

Andrzej SITARZ (Kraków)

**Texture in piano compositions by Feliks Janiewicz:
Study of Mazurek in A major
and variations *Hope Told a Flattering Tale*¹**

As a composer Feliks Janiewicz, an outstanding violin player of the turn of the 19th century, is mainly known for his five violin concertos and six trios for two violins and cello. His duos for two violins, piano pieces and songs are less popular.² He only composed 16 compositions for piano (that is, counting the pieces belonging to the collection *The Lancer's Quadrille* as individual ones), most of which were short, and two of which were transcriptions of compositions originally written for an ensemble.

Judging by the number of published works, he did not write piano music regularly, and it appeared in his oeuvre to satisfy the public demand for the educational material. Nevertheless, there are compositions whose substantial virtuoso-performing advantage cannot be denied. It is highly unlikely that he had himself in mind for performing these works, as the recovered biographical data mentions no occasions when he would play the piano in public. This information cannot be obtained from the extant concert programmes, neither

¹ This article is based on a doctoral dissertation 'Feliks Janiewicz. His Life and Works' supervised by Prof. Małgorzata Woźna-Stankiewicz (Institute of Musicology, Jagiellonian University, Kraków 2006).

² See Thematic Catalogue of Janiewicz's works in: Felix Janiewicz *Opera Omnia, vol. 1: Violin Concertos 1*, «Monumenta Musicae in Polonia», Andrzej SITARZ (ed.). Kraków 1996.

does Lach-Szyrma³ report it in her rather comprehensive account of the composer's involvement in the musical life of Edinburgh, although she does point out that his daughter was a gifted pianist. It was her who might have presented the piano pieces by Janiewicz to the public (she had been on stage since 1816). It could have been his students too.

Regardless of what had been said so far, Janiewicz's piano works should not be considered marginal. Among them are significant compositions that stand out against the Polish musical output of that time, with the piano *Sonata in B flat major* being one of the first Polish examples of developed rendering of the form (published before 1801), very successful variations *Hope Told a Flattering Tale* as well as *Mazurek*, captivating also due to its reference to the Polish folk music. The remaining piano pieces included two marches (*The Lawyer's Grand Slow March* and *The Lawyer's Quick March*), *Favorite Polacca* (adaptation of the 3rd movement of the 2nd Trio), *Original Scotch Air*, *Rondo in the Scottish Style*, *Peggy's Love*, *Rondo à la Militaire*, *Indian War Hoop*, *Swiss Air* as well as six plain quadrilles (*The Lancer's Quadrille with Five New Original Quadrilles*).

Such a small body of work does not fully allow for drawing binding conclusions about his style. In addition, the lack of reliable information about the time when the piano pieces were composed (we only know the approximate dates of publishing) make any attempt at reviewing the development of his style and compositional skills pointless.

The piano music by Janiewicz is represented by pieces which are rather undemanding or require intermediate skill (for a fairly advanced performer, but not for a virtuoso). The texture of his pieces is lucid — the accompaniment (almost invariably in the left hand) is clearly separated from the diatonic melody (figurations) in the right hand. Infrequent are the passages of parallel intervals in both hands (in fast tempo taking a virtuoso dazzle), dialogue or hand crossing. In the scope of accompanying figures, figurations of the right hand and cooperation of hands in creating the piano texture Janiewicz failed to use up the techniques Beethoven exploited in the Bonn period of his work (until 1782).⁴

³ Krystyn LACH-SZYMA *Anglia i Szkocja. Przypomnienia z podróży w roku 1820–1824 odbytej* [England and Scotland. Reminiscence of a journey made in the years 1820–1824], 3 vols. Warszawa 1828–1829, 2nd edition: Warszawa 1981.

⁴ See description in: Irena PONIATOWSKA *Faktura Fortepianowa Beethovena* [Piano texture in Beethoven's compositions]. Warszawa 1972.

