which are indicative of his/her performance style.<sup>7</sup> Thus, Cortot's deliberate alterations to Schubert's

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<sup>5</sup> Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 139, 222 and 234, and Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 2, paragraph 47 [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap2.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap2.html) and chapter 8, paragraph 4 [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap8.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap8.html) (Accessed: September 6, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that, in any case, human beings are unable to produce purely mechanical executions due to the physically imperfect human nature. The imperfection and irregularity of our motor system is perhaps an important reason why the sense of expressivity that we get from the variability of sound in human performances cannot be conveyed even by more sophisticated programmes than MIDI which can incorporate some of this variability (e.g. Sibelius).

<sup>7</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 8, paragraph 15: 'An expressive gesture can be defined as *an irregularity in one or more of the principal acoustic dimensions (pitch, amplitude, duration), introduced in order to give emphasis to a note or chord—usually the start of a note or chord.* Expressive gestures involve sounding notes for longer or shorter, or louder or softer, or in some other way different compared to the local average.' And *ibid.*, paragraph 18: 'So a *'performance style'* is a set of expressive gestures characteristic of an

scores should be considered as an elaborate kind of notation which intends to represent some of those expressive gestures that, he suggests, are needed for the performance of the musical text. While such a practice may demonstrate, in an almost contradictory way, the inefficiency of the system of musical notation, at the same time it provides, perhaps, the most effective way to enable this form of semiosis to represent performance.<sup>8</sup> Even though after Cortot's intervention the musical text is still open to several interpretations, at the same time it is clear that this elaborate type of notation can describe, at least schematically, an expressive performance of a work more efficiently than the composer's unaltered score.

Cortot's editions also reveal his connection with the editorial traditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Although his Schubert editions, in particular, were published between 1954 and 1960 – several years after Giesecking had edited the *Urtext* edition of the complete Impromptus and *Moment Musicaux* for Henle (1948), and a few years before Badura-Skoda completed the first critical edition of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy from both the

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*individual performer that taken together constitute their 'personal style'; or a set characteristic of a period ('period style'), or a group (for example, national style).'* (Leech-Wilkinson's italics.) It should also be noted that personal and period performance styles, in fact, differ in the way performers apply their 'expressive gestures'. Thus, for example, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performers applied significantly larger inflections in tempo than performers of the mid and late twentieth century. However, this does not mean that the latter did not apply any 'expressive gestures' at all. See Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 8 paragraph 14: 'Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially during the 1920s and 30s, [expressive gestures] were very large; later, especially in the 1960s and 70s, they were often very small, barely noticeable in casual listening although one would notice at once if they were missing'; <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap8.html> (Accessed: August 28, 2015). The concept of 'expressive gestures' is not dissimilar to that of 'expressive contours' introduced by Patrik Juslin; see Juslin, 'Communicating Emotion in Music Performance', p. 317.

<sup>8</sup> See Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 240-243, where Cook discusses Stephen Hefling's idea that an 'embellished notation' can arguably represent performance; p. 243: 'Of course, as I have been at pains to emphasise in this book, notations of whatever kind cannot stand in for performances in any straightforward way: not only do they fail to capture many of the most salient aspects of performance, but the nature of a representation crucially depends on its purpose ... Yet the totality of the notation still discloses, in visible form, something of the topography and dynamics of the musical work as performance.'

autograph and the first print (Universal Edition, 1965) – they appear to follow practices typical of editions that were published several decades earlier. Cortot's annotations on versions of the Impromptus and the 'Wanderer' Fantasy that appeared in scores from around the 1890s, edited by Louis Köhler and Richard Schmidt (Peters, c. 1890), show that these publications were probably used for his own editorial work.<sup>9</sup> Cortot appears to include in his editions several indications from these scores, even though they did not originate from the autographs or the first prints of the edited works, when they concurred with his own interpretation of particular passages. Such indications are the *subito piano* in bar 159 of D 899 No. 2, the *poco rit.* in bar 26 of D 935 No. 2 and the time signature of the second movement in the Fantasy. Other earlier publications that also seem to have influenced Cortot are Lazare Lévy's editions of the Impromptus (1915). This is displayed in Cortot's observations regarding the articulation of the opening in D 899 No. 2, which quote some of Lévy's editorial comments, as well as in several indications for tempo fluctuation in the postludes of the variations in the B-flat major Impromptu, D 935 No. 3, which are strikingly similar in both pianists' editions. On the other hand, Cortot also attempts to inform performers about potential errors that editions of his time, or before, may have contained, though usually without specifying particular publications. Such a case is the indication *Agitato* in bar 22 of the *Adagio* in the Fantasy, which appeared in such old editions as those by Liszt (1871) and Giuseppe Buonamici (1897), but, according to Cortot, 'had nothing to do with Schubert'. This remark shows that, while Cortot's intention was to offer a musical text displaying deliberate alterations which are necessary for the

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<sup>9</sup> Such annotations include Cortot's interpretation of the broken octaves in the second variation of the Impromptu, D 935 No. 3 and pedalling indications in the first movement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy. These scores belong to Cortot's Archive that can be accessed at the Médiathèque Musicale Mahler in Paris.

performance of a work, access to the composer's notation is still important for the sort of alterations the performer is invited to apply.

