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The Changing Style of Playing Rachmaninoff's Piano Music

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**The Changing Style
of
Playing Rachmaninoff's Piano Music**

Yuan-Pu Chiao

King's College, University of London

Accepted for the Degree of PhD, June 2012

Abstract

Rachmaninoff was not only a fine composer but also an extraordinary pianist. Due to his virtuosity, he established a powerful interpretative style for his music that clearly influenced his contemporaries. However, the way people have performed his piano music has changed over the years. In this thesis, I show how the recorded interpretations of some important figures have become 'authoritative renditions' for other pianists to follow and argue that these have caused performance fashions to change in specific areas and periods. From time to time, pianists have also reacted against existing norms. In the last two decades, fashions seem to have altered again: many pianists are now starting to return to an 'authentic' Rachmaninoff style in their performances.

Since a performance takes place in a historical and cultural context, it is necessary to trace the context behind the sound. The thesis starts by discussing the meaning of performing schools (Chapter One), and the characteristics of the early Russian Piano School to which Rachmaninoff belonged (Chapter Two). Chapter Three focuses on Rachmaninoff's own performance style. Examining the characteristics of his playing, I use the features of the early Russian Piano School to examine the extent to which Rachmaninoff's performances were characteristic of the Russian tradition. Chapter Four discusses how pianists have played Rachmaninoff's solo pieces over time, and Chapter Five how pianists have developed their editorial approaches and structural ideas when playing the composer's Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 3. While Chapter Four underlines the changing fashions across generations, the two case studies in Chapter Five suggest that recordings may have played a more significant role in this change than the score. In Chapter Six, I go back to the question of being 'authentic' and summarise different perspectives from my interviews with pianists, to see how they view these issues. I conclude the thesis with suggestions for further study.

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Introduction: Why Rachmaninoff?

The thesis aims to discuss the changing style of performing Rachmaninoff's piano music. Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) was not only a fine composer but also an extraordinary pianist. He was one of the first composers with superlative performing technique to demonstrate his musical thoughts by sound recording performances of his own compositions. During his lifetime, the composer's piano music already enjoyed popularity and was performed frequently by many of his colleagues. Due to his own virtuosity, Rachmaninoff established a powerful interpretative style for his music which clearly influenced his contemporaries. Most important of all, he left a comparatively large number of recordings, through which later generations could come to know his performances.

This situation was unique. Maurice Ravel's piano technique and Igor Stravinsky's conducting skill were not as exceptional as their composing ability. Students who wish to study Richard Strauss's conducting performances suffer from the fact that the maestro did not record much. Strauss was a distinguished conductor, particularly so in opera, but he did not record any of his operas – only some orchestral works. Few other composer-pianists also possessing brilliant performing skills (such as Bela Bartok, Sergei Prokofiev, and Nikolai Medtner) recorded much. In the case of these three, their compositions were seldom performed by their contemporaries; thus it is difficult to discuss differences in interpretation between the composers themselves and other performers of their works. In much later times finally we have Benjamin Britten and Pierre Boulez: two influential composers, virtuosic conductors, and productive recording artists of their own compositions who can compare to Rachmaninoff in the special three-in-one role, but the popularity of their works is still far below the Russian's.

In fact Rachmaninoff's popularity is not limited to his frequently-performed pieces, but also shown in his piano performances, which have been gradually growing in influence and reputation since his time. With the increasing accessibility of his recordings (all his recorded performances have been digitized since 1992), today people seem to agree widely that Rachmaninoff is one of the greatest pianists we know. In its August 2010 issue, BBC Music Magazine asked one hundred of today's concert pianists to name three of the finest players of the instrument on disc, and the one who got the most votes was Sergei Rachmaninoff. In other words, Rachmaninoff is not only a composer-pianist from the past, and his recordings are not documents covered in dust in libraries that attract only academics. On the contrary, his playing is deeply admired by pianists now. It influences them and seems likely to continue to do so. Studying the performances of Rachmaninoff, to a certain degree, is also studying the playing of pianists today.

Research Approaches

Since he represents such a unique case in musical history – especially in the light of research into recorded performance – what can performance style changes in Rachmaninoff's piano music tell us? In this thesis, I would like to explore the characteristics of his performing style – and how other pianists react to it by ignoring, imitating, or simply taking account of it. Does the concept of 'Rachmaninovian style' change over time? If so, how and when does the style change? Are there any reasons behind the changes?

In my research, I use three main approaches to identify suitable questions and possible explanations:

1. Written Documents

It is dangerous to only believe any description of performing style or sound before recording began. We have many written documents about how delicately Chopin played, how colourful Liszt sounded, and how powerful Anton Rubinstein was, but without recordings we can never actually know how they played. However, that does not mean that written documents are not important. The methods, principles, and aesthetics behind them can be recorded in words. They cannot tell us exactly what the sound was like but at least can point out certain perspectives for us to examine, helping us to find similarities or diversities among the performances. Many of the questions I found through listening to the recordings actually originally came from my study of written documents: I could then examine what the documents describe, and judge whether they are accurate, by analysing the performances in recordings in detail.

2. Recordings

However useful written documents are, I firmly believe that listening is still the most fundamental and probably also the most effective means of discussing a musician's art or technique. The past three decades have seen many musicologists increasingly develop research interests in recorded performance and the field has gained considerable results and recognition. My research has been based on my own collection and, as an Edison Fellow (2008-2009), the collection of recordings at the British Library Sound Archive. For analysis, I have used Sonic Visualiser to help me to observe details of the performances such as phrasing, dynamics, and tempi.

For my research, I have tried to collect as many performances as possible. Although I understand and recognise the significant difference between unedited live

performance recordings and studio recordings, I still simply regard the two as ‘audio documents’ and treat them in the same way in this study. Since the birth of recordings, critics, scholars, and even philosophers have acknowledged that recordings of live performances and studio recordings are quite distinct in nature. Numerous accounts and discussions have elaborated the differences between the two, including from a philosophical standpoint.¹ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson has extensively discussed how a producer or editor can influence musical expression in a recorded performance.² However, in this thesis I still perceive (studio) recordings as performances and treat them as audio documents. As Leech-Wilkinson argues, there is an enormous range of possible convincing performances and in performance the performer can have several different choices open to them at any moment. Therefore recordings assembled by an editor from different takes should still sound like the same work.³ Editing can alter details of a recorded performance, just as one can be unpredictable in live music-making.⁴ In this case study, studying studio recordings is also necessary. Many

¹ In her PhD thesis ‘Sir Charles Mackerras: Live Performance – Studio Recording’, Amélie Amy Blier-Carruthers presents a comprehensive literature review of how scholars, philosophers, critics discuss the issue of the difference between live performance and studio recording. Notably the discussions can be seen in the writings from scholars: Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1998); Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music: Listening to Musical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 23-57; Eric Clarke, ‘Listening to performance’ in *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*. ed. J. Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 185-196; Robert Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 3-25, 42-62; Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 4, 5, 189; Anthony Gritten, ‘Performing after recording’ in *Philosophical Reflections on Sound Recordings*. ed. M. Doğanatan-Dack (London: Middlesex University Press, 2008), 82-99; Dorottya Fabian, ‘Classical sound recordings and live performances: artistic and analytical perspectives’ in *Philosophical Reflections on Sound Recordings*. ed. M. Doğanatan-Dack (London: Middlesex University Press, 2008), 232-260. Philosophers: Theodore Gracyk, ‘Listening to music: performances and recordings’, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55 (1997), 139-150; Stan Godlovitch, *Musical Performance: A Philosophical Study* (London: Routledge, 1998); Stephen Davies, *Musical Works and Performances: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001).

² Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performance* (London: CHARM, 2009), chapter 3.7, paragraph 94-104, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html>. (accessed June 15th, 2011).

³ Leech-Wilkinson, paragraph 105-107, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html>. (accessed June 15th, 2011).

⁴ Leech-Wilkinson, paragraph 101, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap3.html>.

pianists, including important and influential ones, left no live recordings therefore I have to use their studio recordings. On the other hand, in my case studies I also choose to examine features that are less often subject to studio editing. None of the sections I select are difficult to perform and the musical textures are not complex. I aim to find the most recognisable, testable, noticeable features such as choice of major tempo (not tempi at a very detailed level where editorial adjustments might make a difference), added and altered notes or phrases, asynchronisation, arpeggiation, and editorial choice in the performances in my discussion of Rachmaninoff's performing style.

The reason I have decided to focus only on these features is not to ignore the issue of the distinction between live and studio performances but to accept the fact that recording does have its limits. Different recording conditions, acoustics, the piano the pianist used, even different transfers, will all influence a listener's judgment. How to find the common factor among the performances, to uncover certain general trends or performing fashions (if they actually exist) therefore becomes my main concern while listening to the recordings, whether the case study is about the characteristics of the early Russian Piano School or the features of Rachmaninoff's playing. Nuances, colours, pedalling, and other less obvious factors – or factors easily distorted by different transfers or recording conditions – are not the main concern of this research, though they are by no means less important to a pianistic performance.

3. Interviews

Much literature about the research of performances makes use of interviews with the performers, and I also do so in this study. Although I do not consider myself a

(accessed June 15th, 2011).

professional pianist but only a piano player, I have given performances, recitals, and lecture concerts in Taiwan. Before pursuing my doctoral studies I was a writer on classical piano music and interviewed fifty-five concert pianists from around the world. I am still in contact with many of my interviewees and therefore have had the chance to ask them further questions on piano schools and Rachmaninoff for my research. During my studies in London I have also served as the concert dramaturgist of the National Symphony Orchestra, Taiwan and have therefore had opportunities to meet more concert pianists and conduct further interviews based on the questions, assumptions, and observations emerging from my case studies. Many exclusive interviews have been done for the research. All the interviewees I present in this thesis have performed and recorded Rachmaninoff's music and many of them have also critically studied the composer's own playing. Rachmaninoff only taught two private pupils in the West, and I am glad that Ruth Slenczynska (1925-), the only surviving pupil, was willing to be interviewed. Some of my interviewees not only appear in the case studies, but also have played significant roles in changing the way Rachmaninoff's music is performed, thus it is valuable to ask them directly about their interpretative approaches while they were making the recording and about how they formed their interpretation of the composer. In addition, I also asked them about issues that arise in the written documents. I hope this thesis can combine the practical, first-hand experience of the Rachmaninoff performers with my research in analysing recordings and written sources. After all, it is the pianists who collectively create the trends, norms, and performance fashions relating to the interpretation of Rachmaninoff's music. Although I do not simply accept their opinions without question, my research does rely significantly on the interviews I conducted.

From the Past to the Present

The main focus of this thesis is Rachmaninoff's performance style. However, I have decided to start the thesis with a discussion of performing schools, followed by an examination of the features of the early Russian Piano School: these are the contents of the first two chapters. The reason for this is that, as later chapters will reveal, the importance of the Russian Piano School is still obvious in the discussion of Rachmaninoff's playing style. By the same token, the influence of different schools can also be heard in the performances (as this thesis is trying to prove), especially as far as phrasing style is concerned. Phrasing style can be much more than just technique and score-reading: it can be about the concept of singing or speaking in a 'musical sentence', about the performing habits or conventions (for example, what is the definition of a beautiful phrase?), about the balance between the melody and the harmony, about how to interpret the meaning of expression marks, and so on. This is why there is a great range of possibilities while performing a musical phrase. It is also hard to imagine that a classical musician plays without being influenced by anyone else or any conventions. Studying schools, as well as the conventions and traditions behind a performance, therefore helps us to understand performances by players who are influenced by them, or who are trying to react against them and deliberately offer unconventional interpretations. Therefore, this thesis discusses changing performance style in Rachmaninoff's piano music through historical research in the following topics:

Chapter One: The Meaning of the Performing School

Chapter Two: The Early Russian Piano School

Chapter Three: Rachmaninoff's Performing Style at the Keyboard

Chapter Four: Playing Rachmaninoff's Solo Piano Music, a Case Study of the
Prelude in G minor, Op.23 No.5

Chapter Five: The Influence of Recording and the 'Authoritative Rendition'—
How Different Generations of Pianists Have Played Rachmaninoff's
Piano Concertos No.2 and No.3

Chapter Six: Themes, Reflections and Suggestions for further Studies

Since a performance takes place in a historical and cultural context, it is necessary to trace the context behind the sound. In the case of Rachmaninoff's playing, there is, I shall argue, a strong performing school behind his musical expression that is also closely connected with the composer's composition style and musical aesthetics. Before discussing Rachmaninoff's piano performance, a discussion of the early Russian Piano School to which the composer-pianist belongs is necessary. By establishing the position of early Russian pianism, it will benefit us to identify what belongs to Rachmaninoff's originality and what to the legacies he inherited. Before entering into the discussion of the early Russian Piano School, however, an investigation into the meaning of the notion of performing schools is also required, especially as the term 'school' is so widely used that its meaning is not always clear.

The next chapter will focus on Rachmaninoff's own performance style. While examining the characteristics of the pianist's own playing, I will also use the features of the early Russian Piano School to examine the extent to which Rachmaninoff's performances were characteristic of the Russian tradition. The conclusion of this chapter will lead on to the next two chapters: Chapter Four will discuss how pianists play Rachmaninoff's solo pieces over time and Chapter Five will address how pianists develop their editorial approach and structural ideas when playing the composer's Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 3. The former underlines the changing fashion across generations and the latter suggests that recordings may play a more significant role than the score in the two case studies. Also, recording enhances the influence of 'authoritative' renditions. I will apply the theories of memetics and 'authority acceptance' to musical interpretation in order to explain the phenomenon revealed in the case studies. At the end of the thesis I will go back to the question of being

'authentic' – what is the *true* Rachmaninoff? Is there a true Rachmaninoff? How do pianists see the recordings of Rachmaninoff? Can these recordings form a new 'Rachmaninoff School', as performing traditions and conventions did in the past? Besides Rachmaninoff's own performances, are there any other authentic renditions of the composer's music? How do we see the development of the style changing? I find that the questions I face in this thesis are very similar to what arts scholar Joan Stanley-Baker has encountered in the study of Chinese painting and calligraphy. Therefore, I apply her theory to my research in Chapter Six to categorise and explain my findings. Also, I will summarise different perspectives from my interviews, to see how the pianists view these issues. In this final chapter, I will conclude the thesis with suggestions for further study.

In this thesis, for ease of reading, all large tables (over half a page) are in the Appendix. Page numbers of these tables are provided at the relevant point in the main text.

Chapter One: The Meaning of the Performing School

What does 'school' really mean? Is a school a constantly changing fashion among a group of people or a set of serious, coherent aesthetics behind each performance? How can we know that the concept of the school is real instead of being an illusion? In the following section, I would like to outline the arguments in favour of and against the concept of the 'school', then present my summary, which will lead to the discussion in the next chapter.

1. Do Schools Really Exist?

'School' is one of those terms musicians tend to use without always having a clear, consistent definition in mind. The main reference sources provide little help: no relevant entries can be found in the New Grove Dictionary, New Harvard Dictionary or Oxford Dictionary. In music, a school can be defined as a collection or group of people who share common characteristics of style, expression, or technique. Throughout history, numerous different groups have all been labelled as schools, on a national (the Russian Piano School), regional (the London Piano School), personal (the Auer Violin School), technical (the Italian *Bel Canto* School), or even institutional (the Moscow Conservatory School) basis. Nevertheless, deciding what the common characteristics of a school are and who belongs to each collection or group is always a perplexing task, so therefore many musicians and scholars have come to doubt that schools exist at all.⁵

⁵ See the discussion in Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music: Approaches to Studying Recorded Musical Performance* (London: CHARM, 2009), chapter 6, paragraph 5-7, <http://www.charm.rhul.ac.uk/studies/chapters/chap6.html> (accessed June 15th, 2011).

1.1. Doubts from Leaders of Schools

Objections to the school concept have come directly from the figures involved in schools themselves. When Theodor Leschetizky, one of the most famous pedagogues of his time,⁶ was asked about his teaching method, his reply was that:

I have no method and I will have no method [...] Adopt with your pupils the ways that succeed with them, and get away as far as possible from the idea of a method. Write over your music-room the motto: NO METHOD!⁷

While this does not explicitly deny that a Leschetizky school existed, it does suggest that he was not aiming to create or maintain one. Leschetizky's annoyance at attempts to reduce his teaching methods to a set of rigid rules is understandable. Leopold Auer (1845-1930), the Hungarian regarded as the leader of the Russian Violin School from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, also wrote: 'I have always insisted on the one great principle – that my pupils express *themselves*, and that they must not try to express me.'⁸ According to his own definition of his teaching methods then, Auer's pupils did not belong to a school.

1.2. Doubts from Musicians in Schools

If the head of the Leschetizky School flatly denied that he even had a teaching method, and the founder of the Auer School emphasised that he encouraged his students to be different, it is to be expected that many performers would also think that the idea of the school is an illusion. Some doubt the idea on the basis of their

⁶ He was the teacher of Ignacy Paderewski, Mark Hambourg, Ignaz Friedman, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Anna Essipova, Alexander Brailowsky, Benno Moiseiwitsch, Artur Schnabel, Mieczysław Horszowski, and many others.

⁷ Ethel Newcomb, *Leschetizky as I knew Him* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1967), 194.

⁸ Leopold Auer, *Violin Playing as I Teach It* (New York, 1921), 83.

own personal experience. Hungary produced a group of excellent pianists in the first half of the 20th century⁹ and their achievements lead people to think that there must be an 'Hungarian Piano School'. At least, there is supposed to be something excellent in the teaching of Hungarian piano teachers, which is why so many distinguished concert pianists were produced in the country.¹⁰ But Sándor and Vásáry denied the concept of a Hungarian school in my interviews and did not think their musical training in Budapest was different from that in other major music institutions.¹¹ Sándor said he studied music as everyone did in Europe at that time and that there was no Hungarian school. Vásáry even attributed the glory of the great Hungarian pianists to 'historical coincidence', stating that the training he had in his country was not special at all.

As for differences in educational or national backgrounds, some musicians also do not believe that schools actually exist. Samuel Rhodes, the violist of the Juilliard Quartet since 1969, thinks that:

[T]here's as much difference between our sound and the Guarneri, or Cleveland Quartets, as between us, the Amadeus and, say, the Alban Berg Quartet; I fail to see any generic difference between American and European – it's the personality of the group and how it developed, what influences it responded to within the

⁹ For example, Lili Kraus (1903-1986), Ervin Nyíregyházi (1903-1987), Louis Kentner (1905-1987), Edward Kilenyi (1910-2000), György Sándor (1912-2005), Andor Foldes (1913-1992), Annie Fischer (1914-1995), Géza Anda (1921-1976), György Cziffra (1921-1994), György Sebők (1922-1999), Tamás Vásáry (1933-) and many others.

¹⁰ For example, Mme. Yolanda MÉRÖ (1887) stated that it is the influence of Liszt (a national hero in Hungary) that meant that piano playing and study were highly appreciated by the Hungarians. The two major musical institutions in Budapest, Royal Academy and National Conservatory, were both founded by Liszt, and his pupils contributed to the excellence of piano teaching there. See James Francis Cooke, 'Thoroughness in Hungarian music study' in *Great Pianists on Piano Playing* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1917, reprinted 1999), 302-309.

¹¹ Interview with György Sándor (November 11th, 2003) and Tamás Vásáry (April 3rd, 2006).

group and all the diversity within that area.¹²

Another more detailed and thoughtful argument comes from the Polish pianist Krystian Zimerman. Although having certain ideas about the Polish Piano School, he still stresses the danger of the school concept. In particular, defining a school is almost impossible, because 'what really sustains a certain school to grow and to develop is usually not the substance of the school itself'. Zimerman uses composers as an example to discuss this situation:

I remember how Stravinsky's new piece would draw everybody's attention in Poland, same as every other happening in the art field that took place in the western world. John Cage has just released a new composition, and the next minute, we are analysing and studying the piece.

Therefore, these works sometimes enjoyed more fame than they did in their western home countries:

They might actually have had a stronger impact on the Russian School than they did on the American School. Because the composers were viewed as rebels in their own countries, but in Eastern Europe or Russia, they were worshipped like gods.

According to Zimerman, foreign cultures have as great an influence on performing schools as the domestic tradition does. In the case of Zimerman's fatherland, the

¹² Rob Cowan, 'Inner voices', *CD Review*, July 1991, 19-23.

Polish people were denied their own country because of foreign invasions for a long period of time:

They drifted to different parts of the world, and the art and culture of Poland are therefore enriched by these people of diaspora. The immigrants introduce new elements from many other cultures, all of which are part of the dynamic formation of the Polish art.¹³

Consequently, the Polish School is never just about its own tradition; it's where all kinds of cultures converge. By the same token, since mutual communication is ultimately inevitable, it is difficult to define certain common characteristics of any group and the lines between different schools might be much less distinct than we think.

1.3. Doubts from Researchers Studying Schools

As we have seen, some musicians doubt the existence of performing schools. The same is true of some scholars. Robert Philip narrows the term 'school' to the pupil-teacher relationship and states that this relationship can be very varied. Many musicians study with more than one main teacher and even those with only one can still perform very differently from their tutor, as the cases of Leschetizky's pupils show. After comparing the recordings of many early prominent pianists, Philip concludes that 'the distinctions between their styles of playing were not clear-cut, and the differences between pupils of the same teacher were as great as their similarities'.¹⁴ In other words, it is hard to list definite characteristics of any school. As far as tradition

¹³ Interview with Krystian Zimerman (July 9th, 2006).

¹⁴ See Robert Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 183-191.

is concerned, Philip used conductor Leon Botstein's discussion and then argued that any performing tradition, even if it comes directly from the composer, could be simply a kind of 'Chinese whispers', meaning that any tradition passed down through teaching over generations is unlikely to remain stable.¹⁵ Even when we have direct examples, the situation is by no means less puzzling. For instance, Chopin taught a large number of pupils but it is still not easy to understand the composer's interpretative ideas of his own works simply by reading the annotated scores. This is because the teaching manuscripts reveal not only Chopin's opinions of the piece, but also reflect the performance needs of the learner, which is why so many contradictions among annotated scores can be found. If the written evidence of one's teaching method or interpretative thoughts could be misleading, it is not hard to imagine how difficult it would be to generalise about any great mentor's pedagogical approaches.

2. Understanding Schools

All the misgivings about the concept of the school may be summarised in one idea: it is difficult, arduous, even impossible to define certain characteristics of any performing school therefore it is hard to argue that any school is truly distinguishable. In the era of globalisation, it also seems unfashionable to discuss the idea of performing schools, since the distinctions between them have arguably rapidly faded away as a result of increased global communication. Despite all the negative views above about the role of the school in musical performances, however, two reasons are still significant enough for us to continue the discussion. First, schools were more distinguishable in the past, and it is meaningful and essential to discuss them in relation to early performances. Second, the idea of the school also comes from the

¹⁵ Philip, 202-203.

performers themselves and one should not ignore their awareness of being in a group that shares certain identifiable performing habits.

2.1. Schools in the Past

If one examines the concept of the school in the past, a different attitude to the term is seen. Different performing schools started to emerge in the 18th and 19th century, and were systematised and even personalised. At the time, there were no visual and audio recordings, international communication and transportation were much slower, and varied national and pedagogic styles were much more distinguishable from one another than they are today. Take the 18th century performing practice of the pianoforte for example: the differences were enhanced by the regional production of the instrument and performing styles were defined by city, not by nation. In *Clavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Clavierspielen* (1787), one of the most widely read German treatises of the time, the author Daniel Gottlob Türk instructed readers that: 'when notes are to be played in the usual manner [...] the finger should be raised from the key a little earlier than the value of the note requires'.¹⁶ Meanwhile, Muzio Clementi commented on the same issue in his *Introduction to the Art of Playing the Pianoforte* (1803) by giving the very different advice that: 'the best general rule is to keep down the keys of the instrument, the full length of every note'.¹⁷ These two opposite approaches originated from the different designs of the clearer-sounding Viennese pianofortes and the fuller-toned British ones.¹⁸ In the eyes of Czerny, Clementi was the founder of a school of 'soft, quiet and melodious' pianism. Again, the term 'school' is used to group Johann Baptist Cramer, Clementi, Jan Ladislav Dussek, John Field and those pianists who inclined towards the

¹⁶ Malcolm Bilson, 'Keyboards' (in the 18th century) in *Performance Practice: Music After 1600*. ed. H. Brown and S. Sadie (London: MacMillan Press, 1989), 228.

¹⁷ Bilson, 228.

¹⁸ Bilson, 229.

British pianos – and their similar performing style is described as the London Piano School¹⁹ (though none of the names mentioned above is British). From the different slurs and markings shown on their compositions, we may infer that these London School pianists all played differently, just as Leschetizky's pupils all played with diverse personalities. However, their dissimilar styles were more similar when compared to their Vienna-based colleagues. If we can precisely define 'school' then we should be able to identify its distinguishing features, so discussing these is important.

2.2. Musicians' Awareness of Belonging to a School

Even though some musicians disapproved of the concept of the school, as we see in the example of Leschetizky, there were still many, including leading performers and influential pedagogues, who described themselves and others as belonging to a school. Although each of them had his or her own unique personality, individually-modified technique, and recognisable musical characteristics, they still observed some general trends, styles, or techniques through which they identified themselves with certain schools. For them, the differences between the schools were clear. In the case of the London Piano School, since Hummel commented and compared the differences between the British and Viennese pianos as well as the pianists, it showed not only his recognition of two identifiable schools but also his awareness of belonging to the Viennese School himself.²⁰ Marguerite Long (1874-1966), an internationally renowned French pianist and pedagogue of her time, concluded her observations about French pianism and summarised her experience of

¹⁹ See Derek Carew, *The Mechanical Muse: The Piano, Pianism and Piano Music, c.1760-1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 29-31. Also Peter le Huray, *Authenticity in Performance: Eighteenth-Century Case Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 164-165.

²⁰ Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell, *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 45.

teaching in her treatise *Le Piano* (1959).²¹ The foreword shows her acknowledgement of 'national differences' among performing schools and the French characteristics of piano playing:

While claiming universality, which should be a quality of all works of art, I believe that each country, each nation, each race, each culture honours them in its own way [...]. In spite of the diversity in temperaments of our great virtuosos, one can detect among them certain common features. Pianists as different from one another as Planté, Diemer, Pugno, Saint-Saëns, were united by a secret technical and stylistic kinship, made of clarity, ease, measure, elegance, and tact. [...] French playing, at once vigorous and mellow, brilliant and delicate, has thus an easily recognisable personality.²²

This does not mean that Long thought pianists from other schools could not play the piano with such qualities, or that she assumed all the pianists trained in France played in the same style. What she states is the fact that it was through general fashion and musical taste that the French pianists can usually be recognised by their performances. But Long firmly believed in the existence of an identifiable French pianism common to the way many French pianists performed. If we follow her instructions and then listen to the recordings of Francis Planté and Raoul Pugno, or other great pianists of her time who trained in France, such as Ricardo Viñes,²³ the qualities of 'clarity, ease, measure, elegance, and tact' are surely found in their

²¹ Cecilia Dunoyer, *Marguerite Long: A Life in French Music, 1874-1966* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993), 107-109.

²² Marguerite Long, *Le Piano* (Paris: Salabert, 1959), 1-21.

²³ Planté and Viñes: Opal CD 9857; Pugno: Opal CD 9836. Viñes' performances of Scarlatti Sonata L.461 and Debussy Poissons d'Or (1930), Planté's Chopin Étude Op.25-1 and Mendelssohn Scherzo Op.16-2 (1928), and Pugno's Scarlatti Sonata L.495, Chopin Impromptu No.1, and Mendelssohn Spinning Song Op.67-4 can be the best evidences of Long's praise of the French playing.

performances. Long's performances of Fauré, Chopin, Debussy, and Ravel are also deeply valued as the supreme expressions of traditional French pianism.²⁴

The concept of the performing school is clearer if one takes the violin treatises of the 19th and the early 20th century as examples. George Dubourg in his *The Violin, Being an Account of the Instrument and its Most Eminent Professors* (1836), Joseph Joachim and Andreas Moser in *Violinschule* (1902-1905), and Carl Flesch in his *The Art of Violin Playing* (1924-1930) all expressed the same idea: that different violin schools, mainly the German and the Franco-Belgian, did exist and were distinctive. Naturally they had different evaluations of the two, but what they observed and summarised in their books about phrasing, portamento, vibrato, rubato, technical display, and stylistic differences, provides us with consistent and coherent arguments about the characteristics of the German School and the Franco-Belgian School.²⁵ It would be inappropriate to use Joachim or Flesch's words to predict how a performance from a contemporary German violinist or a French one would sound, simply based on their nationality or educational background – for example by assuming the former would base their performance on the Italian *bel canto* tradition and the latter the bravura style, as the treatises say they should. On the other hand, it would be equally misleading to say that those two traditions did not exist and did not influence the violinists at that time, especially as the leading figures of each school displayed such a strong sense of belonging to it in their words or treatises. Some violinists can still hear, or feel, the differences between the schools. Günter Pichler, the first violinist of the Alban Berg Quartet, thinks that there is a clear and generic difference between German and American styles, much more significant than the individual differences

²⁴ Cascavelle M00648328.

²⁵ David Milson, *Theory and Practice in Late 19th-Century Violin Performance: An Examination of Style in Performance, 1850-1900* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003), 13-27.

between specific German or American quartets. In an interview in *The Gramophone* he says that:

A German journalist compared, as an example, a Kolisch Quartet interpretation of a Mozart quartet with one by the Alban Berg Quartet, and though they were very different there is a common style. But if you compare with an American quartet, there is an enormous difference.²⁶

3. Common Characteristics of Performing Schools

These two reasons – the school in its historical context and the awareness of musicians of belonging to a school – may lead us to rethink all the objections to the term. Which position should we adopt then? If we pay attention to the similarities rather than differences among the performers and performances, can we not also reach the conclusion that performing schools do exist in certain ways? Based on years of experience, did those famous pedagogues not combine consistency with certain fundamental values likely to produce some shared tendencies among their pupils? As we can still sense the particular qualities of national styles in composers' works, why can we not hear these differences in musical performances? Can one really reject the concept of the school simply because there are too many exceptions, or is it too difficult to arrive at a satisfactory definition? Even if we have not found an ideal way to discuss performance schools, can we give up the discussion so quickly and deny their existence altogether?

Due to the overabundant usage of the term, there is no agreed definition of the performance school at this moment. The following discussion does not attempt to

²⁶ James Jolly, 'An old style taste for the new', *Gramophone* 69/826 (1992), 8-9.

give a comprehensive or universal definition of the term, because it is exactly the variety of meanings of the term 'school' that shows the profound cultural, historical, and musical content the term includes. But for ease of discussion, in this chapter I would like to separate the possible meanings of the term 'performing school' into four categories and discuss each of them with examples. The four categories are:

- (1). Technique and Technique Training
- (2). Important Figures and General Performing Styles
- (3). Interpretations and Traditions
- (4). Schools, Curriculum, Repertoire, and Composers

The four categories do not contradict one another. On the contrary, they can be viewed as different layers, which collectively present the concept of the performing school. Nevertheless, the premise is that each of the four is examinable and has to have clear meanings in a historical sense. Whether that is written evidence in treatises or recorded performances in sound, we should clearly know how the school is manifested in musical performance, and then a clearer picture of it will emerge from the paradoxical stereotypes outlined above. In the next chapter, on the early Russian Piano School, further discussion with detailed examples will follow. Since the Russian Piano School is the main topic of this thesis, I will primarily use different piano schools as examples but also include other instrumental schools too.

3.1. Technique and Technique Training

One of the most obvious and fundamental features of any performing school is performance technique. It is essential to develop performance skill before any further discussion of interpretation or music-making. Indeed, technique itself determines the means of expression. Performing technique is not only about how to play or how to

sing, but is also a reflection of musical aesthetics.²⁷ What kind of sound is considered beautiful? Should performers give priority to maintaining purity of tone or to exploring variety of colour? What is the most natural and effective way to perform? Which effect is more important in a performance, emotional production or mechanistic perfection? Different philosophies of music contribute to different performances, which require different performing techniques. When Moscheles discussed Chopin's playing by saying: 'one does not miss the orchestral effects which the German School requires from a pianist, but allows oneself to be carried away as by a singer who, unpreoccupied by the accompaniment, gives full rein to his feelings',²⁸ he was not only comparing Chopin's style with the German Piano School at that time, but also presented the different concepts of piano-playing behind the two styles – singing-orientated and imitative of an orchestra – which required (as Chopin taught his pupils) quite different performing techniques. Performing technique is not solely a tool for musical expression, it also explains how performers view and treat their instruments or bodies as well as how they present their artistic ideas of music making. If a certain technique is used by a group of performers for a period of time, a school can naturally emerge from this practice.

The connection between schools and technique is clearly shown in the performing history of Western art music. In the 18th century (the Age of Enlightenment, the era of the encyclopédistes) treatises on various subjects – including music – were written and disseminated. The existence of musical treatises gives us abundant information regarding performance practice at a time when professional musicians were starting

²⁷ See the discussion in John Rink, *Chopin and the Technique of Performance in Chopin in Performance: History, Theory, Practice*. ed. A. Szklener (Warsaw: Narodowy Instytut Fryderyka Chopina, 2004), 225-235.

²⁸ Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 15.

to emerge and many non-professionals were learning instruments. As far as musical instruments are concerned, the vast repertoire and ongoing popularity of the piano and violin created the demand for people to master them as well as encouraging authorities to write treatises on them. In 1756, the year Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born, his father Leopold published his *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*, which rapidly became celebrated across Europe and was translated into several languages.²⁹ Three years before that, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach published *Versuch über die wahre Art, das Clavier zu spielen*, which was republished three times by 1787 and regarded as the crucial treatise on keyboard playing. Together with Johann J. Quantz's *Versuch einer Anweisung, die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* in 1752, these three publications represented some of the most valuable information about music-making in the 18th century.³⁰

Although these treatises were aimed at training professionals – C.P.E. Bach described his treatise as being for ‘those for whom music is a goal’ – it is the treatises of the latter period that give us more comprehensive ideas about the art of performing and the schools behind it.³¹ By this time, methods designed to train virtuosos had by and large replaced the earlier approach and these treatises provide far more information on what performing musicians actually did. What Leopold Mozart, Johann J. Quantz, and even C.P.E. Bach did is offer general guidelines and methods for those aspiring to professional standards. Compared with the pedagogues of the Baroque and Classical generation – who regarded the acquisition of virtuosity as a collection of recipes to obtain a well-determined position of the fingers, hand,

²⁹ Simon McVeigh, ‘The violinists of the Baroque and Classical periods’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*. ed. R. Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 56-58.

³⁰ Janet Ritterman, ‘On teaching performance’ in *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*. ed. J. Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 75-77.

³¹ Ritterman, 77.

forearm, and so forth – the 19th century instrumental maestros were more concerned about expression, touch, sound, and tone colour. In other words, they were searching for more refined and complex techniques and raised the discussion of technique from the level of mechanistic perfection to that of artistic creation. Thus, it is natural for us to see a variety of kinds of approaches, ideas, and musical aesthetics from which different techniques originated and which were then able to cluster into different schools.

In the case of piano performance technique, piano schools appeared from the time the pianoforte started to gain popularity. During the early 18th century, the new instrument did not threaten the dominance of the harpsichord in terms of the power of the sound, nor did it challenge the reputation of the clavichord as far as intimate expression is concerned. The real emergence of the pianoforte as a serious rival to the harpsichord and clavichord should be placed in the 1770s, when Johann Andreas Stein in Augsburg and John Broadwood in London started to produce their established prototypes of the instrument.³² As far as keyboard-playing technique is concerned, because the harpsichord had been developed for over three hundred years and the evolution of piano making dated back only to the early 1690s (when Bartolomeo Cristofori built his new keyboard with more flexible dynamics),³³ the general rules of harpsichord playing were applied to piano playing for a long time. To the 18th century musician, the harpsichord and pianoforte were actually two versions of the same instrument and were frequently treated as interchangeable. Mozart and his sister played his Concerto for Two Pianos on harpsichords in Salzburg.³⁴ In 1779, when Clementi played concertos in London, he played on the harpsichord first and then on

³² Bilson, 229.

³³ Carew, 4.

³⁴ Bilson, 223, 225.

the piano.³⁵ When the young Carl Czerny took his first piano lesson with Beethoven in Vienna, the great pianist and composer still required him to bring C.P.E. Bach's *Versuch* as the main treatise,³⁶ even though it was written for keyboard instruments in general – the clavichord, the harpsichord, the organ, and the fortepiano – with Bach teaching the same basic technique for all instruments.

Because the harpsichord could not produce dynamics (the 'piano-forte' effect) the focus of harpsichord playing is naturally placed on the independence of each finger and the pianist's control over individual fingers. When playing the clavichord, there is also no need to use arm weight or wrist action, because a heavy or energetic touch will damage the tuning. When performers started to adapt those principles to pianoforte playing, they also inherited the aesthetics of the harpsichord or clavichord playing and then emphasised that key touch must be well balanced and every single sound must be distinguishable during a performance. The digital skills of moving horizontally on the keyboard and comfortable fingering therefore become the most important issues in piano playing.

The first keyboard tutor who wrote primarily for pianists was J. P. Milchmeyer. His *Die wahre Art das Pianoforte zu spielen* was published in 1791 in Dresden and then soon followed by Clementi's *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte* (1801) and Louis Adam's *Méthode de Piano* (1804) and many others.³⁷ But the most significant piano treatises, representing the summit of finger technique, were written by Johann Nepomuk Hummel and Carl Czerny.³⁸

³⁵ Le Huray, 164.

³⁶ Czerny, 'Recollections from my life', *The Musical Quarterly* 42/3 (July, 1956), 302-317.

³⁷ Le Huray, 166.

³⁸ Reginald Gerig, *Famous Pianists and Their Technique* (New York: Robert B. Luce, Inc., 1974), 65-80, 103-120.

After Czerny, finger technique became the foundation of more advanced piano performing skills and pianists developed more personalised techniques, which formed distinctive styles, traditions, and schools. Although they did not write tangible treatises, Chopin and Liszt left their legacies of technique through their teaching, performances, and compositions. Unlike the pedagogues of that time, who sought to equalise the fingers by means of laborious and cramping exercises, Chopin directly faced the individual characteristics of fingers, prizing their natural disparity as a source of variety of sound.³⁹ One should not, however, exaggerate Chopin's opinion of finger inequality and then attribute mystical meanings to individual fingers and their unique roles, or read into this that Chopin could not play passages, scales, and arpeggios with evenness. Notably, Chopin instructed his pupils to achieve evenness in scales by using the thumb properly as well as through correct hand positioning.⁴⁰ What Chopin wished to point out was that the speaking and singing quality of the sound, the art of touch, and tone colour are much more important than digital dexterity in piano-playing. One can see this in Chopin's fingering marks in his scores. Unlike Hummel and Czerny, Chopin's fingerings were designed to pronounce accents in the passages rather than being comfortable to play. Using the natural inequality of the five fingers, Chopin created expressively talking effect in piano-playing through several fingerings which are awkward at first sight.⁴¹

Liszt, a great virtuoso and artist, absorbed as much as possible and learned all he could in order to improve his technique. By searching for the extremes of dynamics, colours, orchestral effects, and vocal qualities of piano, Liszt pushed the instrument to its limits and opened up new horizons for it. In his book *Liszt*, Soviet pianist and

³⁹ Eigeldinger, 16-17.

⁴⁰ Eigeldinger, 34-41.

⁴¹ Eigeldinger, 34-41.

scholar Yakov Milstein, a Liszt authority, compared the revolution in technique that Liszt brought about with the concept of traditional finger technique as follows:⁴²

Table 1-1: Principles and Concepts of Fingering	
Hummel and Czerny	Liszt
1. Fingering: the most important factor in performing technique.	1. Fingering: a subordinate factor which is determined by the musical elements (phrasing, dynamics, sound colours) of works.
2. The best fingering is the most comfortable.	2. The best fingering is the one that best fits the idea of the composition.
3. The correct and reasonable fingering is based on 'using three fingers (the second, third, and fourth)'.	3. The basis of good fingering is using all five fingers and considering the individual characteristic of each finger.
4. In playing, the fingers must never be passed over one another.	4. All the five fingers can freely cross each other.
5. While performing, pianists should maintain the same hand position (rounded position) but frequently change hand location on the keyboard to play the keys.	5. While performing, pianists can extend their fingers as much as possible from the same hand location to play the keys.
6. In principle, the thumb and the fifth finger should never be placed on the black keys in playing the scales.	6. Pianists can unlimitedly use the thumb and the fifth finger to play the black keys.
7. The same finger must not be placed on two or more consecutive keys.	7. It is allowed to use the same finger to play a line to create certain sounds or accents.

Simply from these different ideas about fingering, one can see how completely different the aesthetics and techniques behind the two schools are. One can also see how different piano performing schools started to evolve. Some schools preferred the traditional finger technique and adapted the aesthetics of harpsichord playing to the

⁴² Yakov Milstein, *Liszt*, trans. YuZi Zhang, XiaPin Pong, (Beijing: People Music Publisher, 2002), 371-372.

pianoforte. For example, the traditional French Piano School focused on clarity and articulation and developed a method of 'non-staccato; non-legato' to pursue distinct clarity in every note.⁴³ Since this technique derives from harpsichord playing, the independence of each finger and the control over individual fingers are particularly emphasised.⁴⁴ After a certain period of time, the method evolved into a performing pattern that includes lifting up the finger knuckles, pushing downward with the fingertips, and exerting only the muscles of the fingers and wrists.⁴⁵ With great emphasis on the digital skills of moving horizontally on the keyboard, the 'non-staccato; non-legato' method can indeed be thoroughly practised and the much-sought-after clarity be produced. The performing style discussed here has been dubbed *jeu perlé* (pearl-like) for its bead-like effect, beautifully describing the aesthetics of clarity of traditional French pianism.

In contrast, when the piano hammer action was getting heavier, the German Piano School decided to accept the difference between the harpsichord and pianoforte and developed piano technique with an emphasis on the function of the arm and body. Ludwig Deppe (1828-1890) was the first major teacher to develop an effective technique system combining both arm and finger technique, but it was Rudolf Maria Breithaupt's theoretical work *The Natural Piano Technic* (1905) and *School of Weight-Touch* (1907) that demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge of physiology and a way of using it in piano playing. These treatises instantly became influential in the piano world.⁴⁶ In his own words, Breithaupt thought Deppe was the first to make

⁴³ Charles Timbrell, *French Pianism* (New York: Pro/Am Music Resources, Inc., 1992), 149-153.

⁴⁴ James Methuen-Campbell, *Chopin Playing* (New York: Taplinger, 1981), 163.

⁴⁵ Interview with Jean-Philippe Collard (May 21st, 2004).

⁴⁶ Gerig, 329-360. It is not surprising to see that Long was against the idea of weight technique and openly expressed her disapproval in *Le Piano*. She strongly followed the Czerny tradition and was against the idea of using weight, free-fall, as well as the methods of the relaxation schools. See Long, 2-4. In addition, Long even established a school and successfully trained a large number of educators,

proper use of the upper arm and shoulder, but he 'undid all the good by his unfortunate tension and stiffening of the joints and the turning in of the hands at a sharp angle'.⁴⁷ The core idea of the Breithaupt system is to avoid muscular tension as much as possible and freely and fully to use weight from the shoulder, elbow, wrist, or knuckle. Starting from complete relaxation, a pianist should use the weight of the whole arm and its parts and then play from the shoulder, but with free fingers and relaxed hands. In this motion the knuckle joint exerts whatever muscular effort is needed, the wrist being kept as loose as the playing will allow. When the keystroke is made, immediate relaxation should follow; the shoulder then takes the weight of the arm and a loose wrist gives sufficient weight to keep the keys held down.⁴⁸ This approach is the opposite of the French-style finger technique and is intended to produce deeper tone and greater volume. The Russians were also influenced by Liszt's ideas and developed a piano performing school that took account of the whole body, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The cases of the French, German, and Russian Piano Schools are only three examples among many and hundreds of pages can be written about the relationship between technique and school. Perhaps the best perspective from which to view performing schools is to consider them the fruit of hundreds of years of accumulated experience and knowledge, with technique training being the most essential and valuable component of that. Believing deeply in education, pianist Ivo Pogorelich defines a school as 'an ability, experience, or knowledge that requires more than

with the aim of developing the style of the *jeu perlé* and sustaining the conventional method in the mainstream. See Cecilia Dunoyer, 107-109.

⁴⁷ Arthur Elson, 'Other piano methods' in Malwine Brée. *The Leschetizky Method: A Guide to Fine and Correct Piano Playing* (New York: Dover Publications, 1997), 86.

⁴⁸ Elson, 87.

sheer talent'.⁴⁹ With the experience and knowledge gained from their predecessors, musicians do not have to reinvent the wheel and can avoid making the same errors. Although there are still some distinguished musicians who are largely self-taught (some of whom are even the greatest virtuosi of the time, such as tenor Franco Corelli, pianist Sviatoslav Richter, and trumpeter Sergei Nakariakov),⁵⁰ they are the exceptions and most musicians acquire their knowledge of technique through systemised education and instruction. As in training in sport, different schools provide different methods to help musicians to 'stand on the shoulders of giants' and so see greater landscapes. Different performance techniques can be referred to as different musical aesthetics, which form different styles and interpretations. If one wishes to understand any school, it is vital to understand the techniques behind it and place its aesthetics in a historical context.

3.2. Important Figures and General Performing Styles

Understanding the characteristics of a certain technique and its aesthetics will also help us to differentiate the achievements of influential performers or pedagogues from the general performing fashion or style of the time (especially when the term school is applied to a person or a nation). It also helps us to observe when a performing school starts to change. In most cases, the distinctiveness of a school is also seen in its exponents. One can see that the characteristics of the Russian Piano School and the performing style and technique of Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, Josef Lhévinne, and Konstantin Igumnov, or the bravura features of the Franco-Belgian School and its virtuosic tradition of Henri Vieuxtemps, Pablo de Sarasate, Henri

⁴⁹ Interview with Ivo Pogorelich (February 20th, 2007).

⁵⁰ Here 'self-taught' refers to the process by which they mastered performing technique. For example. Richter's father only gave him a basic education in music. See Bruno Monsaingeon, *Sviatoslav Richter: Notebooks and Conversations*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 12-14.

Wieniawski, and Eugène Ysaÿe, are basically coherent. If one studies the treatise written by Joachim and the technical and musical display of the German Violin School at this time, one will also notice that the German Violin School had started to move closer to the Franco-Belgian School by the early 20th century through the greater use of vibrato and greater emphasis on beauty of tone.⁵¹

In the case of the French Piano School, however, we see the opposite. As mentioned above, the French Piano School was famous for its *jeu perlé* style and the 'non-staccato, non-legato' finger technique. Though the method of the 'non-staccato, non-legato' produces an exceptionally clear effect, the timbre it produces appears rather plain and dry, since the dynamics and colours are limited. As the most fashionable style in France at that time, the *jeu perlé* style had many strong advocates, such as Louis Diémer (1843-1919), Isidor Philipp (1863-1958), Marguerite Long, and the extraordinary Jeanne-Marie Darré (1905-1999). Darré can be regarded as the last exemplary figure of the traditional French Piano School. Her style completely retained the characteristics of Marguerite Long and her performance dazzled the Parisians with its lightning rapidity. She played a record five piano concertos by Saint-Saëns consecutively in one evening, which has become the ultimate celebration of the performing aesthetics of the *jeu perlé*.⁵²

However, each pianist perceives and imagines sounds in a different manner. Consequently, each follows a course of disparate technique and tone colour. In the French Piano School, the situation is considerably different, simply because the *jeu perlé* style and technique is neither musically satisfying nor technically accomplished.

⁵¹ Milson, 26.

⁵² Dean Elder, 'Grande Dame of the French piano,' in *Clavier*, February 1981. Adapted from the booklet of CD 'Jeanne-Marie Darré: The Early Recordings,' CD (VAI /IPA 1065-2, 1994).

This technique cannot generally deal with pieces that require power and weight. Even though Long was very interested in the music of Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, and Bartok, her technique limited her repertoire to mainly Classical and French music, even excluding many major Romantic pieces.⁵³ Jacques Rouvier, distinguished piano professor of the Paris Conservatory (CNSMDP), for example, underwent a long journey to get rid of the *jeu perlé* style. He started his piano lessons with a pupil of Long. When he was not satisfied with his sound and technique, he eventually went to Pierre Sancan and Polish pianist Jean Fassina, Heinrich Neuhaus's student, to rebuild his technique. He stated that:

I hate the traditional emphasis of the French School on finger technique, because it's impossible to play a good legato and create layered effects. If you want to play a real singing melody, you need to perform with the strength of your whole body. Nearly every week I have to tell students that they need to imagine that their hands start at their shoulders. You absolutely can't just play with your fingers.⁵⁴

Jean-Philippe Collard, another renowned French pianist who recorded extensively for the company EMI, also had a very similar experience and opinion to Rouvier. He studied with Long's pupil Alice von Barentzen, but:

[H]er performances were similar to Jean Doyen and Jeanne-Marie Darrè, they were the mainstream performance style of the Paris Conservatory at the time, which was the Marguerite Long School of traditional French finger technique. This school of technique emphasizes applying force at the wrist. It only involves the fingers and

⁵³ Dunoyer, 163.

⁵⁴ Interview with Jacques Rouvier (May 20th, 2008).

hands. While performing at the time I also employed this technique. I played fast and relaxed, but it was very superficial, all the force was on the horizontal plane instead of the vertical plane.⁵⁵

In the end, Collard left Barentzen's class and started to study with Pierre Sancan, whose teaching method will be discussed later.

The *jeu perlé* style can be viewed as an aspect of keyboard skill, but should not be seen as an entire piano technique, even though it enjoys the name of *the* French technique: if anyone mentions the (traditional) French Piano School, the French pianists will refer to the *jeu perlé* style, and the *jeu perlé* style had the reputation of being the mainstream of French pianism. Stepping outside of the mainstream sphere, however, many pianists of the French School were not satisfied with the *jeu perlé* style. They instead developed alternative methods that involved the exertion of the arms, shoulders, and muscles of the upper body, and free fall of the arms. For instance, for most of the time Francis Planté (1839-1934) and Raoul Pugno (1852-1914) did not deviate from the style of *jeu perlé*. While both of them would be categorised as members of the traditional French School, they were able to produce better timbre than that of the other pianists such as Diémer.⁵⁶ From the performances of numerous pianists including Edouard Risler (1873-1929), Alfred Cortot (1877-1962), Lazare-Levy (1882-1964), Blanche Selva (1884-1942), Robert Lortat (1885-1938), Yves Nat (1890-1956), Marcelle Meyer (1897-1958), Robert Casadesus (1899-1972), Monique de la Bruchollerie (1915-1972) and Samson François (1924-1970), we can also hear

⁵⁵ Interview with Jean-Philippe Collard (May 21st, 2004).

⁵⁶ Timbrell, 35-37.

that their sounds are not products of the *jeu perlé* style.⁵⁷ Technically speaking the performing style of *jeu perlé* was still predominant in France before the mid-1950s, but different sounds and thoughts had existed simultaneously, indispensable to the art of French pianism. Those who did not limit themselves to the *jeu perlé* style could actually embrace better performing technique and become top-ranked pianists on the world stage. If one compares Cortot with Long, one playing with full weight and the other typical *jeu perlé*, one can see and hear how different these two pianists of the French Piano School were, and then could reach the conclusion that there is no school at all. However, if we examine more closely their performing techniques in historical context, if we understand the differences between the mainstream and those who stood outside it, we will see the similarities, common values, and shared aesthetics among those French pianists. Their differences can be regarded as two sides of the same coin. The two were absorbed in the same culture, a culture that regarded colour and taste as the main aspects of piano playing. Long adopted and polished the style of *jeu perlé* to its finest expression and Cortot sought wider approaches to playing because he was not satisfied with this traditional technique. But if one reads Cortot's edition of Chopin's *Études*, it is obvious that clarity and articulation – the core aesthetics of French Piano School – are still his focus in terms of fingering, and he also used the term *jeu perlé* to enable his readers to imagine the effect he would like pianists to achieve.⁵⁸

Following the development of the French Piano School after the Second World War, one can also identify the key figures who ended the fashion for the *jeu perlé* style.

⁵⁷ Alfred Cortot, *French Piano Music*. trans. H. Andrews (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), 1-5.

⁵⁸ See Alfred Cortot, *Chopin: 12 Études, Op.10* trans. M. Parkinson (New York: Editions Salabert, 1914), 1-8.

Pianist, pedagogue and composer Pierre Sancan (1916-2008) is the most crucial of them. A pupil of Nat, Sancan was used to the idea of weight technique in piano playing, but he went even further later. He studied the Russian Piano School's approach to exerting force and summed up the virtues and weaknesses of the French Piano School.⁵⁹ Also of great importance is his analysis of the principles of muscle functioning from the perspective of medical science and anatomy. From this he developed a set of learning methods that is highly systematic.⁶⁰ His pedagogy was able to effectively control piano technique through his methods. Sancan reformed the French Piano School and successfully trained several prestigious pianists. After the technique revolution triggered by Sancan, the French Piano School would be directed down a completely new path. Many of his pupils, including Jean-Bernard Pommier (1944-), Jacques Rouvier (1947-), Jean-Philippe Collard (1948-), Michel Béroff (1950-), Abdel Rahman El Bacha (1958-), Jean-Efflam Bavouzet (1962-), and Marc Laforêt (1966-), not only became winners of major international piano competitions, but also developed excellent performing technique. Many of them are still active in concert halls around the world and have become eminent teachers. Sancan did not write any treatise about his methods and he succumbed to Alzheimer's disease in later life, but his teaching has been discussed and explained in numerous interviews and articles.⁶¹

The example of the French Piano School not only gives us the idea that the general characteristics of a school can be different from those of its outstanding performers, but also demonstrates the value of influential figures who change performing fashions or lead style revolutions. If we keep the historical background in mind – the mainly *jeu perlé* fashion among the majority of pianists and the counter-*jeu perlé* style among

⁵⁹ Timbrell, 149-153.

⁶⁰ Interview with Jean-Philippe Collard (May 21st, 2004).

⁶¹ For example, Charles Timbrell's interview with Sancan on piano technique. See Timbrell, 197-203.

some particular first-rate pianists – the gap between the two no longer seems so bewildering. One can also have a better idea of how and when the style of the French Piano School started to change, instead of being tied to the idea that a performing school must be a permanent, fixed entity. In addition, if one has a clear picture of the fashions surrounding traditional digital technique in France before the Second World War, then the important status of certain piano pedagogues, such as Sancan, becomes apparent.

3.3. Interpretations and Traditions

If one can identify the contributions of the influential performers or pedagogues within a certain school, then it is easy to understand the style, technique, even interpretations they left, which were then followed by their admirers and pupils. These great personalities will then remain influential in the next generation and some of their experience or originality will be carried on, albeit in a different form. If the interpretative ideas and traditions are distinctive enough, then a school appears.

Many traditions exist as metaphors, which are not detailed instructions but guidelines for imagination, therefore it may be hard to find tangible evidence of them simply from a pianist's performance. However, that does not mean that these traditions do not exist: they exist in written documents or dictation and they can influence the sound and phrase a pianist plays. For example, the metaphor of 'Orfeo pacifies the beast' in the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 is famous in the German Piano School. One may not always think the pianist is trying to imitate the sound of a harp in the performance, but the performer may have a very clear idea of this Orfeo metaphor in mind. Also, the Liszt School has the tradition of applying the Greek tragedy *Hero and Leander* to Liszt's Ballade No. 2 in B minor and

Goethe's *Faust* to the Sonata in B minor.⁶² The sound of a sea wave and the image of Mephisto would be vivid in the minds of Liszt's pupils, but audiences might not successfully identify their origins in Greek tragedy or in Goethe. All these metaphors help musicians to form interpretations efficiently, especially as some of the works are famous for their depth and complexity. Other schools may have different metaphors for the same composition, which also enhances the schools' distinctiveness and allows them to be recognisable.

On the other hand, in some cases new metaphors can actually alter the traditional interpretation of the score. This can provide concrete examples of the existence of a particular school. The third movement of Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 7 in B Flat Major, Op. 83 is an example. Although the movement was supposed to be played fast, as Sviatoslav Richter performed it at the world premiere, some major Russians pianists argue that the seven-beat design was actually meant to mimic Stalin's speech: the style of a Georgian who could not speak Russian fluently. Therefore, the movement should not be played with too fast a pace and the performer should give the audience an impression of speaking. This interpretation can be seen in Andrei Gavrilov's essay on this piece in his CD booklet (DG 435 439-2, 1992), and his opinion is almost the same as Vladimir Krainev's.⁶³ Lev Naumov, an assistant of Heinrich Neuhaus who later became one of the most respected piano professors at the Moscow Conservatory, especially advocated this interpretation, although Neuhaus did not use the metaphor to coach Richter during the preparation for the premiere.⁶⁴ Despite their usual preference for rapid tempi and dazzling virtuosity, many of

⁶² Joseph Horowitz, *Conversations with Arrau* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1982), 136-141.

⁶³ Interview with Vladimir Krainev (September 16th, 2005)

⁶⁴ Brigitte Engerer, a pupil of Stanislav Neuhaus (Heinrich's son, pupil, and assistant), says that this "Stalin speech" rendition was popular but not how Stanislav taught her at the Moscow Conservatory. Interview with Brigitte Engerer (June 14th, 2005).

Naumov's pupils – such as Vladimir Krainev, Andrei Gavrilov, and Alexi Sultanov – performed the third movement comparatively slowly in their recordings (see table 1-1, page 391). Andrei Nikolsky, Peter Dimitriew, and Alexander Mogilevsky, Naumov's late students, even stopped attempting to display technical excitement and focused instead on an approach said to imitate Stalin's speaking style. Of course it is also natural for a musician to change his or her interpretation and Richter himself also embraced the slow-tempo interpretation in his later years. There are also some other explanations for the rhythmic design of this movement among members of the Soviet School. For instance, pianist Boris Berman says that: 'The time signature of this movement is an unusual 7/8. [...] [S]uch asymmetrical meters, often encountered in Russian folk songs, were used by Russian composers of the 19th century in music with a national flavour.' Berman thinks that Prokofiev's use of asymmetrical metres in this movement and in his Violin Sonata No. 1 are typical examples of this continuing tradition in Russian/Soviet composition. Although the two explanations are different, both of them prevent Russian pianists from playing the movement rapidly. If one compares the general tempo choice made by Russian/Soviet pianists for this movement with that of western pianists, a major difference appears: non-Russian pianists seldom play this movement for longer than three and half a minutes and Lev Naumov's pupils, in particular, play this movement slower than most other pianists. Therefore, the 'Stalin speech' interpretation of this movement becomes a distinctive characteristic of the Lev Naumov School, if not of the Russian/Soviet Piano School.⁶⁵ It is interesting to notice that many young Russian pianists, such as Denis Matsuev (1975-), Anna Vinnitskaya (1983-), and Alexander Gavrylyuk (1984-), seem to ignore these traditional explanations and have begun regard the piece as a showpiece for the concert hall. This may imply that the binding force of the Russian Piano School is

⁶⁵ See Boris Berman, *Prokofiev's Piano Sonatas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 106.

waning.

Anton Rubinstein's interpretation of Chopin's *Funeral March* is another example. In the case of Prokofiev, the metaphor offers an opinion about the material of the piece. In the case of Rubinstein, the pianist creatively tinkered with Chopin's dynamics and adopted a fortissimo immediately after the trio with a steady decrescendo to the last movement, which directly alters the composer's original idea. Due to the persuasive power of Rubinstein's performance, this special interpretation immediately became a tradition of the Russian Piano School and attracted many later pianists, including Rachmaninoff. Even Pugno's recording of the piece in 1903 is supposed to be influenced by Rubinstein, because the French maestro altered the composer's dynamics in the style of the Russian virtuoso.⁶⁶ Thus far, this tradition has not been dismissed as heresy and still enjoys popularity among many concert pianists, both Russian and non-Russian.

On the other hand, if Rachmaninoff had not followed the Rubinstein tradition in his well-known RCA recording, its influence would be quite limited nowadays. Recordings help to keep many traditions and personal opinions from being ephemeral and allow them to influence later generations, and even to form a school. For example, French pianist and pedagogue Yvonne Lefébure (1898-1986) once performed Ravel's *Jeux d'eau* for the composer and argued that the first treble lines could be played 'half-staccato', which would be more impressive than the legato that the composer marked. Ravel approved her interpretation and asked her to pass it on to pupils.⁶⁷ Lefébure recorded her interpretation with deliberate 'half-staccato' and her students,

⁶⁶ OPAL CD 9836.

⁶⁷ Interview with Théodore Paraskivesco (June 4th, 2005).

as well as many other pianists, still regard her recording as a major reference point when they study *Jeux d'eau*. One may argue that Rubinstein's Chopin example or Lefébure's Ravel case is not big enough to form a school. However, there are numerous examples that can be added here, all by influential figures at a regional or national level, that contribute to certain common performing habits which contribute to (or blur) the concept of the School. If one wishes to study Rachmaninoff's interpretation of Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 2, it is necessary to know the Rubinstein tradition in the third movement first. This is not to imply that Rachmaninoff's interpretation is identical to Rubinstein's but to suggest that one should trace the school's background, which cultivated and supported Rachmaninoff's own opinions of the piece.

3.4. Schools, Curriculum, Repertoire, and Composers

Sometimes, 'school' literally means a school. At the end of the 18th century, when the demand for music teaching increased to a remarkable degree, music schools started to emerge.⁶⁸ Although the teacher-student relationship is the most important in musical study, sometimes conservatories, institutions, or music schools can shape their own distinctive styles, too. In other words, a music school can become a performing school. In Semyon and Gary Ronkin's *Technical Fundamentals of the Soviet Masters: a Violinist's Handbook*, they meticulously explain the different opinions about the most fundamental principles of violin playing, including left hand finger position and bowing, in the Leningrad and Moscow Conservatory.⁶⁹ The differences were not created by one or two violin teachers but were the result of collective knowledge, experience, debate, and performing practice inside the conservatories.

⁶⁸ Ritterman, 78.

⁶⁹ Semyon Ronkin, *Technical Fundamentals of the Soviet Masters: A Violinist's Handbook* (New York: GSG Publications, 2005), 11-24.