Mazurek, in the form of rondo with three refrains, can be counted among the most successful piano compositions by Janiewicz. Its immense value results from the manner of structuring the form through apt application of contrasts and diversification of sections by means of various elements (melody, texture, harmony, dynamics or accentuation). The rondo theme itself demonstrates an aspect of contrast: it contains two diverse units (A_a : b. 1–8 and A_b : b. 9–16) developing in opposing directions and supported with separate types of accompaniment — harmonically complete in the first part and based on ‘bare octaves’ in the second one.

Example 1. The theme of *Mazurek in A major*

a) b. 1–8, section A_a

b) b. 9–16, section A_b

What captivates about the *Mazurek*-rondo is implementation of variational features in theme repetitions and insertion of a developmental element in one of the couplets, which distinguishes Classical rondos affected by the sonata-allegro pattern. The section A_a of the refrain receives a slightly modified representation at nearly each recurrence (by contrast, section A_b remains mostly unaltered):

- b. 1–8 the primary thematic material
- recurring in bars 17–24 the second part of the theme is shifted an octave up, and accompanied by semiquavers (earlier on by quavers)

- reappearance in bars 33–40 the right hand repeats the material from the beginning, and the left hand moves in semiquavers (incidentally, it includes sustained crotchets and quavers which constitute an additional line)
- in b. 99–122, the entire theme is essentially unmodified
- recurring in b. 192–199 the theme is transferred an octave up with the accompaniment as in b. 17–24
- b. 208–215 present a figurative arrangement (a variation) of the theme A_a with the primary form of the accompaniment
- beginning in bars 247 and 255 come variations on the theme version A_a (figurations with the primary accompaniment).

Example 2. Transformations of the theme section A_a in *Mazurek*

a) b. 7–24

b) b. 33–40

c) b. 192–199

d) b. 208–215

Musical score for section d) b. 208–215. The score is in E major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a continuous eighth-note melody, while the left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system continues this texture, with a final flourish in the right hand at the end of the section.

e) b. 247–254

Musical score for section e) b. 247–254. The score is in E major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand has a melody with a slur over the first two measures. The left hand plays a simple accompaniment. The second system features dynamic markings: *rf* (ritardando forte) in the first measure, *f* (forte) in the second, *p* (piano) in the third, *rf* in the fourth, and *f* in the fifth. The section concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

f) b. 255–262

Musical score for section f) b. 255–262. The score is in E major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand plays a steady eighth-note melody, and the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system continues this texture, ending with a final chord in the right hand.

In couplet 1 (b. 41–98) the composer exploits the 4-bar fragments derived from both sections of the theme (A_a and A_b) and sets them in opposing keys: E major – E minor (b. 49–52, 53–56), G major – D major (b. 57–60, 61–64), D major

– D minor – F major (b. 75–78, 79–82, 83–86), thus this extensive section of the composition displays properties equivalent to the modulating sections in the sonata-allegro. Bars 79–82 combine both patterns embedded in the theme, leading to an adeptly constructed climax of this phase of the couplet/development:

Example 3. *Mazurek in A major*, b. 77–84

Even if the same figurations keep recurring in the immediate neighbourhood at several points of the composition, instead of monotony, they convey the impression that the composer intended it as a device, which evokes the ‘rotary movement’ intrinsic to the dance of oberek (e.g. see b. 65–72 and 87–98). Apart from the already illustrated mazurka formulae (theme sections A_a , in bars 1–8, and A_b in bars 9–16) the composer introduced two more (the second of which shows the qualities of the oberek):

Example 4. Two mazurka formulae

a) b. 127–134

b) b. 170–177

The variations *Hope Told a Flattering Tale* come as the second longest (after *Sonata in B major*) piano composition by Janiewicz. They are based on the theme of the duo *Nel cor più non mi sento* from Paisiello's opera *La Molinara* (from 1788) and develop in six following pieces. The theme has a lucid periodic structure comprising an 8-measure antecedent and a consequent covering two 6-measure units. The simple key design of (G) (aD) (G), and an uncomplicated melody — highly distinctive and very easy to remember — lend themselves perfectly to become a foundation for variations, which can be confirmed by the fact that the same theme was used by Beethoven (6 variations WoO 70 from 1795), Bochsá, Dusik, and Paganini (*Nel cor più* for violin solo, 1820–1821).

