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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

SELECTED SOLO PIANO COLLECTIONS

OF ALEXANDER GRETCHANINOFF:

AN ANALYSIS FOR TEACHING AND PERFORMANCE

A DOCUMENT

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

YEESEON KWON

Norman, Oklahoma

1998

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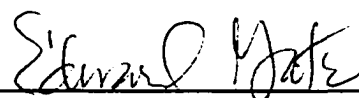
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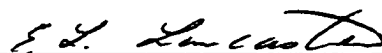
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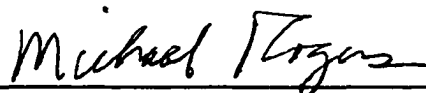
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ABSTRACT

SELECTED SOLO PIANO COLLECTIONS

OF ALEXANDER GRETCHANINOFF:

AN ANALYSIS FOR TEACHING AND PERFORMANCE

BY: YEESEON KWON

MAJOR PROFESSOR: EDWARD GATES D.M.A.

The purpose of this document was to provide a teaching and performance analysis of three piano collections of Alexander Gretchaninoff: *Children's Album* [Kinderbuch], op. 98, *Historiettes*, op. 118 and *Five Little Pieces* [Pastels], op. 3. These particular collections were chosen as representative of the early-intermediate, intermediate and late-intermediate level solo piano works of Gretchaninoff as well as for their inherent musical and pedagogical appeal. It is intended to serve as an informative source for teachers who want to supplement their students' repertoires with expressive and accessible music.

The first chapter includes an introduction that discusses the significance of Alexander Gretchaninoff as an important contributor to the intermediate-level piano repertoire. The second chapter provides a brief biography and a general overview of Gretchaninoff's solo piano collections currently in print organized into three levels: early-intermediate, intermediate and late-intermediate.

The three following chapters present the teaching and performance analyses of the selected collections respectively: *Children's Album* [Kinderbuch], op. 98, *Historiettes*, op. 118 and *Five Little Pieces* [Pastels], op. 3. After a brief introductory background on each collection, a structural analysis identifying main sections, tonal areas, compositional techniques and other unique musical features of the individual pieces in each collection is provided. Secondly, suggestions identifying pianistic, technical and musical elements for teaching and performing are presented.

The final chapter contains a summary, conclusions and recommendations. Appendix A provides a listing of Gretchaninoff's solo piano music collections.

SELECTED SOLO PIANO COLLECTIONS
OF ALEXANDER GRETCHANINOFF:
AN ANALYSIS FOR TEACHING AND PERFORMANCE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The music of Alexander Tikhonovich Gretchaninoff¹ (1864-1956) is an important contribution to the intermediate piano repertoire. A Russian-born composer, Gretchaninoff became an American citizen in 1946. Many of his expressive miniatures were written for his own teaching purposes and are valuable pedagogically. His numerous piano compositions span several decades and can be described as character pieces imbuing expressive melodic lines with underlying sonorous harmonies. Imaginative and descriptive titles spark and characterize various moods and scenes such as "Monkey's Dance," "First Tears," "In the Garden Picking Flowers" from *Dew Drops*, "The Toy Soldiers are Marching,"

¹ Several English transliterations have been used for Gretchaninoff's name, including Alexandre Grechaninov, Alexandr Grechaninov, Alexander Gretchaninov, A. Gretchaninow. The spelling used in this document, Alexander Gretchaninoff, corresponds to its appearance in most of his musical scores.

“A Dull Lesson,” “A Frightful Story” from *Children’s Album*, “Solitude,” and “Joyous Refrain” from *Historiettes*.

Born in Moscow in 1864, Gretchaninoff left Russia at the age of sixty and spent the next fourteen years in France before immigrating to the United States in 1939, eventually to become a naturalized citizen. As one of several artists who left Russia following the Revolution of 1917, Gretchaninoff writes in his autobiography of the physical and financial difficulties he endured as a result of the political events in his country.² The uprising of 1905, World War I, the Russian Revolution and the period of Soviet Realism greatly curtailed his creative output.

As a composer, Gretchaninoff is most remembered for his choral and liturgical music. It is here that he is most authentically Russian in inspiration and most original in thinking.³ His Liturgies—*St. John Chrysostom*, op. 13 (1897) and op. 29 (1902) and *Domestic Liturgy*, op. 79 (1917)—are among the most significant contributions to Russian religious music since 1890. In addition to these three liturgies, Gretchaninoff produced numerous a cappella choruses and several outstanding Masses including the *Missa Oecumenica* in 1936, and the *Missa Festiva*, op. 154 in 1937. Gretchaninoff’s skill in writing for voices, his remarkable technique

² Alexandre Gretchaninoff, *My Life*, translated by Nicolas Slonimsky (New York: Coleman-Ross Company, Inc., 1952).

³ Ibid.

in polyphony, his ability to produce powerful choral effects, and his profound religious conviction are the qualities that place his best church music on such a high artistic plane.⁴

Almost as important as his choral music for the church are his songs, which number over two hundred and fifty. His most celebrated songs were all composed before 1900. His first opus was a group of five songs written between 1887 and 1892. One of these, *Lullaby or Cradle Song*, is one of his most popular art songs. "The main characteristics of Gretchaninoff's songs," wrote M. D. Calvocoressi, "are refinement, easy grace and sentiment which at its best owes little to sentimentality."⁵

Gretchaninoff also produced five symphonies. The fourth, in C Major (1923-24), was written in memory of Tchaikovsky and was premiered in New York on April 9, 1942, with John Barbirolli conducting the New York Philharmonic. The fifth, in G Minor (1936), was heard first in Philadelphia on April 5, 1939, with Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Gretchaninoff's output of solo piano music includes over forty collections of piano pieces written mainly for pedagogical purposes. Unfortunately, fewer than half of these collections are currently in print.

⁴ David Ewen, ed., *The World of Twentieth-Century Music* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 321.

⁵ David Ewen, ed., *Composers Since 1900* (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1969), 248.

Gretchaninoff's numerous solo piano works range from early-intermediate to the late-intermediate levels. A product of both the Moscow and St. Petersburg Conservatories, Gretchaninoff reflects in his compositions the nationalism of the nineteenth century. His piano music retains the romantic and expressive qualities of Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. Periods of experimentation with "modern" or "impressionistic" qualities were brief and examples are rare in his piano works. Harmony remains traditional with occasional "twists," such as parallel dominant sevenths, to provide variety and color.⁶

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide a teaching and performance analysis of three piano collections of Alexander Gretchaninoff: *Children's Album* [Kinderbuch], op. 98, *Historiettes*, op. 118, and *Five Little Pieces* [Pastels], op. 3. Teachers who want their students to play character pieces expressively and musically should find this document useful.

All three of the solo collections chosen are currently in print and readily available. These particular collections were chosen for their inherent musical and pedagogical appeal, and for their representation of

⁶ Peter Deane Roberts, *Modernism in Russian Piano Music*, Vol. I (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 49.

the early-intermediate, intermediate, and late-intermediate level solo piano works of Gretchaninoff. Selected pieces from these and other solo collections have been republished in *The Gretchaninoff Collection*,⁷ edited by Maurice Hinson, and can also be found in multi-composer collections.

Limitations

Many of the solo piano works of Alexander Gretchaninoff are currently out of print and are not readily accessible. This document is limited to the overview of the early-intermediate through the late-intermediate level solo piano collections currently in print. A teaching and performance analysis will be provided only for *Children's Album* [Kinderbuch], op. 98, *Historiettes*, op. 118, and *Five Little Pieces* [Pastels], op. 3.

Need for the Study

Gretchaninoff's music serves an important role in the pedagogical literature for the developing pianist. His piano works for children are characterized as having, ". . . musical invention, with an original application of musical resources as well as the genuine masterly technique

⁷ Alexander Gretchaninoff, *The Gretchaninoff Collection*, selected and introduced by Maurice Hinson (New York: Schott Music Corporation, 1992).

of an experienced and knowing composer.”⁸ Gretchaninoff’s teaching literature ranges from the early-intermediate through the early-advanced levels. The music is appealing and readily accessible, reflecting romantic qualities with little experimentation into the techniques and emerging eclectic styles of the twentieth century. David Ewen writes in *The World of Twentieth-Century Music*, “. . . More important still, he had an abundant and varied melodic gift (often made piquant with Russian flavors) and a vein of tenderness all his own. He could be passionate, elegiac and romantic.”⁹

Gretchaninoff’s creative output of piano music for children is substantial and distinguished. His works are included in several source books, including Albergo and Alexander’s *Intermediate Piano Repertoire*,¹⁰ Jane Magrath’s *The Pianist’s Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*¹¹ and Maurice Hinson’s *Guide to the Pianist’s Repertoire*.¹² They are listed in several syllabi and bulletins including the

⁸ Leonid Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, translated by Judah A. Joffe (New York: International Publishers, 1927), 145.

⁹ David Ewen, ed., *The World of Twentieth-Century Music* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968), 321.

¹⁰ Cathy Albergo and Reid Alexander, *Intermediate Piano Repertoire: A Guide for Teaching*, 3rd ed. (Oakville, Ontario: Frederick Harris Music Co., 1993).

¹¹ Jane Magrath, *The Pianist’s Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*, (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co. Inc., 1995).

¹² Maurice Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist’s Repertoire*, 2nd rev. and enl. ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993).

Illinois State Music Teachers Association Piano Syllabus,¹³ and the *Certificate of Merit Piano Syllabus* of the Music Teachers Association of California.¹⁴

Gretchaninoff's solo piano music is melodious and displays highly imaginative writing that can bridge the young student's musical palette from the late romantic into the twentieth century. His music is reflective of the nineteenth-century Nationalist movement and retains an expressive, romantic quality.

The solo piano music is a neglected source of repertoire and deserves greater awareness and familiarity. Two documents have been written on Gretchaninoff's solo piano music: the doctoral dissertations by Ann Elisa Haertling-Lint¹⁵ and Sandra Kay Stewart.¹⁶ Even so, there is still very little written on the teaching and performance aspects of the music. Although these documents provide some formal analysis and some pedagogical suggestions, teaching and performance considerations should be examined in depth for much of this music. Because Gretchaninoff is

¹³ Carol Balboa, ed. *Illinois State Music Teachers Association Piano Syllabus* (ISMSTA Student Foundation, 1990).

¹⁴ David C. Kortkamp, et. al., *Certificate of Merit Piano Syllabus*, revised (Music Teachers Association of California, 1987).

¹⁵ Ann Elisa Haertling-Lint, "A Graded Annotated Bibliography of Selected Solo Piano Works of Alexandre Gretchaninoff" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1988).

¹⁶ Sandra Kay Stewart, "The Life and Solo Piano Collections of Alexander Gretchaninoff" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1995).

especially renowned for his educational piano compositions, there is a need for further study. The music holds important musical and pedagogical value, especially for younger musicians, and deserves to be studied and performed more frequently.

This document will explore the teaching and performance considerations of selected pieces of Gretchaninoff's music. It will serve as an informative reference for teachers who are unfamiliar with Gretchaninoff's piano music, and who wish to expand their students' repertoire and include it as a part of their standard teaching literature.

Related Literature

Biographical information on Alexander Gretchaninoff may be readily found in several major sources, including *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*,¹⁷ *The Concise Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*.¹⁸ and *The New Oxford Companion to Music*.¹⁹ Most significantly, Gretchaninoff's autobiography *My Life*,²⁰ sheds

¹⁷ Stanley Sadie and H. Wiley Hitchcock, eds., *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (London: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd., 1986) s.v. "Gretchaninov, Alexandr," by Inna Barsova and Gerald Abraham.

¹⁸ Nicolas Slonimsky, ed. *The Concise Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 8th ed. (New York: Schirmer, 1994), s.v. "Gretchaninov, Alexander."

¹⁹ Denis Arnold, ed., *The New Oxford Companion to Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) s.v. "Gretchaninov, Alexander," by Geoffrey Norris.

²⁰ Alexandre Gretchaninoff, *My Life*, translated by Nicolas Slonimsky (New York: Coleman-Ross Company, Inc., 1952).

comprehensive light into the composer's life as well as his musical inspirations.

Two doctoral dissertations have been written on Gretchaninoff's solo piano music. Ann Elisa Heartling-Lint's²¹ dissertation surveys and compiles a complete listing of Gretchaninoff's solo piano works. A historical background on Gretchaninoff also is included. The form and characteristics of the compositions are examined, including tempo, key, meter, length, form and classification. Appendices include a complete listing of Gretchaninoff's solo piano works. Although this survey is very comprehensive and informative, the teaching and performance aspects of the works are not discussed.

Sandra Kay Stewart's²² dissertation documents the life of Alexander Gretchaninoff and surveys his piano literature. Stewart reviews nineteen piano collections as well as *The Gretchaninoff Collection*, edited by Maurice Hinson. The political background of Russia is described to some extent in three sections: The Romanov Dynasty (1855-1917), Soviet Russia (1917-1925), and Music During the Imperial and Soviet Regime. Gretchaninoff's biography is detailed in view of this historical background. In examining the piano collections, Stewart provides brief, and general,

²¹ Heartling-Lint, "A Graded Annotated Bibliography of Selected Solo Piano Works of Alexandre Gretchaninoff."

²² Stewart, "The Life and Solo Piano Collections of Alexander Gretchaninoff."

analytical and pedagogical considerations. A listing of duets, two-piano literature and pieces in multi-composer collections are among the appendices in this document. It seems that Stewart was ignorant of Heartling-Lint's dissertation (1988) which contained far more detailed bibliography and listings of published piano works. Stewart's dissertation also offers only some suggestions for performance of the solo piano works.

Additional information on Gretchaninoff and his music has been located in the following documents: the doctoral dissertations of Marcella May Poppen²³ and Bradley Alan Holmes,²⁴ and the masters thesis by Sister Mary Nicholas Smith.²⁵ Marcella May Poppen's dissertation surveys the four-hand piano literature of several composers including Gretchaninoff's "On the Meadow" from *On the Green Meadows*, op. 99 as a representative selection.

Bradley Alan Holmes' dissertation examines the *Missa Oecumenica* in light of its historical, political and religious background. Musical analysis is centered around a discussion of Russian sacred music during the revolution, chant, folk song elements in the music, Gretchaninoff's

²³ Marcella May Poppen, "A Survey and Analysis of Selected Four-Hand One Keyboard, Piano Literature" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1977).

²⁴ Bradley Alan Holmes, "'Missa Oecumenica' and the Roman Catholic Masses of Alexandre T. Gretchaninov" (D.M.A. dissertation, Arizona State University, 1990).

²⁵ Sister Mary Nicholas Smith, "The Music of Alexandre Gretchaninoff in its Relationship to Russian Nationalism" (M.Mus. thesis, University of Southern California, 1952).

tutelage under Taneyev, and the ecumenical bent which formed the composer's philosophy of sacred music.²⁶

In her thesis, Sister Mary Nicholas Smith evaluates Gretchaninoff's use of folk music and national characteristics in his compositions.²⁷ Included is a historical background of Russian music, both liturgical and folk, and a short review of Glinka and the Nationalist School. Smith delves more deeply into Gretchaninoff's liturgical music and songs than his piano works. *A Child's Day*, op. 109, *Glass Beads*, op. 123 and the *Second Sonata*, op. 174. are selected as representative of Gretchaninoff's piano music. While Smith examines these works, she primarily focuses on form and the compositional techniques. The teaching or performance aspects of the works are not discussed.

Other dissertations that are particularly useful as models for this document are, "Selected Intermediate-Level Solo Piano Music of Robert Starer: A Pedagogical and Performance Analysis" by Nancy Mei-Ling Tye,²⁸ "A Pedagogical and Performance Analysis of *Five Miniature Preludes and Fugues, Etudes in Tonality*, op. 44 and *Polyrhythms*, op. 50 by

²⁶ Bradley Alan Holmes, "'Missa Oecumenica' and the Roman Catholic Masses of Alexandre T. Gretchaninov" (D.M.A. dissertation, Arizona State University, 1990).

²⁷ Sister Mary Nicholas Smith, "The Music of Alexandre Gretchaninoff in its Relationship to Russian Nationalism" (M.Mus. thesis, University of Southern California, 1952).

²⁸ Nancy Mei-Ling Tye, "Selected Intermediate-Level Solo Piano Works of Robert Starer: A Pedagogical and Performance Analysis" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1995).

Alec Rowley” by Adrienne Wiley-Lippoldt²⁹, “The Solo Piano Music of Gian-Carlo Menotti: A Pedagogical and Performance Analysis” by Sylvia Watkins Ryan,³⁰ and “The Published Solo Piano Music of Howard Hanson: An Analysis For Teaching and Performing” by Philip Earl Autry.³¹ These documents provide relevant models for teaching and performance analysis.

Articles and reviews of Gretchaninoff’s compositions have been featured in various periodicals and newspaper articles such as *Etude*, *New York Times*, and the *London Musical News and Herald*. They herald his compositions and honor his musical contributions. Silas Gilcar’s article in the *London Musical News and Herald* introduces Gretchaninoff as a “distinguished Russian pianist and composer.”³² Featuring Gretchaninoff in an upcoming recital series, the *New York Times* of September 30, 1928 writes:

Definite announcement of the engagement of Alexander Gretchaninoff, the Russian composer, as a guest conductor this

²⁹ Adrienne E. Wiley-Lippoldt, “A Pedagogical and Performance Analysis of *Five Miniature Preludes and Fugues, Etudes in Tonality, Op. 44 and Polyrythms, Op. 50* by Alec Rowley” (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1991).

³⁰ Sylvia Watkins Ryan, “The Solo Piano Music of Gian-Carlo Menotti: A Pedagogical and Performance Analysis” (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1993).

³¹ Philip Earl Autry, “The Published Solo Piano Music of Howard Hanson: An Analysis for Teaching and Performing” (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1996).

³² Silas Gilcar, “Alexander Gretchaninoff,” *London Musical News and Herald*, 63 (23 September 1922): 262.

season of the Beethoven Symphony Orchestra was made this week. The eminent composer and pianist, it is announced, will also give a number of recitals with Nina Koshetz, the Russian soprano. He recently conducted the orchestra of the Academia di Sonata Cecilia at the Augusteo in Rome, in a program that included his own Third Symphony, the dance and finale of his opera Dobinia Nikitich . . .³³

Sabaneev's article in *The Dominant* acclaims Gretchaninoff as, "one of the most popular composers in Western Europe. . . shares the honors with Rachmaninov."³⁴ Noteworthy also is an article in *The Gramophone* which cites Gretchaninoff as "a neglected genius" and "one of the greatest living composers."³⁵

Design and Procedures

This document comprises six chapters, a bibliography and one appendix. Following this introductory chapter, a brief biography and a general overview of Gretchaninoff's solo piano collections currently in print is presented in Chapter II. Among the solo piano music currently in print are fifteen solo piano collections and the *Sonatina in F Major*, op. 110, no. 2. For the purpose of this document, the fifteen collections have

³³ "News and Comment Of The Week in Music," *New York Times*, 30 September 1928, sec. 10. p. 8.

³⁴ Leonid Sabaneev, "Gretchaninov," *The Dominant* 1 (May 1928): 18-21.

³⁵ Nicolai Nadejine, "A . Gretchaninoff," *The Gramophone* 15 (March 1938): 419.

been categorized into three levels: early-intermediate, intermediate, and late-intermediate.

EARLY INTERMEDIATE

- 1 hand position throughout or shifts of hand position to another position at a rest or between phrases.
- Patterns–Melody and/or accompaniment
- Broken chord or chordal accompaniments
- Accompaniments rhythmically slow, against a moving melody
- Few rhythmic subdivisions
- Keys up to 2 sharps or flats
- Few accidentals
- 1 touch for both hands
- 1 tempo throughout
- Maximum 1 page in length

INTERMEDIATE

- Frequent hand position shifts between and within phrases
- Fingering concepts: crossing, extension, contractions
- Fewer exact phrase repetition
- Less patterning of melody, rhythm, and accompaniment
- Variety in accompaniments, more simultaneous movement in both hands
- Linear style in both hands–disjunct motion
- Keys with 3 or more sharps or flats
- Chromatic alterations within pieces
- More subtle dynamic shading
- Different touches within pieces, between hands
- Different tempi within pieces
- 2 pages or longer

LATE INTERMEDIATE

- More complex textures between hands
- Larger stretches, leaps
- Wider voicing of broken accompaniment patterns
- Melody and accompanying harmonies within one hand
- Simultaneous sustained and moving voices within one hand
- Faster moving passage work

In categorizing the solo piano collections, numerous sources in books, repertoire lists, periodicals, and unpublished documents have been consulted. These sources provide methods for gradations of difficulty or list suggestions of the levels of difficulty. Among them are *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*,³⁶ *A Graded Annotated Bibliography of Selected Solo Piano Works of Alexandre Gretchaninoff*,³⁷ *The Development of Guidelines To Assess the Relative Difficulty of Intermediate Level Romantic Period Piano Repertoire*.³⁸

A teaching and performance analysis of the following collections is presented in Chapters III through V: *Children's Album* [Kinderbuch], op. 98, *Historiettes*, op. 118, and *Five Little Pieces* [Pastels], op. 3. A brief introductory background is provided for each collection. For each

³⁶ Jane Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, California: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1995).

³⁷ Ann Elisa Haertling-Lint, "A Graded Annotated Bibliography of Selected Solo Piano Works of Alexandre Gretchaninoff" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1988).

³⁸ Mary Kathryn Scanlan, "The Development of Guidelines To Assess the Relative Difficulty of Intermediate Level Romantic Piano Repertoire" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1988).

individual piece, a structural analysis identifies main sections, tonal areas, compositional techniques, and other unique musical features. Finally, teaching and performance suggestions identifying pianistic, technical and musical elements for practice, teaching, and performance are presented.

Chapter VI includes a summary, conclusions and recommendations for further study. Appendix A provides a complete listing of Gretchaninoff's published and unpublished solo piano collections. Works highlighted in bold in the appendix identify Gretchaninoff's published solo piano collections currently in print.