In addition, many schools have their own traditions and curricula, which can also profoundly shape their students' repertoire and then become the characteristics of the performing schools. In general, piano professors at the Moscow and St. Petersburg conservatories do not regard Fauré as a top composer and his piano pieces are rarely performed in Russia. The Spanish repertoire is almost extinct in Russian piano education.⁷⁰ On the other hand, pianists at the Paris Conservatory ignored Baroque music for decades and the German, as well as Russian, repertoires were out of fashion for a while.⁷¹ In the violin schools, the major treatises written by the leading pedagogues of the Franco-Belgian School and German School suggest quite different repertoires for pupils to master, which fundamentally influenced their students' aesthetics and technique.⁷² Moreover, different music institutes nurture different types of composers and, in many cases, the composers' works also reflect the education they received and consolidate the distinctiveness of the performing schools they came from. Take Saint-Saëns, for example. At one time, he was the most prominent pianist and organist in the music landscape of Europe. His mastery of keyboard instruments was unrivalled. Thus, his performances were the representation of the traditional French School and his compositions reflected entirely the qualities of the techniques he embodied: light, bright, rapid, and extravagant.⁷³ Whether in the five piano concertos or his solo piano works, Saint-Saëns's compositions unequivocally bear witness to the performing aesthetics of the traditional French Piano School. He seldom deployed heavy chords in the piano part – a significant departure from Liszt, his close friend and predecessor. Compared to his own

⁷⁰ Interview with Dmitri Bashkirov (May 16th, 2004).

⁷¹ For example, it is the reason why Katia and Marielle Labèque decided to leave the Paris Conservatory instead of pursuing graduate studies there. Interview with Katia and Marielle Labèque (May 22nd, 2005).

⁷² Milsom, 18-24.

⁷³ James Harding, *Saint-Saëns and His Circle* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1965), 140-141.

contemporaries such as Brahms and Tchaikovsky, the discrepancy is no less pronounced. Even in the Piano Concerto No. 5 from his late period, he still constructed rich and resplendent music primarily through basic techniques of single notes, thirds, sixths, and octaves. The resulting sound is clear-cut and translucent, the fingering swift and fluent.⁷⁴ Together with Saint-Saëns's increasing impact, his performing method was reinforced by his piano performance and piano compositions. Because of such fortification, the traditional performing style of the *jeu perlé* had a chance to extend into the early 20th century. It is also worth noting that Czerny distinguished six schools of piano playing, which he associated with composers in his treatise: Clementi; Cramer and Dussek; Mozart; Beethoven; Hummel, Kalkbrenner, and Moscheles; New Style: Thalberg, Chopin, and Liszt.⁷⁵ This suggests that, as early as Czerny's time, pianists had the idea that schools should be deeply linked with composers and their works.

Last but not least, a school cannot be outside of a society and consensus from the public, critics, and intellectuals will also influence its performing style. The interpretation of Chopin in Russia is an example that shows how political influence could affect performance. In the late 18th century, the Slavophiles and the Westernisers had completely different political and cultural visions for Russia and music was no exception. Because of the Polish elements and genres in his composition, Chopin was regarded as a 'modern' and 'national' composer, rather than a European Romantic by the Slavophiles. Although Chopin's early works, such as the three Rondos, Piano Sonata No. 1, and works for piano and orchestra, were influenced by Hummel and other virtuosic pianists at that time, any attempt to perform those pieces in the

⁷⁴ Michael Stegemann, *Camille Saint-Saëns and French Solo Concerto from 1850 to 1920* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1984), 61.

⁷⁵ Gerig, 115-118.

glittering European fashion would be attacked by the Slavophiles. As far as the St. Petersburg and Moscow Conservatory are concerned, since their founders Anton and Nikolai Rubinstein were both so-called Westernisers, Slavophiles scrutinised graduates of the two schools carefully in concerts.⁷⁶ As a consequence, Chopin in Russia has been performed in a more 'national', more emotional, and more Slavonic way since the Russian Empire, which was entirely different to the salon style in Paris. Of course, one cannot ignore Anton Rubinstein's powerful Chopin interpretation and his legacy, which also shaped the Chopin style in Russia, but it is important to take into account the political environment surrounding the two schools, as well as the fact that performing schools can develop around particular institutions. In Paris, the social environment and audiences' tastes also influenced the development of the French Piano School and performing style. When asked why the French School had not changed for such a long time, and why so many pianists were satisfied with the traditional finger technique before World War II, Jean-Philippe Collard replied: 'The reason is because they didn't need to'. He remembered how popular this performing style was when he was a student:

Maybe Philipp, Long, Doyen and Darré really thought about this problem, but they didn't need to change, because they were tremendously popular during that period. What the public liked was this fast and light style, and Saint-Saëns's works were favourite concert pieces. Darré made the biggest stir by performing five Saint-Saëns piano concertos in a row! She was so proud of her performance ability, and the audience loved her, so why would she change? Long also had a very limited performance repertoire, but that was enough for her and the

⁷⁶ Anne Swartz, 'Chopin as modernist in 19th-century Russia,' in *Chopin Studies 2*. ed. J. Rink and J. Samson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 35-49.

audiences.⁷⁷

His testimony may explain why even though Ravel, Dukas, and Messiaen had written several pieces requiring a 'big sound' and complete piano technique, the *jeu perlé* style was still the mainstream in France until the turn of the 1950s. Social environment may, then, also play an important role.

Having examined the importance of technique and training, the influence of important figures, general or national performing styles, traditions, and repertoire on the notion of the school, the discussion will now move to the Russian Piano School in the time of Rachmaninoff. Based on the categories mentioned above, the next section will analyse early Russian pianism and its influence on Western Europe, the key figures of the Russian School, and the principles, aesthetics, and characteristics of early Russian pianism.

⁷⁷ Interview with Jean-Philippe Collard (May 21st, 2004) .

Chapter Two: The Early Russian Piano School

In 2008, Russian pianist Bella Davidovich, the first prize winner of the 4th Warsaw Chopin Competition in 1949, was invited to judge a piano competition. When a Chinese boy started to play a Tchaikovsky piece in the first round, his sound immediately caught her attention:

The competition only provided one piano, so all the competitors had to play at the same one. When the Chinese boy touched the keyboard, however, the piano sounded completely differently – and for me, he sounded very Russian. How it could be possible that a Chinese boy could play with such beautiful and *Russian* sound?

It was not just she who wondered; the other two Russian jurors also had the same feeling straight away, although the non-Russians did not seem affected by the boy's playing: 'We looked at each other, wondered, and started to check the competition program book [...] and then, we all laughed.'

What was so funny to them? Because they discovered that the Chinese boy, although born in Beijing, was studying piano in Canada at that time with Vietnamese pianist Dang Thai Son – the first prize winner of the 10th Chopin competition in 1980 and an alumnus of the Moscow Conservatory.⁷⁸ 'Dang Thai Son has a very beautiful Russian tone. No wonder his pupil also has that Russian sound', said Davidovich.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Dang Thai Son, the first prize winner of the 10th International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw in 1980, was born in Hanoi, Vietnam in 1958. His talent was discovered by the Soviet pianist Isaac Katz when Dang Thai Son was sixteen, then the Vietnamese was brought to the Moscow Conservatory two years later under the tutelage of Professor Vladimir Natanson.

⁷⁹ Interview with Bella Davidovich (October 17th, 2010).

Davidovich's personal experience reflects a common experience among many pianists: that a school of piano-playing can be 'felt' and 'taught'. That it can be 'felt' means that a piano school – in this case the Russian – must have certain identifiable characteristics that the musicians, who know the school well, immediately recognise. That it can be 'taught' means that even a pianist who was not born and raised in the environment of the Russian Piano School can learn its playing style well from a mentor – just as a Chinese person can speak English without any foreign accent, assuming the teacher knows the correct way to tutor (and the pupil is talented enough and willing to learn).

Therefore, the next question is: what are the characteristics of the Russian Piano School? If someone knows its features well, can he or she identify the educational background of a pianist by examining them? When we listen to Rachmaninoff's piano playing, to what degree do we hear Rachmaninoff's individual expression and technique and to what degree do we hear the Russian School behind his performance? In this chapter, the discussion will cover the early Russian Piano School in its historical context, research difficulties, the studying method used, and an analysis as well as an examination of the characteristics of early Russian Pianism. The 'early Russian Piano School (and Pianists)' in this chapter means the pianists who were Rachmaninoff's classmates and contemporary colleagues and their pupils. His classmates and colleagues had similar studying experiences to the composer and came from similar, even the same, educational and social backgrounds; the latter directly studied with the former, therefore they could be supposed to preserve more of the former's techniques and methods than later generations. There are some compromises in the examples I choose. For example, Vladimir Ashkenazy (1937-) studied with Anaida Sumbatyan (1905-1985) at the Central Music School and later with Lev Oborin

(1907-1974) at the Moscow Conservatory and is therefore a pupil of the pupil of Rachmaninoff's classmate, but I still include his performances – especially his recordings in Russia – in my case studies. The reason is that he established his career at nineteen and his early performances had many more Russian characteristics than his later ones. Another example is Stanislav Neuhaus (1927-1980): the son, pupil, and assistant of Heinrich Neuhaus (1888-1964), who was probably the most famous pedagogue at the Moscow Conservatory. According to his pupils, Stanislav's interpretation and sound are very close to his father's; therefore, his performances are also included in my case studies.⁸⁰

1. The Western European Influence in Historical Context

The previous chapter shows that historical context is crucial to the discussion of any performing school; thus, it is meaningful to examine the history of the early Russian Piano School at the beginning of this chapter. The first recorded concert by a Russian pianist was given in Moscow by Daniil Kashin in 1790, but most of the early pioneers and teachers of piano playing in Russia were foreigners, with the Germans playing the most significant role.⁸¹ Johann Hässler (1747-1822) arrived in Russia in 1792 and stayed there until his death and pianist-composer Daniel Steibelt (1765-1863) also settled down in the land after 1809. Clementi toured Russia during 1802-10 and sold the pianos he produced as he went. He eventually set up a large piano warehouse in St. Petersburg with his pupils John Field (1782-1837), Ludwig Berger (1777-1839), and

⁸⁰ Vladimir Krainev and Brigitte Engerer both expressed this opinion, and the former studied with both of them.

⁸¹ See Christopher Barnes, *The Russian Piano School: Russian Pianists and Moscow Conservatoire Professors on the Art of the Piano* (London: Kahn & Averill, 2007), xiv. In addition, many European piano masters also performed in Russia in the first half of 19th century, such as Hummel (in 1822), Sigismund Thalberg (Liszt's rival in Paris, 1839), Liszt (1842, 1843, and 1847 in Ukraine), and Clara Schumann (1844 and 1864).

Alexander Klengel (1783-1852).⁸² Since Field arrived in St. Petersburg in 1803 (and then moved to Moscow in his late years), the influence of the western European pianist in Russia really began to be felt. The inventor of the nocturne genre, Field expressed his interests in decorated melody, pianistic texture, and sustaining pedal function in his compositions.⁸³ His playing was elegant and refined. His student, the composer Glinka, wrote in a periodical of the 1830s that:

He possesses some kind of magic ability to touch the keyboard in a special way: under his fingers it is no longer the usual piano with a limited sound – it reminds you rather of the singing voice with all its nuances.⁸⁴

Well known as both a performer and teacher, Field presented the excellence of the traditional European piano technique to Russia and became an important figure in very early Russian pianism. Another significant influence came from virtuoso Adolph von Henselt (1814-1889). A German who had studied with Hummel, went to Russia in 1838 and began an influential forty-year teaching career, Henselt was famous for his highly extendable hands, which allowed him to play widely spread chords and arpeggio patterns with an enormous reach. Besides having this natural gift, he was highly regarded by his contemporaries as a great pianist with a wonderful touch and sound. After his arrival and a stunningly successful concert, Henselt was immediately appointed as the official imperial court pianist in St. Petersburg and also served as the teacher of the royal children.⁸⁵

⁸² David Rowland, 'Pianos and pianists c.1770-c.1825' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*. ed. D. Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 32.

⁸³ David Rowland, 'The Music of the early pianists (to c.1830)' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*. ed. D. Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 146.

⁸⁴ Patrick Piggott, *The Life and Music of John Field, 1782-1837* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 103.

⁸⁵ Wilhelm von Lenz, *The Great Piano Virtuosos of Our Time: A Classic Account of Studies with Liszt*,

Today, however, it is hard to estimate how much the teaching of Field and Henselt actually affected their Russian pupils, though their music was still played in Rachmaninoff's time.⁸⁶ Field was not a very devoted teacher and Henselt was even elusive from the public. Neither of them produced great performers (that probably was not their ambition), but what they did do can be seen as preparing the next generation. As previously mentioned, Glinka studied the piano with Field, and Alexandre Dubuque (1812-1898), another pupil of Field, was the teacher of pianist-composer Mily Balakirev (1837-1910), the leader of the Mighty Five and creator of several highly technically demanding piano pieces, including *Islamey*. Nikolai Zverev (1832-1893), who studied with Dubuque but also went to St. Petersburg to learn from Henselt, became a decisive figure in the history of the Russian Piano School. He devoted his life to nurturing talented young students from 1867 and, three years later, was invited to teach the preparatory class at the Moscow Conservatory.⁸⁷ His technical training was exceptionally austere, which successfully fostered a group of virtuosi of his time, including Alexander Siloti (1863-1945), Matvei Pressman, (1870-1937), Konstantin Igumnov (1873-1948), Alexander Goedicke (1877-1957), Elena Bekman-Shcherbina (1882-1951), Alexander Scriabin, and Sergei Rachmaninoff.⁸⁸

But before Zverev's distinguished pupils, Russia had already produced a pianist who was not only *the* single serious rival to Liszt but also established the Russian piano

Chopin, Tausig & Henselt (New York: Pro/Am Music Resources Inc., 1995), 89-95.

⁸⁶ Rachmaninoff recorded Henselt's Étude, and Anton Rubinstein play Field's Nocturnes in his Historical Concerts (Recital 5). See Philip Taylor, *Anton Rubinstein: A Life in Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 270.

⁸⁷ Barrie Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor* (Hampshire: Scolar Press, 1990), 363-366.

⁸⁸ Martyn, 363-366.

tradition.⁸⁹ Born in 1829, Anton Rubinstein was taught initially by his mother and then by Alexander Villoing (1804-1878), a pupil of Field, in Moscow. Rubinstein employed a modern technical approach similar to that of Liszt, in which tone production relied not just on the digital strength and dexterity practised by the earlier generations, but was supported by the full weight of the arm, shoulder and torso.⁹⁰ Rubinstein also learned the *bel canto* singing style from the legendary singers of his time, among them tenor Giovanni Rubini (1794-1854), who especially impressed him. He wrote that: 'Rubini's singing produced so powerful an effect on my senses that I strove to imitate the sound of his voice in my playing.'⁹¹ To the music critics of the time, Rubinstein's playing was characterised by rhetorical and dramatic power, spontaneity, and unprecedented range of tone colour and dynamics.⁹²

Rubinstein was a great pianist and famous composer, but founding music schools in his fatherland might be seen as his most lasting influence. Although students could learn how to read music and play instruments in their own country, Russians still had to go to western Europe to obtain more comprehensive musical knowledge and performing techniques. Anton Rubinstein founded the Russian Music Association (RMA) in 1859 and then established the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1862, Russia's first public music school.⁹³ The faculty did not lack great musicians. Polish virtuoso Henryk Wieniawski (1835-1880), for example, was appointed violin professor, but the most impressive faculty remained in the piano department. Anton Rubinstein taught

⁸⁹ Catherine Bowen, *Free Artist, the Story of Anton and Nicholas Rubinstein* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939), 125-126.

⁹⁰ Josef Lhévinne, *Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972), 29-31.

⁹¹ Anton Rubinstein, *Autobiography of Anton Rubinstein 1829-1889*. trans. A. Delano (Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific, 2005), 20-21.

⁹² Rubinstein, 20-21.

⁹³ Philip Taylor, *Anton Rubinstein: A Life in Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 35-36.

the piano himself, invited the senior Henselt and German virtuoso Alexander Dreyschock to join him, and asked Theodor Leschetizky to be the chairman of the department. Leschetizky was first invited to take up a teaching appointment at the home of Baron Alexander Stieglitz, the court banker and president of the St. Petersburg Stock Exchange Committee in 1852, and continued teaching in Russia until 1878.⁹⁴ Leschetizky was deeply impressed by the Russians. Among all the national schools and their pianists, according to his pupil Annette Hullah, he thought that 'the Russians stand first [...] United to a prodigious technique, they have passion, dramatic, power, elemental force, and extraordinary vitality.'⁹⁵

Four years after the establishment of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, Anton Rubinstein's younger brother Nikolai Rubinstein founded the Moscow Conservatory in 1866.⁹⁶ Though not as famous as his brother, Nikolai was also an excellent pianist himself. He was a successful teacher and his pupils included Alexander Siloti, Emil von Sauer (1862-1942), and Sergei Taneyev (1856-1915). Siloti later went to Weimar to study with Liszt for three years and became one of the maestro's favorite pupils in his late years. When Siloti went back to Russia, he was appointed professor at his alma mater, coaching a group of the best students, including Alexander Goldenweiser (1875-1961), Igumnov, and Siloti's first cousin Rachmaninoff.⁹⁷ Goldenweiser and Igumnov later became the founding fathers of the Soviet Piano School.

Like the St. Petersburg Conservatory, the Moscow Conservatory also had to rely on foreign musicians at the beginning and the German-Austrians were still the most

⁹⁴ Taylor, 82-109.

⁹⁵ Annette Hullah, *Theodor Leschetizky*, (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head Ltd., 1906), 72-73.

⁹⁶ In 1940 the name of Tchaikovsky was added to the Moscow Conservatory. See Uscher, 478.

⁹⁷ Faubion Bowers, *Scriabin: A Biography* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1996), 216.

significant of these. (The Rubinstein brothers also went to Berlin to complete their musical education.) Pianist and conductor Karl Klindworth (1830-1916), Liszt's pupil, had taught in London for fourteen years before going to Russia. He had another fourteen years of teaching at the Moscow Conservatory,⁹⁸ where his students included pianist-composer Sergei Lyapunov (1859-1924). Anton Door, a Viennese pupil of Czerny, and Hungarian Rafael Joseffy, a pupil of Tausig, Moscheles and Liszt, were also in the faculty.⁹⁹ After the death of Nikolai in 1881, his advanced class was taken over by two major figures: Paul Pabst (1854-1897) and Vasily Safonov (1852-1918). Paul Pabst was Door's student in Vienna and also studied with Liszt in Weimar, then was invited to Moscow in 1878 by Nikolai;¹⁰⁰ Igumnov, Goldenweiser, and Liapunov all attended his advanced class. Vasily Safonov initially studied the piano with Villoing and then with Leschetizky and Brassin at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.¹⁰¹ He was the principal of the Moscow Conservatory after Nikolai and his students included Josef and Rosina Lhévinne, Alexander Goedicke, Scriabin, and Leonid Nikolayev (1878-1942) – also key figures in the Russian Piano School. In addition, it was not unusual for the students to seek advice from more than one teacher: Bekman-Shcherbina and Medtner actually studied with both Pabst and Safonov.

In contrast to the development of piano technique in the West, the early Russian Piano School started directly from the piano – not the early pianoforte, harpsichord or clavichord. The Russian School did not have a history of three hundred glorious years of the harpsichord as the French had. Liszt's visit to Russia in 1840 also played a

⁹⁸ John Warrack, Alan Walker, 'Karl Klindworth,' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Second Edition, Vol. 13*, 2001ed., 674-675.

⁹⁹ Barnes, xvi.

¹⁰⁰ James Methuen-Campbell, 'Paul Pabst,' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Second Edition, Vol. 18*, 2001ed., 840.

¹⁰¹ Bowers, 142.

significant role in the development of Russian pianism. Konstantin Zenkin, professor of the Moscow Conservatory, says that:

Above all, his [Liszt's] art was based on the potential of the modern instrument, intended for large halls. Hence the absolutely different technique and approaches, unknown in Field's or Hummel's Schools – the use of the entire arm weight, the flexible wrist and mobile body.¹⁰²

From the point of view of the evolution of piano technique summarised in the previous chapter, the Russians avoided the impact of harpsichord or clavichord playing and directly focused on the characteristics of the piano. Furthermore, the pianos in Russia had been linked with the British ones since Clementi's factory was established;¹⁰³ therefore, Russians were supposed to be used to a heavier action and bigger volume from the very beginning. In conclusion, the Russian Piano School was built straight on the very foundations of the piano. The Russian did not have a long history and tradition of keyboard playing – unlike their French, German, or British colleagues – but they also escaped the long search for a suitable performing technique, as well as debates about the merits of different pianos. This was actually an advantage in the light of the development of pianism.

2. Approaches to Studying Early Russian Pianism

2.1. Research Considerations

Rachmaninoff's technique, performing style, and musical aesthetics came from

¹⁰² Konstantin Zenkin, 'The Liszt tradition at the Moscow Conservatoire', in *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, T. 42, Fasc. 1/2, *Franz Liszt and Advanced Musical Education in Europe: International Conference (2001)*, 97.

¹⁰³ David Rowland, 32.

growing up in the environment of the early Russian Piano School, but defining or summarising the school is not an easy task. These research difficulties have been discussed in the previous chapter, but here I would like to review them once more, then present my approaches to studying the issue and trying to overcome these obstacles.

2.1.1. The Difficulty of Tracing the Sound of the Past

Although the merits of the Russian Piano School are widely appreciated, it is not simple to identify ‘when the Russians became Russians’ in their piano playing tradition. Anton Rubinstein is considered the founding father of Russian pianism and it is certain that pianists from both the St. Petersburg and Moscow Conservatory were highly influenced by him and shared a similar Russian musical culture, which could be considered a distinct performing style or school. But the western influence was definitely not replaced by Rubinstein overnight. For those piano pedagogues teaching in Russia, we cannot know, given the limited information surviving, whether they either immediately absorbed Rubinstein’s technique and aesthetics and then started to educate their pupils in that way, or whether they still taught the way they had learned to in western Europe. At an early stage, the two conservatories only had a limited piano faculty and, as is usually the case nowadays too, only one or two professors were regarded as the best at the time. The most brilliant students were naturally under the guidance of the best professors; therefore, most Russian concert pianists came from the classrooms of a limited pool of professors. In other words, early Russian pianism was mainly shaped by a few teachers at the two conservatories. But how does one categorise them (if one has to)? If a teacher studied with Liszt, are the pupils Liszt’s musical grandsons, or the first generation of the rising Russian Piano School? Using what reasoning can one say they were more Russian than Lisztian?

2.1.2. Teacher-Pupil Relationships

The teaching legacy of Anna Essipova is a puzzling example. Anna Essipova (1851-1914) was a brilliant concert pianist, a former pupil and the second wife of Leschetizky. She gave concert tours in Europe between 1871 and 1892, even travelling the United States in 1876.¹⁰⁴ As a teacher, she also held the best piano class at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. In their piano exams, the marks her students achieved had been among the highest for a long time; only Blumenfeld's class could rival hers many years later.¹⁰⁵ Essipova's pupils included: Simon Barere (1896-1951), Sergei Prokofiev, Anastasia Virsaladze, Leff Pouishnoff (1891-1959), Alexander Borovsky (1889-1956), Sergei Tarnowsky (1883-1976), Isabelle Vengerova (1877-1956), Leonid Kreutzer (1884-1953), and Nadezhda Golubovskaya (1891-1975). They were all famous pianists or pedagogues and their achievements consolidated Essipova's legendary reputation.

But how Essipova actually taught is still unclear. It is a pity that we do not know much about her teaching method and technique system and it is hard to map out her legacy over almost one hundred years. From the recordings of Essipova's renowned pupils – such as Prokofiev, Barere, and Pouishnoff – one may conclude that their playing had one particular characteristic in common: very relaxed and free wrists, which endowed them with the ability to play difficult pieces at a fast tempo. Israel Nestyev, Prokofiev's Russian biographer, said of the pianist-composer's playing that its 'brilliantly individual style [...] with its clean-cut finger technique, steel-like touch, and exceptional freedom of wrist movement bore the stamp of the Essipov-Leschetizky

¹⁰⁴ Jennifer Spencer. 'Anna Yessipova', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Second Edition, Vol. 27*, 2001ed., 658. Also see R. Allen Lott, *From Paris to Peoria: How European Piano Virtuosos Brought Classical Music to the American Heartland* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003), 162-163.

¹⁰⁵ Heinrich Neuhaus, *The Musical Education and Literature Legacy of Heinrich Neuhaus*. trans. Dong-Jian Jiao and Mue-Li Jian (Beijing: People's Music Publisher, 2003), 404.

school.¹⁰⁶ His description of Prokofiev may also be applied to Essipova's pupils.

But what is the Essipova-Leschetizky school? Is there one school or two? It is said that Essipova's teaching method was not the same as Leschetizky's¹⁰⁷ (which is conceivable, since Leschetizky's students did not play in the same way), but we do not have detailed information about how great the difference was. The same issue also arises in the case of the Essipova-Vengerova school. Isabelle Vengerova was born in Minsk and studied there until her graduation from high school. She went to the Vienna Conservatory to study with Joseph Dachs, then entered a two-year special course with Leschetizky, and finally went to St. Petersburg to learn from Essipova. She graduated from Essipova's class in 1904 and was appointed assistant to her in 1906; in 1910 she was appointed professor of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. She taught there until going to the United States in 1923 at the Curtis Institute and was considered one of the most influential teachers in the States at that time.¹⁰⁸ In the book *The Vengerova System of Piano Playing*, Robert Schick (a former student of Vengerova) states that, in a similar way to Leschetizky, Vengerova regarded the position of the hands as the most important aspect of piano technique and developed a special 'accents method' to train pianists, which may be unique.¹⁰⁹ Although Vengerova belongs to the Russian tradition and her teaching is also considered 'Russian' in the States,¹¹⁰ one still can notice the difference between her methods

¹⁰⁶ Israel Nestyev, *Prokofiev* (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., Ltd., 1960), 40.

¹⁰⁷ See the discussion in Robert Schick, *The Vengerova System of Piano Playing* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982), 10-11.

¹⁰⁸ Her pupils includes musicians as Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990), Leonard Pennario (1924-), Gary Graffman (1928-), Jacob Lateiner (1928-) and Gilbert Kalish, as well as composer Samuel Barber and Lukas Foss.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Schick, *The Vengerova System of Piano Playing* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982), 12, 21-30.

¹¹⁰ Martin Canin, Rosina Lhévinne's assistant at the Julliard School, said that Madame Lhévinne and Vengerova, one at Julliard and the other at Curtis, were regarded 'the two mountains of Russian School' in the States while he was a student. Interview with Martin Canin (November 12th, 2003).

and those taught in the Moscow Conservatory. The major distinction comes from her insistence that at no time should 'the upper arm [be] used directly in the production of an accent'. Instead, when playing an accent, the power was to come from the application to the key of pressure from the finger and wrist. The elbow ought to stay in a relatively fixed position and the upper arm remain quiet.¹¹¹ This technique, in fact, corresponds to the Leschetizky method but differs sharply from that of the Moscow School. Interestingly enough, Vengerova's teaching method could recall some descriptions of Essipova's playing. During Essipova's tour of the States in 1876-77, one review stated that:

Her shapely arms, bare to the shoulder, show a remarkable development of the forearm and wrist, and this it is which enables her to play, as she does, entirely from the elbow and wrist, avoiding the awkward appearance of moving the shoulders or the body.¹¹²

Since both Essipova and Vengerova studied with Leschetizky, can one just conclude that Vengerova's method is actually another version of Leschetizky's? Apparently not, because the other methods Schick summarises are not the same as Leschetizky's and the teacher-student relationship is never enough to explain any tradition, performing school, or style. Even without written evidence, one still cannot absolutely exclude the possibility that Essipova or Vengerova acquired the 'Russian' style from other resources. At the St. Petersburg Conservatory, it may be safe to say that Leschetizky's influence was strongly rooted, but the pianists produced there still could be very different and very 'Russian', if not European or Leschetizkian. The previously

¹¹¹ Schick, 21.

¹¹² Schick, 10.

mentioned Felix Blumenfeld (1863-1931) is an example. He was a famous pianist, conductor, composer, and piano teacher¹¹³ and his celebrated students included Simon Barere, Anatole Kitain (1903-1980), Maria Grinberg (1908-1978), and Vladimir Horowitz (1903-1989). He studied with the German teacher Alexander Stein at the St. Petersburg Conservatory but, according to his nephew Heinrich Neuhaus, Blumenfeld shaped his technique, tone colours, and way of musical expression by observing Anton Rubinstein's playing.¹¹⁴ From the perspective of the teacher-pupil relationship, Blumenfeld should have been German; from that of his playing, however, he was a follower of Rubinstein, and appeared very Russian.

2.1.3. The Limits of Words

Although the previous discussion is mainly based on the treatises, articles, and descriptions of the pianists and teachers, it also should be pointed out that one cannot really understand a pianist's complete technique simply by observing their gestures or body movements. It is also dangerous to come to conclusions about someone's technique simply from his or her words: words cannot be comprehensive. It is feasible for one to learn certain skills – for example how to play trills or how to manage certain tricky fingering – using films, pictures, or words, but cloning the entire technique of a pianist is not proven to be achievable. Otherwise, any student in any part of the world could perfectly acquire Horowitz's sound or Cortot's interpretation by watching DVDs of the former and reading books by the latter. In piano playing, one of the most crucial factors is the use of weight. The question of how one should use

¹¹³ He was the conductor of Mariinsky Theater from 1898 to 1918. When Paderewski toured in St. Petersburg and heard Blumenfeld's performance, the Polish master said to the latter that "You can get the whole world under your hands." See Neuhaus, 405.

¹¹⁴ Neuhaus, 405. It is a common mistake that people think Blumenfeld was Rubinstein's pupil, even Horowitz thought his teacher actually studied with Rubinstein. For example, the mistake can be found in Schonberg, Harold. *Horowitz: His Life and Music* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

the weight of the shoulders, upper arms, and entire body is an age-old topic of debate and discussion, not only because it is important, but also precisely because it is something students learn more from *feeling* than from words. Words can only describe the describable; therefore, the secret of using weight remains a bewildering task for all pianists to grapple with. Many examples of this problematic discussion can be found. Malwine Brée, Leschetizky's assistant, summarised the pedagogue's teaching and published it as *The Leschetizky Method: A Guide to Fine and Correct Piano Playing* in 1903 with Leschetizky's full authorisation. Leschetizky even allowed Brée to use pictures of his hands to demonstrate the various recommended positions. The book is very detailed indeed about different hand positions, but lacks any discussion of using the upper arm, shoulder, or torso. Can one therefore assume that Leschetizky's method is only about the finger technique? Probably not, because Leschetizky's pupils did not play that way. There can be many reasons for Brée to omit the discussion: maybe it is too difficult or impossible to explain precisely how to use weight, or maybe Leschetizky taught different students completely different ways of using weight and therefore she could not summarise them. There are too many possibilities.

Another example is provided by what virtuoso Josef Hofmann, Anton Rubinstein's only private student, clearly stated in his own words. He said that one should strictly limit any movements of the shoulder and upper arms. In the chapter entitled 'General Rules' of his book *Piano Playing: With Piano Questions Answered*, he instructed the pianist: 'Move your arms as little as possible and hold them – and the shoulder muscles – quite loosely'. At first glance, one might think that Hofmann's technique must have belonged to the traditional finger-based school, but this is definitely not true if one listens to his powerful and colourful playing with huge volume and variety

of dynamics. The reason is that he used the upper arms and shoulder very skilfully. Later in the book, he suggests the pianist should: 'Let the arm pull the hand above the keys and then let both fall heavily upon them, preparing the fingers for their appropriate notes while still in the air and not, as many do, after falling down.'¹¹⁵ In other words, Hofmann still used the weight and strength of the upper arms and shoulder but in a very subtle way, similar to the 'free-fall method' of the Soviet Piano School.¹¹⁶ The same also applies to Essipova. Elisso Virsaladze, distinguished pianist and professor at the Moscow Conservatory and the grand daughter of Anastasia Virsaladze, said Essipova's appearance when performing was close to what her grandmother recommended, but her explanation is different: 'Essipova's technique was extremely natural, therefore the weight of the upper arms and shoulder was not separated from the whole body movement or specially noticeable.'¹¹⁷

2.2. Approaches Used in This Research

Even with all these difficulties, however, it is still possible to discuss the early Russian Piano School, although one has to be constantly aware of the limited nature of the documents. In what follows, I shall discuss the characteristics of early Russian pianism using two major approaches: studying written documents and listening to performances.

¹¹⁵ Josef Hofmann, *Piano Playing: With Piano Questions Answered* (New York: Dover Publications, 1937), 11-12.

¹¹⁶ Hofmann, 27-28.

¹¹⁷ On the other hand, Elisso also emphasises that Anastasia's teaching method and technique was different from the great maestra: "Essipova did not do much about the technique, because she thought technique is something you either have or not. Students have to find his or her own way, and teachers cannot really help. My grandmother had small hands and many technique problems, but Essipova did not help her at all. She had to solve them herself." Hence, it is hard for one to trace Essipova's technique system through Anastasia Virsaladze's students. Interview with Elisso Virsaladze (May 12th, 2008).

2.2.1. Studying Written Documents

Words are not enough, but 'not enough' is still better than nothing. Students may not learn a comprehensive and coherent teaching method of piano technique from words, but treatises, books, articles, and interviews with the leading Russian pianists and pedagogues of the time still can give one an idea of their views on technique, aesthetics, style, interpretation, music, and art in general. Written documents offer incomplete evidence for us to trace the past; nonetheless, one cannot ignore their importance just because they are incomplete. Although the pianists trained at Rachmaninoff's alma mater were different in their personalities and performing styles, they also displayed notable similarities in their opinions of piano technique and musical art. We are lucky to have Josef Lhévinne's *Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing*¹¹⁸ and his teacher Safonov's *New Formula for the Piano Teacher and Piano Student*.¹¹⁹ The four main figures at the Moscow Conservatory in the Soviet era – Igumnov, Goldenweiser, Neuhaus, and Samuel Feinberg – all left many interviews and articles on piano technique. Feinberg's book *Pianism as Art* and Neuhaus's book *The Art of Piano Playing*¹²⁰ are especially detailed and respected as canonical texts about Russian piano playing, which give us valuable materials to study. In addition, Rachmaninoff's interviews also echo those treatises and articles: one hardly finds contradictions among them. In addition, I also interviewed several senior Russian pianists who directly studied with Rachmaninoff's classmates for this research, such as Naum Shtarkman (1927-2006),¹²¹ Bella Davidovich (1928-),¹²² and Dmitri Bashkurov

¹¹⁸ New York: Dover Publications, 1972.

¹¹⁹ London: J. & W. Chester, Ltd., 1915.

¹²⁰ The book is translated by K. A. Leibovitch; London: Kahn & Averill, 1993.

¹²¹ He was Igumnov's pupil, professor of the Moscow Conservatory, the fifth prize winner of the Warsaw Chopin Competition in 1955 and the third prize winner of the Tchaikovsky Competition in 1958.

¹²² She studied with Igumnov and Igumnov's pupil Yakov Flier. She was professor of the Moscow Conservatory and the Julliard School and won the first prize winner of the Warsaw Chopin Competition in 1949.

(1931-).¹²³ They help me to clarify several perspectives and issues I find in the readings and the interviews also encourage me to go back to the written documents to see what I may have ignored.

2.2.1. Listening to Performances

Listening is still the most fundamental and probably also the most effective measure of directly understanding a musician's art or technique, though recording does have its limits. Different recording conditions, acoustics, the piano the pianist used, and so on, will all influence a listener's judgement. In early recordings, due to technical limitations, the sound of a French pianist playing lightly at a Pleyel piano may be similar to that of a Russian pianist playing heavily at a Steinway, though they are very different in reality. It is also not easy to estimate via early recordings of the real volume a pianist was producing. But one can still get an impression of the way a pianist shaped musical phrases, dynamics, tone colours, and effects through comparison. In this research, evidence should be found in the recordings themselves for the characteristics of the early Russian Piano School summarised from the written documents and interviews – to demonstrate that they are not simply theoretical goals but actual characteristics of the early Russian Piano School. In the next section, I will discuss this issue from five perspectives: 1. Solid technique training; 2. The 'Artistic Image' in music; 3. Repertoire; 4. Singing tone and melody-orientated style; 5. Tone production. The discussion will focus particularly closely on singing tone and melody-orientated style, using three case studies to explore the nature of this very Russian performing characteristic.

¹²³ He studied with Goldenweiser and became his last assistant. He was professor of the Moscow Conservatory and won first prize winner of the Long-Thibaud competition in 1955.

3. The Principles, Aesthetics, and Characteristics of Early Russian Pianism

3.1. Solid Technique Training

The traditional piano training given by the early Russian teachers was very strict. The complete course was originally six years but then was extended in 1879. According to Lhévinne in an interview, the full course at leading Russian conservatories was then about eight or nine years:

During the first five years, the pupil is supposed to be building the base upon which must rest the more advanced work of the artist. The last three or four years at the conservatory are given over to the study of master works. Only pupils who manifest great talent are permitted to remain during the last year.¹²⁴

Among all the basic piano techniques, particular attention was given to scales and arpeggios. Lhévinne thought that the highest technique could be traced back to scales and arpeggios and Siloti also believed that scales and arpeggios were the most important piano techniques. He expressed almost exactly the same view as Lhévinne's:

During the first five or six years of piano study, the groundwork of all daily practice should be scales and arpeggios. The student who attempts to play complicated pieces without this preliminary training is attempting to build without a foundation.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Josef Lhévinne, 'Piano study in Russia' in *Great Pianists on Piano Playing*. ed. J. F. Cooke (New York: Dover Publications, 1917), 170-179.

¹²⁵ Charles F Barber, *Lost in the Stars: The Forgotten Musical Life of Alexander Siloti* (Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), 234.

In fact, scales and arpeggios were the required tests at the fifth-year examination. Rachmaninoff said in an interview that ‘a student was required to play scales and arpeggios in any key at certain metronomic speeds. The scales were tested as fast as 120 with eight notes per beat.’¹²⁶ In addition, the Russians also insisted that the practice of scales and arpeggios need never be mechanical or uninteresting. Lhévinne added that teachers should develop students’ interest in practising scales and arpeggios and focus on not only evenness or clarity but also tone colour and expression, since technique is nothing but a tool to fulfil music and should never be regarded as the only goal of piano playing¹²⁷ – a belief shared by leading Russian pianists. As Neuhaus stated in his manual: ‘I am constantly reminding my students that the word *technique* comes from the Greek word *tekhne*, and *tekhne* meant *art* itself.’¹²⁸

3.2. The 'Artistic Image' in Music

Among the Russian School’s leading teachers, Heinrich Neuhaus was especially famous for his idea of the ‘artistic image’. His rich artistic imagination, his ability to explain ideas to the students in a highly pictorial and vibrant way, and his natural pedagogical intuition all helped him to become a great and influential teacher in the Soviet Union and abroad. The ‘artistic image’ is not only about metaphors or stories. In *The Art of Piano Playing*, the first chapter is entitled ‘The Artistic Image of a Musical Composition’. Here, Neuhaus uses the term to mean a comprehensive and creative way of understanding as well as performing music. For him, having the ability to master the instrument and understand all the component parts – such as melody,

¹²⁶ Sergei Rachmaninoff. ‘Essentials of artistic playing,’ in *Great Pianists on Piano Playing*. ed. J. F. Cooke (New York: Dover Publications, 1917), 211.

¹²⁷ Lhévinne, 175.

¹²⁸ Neuhaus, 122.

harmony, polyphony, form, structure, and so on – is not enough. A pianist with excellent technique and good knowledge of music still can be a bad performer, not to mention a mediocre artist. Neuhaus was also adamant that a performer should establish a picture of the music before he or she actually played – and that picture was the ‘artistic image of music’. ‘Work on the artistic image’, in Neuhaus’s words, ‘can be successful only if it is the result of the pupil’s continuous development musically, intellectually and artistically and consequently also pianistically; without this there can be no “implementation”, no “embodiment”’.¹²⁹

But the ‘artistic image’ was in fact nothing new to the Russian Piano School: the idea can be directly traced back to as early as Anton Rubinstein and Neuhaus just expanded its meaning. Hofmann’s memory of how Rubinstein taught him portrays the idea of the ‘artistic image’ quite well:

Before your fingers touch the keys you must begin the piece mentally – that is, you must have settled in your mind the tempo, the manner of touch, and above all, the attack of the first notes, before your actual playing begins.¹³⁰

Siloti had a similar memory of Rubinstein’s teaching and of his insistence on the ‘artistic image’ as well.¹³¹

When one listens to a performance, one cannot use any scientific method to prove the existence of the artistic image in the mind of the performer via recordings. But it is

¹²⁹ Neuhaus, 20.

¹³⁰ Hofmann, 60-61.

¹³¹ Barber, 12.

crucial to know that Rachmaninoff himself always had certain stories or mental images connected to the piece he was performing and could explain them in detail. As a pianist and composer, Rachmaninoff argued that a performer was also a creator – and a creator is necessarily endowed with greater imagination and sensitivity to colouring than a mere executor. In order to be a creator, the most important issue was to have imagination: ‘every musician who performs the work of another must imagine an entirely new picture for himself.’¹³² In a rare case, Rachmaninoff’s Prelude Op. 32 No. 10 in B minor, we find that the ‘artistic image’ from another interpreter, pianist Benno Moiseiwitsch, was exactly the picture the composer had in mind,¹³³ which provides us with an interesting suggestion as to how [Rachmaninoff thought] the piece was supposed to be performed and how the idea of the ‘artistic image’ was rooted in those pianists of Russian background.

3.3. Repertoire

Compared to western European pianists, the Russians embraced a huge range of music on the stage. There is a historical background behind that. Although Liszt knew and played in private all kinds of piano music, his public repertoire was actually quite limited.¹³⁴ By contrast, Anton Rubinstein crowned his career with a series of concerts in major cities in Europe and the States that illustrated the entire history of piano music from the Baroque to then-contemporary Russian composers.¹³⁵ Such a wide range of music was also rooted in the Russian education system. In the syllabus Nikolai

¹³² Norman Cameron, ‘The composer as interpreter’ (Interview with Rachmaninoff) in *The Monthly Musical Record*, Nov. 1934, 201. Barrie Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor* (England: Scholar Press, 1990), 400.

¹³³ The picture is Boecklin’s painting ‘The Return.’ See Sergei Bertensson and Jay Leyda, *Rachmaninoff: A Lifetime in Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956), 296.

¹³⁴ Michael Saffle, *Liszt in Germany, 1840–1845, Franz Liszt Studies Series No.2* (New York Pendragon Press, 1994), 187.

¹³⁵ Taylor, 194-219.

Rubinstein designed for the piano department at the Moscow Conservatory, the emphasis was on three types of works: 1. classical (Bach, Hummel, Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and so forth); 2. virtuoso (Weber, Kullak, Chopin, Liszt); and 3. genre types of compositions (Songs without Words, Nocturnes, song transcriptions).¹³⁶ For Nikolai, the main aim was to train ‘not only instrumentalists but to prepare “musicians” in the broadest sense of this word’.¹³⁷ Even among the later generation, when Russian repertoire was gaining more and more popularity at home and abroad, the leading professors still insisted on maintaining this tradition. Samuel Feinberg stated that:

Russian pianists can celebrate many accomplishments over the last century. Traditions in the field of style, interpretation method and approach to particular works, which have come down to us via such figures as Balakirev, Rachmaninoff and Scriabin and their artistic legacy, are not only precious to us but also make that great school on which the progress of our modern pianism is founded. But a noble tradition should inspire in us a creative approach to every work. It should not limit but extend the stylistic frontiers. The traditions coming down to us from great pianists of the past demand individual realization and a genuine aesthetic effort on our part. The strength of the Russian piano tradition lies in its breadth and in the range of individual approaches that it permits.¹³⁸

It is worth noticing that Feinberg was an avant-garde composer himself and also a

¹³⁶ Christopher Barnes, *The Russian Piano School* (London: Kahn & Averill, 2007), xvii.

¹³⁷ Barnes, xvii.

¹³⁸ Samuel Feinberg, ‘The road to artistry’ in *The Russian Piano School*. ed. and trans. C. Barnes (London: Kahn & Averill, 2007), 38-39.

great Bach expert who recorded the first set of the complete Forty-Eight Preludes and Fugues in Russia. The similar attitude is seen in Rachmaninoff's recordings and concert performances. Even though he was considered a highly romantic composer and pianist, his repertoire was as large as Anton Rubinstein's and also stretched from the Baroque to his contemporaries. This breadth of repertoire was highly characteristic of the early Russian piano tradition.¹³⁹

3.4. Singing Tone and Melody-Orientated Style

Melody-orientated style is probably the most obvious feature of the Russian Piano School. When my friends and I attend masterclasses, we usually find that Russian and German teachers have very different approaches to a piece. Generally speaking, the German ones will pick up the key notes in a chord and ask students to present the harmonic progression as clearly as possible. Russian teachers, on the other hand, will focus on the key notes in a melodic line and ask students to sing out the phrase as *cantabile* as possible. However, if we take a historical perspective, we will find that the idea of creating singing melody on the piano is not exclusive to the Russian Piano School and has been an artistic principle for many pianists. Besides expressive dynamics and fluent playing, the *cantabile* quality of Mozart's playing was generally praised by musicians and his own students at that time.¹⁴⁰ Vocal phrasing and ornamentation are found throughout Chopin's piano music and the composer also encouraged his pupils to learn the singing style of the opera stars and then recreate the vocal phrases on the keyboard.¹⁴¹ Hans von Bülow, Liszt's pupil and an influential pianist and conductor, insisted that '[a]nyone who cannot sing – with a lovely or

¹³⁹ See the table of Rachmaninoff's recording list in the appendix.

¹⁴⁰ Sandra Rosenblum, *Performance Practices in Classic Piano Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 22.

¹⁴¹ Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger, *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher as Seen by His Pupils*. trans. N. Shohet, K. Osostowicz, and R. Howat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 42-46.

unlovely voice – should not play the piano'.¹⁴² But the Russian pianists especially focused on singing tone and regarded melody-orientated style as the foundation or principal characteristic of Russian pianism.¹⁴³ The aesthetic is deeply embedded in Russian music. The Russian musical tradition has grown from two basic sources: the liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church and the folk tradition.¹⁴⁴ Since Glinka, the 'father of Russian music', Russian folksongs and the old liturgical chant, running side by side, have provided musical and emotional inspiration for many generations of Russian composers and their singing qualities have also contributed vital elements to Russian musical performance.¹⁴⁵ In Russian, there is even a special word – *pesennost* – to identify this song-like quality, which shows its unique importance to the Russians.¹⁴⁶ The importance of folk music is also firmly rooted in Russian music education. Elena Gnesina, the founder of the Gnessin School, preferred to use Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* to train students in legato playing, melodic line, and creating a singing quality to melodies. For Gnesina creating this singing quality was the key to performing Liszt's opera transcriptions and Chopin's nocturnes, ballades, waltzes, and mazurkas.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Richard Zimdars, trans. and ed. *The Piano Masterclasses of Franz Liszt: Diary Notes of August Göllerich* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 17.

¹⁴³ Alexander Goldenweiser, 'Advice from a pianist and teacher' in *The Russian Piano School*. ed. and trans. C. Barnes. London: Kahn & Averill, 2007, 12.

¹⁴⁴ See both Harlow Robinson, 'Music' in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*, ed. N. Rzhevsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 236.; Alfred Swan, *Russian Music and Its Sources in Chant and Folk-Song* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1973), 15, 19-45. On the other hand, after the Soviet Communist Revolution in 1917, the official persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church meant that it was almost completely forbidden to use church music in classical compositions. However, learning from folk song became a *political* imperative that happened to be consistent with an earlier Russian performance tradition emphasising melody. Prokofiev used material from Russian folk songs in the compositions of his Soviet years, for example.

¹⁴⁵ For example, Tchaikovsky commented about Glinka's symphonic poem *Kamarinskaya*: 'Many Russian symphonic works have appeared; we can almost say that there is a real Russian symphonic school, And what do we see? It is all contained in the *Kamarinskaya*, just as the whole oak is contained in the acorn. And for long, Russian composers will draw from this rich source, as much time and strength is needed to exhaust all its riches.' And the source of the *Kamarinskaya* is the Russian folk-song and the old liturgical chant. See Swan, 15.

¹⁴⁶ Swan, 60.

¹⁴⁷ Sofia Hentova, *Lev Oborin*. trans. M. Glebov. Access from the website of International Piano

Evidence can be found in the rudimentary textbooks too. In *The Russian School of Piano Playing*, the piano method officially recommended for use in children's music schools throughout the Soviet Union, in the editorial foreword the authors state that: 'An important aspect of a child's musical education is his acquaintance with folk music, which not only develops his musical taste, but also plays a very considerable part in providing a sound musical foundation.' Based on this belief, a great deal of folk song transcriptions are found in this beginner's method and, according to the authors, 'the logical sense and natural flow and *breathing* of the musical phrase' should always be stressed.¹⁴⁸ Learning how to sing at the keyboard was always the main concern of the early Russian pianists. Anton Rubinstein suggested that pianists should learn singing and observe great singers. Siloti and Lhévinne also asked their students to sing musical phrases before playing them, so that they would know the importance of where and when to breathe, since silence is as crucial as singing in musical performances. In practice, much of the Russian pianists' training consisted of technical exercises, conducted slowly and with patient repetition, designed to allow the *melos* to live.¹⁴⁹

But how can one know whether the early Russian Piano School actually does focus on singing tone and melody-orientated style? The Russian teachers I have encountered emphasise the importance of singing quality in a performance, but is that really a tradition of the Russian Piano School? In the following sections, I will use

Archives at Maryland, UM Libraries <http://www.lib.umd.edu/PAL/IPAM/resources.html>. (accessed June 15th, 2011)

¹⁴⁸ *The Russian School of Piano Playing*, compiled by E. Kisell, V. Natanson, A. Nikolaev, and N. Sretenskaya. trans. N. Harutyunyan and M. Hughes (London: Boosey & Hawkes, Music Publishers Limited, 1978), 3-5.

¹⁴⁹ See Barber, 233; Lhévinne 3-4.

three case studies to examine this belief as held by Russian pianists. In the first case study, I will discuss whether they tended to emphasise melodic lines in order to distinguish melody from accompaniment, if they played as the documents and interviews suggested, in the melody-orientated style. In the other case studies, I will discuss the question further: what kind of melody did the Russians have in mind and what are the features of the Russian singing style? I have intentionally selected pieces by Debussy, Beethoven, and Chopin, so we can see the difference between the French, German, and Russian piano schools more clearly.

3.4.1. Case Study 1-1: Melodic Shaping in Debussy's *Das pas sur la neige* and Dynamic Balance in Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 31, Op. 110, first movement, bars 5-8

If the Russian style is melody-orientated, then in a performance, first of all, melodies should be highlighted in the musical texture. In Case Study 1, I shall use two examples to illustrate this performing habit further. The first example is a comparison of the performances of Debussy's Prelude *Das pas sur la neige* by early French and Russian pianists¹⁵⁰ and the second is of four bars (bars 5-8) of the first movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No.31, Op.110 by early German/Central European and Russian pianists.

The reasons I chose these two are, first, that they are frequently recorded, giving me more examples to compare and, secondly, that they have very dissimilar harmonic languages and musical textures: if the Russians play them in a similar fashion, it is safe to state that they do share certain performance preferences. Thirdly, the two excerpts

¹⁵⁰ Among the early French and Russian pianists, *Minstrels*, the last Prelude from the first book was the most frequently recorded piece of Debussy's piano solo music, but its jazzy style leads pianists to play it in a similar way.

do not require advanced performing technique, so it is safe to say that the pianist played in the way he or she wished. The interpretation of Chopin's Étude in G sharp minor, Op. 25 No. 6, '*Double Thirds*', is a counter example. It is harder to discuss a pianist's interpretation of it because it requires virtuosic technique to perform. In early recordings, the situation is even worse because the sound quality is limited and many details are missing. Few pianists can perform this étude with the tempo and evenness required by the composer (especially on modern pianos) and audiences cannot precisely know whether a pianist chooses a certain tempo or uses a certain type of rubato, rhythmic alteration or even texture change for the sake of musical expression or simply to avoid technical obstacles. In early recordings, at the most difficult part, bars 47-48 (a single descending phrase in thirds without left hand accompaniment to hide any possible unevenness in the right hand), Ignacy Jan Paderewski (left hand arpeggios coming later),¹⁵¹ Ignaz Friedman (changing the texture),¹⁵² and Julien von Karolyi (adding notes)¹⁵³ all made changes to the piece (compared with the notated version) in their own ways, and we shall never know how it would have sounded if they had not changed the texture.

In the two excerpts I have chosen from the two compositions, both are free from this issue. In the Debussy case, my main concern is with seeing how pianists distinguish the melody from the accompanimental background. The composer uses two two-note lines, D-E and E-F, to provide an almost unchanging background for the melody in the Prelude (see Score 2-1):

¹⁵¹ Pearl GEMM CD 9397.

¹⁵² Philips 456 784-2.

¹⁵³ Arkadia 2 CDGI 909.

Score 2-1: Debussy Prelude *Das pas sur la neige*, bars 1-7

Triste et lent (♩=44)

pp *p* *p* *più pp* *p* *expressif et douloureux*

Ce rythme doit avoir la valeur sonore d'un fond de paysage triste et glacé.

m.d.

The interpretation and performance of this textural pattern vary greatly. What is the proper way to present the background accompaniment? In this piece, the musical lines are not always clear and harmonic atmosphere may play a more important role than the melodies. What do early pianists do? How do they deal with the musical lines? As far as the selection of recordings is concerned, since the distinctiveness of performing schools is more obvious in earlier times, I tried to collect the performances of pianists born before or around 1930. I used Sonic Visualiser to produce an analysis of loudness.

Here is the result of examining the collection of Debussy Preludes:

Table 2-1 The Relationship Between Melody and Accompaniment in Debussy's Prelude <i>Das pas sur la neige</i>			
<i>School</i>	<i>Pianist</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Melody/ Accompaniment</i>
Russia	Heinrich Neuhaus	1948	The volume of the accompaniment changes according to the melody.
	Maria Grinberg	1961	The melody is always louder and distinguished from the accompaniment.
	Sviatoslav Richter	1961	The accompaniment is louder.
	Stanislav Neuhaus	1963	The melody is always louder.
	Anatoly Vedernikov	1963	The two are similar in volume, but the melody is a little louder.
France	Alfred Cortot	1932	The melody is always louder and distinguished from the accompaniment.
	Robert Casadesus	1953	The melody is clear but softer than the accompaniment.
	Marcelle Meyer	1956	The accompaniment is very vague; the melody is clear but hidden in the background.
	Monique Haas	1963	The two are similar in volume, but the melody is a little bit softer.
	Samson Francois	1968	The two are similar in volume, but the melody is a little bit louder.
	Jacques Fevrier	1972	The two are similar in volume, but the melody is a little bit louder.

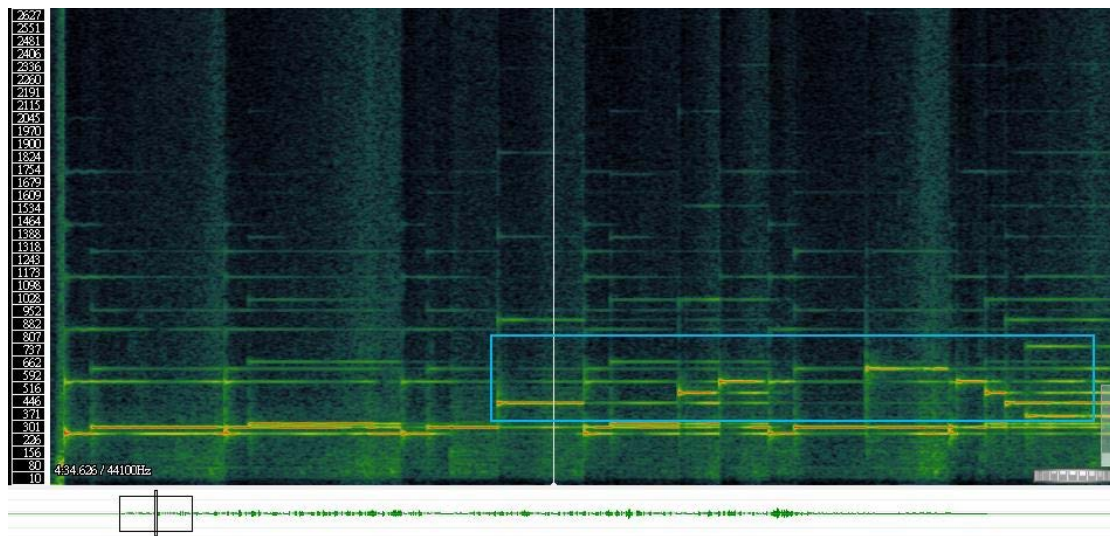
The table above shows the differences between the two groups. Most early French pianists tend to treat the background as a mysterious fog, with the melody largely hidden in it and only just distinguishable. The performances of Casadesus and Meyer are especially mist-like in those background notes. Haas creates a comparatively 'cleaner' background but does not especially mark out the melody line. François and Fevrier play the melody a little bit louder, but Cortot is the only pianist to play the melody decisively louder than the accompaniment. In the group of early Russian pianists, the situation is the opposite: Richter is the only pianist to play the accompaniment clearly louder than the melody in this case study. Among the others, Grinberg marks out the melody very clearly, similar to Cortot's approach. Neuhaus

alters the dynamic relationship between the melody and accompaniment as the piece progresses, but his attention is still focused on the melody. Stanislav, his son and also his pupil, takes a similar approach, but the melody is more obvious. The volume difference between the melody and accompaniment is not so great in Anatoly Vedernikov's performance (another student of Neuhaus), but the melody is still clearer and slightly louder than the background.

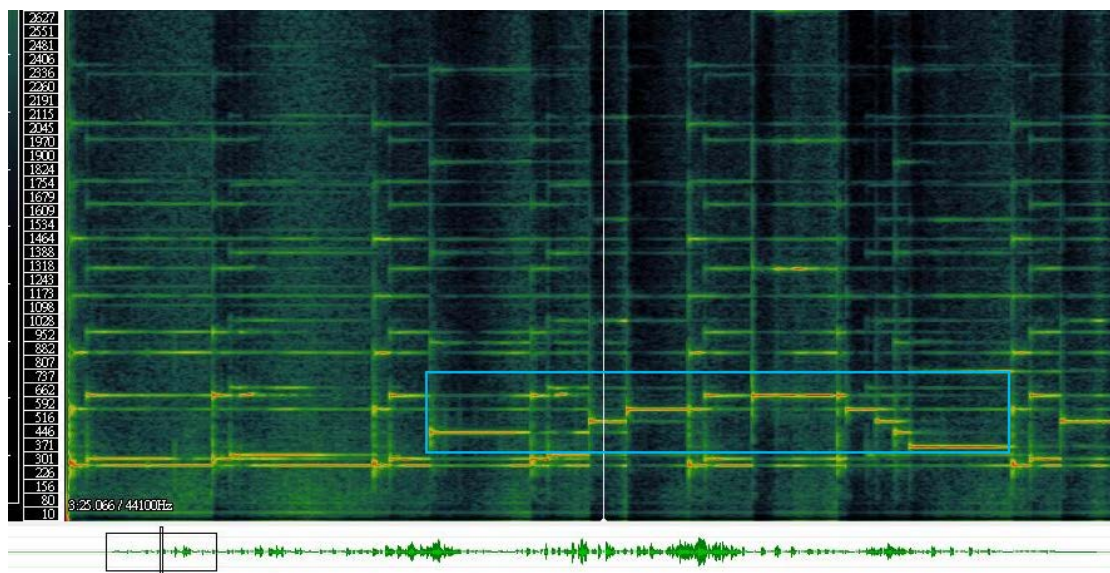
Here is how Sonic Visualiser sees Meyer's and Grinberg's performances. In Meyer's performance, the two-note background motive is played with the volume of the fundamentals around -23 to -25 decibels (dB), and the main melody (circled in blue) around -21 and -20 dB.¹⁵⁴ In Grinberg's performance, however, the background is around -33 to -28 dB, but the main melody is around -20 to -15 dB, which is much more obvious than in Meyer's performance. In addition, when one compares it to Meyer's performance, one also can hear that Grinberg's performance of the piece is cleaner and more multi-dimensional.

¹⁵⁴ In my research, I measured the loudest part of the attack (which comes just after the start of the note).

SV2-1-1 Debussy: Prelude *Das pas sur la neige* (played by Marcelle Meyer) (Audio Example Track 1)



SV2-1-2 Debussy: Prelude *Das pas sur la neige* (played by Maria Grinberg) (Audio Example Track 2)



It may not be about piano technique, as Meyer could also play very cleanly in Ravel's piano works in her EMI recordings.¹⁵⁵ Also, it may be incorrect to assume that the Russians were ignorant about Debussy's music or had no idea of the 'impressionist

¹⁵⁵ EMI CZS 767 405 2

style. It is worth noticing that on the score the melody is marked *piano* and the background *pianissimo*, which means that the Russian interpretation is actually closer to the score. But the main differences between the two still lie in their approaches to melody. It is hard to imagine that the Russians could not sense the specialities of Debussy's musical language, but the case study shows that a choice has to be made: the Russians chose to focus on the musical lines and the French were fond of the harmonic atmosphere in this piece.

Case Study 1-2 Dynamic Balance in Beethoven's Op. 110, first movement, bars 5-8

The way the early Russian pianists highlight the melody can also be found in other compositions. In the next example, Beethoven's Sonata No. 31, Op. 110, we will still see that the Russians tend to underline the melody in their performances.

