The Elusive Fantasy: Genre, Form, and Program in Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini*

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The fantasy is an elusive genre, and Tchaikovsky's orchestral fantasies have proven to be particularly so. At the root of the problem is a cluster of concerns related to three crucial concepts: genre, form, and reception. Specifically, traditional commentary has approached the *genre* of the orchestral fantasy in relation to that of the symphony and the *form* of the fantasy in relation to sonata form. To address the issues surrounding form and genre, the fantasy should be considered in a broader historical context. Above all, it should be released from often-inappropriate expectations, which, as it turns out, have provoked the usual devaluation of Tchaikovsky with respect to the tradition of Beethoven and Brahms.[1] The presumption that Tchaikovsky was a flawed symphonic composer is readily traceable to critical assessments of his formal procedures, and yet many of those procedures, while deviating from the Beethovenian models, were fully consistent both with other nineteenth-century composers and with techniques of variation, development, and interruption.[2] But these techniques were central to the fantasy as a genre, and in the

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[1]The scathing review of the Berlin premiere of *Francesca da Rimini* in 1878 may be related to its being paired with Brahms's Second Symphony. Richard Würst, *Berliner Fremdenblatt*, 17 September 1878, in Modest Tchaikovsky, *The Life and Letters of Tchaikovsky*, trans. and ed. Rosa Newmarch (rpt. 1906 London edn., Vienna, 1973), pp. 319–20.

[2]My use of this term denotes real-time interruption, as distinct from the interrupted structural descent that is central to Schenker's idea of sonata form.

nineteenth century much attention was paid to the potential of fusing symphonic composition and the fantasy.

The following argument seeks a deepened understanding of Tchaikovsky's orchestral works—especially the fantasies. It is built in five stages. First, I propose a more flexible model for examining the fantasy, one grounded in genre theory. Second, I examine multiple layers of meaning historically embedded in the term "fantasy" and provide a historical overview of the fantasy and its relationship to the sonata, assembling material from treatises and encyclopedias, much of which has not appeared in translation. Third, I touch on the compositional implications of generic titles: while ostensibly insignificant, deliberations over title reflect the concern of the composer to frame his or her work within the parameters of neighboring genres. For the fantasy, this concern often yields compound titles, such as Tchaikovsky's formulations *symphonic fantasy* and *fantasy overture*. Fourth, I offer a reading of the symphonic fantasy *Francesca da Rimini,* based on its mixture of symphonic conventions (primarily the reliance on two highly contrasted themes), ternary form, variation content, and central episode. This mixture of forms and the discontinuities that accompany it are strongly characteristic of the fantasy genre and are also intimately linked to the program. Fifth, I ultimately argue that it is erroneous to judge such a work according to the customary "symphonic" norms grounded in the triple bias of genre, form, and reception. In its place I offer a fluid model for the fantasy—one that identifies specific processes within the context of the ephemeral goals with which the genre has long been identified.

Toward a Model for the Fantasy

As is the case in approaching all genres, any treatment of the fantasy is pulled in two contradictory directions: each fantasy should be considered both as a representative of a diverse, remarkably fluid historical tradition—the genre-class of fantasies—and as an individual instance. In recent years, these two ways of looking at genres and their exemplars have reappeared in various constructions. They are seen, for example, in Carl Dahlhaus's view of music history as a mode of inquiry that is capable of reconciling the contrary demands of narrative history and aesthetics.[3] In literary criticism, a similar dichotomy was described by Alastair Fowler in 1982, who noted that genre criticism has often split into two distinct models. One concentrates on fixed states of permanent genres, and the other involves a "plodding chronicle history of individual genres that continually transform themselves without ever waiting long enough for generalization."[4] Fowler argues that one must combine the two models in a theory of family resemblance. More recently, Thomas Beebee has broadened the argument by concluding that "recent genre theory has tended to regard its objects neither as collections of texts nor lists of essential features of texts, but rather as processes of interpretation."[5]

Musicologists and literary critics alike, then, demonstrate a preference for a flexible approach to genre that relies on some combination of the diachronic and synchronic perspectives. Fowler's concept of family resemblance is especially useful in this context. But when confronting the "fantasy genre" the issue, at best, is problematic, because the fantasy has often been viewed as a negation of form—what Hugo Riemann, writing in 1889, referred to as a *Nicht-Form*.[6] Many writers after 1900 simply abandoned the possibility that the genre could be defined at all. Such a view may be found in Hugo Leichtentritt's form manual of 1911: "A fantasy is a piece freely constructed without a definite formal scheme. Since fantasies are therefore extremely varied, hardly anything defi-

[3]The distinction between aesthetic and historical criteria appears in Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History,* trans. J. B. Robinson (Cambridge, 1983) ("The Value Judgement"), pp. 93–96.

[4]Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), p. 49.

[5]Thomas O. Beebee, *The Ideology of Genre: A Comparative Study of Generic Instability* (University Park, Pa., 1994), p. 250.

[6]"Ein charakteristischer Repräsentant dieser Form oder vielmehr Nicht-Form" (Hugo Riemann, *Katechismus der Kompositionslehre* [*Musikalische Formenlehre*] originally published as *Grundriss der Kompositionslehre* [Leipzig, 1889; 3rd edn. Berlin, 1905], II, 124).

nite can be said about the fantasy as a musical form."[7] Similarly, in 1912 Vincent D'Indy sternly identified the fantasy as a work that is marked by the *évasion* of compositional rules.[8] Leichtentritt's and D'Indy's conclusions stem from the fact that, traditionally, the fantasy has been addressed only in relation to certain schematically fixed forms, an approach that intersects with Beebee's contention that "all literature makes itself interpretable by referring to what it is not, by cordoning itself off from the contamination of other genres."[9] However, as in the visual figure-ground relationship, in order clearly to perceive one part of the field, attention must be directed toward that part. Otherwise, both parts are out of focus.

Viewed from a broad historical perspective, it appears that any given fantasy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will draw selectively from a particular cluster of generically available techniques. Many or most of these techniques may be determined through a comparative sampling of the repertory. Toward that end I have examined twenty-one fantasies written by major composers between the years 1870 and 1920 (listed in Table 1).[10] My analysis of these works suggests that four processes are especially important to the "fantasy": the overall structure's relationship to established forms; developmental processes; types of interruption; and methods of linkage.

The central theoretical question lurking behind the first issue is deceptively simple: in the absence of fixed expectations, how do these composers organize works called fantasies? The most common solution was to provide a sectional structure such as ternary (Tchaikovsky's Concert Fantasy [1884]), rondo (Busoni's *Fantasia nach Bach* [1909]), or variation form (Richard Strauss's *Don Quixote: Fantastiche Variationen* [1898]). Conventional sonata form is less often used, although its properties are often engaged in a provocative dialogue with the fantasy that may be relatively close, as in Tchaikovsky's fantasy-overture *Romeo and Juliet* (1869, rev. 1870 and 1880), or more distorted or experimental, as in Richard Strauss's symphonic fantasy *Aus Italien* (1886). With varying degrees of relevance to sonata form, cyclic organization had been prevalent in such early and mid-century examples as Beethoven's Choral Fantasy, op. 80 (1808), Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy, D. 760 (1822), and Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante*, "fantasia quasi sonata" (1837, rev. 1849). By the turn of the century, however, a network of returning themes, as in Busoni's *Indian Fantasy* (1914), was more common than a reliance on a single organizing theme.

Extensive developmental processes of juxtaposition, combination, and fragmentation play large roles in creating the textural fabric of all of the pieces in Table 1, perhaps by association with the term "free fantasia," which was sometimes used interchangeably with "development" in writings on sonata form.[11] In a fantasy, though, developmental processes are more likely to permeate the work than to be found largely in self-contained sections.

For a genre that many defined through its discontinuities—yet which could not be wholly chaotic—two further compositional issues became paramount: how were the discontinuities to be created, and how could the music remain coherent despite them? Often discontinuities were accomplished by interrupting the flow of musical events: such an interrupting discontinuity, for example, may be created by unexpectedly inserting a block of unprepared new

[7]"Unter Phantasie versteht man in der musikalischen Formenlehre ein ziemlich frei gestaltetes Stück, das sich an kein bestimmtes Formenschema anlehnt. Es können demnach die Phantasien ganz ausserordentlich mannigfach sein, so dass es kaum möglich ist, über die Phantasie als Form etwas Allgemeingültiges auszusagen" (Hugo Leichtentritt, *Musikalische Formenlehre* [Leipzig, 1911], p. 185, trans. as *Musical Form* [unnamed translator is most likely the author, who emigrated in 1933 to the United States at the invitation of Harvard University, where he resided until his death in 1951] [Cambridge, Mass., 1951], p. 174).

[8]"Cette véritable <évasion des règles> s'accomode fort bien du mot qui la signifie: *Fantaisie*" (brackets <> are original; Vincent D'Indy, *Cours de composition musicale* [Paris, 1912], II, 299).

[9]Beebee, *Genre*, p. 27.

[10]These works are discussed in my larger study of the genre; see my *Form and Fantasy: 1870–1920* (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1998).

[11]Ebenezer Prout, *Applied Forms: A Sequel to Musical Form* (London, 1895), p. 158. Similarly, the chapter entitled "the second part" of sonata form is subtitled "The Free Fantasia" in Jadassohn, *The Art of Musical Composition*, IV: *Manual of Musical Form*, trans. E. M. Barber (Leipzig, 1892), p. 128.

