

THE ASSIMILATION OF BAROQUE ELEMENTS IN FERRUCCIO BUSONI'S  
COMPOSITIONS AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE *FANTASIA NACH BACH* AND THE  
*TOCCATA*

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Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2009

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Van Schalkwyk, Willem Andreas Stefanus. The Assimilation of Baroque Elements in Ferruccio Busoni's Compositions as Exemplified by the *Fantasia nach Bach* and the *Toccata*. Doctor of Musical Arts (Performance), August 2009, 29 pp., 1 table, 22 music examples, references, 25 titles.

Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924) has a firmly established reputation as one of the giant pianists of his age, yet his compositions are largely neglected both in musicological circles and on the concert stage. A better understanding of his thought processes might lead to a greater appreciation of his art, and the acknowledgement of his reverence for the music of Bach is an important key to such an understanding. Busoni's *Fantasia nach Bach* and *Toccata*, although two decidedly dissimilar compositions in terms of purpose and conception, represent two manifestations of Busoni's respect for Bach, whether it be in the form of assimilating Bach's compositions into one of his own, or by creating an original work to the same mold as some of Bach's works.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Ferruccio Dante Michelangeli Benvenuto Busoni (1866-1924) has a firmly established reputation as one of the giant pianists of his age, and is considered by many as the true heir to the pianistic legacy of Franz Liszt (1811-1886). He developed Liszt's ideas on technique in unprecedented ways and in his ingenious use of the pedals added to the already extensive palette of the Impressionists.<sup>1</sup> Busoni was also in possession of an unrivalled intellect, and being an immensely erudite individual he was often greatly dissatisfied with the general lack of learning he encountered in society.<sup>2</sup> Although many have claimed his prominent stature as pianist to be the detrimental factor contributing to the limited recognition given to his compositions, one could perhaps make a more valid argument that it is rather due to their intellectually and psychologically challenging nature that these works lack popular and scholarly appeal. Most of the earlier sources discussing Busoni and his compositions are articles published by people that knew the composer personally, i.e. his friends and pupils, amongst others Ernst Krenek (1900-91), Vladimir Vogel (1896-1984) and Philipp Jarnach (1892-1982). The books published by his first biographers, the British writer Edward Joseph Dent (1876-1957) and the German musicologist Hugo Leichtentritt (1874-1951), constitute a major contribution to Busoni scholarship, but the first important study of Busoni's compositions was undertaken by Antony Beaumont in his book *Busoni the Composer*, published in 1985. Beaumont is a British conductor and musicologist residing in Germany.

Busoni's pupil Egon Petri (1881-1962) was a great champion of Busoni's compositions, as was Petri's student John Ogdon (1937-1989), and although one often encounters Bach-Busoni

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<sup>1</sup> Busoni expounded upon his ideas on piano technique in the *Klavierübung in zehn Büchen*, published by Breitkopf und Härtel in 1925; it even includes an etude for the use of the middle pedal.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Brendel, *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 107.

transcriptions on present-day recital programs, his original compositions are performed only very rarely by a select number of pianists, such as Alfred Brendel (b. 1931), Ronald Stevenson (b. 1928) and the Australian pianist Geoffrey Tozer (b. 1954).

If Busoni the pianist took Liszt as a point of departure, Busoni the composer was most definitely rooted in the music of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). In 1923 Busoni himself attested to the significant role Bach's works played in his musical education when he wrote,

I have to thank my father for the good fortune that he kept me strictly to the study of Bach in my childhood, and that in a time and in a country in which the master was rated little higher than a Carl Czerny. My father was a simple virtuoso on the clarinet, who liked to play fantasias on *Il trovatore* and the *Carnival of Venice*; he was a man of incomplete education, an Italian and a cultivator of the *bel canto*. How did such a man in his ambition for his son's career come to hit upon the one very thing that was right? I can only compare it to a mysterious revelation. He educated me in this way to be a "German" musician and showed me the path which I never quite deserted, though at the same time I never cast off the Latin qualities given to me by nature.<sup>3</sup>

The complete keyboard works of Bach as edited by Busoni were published in eight volumes during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by Breitkopf und Härtel. This massive undertaking was made with the assistance of Egon Petri and another Busoni pupil, Bruno Mugellini. In the Busoni Edition the extent of editing ranges from the addition of tempo, articulation and phrase markings, to the occasional alteration of the original score and finally to complete rewriting of the original music. The unfinished final Contrapunctus from *Die Kunst der Fuge*, for instance, was completed by Busoni in such a distinctly Busonian manner that the composer eventually published it as his own composition, the *Fantasia Contrappuntistica*. In addition to editing Bach's keyboard works, he also made innumerable piano transcriptions of various works by Bach, including original organ compositions, chorale preludes, and the Chaconne from the second Partita for violin. Furthermore, Busoni wrote an extensive essay on

