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This document proposes that Fryderyk Chopin's Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66 is not an entirely original work, but rather a pastiche in which all of the musical material is derived from three works by other composers: the Impromptu, Op. 89 and *Sonate mélancolique,* Op. 49 of Ignaz Moscheles and the *Sonata quasi una fantasia,* Op. 27/2 of Ludwig van Beethoven. The study is in two parts. In the first part, the consideration of four distinct topics provides a necessary contextual backdrop. These four topics are (1) an exploration of Chopin's great capacity for mimicry, including musical mimicry, a talent uniquely pertinent to a pastiche of other composers' music, (2) an examination of Chopin's relationship to Moscheles and his music at the time of the impromptu's composition, (3) a cursory look at an earlier pastiche by Chopin, and (4) a discussion of the relationship between Moscheles and Beethoven, and how Chopin's awareness of this relationship might have influenced his decision to use both of their music in single pastiche. In the second part of the study, a thorough comparative analysis of Chopin's impromptu and the aforementioned works of Moscheles and Beethoven illustrates how Chopin transformed and combined passages from the source pieces to generate his own musical material.

# INSIGHTFUL IMITATION: CHOPIN'S IMPROMPTU IN C-SHARP MINOR AS A PASTICHE OF MOSCHELES

by

Robin Morace

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Dr. Andrew Willis
Committee Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Robin Morace has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair

Dr. Andrew Willis

Committee Members

Dr. Kailan Rubinoff

Dr. John Salmon

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# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Close scrutiny of one of Fryderyk Chopin's most familiar and popular works, the *Impromptu in C-sharp minor*, Op. Posth. 66, commonly called the "Fantaisie-Impromptu," reveals that it is not an entirely original work, but rather a pastiche in which all of the musical material is derived from three works by two other composers: from Ignaz Moscheles, the *Impromptu in E-flat*, Op. 89 and *Sonate mélancolique in F-sharp minor*, Op. 49, and from Ludwig van Beethoven, the *Sonata quasi una fantasia in C-sharp minor*, Op. 27/2. The nature of the impromptu as a pastiche is disguised by the fact that Chopin does not simply cobble together quotations of the three source pieces, as was done in the myriad operatic potpourris flooding the salons and recital halls of Chopin's Paris. Instead, various musical ideas from the three sources are excised, blended together, and transformed to suit Chopin's unique pianistic idiom. Much as Chopin's impromptu is constructed from three existing pieces by other composers, my own research is predicated on three existing pieces of scholarship: observations by Arthur Hedley and Philip Alan Silver and a study by Ernst Oster kindled my interest in tracing the origins of this piece. Their contributions to the literature and an overview of my own study are detailed below.

Shortly before Chopin's death in 1849, Camille Pleyel asked what Chopin would like to have done with his unpublished manuscripts, which included this impromptu, composed some fifteen years prior but never published. Chopin replied that the completed manuscripts could be distributed amongst his friends, but none should be published; the fragments should be destroyed.[1] But just five years later, Chopin's family engaged his lifelong friend and erstwhile amanuensis Julian Fontana to bring out an edition of Chopin's unpublished works, in an attempt

[1] As per the recollections of Auguste Franchomme, related to Friedrich Niecks. See Frederick Niecks, *Chopin As a Man and Musician* (New York: Cooper Square, 1973), 328.

to combat the rising tide of what Fontana would describe as "inauthentic" editions of Chopin's unpublished works.[2] The impromptu would appear as the first piece in the first volume of Fontana's edition, finally seeing publication two decades after its composition.

In the introduction to his edition of the C-sharp minor impromptu, Maurice Hinson ponders whether there might have been something particular that kept Chopin from publishing the work, and points to two theories which are foundational to my own research.[3] The first is an observation in Arthur Hedley's 1947 biography of Chopin. In the midst of a general survey of Chopin's compositional output, Hedley notes an uncanny similarity between the main theme of Chopin's impromptu and that of Moscheles's impromptu, writing, "A glance at Moscheles's piece shows whence Chopin derived the idea for the work issued after his death as a Fantaisie-Impromptu, and explains why the composer did not publish it, in spite of its superiority over Moscheles's commonplace work: the plagiarism would have been too obvious."[4] Hedley then gives the first four measures of the main idea of Moscheles's impromptu, allowing the reader to discern for themselves the correspondences between the two themes. Hedley's discussion of the relationship between Chopin's and Moscheles's impromptus ends there, but the curious reader who compares the complete scores of the two impromptus will find far more similarities than the melodic resemblance of the main themes. The correspondences are numerous and exist at every level from the overall formal structure to the smallest details. A significant part of my own research was therefore to follow up on Hedley's observations.

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[2] See Julian Fontana, preface to *Œuvres posthumes pour piano de Frédéric Chopin* (Paris: Meissonier Fils, 1855), 1.
[3] Frédéric Chopin, *Fantaisie-Impromptu*, ed. by Maurice Hinson, (Van Nuys, Calif.: Alfred Pub. Co., 1988.), 4.
[4] Arthur Hedley, *Chopin*, ed. by Maurice J. E Brown, Revised ed. The Master Musicians Series. (London: Dent, 1974), 155.

The second theory noted by Maurice Hinson is the work of Ernst Oster, who wrote an article titled "The Fantasie-Impromptu: A Tribute to Beethoven," in which he details a great number of correspondences between Chopin's impromptu and Beethoven's *Sonata quasi una fantasia in C-sharp minor,* Op. 27/2, especially the final movement—Oster ultimately concludes that "The fact that the Fantaisie-Impromptu consciously redraws—one might almost say copies—some of the main features of Beethoven's finale is the reason why Chopin kept it from publication."[5] Oster's analysis is thorough and illuminating; a pupil of Schenker, he often explores deeper structures than the surface level similarity that Arthur Hedley noticed in Moscheles's impromptu. And yet, Hedley's observations cannot be ignored—we have two convincing, competing explanations that both suggest the impromptu is derived from another piece of music.

Though it might seem that involving a third piece would only cloud the situation further, Philip Alan Silver both introduces another work and hints at a theoretical framework that will allow us to integrate the connections between the impromptu and these three different sources. In his 1992 dissertation "Ignaz Moscheles: A Reappraisal of His Life and Musical Influence," Silver acknowledges Hedley's observations about the resemblances between the main themes of Chopin's and Moscheles's impromptus before drawing his own connection between the last two measures of the theme of Chopin's impromptu and a passage from Moscheles's *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49.[6] The particular connection that Silver points out is not convincing, as Ernst Oster notes that the two measures of Chopin's impromptu that Silver has chosen are almost

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[5] Ernst Oster, "Appendix: The Fantaisie-Impromptu: A Tribute to Beethoven," in *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory*, ed. David Beach (Yale University Press, 1983), 205.
[6] Phillip Alan Silver, "Ignaz Moscheles: A Reappraisal of His Life and Musical Influence" (D.M.A. diss., University of Washington, 1992), 70.

entirely a direct quotation of Beethoven. However, Silver's sense that there is a link between Moscheles's *Sonate mélancolique* and Chopin's impromptu is borne out by further comparative analysis, and we are confronted for a third time by resemblances that are too strong to be dismissed as coincidental.

Silver suggests a path to integrating these connections to different pieces by noting that combining Arthur Hedley's observations concerning Moscheles's impromptu with his own observations about the *Sonate mélancolique* "suggests that a synthesis of elements obtained from the *E-flat major Impromptu* and the *Sonate mélancolique* has been produced by Chopin."[7] If this statement is expanded to include Beethoven's Sonata, Op. 27/2 as well, it has great explanatory power concerning the materials of Chopin's work. When the connections to both Moscheles's pieces and Beethoven's sonata are considered simultaneously, it becomes apparent that Chopin's C-sharp minor impromptu is not just a work which contains occasional passing references to existing music by other composers. Rather, it is a work in which every musical idea is derived from existing music by other composers. I will therefore seek to demonstrate that the entire musical fabric of Chopin's C-sharp minor impromptu is woven from threads plucked from all three works.

The body of this study consists of one chapter of contextual information and one chapter of comparative analysis, followed by a brief concluding summation that relates the findings of the study to Chopin's life and work. The chapter of contextual information comprises four parts: (1) an exploration of Chopin's great capacity for mimicry, including musical mimicry, a talent uniquely pertinent to a pastiche of other composers' music, (2) an examination of Chopin's relationship to Moscheles and his music at the time of the impromptu's composition, (3) a

[7] Idem, 70.

cursory look at an earlier pastiche by Chopin, and (4) a discussion of the relationship between Moscheles and Beethoven, and how Chopin's awareness of this relationship might have influenced his decision to use both of their music in single pastiche.

The organization of the chapter of comparative analysis bears mention. Chopin's frequent blending of multiple sources in a single passage makes analyzing connections between Chopin's impromptu and each of the three sources separately an unprofitable exercise. Dealing with each source separately allows the observer to identify where all of Chopin's material comes from, but the complex interplay between the sources themselves is lost, and this interplay is a large part of Chopin's game in the impromptu. So, my analysis will instead proceed chronologically though Chopin's impromptu in small, discrete units, identifying borrowings from any one of the three sources in the order in which they occur, together with the mechanics of their interaction.

# CHAPTER II: CONTEXT

This chapter consists of four sections, each dealing with a different topic relevant to the composition of the C-sharp minor impromptu. In the first section, a picture of Chopin the mimic will be constructed from the recollections of his friends and contemporaries. In the second section, Chopin's relationship with Moscheles and awareness of his music at the time of the impromptu's composition in 1834 will be established. In the third section, some observations regarding an earlier self-pastiche by Chopin will be made, and its relevance to the impromptu explored. In the fourth and final section, the personal and musical relationships between Moscheles and Beethoven, as well as Chopin's own awareness and perception of those relationships, will be considered.

## Chopin the Mimic

A brief diary entry by Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, a Polish poet and statesman who knew Chopin since the latter was a child, makes a casual reference to a facet of Chopin's personality that is fundamental to this study. In 1831, Niemcewicz penned the following summary of his evening: "Dinner at General Kniaziewicz's, attended by Mickiewicz and Chopin, one of the foremost pianists in Europe, cheerful, witty, capable of mimicking anyone, entertained us splendidly." It is the phrase "capable of mimicking anyone" that will provide a basis for the ensuing examination of the C-sharp minor impromptu. Though Chopin's imitations of people, like his musical improvisations, left no material trace, it is possible to piece together a picture of Chopin the mimic from descriptions written by people who witnessed him exercising this talent.

Perhaps the most obvious place to look for a description of Chopin's capacity for imitation is in the abundant writings of his longtime partner, George Sand. In her extensive memoire *Histoire de ma vie*, the following passage is found:

> Chopin always wished for Nohant, and yet could never bear Nohant. He was a socialite *par excellence*, not of overly formal or large gatherings, but of intimate ones, salons of twenty people, when the crowd is dissipating and the usual admirers huddle around the artist to draw from him by friendly importunities the purest of his inspiration. It was only then that he would display all his genius and all his talent. And it was also then, after having plunged his audience into deep reflection or aching sadness, as his music could sometimes instill one's soul with terrible despair, especially when he was improvising; suddenly, as though to lift the impression and the memory of his pain from the others and from himself, he would turn to a mirror, surreptitiously, arrange his hair and his cravat, and suddenly appear to be transformed into a phlegmatic Englishman, a crotchety old man, a soppy English lady, a sleazy Jew. They were always pathetic characters, no matter how comic they might be, but perfectly captured and so exquisitely performed that one never tired of admiring them.[8]

Sand's description suggests a somewhat exclusive social context for Chopin's deployment of his talent for mimicry. Though there is a juxtaposition of musical and imitative activity, Sand does not mention any combination of the two; in this vignette, Chopin plays and does imitations consecutively but distinctly separate. We also cannot be certain whether the characters that Chopin is portraying here are real people or just inventions. Nonetheless, the strength of Chopin's ability is evident, as Sand notes how vividly his characters are rendered and that "one never tired of admiring them."

A trace of the impression that Chopin's imitations made on the attendees of these intimate salons can be found in the 1844 short story *Un homme d'affaires*, where Honoré de Balzac writes the following: "'He had hair like this,' cried Bixiou, mussing his hair. And, gifted

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[8] "Chopin voulait toujours Nohant, et ne supportait jamais Nohant. Il était l'homme du monde par excellence, non pas du monde trop officiel et trop nombreux, mais du monde intime, des salons de vingt personnes, de l'heure où la foule s'en va et où les habitués se pressent autour de l'artiste pour lui arracher par d'aimables importunités le plus pur de son inspiration. C'est alors seulement qu'il donnait tout son génie et tout son talent. C'est alors aussi qu'après avoir plongé son auditoire dans un recueillement profond ou dans une tristesse douloureuse, car sa musique vous mettait parfois dans l'âme des découragements atroces, surtout quand il improvisait; tout à coup, comme pour enlever l'impression et le souvenir de sa douleur aux autres et à lui-même, il se tournait vers une glace, à la dérobée, arrangeait ses cheveux et sa cravate, et se montrait subitement transformé en Anglais flegmatique, en vieillard impertinent, en Anglaise sentimentale et ridicule, en juif sordide. C'était toujours des types tristes, quelque comiques qu'ils fussent, mais parfaitement compris et si délicatement traduits qu'on ne pouvait se lasser de les admirer." George Sand, *Histoire de ma vie,* (Paris: V. Lecou, 1855), 20:227-229.

with the same talent that the pianist Chopin possessed in such a high degree for mimicking people, he immediately imitated the character with alarming accuracy."[9]

As noted by D. C. Parker, the publication of this story came only a year or two after Balzac had been making regular visits to the apartment in Rue Pigalle where Chopin and Sand were living and holding salons.[10] In an 1841 letter to his future wife, the Polish noblewoman Ewelina Hańska, Balzac describes the furnishings of the flat in great detail, mentions some of the habits of the couple living there, and also notes that "Chopin is always there."[11] Beyond the fact of the probably numerous encounters between Chopin and Balzac in the years leading up to the publication of the novel, there is also a particular correspondence between Balzac's brief passage and George Sand's description of Chopin's portrayal of various characters quoted earlier. Sand noted that to transform himself into one of these characters, Chopin would start by arranging his hair; likewise, Balzac has his character Bixiou muss his hair to perform his own imitation. It is highly likely, then, that Balzac's reference to Chopin's prowess as a mimic was inspired by a personal experience.

It is difficult to ascertain whether Balzac intended the reference as an extra bit of color for those directly familiar with Chopin's imitations, or if he thought that knowledge of Chopin's gift in this area was sufficiently renowned among *le Tout-Paris* that this reference might serve as a useful metric for his wider audience. Whatever Balzac's assumptions and intentions, Chopin's capacity for mimicry plainly made an impression on him.

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[9] "Il avait les cheveux comme ça, s'écria Bixiou en ébouriffant sa chevelure. Et, doué du même talent que Chopin le pianiste possède à un si haut degré pour contrefaire les gens, il représenta le personnage à l'instant avec une effrayante vérité." Honoré de Balzac, *La maison Nucingen. Les secrets de la princesse de Cadignan. Sarrazine. Facino Cane. Un homme d'affaires. Les comédiens sans le savoir.* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1892), 246.
[10] D. C. Parker, "Balzac, the Musician." *The Musical Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (1919): 161.
[11] Honoré de Balzac, *Lettres À L'étrangère* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1906), 553.

Jozef Nowakowski, a childhood friend who was also a pianist and composer, furnishes us with greater detail concerning Chopin's imitative talents in recollections related to Maurycy Karasowski for an 1877 biography of Chopin:

> When I visited Chopin in Paris, I asked him to introduce me to Kalkbrenner, Liszt, and Pixis, 'That is unnecessary,' answered Chopin, 'wait a moment, and I will present them to you, but each separately.' Then he sat down to the piano after the fashion of Liszt, played in his style and imitated all his movements to the life; after which he impersonated Pixis. The next evening I went to the theatre with Chopin. He left his box for a short time, and turning round I saw Pixis beside me. I thought it was Chopin, and I laughingly clapped him on the shoulder, exclaiming, leave off your mimicry. My neighbor was quite flabbergasted by such familiarity on the part of a total stranger, but fortunately at that moment Chopin returned to the box, and we had a hearty laugh over the comical mistake. Then, with his own peculiar grace of manner, he apologized both for himself and me to the real Pixis.[12]

Nowakowski's account relates that Chopin would combine his gifts for music and mimicry into improvisations that mimicked both the musical style and physical gestures of other composer-pianists; this information is crucial to the present study. Nowakowski's story also depicts Chopin's capacity as being truly extraordinary. Chopin's imitation of Pixis, whom Nowakowski had yet to meet, was evidently so accurate that when Nowakowski finally encountered the real Pixis, he believed that it was still Chopin playing a character. Nowakowski then goes on to discuss Chopin imitating Liszt:

> Liszt frequently met Chopin in society and had many opportunities of observing his imitative talent. He looked quietly on while Chopin mimicked him, and, far from being offended, he laughed and seemed really amused by it. There was not the slightest jealousy between these two artists, and their friendship remained unbroken.[13]

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[12] Maurycy Karasowski, *Frederic Chopin : His Life and Letters*. Translated by Emily Hill. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970), 306-7.
[13] Karasowski, *Frederic Chopin*, 307.

One of the occasions where Chopin mimicked Liszt that Nowakowski mentions here was recalled by Liszt many years later. His pupil Amy Fay records the following anecdote in her "Music-Study in Germany," related to her by Liszt in 1873:

> We were speaking of the faculty of mimicry, and he [Liszt] told me such a funny little anecdote about Chopin. He said that when he and Chopin were young together, somebody told him that Chopin had a remarkable talent for mimicry, and so he said to Chopin, "Come round to my rooms this evening and show off this talent of yours." So Chopin came. He had purchased a blonde wig ("I was very blonde at that time," said Liszt), which he put on, and got himself up in one of Liszt's suits. Presently an acquaintance of Liszt's came in, Chopin went to meet him instead of Liszt, and took off his voice and manner so perfectly, that the man actually mistook him for Liszt, and made an appointment with him for the next day—"and there I was in the room," said Liszt. Wasn't that remarkable?[14]

Beyond broadly corroborating Nowakowski's recollection that Liszt had observed Chopin mimicking him, this anecdote also corroborates an aspect of Nowakowski's earlier story about Pixis that might on its own seem somewhat far-fetched. In both Nowakowski's and Liszt's recollections, Chopin imitates a person with such accuracy (*"une effrayante verité,"* as Balzac wrote) that someone else is unable to distinguish Chopin's impression from the real person. If the stories are taken separately, one might be inclined to think that Nowakowski or Liszt were exaggerating for effect. Taken together, the stories illustrate the depth of Chopin's ability.

Aside from relating that specific anecdote to Amy Fay, Liszt also gave us a more general sketch of Chopin the mimic. The following passage is from Liszt's 1852 monograph concerning Chopin's life and cultural significance:

> Among company, he was even-tempered in the way of those who are untroubled because they have nothing at stake. He was typically cheerful; his caustic wit quickly exposed the ridiculous that lies beyond the superficialities that might strike the typical observer. In mimicry, he deployed an amusing verve, which was not easily exhausted. He often

[14] Amy Fay, *Music-Study in Germany: From the Home Correspondence of Amy Fay*. (New York, NY: Macmillan Company, 1896), 239-40.

> enjoyed reproducing, in comic improvisations, the musical formulae and individual tics of certain virtuosi; to mimic their gestures and movements, to imitate their faces, with a talent that could communicate the entirety of their personality in a minute. His own features would become unrecognizable, having been subjected to the strangest transformations. Yet, even when imitating the hideous and grotesque, he never lost his own innate grace; even grimacing could not make him appear ugly. His merrymaking was all the more scathing for his restraining its limits with perfect good taste and maintaining a wary distance from that which might go beyond that good taste. There was no moment of even the most complete familiarity in which he might not find a single unseemly word or misplaced boisterousness to be too shocking.[15]

Liszt, like Nowakowski, references the fact that Chopin would use his imitative gifts in a musical context, mimicking fellow composer-pianists. Both Nowakowski and Liszt are careful to note that Chopin's pianistic imitations included both musical and physical mimicry. Liszt seems to suggest that there was a critical, perhaps even potentially hurtful, element to Chopin's imitations. Liszt describes Chopin's wit as "caustic," and notes that Chopin's refinement and good taste actually strengthen the acidity of his humor. Liszt's observation that Chopin used this "caustic" wit to expose things beneath the surface will be of particular relevance to the later analysis of the impromptu.

Even Moscheles himself, the central focus of this study, noted Chopin's gifts in this area. In her digest of Moscheles's writings, his wife Charlotte transmits the following 1839 diary entry: "Chopin was lively, cheerful, and just extremely funny in his imitations of Pixis, Liszt,

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[15] "Il portait dans le monde l'égalité d'humeur des personnes que ne trouble aucun ennui, car elles ne s'attendent à aucun intérêt. D'habitude il était gai; son esprit caustique dénichait rapidement le ridicule bien au-delà des superficies où il frappe tous les yeux. Il déployait dans la pantomime une verve drolatique, longtemps inépuisée. Il s'amusait souvent à reproduire, dans des improvisations comiques, les formules musicales et les tics particuliers de certains virtuoses; à répéter leur gestes et leurs mouvements, à contrefaire leur visage, avec un talent qui commentait en une minute toute leur personnalité. Ses traits devenaient alors méconnaissables, il leur faisait subir les plus étranges métamorphoses. Mais, tout en imitant le laid et le grotesque, il ne perdait jamais sa grâce native; la grimace ne parvenait même pas à l'enlaidir. Sa gaieté était d'autant plus piquante, qu'il en restreignait les limites avec un parfait bon goût et un éloignement ombrageux de ce qui pouvait le dépasser. À aucun des instants de la plus entière familiarité, il ne trouvait qu'une parole malséante, une vivacité déplacée, puissent ne point être choquantes." Franz Liszt, *Chopin* (Paris: Escudier, 1852).

and a hunchbacked amateur pianist."[16] Again, we find Pixis and Liszt as two of the subjects of ridicule. The fact that Moscheles specified the third as a "hunchbacked amateur pianist" and not just a "hunchback" suggests (though not conclusively) that these may have been musical imitations. Moscheles likely enjoyed these comic imitations without ever being aware that he himself was the subject of Chopin's most elaborate application of his skill in mimicry to his skill in music, in a piece written some four years before the diary entry quoted above.

When taken together, these scattered vignettes and observations allow us to form an approximate image of Chopin the mimic, with several facets that are important to the following examination of the C-sharp minor impromptu. His ability was prodigious, allowing him to imitate people with such accuracy that he could be mistaken for the person he was mimicking. Furthermore, Chopin's mimicry was often deployed in a musical context, to imitate fellow pianist-composers. Finally, his imitations were typically funny and in good taste, but, according to Liszt, may have contained barbed criticism, laying bare things that Chopin perceived beneath the surface.

## Chopin's Relationship With Moscheles and His Works

While Chopin and Moscheles are known to have become friends and to have had a fruitful musical collaboration, the composition of the C-sharp minor impromptu predates this association by several years. Chopin's awareness of Moscheles's piano-playing and compositions as of the time of the impromptu's composition will therefore be explored in this section, and his opportunity to engage with the specific works I am arguing were used in the pastiche will be assessed.

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[16] "Chopin war lebendig, lustig, ja überaus komisch in seinen Nachahmungen von Pixis, Liszt, und einem bucklichten Clavierliebhaber." Charlotte Moscheles, *Aus Moscheles's Leben* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1873), 2:26.

**Chopin's Awareness of Moscheles's Playing**

There is no historical evidence to confirm or even suggest that Chopin heard Moscheles play before 1837, some three years before the composition of the C-sharp minor impromptu, when Chopin travelled to London with Camille Pleyel and saw Moscheles perform in a Beethoven memorial concert. The last time that Moscheles was known to have had an extended stay in Paris was at the very beginning of 1830, over a year before Chopin arrived there in the autumn of 1831. Moscheles was living in London during the 1830s, and there is nothing to indicate even a brief excursion to Paris by him during this time. While Chopin mentions in an 1832 letter to Ferdinand Hiller that his publisher, Maurice Schlesinger, has related that both Moscheles and John Field will be coming to Paris that winter, it does not appear that Moscheles made the trip. Schlesinger seems to have been half right: Field certainly did come to Paris, and his visit is well documented, but there is no evidence that Moscheles was there that winter. It is documented that he did leave London for the continent (*The Harmonicon* notes Moscheles to have played several concerts in Germany that October and November) but there is no evidence that he set foot in Paris, let alone played a concert. The C-sharp minor impromptu is thus more a pastiche of material drawn from Moscheles the composer than an imitation of Moscheles the pianist.

**Chopin's General Awareness of Moscheles's Compositions**

While Chopin likely did not have firsthand knowledge of Moscheles's playing, he was intimately acquainted with the elder pianist's compositions. After Chopin and Moscheles finally encountered one another in Paris in 1839, Moscheles wrote that "he [Chopin] professes to have a great admiration for my compositions and even if this is not the truth, he does have a thorough knowledge of them." Chopin appears to have begun accruing this "thorough knowledge" quite

early in his career. Halina Goldberg notes that despite the prevailing taste being for lighter fare, Warsaw's music shops nonetheless both published their own editions of certain major composers and imported foreign publications for sale. Moscheles's compositions feature amongst both the locally produced editions and the imports.[17] Chopin's appetite for the offerings of the local music shops was evidently considerable; he wrote to his friend Tytus Woychiechowski that "I go to Brzezina's [one of the local music shops] every day."[18]

That Moscheles's music should be amongst the works consumed by Chopin in these formative years is confirmed by the program of an 1825 concert in Warsaw, where Chopin is noted to have played a concerto by Moscheles and then improvised on the *eolopantaleon,* a kind of pseudo-organ built by Józef Długosz. It is tempting to think that Chopin's improvisation might have itself been an early attempt to engage with Moscheles's musical materials through his own music making, by extemporizing on themes from the concerto he had just played. This idea is furthered by an account of a different instance of Chopin improvising on the *eolopantaleon*: Antoni Edward Odyniec recounts that "After playing two or three works of other composers, he began to improvise on the last one."[19]

More definite instances of Chopin's absorbing Moscheles's music into his own during his formative years in Warsaw can be found in some of his works from that period. The striking correspondence between Moscheles's Etude in G major, Op. 70/3 and Chopin's own Etude in A minor, Op. 10/2 is one such example (Ex. 1).

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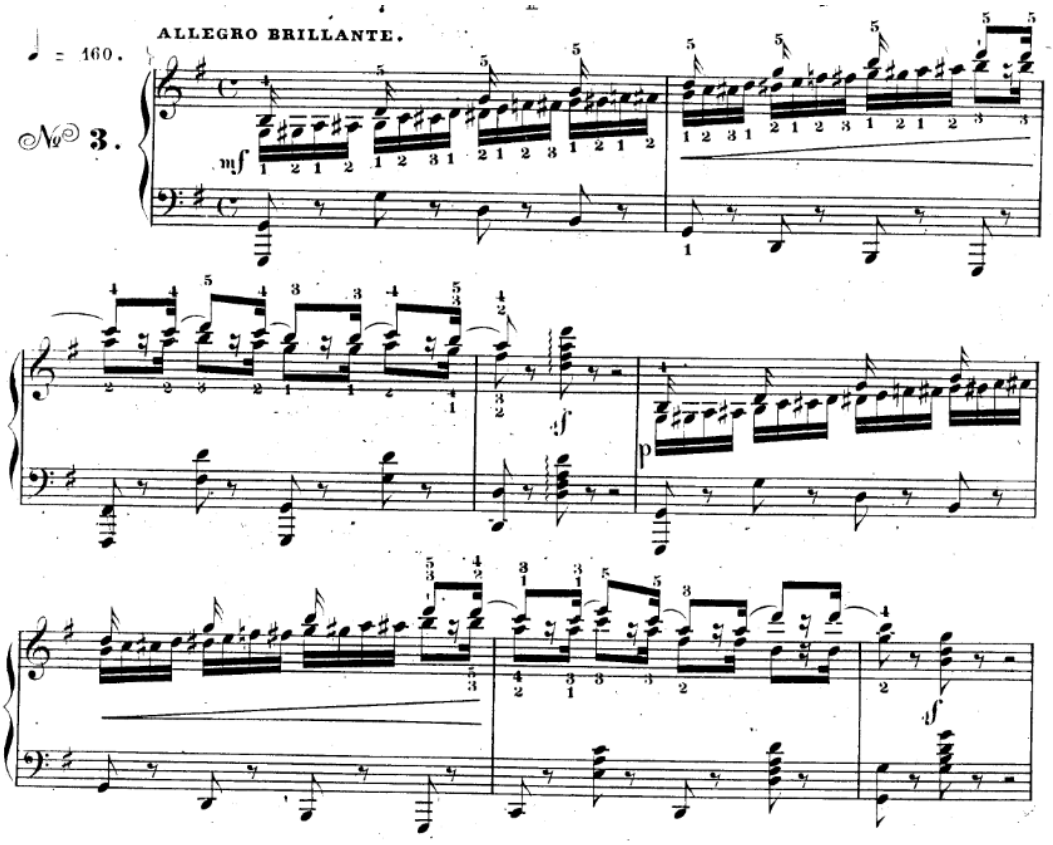
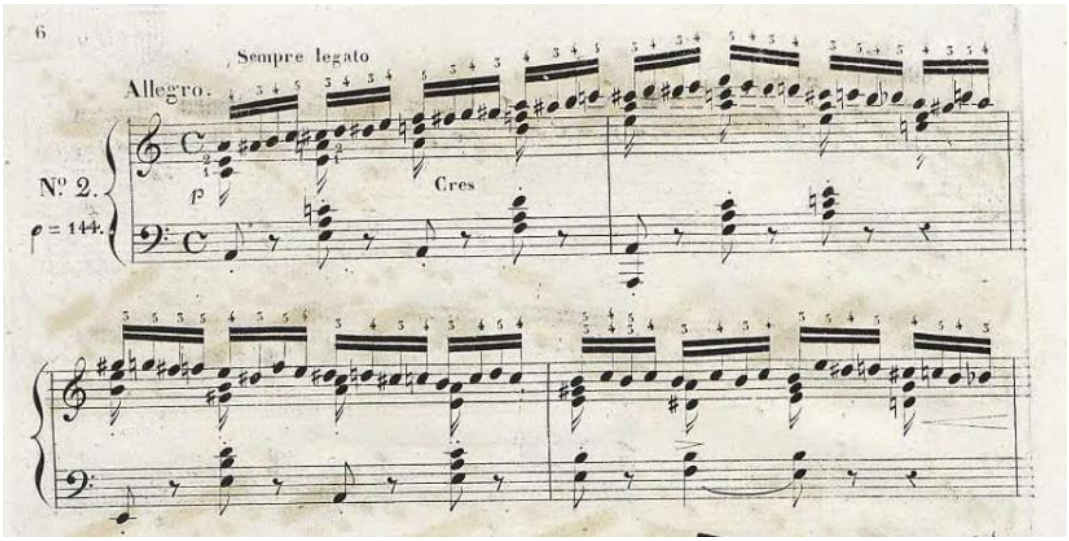
[17] Halina Goldberg, *Music in Chopin's Warsaw* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 104-5.
[18] Chopin, Sydow, and Hedley, *Selected Correspondence,* 108
[19] Antoni Edward Odyniec, *Wspomnienia z przeszłości : opowiadane Deotymie* (Warsaw: Nakład Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1884), 325–326, quoted in Goldberg, *Music in Chopin's Warsaw,* 200.

**Example 1. Comparison of Etudes by Moscheles and Chopin**

a) Ignaz Moscheles, Etude in G major, Op. 70/3, mm. 1-8.




b) Fryderyk Chopin, Etude in A minor, Op. 10/2, mm. 1-4.



Moscheles's description of his own etude is a useful starting point for comparison. He writes, "The object of this study is the chromatic scale, intermixed with double notes: it is above all meant to serve as an exercise for the little finger." The orthography of the two studies is strikingly similar, with the chromatic scale and the intermixed double notes being separated into two voices. The secondary voice has a sixteenth note on each quarter of the bar, without notated rests in between. The left hand has an accompaniment that is also struck on each quarter of the bar, in this case eighth notes with eighth rests between. Moscheles's initial left hand accompaniment is different than Chopin's, but the formula he uses in m. 3 is the one Chopin uses throughout, with a low bass note on the strong beats and a middle register chord on the weak beats. Chopin has transformed the basic idea in the right hand by turning it upside down. Moscheles had placed the chromatic scale in the bottom voice, played with the "strong" fingers (1, 2, and 3) while the fifth supplied the intermittent double notes. Chopin places the chromatic scale in the upper voice, requiring that the weak fourth and fifth fingers join the third in articulating that part of the texture, while the double notes of Moscheles's study become triple notes, requiring both the thumb and forefinger to be used while the remaining fingers deal with the scale; both changes greatly increase the flexibility and finesse required. Chopin has adapted a musical idea of Moscheles'saccording to his own idiosyncratic pianistic idiom.

