A RECORDING PROJECT AND PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY UKRAINIAN PIANO MUSIC: SUITES AND PRELUDES BY SHAMO, BORTKIEWICZ, AND LYATOSHINSKY

by

ANNA SAVELYEVA

(Under the direction of Evgeny Rivkin)

ABSTRACT

This project involves the recording and musical analysis of selected 20th-century Ukrainian piano works by Ihor Shamo, Sergei Bortkiewicz, and Borys Liatoshynsky. The selected repertoire includes Shamo's Ukrainian Suite and Hutsulian Watercolors, Lyatoshynsky's Three Preludes on Themes of Taras Shevchenko Op. 38, Five Preludes Op. 44, and Bortkiewicz's Crimean Sketches. The research explores the composers' stylistic diversity, approach to form, harmony, and texture, while also reflecting on the performance challenges and interpretive decisions involved. Drawing on scholarly literature, cultural context, and lived experience, the project presents this music not only as historical repertoire, but as a living, emotionally resonant art form

INDEX WORDS: Ukrainian Music, Borys Liatoshynsky, Ihor Shamo, Sergei Bortkiewicz, Ukrainian Suite, Hutsulian Watercolors, Crimean Sketches, Preludes, Ethnography, Folk Music, Programmatic Music.

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I also wish to thank my family and close friends for their patience, support, and belief in me, near or far. Working on this music has helped me feel closer to home, and I am deeply thankful for the chance to share it.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This document is a collection of program notes and performance reflections on piano works by three Ukrainian composers: Ihor Shamo, Serhii Bortkiewicz, and Borys Lyatoshynsky. It is a supplement of my recording project, and it explores the music from the perspectives of a performer and as a researcher.

Each composer has a different musical style and story, but they all wrote music that expresses something deeply Ukrainian and authentic. The pieces I chose include Shamo's Ukrainian Suite and Hutsulian Watercolors, Bortkiewicz's Crimean Sketches, and Lyatoshynsky's Three Preludes on Themes of Taras Shevchenko, Op. 38 and Five Preludes, Op. 44. These works are rarely heard in concerts or studied in schools, but they are full of color, depth, and meaning.

The 20th century was a challenging time for Ukrainian artists. Political control, shifting borders, and censorship made it hard for many artists to write freely. Some composers were praised for writing music that followed official rules, while others were punished for doing something different. In the 1920s and 1930s, many artists were arrested or killed. That period is now called the Executed Renaissance. Mykola Leontovych, a well-known Ukrainian composer, was murdered in 1921. In 1938, Hnat Khotkevych, a musician and folklorist, was also executed.

Later, composers like Lyatoshynsky and Revutsky were publicly criticized and forced to change their style. At the same time, Soviet authorities built opera houses and orchestras, promoted mass songs, and created official music schools. In Western Ukraine, which was under Polish control before 1939, composers like Vasyl Barvinsky and Stanyslav Liudkevych continued to develop a national style in music, often inspired by folk music and nature of Ukraine.

Even though Shamo, Bortkiewicz, and Latoshinsky lived in different times and circumstances, they all contributed to the development of Ukrainian music in the 20th century.

Serhii Bortkiewicz, born in Kharkiv and trained in Leipzig, spent much of his life in exile. Though stylistically rooted in Romanticism, his music preserved a lyrical and emotional connection to Ukraine. His music resembles a voice of memory and longing, shaped by displacement.

Borys Lyatoshynsky, one of the most influential figures in Ukrainian modernism, combined deep knowledge of European compositional techniques with a commitment to Ukrainian themes. As a professor at the Kyiv Conservatory, he helped define a national musical language and mentored an entire generation of composers.

Ihor Shamo, a student of Liatoshynsky and Levko Revutsky (Lyatoshynsky's colleague), wrote in a more accessible, post-Romantic idiom. His music often includes sounds of everyday life such as songs, dances, and images of nature, making Ukrainian identity feel personal and authentic.

These three composers transformed the usual Ukrainian characters into lyrical impressionism, often widely beloved forms. Together, their music reflects not just a shared cultural background, but a continuous artistic effort that connects generations through sound, memory, and imagination.

The pieces I chose for this recording project come from different regions, generations, and personal histories. But all of them speak in a musical language that feels close to home. Shamo's music often sounds like songs or dances from the countryside. Bortkiewicz shared with us a refined, emotional portrayal of his homeland with emotion and elegance. Lyatoshynsky was more experimental and serious, he pushed musical boundaries while preserving national meaning under Soviet control, and his music is full of meaning and philosophical depth. Together, these composers express different ways of being Ukrainian through sound.

As someone who grew up in Ukraine, I feel a strong connection to this repertoire. I also feel a responsibility to share it. Many pianists and teachers around the world might not be familiar with this music. My intention is that my project helps introduce it in a way that feels clear, thoughtful, and inspiring.

CHAPTER 2

SELECTED REPERTOIRE

Ihor Shamo: Ukrainian Suite

The Ukrainian Suite by Ihor Shamo is a compact four-movement piano cycle written during his early career, around 1948–1950, while he was still a student at the Kyiv Conservatory. Though modest in scale, the suite offers a clear and sincere musical statement that reveals Shamo's strong melodic instinct, his sensitivity to folk-based intonation, and his early sense of pianistic clarity. Without quoting specific folk melodies, he creates music that feels deeply rooted in the Ukrainian expressive tradition, especially using specific intonation, rhythms, and characteristic musical images.

Each of the four movements offers a contrasting character, structured in a way that balances emotional depth with formal simplicity. The movements can be interpreted as four contrasting scenes, lyrical, joyful, intimate, and energetic, each presenting a particular aspect of mood, landscape, or memory.

I. Duma

The suite opens with Duma, a slow and contemplative movement that takes its title from the traditional Ukrainian epic song genre. Historically performed by kobzars or lirnyks, the duma was a narrative form delivered in a semi-improvised, recitative-like style, often accompanied by Ukrainian traditional music instrument such as bandura or lira (example 1.1, 1.2). Shamo does not try to reproduce the genre directly. Instead, he creates something original that captures the mood and pacing of a duma in a slow, introspective, and almost speech-like manner.

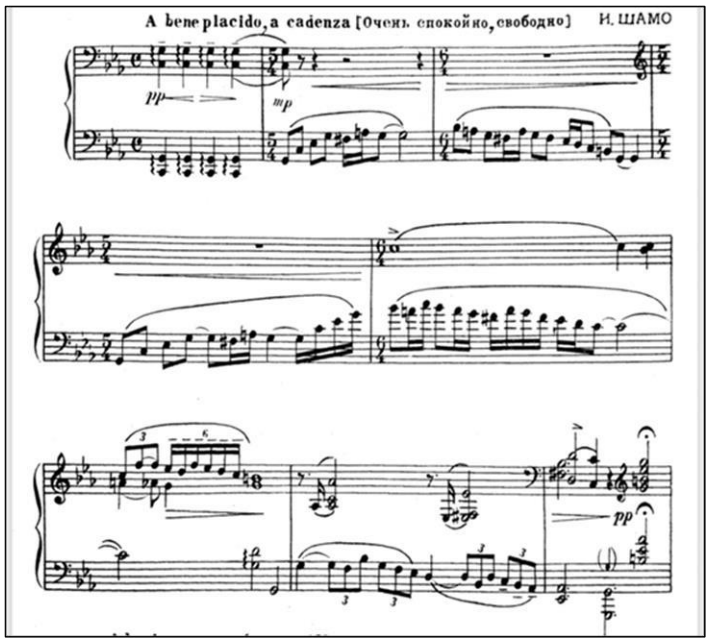
Example1.1: Bandura

Example 1.2: Kozak with Bandura

To me, the first bars feel almost like a backdrop, a kind of instrumental drone that sets the atmosphere, as though we are listening to a Kozak sitting quietly with a bandura, gathering his thoughts. What follows is not a melody in the usual sense, but something that moves like speech. The main theme feels personal, introspective, and it doesn't push forward, but pauses and wanders. The minor and Dorian modes color the harmony, while occasional chromatic turns add emotional shading.

What I find especially compelling is the way the character shifts throughout the movement. There are lyrical, meditative moments, but also strong, even risoluto and marcato gestures like questions surfacing, then settling. The *Agitato* section builds gradually, reaching a point of emotional unrest before returning to the original tempo. At the climax, the resonance reminds me of distant bells, briefly cutting through the texture before fading.

In performance, I treat this piece almost as a spoken monologue, not fixed in time but full of rubato and internal pacing. The transitions are subtle, and nothing should feel mechanical. The return to the opening theme at the end always feels like a return to thought, as if everything that came before was imagined or remembered.



Example 1.3: Shamo: Duma, mm.1-8

II. Vesnyanka

Vesnyanka is the most playful movement in the suite. Its title refers to a traditional Ukrainian spring ritual song (vesnyanka), which is part of ancient pre-Christian customs celebrating the arrival of spring. These songs were typically sung by girls in open fields or village yards as part of ceremonial dances that welcomed the sun, fertility, and renewal. Performed in circles with gentle footwork and repeated phrases, vesnyanky often featured a mix of lyrical innocence and teasing humor.

Shamo's interpretation of the process starts with the tempo marking *Allegro assai, leggiero,* fast and light, launching into a skipping, two-note motif that evokes the sound and motion of children at play. The form is a ternary structure (ABA′), with a central contrasting section that introduces a more lyrical tone before returning to the dance-like energy of the opening.

