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J. S. Bach's Chaconne in D Minor: An Examination of Three Arrangements for Piano Solo.

Jeffery Mark Pruett

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arrangements for piano solo**

Pruett, Jeffery Mark, D.M.A.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1991

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J. S. Bach's Chaconne in D Minor:
An Examination of Three Arrangements
for Piano Solo

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

Jeffery Mark Pruett

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May 1991

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. J. S. BACH'S <u>CHACONNE IN D MINOR</u> , ARRANGED BY ERNST VON PAUER	11
3. J. S. BACH'S <u>CHACONNE IN D MINOR</u> -- ARRANGEMENTS BY ARTHUR BRISKIER AND KARL HERMANN PILLNEY	34
4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY	67
APPENDIX	
A. PIANO ACCOMPANIMENTS FOR J. S. BACH'S <u>CHACONNE IN D MINOR</u> BY FELIX MENDELSSOHN AND ROBERT SCHUMANN	70
B. A LIST OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR PIANO SOLO OF J. S. BACH'S <u>CHACONNE</u> <u>IN D MINOR</u>	81
VITA	83

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Abstract

The chaconne from the Second Partita for Solo Violin by Johann Sebastian Bach is one of the most often arranged compositions in the history of music. In the century following the first publication in 1802 of Bach's six sonatas and partitas for solo violin, the chaconne was performed in arrangements and transcriptions almost as diverse as the composers whom it inspired. From the years 1879 and 1893, respectively, came the most famous arrangements--those by Johannes Brahms and Ferruccio Busoni (both for solo piano). Larry Sitsky, writing of works based on the chaconne apart from those for solo instruments, has referred to "countless" arrangements for organ, orchestra, and various instrumental ensembles.¹ (Busoni himself has mentioned orchestral transcriptions of the chaconne which were performed in America during the early part of the twentieth century.)²

This monograph consists of an examination of

¹Larry Sitsky, Busoni and the Piano: the Works, the Writings, and the Recordings (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972), 307.

²Ferruccio Busoni, Letters to His Wife, trans. by Rosamond Ley (New York: Da Capo Press, 1975), 251.

three versions of Bach's Chaconne in D Minor--those by Ernst von Pauer (1867), Arthur Briskier (1954), and Karl Hermann Pillney (1968). In addition, a brief comparison of piano accompaniments written for the chaconne by Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann (1847 and 1853 respectively) comprises the remainder of the study. While Pauer's arrangement dates from the second half of the nineteenth century--the period of the Brahms and Busoni versions--only the latter two have remained in the repertoire for solo piano. I have chosen to examine Pauer's Chaconne because of its display of virtuoso keyboard technique, a quality that removes it dramatically from the original source. Briskier's and Pillney's arrangements are examined in light of their similar compositional genesis--both are works dating from the twentieth century and subsequently reflect a more conservative view of the interpretation of Bach's original work.

The study of these arrangements reveals diverse attitudes toward the performance of Bach, as well as an insight into the art of piano transcription during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The six sonatas and partitas for violin solo by J. S. Bach (BWV 1001-06) stand at the apex of the literature for unaccompanied violin. These pieces are quintessential examples of a German tradition of polyphonic works for solo violin that encompass the sonatas of Johann Jakob Walther (1605-1717), Thomas Baltzer (c. 1630-1663), Heinrich Franz Ignaz Biber (1644-1705), and Johann Paul von Westhoff (1656-1705). These works in turn form the genesis of a celebrated line of similar unaccompanied compositions that culminates with the caprices of Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840). Bach's sonatas and partitas date from his period of service for Prince Leopold at Anhalt-Cöthen and are thought to have been composed in 1720.¹

Perhaps the most monumental movement contained within the sonatas and partitas is the chaconne that serves as the fifth and final movement of the Second Partita in D Minor (BWV 1004). It is this single movement that has most intrigued scholars, chal-

¹Jon F. Eiche, "Background," in The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: A Collection of Views, ed. Jon F. Eiche (Bloomington, IN: Frangipani Press, 1985), 19.

lenged performers, and inspired arrangers and transcribers.

Philipp Spitta, in his appraisal of Bach's work, described this chaconne as "some phenomenon of the elements, which transports [the listener] with its indescribable majesty, and at the same time bewilders and confuses. . . ." ² Albert Schweitzer suggested that "out of a single theme Bach conjures up the whole world," ³ while Johannes Brahms in a letter to Clara Schumann described the chaconne as "one of the most wonderful and incomprehensible pieces of music." ⁴

The chaconne is cast in three distinct sections and has a length of 257 measures. Since it is longer than the sum of the four movements that precede it in the suite, certain analysts, most notably Spitta, have suggested that the chaconne is an

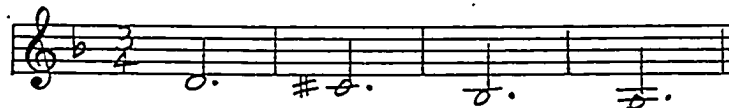
²Philipp Spitta, Johann Sebastian Bach: His Work and Influence on the Music of Germany, 1685-1750, 3 vols., trans. Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller-Maitland (London: Novello & Co., 1983-5; reprint ed., New York: Dover, 1951), 2:97.

³Eiche, The Bach Chaconne, 125.

⁴Johannes Brahms, Letters of Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms, ed. Berthold Litzman (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1927), 16.

appendage rather than an integral part of the work.⁵

There also exists some diversity of opinion regarding the length of the theme with respect to the construction of its successive variations. While most theorists would agree that the chaconne is based on a four-measure harmonic progression which serves as the basis for an identifiable eight-measure melody, various analyses have identified thirty-three to sixty-five patterned variations.⁶ For the purposes of this study, the work's overall scheme will be considered as sixty-four variations on a harmonic progression, each being four measures in length; the progression is based on the descending tetrachord shown in Example 1.⁷ An



Example 1. Descending tetrachord.

⁵Spitta, Bach, 2:95.

⁶Byron Cantrell, "Three B's--Three Chaconnes" in Current Musicology 12 (1968): 64-6. Cantrell cites Auer, Szigeti, Spitta, Leichtentritt, and Bernstein as having differing views as to the number of variations.

⁷This view has been corroborated by Cantrell as well as Martha Curti, in "J. S. Bach's Chaconne in D Minor: A Study in Coherence and Contrast," Music Review 37 no. 4 (1976): 249-65.

eight-measure melody hereafter referred to as the "chaconne theme" (see upper voice in Example 2) recurs three times in the course of the work--the beginning, the middle, and at the conclusion--thereby delineating the three large sections of the piece.



Example 2. Bach: Chaconne Theme,
Measures 1-8.

This chaconne and the remainder of the sonatas and partitas rank with the most discussed, analyzed, and edited of Bach's huge oeuvre. Contemporary performances of these works are the result of a remarkable, continuing evolution of performance practice and editorial effort. Since their first publication there have been some forty-four editions of the sonatas and partitas.⁸ These editions range

⁸For a complete discussion of the editions of the sonatas and partitas, see Robert P. Murray, "The Editions," in The Bach Chaconne, 24-40.

in character from the heavily edited versions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (David, 1843; Herrmann, 1900) to the historic editions of Alfred Dorffel (Bach-Gesellschaft edition, 1879) and Joachim and Moser (1907)--the first based on a Bach autograph. More recent editions (Hausswald, Neue Bach-Ausgabe, 1958; Wronski, 1970; Galamian, 1971) provide the distinct advantage of direct comparison with the autograph, which is included for reference in the score.

In the nineteenth century, the most influential editions for performers were the first edition of 1802, published by Simrock in Bonn, and the edition of 1843 by the great violinist Ferdinand David. Though the sonatas and partitas were known to a select group of scholars and violinists before their first publication through a number of manuscript copies, it was through the performances by David, along with the enthusiastic and influential opinions of Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann, that these sonatas and partitas were made available to a broader audience.

It is probably fair to assume that the sonatas and partitas were initially somewhat misunderstood by early nineteenth-century composers and audiences.

Joseph Szigeti has commented on various reactions to the works in the years following their publication: "They were not considered--as they are today-- indispensable pillars of our musical and violinistic equipment; they were seldom played; there was something apologetic in the minds of those virtuosi who did play parts of them. . . ."9 These observations are corroborated by the fact that a number of composers provided the chaconne with piano and orchestral accompaniments during the nineteenth century.

It is significant for this study that Mendelssohn supplied a piano accompaniment for the work which he premiered in Leipzig on 14 February, 1840 as soloist. Feder speculates that Mendelssohn's efforts may have resulted in the first public performance of the chaconne.¹⁰ A review of this event appeared in the Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung:

⁹Joseph Szigeti, Szigeti on the Violin (New York; Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), 123.

¹⁰Mendelssohn's arrangement of the chaconne with piano accompaniment was published in 1847 by Ewer & Co., London. [Georg Feder, "History of the Arrangements of Bach's Chaconne," in The Bach Chaconne, 24-40.]

A Chaconne in D Minor for violin solo by Sebastian Bach, which concertmaster (Ferdinand) David performed absolutely beautifully, stirred the most interest on this evening. . . . Dr. Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy accompanied both pieces on the pianoforte through a free realization of the harmony, contrapuntal in design . . . we greatly wish that so decided a success of Bach's masterpieces might stimulate all capable violinists to try them anew and to introduce them anew to the public. . . .¹¹

Ferdinand Hiller, an acquaintance of Mendelssohn, wrote of another concert at which Mendelssohn "improvised" an accompaniment for the chaconne.¹² Also present at the aforementioned 1840 concert was Robert Schumann. Inspired by the performance, Schumann composed his own piano accompaniment for the chaconne and the other movements of the six sonatas and partitas as well.¹³

The Mendelssohn and Schumann accompaniments, as well as some arrangements by lesser composers, enjoyed a fair degree of popularity in the mid-

¹¹Gottfried Wilhelm Fink, "A Concert Review," in The Bach Chaconne, 62-3.