Chopin's continuing engagement with Moscheles's music after his student years is evidenced by his inclusion of Moscheles's works in both his teaching and his performing. Mikuli noted that Moscheles's etudes were among those Chopin frequently gave to students.[20] The Chopin pupil Elise Peruzzi would recount to Frederick Niecks that "he made me acquainted with

[20] Carl Mikuli, preface to *Chopin, Complete Works for the Piano,* tr. Theo. Baker (New York: Schirmer, 1894), 2.

the beautiful duet of Moscheles."[21] The work to which she is referring is the *Grande Sonate*, Op. 47, which Chopin performed alongside Liszt in 1834, the same year that he wrote the C-sharp minor impromptu.[22]

**Chopin's Specific Awareness of Moscheles's Sonate Mélancolique, Op. 49 and Impromptu, Op. 89**

Since it is clear that Chopin was already quite familiar with Moscheles's work and had already assimilated it into some earlier compositions, it is now necessary to confirm that Chopin would have been able to engage with the two specific works of Moscheles that I will argue he uses in his pastiche. With the earlier of these works, the *Sonate mélancolique*, it is clear that Chopin would have had ample opportunity to discover the piece. It was first published in 1820 by Johann André in Frankfurt and then in Paris in 1821 by Chopin's future publisher Maurice Schlesinger, giving Chopin both his student years and the entirety of his professional life to happen across the sonata.

The window during which Chopin might have discovered the second piece, Moscheles's Impromptu, Op. 89, is much smaller. A vague completion date of 1834 is often given for this impromptu[23]; Chopin is known to have been working on his own impromptu the very same year. In the absence of more specific dates, one must concede the possibility that Chopin may have had rather little time to discover the existence of Moscheles's impromptu and incorporate its materials into a rather complex and sophisticated musical tapestry of his own—indeed, he might even have begun to write his own work before the publication of Moscheles's piece. Either case

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[21] Niecks, *Frederick Chopin,* 339.
[22] *La Gazette Musicale*, 21 December 1834.
[23] See Emil Smidak and Charlotte Moscheles, *Isaak-Ignaz Moscheles : The Life of the Composer and His Encounters with Beethoven, Liszt, Chopin, and Mendelssohn* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Scholar Press, 198), 95 and Hinson, *Fantaisie-Impromptu*, 3.

would weaken the present argument, the latter critically so. However, there is good reason to assume not only that Chopin was quite aware of Moscheles's activities as a composer, but that Moscheles's impromptu was published slightly earlier than is usually indicated and in a manner that might have attracted Chopin's notice. On 15 December 1833, Schlesinger published an *"Album des pianistes"* containing solo pieces by leading virtuosi. The album contained Chopin's three Op. 15 nocturnes (which had only just been published) as well as Moscheles's impromptu.[24] Two letters reveal that Chopin took a surprisingly keen interest in the contents of these albums. The first is a letter from Chopin to Julian Fontana, sent on 28 December 1838, in which he complains that Schlesinger has, without informing Chopin, bundled the Op. 34 into one of these albums.[25] The following extract of a letter from Chopin to Schlesinger (which, purely by coincidence, also mentions Moscheles) suggests that Chopin may have paid rather close attention to these albums:

> Dear friend,—In the Impromptu [Op. 51] which you have included with the gazette of 9 July, there is an error in the pagination, which makes my composition unintelligible. Though far from taking the care that our friend Moscheles brings to his works, this time I must consider myself, for the benefit or your subscribers, obliged to ask you to insert an erratum in your next issue:— Page 3—read page 5. Page 5—read page 3. If you are too busy or too lazy to write to me, just answer through the erratum in the gazette, and that will tell me that you, Madame Schlesinger, and your children are all doing well. —Yours, July 22, 1843. F. CHOPIN.[26]

While these two letters postdate the composition of the C-sharp minor impromptu, they nonetheless establish a certain awareness of the contents of these albums on Chopin's part (even

[24] See Christophe Grabowski and John Rink, *Annotated Catalogue of Chopin's First Editions* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
[25] Frédéric Chopin, Bronislaw Edward Sydow, and Arthur Hedley, *Selected Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin*, ed. Arthur Hedley (New York: McGraw-Hill Book, 1963), 112. This particular album also contained works by Thalberg, Döhler, Liszt, Méreaux, and Osborne.
[26] Frédéric Chopin, letter to Maurice Schlesinger, 22 July 1843.

if that awareness seems to be coupled with irritation). Arthur Hedley even claims that Chopin sent this particular album containing Chopin's nocturnes and Moscheles's impromptu to his sister Ludwika at the beginning of 1834 (Hedley does not cite his source here, and I have been unable to verify his assertion).[27] Given Chopin's apparent interest in the contents of these albums and the possibility that Chopin may have sent a copy of this particular album to his sister, it is entirely possible that Chopin may have discovered Moscheles'simpromptu quite soon after it was published at the end of 1833, giving him ample time to consider its form and materials.

## A Precedent for Pastiche in Chopin's Oeuvre

Chopin's work on the C-sharp minor impromptu in 1834 does not mark the first time he had composed a pastiche. As noted in Alan Walker's recent biography of Chopin, the *Lento con gran espressione* of 1830 is a kind of self-pastiche, quoting several themes from the Concerto in F minor, Op. 21 along with a fragment from one of Chopin's songs for voice and piano.[28] Some of the techniques deployed in the *Lento* prefigure those Chopin will use in the impromptu.

Even the form of the *Lento* has a correspondence to the concerto; it is a scaled-down version of the structure of the *Larghetto*. Both are in a ternary form preceded by a short introduction, and the first A section has a written-out repeat (with some variation) but the reprise does not. The only large structural discrepancy occurs at the end: the slow movement of the concerto concludes with a return to the material of the introduction, while the *Larghetto* has a codetta of new music drawn from the materials of the outer sections. All of the quotations noted by Alan Walker are found in the middle section of the piece; in fact, the middle section is

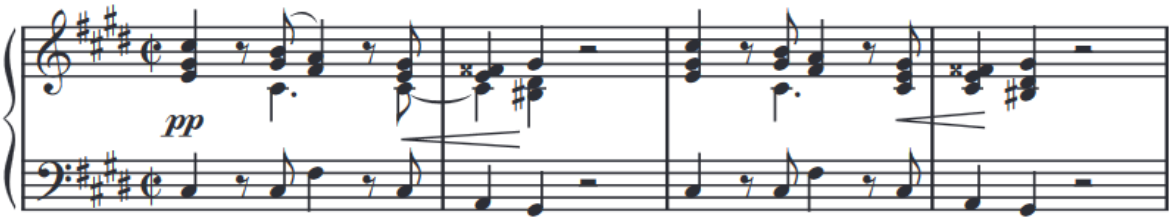
[27] Hedley, *Chopin*, 155.
[28] Alan Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin : A Life and Times* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 195-198.

constructed entirely from disparate quotations stitched together. But the introduction, outer sections, and codetta contain their own more subtle allusions to the source material as well.

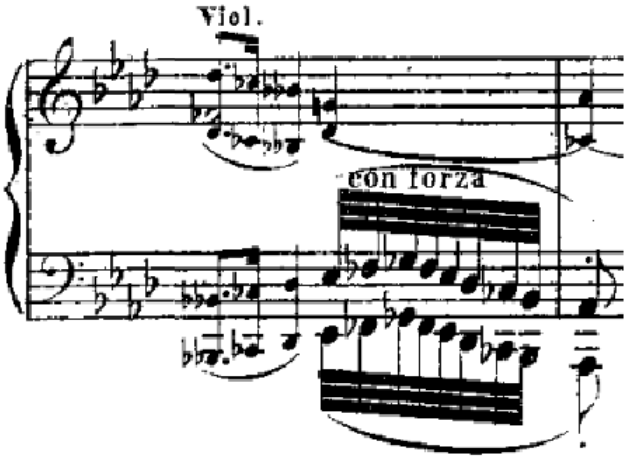
The function and largely homophonic texture of the introduction (mm. 1-4) correspond to the orchestral introduction of the concerto's slow movement, but its pitch material is a recollection and reharmonization of the orchestral interjections that precede the central recitative of that same movement. Though written differently, the pitches are enharmonically equivalent. The characteristic rhythmic profile of the first three pitches is preserved, though in augmentation (Ex. 2).

**Example 2. Comparison of the *Lento*'s introduction and a passage from the concerto**

a) Chopin, *Lento con gran espressione*, WN 37, mm. 1-4.




b) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/ii, mm. 42.2-45.1.

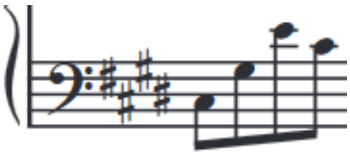


The nocturne-like theme that follows this introduction shares several features with the corresponding theme in the *Larghetto* of the concerto. The general musical topic is quite similar, even if the character is different: it is a delicate cantilena that unfolds over a steady accompaniment in eighth notes. As Chopin seems to have considered the *Lento* a preparatory study for a pianist wishing to tackle the concerto,[29] it is unsurprising that the accompaniment of the *Lento* is a sort of simplification of that in the concerto's slow movement (Ex. 3). The level of difficulty is reduced by compressing the range of the figure, removing the need to find the low basses after a leap, and by deleting the chord on the third eighth. Yet many of the essential features are retained: after the tonic is sounded, there is an ascent to the fifth, followed by another ascent which provides the third of the chord, itself followed by a descent. The precise figuration that Chopin uses as the accompaniment can also be found in the arpeggio that both marks the piano's entrance in the *Larghetto* of the concerto and then later concludes the movement (Ex. 3c). This arpeggio will be referred to again later in the *Lento*.

[29] The manuscript was sent to his sister Ludwika with the note, "For my sister Ludwika to play before she begins to practice my second concerto. See Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin,* 195.

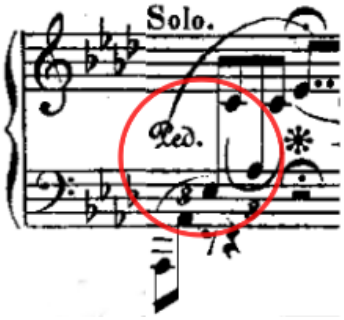
**Example 3. Arpeggio figure in the *Lento* and the concerto.**

a) Chopin, *Lento con gran espressione*, WN 37, m. 5 LH.



b) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/ii, m. 7 LH.


c) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/ii m. 6.

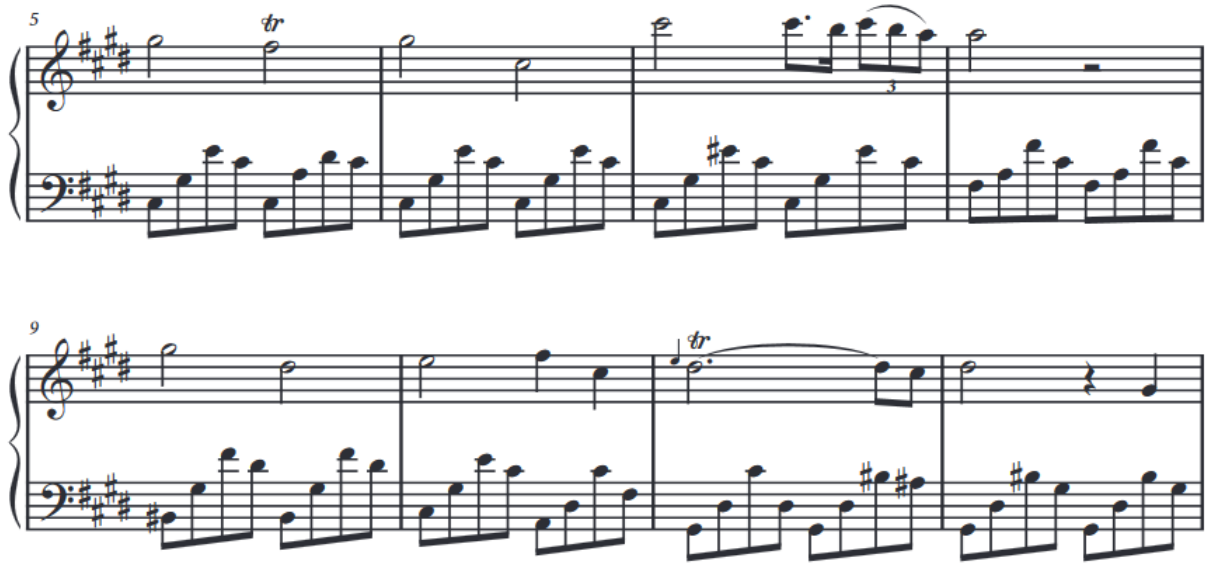



The melody that unfolds over this accompaniment also shares features with the corresponding material in the concerto (Ex. 4). Both commence with a half note on the fifth scale degree, followed by a trill involving the same note (in the concerto the fifth degree is the main note of the trill, in the *Lento* it is the auxiliary). In the second measure, the melody falls to the first degree of the scale. The end of the third measure into the beginning of the fourth shares the same melodic design, accompanied by a tonicization of the pre-dominant. Though there is no particularly close correspondence between the next four bars of each theme, they will both

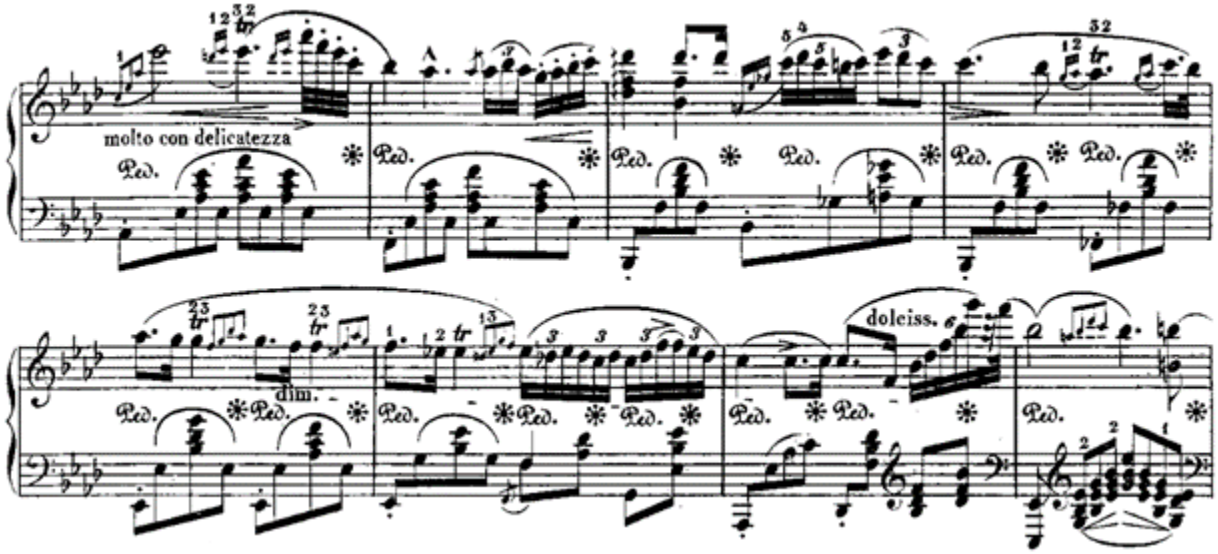
conclude with a half cadence where the melody rests on the second degree of the scale. When repeated, both themes are decorated more ornately—in both works, the second and third iterations of the theme more closely resemble one another than the first iteration. Like the accompaniment, the adaptation of the melody involves a fair degree of simplification; the ornamentation is far less busy, and does not require the same degree of physical elasticity or control.

**Example 4. Comparison of themes from the *Lento* and the concerto's slow movement**

a) Chopin, *Lento con gran espressione*, WN 37, mm. 5-12.



b) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/ii, mm. 7-14.

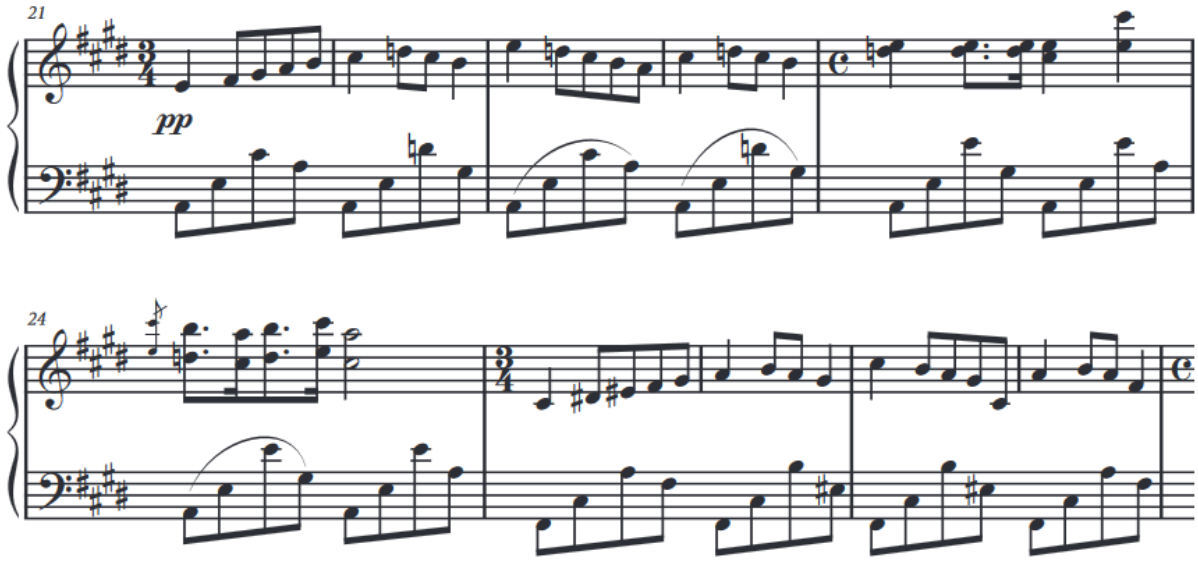


At the end of the opening section, the left-hand accompaniment leads seamlessly into the middle section, where its arpeggiated eighth note accompaniment continues (Ex. 5). In the right hand, however, there is a quotation of the first theme from the finale of the concerto, transposed from its original F minor to A major. In the 1830 autograph, this melody is written in the 3/4 time of the concerto, with two bars of 3/4 in the right hand taking up the space of one bar of 4/4 in the left.[30] Chopin would later simplify this passage to fit the right hand into 4/4. Alan Walker notes that this is "a pioneering example of bi-metrical notation, rare in 1830, and a harbinger of the important role that cross-rhythms were to play in Chopin's later works."[31] Immediately following this quotation from the finale, Chopin switches the right hand back to 4/4 and introduces a fragment of the second subject from the concerto's first movement. There, these bars were in B-flat minor, but they are now heard in A major. This sequence of quotations is then repeated, but following a different key scheme: the finale theme is heard in F-sharp minor (just a half-step away from the original, although the melody is heard one octave lower) and the fragment from the first movement is heard in C-sharp minor.

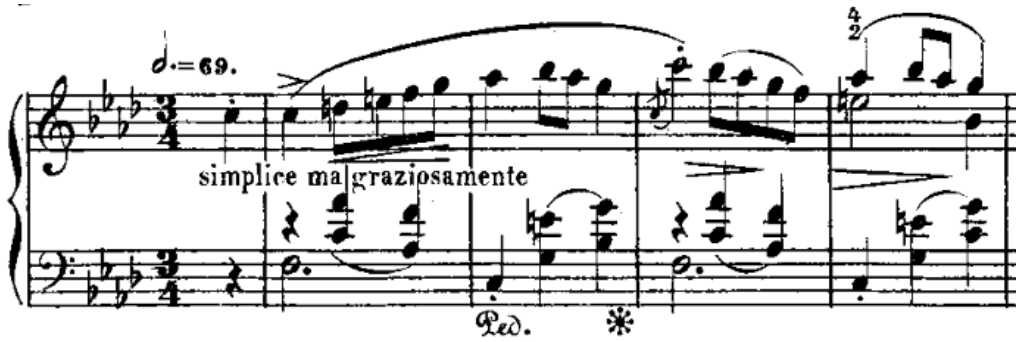
[30] Measure numbers in the examples follow the left-hand barring.
[31] Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 196.

**Example 5. Direct quotations of the concerto**

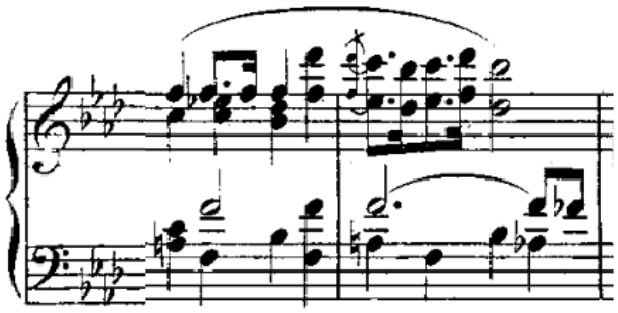
a) Chopin, *Lento con gran espressione*, WN 37, mm. 21-28.




b) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/iii, m. 1-4.



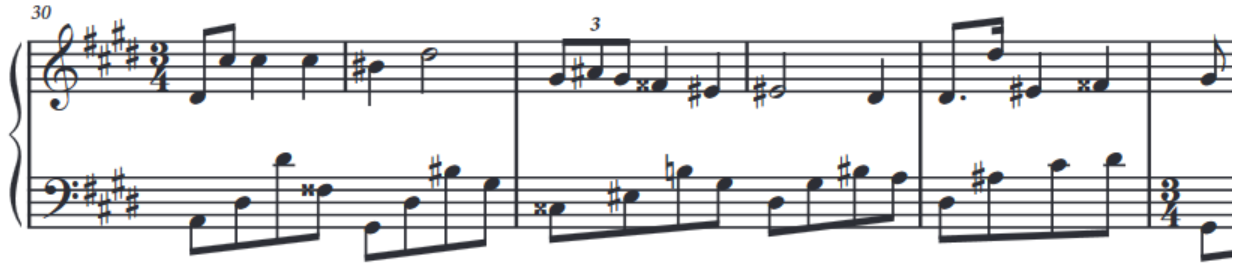

c) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/i, m. 41-42.



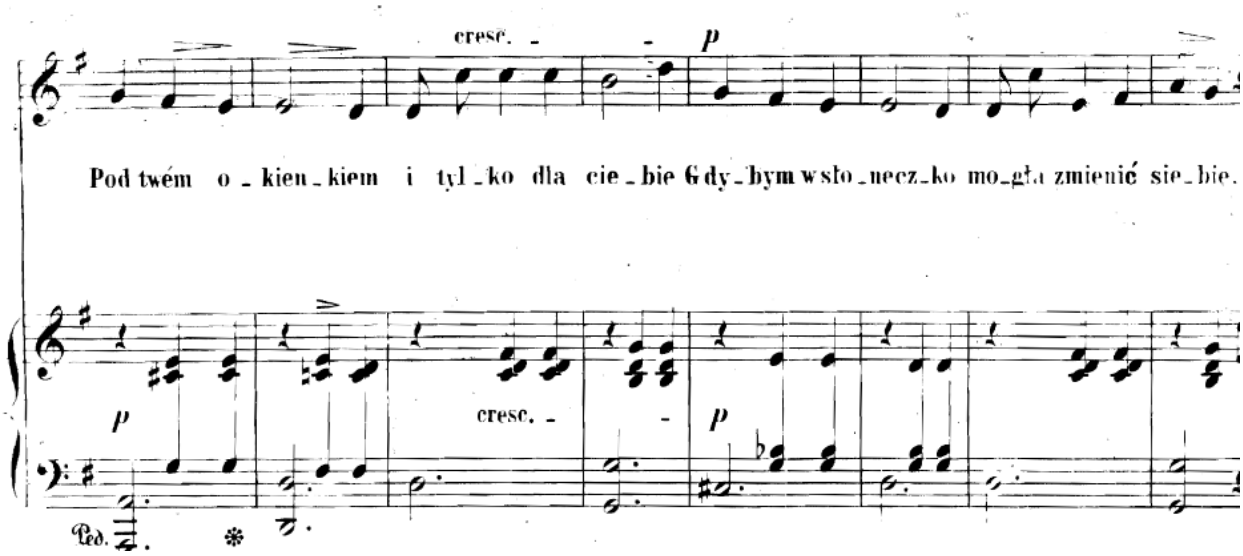
Next, after another bar of unified 4/4 presents the consequent, the right hand yet again switches to 3/4, but not to make another quotation from the finale of the concerto. Instead, there appears a quotation from Chopin's setting of Stefan Witwicki's poem "Życzenie" (Ex. 6). The song was originally in G major, but appears here in G-sharp. As with the last appearance of the theme from the finale of the concerto, which was originally in F minor and was quoted in F-sharp minor, the notes appearing on the staff are not changed, but only the key signature.

**Example 6. Direct quotation of "Życzenie"**

a) Chopin, *Lento con gran espressione*, WN 37, mm. 30-33.1.




b) Chopin "Życzenie," Op. 74/1, mm. 9-16.



The first two bars of the song's melody, which would have fit into the preceding bar of 4/4, are lopped off, and the thread of the song is taken up *in media res*. This sudden jump to the song quotation underscores the unexpectedness of the source material; every other reference so far has been to some part of the concerto. The inclusion of the song allows Chopin to implicitly encode some text into the piece; if the melody of "Życzenie" is recognized, the informed listener can supply the words:

> If I were the sun in the sky,
> I wouldn't shine, except for you—
> Not over waters or woods,
> But for all time
> Beneath your dear window, and only for you.
> If I could change myself into the sun.
>
> If I were a little bird from that grove,
> I wouldn't sing in any alien land—
> Not over waters or woods,
> But for all time
> Beneath your dear window and only for you.
> Oh, why can't I change myself into a little bird?[32]

The choice of this particular text certainly fits the situation; Chopin sent the manuscript of the *Lento* to his sister from Vienna, where he may have been experiencing some early pangs of homesickness. The narrator of the text declares that they would only sing for the person they are addressing; the key to unlocking this hidden text would only be available to those capable of recognizing the reference to an unpublished song, as Ludwika was. But Chopin also draws a musical connection between the material of "Życzenie" and that of the concerto. The end of the song quotation is followed immediately by a four-note motto (Ex. 7), which references the solo pianist's first entrance in the development of the first movement of the concerto (mm. 319-20).

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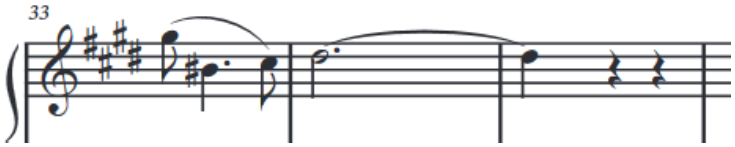
[32] Susannah Howe, liner notes for Frédéric Chopin, *Complete Songs,* Olga Pasichnyk and Natalya Pasichnyk, recorded 21-23 December 2009, Naxos, 8.572499, 2010, streaming audio, accessed 17 October 2021, Naxos Music Library, 1.

As in the introduction, the pitches are the same but spelled enharmonically in sharps rather than flats. This material itself is a reference to the opening theme of the work (mm. 1ff, cf. mm. 74.3ff). The last four notes of the quotation of "Życzenie" have precisely the same contour of this motto from the concerto, and in a similar metrical orientation: a downward leap of a sixth is followed by two steps up, arriving at the final tone on the downbeat of a new measure.[33] After the sudden shift to the quotation of "Życzenie," this melodic comparison helps to bridge the apparent gap between the song and the concerto.

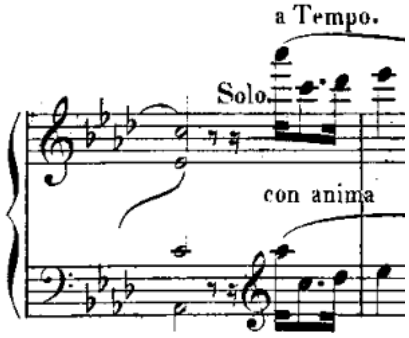
[33] Chopin does not quote himself verbatim here: in the original song, the final tone of this melodic fragment is decorated by an appoggiatura. The omission of this appoggiatura makes the similarity between Życzenie's melody and the motto from the concerto more readily apparent.

**Example 7. Quotation of a fragment of the concerto's first movement**

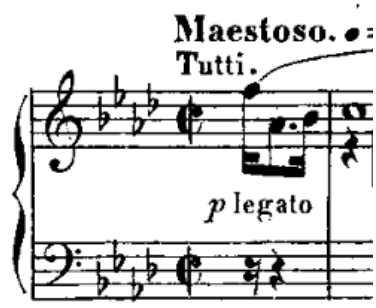
a) Chopin, *Lento con gran espressione*, WN 37, mm. 33-35 RH.




b) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/i, mm. 205-206.1.




c) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/i, m. 1.

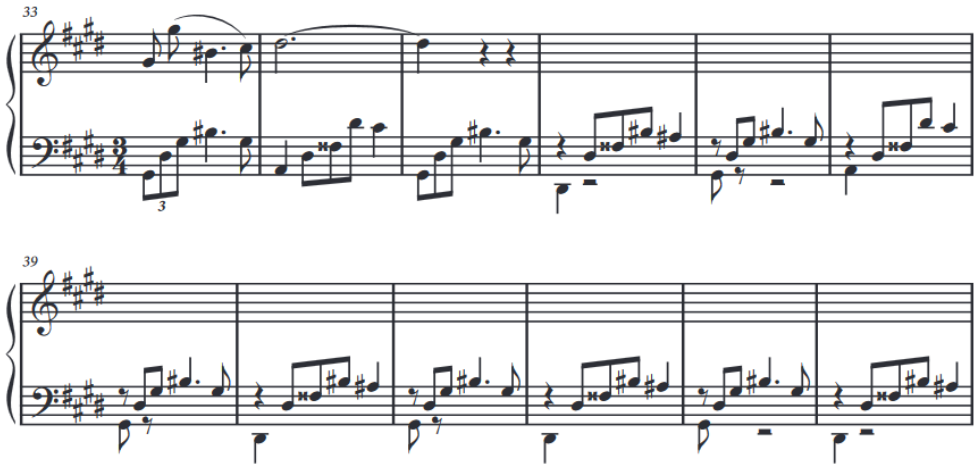



At the moment the final note of that four-note motto from the concerto is sounded in the right hand, the left abandons both its accompaniment pattern and its regular 4/4 meter, switching to 3/4 for another quotation from the finale of the concerto (Ex. 8). While this material is initially presented in A-flat major in the concerto and is written here starting on a G-sharp major harmony, the enharmonic counterpart of that key, this passage is an exact (but transposed)

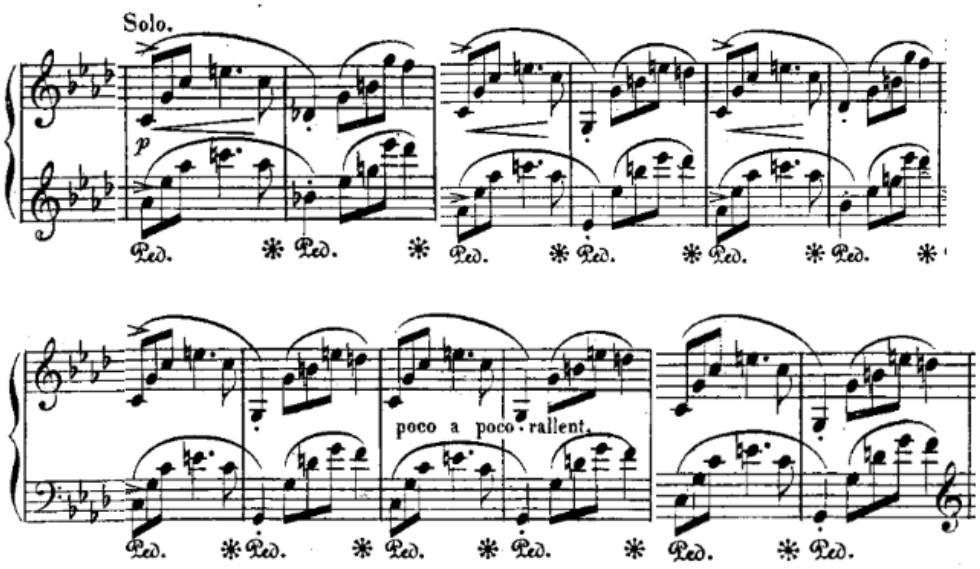
quotation of a later 12-bar passage in the middle section of the concerto movement that originally began on a C major harmony, which was itself a dominant preparation for the ensuing return of the rondo theme in F minor (mm. 293-304). Chopin likely chose this particular variation of the concerto material because of the French augmented sixth in the second bar; he had used the same harmony just a few bars earlier to slide into the quotation of “Życzenie."

**Example 8. Quotation of the concerto’s third movement**

a) Chopin, *Lento con gran espressione*, WN 37, mm. 33-44.



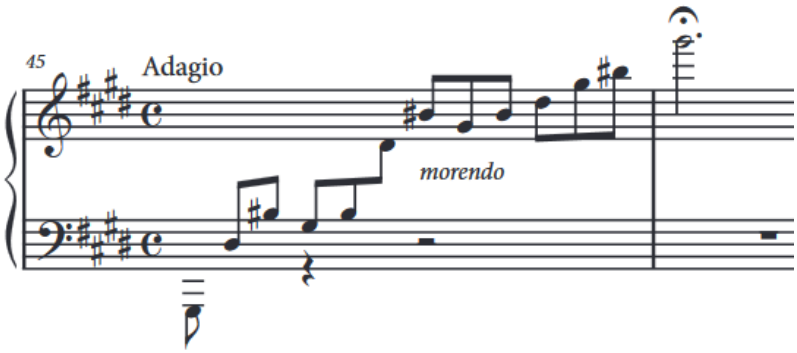

b) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/iii, mm. 293-304.