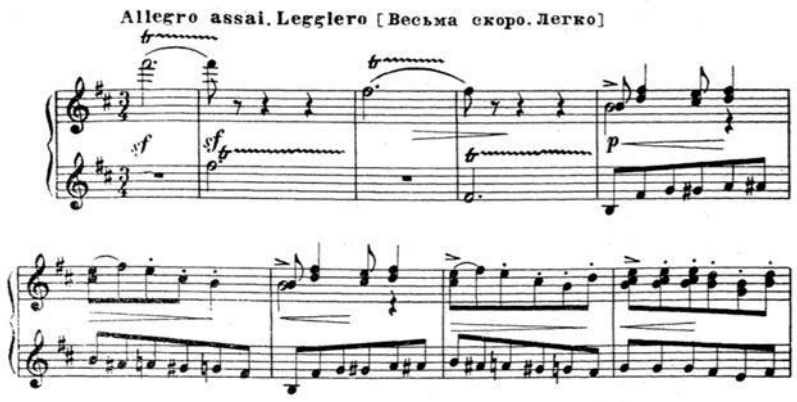
The first theme is built on small, rhythmic gestures, a two-note cells and offbeat rhythms that create a sense of spontaneity. The texture is transparent, mostly two voices, and the harmony is based on modal inflection, especially Mixolydian colors with flattened sevenths in D Major

section. The use of pedal must remain light to preserve the rhythmic sharpness of the articulation.

At the center of the piece, the music shifts: *Meno mosso, con tenerezza, cantabile*. The mood becomes softer and more introspective, almost like a memory or inner thought interrupting the action. This section introduces more chromaticism, richer harmonic color, and longer lyrical lines. Though not marked as such, it may represent a solo voice like someone stepping out of the circle, or simply a personal dreamy-like moment.

Gradually, through poco a poco accelerando, the music leads back to its original tempo and character. The final section restores the playful rhythm and motif of the opening, but now with a more resonant touch, as if the dance has grown more spirited or the group has swelled in size. The ending is brief and light, without climax, just like the way a children's game might finish, not with a resolution, but with a shared sense of joy.

From a performance standpoint, this movement depends on maintaining both energy and lightness. The articulation must remain crisp, especially in repeated notes and syncopated figures, while the middle section asks for a lyrical touch and expressive phrasing without losing direction. The return to the main material should feel seamless, as natural transition rather than a restart. It is music that plays, not performs.



Example 1.4: Shamo: Vesnyanka mm.1-9

III. Melody

The third movement, titled Melody, stands as the lyrical center of the suite. Marked *Andante cantabile*, it unfolds slowly in E minor with a tone that is intimate, melancholic, and inward-looking. Compared to the previous movement, which sparkled with energy and bright modal color, this piece is more somber and reflective, shaped by expressive contour and long-spun phrasing.

The form is loosely ternary (ABA′), though the contrast between sections is more psychological than structural. The opening material is lyrical and song-like, resembling a lullaby or quiet lament. As the piece develops, it grows in emotional intensity, reaching a powerful *Pesante* section before retreating again into a more subdued texture. The final return to *Tempo I* feels like a memory, slightly changed by what came before.

Harmonically, the piece remains rooted in E minor, but the use of modal inflection and chromatic suspensions adds a sense of blurred tonality, especially in the middle voice leading. Texture plays a key role: this is one of the most polyphonic movements in the suite, with subtle counterpoint and hidden inner voices. The performer must pay close attention to pedaling, voicing, and resonance, balancing multiple layers of expression at once.

The opening melody feels almost like a quiet maternal voice, lyrical, yet deeply sorrowful. There is a sense of solitude and fragility in the phrasing, particularly in how the voices float independently yet remain intertwined. As the piece builds toward the *Pesante* section, the music grows more harmonically dense and rhythmically grounded. That section becomes the emotional climax of the movement, like the weight of grief suddenly made audible.

After the fermata there is a moment of complete stillness, when the theme returns in a quieter, more resigned tone. It no longer sounds like a grief, but like someone remembering what was lost. In the final phrases, a subtle change occurs: the line grows stronger, and a certain inner resilience emerges. The F natural, that adds Phrygian color in the last octave, no longer feels hollow like the fermata, but grounded, like a quiet strength that has returned.

This movement is particularly demanding not in technique, but in concentration. Its restraint must come from inside the sound. Interpretation requires not only clear polyphonic awareness, but a strong emotional concept that is still unsentimental.

Interpretively, the piece could be heard as a private lament, perhaps a mother's song of mourning or a reflection of wartime or postwar loss. While Shamo never specified a program, the movement carries a depth of feeling that resonates beyond the notes.

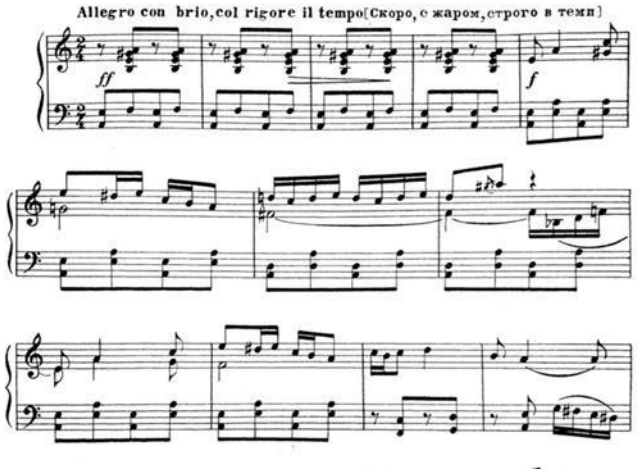
IV. Dance

The final movement, Dance, is the most energetic and extroverted piece of the suite. Marked *Allegro con brio, col rigore il tempo,* it launches immediately into a vigorous, rhythmic motion that feels earthy and celebratory. The piece resembles a stylized folk dance, possibly inspired by the hopak with elements of kolomiyka, a fast and acrobatic Ukrainian dance traditionally performed by Kozaks. However, Shamo avoids direct quotation or imitation.

The form is sectional: a large-scale ABA′ structure with brief internal contrasts. The first and final sections are highly rhythmic and straightforward, while the middle section (*Meno mosso*) introduces a contrasting, more lyrical character. Unlike earlier movements, where transitions

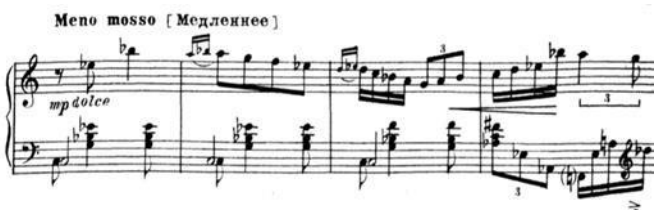
flow seamlessly, here the juxtapositions are sharper and more theatrical, as if various dancers or groups are taking turns onstage.

The rhythmic design is motoric and grounded in duple meter, with accents falling in unexpected places. Syncopations, two-note motifs, and sudden metric shifts give the music a sense of spontaneity and physicality. Texture is often two or three-part, but it thickens dramatically at times, especially in the climactic passages. The frequent use of marcato articulation adds weight and edge to the gestures, keeping the dance grounded rather than light. Harmonically, the movement mixes tonic-dominant clarity with modal inflections, especially flattened second and seventh scale degrees, which express folk modes without resorting to quotation.



Example 1.5: Shamo: Dance mm.1-12

In the *Meno mosso* section, the tone changes completely. The line becomes cantabile, more flowing and graceful. This moment feels feminine in contrast to the masculine strength of the outer sections. The middle phrase is short but effective, like a solo interlude or a girl's song in the middle of a group dance. Harmonically, it is more stable and diatonic, offering a temporary relief before the return of the outer material.



Example 1.6: Shamo Dance mm.45-49

As the final a tempo resumes, the music regains its drive, pushing toward a strong finish. Though the thematic material returns, it feels more complex, as if layered with more voices or more acrobatic movements. The alternation between blocks of material creates the impression of a larger group: different sections taking turns, each with its own character.

From the pianist's perspective, this movement is not only physically demanding, it requires sharp timing, quick reflexes, and interpretive agility. The articulation must stay crisp throughout, and transitions need to happen instantly, without hesitation. The changes in energy are theatrical, but the tempo must remain steady to preserve the dance's overall pulse and momentum most of the time.

Shamo's dance is layered, not literal, it echoes the traditional Ukrainian dance culture. The movement feels communal, as if the pianist is joining a large group celebration, full of humor, spirit, and pride.

Ihor Shamo: Hutsulian Watercolors

Composed in 1972, Hutsulian Watercolors (Гуцульські акварелі) is a six-movement piano suite inspired by the folk culture of the Hutsuls, which are an ethnic group living in the Carpathian Mountains of western Ukraine. According to one theory, they may be descended from the ancient Ulychians mentioned in early chronicles. Among the many regional Ukrainian subgroups, the Hutsuls have preserved a particularly vivid cultural identity. For centuries, sheep herding was their primary occupation, creating the rhythm of daily life and seasonal rituals. This

pastoral tradition gave rise to a musical style that is rooted in improvisation, ritual worship, and the sounds of highland instruments like the trembita and drymba.

Example 1.7: Traditional Instruments

Although Shamo's Hutsulian Watercolors do not quote traditional melodies directly, they reflect rhythms of the folk dances, varied modes and harmonies to create a mountain atmosphere, and textures that feel spontaneous, like speech or call. These are not imitations, but impressions that are based on traditions of the Hutsuls.

Unlike the more song-based Ukrainian Suite, this cycle is more pictorial and atmospheric. Rather than quoting folk melodies, Shamo uses original Hutsul modes (Ukrainian Dorian scale), rhythms, and instrumental gestures, filtered through a refined modern piano idiom.

