

Perpetuated Genius

An Exploration of the Bach Legacy through Transcriptions by

Franz Liszt, Ferruccio Busoni, and Leopold Godowsky

Eliot Grasso

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“‘Notation’ (‘writing down’) brings up the subject of Transcription, nowadays a term much misunderstood, almost discreditable. The frequent antagonism which I have excited with ‘transcriptions’, and the opposition to which an oftentimes irrational criticism has provoked me, caused me to seek clear understanding of this point. My final conclusion is this: Every notation is, in itself, a transcription of an abstract idea. The instant the pen seizes it, the idea loses its original form.”

- Ferruccio Busoni in *A New Esthetic of Music* (1907)

Johann Sebastian Bach, more than any other composer in the sphere of Western art music, has reached what can only be described as the apex of musical immortality. Even during Bach’s lifetime, in an era when travel and communication came at a premium, he was known throughout Germany as an organist of the highest caliber and a consummate composer. Simply put, Bach was a genius, and the music which poured forth from his being can be judged only as such. It is genuine, unique, and above all brilliant, yet it was composed in modesty. Any hint of the pretentious, conceited or tawdry can scarcely be found among the works that bear his name. It is the music of Bach that has been rediscovered, revived, and exalted for the past 250 years. The work of a mere talent hardly enjoys such a phenomenon.

One mark of genius is the facility with which a composer’s music is integrated into what is understood to be “classic” or “classical” repertoire. There have been scores of composers who, in their day, were hailed as brilliant but whose reputations have all since vanished. Bach's pupils were fond of recalling that their teacher often quoted

Gerhardt Niedt: "The sole purpose of harmony is the Glory of God; all other use is but the idle jingling of Satan." Perhaps Bach's music has been so well appreciated because he openly credited his creator for giving him the gift of music making.

The music of Bach is so refreshing and inspiring that it has been transcribed by dozens of musicians since the composer's death. The *Chaconne in D minor* from *Partita BWV 1004* has been arranged and reworked by Ferruccio Busoni, Alexander Siloti, Wilhelm Middleschute, Leopold Stokowski, and Arno Landmann. Busoni's and Siloti's transcriptions are both for piano, while the Middleschute and Stokowski transcriptions are for orchestra. The Landmann transcription is scored for organ solo, making it quite unique in transcription literature. The piano and orchestral transcriptions of the D minor Chaconne are known and acknowledged in the classical performance world. In fact, when a pianistic virtuoso seeks to record Bach, the Bach-Busoni Chaconne is often high on the list. Sergei Rachmaninoff transcribed for piano four movements of the E major Partita for solo violin. Leopold Godowsky transcribed the entirety of the B minor, A minor, and G minor violin suites. Ottorino Respighi transcribed Bach's great organ *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor* for orchestra just as Eugene D'Albert did for the piano. Max Reger transcribed several of Bach's keyboard works for the organ. Among the finest are Reger's organ transcription of the *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue*, the *Prelude and Fugue in B minor* from *The Well-Tempered Clavier Book II*, and his massive piano piece Theme and Variations (and fugue) on a theme of Bach. Edward Elgar's orchestration of the *Fantasia and Fugue in C minor*, Gustav Holst's orchestration of the *Gigue fugue* for organ, and Arnold Schoenberg's arrangement of the *Prelude and Fugue in E-flat* all are a testament to the greatness and enduring quality of Bach's music. Even

Béla Fleck, an exponent of banjo playing in the twenty-first century, has transcribed Bach's keyboard music for banjo, executing it quite deftly on his recording *Perpetual Motion*. Those who have interacted with Bach's music in such a way are among those who have discovered the core of meaning in his legacy. The *Toccatina and Fugue in D minor BWV 565*, one of Bach's most recognizable and beloved works, has sustained for generations, though there is not even an extant score in the composer's own handwriting! *BWV 565* has been transcribed by Busoni, Dmitri Kabalevsky, Carl Tausig, Béla Bartók, Stokowski and myriad other artists after 1750. Most listeners immediately associate this piece with antique horror films, but the real horror is that few are familiar with these equally effective means of conveyance. *The Well-Tempered Clavier* was first published in 1804. Before this, the clavier and violin works existed as handwritten manuscript copies only.¹ Bach's music, whether composed in such a way knowingly or unknowingly, draws gallons from the musical fountain of youth. It can be deduced then that Bach was a genius from the prolonged attention his music has accumulated from both the general public and the most gifted of musicians. Just as Mozart received joyful shouts from the Viennese peasantry and the highest commendation from the aristocracy for his operas, so too does Bach glean praise and attention from every tier of Western music.

To gauge the longevity of a composer's life output, one must consider the degree to which his music can transcend instrumentation or vocalization. To put it another way, the more absolute the music, the greater likelihood of its dispersion. Masters of the Renaissance and early Baroque such as Palestrina, Victoria, Lassus, Pachelbel, and

¹ Lester 6

Vivaldi all contributed to Bach's contrapuntal maturity. Bach even transcribed a half dozen of Vivaldi's concerti himself both for the organ and harpsichord, in addition to compositions by Alessandro Marcello, Benedetto Marcello, and Duke Johann Ernst of Saxe-Weimar. The music of these masters will live on indefinitely along with Bach's, but with an arguably lesser degree of prosperity. These preceding composers are but the flying buttresses of the great cathedral that is Bach. They are essential to the development of his music--Bach draws much of his harmonic structure from their creations--but it is Bach who towers above all in the piazza of Western music.

By transcribing the music he admired, Bach was able to interact with it in a very unique way. He was able to gain an understanding of this music that the act of performance alone would not have afforded him. Bach's brother and childhood ward, Johann Christoph, owned a music cabinet which was filled with works by the old masters. Given the value of these articles, Christoph kept the cabinet locked. The younger Bach was not allowed a candle, so he absconded with the scores at night to copy them by moonlight. It took six months for him to copy every note held captive in the lattice-front cabinet, but when Christoph discovered what his brother had done, he confiscated the copied scores without remorse. Only after Christoph's death did Johann repossess the scores he had so painstakingly duplicated.²

Transcription is an art that neither began nor ended with J.S. Bach, but for the purpose of this essay--although many could be examined at length--the three transcriber-composers whose achievements will be largely discussed are Franz Liszt, Ferruccio Busoni, and Leopold Godowsky. By no means are the re-workings of the transcribers

² Forkel 11

previously mentioned of any lesser quality. On the contrary, their offerings have expanded our understanding of Bach in the twenty-first century, but their orchestrations, arrangements, and transcriptions are less abundant compared to the rest of their original output. These men understood that the beauty of Bach's art lies not in instrumentation, but in his music's ability to affectively elevate the human mind and soul.