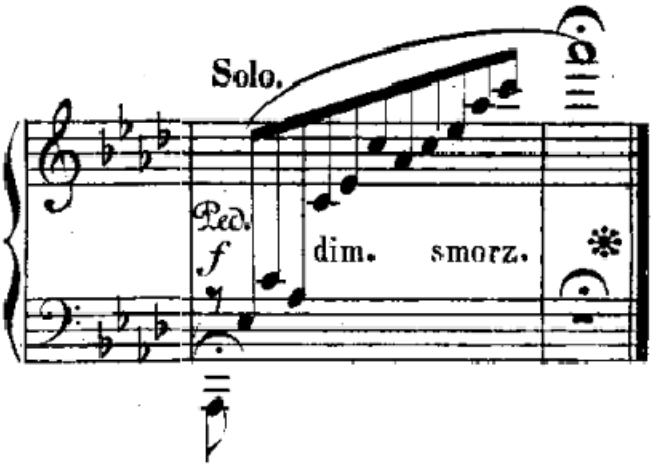
To conclude the middle section, Chopin quotes exactly and in its entirety the arpeggiated figure that he used to close the slow movement of the concerto (Ex. 9). The only change is in the spelling; like the preceding quotation of the concerto's finale, A-flat major has been respelled as G-sharp major. Once again, Chopin draws a connection between two seemingly disparate fragments by placing them side by side. The proximity of the idea from the middle section of the finale and this arpeggio from the slow movement allows us to notice that only the order of the third and fourth notes of the first figure need to be exchanged to yield the beginning of the second.

**Example 9. Quotation of the arpeggio that concludes the concerto's slow movement**

a) Chopin, *Lento con gran espressione*, WN 37, mm. 45-46.



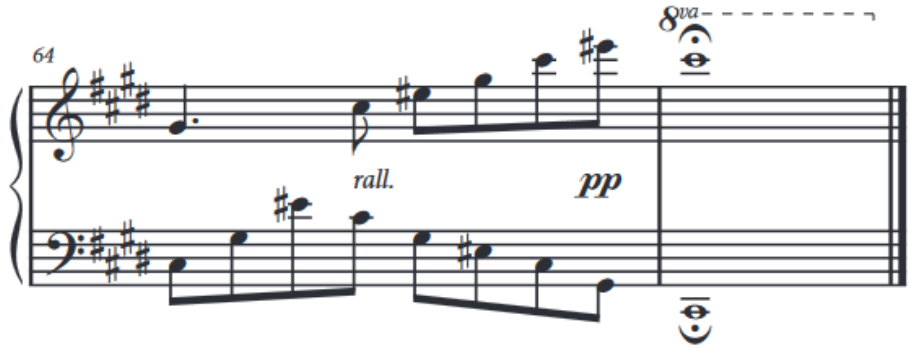

b) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/ii, mm. 96-97.



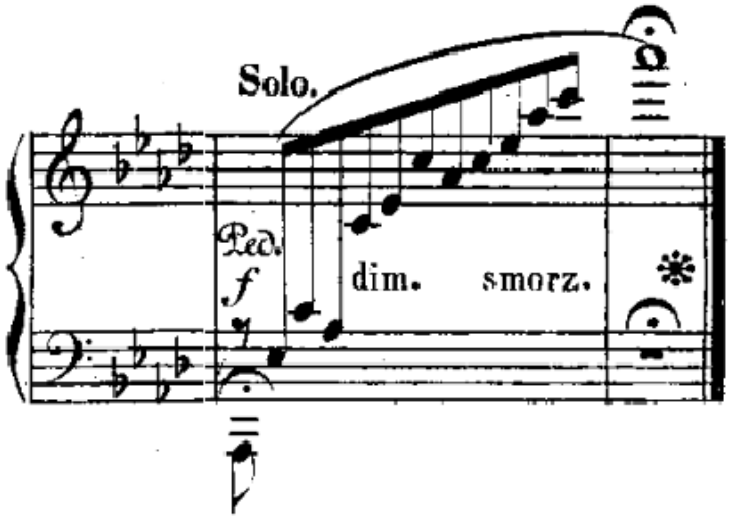
A-flat major is the tonic of the *Larghetto*, whereas G-sharp is the dominant of the *Lento*; Chopin's use of the same pitches carries changes of harmonic implication and formal function. What was an ending for the slow movement of the concerto is here intended to lead us back to C-sharp minor and a reprise of the theme first heard in m. 5. Following the reprise, a codetta begins in m. 58. The left hand maintains the constant eighth-note accompaniment, oscillating between the two harmonies sounded in the first measure of the main theme, while the right hand. Recalling again that Chopin considered the *Lento* a sort of preparatory study for the concerto, the delicate parabolic scales of the codetta offer an opportunity to work on the skills necessary to execute the many exquisitely ornate *fioriture* of the concerto's *Larghetto* movement. The C-sharp major arpeggio that concludes the piece recalls the concluding arpeggio of the *Larghetto*, which Chopin had quoted at the enharmonic equivalent of its original pitch level at the end of the middle section. Here it is transposed into the tonic major of the current harmonic environment, but also somewhat disguised. The left hand sounds the initial four-note segment before continuing to descend into the bass; the right hand sounds the final six-note segment of the figure. The transposition from A-flat/G-sharp to C-sharp ensures that those six notes taken with the right hand lie under the hand with precisely the same keyboard topography as the last six notes in the concerto movement (Ex. 10).

**Example 10. Adapation of the concluding arpeggio from the concerto's slow movement**

a) Chopin, *Lento con gran espressione*, WN 37, mm. 64-65.




b) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/ii, mm. 96-97.




Many of the features just described can be observed in the C-sharp minor impromptu. The basic formal outline (a ternary form preceded by a brief introduction and followed by a coda), the use of literal quotation alongside more veiled allusions, the presentation of material at both the original pitch level (though sometimes respelled enharmonically) and in transposition, the polymetrical superimposition of two quotations/allusions, and a reference to a seemingly incongruous piece of music will all be present as features of Chopin's later return to the pastiche. Another of Alan Walker's observations points out a final significant similarity between the *Lento*

*con gran espressione* and the C-sharp minor impromptu. Walker writes that "We do well to remember that Chopin's 'reminiscences' all came from compositions as yet unpublished, which turned the *Lento con gran espressione* into an essentially private matter, intended first for Ludwika and then for those within Chopin's inner circle, the only people who might be expected to recognize the quotations."[34] Both pieces were carefully worked out and completed but not published by Chopin—both were instead presented in autographs to individuals. The differences lie in the nature of the quotations and the individual to whom the music was given. The *Lento* contains several unmistakable quotations amongst other subtler references and was given to Chopin's sister, who knew him intimately—we can thus be reasonably sure that she understood the references. The case of the impromptu is not so clear cut. One cannot help but wonder if its eventual dedicatee, the Baroness Sarah d'Este, might have been aware (or been made aware by Chopin) that the impromptu was a pastiche of Moscheles works, especially as most of the references are far subtler than the quotations in the *Lento*. One small piece of evidence advances the possibility that Chopin may have found the baroness to be a suitably informed recipient for the autograph of the impromptu—her personal album in which Chopin carefully inscribed the impromptu contains, among many other entries from various celebrated musicians and artists, a *"Petite Esquisse écrite pour Madame d'Este par I. Moscheles."* Whether or not the dedicatee of the piece understood the nature of it, the fact that the impromptu remained unpublished, coupled with the observations noted in the first section of this chapter that restrict Chopin's deployment of his imitative talents to select company, suggests that the impromptu, like the *Lento*, was never intended for the wider public.

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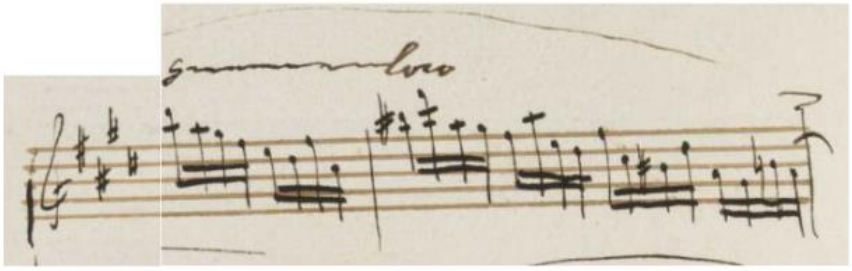
[34] Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 197.

## Why the Quotation of Beethoven?

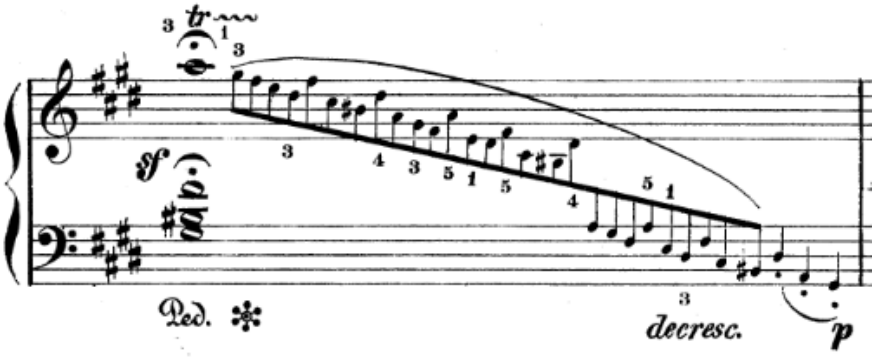
It was noted in the previous section that in the *Lento con gran espressione*, Chopin combines allusions to disparate sources in a single phrase, moving from a quotation of material from the third movement of his F minor concerto to one of material from the first movement of the same piece to one of his song *Życzenie*. Something similar occurs in the main idea of the C-sharp minor impromptu: in the middle of what seems to be a gloss on Moscheles's *Impromptu, Op. 89*, as will be discussed in the following chapter, there is a fragment of music that is unmistakably lifted from the final movement of Beethoven's *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2 (Ex. 11).

**Example 11. Chopin's quotation of Beethoven's *Sonata quasia una fantasia,* Op. 27/2**

a) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 7.3-8, RH



b) Ludwig van Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/iii, m. 187.




Chopin has simply raised the passage one octave (the two extra notes at the beginning of Chopin's run are the two notes of Beethoven's preceding trill) and imbued what was an

improvisatory *Eingang* with a regular rhythm. This quotation challenges the paradigm of the present study: if this work is indeed a pastiche of Moscheles, then why is the most direct and identifiable allusion—all others having been modified in some way, sometimes considerably, while this one is nearly verbatim—related to the music of Beethoven rather than of Moscheles?

In 1947, Ernst Oster, a pupil of Heinrich Schenker, published an article in which he argued that the C-sharp minor impromptu is entirely based upon Beethoven's sonata.[35] Oster's exploration of the connections between Chopin's impromptu and Beethoven's sonata is illuminating, but his analysis is circumscribed by omitting Moscheles's works from consideration; Moscheles is not mentioned once in the article. The lack of awareness is excusable, given that Arthur Hedley's biography of Chopin, appearing in print the same year as Oster's article, seems to be the earliest print source to connect Chopin's impromptu with the music of Moscheles. Understandable though Oster's neglect of Moscheles may be, the correspondences between Moscheles's works and Chopin's impromptu are too significant to be ignored. But neither can Oster's observations themselves be ignored; therefore, an analytical paradigm in which the influence of both Moscheles and Beethoven can be accounted for is essential.

In the preface to his 1858 edition of Beethoven's complete piano sonatas, Moscheles writes, "my soul has always been filled with Beethoven."[36] Mark Kroll's biography of Moscheles devotes an entire (quite lengthy) chapter to Moscheles's relationship with Beethoven and his music, noting that "the figure of Beethoven loomed large throughout Moscheles'slife. He

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[35] Ernst Oster, "Appendix: The Fantaisie-Impromptu: A Tribute to Beethoven," in *Aspects of Schenkerian Theory*, ed. David Beach (Yale University Press, 1983), 189-208.
[36] "J'ai toujours l'âme remplie de Beethoven." Ludwig van Beethoven, *Sämmtliche Sonaten für Pianoforte,* ed. Ignaz Moscheles (Stuttgart: Eduard Hallberger, 1858), 1.

revered the composer and his music from the time he was a boy until his final days at the age of seventy-five, long after Beethoven himself had died."[37] As a child, Moscheles had secretly copied out the score of Beethoven's *Sonate pathétique*, as he was neither able to afford the published edition nor allowed by his teacher Bedřich Diviš Weber to study Beethoven's music.[38] Many years later, after moving to Vienna where he would meet and maintain a cordial relationship with his idol, Moscheles became involved in the publication of one of Beethoven's works when Beethoven entrusted him with the task of preparing the vocal score of his opera, *Fidelio*.[39] In 1827, Moscheles, now living in London, would raise a significant sum to support the ailing Beethoven.[40] After Beethoven's death, Moscheles would advance Beethoven's legacy in several ways. First, he would publish his own editions of Beethoven's complete sonatas (a significant task to which he devoted himself not once but twice, seemingly feeling that his editorial hand had been too heavy in his first edition of the 1830's, a fault he tried to correct in the later 1858 edition). Second, he would translate (and edit, sometimes significantly) Schindler's biography of Beethoven into English. Finally, he would frequently present Beethoven's music in performance, both from the conductor's podium as well as from the piano bench. Chopin attended one of these concerts, some three years after the composition of the C-sharp minor impromptu, during a trip to England with Camille Pleyel. There, in July 1837, they heard a Beethoven memorial concert in which Moscheles directed the Ninth Symphony and played the "Emperor" concerto.[41]

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[37] Mark Kroll, *Ignaz Moscheles and the Changing World of Musical Europe* (Boydell and Brewer, 2014), 200.
[38] Idem, 3.
[39] Idem, 201-202.
[40] Idem, 205.
[41] Iwo and Pamela Załuski, "Chopin in London." *The Musical Time*s 133, no. 1791 (1992): 226.

A seemingly insignificant detail concerning Moscheles's public performances of Beethoven reveals a specific musical connection between a sonata of Moscheles and one of Beethoven, a connection that Chopin identifies in his C-sharp minor impromptu. Moscheles himself applied the Italian title *"Sonata melanconica"* to Beethoven's Op. 27/2 in his concert programs, as per an advertisement in *The Musical World*, a designation to which the title of his own *"Sonate mélancolique,*" Op. 49, is the French equivalent. Though it is extremely unlikely that Chopin had attended one of Moscheles's concerts by the time he composed the C-sharp minor impromptu in 1834, it is not impossible to imagine a scenario in which Chopin, arriving in Paris less than a year after Moscheles had left the city, would have been curious to hear firsthand impressions of Moscheles from those who had heard him play. Perhaps one of his new Parisian friends had kept a program of the event, alerting Chopin to Moscheles's particular title for Beethoven's Op. 27/2. Another potential connection concerns Felix Mendelssohn, who met Chopin shortly after the latter arrived in Paris. Mendelssohn had briefly studied piano with Moscheles in 1824, and had then spent a period of several months with Moscheles in London in 1829 at the beginning of his grand tour of Europe. Might Mendelssohn have remembered hearing Moscheles refer to Op. 27/2 as "melancholy?"

But even if Chopin did not know that Moscheles himself referred to Beethoven's Op. 27/2 and his own Op. 49 by the same title, it is possible that the discerning Chopin—whose "caustic wit," was described by Liszt as probing far beyond the surface—may have picked up on some of the subtle musical allusions to Beethoven's work in the retransition of the Moscheles sonata, the presence of which suggests that Moscheles's adoption of the same title for Beethoven's Op. 27/2 and his own Op. 49 is more than mere coincidental recycling.

Moscheles was a lifelong devotee of Beethoven, and his *Sonate mélancolique* was written at a time marked by particularly deep immersion in Beethoven's music. It was published in 1820, Moscheles's final year in Vienna, during which he would give a public performance of Beethoven's *Choral Fantas*y, Op. 80. However, Moscheles's wife Charlotte notes that he had begun work on the *Sonate mélancolique* some six years earlier, in 1814:

> During the course of this year [1814], he also wrote…the theme of the *Sonate mélancolique*, which according to himself, as well as connoisseurs, is one of his best works. This theme occurred to him during a lesson he was giving to the Countess Haugwitz, and was worked out with particular delight, as several notes in his diary attest.[42]

1814 was the year in which Moscheles completed his piano reduction of *Fidelio*; thus the six-year long gestation of the *Sonate mélancolique* is bookended by two significant immersions in Beethoven's music, one to prepare *Fidelio* for publication and the other to prepare the *Choral Fantasy* for performance. It is thus unsurprising that Moscheles's sonata should bear some imprint of Beethoven's music. An examination of the score reveals a number of allusions to Beethoven's Op. 27/2. The first of these occurs in the passage beginning in m. 161 and corresponds to mm. 87-93 of the third movement of the Beethoven. Both occur at the same structural juncture, the arrival on the dominant at the end of the development. Salient shared features include a measured left-hand octave tremolo on the dominant and right-hand syncopes that start a chain of stepwise descending first-inversion triads (or in Moscheles's case, primarily first-inversion triads with minor exceptions—Ex. 12) Moscheles's second allusion to Beethoven immediately follows in mm. 169-172 and references the main idea of the first movement of Op.

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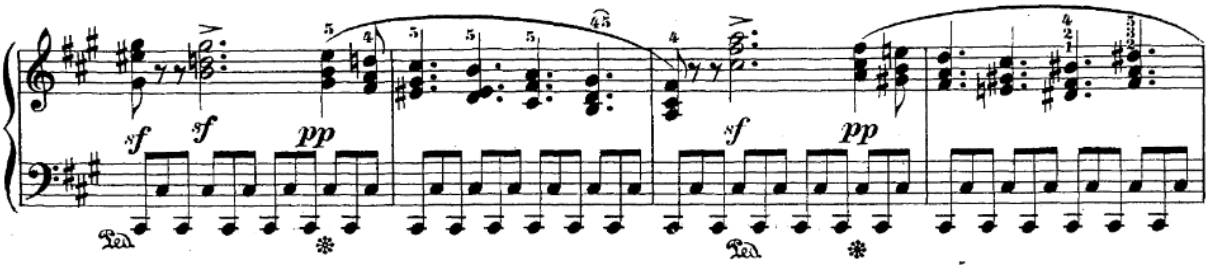
[42] "Ausserdem schreibt er im Laufe dieses Jahres…das Thema der Sonate Mélancolique, von ihm selbst, sowie von Kunstkennern als eines seiner besten Werke gennant. Dieses Theme steigt ihm in einer Lection auf, die er der Grafin Haugwitz giebt, und wird mit besonderer Lust verarbeitet, wie mehrere Notizen im Tagebuch besagen." Moscheles, *Aus Moscheles Leben,* 1:16.

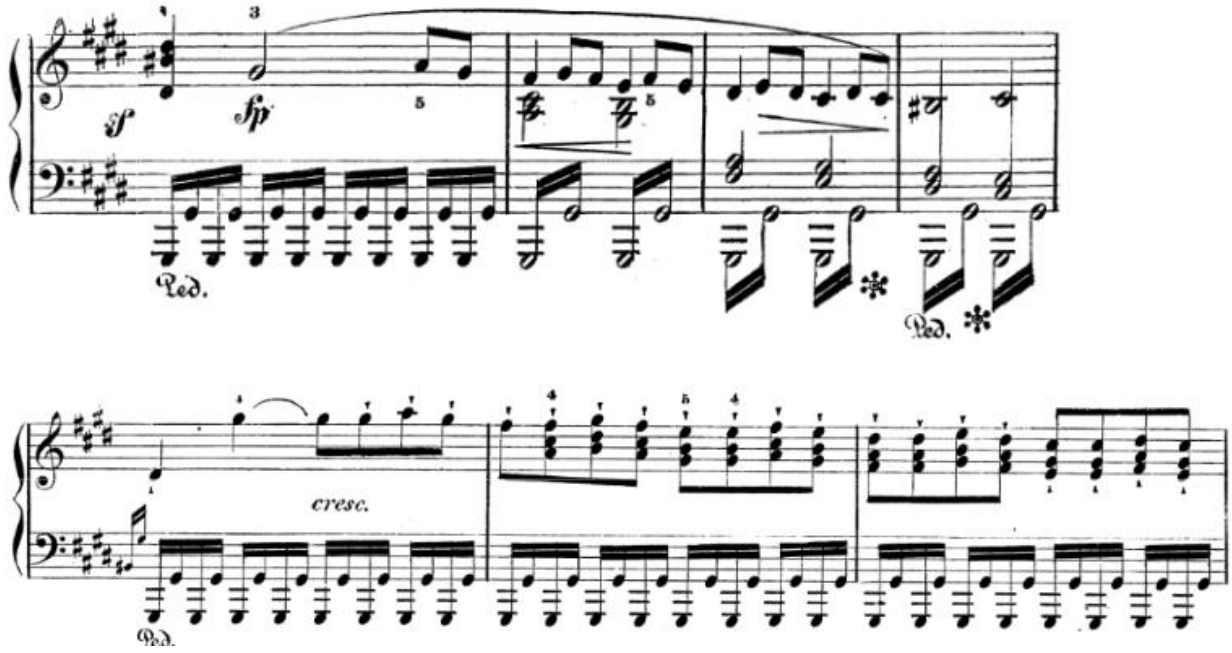
27/2, which first appears in m. 5; a later appearance matches Moscheles's pitch of C sharp in m. 23 (Ex. 13).

**Example 12. Moscheles's allusion to Beethoven's *Presto***

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 161-164.

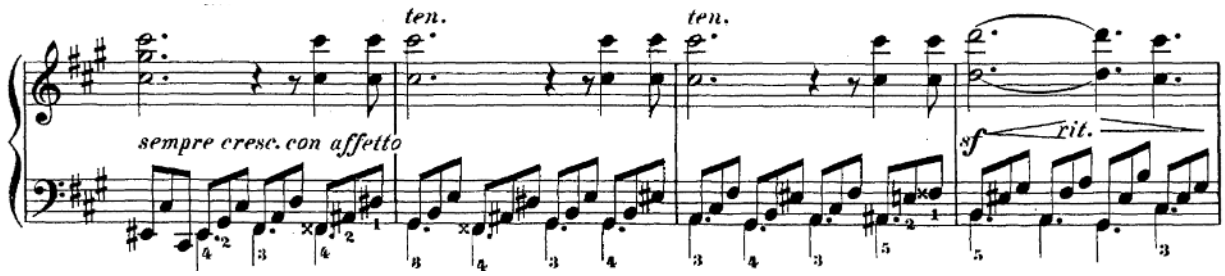



b) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/iii, mm. 87-93.

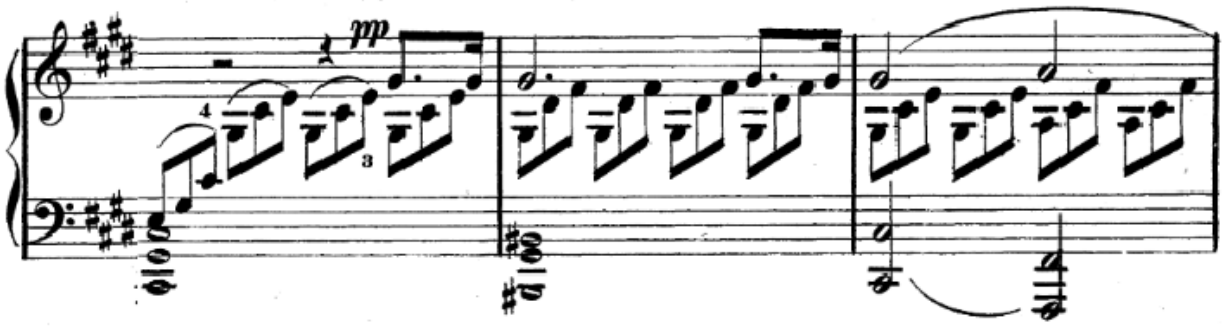


**Example 13. Moscheles's allusion to Beethoven's *Adagio***

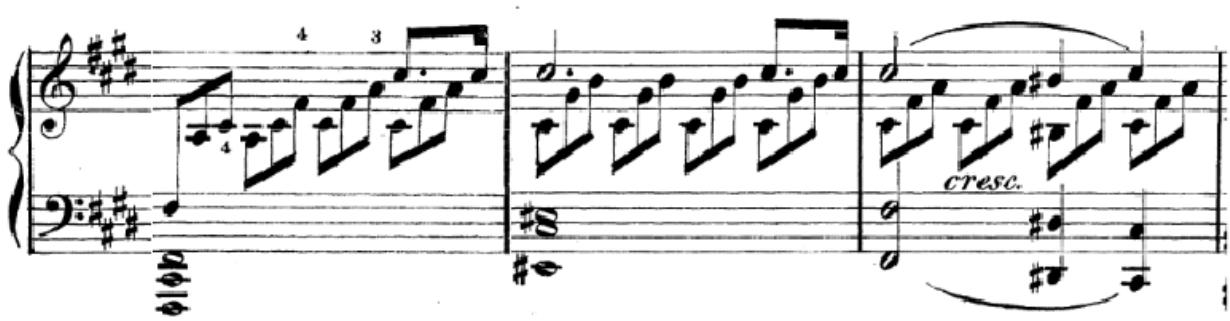
a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 169-172.




b) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/i, mm. 5-7.




c) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/i, mm. 23-25.

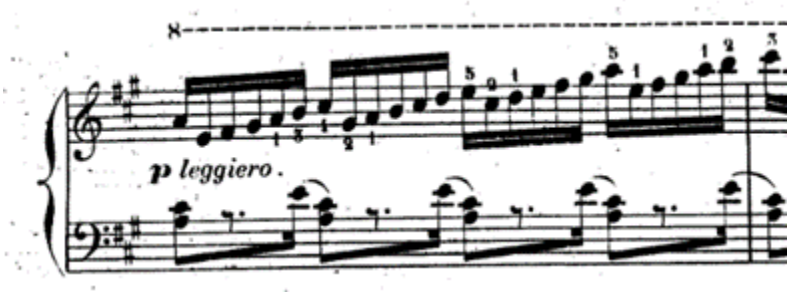



A further correspondence is found in Moscheles's mm. 80 and following. Many details of this passage call to mind mm. 33ff of the finale of Beethoven's sonata (Ex. 14). These passages consist of fleet 16th note passagework in the right hand, commencing with a particular six-note ascending scale fragment in A major (from e" to c-sharp"') and supported by regular interjections of a three-note A major chord in the left hand. Chopin, sensitive not only to the particular colors

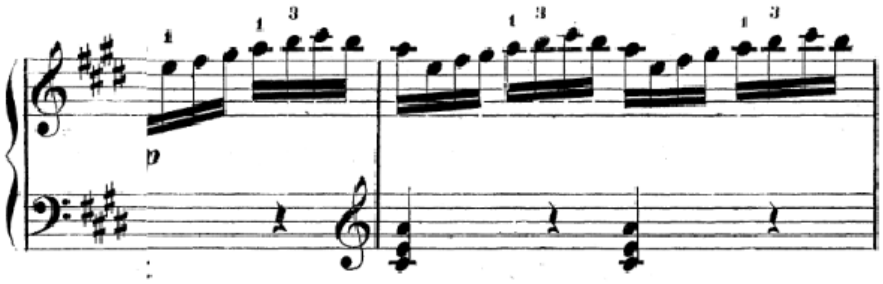
of the various registers of the 19th century piano but also to the feel of a figure under the hand, might well have been struck by these similarities. Both passages necessitate an atypical fingering for the aforementioned ascending scale fragment, given what follows. Moscheles himself used the same fingering in both passages, as evidenced by an early edition of his sonata and his own edition of Beethoven's (Ex. 14). Though it is unlikely that Chopin had seen Moscheles's fingering for the Beethoven (as Moscheles's edition had just been published that same year in England), it is certainly thinkable that Chopin's fingers would have fallen upon the same solution of their own accord.

**Example 14. Comparison of passagework in Moscheles and Beethoven's sonatas**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 80-81.1.




b) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/iii, mm. 33.3-34.



In the *Lento con gran espressione*, Chopin's inclusion of a fragment of "Życzenie," a setting of a text by a leading Polish poet in a characteristic mazurka idiom, acknowledges his self-perceived debt to Polish music and culture;[43] similarly, his inclusion of a fragment of Beethoven's music in his C-sharp minor impromptu acknowledges at second hand his awareness of Moscheles's musical debt to Beethoven. Beethoven's music was a powerful force in the life of Moscheles that left identifiable traces in his music, traces which are particularly evident in his *Sonate mélancolique*. Returning again to Liszt's observation that Chopin's wit often exposed things beneath the surface, it is entirely fitting that Chopin should reference some of Beethoven's music in his pastiche of Moscheles, in particular the music of Beethoven that he finds beneath the surface of Moscheles's music. Ernst Oster wrote that "one genius discloses to us—if only by means of a composition of his own—what he actually hears in the work of genius."[44] In light of the present study, this observation could be emended: "in the C-sharp minor impromptu, Chopin discloses to us what he actually hears in the music of Moscheles"—and the music of Beethoven is amongst the things he hears.

[43] See Mieczysław Tomaszewski, "Chopin's Inspiration from Polish Common Song," in *Chopin's Work : His Inspirations and Creative Process in the Light of the Sources : [Congress, Warszawa 2002],* ed. Artur Szklener (Warszawa: Narodowy Instytut Fryderika Chopina, 2003), 43-54.
[44] Oster, "The Fantaisie-Impromptu," 207.

# CHAPTER III: ANALYSIS

In this chapter, references and allusions to Moscheles's Impromptu, Op. 89 and *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49 as well as Beethoven's *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2 will be discussed in the order they appear in Chopin's Impromptu, Op. 66. The interactions and syntheses of these references and allusions will also be considered as they occur.Before undertaking a detailed study of the correspondences to be found between Chopin's impromptu and these pieces (and, indeed, correspondences between the source works themselves, which Chopin seems to have noticed), it ought to be noted that the larger structure of Chopin's impromptu is lifted from that of Moscheles. Both works are cast in a tripartite design whose outer sections, in a very fast tempo, are characterized by florid melodic figuration in sixteenth notes from the right hand, supported by a slower arpeggiated accompaniment in the left; the trio sections are distinguished by a reduction in tempo and a more lyrical character. The internal structures of Chopin's and Moscheles's outer sections are also quite similar—falling again into a sort of ternary design, comprising a statement, a central episode, and a restatement that flows seamlessly into a codetta—though the proportions of this internal structure are not quite the same. The basic idea is presented as an 8-bar period in both impromptus. There is then a central episode, which is 8-bars in Moscheles's piece and very easily could have been 8 in Chopin's; Chopin, however, adds an extra 4 bars, which comment on one of Moscheles's ideas which Chopin had drawn upon in the foregoing episode. There is then a partial reprise in which the 4-bar antecedent phrase of the opening period returns but is followed not by the original consequent, but by an ascending sequence which leads to a codetta. This final section takes up 24½ measures in Moscheles's impromptu; Chopin cuts and condenses his down to 16. It is worth noting that Moscheles achieves his final structural cadence on the tonic in the sixteenth measure

of this section; the following 8 measures just confirm the tonality of E-flat major. Chopin dispenses with this confirmation of the tonic, and in fact elides his final cadence with the beginning of the trio. These eight bars—apparently superfluous, to Chopin—have been lopped off, but a particular interplay of different motives contained therein is subsumed by Chopin into his leaner 16-bar closing.

The ungainly length of Moscheles's final part of the outer sections is compounded by the fact that he treats these outer sections like a particular sort of 18th century binary-sonata form (with a first half that arrives on the dominant, and a second half, typically somewhat longer and beginning with a proto-development, that works its way back to the tonic) by dividing the first main section in half, and writing out repeats of each subsection. But the first section—which, having achieved the harmonic goal of the dominant, must stand for the entire first half of the binary form—is only 8 bars, while the central episode (akin to the proto-development of the 18th century sonata) and final reprise-codetta section together are 32½ measures. These written out repeats are removed from the reprise which follows the trio, but the result of their inclusion at the beginning of the piece is a first A section that feels bloated, poorly proportioned, and quite repetitive. Chopin's decision to dispense with these internal repeats, as well as the shortening of the final part of the outer sections, can be taken as a sort of critical commentary.

There are some traces of the other source pieces, the two sonatas, in the general disposition of Chopin's impromptu. The single-movement ternary form that was taken from Moscheles's impromptu is married with the key scheme (C-sharp minor—D-flat major—C-sharp minor) of Beethoven's three-movement sonata. Chopin amalgamates the tempo and character markings from Moscheles's and Beethoven's sonatas to arrive at his own: Moscheles's sonata is

marked *Allegro con passione* and Beethoven's third movement is marked *Presto agitato*; Chopin marks his impromptu *Allegro agitato*.

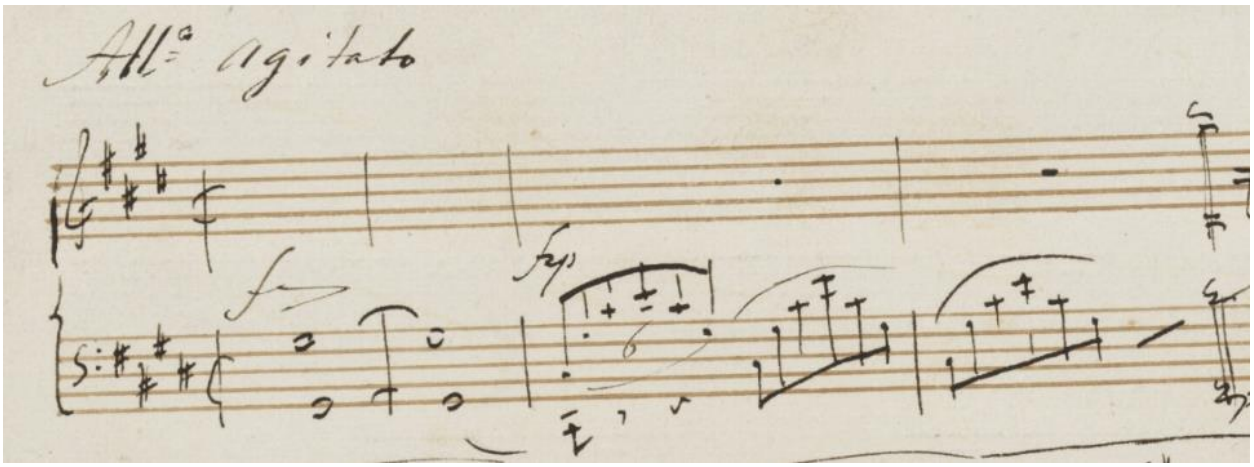
Having considered the general disposition of Chopin's structure and how it relates to his source material—especially the structure of Moscheles's impromptu—let us now turn our attention to cataloguing and examining the many allusions to the music of Moscheles and Beethoven that abound within this structure.