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<sup>3</sup> Edward J. Dent, *Ferruccio Busoni* (London, 1974), 307, as quoted in Roeboyd Hugh Middleton, "Three perspectives of the art of Ferruccio Busoni as exemplified by the "Toccata," "Carmen Fantasy," and transcription of Liszt's "Mephisto Waltz," (D.M.A. diss., North Texas State University, 1981), 3.

the art of transcribing organ works for piano, *Lehre von der Übertragung von Orgelwerke auf das Pianoforte*, published as an appendix to the fifth volume Breitkopf und Härtel's *Bach-Busoni gesammelte Ausgabe*. In this treatise Busoni discussed at length his ideas on recreating the organ's registration on the piano, and also appropriate doublings, additions, omissions, freedoms, pedal use, and interpretative considerations that might be of significance in the process of transcribing organ works for the piano.

Busoni's *Fantasia nach Bach* is a rather peculiar composition in that it is neither a transcription nor a paraphrase, since Busoni combines musical material by Bach – either through direct quotation, transcription or in an altogether altered form – with his own musical material, resulting in a synthesis Beaumont refers to as a *Nachdichtung*, a “reconstruction of an original text in another language or style.”<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, the *Toccata* is an entirely original composition except for the opening “Preludio” section, which borrows thematic material from one of Busoni's earlier compositions. The toccata as a genre dates from the Baroque era and Bach himself composed numerous toccatas for keyboard instruments. Even the three different sections of Busoni's *Toccata* are reminiscent of Baroque genres: “Preludio,” “Fantasia,” and “Ciaccona.” The ultimate goal of this study is therefore to examine Busoni's *Fantasia nach Bach* and *Toccata* and to explore the various ways in which he emulated elements from Baroque composition in his own works. The *Fantasia nach Bach* will be analyzed in detail, but only certain topics of relevance and interest regarding the *Toccata* will be discussed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Anthony Beaumont, *Busoni the Composer*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 137.

<sup>5</sup>Readers interested in a more in depth analysis of the *Toccata* are encouraged to consult the dissertations *Ferruccio Busoni's musical thinking: A study of his 'Sonatina seconda' and 'Toccata'* by Chong-Pil Lim and *Three perspectives of the art of Ferruccio Busoni as exemplified by the 'Toccata,' 'Carmen Fantasy,' and transcription of Liszt's 'Mephisto Waltz'* by Roebold Hugh Middleton.



## CHAPTER II

### *FANTASIA NACH BACH*

In the final measures of the *Fantasia nach Bach* Busoni writes “PAX EJ”<sup>6</sup> as a final reminder that this composition came about as an epitaph to his father, Ferdinando Busoni. After a long period of illness Ferdinando died on 12 May 1909 and Busoni completed this work in the span of a mere three days during the following June. The *Fantasia nach Bach* combines three Bach chorale settings with Busoni’s original material in a unique manner, resulting in a special genre of composition Beaumont refers to as a *Nachdichtung*. Just as the title suggests the work does not adhere to a traditional formal structure, but is rather set in a free form in which each quotation of a Bach chorale demarcates a major section.

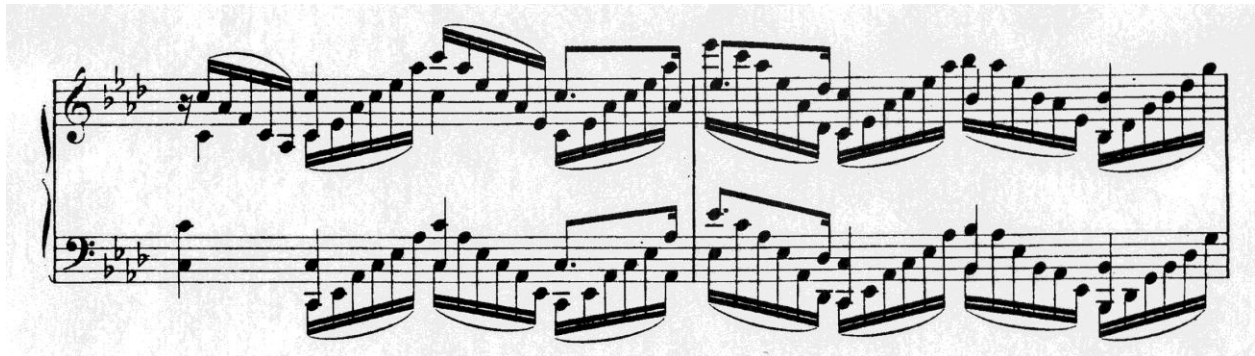
In the murmuring opening of the *Fantasia nach Bach* the key of F minor is suggested by the F pedal point, but the harmony itself is unstable and there is no cadence to establish the key. In measure 3 the right hand provides a premature glimpse of what is to follow by outlining the first five notes of Bach’s chorale prelude *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag*, BWV 766, and while the right hand melody departs from the chorale in measures 4-5, the left hand continues the melody, using it as a device to modulate to D flat minor in measure 6. In measure 7 the left hand introduces an ascending line in a dotted rhythm derived from the bass line of Partita VII of *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag*, while the right hand introduces the four bell-like repeated notes found in Partita II of the same chorale prelude. These two motives are exchanged between the two hands three times in measures 8-10. In measure 11 there is an unexpected arrival on an A flat harmony outlined in arpeggiated figures in both hands, and in the following measures the