¹²Dr. Ferdinand Hiller, Mendelssohn: Letters and Recollections, trans. M. E. von Glehn with an introduction by Joel Sachs (New York: Vienna House, 1922), 265.

¹³Schumann's arrangements were published by Breitkopf and Hartel in 1854. [Feder, in The Bach Chaconne, 41-43.]

nineteenth century with David being their most prominent performer. Some writers have suggested that the accompaniments were rather misguided attempts to make the sonatas and partitas more "palatable" to audiences.¹⁴ It was not until the performances of Joseph Joachim in the latter part of the nineteenth century that the sonatas and partitas found acceptance as entities unto themselves.¹⁵

The early efforts of Mendelssohn and Schumann were only the beginnings of a long line of transcriptions and arrangements of the chaconne--efforts that have continued to the present day. These diverse works encompass a wide spectrum of idioms from arrangements for piano and organ solo to versions for chamber group and large orchestra. Georg Feder, in his history of the arrangements of the chaconne, mentions the following nineteenth century arrangements for piano: Carl Debrois von Bruyck (1855), Joachim Raff (1865), Ernst von Pauer (1867) C. Wilschau (1879), W. Lamping (1887-8), Ferruccio Busoni

¹⁴Joseph Szigeti, "The Unaccompanied Sonatas and Partitas of Bach," The American String Teacher vol. 13, no. 4 (Fall 1963), 1.

¹⁵Eduard Melkus, "The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: Some Thoughts on the History of its Interpretation," trans. Beverley Plazcek in The Bach Chaconne, 138.

(1893), Hans Harthan (1892-3), and versions for the left hand alone by Count Geza Zichy (c. 1880) and Johannes Brahms (1879).¹⁶

From the twentieth century there exist arrangements for piano by Emanuel Moor (1936), a revised version of the Busoni arrangement by Alexander Siloti (1924), a revised version of the Raff arrangement by Isidore Philipp (1925), and more recent arrangements by Arthur Briskier (1954) and Karl Hermann Pillney (1968).¹⁷ In addition to these numerous arrangements for piano solo, there are also arrangements for organ (W. T. Best, H. Messner, Wilhelm Middelschulte, Arno Landmann); for guitar (Andres Segovia); for orchestra (Maximilian Steinberg, Joachim Raff, Riccardo Nielsen, Jeno Hubay, Alfredo Casella, Leopold Stokowski); and for chamber ensemble (B. Todt, Martinus Sieveking, Albert Maria Herz).

In this study, three piano arrangements of Bach's Chaconne in D Minor are examined: those by Pauer, Briskier, and Pillney. I have chosen to

¹⁶Georg Feder, in The Bach Chaconne, 41-61.

¹⁷Although all of these works, particularly the Busoni, are often referred to as "transcriptions," this term does not fit the definition for the genre as preferred by certain music historians.

examine Pauer's version because of its neglect in the modern repertoire for piano (curiously, of the eight arrangements dating from the nineteenth century, only Busoni's and Brahms' have retained their appeal among performers and audiences). Chapter 2 consists of an examination of the Pauer arrangement. In Chapter 3, two arrangements from the twentieth century are studied--those of Karl Hermann Pillney and Arthur Briskier. These two works reflect a somewhat more conservative approach to the transcription genre and the interpretation of Bach's original work. Chapter 4 consists of conclusions and recommendations for further investigations pertaining to the chaconne.

CHAPTER 2

J. S. BACH'S CHACONNE IN D MINOR, ARRANGED BY ERNST VON PAUER

Ernst von Pauer (1826-1905) was the third composer, after von Bruyck and Raff, to arrange J. S. Bach's Chaconne for piano solo. An eminent, if somewhat forgotten, figure of the musical life of Europe in the late nineteenth century, Pauer was described in his lifetime in Grove's Dictionary as "clever and indefatigable."¹ Although he was born and educated in Vienna, he spent the majority of his adult life in England, where he held professorships in piano at the Royal Academy of Music, the National Training School for Music, and Cambridge University. Eduard Hanslick wrote of Pauer's years in London:

Although he has been living here for almost forty years and has become closely associated with English musical and social life, Pauer has remained a real Viennese. As London's best and most sought-after piano teacher, he instructs young geniuses all day, gives lectures now and then, edits selections of the classics, makes four-hand arrangements, and finally comes to rest at home with his amiable children. . . .²

¹A. J. Hipkins, "Ernst Pauer," in A Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. Sir George Grove (London: Macmillan and Co., second ed., 1900), 674.

²Eduard Hanslick, Music Criticisms, 1846-99, trans. and ed. Henry Pleasants (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1950; reprint ed., Baltimore: Peregrine Books, 1963), 246.

While Pauer composed in many musical genres, the bulk of his works may be divided into three broad categories: original works and arrangements for piano; pedagogical and reference volumes; and editions of keyboard music. The last category includes thirty volumes of piano music, ranging in historical sequence from Bach and Handel to Robert Schumann. His writings include The Art of Pianoforte Playing and The Elements of the Beautiful in Music, both dating from 1877, and reference works such as Musical Forms and A Dictionary of Pianists and Composers for the Pianoforte, from 1878 and 1895 respectively.³

Pauer's version of the Chaconne (1867) is one of a number of his arrangements for piano of works by other composers, such as those of the symphonies of Beethoven and Schumann for piano duet. Hipkins comments that "as a pianist his style was distinguished by a breadth and nobility of tone, and by a sentiment in which seriousness of thought is blended with profound respect for the intention of the composer."⁴

³Hipkins, 674.

⁴Ibid.

Pauer's Chaconne possesses many of the characteristics that so readily identify certain other Romantic reworkings of Bach's music. Extreme dynamic contrasts, brilliant passagework, and arbitrary departures from the original source are hallmarks of the Romantic piano transcription as exemplified by the works of Liszt, Tausig, Thalberg, Busoni and others. Pauer's arrangement departs from Bach's original in essentially three areas: the realization or "filling out" of implied harmonies and the subsequent addition of newly-composed material; the displacement and/or enhancement of the register and range of the work; and the addition of dynamic markings.

A highly significant aspect of Pauer's piano arrangement is his liberal addition of newly-composed material. In an effort to transcend the medium of the violin and subsequently render the chaconne more pianistic, Pauer frequently inserts added chordal tones, contrapuntal lines, and a freely-composed concluding passage in an effort to expand the sonority of the violin piece. In a number of passages throughout the work, Pauer tends to harmonize many tones within moving sixteenth-note melodic patterns, as can be seen in the following

examples from variations eight and eleven:

Bach:



Pauer:



Example 1. Pauer: Measures 29-32.

Bach:



Pauer:



Example 2. Pauer: Measures 41-44.

This excessive harmonization accelerates the harmonic rhythm and creates arbitrary chord progressions. It is interesting to compare Busoni's transcription of the same passages--examples that seem to reflect more clearly the harmony implicit in Bach's melodic lines:



Example 3. Busoni: Measures 29-32 (cf. Ex. 1).



Example 4. Busoni: Measures 41-44 (cf. Ex. 2).

In his text entitled Musical Forms, Pauer discusses the term "chaconne" and describes the dance as having "a very sedate movement."⁵ Perhaps Pauer had in mind a tempo that would lend itself to such over-harmonizations as seen in the above examples.

In a later variation, Pauer's effort to supply a harmony for every note of a rapid sixteenth-note passage has as its result a technically difficult series of rapid chord inversions. This chordal passage is performed by alternating left and right hands (see Example 5).



Example 5. Pauer: Measures 63-4.

⁵Ernst Pauer, Musical Forms (London: Novello; New York: H. W. Gray Co., 1878), 151.

Another method by which Pauer attempts to fill out Bach's harmonic scheme is by the addition of purely accompanimental figures as can be seen in the left hand in Example 6 and the right hand in Example 7.



Example 6. Pauer: Measures 217-19.

This musical score shows three measures of music. The top staff is a single melodic line with slurs. The middle staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clef) with a piano (pp) dynamic marking and a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking. The bottom staff is a single melodic line with slurs. The measures are separated by vertical bar lines, and there are asterisks at the end of each measure in the bottom staff.

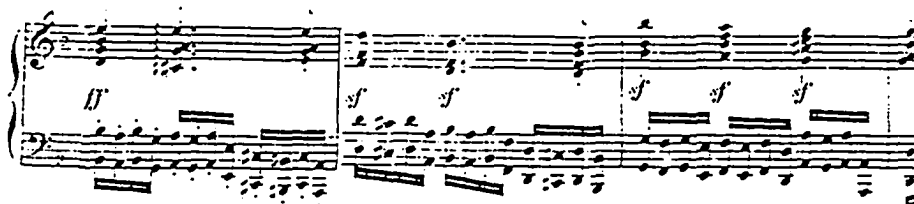
Example 7. Pauer: Measures 53-55.