**The Introduction, mm. 1-4**

The very first event of Op. 66 is unusual; the empty octave G-sharp–g-sharp is struck, *forte*, and held for two bars (Ex. 15). Chopin visually instructs the performer to listen to the decay of this sound with a closing hairpin.[45] We then have what could very well have served as an introduction by itself: two measures of the left hand accompaniment—itself beginning in the d'Este autograph with a sudden *fzp*—undulate before the main idea is introduced in m. 5; consider, for example, the Op. 27 nocturnes, each of which begins with several iterations of the accompaniment before the melody enters.[46]

[45] The mark in the d'Este autograph could easily be considered a long accent rather than a diminuendo hairpin, though both markings indicate a certain heightened engagement with the piano's natural and inevitable decay of sound. The placement of this sign, even one takes it to be a long accent, should not go unnoticed: instead of stacking the two signs vertically—as Chopin does, for example, in m. 8 of the first movement of the Op. 58 sonata—the accent/hairpin follows the *forte* dynamic marking, suggesting a linear process. The situation is less ambiguous in the earlier version of the piece: all copies transmit what is clearly a hairpin, stretching through the second measure.
[46] It is striking that this pair, in C-sharp minor and D-flat major, are the only two of the published nocturnes to commence so, when both sections of the impromptu begin with the left hand spinning out the accompaniment before the entrance of the right hand.

**Example 15. Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 1-4.**

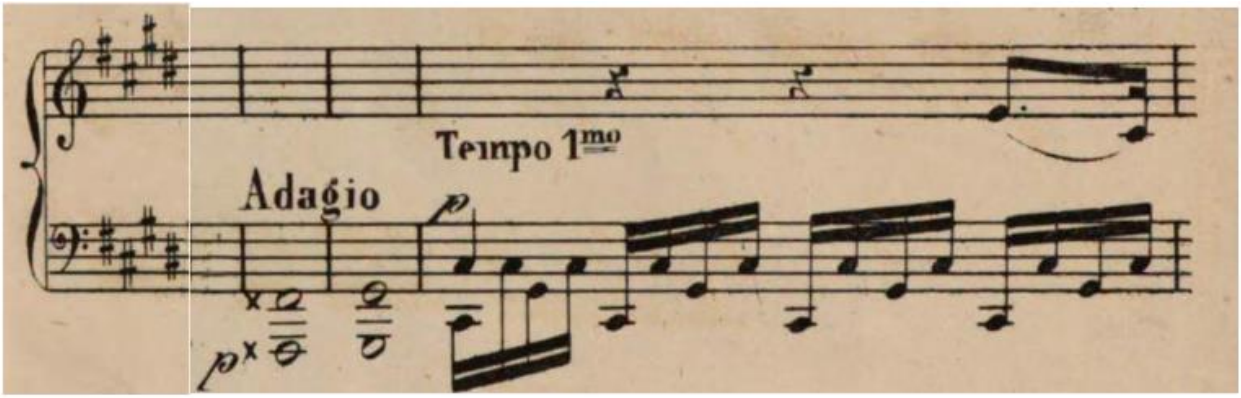



The reason for the inclusion of the empty octave before the repetition of the accompanimental figuration is that Chopin takes as a model for his introduction a brief transitional passage from the finale of Beethoven's sonata. This passage features two distinct elements that Chopin will make use of. The first of these elements—the low, unharmonized, sustained octave—Chopin transforms to highlight a common idea shared by Moscheles's impromptu and the third movement of Op. 27/2; the second—the severalfold repetition of a left hand accompaniment while the right hand remains silent—he transforms by synthesizing the openings of Moscheles's and Beethoven's sonatas.

The generating idea from which Chopin's introduction gets its rather particular form is found in mm. 188-190 in Beethoven's finale; like nearly all the other references to the third movement that Chopin will make, it is on the final page of all editions available at the time. Two whole notes of empty octaves in the lower stave are followed by an accompanimental ostinato on C-sharp, which repeats several times before the right hand enters (Ex. 16). Beethoven's whole notes are on different pitches: F-double-sharp and G-sharp, whereas Chopin has simply tied together two G-sharps. The change is partially due to context; Beethoven is in the middle of a dominant prolongation, while this is the very first pitch class for Chopin. Though Chopin

occasionally starts a piece with an unharmonized bass which we eventually understand to be neither the tonic nor the dominant (e.g. the Ballade, Op. 23, or Nocturne Op. 62/1), he never begins a piece in this way on the raised fourth scale degree.[47] But beginning with a single sounding of the fifth scale degree and marking *f* where Beethoven had given *p* also allows Chopin to point out a rhetorical gesture shared by Moscheles's impromptu and the finale of Beethoven's sonata.

**Example 16. Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/iii, mm. 188-190.**



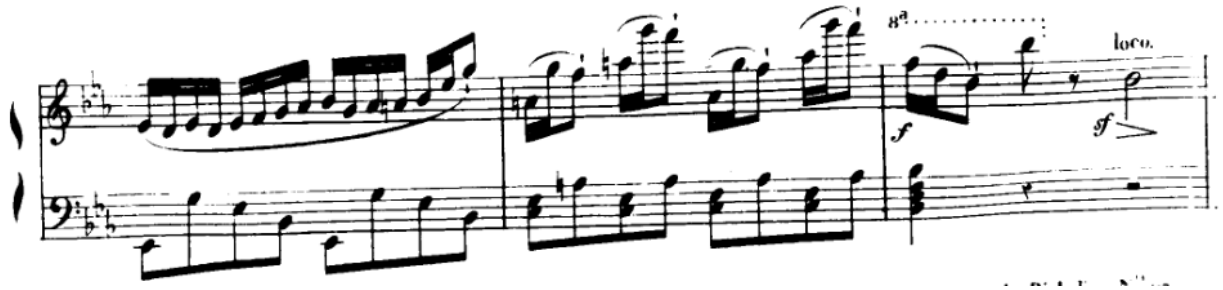

The opening phrases of both Moscheles's impromptu and Beethoven's finale are, after an arrival on the dominant, punctuated by a break in the texture where the swift, as yet unceasing motion in 16th and occasionally 8th notes is interrupted by a *sf* half note[48] on the unharmonized fifth scale degree, reached by a sudden downward leap of two octaves (Ex. 17). Moscheles gives the single pitch b-flat' in the right hand; Beethoven strengthens his right hand g-sharp with an octave in the left hand and gets there one beat earlier than Moscheles. Both interruptions are followed by a resumption of the opening material. While one can easily follow how Chopin's

[47] The Mazurka in C-sharp minor, Op. 30/4 does begin on the note F-double sharp, but it has a harmonic context supplied by other voices, and is in the treble, not the bass.
[48] In Moscheles, the *sf* is followed by a hairpin, just as Chopin would mark his introductory sonority. In Beethoven, the half note is dotted and marked with a fermata.

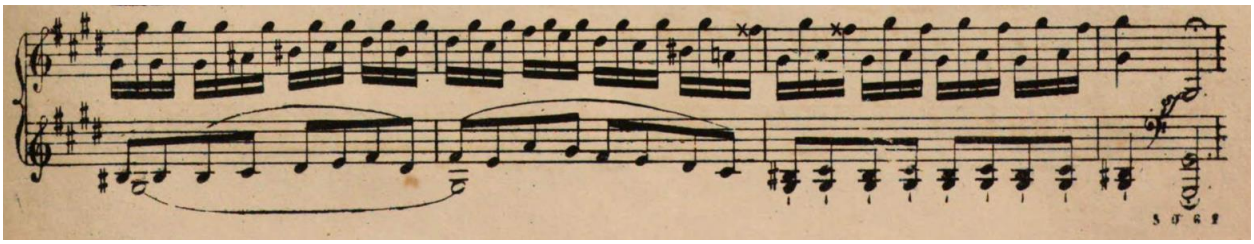
interest in the empty octaves of mm. 188-189 of Beethoven's finale might have led him to examine Beethoven's earlier use of an empty octave of the same note, and how this in turn might have led him to consider the similar rhetorical use of a similar musical object in Moscheles's impromptu, Chopin's removal of that object from its musical context is a significant decision. He transforms what was a kind of emphasized grammatical conjunction between the first phrase and the following music in Beethoven's finale and Moscheles's impromptu into the first sound of his impromptu, necessarily devoid of context.

**Example 17. *Sforzando* half notes as punctuation in Moscheles and Beethoven**

a) Moscheles, Impromptu in E-flat major, Op. 89, mm. 18-20.




b) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/iii, mm. 11-14.



This alteration of function is in fact an essential part of Chopin's introduction; the passage from which Chopin borrowed its framework, mm. 188-190 of Beethoven's finale, is itself a link, rather than the beginning of something. This is not the first time that Chopin had shifted the function of a musical fragment in his adaptation of it: as mentioned previously, the arpeggio which concludes the slow movement of the F-minor concerto is both something of an

ending when it reappears in the *Lento con gran espressione*, wrapping up the middle section (though the foregoing music is based on a theme from the third movement of that concerto, rather than the second), and also serves as a link to the reprise of the opening that follows. Chopin's functional transformation in the introduction of Op. 66 is of a similar kind: instead of turning an ending into a transition, Chopin turns what was a transition in Beethoven's sonata into a beginning for his impromptu.

The relationship between the introduction of Chopin's impromptu and mm. 188-190 of Beethoven's third movement is underscored by an irregularity in one of the copies of Chopin's earlier manuscript of the piece. According to the copy presented to Marie Lichtenstein by Chopin's erstwhile pupil Fernand da Costa, Chopin's "Allegro agitato" marking is situated not at the beginning of the piece but over the third bar, when the accompaniment begins: exactly where Beethoven's "Tempo primo" is located. Though Costa's copy contains some variants which are undoubtedly mistakes (as they result in voice leading errors), it nonetheless contains several deviations from the text transmitted by Franchomme which are not at odds with Chopin's idiom and could thus be authentic (some of which are attested by another copy made by Chopin's pupil Camille Dubois). While the fact that Franchomme's and Dubois copies both have the tempo marking at the beginning (as does Fontana in his posthumous edition of the piece) suggests that it is Costa who made an error, it is conceivable that Franchomme and Dubois might have normalized Chopin's placement, simply thinking that the tempo marking was intended to be placed over the first bar.

There are further orthographical similarities the existence of which is not predicated on a single, possibly erroneous source. One such detail—either unnoticed or taken for a careless omission in need of correction by Fontana in his preparation of the first edition, as well as most

subsequent editors—is that Chopin, both in the d'Este autograph and, according to Franchomme, in the earlier manuscript, left the upper stave blank for the first two bars, rather than filling in the rests, just as Beethoven does.[49] The fourth bar in the d'Este autograph contains a whole rest; the third bar has a blot of ink where Chopin may have considered placing a half rest. This is almost certainly not by accident—the left hand's *tacet* in the coda is filled with rests, though it would have been perfectly understandable without. It is possible that Chopin intends for the performer to use both hands to play the first two and a half bars of the introduction, taking the top note of the octave and the first iteration of the arpeggio figure with the right hand (this reading is bolstered if the blot of ink in the top stave in the second half of bar three is indeed taken for a half rest). This matches the distribution between the hands in the corresponding passage of Beethoven's finale.

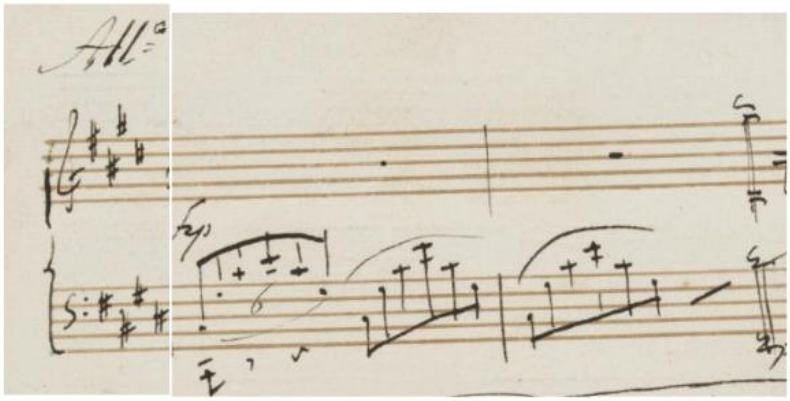
A detail in the d'Este manuscript reveals another connection between Chopin's introduction and Beethoven transition to the coda. Where the accompaniment pattern begins in m. 3 and the octaves of the opening give way to single notes, the lone voice of the earlier manuscript has been split into two, as it was in the Beethoven passage. In Beethoven's sonata, it is the top voice that leaves the thread; in Chopin's impromptu it is the bottom one. This reversal is not the only transformation of its kind here; Beethoven's two *p* markings (one on the initial empty octave, and one at the start of the accompanimental figuration; seemingly redundant, in the modern way of utilizing dynamic signs) is mirrored by Chopin's *f* and *fzp* markings in the corresponding places in the d'Este autograph.

[49] I cannot comment on whether Costa and Dubois, authors of the two other extant copies, also left these measures blank; I have only gleaned their contents from the new Peters edition, which normalizes the notation of the beginning even in the d'Este version by supplying the rests that Chopin left out.

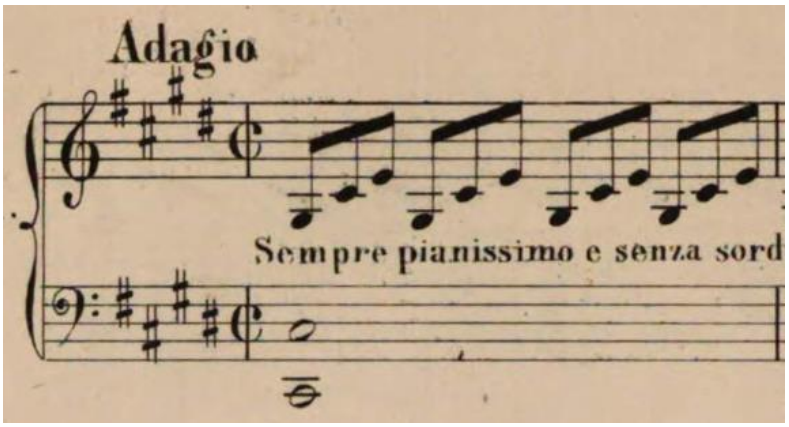
The significance of Chopin's opening *f* marking has already been considered, but the *fzp* marking on Chopin's ensuing C-sharp–c-sharp octave is also significant. Though sharp and violent indications like *fzp* and *sfzp* are an essential feature of the music of Beethoven, they are more sparingly deployed by Chopin. Aside from contradicting Beethoven's *p* marking at the corresponding moment in Op. 27/2, this unexpected *fzp* could have the practical effect of sustaining the presence of the low C-sharp, if one were to use the pedal. This underscores a connection to the opening of the first movement of Beethoven's sonata—both passages imbue the sonority C-sharp–c-sharp–g-sharp–c-sharp'–e' with movement in triplets (Ex. 18). Ernst Oster, without noticing the identical sonorities, also draws a connection between Chopin's figure in m. 3 and the opening of Op. 27/2, claiming that the purpose of Chopin's figure is to delineate the motive g-sharp-c-sharp-e, which is for Oster the shared basis of both Beethoven's sonata and Chopin's impromptu. The figure in Chopin's impromptu, however, does not come from Beethoven. It is from the very opening of Moscheles's Op. 49 sonata, which, in addition to identical rhythm and contour, has the same sonorous voicing of a minor chord, just without the lower octave (Ex. 18c).

**Example 18. Derivation of Chopin's arpeggio figure from Beethoven and Moscheles**

a) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 3-4.



b) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/i, m. 1.




c) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, m. 1 LH.


To crystallize Chopin's process here, one could say that these two bars synthesize the openings of Moscheles's *Sonate mélancolique* and Beethoven's *Sonata melanconica* (as Moscheles called it): the particular shape and movement of Moscheles's parabolic 12/8 arpeggio,

in an Allegro tempo, is combined with the opening sonority of Beethoven's Adagio. The fact that Chopin's mm. 3-4 amalgamate the openings of Moscheles's and Beethoven's sonatas strengthen the thought that these two bars of the arpeggiated accompaniment figure would have made a rather good opening on its own, making the opening octave seem potentially extraneous. But the inclusion of that empty sonority in the first two bars enables Chopin to craft an introduction which references and amalgamates music from all three pieces that will form the basis of the composition.

### The Main Idea, mm. 5-12

The basic conceit of the primary material of the outer sections of Chopin's Op. 66 is that the right hand melodic figuration of Moscheles's Op. 89 impromptu, consisting of sixteenth notes in 4/4 time, is supported by the arpeggiated accompaniment in the left hand of Moscheles's Op. 49 sonata, consisting of eighth notes in 12/8 (Ex. 19). This idea was prefigured by the passage in mm. 21ff of the *Lento con gran espressione*, in which the right hand plays the opening melody of the finale of the F minor concerto in the original 3/4 time while the left hand continues its 4/4 accompaniment which, as discussed previously, is a simplification of the accompaniment of the second movement of the concerto (see Ex. 5 on p. 26). As noted by Alan Walker, "the result is a pioneering example of metrical notation, rare in 1830, and a harbinger of the important role that cross-rhythms were to play in Chopin's later works."[50] In the context of the present study, one could go further and say that this passage is a harbinger of the essential role that the simultaneous use of music in different meters would play in the C-sharp minor impromptu.

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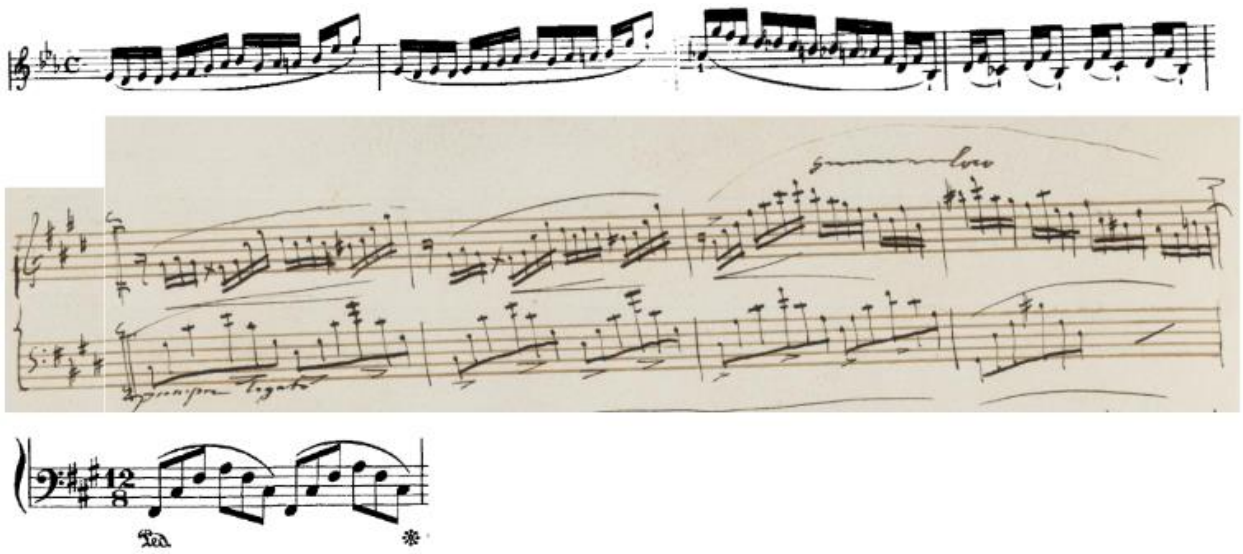
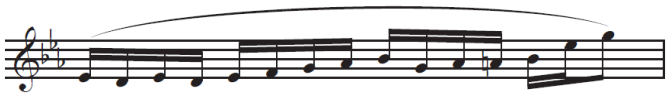
[50] Walker, *Fryderyk Chopin*, 196.

**Example 19. Derivation of Chopin's main idea from Moscheles's impromptu and sonata**



Though a certain similarity between the opening right hand figures of Moscheles's and Chopin's impromptus can be discerned through a cursory comparison, their closeness can be more clearly understood by deriving Chopin's through the application of some basic melodic transformations to Moscheles'. Moscheles's figure (Ex. 20) is essentially comprised of three motives: a measured trill (which I will call *x*), an ascending scale fragment (*y*; which occurs twice), and an ascending arpeggio that begins with a chromatic lower neighbor (*z*).

**Example 20. Moscheles's 1-bar motive.**



**Example 21. Moscheles's motive transposed to C-sharp minor.**

Having transposed the idea from E-flat major to the new tonality of C-sharp minor (Ex. 21) let us first give the figure a greater deal of internal consistency by removing two notes from

the first *y* to yield another *z*, and transforming the second *y* into a second *x*; the figure now has a recursive internal organization *xzxz* mapped onto its original rising shape (Ex. 22).

**Example 22. Motive given a recursive internal organization**

The motives of the first *xz* pair are on the same degree, those of the second are not; let us alter the second to match the first, which will also have the effect of compressing the figure's range. (Ex. 23).

**Example 23. Motive's range compressed.**

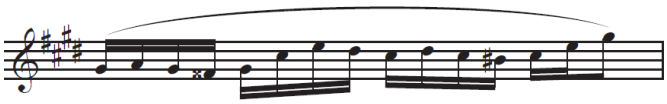
Beginning on the fifth scale degree instead of the first means that the figure will begin on the same g-sharp' that commences the melody of Beethoven's adagio; this reference is quite fitting, if we recall that the already undulating accompaniment is sustaining the sonority with which Beethoven began his Adagio and to which he returned in the fifth measure, before the soprano entrance on g-sharp'. Additionally, the figure will now end in the same place on the staff as Moscheles's figure does, even if Moscheles's g" is now g-sharp" (Ex. 24).

**Example 24. Beginning on the fifth degree of the scale instead of the first**

There is now an elegant turn on the third beat; we need only change one note of the first *x* to yield another turn (which we could call $x^1$). The turn seems to have greater potential energy, urging the line along its ascending course. The inclusion of a turn in the main idea was almost

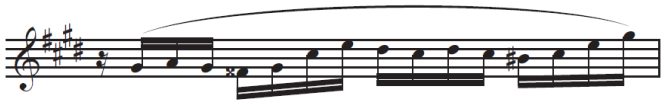
certainly not arbitrary, nor solely for the particular melodic energy of the figure; the turn itself forms the basis of an important musical connection between Moscheles's impromptu and his sonata which Chopin exploits in the next section of the piece. (Ex. 25).

**Example 25. Initial trill changed to a turn**



The figure is rendered slightly square by all the dissonances falling on the weakest metrical positions (this not an issue created by our transformations, but an existing characteristic of Moscheles's motive); given that this idea comprises fifteen notes, with a singly empty sixteenth at the end of the bar, one can solve this issue by inserting a sixteenth rest at the beginning of the bar, offsetting the entire figure to place the dissonances in metrically stronger positions and imbuing the music with a breathless, agitated quality. (Ex. 26).

**Example 26. Metrically offset by one sixteenth note**



It would of course be absurd to claim that this is exactly how Chopin arrived at his own figuration; the exercise merely demonstrates how some simple melodic tinkering can lead us from Moscheles's material to Chopin's.

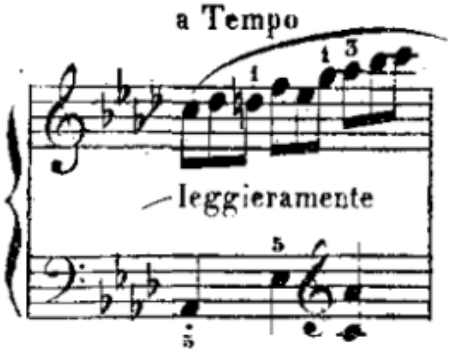
Though it may seem a stretch to claim that a figure as generic as the accompaniment shared by Moscheles's sonata and Chopin's impromptu could be a conscious and specific allusion on Chopin's part, there are two considerations that support the idea. One is, in fact, that very generic simplicity—Chopin hardly ever utilizes this pattern in his published works, though he makes frequent use of similar but more irregularly contoured accompaniments. Consider, for

example, the outer sections of two subsequent impromptus, those in A-flat and G-flat major. The Andante spianato from Op. 22 and both nocturnes from Op. 27 commence by presenting their compound meter arpeggiated accompaniments in the left hand before the right hand enters with the melody, just as in Op. 66. In each case a simple parabolic figure would have sufficed, but Chopin opted for something more idiosyncratic. Indeed, the only place in Chopin's published works to commence with and sustain such an uncomplicated parabolic accompaniment is the first of the *Trois Nouvelles Études*. The significance of this work in relation to the present study will be discussed in a later chapter. Chopin does employ simple parabolic accompaniments at certain points in the Op. 9/1 Nocturne, the Op. 23 Ballade, the Op. 31 Scherzo, and the finale of the Op. 58 sonata, but all of these instances are in metrical contexts—eighth notes in 3/4 or 6/4, or sixteenth notes in 6/8—in which the highest note does not fall on the beat. It is also worth noting that the only one of these instances where the figure accompanies the first subject of the piece is in the finale of Op. 58, where it accompanies the third presentation of the main idea (each presentation of the theme in this rondo having a quicker accompaniment than the last).

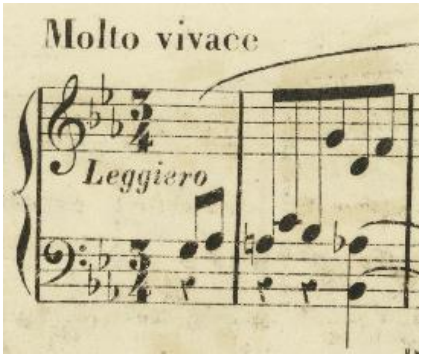
The other consideration is Chopin's sensitivity to the way a given figure might lie under the hand, a sensitivity reflected in his pedagogical practice of starting pupils with the scale of B major, rather than the simpler-to-read C major, because of the natural way it lies beneath the hand. In his compositions, Chopin often returns to melodic figurations associated not just with particular intervals, but with particular configurations of black and white keys. Compare, for example, the beginning of the second subject from the finale of the F-minor concerto to the beginning of the scherzo from the B-minor sonata. The sonata excerpt is at a different pitch level, but one which preserves the way the figure felt under the hand in the concerto (Ex. 27).

**Example 27. Similar passagework in Chopin's Concerto, Op. 21 and Sonata, Op. 58**

a) Chopin, Concerto in F minor, Op. 21/iii, m. 81.




b) Chopin, Sonata in B minor, Op. 58/iii, m.1.




Wishing to begin something in a similar key and similar character, even if in a different register and metrical context, Chopin's hand fell on something familiar, maybe without his even being aware of it (it is interesting to note that both ideas, though in different keys, are accompanied by quarter notes in the left hand that prominently feature the thumb sliding from A-flat to G). A similar transformation, though perhaps undertaken more consciously, is at work in the subject of our study; the key of Chopin's impromptu is one of only two keys (the other being G-sharp minor) in which the accompaniment figure of Moscheles's sonata would lie under the hand exactly as it does in the original key of F-sharp minor.

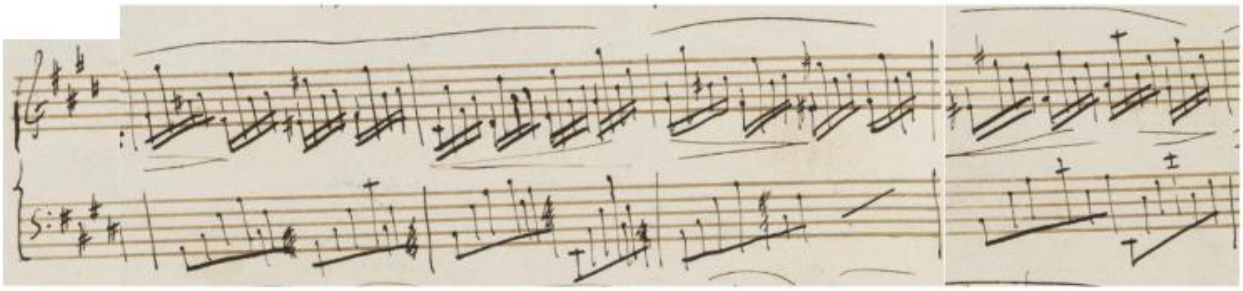
At the level of phrase structure, one can observe that the four-measure main idea of Chopin's impromptu has the same contours and internal organization as that of Moscheles. A one bar ascending motive over a tonic harmony is repeated verbatim before a two-bar continuation that consists of brief ascent (in Moscheles, a leap of a seventh; in Chopin, an ascending arpeggio for two beats) followed by a long fall (Moscheles just has a descending scale; Chopin begins in a descending scale that turns into something a bit more jagged—the quotation of Beethoven discussed in the previous chapter). Both antecedents end on a dominant seventh harmony—in Moscheles's that is the only harmony supporting the two-bar continuation, where Chopin proceeds from a predominant in the first measure of the continuation to a dominant seventh in the second. The entire four-bar idea is then repeated, but varied to cadence on the dominant (in Chopin's case, the dominant minor).

**Central Episode of the Outer Sections, mm. 13-24**

One of the criticisms that could be levied against Moscheles's impromptu is that it is too repetitive. Thanks to written out repeats in the first A section, the main idea is heard some twelve times through the course of the work—Chopin's decision to dispense with these repeats means that his adaptation of this idea is heard eight times. But Moscheles's repetitiousness is also compounded by the fact that the central episode which connects the statement and restatement of this main idea does not stray very far from the materials and textures of that idea. In his central episode, Chopin manages to address the lack of variety in content and texture without changing the polyrhythmic motion or entirely abandoning the basic musical materials of the piece. While the right hand does continue in $16^{th}$ notes and the left hand continues its compound time accompaniment, a new layer emerges from the middle of the texture: the thumb of the right hand brings out a melody in quarter notes (Ex. 28). The content of this melody is loosely derived from

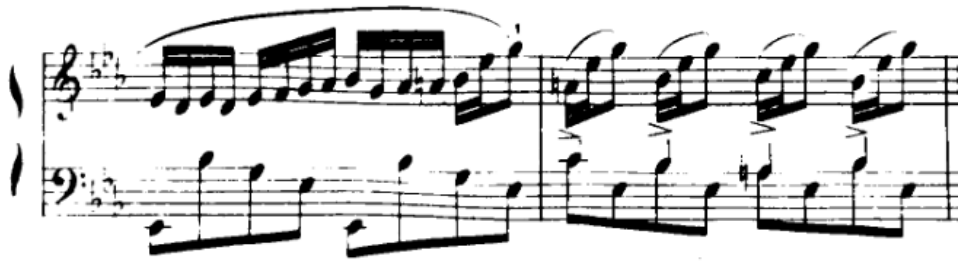
the opening idea of the piece, the main melodic cells being a turn and an ascending C-sharp minor arpeggio with a single non-chord tone (in this case a passing tone between the first and second notes and not a chromatic lower neighbor before the first, though this extra note is a semitone below the note it precedes). The fourth measure is an inverted turn with one interval expanded.

**Example 28. Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 13-16.**



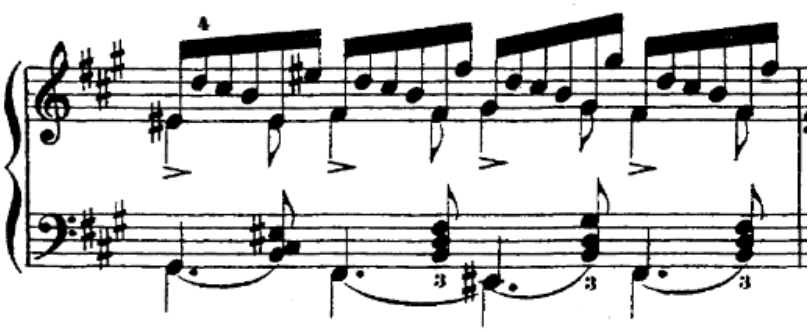
While the application of such a textural device at this point in the form and the derivation of the melodic material for this episode from the opening motive of the work are certainly inspired compositional decisions, the idea for this passage did not simply spring from Chopin's imagination. The basic idea of having a sustained middle voice emerge from the texture in describing a turn is precisely what Moscheles did in one of the few places where he breaks from the basic materials of his impromptu. At the return of the opening idea that follows the central episode, the listener expects to hear the one-bar motive followed by its repetition; instead we have the following (Ex. 29):

**Example 29. Moscheles, Impromptu in E-flat major, Op. 89, mm. 37-38.**



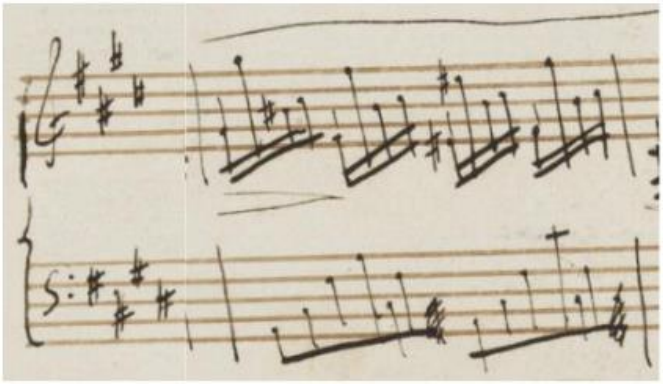
The expected repetition of the main motive has been replaced by an unexpected new measure. This surprising interruption to proceedings is not entirely unrelated to the basic idea; the right hand figure in this new measure comes from the final beat of the main idea. Its characteristic galloping rhythm was previously explored in the fourth and seventh bars of the opening statement. Entirely unexpected, however, is the new voice that emerges in the middle register, articulating a *gruppetto* in quarter notes. Chopin seems to have taken this deviation from the expected course of Moscheles's impromptu as the kernel from which his own central episode would spring, including the idea that the deviation would have some motivic relation to the opening material, as well as the melodic shape of the turn. But many of the details, and in fact the pitch level and register in which the turn appears, in fact come from a passage in the recapitulation of Moscheles's Op. 49 sonata, which shares some details—the melodic turn emerging from the middle of the texture, harmonized by a voice exchange—with the interrupting measure from the impromptu (Ex. 30).