Each piece offers a distinct obraz, musical image, or mood, and the movements range from lyrical and rustic to virtuosic and percussive. Ethnographic elements are shown the music through asymmetric meters, modal harmony (often Lydian and Dorian), and textural effects that recall instruments like the trembita (alpine horn), tsymbaly (dulcimer), and sopilka (wooden flute). As Inna Dovzhynets notes, the suite demonstrates Shamo's gift for transforming folk melodies into a vivid concert language.

The cycle follows a sort of narrative process and creates a sense of unfolding from dawn in the foggy mountains to celebration, solitude, ritual, and return. Each piece perfectly stands on its own but still has a transitional structure, and together, they form a musical arc of traditions that blends intimacy and community, nature and culture, personal memory and stylized folk art.

I. Morning in the Mountains

The first movement of Hutsulian Watercolors, titled Mountain Morning, opens the cycle in an impressionistic haze. Marked *Ad libitum, comodo, quasi cadenza* followed by *Andante* and *Andantino*. The music opens slowly, like mist lifting from the Carpathian peaks. It creates a quiet and layered atmosphere: distant echoes, suspended light, and barely perceptible movement.

Structurally, this is one of the most open-form pieces in the suite. It begins with an improvisatory introduction that is harmonically suspended and rhythmically free, it gradually settles into a flowing *Andantino* where the mood turns more melodic and rhythmically consistent. There is no traditional binary or ternary form. Instead, the piece breathes organically, shaped more by color and motion than by thematic development.

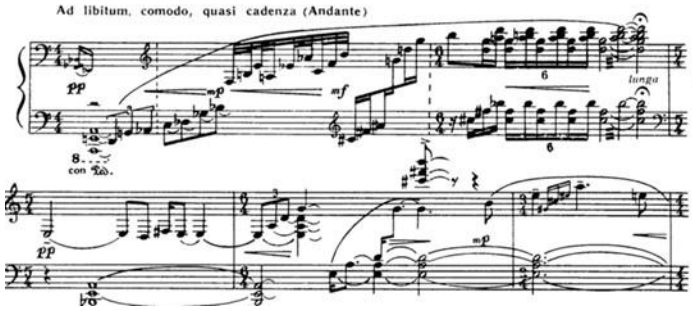
The texture is particularly notable. There is a strong resemblance to French impressionism, especially the harmonic transparency of Ravel. Shamo layers multiple voices and uses sustained pedal tones, soft broken chords, and fragmented melodic lines, often creating three distinct

planes at once. This complexity demands careful pedaling and voicing to preserve the layered sound without obscuring the harmonic movement.

The harmony is modal but fluid, often based on shifting pedal tones and added-note sonorities. Suspensions and blurred cadences create a sense of unresolved space, as if the music were floating in high mountain air. At times, it hovers over a single harmony for long moments, letting the color speak before it shifts again. These long fermatas, some notated, some implied, become the emotional heart of the movement. They are not static pauses, but suspended reflections, full of overtones.

The rhythm, while not complex in meter, is elusive. The quasi-cadenza character allows for natural ebb and flow, which the performer must create with great freedom but also coherence. Even when tempo settles into *Andantino*, the pulse remains flexible, as a gentle walking pace rather than a strict count.

The movement feels like a memory of home. There is no explicit sunrise moment, only the haze before light, the stillness of mountains before movement. The sonority suggests high altitude, distance, and clarity, but also something emotional: nostalgia, tenderness, and an atmosphere of deep quiet.



Example. 1.8: Shamo: Watercolors, Morning in the Mountains mm.1-4

Interpretively, this piece functions less like a picture and more like a meditation. The performer must create space, color, and air, shaping each phrase as a gesture in light.

II. Musicians Going to the Mountains

This movement paints a contrasting and humorous picture of a group of Hutsul musicians ascending into the Carpathians, likely on their way to a village celebration. In Hutsul culture, muzýky (musicians) refers to traditional folk instrumentalists, often violinists, tsymbaly players, flutists, or trembita-blowers. They would perform at weddings, festivals, and ritual events.

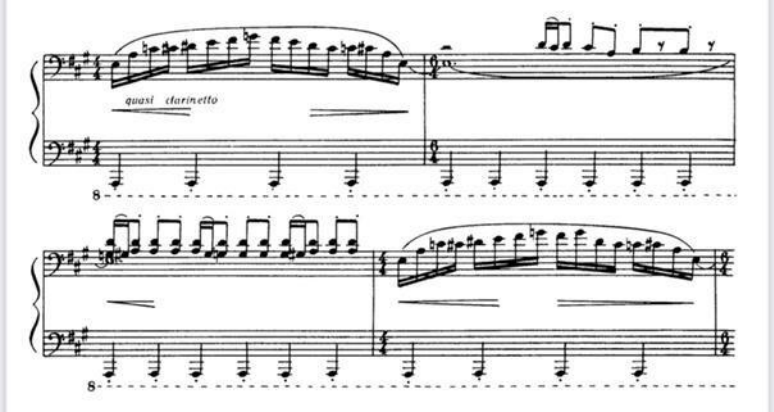
Shamo turns this cultural process into a musical procession that is rhythmic, bright, and full of various characters. Marked with a combination of shifting meters (4/4, 3/4, 5/4) and textural contrast, the movement feels like a stylized march or walking tune but with plenty of syncopation, lopsided steps, and musical surprises. The irregular meter mimics the uneven terrain of the mountains and the spirited improvisation of village musicians. There is also humor here: some phrases seem exaggerated or off-kilter, like playful musical banter among friends.

The form is episodic, progressing in scenes rather than strict repetitions. The opening rhythm is steady and pulsing, echoing footsteps. In the middle section, marked *quasi clarinetto,* Shamo hints at the sound of folk winds, possibly a sopilka with smooth, ornamented lines over grounded and pulsating accompaniment. Texture varies throughout: sometimes sparse and dry, sometimes full and layered, almost orchestral in its color.

Harmonically, the movement is based in modal centers, often returning to a bright Dorian or Lydian color. These modes are common in Carpathian folk music and contribute to the movement's upbeat but non-tonal character. The final section becomes more animated and syncopated, growing toward a percussive climax that feels almost drunken or rowdy, a celebratory outburst before the music fades away.

Technically, this movement presents multiple challenges. The pianist must shift quickly between rhythmic groupings, maintain clarity in dense textures, and highlight contrasting voices, as though various imaginary instruments were passing phrases among themselves. There is a clear element of theatricality here, especially in the exaggerated articulation and sudden dynamic changes. The movement feels like a miniature festival, filled with inside jokes and playful showmanship. At the height of the piece, it evokes a real Hutsul gathering, perhaps around a

bonfire, barefoot, with instruments passed hand to hand. The final gestures are like the quiet after a feast: the fire goes out, the echo fades, and the mountains return to stillness.



Example 1.9: Shamo: Musicians Going to the Mountain mm.20-24

III. Shepherd

After the bright humor and fun of the previous movement, Shepherd shifts the mood inward. This is one of the most delicate and lyrical pieces in the cycle, portraying a pastoral scene in the mountains: a young shepherd tending sheep on the slopes, alone with his thoughts and songs. Shamo captures this image with great sensitivity, using sparse textures, gentle ornamentation, and modal melodies that recall Hutsul vocal traditions.

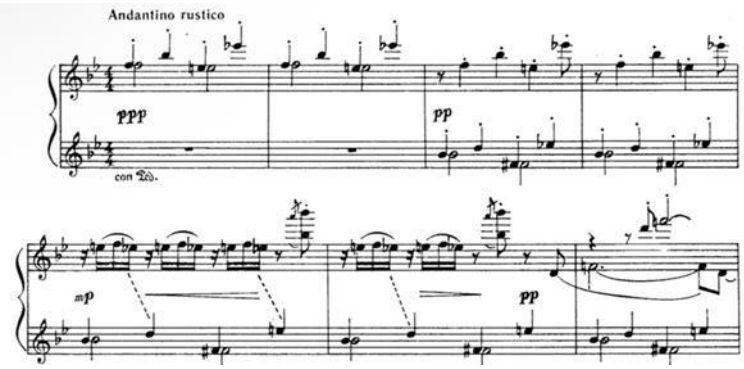
In Hutsul tradition, the shepherd was more than just someone who watched over animals. He was a guardian, a guide, and often the one who led important seasonal rituals. Each spring, when the herd was sent to the high mountain meadows, the event was accompanied by songs, dances, protective rites and rituals. The shepherd took part in rituals that included leading the animals through smoke or near fire, sprinkling them with holy water, reciting prayers or charms, and lightly striking them with blessed willow branches. Hutsuls believed the animals had to be cleansed of evil spirits before the journey.

Marked *Andantino rustico*, the piece balances rustic simplicity with refined detail. The opening is quiet and rhythmically steady, built on pulsing quarter notes and small melodic gestures, almost like a musical teasing game. These repeated rhythms lend a sense of stillness and steadiness, while the grace notes and ligatured phrasing imitate speech-like inflections, echoing folk singing or flute playing. The texture is transparent: two or three voices at most, with space between each layer.

The harmony remains modal, with long pedal points and parallel motion. Instead of modulations, the harmonic variety comes from shifting color within a single key area, creating a sense of intimacy and suspended time. As in earlier movements, Shamo uses long fermatas and sustained intervals to suggest the open air of the mountains. This is the kind of stillness that carries magic.

The middle section, in D minor, introduces a more emotional tone. The rhythm becomes slower, and the melodic line lengthens into expressive fragments. There is a moment of quiet longing here, perhaps even a plea, but it passes quickly. What follows is a return to the simplicity of the opening material, now softened by memory. Shamo's favorite intervallic gesture, the rising third under a slur, appears again, this time in the middle register, as if echoing a farewell.