A further way in which Pauer seeks to embellish the chaconne is the manner in which he adds material of a contrapuntal nature. As in the Busoni arrangement, this added contrapuntal material manifests itself in two forms: as harmonically-supportive accompaniment to the original work and as complementary figuration written in contrary motion. From the beginning of the second variation, as shown in Example 8, Pauer supplements the four-voice theme with a harmonically-supportive counter-melody cast in octaves:



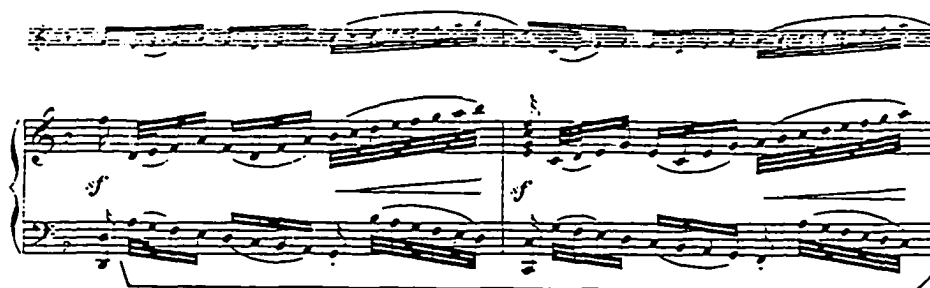
Example 8. Pauer: Measures 5-8.

As can be seen in Example 9, he treats the conclusion of the first section (a reprise of the opening material) in a similar manner, but with more rapid octave movement:

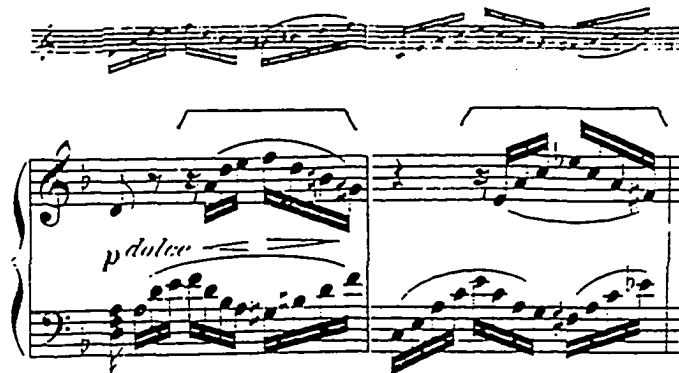


Example 9. Pauer: Measures 126-28.

In certain variations, Pauer attempts to enhance Bach's melody by supplying a voice which moves against it in contrary motion. This process is evident at the beginnings of the eighteenth and twentieth variations (note the bracketed figuration in Examples 10 and 11):



Example 10. Pauer: Measures 69-70.

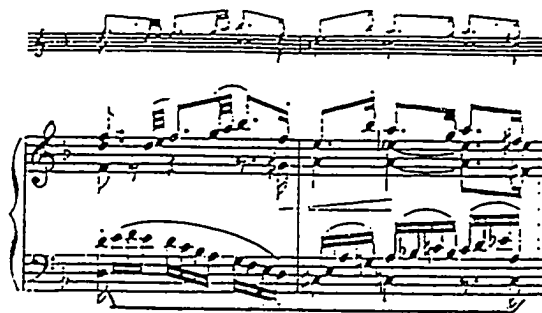


Example 11. Pauer: Measures 77-78.

Occasionally, these added voices assume pronounced melodic interests of their own, as is the case in the sixth and ninth variations (see the bracketed bass lines in Examples 12 and 13):



Example 12. Pauer: Measures 21-22.



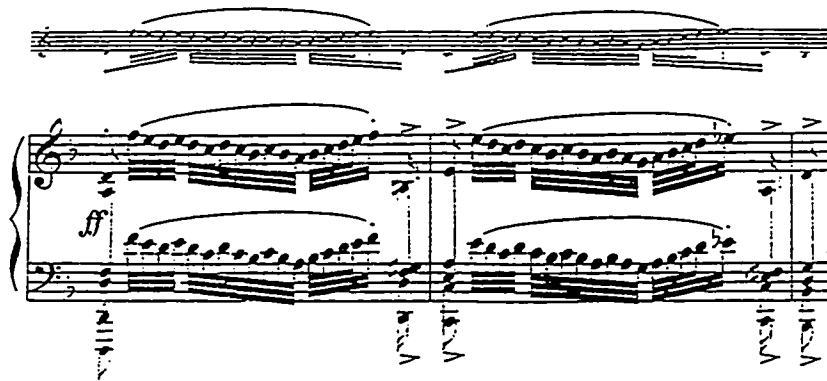
Example 13. Pauer: Measures 33-35.

A second means by which Pauer departs from Bach's original in an effort to make the chaconne more pianistic lies in his manipulation of register. In Example 11 above, the melody of this variation is moved from the treble range to the bass.

Pauer also uses doubling of chords and melodies for the strengthening of sonority and the enhancement of register. At the opening of the arrangement, Pauer intensifies the treble placement of the violin by doubling the first chord in the bass (Example 14) or, later doubling a melody in octaves (Example 15).



Example 14. Pauer: Measures 1-3.



Example 15. Pauer: Measures 121-22.

A third area in which Pauer varies from Bach's work is his liberal use of dynamic markings. By 1867, there had been three published editions of the Sonatas and Partitas: the first edition (editor unknown) in 1802; the edition by Ferdinand David in 1843; and the J. Hellmesberger edition in 1865.⁶ While the first edition and Hellmesberger's contain no dynamic markings, Ferdinand David's edition is laden with directions for performance. There is no overt connection between the markings of David's work and Pauer's, although there are a few similar expressive directions. The dynamic range of Pauer's arrangement is predominantly fortissimo (there are twenty-four such indications to be found in the

⁶Murray, "The Editions," in Eiche, 24.

score). More indicative of Pauer's view of performance of the work are his directions for numerous sforzandi (eighty-four altogether), many of which are clustered together in individual variations. In the course of three measures in one variation, Pauer litters the score with seven sforzandi (see Example 16).



Example 16. Pauer:
Measures 230-32.

Pauer's writing calls for virtuoso technique in many of the variations, especially in numbers twenty-three through thirty-two. In the 1802 edition of the sonatas and partitas these variations are marked with the direction "arpeggio"; in David's edition, he carefully notates the manner in which it should be performed, and Pauer's keyboard realization reflects this notation:

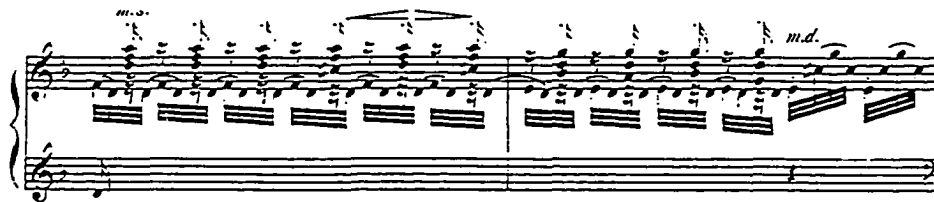
First edition:



David:



Pauer:



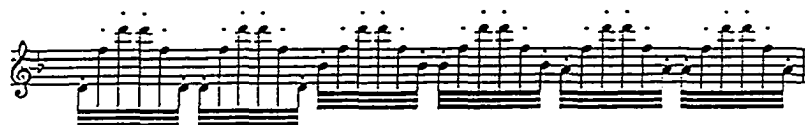
Example 17. Comparison of Measures 29-30
in three editions: the first, David's, and
Pauer's.

As the patterns of notes become increasingly more rapid in the following variations, Pauer writes brilliant arpeggio figuration to evoke the rapid passage-work of the violin. He adheres to the basic chord progression while incorporating added chordal tones. In Example 18, one can compare the three notations of variation thirty-two:

First edition:



David:



Pauer:



Example 18. Comparison of Measure 113.

By far the most radical method by which Pauer infuses this arrangement with his own ideas is the interpolation of a brilliant cadenza at the conclusion of the work. The cadenza is inserted after a fermata on an A major chord which precedes the final statement of the chaconne theme. The cadenza begins with an ascending D melodic minor scale rising from an A major chord; it then descends with a sequential seven-note pattern in the right hand above left hand

single tones that outline a C-sharp diminished chord (see Example 19).

The musical score for Example 19, Pauer: Measure 246, is presented in three systems. The top system shows a solo violin part (treble clef) and a keyboard realization (grand staff). The middle system continues the solo violin part. The bottom system continues the keyboard realization, with the words "accelerando" and "Prestissimo" written below the staff. The music is highly technical, featuring rapid sixteenth-note passages and complex chordal structures.

Example 19. Pauer: Measure 246.

The score of Pauer's work is presented with the solo violin part printed for reference above the keyboard realization, thereby making the techniques of transcription readily apparent. What is less apparent are several curious discrepancies in the

printed violin part when it is compared to the editions of the sonatas and partitas that would have been available to Pauer.

When comparing these editions (to which Pauer would have had access), a number of observations may be noted. First of all, Pauer seems to have totally ignored the first edition in favor of the two subsequent efforts. There are sixteen instances in which Pauer's source material is in conflict with the first edition; in every case the discrepancies involve questionable notes and accidentals. Of these sixteen sections, eleven are in agreement with both the Hellmesberger and the David editions. There is one instance in which Pauer transcribes a measure as edited by Hellmesberger exclusively, and four occurrences in which he transcribes in agreement with the David edition.

