







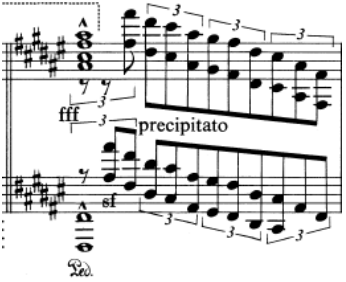







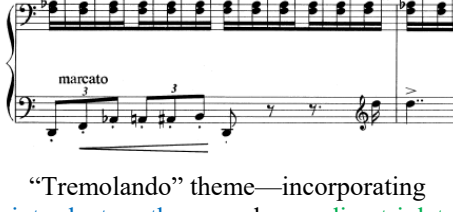









**Franz Liszt: Years of Pilgrimage, Second Year: Italy, S. 161 (1837-1849)**







VII. After Reading Dante: *Fantasia Quasi Sonata* in D minor (1849) - **“Dante Sonata”** (in 1 mvt.)

M.	Key	Formal designation/Theme	Commentary
1	-	 <p>Andante maestoso</p> <p>Introductory theme          “Andante maestoso” tritones</p>	<p><b>Exposition:</b>          Declamatory, maestoso, “double-dotted” octaves in tritones begin the work. Diatonic resolutions of major chords punctuate the grand opening. No key center is established—tritones of A-Eb and C-F# find resolutions to Ab and B. Eb minor is established in m. 15, and G minor in m. 24.</p>
25	-	 <p>Brief introduction of ascending triplet theme</p>	<p>Out of nowhere, this ascending triplet theme emerges “misterioso.” This is a short preview of thematic content that is extended greatly throughout the work.</p>
29	Dm	 <p>stringendo</p> <p>Transition to primary theme</p>	<p>The primary theme of the piece—alternating double octaves in chromatic harmony, surrounding D minor. This crescendos and decrescendos in intensity, interval, chord density, and register.</p>
52	A	 <p>Ascending triplet theme intrusion</p>	<p>Amidst the primary theme, a burst of the triplet theme introduced in m. 25 pops out of the texture, marcatisimo, transformed dynamically from its earlier introduction.</p>
54	Dm	 <p>Primary theme, filled out chords</p>	<p>The primary theme returns, this time, adding left hand leaps from D minor up to chromatically shifting upper chords. The right hand is stated in full chords, creating a dense, rumbling texture.</p>
77	A	 <p>Extended ascending triplet intrusion          Transformation into following texture</p>	<p>Another burst of the triplet theme pops out, extending into more elaborate material. The triplet figure is repeated, and taken over by the right hand, eventually reaching a large quarter note triplet climax in m. 83.</p>



84	D dim.	 <p>“Virtuoso” climax—fortissimo arpeggios and alternating octaves</p>	The first classic “virtuoso” moment of the piece—fortissimo, sweeping arpeggios, with falling alternating octaves. It elaborates on whole tone scales and diminished patterns.
90	- Bm Dm Bb Db	 <p>“Piu animato” triplet theme</p>	A new repetitive triplet theme emerges, serving an accompanimental role in later development. Left hand melodic notes punctuate the repetitive harmonic texture with references to the double-dotted introductory theme. It is stated in fifths rather than in tritones; intervallic transformation of the original theme.
103	F#	 <p>“Virtuoso” climax 2 – chords with pentatonic alternating octaves Transitional material</p>	A second “virtuoso” climax emerges—block chords with falling pentatonic octaves in F# major. In m. 108, the introductory theme is superimposed on both triplet themes, combining with rising block chords until a climactic resolution to C# major, including elements of recitative (m. 114, beat 3).
115	- G	 <p>Recapitulation of <b>introductory theme</b></p>	<i>Close to the exposition</i> As a way to “close off” the material of the exposition, the introductory theme is reintroduced. It is intervallically transformed, originally a tritone, to the interval of a perfect fifth (possibly symbolizing purity of evil, and a shift in mood to the angelic). G major is emphasized, then A#
124	C# dim	 <p>Transitional <b>Andante</b> “quasi improvvisato” theme</p>	“ <b>Development</b> ” – <i>Legato, Second movement style</i> A slower section emerges, “sweetly with intimate feeling.” It transforms the chromatic primary theme to triplet subdivisions, in a sensitive style. At the end of the section (m. 134), a recitativo melody and harmony moment breaks from the texture, with a “long pause” before the following section.
136	F# “C”	 <p><b>Andante</b> “ben marcato il canto” legato, singing theme</p>	An arpeggiated, singing style legato section in 3 parts follows. This long section is melody and accompaniment; left hand arpeggiated chords that accompany a longer melody. In the alto voice, arpeggios repeat to strengthen the the harmony. Occasional “breakout” recitativo moments occur in m. 140-141 and other places—an ascending accented alto voice pops out in preparation for the cadence. The section modulates to Bb, D, G, A, and many other keys, outside of F sharp, until finally “officially” modulating out of the key signature in m. 145. The introductory double-dotted theme is added to the texture in m. 147 as a thematic reference. A final recitativo and adagio transitions into the next section.

