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# MAX REGER'S TELEMANN VARIATIONS, OP.134: ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL EVALUATION OF EDITIONS, INCLUDING AN EXAMINATION OF REGER'S PERFORMANCE STYLE BASED ON CONCERT REVIEWS

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EXAMINATION OF REGER'S PERFORMANCE STYLE BASED ON CONCERT  
REVIEWS

by

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University of Nebraska, 2007

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Max Reger's music is not widely known and performed. His music is often thought of as dense, highly chromatic, and hard to digest. The *Telemann Variations* offer a different view of this highly prolific composer, who was regarded as the most important composer next to Richard Strauss in early twentieth-century Germany. The theme, a minuet in binary form, is taken from Telemann's *Tafelmusik in B-flat Major*. The variations exhibit a transparent texture, regular phrases, and formal balance.

There is a fair amount of literature about the life and music of Reger, much of it written in German. However, the *Telemann Variations* themselves have not been subject to many scholarly writings. Chapter One of this document provides an introduction to the subject matter and addresses the techniques used for the musical analysis. Chapter Two features biographical information on the composer. The third chapter examines Reger's performance style at the piano. There are numerous newspaper reviews, witness reports, and letters describing his pianism. The focus of this study lies on relevant passages from German newspaper reviews that haven't been published in English. Conclusions from these reviews offer valuable insight into Reger's pianism and musical conception, which is helpful in understanding and performing this work. Chapter Four includes an

introduction to the *Telemann Variations*, as well as a musical analysis of each variation and a discussion of differences among editions, including suggestions for a new performance edition. The musical analysis focuses on the relationship of each variation to the theme with particular emphasis on form, harmony, and melody. The understanding of the relationship of each variation to the theme, and therefore also to the other variations, is important in creating a coherent performance of this huge variation set. Chapter Five offers a summation and a conclusion. The appendices include a list of Reger's personal piano performance repertoire, piano compositions, and piano roll recordings.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

Max Reger (1873-1916) was one of the most controversial and influential musical personalities in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although he is mostly remembered as composer, he was equally well known then as keyboard artist, conductor, and pedagogue. Reger was a highly prolific composer, leaving well over one thousand compositions.<sup>1</sup> He wrote in every genre except opera. However, today Reger is known mostly for his organ compositions.

Although Reger is a composer from the late romantic period, his compositions were often subjected to harsh criticism due to their modernism. On the other hand, he was held in high esteem by many of his contemporaries, especially for his progressive traits. In fact, Reger was more frequently featured on the concert programs of the *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen* that was founded by Arnold Schönberg than any other composer.<sup>2</sup> However, his works started to disappear from concerts right after his death, even though he had been considered the most important German composer besides Richard Strauss later in his career. This is partly due to the stereotype that Reger's works are very complex, highly chromatic, dense, and hard to digest. Whereas these characteristics are true for some of Reger's compositions, there are many facets to his output. The *Telemann Variations*, Op.134 provide a good example for that part of his

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<sup>1</sup> There are 146 opus numbers, several of which contain numerous individual works. Additionally, he left many unpublished works and arrangements.

<sup>2</sup> Helmut Brauss, *Max Reger's Music for Solo Piano* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press 1994), 2.

later compositional style, which exhibits neoclassical traits such as balance, simple textures, and formal clarity.

The Max-Reger-Institut<sup>3</sup> has been avid in promoting Reger and has brought forth a substantial amount of research. However, there is a lack of in-depth writing about Reger's piano works, especially in the English speaking world.

The present study of Reger's *Telemann Variations*, Op.134 is divided into five chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the subject matter. It contains brief reviews of two dissertations and one book that deal with the *Telemann Variations* in more or less detail and discusses the importance of this study as related to these earlier writings and the general research on Reger.

Chapter Two offers biographical information on the composer, including musical influences. There are numerous writings about the life of Max Reger. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to introduce the composer and to serve as reference for further reading.

Reger's scores usually exhibit great detail with regard to expression markings. He was concerned about promoting a certain way of interpreting his works throughout his life. There are no sound recordings of Reger playing his own piano music.<sup>4</sup> It is unlikely that a rendition of one of Reger's works will be exactly the way he wanted it to be, even if the performer follows every detail in the score. I believe that it is important to try to understand Reger's way of playing the piano to the extent that this is possible, in order to

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<sup>3</sup> The Max Reger Institut/Elsa-Reger-Stiftung was founded by Reger's wife Elsa on October 25, 1947.

<sup>4</sup> Reger recorded several of his smaller pieces for the Welte-Mignon reproducing piano. However, it is uncertain how accurately these recordings reflect the subtleties of his performances. See footnote 35.



create a satisfying interpretation of his works. Even though Reger did not play the *Telemann Variations* in concert, his renditions of other works provide valuable insights into his personality as performer. There are numerous eyewitness accounts of his playing. However, most of these were written by close friends and supporters and tend to be very subjective. Only some of them are translated and published in English. Chapter Three offers translations of several newspaper reviews of Reger's performances as well as translations from other relevant German sources that have not been published in English. From these reviews, a picture of Reger's pianistic style emerges. The characteristics of this style are similar in the accounts of his friends and supporters, even though they often present them in a better light.

Chapter Four offers a formal analysis of the *Telemann Variations*. The difficulty in the performance of variation works is their episodic character. I believe that it is important to understand how the variations relate to the theme as well as to each other in order to avoid a fragmented interpretation. The analysis focuses on the formal, harmonic, motivic, and melodic relationships of each variation to the theme. Additionally, this chapter provides a discussion of the differences between the various editions and offers additional editorial suggestions by the investigator.

The final chapter provides a summary and concluding remarks. The Appendices offer lists of Reger's personal piano performance repertoire, compositions for piano solo, and piano roll recordings.

The bibliography at the end of this document provides an overview of the numerous writings about Reger. Amongst them are only three major works that discuss

the *Telemann Variations* in more or less detail. The first of these is Jamesetta Holliman's 1975 dissertation entitled "A Stylistic Study of Max Reger's Solo Piano Variations and Fugues on Themes by Johann Sebastian Bach and Georg Phillip Telemann."<sup>5</sup> Holliman provides a detailed analysis of these variation works using Jan LaRue's *Guidelines for Style Analysis*.<sup>6</sup> This approach examines the music for five elements: growth, harmony, melody, rhythm, and sound. Holliman also offers a comparison of the two works based on these elements. This approach to analysis is valuable and interesting, but it is mostly geared toward the music theorist and not the performer. For example, Holliman only discusses a few of the variations based on how the melodic material of the theme is used. In my opinion it is necessary for a successful performance to understand how every variation is related to the theme motivically and melodically. There has also been new research on Reger's music and the *Telemann Variations* since 1975. Holliman points out the differences between Reger's harmonization and Telemann's original version. We know now that Reger did not base the theme on Telemann's original score, but took it out of Riemann's *Anleitung zum Generalbaß-Spielen*,<sup>7</sup> which provides only the melody and a figured bass. Reger follows Riemann's harmonization.

The second work is Maria Hinrichs Kranz's 1985 doctoral document entitled "Max Reger: Piano Variations on Themes of Bach, Beethoven, Telemann."<sup>8</sup> This document provides an interesting, yet short, summary of Reger's stylistic development.

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<sup>5</sup> Jamesetta Holliman, "A Stylistic Study of Max Reger's Solo Piano Variations and Fugues on Themes by Johann Sebastian Bach and Georg Philipp Telemann" (Ph.D. Diss., New York University, 1975).

<sup>6</sup> Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970).

<sup>7</sup> Hugo Riemann, *Anleitung zum Generalbaß-Spielen*, 5th ed. (Berlin: Max Heffes Verlag, 1917).

<sup>8</sup> Maria Hinrichs Kranz, "Max Reger: Piano Variations on Themes of Bach, Beethoven, Telemann." (DMA doc., American Conservatory of Music, 1985).

Nevertheless, her discussion of the variation works is superficial and frequently contains mistakes. Therefore, this document is not used as reference for the present study.

Helmut Brauss's book *Max Reger's Music for Solo Piano*<sup>9</sup> offers a valuable overview of the solo piano works of Reger and their stylistic development. The discussion of the *Telemann Variations* is fairly short due to the scope of the book, but he provides valuable information on the piano works of Reger.

The present study attempts to present up-to-date information on Reger and the *Telemann Variations*. The analysis, including the discussion of the different editions and the investigator's own editorial suggestions, is geared towards the performer. The translations in Chapter Three, of material which had previously been available only in the original German, provide valuable insight into Reger's pianistic style.

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<sup>9</sup> Helmut Brauss, *Max Reger's Music for Solo Piano* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press 1994).

## Chapter II

### Biographical Information

Johann Baptist Joseph Maximilian Reger was born on March 19, 1873, in a small village called Brand, which is located in the Fichtelgebirge (a mountain range in northeastern Bavaria). At the age of 2 his family moved to Weiden, a small town in the nearby Oberpfalz (Upper Palatinate, Bavaria), where his mother gave him piano lessons and his father provided him with elementary instruction in violin and cello. His father was a school teacher who also played the organ, bass clarinet and oboe. He was the author of a well-regarded textbook on harmony as well and undoubtedly influenced the young Reger in these fields.<sup>10</sup>

At the age of eleven, Reger began studies with Adalbert Lindner, who had a great reputation as pedagogue, pianist, and organist in Weiden. During the following five years, Reger's future career as musician started to evolve. In addition to studying the piano and organ, he showed great talent in improvisation, and at the age of sixteen wrote his first major composition (*Ouverture in B-minor*, unpublished).<sup>11</sup> Lindner sent the score of the overture to Hugo Riemann, who was a prominent German musicologist. Riemann's reply was not as enthusiastic as Lindner was hoping, but he showed interest in Reger and sent him a book about composition by A.B. Marx and his own *Kontrapunkt*.<sup>12</sup> These books, together with suggestions about melody and form, prompted Reger to compose prolifically, and it can be said that his future career as composer was formed during these

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<sup>10</sup> Guido Bagier, *Max Reger* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1923), 28.

<sup>11</sup> Eberhard Otto, *Max Reger: Sinnbild einer Epoche* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1957), 14.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, 15.

years. In 1888, he saw Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Parsifal* in Bayreuth.<sup>13</sup> Even though Wagner's influence on Reger's music remained limited, he admired the contrapuntal writing and increasingly started to incorporate chromaticism into his improvisations and compositions.

Reger began his studies with Riemann at the Conservatory in Sondershausen at the beginning of April, 1890. Riemann was a strong advocate of the music of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, and he became a major influence on his student. Reger followed in the footsteps of the great masters in writing absolute music, in contrast to the programmatic music of Richard Strauss, who was the other important German composer at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the fall of the same year, Reger followed Riemann to the Fuchs'sche Konservatorium in Wiesbaden.<sup>14</sup> During his time in Wiesbaden, Reger intensified his piano studies and played the *Händel Variations* by Brahms in a jury as early as 1891.<sup>15</sup> He also started to become increasingly interested in chamber music. His first published works focus on that genre.<sup>16</sup>

After Riemann left Wiesbaden for Leipzig in the fall of 1895, Reger was employed by the conservatory as its teacher for music theory. During the 1890's, he became increasingly drawn to alcohol and nicotine, and he often had to fight depression.<sup>17</sup> Reger became more and more critical of Riemann and his musical ideology.

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<sup>13</sup> Brauss, 10.

<sup>14</sup> John Williamson, "Reger, Max," *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 15 March 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

<sup>15</sup> Otto, 19.

<sup>16</sup> Among his early opuses are the *Sonata for Violin and Piano in D Minor*, Op.1, the *Piano Trio in B Minor*, Op.2, the *Sonata for Violin and Piano in D Major*, Op.3, and the *Sonata for Cello and Piano in F Minor*, Op.5.

<sup>17</sup> Brauss, 12.

This eventually led to an increasing alienation from his mentor. Also, Reger tried to distance himself from the ‘Brahmsian’ influences in his works.<sup>18</sup> During that time, Reger also established important professional friendships, for example with the organist Karl Straube, the pianist-composers Eugene d’Albert and Ferruccio Busoni, and Richard Strauss.

Reger returned to Weiden in 1898, following financial difficulties and other problems such as excessive alcohol consumption.<sup>19</sup> During the following three years in Weiden, Reger was not subjected to many cultural and musical influences. The quiet life apart from the big cities gave him the opportunity to recuperate, and hence a copious number of new compositions stems from these years. It was hard for Reger to stay in touch with the professional world while he was in Weiden. Therefore, he moved with his parents and his sister to Munich in 1901. At the end of 1902, Reger married Elsa von Bercken, formerly von Bagenski.<sup>20</sup>

Reger established himself as pianist and chamber musician during his Munich years, but his compositions were often received with harsh criticism. He often felt attacked and misunderstood by critics. He remarked about reviews of his *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue*, Op.127 for organ that he didn’t understand how the critics could dare to give a definite judgment after a single hearing of such a complicated work.<sup>21</sup> He often fought against his critics through his music. For example, the *Violin Sonata No.4 in*

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<sup>18</sup> Otto, 20.

<sup>19</sup> Bagier, 54.

<sup>20</sup> Helmut Niemann, “Max Reger in München,” in *Max Reger, Zum 50.Todestag am 11. Mai 1966*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Reger-Instituts Elsa-Reger-Stiftung Bonn, Heft IV, ed. Ottmar Schreiber and Gerd Sievers (Bonn: Ferd. Dümmers Verlag, 1966 ), 118.

<sup>21</sup> Willi Jinkertz, *Mit Reger an zwei Flügeln* (Düsseldorf: Die Fahre, 1951), 32.

*C Major*, Op.72 features the motives “Schafe” and “Affe” in the bass (in German, “s” stands for the note E-flat and “h” for B, therefore the notes spell “sheep” and “ape”).<sup>22</sup> The growing number of critics who attacked Reger’s work is an indication of Reger’s increasing popularity, and he also started to have a strong group of supporters. A few days after a concert of the *Sinfonietta in A-Major*, Op.90 in 1906, his followers organized a “Katzenmusik” (caterwauling) in front of the home of the critic Dr. Rudolf Louis, who had published a negative review in the “Münchener Neuesten Nachrichten.”<sup>23</sup> In 1905, Reger accepted a position in organ and composition at the music academy in Munich. At the same time, he accepted his first appointment as conductor, an activity that became increasingly important to him. Reger resigned from the position at the academy only one year later, but he started to become frequently engaged for concerts in Germany and abroad, such as in the Netherlands and St. Petersburg. Prokofiev witnessed a performance of the *Serenade*, Op.95, which may have had an influence on the development of the younger Russian composer’s neo-classical style.<sup>24</sup>

Reger accepted a position as composition teacher at the conservatory in Leipzig in March, 1907. During the Leipzig years, his output started to focus on larger instrumental and vocal forms.<sup>25</sup> The orchestral *Variations and Fugue on a theme by Hiller*, Op.100 from 1907 feature clear structures and other neo-classical traits. Their compositional style, which lacks much of the contrapuntal writing that is so typical for Reger, is common in several of Reger’s late works such as the *Telemann Variations*, Op.134. The

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid*, 33.

<sup>23</sup> Otto, 40.