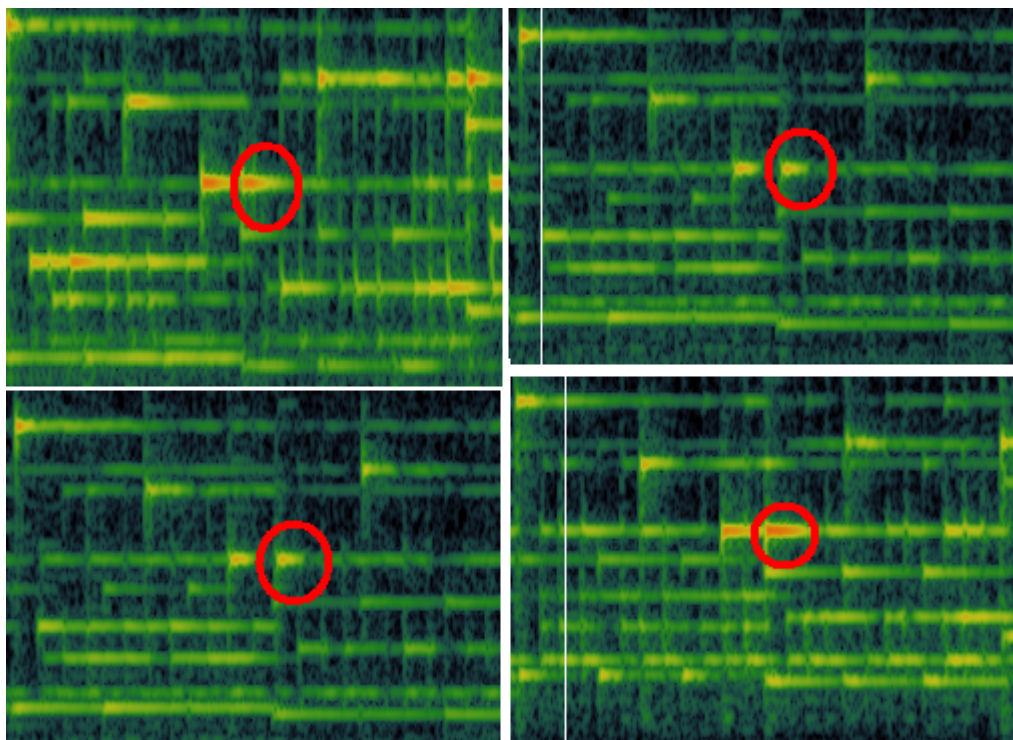
Score 2-2: Beethoven, Piano Sonata No. 31, Mvt I, bars 5-8

In the score example above (Score 2-2), the ten melody notes in the right hand are marked using numbers from 1 to 10 and the 12 bass notes in the left hand are marked using the capital letters A to L. The chords in the middle are marked using lower-case letters from a to l. The volume of the melody and bass notes was

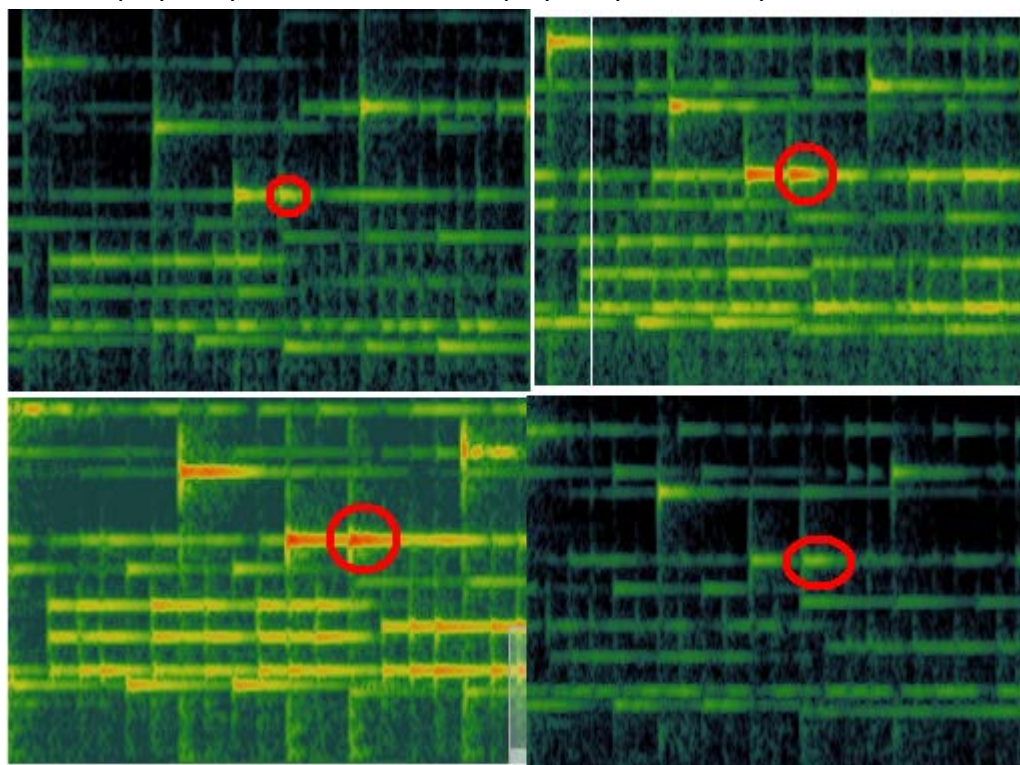
measured using Sonic Visualiser, but for the middle notes of each chord, only the loudest volume was recorded. In the table below, if the note of the melody was quieter than or as loud as the accompaniment and bass, the note and its comparison are marked in red. The goal here is to see how the pianists 'apportion' the sound, using relative loudness to shape the texture. Is the melody always louder than the accompaniment? Or is it the harmonic progression that is emphasised? The two phrases (notes 1-5 and 6-10) form an antecedent-consequent structure. We might ask how pianists shape them, especially the second one, in which the harmony is going from the dominant back to the tonic, meaning the tension is supposed to be stressed. However, the register of the accompaniment is also very close to note 8. In order to sing out the melody, note 8 should also be emphasised. Again, conflicting interpretations appear and pianists have to make their own choices. Through their choices, we can hear the different aesthetics and performing principles among the pianists.

Given what we have seen in the Debussy case, it is not surprising to find that all the Russian pianists emphasise note 8 by playing it louder (see Table 2-2-1, page 393). The only exception is Grinberg, who plays it as loudly as the accompaniment. But still, she distinguishes the note from the background. It is apparent that the Russians intended to focus on the melodic line. Through Sonic Visualiser we can see even more clearly that the Russians play the melody line louder, and also emphasise the volume difference between the melody and the accompaniment.

The Volume of Note 8 (circled) in the Performances of:
 SV 2-1-3 played by Neuhaus / SV 2-1-4 played by Grinberg
 SV 2-1-5 played by Barere / SV 2-1-6 played by Oborin



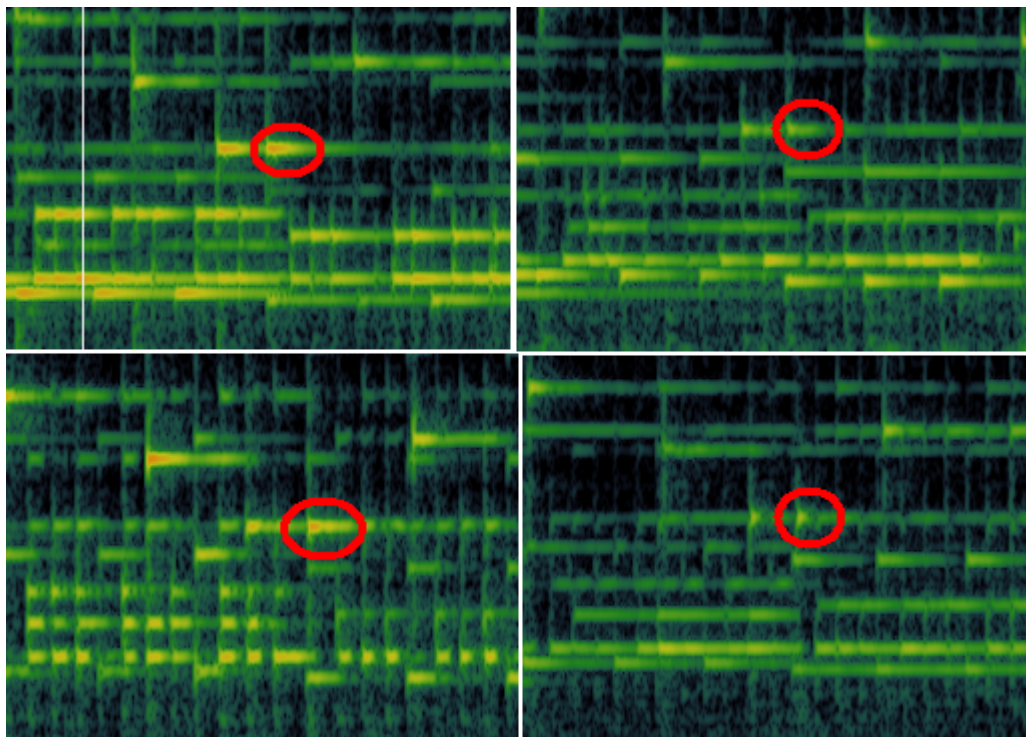
SV 2-1-7 played by Richter / SV 2-1-8 played by Nikolayeva
 SV 2-1-9 played by Gilels / SV 2-1-10 played by Ashkenazy



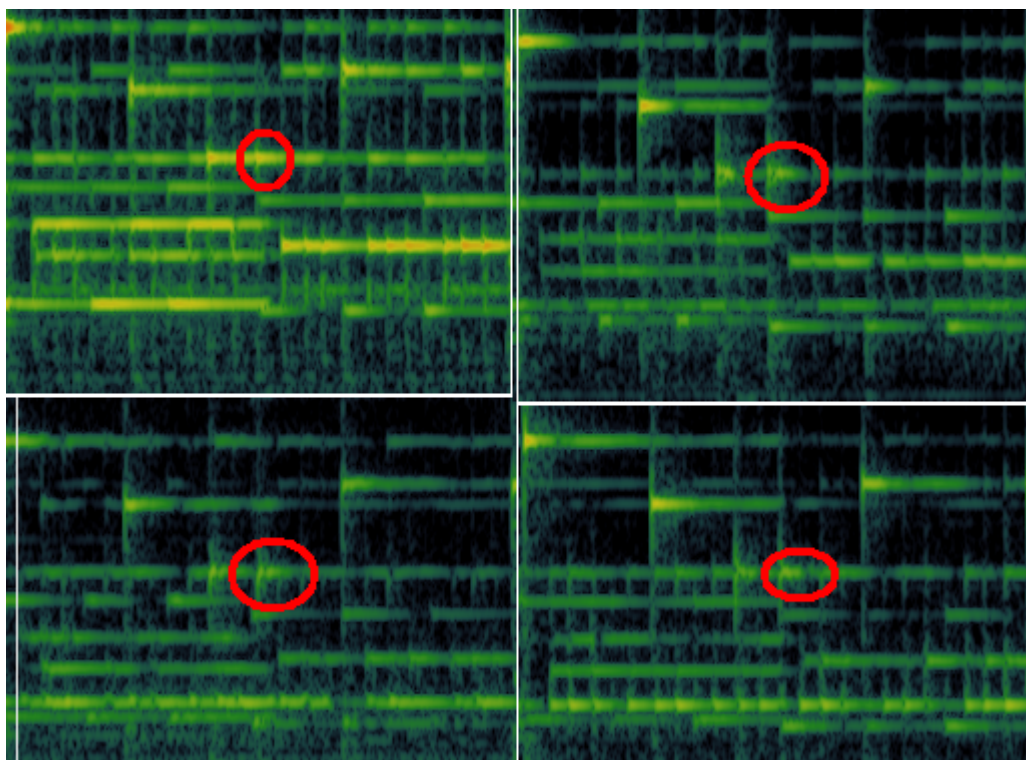
In addition, in the performances of the Russian pianists, although the pianists have different views of the sound proportion of the bass and the middle chords, they hardly let the accompaniment become louder than the melody. Only when the accompaniment is not on the beat of the melodic notes, such as notes 1 and 6, is the accompaniment played louder than the melody, but only slightly louder. In principle, it is a hidden rule that the melody should always be stressed and clear, which echoes the aesthetics of the early Russian Piano School as summarised earlier.

In the performances of the German and Central European pianists, the situation is not at all the same (see Table 2-2-2, page 395). Although we do see pianists like Backhaus and Schnabel playing the melodic lines very clearly and always more loudly than the accompaniment, the German and Central European pianists in general prefer to emphasise the bass and harmony instead of the melody. Not only did the German and Central European pianists not highlight note 8, the majority of them play the left hand either as loudly as the right hand or even more loudly. Of course, the texture of the music is not complicated in this example, so even though the accompaniment is played more loudly, the melody line located in the treble register is still significant. But in the same situation, the Russian pianists still insist on playing the melody more loudly, while their German and Central European colleagues emphasise the harmonic progression.

The Volume of Note 8 (circled) in the Performances of:
SV 2-1-11 played by Arrau / SV 2-1-12 played by Horszowski
SV 2-1-13 played by Ney / SV 2-1-14 played by Serkin



SV 2-1-15 played by Annie Fischer / SV 2-1-16 played by Giesecking
SV 2-1-17 played by Edwin Fischer / SV 2-1-18 played by Kempff



3.4.2. Case Study 2: How Did The Russians Sing? Phrasing Styles in the Second Theme of Chopin's *Ballade* No. 4, Op. 52

If Case Study 1 has shown that early Russian pianists generally had a tendency to emphasise melody over background, then what did they do with the melodies? I will discuss this question in theory and practice. In the former, I will highlight how Russian pianists have written about this issue; in the latter, I will see what views Russian pianists express in my interviews.

In order to sing out the lines, pianists have to face a limitation of their instrument – its percussive nature – and create an illusion of *cantabile* phrasing. One key issue is how to arrange the durations of sound. Here I have to stress again that it is not only the Russians who accentuate the importance of expressing the singing quality of a composition. In the European tradition, such as is described in *The Leschetizky Method*, when two notes of different value are found in succession, ‘the longer note must be played with more force than the shorter, as it is to sound longer.’¹⁵⁶ Chopin’s pupil Kleczynski also stated that the teacher often repeated to his students that: ‘A long note is stronger, as is also a high note [...] Such then are the rules: the exceptions are always indicated by the authors themselves.’¹⁵⁷ What they kept in mind is the correct duration and structure of the piece. If one focuses on singing qualities, however, this view could be different, because the duration of the sound on the piano is not proportional to the strength of the keystroke. The louder a note is played on the piano, the more steeply its strength fades away during the first second. The listener notices this rapid fading of a loud note and it can thus seem to the audience that a sound played more softly in fact lasts longer because the fading of a soft or mezzo

¹⁵⁶ Malwine Brée. *The Leschetizky Method: A Guide to Fine and Correct Piano Playing* (New York: Dover Publications, 1997), 51.

¹⁵⁷ Eigeldinger, 42.

forte note occurs less abruptly.¹⁵⁸ Therefore, in order to achieve a 'real illusion' of singing on the piano, pianists cannot always follow the dynamics notated on the score. Based on the aesthetics of melody-orientated style, the Russian pianists have a strong tendency to reorganise the dynamics to create singing lines: louder notes are not necessarily performed more loudly if they are supposed to be sustained for longer in a phrase, and longer notes therefore cannot always be performed more loudly. In order to play a melody properly, pianists should go by the initial strength of sonority in a consecutive series of notes and correlate the strength of each note with the initial note, rather than the final volume level of the note before.

In practice, after a series of short notes, the last note or chord is frequently played more softly (even if notated more loudly) by Russian pianists, because they interpret notes marked louder in volume as 'stronger in expression'. How to sing it out is actually more important and closer to the composer's intention. From written sources, one can observe some characteristics that distinguish the early Russian Piano School from the others. But can we really hear the difference in the performances? In Case Study 2, I would like to take the second theme of Chopin's *Ballade* No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52, as an example with which to compare pianists from different educational backgrounds and see if there really are trends based on national schools.

The reason I have chosen this excerpt is that it provides an example of 'a longer note after a series of shorter ones', which can reflect pianists' view of how to arrange the duration of sound (see bars 86-87 and 94-95 in Score Example 2-3):

¹⁵⁸ Nearly all the Russian pianists I interviewed had this idea in mind. In written documents, at least Samuel Feinberg has expressed this opinion. See Samuel Feinberg, 'The road to artistry' in *The Russian Piano School*, ed. and trans. C. Barnes (London: Kahn & Averill, 2007), 12-13.

Score 2-3: Chopin, Ballade No. 4, bars 86-88, bars 92-96



The section contains a potential conflict that can illuminate the application of singing style in different schools of piano playing. Chopin's dynamic indication (straightforward crescendo for several bars) is not very vocal in bars 94-95. After a longer line with crescendo, the composer indicates another crescendo within half a bar, which does not match natural breathing patterns. In the first English, French, and German editions of the piece, even though the details of crescendo markings are slightly different, it is clear that Chopin wanted a crescendo in this short phrase, which implies that the composer might not have intended these phrases to be song-like but more as rhetorical or narrative.¹⁵⁹ Given they regard melody-orientated style as a core value of piano playing, however, Russian pianists may see a conflict in this section and may need alternative solutions.

In the comparison, several questions were asked:

- (1). Did the pianist follow the indications on the score? Did pianists from different educational backgrounds have different ways of interpreting Chopin's indications?

¹⁵⁹ The first English, French, and German editions can be seen at the website: <http://www.cfeo.org.uk/dyn/index.html> (accessed June 15th, 2011).

Are there similarities between schools?

(2). If the pianist did not follow the indications, how did they deal with the issues mentioned above? How did they sing (or not sing) the phrases? If bars 94-95 do not sound vocal when played with a crescendo, what did the pianist do?

(3). How did the pianist compare the two similar phrases? The phrase at bars 94-95 comes after a longer crescendo line (bars 92-94), but did the pianist play it even more softly than the phrase at bars 86-87 to create a bigger 'arched, vocal-orientated phrase'?

Based on the comparison (see Tables 2-3-1, 2-3-2, and 2-3-3; pages 397-398, pages 399-400, pages 401-402), some observations can be made as follows:

(1). Among the recordings compared above, of all the pianists who performed a crescendo effect in bars 94-95, only French pianist Yvonne Lefébure, Austrian pianist Friedrich Gulda, and Czech pianist Ivan Moravec played a crescendo to the end of the phrase; all the other pianists used a 'sound illusion' to achieve it – they played the second and third chords with a crescendo but the fourth chord more softly. However, the 'crescendo effect' only appeared when the fourth chord was played as loudly as the second. Because the pitch of the fourth chord is higher than the third, with the acoustic effect of the previous sound, the fourth chord will naturally sound louder and a 'crescendo effect' is created. On the other hand, this effect may simply come from different interpretations or different score editions being used. In the first French and German editions, the crescendo mark lasts to the end of the phrase in

bars 94-95.¹⁶⁰ In the first English edition¹⁶¹ and some later editions, for example the Paderewski edition, the crescendo mark stops before the last chord. The pianists might follow their instinct and therefore not play the crescendo to the end of the phrase if they used the German or French first editions, or an edition with a different crescendo mark, and then interpret it in their own way.

(2). Knowing how to create ‘crescendo effects’ is not a secret, but Russian pianists have a tendency to shape singing lines even if the composer indicates the opposite. Among the recordings of Russian pianists, only Stanislav Neuhaus intentionally creates a ‘crescendo effect’ in bars 94-95. By contrast, the pianists with a French educational background seem to more willingly perform a crescendo in the phrase. Nevertheless, a crescendo mark, not a decrescendo one, is clearly printed there from the very first editions, yet the performances show that Russian pianists seem to be unafraid to play decrescendo instead. They are more likely to shape a more arched, vocal-orientated phrase by changing the composer’s dynamics. Compared to the pianists coming from a French educational background, the result suggests that different performing schools have different views on and ways of singing on the piano.¹⁶²

The Russian pianists’ phrasing style in the case study, in general, is close to American-Russian pianist Gary Graffman’s experience of studying. Graffman, a pupil of Vengerova, thinks that if it is ‘necessary’ (to Russian ears), the Russian Piano School

¹⁶⁰ Paris (Rue Richelieu, 97) Chez Mce. Schlesinger, 1843, Leipzig Chez Breitkopf & Härtel, 1843.

¹⁶¹ Wessel & Co.’s Complete Collection of the Compositions of Frederic Chopin for the Piano Forte, No. 56, 1845.

¹⁶² It is interesting to notice that Paderewski and Koczalski played very similarly in this section. They had different education backgrounds but both were Polish, and a Polish tradition of interpretation may lie behind their performances.

also has the tendency to alter the indications on the score 'to keep the tone and melody beautiful' in a performance. He recalls that:

In the Schumann *Carnaval* it was traditional (in the Russian School of piano playing) to play the section entitled 'Chopin' rather quietly the first time and even more softly the second time. Schumann's markings, however, indicate that this section is to be played the first time *forte agitato* with many dynamic changes, thus rendering it in complete contrast with the quietly played repetition.¹⁶³

The performances of the Russian pianists in the case study do not only point up that singing quality is important in piano playing, but probably also reveal the aesthetics and performing philosophy of the Russian Piano School. 'The greater the musician, the greater his capacity to approach music like an open book.' Neuhaus's words can be viewed as a footnote to this performing practice and attitude to interpretation.¹⁶⁴ With considerable exaggeration, he even wrote that:

It is very often necessary to repeat that time-worn truth that when the score indicates crescendo one should (at that place) play piano and if the indication is diminuendo one should play forte. An exact understanding and rendering of the gradual dynamic changes is vital for a true musical image.¹⁶⁵

Neuhaus did not wish to distort the composer's markings on purpose but stress that the growth and culmination the composer intended should be faithfully

¹⁶³ See Gary Graffman, *I Really Should be Practicing* (New York: DoubleDay Books, 1981), 50-51.

¹⁶⁴ Neuhaus, *The Art of Piano Playing*, 8.

¹⁶⁵ Neuhaus, 71.

implemented. In many cases, carelessly playing an outright forte for crescendo does not achieve a positive effect but rather weakens the musical meaning. Again, this kind of thinking is not exclusive to the Russians. Hans von Bülow also stated that 'decrescendo means *forte*; crescendo means *piano*',¹⁶⁶ which resonates with Neuhaus' words. If we simply focus on Chopin's piano music, pianist-scholar Konard Wolff, Schnabel's pupil, also pointed out that the Polish composer's markings should be treated differently to those of Clementi, Beethoven, Weber, or Hummel, because Chopin's markings 'feature a declamation in which emphasis is produced without loudness,' and concluded that Chopin's accent mark 'only means that the tone in question ought to sound important, not necessarily that the emphasis has to be achieved by playing it louder.'¹⁶⁷ However, it is the Russian pianists that show a tendency towards this phrasing treatment. This case study demonstrates that when Russian pianists desire and have a strong explanation, they are more likely to perform the music as they want instead of what the score indicates. In this case, those Russian pianists were more confident in interpreting crescendo as pianissimo than the others.

3.4.3. Case Study 3: Traditional Russian Diminuendo Phrasing Style: Russian Diminuendo Singing Style at the Piano

In the previous two case studies, we have seen the importance of singing quality and the melody-orientated phrasing approach of the Russian Piano School. In the Debussy and Beethoven cases, we see how the Russian pianists separated the melodic lines from the background, even in impressionist music. In the Chopin *Ballade*, we see how they chose to phrase a singing line instead of faithfully following the dynamic

¹⁶⁶ Karl Leimer, *Rhythmics, Dynamics, Pedal and Other Problems of Piano Playing* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1972), 105.

¹⁶⁷ Konrad Wolff, *Masters of the Keyboard: Individual Style Elements in the Piano Music of Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, and Brahms*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 208-211.

indication on the score. Here I would like to ask a further question: since we know the Russian pianists prefer to 'sing', how do they sing at the keyboard? In a masterclass it is very common to witness a maestro demonstrating how a melody should be played by singing. Do a German pianist and a Russian one sing in the same way? Or is there something particularly 'Russian' in the singing quality of the Russian pianists which can be viewed as an element of the 'Russian Piano School'? Bella Davidovich, who studied with Konstantin Igumnov and Yakov Flier (the former is one of the four 'founding fathers' of the modern Soviet Piano School), stated that:

The traditional Russian piano playing style, is singing in diminuendo way. The sound sings as it is fading away. It is like you are taking a deep breath first and then start to sing, so the musical line is long and continuing to the end. In fact we also 'speak' in that way. The sentences we speak out are almost in diminuendo way. It is very natural. On the contrary, it is unusual for someone to speak in crescendo. We sing and speak very naturally, so why shouldn't we play the piano in that way? Actually in [Russian] schools, teachers always emphasise that we should always breathe with the music we are playing. If you do not breathe with the music, first, you will not hear clearly the sound you produce; secondly, you will not play naturally at all. Pianists should play like they sing or speak, so breathe with the music while playing; otherwise, the playing will sound mannered, unnatural. This idea is also in our music. For example, in Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff's music, frequently we see very long lines. That just tells us that we should play in that long, diminuendo way.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Interview with Bella Davidovich (October 17th, 2010).

A similar observation is offered by Tartar pianist Rustem Hayroudinoff – a musician from a much later generation – who graduated from the Moscow Conservatory and is now professor of the Royal Academy of Music. He agrees that traditional Russian phrasing is always in diminuendo fashion:

When you hear a performance from of some early Russian pianists, such as Rachmaninoff, Horowitz, Sofronitsky, Igumnov, and Neuhaus, you will constantly hear that they started the melody strongly and then let it fade away, just like someone was singing, taking a full, deep breath first and then gradually exhale, or speaking, because it is also the way we speak in Russian, the accent is in the beginning of a phrase. This style also can be heard in some early Russian singers and pianists, but it is almost extinct now.¹⁶⁹

Dang Thai Son, the only Asian student at the Moscow Conservatory at that time, offers another perspective on the Russian singing style at the piano. He recalls how his teacher, Professor Vladimir Natanson, specially explained the characteristic of the ‘Russian Style’ to him:

Traditionally, Russian pianists would (always) prefer phrasing a singing line in a diminuendo way. It is because this way can truly bring out the beauty of the piano sound. At the piano, when the volume increases, the sound usually gets harsher and harsher, and the instrument sounds more and more percussive. On the other hand, pianists can carefully express the *cantabile* quality of the instrument in diminuendo playing. This style is very Russian and quite different from the arch-like, Italian *bel canto* phrasing pattern in

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Rustem Hayroudinoff (August 24th, 2010).

the West. I think that Rachmaninoff and Horowitz are the best examples of this Russian style.¹⁷⁰

The explanations provided by Davidovich, Hayroudinoff and Natanson/Dang Thai Son about the traditional Russian phrasing style are not identical. For the former two, it came from the speaking style (of the Russian language); for Dang Thai Son, it came from the nature of the piano instrument. However, all of them agree that:

- (1). Traditional Russian singing style (at the piano) is diminuendo expression.
- (2). Rachmaninoff (and Horowitz) are regarded as examples of the style.

Based on the testimonies I take in Case Study 3, I would like to discuss the topic of Russian phrasing style by examining the recordings with Sonic Visualiser: did Russian diminuendo phrasing really exist? Is there evidence to demonstrate that?

In order to discuss this issue, I would like to use an excerpt from Debussy's *Clair de lune* (from *Suite Bergamasque*, see Score 2-4) as an example. The passage I have chosen is from bars 15 to 18, where Debussy writes two musical sentences but only indicates volume (*pp*) instead of giving any dynamic instructions (without crescendo or decrescendo). Since the composer gives a carte blanche to performers, we are able to observe the performing habits or phrasing preferences of pianists playing this excerpt through their natural, even intuitive, reaction to the score.

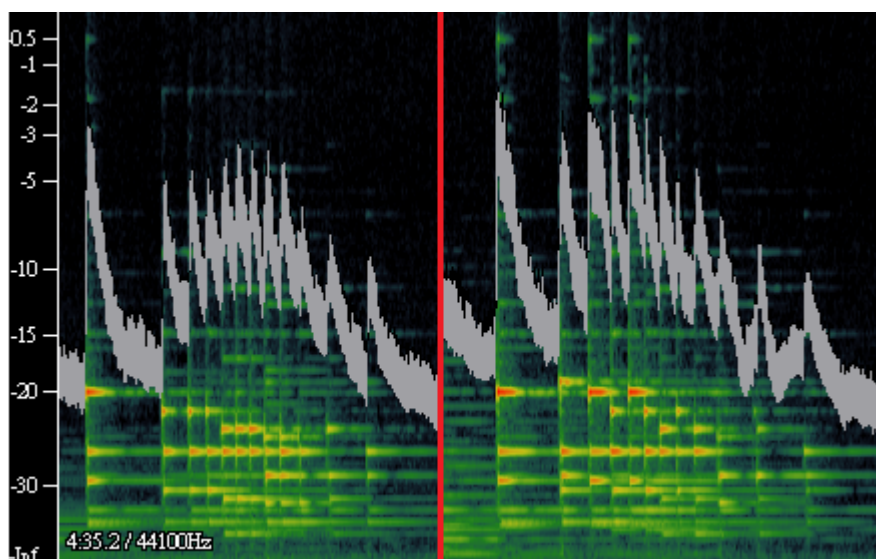
¹⁷⁰ Interview with Dang Thai Son (September 20th, 2010).

Score 2-4: Debussy's *Clair de lune*, bars 15-20



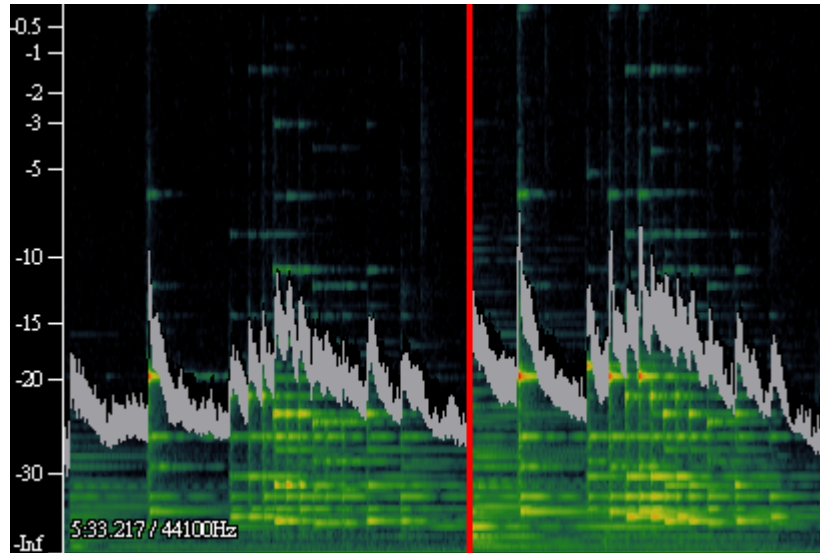
If Russian pianists have a tendency to phrase a diminuendo line in a singing phrase, especially in the earlier generation when the Piano School was still notable, we should hear this inclination in the recordings. Interestingly, the performance of Emil Gilels (1916-1985), recorded during 1930-1950 (no specific date is provided), clearly shows this Russian singing fashion. He plays the first chord in the treble register most strongly, and then plays the rest in a diminuendo way, especially the second phrase.

SV 2-2-1: Gilels's performance, seen in Sonic Visualiser (the red line indicates the end of bar 16) (Audio Example Track 3)



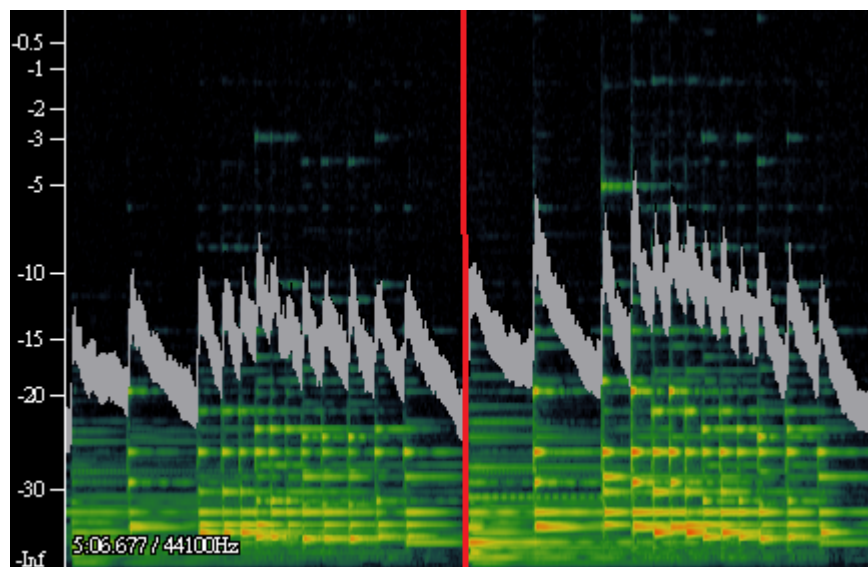
Similarity can be found with Vladimir Ashkenazy (1937-)'s performance in 1963, when he was still in the Soviet Union:

SV 2-2-2: Ashkenazy

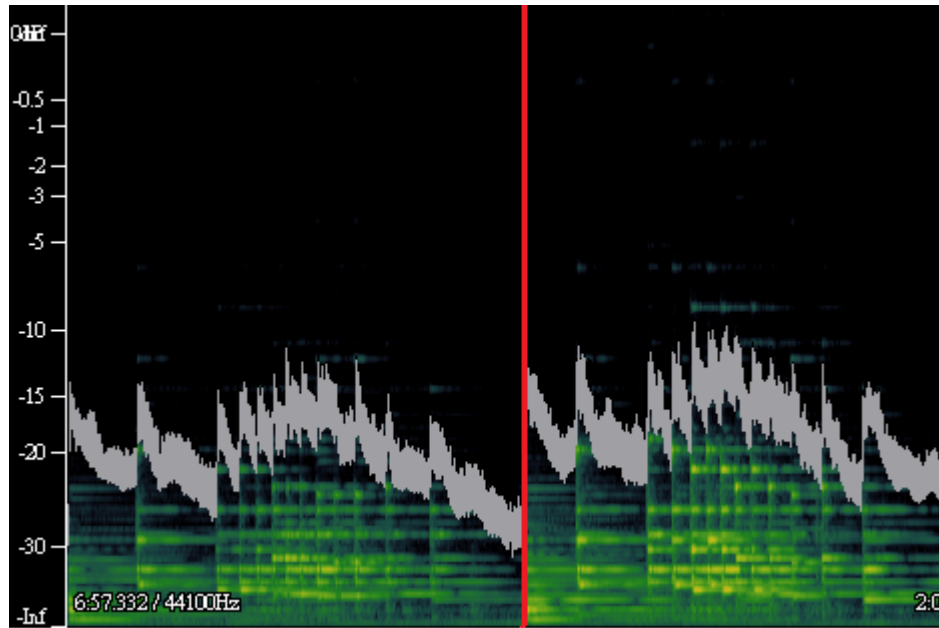


Yakov Flier (1912-77)'s recording from 1952 and Anatoly Vedernikov's (1920-93) recording from 1957 present another kind of diminuendo style. They do not particularly stress the beginning of the phrases but still let the melodic line fade away gradually.

SV 2-2-3: Flier



SV 2-2-4: Vedernikov:

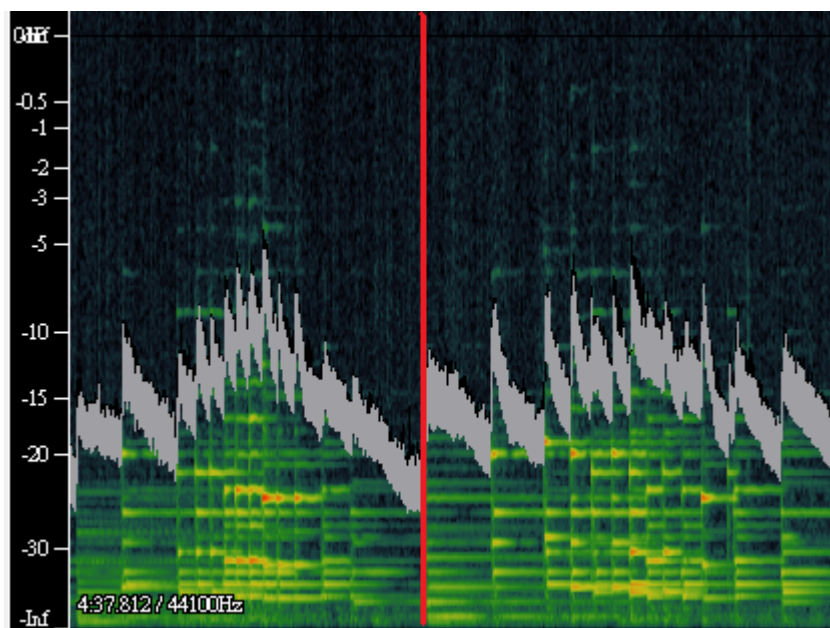


All four performances by these Russian pianists have certain features in common. If we separate the first chord from the melodic line and consider the rest as a phrase by itself (as circled in red in the score sample Score 2-4), I would argue that even though all four are different and are slightly arch-like (not perfectly in decrescendo fashion), the top of the arch is located in the first half of the phrase, which naturally sounds like – or gives the impression of – a diminuendo. In addition, from the first chord to the middle of the phrase, the four pianists do not play a (significant) crescendo line. All the phrases are still generally played in a diminuendo way.

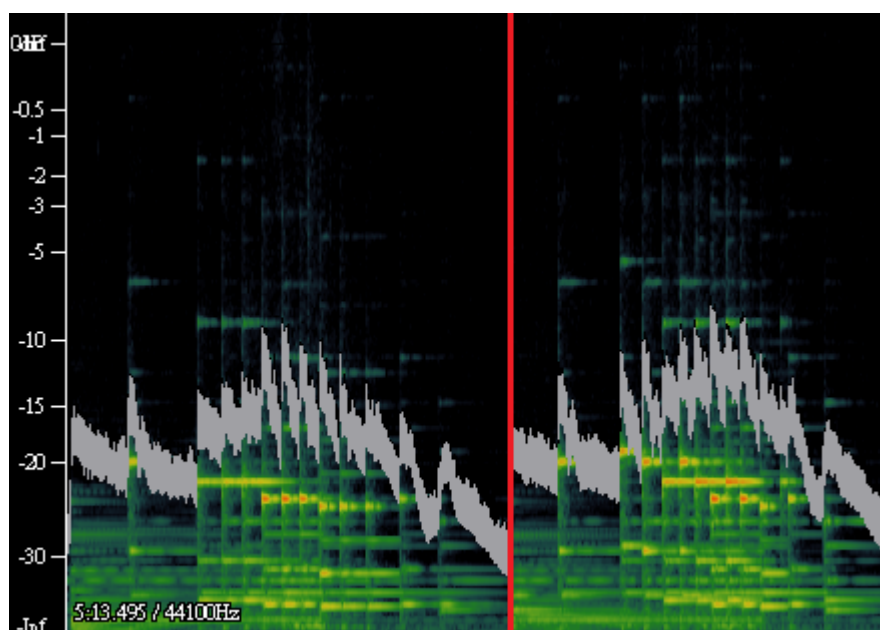
Compared to the performances of *Clair de lune* from the pianists in the West, the diminuendo phrasing of the four pianists above would be considered ‘Russian’. In spite of having different educational, national, and linguistic backgrounds, in the recordings of Polish-American pianist Josef Hofmann (1876-1957) from 1938, German pianist Walter Giesecking (1985-1956) from 1939, French pianist Jacques Fevrier (1900-1979)

from 1970 and Monique Haas (1909-1987) from 1968, British pianist Moura Lympany (1916-2005) from 1988, and French pianist Samson François (1924-1970) from 1959, all play the excerpt in non-decrescendo phrases. Furthermore, from the start to the middle of the phrases, the pianists also all play with a crescendo instead of a gradual diminuendo.

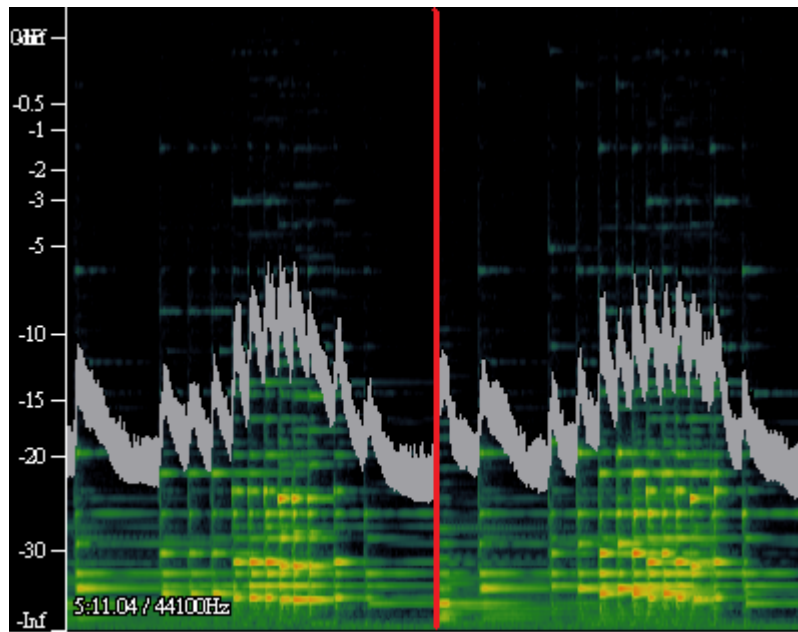
SV 2-2-5: Hofmann



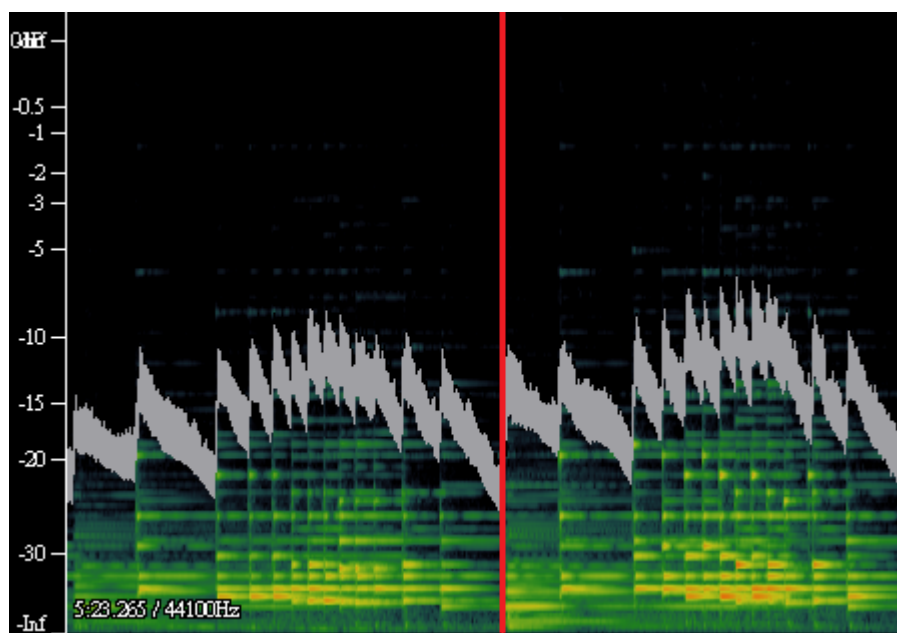
SV 2-2-6: Giesecking



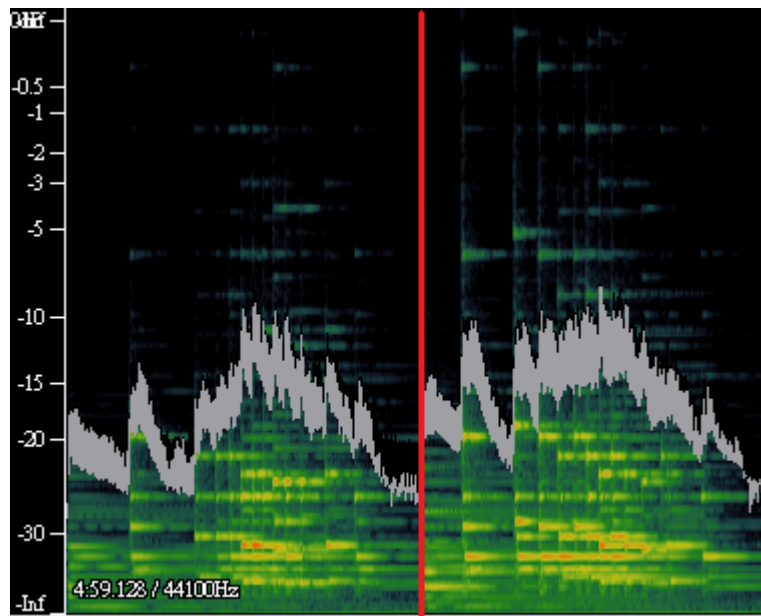
SV 2-2-7: Fevrier (Audio Example Track 4)



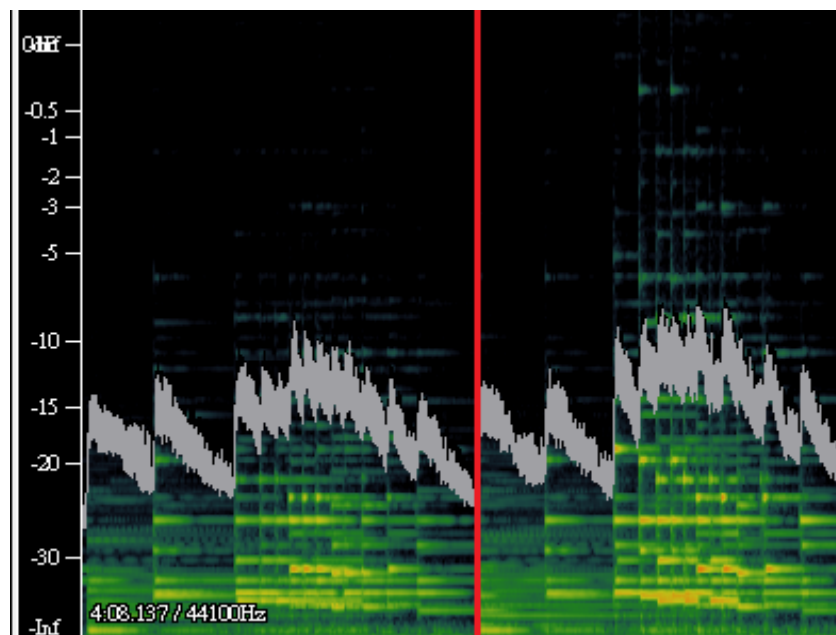
SV 2-2-8: Haas



SV 2-2-9: Lympany



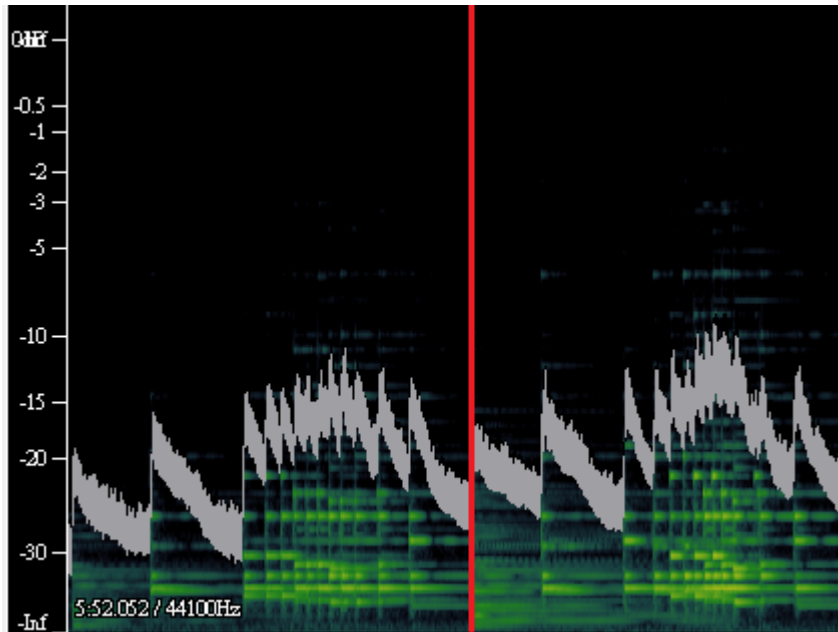
SV 2-2-10: François



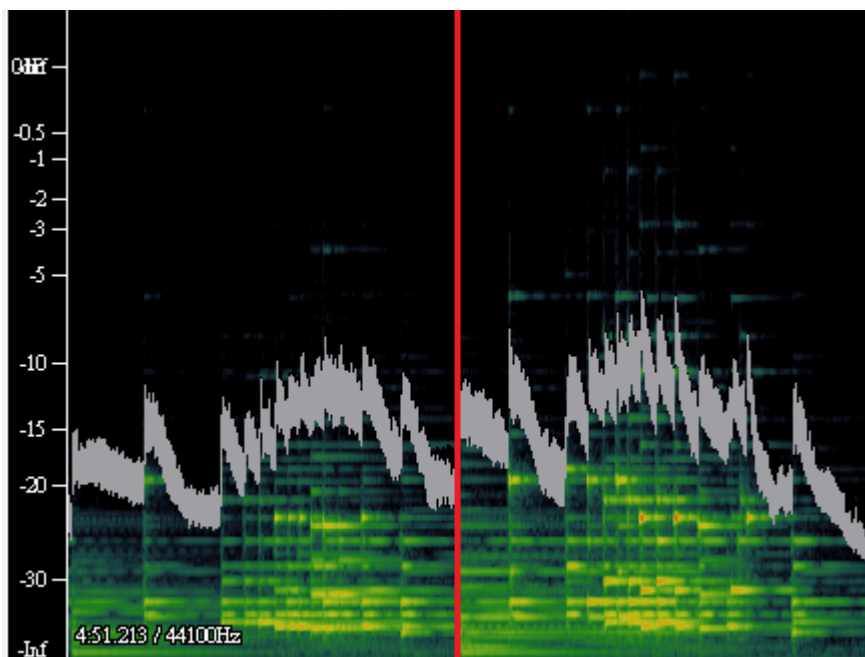
Among a slightly later generation, this performing feature is generally still the same among non-Russian pianists. In the recordings of Bulgarian-born American pianist Alexis Weissenberg (1929-) from 1960, Austrian pianist Jörg Demus (1928-) from 1962, and American pianist Leon Fleisher's (1928-) recording from 2004, all play it in a

similar way to their previous western colleagues and not with the expressive Russian diminuendo.

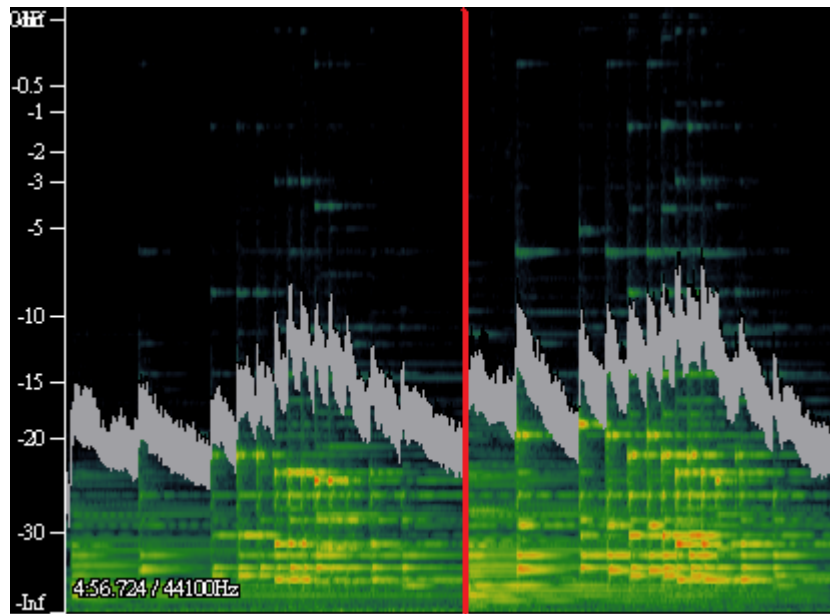
SV 2-2-11: Weissenberg



SV 2-2-12: Demus

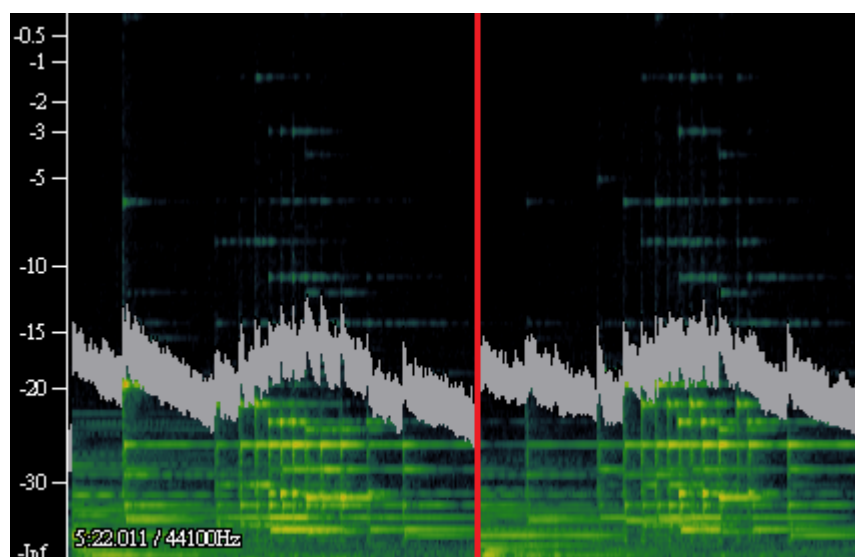


SV 2-2-13: Fleisher

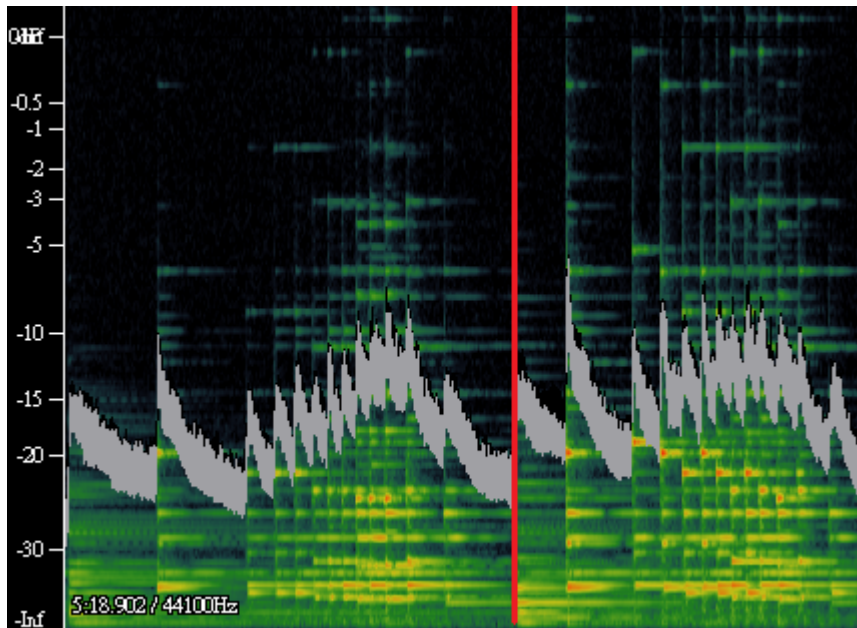


In the recordings of Czech pianist Ivan Moravec (1930-) from 1964 and American pianist Van Cliburn (1934-) from 1972, the former's first phrase and the latter's second phrase recall the feeling of the Russian diminuendo style. In the other phrase, nevertheless, both of them play with a noticeable crescendo in the first half of the musical sentence. In addition, compared to their Russian colleagues, they locate the top of the arch-like phrase slightly after its centre, with the result that the phrase sounds closer to the Italian *bel canto* phrasing than the Russian 'fading away' style.

SV 2-2-14: Moravec



SV 2-2-15: Van Cliburn



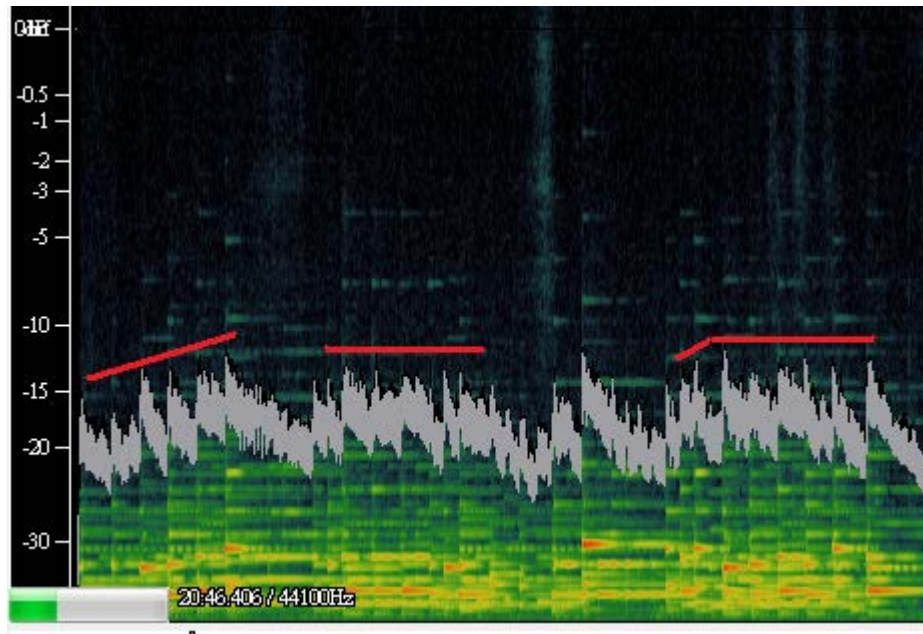
Besides bars 15-18 of Debussy's *Clair de lune*, the beginning of Schubert's Piano Sonata in B flat major, D960, is also a good example. On the score the composer also only gives volume suggestion (*pp*) and does not give any dynamic instructions. Therefore, pianists are supposed to shape the melodies according to their performing preferences.

Score 2-5: Schubert Piano Sonata, D960, bars 1-11



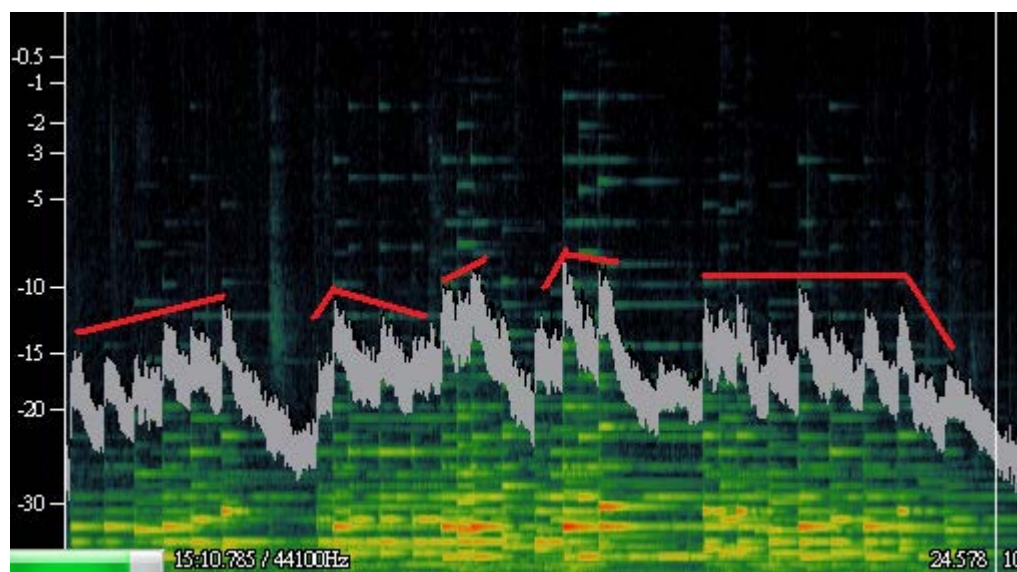
Many pianists play the second and third phrases in the first section (circled in red in Score 2-5) in a calm, serene manner, especially the pianists with a strong Austro-German background. Here is how Rudolf Serkin plays this excerpt:

SV 2-3-1: Serkin (Audio Exmample Track 5)



Alfred Brendel, in a live performance from 1997, expresses the second phrase with more dynamic changes but keeps the third phrase generally at the same volume.

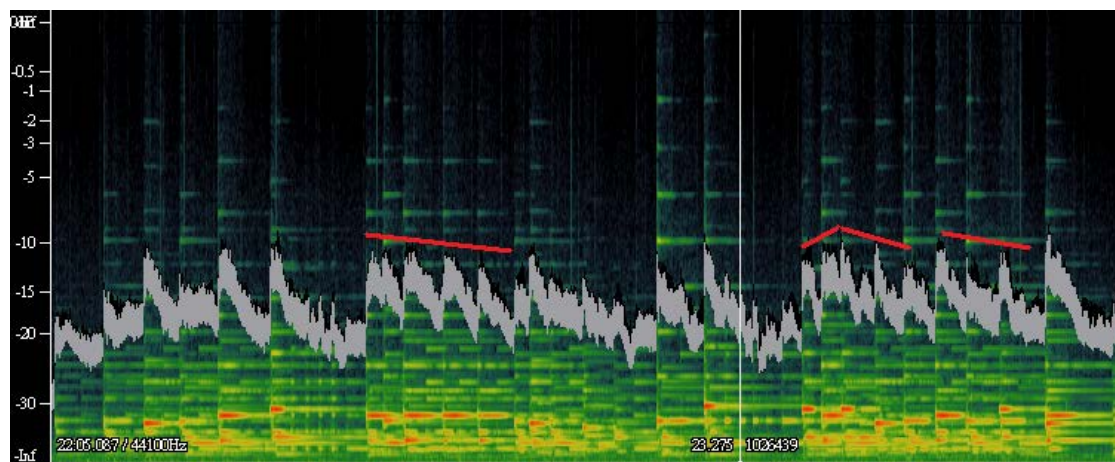
SV 2-3-2: Brendel (Audio Example Track 6)



In performances by Russian pianists, however, especially early ones, the typical Russian diminuendo singing approach is just as evident as in *Clair de lune*. Frequently, we can hear the dynamically descending phrases in their performances.