**Example 30. Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique,* Op. 49, m. 214.**



In m. 214 of Op. 49, the right hand thumb brings out a melodic turn e-sharp'–f-sharp'–g-sharp'–f-sharp' from a figuration that includes a shadow of the melody one octave higher, sounded by the fifth finger; in the center, a shimmer of both harmonic and non-chord tones is supplied by the remaining digits. Chopin retains these features in a compressed version of this figuration, working as he is with two fewer sixteenths per beat (Ex. 31).

**Example 31. Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 13.**



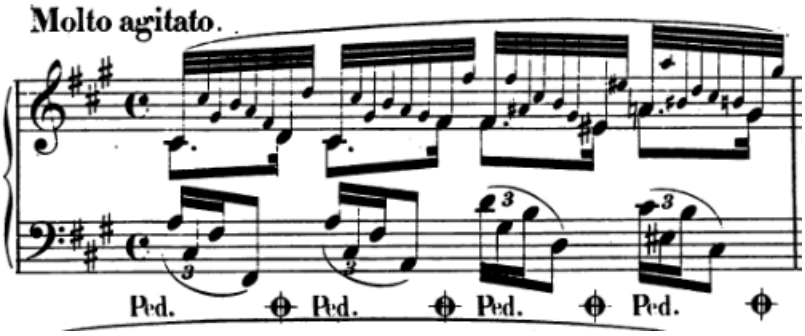
The direction of the turn sounded by the right thumb has been reversed, but the pitches are the same; it should be noted that due to Moscheles harmonization by voice exchange, Chopin's actual motto is sounded by the bass voice. The voice exchange, however, has been discarded, replaced by a first-inversion F-sharp minor harmony, making the upper and lower notes of the turn, which fall on the strong beats, expressive dissonances, just as Chopin's metric

alteration of Moscheles's main idea did in the opening statement. In both Chopin's and Moscheles's figuration, the central shimmer whispered by the longer fingers remains unchanged throughout the measure, while the melody in the thumb and its shadow in the little finger move. The third finger in both rests on c-sharp"; Chopin's second finger is closer to the third than Moscheles's was, resting on b-sharp' rather than b'.

Chopin's fascination with this passage from Moscheles's sonata is revealed by his other, more extended adaptation of it in the F-sharp minor prelude from Op. 28 (Ex. 32).[51] Where the figuration of the impromptu had two fewer notes than Moscheles's figure, that of the prelude has two more. Chopin retains Moscheles's trochaic rhythm in the thumb melody, and allots one of his extra notes to ensuring that both syllables of the trochee are followed by their octave shadow in the finger; Chopin probably found the timbral inconsistency of Moscheles's figure, where the long note is not followed by the upper octave but the short note is, something to be rectified. The other extra note becomes an extra non-harmonic in the central shimmer; where Moscheles's three middle notes consist of a descending third—part of the harmony—with a passing tone in between, Chopin's prelude precedes a descending third—again, part of the harmony—with a double appoggiatura.

[51] A connection noted by Phillip Alan Silver: see Silver, "Ignaz Moscheles," 73.

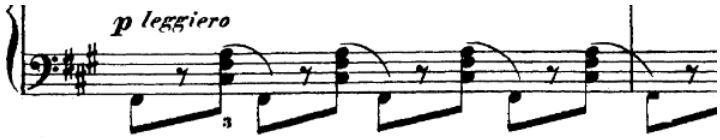
**Example 32. Chopin, Prelude in F-sharp minor, Op. 28/8, m. 1.**



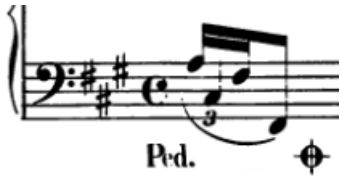

The accompaniment of the prelude is derived from the left hand idea which pervades this section, but which is in fact briefly altered when the right hand figuration that so fascinated Chopin appears in the third measure. The figure has been shifted metrically so that the basses are on the upbeat, the chord is turned into a jagged arpeggio, and the rest swallowed; nonetheless, the connection is evident (Ex. 33).

**Example 33. Chopin derivation of prelude accompaniment from Moscheles's sonata**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, m. 212-213.1 LH.




b) Chopin, Prelude in F-sharp minor, Op. 28/8, m. 1.1 LH.



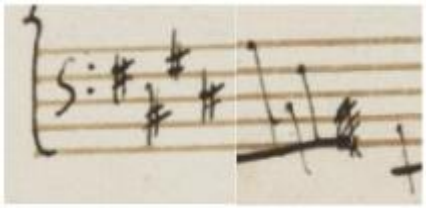

The connection between the F-sharp minor prelude and this passage from the impromptu is underscored by a detail of the accompaniment in the d'Este version—while the accompaniment pattern does not vary in the outer sections of the earlier version, the accompaniment for the twelve measures of the central episode is subtly altered by transposing

the positions of the 5th and 6th notes to give the descending part of the figure a jagged contour. One can see from corrections in mm. 13-15 that Chopin only thought to make this subtle change to the accompaniment while in the process of writing out the presentation manuscript for the baroness (given that corrections of this kind cease after m. 15, we can surmise that he decided to make the change after having reached the end of a line, after the first 3 measures of the central episode). The resultant contour is precisely the same device Chopin applied to Moscheles's left hand accompaniment to produce the accompaniment for the prelude (Ex. 34).

**Example 34. Comparison of accompaniment from Chopin's prelude and impromptu**

a) Chopin, Prelude in F-sharp minor, Op. 28/8, m. 1.2 LH.


b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 13.2-13.3 LH.

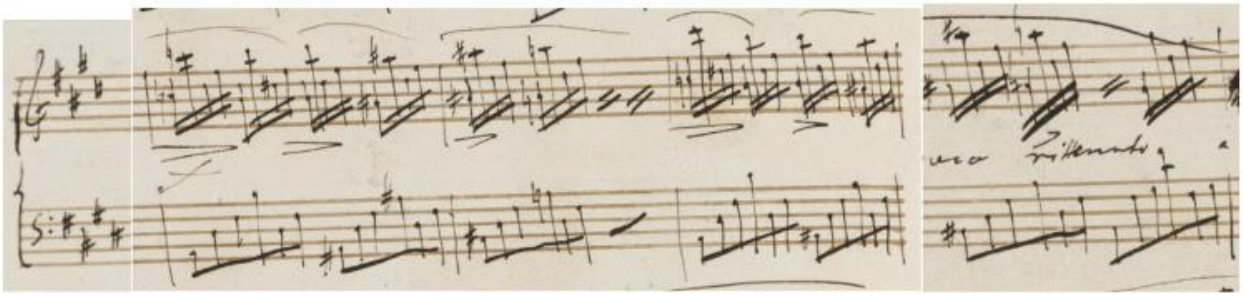


To distill the complex procedures of Chopin's central episode, one could say that Chopin synthesizes a solution to Moscheles's lack of variety from two seemingly unrelated passages in different works which are nonetheless linked by common harmonic and textural ideas; one of which is perhaps the sole place in the impromptu where Moscheles addresses this lack of variety himself—and which moves towards the type of solution Chopin will adopt, in having a melody

in quarter notes emerge from the middle of the texture—and the other of which is cast in a texture and at a pitch level which provides many of the specific details of Chopin's solution.

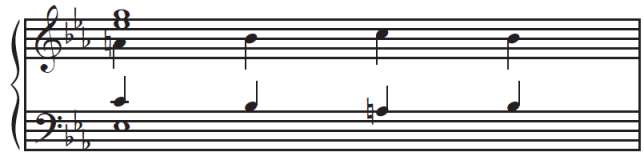
The retransition back to the main material in Op. 66 (Ex. 35) contains a rather strange and subtle elaboration of the voice exchange in m. 38 of the Moscheles impromptu which seems to have been the basic idea from which this whole contrasting episode springs. This is particularly significant as, despite the many ideas adapted from the brief passages from both Moscheles impromptu and sonata in Chopin's mm. 13-20, the voice exchange itself—one of their closest similarities—was discarded. The basic contrapuntal skeleton has either been turned upside down (with the content of soprano and bass voices switched) or inside out (starting in the middle of Moscheles's idea)—one may recall that the same procedure was applied in Chopin's adaptation of the voice exchange passage from the sonata at the beginning of this section. Example 36 gives (a) the harmonic skeleton of Moscheles's m. 38, (b) the same harmonic skeleton but with the upper and lower parts of the voice exchange switched, (c) a fuller voicing of this inverted version of Moscheles's voice exchange with the lowest moving part in the bass rather than the tenor, and (d) the harmonic skeleton of Chopin's mm. 21-22.

**Example 35. Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 21-24.**

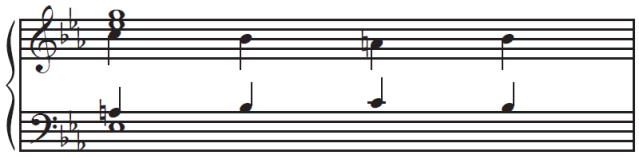


**Example 36. Derivation of Chopin's retransition from Moscheles's voice exchange**

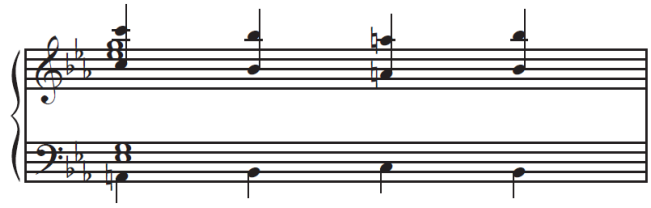
a) Reduction of m. 38 of Moscheles's Impomptu, Op. 89.



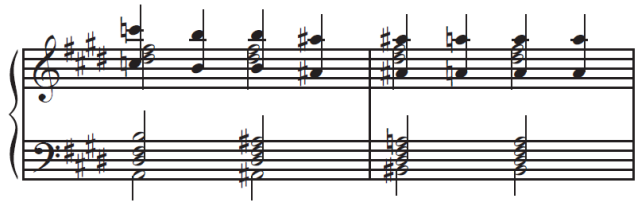
b) The voices participating in the voice exchange switched.



c) Fuller voicing.



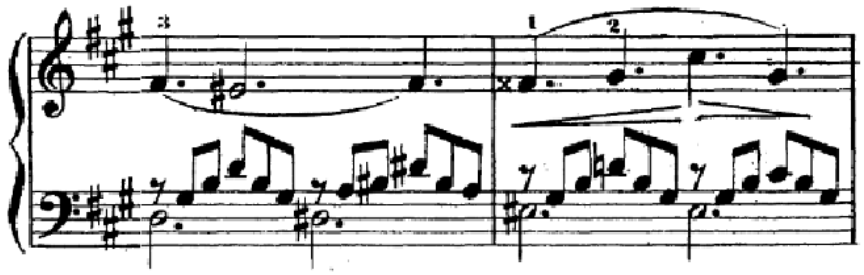
d) Reduction of Chopin's mm. 21-22.



Chopin has re-spelled notes to fit the key of C-sharp minor, but they are in fact the very same pitch classes: A stays the same, B-flat is respelled as A-sharp, and C is respelled as B-sharp. The soprano is lightly ornamented by chromatic appoggiaturas. We almost seem to be watching Chopin improvise; he arrives at a place where he can make a subtle yet direct reference to his source material (mm. 21-22), but, caught in his reverie, he is not immediately able to find a

way back to his own home key and requires a second time (mm. 23-24) to achieve the harmonic sleight of hand necessary to find his way back to C-sharp minor. On the page, with everything spelled to fit the key, the harmonic situation does not seem terribly fraught, and the fact that most modern listeners have heard this piece countless times undermines the power of this extraordinary moment. But if we can try to forget how familiar this music has become to us and instead revel in the strangeness of the bassline A—A-sharp—B-sharp and the fact that Chopin must repeat it to find his way back to where he began, the significance of this passage becomes clearer. Incidentally, this slightly unusual bass movement (6–#6–#7; being neither harmonic minor, nor melodic minor, nor simply chromatic) is present near the end of the opening idea of Mocheles's sonata (Ex. 37).

**Example 37. Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique,* Op. 49, mm. 6-7.**



Without these four bars at the end, the central episode would have a typical span of 8 bars, like the corresponding passage in Moscheles's impromptu. Furthermore, Chopin had already achieved his harmonic goal, the dominant, at the end of those eight bars. Though the end of m. 20 does not smoothly lead into the restatement of the main idea in m. 25, the second half of m. 20 could have been easily altered to make a palatable transition. But these extra four measures allow Chopin to chromatically step the bass and soprano from the compound tenth G-sharp–b-sharp' in m. 20 to the twelfth c-sharp–g-sharp' at the beginning of the main idea while making another reference to his source material.

**Restatement of the Main Idea and Closing of the First Section, mm. 25-40**

In both Chopin's and Moscheles's impromptus, the central episode leads directly into a restatement of the opening idea, which then deviates from the path laid out in the opening to segue into a codetta. Beyond this broad structural correspondence, a number of salient features are shared by the two works in the final part of the first main section. A restatement of the antecedent phrase of the opening group is following by a rising sequence of the main motive. After this sequence reaches its peak, there is a long descending scale in sixteenth notes. In Moscheles's piece, this scale is preceded and accompanied by powerful left hand octaves, mostly quarter notes; in Chopin's, the scale is followed by a passage featuring powerful left hand octaves in quarter notes. We then have a passage in which the opening fragment of the main motive of the piece is articulated in the bass register while the right hand sounds the most significant contrasting element of the piece so far. In Moscheles's impromptu, it is the characteristic rising $16^{th}$-$16^{th}$-$8^{th}$ figure that had provided some needed contrast in the restatement that began this section (and which had already been given extensive treatment in the rising sequence that followed the restatement). In Chopin's work, it is a transformation of the right hand figuration from the central episode (itself derived in part from Moscheles's contrasting material) that now accompanies the initial fragment of the opening idea in the left hand. In addition to these connections to Moscheles's impromptu, Chopin's codetta also contains a wealth of references to the final page of Beethoven's Op. 27/2, which is the same place where one finds both the *Eingang* that Chopin quoted in mm. 7-8 as well as the adagio octaves that lead into the coda, the passage that seems to have given Chopin the form of his introduction.

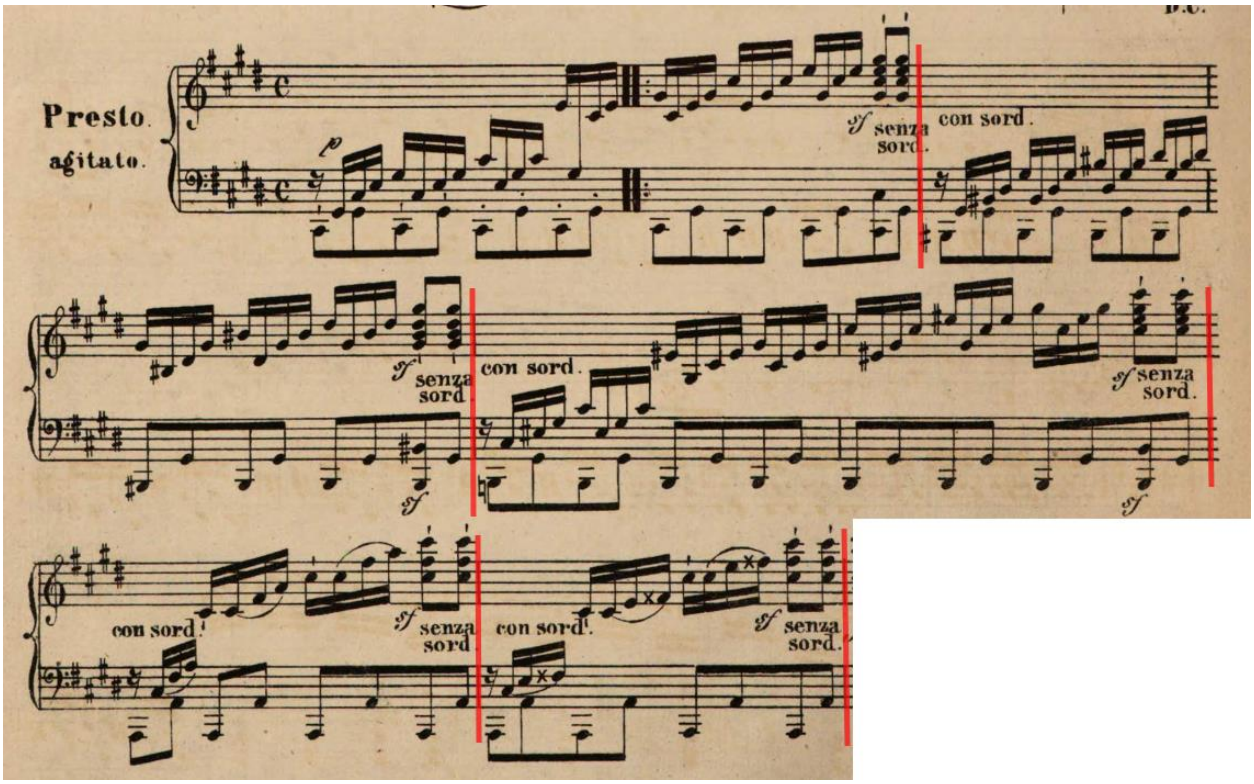
Having taken stock of the many correspondences in this section, let us now examine them in detail. In Chopin's impromptu, the four-measure antecedent phrase appears unaltered; in

Moscheles's work, the only significant change is the previously discussed replacement of the second bar. The antecedent phrases of both works, however, are greatly altered through a characteristically Beethovenian process, one that Alfred Brendel calls "foreshortening."[52] This process gradually tightens and intensifies the musical discourse by reducing the size of musical units. As an example, Brendel gives the opening idea of Op. 2/1, which he notes is "foreshortened according to the following scheme: two two-bar units, two one-bar units, three half-bar units."[53] The main idea of the Presto from Op. 27/2 is constructed through a similar process; the two-bar idea heard thrice in mm. 1-6 is compressed to a single bar in the two iterations in mm. 7-8 (Ex. 38).

[52] Alfred Brendel, *Musical Thoughts & Afterthoughts* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 42.

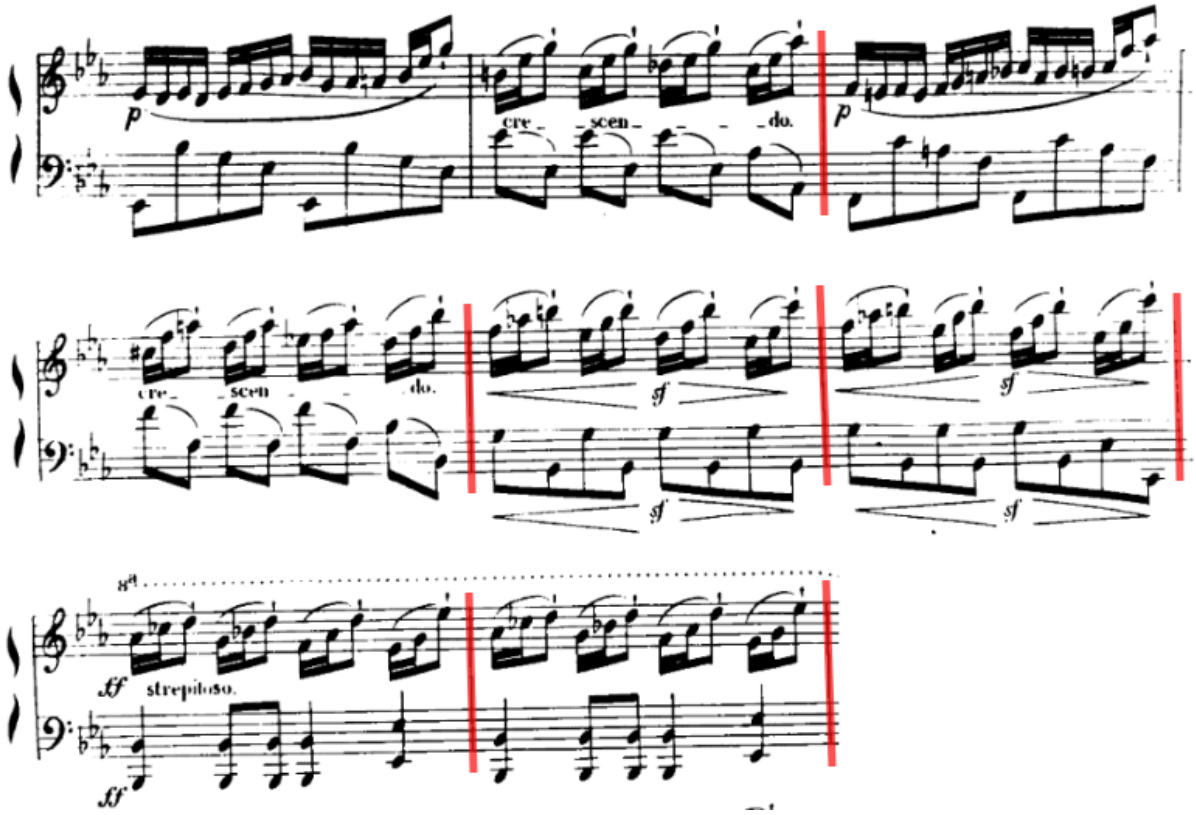
[53] Idem, 43.

**Example 38. Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia,* Op. 27/2/iii, mm. 1-8.**

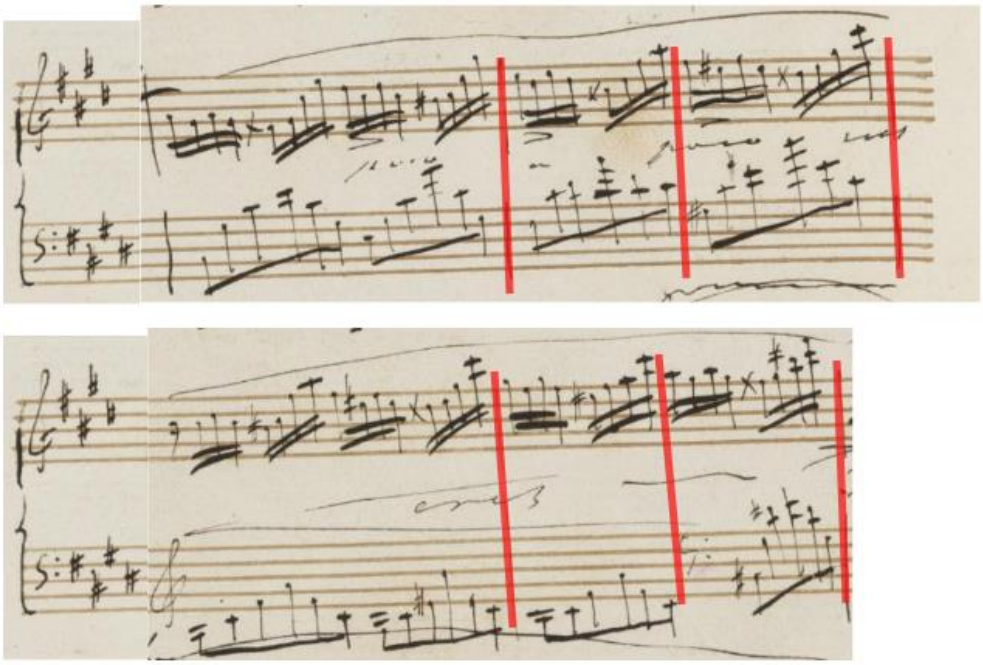



To describe Moscheles's and Chopin's passages in similar terms, we can observe that Moscheles's sequence (mm. 41-48) is constructed from two two-bar units followed by four one-bar units, with the one-bar units being the second half of the foregoing two-bar units (Ex. 39). Chopin's (mm. 29-32) is constructed from a repetition of the following scheme: a one bar-unit followed by two half-bar units, with the half-bar units being the second half of the one-bar units, akin to Moscheles's process (Ex. 40). In Moscheles's sequence, only the motive itself is foreshortened; the harmonic rhythm remains at the previous pace of changing every two bars, undercutting the foreshortening process by grouping the one-bar units into pairs at the same pitch level, supported by the same harmony.

**Example 39. Moscheles, Impromptu in E-flat major, Op. 89, mm. 41-48.**




**Example 40. Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 29-32.**



When discussing Beethoven's use of the foreshortening technique, Alfred Brendel notes that, "It usually happens that several foreshortening processes are superimposed, that they interlock and overlap." So, Chopin superimposes a second process onto the first; the foreshortening of the main motive in the right hand is accompanied by a corresponding acceleration of the harmonic rhythm. Though it may seem at this stage that the seemingly co-dependent foreshortening of the motive and the supporting harmonic rhythm are part of the same procedure, the process begun in the left hand will continue after the right hand has moved onto something different, suggesting that these are distinct but interrelated procedures. To use Brendel's way of thinking, Chopin is both superimposing and overlapping two foreshortening processes.[54] Chopin's deeper engagement with the quintessentially Beethovenian process of foreshortening recalls once again Liszt's remark that Chopin's imitations typically struck at something far beneath the surface. In this passage, Chopin signals his recognition of Moscheles's musical debt to Beethoven and then goes on to critique Moscheles's deployment of one of Beethoven's favorite devices.

As noted earlier, Chopin seems to have felt that Moscheles's final part of the outer sections was too long; one of the ways he addressed this deficiency was by compressing the eight-measure span of Moscheles's sequence to just four. Within this abbreviated span, however, Chopin manages to cover the same distance: in both Moscheles's and Chopin's impromptus, the highest note of the motive (which in both cases is the final note of the figure) rises a (minor) sixth, from g" (g-sharp" in Chopin) to e" (e-flat" in Moscheles) during the sequence.

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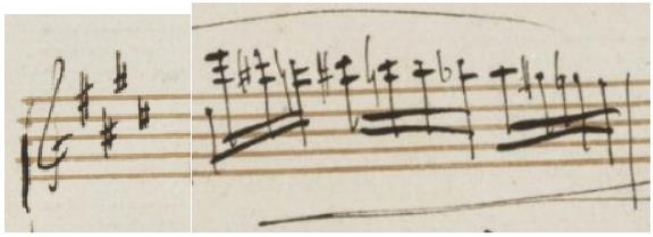
[54] Chopin's main idea, incidentally, already had a degree of foreshortening built in, consisting of two bars of tonic harmony followed by one bar each of pre-dominant and dominant, where Moscheles's main idea is harmonized by a more regular scheme of two bars each of tonic and dominant.

In mm. 33-34, having reached the peak of the ascending sequence, Chopin combines the initial turn motive of his own main idea with a characteristic portion of Moscheles's main idea which was entirely discarded in Chopin's adaptation at the beginning of the work. The third measure of Moscheles's main idea commences with an upward leap of a seventh followed by a descending scale, mostly chromatic. In his own main idea, Chopin had expanded this leap to a compound ninth—starting, one may note, from the same second space a' from which Moscheles's third measure springs—and filled it in with an arpeggio. Moscheles's descending scale was replaced, of course, with Beethoven's *Eingang* from mm. 188-189 of the Presto. In m. 33-34, however, Chopin reproduces Moscheles's m. 15 almost exactly, starting on the second beat of each measure (Ex. 41).

**Example 41. Comparison of passages from Chopin's and Moscheles's impromptus**

a) Moscheles, Impromptu in E-flat major, Op. 89, m. 15 RH.

b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 33.2-33.4 RH.

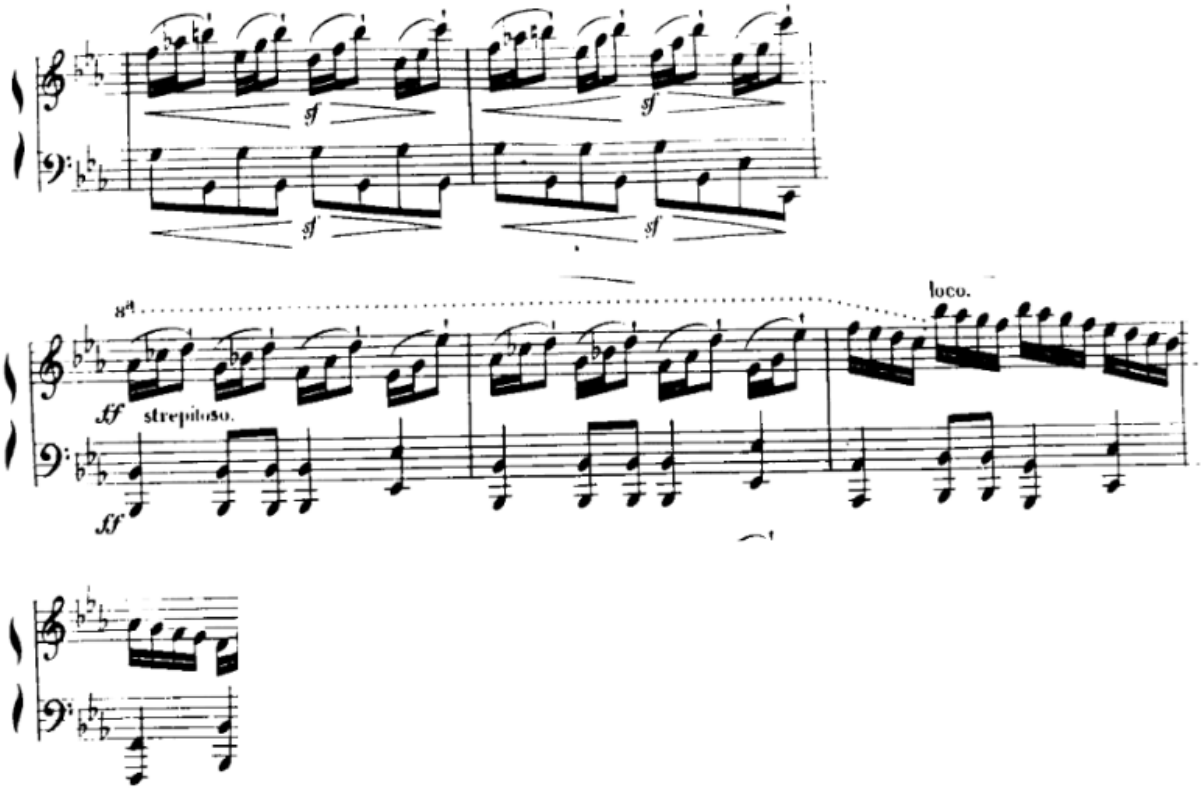


After the inexorable ascent of the preceding four bars, the organization of these two bars—mere static repetition in the right hand—is notable. It echoes the organization of the second half of Moscheles's sequence (mm. 45-48), which also features some static repetition in

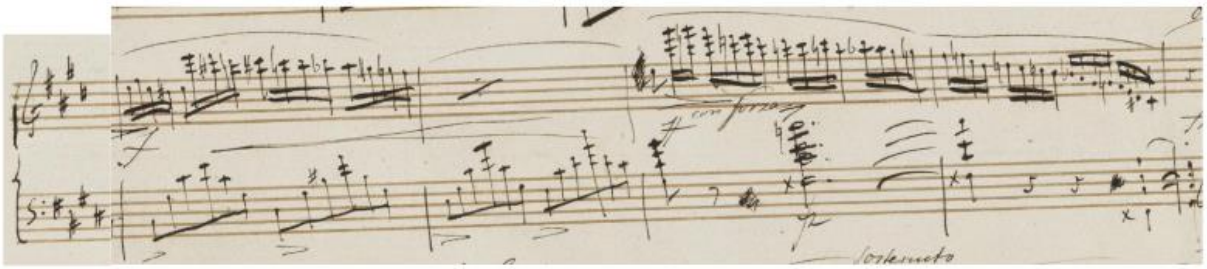
the right hand—m. 46 and m. 48 being repetitions of m. 45 and m. 47, respectively. Chopin avoids the feeling of stasis through a very goal-oriented bass, which ascends stepwise from the tonic towards the dominant, continuing the faster half-bar harmonic rhythm of the preceding sequence. At the point where Moscheles's begins to employ static repetition (mm. 45-48), the material is altered so that the first note of each beat in the right hand describes a descending scale fragment instead of its usual turn, foreshadowing the descending scale in 16$^{th}$ notes that follows (Ex. 42). Chopin's already noted change of material in measure 33—where he replaces the main idea that he has been sequencing with a synthesis of his own turn motive with an unused part of Moscheles's main idea—is more drastic than Moscheles's alteration of the shape described by his material. Nonetheless, Chopin's change allows him to accomplish something similar to Moscheles. The smaller descending chromatic scales in mm. 33-34 (which are the part of this new idea that he has borrowed from Moscheles) foreshadow the longer one in mm. 35-36.