While it remains gentle on the surface, there is something deeper beneath: a moment of pause, a thought half-spoken. The pastoral scene becomes not only an image of daily life, but a reflection of quiet, unadorned, and somehow complete solitude.

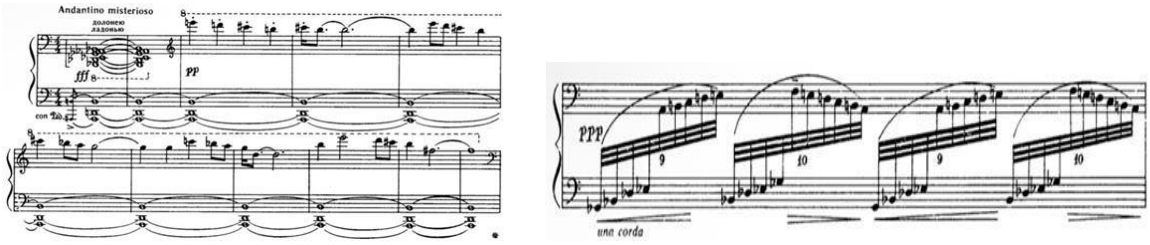


Example 1.10: Shamo: Shepherd mm.1-7

In performance, this piece requires a gentle presence. Its simplicity is not empty, it holds something quiet and essential. I found that it is not about shaping or adding expression, but about listening carefully to the pacing, the layers, and how the melody breathes.

IV. Spring Rain

This movement opens not with a melody, but with weather: thunder, struck not through imitation but through physical gesture. The score instructs the pianist to strike the opening chord with the palm which is a rare moment of theatricality in Shamo's writing. From there, the music begins to shift like a storm taking shape in the mountains: flickers of light, gusts of wind, droplets falling unevenly into the soil.



Example 1.11: Shamo: Spring Rain mm.1-12

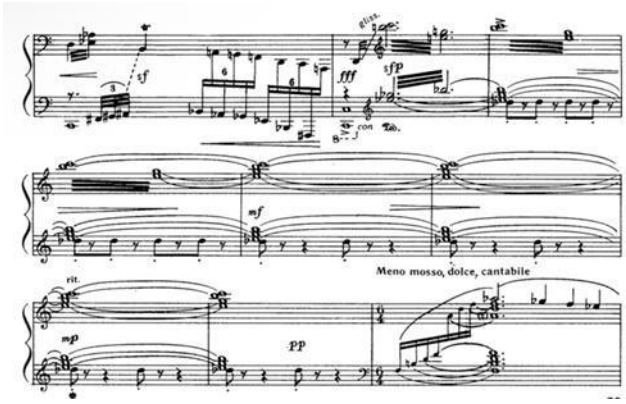
Marked *Andantino misterioso,* the pacing feels unsettled but not frantic. The movement is through-composed, not in any fixed form, but evolving naturally. Harmonically, it begins in a blurred tonal center, with added-note chords and clashing intervals that shimmer under pedal.

The texture becomes impressionistic, full of suspended overtones and echo-like resonances. What results is not a melody in the traditional sense, but a kind of intonatsiya: A sonic intonation of atmosphere, something unspoken but felt.

After the initial thunderclap, the energy grows. There are gusting figures that imitate wind, then accelerating scales that feel like rainfall turning into downpour. The middle section is intense and rhythmically active, harmonically unstable, filled with surging dynamic shifts. Here, the storm seems to crest.

After this, there is silence that is not a mere pause, but a moment of emptied air. What follows is stripped down: individual notes spaced apart, like drops falling from leaves after the storm has passed. This is one of the most intimate soundscapes in the entire suite, and one of the most difficult to deliver as a performer.

As the music continues, a new kind of light appears. The harmony begins to open up. Shamo uses shimmering major chords in parallel motion, delicate arpeggios, and clear modal lines that suggest return, not to the beginning, but to a world changed by the storm. Still, the echoes of the thunder remain. In the final measures, distant tremors reappear, quietly. Each detail matters and each release shapes the next phrase.



Example 1.12: Shamo: Spring Rain m.20-28

From the bench, this movement feels almost cinematic, but not in the sense of grand drama. It is all texture and shadow, instinct and air. The hardest part is not the writing, but the timing: knowing when to hold back, when to let go, when to stretch, and when to dissolve. The intonation here is not about statement, it is about listening to silence and shaping resonance.

V. Hayivka

Hayivka poll brings a striking contrast after the turbulence of Spring Rain. Its tempo, *Andantino*, suggests calm forward motion, and the music opens with simplicity and space. The title refers to another ancient spring ritual that is part of the broader vesnyanka tradition, in which girls would sing in open fields to greet the return of warmth and new life. In Hutsul and broader Ukrainian folk culture, these songs were associated with cyclical rebirth, and often performed in circles, with walking or swaying movements. In Hutsul folk culture, Christianity often coexisted with older, pre-Christian beliefs. Many people maintained a sense of the natural world as inhabited by spirits or entities connected to forests, mountains, rivers, and the home. These ideas were not formalized religion, but part of everyday worldview. This blending of Christian and pagan elements shaped a symbolic connection to the land and may have influenced composers like Shamo in their depiction of Hutsul life through sound.

Shamo's Hayivka does not imitate any specific folk tune, but it captures the atmosphere of this ritual with remarkable precision. The texture is spare and luminous with a clear upper melody supported by flowing inner voices. The character of the melodic line feels close to speech or chant. The music gives the impression of motion through stillness, a walk through air, or light shifting over mountain fields.

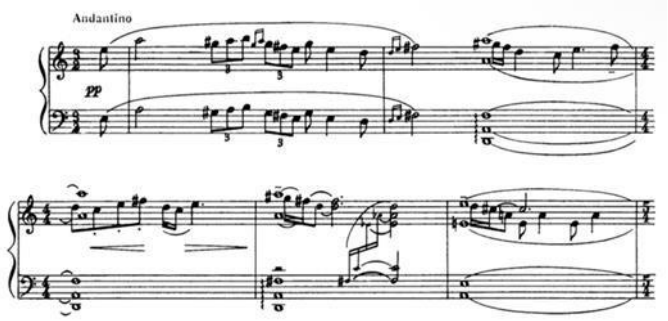
In terms of form, the piece unfolds in two main sections: an opening meditative idea and a contrasting central episode, followed by a return to the original mood. The initial material is modal, with use of Dorian coloring and open intervals and gentle suspensions. The harmony avoids strong cadences, instead creating a soft, floating environment. This modestly reinforces the idea of the character, not a dramatic narrative, but a carefully drawn image or atmosphere.

The middle section introduces more intensity, both harmonically and rhythmically. The motion becomes more insistent, and dynamic contrasts sharpen. Here, Shamo might be referencing the dramatic or ceremonial side of the hayivka tradition and its role in village rituals

that symbolized human connection to the land, fertility, or the cycles of time. The writing is not literal, but the shift in mood feels deliberate. There is a brief moment of complexity in an otherwise luminous piece.

The return to the opening material restores the earlier clarity and simplicity. The final measures fade gently, with open voicing and long pedal resonance. There is no climax, no resolution, simply a quiet closing of the ritual.

From a performance standpoint, Hayivka is all about balance and tone. Pedal must be used with great care to preserve the clarity of the texture. Rubato should remain natural, shaped by phrases rather than by dynamic exaggeration. The most difficult part is emotional restraint: conveying warmth and stillness without falling into sentimentality. As in many of Shamo's pieces, the emotion is not on the surface. Instead, it is embedded in the contour, the pacing, and the color of a single harmony.



Example 1.13: Shamo: Hahilka mm.1-5

This piece feels like a moment between storm and dance, night and morning, silence and speech. It asks for focus and honesty, and offers a kind of musical flexibility.

VI. Dance of the Shepherds

The suite concludes with Dance of the Shepherds. Marked *Allegro molto, furioso*, a powerful and rhythmically charged movement that brings together many elements introduced earlier: modal melody, irregular meter, instrumental color, and folk-rooted expression.

In Hutsul culture, the traditional shepherd dance called Arkan. It is a dance associated with the tradition of shepherds and Kozaks. It is performed in a circle, emphasizing unity, strength, and group coordination, like a symbolic collective victory. The movements, often forceful and synchronized, resemble military drills and are usually accompanied by traditional songs played on instruments like the trembita or drymba. In some regions, the dance also holds ritual significance. It may be consecrated on saints' days or by respected members of the community, underscoring its spiritual and ceremonial role in village life and seasonal events.

Dances associated with shepherds, often performed barefoot on mountain clearings, included leaping, stamping, and group unison steps. These were not theatrical displays but rituals of cohesion and vitality. Shamo draws on that heritage here, not by quoting folk melodies, but by channeling their main traits, which are a rhythmic pulse, harmonic boldness, and layered textures.

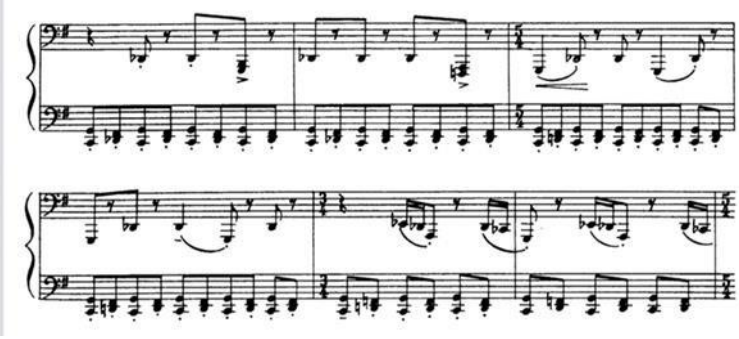
The movement is built from several short motives, developed through repetition, variation, and rhythmic displacement. The form is sectional but cohesive, with bursts of new material, appearing from earlier ideas. The texture is often thick, percussive, and chordal (particularly in the outer sections), but Shamo also inserts contrasting episodes where clarity of line and voice-leading return.