These discrepancies in notation occur most often in passages of rapid sequential scales where there is a question of retaining a particular accidental for an entire measure. The following two examples from variations thirteen and nineteen in the first section of the piece will serve to illustrate these differences. (Compare the notes indicated by arrows.)

First edition:

Hellmesberger:



David:

Pauer:



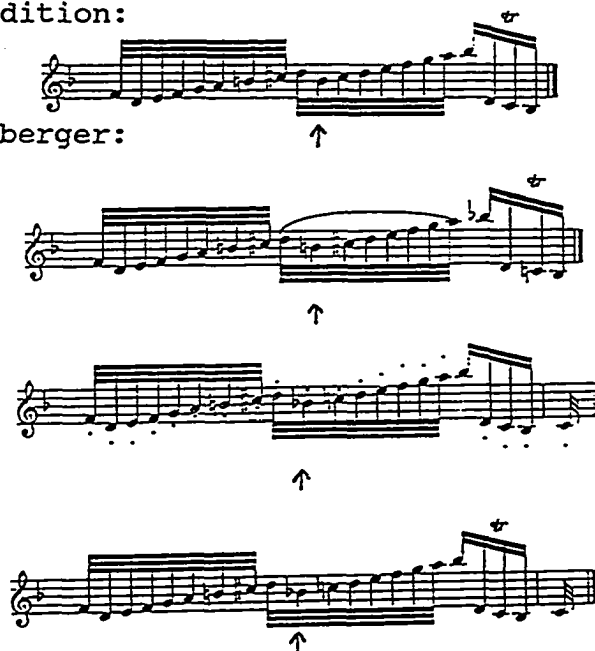
Example 20. Comparisons of Measure 51.

First edition:

Hellmesberger:

David:

Pauer:



Example 21. Comparisons of Measure 73.

Both of the above examples suggest perhaps a vacillation by Pauer between David's and Hellmesberger's editions. In Example 20 there is a question concerning the inflection of the E that occurs within the third beat of the measure. As in Hellmesberger's edition, Pauer realizes this note as an E-natural, rather than the E-flat suggested by the First Edition and David. In the second example, there is a discrepancy in the notation of the B that occurs in the second beat of the measure. In this case, Pauer transcribes following the example of David while disregarding the First Edition and the Hellmesberger. Example 20 is in fact the only instance in the work in which Pauer chooses to transcribe in the manner of Hellmesberger.

In only one measure does the Pauer arrangement differ from both David's and Hellmesberger's editions. This occurs in variation thirty-seven toward the end of the second section of the piece. Here, in measure 183, there is a discrepancy in the notation of the C that falls within beat 2 in the alto voice. In Example 22, one may observe the manner in which Pauer departs from the three earlier sources and raises this C to a C-sharp:

First edition:



Hellmesberger:



David:



Pauer:



Example 22. Comparisons of Measure 183.

It is in the beginning of the second section in the key of D Major that another question of notation occurs. A note that appears to be deleted in the first edition (the F-sharp in the penultimate measure of Example 23) is retained by both David and Pauer. In the Hellmesberger edition this note is cast as an A-natural in the manner of the first edition:

First edition:



David:



Hellmesberger:



Pauer:



Example 23. Comparisons of Measures 139-142.

While Pauer was probably familiar with these three editions of the sonatas and partitas, the greatest number of similarities is with the work of David in his arrangement of the chaconne. Moreover, David's edition was certainly the most influential until the work of Joachim. Georg Feder has noted that the David edition "inaugurated the artistic appreciation (of the sonatas and partitas) to come."⁷

⁷Feder, "Arrangements," 43.

When evaluating this arrangement according to an assumed criterion of adherence to or divergence from the original source, one may conclude that Pauer certainly strays from the esthetic of Bach's original work. Georg Feder has speculated that Pauer possibly considered the chaconne to be "some sort of Hungarian Rhapsody,"⁸ and indeed that view possibly serves to explain many of the divergences from the original source. (Although this may appear to be an extreme viewpoint, the type of elaborate cadenza that concludes Pauer's Chaconne is used by Liszt to link contrasting sections in his nineteen Hungarian Rhapsodies.)

It is interesting to consider that Pauer was not alone in his efforts to elaborate on Bach's Chaconne, for every aforementioned trait (except the concluding cadenza) is present in the most widely-performed chaconne arrangement--the Busoni. Busoni has justified his reasons for harmonic additions to the works of Bach:

Fillings, or completion of harmony, occur for the following reasons: to obtain greater fullness of tone; where two parts are too far apart; for cumulative effect, and climaxes; as a substitute for doublings, when the latter are impracticable of execution; to enrich the

⁸Ibid., 51.

piano effect. They are seldom contrapuntal or of any independent nature. The natural introduction of additions, without violating the style, is a touchstone of the transcriber's art.⁹

Unlike Busoni, Pauer left no explanation for his additions to Bach's work. When the piece was premiered, Pauer was praised for creating "something entirely different."¹⁰ As this nineteenth-century critical opinion indicates, Pauer's Chaconne may be considered as truly representative of its time and, in the same respect, to be a reflection of the temperament of its composer/arranger.

⁹Busoni, First Appendix to The Well-Tempered Clavichord, Vol. 1, by Johann Sebastian Bach, revised, annotated, and provided with parallel examples and suggestions for the study of modern piano-forte technique by Ferruccio Busoni (New York: G. Schirmer; Boston: Boston Music Co.; Leipzig: Fr. Hofmeister, 1894), 169.

¹⁰Signale für die musikalische Welt (1867), quoted in Feder, 51.

CHAPTER 3

J. S. BACH'S CHACONNE IN D MINOR--ARRANGEMENTS BY ARTHUR BRISKIER AND KARL HERMANN PILLNEY

A more conservative interpretation of J. S. Bach's Chaconne than that of Ernst von Pauer is illustrated by two twentieth-century arrangements for piano: the 1954 version by Arthur Briskier and the 1968 version by Karl Hermann Pillney. Both arrangements reflect an adherence to Bach's original work that is unlike the efforts of their Romantic predecessors. These versions are removed from their nineteenth-century counterparts by the two arrangers' deliberate avoidance of elaborate harmonic additions and virtuosic display.

Chaconne in D Minor, Transcribed by Arthur Briskier

The chaconne is only one of several pieces by J. S. Bach that Arthur Briskier (1902-1976) has arranged for piano solo. Among his other works are arrangements of organ compositions such as the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor (BWV 565), the "Great" Fantasy and Fugue in G Minor (BWV 542), the "Little" Fugue in G Minor (BWV 598), the Prelude and Fugue in A Minor (BWV 543), and the Passacaglia and Fugue in C Minor (BWV 582). In these, Briskier's intent

seems to have been to transcend the medium for which the original works were intended while preserving the integrity of Bach's writing.

Briskier began to arrange these works in 1949 at the encouragement of his colleague and friend, Dr. Albert Schweitzer.¹ Upon hearing Briskier play transcriptions of J. S. Bach's music by Busoni and Liszt, Schweitzer suggested that he should re-transcribe the organ works for piano without the pianistic "improvements" added by the nineteenth-century composers. These efforts in keyboard transcription are remarkable when one considers the fact that Briskier's profession was not in music but in medicine. Although his early studies in piano brought him several notable prizes, including an award from the Chopin School of Music in Warsaw, he spent most of his life's work as a successful heart specialist in New York and Paris.²

¹Claire Huchet-Bishop, Arthur Aron Briskier, (Jerusalem: Tafsar Ltd., 1981), 14. Dr. Schweitzer was an important musical influence on Briskier. Schweitzer inscribed a photograph, "To Arthur Briskier, my pupil in music, my master in medicine, my friend in everyday life."

²Ibid. Another passion of Briskier's life was his collection of ancient Greek artifacts, 137 of which he bequeathed to the Israel Museum upon his death.

In his arrangements, Briskier deliberately avoids the techniques of the Romantic transcriptions of Pauer and Busoni, explaining his more conservative approach thus:

[Previous editors and transcribers] often tried to embellish the master's work in order to make it acceptable, and thus the genuine beauty, sincerity and immeasurable profundity of Bach's compositions became distorted. Added harmonies, brilliant passages of virtuosity, prolonged codas detract from this music. . . . What is important is the music itself and not the instrumental technique. . . . Adaptations with modifications are but vain accessories, which dress up this music and lessen its greatness. . . . Unquestionably the best way to discover this music is by studying the original text.³

According to at least one review of Briskier's performances of his transcriptions, the results of his efforts were met with a modest degree of praise.

Y. Boehm reported in the Jerusalem Post:

Arthur Briskier is by profession a heart specialist at the Mount Sinai and French Hospitals in New York City. . . . As a pianist Arthur Briskier employs the singing faculties of his instrument, and he emphasizes his objection to an "objective," or matter-of-fact, interpretation of Bach's music. As an editor of Bach's organ music for the piano, he endeavors to restore the beauty and forcefulness of the master's original writing against the transcriptions and "arrangements" made during the last century. . . .⁴

³Arthur Briskier, A New Approach to Piano Transcriptions, (New York: Carl Fischer, 1953), 7-8.

⁴Y. Boehm, "Back to Real Bach," Jerusalem Post, April 10, 1958, quoted in Huchet-Bishop, 14.

