

The Piano Variations of Carl Czerny

by

Tingshuo Tang

A Research Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved November 2020 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Robert Hamilton, Chair
Hannah Creviston
Amy Holbrook

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2020

ABSTRACT

Positioned between Beethoven and Liszt in the golden period, Carl Czerny (1791-1857) played a significant historical role in the area of piano pedagogy. Many pianists are familiar with and have played Czerny's études, or technical exercises. However, few delve into Czerny's piano works for performance, including eleven piano sonatas and more than 180 works titled variations.

The project at hand examines three of Carl Czerny's variation works for piano: Opus 33 (on a theme of Rode), Opus 281 (on a theme from Bellini's *Norma*, in its solo piano version), and Opus 292 (on an original theme). These works are explored from both compositional and performance perspectives. After a brief biography of Czerny that places his variations into the context of his compositional output, the three variation sets are given analytical description. A chapter on the "Rode Variations" focuses on the technical and musical challenges for the pianist. An important conclusion reached is that these somewhat-neglected works might be attractive to pianists looking to expand their repertoire.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to express my most thanks and respect to my Professor Robert Hamilton. Thank you for all help during the past three years. I am grateful to be your student. I not only learned a lot about performance, but I also gained much support and encouragement from you in every aspect.

I also want to express my sincere thanks to my committee member Professor Amy Holbrook. Thank you for being such a wonderful theory professor. I learned a lot from you taking your theory classes and got so much support on my project. Everything is so precious that I could study with you.

I want to express my special thanks to Professor Hannah Creviston. Not only do I appreciate you agreeing to be my committee member to support my project, but I also appreciate how excellent you are as an advisor of teaching assistants. Thank you for all your encouragement and support during last three years.

Last, but not least, I want to express my thanks to my family—My mother Chunxia Wang, my father Xinghong Tang and my husband Dr. Jun Cai. Thank you for all your help and support during my study from every aspect. Thank you for always being on my side, and supporting and encouraging me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	iv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	v
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
Carl Czerny's Life and Career	3
Piano Output.....	9
2 DESCRIPTIONS OF CZERNY'S THREE PIANO VARIATIONS.....	14
Rode Variations, Opus 33.....	14
Introduction, variations et presto finale sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra Norma de Bellini, Opus 281	24
Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Opus 292	35
3 A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO RODE VARIATIONS	49
4 CONCLUSION	60
REFERENCES.....	62

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Carl Czerny's Piano Sonatas.....	10
2. Key and Cadence Plan of Rode Variation's Theme and Variation 4.....	20
3. Three Types of Rode Variation.....	56

LIST OF EXAMPLES

Example	Page
1. Pierre Rode, <i>Air varié</i> , Opus 10, principal violin part, mm. 1-20	15
2. Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Opus 33, Theme, mm. 1-20	15
3. Variation 1, mm. 1-2	17
4. Variation 2, mm. 1-3	18
5. Variation 3, mm. 1-3	19
6. Variation 4, mm. 1-5	20
7. Variation 5, mm. 1-8	21
8. Variation 5, Cadenza	22
9. Variation 5, mm. 31-38	23
10. Carl Czerny, <i>Introduction, variations et presto finale</i> sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra <i>Norma</i> de Bellini, Opus 281, Introduction, mm. 1-5.....	24
11. Vincenzo Bellini, <i>Norma</i> , Act I, part of “Norma viene”	26
12. Carl Czerny, <i>Introduction, Variations et Presto finale</i> sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra <i>Norma</i> de Bellini, Opus 281, Theme, mm. 1-4.....	26
13. Variation 1, mm. 1-5	28
14. Variation 2, mm. 9-10	29
15. Variation 3, mm. 1-2	30
16. Variation 4, mm. 1-4	31
17. Variation 4, mm. 33-37	32
18. Finale, mm. 1-6	33
19. Finale, mm. 71-74	34

Example	Page
20. Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Opus 292, Introduction, mm. 1-3.....	35
21. Introduction, mm. 4-6.....	36
22. Theme, mm. 1-4	37
23. Theme, mm. 17-24	38
24. Variation 1, mm. 9-11	39
25. Variation 2, mm. 1-3	40
26. Variation 3, mm. 1-4	41
27. Variation 3, mm. 9-12	41
28. Variation 4, mm. 1-4	42
29. Variation 4, mm. 9-12	43
30. Variation 5, mm. 1-4	43
31. Variation 6, mm. 1-3	45
32. Allegro Vivace, mm. 1-13.....	46
33. Allegro Vivace, mm. 89-98.....	47
34. Allegro Vivace, mm. 117-120.....	48
35. Allegro Vivace, mm. 133-136.....	48
36. Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Opus 33, Theme, m. 1.....	50
37. Carl Czerny, <i>The School of Velocity</i> , Opus 299, No. 4, mm. 1-6.....	51
38. Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Opus 33, Theme, m. 18.....	51
39. Carl Czerny, <i>30 Études de mécanisme</i> , Opus 849, No. 22, mm. 1-5.....	52
40. Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Opus 33, Variation 5, mm. 35-36.....	52

Example	Page
41. Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Opus 33, Variation 3, mm. 13-14.....	53
42. Carl Czerny, <i>The School of Velocity</i> , Opus 299, No. 3, mm. 1-5.....	54
43. Carl Czerny, <i>30 Études de mécanisme</i> , Opus 849, No. 8, mm. 1-5.....	55

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Please, practice some of Czerny’s études.” This direction from one of the author’s teachers has frequently been echoed by piano teachers on a global scale. Technical proficiency is indeed a serious requirement for any pianist. In the eighteenth century, Carl Czerny (1791-1857) devoted much of his life to piano pedagogy, creating and organizing textbooks to teach piano technique. His technical exercises are still widely used throughout the world. In addition to these well-known études, Czerny composed more than a thousand piano works. Despite his tremendous prolificity and household-name status among pianists, most of his compositions are entirely neglected. In truth, Carl Czerny composed many valuable works of merit that deserve wider attention. The present study focuses on the genre of piano variations.

While some researchers have realized the value of performing and recording Czerny’s piano variations, these works are still rarely performed on the stage. Su-Chuan Cheng recorded nine of Czerny’s piano variations, of which eight are world premiere recordings, namely Opp. 103, 112, 170, 194, 249, 332, 377, 386, and 825. In her dissertation, she gives a detailed discussion of each of these works, including background information, edition sources, theme categories, and comparison of some head motives with Beethoven’s.¹ In another study, Chia-Jung Chou acknowledges that Czerny’s works were popular during his lifetime, followed by nearly two centuries of neglect. Based on various figurations, tempos, dynamics, and meters in Czerny’s *Variations brillantes*, Op.

¹ Su-Chuan Cheng, “The Piano Variations of Carl Czerny: A Recording Project,” DMA diss. (University of Maryland, 2006).

14, Chou provides a detailed performance guide, including the setting of suitable tempos, pedaling and creating effective color changes. Chou aims to show that this piece is one of Czerny's finest works, having an impressive effect when performed on the stage.² The present author holds similar views for the variations included in this study.

Most of Carl Czerny's 180 sets of variations are unknown or forgotten works. The present study will examine three of them: Opus 33, Opus 281, and Opus 292. The Opus 33 "Rode Variations" is the only well-known set of the three, in large part due to Vladimir Horowitz's performances and a 1944 recording. With a theme taken from another famous composer, Pierre Rode (1774–1830), it is quite expressive with an elegant style. The second work, Opus 281, is entitled *Introduction, variations et presto finale* sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra *Norma* de Bellini. Using a theme from Vincenzo Bellini's opera 'Norma,' Czerny's work is irregular in structure, departing from the longstanding conventions of variation form. The final set of variations to be explored is "Variations brillantes sur un thème original," Opus 292. Its theme is Czerny's own.

In the three works of this study, Czerny shows the variety that is possible in creating variations. As part of this study, performance suggestions for the attractive "Rode Variations" will be provided, including not only advice and practice methods for solving technical challenges, but also suggestions for phrasing, dynamic contrast, and changes of color. This document describes and explores in detail the three variation sets.

² Chia-Jung Chou, "Carl Czerny: An Underappreciated Piano Composer and his Variations Brillantes, Opus 14," MM diss. (California State University, Long Beach, 2012).

Carl Czerny's Life and Career

Czerny was born into a musical family in the Leopoldstadt district of Vienna in 1791. In his autobiography, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, 1842,³ Czerny says of his paternal grandfather: “He was a city official in the small Bohemian town of Nimburg. He was also a good violinist, considering the state of violin playing at the time.”⁴ His father, Wenzel Czerny (b. Nimburg, 1750) was an oboist, pianist, and singer.⁵ Music was prevalent in Czerny's upbringing, and he amply demonstrated his own musical talent as a child. He started to play the piano at age three and began composing at the age of seven. According to Czerny's account, “From my earliest days I was surrounded with music, since my father used to practice a great deal....he strove to develop my sight-reading ability through continuous study of new works and thus to develop my musicianship.”⁶ Based on his outstanding musical memory, he could fluently play nearly everything by Mozart and Muzio Clementi from memory, including Mozart's Piano Concerto in C Minor K. 491, which he performed as a child in 1800.⁷ In the same year, Wenzel Krumpholz—a compatriot and court theater violinist—heard Czerny perform, and introduced him to Beethoven. Czerny played Beethoven's recently-published *Sonata pathétique* (Op. 13) and “Adelaide” (Op. 46), which his father sang with him. “When I had finished, Beethoven turned to my father and said, the boy is talented, I myself want to teach him,

³ Carl Czerny, *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, in *Sammlung musikwissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen* 46 (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1968).

⁴ Carl Czerny, “Recollections from My Life,” trans. and ed. Ernest Sanders, *The Musical Quarterly* 42 (July 1956): 302.

⁵ Carl Czerny, “Recollections from My Life,” 307.

⁶ Carl Czerny, “Recollections from My Life,” 303.

⁷ “Carl Czerny,” *The Musical World* 35, no. 40 (Oct. 03, 1857): 635-36.

and I accept him as my pupil. Let him come several times a week.”⁸ Czerny was honored to be a student of Beethoven and maintained a friendship with him until Beethoven’s death in 1827.

Czerny studied with Beethoven for three years. They spent the first lessons working on scales in all keys. As Czerny wrote: “He showed me many technical fundamentals, which were as yet unknown to most pianists, e.g. the only proper position of the hands and fingers and particularly the use of the thumb.”⁹ After absorbing Beethoven’s technical instruction, he was tasked with practicing works of Bach, Clementi, and his teacher, until the lessons ended in 1802.¹⁰ Czerny, in turn, later adopted a similar curriculum for his own students, as he describes in *Über den richtigen Vortrag der sämtlichen Beethoven'schen Klavierwerke*¹¹ (*On the Proper Performance of all Beethoven’s Works for the Piano*):¹² “they should have acquired that degree of facility which results from a good School, and from the study of the best works of Clementi, Mozart, Dussek, Cramer, Hummel and even of the modern composers.”¹³ One of the demands Beethoven made was that Czerny needed to acquire Beethoven’s distinctive legato technique.¹⁴ Compared with the fashionable detached staccato technique of the

⁸ Carl Czerny, “Recollections from My Life,” 307.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ David Gramit, *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity: Reassessing Carl Czerny* (NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 26.