Rhythmically, this is the most intense movement of the suite. The music drives forward in asymmetric phrases, with syncopations and accent shifts that mirror the unpredictable patterns of traditional Hutsul group dances. There are clear references to hopak-style footwork, with quick leaps and stamping gestures translated into fast sixteenth-note figurations and chordal attacks. At the same time, there is a ritual undertone in how the dance grows denser and more insistent over time.

The harmonic language remains modal, though more angular here, by using second and seventh scale degrees to sharpen the edges. There are also moments when harmonic motion stalls

intentionally, as if holding a pose or preparing for a sudden change in direction. This element is essential to interpreting the piece not as abstraction, but as cultural expression.

From a performance perspective, Dance of the Shepherds demands precision, endurance, and control. The furioso must remain clear and the articulation must not blur the texture. Most challenging are the rapid shifts in voicing and the contrast between percussive drive and lyrical interruptions which needs to be projected and unified in timing. The energy must not come from speed alone, but from internal pulse.



Example 1.14: Shamo: Dance of the Shepherds mm.16-21

Together, Ukrainian Suite and Hutsulian Watercolors show how much Shamo's musical language evolved in just over few decades. The early suite is simple in texture, shaped by song and modal lyricism. In contrast, Hutsulian Watercolors, is far more layered and refined: harmonically richer, texturally complex, and rooted in deeper engagement with folk rhythms and instrumental idioms. Shamo builds each movement from within, relying on musical gestures, and cultural memory.

By the time he composed Hutsulian Watercolors, Shamo had already become a well-known Soviet composer, but his personal ties to Ukrainian culture remained central. In the final years of his life, he left Kyiv and move abroad. That context adds weight to the cycle: not as nostalgia, but as a kind of farewell. These two piano suites, though rarely performed, offer an

unusually clear view of Shamo's inner world that is shaped by folk tradition, classical form, and a quiet, deeply Ukrainian sense of voice.

Serhiy Bortkiewicz: Crimean Sketches, Op. 8

Composed in 1908, Crimean Sketches, Op. 8, is a suite of four piano miniatures that reflect Serhiy Bortkiewicz's early Romantic style and emotional connection to southern Ukraine. Although written after he had already moved to Leipzig, the suite draws on personal memories of Crimea, where he spent his childhood summers. These are not folk-based pieces, and there is no attempt to stylize Ukrainian or Crimean melodies. Instead, the music creates poetic images, imagined or remembered, with harmonic color, rhythmic nuances, and lyrical phrasing.

Compared to Shamo's folklorically inspired idiom, Bortkiewicz's writing is rooted in the 19th-century Romantic tradition of Liszt, Chopin. Still, his voice is uniquely introverted, emotionally restrained, and with a deep sense of nostalgia. The four movements, The Rocks of Uch-Kosh, Caprices of the Sea, Oriental Idyll, and Chaos, follow a loose narrative arc from stillness and nature to movement, fantasy, and emotional upheaval. The suite is not explicitly Ukrainian in material, but the emotional sensitivity and sense of place it conveys align with a broader tradition of Ukrainian lyricism in music.

I. The Rocks of Uch-Kosh (Les rochers d'Uch-Kosh)

This opening movement sets the tone for the entire suite. It is a quiet and meditative landscape. The title refers to Uch-Kosh, a rocky cliff formation near Alupka, on Crimea's southern coast, where Bortkiewicz spent summers as a child. This was a region he never truly left emotionally, even after settling in central Europe. As with much of his work, this piece avoids literal description, instead offers a reflection filtered through time and inner resonance.

The first movement presents a majestic sonic tableau, an ode to the grandeur of Crimean cliffs and gorges. Bortkiewicz's music feels cinematic in its scope. It is opening with heavy,

resonant chords in octaves and fifths, the pianist is immediately placed in a role like that of a landscape painter, laying out vertical layers of harmony and texture.

The movement is marked *Lento* and unfolds in an episodic ternary form (ABA′) that creates an arch but avoids rigid structure in favor of an improvisatory flow, which is a hallmark of Bortkiewicz's narrative style. The outer sections are slow and sustained, anchored by arpeggiated left-hand patterns that resemble the movement of waves or wind. The melodic line is lyrical but understated, built from narrow intervals and soft ascending phrases that resist climax. There is no virtuosic display here yet and the expressiveness lies entirely in pacing, voicing, and harmonic color.

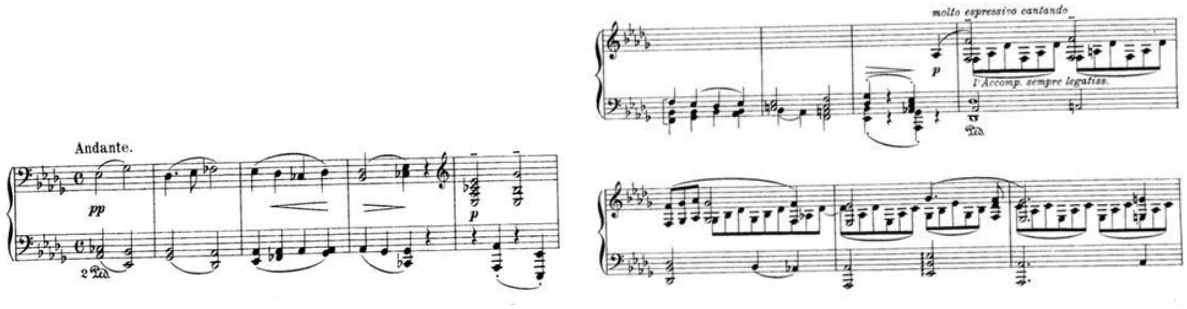
The harmony is traditional Romantic but punctuated by modal inflections suggestive of Eastern color, notably through augmented seconds, pedal tones, and open fifths.

Texturally, the movement builds cathedral-like spaces. Block chords and massive arpeggios alternate with more lyrical lines, sometimes unfolding like recitatives over a sonorous harmonic base. The use of the lower register gives the music its foundation, while the melody seems to emerge in to voice-leading dialogues. This interplay between gravity and lyricism is characteristic of Bortkiewicz's style, one that combines virtuosity with deeply expressive narrative gesture.

Although not rooted in Ukrainian folklore, this piece shares something with the Ukrainian tradition of lyrical introspection. Its emotional core lies in restraint: an internalized intonations inspired through remembrance rather than voice. The absence of thematic drama or contrast may reflect the same sensibility found in later Ukrainian piano miniatures, where character appears not from development, but from presence.

From the first measures, the piece sets a wide, solemn tone. The low octaves and open harmonies create a feeling of something ancient and steady, like stone. The opening *Andante* reminded me of Liszt's-Wagner broad landscapes, while the more expressive middle section brought to mind the mood of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata and perhaps even Liszt's

Liebestraum, not in content, but in texture and atmosphere. The writing does not rush or build to a climax. Instead, it opens space for sound to settle. From a performance perspective, the challenge is to balance weight and clarity, keeping the grandeur of the chords without heaviness, and letting the melody evolve naturally out of the texture.



Example 1.15: Bortkiewicz: The Rocks of Uch-Kosh mm.1-5 and mm.30-36

II. Caprices of the Sea

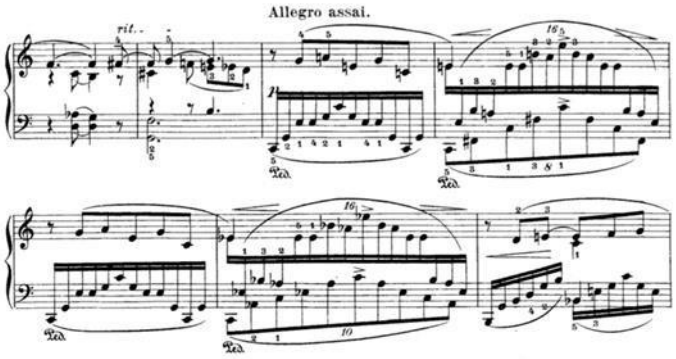
If the first piece in the suite is grounded in rock and mountain, the second moves us to the sea: shifting, restless and full of waves motion. Caprices of the Sea begins with a brief introduction (*quasi introduzione*) that questions the mood of the piece. The music is unsettled, built on chromatic lines, swirling textures, and unresolved harmonies, like the sea before a storm. It then flows directly into a turbulent middle section marked *Allegro assai*, where the wave-like energy dominates.

The rhythm is fluid and constantly changing. Patterns ripple across the keyboard in fast triplets, with interruptions and quick shifts of register. Harmonically, this piece is more adventurous than the first. It avoids clear tonal centers, instead using coloristic harmony and chromatic turns to create a sense of unpredictability, just like waves that never land quite the same way twice.

The texture often resembles an étude: fast-moving right-hand figuration over a lighter lefthand base. But it is never purely technical, the gestures are always expressive. The phrasing

alternates between short bursts of motion and suspended moments of quiet, giving the listener the feeling of being carried and then suddenly dropped. There is also a moment of calm at the center, a brief pause in the waves before the final section accelerates again, closing with sparkle rather than weight.

There is no folk material here, but the movement's intonations carry something natural and familiar: the unpredictability of nature, the humor and danger of the sea, the feeling of standing on a shoreline in wind. From the performer's side, it is a matter of control: creating lightness in fast passages, balancing texture, and keeping the pacing alive without pushing. There's elegance here, but also edge.



Example 1:16: Bortkiewicz: Caprices of the Sea mm.10-16

The music mirrors the ocean's quieter metamorphoses, perpetually evolving in character. It never quite tells a story, but it leaves the impression of something beautiful and constantly in motion.