Table I

LIST OF FANTASIES EXAMINED, 1870–1920

Brahms	*Fantasien*, op.116 (1892)
Bruch	*Scottish Fantasy*, violin and orchestra (1880)
Busoni	*Indianische Fantasie*, piano and orchestra (1914)
	Fantasia nach Johann Sebastian Bach, piano (1909)
	Kammer-Fantasie über Bizets Carmen, piano (1920)
Debussy	Fantaisie for Piano and Orchestra (1890)
Fauré	Fantaisie for Piano and Orchestra, op.111 (1918)
Franck	*Trois Pièces* for organ (1878)
	"Recitativo-Fantasia" from Violin Sonata (1886)
Rachmaninov	*Morceaux de fantaisie*, op. 3, piano solo (1892):
	Elegie, Prelude, Melodie, Polichinelle, Serenade
	Fantaisie-tableaux (*Suite No. 1*), op. 5, 2 pianos (1893):
	Barcarole, A Night for Love, Tears, Russian Easter
Reger	*Fantasie und Fugue über B-A-C-H* for organ, op. 46 (1900)
Scriabin	Sonata No. 2 (Sonata-Fantasy) in G♯ Minor, op. 19 (1892–97)
Sarasate	*Concert Fantasy on Carmen*, op. 25 (1883)
Richard Strauss	*Aus Italien*, symphonic fantasy, op. 16 (1886)
	Don Quixote: Fantastische Variationen über ein Thema, ritterlichen Charakters für grosses Orchester, op. 35 (1897)
Tchaikovsky	*Francesca da Rimini*, symphonic fantasia after Dante (1876)
	Romeo and Juliet, fantasy overture (1869, rev.1870, 1880)
	Concert Fantasy, piano and orchestra (1884)
	Hamlet, fantasy overture (1888)
Wagner	*Siegfried-Idyll* (comp. 1870, publ. 1878)

material before the preceding section has attained a formal close. This process contributes to the dreamlike effect often noted in writings on the genre, its stark contrasts resembling montage techniques in film. Or the discontinuity may be more intrinsic—occurring *within* rather than between themes—and it may be achieved, for example, by unforeseen silences that halt the flow of the work, blocking the road to thematic completion and leaving the listener uncertain of what is to follow. This "breaking-off" is usually measured, but at times it is unmeasured, represented by a fermata.[12]

Somewhat related to all this, perhaps, are motivic and thematic discontinuities, which occur when, instead of completing a theme in a melodically or texturally consistent manner, the music veers in a new direction. This type is best understood in light of Hugo Riemann's pithy definition of the fantasy in which "no complete theme is used, but, as if improvising, [such pieces] only hint [at the theme], in order to quickly abandon it again."[13] All of these types of "organized" discontinuity give rise to familiar descriptions of the ephemeral character of the fantasy—many of which correspond

[12]Annette Richards places great significance on the fermata in the fantasy style of C. P. E. Bach: "It is perhaps not too fanciful to see the fermata as the encapsulation of the free fantasia" (Richards, *Fantasy and Fantasia: A Theory of the Musical Picturesque* [Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1995], p. 259).

[13]"Keines vollständig sein Thema verarbeitet, sondern es gleichsam improvisierend nur andeutet, um es schnell wieder zu verlassen" (Riemann, *Katechismus* II, 123). (Unless otherwise noted, translations are mine.)

to Czerny's account of improvisation as "seemingly irregular . . . but according to plan."[14]

Part of that plan, of course, involves issues of linkage. The manner in which its parts are connected is especially crucial to the sectionalized format often found in the fantasy. Many are focused less on a conventional harmonic journey akin to that of sonata form than on a thematic network less obviously dependent on standard key relationships. Rather than modulating themselves, for instance—or treating their own harmonic activity as primary—many linking areas connect incongruous sections, a feature even more likely in works composed on existing themes, where the melodic invention of the composer is not a factor. As Czerny noted, such works instead test the composer's ability to create "artful" connections between the given themes.[15]

Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Concepts of the Fantasy

Significant historical and theoretical issues are entwined with the fantasy. These are engaged by the layered meaning of the word itself, which can denote a specific musical work, can make wider references to the practice of improvisation and unexpected changes of mood, and can signify the very imagination of the composer. In his *Musikalisches Conversations-Lexicon* of 1890, Hermann Mendel included separate entries for "Phantasie" (the composer's imagination) and "Phantasia" (the musical work). The former is the "power of imagination . . . the actual ground out of which the art work drives forward," while in the latter, "imagination generates picture around picture."[16] Thus Mendel connected the general use of imagination and the specific result of that use in the episodic practice characteristic of the fantasy. This semantic overlap of imagination and work is reflected in the fact that the fantasy is the only modern genre in which improvisation (or the impression of improvisation) and composition overlap so broadly. The term "free fantasy" refers implicitly to actual improvisation, yet it has other meanings including a composed fantasy that closely imitates improvisation, an attribute that was strongly insisted on in the eighteenth century.[17]

In practice, the improvised category was further subdivided according to function, "free fantasy" sometimes denoting a short, improvised prelude for the practical purpose of testing an instrument before performance (common until the mid-nineteenth century). This overlap of fantasy and prelude had been made literal in Brossard's earlier (1703) description of "preludes or fantasies" that were improvised as a means of testing the condition of the keyboard, and it still operated in Fétis's 1847 definition of the prelude as a short fantasy with which instrumentalists sometimes prepared themselves to play the programmed works.[18] While the decline of extemporization made it less likely for the fantasy to be constituted by improvisation,

[14]Carl Czerny, *A Systematic Introduction to Improvisation on the Pianoforte, Op. 200,* trans. and ed. Alice Mitchell (New York, 1983), p. 2. This feature of concealed artfulness lends generic meaning to the motivic interconnections in Schubert's Fantasie, D. 934, that were recently discussed by Patrick McCreless in "A Candidate for the Canon? A New Look at Schubert's Fantasie in C Major for Violin and Piano," this journal 20 (1997), 205–30. This feature is also relevant to Berthold Hoeckner's elucidation of "the secretly intertextual tone" of Schumann's *Fantasie,* op. 17, in "Schumann and Romantic Distance," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50 (1997), 55–132.

[15]Carl Czerny, *School of Practical Composition,* trans. John Bishop (London, 1848), I, 88.

[16]"Einbildungskraft. . . . Die Phantasie wird somit der eigentliche Boden, aus welchem das Kunstwerk hervortreibt"; and "Die Phantasie erzeugt Bild um Bild" (Hermann Mendel, *Musikalisches Conversations-Lexicon: Eine Encyclopädie der gesammten musikalischen Wissenschaften für Gebildete aller Stände,* vol. X [Leipzig, 1890], pp. 68 and 72).

[17]For C. P. E. Bach, the presence or absence of meter determines whether the mode is strict or free in both the composed and the improvised subtypes: "A fantasia [improvisation] is said to be free when it is unmeasured and moves through more keys than is customary in other pieces, which are composed *or* improvised in meter [emphasis mine]" (C. P. E. Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* [1753], trans. William Mitchell, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments* [New York, 1949], p. 430). I use the eighteenth century as a starting point, since it has been documented that C. P. E. Bach represents a turn away from the imitative fantasies of the seventeenth century to the free fantasy. See especially Peter Schleuning, *Die Fantasie,* Das Musikwerk, 2 vols. (Cologne, 1971).

[18]Sébastien de Brossard, "Fantaisie," *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris, 1703); François-Joseph Fétis, *La musique mise à la portée de tout le monde* (5th edn. Paris, 1847).

an association with the prelude persisted well into the nineteenth century.[19]

Besides a short, improvised prelude, "free fantasy" sometimes signified the performance of an extended improvisation. For instance, Hummel's Weimar program of 10 December 1829 included his own *Oberon's Horn*, "Phantasie with orchestral accompaniment," along with a programmed improvisation that was simply denoted *Free Fantasy*. Even in an extended improvisation, though, the composer was more in control of the outcome than the listener might suspect, a paradox that had been at the heart of C. P. E. Bach's idea of "rational deception": "It is one of the beauties of improvisation to feign modulation to a new key through a formal cadence and then move off in another direction. This and other rational deceptions make a fantasia attractive."[20]

This aspect of planned disorder continued through the nineteenth century into the composed fantasy tradition, where the semblance of improvisation was often linked with careful planning.[21] We have seen Czerny's description of the apparent irregularity of the improvised fantasy. For the composed fantasy, Schumann similarly described a duality of outward disorder and latent coherence: every good fantasy, he wrote, must have its "inner thread, which should also shine through the fantastic disorder if it wishes to be otherwise acknowledged in the realm of art."[22]

In general, nineteenth-century commentators writing for encyclopedias tended to emphasize the fantasy's subjective qualities, while writers of composition manuals attempted to describe objective musical features. Represented here by Gustave Schilling (1838) and Hermann Mendel (ca. 1870–90),[23] the first group focused on expressive qualities and moods: freedom, improvisation, imagination, and the mystery that enshrouds the plan of the work. From Schilling we glean a poetic description of the fantasy as a freely composed work in which one idea "shines through the sensual imagination."[24] This description stems from Schilling's literal interpretation of one ancient Greek definition of fantasy—"to make visible"—in which one can discern a unifying idea beneath the surface disorder of the fantasy. Later in the century Mendel highlighted a sense of mystery coupled with the acknowledgment that the fantasy is not altogether formless, but that its coherence is veiled: "As the name signifies, the fantasy is more a product of an imagination that roams unshackled than of one that creates clearly defined events and images. . . . The imagination generates pictures around picture, but it wanders from one to the other without

[19]For a late-eighteenth-century example, even though Mozart's Fantasy in C Minor, K. 475, was composed seven months after his Sonata in C Minor, K. 457, Artaria published the two works together in 1785. According to Eugene K. Wolf: "The most likely hypothesis is that Mozart composed the Fantasy with a view toward publishing it together with the Sonata, perhaps as a sort of greatly extended prelude (though either work can stand alone equally well)" ("The Rediscovered Autograph of Mozart's Fantasy and Sonata in C Minor, K. 475/457," *Journal of Musicology* 10 [1992], 3–47). For an examination of antecedents of the Fantasy and Sonata combination, see Katalin Komlós, "Fantasia and Sonata: K. 475/457 in Contemporary Context," *Mozart-Jahrbuch, 1991* (Kassel, 1992), II, 816–23.

[20]C. P. E. Bach, *Versuch*, p. 434.