Janiewicz's variations preserved the harmonic design of the theme in detail. Neither did he set one variation in a separate key nor composed it in an opposing tempo, even though these were standard practices in Beethoven's works. An essential element that was changed in the last variation was its metre. One needs to admit that the variational means used by Janiewicz were common, however, it was the manner in which he applied them that proved his great compositional skill and good understanding of formal arrangement.

In variations 1 and 2 the accompaniment is nearly the same as in the theme. By way of ornamentation, the right hand complements the harmony of the theme through energetic motion written out in semiquavers (var. 1) and demisemiquavers (var. 2). The figurations in variation 1 add passing and changing tones, appoggiaturas, suspensions, and fragment melody into passages and scales. More distinguishable, however, are the nodes of the theme. The figuration in variation 2 blurs the clarity of the theme. The agility and increased pace of motion in the demisemiquaver passages sets this section apart from variation 1. The speed decreases in the following two variations as the theme recurs in a barely modified form — doubled in thirds and sixths — once in the right hand (var. 3) and for the second time in the left hand (var. 4), supported with figurations (passages and scales) of the other hand.

As a result of replacing the passages in the accompaniment with chords and locating brisk passages in the right hand the texture of variations 5 and 6 gradually becomes denser. The composer established a new metre in variation 6, with two measures in 2/4 substituting for one bar in 6/8 from the theme. An eight-bar finale based on the original version of theme closes the composition, which in perspective might be seen as a reference to the arch form.

Example 5. The theme and its arrangements,
examples in the variations *Hope Told a Flattering Tale*

a) b. 1–2, beginning of the theme

Andante con Variazioni

dolce

b) b. 21–22, beginning of variation 1

c) b. 41–42, beginning of variation 2

d) b. 61–62, beginning of variation 3

e) b. 81–82, beginning of variation 4

f) b. 101–102, beginning of variation 5



g) b. 121–122, beginning of variation 6



The accompaniment in the Polish composer's pieces was usually based on triads or scales, with the most rudimentary figure of triad made up of two elements: a dyad and one note (less frequently in reverse: a note and a dyad). Consequently, a typical accompanying figure consisted of the foregoing elements in alternation, progressing in quavers or in semiquavers. To bring variety, the first tone (lower) of such a figure could be sustained as a pedal note, thus resulting in a form of 'waltz' accompaniment. Both figures were widely applied in all of Janiewicz's piano compositions, with the 'waltz' accompaniment covering longer spans mainly in *Quick March*, *Sonata in B flat major* and in *Mazurek*. As for the so-called Alberti bass, its pure form occurs rather rarely in Janiewicz's work, for larger part only in *Swiss Air*. In addition, it takes a modified shape mainly in *Rondo in the Scottish Style* and in *Mazurek* (with opposing direction). A derivative and simplified version of the above formulae becomes accompaniment comprising two alternating notes. Janiewicz neglected the more creative fashion of employing the formula of Alberti bass, present in the early compositions by Beethoven: with auxiliary and passing notes, or with a dyad in the mid position. Chords in various broken forms (fairly limited) occur in the pieces in question rarely, and develop only within an octave. Another background shaping device was the use of single chords (for longer spans in the 1st movement of *Sonata in B flat major*) or even single notes of a chord succeeding in crotchets, which typified mainly marches: *Grand Slow March*, *Quick March* as well as

Rondo a la Militaire. Large leaps were applied for the accompanying part only in the set of variations *Hope Told a Flattering Tale*.