**Example 42. Repetition precedes a long descending scale in both impromptus**

a) Moscheles, Impromptu in E-flat major, Op. 89, mm. 45-50.2.




b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 33-37.1.

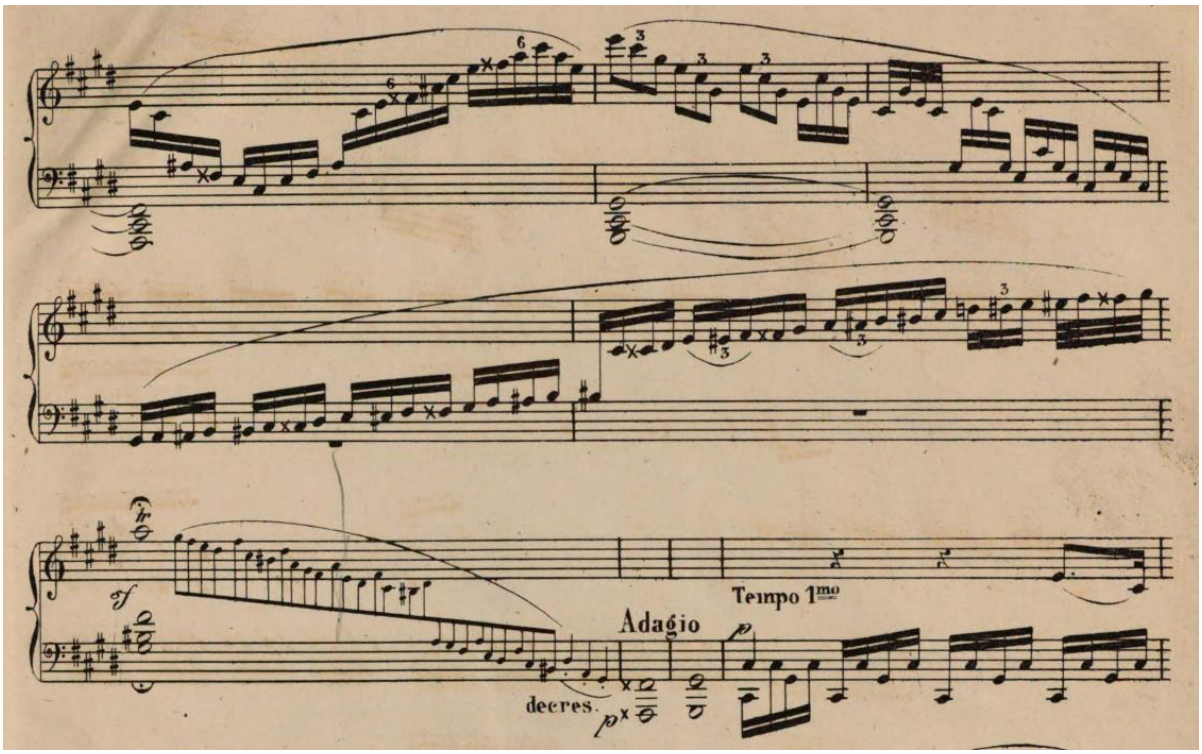


The final six measures (mm. 35-40—Ex. 43a) of Chopin's A section bear a strikingly close relationship to a seven-measure segment of Beethoven's finale (mm. 183-189—Ex. 43b). Within the prolongation of a V6/4 harmony, both passages present the following three elements:

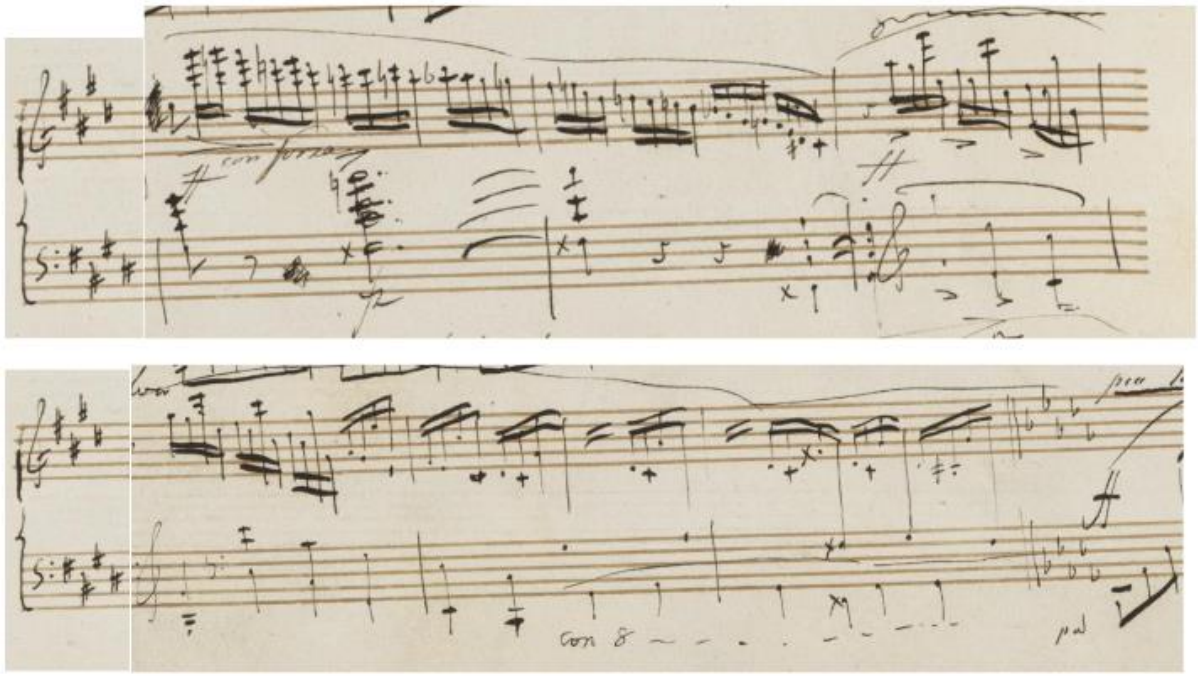
1. An arpeggiated descent of the C-sharp minor triad from the highest E available
2. A three-octave chromatic scale in 16$^{th}$ notes starting on g-sharp (though in opposite registers and directions)
3. The turn A–G-sharp–F-double-sharp–G-sharp in the bass as a conclusion/link to the following music

**Example 43. Comparison of Chopin's codetta and passage from Beethoven's sonata**

a) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/iii, mm. 182-189.




b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 35-40.



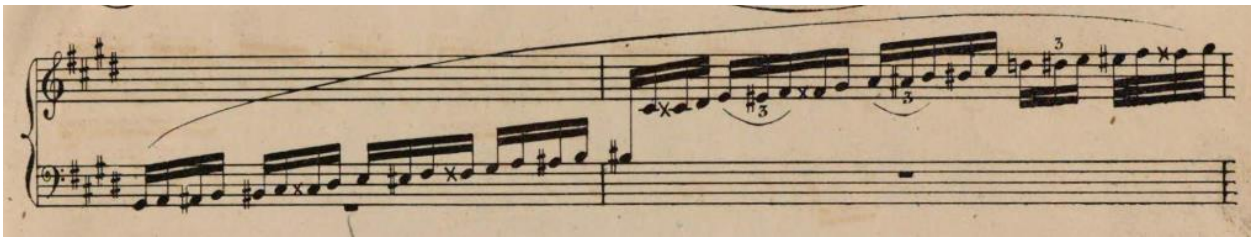
Ernst Oster has already pointed out Chopin's imitation of both the descending 6/4 arpeggio as well as the bass register turn.[55] His analysis, however, is greatly limited in both its scope—as Oster is operating under the assumption that Beethoven's sonata is the only source material for Op. 66—and its analytical framework, examining the music from a Schenkerian perspective. Nonetheless, his observation that it "looks exactly as if Beethoven's coda had especially interested Chopin and almost fascinated him"[56] is supported by the other correspondences between Beethoven's coda and Chopin's impromptu revealed in this study.

Returning to our present analysis, Chopin has reordered these three elements and synthesized each one with a particular element from Moscheles's codetta. The reordering itself reflects the ordering of events in Moscheles's impromptu, with the long scale coming first. The first two measures of the codetta, mm. 35-36, comprise a synthesis of mm. 49-50 of Moscheles's impromptu (two-octave descending scale in 16$^{th}$ notes) and mm. 185-186 of Beethoven's finale (a two-octave chromatic scale starting and ending on a G-sharp), supported by a harmonic distillation of Chopin's main *gruppetto* figure. As was the case with Chopin's adaptation of the *Eingang* from m. 187 in the main idea, Beethoven's scale has been raised an octave. But a second, more substantial transformation has been effected as well: the scale is played backwards. These transformations of register and direction, as well as the regularization of the rhythm, follow the model of Moscheles's mm. 49-50 (Ex. 44).

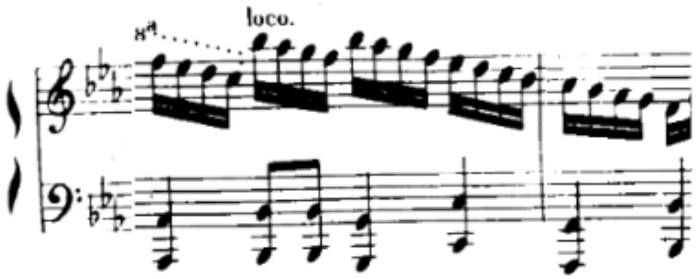
[55] See Oster, "The Fantaisie-Impromptu," 200-201.
[56] Idem, 206.

**Example 44. Long sixteenth note scales in Beethoven, Moscheles, and Chopin.**

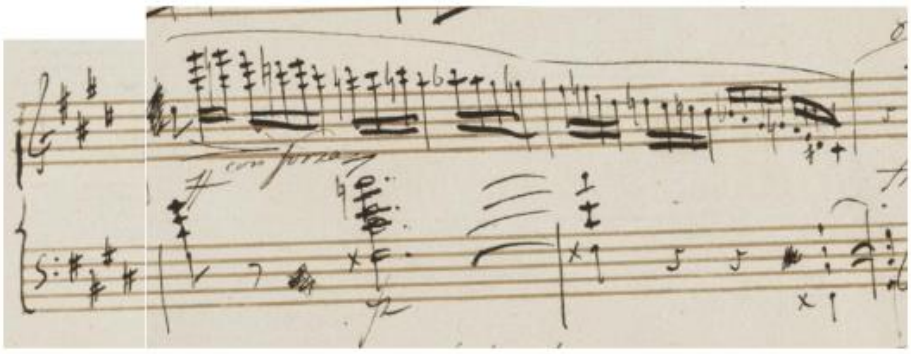
a) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/iii, mm. 185-186.



b) Moscheles, Impromptu in E-flat major, Op. 89, mm. 49-50.2.




c) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 35-37.1.

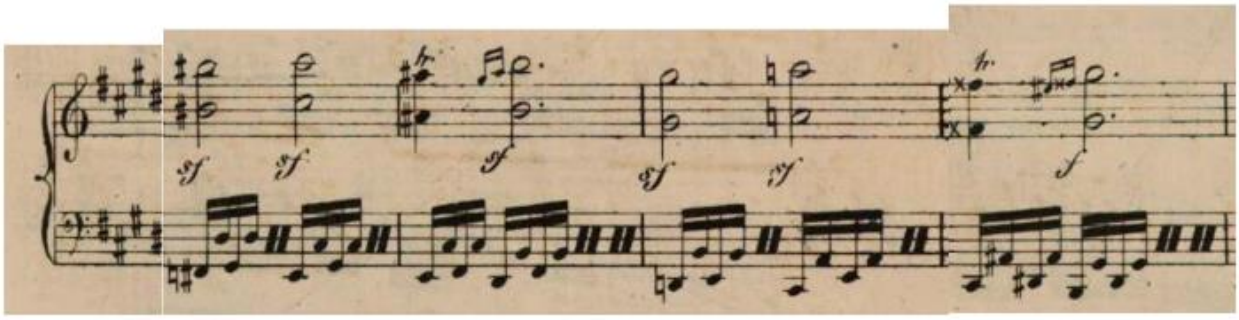


The left hand chord in m. 35 is notable in two respects. The first is that its altered metrical placement in the d'Este autograph—moved from the third quarter to the second—follows one of the foreshortening procedures in Beethoven's finale.[57] The second subject of the

[57] This was a last-minute change when Chopin was copying out the d'Este manuscript; the chord is aligned with the third beat in the right hand, and a quarter rest on beat two has been crossed out.

Presto (mm. 21-28) has a harmonic rhythm of one measure. In the following transition (beginning in m. 29), the rate of change is accelerated to twice per bar. But in m. 30 and m. 32, the change of harmony in the middle of the bar is nudged forward by one beat to fall on the second quarter (Ex. 45).

**Example 45. Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia,* Op. 27/2/iii, mm. 29-32.**



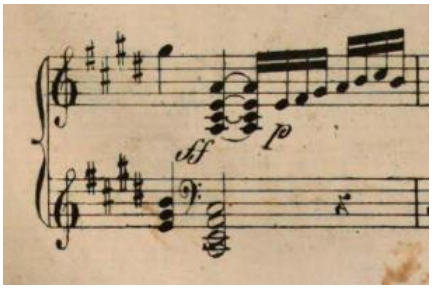
Chopin's process leading into the coda is quite similar, when the altered placement of this single chord is considered. The once-per-bar harmonic rhythm in mm. 27-29 accelerates to twice per bar in mm. 30-34. The expected change of harmony in m. 35 is then nudged forward by one quarter. The effect and harmonic content of this measure are also similar to something that happens a few bars later in Beethoven's transitionary passage, in m. 37 (Ex. 46). Both consist of a short chord (specifically, a full chord in the middle register for the left hand supporting a single note in the soprano register for the right hand) on the downbeat followed by a strong A major chord on the second quarter. Though Chopin's first note in the right hand of the d'Este autograph is e'", it is worth recalling that the earlier version of the piece had Beethoven's note, g-sharp'", here.[58] Though Chopin would ultimately decide that the g-sharp'" was incompatible with the

[58] Again a last-minute change, as one can see that Chopin initially wrote the g-sharp'" in the d'Este manuscript before crossing it out (see Ex. 44c above).

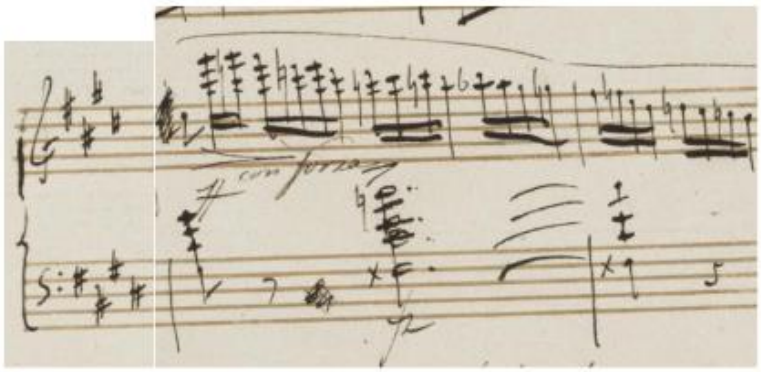
musical surface he had created,[59] knowing that it was his initial choice reveals a correspondence that is somewhat weaker in the final text.

**Example 46. Similar deployment of a strong A major chord in Beethoven and Chopin**

a) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/iii, m. 35.



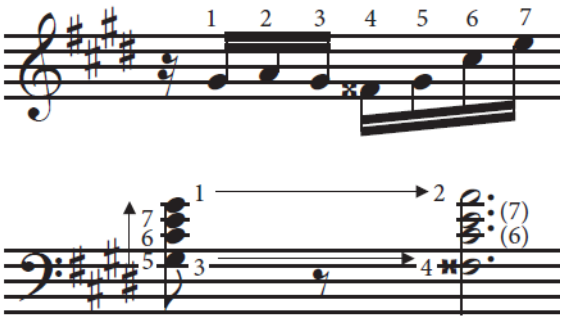

b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 35-36.2.



The second notable facet of this chord is that is a perfect harmonic distillation of Chopin's main motive. The left thumb articulates the first two notes, while the fifth finger gives the second two. Passing over the fifth note—another G-sharp—we can also observe that the middle voices give the sixth and seventh notes of the motive (Ex. 47). This simple succession of two chords thus contains the same content as the first half of Chopin's main idea, itself one complete cycle of the generative turn plus rising arpeggio idea.

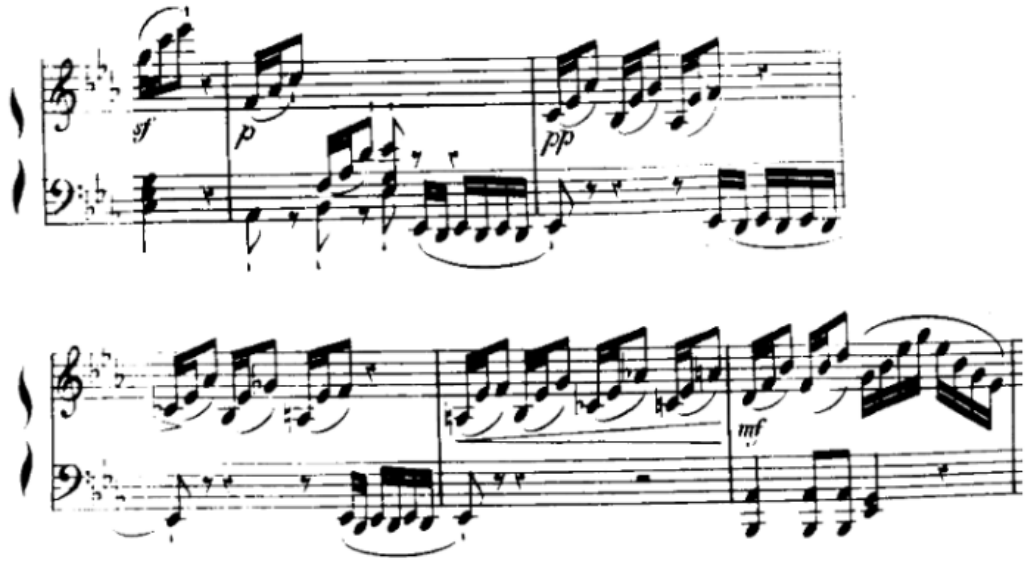
[59] It creates parallel octaves with the bass and goes against the inertia of the preceding scale, especially as that scale has reached the fourth scale degree, which has a strong downward pull, at the end of the preceding bar.

**Example 47. Relationship between main idea and chords in m. 35.**




During the course of mm. 37-40, the remaining two elements from Beethoven's passage—the descending C-sharp minor arpeggio and the bass register turn—are adapted to reflect the dialogue between a fragment of the main motive and the contrasting material in Moscheles's codetta. In mm. 52-55 of Moscheles's impromptu, the initial trill of the main motive appears in the bass register, alternating with mid-register interjections of the contrasting motive from m. 38 (Ex. 48). In the ascending sequence that precedes this passage, Moscheles had saturated the texture with this contrasting motive; after the sequence is completed, Moscheles finishes the phrase by having the contrasting motive descend from the treble register to the middle in mm. 51-52. Chopin will follow both procedures—though simultaneously, rather than successively—in his adaptation.

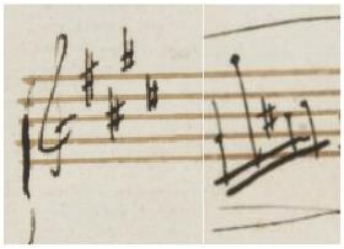
**Example 48. Moscheles, Impromptu in E-flat major, Op. 89, mm. 51.3-56.**



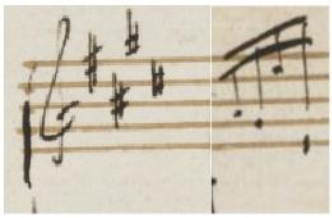

In the right hand, Chopin maps a quasi-retrograde of the 16th note figuration from his central episode, the most significant contrasting element of his own first section—which was also derived in part from Moscheles's constrasting idea—onto Beethoven's triadic descent in mm. 183-184 in the finale of Op. 27/2 (Ex. 49). This synthesis of elements results in both saturation of the texture with a contrasting idea which consists of a motive lasting only one beat being repeated at different pitch levels—which Moscheles accomplished in mm. 45-48—as well as presenting that idea descending from the treble register to the middle—which Moscheles accomplished in mm. 51-52.

**Example 49. Derivation of the final part of Chopin's codetta**

a) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m.13.1 RH.

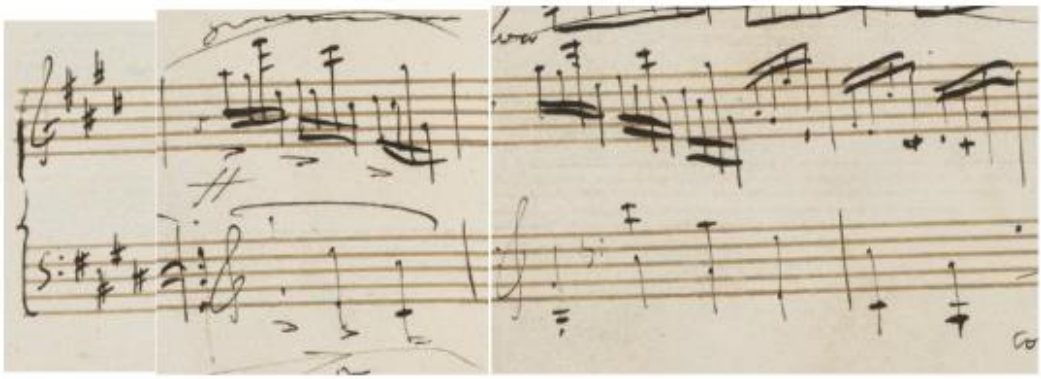


b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 38.4 RH.



c) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/iii, 183-184.

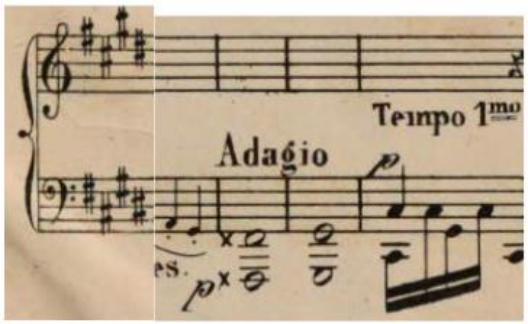
d) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 37-39.2



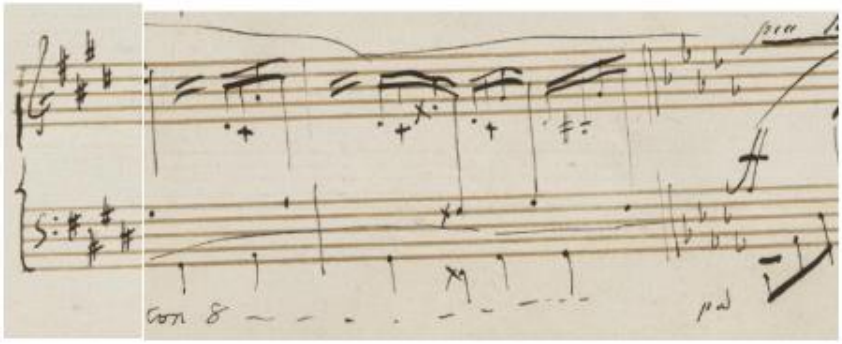
In mm. 39-40, Chopin echoes Moscheles's bass register statements of the initial fragment of the main idea—the measured trill between E-flat and D—in the left hand with a statement of the *gruppetto* around G-sharp that commences his own main idea. Unlike Moscheles', Chopin states this thematic fragment in augmentation (double augmentation, in fact; what were 16$^{th}$ notes are now quarters), as well as in octaves. These very pitches are found, in the same register, in mm. 188-189 of Beethoven's finale (Ex. 50). Though the perception of the turn as a single idea is disrupted by coinciding differences of rhythm and sonority in Beethoven's passage—the first two notes being single meter-less quarter notes, and the second two being whole note octaves—it is intriguing to note that Chopin's turn is unified by taking one element from each of Beethoven's pairs: all notes of the turn are quarter note octaves. The correspondence between the final bars of Chopin's codetta and mm. 188-190 of Beethoven's finale is heightened at the codetta's second iteration when the same music leads not to the trio but instead to the coda, itself based on Beethoven's coda; this will be discussed in our later examination of that section.

**Example 50. *Gruppetto* on G-sharp in Beethoven and Chopin**

a) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/iii, 188-190.1.




b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 39.3-41.1



**The Trio, mm. 41-82**

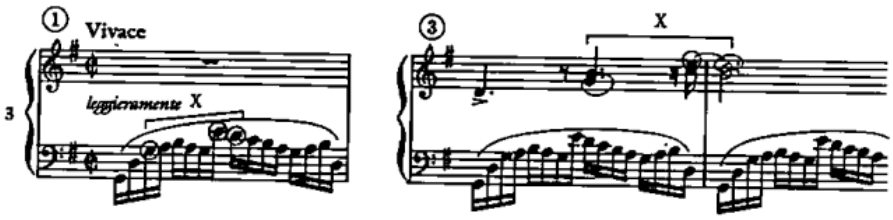
In the trio of Op. 66, Chopin's primary conceit is to adapt the one-bar main motive from the beginning of the work (itself adapted from the corresponding motive from Moscheles's impromptu) to the basic musical conditions of the opening of Moscheles's Op. 49 sonata (which, in turn, was the source of the accompaniment figure at the beginning of Chopin's work). In order to be sure of examining every facet of Chopin's complex process, elements of the primary material of the trio derived from the beginning of the impromptu itself will be discussed independently of those derived from Moscheles's sonata; a similarly bifurcated discussion of the trio's secondary material will follow. Finally, some less complicated references to Moscheles's impromptu and Beethoven's sonata will be considered.

**Derivation of Primary Material from Opening Idea of the Impromptu**

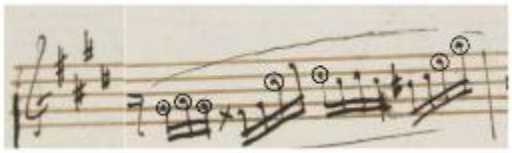
Though it is not evident at first glance, Chopin continues to make efficient use of his basic materials by deriving the first two bars of the trio's cantilena from the one-bar main motive that initially appeared in m. 5. The process Chopin uses to effect this transformation of a *moto perpetuo* type figure into a *bel canto* melody is like the one that Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger notes Chopin to have used in the Opus 28/3 prelude in G major (Ex. 51).

**Example 51. Chopin's transformations of quick figuration into sustained melody**

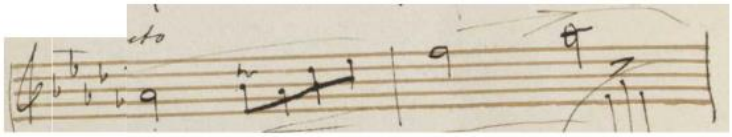
a) Chopin, Prelude in G major, Op. 28/3, m. 1 LH; mm. 3-4 RH.




b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 4 RH.



c) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 43-44 RH.



Eigeldinger writes that "in op. 28 no. 3 the left hand presents a gyratory formula from which the leaping motive in the right hand, appearing in short sections and enriched with

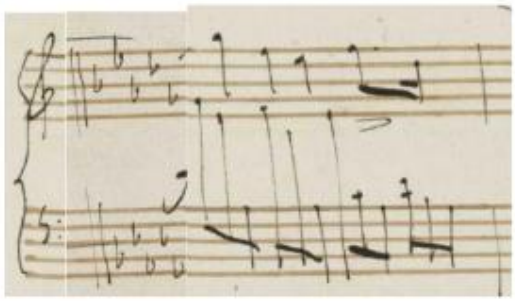
doublings at the third and sixth, is derived by free augmentation."[60] One needs to change very little (the hand presenting the initial material, the description of the character of the derived material) for this statement to apply to the process in the impromptu—even the description of the generative material as "gyratory" is apropos. In both works, Chopin extracts some of the most prominent notes from the figuration and sustains them, generating two bars of melody from one bar of figuration. However, the musical deployment of the melody derived from quick figuration is rather different in the two cases. In the prelude, the melody is drawn from the figure that precedes and then accompanies it in a different register. In the impromptu, the melody is drawn from figuration in the same register that was heard much earlier in the work. But the process itself, in any case, is the same.

In this adaptation of the main motive that comprises the first two bars of the trio theme, the characteristic turn that starts the original figure is lost. As though to make up for this loss, Chopin makes the turn an important part of the rest of theme, using it in two ways. The first occurs immediately following the two-bar adaptation of the main motive, where the turn is described in quarter notes starting on g-flat" in m. 45 (Ex. 52a). The turn recurs in the same rhythm and at the same pitch level in the second part of the phrase, in m. 48 (Ex. 52b).

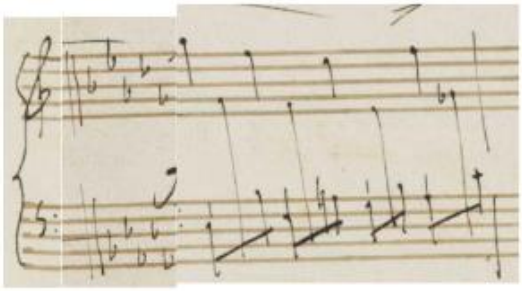
[60] Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, "Twenty-four Preludes op. 28 : genre, structure, significance," in *Chopin Studies,* ed. Jim Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 176.

**Example 52. Turn motive in quarter notes.**

a) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 45.



b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 48.



The second use of the turn is as an ornament. A *gruppetto* in small notes (once, curiously, given definite rhythmic value as 32nd notes in m. 57) occurs in the penultimate bar of each appearance of the theme. This *gruppetto* is the inversion of the initial turn motive, starting below the main note rather than above. In all but its first appearance—which differs from the others in cadencing on the dominant—it is at the same pitch level as the first appearance of the turn motive in m. 5 (Ex. 53a). The anomalous first appearance is at the pitch level of the second appearance of the turn motive that occurs in the second half of m. 5 (Ex. 53b).

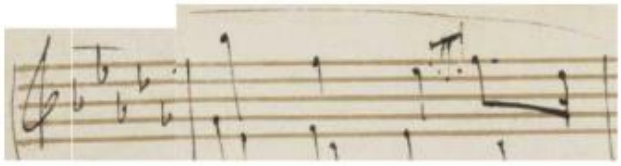
**Example 53. Turn motive as ornament.**

a) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 57 RH.

b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 49 RH.

In the first reprise of this theme (mm. 63ff), the turn (now back in its original form, starting on the note above) is also used as an ornament in the third bar (m. 65), which is itself the deployment of the turn in quarter notes noted earlier—Chopin is here nesting his motive within itself (Ex. 54).

**Example 54. Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 65 RH.**



**Derivation of Primary Material from Opening Idea of Moscheles's Sonata**

This transformation of material from the first part of the impromptu, however, is only part of Chopin's method of constructing the trio: Chopin adapts his transformation to a set of musical parameters dictated by the opening 8-bar idea from Moscheles's sonata. These parameters include the musical topic (and the tension between some of its attendant expressive indications), the melodic compass, the phrase structure, various melodic ideas, and the ornamentation.

Before even considering their musical content, we can observe that both the trio of Chopin's impromptu and the opening of Moscheles's sonata have a similarly conflicting constellation of tempo and character markings—the performance directions in each piece suggest both moving forward and holding back. In Moscheles's sonata, the initial and overarching indication for the entire work is *Allegro con passione*. This global marking is contradicted by the local indication *largamente*. In Chopin's impromptu, the initial marking of *Allegro agitato* is first modified by the relative indication *più lento* at the two-bar preparation for the trio (m. 41). When the cantilena enters in m. 43, Chopin writes both *sostenuto* (above the right hand staff) as well as *con anima* (between the staves).

As we begin to examine the musical content to which these conflicting directions are attached, one might observe that the texture of the trio of Chopin's impromptu is essentially the same as the texture of the opening idea from Moscheles's Op. 49 sonata. The parabolic 12/8 arpeggio in the left hand (mm. 45ff) was of course already used extensively in Chopin's first section, but it here supports something much closer to its original right-hand content: a quasi-operatic cantilena. Especially as these works were written in a time where each register of the piano still had a fairly distinct timbre, it is worthwhile to note that these melodies have almost exactly the same melodic compass: Moscheles's spans e-sharp'–c-sharp", Chopin's e-flat'–C".[61] Yet again, one cannot help but notice that even if these are not exactly the same pitches, they do lie in exactly the same places on the staff. In this particular case, one might also reflect that it is more or less the typical range of a Bellini soprano aria. For example, "Casta diva" from Bellini's

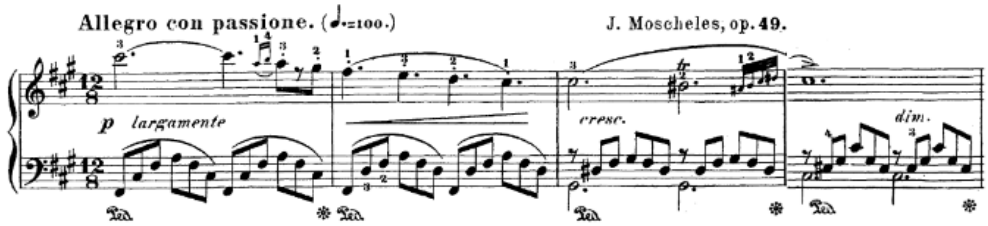
[61] The extremes of this register are only accessed later in the trio, not in the main idea.

