Journal für das Pianoforte

Heft 14

Carl Czerny

1791–1857

[Rondos im leichtbrillanten Style auf die beliebtesten Motiven der Oper Rienzi. Selection

3 Rondos

über Motive aus Richard Wagners Oper „Rienzi“
on Themes from Richard Wagners Opera “Rienzi”
opus 758 No. 1, 2, 5

Herausgegeben von / Edited by Egon Voss

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Preface

Although the names of Czerny and Wagner would appear at first sight to be incompatible, history indicates otherwise. In December 1844 the Dresden publisher Carl Friedrich Meser brought out *Six Rondos in the Lightly Brilliant Style Composed by Carl Czerny on the Most Popular Themes from Richard Wagner's Opera 'Rienzi' op. 758*, following these up in July 1845 with Czerny's op. 759, *Brilliant and Simple Variations on a Theme from the Opera 'Rienzi'*. Although these piano arrangements are now totally forgotten, they enjoyed great popularity in the nineteenth century and Meser's successor, Hermann Müller, produced a new edition of the Rondos in the 1860s, while Müller's own successor, Adolph Fürstner, continued to include both Rondos and Variations in his catalogues even after the turn of the century.

The fact that Czerny arranged sections of Wagner's opera should not lead one to assume that he acted of his own accord, still less that the arrangement met some inner need on his part, since it is fairly certain that he undertook the work in response to a specific request. We know, for example, that his arrangements of Heinrich Marschner's opera *Der Templer und die Jüdin* were the result of a commission from the Leipzig publisher Hoffmeister, who already had the opera in his catalogue and who, in keeping with contemporary practice, hoped to ensure its wider popularity by means of piano arrangements. At the same time, a number of surviving documents relating to Wagner's own life argue in favour of a commission. Although these documents have not yet been properly evaluated, they relate to a lawsuit between Wagner and Carl Schulze, an engraver from the Paez'sche Officin in Leipzig who worked for Meser: among the plates which Wagner is listed as having commissioned are those for Czerny's Rondos op. 758. (It may be added parenthetically that although Meser acted as publisher and saw to the distribution of the works, it was Wagner who paid to have the scores engraved.) If Schulze invoiced Wagner not only for his own works, including, for example, the vocalscore of *Tannhäuser*, but also Czerny's Rondos, the conclusion would seem to follow that it was Wagner who commissioned the Rondos. Such a conclusion presupposes contact between Czerny and Wagner, of course, although no evidence has as yet come to light to support this supposition. Possibly the two composers corresponded with one another or perhaps the affair was dealt with by a third party. It would certainly be in keeping with Wagner's strategy of using every conceivable means of disseminating his operas if he had prevailed on Czerny to promote *Rienzi*. Czerny, after all, was one of the best-known piano teachers and arrangers of his day, in addition to having been a pupil of Beethoven, a composer whom Wagner revered above all others.

The fact that Czerny's arrangements were intended first and foremost as a form of advertising is clear from the title, inasmuch as its reference to 'the most popular themes from the opera *Rienzi*' implies that the work was already widely performed. But, with the exception of a production in Hamburg in the spring of 1844, the work had not been staged outside Dresden – where it had admittedly been highly successful and extremely 'popular' from the time of its first performance on 20 October 1842 – at the time of the Rondos' appearance in print at the end of 1844. It is probable, therefore, that Czerny prepared his arrangements without having seen *Rienzi* in the theatre and without knowing which were, in fact, the most popular themes. He must have based his arrangement on the vocal score of the opera, which had appeared in August 1844. In turn, this would mean that the Rondos were written in early autumn 1844.

In view of their underlying form, it seems strange to find these pieces described as rondos. Certainly, it is impossible to distinguish between refrains and couplets, while only No. 5 shows any signs of a refrain-like treatment of the theme. As a rule each piece uses two thematic complexes from Wagner's opera, each of them being stated twice, with the second of them initially in the dominant, then in the tonic. Between these complexes come bridge passages or transitions which, entirely Czerny's own, are predominantly figurative in style. Rondo No. 1 takes up the main theme from Rienzi's Prayer, No. 13 (bars 9–13, 70ff), together with the principal theme from the final section of the second-act finale, No. 7 (bars 17ff). (Both of these themes are also central to the Overture, which remains virtually the only piece from the opera that is still performed with any frequency.) Rondo No. 2 draws its themes from the Trio for Rienzi, Adriano and Irene, No. 2 (the theme itself accompanies the words, 'Adriano, Du!') and from the following Duet for Adriano and Irene ('Ihr Heil'gen! welche Schreckenstöne!') and bars 87ff. Rondo No. 5 opens with a passage from the *andante* section from Adriano's Aria, No. 9 ('In seiner Blüthe') and continues with the music accompanying Rienzi's greeting to the foreign ambassadors in the second-act finale (bars 45ff).