[21]The two subtypes of the composed fantasy—those labeled "free" and "bound" by Türk in his *Klavierschule* (Leipzig, 1789)—represent divergent responses to the influence of improvisation. Later, Schilling would describe "a double genre of fantasies, to distinguish free and bound fantasy, the latter demonstrating a more definite idea, a set pulse, and more unity in each of the parts" (eine doppelte Gattung von Fantasien, unterschieden freie und gebundene Fantasie, und wollten unter der letzteren eine solche verstehen, der ein bestimmter Gedanke und eine bestimmte Tactart zum Grunde liegen und in deren einzelnen Theilen mehr Einheit herrscht) (Gustav Schilling, *Encyclopädie der gesamten musikalischen Wissenschaften* [Stuttgart, 1835], II, 654). That Schilling still uses the "double genre" in reference to the music of Hummel and Moscheles represents some historical continuity beyond Türk, and, more important, the term "double genre" presages the fluidity of the genre throughout the nineteenth century.

[22]Robert Schumann, *Gesammelte Schriften über Musik und Musiker* (5th edn. Leipzig, 1914), I, 405, trans. Jesse Parker, *The Clavier Fantasy from Mozart to Liszt: A Study in Style and Content* (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1974), p. 45.

[23]Gustave Schilling and Hermann Mendel wrote the two best-known musical lexicons of the nineteenth century. Schilling completed his work by 1838, and Mendel began in 1870. Both relied on accomplished writers (Schilling's staff included A. B. Marx and Ludwig Rellstab). Schilling, *Encyclopädie*, II, 652–55; Mendel, *Lexicon*, X, 72.

[24]"Das Wort Fantasie kommt her von dem griech[isch]—sichtbar machen, und bedeutete daher bei den alten Philosophen meistens nur die sinnliche Vorstellung oder Wahrnehmung, wodurch uns ein Ding erscheint" (Schilling, *Encyclopädie*, II, 653).

producing a specific perceivable cohesiveness."[25] Mendel also placed great importance on the role of color in the earlier solo fantasy and viewed the orchestral fantasy as a natural outgrowth of this phenomenon, one in which texture may constitute form.

In the second group, comprising Czerny, Marx, Lobe, and later, Riemann and D'Indy,[26] the main issue was the fantasy's liberation from sonata form, replacing it with a structure with the semblance of improvisation and, sometimes, an association with an extramusical idea. In Czerny's view, for example (1848), "When we leave the strict form of the Sonata, and, in regard to construction, allow ourselves greater freedom, such a composition belongs to the class of the *Fantasia*."[27] Evidently, Czerny thought of the Fantasia as a defensible genre in its own right, since he allotted it a separate chapter in his *School of Practical Composition,* but one still encountered the difficulty of establishing a genre based on a comparative such as "greater freedom." As Schilling had noted in the free fantasy, Czerny specified that "the composer must endeavor . . . to approximate as closely as possible to the freedom of extemporizing"—thus confirming a line of thought from Koch's "appearance of a free inspiration" from a half-century earlier.[28] Such illusory qualities as "appearance" and "approximate" continue to create permeable borders for the genre and to suggest the usefulness of a theory of family resemblance.

New in the Czerny treatise, however, were specific techniques for achieving this semblance of improvisation. For example, in the type that he identified as the "Fantasia on a Single Theme":

> A happy theme may be employed, first for an Introduction; secondly, for an Allegro; thirdly, for an Adagio; fourthly, for Variations; fifthly, for a Rondo; and, sixthly, even for a Fugue or other piece of a similar strict kind. In this case, the Fantasia somewhat resembles the Sonata, but with the difference that the various degrees of movement and the several pieces must be connected together and form a whole, and also, that each piece must have a more free development.[29]

For Czerny, the resemblance to the sonata was minimized by the prevalence of developmental techniques and by the linking passages that connect the sections to produce a single large work. Czerny's model for this type was the Beethoven Choral Fantasy (1808), a cyclic work that prefigures the construction of Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy (1822) in its conflation of the four-movement scheme into one, although, unlike the latter work, it is not a double function sonata.[30]

Czerny described a second type, "the Fantasia on Several Themes" as similar to that on

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[25]"Wie schon der Name andeutet, ist es mehr ein Produkt der fessellos schweifenden, als der, bestimmte Vorgänge und Bilder schaffenden Phantasie. . . . Die Phantasie erzeugt Bild um Bild, aber sie schweift von einem zum andern, ohne einen sicher erkennbaren Zusammenhang herzustellen" (Mendel, *Lexikon,* X, 72).

[26]Czerny, *Composition* I, 82–89; A. B. Marx, *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition* (Leipzig 1838, 3rd edn. 1857), III, 335–40; Johann Christian Lobe, *Lehrbuch der musikalischen Komposition* (1850, 3rd edn. 1866), I, 392; Riemann, *Katechismus* II, 123–46; Vincent D'Indy, "Le poème symphonique et la fantaisie," *Cours de composition musicale* (Paris, 1912), II, 297–332.

[27]Czerny, *Composition* I, 82. Nearly a century later, Albert Bertelin (winner of the Grand Prix de Rome de composition musicale) conveyed the same view: the fantasy "is distinguished from the *Sonata* by the fact that it avoids schematic forms" (*Traité de Composition Musicale* [Paris, 1931], III, 314).

[28]"So must the written-down Fantasy have the appearance of a free inspiration, to differentiate the fantasy from compositions with fixed forms" (Heinrich Christoph Koch, "Fantasie," *Musikalisches Lexicon,* Reprografischer Nachdruck der Ausgabe Frankfurt 1802 [New York, 1964], pp. 296–97, trans. Parker, *The Clavier Fantasy from Mozart to Liszt,* p. 6).

[29]Czerny, *Composition* I, 82. This description invites comparison to Alastair Fowler's literary process of aggregation, "whereby several complete short works are grouped in an ordered collection—as the songs in a song cycle or the ballads in a ballad opera. The composite work may be united by framing and linking passages, sometimes of a very substantial character" (Fowler, *Kinds of Literature,* p. 171).

[30]The similarity between these cyclic, conflated multimovement fantasies and some symphonic poems can be viewed as a precedent for mid-nineteenth-century formal and generic developments. For instance, in "Sonata Form in the Orchestral Works of Liszt: The Revolutionary Reconsidered," this journal 8 (1984), 144–45, Richard Kaplan asserts that many of Liszt's symphonic poems are based on sonata form, and that the composer invented at most a new genre, not a new form. If indeed the symphonic poems do not constitute a completely new form, I suggest that their flexible approach to form is equally indebted to the fantasy tradition—specifically as described here by Czerny—and to sonata form.

one theme: "The construction of the whole is much the same as in the Fantasia on a single theme; yet, not only can a new melody or figure be introduced at each change in the degree of movement, but also the middle subjects may differ from the principal theme." Even in these works on several original themes, however, the emphasis on one recurrent theme is vital to a successful fantasia: "Here, the composer has a fine and extensive opportunity of displaying both his talent for invention, and his fancy. . . . A leading figure, which has been already employed in the Introduction or in the first movement, may and ought to be used in all the other movements, in order to impart the necessary connection to the whole, and to stamp it with the character of unity." His conclusions are illustrated with Hummel's Fantasia in E♭ Major, op. 18: "This Fantasia consists . . . of five different movements, which are however connected with one another, both in a technical and in an aesthetic point of view."[31]

Czerny reserved all references to virtuosity for his third grouping, "the fantasia on known themes." Their immense popularity (he writes that they have "for the moment supplanted many other Pianoforte works") is credited to the public's desire for familiar melodies, especially operatic tunes: "Grand Fantasias of this class are specially intended to present Virtuosi with the opportunity of displaying their talent in performance, and in the bravura style. Hence they must be brilliant, and consequently difficult."[32] Composers cited by Czerny include Kalkbrenner, Liszt, Moscheles, and Thalberg.[33]

Czerny's final fantasy-type is that of "the Fantasia forming a Pot-pourri," which consists of "the beautiful melodies of favorite operas, tastefully and connectedly strung together." Its creative worth rests in the use of variation and in linking passages:

> The putting together of themes without any connecting passages would form a so-called 'Quodlibet,' destitute of merit. But in such Fantasias, the composer must sufficiently bring into operation his peculiar gift of invention, both as regards variations, connecting passages and embellishments, as well as the ingenious and suitable connection of the numerous subjects; so that this species, when successful, must by no means be deemed insignificant.[34]

Like Czerny, Marx focused on the issue of form in the fantasy. His account differed from earlier ones, however, in that he chose to address the specific idea of generic mixtures. Nor was his discussion limited to only one perspective: rather, like the genre itself, it straddled the objective and subjective worlds. Intangible aspects came to the fore in his suggestion that the fantasy externalizes the inner life of the composer, a subjective analysis that is balanced by an effort to classify the genre. In *Die Lehre von der musikalischen Komposition,* Marx discussed the fantasy in the last section of a chapter entitled "Mixed and Composite Forms" ("Mischformen und verbunden Formen").[35] It is instructive to consider how the fantasy is situated in this chapter:

1. introduction
2. sonata-rondo
3. motivic and cyclic sonata form [*die figurale und fügenartige Sonatenform*]
4. combination of various movements into one larger whole

[31]Czerny, *Composition,* I, 83, 85–86.
[32]Ibid., 87.
[33]Ibid. While Czerny makes no reference to specific works, both the written-down and the improvised fantasy played a large role in nineteenth-century concert life. We have seen that Hummel's Weimar program of 10 December 1829 included his own *Oberon's Horn* (Phantasie) and *Free Fantasie.* A decade later, Liszt's audacious solo recital in Rome included his *Fantasy on Reminiscences of I Puritani* and *Improvisations on a Given Theme.* Thalberg opened his New York program of 2 March 1857 with his *Huguenots* Fantasia, and he closed with his own written Fantasies on *Home Sweet Home* and *God Save the Queen.* These programs are cited in George Kehler, *The Piano in Concert: A History of the Piano Recital* (Metuchen, 1982), I, xxxi.

