Revisiting ‘Simplicity and Richness’: Postmodernism after ‘The New Complexity’

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This article brings together reflections of different kinds on several different, but related, experiences. The principal one of these was personal, although it had a public output: the composing of two recent works (O Venezia, for four women’s voices and harp and Twelve Transcendental Concert Studies on Themes from the Australian Poets for piano solo). Both of these pieces exemplify a compositional approach which is often characterised as ‘postmodern’ and both of them are also tonal compositions in some sense or that word. Since both were composed in the early twenty-first century, after a period in which atonal compositional languages held sway in much repertoire of the Western ‘classical’ tradition, the form of tonality which they exemplify could, with considerable justification, be characterised as ‘post-atonal tonality’.

Both of these compositions also concern themselves with – amongst other ‘issues’ – the ‘problem’ (if it is a problem) of the relationship between musical structure and musical figuration. In the course of thinking about this issue, I had occasion to re-read Leonard Ratner’s fine study of music of the classic era, now more than a generation old, but still a volume to which one can profitably return: particularly, from my perspective, Ratner’s chapters of ‘topics’ in classic music. This led me to consider Kofi Agawu’s more recent book which addresses aspects of the same subject from a more avowedly ‘semiological’ point of view, but also takes up more directly and explicitly the question of the relationship between ‘topics’ and musical structure.

Both Ratner and Agawu begin with a consideration of a well-known passage from Mozart, and re-reading their commentary lead me to listen again to a number of works by composers of the classic era, particularly, to be sure, Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven, but also others. One of these works was Mozart’s G minor Symphony (No 40), consideration of which led me to re-read Leonard Meyer’s analysis of the Trio section from that work’s third movement, the Menuetto: a passage of great directness and simplicity, which led me finally to consider the issue implied in my title, which indeed is derived from Meyer’s own.

The full title of Meyer’s article, dating back to 1976, was “Grammatical Simplicity and Relational Richness: The Trio of Mozart’s G Minor Symphony”. It is a lengthy (69 pages) account of the 42 bars of which Mozart’s Trio is composed. The subject of the article is indeed the apposition enunciated in the title, but rather than tackle this question by argument, Meyer sets out to tackle it by demonstration. Nevertheless, the idea which drives the article is that set out in his introduction.

A number of years ago I published an essay dealing with the nature of value in music [Ratner 1959]. It argued, among other things, that complexity was at least a necessary condition for value.....This view now seems to me, if not entirely mistaken, at least somewhat confused..... What is crucial is relational richness, and such richness (or complexity) is in no way incompatible
French overture, coups d'archet

exordium (introduction)

transposition

singing style

antithesis

circumlocutio

(turning figure)

gradatio

(sequence)

hint of learned style

anadiplosis (repetition of figure after punctuation)

antithesis

fanfare peroratio

(conclusion)

cadence

distributio

(breaking up of figure)

dubitatio (uncertainty, unexpected turn)

fanfare peroratio

(conclusion)

ombra (supernatural)

apostrophe (digression to another topic)

Example 1: Mozart: *Paris Symphony*, opening passage showing the topics (after Ratner and Agawu)
with simplicity of musical vocabulary and grammar. That value is enhanced when rich
relationships arise from modest means is scarcely a novel thesis [see Birkoff 1933]. Indeed the
“Value and Greatness” [Ratner 1959] essay suggested it in passing: “Evidently the operation
of some ‘principle of psychic economy’ makes us compare the ratio of means invested to the
informational income produced by this investment. Those works are judged good which yield a
high return. Those works yielding a low return are found to be pretentious and bombastic” But
like most writers, I failed to show how this general principle might apply to a particular piece
of music. In order to demonstrate how simplicity of means gives rise to relational richness, this
article will analyze a relatively brief excerpt, but one that is complete in itself, with as much
precision as the present writer can command. (Meyer 1976: 693–694)

In what follows, I shall try to bring together these several experiences and issues and relate them to one
another: compositional practice and musicological analysis, postmodernism and post-atonal tonality, structure
and figuration, simplicity and richness.