157	F#	<p>più tosto ritenuto e rubato quasi improvvisato</p>  <p>157</p> <p>ppp dolcissimo con amore</p> <p>una corda</p> <p>“più tosto ritenuto e rubato quasi improvvisato” <b>Andante theme</b> (based on <b>primary theme</b>)</p>	<p>The primary theme in F# is fully transformed into a “melody and accompaniment” 4 part texture, voiced in the soprano. 2 over 3 creates rhythmic tension—the sixteenth notes of the tenor voice and the sextuplets of the alto voice. The chromatic melody sings on the top—a major, expressive treatment than its original intense, rhythmic, fast D minor variant. (reminds me of Schubert variation)</p>
167	F#	<p>accelerando</p> <p>8 non legato</p>  <p>167</p> <p>P</p> <p>Variation on “più tosto” <b>Andante theme</b>, fully triplets, with syncopated alto theme</p>	<p>Eventually, the theme loses its bass and soprano voices, and becomes strictly in 3-time. The alto voice punctuates the texture in a descending scale pattern, while the right hand plays accompanimental arpeggios in great interval leaps and spaced chord voicings. This grows in intensity until a final “quasi cadenza” with fast fortissimo arpeggios in m. 178.</p>
176		<p>con 8 ad lib.</p>  <p>176</p> <p>ff appassionato assai</p> <p>Transition, “appassionato assai”</p>	<p>A brief “appassionato assai” transition presents new material that is never heard again—unison octave scales in duple time. Its function is bringing the rhythmic and “minor” sound-world back to the piece, after the long Andante section. It presents double dotted rhythms and accented offbeats, transitioning into the Allegro moderato.</p>
181	-	<p>Allegro moderato</p>  <p>pp sotto voce</p> <p>Allegro moderato—transitional reference to <b>introductory theme</b></p>	<p>(“3<sup>rd</sup> movement”—return to allegro material; possibly beginning of recapitulation?)</p> <p>The original theme returns, this time with eighth note accompaniment and a more rhythmic treatment (rather than rubato). The tritones re-emerge, signifying a return of the original, “devilish” content. The theme then returns to its perfect fifth interval, possibly suggesting a battle between forces—the unstable and the stable.</p>
189	- “B dim”	<p>marcato</p>  <p>189</p> <p>p</p> <p>“Tremolando” theme—incorporating <b>introductory theme</b> and <b>ascending triplet theme</b></p>	<p>The key signature vanishes, and diminished metered tremolos accompany the original ascending triplet theme—in the same order as the exposition. In this section, the triplets are juxtaposed with the original double-dotted introductory theme, expanding and transforming the original material into a single stream of music. Growing in intensity, harmonic instability, and rhythm, the primary theme takes over.</p>
199	-	 <p>199</p> <p>p</p> <p>Return to <b>primary theme</b></p>	<p>The primary theme returns in its original textural form, however being harmonically altered in quick succession (C7, Db, E augmented, Eb major, etc.). The section is capped by “stringendo” ascending scales that resolve to Ab major.</p>