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<sup>6</sup> Latin, “Peace be unto him.”

first consequent phrase of *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag* is outlined in double octaves. See Example 1.

Example 1: Busoni: Chorale theme in *Fantasia nach Bach* (mm. 12-13).



The descending motive E flat–D flat–C in measure 13, created by the addition of a passing tone to the original chorale melody, is altered into a chromatically descending three note motive that occurs throughout measures 15-22. In this passage Busoni also introduces the repeated three-note “death motive” that he uses in several other compositions as well, especially in association with the death of Faust.<sup>7</sup> This motive can be derived from the three repeated C’s in the third measure of the chorale *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag*. In measures 15, 17, and 19 one also recognizes that the bass line is transposed down a half tone every other measure, resulting in a less apparent presentation of the chromatic motive.

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<sup>7</sup> Beaumont, 57.

Example 2: Busoni: *Fantasia nach Bach* (mm. 15-20).

After a cadenza-like passage in measures 23-4 that is reminiscent of Bach's keyboard writing there is a return to the *mormorando* texture, interjected with chordal statements of the death motive.

The first quotation of an entire chorale prelude commences in measure 30. Busoni inserts the Partita I from Bach's *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag*, BWV 766, with its original harmonization intact, although he adds notes to the chords to achieve a thicker texture, and also punctuates the end of each phrase with a statement of the death motive. In order to allow for the latter additions he changes the note values of Bach's quarter notes with fermatas to whole notes. Refer to Examples 3 and 4 to compare Bach's realization of *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag* with Busoni's version.

Example 3: Bach: *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag*.



Example 4: Busoni: *Fantasia nach Bach* (mm. 28-39).

The image displays a musical score for Busoni's *Fantasia nach Bach*, measures 28-39. The score is written for piano and features a complex texture with multiple staves. The key signature is three flats (B-flat major/C minor), and the time signature is common time (C). The score is divided into four systems, each with two staves (treble and bass clef). The first system (measures 28-31) includes the instruction *dolciss.* above the treble staff and *sospiro* below the bass staff. The second system (measures 32-35) is marked *Con Sonorità* above the treble staff and *tenuto* below the bass staff. The third system (measures 36-38) continues the texture. The fourth system (measures 39-41) is marked *più sosten.* above the treble staff. The score includes various musical notations such as chords, arpeggios, and melodic lines, with some notes marked with asterisks.

Immediately after the quotation of Partita I Busoni inserts an almost verbatim version of Partita II, although he adds extensive phrasing, articulation and dynamic indications. There are also some minor alterations to note values; in measure 43 Busoni alters Bach's eighth note in the bass line to a sixteenth note with a rest of the same value, and in the next measure he does the opposite in the right hand by changing Bach's quarter note to a half note. In measures 48-9 Busoni divides the single melodic line between the two hands that results in a more facile execution, but inevitably also affects the phrasing of these two measures. In measures 48 and 65-7 Busoni adds the indications *sostenuto...a tempo*. In measure 54 begins the passage with the four note repeated motive that was first hinted at in the introduction, and in measures 58-9 Busoni doubles these notes in octaves. In the concluding measure of Partita II Busoni augments the note values so the complete four beats of the measure are accounted for, as opposed to only three beats in Bach's original. Instead of ending in a cadence on the third beat of the measure, Busoni's rendition cadences on the downbeat of the next measure, eliding with the first phrase of the quotation of the fughetta *Gottes Sohn ist kommen*, BWV 708.