III. Oriental Idyll

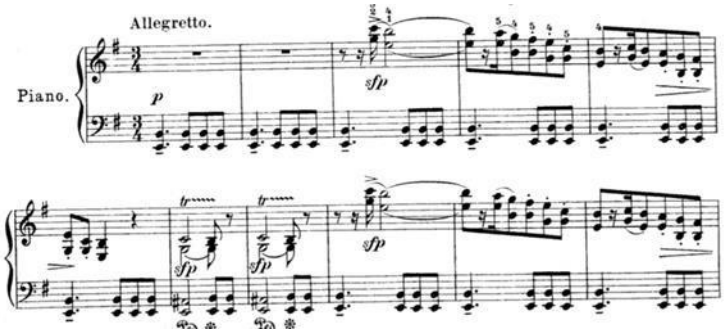
This movement steps into a more imagined, stylized space. With its title and melodic shapes, Oriental Idyll reflects the early 20th-century European fascination with the East, especially the musical cultures of Crimea and the broader Ottoman and Tatar world. Bortkiewicz does not quote any authentic folk songs, but he evokes the exotic flavor of the region through ornamented melody, modal fragments, and a kind of suspended, static atmosphere.

The piece is in a gentle triple meter, marked *Allegretto*, with a floating, lyrical main theme that moves slowly above a static accompaniment, often just a drone or repeated open fifths. This drone effect echoes traditional instruments like the saz, dutar, or even the kobza, though the reference is stylized rather than ethnographic. The melody itself includes augmented seconds and arabesque turns that were typical of eastern‖ exoticism in Western Romanticism.

What sets this piece apart from the others in the suite is its restraint. There is no real climax, no strong harmonic motion. The music seems to hover, to circle around itself. This creates a meditative space that is not empty, but spacious.

Harmonically, Bortkiewiczs's nonfunctional chords, often moving in parallel or chromatic steps, giving the music a sense of stasis rather than progression. There is tension between simplicity and complexity.

From the pianist's perspective, the challenge here is voicing and pacing. The upper line must sing with gentle inflection, never forced, and the accompaniment must remain delicate without becoming dry. The ornamentation should feel natural, as if improvised, and the whole performance needs to stay close to the sound of speech rather than song.



Example 1.17: Bortkiewicz: Oriental Idyll mm.1-11

Oriental Idyll does not try to recreate a culture. It offers instead a composer's vision of something distant and quiet, an image of stillness.

IV. Chaos

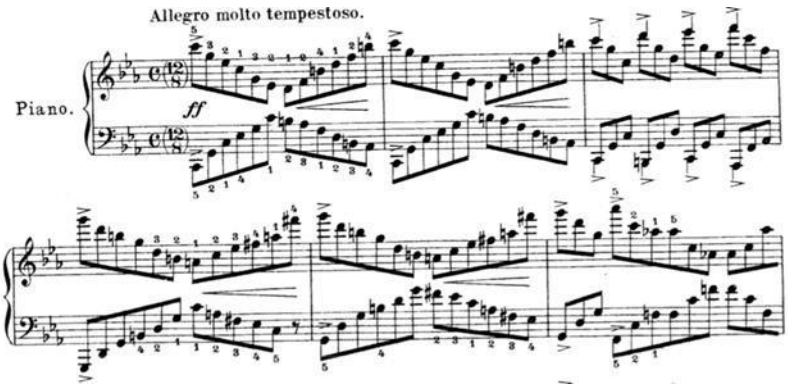
The last movement of the suite stands in stark contrast to the calm restraint of the third. Chaos begins without warning, a storm of rhythmic and harmonic energy, and sustains that turbulence through to the end. If the previous pieces painted images of nature, this one feels psychological: a storm of motion, tension, and collapse.

Marked *Allegro molto tempestoso*, the piece opens with arpeggiated furious passages, that created emotional instability. The material is fragmented, with themes that never fully settle before being interrupted or overtaken by new material. The meter is regular, but the phrasing is irregular and often unpredictable, creating a sense of acceleration even when the tempo remains steady.

One striking feature of the piece is the central fugue-like passage, marked *l'istesso tempo della fuga e sempre marcato.* Here, Bortkiewicz combines Baroque techniques with Romantic, Brahms-like intensity. The subject is angular and rhythmic, passed between voices in different registers, and layered with aggressive counterpoint. This section does not feel academic, it is dramatic and driven, like a fugue under pressure. The texture thickens, dissonance increases, and the entire passage moves toward a climax that never quite releases.

Eventually, the fugue breaks apart. The final section (*Tempo I*) returns to fragments of earlier material: octaves, broken chords, quick downward runs, now stripped of momentum. The piece ends with a majestic quotation of the fugue in double octaves, adding intensity towards a strong and heavy resolution back in C minor.

The title Chaos could be read as metaphorical, not just disorder, but the unraveling of structure and identity. It is also the most technically demanding movement of the suite, requiring full dynamic control, rapid shifts of articulation, and a precise sense of pacing to avoid letting the texture become muddy.



Example 1.18: Bortkiewicz: Chaos mm.1-6

Chaos closes the suite in a quite different emotional space than it began. After the cliffs, the sea, and the remembered East and its internal weather. The majestic ending does not bring calm, only silence.

Borys Lyatoshynsky: Three Preludes Op. 38

The two sets of piano preludes by Borys Lyatoshynsky — Three Preludes, Op. 38 and Five Preludes, Op. 44 were written during the Second World War, in the shadow of violence and displacement, yet with a remarkable sense of inner structure, lyricism, and psychological and philosophical nuance. While they were not conceived as a single cycle, their overlapping origins and evolving titles suggest a larger underlying continuity. The earliest pieces in the group were originally titled as Two Preludes on Ukrainian Folk Songs, and the influence of Ukrainian melodic and folkloric intonations remains central throughout both opuses.

Lyatoshynsky's musical language in these works blends post-Romantic lyricism, impressionistic textures and occasionally expressionist harmony. Despite their compact size, the preludes reveal a symphonic level of drama and architecture, often unfolding in multiple layers with polyphonic density and motivic transformation. Some carry literary epigraphs from Taras Shevchenko, pointing to a deeper programmatic or philosophical meaning, though not in the

form of narrative tone poems. These are not virtuosic display pieces. Rather, they are inner reflections: fragments of sorrow, remembrance, resistance, and redemption.

Taras Shevchenko (1814–1861) is a central figure in Ukrainian culture, a poet and artist whose work speaks directly and from the country's history and spirit. His poems often touch on themes of hardship, freedom, and a strong bond with the Ukrainian land. The short fragments Lyatoshynsky chose for the preludes capture some of these feelings, reflecting pain and hope. By placing Shevchenko's words before his music, Lyatoshynsky connects his compositions to the voice of Ukrainian history and identity, adding meaning to how we understand the music.

Both sets, Op. 38 and Op. 44, demand acute attention to voicing, color, and phrasing. They offer pianists an opportunity for expressive subtlety and for a kind of psychological storytelling, shaped by wartime experience, folk roots, and an unmistakably Ukrainian emotional scope.

In Op.38 preludes presented as brief fragments, these epigraphs are drawn from full poems by Taras Shevchenko and carry the weight of his emotional vision. Vera Rich, a respected translator of Shevchenko's work, offers the most complete rendering of the first epigraph, where the speaker's quiet nighttime longing becomes clear within its full stanza. The second and third epigraphs, though shorter, interrupt Shevchenko's original lines, yet remain unmistakably powerful: the image of mourning chimneys and growing graves captures communal loss, while the promise of a revived earth and the return of mother and son foregrounds hope. Though these are only excerpts, their progression from melancholy to determination echoes the expressive trajectory of Lyatoshynsky's Op. 38. Shevchenko's words, even in partial form, retain their resonance: personal yearning becomes national remembrance, desolation leads toward renewal.

The music itself combines folk-like intonations with repeated patterns and dark harmonies, creating a feeling of inner struggle and reflection. The first two preludes, in E minor and E-flat minor, reflect a heavy, almost mournful, atmosphere. In contrast, the third prelude in

F-sharp minor, offers a sense of light and hope. The cycle seems to move from sorrow toward an imaginative future.

These preludes are not just short pieces, they carry emotional depth and formal complexity. Their textures sometimes resemble wordless songs or ancient polyphony. Even under Soviet pressure to write in a more traditional style, Lyatoshynsky found a way to express personal and national ideas through subtle musical means.

I. *Andante sostenuto* Op. 38, No. 1

Taras Shevchenko:

The sun sets, and dark the mountains become,

The little bird hushes, the plain has grown dumb.

The people rejoice that slumber is nearing,

And I look: and with my heart I fly in my dreaming

Into the dark orchard in far Ukraina…

The opening prelude of the Op. 38 cycle begins in a restrained and contemplative mood. The piece bears a poetic epigraph from Taras Shevchenko, though in the manuscript version this appears to have been added after the music was completed, a reverse of the typical compositional process, and perhaps a sign that the expressive idea came first, while the literary reference was chosen later to reflect its emotional arc.