Isidore Philipp (1863-1958), the French composer and pianist (whose version of the chaconne was published in 1925), enthusiastically praised Briskier's playing of Bach. He wrote, "What else could I say of your Bach. . . . Your playing is first class. . . . No pianist in Paris or New York would be capable of playing those beautiful works with as much understanding and, let me add, as much technique."⁵

Briskier asserts that a thorough study of the Bach autograph, as well as several editions and transcriptions of the chaconne, preceded his version of the work. In the Foreword to his arrangement of the chaconne, Briskier explains his points of departure for the transcription:

For my piano transcription of the Chaconne, I have made an extensive study of many editions by outstanding musicians such as Raff, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Busoni, Siloti, Philipp, and others. . . . As basis for authenticity, I have used a true autograph of Johann Sebastian Bach, which, fortunately has been preserved; a facsimile of this autograph is herewith submitted.⁶

⁵Isidore Philipp, quoted in Huchet-Bishop, 14.

⁶Briskier, Foreword to Chaconne in D Minor, by J. S. Bach, trans. by A. Briskier (New York: Carl Fischer, 1964).

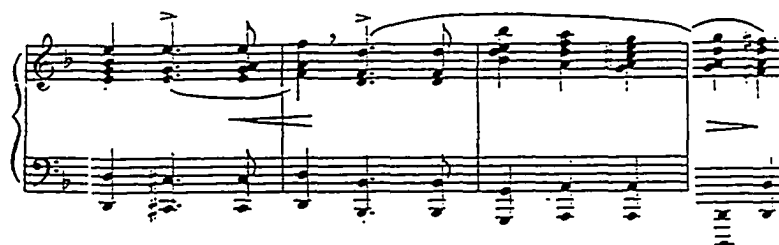
Of the editions that Briskier cites, it is obvious that the most influential for his own arrangement was that of Busoni. Briskier's arrangement of the chaconne is similar in pianistic writing to the more famous Busoni version, but it is devoid of the latter's harmonic additions and the virtuosic display so inherent in that work. The aspects of Briskier's Chaconne which are most similar to the original source are in the area of register and the absence of newly composed material. Dynamics and other expressive markings are included, according to Briskier's "personal interpretation." He explains that "emphasis is put on the eloquent phrasing and variety of shading made possible by the piano's tonal capacity, rather than on piano technique and use of the full keyboard."⁷

In dealing with the placement of register for his transcription, Briskier casts each statement of the chaconne theme in its proper range--the treble. Briskier's treatment of the first, second, and third statements of the chaconne theme are seen in the following examples:

⁷Ibid.



Example 1. Briskier: Measures 1-8.



Example 2. Briskier: Measures 126-129.



Example 3. Briskier: Measures 249-253.

In the above examples, one may observe the manner in which Briskier enhances the register by providing harmonic support in the bass. (It is curious that Briskier chooses to state the second half of

the chaconne theme an octave lower than its first statement, as is shown in measures 5 and 6 of Example 1, beginning on beat 2 of measure 5.) One may also note that in both the second and third statements of the chaconne theme (Examples 2 and 3), Briskier avoids the fortissimo rolled octave chords of Busoni's transcription (see Example 4 below); in their place are solid block chords similar to Pauer's treatment (see Example 5).



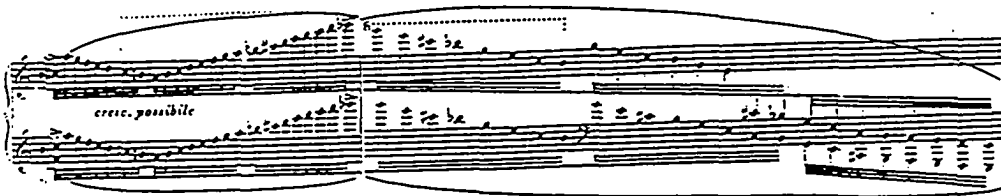
Example 4. Busoni: Measures 126-129.



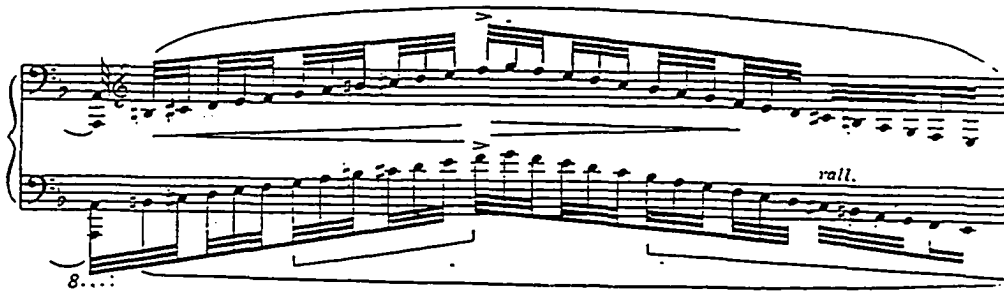
Example 5. Pauer: Measures 249-257.

In his arrangement, Briskier elects not to exploit the instrument's upper register for bravura effect. Whereas both the Pauer and Busoni

transcriptions contain passages of sweeping ascending and descending scales and arpeggios, a comparison of the Busoni and Briskier treatments of the conclusion of variation seventeen illustrates the latter's use of a more conservative range (see Examples 6 and 7).



Example 6. Busoni: Measure 76.



Example 7. Briskier: Measure 76.

In certain variations, Briskier seems to have followed Busoni's compositional model, though omit-

ting his harmonic additions. For example, in variation thirty-six, it is apparent that he chose to transcribe Bach's melody with fewer notes in the bass than Busoni supplied (see Examples 8 and 9).



Example 8. Briskier: Measure 149.



Example 9. Busoni: Measure 153.⁸

At the conclusion of variation eleven, Briskier transcribes in a manner similar to that of Busoni, but without the latter's harmonic additions. Busoni's version contains an added B-flat in the right hand, which functions in this case as a

⁸The discrepancy in the numbering of the measures of the previously cited examples is a result of a four-measure addition in the Busoni, measures 85-88.

flatted ninth above the dominant-seventh chord built on A. By removing these right-hand chords, and with the range of the melody restored to the treble, Briskier achieves a more accurate rendering of Bach's original (see Examples 10-12).



Example 10. Bach: Measure 52.



Example 11. Busoni: Measure 52.



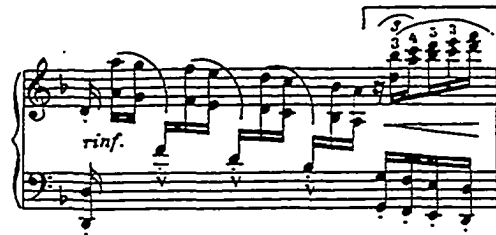
Example 12. Briskier: Measure 52.

In variation sixty, Briskier arranges the upper voice in double octaves. While it is true that Bach's original is notated in single tones, Briskier seems to have borrowed Busoni's general idea at this

point: that is, to utilize a descending sixteenth-note pattern in octaves on beat 3. However, he has eliminated Busoni's added thirds and sixths, as is shown in the bracketed portions of Examples 13-15:



Example 13. Bach: Measure 245.



Example 14. Busoni: Measure 249.



Example 15. Briskier: Measure 245.

These observations on Briskier's arrangement of J. S. Bach's Chaconne are supported by his own

thoughts of the transcription process. He wrote, "Piano transcriptions should absolutely conform to the originals, namely, they should contain only notes composed by J. S. Bach, without any additions or modifications."⁹

In retaining certain elements of the Busoni arrangement while eliminating others, Briskier provided a more esthetically accurate realization of the Bach Chaconne. It is significant that the arranger himself entitled his version of the chaconne a "transcription" rather than "arrangement," thus suggesting a more faithful interpretation of the original source.

Briskier and his transcriptions have earned the admiration of at least one noted performer--the cellist Pablo Casals. In a personal letter to the arranger, Casals wrote, "Dr. Briskier gives a faithful transcription from organ music. This is not merely another edition. Contrary to many existing transcriptions where the interpretation is pre-established and where Bach is present only through the transcriber, this edition enables the pianist to be directly in contact with Bach and to express

⁹Briskier, A New Approach, 39.

himself through his personal interpretation."¹⁰

Chaconne in D Minor, Transcribed by
Karl Hermann Pillney

In addition to his version of the Chaconne in D Minor, Karl Hermann Pillney's work in the area of piano transcription includes arrangements of several works for organ by J. S. Bach, Pachelbel, and Buxtehude. As an orchestrator, he has published versions of both The Musical Offering and The Art of the Fugue, with a completion of the final fugue of the latter. His works for chamber orchestra include a Divertimento consisting of seven parts (Toccata, Fughetta, Basso Ostinato, Intermezzo, Scherzo, Groteske, and Finale), and twelve Parody Variations on a Street Song in the style of Bach, Handel, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Rossini, Verdi, Reger, Strauss, Schoenberg, and Liszt. He has held professorships in piano in Cologne, at both the Rhine Music School and at the State University for Music. In addition to his performing and teaching, Pillney has toured as pianist or harpsichordist

¹⁰Pablo Casals, introduction to "Piano Transcriptions of J. S. Bach," by Arthur Briskier, in Music Review Vol. 15, No. 3, (Aug. 1954): 40.

in almost every country of Europe and in the United States. As a composer, he has been described as "an extremely fine and tasteful musician who is largely inspired by his instincts."¹¹

Pillney's arrangement of the chaconne surprisingly fits Briskier's idea of what a transcription should be more closely than the latter's own work (see Briskier's statement on page 36). Although Pillney's version does contain some newly composed material that is interpolated for the purpose of providing contrapuntal interest and enhancing the harmony (as it was in the earlier arrangements), his additions do not interfere with the clarity of Bach's writing. This is due in part to the relatively thin texture which Pillney adopts for his version. Although the inherent virtuoso elements that are present in the original violin piece are retained in his arrangement, the general texture of the work does not ever become more intricate than that of a typical movement from one of Bach's keyboard suites. Much of the arranger's work is a literal transcription from the original source; see for

¹¹Heinrich Hüsch, "Karl Hermann Pillney," in Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. Friedrich Blume (Kassel, Basel, London, New York: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 17 vols.), 10: 1278.

instance his treatment of variation thirty-six. The similarity of Pillney's arrangement to Bach's original at the opening of this variation is shown in Examples 16 and 17:



Example 16. Bach: Measure 149.