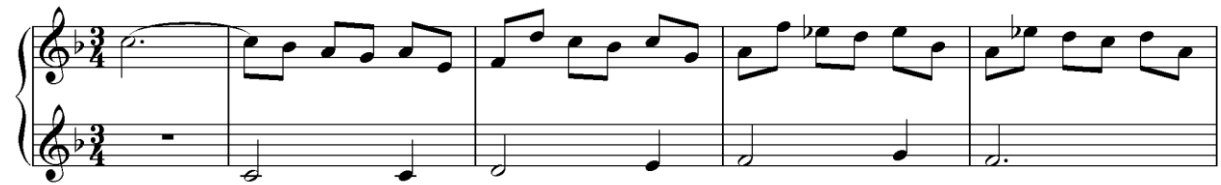
In contrast to the almost exact quotation of *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag* in the previous section, Busoni makes considerable changes to *Gottes Sohn ist kommen*, expanding it in length from 22 measures to 43 measures. The first statement of the fughetta subject is preceded by two measures of open F octaves, and the final C of the subject is augmented from a quarter note to a dotted half note resulting in the addition of an entire measure at the end of the first phrase. In the subsequent nine measures, which constitute the answer in the middle voice and another statement of the subject by the bottom voice, Busoni changes the note values of the sixteenth notes in the accompanying counterpoint to eighth notes; he writes the same notes as Bach, but in order to conserve same number of beats he extracts two of the original sixteenth

notes from each beat to outline the main melodic contour. See Examples 5 and 6, and note also the slight change in note duration in the left hand entrance.

Example 5: Bach: *Gottes Sohn ist kommen* (mm. 4-7).



Example 6: Busoni: *Fantasia nach Bach* (mm. 74-78).



In measure 84 Busoni adds four measures that do not exist in the original at all, consisting of a statement of the answer in octaves in the bass accompanied by the original counterpoint in sixteenth notes found in measures 4-6 of Bach's work. In measure 88 Busoni recommences the quotation of *Gottes Sohn ist kommen*, but he retraces his steps by resuming from measure 10 in the original instead of measure 13 until where he had already quoted. From this point onwards he also makes more significant changes to the original material; in measures 88-90 he alters the registers in which some of the voices are heard, but beginning in measure 91 he actually varies the notes in the upper voice in addition to adding octaves in the left hand. In measures 94-95 he retains the running notes in the right hand, but simplifies the left hand notes to its essential pitches, presenting them in double octaves. From measure 96 onward Busoni gradually thickens the texture, first by the addition of double octaves in the right hand and then by the addition of his own contrapuntal voices upon those already present in the original. In measures 96-99 Busoni adds an E flat pedal in the bass, implying a dominant F harmony in third

inversion, followed by the second inversion of the same harmony in measures 100-101. The dominant is not resolved, but is instead followed almost awkwardly by an extended six measures of the dominant C harmony, also in third inversion. In measure 108 the C<sub>7</sub> harmony is succeeded by an A minor chord, with which it shares a common C, and the A minor harmony is in turn followed by an F minor chord in first inversion, also with the C in common. Busoni effectively evades the stability that would have been provided by means of a regular cadence.

Example 7: Busoni: *Fantasia nach Bach* (mm. 106-111).

After the unusual harmonic movements in measures 106-11 there is a return to Bach's *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag*, this time the Partita VII. The chorale melody is presented in the bass line in this section, and is characterized by the dotted rhythmic motive that was already presented in the introduction. Busoni presents this chorale melody in octaves, and adds another voice above the existing texture in measures 113-17. It is rather curious to note that Busoni does not highlight the descending line F - E flat - D flat - C in the middle of the texture in measures 116-17 at all, whereas Bach does just that by sustaining each note for a dotted eighth.

In measures 119-120 Busoni adds completely new material and redistributes all of Bach's original material to be played by the left hand. The ensuing six measures are still largely based on the Partita, but Busoni doubles the death motive in octaves in each instance it occurs and also doubles the three descending notes presented by the middle voice in measures 121, 123 and 125. Busoni alters the figuration in the treble in order to adapt material that was intended to be played by both hands in Bach's version for the right hand alone. Beginning with the upbeat to measure



127 Busoni completely departs from the Partita, although he initially maintains the same texture. The music builds in intensity while Busoni gradually adds more of his own material until it reaches the climax in measure 130, where there is a transition into a transcribed and transposed version of Bach's *Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott*, BWV 602, from the *Orgelbüchlein*. Busoni only inserts the first three phrases of Bach's chorale, and retains the exact melodic and bass lines of the original, albeit with octave doubling in both hands. However, the ingenious manner in which the two inner voices are altered in order to facilitate execution on the piano reveals Busoni's consummate skills in transcribing organ works for the piano. In comparing Bach's chorale with Busoni's transcription in Examples 8 and 9 it is discernable that Busoni made minor changes in the notes and/or rhythms, yet preserved the overall texture of the original composition. Note also that Busoni writes out the fermatas in the chorale by adding two beats in each of the measures 131, 133, and 135, resulting in six beats for each measure.