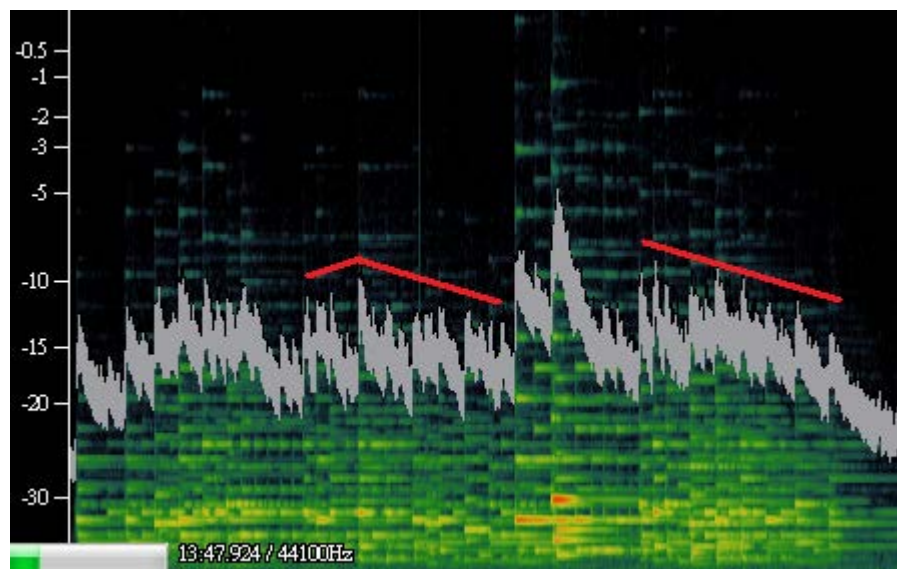
Here is Maria Yudina (1899-1970) unusually slow performance recorded in 1947.

SV 2-3-3: Yudina (Audio Example Track 7)



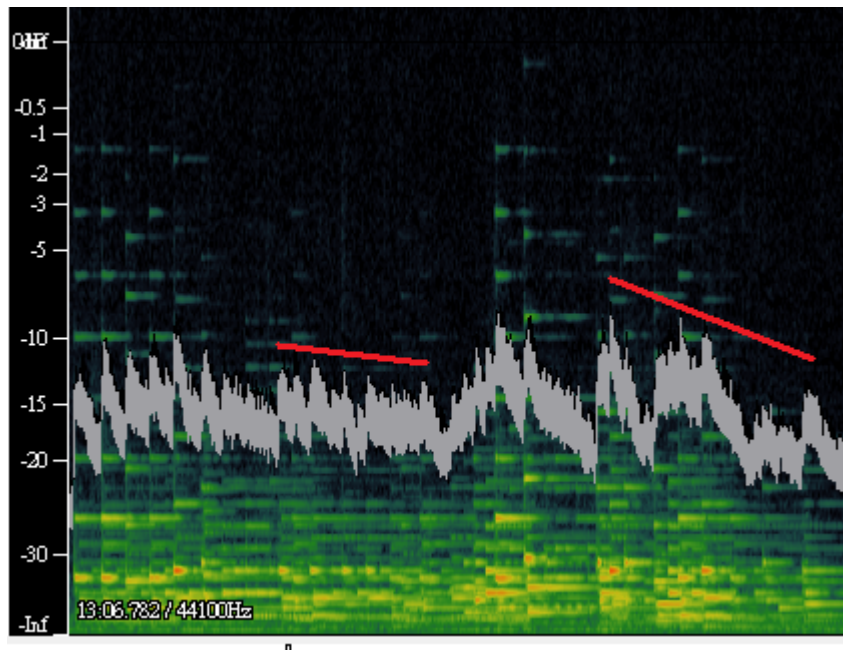
Here is Vladimir Sofronitsky (1901-1961)'s performance from 1959. The way he plays the beginning of the third phrase, the last beat of bar 5, is actually very similar to how Gilels plays bar 17 of *Clair de lune*:

SV 2-3-4: Sofronitsky (Audio Example Track 8)

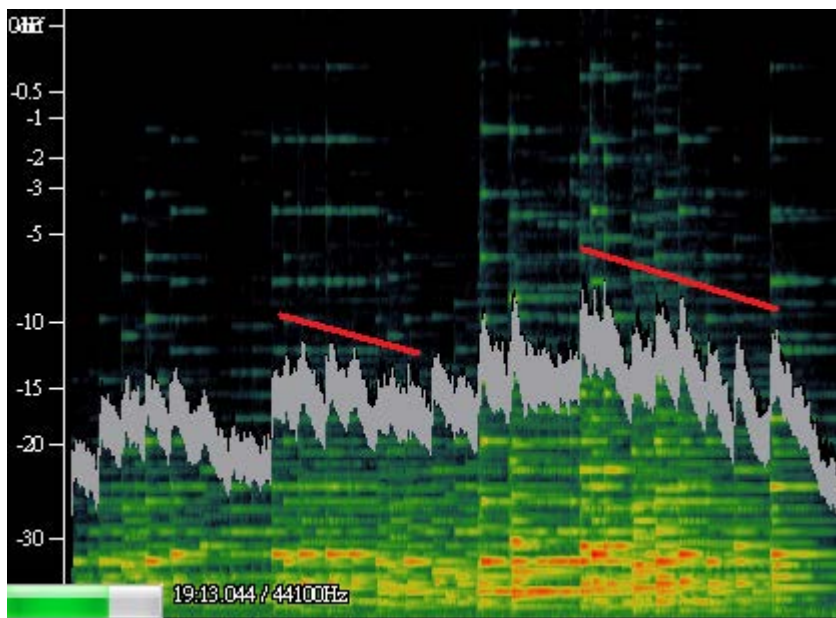


Vladimir Horowitz (1903-1989) left two live recordings of the piece, and both of them show the Russian diminuendo phrasing:

SV 2-3-5: Horowitz (1953) (Audio Example Track 9)



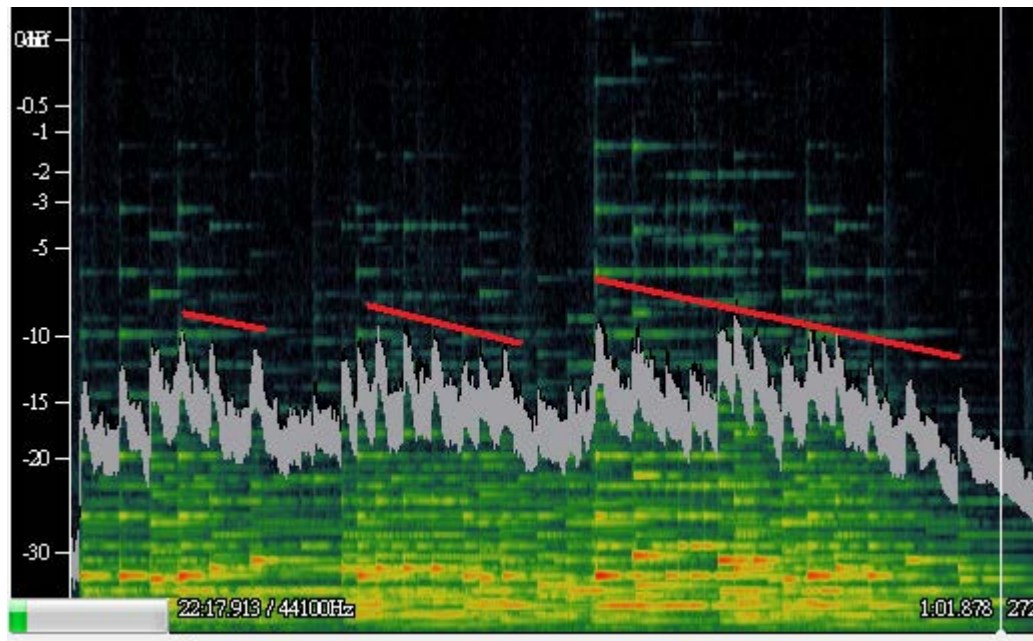
SV 2-3-6: Horowitz (1987)



In the recorded performances of Sofronitsky and Horowitz, the pianists not only play the second and third phrase in the diminuendo style but also the last two chords

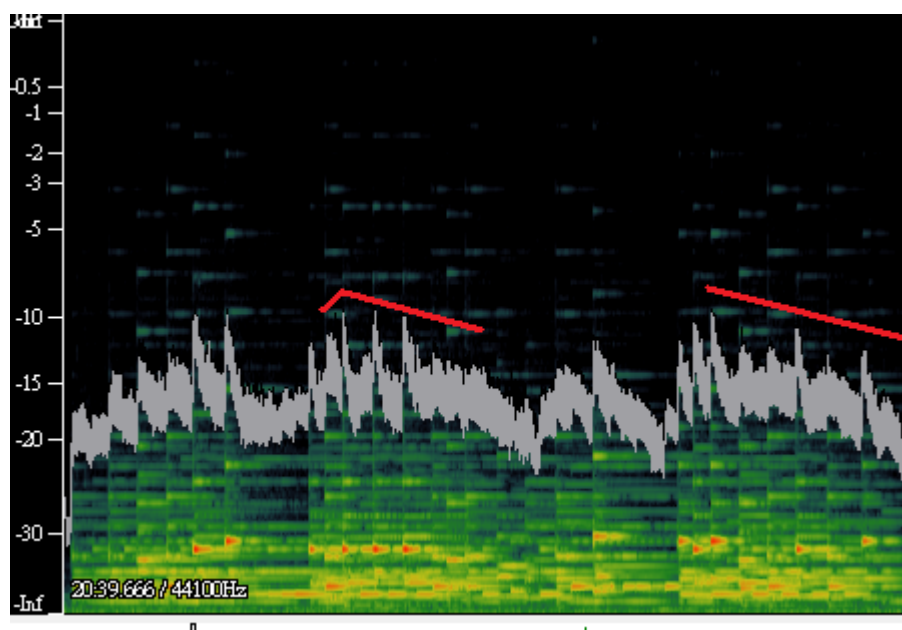
of the first phrase, which also form a 'fading away' effect. In Lazar Berman's (1930-2005) performance from 1990, he also presents this phrasing pattern:

SV 2-3-7: Berman (Audio Example Track 10)



In Ashkenazy's recorded performance from 1987, he does not adopt the diminuendo phrasing pattern in the first phrase, but his second and third phrases are still arguably 'Russian':

SV 2-3-8: Ashkenazy



Based on these Debussy and Schubert cases, one should not infer that only Russian pianists would ever play those excerpts in a diminuendo fashion, or that all Russians must always play those singing lines with a ‘fading away’ dynamic pattern. The discussion above rather attempts to demonstrate that the ‘Russian diminuendo singing phrase’ is a kind of performing habit or preference commonly heard in the playing of (early) Russian pianists. They have a tendency to sing in diminuendo lines instead of in an Italian, arch-like, *bel canto* way at the piano. In the case of Horowitz, he constantly adapts this ‘Russian diminuendo phrasing’, even in passages where composers actually give the opposite dynamic indications. In Scriabin’s Étude in C sharp minor, Op. 2 No. 1, for example, although the composer notated an arch-like dynamic singing phrase on the score, Horowitz still interprets it in the Russian diminuendo way (see Score 2-6):¹⁷¹

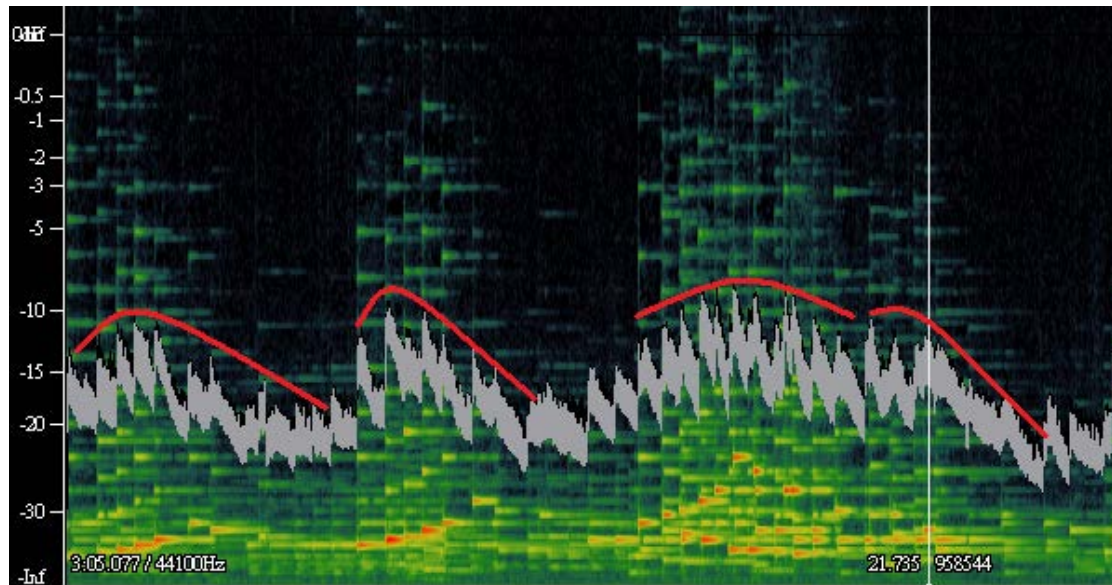
Score 2-6: Scriabin, Étude, Op. 2 No.1, bars 1-8



¹⁷¹ Horowitz recorded it many times. Here I choose a performance in 1963 (Sony S2K 53457).

Here is how Horowitz plays the first eight bars:

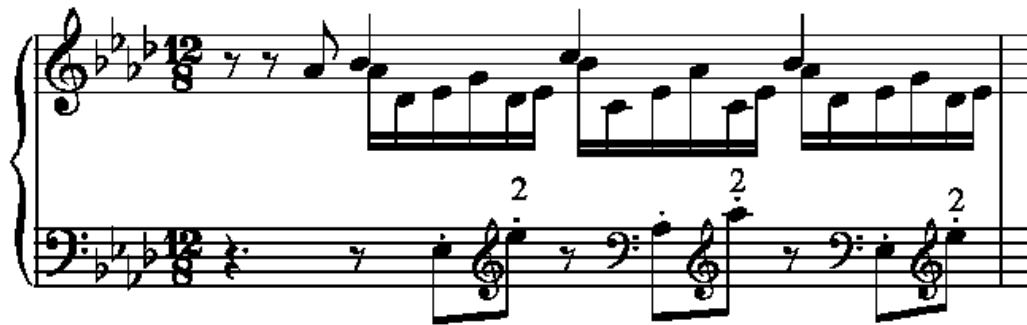
SV 2-4: Horowitz plays Scriabin Étude Op. 2-1, bars 1-8 (Audio Example Track 11)



3.4.4. Singing Style from the Editions: Siloti's Liszt Edition and Bach Transcriptions

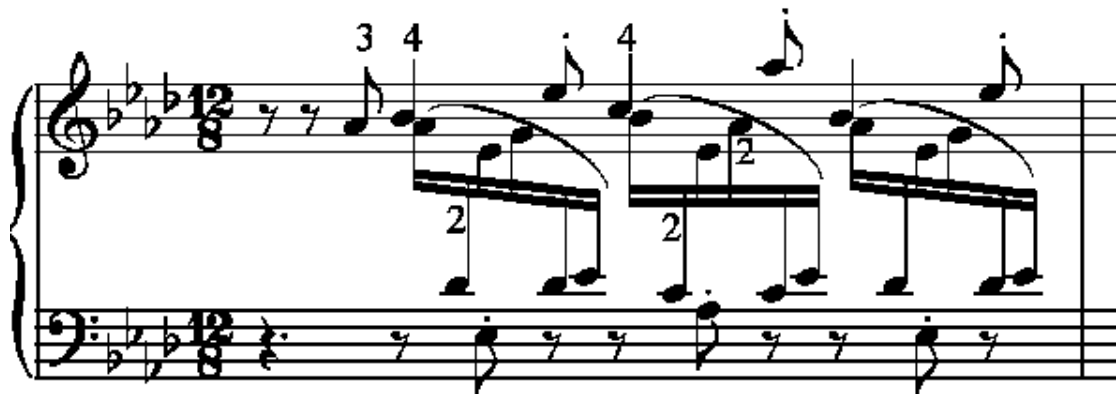
We can also see how the Russian pianists emphasise singing qualities and adopt a melody-orientated style through the editions of the early Russian maestros, for example, Siloti's Liszt editions and his Bach transcriptions. Although Siloti also added some extra bravura passages, such as the added octaves at the end of the *Totentanz*, his Liszt editions are notable for their clear musical phrases. In most of the pieces he edited, Siloti rearranged the location of the melodies on the original score and clearly identified the hand to which the melodies belong. In the original version of *Au bord d'une source*, the composer wrote the beginning with virtuosic left hand jumps:

Score 2-7-1: Liszt *Au bord d'une source*, bar 1



In Siloti's edition, however, he rewrote it as:

Score 2-7-2: Liszt, *Au bord d'une source* (Siloti edition), bar 1



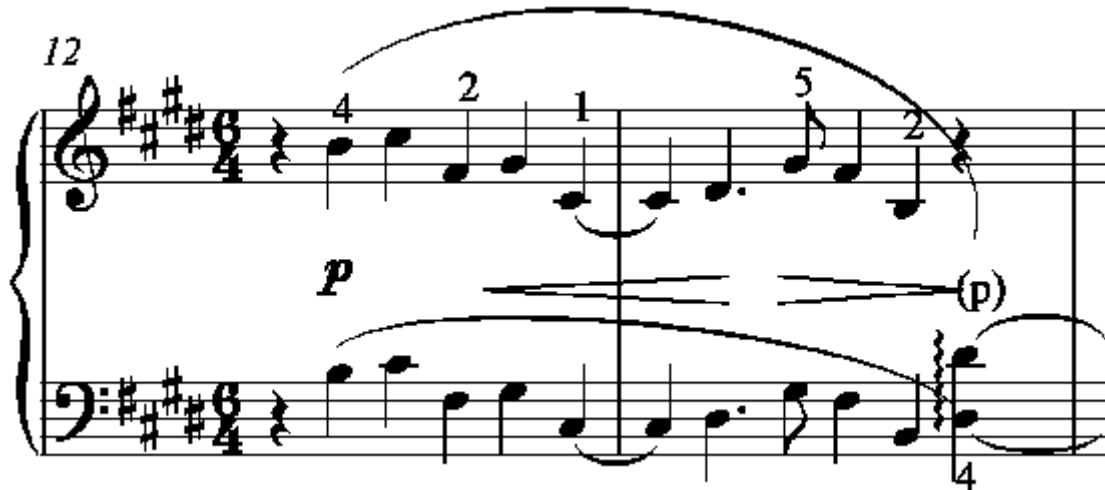
Obviously, clarifying the melodies and making them sing are his goal, not technical display. Also, Siloti did not miss an opportunity to make the melody easier to sing in his edition. In Liszt's *Sposalizio*, the composer's original version of bars 5 and 6 is written in octaves:

Score 2-8-1: Liszt, *Sposalizio*, bars 5-6



In Siloti's edition, not only did he rewrite it for both hands, he also added expression indications guiding pianists to sing:

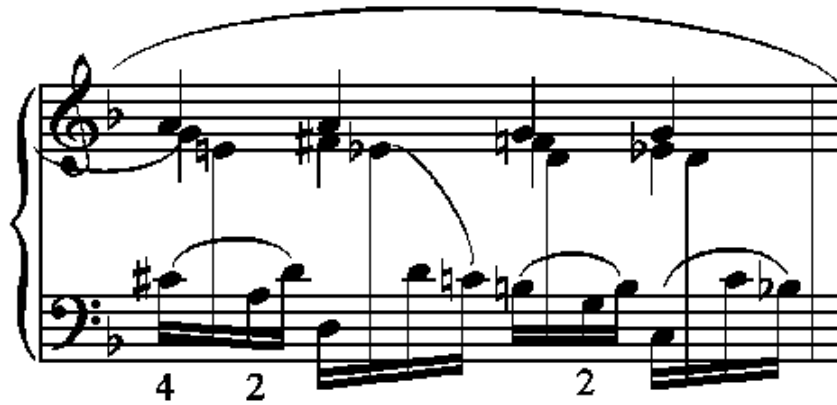
Score 2-8-2: Liszt, *Sposalizio* (Siloti edition), bars 5-6



In Siloti's Bach transcriptions and arrangements, the melody is also always the first concern. The four piano transcriptions of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor BWV 565 for organ by Carl Tausig, Ferruccio Busoni, Alfred Cortot, and Alexander Siloti, show their different conceptions of the aim of transcription. All of them knew the ability and characteristics of the piano well, and Tausig, Busoni, and Cortot all focus on recreating the colours of the organ (even the orchestra) on the piano. Siloti, on the other hand, focuses on clarifying the melodies. In bar 55, Siloti is the only one of the four to mark out the two higher voices by distributing the complete bass voice in the left hand, the way he did in his Liszt editions.

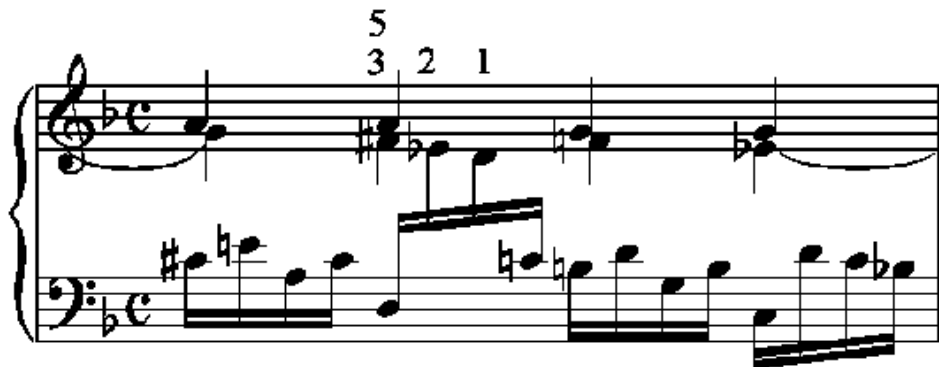
Tausig's transcription:

Score 2-9-1: Bach, Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Tausig), bar 50



Busoni's transcription:

Score 2-9-2: Bach, Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Busoni), bar 50



Cortot's transcription:

Score 2-9-3: Bach, Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Cortot), bar 50



Siloti's transcription:

Score 2-9-4: Bach, Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Siloti), bar 50



In bars 67-70, the other three performers transcribe the repeat phrase differently to make dissimilar sounds, but Siloti keeps the two phrases the same – to focus on the melody by keeping it simple. Siloti was hardly ignorant of the transcriptions of Tausig and Busoni – his piano transcription of Bach's *Chaconne* was an arrangement after Busoni's version – but Siloti still keeps the melodies as clear and straightforward as possible. These are the characteristics of his version, and also reveal the aesthetics of melody-orientated style.

Tausig's transcription:

Score 2-10-1: Bach, Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Tausig), bars 67-70

This musical score for Tausig's transcription of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor, bars 67-70, is presented in two systems. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The right hand (treble clef) plays a continuous eighth-note arpeggiated pattern. The left hand (bass clef) plays a series of chords, with some notes marked with a 'y' (likely indicating a grace note or a specific articulation). The first system includes fingering numbers (5, 2, 1, 2) under the right hand and a 'Ped.' (pedal) marking under the left hand. The second system includes a '(p)' (piano) marking under the left hand. The score is marked with a dashed line at the top, indicating a repeat or a specific section.

Busoni's transcription:

Score 2-10-2: Bach, Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Busoni), bars 67-70

This musical score for Busoni's transcription of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor, bars 67-70, is presented in two systems. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The right hand (treble clef) plays a series of chords, with some notes marked with a 'y' (likely indicating a grace note or a specific articulation). The left hand (bass clef) plays a series of chords, with some notes marked with a 'y' (likely indicating a grace note or a specific articulation). The first system includes a 'poco f' (poco forte) marking under the left hand. The second system includes a dashed line at the top, indicating a repeat or a specific section. The score is marked with a dashed line at the top, indicating a repeat or a specific section.

Cortot's transcription:

Score 2-10-3: Bach, Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Cortot), bars 67-70

This musical score for Cortot's transcription of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor, bars 67-70, is presented in two systems. The first system consists of two staves: the upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature (C), featuring a melodic line with triplets and slurs, marked *mp*; the lower staff is in bass clef, featuring a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, marked *f*. The second system also consists of two staves: the upper staff continues the melodic line from the first system, and the lower staff continues the rhythmic accompaniment, both marked *f*.

Siloti's transcription:

Score 2-10-4: Bach, Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Siloti), bars 67-70

This musical score for Siloti's transcription of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor, bars 67-70, is presented in two systems. The first system consists of two staves: the upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature (C), featuring a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings *f* and *p*; the lower staff is in bass clef, featuring a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes, marked *f*. The second system also consists of two staves: the upper staff continues the melodic line from the first system, and the lower staff continues the rhythmic accompaniment, both marked *f*.

Last but not least, we can also see Siloti's conception of dynamic and textural balance in evidence in his editions. In bar 88 of Liszt's *Au lac de Wallenstadt*, the original version is:

Score 2-11-1: Liszt, *Au lac de Wallenstadt*, bar 88



In the right hand, pianists may easily play the middle voice (the major second including D flat and E flat) too loud when using Liszt's version (because they have to play the two notes with one thumb). As we have seen in Case Studies 2 and 3, this kind of dynamic balance is not attractive to Russian ears. In order to sing out the melody line (the G, A flat, and B flat) more naturally and also prevent the major second from becoming too loud, Siloti re-voiced the chord as:

Score 2-11-2: Liszt, *Au lac de Wallenstadt* (Siloti edition), bar 88



With this redistribution of voices between the hands, Siloti created a more balanced sound (according to the aesthetics of the early Russian Piano School). The characteristics of Siloti's editions and transcriptions inevitably reflect the Liszt School, but they are also coherent with the aesthetics of Russian pianism.

3.5. Tone Production

Directly associated with the melody-orientated style is tone production, another main goal of Russian piano training. 'Tone' means the sound a pianist produces, and 'colour' the varying of tone by a pianist in different layers. Singing phrases and beautiful tone are the two sides of the same coin. If a pianist cannot produce beautiful tone colours, the singing quality of the playing is definitely limited: if a pianist has difficulty in singing out a musical line from the keyboard, it is also hard to imagine that the tone under the fingers can be handsome. For the purposes of musical expression, Russian pianists pay great attention to singing quality and focus on tone production as well as colours. Gary Graffman says that Vengerova 'was interested primarily in sound – she had an obsession with beautiful sound and legato.'¹⁷² In an interview, Horowitz stressed that 'the finger must sing' and one must 'sing scales' instead of purely displaying technique.¹⁷³ Siloti also stated that 'piano playing has four requirements; tone, tone, tone, tone', which actually means a focus on sound and singing tone.¹⁷⁴ Safonov expressed the idea that 'Never must an exercise, dry as it may appear, be played with a dead sound. Vividness of tone is the only condition of fruitful study.' Beautiful tone and sound are the goal of his teaching.¹⁷⁵

There was a time when pianists debated whether or not one could actually control the quality of the piano tone produced, but such discussion has long since disappeared as pianists have realised that it is possible to play the same key with

¹⁷² Graffman, 43.

¹⁷³ Jan Holcman, 'An interview with Horowitz,' *Saturday Review of Literature*, Vol.XLIII No.18 (April 30, 1960), 60.

¹⁷⁴ Barber, 235.

¹⁷⁵ Anatole Leikin, *The Performing Style of Alexander Scriabin* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 23.

different tones by means of different touches. The secret lies in the speed of the pianist's hand at the instant it strikes the keyboard.¹⁷⁶ The early Russian pianists did not have scientific approaches to analysing tone production, but the majority of them firmly believed that piano tone can be altered using different touches. Based on empirical experience the Moscow-trained pianists shared a very consistent view of piano touch and singing tone production in their treatises and comments.

First of all, they knew that there is no absolute way to produce beautiful singing tones. Both Liszt and Anton Rubinstein had a beautiful tone, but they played differently due to their physical differences. Liszt used to hold his wrist high because he had very long fingers. Anton Rubinstein's, on the other hand, were not at all long. He had a very broad hand but short fingers (Rubinstein once said that he did not have hands, but paws),¹⁷⁷ so he would have found it awkward to maintain a high wrist.¹⁷⁸ In their manner of playing, the two great virtuosi looked quite dissimilar to each other.

3.5.1. Relaxed Wrists and Arms, with Weight from the Whole Body

However, the Russians had much better access to Rubinstein's performances than Liszt's and they thought the greatness of Rubinstein's technique came from his relaxed wrists and arms as well as the use of the weight of his whole body. Siloti also emphasised the importance of weight: while playing the piano, a pianist should keep the body straight and comfortable so that strength can 'come from the floor if necessary.'¹⁷⁹ It is also why Igumnov stated that 'tone production depends not just on the fingers. The source of tone is somewhere here in our back.'¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ Gerig, 439-441.

¹⁷⁷ Catherine Bowen, *Free Artist-The Story of Anton and Nicolas Rubinstein* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939), 335-336.

¹⁷⁸ Konstantin Igumnov, 'Some remarks on technique' in *The Russian Piano School*. ed. and trans. C. Barnes (London: Kahn & Averill, 2007), 80.

¹⁷⁹ Barber, 235.

¹⁸⁰ Igumnov, 78.

Why should pianists use the weight of the body to control the tone instead of using only their fingers? Igumnov's student, Lev Oborin, argued that it is because obtaining equal strength in all the fingers on their own is virtually impossible. Therefore, 'the weight of the whole arm comes to our aid, flowing down, as it were, from the shoulder to the fingers and creating an equal load on each of them.'¹⁸¹ The weight on the fingers should 'flow' down from the shoulder to the fingertips without getting stuck en route at the elbow. How does a pianist actually transport their weight from torso to fingertips? Lhévinne, Igumnov's classmate, based on his observation of Rubinstein, wrote that 'instead of sitting bolt upright, Rubinstein was inclined decidedly toward the keyboard. In all his forte passages he employed the weight of his body and shoulders.'¹⁸²

But even if a pianist can successfully do this, how can he or she prevent the sound from being harsh and sharp? Relaxed wrists are the key. According Lhévinne:

Rubinstein could be heard over the entire orchestra playing fortissimo. The piano seemed to peal out gloriously as the king of the entire orchestra, but there was never any suggestion of noise [...]. Because Rubinstein's wrists were always free from stiffness in such passages and he took advantage of the natural shock absorber at the wrist which we all possess.¹⁸³

Safonov, the teacher of Igmunov and Lhévinne, wrote a short technical treatise

¹⁸¹ Lev Oborin, 'Some principles of pianoforte technique' in *The Russian Piano School*. ed. and trans. C. Barnes (London: Kahn & Averill, 2007), 73-74.

¹⁸² Josef Lhévinne, *Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing*, 29.

¹⁸³ Lhévinne, 31.

entitled *New Formula for the Piano Teacher and Piano Student* in 1915, which proposed the same method of correct and natural piano playing. He regarded 'finger independence, evenness in touch, dexterity and tonal beauty' as the four major parts of piano playing, with tonal beauty being the highest goal for pianists to pursue. In order to achieve this:

[S]ound must never be produced by hitting the keys, but by an elastic fall on them from the root of the fingers, so that the weight of the arm is felt in the finger-tips, without the slightest stiffness of the wrist.¹⁸⁴

Siloti also considered the free-flowing, loose, and rotating wrist movement as an infallible way of producing the tone he heard in his own ear. Only the fingers were to be firm: the wrist, hand, and forearm loose.¹⁸⁵ The idea of relaxed wrists and arms is a golden rule for Russian pianists. Neuhaus's statement, '[t]he condition *sine qua non* for a good tone is complete freedom and relaxation of the arm and wrist from the shoulders to the tips of the fingers which should always be at the ready' is just another example of it.¹⁸⁶

3.5.2. Touch and Hand Position

Naturally, the fingers are still crucial in piano playing because they are the parts that actually touch the keyboard. As far as touch is concerned, the early Russians had a similar view. First of all, the fingers should be attached to the keyboard, or at least be close to it as much as possible. In order to achieve that, pianists are supposed to

¹⁸⁴ Wassili Safonoff, *New Formula for the Piano Teacher and Piano Student* (London: J.&W. Chester, Ltd., 1915), 15.

¹⁸⁵ Barber, 230.

¹⁸⁶ Neuhaus, *The Art of Piano Playing*, 83.

abandon all unnecessary body movements. Igmunov stated that the 'pianist needs a calm finger position and with just downward movement, not up and down, [and should] lift the finger then lower it. I strongly dislike any rapid downward movements, just as I don't like upward flourishes.'¹⁸⁷ Feinberg also emphasised the importance of restraint. He thought that 'essential in playing the piano [was] a certain degree of restraint, achieving tone production by the simplest, most efficient means, and the elimination of all superfluous gestures such as swinging the head and body, flapping the elbows [...].'¹⁸⁸

Secondly, how the key is touched is of course very important. The hand position on the keys can vary according to the hand's individual features, but in principle the fingers should be slightly bent and lie with their cushions (not the nails) on the keys and be supported on all three joints. When a pianist actually plays the key, only the third joint from the fingertips should be lifted, and the movement up and down is solely at the third joint. In conclusion, Lhévinne argued that the richness and singing quality of the tone depends very largely upon (1) the amount of key surface covered with the well-cushioned part of the finger, and (2) the natural 'spring' which accompanies the loose wrist. Moreover, (3) the upper arm and forearm must have a feeling of extreme lightness – as though they are floating in the air and with an entire absence of nervous tension or stiffening, (4) every key must be touched to its bottom, and (5) the raised fingers must stay very close to the surface of the keys.¹⁸⁹ In Lhévinne's opinion, traditional 'non-legato' playing – in which the hands should be held as stiff and hard as a rock while the fingers arise from the third joint but with all the joints bent, and then hit the keyboard directly – is completely unacceptable.

¹⁸⁷ Igmunov, 78.

¹⁸⁸ Feinberg, 7.

¹⁸⁹ Lhévinne, 12-16.

However, it was an approach frequently applied by the traditional French school for the sake of clean sound. This is not to claim that any Russian pianist fails to appreciate the value of pure finger technique, but the richness and beauty of tone is much more important than clear but dry playing, though of course the Russians did also focus on clarity in their performances. Pianists can change those rules to create different colours, even a harsh one if it fits the music, but in general the early Russian pianists had a firm idea of correct position and touch and one still can hear the colour and singing tone of Lhévinne, Rachmaninoff, Igumnov, Feinberg, and many other early Russian pianists in their recordings.

The wisdom of those early Russian maestros was cherished by later generations and has become a common value and principle in piano playing. When I interviewed Bella Davidovich on this issue, her answer was just like a summary of what has been discussed above:

The most important thing is that the touch comes from the cushions of the finger, not only from the tip of the finger. Igumnov always stressed that pianists should *touch* the piano, not *hit* the piano. That's why we say the art of producing good piano sound is associated with the art of 'touch'. The art of piano playing is to make beautiful sound, and in principle, pianists should avoid any percussive, harsh sound. In order to get beautiful tone, pianists should play 'into' the keys, to the depth of the key. The shoulders and the body should be always relaxed, but the fingers should be trained to be very strong. By controlling from the pillows and tip of the fingers, pianists can produce all kinds of sound by freely using all kinds of muscles and weight from the body. When the body is relaxed, then it is easy to transfer the

weight and power from the body to the fingers, so Russian pianists, for example, Gilels, still can play with big volume. But still, Gilels's sound was never harsh. Of course, it not easy to relax the whole body while playing. It requires years of learning, knowing how to coordinate the body. But the goal is there – relaxed body and strong fingers. And then, we can develop many little skills to produce all kinds of sound and colour. It is crucial to playing Rachmaninoff's piano music. In Prokofiev's, sometimes pianists are allowed to make very direct sound for the sake of the music; in Rachmaninoff's, the sound should be always round and warm.¹⁹⁰

If Davidovich's opinion can be so close to the teaching of Lhévinne, it probably suggests that for the early Russian pianists, those ideas of how to produce a good sound are generally held and practised by the pianists. Tone emerges as an important feature of early Russian pianism. However, how those principles are applied to individuals can be very personal – varying greatly from case by case because piano players have different muscles – and that discussion must be reserved for another occasion.

After examining these aspects of the early Russian Piano School, it is possible to observe all their qualities – solid technique, beautiful tone, melody-orientated singing style, and well-balanced sound proportion – in the performances of the best Russian singers at the piano. Rachmaninoff's playing, for example, is regarded as a legendary model of the Russian style by his colleagues and later generations, reflecting early Russian pianism as well as his own artistic characteristics. In the next chapter, the discussion will be focused on Rachmaninoff's own performing style. I will examine his

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Bella Davidovich (October 17th, 2010).

playing using Sonic Visualiser and discuss both the legacy he inherited from the Russian Piano School and also his personal approach to presenting ideas through the keyboard.

Chapter Three: Rachmaninoff's Performing Style at the Keyboard

After reviewing the characteristics and features of the traditional Russian Piano School, this chapter will focus on Rachmaninoff as a pianist: his own performing style. Rachmaninoff was notably successful in composition, conducting, and piano playing and had a particularly distinguished career as a pianist. Even those who disliked his music, for example Igor Stravinsky, still acknowledged Rachmaninoff's genius at the piano. Abram Chasins, a friend of the composer and a composer-pianist himself, beautifully described Rachmaninoff's piano performance as follows:

One no sooner reflects that perhaps the most fabulous aspects of his playing were his melodic eloquence and dramatic virtuosity than one remembers the unique rhythmic bite in sustained, short, or syncopated, accentuation, or his way of orchestrating chords with special beauty through individual distribution of balances and blendings. Rachmaninoff brought as much art to the performance of his own works and devotion to those of others as was brought to their creation.¹⁹¹

Readers can easily imagine Rachmaninoff's 'dramatic virtuosity', but what are the composer's 'melodic eloquence', 'unique rhythmic bite', style of 'accentuation', and 'individual distribution of balances and blendings'? These words vividly describe Rachmaninoff's art as a pianist, but could they not also describe most great virtuosos since Liszt? In this chapter, I would like to discuss Rachmaninoff's piano performance style by studying his recordings, scores, and revisions. I also intertwine my discussion

¹⁹¹ Abram Chasins, *Speaking of Pianists* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1957), 45.

with the opinions of the pianists I interviewed, aiming to combine all the perspectives I can collect and discuss their validity using evidence.¹⁹²

1. Studying Rachmaninoff's Performing Style

1.1 Rachmaninoff's Attitude Towards Recording and His Recording Legacy

Before entering into the discussion, it is worth knowing something of Rachmaninoff's attitude towards recording and his recorded legacy first. Rachmaninoff was never invited to the recording studio in Russia and only started to make recordings when he settled down in the United States. He began to make his first recordings for the Edison Company in April 1919 due to financial concerns. The collaboration was not a happy one, as Rachmaninoff was annoyed that the recordings were issued without his authorisation.¹⁹³ The result was that almost exactly a year after working for Edison, Rachmaninoff signed an exclusive five-year contract with the Victor Company. The company (which later became RCA) was pleased to comply with Rachmaninoff's restrictions and their initial contract finally became an uninterrupted cooperation lasting 22 years.¹⁹⁴

Rachmaninoff was very serious about recording. For him a gramophone record was a permanent artistic document. Therefore, Rachmaninoff remade recordings repeatedly until he was thoroughly satisfied with their musical worth. After his unhappy experience with Edison, Rachmaninoff was scrupulous about having all copies of records he had not approved destroyed, which is why there are no copies in Victor's own archives, and why there is no possibility of any ever turning up. For the

¹⁹² In the thesis I only discuss Rachmaninoff's sound recordings and do not take the reproduction of his piano rolls into account. I give my arguments in the Appendix and Table 3-0, page 403-405.

¹⁹³ Barrie Martyn, 439-445.

¹⁹⁴ Martyn, 439-455.

same reason, he did not allow any of his live performances to be broadcast, which unfortunately means that there are no live recordings of his concert performances to supplement his discography.¹⁹⁵ Rachmaninoff's attitude towards recording implies that the performances in his records do appropriately reflect his artistic and interpretative characteristics. On the other hand, that does not necessarily mean that he himself would have given similar performances.¹⁹⁶ All I can state here is that the performances in his recordings create the impression he wanted the audience to keep.¹⁹⁷

As a pianist, Rachmaninoff was recording from 1919 to 1942 (albeit with a three-year gap from 1931 to 1933 due to the Great Depression), and his own compositions and transcriptions featured most prolifically (see Table 3-1, page 406). He recorded his *Prelude* Op.3, No.2; Op.23 No.5, No.10; Op.32 No.3, No.6, No.7; *Étude-Tableau* Op.33 No.2, No.7; Op.39, No.6; *Humoresque*, Op.10 No.5; *Mélodie*, Op.3 No.3; *Sérénade*, Op.3 No.5; *Moment Musical*, Op.16 No.2; *Oriental Sketch*, *Polka de V.R.*, four piano concertos and *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*, as well as his complete published transcriptions.

Besides Rachmaninoff's recordings, the revisions of his early scores are another important source for understanding his musical language in practice. In 1940 and 1941 Rachmaninoff prepared new editions of his works, marked 'revised and as played by the composer', including *Mélodie* and *Sérénade* from *Morceaux de Fantaisie*, Op.3,

¹⁹⁵ Martyn, 435-449. There is a tape which records a fragment of a performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.1, said to be Rachmaninoff's, restored at the Sound Archive of the British Library. But the identity of the performer has not yet been confirmed. (Interview with Jonathan Summers, the curator of the Sound Archive of the British Library.)

¹⁹⁶ I will come back to this issue by discussing his 'live' performance of his *Symphonic Dances* at the piano later in this chapter.

¹⁹⁷

Humoresque from *Morceaux de Salon*, Op.10, No.2 from *Moments Musicaux*, Op.16, song transcriptions of *Lilacs* Op.21 No.5 and *Daisies*, Op.38, No.3. All of these were published in New York by Charles Foley. If Rachmaninoff had not died in 1943, he might have provided more revisions of his pieces. The reason Rachmaninoff prepared them is not clear. He might have been aiming to extend the copyright on the compositions (like Stravinsky in the late 1940s), but that could not explain his revising the song transcription *Lilacs* (1914) instead of his most popular *Preludes*, written in 1892, 1903, and 1911. But at least it is certain that the re-edited pieces were constantly played by Rachmaninoff in concerts, thus his revisions of melody phrasing, sound and voice arrangement, harmonic and dynamic design, as well as musical language, can be viewed as a reflection of his long experience as a concert pianist. Most importantly, Rachmaninoff was involved in recording nearly all the revised versions, which allows us to compare his editorial revisions and his performances.

Besides his own works, Rachmaninoff's concert repertoire extends from the Baroque to his contemporary Medtner, and he played a lot of other composers' works in the studio and concert hall (see Table 3-2, page 408). In addition, he loved his 'double identity' as a composer and a pianist, which enabled him to bring a particular kind of creative interpretation into his performance. In an interview, Rachmaninoff said that:

Interpretation demands something of the creative instinct. If you are a composer, you have an affinity with other composers. You can make contact with their imaginations, knowing something of their problems and their ideals. You can give their works *colour*. That is the most important thing for me in my *pianoforte* interpretations, *colour*. So you can make music live. Without colour it

is dead. The greatest interpreters of the past were composers in most instances. Paganini, so we understand, was a king of virtuosity. But he was a composer, too. Liszt and [Anton] Rubinstein; and in our time Paderewski and Kreisler. [...] It makes no difference whether these are first or fourth-rate composers. What matters is, they had the creative mind and so were able to communicate with other minds of the same order.¹⁹⁸

1.2 Basic Observations on Rachmaninoff's Performances in the Recordings

Before beginning the discussion of Rachmaninoff's performing style, some basic observations based on the comparison of his scores and performances should be offered. First, Rachmaninoff's performances in recording show considerable consistency. As far as his non-revised works and other composers' pieces are concerned, in the three recordings of his Prelude in C sharp minor (1919, 1921, and 1928), *Polka de VR* (1919, 1921, and 1928), and two recordings of Chopin's Waltz Op.64, No.3 (1919 and 1927) and Waltz Op.64, No.1 "*Minute*" (1921 and 1923), and Tchaikovsky's *Troika* (1920 and 1928), some phrasings may have minor changes in rubato, but the general character, interpretation, and even speed remain the same: the two recordings of Waltz Op.64, No.3 have almost exactly the same duration (2'43"). The biggest change between two recordings of the same piece is his transcription of *Liebesfreud* (recorded 1925 and 1942). In the second recording, Rachmaninoff cut the splendid cadenza, a high point of the original recording. This was probably because he wished to squeeze the new recording onto one record side. Even in this case, his general interpretation and phrasing hardly changed. As many writers have commented before, once Rachmaninoff set up an interpretation, he had a tendency to stick to it.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Basil Maine, 'Conversation with Rachmaninoff' in *Musical Opinion Vol.60, October 1936*, 14-15.

¹⁹⁹ The consistency of Rachmaninoff's interpretation in the different performances of the piece has

In his two revisions, *Sérénade* (1922 and 1936) and *Lilacs* (1923 and 1942), Rachmaninoff revealed more about his performing habits. The two recordings of *Lilacs* correspond to the original and revised versions of that piece respectively. However, in the case of his *Sérénade*, composed in 1892, the first recording is almost identical to the revision he published in 1940. His second recording, in 1936, gets even closer to the 1940 revision, but still has some minor differences. Rachmaninoff must have been very fond of the melodies he created here because he used the materials and harmonic structure from *Sérénade* to compose the second movement of his *Symphonic Dances, Op.45* (1940), his last symphonic piece and also his last work. His two recordings of *Sérénade* show that he had the revision in mind some time before he published it, and his interpretation of the piece did not change in fourteen years. This implies again that Rachmaninoff kept a consistent performing style – in his recordings, at least.

Secondly, Rachmaninoff displayed slightly different interpretative attitudes to his own works compared to works by other composers. As an interpreter, Rachmaninoff could be very subjective, especially in well known pieces. In the recording of the first movement of Mozart's Sonata in A major, K331, for instance, his playing is so free that the penultimate Adagio variation is actually faster than the Allegro that follows it. His Chopin performance, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter, sometimes also reflects this interpretative approach. As a composer-pianist, however,

been frequently discussed. In the case of the Prelude in C sharp minor Op.3 No.2, for instance, by examining Rachmaninoff's three commercial recordings of the Prelude with a sound analysis program and comparing that with Josef Hofmann's performance of the same piece, Marcin Strzelecki writes that 'the extraordinary similarity of the diagrams proves that the recording that was used as a contrast with Josef Hofmann's interpretation was not the effect of some momentary mood – this is how Rachmaninoff used to play this piece.' See Marcin Strzelecki, 'Tracking the psychoacoustical features of performances of Chopin's music: measuring the musical time flow' in *Chopin in Performance: History, Theory, Practice*. ed. A. Szklener (Warsaw: Narodowy Instytut Fryderyka Chopina, 2004), 327-328.

Rachmaninoff was comparatively faithful to his own scores, and his interpretations were more objective.

These mildly conflicting attitudes may come from the role Rachmaninoff played in the performances. In famous pieces by other composers, Rachmaninoff might have felt the need to distinguish himself from the performances of his colleagues, so he aimed to leave his unique musical signature on them. Since those pieces are so popular, he would also have felt free to add more personal marks to them without worrying that the audience would not recognise them. But when it came to his own compositions, since Rachmaninoff was very serious about making recordings, he might have regarded his own recordings as interpretative models for later generations. Even in his most famous piece, the Prelude in C sharp minor, Op.3, No.2, he kept the same interpretation over the three recordings (1919, 1921, and 1928) and all of them were played in an objective manner.

Thirdly, these two attitudes to interpretation do not mean that Rachmaninoff played in two different styles. On the contrary, through the grand phrases in Adagio variation of Mozart's Sonata in A major, K331 or those expanded singing lines in Chopin's miniatures, one can have an even clearer idea about Rachmaninoff's musical personality and performing style. In addition, although Rachmaninoff did not always follow dynamics, expression, tempo and other markings when he performed, once he made a change, he kept it. Rachmaninoff demonstrated consistency in both performing style and interpretation in his recordings, and this certainly suggests that his recordings are likely to have represented his own playing (or at least the performances he wished the listeners to hear) rather faithfully. In order to understand Rachmaninoff's performing style, it is helpful to compare how he played other composers' works with the performing style he displayed in his own compositions.

2. An Analysis of Rachmaninoff's Performing Style

Since the main purpose of this thesis is to study changing performance style in Rachmaninoff's piano music across different generations, the discussion in this chapter is inevitably focused on how Rachmaninoff performed his own compositions. As far as works by other composers are concerned, Chopin is the main focus of discussion and the major source of reference. It is not only that Chopin was Rachmaninoff's favourite composer, but also, Rachmaninoff recorded Chopin's works more often than those of any other composer, apart from himself. Although the Chopin recordings only represent a sample of the works Rachmaninoff played in concerts, they still give us an opportunity to see his overall interpretation of the composer. It is hard to discuss Rachmaninoff's interpretative view of the Austro-German classics, because he only recorded two movements from Mozart's Sonata in A major K.331 (with significant cuts), Beethoven's 32 Variations in C minor (cutting eight variations) and *Turkish March* (arr. Anton Rubinstein). Rachmaninoff's public piano repertoire includes 13 Beethoven Piano Sonatas, but he did not record any of them. Rachmaninoff also played a lot of Schumann in concert, but only *Carnaval* and *Kontrabandiste* (arr. Tausig) were recorded.

In the following sections, I will discuss the composer's performing style in two major parts. First, the tradition behind Rachmaninoff's playing: the characteristics of the early Russian Piano School in Rachmaninoff's performances, from both the written sources and recorded performances. Second, Rachmaninoff's individual pianistic personality: the 'big singing and phrasing style'.

2.1. The Russian Tradition in Rachmaninoff's Words: The Influence of Anton Rubinstein

Just as Josef Lhévinne regarded Anton Rubinstein's playing as the best example of piano performance in his *Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing*, Rachmaninoff also

constantly referred to the greatness of Rubinstein when he discussed piano playing or musicianship. He said that:

It was not so much his magnificent technique that held one spellbound as the profound, spiritually refined musicianship, which spoke from every note and every bar he played and singled him out as the most original and unequalled pianist in the world.²⁰⁰

The influence of the maestro can be seen throughout Rachmaninoff's interviews and Rachmaninoff also found a connection between Rubinstein and himself, as both of them were composer-pianists:

It was said of Anton Rubinstein that no other pianist produced such a dazzling wealth and variety of sheer musical colour from the keyboard. Listening to his playing, one might almost imagine he commanded the resources of a full orchestra, because Rubinstein, being also a great composer, possessed this intense feeling for colour which pervaded his interpretative as well as his creative work. Personally, I consider the possession of this acute colour-sensitiveness to be a composer's highest privilege. However fine a musician the executant may be, I think he can never acquire the talent for sensing and reproducing the full range of musical colour that is the composer's birthright.²⁰¹

Obviously, Rachmaninoff also learned through observing Rubinstein's performances

²⁰⁰ Oskar von Reisemann, *Rachmaninoff's Recollections* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1934), 51.

²⁰¹ Basil Maine, 45.

and then developed his own technique. Whether it is about a detailed technical issue:

The pedal has been called the soul of the piano. I never realised what this meant until I heard Anton Rubinstein, whose playing seemed so marvellous to me that it beggars description. His mastery of the pedal was nothing short of phenomenal.²⁰²

... or the general performing style:

Behind me and behind all the artists who play Chopin in the *grand manner*, the broader style, stands Rubinstein. He could play in all styles; he could have played Chopin in the subdued style if he had liked. But he did not choose to play it in that way.²⁰³

Rachmaninoff regarded Rubinstein as the mentor and his performances as a source of inspiration. Later in the chapter, I will argue that the 'grand manner' actually became Rachmaninoff's most characteristic performing style, especially in the light of the 'big phrase' he presented.

For example, Rachmaninoff's famous interpretation of Chopin's Piano Sonata No.2 was deeply influenced by Rubinstein's rendition, as I have mentioned in Chapter One:

His rendering of Chopin's B flat minor Sonata is indeed wonderful [...] the *funeral march* is stern and sustained; the mighty crescendo at the beginning of the trio, and the gradual decrescendo after it, is a brilliant innovation of his

²⁰² Rachmaninoff, 'Essentials of artistic playing' in *Great Pianists on Piano Playing*. ed. J. F. Cooke (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999), 214.

²⁰³ Rachmaninoff, 'Interpretation depends on talent and personality' in *Étude*, April 1932, 240.

own.²⁰⁴

What Hanslick described about Rubinstein's original dynamic design of the *Funeral March* movement can be also heard in Rachmaninoff's recording, which will be discussed later in detail.

It is a pity that Rubinstein did not leave any recordings for us to trace his imaginative interpretation, legendary technique, and magical sound, and so one cannot truly compare Rachmaninoff's recordings to the descriptions of Rubinstein's performances, except the case of Chopin's Piano Sonata No.2, where we have both Hanslick's words and Rachmaninoff's recording. Although the repertoires of Rubinstein and Rachmaninoff overlap to a large extent, a comparison of the two would be meaningless since Rubinstein played almost everything.²⁰⁵ But bearing in mind Rachmaninoff's own testimony as to Rubinstein's importance for him, and the fact that Rachmaninoff developed as a pianist within the orbit of the early Russian Piano School, it seems highly likely that traces of Rubinstein's playing survived in Rachmaninoff's.

2.2. The Early Russian Piano School and Rachmaninoff's Performance

Rachmaninoff's performing style reflects both the zeitgeist of his era and the aesthetics of the early Russian Piano School. The following discussion will examine

²⁰⁴ Rachmaninoff, 'Interpretation depends on talent and personality', 240.

²⁰⁵ For instance, I do not agree that one can assume that Rachmaninoff's interpretation (including the added chords in the 'Sphinx' and some editorial changes) of Schumann's *Carnaval* must be influenced by Rubinstein's simply because Rubinstein played it in his Historical Recitals (as Barrie Martyn and Max Harrison state in their biographies of Rachmaninoff). However, if we have Rachmaninoff's testimony, and at least one example (Chopin's Piano Sonata No.2) to show Rubinstein's influence in his performance, I would still suggest that we should investigate this historical background and use it to locate Rachmaninoff's piano performing aesthetics within the tradition of the early Russian Piano School.

Rachmaninoff's attitude towards dislocation and unmarked arpeggiation, playing unexpected middle voices, and the use of rubato, to see how Russian a performer Rachmaninoff was and how European-Romantic a pianist he could be.

2.2.1. Restrained Asynchronisation and Limited Use of Unmarked Arpeggiation

By the end of the 20th century, the use of asynchronisation and unmarked arpeggiation had come to be considered slightly ludicrous; at the end of the 19th, however, it was only a question of aesthetic choice and application. Leschetizky stated that 'the arpeggio may be used also when an expressive or emotional effect is desired.'²⁰⁶ In addition, 'an arpeggio may sometimes be used for the purpose of giving a more distinct effect to polyphony at important points, as where one voice ends and another begins.'²⁰⁷ As far as asynchronisation was concerned, he also thought that 'the bass tone and the melody note need not be always taken together with rhythmic precision. The later will have a better effect if played an instant later than the former, even when no arpeggio is marked.'²⁰⁸ This practice could be adopted not only at the beginning of a phrase but also on important notes. However, he still argued that 'the two hands should play together on weak beats. The melody note must come so closely after the other that the pause between them will scarcely be noticed by the hearer.'²⁰⁹ In the *The Leschetizky Method*, Brée used Chopin's Nocturne in D flat major Op.27 No.2 as an example, and many recordings of the piece performed by early European pianists also reflected Leschetizky's opinion – such as Leschetizky's own piano roll, Pachmann's recording of 1916,²¹⁰ and Moritz

²⁰⁶ Brée, 55.

²⁰⁷ Brée, 55.

²⁰⁸ Brée, 56.

²⁰⁹ Brée, 56.

²¹⁰ Opal CD 9840.

Rosenthal's recording of 1936.²¹¹

In the case of early Russian pianists, the situation is quite different. In the recordings of Josef and Rosina Lhévinne, Sergei Prokofiev, Konstantin Igumnov, and Alexander Goldenweiser, one can still observe that while asynchronisation and unmarked arpeggiation sometimes appear, the practice is rather restrained. Compared to that of the pupils of Leschetizky and Liszt in the West, one can even say that the early Russian pianists tended not to use asynchronisation and unmarked arpeggiation, or at least to use them as rarely or unobtrusively as possible. In Charles Barber's biography of Alexander Siloti, the author states that although 'many students were fascinated by the quality and variety of arpeggiation that Siloti could introduce into his own playing and that he demonstrated in his teaching', the pianist 'used it sparingly and could be unforgiving of those who applied it too liberally.'²¹² Barber reached this conclusion by interviewing Siloti's pupils. For example, one interviewee says that Siloti:

[...] wanted the bass to be clear and on the beat when practicable. This meant breaking or arpeggiating large chords on the beat rather than ahead, in whatever hand. If one had to choose, he preferred breaking to arpeggiating unless there was an expressive reason for the latter. In breaking, he would get as many notes on the beat as he could.²¹³

Vladimir Ashkenazy (1937-), pupil of Lev Oborin (1907-1974) at the Moscow Conservatory, said that he had been taught to avoid this kind of performing practice since he was a child, and he had also disliked all asynchronisation and unmarked

²¹¹ Pearl Gemm CD 9963.

²¹² Barber, 234.

²¹³ Charles Barber's interview with Benning Dexter. Barber, 234.

arpeggiation in performance since childhood.²¹⁴ And how did Oborin play? Lev Oborin was a pupil of Igumnov, whose performing style was also neat, polished, and precise, and one can hardly hear any use of asynchronisation or unmarked arpeggiation in his playing²¹⁵. If Ashkenazy's testimony is true, then we may be safe to say that when Igmunov and his colleagues, many of whom were Rachmaninoff's friends, started to teach at the conservatories, they tried to avoid asynchronisation and unmarked arpeggiation, which also reflected how they played in recordings.

In Rachmaninoff's recordings, however, he actually had two opposite ways of using asynchronisation and unmarked arpeggiation. He could play like his Russian colleagues or perform like his Western European contemporaries. In Chopin's music, Rachmaninoff could play in a very free manner. In recording, his Chopin Nocturne in E flat major, Op.9, No.2 and Nocturne in F sharp Major, Op.15, No.2, are examples of how he can liberally adopt unmarked arpeggiation in his performance. In the score example of the Nocturne in E flat major (Score 3-1), none of the arpeggios played by Rachmaninoff are in Chopin's score. In addition, Rachmaninoff plays the piece with a strong use of tempo rubato, and his constantly changing speed here goes frequently with his use of unmarked arpeggiation.

²¹⁴ Interview with Vladimir Ashkenazy (December 14th, 2010).

²¹⁵ Oborin's several famous performances have been transferred and issued on CD, including works from Chopin, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, and Rachmaninoff, and I rarely find he applied unmarked arpeggiation in his performance. The only exception is his performance of the third movement of Chopin's Piano Sonata No.3.

Score 3-1: Chopin Nocturne Op.9 No.2, bars 1-4 (with Rachmaninoff's arpeggiation in the recording)

The image displays a musical score for Chopin's Nocturne Op.9 No.2, specifically bars 1-4. The score is written for piano and is in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The original notation is shown in the upper system, with a piano (p) dynamic marking. The lower system shows the same bars with Rachmaninoff's arpeggiated version, indicated by 'Ped.' and asterisks. The right hand features a melodic line with a 24321 fingering. The left hand has a complex arpeggiated accompaniment. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system ending with a forte (f) dynamic and a piano (p) dynamic marking.

The recording of the *Nocturne* shows that as far as unmarked arpeggiation is concerned, Rachmaninoff's rendition of the piece is closer to the Western European pianists of the time. But Rachmaninoff did not treat all Chopin's compositions in the same way. His Chopin Waltz in E minor, Op. posth, or Mazurka in A minor, Op.68 No.2, for instance, are played straightforwardly without added arpeggios. In the recording of the Waltz in B minor, Op.69, No.2, Rachmaninoff even omits all the ornaments and acciaccaturas in the right hand and plays the piece very directly. Obviously Rachmaninoff played Chopin in very different ways. Could it be that Rachmaninoff's different interpretations are more likely to be linked to genre, since Nocturnes are more reflective and thoughtful than Waltzes and Mazurkas? It is to be assumed that Rachmaninoff considered the genres of different pieces when he played them, but in practice his performing style was still more related to the character of the piece (according to his interpretation) than to its genre. For example, the way Rachmaninoff

plays unmarked arpeggiation and uses tempo rubato in the Waltz in C sharp minor, Op.64, No.2 in the recording is very similar to that in the Nocturnes. In the score example of the beginning of the Waltz, none of the arpeggios are on the score but all are provided by Rachmaninoff.

Score 3-2: Chopin Waltz Op.64 No.2, bars 1-15 (with Rachmaninoff's arpeggiation in the recording)

The image displays a musical score for Chopin's Waltz Op. 64 No. 2, bars 1-15. The score is written for piano and includes Rachmaninoff's arpeggiation. The key signature is C major (one sharp, F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo marking is "Tempo giusto". The score is organized into three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a treble and bass staff. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The third system shows the end of the excerpt. Arpeggios are indicated by "Ped." and "*" symbols below the bass staff. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above the notes.

In other music of the Romantic period, Rachmaninoff also did not frequently introduce unmarked arpeggiation. In some cases, such as Tchaikovsky's *Troika* from *The Seasons* in his recording, Rachmaninoff even ignores all the marked arpeggiation on the score, which actually 'undoes' what the composer marked. The two different attitudes toward performing marked and unmarked arpeggiation at least confirms

that Rachmaninoff did not play arpeggios (instead of chords) as a constant performing habit. For him, whether to apply arpeggiation to a chord or not depended on the character of the piece. But when Rachmaninoff played his own compositions, the situation was clearer: he still used asynchronisation and unmarked arpeggiation, but significantly more rarely. Furthermore, when Rachmaninoff broke a chord into an arpeggio, he almost always played it fast, on the beat, and without adding to the time value of the beat. In other words, his arpeggiation does not result in rubato or change the tempo in general.