Examples 1 and 2 come in fact from Ratner (see Ratner 1980), and recycled by Agawu at the opening of his
book (see Agawu 1999). As my captions indicate, they provide two different commentaries on the opening
sixteen bars from Mozart’s *Paris Symphony*. Example 1 provides a piano-reduction of the passage is annotated
with comments identifying various ‘topical gestures’ which appear there. References to such stylistic features as
‘singing’, ‘learned’, ‘sensibility’, ‘fanfare’ and others indicate connections which a listener who is reasonably
historically-informed about eighteenth-century music might recognise between Mozart’s passage and certain
archetypal gestures referring to wider aspects of eighteenth-century life and art. Although one might think
these rather esoteric from a twenty-first-century viewpoint, recent research by Carol Krumhansl (Krumhansl
2001) indicates that a wide cross-section of contemporary listeners are able to recognise them.

Example 2 provides a completely different view: a two-part ‘contrapuntal skeleton’ which underpins the
continuity of the passage. Clearly this is a much simpler, ‘stripped-down’ view of the passage. Nevertheless,
it requires a more sophisticated knowledge of contrapuntal technique than the ‘topical’ view.

Example 2: Mozart: *Paris Symphony*, opening passage
showing the two-part contrapuntal framework (after Ratner and Agawu)

At least one aspect of the ‘richness’ (to use Meyer’s term) of the passage is the possibility which it affords, of
being heard in these two different ways, and without doubt, there are other ways of hearing the passage too.

Meyer’s article concerns a different Mozart piece, which, if anything, is simpler than the opening of the *Paris
Symphony*. The *Trio* from the third movement of the *Symphony in G minor* (of which the first section, bars
Example 3: Mozart: *Symphony No 40 in G minor (Trio)*, first section (bars 1–18)

1–18) are shown in short score in Example 3, is therefore a particularly appropriate *locus* for the discussion of the relationship between simplicity and richness. I will mention just one or two aspects.

I have labelled the phrases of this 18–bar section with the letters A to K. Meyer analyses (for example) phrase D as a variant of phrase A. On the face of it, this seems perhaps a somewhat obscure relationship to point out, because it is hardly literal, but depends crucially on context and on our understanding of how richness is created.

Firstly, we can note that passage segments into 3 phrases. The first (bars 1–6) is created by the caesura which the authentic cadence at that point brings about. This 6-bar phrase segments into 3 motifs, owing, amongst other things, to the rests in the melody, and the parallelism between motifs A and B, which leaves C as
an isolated ‘cadential portion’. The shape of this 6-bar phrase (two complementary motifs, followed by a cadence-motif) provides a model for a variation on the same pattern which occurs in Phrase 2: this time there are three complementary motifs, followed by a cadence-motif, landing in D major. Phrase 3 is a codetta to the two phrases we have just heard, by virtue of its two-fold repetition of the previously-heard cadence-motif (motif C and motif G, repeated in the codetta as motifs I and K).

The character of the complementary motifs in Phrase 2 leads us to hear them as consisting of ‘head’ and ‘tail’ segments. This is because the tail segment retains its shape (a pair of descending parallel thirds) unchanged through the three statements, while the head varies, and because of the voice-leading which the tail segments set up: B/G > A/F# in the tail of segment one, descending to A/F# > G/E in the tail of segment two and then to G/E > F#/D in the tail of segment one. This pair of descending thirds is something we have heard before: consider the underlying voice-leading of Phrase A, and this gives us a handle on the relationship between phrases A and D, as follows:

Example 3: Mozart: Symphony No 40 in G minor (Trio), first section (bars 1/2 and 7/8), showing the relationship between motifs A and D

As the title of the research project in the course of which this revised text was generated implies, my composition for piano solo entitled Twelve Transcendental Concert Studies on themes from the Australian Poets was inspired by the series of Etudes d’execution transcendante by Liszt, one of the great monuments in the canon of piano literature.

Twelve Transcendental Concert Studies on themes from the Australian Poets is in some broad sense a tonal
composition. But the tonality which it exemplifies is of a particular kind. The term I use for it is *referential tonality*, as opposed to the tonality exemplified in Liszt's *Etudes d'exécution transcendante*, which is that form of tonality exemplified by what we often call the ‘common practice’ tradition, to which the term ‘functional tonality’ is often applied.

Another descriptive term for the approach to tonality exemplified by *Twelve Transcendental Concert Studies on Themes from the Australian Poets* is ‘post-atonal tonality’. Recently I went searching for earlier uses of this phrase. A trawl through the on-line repository of musicological journals held in the database JSTOR reveals only one use of this term in the whole of recent musicological literature, as far as I have been able to ascertain. It is used by Arnold Whittall in an article entitled ‘Tonality in Britten’s Song Cycles with Piano’ (cf Whittall 1971).