Example 8: Bach: *Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott*.

Example 9: Busoni: *Fantasia nach Bach* (mm. 128-134).

The image displays a musical score for Example 9, Busoni's *Fantasia nach Bach*, measures 128-134. The score is written for piano and consists of six systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system is marked *largamente, tenuissimo* and *ff*. The second system has a *cresc.* marking. The third system has a *cresc.* marking. The fourth system has a *cresc.* marking. The fifth system is marked *diminuendo assai* and *dolce*. The sixth system ends with a *p* marking.

In measure 135 the music rapidly quiets down and after a modulation to F major Busoni restates the first three phrases of *Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott*. In this instance the melodic line is presented in single notes, and while Busoni uses the same melodic contours for the bass line and inner voices as Bach's chorale, he alters the rhythm of these voices to even sextuplets, as can be observed in Example 10. Note that the measures in which Bach wrote fermatas now have five beats each.

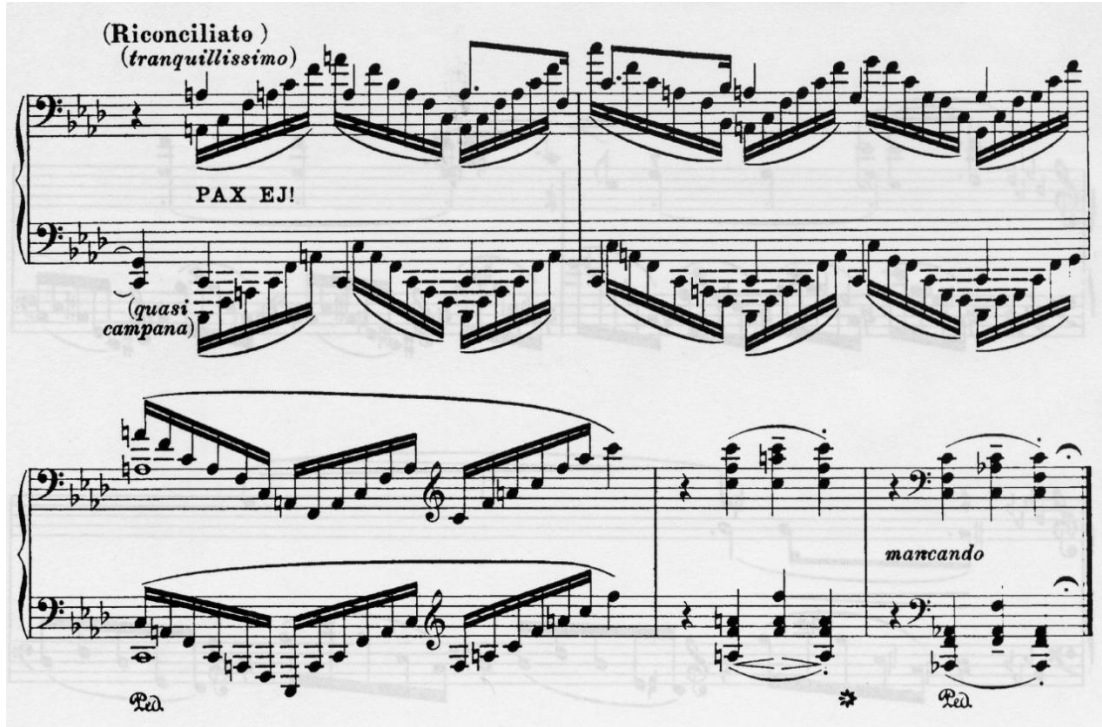
Example 10: Busoni: *Fantasia nach Bach* (mm.136-141).

The image displays a musical score for Example 10, consisting of three systems of music. Each system has a right-hand staff (treble clef) and a left-hand staff (bass clef). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major). The first system begins with a measure marked '135' and includes a dynamic marking 'p'. The second system features a 'poco a' marking and a 'm. s.' (mezza sostenuto) marking. The third system includes 'poco discendente' and 'ten. l'accordo' markings. The score shows a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line with inner voices in the left hand, characterized by even sextuplets. The music is marked 'p' (piano) and includes dynamic markings such as 'poco a', 'poco discendente', and 'ten. l'accordo'. The score shows a modulation to F major and a change in rhythm to even sextuplets.

The section comes to a close in what seems to be a cadence in D minor, but after a brief pause there is a soft, more introspective statement in F minor of the third phrase from *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag*, followed by a single statement of the death motive in its chordal guise, as presented in the section in measures 30-39.