[34]Czerny, *Composition,* I, 88. Uniting several of Czerny's favorite composers is the *Hexameron* Fantasia (1837) consisting of variations on the air "Suoni la Tromba" from Bellini's *I Puritani* as rendered by Chopin, Thalberg, Liszt, Czerny, Döhler, and Pixis—the work was a popular virtuoso vehicle.
[35]A. B. Marx, *Die Lehre,* III, 335–40. This five-page segment on the fantasia is not included in Scott Burnham's extensive recent translations of Marx, which focus on issues of sonata form: A. B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven: Selected Writings on Theory and Method,* ed. and trans. Scott Burnham (Cambridge, 1997), and see *Source Readings in Music History,* ed. Oliver Strunk (rev. edn. New York, 1998), pp. 1112–119, 1223–231.

5. the sonata in two movements
6. the sonata with more movements
7. the unusual arrangement of the sonata
8. the fantasy

Six of the seven "mixed and composite forms" are structured in an ever freer dialogue with sonata forms. By including the fantasy in this context, Marx placed it into a clear relationship with the sonata: as the last in his series of mixed forms, the fantasy transcends the sonata. His grouping points also to the notion of generic mixture in the fantasy—an assertion supported in his subsequent discussion.

In Marx's "evolutionary" view of forms, an inherent tendency toward freedom from mere schemata resulted in a gradual—and progressive—loosening of the basic form of the sonata. This freedom was not only a right of the forms themselves but a compositional and personal goal of an individual composer. Through the study of form, one may become free—*Formenlehre* as a metaphor of human liberation. Distinct from the putative freedom of the uneducated, the true freedom of the masters knows all directions and paths, as one can go "cross-country without the danger of losing one's way."[36] For Marx, structures that take the last emancipatory step toward freedom are to be given the name "Phantasie." Taking an expansive view of the genre, he specifies that, regardless of the actual title provided by the composer, the particular *content* of each composition is what distinguishes it as a fantasy. Moreover, the genre allows for a diverse range of realizations and types, such as: toccata (marked by exceptional virtuosity), capriccio (with a particularly stubborn idea or way of playing), and potpourri ("for the most part a stew from other bowls").[37] By definition, he argued, the fantasy can have no fixed form. There is no reason that the principal theme must remain in force or that it must return at the end of the work, even though the latter most often proves true. Marx expressed the polarity of freedom and control in psychological terms: at times, one can let go, but one must also restrain oneself. Thus we are likely to encounter formal boundaries that cannot be defined with certainty—one cannot say "whether it is on this or that side of the house."[38] Marx illustrated this analogy with Beethoven's designation for the two sonatas of op. 27, *Sonata quasi una Fantasia,* and included further discussion of a number of fantasies by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and others. The traditional association of the fantasy with deep feeling (especially lament) and recitative resurfaces in Marx's discussion of Bach's Chromatic Fantasy.

Marx concluded his overview with a separate category of fantasies that bear programmatic titles or other indications of the expressive content. He disparaged those that strive to depict what can not be successfully represented, as in the battle and nature paintings of earlier composers; the "countless *Souvenirs de Paris* of our virtuosi"; and "scented titles or intimate mottos from *Faust* or other poetry in our time."[39] For Marx, this lower stratum is to be

[36]"Auch wohl querfeldein gehn kann ohne Gefahr sich zu verirren" (Marx, *Die Lehre* III, 336).

[37]"Die Gestaltungen, in welchen sich dieser letzte Schritt zur Freiheit thut, fassen wir mit dem Namen Phantasie zusammen, ohne weitere Rücksicht auf die bisweilen nebenbei aufgeführten Namen der Tokkate (wenn sich in der Phantasie ein besondrer Spielreichthum zeigt), des Capriccio (wenn besonders eigensinnige Gedanken oder Spielweisen geltend werden), des Potpourri (meist ein Ragout aus Andrer Schusseln) und andrer, die den besondern Inhalt der Komposition unterscheiden sollen" (Marx, *Die Lehre,* III, 336).

[38]"Es liegt im Begriff der Sache, dass die Phantasie keinen bestimmten Weg gehn, keine bestimmte Form haben kann; denn ihr Wesen beruht ja eben darauf, von jeder bestimmten Form abzugehn. Daher ist auch für sie schlechthin gar kein Gesetz, nicht einmal das zu geben: dass ein Hauptton festgehalten oder zuletzt wiedergebracht werden müsse, —obgleich das Letztere meist zutreffen mag. Wir können vielmehr beobachten, dass die Gestalten der Phantasie von einer festen, nur frei gewählten Formung an bis in das freieste Sichgehnlassen wechseln, werden also auch gefasst sein müssen, hier wie auf jeder Formgränze Gestalten zu begegnen, von denensich gar nicht mit Bestimmtheit sagen lässt, ob sie hüben oder drüben zu Hause sind" (Marx, *Die Lehre,* III, 336–37).

[39]"An die zahllosen *Souvenirs de Paris* und so weiter unsrer Virtuosen, an die parfümirt-poetisirenden Titel oder andeutenden Motto's aus 'Faust' oder andern Gedichten in neuster Zeit" (Marx, *Die Lehre,* III, 340). This category represents the stream of marginal fantasies that coexisted with the mainstream repertoire throughout the nineteenth century. The reference must be to such titles as "Parfum des Roses," "Brisé parfumé," and "Goldfischlein in Silberwellen"—some of the works cited by Hans Christoph Worbs "Salonmusik," in *Studien zur Trivialmusik des 19. Jahrhunderts,* ed. Carl Dahlhaus (Regensburg, 1967), p. 126.

distinguished from a more subtle—and more valuable—type in which the composer only hints at the content, or where that content is an aspect of nature that is deemed representable. But art that requires such effort is "not everyone's cup of tea." The usual procedure is to be more obvious, to supply what can be grasped easily—"the old under the pretense of novelty."[40]

In sum, Marx made three important claims: first, that the fantasy may rely substantially on generic mixture; second, that, considered as a whole, it is a defensible, wide-ranging genre that encompasses such alternate subgenres as toccata, capriccio, and potpourri; third, that in its deepest and most elevated guises, it is capable of being regarded as the pinnacle or end point of the evolution of forms, representing an emancipatory freedom that only consummate masters could attain. Similar views of the fantasy would be taken by Johann Christian Lobe (1850)—who emphasized the role of variation technique in the fantasy—and Hugo Riemann (1889).[41]

For the second half of the nineteenth century, perhaps the most obvious question here would be the relationship of the long-standing category of formally "free" fantasies—especially those of the highest, most emancipatory types—to the newly emerging genre of the symphonic poem. In part as a result of Liszt's orchestral works of the 1850s and his celebrated companion-manifesto, *Berlioz und seine Harold-Sinfonie* (1855), it became increasingly clear that the symphonic poem was also claiming a free, "poetic," emancipatory status from the shackles of the traditional forms: a large part of the ideology of the symphonic poem, like Marx's vision of the fantasy, insisted on its progressive transcending of the forms as a modern end point in the evolutionary march of forms toward the music of the future. Yet, unlike the fantasy, the symphonic poem was not rapidly recognized by writers of textbooks as something that belonged in a *Formenlehre*—a textbook of traditional forms. Leichtentritt, for one, was explicit on the matter: "A treatise on form has little to do with these 'symphonic poems,' because they do not represent a definite type of form."[42]

Curiously, however, the issue does emerge with full clarity in certain textbooks of the early twentieth century—typically in non-Germanic textbooks (that is, in books less bound to traditional Austro-Germanic practice)—and we might also presume that the ideas here, obvious enough, must have been decades old. One of the clearest instances may be found in Vincent D'Indy's treatise *Cours de composition musicale* (1912), in which he explicitly linked the two genres in a chapter entitled "Le poème symphonique et la fantaisie." After pointing out that works with various titles such as "Légende, Ballade, Conte, etc." are often conceived after the same principles as the symphonic poem, D'Indy went on to identify the unifying factor between the two genres, that is, their essential difference from those other formal types that seem to follow the rules:

> However, besides these so-called *representative* titles, one comes across others by which writers have wanted to qualify works of which Symphonic Poem is always, consciously or not, the prototype, inasmuch as they *escape the normal laws of composition*. This genuine *evasion of the rules* combines very strongly with the word that it signifies: *Fantasy*. We will make a special place in this chapter for this actual *variety of the Symphonic Poem* that was the Fantasy.[43]

For D'Indy, a further connection between the two genres is a programmatic one: "Thematic

[40] "Nicht Jedermanns Sache; und stets hat das dem Gewohnten Näherliegende, das Leichfassliche, das Alte unter dem Scheine der Neuheit" (Marx, *Die Lehre*, III, 340).

[41] Lobe, *Lehrbuch*, I, 392; Riemann, *Katechismus*, II, 123–46.

[42] "Die Formenlehre hat mit dieser sogenannten 'symphonischen Dichtung' wenig zu tun, eben weil es sich hier nicht um Herausarbeiten einer bestimmten Form handelt" (Leichtentritt, *Musikalische Formenlehre*, p. 187; trans. in *Musical Form*, p. 175).

[43] "Toutefois, à côté de ces titres <représentatifs> ou prétendu tels, on en rencontre d'autres par lesquels les auteurs ont voulu qualifier des œuvres dont le *Poème Symphonique* est toujours, consciemment ou non, le prototype, en tant qu'il <échappe aux lois normales de la composition>. Cette véritable <évasion des règles> s'accomode fort bien du mot qui la signifie: *Fantaisie* . . . nous ferons dans ce chapitre une place particulière á cette véritable <variété de Poème Symphonique> que fut la *Fantaisie*" (D'Indy, *Composition*, II, 299).

and tonal order can be justified by nothing other than an extramusical idea, *expressed or not* [emphasis mine]. . . . [Fantasies] constitute, for this very reason, a type of symphonic poem, insofar as one can call such an indeterminate composition a type."[44] His struggle to classify composite structures thus led to the imposition of a programmatic reading of fantasies even in cases where the composer had made no such claim.

