A DMA RECORDING PROJECT ACCOMPANIED BY AN ESSAY ON

THE CONCERT PIANO ÉTUDE FROM THE

NINETEENTH TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

by

ELENA LYALINA

(Under the Direction of Evgeny Rivkin)

ABSTRACT

The goal of this recording project is to present a selected history of the concert étude genre from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, examining the études of Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Kapustin, Bolcom, Lane, and Giarusso. The popularity of composing in this genre has grown since the nineteenth century and études were no longer considered merely didactic pieces, but also for use in concert performance. The purpose of this essay is to discuss the evolution of études (studies), important aspects of composers' style, a variety of piano techniques, and to present interesting cases in different editions and interpretations.

INDEX WORDS: Piano Etudes, Piano Studies, Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Kapustin, Bolcom, Lane, Giarusso

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

My goal in the recording project is to present a selected history of the concert étude genre, examining the études of different composers who defined the genre, starting with Chopin and ending with notable twenty-first century composers. Primarily, I will research the evolution of études and a variety of piano techniques, introduce different types of fingering and interpretations, and present interesting cases in editions of the following list of studies:

- Fréderic Chopin, *Études*, Op. 25, Nos. 1, 11, and 12 (1810-49)
- Franz Liszt, "Harmonies du Soir," from *Études d'Exécution Transcendante* (1811-86)
- Claude Debussy, "Pour les Arpeges Composés," from *Douze Études* (1862-1918)
- Sergey Rachmaninoff, *Études-Tableaux*, Op. 33, Nos. 2 and 3, and Op., 39 No. 1 (1873-1943)
- Alexander Scriabin, *Études*, Op. 2, No. 1, Op., 8 Nos. 2 and 4, and Op. 42, No. 5 (1872-1915)
- Igor Stravinsky, Étude in F-sharp major, Op. 7, No. 4 from *Four Études* (1882-1971)
- Sergey Prokofiev, Étude in C minor, Op. 2, No. 3 from *Four Études* (1891-1953)
- Nikolai Kapustin, "Toccatina," Op. 40, No. 3 from *Eight Concert Études* (b. 1937)
- William Bolcom, "Nocturne," from *12 New Études* (b. 1938)
- Peter Lane, "Ground State," from *Studies in Momentum*
- Joe Giarrusso, "Incanto", Op. 59, No. 2 from *Four Études* (b. 1948)

Historically, composers of the piano étude genre primarily aimed to develop a particular performance technique, and designed pieces to provide practice material for perfecting piano

skills. The term *étude* derives from the French word for *study*. The popularity of composing in this genre has grown since the nineteenth century, when the piano enjoyed its most widespread popularity and accessibility for middle-class Western European and American culture. However, there were some didactic keyboard pieces composed before the nineteenth century, which shared this idea of developing performing techniques, including Domenico Scarlatti's *30 Exercises for Harpsichord* (1738) and Johann Sebastian Bach's four volumes of *Clavier-Übung* (1731).[1]

In the early nineteenth century, the étude became a common genre in the output of composers who were also piano teachers. They composed exercises for their students with a didactic function, including, for example, Johann Baptist Cramer's Op. 50 (1804-1810), Muzio Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*, Op. 44 (1817-26), numerous works by Carl Czerny (ops. 299, 540, and 740), and Ignaz Moscheles's *Studien*, Op. 70 (1825-26). The treatment of études by these composers evolved in their late works and such pieces were no longer considered merely didactic, but also for use in concert performance. For instance, the late pieces of Clementi's collection and Moscheles's *Charakteristische Studien*, Op. 95 served as suitable material to improve technique and focus on musical value. These études were considered not only exercises for practice but also functioned as pleasing music for audiences, thus considered concert pieces.[2]

The British musicologist Simon Finlow suggests grouping études into three categories: 1) *exercises*, which focus on the isolation and repetition of specific technical problem and almost ignore the musical characteristics (Czerny and Henri Bertini); 2) *études*, which have balanced musical and didactic functions (Cramer, Ludwig Berger, Moscheles, and Chopin); and 3) *concert studies*, in which the didactic function is incidental and the musical characteristics appear at the

[1] Howard Ferguson and Kenneth L. Hamilton, "Study," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027018.
[2] Ferguson and Hamilton, "Study."

foreground level, with an invariable demonstration of virtuoso technique (Liszt and Robert Schumann).[3]

In this introduction I intend to present historical overview of études. In his works, Chopin developed the tradition of the étude, and these represent the transcendence of this genre's brilliant style. Chopin wrote three sets of studies: *Twelve Études*, Op. 10 (1829-33), *Twelve Études*, Op. 25 (1835-37), and *Three Nouvelles Études* (1839-40), the latter written for the Moscheles/Fétis collection *Méthode des methods*. Chopin began to compose études when he was nineteen. In Warsaw, he was inspired by the virtuosic playing of the great violinist Niccolo Paganini, and wrote *Études*, Op. 10, which he then dedicated to Liszt. Later, Liszt mastered these pieces and performed them in Paris.[4]

In his cycles Chopin explored piano texture, pianistic technique, sound, dynamics, and compositional inventiveness. Each étude focuses on a chosen aspect of piano technique, such as broken chords in the right-hand part (C major, Op. 10, No. 1), crossing the fingers of the right hand in a chromatic scale (A minor, Op. 10, No. 2), leading a tuneful melody (E major, Op. 10, No. 3, and C-sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 7), passages in the left hand (C minor, Op. 10, No. 12), arpeggio technique in both hands (E-flat major, Op. 10, No. 11), playing on the black keys (G-flat major, Op. 10, No. 5), dyads—thirds (G-sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 6), sixths (D-flat major, Op. 25, No. 8)—and octaves (B minor, Op. 25, No. 10). Chopin combined the use of piano performance techniques, the didactic function with musical quality, and expanded the creative methods and harmonic perspectives of the étude as a genre.

Liszt composed a number of études, more extensive in length, and gave them programmatic content and titles. He wrote *Six Études After Paganini*, *Two Concert Études*,

[3] Simon Finlow, "The Twenty-seven Études and Their Antecedents," in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. Jim Samson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 53-54.
[4] Artur Bielecki, "Étude," *Internet Chopin Information Center*, http://en.chopin.nifc.pl/chopin/ genre/detail/id/2 (accessed March 21, 2018).

Three Études de Concert, and *Twelve Transcendental Études* (1839-52). Liszt focused on the pictorial aspect of music and titled most of his studies. For example, in *Twelve Transcendental Études* he added titles such as "Landscape," "Mazeppa," "Irrlichter," "Eroica," "Wild Hunt," "Ricordanza," "Evening Harmonies," and "Snow-whirls." In this collection, Liszt took piano technique to a different level. The original idea of this set was to compose twenty-four études in major and minor keys. However, he only completed half of the project and focused on neutral and flat-key signatures. The Russian composer Sergey Lyapunov was inspired by Liszt's cycle and wrote his set of *Douze Études d'Éxécution Transcendante*, Op. 11 (1897-1905), dedicating it to the memory of Liszt. He chose the sharp keys Liszt had omitted in his collection and Lyapunov also titled his pieces, which created a sense of a full set of twenty-four études. Moreover, the last piece in Lyapunov's set was titled "Élégie en Mémoire de Franz Liszt."[5]

Schumann, the Romantic composer and contemporary of Chopin and Liszt, wrote three sets of studies. He was also fascinated by the virtuoso violinist Paganini. In 1832-33, when Schumann worked as a piano tutor, he took a close look at Paganini's *Caprices* and wrote *Six Études*, Op. 3; these études are based closely on Paganini's original works, with their virtuoso spirit and educational intention. Another Schumann set is *Six Études*, Op. 10, designed to achieve more of a performance goal and has a freer approach than the original model of Paganini's *Caprices*. Schumann's *Études Symphonique*, Op. 13 (in the second edition *Études en Forme de Variations*) consists of a theme and twelve études. Nine of the études were specifically designated as variations and an additional five variations were published posthumously. The title *Études Symphonique* reflects the idea of orchestral writing, with its complexity of colors, timbres, and polyphony. As a result, the cycle of variations represents

[5] Edward Garden, "Lyapunov, Sergey Mikhaylovich," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press, https://doi-org.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.17241.

stage performance pieces, and the piano writing is transformed in a way that resembles orchestral texture and sound.[6]

The twentieth-century genre of études was very popular. Among its composers of the first half of the twentieth century were Debussy, Leopold Godowsky, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Béla Bartok, Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Karol Szymanowski, and Prokofiev. The second half of the century and the beginning of the twenty-first century is represented by the following works: Olivier Messiaen's *Four Studies in Rhythm* (1949–50), John Cage's *Études Australes* (1974–75), Bolcom's *12 Études* and *12 New Études*, three books of études by György Ligeti (1985, 1988–94, 1995), Kapustin's *Eight Concert Études*, Marc-André Hamelin's *Twelve Études* (1982–2008), and Philip Glass's two books of études (1994–2012).

The collection *Douze Études* by Debussy (1915) focuses on one particular aspect of technique in each piece. However, he also concentrates on sonorities and timbres. The études are broadly considered his late masterpieces. He dedicated this set to Chopin, and some scholars see Chopin's influence in this cycle. Moreover, Debussy worked with Chopin's manuscripts, and music publisher Jacques Durand commissioned him to revise all of Chopin's works, publishing the scores between 1915 and 1917.[7] Debussy gave programmatic titles to each étude in his cycle, for example, the first study he called "After Monsieur Czerny." The next four pieces are based on double notes of different intervals. The second half of the collection focuses on specific techniques, such as chromatic scales, ornaments, arpeggios, repeated notes, and chords. The studies do not concentrate simply on mechanical difficulties, but represent imaginative compositions, similar in nature to his *Preludes*.

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[6] Blair Johnston, "Robert Schumann: Symphonic Études," ("Études in the form of variations") for piano (2 versions), Op. 13, *All Music*, https://www.allmusic.com/composition/symphonic-etudes-etudes-in-the-form-of-variations-for-piano-2-versions-op-13-mc000235872.
[7] Claude Debussy, *Letters*, trans. and ed. by Rogers Nichols, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 296.

Furthermore, études by Godowsky and, to an extent by Hamelin, were also based on Chopin's works. Godowsky composed *Fifty-three Studies on the Chopin's Études* (1894–1914). He increased the difficulty of Chopin's études and made them more complex and ambitious. For example, in Chopin's *Étude*, Op. 10, No. 2, Godowsky shifts the original right hand to the left hand, uses transposition, and combines two of Chopin's studies, Op. 10, No. 5 and Op. 25, No. 9, into one composition. In his set of twelve études, Hamelin integrated different styles and different composers' manners and used only minor keys. He used titles for pieces, such as "After Chopin," "After Paganini-Liszt," "After Alkan," "After Tchaikovsky," "Erlkönig" (based on Schubert's song), "After Rossini, "and (the last piece) "Prelude and Fugue."
One of the significant outputs in the étude genre for piano in the second half of the twentieth century belongs to Ligeti. His études consist of three books (*6 Études*, Book I; *8 Études*, Book II; *4 Études*, Book 3). The composer concentrates on particular techniques in each piece, not just on piano techniques but also on compositional techniques and rhythmic and metrical exploration of the music. For example, he focuses on the use of *ostinato* as a main idea in *Fanfares*, where he segregates the black keys from the white in "Désordre," or ambivalent tonality and imitation of gamelan orchestra in "Galamb borong." Ligeti often gives titles for studies after writing the music, using a mixture of technical terms and poetic descriptions.[8]

For the Russian school of composers (the end of nineteenth and the first half of twentieth centuries) the étude genre is exemplified by Lyapunov, Anton Arensky, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and Prokofiev. The most popular among pianists were études by Rachmaninoff and Scriabin. *Études-Tableaux* or "study-pictures," by Rachmaninoff, consists of eight studies in Op. 33 and nine pieces in Op. 39. Rachmaninoff composed these in 1911 and 1916-17. Initially, Op. 33 was a set of nine études, but only six of them (Nos. 1-2 and Nos. 6-9) were published, in 1911. The

[8] Richard Steinitz, "The Piano Études" in *György Ligeti: Music of the Imagination*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2003), 277-92.

original of *Étude* No. 4 was revised and published as Op. 39, No. 6 and the original *Études* Nos. 3 and 5 were published posthumously within *Études-Tableaux,* Op. 33. Rachmaninoff worked on this opus at the Ivanovka estate, and this set followed the cycle of his *Preludes*, Op. 32. Consequently, studies from Op. 33 share some of the preludes' features. The collection of nine études from Op. 39 is the last work written in Russia before Rachmaninoff's immigration to the United States.

Rachmaninoff wrote the Fourth Piano Concerto, Op. 40 (1926) following his *Études-Tableaux*, Op. 39, and the concerto is dominated by somber moods and energetic rhythms of Op. 39, with no light lyricism or naïve elegiac characteristics. As "story" or "picture pieces," the *Études-Tableux* were intended as short programmatic poems. However, the composer provided no titles, and perhaps his intention was that the audience would use their visual imagination. Nevertheless, Rachmaninoff allowed Italian composer Ottorino Respighi to orchestrate a few of them in 1930 (Op. 33, No. 6; Op. 39, Nos. 2, 6, 7, and 9).[9]

Scriabin's output of studies in piano literature includes "Étude," Op. 2, No. 1 (1887), *Twelve Études*, Op. 8 (1894), *Eight Études*, Op. 42 (1903), two "Études," Op. 49, No. 1, and Op. 56, No. 4, *Three Études*, Op. 65 (1911-12). Moreover, the études as compositional works also reflect his stylistic development as a composer. Scriabin's études can be divided into four creative periods, the first period including the "Étude," Op. 2, No. 1, which reflects Chopin's influence and composed when Scriabin was fourteen. The second period is represented by *Twelve Études*, Op. 8, written in 1894. This set of études has some common features with the preludes he composed during that time. The third period is exemplified by *Eight Études*, Op. 42, and reaches diverse nuances of depth and intricacy. The fourth period is represented by five studies: Op. 49, No. 1, Op. 56, No. 4, and the three études of Op. 65 (1908). For example, Op.

[9] Yury Keldish, "Études-Tableaux, Op. 33," *Belcanto.ru*, http://www.belcanto.ru (accessed March 21, 2018).

65, No. 1, features chromatic scales of major ninths in the right hand and follows the idea of atonality and a dissonant musical system.[10] Scriabin wrote to his friend and biographer Leonid Sabaneyev, in 1912,

> I inform you of news that is rather pleasant for me, maybe not indifferent to you, and quite unbearable for some proponents of classicism: a composer you know has written three études! In fifths (or horror!), in ninths (what depravity!) and . . . in major sevenths (the final fall!). What will the world say?[11]

Moreover, this use of harmonic tones in his atonal scale demonstrates a development toward his personal brand of mysticism. The musicologist George Ledin, Jr., in his program notes, explains the manner and individual features of the composer's writing:

> The one single feature referred to by almost all writers is Scriabin's development as a composer; specifically, the alleged stylistic progression of his compositions from Chopinesque to Lisztian to Wagnerian. The possibility that a young musician's early compositions may show the influences of other composers is no surprise. In Scriabin's case, however, it is notable that even his earliest compositions display his own individualistic, unmistakable signature. His maturation as a composer is reflected in his continued attempts to use music to express titanic, sweeping emotions. Not merely thunder and lightning, not solely the cannon volleys of the march of war, not just the convulsions of seismic and volcanic nature, but the paroxysms of cosmic consciousness, the very nature of conflict within the human soul. In this respect, Scriabin was and still remains the most boldly original composer.[12]

Thus, Ledin emphasized the unique features of Scriabin's nature.

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[10] George Ledin, Jr., "Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915) Piano Études (Complete)," *Naxos*, https://www.naxos.com/mainsite/blurbs_reviews.asp?item_code=8.553070&catNum=553070&filetype=About%20this%20Recording&language=English (accessed March 21, 2018).
[11] Ballard Lincoln, Matthew Bengston, and John Bell Young, "The Solo Piano Music," in *The Alexander Scriabin Companion: History, Performance, and Lore* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 58; Alexander Scriabin, *Pis'ma* (Moskva: Muzika, 1965), 594.
[12] Ledin, "Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915) Piano Études (Complete)."

CHAPTER 2

ÉTUDES OF THE NINTEENTH CENTURY

Chopin *Études*, Op. 25, Nos. 1, 11, and 12

Chopin composed his *Études*, Op. 10, Nos. 1 and 2 in Warsaw, in 1830, and originally called them "exercises." The Op. 25 études were published in 1837. The pianist-composers of the early nineteenth century explored small forms, such as preludes, études, and exercises. However, Chopin transformed this genre and both cycles stand alone compared to their antecedents. They reflect the transitional tendency from early nineteenth-century prototypes to the extroverted concert études of Liszt, Alkan, and other composers. Chopin revealed the musical potential of this genre: the pianistic ideas, pervasive ingenuity, and artistry with which they are manipulated. However, his originality derives not from the invention or demonstration of new techniques, but from his vision and innovative conceptual insight into the basic problem of the technique. For example, Chopin's figurations in passages have no decorative purpose in harmonic or melodic progressions, but embody a motivic structure that permeates the entire composition.[13]

Nevertheless, Chopin's studies were based on traditional pianistic figures as early études had been represented: arpeggios, broken chords, skips, extensions, thirds, sixths, and octaves. Moreover, he avoided some of the established virtuoso techniques: hand crossing, tremolos, and broken octaves. Chopin's originality reveals in his approach the use of broader schemes of traditional figures and larger scale harmonic structure in a manner where they interact with technical effects.[14]

[13] Simon Finlow, 50-57.
[14] Ibid., 50-57.

Musicologist and critic Jim Samson introduces the common features and analogies between the two cycles. He considers the figurations of *Études*, Op. 10 as extended in several ways in Op. 25. For example, the right-hand arpeggios of Op. 10, No. 1 (C major) match the figures in both hands of Op. 25, No. 12 (C minor), and the equally arpeggiated accompaniment with a melody in the top voice in Op. 10, No. 11 (E-flat major) has analogs in Op. 25, No. 1 (A-flat major); the melodic figuration in Op. 10 No. 2 (A minor) is similarly recreated in Op. 25, No. 2 (F minor) or extended in other ways in Op. 25, Nos. 6 and 8 (G-sharp minor and C-sharp minor). Samson sees parallels between the Op. 10, No. 12 (C minor) and Op. 25, No. 11 (A minor): the function of the hands is inverted—a melody based on dotted rhythms in the right hand versus the left-hand passages in the C minor "Étude," and the same idea as employed in the A minor "Étude" (inverts the hands).[15]

Schumann called the *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 1 the "aeolian harp"; his review appeared in the Leipzig music magazine *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, of which Schumann was editor. He describes in evocative terms Chopin's playing of Op. 25, No. 1: for example, "aeolian harp," "a deeper fundamental tone and softly singing melody," "a billowing of the chord of Ab," "swelled here and there by the pedal," and "through the harmonies . . . in sustained notes of a wonderful harmony."[16]

This A-flat major étude is a work for developing the melodic proficiency of the fifth finger of the right hand to create an illusion of a singing melody. It requires patience to work on the *legato* and the flexibility of the wrist. Polish pianist, pedagogue, editor, and publicist, Jan Kleczyński, noted how Chopin tried to help some of his pupils obtain the effect he had in mind: '"Imagine,' he said, 'a little shepherd who takes refuge in a peaceful grotto from approaching storm. In the distance rushes the wind and the rain, while the shepherd gently plays a melody on

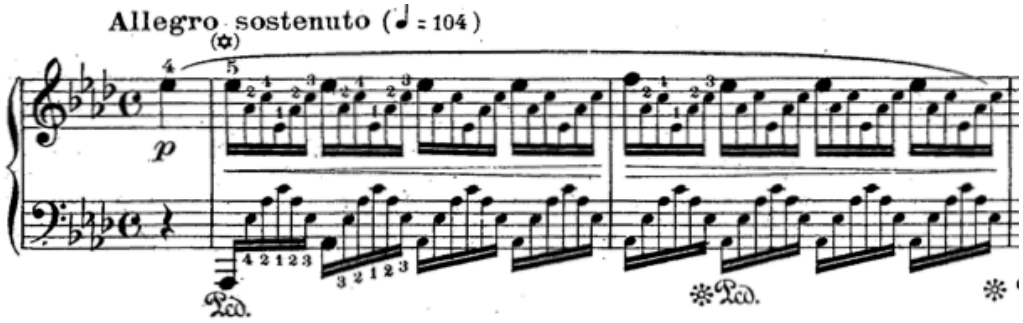
[15] Jim Samson, "A New World for Myself" in *Chopin* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), 159-60.
[16] Ibid., 132.

his flute.'"[17] Thus, it is necessary to control the balance between the melody and accompaniment. The simplicity, regular phrase-length, and consistent textures create the effect of a prelude-like miniature.