On the other hand, the use of recordings for analyzing performance and performance styles is a recent tendency in musicology.<sup>10</sup> Although it is often highlighted that the recordings lack pivotal aspects of live performances, such as their 'unfixedness' and 'liveness', Cook and Philip Auslander have observed that listeners do not perceive them any differently from 'real' performances that happen at a particular time and place.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the recordings can comprise effective sources for performance analyses. In the recordings that I discussed I acknowledged the problems of early recording techniques, as they may have occasionally forced specific performance decisions by the recorded artists. An important characteristic of the early recordings that influenced my conclusions on Cortot's performances is the time limitations of the 78-rpm discs that often led performers to apply, more or less, significant cuts to the recorded pieces, or to split their performances onto several sides or discs. For this reason, I suggest that it is very likely that Cortot had to omit the repeat of dance No. 11 in his 1937 recording of the *Ländler*, D 790. In addition, the unreliability of piano rolls in the rendition of devices that pertain to sound, touch and pedalling led me to focus my examination of Cortot's 1920 recording of the Impromptu D 935 No. 3 mainly on issues of tempo fluctuation and *rubato*.

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<sup>10</sup> See Cook, *Beyond the Score*, p. 142; and Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 1, paragraphs 1-19, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap1.html> (Accessed: July 29, 2015). One of the pioneering works in this field of research is Robert Philip's exceptional study on recorded performances which has been mentioned in the previous chapters.

<sup>11</sup> For a relevant discussion, see Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 351-373 and Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 55-69 and 183-184. Also see Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 1, paragraphs 20-21, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap1.html> (Accessed: July 29, 2015).

Cortot's recordings demonstrate even more directly than the editions the need for a creative approach by performers, since the sound is undoubted proof that the methods a performer uses for the execution of the musical text are not sufficiently depicted on the composer's score. It becomes clear, therefore, that deliberate modifications on the notation, or even the application of devices that are not specified in it, are necessary for the performance of a composition. The use of specific performance devices by a performer reveals not only his/her personal style, but also the way this can be related to certain tendencies that characterize the styles of other performers during a particular historical period.<sup>12</sup> Cortot's Schubert recordings (1920-1954) show his affiliation with practices that were typically used by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century pianists or, in other words, with what I called in this work the 'romantic' style. Such practices are a frequent use of tempo fluctuation and *rubato*, dislocation between treble and bass, arpeggiation of chords and additional ornamentation/improvisation. Moreover, Cortot's recordings show how his performance style may have been affected by the introduction and gradual predominance of what I called the 'modern' style, which resulted in a significantly less frequent use of these devices in performances from the last decades of the first half of the twentieth century onwards.

A comparison between recordings of the same works that Cortot made in different periods of time shows that his performance style remained mainly unaltered, despite the stylistic changes in the early twentieth century. This is particularly apparent in the way devices like arpeggiation of chords, dislocation between treble and bass, and additional improvisation are applied in his 1937 and 1951 recordings of the *Ländler* – thus corresponding

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<sup>12</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 8, paragraph 18, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap8.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap8.html) (Accessed: September 2, 2015).

with relevant findings by Leech-Wilkinson, who notes that Cortot often appears to have produced identical performances of the same works in both early and late recordings.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, the examination of recordings by Cortot and other pianists of similar generations demonstrate Cortot's response to the stylistic changes of the early twentieth century in comparison with how his, more or less, near contemporaries responded. In the B-flat major Impromptu, a comparison between Cortot and Paderewski shows that – despite several similarities in the application of such devices as *rubato*, dislocation and overdotting – Cortot made a more sparing use of practices of the so-called 'romantic' style than a significantly older performer. At the same time, though, he used them more frequently than pianists who were only slightly younger than him, like Fischer and Schnabel, as shown in recordings of both the Impromptu and the *Moment musical* No. 3. In addition, Cortot's late recordings of the *Moment musical* (1954) and the *Ländler* (1951) display features of earlier styles to a greater extent than earlier recordings of the same works, such as Schnabel's recording of the former (1937) and Erdmann's recording of the latter (1940).

However, Cortot's response to specific areas of performance practice, as seen in the editions, usually in comparison with his recordings, shows that the evolution of performance styles may have affected his interpretive approaches more strongly than his mainly unaltered style of playing suggests. Cortot's critical evaluation of the Lisztian tradition that pertained to the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, as well as his remarks regarding additional ornamentation/improvisation and tempo fluctuation in various works of Schubert, reveal a tendency to adjust, or rationalize, the use of earlier

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<sup>13</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, 'Making Music with Alfred Cortot', p. 135.

practices according to more recent standards of performance.<sup>14</sup> This rationalization appears to highlight the performer's need to focus on issues that relate more closely to the so-called 'modern' style, such as following the composer's text and style of writing, and prioritizing the rendition of the main structural features of a work.