1831 opera "Norma"—an aria which Chopin liked enough to write out with what appears to be a sketch for his own reduction of the orchestral accompaniment[62]—has a range of f' to c'".

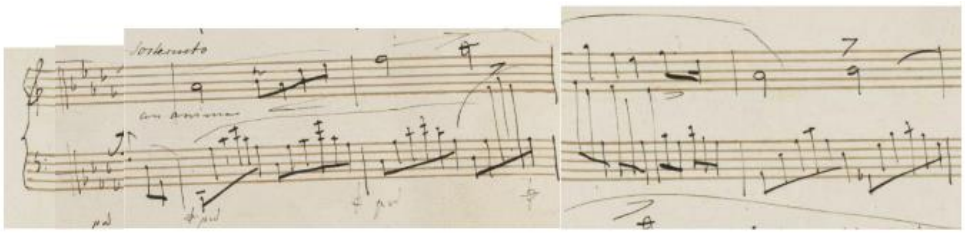
To organize this operatic cantilena, Chopin also borrows the phrase structure of Moscheles's sonata opening (Ex. 55). Both are laid out in something like a period; the antecedent is a 4-bar idea which starts and ends on the fifth scale degree with the harmony progressing from I to V. The first two bars of both Chopin's and Moscheles's themes traverse exactly one octave, starting and ending on the fifth scale degree. There is a melodic correspondence between the second bar of Moscheles's theme and the third of Chopin's (m. 45): both make a stepwise descent from the pitch f-sharp/g-flat" in quarter notes (dotted, in Moscheles's case). Chopin does obfuscate the final step of his scalar descent, inserting an f" before the final d-flat". The reason Chopin chose this particular melodic deviation will be explored later in this chapter.

**Example 55. Antecedent phrases of themes from Moscheles's sonata and Chopin's trio**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 1-4.




b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 43-46.

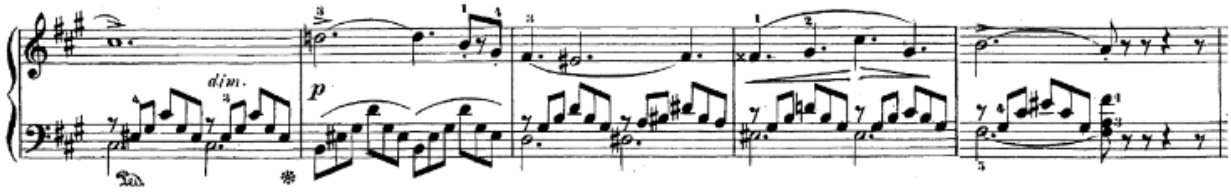


[62] Wojciech Nowik, "Chopin's Tribute to Bellini," *Chopin in the World: Journal of the International Federation of Chopin Societies* 10 (1996): 8-9.

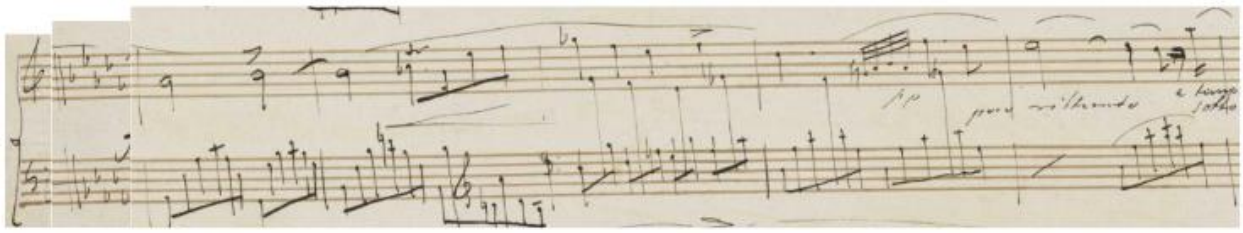
We then have a consequent in which the same idea begins a step higher (on the sixth scale degree) and is both compressed in range and altered to end with a feminine cadence on the tonic (Ex. 56). The consequent of both pieces is approached in the same contrapuntal fashion: the bass and soprano both arrive at scale degree five at the end of the antecedent, and step outwards to four and six respectively at the beginning of the consequent.

**Example 56. Consequent phrases of themes from Moscheles's sonata and Chopin's trio**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 4-8.




b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 54-58.

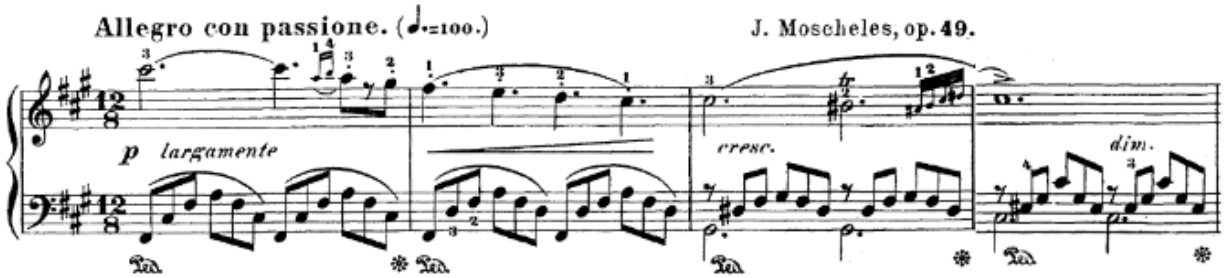


It should be noted that, despite their differing roles in the phrase, Moscheles's antecedent and Chopin's consequent are strikingly similar (Ex. 57). Both are in the minor mode and start with a long tone sustaining the fifth scale degree, followed by a scale fragment traversing the first three steps of the scale, which in turn leads to a scalar descent in quarter notes from the note f-sharp"/g-flat" in the second bar. This descent leads us to a half note on c-sharp/d-flat" at the beginning of the third measure. And in the fourth bar, we arrive at a half cadence while the melody, for the first and only time, simply sustains a single note for the entire measure. Chopin's

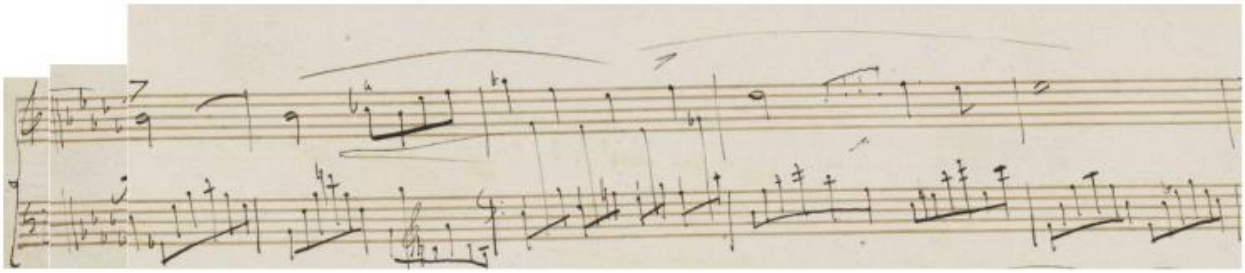
largest change, then, is a free inversion of the first bar—a particular kind of free inversion where the same degrees of the scale, rather than the same chromatic or even diatonic intervals, are used.

**Example 57. Comparison of Moscheles's antecedent and Chopin's consequent**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 1-4.




b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 46.3-50.



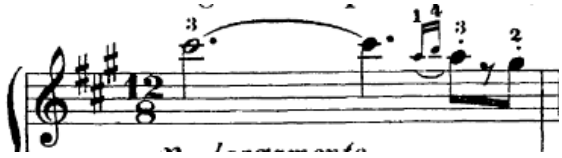
The final observation that must be made regarding the phrase structure is that in his initial presentation of the theme, Chopin repeats the entire 8-bar phrase again—the first iteration is altered to cadence on the dominant. Though it may seem strange to say that it is the first appearance of the theme is the one that has been altered, the fact that the two later reprises of this theme match the second iteration rather than the first, as well as the stronger resemblance between the second iteration and Moscheles's opening theme, lead to the conclusion that the second iteration is the original one. Together, these two iterations of the cantilena make an actual period of a theme whose internal organization is already period-like.

Shifting attention from the larger structure to the more minute melodic features, one finds similarities in even the ornamental details of these two themes. Both melodies start with a

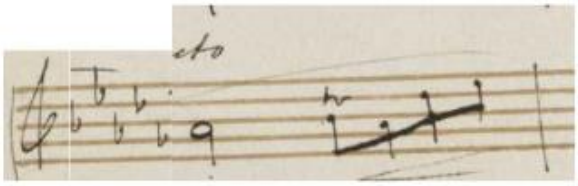
sustained tone on the fifth scale degree before becoming imbued with movement. In each case, the second note of the theme is decorated with a *Schneller*, a quick trill (Ex. 58). Moscheles's ornament is written out in small notes, whereas Chopin simply uses a trill sign, but the execution will be similar if not identical.

**Example 58. Initial fragment of Moscheles's and Chopin's themes**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, m. 1 RH.



b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 43 RH.

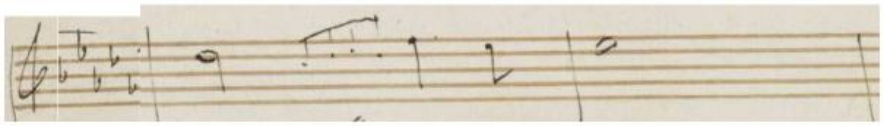


The second borrowed ornament is easily spotted; unlike the first one, the orthographic correspondence is stronger than the auditory one. Chopin's trio is dotted with four-note groups of grace notes, much like those that appear as a trill termination in the third measure of Moscheles's sonata (Ex. 59). Chopin's first use of this ornament is in the same register used by Moscheles, in the middle of the treble staff. Enharmonically, the last three notes of Moscheles's figure are the first three of Chopin's; one could even use the same fingers to play these keys. Chopin's melodic shape, though, is different: a *gruppetto* instead of a stepwise ascent—in fact, all of Chopin's clusters of grace notes outline this figure. But once again, there is a reason for the particular shape of Chopin's ornament which will be explored later on.

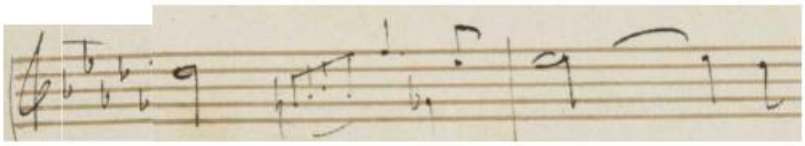
**Example 59. Similar groups of four grace notes**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 3-4 RH.


b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 49 RH.



c) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 69 RH.



d) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 81 RH.

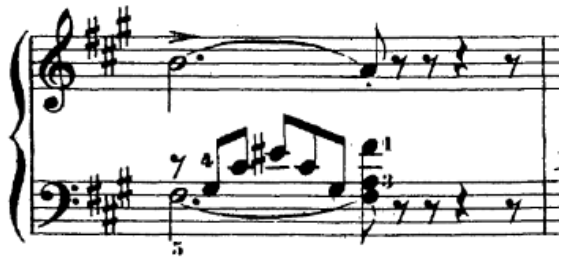
The final correspondence between these two themes is in their ending: both themes conclude with a stock cadence—on the downbeat of the eighth measure, the melody lands on a dissonance that resolves downwards by step (in Moscheles from the fourth to the third degree of the scale, in Chopin the second to the first) while the harmony progresses from $V^7$ to I over a tonic pedal, resolving on beat three (Ex. 60).[63] When preparing the presentation autograph for the Baroness d'Este, Chopin would decide to delay the resolution of the melody to beat four. A close

[63] For Chopin, it is really the 16th measure of the cantilena, as I am considering the consequent phrase to be the urform and the foregoing 8-bar antecedent a variant.

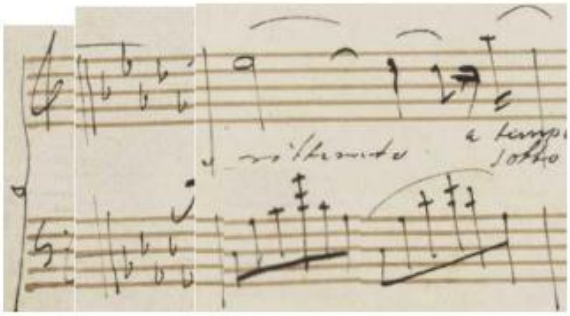
examination of m. 58 reveals that this was a last-minute decision: A d-flat" on beat three has been corrected to e-flat", while a dotted eighth rest on beat four has a sixteenth rest heavily inked over it, and a d-flat" eighth note squeezed in before. As was the case with the alterations to the left hand in mm. 13ff, we can glean, from the fact that the corresponding text in m. 70 is not scrawled over the obvious traces of the earlier version, that Chopin decided to change the text sometime after having written out m. 58 but before finishing the entire section.

**Example 60. Comparison of Moscheles's and Chopin's cadences.**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, m. 8.



b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 58.



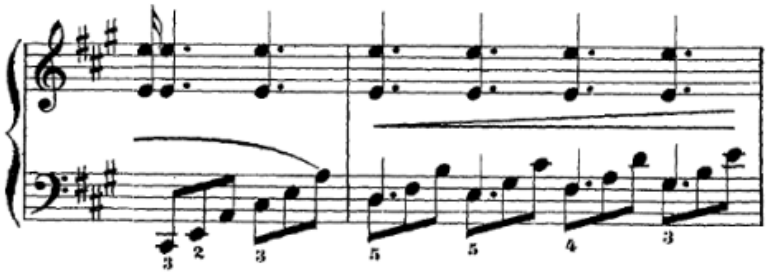
**Correspondence Between the Primary Material and Moscheles's Second Group**

There is a further correspondence between the primary material of Chopin's trio and Moscheles's sonata which does not have to do with Moscheles's opening. In the third bar of the trio, the as yet unchanging accompaniment finally breaks its pattern so that the left thumb can

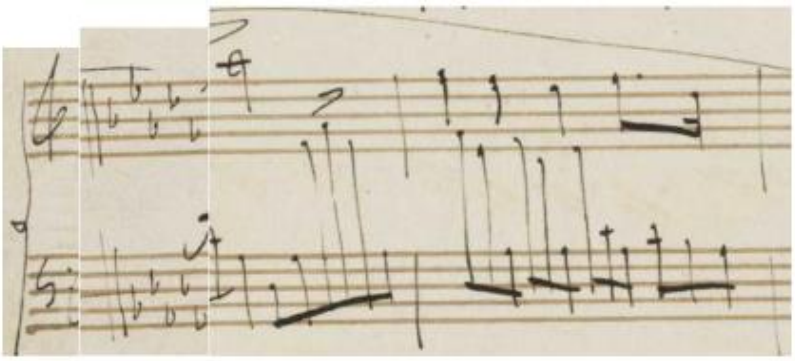
shadow the right hand melody. This bar shares several key figures with the third bar of the second presentation of the second subject in Moscheles's sonata (Ex. 61).

**Example 61. Comparison of a fragment of Moscheles's second group and Chopin's trio**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 54.3-55.



b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m. 44.3-45.



In both passages, the established accompaniment pattern breaks, one part sustains the fifth scale degree while another moves by step towards it and a third part doubles the moving one at the third. In both cases, the procedure is set up at the end of the preceding bar. The differences, of course, are so great as to nearly obscure the similarities. In Moscheles's sonata it is the soprano voice that sustains the fifth scale degree, with the bass rising by step towards it and the tenor shadowing the bass at the third; in Chopin's impromptu the both the order of the parts and direction of the stepwise motion are reversed. But these differences can be explained by a single simple transformation: Chopin's passage is the inverted retrograde of Moscheles's. It is almost as

though Chopin set the score of Moscheles's sonata upside down on the music desk and made something of what he saw—not unlike what Beethoven is said to have done with some of Daniel Steibelt's music.[64] This correspondence might seem coincidental if not for the fact that Chopin has already in this piece read some music backwards, to derive the figuration of the first section's closing material (mm. 37-40) from its central contrasting episode (mm. 13-24) and by traversing Beethoven's two octave chromatic scale in the wrong direction in mm. 35-36.

**Derivation of Contrasting Material from Opening Idea of the Impromptu**

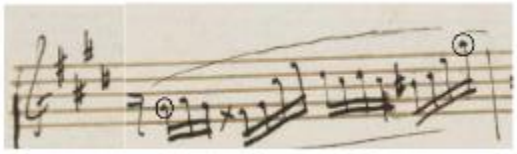
Though it is less immediately apparent than was the case with the trio's primary material, the four bars of contrasting material heard in mm. 59-62 and then again in mm. 71-74 can again be better understood by comparing it to both the opening of Chopin's impromptu and to part of Moscheles's sonata.

The melodic content of these four bars shares several features with Chopin's initial four-bar main idea from mm. 5-8. The first of these shared features is the melodic ground covered by the opening motive. The one-bar motive presented in m. 5 traced a winding path from g-sharp' to g-sharp"; the first gesture of this contrasting episode in the trio is to leap directly from the highest point of that motive to the lowest, now respelled as a-flat" and a-flat' (Ex. 62). That this melodic distance is an important part of the identity of the figure is supported by Chopin's earlier adaptation of it in the main material for the trio.

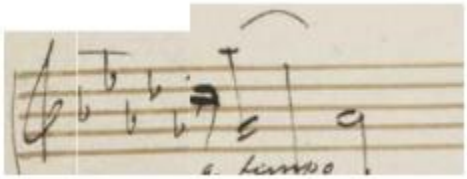
[64] See Franz Gerhard Wegeler and Ferdinand Ries, *Beethoven Remembered : The Biographical Notes of Franz Wegeler and Ferdinand Ries* (Arlington, VA: Great Ocean, 1987), 71.

**Example 62. Octave traversal respelled and reversed.**

a) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, m.5 RH.

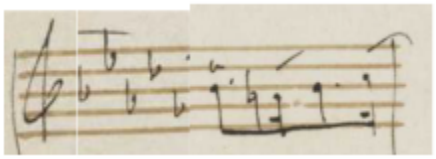


b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 58.4-59.3 RH.



The second shared feature is the ubiquitous turn (Ex. 63). In the primary material of the trio, the turn was used in both its usual form (in m. 45) and its inversion (the *gruppetto* in m. 49); in measure 59 it is used in retrograde. I am calling this retrograde rather than inversion (the two transformations of a turn figure yield similar results) because all of Chopin's other four-note turns begin on an auxiliary note. This one, however, begins on the main note.

**Example 63. Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 59.3-60.4 RH.**

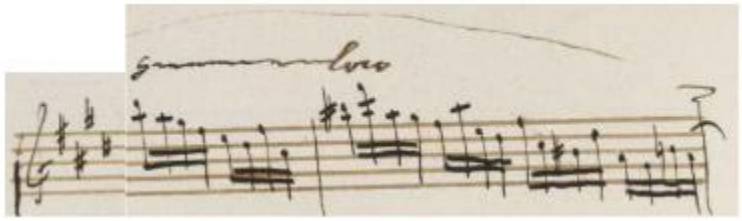


In m. 60, there is a long fall, like what occurred in the third bar of the main idea (Ex. 64). Both begin from a non-chord tone high above the prevailing tessitura. Here, perhaps due to the musical context being operatic rather than etude-like perpetual motion, the melody lingers for a time on this high dissonance before describing the descent. In the earlier version of the piece, this dissonance was prepared by striking the high C one beat earlier so that the descending figure was

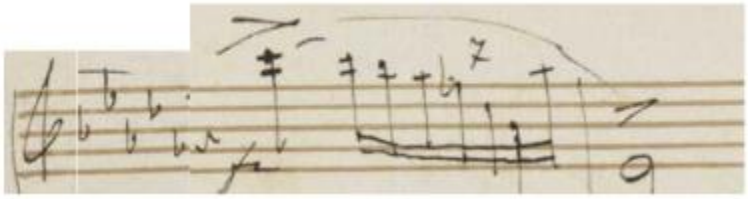
allowed time to unfold more languidly. A possible motivation for this change will be explored later.[65]

**Example 64. Long fall in sixteenth notes.**

a) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 7.3-8 RH.



b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 60.3-61.3 RH.



A final correspondence between this material and the first part of the impromptu is a detail of the accompaniment of the central episode of the outer sections. In mm. 13ff, Chopin made a subtle alteration to the smoothly parabolic accompaniment; the order of fifth and sixth notes is transposed to yield a more jagged figuration. Chopin effects the same transformation here, though not with the same uniformity (Ex. 65).

**Example 65. Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 59-62 LH.**

[65] See p. 107.

Chopin appears to have given careful consideration to which iterations of the accompanying figure should be altered and which should not. After writing out bar 59, he decided that the second half of the bar needed the alteration and amended it accordingly. He wrote out bar 60 with the newly altered pattern, but then changed his mind about its use in the second half of the bar and changed the pattern there to the original figure. A similar correction is found in the second half of m. 62. When the whole phrase recurs in m. 71, the text appears almost entirely as per the correction in the earlier iteration, except for the second half of measure 72, (corresponding to m. 60) which has the jagged figuration that Chopin initially wrote in m. 60 before correcting it (Ex. 66).

**Example 66. Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 71-74 LH.**

Whatever Chopin's motivations for applying this figure only here and there rather than consistently in this section, a certain similarity exists between the two sections where he deploys this altered accompaniment. In each case, the alteration supports contrasting materials that break up reiterations of the main material of a given section and contributes a subtle means of differentiating the secondary material from the primary.

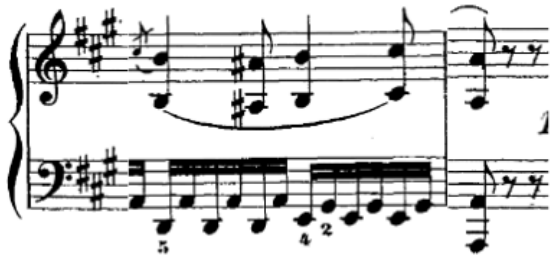
**Derivation of Contrasting Material from Moscheles's Closing Group**

As was the case with the primary material of the trio, Chopin's reworking of material from the opening of the impromptu to craft the contrasting material of the trio appears to have been influenced by part of Moscheles's sonata. But here it is the closing group, rather than the opening, that is relevant.

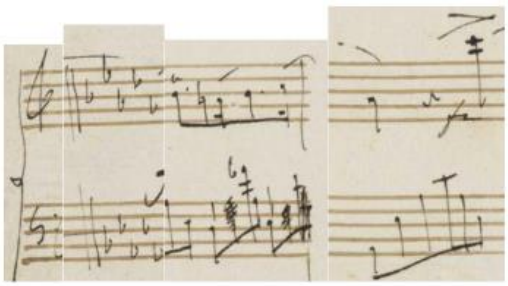
The second half of Chopin's m. 59 is similar to the final structural cadence of Moscheles's exposition in mm. 97-98 (Ex. 67). The character is completely different in each passage: the prevailing dynamic marking in the Moscheles is *fortissimo*, and we have octaves supported by an energetic bass-register tremolo; Chopin's passage is marked *sotto voce*, and single notes are supported by delicate arpeggios in the middle register. Nonetheless, the melodic and harmonic similarities are obvious. Once the change in character has been accounted for, three differences remain. First, the pre-dominant has no third above the bass in Moscheles's passage, but Chopin supplies a chromatically altered minor third. Second, Chopin slurs by pairs across beats. whereas Moscheles places the whole group under one slur. Finally, Chopin changes the ornament on the first note from an *acciaccatura* on the note above to a *Schneller*, though when Chopin varies this figure in m. 61, he does use Moscheles's acciaccatura.

**Example 67. Similar fragments in Moscheles's sonata and Chopin's impromptu**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 97.3-98.1.



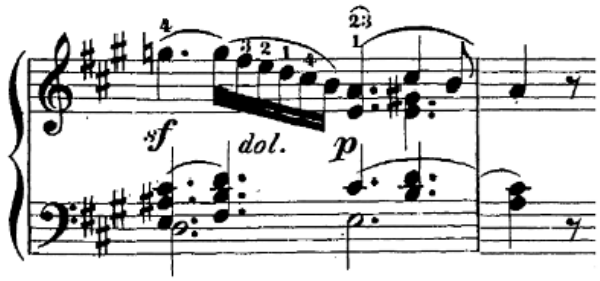
b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 59.3-60.2.



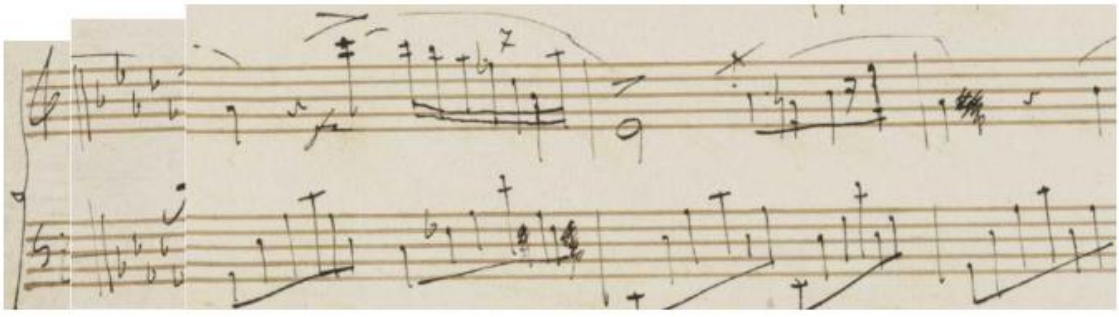
The next part of Chopin's contrasting material bears a strong resemblance to something that occurs just a few bars later in Moscheles's closing group (Ex. 68). In both passages there is a sudden leap to a high, unprepared dissonance. The high tone is sustained for one beat and tied into the beginning of a fall in sixtheenth notes (over a predominant harmony) which leads us back to our original tessitura and a V6/4—V—I cadence. The cadence is of course quite ordinary, but worth noting, given how rarely Chopin deploys a cadential 6/4. The correspondence between these passages was less apparent in the earlier version of the impromptu, where the high note is struck a beat earlier, allowing the ensuing fall to happen twice as slowly.

**Example 68. High, unprepared dissonance leads to fall in Moscheles and Chopin**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 101-102.1.




b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 60-62.2.

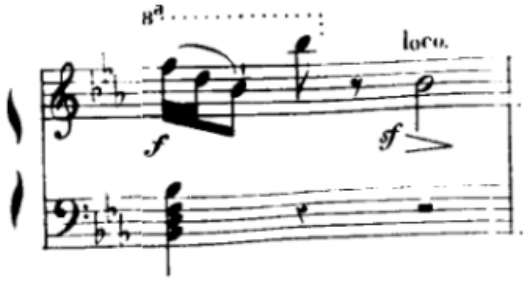


**Relationship to Moscheles's Impromptu**

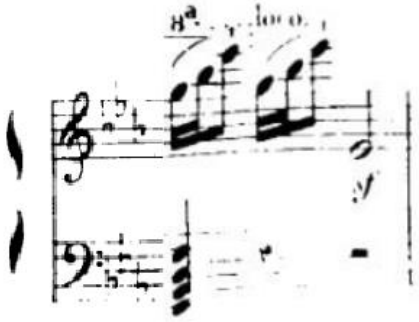
At first glance, there does not appear to be any strong correlation between the trios of Moscheles's and Chopin's impromptus beyond the reduction in tempo and adoption of a more lyrical character. But there is in fact one very strong material connection between the trios of Chopin's and Moscheles's impromptus: a return to the "signal" motif that Moscheles uses at the end of his main idea, and which Chopin adapted in his introduction. To understand Chopin's use of this motif, we first need a complete picture of the way Moscheles used it. The signal is sounded four times during the course of the first A section, always both punctuating the end of one subsection and announcing the start of the next. The internal organization of Moscheles's A section is a sort of unbalanced rounded binary (the 8-bar main idea being treated as the first "half" and the entire contrasting episode, reprise, and codetta sequence being treated as the second) with each half being repeated once. This means that first three instances of the signal motif are preceded and succeeded by quite similar music, as the A section is almost entirely spun from a single idea (Ex. 69). But the fourth occurrence of the signal motif must both punctuate the final paragraph of the A section and prepare the arrival of the trio; indeed, it even becomes an integral part of the trio's material.

**Example 69. Moscheles's first uses of the signal motif.**

a) 1st iteration of signal motif (Moscheles, Impromptu, Op. 89, m. 20).

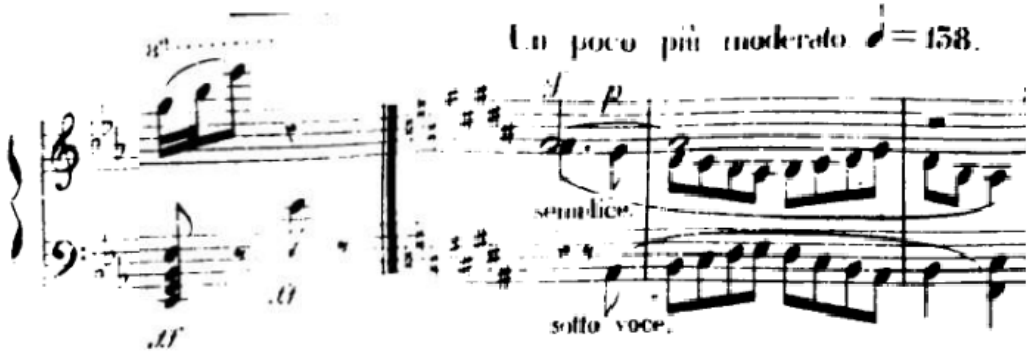



b) 3rd iteration of signal motif (Moscheles, Impromptu, Op. 89, m. 61)



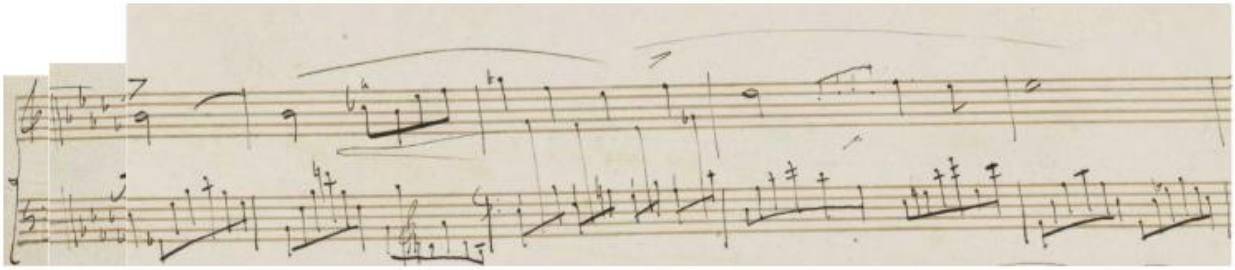

Therefore, the closing bar of the opening section is altered from its first appearance in a way that allows Moscheles to separate out the dual functions of the signal tone: the punctuation aspect is shifted to the short e-flat' on beat two, and the signal tone itself is abruptly transposed to f-sharp', effecting a nearly instantaneous lurch of a modulation (Ex. 70).

**Example 70. Fourth iteration of signal motif (Moscheles, Impromptu, Op. 89, mm. 94-96.2).**



As the sound of this unexpected tone decays, it ushers in the new musical environment of the trio. It seems to have been this attention to the sustain and decay of the signal tone that Chopin found most intriguing. Chopin combines the precise pitch (b-flat') of Moscheles's first use of the signal with the tie into the following bar (and attendant close attention to the decay of the tone) from the fourth iteration (Ex. 71). It would have been more ordinary for the tone b-flat' to be struck on the downbeat of measure 47, as this would give the same rhythmic profile to the antecedent and consequent phrases. But shifting the b-flat' two beats earlier allows Chopin to simultaneously make a reference to an important feature of Moscheles's trio while also solving a contrapuntal problem: if Chopin had waited to strike the b-flat' until the following downbeat and had sustained the initial harmony of m. 46, it would have generated parallel octaves between the bass and soprano.

**Example 71. Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 46.3-60.**



Chopin's adaptation of this motif seems to imply a certain criticism of the way Moscheles used it in his own trio. Every time that Moscheles uses the signal tone in the trio of the Op. 89 impromptu, the tone lasts for six beats before that voice disappears from the texture. Chopin, on the other hand, insists on following the decaying sound of the tone closely enough that it can lead to a continuation of the melody. Chopin also seems to have found Moscheles's way of using the signal tone to effect a modulation with the sudden leap to an unexpected and unprepared tone incompatible with his own style. In his adaptation of this device, Chopin is careful to harmonize

the beginning of the signal tone so that it connects smoothly with the preceding harmony before shifting the ground beneath the sustained tone to prepare what comes next.

**Relationship to Beethoven's Sonata**

To conclude this discussion of the trio, we must note the limited but significant import of Beethoven's Op. 27/2. There are no strong, direct connections between the material of Beethoven's sonata and Chopin's trio section, but it should not be overlooked that the key scheme of the three movements of Beethoven's sonata is C-sharp minor—D-flat major—C-sharp minor, which is the same as Chopin's key structure in the impromptu. As this observation suggests a relationship between the overall design of Beethoven's sonata and the internal organization of Chopin's impromptu, Liszt's description of the central movement of Op. 27/2 as "a flower between two abysses" seems quite appropriate for the trio of Chopin's impromptu, nestled between the two dark iterations of the main section.

## The Coda, mm. 119-138

Where the outer sections of Chopin's impromptu were based primarily on Moscheles's impromptu and the trio based primarily on Moscheles's sonata, the coda is based primarily on Beethoven's sonata. Recalling, yet again, Liszt's observation that Chopin's wit struck at things well beneath the surface, one can conclude that Chopin is here demonstrating without equivocation what it is he sees at the core of Moscheles's music: the music of Beethoven.

