

An edition to:

3 Nocturnes Op. 21

Written by
virtuoso pianist and composer:
Sigismund Thalberg
(1812-1871)

Originally published in 1837

Edition(2020) by:

Hazim Azlan

Pieces in this set:

1. Nocturne in A-flat major
2. Nocturne in D-flat major
3. Nocturne in A minor

Notes by the editor

Sigismund Thalberg was remembered for his extraordinary virtuosity that rivalled the great Franz Liszt. Both even had a duel in 1837 at Paris which resulted in a draw, where the judge stated: "Thalberg is the first pianist in the world, Liszt is unique." Despite the rivalry, Liszt and Thalberg became extremely close friends, where Liszt would praise Thalberg's compositions and technique in his future concerts, and for an instance stated "Thalberg is the only person who can play violin on the piano".

Such remarkable praise might be surprising, as for today, Thalberg is forgotten in the eyes of the audience and musicians, being just a bookshelf name for music historians. A suitable reason, for me, is that Thalberg has performed so much, that the audience grew tired of him. Liszt knew this and retired from the concert platform early, which might have saved his musical career. Another reason for this is because of Thalberg's sudden retirement from musical world. After performing extensively in America, Thalberg retired and never touched a piano ever again in his lifetime, stating that he has grown old to the newer audiences.

For others, another reason is because his music is very vapid to listen to. I find this theory odd as composers from Schumann, Mendelssohn, Rossini and Liszt himself found enormous respect for him, and some extremists like Joseph Fetis claimed that he was creating a new art form. My theory on this is that most pianists do not know really how to play Thalberg.

The nocturnes here are compositions written in 1837, the height of his duel with Franz Liszt. Although musically inferior to his later nocturnes, these pieces possibly give an insight to what Thalberg's compositional technique is: the importance of the melody. The first nocturne is a berceuse with hand configurations surrounding the main melody. The second is a barcarolle with sweeping left hand patterns accompanying a rather simple melody. The third is an etude-like nocturne which has a particularly beautiful middle section in A major.

What I hope is that these nocturnes will help us as performers to understand the content of the music by this forgotten composer. For the performers of this music, remember to take in the history and the description of the composer's playing in account to your performance. Thalberg's cadenzas are not Liszt's cadenzas and Thalberg harmonies are not Chopin harmonies. He is a very different composer from the two. When we take in consideration of these details, we would be left with a greater magic that shines through his compositions, and you will be applauded by your audience.

Hazim Azlan (2020)

I

Andante sostenuto (♩ = 68)
Il canto ben legato

p *cresc.*

con molto espressione

f *pp*

p *cresc.*

f *pp*

f *dim.*

Un poco agitato

17

(dim.) *pp* *leggrio* *ritenuto*

8

18

21

24

pp

26

molto agitato

28

p

30

f

33

ff *dim.* *p* *pp*

36

leggrio

8

37

pp

8

ben marcato il canto

38

8

39

cresc.

40

8

(cresc.)

f

ff

41

8

ff

42

8

43

dim. *p*

44

dim. *p*

46

con duolo

con duolo

48

A tempo

pp

ritenuto

pp

ritenuto

50

cresc.

cresc.

52

Measures 52-53 of a musical score in E-flat major (three flats). The right hand features a complex, rapid sixteenth-note pattern with many beamed notes and slurs. The left hand plays a simpler, slower melody with eighth and quarter notes, including some slurs and ties.

54

Measures 54-55 of the musical score. The right hand continues with the rapid sixteenth-note pattern. The left hand plays a melody that includes a *morendo* (diminuendo) marking in measure 55, indicated by a hairpin symbol.

56

Measures 56-57 of the musical score. The right hand has a few chords and rests, ending with a fermata. The left hand plays a simple melody of quarter and eighth notes, also ending with a fermata. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

II

Adagio ♩ = 68

molto cantabile

pp

Una corda

cresc.

f *dim.* *p* *cresc.*

21

25

28

31

35

38

41

f *p*

45

agitato

48

pp *tr*

51

tr

53

tr

55

tr

56 **L'istesso tempo**

p *con espressione*

58

tutto legato

8

60

62

8

pp

64

p *cresc.* *f*

8

67 8

Accelerando

70 8

p

73

75

p *cresc.*

77

f *p*

79

8

pp

81

p

cresc.

8

84

(cresc.)

f

8

87

cresc.

ff

8

90

f

92

95

98

101

105

108

Measures 108-111. The right hand features a long melodic line with a slur over measures 109-111. The left hand provides a steady eighth-note accompaniment.

112

Measures 112-114. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over measures 113-114, which includes a triplet. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment.

115

Measures 115-117. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over measures 115-116, which includes a sextuplet. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment.

118

Measures 118-120. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over measures 118-119. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment.

121

Measures 121-124. The right hand has a melodic line with a slur over measures 121-122. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment.

124

A musical score for measures 124 through 128, written in a key with four flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat, D-flat) and a common time signature. The score is presented on a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. Measure 124 features a complex chordal texture in the treble with a half note and a quarter note, while the bass plays a descending eighth-note pattern. Measure 125 continues the bass line with a half note and a quarter note, and the treble has a half note. Measure 126 shows a half note in the treble and a half note in the bass. Measure 127 has a half note in the treble and a half note in the bass. Measure 128 concludes with a half note in the treble and a half note in the bass. The piece ends with a double bar line.

III

Agitato ♩ = 108

pp

Measures 1-8: The piece begins in C major with a tempo of 108 beats per minute. The right hand features a melodic line with a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

con gran espressione

(♩ = 128)

9 p f p

Measures 9-13: The tempo increases to 128 beats per minute. The music is marked *con gran espressione*. The right hand continues with a melodic line, while the left hand features a more active accompaniment with eighth notes and chords.

14

Measures 14-17: The music continues with a similar melodic and harmonic structure, maintaining the expressive character.

18 p cresc. f dim.

Measures 18-21: The music builds in intensity, marked with *p*, *cresc.*, *f*, and *dim.*. The right hand features a melodic line with a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

22 piangando

Measures 22-25: The music concludes with a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand, marked *piangando*.

26

p *f* *p*

30

34

p *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

38

risoluto

42

cresc. *f*

46 *molto agitato*

50

53

A tempo

55 *con sordino pp* *sempre p*

58

61

61

64

64

ritard

f

A tempo

67

pp

A tempo

67

71

71

76

76

79

leggrio

cresc.

82

cresc.

85

(cresc.)

f

dim.

88

(dim.)

p

91

dim.

93

(dim.)

95 *con dolore*

p

97 *A tempo*

ritard

p

100

f

p

104 *con passione*

f

con passione

dim.

107

(dim.) ritard

p

110

Measures 110-112 of a musical score. The right hand features a melody with a half note G#4, a quarter rest, and a half note A4. The left hand has a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 111 includes a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand: G#4, A4, and B4.

113

Measures 113-116 of a musical score. The right hand has a melody with a half note G#4, a quarter rest, and a half note A4. The left hand has a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 115 includes a half note G#4 in the right hand. The word *morendo* is written in the right hand of measure 116.

117

Measures 117-120 of a musical score. The right hand has a melody with a half note G#4, a quarter rest, and a half note A4. The left hand has a continuous eighth-note accompaniment. Measure 118 includes a half note G#4 in the right hand. The word *ritard* is written in the right hand of measure 118. Measure 119 includes a half note G#4 in the right hand. The word *pp* is written in the right hand of measure 119. Measure 120 includes a half note G#4 in the right hand.