The character of this prelude is songful and modest, rooted in a Ukrainian type of lyricism that balances between lament and meditation. Melodic lines unfold slowly in the middle register, with a distinctly vocal quality. While there is no direct quotation of a folk tune, the

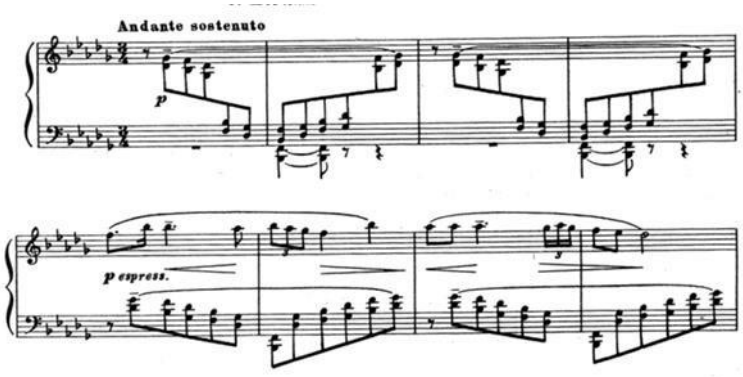
melodic intonation clearly echoes Ukrainian folk modality, particularly through the alternation of major and minor inflections around the third and sixth degrees.

Structurally, the prelude is built on a three-part arch form. The outer sections share a similar harmonic space and thematic material, while the middle section develops the main motive with greater harmonic tension and inner movement. The overall pacing is elastic, almost rubato in spirit, but within a clearly controlled frame.

The harmonic language is impressionistic in color but emotionally grounded. Lyatoshynsky often blurs modal and functional harmony, using modal shifts and chromatic alterations to evoke uncertainty and grief. The sustained pedal points and parallel chords add a sense of stasis and breath, a technique that aligns with the aesthetics of lament found in Baroque and Romantic repertoire.

The texture is delicate and lightly layered, with a consistent interplay between melody and harmonic cushion. It is essential for the performer to maintain balance, especially when the main melodic line is distributed between hands or tucked into inner voices. The dynamic range is moderate, and the expressive world is internal, as one of reflection rather than proclamation.

Interpretively, this prelude suggests quiet resilience. It does not depict a dramatic scene but rather a state of mind with the waves of thoughts. The performer must perform each phrase with care, allowing time and breath between ideas, as if speaking aloud a personal thought. Rubato here is not indulgent but natural, linked to the melodic rhythm itself. It is in this balance of restraint and sincerity that the piece finds its expressive strength.



Example 1.19: Lyatoshynsky: Prelude Op.38 No.1 mm.1-8

II. *Lento tenebroso* Op. 38, No. 2

Taras Shevchenko:

The chimneys mourn, emitting no smoke,

And beyond gardens, over the fence,

Black graves rise solemnly…

This sorrowful image is empty homes and growing graves that reflect the silence of a community grieving loss. The second prelude, with its slow, funeral-like pace, pedal-toned harmonies, and understated lament, mirrors this grief. The absence of warmth in Shevchenko's verses comes through in Liatoshynsky's sparse textures and muted emotional tragedy.

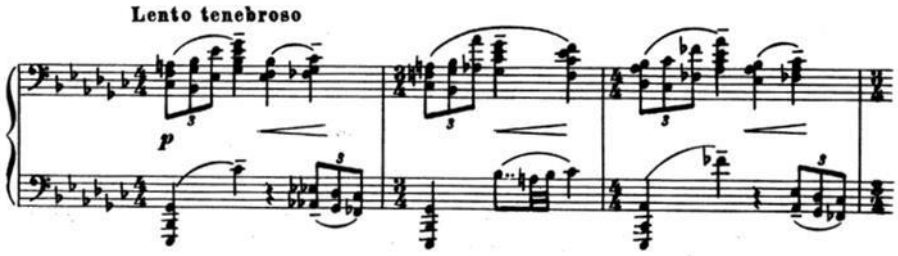
The second prelude of the cycle is perhaps its most tragic and monumental. Lyatoshynsky sets a somber tone with the tempo marking *Lento tenebroso*, and reinforces this with a deeply expressive musical and harmonic language. A second poetic epigraph from Shevchenko introduces the piece, now more fully integrated into the conception. Here, the connection between literature and music becomes not decorative but essential to its expressive weight.

This prelude is constructed as a kind of pianistic requiem. The steady, funereal motion of triadic quarters in the left hand suggests a slow march, but Lyatoshynsky undermines its rhythmic regularity through metrical shifts and subtle asymmetries. The harmonic field is dense, often built around low-register chromatic clusters, which generate not so much dissonance as harmonic pressure, a kind of emotional gravity.

The main theme is placed in the middle voice, distributed across both hands, and must be brought out with subtle shading. It is built on a descending minor second, a gesture reminiscent of traditional laments and folk cries. Lyatoshynsky expands this into longer lines through sequencing and rhythmic elongation, which gives the theme an epic quality despite its melodic simplicity.

Formally, the piece unfolds in three large sections, with the return of earlier material in a slightly transformed harmonic light. The middle section intensifies through registral expansion and tonal instability. Toward the end, the low triplet ostinato becomes almost orchestral in resonance, a reminder of Lyatoshynsky's symphonic style.

For the performer, this prelude demands restraint, concentration, and an ability to project sonority across low registers without heaviness. Each harmonic change matters. Each phrasing must rise naturally out of the dark texture. The music offers no catharsis, only depth and gravity.



Example 1.20: Lyatoshynsky: Prelude Op.38 No.2 mm.1-3

III. *Moderato con moto* (Op. 38, No. 3)

And on the renewed earth

There will be no enemy or foe;

But there will be son, and there will be mother,

And there will be people upon the earth!

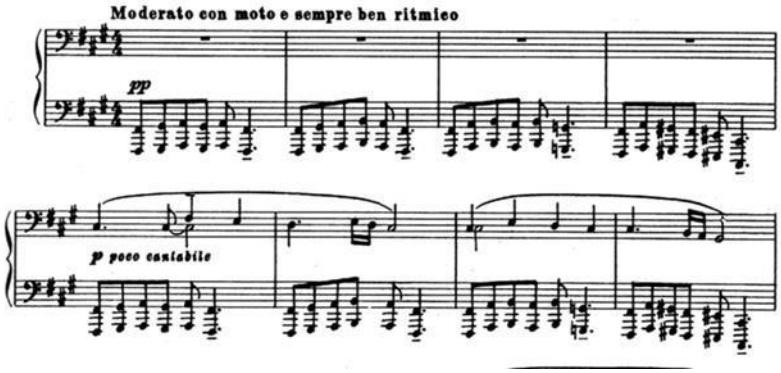
The final prelude of Op. 38 introduces a contrasting tone. Though still marked by introspection, it contains a clearer lyrical impulse and a slightly brighter harmonic space. It begins with another literary epigraph from Shevchenko, which offers a kind of reflection on Ukrainian nature, or on memory of it. This shift from mourning to meditation gives the cycle its narrative arc.

The texture here is more transparent, with the melodic line placed clearly in the upper register and supported by a steady basso ostinato. There is a notable simplicity in the melodic line, a pentachordal curve, framed by minor sixths, which evokes a folk-like intonation. While no direct quotation is present, the musical language is saturated with elements familiar from Ukrainian vocal tradition: stepwise movement, modal ambiguity, and expressive sighing intervals.

Formally, this prelude adopts a loose ternary structure. The middle section explores more distant tonal areas and the basso ostinato pattern moves to the soprano register in a cantabile style, which slightly unsettle the flow before returning to the more stable opening material. This return, however, is altered as less pure, more colored by memory.

The harmonies are richer than they appear on first glance. Lyatoshynsky uses modal inflections (flattened 2nd and 7^{th}) and chromatic colorings to nuance the key center. These do not create contrast so much as gentle variation, a language of intimacy rather than rhetoric. The final gestures are broad and affirm a hopeful resolution with a resonant and powerful F-sharp major chord.

Interpretively, this piece asks for cold mind and clarity in balance. The performer must project the upper line as if singing a lullaby, while keeping the texture pulsating, flowing and supple. It is a delicate balance of tone, timing, and intonation.



Example 1.21: Lyatoshynsky: Prelude Op.38 No.3 mm.1-8 Although the Op. 38 Preludes form a compact and inward-looking triptych, they represent only one phase of Lyatoshynsky's evolving approach to the prelude genre. Written during the early 1940s, these pieces carry deep personal and national overtones, enriched by poetic epigraphs and folk-like intonations. Yet soon after completing them, the composer turned to a broader and more ambitious conception.

Borys Lyatoshynsky: Five Preludes, Op. 44

Composed shortly after Op.38, during the same wartime years, the preludes reflect a deepening of musical language, structure, and emotional scope. While no longer overtly tied to literary quotations, they continue the trajectory of expressive expansion, exploring a fuller dynamic range, heightened textural contrasts, and a more symphonic conception of the piano. If Op. 38 is intimate and poetic, Op. 44 speaks in a broader register: still personal, but with a reach that suggests national struggle and universal reflection.

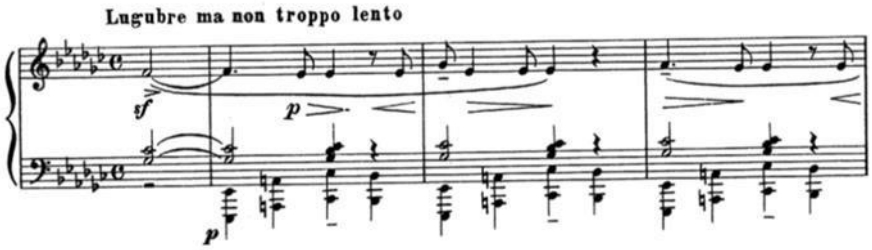
I. *Moderato* Op. 44, No. 1

The first prelude of the Op. 44 set opens with an explosive sharp and dissonant chord, as the sound of a gunshot. Marked Moderato, it does not rush or impose but instead unfolds as a quiet statement of presence. The melodic line is stepwise and even, like a spoken phrase, and carried in the upper voice with a cold but cantabile touch. It hovers around the natural minor scale, though Liatoshynsky avoids confirming tonal centers too directly. Instead, the harmony moves fluidly through modal inflections, chromatic color, and sharp ambiguities.

