

A Lecture Recital, Performance Guide and Descriptive Analysis of *Piano Sonata
No. 3 Op. 82* by Lowell Liebermann

by

Jialin Wei

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Baruch Meir, Chair
Robert Hamilton
Jody Rockmaker

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Lowell Liebermann (b.1961) is one of America's most frequently performed contemporary composers.¹ He has written a large number of piano pieces and his works are often featured in major competitions and doctoral dissertations.

Liebermann's relationship with the piano began early in life and he considers it to be his principal instrument. His understanding of the strengths and limitations of the piano makes his keyboard creations powerful, expressive, and virtuosic. Although many of his pieces have been performed, his *Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82* has not yet found a large audience or used as the subject of in-depth discussion. It is the author's hope to stimulate performances of this work through a descriptive analysis and performance guide.

This research document begins with a concise biography of the composer, including the composer's early musical experiences, his education in academia, and his composition career. The second chapter provides a review of the composer's major works. The third chapter provides a descriptive analysis and performer's guide, with insights into Liebermann's expectations of the performer. The present study includes a lecture recital, found online at https://youtu.be/Uf-SpK8cIr0?si=usxy5_AaWu7VoKP4

¹ "Biography," *Lowell Lieberman's Official Website*, accessed November 1, 2023, <https://www.lowellliebermann.com/biography>

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Lowell Liebermann (b.1961) is one of America's most frequently performed contemporary composers.² He has written a large number of piano pieces, and his works are often featured in major competitions and doctoral dissertations. Liebermann's relationship with the piano began early in life and he considers it his principal instrument. His understanding of the strengths and limitations of the piano makes his keyboard creations powerful, expressive, and virtuosic. His piece *Three Impromptus, Op. 68* won the first American Composers Invitational Competition when the majority of finalists chose to perform it at the 11th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.³ *Gargoyles, Op. 29* is perhaps his most popular work for solo piano and has been recorded for commercial labels at least ten times to date. The *Piano Sonata No. 2, Op. 10* and *Nocturnes*, along with other works, have been analyzed and featured in numerous dissertations. However, his *Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82* has not yet been widely performed or used as the subject of in-depth discussion. It is the author's hope to stimulate performances of this work through a descriptive analysis and performance guide.

Prior Research Related to this Topic

A number of dissertations have been written about Liebermann's keyboard music.

² "Biography," *Lowell Lieberman's Official Website*, accessed November 1, 2023, <https://www.lowellliebermann.com/biography>

³ Tomoko Uchino, "An Analysis of Three Impromptus for Piano Op. 68 by Lowell Liebermann" (D.M.A. diss., University of Arizona, 2007), 13.

The majority focus on his *Nocturnes* and *Gargoyles*. There are just two dissertations that touch on the *Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82: A Stylistic Analysis of Piano Sonatas by Lowell Liebermann* (Lin, Meng-Hua, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015).⁴ and *The Piano Sonatas of Lowell Liebermann: A Performer's Analysis* by Andrea Isaacson, also completed in 2015.⁵ Both dissertations provide an overview of the three sonatas. Lin offers stylistic summaries and includes a brief analysis of the third sonata in the third chapter. Isaacson examines the first, second, and third sonatas with background information, and descriptions of the harmonic content and textures. His statements about the third sonata offer a general overview of form and texture.

⁴ Meng-Hua Lin, "A Stylistic Analysis of Piano Sonatas By Lowell Liebermann" (D.M.A. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015).

⁵ Andrea Isaacson, "The Piano Sonatas of Lowell Liebermann: A Performer's Analysis" (D.M.A. diss., University of Oklahoma, 2015).

A Concise Biography of Lowell Liebermann

Early musical experience

American composer, pianist, and conductor Lowell Liebermann (b.1961) is currently regarded as the most frequently performed contemporary composer.⁶ He was born in New York City on February 22, 1961.⁷ His parents, though not musicians, enjoyed music and encouraged him to begin piano studies at a young age.⁸ His musical experiences were mostly from the music his mother listened to during his childhood. In his interview, Liebermann recalls,

“My earliest experiences with Bach were with “Switched On Bach,” Wendy Carlos’s recording of Bach played on the Moog synthesizer that was a big hit in the ’60s and ’70s, and my mother was constantly listening to that when I was a kid...This was kind of simultaneous with us being forced to take piano lessons.”⁹

This album featured Bach’s pieces played on a Moog synthesizer, blending classical music with modern electronic sounds.¹⁰ Growing up in an environment where Bach’s music was frequently played provided an early influence on his compositions.

Inspired by a J.S. Bach fugue that continually played in his mind, Liebermann

⁶ “Biography,” *Lowell Lieberman’s Official Website*, accessed November 1, 2023, <https://www.lowellliebermann.com/biography>

⁷ Dean Alan Nichols, “A Survey of the Piano Works of Lowell Liebermann” (D.M.A. diss., University of Kentucky, 2000), 8.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Asher Armstrong, “Schubert, Liszt and other ‘personal demons’: In conversation with the composer of Gargoyles,” *American Music Teacher* 70, no. 5 (April-May 2021): 26-30.

¹⁰ Kate Botello and Emily Duncan Wilson, “Classical Sprouts: ‘Switched-on Bach’.” *Interlochen IPR Public Radio*, June 5, 2023, <https://www.interlochenpublicradio.org/podcast/classical-sprouts/2022-08-01/classical-sprouts-switched-on-bach>

composed *Fantasy on a Fugue by Bach* for a concert performed on Bach's birthday.¹¹

As a pianist-composer, Liebermann was dissatisfied with his first piano teacher because he desired to play more "real" music, such as Bach's *Notebook for Anna Magdalena* and Schumann's *Album For the Young*, rather than being limited to only finger exercises.¹² Soon after, he began studying with his second piano teacher, Ada Sohn-Segal, whose extensive knowledge in music, art, and literature greatly inspired him to become a full-time musician.¹³ Under her guidance, Liebermann gained knowledge of both piano repertoire and compositions. This strong foundation in piano allowed him to incorporate diverse techniques in his works, which contributed to the later popularity of his piano compositions. Liebermann's first compositional work, *Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 1*, was composed during his time studying with Ruth Schonthal.¹⁴ Liebermann made his debut performance of his First Piano Sonata at Carnegie Recital Hall. This work later received awards from both the Music Teachers National Association and the Yamaha Music Foundation.¹⁵ This first work for solo piano demonstrates Liebermann's early ability to write for the keyboard, demonstrating his adept use of pianistic techniques and understanding of the piano. Pianist David Korevaar, who has performed a number of Liebermann's works, noted

¹¹ "Liebermann's Twist on a Bach Fugue," *Your Classical*, last modified February 20, 2019, <https://www.yourclassical.org/episode/2019/02/20/liebermanns-twist-on-a-bach-fugue>

¹² Zsolt Bognár interviewing Lowell Liebermann, "Composition is something you do because you can't imagine doing anything else," episode 38 of *Living the Classical Life*, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMPudpqNcVA>

¹³ Lowell Liebermann, "Lowell Liebermann, Pianist & Composer," interviewed by The Cross-Eyed Pianist, February 5, 2021, <https://meettheartist.online/2021/02/05/lowell-liebermann-pianist-composer/>

¹⁴ Dean Alan Nichols, "A Survey of the Piano Works of Lowell Liebermann" (D.M.A. diss., University of Kentucky, 2000), 8.