<sup>24</sup> John Williamson, “Reger, Max,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 21 March 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

<sup>25</sup> Brauss, 18.

creation of the first festival dedicated solely to Reger's music, in Dortmund in May of 1910, indicates an increasing recognition of Reger as a major German composer.<sup>26</sup> He also received honorary doctorates from the universities in Jena and Berlin. During this time Reger wrote his only piano concerto, which was premiered by the pianist Frieda Kwast-Hodapp on December 15, 1910, in the *Gewandhaus* in Leipzig.<sup>27</sup>

In December of 1911, Reger accepted a position as director of the orchestra of the ducal court of Saxe-Meiningen (*Meininger Hofkapelle*), which had gained a great reputation under his predecessors Hans von Bülow, Richard Strauss, and Fritz Steinbach.<sup>28</sup> He continued to teach in Leipzig one day per week. During the following three years, Reger had very successful concert tours with the orchestra during the winter seasons and used his summer vacations for composition. The stressful concert life during these years, together with the weekly train rides to Leipzig, led to a breakdown in February 1914, which forced him to quit his position in Meiningen.<sup>29</sup> Reger devoted little time to his recovery and almost immediately started to compose prolifically. The *Variationen und Fuge über ein Thema von Mozart*, Op.132 were a significant step toward the development of the *Telemann Variations*. Whereas the theme of the *Hiller Variations* is broken down into little units and manipulated in various subjective ways, Reger retains the structure of the theme throughout the *Mozart Variations*, despite harmonic and contrapuntal modifications. Reger said that he wanted to create a work that is “full of grace, without all earthly heaviness, totally pure, without any outbursts” (voller Grazie,

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<sup>26</sup> Bagier, 92.

<sup>27</sup> Otto, 48.

<sup>28</sup> John Williamson, “Reger, Max,” *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy (Accessed 18 March 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

<sup>29</sup> Brauss, 19.



ohne alle Erdschwere, ganz rein, ohne irgendwelche Ausbrüche).<sup>30</sup> The growing tendency towards transparency, less contrapuntal density, and clearer formal structure can be observed in other works of that time as well, such as the Op.131 chamber works for various string instruments.<sup>31</sup>

With the outbreak of World War I, Reger wanted to support his motherland and join the military. However, his short-sightedness made him unusable at the front, and he was only employed for a short time during the summer of 1914 as writer in a “draft board” (Musterungskommission).<sup>32</sup> Needless to say, Reger didn’t compose or concertize during that time. However, he wrote the *Telemann Variations* almost immediately after his release from the army. This set of variations is the only composition for piano from the Meiningen years (with the exception of a version for two pianos of the *Mozart Variations*) and his last major composition for solo piano. Despite his success with the Hofkapelle, Reger encountered growing resistance in Meiningen and eventually moved to Jena in March of 1915. He was hopeful of the inspiring environment of this university town and started to talk about “the beginning of the free Jena Style.”<sup>33</sup> During the following year, Reger continued to concertize, teach in Leipzig, and travel, despite growing depression.<sup>34</sup> It was during one of his weekly trips to Leipzig that Reger died on May 11, 1916, probably because of a heart attack.

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<sup>30</sup> Otto, 61.

<sup>31</sup> Bagier, 277: *Preludes and Fugues for Solo Violin*, Op.131a, *Three Duos (Canons and Fugues) for Two Violins*, Op.131b (‘im alten Stil’), *Three Suites for Cello*, Op.131c, and *Three Suites for Viola*, Op.131d.

<sup>32</sup> Otto, 63.

<sup>33</sup> Max Reger, *Briefe an Karl Straube*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Reger-Instituts Elsa-Reger-Stiftung Bonn, Heft X, ed. Susanne Popp (Bonn: Ferd. Dümmlers Verlag, 1973), 249.

<sup>34</sup> Otto, 68.

### Chapter III

#### Max Reger as Pianist

Reger's scores are known for their detailed indications of phrasing and expression. However, it is in the nature of the written score that it can't express the various tone colors and subtle rhythmic and textural inflections that the composer has in mind. In order to come as close to the composer's intention as possible, it is helpful to examine his performance style to whatever extent this is possible. Many composer-pianists from the beginning of the twentieth century, such as Bartok or Rachmaninoff, recorded their works. They often deviated significantly from the score. These recordings enable the listener to gain at least some insight into the way the composers perceived their music. The impression of the composer's style often helps the performer to better understand the subtleties of the score and therefore to create a more successful performance.

Reger did not leave sound recordings of his works, although he did make player piano rolls of several of his shorter pieces.<sup>35</sup> However, there are numerous reminiscences, letters, and newspaper reviews that describe his playing. The majority of the writings about his performance style are by his pupils, friends, and wife.<sup>36</sup> Many of these sources have been translated into English and are easily accessible. However, most of these

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<sup>35</sup> Reger recorded several of his smaller pieces for the Welte-Mignon reproducing piano. However, it is uncertain how accurately these recordings reflect the subtleties of the performances such as rhythmic inflections, dynamics, and pedaling. It is also not known to what extent the recordings were edited when they were transferred to paper rolls. Nevertheless, these recordings provide an interesting resource on Reger's playing. They largely correspond with the traits of Reger's playing as described in the reviews. For a list of Reger's piano roll recordings, see Appendix III.

<sup>36</sup> Elsa Reger, *Mein Leben mit und für Max Reger* (Leipzig: Koehler und Amelang Verlag, 1930).

accounts are highly subjective and tend to look past shortcomings in Reger's playing. Newspaper reviews are subjective as well. Nevertheless, they tend to be more critical and often provide a better picture of a performance. Ingeborg and Ottmar Schreiber published a collection of newspaper reviews about Reger's concerts.<sup>37</sup> These have not been published in English. Following are excerpts from these articles which are relevant for the understanding of Reger's performance style at the piano and their translations. Additionally, there is a translation of the relevant passage from Walter Niemann's book *Meister des Klaviers: Die Pianisten der Gegenwart und der letzten Vergangenheit*.<sup>38</sup> The entry about Reger in this book is similar in style to the newspaper reviews. Following these articles is a summary of the most important traits of Reger's performance style and a conclusion on how these ought to affect one's own interpretations. The basic characteristics of Reger's playing as presented in these reviews are generally consistent with other writings and with Reger's piano roll recordings.

Basel, 3/3/1913 (concert)

Basler Nachrichten Nr.105, 1. Beilage, 3/5/1913 (review)

Wie dämmernd weich der Komponist alles aufgefaßt haben will, zeigte er deutlich am Klavier, dem er ein wunderbares Halbdunkel abzugewinnen versteht. Die Zartheit der Auffassung trieb er im Vortrag Bachscher Fugen, der immerhin ein sehr interessanter Beitrag zu dem Konzert war, nach meinem Empfinden zu weit. Die Fis-dur-Fuge z.B. verrät doch schon im Anfang des Themas eine gewisse Energie, und auch der leidenschaftliche Anstieg in der Fis-moll (alles aus dem ersten Teil des Wohltemperierten Klaviers) verlangt nach meinem Gefühl eine gewisse Kraft. Aber eins erreicht Reger: unbedingte Klarheit, die sonst auf dem modernen Pianoforte fast nicht herauszubringen ist und einzelne Stücke, wie das,

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<sup>37</sup> Ingeborg Schreiber and Ottmar Schreiber, *Max Reger in seinen Konzerten*. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Reger-Instituts Elsa-Reger-Stiftung Bonn, Heft VII. (Bonn: Ferd. Dümmers Verlag, 1981).

<sup>38</sup> Walter Niemann, *Meister des Klaviers: Die Pianisten der Gegenwart und der letzten Vergangenheit* (Berlin: Schuster und Loeffler, 1921).

Schumanns Eusebius vorausnehmende Fis-dur-Präludium, spielte er unnachahmlich schön. Größe hatte die Ruhe in der Wiedergabe der F-moll-Fuge, eine Größe, die die immer hastenden Berufspianisten leider kaum je erreichen. Wenn diese Fugen vortragen, verfallen sie auch zu leicht in einen lehrhaften Ton, während Reger das Mechanische der Fugenform vollständig überwand und nur den Gehalt suchte und fand... (Karl Nef, in Schreiber, p. 339.)

The composer showed at the piano, from which he understood how to win a wonderful semi-darkness, how dusky-softly he wants everything to be conceived. To my mind, he drove the delicateness of his conception in the performance of Bach fugues, which at any rate were a very interesting contribution to the concert, too far. After all, the F-sharp major fugue, for example, gives away a certain energy already at the beginning of the theme, and also the passionate ascent in the one in F-sharp minor (everything out of the first part of the Well-tempered Clavier) demands, I feel, a certain strength. But Reger achieved one thing: absolute clarity, which is otherwise almost impossible to bring out on the modern pianoforte, and he played individual pieces, such as the prelude in F-sharp Major, which anticipates Schumann's Eusebius, inimitably beautifully. The calmness in the rendition of the F minor fugue had greatness, greatness which the always hasty professional pianists unfortunately almost never achieve. If they perform fugues, they resort all too easily to a lecture-like tone, whereas Reger overcame the mechanical aspects of the fugue form completely, and was only looking for the substance, and found it.

Bonn, 4/28/1913

Kölnische Zeitung Nr.498, Mittags-Ausgabe, 4/29/1913

... Regers Bachspiel weicht nicht unerheblich von der üblichen Art ab. Man darf wohl sagen, daß er die Frühromantik des Größten der Großen wie kein zweiter begriffen hat. Auch besitzt sein Klavierspiel, ohne virtuos besonders entwickelt zu sein, doch einen pianistischen Vorzug in dem überaus verfeinerten Anschlag. Man möchte sagen, daß Reger alles, was die Fugen an innerstem Seelenleben offenbaren, zum Vorschein bringt, oft zwar mit so elegisch zartem Ausdruck, daß das architektonische Skelett der Fuge dagegen zurücktritt. Regers Bachauffassung besitzt einen fast feministischen Zug, der einer F-moll-, einer Fis-moll-Fuge sehr zustatten kam und die in Fis-dur mit Lieblichkeit übergöß. Es ließ sich denken, daß zwei so verschiedene Individualitäten wie Reger und Frau Elly Ney-Hoogstraaten im Schlußstück, dem C-dur-Konzert für zwei Klaviere, alles andere bieten würden als ein "siamesisches" Zusammenspiel. Frau Ney vertrat dem zarten Reger gegenüber das männliche Prinzip, und wenn Reger, der seine Stücke gern langsam anfängt, um sie im Verlauf zu beschleunigen – ähnlich wie Saint-Saëns -, manchmal die rhythmischen Zügel schleifen ließ: Frau Ney zog sie

wieder straff. Außer im zweiten Satz, wo ganz Regers verhärmte Art vorherrschte und auch dem Spiel der Frau Ney die Träne entquoll. (Otto Neitzel, in Schreiber, p. 340.)

...Reger's performances of Bach deviate not insignificantly from the common way. One must be allowed to say that he has understood the early Romanticism of the greatest of the great. His piano playing also possesses, even though it is not very developed virtuosically, nevertheless a pianistic advantage in its exceedingly sophisticated touch. One would like to say that Reger brings to light everything that the fugues reveal in their most inner lives, although often with such an elegiac delicate expression that the architectural skeleton of the fugue comes second. Reger's conception of Bach possesses an almost feminine trait, which was well suited for the F-minor and F-sharp minor fugues, and which poured delightfulness over the one in F-sharp major. One might think that two so different individuals as Reger and Ms. Elly Ney-Hoogstraaten would present everything but a "Siamese" ensemble playing in the final piece, the *Concerto in C Major* for two pianos. Mrs. Ney represents the masculine principle in contrast to the sensitive Reger, and when Reger, who likes to begin his pieces slowly in order to accelerate over their courses - similar to Saint-Saëns - sometimes let the rhythmical reins drag, Mrs. Ney pulled them tight again, except for the second movement, where Reger's careworn way dominated entirely and also inspired tears to flow from the playing of Mrs. Ney.

Berlin, 12/4/1913

Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger Nr.617, 12/5/1913

Als Solist im Brandenburgischen Konzert erbrachte Reger mit der sehr feinsinnigen Einfügung von Füllstimmen in seinen Part Belege für ein kongeniales Bach-Verständnis; sein weicher Anschlag war des weiteren vortrefflich geeignet, den Klavierklang, soweit das möglich ist, sozusagen cembaloartig zu modifizieren. Nur scheint mir, daß der Künstler, wahrscheinlich in Unkenntnis der akustischen Verhältnisse des Opernhauses, die Abdämpfung des Tones etwas übertrieb und damit die gesunde Festigkeit der Bachschen Linienführung manchmal gefährdete. (Wilhelm Klatte, in Schreiber, p. 356.)

Reger proved to have a congenial understanding for the music of Bach through the very sensitive insertion of additional voices to his part as soloist in the *Brandenburg Concerto*. His soft touch was splendidly suited to modify the sound of the piano towards the cembalo, as far as this is possible. It just seems to me that the artist, probably in ignorance of the acoustical conditions of the opera house, somewhat exaggerated the muting of the tone and therefore sometimes jeopardized the healthy steadfastness of Bach's contrapuntal writing.

Berlin, 12/4/1913

Vossische Zeitung Nr.618, 12/5/1913

Herr Dr. Reger saß selbst am Flügel. Er ist kein Pianist, sein Anschlag war merkwürdig dünn und entbehrte jeder Tragfähigkeit. Infolgedessen wirkte das Konzert matter, als es seinem frischen Inhalt nach hätte der Fall sein müssen... (Franz von Hennig, in Schreiber, pp. 356-57.)

The great Dr. Reger himself sat at the grand piano. He is no pianist, his touch was strangely thin and was missing any weight-bearing capacity. Consequently, the recital seemed duller than it should have been the case according to its fresh content.

Marburg, 11/17/1914

Oberhessische Zeitung Nr.272, 11/20/1914

Aus diesem Buche hatte sich Professor Reger die Präludien und Fugen in C-Moll, Fis-Moll, As-Dur und H-Dur zu eignem Vortrage ausgesucht. Zollten wir dem Komponisten am Flügel schon mehrfach als Begleiter von Solisten und Spender eigener Lieder Bewunderung, so war es uns auch an diesem Bachabend vergönnt, seine reiche Gestaltungskraft aufs neue auf uns wirken lassen zu können. Jeder große Künstler bringt als Interpret der Werke früherer oder überhaupt anderer Meister seine eigene Auffassung bei der Wiedergabe zum Ausdruck. Auch Reger fesselte durch sein fein empfundenes Spiel. Er glänzt nicht mit allerhand Kunststücken – dazu ist ja auch diese Komposition nicht angetan – aber er taucht tief hinein in seine Kunst und entlockt seinem Flügel eine Fülle von Empfindungen. Ob er im Präludium eine Farbenpracht entfaltet oder dem Kanon ernste Töne leiht, immer klingt eine Saite im Hörer mit, die von der Echtheit und Größe der Künstler ein sicheres Zeugnis ablegt. Es war eine Stunde künstlerischer Freude, in der man auch einmal seine kritischen Nebengedanken vergessen durfte. – Nicht minder frischem Mitempfinden begegnete der Schlußvortrag des Konzertes C-Moll mit seinen zwei belebenden Sätzen, denen zwischengefügt das zarte Adagio erklingt. Auch die Ausführung dieser Sätze mit *Regerscher Auffassung* bildeten einen Höhepunkt in der Gesamtleistung beider Künstler. (Elly Ney-van Hoogstraaten) Das Zusammenspiel konnte nicht feiner abgetönt, der Inhalt nicht erschöpfender vermittelt sein. Namentlich in dem im Schlußsatz gespielten, zum Teil in romantischen Bahnen wandelnden Klangfreudigen “Allegro con spirito” wußten die Künstler über eine auch technisch tadellose Wiedergabe hinaus mit schöpferischem Erfolg das Musikalische herauszuheben. (-m., in Schreiber, p. 367.)