¹¹ Carl Czerny, *Über den richtigen Vortrag der sämtlichen Beethoven'schen Klavierwerk* (Vienna: A. Diabelli & Co., 1842).

¹² Carl Czerny, *On the Proper Performance of all Beethoven's Works for the Piano, with excerpts from Czerny’s Memoirs and Anecdotes and Notes about Beethoven*, ed. Paul Badura-Skoda (Vienna: Universal, 1970).

¹³ Carl Czerny, *On the Proper Performance of all Beethoven's Works for the Piano*, 21.

¹⁴ Tilman Skowronek, *Beethoven the Pianist: Musical Performance and Reception* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 208.

period, legato was very special and unusual. Beethoven's dramatic, often sudden dynamic and emotive changes gave new expression and context to legato pianism.¹⁵ As Komlós describes it, "The shocking individuality of Beethoven's playing was in great contrast with the performance of other pianists in Vienna."¹⁶ Similarly, Czerny recalls, "Beethoven himself was, in his day, one of the greatest pianists, and unsurpassable in legato playing."¹⁷

In addition to the technical training, learning to focus on the beauty and poeticism of music was another important requirement during Czerny's study with Beethoven: "All rapid passages and figures are only employed as a means, never as the end."¹⁸ For both Beethoven and Czerny, powerful technique and tasteful aesthetics were considered primary factors of performance.

As one of Beethoven's outstanding pupils, Czerny had many prominent opportunities to perform Beethoven's music throughout his lifetime. In 1806 he performed Beethoven's first piano concerto, in C Major, Op. 15. Also, in 1812, he premiered Beethoven's famous fifth piano concerto ("Emperor," Op. 73) in Vienna.¹⁹ Over a number of years, Czerny scheduled regular, Sunday home concerts in which he performed all of Beethoven's piano sonatas by memory. Moreover, he authored several publications, including *Über den richtigen Vortrag der sämtlichen Beethoven'schen*

¹⁵ Skowronek, *Beethoven the Pianist*, 173.

¹⁶ Katalin Komlós, "After Mozart: The Viennese Piano Scene in the 1790s," *Studia musicologica* 49, no. 1/2 (2008): 44.

¹⁷ Carl Czerny, *On the Proper Performance of all Beethoven's Works for the Piano*, 21.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Max Rudolf, and William Rudolf, *A Musical Life: Writings and Letters* (Pendragon Press Musicological Series. Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2001), 56.

Klavierwerke and *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, both mentioned above, that detail his memories of Beethoven. Many of his writings remain valuable assets to historians interested in Beethoven studies. Beethoven found much to admire in Czerny as well: as described by Tyson, “The regard in which Beethoven held Czerny both as man and musician is indicated not only by the fact that he chose him as his nephew's piano teacher, but by his respectful and generous-hearted behaviour towards him.”²⁰

As a piano teacher, Czerny held significant status. Most of the piano masters in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were pupils of Czerny, or students of Czerny’s disciples. Czerny started to teach when he was a teenager. In 1810, when Muzio Clementi came to meet Beethoven, Czerny had a chance to observe and absorb his piano technique.²¹ As Czerny’s focus shifted toward piano pedagogy, he started to give fewer performances. As Gramit says, “By 1815 he claims to have given twelve lessons a day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. — a rigorous schedule he maintained for twenty-one years.”²² Drawing from his vast teaching experience, Czerny wrote much on piano technique. He believed that piano teaching methods should be different for each student, and he noted that everyone’s hands are of different shapes and sizes. Hence, he wrote abundantly about exercises for developing finger agility, correct use of fingering, and various touches that work best for different people, such as his *Practical Method for Beginners Opus 599* and *Twenty-Four Piano Studies for the Left Hand Opus 718*. Czerny’s autobiography reveals the technical details of his pedagogy: “Teach all scales in a variety of tempi, teach

²⁰ Alan Tyson, “Czerny on Beethoven (Book Review),” *The Musical Times* 105, no. 1453 (1964): 195.

²¹ Gramit, *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity*, 26.

²² *Ibid.*

rhythmic strictness, beautiful articulation and tone, proper fingering.”²³ Czerny emphasized that all techniques are to be used for producing a beautiful and pure sound, just as Beethoven had taught him. The basic principles underlying his pedagogical suggestions remain useful to students today. With regard to the number of Czerny's students, whether considering his direct students, his students' students, or students of his literature in posterity, his influence is unrivaled in piano pedagogy.²⁴ Among the remarkable ones whom he taught, two outstanding artists warrant examination: Franz Liszt (1811-1886) and Theodor Leschetizky (1830-1915).

In 1822, eleven-year-old Franz Liszt began to study the piano with Czerny.²⁵ Czerny, recognizing Liszt's potential, refused to accept any form of payment. As Walker explains, “A petition for a special scholarship, written by Antonio Salieri, allowed the Liszt family to move to an apartment near his piano teacher's so he could take lessons every day.”²⁶ After Liszt could fluently play the scales in all keys, Czerny “instilled in him for the first time a firm feeling for rhythm and taught him beautiful touch and tone, correct fingering, and proper musical phrasing.”²⁷ Besides developing Liszt's sight-reading and improvisation skills, Czerny encouraged him to contemplate the underlying spirit while playing the works of Bach, Clementi, Beethoven, and Hummel. This focus

²³ Gramit, *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity*, 57.

²⁴ John Comfort Fillmore, *A History of Pianoforte Music*, ed. Ridley Prentice (London: W. Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1885), 176-177.

²⁵ Michael Saffle, *The Music of Franz Liszt: Stylistic Development and Cultural Synthesis* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 23.

²⁶ Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years 1811-1847* (London: Faber & Faber, 1983), 72.

²⁷ Czerny, *Recollections from My Life*, 315.

directed Liszt to master both technical and expressive performance.²⁸ Liszt sincerely appreciated Czerny, who was his only professional teacher. After Liszt became a celebrity pianist, he frequently performed Czerny's Piano Sonata No. 1 in A-flat Major and admonished his own students to practice Czerny's études diligently. Liszt dedicated the third and final version of his twelve *Transcendental Études* to Czerny as an expression of his gratitude.

Theodor Leschetizky is another eminent pupil of Czerny. Unlike Liszt, Leschetizky did not have a glorious performance career. However, like Czerny, he devoted much of his life to teaching the piano. He is one of the founders of the "Leschetizky method," which continues to remain a topic of interest for pedagogues internationally.²⁹ Leschetizky taught hundreds of students, including Artur Schnabel (1882-1951), who was the first pianist to record the entirety of Beethoven's thirty-two piano sonatas.

Czerny was an outstanding pianist, prolific composer, and remarkable pedagogue. He inherited and developed Beethoven's ideas and made significant contributions to the established methods of piano teaching and performance. Even though Czerny was extremely busy with teaching, he still had many compositional achievements. In 1836, when Czerny was forty-five years old, he gave up his teaching schedule and began to spend more time composing. In all, he completed more than a thousand works, covering all of the significant genres.

²⁸ Walker, *Franz Liszt*, 73.

²⁹ Malwine Brée, *The Groundwork of the Leschetizky Method*, trans. Theodore Baker (New York: G. Schirmer, 1902), iii.

Piano Output

Czerny composed numerous piano works, including eleven piano sonatas, twenty-eight piano sonatinas, seventy-eight textbooks of exercises and 180 titled variations. Moreover, he published outstanding treatises that present in an organized way his complete thoughts about composing in various genres. These works include his *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte Opus 200*³⁰ (*A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte, Opus 200*)³¹, and *Die Schule der praktischen Tonsetzkunst*.³² Czerny himself divided his music into four categories:³³ studies and exercises, including Czerny's pedagogical works (e.g., *School for Velocity*); easy pieces for beginner students; brilliant concert pieces including variations, rondos, and large-scale virtuosic fantasies; and serious music (*Musik im ernsten Styl*), which includes his piano sonatas and sonatinas, symphonies, concertos, vocal music, and chamber music. Czerny created abundant piano variations by categorizing them as brilliant pieces for concerts. Unfortunately, some are currently unpublished or out of print.

To illustrate the breadth of Czerny's output, here is a summary of his piano sonatas, études and exercises, and other piano works.

³⁰ Carl Czerny, *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte Op.200* (Vienna: A. Diabelli & Co., 1829).

³¹ Carl Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte, Op. 200*, trans. and ed. Alice L. Mitchell (Longman Music Series, New York: Longman, 1983).

³² Carl Czerny, *Die Schule der praktischen Tonsetzkunst*, 3 vols. (Bonn: N. Simrock, 1849).

³³ Gramit, *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity*, 139.

Piano Sonatas

The following table is the list of his piano sonatas, most of which were composed between 1820 and 1827.³⁴

	Opus number	Key	Movements
Piano Sonata No. 1	Opus 7	A-flat Major	5
Piano Sonata No. 2	Opus 13	A minor	5
Piano Sonata No. 3	Opus 57	F minor	4
Piano Sonata No. 4	Opus 65	G Major	4
Piano Sonata No. 5	Opus 76	E Major	5
Piano Sonata No. 6	Opus 124	D minor	7
Piano Sonata No. 7	Opus 143	E minor	5
Piano Sonata No. 8	Opus 144	E-flat Major	5
Piano Sonata No. 9	Opus 145	B minor	6
Piano Sonata No. 10	Opus 268	B-flat Major	4
Piano Sonata No. 11	Opus 730	D-flat Major	4

³⁴ Randall Keith Sheets, "The Piano Sonatas of Carl Czerny," DMA diss. (University of Maryland College Park, 1987), 21.

In 1823, Czerny explained his regard for this genre in a letter to the Leipzig publisher C.F. Peters:

My solo piano sonatas, however many I plan to write, ought through [one separate] continuous numbering to comprise an entirety [in themselves], in which I want, little by little, to record my artistic views and experiences. Therefore I ask you to consider the 3rd Sonata, sent to you, as one item of an over-all series, which I hope to make more and more significant.³⁵

As detailed above, many of these works are between five and seven movements. This is an expansion of the conventional sonata of the Classic period. The first sonata, Op. 7, was frequently performed by Liszt. It consists of different characters, such as a soulful, *cantabile Adagio*, a sparkling, lively rondo, and a dramatic Capriccio. Completed when he was just 19 years of age, it shows Czerny's compositional talent at a young age.³⁶

Czerny published his third piano sonata as Opus 57 in F minor, thus matching the opus and key of Beethoven's 23rd ("Appassionata"), although it is in four movements rather than three. Debuted in 1824, it shows his deep respect and indebtedness to Beethoven.