Measures 145-150 correspond to measures 15-22 of the introduction, characterized by countless instances of the death motive and the chromatically descending three-note motive, but whereas the bass also gradually descended in the introduction, it stays steadfast on C in this later restatement. In measures 151-2 there is another cadenza-like passage that corresponds to measures 23-4 of the introduction, but this time it coincides with a completely reharmonized, *dolce* statement of *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag* that continues until measure 160. In measures 161-3 Busoni outlines the first consequent phrase of this very chorale in the same manner as in measures 11-3, albeit in F major instead of A flat major, punctuated by two statements of the death motive in measures 164 and 165 respectively; the first instance quite contentedly in F major, but the second, very disturbingly, in F minor and ending the entire composition on a chord in first inversion, thus leaving the listener with a sense of being unfinished.

Example 11: Busoni: *Fantasia nach Bach* (mm. 160-164).



When considering the manner in which the larger sections of the composition are put together, as outlined in Table 1, it is noticeable that the structure resembles Rondo Form, where each statement of *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag* represents the ritornello section.

Table 1: Busoni: *Fantasia nach Bach*: Summary of larger sections.

Section	Measures	Remarks
Introduction	1-29	Contains fragments of <i>Christ, der du bist der helle Tag</i>
<i>Christ, der du bist der helle Tag</i>	30-68	Partita I (mm. 30-39); Partita II (mm. 40-68)
<i>Gottes Sohn ist kommen</i>	69-111	
<i>Christ, der du bist der helle Tag</i>	112-129	Partita VII
<i>Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott</i>	130-141	
Coda	142-165	Contains fragments of <i>Christ, der du bist der helle Tag</i>

The question presents itself as to why Busoni chose these three Bach works in particular, i.e. whether the corresponding texts might have had any significant relevance to the context of Busoni's composition. In the Lutheran Church Calendar the two Bach chorales *Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott* and *Gottes Sohn ist kommen* are appropriate for Advent and Christmas, respectively, and since *Christ, der du bist der helle Tag* is a Chorale Partita it does not belong to any particular period of the Church Calendar. Considering that Busoni composed the *Fantasia nach Bach* after the event of his father's death, and the fact that he proclaimed himself on various occasions to be an unfaltering atheist,<sup>8</sup> it is unlikely that he chose the Bach works for their Lutheran liturgical significance, but more probably for purely musical reasons.

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<sup>8</sup> Beaumont, 32. See also Chapter X: "Occult" in the same volume.

## CHAPTER III

### TOCCATA

By the time Busoni composed his *Toccata* there were already several major composers who had made significant contributions to the genre. Robert Schumann (1810-1856) composed his *Toccata in C Major*, Opus 7, in 1830 during his stay in Heidelberg, and revised it in 1833. Peter Ostwald remarks that this work, which was perhaps one of the most important models of the genre for subsequent composers, was a “milestone in Schumann’s development as a composer, [and] forces piano technique to the limit while preserving something of its Baroque traditions.”<sup>9</sup> Example 12 illustrates the virtuoso character of the opening of Schumann’s *Toccata*.

Example 12: Schumann: *Toccata*, Opus 7 (mm. 1-10).

The image shows the first ten measures of Schumann's *Toccata*, Opus 7. The music is written for piano in 3/4 time, marked 'Allegro.' The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is characterized by its virtuosic and technically demanding nature, featuring rapid sixteenth-note passages, often in triplet patterns, and complex rhythmic structures. The texture is dense, with both hands playing intricate patterns. The notation includes various ornaments and dynamic markings such as 'f' and 'ff'.

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) included a toccata as the final movement of his *Le tombeau de Couperin*, as did Claude Debussy (1862-1918) in *Pour le piano*, and Serge Prokofiev (1891-

<sup>9</sup> Peter Ostwald, *Schumann: The Inner Voices of a Musical Genius*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 60.

1953) completed his *Tocatta* in 1912. These three works share a similarly motoric character and tend to be of a relatively homogeneous texture throughout. Busoni's *Tocatta*, on the other hand, consists of three distinct sections, a "Preludio," "Fantasia," and "Ciaccona," each of a very different character. In this regard his composition more closely resembles the model provided by Bach than those of his contemporaries. Bach's keyboard toccatas are sectional, each section having a different texture and character, the last of which is generally a fugue. Bach contrasts passages of fast finger work with slow arioso sections, for example *Tocatta* in G Minor BWV 915, or simply divides the toccata into three sections, Fast-Slow-Fast, as in the *Tocatta* in G Major, BWV 916. Example 13 illustrates the lyrical nature of the opening of the middle section of the latter composition.

Example 13: Bach: Adagio from *Tocatta* in G Major, BWV 916 (mm. 1-8).



Whereas the toccatas by Schumann, Ravel, Debussy and Prokofiev call attention to certain technical proficiencies of the performer, Charles Rosen observes that in Bach's toccatas "the composer is liberated from traditional procedures and can use instrumental color to bring new forms into being. The toccata displays the instrument and tests it. It aims not at



composition, but at an illusion of improvisation.”<sup>10</sup> Also in this regard does Busoni follow in Bach’s footsteps by continuously exploring new sonorities on the piano, even though he still pushes the physical demands on the performer to the limit.

Although Busoni’s *Toccata* as a whole is an original composition, the “Preludio” is a virtuoso improvisation on the “Ballad of Lippold the Jew-Coiner” from his opera *Die Brautwahl*. Example 14 is a piano reduction of the orchestral score of the opening of the aria, and when compared with Example 15 it is discernible how the composer adapted the orchestral texture of the operatic material to the opening of the *Toccata*.

Example 14: Busoni: “Leonard’s Ballad” from *Die Brautwahl* (mm. 1-6).

The image displays a musical score for the opening of the aria "Leonard's Ballad" from Busoni's opera *Die Brautwahl*. The score is presented in two systems, each containing a vocal line and a piano reduction. The tempo and mood are indicated as "Schnell und wild" (fast and wild) and "ff (grimmig)" (fortissimo, grimacing). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 6/4. The piano reduction features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and a dense harmonic texture. The vocal line is in a higher register and includes the lyrics: "Man fand das Zau-ber-buch, das ihm ver-hol-fen".

<sup>10</sup> Charles Rosen, *The Romantic Generation*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 39-40.

Example 15: Busoni: *Toccata* (mm. 1-6).

The image shows the first six measures of the 'Preludio' section of Ferruccio Busoni's Toccata. The title 'Preludio' is centered at the top, with 'Quasi Presto, arditamente' below it and 'Ferruccio Busoni' on the right. The word 'Piano' is written on the left side of the first system. The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex, arpeggiated texture. The first system includes the instruction 'staccatissimo' and a dynamic marking 'f'. The second system includes the instruction 'marc.'. The score is written for piano with treble and bass clefs.

Busoni develops the motoric arpeggiated figure throughout the “Preludio”; whereas the melodic material is presented in the left hand at the beginning, the hands switch roles in measure 30, and in measure 34 both hands present the arpeggiation in different forms, spanning the entire range of the keyboard, and even with an awkward crossing of hands in measure 37.

The distinctive rhythm of the “Preludio’s” theme as presented in measures 5-6 becomes a rhythmic motive that unifies an otherwise exceedingly improvisational “Fantasia.” The motive is heard at the very opening of the “Fantasia” in measure 50 in a declamatory manner as illustrated by Example 16.

Example 16: Busoni: *Toccata* (mm. 50-51).

The image shows the first two measures of the 'Sostenuto, quasi Adagio' section of Busoni's Toccata. The title 'Sostenuto, quasi Adagio' is centered above the staff. The music is in 12/8 time and features a slow, declamatory melody. The first measure starts with a double flat (bb) and the second measure has a flat (b). The score is written for piano with a treble clef.

Although the “Fantasia” consists of a myriad different sections, each with its own tempo indication and character, it is held together by the rhythmic motive that is transformed to perform

different functions, ranging from the more lyrical version in measures 61-69 or the acutely brusque treatment in measures 75-77 and in measures 87-88. See Examples 17 to 21 for different transformations of the rhythmic motive.

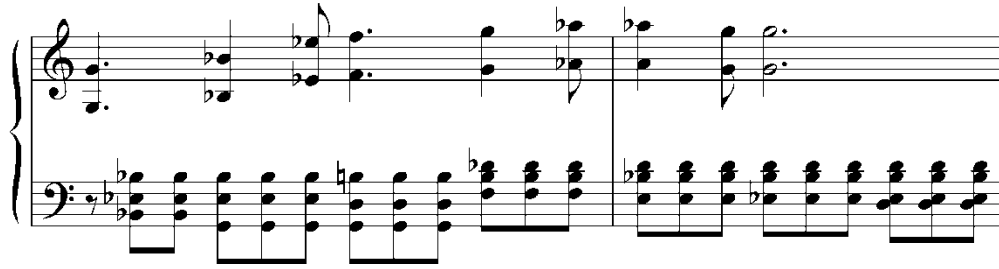
Example 17: Busoni: *Toccata* (mm.53-54).

Musical score for Example 17, Busoni's *Toccata*, measures 53-54. The score is in 12/8 time and consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and rests, characteristic of Busoni's style. The upper staff begins with a chord of F major (F, A, C) and moves through various chords, including B-flat major and F major. The lower staff features a similar rhythmic pattern, often with a sustained note in the left hand.

Example 18: Busoni: *Toccata* (mm. 61-62).