Professor Reger chose the preludes and fugues in C-sharp minor, F-sharp minor, A-flat major and B major from this book for his own performance. We have already often admired the composer at the grand piano as accompanist of soloists and contributor of his own songs. We also have been granted the privilege on this Bach evening to once again have his rich creative power have an effect on us. Every great artist expresses his own conception through the performance, as interpreter, of the works of earlier, or in general of other masters. Reger too had a grip on us through his delicately sensitive playing. He does not shine with all kinds of tricks – this composition is not suitable for that anyway – but he immerses himself deeply into his art and coaxes a wealth of emotions out of his piano. A string always sounds along in the listener, which gives certain evidence of the genuineness and greatness of an artist, no matter if he unfolds a blaze of color in the prelude or lends the canon serious tones. It was an hour full of artistic pleasure, in which one was also at times allowed to forget one's critical second thoughts. The closing performance of the *Concerto in C Minor* with its two invigorating movements, inserted between which the delicate *Adagio* is heard, was met with no less fresh sympathy. The performance of these movements also with "Regerian" conception constituted a high point in the overall performance. (Elly Ney-van Hoogstraaten) The ensemble playing couldn't have been more refined, nor the content conveyed more exhaustively. Particularly in the way the *Allegro con spirito* of the final movement, which is partly strolling in romantic paths and timbre friendly, was played, the artists knew how to bring out the musical substance with creative success through a none-the-less technically immaculate rendition.

Kassel, 1/4/1915

Casseler Allgemeine Zeitung Nr.6, 1/6/1915

Vier Präludien und Fugen aus dem "Wohltemperierten Klavier" lösten sich ab; aus dem zweiten Bande die in C-Moll, Fis-Moll und As-Dur, aus dem ersten die in Cis-Moll. In der Wahl der Tempi fußt Reger vollständig auf altklassischer Anschauung, die einem Allegro nicht die heutige Beweglichkeit zugesteht; in der musikalischen Behandlung erkennen wir den modernen Meister, der in Bach keineswegs eine Rechenmaschine, sondern eine lebendige, von wechselndem Empfinden beeinflusste Persönlichkeit erblickt. Sein Anschlag ist einer bezaubernden Zartheit fähig; der scharfen Prägung des thematischen Gehaltes, der klar beherrschten Kontrapunktik steht manches rubato gegenüber, das musikalisch durchaus gerechtfertigt erscheint, aber manchen strengen Bachschüler wohl befremden mag. (F.G., in Schreiber, pp. 368-69.)

Four preludes and fugues from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* were heard one after the other; from the second volume the ones in C minor, F-sharp minor and A-flat

major, from the first the one in C-sharp minor. Reger bases his choice of tempi entirely on the old classic view, which does not grant the Allegro the modern agility; in the musical treatment we recognize the modern master, who by no means perceives in Bach an adding machine, but a living personality, influenced by changing emotions. His touch is capable of an enchanting sensitivity; a fair amount of rubato, which seems to be musically perfectly justified, but which might displease a good many strict Bach pupils, stands opposite to the sharp character of the thematic content, which is defined by the clearly dominating contrapuntal texture.

Mainz, 1/5/1916

Mainzer Anzeiger (Generalanzeiger), 1/6/1916

Abgesehen von der ungünstigen äußeren Art des Spiels hatte man den Eindruck nicht sehr sorgsamer Vorbereitung und reichlich sorgloser technischer Behandlung, wozu noch große Freiheiten in rhythmischer Beziehung, vor allem bei dem Bach-Konzert, (D-Moll) hinzutreten. (-al-, in Schreiber, p. 378.)

Apart from his unfavorable appearance and manner of playing, one had the impression of careless preparation and plenty of carefree technical treatment, to which also great liberties in rhythmical respect were added, especially in Bach's *Concerto in D Minor*.

Mainz, 1/5/1916

Mainzer Journal, 1/6/1916

Er ist ein ausgezeichnete Bachkenner. Des Meisters D-moll-Konzert mit Begleitung von Streichorchester hat er bearbeitet und selbst vorgeführt. Die Vorführung stand freilich nicht auf der Höhe der Bearbeitung. Reger blieb dem rein technischen Teil viel schuldig. Manche Note fiel unter den Tisch, das Spiel war spröde und ermangelte des rhythmischen Ausdrucks. (L.F., in Schreiber, p. 378.)

He is an excellent Bach expert. He arranged the master's *Concerto in D Minor* with string accompaniment and performed it himself. Of course the performance did not reach the level of the arrangement. Reger fell short of the purely technical aspect. A fair number of notes fell under the table, the playing was brittle and lacked rhythmic expression.



Köln, 3/31/1916

Kölnische Zeitung Nr.388, Mittags-Ausgabe, 4/1/1916

Die drei Präludien und Fugen aus dem zweiten Teil des Wohltemperierten Klaviers, das herb-zarte in C-moll, das empfindungsreiche in Fis-moll mit der mächtigen Tripelfuge und das glanzvolle in As-dur waren schon allein wegen der wirkungsvollen Steigerung wohl ausgewählt. Reger bot sie in klarer, geistvoller Nachzeichnung und durchaus im Geiste Bachs, indem er alle Mittel des modernen Flügels, den großen Ton und die Pedalwirkung voll ausnutzte... (in Schreiber, pp. 380-81.)

The three preludes and fugues from the second part of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, the austere, delicate one in C minor, the richly sensitive one in F-sharp minor with the massive triple-fugue, and the brilliant one in A-flat major were already well chosen because of the effective intensification. Reger presented them in a clear, intellectual interpretation and quite in the spirit of Bach, by fully making use of all possibilities of the modern grand piano, the big tone and the pedal effect.

The following excerpt is from Walter Nieman's book *Meister des Klavierspiels*, p. 141:

So heiß umstritten der Komponist, so unumstritten war der Pianist Max Reger. Saß der mächtige und gedrungene Meister mit dem ungewöhnlichen Musikerschädel und den dicken, fleischigen Händen am Flügel, so erwartete man auch von seiner äußeren Erscheinung das ein wenig derbe und klanglich harte Klavierspiel eines urdeutschen Organisten. Wie anders wurde uns mit dem ersten Ton, den Reger anschlug! Gewiß spielte auch Reger Orgel auf dem Klavier; das heißt: er zog gewissermaßen auch seine "Register" und wechselte am liebsten zwischen einem stählernen fortissimo oder einem gedeckten, schattenhaften und gesäuselten piano und pianissimo. Die gesunden Mittelfarben in Empfindung und Ton fehlten. Aber wie spielte er Orgel auf dem Klavier! Sein Spiel war das unmittelbare Neu- und Nachschaffen einer außergewöhnlichen Persönlichkeit, das weniger pianistisch-technisch, als menschlich und musikalisch bewertet sein wollte. Er vergaß Konzertpublikum, Konzertsaal und sich selbst, und versenkte sich ganz und gar innerlich in die Musik, die er vortrug. Er war Erzromantiker auch als Pianist und spielte selbst Bach romantisch: weich, verschwimmend, modern, stimmungsvoll, schön, doch charakterlos zerfließend und gänzlich unbachisch. In romantischen Aufgaben, ganz besonders aber beim Vortrag seiner eigenen Werke wurde er dagegen zu einem der wunderbarsten und delikatesten Klang- und Stimmungspoeten, den die Geschichte des Klavierspiels ihr eigen nennt. Seine ebenso große wie einseitig entwickelte Persönlichkeit, die außerordentliche Energie seiner Gestaltung, der unvergleichliche Reichtum an

zarten Mischfarben des piano, verlieh seinem Klavierspiel einen scharfgeprägten und eignen “Regerschen” Charakter, doch einen überall, bei Bach wie bei Beethoven und Schubert, bei Brahms wie bei Reger gleichen Stil.

As hotly debated a composer as he was, Max Reger was indisputable as pianist. When the massive and sturdy master with the unusual musician skull and the thick, meaty hands was sitting at the grand piano, then one expected from his outer appearance indeed the kind of coarse and tonally hard piano playing of an original German organist. How different we became with the first note which Reger touched! Certainly, Reger also played organ on the piano; this means: he also pulled his “stops,” so to speak, and preferred to alternate between an iron fortissimo and a muted, shadowy and murmuring piano and pianissimo. The healthy middle colors in sensation and tone were missing. His playing was the immediate new and reproduction of an unusual personality, which wanted to be judged not so much pianistically-technically, but humanly and musically. He forgot the concert audience, the concert venue and himself, and immersed himself completely in the music that he performed. He was also an arch-Romantic as pianist and even played Bach romantically: smooth, hazy, modern, atmospheric, beautiful, but characterlessly dissolving and entirely un-Bachian. In romantic tasks, but especially in the rendition of his own works, he became, in comparison, one of the most wonderful and delicate tone and atmosphere poets which the history of music calls her own. His equally great and one-sided developed personality, the extraordinary energy of his shaping, the incomparable richness in delicate mixed colors of his piano, lend his piano playing a sharply characterized and own “Regerian” character, but one that is the same in Bach as well as Beethoven and Schubert, in Brahms as well as Reger.

### Conclusion

Most writers agree that, unlike his friend Ferruccio Busoni, Reger was not a virtuoso pianist. He did not perform any of the great virtuoso works and refrained from playing his own, more difficult compositions. However, his chamber music repertoire was quite extensive.<sup>39</sup> Judging from his concert programs, Reger was technically proficient enough to play most of the standard repertoire. He almost exclusively chose

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<sup>39</sup> For a complete list of his concert programs, see: Ingeborg Schreiber and Ottmar Schreiber, *Max Reger in seinen Konzerten*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Reger-Instituts Elsa-Reger-Stiftung Bonn, Heft VII (Bonn: Ferd. Dümmlers Verlag, 1981).

selections from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* for his solo performances during the last ten years of his life. He often used them as interludes in chamber music concerts. He frequently performed music for two pianos and concertos for one or more pianos. Several writers compliment the clarity in his playing, especially in his interpretations of Bach and accompaniments of singers. The footnote to the first variation of the *Telemann Variations* says that "absolute clarity must be the first goal."<sup>40</sup> Reger's music is often dense and complex. However, the performer must strive for the utmost clarity in Reger's works.

Another trait of Reger's playing that is frequently mentioned is his refined touch. He apparently was able to produce many colors and gradations of *piano* and *pianissimo*, even to the point where the notes were hardly audible. He was able to produce massive sounds as well. On the other hand, he hardly made use of the many types of shading in the middle dynamic range. Reger provides clear indications regarding dynamics. Reger frequently differentiates between *piano*, *pianissimo*, and *piano-pianissimo*. Additionally, he indicates the use of the *una corda* pedal frequently throughout the *Telemann Variations*. Judging from the reviews and his scores, it was very important for Reger to show even the most subtle differences in dynamics.

It is often noted that Reger made use of all of the possibilities of the modern grand piano, including a generous use of the damper pedal, even in Bach. Several variations, as well as the theme, of the *Telemann Variations* are predominantly marked *staccato*. It seems appropriate to use the damper pedal in order to create different colors. It is often noted that Reger treated the piano like an organ, on which instrument the

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<sup>40</sup> See Chapter Four for the entire footnote and its translation.

performer has the option to change the tone color immediately by pulling different combinations of stops. Reger's occasional *fortissimo* is sometimes described like pulling all the stops on the organ.

Reger's playing is often characterized as being Romantic. He took many rhythmic liberties, including the frequent use of rubato. In his performances, these seem to have happened unintentionally at times:<sup>41</sup>

Selbst von den Metronombezeichnungen in seinen eigenen zweiklavierigen Variationswerken, die, wie er sagte, nur "ungefähre Anhaltspunkte" geben sollen, wich Reger, je nach seiner inneren Verfassung manchmal so erheblich ab, daß man mitzukommen nur seine liebe Not hatte. Nach einem einmal beinahe drohenden "Umschmiß" – Reger hatte sich in ein derartiges Tempo hineingesteigert, daß er einige Takte aussetzen mußte – erhielt ich von ihm für die geistesgegenwärtige Überbrückung der dadurch entstandenen Lücke das hier wiedergegebene Bild mit der Widmung "Dem Lückenspieler."

Reger even deviated sometimes so significantly, depending on his inner state of mind, from the metronome indications in his own variation works for two pianos, that one had great trouble to keep up with him. Once, after an almost imminent "knock over" – Reger worked himself up into such a tempo that he had to break off for a few bars – I got the above printed picture from him for the quick-witted bridging of the resulting gap, with the dedication "to the gap-player."

It is frequently mentioned that Reger tended to start his pieces slow and gradually sped up. The *Telemann Variations* are based on a Baroque minuet, and most of its variations retain the basic form and characteristics of the theme. Reger does not indicate subtleties in tempo and rhythm as frequently and in as much detail as he does in many other works. Seemingly, Reger wanted to have these variations played rather strictly with regard to tempo and rhythmic flexibility. However, there are variations where it seems appropriate, if not necessary, to be rhythmically flexible. For example, Variation Three

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<sup>41</sup> Jinkertz, 15.

seems to be more effective if one starts a little under tempo, and then keeps accelerating and relaxing. This variation seems rather stiff and not portraying the *scherzando* character if it is played strictly in time. The slow variations exhibit a denser texture, more chromaticism, and longer phrases. They are only effective with a generous use of rubato.

There is a quote by Friedrich Nietzsche which in my opinion reflects Reger's approach to performing very well:<sup>42</sup>

*Wie nach der neueren Music sich die Seele bewegen soll.* – Die künstlerische Absicht, welche die neuere Musik in dem verfolgt, was jetzt, sehr stark aber undeutlich, als “unendliche Melodie” bezeichnet wird, kann man sich dadurch klarmachen ,daß man ins Meer geht, allmählich den sicheren Schritt auf dem Grunde verliert und sich endlich dem wogenden Elemente auf Gnade und Ungnade übergibt: man soll *schwimmen*. In der bisherigen älteren Musik mußte man, im zierlichen oder feierlichen oder feurigen Hin und Wieder, Schneller und Langsamer, *tanzen*: wobei das hierzu nötige Maß, das Einhalten bestimmter gleichwiegender Zeit- und Kraftgrade von der Seele des Zuhörers eine fortwährende *Besonnenheit* erzwang: auf dem Widerspiele dieses kühleren Luftzuges, welcher von der Besonnenheit herkam, und des durchwärmten Atems musikalischer Begeisterung ruhte der Zauber jener Musik. – Richard Wagner wollte eine andere Art *Bewegung der Seele*, welche, wie gesagt, dem Schwimmen und Schweben verwandt ist.

*How the soul should be moved by the newer music:* The artistic intention that the newer music tries to convey is that which is now termed “endless melody,” an expression that is used with conviction, but little clarity. This artistic intention can be made clear when one imagines walking into the sea: one slowly loses the firm ground under one's feet, and finally has to surrender totally to the surging elements of the sea; one is at its mercy, for good or ill: one ought to swim. In the former, older music, one had to dance, in a delicate, solemn or fiery to-and-fro, faster-and-slower; whereby the requisite levelheadedness, the maintenance of certain well-balanced degrees of time and energy, required a constant presence of mind in the listener's soul. The magic of that older music came from the interplay of forces, on the one hand the cooler breezes derived from that presence of mind and, on the other, the warm breath of musical inspiration. – Richard Wagner

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<sup>42</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, “Menschliches, Allzumenschliches II,” in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2 (München, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980), 434. This excerpt was translated by Quentin Faulkner and the investigator.

sought to move the soul in a different way, which, as described above, is analogous to swimming and hovering.

## Chapter IV

### Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Telemann, Op.134

The *Telemann Variations* are the only major work for solo piano from Reger's Meiningen period. He wrote the set in just eight days, between August 8 and 15, 1914. The variations are dedicated to the Dutch-German pianist and pedagogue James Kwast.<sup>43</sup> The premiere was given about half a year later, on March 14, 1915, in Berlin by Frieda Kwast-Hodapp.<sup>44</sup> The work was published by Simrock in 1914.<sup>45</sup> Reger used the minuet from the "Minuet and Trio" in Telemann's *Tafelmusik in B-flat Major* as the theme, which he found in Riemann's *Anleitung zum Generalbaß-Spielen*.<sup>46</sup>

The *Telemann Variations* follow in the path of the great variation works for piano such as Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations*, and especially Brahms's *Händel Variations*. The resemblance to Brahms's *Händel Variations* is immediately apparent considering the choice of a Baroque dance as theme, the identical key (B-flat major), the similar number of variations (23 and 25), and the concluding fugues. There are several different ways to view the basic structure of the *Telemann Variations*. One possibility is to organize them by tempo:

Theme	
Variations 1 through 9	Fast
Variations 10 and 11	Slow
Variations 12 through 14	Fast

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<sup>43</sup> Jacob James Kwast (1852-1927) taught piano at the Hoch'schen Konservatorium in Frankfurt am Main and later at the Stern'schen Konservatorium in Berlin.

<sup>44</sup> Reger dedicated his *Piano Concerto* to Frieda Kwast-Hodapp (1880-1949), who was known as an interpreter of Reger's music. She was the second wife of James Kwast.

<sup>45</sup> Max Reger, *Variationen und Fuge über ein Thema von G.Ph. Telemann* (Berlin: Simrock, 1914).

<sup>46</sup> Hugo Riemann, *Anleitung zum Generalbaß-Spielen*, 5th ed. (Berlin: Max Heffes Verlag, 1917).

Variations 15 through 17	Slow
Variations 18 through 23 <sup>47</sup>	Fast
Fugue	

Another way of looking at this set is to consider the key areas. All of the variations are in B-flat major, except for variations 16 to 18, which are in B-flat minor.

Helmut Brauss characterizes the variations in the following way:<sup>48</sup>

No. 1 and no. 2	melodic, figurative
No. 3 and no. 4	figurative, with chromaticism
No. 5 and no. 6	strong rhythmical figuration
No. 7	figurative, ethereal pianissimo scale patterns
No. 8 and no. 9	virtuosic pianistic patterns
No. 10	lyrical, slow, four-part writing
No. 11	lyrical with romantic melodious texture
No. 12 to no. 14	virtuosic figurative patterns
No. 15 to no. 17	slower, lyrical, closer to character variations
No. 18 to no. 22	virtuosic figurative patterns (no. 22 appearing as a double variation of no. 5)
No. 23	massive, organ-related sonorities

Siegfried Schmalzriedt offers yet another way of structuring the *Telemann*

*Variations*.<sup>49</sup> He organizes the variations into three types: figural variations (Figuralvariationen), character variations (Charaktervariationen), and etude-like variations (Variationstyp mit Etüdencharakter). Based on this division, he comes up with a four-part structure that resembles the four-movement sonata form. The first nine variations are figural variations and could stand for the opening *Allegro* movement, the following nine variations are character variations that resemble the slow movement

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<sup>47</sup> Variation 23 is marked *Poco Andante*. However, if one follows the metronome marking of one quarter note equaling 76, the character of this variation is fast rather than slow. The B section is marked *Vivace*. At the end of this variation, Reger adds a slow, reflective eight-measure transition to the fugue.

<sup>48</sup> Brauss, 164.

<sup>49</sup> Siegfried Schmalzriedt, "Max Reger's Telemann-Variationen, op.134," in *Reger-Studien 6: Moderne und Tradition*, ed. Alexander Becker, Gabriele Gefäller, Susanne Popp (Wiesbaden, Breitkopf & Härtel, 2000), 59.



(*Adagio*), variations nineteen through twenty-two are etude-like and make up the third movement (*Scherzo*), and the fugue is the *Finale*.

The following analysis focuses on the relationship of each variation to the theme, with particular emphasis on form, melody, and harmony. It is not the intention of this analysis to examine this work based on a specific theoretical approach such as Schenkerian analysis. The following presentation is performance oriented and intends to provide a clear picture of the way the individual variations relate to the theme and to each other. It is the investigator's belief that a basic understanding of the structure of the variations is a necessary prerequisite for a successful performance. For a different analytical approach, the reader is referred to Jamesetta Hollimann's dissertation which examines the *Telemann Variations* according to LaRue's guidelines.<sup>50</sup>

The variations are presented individually in order to facilitate consulting, especially for the performer who is looking for information on a specific variation. Following the analysis of each variation is a discussion of the differences among the various editions, including the author's own suggestions. An overview of the editions that the investigator has examined can be found in the bibliography. Most available editions are reprints of, or based on, the first edition, which is referred to as FE in this document.<sup>51</sup> The other significant edition is part of the complete works published by Breitkopf &

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<sup>50</sup> Jamesetta Holliman, "A Stylistic Study of Max Reger's Solo Piano Variations and Fugues on Themes by Johann Sebastian Bach and Georg Philipp Telemann" (Ph.D. Diss., New York University, 1975).

<sup>51</sup> Max Reger, *Variationen und Fuge über ein Thema von G.Ph. Telemann* (Berlin: Simrock, 1914).

Härtel.<sup>52</sup> It includes a critical commentary by Gerd Sievers and is referred to as SW. The corrections in SW are frequently based on conjecture and analogy because there is no autograph.

### **Theme**

There is a footnote in later editions, starting with the 1942 edition of Peters, which indicates the origin of the theme as the “Menuett aus der Tafelmusik in B dur (Denkmäler Deutscher Tonkunst Bd. 61/62).”<sup>53</sup> This footnote does not appear in the first edition and the 1928 edition of Peters. However, Reger used the minuet as it is given as an exercise in Riemann’s *Anleitung zum Generalbaß-Spielen*. Riemann provides just the melody and a figured bass. There are several differences between Telemann’s original version and Riemann’s which indicate that Reger used the theme from Riemann’s treatise.

Riemann’s version omits the original 4-3 suspension in m.8 and changes the chord on beat three of m.11 from major to minor (maybe mistakenly). Additionally, Riemann omits the trills on the third beats of mm.17 and 27. Telemann’s original version, as well as Riemann’s, is in 3/8 meter. Reger changes the meter to 3/4 in his theme. The meter change and the thicker chords create a more majestic character compared to the original lighter texture. Furthermore, Reger adds the note E to the chord on beat three of m.19 in order to make it a complete diminished triad. He also adds a passing harmony on

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<sup>52</sup> Max Reger, *Werke für Klavier zweihändig, Vol. III*, ed. Gerd Sievers (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1965).

<sup>53</sup> *Denkmäler Deutscher Tonkunst*, vol.61-62 (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1958 - ).

beat 2 of m.20 and a passing tone to the bass line in m.27. The overall structure of the minuet is shown in the following table (including Reger's dynamic and other markings):

The theme is marked *Tempo di Minuetto* ( $\downarrow = 96-112$ ).

<b>Measure</b>	: 1-8 :	: 9-15	16-20	21-28 :
<b>Phrase</b>	a	b	c	a'
<b>Section</b>	A	B		A'
<b>Key: Bb</b>	I V	V/vi I	IV V7	I
<b>Dynamics</b>	<i>f</i> <i>sempre f</i>	<i>p</i> < <i>f</i> >	<i>p</i> >	<i>f</i> <i>sempre f</i>
<b>Other Markings</b>		<i>dolce</i>	<i>poco rit.</i> <i>grazioso</i>	<i>a tempo</i>

In FE, there is a *forte* indication in m.1 and a *sempre forte* indication in m.7. SW replaces the first *forte* with *sempre forte* and omits the indication in m.7. There are no changes in dynamics in mm.1-7. Therefore the change in SW seems justified. However, I believe that Reger indicated *sempre forte* in m.7 as a visual reminder to stay loud. A natural instinct of the performer is to taper the ending of A, which destroys the dynamic contrast of *piano* at the beginning of B. I believe that Reger was aware of that and therefore indicated the *sempre forte*. I believe that the indication should stay as a visual reminder. This replacement usually happens in SW in similar instances. They will be pointed out in this discussion, but not explained any further. The *forte* in FE in m.21 is replaced by a *sempre forte* in SW, which is omitted in m.27. The following footnote is attached to the theme: “Beim Konzertvortrag sind *alle* Wiederholungen in den

Variationen wegzulassen” (In recital, one must not take *any* of the repeats in the variations). The footnote is missing in MMP.<sup>54</sup>

## Variation I

*L'istesso Tempo*

The image shows a musical score for Variation I. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The right hand plays a melody with various note values and rests, including some notes that are circled. The left hand provides accompaniment with sixteenth notes. Dynamic markings include 'f' (forte) and 'marc.' (marcato). There are also articulation markings like 'marc.' and 'f'.

The melody is present in its entirety, distributed between the left hand and right hand. Some notes of the melody are displaced by an octave and some are doubled. The accompaniment consists of running sixteenth notes that are passed between the hands. The motion is mainly stepwise.

The articulation of the melody is mainly staccato in parts a, c, and a'. Reger changes the articulation to legato at the beginning of part b. The phrase markings of b are somewhat peculiar. The melody of the theme forms two two-measure phrases at the beginning of b. The phrase marks in the first variation break up that logical division. These phrase markings seem to indicate that Reger is looking for a contrasting, more Romantic character in this passage. It was customary in the Baroque era to clarify the rhythm by not slurring across the bar lines, a convention that Reger follows in the theme.

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<sup>54</sup> Max Reger, *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Telemann*, Op.134 (Boca Raton, FL: Masters Music Publications, 1991).

The dynamic markings are identical to the theme. Reger adds *marcato* markings to the beginning of A whenever the melody is passed between the hands in order to show the line of the melody. He omits the *dolce* marking at the beginning of b. However, due to the slurred phrases and dynamic contrast, this section exhibits a *dolce* quality anyway. The last two measures of B are marked *sempre piano*. The rising scale in the right hand is tempting the performer to crescendo, which is obviously not what Reger intended. The harmonic scheme of the first variation is basically the same as in the theme. Reger had to change the inversion of some chords because of the placement of the theme in the left hand and the scalar sixteenth-note motion. There is a first and second ending at the end of A'. Variation eighteen is the only other variation with two endings, but there they are at the end of A. This seems to indicate that Reger initially wanted the work to be performed with repeats, but eventually decided that it is too long for the audience and added the footnote to the theme, specifying that one must not take the repeats. The tempo is marked as *L'istesso Tempo*. However, Reger adds the following footnote: "Die angegebenen Metronomzahlen bedeuten den äußersten Grad der beim Vortrag zunehmenden Schnelligkeit; absolute Deutlichkeit sei erstes Ziel!" (The given metronome markings provide the outermost degree of speed that is to be taken in performance; absolute clarity is the priority!).

In FE, there is a *forte* indication in m.1 and a *sempre forte* indication in m.7. SW replaces the first *forte* with *sempre forte* and omits the indication in m.7. The *piano* in FE in m.15 is replaced by a *sempre piano* in SW, which is omitted in m.17. SW replaces the *forte* in m.21 with *sempre forte* and omits the indication in m.27. SW adds a *tenuto*

marking to the very last left-hand chord. This is consistent with the right-hand marking and the first ending. In FE, the sixth of the sixteenth notes in the right hand in m.27 is a G-flat. Based on conjecture, that note is changed to G-natural in SW. Both versions work in my opinion. However, the G-flat seems to add a nice color to that passage.

Musical score for FE: m.27. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of two flats. The right hand plays a melodic line with sixteenth notes, and the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

FE: m.27

Musical score for SW: m.27. This version is identical to the FE version, except for the sixth sixteenth note in the right hand, which is a G-natural instead of a G-flat.

SW: m.27

## Variation II

*L'istesso Tempo*

Musical score for Variation II. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of two flats. The right hand plays a melodic line with thirty-second notes, and the left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The score includes a dynamic marking of *f* and the instruction *sempre ben marc.*

The melody is stated clearly in the left hand in A. The accompaniment in the right hand includes virtuosic scales in thirty-second notes. The melody switches to the right hand in m.9. However, the right hand does not exchange the thirty-second notes with the left hand, and thus the melody appears highly embellished. In A, the articulation of the melody is the same as in the theme. However, for the first time the accompaniment exhibits articulation in contrast to the melody and is legato for the most part. The melody

assimilates the legato character in B since the melody and the accompaniment merge. The trills in mm.13-14 are replaced by descending scale figures. The melody is returned to the left hand in A'. The right hand has the last four notes of the theme. The harmonization remains unchanged. The dynamic structure follows the example of the first variation.

The *forte* in FE in m.1 is replaced by a *sempre forte* in SW, which is omitted in m.7. The *piano* in FE in m.15 is replaced by a *sempre piano* in SW, which is omitted in m.17. SW changes the *forte* indication in m.21 to *sempre forte*. It restates the *sempre forte* indication of FE in m.25. FE has the note C-sharp in the left hand on the third quarter note in m.9. This is changed to C-natural in SW to match the C-natural in the right hand and to create a diminished triad which logically leads to the following harmony. It seems obvious that the C-sharp earlier in the measure was overlooked in FE and the cancellation sign forgotten. The chords on beat one in both hands in mm.13 and 15 have a *tenuto* marking. The right-hand chord in m.14 has a *tenuto* marking, whereas the left-hand chord has a *staccato* marking. In my opinion this should be a *tenuto* marking as well. Based on conjecture, SW suggests playing m.27 one octave higher. Considering the register of the previous and the connection to the following measure, this seems to make perfect sense. SW adds a *tenuto* marking to the first note of m.28 in the right hand which is consistent with the preceding measure.

FE: mm.26-28 (suggestion in m.27 and correction in m.28 by SW in square brackets)

### Variation III

*L'istesso Tempo (scherzando)*

The third variation is based on eighth-note triplet figures. Thus, Reger breaks the natural accelerando caused by the diminishing note values in the preceding two variations. The melody is in the top voice of the left-hand chords and on the second and third eighth-notes of each figure in the right hand. The trills are omitted. However, Reger leaves the main note of the trill and the termination and gives them in equal note values. The places in which the melody moves in eighth notes, the second of each pair is left out. The outline of the melody remains intact. Reger doesn't change the harmonization in this variation. However, it seems more chromatic because the upper note on the beats in the right hand is a half-step below the following melody note and thus creates a dissonance



with the left hand. This is the first variation that alters the dynamic outline of the theme. A begins *piano*, crescendos in mm.5-7 to a *forte* and diminuendos in m.8. B is marked *sempre una corda* and begins *pianissimo*. There is a *crescendo* in mm.13-14 to a *mezzo forte*, but it immediately returns to *pianissimo*. A' is similar to A except that Reger uses hairpins instead of words and he doesn't indicate the *forte*. A' is marked *tre corde*. One can speculate that the difference in dynamic markings between A and A' means that one should play A' differently, maybe with a crescendo only to *mezzo forte*. The *crescendos* of this variation occur at the places where the original melody has the trills. Thus, Reger simulates the increasing tension that naturally results from the use of trills.

SW replaces the *pianissimo* indication in m.16 with *sempre pianissimo* and omits the indication in m.19. The first note in m.16 on the top of the right hand is E-flat. SW corrects that to E-natural. This correction seems to be right because the second eighth note in the right hand is always approached by a half-step from below.

Musical score for FE: m.16. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The right hand (treble clef) begins with a half note G4, followed by a triplet of eighth notes: F#4, E-flat4, and D4. The left hand (bass clef) provides harmonic support with chords in the first, second, and fourth measures.

FE: m.16

Musical score for SW: m.16. This score is identical to the FE version, but the first note in the right hand is E-natural instead of E-flat. The rest of the notation, including the triplet and the left hand accompaniment, remains the same.

SW: m.16

### Variation IV

*L'istesso Tempo*

The image shows a musical score for Variation IV, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef). The music features ascending arpeggios in sixteenth notes. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and *p* (piano), and various musical notations including slurs, trills, and rests. The piece is marked *L'istesso Tempo*.

Variation four features ascending arpeggios in sixteenth notes. Reger keeps the harmonic scheme from the theme. He creates harmonic interest through the addition of an additional note to the arpeggiated triads, usually the major seventh. The melody is present throughout and the trills are included as well. The melody frequently shifts between the hands and some notes are omitted or altered. For example, the note F of the melody in m.3 is left out because the B-flat and the D are displaced by one quarter note. The same holds true for the F in m.7, even though it is present in the arpeggio of the right hand. The last two notes of the melody in m.12 are switched. There are frequent instances of octave displacement. An example would be m.11, where the neighbor motion of a second is expanded to a ninth. The dynamic outline of the theme is basically followed, but Reger expands the dynamic indications at several points. The *forte* in A is interrupted by a *subito piano* in m.5, which is followed by a *crescendo* back to *forte*. The *crescendo* in mm.13-14 reaches only to *mezzo forte* instead of *forte*. The *subito piano* effect returns in A'. Reger creates contrast in the B section through rhythmic shifts. The regular pattern of two beats of sixteenth-note arpeggios followed by an eighth note and an eighth-note rest in the A section is broken up into various combinations. Reger most frequently employs

the combination of four sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note and an eighth-note rest, which creates hemiola effects (e.g. mm.17-18).

In FE, the left-hand note on beat two of m.15 is a C. SW changes that note to A based on analogy and conjecture. Whereas it is true that in similar places in this variation the left hand doubles the right-hand note, the C provides that passage with a nice color. There are also other instances where the left hand forms a triad with the right-hand octave, such as on beat two of m.17. Since the A and the C in m.15 belong to the F major harmony, the C does not necessarily seem to be a mistake. However, the argument for the A in SW seems valid. The right hand has a sixteenth-note rest on beat one of m.15 in FE. SW doubles the left-hand note A to provide a consistent reading of the right hand. This change is unnecessary since the right hand only doubles the left-hand note. It also makes it harder to read at sight.

Musical score for FE: m.15. The score is in 3/4 time and features a treble and bass clef. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line starting with a half note C4, followed by a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note F4. The left hand (bass clef) plays a bass line starting with a half note C3, followed by a quarter note D3, a quarter note E3, and a quarter note F3. The dynamic marking is *mf*.

FE: m.15

Musical score for SW: m.15. The score is in 3/4 time and features a treble and bass clef. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melodic line starting with a half note C4, followed by a quarter note D4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note F4. The left hand (bass clef) plays a bass line starting with a half note A2, followed by a quarter note B2, a quarter note C3, and a quarter note D3. The dynamic marking is *mf*.

SW: m.15

### Variation V

*Non troppo vivace* (♩ = 98)

Variation five is the first variation that is motivic rather than melodic. The basic rhythmic movement is the eighth-note triplet. Sixteenth-notes sextuplets are used in b and c. This is the first variation with a new tempo indication, even though the basic pulse stays the same. The left hand has a Scarlatti-like accompaniment. The main note is usually preceded by three grace notes that are the main note, the tritone, and the fifth. The right hand features a three-note ascending stepwise figure that is generally harmonized by the tonic, the dominant, and the tonic in first inversion. The lower of the two voices in the right hand forms an ascending triad, which is the motive of the theme in the first measure. The top note is a filled-in third, the two outer notes are identical with the first two notes of the theme. Thus, the motto of this variation is the ascending triad. When the sixteenth notes are introduced in b and c, the right-hand motive switches to the left hand. The right-hand figure is basically an embellished version of the left hand in A. In A, each subsequent three-note figure is displaced by an octave. This taking of a motive through different octave registers is typical for Reger's compositional style for piano and can be observed in several variations. The harmonic scheme remains unaltered. Dynamically,

this variation adheres to the theme with one exception. There is a *sempre f* in m.15 instead of a *diminuendo*.

In FE, there is a *forte* indication in m.1 and a *sempre forte* indication in m.7. SW replaces the first *forte* with *sempre forte* and omits the indication in m.7. The *forte* in FE in m.13 is replaced by a *sempre forte* in SW, which is omitted in m.16. SW replaces the *piano* in m.17 with *sempre piano* and omits the indication in m.19. SW changes the markings in A' to match A.

### Variation VI

*Non troppo vivace* (♩ = 98)

The image shows a musical score for Variation VI, consisting of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The music is in 3/4 time and features a prominent eighth-note triplet rhythm. The treble staff begins with a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a series of eighth-note chords and triplets. The bass staff also features triplet eighth notes and chords. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed at the beginning of the first measure. The score is divided into two measures by a bar line.

This variation continues in the spirit of the previous variation. The tempo indication is the same and the dominating rhythm is the eighth-note triplet. Each three-note figure is displaced by an octave similar to variation five. The figure is related to the right hand in variation five. The dominant is usually placed between two tonic chords. The harmonic scheme is unaltered. Dynamically, this variation follows the theme closely, with one exception: for the first time in this work, Reger uses the dynamic marking *fortissimo*. The two instances are at the ends of A and A'. This is important to keep in mind when performing this work. The previous variations are often marked *forte* or

*sempre forte*. It is important not to overplay these dynamics in order to bring out the climactic effect of these *fortissimo* indications.

SW replaces the *piano* in m.16 with *sempre piano* and omits the indication in m.19.

### Variation VII

*Quasi Tempo Primo* (♩ = 102)

The image shows a musical score for Variation VII. It consists of two staves, a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is not explicitly shown but is implied to be 3/4. The right hand (treble clef) features a descending scalar pattern in sixteenth-note sextuplets, indicated by a '3' above the notes and a slur. The left hand (bass clef) features ascending eighth-note triplets, indicated by a '3' below the notes. The dynamic marking is *pp* (sempre una corda). The score is divided into two measures by a bar line.

The predominating motive is a descending scalar pattern in sixteenth-note sextuplets. These patterns are most often in the right hand. Sometimes they are passed to the left hand, which mainly has ascending, widely spaced arpeggios in eighth-note triplets. The melody is present, but it is disguised. Some of the main notes of the melody are doubled between the hands. The melodic outline can easily be followed throughout, although it is more disguised in B and often switches between the hands. Some notes are incorporated into the sixteenth-note movement. The descending scale patterns are derived from the B section of the theme, e.g. m.10. The harmonic scheme is unchanged. It is striking that Reger indicates *sempre una corda* at three places in this variation (beginnings of A, B, and A'). The dynamic marking is *pianissimo* almost throughout.

There are *crescendo* markings at the places where the trills are in the theme. Reger indicates a *diminuendo* that reaches a new dynamic level at the end of this variation: *ppp*. The variation consists mainly of one-measure phrases, and it is important to avoid making it sound fragmented in performance.

Based on analogy and conjecture, the appoggiatura in the right hand in m.8 is changed from the note A to F in SW. The reason for that is that every other appoggiatura in this variation forms an octave with its main note. However, the right-hand appoggiatura and the upper-octave main note usually form a third or a sixth with the left-hand bass note. The only exception to that occurs on beat three of m.27 which is analogous to the third beat of m.7. The analogous note in m.28 to the note in question does not have an appoggiatura. Therefore, I believe that the note A in FE makes perfect sense given that it logically proceeds from the B-flat and that it forms a third with the left-hand bass note. SW adds a slur to the sixteenth notes in the left hand in m.17. This is consistent with the other left-hand figures in this variation. SW replaces the *sempre ritardando* indication in the last measure with a *ritardando*. Even though it is the final measure and the *sempre* indication seems superfluous, I believe that this indication might stand for a greater degree of *ritardando*.

Musical score for FE: mm.7-8. The score is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of two flats. It consists of two staves: a right-hand treble staff and a left-hand bass staff. The right-hand part begins with a trill on the note A, followed by a series of sixteenth-note runs. The left-hand part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Both parts conclude with a final chord in measure 8.

FE: mm.7-8

Musical score for SW: mm.7-8. This score is identical in notation to the FE version, but with a specific editorial change: the appoggiatura in the right-hand treble staff of measure 8 is changed from the note A to the note F. The rest of the notation, including the trill, sixteenth-note runs, and eighth-note accompaniment, remains the same.

SW: mm.7-8

### Variation VIII

*Tempo Primo* (♩ = 108)

It is interesting to note that the metronome marking in variation eight is slightly faster than in the preceding variations that are marked *Tempo Primo*. The basic motion is in sixteenth notes. The left hand moves in eighth notes, the right hand interjects octaves on the second and fourth sixteenth notes of each beat. The entire variation is marked *staccato*, there are no phrase markings. Parts of the melody are incorporated into the texture, but these are hard to hear. The easiest passage to hear the melody is in mm.5-8 in the right hand. The melody in B is present almost in its entirety in the left hand. The opening measure features a descending scale in thirds in the left hand, spanning a sixth. This is reminiscent of the scalar patterns in the preceding variation. The harmonic scheme is basically intact, but it sometimes is disguised through passing harmonies. Dynamically, this variation follows the basic outline of the theme. There is one exception, however, namely the echo effects in mm.3-4 and 23-24 that answer the preceding two loud measures in *pianissimo*.

FE indicates *forte* in m.1 and *sempre forte* in parenthesis in m.2. SW indicates *forte* with *sempre* in parenthesis in m.1 and omits the indication in m.2. The same occurs in the following two measures with *pianissimo*. A' is analogous to A. SW offers an



editorial suggestion to change the last note in the left hand of m.27 from G to G-sharp because the other right-hand octaves in this passage are approached from a half-step below. However, in the investigator's opinion this sounds awkward and disturbs the natural line A-G-F of the left hand.

### Variation IX

*Non troppo vivace* (♩ = 86)

The image shows a musical score for Variation IX, consisting of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or F minor). The tempo is marked 'Non troppo vivace' with a quarter note equal to 86 beats per minute. The dynamic marking is 'ff' (fortissimo). The score features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and rests. Accents are placed above every note. The right hand plays a melody that is often approached from below, while the left hand plays a more rhythmic accompaniment with some octave doublings.

The ninth variation is the last one of this initial group of fast variations. The A section is marked *sempre fortissimo* and features octaves and massive chords in both hands. In addition to the *fortissimo* marking, Reger adds accents on every beat. The two hands move in contrary motion. The basic rhythm is the sixteenth note. The melody is present almost throughout in the right hand. It is in the left hand in the first measure, which also doubles the melody in m.5. The notes of the theme that are not on the beats are omitted. The B section is contrasting through its softer dynamics and a change in texture. Each melody note in the right hand is approached by a half-step from below and repeated one octave lower. The first melody note is approached by a half-step in the right

hand, the second by the left hand. This addition of the half-step approach has already been seen in several variations: 3, 4, 5, 8 (m.7, l.h.). Through this addition of the half-steps, the B section seems very chromatic compared to the A section, which emphasizes the triadic structure.

In FE, there is a *fortissimo* indication in m.1 and a *sempre fortissimo* indication in m.7. SW replaces the first with *sempre fortissimo* and omits the second. This is analogous in A'. SW replaces the *piano* in m.17 with *sempre piano* and omits the indication in m.19.

### Variation X

*Quasi adagio* (♩ = 60)

Variations ten and eleven provide a welcome break from the rapid, virtuosic variations preceding. The basic rhythm is the eighth note. This is the first variation that is highly chromatic, even though the outline of the melody is still present. The melody is well hidden in the mostly stepwise motion of the right hand. Reger uses the term *espressivo* for the first time. The variation seems to begin on a D minor chord. However, the note A in the top voice merely functions as a half-step approach to the B-flat. This use

of the half-step has already been discussed in several variations. The harmonies are highly chromatic and the text is marked by accidentals, which are so typical of Reger's compositional style. The music is organized into long phrases and it is to be played legato throughout. This marks a drastic stylistic change compared to the preceding variations. There are numerous hairpins which also serve to enhance the expressive style of this variation. The dynamics are generally kept between *piano* and *pianissimo*. There are two *forte* indications at the ends of A and A'. However, Reger adds the term *dolce* to indicate that these loud passages should stay within the general character of the variation. The half-step approach figure is very prominent throughout in both hands. In m.1, not only is the B-flat approached by half-step, but the two lower voices also ascend by half-step. This motive can almost be seen as a motto throughout the entire work.

In FE, the last eighth note of m.11 in the lower voice of the right hand is a G-sharp. This is corrected in SW to a G-natural in order to form an octave with the right hand. In FE this is clearly a mistake, and the G-sharp earlier in that measure was probably just overlooked and the cancellation sign forgotten. In m.22, the E-flat in the left hand is not tied as it is in the analogous passage in m.2. SW corrects that mistake.

## Variation XI

*Quasi adagio* (♩ = 66)

This variation is also marked *Quasi Adagio*, but the metronome marking is slightly faster. These subtle changes in tempo are typical for Reger's music. The left hand moves in sixteenth notes and features broken octaves. The harmonic scheme is very clear and adheres to the theme. The melody is present in the last four measures of A and A'. Reger returns to one-measure units in this variation, the articulation is still legato. He indicates *sempre una corda* and the dynamic stays mostly between *p* and *ppp*. The main effect of this variation is the dynamic contrast between the first two beats of each measure and the last beat. Reger is consistent in specifying that the third beat is one dynamic level softer. The motto of this variation is the half-step, which is most often used in a neighbor-tone fashion. This movement can be found in both hands, but they usually move in contrary motion. This variation is very expressive. One of the challenges for the performer is the register shifts in the left hand. It is important to keep the music moving through these shifts.

There is an obvious mistake in m.6 in FE. The middle voice of the right-hand chord on beat three should be a B-flat instead of a B-natural. It should read like the

analogous passage in m.26. SW corrects that mistake. FE has *tenuto* markings over the first left-hand note of the first four measures. Based on analogy, SW indicates them on the remaining measures of A as well as A'. The left-hand figuration is the same in B, and therefore the investigator believes that the *tenuto* markings should be added there as well.