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHY AND OVERVIEW OF WORKS

This chapter briefly documents Alexander Gretchaninoff's life. A general overview of Gretchaninoff's solo piano collections currently in print follows, highlighting some of the unique features of these works.

Biography

Russia (1864-1925)

Alexander Tikhonovitch Gretchaninoff was born in Moscow on October 25, 1864.³⁹ He was one of eleven children and was born one year after his parents left the rural village of Peremyshal for a better life in the large city. Despite the aid of a midwife and a children's nurse, only five of the eleven children survived. His father was nearly illiterate, but his merchant background gave him the resources to open a small grocery store in Moscow.

³⁹Alexandre Gretchaninoff, *My Life*, translated by Nicolas Slonimsky (New York: Coleman-Ross Company, Inc., 1952), 7.

The family was deeply religious and both parents were fond of singing. His father would sing only religious music and taught Alexander to sing harmony to church songs. The entire family attended church on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings where young Alexander sang alto in the choir. Each year he also traveled with his parents on religious pilgrimages to the Trinity Sergius Monastery. This exposure provided him with the knowledge of Russian Liturgical music that later inspired him to compose in that genre.

At the age of six, Alexander entered public school. Primary school lasted a mere three years, after which he went to his father's store to learn his trade. However, his parents were persuaded by a family friend to allow Alexander to enter high school and pursue a profession. For the next four years he attended Moscow's Fifth High School where he received good marks in all but his language classes.

Alexander's first encounter with a musical instrument came at the age of twelve, when a visiting relative brought along a guitar. Instantly intrigued, he learned to play songs with a few simple chords. After his father's refusal to spend money on such a "frivolous item," Alexander eventually purchased the guitar with money that he had saved from skipping lunch at school. He learned to accompany himself while singing his favorite songs. In 1870, Alexander's parents purchased a piano for his older sister whom they felt had musical talent. She attended a boarding

school and lived at home only on weekends; therefore, it was Alexander who came home from school every day to play it. He taught himself to play songs and hymn tunes sung by his parents, but without formal training his technique remained minimal.

Alexander received his first piano lessons at the age of fourteen from the girlfriend of his older brother who was a music student at the Moscow Conservatory. He recalled, "She taught me according to the Huenten Method, which consisted mainly of tedious exercises utterly devoid of musical interest."⁴⁰

In high school, he passed most subjects easily, but struggled with foreign language requirements. After completing his fourth year, he decided against re-entering high school the following term, and focused on preparing for auditions at the Conservatory. His father continually dissuaded him from music and encouraged a medical career. Although both his parents liked music and enjoyed singing, they had no concept of music as an exalted art. Gretchaninoff wrote later in his memoirs, "Their idea of the professional musician was correspondingly low. They thought of him only as they would of the itinerant players that passed the hat at tavern doors."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Gretchaninoff, *My Life*, 15.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

Alexander was accepted, granted a partial scholarship, and entered the Moscow Conservatory in 1881. He was assigned to study piano with Professor Nikolai Kashkin, one of the founders of the Conservatory. In addition to piano, Alexander studied sight singing, counterpoint, harmony and form. His teachers included Vasily Safonov, N. A. Hubert, Hermann Laroche, Anton Arensky, and Sergei Taneyev; fellow students were Sergei Rachmaninoff and Alexander Scriabin. The music of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and most notably Anton Rubenstein, left the greatest musical impressions on him.

After four years of study, and barely passing the entrance exams, Gretchaninoff was admitted to the graduate pedagogy field to study with Safonov. Safonov recommended Gretchaninoff for a composition class. Here he was inspired by Taneyev's choral writing but unappreciative of Arensky's style of teaching. Arensky, in turn, held very little regard for Gretchaninoff's writing and often ridiculed his work. A final argument over a class assignment resulted in Gretchaninoff leaving the Conservatory in January 1890 and moving to St. Petersburg.

The illustrious name of Rimsky-Korsakov drew him to the St. Petersburg Conservatory and he was provisionally accepted as a student. Rimsky-Korsakov allowed him into his class and a friendship developed between the two that lasted until Rimsky-Korsakov's death in 1908.

In 1891, Gretchaninoff married Vera Ivanova Röhrberg with Rimsky-Korsakov as his best man. Vera Ivanova was an accomplished pianist and the two often played piano duets together. During this time Gretchaninoff's first album of *Pastels* [Five Little Pieces] was written and eventually published as his opus 3.

Gretchaninoff graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory in the spring of 1893 and wrote the String Quartet in G Major, his first independent composition in a large form. It received the Belaieff prize and premiered on December 7, 1894 at the fourth chamber music concert sponsored by Belaieff, the music publisher. His Symphony in B Minor was consequently accepted by Belaieff for publication as well as his first album of songs, Opus. 1. The Symphony in B Minor was premiered at the Russian Symphony Concert in January 1895 under Rimsky-Korsakov's direction. It received mixed reviews but was accepted by Safonov for a second performance in Moscow under Safonov's direction.

After graduation, Gretchaninoff lived for six years in St. Petersburg, earning his living by teaching music. Gretchaninoff's love of teaching piano to children sustained him during the periods when his compositions were not providing him with income. Teaching absorbed much of Gretchaninoff's time during the winter, but the morning hours from nine to twelve were invariably devoted to composition. ". . . I gave lessons from one o'clock until evening. I rarely composed at night. In the

evenings I usually played piano duets with my wife, read, attended concerts, or went to the theater. . . .⁴² Gretchaninoff further wrote in his autobiography, “. . . But I adore children, and their company has always been a great joy to me. . . I always felt on an equal footing with children, and did not have to “pretend.” The fact that I felt at ease in their company explains why I wrote music for children with such facility and interest.”⁴³

Gretchaninoff began to teach music theory and choral classes at a children’s school in Moscow founded by the Gnessin sisters. Eventually he began to write songs for these children and produced a collection of two-part songs. His own enjoyment from working with the children resulted in a series of albums written for the Gnessin School choir over several years. He published an album of children’s songs under the title *Ay-doo-doo!* which he used in his teaching. These songs were very successful and were the first of a series of children’s albums: *Little Rooster, The Seasons, In the Country* and others.

“. . . It became an established rule that every year I compose two or three new songs for the public concerts of the Gnessin School, to be performed by the children. I wrote these songs effortlessly, and it was always a joy to hear the little choristers sing them under the expert direction of their teacher. . . .”⁴⁴

⁴² Gretchaninoff, *My Life*, 50.

⁴³ Ibid., 94.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 95.

Gretchaninoff also accepted a choral teaching position at the Berckmann School in Moscow. Here he enjoyed a great deal of satisfaction accompanying and conducting the children at the piano. Gretchaninoff was encouraged to write piano pieces that could be used in teaching at the school, and at the Berckmann School's request, Gretchaninoff wrote elementary pieces for piano. He devised his own method of piano instruction which proved successful for him:

"During the first few lessons I never insisted on strict observance of correct hand positions, but let my pupils play real music. I gave them easy melodies, first for the right hand alone, then for both hands, while I played the bass part. At the same time I taught them how to read notes. As soon as they showed signs of enjoying their lessons, I taught them correct hand positions and gave them technical exercises. As they progressed I devoted a considerable part of the lesson time to the playing of duets. I made use of simple melodies written especially for four hands. I regard Diabelli's pieces as the best of their kind. Then I initiated my pupils into classical music, beginning with Haydn, so that they gradually became acquainted with the music of the great masters."⁴⁵

In addition, Gretchaninoff taught solfege as an inclusive part of learning to read music.

While at the Berckmann school, these piano pieces were published in collections under the following titles: *Children's Album, Opus 98* (1924); *On the Green Meadow, Opus 99* (1924); *Glass Beads, Opus 123* (1930); and *Grandfather's Album, Opus 119* (1928). Similar pedagogical collections followed including a collection of pieces for violin and cello, *De bon*

⁴⁵ Ibid., 65.

matin, and several operas for children: *The Dream of a Little Christmas Tree*, Opus 55 (1911); *The Castle of a Little Mouse*, Opus 92 (1921); and *The Cat, the Rooster, and the Fox*, Opus 103 (1919). *The Castle of a Little Mouse* was successfully produced at the Gnessin School, and later under Gretchaninoff's direction, at the Berckmann School. *The Dream of a Little Christmas Tree* was performed many times in Paris and New York. Gretchaninoff also wrote songs about children for adults during his association with the Berckmann School, among them *Snowflakes*, Opus 47 (1909); *The Brown Hen*, Opus 39 (1906); and *The Little Footpath*, Opus 89 (1920). Gretchaninoff gained a reputation for being able to enter a child's world through his music, producing works that were neither condescending nor uninspiring to children. The folk-like quality of his melodies and rhythms blend Russian Nationalism with originality and spirit. He became known as a true "children's composer."⁴⁶

Gretchaninoff's interest in Russian folk music, stemming from his childhood, led him to the Ethnographic Society at the University of Moscow where he became a Committee member for the Music Division. The goals of this committee were to collect, catalogue, publish, and record native folk songs that were still being sung in various regions throughout Russia. Gretchaninoff, elected Committee Vice-Chairman in 1903, arranged many of the songs for publication.

⁴⁶ Leonid Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, 144-5.

Gretchaninoff and his wife Vera separated in 1911 and he later married Maria Grigorievna Sredina in 1912. Maria Sredina served as Gretchaninoff's interpreter until the time of her death in 1947. Growing increasingly discontent with the economic and political hardships of Lenin's revolutionary Russia, Gretchaninoff became convinced that he must leave his homeland. Gretchaninoff left Russia at the age of sixty. When asked several years later why he left, he replied, "I refused to compose revolutionary music. It was morally impossible. The government was very nice to us . . . but I can't sell my mind for money."⁴⁷

France (1925-1939)

In the spring of 1925 Gretchaninoff and his wife left Russia. Unsure if they would return, he left his archives in Moscow. Gretchaninoff's living conditions and career opportunities greatly improved while living in Paris. He established contacts with other musicians which allowed him to perform with vocalists and instrumentalists, or as conductor for larger works such as his Third Symphony. He made a substantial living from his performances and composed, among other works, his fourth and fifth symphonies.

⁴⁷ Ross Parmenter, "Gretchaninoff Settles in New York," *New York Times*, 6 October 1940, Sec. 9, p. 7.

During these years in France, Gretchaninoff began to write his memoirs, which were first published in Russian in 1934.⁴⁸ Between 1929 and 1934 Gretchaninoff spent three months each year in America giving concerts. During this period he composed ten piano compositions including *First Sonata in G Minor, op. 129*. While private piano teaching had become much less a part of his professional activities than it had been earlier in his career, he continued to write pieces for piano. In his autobiography Gretchaninoff wrote, “. . . Before I went abroad I had written little for the piano. Since then I have composed many works for the instrument, simple piano pieces for children and more complex works, including two sonatas, two sonatinas, two albums of arrangements of Russian dances, etc.”⁴⁹

Gretchaninoff gave his first concert in America in New York City at Carnegie Hall on January 17, 1929, with Nina Koschetz. In March, 1929, he also conducted *Domestic Liturgy* which was well received. Gretchaninoff composed his famous *Missa Oecumenica (Universal Mass)* in 1935 and his *Fifth Symphony* in 1936. Gretchaninoff regarded *Missa Oecumenica* as his most important sacred work and the only sacred composition in which he introduced some modern elements.

⁴⁸ Sandra Kay Stewart, “The Life and Solo Piano Collections of Alexander Gretchaninoff” (D.M.A. dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1995), 80.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 151-2.

United States (1939-1956)

With the impending war, Alexander and Maria sought refuge with Maria's daughter in Detroit, Michigan in 1939. They moved to New York in 1940 where Gretchaninoff had better opportunities for musical activities. He continued to compose and wrote:

Some writers complain that they cannot continue their creative work away from their native soil. I never experienced this difficulty. Quite to the contrary: I work productively abroad, and my compositions of this period are imbued with the Russian folk spirit to an even greater degree than the music I wrote in Russia. Here, from afar, I feel more intimately all things Russian, and my attachment to my native land grows ever deeper. Besides, I am surrounded almost exclusively by devoted Russian friends who appreciate my music, particularly my sacred works which are constantly performed in American churches.⁵⁰

Gretchaninoff's eightieth birthday, celebrated three years later, was commemorated by concerts in London, Moscow and New York.

Joseph Yasser (1893-1981) a noted Russian-American organist who had performed several times with Gretchaninoff, wrote an article in the *New York Times* praising his achievements.⁵¹ A tribute by Gretchaninoff's friend Koussevitzky, written on behalf of the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, also appeared in the *Times* and stated, "Your greatest achievement among the contemporary composers, amid a war-torn world, has been to raise the voice of music above all disparity and

⁵⁰ Gretchaninoff, *My Life*, 150.

⁵¹ Joseph Yasser, "Gretchaninoff's 80th Birthday," *New York Times*, 22 October 1944, sec. 2, p. 5.

unite mankind in the light of eternal truth and love. . ."⁵² Gretchaninoff continued to write, although many of the works from this period remained unpublished. Eleven piano solo collections were written after 1944, yet only six were published. He began to work on his third opera, *The Marriage*, as well as a four-part liturgy.

Gretchaninoff became an American citizen in 1946 and continued to be recognized for his achievements. He received an honorary doctoral degree from New York College in 1951. Gretchaninoff granted permission to Nicolas Slonimsky to translate his autobiography into English.⁵³

Summing up his thoughts on modern music and his own style he wrote:

The question may now be asked: what was the influence of modernism on my creative work? Have I joined the modernists, or have I kept myself outside the sphere of their influence? Readers know that I have composed music in all genres, from sacred music to opera. The multiplicity of musical genres demands different modes of expression. . .

The early modernists paid too much attention to the concrete materials of music, forgetting that music is the expression of human emotion. Blessed is the composer who can faithfully communicate his inner emotion to the performer and the listener!⁵⁴

Gretchaninoff's last public appearance was at Town Hall on October 26, 1954. It was a concert of songs held in honor of his ninetieth birthday and

⁵² Serge Koussevitzky, "To Gretchaninoff," *New York Times*, 29 October 1944, sec. 2 p. 5.

⁵³ Sandra Kay Stewart, "The Life and Solo Piano Collections of Alexander Gretchaninoff" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1995), 84.

⁵⁴ Gretchaninoff, *My Life*, 167-8.

featured a selection of his Russian songs. Gretchaninoff died January 3, 1956 at his Seventy-fifth Street apartment in New York City.

Overview of the Piano Collections

Alexander Gretchaninoff's piano works span a period of fifty-eight years. His total output of catalogued works included in his autobiography number fifty-six collections, in addition to two sonatas and eight transcriptions of orchestral works. The solo piano literature includes forty-one collections written for teaching purposes. The level of difficulty of these collections ranges from the early-intermediate through the late-intermediate levels. His two sonatas, each written in three movements, are the most advanced of his piano works. The solo piano music included in the overview is limited to collections currently in print.

The first pedagogical collection of five miniatures, *Pastels*, op. 3, [Five Little Pieces], was written in 1893 in Moscow. He continued to write solo piano music while living in Paris and New York. The last eleven catalogue collections were written after the composer's eightieth birthday, with the final opus composed during his eighty-seventh year.

Early Intermediate-Level Collections

The early intermediate-level solo piano collections include two works, *Children's Album* [Kinderbuch], op. 98 and 12 *Little Sketches for Children*, op. 182. *Children's Album*, op. 98 is a collection of fifteen short pieces with imaginative titles composed especially for the young child. Works from this collection are included in the *Certificate of Merit Piano Syllabus* of the Music Teachers Association of California⁵⁵ and the *Illinois State Music Teachers Association Piano Syllabus*.⁵⁶ Jane Magrath, in *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*, describes this collection as, "Gretchaninoff's best-known set of teaching pieces. Fine writing in a set of titled character pieces in a harmonically conservative idiom."⁵⁷

The character of the pieces is vividly captured in the music. No. 5, "Riding on the Stick," depicts the animation of riding a hobby horse with rapid staccato scale passages. The imagery is tangibly achieved through alternating hands to give a rocking feel. In No. 11, "A Frightful

⁵⁵ David C. Kortkamp, et. al., *Certificate of Merit Piano Syllabus*, revised (Music Teachers Association of California, 1987), 30.

⁵⁶ Carol Balboa, ed., *Illinois State Music Teachers Association Piano Syllabus* (ISMTA Student Foundation, 1990), 24, 50, 71.

⁵⁷ Jane Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, California: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1995), 382.

Story," low register melodic writing with changes of tempo provokes the student's imagination to illuminate the dramatic and gloomy effect.

No. 8, "A Dull Lesson," is portrayed through deliberate musical repetitions of phrases. Many short phrase groupings generate the humor and appeal of this piece. No. 4, "In Parting," is an excellent piece for reinforcing scale patterns. In the A section, the right hand plays an descending melodic line. Consequently, the same rhythmic pattern is featured in the ascending scalar melodic line of the B section. Contemplative in nature, question-and-answer phrases musically illustrate the farewell.

Gretchaninoff wrote *12 Little Sketches for Children*, op. 182 when he was eighty-three years old. Considered to be some of his easiest writing, these one-page pieces are easily accessible, appealing, and written in his characteristic Romantic style. In *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*, Magrath compares the level of difficulty of this collection to Latour's Sonatinas and Kabalevsky's *Pieces for Young People*, op. 39.⁵⁸ The third piece in this collection, "Returning Home with a Bouquet of Field Flowers," reflects a folk-like quality. The left hand avoids the downbeats but the right hand emphasizes the downbeats by stressing the two strong pulses of the 6/8 meter. The swaying gesture in the solo, "On the Swing," is reflected through meters fluctuating from 4/4

⁵⁸ Ibid.

to 3/2. Canonic melodic writing also adds variety and musical interest. "Tag" is a lively piece representing the frolicsome nature of this popular children's game. Alternating measures of quarter and eighth notes depict the chase and help capture the character of the piece. The *accelerando* in the left hand at the end of the piece exuberantly ends the chase.

Intermediate-Level Collections

The five intermediate-level solo piano collections include: *Dew Drops*, op. 127a, *Historiettes*, op. 118, *Brimborions*, op. 138, *Four Piano Pieces for Children*, op. 170, and *Glass Beads*, op. 123.

Dew Drops, op. 127a, was written in 1930 and contains nine pieces. "What a Lovely Morning" is characterized by a thin texture, written in the middle and high registers, capturing a bright mood. The thin melodic line of the right hand spans no more than six notes at one time. The following piece, "In the Garden Picking Flowers," is written in G Major with modulations to B Major and A Minor. It has more harmonic variety than "What a Lovely Morning," and remains in the middle to high registers and features a four-measure B section. Several finger crossings and hand position changes are required for the right hand melody to be musically expressed. Musical imagery is achieved through descending four- and two-note slurs in "First Tears" which portrays the images of crying. "Basque Fandango" displays the flair and excitement of guitar strums and castanets

in a lively Spanish dance that is characterized by the alternation of tonic and dominant chords in 6/8 meter. Finger dexterity and strong rhythmic accents are necessary for this piece to be performed effectively.

Historiettes, op. 118 was written in 1928 and published two years later. Composed three years after Gretchaninoff immigrated to France, these twelve pieces display an increased use of the diminished chord and impressionist style characteristics. The first nine pieces are easier than the last three solos which contain more musical complexities. Maurice Hinson's repertoire list in the *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire* grades these selections in the intermediate level.⁵⁹

This French title, *Brimborions*, op. 138, translated as "knick knacks," was written in 1933 while Gretchaninoff was living in Paris. Hinson writes, "There are delights for everyone in this charming suite."⁶⁰ Of the twelve pieces, "En Route!" and "Sévère Reprimande" are charming examples of Gretchaninoff's inventive musical style. The vivid imagery of the titles is captured in the music. Gretchaninoff paints pictures with his imaginative writing as seen in the accented chords in "En Route!" recalling the sound of a car horn. The visual and aural imagery of the moving eighth-note line corresponds with the automobile's movement,

⁵⁹ Maurice Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*, 2nd rev. and enl. ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), s. v. "Alexander Gretchaninoff," 332.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

slowing down during the *ritardando*, then speeding up again. In “Sévère Reprimande,” the character of the left hand is sharply contrasted and juxtaposed. Accented staccatos in the first section are assertively punctuated in contrast to the expressive lyrical left hand motive of the second section.

The Four Piano Pieces for Children, op. 170, was the first collection that was written after Gretchaninoff immigrated to the United States. This short collection was written in 1943 and published a year later. Again, Gretchaninoff’s focus in this set is developing musical expressiveness in the younger student. Most notable of these elementary level pieces are “See Saw” and “Polka.” The ascending and descending musical line of “See Saw” both visually and aurally depicts the motion of the seesaw. The expressive nature of this solo is reflected in the chromatic melodic line which contains changes of dynamics and tempo combined with smooth legato phrases. In contrast, the lively dance “Polka” incorporates sixteenth notes and a thicker texture. Extremes of dynamics and a fast 2/4 meter generate excitement and appeal.

The twelve intermediate-level pieces in *Glass Beads*, op. 123, were published in 1930. The complex metric organization of the pieces in this collection makes them well suited for the intermediate level.

Hinson describes this collection as "Lyric and attractive,"⁶¹ and Magrath cites, "One of Gretchaninoff's best known collections."⁶² Selections from this collection including "On the Bicycle," "My First Ball," "Complaint," "In the Fields," and "On the Harmonica" are listed in the *Illinois State Music Teachers Association Piano Syllabus*,⁶³ *Certificate of Merit Piano Syllabus*,⁶⁴ and in the *Teacher's Guidebook to Piano Literature*.⁶⁵ Other pieces from this grade level include Kabalevsky's *Fifteen Children's Pieces*, op. 27 and Clementi's *Sonatina* op. 36, No. 2.