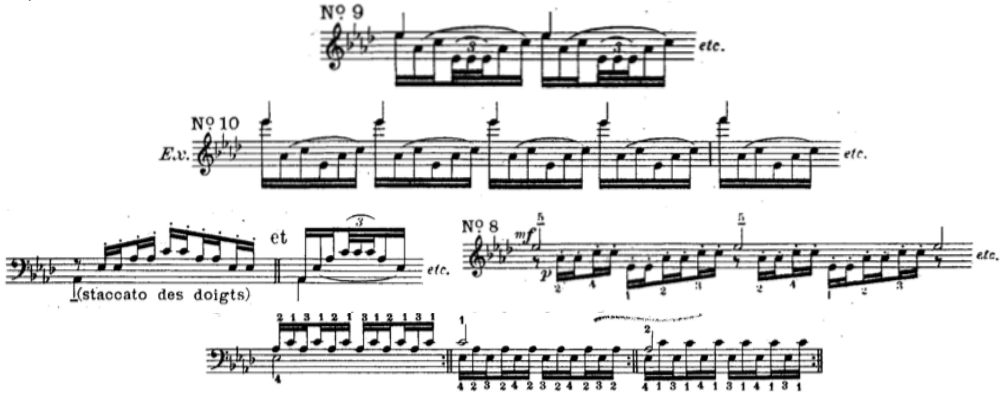
There were many editions of Chopin's *Études* during his lifetime; he sold his works to German, French, and British publishers. There are differences in dynamics, fingering, and notes within the various editions, the most common and available edited by Theodor Kullak, Alfred Cortot, Karol Mikuli, Lev Oborin, and Ignacy Paderewski. The Polish National Edition, under Paderewski, contains the scholarly explanations regarding differences and choices between all German, French, and British publishers. Cortot's edition is represented by detailed information about practice and fingering. He offers an alternating fingering inside of the pattern (Ex. 1a, see p. 12). Each étude is followed by the instruction and recommendations for successfully studying the piece (Ex. 1b, see p. 12). Mikuli, who was Chopin's student, suggests his own fingering ideas (Ex. 1c, see p. 12). James Methuen-Campbell surmises the reason for this as the type of instruments on which Mikuli was teaching his students in the city of Lwow, ". . . the type of the piano to which Chopin was devoted, the Pleyel, so that some of the effects that his master had demonstrated on his own instrument could well have been severely altered on one with a heavier action."[18]

[17] Mieczysław Tomaszewski, "Étude in A-flat Major, Op. 25, No. 1," *Internet Chopin Information Center*, http://en.chopin.nifc.pl/chopin/composition/detail/id/187 (accessed March 21, 2018).
[18] James Methuen-Campbell, "Chopin in Performance," in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin*, ed. by Jim Samson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 195.

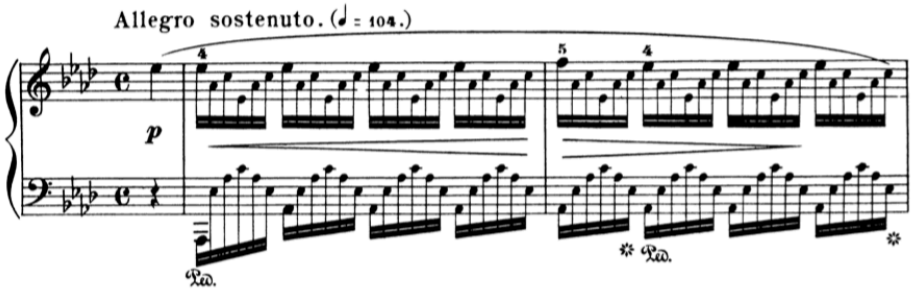
Example 1a: Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 1, mm. 1-2. Alternating fingering in Cortot's edition (third and fourth fingers on the C notes inside of A-flat pattern in right hand).



Example 1b: Cortot's recommendations for practicing on Chopin's *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 1 (Cortot's edition).



Example 1c: Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 1. Fingering in Mikuli's edition, mm. 1-2 (fourth finger on E-flat, not fifth finger as in Cortot's edition).



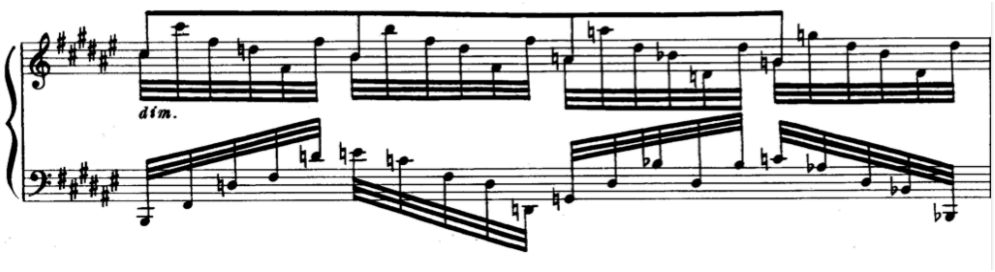
Mikuli transmitted the aspects of Chopin's tradition through his students, such as a refined and poetic approach, and plasticity in phrasing. Among his students were renowned artists Raoul Koczalski, Aleksander Michałowski, and Moris Rosenthal. Koczalski notes Mikuli's performance practice priorities:

> His analyses opened my eyes and trained me not to dissociate technique from mental work. Nothing was neglected: posture at the piano, fingertips, use of the pedal, *legato* playing, *staccato*, *portato*, octave passages, *fiorituras*, phrase structure, the singing tone of a musical line, dynamic contrasts, rhythm, and above all the care for authenticity with which Chopin's works must be approached. Here there is no camouflage, no cheap *rubato* and no languishing or useless contortions.[19]

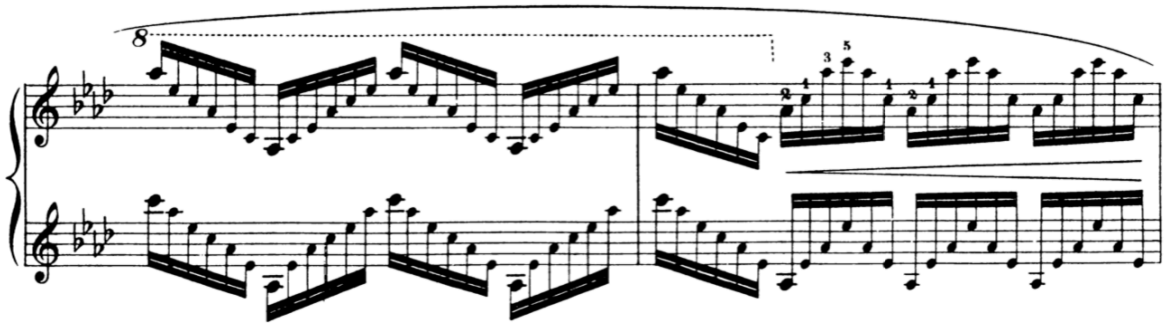
Thus, Mikuli's ideas of fingering and other markings in the score provide further information on performance practice in an authentic Chopin tradition.

Furthermore, Chopin's piano music inspired Debussy and Ravel and played a significant role in their musical lives. Some of Chopin's techniques can be found in impressionists works. For example, Ravel's "Ondine" from *Gaspard de la Nuit* resembles the arpeggios and at some points the contour of Op. 25, No. 1 (Ex. 1d, see p. 13). Debussy nearly cites outright the idea of the ascended passage at the end of Chopin's Op. 25, No. 11 in his "Pour les Cinq Doigts," from *Douze Études* (Exs. 1e and 1f, see p. 14).

Example 1d: Ravel, "Ondine," from *Gaspard de la Nuit*, m. 67.

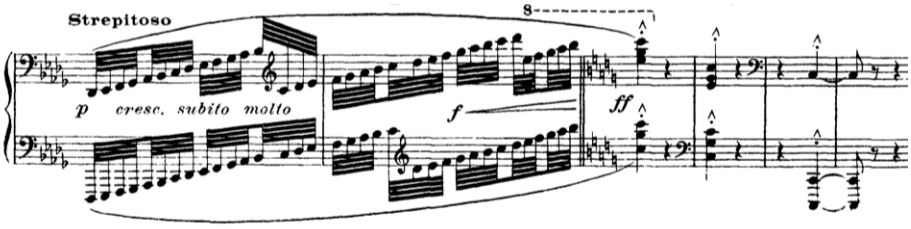


Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 1, mm. 45-46.

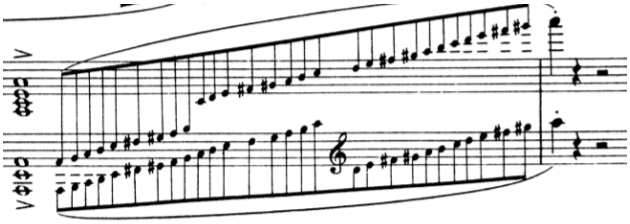


[19] Methuen-Campbell, 194-5.

Example 1e: Debussy, *Étude*, "Pour les Cinq Doigts," mm. 112-16.



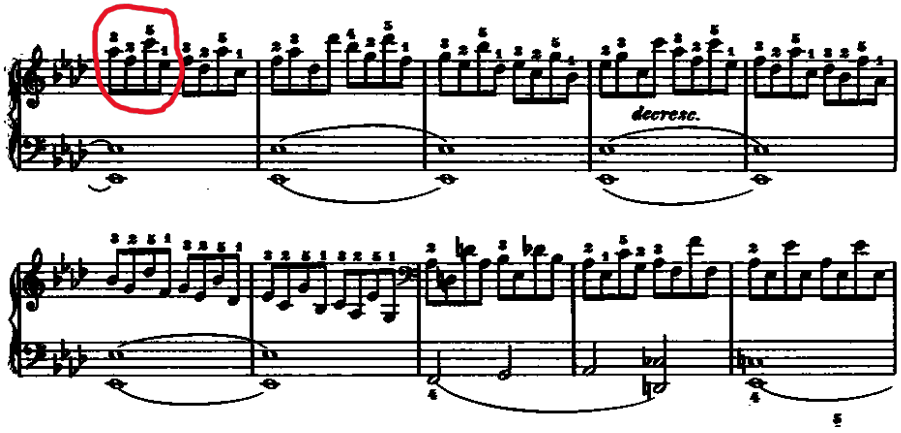
Example 1f: Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 11, mm. 99-100.



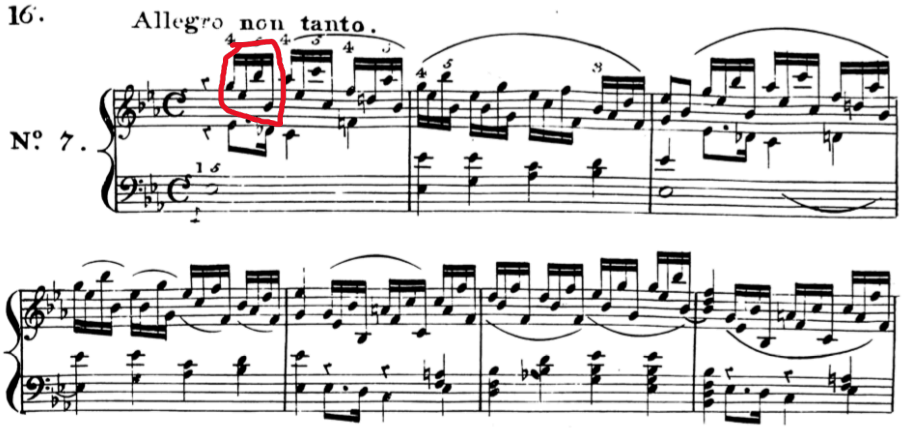
Chopin's *Étude* No. 11 in A minor is a challenging work in the sense of using a free and flexible wrist and forearm. This composition matches its predecessor, *Étude* No. 10, in the prominence of extreme sonorities. The *Étude* No. 11 is based on right-hand standard melodic figurations, which derive from both classical and post-classical traditions. The sonorities create a clash between the acoustic expression of the diatonic tune in the left hand and the cosmeticized figuration in the right hand. The agitated passages are based on the chromatic scale pattern, which traces a melodic line in the upper notes. This type of figuration (the most common four-note idea is marked in the Exs. 2a and 2b, see p. 15) was used often in Classical era compositions, such as Beethoven's and Mozart's works. It was a quite popular motivic cell in studies and exercises (with many repetitions) and embodies the *perpetuum mobile* effect. It is characterized also by intervallic transformation, according to harmonic context, chromatic alteration, and inversion. The following examples illustrate some excerpts of similar figurations from other studies of Chopin's contemporaries for comparison:[20]

[20] Finlow, 54-56.

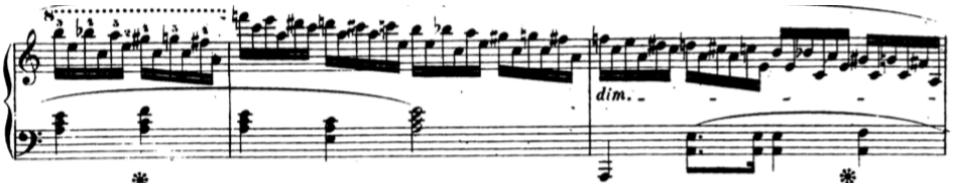
Example 2a: Cramer, *84 Studies*, No. 27 (1804), mm. 46-55.



Example 2b: Kalkbrener, *24 Études*, Op. 20, No. 7 (1820), mm. 1-7.



Example 2c: Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 11 (1837), mm. 6-8.

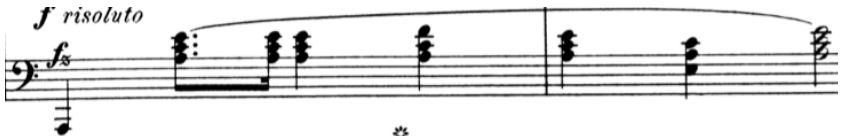


These examples demonstrate the pianistic similarity of the motivic cells and show how virtuoso piano music was standardized in the nineteenth century. However, in Chopin's work the melodic design of right-hand passages is represented by chromatic scales emerging in the top voice. Moreover, he places these in triple rhythms instead of more the common duple design, thus extending the breadth, fluency, and musical paragraph. Furthermore, the sixteenth note of the

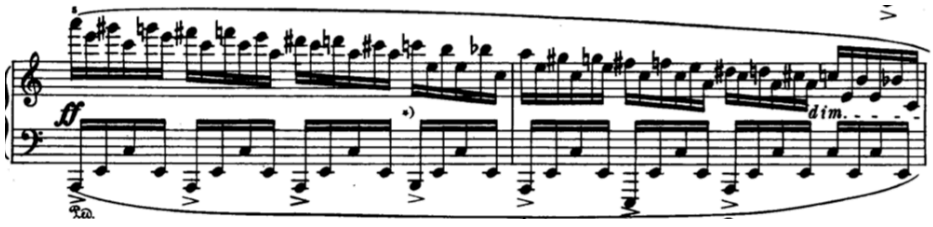
dotted rhythm in the left hand should be played strictly as a sixteenth note to avoid shifting into the triple rhythm.

Paderewski's edition shows different notation in the left-hand at the end of the piece (mm. 93-4): A–A–A–B–A–E–A (Ex. 2e). Mikuli's edition shows the following notation: A–A–A–A–A–E–A (Ex. 2f). Cortot's edition combines both notations (Ex. 2g). Since the tune in mm. 93-94 is both represented in augmentation, and based on the chord progression from the beginning (in the left hand, mm. 5-7, Ex. 2d), there are two ways of interpreting these two notations. First, and most probably, Paderewski's edition follows the idea of a transposed top voice in the left hand, from E–E–E–E–F–E–(C)–E to A–A–A–B–A–E–A. In Mikuli's edition this pattern is an augmentation of the same theme, but in the bass progression A–A–A–A–A–E–A.

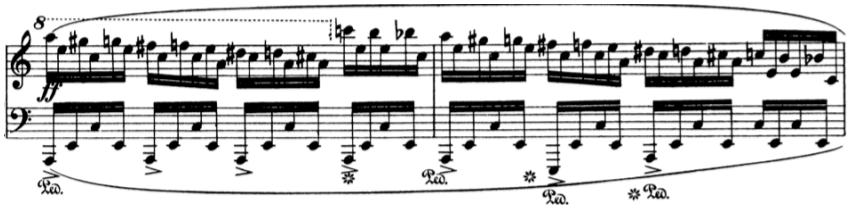
Example 2d: Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 11, mm. 5-7. Left-hand harmonic progression, all editions.



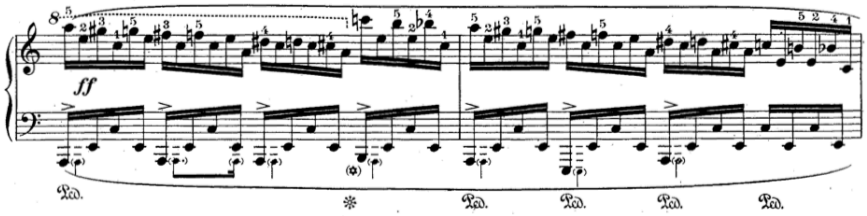
Example 2e: Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 11, mm. 93-94. Paderewski's edition.



Example 2f: Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 11, mm. 93-94. Mikuli's edition.

