

GRAND WALTZ

Joshua Chandra
josh.chandra@gmail.com

What was meant to be Waltz No. 2—which I quickly decided, within some weeks of its roots of conception, to rename as the independent “Grand Waltz”—saw its first sketches in probably late 2010 and definitely by early 2011. Curiously enough, its first composed part was what is now measures 40-51, which was then followed by measures 5 and on (with vast later revision over time), then the opening mm. 1-4, before continuing to the B section and on. I was aiming for a joyous, energetic contrast to the Valse, whose then-alternate name addition of "No. 1" I now scrap for purposes of total individuality. You can tell that I really took criticism of that first work to heart: too blandly repetitive, and inadequate use of the piano's registers—then my own: too lyrical, so the pianistic mm. 40-51 was first envisioned.

I remember spending over an hour figuring out how I could pose a lead-in to measure 40, given how it was the first material I (rather abruptly) conceived out of the entire piece. So the 8-bar phrase of measures 32-39 took something like one to two painstaking hours at a piano in a practice room one evening, as I tried to figure out a lyrical treble melody to work with the already written left hand. In the end (I remember, in almost a state of disgust), I settled with two-chord treble motives, and have even got the manuscript noting that that motive's triplets were added later, as it was just too bland to have flat eighth-note chords. Intriguingly, this *retroactively* turned two right-hand chords in mm. 54-55 into that motive.

Composition is an astounding world in a world in how there are literally no rules to writing; the end goal is simply that people be inspired and brought to recognize that there exists an Order beyond what mankind can see in front of its face. Its process is otherwise the most flexible in the world: a bass line, or a treble line, or a harmonic progression, or a texture can be conceived first, and the rest filled in, up to years later. In contrast to my conceiving the bass line first to mm. 32-39, the B section's G Major interjection was formed with the right-hand motive first, and later left-hand improvisation fit to it. As I wish to have performers get out of their ruts and taste compositional magic: the section after B is to be notated by, and solely for, each performer. Abundant material in pages 1-5 is just waiting to be used for it!

It was in early 2012 that I finalized the work's form, with the coda's basic structure being decided at the end of March 2012. The whole piece's construction took so long mostly because I was swamped by school, work, or other events to the point of literally forgetting about the waltz, and/or because of my pursuit of other projects. Another factor was my lack of consideration of it as a serious work, as I had disliked my own theme in m. 5. One little change—here, chromatic (the initially static bass line)—can make or break a whole passage.

I realize that this piece can be insanely difficult in several ways; although I didn't intentionally write it with challenge in mind, that was simply how I conceived the music; it commanded itself to be recorded on paper in no other way. Even now I am amazed at the work itself and attribute its appeal to God's power: nothing of my own, except of my being an imperfect vessel nonetheless used to bring inspiration to listeners, which is the purpose of music. Accessibility to audiences' ears is thus the focal point; accessibility to performers is second!

Debuted on: April 20, 2012, at:
California State University, Fullerton.
Performed by: The composer at the piano.

Compositional History & Other Remarks:

- Mm. 40-51: the first composed part of the piece, probably sometime Nov. 2010-Feb. 2011(?).
- B section, incl. parts of mm. 89-96: Mar. 20, 2011 (theme: from Saint-Saëns' Op. 52 No. 6).
- Mm. 115-122: composed April 1, 2011.
- Mm. 97-108: composed April 2, 2011 upon inspiration while lying in bed, c. 2:11pm.
- Mm. 75 to about 82: Aug. 24, 2011.
- Mm. 85(?) -88: Feb. 20, 2012.
- Mm. 32-35: All triplets added late Feb. 2012.
- M. 39: R.H. notes in beats 2-3 added late Feb. 2012.
- M. 108: R.H. revised early Mar. 2012.
- M. 31: L.H. 16th triplet added Mar. 14, 2012.
- Structure of coda's multi-bar patterns finalized Mar. 22, 2012, 7:20am (CSUF's spring break!).

There are more changes that I never recorded and have forgotten. Alas, they are unimportant.

Internationally debuted on: August 13, 2012, at:
Sala dei Notari, Perugia, Umbria, Italy, as a part of
Music Fest Perugia 2012, by the composer at the piano.