Example 17. Pillney: Measure 149.

For his version of the chaconne, Pillney has deliberately chosen to avoid virtuoso writing in favor of a more intimate interpretation of the piece. As can be seen in Examples 18-20, a comparison of variation thirteen exhibits the markedly different approaches in transcription styles employed by Pauer, Briskier, and Pillney:



Example 18. Pauer: Measure 57.



Example 19. Briskier: Measure 57.



Example 20. Pillney: Measure 57.

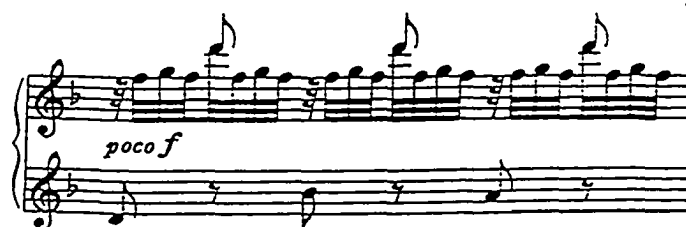
Instead of the forte octaves, arpeggios, and broken chords chosen by Pauer and Briskier in their realization of variation twenty-seven, Pillney opts for rapid, light figuration built around Bach's chord progression, as can be seen in Examples 21-23.



Example 21. Pauer: Measure 113.



Example 22. Briskier: Measure 113.



Example 23. Pillney: Measure 113.

Pillney's arrangement has some surprising similarities to its nineteenth-century counterparts in terms of the incorporation of newly-composed material. Such additions consist of supplementary chordal tones for the realization of implied harmonies, the addition of lower and upper voices, and the inclusion of dynamics. However, unlike similar changes in the earlier works, Pillney's contributions do not violate the original source because of the light texture that is adopted for his version.

For the majority of the arrangement, Pillney limits his realization of implied harmonies to the more important melodic or rhythmic tones within a given measure. In variation seventeen, Pillney provides a triad (in place of Bach's single note) on beat three of the measure, its construction having been derived from the preceding scale. In Example 24, one may observe this variation as found in Bach's original and its subsequent arrangement by Pillney (see bracketed notes):

Bach:



Pillney:



Example 24. Bach and Pillney:
Measures 73 and 74.

An unusual way in which Pillney realizes the harmonization of the chaconne theme itself is by his incorporation of a secondary dominant chord in the final beat of the third measure leading to the fourth measure. In Bach's original work, the C-natural is treated as an unaccented passing tone, and the Pauer, Briskier, and Busoni versions treat the note in a similar manner. Pillney's arrangement adds a chord, producing a markedly different harmonization than that intended by Bach. (See the bracketed portions of Examples 25-27.)



Example 25. Pillney: Measures 3 and 4.



Example 26. Briskier: Measures 3 and 4.



Example 27. Pauer: Measures 3 and 4.

As in the transcription by Briskier, the initial rhythm of the chaconne theme ($\frac{3}{4}$ { $\text{♩. ♩} | \text{♩} \text{♩. ♩}$ }) is maintained by Pillney throughout the course of the variations. For example, as the arranger adds harmonic support to the twentieth variation, the characteristic rhythm is continued in the left-hand chords (Example 28):



Example 28. Pillney: Measures 90-91

Pillney's newly-composed material also takes the form of upper and/or lower voices that provide contrapuntal interest. Such examples as the added tenor voice in measures 33-35 of the seventh variation and the added bass voice in measure 40 of the eighth variation show a desire by Pillney to enhance, rather than alter, Bach's original writing (see the bracketed lines in Examples 29-30).

Bach:



Pillney:



Example 29. Bach and Pillney: Seventh variation, Measures 33-36.



Example 30. Pillney: Eighth variation, Measures 37-40.

These newly-composed linear additions do not

violate the texture of Bach's original work; actually, they disturb the melodic line by providing canonic imitation (Example 29) and creating arbitrary syncopations (Example 30). In the aforementioned eighth variation, the resolution of the descending scale in measure 38 is a B-natural; however, with the addition of the lower neighbor A-natural rising to a second B-natural at the end of the scale, the melody is truncated. When combined with the addition of a sixteenth rest in the right-hand, an unwarranted syncopation is the result. (See the bracketed scale passage in Example 30, measures 38-39, on page 54.)

The distribution of the melody between the hands creates syncopation in several instances in the course of the arrangement. It can be seen in Example 31 how a marked syncopation occurs as the melody is transferred from the right to the left hand. In this example from the previously mentioned eighth variation, note the D-natural that enters in beat 2 in the left hand:

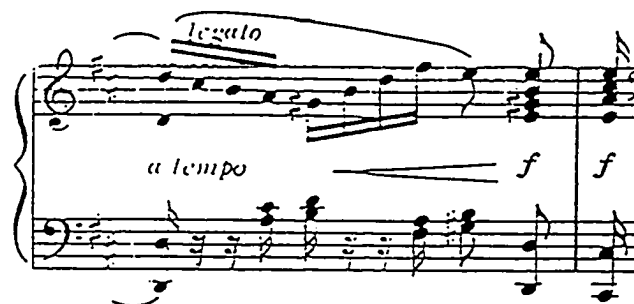


Example 31. Pillney: Measure 37.

Whereas the arrangements of Busoni, Pauer and Briskier contain many indications of tempi, Pillney's contains none. His does include dynamic markings, but they are almost exclusively either forte or piano; unlike the other arrangements, there are no directions of fortissimo or sforzando. Also, the dynamic indications for certain sections exhibit a somewhat unique interpretation by the arranger. For example, variation thirty-six as transcribed by Pauer and Briskier (and Busoni, as well), is a brilliant, forte passage incorporating octaves; Pillney casts the same variation as a transparent melodic line in the soprano with the dynamic marking of piano, as is shown by Examples 32-34:



Example 32. Pauer: Measure 149.



Example 33. Briskier: Measure 149.



Example 34. Pillney: Measure 149.

It is enlightening to compare the manner by which Pauer, Briskier, and Pillney chose to conclude their arrangements of the chaconne. Bach ends the piece on an unharmonized D-natural. The three arrangers harmonize the final note, but differ in opinion as to the inflection of the chord. Pauer and Pillney chose to end the chaconne in the key of D minor; but Briskier, like Busoni, concluded the work on a D major chord, justifying his choice of the major ending by explaining that the D string on the violin produces an F-sharp overtone.¹²

In the course of the twentieth century, the vast scholarly research dealing with the work of J. S. Bach has influenced certain criteria in performance that performers and audiences have adopted. The heightened regard for the most accurate editions of a composer's work is reflected in the Briskier and Pillney arrangements of Bach's Chaconne. Their versions of the piece are indicative of differing interpretations linked by a mutual respect for the integrity of the original musical source.

¹²Briskier, Foreword to Chaconne.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

A casual survey of the piano transcription literature reveals that Bach's Chaconne in D Minor is one of the most often arranged works for keyboard solo. In his study, "Bach and the Piano: Editions, Arrangements and Transcriptions from Czerny to Rachmaninoff," Carruthers has arrived at a total of fifteen published arrangements of the work, excluding various versions for other ensembles.¹

It should be obvious from the preceding study that there is an attraction about the chaconne which has inspired a wide spectrum of composers to add this piece to an already bountiful keyboard repertoire. Arrangements for piano of works for other media succeed or fail depending upon whether or not the entirety of the musical matter is transferred to meet the idiomatic demands of the keyboard.

Bach's Chaconne as arranged by Ernst von Pauer is very much a product of its time as it exists side

¹Glen Blaine Carruthers, "Bach and the Piano: Editions, Arrangements, and Transcriptions from Czerny to Rachmaninoff," Ph.D. diss., University of Victoria, 1987, 228-29.

by side with the paraphrases of the entire Romantic generation of pianists. If this version of the chaconne were to be performed today, Pauer's work, though exhibiting virtuosic tendencies which characterize the Romantic school of pianism, would not illuminate the power and majesty of the original unaccompanied violin piece. The indulgent divergences from the original score, such as the addition of newly-composed melodic material and liberal additions of harmonic tones, illustrate an insensitivity to the purity of Bach's melodic line. The addition of Pauer's concluding cadenza lessens rather than heightens the grandeur of the work, thereby failing to convey that most inherent musical quality of the chaconne. This arrangement exists today as a specimen of its generation and is of historical significance in that respect.