Later in his ninth sonata, the thematic material of the scherzo, trio, B section of the rondo, and the fugue is similar, showing a method of unification that was used and developed during the Romantic era.

Études and Exercises

Most serious pianists have probably encountered Czerny's études and exercises. It is not uncommon for pianists to conjure up memories of finger exercises immediately upon the mere mention of Czerny's name. Drawing from his wealth of experience as a piano pedagogue, Czerny wrote seventy-eight exercise/étude books for technique training. His

³⁵ William S. Newman, *The Sonata Since Beethoven* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), 181.

³⁶ Gramit, *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity*, 141.

most popular textbooks are *The School of Velocity Opus 299*, *The Art of Finger Dexterity Opus 740*, and *Thirty New Studies in Technics Opus 849*. Czerny's études and exercises remain popular and invaluable to pianists of differing needs and developmental levels.

Other Piano Works

Included in this category are the majority of Czerny's works (approximately 600 opus numbers),³⁷ entitled variations, rondos, character pieces, fantasies, six piano sonatas for two pianos, and eight piano sonatinas for four hands. It is unfortunate that most of Czerny's advanced piano works are obscured by his études and exercises, especially when one considers his advocacy of an underlying musicality that must not be overwhelmed by virtuosity. For pianists and scholars to fully understand the pedagogical essence that Czerny promoted, one must acknowledge the subjective voice of Czerny the artist, recognizing that Czerny was himself a diligent creative force. To shine a light on his artistic abilities, one can simply explore his catalogue. His first published work is titled *Variations concertantes*, Op. 1, written when he was fifteen years old. As he states in his autobiography, "In 1806 Krumpholz, who remained our constant friend, gave me a theme he had composed himself. To surprise him I composed of my own accord and without any outside help *20 Variations concertantes* for piano and violin."³⁸ Czerny's account continues, "More than ten works (the grand piano sonata, Op. 7, and the four-hand sonata, Op. 10, among them) appeared the following year (1819), and soon my

³⁷ Su-Chuan Cheng, *The Piano Variations of Carl Czerny: A Recording Project*, 21.

³⁸ Czerny, *Recollections from My Life*, 312.

name began to become known abroad as well.”³⁹ Czerny took pride in his compositional output. Many of his compositions became popular and are publishers’ favorites.

Even though Czerny’s compositional prowess garnered international acclaim in his own time, his capacity as anything other than a technical taskmaster remains largely unrecognized today. In part, this attitude has to do with a bias against decidedly virtuosic, showy music. However, because Czerny’s emphasis on technique was only in service to creativity and expression, the Czerny of the concert hall demands the attention of those who are only familiar with the Czerny of the practice room. It is regrettable that we ignore so many of his advanced works. Exploring them more earnestly could lead to a valuable expansion of the piano repertoire.

³⁹ Czerny, *Recollections from My Life*, 314.

CHAPTER 2

DESCRIPTIONS OF CZERNY'S THREE PIANO VARIATIONS

Variations on a Theme by Rode, Opus 33

Czerny composed these variations in 1822-23 and published them as Opus 33. They are based on Pierre Rode's *Air varié* for solo violin and string trio, Opus 10. Czerny opens Opus 33 with a piano arrangement of Rode's theme, transposed from G Major in the original to E-flat Major, then goes on to five variations and a coda. In the process, he turns the naive charm of Rode's aria into a tour de force of early Romantic piano music.⁴⁰

Rode's Opus 10, originally titled *Air varié pour le violon avec accompagnement d'un second violon, alto et basse*, was also a set of variations. Pierre Rode (1774-1830) composed this work to display his virtuosic strengths as a violinist.⁴¹ Czerny composed his Opus 33 after he heard an arrangement of Rode's theme as sung by Angelica Catalani (1780-1849) around 1821. He nicknamed his set *La ricordanza*, presumably because the theme brought back memories for him.⁴²

Theme

Example 1.1 shows the solo violin part of Rode's work for comparison with Czerny's arrangement in Example 1.2.

⁴⁰ David Dubal, *The Art of the Piano: Its Performers, Literature, and Recordings* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1995), 121.

⁴¹ Hilary Poriss, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 152.

⁴² *Review of Piano Variations*, CD, David Neil Jones, Amphion Phi CD 135, *Musical Opinion* (Autumn 1996): 177.

Air varié.

1

VIOLINO PRINCIPALE. P. Rode, Op. 10.
Andante con Variazioni.

mf 2^{da} C. 3^{ra} Corda dim. 2^{da} C. 2^{da} C. 3^{ra} Corda dim.

Example 1.1 Pierre Rode, *Air varié*, Op. 10, mm. 1-20, principal violin part.

VARIATIONS
on a theme by Rode
Edited by ISIDOR PHILIPP
THEME
Andante espressivo (♩ = 64) CARL CZERNY, Op. 33

PIANO p pp sf cresc. una corda dim. cresc. una corda cedendo cedendo

830
Copyright 1945 by International Music Company, New York City

Example 1.2 Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Op. 33, Theme, mm. 1-20.

Both Rode's and Czerny's themes are marked *Andante*, and both consist of an accompanied melody. Czerny made superficial changes to Rode's melody with new ornaments, slightly altered rhythms, and pick-ups added between phrases.

As shown in Example 1.2 above, Czerny's theme begins in a hymn-like style and becomes more florid as the theme progresses. Structurally, the theme is in rounded binary form. The first part is a 4+4 period. After a half cadence in m. 4, the consequent modulates to B-flat Major and affirms that key with a perfect authentic cadence in m. 8. As in Rode's theme, the modulation is made more dramatic when the melody in m. 6 suddenly launches upward to g^2 , which adds the ninth to the new dominant chord. This gesture is exaggerated in m. 9, with a higher peak (a^2) and a rise from *pp* to *f* within only four beats. This heightened gesture, which appears also in Rode's theme, begins the digressing phrase of the rounded binary form (mm. 9-12). The remainder of the phrase returns to E-flat Major and drops to *pp*, with *una corda* and *cedendo* marked, quietly pausing on the dominant to set up the return of the opening melody in m. 13. As in Rode's theme, the return of mm. 1-8 in mm. 13-20 is again a 4+4 period, but with an imperfect authentic cadence instead of a half cadence at the end of the antecedent; the consequent does not modulate, as before, and instead comes to a full close in E-flat Major. From the start, the return is like a variation within the theme. It begins at a higher dynamic, introduces double-dotted rhythms and eighth-note triplets, and reaches the peak on g^2 almost immediately (m. 14); the new consequent melody in m. 18 pushes up to the highest note of the theme, $b\text{-flat}^2$, with a *sf*. The melodic peaks match those of Rode's theme, but the dynamics are exaggerated, and the penultimate measure of Czerny's theme is far more active, which creates a flourish before the cadence. The distinctive changes of

dynamic, the greater drama of the return, and the embellishment before the final cadence will become points of identification in the variations.

Variation 1

With chromatic notes and sixteenth-note elaboration, the main notes of Rode's melody can be found in the right hand. The bass line is similar until it becomes much more active in the second part. Czerny marked *Stesso tempo*, which emphasizes that the same tempo is to be kept despite the apparent increase of activity. Generally, the music retains the same rounded-binary form, including its key plan and cadences. However, the elaborately ornamented melody, the steady stream of sixteenth notes in the treble, and the more-active accompaniment create a playful and lively character compared to the *cantabile* Theme. Example 1.3 shows an immediate change of musical character and rhythmic pace in Variation 1.

Var. 1

Stesso tempo

P legato

Example 1.3 Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Op. 33, Variation 1, mm. 1-2.

Czerny expands the simple tune of m. 3 with sixteenth notes that rise to g^3 , greatly expanding the range of the melody in the Theme. A similar gesture in m. 6 adds a descending scale in doubled thirds, introducing a virtuosic element that is lengthened in m. 9 and expanded to successive 6/3 chords in m. 18, during the final flourish before the ending. As in the Theme, the return of mm. 1-8 in mm. 13-20 is varied, with new rhythms

introduced. Despite its energy, this variation finishes quietly after a *forte* outburst, as did the Theme.

Variation 2

Variation 2 again retains the main melody, tempo, and form of the Theme, but with a new rhythmic figuration and *teneramente* marked at the beginning. As shown in Example 1.4, the new rhythm consists of double-dotted eighths and thirty-seconds in the treble, supported by steady eighth-note triplets below.

The image shows a musical score for Variation 2. It consists of two staves: a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff starts with a double-dotted eighth and thirty-second note, followed by a series of eighth-note triplets. The bass staff provides a steady eighth-note triplet accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Stesso tempo' and the dynamics include 'dol.' and 'teneramente'. The score includes fingering numbers (3, 5, 4, 2, 1) and a breath mark above the treble staff.

Example 1.4 Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Op. 33, Variation 2, mm. 1-3.

In m. 5, the treble begins a powerful climb to the high register, at *forte*, which enlarges the rise-and-fall in mm. 6-7 of the Theme. Where the Theme and the first variation became more dramatic with *a²*, the return in this variation is smoother and more relaxed. Before, the dotted rhythms became more marked, but here they phase out until only triplets are left. In the Theme and the first variation, in contrast, the dotted rhythms became more prominent, and the rate of chord change accelerated in the remainder.

Variation 3

Variation 3 is marked *Vivace*, which is a suddenly faster tempo. As shown in Example 1.5, the staccato, waltz-style accompaniment creates a steady rhythmic framework for the elaborate flourishes and ornamentation in the right hand.



Example 1.5 Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Op. 33, Variation 3, mm. 1-3.

The subordinate role of the accompaniment is emphasized in m. 6 with the marking *il basso leggero*, instructing the performer to keep the left hand light. The treble part is a rapid line that quickly traverses the keyboard and covers over all of the cadences with continued motion. During the Bb: PAC in m. 8, for example, a rising arpeggio shoots up to f⁴ while the bass descends to its lowest note in the variation. With the return at m. 13, the bass departs from its subordinate role and shares in passing sixteenth-note figures back and forth with the treble. As in the Theme, Czerny in m. 16 slows the motion at the Eb: IAC with a half-note F[#] in the melody pulling up to G. The rapid motion quickly resumes, and an expansive run in tenths, marked *con fuoco*, climbs into the top register of the piano. The treble then descends with a florid line that quickly falls over four octaves, from f⁴ in m. 18 to e^b at the very end of the variation.

Variation 4

The slow and hymn-like character of this variation is reminiscent of the Theme, returning to its homophonic sobriety and slight touches of ornamentation and occasional dotted rhythms. This recollection of the theme is particularly explicit when contrasted with the frenzy of sixteenth-note triplets in the preceding variation. Marked *Sostenuto* ♩ = 76, this

variation returns to the limited range and melodiousness of the Theme, with rhythm that is relatively simple throughout.