However, Whittall’s article describes forms of tonality, exemplified by the music of Benjamin Britten, which persisted through the post-war period despite the hegemony of serialism at that time, and thus could perhaps be considered to be the continuation of an older tradition during the time of the rise of a new one. I take the phrase more literally, to mean forms of tonality which emerged more recently, in the aftermath of (perhaps because of) atonal hegemony, and which I would therefore consider to exemplify the rise of a new tradition. Examples of ‘post-atonal tonality’ in this sense might include Minimalism, the so-called ‘New Romanticism’ and ‘Appropriationism’ (the use of collage and other devices for creating new music by ‘cutting, pasting and re-assembling’ elements from musics of the past). The music of Terry Riley, George Rochberg and Alfred Schnittke might be considered as examples of this new tradition.

Nevertheless, Whittall identifies, in several Britten song-cycles, traits common to both interpretations, eg Mahlerian ‘progressive tonality’: by which I mean to describe works in which the tonality moves, over the course of a work, via a tonal trajectory (or a series of interlocking tonal trajectories), from a given starting-point to a different final goal. Examples of this procedure include five of Mahler’s nine symphonies: the Fourth (which begins in G major and ends in E major), the Fifth (which begins in C# minor and ends in D major), the Seventh (which begins in B minor and ends in C major) and the Ninth (which begins in D major and ends in D@ major). Mahler applied the principle of tonal progression to both sequences of movements (as in the symphonies) and to tonal trajectories *within* movements. His song cycle *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* is an example of the latter. Each of the songs begins in one key and ends in another: D minor to G minor, D major to F# major, D minor to E@ minor and E minor to F minor, respectively. The term is not usually applied, however, to shifts from minor to major or vice-versa where the key-note remains unchanged (as for example, in Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony, which begins in C minor and ends in C major).

These sorts of tonal procedures are clearly continuations of an older, ‘pre-atonal’ compositional tradition, albeit it one that came into being towards the end of the period of the hegemony of that tradition in the late nineteenth century. Schoenberg’s concepts of *schwebende* (fluctuating) and *aufgehobene* (suspended) tonality, bring us even closer to the ‘atonal and serial era’ just before and after the First World War. But we should expect a truly ‘post-atonal tonality’ to carry within itself signs of the compositional procedures associated with the atonal and serial era, and perhaps to give evidence of having drawn upon, modified or developed something of such procedures in its ‘compositional genes’ (so to speak). Otherwise, we might do better to describe such approaches as ‘revivalism’: reactionary throwbacks to the practices of former times.

In order to show something of how a ‘post-atonal tonality’ with such characteristics might be developed, I would like to refer to some compositional procedures located in a few particular well-known atonal and
twelve-tone works, and move on to show some examples from my *Twelve Transcendental Concert Studies on themes from the Australian Poets* and certain other of my works which indeed carry within their physiognomy evidence of precisely those atonal and serial procedures, and then show how these procedures have been modified to co-exist with, indeed to create, the sense of ‘post-atonal tonality’ which I have in mind.

I want first of all to refer to the source and fountain-head of atonal and serial practice, Arnold Schoenberg, and an approach which is ‘post-atonal’ more literally still: derived from the serial concept of ‘parametricisation’ (Ferneyhough 1995: 22–26, though the term, and the practice it describes, has roots a generation older).

Example 3: Milton Babbitt: *Woodwind Quartet* (bars 4–10)

The controversy in the 1960s (Lowinsky v Mitchell) over the musical language of Lassus’s Prophetiae turned on very different interpretations of the co-ordination of the different components of tonal language (chromatic triad-sequences, bass movement, voice-leading, etc). This controversy suggests to me that one possible approach to the tonal idiom of PP could be that the individual elements of tonality and atonality (diatonicism, chromaticism, centricity, acentricity, consonance, dissonance, metricity, ametricity, continuity
and discontinuity, etc) could be deliberately ‘unpicked’, re-assembled and made to overlap and interpenetrate
by means of ‘non-synchronous structural trajectories’, eg a ‘centrism/acentrism trajectory’ which moves
sometimes in synchrony (sometimes not) with the diatonic/chromatic trajectory, which moves sometimes in
synchrony (sometimes not) with the harmonic consonance/dissonance trajectory, the continuity/discontinuity
trajectory, the metrical/counter-metrical trajectory, and so on.

Through these means (inspired by the otherwise unlikely conjunction of Britten, Ferneyhough and Lassus), I
propose ‘R+I’ of tonality and atonality as the first engine of an inclusive musical language. My Into the Shores
of Light (BBC SSO 2001, Radio 3 2003, recorded for ERM Records by the Czech Radio Orchestra 2007)
implemented such techniques in a prototypical way, which I now propose to develop.