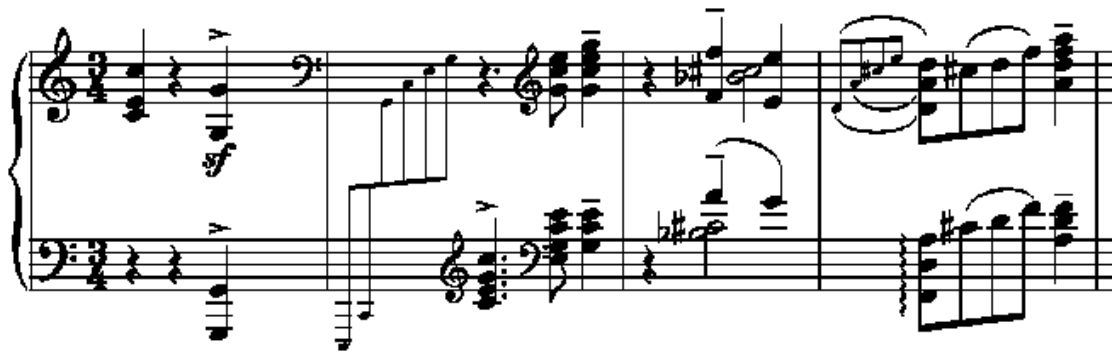
This performing method can be observed in both his compositions and performances. In his transcription of Kreisler's *Liebesleid* and *Liebesfreud*, Rachmaninoff writes clearly on the score that the arpeggios should be played on the beat, not before the beat, and he also plays them fast without influencing the time value of the next beat in the recording. In bar 35 of *Liebesleid*, Rachmaninoff plays the added arpeggio on the first beat. It is worth noticing that the composer writes *forte* on the arpeggio, which suggests that the arpeggio should be viewed as a part of the first beat.

Score 3-3-1: Kreisler-Rachmaninoff *Liebesleid*, bars 34-36 (Rachmaninoff). The arpeggio on the right hand of bar 35 is played on the first beat, and it is played so fast that the notes in the chord in the left hand occur almost at the same time. (Audio Example Track 12)



In bars 38 to 41 of *Liebesfreud*, one can observe the same treatment of playing the arpeggios on the beat without adding to the time value.

Score 3-3-2: Kreisler-Rachmaninoff *Liebesfreud*, bars 38-41 (Rachmaninoff)



Because Rachmaninoff played all these arpeggios fast, on the beat, and without adding time value to the bar, it implies that he did not emphasise or encourage free arpeggiation in performances of his own compositions. The way Rachmaninoff treated arpeggiation in his compositions is almost as equal to ornaments in Baroque music – he decorated his music in a very controlled manner. He used it to carefully contrast phrases instead of playing them as a routine. This deliberate calculation can be seen in

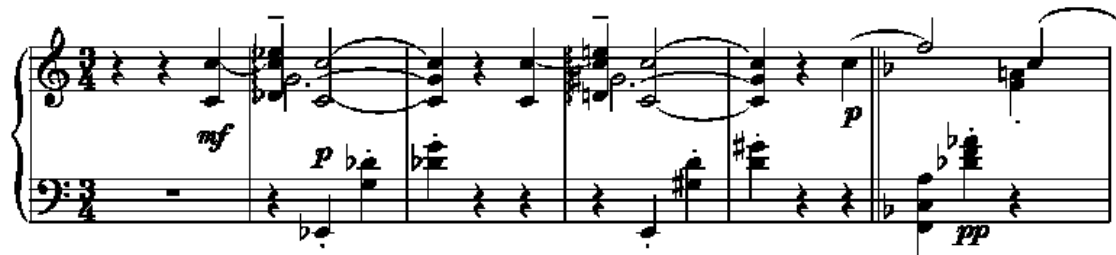
the way he ‘undid’ the marked arpeggios on the score. On the score of the *Liebesfreud*, bars 124 to 129, Rachmaninoff marks the arpeggios as:

Score 3-4-1: Kreisler-Rachmaninoff *Liebesfreud*, bars 124-129



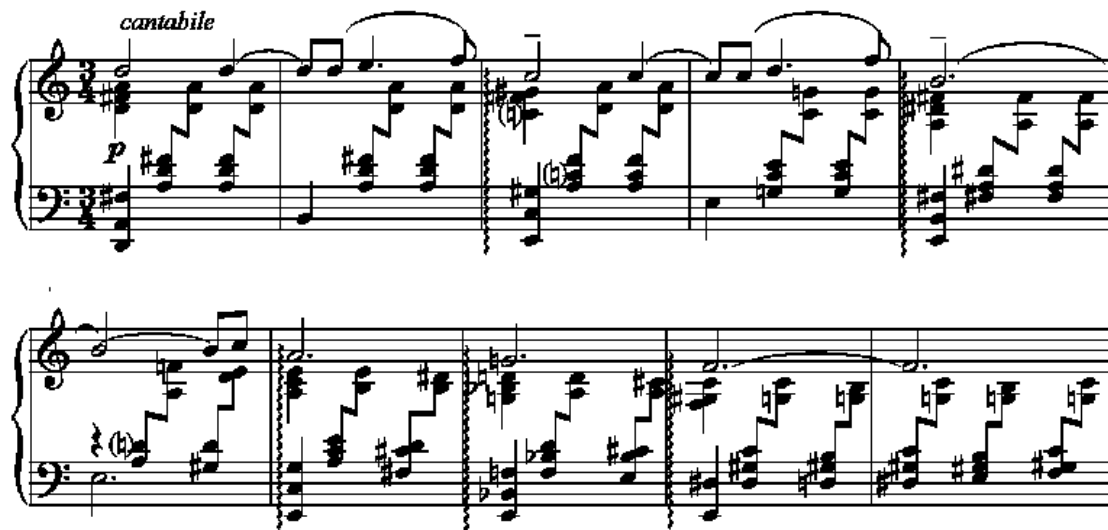
In the recording of the piece, however, Rachmaninoff plays it as:

Score 3-4-2: Kreisler-Rachmaninoff *Liebesfreud*, bars 124-129 (Rachmaninoff)



The musical meanings of the two are the same. In the recording Rachmaninoff just uses a similar but different way to express how he contrasts the phrases. By the same logic, he also removes the marked arpeggios in bars 137 and 218 in the performance. The only new arpeggio he adds is on the third beat of bar 173. Therefore, Rachmaninoff actually plays fewer arpeggios in the recording than he writes on the score. In his recording of *Liebesleid*, one can hear the same way of treating marked and unmarked arpeggiation. Although Rachmaninoff adds three unmarked arpeggios in bars 3, 7, and 139, he also removes three marked arpeggios in bars 145 to 147:

Score 3-5-1: Kreisler-Rachmaninoff *Liebesleid*, bars 139-148



Score 3-5-2: Kreisler-Rachmaninoff *Liebesleid*, bars 139-148 (Rachmaninoff)



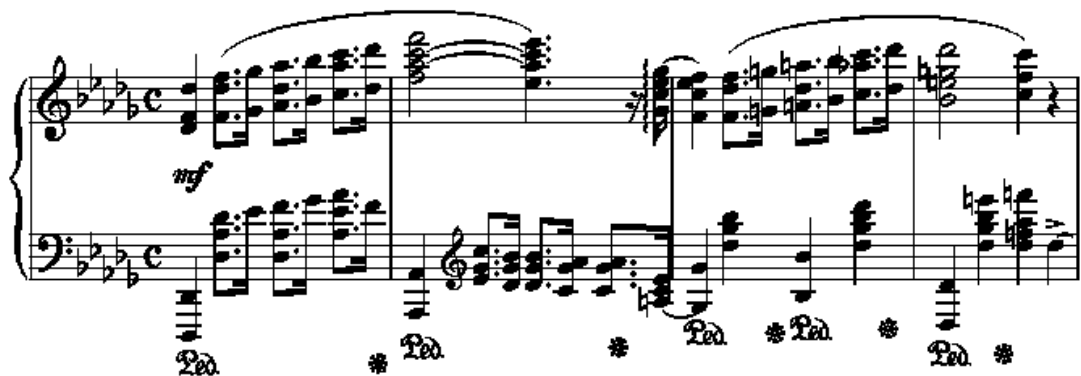
One can see a similar occurrence in Chopin's Piano Sonata No.2. In the *Funeral March*, Chopin gives the arpeggio on the score as:

Score 3-6-1: Chopin Piano Sonata No.2 Op.35 Mvt III, bars 15-18



Rachmaninoff, however, plays the arpeggio at the beginning of the second phrase and keeps the same phrasing for the entire movement:

Score 3-6-2: Chopin Piano Sonata No.2 Op.35 Mvt III, bars 15-18 (Rachmaninoff)



And in the first movement of the Sonata, Rachmaninoff does not play all the marked arpeggios on the score. The beginning of the second theme, for example, is played without arpeggiation:

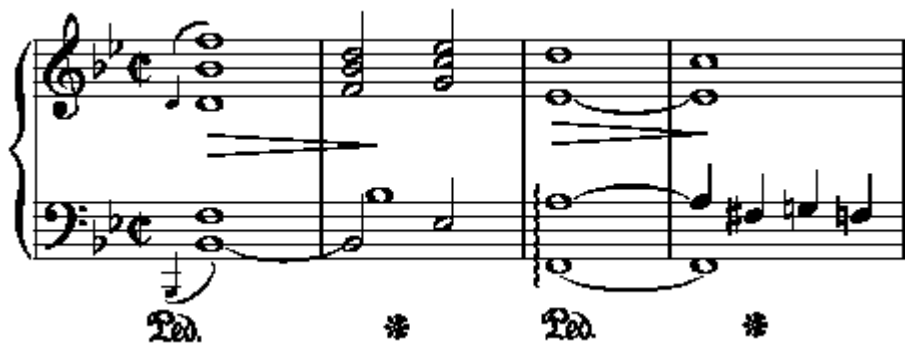
Score 3-7-1: Chopin Piano Sonata No.2 Op.35 Mvt I, bars 57-58 (Rachmaninoff does not play arpeggios in the circled notes.)



Or played with different arpeggiation, just as he does in *Liebesleid*.

Here is Chopin's marking on the score:

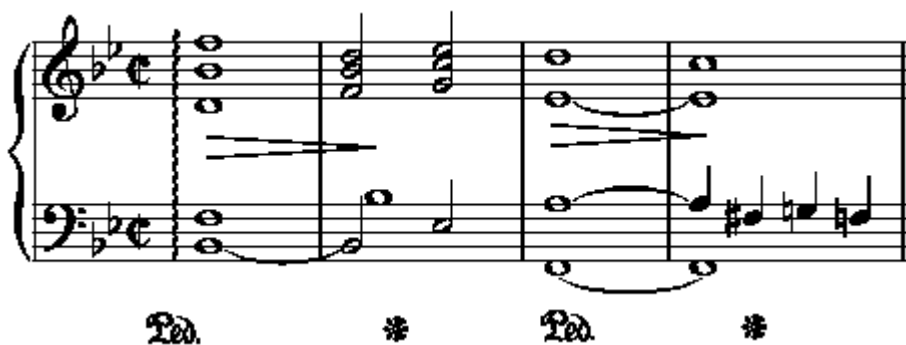
Score 3-8-1: Chopin Piano Sonata No.2 in B flat minor, Op.35 Mvt III, bars 46-49



Here is how Rachmaninoff plays it in the recording:

Score 3-8-2: Chopin Piano Sonata No.2 in B flat minor, Op.35 Mvt III, bars 46-49

(Rachmaninoff)



Rachmaninoff's recording of his transcription of Mussorgsky's *Hopak* is another example illustrating his attitude towards the use of arpeggiation. At the end of the piece, the composer marks arpeggios as:

Score 3-9-1: Mussorgsky-Rachmaninoff *Hopak*, bars 95-99



In the recording, however, Rachmaninoff plays staccato instead of arpeggio:

Score 3-9-2: Mussorgsky-Rachmaninoff *Hopak*, bars 95-99 (Rachmaninoff)



As the example of *Liebesfreud* and *Liebesleid*, Rachmaninoff does not change the musical meaning of this phrase in *Hopak* either. The composer wants the music here to be light and witty. In his fast tempo, however, playing arpeggios of those chords will only result in slowing down the musical flow, if all the notes are still to be heard clearly. In order to keep the same musical meaning, perhaps removing the arpeggiation from those chords is the best solution in practice. The same treatment can also be heard in the second movement of Chopin's Piano Sonata No.2. At a very fast speed,

Rachmaninoff also removes the marked arpeggios on the score in the recording:²¹⁶

Score 3-10: Chopin Piano Sonata No.2 Op.35 Mvt II, bars 1-4



These examples also remind us of what he did in Tchaikovsky's *Troika*. If it was not necessary to play the arpeggiation to stress the phrase, Rachmaninoff simply did not do so.²¹⁷ In the same manner, Rachmaninoff did not frequently use asynchronisation. When he did so, the time gap between the two hands was also very small. One can reach the conclusion that neither unmarked arpeggiation nor asynchronisation was Rachmaninoff's performing habit or constant practice. In the Chopin Nocturnes and in the Waltz in C sharp minor, we see how Rachmaninoff adopted a similar way of performing pieces from different genres. In the case of *Liebersleid*, *Liebersfreud*, *Hopak* and Chopin's Piano Sonata No.2, we see how Rachmaninoff kept a consistent performing style in works by different composers. All of them show that genre was not the decisive factor when Rachmaninoff was choosing whether to play an unmarked arpeggiation or not – it all depended on his subjective feeling for the piece. In section 2.2.3, we will see that in the Waltz in C sharp minor Rachmaninoff not only played using free arpeggiation, but also shaped the middle voices, a fashion popular among his European colleagues but not his Russian ones.

²¹⁶ The reason that Chopin wrote arpeggios for those chords was probably out of physical necessity, and not for expressive reasons. Rachmaninoff, however, was able to play them without arpeggiation as he had big hands.

²¹⁷ Hand-stretch is not a factor in this piece (within an octave).

2.2.2. Rachmaninoff's Unreleased Live Performance: Ormandy Archive, University of Pennsylvania

Before concluding the discussion of Rachmaninoff's practice of unmarked arpeggiation, an important fact should be addressed again, which is that the discussion above is based on his studio recordings. As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, Rachmaninoff banned all live recording or broadcasting of his performances. Until recently his only known live (but not concert) recording was a fragment of him and his daughter Natalie playing his *Polka italienne* (for four hands) at the piano in 1938. It is about one minute and seventeen seconds long. The sound quality is very poor and one cannot hear sufficient detail in it.²¹⁸ However, a recently discovered disc kept in the Ormandy Archive in the Rare Book & Manuscript Library Reading Room, University of Pennsylvania, changes this situation.²¹⁹ It has been digitally catalogued as Ms Coll 440 item 98 in the library's system. It records that Rachmaninoff was playing his *Symphonic Dances, Op.45* at the piano for (supposedly) Eugene Ormandy in the studio before the premiere of the piece (the composer dedicated the piece to the conductor and the Philadelphia Orchestra).²²⁰

I visited the library to listen to the recording in October 2009. There are four tracks on the CD, the sound quality is perfect, and all together the four tracks are about thirty-three minutes long, enough to present Rachmaninoff's playing well. The recording suggests that no one present was aware that the playing and conversation

²¹⁸ BMG 09026-61265-2.

²¹⁹ I am truly grateful for the help of Simon Trezise, Nancy Shawcross, John Pollack, and Daniel Leech-Wilkinson for making my visit to the library possible.

²²⁰ According to Sergei Bertensson and Jay Leyda, Ormandy heard Rachmaninoff played this piece in the September of 1940. The recording probably was made at that time. See Sergei Bertensson, J. Leyda, *Sergei Rachmaninoff: A Lifetime in Music* (New York: New York University Press. 1956), 420.

were being recorded, and it is also unclear as to why they were recorded and who recorded them. Although it is still not a 'concert performance' of the pianist, it vividly records how Rachmaninoff played outside a recording studio. I was only allowed to listen to it on a CD player with earphones in the Reading Room and could not make a copy of it in any form, including to analyse with Sonic Visualiser. Therefore I could only record what I heard in note form. Table 3-3 (page 410) shows the notes I made on the four tracks in the library while listening to the CD transfer.

All four tracks start and end suddenly. For example, track one begins at bar 48 of the first movement of the *Symphonic Dances*. It sounds as if the tape begins during an ongoing performance. Although some parts of the performance are almost identical to the composer's two-piano version of the piece, this recording by its very nature is demonstrating the *Symphonic Dances* by playing the orchestral score at the piano, as many passages in this performance are different from the composer's two-piano version, which I brought to the library and followed while listening to the recording. In the performance Rachmaninoff sometimes only sings instead of playing, or he only plays the accompaniment and sings the main melody. As far as the practice of arpeggiation is concerned, Rachmaninoff plays vast arpeggiated chords, not on the score of the two-piano version, to stress the emotion or to emphasise his points in the melodies. The way he arpeggiates is very similar to what Horowitz does in the recorded performance of Rachmaninoff's Piano Sonata No.2 in 1980: the practice is so frequent that almost every phrase is arpeggiated somewhere – the opposite of the very restrained and controlled practice we see in his commercial recordings.²²¹

What does it mean? Although we do not know how Rachmaninoff played in

²²¹ Vladimir Horowitz (RCA 7754-2 RG)

concerts from any audio document, this live (but private) performance shows at least that he could be very free in arpeggiating chords. While Rachmaninoff could be so free, I would like to argue that his commercial recordings actually present the performances that the pianist really wished the audience to remember, just as I argued at the beginning of the chapter, that 'Rachmaninoff's attitude toward recording implies that the performances in his records do appropriately reflect what he thought were his artistic and interpretative characteristics'. The performances in his recordings represent the impression he would have liked the audience to retain. He could play very freely in some of his commercial recordings, too. Based on his treatment of the first movement of Mozart's Sonata in A major, and his structural design of Chopin's Piano Sonata No.2, his interpretations are also very 'free'. He could adopt the practice of unmarked arpeggiation in some pieces, Chopin's Nocturnes, for example. Nevertheless, in general he still chose to restrain it in his studio piano recordings. This interpretative attitude is consistent, from the beginning of his recording career to the very last recorded piece. Therefore, I think it is safe to state that Rachmaninoff did not change his view of practising this performing fashion in his late years (Rachmaninoff made his last piano recording in February, 1942.) On the other hand, since Rachmaninoff generally limited the practice in his studio performances, when he did arpeggiate, as in the examples provided above, it is likely that he played them with a clear objective in mind, and not on a sudden impulse.

There are still some important factors relating to the *Symphonic Dances* performance which should be addressed. I will discuss them in due course. In the next section, I would like to discuss a topic similar to the practice of unmarked arpeggiation: unexpected middle voices.

2.2.3. The Restrained Practice of Playing Unexpected Middle Voices

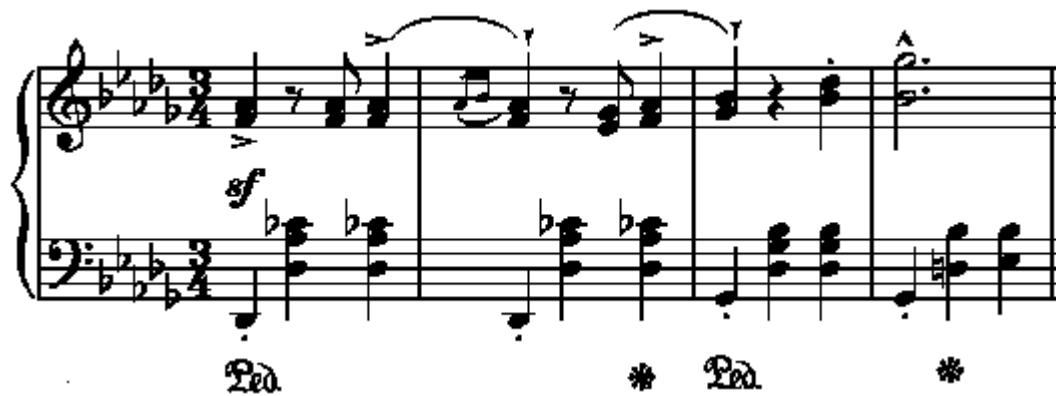
Besides the practice of asynchronisation and unmarked arpeggiation, another important issue that should be discussed in relation to pianists in the first half of the 20th century is the appearance of unexpected middle voices in their performances. Many pianists in Rachmaninoff's time liked to bring out the middle voices of the piece. Sometimes they emphasised the inner lines, sometimes they created their own melodies through the texture: Josef Hofmann was the most notable example, and Godowsky could even go so far as to rewrite Chopin's figuration to complete an inner line that he found particularly piquant. They were fond of presenting the art of multi-melody playing. Rachmaninoff, however, rarely did so in his recordings. One can hardly find any examples of an inner voice that overshadows the main melody. The only exceptions are found in his Chopin performances, where Rachmaninoff sometimes emphasised certain notes unstressed by the composer. In the second time round of the *più mosso* section (bars 97 to 128) of Chopin's Waltz in C sharp minor, Op.64, No.2, Rachmaninoff accentuates one of the quaver sextuplets in each bar to form a descending scale, which actually adds another voice into the texture.

Score 3-11: Chopin Waltz, Op.64, No.2, bars 97-128



This practice, however, is not at all uncommon. According to Tilly Fleischmann, it is also how Liszt played this passage,²²² and we can still hear this treatment in the performances of some contemporary pianists, like Alexandre Tharaud and Stephen Hough.²²³ But ultimately, Rachmaninoff's way of middle-voice playing was considerably insignificant compared to his colleagues. By the same token, he hardly added any new materials into the original texture, even though he was a composer of considerable creative ability. When he did so, the practice was still very limited and controlled, as if merely ornamenting the texture. In Chopin's Waltz in E flat major "Grande Valse Brillante", Op.18, Rachmaninoff played an octave instead of a single note on the downbeat in some sections. In bars 152 and 160, he added an extra voice in the left hand:

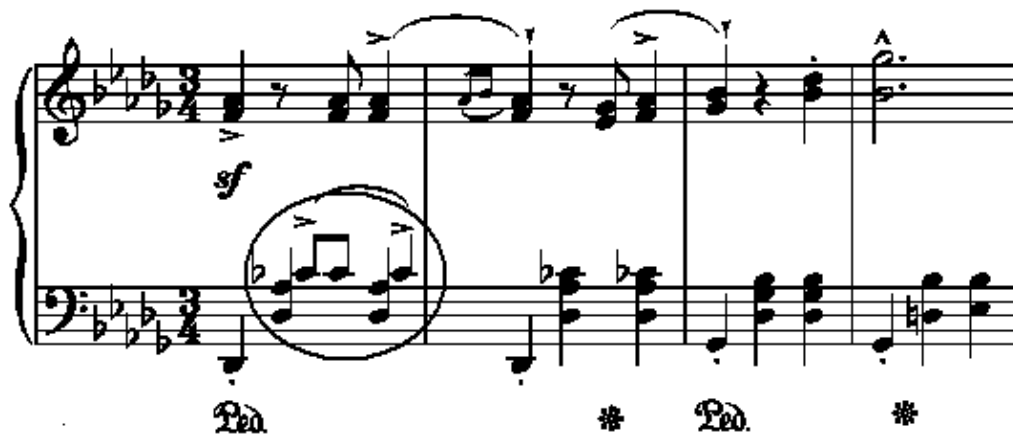
Score 3-12-1: Chopin Waltz, Op.18, bars 152-155



²²² Tilly Fleischmann, *Aspects of the Liszt Tradition* (Cork: Adare Press, 1986), 21.

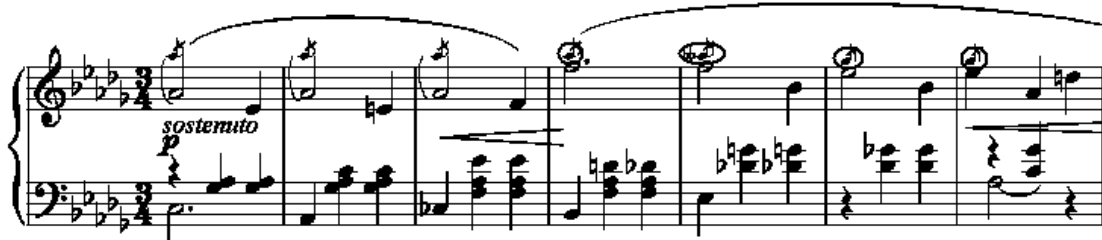
²²³ Alexandre Tharaud (Harmonia mundi HMC 901927, 2005); Stephen Hough (hyperion CDA67456, 2009) Hough expresses that he gets the inspiration for using this practice from the pianists of the past. However, in his performance, he designs more inner voices, including some in the left hand, making the texture more complicated. Interview with Stephen Hough (August 10th, 2010).

Score 3-12-2: Chopin Waltz, Op.18, bars 152-155 (Rachmaninoff)



In the middle section of Chopin's *"Minute" Waltz*, Rachmaninoff picked out the repeated A flat acciaccatura for special focus and even arbitrarily extended the sequence, as circled in the score example:

Score 3-13: Chopin Waltz, Op.64, No.1, bars 62-68 (Rachmaninoff)



Although Rachmaninoff expressed this European fashion in his performances, the three examples should only be seen as exceptions, not evidence of a consistent performing style, because Rachmaninoff did not do so in most of his recordings. Compared to the dazzling unexpected middle voices in Hofmann's and Godowsky's recordings, what Rachmaninoff plays in the Waltz in C sharp minor is nothing special, and his minor additions to the Waltz in E flat major are even not an issue if one has

heard how Hofmann played the right hand of the *Minute Waltz* in thirds and the coda of Scherzo No.1 in alternating octaves, how Paderewski added bravura scales and arpeggios in the original texture, or how Rosenthal showed off his brilliant technique by changing the coda of the first and last movement of the Chopin Piano Concerto in E minor into octaves. Given that many pianists today also add octaves in the bass in their performances, one sees that Rachmaninoff's attitude towards presenting unexpected middle voices and adding new material to the original is quite conservative and different from the European mainstream.

But if one compares this performing style with that of many early Russian pianists, one sees that Rachmaninoff also belongs to the tradition of the early Russian Piano School. The reason goes back to the singing aesthetic: as I argued in Chapter Two, the main melody should always be clear and distinguishable from the others. In the performances of Lhévinne, Igumnov, and Goldenweiser, all of whom were Rachmaninoff's classmates and friends, one can also observe a similar main-melody performing style. It definitely does not mean that Rachmaninoff and his Russian contemporaries could not control multi-melody textures. In fact, Rachmaninoff played those polyphonic passages excellently in the Schubert-Liszt Lieder Transcriptions and his own transcriptions of Schubert's *Wohin?*, Tchaikovsky's *Lullaby*, and the Suite from Bach's Violin Partita in E major (Prelude, Gavotte, and Gigue). However, there was always only one crystal clear melody line singing throughout the piece in his performances, and generally Rachmaninoff did not create unexpected melodies either in his own compositions or transcriptions.

2.2.4. The Use of Tempo Rubato

Rachmaninoff, like many great pianists, was famous for his individual rubato, but the written descriptions of it seem very inconsistent. Arthur Rubinstein admired Rachmaninoff's sound but was uneasy about his 'too rapidly fleeting fingers and his exaggerated *rubatos*.'²²⁴ For composer and pianist Alexander Tcherepnin, surprisingly however, Rachmaninoff's playing was as cold-blooded as Prokofiev's:

His playing of Chopin was not at all the 'super-rubato' playing of many other great pianists, and my own impression was always that he was as it were barricading himself from the over-emphasising of the sentiment in the music he was playing; but the sentiment came not because of his underlining the sentiment but because of his having the sentiment.²²⁵

Even across different statements by the same person, observations of Rachmaninoff's rubato can vary greatly. Goldenweiser recalled that:

Even Rachmaninoff, who had a rock firm sense of rhythm, admitted that when he was playing a concerto and there was a pause on a long held note, he always counted out this note to himself.²²⁶

This confirms how Rachmaninoff kept strict rhythm in mind. However, Goldenweiser also commented that Rachmaninoff's piano playing could be 'distinguished by great rhythmic freedom; he quite often adopted a rubato that seemed somewhat

²²⁴ Arthur Rubinstein, *My Many Years* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1980), 218.

²²⁵ Martyn, 407.

²²⁶ Goldenweiser, 59.

paradoxical and in no way lent itself to imitation.'²²⁷ Why do we have such contradictory testimonies? In fact all of the comments are understandable, because in Rachmaninoff's recordings, one does find that he played in two extremes: he could play rather straight and strictly, always pushing forward without tempo rubato (mainly in his own compositions), but also could play freely, with remarkable speed changes (especially in his Chopin). In the performances, Rachmaninoff used rubato in at least three different ways, as will now be discussed.

2.2.4.1. Restrained Rubato: Playing in Strict Time

Rachmaninoff could play in very strict tempo without much rubato in the music, and he constantly did so in pieces in rapid tempi, such as his recordings of his *Moments Musicaux No.2*, his transcription of the *Scherzo* from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mendelssohn's *Song Without Words Op. 67-4, 'Spinnerlied'*, or Henselt's *Études Caractéristiques*, Op. 2. He also could play slow pieces at a steady pace, as we can hear in his recording of Schubert-Liszt's *Das Wandern* and Liszt's *Polonaise No.2*, among others. Both of these demonstrate his ability to keep a steady speed with very restrained rubato.

This performing style must benefit from his practising method. Rachmaninoff enjoyed practising. Many people witnessed how he practised. Feodor Chaliapin recalled that:

Sergei Vasilyevich used to begin his exercises very slowly and, evidently, playing with one hand. Then the exercises became more complicated, speeded up and finally turned into a quick scattering of beads of sounds over the whole length

²²⁷ Martyn, 518.

of the keyboard, lingering in the low, middle or high register, or slipping down from top to bottom and then from bottom to top in an uninterrupted variety of scales.²²⁸

Arthur Hirst also witnessed Rachmaninoff practising in a slow tempo:

Rachmaninoff played his exercises very slowly, and diligent pupils would have been heartened to hear at how slow a tempo this greatest of pianists used to practise, and with what painstaking attention he monitored the sound of each note and the work of each hand.²²⁹

This constant and slow practice enabled Rachmaninoff to maintain a very stable and controlled tempo. Rachmaninoff's method of practising was a habit he learned as a student in Russia. In the previous chapter, I demonstrated how Russian piano students had to practise, and both Rachmaninoff and Lhévinne had vivid recollections of their daily practice requirement and the standard demanded for the upgrade exam. In fact, among the Moscow-trained pianists, Josef and Rosina Lhévinne, Bekman-Shcherbina, and Medtner all present very restrained tempo rubato in their recordings.²³⁰ Samuel Feinberg's rubato was freer, but he also could play firmly without tempo changes. Although Goldenweiser and Igumnov demonstrated more liberality in their phrasing and speed changes, they still did not apply dramatic tempo rubato.²³¹ If one looks at the St. Petersburg-trained pianists, Leff Pouishnoff (1891-1959),²³² Simon Barere,²³³

²²⁸ Martyn, 398.

²²⁹ Martyn, 399.

²³⁰ Medtner's complete studio recordings have been issued on APR label. Bekman-Shcherbina's recording can be heard on BMG/ Melodiya 74321 33209 2.

²³¹ When Rosina Lhévinne made her famous recording of Chopin's Piano Concerto in E minor aged 81, she still played with a very stable tempo, as though playing with a metronome.

²³² Pearl GEMM CD 9029.

Sergei Prokofiev,²³⁴ and early Horowitz, even Vassily Sapellnikoff (1868-1941),²³⁵ Tchaikovsky's close friend and the main promoter of his piano music, one hears that they display a very steady speed in their performances compared to their European colleagues.

Most early European pianists were so used to free tempo rubato that they rarely maintained a stable tempo in slow passages. Although early Russian pianists could still play quite freely, just like their European colleagues, they tended normally to play at a very steady speed. In other words, they had the ability to play both freely and steadily (Scriabin was nearly the only exception in that he almost never maintained stable tempi throughout the piece). Rachmaninoff definitely belonged to this group and displayed this characteristic of early Russian pianism.

2.2.4.2. Playing in Free Tempo Rubato

Just as Rachmaninoff used free unmarked arpeggiation in Chopin's Nocturne Op.9, No.2, he could also play the piece in free tempo rubato, as most of his European contemporaries did. His rubato could be so free that it is no wonder Rubinstein felt troubled. In his own pieces, such as the transcription of *Liebesleid*, *Liebesfreud*, *Wohin?*, Rachmaninoff created a very different world to the one he established in his clear-cut performances. Rachmaninoff's comments on rubato are also very vague. Like most of his colleagues, he did not analyse the use of rubato but just felt and learned it:

²³³ Simon Barere's complete studio recordings has been issued on APR label.

²³⁴ Sergei Prokofiev's complete studio recordings in the West, recorded between 1932 and 1935, has been issued on Pearl GEMM CD 9470.

²³⁵ Pearl GEMM CD 9163.

The best way for a student to learn about rubato is to imitate his professor. And then he must play the passage over and over and study the effects. Rubato must be individual. One cannot fix upon a moment when the general tempo must change [...]. If such a variation in tempo is planned by the brain alone, that is wrong. Rubato must be determined by the heart, by feelings.²³⁶

On the other hand, I would like to argue that Rachmaninoff's free tempo rubato in his compositions, to a certain degree, can be 'felt' and 'learned', if one knows how to read his tenuto markings. Most composers have their characteristic markings, for example, the short slurs in Mozart, the frequent *sforzandi* in Beethoven, or the dots and accents in Schubert. In Rachmaninoff's piano music, the composer constantly uses the tenuto mark. He would even use both staccato and tenuto marks on the same note, even though the two terms are supposed to be opposites. The definitions of staccato and tenuto are:²³⁷

Staccato is a form of musical articulation, signifying an unconnected note, which is short and detached. In music, a dot is usually placed above a note to express that it should be distinctly separate from the notes before and after it while also short in length. This does not, however, alter the rhythm of the music and the remainder of the time allotted for each staccato note is played as rest.

Tenuto is a direction used in musical notation. The precise meaning of *tenuto* is ambiguous: it can mean either *hold the note in question its full length (or longer,*

²³⁶ Max Harrison, *Rachmaninoff: Life, Works, Recordings* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005), 268.

²³⁷ Tom Gerou and Linda Lusk, *Essential Dictionary of Music Notation*, (New York: Alfred Publisher, Co., 1996).

with slight rubato), or *play the note slightly louder*. In other words, the *tenuto* mark may alter either the dynamics or the duration of a note. Either way, the marking indicates that a note should receive emphasis.

For British pianist and composer Stephen Hough, Rachmaninoff's 'tenuto' is actually a suggestion of rubato:

It seems to mean a lingering (whether held or staccato) on the notes indicated with the marks. And that suggests that the notes after the tenuto marks should move ahead a bit. I've been using the same marking in my own music – it's almost like the lines on the road when you want a car to slow down before a junction.²³⁸

But what does the rubato mean if it is suggested by a tenuto mark? Bella Davidovich states that where Rachmaninoff writes tenuto, performers should 'emphasise the note but not add any accent'. She elaborates on this idea by saying that Rachmaninoff's tenuto 'means that you should do something different – maybe you use slight rubato, especially when the tenuto mark is at the end of a legato line. Or, you play it with different sound and colour.' But the purpose of emphasising the note is to create a recitation-like effect, in her words, a 'declamation': 'It is about the Russian vocal tradition. Rachmaninoff's tenuto, for me, is more about the quality of sound. Pianists should play with different tones and organise those tones to speak in music.'²³⁹ Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G sharp minor, Op.23 No.5 is an interesting

²³⁸ Interview with Stephen Hough (August 10th, 2010).

²³⁹ Interview with Bella Davidovich (October 17th, 2010) .

example of what the composer's tenuto mark actually means.²⁴⁰ In this Prelude, Rachmaninoff frequently uses the combination 'staccato-tenuto' in the march section. My explanation is that the notes Rachmaninoff marked with staccato and also tenuto are meant to be sung out; tenuto indicates that those notes, even though they are marked with staccato, still belong to a melody. The phrase should be emphasised as melody, but with the touch or feeling of staccato at the same time. In the Prelude, the staccato-tenuto appears in the first six bars, which indicates that the voice in the bass should be sung as melody. Rachmaninoff marked the short phrase from bars 6 to 8 with staccato only (with only one exception on the right hand), and we can hear that he plays this phrase much faster and more lightly in his recording, implying that it is not the focus of the section. In the short phrase from bars 14 to 16, Rachmaninoff only marks the notes with staccato, and he also plays this much faster and more lightly than the previous notes marked with staccato-tenuto. When the march reappears after the middle section, the first two bars (bars 50 to 51) are only marked with staccato. The tenuto mark only emerges at bar 52, but never appears with staccato again. When the music goes to the tenuto mark in bar 52, Rachmaninoff emphasises it by enhancing the character of the phrase in his recording, echoing the indication 'poco a poco accel' on the score. Comparing the phrases with and without staccato-tenuto, with how Rachmaninoff played the phrases with only either staccato or tenuto, one can probably reach the conclusion that he had specific definitions of each and that the three markings should be treated differently.

²⁴⁰ In the next chapter, I will use Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G minor, Op.23 No.5 as the main case study for the discussion of phrasing style.

As for another aspect of the meaning of tenuto, the rubato, one can see a clear example of Rachmaninoff's art of using tenuto in the famous 18th variation of the *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*. Many writers have noticed that Rachmaninoff did not play this variation with rhythmic evenness. Robert Philip, for instance, describes how the composer played here in detail:

His rubato consists of subtle adjustment of rhythmic detail, rather than the languishing mini-rallentando that tends to characterise the rubato of later pianists in Romantic music. As a result, his rubato does not hold up the flow. The way he plays [...] the famous melody that forms variation 18th of the [Rhapsody] on a Theme of Paganini (1934), makes a striking comparison with later pianists. [...] Instead of stretching out the whole of the first upbeat group, he plays it irregularly, with tenuti on the first three semiquavers, then a shortened final semiquaver which gives an impulse onto the first beat of the next bar. He does the same with the upbeats over the next three bars, in subtly varying ways. Rachmaninoff also arpeggiates chords, and, at the seventh bar of the theme, brings out an internal melodic counterpoint by playing notes early. Ashkenazy does none of this, and there is no indication in the score that he should. But it gives Rachmaninoff's playing a unique 'speaking' quality.²⁴¹

I agree with most of the comment above but cannot help wondering if Rachmaninoff really does not give any indication in the score of what he was doing in the recording. First, if one focuses solely on this variation, Rachmaninoff certainly does play as Philip describes. If we consider the whole structure of the piece and compare Rachmaninoff's treatment of rubato and phrasing here with how he played

²⁴¹ Philip, 173.

in the other variations, it is clear that what he did for the *Andante cantabile* was special, because he did not play other slow passages with similar metrical liberty and asynchronisation. The examples I presented in the discussion earlier in this chapter show that Rachmaninoff had two attitudes toward asynchronisation and unmarked arpeggiation, and the difference between the 18th variation and the others is a further example of this. I would argue that the purpose of the uneven rhythmic playing in this variation, therefore, is to create a 'speaking' effect that a pianist would not be able to do in the other variations, especially where the variation is the emotional centre of the whole composition.

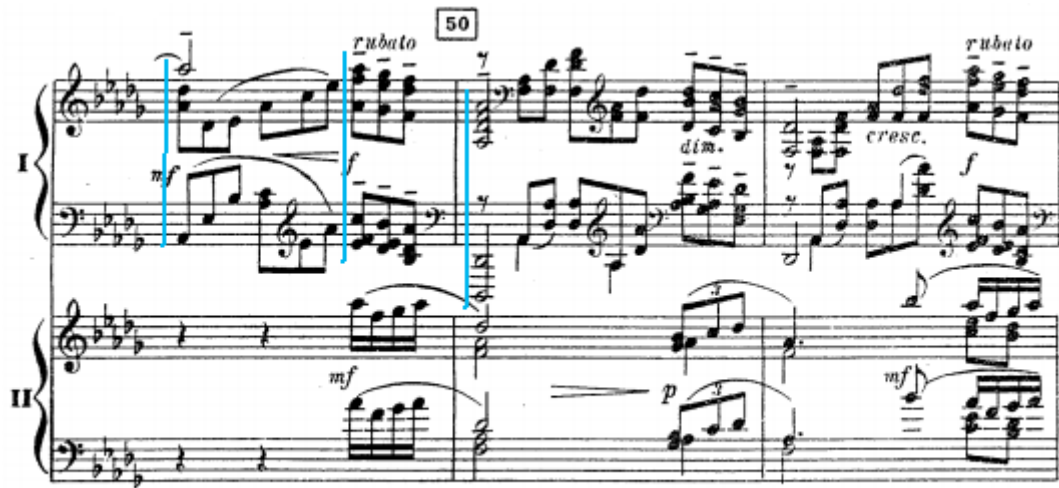
In Score 3-14 (the first 15 bars of the variation), the blue lines indicate where Rachmaninoff plays with an arpeggio, the green circles indicate where he sustains the note longer, and the orange lines show where he slightly slows down (*ritardando*). Rachmaninoff does indeed arpeggiate many chords, in a similar way to the *Symphonic Dances* performance, and he slows down at many of the triplets. Nevertheless, all the added arpeggios are linked with his tenuto marks except in bars 2 and 3. It probably proves that the composer's use of tenuto goes beyond its literal meaning of 'sustained'. If we can agree that those arpeggios mean 'to emphasise', then Rachmaninoff quite faithfully plays as he writes. In addition, in all three places he plays with a *ritardando* (marked in orange); the first one is only slightly slower than the previous beat, and the second and third, in bars 7 and 9, are also linked with his marking of inner voices. Since Rachmaninoff played this variation quite fast, we may suspect that he had to slow down a little bit there to bring out those voices. As far as the 'internal melodic counterpoint' is concerned, Ashkenazy and many other pianists actually bring those inner voices out, as the linking lines in the score indicate. However his treatment of those melodies is not as obvious as Rachmaninoff's.

The only problematic part, for me, is where to start the inner voice in bar 8 (to the first beat of bar 9). Rachmaninoff plays those four notes (which I have circled in red) significantly more loudly, but the first note is not linked with the second in some versions of the score – for example, the Charles Foley full score of 1934. But in many early performances of the piece, such as Moisewitsch's in 1937, Kapell's in 1945, and Rubinstein's in 1947, 1950, 1956, and so forth, one can also hear that the pianists bring out the inner voice from the first note of the four, not from the second, as many pianists from later generations do. Therefore, I have decided to sidestep this problem and only focus on whether a performer brings out the inner voice there rather than attempting to establish where the inner voice begins. However, according to the score, those internal melodic counterpoints are supposed to be highlighted in bars 8 to 9.

Score 3-14: Rachmaninoff 18th Variation of *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*, Op.43,
bars 1-15 (Audio Example Track 13)

Var. XVIII
Andante cantabile (Спокойно, певуче)

The musical score for the 18th Variation of Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*, Op. 43, is presented in four systems. The tempo is marked **Andante cantabile (Спокойно, певуче)**. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The score features a piano accompaniment with triplets and a melodic line in the right hand. The dynamics range from *pp* (pianissimo) to *f* (forte). The score is annotated with various markings: green circles around specific notes, blue vertical lines, yellow horizontal lines, and red circles around specific notes.



It is this kind of rhythmic freedom, suggested by the personal use of tenuto, that enables Rachmaninoff not only to sing but also to speak at the keyboard. Another example of the composer's art of using tenuto is the beginning of the second movement of his Piano Concerto No.1. In his performance, Rachmaninoff demonstrates not only precise control but also rhythmic freedom. His rubato is free in the piano solo section, and he also arpeggiates many chords (the blue lines in the Score 3-15). Similar to the approach shown in the 18th variation, those arpeggiated chords are almost all linked with his tenuto indication in the score:

(Audio Example Track 14)

Score 3-15: Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No.1 Mvt. II, bars 11-26

The musical score for Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 1, Movement II, bars 11-26, is presented in five systems. The notation is for a piano solo, marked 'espress.' and 'mf'. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score features complex piano techniques, including triplets, sixteenth-note runs, and dynamic markings such as 'cresc.', 'dim', and 'm.g.'. The notation is written for both hands on grand staves.

In the composer's recording of this passage, every note is carefully planned, but the phrasing also breathes in the *Sprechgesang* style. Hayroutdinoff says that when he was listening to this specific section, he 'felt that someone was speaking to me in Russian. The intonation and nuances were so vivid that I almost could identify the words.'²⁴²

²⁴² Interview with Rustem Hayroutdinoff (August 12th, 2010).

His impression echoes Philip's words, 'a unique "speaking" quality', which, to me, can be read from the score, especially after comparing the composer's personal approach to tenuto indications with how he plays them in the recordings.

2.2.4.3. Using Tempo (Contrametric) Rubato to Define Sections

Although Rachmaninoff played in these two different styles, he did not frequently mix the two in one piece. He usually chose one, established the character of the piece at the start, and stayed consistently within it. Nevertheless, sometimes Rachmaninoff still presented the two opposite styles in one piece, and he used the two different rubato patterns to define or determine sections. For example, in his recording of Chopin's Ballade No.3, Rachmaninoff starts the piece with very free tempo rubato (see Table 3-4). However, as the music went on, his rubato becomes more and more reserved. Finally, when he enters the C sharp minor section (bar 157), he plays in fast tempo and almost strict time, only slowing down in a few places. As far as the structure is concerned, there are several different sections containing different themes from bar 157 to the end (theme B2, B1, B2, B1, A1 and C1), and most pianists distinguish the sections from one another by phrasing differently or using very dissimilar speed. Rachmaninoff, however, still regards them as one complete phrase. This is probably because he focuses on tonality instead of theme, so the whole C sharp minor section is played in almost the same tempo, though this rendition is only quite rarely heard. This very individual interpretation creates great emotional tension and forces the audience to listen to it spellbound. For Rachmaninoff, rubato is a tool to define sections and a method for organising time.

Table 3-4: Rachmaninoff's Performance of Chopin's Ballade No.3							
<i>Theme</i>	A(1,2)	B(1,2)	C(1,2)	B(1,2)	B(2,1,2,1)	A(1)	C(1)
<i>Bar</i>	1-	52-	116-	144-	157-	213-	231-
	52	115	144	157	212	230	241
<i>Tonality</i>	A flat	F	A flat	D flat	c sharp	A flat	A flat
<i>Metronome</i>	ca 43-	ca 50-	C1:ca 50 C2:ca 99	ca 55	(104)	(95)	(93)
<i>Notes</i>	Free tempo rubato	Stable speed		Stable speed	Almost strict, stable, speed	Slowing down in the end	

When Rachmaninoff mixed the two rubato styles, he did not always play as dramatically as when he performed the Ballade. In the recording of the Prelude in G minor, Op.23 No.5, Rachmaninoff plays the two march sections in strict time, but the middle section with more and more tempo rubato. In the last three bars of the middle section (bars 47 to 49), he even exaggeratedly slows down (he only marks *diminuendo*, not *ritardando* in the end of bar 49). This personal interpretation will be discussed further in the next chapter. At the end of this discussion, I would like to stress again that Rachmaninoff, to judge by his recordings, did have a solid sense of rubato. In the unpublished recording of the *Symphonic Dances*, one can hear that Rachmaninoff plays with a metronome in some parts in tracks two and three. In the recording he demonstrates various tone colours, and his phrasing is free and the melody fluent. Because the performance is so free and fluent, one may think that Rachmaninoff must play with tempo rubato, but the passages with the metronome beating prove that every beat in his playing is perfectly in time. It means that one feels the freedom of expression through his singing lines, but Rachmaninoff actually plays strictly on the

beat. This also echoes the observation I mentioned above that in Rachmaninoff's playing, arpeggiation does not cause rubato or change the tempo. Rachmaninoff must have taken this consideration seriously, otherwise he would not have used the metronome to make sure that he is playing in time. It is because of this characteristic of his playing that many concert pianists, such as Stephen Hough and Nelson Freire, praised Rachmaninoff as the greatest master of rubato.²⁴³

2.3. Rachmaninoff's Singing Style and Phrasing

Rachmaninoff's piano playing was highly praised for its beautiful singing lines. He possessed the ability to make a line sing, no matter how long the phrase, how difficult the technical demands, nor how complex the texture. Scriabin considered Rachmaninoff's playing of his own music incomparable, especially because of this singing quality:

Take the notes of something by Rachmaninoff. Listen to it with your eyes and then hear Rachmaninoff play it on the piano. The same notes, yes, but the quality is entirely different. Unquestionably beautiful, no argument, convincing, everything sings.²⁴⁴

Fyodor Chaliapin, the legendary Russian bass and close friend of the composer, even said that when he and Rachmaninoff performed together, 'I can truly say, not that "I'm singing", but "we are singing"'.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Interviews with Stephen Hough (August 16th, 2010) and Nelson Freire (August 24th, 2010).

²⁴⁴ Faubion Bowers, *Scriabin: A Biography* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1996), 227.

²⁴⁵ Feodor Chaliapin, *An Autobiography: As Told to Maxim Gorky* (New York: Stein and Day, 1967), 279.

How did Rachmaninoff actually 'sing' at the keyboard? What are the qualities in Rachmaninoff's singing style? Through Rachmaninoff's singing phrases, one can trace both the early Russian Piano School and his personal performing style, and I will discuss this issue in three parts over the following sections.

2.3.1. The Russian singing style

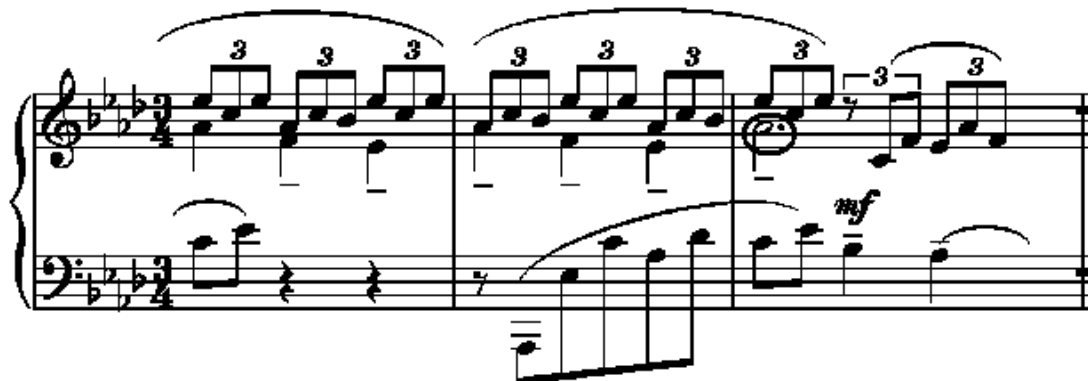
In case studies 1, 2, and 3 of the previous chapter, we have seen how the early Russian pianists focused on singing tone and regarded melody-oriented style as the principal characteristic of Russian pianism. In order to sing out the musical lines, the early Russian pianists did not necessarily follow the European performing principle that 'the longer note must be played with more force than the shorter, as it is to sound longer'. Also, the effect can be viewed as part of the Russian diminuendo singing style. As a pianist, Rachmaninoff's singing style also belongs to this Russian tradition – or, as Bella Davidovich, Rustem Hayroudinoff and Dang Thai Son say, he is one of the best examples of playing the traditional Russian singing style at the piano. Just as the phrasing preference shown in the Chopin Ballade case study shows, when Rachmaninoff, a Russian pianist from the early generation, encountered a phrase-end in a longer note after a series of short notes, he frequently played the long note more softly to form the diminuendo effect. Numerous examples can be found in Rachmaninoff's performances. In the middle section of the *Funeral March of Chopin's* Piano Sonata No.2, Rachmaninoff plays the minims (circled in the score example Score 3-16) after the two crotchets much more softly, which is, of course, against the European doctrine that the longer note be played louder:

Score 3-16: Chopin Piano Sonata No.2 Op.35 Mvt. III, bars 30-34 (Audio Example Track 15)



Similar singing phrases can also be heard in his own compositions. For instance, in bar 9 of his transcription *Lilacs* (see Score 3-17), Rachmaninoff plays the circled note considerably more softly to make the phrase sing in the recording, although it is on the first beat and is supposed to be played more loudly.

Score 3-17: Rachmaninoff *Lilacs*, bars 7-9



In bar 3 of Prelude in G major Op.32 No.5, Rachmaninoff also played the minim more softly, even though its time value is supposed to be maintained for much longer in the phrase.

Score 3-18: Rachmaninoff Prelude Op.32 No.5, bars 1-4

Moderato

p *dolce* *poco rit.*

The most contradictory case may be bar 9 of the Prelude Op.32 No.7 in F major. On the score the composer marked *mezzo forte*, but as a performer, Rachmaninoff still played the circled note much more softly:

Score 3-19: Rachmaninoff Prelude Op.32 No.7, bars 7-9 (Audio Example Track 16)

pp *m.s.* *mf* *m.d.*

Was Rachmaninoff really contradicting what he wrote? Probably not, because he actually effectively stressed the line by singing it significantly, which can be interpreted as 'mezzo forte' in the light of the musical meaning. It also can be argued

that, for Rachmaninoff, the beauty of singing phrases was crucial to piano playing. Whether this idea originated in his education at the Moscow Conservatory or simply came from his instinct, it seemed very natural for him to shape melodies in a vocal way.

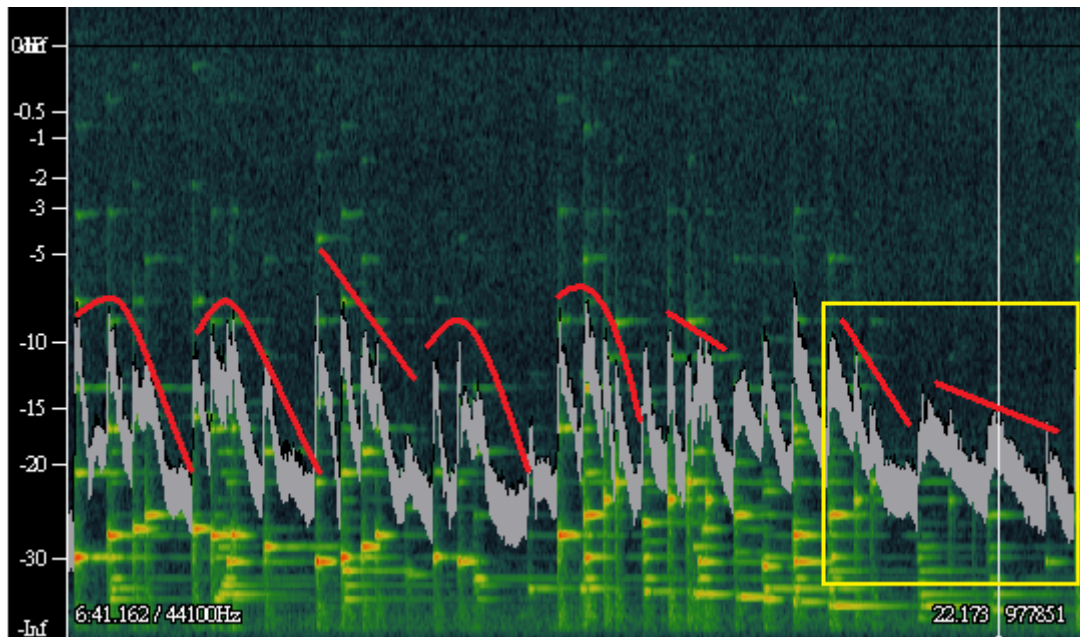
In addition, as Case Study 3 in the previous chapter shows, the Russian vocal style is *diminuendo* in fashion, unlike Italian *bel canto*, and we can hear that clearly in Rachmaninoff's playing. In fact, compared to his colleagues, I would argue that Rachmaninoff's *diminuendo* phrasing method is generally much stronger. His singing style is more intense, and the fading-away effect is more obvious. In most of the arch-like phrases he played, the top of the arch is nearly always at the very front of the line, and the volume decreases immediately. In the recording of Grieg's Violin Sonata No.3 in C minor, Op.45, recorded in Berlin, 1928, by Fritz Kreisler and Rachmaninoff, the different phrasing styles presented by the two were so noteworthy and obvious that even the pianist was not satisfied with the result,²⁴⁶ and their contrasting phrasing styles have been frequently discussed.²⁴⁷ The reason that the two sound so differently is that Kreisler was regularly playing sustainable, rising-up phrases, while Rachmaninoff still preferred to sing in the Russian *diminuendo* fashion. In the beginning of the second movement, Rachmaninoff played nearly all the musical sentences in the Russian *decrecendo* way:

²⁴⁶ Martyn, 443.

²⁴⁷ For example, see Robert Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 105-110.

SV 3-1: Grieg Violin Sonata No.3 Mvt. II, the first 16 bars played by Rachmaninoff:

(Audio Exmaple Track 17)



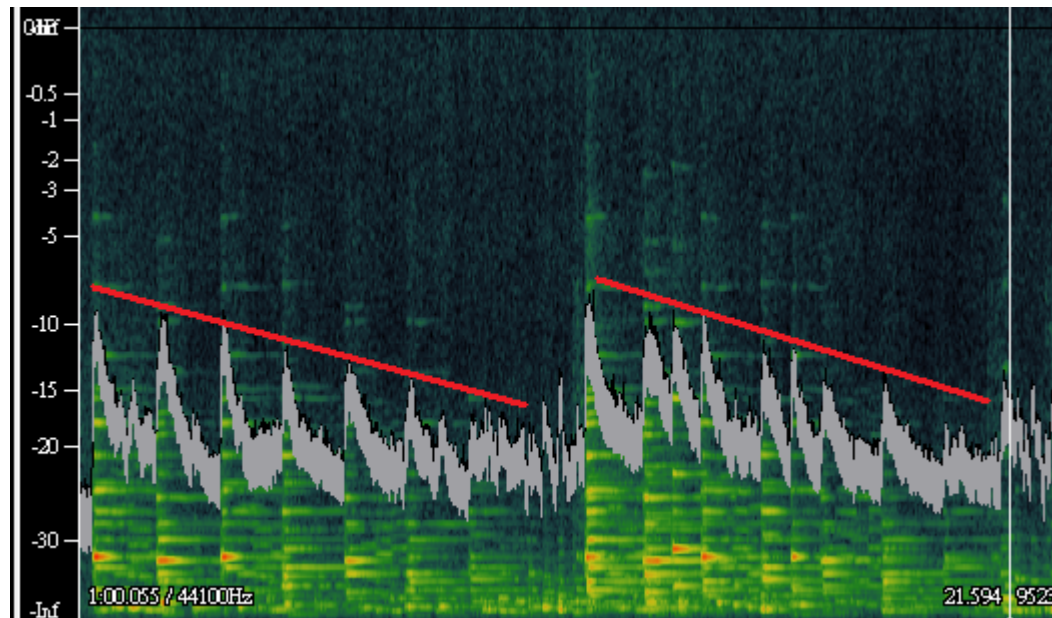
In the picture SV 3-1 and score example Score 3-20-1, bars 13 to 16 are circled in yellow. In the phrase Grieg gives an arch-like dynamic indication; Rachmaninoff, however, still changed it into the Russian cantabile manner.

Score 3-20-1: Grieg Violin Sonata No.3, Mvt. II, bars 1-16

Another example of the Russian diminuendo singing style in Rachmaninoff's performances is in his recording of the 7th variation of his *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*, Op.43. In this variation, the composer introduces the tune of *Dies Irae* at the piano, while the orchestra accompanies with a slower version of the opening motif (the Paganini theme). In the *Dies Irae* melody, although Rachmaninoff does not give any dynamic suggestions on the score, he plays all the phrases of the theme in a diminuendo way in his 1934 recording of the piece (see SV 3-2-1). Since the composer writes *cantabile* in the second phrase (bar 9), I would argue that it actually shows that communicating the 'singing quality', to the composer, meant shaping the melody in the Russian diminuendo way, the same way he played.

SV 3-2-1: The first two phrases of the 7th variation, bars 1-16:

(Audio Example Track 18)



In fact, Rachmaninoff did not use *cantabile* often in the score. In his piano music, he only used the term in the *Moments musicaux*, Op.16 No.3, Variation 21 from *Variations on a theme of Chopin*, Op.22, Prelude Op.23 No.4, *Études-tableaux* Op.33

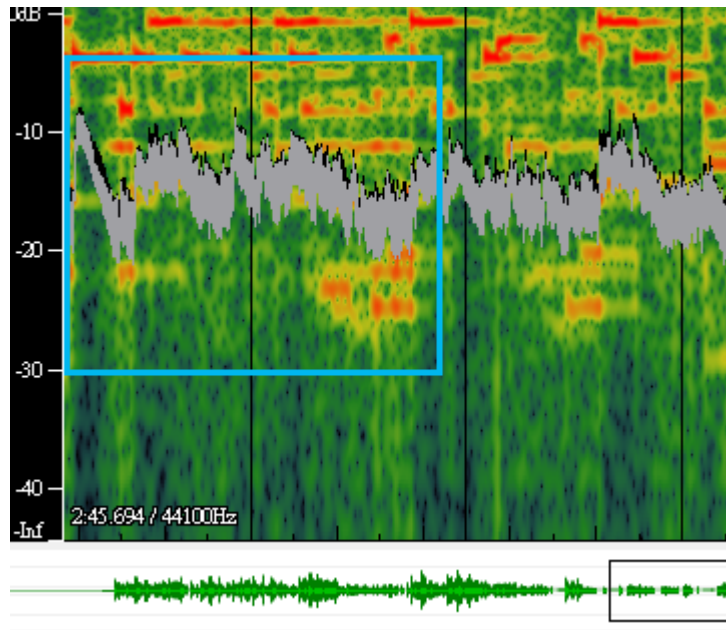
No.7, Variation 14 from *Variations on a theme of Corelli*, Op.42, and *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*, Op.43 (Variation 7 and Variation 18) the revision of *Sérénade*, Op.3 No.5, and transcriptions of Bizet's Minuet from *L'Arlésienne*, Kreisler's *Liebesleid* and *Liebesfreud*. Rachmaninoff only recorded Op.43, the revision of Op.3 No.5, and the three transcriptions. In the revision, the composer not only played a diminuendo phrase where he wrote *cantabile* (bar 90), he also wrote *mezzo forte* (bar 90) and then *diminuendo* (bar 91) in the score to indicate this phrasing style. In the transcriptions, where Rachmaninoff wrote *cantabile* in the two Kreisler's pieces, the melodies are all descending, so it is not surprising to see that he played them with a diminuendo. But in Bizet's *Minuet*, *cantabile* appears where the main melody (circled in red in Score 3-20-2) is ascending, and Rachmaninoff still played it in a diminuendo style (squared in blue in SV 3-2-2):

Score 3-20-2: Bizet-Rachmaninoff, Minuet from *L'Arlésienne*, bars 54-56

(Audio Example Track 19)



SV 3-2-2: Bizet-Rachmaninoff Minuet from L'Arlésienne, bars 54-56



Therefore, this probably implies again that this is how Rachmaninoff wished other performers to play the piece, since he noted *cantabile* in the score.