Cortot's edition of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy (1954) comprises a remarkable source for the history and evolution of performance styles, since it demonstrates the way performers of the first half of the twentieth century responded to the practices of rewriting and paraphrasing that were typical of late nineteenth-century performers/composers. Liszt's solo version of the Fantasy and his transcription for piano and orchestra display the sort of changes a (late) nineteenth-century virtuoso would apply to an earlier piece, and the extent to which the transcribed versions could be equally, if not more, popular than the original work.<sup>15</sup> Although Cortot appears to believe the Lisztian tradition to be an indispensable part of his interpretation of the Fantasy, at the same time he carefully considers many of the suggestions found in Liszt's versions depending on how Schubert's text and compositional style are treated. Cortot's intention to encourage the use of the interpretive freedom of earlier performers in a rationalized way is particularly evident in his approval of Liszt's suggestion for voicing the tenor line in the fourth variation (bar 39) of the *Adagio*, but without adopting Liszt's textural additions. Similarly, Liszt's variants that change the physiognomy of the texture, like the use of octaves in the opening of the finale, or make use of the instrument in an irrelevant way to Schubert and his time, as in bars

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<sup>14</sup> Cook has observed a similar tendency in performances and writings by artists that were active during the early and mid twentieth century, like Horowitz and Gieseking. See Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 196 and 222.

<sup>15</sup> In Chapter Four I referred to several performers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that regularly played Liszt's versions of the Fantasy. Apart from Liszt, these performers were Saint-Saëns, d'Albert, Busoni and Friedman.

43-46 of the second movement, are not accepted. However, variants that display a less drastic kind of (re)writing, like the doubling of the arpeggios in bars 71 and 74 in the first movement, are occasionally described as more satisfying alternatives to Schubert's choices.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, Cortot's edition clearly demonstrates that performers' priorities in the mid twentieth century were different from those half a century earlier, though it still shows that these changes are realized through a gradual absorption of earlier performance tendencies into more recent ones.

The issue of the use of unnotated and improvised embellishments in the performance of Schubert's compositions is touched upon by Cortot in a similar manner to texts on historically-informed performance; in this respect his approach can be seen as very modern.<sup>17</sup> The ornamented variants that Cortot provides in his editions – as in the Trio from the Scherzo in the Fantasy, and in several dances from the *Ländler* (1960 edition) – combined with the relationship to the texture of the composition and the style of the composer and his time, highlight the applicability of this practice in repeated material. Such an approach concurs strikingly with views found in treatises from the first half of the nineteenth century, like those of Starke and

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<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting here that Cortot applies minor textural additions, like octave doublings of single bass notes, in his performance of Schubert's Trio No. 1 with Thibaud and Casals, (1926), as in the low D-flat in bar 198 of the first movement, and in the first left-hand F in bar 92 of the Scherzo. Such cases are normally to be found in Cortot's recordings and editions. Similarly Cortot plays octaves instead of single notes in the triplets of the right hand that start with *sforzando* in bars 211-214 of the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1 (1947), while he also suggests a similar octave doubling in bar 17 of *Arlequin* from Schumann's *Carnaval*. See Robert Schumann, *Carnaval, Op. 9*, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert, 1946), p. 7n2. This kind of embellishment was regularly applied by performers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

<sup>17</sup> The notion that the movement of historically informed performance is in fact a modern (or post-modern) performance approach has been expressed by several scholars including Richard Taruskin, Cook, and Leech-Wilkinson. See Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 164-172 and Cook, *Beyond the Score*, p. 28.

Schilling.<sup>18</sup> However, as both Cortot's edition and recordings of the *Ländler* show, along with its applicability in repeats, additional ornamentation/improvisation can also be a creative means for the structural completion of sets of miniature dances, which were often published as complete sets in posthumous editions, thus not necessarily reflecting Schubert's conception. In addition, these pieces have usually been described as products of Schubert's own improvisations, an issue that is specifically addressed in Cortot's edition of the *Ländler* in order to justify the use of additional ornamentation/improvisation. Although Cortot's improvisatory ending in D 790 can arguably comprise a reference to the practices of paraphrasing used by older performers, at the same time it displays a less elaborate style and aims to meet specific historical and structural criteria. Thus, apart from an attempt to question greater improvisatory tendencies of earlier times, the issue of additional ornamentation/improvisation is placed within a theoretical and structural frame and, particularly in Cortot's editions, is presented as an optional rather than necessary feature in Schubert performance.

A particularly structural concept appears to be important for the way Cortot approaches the issue of tempo fluctuation in his Schubert editions. This is apparent in all the edited works, especially in the Impromptus and the 'Wanderer' Fantasy where the application of slight flexibility of tempo is advised for transitions between main structural parts, as in the ternary forms of the Impromptus D 899 No. 4 and D 935 No. 2, and the third movement of the Fantasy. In general, uniformity of tempo is to be maintained, since contrasting episodes are not to be played in, at least perceptibly, different tempi (the E-flat major episode in the first movement of the Fantasy is an

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<sup>18</sup> Starke's *Wiener Pianoforte-Schule* (1819-1821) and Schilling's *Musikalische Dynamik* (1843) are treatises which are often cited by historically-informed Schubert performers and scholars.

exception), while comments and indications on the score usually advise against any modification in timing.