Example 1.6 Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Op. 33, Variation 4, mm. 1-5.

Although the character of this variation resembles that of the Theme, Czerny for the first time alters the key and cadence plan, creating a more fluid structure. The five phrases of the Theme are intact, but with different cadences. This table shows the key and cadence plan of the Theme for comparison with that of Variation 4.

		Theme	Variation 4
a^1	m. 4	Eb: HC	Eb: HC
	m. 8	Bb: PAC	gm: PAC
b	m. 12	Eb: HC	cm: HC
a^2	m. 16	Eb: IAC	A pause on Eb: vii ^{o4} ₃ of ii
	m. 20	Eb: PAC	Eb: PAC

As shown in the table, in Variation 4, after a half cadence in m. 4, the consequent modulates to G minor with a perfect authentic cadence in m. 8 instead of modulating to Bb Major. This new key plan is unconventional, and the introduction of a minor key into the form is expressive. The repeat signs are removed, which weakens the binary division of the form. After the gm: PAC, there is a gradual return to Eb Major, through C minor and a hint of F minor, evident in mm. 12-13 and again, in the context of Eb Major, with

the very poignant phrase ending on the leading-tone seventh chord of F minor. The return of Eb Major is in mm. 14-15, but the start of the final phrase, with its abundance of diminished-seventh chords in mm. 16-18, obscures the key. In the Theme, mm. 17-18 rose in pitch and dynamic to a peak, which dropped back to *pp* for a final cadence marked *cedendo*. In this variation, the peak is made higher and grander with the half-note pause on the German Sixth in m.18. The contrast with the *pp* ending, *rall.*, is made all the more dramatic.

Variation 5

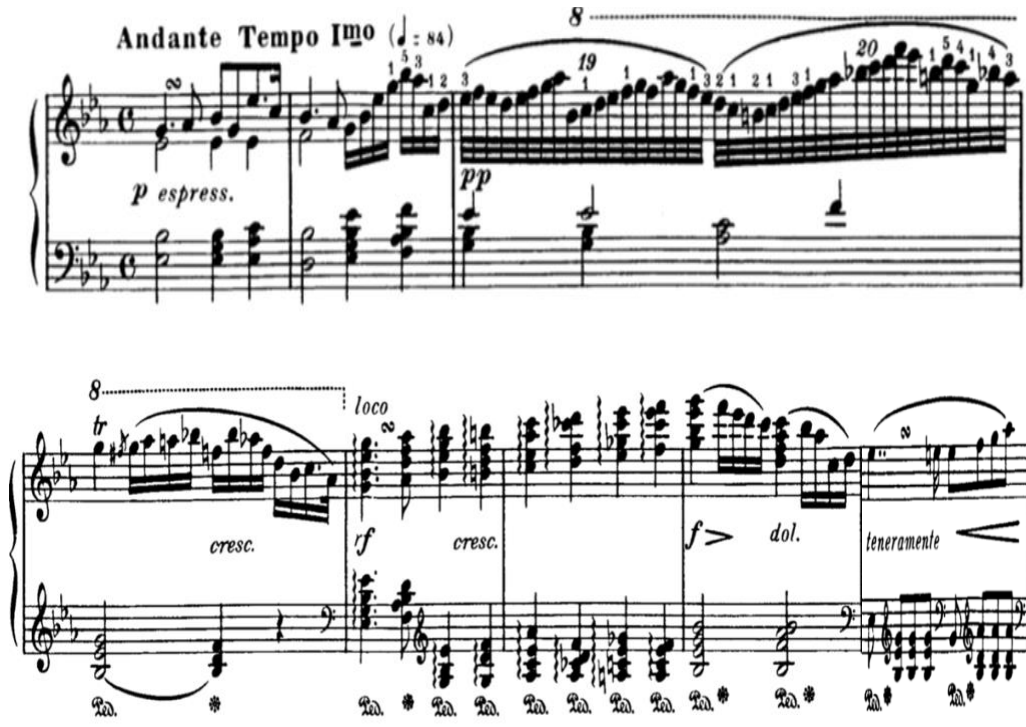
This variation returns to the original key and cadence plan. If Variation 4 is like a slow movement, Variation 5 is a light, perpetual-motion finale marked *Allegro vivace*. As shown in Example 1.7, the left-hand accompaniment consists of steady eighths with a slow-moving bass that recalls the bass line of the Theme.

Example 1.7 Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Op. 33, Variation 5, mm. 1-8.

Over this simple accompaniment, the right hand consists entirely of a sixteenth-note line, sprinkled with chromatic notes, that rapidly traverses the registers. In the final phrase *a*² the left hand joins with sixteenths also to make a *ff* cadence in m. 20. After this cadence the remainder of the work is a coda that at first continues the sixteenths from Variation 5. As shown in Example 1.8, at m. 30, the rapid figuration suddenly stops on a half note with a fermata, and an *ad libitum* cadenza, marked *Presto*, ensues.

Example 1.8 Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Op. 33, Variation 5, cadenza.

After a passage of improvisatory character, the motion pauses on Eb: V7, which prepares a recall of the opening of the Theme starting in m. 31. As shown in Example 1.9, this recall incorporates the wildly contrasting rhythms through the variations; the first two measures of the Theme return in their original rhythm, followed immediately by a measure with a thirty-second-note flourish.



Example 1.9 Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Op. 33, Variation 5, mm. 31-38.

The treble in the next measure, the Eb: HC in m. 34, slows to sixteenths, and a variation of the last phrase of the Theme, mm. 17-20, immediately follows, in mm. 35-38. As in the Theme, this new version of the final phrase rises with rolled quarter-note chords to a *forte* peak, then falls to the Eb: PAC at the end of the theme. A difference is that the dominant harmony of this final cadence occupies a full measure (m. 37), and the melody approaches E^b through C and D. The remainder of the work (mm. 38-44) reiterates V and I, with a new, tranquil melody, marked *teneramente*, that rises to a peak, then slows and

falls to *pp*, *morendo* – a familiar shape by now for an ending phrase. How to end a set of variations is always a problem for composers, and here Czerny creates a grand finale that goes from virtuosic passagework to a reminiscence of the Theme and its most expressive moments.

Introduction, Variations et Presto finale sur un Thème favori de l’Opéra *Norma*
de Bellini, Opus 281

The Theme of this work is based on the chorus “Norma viene” from Act I of Vincenzo Bellini’s tragic opera *Norma*, first produced in 1831. Czerny composed two versions of the variations on this Theme, one for piano and orchestra, and another for solo piano. The piano version encompasses all that is in the orchestral version. Czerny opens Op. 281 with an introduction that sets up the Theme, which is an arrangement of the main melody of “Norma viene,” transposed from the original E-flat Major to F Major. The Theme is followed by four variations and an extended Finale.

Introduction

Because the Theme is too light to serve as the opening of a big, brilliant work, Czerny prefaces it with a *bravura* Introduction (Example 2.1).



Example 2.1 Carl Czerny, *Introduction, Variations et Presto finale* sur un Thème favori de l’Opéra *Norma* de Bellini, Op. 281, Introduction, mm. 1-5.

The orchestral music begins powerfully, at *fortissimo*, in the dominant key of C Major. The ascending chords presented at the beginning anticipate the Theme, and the dotted rhythmic figures foreshadow its march style. The sudden drop from *fortissimo* to *piano* (mm. 3-4) previews the dramatic changes of dynamics and rhythm in the Theme and variations to follow. After eight measures of martial orchestral style, the solo piano enters with immediately ornate passagework that culminates with a *con fuoco* cadenza and a pause on C: V in m. 20. From m. 21, Czerny changes the key to E-flat Major. The new material in the new key is particularly stark when contrasted with the frenzy of activity in the brilliant preceding phrases. The rapid thirty-second-note runs, supported by a dance-style accompaniment of steady eighths, takes the music into a sparkling delicate moment. After a brief recall of the opening martial style in mm. 34-39, the key returns to C Major and a *leggiere* passage in playful character begins. The humor continues until a *bravura* cadenza in m. 44, marked *Molto Allegro*. Starting in m. 45, glimpses of the Theme come through in the resounding bass. After a cadenza with a florid descending line, the motion gradually slows as the dynamics fall, and a quiet pause on F: V₇ prepares the entrance of the Theme.

Theme

In Act I of the opera, the title character, Norma, leads the Druids and priestesses as the chorus sings “Norma viene,” which translates to “Norma is coming.” The solemn choral melody portrays Norma’s prominent status as a high-priestess and the people’s admiration of her. Based on the context of this excerpt, Czerny follows the majestic character of the chorus and exaggerates its march quality. Example 2.2 shows an

orchestral excerpt from “Norma viene” for comparison with Czerny’s arrangement in Example 2.3.

Cl. in Si b
Fag.
Corni in Mi b
Tr. ni
Timp.
Banda
Viol.
V. le
Vo.
Cb.

Example 2.2, Vincenzo Bellini, *Norma*, Act I, “Norma viene”.

Allegro.
TEMA.
p dol.

Example 2.3 Carl Czerny, *Introduction, Variations et Presto finale* sur un Thème favori de l’Opéra *Norma* de Bellini, Op. 281, Theme, mm. 1-4.

Both Bellini's and Czerny's themes consist of an accompanied melody, but Czerny alters the form of Bellini's chorus. Structurally, he constructs his Theme in rounded binary form and slightly modifies the choral tune by adding ornaments and altering the rhythms.

Czerny's first phrase derives from Bellini's theme. After eight measures, the repeat of the first part (mm. 9-16) is written out at a higher dynamic and register with fuller accompanying chords. After an energetic ending in the dominant key, marked by falling octaves on C, a sudden drop in dynamics initiates the digressing *b* phrase, which is delicate and *dolce* in contrast (mm. 17-24). With a rise to *fortissimo*, Czerny prepares a powerful return of the opening melody. From here, he alters Bellini's chorus to create an ending for the rounded-binary form. The returning phrase in mm. 25-32 resembles Bellini's original melody, but it finishes with a strong cadential formula with falling octaves again embellishing the tonic chord. After the rounded-binary form is completed, Czerny in mm. 32-40 adds an obviously orchestral passage to provide additional closure and create an interlude between the Theme and Variation 1.

Variation 1

Generally, the variation retains the same binary form as the Theme, including its key plan and cadences. However, the treble is full of sweeping chromatic scales, sixteenth-note elaborations, and rapidly repeated notes, which, combined with a steady chordal accompaniment, create a playful and lively character compared to the martial Theme. Example 2.4 shows the distinct change of character in Variation 1.

Example 2.4 Carl Czerny, *Introduction, Variations et Presto finale* sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra *Norma* de Bellini, Op. 281, Variation 1, mm. 1-5.