211	-- Ab, Db, A, D, C#dim, G, F#	 <p>“Piu mosso” development</p>	A very long developmental section follows that incorporates the double-dotted <b>introductory theme</b> , <b>triplet theme</b> , and <b>virtuoso</b> themes into a climactic point. 2 over 3 is emphasized, wide interval leaps, chord inversions, “back and forth” register shifts, and marcatisimo octaves. Harmony quickly shifts through multiple keys. To end the section, “con strepito” fff triplet octaves outline diminished and chromatic patterns, with deep, dense, marcato chords that punctuate the bass. These triplets transform the initial ascending triplet line into primary material, eventually transforming into the repetitive second triplet theme to bring the energy down.
246	D dim	 <p>Transition, referencing “<b>piu animato</b>” <b>triplet theme</b> and <b>introductory theme</b></p>	Transition into slower, softer section once more, that reintroduces the repetitive triplet theme previously in m. 90. The introductory theme is referenced in the left hand, the triplets eventually becoming chords.
254	- A B F# G F D Edim C Bb	 <p>3-staved theme—combining <b>triplet theme</b>, double dotted <b>introductory theme</b>, with new chordal material, quieter theme</p>	Hand-crossing is necessary in this section, incorporating 3 voices in 3 staves—the arpeggiated accompaniment, declamatory chords in the upper register, and punctuating fifths in the lowest bass. This section is repetitive, quiet, and brings the energy down, ending the development.
270	-	 <p>Full restatement of <b>ascending triplet theme</b></p>	<b>Recapitulation?:</b> The original triplet theme is restated in its original texture, with different harmony. This signifies the beginning of the primary theme as stated in the opening.
273	A	 <p>Rubato, lamentoso theme, tripletizing the <b>primary theme</b> and transforming it to a softer, sensitive style</p>	The andante “quasi improvvisato” variation on the primary theme (m. 124) returns, but with a different tempo marking and texture. The dominant of the piece is finally emphasized strongly, in the same tripletized treatment of the primary theme as before. This section quickly dies down, only as a brief reference (in a major key) to the original fervor of the primary theme.
283	- “Bb”	 <p>Brief restatement of <b>introductory theme</b></p>	The introductory theme is reintroduced once more, punctuating the section, in pianississimo dynamic. Perfect fifths are highlighted, once again, in comparison with the tritone opening.

290	D	 <p>Restatement and extension of tremolando theme, this time with arpeggios</p>	<p>The “tremolondo” theme reappears in different rhythmic spelling, with accompanimental left hand arpeggios. Similar recitativo moments emerge in m. 295, 299. D major is strongly emphasized, but modulates to F# in m. 296 and F diminished to close.</p>
300	“A”	 <p>Piu mosso “Virtuoso” section, with ascending triplet octave arpeggios with leading tone</p>	<p>The allegro material finally returns here; until the end of the work. Rapid ascending 7 chords and declamatory downbeat chords reintroduce the chaotic energy. Liszt modulates through harmonies in chromatically ascending order: A, Bb, B, C, C# (chord planing).</p>
306	D	 <p>Climactic restatement of ascending triplet theme, introductory theme, “piu animato” triplet theme, and the tremolando theme</p>	<p>This large climactic moment begins in D major, the parallel major, with similar chord planing as the previous section—virtuoso double-dotted arpeggios (harkening to the introductory theme) and large chords punctuating each measure. (Perhaps the parallel major signifies rhetorical and narrative structure—light overcoming darkness.) The virtuoso section develops and combines many previous themes in quick succession—the sweeping left hand arpeggios, ascending triplet theme, tremolando theme, and double-dotted introductory theme. <b>This section represents the strongest climax of the piece—dynamically, rhythmically, and thematically.</b></p>
327	D	 <p>Allegro vivace section, extending texture and harmony of primary theme</p>	<p>The primary theme is transformed into a faster, more rhythmically active texture that does not incorporate octave alternation, but instead, syncopated left hand chords with rapid sixteenth note accompaniment in the right hand. Creating a similar texture and melodic movement, the primary theme is altered in an impassioned virtuoso style.</p>
339	D	 <p>Presto, triplettized extension of primary theme</p>	<p>The transformation continues—the primary theme undergoes a final severe transformation, this time, each hand alternating register with itself. Starting at a piano dynamic, the rhythm becomes fully triplettized (6/8 feel), increasing in interval leap, dynamic, and register of the piano, never fully climaxing (the highest dynamic is “piu forte”). It quickly returns to a quieter dynamic, creating a multi-stage crescendo to the end.</p>
353	D	 <p>Restatement of original primary theme</p>	<p>The original primary theme returns in texture—alternating octaves and chords in D minor. This is the first true restatement of the primary theme since the beginning of the piece, this time in D major once more. It grows in intensity once more, finally reaching a true fortissimo in the following section.</p>



361	D mod	 <p>Closing reference to the climactic restatement of <b>introductory double-dotted theme</b></p>	A final reference to the double-dotted introductory theme is presented in simple large block chords that sweep the entire range of the piano. These chords modulate from D, to C, to Bb, to Ab, to F#: planing chords in descending whole steps.
366	D	 <p>Finale; referencing <b>introductory double-dotted theme</b></p>	As an exclamation mark on the end of the work: fortissimo, double-dotted rhythms in large block chords give way to rumbling tremolos in D major. Simple diatonic harmony is finally established, with no chromatic alteration (a rarity in this piece—signifying the end). The final chords are given especial depth by placing the 3 <sup>rd</sup> deep in the register of the piano, rather than in the higher right-hand notes (from m. 370 to the end).

### Tonality: “D”

- The piece modulates ad libitum throughout, and one key center does not exist for many modulating transitionary sections. Longer, harmonically significant “pivot points” in the form— extended single key-centers—guide the work’s larger structure. The work is based around sonata form. Chord planing and common-tone modulations create areas of harmonic ambiguity.
  - D minor → F# major → D major

### Characteristic stylistic features

- “Fantasy” improvisation and cadenza
- “Virtuoso” technique—
  - Fast alternating octaves and chords
  - Technically demanding scales, arpeggios, and rhythmic organization
- Cantabile, singing-style decorated melody and accompaniment—romantic trope
- Thematic transformation and development—Beethoven
- Juxtaposition of many styles in a single work



### Discussion Questions:

\*\* How does Liszt organize thematic material to depict programmatic ideas and images? Can you connect any topics to its style, structure, and use of specific musical themes – to Dante's Divine Comedy?

#### Examples/ideas:

- **Tritone** as a topic— interval that historically represented and symbolized the "devil"--hellish imagery
- **D minor** as a topic— common key for music relating to death, as evidenced by Liszt's *Totentanz*, and the statue scene of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.
- The first chromatic theme symbolizing "the wailing souls in Hell."
- The second chorale treatment is in F-sharp major, representing "the joy of those in Heaven."
- **F# major** as a topic— Liszt's use of F# for angelic and religious context is found more directly in his other works: *The Fountains of the Villa d'Este* and *Benediction of God in Solitude*
- “The ending rapid chromatic octave section--splits into 3 distinct themes, reflecting the three heads of Satan in Dante's Inferno.”

\*\* How does harmony function throughout the work? Structurally? Thematically? Is the work major or minor, and can we classify it as such?

\*\* How does this piece both fit and transform the traditional definition of a “sonata”? How does it not? Where are the 3 parts?

\*\* How are tempo and expressive markings used? How are these different from previous solo repertoire—in both quantity and specificity?