Conservative interpreters would cringe at the thought that Bach's music might be performed on anything other than the instrument(s) available to the composer at the time—in the case of the present study a harpsichord, organ, or baroque violin. Such a purist attitude is somewhat surprising since the master himself would probably have taken no offense. Bach was a brilliant innovator and likely would have been impressed by the organistic sonorities Busoni achieved in many of his transcriptions for a modern piano. Bach was a recycler of his own music and hardly flinched at transcribing a flute part for oboe and vice versa. The G minor fugue of the first violin sonata BWV 1001 was transcribed by the composer himself for no less than three different instruments. It is only logical that Bach would have explored the furthest reaches of our modern instruments had they been at his disposal in the eighteenth century. As an organist, he was renowned for his colorful registrations. Forkel's biography of the man states that, "Bach's way of registering was so unusual that many organists and organ builders were startled when they watched him registering. It seemed to them that such a combination of stops could not possibly sound well, and they were surprised when they noticed afterwards that the organ sounded best exactly this way..." The *Tocatta and Fugue in D minor BWV 565* is one such innovative work and is hypothesized by Klaus Eidam to be--aside from a work of art--a piece designed to test the mechanisms of the organ at

Arnstadt. The rolled chords of the opening bars were allegedly formulated to test the bellows reserves of the organ while exploring a then new technique of organ crescendo unknown before Bach. Of Bach's pedal technique, his obituary states that "With his two feet he could perform on the pedals passages which many a capable clavier player would find it hard enough with five fingers..." Gerber's *Lexicon* reports of his pedal technique, "His feet had to play on the pedals (following his hands which preceded) every theme and every passage most exactly. No *appoggiatura*, no mordent, no *Pralltriller* could be missing or sound any the less neat or clear. He performed long double-trills with both feet even while his hands were no less active at the same time."³

Die Kunst der Fuge BWV 1080 is a case in point regarding Bach's lenient tendencies toward instrumentation. Here is a specimen of such astounding aesthetic and intellectual beauty that Bach felt it unnecessary to assign instruments at all. Busoni eventually manipulated *The Art of Fugue* in *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*, a piece which explores the possible conclusion to the unfinished *BWV 1080*. This is music everlasting, a veritable Bible of polyphonic composition, although "asking questions about why a piece of music has remained immortal would probably not have occurred to early-eighteenth century musicians."⁴ Surely there must have been composers in Bach's day who matched or surpassed his popularity, but who are now regarded by history as mere epitaphs. The notion of egocentrism and human immortality through art is a philosophy more idiosyncratic to the Romantic era.

All attempts at orchestrating *BWV 1080* have been successful in that they convey corroborating affects. String quartet, brass quintet, organ, piano, and orchestra: all of

³ Keller 24

⁴ Lester vi

these media yield the same fruits. The core of Bach's music is its ability to affect and exalt the soul; an effect which is manifested in harmonies, counterpoint, and an element which transcends human logic but which is able to pierce the center of our being.

Liszt the Organ Donor

Franz Liszt was born in Raiding, Hungary in 1811, and is best known for the manner in which he revolutionized piano playing in the nineteenth century, both technically and philosophically. Liszt's solo recitals often hypnotized and drove his audiences to frenzy. Although many of his public concert programs consisted of virtuosic paraphrases and original works, in private homes, where his listeners were more interested in 'serious' music, Liszt played Bach, Scarlatti, and Beethoven.⁵ Outside his role as a performing soloist, he single-handedly created the symphonic poem and scandalously introduced the triangle into Western orchestral instrumentation. On a personal level, and perhaps of less concern to the history of music, are his numerous counts of womanizing and his retreat into piety later in life. All this could be gleaned from a short and concise biography of a man whose presence in the Western music scene reshaped it forever. However, fewer are familiar with his role as an organist and his role in the Bach revival of the 1820s. Liszt's elaborate opera paraphrases are familiar to the performance world, but less well known are his faithful transcriptions of Bach's *Fantasy and Fugue in G minor* and *Six Organ Preludes and Fugues*. Jeffrey Chappell, a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Philadelphia and the Peabody Conservatory of Baltimore, a recording artist as well as a seasoned performer and teacher, was taken aback when I first

⁵ Seroff 62

revealed to him the existence of the Bach-Liszt transcriptions. Chappell commented on the “surprising restraint” with which Liszt treated these transcriptions, a restraint also exercised in his arrangements of Beethoven’s nine symphonies. “It looks as though he just recopied the notes for one keyboard and doubled the pedal line in the bass,” remarked Chappell upon a cursory perusal of the score. Liszt’s greatest contribution to Western music is perhaps his successful transformations of other composers works making them accessible from keyboard. With the piano’s heyday in nineteenth-century Europe, few were willing or able to mount an organ bench. Liszt’s organ transcription of Chopin’s *Prelude in E minor op.28, no.4* is a case demonstrating the superior transferability of Bach’s music when pitted against another’s. Chopin’s music is idiosyncratic to the instrument on which it was composed: the nineteenth-century piano. Attempts to convey this piece through an organ fail brilliantly by not only relieving the prelude of its subtle nuance, but by removing any and all of its originally intended affect; in any case, it is hardly fair to pick on the transcriber. After all, Liszt deserves credit for single-handedly laying the foundation of Romantic pianistic dynamism for the coming centuries, even if he was more than once in his life bereft of good taste.

Liszt was fortunate to have an early introduction to Bach’s music. By age eight in 1819, he was already playing Bach’s fugues and transposing them.⁶ Bach was known far and wide as an avid improviser. After improvising for half an hour on the Choral *An Wasserflüssen Babylon* at a Hamburg organ for Johann Adam Reincken (1643-1722), the elderly organist remarked, “I thought this art was dead, but I see that it survives in you.”⁷ By the time the generation of Romantics was flourishing, just as in the Baroque,

⁶ Zaluski 26

⁷ Forkel 21

keyboard improvisation was a highly developed skill. When improvising, Liszt did not just play the theme in different ways, “he created an instant music tone-poem, technically brilliant and exploratory, moody and directed at the audience, in which the theme figured enough to be a pliable yet recognizable backbone, sometimes--tantalizingly--barely so. Franzi’s early studies of Bach’s fugues played a part, specifically where the fugue subjects dissolved into episodes, only to emerge again at intervals, in any one of the voices.”⁸ Liszt would not tamper with Beethoven’s music in any way because he was afraid of failing, a mindset he maintained when treating Bach’s music. Even when composing original music, “his second inspiration lay in Bach; each of the twelve etudes had the feel and continuity of a Bach prelude. In later years he rearranged them --twice-- into the technically very demanding *Transcendental Etudes*.”⁹

Bach’s music was not foreign to Liszt’s concert repertoire. Liszt, along with Chopin, joined Ferdinand Hiller in a performance of the Allegro from Bach’s *Concerto in D minor BWV 1063* for three keyboards. This piece was one of Liszt’s favorites and was a warhorse upon which he would ride to victory many times. “He [Ferdinand Hiller] was joined by Chopin and Franzi in the *Allegro* from Bach’s *Concerto in D minor* for three claviers. This concerto, one of Franzi’s favourites, became a mainstay of his repertoire.”¹⁰