Czerny uses a repeat sign instead of writing out the repeat of a^1 as in the Theme. The digressing b phrase sprinkles chromatic notes into the rapid sixteenth notes and pauses on F: V_7 , at *fortissimo*, keeping up the momentum. The return at m. 17 is varied, replacing the running scales of the opening with arpeggios. After the variation finishes at m. 24, Czerny again inserts an orchestral passage that not only adds closure but also clearly recalls the martial rhythms of Bellini's chorus. With so much display writing in the variations, these interludes remind the listener of the original Theme.

Variation 2

Generally, Variation 2 again retains the form and the main tempo of the Theme, though the primary rhythmic value is the triplet eighth rather than the sixteenth note. With *leggiero* marked at the beginning, Czerny recalls the opening arpeggio of the Theme by adding trills and extending its range from a tenth to three-and-a-half octaves upward. The

new consequent replaces the arpeggios with staccato triplet eighths that ascend and descend in a scale with a bouncy, dance-like accompaniment. Again, the end of the first part is a *forte* play on octave leaps. At the beginning of the digressing *b* phrase (Example 2.5) the dynamic drops to *piano* and Czerny sprinkles staccato notes above a descending bass line. The phrase returns to *forte* for a forceful close on the dominant.



Example 2.5 Carl Czerny, *Introduction, Variations et Presto finale* sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra *Norma* de Bellini, Op. 281, Variation 2, mm. 9-10.

The return, a^2 , recalls the long upward arpeggio from the opening, now decorated with quintuplet turn figures. As before, the elongated arpeggios give way to staccato triplet chords and a descending scale that ends with octave drops on the tonic chord. The inserted orchestral closing resembles the one at the end of the first variation.

Variation 3

Variation 3 is marked *Molto vivo e brillante*, which is a suddenly faster tempo, and the 'brilliance' of this variation is conveyed by stormy, nearly-constant sixteenth notes for both hands, at *fortissimo*, creating a furious character (Example 2.6).



Example 2.6 Carl Czerny, *Introduction, Variations et Presto finale* sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra *Norma* de Bellini, Op. 281, Variation 3, mm. 1-2.

The arpeggios of the Theme are developed in this way, and in m. 5 the hands begin to move outward, reaching their widest separation in mm. 6-7, only to come back together for another variant of falling octaves at the cadence in m. 8. As in the previous variations, the dynamic of the digressing *b* phrase suddenly drops. Both hands continue in constant sixteenths, *leggiero*, with a mixture of arpeggios, repeated notes, and scales.

With the return of the stormy opening in m. 17, its new figuration continues to build into a *bravura* moment. The end of its first half is on the F: vii^{o4}₂/IV instead of an imperfect authentic cadence in m. 20, continuing the momentum. Again, the *marcatissimo* eighths and the sixteenths in the other hand start to move outward, coming together again in the arpeggiation of the tonic at the cadence (m. 24). Once more, the orchestral insertion starting in m. 25 recalls the dotted rhythms of Bellini's chorus. This time, however, it closes on F: V in place of I. Then a small transition is added, a single line, marked *Solo*, that slowly works upward from C to D-flat to D-natural. The chromatic line leads to E-flat, the first melodic note of Variation 4, which begins in A-flat Major.

Variation 4

The slow tempo and barcarolle-like character of this variation, marked *Adagio non troppo*, create a tranquil intermezzo. As shown in Example 2.7, Czerny changes the key to A-flat Major and offers a *cantabile* melody embellished with delicate flourishes and supported by a continuous accompaniment of eighth-note triplets.



The image shows a musical score for Variation 4. The tempo is marked 'Adagio non troppo'. The score is in A-flat Major and 3/4 time. It features a cantabile melody with delicate flourishes and a continuous accompaniment of eighth-note triplets. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system labeled 'VAR. 4.' and the second system starting with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket.

Example 2.7 Carl Czerny, *Introduction, Variations et Presto finale* sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra *Norma* de Bellini, Op. 281, Variation 4, mm. 1-4.

The repeat signs are removed. Measures 9-16 are a more-impassioned variation of mm. 1-8, ending with a cadence in C minor. Modulations continue into the digressing *b* phrase, which returns to E-flat Major before modulating to G-flat Major and cadencing there in m. 24. The next eight measures are a gradual return first to F minor, through a sequence that falls in steps (mm. 28-29) and pauses in mm. 30-31 on the Ger6 chord of that key. At m. 32, the resolution of the Ger6 to the dominant chord initiates a *dolce e leggero* passage, suddenly *piano*, that tonicizes C Major. As shown in Example 2.8, Czerny makes striking use of glissandi in thirds in the treble.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system (measures 33-37) features a right hand with a single-handed glissando in thirds, starting with a 4-measure rest and a 2-measure rest, followed by a series of chords and a final flourish. The left hand provides a steady accompaniment of chords. The second system (measures 38-42) continues the right hand's flourish and includes a section marked 'Ped. dim.' and 'Ped.' with a wavy line indicating a tremolo effect.

Example 2.8 Carl Czerny, *Introduction, Variations et Presto finale* sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra *Norma* de Bellini, Op. 281, Variation 4, mm. 33-37.

This spectacular technique of a single-handed *glissando* in thirds contributes to the sparkling, light ending of this variation. This closing passage is purely in C Major until a short cadenza, marked *Presto, sempre pp e leggerissimo*, re-introduces chromatic notes. The end of this flourish adds B-flat into the C-Major chord, thus creating the V₇ of F Major. The final three measures slow to *Lento* and pause on the V₇ to prepare the entrance of the energetic Finale.

Finale

The variations culminate in an impressive, 181-measure Finale marked *Allegro molto quasi Presto*. As shown in Example 2.9, the Finale starts, in contrast to the *Adagio non troppo* of the previous variation, with a flurry of staccato eighths in the treble over a steady chordal accompaniment, and chords are divided between the hands in mm. 3-6.

Allegro molto quasi Presto.

FINALE.

The image shows a musical score for the 'FINALE' section. It consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system begins with a forte (f) dynamic and includes the instruction 'ben marcato.' The second system includes 'loco.' markings. Both systems feature eighth-note patterns and falling octaves.

Example 2.9 Carl Czerny, *Introduction, Variations et Presto finale* sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra *Norma* de Bellini, Op. 281, Finale, mm. 1-6.

Measures 1-24 of the Finale are actually a new variation of the Theme, with the same phrasing and cadence plan. As in the Theme, the first part ends in the dominant key (m. 8) with *forte* falling octaves, but here the momentum continues into the *b* phrase instead of a sudden drop in dynamics. After a powerful climb into the high register, the hands begin to move inward, arriving on F: V₇. The return at m. 17 is varied, now an amplified version of the chordal figures from the opening. Again, the variation ends with the falling octaves embellishing the tonic chord (m. 24). As at the end of the first three variations, an orchestral passage is inserted (mm. 24b-36) that recalls the dotted rhythms and some of the melody of the Theme. Its *forte* ending on a repeated C is followed by a suddenly *piano* line that creeps upward to E-flat, as in the ending of Variation 3.

As in Variation 4, Czerny changes the key to A-flat Major, and presents essentially another variation of the Theme, differently structured, in mm. 37-59. The arpeggio melody at the opening of the Theme returns, punctuated by rolled chords, and ends in m. 44. At m. 45, the dynamic suddenly drops to *pianissimo*, and a new

arpeggiation pattern in sixteenths initiates a *leggiero* phrase. This new consequent phrase, mm. 44-52, modulates to E-flat Major and cadences there. A new figuration recalling the trills, quintuplets, and triplet bass of Variation 2 extends to m. 59, where there is another cadence in E-flat Major.

In place of an orchestra insertion, a *dolce* transition follows that passes from B Major to the dominant of C Major with a diminished-seventh pivot in m. 67. After four measures of C: V, the dynamic suddenly drops to *piano* and a new, *Animato* figure begins (Example 2.10).



Example 2.10 Carl Czerny, *Introduction, Variations et Presto finale* sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra *Norma* de Bellini, Op. 281, Finale, mm. 71-74.

The staccato eighth-note octaves, supported by a dance-style accompaniment of steady eighths, create a playful and lively moment. At m. 79, a cadence in C Major is followed by a new sixteenth-note figuration that drops to *piano* and begins to climb chromatically with ascending diminished-seventh outlines to a *fortissimo* peak at m. 89. After pausing on a C-Major chord at this peak, the figuration begins to descend chromatically, again with diminished-seventh chords, until F: V₇ is reached and prolonged for ten measures (mm. 95-105).

From the F-Major tonic in m. 106, Czerny provides 66 measures of brilliant, concerto-style closing passages entirely in F Major. The virtuosic closing ends with 18

measures of prolonged dominant harmony that finally arrives on the tonic on the downbeat of m. 171. What follows is another orchestral passage, this one marked *Presto*, that not only continues the closure with V and I, but also recalls the melody and the dotted rhythms of Bellini's chorus. Thus Czerny rounds off the work with a grand ending that derives from its beginning.

Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Opus 292

Czerny's Opus 292 is a virtuosic expansion on a simple, dance-like Theme. This original Theme is transformed through a series of variations in different tempi with elaborate figurations added to the basic framework. In total, the work consists of a sixteen-measure introduction followed by the Theme and six variations. There is essentially a seventh variation in slow tempo, then an *Allegro vivace* movement that greatly expands the Theme. Finally, a *Presto* coda.

Introduction

Similarly, Czerny set an attention-grabbing Introduction, as did his Op. 281. As shown in Example 3.1, the rhythmic figure at the start of the Introduction foreshadows the horn-call motive in the Theme.



Example 3.1 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Introduction, mm. 1-3.

The music begins quietly and mysteriously, as if the horns are in the distance. The F presented alone at the beginning is slowly shown to be the fifth scale degree of Bb minor, but only after it is surprisingly pushed up to G^b and a *ff* arpeggiation of the Cb-Major Neapolitan chord ensues. As shown in Example 3.2, this short detour (mm. 5-6) foreshadows sudden changes of dynamics, tonality and rhythm in the Theme and variations to follow.

Example 3.2 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Introduction, mm. 4-6.

The *ff* outburst falls back to a *pp* stop on bb: V in m. 8, again quiet and tentative.

The second half of the Introduction begins with an abrupt change of key to Db Major, the relative major (mm. 9-16). A long, legato melody that continually rises is accompanied by a walking bass in staccato eighth notes that are an outgrowth of the repeated eighth notes in m. 1. The melody in mm. 9-13 consists entirely of leaps, thus anticipating the many leaps in the melody of the Theme. The descending leaps in particular anticipate similar falls in the melody of the Theme. After the Db-Major melody, mm. 13-15 recall the rhythm of the opening horn call and serve to prepare a grand flourish on V₇ in m. 16, where a rising arpeggio shoots up to e-flat⁴ and falls back to the bottom of the keyboard. This flourish suddenly transforms the mysterious

character of the Introduction into a burst of energy. As introductions normally do, this one ends on V_7 to set the stage for the thematic material to follow, but with a gesture so grand that it seems almost incongruous with the rustic character of the upcoming Theme.