However, a comparison between Cortot's recordings and editions of the same works, especially in cases where the year of a recording is significantly earlier than that of the edition, shows how the idea of rationalization of earlier practices can explain Cortot's approaches in the editions. Such cases are the B-flat major Impromptu (1920 recording – 1957 edition) and the *Ländler* (1937 early recording – 1951 late recording – 1960 edition). The recording of the Impromptu displays an abundant use of tempo fluctuation as a kind of *rubato* in order to underline expressive details of the phrasing or the dynamics, which in the edition is not indicated, unless it relates to a deeper structural role, as in the postludes in each variation. In addition, the recording shows the adoption of a different tempo for every variation, a method that appears to correspond with the significant changes of character of Cortot's playing, while the editorial comments mainly favour uniformity of tempo throughout the piece. It is evident, thus, that the edition accentuates the need for structural coherence and, in comparison with the recording, keeps the expressive gestures by means of tempo modification at rather subtle levels.

In the *Ländler*, although both of Cortot's recordings display a more frequent use of tempo fluctuation than is suggested in the edition, it is notable that the late recording occasionally appears to embody the editorial comments more consistently than the early one. This is apparent in the way tempo relations between several dances, like the second and the third, are treated in each of the recordings and the edition, and particularly in the way Cortot approaches in all three sources the opening of dance No. 6. The fact that Cortot's interpretation of this passage gradually shifts from a large gesture in the inflection of tempo (1937 recording), to a subtler execution (1951

recording) and, finally, to the idea of uniformity (1960 edition) may be a fascinating demonstration of the transitional stages in the evolution of performance styles.

These observations allow us to conclude that the transition to the predominance of one performance style against another is a gradual process that cannot be defined within narrow time frames, and goes through phases when contrasting approaches to the same repertoire coexist. Thus, the differences between performances lie in the way performers respond to certain stylistic tendencies which, however, do not necessarily include only the leading ones of a particular historical period. Comparisons between performances and interpretive suggestions that display features of the so-called 'modern' and 'romantic' styles should not be understood as a clash between proper and improper kinds of interpretation, but, on the contrary, should show the wide range of interpretive possibilities that are at performers' disposal. The differences between recordings by Cortot and other performers of a similar period, or between the approaches found in Cortot's recordings and editions, may be explained in historical and stylistic terms, but their essential point is that they all represent interpretations equally true to the composer's score at a particular time. Constant changes in performance styles should always remind us that an ideal interpretation of a musical work cannot exist, since a great part of what can be considered the meaning and the substance of a work is delivered by performers. On the other hand, in every historical period performers' innumerable options will be conditioned by sociopolitical and cultural standards of that time. Therefore, it is beneficial to view the different approaches not as conflicting, but rather as 'complementary' (Cook's word) methods of musical

performance, since this underlines the flexible nature of musical works, and performers' interpretive freedom.<sup>19</sup>

The issue of sound and the interpretation of Schubert's expressive indications is a subject which I did not examine as fully in relation to the changes in performance styles during the first half of the twentieth century. This is mainly because issues like tempo, *rubato* and additional ornamentation are more obvious areas of contrast between the so-called 'romantic and 'modern' styles, given also the unreliability of early recordings in the rendition of sound qualities. However, I did consider the way Cortot used practices of earlier tendencies for the interpretation of certain indications on Schubert's scores, such as accents, since it encourages present-day performers to look for creative and unconventional ways in their interpretations of standard forms of musical notation. Cortot's approach to Schubert's expressive marks demonstrates how the performer's decisions can be equally related to a consideration of certain historical parameters, such as the various types of instruments from different times, as well as a personalized response to the composer's text.

Cortot's approach to sound in Schubert's works appears to be due partly to his preference for *fin-de-siècle* Pleyel pianos which, while they should not be considered radically different from modern instruments, allowed greater sensitivity of touch and clarity of tone, especially in low registers, than other pianos of that time. Thus, editorial comments which call for a restrained rendition of loud dynamics, and a sparing use of pedal, in places with left-hand passage-work in a low register – as in bars 342-349 of the third movement in the Fantasy, or bars 110-111 in the fifth variation of D 935 No.

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<sup>19</sup> Cook, *Beyond the Score*, p. 5: 'the rhetorical and structuralist approaches represent complementary ways of construing music as both theory and practice, and to that extent permanently available options, even though one or the other may predominate at any given time or place.'

3 – may originate in Pleyels' particular characteristics. Similarly, in Cortot's recorded performance of the *Moment musical*, which was most likely played on a Steinway grand, the refinement of the left-hand *staccato* that results in a less Gypsy-inspired, and perhaps more French-like, interpretation, could be a reference to the fine sonorities of Pleyel pianos.

On the other hand, Cortot's ideas on sound appear to address more systematically the differences between modern pianos and the keyboards of Schubert's time. This approach often highlights the fact that modern instruments offer stronger volume and greater sound capacity and, therefore, the rendition of particularly loud dynamics should ensure the avoidance of inappropriately harsh sonorities. This is evident in one of the most frequent remarks in Cortot's Schubert editions, where the performers are advised to think and execute indications like **ff** and **f** as smaller scale nuances, **f** and **mf** respectively. Examples of where Cortot makes this suggestion include the dense textures of the third and fourth movement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, as well as the less dramatic style of the Impromptus D 935 No. 2 and No. 3. The same approach often appears to apply to the interpretation of Schubert's accents both in loud and soft contexts. Full chordal textures that contain simple accents (>) and/or **fz**, such as those in the Coda of the first movement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy, usually display Cortot's editorial additions that show the need for a mindful execution by the performer. The descriptive notation provided by Cortot on these chords – which combines the uplifting gesture of *staccato*, with the fullness of tone of *tenuto* and the resonance of metronomic pedals – demonstrates, perhaps, the most efficient way to render the effect of orchestral *tutti* without producing a rough sound on modern instruments. In soft contexts, on the other hand, Cortot usually suggests the execution of normal accents as *tenuti*, as in the last variation in D 935 No. 3. The interpretive implication in

such a remark points to the fact that modern pianos, while they can easily sound clumsy in literal executions of accents, still require a greater amount of pressure for the production of a singing tone than the keyboards of the early nineteenth century.