To a considerable extent the figurations of the right hand featured scales and arpeggiated chords, and the formulae recurred in their immediate neighbourhood. Simple scales frequently transcend the range of two octaves (e.g. in the sonata, *Indian War Hoop*); the passages, however, are not that extensive, unless they take the form of arpeggiated or broken (seldom) chords based on triads (fragments of *Sonata in B flat major*, *Indian War Hoop*, *Swiss Air*).

Example 6. *Sonata in B flat major*, 1st movement b.145–146



Among rarities can also be counted the right-hand leaps that surpassed an octave (e.g. a tenth: *Sonata in B flat major*, 1st movement, b. 188; two octaves; *ibid.* 1st movement b. 189), or broken octaves, in fact absent from Janiewicz's piano music. Dyads in the right hand came as sporadic means — they were mostly thirds, sixths, or, in passing, other intervals, whereas the octaves were truly exceptional and transient (e.g. at some points of the 2nd movement in *Sonata in B flat major* b. 8/9). The more sophisticated devices present on a large scale in Beethoven's compositions from the Bonn period, involving methods of thickening the texture with tremolos, repetitions, or trills, to name but a few, are very uncommon for Janiewicz's piano music. The rare complex devices he did implement include a chromatic passage downwards with an auxiliary note d in b. 121–122 in the 1st movement of *Sonata in B flat major* and some lines from the variations *Hope Told a Flattering Tale* which are described below.

Example 7. *Sonata in B flat major*, 1st movement b. 121–122



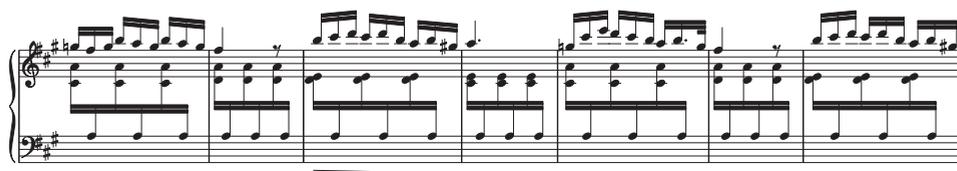
The way to enrich the texture was to sustain the notes of passages, which emphasised the melody — a solution applied several times in *Rondo à la Militaire*.

Example 8. *Rondo à la Militaire*, b. 57–62

Seldom did Janiewicz abandon the model he set for the texture of his piano compositions: the melody or figurations in the right hand and the accompaniment in the left hand. The variations *Hope Told Flattering Tale* stand for one of the few departures from this prevailing pattern. Parallel (yet standard) figurations in both hands can be found in short fragments closing the sections of *Sonata in B flat major* (b. 84, 218–221 and 227–230), *Favorite Polacca* (b. 93–95, 112–122), and *Rondo in the Scottish Style* (b. 147–148), whereas some more diversified, not entirely parallel variants were set within *Indian War Hoop* (b. 106–114). Even more captivating sounds the timbre produced in two moments of *Mazurek*: both hands in unison in b. 124–126 and motion in opposing directions in b. 135–138. On few occasions was a model of figuration shared between both hands, and it only happened in isolated bars of *Sonata in B flat major* (b. 124), in *Peggy's Love* (e.g. b. 45, 47). Janiewicz applied the solution to a greater degree solely in *Rondo in the Scottish Style* (b. 97–102) and *Favorita Polacca* (b. 162–164). Out of other methods, there can be observed an example of hocket style technique in two measures of *Mazurek* (b. 168–169). Hand crossing is virtually a non-existent feature of the music in question. If used, its purpose is chiefly to enrich the tone colour rather than the virtuoso effects in *Rondo in the Scottish Style* in b. 141–142. What adds variety to the

motion encapsulated in figurations is rhythm transformation from dual (quavers, semiquavers) to appropriately faster triple patterns (triplets, sextuplets) or in reverse (e.g. *Sonata in B flat major*, 1st movement b. 59–60, 63–64, 144–150, *Rondo in the Scottish Style* from b. 153, *Peggy's Love* from b. 24, *Indian War Hoop* from b. 177 and from b. 242 and other), possibly applied at once as cross rhythm (1st movement in *Sonata in B flat major* from b. 61), producing fine timbre in *Mazurek* from b. 216 and from b. 231.