D'Indy did acknowledge differing types of nineteenth-century fantasies, which he arranged into moralistic hierarchies. Some examples, for instance, consisted of the treatment of various popular themes, he continued, in which case the term *Rhapsody* was more appropriate. Others fell into another low category of "unspeakable medleys of operatic airs."[45] On the highest plane, though, the will to innovate manifests itself fully, and the "program" becomes the "supreme master" of the symphonic poem: "What took shape then was the last state of this musical genre, which one can hardly call a *form*, although it occupies such a large place in the instrumental music of our time."[46]

As might be expected, D'Indy's own opinions were nationalistic and staunchly conservative, and he reserved his strongest praise for French symphonic poems that hewed to more traditional formats, as opposed to the threatening freedom of some of the earlier radicals: "[In Saint-Saëns's *Phaéton*, op. 39 (1875)] we are in the presence of a true *construction*, more solid and reasoned than those of Berlioz and of Liszt: the strong framework of the sonata model maintains the cohesion of thematic elements and makes up for their often rather ordinary musical quality."[47] This view is grounded in D'Indy's fear that the difference inherent in the fantasy—its very freedom—would threaten the existence of the sonata: "Without doubt, this order [in the musical elements] is always reconciled with the proposed poetic program, but these necessary concessions never lead to the genuine tonal and thematic anarchy of which Berlioz and Liszt have supplied many examples. . . . Franck and his disciples always do their best to avoid the *over-dependence on another art* that can cause a crumbling away or *dilution* of symphonic principles."[48] Certainly D'Indy's strong desire to safeguard symphonic principles did not emerge apart from a powerfully shaping context—it was partly a response to the increasing overlap of genres, an overlap that is most obvious in the rising popularity of compound titles.

[44]"Ces œuvres assez disparates, dont l'ordre thématique et tonal ne peut se justifier par rien, sinon par une idée extramusicale exprimée ou non, se réclament, pour ce motif même, du type *Poème Symphonique*, dans la mesure où l'on peut appeler <type> une composition aussi indéterminée" (D'Indy, *Composition*, II, 300).

[45]"Ces innommables agrégats d'airs d'opéras" (D'Indy, *Composition*, II, 302).

[46]"Alors prendra naissance le dernier état de ce genre musical, que nous ne pouvons plus guère appeler une <forme>, bien qu'il occupe de nos jours une si large place dans la musique instrumentale" (D'Indy, *Composition*, II, 303).

[47]"Nous sommes en présence d'une véritable <construction>, autrement solide et raissonée que celles de Berlioz et de Liszt: la forte armature du type Sonate maintient la cohésion des éléments thématiques et supplée à leur qualité musicale souvent assez ordinaire" (D'Indy, *Composition*, II, 321). Alternatively, Gerald Abraham considers *Phaéton* to be a ternary, not sonata, form; see his "The Symphonic Poem and Kindred Forms," *New Oxford History of Music* (Oxford, 1990), IX, 513.

[48]"Sans doute, cet ordre se concilie toujours chez eux avec le programme poétique proposé, mais jamais ces concessions nécessaires n'entraînent la véritable anarchie tonale et thématique dont Berlioz et Liszt ont donné trop d'exemples . . . Franck et ses disciples se sont toujours efforcés d'éviter que cet <appui sur un autre art> ait pour effet une sorte d'effritement ou de <dilution> des principes symphoniques" (D'Indy, *Composition*, II, 324). This fear was made especially vivid in D'Indy's expansion of the metaphor from "dilution" to "exploding into pieces" as he continued the section titled "Stagnation and fanciful disintegration of sonata form." He was certainly not the first to express this fear, as shown in Ottokar Hostinsky's defense of program music against the "explosion" metaphor (1877): "The chief importance of program music lies not so much in this uniting of music and poetry in the moment of aesthetic pleasure as in the fact that poetry stimulates the composer's imagination to create a great variety of new musical forms. . . . Liszt himself certainly had no desire to 'destroy' or to 'blow up' the form of the symphony, only to reshape it and to develop it in the direction of a higher unity in the purely technical, musical sense" (*Das Musikalisch-Schöne und das Gesamtkunstwerk vom Standpunkte der formalen Aesthetik* (1877), trans. Martin Cooper in *Music in European Thought 1851–1912*, ed. Bojan Bujic [Cambridge, 1988], pp. 132–51).

So one writes sonatas or fantasies (what's in a name!); let one not forget music and the rest will succeed through our good genius.

—Robert Schumann (1838)[49]

Welcome, then, ye (to me) nameless ones, in your nebulous garb of *Rhapsodies!*

—Elisabeth von Herzogenberg to Brahms (1880)[50]

Many features identified with the fantasy are also central to a large constellation of genres ranging from capriccio, arabesque, rhapsody, and toccata to fantasy-piece or fantasy-picture to the hybridized sonata-fantasy, fantasy overture and symphonic fantasia. The existence of compound titles surely reflected a problematized genre system—were generic labels becoming meaningless? Brahms's deliberations over a title for his *Rhapsodies*, op. 79 (1880), provide a useful frame for the issue. The composer's uncertainty regarding the title was reflected in Riemann's comparison of the *Rhapsodies* with variously titled works by other composers: "Brahms has made one anomalous use of the names [rhapsodies], by pieces called Rhapsodies (op. 79) [in] such a manner as Schubert [was] to write under the names impromptu, Mendelssohn under the names capriccio and Chopin under the names impromptu or ballade, Schumann under the names novelette."[51] Riemann justified this grouping by noting that the Brahms works are "more epic than lyric." Brahms himself had expressed second thoughts about the title in a letter to the work's dedicatee, his former student and close friend, Elisabeth von Herzogenburg: "I would like to publish the two piano pieces you know. Can you think of a better title than *Two Rhapsodies for Pianoforte?*" Her response was heavily qualified:

You know I am always most partial to the non-committal word, *Klavierstücke,* just because it is non-committal; but probably that won't do, in which case the name *Rhapsodien* is the best, I expect, although the clearly defined form of both pieces seems somewhat at variance with one's conception of a rhapsody. But it is practically a characteristic of these various designations that they have lost their true characteristics through application, so that they can be used for this or that at will, without many qualms. . . . Welcome, then, ye (to me) nameless ones, in your nebulous garb of rhapsodies![52]

For Herzogenberg, "rhapsody" carries the specific meaning of formal freedom, yet she states that titles have become completely arbitrary.

The simultaneous perception of specific meaning and universal arbitrariness is a paradox that resonates in compound titles, which allow composers to evoke the features of two, thereby providing more information to performers and listeners. It was not unusual to link the waltz with the fantasy, as in Glinka's *Valse-fantaisie* for piano (1839, orchestrated 1845, reorchestrated 1856, published 1878) or Satie's *Fantaisie-valse* for piano (1885). Similarly, in a compound title like "Valse caprice" (e.g., Liszt's *Trois caprices-valses,* 1850 and Reger's *Walzer-Capricen,* 1892) the whirling energy associated with the caprice could enhance that of the waltz. On the other hand, the existence of compound names could be used to support the notion that titles were becoming somewhat arbitrary, as Friedrich Niecks implied in his 1890 biography of Chopin: "Isn't the title Fantaisie-Impromptu [op. 66] actually a pleonasm?"[53]

The increasing overlapping of generic boundaries was supported by Lobe's observation that, in études, fantasies, impromptus, and so on, the form was usually grounded in the variation

[49]"Also schreibe man Sonaten oder Phantasien (was liegt am Namen!), nur vergesse man dabei die Musik nicht, und das andere erfleht von eurem guten Genius" (Schumann, *Schriften,* II, 155–56).

[50]*Johannes Brahms: The Herzogenberg Correspondence,* ed. Max Kalbeck, trans. Hannah Bryant (London, 1909), p. 99.

[51]"Einen abweichenden Gebrauch hat Brahms von dem Namen gemacht, indem er Stücke solcher Art, wie sie Schubert unter dem Namen Impromptu, Mendelssohn unter dem Namen Capriccio und Chopin unter dem Namen Impromptu oder Ballade, Schumann unter dem Namen Novellette schrieben, Rhapsodien nannte (op. 79)" (Riemann, *Katechismus,* II, 137).

[52]*Brahms: The Herzogenberg Correspondence,* pp. 98–99.

[53]"Ist nicht der Titel Fantaisie-Impromptu eigentlich ein Pleonasmus?" (Friedrich Niecks, *Chopin als Mensch und als Musiker,* vol. II [Leipzig, 1890], p. 283).

principle.[54] Even D'Indy, in a rare criticism of his teacher, noted that Franck's early piano works of the 1840s, "without exception, be they called eclogue, ballade, caprice, or fantasia, are all written on one and the same plan: an Allegro enclosed between two statements of the same theme, sometimes preceded by a brief introduction. They are, moreover, rendered rather monotonous by the entire lack of modulation."[55] Similarly, Mendelssohn's op. 16 piano works entitled *Fantaisies ou Caprices* have been cited as evidence of the superfluity of titles.[56] Here the dual title, however arbitrary it may seem, also affirms the ephemeral qualities traditionally associated with the fantasy—like the figurative connotation of a freely roaming imagination, the title itself remains unstable.

One of the earliest influential titles that brought two different concepts together was the "Sonata quasi fantasia," first seen in the op. 27 set by Beethoven (1800/1801). The first, in E♭ major, points toward the interconnected movements that Czerny highlighted as a typical hallmark of a fantasia. Beethoven marked each of the four movements "attaca subito" (his only sonata so marked), and he recalled the theme of the second movement near the end of the last movement. In Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante,* "fantasia quasi sonata" (1837, rev. 1849), the conflation of the sonata cycle into one movement may be seen as an extension of Beethoven's *attacca* directives in op. 27.[57] Perhaps that change contributed to Liszt's reversal of the title, which gave *fantasia* the primary position. Felix Draeseke, a disciple of Liszt, returned to the earlier disposition with his *Sonata quasi fantasia* (1862–69).[58] And decades later, Scriabin added further complexity to the compound title with a work that is officially a sonata and parenthetically a sonata-fantasy: Sonata No. 2 (Sonata-Fantasy) in G♯ Minor, op. 19 (1892–97).[59] Within his mixture of sonata and fantasy, we encounter the coherence provided by a recurring theme, cyclic qualities, and connected movements seen in historical accounts of the fantasy.

