

Review Article

The Performance Practice and Musical Analysis of Ignaz Moscheles's Etude Op.105.

Xiao Jing*

Mannes School of Music, 55 W 13th St, NY 10011, New York.

Corresponding Author: Xiao Jing, Mannes School of Music, 55 W 13th St, NY 10011, New York.

Received: 📅 2024 Jun 20

Accepted: 📅 2024 Jul 09

Published: 📅 2024 Jul 19

Abstract

This paper explores Ignaz Moscheles's Etude Op. 105 by conducting a detailed examination of its performance practices and musical analysis. Moscheles, a notable figure bridging the Classical and Romantic periods, crafted this composition in 1841, showcasing advancements in technique and a unique musical approach. The research investigates the historical context surrounding the composition, encompassing various facets such as technical challenges and articulation. The musical analysis focuses on aspects of tonality and phrasing. In addition, the paper concludes with the method of interpretation for performers. By understanding Moscheles's creative intentions and historical background, musicians can adeptly interpret and convey the depth of Op. 105, thereby contributing to the appreciation and preservation of Moscheles's notable contributions to piano music.

Keywords: Ignaz Moscheles, Etude Op. 105, Performance Practice, Musical Analysis, Method of Interpretation.

1. Introduction

Ignaz Moscheles, a prominent figure in the musical landscape, lived through the classical period and the Romantic period in music history. He left behind a large number of valuable musical works, as well as a great contribution to piano education. He composed lots of piano studies, and there has been extensive research on his Op.70 compositions. It's worth noting that his work number of op.105 is a good example of etudes that illustrate his innovation of unique style and techniques. This paper delves into the performance practice and musical analysis of Moscheles's etude op.105. The purpose of this paper is to explore how music was played during Moscheles's era, including difficulties with piano techniques, articulation, and other ways of performing. Studying the music and researching the historical context, comparing it with pieces from other composers created in the similar period helps enhance our understanding of Moscheles's piece and the unique style of his period. In the end, this paper provides a reference for players on how to play this piece, and in order to demonstrate Moscheles's special style and creative intention to the audience [1].

Piece: This piece of music, called "Two Etudes for Piano," was created by Moscheles in London in 1841. There are two main parts: the lively Allegro Scherzoso and the fierce Allegro Feroce. Even though it wasn't as well-known as Chopin and Liszt's etudes at the time, Moscheles composed this piece to showcase his talent and distinctive style in piano music. Although not widely recognized, this piece makes

an important contribution to piano music by showcasing various technical aspects and offering educational and musical value for advanced students.

1.1. Historical Context

The Industrial Revolution had a profound impact on various aspects of society. This was the beginning of new methods for producing pianos, shifting from being crafted by hand by skilled workers to being mass-produced in factories. As a result, the piano gained popularity as a prominent musical instrument in Europe during the early 19th century, leading to an increase in middle-class families purchasing and learning to play the piano. Additionally, the Industrial Revolution resulted in advancements in piano technology. The construction and mechanisms of pianos saw significant improvements, with the use of advanced materials leading to stronger frames.

Periodically, advancements in technology were promoted by competing manufacturers, thereby enhancing the instrument's pitch range, speed of performance, size of volume, and expressive powers. In the early 19th century, keyboards had a range of five to six octaves, and some instruments even went up to six and a half octaves. Following 1810, fortepiano instruments started using pedals instead of knee levers. This development of the piano allowed pianists to achieve distinct dynamics and intensity while playing. In addition, in 1821, Pierre Erard received a patent for a double-escapement mechanism that had been refined by his

uncle Sébastien. This system allowed for quicker and more intricate note repetitions, thus promoting the development of exceptional skill in accomplished musicians like Franz Liszt.

Between 1830 and 1850, the modern piano saw substantial transformation, leading to the widespread manufacture of its fundamental models: the upright and grand piano. Due to improvements in piano technology, there has been a growing desire for more difficult technical challenges in piano playing. As public performances grew, the need for piano music also rose, leading many composers to create pieces for the piano. The main goal when the etude genre was first created was to improve technical skills through concentrated practice. During the post-1820s era in Europe, the prevailing musical style illustrated the spirit of romanticism, composers emphasized the emotional expressive, personal uniqueness, and distinct contrasts within their works.