"Morning Walk," features a tuneful melody line in repetitive phrases. The right hand contains a sustained pedal tone while the left hand accompaniment contains intervals of thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths and sevenths. A descending two-note slur motive characterizes the plaintive desperation of the "Little Beggar." The syncopation of the melodic line, and recurring two-measure *crescendos*, effectively sets the mood and drama of this solo. "Etude" is a broken chord study of a single

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Jane Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, California: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1995), 380.

⁶³ Carol Balboa, ed., *Illinois State Music Teachers Association Piano Syllabus* (ISMTA Student Foundation, 1990), 50.

⁶⁴ David C. Kortkamp. *Certificate of Merit Piano Syllabus*, revised (Music Teachers Association of California, 1987), 42.

⁶⁵ Alice M. Kern and Helen M. Titus, *The Teacher's Guidebook to Piano Literature* (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1964), 21.

line melody distributed between two hands. This piece reinforces linear reading and fluid legato playing. "On the Bicycle" also features a thin texture in 3/8 meter. The left hand accompaniment chords occur on the second beat, while the chordal right hand melody featuring broken fourths and fifths is played on the first and third beats. "Waltz" is a lyrical solo, with a charming melody in dotted rhythms in the middle and high registers accompanied by a light chordal waltz bass in the left hand.

Late Intermediate-Level Collections

The remaining eight solo piano collections for late intermediate-level grades include: *Grandfather's Album*, op. 119, *On the Green Meadows*, op. 99, *A Child's Day*, op. 109, *Fleeting Thoughts*, op. 115, *Two Pieces*, op. 37, *Eight Pastels* [*Pastels*, second album], op. 6, *Suite Miniature*, op. 145, and *Five Little Pieces* [*Pastels*, first album], op. 3. Individual selections within each collection range from the intermediate through the late-intermediate levels.

Grandfather's Album, op. 119, is recommended for the late-intermediate level. *The Intermediate Piano Repertoire: A Guide for Teaching* categorizes this collection as "... material appropriate for introducing the classics."⁶⁶ Selected pieces from this collection are also

⁶⁶ Cathy Albergo and Reid Alexander, *Intermediate Piano Repertoire: A Guide for Teaching*, 3rd. ed. (Oakville, Ontario: Frederick Harris Music Co., 1993), 41.

included in the *Illinois State Music Teachers Association Piano Syllabus*.⁶⁷ Pieces in this collection focus on a singular concept such as rhythm, metric grouping, or phrasing. The brevity of these seventeen short pieces allows them to be used by an older student to fill in musical gaps or supplement their repertoire with pieces that can quickly and easily be mastered. Especially appealing is “An Old Romance,” which is a binary piece featuring a chordal bass line. The shifting left hand patterns span beyond an octave range. “March” is characterized with a fanfare introduction and coda based on repeated notes. *Fortissimo* chords in both hands resolutely and dramatically resound with a contrasting B section that features only a single line melody. “Out for a Walk” is a chord study reinforcing inversions in the right hand. The syncopated rhythmic ostinato is highlighted by a G pedal in the left hand entering on the second beat with a grace note, and avoids the downbeat throughout the piece.

The ten pieces of *On the Green Meadows*, op. 99, are appropriate for the late-intermediate level. Selections from this collection are included in the *Illinois State Music Teachers Association Piano Syllabus*.⁶⁸ The first piece, “In the Meadows,” requires mobility across the keyboard. The left hand displays a leap of over two octaves. “Walking” is musically depicted

⁶⁷ Carol Balboa, ed., *Illinois State Music Teachers Association Piano Syllabus* (ISMTA Student Foundation, 1990), 71.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 91.

with passing quarter notes between the hands. "Tale" is a canon and requires imitation between the hands.

A Child's Day, op. 109 is the first piano work published by Gretchaninoff after he left Russia. The collection as a whole is most suited for the late intermediate-level student. Although the level of the individual pieces vary, No. 3 "My Little Horse," No. 4 "The Broken Toy," No. 7 "Grandmother's Waltz" and No. 8 "The Happy Return Home," are characterized as late-intermediate in the *Illinois State Music Teachers Association Piano Syllabus*.⁶⁹ In addition, Kern and Titus cite four pieces from this collection including "Morning Prayer," "At Work," "My Little Horse," and "The Broken Toy" in the early-intermediate level.⁷⁰

In this collection of ten pieces, Gretchaninoff's mastery of painting a picture through his music is quite evident. Most are written in rounded binary form, with a return to the opening material that reestablishes the original mood. "Morning Prayer" characteristically expresses spiritual and reverent emotions through its setting in the high register of the piano. This piece provides excellent reinforcement of voicing chords within one hand. The sense of tension and resolution unfolds through a series of harmonic progressions. Changing meters also adds to its musical

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Alice M. Kern and Helen M. Titus, *The Teacher's Guidebook to Piano Literature* (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1964), 21, 22.

complexity, deeming it to be one of the most challenging pieces in this collection. The two themes in "Father and Mother" are written in different clefs denoting the feminine and masculine melodies of the treble and bass clefs. The mother's theme is written in major, while the minor mode represents the father's theme. Large stretches and leaps and the thick texture of this piece present technical challenges.

Fleeting Thoughts, op. 115 is the fourth collection published in France in 1927. Originally titled in Gretchaninoff's catalogue as *Pensées Fugitives*, it is a collection of fifteen pieces for the late-intermediate level. "Menuett," "Expectation," and "Unrest" reflect the expressive romantic style of this collection. A three against two rhythmic pattern prevails throughout "Menuett," and is the most challenging aspect of this piece. "Expectation" incorporates alternating melodic phrases between the hands. Hands are closely positioned at times and sometimes involve hand crossings. The music is characterized as *amoroso* in style. Sharply rising and falling *crescendos* and *decrescendos* in "Unrest" create the turbulent effect of this piece. Chromatic triplet patterns in the right hand drive the music and shape the restless character of this piece. The opening and final measures in the left hand feature descending chromatic octaves.

Originally titled, *Deux Morceaux*, *Two Pieces*, op. 37 were written in 1889 though not published until 1905. They are appropriate for the late intermediate-level student. These pieces, written in the style of

nineteenth-century romantic etudes, are reminiscent of Chopin. The technical and rhythmic challenges of the first piece, "Impromptu," include broken chord patterns in both the melody and accompaniment and playing two against three between the hands. Sensitive pedaling is required to bring out the harmonies grouped in the right hand sixteenth-note patterns. "Prélude," the following piece, is especially expressive. This chordal etude features a descending right hand melodic line outlining a chord over a thin single-note accompaniment texture in the left hand. The listener is unexpectedly left waiting as the piece ends in the dominant.

Cited by Albergo and Alexander,⁷¹ as "moderately difficult pieces," *Eight Pastels*, op. 61, was published in 1912, the year Gretchaninoff married Maria Sredina. The turmoil in his personal life is reflected in his experimentation with the harmonic boundaries. The modern sounds and musical complexities of these pieces are reminiscent of the piano works of Alexander Scriabin, who also was a student of Sergei Taneyev. Opus 61 is recommended for study at the late-intermediate level because of the tempo, meter, and rhythmic intricacies as well as modal harmonies. Cited in the *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*, Hinson writes *Eight Pastels*, op. 61

⁷¹ Cathy Albergo and Reid Alexander, *Intermediate Piano Repertoire: A Guide For Teaching*, 3rd. ed. (Oakville, Ontario: Frederick Harris Music Co., 1993), 41.

“has some pleasing qualities.”⁷² “Prelude,” the first piece in this collection incorporates four different time signatures 4/4, 5/4, 3/4, and 2/4. Tempo alterations and meter changes involve expressive, rubato playing.

“Epilogue” is highly chromatic and features dissonant harmonies.

Rhythmic complexities involving sixteenth-note triplet figures, with dotted rhythms against duplet figures, makes it the most challenging of this collection.

The ten works in the *Suite Miniature*, op. 145 are sectional in form and reflect an increased use of key signatures with three or more sharps or flats. Written in 1934, this collection is appropriate for the late-intermediate level and is graded as such in the *Guide to the Pianist’s Repertoire*.⁷³ Rhythmic intricacies abound in “Chanson d’Aurore,” and “Chant d’Artisan.” Gretchaninoff uses the five-part song form ABABA for both of these pieces. “Vers la Maison” is a scale study containing repeated notes and dotted rhythms. Scale passages and chords are played by the left hand while the right hand plays two and three-note repeated chords.

⁷² Maurice Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist’s Repertoire*, 2nd rev. and enl. ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), s. v. “Alexander Gretchaninoff,” 332.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Five Little Pieces, op. 3 originally titled *Pastels*, was the first piano collection written by Gretchaninoff shortly after he graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory. These five miniatures, with their programmatic titles, are well suited for the late-intermediate student. The musical expressiveness evokes certain moods or atmospheres and must be played with sensitivity. "Plainte," "Chant d'Automne," and "Orage" are descriptive in nature because of the highly lyrical and expressive writing. This collection is included in the *Certificate of Merit Piano Syllabus* of the Music Teachers Association of California.⁷⁴ Other pieces found in this level include Dussek's *Sonatina No. 3* in F Major, and "Arietta" from Grieg's *Lyrical Pieces*, op. 12.

⁷⁴ David C. Kortkamp, et al., *Certificate of Merit Piano Syllabus*, revised (Music Teachers Association of California, 1987), 79.

CHAPTER III
CHILDREN'S ALBUM [KINDERBUCH], OPUS 98

Introduction

Children's Album [Kinderbuch], op. 98 was the first piano collection written by Gretchaninoff for pupils in the Gnessin and Berckmann Schools in Moscow in 1924. Gretchaninoff's earlier collections were oriented toward older and more musically mature students and these solos represented a new direction for him. Gretchaninoff wrote these as teaching pieces with the young student in mind.

Children's Album [Kinderbuch], op. 98 is a collection of fifteen short pieces with imaginative titles. Most are one-page works appropriate for early-intermediate students. The English titles of the pieces used in this paper are exact translations from Gretchaninoff's 1952 catalogue. The titles vary in many contemporary publications. Magrath's *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* equates the level of difficulty of this collection with the Latour *Sonatinas* and Kabalevsky *Pieces for Young People*, op. 39.⁷⁵ Although No. 1, "Little Fairy Tale," is

⁷⁵ Magrath, xi, 378.

the easiest solo in the collection, the fifteen pieces are not arranged in order of difficulty.

Little Fairy Tale

Structural Analysis

Little Fairy Tale is characterized by a tuneful and appealing melody that is easily accessible to the early-intermediate student. The texture uses thin lines in both the melody and the accompaniment (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1, *Little Fairy Tale*, mm. 1-4



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Little Fairy Tale, marked *moderato*, is in A (mm. 1-4) A' (mm. 4-12) A (mm. 12-16) form. The harmony highlights the form with its unusual and surprising events. The A phrase begins in G Major and pivots from a subdominant harmony to an unexpected V/Em cadence in mm. 3-4. The A' phrase begins similarly, but this time resolves the subdominant

harmony to the V/GM in mm. 7-8. This phrase is then extended through four measures in G Major (mm. 8-12), surprisingly returning at the last moment to the V/Em harmony (m. 12). The final A phrase, which is the same as the opening phrase, charmingly concludes with a harmonic twist leaving the unexpected cadence ringing as its final harmony.

Gretchaninoff brings out the formal design of this piece in several ways. A *crescendo* leads to the V/Em chord in the first phrase. In the G Major extension of the second phrase (mm. 8-12), the two-voice linear texture opens up into three-voice chords. The *crescendo* is replaced by a *rallentandi* tapering the ends of the last two phrases (mm. 11-12 and 15-16).

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The zigzag opening melodic line, which is mirrored in the left hand, offers an opportunity for the student to experience relaxed rotary motion between the hands. The contrary direction of the legato lines in the opening measures reinforces hand coordination. The rotary motion in mm. 1-2 requires keeping a supple wrist and relaxed elbows to avoid tension and tightness in the fingers and wrist. In addition, smoothly connect the legato melodic line between the hands in mm. 9-10.

Gently lean into the *tenuto* notes in the opening phrase (mm. 1-4). The *decrescendo* marking under the four-note motive in m. 1 suggests a tapering of sound in preparation for the subsequent *crescendo* (and should

be repeated for each motive). Play the V/Em chord in m. 4 firmly leaning into the keys to give prominence to the unexpected harmony.

Since there is only one written dynamic marking along with a few *decrescendos* and *crescendos* in the piece, the repetitious nature of the phrases may be useful for discussing and making decisions about dynamics and expression as well as creating opportunities for inventive and expressive playing. Encourage the student to listen to the shape of the piece and choose appropriate dynamics. Differentiate the phrases, which all begin the same, by dynamically contrasting the different endings for musical interest and variety.

Begin each of the phrases at a moderate dynamic level (mm. 1, 5 and 13). Contrast the *crescendo* reaching up to the V/Em cadence in m. 4 of the A phrase with a softer dynamic level relaxing into the expected dominant harmony in m. 8 of the A' phrase. Maintain a *mp* dynamic level through the chordal extension in mm. 8-11 and *decrescendo* to the *rall.* close in m. 12. Emphasize the absence of the expected *crescendo* leading to the V/Em chord in mm. 15-16 with a tapering *decrescendo*. The *rall.* marked in the final two beats brings the piece to a close.

Discussion of form can be achieved by noting the number of times the A phrase appears and how it is varied each time. For example, direct the student to listen and raise his hand each time the four-note motive that first appears in m. 1 is heard. This process may be useful for

distinguishing the similarities and differences of the A phrases, which then can help the student analyze the form.

In the Camp of the Lead Soldiers

Structural Analysis

In the Camp of the Lead Soldiers, begins boldly with a trumpet herald. The opening D Major bugle call establishes the key and summons the soldiers to attention in this two measure *Lento* introduction. These two measures also conclude the piece (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2, *In the Camp of the Lead Soldiers*, mm. 1-2



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The *Allegro* section (mm. 3-18) is in **ABA** form with the A and B sections sharply contrasted. The four-measure melodic material of the A section (mm. 3-6), derived from the D Major triad, is repeated. The linear melodic phrases are lively with the harmonic intervals between the hands

reinforcing the key of D Major. The A section begins in a first inversion dyad with the hands playing in parallel motion.

In contrast to the arched contour of the A section, the eight-measure B section (mm. 7-14) has a static quality. The voices are less parallel, and hover around the dominant harmony in root position. The marching left hand half notes mark the steady tempo emphasizing the martial character of the piece.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

In the Camp of the Lead Soldiers portrays a lively martial character. The smooth shape of the music should be conveyed by playing with fluidity and ease. This excellent character piece allows the student to develop a smooth legato movement and expressive playing. It also reinforces and encourages grouping and shaping of phrases through the use of larger gestures.

As a preparatory step to fluid legato playing, swing the arms in parallel motion laterally away from the body in a relaxed rhythmic motion while listening to the rising lilt of the phrase. This will allow the student to sense physically the ascending direction of the music in the opening measures. Then, play D Major triads in root position and their inversions in various registers of the keyboard lifting the arm in a semi-circular motion while moving up and down the keyboard. Next, play broken

D Major triads and their inversions melodically in the notated rhythm of the opening measures in various registers of the piano. Play the broken triad in one smooth semi-circular motion of the arm, while maintaining a relaxed elbow. The wrist and especially the fingers should also remain relaxed and not feel extended or taut. These preparatory steps should help the student transfer the legato sound and fluid playing to the opening *Lento* motives. The semi-circular arm gesture may be similarly reinforced in the *Allegro* section (Figure 3.3). Musically, the *crescendos* also enhance the shaping of the phrases.

Figure 3.3, *In the Camp of the Lead Soldiers*, mm. 3-4



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These semi-circular gestures will also encourage ease in finger legato. The stretching of the hand, which the notated fingering in mm. 3-4 requires, is then avoided. Use fingers 5 3 1 2 in the left hand (m. 3) for a smooth legato. In the right hand, use fingers 1 2 3 5 and 3 2 1 2 1 (mm. 3-4).

Maintain consistent right hand fingering (m. 5) by using finger 2 on the first eighth-note D instead of finger 3 and concluding with fingers 4 2 3 1 2 in m. 6. These suggestions will enable the student to keep a supple wrist and arm while accommodating the legato phrases.

Practicing hands separately is encouraged to coordinate the articulation and balance of voices in the piece. The student should strive for a singing tone in the right hand and carefully observe the *crescendo* and *decrescendo* markings in the music for expressive phrase shape. Play m. 3 at a *mezzo piano* dynamic level, with *forte* in mm. 7-10, heralding the new section. The following phrase (mm. 10-14) might be softly contrasted as an echo.

The staccatos in the left hand in mm. 4 and 6 present a contrasting touch to the otherwise legato line. Separate left hand practice is especially encouraged for each two-measure phrase (mm. 3-4 and 5-6) to coordinate the contrasting articulation of the staccato and legato touches. The staccatos in the left hand, crisply tapering each phrase in m. 4 and 6, should be played lightly with a short, bouncy touch.

Although a tempo marking is present in the introduction, it is absent in the coda (mm. 19-20). To preserve the symmetry and the character of the piece, the writer suggests that the coda should reflect the *Lento* tempo of the introduction.

Lead Soldiers on the March

Structural Analysis

Lead Soldiers on the March, in G Major, is in **A** (mm. 1-16) **B** (mm. 17-32) **A'** (mm. 33-40) form with **B A'** repeated. Only the second half of the A section returns in the closing section. This musical march is characterized by slurs, *tenuto*, and *non legato* markings which indicate a variety of articulations. In the A section, a marching *tenuto* melody is answered by a legato reply in mm. 5-8. The second phrase (mm. 9-16) begins exactly like the first phrase, but is followed by shorter one-measure slurs in mm. 13-14.

In the B section (mm. 17-20), legato motives are answered by *non legato* replies (Figure 3.4). This *forte* exchange is repeated *piano* in the subsequent measures (mm. 25-32).

Figure 3.4, *Lead Soldiers on the March*, mm. 17-20



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Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The *tenuto* quarter notes in the opening measures lend themselves to the stately march-like character, boldly portraying a sense of resoluteness. Play the quarter notes using a “walking” touch with adequate arm weight to produce resonant and warm tones. Keep the hands close to the keys and avoid striking the keys, which may produce harsh accents (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5, *Lead Soldiers on the March*, mm. 1-4



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This stately march requires a steady tempo and, with only a few shifts of hand position, encourages the student to pay close attention to contrasting articulations. The lively exchange of slurred and *non legato* statements in the B section (mm. 17-32) should be distinct. Practice the legato statement for accuracy and smoothness. Practice releasing the last note of this pattern (mm. 17-18) lightly with hands suspended in the air in

preparation for the next statement. Then, practice the *non legato* statement keeping a light bouncy staccato touch. Although the *non legato* marking is omitted in mm. 22-24, 26-28, and 30-32, the similarity to mm. 18-20 requires that they be played with a *non legato* touch as well.

Practice the phrase groupings in each hand in mm. 7-8 for balance and shaping of phrases. Play the two-note slurs in the left hand with a down-up motion, lifting the elbow and hand while tapering the phrase with a *decrescendo*. Then, practice the longer two-measure melodic phrases (mm. 5-8) in the right hand, smoothly shaping the legato.

In addition, the repetitious nature of the phrases requires dynamic contrasts and variety for musical interest since very few dynamic markings are indicated. Keep a robust *forte* dynamic level throughout the A section maintaining the *marziale* character. This will serve to highlight the *forte-piano* contrast in the subsequent B section (mm. 17 and 25). Voice the left and right hands equally in mm. 1-4. To highlight the change of articulation in mm. 5-8, subdue the left hand.

Farewell

Structural Analysis

Farewell is the first piece in the collection written in a minor key. Subdued in character, it is written in E Minor and in A (mm. 1-8) B (mm. 9-16) A' (mm. 17-20) form. This somber mood is briefly lifted in the

B section with a subtle harmonic shading of G Major before gradually tapering to a V/Em cadence at m. 16. In the A' section, only the second phrase of the A section (mm. 5-8) is used as in *Lead Soldiers on the March*.

The wistful character of this piece is heightened in several ways. The rhythm of mm. 1-2 is reflected in mm. 9-10 and suggests an earlier event or a nostalgic memory. The melodic line in m. 1, which encompasses an upward leap of a sixth in beat 1 before descending by step, is varied in m. 9 and ascends by step. In addition, chromatic half step movement of A-sharp-B in the left hand in mm. 1-2, and alternations of C-natural-C-sharp-C-natural in mm. 11-13 and D-sharp-D-natural-D-sharp in mm. 2-4, further enhance this melancholy mood (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6, *Farewell*, mm. 1-4



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Dynamics play an important part in shaping the phrases eloquently. The *espressivo* marking at the beginning of this poignant piece is exemplified

in mm. 9-16 by *crescendos* and *decrescendos* for each phrase. The sense of rubato and flexibility of tempo is indicated by the *rit.*, *a tempo*, and *rall.* at the end of the piece, and projects a sense of longing.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

Farewell requires smooth legato phrasing with musical shape. The student should practice hands separately for smooth control of the legato phrases without any unwanted accents. The two-measure phrases, which delineate the piece, require musical shape and balanced voices. In the A section, *crescendo* to the first beat of the second measure, then taper the phrase with a slight *decrescendo*. Contrast the *mf* marking in the opening phrase with a softer dynamic level in m. 5 for musical interest. This will prepare the listener for the *crescendo* in m. 9. In the B section, broaden each *crescendo* and taper the *decrescendo*, so that the climax arrives on beat 1 of the second measure of each two-measure phrase. The A' section poignantly recalls the final statement of the "farewell" with the hushed *p* dynamic level and *rall.* ending.