Compound titles prove especially meaningful for Tchaikovsky's orchestral fantasies. Here we might consider Fowler's distinction between kind and mode, according to which, in a compound title, the principal kind is always a noun, and the mode is an adjective—for example, "comic novel." This nomenclature works well for *Francesca da Rimini,* "symphonic fantasia after Dante" (1876): "fantasia" is the kind and "symphonic" is the mode, and fittingly the work displays central features of the fantasy genre while making references to recognizable symphonic features. Another of Tchaikovsky's compound titles, the *fantasy overture*—used for *Romeo and Juliet* (1869; rev. 1870 and 1880) and *Hamlet* (1888)—is more ambiguous. Each of its components is a noun, and neither is relegated to a modifying role. This combination allows for flexible usage that can emphasize one or the other title. Thus *Hamlet* is a fantasy with sonata-form affinities, while *Romeo and Juliet* maintains closer ties to traditional concepts of sonata form and can be viewed as an overture in which features of the

[54]"Sind die Formen der Etuden, Fantasien, Impromptu's und so weiter sehr einfach und leicht zu erkennen, so beruht auch die Erfindung der Modelle eigentlich auf einem einfachen Grundsatz, nämlich: auf der Kunst der Variirung" (Lobe, *Lehrbuch,* I, 392).

[55]D'Indy, *César Franck,* trans. Rosa Newmarch (1910; rpt. New York, 1965), p. 119.

[56]Willi Kahl, "Fantasie," *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Kassel, 1954), III, col. 1798.

[57]Compare Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy (which Liszt arranged in two versions: two pianos, and piano and orchestra) and McCreless, "Schubert's Fantasie in C Major for Violin and Piano," pp. 205–30. Regarding Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante,* "fantasia quasi sonata," the problem of form in the history of the fantasy is encapsulated in the commonplace abbreviation of Liszt's full title as "Dante Sonata" instead of "Dante Fantasia." I have encountered the latter, more accurate contraction only once, in William A. Lipke, *Liszt's Dante Fantasia: An Historical and Musical Study* (D.M.A. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1990).

[58]William Kinderman has observed that Draeseke's opening movement exemplifies directional tonality. (In this case, it is motion between relative minor and major, tame in comparison to the move from G minor to B major in Beethoven's Fantasy, op. 77.) See *The Second Practice of Nineteenth-Century Tonality,* ed. Kinderman and Harold Krebs (Lincoln, Neb., 1996), p. 8. Carl Schachter addresses this issue in "Chopin's Fantasy Op. 49: The Two-Key Scheme," *Chopin Studies,* ed. Jim Samson, vol. I (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 221–53.

[59]This combination first attracted Scriabin at the age of fourteen, when he wrote a Fantasy Sonata in G♯ minor (1886). It is not the same work as his Sonata No. 2 (Sonata-Fantasy) (1892–97).

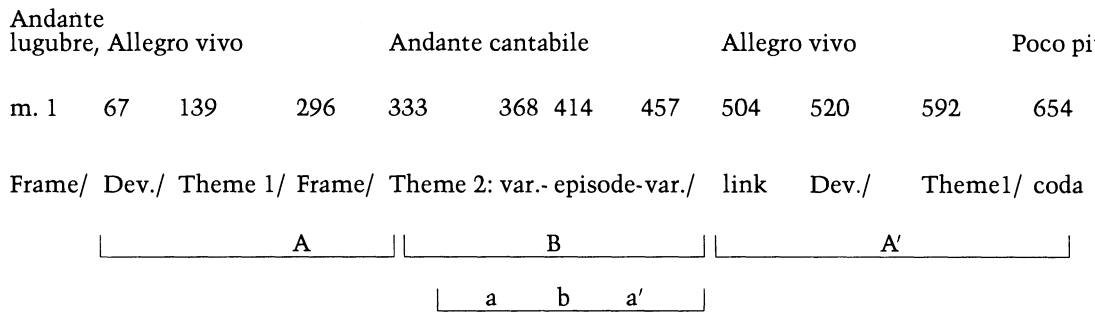


Figure 1: Symphonic references keyed to ternary structure *Francesca da Rimini* (1876).

fantasy play a large role. Both of these *fantasy overtures* rely on constitutive discontinuities, mentioned above within the fantasy tradition. Only *Francesca da Rimini,* the *symphonic fantasia,* however, incorporates a central area of contextual interruption. Perhaps this broadscale occurrence contributes to the unequivocal role of fantasy in the title, *symphonic fantasia,* and it is to that work that I now turn.

Francesca da Rimini: Genre, Program, Form, and Reception

Since *Francesca da Rimini* self-avowedly relies on generic mixture, one must examine what Tchaikovsky mixes and why he places these references side by side. Surely the most immediately striking aspects are: its maximally contrasted theme groups and developmental areas associated with symphonic construction; its sectional form, in part informed by variation techniques often found in fantasies; and its lyrical central episode that functions as an interruption—a moment of stasis seemingly unrelated to what surrounds it.

Not surprisingly, these generic references are directly connected to the program of the work. As Tchaikovsky made perfectly clear, the piece is grounded in the famous fifth canto of Dante's *Inferno:* the whirling outer sections were intended to depict hell's tempests while the middle section represents Francesca's and Paolo's love, as recalled in Francesca's personal recounting of her tale of misery. Superimposed on the ternary form of the middle section is a theme and three variations. In addition, the symmetry of the entire work is mirrored within this middle section, in which a brief, contrasting central episode appears between the second and third variations. This episode is crucial to the formal scheme and pivotal to the program. (Figure 1 shows the layout with symphonic references keyed to ternary structure.)

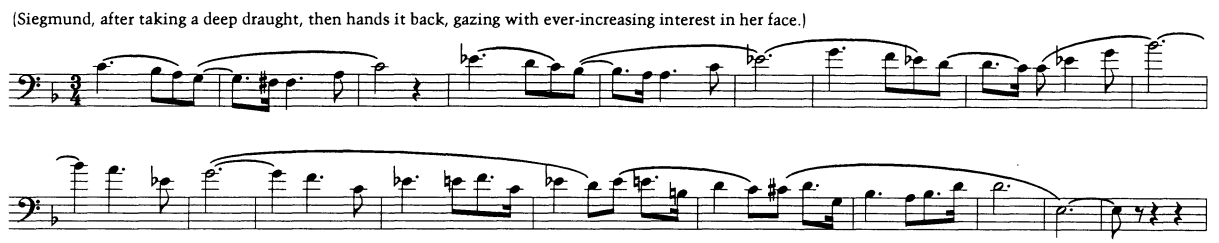
For an obvious structural and dramatic precedent, one might look to Liszt's composition on the same topic, the "Inferno" movement of his *Dante* Symphony (1855–56). Here, too, stormy outer sections enclose a central area explicitly linked to Francesca's words: "There is no greater pain . . . than, in our misery, to be reminded of a happy time" (*Inferno* V, lines 121–23) (fig. 2).[60] The two works share a number of characteristic theme types, but they differ regarding proportion: the middle section of *Francesca* is considerably longer than that of the *Dante* Symphony, an expansiveness that has prompted much criticism—although, as will emerge, that expansiveness is linked to the program on several levels. That Tchaikovsky modeled his outer, "whirlwind" sounds on Liszt's can hardly be doubted: the sonic and textural references were overt. Strong connections can be observed in the lyrical middle sections as well. These include similar meter changes, harmonic stasis, and the special sonority of harp and English horn. Both composers highlight Francesca's plight by giving maximal contrast to her music.

[60]Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy: Inferno,* trans. Louis Biancoli (New York, 1966), p. 21.

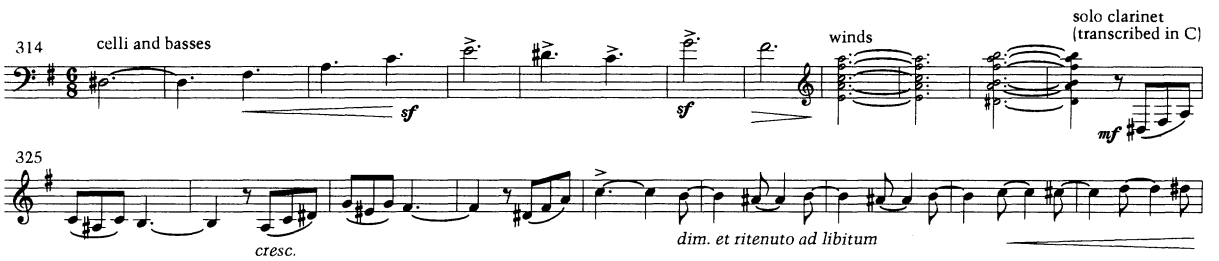
m. 1	64	279	395	637
Lento	Allegro frenetico	Quasi andante	Allegro	Adagio
Frame/	Theme 1/closing/ Frame	Theme 2	Theme1'/closing/	Frame

Figure 2: Liszt, *Dante* Symphony, first movement "Inferno."

a. Wagner, *Die Walküre,* opening scene—cello recitative underscores Siegmund gazing at Sieglinde.



b. Tchaikovsky, *Francesca da Rimini,* recitative introducing theme 2, mm. 314–32.