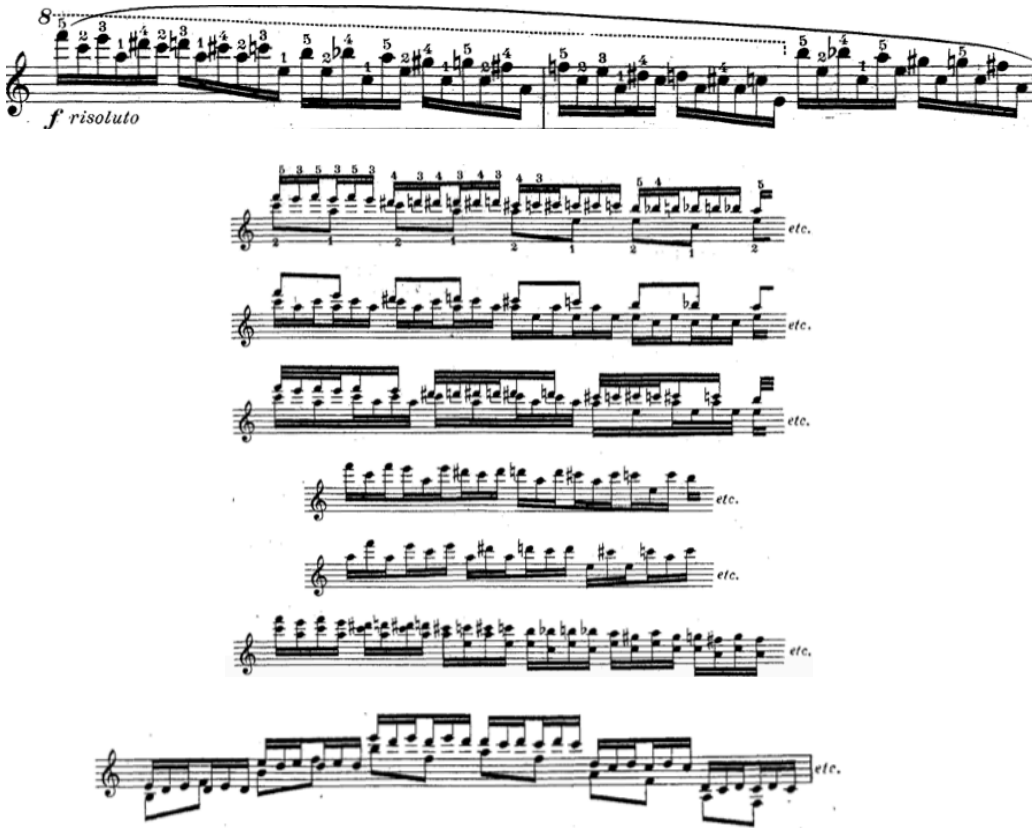


Example 2g: Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 11, mm. 93-94. Cortot's eition.



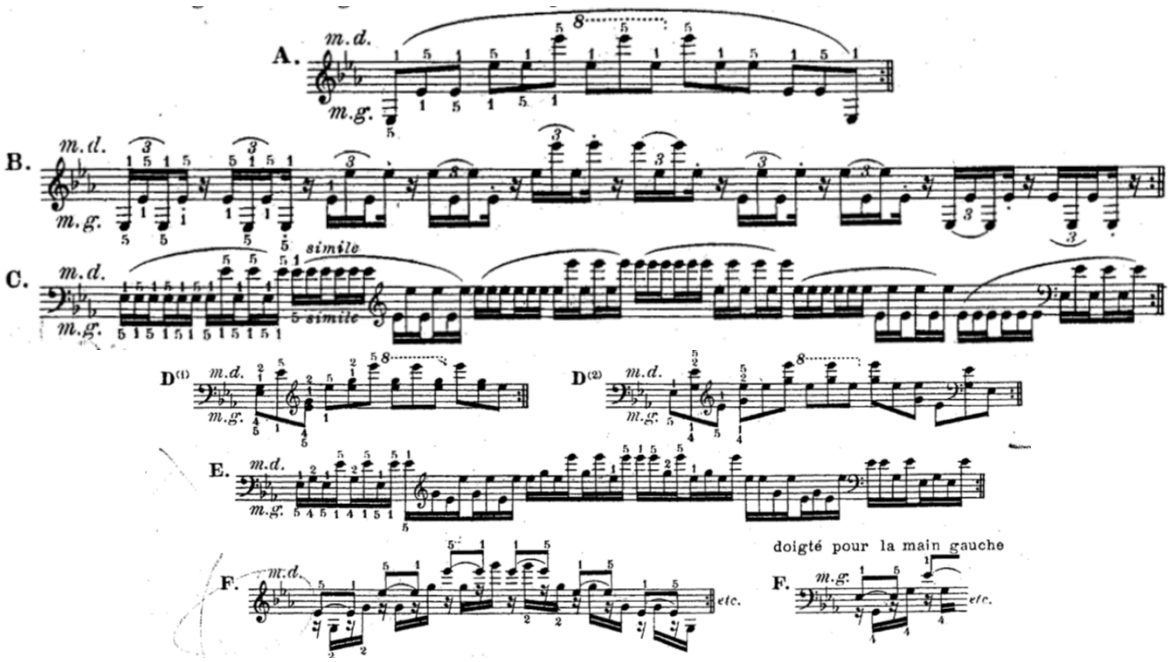
Moreover, Cortot suggests his own fingering. The following examples are exercises he suggests for technical improvement (Ex. 2h):

Example 2h: Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 11, mm. 93-94. Cortot's eition.

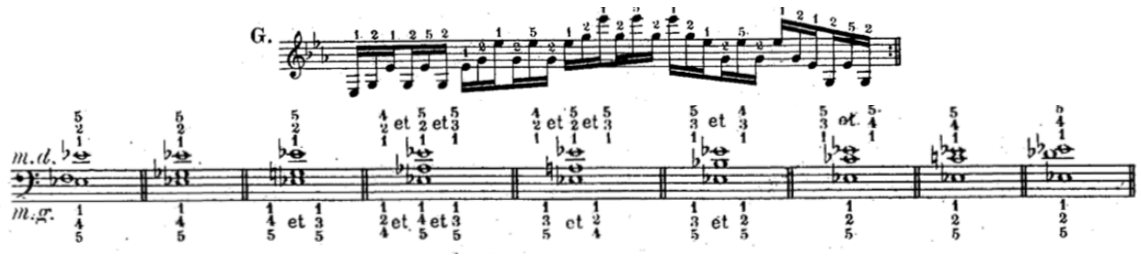


Étude No. 12 in C minor is based on arpeggios in both hands and on waves of figuration with a "heroic" character. At the end of the piece a rest is followed by a "victorious" chord in the major key instead of C minor. The challenge in this étude is crossing from the fifth finger to the thumb in ascending passages; but the more uncomfortable position for the shift happens in a reverse fingering order, when the passage moves downward. Thus, pianists would do better to start practicing the pattern from the upper note and descending, and then play the whole passage. Additionally, an American teacher, Abby Whiteside, has observed and focused attention on the rotary action demanded in No. 12. She advises practice exercises to omit the middle tone and to perfect the twisting moment of the repeated notes.[21] Cortot recommends a similar exercise for working on this étude. The following examples are included in his edition of Chopin's études (Ex. 2i).

Example 2i (see pp. 18-19): Cortot's recommendations for practicing on Chopin's *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 12.



[21] Abby Whiteside, "Mastering the Chopin Études," in *Mastering the Chopin Études and Other Essays* (New York: Scribner, 1869), 81, 85.



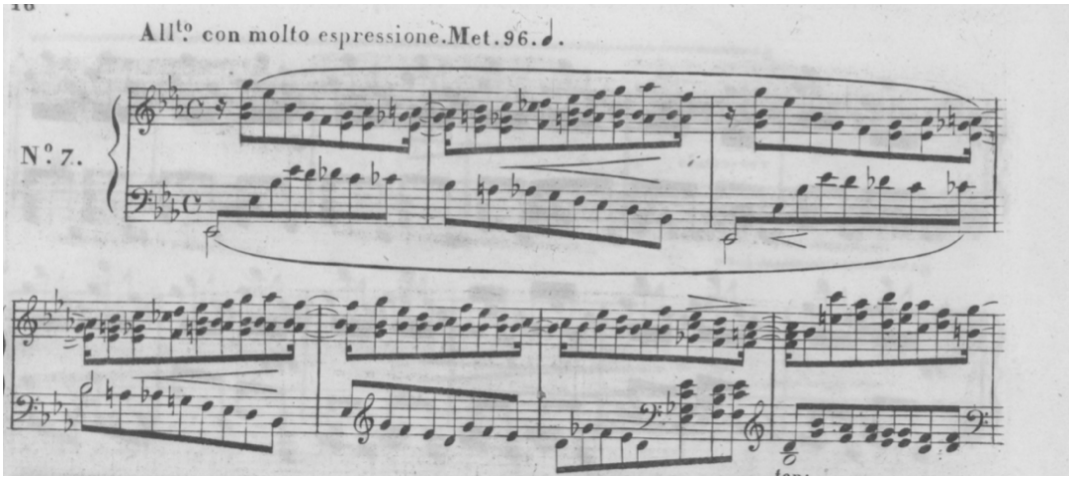
Liszt "Harmonies du Soir," from *Études d'Exécution Transcendante*

Liszt's "Harmonies du Soir" ("Evening Harmonies") is No. 11 in his set of twelve *Études d'Exécution Transcendante* (*Studies in Increasing Degree of Difficulty*). Liszt was age thirteen when he composed the first version of the set, with the title *Études Pour le Piano en Douze Exercices*. The collection of the second version of studies appeared in 1839 and was published in Vienna. Liszt dedicated this work to his teacher Carl Czerny, and called them *Grandes Études*. The transformations were in the increasingly complex variations of the *Études Pour le Piano en Douze Exercices*. Schumann described them as "studies in storm and dread for, at the most, ten or twelve players in the world."[22] Later, in 1851, the composer revised the studies and the final versions appeared under the title *Études d'Exécution Transcendante*, with the same dedication to Czerny: "from his pupil, in gratitude and respectful friendship." The final version represents the reshaping, adding, and substracting of its predecessor. [23] "Harmonies du Soir" appears in the earliest version of the work (*Études Pour le Piano en Douze Exercices*) as No. 7 in E-flat major, and then in two later versions becomes No. 11, as transposed in D-flat major. The *Étude* in E-flat major is a short piece (only two pages), based only on the first theme, and represents a study in *legato* playing and subtle pedaling. The following are some examples of "Harmonies du Soir" versions (1827, 1839, and 1851) for comparison:

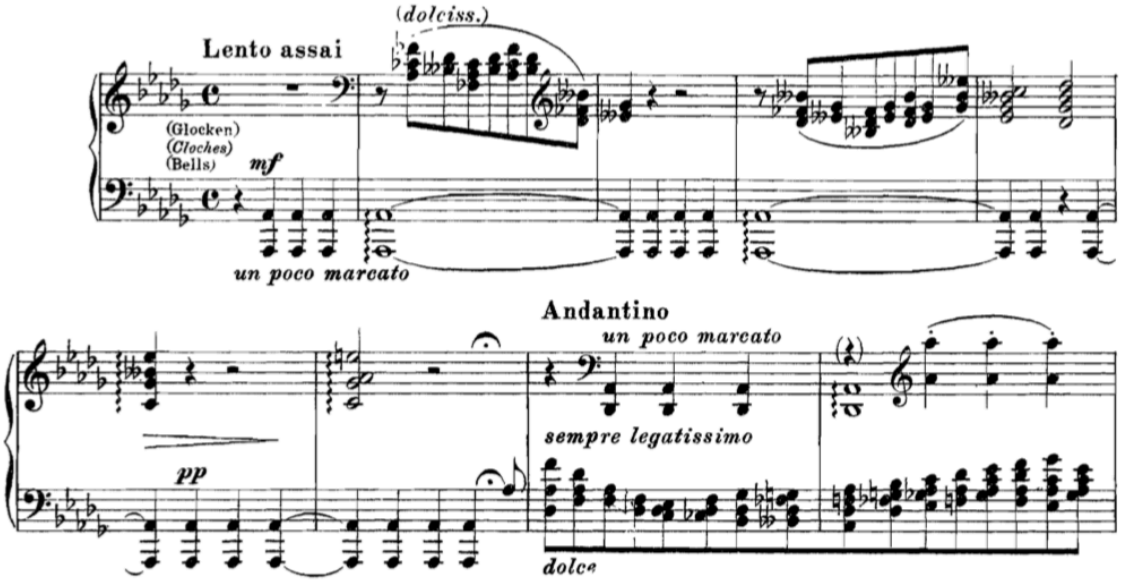
[22] Alan Walker, "Liszt and the Keyboard," in *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years 1811-1847*, vol. 1 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 305.
[23] Ibid., 305-6.

Example 3a (see pp. 20-21):

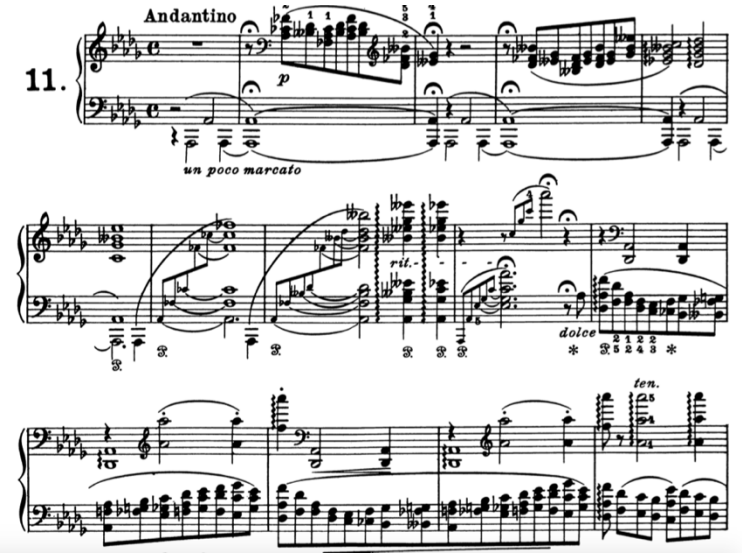
Études Pour le Piano en Douze Exercices, No. 7 (1827), in E-flat major, mm. 1-7.



Twelve Grandes Études, No. 11 (1839), mm. 1-9 (octaves in the left hand).

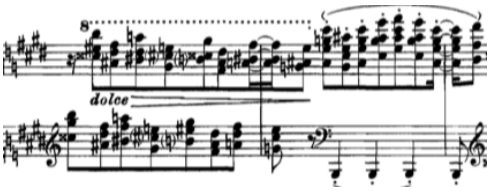


Études d'Exécution Transcendante, No. 11 (1851), mm. 1-14 (extended introduction with arpeggiated chords).

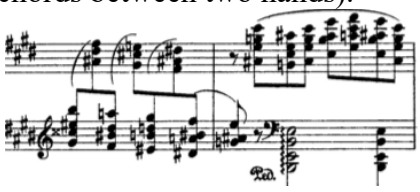


Example 3b:

Twelve Grandes Études, No. 11 (1839), mm. 28-29.

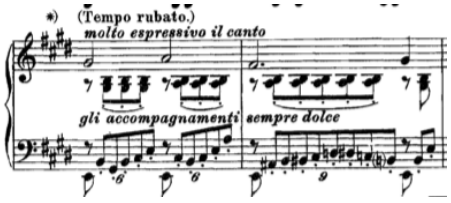


Études d'Exécution Transcendante, No. 11 (1851), mm. 30-31 (simplified reduction of the chords between two hands).

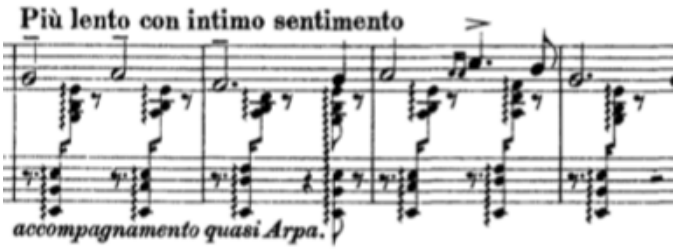


Example 3c (see pp. 21-22):

Twelve Grandes Études, No. 11 (1839), mm. 56-57.

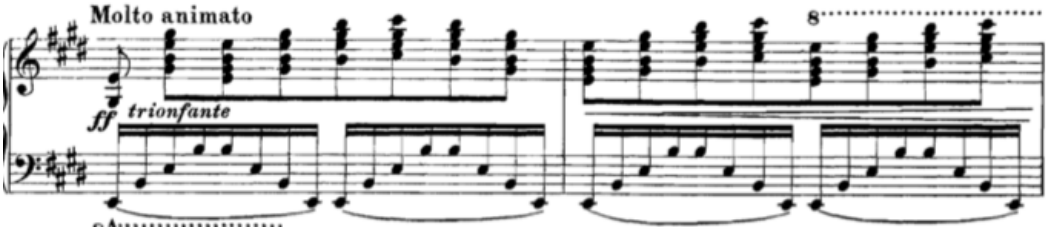


Études d'Exécution Transcendante, No. 11 (1851), mm. 59-60 (*arpeggiato* in accompaniment part).

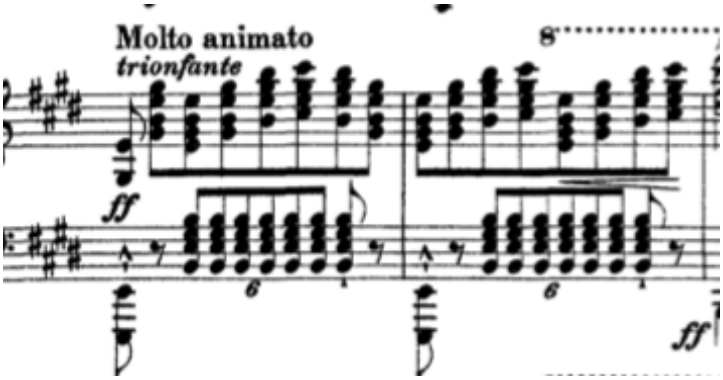


Example 3d:

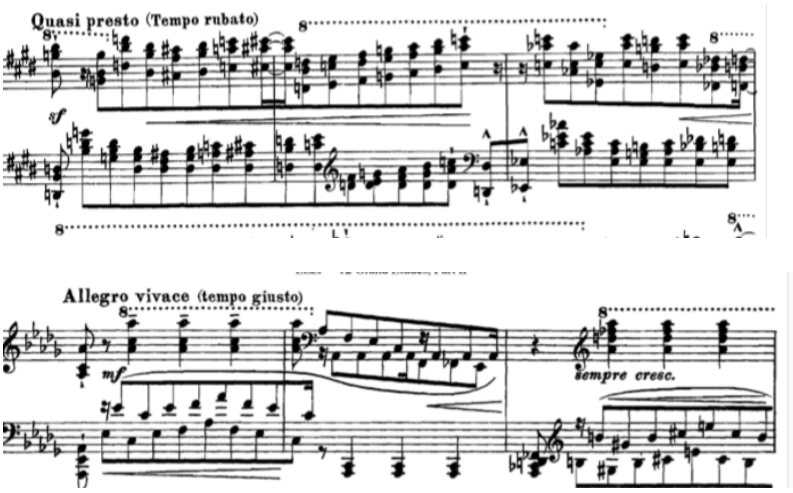
Twelve Grandes Études, No. 11 (1839), mm. 77-78 (arpeggios in the left hand).



Études d'Exécution Transcendante, No. 11 (1851), mm. 80-81 (chords in the left hand instead of arpeggios).



Example 3e: The following extended episodes are omitted in the 1851 version and belong to the *Twelve Grandes Études* (1839), mm. 97-99, 107-10.



As these examples show, the final revised collection of studies, in comparison to the *Twelve Grandes Études* edition, is characterized by greater simplicity and economical motion and energy for achieving a more powerful result for the dramatic compositions.

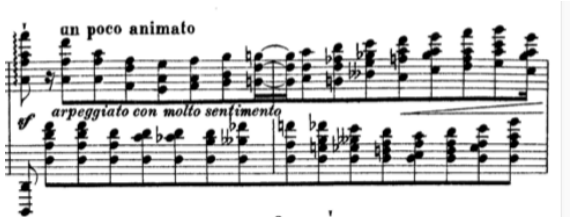
Poetical vision was important to Liszt, and he focused the pianist's attention on the pictorial imagination rather than the technical complexities of his compositions. He taught by parables and always had in mind the poetical idea. As a result, he wanted to present his students with the capability of turning ideas into reality in music. For instance, Arthur Friedheim, one of Liszt's students, during his lesson in the master's apartments at the Villa d'Este near Rome, describes his playing of "Harmonies du Soir" for Liszt: "It was late autumn and sun was about to set over the Italian campagna. Liszt drew Friedheim to the window and said: 'Play that. There are your evening harmonies.'"[24]

[24] Alan Walker, "The Lion of Weimar: Liszt and His Pupils," in *Franz Liszt: The Final Years 1861-18867*, vol. 3 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 247. Walker, "Liszt and His Pupils: Three Character Sketches," in *Reflections on Liszt* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 56.