¹⁵ Richard Freed, "Liebermann, Lowell." *Grove Music Online*, 2001; accessed on November, 2023, <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000042542?rsk=0sJUXR&result=2>

that:

“The slow movements exhibit one of the most important characteristics of the composer’s music -- lyricism. The use of *ostinato*, mastery of counterpoint and texture, and many flavors of virtuosity in the faster movements are also Lieberman’s characteristics seen in his future pieces.”¹⁶

These elements are evident in Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, but in a much more complex, mature, and intricate way.

Education in Academia

Liebermann first studied with David Diamond when he was at the State University of New York-Stony Brook.¹⁷ During this period, Liebermann's compositions began to exhibit a strong tendency towards tonality, an approach that, according to him, “has not really changed much since my student days.”¹⁸ In 1979, Liebermann entered The Juilliard School of Music, where he completed the Bachelor of Music, Master of Music, and Doctor of Musical Arts Degrees.¹⁹ During his time at Juilliard, Liebermann faced challenges in continuing his concept of music, noting, “My earliest works, the works I wrote while I was at Juilliard tended to be much more self-consciously modern. There, one was almost made to feel that you couldn’t write

¹⁶ Lowell Liebermann, *Piano Music, Vol. II*, Performed by David Korevaar, Liner notes by David Korevaar, KOCH International Classics 3-7552-2 HI (CD), 2004.

¹⁷ Dean Alan Nichols, “A Survey of the Piano Works of Lowell Liebermann” (D.M.A. diss., University of Kentucky, 2000), 8.

¹⁸ NewMusicBox Staff, “Would you describe yourself as a neo-romantic? Why (not)? Lowell Liebermann,” *NewMusic Box*, September 1, 2003, <https://newmusicusa.org/nmbx/Would-you-describe-yourself-as-a-neoromantic-Why-not-Lowell-Liebermann/>

¹⁹ Richard Freed, “Liebermann, Lowell.” *Grove Music Online*, 2001; accessed November, 2023, <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000042542?rkey=0sJUXR&result=2>

music that was too nice sounding.”²⁰ However, Liebermann instills a strong sense for the music he wanted to compose, being “very comfortable with tonality and feels that it is a tool to be used, and basically thinks that tonality in music is inescapable.”²¹ He embraced his comfort with tonality, viewing it as an essential tool in music composition. The works he composed during and after his schooling is a continuation of this approach to his style. This is evident in *Sonata No. 2, Op. 10*, subtitled “Sonata Notturna”, which was composed during his time at Julliard. Unlike Liebermann’s first sonata, this work is known for its meditative quality rather than its virtuosity.²² This piece signifies the development of Liebermann’s compositional style. This progress is evident through the contrasting elements in his music, as described by Dean Alan

Nichols:

“the lean, modern-sounding sections, there are passages which have a more expansive texture, sometimes increased by the liberal use of the damper pedal. The opening segment of this sonata is one of these sections, and it marks a departure from the strict Modernism of many contemporary works. These sections are clearly tonal, in spite of occasional sharp dissonances, and they have a certain Impressionistic quality, a characteristic which becomes more pronounced in later works.”²³

Liebermann was not focused on incorporating dissonance to conform to a particular style. His use of dissonance was a careful choice to not follow the trend of the

²⁰ Lisa Michelle Garner, “Lowell Liebermann: A stylistic analysis and discussion of the sonata for flute and piano, Op.23. Sonata for Flute and Guitar, Op.25, and *Soliloquy* for Flute Solo, Op.44” (D.M.A diss., Rice University, 1997), 21.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

²² Dean Alan Nichols, “A Survey of the Piano Works of Lowell Liebermann” (D.M.A. diss., University of Kentucky, 2000), 29.

²³ *Ibid.*, 28.

modernist aesthetic of his time. He blended different styles and techniques to create his sound, instead of adhering to the rules of any single style. However, Liebermann's compositional approach in the second sonata was not well received by David Diamond, who expressed dissatisfaction with the piece.²⁴ Liebermann decided to change composition teachers and began studying under Vincent Persichetti, his second composition teacher at Juilliard. Reflecting on Persichetti's influence, Liebermann said, "Persichetti was a terrific inspiration not only for his unbelievable musicianship but also for his dry humor and great humanity. He was also the person responsible for getting my first scores published."²⁵

Composition Career

After graduating from Juilliard, Liebermann began working full-time as a commissioned composer. He has served as Orchestra's Composer-in-Residence at numerous institutions, such as the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. During his residency, the Dallas Symphony commissioned his second symphony, a large work for orchestra, organ, and chorus, with texts based on the writings of Walt Whitman.²⁶ He has also worked for other organizations such as the Saratoga Performing Arts Center and the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan.²⁷

Liebermann has received commissions from world-renowned orchestras

²⁴ Ibid., 3.

²⁵ Lowell Liebermann, "Lowell Liebermann, Pianist & Composer," interviewed by The Cross-Eyed Pianist, February 5, 2021, <https://meetheartist.online/2021/02/05/lowell-liebermann-pianist-composer/>

²⁶ Karen S. Kenaston, "An Approach to the Critical Evaluation of Settings of the Poetry of Walt Whitman: Lowell Liebermann's Symphony No.2" (D.M.A. diss., University of North Texas, 2003), 4.

²⁷ "Biography," *Lowell Lieberman's Official Website*, accessed November 1, 2023, <https://www.lowellliebermann.com/biography>

including the New York Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. In addition, the Royal Opera House and San Francisco Ballet have commissioned Liebermann to compose *Frankenstein* (Ballet in Three Acts) for orchestra.²⁸ The world-renowned Van Cliburn Foundation presented a concert of Liebermann's works as part of their "Modern at the Modern" series.²⁹ During this event, Liebermann himself and cellist Andres Diaz performed the premiere of his Sonata No. 3 for Cello and Piano, Op. 90 (2005).³⁰

Liebermann has received an impressive list of awards and honors, including the Grand Prize in the 1986 Delius International Composition Contest for his *War Songs* (op. 6, 1980), the Charles Ives Fellowship from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and more recently, the Barto Prize for his Eighth Nocturne for solo piano, awarded in 2016.³¹ Liebermann has long been a pianist, but he has become particularly active in recording and performing both his own piano works and those of other composers in recent years. His album *Personal Demons*, released in 2021, contains music "he wishes he wrote," which includes works by Busoni, Liszt, Kabeláč, Schubert, and his own pieces.³² The following year, he published *The Devil's Lyre: Piano Music of David Hackbridge Johnson*. Liebermann greatly admires David Hackbridge Johnson's work and is eager to share it with a wider audience.³³

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Karen S. Kenaston, "An Approach to the Critical Evaluation of Settings of the Poetry of Walt Whitman: Lowell Liebermann's Symphony No.2" (D.M.A. diss., University of North Texas, 2003), 67.

³² Patrick, "Lowell Liebermann's Personal Demons," *Piano Street Magazine*, April 1, 2021, <https://www.pianostreet.com/blog/articles/lowell-liebermanns-personal-demons-11052/>

³³ Fred Plotkin, "Lowell Liebermann," *Fred Plotkin on Fridays* (podcast), February 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N96uwR-iEI0>

His most recent work, *Concerto No. 2 for Flute and Orchestra* Op. 142, composed 2023, was premiered by Stafán Ragnar Höskuldsson, the principal flutist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.³⁴ Liebermann has been a faculty member of the Composition Department at the Mannes School of Music at The New School since 2012.³⁵

Conclusion

Highlighting his focus on a tonal center and lyricism, Liebermann's music has often been labeled with such terms as "Neo-Romantic" and "Neo-classical" to "Impressionistic". It has been the subject of considerable discussion to determine which specific categories define Liebermann's music. Liebermann maintains his own thoughts and approach to music composition:

"...this obsession with innovation is a very recent phenomenon, and rather simplistic. We usually hail as an innovator the first composer to do something different from anything that came before. But doing something different for its own sake can be quite meaningless. The real question is whether that different something is actually making a meaningful contribution to the literature.' He cites composers, from Bach to Brahms to Barber, Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich and Prokofiev, who were derided as conservatives in their days...But their work now forms the standard repertoire."³⁶

³⁴ Kyle MacMillan, "A Chicago Moment for Composer Lowell Liebermann," *Experience*, February 15, 2024. <https://cso.org/experience/article/17494/a-chicago-moment-for-composer-lowell-lieberma>

³⁵ Richard Freed, "Liebermann, Lowell." *Grove Music Online*, 2001; accessed November, 2023, <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/grovemusic/display/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000042542?rsk=0sJUXR&result=2>

³⁶ Barrymore Layrence Scherer, "A Composer Balances Tradition, Invention," *Wall Street Journal*, Eastern edition, June 15, 2000.

Liebermann's music emphasizes the value of meaningful innovation. His compositions reflect this belief, with the focus on making an impact in music, rather than just trying to be unique. His works have developed over time into a more complex style with diverse elements that draw from various musical eras. Lowell Liebermann's journey as a composer has been marked by an exploration of various musical styles. This path has led him to create works that showcase a blend of traditional and modern elements.

CHAPTER II

LIEBERMANN'S MAJOR WORKS

Liebermann has written works for a wide range of genres, including opera, orchestra, wind ensemble, and solo vocal, chamber, choral, and keyboard music. "I do appreciate variety as a composer...and I like to write for different combinations than I [already] have. It's very rare that I'll write for the same instrumental combination back-to-back," he explains.³⁷ Liebermann, particularly known for his flute works, achieved major success with his *Sonata for Flute and Piano Op. 23* (1987). Liebermann commented on his Flute Sonata, stating, "It allows the flute to do things which it often doesn't get a chance to do -- namely big, expansive, virtuosic playing."³⁸ The renown of James Galway, one of the world's leading flutists, played

³⁷ Kyle MacMillan, "A Chicago Moment for Composer Lowell Liebermann," *Experience*, February 15, 2024, <https://cso.org/experience/article/17494/a-chicago-moment-for-composer-lowell-lieberma>

³⁸ Barbara Kevles, "Can This Man Save Classical Music?" *Salon.com*, November 21, 2002, <https://www.salon.com/2002/11/21/liebermann/>

a significant role in elevating the profile of Liebermann's first flute sonata. Following its success and popularity, Liebermann composed the *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra* (1992), his second flute piece, which also achieved great popularity.

William T. Spiller states, "Liebermann's works for piano are written with a masterly command of idiomatic keyboard writing. He is a formidable pianist who understands (and exploits) the coloristic and virtuosic possibilities of the instrument."³⁹ According to Liebermann's website biography, the most popular piano work that matches the popularity of his Flute Sonata is *Gargoyles, Op. 29* (1989), which he composed two years after graduation. This work, according to the composer, is "a lighter piece"⁴⁰ Instead of composing a large-scale form with intricate and mixed textures, each movement in *Gargoyles* focuses on specific elements that persist throughout. For example, the entire second movement presents consistent elements—the ostinato in the left hand and the octave melody for the right hand. Moreover, the piece features a distinct tonal quality, which makes it enjoyable for both pianists and audiences to play and listen to.

Three Impromptus, Op. 68 (2000) received Grand Prize at the American Composers Invitational Competition at the 11th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in Fort Worth, Texas, in 2001.⁴¹ Antonio Pompa-Baldi, a concert pianist who performed this work, notes that it has received positive responses from both

³⁹ William T. Spiller, "Review of Lowell Liebermann: Keyboard Music," *Notes* 60 (June 2004):1034-1039.

⁴⁰ Asher Armstrong, "Schubert, Liszt and other 'personal demons': In conversation with the composer of *Gargoyles*," *American Music Teacher* 70, no. 5 (April-May 2021): 26-30.

⁴¹ Lowell Liebermann, preface to *Three Impromptus for Piano* (King of Prussia, PA: Theodore Presser Company, 2018).

audiences and music critics.⁴² The impromptus display typical features of the genre, including compound meter and an improvisational tone, complemented by numerous lyrical melodies and moments of virtuosity.⁴³ Liebermann often utilizes these features in his other works.

Besides composing music for advanced pianists, Liebermann also created a collection of short pieces *Album for the Young* (1993) for intermediate pianists. It was commissioned by pianist Andrew Wilde and is dedicated to his two children, Jennifer and Matthew.⁴⁴ Denes Agay, a Hungarian-born American composer, states “Lowell Liebermann is on the right track with *Album for the Young*. He has the intellectual, emotional and musical instincts to penetrate the child’s world.”⁴⁵ Liebermann not only incorporates fundamental techniques such as two-against-three rhythms and hand crossing, but he also skillfully employs these musical elements to depict the descriptive titles of each short piece. For instance, *Marching off to War* is characterized by staccato markings, accents, and a steady pulse, which vividly evoke the imagery suggested by the title.