Edits after this premier:

- One added hidden voice (parenthetical note in m. 59—previously nonexistent), and enharmonic fixes (such as Ebs to D#s in mm. 86-87, and more similar revisions in the coda). Such enharmonic inconsistencies were pointed out at that music festival by the most generous Mikhail Petukhov.

Actual note changes quickly following the debut:

- M. 60: Additional upper-octave E# added in L.H. (in conjunction with the above-mentioned hidden voice), with a melodic cross-staff slur.
- M. 94: The C-natural in the right hand (originally a B).
- Pg. 5, last measure: entire left hand (upon Petukhov's general suggestion to increase complexity; originally three basic eighth-note octaves of Bb-Eb-G-Bb, G-G, and Eb-Eb, from bottom to top).
- Pg. 6, first measure: last eighth-note beat (Petukhov's exact suggestion of both hands' chords; originally a basic A-flat major filled octave-chord in second inversion).

I adamantly *refuse* to call the self-notated part a "cadenza." Part of it may certainly be in free time, as the opening to my own 2012 rendition was, but it is so much more than a mere cadenza. It is an absolutely vital section to the piece (simply written by the performer instead of me), whose arguably overall slower material should contrast against the surrounding, faster *Da Capo* material, while refreshing it in different keys, textures, or other methods of delivery, ultimately connecting back to the grand reopening.

Of course, new measures may be injected into the piece by performers or any existing ones changed, such as the entire harmonic progression entering m. 40 or the ending, descending chromatic octaves—if done tastefully. It is expected that performers repeat mm. 126 back to 54 with all sorts of changes, a tradition which somehow became lost over the ages through intense human standardization. Too bad! Good creativity must never be discouraged nor put on a leash.

To all bringers of joy
Grand Waltz

Composed late 2010(?) - Apr. 2012, edited Aug. 2012

Joshua Chandra

Estatico, ma non frenetico – soprattutto, improvvisatorio

The musical score is written for piano and bass. It begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The first system (measures 1-2) features a dynamic marking of *f* and includes a triplet of eighth notes in the treble and a pair of eighth notes in the bass. The second system (measures 3-8) includes a *staccato a piacere* marking, a repeat sign, and a *molto meno* dynamic marking. The third system (measures 9-14) features a *d.* (diminuendo) marking and a *sfp* (sforzando piano) marking. The fourth system (measures 15-18) includes a triplet of eighth notes in the treble, a *rit.* (ritardando) marking, and a measure rest of 6 in the bass. The fifth system (measures 19-24) includes a measure rest of 7 in the bass. The score concludes with a final cadence in the bass staff.

23

espressivo

7

8va

28

più *dim.* *rall.* *p* *cresc. poco*

3

34

subito più

3

9/16

40

brillante! *Pedale* *f* *(accel.)* *senza pedale*

44

3

48

Musical score for measures 48-51. The piece is in 3/4 time and features a complex texture with multiple voices in both hands. A long melodic line is sustained across the top of the system.

(come prima)

52

To Coda

f (Ravel)

meno rit.

sempre ≤ mp

Pedale

5

Musical score for measures 52-59. The piece transitions to a 3/8 time signature. It includes dynamic markings such as *f* (Ravel), *meno rit.*, and *sempre ≤ mp*. A *Pedale* marking is present in the bass line. A Coda symbol is placed above measure 55. A fermata is placed over the final chord of the system.

(Saint-Saëns' Op. 52 No. 6)

60

Musical score for measures 60-67. The piece continues in 3/8 time with intricate rhythmic patterns and a dense harmonic texture.

68

tr

Musical score for measures 68-73. The piece features a prominent trill (*tr*) in the right hand and continues with complex rhythmic and harmonic structures.

74

più

3

Musical score for measures 74-81. The piece continues with a *più* marking and includes a triplet of eighth notes in the bass line.

80

86

91

97

103

109 **Irresoluto**

(Ravel)

← (v) only on poor pianos. **pp** (non arpeggiate)

117

sfz

This section is to be hand-notated by each performer for only that performer, and renewed at least yearly.

124 **D.S. al Coda**

f

molto meno

sfp (come prima)

Più Vivace

8vb

Tempo primo subito

rit. *ff* (Liszt) *sf*

sf *mp* *f a fin.*

rall. *sva* *sva* *no rit.*

Ossia: