RICE UNIVERSITY

Symphonic Metamorphosis
on a theme of Carl Maria von Weber

by

Thomas Martin Conroy

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Doctor of Musical Arts

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE:

Karim Al-Zand, Lynette S. Autrey
Assistant Professor
Composition and Theory

Anthony Brandt, Associate Professor
Composition and Theory

Walter Bailey, Associate Professor
Chair of Musicology

Harvey Yusup, Professor
Classical Studies

HOUSTON, TEXAS

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ABSTRACT

Symphonic Metamorphosis on a theme of Carl Maria von Weber

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Symphonic Metamorphosis on a theme of Carl Maria von Weber was inspired by Paul Hindemith's work of the same name. While Hindemith's title suggests that the original themes might have gone through transformations, he based his work not on themes, but on entire short pieces and changed very little of Weber's thematic material. I have selected the third piano duet, in F major, from Weber's Huit Pièces, Op. 60 as my source material. Having analyzed the motivic content, I derived new and expanded ideas of several prominent motives to create my work. Linear lines from the Weber have been transformed through means of additive interval expansion. I have also applied additive processes to manipulate the original rhythms. The harmonic content of the piece is largely derived from presenting in vertical fashion various elements that were originally linear. The work is episodic and follows a theme and variations format in four shorter movements that are encased by the introductory material, brass fanfares (Allegro, maestoso). The characterizations and tempi of the shorter movements fluctuate from mysterious (Allegro, mysterioso), to joyous (Allegro, giocoso), to playful (Largo, scherzando). I have employed several basic compositional devices and processes—repetition, imitation, sequence, inversion, retrograde, diminution, augmentation—and combinations of these to transform and at the same time unify the music.
Symphonic Metamorphosis
on a theme of Carl Maria von Weber
Huit Pièces Op. 60, No. 3
[duration: 8 minutes]

Instrumentation:

Piccolo
Flute 1, 2
Oboe 1, 2
English horn
Clarinet in Bb 1, 2
Bass Clarinet
Bassoon 1, 2
Contrabassoon

Horn in F 1, 2, 3, 4
Trumpet in Bb 1, 2, 3
Trombone 1, 2
Bass Trombone
Tuba

Harp
Celesta

Timpani (five drums including piccolo)
Percussion (four players)

1 Xylophone, Vibraphone, Glockenspiel
2 Crotales, Chimes, Suspended Cymbal
3 Tom-toms (4), Triangle, Wood blocks (5)
   Sandpaper blocks, Slapstick
4 Bass drum, Small gongs (3 – Low, Mid., High)
   Tam-tam, Crotales (same set as player 2)

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Contrabass

The inspiration for this piece came from Paul Hindemith’s *Symphonic Metamorphosis.*
Carl Maria von Weber’s *Huit Pièces*, Op. 60 was the source material for some of Hindemith’s
movements. I extracted and transformed pitch and rhythmic material from piano duet No. 3
from this opus to create my piece. After a broad introduction, there are a series of four
vignettes that are comprised of and related by various transformations of Weber’s theme.
There is one direct quote in the finale.

Thomas Conroy
713-807-8456
tconroy@rice.edu
ASCAP member
Issenheim Music
Symphonic Metamorphosis
on a theme of Carl Maria von Weber
(Huit Pièces Op. 60, No. 3)

Allegretto, maestoso \( \frac{d}{d} = 92 \)

Duration: 8

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Allegretto, agitato ($\frac{1}{2} = 92$)

\begin{align*}
\text{Pos.} & \\
\text{Fl. 1&2} & \\
\text{Ob. 1&2} & \\
\text{E. Hs} & \\
\text{Bb Cl.} & \\
\text{B. Ch.} & \\
\text{Bsn. 1&2} & \\
\text{C. Bu.} & \\
\text{Hn. 1&2} & \\
\text{Hn. 3&4} & \\
\text{B. Tp.} & \\
\text{B.Trp. 3} & \\
\text{Tbn. 1&2} & \\
\text{B. Tba. & Tba.} & \\
\text{Timb.} & \\
\text{Perc. 1} & \\
\text{Perc. 2} & \\
\text{(Tom) perc.} & \\
\text{Perc. 3} & \\
\text{(Crotales) perc.} & \\
\text{Perc. 4} & \\
\text{Hp.} & \\
\end{align*}
Largo, scherzando \( \frac{1}{96} \)