Liebermann has expressed a keen enjoyment in performing within the two-piano repertoire, stating, “...being a pianist myself, I’ve always enjoyed performing the two-piano repertoire. There isn’t a huge amount of repertoire for two pianos, so it was something that I wanted to add and something that I enjoyed doing.”⁴⁶ His

⁴² Antonio Pompa-Baldi, “Three Impromptus by Liebermann: Music Performed in the 2001 Cliburn Competition,” *Clavier* 41(September 2002): 26.

⁴³ William T. Spiller, “Review of Lowell Liebermann: Keyboard Music,” *Notes* 60 (June 2004):1034-1039.

⁴⁴ Dean Alan Nichols, “A Survey of the Piano Works of Lowell Liebermann” (D.M.A. diss., University of Kentucky, 2000), 123.

⁴⁵ “Biography,” *Lowell Lieberman’s Official Website*, accessed November 1, 2023,

<https://www.lowellliebermann.com/biography>

⁴⁶ Jeffrey and Karen Savage, interview with Karen Savage, in liner note for *Lowell Liebermann: Complete Works*

compositions for two pianos include *Three Lullabies for Two Pianos*, Op. 76 (2001), *Sonata for Two Pianos*, Op. 117 (2012), *Variations on a Theme by Mozart for Two Pianos*, Op. 42 (1993), and *Daydream and Nightmare for Two Pianos, Eight Hands*, Op. 94 (2005). Particularly in *Sonata for Two Pianos*, Liebermann incorporates intricate counterpoint, a compositional technique commonly found in many of his works, as well as virtuosity, another important element in his compositions. Additionally, this sonata reveals a jazz inspiration, reflecting Liebermann's view that "every kind of music that I hear ends up influencing me, whether I like it or not. You just kind of carry these things around you and they seep into your music."⁴⁷ Jazz-like elements are also apparent in his *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82*. The next chapter will delve deeper into the author's analysis of this piece.

Besides works for flute and piano, Liebermann has also composed two full-length operas. The first, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, was the first American Opera commissioned by and premiered at l'Opéra de Monte-Carlo in 1995.⁴⁸ The second, *Miss Lonelyhearts*, based on the novel by Nathanael West, was commissioned and presented by Juilliard School to celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2005.⁴⁹

CHAPTER III

PERFORMANCE GUIDE AND DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

for Two Pianos, Albany, NY: Albany Records, 2015, CD, www.albanyrecords.com

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ "Biography," *Lowell Lieberman's Official Website*, accessed November 1, 2023,

<https://www.lowellliebermann.com/biography>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

PIANO SONATA NO. 3, OP. 82

Liebermann composed his *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82*, in 2002. The piece was commissioned through the American Pianists Association for James Giles, an accomplished pianist currently on the faculty at Northwestern University.⁵⁰ In 2004, Giles published a world-premiere recording of solo works written by American composers, including Liebermann's *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82*.⁵¹ Giles comments, "the title *American Virtuoso* describes how these composers have so idiomatically responded to the challenge of writing for the piano."⁵² This sonata requires a high level of piano proficiency due to its highly technical demands and artistic lyricism, characteristics that are often found in Liebermann's music.

Liebermann notes: "The Third Sonata is in one movement that has several interconnected sections."⁵³ Liebermann assigns titles to four different sections all suggesting various musical characters: *Inquieto, esitante; Dona Nobis Pacem; Lullabye* and *Interlude*. While the titles *Lullabye* and *Interlude* are self-explanatory, and *Inquieto, esitante* translates to restless, faltering, *Dona Nobis Pacem* may be less familiar and not as commonly used term in Liebermann's piano works. According to the Oxford Dictionary of Music, *Dona Nobis Pacem* (Grant Us Peace) is a phrase from the Agnus Dei of a mass.⁵⁴ Liebermann employs a chorale-like writing with

⁵⁰ "James Giles," Northwestern University Bienen School of Music, accessed December 2023,

<https://www.music.northwestern.edu/faculty/profile/james-giles>

⁵¹ Stephen Carlson, "Review of American Virtuoso," *American Music* 27, no. 1 (2009): 119-121.

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/263310>

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Trinity College London, "Singing: Rounds & Canons *Dona Nobis Pacem*," accessed November 2023,

<https://resources.trinitycollege.com/learners/music/rounds-canons-dona>

four voices based on the main motives. Liebermann himself states that he is not a supporter of program music: “When writing music, I don’t think of images or anything specific, or usually have any kind of extra-musical idea for a piece. It’s really just about the notes and the manipulation of the notes, and the thematic integrity of what’s going on.”⁵⁵ However, the use of descriptive titles presented in this sonata helps to guide performers in understanding the texture and meaning of each section.

There are two essays that analyze Liebermann’s *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82*, each examining it from different points of view. In Meng-Hua Lin’s essay, the sonata is divided into five sections for analysis and focuses on stylistic aspects of the piece.⁵⁶ Andrea Isaacson divides the piece into three sections, aligning with the partitions found in James Giles’s recording, and focuses on the piece’s general features.⁵⁷ This analysis will divide the score into four sections, corresponding to the titles Liebermann assigned to them, since each section is arguably interconnected in terms of motivic and structural coherence. In each section, the composer presents the same or developed motivic idea to achieve thematic unity through various musical characters. The first section, titled *Inquieto, esitante*, and *Con tutta forza*, is comprised of a continuously energetic musical idea with virtuosic material, suggesting a sense of agitation. The second section, *Dona Nobis Pacem*, is slower and softer in character, employing a chorale-like texture with four voices. The third

⁵⁵ Karen Savage, “A Conversation with Lowell Liebermann,” Albany Records, TROY1596, 2014.

⁵⁶ Meng-Hua Lin, “A Stylistic Analysis of Piano Sonatas By Lowell Liebermann” (D.M.A. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015).

⁵⁷ Andrea Isaacson, “The Piano Sonatas of Lowell Liebermann: A Performer’s Analysis” (D.M.A. diss., University of Oklahoma, 2015).

section, *Lullabye*, introduces three-voice passages with peaceful moments created by a clear melodic line with an ostinato accompaniment. The final section, *Interlude*, includes an extended quasi-lullaby before moving into an aggressive *Allegro*, suggesting a return to the previous energetic section. The following table provides a sketch of the structure of this sonata.