The differences between modern and period instruments also appear to be addressed in order to encourage the use of the special characteristics of present-day pianos in favour of a wider range of expressive variety in the performance of Schubert's music. This is particularly evident in editorial suggestions regarding the use of the left pedal in the interpretation of both dynamic indications and accents. Cortot's advice to execute Schubert's *pianissimo* as *piano* combined with the application of *una corda* in the opening of the Impromptu D 935 No. 2, or to use the left pedal exclusively on the accented chords in bars 18-26 in the first movement of the Fantasy, shows how certain features of modern pianos can be used creatively in order to achieve a special colour in the sound. In addition, the great range of touch that can potentially be realized on modern instruments, through intensity of articulation or differentiation in the voicing, is also highlighted as a means of accentuating the orchestral qualities of Schubert's writing, especially in the second movement of the 'Wanderer' Fantasy.

Particularly inspiring for present-day performers is the interpretation of accents as indicators for the application of expressive devices other than simply a stronger tone, since it suggests fresh, or at least less common, insights regarding such symbols in Schubert's scores. This approach is not usually displayed in the editions, though it is occasionally implied, as shown in the third variation and the Coda of D 935 No. 3, where Cortot's commentary and notational additions appear to encourage agogic executions of accented chords. However, the recordings show various expressive devices that Cortot used for the interpretation of Schubert's

accents. In the *Ländler*, the accentuation in the opening of dance No. 10 is rendered through a capricious kind of *rubato*, which leads to a perceptible halt between the first and second beat of the first bar, while in dances No. 8 and No. 11 agogic delays and arpeggiation enhance the smooth sound quality of accented chords. In the recording of the *Moment musical* Schubert's accents in bars 49 and 51 are highlighted through an imperceptible delay, and a special voicing effect for the, chromatically moving, passing notes in the middle voice. An exceptional source for the particular finesse with which Cortot appears to respond to Schubert's accentuation in his performances is also the recording of the Trio No. 1, D 898 by Cortot, Thibaud and Casals (1926). In the second movement in particular, Schubert's frequent accents, within an undoubtedly lyrical character, are performed through dislocation between treble and bass (bar 82), arpeggiation of chords (bars 57-58) or *rubato* (bars 9, 12, 20 and 62 are just a few examples), thus showing that they are realized as signs of significantly expressive moments in the musical structure. The special approach to Schubert's accentuation that is evidenced in Cortot's recordings not only reveals features of a personal, or rather period, performance style, but more importantly shows how conventional types of notation in this repertoire can be rendered through a thoughtfully creative and emotional response by the performers.

The performer's creativity and emotional response to musical texts are particularly highlighted in Cortot's editions and recordings through an interesting correlation between the use of poetic language and metaphor, and their possible implications for performance. The imaginary pictures and eloquent descriptions of emotions or moods, which Cortot often provides in

his editions for particular passages or phrases,<sup>20</sup> appear to relate to the application of specific expressive devices, as heard in his recorded performances, or shown in his editorial additions on Schubert's texts. Although the use of poetic language and metaphor in order to describe methods of performance is thought of as a rather old-fashioned practice in the education of present-day performers, there is no doubt that it highlights a fundamental way through which human beings perceive music.<sup>21</sup> Research studies that explore the connection between music and emotion assert that human brains respond to music first and foremost (in a 'pre-conscious' or 'pre-cortical' level) in an emotional way, which relates to the acoustical features of the sounds in the rendition of basic elements of the musical structure, such as rhythm, harmony and dynamics. Moreover, the emotions generated by musical performances are experienced through the ability of human brains to automatically establish similarities and analogies between certain 'expressive cues' in the sound and past experiences from one's life, or even imagined situations.<sup>22</sup> It is, therefore, plausible to maintain that the realization of (a part of) a composition in extra-musical terms can inform the performer about the expressive means that he or she may need

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<sup>20</sup> This is a practice Cortot generally applied in his editions. Typical examples are the programmes he suggested for each one of the twenty-four preludes of Chopin and the 'Faust' story he attributed to the Liszt Sonata. See Cortot-Chopin, *24 Préludes*, p. [ii] and Cortot-Liszt, *Avant Propos*, p. [i].

<sup>21</sup> Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 6, paragraph 49, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap6.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap6.html) and chapter 8, paragraph 110, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap8.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap8.html) (Accessed: September 6, 2015). The fact that the use of metaphor is not frequently applied in modern approaches in music education is also evidenced in Susan Hallam, 'Music Education: The Role of Affect', *Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications*, eds. Patrik Juslin and John Sloboda (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 798-801; and in Patrik Juslin, 'Expression and Communication of Emotion in Music Performance', *Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications*, pp. 478-479.