### Variation XII

*Poco vivace* (♩ = 96)

The image shows a musical score for Variation XII. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is not explicitly shown but is implied to be 3/4 based on the tempo marking. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. The first measure of the treble staff has a dynamic marking of *f* and the instruction *(tre corde)*. The bass staff has several measures with notes and rests, including a measure with a dynamic marking of *f*. The score is presented in a standard musical notation style.

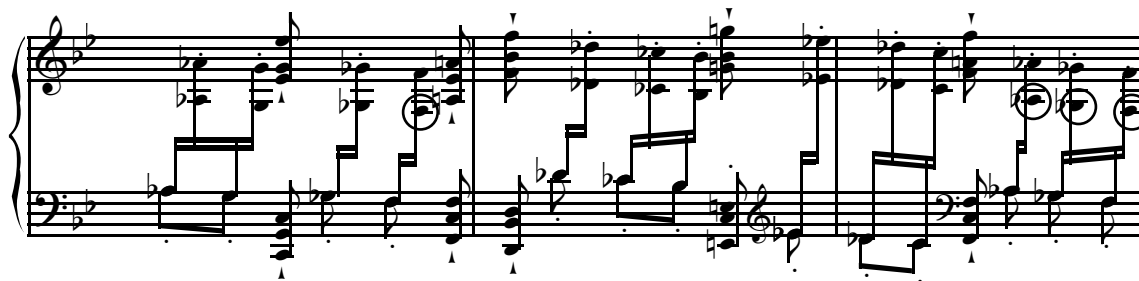
The twelfth variation returns to the virtuosic, etude-like style. Reger employs various Italian tempo markings in many of the variations even though the basic pulse remains the same. This seems to be an indication that the Italian terms describe the character of the variation rather than the absolute tempo, for which he provides the metronome markings. This is the first variation that does not make use of dynamic contrasts at some point. Similarly, the texture remains the same in B. Sections A and B are marked *sempre forte*, A' *sempre fortissimo*. The melody is not present, but the harmonic scheme is unaltered. This variation combines elements from several earlier variations. The first group of sixteenth notes in the right hand is taken from the right hand of variation five, the accompanying figure in the left hand is taken from the left hand of

variation six. The second half of the first measure is derived from variation eight. The technique of combining elements from earlier variations into a new variation is featured several times in the later variations. The only modification of tempo in this variation is the *ritardando* at the end of B, which helps to increase the crescendo effect to the return of A in *fortissimo*.

SW replaces the *forte* indication in m.1 with *sempre forte* and omits the indication in m.7. A' is treated likewise. Reger marks B *forte* and employs two additional *sempre forte* markings in mm.12 and 18. SW reduces these markings to one *sempre forte* indication at the beginning of B. In FE, the right-hand octave figuration is inconsistent in mm.18-20. SW changes the single notes in mm.18 and 20 to octaves. This makes sense since the right hand doesn't have single notes in this figuration at any other place in the variation. It also increases the crescendo effect that leads into A'. It doesn't seem logical to reduce the texture for that transition.

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 18-20. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The right hand (treble clef) features a complex octave figuration with many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes, and some chords. The left hand (bass clef) provides a steady accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. There are several dynamic markings, including accents and slurs, throughout the passage.

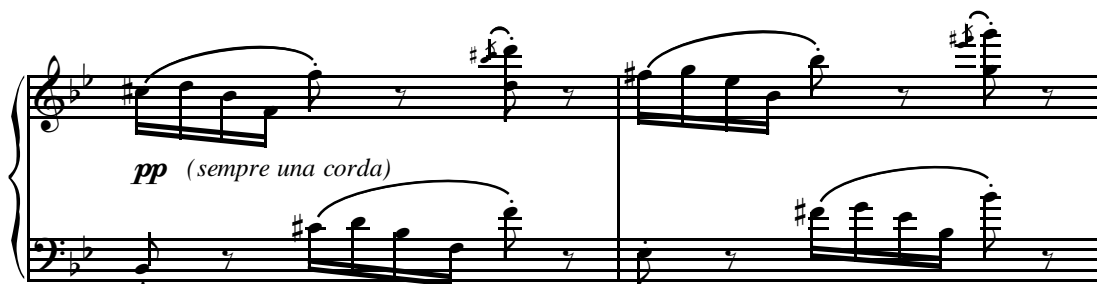
FE: mm.18-20



SW: mm.18-20

### Variation XIII

*Tempo Primo* (♩ = 112)



Variation thirteen is marked *Tempo Primo*, but yet again with a slightly different metronome marking. The basic rhythmic motion is the sixteenth note. Reger once again uses material from earlier variations. The regular grouping of two beats with sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note and an eighth-note rest on beat three is reminiscent of variation four. The use of the half-step approach on the beats stems from variation three. This variation is marked *sempre una corda* and only departs from the *pianissimo* dynamic at the places of the trills in the theme. The left hand imitates the sixteenth-note figure of the right hand an octave lower. There are some hemiola effects, e.g. in mm.11-

12 and 15-16. The harmonic structure adheres to the theme, except for the places of the hemiolas where the harmonic rhythm is modified.

I believe that the right hand on the last beat of m.5 should read like the analogous passage in m.25. Similarly, based on analogous and conjectural reasons, the appoggiatura on beat three of m.9 in the right hand should include the C natural and lead to the octave A. These inconsistencies are not considered in the critical report of SW, whose score reflects that of FE.

Musical score for measure 5, showing the original notation from FE/SW. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a slur over the first four notes and a fermata over the fifth note. The bass staff contains a bass line with a slur over the first four notes and a fermata over the fifth note.

FE/ SW: m.5

Musical score for measure 5, showing a suggested alternative notation. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a slur over the first four notes and a fermata over the fifth note. The bass staff contains a bass line with a slur over the first four notes and a fermata over the fifth note.

Suggestion for m.5

#### Variation XIV

*Meno vivace* (♩ = 92)

Musical score for Variation XIV, showing the original notation. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a slur over the first four notes and a fermata over the fifth note. The bass staff contains a bass line with a slur over the first four notes and a fermata over the fifth note. The score includes a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) and the instruction *(tre corde)*.



Variation fourteen is based on trill figurations in sixteenth-note sextuplets. The melody is clearly brought out through accents in the right hand. It is often doubled in the left hand which features thick chords and an off-beat bass line. The dynamic of the A section is *f*, crescendoing to *fortissimo* and ending in *mezzo forte*. In the B section, the trill figurations are passed to the left hand. The right hand moves in eighth notes and still has the melody. The dynamic marking is *mezzo piano* for b and *piano* for c. A' is marked *sempre fortissimo* and ends on an *ffz* accent. The grace notes in B appear in two earlier variations: 7 and 13. The harmonic structure is clear and adheres to the theme.

A' is marked *sempre fortissimo* in SW and the indication in m.24 omitted. The top note of the left-hand chords on the beats is written as quarter note in the first four measures of A. I believe the same should be done in A' since it emphasizes the theme. The last eighth note in the left hand in m.5 is F. The analogous spot in m.25 has a B-flat. Therefore SW changes m.5 to a B-flat based on conjecture. This seems logical and appropriate because the first and third beats are identical in the right hand as well.

The image shows a musical score for measure 5 of the first edition (FE). It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The treble staff contains a melody of sixteenth-note sextuplets, each starting with an accent (>) above the first note. The bass staff contains thick chords and an off-beat bass line. The first and third beats are identical in both hands.

FE: m.5

The image shows a musical score for measure 5 of the second edition (SW). It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The treble staff contains a melody of sixteenth-note sextuplets, each starting with an accent (>) above the first note. The bass staff contains thick chords and an off-beat bass line. The first and third beats are identical in both hands. The last eighth note in the left hand is B-flat, which differs from the first edition.

SW: m.5

### Variation XV

*Andante* (♩ = 72)

The musical score for Variation XV is presented in a grand staff format. The right hand (treble clef) plays a chromatic melody of sixteenth notes, starting on a first-inversion E-flat major chord. The left hand (bass clef) plays a rising melodic line on the off-beats. The score includes dynamic markings of *p* and *pp*, and performance instructions such as *dolce* and *poco espress.* A fermata is indicated over the final measure of the right hand.

Variation fifteen is the first of a set of three slower variations. It moves in sixteenth notes. The theme seems to be absent and the harmony very chromatic. The long phrases, soft dynamics, and *poco espress.* markings are reminiscent of variation ten. The left-hand, rising melodic line is also similar to the right-hand line in variation ten. The variation begins on a first-inversion E-flat major chord, which is already an indication that this variation is not harmonically clear. The basic harmonic outline is kept intact but highly distorted. The half-step motive is very prominent in this variation. The first and third sixteenth notes of each beat in the right hand usually form a half-step, surrounded by an octave. The pattern is kept throughout the variation. There are traces of the theme at various points in the variation. The melody can be traced in the left hand on the off-beats throughout A and A'. It can also be discovered in the right hand in b.

The B section is marked *sempre dolce*, a restatement of that indication in m.17 is omitted in SW. Additional indications of *sempre dolce* and *sempre poco espressivo* in m.21 are omitted in SW. The *poco a poco sempre ritardando* in m.27 is changed to *ritardando* in SW. The left-hand chord on beat one in m.18 is not arpeggiated in FE. SW

marks it arpeggiated since all of the other left-hand chords that span more than an octave are arpeggiated. Even though large hands can reach the chord, it makes sense to arpeggiate it for consistency. Arpeggiation also helps to bring out the top line in the left hand, which is the main melodic line. In the B and A' sections, FE uses a different way of notating the left hand, using eighth- and quarter-note rests to separate the melodic line from the underlying chords. SW continues in the same way as the music is notated in A to facilitate reading. SW points out that the *a tempo* in m.9 points to a forgotten *ritardando*, probably in m.8.

### Variation XVI

*Adagio* (♩ = 60)

Reger introduces a change of mode to the parallel minor in variation sixteen. It is marked *Adagio* and *espressivo*. The basic rhythmic motion is the eighth note. The basic harmonic scheme is intact, but there are some changes resulting from the switch to the minor mode. In the theme, m.3 is in the relative minor of B-flat major, G minor. In this variation, m.3 is in the relative major of B-flat minor, D-flat major. The melody is often

present in the right hand and adapted to the minor mode. One can also find the chromatic neighbor motion that is so prominent in many variations. One good example occurs in the first measure of B. There are long phrases and frequent hair pins that magnify the *espressivo* affect. Some passages in the left hand are reminiscent of variation eleven, such as the upper-neighbor motion in the inner voice of the right hand in mm.5-8.

SW changes the *espressivo* indication in m.1 to *espressivo sempre* and omits the indication in m.9. In SW, the last three eighth notes on C in the right hand in m.13 are tied, making it correspond to the following measure. The first C in m.14 is changed to a quarter note and stemmed with the lower G, following the notation of the previous measure. The last C in the right hand in m.14 is tied over to the next measure, similar to the previous measure.

### Variation XVII

*Poco andante* (♩ = 68)

The musical score for Variation XVII consists of two staves, treble and bass clef, in a minor key. The tempo is marked *Poco andante* with a quarter note equal to 68 beats per minute. The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with continuous eighth-note triplets, marked *dolce* and *p*. The left hand (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes, marked *espress.* and *pp*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and hairpins.

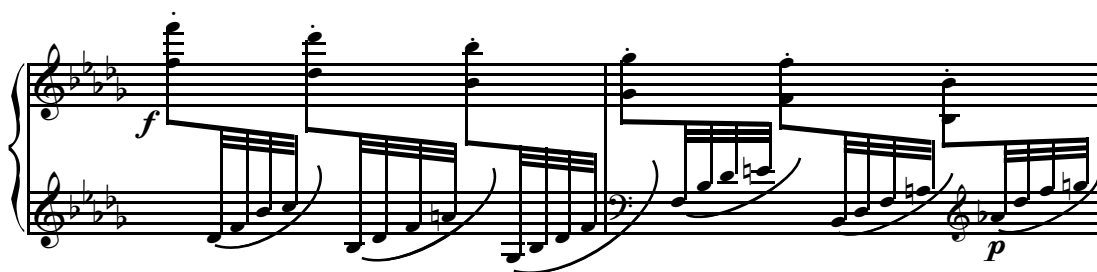
This variation stays in the minor mode. The right hand features continuous eighth-note triplets that once again incorporate the lower half-step motion. There are traces of variation three that can be seen very clearly in the right hand of m.5. There are only

traces of the melody, but these can hardly be perceived by the listener. The opening triad motion is inverted in the left hand. In mm.5-8, the melody can be found in the right hand. The harmonic scheme is similar to the preceding variation. The score is marked *dolce* and *espressivo*. There are long phrases and numerous dynamic indications.

The upper voice of the left hand in m.27 is a quarter-note F in FE. The analogous passage in m.7 has an eighth-note F followed by an eighth-note B-flat. SW changes m.27 to match m.7. In m.16, the F in the right hand on beat two is written as a quarter note in SW, the following E-natural is double-stemmed in order to maintain the two-voice texture. Similarly, SW changes the right-hand notation in m.13 to match the notation in m.14 (stemming on second beat). SW points out that the *a tempo* in m.9 indicates to a forgotten *ritardando*, probably in m.8.

### Variation XVIII

*Tempo Primo* (♩ = 112)



This is the only fast variation in the minor mode. It features rapid thirty-second note arpeggios. This is only the second time that Reger bases a variation on thirty-second notes, the first being variation two. It is the only variation that has two endings for A. This is probably to facilitate the transition to B. In A, the right hand plays a staccato

eighth note followed by a four-note ascending arpeggio in thirty-second notes in the left hand. The first three notes of the left-hand group are usually a simple triad. The fourth note is a half-step below the next right-hand note. This half-step approach has been observed in numerous other variations. The roles are reversed in b where the right hand starts with a descending arpeggio in thirty-second notes, followed by an eighth note in the left hand. The melody can only be clearly heard in the second halves of A, B and A'. The dynamic outline is similar to variation eight. The only difference is b, which is mostly *forte* in variation eight and predominantly *piano* in variation eighteen. Both variations end *pianissimo* in a high register. Harmonically, the variation adheres to the scheme of the preceding variation. Even though the arpeggios are written out, they belong to the following beat and can be seen as grace notes. This approach is similar to the left-hand arpeggios in variation five.

SW provides a NB that the left-hand arpeggio on beat three in m.3 has an F, whereas the analogous arpeggio in m.23 has a G-flat. Both versions seem valid and I don't see the need to change the score. However, I believe that it would be appropriate to play the same arpeggio in both places (either with F or G-flat).

### Variation XIX

*Poco Vivace* (♩ = 106)

The image shows a musical score for Variation XIX. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The music is in B-flat major, indicated by two flats in the key signature. The tempo is marked 'Poco Vivace' with a quarter note equal to 106 beats per minute. The score is divided into two systems. The first system has four measures. The second system has four measures. The piano markings are: *pp* (pianissimo) at the start of the first measure, *poco* (poco) at the start of the second measure, *a* (forte) at the start of the third measure, *poco* (poco) at the start of the fourth measure, and *cre* (crescendo) at the start of the fifth measure. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern of sixteenth notes in the right hand and eighth notes in the left hand.