"Harmonies du Soir" is a study in harmonies, chromatic harmonies, broken chords (*arpeggiato*), arpeggios, full massive chords, and leaps. The opening of the étude is an *Andantino* episode and begins with broken A-flat octaves (with *un poco marcato* marking) and fifths based on D-flat, which imitate the bell-like sonorities and vibrating bell sounds in the atmosphere. Moreover, the 1838 version of the étude has an indication of Liszt's poetic language in the *quasi campani* marking, instead of *un poco marcato*. The first theme is represented in the left hand by chords with chromatic motion, changing harmonies on each eighth-note. As a result, the pedal requires more frequent changing where there is chromatic chord movement, especially on modern instruments. The same theme appears at the end of the study, which creates an arch-design effect in form. Furthermore, the contour of the first theme (from m. 10), marked *un poco animato* (from m. 24), references Chopin's *Étude* in E-flat major, Op. 10, No. 11, also based on extended arpeggiated chords:

Example 4a: Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 10, No. 11, mm. 1-4.

Example 4b: Liszt, "Harmonies du Soir," mm. 24-25.

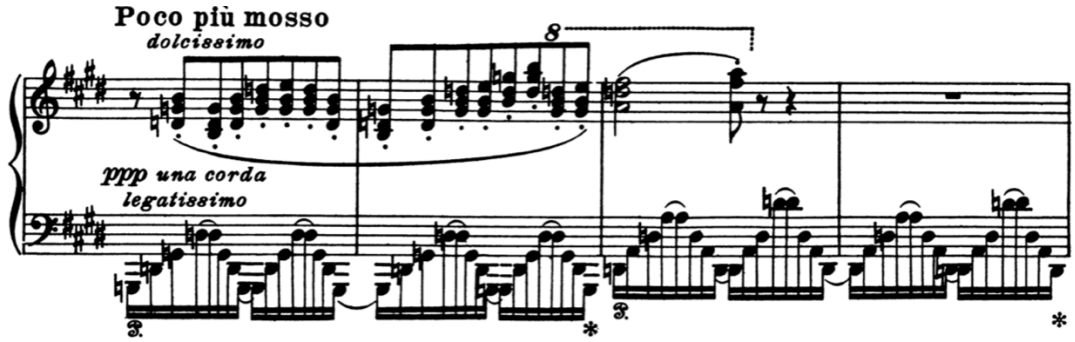


The second theme of Liszt's "Harmonies du Soir" is represented in *Poco piu mosso* with *ppp dolcissimo* indication (from m. 38, Ex. 4c) and based on transposition into different keys of the two-measure motive (G major, D major, A minor, and C major). The same theme returns in

Molto animato (from m. 80, Ex. 3d, see p. 22) and after a singing-like episode in *Piu animato* (from m. 120, Ex. 4c), where it grows into an *appassionato* climax of the whole étude, with *ff* dynamics and *trionfante* character. These episodes with chords in both hands are the most technically difficult part of the étude. The chordal leaps and repetition require a large amount of endurance, agility, and finger stretching. This type of chordal texture is a quite common device of Liszt's chordal technique. The use of wrist and arm, forearm rotation, transformation into vertical gestures, and use of all registers of the keyboard emphasize the interpretation of the piano as an orchestra. For instance, French pianist François Clidat has characterized the use of hand, arm, and body technique needed for this as "three-dimensional."[25]

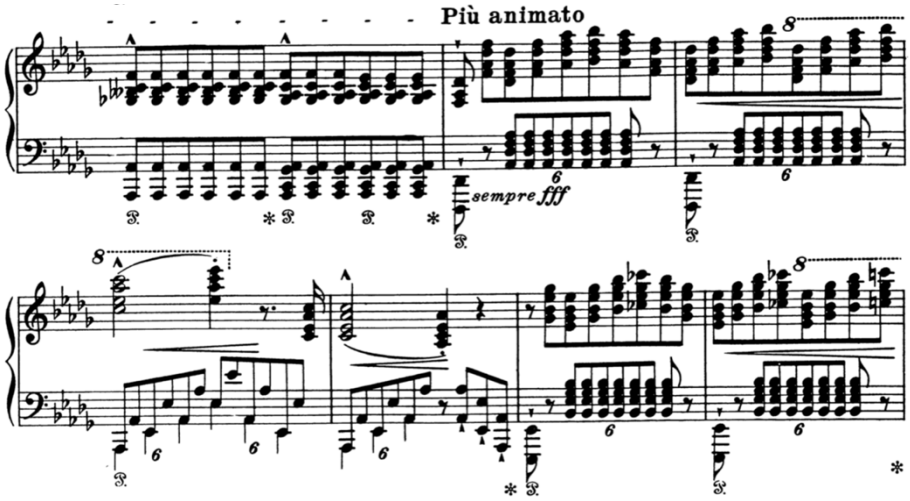
Example 4c (see pp. 25-26):

Liszt, "Harmonies du Soir," mm. 38-41.



[25] Samson, "Composing the Performance," in *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 91.

Liszt, “Harmonies du Soir,” mm. 119-125.



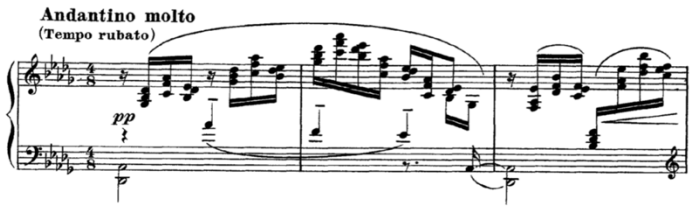
The *Piu lento con intimo sentimento* section represents a clear separation of the melodic line and harp style accompaniment (see Ex. 3c, version of 1851). This type of differentiation in texture directly associates with the vocal or opera paraphrase and is reminiscent of an operatic score. Liszt’s common solution in similar types of vocal-like music is to write notation in two different typefaces, light and bold. This keyboard notation helps a performer to see how to distribute the tone.[26]

The tonal ambiguity and sonorities, playing with shades, pedal effects, and artistic manner of the piece mark Liszt’s “Harmonies du Soir” as a forward-looking impressionistic work. Liszt explored many coloristic effects, which later inspired impressionists such as Debussy and Ravel (both admirers of Liszt’s *Les Jeux d'Eaux à la Villa d'Este*). Moreover, Debussy had a chance to observe Liszt’s playing, in 1884, and on another occasion to play for him.[27] The opening of “Harmonies du Soir” shows Liszt’s influence, with some features in coloristic

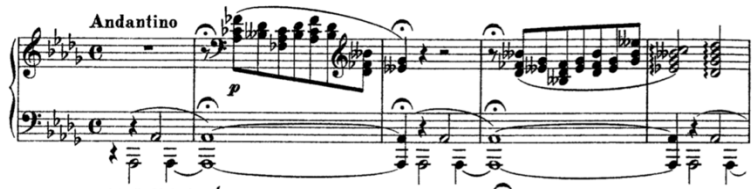
[26] Walker, vol. 1, 314.
[27] Joseph Banowetz, “Études d'Exécution Transcendante,” in *American Music Teacher* 20, no. 3 (January, 1971), 18-19, 38, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43533752.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A3cbac269cacde4777a83139cabcc73c6 (accessed August 14, 2018).

sonorities and mood Debussy used in “Reflets dans l’Eau” (“Reflections on the Water”), from *Images*:

Example 5a: Debussy, “Reflets dans l’Eau,” mm. 1-3.



Example 5b: Liszt, “Harmonies du Soir,” mm. 1-5.



In terms of the genre, more generally, the common idea of the study in the nineteenth century usually focused not only on one technical problem, but also on a figure; this figure worked cyclically throughout the entire composition. Liszt’s technical difficulties are almost always components of a larger narrative or drama; the études were more ambitious in scale and form, represented by gestural character and sonority. The American pianist George Barth called this the “transformation of keyboard style,” inaugurated by Beethoven.[28]

[28] Samson, “Composing the Performance,” in *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt*, 87.

CHAPTER 3

ÉTUDES OF THE LAST QUARTER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Debussy "Pour les arpèges composes," from *Douze Études*

Debussy worked on his études from July through September of 1915 and, according to Marianne Wheeldon, they reflect wartime concerns: "Debussy's artistic responses to the First World War resulted in works that can be drawn together, not by a monolithic musical aesthetic or language, but the shared pressures and concerns of their unique context."[29] Wheeldon emphasizes the importance of how circumstances influenced Debussy's works in his final creative period. Debussy's music of this period introduces new rhetoric of wartime compositions and presents a significant body of work, more or less acknowledged as among the masterpieces of his career. By the time he worked on his études, Debussy had completed *Berceuse Héroïque* for piano (1914), *Pièce pour l'Oeuvre du "Vêtement du Blessé"* (1915), and *En Blanc et Noir* for two pianos (1915). The compositions following *Douze Études* are *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (1915), *Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp* (1915), *Élégie*, for piano (1915), *Noël des Enfants qui N'ont Plus de Maison*, for voice and piano (1915, transcribed by Debussy for two-part girls' chorus and piano), *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1916–17), and *Les Soirs Illuminés par l'Ardeur du Charbon* for piano (1917, not published until 2003).[30]

Most of Debussy's wartime works take an entirely new direction—presenting a choice of more traditional genres—and possess, instead of theatrical emphasis and reliance on poetic or

[29] Marianne Wheeldon, "Defining Debussy's Late Style," in *Debussy's Late Style* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 3.
[30] Ibid., 2-7.

literary sources, more generic titles: Berceuse, Pièce, Étude, Sonata, and Élégie. If in the prewar years Debussy concentrated on orchestral writing, dramatic, and theatrical compositions, his wartime compositions focused more on instrumental works. For example, the works composed before the Great War, from 1911–14, are *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien* (incidental music to the mystery play in five acts by Gabriele D'Annuzio), *Preludes* for piano (second book), *Khamma* (ballet), *Jeux* (*Games*, a ballet for the Ballets Russes), *Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé*, for voice and piano, *La Boîte à Joujoux* (*The Toy-Box*, a ballet), La Flûte de Pan, for solo flute (incidental music to the dramatic poem), and *Six Épigraphes Antiques*, for piano duet (transcribed by Debussy for a solo piano, in 1915). Wheeldon emphasizes the distinction between Debussy's compositional development in prewar piano pieces and the wartime piano studies she characterizes as "the more sober guise of the piano étude."[31]

The music of Chopin played a significant role in Debussy's musical life, and figured prominently in his education through the piano repertoire he performed during his studies at the Paris Conservatoire. Debussy dedicated his études to the Polish composer, further demonstrating Chopin's influence and Debussy's intimate knowledge of Chopin's music. However, Chopin was only one half of a musical heritage to which Debussy referred in the set. For example, in the foreword Debussy extends his historical associations to the French eighteenth-century school, writing: "Our old [French] Masters—I mean our admirable harpsichords—never indicated fingering . . ." In his letter of August 19, 1915, Debussy asked Durand: "Will they be dedicated to F. Chopin or F. Couperin? I have as much respectful gratitude for one as for the other of these two masters, such admirable 'diviners.'" Thus, covering three centuries, from harpsichordists (*clavecinistes*) to Chopin, to the beginning of twentieth century, Debussy's studies trace various

[31] Wheeldon, 4-7.

musical influences, simultaneously showing the composer's own contribution to the development of French pianism.[32]

Furthermore, in the 1920s, the Italian music critic and founder of the journal *Il Pianoforte*, Guido M. Gatti, emphasized Debussy's aesthetic personality and his exquisite manner in working with the keyboard and sonorities, and his contribution to French pianism:

> But the piano remains his preferred instrument . . . Debussy achieves a union of the greatest loftiness with the drama and the symphonic poem . . . just as many pianoforte compositions by the nineteenth century romanticists smack of the orchestra, in quite a few of Debussy's symphonic scores, perhaps, we feel a piano. This is because he has made such extensive use of those subtle sonorities, sonorities delicately high . . . which are property of the piano. . . .[33]

Based on this connection, Debussy's *Études* can represent an interesting example of the primary role of the piano in his compositions and a summary of Debussy's piano music.

The musicologist, lifelong friend and correspondent for thirty years of Debussy, Robert Godet (1889-1918), affirmed that Chopin and Debussy had "no rival as reformers of pianism" and that they "mark two decisive stages in the development of this instrumental discipline." Godet sees similarities between the two composers, in their tendency to expunge pedantic dryness and exaggerated expression, and in their compositions that successfully balance the demands of genre, technique, and interpretation. From another prospective, Godet emphasizes the differences between Chopin's and Debussy's étude sets. He considers Chopin's early cycles as representing the vehicle for his compositional audacity. Debussy's studies, by contrast, appeared in his late period and were more for the benefit of his audience than for the composer's own artistic ambitions.[34]

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[32] Wheeldon, 10-19, 55.
[33] Guido M. Gatti, "The Piano Works of Claude Debussy," in *Musical Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (July, 1921), 453-4, http://www.jstor.org/stable/738116 (accessed August 8, 2018).
[34] Wheeldon, 57.

Debussy was satisfied with this set of études and seemed confident that this cycle would have its own niche in the piano repertoire. He wrote to Durand in August, 1915:

> I've invested a lot of passion and faith in the future of the *Études*. I hope you'll like them, both for the music they contain and for what they denote?
>
> I'm sure you'll agree with me that there's no need to make technical exercises over-somber just to appear more serious; a little charm never spoilt anything. Chopin proved it and makes this desire of mine seem somewhat foolhardy, I know. Neither am I so dead to the world as not to be aware of the comparisons that my contemporaries, colleagues, and others . . . will undoubtedly make to my disadvantage.[35]

Thus, for Debussy, the études meant more than simply piano pieces for pedagogical purposes; he was less interested in the traditional model of the étude than with its specific or problematic area of piano technique, from the opening measures until the end. The composer explored a range of musical and technical possibilities and masterfully balances them.[36]

Godet also suggested the following comparisons for seven pairs of Debussy's and Chopin's *Études*:

Debussy: *Étude 1,* "Pour les Cinq Doigts d'Après Monsieur Czerny" ("Five Fingers, After Monsieur Czerny") – Chopin: Op. 10, No. 4 (C-sharp minor)

Debussy: *Étude 2,* "Pour les Tierces" ("Thirds") – Chopin: Op. 25, No. 6 (G-sharp minor)

Debussy: *Étude 4,* "Pour les Sixtes" ("Sixths") – Chopin: Op. 25, No. 8 (D-flat major)

Debussy: *Étude 5,* "Pour les Octaves" – Chopin: Op. 25, No. 9 (G-flat major) and No. 10 (B minor)

Debussy: *Étude 7,* "Pour les Degrés Chromatiques" ("Chromatic Degrees") – Chopin: Op. 10, No. 2 (A minor)

Debussy: *Étude 11,* "Pour les Arpèges Composés" ("Composite Arpeggios") – Chopin: Op. 25, No. 1 (A-flat major)

Debussy: *Étude 12,* "Pour les Accords" ("Chords") – Chopin: Op. 10, No. 11 (E-flat major)

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[35] Debussy, *Letters*, 300-1.
[36] Wheeldon, 57-58.

Godet pairs off these études and traces Chopin's influence in Debussy's references to Chopin in the former's exploration of similar areas of piano technique. However, if Chopin has a consistent texture, and almost always focuses on a specific technique, Debussy changes the texture every two or four measures, uses rests, *fermatas*, *rubato*, *ritenuto* markings, and often employs tempo changes.[37] Moreover, he never indicates fingering as do Chopin and Liszt in some of their studies. In the summer of 1915, Debussy wrote a foreword for his études, and explained why he excluded fingering from the set of studies:

> The present Studies intentionally contain no fingering. This briefly is the reason: Logically, an imposed fingering cannot suit different formation of the hand. Modern piano editing thinks it has overcome this problem by giving several fingerings on top of one another; this only increases the confusion . . . The music thus looks like a strange operation where, by inexplicable phenomenon, the fingers must multiply themselves…
>
> Our old Masters—I mean "our" admirable harpsichordists—never indicated any fingering, confident, no doubt of the skill of their contemporaries. To doubt that of modern virtuosos would be invidious.
>
> In conclusion: the absence of fingering is an excellent exercise, suppresses the spirit of contradiction which prompts us to prefer not to use the composer's fingering and confirms the old saying: "One is never better served than by oneself."[38]

That the composer gives the freedom of fingering to the performer is not a feature of a didactic composition, but evidence of the artistic purposes of the composition.[39]

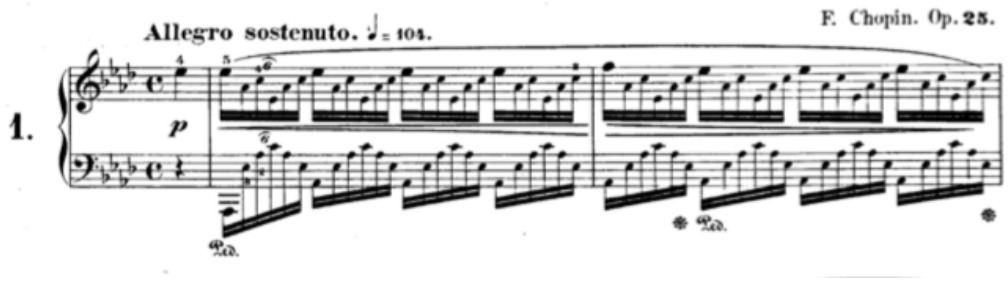
"Pour les Arpèges Composés" is the penultimate of Debussy's set of twelve études, included in his second volume, which focuses on different aspects of music than the collection of six études in the first. The first volume focuses on double-note technique, for example, playing thirds, quarters, sixths, octaves, five- or four-finger patterns; the second volume extends the double-note technique to chromatic scales, arpeggios, chords, repeated notes, sonorities, and ornaments. Gatti called the second set a "study for theory and of sonority," characterizing these études as imaginative compositions: "In the second book of *Études*, the composer frees himself

[37] Wheeldon, 58-60.
[38] Claude Debussy, "Program Notes" in *Études*, (London: Edition Peters, 2009).
[39] Wheeldon, 56-65.

to a still greater extent from the bonds of form, abandoning himself to that lyric fancy which has given us in *Preludes*."[40]

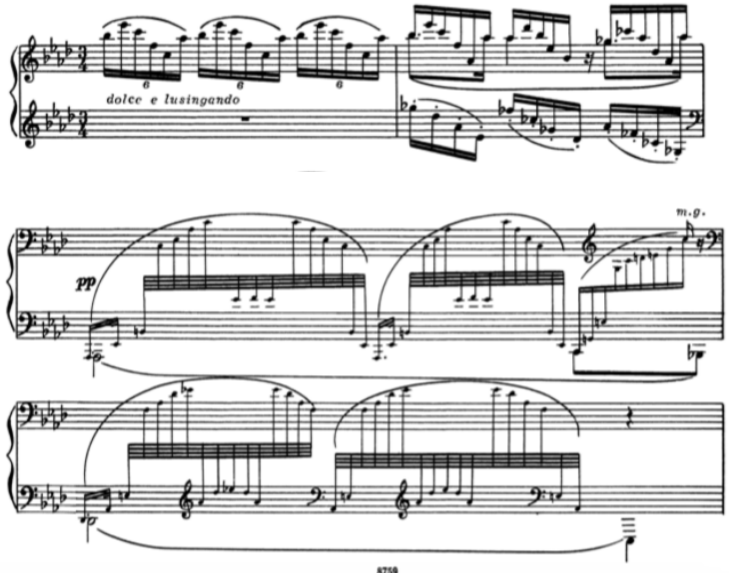
The innovative application of compositional use of arpeggios redefines them to include a variety of non-harmonic tones. Moreover, the harmonic delicacies of sonorities, variety of musical gestures, and characteristic markings in "Pour les Arpèges Composés" make this composition not simply a purely virtuosic étude, but an artistic piano work on its own musical terms, without any stereotype in the spinning design. Debussy uses similar notation and choice of key (A-flat major) as Chopin in Op. 25, No. 1. Debussy's and Chopin's notations represent the melody in bold typeface and accompaniment in light; the tradition of this notation helps the pianist to read how to distribute the melody:

Example 6a: Chopin, *Étude*, Op. 25, No. 1, mm. 1-2.