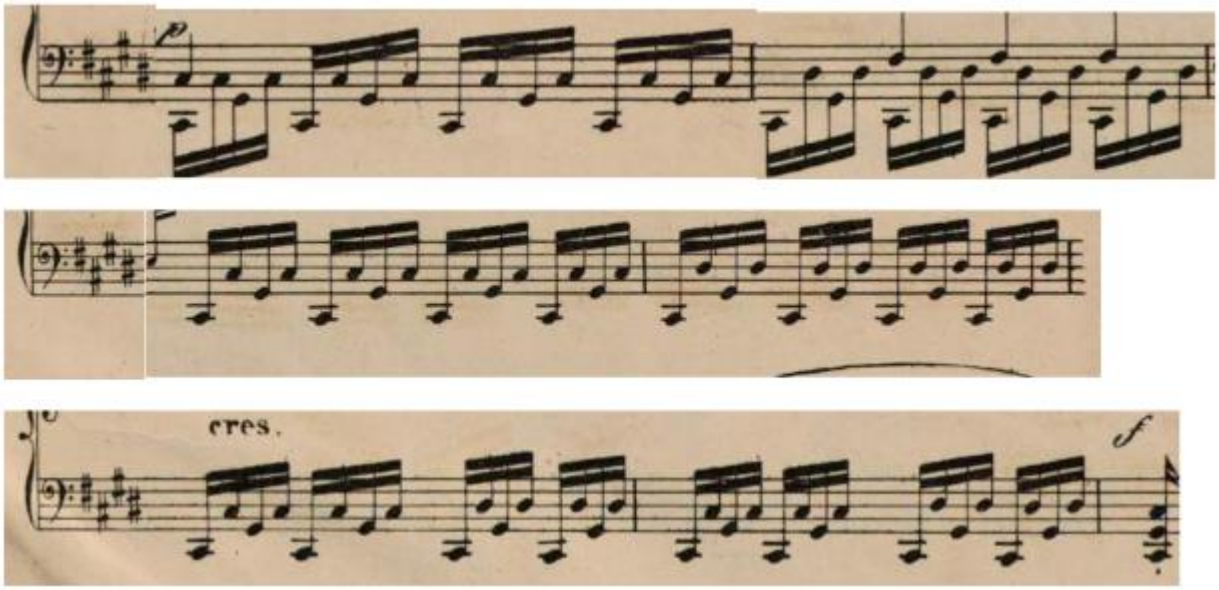
Chopin's basic process in the coda is to expand the final segment of the codetta of the outer sections and synthesize its content with coda material from Beethoven's sonata. The coda has two parts, which are distinct both in their processes of expansion and in which movement of Beethoven's sonata they are referencing. The first part of the coda, mm. 119-128, is an expansion of just three beats of the codetta, mm. 38.4-39.2, and incorporates many features of

the coda from Beethoven's finale (mm. 190ff). The second part, mm. 129-138, is an expansion of the following bar and a half of the codetta, mm. 39.3-40, and incorporates features of the coda from Beethoven's first movement (mm. 60ff).

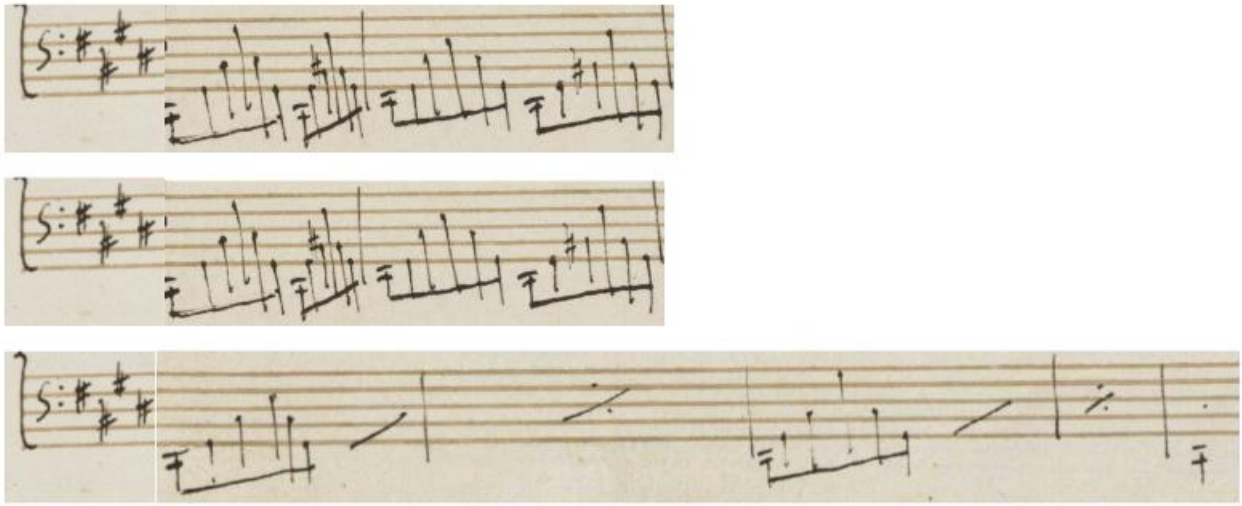
Chopin achieves continuity between the codetta of the previous section and the coda proper by both following Beethoven's thread (that connects the transition to the coda in the *Presto*) in the left hand as well as continuing to follow his own in the right hand. Beethoven's thread is followed by succeeding the turn motive that concludes the codetta (cf. Beethoven's mm. 187-189) with a particular left hand ostinato. Chopin resumes the nearly ubiquitous parabolic accompaniment, now an octave lower; tonic and dominant harmonies alternate over C-sharp–G-sharp drone, just as in mm. 190ff of Beethoven's *Presto* (Ex. 72). Though the harmonic rhythm is different—Beethoven's accelerates from one-bar units to half bar units, where Chopin's remains constant at half-bar units—the number of oscillations is the same; both passages have four tonic-dominant pairs before an eventual tonic stasis.

**Example 72. Comparison of left hand ostinatos in Beethoven's and Chopin's codas**

a) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/iii, mm. 190-196.1 LH.




b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 119-127.1 LH.

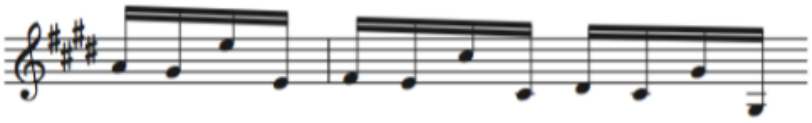


In the right hand, Chopin expands material from his own codetta through two processes: repetition and elaboration (Ex. 73). The descending arpeggio e"–c-sharp"–g-sharp" that was traced in mm. 38.4-39.2 is now traversed three times. The first two iterations—mm. 119-120 and

mm. 121-122, which are identical save the first beat of m. 121—take up two bars each (the corresponding part of the codetta was just three beats) and the simple triadic descent is obscured by the addition of a passing tone and then subsequent decoration with appoggiaturas.

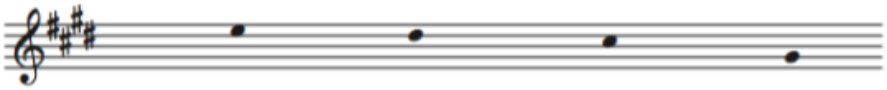
**Example 73. Chopin's elaboration of the descending arpeggio**

a) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 38.4-39.2.

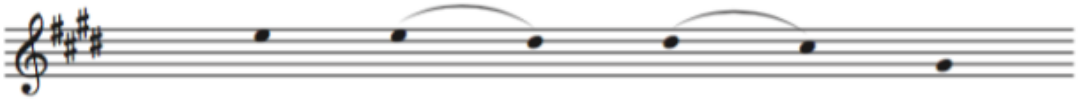


b) Arpeggio outlined by the excerpt above.

c) Arpeggio with passing tone.



d) Arpeggio with passing tone; appoggiaturas on 2nd and 3rd notes.



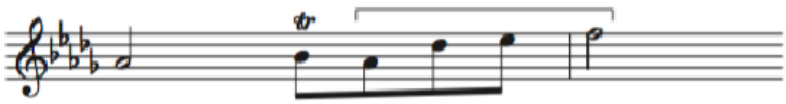
e) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 119.2-121.1

The addition of the passing tone between e" and c-sharp" was not an idle choice; the resulting melodic motive is the retrograde of a characteristic fragment of the cantilena from the trio, just shifted from major to minor (Ex. 74). That Chopin should have found these four notes to be a satisfactory distillation of this melodic idea is supported by his subsequent adaptation of this material in the Op. 29 impromptu, about which Jim Samson notes "In his second Impromptu in A flat major, Op. 29, he rebuilt to the specifications of Op. 66; we might almost say that he derived the second from the first. There are precise parallels of formal design, proportion, detailed phrase structure, texture, and contour. And the links are strengthened by motivic parallels."[66] While the fact that this small fragment appears here in retrograde makes the connection to the trio even less immediately perceptible, it is important to recall that the figuration outlining the motive is itself the retrograde of prior material, Chopin having derived the figuration of the codetta and coda by playing the figuration in mm. 13ff backwards. He may have therefore found it appropriate to use this figuration in retrograde to outline a theme in retrograde.

[66] Jim Samson, "Chopin and Genre," in *Chopin,* ed. John Rink (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 218. The connections between Op. 66 and Op. 29, and indeed the two subsequent impromptus, Op. 36 and Op. 51, are deserving of their own study—see pp. 128-130.

**Example 74. Correspondence between trio cantilena and coda material**

a) Initial fragment of trio cantilena.



b) Four-note ascending motive.

c) Transposed to C-sharp minor.

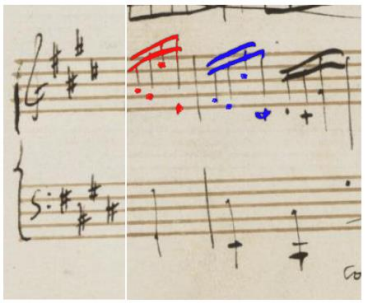
d) In retrograde.

The third and final iteration of the descending arpeggio is rather longer than the first two, now taking up six measures (Ex. 75). The passing tone and appoggiaturas that clouded the underlying arpeggio of the first two iterations are gone. So too are the alternating tonic and dominant harmonies; Chopin has arrived at the tonic stasis that Beethoven achieved in m. 196 of his finale. Chopin uses this harmonic repose and the temporal expansion of the arpeggio motive to dissipate the churning energy of the foregoing music. Each step of the arpeggio is less complex than the last. All of the turbulence in the first two steps is the result of blending the two

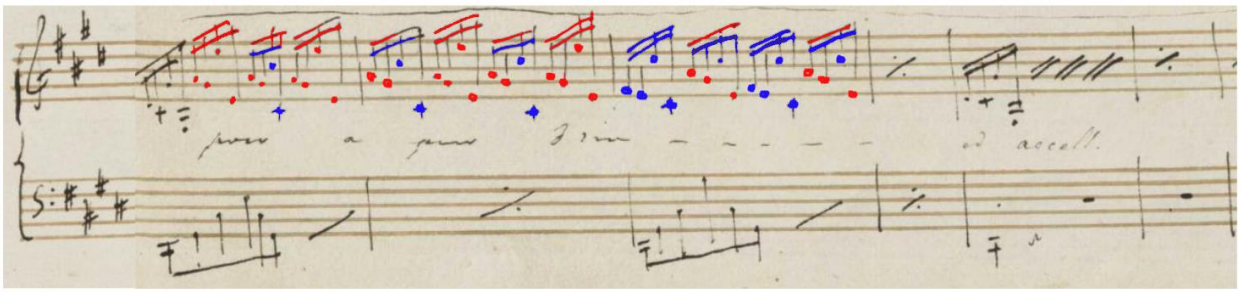
iterations of the figure together. The third step is a placid shimmer, its figuration repeating without disturbances.

**Example 75. Derivation of figuration in part of the coda from that of the codetta**

a) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 38.4-39.2.



b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 123-128.



Its careful motivic construction aside, there is one more noteworthy facet of this first part of Chopin's coda. It was previously noted that in adapting his introduction from part of this same passage of Beethoven's finale (mm. 187-90, the first measure of Beethoven's coda and several measures preceding it) Chopin inverted Beethoven's dynamic indications, turning two *p* markings into a *f* and a *fzp*.[67] Similarly, Chopin here inverts Beethoven's dynamic trajectory: where Beethoven's coda starts piano and gradually increases to forte, Chopin starts at forte and gradually diminishes to *sotto voce*. Chopin also inverts Beethoven's associated control of the

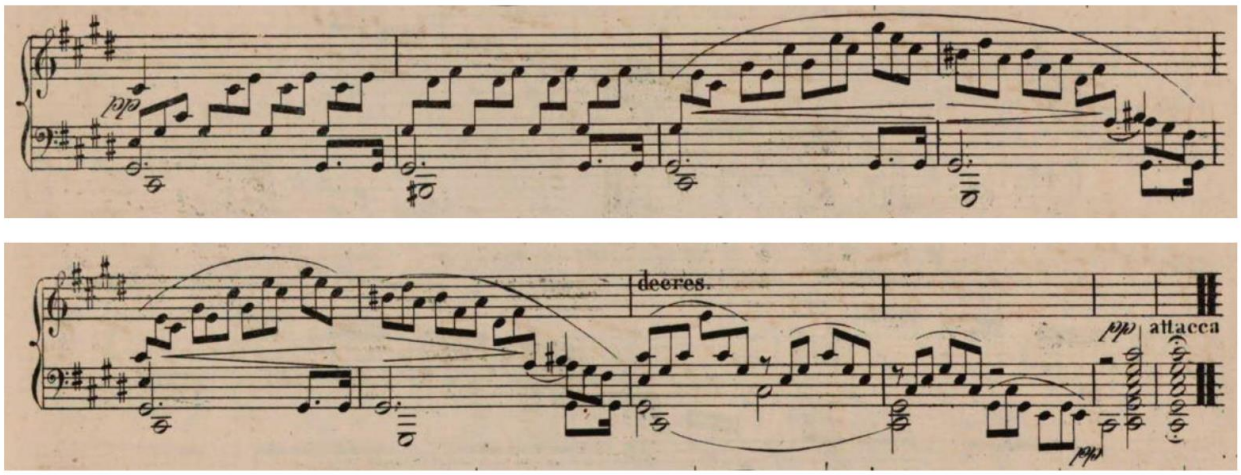
[67] See p. 52.

registral space: the registral ceiling in Beethoven's coda rises from g-sharp' to g-sharp" and ultimately reaches e'" in the final cascade of arpeggios, while Chopin's descends from e" to g♯"; the floor in both Chopin's and Beethoven's passages remains fixed at C-sharp.

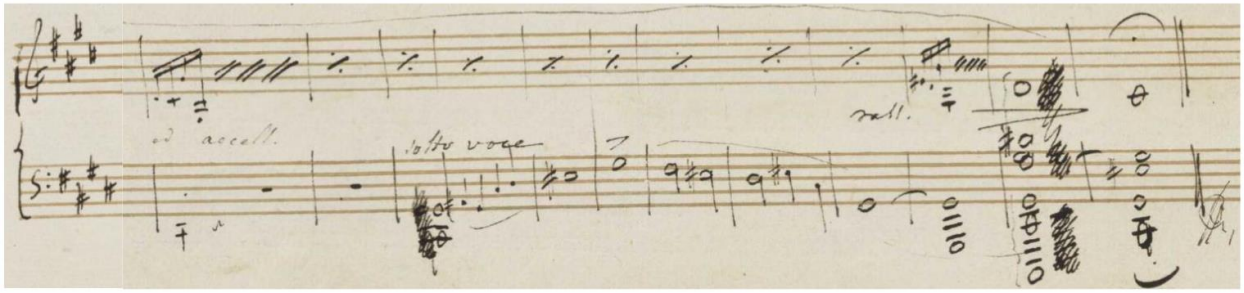
This decrease in energy in mm. 123-128 leads us to the second half of the coda. The right hand continues with the same figuration as before, linking the two halves of the coda to one another; one should recall that this figuration was also the link between the coda and the foregoing codetta. In the left hand, the cantilena of the trio is heard, but now in the bass register. The procedure matches the one employed by Beethoven in the coda of the first movement of Op. 27/2 (Ex. 76). A previously heard theme that begins on the pitch g-sharp is moved from the soprano register to the bass, supported by a low C-sharp below and harmonic figuration above.

**Example 76. The coda from Beethoven's *Adagio* and the end of Chopin's coda**

a) Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia*, Op. 27/2/i, mm. 60-69.




b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 127-138.



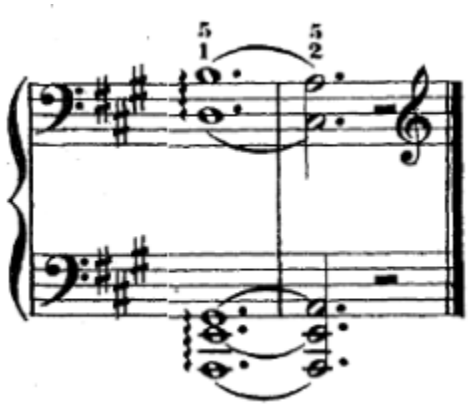

Within this basic template from Beethoven's first movement, Chopin expands the very last part of his own codetta, mm. 39.3-40: in both passages, the right hand continues its figuration (after having completed its arpeggiated descent) while the left sounds a thematic fragment on the correct pitches but in augmentation. In the codetta, it was a very small fragment—just the turn motive—in double augmentation, which makes its relationship to the main material less easily perceptible to the listener. In the coda, however, the length of the thematic fragment is extended, and the theme is heard in what we might call "normal" augmentation—the note values have been only doubled, not quadrupled. Given that the tempo of the trio is somewhat slower than the outer sections and that there is an accelerando leading to this

final part of the coda, the temporal relationship of the trio and this recollection of its material in the coda is even closer than the written values might suggest (and is also subject to the will of the performer).

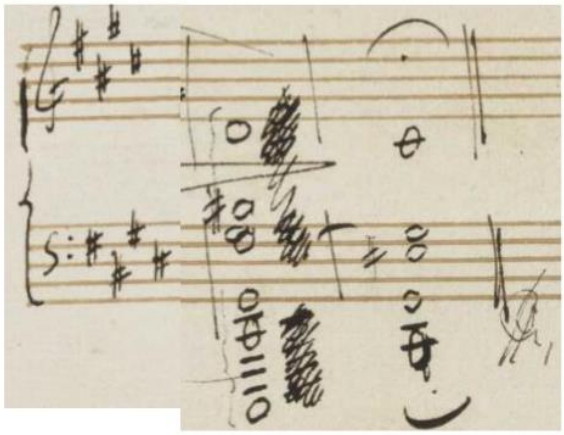
After the left hand has sounded the first four measures of the trio melody (now of course occupying eight measures) the right hand figuration slows and eventually stops when we come to a fairly common sort of cadence, with a dominant seventh chord in a metrically—in this case, hypermetrically—strong position resolves to the tonic on a weaker position over a tonic pedal point (Ex. 77). Like the parabolic arpeggio that accompanies most of the piece, the ubiquity of this figure in musical practice belies its significance. This ending shares many details with a similar cadence at the end of the exposition (mm. 108-109) of Moscheles's sonata.

**Example 77. Cadences at the ends of Moscheles's exposition and Chopin's coda**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 108-109.



b) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66, mm. 137-138.



Both passages share the following characteristics: the cadence lies in the same rather low register; the first chord is broken while the second chord is taken together, with each hand being arpeggiated independently; some common tones from the first chord are tied into the second; and the voicing is virtually identical save the placement of the leading tone and its resolution, as well as Chopin's slight thickening of the sonority.

This cadence becomes even more significant when one notices that it is an echo of the cadence that concludes phrases in the trio (m. 58 and m. 70; the same cadence is left unresolved at the end of the trio in m. 82). This makes the last part of the coda give the impression of a summation of the trio theme rather than just a fragment; both the characteristic opening of the cantilena and the concluding cadence are presented. But, as was discussed earlier, the cadential idea in the trio was itself borrowed from the cadence of Moscheles's opening idea in the sonata.[68] This brings us to the final layer of significance in this seemingly simple ending: references made in this cadence allow us to notice something that Chopin heard in Moscheles's sonata, which is that the first and last cadences of the exposition "rhyme" in a certain way. That is, both cadences harmonize a B moving down to an A in the soprano voice with a dominant seventh resolving to a tonic chord over a tonic pedal, but not in the same key—the first is in F-sharp minor while the second is in A major (Ex. 78). While the change of mode is lost in Chopin's adaptation, this nexus of references suggests that he noticed this relationship between Moscheles's cadences. The connection between Chopin's final cadence and the cadence of his trio theme is enhanced by the final cadence being preceded by a fragment of the trio theme. When the resemblances between Chopin's final cadence and Moscheles's final cadence of the exposition, as well the resemblances between Chopin's cadence of the trio theme and Moscheles's cadence of the first theme are noticed, the readily observable connection between Chopin's cadences assists the informed listener in noticing the more subtle connection between Moscheles's cadences. One might recall Ernst Oster's observation that in Op. 66, "one genius discloses to us what he hears in the music of another genius."[69]

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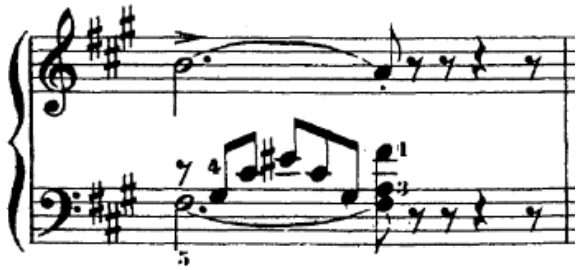
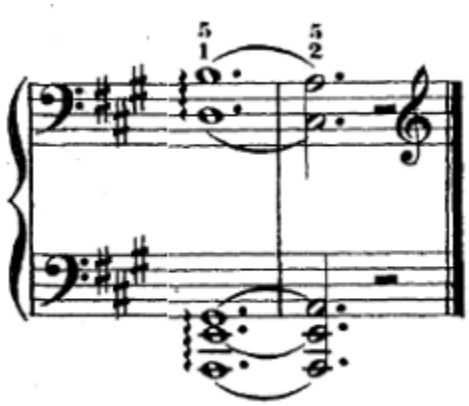
[68] See pp. 99-100.
[69] Oster, "The Fantaisie-Impromptu," 207.

**Example 78. Correspondence between Moscheles's first and last cadences in the exposition**

a) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, m. 8.

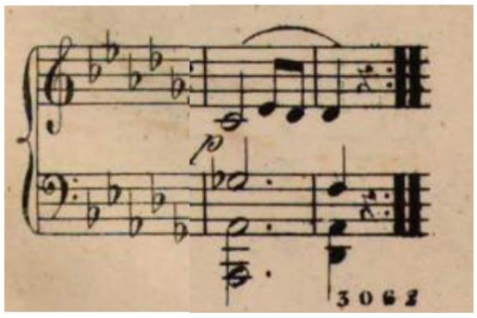


b) Moscheles, *Sonate mélancolique*, Op. 49, mm. 108-109.



A similar sort of cadence in the same register and the same key also concludes Beethoven's middle movement (Ex. 79). Chopin's only nod to this movement in the impromptu is the choice of key for the trio; the endings of the other two movements have already been referenced in the coda. When Chopin arrived at the penultimate chord when writing out the d'Este presentation manuscript, he momentarily forgot that he was in the key of C-sharp major, and wrote the first chord of the cadence as though he was in D-flat before crossing it out and correcting it.

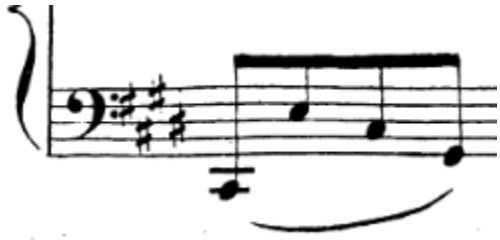
**Example 79. Beethoven, *Sonata quasi una fantasia,* Op. 27/2/ii, mm. 35-36.**



There is a final connection between the impromptu and its source material which is only present in the earlier version of the piece that was eventually published by Julian Fontana and would become the version familiar to most listeners. The coda of this early version of Op. 66 contains an unheralded alteration of the texture: the parabolic compound meter accompaniment, which has been flowing almost unceasingly since it began in m. 3, suddenly gives way to a different figuration in a different rhythm (Ex. 80a) This new accompanimental idea has the same basic function as the previous one: four-note chords are given shape and movement by the application of a repeating figuration. What is lost however, is the polymetric interplay between the parts, as the new accompaniment is 8$^{th}$ notes in cut time. The basic idea of the piece disappears, and the coda seems a bit more flat-footed than the preceding music. As with the rest of the piece, this new accompanimental figure was not conceived by Chopin but was borrowed, in this case from the accompaniment of the main idea of Moscheles's impromptu (Ex. 80b).

**Example 80. Accompaniment from Chopin's original coda and Moscheles's impromptu**

a) Chopin, Impromptu in C-sharp minor, Op. 66 (1834 version), m. 119 LH.



b) Moscheles, Impromptu in E-flat major, Op. 89, m. 13 LH.

This accompanimental figure was discarded when Chopin fashioned his own main idea by pairing the right-hand melody of Moscheles's impromptu with the left-hand accompaniment of Moscheles's sonata. Recalling that the right-hand figuration of Chopin's coda is ultimately derived from a passage in Moscheles's sonata,[70] we can observe that this early version of the coda inverts Chopin's procedure in the main idea; with an accompaniment from Moscheles's impromptu supporting material from Moscheles's sonata in the right hand. Though Chopin would ultimately discard this conceit when preparing the manuscript for the Baroness d'Este, this scrap from Chopin's cutting room floor—through a quirk of fate now far more well known than its successor—gives us further evidence of the impromptu's fundamental dependence on the source pieces for material.

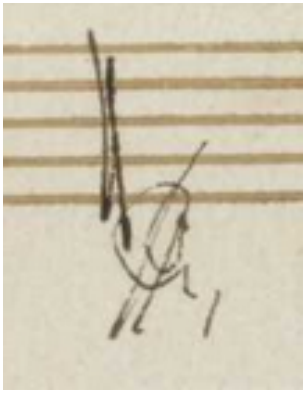
[70] See pp. 63-65.

If one now takes a step back from this chapter's exploration of Chopin's dense and winding musical processes, a surprisingly clear pattern emerges. It was noted earlier that the internal organization of the outer sections resembled that of the entire work. The (1) main idea, (2) central episode, (3) reprise of the main idea, and (4) codetta of the outer sections correspond to the (1) first A section, (2) trio, (3) reprise of the A section, and (4) coda of the whole piece. Chopin uses this recursive structure to determine which of the three source pieces will be most prominently featured in the material of each part of the impromptu. In the main idea (and, of course, its reprise) we find that Moscheles's impromptu has the greatest influence on the material, in the central episode it is Moscheles's sonata, and in the codetta it is Beethoven's sonata. Correspondingly, the most evident source piece in the outer sections as a whole is Moscheles's impromptu, in the trio is Moscheles's sonata, and in the coda is Beethoven's sonata. However, it is also essential to recall that the most prominent source material is never the only source material, with music from the other pieces influencing the musical discourse in various ways. Chopin's C-sharp minor impromptu thus allows the informed listener to take up a vantage point where the Impromptu, Op. 89 and *Sonate mélancolique,* Op. 49 of Moscheles and the *Sonata quasi una fantasia,* Op. 27/2 are all in view. Chopin will then systematically draw our focus from one piece to the next, but without every losing sight of the others. In this way, he guides us through his own perception and interpretation of the three pieces upon which his impromptu is based.

## CHAPTER IV: THE INTERSECTION OF CHOPIN'S PRIVATE AND PUBLIC LIVES

The C-sharp minor impromptu affords us an opportunity to lift the curtain and observe several different facets of Chopin's private musical life. A written down and thoroughly worked out analogue of Chopin's "comic improvisations" imitating other composer-pianists, it transmits some of Chopin's impressions of Moscheles as a composer, not least of all Chopin's perception of Moscheles's appreciation of Beethoven. Liszt's description of Chopin's musical imitations as "comic" does not appear, at first glance, to be relevant to the impromptu, the musical character of which is not particularly humorous. Either this comic element was only present in Chopin's improvised imitations for entertainment and not an integral part of the impromptu's composition, or there was some humorous component to Chopin's way of performing the piece which is not indicated in the score. The door to the latter possibility is perhaps left ajar by an odd detail of the d'Este manuscript. After carefully inscribing the text of the impromptu in the baroness's album, Chopin signed the manuscript with his initials. He then transformed his initials into a crude and somewhat silly caricature of himself (Ex. 81). The incongruity between the elegantly presented text of a seemingly serious piece of music and the comical signature that accompanies it is striking.

**Example 81. Chopin's signature in the d'Este manuscript**



Beyond offering a vague glimpse of Chopin's musical mimicry, the impromptu also allows one to see Chopin in his musical workshop, refining both practical and organizational elements of his art. In the practical realm, Chopin develops his own pianistic idiom through the imitation and adaptation of Moscheles's pianistic figurations. The most conspicuous and consistent feature of Chopin's transformations of Moscheles's material is how much more physical plasticity is required of the performer. Moscheles himself would comment on the flexibility required to approach one of Chopin's pianistic ideas, writing that "the most difficult stretch is that of a fifth between the fourth and fifth finger. It requires a rather large hand or a great deal of training to be able to reach it easily at speed, and to execute correctly arpeggios such as this, in an excerpt from Chopin's ninth etude."[71] Moscheles likely wrote these words without being fully aware of the role that his own music played in the development of Chopin's supple approach to the keyboard.[72]

In the organizational realm, Chopin cultivates a new genre by engaging with Moscheles's formal procedures. It was noted in Chapter III that Chopin adopts the basic idea of Moscheles's impromptu, a ternary form whose outer sections are characterized by florid melodic passagework in a fast tempo and a trio distinguished by a more lyrical character and a reduction in tempo. To effect the reduction of tempo and shift to a lyrical character for the trio, Chopin implements the operatic aria topic that Moscheles had used at the beginning of the *Sonate mélancolique*. This allows Chopin to establish a dialectic between quintessentially pianistic passagework in the outer sections and evocations of the human voice in the trio, pure distillations of two different facets of

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[71] "L'écartement le plus difficile est celui de la quinte, entre le quatrième et le cinquième doigt. Il faut une main de grande conformation ou un long exercice pour y atteindre facilement dans la vitesse, et pour bien exécuter des arpèges tels que celui-ci, extrait de la neuvième étude de Chopin." François-Joseph Fétis and Ignaz Moscheles, *Méthode des méthodes* (Paris: Schlesinger, 1840), 64.

[72] For a very clear instance of Chopin deriving a figuration from Moscheles, see Ex. 1 on p. 15.

Chopin's pianism, which can be described by relation to non-pianistic music as Chopin's Paganinian and Bellinian sides. These formal and topical considerations will also determine the structure of the three impromptus that Chopin is to publish over the decade following the composition of the C-sharp minor impromptu.

The Impromptu in A-flat, Op. 29 of 1837 is the one that most closely follows the design of its predecessor in C-sharp minor; in the outer sections, Chopin often seems to be tracing the earlier work. The most significant departure occurs in the trio: the middle section of the C-sharp minor impromptu is a single, coherent aria in the soprano register, but the trio of Op. 29 is in two separate parts with two distinct characters and voices. The first has a mezzo-soprano singing a sustained melody, and the second features a more agile and mercurial coloratura soprano.

In the 1838 Impromptu in F-sharp major, Op. 36, Chopin appears to abandon the operatic topic of the trio, much as he abandons the usual flittering melodic roulades in the first section of the piece—the second impromptu is decidedly the odd one out. But Chopin is only bending the form he has created, not breaking it. The melodic arabesques will appear later in the piece, and the fact that the trio is a march rather than the expected aria is explained by Jim Samson, who seeks a basis for some nineteenth century descriptions of this passage. Samson writes, "a comparison between the central march of the F-sharp major impromptu and contemporary operatic choruses, for instance, would provide some rationale for Niecks' 'procession' and Huneker's 'cavalcade'."[73] Chopin has merely replaced one operatic form with another, giving us a chorus in place of an aria.

In his final essay in the genre, the Impromptu in G-flat major, Op. 51 of 1843, Chopin follows more closely the model of his first two efforts. The first section commences and sustains

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[73] Jim Samson, *Chopin* (New York, NY: Schirmer, 1997), 226.

the expected figuration, and the trio is once again an aria. Chopin does, however, explore a different voice type in the trio of Op. 51; whereas the first two impromptus featured right-hand melodies in the soprano and mezzo-soprano registers, the trio of the last impromptu has its melody declaimed by the left hand in the baritone register. The connections between the four impromptus go far beyond these formal and topical similarities, and are deserving of their own study. But even a cursory comparison makes it clear that the C-sharp minor impromptu served as a prototype for the three that followed.

The C-sharp minor impromptu thus sits at the intersection of Chopin's private and public musical lives. From the private sphere, it contains traces of Chopin's way of entertaining friends and admirers by mimicking other composer-pianists, as well as Chopin's personal research and refinement of his art through the imitation and assimilation of Moscheles's ideas. The quintessentially private nature of these musical activities may have caused Chopin to consider the C-sharp minor impromptu unsuitable for public consumption and opt to present it to a single admirer instead of publishing it for widespread consumption. However, the musical research he undertook in the composition of the C-sharp minor impromptu was too fruitful to be kept private, leading Chopin to use the work as a template for three finely wrought pieces that he would elect to present as public manifestations of his musical craft.

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