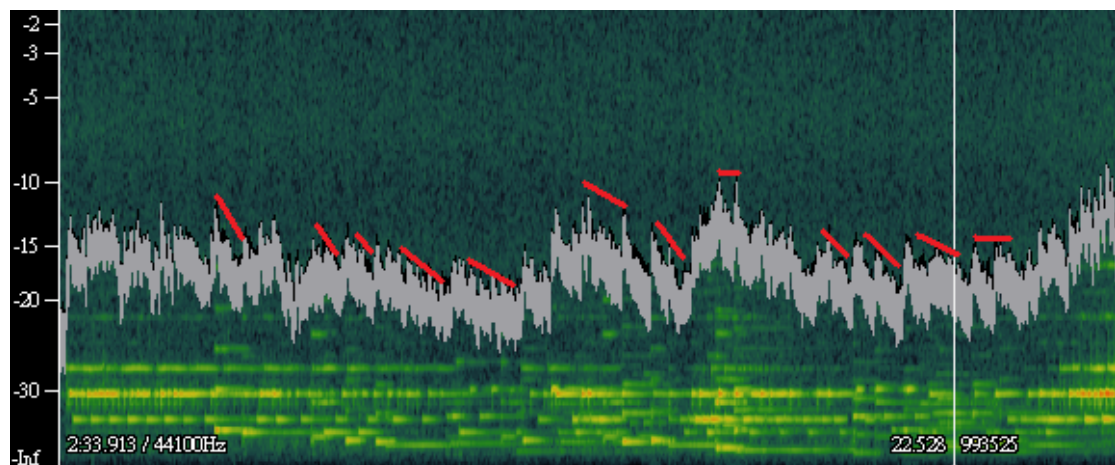
In addition, Rachmaninoff not only played in this Russian style but also frequently wrote melodic lines in this fashion. His Prelude in G sharp minor, Op.32 No.12, provides probably the best example of this phrasing approach. In his own performance of the piece in 1921, again, we can see how Rachmaninoff played the phrases in the Russian diminuendo style, and the minims (circled in the score example Score 3-21) after a series of shorter notes, were played much more softly:

Score 3-21: Rachmaninoff Prelude, Op.32 No.12, bars 1-8

(Audio Example Track 20)

The musical score for Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G sharp minor, Op. 32 No. 12, bars 1-8, is presented in four systems. The key signature is G sharp minor (three sharps) and the time signature is 12/8. The tempo is marked 'Allegro'. The score includes various performance markings: 'rit.' (ritardando), 'meno mosso' (less motion), 'accelerando' (increasing speed), 'a tempo' (return to tempo), and 'rit.' (ritardando). Dynamic markings include 'p' (piano), 'dim.' (diminuendo), 'pp' (pianissimo), and 'ten.' (tenuto). The left hand features multiple melodic lines, some of which are highlighted in red in the audio example.

SV 3-3: Rachmaninoff Prelude in G sharp minor, Op.32 No.12, bars 1-8, the composer's performance (all the melodic lines in the left hand are marked in red)



2.3.2. Rachmaninoff, Chaliapin, and the Early Slavic Singers

The Russian diminuendo singing approach can frequently be heard in the performances of many early Russian pianists, although not all of them shared this characteristic. On the other hand, Rachmaninoff could also have mastered this singing style from singers, especially his close friend Feodor Chaliapin (1873-1938). Arguably the greatest Russian singer, even the greatest bass on earth in his time, Chaliapin was famous not only for his supreme vocal ability, but also for his intense acting and interpretation, especially his technique of combining the qualities of speaking and singing.²⁴⁸ In his autobiography, *Man and Mask*, Chaliapin expresses his artistic aim by asking:

How must breathing be controlled so as to express a musical situation, the mental state of a character, with the appropriate intonation? I am speaking here not of musical intonation, of the production of such and such a note, but of the colour of the voice which, even in ordinary conversation, assumes various shades.²⁴⁹

One can hear what Chaliapin describes here in what is probably his most celebrated character, the title role from Mussorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov*. Chaliapin vividly sang the musical lines in the manner of human (Russian) speech. In the first thirteen bars of the famous 'Farewell' aria the composer creates the musical lines in the patterns of human (Russian) speech. There is no dynamic instruction, and the singers are supposed to *speak* through singing:

²⁴⁸ Martha Elliott, *Singing in Style: A Guide to Vocal Performance Practices* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 258-259.

²⁴⁹ Feodor Chaliapin, *Man and Mask: Forty Years in the Life of a Singer*, trans. P. Megroz (London: Victor Gollancz, 1932), 60.

Score 3-22: Mussorgsky *Boris Godunov*, excerpt from the Farewell aria

БОР. Andante. $\text{♩} = 72$

Прощай, мой сын! у-ми-ра-ю. Сей-час ты

248

цар-ство-вать нач-нешь. Не спраш-ивай, ка-ким пу-тем я

цар-ство при-о-брел; те-бе не нуж-но знать. Ты цар-ствовать по

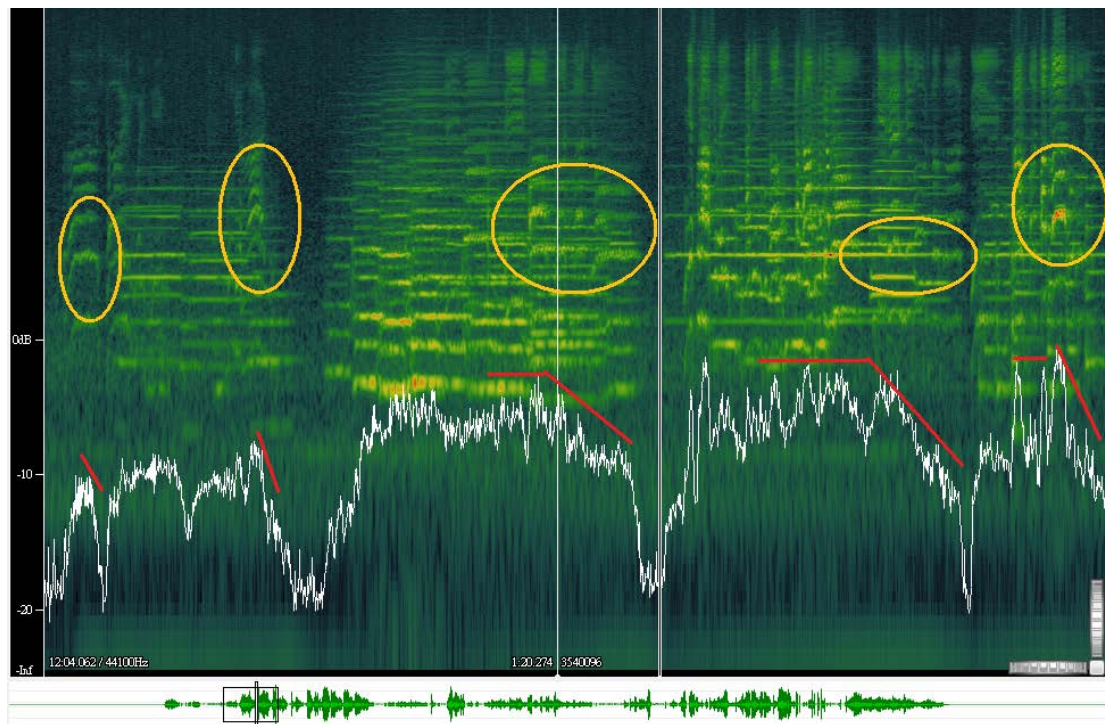
пра-ву бу-дешь, как мой на-след-ник, как сын мой пер-воро-д-ный.

The image shows a musical score for the Farewell aria from Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*. It consists of four systems, each with a vocal line (BOY) and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Andante' with a quarter note equal to 72 beats. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are in Russian. The first system includes a measure number '248'. The piano part features various dynamics including *p*, *pp*, *pppp cresc.*, and *tr*. The vocal line is written in a bass clef.

Chaliapin lucidly sang this excerpt by using the diminuendo style. In the picture (taken from Sonic Visualiser), we can see how he shaped his phrases in the 'fading away' manner in his 1928 recording (the horizontal red lines, however, are the

passages he sang in a way of reciting, and the orange circles mark Chaliapin's diminuendo phrasing):²⁵⁰

SV 3-4-1: Chaliapin's performance of the farewell aria, bars 1-13: (Audio Example Track 21)

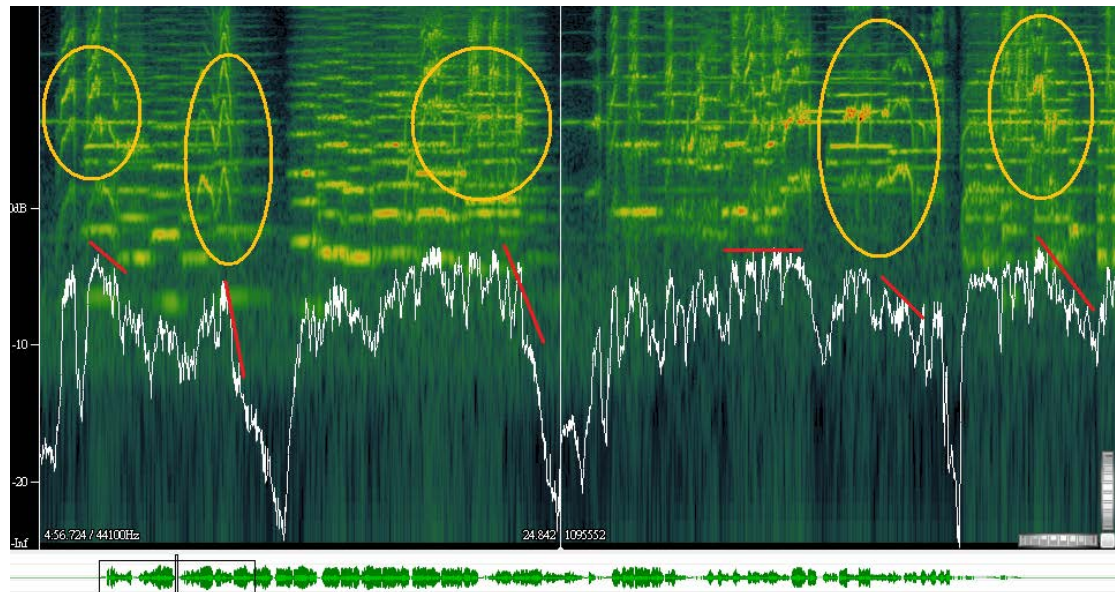


As shown in the picture, Chaliapin used decrescendo phrases to end those musical lines. For each of them, the volume drops almost immediately, not in the Italian *bel canto* style. This Russian diminuendo style, of course, does not only appear in Chaliapin's singing. Ukrainian bass Alexander Kipnis (1891-1978), who trained in his hometown and then the Warsaw Conservatory, was one of the greatest basses of his time. In his recording of the aria in 1945, he sang it in a different but still speech-like and diminuendo way. At the end of the phrases, his volume drops even more markedly than Chaliapin's, making his singing more like speaking.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ EMI CDH 7610092 (DB 3464).

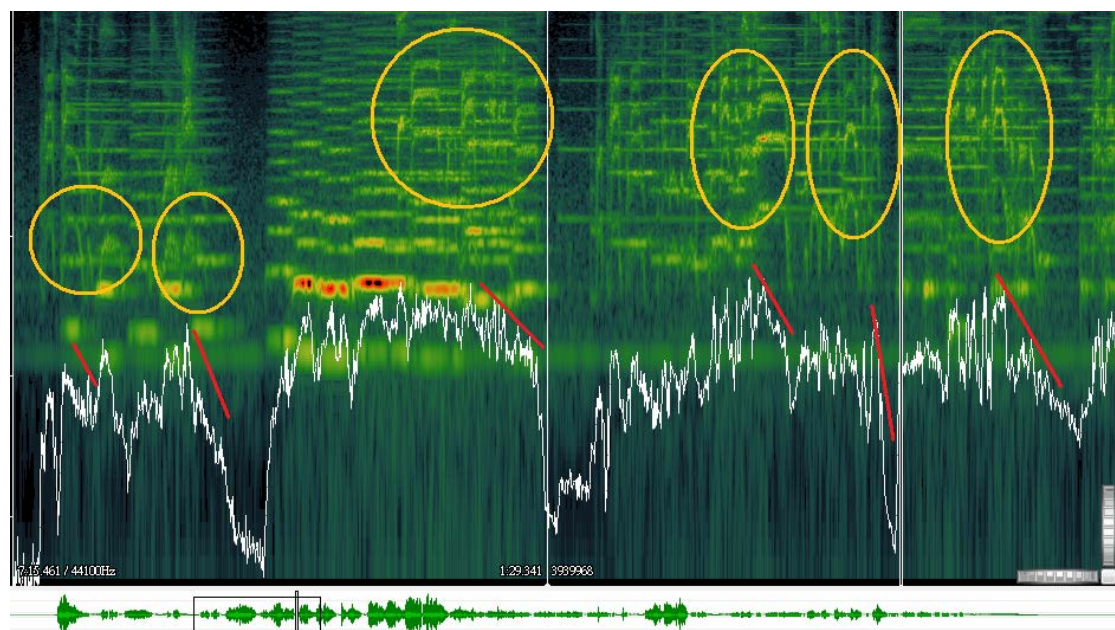
²⁵¹ RCA 60522-2-RG (D5-RC-0686-1).

SV 3-4-2: Kipnis's performance of the farewell aria, bars 1-13



Later, one of the most distinguished Boris Godunovs after Chaliapin, Bulgarian singer Boris Christoff (1914-1993), also sang this aria in the Russian style in his recording of 1949.²⁵² Although the three Slavic singers stressed different parts (words or melodic lines) in this excerpt, one can still hear the similarity among the their performances in the light of speech-like singing and diminuendo style:

SV 3-4-3: Christoff's performance of the farewell aria, bars 1-13



²⁵² EMI CDM 764252 2.

Mussorgsky's music is famous for the composer's efforts at combining music and Russian intonation. If we hear Russian vocalists sing pieces by western-influenced Russian composers, will the result be similar? Contrast to Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky is viewed as a 'western style' composer in Russia, and his music is not as close to Russian intonation as Mussorgsky's. In Gremin's aria from his opera *Eugene Onegin*, the first two musical sentences are regular and within the classical norm (four bars plus four bars). Although the composer writes a rising melody in bar 4 (see the score example Score 3-23), Vladimir Kastorsky, a famous bass from the Mariinsky Theatre of St. Petersburg, when he recorded this aria in 1908, sang this phrase in a natural diminuendo fashion. He performed the later phrase, bars 12 to 14, as spoken words and broke the line into several short phrases. However, he still sang the three bars with the Russian diminuendo singing phrase.²⁵³

Score 3-23: Tchaikovsky *Eugene Onegin*, Gremin's aria, bars 1-7

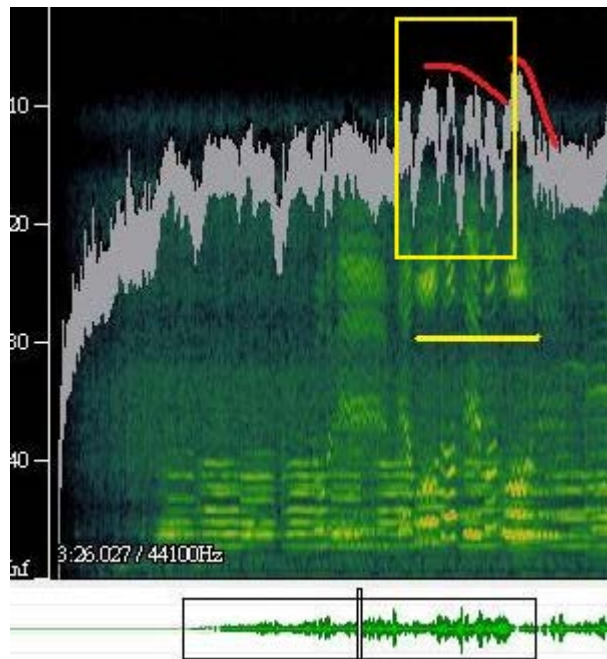
Andante sostenuto (♩ = 66)
(с благородством спокойного, но, шло)

Гремин

Лю-ви все воз-ра-сты по-кор-ны, е-е по-

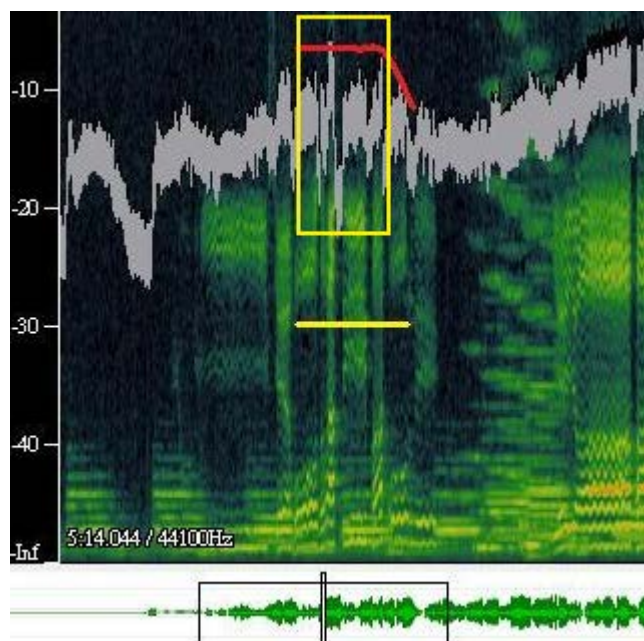
²⁵³ Nimbus NI 7865

SV 3-5-1: Kastorsky's performance of the Gremin aria, bars 1-7



Kipnis's rendition of 1945, on the other hand, is more about creating the effect of speaking than singing, therefore it is hard to be sure he wanted to create a diminuendo phrase.²⁵⁴

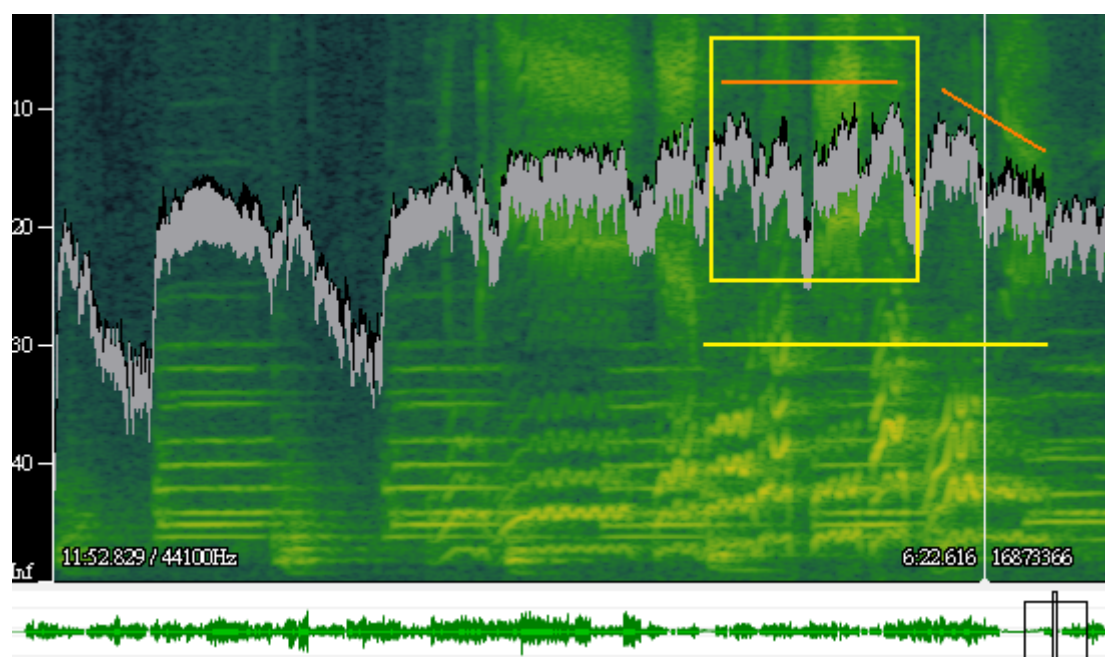
SV 3-5-2: Kipnis's performance of the Gremin aria, bars 1-7



²⁵⁴ RCA 60522-2-RG (D5-RC-1824-2).

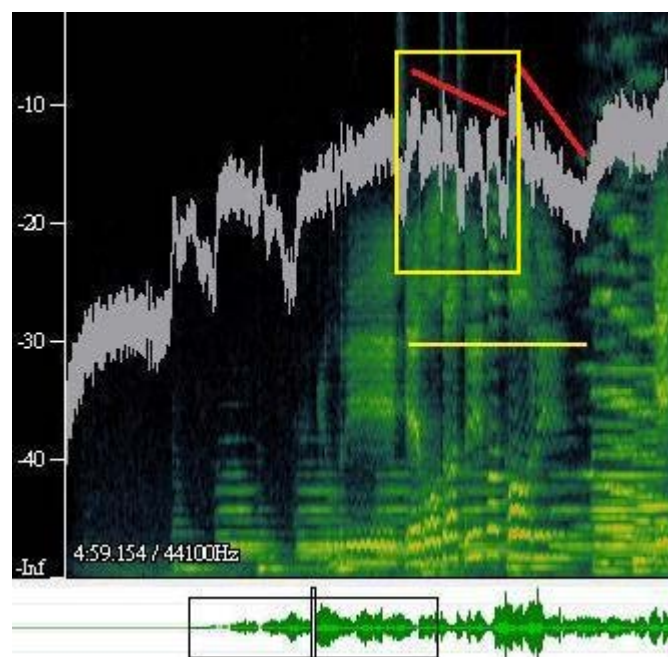
This approach can also be heard in Ivan Petrov's performance of 1955.²⁵⁵

SV 3-5-3: Petrov's performance of the Gremin aria, bars 1-7



However, in Christoff's performance in 1952, again, one can hear that he performs the two phrases in the typical Russian diminuendo style:²⁵⁶

SV 3-5-4: Christoff's performance of the Gremin aria, bars 1-7

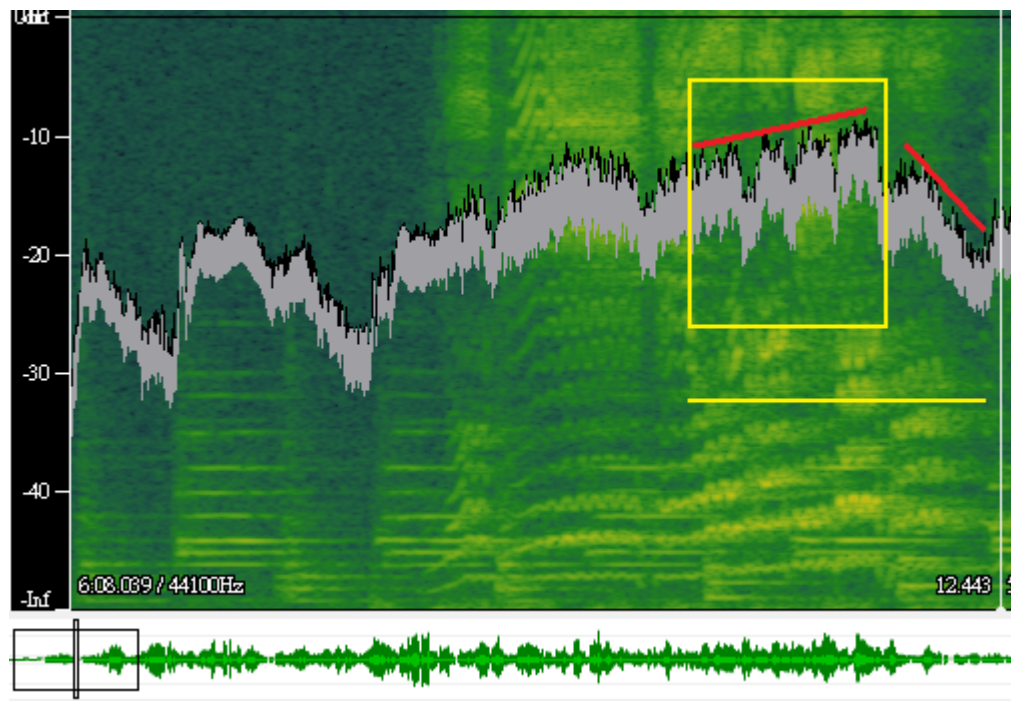


²⁵⁵ BMG Melodiya 74321170902.

²⁵⁶ EMI CDM 764252 2

The four Russian and Slavic singers either perform the phrase in a ‘speaking’ style, or sing it in the Russian diminuendo fashion: perhaps for them, the latter was actually a way of speaking through singing, as the pianists described, and a very natural way of shaping a musical line. Singers from non-Russian or Slavic linguistic or educational backgrounds, however, may have had different phrasing preferences while performing this excerpt. Finnish bass Kim Borg (1919-2000), for instance, when recording the Gremin aria in 1963, sang the first sentence in a rising-up, crescendo manner.²⁵⁷

SV 3-5-5: Borg’s performance of the Gremin aria, bars 1-7



The Russian diminuendo singing style in the performances of Russian and Slavic singers, as seen above, echoes the Russian diminuendo singing approach at the piano and Rachmaninoff’s playing. The speech-singing style, as can be heard in Kipnis and Kastorsky’s Gremin aria, and Chaliapin’s dramatic farewell aria from *Boris Godunov*, may also indicate the way Rachmaninoff phrased certain small sections in big phrases.

²⁵⁷ DG 445 427-2

In his biography Chaliapin said of Rachmaninoff:

When he is at the piano, I am not singing alone – we are both singing. He interprets the very soul of the composition with the utmost delicacy, and if a pause or a suspended note is required, the singer may be sure that he will indicate them perfectly.²⁵⁸

Neither Chaliapin nor Rachmaninoff discussed Russian phrasing in their interviews or books, but it is probably safe to suppose that the two artists influenced each other with regard to cantabile expression.

2.3.3. 'Big' Musical Line

Besides the Russian singing style, what else did Rachmaninoff learn from his close friend? One of the reasons that Chaliapin's diminuendo singing was so impressive is that he could manage an unusually long phrase, due to his phenomenal breath control. According to a critic of the time:

The chief factors in Chaliapin's marvellous combinations of quantity and quality are enormous chest depth, a singularly domed roof of the mouth and perfect co-operation of sound-modifying muscles and natural resonances. Chaliapin appears to hold back his breath till the last possible moment, so that when at last it leaves his moulded lips the tone soars forth on the strongest possible breath impulse. Thus the note seems to explode, as it were, on the lips, and the result is that almost thunderous hollow tone peculiar to Chaliapin. Then there are wondrously plaintive soft notes, in which he gives the impression of leaning so

²⁵⁸ Chaliapin, 184.

elastically on the breath. They are not produced, as with many singers, entirely in the head, but always have a continued chest-depth.²⁵⁹

Chaliapin's 1936 recording of Rachmaninoff's aria 'All the Gypsy Camp is Sleeping' from the opera *Aleko*, and many other performances, show that his signature long singing phrase is truly exceptional.²⁶⁰

Whether or not the composer's pianism was influenced by Chaliapin, in Rachmaninoff's piano playing, long phrasing – or the 'big' musical line – is also a noteworthy and important feature. In the previous discussion of the composer's personal approach to the tenuto mark, I mentioned that the reason pianists are supposed to 'emphasise the note but not add any accent', for Davidovich, is that even though pianists need to speak through music, they are not supposed to break the long singing line in Rachmaninoff's music. That is also the reason, for her, why the composer usually writes tenuto at the end of a (long) phrase, because the tenuto extends the line. The importance of maintaining the 'big line' in Rachmaninoff's music, as Davidovich stresses, is also supported by many pianists. Vladimir Ashkenazy thinks that creating a big musical line is the most important factor while playing Rachmaninoff's music. He says:

The main thing of playing Rachmaninoff is to understand that there is always a big line in his music. Don't go to many bits and pieces [in his music], even though they are very attractive or interesting. That's not the point. Rachmaninoff's music is of big line and big expression. It is his attitude to existence, to life and death.

²⁵⁹ Richard Capell, 'Chaliapin the greatest opera actor', *Daily Mail*, London, July 2nd, 1914. See in Victor Borovsky, *Chaliapin: a Critical Biography* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1988), 442.

²⁶⁰ EMI CDH 7610092 (DB 3464).

Occasionally I hear some pianists play Rachmaninoff in the opposite way. They do many tiny, little things, but miss, even distort the big line in his music. That's really a mistake, and it is not how Rachmaninoff plays in his recordings. I do not suggest anyone to imitate his playing, but I do suggest that we should emulate his style, to learn the big line from how he plays.²⁶¹

In addition, according to Ruth Slenczynska, one of the only two pianists Rachmaninoff ever coached in the West, the composer-pianist once told her that in piano playing it is important to 'make things big', just as he said about Rubinstein's performance.²⁶² A concert pianist should always think *big* musical lines and make a large musical arch in phrasing:

Play for the man in the last row of the gallery; the real climax will reach him after the sound leaves the piano. The musical arch is shaped like an ocean wave which falls on the beach after it reaches its highest point.

In conclusion, Rachmaninoff emphasised the point: 'Big musical line, big musician; small musical line, small musician.'²⁶³

Even if we do not have Slenczynska's recollection of the maestro's teaching, as Ashkenazy points out, one still can find evidence of this grand style in Rachmaninoff's recordings. He used at least three major approaches to form a grand musical line:

- (1). Combining short lines and sections into longer ones.
- (2). Longer crescendo or decrescendo line.

²⁶¹ Interview with Vladimir Ashkenazy (December 14th, 2010).

²⁶² Interview with Ruth Slenczynska (January 5th, 2009).

²⁶³ Ruth Slenczynska in *Clavier*, October 1973, 15.

(3). Ignoring detailed dynamics.

2.3.3.1. Combining Short Lines and Sections Into Longer Ones

Although in performance Rachmaninoff could sometimes give a very personal definition of musical phrases or structure (for example, his rendition of Chopin's Ballade No.3), there is one general rule about his phrasing: he did not separate long phrases into small ones. I have not found any exceptions to this rule in his performances. However, he did frequently combine short lines into longer ones. In his transcription of Bizet's Minuet *from L'Arlesienne Suite*, Rachmaninoff avoided stress on the down beat of bars 30 and 46 so as to make the descending scale in thirds on the right hand sound like a longer line:

Score 3-24: Bizet-Rachmaninoff Minuet from *L'Arlesienne Suite*, bars 30-31



In the same style, Rachmaninoff also combined small sections into big ones, which makes the musical lines and phrases sound even longer. His use of this effect in variation sets is especially notable. In Handel's *Harmonious Blacksmith*, for instance, Rachmaninoff connected the Variation 2 and 3 so that the piece sounds like a four section composition:

Theme—Variation 1—Variation 2 & 3—Variation 4

Rachmaninoff regarded Variation 4 as the coda and played Variation 2 and 3 straightforwardly while gradually speeding up, which naturally shaped a grand line in the performance. This performance also reveals that once Rachmaninoff decided to connect the sections or phrases, he would even avoid treating cadences differently and played them directly without slowing down. The end of the Variation 2 is a good example. In other words, Rachmaninoff combined the two sections not only by ignoring the pause between the two variations: he also intentionally blurred the harmonic boundaries to create longer phrases.

A similar approach can be heard in his performance of Chopin-Liszt *The Maiden's Wish*. In this piece Liszt wrote three variations after Chopin's Polish song, and Rachmaninoff treated the theme and variations as a single section without clear separations. In the performance there is a gradually accelerating process from Variation 1 to 3, and Rachmaninoff even connected Variations 2 and 3 to form a long crescendo passage. Compared to how the other pianists played the same piece around the same period, Rachmaninoff's design of it really sounds personal and unique. For example, Paderewski distinguishes the theme and variations by using free rubato in the former and stable tempi in the latter. He even adds short passages between the variations.²⁶⁴ In Hofmann and Godowsky's performances, although they do not separate all four sections very clearly, they also do not link the last two variations and phrase them as a big crescendo line as Rachmaninoff does, so the audience can still have a sense of the variation within the form through their performances.²⁶⁵ Once one is familiar with Rachmaninoff's phrasing style, one would

²⁶⁴ Pearl Gemm CD 9397.

²⁶⁵ Marston 52004-2 (Hofmann); APR CD APR 7011 (Godowsky).

not be surprised to hear that in his recording of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No.2, Rachmaninoff plays his own cadenza connecting to the coda without a fermata. This design is close to the crescendo effect he created in *The Maiden's Wish*.

2.3.3.2. Longer Crescendo or Decrescendo Lines

Besides connecting short sections and phrases, Rachmaninoff demonstrated some other methods of forming grand lines in the recordings. Many of those methods also echo what Rachmaninoff did in the revisions of his early works, which gives us a clearer picture of Rachmaninoff's performing style. An easy way to express a grand musical line is to play with a longer and sustained crescendo or decrescendo, and Rachmaninoff was really fond of this method. In his revised versions, he often clarified the dynamic indications by giving more detailed marks, and these marks show his phrasing style.

For example, in bars 15 to 30 of his *Sérénade*, Op.3 No.5 (composed in 1892), the dynamic marks in the original version are very simple:

Score 3-25-1: Rachmaninoff *Sérénade* Op.3 No.5, bars 15-30 (original version)



But Rachmaninoff probably did not actually want the performer to play mezzo forte until the *piano pianissimo* comes. In the revised version (1940) he gives the indications in detail to articulate his phrasing in his mind more clearly. By following the new dynamic design, a performer will shape a longer decrescendo line, and that is also how Rachmaninoff plays in the recording (1936) of the piece:

Score 3-25-2: Rachmaninoff *Sérénade* Op.3 No.5, bars 15-30 (revised version)

The musical score for Rachmaninoff's *Sérénade* Op. 3 No. 5, bars 15-30 (revised version), is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 15-20) shows a decrescendo dynamic design, starting with *mf a tempo* and ending with *dim.*. The second system (bars 21-30) shows a decrescendo dynamic design, starting with *pp* and ending with *mf*. The tempo is marked *ritenuto* in the second system.

Rachmaninoff published the revision in 1940, but in this recording in 1936, he already plays the revision (with some tiny differences) instead of the original. But this is his second recording of the piece. In his first one, recorded in 1922, some parts belong to the original version, but the piece in general is still closer to the 1940 revision. In this section (bars 15 to 30), the 1922 recording also has the long decrescendo dynamic design, and the major difference is that Rachmaninoff plays *piano* instead of *mezzo forte* (as in the score) at bar 27. As far as the notes are concerned, the 1892 original, 1922 recording, 1936 recording, and 1940 revision are actually four different versions of the *Sérénade*. The latter three, however, have very

similar phrasing patterns. Since Rachmaninoff only started to make recordings in 1919, we do not know how he played between 1892 and 1919. On the other hand, Rachmaninoff's main profession was not as a pianist until his emigration to the West in 1917, when he was 44 years old. By then he was so occupied with his successful concert schedules that he only composed six new pieces (except arrangements, transcriptions, and revisions of his works) throughout the rest of his life. If the comparison of the original version, revised version, and the recording here reveals the consistency that Rachmaninoff had the tendency to play the passage between two contrasting dynamic marks in crescendo or decrescendo, then it is probably safe to state that although he may have played differently before 1919, this phrasing style is how Rachmaninoff was known as a professional, full-time concert pianist.

This performing habit can be heard again in Rachmaninoff's *Humoresque*, Op.10, No.5 (composed in 1894). In the beginning the dynamic indication of the original version is:

Score 3-26-1: Rachmaninoff *Humoresque*, Op.10 No.5, bars 1-5 (original version)

Allegro vivace

pp *leggiero* *sf sf*

In the revision (1940), Rachmaninoff changed bar 5 to:

Score 3-26-2: Rachmaninoff *Humoresque*, Op.10 No.5, bars 1-5 (revised version)

Allegro vivace

pp *leggero*

Why did Rachmaninoff write *forte* for the bar instead of two *sforzandi* for the two quavers? In the original version, the phrase should be played *pianissimo* until bar 5. In the revised one, however, Rachmaninoff wished the pianist to play with a crescendo to link the two dynamic marks, just as the example of his revision of *Sérénade*. This assumption is supported by how Rachmaninoff played the passage in the recording (1940):

Score 3-26-3: Rachmaninoff *Humoresque*, Op.10 No.5, bars 1-5 (as the composer plays in the recording)

Allegro vivace

pp *leggero*

One also can see this kind of score-reading pattern in his transcription of Bach's Prelude from the Violin Suite No.3. On the score, Rachmaninoff gives the dynamic indication as:

Score 3-27-1: Bach-Rachmaninoff Prelude, bars 9-12

In the recording, Rachmaninoff plays a decrescendo line to link the *forte* and *piano*:

Score 3-27-2: Bach-Rachmaninoff Prelude, bars 9-12 (as the composer plays in the recording)

Rachmaninoff's recorded performance of his *Étude-Tableaux in A minor*, Op.39, No.6 is another example illustrating how he made a grand phrase. Referred to as 'Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf', this aggressive and daunting piece opens with a threatening chromatic octave run low on the keyboard, answered by quick, chattering treble figures that eventually transform themselves into a march. The march starts at bar 36 and a new theme enters at bar 59. Rachmaninoff regards bars 36 to 56 as a single crescendo phrase. Although he writes detailed dynamic and tempo indications on the score, he decides to ignore those marks to make a grand musical line. For example, in bars 51 to 54, what he writes on the score is:

Score 3-28-1: Rachmaninoff *Étude-Tableaux*, Op.39 No.6, bars 51-54



In the recording, however, he plays this part as a non-stopping crescendo line:

Score 3-28-2: Rachmaninoff *Étude-Tableaux*, Op.39 No.6, bars 51-54 (as the composer plays in the recording)



In addition, according to the dynamic indications on the score, Rachmaninoff wanted the march to end *forte* and the new theme to start from *piano*, which means that the new theme is a departure with a new musical line:

Score 3-28-3: Rachmaninoff *Étude-Tableaux*, Op.39 No.6, bars 57-59



In the recording Rachmaninoff abandons his original dynamic design on the score. He plays decrescendo instead of crescendo from bar 57 on, which allows the march to be connected to the new theme, forming an even bigger musical phrase in the middle section of the *étude*:

Score 3-28-4: Rachmaninoff *Étude-Tableaux*, Op.39 No.6, bars 57-59 (as the composer plays in the recording)



It is worth noticing that Rachmaninoff wrote *Étude-Tableaux*, Op.39 between 1916 and 1917, and he recorded this piece in 1925. The reason Rachmaninoff did not write in that way (given the fact that there is only an eight-year gap between 1917 and 1925), I would argue, is that he had not yet established a clear indication method as a

piano music composer, at a time when he was not a professional, full-time concert pianist. His early works, such as the piano part of the *Cello Sonata* Op.19, often show that Rachmaninoff was not always very clear about giving indications, especially as far as pedal marks and slurs are concerned. In his later works, *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*, Op.42, for example, he became a meticulous composer and gave very clear instructions on the score. If his phrasing style in the performances of this *Étude*, *Humoresque*, and *Sérénade* are very similar, and all three are also close to the dynamic design of the revisions of the latter two, then I would argue it is more likely that Rachmaninoff had a habit of playing longer crescendo and decrescendo lines, at least from the point when he started to record. It is his indicational skill that became more advanced and experienced rather than his playing style that changed. However, one cannot deny the other possibility that he might have dramatically changed his phrasing pattern between 1917 and 1925: when he began to play the piano as his main professional occupation, it is possible that his approach to phrasing and expressivity also became more systematic in general, due to intensive practice and performing. It is a pity that Rachmaninoff did not leave any recordings between 1917 and 1925 for us to examine. Furthermore, the fact that Rachmaninoff did not record in Russia and only composed six major works in the West makes discussing this possible style change by comparing Rachmaninoff's playing and indications in the score very difficult. *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*, Op.42, which he composed in the summer of 1931, is the only original solo piano work he wrote after leaving Russia, and he did not record it.

On the other hand, Rachmaninoff's phrasing method here – reducing the dynamic waves to form a broader phrase – may have a deeper musical culture behind it than just his own personal style. It may take us back to the discussion of the early Russian

Piano School in Chapter Two. Based on his experience, Stephen Hough thinks that Rachmaninoff inherited the performing habit of the Russian Piano School, calling it 'Russian crescendo':

The 'Russian crescendo' was something I learned of from Josef Lhévinne via Adele Marcus (his former pupil and assistant) – when the intention to get louder in a phrase is actually heard as getting softer. It is not a diminuendo because that has the *intention* of getting softer – a relaxing rather than an intensifying.²⁶⁶

In Rachmaninoff's performances Hough frequently hears this kind of 'Russian crescendo', which gives a sense of widening a phrase and then also contributes to the big phrasing style. In the light of this style, a clearer explanation of many of the composer's structural plans emerges. The most exaggerated example of this performing aesthetic may be his interpretation of Chopin's *Funeral March*, in which he adopted Anton Rubinstein's interpretation. By varying the dynamics at the repeat of the march, Rubinstein's interpretation turned the whole movement into a processional that gradually approached in crescendo for the first section, stood at the graveside for the trio, then marched away into the distance. The image was fostered by starting the repeat after the trio *fortissimo*, then introducing a gradual decrescendo; actually the opposite of Chopin's original marking.

March———Trio———March

Crescendo

Decrescendo

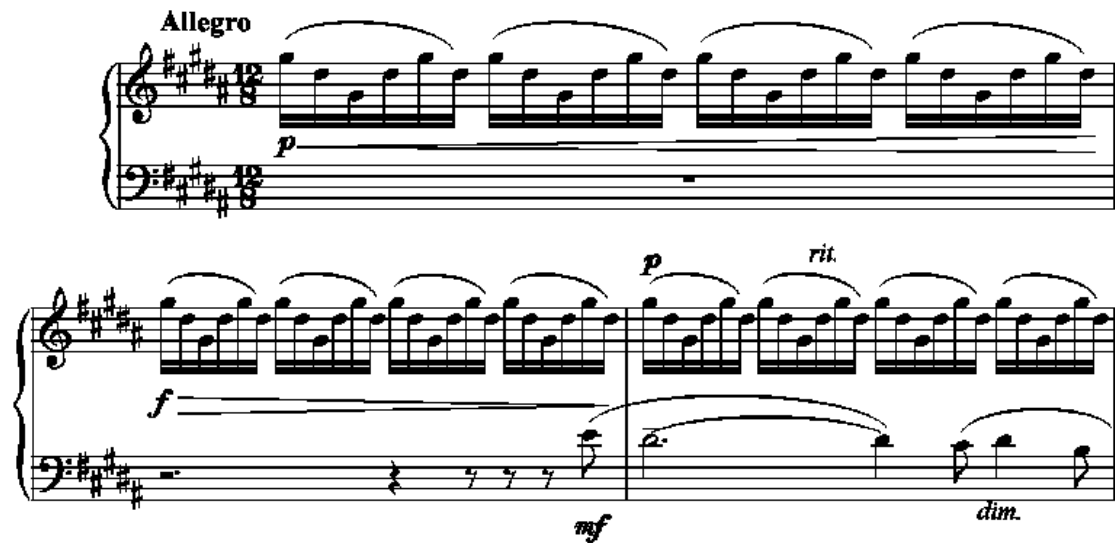
²⁶⁶ Interview with Stephen Hough (August 16th, 2010).

In Rachmaninoff's performance of the piece, he not only displays phenomenal volume control from *piano pianissimo* to *forte fortissimo* but also plays the two march sections as two straightforward crescendo and decrescendo phrases. Rachmaninoff's interpretation reflected his admiration of Rubinstein as well as his performing habit of crafting grand lines and playing long, gradual dynamic changes.

2.3.3.3. Ignoring Detailed Dynamics

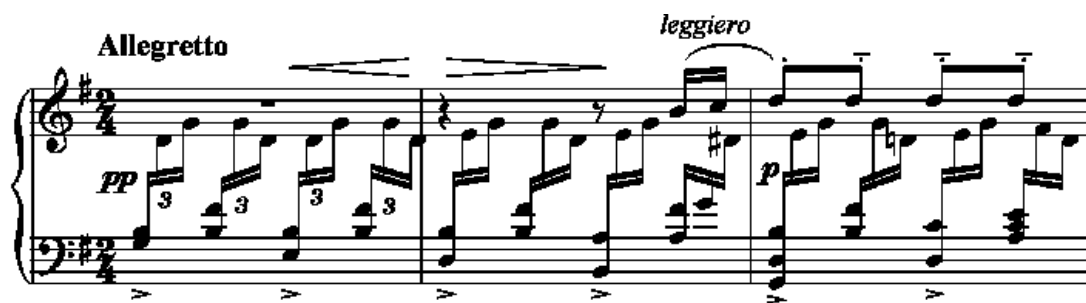
In the previous examples, Rachmaninoff used crescendo and decrescendo to connect different dynamic indications, thus producing longer phrases. Nevertheless, making a grand phrase can also come from ignoring detailed dynamics. In the unpublished recording of the *Symphonic Dances*, Rachmaninoff did not faithfully follow his dynamic indications on the score, but the result is that he formed 'big phrases' in the performance. In his studio performances, also, as the *Étude-Tableaux* Op.39, No.6 and the *Funeral March* show, the march sections were played in very strict time and all the inner dynamic changes and small phrases were ignored, which makes the volume changes more sudden: one grand line for each of the sections. Rachmaninoff might have wished the phrases to sound bigger, and delicate expression would have lead the audience to pay attention to those minor elements and thus failed to see the big picture. As a composer, Rachmaninoff tried to present his ideas clearly and give detailed instructions, especially in his early works. As a performer, however, the pursuit of the grand musical phrase led him to overlook small lines and detailed phrasing. In the beginning of his Prelude Op.32, No.12, Rachmaninoff marks crescendo and decrescendo in the first two bars, making them one small, introductory phrase:

Score 3-29: Rachmaninoff Prelude Op.32 No.12, bars 1-3



In his recording, however, Rachmaninoff adopts a different interpretation. He plays the first two bars evenly and without altering the dynamic or tempo. The same performing habit can also be heard in his transcription of *Wohin?* In the recording, Rachmaninoff does not play the slight arch phrase in the beginning as he wrote it:

Score 3-30: Schubert-Rachmaninoff *Wohin?* bars 1-3



This kind of simplification is clearly not the result of technical difficulty, as Rachmaninoff still plays the bars cleanly and clearly. The benefit is that Rachmaninoff was able to regard the introduction and its following passage as a whole phrase, making a bigger singing line of the accompanying section. On the other hand, Rachmaninoff could still play small phrases and dynamic changes in detail. To the

audience the feeling of 'big phrase' is determined by the musical texture and the tempi the performer uses. In the pieces played in fast tempi, like the two examples mentioned above, Rachmaninoff almost always gave up small phrases. But when he could establish a solid big phrase, and the tempo was not too fast, he would still play all the details clearly, just as he performed bars 109 to 112 from the first movement of his Piano Concerto No.2:

(Audio Example Track 22)

Score 3-31: Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No.2, Op.18 Mvt I, bars 109-112



And in the pieces played in slow tempi, Rachmaninoff felt free to create even more meticulous details. In Siloti's transcription of Saint-Saëns' *Swan*, the beginning of the piece is:

Score 3-32-1: Saint-Saëns-Siloti: *Swan*, bar 1



But in Rachmaninoff's recording, since he could use sustaining pedal and consistent legato to maintain a long phrase, he slightly divides the introductory bar by playing the second half much more softly:

Score 3-32-2: Saint-Saëns-Siloti: *Swan*, bar 1 (Rachmaninoff)



All these examples above fit Ashkenazy's observation of Rachmaninoff's performances, and Brazilian pianist Nelson Freire also shares Ashkenazy's opinion. Freire states that:

[F]or me, the greatest lesson Rachmaninoff teaches us through the recording is 'less is more'. Why does Rachmaninoff's music need 'less' instead of 'more'? Please do not forget that Rachmaninoff published most of his works before the Soviet revolution. He was still very young at that time and not very experienced about giving notations. The result was that he frequently gave unnecessary, even ineffective indications—over dynamic range, over emotion contrast, over phrase details, etc. [...] If a pianist faithfully follows what he wrote on the score, the music would become very exaggerated and unnatural. Therefore, the secret

of playing Rachmaninoff well is to skilfully ignore some of his indications, and Rachmaninoff's recording provides an ideal answer. That's why he did not literally play what he wrote and usually combined small up-and-downs into big phrases. Listening to how Rachmaninoff plays his works, therefore, is very important to all the pianists who wish to play them.²⁶⁷

As a performer Rachmaninoff was not isolated from his time. We can hear that he still adopted asynchronisation, unmarked arpeggiation, and unexpected middle voices in his playing, as many of his colleagues did, especially European performers. However, his practice of these three techniques is quite restrained. It can be a personal choice, but it is also similar to how the Russian pianists played around his time. In the light of the Piano School, Rachmaninoff was also very *Russian*. He frequently played in the Russian diminuendo singing style, a style similar to that of his close singer friend Chaliapin and many other early Russian singers.

On the other hand, Rachmaninoff, like all great artists, of course, had his own noticeable style of piano playing. He was a master of rubato, and I argue that he left his wisdom of managing time in his creative usage of tenuto marking: it suggests rubato, speaking-effect, or alternation of tone. Comparing what he wrote in the score with how he played those passages, one can find that the true meaning of his tenuto will emerge from its literal implication. His recording gives us an insight into his indication habits and helps us to read between the notes in the score. Furthermore, as a composer-performer, Rachmaninoff expressed a coherent and consistent style in his performances, and his phrasing approach corresponds to the changes he made in his 1940 and 1941 revisions: the 'big' musical line. For his pupils and many contemporary

²⁶⁷ Interview with Nelson Freire (August 24th, 2010) .

pianists, this performing style also reflects how they feel after studying his performances and compositions. It is not possible to know about his performing style before 1919, when he made his first recordings. However, from the phrasing style in his recordings (from 1919 to 1942) and the dynamic alternations of his revisions, it is probably safe to state that Rachmaninoff had a stable, coherent phrasing style during his time in the West, which is also the only period that he was a full-time, professional concert pianist.

Since Rachmaninoff's performing style is clearly shown in his recordings, the next question is how important this is. How do pianists see Rachmaninoff's recordings of his own works? Do they consider them as guidelines for interpreting the composer's music? Did Rachmaninoff's contemporaries also perform his compositions in the composer's performing style? Did pianists learn the very personalised rubato and phrasing from Rachmaninoff's interpretation when they played the pieces the composer recorded? Did they focus on the details of the score or simply follow Rachmaninoff's model, ignoring the minor indications to form big phrases? When the composer presented different versions of the same piece in the score and recording, what would the pianists do? For example, Rachmaninoff published his transcription of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumble Bee* in 1929 and recorded it in the same year, but the recording and the score are not identical. Rachmaninoff added the left hand accompaniment in the introduction but deleted the top voices in the later passages.

Here is what Rachmaninoff wrote in the score:

Score 3-33-1: Rimsky-Korsakov-Rachmaninoff *Flight of the Bumble Bee*, bars 1-7

This musical score is for the first system of bars 1-7. It is written for piano in 2/4 time, marked 'Presto'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The first system (bars 1-3) features a treble clef with a melody of eighth notes, marked 'm.g.' (mezzo-giochiato) and 'f' (forte). The bass clef has whole rests. The second system (bars 4-7) features a treble clef with a melody of eighth notes, marked 'm.g.' and 'dim.' (diminuendo) with a dashed line. The bass clef has whole rests.

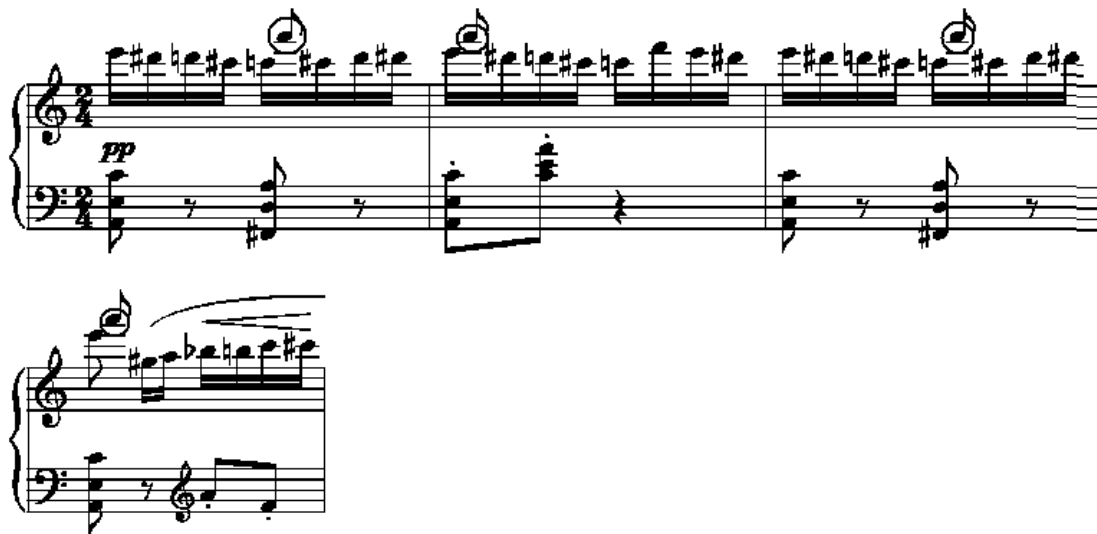
And here is what Rachmaninoff plays in the recording:

Score 3-33-2: Rimsky-Korsakov-Rachmaninoff *Flight of the Bumble Bee*, bars 1-7 (as how Rachmaninoff plays in the recording)

This musical score is for the first system of bars 1-7, as played by Rachmaninoff in the recording. It is written for piano in 2/4 time, marked 'Presto'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The first system (bars 1-3) features a treble clef with a melody of eighth notes, marked 'f' (forte). The bass clef has whole rests. The second system (bars 4-7) features a treble clef with a melody of eighth notes, marked 'dim.' (diminuendo) with a dashed line. The bass clef has whole rests.

In bars 80 to 83, the circled notes are omitted in the recording:

Score 3-33-3: Rimsky-Korsakov-Rachmaninoff *Flight of the Bumble Bee*, bars 80-83



What would a pianist do? Or what can a pianist learn from Rachmaninoff's recording? Is recording as significant as the score to pianists? In the next chapter, the discussion will be focused on how Rachmaninoff's colleagues interpreted his solo piano works, and how the performing style adopted for his music has changed over the last 80 years.

Chapter Four: Playing Rachmaninoff's Solo Piano Music, a Case Study of the Prelude in G minor, Op.23 No.5

1. Case Study of the Prelude in G Minor, Op.23 No.5

In Chapter Three several discussions were raised regarding Rachmaninoff's own performing style as observed in his recordings, and I have categorised the performing features as follows:

- (1).Period style: as a pianist of his time, several characteristics of the performing fashion in the late 19th century, for example asynchronisation and unmarked arpeggiation, are found in Rachmaninoff's performances. However, Rachmaninoff makes use of these in a generally restrained way.
- (2).Russian background: as a Russian pianist, Rachmaninoff also plays in the *Russian* style. He highlights the main melodic lines in the musical texture and sings in the Russian diminuendo manner at the piano.
- (3).Personal approach: both his own pupils and colleagues testify to the importance of Rachmaninoff's famous 'big phrase' in his piano playing. His personal approach towards rubato – using it for speech-like effect – is also very notable. Comparing his notation method and his recordings, I argue that Rachmaninoff uses tenuto to suggest rubato in the score.

In this chapter, the focus will be on how successive generations of pianists play, understand, and interpret Rachmaninoff's piano solo music. Do the recordings of a composer, who also happens to be a great pianist, and who left many recordings of his own compositions, influence his colleagues and later generations? If so, why?

For this discussion I have chosen Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G Minor, Op.23 No.5 as the main case study. My reasons for choosing this piece are:

- (1). It is a piece the composer himself recorded. Therefore we can compare how Rachmaninoff played it with how other performers did.
- (2). It is a popular piece that has been recorded frequently since Rachmaninoff's lifetime, especially by performers close to the composer. Josef Hofmann (the pianist Rachmaninoff respected most among those of his generation), Vladimir Horowitz (the younger colleague Rachmaninoff admired most), Gina Bachauer and Ruth Slenczynska (the only two pianists Rachmaninoff ever coached in the West) all recorded this piece, which gives us more information for discussing different interpretative ideas. In addition, many pianists from the Soviet Union also recorded the Prelude, providing an excellent chance to examine whether Western and Soviet pianists viewed Rachmaninoff differently.
- (3). As the subject of a case study, an ideal piece is supposed to provide as many interpretative possibilities as possible. A piece containing more diverse indications, changes of tempi, dynamics, volume, and so forth, is preferable, because a performer has more chances to react to those marks, thus telling listeners more about their performing habits and musical taste. Of all the pieces composed and also recorded by Rachmaninoff, the famous Prelude in C sharp minor, Op.3 No.2 and Prelude in G minor, Op.23 No.5, are two of the most popular and frequently recorded works over the generations. Many pianists active in the first half of 20th century only chose these two pieces of Rachmaninoff's to record. But the crucial reason I decided to choose the G minor instead of the C sharp minor Prelude for the case study is that the G minor provides more indications in the score for pianists to consider. However, many distinguished pianists, including Arthur Rubinstein, Vladimir Sofronitsky, Byron Janis and William Kapell, only recorded the C sharp minor Prelude

(the latter two are also famous for their performances of the composer's piano concertos). In the discussion of the composer's phrasing style, I also bring in the performances of the C sharp minor as auxiliary examples.

The structure of the G minor Prelude is an A-B-A form. The A section contains two themes (A and B), and in the middle section, a new theme (C) comes in. The B theme appears twice in the piece and both are the same, but the A theme appears differently each time. For ease and clarity of discussion, I will use code (A1, A2, etc) in Table 4-1 to address each section in the following paragraphs:

Table 4-1: Structure of Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G minor, Op.23 No.5									
Section	March A				Middle Section (Un poco meno mosso)		March A'		
Theme	A1	A2	B	A3	C1	C2	A4	B'	A5
Bar	1-9	10-16	17-24	25-34	35-41	42-49	50-61	62-71	72-86

In the tables in the following paragraphs, I use check mark 'V' to identify whether the pianist fits the description of that column or category. However, when brackets are also used, this is to indicate that the characteristic in the performance is rather unpronounced. For example, it is not always clear whether a pianist is playing an arpeggio instead of a chord in their performance. First, the recording condition may not be ideal and the sound may not be clear enough for a listener to make such a judgment. Secondly, even if a chord was arpeggiated, it still does not necessarily mean that the pianist 'intended' to play it as an arpeggio: maybe because of the physical limits of the hand (i.e. it cannot stretch wide enough), or because of imprecise execution (failing to play all the notes in the chord at the same time). In Table 4-2 (page 412), where a chord is clearly arpeggiated, especially if the pianist arpeggiated it more slowly, I record where the pianist played it in **bold**. If a chord is only slightly

arpeggiated – and many of them are hard even to notice – I indicate them with brackets. Most of these slightly arpeggiated chords can sound like chords without arpeggiation at all, and many of them should be regarded as imprecise execution instead of deliberate arpeggiation .

3.5. Subjects for Discussion

Since the purpose of this chapter is to find out whether Rachmaninoff's performances have ever been influential, it is important to clarify what his personal approaches are and which belong to the performing fashion of the period, or the influence of the Russian Piano School. In the following sections I will discuss how pianists play the Prelude from the 1930s to the 2000s in recording in three major parts:

- (1).Period performing habits: the use of unmarked arpeggiation, pianists' alteration or deletion of notes or phrases on the score, and pianist's playing with asynchronisation (dislocation of hands).
- (2).Performing style through the generations: pianists' concept of the structure of the piece, Rachmaninoff's 'Big' Phrasing, and reactions to the general trend.
- (3).Rachmaninoff's personal approaches and the Russian style: the presentation of melody and accompaniment, the interpretation of Rachmaninoff's notation, and Rachmaninoff's rubato, time-taking, and phrasing style in the middle section.

2. The Composer's Performance: How Did Rachmaninoff Play the Prelude?

(Audio Example Track 23)

2.1. The Use of Unmarked Arpeggiation

In the previous chapter, I discussed the historical context of the practice of unmarked arpeggiation. Many pianists in the first half of the 20th century, including Rachmaninoff, adopted this practice in their playing, but he himself used it quite sparingly. Rachmaninoff plays two kinds of arpeggio in this prelude: fast and light, and slow and clear. Rachmaninoff frequently uses the former in his (recorded) performance. This kind of arpeggio is like adding a colour to the music – but it does not change the ‘taste’ of it as it does not change the duration of the chord and the effect of it as an arpeggio is not very obvious. In section C1, Rachmaninoff plays several chords in this way. On the other hand, at the end of the C2 section (bars 48 and 49), he arpeggiates certain chords slowly and makes them sound like clear arpeggios. Rachmaninoff’s message is very clear. In those two bars he plays a longer, slowing-down phrase as notated on the score and sings the two bars as an elegant, long diminuendo line. It also fits the ‘big phrase’ feature of his playing, which I will discuss further in due course. (In the score, *diminuendo* only appears on the third beat of bar 49). With those slowly arpeggiated chords Rachmaninoff demonstrates what Leschetizky instructed in his teaching, creating ‘an expressive or emotional effect’, without exaggeration.²⁶⁸ In addition, since he does not arpeggiate any chords in the C1 section in this slower way, the arpeggiated chords in C2 naturally form a distinct contrast to the same melody in C1. The practice in this Prelude also echoes how Rachmaninoff plays in other pieces, as discussed in Chapter Three.

2.2. Cuts and Alterations

Although Rachmaninoff does not faithfully follow his indications on the score in the

²⁶⁸ Malwine Brée, *The Leschetizky Method: A Guide to Fine and Correct Piano Playing* (New York: Dover Publications, 1997), 55.

recording, he plays almost all the notes of the piece without cutting out any passages or changing the melody, except in two places: first, on the third beat of bar 6 he only plays the F sharp and omits the following two notes, making the phrase more similar to the previous one. Secondly, in the coda he adds some extra notes in the closing stage of the A5 section and ends the piece with *forte* instead of *piano staccato*. Compared with the difference between the score and the recording of his transcription of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumble Bee* and his published revisions of his previous works, the alternative ending here and the small alteration in bar 6 in this Prelude are very minor changes.

