

Fantasy and Fugue in C major, K. 394

Mozart's "Fantasy and Fugue in C major, K. 394" is a captivating composition that showcases the composer's remarkable creativity and skill. This piece is notable for its structure, which combines a fantasy and a fugue.

The "Fantasy" section of the composition begins with an Adagio introduction, marked by grand gestures and harmonies. It opens with a sense of grandeur and gradually transitions into a more elegant and refined musical expression, eventually concluding on the note G. This section demonstrates Mozart's ability to create a rich and evocative musical atmosphere, using harmonic shifts to keep the listener engaged.

In the subsequent part, Mozart takes the listener by surprise with the introduction of hammered triplet chords, followed by a series of A dominant chords and arpeggios. While this section might initially seem predictable and somewhat laborious, it provides an opportunity for the pianist to infuse the music with life and character. The alternation of lines over the triplets creates a sense of call and response, lending an interesting dynamic to the composition.

The composition continues with more triplet patterns that ascend into the high treble register, offering moments of promise and progression. However, Mozart occasionally returns to repetitive triplet passages, including descending scales with pedal tones in the right hand, which may be perceived as uninspired in comparison to his usual brilliance.

As the piece unfolds, it introduces some intriguing sequences, which are intermittently interrupted by Bachian dotted-rhythm chords and sweeping diminished arpeggios. Mozart's repetition of these motifs may test the listener's patience, but it eventually leads to a modulation to A minor.

The final section of the composition revisits the descending-scale and pedal motif, with some interesting harmonic developments that carry it to a close.

Transitioning to the "Fugue" section, Mozart presents a remarkable display of his compositional prowess. The fugue commences with a straightforward subject, but Mozart gradually introduces dissonance into the composition. Notably, the subject's perfect-fourth leaps create significant clashes, primarily in the form of major seconds, which are considered dissonant in traditional counterpoint. This choice gives the fugue a complex and somewhat dissonant quality, reminiscent of Shostakovich's compositions.

The introduction of the first countersubject, which intricately intertwines with the subject, provides Mozart with a rich palette to craft chromatic passages marked by bold dissonances on strong beats. The result is a wide range of emotional qualities in the music, including melancholy, nobility, and determination.

As the fugue progresses, Mozart explores techniques such as augmentation and diminution of the subject, primarily in the bass. His fascination with the countersubject endures as he presents it in thirds and octaves toward the end. Additionally, he briefly introduces a G pedal bass to set up the coda.

In summary, Mozart's "Fantasy and Fugue in C major, K. 394" is a composition that beautifully captures the composer's ability to balance grandeur and refinement. The piece combines moments of exuberance and unpredictability with intricate counterpoint and dissonance. It is a testament to Mozart's genius and his willingness to explore new musical territory. This program note aims to provide a deeper understanding of this composition and

its various elements, from the fantasy's evocative gestures to the fugue's daring dissonances, making it an engaging and enriching musical experience.

Rondo in C major, Op. 16

Chopin's "Rondo in C major, Op. 16" is a delightful and exuberant piano composition that showcases the composer's signature lyrical style and virtuosic piano writing. This rondo is a single-movement piece with a lively and recurring theme, often characterized by its cheerful and dance-like qualities.

The piece opens with a bright and catchy melody that is instantly captivating. The main theme is then elaborated upon and developed throughout the composition, showcasing Chopin's brilliant pianism and his ability to create intricate, ornamented passages that are both technically demanding and musically expressive.

Throughout the rondo, listeners are treated to a variety of contrasting sections, each with its unique character and mood. Chopin masterfully explores different key areas and introduces virtuosic runs and arpeggios that highlight the pianist's dexterity. The rondo format allows for the theme to return in between these contrasting episodes, providing a sense of unity and familiarity in the midst of the musical journey.

In the latter part of the composition, Chopin introduces a brief and more introspective episode, creating a moment of respite before returning to the lively main theme. This variation in mood and dynamics adds depth and nuance to the overall structure.

Chopin's "Rondo in C major, Op. 16" is a splendid showcase of his ability to blend technical brilliance with lyrical beauty. It is a joyful and uplifting piece that continues to be a favorite in the piano repertoire, captivating audiences with its charm and brilliance.

Suite de dansas criollas

The Suite can be played in its entirety or split into individual movements. Ginastera marks all five dances to be played *attacca*; if you are performing the entire work, make sure to practice moving from one dance to another seamlessly.

The individual dances of the Suite provide good entry points to the piano music of Ginastera for pianists of varying ability. Its five movements span a large technical range, with the least advanced being the relatively simple first dance (*Adagietto pianissimo*) that will give intermediate to early advanced pianists the opportunity to practice lyrical melodic lines, *pianissimo* playing, and flowing phrases while encountering 20th-century compositional elements such as cluster chords and a bitonal arpeggio. The fourth dance (*Calmo e poetico*) tests the pianist's ability to create a range of colors, especially through the use of the *sostenuto* and *una corda* pedals. The third dance (*Allegretto cantabile*) explores an unusual meter (11/8) and includes a metrically tricky canon. The second and fifth dances are the most virtuosic, with the fifth dance containing by far the most extended technical passages.

The second dance (*Allegro rustico*) contains difficult left-hand leaps and an instruction to play right-hand chords with the palm of the hand. The fifth dance (*Scherzando*; Coda) is a true showpiece, with driving rhythms, quick meter changes, and a toccata-like coda with rapid-fire octaves in both hands.