To illuminate and reify this topical perspective on PAT, consider the historical perspective. In 1982, Jacob
Druckman thought that ‘...not being a serialist on the East Coast of the United States in the sixties was like
has since produced statistics proving Druckman’s implication (that serialism exerted intellectual tyranny)
comprehensively wrong, Druckman’s attitude was shared widely enough to make Rochberg’s ‘Concord’
Quartets, juxtaposing tonal and atonal movements, seem ‘transgressive’ at the time.

Rochberg’s works have entered the repertoire of several major quartets, so perhaps Holloway’s (2001)
castigations (‘ersatz Mahler and late-Beethoven’, ‘more than a bit jejeune’, ‘incomplete mastery of the old
rules’ and ‘feeble insipidity’) are exaggerated. However, Frederic Rzewski’s approach points in more fruitful
directions: in (eg) American Ballads, juxtaposition of popular tunes with atonal passages based on short motifs
extracted from them and subjected to quasi-Webernian rhythmic and registral procedures (eg exchange of on-
beat and off-beat placement and manipulation of mensural proportions: 3:2, 3:4, 5:4 etc), ubiquitous registral
dispersion and textural discontinuity (inter alia) produce a more convincing totality.

Nevertheless, there still seems plenty of room for an approach which reconciles tonal and atonal forces in a
more thoroughly integrated way. I have in mind ‘non-synchronous pitch trajectories’ analogous to the ‘non-
synchronous rhythmic trajectories’ captured in Roeder’s analysis (1994) of Schoenberg’s Mondestrucken,
which demonstrates how Schoenberg’s highly variegated rhythmic surface is nevertheless produced by
periodic interacting pulse-streams.

Consider the following very well known example from the Piano Sonata in C major (Hob XVI/35, I) by Josef
Haydn:

\begin{verbatim}
\textbf{Allegro con brio}
\end{verbatim}

Example 2 gives an analysis of the voice-leading structure of this passage, according to basic ‘Schenkerian’ principles. It shows a principal top line descending from the fifth degree of the scale to the first, supported by a bass which proceeds from an initial tonic, through the dominant, then back to an arrival-point on the tonic. Various subsidiary events (melodic or harmonic ‘prolongations’ or amplifications of this basic structure) are also shown. In particular, the initial tonic is prolonged (*auskomponiert*) by a subsidiary dominant harmony in bars 3, 4 and the first half of 5, and the melodic prolongation of scale degree 5 extends that degree for 4 bars until the arrival of the F5 on first beat of bar 5:

Example 3: Analytical graph of Example 1

Example 4: Haydn: *Piano Sonata in C major*, Hob XVI/21, I (bars 1-6)

Example 2 gives an analogous analysis of the voice-leading structure of this second passage, according to similar ‘Schenkerian’ principles. Again it shows a principal top line descending from the fifth degree of the scale to the first, supported by a bass which proceeds from an initial tonic, through the dominant, then back to an arrival-point on the tonic. Again, various subsidiary events, melodic and harmonic, are also shown. This time, the initial prolongation of the tonic is a slightly more elaborate (ii–V) harmonic progression (bars 2 and 3) and the melodic line descends from scale degree 5 to scale degree 4 after one bar, whereupon scale degree 4 is prolonged through bars 2, 3 and 4 until the arrival of the E5 on the second beat of bar 4:
It’s obvious that these two passages share certain common structural principles, and that some of these are shown in the two graphs. The two passages exemplify a *dictum* which Heinrich Schenker articulated in the motto which prefaces his final book *Free Composition* (*Der Freie Satz*): ‘*semper idem sed non eodem modo*’ (always the same, but not always in the same way). But even if we acknowledge the different ways in which the similar basic structure is prolonged in each passage, there are still certain quite striking aspects of both passages which are rather weakly projected by Schenker’s analysis.

Consider the motivic aspect, for example. The way I hear the Ex 2 is something like the following:

(i) a distinctive one-bar motif, consisting of the dominant G5 played three times in staccato crotchets (bar 1), approached from the tonic below via a dotted-rhythm upbeat

(ii) an answering one-bar motif: the same triple repetition of the dominant, preceded by an upbeat, this time from the tonic *above*;

(iii) a variation and extension (to two bars) of the motif: *five* staccato crotchets, incorporating *two double repetitions*, preceded by the dotted-rhythm upbeat.