Among the myriad stylistically varied piano transcriptions from Liszt’s later years, one unequivocally gleaming emerald is his arrangement of Bach’s organ *Fantasy*

⁸ Zaluski 107-108

⁹ 109

¹⁰ 166

and Fugue in G minor which was lovingly adapted in 1839.¹¹ This transcription is not an isolated incident. Liszt also began to transcribe some organ preludes and fugues of Bach—one of the fairly rare cases of his taking an interest in music that was not by his contemporaries.¹² “These mark, indeed, the beginning of the cult for Bach, who had just begun to be rediscovered at that day. The credit for this is due, chiefly, to Mendelssohn and to Liszt, and both of them were the leading spirits in starting the *Bach-gesellschaft*, which took some sixty years to finish its labours of editing and publication.”¹³ Liszt called his type of transcriptions “partitions de piano...and was able to make the works of Bach...known at a time when they were insufficiently appreciated by the concert audiences of the day”¹⁴

Liszt’s organ prelude and fugue on the name Bach was originally written in 1855 and revised in 1870; this later version was also transcribed for piano by the composer. “This type of chromaticism, based to some extent on the chord of the diminished seventh, was considerably influenced by Bach’s own use of chromatic harmonies, particularly in some of the chorale harmonisations and chorale preludes.”¹⁵ This *Prelude and Fugue* may be regarded as more or less of a direct link between Bach and Schoenberg. Its experimental nature makes it an extremely interesting and effective piece, not to mention a staple of contemporary organ literature.¹⁶ Surely, the *Bach Fugue* [fugue on B-A-C-H] is monumental in the realm contrapuntal music. Liszt’s *B minor Sonata* of 1853, a comparable staple of the piano repertoire, finishes with an immense fugue. However,

¹¹ Humphrey 115

¹² 46

¹³ Sitwell 134

¹⁴ 8

¹⁵ Humphrey 87

¹⁶ 88

when comparing the two, it is clear that the *Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H* stands out far more clearly in the volumes of Liszt's output than does the *B minor Sonata*.¹⁷

Liszt himself gave recitals of Bach's organ music and was no amateur of interpretation. "He [Liszt] used to coach his young friend [Alexander Wilhelm Gottschalg 1827-1908] in the interpretation of Bach, and it becomes clear from Gottschalg's account of their sessions together that Liszt enjoyed using the full resources of the instrument and that he had no time for the cautious, colorless renderings of Bach's works which then prevailed in Germany. On one such occasion Gottschalg played Bach's *Toccatà and Fugue in D minor* with the full organ, on one manual, a usual practice of the time. Liszt listened carefully and then remarked: 'In terms of technique it is totally satisfying...but where is the spirit? Without this Bach is a Book of Seven Seals! Surely Bach did not play his works in such a manner; he whose registrations were so admired by his contemporaries! When you are playing on a three-manual instrument, why should the other two manual be ignored?'"

The Book of Seven Seals is an apocalyptic reference. In Christian writings, the Book of Seven Seals is opened by the lamb (Christ) at the end of time to punish disbelievers.

Despite Liszt's artistic interjections, he was not a virtuoso organist (according to Gottschalg, he lacked real fluency on the pedals).¹⁸ Regardless of his pedal prowess, Liszt's contribution to *Bachiana* cannot be ignored.

¹⁷ Sitwell 235

¹⁸ Walker 159

Busoni Plunges Headlong into the Teutonic Brook

The Germanic-Florentine, Ferruccio Busoni, was born on April 1, 1866 to Fernando Busoni, a clarinetist, and Anna Weiss-Busoni, a pianist. It appears that it was Busoni's father who first introduced him to Bach's music. We have these words from Dent's biography of Busoni: "I thank my father for the good fortune that he kept me strictly to the study of Bach in my childhood, and that in a time when the master was rated little higher than a Carl Czerny."¹⁹

This enunciates further that Bach really was a musician's musician. The fact that most of Europe would have regarded Bach only a little higher than Czerny is truly baffling. Czerny was a brilliant musician in his own right and, more importantly, the tutorial progeny of Beethoven, certainly, but not of Bachian caliber.

Busoni made his debut performance in Trieste at age eight, and by age ten, his playing was described by Hanslick as having "no precocious sentimentality or studied eccentricity, but a naïve pleasure in music." In Graz at this same time, Busoni took up piano studies with Wilhelm Mayer, a prominent composer of the day. Busoni ultimately became a composer himself at the age of twelve, dedicating his *Preludio e fuga* op.7 for organ to his teacher.²⁰ Busoni also studied the violin in 1874 with Professor Cappelletti under the watchful eye of his mother.²¹

By age twenty, Busoni was living in Leipzig as a celebrated pianist, where he rubbed elbows with nineteenth-century musical figureheads such as Pytor Tchaikovsky, Edvard Grieg, Frederick Delius, Gustav Mahler, and Egon Petri. It was Petri's wife who

¹⁹ Dent 17

²⁰ Beaumont 669

²¹ Dent 18-19

first suggested to Busoni that he transcribe Bach's music for the piano. The two went to the Thomaskirche one day and heard a performance of Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in D major BWV 532*. Without ever attempting such a feat, Busoni played it to his concert companion one week later without having written down a single note. It was not until two years later in 1888 that he unveiled his piano transcription of Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in D major*, and it caused as much controversy as Godowsky's *Studies on Chopin's Etudes* would in the early twentieth century.²² January 12 of the same year, Busoni performed the Bach-Liszt organ *Fantasia and Fugue in G minor* on the piano.²³

Busoni's first teaching post was in Helsinki, where he met his wife Gerda Sjöstrand. Busoni's name became so inextricably linked to Bach in the nineteenth century that his wife came to be affectionately referred to as "Mrs. Bach-Busoni."²⁴ Despite being awarded the Rubinstein Prize for his *Konzertstück op.31a*, he declined professorship in Moscow to tour in America. Four years later, he returned to Europe, this time to Berlin where he would spend the rest of his life. Busoni conducted German and world premieres of his own works as well as music by Bartók, Jean Sibelius, and Delius.²⁵

Busoni not only transcribed Bach's music for keyboard, but also published many of his own editions of Bach's extant keyboard works. In 1890, Busoni published his own edition of Bach's Inventions for keyboard which were followed in 1894 by his edition of *The Well-Tempered Clavier Book I*.²⁶

²² New Grove Beaumont 670

²³ Dent 72

²⁴ Dent 222

²⁵ New Grove Beaumont 670

²⁶ Dent 103

Like many Romantics, Busoni despised the term. With his composition *Junge Klassizität (Young Classicality)*, Busoni rejected the programmatic tendencies of the nineteenth century. He instead advocated the serious study and consideration of Bach and Mozart, the greatest masters of absolute music.²⁷