2.3. Asynchronisation

The practice of asynchronisation – or the dislocation of the two hands – in this Prelude is arguably one of the most important features of this interpretation. In the middle section, Rachmaninoff introduces a middle voice in the C1 section, and then the short melody is developed as a theme with echoes, appearing separately in the left hand first, followed immediately by the right hand, forming a four-voice texture in the C2 section. However, the middle voice in C1 is written in semiquavers. If one plays the middle voice at fast tempo, then there is hardly any room for the melody to sing, and those short lines sound rash. Rachmaninoff slows it very considerably, almost to quavers, so that in performance they sound much the same as the notated quavers he uses in C2, where only the echo is notated in semiquavers. And so in Rachmaninoff's performance, the themes in both C1 and C2 sound much more similar than the notation suggests, only the echoes are shorter. Instead of revising the text, Rachmaninoff (to judge by this recording) achieved the same result through asynchronisation and tempo rubato in his performances. In other words, Rachmaninoff's practice of asynchronisation and tempo rubato in the middle section

can be explained as his rethinking of the composition rather than a kind of period performing habit, especially as he did not publish a revision of the piece. Both possibilities should be considered.

On the other hand, because Rachmaninoff also plays the C2 section more freely than C1, he also does not play the two hands exactly in time. In this four-voiced passage, Rachmaninoff does exactly as Leschetizky has pointed out: 'An arpeggio may sometimes be used for the purpose of giving a more distinct effect to polyphony at important points, as where one voice ends and another begins, etc.'²⁶⁹ Rachmaninoff does not exaggerate, but the slight dislocation is still noticeable in the recording.

2.4. The Russian Style and Big Phrasing

In Chapter Three I discussed how Rachmaninoff shaped a 'big phrase' and how he tended to play with this phrasing style. Rachmaninoff did not always intend to make special 'big' lines. In this Prelude, for example, in section A5, he does not see the whole section as a long decrescendo. He still only starts to play it more softly from bar 80, where he wrote *diminuendo*. He even plays with a crescendo from bars 78 to bar 79 to stress the four descending octaves in the bass, enhancing the dynamic indication *fortissimo* at the beginning of the A5 section (bar 72).

Compared to section A5, in which he is faithful to the score, in the middle section, Rachmaninoff demonstrates his ability to form the long melodic lines that give an audience a feeling of the 'grand style'. Since the composer starts to provide crescendo and other tempo or dynamic indications from bar 39 in the middle section onwards, I have decided to focus on how he plays the first four bars of the section (from bars 35

²⁶⁹ Brée, 55.

to 38, see Score 4-1) to discuss his phrasing method.²⁷⁰ In SV 4-1, one can see that for the main melody (underlined in red) Rachmaninoff plays with clear articulation and maintains the phrase as a long musical sentence for two bars. Towards the end of the phrase, Rachmaninoff lowers the volume, but the two crotchets sound equally loud. The whole phrase then sounds slightly diminuendo but is still a 'big' one in general, and is not separated into three short phrases.

Where Rachmaninoff does play in the Russian singing style, the middle voice is introduced at the end of the long phrase (circled in orange in SV 4-1). It ends at the down beat of the next bar and has a tenuto mark on it. Reading the score without any knowledge of Rachmaninoff's performing style (as judged from recordings) or an educational background in the Russian Piano School, one would be very likely to play the short phrase with a crescendo, because the down-beat is supposed to be stressed, and the tenuto mark also enhances this idea. However, if a pianist understands that Rachmaninoff's tenuto mark means more than 'hold the note in question for its full length, or play the note slightly louder' as well as understanding the Russian singing style, then I would argue that one would be very likely to play the phrase in the diminuendo manner, just as Rachmaninoff does in the recording. In SV 4-1 we can see that Rachmaninoff plays the short phrase in a completely descending manner, ignoring the fact that the end of the phrase is actually on the downbeat.

²⁷⁰ Rachmaninoff also reveals his magic way of shaping 'big phrases' at the end of the C2 section and some other places. But here it is either in complex polyphonic texture or with many dynamic marks, making it difficult to judge a pianist's phrasing preference.

Score 4-1: Rachmaninoff Prelude, Op.23 No.5, bars 34-39

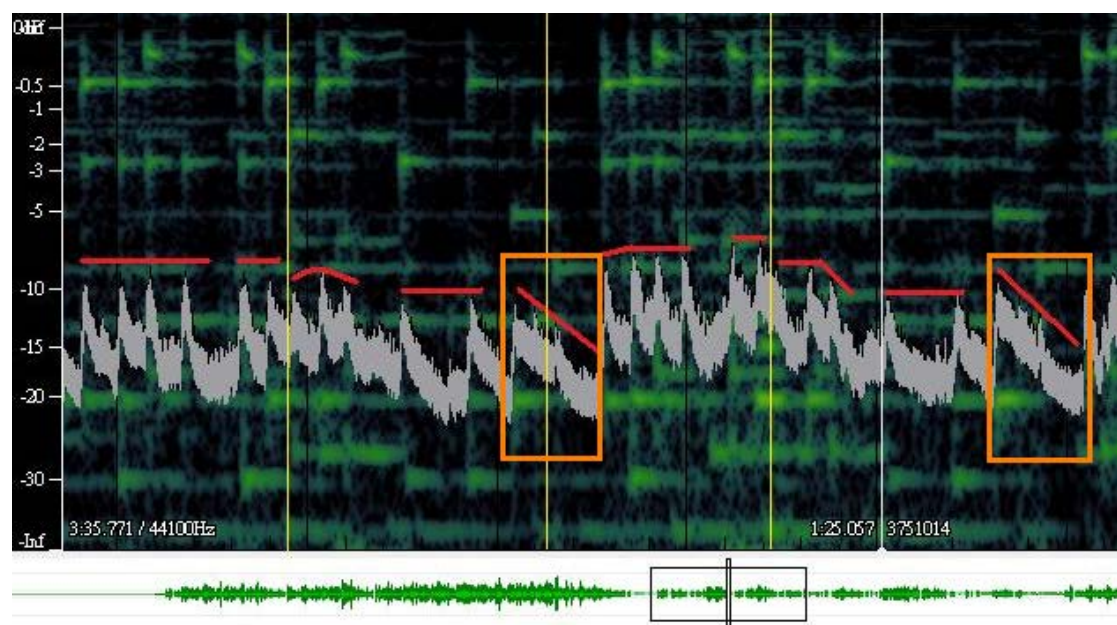
Un poco meno mosso

bar 35

p *dim.* *pp*

cresc.

SV 4-1: Rachmaninoff's performance of Prelude Op.23 No.5, bars 35-39



3. How the Prelude Was Played Before the 1950s

In these four bars, one can see that the composer played the piece not only with a 'big phrase' but also in the Russian tradition. His use of free arpeggiation and asynchronisation reflects the performing habit of his time, but the restrained practice also shows his personal approach and the influence of the early Russian Piano School.

How did other pianists of Rachmaninoff's time play this Prelude? Since the composer was performing and recording frequently, and was one of the most respected and in-demand pianists at that time, did other pianists listen to, and even study, his performance as a reference? When they played the composer's music, did they try to play in the 'Rachmaninovian style' that he displayed in his recordings?

Over the next pages I will discuss how pianists before the 1950s played Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G minor, Op.23 No.5. Through their renditions of the piece, it may be possible for us to know if Rachmaninoff's performing style had been established in the minds of pianists of his time.

3.1. Cuts and Alterations

In his performance of this Prelude, Rachmaninoff is not only a pianist but also its composer, and one could probably declare that all the changes he made are his revisions, though it is hard to be sure whether he was seriously presenting his revision or extemporaneously playing the piece while recording it.²⁷¹ But at Rachmaninoff's

²⁷¹ However, by comparing the original, the revised revision, and his two recordings of his *Sérénade* in the previous chapter, I am drawn to the idea that when Rachmaninoff recorded a piece, he presented a stable composition – a composition he had been playing for a period of time – rather than an improvisation. Although the four versions are all different, the notes in the two recordings are much closer to the revision than the original, and both were recorded long before the revision was published. Rachmaninoff might change his design of a piece, but just like his barely-changed interpretation, once he established a new idea, he stuck to it.

time, for pianists who were not composers, it was not uncommon for performers to change the notes or make (minor) deletions in a piece, even when the composer was still alive and able to challenge these 'variations'. One famous story illustrates this. Austrian pianist Paul Wittgenstein commissioned a piano concerto for the left hand from Ravel, but when the composer heard the pianist's performance, he was extremely angry at how Wittgenstein changed his work. Later the irritated composer fired off a letter demanding the pianist's formal commitment to play the concerto only as written in the future. In return, the pianist replied with another angry letter:

As for a formal commitment to play your work henceforth strictly as written, that is completely out of the question. No self-respecting artist could accept such a condition. All pianists make modifications, large or small, in each concerto they play. Such a formal commitment would be intolerable [...].²⁷²

Wittgenstein's reaction showed that at least as recently as the first half of the 20th century some performers still strongly believed that they had the freedom to 'modify' a piece, even though the composer was clearly against his or her alteration. In addition, altering and cutting notes and even small passages or sections, were both considered as acceptable and common among performers. The pianist Benno Moiseiwitsch's statement in 1950 shows what a performer thought about the issue at that time:

One evening last summer, I played Chopin's b minor Sonata, the Largo of which is among the loveliest slow movements we know. One always plays best alone

²⁷² Alexander Waugh, *The House of Wittgenstein: A Family at War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), 185-186.

at home, and this night I reveled in the beauty and sentiment of that movement. When I had finished it, I was startled to find myself sliding straight into the theme of the last movement, omitting the introductory chords. It was in no sense intentional; I simply could not break the mood of the beautiful slow movement by playing chords, and, immediately it came to me that those chords do not relate to the transition between the third and final movements. I was greatly excited by the thought and determined (against advice) to try playing the work this way in public. I finally did, and was gratified when the critics, who might have condemned me, approved the alteration. On principle, I am against taking liberties with the masters; I never seek to change texts. But when changes of this kind come to me, when they fit, and when I have exercised thought and reason upon them, then I feel they must be right!²⁷³

In the live recording of this sonata in 1960 Moiseiwitsch still played the final movement without the introduction.²⁷⁴ In other words, what he ‘discovered’ on one summer night in 1949 had become a performing pattern lasting for at least 11 years, and the pianist himself was emotionally happy with his alteration. On the other hand, Moiseiwitsch’s words also reveal that although he decided to play his unconventional version in public, he was somehow still worried about the possible negative reaction of the critics. It implies that around the 1950s the fashion had started to change. For the public, altering the score was no longer generally acceptable.

The two examples above show the general attitude among pianists at that time, and it would be expected then that some pianists in the first half of the 20th century

²⁷³ Benno Moiseiwitsch, ‘Playing in the grand style’ in the CD booklet of Pearl GEMM CDS9192.

²⁷⁴ Pearl GEMM CDS9192.

would make alterations to the Prelude in their performances. But compared to how Wittgenstein altered the Ravel and what Moiseiwitsch cut in the Chopin, the alterations and cuts in early recordings of the piece are quite limited. In both of his two recordings Hofmann adds a short semiquaver phrase in bar 26, and the echo notes in C2 are hardly audible (in the 1915 version those notes cannot be heard, and one has to wonder if he actually plays them or changes the texture by ignoring them.) Like Hofmann, Bowen also adds a semiquaver phrase in bar 26, so that it matches the original statement in B2, but he takes out the semiquavers in bar 6. The alteration in Horowitz's performance, however, is perplexing. He plays the last three bars of the Prelude at double speed and plays a chord instead of the octave written on the last beat. But what he changes is much more than that: he almost rewrites the whole of A5, although the way he plays it does not sound convincing and is more like a memory lapse than a planned change. Ruth Slenczynska also changes the ending by adding an arpeggiated chord in the treble register, which is unique among all the performances I have collected from this period, but is nonetheless rather reminiscent of Rachmaninoff's addition (as discussed earlier).

Might Slenczynska have been inspired by how Rachmaninoff performed the ending? In my email correspondence with her in 2010, she admits that she did take Rachmaninoff's recording as a reference and tried to do 'something like him but in a different way'.²⁷⁵ Even if she was not influenced by Rachmaninoff's recording, this kind of ending was not an uncommon way for an early recorded pianist to end a piece. Vladimir de Pachmann, for example, did the same in Chopin's Waltz in D-flat major, though Slenczynska was still the only one who did so among the pianists who recorded the piece before the 1950s – apart from the composer himself. On the other

²⁷⁵ Email correspondence with Ruth Slenczynska (August 24th, 2010).

hand, Slenczynska also cut bar 34 (apart from the introductory octaves in the bass), and she does not remember why she did so. But she is not alone. Levitzki makes a similar change but only cuts the first half of bar 34. And as far as alteration is concerned, Horowitz again makes a radical change by cutting three bars from bars 29 to 31. It seems that they all thought the A3 section was too long and should be modified. Both Slenczynska and Levitzki shorten it by omitting the ending, but Horowitz cuts the climax of the phrase, which is truly special (and unfathomable). The performing time of the Prelude is around three to four minutes, not long at all. After Slenczynska's recording in 1945, out of 82 later recordings considered in this chapter, only Italian pianist Sergio Fiorentino (1927-1998)'s performance of 1963 includes cuts. Unlike all the other examples above, Fiorentino cuts only one bar (bar 83) at the end of the prelude. Since all of them only cut one to three bars, which may only contain five to seven seconds, their decision was presumably more related to their view of the passage than a concern about running over time on the record side.

To sum up, Slenczynska's ending of the Prelude is inspired by the composer's recording, and arguably Hofmann's minor textural change is also influenced by the composer's playing, since it is similar to what Rachmaninoff did in the recording and the two were very good friends. Besides these two, Rachmaninoff's pupil and friend respectively, it is hard to state that the other pianists who altered the notes in the case study were directly influenced by the composer's playing. The ways in which they made alterations are various and not close to Rachmaninoff's own recording. Therefore I would like to argue that these pianists were more likely acting in the spirit of Wittgenstein or Moiseiwitsch, rather than following in the footsteps of Rachmaninoff, as far as alterations and cuts are concerned.

3.2. Unmarked Arpeggiation and Asynchronisation

In Chapter Three and the discussion above, we have seen that Rachmaninoff did use unmarked arpeggiation but, in general, only in a restrained way. If we cannot decide how 'restrained' Rachmaninoff was with regard to unmarked arpeggiation, we will possibly gain a clearer view by comparing his performance with those of other performers of the period.

In recordings of the Prelude made before the 1950s by pianists of Rachmaninoff's generation, unmarked arpeggiation is frequently heard. Some pianists, like Josef Hofmann, York Bowen, Misha Levitzki, and Simon Barere, use this practice very obviously and habitually. Josef Hofmann, for example, left two recordings of the Prelude from 1915 and 1922, and in both of them he uses free arpeggiation in the middle section, though in different places. The 1922 version is much freer than the 1915 version: not only is the singing line smoother, but Hofmann also uses much more arpeggiated chords in the middle section and adds octaves in the bass in C2, a typically 19th century performing fashion (see the discussion in Chapter Two). Since Hofmann uses arpeggiation so freely and repeatedly in both C1 and C2, the listener cannot tell if any phrase is especially emphasised. Compared to Rachmaninoff's playing, Hofmann's practice of arpeggiation in the 1922 version is more like a pure habit than a calculated interpretation. His playing could be viewed as more old fashioned than Rachmaninoff's in this Prelude.

Hofmann's problem is also a major issue in the recordings by York Bowen and Misha Levitzki. Since those arpeggiated chords in their performances are not merely slight stresses to the melody but a major character of the phrase, the practice actually

changes the spirit of the music and turns it from elegant singing to passionate but unfocused expression. Bowen arpeggiates certain chords (not all) on the down beat in C1 and C2, but there is no clear rule about when to arpeggiate in his performance. Barere does not even limit the practice to the chords on the down beat, and of course, it is more difficult to judge whether there is any logic behind those arpeggiated chords. As far as the change of character is concerned, Levitzki's middle section is played so fast and wildly that one can hardly recognise the music (at least, the impression of it we are familiar with), never mind attempting to find the meaning of the arpeggiated chords. In addition, all four pianists above use only one type of arpeggio, unlike Rachmaninoff, who uses two different types of arpeggiation (fast and slow) to express different ideas. In Hofmann's 1922 version, although he also slows down at the very end of C2, he still arpeggiates the chords at a fast speed, making those chords sound the same as the previous ones.

On the other hand, some pianists, such as Joyce, Leginska, and Schioer, also use this practice in a restrained way. Leginska adds octave bass in the middle section, but she only obviously arpeggiates chords at the very end of C2, in a similar way to Rachmaninoff. Joyce plays arpeggios in both C1 and C2, but the ones at the end of C2 are more noticeable. Schioler, on the contrary, arpeggiates almost all the chords on the down beat, but since he only does so very vaguely in C1, this approach can be viewed as forming a clear contrast to the previous section – a calculated design rather than a random idea. In addition, this case study also shows that the practice of unmarked arpeggiation seems to have been declining in the first half of the 20th century. After 1930, most pianists investigated in this study did not adopt this habit while recording the Prelude, which probably means that the practice had been in fashion before the 1930s but gradually became unfashionable after that.

As far as the practice of dislocating hands is concerned, in early recordings it is common to hear pianists play with asynchronisation. All four Russian pianists included in my research – Horowitz, Gilels, Barere, and Flier – apply it to their performances, but slightly and in a restrained manner. This echoes what I argued in Chapter Three, that early Russian pianists tended to treat asynchronisation in a subtle way. However, it is hard to say that piano school or national background are significant factors in this case study: British pianists Lympny and Smith dislocate their hands in their recordings of the C1 section, but Bowen and Joyce do not. European-trained pianists Leginska, Schioler, and Darré do not, but Levitzki and Karolyi do. United States-based Hofmann does, but Slenczynska does not. Although it was an acceptable and common practice in the first half of the 20th century, it seems that in this Prelude, the use of asynchronisation is more about personal choice than performing fashion. Nevertheless, that asynchronisation was to some extent a period fashion is suggested by the fact that Levitzki, Karolyi, and Lympny also adopt it in section C2. In this four-voice passage, they slightly rearrange the timing of the appearance of each melody, making the music swing more fluently.

On the other hand, many pianists still insisted on playing the two hands together, but in recordings they slowed down during those semiquavers in the C1 section to make the music sound more cantabile. It was the most common way of solving the phrasing problem in the second half of the 20th century, when pianists still played the C1 section quickly. (Another way is to slow down the whole middle section, so the semiquavers don't sound strange at all.) Among all the fast performances collected here, French pianist Darré's performance in 1946 is the only one in which those semiquavers are played as written – with their 'correct' duration and without slowing down or rubato. Such a 'literal' performance appears only once out of the 82

recordings I consulted, giving us the only chance to experience how the middle section would sound if played 'correctly'.

To sum up the observations above, it is hard to find the influence of Rachmaninoff's performance on early pianists either in their way of using unmarked arpeggiation or in their asynchronisation. None of them really play like Rachmaninoff does in his recording, and the practice of the two performing habits is arguably mainly about personal choice rather than any influence being exerted by the composer's recording, piano school, or geographic background. Only Hofmann's two performances in general, however, are close to Rachmaninoff's recording. As previously mentioned, Hofmann was a good friend of the composer. They attended each other's concerts frequently and knew each other's performances well, which might explain the similarity we find in between their performances of the piece.

3.3. Big Phrase and the Russian Singing Style

This conclusion can probably be confirmed by examining whether the pianists play with the Russian singing style and the Rachmaninovian 'big phrase' in the first four bars in the middle section of the Prelude, which I will discuss using their phrasing patterns, as laid out in Table 4-3 (page 415). In the table, 'Phrasing Pattern A' means how the pianists play the main melody (underlined in red in SV 4-1), and 'Phrasing Pattern B' means the short phrases (circled in orange in SV 4-1).

For Pattern A, the phrasing styles of the pianists can be categorised into four types:

Long phrase: the melody is flat in general.

Long diminuendo phrase: the melody is an extending, continuing long line in the diminuendo manner.

Short phrase diminuendo: the melody is separated into two or three short phrases, but each of them is treated in the diminuendo manner.

Short (others): short phrases but not (all) in diminuendo fashion. The phrases can get louder, maintain a constant loudness, or get quieter.

For Pattern B, three types can be found in the performance:

Diminuendo 1: Straightforward descending line. The traditional Russian singing style Rachmaninoff displayed in his playing.

Diminuendo 2: A minor curved line. The melody gets louder slightly from the first note to the second, and then getting quieter from the second to the third. Since the third note is longer, the effect is still a diminuendo phrase (in the Russian spirit), and it just does not start from the first note.

Crescendo: The three-note phrase is rising up.

I have already discussed Rachmaninoff's phrasing style in this section. For the main melody he maintains a long musical line and ends with minor descending fashion (between 'long phrase' and 'long diminuendo phrase' but closer to the former). He plays the short phrases in the typical traditional Russian singing style (diminuendo 1). The diminuendo phrase starts right from the beginning of the phrase, very similarly to how Chaliapin and some early Russian singers perform in the recording. If one is

familiar with Rachmaninoff's performing style and wishes to apply that to one's own performance, I argue that one should play the long melodies with the 'big phrase' and try to shape all the phrases in the Russian diminuendo style. However, in the pre-1950 recorded performances in the case study, none of the pianists appear to be strongly influenced by the composer's own performance. Hofmann maintains long phrases for the main melodies in his two recordings and ends the short phrases in diminuendo fashion, which is perhaps the rendition closest to the composer's recording in terms of phrasing style. It is interesting to see that the four Russian pianists Horowitz, Gilels, Barere, and Flier (marked in red in the table) all play the main melodies in short and diminuendo fashion, and three of them (all except Flier) shape the short phrases in the diminuendo style (diminuendo 2), too. Horowitz's and Barere's phrasing patterns are especially alike, but not similar to Rachmaninoff's. This may have been due to their educational background and the Russian Pianism they inherited. Barere studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory under Anna Esipova and then Felix Blumenfeld, the latter was also Vladimir Horowitz's teacher at the Kiev Conservatory. Barere and Horowitz played the Prelude in the Russian singing style, but not in the manner of Rachmaninoff's 'big phrase', even though they could have: Horowitz met the composer in 1928, two years before he made the recording; Barere, as a Russian immigrant in the States, should have known the composer's performing style, as he had opportunities to attend Rachmaninoff's concerts and purchase his records. As far as the phrasing pattern is concerned, I suppose that it is Piano School that played the most significant role in the performances of these four early Russian pianists: they played with a diminuendo singing style in general, but not the 'big phrase' style Rachmaninoff had.

The performances of the four pianists without a Russian educational background in the case study – York Bowen (1884-1961), Ethel Leginska (1886-1970), Mischa Levitzki (1898-1941), Victor Schioler (1899-1967), and Jeanne-Marie Darré (1905-1999) – have almost nothing to do with Rachmaninoff's own performance, and do not sound Russian in phrasing style. Hungarian pianist Géza Anda (1921-1976) plays the piece with various kinds of phrasing patterns, and Julian von Károlyi (1914- 1993), who was also Hungarian, uses long phrasing in pattern A but not really in the Russian manner (the main phrase ends at the first short sentence of bar 36, leaving the last short phrase as a separated sentence). It is between my categories 'long diminuendo phrase' and 'short phrase diminuendo' in the table, and the way he plays pattern B enhances this impression. Besides the Russian pianists, only Eileen Joyce (1908-1991) and Cyril Smith (1909-1974)'s rendition can be said to definitely have Russian characteristics, and Slenczynska and Lympany display long musical lines in pattern A, which are similar to Rachmaninoff's performance. Although it is not known whether Eileen Joyce and Moura Lympany (1916-2005) knew Rachmaninoff's recording well, at least they should have been able to attend the composer's concerts, since Rachmaninoff frequently played in Great Britain. It is certain though that both Cyril Smith and Slenczynska personally knew the composer well and were friends with him.²⁷⁶ In other words, based on all the performing features I have used to examine whether a rendition is close to Rachmaninoff's performance, the pianists who played like the composer, at least in more than one way – Hofmann, Slenczynska, and Smith for example – all had personal contact with him. This shows that among pre-1950s pianists, only the ones who knew Rachmaninoff in person well, or who were able to attend his concerts, displayed renditions of the composer's work that were close to

²⁷⁶ See Cyril Smith's autobiography. Cyril Smith, *Duet for Three Hands* (London: Angus & Robertson, 1958), 77-86. Ruth Slenczynska, Louis Biancolli, *Forbidden Childhood* (New York: Peter Davies, 1958).

his performance in the recording. Among the others, who were not part of the tradition of the Russian Piano School, it was unusual for them to play like Rachmaninoff – and perhaps ‘playing like Rachmaninoff’ was not their concern at all.

3.4. A Further Example: The 18th Variation of Rachmaninoff’s *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*

In order to examine whether this impression is only created by this Prelude or is generalisable to other works, too, I have also examined performance phrasing style in another case study for comparison – the 18th variation of Rachmaninoff’s *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. In Chapter Three, I used the piano solo part from the beginning of the variation to discuss Rachmaninoff’s art of rubato, phrasing style, and inner voices. In this chapter, I will discuss it in more detail (see Table 4-4, page 417).

The way the composer plays it is distinguished by four characteristics, as follows:

First, he plays it in a fast tempo (it lasts only about two minutes and thirty-five seconds), and with the musical sentences always pushing forward. Secondly, he not only brings out the inner voices clearly (as written on the score), but also manages to shape them, giving them vivid characters (which I call ‘active inner voice’ in Table 4-4) – instead of simply playing the notes clearly but without interacting with the main melody (which I call ‘passive inner voice’ in the table).

Thirdly, as discussed in the previous chapter, his phrasing style involves playing upbeat groups irregularly, in subtly varying ways, which lends them a special ‘speaking’ quality. This is arguably the most important feature of Rachmaninoff’s rendition of the variation: if a pianist simply brings out those inner melodies, he has fulfilled what the

composer wrote in the score. The internal melodic counterpoint can be viewed as a decoration of the main musical lines. However, the ‘speaking’ quality is about how a performer interprets Rachmaninoff’s tenuto marks, which without listening to his performances it is not always obvious how one should decode. If a pianist knows Rachmaninoff’s performance style well, or knows his recording of this piece, then it is more likely that he or she will play it with metrical freedom. This method – which I call ‘irregular’ in the table – may be contrasted with an approach to phrasing that plays the upbeat groups with an even rhythm (this I call ‘even’ in the table. Fourthly, Rachmaninoff frequently arpeggiates chords in this excerpt, In Table 4-4, I count and record how many chords are arpeggiated by pianists in the solo part.

The result is very close to the situation relating to the Prelude in G minor, Op.23 No.5. Benno Moiseiwitsch, Rachmaninoff’s close friend, plays this variation like Rachmaninoff. Although they had their own musical personalities, their performances here are generally very alike, especially in the way they speak using irregular rhythms at the piano and the way they arpeggiate chords. William Kapell, a pianist who studied Rachmaninoff’s recordings seriously also plays using active inner voices and uneven upbeat groups.²⁷⁷ The way he arpeggiates chords is rather limited compared with the Rachmaninoff and Moiseiwitsch, but still significant when compared with the others. Smith, another friend of the composer, also plays the upbeat groups with rhythmic liberty, though he chose to keep the inner voice passive.

Arthur Rubinstein, on the other hand, plays this variation in a very different manner. He plays differently in each of his three performances, but in general, his treatment of

²⁷⁷ In the next chapter, I will discuss how he followed the composer’s recording of his Piano Concerto No.3 to create his own interpretation.

the inner voices is passive and the phrasing pattern is even – similar to what Ashkenazy did many years later. Rubinstein was never close to Rachmaninoff. He only played very selected works by the composer and did not develop a friendship with him. Romanian pianist Valentin Gheorghiu (1928-), and Soviet pianists Yakov Zak (1913-1976) and Victor Merzhanov (1919-) probably did not have chance to listen to Rachmaninoff's recordings or live performances at that time. They present fine executions of the piece, but their phrasing styles are not similar to Rachmaninoff's.

The recorded performances of the American pianists here – Leonard Pennario (1924-2008), Julius Katchen (1926-1969), and Leon Fleisher (1928-) – provide us with an interesting topic to explore. They probably knew, or at least were probably not unfamiliar with, Rachmaninoff's performances and recordings, since they were either able to attend his concerts or easily to access his recordings. However, the influence of Rachmaninoff's performance of the piece is not obviously shown in the way the three pianists play the variation in their recordings. Fleisher admits that when he was preparing the piece, he listened to Rachmaninoff's recording of it carefully, because he was German maestro Artur Schnabel's pupil, and Rachmaninoff's works were the 'most un-Schnabelian music one can imagine.' He certainly did not study any Rachmaninoff pieces with Schnabel, and the teacher did not have an interest in the composer's music either. Therefore, besides discussing the issue with his Russian friends, such as Eugene Istomin (1925-2003) and Gary Graffman (1928-), he also listened to Rachmaninoff's records to get to know his style better. But he did this, Fleisher insists, only to 'get the impression of the composer's rendition, not to copy him'.²⁷⁸ This may explain why he plays the upbeat groups with a slightly irregular rhythm – though this practice, compared to the composer's, is quite limited. Both

²⁷⁸ Interview with Leon Fleisher (November 15th, 2010).

Pennario and Katchen play the variation in an even rhythm, and the melodies in their hands sound lyrical and flat rather than speech-like, the way Rachmaninoff's or Moiseiwitsch's do. But can we say that Pennario and Katchen were unaffected by the composer's recordings? It is difficult to give a definite answer, because in their recordings they do focus on the inner voices like Fleisher, but certainly, their performances are not similar to the composer's.

All three of them play both the variation and the whole work in comparatively fast tempi, in the spirit of Rachmaninoff's recording, but it is difficult to say that this is directly inspired by the composer's recording, because among the recordings from the 1930s to the 1950s dealt with in this research, the majority of pianists play the piece with fast tempi. French pianist Philippe Entremont (1934-) was invited to record the piece in 1958 by Eugene Ormandy and Philadelphia Orchestra, for instance. At that time the pianist was only twenty-four years old, and the composer frequently worked and recorded with the conductor and orchestra. The recording is a milestone in the pianist's career, and he was also very happy about their collaboration, stating that he played like Rachmaninoff:

Many people have told me that my rendition is very similar to the composer's recording. But I have to say that I only had the chance to listen to his recording of the piece after I made my recording. So I am very proud of that.²⁷⁹

If we look at the details of Entremont's performance – his passive inner voice, restrained use of arpeggiation, even phrasing style – none of these is close to how the composer played the variation. However, as far as his performance of the whole

²⁷⁹ Interview with Philippe Entremont (October 21st, 2010).

composition is concerned, Entremont's fast tempi and endless, constantly forward-moving energy can still be reminiscent of the composer's recording. That is probably why the pianist thinks that he played in the style of Rachmaninoff. On the other hand, if performing the piece in fast tempi was the general fashion in that period, then rapid playing by itself is not a reliable tool for determining whether a performance was influenced by the composer's. It can, however, show that such an influence did not exist: it is almost certain that Gheorghiu and Merzhanov's performances were not affected by the composer's recording, and neither was Rubinstein's in 1956.

To sum up, in recordings of both the Prelude Op.23 No.5 and the 18th variation of the *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*, the pianists in these case studies who played in the style of the composer before 1950 were mostly friends or pupils of Rachmaninoff. Being a contemporary of a composer does not mean that a pianist will necessarily play in his or her style, although certain common performing practices of that period may be heard in their playing. As far as phrasing style is concerned, Russian pianists did play in the diminuendo, singing manner, similarly to Rachmaninoff, but this had more to do with their educational background than the composer's influence. 'Big phrase', Rachmaninoff's personal phrasing style, is not commonly found in the performances of this period.

4. Performing Style Through the Generations

From the 1950s to the present day, however, we will see that the situation is different. Several phenomena have emerged in the past sixty years: a general trend emerged from the performances during the 1960s and 1970s; but just as the trend

had become well established, from the 1980s onwards, several pianists started to react against the trend and aim to offer different interpretations. In a recent development, however, pianists now seem to be studying the recordings of Rachmaninoff more and more seriously. While learning from the composer's own performances, they are also bringing the performing habits of that period to the present day.

4.1. General Trends: The Concept of Structure

The general trend, as many scholars have discussed and described, is that since the invention of recording, significant changes of performing fashion have taken place in the last century. For example, Robert Philip has commented that:

The basic trends of the 20th century are clearly preserved on recordings, and can easily be summarised: the most basic trend of all was a process of tidying up performance: ensemble became more tightly disciplined; pianists played chords more strictly together, and abandoned the old practice of dislocating melody from accompaniment; the interpretation of note-values became more literal, and the nature of rubato changed, becoming more regular and even. Acceleration of tempo was more tightly controlled, and the tempo range within a movement tended to narrow [...].²⁸⁰

His observation can certainly be seen in the case study of the Prelude. For instance, pianists hardly added freely appregiated chords during the 1960s and 1980s, reflecting the fact that they were more faithful to the score. In the light of the more

²⁸⁰ Robert Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 232.

literal and controlled approach to note-values, rubato, and tempo changes, this change of fashion can be clearly seen in the ways the pianists in this study present the structure of the Prelude. The structure of this Prelude is a ternary form (see Table 4-1) with a condensed March A section (March A').

In Rachmaninoff's performance, one can hear three particular features. First, he separates the three sections very clearly. When he enters the middle section, he strongly emphasises the two octaves in the left hand (marked staccato) as a signal. Secondly, when Rachmaninoff moves to the March A' section, he plays with a very similar approach, almost going back to the original tempo of the March A section, forming an apparent contrast to the much slowed-down ending phrase of the middle section. (Rachmaninoff starts the A section at crotchet=102. He enters the A' section at crotchet=88, but both of the two sections quickly speed up to crotchet=132 while entering the theme B.) Thirdly, Rachmaninoff plays at least *mezzo forte*, instead of piano pianissimo, as the score indicates, while entering the March A', which powerfully distinguishes it from the middle section.

All these changes Rachmaninoff made can help listeners to have a clear picture of the piece as three distinct sections. In early recordings we also can hear that some pianists enter the middle section with strong accents (played as marked with accent hairpins) in the left hand, and almost all the pianists in the recordings made before 1950, except Bowen's and Joyce's, enter the March A' section in almost the original tempo of March A. As the previous discussion suggests, this similarity probably comes from their having similar concepts of 'ternary form' rather than any influence of the composer's recording, because they do not play with similar phrasing styles or other features. From the 1950s onwards, however, the situation begins to change. It seems

that pianists start to see the structure of the Prelude differently: they want to link the three sections instead of separating them. They rarely emphasise the introductory bass octaves; Sergio Fiorentino (1927-1998)'s performance of 1963 and Van Cliburn (1934-)'s of 1970 are the only two exceptions in the period. In addition, while entering the March A' section, pianists start to maintain the tempo of the ending phrase of the middle section, or even to use a slower speed, making the transition smoother. Finally, they play the beginning of the March A' section in *piano pianissimo*, which also helps to connect rather than separate the two sections.

What is the reason behind this change? The answer may simply lie in the score. Although this new treatment is the opposite of Rachmaninoff's performance, it is also a logical result of reading the score. The two octaves in the left hand at the end of March A are marked with staccato, not accent hairpins (>). They are not supposed to be played as strongly as the composer did. Rachmaninoff also did not write 'a tempo' at the beginning of the March A' section, and it is reasonable to keep the speed of the end of the middle section and start the new section from the slow tempo. Moreover, the new treatment also fits the dynamic indication the composer gave in the score. Perhaps for Rachmaninoff and the pianists of his time, it went without saying that each section in a ternary form should be presented as clearly and separately as possible. From the 1950s, however, it seems that the pianists did not have this structural concept in mind and tended simply to interpret the music as it was written in the score. This new approach presents a smoother transition between the three parts, more controlled tempi, and more calculated rubato, reflecting a greater concern for note values and, above all, a more *faithful* interpretation. It is more about continuing the feeling of the musical flow rather than presenting a clear-cut ternary form, and the score-reading becomes more literal. The renditions of these pianists

also echo what Leech-Wilkinson has pointed out: after the Second World War, for a new generation, ‘a new approach seemed necessary, and suddenly those performers who had been playing all along in a more restrained fashion seemed newly relevant,’ and their rubato was ‘constrained by a steady beat’.²⁸¹

In Table 4-2, we can see when this trend emerged. It started in the 1950s, and over the next two decades pianists gradually started to embrace this new performing fashion. From the 1980s to the present day, the majority of the pianists in this research adopted the new view of structure. It is interesting to notice that many senior pianists, such as Earl Wild (1915-2010) and Shura Cherkassky (1909-1995), still clearly distinguished the structure of ternary form as did the majority of their colleagues before the 1950s. This corresponds to Leech-Wilkinson’s observation that ‘for individuals innovation need not continue. [...] Once a career has become established there is little incentive to upset the balance of effort and reward by innovating further.’²⁸² But then there is also the example of Vladimir Horowitz, who changed the ideas he had in 1930 by displaying a new approach in his 1981 performance of the piece. Furthermore, from Table 4-2 we can also see that such a dramatic change of performing fashion is beyond the influence of piano school or geographical difference. Pianists with different training and national backgrounds still conform to this trend.

We can see a similar situation in this case study. In this Prelude, if a pianist wishes to create a wider, longer phrase, it is conceivable that the whole A5 section could be

²⁸¹ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, ‘Recordings and histories of performance style’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. N. Cook, E. Clarke, D. Leech-Wilkinson, and J. Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 252-253.

²⁸² Leech-Wilkinson, ‘Recordings and histories of performance style’, 256.

considered as one long decrescendo phrase and be played as a big diminuendo line for fifteen bars. This interpretive idea can be traced back as far as Hofmann's recording of 1915, and all the five recordings from the 1940s in my research show this practice. But no continuous trend can be found among the later generations. When the general trend shifted to being more faithful to the score, the practice of changing the dynamics also seemed to go out of fashion. From the 1960s onwards, the majority of the pianists continued to play as the original dynamic marking indicates. If one wished to alter the composer's setting, it was more about personal choice than a general fashion. Even in the recordings made before the 1940s, it is also hard to say that any influence from a piano school or performing fashion was present, as no direct influence can be found in the table.

If we compare the A5 section with the middle section of Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C sharp minor, Op.3 No.2, we can probably conclude that the choice of playing with the 'big phrase' is mainly about a pianist's preference instead of a generally agreed approach to playing the composer's music. As mentioned above, this Prelude is one of the most frequently recorded pieces by Rachmaninoff, therefore we have plenty of versions to compare. In addition, the structure of this Prelude is also a simple ternary form (similar to the Prelude in G minor, Op.23 No.5), and the whole piece is developed out of the opening motif (see Table 4-5). After a passage in *piano pianissimo* for six bars, the middle section starts from *mezzo forte*, and it should be played with the feeling of *agitato*, as the score indicates. When the disturbing, unsettling section approaches its end, the A section returns *forte fortissimo* and reaches the climax of the piece. (Audio Example Track 24)

Table 4-5: The Dynamic Setting of Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C sharp minor, Op.3 No.2			
Section	A (Lento)	B (Agitato)	A (Tempo primo)
Theme	<i>ff—ppp—mf—ppp—ppp</i>	<i>mf—mf—ff—fff</i>	<i>sfff—fff-sfff—mf—ppp</i>

In Rachmaninoff's three recordings of the piece, he always plays the middle section with an uneasy feeling and starts it from *mezzo forte*, as he wrote in the score. This treatment not only fits the score, but also offers an image of a clear-cut ternary form to audiences. However, after the quiet ending phrase of the A section, perhaps it is emotionally comfortable to start the middle section *piano pianissimo*, or maybe it is more effective to play the whole B section as one long crescendo line, and from time to time we can hear pianists change the composer's dynamic setting (and shape their own phrase in the Rachmaninovian 'big phrasing' style). In Table 4-6 (page 419), I list the recordings of the Prelude I have collected for my research (pianists with Russian educational background are marked with **bold** letters, and the pianists who played with big phrasing style in both preludes are marked in blue). We can see that since Arthur Rubinstein's performance of 1936, pianists played with the 'big phrase' in each decade, but there is no sign that this approach was becoming a trend during the 1960s and 1980s, nor that there was any influence from a piano school behind the decision to play with a longer line in the middle section. Another reason for stating that the choice is mainly personal is that, of the pianists who recorded both Op.23 No.5 and Op.3 No.2, not all of them adopt the same 'big phrase' style in the two Preludes. In Table 4-7 (page 421), we can see that although one group of pianists plays with the 'big phrase' style in both Preludes, there are more pianists who only adopt this style in one of the Preludes, as well as a group of pianists who stick to the original dynamic indications. Their educational background cannot explain their choices, since all the nations and piano schools are nearly equally distributed among the three groups.

As the discussion above shows, it seems that during the 1950s, many traditional performing habits were declining, and a new approach involving greater faithfulness to the score and a more literal approach to interpretation was emerging as a new trend among performers of the time. Pianists do not always obey the indications in the score, but it is hard to see any performing school or geographic background being behind that: it is more about personal choice. But how did this trend begin? Why did it happen in the 1950s?

The factors triggering this change were no doubt diverse. The drastic social, political and cultural changes after World War II should be considered. For example, the composers of the Darmstadt group (Boulez, Stockhausen, Berio, Maderna, Nono, etc.) wished to completely eradicate the tradition and past, stating that music should start again from scratch. This attitude reflected how most young people thought at that time, though not everyone acted as radically as they did.²⁸³ In the field of interpretation, however, the changes probably cannot directly explain the process of fashion change, since this was a gradual development across decades. Here I would like to discuss the question via three major routes: the influence of the 'Urtext' score; the dominant figures in the musical field; and the impact of recordings. Before discussing these three factors, however, it is necessary to go back to the discussion about the maturing process of musicians. Leech-Wilkinson states that 'performing style' is a 'collection of habits', and that 'patterns of shaping applied to notes constitute habits of performance style'.²⁸⁴ Since these habits can be analysed and defined in terms of the precise ways in which performers modify pitch, timing and

²⁸³ Michael Hall, *Leaving Home: A Conducted Tour of Twentieth-Century Music with Simon Rattle* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), 195. Hall states that 'Like most young people at the time, they wanted to put the past behind them. But in their case, the decision was unparalleled. At no other time in the history of music had composers wanted to go to the extreme of completely abolishing the past.'

²⁸⁴ Leech-Wilkinson, 'Recordings and histories of performance style,' 255

loudness in specific circumstances:

[A]t the level of the individual note and below, performance style can be defined quite precisely in units that are comparable to genes in the evolution of life, or memes in the evolution of culture, or which might best be thought of as 'cultural variants' [...]. [W]e can think of culture as high-speed adaptation, with social learning as its mechanism. It is a system of inheriting acquired variation. Invoking theories of cultural evolution is therefore a rather good way of understanding how these collections of performance habits change over time.²⁸⁵

The learning and maturing process of a musical performer, as Leech-Wilkinson describes and summaries, can be categorised into several stages:

(1). At the formative stage, students learn from teachers, who instill technique. As mentioned in Chapter One, technique is not only about performing skill, but also about performance style.

(2). Teachers encourage a style which is accepted in the wider musical world. They teach tradition rather than heresy to the pupils, and the aim of teaching therefore tends to transmit traditional style as exactly as possible.

(3). However, aspiring performers are also influenced by the peers, recordings, performances of the senior (successful) musicians, or the other musical or cultural stimulations. In addition, the norms and rules of any performing technique and style have to be absorbed and applied to individuals. Since each one has his or her own

²⁸⁵ Leech-Wilkinson, 'Recordings and histories of performance style,' 255-256

physical and personal characteristics, the technique and style they have learned gradually become personalised.

(4).At the professionally performing level, one also learns through performing to an audience, and then through responding to audiences', examiners' and critics' responses when they start to build their performing careers.²⁸⁶ Social and cultural environment can also become influential to one's performance.²⁸⁷ A musician has the need to distinguish him or her from their surroundings in order to be noticed. On the other hand, that also has to be tempered by another need: to be accepted and so not too different. Thus how to find a balanced approach becomes crucial, and a performer adjusts the interpretative method through experience.²⁸⁸

This learning process – the interaction between the performer, the teacher, the peers, the audiences, and so on – can almost exactly be seen in the autobiography of Gary Graffman. Graffman's father, a violinist, was an distinguished alumnus of the St. Petersburg Conservatory and a classmate of Isabelle Vengerova. Graffman started his piano lessons with the maestro at six years old, and learned the Russian technique and style from both Vengerova and his father. However, as Leech-Wilkinson describes above, influence from peers also played an important role in his maturing process:

Gradually, though, I began to spend more time with [...] my fellow piano students.

²⁸⁶ Playing and listening to the responses is a crucial factor and experience for a concert musician to achieve what one really wishes. For example, Alfred Brendel states that he 'may hear the sound much differently on the stage from the way the people in the audience heard it, and that will alter the whole projection of the performance just as the projection may be altered when you listen to the same record on different amplifiers and speakers.' See Elyse Mach, *Great Contemporary Pianists Speak for Themselves* (New York: Dover Publication, 1991), 31.

²⁸⁷ Leech-Wilkinson, 'Recordings and histories of performance style,' 256

²⁸⁸ Paraphrased from: Leech-Wilkinson, 'Recordings and histories of performance style,' 255-256.

[...] We played our current repertoire to each other. [...] So we met often for marathon playing sessions at which we requested and received the uninhibited comments of our peers. And here is where we felt the interaction of the different influences that had taken roots in America during the previous three decades. For not all these friends – and one learns a great deal from friends – were being brought up, as I was, in the Russian tradition of piano playing. While the education Vengerova and my father were giving me came direct from St. Petersburg, some of my friends were receiving the same kind of training that they would have had if they'd grown up in Berlin or Vienna. These were, mainly, the students of Schnabel and Serkin. [...] When we played for each other we were thinking harder, trying hard to convince each other that the approach each of us was learning toward a particular piece, or toward the instrument in general, was without doubt the only right one.²⁸⁹

Although the learning experience of pianists may vary significantly, Graffman's recollection should reflect not only his but also his peers' experience. Many of Graffman's fellow students (the OYAPs: Outstanding Young American Pianists, as Graffman jokingly called themselves, including Leon Fleisher, Julius Katchen, and Jacob Lateiner) later became representatives of American pianism. In other words, Graffman's words probably represent the general picture of how his generation studied piano playing at that time. Leon Fleisher also described how he and Gary Graffman, as well as other pianists, discussed music, listened to records, and played together in their youth. His recollection is not different from Graffman's.²⁹⁰ Therefore, if we can agree that Graffman's maturing experience probably reflects the general

²⁸⁹ Gary Graffman, *I Really Should be Practicing* (New York: DoubleDay, 1981), 67.

²⁹⁰ See Leon Fleisher, *My Nine Lives, a Memoir of Many Careers in Music* (New York: DoubleDay, 2010), 64-70.

experience of musicians at his time, then it is important to notice how the influence of the new editions, the Urtext, played a crucial role in Graffman and his peers' music learning:

It was around this time that the Green Editions came into our lives. [...] They were reprints of early editions of early 18th- and 19th-century piano music and were in number of ways quite different from the same pieces that other Vengerova pupils and I had been studying. [...] She [Vengerova], like most pedagogues of the Russian persuasion, assigned her students rather heavily edited music. By this I mean editions prepared by certain famous 19th-century pianists who had made revisions corrections that they deemed appropriate. These changes—of phrasing, dynamics, pedaling and sometimes even notes—were usually not gleaned from any particularly scholarly studies but merely were what had been fashionable or traditional when these pianists were performing. [...] It was not until the Kalmus green-covered reprints, with that hallmark of purity, 'URTEXT' prominently displayed on the front, started to appear in the serious New York music stores during the early 1940s that the quest of accuracy among the new generation of pianist began to pick up momentum.²⁹¹

Graffman's piano technique and rich tone are still the product of the Russian Piano School, but after absorbing these new editions and continuous dialogues with his fellow students, he polished his rendition with ideas from beyond the Russian tradition. However, 'it was traditional in the Russian School to continue these customs,

²⁹¹ Graffman, 56-57. However, the 'Urtext' here is not real *Urtext*: It's actually only the reprint of the first editions. However, compared with the highly edited versions, these reprints are less interfered with than the intervening interpretation-editions.

right or wrong', and his teacher was not always in favor of his discoveries from the Urtext. He states:

[...] I must say that Vengerova did resign herself to our passionate erudition; although occasionally when Jacob [Latiener], after having rooted through a facsimile manuscript stumbled upon a hitherto unnoticed phrase mark that we all agreed was of Copernican significance, Vengerova would mildly suggest that perhaps notable performances of that music had been given prior to his revelation.²⁹²

On the other hand, was the publication of Urtext itself influential enough to shift the attitude toward interpretation, from tradition- or teacher-oriented to score-based? Or was there also a deeper cultural factor behind this phenomenon, stimulating the musicians to be more sceptical towards the traditions and conventions and more faithful to the score? Josef Horowitz argues that it is Toscanini and his influence that established the literal, direct performing trend towards focusing on textual fidelity in the United States. It naturally also influenced the status of American solo instrumentalists:

During the forties and early fifties, Jascha Heifetz was regularly proclaimed king of the violinists, and Vladimir Horowitz king of the pianists. [...] Heifetz's playing was rapid, powerful, tensile, and awesomely precise. And so could be Horowitz's.

²⁹² Graffman, 65. In addition, Graffman's self-awareness of being faithful to the score eventually caused a tension between him and Vengerova, as he played the 'Chopin' section in Schumann's *Carnival* according to the markings by the composer instead of the Russian tradition his teacher taught to him, which I have mentioned in Chapter Two. See Graffman, 57.

If neither emanated Toscanini's integrity—only Toscanini combined all-purpose electricity with absolute probity—Heifetz was a notably objective, unsentimental Romantic violinist.²⁹³

Furthermore, the advertisements of the recording company also enhanced this new trend, since all three were RCA artists and they were marketed as the 'world's greatest'.²⁹⁴

The Toscaninian influence illustrates the final learning stage of a performer that Leech-Wilkinson describes: learning through responding to audiences' responses. Once the Toscaninian style became the audiences' favourite, performers tended to follow it, fitting themselves into the norm. On the other hand, since the Toscaninian style was the mainstream, according to Josef Horowitz' observation, it also became the reason why Alfred Cortot, Edwin Fischer, Wilhelm Kempff could never have transplanted their career to America, because they 'were cultivated, clear-headed violators of textual fidelity canons, possessing musical imaginations packed with far-flung metaphor'²⁹⁵ – the opposite of what Toscanini represented. In the domestic music market, when a generation of gifted American pianists emerged in the late 1940s and early 1950s, note-perfect and text-faithful performance therefore became the model to pursue. In addition, although Toscanini was not a dominant figure in Europe, his wide-reaching influence may have been greater than Josef Horowitz thought. For example, in her study of the 'lesson scene' of Rossini's opera *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Hilary Poriss discusses how sopranos and mezzo-sopranos chose the aria(s)

²⁹³ Joseph Horowitz, *Understanding Toscanini: A Social History of American Concert Live* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 382.

²⁹⁴ Joseph Horowitz, 382.

²⁹⁵ Joseph Horowitz, 386.

for it from the premiere (1816) to the latest generation. The aria the composer wrote for the scene was 'Contro un cor che accende amore', which was replaced with 'La mia pace, la mia calma' by the first Rosina, according to the performing fashion of the time. However, this practice declined during the first half of the 20th century, just as performing fashion was changing in piano performance.²⁹⁶ Poriss also points out the influence of Toscanini. Even though he never conducted *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, his legacy, the concept of faithful adherence to the composer's score, is discernable in the work of two later conductors: Vittorio Gui's famous 1942 production, aiming to reconstruct Rossini's intentions, and Alberto Zedda's critical edition of the opera in 1969, weeding out all the 'traditions' and going back to the original material. After that, singing 'Contro un cor' became *the* version of the lesson scene.²⁹⁷ It is interesting to see that the influence of Toscanini and the critical edition also played a significant role in performing *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, which echoes Graffman's memoir and Josef Horowitz's observation.

Last but not least, recording itself probably also contributed considerably to this change in fashion. With the help of an advanced recording device, musicians can record their performances at home and then polish their playing by listening back to them. On the other hand, since a recorded performance can be played repeatedly, and audiences are used to the edited, note-perfect performance they hear in the records, accuracy and clarity become the priorities in a musical performance. In the end, in the words of Robert Philip:

²⁹⁶ Hilary Poriss, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 135.

²⁹⁷ Poriss, 165-168.

The ability to examine and correct one's own playing has led to an unprecedented level of self-awareness and an attention to minute detail that was never possible before. And because of the wide availability of recordings, there has been a general globalization of styles, standards and expectations.²⁹⁸

From the other angle, audiences may also have a tendency to look for what they are familiar with in the recordings. Thus, recordings may generate a 'phonograph effect', as Mark Katz has termed it, in which recorded performances have a direct influence on audiences' musical perception.²⁹⁹ If the assumptions above are tangible, then the outcome of the invention of the LP in 1948 (introduced by Columbia Records), should have deeply influenced audiences and performers alike. This timing also corresponds to the change of performing fashion in the 1950s.

4.2. Reacting to the Previous Generation

In conclusion, all the three major factors mentioned above contributed to the general style, a trend towards internationalisation and similarity that emerged during the 1950s and 1960s, as the case study of the Prelude has shown. And the most notable feature or result of this trend is that musicians started to read the score using a more 'literal' and faithful approach. A more objective performing style emerged. It was probably more significant in the States, as Toscanini was a cultural icon there, but recording also pushed this trend in general as a global phenomenon.

Nevertheless, this general trend also changed. The case study of the Prelude shows that performing fashion seemed to alter again around 1980. More and more pianists

²⁹⁸ Philip, 232-233.

²⁹⁹ Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 3.

have started to bring their personal approaches or creativities to offer special or easily recognisable interpretations (but not necessarily strange or unconventional ones). In the following case study, I have chosen to discuss the performances of Kathryn Stott, Howard Shelley, Nikolai Demidenko, and Berezovsky, because each of them presents a different, noticeable, and arguably unprecedented interpretative approach in their recorded performances of the Prelude. They still play the piece within the boundaries of the general trend, but add more flavours to the rendition.

4.2.1. Creativity via Personalised Tempo Rubato

British pianist Kathryn Stott plays this Prelude with very personal rubato. The tempo rubato she adopts in the middle section is almost in danger of becoming so indulgent that the music does not flow smoothly. But maybe that is exactly the effect she wished to achieve, because even in the two march sections she still plays many phrases using strong tempo rubato (Audio Example Track 25). Stott's approach is similar to her colleague, British pianist Howard Shelley, who also uses very distinctive tempo rubato in the March sections. Shelley's tempo rubato in the middle section is not as dramatic as Stott's, but in the A4 section he radically slows down and the music is suddenly frozen for three more bars (from bar 50 to the first half of bar 53; Audio Example Track 26). Needless to say, both Stott and Shelley definitely leave very strong impressions on the audience and make their performances special by their use of tempo rubato. Although their thinking about rubato is very strong, it is still not provocative as they do not change the structure of the piece. The structure in their renditions is still within the general trend as mentioned previously.

4.2.2. Creativity via Details and Accents

Russian pianist Nikolai Demidenko uses another method to distinguish his

performance from the others. He has a reputation for 'being special' in his interpretations. The more popular the piece is, the more 'special' his rendition may be. Nevertheless, he does not provide a controversial rendition but mainly toys with phrasing and details. In his recording of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, for instance, he plays at a normal tempo but changes many dynamics in the score to provide surprises throughout the piece.³⁰⁰ His rendition of Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.1 also shows quite personal phrasing in the cadenzas or piano solo parts, but is still within the general trend as far as the whole structure is concerned.³⁰¹ In the performance of the Prelude Op.23 No.5 in G minor, Demidenko focuses on the details and creates many small short phrases (Audio Example Track 27). This microscopic and kaleidoscopic method is also reflected in the fact that Demidenko adds several accents into the music. Since there are numerous aspects to take care of, it is natural for him to perform the Prelude in a slow tempo, giving him more room to fulfil all the tiny elements he wishes to shape. Compared to Rachmaninoff's grand fresco-like interpretation, Demidenko's performance is more like a carefully carved craftwork, which reveals another kind of beauty in the piece.

4.2.3. Creativity via Singing Style

In his recording of 1991, Russian pianist Boris Berezovsky adopts a special approach to playing this Prelude. On the one hand, he links the three sections within the trend of his colleagues; on the other hand, he also 'sings' in the two march sections, which is almost unique among all the recordings in the case study: strong beats are softened in the two sections, all the vigorous energy is replaced by mellow phrasing, and the melodies are sung in a highly emotional, even sentimental way (Audio Example Track

³⁰⁰ Hyperion, CDA67018.

³⁰¹ Hyperion, CDH55304.

28). The general concept of his interpretation is entirely opposite to Rachmaninoff's score indications and recording, and of course, is easily recognisable among all the versions. Interestingly enough, when Berezovsky recorded this Prelude again in 2004, he almost completely abandoned his previous interpretation and performed the piece in a more standard, 'normal' way (Audio Example Track 29). When he recorded it for the first time, the pianist had just won the first prize of the Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in 1990 and launched his international career. The Prelude and the other four pieces are included in his first studio recording of piano concertos. It is possible that in order to impress audiences and establish his name in the West, Berezovsky decided to present very special renditions of those pieces. When he recorded the piece again, he had been a well-known concert pianist for some time and no longer needed to surprise his audience on purpose.

4.4 The Reasons behind the interpretation

If one compares those three types of interpretative approach with the general trend established though the 1950s to the 1970s, it is quite obvious that these pianists I have just discussed were representing quite unusual renditions of the Prelude. But why did that happen in the 1980s? There are several reasons we might offer to explain this change. First, the key figures who established the earlier trend eventually faded away, as did their influence on the next generation. Josef Horowitz mentions that by the time Heifetz stopped his career as a soloist in public around 1970, 'most younger violinists [in the States] preferred a looser, friendlier playing style'.³⁰² Heifetz's master class, started in 1962 at the University of Southern California, also declined in prestige and appeal: 'By 1980, he was advertising for students in the New York Times.'³⁰³

³⁰² Josef Horowitz, 394

³⁰³ Josef Horowitz, 394.

When the key figures are gone, it is natural that their performing style will not be as influential as before.

Secondly, as has been widely argued, the post-World War II ‘baby boom’ caused a noteworthy change in culture. The Boomer generation was not necessarily associated with a rejection or redefinition of traditional values, but in general the generation appeared to be looking for an expansion of individual freedom³⁰⁴ and created a very specific rhetoric around their cohort, and the change they were bringing about.³⁰⁵ In the field of pop music, ‘the desire of youth to align itself to musical forms different from those favoured by its progenitors’, caused the prevailing popularity of rock ‘n’ roll.³⁰⁶ In the field of classical performance, it probably also explains Josef Horowitz’s observation: ‘When a post-OYAO generation emerged around 1970, its members seemed oblivious of the Horowitz-Heifetz-Toscanini pressure cooker.’³⁰⁷ Although academic discussion of the Boomers’ musical preference and achievements is mainly focused on pop music, it is still imaginable that this generation would present a different performing style than the previous one in the field of classical music, especially when the Boomers became the major performing artists on the world stage in the 1970s.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁴ Steve Gillon, *Boomer Nation: The Largest and Richest Generation Ever, and How It Changed America* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 1.

³⁰⁵ Doug Owsen, *Born at the Right Time* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), X.

³⁰⁶ David Patmore, ‘Selling sounds: Recording and the record business’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, ed. N. Cook, E. Clarke, D. Leech-Wilkinson, and J. Rink, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 130-131.

³⁰⁷ Although Horowitz’s reason is different: ‘More than any previous musical generation, [Garrick Ohlsson, one of the post-OYAPs generation] takes for granted the phonograph, trans-Atlantic travel, and trans-Atlantic television. He shares with same-age European colleagues an awareness of Horowitz, Rubinstein, Serkin, Schnabel, and other pianists who came to America to teach or play, and also of those pianists, little known to the OYAPs, who stayed put in Europe and Russia: Cortot, Fischer, Kempff, Walter Gieseking, Vladimir Sofronitzky. More than in name, the intense, competitive OYAPs, infrequently heard abroad during their formative years, seemed “American” in temperament.’ Joseph Horowitz, 395.

³⁰⁸ The cultural impact of the Boomers differs with each country. For example, most young people in Germany started to question the value of the tradition, including arts, literature, music, etc., after

Thirdly, even if we do not regard the Boomers as a special generation, using Leech-Wilkinson's analogy with the evolution of life one can still conceive of a scenario in which style could change. From a positive point of view, once a common trend becomes fully established, a musician can follow the current norms to obtain (comparatively) easy recognition. On the other hand, it becomes more and more difficult for performances to be refreshing and remarkable, especially given that senior colleagues have already presented various interpretations (with minor variations) as well as leaving a great number of recordings in the style of the general trend already. Richard Peterson states that the Boomers played a wider range of musical styles, had music turned on more of the time, and listened to it less closely than their parents.³⁰⁹ Since music now plays almost constantly, and people are used to its presence, I would argue that the 'phonograph effect' may also have had the opposite impact – people do not necessarily expect to listen to what they already know from previous recordings, since they know them too well. Therefore, besides the disappearance of the previous generation and the cultural impact brought by the Boomers, it is also logical that if one wishes to be noticed, one can either be a rebel, presenting provocative ideas and renditions, or be a 'modifier', maintaining the norms but also developing a new interpretive method to distinguish one's performance from the others.

World War II. It was no longer fashionable for the Boomers to learn classical music. Therefore, those who were still embracing classical music are reacting against the reactors. They do not reflect the value of the Boomers but display the opposite. The author's interview with Gerhard Oppitz (May 24th, 2005). Also see the related discussion in Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

³⁰⁹ Richard Peterson, 'Audience and Industry Origins of the Crisis in Classical Music Programming: Toward World Music' in *The Future of the Arts: Public Policy and Arts Research*. ed. D. B. Pankratz and V. B. Morris (New York: Praeger, 1990), 212.