[40] Gatti, "The Piano Works of Claude Debussy," 452.

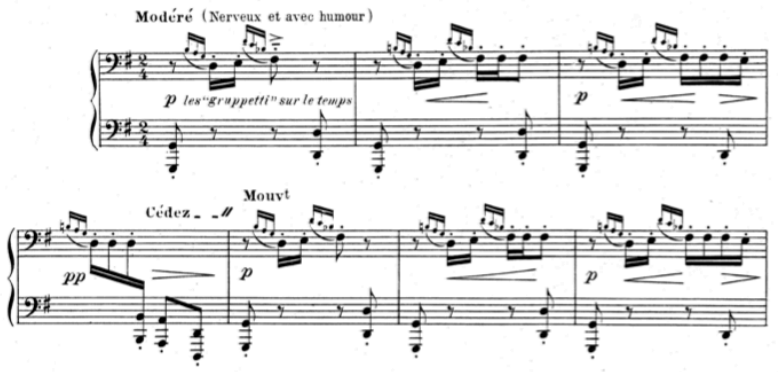
Example 6b: Debussy, *"*Pour les Arpèges Composés," mm. 1-2, 7-8.



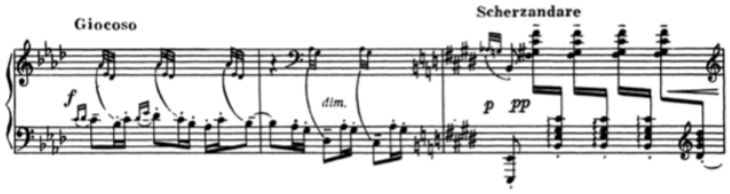
Debussy's texture also resembles and shares other common features, such as the idea of the "aeolian harp," because of his use of a wide register, spreading out or flowering arpeggios, and applying a light articulation and touch. However, the study avoids the consistent texture and spinning idea of Chopin's *Étude* in A-flat, Op. 25.

"Pour les Arpèges Composés" is nevertheless a kaleidoscopic and quite eclectic composition, with different tempos and characteristic indications: *dolce lusingando*, *lumineux* with *ff*, *elegantemente, un poco pomposo*, *giocoso*, *scherzando*, and returning to *sempre pp e lusingando*. The arabesque character of the piece, with its unpredictable mood changes, has some parallels with a few pieces from Debussy's *Preludes*. I compare the following paired examples, which resemble the contour or posture of some his preludes and other compositions:

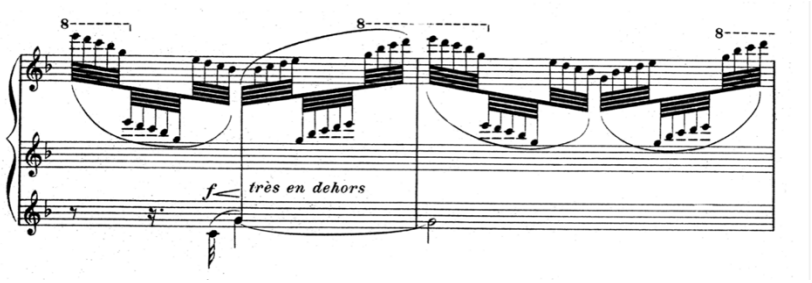
Example 7a: “Minstrels,” from *Preludes*, Book 1, mm. 1-7.



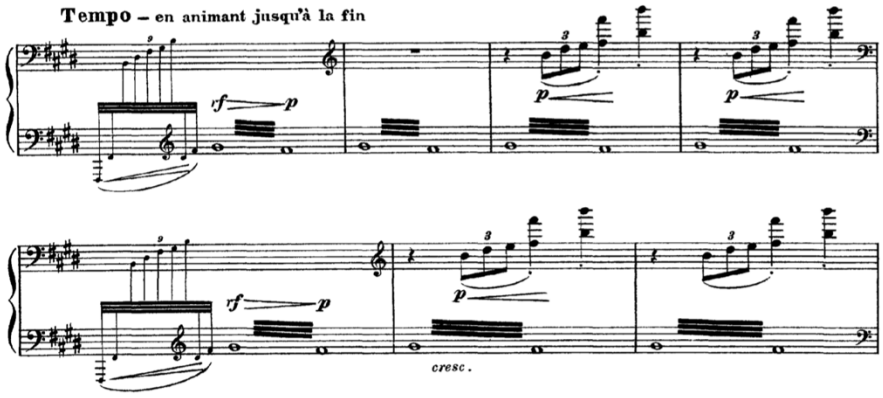
“Pour les Apèges Composés,” mm. 29-31.



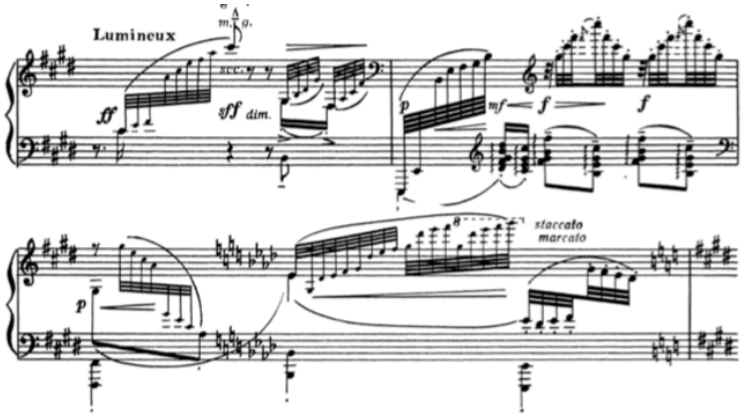
Example 7b (see pp. 35-36): “Feux d’Artifice,” from *Preludes*, Book. 2, mm. 27-28.



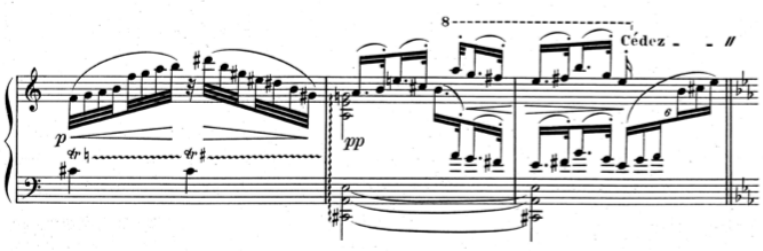
“Jardins Sous la Pluie” (“Gardens in the Rain”), from *Estampes*, mm. 128-34.



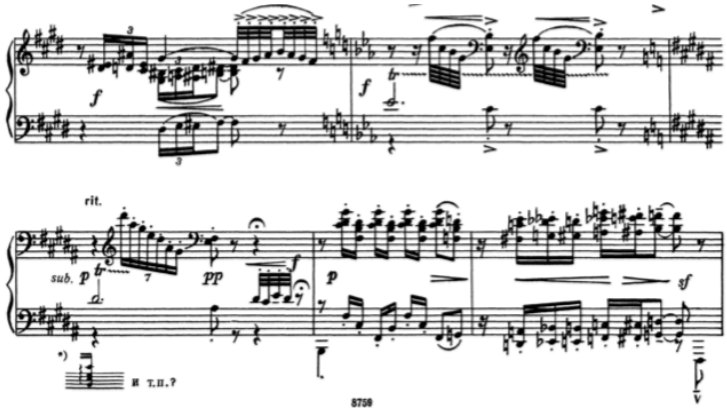
"Pour les Arpèges Composés," mm. 25-27.



Example 7c: "La Danse de Puck" from *Preludes*, Book 1, mm. 60-62.



"Pour les Arpèges Composés," mm. 37-41.



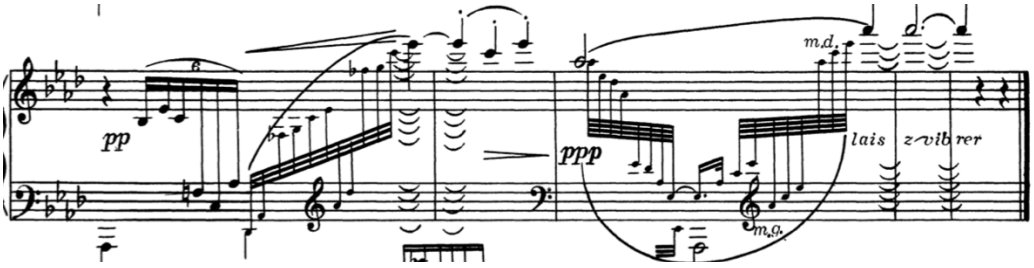
Debussy has no precise pedal indications in his music, but his works require very sensitive pedaling. As he wrote to his publisher, Jaques Durand, in August 28, 1915:

> Despite my respect for Saint-Saëns's great age, what he says about Chopin's pedalling isn't entirely true. I have very clear memories of what Mme Mauté de Fleurville told me. He (Chopin) recommended practising without pedal and, in performance, not holding it on except in very rare instances. It was the same way of turning the pedal into a kind of

> *breathing* which I observed in Liszt when I had the chance to hear him in Rome. I feel that Saint-Saëns forgets that pianists are poor musicians, for the most part, and cut music up into unequal lumps, like a chicken.
>
> The plain truth is that abusing the pedal is only a means of covering up a lack of technique . . . . In theory we should be able to find a graphic means of representing this "breathing" pedal . . . it wouldn't be impossible.[41]

Thus, the composer notated open-ended slurs over notes indicating the pedal. Sometimes he denotes the omission of pedal with the word *sec*. For example, Debussy employed nine slurs at the end of the "Pour les Arpèges Composés" and also uses the indication of vibrating pedal (Ex. 7d). This gives the pianist the freedom to work with overtones to create shade effects.

Example 7d: Debussy, "Pour les Arpèges Composés," mm. 63-67.



At one point the composer avoided performing the set of études himself:

> I can no longer play the piano well enough to risk a performance of the *Études*. . . . In public a peculiar phobia takes hold of me: three are too many keys; I haven't enough fingers any more; and suddenly I forget where the pedals are! It's unfortunate and extremely alarming.[42]

In sum, for performances of "Pour les Arpèges Composés," then, the pianist should master and manage the fingering, elegant use of *rubato* and pedal effects, soft nuances, spontaneity and natural handling of the tempo changes with its humorous charm, close interpretation of rhythm notation, and deliver a natural and organic interpretation.

[41] Debussy, *Letters*, 301-2.
[42] Ibid., 324.

Rachmaninoff *Études-Tableaux*, Op. 33, Nos. 2 and 3, and Op. 39, No. 1

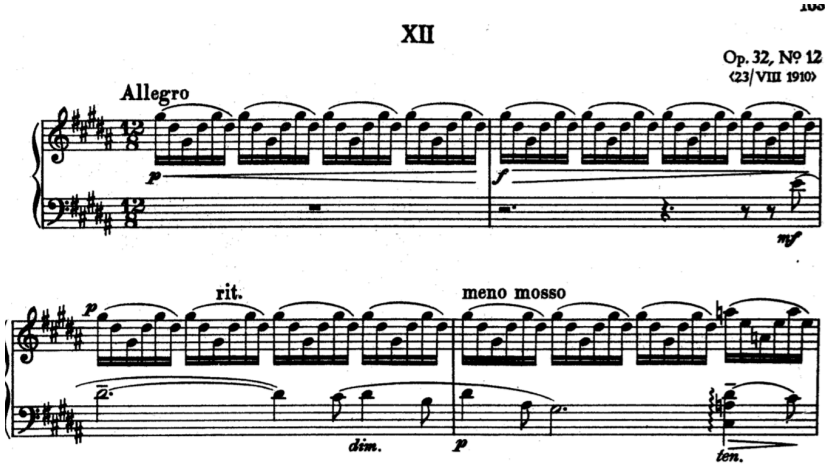
Rachmaninoff's final works before leaving Russia might be divided into three groups. The first group is series of multi-movement scores: The Third Concerto, Op. 30, the choral symphony—*The Bells*, Op. 35—and his Piano Sonata, No. 2, Op. 36. The second group is represented by short pieces for solo piano: *Preludes*, Op. 32, *Études-Tableaux,* Ops. 33 and 39, and the *Songs*, Ops. 34 and 38. The third group is represented by two major religious works for unaccompanied chorus, the *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, Op. 31, and the *All-Night Vigil*, Op. 37.[43]

The name of the cycles *Études-Tableaux* was adapted by Rachmaninoff from his own Suite No. 1, Op. 5, for two pianos, which he titled *Fantasie-Tableaux*. Since Rachmaninoff composed the set of studies in the years just after his *Preludes*, the études share similar moods and from the one perspective are almost interchangeable. Moreover, Rachmaninoff's *Études-Tableaux* represent studies in composition, much like Debussy's *Études* and Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis*. However, Rachmaninoff's studies discover new territory, are less predictable than his preludes, develop a variety of themes transformed through piano texture and sonorities, and each piece has an energetic shape of its own. For example, each of Chopin's *Études* is based on one technical idea and classically formed, while Liszt's studies are romantically extensive and pictorially enriched. In their own études, Debussy, Scriabin, Szymanowsky, Bartok, Messiaen, and Ligeti extend and fuse the tendencies of the two Romantic composers. The musicologist Max Harrison considers Rachmaninoff's *Études-Tableaux* as "summarize[ing] the composers' discoveries about the piano and how music for it might be written."[44]

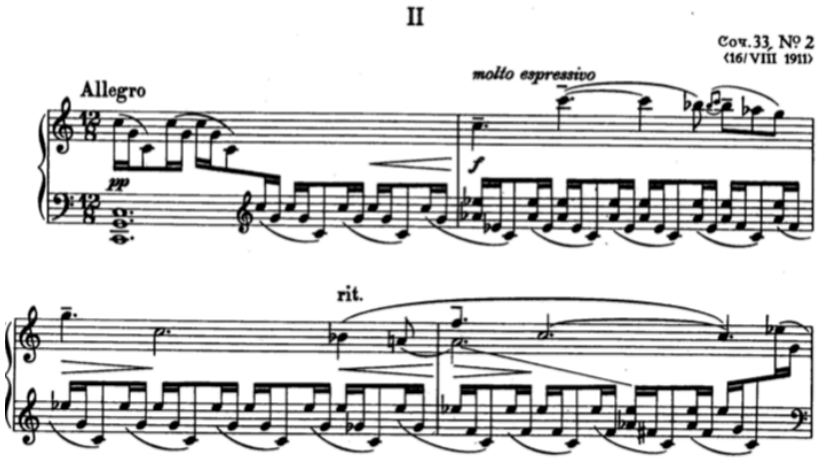
[43] Max Harrison, "America and the Liturgy," in *Rachmaninoff Life, Works, Recordings* (London: Continuum, 2005), 163.
[44]Ibid., 177.

Rachmaninoff composed the Étude in C major, Op. 33, No. 2 (of the *Études-Tableaux*) in 1911. This work has some similarities in texture with his *Prelude* in G-sharp minor, Op. 32, No. 12 (Exs. 8a and 8b). The étude is considered a work in a major mode, although there are no key signatures. However, the opening is based on intervals of fourths and fifths, with thirds omitted, thus Rachmaninoff indicates no particular mode here. The first impression of a mode, with of the interval of a minor third, occurs in the third measure, intimating the key of the composition as C minor. The study is characterized by a fluttering accompaniment and melancholy melody. The challenge in studying this piece is in following the long phrase structure and playing the sixteenth notes evenly in the left hand.

Example 8a: Rachmaninoff, *Preludes*, Op. 32, No. 12, mm. 1-4.

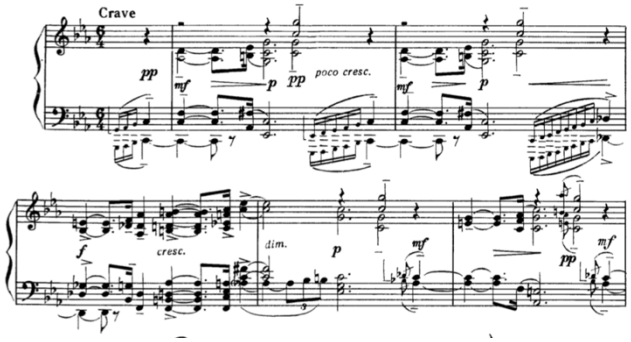


Example 8b: Rachmaninoff, *Études-Tableaux*, Op. 33, No. 2, mm. 1-4.

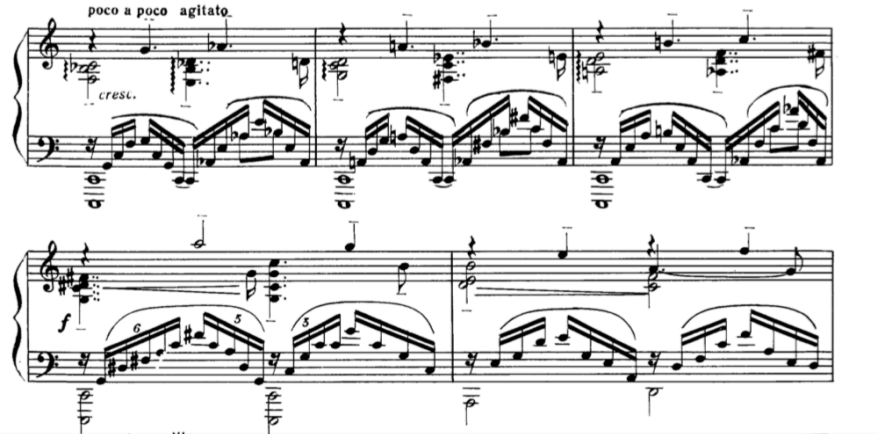


Étude-Tableaux, Op. 33, No. 3, is written in a slow tempo, uncommon for études as virtuosic compositions. This étude was published posthumously and was not included in the set of Op. 33 in the first publication. The first half of the étude is marked *Grave* and has many unpredictable dynamics changes. Such contrasts (*pp* to *mf*, *pp* to *f*, and *p* to *f*) generate a feeling of dramatic tension. The C-minor opening of the piece draws parallels with a funeral mood evocation, as if full of dark thoughts. The chords, especially the open fifth intervals, imitate funeral bells (Ex. 9a). The image of the bells in Russian music plays an important role as a significant style characteristic. For instance, Rachmaninoff's choral symphony, *The Bells*, Op. 35 represents different stages of human life and how the sounds of different types of rituals using bells reflect and transform throughout life's progressions: festive bells, wedding bells, fire bells, and mournful bells. In the second half of Op. 33, No. 3, a shift from C minor to C major occurs. Rachmaninoff reuses the C-major theme of this étude in his Fourth Piano Concerto, Op. 40, which he composed in 1926 (Exs. 9b and 9c, see p. 41).

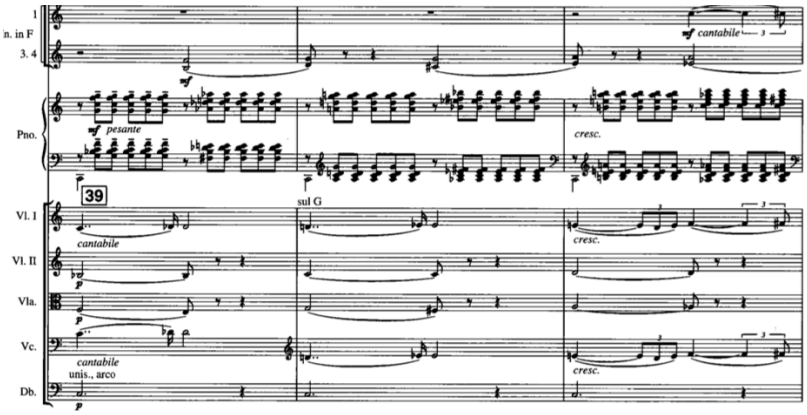
Example 9a: *Étude-Tableaux*, Op. 33, No. 3, mm. 1-5.



Example 9b: *Étude-Tableaux*, Op. 33, No. 3, mm. 30-34.



Example 9c*: Piano Concerto*, Op. 40, second movement, mm. 64-66.



From a technical perspective, Op. 33, No. 3 requires extensive hand stretching, the shaping of long phrases, balancing between different layers (as in orchestral texture), evenly played sixteen notes, and careful and precise reading of rhythm and time-signature shifts.

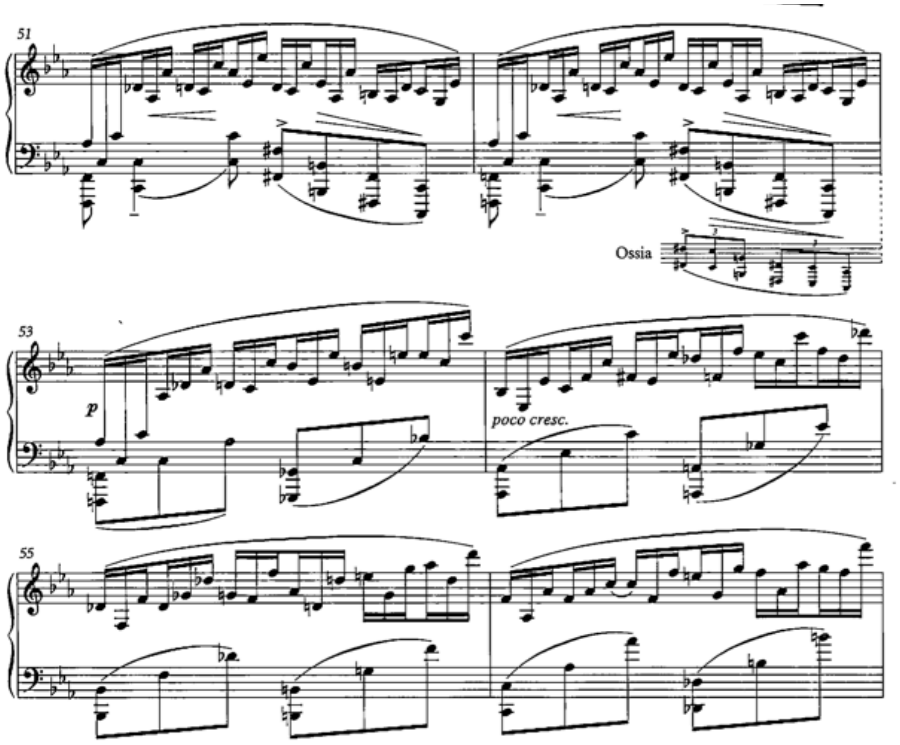
In Op. 39 Rachmaninoff elaborates and increases the palette of keyboard colors, the dramatic content, the virtuosity, and eccentric rhythms, and explores multi-voiced texture. *Étude-Tableaux*, Op. 39, No. 1, an agitated and passionate work, is a highly virtuosic composition. The étude has many chromaticisms in its structure and invokes some whirling and wave images. One of the challenges in this piece is Rachmaninoff's exploitation of the right-hand *piano* dynamic and the simultaneous "controversial" syncopations and accents in the left hand. Moreover, subversive inner voices, especially the chromatic voices hidden in right-hand figures, require a masterly approach to the work. Another challenging issue is the *rubato* and time manipulation of this composition. On the one hand, some interpretations follow the idea of time flexibility; on the other, it is important to keep a steady tempo throughout the piece and avoid any acceleration in sixteenth notes or in textural changes, because the rhythmic effects, with their energy in Rachmaninoff's music are an important feature of his style.

The Italian composer Ottorino Respighi orchestrated Rachmaninoff's five études from both opuses, the world premiere given by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Serge Koussevitsky, on November 13, 1931. Rachmaninoff suggested some program ideas to Respighi, which are reflected in titles: Op. 33, No. 6 in E-flat major is called "La Foire" ("The Fair"), Op. 39, No. 2 in A minor, "La Mer et les Mouettes" ("The Sea and the Seagulls"), Op. 39, No. 6 in A minor, "La Chaperon Rouge et le Loup" ("Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf"), Op. 39, No. 7 in C minor, "Marche Funèbre" ("Funeral March"), and Op. 39, No. 9 in D major, "Marche" ("March"). Rachmaninoff was thankful to the Italian composer for staying close to the original piano scores. However, he tried to avoid any comments on the project, and also avoided attending the rehearsals and premiere. Later, he wrote to the director of Grandes Editions Russes, Gavriil Paichadze: "Never in my 38 years of being published have I seen such printing or

correction . . . . I personally have neither the time nor the desire to take part in a publication like this."[45]

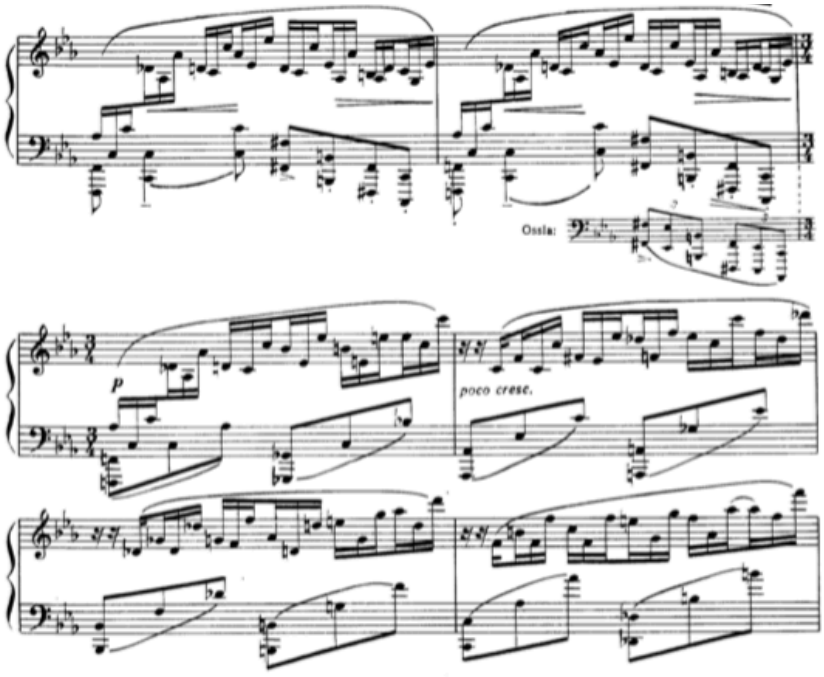
In 2005, Russian Music Publishing published the series of *Collected Works of Rachmaninov*. The edition of *Études-Tableaux*, Ops. 33 and 39 in the *Collected Works*, was prepared by the musicologist Valentin Antipov and special committee members; it represents the research on Rachmaninoff's autographs, facsimile copies, different editions, and the composer's recordings. The edition focused on reconstruction of the historical order of *Études-Tableaux*, fragments and versions of some of the pieces, and the composer's corrections. For example, *Études-Tableaux*, Op. 39, No.1 is represented in two versions for comparison (Exs. 10a and 10b, see pp. 43-44). Rachmaninoff changed the articulation in the left hand (*legato* to *staccato* in mm. 51-52), the notes in the right hand (mm. 53-56) and added sixteenth-note rests (mm. 54-56).

Example 10a: *Études-Tableaux*, Op. 39, No. 1, mm. 51-56, first version.



[45] Harrison, 280.

Example 10b: *Études-Tableaux*, Op. 39, No. 1, mm. 51- 56, final version.



Furthermore, Antipov emphasized the research challenge of Op. 33. In the foreword to the Russian Music edition, he presents the historical ("genealogical") scheme of Op. 33, which exemplifies the chronological order of the two versions and the two variants:

GENEALOGICAL STEMMA FOR OP. 33

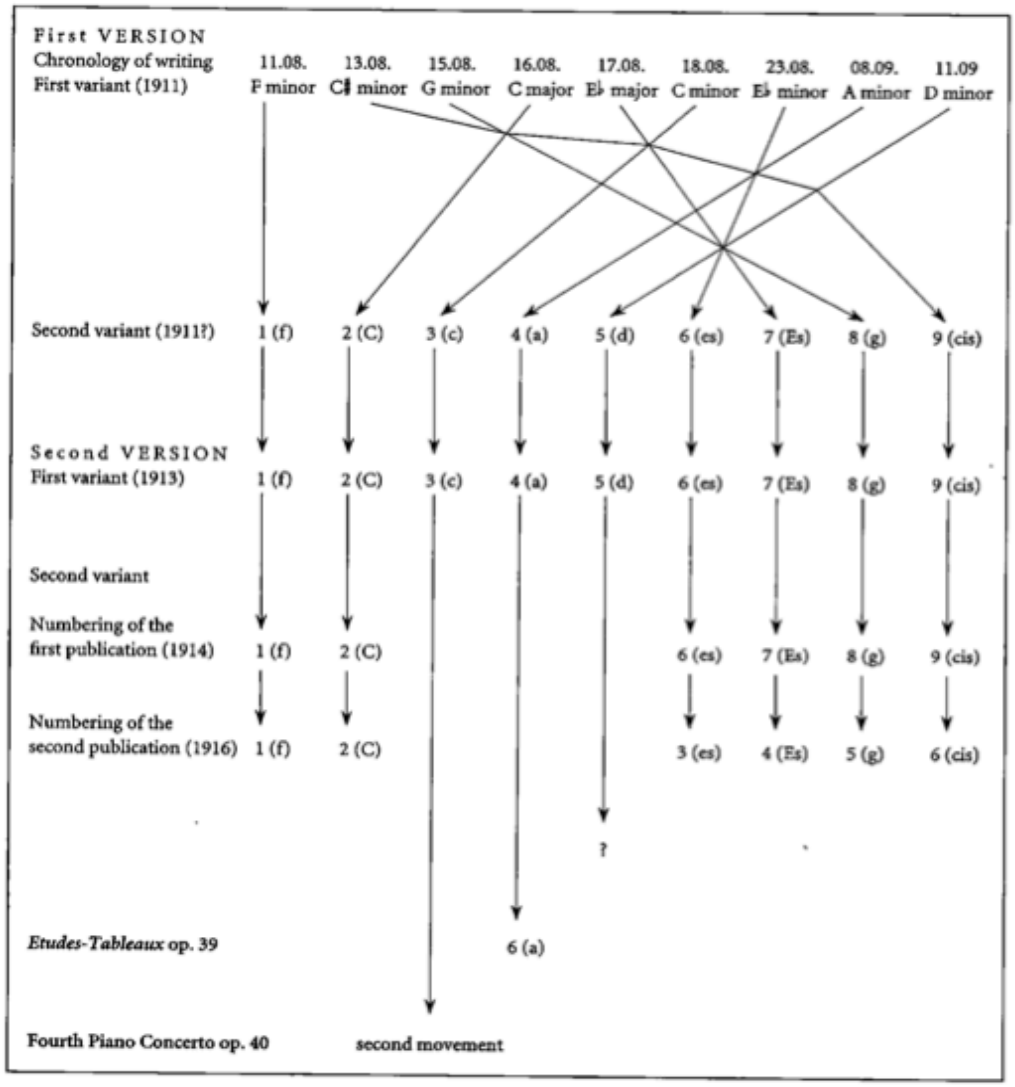


Figure 1.

Thus, this edition attempts to identify Rachmaninoff's corrections and differences between the variants, presenting the 2005 edition of the two versions of *Études-Tableaux*, Op. 33 and final version of Op. 39, with some fragments from the first version of Op. 39.[46]

[46] Valentin Antipov, Études-Tableaux, Ops. 33 and 39, "Foreword," in *Collected Works of Rachmaninoff*, 18 (Russian Music, 2005), 170, XII-XVII.

Scriabin *Études*, Op. 2 No. 1, Op. 8, Nos. 2 and 4, and Op. 42, No. 5

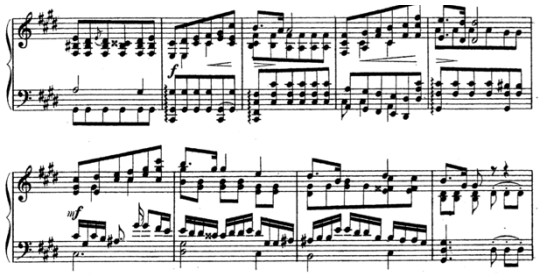
Scriabin's output in the concert étude genre is represented by twenty-six compositions and demonstrates a wide range of technical demands and emotions. His early compositions are influenced by Chopin's and Liszt's studies. Moreover, Op. 8 continues the idea of grouping the set by twelve études, as did Chopin and Liszt, and belongs to the category of études that transforms technical difficulties into artistic composition. Scriabin was a masterful miniaturist, perhaps why some parallels exist between his studies and his preludes. Some specifics of Scriabin's technique were uncommon among his predecessors in this genre. For example, in his works he gives an expanded role to the left hand and for widely spaced chords; often the two hands share a register or cross over each other. Compound rhythms and refined pedaling are further stylistic features of his music. Scriabin suffered a right-hand injury in 1891, therefore focused on extensive practice of the left hand. As a result, this decisive event shaped the nature of his approach to the piano, causing him to develop the dexterity of his left hand. He began composing music for the left hand alone, such as *Prelude and Nocturne*, Op. 9. Another Russian composer, César Cui, claimed after Scriabin's recital: "His left hand is stronger than his right and sometimes smothers it. He played better with one hand in the Nocturne than he did with two hands in the other pieces."[47]

Scriabin wrote his *Étude* in C-sharp minor, Op. 2, No. 1, in 1887. This étude belongs to the set of Op. 2, which consists of "Prelude" in B major and "Impromptu a la Mazur." The musical language of Op. 2, No. 1 derives from a Romantic vocabulary and expressivity. It is a slow composition with a somber mood, both unassociated with the tradition of étude writing (usually in the direction of the didactic virtuosic goal of the étude). Sometimes, the Chopinesque character of the melody (top voice notes) in *cantabile* style is a part of the chords, which play an

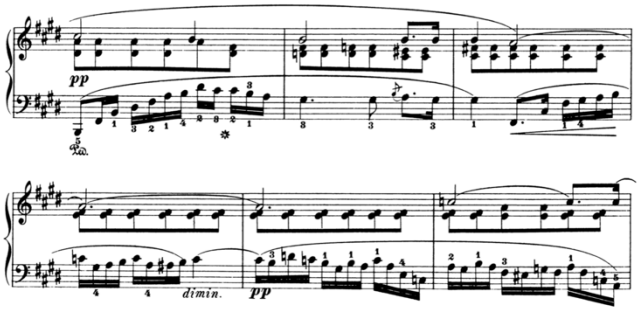
[47] Ballard Lincoln, "Technique," in *The Alexander Scriabin Companion* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 218-9.

accompaniment role. The repeated chords in both hands feature rich harmonies associated to Chopin's *Etude* in C-sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 7 (Exs. 11a and 11b). Moreover, Scriabin's clear layering of texture, with its inner voices and large spreading texture in the chords and contrapuntal design, represent some challenges for the performance of this piece. The significant factor is the smart distribution of weight and differentiation between melodic projection and accompaniment. Moreover, the sophisticated pedal technique plays an important role with the many sustained notes, which must be held by the fingers, and the simultaneously occurring changes in harmonic progression.[48]

Example 11a: Scriabin, *Étude*, Op. 2, No. 1, mm. 25-33.



Example 11b: Chopin, *Etude*, Op. 25, No. 7, mm. 12-17.



Scriabin's *Études*, Op. 8 were composed in 1894–95, in Moscow, and he organized these in two parts, according to key. The first triad of the first part consists of minor keys by preceding

[48] Lincoln, *The Alexander Scriabin Companion*, 55, 290, 301.

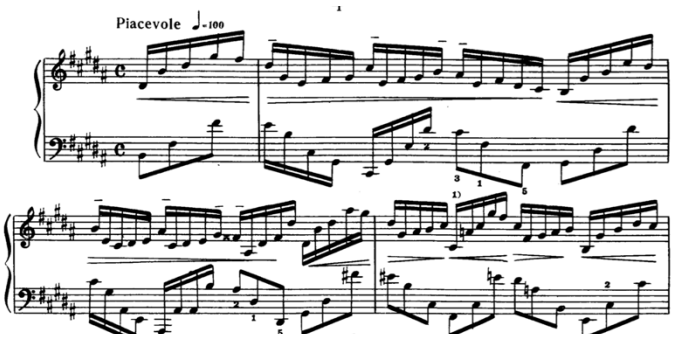
interval of a fourth: C-sharp, F-sharp, then B. In *Étude* No. 4 a similar shift to major keys occurs with the same trajectory of the interval of a fourth: B, E, and A. *Étude*, Op. 8, No. 7 opens new territory in that Scriabin writes the opening of the composition in different meters (4/4 and 12/8) between the right and left hands.[49]

Étude in F-sharp minor, Op. 8, No. 2 is marked *A capriccio, con forza* and is based on a cross in rhythms (quintuples against triplets), which can present challenges for the performer because of the polyrhythmic issues. Inner voices, dotted rhythms, and recitative melody give the feeling of exposed nerve and draw some parallels with Schumann's spirit (*Carnaval*, Op. 9, *Novelettes*, Op. 2, *Carnival Jest from Vienna*, Op. 26). Nevertheless, the study is innovative in terms of polyrhythmic content and widely spaced texture in both hands, and Scriabin follows classical ternary design in form.

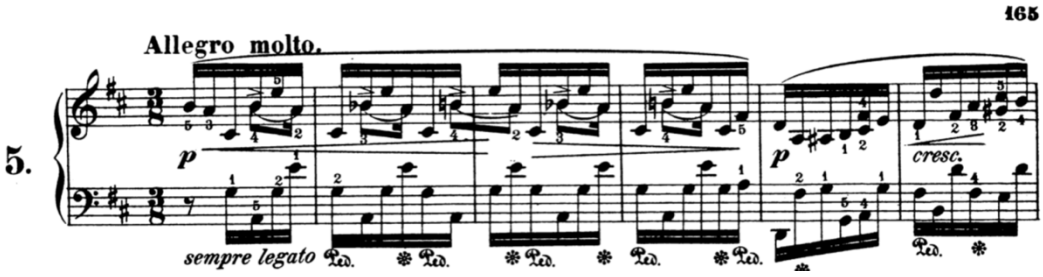
Étude in B major, Op. 8, No. 4 also belongs to the Chopinesque style of composition and develops the idea of polyrhythmic patterns. Scriabin's étude is based on quintuple figures against triplets or quadruples. The étude includes charming coloristic effects, has surprising turns in harmonic language, and unpredictable chromaticism. The airy mood and refined character of the composition (marked at the beginning *piacevole*, "pleasantly") create an illusion of a light miniature piece, like a prelude. The étude has some similarities with Chopin's *Prelude* in D major, Op. 28, No. 5, in terms of contour, detailed dynamic markings (hairpins), and elegant mood (Exs. 12a and 12b, see p. 49). Moreover, where Chopin marks the melodically important voices by sustaining and prolonging, by accentuation (some editions do not have accents), and by stemming the notes differently, Scriabin articulates his melody with *tenuto* symbols.

[49] Lincoln, 55.

Example 12a: Scriabin *Étude*, Op. 8, No. 4, mm. 1-3.



Example 12b: Chopin *Prelude*, Op. 28, No. 5, mm. 1-5.



Another crucial aspect of Scriabin's works lies in pedal technique, which must be carefully mastered in this piece. Scriabin exploited a wide range of pedal techniques. He was a renowned master of refined pedaling, and his playing was impressive for its freedom, taste, and unpredictability. For example, Scriabin's student Maria Nemenova-Lunz characterized Scriabin's pedaling as follows: "Scriabin instructions concerning the pedal, of which he was a virtuoso master, were exceptionally interesting . . . . Alexander had his own special types of pedal: the 'vibrating,' the 'pin pedal,' the 'pedal mist.'"[50] Pedal for Scriabin is a subject for artistic exploration, and a specific acoustic phenomenon.

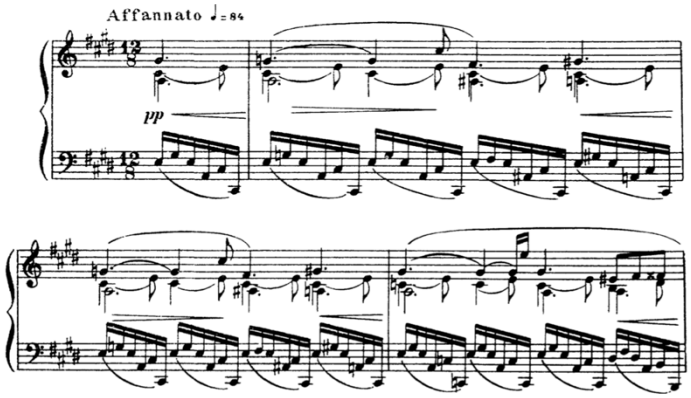
Eight Études, Op. 42, was composed in 1902-03, at the same time as Scriabin wrote his Symphonies Nos. 2 and 3. Polyrhythms continue to play a fundamental role in his works. The harmonic language of Op. 42 is highly chromatic, with post-Romantic features, and has a more

[50] Ye. Rudakova and A.I. Kandinsky, *Scriabin: His Life and Times*, translated by Tatyana Chistyakova, (Neptune City, NJ: Paganiana Publications, 1984), 72.

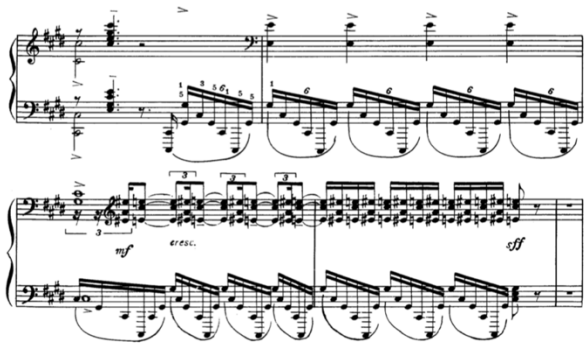
distinctive compositional voice than in Op. 8. For pianists, Scriabin brings challenges in terms of virtuosity in left-hand arpeggios, finger independence, balance in texture distribution, sophisticated voice leading, and frequent shifting of registers, which require hand stretching and a quirky and flexible wrist motion.

Scriabin marked the étude in Op. 42, No. 5, in C-sharp minor, *Affannato*, which means "breathless" or "agitated." The intensive power and sustained tension in this composition form stylistic features that represent the ecstatic sprit of Scriabin's personality and music. The étude in C-sharp minor consists of two themes, variably presented, which create a kaleidoscopic effect. The thick texture in the climax of the étude is represented with octave leaps in the left hand, bell-like in nature and providing a Russian flavor, similar to Rachmaninoff's use of bell-like sonorities in his works. Moreover, the descending arpeggios and large spreading texture parallel Rachmaninoff's *Étude-Tableaux* in C-sharp minor, from Op. 33 (Exs. 13a and 13b, see pp. 50-51).

Example 13a: Scriabin, *Étude*, Op. 42, No. 5, mm. 1-3.

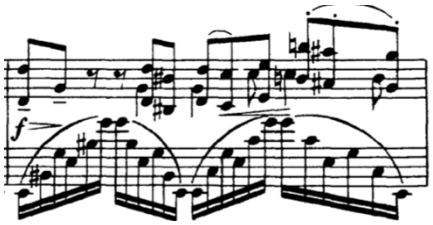


Example 13b: Rachmaninoff, *Étude-Tableaux*, Op. 33, No. 9, mm. 4-8.

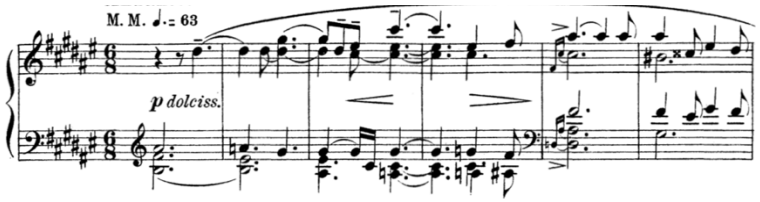


Another issue in this piece involves the *tenuto* and accent markings in the study, indications for the pianist to use arm weight to prevent harshness of attack or phrase shaping. For example, the renowned Russian pianist and professor of Moscow Conservatory, Lev Naumov (1925-2005), considers the descending fifth intonation of the beginning of the second theme (D-sharp–G-sharp) an idea which Scriabin continued in his Piano Sonata No. 4, Op. 30 (Exs. 14a and 14b).[51]

Example 14a: Scriabin, *Étude*, Op. 42, No. 5, m. 21.



Example 14b: Scriabin, Piano Sonata No. 4, Op. 30, mm. 1-6.



[51] Lev Naumov, "Lev Naumov teaches Scriabin's Op.42 No 5 étude in C# Minor," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkdXzTjPr18 (accessed August 25, 2018).

Scriabin compared the étude with his Third Symphony and wrote to B. Schloezer in 1903: "I am working on piano pieces, among which there is an étude excelling the *Third Symphony* in power and sublimity."[52]

Stravinsky Étude, Op. 7, No. 4, from *Four Études*

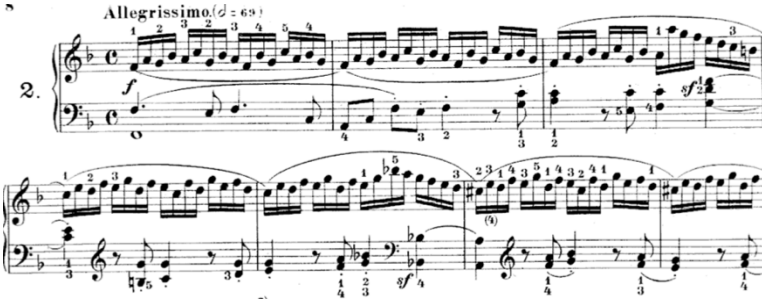
Four Études, Op. 7 was composed in 1908 prior to the Stravinsky's departure for Paris. These studies were not his first solo piano works; in 1903-04, Stravinsky composed his Piano Sonata in F-sharp minor. Nevertheless, because Stravinsky considered the piano a percussion instrument in most of his other piano works, his Piano Sonata demonstrates the influence of Classical and Romantic styles, and the first three études of Op. 7 are influenced by both Chopin and Scriabin. Each of the studies is focused on a specific type of rhythmic structure, such as quintuples against triplets or duplets, six notes against of group of four or five notes, and syncopations; all of these rhythmic forms pose performance challenges.

Stravinsky's *Étude* in F-sharp major, No. 4 is the last étude in the set, and dedicated to Rimsky-Korsakov with whom he was taking private lessons. It is composed in the spirit of Clementi, with a flickering effect, and is associated with the pianola, or self-playing piano. This little masterpiece gives the impression of a neoclassical work. Moreover, the work is an indication of the composer's attraction to gliding effects. The following examples of Clementi's studies and Stravinsky's Op. 7, No. 4 demonstrate the similarities between the compositions in terms of contours and finger technique manners (Exs. 15a and 15b, see pp. 53-54).[53]

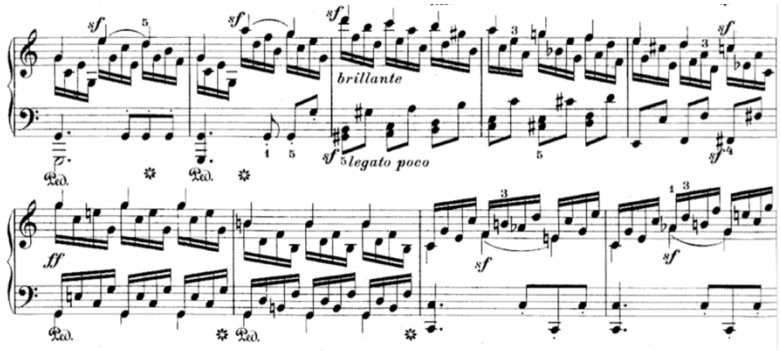
[52] Rudakova and Kandinsky, 82; Scriabin, *Pis'ma*, 289.
[53] Robin Maconie, "Chapter 2," in *Experiencing Stravinsky: A Listener's* Companion (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 30.

Example 15a:

Clementi, *Gradus Parnassum*, No. 2, mm. 1-7.

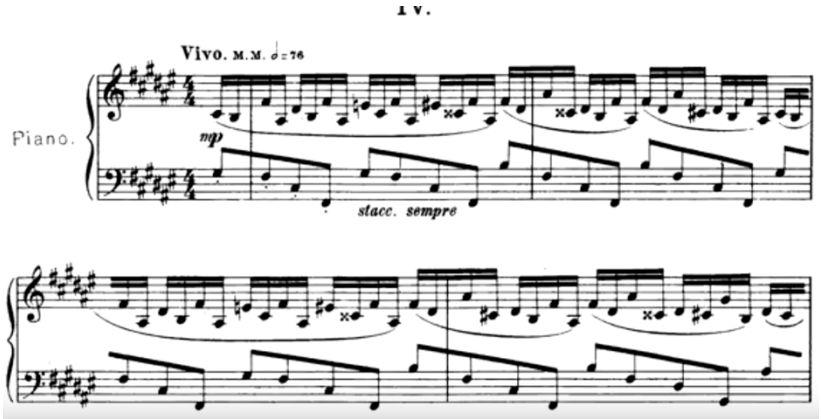


Clementi, *Gradus Parnassum*, No. 12, mm. 46-54.

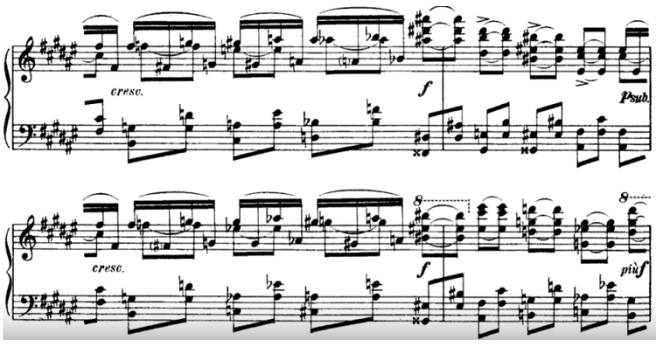


Example 15b (see pp. 53-54):

Stravinsky, *Étude*, Op. 7, No. 4, mm. 1-4.



Stravinsky, *Étude*, Op. 7, No. 4, mm. 18-21.



Étude, Op. 7, No. 4 is written in tempo *vivo* and gives the impression of a *perpetuum mobile*. The study is based on Stravinsky's rhythmic experiments and has irregular rhythmical structures built out of syncopations. These create the illusion of the pick-up note having the strong beat (anarcusis). The performer faces the problem of a shifting beat and coordination issues that require a high degree of control and attention. Moreover, the study demands a lightness, ease of touch, and an incisive, brilliant performative effect.

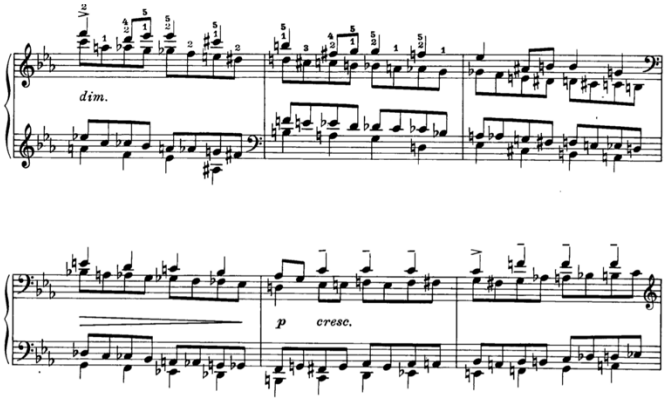
Prokofiev Étude, Op. 2, No. 3, from *Four Etudes*

In the summer of 1909, Prokofiev composed his Sonata, Op. 1 and a set of four studies, Op. 2. However, these two opuses are opposed in style. Later, the composer denoted that *Sonata*, Op. 1 belongs to his early period and, beginning with the *Four Études*, Op. 2, he developed a new type of writing. Prokofiev's style transformation is characterized by an innovative and distinctive manner. The piano writing from Op. 2 becomes impulsive, energetic, powerful, assertive, willful, whimsical, and heavily ironic. Moreover, the piano texture of Op. 2 resembles some sections from his first three Piano Concertos (Ops. 10, 16, and 26) and Sonatas (Ops. 14, 28, and 29). However, the piano writing was also influenced by Mussorgsky and Rachmaninoff.

For example, the orchestral manner of piano texture derives from Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and the virtuoso pianism draws recalls Rachmaninoff and Scriabin's works.[54]

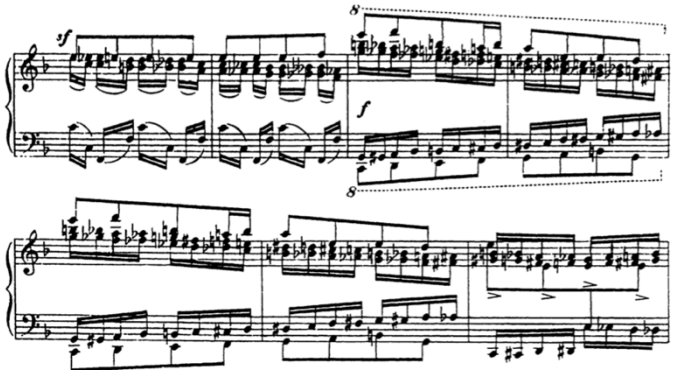
Prokofiev dedicated *Étude* in C minor, Op. 2, No. 3 to one his teachers, the professor of Saint-Petersburg Conservatory, pianist, and composer, Alexander Winkler (a student of Theodor Leschetitzky). The étude is based on scales in chromatic thirds and sixths. It consists of motor elements, brittle energy, active rhythm, and *accelerando* and *presto* sections that can make an audience breathless in its passive listening role. Moreover, Prokofiev places the main tune from the introduction in the right hand with the passages at the same time; it gives some challenge to the performer in introducing the first theme. This étude requires the pianist to demonstrate good finger independence and clarity in all parts that create an impression of steely brilliance. The ideas of *angles*, leaps, graphic lines, energetic and motor toccata rhythms, repetitive ostinatos, and polyphonic tools are elaborated in Prokofiev's later works, such as *Toccata*, Op. 11 (Exs. 16a and 16b, see pp. 55-56).

Example 16a: Prokofiev *Étude*, Op. 2, No. 3, mm. 61-66.



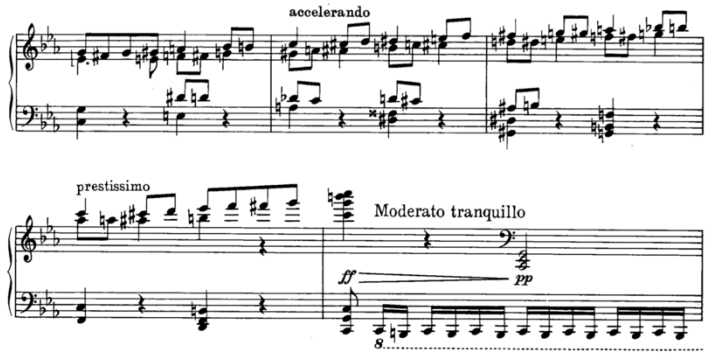
[54] Viktor Delson, "Four Études for Piano, Op. 2," *Belcanto.ru*, http://www.belcanto.ru/prokofiev_4etudes.html (accessed August 22, 2018).

Example 16b: Prokofiev, *Toccata* in D minor, Op. 11, mm. 75-81.



Moreover, in his instrumental works, Prokofiev uses the montage and kaleidoscope principles very common in his theater music. Michail Druskin has noted Prokofiev's instinctive musical drama, which he argues incorporates cinematic techniques, such as using close-up and speeded-up or slow-motion filming.[55] For example, in the entire étude, the composer uses such tempo changes as *andante semplice*, *accelerando assai al presto*, *prestissimo*, *Tempo I*, and *ritardando*, which create dramatic effects and draw parallels with specifics cinematographic and theater techniques (Ex. 16c).

Example 16c: Prokofiev, *Étude*, Op. 2 No. 3, mm. 85-89.



Prokofiev's early works were deemed unacceptable by some contemporaries because of the innovative language and uncompromising personality of the composer. For example, music

[55] Michail Druskin, in "Tvorchestvo S. S. Prokofieva – proizvedeniya, janri, analiz," *Kultura Zdes' e Seichas* http://velikayakultura.ru/russkaya-muzika/tvorchestvo-s-s-prokofeva-proizvedeniya-zhanryi-analiz (accessed August 23, 2018).

critic Leonid Sabaneyev wrote about his negative impressions of Prokofiev's music. Prokofiev was called by his contemporaries as a "futurist composer" because of the physical shock of his strong hammer-like accents or jolting contrasts. Scottish musicologist and composer Rita McAllister writes: "The press pronounced his music 'unintelligible' and 'ultra-modern'; and in the next few years he did his best to maintain this image of the 'enfant terrible.'" However, other Russian composers, such as Nikolaj Myaskovsky and Boris Asafiev, supported the young composer and saw the phenomenal potential in his talent. Moreover, in 1912 Myaskovsky wrote about the set of études "as full of originality and freshness and that, due to their high difficulty, they could scare the timid spirited pianists who perform them."[56]

[56] Kostantin Bogomolov, "Zatchitnik Sabaneyev: Prokofiev e Varvarstvo," *Kult Prosvet*, http://www.kultpro.ru/item_646/ (accessed August 23, 2018). Rita McAllister, "Sergey Prokofiev," in *The New Groove Russian Masters 2* (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986), 112.

CHAPTER 4

ÉTUDES FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Kapustin "Toccatina," Op. 40, No. 3, from *Eight Concert Études*

Nikolai Kapustin was a Russian composer influenced by jazz, who received his music education as a classical pianist. He graduated from the Moscow Conservatory, where he studied with legendary pianist Alexander Goldenweiser. Kapustin's training as a pianist reflected the best of Russian piano traditions. He received no professional education as a composer or jazz performer; however, his playing in jazz bands gave him qualifying experience in which to apply practical skills. As a result of a strong classical education, his compositions belong to the level of high virtuoso repertoire, and present challenges in reading and performing.[57]

Kapustin belongs to the "third stream" of jazz musicians, who stylistically experimented with mixing jazz with classical music. Generally, his music combines the traditions of George Gershwin, Duke Ellington, Oscar Peterson, Alexander Tsfasman, the Russian composers' school, a synthesis of jazz and rock elements, and non-European folklore. Kapustin defines himself as a composer rather than a jazz musician:

> I was never a jazz musician. I never tried to be a real jazz pianist, but I had to do it because of the composing. I'm not interested in improvisation—and what is a jazz musician without improvisation? All my improvisation is written, of course, and they became much better; it improved them.[58]

[57] Alla Vladimirovna Grigor'yeva, "Kapustin, Nikolay Girshevich," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/44391 (accessed March 21, 2018).
[58] Nikolai Kapustin, "Nikolai Kapustin: Biography," Nikolai Kapustin: Composer & Pianist, http://www.nikolai-kapustin.info (accessed March 21, 2018).

Thus, as a composer, Kapustin thinks from the pianist's perspective and performs his own compositions. His *Eight Concert Études*, Op. 40 (1984) might be considered programmatic compositions. All eight études have titles: "Prelude," "Dream," "Toccatina," "Reminiscence," "Shufka," "Pastoral," "Intermezzo," and "Final." Moreover, they continue the traditions of the nineteenth-century concert étude, which holds that music plays the primary role and that specific technical challenges are secondary. However, the technical aspect of Kapustin's compositions could be a challenge for the pianist. For example, in his "Toccatina," the pianist faces the issues of rhythmic shifts and coordination, choosing adequate and efficient fingering, rational use of arm weight, and the necessity of technical freedom in performance.[59] Moreover, up-beat energetic accents present the piano as a percussive instrument, and the use of low register creates the illusion of the *metallic* sound of an electric guitar. The Canadian pianist Leslie De'Ath observed some aspects that can be a challenge in studying Kapustin's music:

> The classical pianist approaching this music can easily lapse into a learning process that "fights" the music. It is partly because the plethora of visual detail bombarding the brain causes one not to see the forest for the trees. It is also because the pianist, when performing this style of jazz, should employ an approach to arm weight, fingering, rhythmic independence of hands, and other specifically technical considerations, quite distinct from that reinforced by the experience of playing classical repertoire. For instance, this music typically demands more vitality and independence of the left hand than is usual in most classical keyboard writing. Fingering and forearm weight are closely connected allies in jazz playing, and coincide in manners peculiar to the rhythmic and harmonic idioms of jazz, as distinct from other musical styles. Part of the challenge in reading this music lies in the deciphering of this technical symbiosis hidden in the notation.[60]

Thus, this confrontation with learning Kapustin music in terms of difficulties requires from the pianist not only a strong array of technical skills, but also aural experience with an understanding of jazz styles.

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[59] Leslie De'Ath, "Nikolai Kapustin: A Performer's Perspective," *MusicWeb International*, http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2002/Jun02/Kapustin.htm (accessed March 21, 2018).
[60] De'Ath, "Nikolai Kapustin."

Bolcom "Nocturne," from *12 New Études*

William Bolcom won a Pulitzer Prize in 1988 for *12 New Etudes*. The title of the cycle includes the word New to distinguish his previous set, *Twelve Études*, composed in 1959-66. The composer divided the études into four books, each consisting of three pieces. All twelve studies are programmatic, with titles: "Fast," "Furious," "Recitatif," and "Mirrors" (Book I), "Scene D'opera," "Butterflies," "Hummingbirds," and "Nocturne" (Book II), "Premonition," "Rag Infernal," and "Invention" (Book III), "Vers le Silence," "Hi-Jinks," and "Hymne à L'amour" (Book IV). He dedicated the set to three pianists:

> I gave Marc-Andre the nine etudes I had completed . . . and he played them so beautifully that when I got home I composed the last three in a white heat, and gave him the whole set. I dedicated the études to Paul Jacobs, in memory, and extended the dedication to both John Musto and Marc-Andre Hamelin, because they were able to break the spell on them.[61]

The last piece of the set, "Hymne à L'amour," is a hymn-like work composed in memory of the late Paul Jacobs. John Musto and Marc-Andre Hamelin performed this cycle and, later Hamelin recorded the entire set.

According to Chris Morrison,

> One of Bolcom's goals in composing the *New 12 Études* was the fusion of tonal and what he has called "non-centered." Bolcom finds the tension between these two elements particularly interesting, making possible, in the composer's words "a musical speech that is at once coherent and comprehensible and in constant expansion."[62]

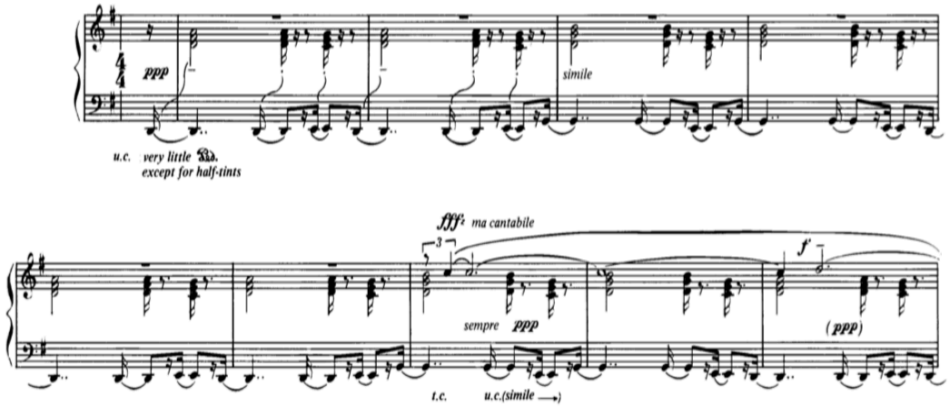
Some musicians have argued that Bolcom borrows tunes from popular songs, although Bolcom professes never to have copied them. His music is characterized by juxtaposing stylistic features,

[61] Allan Kozinn, 'Recordings; How the Spell Was Broken for Bolcom's 'Études'," *The New York Times*, https://www.nytimes.com/1988/07/31/arts/recordings-how-the-spell-was-broken-for-bolcom-s-etudes.html (accessed August 23, 2018).
[62] Chris Morrison, "William Bolcom: New Études (12) for Piano," *All Music*, https://www.allmusic.com/composition/new-etudes-12-for-piano-mc0002358842 (accessed August 23, 2018).

thus difficult to discern within it the boundaries between popular and serious music. Moreover, some of his works even draw parallels with Charles Ives's music.[63]

Bolcom's "Nocturne," the final piece in Book II, shows the composer seeking to engage the audience with colorful and charming contrasting timbres and orchestral sonorities. He writes *ppp* chords (some of them jazz chords), which play an accompanying role. Furthermore, he places *fffs* under longer value notes (half and tied whole notes) in the top voice, versus the chordal accompaniment. At the beginning of the piece, the composer has marked the importance of absolute contrast in dynamics and tone. The contrast between the top voice and accompaniment creates the effect of great distance. For example, he uses the alternation of *una corda* and *tre corda* pedals, a contrast increased by the *ppp* in low registers versus *fffs* in the high tessitura. This uncommon use of wide and thin piano strings challenges the performers to adapt and make adjustments in coordination and dynamics, as well as demanding good pianism and extraordinary imagination. Bolcom also uses an *ostinato* rhythm in the accompaniment, which needs to be strict and controlled because of the eighth rest inside a dotted figure (Ex. 17a).

Example 17a: Bolcom, "Nocturne," mm. 1-9.



[63] Henry Scott Jones, *William Bolcom's 'Twelve New Etudes for Piano'* (Louisiana State University, LSU Digital Commons, 1994), 8. https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=6878&context=gradschool_disstheses (accessed September 7, 2018).

Thus, the pianist faces the requirements of exaggerated dynamic contrast, even playing of rhythmic patterns, and large hand stretches. Since all long-note values must be sustained and the accompaniment performed at the same time, the pianist must have big hands (in the best scenario), a good finger stretch, and be able to demonstrate agility, although sometimes it is possible to avoid sound breaks between two parts with the use of the sustain pedal.

Peter Lane "Ground State," from *Studies in Momentum*

Studies in Momentum is Peter Lane's cycle for piano and electronics. The collection consists of five titled études: "Ground State," "Projectile Motion," "Escape Velocity," "Planck's Waltz," and "Approaching Entropy." In Lane's foreword, he notes that he chose the titles of the pieces before composing any music, and explains the titles:

> The titles . . . give each étude's narrative a particular challenge, or sense of tension between where the music is going and how it gets there. These concepts—borrowed concepts of quantum mechanics and kinematics . . . I find layperson-geared explanations of physics highly evocative, sparking exciting ideas about relationships between musical narrative and motion in physical world.[64]

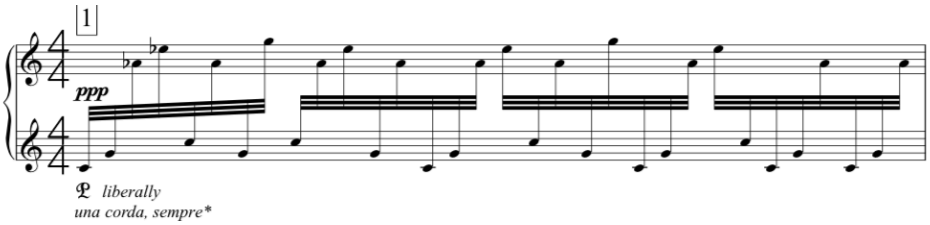
"Ground State" is a short piece, inspired by minimalist composer John Adams' solo piano work *China Gates*. There are thirteen cycles of patterns in the piece, each cycle using a different subset. The subdivisions of each cycle are based on the Fibonacci sequence. Lane used Max/MSP software to harmonize each cycle. Other études in the set feature different effects.[65]

"Ground State," starts at *ppp*, which should be sustained for almost the entirety of the piece; only in the last system is there a *crescendo*, then a *forte* ending. The composition has a *perpetuum mobile* character and challenges for performers in this piece include maintaining the same quality of touch, tempo, and even playing of thirty-second notes, and avoiding *rubato* in

[64] Peter Lane, "Program Note," in *Studies in Momentum*, (Gainesville, Fl: Self-published, 2014).
[65] Peter Lane, personal communication, (March 1, 2018).

order to achieve this hypnotic and crystalized effect. This piece requires very little shaping or expression in the piano part; phrasing is given to the computer. The refined texture, acoustic effects, and *quasi ostinato* patterns recall Schumann's comparison of Chopin's study to the aeolian harp; thus, parallels are shown with Chopin's *Étude* in A-flat major, Op. 25 No. 1 (Ex. 18a).

Example 18a: Lane, "Ground State," from *Studies in Momentum*, m. 1.



Joe Giarrusso "Incanto," Op. 59, No. 2, from *Four Études*

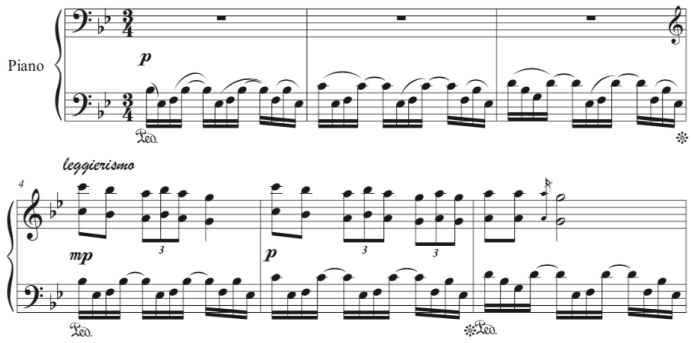
Joe Giarrusso, an American composer who works in Palm Springs, CA, composed the set of four studies of Op. 59 in Winter, 2018. "Incanto" ("Enchantment") has an improvisatory manner and fantasy-like character. The composition includes sudden contrasts of mood and unpredictable changes of register, which employ the aesthetic principles of *Empfindsamer Stil*, or "sensitive style," of the eighteenth century. The flexibility in form and unpredictable turns in texture and harmony create a sense of patchwork design. The study concentrates on E-flat as a pitch (tone) center and presents itself as less on piano technique than on compositional technique: E-flat appears as a main cell of this étude and the piece gives the impression of a study on E-flat.

The composition starts with a repeated figure in the left hand and with the charming melody, which joins three measures later, creates a sense of relaxing and meditative atmosphere (Ex.19a, mm. 1-6). The unpredictable turn from calm to active character occurs in section B because of shifting to the thirty-second notes texture (Ex. 19a, m. 21). The challenge in this episode is there are no repetitive patterns, and it requires from the performer adjustments in texture

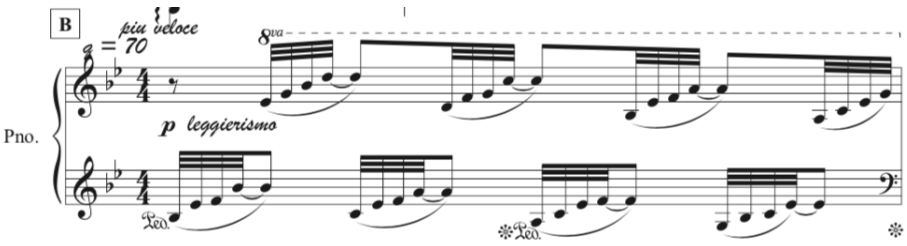
changes, light touch with clarity in articulation, but in an auditory aquarelle tone-color effect. Even though both hands are utilizing similar rhythmic components, another idea is presented in recitative style in the right hand versus the left hand (ex. 19a, mm. 27-28). As a result, all this shifting in texture and mood combined with the unpredictable *subito* ending delivers a mosaic structure and fantasy-like character (Ex. 19a, m. 50).

Example 19a (see pp. 64-65):

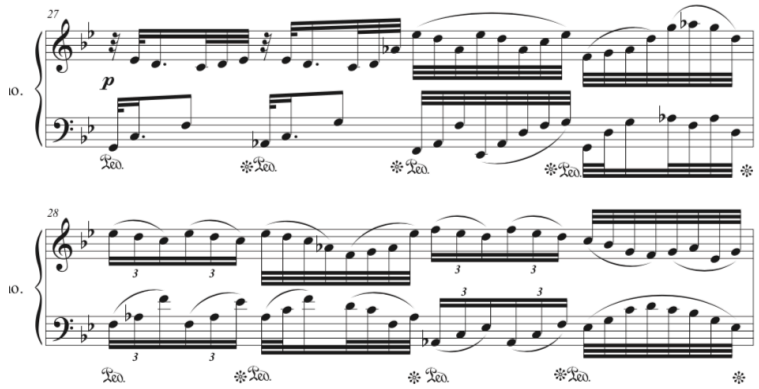
Giarusso, "Incanto," mm.1-6.



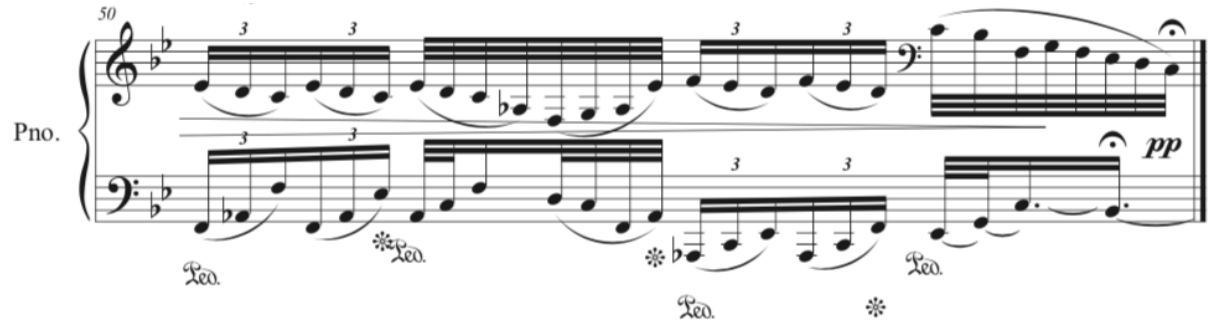
"Incanto," m. 21.



“Incanto,” mm. 27-28.



“Incanto,” mm. 50.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Chopin's *Études*, Op. 10 and Op. 25, remain some of the most frequently performed compositions in the piano concert repertoire. The recordings from older twentieth-century masters to contemporary pianists represent a great deal of the historical evolution of piano performance practice. Masters of this older school are pianists such as Vlado Perlmutter, Nikita Magaloff, Samson François, Shura Cherkassky, Vladimir Horowitz, Artur Rubinstein, Alfred Cortot, Georges Cziffra, Claudio Arrau, and Josef Levin. For them, the most common features in the interpretation of Chopin's *Études* are poetic vision, lightness of touch, masterly handling of the tempo, elegant use of *rubato*, and spontaneity in mood changes. For instance, Cortot's recorded performances may have a few wrong notes, but never break the listener's attention and impress through the musical spirit and the performer's personality. As another example, in Op. 25, No. 12, Levin separates the music of left and right hand sometimes by delaying the right, not considered an appropriate approach anymore in contemporary performance practice. Nevertheless, masters of the old school impressed audiences by their sincerity and personalized attitude to the music.

In later developments of the concert étude, interpretations of Liszt's *Études d'Exécution Transcendante* by Claudio Arrau, Nelson Freire, Georges Cziffra, Emil Gilels, and Svyatoslav Richter attracted listeners by their pictorial imagination, not focusing on virtuosity as the main idea of the composition. Their interpretations have different tempo distribution, such as the very slow tempo in the *Piu lento con intimo sentimento* section of *Étude* No. 11 in Cziffra's

performance, and the incredibly fast tempo of the final episodes of the same composition in Gilels's interpretation.

The Russian School of composers, such as Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, and Prokofiev, is represented by some of their own recordings. It is important to listen to the composers' performances; doing so provides the authentic vision and understanding of their styles as composers and formidable pianists. The most renowned interpreters of Scriabin's music are Vladimir Sofronitsky, Vladimir Horowitz, Stanislav Neuhaus, and Svyatoslav Richter. As with Chopin's *Études*, Ops. 10 and 25, Rachmaninoff's *Études-Tableaux*, Ops. 33 and 39, are represented in an enormous quantity of pianists' recordings. The most popular recordings amongst students are Richter's and Vladimir Ashkenazy's performances.

For the modern pianist, interpretation of Rachmaninoff's opuses poses a challenge in the close following of the composer's stylistic features. For example, the tempo unity and precision in rhythm in Rachmaninoff's works demand a rigorous attitude, a crucial feature in his style.

Walter Gieseking and Horowitz apply a strict attitude in terms of rhythm and steadiness in tempo in Debussy's "Pour les Arpèges Composés." However, François's interpretation is more flexible in handling of tempo and more often captures the idea of *rubato* in the composition. Nevertheless, the clarity of touch and even dryness in all performances of the piece form the main characteristics of approaching Debussy's work by these pianists.

Benno Moiseiwitsch, Michel Béroff, and Victor Sangiorgio represent the most memorable recordings of Stravinsky's studies; they impress the audience by bright virtuosity and technical perfection. Kapustin's compositions emerge brilliantly in the composer's and Marc-Andre Hamelin's recordings. Moreover, Hamelin's recording of Bolcom's *12 New Études* also reveals the outstanding quality of contemporary composers' music.

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