Challenges also include finger crossings, which appear in the left hand in mm. 1-2 and the right hand in mm. 7-8. Move the arm through each crossing in one smooth motion and avoid jerky or sudden movements of the elbow. Practice slowly and listen for a smooth, connected sound. *Crescendo* through the cross-over in m. 1 to correspond

with the ascending chromatic accompaniment, and *decrescendo* in m. 2 to slightly taper the phrase. Practice the right hand alone in the middle section (mm. 9-16) until fluid playing can be achieved.

Hobby-Horse

Structural Analysis

Hobby-Horse imitates the rocking motion of this childhood toy. It is in A (mm. 1-14) **transition** (mm. 15-22) A' (mm. 23-28) design in G Major. Rhythmic groupings of 6/8 meter musically characterize the easy rocking momentum of a child riding the hobby-horse (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7, *Hobby-Horse*, mm. 1-4



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The hands are positioned in close proximity to each other with alternating thirds (mm. 1-2) shifting to root position chords (mm. 3-4).

The vertical sense of the accented chordal texture is offset by a descending staccato scalar passage (mm. 5-6) which adds to the musical appeal.

In the transition section (mm. 15-18), ascending chromatic thirds lead to an extended dominant harmony (mm. 19-22), suggesting the horse and rider are far away. To vividly capture this musical ride, Gretchaninoff writes in the score, "...Too far gone" followed by "...inspite of it happily returned" when the opening chordal motive subsequently returns (m. 23).

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The even execution of the two rhythmic groupings in mm. 1-4 may present a challenge for the student. As a preparatory step, use alternating hands and tap the rhythm of the opening measures while counting aloud to achieve a sense of the two beats per measure. To ensure rhythmic security, repeat this practice step with the teacher tapping two beats per measure reinforcing the sense of two large groupings. The accents over beats 1 and 4 should help group the rhythm of the 6/8 meter in two beats rather than six eighth-notes. Repeat these practice steps with mm. 15-18.

Quick changes of hand position are required to play the alternating thirds and root position chords. Practice the right hand shift from the G Major position to the C Major position several times before playing hands together (mm. 1-3).

In the transition section (mm. 15-22), left hand practice of the ascending chromatic thirds in mm. 15-18 may be required. The notated fingering is awkward and the use of fingers 2 and 4 throughout mm. 15-18 is recommended. Practice chromatic first inversion chords up and down in different registers of the keyboard hands together. Keep the fingering consistent throughout the ascending thirds in mm. 15-18 to facilitate the shaping of the *crescendo*. Consistent fingering for mm. 19-20 will simplify these measures and lead to increased control of the tone.

The descending staccato pattern in mm. 5-6 and 13-14 requires a full, lively sound, reminiscent of galloping hooves. Use firm, curved fingers close to the keys for a rounder tone production. Here, the character of the music calls for heavier staccatos rather than a light bouncy sound.

On the Meadow

Structural Analysis

On the Meadow is a lively and appealing piece in A (mm. 1-8) B (mm. 8-16) A' (mm. 17-26) form. The opening root position chords prominently mark the key of F Major. Charming details of articulation in the A section include staccato-legato exchanges between hands (mm. 3-4) as well as a two-note slur amidst a delicate flurry of staccatos in the right hand (m. 7). In addition, the *tenuto* eighth note in beat 3 of m. 3 emphasizes the climax of the phrase (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8, *On the Meadow*, mm. 1-4



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The three-note melodic motive from mm. 4-6 is repeated a fifth lower in the first two measures of the B section (mm. 8-9). The subsequent six measures (mm. 11-16) display a melodic array of staccatos in the right hand. These alternating broken thirds and fourths are featured over a syncopated ostinato accompaniment in the left hand. The five-measure codetta (mm. 22-26) extends the A' section and recalls the staccato melodic intervals of the B section.

Gretchaninoff juxtaposes contrasting dynamic levels throughout the piece to add musical variety and interest. The alternating *forte* and *piano* effects evoke images of two characters playing in the meadow. There is a musical dialogue that occurs not only between the contrasting dynamics, but also between the contrasting legato and staccato phrases.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

Partial scale passages without finger crossings in the melodic line in mm. 1-8 cover a limited range. Play the scalar figures in mm. 2-3 in one semi-circular motion of the arm. Keep the fingers close to the keys and play the staccato notes lightly with the indicated dynamic shape.

Isolate and practice the staccatos (mm. 11-16) for even execution of the alternating broken thirds and fourths. As a preparatory step for playing mm. 11-12, block and play the alternating intervals harmonically with the right hand. To avoid awkward stretches in mm. 11-16, use fingers 2 and 4 for the thirds and 1 and 4 for the fourths, instead of the notated fingering. Strive for accuracy and evenness when practicing the blocked thirds and fourths. Later, when playing the right hand as written, keep the wrist loose and use a relaxed rotary motion. Before playing hands together, practice separately until the staccatos can be played smoothly and evenly.

On the Meadow offers a variety of articulations and dynamic contrasts including accents and *tenutos* in the A sections. The chordal *forte* opening of the piece calls for a resonant, warm sound. Use adequate arm weight to sink into the dotted-quarter eighth note motive in mm. 1-2, and gently lift the arms for a light release after each two-note slur. The *forte* tone should be full and round.

The *tenuto* C in the left hand in m. 3 should be played with emphasis to accentuate the high point of the *crescendo* as well as the climax of the musical phrase. Similarly, the accent marks over the Fs in mm. 5-6 direct the listener to the arrival of the phrase. The accents emphasize not only the contrasting *forte* dynamic level against the previous *piano* phrase but also delineate the articulation of the dotted-half note against the shorter staccato eighth-notes. Play the accented Fs resolutely in mm. 5-6. Accent marks are absent in a similarly derived phrase in mm. 9-10 and can be contrasted by playing this passage with a tapered *decrescendo* to the B-flat.

Nurse is Sick

Structural Analysis

The key of C Minor sets the melancholy mood for *Nurse is Sick*. It is in A (mm. 1-9) B (mm. 9-16), A' (mm. 16-20) form. This is the only piece in the collection where pedal markings are notated (Figure 3.9).

The colorful harmonies expressively shape the music in several ways. Musical tension and harmonic interest evolve through passing chromatic tones in mm. 9-13. In mm. 13-16, the right hand plays a more integral role in bringing out the melodic interest with minor and major thirds. The ascending chromatic passage has a slight *rubato* feel with the *rall.* markings in mm. 12 and 15-16 and should be played rather freely.

Sudden shifts of dynamic levels from *forte-piano* in mm. 9-16 also heighten the sense of agitation in the music.

Figure 3.9, *Nurse is Sick*, mm. 1-3



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Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

Nurse is Sick calls for expressive playing of the left hand melodic motive. It is important to shape the melodic motive of the left hand carefully by giving the three-note motives prominence over the right hand accompaniment. Bring out the melody in the left hand by using more weight in the arm to depress the keys. Shape the three-note motive with a *decrescendo*, almost like a sigh.

Use the weight of the arm, rather than relying solely on fingers, to depress evenly to the bottoms of the keys. Listen carefully and strive for evenness and balance of sound in the right hand when playing the two-note chord accompaniment throughout the piece.

In the A and A' sections, use the pedal to enhance the seamless quality of the piece but listen carefully to avoid blurring the harmonies. Sustain the harmonies of the right hand and change the pedal where indicated. Practice hands separately with the pedal to reinforce clear syncopated pedaling.

Although it is not marked, pedal throughout the rest of the piece for musical continuity and shaping of phrases. In mm. 9-11 and 15-16, change the pedal on the first and fourth beats. The chromatic passing tones in mm. 12-14 require more frequent pedal changes. Listen carefully for clear harmonic changes and pedal accordingly.

Tedious School Work

Structural Analysis

Tedious School Work, in C Major, is characterized by various repetitive patterns. The punctuating accents capture the imagery of the title. This piece, in A (mm. 1-8) B (mm. 9-12) A' (mm. 13-16) form, contains short, mostly scalar motives for fingers 1-4 (mm. 1-2) and 2-5 (mm. 3-4). The short B section (mm. 9-12) intensifies the exercise of fingers 2-5 at a higher pitch level and with increasing repetition. Gretchaninoff writes above these measures, "bored," to indicate the sense of tedium that may set in during a repetitive task. The A' section (mm. 13-16) resumes the repetitive patterns of mm. 1-2 (Figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10, *Tedious School Work*, mm. 1-2



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Accent marks throughout the piece characterize its repetitive nature. A few accents in the melody of the A section later intensify to encompass both the melody and accompaniment in the B section (mm. 11-12). The culminating A' section features an even more dense and frequent occurrence of accents heightening the sense of mechanical repetition.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The melodic patterns in *Tedious School Work* require shifting hand positions. As a preparatory step, isolate the right hand and play only the beginning note of each ascending pattern. For example, in mm. 1-2, use finger 1 and play E-F-G to the half-note A. Gradually add a *crescendo* for musical shape when reinforcing these ascending steps. Next, play each four-note pattern and the beginning note of the next pattern (4+1). This will prepare the hand to move to the next shifting pattern. Listen for

evenness in the eighth-note grouping and keep the wrist supple to avoid tightness. Gentle semi-circular movement of the wrist will enhance flexibility and evenness of tone. Depress the keys to the bottoms of the keyboard for an even sound. Incorporate a *crescendo* in all these practice steps to prepare the piece musically. Finally, the eighth-note patterns should be played as a gesture with a down-up motion of the arms on each of the groupings. Play the eighth-note patterns with a downward motion on beats 1 and 3 while lifting the arms upward gently on beats 2 and 4. This down-up gesture prepares the hand for each subsequent pattern while facilitating the playing of the two-note slurs in the left hand accompaniment.

The eighth-note patterns in mm. 3-4, 7-12, and 15-16 should begin on the fifth finger to ensure ease and evenness of sound. Practice these patterns in syncopated rhythmic groupings. Incorporate a dotted-eighth sixteenth rhythmic pattern (long-short-long-short etc.). Then repeat this step, reversing the syncopated rhythmic pattern starting with the sixteenth note (short-long-short-long etc.).

The accent marks in *Tedious School Work* have a humorous quality similar to musical jibes. The accents should be played lightly without too much emphasis. The absence of the accent marks in the first three ascending patterns of eighth notes in the A section is sharply contrasted with the insistent accents on beats 1 and 3 in both hands in the

A' section. To highlight the contrast between the accented and unaccented patterns, avoid accenting the thumb when playing mm. 1-2 and 5-6. Add a *crescendo* to each ascending group to shape the rising phrases. In contrast, play the accented statements in the A' section resolutely to convey the growing sense of tedium.

Lullaby

Structural Analysis

The calm nature of *Lullaby* is characterized by the *lento* tempo marking in the key of B Minor. It is in A (mm. 1-6) B (mm. 7-14) A' (mm. 15-20) form and contains expressive, soothing harmonies. The A section begins interestingly on the dominant. The V-i chordal accompaniment in the left hand is colorfully altered in m. 5 with a momentary replacement of the F-sharp in the bass with the G. The F-sharp in the repeated cadential figure in m. 6 reestablishes the dominant harmony and charmingly answers the harmonic query (Figure 3.11).

The harmonically contrasting B section (mm. 7-14) begins in the mediant key of D Major. In m. 11, the left hand accompaniment alternates from E Minor to F-sharp Major before arriving at a V/Bm cadence (m. 14).

Figure 3.11, *Lullaby*, mm. 1-6



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The supporting three and four-voice texture of this piece also enhances the poignant melodic lines. The lyrical melody in the A section is grouped into two-measure phrases that explore slow expressive playing with two voices in one or both hands. The melody in the B section, in contrast to the previous section, is shaped by shorter, one-measure slurs over sustained two-measure slurs in the accompaniment. Melodic movement resumes a vertical chordal texture in m. 11.

Noteworthy in the A' section (mm. 15-20) is the reversal of the soprano and alto lines in mm. 15-18. The alto line in mm. 1-2 is written as the soprano line an octave higher in mm. 15-16, although the F whole notes are not tied. Similarly, the soprano line from mm. 1-4 is written as the alto line in mm. 15-18, with a half-rest marked in m. 15 instead of the F (to avoid awkward voice-leading in the alto voice). The lullaby expressively comes to rest on the colorful cadence from mm. 5-6.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

For *Lullaby*, the challenge for the student with small hands will be the extended positions and large stretches required to sustain the pedal tones above or below the accompaniment figures and melodic lines.

In the beginning, use the pedal to sustain the legato phrasing in a smooth line. Depress the pedal at the end of m. 1 and change it at the beginning of m. 2 for clean harmonic shifts. Stretches of a seventh in the left hand in mm. 7-10 also require lateral arm movement to avoid tension between fingers 4 and 5.

Lullaby is marked *piano* throughout. Although the soft dynamic should be followed, good shaping of phrases and warm tone production should also be encouraged. In m. 1, *crescendo* slightly to the high point of the melodic figure and taper softly down from C-sharp to B in m. 2. When the figure is repeated with a varied rhythm, contrast the melodic figure by playing *mp* the second time. Experiment with various dynamic levels and map out the dynamics before playing the piece. For example, play the first four measures of the B section (mm. 7-8) at a *mf* dynamic level to draw attention to the new key. Then, play the subsequent four measures more softly as the original tonic is prepared and the rhythmic activity slows. Play A' with a gradual *decrescendo*, like a child falling asleep. Play the alto line, which recalls the opening melody, with more prominence in the A' section to highlight the moving inner voice. Finally, isolate and practice

the hand position shifts in mm. 10-11 and 14-15. Prepare and practice the movement several times for security and fluidity.

Little Dance

Structural Analysis

Little Dance is an exuberant dance in C Major and follows A (mm. 1-12) B (mm. 12-20) A (mm. 20-32) form. The A section incorporates short three-note figures in parallel motion in the first four measures, followed by a descending pattern of melodic sixths in the right hand. This pattern alternates with a *non legato* phrase in parallel motion in mm. 6-12.

Perhaps an editing error, the *non legato* marking in mm. 4-5 is inconsistent with the legato slurs. It might have been prematurely marked, since the composer indicates the *non legato* articulation again in mm. 6-8, where there is no slur.

The B section (mm. 12-20) is a varied extension of the alternating pattern of melodic sixths from mm. 4-6. This pattern changes to alternating melodic fourths and thirds in mm. 12-16 and is echoed in the parallel minor key in the subsequent four measures. In addition, the shift from major to minor in mm. 16-20 is accentuated with a dynamic shift from *forte* to *piano*.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The alternating parallel and rotary motion of the arms captures the lively nature of this dance. Parallel ascending and descending figures in both hands convey the dance-like sway and swing. For musical shaping of phrases, use one gesture to play each group of slurred figures. Avoid accenting the first notes of each slur by moving the arms in lateral swings. Follow the changing contours dynamically. Keep the elbows relaxed during the parallel movement in mm. 1-4. The up and downward swing releases should gracefully lead into the relaxed rotary motion of the right hand in mm. 4-6 (Figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12, *Little Dance*, mm. 1-6



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Play the melodic sixths in mm. 4-6 with fingers 1 and 5, because the fingering indicated may be awkward for some students and cause tension

and unnecessary stretching of the hand. In addition, use fingers 3 and 5 for both the melodic thirds and fourths in the right hand (mm. 12-20), instead of the notated fingering.

The *non legato* phrase (mm. 6-8) should be played detached and in a resolute manner to correspond with the *f* dynamic level. The repeated phrase in mm. 10-12, with the *p* dynamic level, calls for a softer touch with a *decrescendo* for the last three notes.

The *rall.* and *decrescendo* markings in mm. 19-20 suggest the dance is winding down to the end, only to resume its lively course with the *a tempo* return of the A section before finally slowing down to end (mm. 30-32). To maintain continuity and symmetry of the A sections, play mm. 30-32 in a detached manner, although the *non legato* marking is absent, to correspond with the *non legato* phrase in mm. 6-8.

Dreadful Event

Structural Analysis

The somber *Dreadful Event* is set in the key of C Minor. It is one of the most harmonically rich pieces in this collection. A chordal texture in the right hand is offset by a linear left hand in the middle and low registers. This texture characterizes the ominous tone (Figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13, *Dreadful Event*, mm. 1-4



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A rondo (A B A' B' A'') form underlies this harmonically dense piece. The melody of the A theme (mm. 1-4) is in the dark register of the left hand. It begins on a dominant G7 harmony in ostinato rhythm and does not resolve to a tonic C Minor cadence until m. 4. In the B theme (mm. 4-10), colorful descending chromatic thirds in the right hand cadence on a third inversion E-flat Major seventh harmony in m. 8. This is set against an accented ostinato D-flat in the left hand. The following three measures, marked *meno mosso* (mm. 8-10), draw the B theme to rest on an augmented sixth harmony in m. 10. This augmented sixth harmony is colorfully altered with a B-flat (instead of a C) and resolves to a V7 (instead of a V) chord in beat 4.

The A' theme (mm. 10-12), which is shorter than the opening A theme, contains added accent marks under the quarter notes and deepens the sense of despair. The B' theme (mm. 12-18) is varied harmonically

with a linear resolution of the augmented sixth harmony to a B-diminished harmony in beat 3 of the *meno mosso* phrase in m. 18. This augmented harmony is re-spelled with a G-flat instead of the F-sharp and the D is delayed until the third beat. The final A'' theme (mm. 18-20) recalls the A' theme (mm. 10-12) with a *rall.* to a *fermata* in the final tonic chord.

The descriptive nature of this music further enhances its appeal. The images of ominous knocks on the door or thumping heartbeats may be suggested by the rhythm of the ostinato half step pattern in the left hand in mm. 1-4. The divided melody between the hands in the B themes and sudden changes in dynamic level from *piano* to *forte* (mm. 6-14) heighten the tension and add the element of surprise to this highly imaginative piece.

Tempo changes in mm. 6-20 also add a narrative aspect. The image of someone scurrying or running can be seen in m. 6 with the *poco accelerando* leading to the *fermata* sign. The *Meno mosso* to the *rall.* marking in the subsequent *forte* measure reflects the heavy footsteps or the ominous call of the "dreadful." *Tempo primo* of the A' theme is resumed softly in m. 10 indicating the calm before the storm.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

A hypnotic eighth-eighth-quarter ostinato rhythmic pattern accentuates the suspenseful nature of *Dreadful Event*. Essential to this foreboding call, is the clear voicing of hands in mm. 1-10 to bring prominence to this ostinato rhythmic pattern. Play the two eighth quarter note pattern with strong fingers close to the keys. This will ensure the *piano* dynamic level in the right hand rhythmic thirds (mm. 6-8). Evenly distribute the weight of the arm and play with the sense of touching the bottoms of the keys. Play with curved fingers and listen for an even sound when playing thirds.

Similarly, when playing the A' theme in *piano* (mm. 10-12), stress the quarter notes which are accented in m. 11 to create a sense of urgency. Emphasize the final three bass (E-flat-D-C) notes of each of the A, A' and A'' themes in accordance with *tenutos* in mm. 4, 12, and 20. The *meno mosso* phrases in mm. 8-9 and 16-17 indicate changing fingers on the repeated notes. Keep the arm and wrist even and relaxed when changing fingers on these figures.

Etude

Structural Analysis

Etude is an excellent chordal and technical study for the developing pianist. Groups of eighth-note patterns are divided between the hands in

this lively E Major study. In the A section (mm. 1-8), the right hand plays root position E Major chords and descending harmonic thirds which alternate between single notes in the left hand (Figure 3.14).

Figure 3.14, *Etude*, mm. 1-4



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The B section (mm. 8-16) only contains descending thirds in the right hand. The A' section (mm. 16-24) is exactly the same as the opening but cadences on the tonic instead of the dominant harmony. Repeat signs after the A and B A' sections extend this study.

The texture of the music is similar to *A Dreadful Event*, with a thicker chordal right hand offset by single notes in the left hand. Strong accents on the down beats provide a steady grounding of the pulse. The accent mark in m. 3 is musically inconsistent and is misplaced from beat 1 to beat 2. This corresponds to m. 18 of the A' section. Challenges for the

early-intermediate student may include playing steadily and evenly with motor coordination and control between hands.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The primary challenge in *Etude* is keeping a steady pulse while playing accurately. In preparation for this chord study, tap the rhythm with both hands. Then, keep a steady pulse while playing with curved fingers close to the keys. Depress the keys firmly and accurately, listening for a resonant and warm tone. Drop the weight from the shoulder to the arm making sure all the notes of the chord sound evenly.

When playing hands together, slow practice should be encouraged for even execution of the alternating eighth notes between the hands. The repetitive nature of *Etude* makes this an ideal memorization study. Memorizing the endings of the A and A' sections will also reinforce and facilitate the moves required to smoothly perform the piece.

After the Ball

Structural Analysis

After the Ball, in B Minor, is in A (mm. 1-8) **B** (mm. 9-16) A (mm. 17-24) form with the **B A** repeated. It is marked *Tempo di Mazurka* and should be played “dreamingly” with sharply contrasting textures and phrase shapes. The A section is characterized by a three-voice texture with

sustained middle notes. These emerging chordal layers and blending voices in mm. 1-4 create a colorful timbrel effect (Figure 3.15).

Figure 3.15, *After the Ball*, mm. 1-4



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Each four measure phrase in the A section consists of 1+1+2 measure groupings. The characteristic dotted rhythmic melodic figure (dotted-eighth sixteenth), traditionally found in Chopin's mazurkas, first appears in the right hand melody in m. 3.

The B section (mm. 9-16), in contrast to the sustained texture of the A section, is in two voices with contrasting articulations. This section, which is in the mediant key of D Major, features a flowing legato melody over a staccato broken chord left hand accompaniment. The dotted rhythmic figure in this section has been augmented to a dotted-quarter eighth-note pattern. The second beat is emphasized with the longer note values which is also typical of mazurkas.

Each four-measure phrase in the B section is subdivided into 2+2 measures, first marked *forte*, then repeated and contrasted in the subsequent four measures at a *piano* dynamic level. The V/Bm chord in m. 16 harmonically prepares the tonic key in the final A section.

Dynamic contrasts also highlight the form and phrasing in this piece. The *mf* dynamic level of the opening A section is contrasted with a *forte-piano* exchange in the B section, closing softly in the final A section.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

After the Ball features contrasting moods and encourages expressive playing. The mood in the A sections seems to reflect upon feelings or events at the ball. The timbrel layers of the three voices create a dreamy state and may be effectively brought out with pedal. To help sustain the middle voice, while adding color and depth, change the pedal at the beginning of each measure and listen carefully to the harmonies to avoid blurring effects.

The B section suggests the musings of someone after the ball retracing their dance steps. The long singular melodic line and the light broken chordal accompaniment are reminiscent of a dance. Play the staccato left hand lightly and balanced beneath the right hand. In contrast, the right hand should sing and be played into the keys with more weight to bring out the shape of the phrases. Finger crossing is required to

connect the legato phrase. In mm. 9-10, smoothly use finger 1 on the G to pivot to finger 2 on the F sharp without breaking the legato. The dreamy state returns in m. 17 and closes with a *rall.* in m. 23.

On a Travel Tour

Structural Analysis

On a Travel Tour, in C Major, is a delightful miniature in A (mm. 1-8) B (mm. 9-13) A' (mm. 14-17) form. The articulation and lengths of phrases are varied, offering a distinct contrast between the A and B sections. In the A section, legato two-measure phrases (mm. 1-2) are juxtaposed with shorter two and three-note slurs (mm. 3-4) that require shifting hand positions. This musical jaunt is accompanied by staccato thirds on the offbeats and two-note slurs (Figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16, *On a Travel Tour*, mm. 1-4



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The contrasting B section (mm. 9-13) is shorter in length than the A section and is comprised of only two-note slurs in the right hand. In addition, the accompaniment also remains smoothly legato with two-note slurs following the melodic shape. Gretchaninoff provides some tempo flexibility and incorporates rubato in mm. 12-17 with *poco accelerando*, *ritardando*, *a tempo* and *rall.* indications.

The return of the A' section in mm. 14-17 is a partial restatement of the opening. It contains only the first three measures of the A section, and cadences on the tonic C Major chord. The *rall.* marking, coupled with the *crescendo* in the last measure, triumphantly ends the piece.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

On A Travel Tour allows the student to work on shifting positions while maintaining a smooth legato line. In mm. 1-2 of the opening A section, give firm support and shape to the melodic line with good finger legato. Keep the fourth and finger fingers lifted and curved when starting the piece for a resonant prominent tone to carry through the melodic line. Shift the right hand up in m. 3 to follow the ascending figure. Shape the phrases according to the *crescendo* and *decrescendo* markings (mm. 3-4). Play the thumb softly on the first note of the *crescendo* to avoid a heavy accent.

In mm. 9-11 of the B section, release the two-note slurs and shift smoothly to the following position. Practice the right hand alone pushing off the keys in one fluid gesture. Experiment with rubato effects in mm. 12-14 by playing m. 12 a bit faster. This slightly hurried manner will portray the image of the traveler hastening his step before resting at the *fermata*. The silence of the quarter rest in m. 13 should not be rushed as the traveler pauses briefly to rest along his journey. Continue this mood by playing the G Major cadence in m. 14 slowly into the keys. Although the *fermata* conveys a sense of arrival, the traveler resumes his tour and finally arrives at his destination four measures later (mm. 14-17). Accentuate the final *rall.* in m. 17 with a *crescendo* emphasizing the end of the journey.

The Little Would-be Hero

Structural Analysis

The final and longest solo in the collection is a waltz, *The Little Would-be Hero*. It is in F Major and in **A** (mm. 1-16) **B** (mm. 17-36) **A** (mm. 37-52) form with **B A** repeated. The A and B sections are similar in character with subtle contrasts in the melodic shape and accompaniment. The A section contains a linear melodic line in a rising shape over a jump-bass, broken-chord accompaniment (Figure 3.17).

Figure 3.17, *The Little Would-be Hero*, mm. 1-8



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The B section contains a descending melodic line in mm. 17-20 which is answered by shorter two-measure slurred phrases (Figure 3.18). The flowing melodic line requires finger crossing over the thumb for a smooth legato phrase (mm. 18 and 26).

Figure 3.18, *The Little Would-be Hero*, mm. 17-25



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The waltz-bass accompaniment in this elegant dance involves some leaps, seventh chords and sustained tones. A challenge for pianists with small hands will be the reach required to play seventh chords in the left hand in the B section.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The Little Would-be Hero is an excellent study of the waltz bass accompaniment. As a preparatory step, isolate and practice the waltz bass patterns in the left hand separately. Broken chords sometimes require the bass note to be held while the rest of the chord is played (mm. 1-4 and 9-12). Move the arm in a fluid down-up-up motion, so that the second and third beats are lighter and softer than the sustained note of the first beat. Keep the fifth finger tall and depress the held note a little louder to sustain the sound throughout the entire measure.

In the B section (mm. 17-36), practice the left hand waltz accompaniment divided between two hands to achieve balance and evenness of sound. Then play the waltz pattern with one hand, matching the tone and balance from the previous practice step. All notes of the chord should sound when played by the left hand. Although there are no pedal markings, the use of the pedal enhances the character and flow of this waltz. Apply the pedal on the first beats in mm. 1-4 to sustain the bass

note. This pedaled texture will also add an element of grandeur and fullness to this dance.

Shape and taper the melodic figure in mm. 1-2 by playing the first note C with more prominence and *decrescendo* to the second note D. Complete the phrase in mm. 5-8 with the *crescendo*. This calls for playing into the keys to give more tonal prominence to the legato phrase. Overall, strive for good balance between the lyrical melodic line and a softer supporting harmonic accompaniment. Maintain the symmetry and musical consistency in the A phrases. Although the *non legato* marking is absent in mm. 41-52, play these last two measures of the piece with a detached touch as indicated in mm. 7-8.

Dynamically enhance the phrase shapes in the A and B sections by paying close attention to the groupings of phrases. The 2+2+4 measure phrase groupings in the A section (mm. 1-8) call for a *decrescendo* in the melody from C to D in the first two measures. Play mm. 3-4 louder (still tapering the second note) but drop back to a *piano* dynamic level to gradually pace the *crescendo* in mm. 5-8. Play the second phrases (mm. 9-16) similarly. In the final two measures of this phrase (mm. 15-16), play the *non legato* arpeggio in the left hand lightly and taper with the *decrescendo*.

In contrast to the consistent groupings of the phrases in the A section, the phrase groupings vary in the B section. The first phrase in the

B section is subdivided into 4+2+2 measures in mm. 17-24. Play mm. 17-20 with a slight *crescendo* to shape the musical flow and direction of the four measures. Contrast the two-measure figures by playing the second one slightly softer. The second phrase (mm. 25-32) is subdivided into 4+4 measures followed by a short cadential passage (mm. 32-36) which slowly tapers to a C7 chord. Keep the tone prominent throughout this phrase to convey a smooth, musical line.

Interestingly, the *f* and *p* dynamic markings in the B and final A sections are marked in parentheses. This allows the performer more flexibility and variety in choosing a dynamic level for these sections. For example, playing the B section in a moderate dynamic level might allow more flexibility to *crescendo* in the phrase. Another possibility may be to play in the dynamic level indicated in the parentheses after the repeat.

CHAPTER IV
HISTORIETTES, OPUS 118

Introduction

Historiettes, op. 118 was written in 1928 and published two years later. Described as “12 children’s pieces” in Gretchaninoff’s catalogue, these miniatures were composed three years after Gretchaninoff emigrated to France and reflect an increased use of impressionistic and contemporary style characteristics. These pieces are appropriate for the intermediate level student, although the first nine pieces contain fewer musical and technical complexities than the last three.

Primavera

Structural Analysis

Primavera, in C Major, is a simply constructed piece in **A** (mm. 1-8) **B** (mm. 9-16) **A** (mm. 17-24) form with **B A** repeated. Alternating G7 and CM harmonies in second inversion accompany the melody throughout the piece with no key change in the middle section. An unexpected V/Am chord adds a harmonic twist at the end of the B section (m. 16).

Subtle musical contrasts distinguish the A and B sections. Each four-measure phrase in the A section (mm. 1-8) is shaped with an ascending sixth and a sustained note (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1, *Primavera*, mm. 1-2



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In contrast, the melodic phrases in the B section (mm. 9-16) feature descending shapes with motivic repetitions. Static V7 and I harmonies alternate until the unexpected turn to V/Am before the return of the A section (m. 16). In addition, *tenutos* mark the beginnings of each phrase.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

Shaped phrases and balanced voices between the hands develop expressive playing and provide structural clarity to *Primavera*. For example, in mm. 1-2, play the melodic note E on beat 2 prominently with a *crescendo* to m. 4, before tapering the final note G. Contrast the second

phrase (mm. 5-8) with a *mp* dynamic level and *decrescendo* in the final two measures of the A section.

In the B section, clearly shape the phrasing of each *tenuto* figure (mm. 9-10, 13-14) by adhering to the *slur* markings. This phrase shape serves to accentuate beat 1 of each measure which corresponds to the *tenuto* mark. The *tenutos* add clarity and distinction to the shape of these measures by requiring the hand to release the previous note to stress the note A. Shape the first phrase of the B section (mm. 9-12) with a *crescendo* through mm. 9-10 playing the second measure louder to direct the musical momentum to m. 11. Then, *decrescendo* through the descending melodic line to m. 12. Shape the second phrase (mm. 13-16) similarly, relaxing softly into the unexpected E Major harmony in m. 16. Maintain the moderate dynamic level throughout the final A section.

The left hand accompaniment requires hands separate practice for voicing of chords and phrase shape. As a preparatory step, block the broken chords in the accompaniment to reinforce the shifts of hand positions between the chord changes. When these chord changes are smooth and accurate, play the accompaniment as written, tapering softly to the second note or chord. The span of a seventh required in the G7 chord makes this piece suitable for students with larger hands.

Listen for evenness of sounds when voicing two and three-note chords. Use a heavy arm to play into the keys making sure all the notes

sound in every chord. To achieve proper balance between the hands, listen carefully and play the left hand chordal accompaniment softer than the right hand. In addition, pedal with the left hand chords (except m. 15, which moves in quarter notes).

Solitude

Structural Analysis

Solitude portrays a melancholy mood in E Minor. It is in A (mm. 1-8) B (mm. 9-16) A' (mm. 17-20) form with lilting dotted rhythms in the melody (Figure 4.2). The left hand features broken triads, often in first inversion, and at times encompasses a seventh (mm. 11-12 and 16). The accompaniment shifts to the treble register in m. 3 and remains there throughout the piece.

Figure 4.2, *Solitude*, mm. 1-4



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Repeating four-measure phrases provide structural balance and symmetry to both the A and B sections. The four-measure phrase pattern of the A section is repeated up a fifth in the B section (mm. 9-16). At the end of the B section, the *rall.* marking in mm. 15-16 poignantly paints the waning music with *tenutos*, emphasizing the tapered two-note slurs. The *decrescendos* under each two-note slur portray a musical “sigh” lingering on a dominant seventh harmony (m. 16) that is resolved in the following measure. Only the second phrase of the opening A section is used in the A’ section, characteristic of Gretchaninoff’s compositional style.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The sadness in *Solitude* is musically painted with the dotted-note motive in the melody in mm. 1-2. Since this motive is repeated twice, play the second one a bit softer with a slight rubato to indicate a sense of reluctance or longing. *Crescendo* through the ascending melodic shape of the sixteenth-note figure in m. 3 and softly taper the ending. In the next two measures the left hand contains broken first inversion triads marked by two-note slurs in mm. 5-6 (Figure 4.3). Gently release the second note of each two-note accompaniment figure softly. Overall, listen for smooth, accurate chord changes.

Figure 4.3, *Solitude*, mm. 5-6



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Shape the four-measure phrases of the A and B section with dynamic contrast. For example, contrast the *mf* dynamic level of the opening phrase in the A section (mm. 1-4) with a softer dynamic level in the second phrase (mm. 5-8), highlighting the harmonic differences. Similarly, contrast the moderate dynamic level of the opening of the B section (mm. 9-12) with a *mp* dynamic level in m. 13. Then, gradually *crescendo* and arrive at a *f* dynamic level to the *tenuto* marked B (m. 15).

Finally, linger on the first of each two-note slur in the right hand in mm. 15-16. These two-note slurs are emphasized with *tenutos*, musically illuminating the descending melodic notes: B-A-G. Play these two-note slurs gradually softer with a *rall.* in mm. 15-16.

Sur la prairie verte

Structural Analysis

Sur la prairie verte (*In the Green Meadows*) is an appealing piece in ternary form with a pastoral and folk-like melody (Figure 4.4). The harmonic structure is simply designed through tonic and dominant chords in A Major with subtle contrasts in the **A** (mm. 1-4) and **B** (mm. 5-8) sections. The tonic triads in the left hand accompaniment in the A section are varied to dyads in I-V-vi-V harmonies in the B section. This variance is also accompanied by hand shifts to the middle and high registers.

Figure 4.4, *Sur la prairie verte*, mm. 1-2,



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The melodic line is also subtly altered in various ways. Two-note slurs shape this tuneful melodic line on the down beats of mm. 1-3. The second beat is prolonged with *tenutos* highlighting the tonic note.

The two-note articulations increase in frequency starting from m. 4 and shift to broken thirds and fifths outlining tonic and dominant harmonies (mm. 5-8). In the A' section (mm. 9-12), the melodic line soars up an interval of a seventh to the tonic note A in the final two beats of m. 12.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

Sur la prairie verte is a musical study in chord playing and two-note slurs. In the A section, careful attention should be given to the slur markings in the melody. Play the two-note slur in m. 1 in a down-up motion releasing the second note gently. Then, continue the momentum of the lift and release gesture and drop back into the key with finger 1. This release-dropping gesture should provide sufficient weight for the playing of the *tenuto* A on the second beat and should be repeated in mm. 2-3 and throughout the B section with the series of two-note slurs. Listen carefully to avoid accenting the first note of each two-note slur.

The voicing of chords in the left hand can be reinforced by using adequate arm weight for even tone projection. Be sure all the notes of the chords are depressed evenly and are heard, especially in the three and four-note chords, without tensing the arm, shoulder, or wrist.

Listen for a flowing melodic line in the right hand. While the *f* and *ff* dynamic markings call for an energetic and lively performance, shape the phrases with dynamic nuances to enhance musical expression.

Crescendo and broaden the melodic leap up a sixth in m. 2. In addition, begin m. 5 a bit softer than the *ff* dynamic level and gradually *crescendo* to m. 6. Repeat this process in mm. 7-8 and gradually taper softly to the *fermata* in m. 8. In the final measure of the piece, play the last three notes prominently with a slight *ritard.* to accentuate the changed ascending melodic line.

L'ombre

Structural Analysis

The mysterious aura of *L'ombre (Shadow)*, is supported by an ostinato rhythm that is revealed through various textures. It is in ternary form with dyads growing to three-note chords in the left hand. The melody is added to this texture in m. 3 (Figure 4.5). Descending scalar lines in the chordal accompaniment in mm. 1-12 highlight the key of D Major.

Figure 4.5, *L'ombre*, mm. 1-6



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The harmonic structure colorfully adds contrast and a sense of mystery to this piece. While the first phrase (mm. 1-6) in the A section emphasizes a D Major harmony, the second phrase (mm. 7-12) suggests the relative B Minor harmony. The ii°7-V-I cadential pattern (mm. 11-12) tapers softly on the dominant of B Minor. The first phrase (mm. 13-18) of the B section begins on the subdominant and moves through these harmonies:

(m. 13)**GM**--(m. 14)**AM**--[(m. 15)**Em7**-(m. 16)**AM**](m. 17-18)**DM**

The second phrase (mm. 19-22) is shorter and consists of four measures:

(m. 19)**GM**--(m. 20)**AM**--(mm. 21)**DM**--(mm. 22)**F-sharp7**.

The two-measure right hand texture [(m. 15)**Em7**-(m. 16)**AM**] is absent in the second phrase. In addition, the two-measure D Major harmonic cadence (mm. 17-18) changes to V/Bm: F-sharp Major in m. 22. In the A' section (mm. 23-34), the second phrase remains in the tonic key.

The suspenseful nature of the piece is characterized by the short-long ostinato rhythm of a sarabande, marked with downbeat *tenutos* in the A and A' sections. This ostinato pattern in the B section begins with a quarter, dotted-quarter, eighth-note rhythm in the left hand (mm. 13-14). This dotted rhythmic pattern is answered an octave higher in the right hand melody in mm. 15-16.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

L'ombre is an imaginative and musically appealing piece with various technical challenges, including voicing of the chords within the left hand and balance of melody and accompaniment lines between the hands. The octave span in the melody in mm. 21-22 might present a challenge for pianists with small hands.

It is important to play the chordal harmonies in the left hand evenly so that all the notes sound equally. Depress the keys with curved fingers, using adequate arm weight to produce a warm tone. When the right hand texture is introduced (mm. 3, 9, 15, 21, 25, 31), play the melodic note prominently to project the new voice. Similarly, the *tenutos* in both the melody and accompaniment in the A sections indicate playing with more supportive weight in the arms for a resonant tone quality.

The quarter notes in the left hand (mm. 1-2), also marked with *tenutos*, should be held a bit longer as well, to project a sense of reluctance or uncertainty. Intensify this sense of longing in the right hand in mm. 5-6 by taking time in the rising melodic figure (m. 5), which is highlighted by the melodic leap up a fifth. Follow the suggested *crescendo* marking and taper the phrase with a slight *ritard.* and *decrescendo* in m. 6.

In the B section, the slurs in mm. 17-18 call for smooth, connected playing of the eighth-note line. Use fingers 1 and 3 to play the fourths in the right hand in m. 17 to facilitate a good finger legato. Similarly, shift

smoothly to the thumb in the last note of m. 17 to maintain the legato line. In contrast, separate mm. 21-22 into two phrases, playing the second phrase softer in m. 22. Gradually *ritard.* mm. 22-23 for the return to the A' section.

The lack of dynamic markings in the B section provides the performer with some musical latitude. For example, begin playing the opening phrase (mm. 13-18) at a soft dynamic level to contrast the moderate dynamic level of the previous section. Gradually *crescendo* in mm. 15-16 to the B on beat 1 of m. 18. Taper the phrase, and softly drop back to the *p* dynamic level in the following phrase (mm. 19-22). Since a tempo indication is not included in this piece, the writer suggests a relaxed, moderate tempo to correspond with the mysterious character of this piece.

Refrain joyeux

Structural Analysis

Refrain joyeux (Joyous Refrain) is a brilliant piece in 2/2 meter. It is in A (mm. 1-8) B (mm. 9-16) A (mm. 17-24) form in G Major. The accented rolled chords of the A section portray ringing bells. Patterns of repeated seconds and thirds in mm. 3-4 enhance the energetic and lively quality of this miniature (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6, *Refrain Joyeux*, mm. 1-4



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In contrast to the resounding chordal texture of the A section, the B section has a thinner two-voice texture with a staccato accompaniment under a pattern of repeated eighth-notes in the melody. Subtle harmonic shadings in this piece include a brief foray into the mediant key in the B section. The V-i cadence in B Minor (m. 12) is reinforced by the subsequent *rall.* (mm. 13-14).

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

Refrain joyeux is a brilliant and lively miniature for the intermediate student who can easily reach an octave. Its bell-like, rolled chords make it an excellent recital piece. These jubilant chords should be pedaled to sustain and support the resonant tones. Listen carefully and change the pedal cleanly at the beginning of each roll to avoid blurring.

For proper voicing of the rolled chord in m. 1, give prominence to the bottom note B in the left hand and the top note D in the right hand. Since the pedal helps to sustain the harmony, release the middle notes of the chord if the right hand octave span is difficult to reach. Roll the chords fluidly with a smooth lateral motion in the right hand. As a preparatory step, isolate and practice rolling the chords slowly in various registers of the piano with the pedal. Then gradually increase the tempo, until the lateral motion and the pedal are well coordinated and smooth.

This piece is also an excellent study for playing repeated notes. For the repeated double notes of the A section (mm. 3-4), keep the hand close to the keys and maintain a light (almost staccato) touch. *Crescendo* slightly when playing the repeated notes so that the music continues to have direction and flow. Use finger 1 each time on the repeated notes in mm. 9-10, so it feels like mm. 3-4, and unify the feeling of playing repeated notes.

Other preparatory practice steps for expressive playing include working on the articulation in the left hand accompaniment. The two-note slurs in the left hand of mm. 3 and 7 should be practiced separately for fluid phrase shape. Play the two-note slurs in one gesture using fingers 1 and 2 on the fourths and thirds for a smooth slurring to the D while listening for a light and tapered phrase. The thinner texture, and the *mf* dynamic marking in the B section, suggests a lighter staccato touch in the

left hand accompaniment in contrast to the boisterous character of the A section.

Dynamics also heighten the brief harmonic foray into the mediant key in the B section with the repeated V-i cadential measures in mm. 12-14. Play the *tenuto* on the E-sharp firmly (mm. 13-14), while gradually playing softer and slower as if to signal the end. The *rall. e dim.* closing (mm. 13-14), with the *tenuto* E-sharp (the leading tone to F-sharp) reinforces the V-i relationship in B Minor. The *a Tempo* dominant extension in m. 15 propels the music forward toward the tonic resolution in m. 17. Lean into the C-sharp *tenutos* with strong fingers and supported arm weight. Boldly punctuate the leading tone to D. *Crescendo* through mm. 15-16 to propel the musical energy and harmonic momentum to the V-I cadence in G Major.

Conte terrible

Structural Analysis

Conte terrible (Terrible Tale) displays a heavy, somber mood. It is in rounded binary form (A | B A) with each section repeated. The character is imaginatively depicted in the low register in C Minor and is held almost entirely at a very loud dynamic level. The melody throughout features chromatically expanding *tenuto* two-note slurs with accented half notes in the accompaniment (Figure 4.7). The musical plot thickens in the

B section (mm. 7-16) with increased vertical density and dissonant melodic imitations.