Reger returns to B-flat major in variation nineteen. The variation is based on sixteenth notes and exhibits traits from several earlier variations. The right hand features an octave in sixteenth notes followed by a slurred single inner voice. It then returns to the initial octave following the lower half-step. The octave going to an inner voice and back out occurs in variation six. The use of the octaves in the right hand can be found in variation eight. There is an ascending stepwise motion from the third sixteenth note of each group to the next beat. This motive is used in variations five and twelve. The first four measures of A are very effective. The music starts *pianissimo* and crescendos over a four-measure, ascending line (spanning a tenth) to *forte*. The theme can be found in the last four measures of A and A'; in the right hand in mm.5, 7, 8, and in the left hand in m.6. It is prominent throughout the B section. Reger introduces a different texture in the B section that alternates with the initial pattern. The theme can be found in the right hand during the new texture and in the left hand during the initial pattern. In the second half of b, Reger doubles the last two sixteenth notes of each group in the left hand, either in

parallel thirds or parallel sixths. The half-step approach can be found throughout the variation, such as the note A in the left hand of m.1 that leads to the B-flat.

SW changes the *poco a poco crescendo* indication in mm.1-4 to *crescendo*. The right-hand eighth note on beat two of m.8 is marked *tenuto*. This is omitted in SW, probably mistakenly because it corresponds with the left hand. In m.12 of FE, the D-sharp at the end of beat two in the left hand should be a D-natural as it is in SW. It seems like the sharp at the beginning of the measure was simply overlooked and the cancellation sign forgotten. There are several differences between the A and A' sections that don't seem to be mistakes or musically "wrong." However, these changes are inconsistent with the other variations and could be assimilated in my opinion. The corresponding measures are: 1/21; 3/23; 4/24; 6/26. SW replaces the *sempre ritardando* in m.27 with *ritardando*.

## Variation XX

*Poco Vivace* (♩ = 98)

The image shows a musical score for Variation XX, consisting of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The music is in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Poco Vivace' with a quarter note equal to 98 beats per minute. The score is divided into two measures. The first measure starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a sequence of chords and eighth notes in both hands. The second measure starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and continues the rhythmic pattern. The notation includes various accidentals and articulation marks.

Variation twenty resembles variation eleven. The basic rhythm is the sixteenth note. Similar to the earlier variation, the measure is divided into two beats plus one. The last beat is kind of a reverse echo in a higher octave. Unlike its predecessor, the third beat



in this variation is louder instead of softer. The ascending filled-in third on beats two and three is reminiscent of variation five. The half-step approach also plays a role in this variation. In the first measure, the left hand seems to play with the mode of the triad. However, the minor third of the chord can be seen as a half-step approach to the major third. It can also be seen as part of a diminished seventh-chord on the second half of beat one that serves as passing harmony. The melody is not present. There are snippets of the melody such as in the right hand in mm.7 and 8. However, these can be seen as resulting from the chord progression. The pattern of two slurred sixteenth notes followed by two *staccato* notes is taken from the preceding variation.

### Variation XXI

*Vivace* (♩ = 102)

The image shows a musical score for Variation XXI. It consists of two staves, a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. The music is written in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Vivace' with a quarter note equal to 102 beats per minute. The dynamic is marked 'f' (forte). The score shows a series of broken octaves in contrary motion in both hands, primarily in sixteenth notes. A large slur covers the entire piece. The right hand has a melody in the second halves of measures A, b, and A', as well as in measure c.

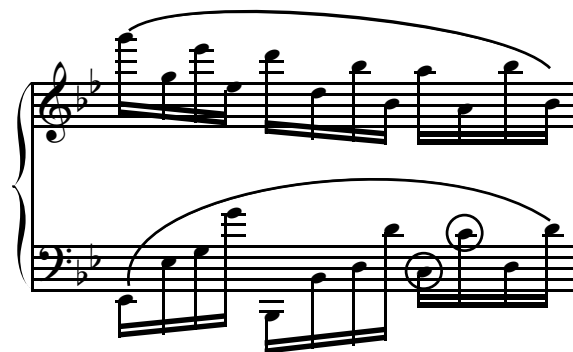
Variation twenty-one is essentially a study in broken octaves. It features broken octaves in contrary motion in both hands in sixteenth notes. The melody is present in the second halves of A, b, and A', as well as in c, always in the right hand. The harmonic scheme adheres to the theme. The A section is marked *forte* and crescendos to *fortissimo* in m.7 before it diminuendos to *mezzo forte*. The B section introduces scalar passages and

chords that are combined with the broken octave patterns. Here we can also find the half-step approach such as the C-sharp going to the D in m.9. Reger marks long phrases in the B section that start soft, grow louder and end soft. This creates the impression of a wave-like motion. I believe that it would be appropriate to this type of motion to begin each phrase slightly slower, *accelerando* towards the middle and then to pull back again at the end.

Based on conjecture and analogy, SW changes the first two sixteenth notes on beat three in the left hand in m.2 from E-flat to C. I believe that the E-flat works better and that, on the contrary, the C in m.22 should be changed to E-flat. SW is correct in saying that whenever the contour of the right hand is like m.2, the left hand follows that contour in parallel motion. However, in the other places where that figure occurs, such as at the end of m.4, the left hand imitates the semi-tone motion of the right hand. Therefore, the notes in m.2 should be C-sharp rather than C-natural. Nevertheless, since there is no C-sharp in either m.2 or m.22, the E-flat seems to be the right choice in both measures. SW replaces the *forte* in m.1 with *sempre forte* and omits the indication in m.5, likewise in A'. In FE, the first sixteenth note on beat three of m.19 is an E-natural and should be changed to an E-flat, as does SW. It seems obvious that FE simply overlooked the natural sign at the beginning of the measure.



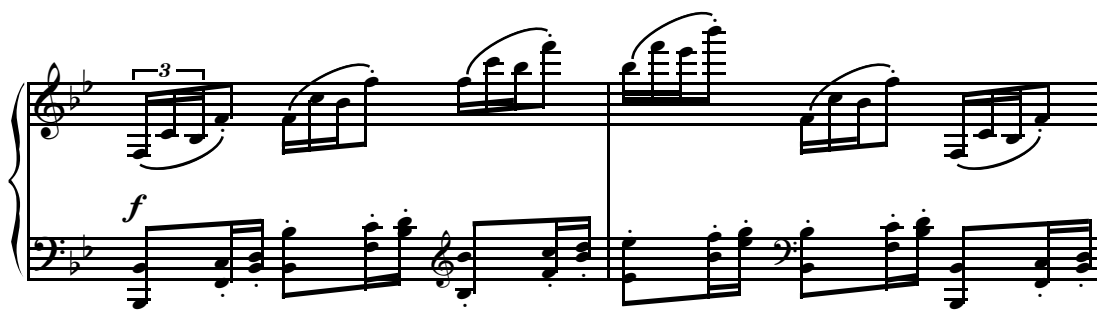
FE: m.2



SW: m.2

### Variation XXII

*Vivace* (♩ = 102)



Variation twenty-two also draws on material from previous variations. It plays with two-against-three sixteenth notes between the hands. The one-beat pattern is repeated in various octaves which is similar to variations five and six. The left-hand figure can be seen as a diminution of the left-hand figure in variation four or a rhythmically altered version of the right-hand figure in variation five. The A section is marked *sempre forte* and crescendos to a *fortissimo* close. Whereas the A section does not superimpose the duplets and triplets, the B section features triplets in the right hand versus duplets in the left hand. Reger also plays with the juxtaposition of legato and

staccato in this variation. The B section begins in a very high register and is mainly kept in *pianissimo*. There are traces of the melody such as in the right hand in mm.5-8 and in the right hand of the B section. The harmonic scheme is clear and adheres to the harmonization of the theme.

SW offers a NB that points out that the register of beats two and three in mm.2 and 4 is different from the analogous passages in A'. In my opinion, the way it is written in A' works better because it creates a nice arch. Therefore, I believe that A can be played in the way A' is written. SW replaces the *forte* in m.1 with *sempre forte* and omits the indication in m.5, likewise in A'.

Musical score for measures 1-2. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The right hand (treble clef) begins with a triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4) followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of sixteenth notes (G4, A4, B4) in measure 2. The left hand (bass clef) starts with a *f* dynamic and plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3) in measure 2.

mm.1-2

Musical score for measures 21-22. The notation is identical to the first system, showing measures 1-2. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a triplet of eighth notes (F4, G4, A4) followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of sixteenth notes (G4, A4, B4) in measure 2. The left hand (bass clef) starts with a *f* dynamic and plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3) in measure 2.

mm.21-22

### Variation XXIII

*Poco Andante* (♩ = 76)

The musical score for Variation XXIII is presented in two systems. The first system contains two measures, and the second system also contains two measures. The right hand (RH) features a series of chords in the first measure of the first system, followed by a sixteenth-note triplet figure in the second measure. The left hand (LH) plays octaves in the first measure of the first system and chords in the second measure. Dynamics include *ff* and *8va* markings.

The last variation is different from the others in several ways. This variation is not based on a single motivic or rhythmic pattern. The ascending arpeggio in thirty-second notes in m.2 with the added major seventh is taken from variation four. The A section is marked *sempre fortissimo* and does not use the melody. The B section is reminiscent of variation eight, except that the right hand has a sixteenth-note triplet figure that interjects the eighth notes in the left hand instead of simple octaves.

The musical score for the B section of Variation XXIII is presented in two systems. The first system contains two measures, and the second system also contains two measures. The right hand (RH) features a sixteenth-note triplet figure in the first measure of the first system, followed by a series of chords in the second measure. The left hand (LH) plays chords in the first measure of the first system and chords in the second measure. Dynamics include *p* and *(vivace)* markings.

mm.9-10

Reger uses a different tempo marking for the B section, *vivace*. He gives it only in parenthesis. I believe that this means that the pulse stays basically the same, but that the Italian marking, as I have explained earlier in the analysis, describes the character rather than an absolute tempo marking. Performers often take the A section a lot slower than the

indicated metronome marking. This alters the character significantly and requires the B section to be played a lot faster than A. I believe that Reger would have indicated a new metronome marking for the B section if he wanted that effect. Also, he hardly would have put the *vivace* indication in parenthesis. The B section is kept quiet throughout. Another difference to the preceding variations is that the return of the A section is varied significantly. The variation ends in *fff* with a fermata.

SW ties the first two C's in the middle voice of beat three in m.6 to match the preceding measure. In m.19, SW changes the middle note of the first chord in the right hand of beat three to B-natural. Obviously, FE just overlooked the natural sign earlier in the measure. SW ties the last two F's in the right hand on beat three of m.25 to match the preceding measure. The left hand in mm.1, 3, 20, and 22 is analogous. Therefore I believe that m.3 should be played in the same way as in the other measures.

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The music is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1, 2, and 3. The second system contains measures 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25. The notation includes various notes, rests, and dynamic markings (v). There are slurs and ties in the right hand of measures 19-25 and in the left hand of measures 1, 3, 20, and 22. The score ends with a fermata in measure 25.

suggestion for m.3

## Transition

*Molto adagio* (♩ = 60)

Reger attaches an eight-measure transition to the last variation that is marked *molto dolce* and *sempre dolcissimo ma espressivo*. It is kept very quiet and exhibits a chorale-like, four-part texture. The left hand is doubled at the octave, which shows the influence of an organ chorale where the pedal might employ an eight-foot as well as a sixteen-foot stop. This transition is very chromatic and exhibits many half-step motions. Surprisingly, this transition ends on a G major chord.

SW changes the *poco a poco sempre ritardando* in m.6 to *ritardando*.

## Fugue

*Vivace con spirito* (♩ = 138-144)

The following chart illustrates the formal plan of the fugue:

	Exposition				Episode	ME I	ME II
<b>Measure</b>	1	8	18	26	33	41	52
<b>S</b>	SI (Bb)					SI (g)	
<b>A</b>		A (F)					
<b>T</b>			SI (Bb)				
<b>B</b>				A (F)			SI (d)
<b>Remarks</b>							incomplete

Episode	ME III	Episode	ME IV	ME V	Transition	Subject II	
58	73	80	84	94	100	109	120
			SI (Bb)	SI (Bb)		S II	
	SI (Eb)						S II
	mm.2 and 4 of SI are in the soprano			inversion			



ME VI	ME VII	ME VIII	Episode	ME IX	Episode	Final Entry	Cadential Material
132	144	161	166	179	186	200	206
SI (d)		SI (F)		SI (Bb)		SI (Bb)	
	SI (g)			SI (Bb)		S II	
	augmentation, incomplete, mm.2 and 4 are in the soprano in original time	incomplete, the fourth bar is omitted		canon at the octave, the soprano is displaced by one quarter note			

Reger concludes his set of variations with a four-voice double fugue. The subject is first stated in the right hand (soprano) in *piano-pianissimo*. It can be divided into three parts: x, y, and z. The second part is a repetition of the first a step higher. At first it seems that the subject of the fugue is not related melodically to Telemann's theme. However, a closer look reveals that the first two measures are based on the first two measures of b. Measure three of b starts as a repetition of the preceding two measures a fifth higher. Even though the subject of the fugue exhibits a repetition a step higher, we can still see the resemblance. The phrase structure of b and the fugue subject is also similar: two plus two measures plus a longer tail. The subject ends on B-flat on the third beat of m.7. Alternatively, the subject can be related to the first two measures of the theme. That connection is shown through circles in the following musical example.

*ppp* *sempre molto grazioso*  
(*una corda*)

## Fugue, mm.1-7

*p dolce*

Theme: b

The second entrance of the subject (answer) occurs in m.8 in the alto voice. After a short bridge, the subject enters in the tenor in m.18. There is no countersubject *per se*, even though Reger uses similar material as counterpoint. The last entrance of the exposition (answer) occurs in m.26 in the bass. It is doubled at the octave. Following is a short episode that features sequences and parallel thirds in the right hand. The next entrance of the subject occurs at m.41 in the soprano in G minor. After a short episode, the subject is stated in the bass in D minor in m.51. The tail of the subject is altered and

leads to an episode that introduces new material in m.62. The melodic outline of the top notes foreshadows the second subject. The sixteenth-note figurations in the right hand are very virtuosic and reminiscent of Liszt or Rachmaninoff etudes. These figurations are interrupted by the ascending stepwise third motive that we have encountered in several of the variations. This episode leads to a middle entry of the subject in E-flat major in m.73 in the soprano, which is doubled an octave lower, and the bass. The tail of the subject is taken over entirely by the bass. After a short episode, the subject enters in the soprano in m.84 in *fortissimo*. The left hand introduces new sixteenth-note figurations as counterpoint. After a short bridge, the subject is again stated in the soprano in m.94. However, this time the subject occurs in inversion. The music subsequently slows down and leads to a contrasting section that features a new subject.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano, representing Subject II in E-flat major (two flats). The first system includes the instruction *pp poco espress. e ben legato*. The second system includes the instruction *sempre dolce*. Both systems feature a treble and bass clef with a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. The notation shows a melodic line in the treble clef and a supporting line in the bass clef, with various dynamics and articulations.