Musical score for Example 18, Busoni's *Toccata*, measures 61-62. The score is in 12/8 time and consists of two staves. The upper staff is in bass clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and rests, characteristic of Busoni's style. The upper staff begins with a chord of F major (F, A, C) and moves through various chords, including B-flat major and F major. The lower staff features a similar rhythmic pattern, often with a sustained note in the left hand.

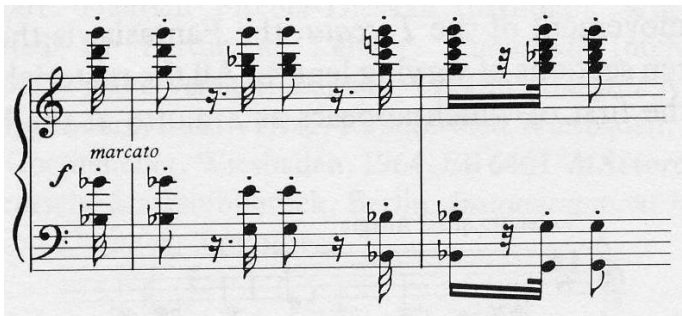
Example 19: Busoni: *Toccata* (mm. 65-7).



Example 20: Busoni: *Toccata* (mm. 75-77).



Example 21: Busoni: *Toccata* (mm. 87-88).



The “Fantasia” transitions into the “Ciaccona” without interruption, and the latter section exhibits much counterpoint, once again redolent of the final fugal sections in Bach’s toccatas.

The rhythmic motive that instills a sense of coherence in the “Fantasia” is applied one more time in the final measures of the composition, bringing it to a dark and gloomy conclusion.

Example 22: Busoni: *Toccata* (mm. 299-306).

Tempo I

Piu sostenuto

The musical score is written in 3/4 time. The first system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It contains four measures of music, with the first three measures featuring a series of chords and the fourth measure featuring a single note. The bass staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It contains four measures of music, with the first three measures featuring a series of chords and the fourth measure featuring a single note. The second system consists of two bass staves. The top staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a 3/4 time signature. It contains four measures of music, with the first three measures featuring a series of chords and the fourth measure featuring a single note. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a 3/4 time signature. It contains four measures of music, with the first three measures featuring a series of chords and the fourth measure featuring a single note. The tempo is marked 'Tempo I' and 'Piu sostenuto'.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

Almost every major composer in the Western World born after 1750 had their musical education built upon the foundation of Bach's music, although it can easily become an exercise in inanity to attempt to find any specific instance of Bach's influence, as it were, on the compositions of these later composers. In the case of Busoni his particular interest in Bach's music is evident in the volume of his Bach transcriptions and editions, and the frequency with which he performed Bach's compositions in his piano recitals. The *Fantasia nach Bach* and the *Toccatà*, although two decidedly dissimilar compositions in terms of purpose and conception, represent two manifestations of Busoni's respect for Bach, whether it be in the form of assimilating Bach's compositions into one of his own, or by creating an original work to the same mold as some of Bach's works. Whereas Liszt's paraphrases of operatic works are free and often virtuoso arrangements of excerpts from other composers' works and as such are entirely presented in Liszt's musical language, in the *Fantasia nach Bach* Busoni created a synthesis between his own musical material and language and those presented in Bach's works, whether the latter be quoted verbatim, slightly altered, or radically changed. The final result is a composition that audiences perhaps find challenging to relate to, yet of which the compositional skill is incontestable. Similarly the *Toccatà* is without a doubt the creation of a superior craftsman, but the dark implications of the music have been preventing the work from being more widely accepted.

APPENDIX  
TRANSLATIONS OF CHORALE TEXTS

The following texts are translated by the author of this dissertation.

**Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott**

Lob sei dem allmächtigen Gott,	Praise to the almighty God
Der unser sich erbarmet hat,	Who had mercy on us
Gesandt sein'n allerliebsten Sohn,	And sent His beloved Son
Aus ihm geboren im höchsten Thron.	Born of Him in the Highest.

Michael Weiße, 1542

**Gottes Sohn ist kommen**

Gottes Sohn ist kommen	The Son of God has come
Uns allen zu Frommen	To sanctify us all
Hier auf diese Erden	Here on earth
In armen Gebärden,	In lowly guise
Daß er uns von Sünde	So that we might be from sin
Freie und entbinde.	Freed and released.

Johann Roh, 1544

**Christ, der du bist der helle Tag**

Christ, der du bist der helle Tag	Christ, you who are the bright day
vor du die Nacht nicht Bleiben mag,	Before you the night does not endure
Du leuchtest uns vom Vater her	You shine upon us from the Father
und bist des Lichtes Prediger.	and you are the Preacher of Light.

Erasmus Alber, 1536



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