Figure 4.7, *Conte terrible*, mm. 1-2



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Constant chromatic activity and unusual harmonic resolutions contribute to the suspenseful nature of this piece. For example, a German sixth chord in m. 3 resolves to a V7-I cadence in mm. 3-4, and a diminished-seventh of G resolves to a G7 chord in third inversion via an F7 chord in mm. 9-10. The *Meno mosso* (mm. 15-16) provides the climax of this piece with an isolated tritone figure in the deep bass.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The dark setting of *Conte terrible* is highlighted by accent marks in the left hand and *tenutos* in the right hand. These highlights create a foreboding sense with the *ff* dynamic level. The left hand accompaniment

should be played with a heavy arm to emphasize the “terrible.” Accent the *tenutos* in the two-note slurs of the chromatic melodic line in mm. 1-2 and mm. 7-8. Play each two-note slur with a *decrescendo* and softly taper the descending chromatic notes. For a dramatic effect, play the repeated cadence in mm. 5-6 louder, and the *tenuto* tonic harmony emphatically.

In the B section, the repeated eighth-notes on E-flat and D in the melody (m. 9) lead to the arrival of the treble C on beat 3. *Crescendo* through the repeated notes to accentuate the arrival on the *tenuto* C, then taper with a *decrescendo* to the resolving B. The repeated eighth-note figure is answered (though not strictly imitated) with the left hand in beat 3 of mm. 9-10. Play this rhythmic dialogue prominently.

The *decrescendos* in mm. 13-14, are written inside the measure instead of over the melodic line in mm. 9-10. This would perhaps suggest that the right hand in mm. 13-14 be played softer with a more prominent left hand. In mm. 15-16, the eighth-note *tenuto* figures in the lower bass register should be played slowly and sustained with a heavy arm to suggest the descent into a “pit of darkness.” Gradually slow down but keep the tone projected, especially in the sudden *ff* marked *Meno mosso* phrase. Play the *tenuto* tritones (m. 16) resolutely and steadily. The bold, speech-like effect of these accented tritones should be played with firm fingers while dropping into the keys. The *fermata* over the half rests heightens the suspenseful nature of this piece and should not be rushed.

Consolation

Structural Analysis

Consolation, in F Major, is in A (mm. 1-8) B (mm. 9-18) A (mm. 20-26) form with B A repeated. This cheerful piece contains subtle, contrasting textures and articulations in and between the A and B sections. Each four-measure phrase in the A section juxtaposes descending lines in parallel motion (mm. 1-2) with a more vertical, chordal texture (mm. 3-4). The contrasting B section, in C Major, contains repetitive two-note slurs which increase the musical momentum. The texture remains chordal with the exception of a single-line recitative phrase (mm. 17-18). This recitative link to the final A section features a legato melody between the hands. It is marked *rall.* with a shift from 3/4 to 4/4 meter (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8, *Consolation*, mm. 1-4



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Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The contrast of long and short phrases within *Consolation* encourages the intermediate student to experience various gestures and touches. The added challenge of playing sustained and moving voices within one hand strengthens and develops hand-arm coordination.

Sustained and moving voices within each hand of the opening phrase (mm. 1-2) may present technical challenges and require hands separate practice for evenness of sound and shaping of the phrase. Although the opening interval in the right hand is a fifth, use fingers 1 and 4 to achieve a legato line in the top voice. Keep the fingers curved for even, steady playing of the descending scalar line. Similarly, in the left hand, keep the fourth and fifth fingers tall and curved for a legato, even line. Enhance the expressive shape of this phrase with a *crescendo* through the moving voices to the *tenutos* (m. 2).

This melodious piece also reinforces smooth playing of legato double thirds in mm. 3-4 and 7-8. As a preparatory step, play the top and bottom notes of the thirds separately with a smooth, legato shape. Then, play these double thirds in several different registers of the piano with a down-up motion of the arm to smoothly facilitate the execution of these legato thirds. In addition, play the two-note slurred eighth-note accompaniment in mm. 11-12 with a down-up motion of the arm. The release of each group should prepare the hand for the next group in one

smooth movement. Practice this gesture in the subsequent measures with the right hand in mm. 13-16.

Another technical challenge includes playing the legato melodic figure in mm. 10 and 12. Fingers 1, 2, and 3 are required to play the dotted-quarter chord on beat 1, even though the reach of a fifth in the melody may create an awkward stretch with fingers 3 and 5. Use a lateral motion of the arm and lead with the elbow to execute a smooth phrase. In addition, sustain the dotted-quarter note value with only the top melody note, and release the bottom two notes of the chord early to provide more mobility and flexibility in playing this legato.

The lack of dynamic markings in the B section provides opportunities for the student to explore various musical and expressive dynamic nuances. For example, begin the B section at a *f* dynamic level and make the repeat of the phrase (mm. 11-12) softer. Also, articulate the left hand prominently to accentuate its increased melodic importance. Gradually *crescendo* through the V7-I cadential prolongation (mm. 13-16). The *f* arrival of the two-measure recitative link (mm. 17-18) should be played freely with rubato. Play the *rall.* melodic line boldly. Taper only the C to B-flat to signal the return of the A section (m. 19).

Orphelin

Structural Analysis

The warm, harmonic timbres of *Orphelin* (*Orphan*) are brought out in the key of B-flat Minor and set in A (mm. 1-8) B (mm. 9-16) A (mm. 17-20) form. The *Lento* tempo features the tonic harmony alternating between neighbor tones with a B-flat pedal (mm. 1-2). The chromatic descent of *tenuto* thirds in m. 1 depicts a musical “sigh” and a sense of despair (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9, *Orphelin*, mm. 1-2



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The lush harmonic movement in the B section is most noteworthy with a repeat of the melody from the A section. These harmonies smoothly wind through E-flat Minor, momentarily lingering in A-flat Major (mm. 11-12), and arrive at a iv-V7-i cadence in B-flat Minor (mm. 15-16).

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

Although *Orphelin* is marked *lento*, the piece should still flow and have a sense of direction and motion. The rocking, two-note slurs offset between the hands encourage playing with a gentle, relaxed, rotary motion. Linger over the *tenuto* notes in mm. 1-2, with a slight emphasis on the dotted-quarter note. This will reinforce the 2/2 meter and express the wistful mood. The dynamic markings in m. 3 facilitate the ascending shape of the melodic line to the *tenuto* C. Linger slightly longer and give more emphasis to the following *tenuto* in the next measure to contrast the change in harmony.

The brief harmonic shift from minor to major in mm. 11-12 may be reflected not only by shaping the phrase expressively, as indicated, but also by lingering slightly on beat 3 of m. 11. In mm. 15-16, start the *rall.* earlier on beat 1, and pause momentarily on the high C to incorporate a more expansive *rall.* on beat 3 and 4.

Although there are no written pedal markings, the sustained half notes in the left hand require the use of the pedal for a legato and smooth phrasing. Change pedal with each half note pulse and listen for clean harmonic changes. The pedal provides a seamless quality and facilitates a smooth legato phrase through the awkward stretches (mm. 3, 11, and 19).

En dansant

Structural Analysis

En dansant (Dancing) is a folk dance in triple meter. It is in the key of B-flat Major and is in A (mm. 1-8) B (mm. 9-16) A' (mm. 17-24) form. Contrasting articulations between the hands distinguish this piece. In the A section, the right hand melody contains legato dotted motives with staccato weak beats over a legato left hand accompaniment (Figure 4.10). In the B section, dotted rhythms in the right hand are intensified with ascending extensions over left hand chords on the weak beats.

Figure 4.10, *En dansant*, m. 1-4



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This dance also follows an interesting harmonic route. Although the piece begins in B-flat Major, the opening section ends with a ii-V-i cadential pattern in D Minor (mm. 7-8). The B section remains in the key of D Minor with the F7 harmony (m. 15) preparing the B-flat return. The

whole rest in m. 16 suspends the music briefly and creates a sense of anticipation for the dance to resume.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

En dansant requires rhythmic vitality and suggests a lively folk dance. The dotted rhythms in the melody should be played steadily with a dancing lilt. As a preparatory step, tap hands together to reinforce this rhythm. In addition, practice the right hand alone for smooth thumb crossings (1-2-1) on the down beats of mm. 9-16. In mm. 9-11, practice releasing the staccato quarter note on beat 3 and shift smoothly to the next hand positions.

Contrasting touches in the left hand accompaniment distinguish the graceful, courtly nature of the A section with the more energetic, middle section. In the A section, smoothly connect and shape the *grazioso* accompaniment according to the slurs in mm. 1-6. The cadential chords in mm. 7-8 should be played lightly detached. In the B section (mm. 9-16), bring out the block chord accompaniment supporting the sharp, dotted rhythms in the melody. The chords in the left hand should be played detached with a softer touch on beat 3 than on beat 2. Play with firm, curved fingers into the keys, voicing all the notes of the chord evenly. Smoothly play and release each chord, moving through the shifts in position fluidly in mm. 9-13.

Appropriate dynamic nuances in the B section may enhance its lively character. Although the section is marked *f*, gradually *crescendo* through mm. 9-10, delaying the arrival of the full dynamic effect until the A in m. 10. Drop back to a *mf* dynamic level in mm. 11-12 and maintain the *crescendo* and energy through mm. 13-16 climaxing on the high C in m. 15. This *ff* measure is marked to be played strictly in tempo without *rall.* This momentum energetically directs the musical line to the climax of the dance. This breathless excitement is momentarily suspended in m. 16 where the music abruptly stops (allowing the dancers to catch their breath).

The graceful nature of the dance resumes in the A' section. The *Rall.* and *fermata* in mm. 21-22 draws the listener to a false sense of close before its final rousing finish in mm. 23-24. Gradually *decrescendo* through mm. 21-22 while slowing down for the pause. With a sense of gusto and enthusiasm, play the consequent *a Tempo* ending at a *forte* dynamic level. The shift to the bass register in the accompaniment in mm. 23-24 also prominently emphasizes the tonic key with its resounding IV-V-I cadence (Figure 4.11).

Figure 4.11, *En dansant*, mm. 21-24



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Heureux évènement

Structural Analysis

Heureux évènement (*A Happy Event*) is a highly rhythmic and lively piece in E-flat Major. It is in **A** (mm. 1-8) **B** (mm. 9-16) **A'** (mm. 17-21) form with **B A'** repeated. The *non legato* touch, the dotted rhythms, and the off-beat chords in the left hand accompaniment project a bouncy, spirited character (Figure 4.12).

Figure, 4.12, *Heureux évènement* mm. 1-2



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The A section is characterized by a shift from a single-line texture between the hands to a two-line melody and accompaniment. The thicker texture in the B section is enhanced by off-beat, four-note chords in the left hand. The right hand must project the melody, while playing the top notes of the inner line in the off-beat chords (Figure 4.13). Repeated two-measure phrases (mm. 9-12) alternate between F Minor and G Major harmonies. The following phrase (mm. 13-16) brings the section to a close with repetitions of the arpeggiated F Minor harmony leading to a chordal B-flat7 harmony. This cadential extension of ii-V7 is repeated an octave higher with a rhythmic variance (mm. 15-16).

Figure 4.13, *Heureux évènement*, mm. 9-10



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Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The technical challenges in playing *Heureux évènement* include balance within and between hands. The sixteenth-note rhythmic pattern

of the broken chords in the right hand in m. 4 is notated in two-note slurs. The challenge lies in playing the broken chords evenly due to the octave span (m. 4). Play the consecutive two-note slur figures with a down-up motion of the arms, keeping a relaxed wrist to facilitate the smooth legato phrase.

As a practice step for playing mm. 9-12 evenly and steadily, tap the rhythm hands together. The off-beat left hand chords in this section should be precisely executed in a light detached manner with rhythmic accuracy. In addition, balancing the sustained and moving lines within the right hand requires practicing hands separately. As a preparatory step, voice the melodic treble line prominently at a *forte* dynamic level while playing the accompaniment middle voice softer at a *piano* dynamic level to delineate the separate voices. Articulate the off-beat accompaniment figures in the inner voice of the right hand evenly and in a light detached manner to correspond with the left hand. Play the melody in the right hand prominently, and balance the off-beat chords in the left hand leaving out the accompaniment notes. After achieving evenness and balance of sounds between the hands, add the inner accompaniment voice in the right hand. Listen and adjust the balance of sound so that the thicker chordal texture of the off-beat accompaniment in the right and left hands does not overshadow the melodic line.

Enhance and expressively shape the *non legato* phrase dynamically in mm 1-2 with energy and rhythmic precision. Begin at a moderate dynamic level and *crescendo* slightly to the *forte* dynamic level on beat 2 of m. 1. The *mf* dynamic level of the B section requires a *leggiero* touch to contrast with the *forte* A section.

Pedal is indicated in mm. 14 and 16, adding resonance and warmth to the chord tones in the treble register. Play the left hand chords with a light staccato touch while prominently voicing the right hand staccato notes (mm. 13-14). Play the repeated phrase (mm. 15-16) more loudly and emphatically.

Orientale

Structural Analysis

The expressiveness and timbral effects of *Orientale* are brought out through its harmonic movement. This lilting piece, in G Minor, is in A (mm. 1-8) B (mm. 9-15) A' (mm. 16-19) form. The melody consists of slurred three-note groupings that are played in dotted and even rhythms with a broken chord accompaniment (Figure 4.14). The harmony in the first four-measure phrase in the A section alternates between i-vii⁷ harmonies and cadences with vii⁷/V-V in m. 4.

Figure, 4.14, *Orientale*, mm. 1-2



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The B section briefly introduces the mediant harmony (mm. 9-12). Here, both melody and bass descend chromatically, balancing the rising chromatic movement in mm. 3-4. A recitative link (mm. 13-15) to the A' section, marked *con alcuna liberta* (with some freedom), encourages rubato playing. The D7 chord is rolled in the left hand while the right hand plays a single line *recit.* phrase. The D pedal tone in the soprano voice, carried over from m. 15, is new in the A' section. This pedal tone richly adds another timbral layer to the closing.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

Orientale emphasizes lyrical, rubato playing with chromatic tones, creating an array of musical timbres in dotted and even rhythms. Expressive phrasing and melodic and rhythmic groupings are integral parts of performing this piece. As a preparatory step, practice shaping the

rhythmic figures in the right hand (mm. 1-8). Follow the three-note groupings in the A section, making sure to release the hand gently after each group to articulate the sense of two large beats in the 6/8 meter. Shape the two-note slurs of the broken chord in the left hand with a *decrescendo*. Finally, play the entire phrase (mm. 1-8) with a relaxed, rotary motion between the hands. Avoid an accent or a staccato touch at the ends of slurs on the third and sixth beats.

Dynamic nuances enhance the shape and direction of phrases in the A section. Gradually *crescendo* in mm. 3-4, following the ascending line of the melodic notes G-A-B-flat and taper the melodic two-note slur softly in m. 4. For dynamic contrast, invert this process in the following phrase (mm. 5-8). Although there are no dynamic markings in the first four measures of the B section (mm. 9-12), the musical dialogue in mm. 9-10 allows the student to experiment with various interpretive possibilities. For example, play mm. 9-10 softly and *crescendo* to a *f* dynamic level in mm. 11-12. Accentuate this musical momentum to the *fermata* A. Hold and listen for this A to wane considerably before renewing the *forte* dynamic level in the recitative link.

The recitative link (mm. 13-15) is indicated to be played freely without strict adherence to tempo. Play the melodic line purposefully and emphatically with an *accelerando* to the B-flat in m. 13 and gradually slowing down to the half note D in m. 15. Play the D prominently,

sustaining the tone through the *fermata* and into the A' section. Divide the D7 chord between the hands (m. 13), playing F-sharp with right hand, and roll the chord slowly. The D7 chord should unfold freely to prepare the listener for the *recit.* line.

The soprano pedal point over the moving voice in the right hand (mm. 16-17) is new in the A' section. Play the *tenuto* D with finger 5 prominently and at a *f* dynamic level. Play the moving voices at a *mp* dynamic level for clarity and distinction between the two voices. Pedal throughout the piece, changing on the first and fourth beats of every measure. The slight blurring of chromatic tones adds timbral and coloristic touches throughout the music. Change the pedal on beat 3 and 4 of the final measure to correspond with the harmonic changes.

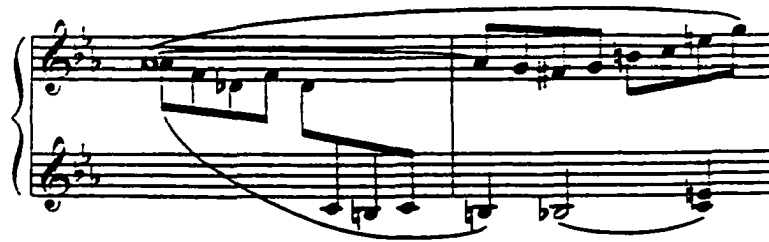
Les nuages errants

Structural Analysis

The last piece in the collection is evocatively titled *Les nuages errants* (*Wandering Clouds*) and marked *Moderato poetico*. It is in A (mm. 1-10) B (mm. 11-18) A' (mm. 19-26) design, followed by a codetta in mm. 27-30. This linear melody covers a wide range of the keyboard with many shifts of register. Passing chromatic tones throughout the work, blend the colorful tones into the harmonic fabric (Figure 4.15).

Overlapping layers of clouds are musically conveyed through the dual, layered textures of melody between the hands (mm. 1-4).

Figure 4.15, *Les nauges errants*, mm. 13-14



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The A section is in E-flat Major, moving through V7-I-V7-IV (mm. 1-7) to a ii-V7/V-V cadence (mm. 9-10). Accidentals and chromatic passing tones add colorful shades to the harmony in mm. 11-14 of the B section. B-diminished, G7, D^bM and C7 harmonies sound like shifting formations of clouds with their colorful, harmonic textures and emerging layers of sounds created by the sustained A-flat in the legato lines. This is enhanced by the passing accidentals in the moving eighth-notes. The ii-VI-V/V-V7 harmonic scheme of the following phrase (mm. 15-18) leads to the A' section, which is the same as the opening.

The four-measure codetta (mm. 27-30) reinforces the E-flat Major tonal center with parallel descending chromatic steps from C-flat to B-flat in the right hand and A-flat to G in the left hand (mm. 27-28).

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

Les nuages errants is an appealing and musically sophisticated miniature requiring a flowing legato style of playing and subtle dynamic shading. It provides reinforcement of impressionistic sound and style at the intermediate level, with its chromatic blending of colors and layering of voices within and between hands. Additional challenges include syncopated pedaling for smooth legato playing without overt blurring of sound.

The musical effect of wandering clouds can be brought out by playing with rubato. Play the flowing lines in mm. 1-4 freely and with flexibility of tempo. Play the sustained note of each two-measure phrase prominently while playing the moving notes more softly and slowly at first, gaining musical momentum with an *accelerando* to m. 2. In addition, mobility and smooth lateral movement of the arm are required to play the legato lines effortlessly (mm. 1-4 and 11-14). The chromatic nature of mm. 11-14 requires careful attention to fingering and thumb crossings.

The underlying dynamic level in this piece is *p*, and careful balance of voices and a light touch are required throughout. Even so, play the sustained pedal tones prominently in mm. 11 and 13, with the underlying eighth-note texture a bit softer before gradually getting louder in the ascending melody in mm. 12 and 14. Repeat this *crescendo* effect in the following two-measure phrase (mm. 13-14), carrying the momentum of the *crescendo* to the high C which outlines an F Minor chord (m. 15). Relax softly into the following measure, which outlines a C7 harmony (m. 16). *Decrescendo* through the following descending, chromatic, melodic figures (mm. 17-18). The dynamic nuances in mm. 15-18 also bring to the musical foreground the harmonic ii-V7/V-ii-V7 cadential pattern. The *Rall.* in m. 18 not only tapers the B section but allows for a smooth segue into the A' section in m. 19.

The *tenuto* markings in mm. 7-8 suggest a slight lingering on the E-flat and B-flat. In the codetta, articulate the parallel chromatic descent of the half notes in both hands with a *decrescendo* and taper the sound of the two-note slur. The *tenuto* C-flat in the right hand should be more prominently played with the thumb and then resolved softly to its lower neighbor tone (mm. 27-28). *Crescendo* from beat 2 of m. 28, accentuating the melodic leap up a fifth to the F in m. 29 and then taper softly. Avoid playing the E-flat in m. 30 too softly. Maintain a warm, prominent tone in m. 30, and play the middle notes very softly and slowly.

Even though pedal markings are not included, sustain the pedal tones and smoothly shape the legato lines. Change the pedal at the beginning of each measure to correspond with the changes of harmony.

CHAPTER V

FIVE LITTLE PIECES [PASTELS], OPUS 3

Introduction

Opus 3, originally titled *Pastels*, was the first piano collection written by Gretchaninoff after he graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1893. Belwin Mills Publishing Corporation published a new edition of these five miniatures titled *Five Little Pieces* in 1996. The musical and technical sophistication of these pieces deem them appropriate for the late intermediate-level student. The five pieces in this collection have programmatic titles and encompass a variety of moods and styles. *Plainte*, *Méditation*, *Chant d'automne*, *Orage*, and *Nocturne* are suggestive of particular moods and encourage imaginative playing.