This piece was created in 1841, when this time the romantic music style took shape, herein composers commenced delving into the realm of emotional expression and personal feeling within their musical compositions. Hence, this piece written by Moscheles explores an approach to combining technical challenges with musical expression in etudes. At that time, while Germany was seen as the cultural center of Europe, Moscheles received greater support and had similar ideas to the English court. He spent a lot of time in England, living in London while working on this piece. It wasn't until 1846 when he started teaching at the Leipzig Conservatory,

that he returned to Germany. In that period, the European Romantic period had many famous composers like Franz Liszt, Frederic Francois Chopin, Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann. Moscheles exhibited a limited engagement with the musical compositions of Chopin and Liszt. Nevertheless, he showed a liking for Mendelssohn's music, acknowledging its impact and forming a significant bond with the composer in the 19th century. Moscheles, a prominent figure of this time, demonstrates significantly in both musical style and performance style from other remarkable composers like Frederic Chopin and Franz Liszt in the romantic period [2].

1.2. Performance Practice Technical

Technique Challenges: This piece presents a myriad of technical challenges that require performers to be precise in their play. One of the primary technical challenges, as illustrated in Figure 1, involves the consistent appearance of same texture frequencies. This passage emerged as a result of advancements in piano manufacturing technology in 1821, incorporating novel mechanisms. Therefore, the task of this method for performing requires careful attention to clearly articulate repeated notes and smoothly transition to subsequent notes. Specifically, this challenge manifests in the introductory section and the climactic part of the first part of this work. It requires executing repeated notes at a rapid tempo in the right hand, incorporating harmonic intervals. Furthermore, it involves maintaining a similar texture characterized by repeated notes and melodic leaps across both hands. Maintaining fluency and accuracy under high tempo conditions represents a critical aspect of technical proficiency [3].



Figure 1: Selecting from the Initial Passage of this Set of Music, Measures 1-7



Figure 2: Selecting from the First Piece of this Set of Music, Measure 28-31

Moreover, Figure 2 illustrates an example of another technical difficulty of this work, regarding the consistent utilization of octaves on a single hand. Throughout that era, with the evolution of piano fabrication techniques, numerous composers leaned towards utilizing this gesture

in their piano works. Similarly, Hummel, who maintained a close friendship with the composer Moscheles, distinguished himself not only as a virtuoso performer but also as a gifted composer, showcasing similar techniques in his piano compositions, notably in his use of octave passages.



Figure 3: Selecting from the Second Piece of this Set of Music, Measure 1-7

The challenging aspect of the technical passage at the begin of this second part of the musical composition involved executing harmonic intervals simultaneously with staccato

articulation to achieve clarity, coherence, and make the change of dynamic with the same musical document.



Figure 4: Selecting from the Second Piece of this Set of Music, Measure 93-103

This illustration depicts the difficult technical challenge of alternating harmonic utilization with each hand, performing

this musical document seamlessly while guaranteeing clear acoustic outcomes.



Figure 5: Selecting from the Franz Liszt's Dante Sonata S.161 No.7, Measure 35-40

During the Romantic era, Franz Liszt, a renowned pianist and composer, overlapped with the time when Moscheles was active. Upon analyzing Liszt's musical works, it becomes clear that the technical hurdles in performance, especially in his Fantasia Piano Sonata, are closely intertwined with the manifestation of musical consonance. A comparative examination of analogous textual components employed in compositions by various composers highlights the pivotal role these methods play in illustrating piano performance abilities [4].

Furthermore, in this collection, an added technical difficulty emerges due to the continuous performance of broken octaves using the right hand. Moreover, within the second part of this set work, the complexity of its techniques holds significance as it accentuates the harmonic intervals executed by the right hand, executed at a fast tempo, thereby enhancing auditory coherence. Interestingly, Moscheles consciously steered clear of using rapid scales in this musical piece, deliberately sidestepping technical challenges. In addition, this anthology of musical pieces, categorized under the genre of etude, stands out not just due to specific technical hurdles but also because of the integration of varied technical intricacies in work.

Pedaling Technique: The development of the piano, the pedal innovation the feet pedal. The proper use of pedals plays a notable role in the technical challenge of this piece. The use of appropriate pedals will make the music more abundant in musical tone and color, and the transition between phrases gets smoother. However excessive use of pedals in fast-moving passages can make the music sound too dirty and too heavy for the 19th-century piano. If some parts do not use pedals make music lacks continuity, especially the melody line will be broken, and too heavy pedals will cover the multiple layers that the composer wants to reflect. So be careful when facing the challenge of pedal handling.

1.3. Articulation

Articulation stands as a pivotal cornerstone in expressive interpretation within the realm of musical performance. In this piece, the composer highlights the accurate articulation of the early romantic period, emphasizing the articulation of this piece combined with smooth legato playing for lyrical lines and staccato. The explanation in this piece shows the clear distinction between different types of notes using

staccato articulation. This element adds musical importance to the piece and also challenges the performer to adjust their touch to meet the detailed articulation requirements. Moreover, attention to articulation heightens the interplay between melody and accompaniment, fostering a sense of balance between each voice part and cohesion within Moscheles's musical framework [5].