Table I

I. First Part

<i>Inquieto, esitante</i>	Introduction
mm. 1-9	
<i>Con tutta forza</i>	Main body of Movement
mm. 10-14	

II. Second Part

<i>Dona Nobis Pacem</i>
mm.143-213

III. Third Part

<i>Lullabye</i>
mm.164-213

VI. Fourth Part

<i>Interlude</i>
mm. 214-356
<i>Allegro</i>
mm.262-346
<i>Presto</i>
mm.347-356

Presenting motifs as central elements in the theme is one of the key characteristics of Liebermann’s piano compositions. Liebermann describes his music as having “various elements [that] grow out of a small musical seed, whether it be a motive, a collection of notes or intervals, and actual melody, or something else.”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ The Cross-Eyed Pianist, “Lowell Liebermann, Pianist & Composer,” *Meet the Artist*, February 5, 2021,

This approach, particularly evident in the exploration of the sonata's motivic construction, reveals how he achieves structural unity through recurring motifs, intervals, rhythms, and transitional material. This performance analysis will delve into these motivic relationships, highlighting how they contribute to this sonata's unity, with special emphasis on recurring materials and unifying elements. Along with the descriptive analysis, the performance guide will present a range of performance recommendations based on the author's analysis. These suggestions aim to provide performers with a comprehensive understanding of the pieces, thereby enhancing their interpretation and performance.

Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 8, Motive

Set class

Liebermann employs motifs to unify this one-movement sonata. The opening of *Inquieto, esitante* features the pitch-class set [0,1,3,4], henceforth known as motive *a*. Much of the sections of this piece are composed around this pitch-class set. The most distinct form of the set is a downward m2 followed by an upward M3 and a downward m2 again (see Example 1).

Example 1. *Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82, Motive a, mm. 1*

Inquieto, esitante (♩ = 100)

p

[0,1,3,4]

<https://meettheartist.online/2021/02/05/lowell-liebermann-pianist-composer/>

This introductory section repeats this introduced motif with pitch modifications such as C#, C, E, to Eb, before transitioning to Theme A (m.10). The main body of the movement starts with the notation *Con tutta forza* (“with full force”), where the introduced motif develops in various forms. At the beginning of *Con tutta forza* (m.10), the motif retains its original contour, featuring a downward minor second, an upward major third, and a downward minor second. The difference between the initial presentation and this section is that this time it is accompanied by minor ninths intervals in the left hand, which supports a contrast in dynamics from *p* at the beginning and *ff* for the *Con tutta forza* (see Example 2). Moreover, the primary motif is followed by a chromatic scale descending from C to F, adding dramatic material to the Theme A (see Example 3).

Example 2. *Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82, Theme A, mm. 10*



Example 3. *Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82, mm. 11*



In measure 21, a reconfigured Theme A appears, henceforth named A1, closely adhering to the structure of the original Theme A. Theme A1 features an accented ninth in the left hand and repeats notes from the original pitch-class set. The rhythmic emphasis is important in this section in order to create a sense of swing. This aspect will be further discussed in the section discussing pianistic considerations for each section.

A new thematic idea is introduced in measure 40, marked *ansioso e mesto*, serving as Theme B. It creates a sense of loneliness mingled with anxiety. It derives from Theme A's pitch-class set motif, but this time with the notes skillfully distributed between both hands. In order to presents this Theme A in a different way, the treatment itself changes from a polyphonic texture to monophonic, prolonged and filled with diatonic scales, which contrasts with the previous chromatic scale (see Example 4). Liebermann employs this consistent Theme A motif, skillfully manipulating it to create diverse textures, which is an important observation for performers.

Example 4. *Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82*, Theme B, mm. 40-42



The motive from *Dona Nobis Pacem* is derived from the beginning motive *a*, presented in an inverted form. Example 5. demonstrates how this motive from the first section is used in this section. To create a thematic link throughout the entire sonata,

Liebermann utilizes a consistent set class to connect the themes. The emotional quality of this section differs from the first, evoking a peaceful and religious feeling. The four voices need to be balanced, but all voices need to be heard clearly in order to convey this chorale-like feeling.

Example 5. Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Motive a and Motive from *Dona nobis*

Pacem



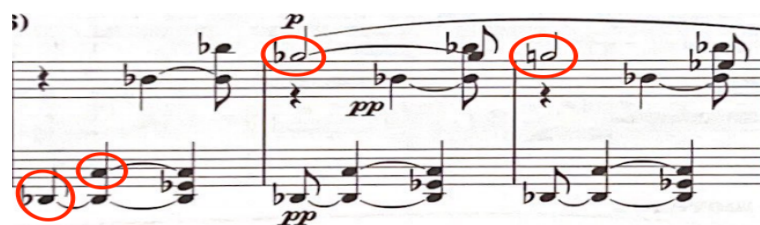
Instead of addressing the same set class, an important moment occurs in measure 180-186 (see Example 6). This moment marks the first clear tonal harmony with a major triad, emphasized by the use of fortississimo and accents to highlight its importance.

Example 6. Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82, Lullabye, mm. 180-186



Throughout the final section of the sonata, *Interlude*, Liebermann continues to use the same class set to reinforce a sense of thematic unity. In this section, the motive is also presented differently from its initial presentation (see Example 7). While the motive features intervals under the set note, here it is split between two hands. Where the first presentation of the motive highlights a change of energy, here it provides a change in character. In terms of texture, the left hand serves as an accompaniment role with a repeated pattern. In contrast, the right hand plays a dual role, featuring both octave leaps as accompaniment and a melody interspersed between the accompaniment notes.

Example 7. Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Interlude, mm. 214-216



From a performer's point of view, establishing the proper character at the beginning of this sonata is important. The initial motive creates a feeling of

uncertainty. Liebermann's indication of *Inquieto, esitante* provides performers with direction to play it with a sense of moving forward yet with a feeling of indecision. As the music continues, it is important for performers to adjust their approach in Theme A (m. 10). Compared to the beginning, the performer needs to play with a determined feeling and *fortissimo* to highlight the difference between the initial motive and Theme A section. Moreover, the Theme A pitch-class class motif serves a distinct purpose in terms of texture and mood, requiring performers to make nuanced adjustments in their playing to convey the different emotions. The use of varying textures crafts the composer's intention for the first part of the piece, utilizing the staccato and accented left hand to convey the intense Theme A. In the section titled *Ansiosos e Mesto* (translated to "anxiety and sadness"), the contrasting dynamics, including crescendos and diminuendos, play a crucial role in building tension and release. It is important to create a crescendo as the left hand moves through a diatonic scale to build a sense of anxiety, with a subsequent release while the right hand closes the phrase. The performer can increase the force of the fingers against keys and simultaneously lean into the next note to achieve a sense of mounting tension. In the subsequent portion of the first section, there is a clear reappearance of Theme A in measure 69 and Theme A1 in measure 119. Notably, Theme A1 in measure 119 introduces a new element in the piece: voice exchange between the two hands.