Busoni falls between Liszt's and Godowsky's transcription styles. For the greater majority of his transcribed works, Busoni adheres faithfully to Bach's melody and harmony as did Liszt. "...Busoni's extensive activity as an arranger can be traced to Liszt, with whom he shared a phenomenal sense of the tonal possibilities of the piano. This is illustrated in his piano transcriptions of Bach's organ works, in which his teaching abilities were employed to immediate creative effect." However, unlike Liszt, Busoni sought not only to reproduce organistic sonorities, but also to introduce "individual textual alterations and instructions for phrasing."²⁸

Bach's own obituary states, "He never succeeded, as he used to lament, in having a really large and really fine organ for his regular use. This fact deprived us of many fine ideas never heard in organ playing which he would otherwise have set down in paper and displayed just as he had them in his head."²⁹ Hermann Keller gives a great insight by stating, "But if, in his youth, an instrument rich in more stops and powerful in tone perhaps had inspired him to still more daring productions, the art of the mature Bach would have become continually more independent of the instrument, more abstract, and

²⁷ Wirth 509

²⁸ Wirth 509

²⁹ Keller 16

more profound.”³⁰ Godowsky occasionally diverges from Bach’s harmonic infrastructure and frequently displaces the melody elsewhere in his own polyphonic scheme.

Busoni, like Liszt, writes the pedal lines in octaves for the left hand while subdividing the manual parts between the two hands or condensing them to be played entirely by the right hand. In Busoni’s adaptation of *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen* the *cantus firmus* (the organ would play the *cantus firmus* in the pedals and voiced between the right hand soprano and the left hand bass) is faithfully maintained in the middle of the texture leaving the left hand with the honor of realizing the melody. As this short piece progresses, the *cantus firmus* is stressed in octaves as is the left hand accompaniment. A close survey of Busoni’s transcriptions reveals his uncanny knack for straddling the fine line between textual fidelity and creative pianism.

In Busoni’s transcription of Bach’s *Toccat, Adagio, and Fugue in C major BWV 564*, he, like Liszt and Godowsky, uses alternating octave displacement in the *Toccat* to fill out the sound--the most notable commonality among these three transcribers. “The *Adagio* movement, when filtered through the Romantic temperament, emerged with enhanced dissonance and huge intervals sometimes as wide as an eleventh for one hand alone. Busoni’s open voicing successfully achieves the sonorities of a great pipe organ.”³¹ In many instances, color and subtlety are options available only to the pianist; the organist has no such luck.

Busoni, like Liszt, perpetuated Bach’s genius with his own by making Bach’s organ works accessible to the masses during a time in which these pieces were virtually

³⁰ Keller 16-17

³¹ Grasso 1

unknown.³² The issue (whether advantage or problem is debatable) of translating between media arises when transferring Bach's music to piano from violin or cello. By 1897 Busoni had transcribed Bach's single largest continuous work for solo violin, the *Chaconne* from the *Partita in D minor BWV 1004*, for "concert performance on the piano." These eighteen pages bear a dedication to Eugen d'Albert (1864-1932), a veteran of the Liszt studio and Bach enthusiast who transcribed the master's mighty organ *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor* for solo piano. The first half of this *Passacaglia's* theme is derived from André Raison's 1687 composition *Christe, Trio en Passacaille*.³³ As in the Liszt transcriptions of the organ preludes and fugues, D'Albert remains faithful to the text and is often forced to reduce the pedal line to a single note in the left hand to maintain the harmony. The trade-off here is an organ's sonority, but our commendation is due for textual fidelity.

Busoni first heard Liszt play on March 16, 1877 in Vienna for a concert to aid the Beethoven monument when the Italian was but eleven years old. Liszt had recently injured his left hand and had to play Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto* and *Choral Fantasia* without the use of his fourth finger. Busoni's initial disappointment--at what must have been an understandable mediocre performance for the great Liszt--turned into profound regard and appreciation. Busoni came to place Bach and Liszt as "the two poles, the two centres of gravity of all music."³⁴ In an interesting twist of compositional and pedagogical tradition, just as Liszt had transcribed the organ works of Bach, Busoni then transcribed the organ works of Liszt. In 1897, Busoni transcribed Liszt's massive

³² Badura-Skoda 193

³³ Little 201-202

³⁴ Williams 811

organ work, *Fantasie und Fuge uber den Choral "Ad nos, ad saluterem undam,"* for piano solo. The theme of this is a colossal 763-measure work is derived from Meyerbeer's chorale of the Anabaptists in his opera *Le Prophète*.

Of Bach and Liszt, Busoni could play hours. In 1914, Busoni became the first pianist to give a completely Bach-devoted performance in Berlin. This was met with "discourteous ingratitude."³⁵ "He did not care to play Chopin, except the twenty-four Preludes. In all the lesser Chopin the drawing-room atmosphere, the satin and the flounces, became too apparent when he played. But the same thing in Busoni's performance that belittled Chopin, enlarged Bach, or the last sonatas of Beethoven, beyond all the bounds of ordinary experience. They had the magnificence of the most splendid classical architecture, of Vitruvian masterpieces that never reached creation. Only by such an analogy is it possible to describe a fugue played by Busoni."³⁶ "[Busoni confided to Max Hambourg] that the romanticism of Chopin and Schumann were distasteful to him, and that the grandioleloquence of Liszt and the majestic structures of Bach were more akin to his nature."³⁷ One of Busoni's axioms was, "Bach is the foundation of piano playing. Liszt is the summit. The two make Beethoven possible." The great pianist-pedagogue Theodor Leschetitzky once remarked of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*: "Go ahead and play it if it interests you, but why waste time on it when there is all of Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, and Brahms to master?"³⁸ Had these two men met, their musical discussion would have no doubt turned to fisticuffs.

³⁵ Dent 221

³⁶ Williams 294

³⁷ Schonberg 352

³⁸ 277

Busoni was, of course, a fabulous performer. Ferruccio Bonavia said of Busoni's playing that, "...he would start and build up a climax that reached the extreme limit of what is possible to a pianist, an avalanche of sound giving the impression of a red flame rising out of marble. His intellectual control was remorseless."³⁹ Busoni's style of performance was often cited as radical in his day; in other words, it was the complete opposite of the sentimentally frilly Romanticism that, in Busoni's mind, plagued the nineteenth century. This remorseless intellectual control would have made Busoni a prime interpreter and transcriber of Bach. Bach's music is logical, and it is within this logical framework that he is able to manipulate his listener just as muscle bound to bone.