Tempo: The speed selected for this music piece is crucial in influencing how it is interpreted and how effective the performance is. In the first and second etudes within this composition, a rapid tempo is employed. While the fast tempo enhances the excitement and virtuosity of the piece, it also accentuates the technical complexities, thereby requiring heightened precision from the performer. Especially in fast passages, it's really important to maintain clarity and accuracy. Maintaining a quick tempo throughout the music is impressive. On the other hand, a slower pace reduces the energy in the composition.

Rhythm: The first piece in this compilation uses a time signature of six-eight, distinguished by a compound beat. At the same time, the subsequent segment utilizes a four-four time signature, alongside showcasing a compound beat. Nevertheless, the rhythmic pattern differs among these compositions. The primary rhythmic feature in the six-eight composition revolves around sixteenth notes, whereas the four-four composition incorporates a blend of eighth and sixteenth notes in its rhythmic framework. Moreover, the symbol of rest was pivotal in shaping this piece. Rest breaks are consistently interspersed with tightly structured rhythms in the different voice part, thereby illustrating a unique facet of the creator's pulse interpretation in creating this piece.

Dynamic Range: Because of the development of the piano, in this piece, the composer gives performers more freedom to demonstrate distinct dynamics while composing. The different signs of dynamics make the same music materials listen full of different feelings, by using these changing dynamics, the composer expressed the personal feelings, adding contrasts to the music that fit with the creative style of the Romantic era. Throughout the progression of the composition, the dynamic expression exhibits significant fluctuations, encompassing transitions from soft to intense crescendos culminating in the fortissimo climax. Furthermore, employing a diverse spectrum of dynamic

elements enhances the musical charm and emotional profundity, allowing musician's ample room to delve into expressive renditions.

Articulation Marks: Figure 6 illustrates the progression



Figure 6: Staccato Signs

Moscheles incorporated both staccatissimo and standard staccato markings in his compositions, using both wedges and dotted staccatos. These two notational methods for staccato highlight distinct musical articulations, influencing the interpretation and execution of notes, especially regarding their duration in rapid passages.

Tenuto Sign: The tenuto symbol is pivotal for expression in this musical piece. Throughout history, due to limitations in piano technique, musicians depended on the duration of notes to regulate sound intensity. Therefore, in a time signature of six-eight, the placement of a tenuto symbol adjacent to a dotted quarter note assumes crucial importance. The tenuto symbol in this composition indicates the composer's need for maintaining a specific note for a sufficient period within a vocal part to outline the melody clearly. Although this is merely one note, the musician should perform it at a higher volume in contrast to the other voices.

Ornamentation: In the Baroque era, composers initially integrated considerable embellishment into their musical works. Gradually, the popularity of embellished symbols diminished consistently. In analyzing Baroque versus Classical compositions, it becomes evident that ornamentation decreases notably as music transitions into the Romantic era. During this era, composers often employed a unique style of embellishment, exemplified by Moscheles' preference for the trill, which became a prominent feature in German Romantic music. His approach to executing trills diverges significantly from the norms of the 18th century, where such embellishments traditionally began with the main note rather than the higher auxiliary tone. Moreover, enhancements were performed by breaking down the prolonged tone into sixteenth or eighth notes.

1.4. Musical Analysis

Tonality Analysis: The tonal structure of the initial segment in this musical set commences in F major and concludes in the same key. The progress of tonal structure in the initial creation of this piece use the composition method of modulation and employs the tonalities of E major, A-flat major, D-flat major, and A major. The subsequent piece within this composition starts in D harmonic minor, which is

of staccato representation in the composer's composition, initially indicating a staccato symbol as either a short stroke or a wedge. By the early 19th century, this notation had developed into three distinct types: staccatissimo, normal staccato, and mezzo-staccato.

the relative minor of F major, and concludes in the identical key. Furthermore, the development of the tonal structure in this segment incorporates methods like modulation and the organization of harmonic minors such as E minor, C harmonic minor, B harmonic minor, and G harmonic minor [6].

Phrasing: The crafting of phrase is notable in demonstrating Moscheles's unique approach to composition, providing musicians with an opportunity to create lively musical scenes. The composer utilizes diverse structural patterns of phrases in this composition, encompassing balanced sentences and segments where measures are fractured and segmented into smaller unit forming a unified sentence. The highlighted phrase arrangement in this composition is a specific type known as the dovetailed phrase, predominantly utilized in contrapuntal music. This phrase entails a single note serving as both the concluding element of one phrase and the initiating element of the subsequent phrase, occasionally culminating in a significant cadence. For example, in the second section of this composition, the first note at measure 24 marks the end of a phrase and the beginning of the next phrase.