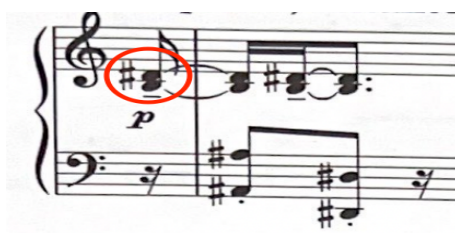
Linear contours play an important role in Liebermann's work. The accompaniment helps to emphasize the melody more prominently. In the part of the *Interlude*, the performer should not focus on emphasizing the melodic line, since the

contrast of texture that Liebermann created between both ostinato accompaniments will help guide the listener's attention to the melody. In order to make the music flow naturally, the performer should practice all accompaniment parts evenly and smoothly; otherwise, the music may sound mechanical and stiff. Additionally, although the composer assigns the melody with an unchanging *piano dynamic*, the author suggests that the performer adjust dynamic levels according to the contour of the melody (mm. 214-251).

Intervallic Motive

In addition to the pitch-class set, Liebermann employs another persistent motive, which is characterized by the intervallic motive, particularly the intervals of a third and ninth. The major third, B and D-sharp, recurs at the beginning of each subsection for the entire *Inquieto Esitante* section and is labeled motive *b* (See Example 8).

Example 8. *Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82, Motive b, mm. 1*



Its inversion, a sixth, introduces variation while maintaining a connection between the theme and the transition. After two statements of *Con tutta forza*, a sweeping arpeggio (m.14) leads to a sixth interval in the right hand (see Example 9). Here, Liebermann employs intervals of sixths and triplets in the left hand to enhance the texture of this transition (m.15-20).

Example 9. Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82, mm. 15-19



Besides Motive *b*, the use of ninths and its inversion are an essential component in this sonata. Motive *c* first appears in the *Con tutta forza*, serving as a supporting bass line to Motive *b* (see Example 10).

Example 10. Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82, Motive *c*, mm. 10



After four statements (m.21-24) that reinforce those two motives, the ninth interval in the left hand becomes broken, creating a transition between the themes of A1. Its inversion, a second in measure 37, climbs in contrary motion to the first climax at measure 39. From measure 21 to measure 40, the music is almost entirely made up of the third and ninth intervals, as well as an inverted second. The ninth interval occurs also in *Dona Nobis Pacem*. Starting in measure 150, all the left hand ninth intervals serve as a supporting voice to the upper pitch-class set (see Example 11).

Example 11. Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82, Motive c, mm. 154-155



In the next section, *Lullabye*, Liebermann continues to employ the motives *b* and *c* (the third and ninth intervals) to create a powerful *stringendo* effect (m.187). Here, the ninth interval in both hands move in the same direction and incorporates a sixth (an inversion of motive *b*) between the right hand ninth intervals that include a crescendo and accents as the notes move higher in register (see Example 12).

Example 12. Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 82, Lullabye, mm. 187-190



Motive *c* challenges the performer's hands due to the physical stretch. The author suggests that the performer try and practice the passage of ninth intervals before attempting to play the entire piece. The stacked ninths require strength and dexterity of the hand. For instance, near the end of the *Presto* on the last page (mm.347-353), the performer should not only practice the ninth interval passages but should also be attentive to accents and staccatos indicated in the score, as these can significantly

impact the energetic ending. Furthermore, the left hand needs to be flexible to accommodate the fast speed. The musical purpose here is not to showcase virtuosity, but to convey a sense of energetic heroism towards the conclusion.

Rhythm

This sonata challenges performers with its complicated rhythm, which involves numerous triplets, quintuplets, sextuplets, polyrhythms, and other irregular subdivisions of the beat. Combining motives *a*, *b* and *c*, Liebermann then adds rhythmic complexity to create contrast and variation. In measure 105, the rhythm becomes more complicated, involving a cross-rhythm between two hands. Eventually, the musical figures of the ninth intervals, recalling motive *b*, moves back to the left hand while the right hand features scalar passage (see Example 13). The use of such complex rhythms enhances the overall texture.

Example 13. *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82*, mm. 95-114

410-41337

9

After this section of continually changing rhythms, the music persists in its forward motion with a flurry of 16th notes (mm. 112). This section can be likened to a paragraph with rhythmic uncertainty, where its rhythm constantly evolves until it

settles into a regular pattern of 16th notes.

For this passage, a steady pulse serves as the foundation, even when complex rhythms are introduced (mm. 89-111). Due to the unmarked meter, the performer needs to count the quarter note as a unit to practice the polyrhythm. To perform this section effectively, the performer needs to be aware that the passage (mm. 89-109) is marked primarily in *piano*. However, it requires the performer to gradually build the potential energy over the course of the intervallic pattern and leads to a *forte* passage in measure 112.

The other distinct moment in this piece is the quickening rhythmic subdivisions, prompting a sense of *accelerando* and high energy. For instance, mm. 210-213 of *Lullabye* shows the quickening of rhythmic subdivisions before transitioning to a trill passage (see Example 14).

Example 14. Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Lullabye, mm. 210-213



Liebermann utilizes the note divisions to heighten the listener's awareness of the final resolution chord. This type of passage occurs two times, serving as an ending for each section (mm.128-133, mm.209-213). In the first instance, the figuration begins

with a stepwise short tremolo in the left hand, transitioning into a long trill in the inner voice for both hands, creating an *agitato* effect. Meanwhile, the presence of accented thirty-second notes in the outer voices leads to the resolution of the harmony (see Example 15). In this case, the *accelerando* is created by the rhythm. From the author's perspective, the notes marked with accents and/or *sforzando* need to be played with great force.

Example 15. Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, First Section, mm. 128-132



In both instances (mm.128-133, mm.209-213), the resolved chord is followed by a rest. It is crucial for the performer to allow this rest its full duration, possibly even elongating it slightly due to the presence of a fermata. Giving this rest its full time not only helps the performer prepare for the upcoming change in touch, but also allows listeners to fully feel the resolution before the next part begins.

The final section, *Allegro*, is an example of rapid changes in rhythmic grouping, which contributes to a sense of forward motion and drive in the music. In order to build momentum in the music, Liebermann utilizes constantly changes time

signatures. The section begins in 4/4 with two subphrases (2+2) and follows a long phrase that spans for 4 quarter-note beats. The next phrase starts with the same subphrases, with the long phrase this time extended by one beat, putting 5 quarter beats in one measure in the time signature of 5/4 (see Example 16).