<sup>22</sup> See Juslin, 'Communicating in Emotion in Music Performance', pp. 309-337; John Sloboda and Patrik Juslin, 'Psychological Perspectives on Music and Emotion', *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research*, pp. 85-86 and 91-96; and Alf Gabrielsson, 'Emotion in Strong Experiences with Music', *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research*, pp. 431-449. Also see Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 2, paragraphs 34-35, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap.2.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap.2.html) (Accessed: September 8, 2015).

to use in order to communicate specific emotions in performance. Cortot's editions and recordings demonstrate not only how a specific method of execution can originate in a metaphorical perception of the musical text, but also the importance of the performer's intervention through certain inflections on the composer's notation.

In the *Ländler* in particular, I considered how the theatrical conception, discussed in Cortot's edition, may have been rendered in his recordings through a special handling of sound quality and rhythm. One of the most pronounced examples is the fourth dance, where I suggest that the 'character of coquetry' which Cortot attributed to it, is rendered in his 1937 recording through a number of expressive devices that display a complex use of *rubato* in the first eight bars. Devices such as a hesitation to establish the tempo until bar 4, a certain unevenness in the execution of the ternary metre, and the contrast of a *sostenuto* kind of playing in the dotted rhythms with a straightforward flow in the sequences of quavers appear to efficiently portray the (possibly pretentious) shyness and indecisive manner of a coquette. The fact that a similar kind of rhythmic treatment is suggested by Cortot for the performance of the waltz-like episode (bar 25) from Schumann's *Grillen* (No. 4 from *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12) – where he also evoked the image of a, 'mischievous' this time, 'coquetry' – shows that he may have consistently used a specific pattern of expressive devices for the rendition of this particular character.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Schumann, *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, ed. Alfred Cortot (Paris: Salabert, 1947), p. 18n2. Cortot's editorial commentary and annotations advise the performer to shorten the first and linger on the third beat of the bar: 'C'est ainsi que les premières mesures de ce second fragment bénéficient d'une exécution légère et rebondissante; le rythme y devenant presque celui d'une valse empreinte de malicieuse coquetterie, alors qu'un élan plus soutenu doit déterminer l'ample giration du passage en la bémol majeur, dont on mettra bien en valeur la ponctuation caractéristique, dûe aux appuis sur les troisièmes temps de chaque mesure; la durée des noires suivantes de la main droite étant envisagée presque comme si elles n'avaient que la valeur d'une croche'.

In the third variation from the B-flat major Impromptu, the 'feeling of pathetic anxiety' which Cortot ascribed to its passionate character, appears to relate to several expressive devices heard in his recording of D 935 No. 3. In this variation Cortot makes considerable use of dislocation between treble and bass, overdotting and *rubato*, particularly in bars 71-73, which are also marked *espressivo* in his edition. This match between commentary and execution, apart from showing how Cortot, or perhaps generally performers of his time, may have understood ill-defined notational instructions,<sup>24</sup> reveals the role of certain expressive devices as potential signifiers of particular emotions in musical performance, such as anxiety and agitation. Interestingly, Cortot appears to have used the same devices for expressing an equally passionate and agitated character in the C-minor episode (bar 48) from the second movement of Schubert's Trio No. 1, which displays striking textural similarity to the third variation of the Impromptu. The emotional climax of the piano's sorrowful tune, under the palpitating accompaniment of the strings, is highlighted by Cortot through dislocation and overdotting in bar 52, and an agogic execution of the semiquavers in bar 53. It would be fascinating to consider the similarity of Cortot's playing in these examples as indicative of how particular features of the musical structure can generate specific emotional responses by the performer.

Finally, in the 'Wanderer' Fantasy Cortot's poetic descriptions appear to correspond with his additions on the text, most notably in passages where Schubert provided sparse expressive indications. Cortot's elaborate notation in these places can be so thorough that, despite the fact that his playing of the Fantasy is not available on record, we can still understand

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<sup>24</sup> Peres da Costa and Hudson have discussed the use of devices like dislocation and *rubato* by late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performers as means for the rendition of such indications as *espressivo*, and, generally, as indicative of a particularly expressive and emotionally involved kind of playing. See Chapter Five, footnote 115.

important aspects of his recommended manner of execution. Examples of this can be found in the first (bar 27) and second variation (bar 31) of the *Adagio*, where the contrasting imaginary pictures and moods that Cortot describes arguably correspond with additional pedalling and dynamic indications, while Schubert had provided no expressive marks apart from *pianissimo* in bar 27.<sup>25</sup> I suggest that the ‘immaterial’ kind of sound that Cortot asks for in the first variation, which he describes as a ‘vision of life after death that promises a heavenly bliss’, corresponds with the indication *dolce* and implies a uniform kind of voicing between the two parts of the right-hand octaves. Additionally, his indications for full pedals in every beat of the bar aid the peacefulness of the left-hand part and the smoothness of the melodic line. Similarly, the ‘penetrating and painfully realized sonority’ that Cortot suggests for the ‘hidden anxiety’ of the second variation seems to imply a clearer projection of the top notes of the melodic octaves, thus corresponding with the added *mezzo-piano* and *espressivo*. At the same time, pedal markings for only the first half of each beat show that the feeling of agitation could be highlighted through slight interruptions in the continuity of sound in both the melody and the repeated chords of the accompaniment. Although such an analysis certainly expresses my personal understanding of Cortot’s, equally personal, interpretation of this passage, it still shows how a performer’s deliberate alterations to the composer’s score can represent certain expressive gestures that aim to evoke specific emotions in performance.