Busoni derides other Bach transcriptions which fail to reproduce the master's great intentions. "Middelschulte [an organist and student of Busoni]...has transcribed Bach's Chaconne for strings and organ. The work is inadequate for such large forces and sounds thinner than on a piano. The gentlemen of the violins occasionally obtruded when they lit upon the celebrated passages from the David and Joachim interpretations."⁴⁰ (from a letter to Egon Petri March 3, 1915)

In Busoni's repertoire, we find no less than thirty of Bach's works, which he performed in public over the course of his life. Among these works is the *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue*, a favorite of Johannes Brahms, who made his own transcription of the D minor *Chaconne* for left hand solo. Busoni arranged the *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* for cello and piano. In this transcription, the cello is given the running cadenzas in the *Fantasy* and pronounces the lowest voice of the *Fugue*.

³⁹ Schonberg 352

⁴⁰ Beaumont 195

Godowsky, a man of many faiths: Jewish, Buddhist...Lutheran?

The Intention of Music is not only to please the Ear, but to express Sentiments, strike the Imagination, affect the mind, and command the Passions. The Art of playing the Violin consists of giving that Instrument a Tone that shall in a Manner rival the most perfect human Voice; and in executing every Piece with Exactness, Propriety, and Delicacy of Expression according to the true Intention of Music. But as the imitating the Cock, Cuckoo, Owl, and other Birds; or the Drum, French Horn, Tromba-Marina, and the like; and also sudden Shifts of the Hand from one Extremity of the Finger-board to the other, accompanied by Contortions of the Head and Body, and all other such Tricks rather belong to the Professors of Legerdemain and Posture-masters than to the Art of Music.

- Your most obedient servant, Francesco Geminiani

from *Art of Playing on the Violin* (1751)

Leopold Godowsky was born in the small town of Sozly, Lithuania, on February 13, 1870. His father, Matthew Godowsky, a respected physician, died tragically in a cholera epidemic scarcely two years after his only son's birth. Matthew's death left his wife Anna and their newborn son poverty-stricken, so they relocated to nearby Schirwinty. At the invitation of her friends Louis and Minna Passinock, mother and son once again moved, this time to Wilno, the ancient capital of Lithuania. Louis, himself childless, was an avid music lover, amateur violinist, and piano shop proprietor who

eventually set about teaching violin to his foundling Godowsky. Godowsky's dedication to technical perfection would manifest itself throughout his entire musical career. As a young violinist, he was soon proficient enough to have mastered the solo part of Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto in E minor*, but it was to the piano that he was instinctively drawn, despite being actively discouraged at first.⁴¹

It is reasonable to surmise that any student of the violin with enough time and talent to master the cadenza of the Mendelssohn violin concerto must have at least become introduced to Bach's works for solo violin.

One voucher for Godowsky's own genius is that on the piano, he was completely self-taught. He recalls in his autobiography that he cannot remember being taught the value of notes or the art of fingering. Godowsky's only recollection is that after age five he was his own tutor and had composed his first piece. This piece was a minuet, the middle section of which was a perfect canon. These early signs of Godowsky's penchant for counterpoint are magnified by the fact that the child had never even heard a canon before composing one perfectly.⁴²

By age nine, Godowsky had made his public debut in Wilno and, by age eleven, having made for himself a musical reputation, entered the Berlin conservatory where his studies were financed by a certain Mr. Feinberg. Among the figures at his entrance audition were Schumann's brother-in-law and Joseph Joachim, the first man ever to perform the complete Bach solo violin works in public, and whose 1908 edition of the Bach violin works was the first to be based on the original autograph score. Godowsky

⁴¹ Godowsky.com

⁴² Godowsky.com

grew weary of his studies with Ernst Rudorff as time passed and in a few weeks left for America in 1884.⁴³

After some disastrous touring, the penniless Godowsky was taken in by Leon Saxe, a wealthy music patron. Saxe ultimately took Godowsky from America to France to study with Franz Liszt, but Liszt passed away only days after Godowsky's arrival. In response to this unexpected turn of events, Godowsky went to study with Camille Saint-Saëns. Although Saint-Saëns was not teaching regularly, Godowsky's exceptional talent won him special consideration. The two met every Sunday and Saint-Saëns, having lost a son earlier in life, wished to adopt the young Godowsky, with the proviso that he take Saint-Saëns' surname. The Frenchman was furious when his protégé refused this, and by 1890, Godowsky was back in America.⁴⁴

Godowsky's talents led him to become one of the first pianists to perform at Carnegie Hall, but competition with myriad pianists in New York forced Godowsky into teaching. For the next ten years he taught at the New York School of Music, Gilbert Raynolds Combs's Broad Street Conservatory in Philadelphia, and the Chicago Conservatory where he beat out composer and pianist Edward MacDowell for the position. It was during these years that Godowsky began to transcribe music, and, like Liszt and Busoni, who made music originally written for other instruments amenable to the piano also re-arranged already extant piano works. His stylistic approach was one of polyphony and of interweaving many different themes simultaneously.⁴⁵

⁴³ Godowsky.com

⁴⁴ Godowsky.com

⁴⁵ Godowsky.com

By the turn of the century, Godowsky had turned from teaching back to performing and had given ambitiously programmed concerts all over the United States and Canada. In Chicago, he gave a series of eight programs surveying the scope of nineteenth-century piano literature. Success in North America encouraged Godowsky to once again try his skills in the European performance arena. On December 6, 1900, he performed in the Beethoven-Saal to critical acclaim. By age thirty, Godowsky was hailed as one of the greatest pianists in history.⁴⁶

His repertoire, like those of Liszt and Busoni, was immense. He gave a season of concerts which consisted of nearly the entire classical repertoire, and seventy concerts on the European continent in a single year assured his legacy. He made his home in Berlin and gathered to him such musical lights as Jean Sibelius, Edvard Grieg, and Fritz Kreisler, to name a few. By 1909 Godowsky's reputation had grown so much that he was invited to be the director of the Piano School of the Imperial Academy of Music in Vienna. Godowsky was the first Jew ever to hold such a prestigious position, in addition to being the most highly paid.⁴⁷ However, Godowsky's success was all at the expense of Busoni.