Theme

The Allegro theme begins in a contredanse style with the horn call that was foreshadowed in the Introduction (Ex. 3.3).

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of the 'Tema' from Carl Czerny's 'Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292'. The score is in 2/4 time, B-flat Major, and is marked 'Allegro.' and 'Tema.'. The first four measures are shown, featuring a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The melody starts with a horn call motif. Dynamics include 'fp' and accents.

Example 3.3 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Theme, mm. 1-4.

Structurally, the theme is in binary form in twenty-four measures, with both parts repeated. The first part, in B-flat Major, is a 4+4 period. After completing a half cadence in m. 4, the simple, basic harmony and phrasing of this first part are dressed up by the rise in register through mm. 5-8, with a big plunge downward at the end. This melodic contour will become the basis for elaborate variation. After modulating to F Major and affirming the key with a perfect authentic cadence in m. 8, an abrupt move in m. 9 to a Db-Major chord launches the second part of the form. Similar tonal shifts in the Introduction foreshadowed this sudden move, and it is so distinctive that it will be a point of identification in the variations. The digressing *b* phrase is a sequence that falls in thirds, from a Db-Major triad to a Bb-minor triad to a Gb-Major triad that is converted to a German Sixth chord to quickly restore V of Bb Major. At m. 17, where a return of the

opening would conventionally be expected, Czerny offers a new melody that features the falling-fourth figure from m. 1. The horn-call opening of the Theme was very limited harmonically, so for the ending Czerny replaces its return with a full-bodied phrase that closes the form with a complete harmonic progression in Bb Major. This replacement in the variations offers an opportunity for change of material so that each variation begins with a repetitive figure, goes on a tonal digression, then ends with an elaborate new figuration. As shown in Example 3.4, besides the falling-fourth figure, the new 2+2+4 melody is constructed from the repeated eighth notes in m. 1 and the rising steps in m. 3, and is supported by a dance-style accompaniment of steady eighths.

Example 3.4 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Theme, mm. 17-24.

The new melody climbs to a *forte* peak in m. 22, then suddenly drops to *piano* and falls through three octaves of B^bs to the end. The falling octaves in the last measure are given new figuration with each variation.

Variation 1

Variation 1 is marked *Brillante*. Generally, the variations retain the same binary form, including keys and cadences. The ‘brilliance’ of this variation is conveyed by strong full chords and nearly-constant sixteenth-note triplets, creating a *bravura* character. Whereas the dynamics of the Theme were *p* and *pp*, with only one rise to *forte*, this variation, in keeping with its display character, begins at *forte*, drops to *pp* for the tonal digression, then ends at *f* and *ff*, with *sf* punctuations. The new consequent melody rises with arpeggiated figuration to the high peak c⁴ with a *sf* (m. 7), then falls to f¹ with the perfect authentic cadence in F Major. As shown in Example 3.5, with the tonal departure in the digressing phrase, Czerny introduces sweeping chromatic scales, marked *pp*.

Example 3.5 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Variation 1, mm. 9-11.

The repeated Fs in mm. 15-16 of the Theme are expanded into octaves and a rising arpeggio, keeping up the momentum. As in the Theme, the final phrase introduces a new melody, this time a series of sixteenth-note triplets that mixes chromatic scales from the

digressing phrase with other scale and arpeggio figures. After rising to the peak on f^4 at *ff* (m. 23), the line descends with the arpeggiated figuration, and the phrase finishes with a *ff* variation of the dropping octaves from the end of the Theme.

Variation 2

Variation 2 again retains the tempo and form of the Theme, and it also brings back much of the main melodies. As shown in Example 3.6, the horn-call melody is recalled in the treble with a new, sweeping chromatic accompaniment resembling the lines in Variation 1.

Example 3.6 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Variation 2, mm. 1-3.

In m. 5, the treble begins a climb in leaps to a forte peak on c^2 , which enlarges the range in mm. 6-7 of the Theme. The digressing *b* phrase is again a sequence that falls in thirds, with a new arpeggiation figure for each chord. After the rising chromatic notes in the treble (m. 14), the motion again pauses on repeated Fs. In the last phrase, the melody that closed the Theme returns, now with running sixteenth triplets in the bass. The melody and the bass move outward, reaching their widest separation as the melody peaks in mm. 22-23. The two lines both fall in the last measure for yet another variation of the B^b octaves.

Variation 3

Variation 3 returns to the simple eighth-note accompaniment figure of the Theme, now supporting elaborate sixteenth-note lines doubled in octaves, sixths, and thirds. As shown in Example 3.7, the opening recalls the repeated Fs from the Introduction and the Theme, adding a line also in sixteenths against them.

The image shows the first four measures of Variation 3. The music is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The right hand (treble clef) features a complex sixteenth-note texture, starting with a half-note F in the first measure and moving to a sixteenth-note line in the second measure. The left hand (bass clef) provides a simple eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and crescendo (*cres*).

Example 3.7 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Variation 3, mm. 1-4.

After the treble and the dynamics reach a peak at m. 5, the consequent phrase accelerates the rate of chord change with new chord functions while the sixteenths descend, dropping octaves, as before, at the cadence in m. 8. As shown in Example 3.8, the horn-call rhythm continues into the *b* phrase, as it did in the Theme. The running sixteenths move into the bass here and are doubled in octaves.

The image shows measures 9-12 of Variation 3. The music is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The right hand (treble clef) features a complex sixteenth-note texture, starting with a half-note F in the first measure and moving to a sixteenth-note line in the second measure. The left hand (bass clef) provides a simple eighth-note accompaniment. Dynamics include fortissimo (*ff*).

Example 3.8 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Variation 3, mm. 9-12.

In mm. 13-14, a rising line in the treble and a descending line in the bass move chromatically outward to F, restoring the dominant harmony in preparation for the final phrase, as in the Theme. The new figuration in the closing is a variation of the opening, namely an eighth-note accompaniment supporting delicate, staccato sixteenths doubled in thirds. The final phrase introduces yet another figuration, this one a fuller version of mm. 13-14, and it rises from *p* to *ff*. This crescendo culminates, as expected, in falling B^b octaves.

Variation 4

Marked *Non tanto Presto, ma con vivacita*, the rhythmic pace of Variation 4 now is primarily at the eighth note, with various rhythms against the eighth-note pulse. In the opening phrase, as shown in the Example 3.9, Czerny recalls the leap figure of the Theme, and adds trills and big leaps to convey a quick, energetic sense of humor.

The image shows a musical score for Variation 4, measures 1 through 4. It is written for piano in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The right hand (treble clef) contains a melodic line with trills and leaps, while the left hand (bass clef) provides a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'f dol:' and 'Ped:', and asterisks indicating specific performance techniques.

Example 3.9 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Variation 4, mm. 1-4.

In mm. 5-6, a rising melodic line full of trills climbs to a *forte* peak c⁴, then suddenly drops to *piano* in only an eighth note's time, creating a playful change of dynamic. The falling Fs at the cadence in m. 8 are also playfully exaggerated, quickly dropping five octaves. As shown in Example 3.10, in the *b* phrase, a hymn-like character is introduced, marked *legato* and *pp*.



Example 3.10 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original”, Op. 292, Variation 4, mm. 9-12.

The sequence of the *b* phrase steps up twice (mm. 9-14) instead of falling in thirds. Steady eighth-note chords move through a progression in Bb minor and at m. 16, in place of repeated Fs, there is a pause on the dominant chord. This pause sets up a return to the playful character of the opening of the variation, which is amplified with quick dotted-sixteenth/thirty-second-note figures. The humor continues through to the *leggiero* ending. The distinct change of character in this variation creates a break from the virtuosic display of the previous variations.

Variation 5

Marked *Più Allegro*, Variation 5 returns quickly to a *bravura* character with a new sixteenth-note figure that lends an excited and agitated affect (Example 3.11).



Example 3.11 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Variation 5, mm. 1-4.

As in the Theme and all of the variations thus far, the first part is a 4+4 period. Also as before, each phrase rises to a peak, then quickly falls. The new figure of this variation, shown in Example 3.9 above, consists of alternating sixteenths with an offbeat neighboring figure, which is widened and inverted in the second phrase. The digressing *b* phrase again is a sequence that falls in thirds, with rapidly arpeggiated chords. As before, the dominant chord arrives in m. 15, here at *ff* with a sudden drop to *p*, during which thirds rise chromatically against repeated Fs to smoothly connect to the return of the opening figuration, varied, in m. 17. In the final phrase, the alternating sixteenths are reduced to the offbeat neighboring figures, supported by a dance-style accompaniment of steady eighths. A more-complex harmonic progression is introduced in this variation with the rise in register through the phrase, thus creating a flashier finish. The peak is delayed to the penultimate measure and is followed quickly by the falling B^bs in the last measure.

Variation 6

Variation 6 loosely follows the form of the Theme, with a written-out repeat of Part 1, which creates the opportunity for additional variation within the variation, and no repeat of Part 2. It is in the subdominant key, E-flat Major. The tonic key will be restored with the *Allegro vivace* that follows. Overall, the tempo, key, and character of Variation 6 make it a slow movement that will be followed by a lively finale. For the first time in this work, Czerny transforms the horn call into a dotted rhythm that evokes a slow march (Example 3.12).



Example 3.12 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Variation 6, mm. 1-3.

Despite the short motive that is reiterated throughout the melody, the first eight measures are a single, continuous phrase that modulates to the dominant key, Bb Major, reinforced by a PAC in Bb in m. 8. Measures 9-16 are a written-out repeat, with variation, of mm. 1-8. The first four measures of the repeat are similar to the opening, but with added trills recalling Variation 4 and steady eighths in the accompaniment. The rest of the phrase is replaced with a new but derived melody. The repeat of Part 1 ends with a Bb: PAC in m. 16. The digressing *b* phrase begins in m. 17, again with a move to the \flat VI chord (in relation to the cadence), Gb Major, and it is a measure longer than before (9 vs. 8). The double-dotted quarters recall the *b* phrase of the Introduction (m. 17). This phrase ends on a Bb: PAC in m. 25. The remainder of the measure turns Bb: I into Bb: V₇, which is different from the Theme. The return of the Eb tonic in m. 26 is the start of the final portion, which is again a 4+4 period with change of material in the consequent. Because there is no repeat of Part 2, the Eb: PAC at m. 33 is the end of Variation 6. The music that follows is a transition denoted by a new tempo (*Piu lento*). It modulates back to Bb Major and ends on V₇ with a fermata to set up the *Allegro vivace*.

Czerny, for the first time, expands the original form into a sonata form with much-larger dimensions than the previous variations (153 measures vs. 24 measures).

The energetic character of this movement resembles that of the Theme in a contredanse style and is launched by the fugue-like opening (Example 3.13).