Example 16. *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Allegro*, mm. 261-265

The musical score for Example 16 is presented in two systems. The first system shows measures 261 and 262. Measure 261 is in 4/4 time and contains two subphrases of two quarter notes each. Measure 262 is in 5/4 time and contains a long phrase of five quarter notes. The second system shows measures 263 and 264. Measure 263 is in 4/4 time and contains two subphrases of two quarter notes each. Measure 264 is in 5/4 time and contains a long phrase of five quarter notes. The tempo is marked 'Allegro' with a quarter note equal to 156 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Liebermann later extends each short subphrase to exceed 2 beats and the long phrase expands beyond 5 beats. For example, the subphrase is still structured in a 2 + 2 pattern in 4/4 (mm. 286). Subsequently, it follows a long phrase in 3/2 with a crescendo and diminuendo to help make a one long phrase. To maintain the steadiness of the passage, there is an alternation between asymmetric meters, such as 5/8, accompanied by a crescendo, and symmetric meter, like 3/4, accompanied by a decrescendo (see Example 17). These frequent changes of meter and dynamics help gradually build momentum.

Example 17. *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Allegro*, mm. 286-290



The music retains a sense of organization through clear grouping, which drives to an energetic conclusion. It is essential for the performer to view the groupings within various time signatures in order to sense the pulse and maintain momentum.

Moreover, performers should pay careful attention to the accents within these passages. For example, the rhythmic pattern and grouping are conveyed through the accents on the repeated note A in the right hand and consistent accents in the left hand to keep the pulse in measure 271 (see Example 18). Clearly emphasizing the accents will effectively convey this energetic passage.

Example 18. *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Allegro*, mm. 271-272



Tempi

In addition to the complex rhythmical combinations, the tempo also plays an important role in conveying the expression of each section. The following table presents the tempo indicated by Liebermann for each section.

Table II:

<i>Inquieto, esitante</i>	metronome marking of 100 for eighth note.
<i>Con tutta forza</i>	metronome marking of 120 for quarter note.
<i>Dona Nobis Pace</i>	metronome marking of 80 for quarter note.
<i>Molto adagio con rubato</i>	metronome marking of 40 for quarter note.
<i>Lullabye</i>	metronome marking of 60 for quarter note.
<i>Interlude</i>	metronome marking of 176 for eighth note.
<i>Allegro</i>	metronome marking of 156 for quarter note.

His prescribed tempos, particularly in the initial sections, demand special attention from the performer to emphasize the important role of tempo in shaping the character of the first section and in distinguishing the various sections of the composition. To effectively guide the listener through the main body of the movement, the performer must adhere to the composer's notations, such as employing eighth notes at a tempo of 100 for the section *Inquieto, esitante*, and the quarter notes at a tempo of 120 in *Con tutta forza*. This approach helps the performer to convey the strength of *Con tutta forza* ("with all force") with a quicker tempo, effectively

introducing theme A to the listener. Additionally, the use of rests between the Introduction and *Con tutta forza* provides the performer with a moment to prepare for the swifter tempo. The author recommends that the performer capitalize this rest, holding it for the entire duration to ensure a seamless transition to the forcefulness in *Con tutta forza*.

Another example of highlighting the tempo changes occurs in measure 258-262, where Liebermann employs a single line of *accelerando* to a quicker tempo, marked as *Allegro*. The performer should take advantage of the single line to execute the *accelerando* gradually in order to prevent the *Allegro* tempo from sounding too abrupt. By strategically planning and phrasing the single line, the performer can increase the pace in order to have a smooth and controlled acceleration. See example 19 for suggestion on phrasing to a well-executed *accelerando*.

Example 19. Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Allegro, mm. 258-263



It is also important to maintain the quarter notes at a tempo of 156 in *Allegro* to save the room for later indication of *Presto*. The author recommends comparing the metronome markings in Table II in order to fully understand the difference.

Implementing a clear execution of all rhythmic components is vital. Without a strong sense of pulse, the music has less meaning, thereby limiting any dramatic phrasing possibilities.

Additional Pianistic Considerations

Con tutta forza:

To assist performers in their interpretation, the author recommends infusing a sense of jazz into *Con tutta forza*. This effect can be achieved by accentuating weak beats instead of the downbeat, a characteristic commonly found in jazz music. The performer is also tasked with distributing accents between the two hands, which adds more complexity in practicing. The performer should incorporate these syncopated rhythms to evoke a feeling of swing. Another way to convey a Jazz feel is through the rhythmic structure. It involves both two-note and three-note groupings, which forms the foundation of the themes. The author suggests that understanding these groups correctly is essential for interpretation. As seen in Example 19, the notes in both hands form groups of 12+12+123, followed by another group in 123+12+12+123+123+12. This rhythm structure helps to contribute to the overall swing feel that jazz music typically has. Thus, to successfully convey the intended jazz feeling, the performer needs to navigate the challenges posed by the accents, the division of accents between hands, and the mastery of rhythm groupings.

Example 20. Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Con tutta forza, mm. 8-13

Con tutta forza (♩ = 120)

The technically most challenging part of the first section occurs from measure 123 to 127, during which the performer is required to present a theme shift between two hands while simultaneously playing tricky moving notes. There may be a tendency for performers to use rubato due to the uncomfortable positioning of the moving notes ; however, it is crucial to maintain the sense of swing in Theme A's original tempo (see Example 21).

Example 21. Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Con tutta forza, mm. 123-129

f cresc. *ff*

Dona Nobis Pacem

The texture undergoes a shift, transitioning into chorale-style writing with a number of embellished pitches. In this melismatic line, Liebermann's instruction is to play *libero*, signifying a call for freedom, flexibility, and heightened expressiveness in the performance. The author recommends that the performer play these embellished notes with a sense of freedom, but return to the designated tempo when the chorale setting reemerges. This shift is notable, as it contrasts with the dynamic and propulsive motion of the first section. The overall section is composed with a calm and tranquil atmosphere.

Lullabye

The entire section is primarily a *pianissimo* setting corresponding to the title of *Lullabye*. The first part (mm.164-190) presents a performance challenge to emphasize the top note while keeping the other two voices soft. This style of composition, with a focus on bringing out a top voice while maintaining softness in others, is a prominent characteristic of Liebermann's work. This compositional style is also found in Liebermann's *Three Impromptus* Op. 68. The two examples share the same texture (see Examples 22 and 23). In the first impromptu, there is an ostinato for middle voices, a chord for the left hand, and the top note for the melody, as illustrated in Example 22. These gestures are particularly advantageous for training to play these melodies using fingers four and five.