Subject II, mm.108-115

The first entrance of this new subject is in the soprano. It is difficult to determine the exact end of this new subject because it does not lead to a definitive cadence, but rather stays open. There is another entrance of this subject in the bass in m.119. This section has a chorale-like quality, similar to the transition passage at the end of variation twenty-three. The first subject suddenly emerges out of this section in the soprano in D minor in m.131. After a short episode, the subject enters again in the bass in m.143. It is in augmentation and accompanied by virtuosic figures in the right hand. One of the peculiarities of this entrance is that the second and fourth measures are taken over by the top voice and given in the original time. The following episode is rather rhapsodic and includes an abbreviated entrance of the subject in the soprano in F major in m.160. Reger slows down the tempo for the next section of the fugue that starts in m.178. The subject is stated in the bass, followed one quarter note later in canon in the soprano. It is in B-flat but finishes on a C-flat instead of a B-flat. A brief *stringendo* section leads into the next episode. This episode starts at m.186 and features virtuosic eighth-note triplets. The climax of the fugue occurs at m.199 when Reger combines the two subjects in *triple-forte* and *meno mosso*. The fugue closes with brilliant *stringendo* figures in *triple-forte*.

SW changes the *sempre crescendo* in m.26 to *crescendo*. The *pianissimo* in m.41 is changed to *sempre pianissimo* and the indication in m.45 omitted. SW changes the *sempre crescendo* in m.51 to *crescendo*, likewise in m.64. SW adds a missing flat to the bass note on the second quarter note of m.71. SW replaces the *fortissimo* indication in m.73 with *sempre fortissimo* and omits the indication in m.79. SW changes the A on beat three of the left hand in m.89 to A-flat. This is consistent with the motion in parallel

thirds between the hands. SW replaces the *poco a poco calmato* in m.92 with *calmando*. It also changes the *sempre poco a poco ritardando* in m.105 to *ritardando*. SW moves the *sempre dolce* in m.113 and *sempre ben legato* in m.121 to m.109. The *sempre poco a poco crescendo* in m.134 is replaced by *crescendo* in SW. Likewise, the *sempre stringendo* and *sempre molto crescendo* in m.191 are simplified to *stringendo* and *molto crescendo*. In m.197, SW adds a missing flat to the G in the right hand on beat two. SW omits the *sempre fortissimo* indication in m.213 and changes the *sempre fortissimo* in m.216 to *fortissimo*. I believe that m.177 should be played in the same way as the preceding and the following measure, e.g. B-flat on every eighth note in the right hand.

The image shows a musical score for three measures (176-178) in a piano arrangement. The score is written for two staves: the upper staff in treble clef and the lower staff in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). Measure 176 shows a series of chords in the right hand, with a bass line of eighth notes in the left hand. Measure 177 features a more complex texture with sixteenth notes in the right hand and eighth notes in the left hand. Measure 178 continues with similar rhythmic patterns. Dynamic markings include *v* (piano) and *b* (flat) for notes. The score is presented as a suggestion for the SW/FE edition.

SW/FE: mm.176-178 (suggestions in parenthesis)

### Relationship between the Variations and the Fugue

The discussion of the fugue has already pointed out some of the motivic relationships between the fugue and the variations. Christoph Wunsch presents the

following table that shows a possible relationship of the overall form of the variations to the fugue.<sup>55</sup>

<b>Variations</b>		<b>Fugue</b>	
Theme		Phase 1	Theme A
Var.1-5	Theme in its original form/ figural	Phases 2-6	Theme A in its original form and in minor
Var.6-10	new motives, harmonic scheme of the Theme	Episode	new material/ elements from the variations
		Phases 7-9	Theme, each time with a new texture (no contrapuntal voices)
Var.10-11	slower tempo, <i>piano</i>	Middle Part	Theme B, <i>tranquillo, piano</i> , three-voice texture/ subjective tempo reduction since the movement is in quarter notes
Var.12-15	motives from the Theme modified	Phases 10-12	Theme A varied, head in all episodes
Var.16-18	minor, Head A, dynamic contrasts		minor, last intensification <i>p-f</i>
Var.19-22	elements from earlier variations, Head B, intensification (note values, density, and ambitus)	Phases 13-14 Phase 15	Theme A original/ stretto synthesis of Theme A and Theme B/ dynamic and textural final intensification/ fluctuating tempo
Var.23	rapid structural changes, reminiscences	Coda	rapid structural changes, reminiscences

This correspondence between the variations and the fugue is very interesting.

However, it seems unlikely that Reger followed that plan in the compositional process, considering the free treatment of the fugue.

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<sup>55</sup> Christoph Wunsch, *Technik und Form in den Variationsreihen von Max Reger* (Stuttgart: Carus-Verlag), 224.

### Performing this Work in Concert

The *Telemann Variations* take about one hour to perform if all of the repeats are taken. It is not easy for an audience to focus continuously for such a long time on difficult music. Helmut Brauss recognizes the problem and provides the following thoughts:<sup>56</sup>

The performer requires not only superior technical stamina but also a keen sense of dynamic and agogic differentiation in order to present this work successfully on the concert stage without burning out the audience in display of pyrotechnics. Since heretical thoughts ought sometimes to be made public, if only for the sake of a fruitful discussion, one could argue that in public performance of this piece it might be most effective to omit variations 6, 14, and 20, and possibly to place variation 19 between variations 16 and 17. The coherence of the work would be considerably strengthened.

Reger probably realized that the duration of the variations is not beneficial for its promotion and added a footnote to the theme of the first edition that explicitly states to leave out all repeats in the variations in performance. Another flaw of this work is that the variations get somewhat repetitive after a while. There is a piano roll recording of this work by Frieda Kwast-Hodapp,<sup>57</sup> who played the premiere. Kwast-Hodapp shortens the work, apparently with the approval of Reger himself. On the recording, variations 11-15, 17, and 22 are omitted. The theme is not repeated. Kwast-Hodapp changes the sixth variation from fast to slow. She plays the left hand as written, but alters the right hand to eighth-note octaves. The dynamic is soft and the tempo much slower. The two-against-three eighth notes between the hands create an expressive texture. There are other peculiarities about this recording, such as rhythmic freedom, that will not be discussed.

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<sup>56</sup> Brauss, 170.

<sup>57</sup> Reger Plays Reger: The Welte-Mignon Mystery Vol.5. Compact disc Tacet 152. Tacet, 2006.

## Chapter V

### Conclusion

Unfortunately, Reger's piano music has not made it into the standard repertoire, especially outside of Europe. I am saying "unfortunately" because I believe that many pianists do not play and listen to these works because of stereotypes about his music. Whereas these stereotypes undoubtedly are part of Reger's output, much of his piano music is easy to listen to and in my opinion can be as attractive to the concert audience as the piano music of one of his great influences, Johannes Brahms.

This investigation has presented a brief overview of Reger's life and works in Chapter Two. Whereas there is no new or groundbreaking information presented in this chapter, it hopefully provides a helpful introduction to who Reger was and hopefully serves as inspiration for further reading. There are numerous books about Reger's life, many of them being reminiscences by his pupils, friends, and supporters, foremost the recollections by his wife, Elsa Reger.<sup>58</sup>

In this author's view, it is necessary to understand Reger's approach to performing at the piano as much as possible in order to successfully understand his piano writing and perform these works. Many of his supporters who wrote books about Reger discuss his performance style. However, many of these reports are very subjective and tend to skip possible criticism. Even though newspaper reviews are subjective as well, they nevertheless tend to be more critical and often present a better picture of his playing in public. The articles presented in Chapter Three have not previously been translated

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<sup>58</sup> Elsa Reger, *Mein Leben mit und für Max Reger* (Leipzig: Koehler und Amelang Verlag, 1930).



into English. The traits of Reger's playing described in these articles are generally consistent with the recollections of other writers. In general, his performances seem to have been especially valued for their use of many different colors of *piano* and *pianissimo*. Reger apparently took great rhythmic freedom, often starting pieces under tempo. Many sources mention the clarity of the contrapuntal textures in his performances of Bach fugues. However, most writers agree that Reger was not a virtuoso pianist like his friend Busoni.

The analysis focuses on the relationship of each variation to the theme, especially with regards to harmony, melody, and motivic relationships. The difficulty in playing a variation set is its episodic character. I believe that a good understanding of how the variations developed from the theme, and therefore also how they interrelate, is necessary for a successful performance. Chapter Four also includes a discussion of the differences between editions, mainly the first edition and Breitkopf & Härtel's complete works. The variations are discussed one by one in order to make it easier to look up information on a particular variation. This chapter also includes editorial suggestions by the investigator.

This investigation does not aspire to be a comprehensive examination of every aspect of the *Telemann Variations*. However, I hope that it provides people who are interested in Reger's music and performers who want to play his piano works with a deeper understanding of his pianistic style and interpretation. I also hope that this document will serve as a reference guide to pianists who want to work on this set of variations in particular. Undoubtedly the piano works of Reger vary in quality. Reger

himself strongly disapproved of his works up to Opus 20.<sup>59</sup> However, I believe that much of his output deserves to be part of the standard repertoire, and I hope that the present investigation helps to promote his works and allows them to gain their proper recognition.

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<sup>59</sup> Jinkertz, 31.

## Appendix I

### Reger's Personal Piano Performance Repertoire<sup>60</sup>

Composer	Work
J.S. Bach	Well-Tempered Clavier (selections) Brandenburg Concerto No.5 (ed. Reger) Brandenburg Concerto No.6 (ed. Felix Mottl) Goldberg Variations (ed. by Joseph Rheinberger for two pianos) Concerto in D Minor (ed. Reger) Concerto in C Minor for two pianos Concerto in C Major for two pianos Concerto in D Minor for three pianos Concerto in C Major for three pianos Prelude and Fugue for Organ in D Major (ed. Reger) Partita No.4 in D Major
W.F. Bach	Concerto for two pianos
Ludwig van Beethoven	Concerto in G Major, Op.58 Sonata in C-sharp Minor, Op.27/2 Sonata in D Major, Op.28
Johannes Brahms	Haydn Variations for two pianos Rhapsody in B Minor, Op.79/1 Rhapsody in G Minor, Op.79/2 Sonata in F Minor for two pianos, Op.34b Sonata in C Major, Op.1 Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Op.2 Fantasies, Op.116 Three Intermezzi, Op.117
Frederic Chopin	Scherzo in B-flat Minor, Op.32 Ballade in A-flat Major, Op.47
Couperin	Suite No.26

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<sup>60</sup> For a complete list of Reger's concert repertoire, including chamber and orchestral performances, see: Ingeborg Schreiber and Ottmar Schreiber, *Max Reger in seinen Konzerten*, Veröffentlichungen des Max-Reger-Instituts Elsa-Reger-Stiftung Bonn, Heft VII (Bonn: Ferd. Dümmlers Verlag, 1981).

Hasse	Variations for two pianos, Op.1 (premiere)
Huber	Sonata in B-flat Major for two pianos, Op.31 Sonata giocosa in G Major for two pianos, Op.126
Kaun	Passacaglia for two pianos, Op.81
Kirchner	Zwei Klavierstücke
Liszt	Harmonies du soir (Etudes d'Exécution Transcendante No.9)
Mendelssohn	Lieder ohne Worte (selections)
W.A. Mozart	Concerto in E-flat Major for two pianos, K365 Sonata in D Major for two pianos, K448 Concerto in E-flat Major, K271 Concerto in D Major, K537 Fantasy in C Minor, K475
Muffat	Second Suite
Rossi	Andantino and Allegro
Scarlatti	Tempo di ballo
Schubert	Sonata in B-flat Major (1 <sup>st</sup> movement)
Schulhoff	Sonata in F Minor
Schumann	Andante and Variations for two pianos, Op.46 Bilder aus dem Osten for piano four hands, Op.66 Fugue on the name BACH

## Appendix II

### Chronological List of Reger's Compositions for Solo Piano

For a complete list of Reger's piano works, including the works for two pianos, four-hands, and works without opus numbers, see Brauss.<sup>61</sup>

Opus	Title	Date
11	Sieben Walzer	1893
13	Lose Blätter, 14 kleine Klavierstücke	1894
17	Aus der Jugendzeit, 20 kleine Klavierstücke	1895
18	Improvisationen, 8 Klavierstücke	1896 (?)
20	Fünf Humoresken	1898
22	Sechs Walzer	1898
24	Six Morceaux pour le Piano	1898
25	Aquarelle, kleine Tonbilder	1898
26	Sieben Fantasiestücke	1898
32	Sieben Charakterstücke	1899
36	Bunte Blätter, 9 kleine Stücke	1899
44	Zehn kleine Vortragsstücke zum Gebrauch beim Unterricht	1900
45	Sechs Intermezzi	1900
53	Silhouetten, 7 Stücke	1900
79a	Zehn Klavierstücke	1901-1903
81	Variationen und Fuge über ein Thema von J.S. Bach	1904
82/I	Aus meinem Tagebuch, vol. I	1904
89/I	Sonatine e-moll	1905
89/II	Sonatine D-dur	1905
82/II	Aus meinem Tagebuch, vol. II	1906
99	Sechs Präludien und Fugen	1906/07
89/III	Sonatine F-Dur	1908
89/IV	Sonatine a-moll	1908
114	Klavierkonzert mit Orchester	1910
115	Episoden, Klavierstücke für große und kleine Leute	1910
82/III	Aus meinem Tagebuch, vol. III	1911
82/IV	Aus meinem Tagebuch, vol. IV	1912

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<sup>61</sup> Helmut Brauss, *Max Reger's Music for Solo Piano* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press 1994).

134	Variationen und Fuge über ein Thema von G.Ph. Telemann	1914
143	Träume am Kamin, 12 kleine Klavierstücke	1915

### Appendix III

#### The Piano Roll Recordings of Max Reger

Several of the following recordings include the same pieces. However, there are differences in sound and other performance details (such as slight variations in tempo or dynamics) based on the reproduction system that was used. The original machines were destroyed. The recordings can even sound different just because they were recorded on a different piano or in a different hall.

Reger Plays Reger: The Welte-Mignon Mystery Vol.5. Compact disc Tacet 152. Tacet, 2006.

Humoresques, Op.20, No.5  
 Intermezzo, Op.45, No.3  
 Silhouetten, Op.53, No.2  
 Silhouetten, Op.53, No.3  
 My Diary, Op.82, No.3  
 My Diary, Op.82, No.5  
 My Diary, Op.82, No.6  
 My Diary, Op.82, No.10  
 My Diary, Op.82, No.11  
 Telemann Variations, Op.134 (played by Frieda Kwast-Hodapp)

The Definitive Piano: Famous Composers Play Their Own Music (from the Welte piano rolls). LP record TH 97009. Telefunken, 1962.

My Diary, Op.82, No.3  
 My Diary, Op.82, No.5 (recorded 1905)

Welte-Mignon Digital: Grieg, Mahler, Skrjabin, Reger, Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Ravel, Strauss spielen eigene Werke. Compact disc INT 860.855. Intercord, 1986.

Intermezzo, Op.45, No.3  
 Silhouetten, Op.53, No.3

Great masters of the keyboard Vol. 5: Famous composers and pianists in their own history-making recorded performances: Richard Strauss, Gustav Mahler, Alexander Scriabin, Max Reger. LP record. Columbia, 1950.

From My Diary, Moderato  
From My Diary, Andante

Liszt Schüler spielen Liszt. Compact disc 8.43931. Teldec, 1981.

Humoresques, Op.20, No.5  
Intermezzo, Op.45, No.3



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