(iv) to summarise: the ‘chunking’ profile of this passage thus projects a grouping of 1+1+2 bars

(v) an answering four-bar phrase, with certain similarities, but significant differences: for example, with a different ‘chunking’ profile: 1/2+1/2+1/2+1/2+ 2 bars.

Obviously, the two-bar motifs in bars 3-4 and 7-8, particularly the double repetitions, give a sense of ‘rhythming lines’ to the passage as a whole (two four-bar phrases concluding in a similar way), and thus a sense of one phrase answered by a complementary one. On the other hand, the one-bar and half-bar motifs in 1-2 and 5-6 respectively, are different from one another in important ways. Bars 1-2 stay put on or around the dominant, whereas bars 5-6 descend the scale to the tonic note. Bars 1-2 comprise perhaps an ‘opening strategy’, followed by a cadential phrase, bars 5-6 give a sense of ‘moving on’, followed by a ‘rhythming’ cadential phrase.

Ex 4 has a strikingly-different motivic profile:

(i) a two-bar motif, consisting of a jagged dotted-rhythm *broken-chord ascent* to a short resting-point on top C6, followed by a *scalar descent*, ending with a striking long appoggiatura resolving onto scale-degree 4

(ii) a double repetition of the second half of this two-bar motif (bars 2-3 and 3-4), likewise ending with long appoggiaturas, at transposition-levels which result in resolutions onto scale-degrees 7 and 3, respectively.

(iii) a concluding two-bar motif, based purely on the dotted-rhythm figure.
No sense of complementation here: the passage moves directly from an opening strategy (broken-chord rise, scalar fall), to a sense of ‘moving on through the phrase’s middle part’ (the double-repetition), to an ‘ending strategy’, driving through to the cadence via energetic dotted rhythms.

In both cases, the double and triple repetitions, dotted rhythms, broken chords, scalar passages, appoggiaturas, and so on, particularly the way in which these things are set off against one another, or pile up in cumulative sequence, give a vivid sense of the character of the music. or to put it conversely, and in more general terms, in Jim Samson’s words: ‘An obvious effect of theory-based analysis has been to emphasise musical structures at the expense of musical materials (Samson 2003: 3). Another way of putting it might be to say that the account of Haydn’s motivic strategies adds a more vivid sense of the variety implicit in Schenker’s dictum, especially that sed non eodem modo. Or yet another way: ‘Here is a structural idea of which the two Haydn sonata themes are different versions. However, the latter formulation would be, in my estimation, to make too much of a good thing!

But to return to my Paraphrase on Harold Arlen’s Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, with which we began: I composed it having in mind the creation of a particular kind of performance of Arlen’s song: it’s a clear case of a piece which is a version of a more general idea, and the process of composing it was a performance-oriented one. Transcription, arrangement and paraphrase interest me for just this reason: because they are concerned with creating specific versions of a more general idea. In that sense they are like performances.

The antithesis of such a performance-oriented process would be a work-oriented one, and the two Haydn sonatas would seem to exemplify it, even though they too might just possibly be considered as versions of a more general idea in the sense that I have articulated. But to take such an attitude would be, I would claim, to overplay the analogy!

The terms ‘work-oriented’ and ‘performance-oriented’ derive, as far I am aware, from the volume on Liszt’s Etudes d’Execution transcendante by Jim Samson, cited earlier, though Samson’s formulation may have earlier antecedents. The terms play into the controversy over ‘organicist’ and ‘contextual’ approaches to analysis, because ‘organicist’ approaches tend to stress the unique features of particular works, and to show how they can be considered to form self-contained, coherently-unified wholes, whereas ‘contextual’ approaches stress the wider cultural context in which every compositional act is located. ‘Organicist’ approaches tend to stress musical works, ‘contextual’ approaches to stress musical practices and activities.

The middle ground between work-orientation and performance-orientation is provided by genre, for genre provides the means whereby specific works are located in the wider context of a network of what we might call ‘family resemblances’. And one of the most powerful concepts of genre is that provided by the étude. ‘It draws the performer right into the heart of the work, foregrounding presentational strategies that are hard to illuminate through the familiar, pedigreed methods of musical analysis. And it spotlights the instrument, elevating the idiomatic (the figure), a category much less amenable to analysis than theme, harmony and form’ (Samson 2003: 2).