Plainte

Structural Analysis

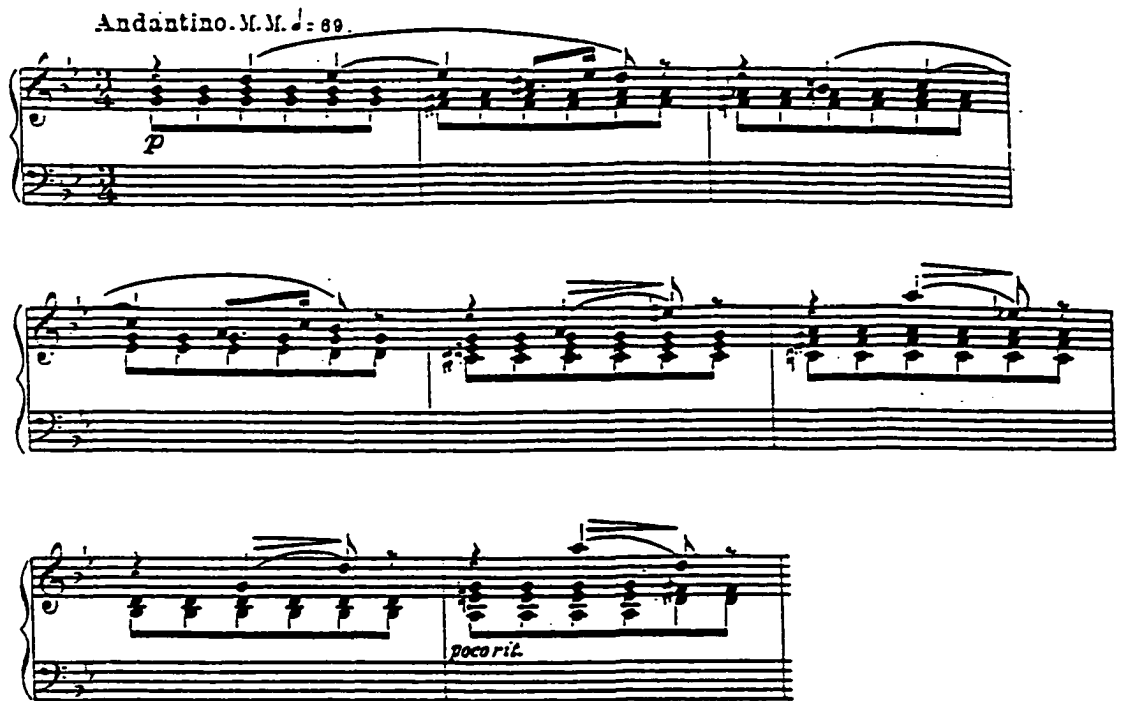
Plainte (*Complaint*), in G Minor, is a lyrical and musically sophisticated piece. It is through-composed, and conveys a musical “complaint,” migrating through various chromatic harmonies which grow to an insistent clamor before fading away. Compositional devices

include augmentation, inversion, chordal accompaniment based on scale harmonies, and the use of descending seconds. Reflecting the style of some of Chopin's less difficult preludes, it serves to prepare the student for playing more advanced romantic repertoire.

A single melodic motive (mm. 1-2), which depicts this "complaint," unfolds through Gm-E^bM-F[#]m-DM harmonies. This motive is repeated down a minor third and touches on Ddim⁷-Fm-Cm-Gm harmonies in mm. 3-4. Ascending and descending melodic fourths and fifths (mm. 5-8) shape this phrase with an extended dominant cadence through mm. 7-8, before tapering slowly with a *decrescendo*. This lyrical phrase (mm. 1-8) unfolds expressively over a repeating chordal accompaniment (Figure 5.1).

The plaintive motive in the tonic harmony is presented again in octaves in the right hand in mm. 9-14. This motive, in contrast to the opening (m. 3), stays on the D and ascends a diminished fifth in m. 11. A growing sense of urgency is developed with the accented repetition of the motivic figure (mm. 13-14). The harmonic sequence also changes in m. 11 to Ddim-E^bm-E^bM-G⁷-C⁷ and enhances the musical momentum of the repeated dotted-rhythms. This section is reinforced by the *crescendo* to the *f* dynamic level.

Figure 5.1, *Plainte*, mm. 1-8



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The dynamic level dramatically drops to *pp* in m. 15 with another entrance of the melodic motive starting on C. This motive is further developed with *poco string*. dotted-rhythmic figures moving through diminished and dominant seventh harmonies (mm. 15-20). This phrase gradually tapers with a *rit.* in the minor mediant key (m. 20).

The following *a tempo* passage in B-flat Minor features the melodic motive not only inverted with a descending half-step figure, but also rhythmically varied (mm. 21-30). These dotted-rhythmic figures

encompass a wider intervallic range with descending minor sevenths and octaves. This phrase gradually tapers with a *ritard e dim.* (mm. 29-30). The *a tempo* entrance of the melody heightens and broadens the feeling of “complaint” with an expanded texture and the sudden *ff* dynamic level (m. 31). The D7 harmony in mm. 31-32 expands the sense of unrest and tension with the dominant extension of the melodic motive. This extension is rhythmically altered to dotted-eighth sixteenth notes. The climax and resolution to the tonic harmony in m. 33 is marked *rubato* and *piu f disperatione* and reinforced with the insistent dotted rhythms, reflecting a sense of desperation. The dense and rich texture of mm. 31-36 contains four-note chords and octaves based on the harmonies of the G Minor scale. This texture gradually becomes thinner as the music begins to subside in m. 37 with the repeated, dotted figures descending by step in the bass through Cm-Gm-Adim7-Gm (mm. 37-40). The final statement of the melodic motive in the tonic key recalls the descending melodic figure from the minor mediant phrase (m. 21), but is rhythmically augmented (mm. 41-45). The music fades to a close with the tonic note in octaves in the left hand tinged with A pedal tones (mm. 46-48), delaying the third of the tonic chord. The octave C-sharps protrude with accents in the right hand. In the penultimate measure of the piece, the A resolves to B^b and the C[#] resolves to D, finally delivering the long awaited G Minor chord. A single *ppp* low G in the bass simply ends this beautiful miniature.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

Plainte is a musically sophisticated piece for the late-intermediate student with expansive textures requiring large stretches and leaps. Be especially attentive and listen carefully to the voicing and balancing of the melodic line over the thicker accompaniment. Although the melody and chordal accompaniment are often played in the same register in the opening phrase (mm. 1-8), listen carefully to the balance of sounds between the hands and play the right hand melodic line with more prominence.

The voicing of octaves, which appear abundantly in both the melody and accompaniment, may require hands separate practice. As a preparatory step, play the G Minor scale in octaves in each hand, listening carefully to make sure both notes sound. Practice slowly until ease and accuracy of playing is achieved. Next, play the octave scale with two hands playing the top note more prominently. Then switch to playing the bottom note louder. Listen carefully to the voicing of the octaves. Play the octave again with one hand and tilt the hand to give more weight in the direction of the note to be voiced louder. Keep the fifth finger tall for a more prominent tone when voicing the top note. This may also be done as a technical warm-up to *Plainte*.

Tempo should be flexible and pliable to enhance the expressive and lyrical nature of the piece. For example, emphasize the two-measure

crescendo of the repeated dotted-rhythmic figure in mm. 13-14 by pulling the tempo back slightly and playing m. 14 a bit more slowly to heighten the sense of musical tension generated by the accented figures. Pulling back the tempo in m. 14 also brings out the sudden subito effect of the *pp* dynamic level of the following phrase (m. 15). The *poco string.* marking calls for a flexibility in tempo in mm. 17-20. Play the first figure slightly more slowly, increasing the tempo with each subsequent figure. Play into the keys and *crescendo* to the third figure (m. 20) with a tapering *ritardando* on the last two beats of the accompaniment.

The dominant prolongation to the climactic phrase (mm. 30-31) is marked *rubato* and *ff*. Delay the arrival of the *ff* dynamic level with a *crescendo* and *accelerando* to the second beat of m. 31. Pull the tempo back in the third beat to heighten the sense of arrival to the tonic key in m. 32. The following phrase, marked *piu f disperazione*, suggests a sense of desperation to the passionate musical plea. Incorporate rubato in the chordal accompaniment after the octave G in the bass. Begin playing the chords somewhat slowly and *accelerando* to m. 33 with a slight *ritardando* in beat 3 of m. 34 to taper the phrase. To reflect the calming and less turbulent nature of the music, gradually incorporate less rubato as the piece winds down to the *p* dynamic level (mm. 41-50). The C-sharps in the melody in the *morendo* phrase (mm. 46-48) should be accented, but should stay within the *pp* dynamic level. Use the *una corda* pedal and

voice the top notes of the right hand slightly more loudly than the supporting chord tones by leaning the hand slightly to the right and playing with a tall fifth finger.

Pedaling is required throughout the piece for enriching the harmonic texture and sustaining the legato phrases when playing in octaves. Listen for changes of harmony and pedal accordingly. In addition, pedal during the louder and more passionate statements of the phrase to enhance the richer texture, and boldly accentuate the thick chords (mm. 13-18 and 31-36). The pedal will also provide a sense of warmth to the thinner texture and will enhance the mellow, tranquil moments during the *p* and subdued phrases (mm. 21-30 and 41-50).

Méditation

Structural Analysis

The various textures of *Méditation* reflect changing characters through its contrasting sections. It is in **A** (mm. 1-19) **B** (mm. 20-42) **Coda** (mm. 43-64) form in D Major. Changes of key and meter correspond to changes of mood in the piece.

The A section is marked *Andante sostenuto* (♩=58) and suggests the B Dorian mode. Long phrases are smoothly sustained in the soprano and tenor voices with an F-sharp pedal tone, while the alto and bass voices project a moving melody in octaves (Figure 5.2). The character is

reflective and calm, and is depicted by the sustained and unison voices. The texture is thick and highlighted with accented melodic notes suggestive of a Russian chant (mm. 4 and 8-10). Sharp contrasts and sudden changes of dynamics include the *sf* F-sharps in the opening measure that blend into the hushed *p* unison octaves. Briefly, the meter alternates from (C) to 2/4 with a *f-p* dynamic contrast (mm. 13-15).

Figure 5.2, *Méditation*, mm. 1-3



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The shift to the 3/4 meter in the lively B section (mm. 20-42) is marked *Allegretto* (♩ = 126). A shift to the treble register in the left hand begins in G Major (mm. 20-21) and highlights dotted rhythms in the opening chordal texture (Figure 5.3). The dotted figures are answered in m. 25 with unison eighth-note melodic patterns.

Figure 5.3, *Méditation*, mm. 20-21



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Notable is the unusual second half of the B section (mm. 29-42) which presents a new melodic idea at a *p* dynamic level. This second period changes to F-sharp Major and presents contrasting melodic and rhythmic material in contrast to the uniform texture of the first half. It contains a thin texture of triplet figures in the melody with sustained chords in the accompaniment. The left hand accompaniment reflects a shift to the treble register in m. 29 where it remains until the final F-sharp octaves bring the section to a close (mm. 40-42).

The coda (mm. 43-64), marked *L'istesso tempo*, portrays both the meditative chordal texture of the A section in augmentation (mm. 43-50), and the *leggiero* triplet figuration of the B section. A wide range of movement is required in the left hand for the shifts to the sustained legato inner voices (mm. 51-52).

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The musical timbre and shifting textures of *Méditation* are uniquely reflected in the contrasting sections of the piece. This piece requires technical and musical maturity with the use of both the sostenuto and damper pedals. The sostenuto and damper pedals are suggested to sustain the opening note, while smoothly connecting the long lines of the inner voices (mm. 1-4). In the *sf* opening unison note, avoid striking the keys harshly by dropping into the keys from a close distance. Apply the sostenuto pedal prior to playing and hold the octave opening notes (m. 1). Depress the damper pedal to sustain the tone through the subsequent three measures. While the sostenuto pedal is sustaining the opening note, use the damper pedal (mm. 2-4) to smoothly connect the unison legato octaves in the inner voices. Lift the sostenuto pedal after beat 1 of m. 4 but depress it again following the accented F-sharp in the left hand in beat 2 to sustain through m. 5. The sustained F-sharps in both the hands in mm. 8-14 also require the use of the sostenuto pedal. The resulting timbral texture and layers of sound reflect the meditative quality of this piece. The use of both pedals is suggested in the coda (mm. 43-50). Depress the sostenuto pedal after playing the octave B's in the left hand, listening for a clear pedal change to the B Minor harmony in m. 49. Keep the sostenuto pedal depressed through m. 52 during the pedaling of the inner voices in mm. 51-52.

Balance and contrast the left hand voices in mm. 8-10 as they shift back and forth to play the accented notes from the bass to the counter melody in the inner voice. Play the inner moving line more softly to blend with the melodic texture while bringing out the accented notes in the bass in m. 9. Prominently accent the thirds in m. 10 and 11 in the respective hands. Also bring out the echoing dialogue of descending eighth-eighth-quarter note figures (mm. 10-19). Release both hands after the 2/4 measure (m. 14) with the *f* arrival emphasizing the three-note figure. To highlight the sudden dynamic contrast, pause briefly before playing the subito *p* (C) measure in m. 15. *Accelerando* slightly through mm. 15-18, fading softly to the end of the section with a *ritard.* on the last two notes of the left hand (m. 18-19).

Challenges include large intervallic spans in the chordal texture and even execution of the rhythm in the first part of the B section. As a preparatory step toward even execution of the unison chordal figures in dotted rhythms, tap the dotted-rhythmic sequence in mm. 20-24. After rhythmic security is achieved, practice the left hand thirds (using fingers 1 and 3) and fifths (using fingers 2 and 5). The second inversion G Major triads in the right hand can be played using fingers '1-3-5' to achieve the smooth, legato shape which the phrase requires. Shift and change the fingering on the third beat in m. 21 to fingers '1-2-4' to smoothly connect the octaves.

The wide ranges in the left hand chordal accompaniment and rhythmic accuracy in the second half of the B section also require hands separate practice. For accurate and smooth execution of the jump bass chordal accompaniment (mm. 29-30) and the wide arpeggiated chords (mm. 37-39), practice the left hand separately. In addition, practice the octave moves down the keyboard for fluid, accurate movements in the repeated descending motives (mm. 51-53). As a preparatory step, play only beat 1 of each measure. Shift fluidly down the keyboard until the moves are smooth and accurate.

Chant d'automne

Structural Analysis

Chant d'automne (Autumn Song), in D Minor, is in A (mm. 1-18) B (mm. 19-38) A' (mm 39-58) form with sharply contrasting A and B sections. The A section requires a quasi-improvisatory style of playing which reflects the whimsical nature of the piece. It is characterized by the melodic motive in mm. 1-2 which is embellished with a pair of descending grace-notes (Figure 5.4). The first phrase (mm. 1-8) contains two statements of the melodic motive (mm. 1-4) with a third echo of the melodic motive sequenced up a fifth (m. 5). This flows into descending triplet figures in mm. 6-7 tapering to a dominant cadence. The second

phrase (mm. 9-18) features a two-measure tonic cadential extension (mm. 16-18).

Figure 5.4, *Chant d'automne*, mm. 1-2



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The contrasting B section (mm. 19-38) is chordal with a thick, vertical texture grouped in four and five-measure phrases. This chordal section, marked *Meno mosso e rubato* (♩=100), suggests a more relaxed character than the A section. Octaves in the bass with three and four-note chords in the right hand offer a rich harmonic palette. The harmony shifts to the mediant F Major with the opening four-measure chordal phrase (mm. 19-23). It begins on the subdominant B-flat Major harmony leading to a ii-V7-I cadence. The next four-measure phrase (mm. 24-28) repeats the chordal phrase beginning with an E-flat Major harmony replicating the ii-V7-I cadence in B-flat Major. The third chordal

statement (mm. 29-33) displays a thicker texture with four-note chords in the right hand highlighting the C7 harmony. This phrase begins on the second beat and reiterates a V7-I cadence in F Major. The final five measures of the B section (mm. 34-38) feature the notes: E-flat-A-D in unison and outline the ii-V-i cadence in D Minor.

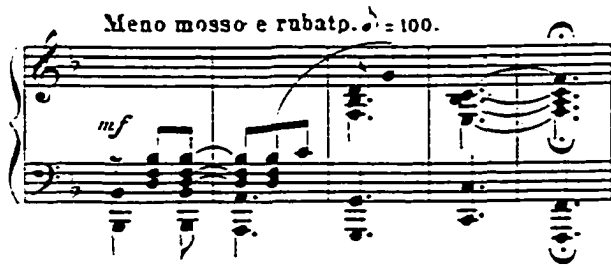
A unique feature in this ternary form is that the harmony in the final A' section (mm. 39-58) does not return to the tonic key as expected but moves to the subdominant key and delays the arrival of D Minor. The first phrase (mm. 39-46) begins in G Minor with similar melodic contours and modified material from the A section. The accents on D-C-B-flat in the last three triplet figures are modified and lead to the A7 harmony in m. 46. The following cadential extension (mm. 47-53) moves through D7-Gm-A7-Dm-Gm-Dm-A7 and arrives on the single, accented note A (m. 54). This note leads into the tonic extension (mm. 54-58), which uses the melodic material of the triplet figuration from mm. 6-7. This four-measure extension (mm. 51-53) is comprised of modified material from the second half of the melodic motive. The grace-note figures, embellishing the melodic motive, repeat and descend by step with an expanded interval of a seventh (mm. 51-53). Also, the accent that fell on beat 1 (m. 2), marking the arrival of the preceding six-note melodic figure, arrives on beat 3 and emphasizes the descending, step-wise motion of the grace-notes (m. 50).

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The playful, jaunty nature of *Chant d'automne* is characterized by the embellished melodic motive (mm. 1-2). Both technical and rhythmical challenges are involved in achieving a playful and lively character, while evenly executing the embellishment lightly. The right-hand grouping of the six thirty-second notes should not sound fast, but rather steady and light. Avoid coming in too early in the right hand on the first thirty-second note. As a preparatory step, play m. 1 without the pick-up note to the five-note grouping while counting aloud. Then, add the pick-up note, using fingers 1 2 4 5 for the D Minor triadic outline of the melodic motive. Accent the arrival of beat 1 in m. 2 and taper softly to the B-flat. Play the descending pair of grace-notes lightly in one smooth motion with a gentle staccato release on beat 3. To achieve smooth legato lines in the broken-chord melody and accompaniment, pedal each measure to sustain the triadic D Minor harmony. Practice the legato triplet figuration slowly (mm. 6-7 and 14-16), keeping a relaxed and flexible elbow when crossing over the thumb.

The chordal texture of the contrasting B section, marked *Meno mosso e rubato*, is more reflective. The linear, song-like character of the A section is musically suggestive of a solo singer, whereas the thicker chordal texture is more suggestive of a chorus (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5, *Chant d'automne*, mm. 19-23



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Play the phrases in the B section progressively more loudly, sustaining each *fermata* longer and longer. The climax of the section arrives in m. 29 with the accented, *f* dynamic level of the four-note chord on beat 2. To maximize the *f-p* dynamic contrast of the C7 chords (m. 27), lean into the keys on the second beat, using weight from the shoulders and arms. Release and drop back to the chord softly. Curve the fingers and play with pedal to accentuate and sustain the harmony.

Resume the livelier tempo in the A' section, with a broad *crescendo* in mm. 43-45 leading to the *forte* dynamic level marked by accents (m. 45). Incorporate a slight rubato at the beginning of m. 44 by starting the long triplet figuration a bit slowly. Gradually gain momentum and *crescendo* to the accented D-C-B-flat (m. 45). Use the *una corda* pedal in the tonic

extension (mm. 54-58) and gradually *accelerando* (mm. 55-56) through the *crescendo*. Softly taper the ending with a slight *ritard*.

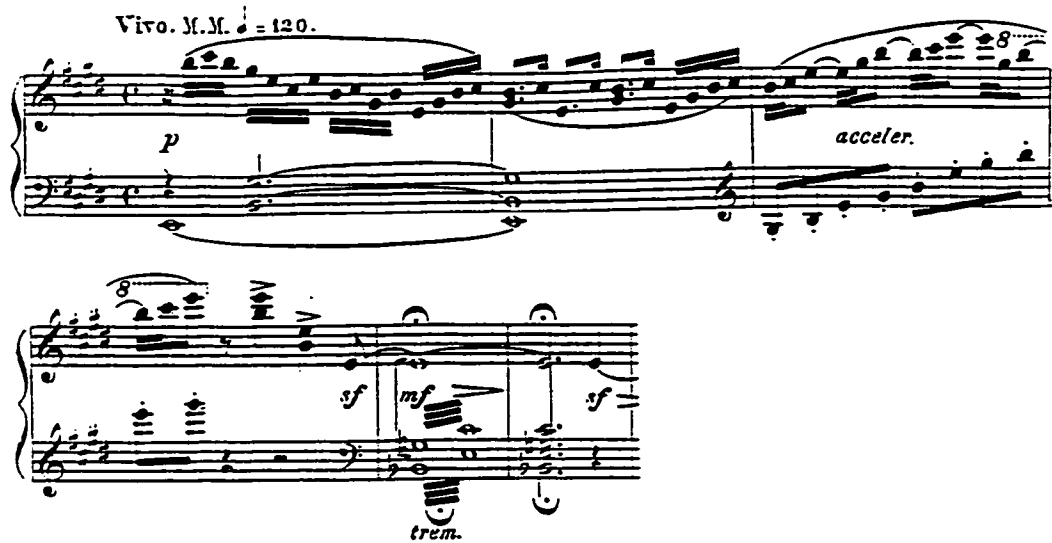
Orage

Structural Analysis

Orage (Storm), marked *Vivo* (♩=120), displays both virtuosic and imaginative musical characteristics and utilizes the whole range of the keyboard. It depicts a storm through scalar passages, arpeggios, tremolos, and sudden dynamic shifts (*sff*, *ff* to *ppp*).

