

Introduction

The use of poetic texts as a direct inspiration for solo piano music can be traced across the nineteenth century with works such as Franz Liszt's (1811-1886) three pieces on Petrarch sonnets from the second book of his *Années de pèlerinage* (S. 161), the first *Ballade* of Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), and into the twentieth century with *Gaspard de la nuit*, the suite of pieces on poems of Aloysius Bertrand composed by Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) in 1908.¹ Another example is the first *Mephisto Valse*, for orchestra or solo piano or piano duet, also by Liszt, which follows closely a poem by Nikolaus Lenau (1802-1850).²

The ballade is particularly relevant to any discussion of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century solo piano works in relation to poetic texts. Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) and Johannes Brahms each wrote four ballades, while Liszt wrote two. Others, including Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) and César Franck (1822-1890), also wrote single pieces for the piano with the title of "ballade".³ The ballade's formal features derive from thematic development in connection to programmatic or literary material rather than formal or abstract musical structures, which naturally is the case with strongly programmatic works.⁴ Some of these literary connections are vague and indirect as in the ballades of Chopin, Liszt, and Franck; while others are openly and

¹ Liszt wrote 3 pieces on sonnets of Petrarch in his second book of *Années de pèlerinage*: Franz Liszt, *Années de pèlerinage II*, S. 161, Facsimile, Plate 13378.1-7, (Mainz: Schott, 1858), Accessed February 20th, 2016, http://petrucci.mus.auth.gr/imglnks/usimg/b/b4/IMSLP13289-Liszt_-_S161_Anees_de_Pelerinage_Deuxieme_Anee_Italie_schott_.pdf; Brahms' Op. 10, No. 1. See Maurice J.E. Brown, "Ballade (ii)," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, (Oxford University Press Online, accessed March 19, 2016), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01885>; Ravel labelled *Gaspard de la nuit* as "Poems for piano". See preface of musical score: Maurice Ravel, *Gaspard de la nuit*, (New York: G. Schirmer, 1990), notes ii-iv.

² Ibid.

³ For cataloguing and dates, see Jerzy Chwiałkowski, *The Da Capo Catalog of Classical Music Compositions*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996) as follows: For the Ballades of Chopin, Op. 23, 38, 47, 52, dating from 1831/1836 through 1842 see page 294; For Brahms' 4 Ballades, Op. 10, 1854 see page 190; for the 2 Ballades of Liszt, S. 170, 171, dating from 1845-1853, see page 721; Edvard Grieg's Op. 24 for solo piano is entitled *Ballade in Form von Variationen über eine norwegische Melodie*, Op. 24, (1875-1876). Franck's Ballade, Op. 9 (1844). For both pieces, see Brown, "Ballade (ii)," *Grove Music Online*.

⁴ Brown, "Ballade (ii)," *Grove Music Online*.

directly acknowledged, with the relevant texts often reproduced in the score by the composer.⁵

The latter category includes Alexander Zemlinsky's (1871-1942) *Balladen* (1893), the subject of the present study.⁶

Existing literature on Zemlinsky provides little discussion of the *Balladen*.⁷ Anthony Beaumont's biography of the composer draws attention to certain historical details surrounding them, such as their long-omitted title page with Zemlinsky's dedication to his teacher Johann Nepomuk Fuchs (1842-1899), the thematic allusions to Brahms in the music, and the revelation that the *Balladen* were originally designated as his Op. 2 in the manuscript.⁸ Beaumont follows these details with brief descriptions of each ballade, but any detailed analysis of these pieces is missing from his biographical study of Zemlinsky's life and career.⁹ Mark D. Moskovitz mentions the *Balladen* briefly in passing in his biography of Zemlinsky, but like Beaumont, decides to move past them without any further discussion. Indeed, most of the existing literature on Zemlinsky's solo piano music centres on the *Fantasien über Gedichte von Richard Dehmel*, Op. 9, of which Shoko Hino's study is the most relevant example.¹⁰ Hino explores Zemlinsky's compositional style through the *Fantasien* for solo piano. Her study, and others, however, fail to consider the *Balladen* with the same depth and analytical attention. Furthermore, any scholarly discussion, however tenuous, of the *Balladen* has completely avoided the issue of their

⁵ The ballades of Chopin, Liszt, and Franck may have been inspired by certain texts, but poetic texts have not been directly associated with each ballade. See Brown's "Ballade (ii)" *Grove Music Online*.

⁶ Brahms's Op. 10, No. 1 includes a heading, "After the Scottish ballad 'Edward' in Herder's 'Stimmen der Völker'". Brown, "Ballade (ii)," *Grove Music Online*; For Zemlinsky's *Balladen*, see Alexander, Zemlinsky, *Ausgewählte Klavierstücke*, ed. Antony Beaumont, (Munich: Ricordi, 2002).

⁷ Antony Beaumont, *Zemlinsky* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Moskovitz mentions the *Balladen* in tandem with Zemlinsky's "Albumblatt," a short work for solo piano composed after the *Balladen* in Moskovitz, *A Lyric Symphony*, p. 27.

⁸ Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, pp. 45 and 476 n. 11.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 45.

¹⁰ Shoko Hino, "Innovator or Imitator? Examining Zemlinsky's Eclectic Voice in *Fantasien on Poems by Richard Dehmel*, Op. 9," *Zemlinsky Studies* Michael Frith, ed, (London: Middlesex University Press, 2007), pp. 89-98.

publication history, which seems particularly puzzling. Zemlinsky had originally planned for them to be published as his Op. 2, but their publication was deferred to a posthumous date: indeed, they were not published until 1996, and the critical edition to which this study will refer was issued only in 2002.¹¹

This study will focus on defining the connections between poetic and musical texts in Alexander Zemlinsky's *Balladen* for solo piano. Following a contextual background of Zemlinsky's work for the piano, specifically the *Balladen*, as well as relevant stylistic influences in Chapters 1-2, each ballade will be explored individually in Chapter 3. Unique attributes of each ballade will be examined as well as prominent musical references and quotations. A background of poetic texts and their musical settings will present a framework to which the following analyses will be applied. Chapters 4-6 will individually examine three compositional devices which Zemlinsky uses throughout the *Balladen*: 1) Alternation between major and minor modes, 2) Chromatically-moving harmonic oscillations, and 3) the hemiola. Each of these will be isolated and explored individually as they appear throughout all of the four published ballades in an effort to reveal the commonalities and consistencies within.

At times, using the above compositional devices, comparative analysis will be conducted with each line of each poem in reference to the musical text in an endeavour to produce connections beyond any doubt of programmatic and literary connections to the musical score.¹² This micro-level analysis will be enveloped by a larger macro-level analysis that considers aesthetic, affect, and narrative connections between the poetic and musical texts. The results of

¹¹ Beaumont, *Zemlinsky*, p. 45.

¹² Beaumont includes the German poems in their original forms in the preface of his musical score: Zemlinsky, *Ausgewählte Klavierstücke*, pp. 6-7. Several English translations will be referenced.

the literary connections in this work will be placed in context within the history of programmatic solo piano music genres.

The depth of the programmatic influences in the *Balladen* requires a much closer reading and synthesis than has heretofore been the case, and Zemlinsky's contribution to the ballade genre should be historicized within the larger picture of programmatic, literary-based solo piano music. This dissertation will help to place these valuable pieces of music in their rightful place within this musical history.