Godowsky crossed paths with Busoni more than once in his life, and in Berlin, they were considered rivals constantly caught in a battle of one-upmanship. Busoni used to joke: "What's the difference between Godowsky and a pianola? Godowsky can play ten times as fast, but the pianola has ten times as much feeling."⁴⁸ This statement is probably owing in part to the events of Busoni's termination at the Vienna Conservatory

⁴⁶ Godowsky.com

⁴⁷ Godowsky.com

⁴⁸ Lebrecht 277

in February of 1908. Busoni's secretary wrote to the director of the Conservatory, Dr. Botstiber, explaining that Busoni had to cancel his second recital and some classes due to illness; the real reason for Busoni's absence was that he was going on tour in Switzerland, Paris, and London. The director was understandably disgruntled with Busoni's lackadaisical attitude toward the Conservatory and his teaching post there. Busoni was effectively "dismissed for neglecting his duties," as was printed in the Viennese press. None other than Leopold Godowsky was appointed in Busoni's stead and the two were on ill terms henceforth.⁴⁹

Jeremy Nicholas, in his biography of Godowsky, describes the man in this way: "He was...a small man - only five feet three - with a high domed forehead, a round, cherubic face with twinkling eyes and a face that aged into Buddha-like placidity. From his thirties he acquired a figure that made him, while never less than sartorially elegant, compactly plump and the owner of that most important of pianistic attributes, a large and wide seat."⁵⁰

This "large and wide seat" along with his "marble-chiseled hands," made Godowsky one of the most highly paid and sought after artists in the world. His hands alone were insured for \$1,000,000. Godowsky's son, Leopold Jr., eventually came to invent the color photograph process. The Godowskys were indeed living comfortably.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Dent 161

⁵⁰ Godowsky.com

⁵¹ Godowsky.com

1914 found the Godowsky family vacationing in Belgium. With the outbreak of the war, Godowsky was lucky to catch the last boat to England with his family. From there, they set sail for America.⁵²

In February 1923 Godowsky was on tour in China during which time he began transcribing three solo violin sonatas and three solo cello suites of Bach, a task involving thirty-seven separate movements in all. Before the Bach transcriptions, Godowsky transcribed, or rather reinterpreted, the complete Etudes of Chopin. Several of the Etudes Godowsky transcribed for left hand alone, while in other transcriptions he synthesized two etudes into one. In the *Studies on Chopin's Etudes*, it was Godowsky's intention to imbue Chopin's ideas with an element of even greater difficulty than Chopin himself had originally conceived. Through sheer creativity, Godowsky engineered the *Etudes* to focus on wholly different areas of technical development, although his work was lauded by few contemporaries. Many critics accused him of musical blasphemy and of tampering with what ought not to have been tampered with.⁵³

Godowsky, just like Busoni, took great interest in the art of polyphonic composition and so augmented Chopin and Bach's ideas through copious melodic imitation in his arrangements of their works. Godowsky's colleague, Kaikhosru Sorabji, expressed in no uncertain terms that he felt the pinnacle of Godowsky's musical achievement was reached through his six Bach transcriptions.⁵⁴

⁵² Godowsky.com

⁵³ Godowsky.com

⁵⁴ Godowsky.com

“Arthur Friedheim, who worshipped Liszt and was one of his important pupils, said that...Godowsky exceeded Liszt in certain ‘specialized’ kinds of technique...”⁵⁵ Godowsky and Busoni were both transcendent technicians who largely worked out technical issues for themselves until they had been utterly overcome and mastered. Godowsky could slave away for twenty-hour stretches, while Busoni, after a triumphant recital, would (according to Harold Bauer) sit at the piano all night, replaying and criticizing the program he had just finished. But there, the resemblance ends. “To Godowsky, the *piano* was the thing; to Busoni, the *idea*. Godowsky was the personification of the piano, Busoni the personification of intellect, of interpretation on the piano.” As Busoni aged, he severely attenuated his repertoire, reducing it to music almost solely by either Bach or Mozart. This is quite a contrast to the omnivorous musical appetites of his youth.⁵⁶

In June 1932, Godowsky suffered a paralytic stroke that left his right hand and motor-flex system irreparably damaged. The 1929 October Stock crash had left the Godowsky family in a destitute financial state. Godowsky was plunged into severe depression which would plague him for the rest of his life. He died of stomach cancer at 7 a.m. on Monday, November 21, 1938.⁵⁷

“I worked honestly with the highest ideals for my chosen art and beloved instrument. I have accomplished in my field more and greater things than all my contemporary colleagues. Yet real recognition and material benefits were not given to

⁵⁵ Schonberg 168

⁵⁶ 345

⁵⁷ Godowsky.com

me; but crediting me sparingly and grudgingly, my life ebbed, and now I find myself ill and poor. A few know the importance of my having lived. When I am but a memory my works and my influence will begin to live.”

- Leopold Godowsky 1932

Appendix III is a list of Bach’s music for solo violin and cello which Godowsky transcribed for piano during 1923 and 1924.

“The Godowsky paraphrases *are* the piano, pushed to its logical (or, if you wish, illogical) extremes of the tightest kind of romantic polyphony. Nothing since Liszt has been so imbued with the idiom of piano qua piano...Godowsky had musical aims in mind...they do represent a philosophy where the piano itself was the be-all and the end-all, less a musical instrument than a way of life, and the paraphrases end up not music for the sake of music but (like so many of the Liszt transcriptions) music for the sake of the piano.”⁵⁸ Convolutd and vague as this statement may seem, Schonberg probably means to convey that Godowsky was working from within to elevate and enrich music at large, whereas Liszt was out to enhance the image of the Romantic pianist.

Pianist Carlo Grante, in the liner notes of his recording of the three Bach-Godowsky cello suites, explains that it would have made more sense for Godowsky to couple Bach’s polyphony with Bach’s sonority. Since there was no piano sonority in the eighteenth century, Godowsky sought to combine Chopin’s sonorities with Bach’s

⁵⁸ Schonberg 323

polyphony.⁵⁹ However, I would caution against such a comparison since the sonorities in these transcriptions are uniquely Godowsky's and not an imitation of another.

When it came to transcribing, Godowsky was a great chemist in the science of music making. He took a stable, perfect element, the basis for all matter, and through testing and experimentation, wove around it a most complex and beautiful molecule. When transcribing, or very freely arranging as the man himself said, Godowsky maintains Bach's melodic and skeletal structures. The basic, solid foundations are then ornamented and decorated according to the transcriber's personal tastes and preferences.

Godowsky's free arrangement of the Bach's *Suite No. 5 for Unaccompanied Violoncello in C minor BWV 1011* will serve as a representative sample for the entire series of cello transcriptions. The key and structure of the original string work are held very well intact. The melody is frequently maintained in the top of the texture and is doubled in octaves, thirds, or sixths. This is one point on which the styles of Busoni and Godowsky differ. Busoni preferred in most cases to double the melody in octaves. It would appear that Godowsky desires to maintain the timbre of the cello by arranging the music in the same octave as the original. He is no stranger to the shimmering heights of the keyboard, but more often ventures below the cello range than above it in these transcriptions. The first chord is C minor and contains four Cs spread over four octaves. As noted by Jeffrey Chappell in an interview conducted on April 26, 2005, Godowsky tends to fill in the harmony--a Baroque concept--and "sticks to simple and applied diatonic harmonies."

⁵⁹ Grante b 1

Thick chords not only with wide intervals, but also with added harmony are quite common in Godowsky's arrangements. Added seconds and sevenths are bountiful probably to increase the tension preceding cadences. It would have been apparent to Godowsky that one reason Bach's music is effective is because of his frequent tightening and release of harmonic tension. Godowsky latched onto Bach's concept and sought to employ it.