The piece is structured in a compact ternary form, with a central section that subtly intensifies both the dynamics and the harmonic density. The outer sections maintain a restrained dignity, never reaching toward climax but instead circling around the same emotional space, reflective balanced and understated.

Texture is lightly layered. The melody is built out of three notes that is the main motif of the prelude. The chords of the middle layer are clearly voiced and create a gentle rhythmic pulse without becoming accompanimental in the traditional sense and more of a harmonic support for the melody. Basso ostinato is reminding an effect of pulsating steps from far away. This kind of motion recalls folk instrumental stylizations, possibly zither-like textures. Thought nothing here is folkloristic in a literal way.

Interpretively, this prelude demands restraint and sensitivity. Its emotional content is quiet but direct and tender. There is a grounded lyricism that suggests philosophical thoughtfulness rather than narrative drama. Rubato may be used, but sparingly, and always in service of phrase and breath.



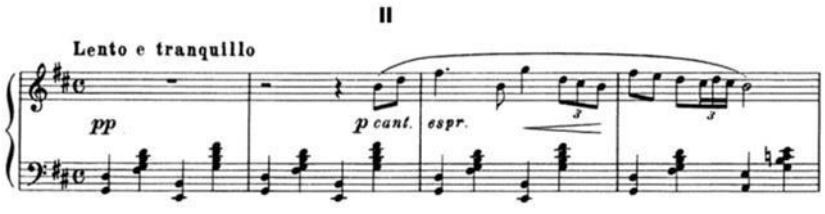
Example 1.22: Lyatoshynsky: Prelude Op.44 No.1 mm.1-3

II. *Andante sostenuto* Op. 44, No. 2

Marked Andante sostenuto, the second prelude deepens the reflective tone of the first, but with darker harmonic color and slower pacing. This piece feels suspended and time is stretched. Harmonies unfold in long-breathed phrases, often supported by pedal tones or gently shifting inner voices that lend a sense of harmonic gravity.

The melodic material is vocal, in B minor, fragmentary at first but slowly gathering direction as the piece unfolds. The harmonic support of the melody is in G major and together with the melody transfer the listener in a dream-like meditative atmosphere. Liatoshynsky creates tension not through dissonance, but through ambiguity. Diminished intervals, unresolved suspensions, and modal mixtures that hover between major and minor. The result is unsettled.

The form is through-composed, with thematic materials gradually transformed rather than repeated. There is no dramatic climax. Instead, the energy grows inwards, leading to a subtle high point in the middle register before dissolving again into stillness.



Example 1.23: Lyatoshynsky: Prelude Op.44 No.2 mm.1-4

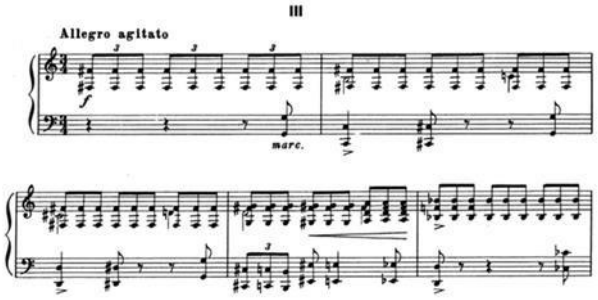
III. Allegro agitato (Op. 44, No. 3)

This is the most urgent and physically charged piece in the set. The tempo marking Allegro agitato is realized through rapid figuration, rhythmic displacement, and motoric drive of the triplets. Angular motifs move across registers in fragmented bursts. The left hand often outlines unstable harmonic areas while the right hand carries restless gestures that refuse to settle.

Unlike many of Liatoshynsky's preludes that breathe in long vocal lines, this one is percussive, disjunct, and rhythmically unsettled. It evokes motion effects more than melody, perhaps reflecting inner tension, external threat, or a fleeting storm of emotion.

Structurally, it is closest to a miniature toccata, but with irregular phrasing and frequent metric shift. Despite the constant motion, the dynamic contour is carefully graded, with each climax held in proportion to the piece's short span.

This prelude can be interpreted as an interruption, a psychological or emotional rupture. That stands in stark contrast to the surrounding lyricism. Yet it remains consistent in scale and discipline, never tipping into excess.



Example 1.24: Lyatoshynsky: Prelude Op.44 No.3 mm.1-5

IV. *Andante mestoso* (Op. 44, No. 4)

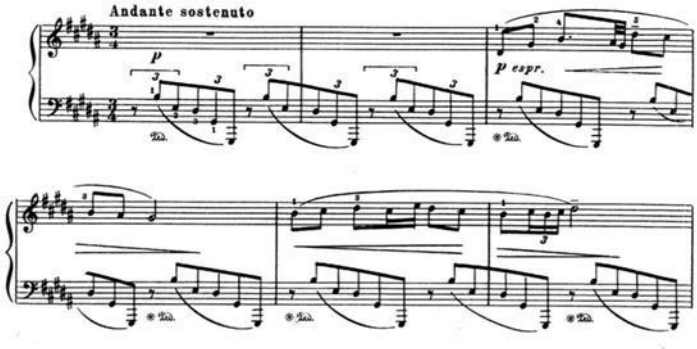
With Andante maestoso, Liatoshynsky returns to a tone of lament. The title marking (mournful‖) is realized not through overt tragedy but through sparseness, soft dissonance, and

expressive silences. The melodic line is narrow in range, melancholic in mood and avoids peak moments. It is as if the piece is speaking softly through ashes of memory and regret.

Harmonic support of the melody plays an important role, which travels from one key to another every new section. In some way it is familiar from Ukrainian laments and spiritual folk traditions. There is a kind of ancient voice embedded within the modern harmonic fabric and melody.

The texture is often pared down to just two voices: melody and pedal-tone harmony, creating an austere sound world that feels familiar but distant. Harmonic progressions are slow, with careful voice leading and long pedal resonances.

Interpretively, the piece demands great restraint. Nothing must be rushed or emphasized. The performer's role is to listen inward and let the sound carry its own expressive weight, resisting the temptation to dramatize.



Example 1.25: Lyatoshynsky: Prelude Op.44 No.4 mm.1-6

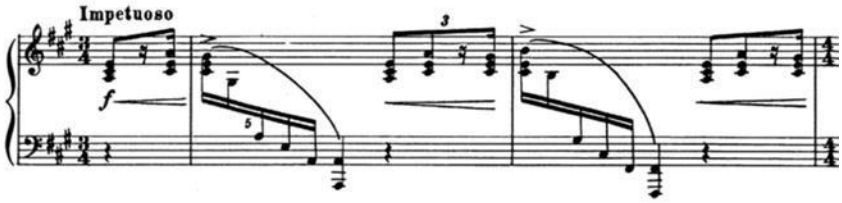
V. *Allegro con fuoco* (Op. 44, No. 5)

The final prelude closes the set with passionate energy of victory. Marked Allegro con fuoco, it recalls the bravura finales of classical-romantic character suites. But here the fire is compact, tightly controlled, and rhythmically charged.

The prelude is in A major, opens with bold octave gestures and sequences of accented chords that generate immediate forward motion. The figuration is angular and percussive, moving in fits and bursts rather than smooth lines. The harmony alternates between stark intervallic patterns (fourths, sevenths) and quick modal resolutions, often using syncopation to destabilize expectations.

Despite its forcefulness, the structure remains tight and clear. Motifs are developed through variation and rhythmic transformation, leading to a concentrated climax. The ending is energetic, with majestic triumph and celebration of victory.

The finale, marked Andante sostenuto, serves as a dramatic counterweight to the quieter preludes that precede it. The composer brings back the theme from Prelude 2, which serves as a structural closure for the cycle. There is a majestic resolution of the cycle, with expressive defiance at the Meno mosso, with marked accents at the end.



Example 1.26: Lyatoshynsky: Prelude Op.44 No.5 mm.1-2

Although Op. 44 does not bear poetic epigraphs like Op. 38, it continues the same spirit of compressed, emotionally charged piano writing that fuses folk modality, expressive restraint, and harmonic nuance. Compared to the three-part Op. 38, this five-prelude set expands the emotional arc: from lyricism and meditation to grief, fire, and ashes.

Taken together, the five preludes of Op. 44 form a compact emotional and philosophical arc. The first offers quiet psychological reflection, almost detached from the world; the second sinks

deeper, into a kind of suspended dream or hope. The third prelude erupts with tension and force, a moment of internal crisis, followed by the fourth, where only ashes remain. The final prelude gathers what is left and transforms it into strong and certain character. It is not triumph in a theatrical sense, but a firm, steady assertion of the music that has survived. Lyatoshynsky compresses an entire inner world into these short pieces: a story of grief, endurance, and powerful strength.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION

Preparing and performing this repertoire has been an important and at times personal process. These works are not virtuosic showcases in the usual sense, and they require something different: attention to detail, imagination, depth of listening, and the ability to convey musical meaning without exaggeration. That kind of work is not always visible, but it is essential.

In learning them, I became more aware of how cultural identity can be embedded in musical language in modal turns, in phrasing and in texture. This is especially true in Lyatoshynsky and Shamo, where even the smallest details seem to carry weight. Their music does not imitate folk sources, but absorbs their intonational logic, transforms to unique style and emotional tone in a more internal way.

I did not try to over-interpret or impose extra meaning. I just followed the score, the phrasing, the composers' markings, and tried to understand what each piece is really built from. At some point, this work became deeply personal. As someone far from home, this project gave me an opportunity to return to familiar lands during the peaceful times and explore the culture and traditions in a deeper level. Whether or not it comes through in the sound, that feeling stayed close as I work on this project.

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