Example 1

Wagner, the dedicatee of Liszt's *Dante* Symphony, also loomed large for Tchaikovsky. In August 1876, one month before he wrote *Francesca,* Tchaikovsky attended the premiere of *The Ring* cycle at Bayreuth. Although sharply critical of the cycle, he acknowledged its presence in his own new composition: "The observation that I wrote [Francesca] under the influence of *The Ring* is very true. I myself felt this while I was working on it. Unless I am mistaken this is particularly noticeable in the introduction. Isn't it strange that I should have fallen under the influence of a work of art for which I feel, on the whole, a marked antipathy."[61] But the actual sphere of influence exceeds the introduction. Of the *Ring* dramas, *Die Walküre* invites the strongest comparison to *Francesca.* The analogues are threefold: sonic—the depiction of the storm in the opening sections of each work; thematic—the "love" and "ring" motives that echo in the middle section of *Francesca;* and dramatic—the topic of a forbidden love that violates the forced marriages of Sieglinde/Francesca and Hunding/Rimini. The dramatic appeal of *Die Walküre* must have been palpable to Tchaikovsky. Only two weeks after hearing the work, he would write of the necessity of his own false marriage and of the presumption that he would have to violate such a sham.

The programmatic correspondence of forbidden love is reflected in three motivic relationships. The cello recitative with which the middle section of *Francesca* begins (mm. 303–20) is reminiscent of Sieglinde's motive and of the cello recitative in act I (sc. 1) that underscores Siegmund gazing at her (exs. 1a and b).

[61]Letter to Taneyev of 8 April 1878, cited by David Brown in *Tchaikovsky: The Crisis Years* (New York, 1983), p. 108.

In *Die Walküre,* these cello phrases reinforce the drama as the protagonists look at each other and as they move together and apart. The recitative in *Francesca,* too, highlights what is probably to be understood as an expressive exchange of glances: "Many times that reading drew our eyes together / And drained the color from our faces" (*Inferno* V, lines 130–31). In a clarinet continuation of the recitative, the rests between rising sequences may have been intended to represent Francesca's reluctance to tell her story to the narrator. Sieglinde's motive, we might recall, had traced similar rhythmic interruptions later in act I, as she starts, hesitates, then finally brings the drugged drink to Hunding.

Francesca's main melody bears intervallic and rhythmic resemblances to the "love" motive as it is transformed in *Die Walküre*—especially as sounded in Siegmund's "Spring Song" (exs. 2a and b). This close resemblance to the first phrase of Francesca's "memory" theme (marked **x** in ex. 2b) is prefigured at the opening of sc. 3, when Siegmund sings of his first blissful glance at Sieglinde (act I, sc. 3, mm. 37–41). Likewise, a strong analogy to the **y** motive occurs at a point that underscores the power of Sieglinde's gaze (act I, sc. 3, mm. 106–07). The middle section concludes with an allusion to the "ring" motive (exs. 3a and b). Even though Tchaikovsky claimed to be puzzled by his surrender to the influence of Wagner, the manifest allusions were fitting—especially since *Francesca* was identified generically as a fantasy. By describing the work in this way, Tchaikovsky was implying that he was freed from the expectations of conventional symphonic form, a model that preoccupied him with a sense of inferiority—as he remarked, famously, in 1888: "As regards your humble servant, all his life he has suffered from consciousness of his inability in general matters of *form.* I have struggled much with this inborn deficiency and I can say with a certain pride, that I have achieved significant results, but to the day I die, I shall have written nothing that is *perfect* as concerns form."[62] Here unconstrained by traditional formal models, Tchaikovsky felt freer to allow the program to shape the course of the work—thus adopting the principal claim of the "symphonic poem," only here removing most of the usual references to traditional sonata practice.

Francesca is built on fantasylike, alternating sections of flux and stasis that are closely linked with the program. The outer areas represent the physical reality that encloses the protagonist's memory. Tchaikovsky begins the main Allegro vivo section (m. 67) with *pianissimo,* turbulent fragments—flicker of flames, and the fragments are tossed about before they coalesce into a full first theme. This process offended an early Berlin critic, who may have been expecting a more straightforward, sonatalike presentation of the main theme: "The first and last allegros, which depict the whirlwinds of hell, have neither subjects nor ideas, but only a mass of sounds, and these ear-splitting effects seem to us, from an artistic point of view, too much even for hell itself."[63] Tchaikovsky is not often charged with a lack of melodic "subjects," but it may be that the thematic procedure in this instance—clearly indebted to Liszt, as mentioned above—responds to the fantasy or hallucinatory character of the topic, defined by the semblance of chaos.

In marked contrast, the stasis of the middle section is built around a full-fledged theme and three variations. The sheer length of this area—it lasts around ten minutes—was controversial from the outset. The 1878 Berlin review continued: "The middle section, which describes the unhappy fate of Francesca, Paolo, and myself [the critic sarcastically includes himself as a disgruntled listener], shows—in spite of its endless length—at least some trace of catching melody."[64] A similar complaint echoes in David Brown's recent description of "the seemingly interminable alternation of two themes . . . a foretaste of the obsessiveness that was to mark some of Tchaikovsky's later music."[65] Such

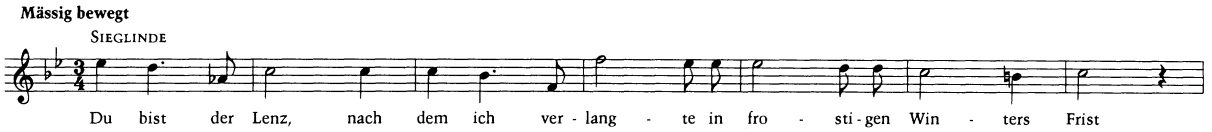
[62]Letter to K. K. Romanov of 3 October 1888, cited in Henry Zajaczkowski, *Tchaikovsky's Musical Style* (Ann Arbor, 1987), p. 1.

[63]Richard Würst, *Berliner Fremdenblatt,* 17 September 1878, in *The Life and Letters of Tchaikovsky,* trans. and ed. Rosa Newmarch, pp. 319–20.

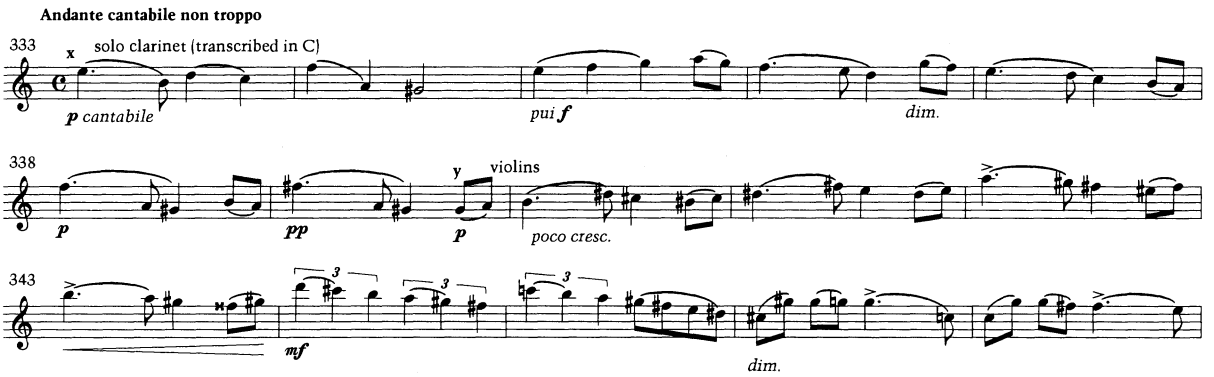
[64]Ibid.

[65]David Brown, "Tchaikovsky," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians,* ed. Stanley Sadie (London, 1980), vol. 18, p. 615.

a. Wagner, *Die Walküre,* act I, "Du bist der Lenz."

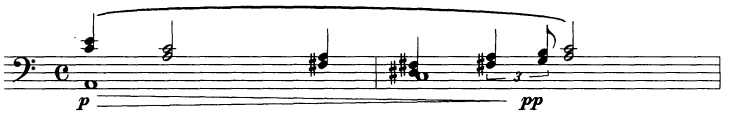


b. First statement of theme 2 (Francesca's "memory" theme), with segments marked **x** and **y.**

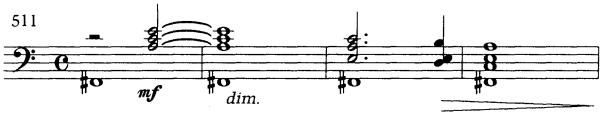


Example 2

a. Wagner, the "ring" motive.



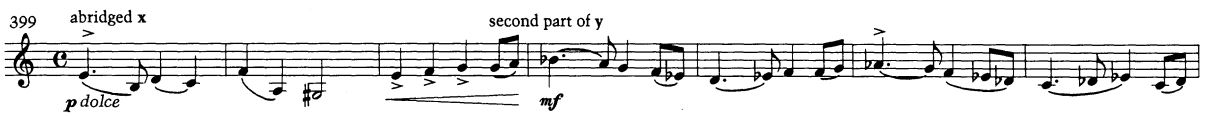
b. *Francesca da Rimini,* end of middle section, showing influence of the "ring" motive.



Example 3

criticism is based on two fundamental oversights: the inaccurate assessment that the music constitutes mere repetition rather than variation; and the failure to consider the implicit connections between this lyrical music and Dante's words.

By ignoring the intensification and variation process and claiming that this music is nothing but "repetition," we lose sight of the central distinction between the present experience of reality and that of its later projections in memory. In my view—based on a close comparison of Dante's text with the music of the symphonic fantasia—these variations mirror Francesca's memories. The variations are in part generated by the rhythmic and melodic relationships between the two segments of what we may regard as Francesca's "memory" theme (marked **x** and **y** in ex. 2b): the link is strongest in the last four measures of **x** (mm. 336–39) and the first four measures of **y** (mm. 340–43). At these points, a rhythmic pattern is shared while



Example 4: *Francesca da Rimini*, theme 2, showing culminating **x** + **y** combination in cello.

their melodic shapes diverge: the first two units of **x** descend, while the corresponding units of **y** begin as an ascent and finish with a descent. In addition, each segment is closely identified with instrumentation: **x** with winds, **y** with strings.