Example 3.13 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Allegro Vivace, mm. 1-13.

Czerny creates a fugue subject from the horn-call motive, and the movement begins with a four-voice fugal exposition of this subject, ending on the downbeat of m. 19. There is a short transition using the head motive that ends on F: V in m. 24. In a Haydn mannerism, Czerny begins the F-Major portion in m. 25 with a transposition of the horn-call motive to that key. Once past m. 29, Czerny returns to *bravura* style with a new figuration that recalls the beginning of Variation 5. After the F: PAC in m. 33, *ff*, the dynamic suddenly drops to *p*, *leggierement*, and a reiterated cadence formula using the rhythm of the horn call closes the exposition.

The development, mm. 41-88, begins with the horn-call motive in the \flat VI key, Db Major, as did the Theme. The development has the expected sequences and circle-of-fifths successions, until in m. 65 the horn-call is exposed in inversion. This change signals the arrival of the retransition, which is marked by a faster tempo, *Vivo*, and

constant sixteenth-note motion. Through the sixteen measures of the *Vivo*, the energy increases and there is a crescendo that builds up aggressively to the moment of recapitulation, m. 89. As shown in Example 3.14, the fugue does not return, but rather a harmonization of the fugue subject with big chords, which sounds like a fresh start in the home key.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system is marked "molto energico." and features a dense texture of chords and sixteenth-note motion. It includes dynamic markings of *f* and *ffz*, and several "Ped:" markings with asterisks. The second system is marked "gvanissimo loco." and shows a more melodic line in the right hand with a wavy line above it, and a bass line in the left hand. It includes dynamic markings of *f* and *f pleggier:*, and "Ped:" markings with asterisks.

Example 3.14 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Allegro Vivace, mm. 89-98.

The remainder of the recapitulation replaces what was in the exposition with a new, *bravura* passage. This change is an expansion of the theme and variations, in which the endings consistently introduced new material. As shown in Example 3.15, the bass, doubled in octaves, recalls the horn-call motive.



Example 3.15 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Allegro Vivace, mm. 117-120.

The sonata form ends with a big F₇ arpeggio that recalls the falling octaves at the cadences in the Theme. With no pause, the tempo increases to *Presto* and the meter changes to 6/8 for a 21-measure coda (Example 3.16).



Example 3.16 Carl Czerny, Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292, Allegro Vivace, mm. 133-136.

Resembling an *opera buffa* conclusion, the *Presto* brings back the character of the Theme, which is easily recognizable despite the change of meter. For closure of a very large work, Czerny sounds the tonic for the final eight measures in orchestral fashion.

CHAPTER 3

A PERFORMER'S GUIDE TO RODE VARIATIONS

Piano technique and musical expression are the two primary factors that influence the effect of a performance. The following performance suggestions for Czerny's Rode Variations will be divided into two categories: Technical Considerations and Expression.

Technical Considerations

Czerny developed his thematic material in various ways, often adding ornamentation, including trills, turns, arpeggios, and rapid scale passages. These gestures are inherently pianistic, which can bring technical challenges requiring thoughtful consideration and practice.

Ornamentation

Adding ornamentation is a way that Czerny often builds the melodic line into a lyrical and fluent form. As he once wrote, "The graces—namely, the shake, the turn, the appoggiatura, etc. — are the flowers of music; and the clear, correct, and delicate execution of them, embellishes and exalts every melody and every passage."⁴³ In this work, two types of ornaments appear frequently, the turn and the trill. Czerny uses turns more than twenty times in the Rode variations, in every variation except Variation 5, and trills appear five times.

The turn is a short figure consisting of a main note with neighboring tones added above and below. It is easy for pianists to miss notes or play without clarity while performing turns, especially those involving the fourth finger, which is not as strong as

⁴³ Carl Czerny, *Letters to Young Ladies on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, trans. J.A. Hamilton (New York: Da Capo Press, 1982): 35.

the other fingers. Czerny says of the fourth finger, “with almost every person, the weakest of all. The pianist, however, must know how to employ these various degrees of power.... all the fingers may strike their appropriate keys with perfect equality of strength.”⁴⁴ To create a precise and equal turn when using this finger, it is helpful to think of these rapid notes as a whole and move the weight onto it to produce a firm, unwavering attack on the key. It is essential to practice through each turn at a slow tempo, to practice the strength needed for each key. In addition, the speed of the turn can be determined based on the tempo and style of the music. For instance (Example 4.1), at the opening of the Theme, Czerny adds a turn after the first note in the melody.



Example 4.1 Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Op. 33, Theme, m. 1.

In accordance with the hymn-like style of the theme, the speed of this turn can tastefully be rendered with a slow touch and legato technique to produce a cantabile melodic line. Czerny values this technique and creates several études to train it. Here the author suggests one related étude to practice for preparation from *The School of Velocity*, Op. 299, No.4 (Example 4.2).

⁴⁴ Carl Czerny, *Letters to Young Ladies on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, 20.



Example 4.2 Carl Czerny, *The School of Velocity*, Op. 299, No. 4, mm. 1-6.

The trill is a way of sustaining a pitch so that it connects more smoothly to the next. As shown in Example 4.3, Czerny includes a trill in the Theme (m. 18).



Example 4.3 Carl Czerny, *Rode Variations*, Op. 33, Theme, m. 18.

It is particularly important to perform trill notes in an equal manner. Czerny mentions, “The equality of the shake can only be attained by lifting up both fingers to an equal height, and striking the keys with equal force.”⁴⁵ The quality of a trill execution greatly influences the overall smoothness of the melodic line. It is best to use two flexible fingers with a fully relaxed arm and wrist, lifting both fingers to the same height while using equal force and avoiding unequal speed. Practicing with less finger motion to

⁴⁵ Carl Czerny, *Letters to Young Ladies on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, 35.

reduce the lift height helps the player to produce a clean and agile sound with accuracy.

A good preparatory étude is *30 Études de mécanisme*, Op. 849, No. 22 (Example 4.4).

Example 4.4 Carl Czerny, *30 Études de mécanisme*, Op. 849, No. 22, mm. 1-5.

Arpeggiation is another technique that Czerny often uses in this work, particularly broken/rolled chords. As Czerny states,

“In every piece, whether written today or one hundred years ago, they are the principal means by which every passage and every melody is formed. The diatonic scales or the chords broken into arpeggios, you will everywhere find employed innumerable times.⁴⁶”

As shown in Example 4.5, Czerny emphasizes broken chords in Variation 5.

Example 4.5 Carl Czerny, *Rode Variations*, Op. 33, Variation 5, mm. 35-36.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 18.

Practicing the rolled notes in blocked chords provides familiarization with the appropriate finger and hand positions. Once prepared, the rolled notes should be played with flexible wrists and arms, so as to provide free motion and definition for the highest (melodic) note.



Example 4.6 Carl Czerny, Rode Variations, Op. 33, Variation 3, mm. 13-14.

Czerny writes rapid ascending and descending arpeggios in Variation 3 (Example 4.6, above). Once again, practicing in blocked chords can be helpful. To perform the arpeggiations precisely, the hands and wrists must remain loose and flexible for a smooth motion. Consideration of hand angle is helpful, moving the wrists horizontally to lead the hands upward or down. Wise choice of fingerings will increase fluidity and avoid bumps, particularly those caused by the thumbs. Czerny says that those fingerings should be chosen “by which we may most easily and naturally be able to maintain a tranquil and fine position of the hands, a firm and perpendicular percussion.”⁴⁷ Czerny enumerates fingering in all of his études. One étude that is helpful for the fingering of arpeggios is *School of Velocity*, Op. 299, No. 3 (Example 4.7).

⁴⁷ Ibid, 28.

Presto. (♩ = 108)

10414

Example 4.7 Carl Czerny, *The School of Velocity*, Op. 299, No. 3, mm. 1-5.

Running scales appear in almost every piano piece. As was true of his teacher, Beethoven, Czerny stressed the importance of practicing scales in his teaching. “Many beautiful pieces require to be executed in a very quick degree of movement, and with great volubility of finger..... All these he has already conquered who is able to play the scales well and with sufficient quickness.”⁴⁸ Not only is fine technique required in faster tempos exposing the flexibility and deftness of the fingers, but also in slow moments where expressivity is desired. However, most of the variations are in a fast tempo, demanding excellent technique and familiarity with scale passagework. Practicing at a slower pace with slight overlapping of the notes, exercising deliberation to control finger independence, can improve the evenness and flexibility of running notes. While pressing into the key bottoms, avoid tightening the wrists or exerting the whole weight of the arms,

⁴⁸ Ibid, 19.

which make it more difficult to produce a bright and clean sound. Czerny explains the process as follows:

The pianist, however, must know how to employ these various degrees of power, so that in playing the scales all the fingers may strike their appropriate keys with perfect equality of strength for the scales sound well only when they are played in every respect with the most exact equality. He named the three rules: Equality of strength, Equality in point of quickness, and Equality in holding the notes down.⁴⁹

For preparation of this technique, Czerny's 30 *Études de mécanisme*, Op.849, No.8 is a good choice (Example 4.8).

8. *Vivace* (♩ = 84)

p *cresc.*

Example 4.8 Carl Czerny, 30 *Études de mécanisme*, Op. 849, No. 8, mm. 1-5.

Musical Expression

Having a comprehension of the style characteristics of a period is another component of understanding a work. To express the thoughts and emotions of a work successfully, “all the marks of expression must be observed with redoubled attention; and we must endeavor to seize correctly on the character of the composition, and to enforce it in our

⁴⁹ Czerny, *Letters to Young Ladies on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, 20.

performance according to its total effect.”⁵⁰ Czerny was born in an era that bridged Classicism and Romanticism, so many of his works inherit the Classical style, while also showing emergent characteristics of Romanticism. In the Rode Variations, the theme would not be out of place in a traditional Classical era composition. But in the variations, we get more flavors of Romanticism, such as emphasis on virtuosic technique, dramatic tempo contrasts, sudden and wild dynamic changes and liberal use of expressive musical marks. This table shows three types of the variations, which have been divided with respect to character and style.

Character/ Style	Variations
lyrical, songful	Theme, Variation 4 and coda
flowing, gracefully nimble	Variation 1 and Variation 2
cheerful, lively	Variation 3 and Variation 5

Theme, Variation 4, and Coda

Based on the slow tempo and expressive elements in these variations, using a slow touch and legato technique is advisable to ensure the songlike style and correct tone color.