The Chaconnes of Briskier and Pillney, on the other hand, stand together at the opposite extreme in terms of esthetic principle. As a result of changing musical tastes and a backlash against elaborate paraphrases such as Pauer's version, the works of Briskier and Pillney emerge from a period when arrangements and transcriptions had not only

lost favor but were actually scorned. The relative conservatism of the Briskier and Pillney Chaconnes is best understood when one considers the prevalent attitudes toward performance practice of Baroque music in the twentieth century. Richard Tetley-Kardos has commented on the decline of the transcription/arrangement for piano in this century:

Musical tastes continually undergo changes, and the introduction of radio, television, and, above all, recordings has both developed listeners'--and performers'--powers of discrimination and raised expectations. With those rising standards came, quite correctly, a greater respect for the printed musical page, and a more reverent attitude toward music on the part of the performers. Scholarly research, specifically that leading to urtext editions, further encouraged this attitude. When performers began consulting urtext editions, the personal, individualistic style of turn-of-the-century virtuosos lost favor.²

Performances of these twentieth-century arrangements exhibit a refreshing and enlightened understanding of Bach's original work and musical ideas. Both pieces have been shown to adhere to the original source more faithfully than two of their Romantic predecessors. In that respect, one may

²Richard Tetley-Kardos, "Transcriptions--Back for Good?," Clavier 25, no. 2 (February 1986): 18-19.

consider them more akin to the literal "transcription" rather than "arrangement." The Briskier transcription is an admirable effort to represent this work for violin in a keyboard setting without the arranger's own personality dominating the musical contents. Briskier has established criteria for his arrangements that are worthy of enlightened attitudes toward the piano transcription in the twentieth century. In a similar vein, Pillney's Chaconne, with its deliberately scaled-down texture, can be said to evoke the linear, single-voice timbre of the violin as well as the contrapuntal qualities that are present in the piece. This is done in a manner that does not sacrifice Bach's original intent.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

There is a pronounced dearth of bibliographic information concerning the careers and works of Pauer, Briskier, and Pillney. Since all three have made arranging the music of other composers a focal point of their respective careers, it is likely that those arrangements deserve investigation.

Research for this study has led me to examine a number of diverse arrangements of the chaconne. Aside from Busoni's version and the three that are the focus of this study, among the most remarkable are those by Raff, Brahms, Siloti, and Philipp. Of these four, the Brahms version is the best known and most widely available. Brahms has written of his admiration for the work; his enthusiasm was such that he suggested to his friend Billroth to "[smoke] the cigarettes I'm sending . . . with the right hand while the left hand is letting Bach's Chaconne sound its tones. . . ."³ I have discovered little documentation regarding the thoughts of Raff, Siloti, and Philipp concerning their versions of the chaconne.

While many notable sources, including Feder, Szigeti, Carruthers, and Sitsky make mention of these last three arrangements, it is somewhat surprising that no detailed study of them has been undertaken. Moreover, as each of these artists was

³Johannes Brahms, quoted in Johannes Brahms and Theodore Billroth: Letters from a Musical Friendship, trans. and ed. Hans Barker (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), 56.

highly regarded in his time, it seems that an examination of their settings of the chaconne would be a valid contribution to the literature. Each of their arrangements reveals an insight into the transcription process and suggests an ongoing fascination with this particular work of J. S. Bach.

Raff's version, in particular, is consistently mentioned in even the most cursory discussions of the chaconne. His arrangement exists also in an orchestral version, for which the piano solo might have been a sketch.⁴ (There also exists a version by Raff cast for left-hand alone.)⁵ Given Raff's early, impressive former stature as a composer, it seems that a study of his chaconne in both its piano and orchestral versions would provide a revealing portrait of nineteenth century orchestration, and at the same time might shed light on a somewhat

⁴Feder, "Arrangements," 51.

⁵Maurice Hinson, The Pianist's Guide to Transcriptions, Arrangements, and Paraphrases (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 7.

neglected figure of that period.⁶

Of related interest would be a survey and examination of the opinions of violinists themselves regarding the esthetic value of these piano transcriptions. In research for this monograph, I have taken note of Joseph Szigeti's thoughts of Busoni's arrangement of the chaconne. Szigeti has spoken enthusiastically and with great admiration for that version of the work; in his memoir, With Strings Attached, he wrote of an encounter with the pianist/composer:

What worlds Busoni opened up for me! . . . He was playing his transcription of the Bach Chaconne at every concert, and never one of these many performances but that I stood in the wings, taking it all in. . . . I recall his elucidation of the large pattern that the grouping of several related variations into variation-clusters, one might say, brings into the vast structure, and his insistence on monochrome treatment of some of the variations instead of the violinistically traditional

⁶Raff's musical output was highly prolific and his oeuvre embraced all genres including opera, choral works, symphonies, and many works for piano solo. Oscar Bie characterized him as "the eclectic" and suggested that "his piano pieces will at least give a good picture of the time." Oscar Bie, A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players, trans. and ed. by E. E. Kellett and E. W. Taylor (London: J. A. Dent and Sons, Ltd; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1899; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), 323.

"glamorizing" of each and every one of them.
. . . A few bars on the piano to make his meaning clear, a juxtaposition of Bach's original phrasing with the pernicious (as he called it) "traditional" phrasing . . . and scales seemed to fall away from my eyes; the edifice stood there in all its architectonic harmony.⁷

Since the Chaconne in D Minor is first and foremost in the repertoire of the violin, perhaps the insight of other violinists would provide the key to revealing why this piece, more so than any other work of Bach, has captured the imagination and creative process of its many arrangers and transcribers.

⁷Szigeti, With Strings Attached, 83-84.

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APPENDIX A

PIANO ACCOMPANIMENTS FOR J. S. BACH'S CHACONNE IN D MINOR BY FELIX MENDELSSOHN AND ROBERT SCHUMANN

The accompaniments for Bach's Chaconne by Felix Mendelssohn (1847) and Robert Schumann (1853) deserve to be mentioned in the scope of this study because of their historical importance in the introduction of this work to audiences of the nineteenth century (see Chapter 1, pages 6-7) and for the surprising fact that they are virtually unknown today. The added accompaniments alter the medium for which the sonatas and partitas were intended by casting the works in a pseudo chamber music setting. Szigeti has suggested that the two Romantic composers desired to rescue the Sonatas and Partitas from their status as "step-children" in the oeuvre of Bach.¹

Although Mendelssohn was responsible for the first accompanied performance of the chaconne in public, both his and Schumann's published versions were preceded by that of F. W. Ressel, a Berlin

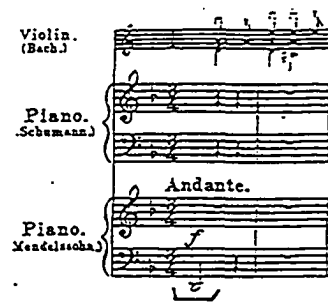
¹Joseph Szigeti, "The Unaccompanied Sonatas," 1.

violinist. Ressel's work (1845), which has been reported to contain random cuts and additions to the violin part, is described by Feder as "amateurish" and sounding like "a dusty counterpoint exercise."² The Mendelssohn and Schumann arrangements share a common purpose--to serve as accompaniments to the Bach original, never assuming the role of the primary solo instrument. They do, however, function well as accompaniments and exhibit typical characteristics similar to other vocal and instrumental works by the two composers.

Feder compares the Mendelssohn arrangement to a concerto movement and cites instances in the accompaniment where the piano is tacet and the violin is unaccompanied.³ Both the Mendelssohn and the Schumann accompaniments allow the violin to state the chaconne theme sans piano, with the exception of a lone D-natural in the lower register of Mendelssohn's accompaniment. (See the bracketed note in Example 1.)

²Feder, "Arrangements," 43.

³Ibid.



Example 1. Mendelssohn and Schumann:
Measures 1-2

Like the arrangements discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study, these accompaniments attempt to expand the sonority by the filling-out of harmonies, the addition of contrapuntal lines, and the use of imitation. The most obvious manner by which the expansion of sonority occurs is in the employment of the piano's lower registers. In this respect, the Schumann accompaniment is remarkable for the manner in which the composer utilizes the technique of pedal point. In one instance, a pedal point on A is held for a length of fourteen measures. Since the tonality of the work is centered around the tonic D minor, this pedal point obscures and markedly alters Bach's original harmonic scheme. Bach's original work and Schumann's subsequent realization of the harmony in the added accompaniment are shown in

Examples 2 and 3. (The pedal point can be seen in the bass line of the accompaniment in Example 3.)



Example 2. Bach: Measures 77-84.



Example 3. Schumann: Measures 77-84.

Both composers employ newly-composed lines of quasi-contrapuntal interest. In most cases the added lines serve to support Bach's original writing in what may be considered an alto, tenor, or bass voice. For example, Mendelssohn employs an alto line in variation 34, while Schumann adds a similar line in variation 46. (See the right-hand figuration in Examples 4 and 5.)



Example 4. Mendelssohn: Measures 141-44.



Example 5. Schumann: Measures 185-87.

Imitation is used frequently by both composers in each accompaniment. Usually this imitation is based upon melodic lines or rhythmic ideas from earlier variations. For instance, in Examples 6 and 7 it can be seen how Mendelssohn imitates a rhythmic pattern from variation 5 of Bach's original in his accompaniment for variation 28. (Compare the bracketed notes in each example.)

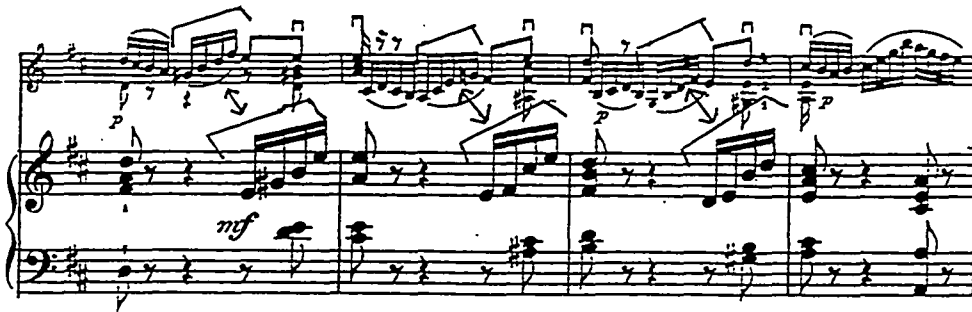


Example 6. Bach: Measures 25-28.