Texturally speaking, the original cello suites are much simpler than the violin suites. There is a great deal more experimentation and realized harmony in the body of the violin works than in the cello works. The cello suites offer more possibilities because the framework is barer.⁶⁰ Although Bach hints in certain harmonic directions, Godowsky uses the structural melodies to blaze his own distinct path.⁶¹ For example, in measure seven of the G minor fugue, Godowsky writes a C-sharp instead of the original D. This changes the harmony from I to V. This is a notable alteration.

Godowsky writes in voices and melodies where they did not originally exist. He does not create his own melodies but rather interpolates Bach's melodies simultaneously with others all the while adding voices by doubling them in octaves, thirds, sixths, and tenths. "...The special attention given to the articulation and color of each polyphonic voice—are new to this genre."⁶² On the following page, Grante quotes Philipp Spitta's biography of Bach where the author decreed, "The opinion we find expressed here and there, that, in the performance of his clavier pieces, Bach gave no light and shade of expression, and that the introduction of such a rendering is a presumptuous modern

⁶⁰ Grante b 7

⁶¹ 9

⁶² Grante b 2

innovation, must fall to the ground as an unfounded hypothesis.” But Joel Lester cites in his publication on Bach’s violin works that “Bach’s pupil J. F. Agricola wrote in 1774 that Bach ‘often played [the solo-violin pieces] on the clavichord, adding as much in the nature of harmony as he found necessary.’”⁶³ For those who denounce the existence of accounts of Bach’s violin playing, “Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach reported in 1774 that his father continued to play the violin “cleanly and penetratingly...until the approach of old age.”⁶⁴ As mentioned before in this essay, Bach was an arranger of his own music. Spitta later extols the piano for its ideal combination of organistic volume and clavichord expression.

The Question of Genius

“Talent does what it can; genius does what it must.” This famous quote by English dramatist, novelist, and politician Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873) brings into question the reason why Bach’s music has enjoyed such longevity. Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary describes genius, among other things, as:

1b: a person who influences another for good or bad; 3a: a peculiar, distinctive, or identifying characteristic; 3c: a personification or embodiment esp. of a condition or quality; 5a: a strongly marked capacity or aptitude; 5b: extraordinary intellectual power esp. as manifested in creative activity; 5c: a person endowed with transcendent mental superiority

⁶³ Lester 23

⁶⁴ 9

The same dictionary defines talent thus:

1b: a unit of value equal to a the value of a talent of gold or silver; 2a: a characteristic feature, aptitude, or disposition of a person or animal; 3: natural endowments of a person; 4:a special often creative or artistic aptitude; 4b: general intelligence or mental power

Genius implies a transcendental quality of a human being, the embodiment of a quality, and a strong aptitude for creativity. Talent seems relative to currency implying that an individual (or creature!) is only as talented as the amount of money or attention that person receives. The mention of *animal* in the definition of talent nearly creates an insult of the term when applied to a human being.

Is the work of a genius always popular with the public at large? Popularity is hardly a reflection of genius, although, in the same sentence, it is important to note that the rarely exhibited does not imply genius. Busoni's statement about the tepid appreciation of Bach's music among audiences in the late nineteenth century is a case in point. A genius is best appreciated by other geniuses. An audience of commoners may appreciate a Mozart aria, a work of genius, but it is unlikely that they will understand *why* they appreciate it.

Vivaldi was incredibly popular in his day; even Bach transcribed his concerti for performance on the organ. Even so, it is Bach's music that has prevailed: it is Bach's music that has been filtered through the transcriber's pen more often than Vivaldi's. On the contrary, the rarely performed piece does not necessarily confer upon its creator the rank of genius. The great volume of music that is rarely performed on the concert stage

is not so necessarily because its creator was not talented or a master of their craft, but because these works are overshadowed by music conceived and existent on a higher plane.

“With the Bach transcriptions Godowsky reached his peak as a transcriber, yet they did not prove successful; disheartened and disappointed, he came to believe that his music would never enjoy immediate popularity. Still, his desire and skill for composition only continued to grow.”⁶⁵ This speaks volumes of Godowsky as a creative force. He was a genius and knew that the work of geniuses takes time to penetrate thick skulls, but he accepted this fact and persevered not for fame or glory, but to further the art of music.

Schoenberg and His Erroneous Claim to Bach’s Legacy

“There are still so many beautiful things to be said in C major.”

- Sergei Prokofiev

“The method of composing with twelve tones grew out of a necessity”

- Arnold Schoenberg

“He’d [Schoenberg] be better off shoveling snow.”

- Richard Strauss

Arnold Schoenberg held himself in such high esteem that he to regarded himself a successor in the musical line of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. It must have taken an instant of blinding nationalistic pride to prompt Schoenberg to entertain such an erroneous and unfounded notion. To consider one’s self at Bach’s level would warrant proof of such immortal genius via the music one produces.

⁶⁵ Grante b 3

As previously stated, a main tenet in the case for Bach's genius is the transferability of his music, meaning that *BWV 565* will wield the same affect whether it is played by an organ, piano, violin, or orchestra. Bach's music, more than the music of any other before or after him, has been transcribed in great quantity, fidelity, and imagination. This is simply because Bach's music is the purest and most absolute in that it defies definitive instrumentation, and the even balance of tension and resolution provides a satisfying experience to the listener. Although Schoenberg did in fact orchestrate some of Bach's music, it is not in this light that he considered himself an equally fecund branch of the musical tree.

Schoenberg has no claim to Bach's musical lineage not because his music fails to satisfy all (as no music does), but because the affect of his music is confined to the instrumental or vocal timbre that exists only at the moment of performance. Schoenberg was without question a master of composition and a knowledgeable tutor and mentor. His contribution to Western music will forever be felt for better or worse. However, his place in the history of musical genius is certainly not next to Bach.

The trend in the compositional style of absolute music slopes downward from Bach both before and after his lifetime. The magnificent sonorities conveyed in a Palestrina mass or a Victoria motet are eternally priceless and will forever exist in the plane of genius, but disability of these composers' works to reach the transferability of Bach's is for the most part confined to instrumental timbre.

In the Germanic world after Bach's death, there was the genius of Mozart. Mozart, like Bach, composed a great deal of absolute music, and much of Mozart's composition was done internally and was devoid of aural experimentation. Bach and

Mozart did not frequently experiment with and explore new instrumental timbres as did their successors. It is beginning with Beethoven that there was this need to perform music upon specific instruments built to specifications while also performing music as a composer has indicated. Beethoven's considerable contribution to piano manufacturing has had immeasurable effects in the classical world. But it is at this time, when music must be played from scores laden with interpretive minutia on specific instruments that the eternal quality of music becomes dampened. Bach's performing instructions are rarely found among his works. I would speculate that this is so because he probably knew that a true artist would be able to infer the best manner in which to tastefully perform the work from the melody and harmony presented.