I would therefore like to conclude with a few comments on the first of Liszt’s Twelve Transcendental Etudes. For ease of reference, the score is reproduced at the end of this article. It begins with a series of scalar passages elaborating tonic harmony and arriving on the note E3 (downbeat of bars 3 and 5), then climbing up an octave to E4 (bar 6, beat 4), E5 (bar 7) and E6 (bar 8, downbeat of bar 9). A series of pounding chromatic chords in
bars 9–12 elaborates the space between this E6 (scale degree 3) over a C bass on the downbeat of 9, and the arrival of the structural line on D4 in bar 12 (harmonised with flat VII in bar 12, moving to the dominant in bar 13). The dominant resolves to tonic on the downbeat of bar 14 and the rest of the piece simply prolongs the tonic, settling melodically on scale degree 1 (C6) in bar 22, over which a cover-tone rises back up to E6 in the final bar (23).

Such a description I would suggest, might well give an overview of the structure, but it is also rather banal. Although this first etude is rather simple (it is, after all, a Preludio, an introduction to the series), there is some interesting use of figures, especially compared to the first number in Liszt’s two earlier collections of etudes, the Grandes Études and the Étude en douze exercises on which this one is based (in a sense the Étude en douze exercises, the Grandes Études and the Études d’execution transcendante are three different versions of a similar, broader general idea). Example 6 shows the (very simple) structural framework on which the first phrase is based, particular features being tonic harmony elaborated by a subdominant ‘prolongation’, and a scalar top line rising to complete the phrase on scale degree 3. I have divided the passage (stretching from the beginning to the downbeat of bar 3) into three parts (indicated by the brackets above the top stave) on the basis of the way Liszt uses pianistic figures in this passage:

![Example 6: Structural framework of bars 1-3](image)

This simple framework is elaborated by three contrasting ‘figures’ and the brackets indicate the portions of the framework to which these figures are applied:
(i) a single ‘percussive stroke’
(ii) a bravura descending arpeggio (a group of 19)
(iii) a rising scale in thirds, elaborated by chromatic colouring and a complementary counterpoint in the form of a series of descending four-note figures.

We might read these figures as constituting aspects of a performance; to borrow rhetorical terms for a moment, something like a sequence of exordium, narratio and propositio. This sequence is then repeated, but with significant extensions to its third component: an elaboratio, perhaps.

A third section begins at bar 9, with the series of brilliant staccato chords, passing through a sequence of fluctuating (aufgehobene, to use Schoenberg’s term) harmonies, in contrast to the arpeggio and scalar figures on which bars 1–8 have been largely built. Nevertheless, this staccato chord-sequence is built on a bass-line which articulates versions of the four-note figure which has been used so extensively in bars 1–8: here it reads G♯2, A♯2, G♯2, F♯2 and E♯2, D♯2, D♯2, C♯1. This chromatic sequence then turns out to be extensive dominant-preparation harmony, confirmed by the arrival on scale-degree 2 (D♭4) in bar 12, and the dominant harmony itself in bar 13. Bars 9–11 constitute perhaps a confutatio, balanced by a confirmatio with the arrival on scale-
degree 2 and dominant harmony.

Finally comes a *peroratio*, concluding the etude with an elaboration of tonic harmony. New figures which bring together elements of what has preceded and raise the tenor of the rhetoric to a climactic point appear: the rising arpeggios in bars 14–15, then the wave-like (ascending and descending) bravura arpeggios in bars 16–21. A final concluding gesture is provided by the last rising arpeggio in the second half of bar 21: rising to the extreme upper register where the peroratio ends (bars 22–23). Over this harmony, the top line arpeggiates the tonic triad: G6 in bars 14–15, to E7 > C7 > E6 > C6 > E5 > C7 at the top of the wave-shapes in bars 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21. This harmony in bars 21–23 forms a plagal cadence: that archetypal ‘post-terminal’ gesture, extending the sense of structural closure provided the authentic cadence which announced the arrival back on the tonic at the beginning of the *peroratio* in bar 14.

In my own set of *Twelve Transcendental Concert Studies on Themes from the Australian Poets* I have endeavoured to build analogous (but different) rhetorical features (*performance-oriented* compositional processes) which provide complementation for the *work-oriented* structural features (pitch-sets, time-series etc), inspired by Liszt’s fecund use of such ‘figural narratives’ in his *Etudes d’execution transcendante*.

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Example 7 (beginning): Liszt: *Etudes d’execution transcendante*, No 1 (bars 1–8)
Example 7 (conclusion): Liszt: *Etudes d’exécution transcendante*, No 1 (bars 9–23)