This ternary form, **A** (mm. 1-15) **B** (mm. 16-28) **A'** (mm. 29-42) in E Major, is the most technically challenging miniature in this collection. The piece begins softly and accelerates to a high E before descending to the middle register E. The low bass *tremolos* in both hands recall the rumbling thunder (mm. 5-6 and 11-15). Turbulence of wind and storm is characterized by sweeping broken chord and short scalar passages in the right hand ranging up and down the keyboard. This is accompanied by staccato E Major arpeggiated notes in the left hand (mm. 3-4). The opening phrase (mm. 1-6) of the A section comes to a *fermata* rest as the storm momentarily abates. This is musically depicted by accented, descending fourths rumbling to a *tremolo* close, resting on a C[#]dim7 harmony in mm. 5-6 (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6, *Orage*, mm. 1-6



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The following phrase (mm. 7-15) repeats the sweeping melodic material in the subdominant-A Minor harmony with more fervor marked by the *acceler. molto* indication in m. 9. The storm brews on in mm. 11-14 through an extension of *tremolos* in D7-G[#]7-AM marked by *f-più f-sff-ff* dynamic levels. The *tremolos* finally lead to the relative C-sharp Minor arpeggio (m. 15) and segues into the B section.

The *Più mosso* B section (mm. 16-28) features a change in meter from 4/4 to 12/8 and is suggestive of the minor dominant (B Minor). This sweet, *doloroso* section is markedly more lyrical and song-like, and is

characterized by the exchange of melody between the treble and bass lines. The *tremolos* serve as embellishment or accompaniment. The right hand phrase portrays an ascending syncopated melodic line over a steady chordal left hand accompaniment in F[#]m in m. 16. The melody, marked *p*, is extended to the G[#]7 harmony and switches to the bass in the following measure. This is indicated by a slur over the left hand (m. 17). The melody broadens quickly to a *ff* dynamic level under a *tremolo* right hand accompaniment, and then tapers quietly to the *p* dynamic level in m. 18 (Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7, *Orage*, mm. 16-17



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This melodic dialogue continues in mm. 18-20 moving through F[#]m-Bm-EM harmonies. At this point, the music expands and broadens in harmonic rhythm. The harmonic changes occur every two measures

characterized with A[#]dim7 (mm. 21-22) to Am (mm. 23-24) to EM (m. 25). Accents in the ascending line in mm. 25-26 lead to the culminating B7 arpeggiated figures in the left hand over repeated B7 chords in the right hand. The *ff* dynamic level in this dominant extension (mm. 27-28) also accentuates the culmination of musical dialogue begun in the opening of this section.

The resolution to the tonic-E Major key signals the final A' section (mm. 29-42) as the storm gradually lessens. Marked *mf più tranquillo*, the melodic material is augmented rhythmically over ascending and descending E Major arpeggios. The storm begins to calmly subside in the *Più lento* phrases (mm. 38-42). The texture becomes thicker and more chordal as the tonic key is saturated with *tremolos* of E pedal tones under ascending E Major four-note chords in inversions (mm. 39-42). In the final four measures of the piece, the *poco rit. morendo* dissipates to a calm *ppp* dynamic level and represents the subsiding storm.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

Orage requires much energetic flair and prepares the student for advanced romantic repertoire. It is an effective study in phrase shaping and rubato playing with sudden shifts of tempo and dynamics and requires musical and technical security. Rubato playing and flexibility of tempo is required in the A section to effectively portray the romantic,

programmatic elements. Although the composer indicates *acceler.* and *a tempo* markings (mm. 3, 7, 9, and 11), incorporating tempo flexibility in other places aids in achieving technical facility. For example, in the opening measure in the right hand, linger on the first note and gradually *accelerando* through the sixteenth-note pattern, relaxing into *a tempo* metrical feel of the dotted rhythms in m. 2. This stretching effect of the tempo allows the fast sixteenth groupings to unfurl gradually. This effect musically depicts sweeping winds.

Start slowly and gradually *accelerando* through the B7 arpeggios in the left hand in the dominant prolongation in mm. 27-28 at the end of the middle section. Isolate the left hand for practice using the finger numbers indicated in m. 27 and play the first dominant seventh arpeggio slowly with firm fingers. Gradually add speed and *crescendo* as the arpeggios move up the register. In m. 28, *ritard.* and pull the tempo back on the last group of sixteenth notes in the right hand to musically and dynamically prepare for the return of A' in the following measure.

The dramatic nature of this piece is also depicted by extreme ranges of dynamics. Throughout the *Più mosso* section (mm. 16-26), the melody in the right hand begins softly at a *p* dynamic level but in a short span, *crescendos* to *ff* dynamic level in the following measure. To ensure proper balance of sounds between the hands, voice the single-note melodic line more prominently in the right hand in m. 16 following

through in the left hand melody in m. 17. In addition, play the *tremolos* in the accompaniment with rubato to enhance the flow and direction of the melodic line. For example, in m. 16, play the beginning of the phrase slowly and gradually increase speed and volume. Slightly *ritard.* and linger on the last accented note and arrive convincingly on the *sff* down beat of m. 17. *Crescendo* to the *ff* dynamic level through the ascending melodic line before tapering softly. When the melody switches hands in m. 17, make sure the right hand *tremolo* remains at a low murmur without overwhelming the left hand dynamically.

In the last four measures of the piece, keep the damper pedal sustained throughout mm. 39-42 to keep the harmony resounding to the end. Play the *tremolos* in the left hand softly and lightly when adding the damper pedal. The *Più lento* marking suggests a slightly slower tempo in mm. 38-42. The *morendo* marking (mm. 40-42) also suggests a gradual *decrescendo* with each successive chord being played slower and softer.

Nocturne

Structural Analysis

Nocturne, the final piece of the collection features alternating 6/8 and 9/8 meters with syncopated rhythms. It is in A Major and in A (mm. 1-28) B (mm. 29-43) A' (mm. 43-59) form. The texture remains thin throughout this song-like piece. The A and A' sections are characterized

Allegretto semplice e poco rubato M. M. ♩=152 and portray a descending linear melody over a chordal accompaniment. The descending triads on beats 2 and 5 in the left hand fill out the harmony. These chords change to arpeggiated figures between the hands (mm. 4-5) and lyrically extend the A Major harmony (Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8, *Nocturne*, mm. 1-4



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The melody, from m. 5, expands expressively with legato arpeggios in the accompaniment alternating between F-sharp Minor and B Minor harmonies. The arpeggios in the left hand (mm. 8-17) shifts to ascending broken chords in the right hand (mm. 18-27) as the music gains increasing momentum through the *accelerando poco a poco e cresc.* The A section gradually tapers to a *lento* close with broken chord accompaniment figures in 9/8 meter (m. 25).

The B section (mm. 29-42), marked *Poco più mosso, ma sempre tranq.* $\text{♩} = 76$, remains in 6/8 throughout and is rhythmically more stable. Unlike the descending pattern of the melodic material in the A section, the melodic sequence follows an ascending pattern (mm. 29-30). The harmony in the first phrase (mm. 29-35) is introduced in A Major leading to a repeated and emphasized ii/vi-V7/vi cadence (mm. 33-35). The expected F-sharp resolution is denied, and instead, jumps into B Minor in the following phrase (mm. 36-40). The final three notes taper the phrase in B Minor (m. 40) and repeat slowly and expressively in the *lento* melody. This becomes the ii harmony in the ii-V7-I cadential return to the tonic key (mm. 41-43).

In the A' section (mm. 43-59), the meter remains in 6/8, resuming the *Tempo I* of the A section. The meter does not shift to the 9/8 meter in m. 54 as expected, but leads instead to the *Più lento* closing in mm. 55-59. The final *forte* burst of the rolled E7 chord harmonically resolves to the final arpeggiated tonic harmony and closes the piece *ppp*.

Suggestions for Teaching and Performing

The thin, lyrical melodic texture of *Nocturne* requires a light touch. The chordal accompaniment lies close to the melodic line and requires careful balancing of sounds between the hands (mm. 1-4). Although the dynamic level is marked *p*, begin a bit louder and *decrescendo* through

these measures. Play the ascending arpeggiated figure in the accompaniment in mm. 4-5 with *rubato*, gradually playing the last three notes slower in m. 5, before gradually accelerating through the next four measures. In mm. 18-24, pace the *accelerando* and the *crescendo* through the climax of the A section, with a generous *rit.* at m. 24. Accentuate the melody prominently into the arrival of the 9/8 measure (m. 25). Drop to a subito *p* dynamic level and gradually *ritard.* to the delicate *lento* closing.

In the tranquil B section (mm. 29-42), shape the melody in two large beats for better phrasing. Follow the slurs in mm. 29 and 30 and taper softly. *Crescendo* slightly through the subsequent two-measure phrase with a slight *accelerando* to beat 4 in m. 32. Emphasize the *tenuto* notes in m. 34 while growing louder to the rolled chord. Similarly, play the *tenuto* notes in the cadential phrase (mm. 41-42) with a *crescendo* to the high B sustaining the V7 harmony.

The *Più lento* closing phrase in the A' section should be played freely with much *rubato*. The tempo should be flexible with an improvisatory feel in the closing material. Sustain the *fermata* in m. 57 long enough so that the rolled, *forte* chord is almost exclamatory in nature. Keep the pedal down and listen for the slow unfolding of the A Major harmony in the last two measures. Although the only formal pedal markings are in the last three measures, pedaling throughout the piece is recommended to enhance the musical shape, phrasing, and harmony.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this document was to provide a teaching and performance analysis of three piano collections of Alexander Gretchaninoff: *Children's Album* [Kinderbuch], op. 98, *Historiettes*, op. 118 and *Five Little Pieces* [Pastels], op. 3. These particular collections were chosen as representative of the early-intermediate, intermediate, and late-intermediate level solo piano works of Alexander Gretchaninoff. They have inherent musical and pedagogical appeal for teachers who want to develop expressive and musical playing in their students through character pieces.

The first chapter provides an introduction that discusses the significance of Alexander Gretchaninoff as an important contributor to the intermediate-level piano repertoire. The second chapter features a brief biography of Alexander Gretchaninoff with an overview of his solo piano collections currently in print.

The next three chapters present the teaching and performance analysis of the following collections: *Children's Album* [Kinderbuch],

op. 98, *Historiettes*, op. 118, and *Five Little Pieces* [Pastels], op. 3. A brief introductory background is provided for each collection. For each piece, a structural analysis identifies main sections, tonal areas, compositional techniques and other unique musical features. Finally, suggestions identifying pianistic, technical and musical elements for practice, teaching and performance are presented.

Conclusions

Children's Album [Kinderbuch], op. 98, *Historiettes*, op. 118, and *Five Little Pieces* [Pastels], op. 3, provide enriching supplementary additions to the early-intermediate, intermediate, and late-intermediate piano repertoire. These three collections contain miniature gems for the developing pianist. These character pieces display imaginative titles and exhibit a wide variety of moods, character and styles.

The fifteen pieces of the *Children's Album* [Kinderbuch], op. 98 are excellent, appealing short studies which incorporate patterns in melody and accompaniment, broken chord, waltz bass accompaniments with few shifts of hand positions. Moreover, thin textures, rudimentary harmonies, a limited intervallic span and scalar melodic lines with repeated patterns and sections reinforce reading, rhythm and memorization skills for the developing pianist in the early-intermediate level. Ternary, rondo and binary forms are the prevailing forms in these

fifteen miniatures. Dance styles reminiscent of Chopin's mazurkas and waltzes are evident in "Little Dance," "After the Ball," and "The Little Would-be Hero." In addition, technical studies like "Hobby-Horse," "On the Meadow," "Etude," and "Dreadful Event" reinforce chord playing in inversions, diminished harmonies and double thirds.

Historiettes, op. 118 presents coloristic and musical pictures through a variety of textures and sounds. This collection of twelve miniatures, which were composed during the period when Gretchaninoff was living in France, incorporates rubato, changes of meter/tempo, dynamic contrasts, and chromatic alterations. Ternary and rounded binary forms are used frequently in this collection. Use of octaves, syncopated pedaling, contrasting touches of articulation between and within hands are also evident in this collection. Gretchaninoff also uses impressionistic harmonic color and texture to expressively enhance the music. This is especially reflected in "Les nuages errants."

Five Little Pieces [Pastels], op. 3 features a variety of compositional devices such as imitation, sequence, augmentation and extension of dominant harmony for musical interest and variety. The five pieces in this collection require mature expressive abilities and technical challenges suited for the late-intermediate student. In addition, harmonic ventures into the relative major/minor and the minor dominant keys add musical depth with dotted rhythms, syncopated pedaling and expanded textures.

Other challenges prevalent in these five miniatures include moving octaves in both hands, melody and accompaniment within one hand, faster moving passage work as well as sustained and moving voices within one hand. "Meditation" reinforces the use of both the damper and sostenuto pedals as well as reading and playing in the F-sharp Major key signature. "Orage" requires mature expressive abilities with many changes of dynamics, tempo, and reinforces playing with dynamic subtleties. Stylistic influences in "Plainte" not only reflect the texture of Chopin's Prelude in E minor, op. 28, no. 4, but reinforce balancing melodic and chordal accompaniment textures. A light touch with an improvisatory style, characteristic of Debussy's music is reflected in "Chant d'automne."

Consistent and true to his Russian Nationalist heritage, Alexander Gretchaninoff's music remains faithful to the Romantic style. It is infused with wit and humor, and embraces folk idioms in its melodies and harmonies. Gretchaninoff writes near the end of his life in his autobiography:

One wonders how long musicians will go on discussing modernism, or lack of modernism, in contemporary music. This debate opened a century ago, and reached the heights of acrimony early in this century; it has now all but subsided. Yet it has served its purpose; the horizons of harmony have been broadened; the excessive infatuation with dissonance has abated.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Gretchaninoff, *My Life*, 168.

Recommendations

This document will hopefully stimulate renewed interest in the solo piano music of Alexander Gretchaninoff. Further research is recommended in the following areas:

1. A pedagogical edition of the three works, *Children's Album* [Kinderbuch], op. 98, *Historiettes*, op. 118, and *Five Little Pieces* [Pastels], op. 3 including fingering, pedal and other editorial editions to serve as a guide for early-intermediate, intermediate and late-intermediate students;
2. Recordings of *Children's Album* [Kinderbuch], op. 98, *Historiettes*, op. 118, and *Five Little Pieces* [Pastels], op. 3 to serve as a performance model for students;
3. An analysis for teaching and performance of Gretchaninoff's piano duets and two-piano literature;
4. An analysis for teaching and performance of Gretchaninoff's more advanced level solo piano music, including *First Sonata* and *Second Sonata* ;
5. A comparative study tracing the stylistic influences of other composers (including Debussy, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, Chopin and Schumann) in Gretchaninoff's solo piano music;
6. An investigative study of the folk idioms used in Gretchaninoff's piano music;

7. Similar teaching and performance analyses of intermediate level piano music of other Russian composers including Tchaikovsky, Gliere, Rebikov, and Prokofiev;

8. More inclusions of pedagogical articles on Gretchaninoff's solo music in professional journals;

9. More recitals and workshops on Gretchaninoff's solo piano music to bring greater awareness of his music to audiences and teachers.

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APPENDIX A
SOLO PIANO MUSIC COLLECTIONS

SOLO PIANO MUSIC COLLECTIONS

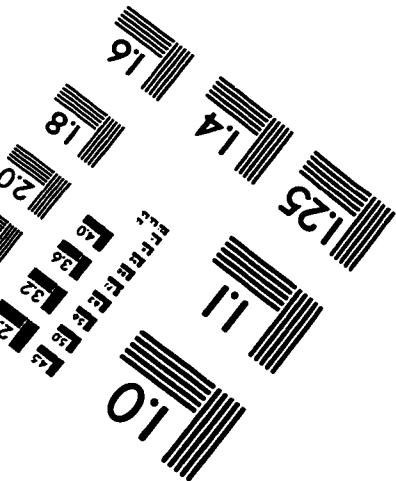
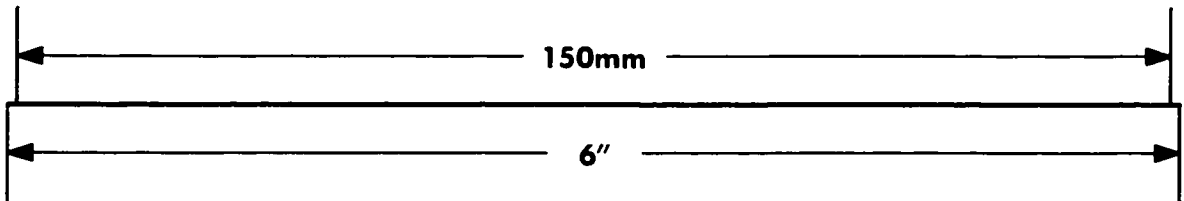
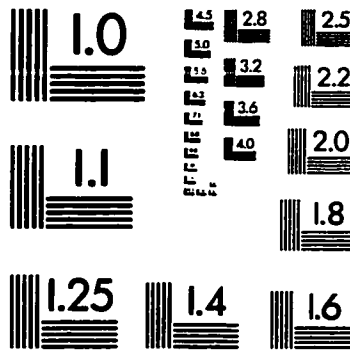
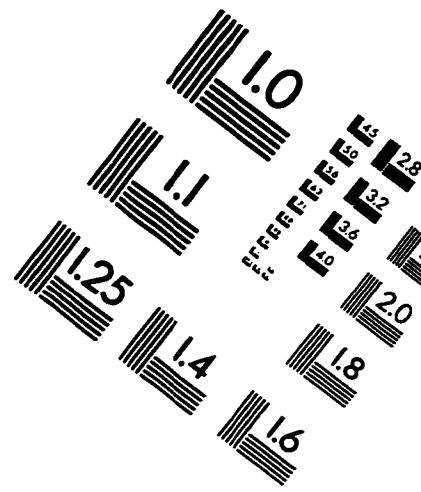
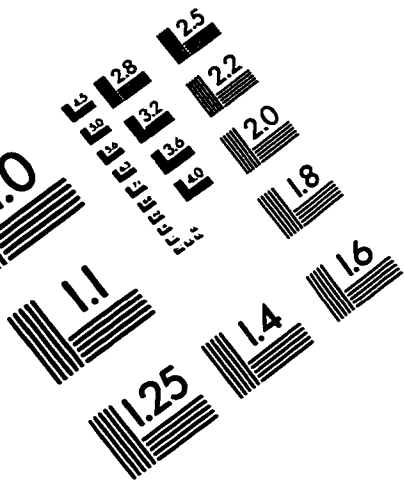
The table chronologically lists the opus, title, number of selections, year the collection was composed and the publisher. Works highlighted in **bold** denote collections currently in print. For a complete listing of all the solo piano music, see Haertling-Lint's Appendix E.

OPUS	TITLE	NUMBER OF SELECTIONS	YEAR COMPOSED	PUBLISHER
3	<i>Five Little Pieces</i> [<i>Pastels</i>, first album]	5	1893	Belaieff
37	<i>Two Pieces</i> [<i>Deux Morceaux</i>]	2	1905	Gutheil
53	<i>Four Mazurkas</i>	4	1911	Wilhelm Zimmermann
61	<i>Eight Pastels</i> [<i>Pastels</i>, second album]	8	1912	Wilhelm Zimmermann
78	<i>Moments Lyriques</i>	3	1917	Gutheil
98	<i>Children's Album</i> [<i>Kinderbuch</i>]	15	1924	Schott
99	<i>In the Meadows</i> [<i>On the Green Meadow</i>]	10	1924	Schott
104	<i>Three Miniatures</i>	3	1924	Heugel
109	<i>A Child's Day</i>	10	1927	Schott
112	<i>Bagatelles</i>	15	1927	Wilhelm Zimmermann
115	<i>Fleeting Thoughts</i> [<i>Pensées Fugitives</i>]	15	1927	Schott
116	<i>Three Pieces</i>	3	1927	Schott
118	<i>Historiettes</i>	12	1928	Alphonse Leduc

OPUS	TITLE	NUMBER OF SELECTIONS	YEAR COMPOSED	PUBLISHER
119	<i>Grandfather's Album</i>	17	1928	Schott
123	<i>Glass Beads</i>	12	1930	Schott
127a	<i>Dew Drops</i>	9	1930	Schott
127b	<i>En Barque</i>	7	1930	Schott
130	<i>Russian Folk Dances, Vol. 1 and 2</i>	12	1931	Schott
131	<i>Sketchbook</i>	12	1932	Schott
133	<i>Andriusha's Album</i>	10	1932	Editions Max Eschig
138	<i>Brimborions</i>	12	1933	Augener
139	<i>Feuilles d'Album</i>	10	1933	Durand
141	<i>Fragments Lyriques</i>	10	1933	Editions Max Eschig
143	<i>Promenade au Bois</i>	10	1934	Alphonse Leduc
145	<i>Suite Miniature</i> [Suite Enfantine No. 2]	10	1934	Alphonse Leduc
146	<i>Aquarelles</i>	5	1935	Augener
150	<i>Arabesques</i>	10	1932	Editions Max Eschig
156	<i>Eight Simple Pieces</i>	8	1938	Belaieff
167	<i>Four Morceaux</i>	4	1942	Edward B. Marks
170	<i>Four Piano Pieces for Children</i>	4	1943	Hargail
173	<i>Petite Suite</i>	3	1944	Mclaughlin & Reilly
176	<i>Petite Suite</i>	5	1944	Century Music

OPUS	TITLE	NUMBER OF SELECTIONS	YEAR COMPOSED	PUBLISHER
182	<i>Twelve Little Sketches for Children</i>	12	1947	International
183	<i>Au Foyer</i>	10	1947	Boosey & Hawkes
184	<i>Two Morceaux</i>	2	1947	Manuscript
189	<i>Gouaches</i>	3	1948	Leeds
194	<i>Three Morceaux</i>	3	1950	Leeds
196	<i>Five Miniatures</i>	5	1950	Edward B. Marks
197	<i>Lettres Amicales</i>	6	1950	Edward B. Marks
198	<i>Three Pieces</i>	3	1951	Edward B. Marks
202	<i>Suite Miniature</i> (posth.)	8	(published 1959)	Edward B. Marks
203	<i>Mother's Book</i>	7	(published 1952)	John Markert & Co.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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