Conforming to variation tradition, the first variation (mm. 368–98) modifies only the surface features: accompaniment style, orchestration, and rhythmic diminution. With the second variation (mm. 399–413), however, a new combination is distilled from the two modules. Created by the elision of the first and second parts of the melody, it begins as expected (with **x**, m. 399) but veers in its third measure to a variant of **y**, which is then sequenced (m. 402) (ex. 4). As mentioned above, this type of thematic discontinuity—here a kind of free *Fortspinnung*—is a strong component of the fantasy tradition. That Tchaikovsky thought of the resulting melody as a new entity is supported by a change in instrumentation from winds to celli. The shared rhythm of **x** and **y** still defines this new combination, but the contours are completely changed. Originally two-measure groups with two repeated contours, the contours of the **x** and **y** combination fall and rise in one-measure groupings. Figure 3 summarizes the **x**/**y** combinations as they generate the middle section: rather than merely repeating material, this second variation begins to produce new combinations of earlier ideas.

But how might this relate to the program—the inscription from Dante included in the score? The crucial point is that Francesca is reluctant to tell her story:

Theme:	m.	333		x
		340		y
		353		bridge
Variation 1:		368		x
		375		y
		388		bridge
Variation 2:		399		x + y
		406		y
[episode:			414	a
			434	b
			442	a]
Variation 3:		457		x
		463		x + y
		480		y
		494		bridge

Figure 3: **x**/**y** combinations in the middle section, *Francesca da Rimini*.

> There is no greater pain—Your master knows
> this—than, in our misery,
> To be reminded of a happy time.
> But since you want so eagerly to know
> The first root of our love for one another,
> I shall be like the one who speaks and weeps.
> (*Inferno* V, lines 121–26)[66]

Protective of her memory, she reveals it only at Dante's insistence. The tale upsets not only Francesca, but also the narrator: "overcome by pity, I lost consciousness, as if I had died, / And I fell down as a dead body falls" (*Inferno* V, lines 140–42)—this might be represented directly with the cymbal crash (m. 510).[67] Thus

[66]Dante, *The Divine Comedy*, p. 21.

[67]Compare Constantin Floros's discussion of cymbal and tam-tam strokes as death images: "Tamtam als funebrales und makabres Klangsymbol bei Mahler, Wagner, Liszt, Strauss, Tschaikovskij, Schönberg und Berg," in *Gustav Mahler* (Wiesbaden, 1977), II, 311–17 and Table 78, p. 428.

mm. 1–64	A = *dance suite:* "Andante mosso" clear pulse in regular two- and four-measure groupings; continuous flow; three concise themes in closely related keys (G, b, D)
65–218	B = *narrative* (piano solo): "Lo stesso tempo, ma molto capriccioso e rubato" metric freedom; frequent fermati and tempo changes; chromatic; modulatory
219–80	A = *dance suite reprise* three themes restated (G, e, G)
280–306	Optional coda = *apotheosis*

Figure 4: Large-scale form produced by sections that are analogous to dances and narratives, Tchaikovsky, Concert Fantasy (1884).

the protracted revelation of Francesca's secret is enhanced by the grand sweep that drives toward the climactic ending of the whole middle section.[68]

This drive to the climax, however, is interrupted by the central episode (mm. 414–57): the locus of Francesca's buried memory. Contextually, this episode interrupts the ongoing variations, and in some respects it seems more static than its surroundings. With this central episode, the principle of maximal thematic contrast is taken to an extreme: not only does the lyrical center of the symphonic fantasy differ sharply from its whirlwind frame, but it also contains a strong contrast within its own center. The contrast is tonal as well thematic: all the variations begin in A minor (although each one settles on E major at its end) and the episode begins in E♭ major and leads to a series of modulations. Another distinguishing feature of this interruption is the more balletic sonority that stems from orchestration as well as from internal proportion.

The importance of proportion to the generic mix of ballet and fantasy is strongly demonstrated in Tchaikovsky's Concert Fantasy in G Major, op. 56 (1884, piano and orchestra). Its large-scale form springs from sections that are analogous to dances and narratives, the basic components of ballet music. Of the two, as Roland John Wiley has demonstrated, dances are simpler constructions characterized by a clear pulse and periodicity of phrase, an avoidance of complex chords and modulations, and a significant articulation every thirty-two to forty-eight measures. In contrast, narratives demonstrate greater structural, textural, and harmonic complexity.[69] The ternary plan of the first movement is produced by the contrast of these two types (fig. 4).

The analogy to ballet is more complicated for *Francesca,* since the outer sections combine developmental and thematic areas. The middle section, however, is directly related to the tableaux of a dance suite. The first two variations are articulated at thirty-two-measure intervals. Part of the discontinuity associated with the central episode may be that the proportion is cut in half: the episode interrupts the second variation at the sixteen-measure point. The length of the episode itself is unusual—it comprises forty-three measures. The climactic articulation at the end of the final variation (m. 510) corresponds to the longer of the typical lengths within a dance suite—forty-eight measures.

The sweep of the entire central section points directly toward the final statement as the variations progress from surface changes to ones

[68]David Brown imposes overidentification onto the composer: "Himself possessed with feelings of sexual guilt, Tchaikovsky's identification with Francesca's shade has become so absolute, so complete that finally, as it were, her music becomes possessed with something of the agony that beset his own self. His own emotion overflows, and the whole canvas is indelibly stained" (Brown, *Tchaikovsky: The Crisis Years,* p. 116).

[69]Roland John Wiley, *Tchaikovsky's Ballets* (Oxford, 1985), p. 69.

that are more fundamental. In the final combination of **x** and **y** (mm. 463–79), the elided version appears between statements of the two parts of the melody. Full dynamic and tutti scoring create a conclusive character—a typically Tchaikovskian balletic-lyrical apotheosis—appropriate to the evolution from simple to full statements of the theme. A standard feature of the variation principle, this process is also consistent with late-nineteenth-century teleological structures. In *Francesca,* the achievement of a sonorous climax is accomplished by this "second" theme.[70] Yet the climax is not accompanied by a cadence, instead, intensification builds toward the narrator's collapse on the cymbal crash.

The culmination of theme 2 leads to a new version of the "whirlwind" of theme 1, which now persists only half as long as in its first appearance, and the introductory frame (mm. 1–60 and mm. 295–332) is not restated at all. Once again, structure and program are linked: given the powerful narrative of the middle section, this reprise of the opening must return in a different way. (Likewise, in the *Dante* Symphony, Liszt does not repeat the A section in the same way as in the opening; rather, it is a grotesque parody.) The difference in the final whirlwind section stems from its function as both an interruption of Francesca's reverie and a sign of Dante's revival after he had fainted and awakened to new surroundings: "When I regained my senses . . . new forms of torment I saw about me" (*Inferno* VI, lines 1–6).

In summary, the program of *Francesca* is linked to four important structural processes. These include thematic fragmentation in the A section; contextual interruption in the central episode; the sweeping drive toward the final variation; and the reinterpreted return. Through these processes—all recognizable elements of the nineteenth-century conception of "fantasy"—the work shows its affinity with the historical ideals of the genre and its involvement with the influence of the symphonic tradition.

Conclusions

Four conclusions arise from this study of an instance situated in the tradition of the fantasy genre. First, by focusing on the relationship between program and structure, the climactic middle section may be understood not as "the seemingly interminable alternation of two themes," but as a process of transformation in which form and topic are closely integrated. Second, an examination of the role played by genre is especially important to the study of any fantasy. It is particularly fruitful for the consideration of this work, since Tchaikovsky was clear in his distinction between the structural basis of a symphony and that of a fantasy. In 1878 he wrote to Nadezhda von Meck: "You ask, do I keep to established forms? Yes and no. Some kinds of composition imply adherence to a particular form, for instance, *the symphony.* . . . In vocal music, where everything depends on the text, and in fantasias [*The Tempest, Francesca,* for instance] the form is completely independent."[71] Third, while a fully independent form is perhaps never attainable, it was both Tchaikovsky's goal for this work and a goal for the genre as set forth in the treatises, particularly in Marx's idea of transcendence. The relationship between the genre and the title, *Symphonic fantasia,* is illuminated by Fowler's formulation: "When a modal form is linked with the name of a kind, it refers to a combined genre, in which the overall form is determined by the kind alone."[72] In the case of *Francesca,* the separation between kind and mode is less clearly delineated than in Fowler's model, since aspects of the form are traceable

[70]James Hepokoski points to Weber's Overture to *Der Freischütz,* Wagner's Overture to *The Flying Dutchman,* and other works as models for symphonic adaptations with a grand statement of the second theme that functions as the climax of the entire work. See his "Masculine-Feminine," *Musical Times* 135 (1994), 498.

[71]*"To My Best Friend": Correspondence between Tchaikovsky and Nadezhda von Meck 1876-1878,* trans. Galina von Meck, ed. Edward Garden and Nigel Gotteri (Oxford, 1993), pp. 296–97. One is reminded of a similar distinction drawn by Schumann in his 1835 review of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique:* "We apply certain criteria to a *fantasy,* others to a *sonata*" (Wir machen andere Ansprüche an eine "Phantasie," andere an eine "Sonate") (Schumann, *Schriften,* I, 133).

[72]Fowler, *Kinds of Literature,* p. 107.

to the mode. The work refers to symphonic conventions, particularly to highly contrasted themes and developmental areas, but its sectional construction, variation content, and interruptive processes are suited to the fantasy. Thus it accommodates generic mixture within the family resemblance model proposed at the outset of this article.

Fourth and finally, allowing equal emphasis on generic conventions and on individual instances, a fluid model for the fantasy is especially appropriate for *Francesca*. The work exemplifies a genre that hinges on the balance between discontinuity and cohesion, through often sectional forms that are conditioned by interruption and cohered by systems of returning themes. By reconciling genre, program, and structure in this work, it is hoped that this account supplies at least a foothold in pursuit of the ever-elusive fantasy.