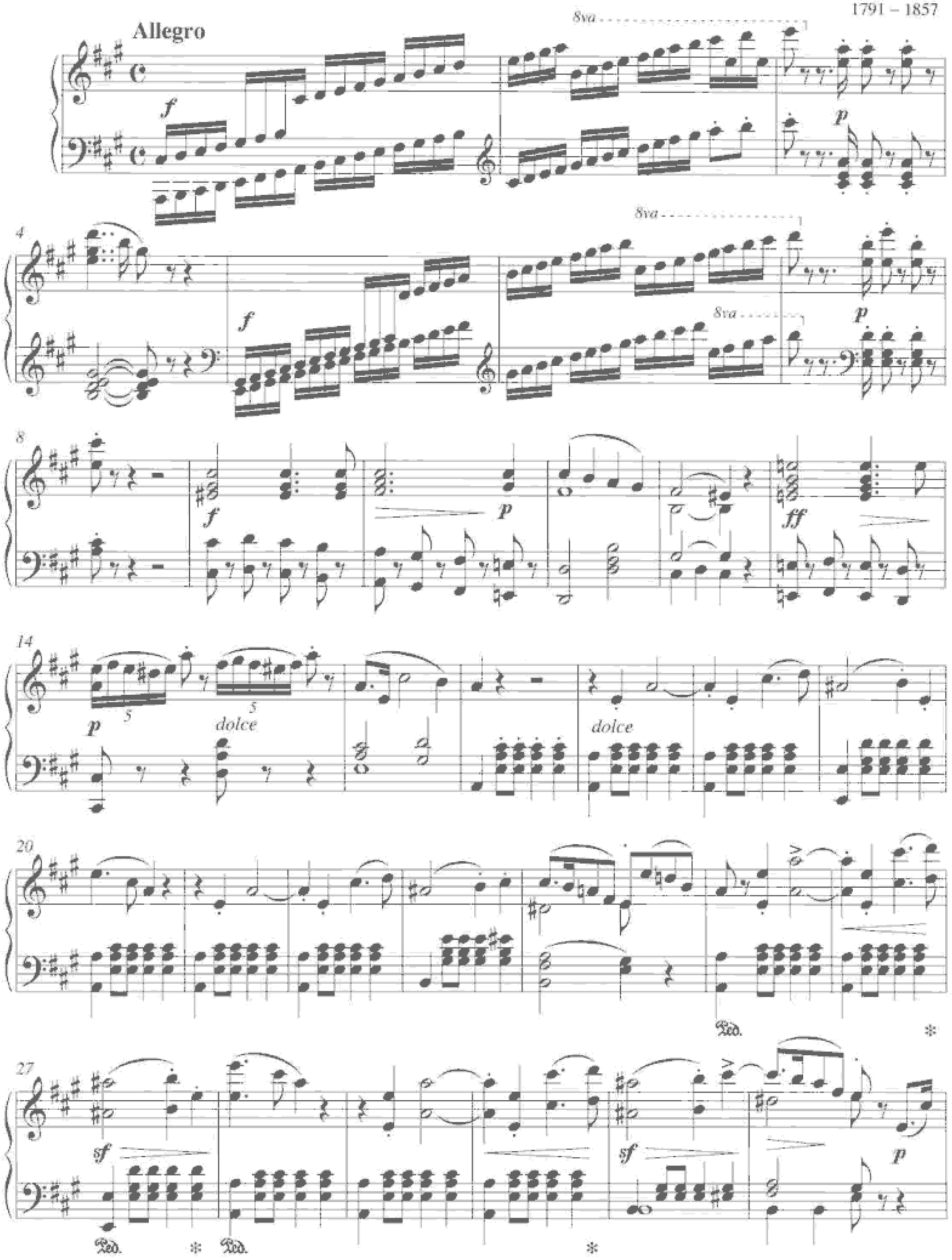
If Czerny's own transitions and bridge passages reveal an unmistakably Neo-Classical stamp, how much more true is this of the manner in which he treats Wagner's own music. Whenever Wagner's melodies show signs of departing from Classical periodic structure, Czerny is at constant pains to ensure that they are reintegrated into that structure, an endeavour which not infrequently creates a distinctly bizarre effect. Listen, for example, to bars 9-16 from Rondo No. 1, where Czerny is either incapable or unwilling to adapt his style to Wagner's music, prefering instead to in force it back into the mould of Classical form. By articulating the disparate, not to say antithetical aesthetic positions of the two composers, these Rondos might almost be regarded as ultimate proof of the fact that, as noted at the outset, the names of Czerny and Wagner are incongruously incompatible.