Cortot’s Schubert recordings and editions help present-day performers explore ways to express their creativity in the performance of repertoire which they are usually trained to treat with a kind of reverence that leaves

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<sup>25</sup> This is according to the Wiener Urtext Edition where both the first edition and the autograph were used in the sources. In the first edition of the Fantasy *pianissimo* is given in bar 26 and not in bar 27.

very little space for interpretive freedom. The perception of the composer's score as only a point of departure (yet an important one), which the performer has to modify, or embellish, through various expressive means in order to perform it, shows that a collaboration between composer and performer is required for the realization of musical works.<sup>26</sup> The fixed form of the musical texts, along with the variability of performers' approaches – which are informed by certain historical factors, performance traditions and personalized interpretations – manifest the inability of the score, and the composer, to adopt a regulative role. More importantly, however, they teach performers that their role in this collaboration should be considered equally creative and authoritative as that of the composer.

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<sup>26</sup> The idea of a collaboration between performer and composer is supported by several scholars such as Leech-Wilkinson, Cook and Robert Martin. See Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music*, chapter 2, paragraph 32, [www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap2.html](http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap2.html) (Accessed: September 6, 2015); Cook, *Beyond the Score*, pp. 235-236; and Robert Martin, 'Musical Works in the Worlds of Performers and Listeners', *The Interpretation of Music: Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Krausz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 120 and 122-124. A similar opinion appears to be supported by Cortot; see Thieffry, p. 73: 'Music is a dead-letter without *interpretation*. It always contains a fixed element, laid down by the composer, and a variable element, assigned to the performer. By the quality and the subtle relations of movements, *timbres*, and shadings the interpreter's skill can make itself felt.'



# APPENDIX I<sup>1</sup>

## WORKS OF CHOPIN EDITED BY CORTOT (EDITIONS SALABERT, PARIS)

WORK	YEAR OF PUBLICATION
<i>Allegro de Concert</i> , Op. 46	1947
4 Ballades, Opp. 23; 38; 47; 52	1929
<i>Barcarolle</i> , Op. 60	1936
<i>Berceuse</i> , Op. 57	1936
<i>Bolero</i> , Op. 19	1947
3 <i>Écossaises</i> , Op. post. 72C	1946
12 Etudes, Op. 10	1915
12 Etudes, Op. 25	1916
3 <i>Nouvelles Études</i> (1838- 40)	1947
<i>Fantaisie</i> , Op. 49	1936
4 Impromptus, Opp. 29; 36; 51; 66 ( <i>Fantaisie- Impromptu</i> )	1934
<i>Marche funèbre</i> Op. post 72B	1946
21 Mazurkas (Vol. 1), Opp. 6; 7; 17; 24; 30	1943
14 Mazurkas (Vol. 2), Opp. 33; 41; 50; 56	1943
15 Mazurkas (Vol. 3), Opp. 59; 63; 67; op. post 68	1943
10 Nocturnes (Vol. 1), Opp. 9; 15; 27; 32	1945

<sup>1</sup> Sources: <http://www.durand-salabert-eschig.com/formcat/depliants/cortot.pdf>;  
<http://bl.uk>; <http://www.mediathequemahler.org>.

8 Nocturnes (Vol. 2), Opp. 37; 48; 55; 62	1945
Nocturne Op. post. In C- sharp minor	1946
Nocturne Op. post 72A	1946
7 Polonaises, Opp. 26; 40; 44; 53; 61 ( <i>Polonaise- Fantaisie</i> )	1939
3 Polonaises posthumes, Op. 71	1946
Polonaise posthume in G- sharp minor	1946
24 Preludes, Op. 28	1926
Prelude, Op. 45	1947
3 Rondos, Opp. 1; 5; 16	1946
4 Scherzos, Opp. 20; 31; 39; 54	1933
Sonata No. 1, Op. post. 4	1946
Sonata No. 2, Op. 35	1930
Sonata No. 3, Op. 58	1930
<i>Tarantelle</i> , Op. 43	1936
<i>Variations brillantes</i> , Op. 12	1947
<i>Variantions sur un air allemande</i> , Op. post (1824)	1946
14 Waltzes, Opp. 18; 34; 42; 64; 69; 70; op. post in E minor	1938