Example 9. *Mazurek* b. 216–219



Due to the nature of its form, the set of variations *Hope Told a Flattering Tale* should be discussed separately as the problem of texture seems central for this genre. The advancement of means used by Janiewicz in this composition surpasses his other works for the piano. Figurations are more diverse for their range (at many points reaching two octaves), change of direction, ornamentation, broken intervals, including broken octaves (*c-c*, *b-b*, *a-a*), and auxiliary notes in variation no.1.

Example 10. *Variations Hope Told a Flattering Tale*, b. 35–36 (variation 1)



The right hand daringly exploits octave tremolos (with octave appoggiaturas) featuring in the opening bars of variation no. 4 (starting with b. 81), and extensive passages of parallel octaves coming in the following bars of the same variation.

Example 11. *Hope Told a Flattering Tale*, b. 85–88 (variation 4)

The musical score for Example 11, variation 4, measures 85–88. It is written for piano in G major. The right hand features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and slurs, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of arpeggiated triads. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained note in the left hand.

The accompanying figure — most basic, in the form of arpeggiated triads in the theme and two introductory variations — transforms into an agile flow in semiquavers in variation no. 3, created through adding auxiliary and passing notes to the triads, and through reversing the motion and widening the span of some figures up to more than two octaves. At the same time the sonorities become denser as the melodic line of the theme is doubled with thirds and sixths.

Example 12. *Hope Told a Flattering Tale*, b. 69–72 (variation 3)

The musical score for Example 12, variation 3, measures 69–72. The right hand contains a simple harmonic accompaniment of chords, while the left hand features a more complex, flowing accompaniment of arpeggiated figures with slurs and ties. The piece ends with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained note in the left hand.

In variation no. 5 the composer achieved the effect of denser texture thanks to altering the formulae in the accompaniment and in the right hand (in the preceding variations only one of those elements was changed). The theme in the right hand takes a highly ornamented form in dyads, whereas the fundamental figure of the accompaniment becomes a sonority repeated in a robust, dotted rhythmic pattern with a leap ranging over an interval unprecedented in Janiewicz's piano music.

Example 13. *Hope Told a Flattering Tale*, b. 109–112 (variation 5)

The musical score for Example 13, variation 5, measures 109–112. The right hand features a highly ornamented melodic line with dyads and slurs, while the left hand provides a robust accompaniment of repeated sonorities with a dotted rhythmic pattern. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a sustained note in the left hand.

Note *g* repeated as a drone in the 6th variation transforms into a form of octave tremolo, thus building tension while anticipating the coda.

Example 14. *Hope Told a Flattering Tale*, b. 169–176 (variation 6)



* * *

A limited choice of accompanying formulae and figurations as well as an insignificant cooperation between the hands does not mean lack of success and interesting features of Janiewicz's piano compositions, which would merit the attention of neither a researcher nor a performer. On the other hand, simple standard patterns invite variety — an option readily and aptly embraced by the composer. As a result the formulae are modified within short spans or within recurring melodic ideas and figurations. It is achieved by remodelling the accompaniment, breaking notes into shorter durations, reversing the direction of passages and by transferring the accompaniment or figurations to another octave. Consequently, the dramatic tensions are vivid and clearly shape the form. The discussed mode of piece construction as coupled with appealing themes based on the model periodic structure, as well as clear-cut design, and relatively modest technical challenge make Janiewicz's piano music an excellent collection of practice materials for less advanced or intermediate pianists, which was most probably the composer's objective.

Translated by Agnieszka Gaj