Egon Voss

Rondo
op. 758/1

Carl Czerny
1791 – 1857

Allegro



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33

dolce

cresc.

37

3

41

sf

45

sf

f

p

49

f

p

f

p

dolce

52

f

sf

sf

8va

55

p

58

cresc.

f

61

sf

ff *sf*

p

f *sf*

65

p

69

dolce

73

p

78

pp

3 3 3 3

cresc.

82

sf

p

86

cresc.

f *dim.*

89

p

cresc.

92

f

dim.

fp

8va

95

dolce

8va

98

101

p

107

sf

Ped. * Ped. *

113

sf

p

dolce

Ped. *

119

cresc.

124

sf

129

8va

sf

f

133

8va

8va

p

Ped. *

136

8va

Ped. *

cresc.

139

8va

Ped. * Ped. *

142

f

145

sf

ff

148

sf *sf*

dim.

p dolce

152

sf *p*

157

Vivace

ff

Ped. *

160

p

ff

Ped. *

163

p

166

Più mosso

8va

8va

169

8va

Ped.

172

8va

*

Rondo
Op. 758/2

Allegro

(Adriano, Du!)

ff *p*

Ped. * Ped. *

6

11

15

19

23

Ped. * Ped. *

28

cresc.

33

p

cresc.

37

sf

p

41

cresc.

45

f

8va

f

48

51

8va

ff

sf

sf

(Ihr Heil'gen! welche Schreckenstöne!)

54

p *f* *p*

59

f

64

p

69

f *sf*

Ped. * Ped. *

74

ff *p* *p*

Ped. *

79

83

cresc.

sf *ff*

87

sf *sf* *sf*

90

sf

93

p *f* *sf*

8va

Ped. *

96

p *f*

8va

Ped. *

99

8va

più f

8va

102

ff

Ped.

*

105

dim.

109

114

119

124

Ped. * Ped. *

130

sf *ff*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

135

sf

138

sf *sf*

141

Ped. *

144

sf *sf* *sf*

Ped. *

147

p *sf* *p*

150

dolce

Ped.

153

f

157

p

161

dolce

tr

164

tr

167

sf

p

8va

8va

170

dolce

Ped.

173

2 1 5 3

cresc.

176

f

sf

Ped.

179

182

ff

Ped.

185

sf

Rondo
op. 758/5

Allegretto moderato

8va

f *sf* *sf*

(In seiner Blüte)

p *p* *dolce*

pp

21

dolce

cresc.

26

sf

pp

dolce

tr

30

tr

cresc.

35

f

38

sf

40

sf

p

42

f

dim.

Ped. *

45

p dolce

Ped. *

49

sf

53

sf *sf*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

57

cresc.

sf

p

6 6

Ped. * Ped. *

61

6 6

63

p

65

68

f

70

f

72

74

sf *sf* *sf* *ff* *dim.*

8va

Ped.

76

p

78

p dolce

82

86

89

pp

92

dolce

96

3

3

cresc.

sf

100

pp

dolce

103

107

111

3

114

cresc.

8va

f

Ped.

117 8va

leggiero

fp

119 8va

cresc.

121 8va

f

leggiero

fp

123 8va

cresc.

125 8va

f

p

127

cresc.

129

8va

6

f

Ped.

131

8va

8va

ff

sf

sf

*

Ped.

*

Ped.

*

134

fp *dolce*

6

137

tr

140

8va

8va

f

3

6

3

6

142

8va

3

6

ff

Ped.

*

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