Example 22. Lowell Liebermann, *Three Impromptus for Piano Op. 68, No. 1*, mm. 1-

4



Example 23. *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Lullaby*, mm. 164-167



Moving on to the second part, marked *Molto adagio con rubato*, there is a change in texture to the accompanying line in the left hand and a contrapuntal line in the right hand. Apart from highlighting the melody, the performer is also tasked with keeping the other two voices soft. To play this section well, performers should stay close to the keys for the inner voices while slightly lifting the fifth finger for the outer voices. Additionally, the performer can lean slightly towards the fifth finger to better project the melody. Although the overall setting is quiet, bringing out the lower note in the left hand can create a contrast with the highest note in the right hand, thus creating two distinct sound (see Example 24).

Example 24. *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Lullaby*, mm. 191-198

Molto adagio con rubato indicates that Liebermann wanted this part to have a flexible tempo and played with flexible tempo in the appropriate spots. Some extra space can be taken at the end of a phrase (see Example 25, marked with red circles). In the whole note chords present at measure 202 and 207, the performer may take more time to enjoy and listen to the consonant major triads.

Example 25. *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Lullaby*, mm. 191-203

Interlude

The last section starts with a passage reminiscent of *Lullaby*. It consists of multiple layers, requiring the performer to maintain clarity among the various voices and ensure the top voice is distinctly heard. In contrast to *Lullaby*, this section demands a longer melodic phrase. To help with this effect, the performer should adhere to the *Movendo* (Moving) directive and the given tempo, ensuring a continuous forward motion and creating a longer melodic line.

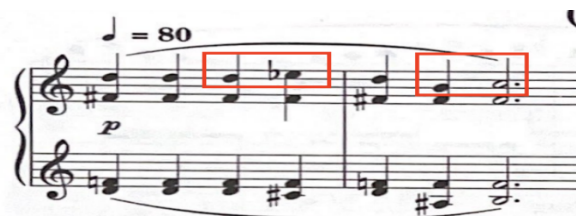
In addition, there are pattern changes in measure 238. The walking bassline here needs special attention since the contour needs to be interpreted musically, with

dynamic fluctuation that responds to the harmonic tension and release. Meanwhile, the middle voice with staccato octaves in the right hand also needs to be quiet under the sound of melody. Due to the sudden introduction of 16th notes in the left hand, it may feel to the listener as though the tempo has abruptly increased. Therefore, it is important for the performer to maintain exactly the same tempo as before to ensure consistency. The overall texture before the *Allegro* section provides a platform for performers to practice two lines simultaneously in the right hand with proper balance.

Allegro:

Among the sections, this one is the most etude-like, making the greatest technical demands on the player. It requires endurance, control, and extensive preparation and strength to the last bar. The last phrase of *interlude* (m.258) is introduced by a recurring motif derived from *Dona Nobis Pacem* (see Example 26 and 27, marked with red circles). This motif serves as a short introduction to the *Allegro*. It is crucial for the performer to use an *accelerando* to transition to the *Allegro* and build the energy from there (see Example 27).

Example 26. Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, *Dona Nobis Pacem*, mm. 80-81



Example 27. Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Interlude, mm. 258-260



The *Allegro* maintains a structure of two short phrases followed by a longer one, which was a common style in the Classical era (see Example 28). The same phrasing is particularly evident in Beethoven's early sonatas, such as his *Sonata No. 4 in E flat Major* Op. 7 (see Example 29).

Example 28. Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Allegro, mm. 261-265



Example 29. Ludwig van Beethoven, *Piano Sonata Op. 7 No. 4*, mm. 5-12



Another important characteristic of Liebermann's compositions is his use of large jumps, as exemplified in measures 272-278. Liebermann utilizes different registers of the keyboard to emphasize greater contrast. This section challenges performers to accurately hit the notes at a fast tempo while simultaneously playing with full force. The author recommends that the performer slightly delay before jumping to the chord. However, immediately after playing the chord, the tempo should return without any break. This is important for emphasizing the downbeat in the phrasing, rather than treating it as the last chord of the previous phrase (see Example 30).

Example 30. *Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Allegro*, mm. 270-277

The image displays a musical score for Example 30, Piano Sonata No. 3 Op. 82, Allegro, measures 270-277. The score is written for piano and consists of three systems of music. The first system (measures 270-272) features a right-hand melodic line with a slur and a dashed line labeled '8va' above it, and a left-hand accompaniment with a slur and a dashed line labeled '8ba' below it. The second system (measures 273-275) shows the right hand playing a melodic line with a red arrow pointing to a specific measure, and the left hand playing a rhythmic accompaniment. The third system (measures 276-277) continues the melodic and accompanimental patterns. The score includes dynamic markings such as *sfz* and *sf*, and articulation markings such as accents and slurs.

To assist performers with the section starting from measure 288 where melodic material alternates between hands, particularly where octaves and moving notes switch back and forth, one can refer to the piano-writing styles of the past. The motion in this section is reminiscent of Chopin's *Étude Op. 10 No. 12 Revolutionary* (see Example 31).

Example 31. Frederic Chopin *Étude Op. 10 Op. 7, mm. 1- 6*

The image shows the first six measures of Chopin's Étude Op. 10 Op. 7. It is written for piano in G minor, 3/4 time. The first system (measures 1-3) begins with a piano (p) dynamic and a 'legatiss.' marking. The second system (measures 4-6) begins with a forte (f) dynamic and a 'con fuoco.' marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingering numbers (1-5).

This *Allegro* also contains many elements from earlier parts, serving as a review of key elements. One example is the *adagio* in measure 338, transposed up a half-step from measure 134. Similarly, the subsequent phrase derived from *Dona Nobis Pacem* is also a half step higher than its previous occurrence. In measure 347, there is a segment reminiscent of *Con tutta forza*, this time at quicker pace. The final measure presents a classic ending, with three pronounced chords descending from the upper to the lower register. The entire sonata should be performed as indicated by the composer's markings on the score.

CONCLUSION

An intent of this study has been to delineate influences and milestones that are crucial for understanding Lowell Liebermann's musical style and the essence of his compositions. Although there have been attempts to place his music into specific stylistic categories, Liebermann's purpose seems aimed at synthesizing music into a unique expression of himself.

The descriptive analysis and performance guide will hopefully assist performers in effectively interpreting the score. Considerations specific to pianists have been discussed, offering insights and general playing suggestions towards a fresh perspective, while also drawing connections between the Third Sonata and the composer's other works.

It is the author's hope to have illuminated the art and beauty of this sonata, inspiring performers to explore further and delve into more of Liebermann's oeuvre. Among other things, its impressive sound effects make Liebermann's Third Sonata an appealing choice for engaging audiences. It should also be an excellent choice for pianistic development and participation in formal competitions.

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