According to Czerny, “If we merely thump and bang the keys, the best instrument will sound hard and unpleasant.”⁵¹ Rather than using the finger tips, it is helpful to use flatter fingers with a deep slow touch, maintaining relaxed arm weight. This will make it easier to produce a *cantabile*, expressive sound. Czerny provided a suitable tempo at the top of

⁵⁰ Czerny, *Letters to Young Ladies on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, 38.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 18.

the Theme ($\text{♩}=84$), and performers ought not to play in an excessively slow, plodding tempo. The pianist should bring out the top voice as the melody and create a tasteful balance between the layers. A large number of sudden dynamic changes, such as *pp* < *f* (Theme, mm. 8-9, and Variation 4, mm. 10-12) and *f-p* (Theme, m. 18, and Variation 4, m. 18) require special attention in order to build the intensity of dramatic moments. As Czerny says, “If we were to play a piece of music with exactly the same degree of forte or piano throughout, it would sound as ridiculous as if we were to recite a beautiful poem in the same monotonous tone.”⁵² Even the most minute dynamic changes influence the overall effect and ensure execution of each section in a flowing and singable manner.

Variation 1 and Variation 2

Even though Czerny does not offer a new tempo in either Variation 1 or 2, he creates elaborately ornamented melodies which convey different characters. In Variation 1, Czerny places *legato* and *p* at the beginning, giving performers explicit requirements. The sixteenth-note figuration with a melodic top voice in the treble builds intensity to contrast with the slow chords in the left hand. Not only is it necessary to bring out the lyrical main melody, but it is also helpful to make the phrase flow, touch the key slowly, and connect each note by transferring the arm weight to each finger smoothly. When the music builds to a peak in mm. 6-7 in the high register, the pianist should still employ a wonderful lyrical tone color with flat fingers instead of harsh short staccatos. In m. 19, for the first time, Czerny uses florid thirty-second notes at *pp* dynamic, establishing a flowing, nimble moment at the end of Variation 1.

⁵² Czerny, *Letters to Young Ladies on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, 35.

In Variation 2, Czerny writes *teneramente*, or tenderly. As he said, “The same exactitude with which you are obliged to observe the notes, the marks of transposition, the fingering, and the time, you must likewise employ with regard to the marks of expression.”⁵³ He creates double-dotted rhythms against eighth-note triplets as the main rhythmic element, causing an inner tension between the two hands. Bringing out the top and sustained bass voices is necessary to produce a good balance. Performers need to play the double-dotted eighth rhythms accurately, maintaining musical direction over mechanical counting. Based on the upward motions at the beginning of this variation, the author prefers to play with a small crescendo to give direction to the phrase, even though there are no dynamic changes in the first four bars. Articulation marks such as slurs need close attention (mm. 17-18). As Czerny mentions, “To this belongs the very important quality that the player should know how to listen properly to himself, and to judge of his own performance with accuracy.”⁵⁴

Variation 3 and Variation 5

In the only two fast variations, Czerny makes use of elaborate running notes to imbue a greater sense of energy. Basic elements that are required include fast touch and a clean and bright tone. In Variation 3, Czerny gives the performer many indications of which to be mindful, such as *p*, *dolce* and *Vivace* (m. 1). The plentiful rapid notes should be performed in a lively manner. After ensuring that fingering and technique are in place to perform these running notes, it is beneficial to set a light and brilliant tone color. As Czerny states, “If we employ too little force, or do not know how to use this power in a

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Czerny, *Letters to Young Ladies on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, 38.

proper manner, the tone will be poor and dull, and the performance unintelligible without soul or expression.”⁵⁵

A waltz-style accompaniment underpins all of Variation 3. It should be balanced well with the right hand, using the finger tips to make it *leggero* and lively rather than heavy and sluggish. In mm. 13-14, the author suggests practicing slowly to feel the connection and direction between both hands. Czerny marks mm.17-20 as *con fuoco*, and the performer should use arm weight to create energy and finish this variation brilliantly instead of with a flat tone color.

In Variation 5, again, Czerny offers his ideas with marks such as *p*, *leggero*, and *Allegro vivace* (♩=144). The sustained line needs attention to ensure the exact duration of each note. In the elaborate running notes, avoid creating a flat tone color. It is important here to create long phrases with the correct dynamics. In mm. 24-27, the author slightly reinforces the *piano* quarters in the left hand, and plays the repeated sixteenth notes lightly with finger tips and relaxed arm weight. Moreover, the cadenza needs a bright, shining tone color to fit its brilliant style. This is achieved by using a fast touch with perfect equality of emphasis.

As Czerny suggests, “Expression, feeling, and sensibility, are the soul of music, as of every other art.”⁵⁶ Through a complete comprehension of the work, infusing Czerny’s original intention with imagination and emotions, the performer can play this fine work perfectly and with nuance, thereby achieving the technical demands and underlying musical expression.

⁵⁵ Czerny, *Letters to Young Ladies on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*, 16.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 32.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Carl Czerny's enormous pedagogical contribution for the piano has unfortunately eclipsed his more creative output. Piano teachers, past and present, regularly assign his composed exercises (e.g. *The School of Velocity Op. 299*, *The Art of Finger Dexterity Op. 740*) while ignoring his artistic works and pieces of brilliance intended for performance. In recent generations it has been rare to find any of Czerny's works on concert programs. The recordings currently available online for solo piano are, oddly, limited to his exercises and études, often performed by children. Meanwhile, few recordings of Czerny's splendid piano concertos and symphonies reveal a high creative standard, scope, and style that have much in common with his teacher and friend, Ludwig van Beethoven.

More than 180 sets of variations appear in the composer's designated category of brilliant concert pieces, forming a bridge between the pedagogical exercises and his serious music. The three sets of variations examined in this paper are exemplary of Czerny's contributions to this genre. Those who take up these works will access simple music of elegance and grace, in combination with brilliant outbursts of virtuosity. Playing them is a delightful and rewarding experience of expressivity and abandoned sweep.

Of these works, the *Rode Variations* most closely resembles the Classic ornamental variation. In Opp. 281 and 292, Czerny adds introductions and finales, along with some ventures into non-tonic keys, and his mimicking of a slow movement followed by a concluding finale has precedent in the Classic period (e.g., Mozart K. 284. iii). The

inclusion of variations in non-tonic keys has precedent in Schubert. Czerny creates in these works large-scale structures, and not just a simple succession of variations.

Positioned between Beethoven and Liszt in the golden period, Czerny's music skirts the aesthetic borders of some of the most popular composers in his field. It also provides ideal repertoire for pianists wishing to present seldom-heard, Classic/Romantic music that is off the beaten path. In a time of widespread world concert activity, such exploration of lesser-known repertoire may be gaining some traction. According to one enthusiast, "The rediscovery of Carl Czerny as a significant and long-neglected composer of serious music understandably generates great enthusiasm among his advocates."⁵⁷ Is it possible that a revival of Carl Czerny's music is at hand?

The author has hoped to make a case, supported by her recordings, for revisiting the man who has enriched our techniques, to discover his untapped potential for broadening our piano repertoire. Brahms's statement about Czerny remains relevant nearly a century and a half later: "... I think that people today ought to have more respect for this excellent man."⁵⁸---Johannes Brahms, to Clara Schumann in a letter of March 1878.

⁵⁷ David Gramit, *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity: Reassessing Carl Czerny* (NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 67.

⁵⁸ Clara Schumann, Johannes Brahms, and Berthold Litzmann, *Letters of Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms, 1853-1896* (New York: Vienna House, 1971).

REFERENCES

- Brée, Malwine. *The Groundwork of the Leschetizky Method*. Translated by Theodore Baker. New York: G. Schirmer, 1902.
- Cheng, Su-Chuan. "The Piano Variations of Carl Czerny: A Recording Project." DMA diss., University of Maryland, 2006.
- Chou, Chia-Jung. "Carl Czerny: An Underappreciated Piano Composer and his Variations Brillantes, Opus 14." MM diss., California State University, Long Beach, 2012.
- Czerny, Carl. *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte: Opus 200*. Translated and edited by Alice L. Mitchell. New York: Longman, 1983.
- _____. *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, in *Sammlung musikwissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen* 46. Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1968.
- _____. *Die Schule der praktischen Tonsetzkunst*, 3 vols. Bonn: N. Simrock, 1849.
- _____. *Introduction, Variations et Presto finale* sur un Thème favori de l'Opéra *Norma* de Bellini, Op. 281. Leipzig: Friedrich Hofmeister, 1833.
- _____. *Letters to Young Ladies on the Art of Playing the Piano Forte*. Translated by A.J. Hamilton. First pub. 1851 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1982).
- _____. *On the Proper Performance of All Beethoven's Works for the Piano, with Excerpts from Czerny's Memoirs and Anecdotes and Notes about Beethoven*. Edited by Paul Badura-Skoda. Vienna: Universal, 1970.
- _____. *Recollections from My Life*. Translated by Ernest Sanders from the manuscript "Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben" of 1842. *The Musical Quarterly* 42, July 1956.
- _____. Rode Variations, Op. 33. New York: International Music Company, 1945.
- _____. *Systematische Anleitung zum Fantasieren auf dem Pianoforte Op. 200*. Vienna: A. Diabelli & Co., 1829.
- _____. *The School of Velocity*, Op. 299. New York: G. Schirmer, 1893.
- _____. *Über den richtigen Vortrag der sämtlichen Beethoven'schen Klavierwerk*. Vienna: A. Diabelli & Co., 1842.
- _____. Variations brillantes sur un thème original, Op. 292. Bonn: N. Simrock, n.d.

_____. *30 Études de mécanisme*, Op. 849. Leipzig: C. F. Peters, 1892.

“Carl Czerny.” *The Musical World* 35, no. 40. Oct. 03, 1857.

Dubal, David. *The Art of the Piano: Its Performers, Literature, and Recordings*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1995.

Fillmore, John Comfort. *A History of Pianoforte Music*. Edited by Ridley Prentice. London: W. Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1885.

Gramit, David. *Beyond the Art of Finger Dexterity: Reassessing Carl Czerny*. NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008.

Jones, David Neil. Review of *Piano Variations* CD. *Musical Opinion* (Autumn 1996): 177

Komlós, Katalin. “After Mozart: The Viennese Piano Scene in the 1790s.” *Studia musicologica* 49, no. 1/2, 2008: 44.

Litzmann, Berthold, ed. *Letters of Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms, 1853-1896*. New York: Vienna House, 1971.

Newman, William S. *The Sonata Since Beethoven*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1969.

Poriss, Hilary. *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Rudolf, Max and William Rudolf. *A Musical Life: Writings and Letters*. Pendragon Press Musicological Series. Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2001.

Saffle, Michael. *The Music of Franz Liszt: Stylistic Development and Cultural Synthesis*. New York: Routledge, 2018.

Sheets, Randall Keith. “The Piano Sonatas of Carl Czerny.” DMA diss., University of Maryland College Park, 1987.

Skowronek, Tilman. *Beethoven the Pianist: Musical Performance and Reception*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Tyson, Alan. “Czerny on Beethoven (Book Review),” *The Musical Times* 105, no. 1453, 1964.

Walker, Alan. *Franz Liszt. Vol.1 The Virtuoso Years 1811-1847*. London: Faber & Faber, 1983.