Schoenberg considered himself as a perpetuator of the Germanic line, doubtless because of his development of the twelve-tone method. This composer's previously quoted statement about the necessity of atonality is an odd one when pitted against his contemporary Prokofiev's comment advocating tonality. It is truly amazing to consider the undeserved accolades which Schoenberg lavished upon himself. Bach dabbled in chromaticism far beyond the bounds of diatonicism centuries before dissonance exchanged seats with consonance. The so-called Tristan chord appears in the organ music of Bach centuries before musicologists erroneously credited its conception to Wagner. One look at the end of Bach's *Fantasy and Fugue in G minor* for organ reveals wrenching dissonance, the likes of which were nonexistent before he conceived it. The only difference between Bach and the Schoenberg-Wagner philosophy is that Bach's harmony has a purpose, a purpose so clear that there is no speculation about where it goes or why it goes there.

Schoenberg arrived in a post-Wagnerian where gratuitous details were heaped upon the performer to ensure an accurate portrayal of the piece performed. It is hardly his fault to have been assimilated into this tradition; it had been going on for over one hundred years. Nonetheless, the timbral demands of Schoenberg's works confine them to the temporal realm. Since his harmony fails to lead the listener, Schoenberg can stand in and not outside of Bach's shadow, just like all his Germanic predecessors.

Conclusion

Bach's own genius has been perpetuated through transcriptions many times over, but it has been through the likes of Liszt, Busoni, and Godowsky that the most interesting, varied, and creative arrangements have come to light. A French Hungarian, a Teutonic Italian, and a Lithuanian Jew with diverse personal and musical backgrounds have this common ground in the art of J.S. Bach. Dr. Millan Sachania, in the introductory notes of his compiled edition of Godowsky's complete piano works, states that Godowsky was often concerned of not only enhancing Bach's music harmonically, but cohesively as well. Godowsky sought to draw connections between movements by inserting fragments from subsequent fugues into preceding preludes. It is truly a blessing to have the work of these three giants, because each transcription sheds light on different aspects of each piece, aspects that the transcriber felt were important. Sachania states in the footnotes that, "Busoni showed similar concerns in his Bach arrangements, though he aimed at spotlighting 'existing' links, not concocting them."⁶⁶ Joel Lester puts it

⁶⁶ Sachania xi

succinctly when he writes, “A single creative genius lies behind all of Bach’s music in all genres.”⁶⁷

Liszt, Busoni, and Godowsky all recognized that Bach’s music defies instrumentation and, through this, were able to diversely expand upon and reiterate Bach’s ideas. The style of treatment ranges from the very strict keyboard-to-keyboard style of Liszt to the flamboyant and steroid-enhanced polyphony of Godowsky. Busoni’s elegant power falls between the two and even serves as a historical link. Busoni knew Liszt and Godowsky, but the two did not know each other.

A sentiment in the Romantic era was that Bach’s music was incomplete, and it was judged to be too skeletal for performance. This idea prompted composers like Schumann and Mendelssohn to enhance the solo violin and cello works with accompanying piano parts. It was a similar attitude that likely contributed to the extended transcriptions of Busoni and Godowsky. Liszt, Busoni, and Godowsky were all terribly interested in polyphonic composition, a shared personality trait which compelled them to work with Bach’s music in the most profound and intimate manner.

⁶⁷ Lester vii

Appendix I

Liszt's Complete Transcriptions of Bach's Works for Organ

Organ-Fantasy and Fugue in G minor, BWV 542; S463

Six Organ Preludes and Fugues

Prelude and Fugue in A minor, BWV 543; S462/1

Prelude and Fugue in C Major, BWV 544; S462/2

Prelude and Fugue in C minor, BWV 545; S462/3

Prelude and Fugue in C Major, BWV 546; S462/4

Prelude and Fugue in E minor, BWV 547; S462/5

Prelude and Fugue in B minor, BWV 548; S462/6

Appendix II

Busoni's Complete Transcriptions of Bach's Works for Organ and Violin

Prelude and Fugue in D Major, BWV 532

Composed ca. 1708-17, transcribed 1888

Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Major ("St. Anne"), BWV 552

From Clavierübung, Part III, 1739; transcribed 1890

Tocatta in C Major (Prelude, Intermezzo, and Fugue), BWV 564

Composed ca. 1708-17; transcribed 1900

Chaconne in D minor

From Partita II for Violin, BWV 1004, 1720; transcribed 1897

Ten Choral Preludes

Transcribed 1907-09

1. "Komm, Gott Schöpfer, heiliger Giest," BWV 667
Come God Creator, ca. 1708-17
2. "Wachet auf ruft uns die Stimme," BWV 645
Awake, the voice commands
Fourth movement of the cantata BWV 140 (1731); from six cantata movements transcribed for organ
3. "Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland," BWV 659
Now comes the gentiles' Saviour, ca. 1708-17
4. "Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein," BWV 734a
Rejoice, beloved Christians, ca. 1708-17
5. "Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ," BWV 639
I call on Thee, Lord Jesus Christ; from Das Orgelbüchlein, Part III, 1713-17
6. "Herr Gott, nun schleuß den Himmel auf," BWV 617
Lord God, now open heaven's gate; from Das Orgelbüchlein, Part III, 1713-17
- 7a. "Durch Adam Fall ist ganz verderbt," BWV 637
All is lost through Adam's fall; from Das Orgelbüchlein, Part III, 1713-17
- 7b. "Durch Adam Fall ist ganz verderbt," BWV 705
8. "In dir ist Freude," BWV 615
In You is joy; from Das Orgelbüchlein, Part III, 1713-17
9. "Jesus Christ, unser Heiland," BWV 665
Jesus Christ, our Saviour, ca. 1708-17

Appendix III

Godowsky' Complete Transcriptions of Bach's Works for Violin and Cello Solo

Sonata No. 1 in G minor for Violin, BWV 1001

transcribed in New York from November 8-27, 1923

dedicated to Franz Kneisel

Sonata No. 2 in B minor for Violin, BWV 1002

transcribed in Harbin, Manchuria, on the S. S. Gorjistan, and Shanghai from December 10, 1922 - February 10, 1923

dedicated to Henriot Levy or Sergei Rachmaninov (varies with edition)

Sonata No. 3 in A minor for Violin, BWV 1003

transcribed in New York and Atlantic City from January 4, 1924 - March 2, 1924

dedicated to Leopold Auer

Suite No. 2 in D minor for Violoncello, BWV 1008

transcribed in New York from November 29 - December 28, 1923

dedicated to Jean Gérardy

Suite No. 3 in C major for Violoncello, BWV 1009

transcribed in Shanghai, Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe, the S. S. Siberia Maru, and in Honolulu from April 1, 1923 - May 16, 1923

dedicated to Mario Paci

Suite No. 5 in C minor for Violoncello, BWV 1011

transcribed on The S. S. Tjikembang, Shanghai, and the S. S. Maui from March 10 - May 19, 1923

dedicated to Pablo Casals

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