The shift happens from the dominant chord of a harmonic minor to resolve on the tonic chord of a minor. Subsequently, starting from measure 24, a new musical theme emerges and then start a new phrase. Melodic and Harmonic Analysis: Investigation into the melody within this piece exposes Moscheles' extensive use of non-harmonic tones, such as passing tones, neighboring notes, and chromatic progressions, profoundly influencing the melodic framework. Employing organization techniques of sequence enhances the breadth and intricacy of the melody's tonal spectrum, while utilizing imitation methods integrates mirrored melodic pattern across different voice part. In the etude genre, the rapid tempo showcases diverse descending second intervals in the melody, while chromatic progressions in separate voices engage in musical dialogue, creating a space within the lively composition, brimming with tension and vibrant delight.

The primary section of this piece progresses harmoniously, whether in its original key or through modulation, focusing predominantly on the fundamental harmonics of the tonic

and dominant. The composition's second part commences with the dominant chord, followed by the composer employing a perfect authentic cadence within the piece to create tension. The composer employs secondary chords to imbue the music with chromatic richness, utilize the augmented sixth chords, diminished chord to add color and tension. The frequent changes in tonality showcasing Moscheles's skill in handling harmonic transitions smoothly.

1.5. Method of Interpretation

Performing this piece necessitates strict adherence to all articulations indicated in the musical score, encompassing tempo, dynamics, touch, and other related elements. Moscheles experienced the transition from the classical to the romantic period, yet his performance style retained classical elements within the romantic context. Therefore, performing this piece requires maintaining a consistent tempo and avoiding rubato to prevent fluctuations in the tempo and letting audience feeling the wave of the speed. Furthermore, the polyphonic texture in this composition plays a significant role. Moscheles' distinctive compositional style incorporates multipart patterns influenced by Baroque music, coupled with a deliberate commitment to polyphonic texture during the Romantic period.

When performing this piece, it's important to maintain a balance in volume between different vocal parts in contrapuntal music. Players must consider the strategic arrangement of dynamics using identical musical materials and recurring musical segments, while also controlling dynamics within the imitative parts. In accordance with contrapuntal textures, variations in dynamics should be introduced to create contrast with the monophonic elements. The identical gesture depicted in this composition serves as another distinguishing feature, imbuing the music with a rich array of colors through altered notes. When performing this piece, adherence to harmonic progressions is crucial for dynamic expression, such as transitioning from a dominant seventh chord to a tonic chord.

This approach not only creates tension but also resolves it, thereby evoking a palpable sense of anticipation and release in the audience. Furthermore, achieving clarity in phrasing and organizing musical materials holds significant importance in musical interpretation. In terms of how pedals

are handled, the notation of pedal symbols on musical scores differs depending on the editor's preferences. Henceforth, the musical notation functions purely as a reference, obliging musicians to rely on their auditory perception to decide on pedal usage. Simultaneously, fingering is identified as a crucial element in performing this etude. Effective fingering facilitates the execution of challenging passages, enabling players to navigate them more smoothly. In this piece, players must strategically devise fingering patterns.

For instance, in reference to the complex passage illustrated in Figure 1, decisions regarding uniform or varied fingering may vary depending on the piano model and the performer. Additionally, adept fingering supports sustained notes. Historically, the horizontal span of keyboards was limited, but with advancements in modern piano design, this span has increased. Consequently, executing compound harmonic intervals and chords poses challenges, particularly for smaller hands. Therefore, addressing these challenges necessitates thoughtful application of appropriate fingering techniques and pedal usage to ensure musical continuity.

2. Conclusion

This paper investigates Ignaz Moscheles's etude op. 105 from various aspects. It begins with an introduction to the composer, followed by an examination of the historical context surrounding the composition of this piece. Additionally, it delves into performance practices and conducts a detailed analysis of the musical work, offering guidance to performers on effectively interpreting this significant composition.

Bibliography

1. Bonds, M. E. (2006). A history of music in western culture. (No Title).
2. Ferguson, H. (1975). Keyboard Interpretation from the 14th to the 19th century: An Introduction. (No Title).
3. Gillespie, J. (2013). Five centuries of keyboard music. Courier Corporation.
4. Gordon, S. (1996). A history of keyboard literature: Music for the piano and its forerunners. (No Title).
5. Moscheles, Ignaz. "2 Etudes, Op.105." Edited by n.d. IMSLP. Accessed May 31, 2024.
6. Roche, J. (1970). Ignaz Moscheles, 1794-1870. *The Musical Times*, 111(1525), 264-266.