**WORKS OF LISZT EDITED BY CORTOT (EDITIONS SALABERT,  
PARIS)**

<b>WORK</b>	<b>YEAR OF PUBLICATION</b>
<i>Après une lecture de Dante, Sonata quasi fantasia (from Année de Pèlerinage No. 2)</i>	1950
<i>Au bord d' une source (from Années de Pèlerinage No. 1)</i>	1949
Ballade No. 2	1949
<i>Bénédictio de Dieu dans la solitude (from Harmonies poétiques et religieuses)</i>	1949
3 Caprices poétiques	1950
6 Consolations	1949
<i>6 Études d' après Paganini</i>	1949
<i>12 Études d' exécution transcendante</i>	1951
<i>2 Études de concert</i>	1950
<i>Fantaisie et fugue sue le nom de BACH</i>	1949
<i>Fantaisie sur Don Juan</i>	1949
<i>Funérailles</i>	1949
<i>Jeux d' eaux à la Villa d' Este from Année de Pèlerinage No. 3)</i>	1949
<i>2 Légendes</i>	1949
<i>Mephisto – Waltz</i>	1949
Polonaise No. 2	1949
Spanish Rhapsody	1949
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2	1949
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6	1949
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 9	1949
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 10	1949
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 11	1949
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 12	1949

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 13	1949
<i>Rêves d' Amour</i> (3 Nocturnes)	1950
Sonata in B minor	1949
Variations on a theme by Bach "Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen"	1949
<i>Venezia e Napoli</i> (from <i>Année de Pélerinage</i> No. 2)	1949

**WORK OF SCHUMANN EDITED BY CORTOT (EDITIONS SALABERT,  
PARIS)**

<b>WORK</b>	<b>YEAR OF PUBLICATION</b>
"Abegg" Variations, Op. 1	1945
<i>Arabesque</i> , Op. 18	1945
<i>Blumenstücke</i> , Op. 19	1945
<i>Carnaval</i> , Op. 9	1946
<i>Davidsbündlertänze</i> , Op. 6	1946
Fantasy, Op. 17	1947
<i>Fantasiestücke</i> , Op. 12	1947
<i>Faschingsschwank aus Wien</i> , Op. 26	1947
<i>Humoresque</i> , Op. 20	1947
<i>Kinderszenen</i> , Op. 15	1945
<i>Kreisleriana</i> , Op. 16	1946
8 <i>Noveletten</i> , Op. 21	1947
<i>Papillons</i> , Op. 2	1945
Sonata No. 1, Op. 11	1946
Sonata No. 2, Op. 22	1948

Sonata No. 3, Op. 14	1948
Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13	1948
Toccata, Op. 7	1946
<i>Waldszenen</i> , Op. 82	1947

**WORKS OF BRAHMS EDITED BY CORTOT (EDITIONS CURCI, MILAN)**

<b>WORK</b>	<b>YEAR OF PUBLICATION</b>
3 <i>Intermezzi</i> , Op. 117	1957
<i>Paganini – Variations</i> , Op. 35 (book 1 and book 2)	1957
2 Rhapsodies, Op. 79	1956
5 Selected Pieces, Opp. 76 No. 2; 118 No. 2; 118 No. 6; 119 No. 3; 119 No. 4	1958
Sonata No. 3, Op. 5	1959
Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24	1957



## APPENDIX II

### DISCOGRAPHIC REFERENCES FOR CORTOT'S RECORDINGS OF SCHUBERT'S MUSIC

The main source for the following references has been John Hunt's study *Pianists for the connoisseur*.<sup>1</sup> Wherever it was possible, references from Naxos Music Library were added. The majority of Cortot's recordings of Schubert's music took place in London, apart from: the works which were recorded in Tokyo in 1952 and for which special Japanese publications are mentioned; and the 1925 recording of the 'Litanei' which was made in Camden, NJ (USA).

WORK	YEAR AND DISCOGRAPHIC DETAILS
Impromptu D 935 No. 3	1920 Duo-Art piano roll Decca SDDR 173
12 <i>Ländler</i> D 790	1937 HMV DB 3268 biddulph LHW 020 Naxos 8.112012

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<sup>1</sup> Hunt, *Pianists for the connoisseur*, pp. 196-198.

	1951	HMV DB 21492 EMI 1C047 01400 APR 5574, 2010
<i>Moment Musical D 780 No. 3</i>	1952	Victor (Japan) M 335 Victor (Japan) LS 105 Toshiba shinseido SGR 8114
	1954	APR 5574, 2010
'Litanei auf das Fest Aller Seelen' D 343	1920	Duo-Art piano roll Decca SDDR 173
	1925	Victor 6502 Pearl GEMMCD 9386 Piano Library PL 214 biddulph LHW 014- 015 Naxos 8.111261
	1927	HMV unpublished
	1937	HMV DB 3338 Victor 14612 biddulph LHW 020 Naxos 8.112012

	<p>1948 HMV DA 1898</p> <p>1952 Victor (Japan) SD 3104 Victor (Japan) LS 105 Toshiba shinseido SGR 8114</p> <p>1953 HMV DB 21618 HMV 7R 174 HMV (Italy) 7RQ 3036 APR 5574, 2010</p>
Piano Trio No. 1 D 898	<p>1926 HMV DB 947-950 Victor M 11 HMV COLH 12 EMI HLM 7017 / 1C047 01148M / RLS 723 / 1C153 52475- 52477M / 3C161 50089-50091M</p> <p>EMI CDH 761 0242 / CDM 566 9862 / CHS 764 0572</p> <p>Magic Talent CD 48010 Monopoly GI 20059 Avid AMSC 586</p>

	Andante 1991-1994 Naxos 811.0188 EMI CDZ 572 1542 (III only)
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