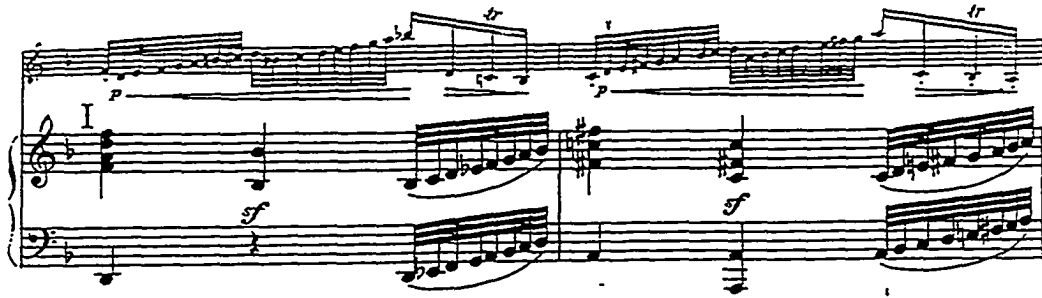
Example 7. Mendelssohn: Measures 117-20

Much imitation in both accompaniments consists of melodic and rhythmic material derived from the original violin piece. This is especially evident in Schumann's accompaniment as he employs continuations or imitations of rhythmic patterns between the violin and piano (see Example 8).



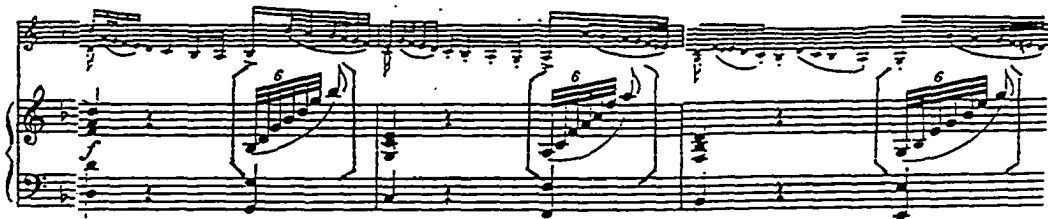
Example 8. Schumann: Measures 149-52.

When examining both accompaniments, one notes that Schumann's version gives more prominence to the piano than Mendelssohn's. Much of Schumann's writing, in particular, is of a virtuosic nature, as is shown by the parallel ascending scales from variation 17 (see Example 9).

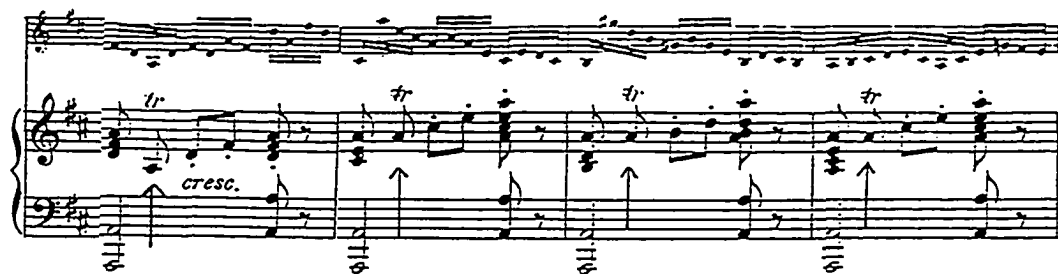


Example 9. Schumann: Measures 73-74.

The heightened role of the piano in Schumann's accompaniment is evidenced by the aforementioned use of pedal point, by his addition of arpeggiated "flourishes" in a number of variations (see bracketed notes in Example 10), and the use of trills (see indicated portions of Example 11).



Example 10. Schumann: Measures 65-67.



Example 11. Schumann: Measures 153-56.

An interesting comparison between the two accompaniments may be observed by viewing variation 16 side by side. Both Mendelssohn and Schumann use descending scales in this variation in a manner that has the visual suggestion of a two-piano performance of the accompaniment (see Example 12).

Example 12. Mendelssohn and Schumann:
Measures 73-76.

It is fair to say that these accompaniments have all but disappeared from the modern repertoire. They are not included in the complete works of either composer, and neither has been published since the 1904 edition by the violinist Ovide Musin.

Scholars' and critics' opinions are divided regarding the artistic value of the works. While Tovey labels the Schumann accompaniments "a miserable failure,"⁴ Spitta has only praise. The latter

⁴Donald Francis Tovey, "Linear Harmony," in Eiche, 73.

writes: "[Schumann] not only intensified the general musical import, but also shed a clearer light on the chaconne form by following it out phrase for phrase in the most exact way."⁵ Edward Melkus, Professor of Violin at the Vienna Academy of Music and Art, describes the accompaniments as "a curiosity," but asserts that Mendelssohn's and Schumann's efforts are not unlike Bach's reworking of a number of other movements from the sonatas and partitas for violin.⁶

While it is questionable whether or not these accompaniments for the chaconne will ever regain their once-popular status among performers and audiences, it is certain that they represent sincere efforts by their composers to expose to audiences of their day the violin works of J. S. Bach.

⁵Spitta, Bach, 98.

⁶Eduard Melkus, in The Bach Chaconne, 138. The following movements are examples of Bach's reworking of the sonatas and partitas for violin: the fugue from the G minor sonata (BWV 1001) for organ, the A minor sonata (BWV 1003) for cembalo, the E major partita (BWV 1006) for lute, and the prelude of the latter work as an organ solo with orchestral accompaniment in the cantata, "Wir danken dir, Gott."

APPENDIX B

A List of Arrangements of J. S. Bach's Chaconne in D Minor for Piano Solo¹

<u>Arranger</u>	<u>Publisher</u>
*Brahms, Johannes (1878)	Breitkopf & Hartel, Dover, Ricordi, Simrock
Briskier, Arthur (1954)	Carl Fischer
Brocca, D. (1884)	unknown
Bruyck, Carl Debrois van (1855)	Kirstner
*Busoni, Ferruccio (1897)	Schirmer
Harthan, Hans (1892/3)	Hainauer
Lamping, W. (1887/8)	Breitkopf & Hartel
Moor, Emmanuel (1936)	Universal Edition
Pauer, Ernst von (1867)	Senff

¹Information for this list was compiled from the following sources: Glen Blaine Carruthers, "Bach and the Piano: Editions, Arrangements, and Transcriptions from Czerny to Rachmaninoff," Ph.D. diss. University of Victoria, 1987, 228-29; Georg Feder, "History of the Arrangements of Bach's Chaconne," in The Bach Chaconne for Solo Violin: A Collection of Views, ed. Jon Eiche (Bloomington, IN: Frangipani Press, 1985), 24-40; Maurice Hinson, The Pianist's Guide to Transcriptions, Arrangements, and Paraphrases (Bloomington: Univ. of Indiana Press, 1990), 7.

Philipp, Isidore (1925)	Durand
*Pillney, Karl Hermann (1968)	Breitkopf & Hartel
Raff, Joachim (1865)	Rieter-Biedermann
Schubert, F. L. (c. 1858)	Breitkopf & Hartel
Sieveking, Martinus (1914)	Stahl
Siloti, Alexander (1924)	Carl Fischer
Wittgenstein, Paul n.d. (in <u>School for the Left Hand</u> , vol. 3: Transcriptions)	Universal Edition
Wilschau, C. (1879)	Jurgensen
Zichy, Geza (c. 1880)	Rahter

*Denotes currently in print (1991)

VITA

Jeffery Mark Pruett was born in McKinney, Texas on December 17, 1959. His first studies in piano were with Mrs. Ray Schumann in Dallas, Texas. Later, as a student of Larry Walz at North Texas State University, he received the Bachelor of Music and Master of Music Degrees in Piano Performance in 1982 and 1984, respectively.

As a graduate student of Dr. Jack Guerri at Louisiana State University, Mr. Pruett was a teaching assistant for four years, and he served for one year as Acting Coordinator of the Group Piano Program. In 1987, he performed as soloist with the LSU Symphony as the winner of the university's annual concerto competition.

Currently, Mr. Pruett resides in Menomonie, Wisconsin where he has been on the music faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Stout since 1988.

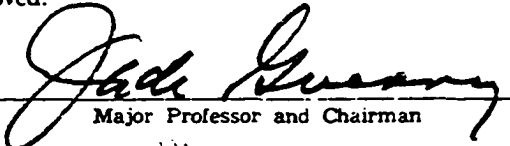
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

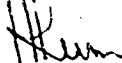
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Major Field: Music

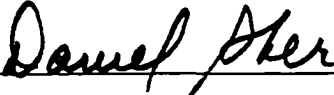
Title of Dissertation: J.S. Bach's Chaconne in D Minor: An Examination of
Three Arrangements for Piano Solo

Approved:



Major Professor and Chairman

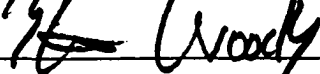

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EXAMINING COMMITTEE:











Date of Examination: _____

March 18, 1991