As far as 'rebels' are concerned, they are not as rare as one may expect. Many pianists do not play 'safe' in concert or the studio, even in competitions. Take the Warsaw International Chopin competition for example. The competition has the longest history of all musical competitions and is still one of the most celebrated competitions today. Since the first competition in 1927, there have been pianists who dared to offer unconventional interpretations, even if their goal was supposedly to win the competition. In the 1927 competition, it was composer and pianist Dmitri Shostakovich, who played Chopin with surprising inner voices that no one had heard before.³¹⁰ In the 1960 competition, Belgian-Mexican pianist Michel Block caused a sensation with his passionate but controversial Chopin rendition. In the 1970, American pianist Jeffrey Swann stunned but also won the heart of the audience with his wild, dazzling, Horowitzian style. In 1980, it was Ivo Pogorelich who caused probably the most momentous controversy in the history of music competitions.³¹¹ All of the names mentioned above paid their price for being unconventional as none of them was selected in the final round. However, all of them caught attention and gained the support of the public, and they all had performing careers afterwards (except Shostakovich, who focused on his composition career instead). Jeffrey Swann was frequently invited back to Poland and later made his name by winning other competitions; Block was rejected by the jury but won support from the honorary chairman, Arthur Rubinstein. The latter not only offered him a special prize with financial help, but also asked his agent to arrange Block's concerts. But the most successful one is still Pogorelich. During the competition, the jury had divided into two groups: those who found his playing unacceptable, and those who were enthusiastic

³¹⁰ Sofia Hentova, *Lev Oborin*. trans. M. Glebov (Leningrad: Muzyka, 1964). See Chapter Five from International Piano Archives at Maryland <http://www.lib.umd.edu/PAL/IPAM/resources.html>. (accessed June 15th, 2011)

³¹¹ Janusz Ekiert, *The Endless Search for Chopin: the History of the International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw* (Warsaw: MUZA SA, 2000) 67-70.

or at least approving of his performance. In the end, Martha Argerich, supported by Paul Badura-Skoda and Nikita Magaloff (two of the jury members), withdrew from the jury to support Pogorelich, when the latter did not reach the final round. After this event, Pogorelich immediately gained popularity as well as a recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon.³¹²

However, being unconventional can only provide a point of discussion for a short period. The reason for these pianists' success still lies in the fact that they are excellent pianists and musicians. Ivo Pogorelich, the most successful of them, is not only a pianist with unusual ideas but a rare virtuoso. With such technical ability, he was almost certain to have had a great career whether or not he won the Chopin Competition (he had won the first prize Casagrande Piano Competition in 1978 and Montreal International Music Competition in 1980 before the Chopin Competition). His provocative interpretations and behaviour mean he could be considered something of a peacock: easily noticed (by the audience) but also easily targeted (condemned by critics and traditionalists). But his performing ability ensures that he cannot only be considered a flashy show off. He caught people's attention but has gone on holding it. For other pianists, it is still beneficial to stay within the general trend. If one wants to sound 'refreshing' or 'new', but also does not wish to take the risk of being a rebel, then it is best to be a 'modifier' – providing minor but perceivable changes under the surface of the general trends or norms, as we have seen in the three types of interpretative approach to the Prelude emerging from the 1980s.³¹³ Miriam Quick, in her research on Webern performance style, argues that

³¹² Janusz Ekiert, 71-73.

³¹³ This process can be equally well explained, naturally, using Thomas Kuhn's theory of normal and revolutionary science in relation to paradigm shifts. See Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1962).

one reason the composer's music has been performed with ever more flexibility since the 1960s – but especially from the 1980s onwards – is that a new generation of musicians insists on reacting against the previous generation.³¹⁴ Although Rachmaninoff's music is very different from Webern's, performers' reactions against the previous generation are similar.

4.3. Tradition Comes Back

Whether it is Berezovsky's 1991 recording, Demidenko's, Stott's or Shelley's, all of the performances mentioned above are creative. Mannered in certain ways, but basically they are not revolutionary or provocative renditions. The pianists were looking for new ideas and new ways of expression to surprise – but not horrify – their audiences. This reaction, on the other hand, also changes over time. It seems that since the early 1990s, 'old is new' has applied to the interpretation of Rachmaninoff's music: more and more pianists have started to bring back the performing fashions of fifty years ago.

In the case study of the Prelude, we can observe this new trend from at least three perspectives. First, it seems that the use of unmarked arpeggiation, asynchronisation of hands, even alteration of the score, have frequently appeared in recordings of the Prelude from the last two decades. This trend was partly produced by pianists from older generations. Earl Wild's (1915-2010) recording of 1993, Shura Cherkassky's (1909-1995) of 1995, and Claudette Sorel's (1932-1999) of 1998 all belong in this category. We can also add three recordings from the 1980s – Horowitz's (1903-1989) of 1981, Jorge Bolet's (1914-1990) of 1987, and Nikita Magaloff's (1912-1992) of 1988

³¹⁴ Miriam Quick, *Performing Modernism: Webern on Record*, PhD 2010 thesis, King's College London.

– to the list. It is arguable that they maintained the performing fashions of the first half of the 20th century solely because they were born in that period. However, there are counter examples: Yuri Boukoff (1923-2006), for example, did not present those performing fashions in his recording of 1987, nor did Ruth Laredo (1937-2005) in 1995. Secondly, those pianists did not simply ‘present’ the traditions but in fact recreated them in the second half of the 20th century. Horowitz, for instance, does not play obvious arpeggiated chords of the piece in his 1930 recording but heavily applies this performing habit to his 1981 performance. If one compares his performances of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Sonata No.2, Op.36 from different periods,³¹⁵ one reaches the same conclusion: he used more and more arpeggiated chords through the years. In performing this Prelude, the Horowitz of 1981 was actually closer to the traditional romantic style than the Horowitz of 1930.

The explanation for why the young Horowitz was actually more modern than the senior Horowitz is probably that he clearly thought about those old performing fashions and planned to present them in his performance during his late years. In other words, those characteristics are more about designed interpretation than simple playing habit, and it is the pianist who decided to present those period fashions. Another factor to suggest that those pianists ‘recreated’ instead of ‘inheriting’ those styles is that they used not just more markedly arpeggiated chords, but also a greater number of arpeggiated chords than the pianists of 50 years ago. In this Prelude when pianists arpeggiated chords before the 1950, they did so only in the middle section. In those ‘recreated’ versions from the 1980s, however, the pianists even do so in other parts of the Prelude. Besides the C1 and C2 section, Wild arpeggiates in the A2 and A4, Cherkassky in the A1, A3, A4 and A5, and Sorel in the A1,

³¹⁵ Sony SK 53472 (1960), Music & Arts CD-666 (1979), RCA 7754-2-RG (1980).

A2, A3, and A4. Although the three all adopt unmarked arpeggiation, the practices in different periods of the 20th century are quite different, and the 'recreated' ones seem more *romantic* than the early ones.

Peter Donohoe (1953-)'s performance shows how old performing styles can be absorbed and recreated in a completely new way. He did not play arpeggiation in the middle section at all but arpeggiates chords in the A2 and A4 section. It is clear that he plays those arpeggios on purpose to add some flavour to the music. Donohoe understands the meaning of playing chords as arpeggios and uses this method in the parts where early pianists did not. It is as if he has learned the grammar of a language but uses the grammar to tell new stories. In the performances of Max Pilippov, Andrei Pisarev, Marietta Petkova, and Simon Trpceski, since the pianists only use limited arpeggiation in the middle section, what they do can be regarded as similar in approach to Donohoe, and the main purpose is to add extra 'taste' to the music. In the performances of Nikolai Lugansky, Ruth Laredo, Leonid Kuzimin, Evgeny Kissin, Santiago Rodriguez, Kateryna Titova, Laure Favre-Kahn, Dennis Matsuev, Simon Trpceski, and Steven Osborne, however, because they frequently use arpeggios in the middle section, we can probably say that these pianists deliberately want to bring back the former performing style in their interpretations. Lugansky not only arpeggiates the chords in the right hand but also plays arpeggios in the left hand, which creatively redefines the old practice.

And there is another dimension to this renaissance of tradition, which is that pianists may be influenced, or at least inspired, by Rachmaninoff's recording of the Prelude. They are not afraid of being attacked for imitating someone and feel free to present what Rachmaninoff told them in his performance. For example, Trpceski,

Laredo, Leonid Kuzmin, and Hayroudinoff all arpeggiate the chords in bars 48 and/or 49, which is very similar to what Rachmaninoff did in his recording. One can argue that Rachmaninoff's recording is their interpretive model, because their way of phrasing and the use of arpeggiation in the middle section is very close to Rachmaninoff's own performance. Hayroudinoff even copies the way Rachmaninoff altered the notes in the coda (the only version in this study which exactly duplicates what Rachmaninoff did). Hayroudinoff thinks that Rachmaninoff's recording should be regarded as his revision of the Prelude. Since he agrees with Rachmaninoff's alteration, he is happy to reproduce it in his own performance, though he still has his own idea of the Prelude and is not simply imitating the composer's interpretation.³¹⁶

Secondly, besides the arpeggiation and asynchronisation, the composer's phrasing style in this Prelude is also a feature that we may use to assess whether Rachmaninoff's recording influenced how other pianists play it. In the C1 section, Rachmaninoff plays the left hand accompanying arpeggio figures with rubato and in *leggerio* style – very light, delicate, and wave-like. The composer only writes 'un poco meno mosso' on the score and gives nothing to suggest that pianists should play it as *leggerio* and wave-like as possible; therefore, this can be considered Rachmaninoff's personal approach. The other feature is that, close to the end of the C2 section, Rachmaninoff slows down in the climax of the section (bar 47), and separates it from the next phrase starting from bar 48. According to the score, pianists are supposed to play those bars in one phrase, since the composer does not give any tempo change indications there but only writes *dim.* later, on the third beat of bar 49. However, Rachmaninoff plays it in his recording in a very different way, which also can be viewed as his individual idea. Because these two features cannot be read from the

³¹⁶ Interview with Rustem Hayroudinoff (August 14th, 2010).

score but appear in Rachmaninoff's performance only, it would be interesting to see whether pianists play them like this or in a similar way (see Table 4-2). The result of the case study is in keeping with what was shown in the discussion above. Before the 1990s, pianists might play the C1 section in wave-like style or perform the ending phrases as Rachmaninoff did, but only Smith's recording in 1946 and Shelley's in 1983 have both of these features. This fact suggests that for the other pianists who played one of the two features, their decision to do so probably stemmed from personal judgment rather than planned imitation, otherwise they would have presented both in their performances. Nevertheless, from Biret's performance in 1989 to the present day, we see that more and more pianists interpret both features in their recordings. This supports my earlier conclusion that pianists have started to bring back some old traditions and performing habits in the last two decades. Here, the result suggests that many of them actually took the composer's recording as a reference point when they played the same piece, and thus that imitating Rachmaninoff's interpretation is no longer seen as taboo, but as a way of being faithful to the composer.

There is another feature for us to use to examine whether the pianists are actually presenting the characteristics of Rachmaninoff's performances instead of the general performing habits from the past in this Prelude: the singing style of the middle section. In the previous section, I discussed how Rachmaninoff played the first few bars of the middle section (see Score 4-1 and SV 4-1). Since the turn of this century, it seems that more and more pianists have come to know about the composer's phrasing style and wish to evoke this feature in their melodic shaping. As far as Phrasing Pattern B is concerned, although they do not show equal similarity to Rachmaninoff's playing as in Phrasing Pattern A, the control of melodic flow they demonstrate in performance can still bring back the impression of the composer's phrasing. Since this phrasing style, as

discussed earlier, is almost Rachmaninoff's musical signature in his playing and not usually heard under the fingers of other pianists of his time, I would argue that it is very possible that pianists (of the last ten years) had studied Rachmaninoff's recording before they recorded the piece, and that they also intended to present this phrasing method in their performance.

From the case study of the Prelude, it seems that pianists in recent years have had a tendency to embrace old performing habits or polish their renditions by absorbing the style the composer expressed in his recording. This phenomenon is not exclusive to performances of the Prelude, because similar results can be found in the performances of the 18th variation of *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* as regards phrasing style. In the previous section I argued that the composer plays the solo passage of the 18th variation with irregular rhythm, giving it a quality of 'speaking effect', especially in the upbeat groups. This feature mainly appears in the performances of the composer, his friends, and those pianists who studied (or even imitated) his playing in the recording. In the recordings of the 1960s and 1970s, however, pianists generally play the variation with even rhythm of the upbeat groups and bring out the inner voices. The former implies that pianists had been inclined to read the score without studying the recording of Rachmaninoff's playing; therefore, they saw the upbeat groups with the literal meaning of tenuto. Only two pianists, Abbey Simon (1922-) and Earl Wild (1915-2010), play this variation with irregular rhythm, and both of them belonged to Rachmaninoff's generation. This may suggest that they still kept some performing characteristics of the previous generation when they recorded the piece.

The practice of 'speaking effect' by playing the upbeat groups with irregular rhythm, almost absent in the 1960s, somehow returned to the minds of some pianists at the turn of this century. From French pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet's recording of 1993 onwards, the practice seems to have gained greater and greater popularity. In the last decade, it has even become the most common performance style among the recordings I collected for this case study. This probably shows that the performing fashion has changed again.

Both the performances of the Prelude Op.23 No.5 and the 18th variation of *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* have shown that the tradition has come back in various ways, but why is that? The shift that happened in the 1980s can be viewed as a reaction against the previous trend, but what has influenced the pianists in the last two decades? Based on my interviews with pianists, I would argue that the most probable reason behind this change is the digital reissue of Rachmaninoff's complete recording on CD in 1992. RCA/BMG issued the composer's recording of his Piano Concerto No.2 and No.3 in 1987, but his complete recorded performances, including the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, were only officially issued five years later. Before this official release, some small recording companies published their CD transfers of the composer's performances, but these were not distributed worldwide. The official digitised release in 1992 enabled pianists and the public alike to appreciate Rachmaninoff's performing legacy in the most convenient way possible, and probably also contributed to the fact that pianists have started to learn the composer's playing style and adopt it in their own performances since the 1990s. In my interview with Jean-Yves Thibaudet, he passionately recalled the impact those recordings had on him when he listened to them for the first time when they were issued in 1992:

The first time I heard his recording of his piano concertos, I simply couldn't believe my ears. His playing is completely different from the 'loud, thick, and explosive' style of many Russian pianists today. The sound is lighthearted and graceful, fast but without a sense of oppression--on this point, his playing has similarities with the French School! I could not stop listening until I finished all the five concertos. His rubato is true art, noble and exquisite, with an unbelievable sound and singing phrasing. For me, it was a kind of musical enlightenment! I would like to emphasise that his playing is controlled and elegant. In Los Angeles I met some people who had met Rachmaninoff. They remember him as being a very warm, kind, polite, and noble gentleman. This is very similar to Chopin. Their music should be performed with a certain nobility, and not with excessive emotion. The way that many people perform Rachmaninoff and Chopin these days is extremely sentimental, even morbid, it's really a mistake.³¹⁷

The reason Thibaudet bought and listened to the recordings is because he was preparing his recording of Rachmaninoff's complete works for piano and orchestra with Ashkenazy and the Cleveland Orchestra, on Decca. In my later correspondence with him, Thibaudet agreed that the way he played the 18th variation came from the composer's performance, especially the idea of 'irregular rhythm'. However, he stressed that:

Although I admire Rachmaninoff and his playing, I am not Rachmaninoff and have no intention to be another Rachmaninoff. We have different temperaments.

I play the variation with irregular rhythm, but as you have noticed, I do not do so

³¹⁷ Interview with Jean-Yves Thibaudet, (June 6th, 2004).

as strongly as Rachmaninoff did. I get the idea from his recording and I am inspired by his playing, but I do not want to copy his playing. (In fact, I cannot copy his playing!) It is still my interpretation. His recording helps me to clarify some doubts when I study the score. I know his music style much better after listening to his performance.³¹⁸

Although my wish to contact Kuzmin, Mark Zeltser, and Mikhail Pletnev (the three pianists who played the variation with irregular rhythm in the 1990s) was not fulfilled, Alexander Gavrylyuk, Stephen Hough, and Nikolai Lugansky, who recorded the Rhapsody in the last decade, all confirmed in my interviews with them that they had seriously studied the composer's recordings before they recorded it. Therefore, it is not surprising to hear that they all played the variation with irregular rhythm, especially Hough and Lugansky. In addition, among all the pianists who have played the variation with irregular rhythm since 2000, nearly all of them, except Lang Lang, bring out the inner voices obviously and actively, close to the way the composer did. This echoes the phenomenon which emerged from the case study of the Prelude Op.23 No.5: in the last ten or so years, more and more pianists have started to present the characteristics Rachmaninoff showed in his recordings when they play the composer's works. In addition, if one listens to Thibaudet, Gavrylyuk, Kuzmin, and Lugansky's Chopin recordings (all made around the time when they made their Rachmaninoff ones), one will find that they did not apply those old performing habits or irregular rhythms in their Chopin performances.³¹⁹ This suggests that those pianists did so in their Rachmaninoff performances because they studied the composer's recordings. Kuzmin even played the third movement of Chopin's Piano

³¹⁸ Interview with Jean-Yves Thibaudet, (December 13th, 2010).

³¹⁹ For example, Thibaudet: Decca 466357 (2000); Lugansky: Erato 85738-02282-2 (2000), 0927-42836-2 (2002); Kuzmin: Russian Disc 10022 (1995), Gavrylyuk: VAI 1272 (2006).

Sonata No.2 in the Rubinstein-Rachmaninoff tradition in his album, which further suggests Rachmaninoff's influence on his interpretations.

If the digitised release of Rachmaninoff's complete recordings in 1992 caused this change of fashion, the next question would be: why do pianists wish to study the composer's playing? Why can they not simply study the score, as they do for Beethoven or Chopin's music, but have to think about the composer's performance as well? 'Is perhaps the present interest in "authenticity" simply a reflection of a lack of professional self-confidence? [...] Is not music a performing art, in which the recreator has just as much right to an opinion as the creator?' When commenting on the 'historically informed' performance movement, Peter le Huray once asked these questions and they can be applied to the Rachmaninoff case: why is the fashion changing again, and why do pianists wish to follow, or at least take the composer's performances as a reference point?

It is not easy to provide an answer to this, but it probably relates to our current cultural fashions. Creativity is still highly appreciated: in literature, arts, and composition, we still praise novelty, the courage of being different, and determination to explore the unknown and undiscovered. As far as interpretation is concerned, however, the focus may increasingly be shifting towards being 'authentic' and 'real', and the definition of 'being authentic or real' is also becoming more and more literal. After the Academy Award ceremony (Oscar) in 2006, Annie Proulx, the author of 'Brokeback Mountain', which was adapted as an award winning film, wrote a sharp-tongued essay 'Blood on the red carpet' for the *Guardian* to give her view on the decision to award the film an Oscar. One of her questions actually raised the issue of the art of interpretation:

Both beautiful and household-name movie stars announced various prizes. None of the acting awards came Brokeback's way, you betcha. The prize, as expected, went to Philip Seymour Hofmann for his brilliant portrayal of Capote, but in the months preceding the awards thing, there has been little discussion of acting styles and various approaches to character development by this year's nominees. Hollywood loves mimicry, the conversion of a film actor into the spittin' image of a once-living celeb. But which takes more skill, acting a person who strolled the boulevard a few decades ago and who left behind tapes, film, photographs, voice recordings and friends with strong memories, or the construction of characters from imagination and a few cold words on the page? I don't know. The subject never comes up. Cheers to David Strathairn, Joaquin Phoenix and Hofmann, but what about actors who start in the dark?³²⁰

I do not wish to question the result of the best leading male actor of the Academy Award that year, but it is very interesting to see the two types of roles in the light of interpretation. Does Hollywood really love mimicry? If we examine the winners of the best leading actors and actresses of the past three decades, we can indeed see that the winner goes to 'non-fictional' roles more and more frequently. In Table 4-8 (page 421), I list all the winners of the best leading actor and actress of the Academy Award in the past three decades. My definition of the 'non-fiction role' is that: 1. The character is based on a real person who has left pictures, tapes, film, photographs, or voice recordings for one to imitate. 2. Although the character does not exist in reality, it portrays physical or mental disability or a very specific role (the female boxer in 'Million Dollar Baby' and the ballet dancer in 'Black Swan', for example), and the

³²⁰ Annie Proulx's essay can be read from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2006/mar/11/awardsandprizes.oscars2006> (accessed June 15th, 2011)

physical appearance or features is the main challenge of acting. (In Table 4-8, I use check marks with brackets to identify this category.) Both of these require actors and actresses to be as *authentic* as possible, and people can judge their acting performance by comparing them with the real characters. If we see both the male and female winners, it is certain that the Academy has displayed a tendency to award those roles in the last decade.

Compared to the Venice Film Festival or Festival de Cannes, the Academy Award is probably not the most distinguished movie award as far as artistic achievement is concerned. However, it is certainly the most-watched and most popular film award on earth. Since movie is perhaps the most popular art form in our time, it quickly responds to our current cultural fashion and general tastes. Acting, the work of an actor or actress, is an art of interpretation by nature. As far as interpretation is concerned, if our current trends, at least in the last decade, is to praise those who portray the non-fiction characters more than encouraging ‘the construction of characters from imagination and a few cold words on the page’ as Proulx says, maybe it is also the reason for what we have witnessed in musical interpretation – in this case, the performances of Rachmaninoff’s music. It is fashionable and encouraged to be ‘authentic’, and the most direct (probably also the easiest) way of being authentic is to imitate or take reference from the composer’s own performance. The more similar to the composer’s own playing, the more authentic it is – and being authentic is a value highly praised in the current era.

5. Conclusion and Another Question: The Cultural Impact of ‘Authoritative Renditions’

In the case studies in this chapter, we can see that pianists do play differently in

different periods: before the 1950s, from the 1950s to 1970s, from the 1980s to the 1990s, and from 1992 to the present day. The first period is an extension of the performing habits of the late 19th century. During the second a new general trend emerges, which tends to be more faithful to the score. Pianists' score reading becomes more literal, and their performances become more and more alike. The third period is a reaction against the previous trend. Pianists start to offer more and more creative, even unconventional ideas in their renditions. In the most recent decade, however, the fashion seems to have changed again. The influence of Rachmaninoff's performance is notable, but surprisingly it is not necessarily his 'big phrasing' style but some other features that can be clearly identified as a trend or generally-agreed approach. In addition, the influence of the composer shows mostly in the performances of his friends, students, from some contemporaries or from the recent generation, whose view, in turn, has been shaped by a profound change in general attitudes toward recordings, both on the part of critics (finding early recordings more and more interesting) and the record companies (finding them more and more profitable, or at least less loss-making since the investment required is tiny compared to a new recording). Economic, academic and social factors have all played a part, therefore, in changing performance styles for Rachmaninoff.

On the other hand, the case study also shows that the influence of geographical background and piano schools is not significant in the recorded performances of the Prelude. In addition, we cannot see any 'authoritative rendition' in the case study that sets up the standard or interpretative model, influencing the pianists when they perform the piece. As far as the composer's version is concerned, its influence probably mainly shows in the performances of his friends, students, or the very recent generation. However, does it really mean that geographical background, piano schools,

and the composer's rendition they are not influential at all? While commenting on the decline of the tradition of aria substitution— by the mid-to late 1950s, many sopranos and mezzo-sopranos stopped substituting their own choice of aria, returning Rossini's 'Contro un cor' to its original place in the lesson scene – Poriss mentions that Maria Callas' 1957 recording of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* probably contributed tremendously to the change of the tradition, 'for it was she who convinced mid-20th century audiences to demand fidelity, and it was she who convinced future Rosinas to deliver.'³²¹ In performances of Rachmaninoff's music, can't we see any similar 'authoritative rendition' serving as a model for pianists to follow? In the examples I chose for the case studies, there is probably one instance that shows the influence of a particular recording – although actually not the recording itself, but more the image and impression behind the performance.

This is the changing fashion relating to performances of the 18th Variation of the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, which happened even before the reissue of Rachmaninoff's recordings. As has been summarised in the previous sections, Rachmaninoff played this variation with irregular rhythm and active inner voices. In addition, the composer marked out clearly the inner voices in the score. However, it is also imaginable that pianists may feel it is more attractive to play the variation without the speaking effect the composer demonstrated in his playing, presenting a generally softer rendition: in the performances of the piece in the 1960s and 1970s, generally speaking, the pianists had the tendency to *smooth* it out. Even so, however, if pianists are faithful to the score (at least in the literal meaning), they are supposed to bring out those melodies, as they are clearly marked in the score. The result of the case study also shows that. Although the pianists did not play it with irregular rhythm,

³²¹ Poriss, 166-168.

they still brought out the inner voices: the difference is only whether they did so actively or passively.

At the beginning of the 1980s, however, the situation started to alter (See Table 4-4, the versions marked in **bold** letters). Although many pianists in the case study still chose to bring out the inner voices, there were also many who decided to weaken the role of those melodies and play the solo part more softly or lightly. Greek pianist Tirimo's performance of 1982 brings out the inner voices, but the pianist seems deliberately vague in the articulation of them. In the recordings of Filipina pianist Cecile Licad, French pianist Cécile Ousset, British pianist Philip Fowke and American pianist Tedd Joselson, the role of the inner voices wanes considerably as if the pianists just played the notes, made them sound out, but never wanted to organise the notes into musical lines. This phenomenon is especially notable in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, when there were more pianists playing it without bringing out the inner voices than those who did.

There could be many reasons behind this change of fashion, but I argue that the main factor is probably a non-musical one: the American movie 'Somewhere in Time' in 1980. The film is adapted from the 1975 novel *Bid Time Return* by science fiction writer Richard Matheson, directed by Jeannot Szwarc, and starring Christopher Reeve, Jane Seymour, and Christopher Plummer. The 18th variation of *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* plays an important role in the story, as it is the piece the male leading character uses to win the heart of the female one. This is not the first time the piece had been heard in a movie: it is also featured in the film 'The Story of Three Loves' of 1953, in 'The Jealous Lover', one of the three stories in the movie. However, it seems that it is the success of 'Somewhere in Time' that truly increased the popularity of the

18th variation of *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini*, which unfortunately, also influenced the interpretation of the pianists, to judge by the timing of the change of fashion in of the way pianists treat the inner voices.

In the movie soundtrack, the variation was played by Chet Swiatkowski, in a stereotypical 'film music' style: only the main melody (on the treble register) is clearly played and the notes of the inner musical lines are not linked. It seems that the pianist did not wish to play them as melodic phrases. The musical flow is fluent but very flat: even the triplets of the accompanying part are treated equally, without the rhythmic impulses they are supposed to have. (Audio Example Track 30)

It is hard to imagine that professional concert pianists would imitate this kind of 'soft, flat, background music' performance. On the other hand, it is possible that the romantic feeling of the movie, or the atmosphere of film music, may persuade performers to bring the image 'Somewhere in Time' gives to them into their rendition of the variation. Licad, Ousset, Fowke and Joselson all have much better technique than Swiatkowski in every respect, including articulation, tone colours, dynamic control, and so forth, but they still choose to present the inner voices in a very passive way. Clearly they are fine musicians and can read what the composer wrote in the score, but, whether by chance, direct or memetic influence, their interpretation of the piece is inclined to the image of the movie rather than the score or the composer's recording.

This wave of fashion seemed to continue up to the end of the 1990s. While many pianists played the variation under the shadow of 'Somewhere in Time', some pianists also started to play it in the style of Rachmaninoff's performance, as I have mentioned

earlier. John Fisher and Jason Potter claim that recording and broadcast music results in extraction: removing movements or sections from the larger works to which they belong. Films, TV shows, and advertisements pillage the pieces for good tunes, and the consequence is that those works are abstracted from their historical and musical context.³²² The variation is arguably a good example (or victim) of this trend. Although there is probably no direct evidence to confirm that the fashion changed in the early 1980s as a result of the impact of the movie, the close interaction between inner voicing style and the release of the film, as well as the feeling the movie soundtrack gives, suggests that this performance-stylistic shift and the movie are not just coincidentally linked. Even if the reason is not the movie, the result of the performances still shows that general performing fashion can suddenly change.

Although I do not see any similar examples of the 'authoritative rendition' in performances of the Prelude, these kind of influential performances and recordings still exist. In the next chapter, the discussion will be focused on how pianists play Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.2 and No.3, and then we will see that geographical background and piano schools are still prominent, and 'authoritative renditions' are important, even key factors, influencing pianists' interpretation of the pieces.

³²² John Fisher and J. Potter, 'Technology, appreciation, and the historical view of art' in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 55 (1997), 169-185.

Chapter Five: The Influence of Recording and the ‘Authoritative Rendition’— How Different Generations of Pianists Have Played Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concertos No.2 and No.3

In previous chapters, we have seen how 1) the characteristics of certain period performing habits and the Russian School, 2) Rachmaninoff’s own playing style at the piano, and 3) reactions against previous norms across the generations, have all influenced the interpretation and performance of Rachmaninoff’s solo piano music. Some performing characteristics, such as the new concept of structure in the Prelude Op.23 No.5 which emerged in the 1950s, became dominant trends lasting more than half a century. What was fashionable in the past may come back and have new life in the present day. Since the digital reissue of the composer’s complete recordings in 1992, more and more pianists have taken Rachmaninoff’s recordings as the main reference when they play his music. After examining the performances of the solo pieces, in this chapter I will focus on the performances of Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No.2 in C minor, Op.18 and Piano Concerto No.3 in D minor, Op.30.

How do solo and concerto playing differ in the development of a pianist’s performing practice? The main difference between the two, from a performer’s angle, is probably that concerto performance plays a more crucial role in the career development of a pianist, especially for young ones. As a budding soloist, it is usually quite difficult to attract large enough audiences to fill up a big venue. For example, in the case of Yulianna Avdeeva, the first prize winner of the Warsaw Chopin competition in 2010, the concert organiser only arranged her UK recital debut (on November 3rd, 2010) at the Queen Elizabeth Hall (around nine hundred seats) instead of the Royal Festival Hall (around two thousand nine hundred seats), even though she was the

hottest topic in the musical field at the time. With the appeal of the conductor and orchestra as well as the other symphonic works in the same concert, a pianist can easily present herself or himself in front of a great number of audiences and then establish her or his reputation, if the concerto performance goes successfully. On the other hand, it is also hard to find a pianist who can launch their career mainly by giving recitals. For pianists who have firmly established lasting and solid performing careers, concerto concerts are still important, because they can suddenly lose hundreds of fans with a poor performance. In the case of Rachmaninoff's piano music, although the composer's twenty-four Preludes (Op.3 No.2, Op.23 and Op.32), *Six Moments Musicaux* Op.16, and two sets of *Études Tableaux*, Op.33 and Op.39, are well-liked concert program pieces and beloved encores, Rachmaninoff's large-scale piano solo works have only become popular in the last two to three decades, and then only the Piano Sonata No.2, Op.36 and *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*, Op. 42. His gigantic Piano Sonata No.1, Op.28 is never a popular piece on the stage or in the studio, neither is his *Variations on a Theme of Chopin*, Op.22. Many great Soviet or Russian pianists, such as Emil Gilels and Sviatoslav Richter, did not play any of those large-scale solo pieces by Rachmaninoff, only the solo miniatures and piano concertos. This means that for a pianist, Rachmaninoff's large-scale solo pieces do not have the same status as certain classical, standard major compositions, for example, Beethoven's *Appassionata Sonata* or *Hammerklavier Sonata* or Liszt's Sonata in B minor, which may establish one's career. Playing Rachmaninoff's solo pieces well is important, but for a long time, it was nowhere near as important as being able to perform his piano concertos brilliantly.

Since concerto performance is so important to a pianist, performers may be particularly concerned with making their rendition of a concerto acceptable to their audiences, critics, and the public in general. In this sense they may be more dependent on well-established norms and models, but they can also shift their interpretative ideas quickly in response to changing fashion if its cultural impact is strong enough. As we saw in the discussion in the previous chapter, performers easily fit into current general norms, but they can also be very reactive to the environment and the feedbacks from the audiences. The case study in Chapter Four – on the performances of Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G minor, Op.23 No.5 – provides information about the performing features of different generations. We see the general trend evolving over decades but cannot identify any single performance, performer, or factor that caused the change in fashion. The only exception may be the influence of Rachmaninoff's recording since the digital reissue in 1992. This is to be expected: it is hard to imagine that any pianist could establish a career by playing a small piece, therefore we also cannot see an influential 'authoritative rendition' that influences how other pianists play the same piece for a period of time. In the performances of a concerto-like work, as the 18th variation of the *Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini* shows, we still see a general trend, but also can see that some pianists change their renditions dramatically rather than gradually, when the stimulation comes from a popular film. If pianists are more reactive and sensitive to the rendition of a piano concerto, it is more likely that rather than keeping the norm, we will see more persuasive and overwhelming concerto interpretations become 'authoritative renditions', or a sudden change of interpretation when a strong cultural impact emerges.

1. The Influence of the ‘Authoritative Rendition’

In fact, pianists frequently refer to, even imitate, the performances of their role models or certain prominent colleagues, and as a consequence, those performances become influential ‘authoritative renditions’. We are not unfamiliar with those authoritative renditions and their performers. In Chapter One, those strong personalities or interpretations, such as Anton Rubinstein’s rendition of Chopin’s Piano Sonata No.2, are part of the content of the performing school or performing tradition. Here I am going to present some examples that I will argue pianists view as ‘authoritative renditions’, and which pianists have followed instead of the scores, thus shaping their interpretative approaches. The Rubinstein rendition of the Sonata is easy to recognise, because his dynamic design of the reprise of the Funeral March is the opposite of the composer’s idea in the score. By the same token, the examples I am going to present (showing reorganisation, deletion, and rearrangement) are all about changing the notes, texture, even structure of a composition – the most obvious features of a performance. Since the alteration directly changes the score, it is clear when pianists are following the authoritative rendition instead of what the composer has written. In addition, the examples are mainly from outside Rachmaninoff’s works, which shows that this is a general issue, and Rachmaninoff’s works are simply particular examples of it.

1.1 Reorganisation

The editorial choice of Schumann’s *Symphonic Études*, Op.13 is a fascinating subject as regards reorganisation, and it is probably a new phenomenon, as the recording document suggests, which only appeared in the second half of the 20th century. Schumann first published it in 1837, and it contains a theme and 12 études (variations in nature). In 1852 the composer published a new version: he edited the theme and

1st, 2nd, 10th, 11th, and 12th étude, deleted the 3rd and 9th étude, changed the name from 'études' to 'variations', and renamed the 12th étude 'finale'. Later Brahms added the two deleted études back in 1862, and in 1873, he found five variations in Schumann's manuscript and added them into the appendix of the score as 'posthumous variations'.³²³ Therefore several choices of edition have been available since before the 20th century, but in the recent era it seems that pianists have started to develop a more creative approach to performing the work. Although many pianists prefer to perform the *Symphonic Études* as Brahms edited them in 1862, recordings show that more and more pianists, mainly from the second half of the previous century to today, have chosen to add some or all of the five posthumous variations into the original. Some insert the five as a whole (like Richter and Pollini),³²⁴ and some freely place the five (or some of them). By adding the posthumous variations, pianists have actually reorganised the piece and built their own structure out of Schumann's variations.

There are a vast number of imaginable ways to reorganise these variations. Among the 85 recordings of the *Symphonic Études* I have collected, Alfred Cortot's performance in 1929 seems to have attained an 'authoritative rendition' status among some pianists. Although Vlado Perlemuter (1904-2002), Wolfgang Leibnitz (1961-), and Burkard Schliessmann do not play in the style of Cortot (as far as phrasing and tempi are concerned), they all follow Cortot's ordering of the variations:³²⁵

³²³ Robert H. Schauffler, *Florestan: The Life and Work of Robert Schumann* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1945), 323.

³²⁴ Sviatoslav Richter (Olympia OCD 339), 1972; Maurizio Pollini (DG 410 916-2), 1984.

³²⁵ Alfred Cortot (Biddulph LHW 004), 1929; Vlado Perlemuter (Nimbus NI 5108), 1985; Burkard Schliessmann (Bayer Records BR 100 311), 2000; Wolfgang Leibnitz (Gallo CD 1077), 2001.

Cortot (1929)	T E1 P1 E2 E3 E4 E5 P4 E6 E7 P2 P5 E8 E9 P3 E10 E11 F
Perlemuter (1985)	T E1 P1 E2 E3 E4 E5 P4 E6 E7 P2 P5 E8 E9 P3 E10 E11 F
Schliessmann (2000)	T E1 P1 E2 E3 E4 E5 P4 E6 E7 P2 P5 E8 E9 P3 E10 E11 F
Leibnitz (2001)	T E1 P1 E2 E3 E4 E5 P4 E6 E7 P2 P5 E8 E9 P3 E10 E11 F

(T=theme; E=étude; P= posthumous variations; F=finale)

A similar case is the ‘Michelangeli version’ of Brahms *Paganini Variations*, Op.35. The composer writes two books on the theme of Paganini’s 24th *Caprice*, and each book is a complete set. The great Italian pianist, Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli (1920-1995), however, combined the two books into one by reordering the variations and editing some of them to fit into his design.³²⁶ His version is at least followed by Russian pianist Alexander Shtarkman (1967-) and Chinese pianist Yuja Wang (1987-). Both note that they play the ‘Michelangeli version’ on the CD cover and in the booklet.³²⁷ Although Yuja Wang does some further editing of the piece, the basic structure is still Michelangeli’s.

1.2 Deletion

Many large-scale works, such as Strauss’ *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and Meyerbeer’s *Les Huguenots*, have been often performed live or recorded in the studio with considerable cuts. This is not the case though with the deletion of the third movement of Khachaturian’s Piano Concerto, Op.38. Its duration is only around 30 to 32 minutes; therefore the cut in the final movement in the recording is more about the performer’s will than practical purpose. The concerto was premiered in 1937 by pianist Lev Oborin (1907-1974), and the Western premiere was given by British pianist

³²⁶ Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli (EMI 5 75230 2), 1948.

³²⁷ Alexander Shtarkman (DivoX CDX 25219-2), and Yuja Wang’s (DG 477 879 5)

Moura Lympany (1916-2004) in 1941, becoming the latter's signature piece.³²⁸ In Oborin's two recordings of the piece, he did not cut any passages at all.³²⁹ When Lympany recorded it with Anatole Fistoulari and the London Symphony Orchestra in 1945, and with the same conductor but the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1952, however, she cut 31 bars (bars 212 to 242) of the piano solo section in the third movement.³³⁰ She did not leave any explanation of the decision, and both records were made at a time when musicians did not have to worry about the time limits of their recording, especially the 1952 one (in the era of LP already). Lympany was not the only pianist who made deletions in the third movement. The official American premiere of the piece was given by William Kapell (1922-1953) in the summer of 1942. In the recording of a live performance on May 20th, 1945, William Kapell also made a significant deletion in the solo part, though he cut it in a different manner to the Lympany.³³¹ A live performance is one thing, though, a studio performance is quite another. When Kapell recorded the concerto with Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra next year, he still performed the concerto without deletion.³³²

Musically, it is hard to find any reason to cut the solo part in the way Lympany did, and her practice is not imitated by the other pianists on record except one: when British pianist Peter Katin (1930-) recorded the concerto with Hugo Rignold and the London Symphony Orchestra in 1960, he cut the third movement in exactly the same

³²⁸ After the UK premiere of Khachaturian's *Piano Concerto*, Lympany said that 'I had thus added a most valuable and innovative work to my repertoire, which endorsed my reputation as a Russian interpreter. I was asked to play it everywhere I went and to record it for Decca.' See Moura Lympany and Margot Strickland, *Moura: Her Autobiography* (London: Peter Owen, 1991), 69-70.

³²⁹ Lev Oborin, Aram Khachaturian, Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra (VICC-2150), unknown date; Lev Oborin, Evgeny Mravinsky, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra (Praga PR 250 017), 1946.

³³⁰ Moura Lympany, Anatole Fistoulari, London Symphony Orchestra (Dutton CDEA 5506), 1945; Moura Lympany, Anatole Fistoulari, London Philharmonic Orchestra (Decca POCL-4717), 1952.

³³¹ William Kapell, Frank Black, NBC Symphony Orchestra (VAI VAIA/ IPA 1027), 1945.

³³² William Kapell, Sergei Koussevitzky, Boston Symphony Orchestra (BMG 09026-68993-2), 1946.

way as Lympany.³³³ Since there are so many possible ways to cut a section if a pianist wishes to do, it is highly likely that Katin regarded Lympany's recordings as an 'authoritative rendition' and imitated her choice of deletion in the third movement.

1.3 Rearrangement

Vladimir Horowitz (1903-)'s version of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* is one of the most famous interpretations of the piece and the way he transcribed the work has been followed by many pianists since. Before Horowitz some pianists had offered their arrangements of the piece, such as the one that can be heard in Benno Moiseiwitsch's recording of 1945.³³⁴ However Horowitz's two performances, recorded in 1947 and 1951, are still the most influential, because pianists, especially those in the States, have frequently used at least a part of Horowitz's transcription in their performance. William Kapell's two live recordings of the piece in 1951 and 1953 document how he gradually took more and more designs from the piano giant's version. Byron Janis (1928-), Horowitz's private pupil, also played around half of the Horowitz version in his recording of 1961. Gary Graffman, another private pupil of Horowitz, only copied the maestro's transcription of the ending of the last piece, *The Great Gate of Kiev*.³³⁵ But the influence of Horowitz's recording is still vivid in Graffman's recording in general, especially where he adds octaves in the bass. More recently, American John Browning (1933-2003), Israeli David Bar-Illan (1930-2003), Finnish Ralf Gothoni (1946-), Polish pianist Krzysztof Jablonski (1965-), and Norwegian Leif Ove Andsnes (1970-) have also used some parts of the Horowitz version in their

³³³ Peter Katin, Hugo Rignold, London Symphony Orchestra (Everest EVC 9060), 1960.

³³⁴ Benno Moiseiwitsch (APR CD APR 7005), 1945.

³³⁵ Gary Graffman (Sony S2K 94737), 1965.

recordings.³³⁶ Jablonski even notes that he recorded the 'Horowitz version' on the CD cover, though he only plays some sections from Horowitz's transcription.

In addition, Horowitz's status as an 'authority' can also be seen in his 'fusion version' of Rachmaninoff's Piano Sonata No.2 in B flat minor, Op.36. The composer first published the piece in 1913, but he was not happy with it and revised it in 1931. Horowitz, however, was unsatisfied with both versions, and Rachmaninoff generously gave him complete authority to make his own one. Horowitz presented his version in January 1943, just two months before the death of the composer,³³⁷ but he did not leave a recording of the piece until 1968.³³⁸ Horowitz never published a score of his fusion version, and it seems that his version also changed from time to time. His live performance of the piece in 1980 was recorded and issued, which is considerably different from the previous version.³³⁹ There are also some fusion versions, such as Van Cliburn (1934-)'s in 1960, Vladimir Ashkenazy (1937-)'s in 1980, Korean pianist Kun Woo Paik (1946-)'s in 1992, and British pianist Ian Fountain (1980-)'s in 2000, which were not influenced by Horowitz's two versions,³⁴⁰ but the Horowitz versions have still become 'authoritative renditions' for many pianists. For example, Russian pianist Leonid Kuzmin (1964-) recorded the 1968 version (with minor changes), and also notes that he played the 'Horowitz 1968 version' on the CD cover.³⁴¹ American pianist Ruth Laredo (1937-) and French pianist Jean-Philippe Collard (1948-) refer to

³³⁶ John Browning (Delos D/CD 1008), 1987; David Bar-Illan (Audiofon CD 72031); Ralf Gothoni (Ondine ODE 753-2), 1990; Krzysztof Jablonski (Accord ACD 094-2), 1993; Leif Ove Andsnes (EMI 5099969836022), 2009.

³³⁷ Barrie Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor* (Vermont: Gower Publishing Company, 1990), 248-253.

³³⁸ Vladimir Horowitz (Sony SK 53472), 1968.

³³⁹ Vladimir Horowitz (RCA 7754-2-RG), 1980.

³⁴⁰ Van Cliburn (BMG 7941-2-RG), 1960; Vladimir Ashkenazy (Decca 443 841-2), 1980; Kun Woo Paik (Dante PSG 9327), 1992; Ian Fountain (EMI 7243 5 74164 2 9), 2000.

³⁴¹ Leonid Kuzmin (Russian Disc RDCD 10025), 1993; Leonid Kuzim (Cogam 488009-2), 2001.

the Horowitz 1968 version and make some changes.³⁴² Russian pianist Alexei Sultanov (1969-2004), on the other hand, chose to record the Horowitz 1980 version (with minor changes).³⁴³

2. The Case Studies: Rachmaninoff's Piano Concertos No.2 and No.3

In the following pages, through the two case studies of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concertos No.2 and No.3, we are going to observe not only that musicians learn from both recordings and scores, but also see some 'authoritative renditions' among the recordings. The biggest difference between the examples of 'authoritative rendition' given above and that in the two concertos is that in the latter cases authoritative renditions influence a large number of the pianists. There are not only four or five, but 40 or 50 performers (or more) who have been influenced by them. In other words, those authoritative renditions have become a major part of the interpretation of the two concertos. In the case of the Piano Concerto No.2, although Rachmaninoff gave metronome markings in the score, his performance did not follow what he had written, especially in the coda of the first movement. We are going to see how pianists have reacted to his (recorded) performance.

In the case of the Piano Concerto No.3, cadenza choice or deletion are probably the most important aspects of a pianist's interpretation. Choosing the short or long version of the cadenza usually determines the general speed of the first movement, because the characters of the two cadenzas are very different. In addition, the deletion in the concerto is probably a unique case in the performing history of classical music. Deletion, as mentioned above, is not rare. However, since being

³⁴² Ruth Laredo (Sony SMK 48470), 1978; Jean-Philippe Collard (EMI CZS 7 62745 2), 1978.

³⁴³ Alexei Sultanov (Teldec 2292-46011-2), 1990.

faithful to the score has been a mainstream belief in musical performance since the 1950s, if a deletion influences the structure, the practice will usually be abandoned. The concerto can last up to 45 minutes, but that is not a good reason for deletions. Chopin's Piano Concerto No.1, Beethoven's Piano Concerto No.5 and Brahms Piano Concerto No.1 and No.2 all can be played for over 40 minutes, but before the 1950s, pianists would only shorten the orchestral introduction of the Chopin, and the latter three were never shortened, as far as the recorded performances I have listened to are concerned. Even Mahler's symphonies, famous for their length, according to the *Mahler Discography* (published by the Kaplan Foundation in 2010), have only been performed with cuts by a few conductors, and the last one on record is Leopold Stokowski's Mahler Symphony No.2, recorded in 1967.³⁴⁴ Rachmaninoff's Symphony No.2, Op.27, has also been subject to many revisions, which usually reduce the piece from nearly an hour to 35 minutes. Nevertheless, just as Stokowski's No.2 is probably the last performance to make cuts out of all the Mahler symphonies on record, around the same time, Alfred Wallenstein's performance of the Rachmaninoff in 1960 on Capitol Records has almost certainly been the last commercial recording of the piece with cuts. Since Paul Kletzki's recording on Decca in 1968 (the first commercially recorded performance without cuts) and André Previn's on EMI in 1973, the symphony probably has always been performed in its entirety (only sometimes with the omission of a repeat in the first movement). Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.3 is long, but is still manageable (Busoni's Piano Concerto in C major is about 75 to 80 minutes long). If Rachmaninoff's Symphony No.2 has not been performed with deletions after 1960, it is hard to think of any reason to play the Piano Concerto No.3 with cuts. Yet it has been very common to see some pianists still perform it with deletions (especially the big one in the third movement) in recent years. As we are

³⁴⁴ Péter Fülöp, *Mahler Discography* (Toronto: Mikrokosmos Co, 2011).

going to see, the reason is probably still the influence of the authoritative rendition. The interaction between musicians and recordings, therefore, provides a broader perspective for understanding the process of forming a musical interpretation, and the changing of performing style in general, especially in the discussion of Rachmaninoff's music, since the concertos are two of his most popular works.

3. Case Study 1: Tempo Choice in Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.2, First Movement

There are many aspects to explore in the interpretation of the concerto. In this case study, I only compare pianists' choice of tempi in the first movement. The reason is not only that it is the most noticeable and clearest feature, but also that it raises a significant issue regarding the difference between the composer's score and the recording. The tempi of a piece are decided by the performer, based on the composer's indications (such as *allegro*, *andante*, *presto*, and so forth). Nevertheless these are all fairly flexible notions. To make those notions more precise, composers sometimes give metronome indications. Even so, we still cannot declare that those indications should be regarded as absolute, unalterable requirements. In some instances composers revise their own compositions themselves, but most commonly they simply express their latest view through performances. Byron Janis was surprised when Copland asked him to play the second movement of his Piano Sonata 'much slower', because the metronome marking in the score only reflected what the composer thought ten years ago.³⁴⁵ György Ligeti not only gave metronome markings but also added exact 'playing time' in the score of his *Études*. When Pierre-Laurent Aimard was recording those pieces under the composer's supervision,³⁴⁶ however,

³⁴⁵ Interview with Byron Janis (November 23rd, 2003).

³⁴⁶ Sony SK 62308.

the pianist was asked to change the tempi several times to satisfy Ligeti's latest ideas: it emerged that Ligeti had actually changed his thinking about the first book (1985) significantly yet kept ideas of the second book (1988-1994) relatively unchanged, because at the time of the recording (1997) the second book was fairly recently composed, whereas it had been longer since he wrote the first (see Table 5-1, page 424).³⁴⁷

On this issue Rachmaninoff was no exception. Rachmaninoff only gave metronome markings in his early pieces and then completely gave up adding them later. The turning point might have been the experience of coaching his younger colleague Alexander Goldenweiser. According to Grigory Ginzburg (1904-1961), a famous Russian pianist and pupil of Goldenweiser, when his teacher was preparing this concerto for performance, he asked the composer to listen to him. Goldenweiser knew how Rachmaninoff played this piece in concerts and learned his tempi. Before the meeting, however, he checked his performance against the metronome markings in the score and discovered that he had to change the relative tempi in several sections. When Goldenweiser raised the question with Rachmaninoff about the disparity between his performance and his own metronome markings, the composer was unpleasantly surprised. After this incident, according to Goldenweiser, Rachmaninoff hardly ever placed metronome indications in his compositions.³⁴⁸

Whether or not this experience is in fact the reason Rachmaninoff did not add metronome markings in his works later, the story indicates that Rachmaninoff did not

³⁴⁷ Interview with Pierre Laurent-Aimard (April 18th, 2004).

³⁴⁸ Grigori Ginzburg, 'Notes on master of the piano' in *The Russian Piano School: Russian Pianists and Moscow Conservatoire Professors on the Art of the Piano*. trans. and ed. C. Barnes (London: Kahn & Averill, 2007), 84-85.

follow his metronome markings while playing the concerto, and this practice can be traced back to the time when he was still in Russia. In both of his recordings of the concerto (1924 and 1929), the tempi Rachmaninoff played were very different from the metronome markings in the score. In the case study, my questions are: how do pianists view Rachmaninoff's own interpretation of the piece? Do performers follow the tempi choice of Rachmaninoff's recording while playing the piece, as the recording represents the 'authentic' interpretation of the composer, or is the composer's performance only considered to be one possible way of rendering the piece, so that pianists are not limited by it?

Comparing the metronome markings Rachmaninoff gave on the score and his two recordings of the piece, one can find many disparities. The most significant two are:

(1).The tempo from the introduction to the first theme: Rachmaninoff gave the introduction $\text{minim}=66$ and indicated *a tempo* for the first theme. However, in his two recordings in 1924 and 1929 he played it at $\text{minim}=47-51$ for the introduction and $\text{minim}=80$ (1924) and 81 (1929) for the first theme. The introduction is much slower and the first theme is much faster, and the latter definitely does not go back to the initial tempo. In fact Rachmaninoff played the piece generally faster than the metronome markings he suggested throughout the piece: he finished the first movement within ten minutes (9'24" and 9'44" separately) in a very fluent, speedy way.

(2).The tempo of the coda: In the score Rachmaninoff gave the metronome mark $\text{minim}=63$ for the coda. Compared with the passage before it ($\text{minim}=69$) the coda would then sound somewhat slower, but what Rachmaninoff performs is the

opposite: he plays the coda with the tempo at minim=80 (1924) or 81(1929), much faster than the previous section, which gives a completely different character to the ending. Here the composer obviously discarded his original design and embraced a new interpretation of the score.³⁴⁹ (If the coda is played faster, it is highlighted in the 5-2-(1-3) tables.)

3.1 General Trends

These are the performing features the composer presented in the recordings. When we see details of the performances of the pianists in Table 5-2 (128 performances, page 425), we can make several basic observations on general trends:

3.1.1. The tempi choice

As far as the introduction is concerned, none of the pianists follow Rachmaninoff's metronome instruction (minim=66), although British pianist Stephen Hough's recording is closest to it (minim=64-80). In addition, none of them play the introduction and the first theme with the same tempo as the score suggested (*a tempo*). On the contrary, all the pianists play the first theme faster than the introduction. It seems that a performance which actually conforms to the metronome marking at the beginning of the piece, or even fits the intention of those indications (the same tempo for the introduction and the first theme), has not appeared yet in the eighty-year recording history of the concerto. This may imply either that

³⁴⁹ I suppose that it is safer to state that the tempi choice mainly reflects the will of the soloist in a concerto performance. For example, Table 5-2 shows that after the first theme of recapitulation in the first movement, the tempo frequently goes to ca. minim=69 as the score indicates. It is because the second theme of the recapitulation is played by the orchestra (with French horn solo) instead of the pianist. It is the conductors who choose the tempo, and most of them start the new section according to the instruction in the score. If the pianist does not play as the metronome markings indicate in the score (which is very common in this concerto), the conductor may just follow the tempi the soloist gives.

Rachmaninoff's renditions set up a strong example of how to play the beginning, or that the composer's original idea (as shown in the score) has been completely abandoned by himself and all the other pianists, because it just does not seem to work out.

In addition, successive generations of pianists have tended to play the concerto more and more slowly. From the year 1924 to 1970, the duration of the first movement is mostly located between 9'30" and 10'30", and only in the recordings of Edith Farnadi, Sviatoslav Richter, John Ogdon, and Georges Cziffra does the first movement last over 11 minutes. After 1970, however, it is not common to see a performance of less than ten minutes, and many pianists even make the first movement last over 11.5 minutes. If we take the median of the duration data from each decade, the result confirms this tendency:

Decade	Median	Number of Samples
1940—1949	9'43"	11
1950—1959	10'22"/ 10'22"	20
1960—1969	10'25"/10'44"	12
1970—1979	10'47"	15
1980—1989	11'00"/11'05"	20
1990—1999	10'51""	31
2000—2008	10'50"/10'54"	16

This implies that pianists from different generations have had different views of the character of the first movement. In earlier recordings most of the pianists perform the movement with lighter emotion, especially the composer himself. It seems that although they still create dramatic tension in the development section, as the music requires, the melodic lines are always pushing forward, with less rubato in general. Pianists of later generations seem to play it with more sentimental expression in

slower tempi. Moreover, that tendency has also changed over the generations. From the 1990s to the present day the interpretation has become more and more various and unpredictable, but somehow in the last decade the Rachmaninoff style of the 1940s seems to have been revived. From 1990 to 2008, only four pianists in this study play the first movement in under ten minutes, but three of these recordings were made between 2004 and 2008, which may suggest that a new trend is forming.

In addition, just as we have seen in the case study of the Prelude Op.23 No.5, pianists have also gradually come to play the piece with smoother transitions, but the situation varies in different geographic areas. We can observe this from the tempi pianists adopt in the development section: in Rachmaninoff's two recordings of the concerto, the development section starts at crotchet=100 (1924) and crotchet=90 (1929), and then speeds up to crotchet=110 (1924) and crotchet=104. In the group of pianists trained or based in the Soviet Union (see Table 5-2-3), it is quite clear that before 1970 they play the development section with fast tempi, close to Rachmaninoff's performance – the only exception being Tatiana Nikolayeva (crotchet=85; crotchet=96). Only from the late 1970s onwards do the Soviet pianists start to slow down the speed, though they still retain the speed gap between the two metronome markings, so that the transition between sections is still clear. By the end of the 1980s, however, more and more Soviet pianists start to present a smoother transition. They do not speed up as much as their former colleagues; for example, we can see that in the performances of Alexei Sultanov crotchet=94, crotchet=96; Alexander Svyatkin crotchet=100, crotchet=104; Lilya Zilberstein crotchet=96, crotchet=96; Vladimir Mishtchuk crotchet=96, crotchet=100; Andrei Pisarev crotchet=96, crotchet=100; Evgeny Kissin crotchet=90, crotchet=90; Mikhail Petukhov crotchet=87, crotchet=91; Konstantin Scherbakov crotchet=90, crotchet=96; and

Nikolai Lugansky crotchet=92, crotchet=94. It seems that the majority of Soviet and Russian pianists started to see the structure differently, or wished to present the Rachmaninovian ‘big phrasing’ style by combining different sections to form a broader image of the musical line, even though the composer himself did not do so in his recordings. This interpretative approach also reflects their tendency to present more controlled tempi and more calculated rubato, as we have observed in the case of the Prelude Op.23 No.5. Only the timing of the trend’s appearance is different: in the case of the Prelude, it appeared in the 1950s.

Among the group of pianists trained or based in North America (see Table 5-2-1, page 429) and the Europe-trained or based pianists (see Table 5-2-2, page 430), the situation is more varied than the Soviet one. In general, pianists from the two groups still play the movement with gradually decreasing speed through the generations, but it is hard to see a clear trend, unlike in the Soviet case. In the 1990s there are more pianists from the two groups who start to present smoother transitions, too, and some of them even slow down rather than speed up throughout the development section. These include John Ogdon (1988) crotchet=92, crotchet=90; Hiroko Nakamura (1990) crotchet=90, crotchet=88; Noriko Ogawa (1997) crotchet=88, crotchet=86; Kun-Woo Paik (1998) crotchet=91, crotchet=82; Wibi Soerjadi (2000) crotchet=88, crotchet=86; and Lang Lang (2004) crotchet=95, crotchet=94. However, this practice (smoother transitions) is not used by the majority of performers in the West, in contrast to the Soviet/Russian case.

Therefore the biggest common feature among the three groups is that the performing time of the concerto has got longer and longer over the generations, and it is only around the turn of this century that we see a different trend starting to

emerge again. The slowing down process is a general phenomenon, and we cannot see any particular recording having caused this trend. The concerto has also featured significantly in movies: David Lean's 1945 film *Brief Encounter* and Billy Wilder's 1955 film *The Seven Year Itch*. In the former, the performance used in the film was by Eileen Joyce and in her recording of the piece, released the following year, its first movement was also the first to reach ten and a half minutes long in the case study. The image of 'film music' may influence the pianists to play the concerto in a more sentimental way, but Joyce may have had her own concerns. In her biography, the author Richard Davis notes that her interpretation of the concerto is 'less scrupulous and less faithful to the composer than Eileen's splendid recordings of Rachmaninoff's preludes.' However, this recording is perhaps 'the vehicle for Eileen to dispel the rumours that her playing was soulless and that wringing every drop of emotion from it was designed to achieve that end, regardless of the cost.'³⁵⁰ No matter what the real explanation is, Davis's words imply that this slow rendition did cause certain debate at that time, and at least it did not fit into the current norm of fast speed and fluent playing. Although *Brief Encounter* was a commercially successful film, unlike the case of the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, the case study here shows no direct interaction between the film being released and the performance durations of the first movement. Pianists still play the concerto within the general trend of that time. On the other hand, the latest trend does echo the case studies of Rachmaninoff's Prelude Op.23 No.5 and the 18th variation of the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* in the previous chapter: it seems that the digital reissue of the composer's complete recordings on CD enabled pianists to appreciate and study the composer's playing easily, and more and more pianists have started to learn from Rachmaninoff's recording in the light of performing style

³⁵⁰ However, Eileen Joyce did not mention her interpretative ideas of this concerto herself. See Richard Davis, *Eileen Joyce: A Portrait* (West Australia: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2001).

and interpretation. Stephen Hough, one of the four from recent years who play the first movement in under ten minutes, states that he polished his interpretation by studying Rachmaninoff's recording of the piece (as I mentioned in the previous chapter).

In conclusion, as far as the opening of the concerto is concerned, the treatments from the pianists show that:

(1). No pianist in the case study, including the composer himself, plays the opening according to the tempo instruction given in the score.

(2). There is a trend for pianists to play the movement more and more slowly over the generations. This probably reflects a general fashion in classical music performance, as many studies have shown, from José Bowen's research on Beethoven onwards.³⁵¹

(3). There is probably no authoritative rendition influencing pianists' tempi choice. However, some pianists have started to play the first movement at a similar speed to the composer during the last decade. This echoes the conclusion of the previous chapter, that Rachmaninoff's recording has probably become a major influence on many pianists after the digital reissue of his complete recordings in 1992 (in the case of his Piano Concerto No.2 and No.3, this goes back to 1987). If there is an authoritative rendition of the piece, then it is probably Rachmaninoff's own version.

³⁵¹ José Antonio Bowen, 'Tempo, duration, and flexibility: techniques in the analysis of performance,' *The Journal of Musicological Research* 16/2 (1996), 115, 136.

(4). The Soviet and Russian group of pianists show clear generational difference (before the early 1970s; late-1970s to late 1980s, late 1980s to the present) in their performances. The feature of the last trend (smoother transitions) can also be seen in the performances of the pianists in the West, but only among the Soviet and Russian pianists does this become a trend shared by the majority.

3.2. Geographical Differences: Tempi Choice in the Coda

In the discussion above, only a general trend towards gradually slower playing emerges from the recordings. We see that pianists in different geographical areas followed a different process of style shifting, especially in the case of the Soviet and Russian pianists, but in general all their performances are moving in the same direction. But if we examine how pianists play the coda, then one can clearly mark out three groups – North American, European and British, and Soviet – among the performers. Pianists from North America and the Soviet Union seem to have consistent interpretation patterns within their groups, while their European colleagues hold more assorted opinions.

3.2.1. North America

In Table 5-2-1 we can see that before the year 1975 most pianists based or trained in North America played the coda much faster than the previous section as Rachmaninoff did in his recording. In the performances of Raymond Lenwenthal and Alexander Brailowsky, although their tempi in the coda are not faster than in the previous section, they are still faster than the metronome marking in the score (minim=68 and 78 against minim=63), which suggests that their intention, especially Brailowsky's, was still to play the coda fast.

This situation implies that pianists in North America were familiar with the composer's piano playing. There are reasons to support this assumption. Rachmaninoff's career as a performing concert pianist was mainly rooted in North America. He only gave a limited number of concerts each year and the domestic demand for his performances occupied most of them. According to the concert statistics organised by Barrie Martyn, his Piano Concerto No.2 was the most popular warhorse among his concerto repertoire and he played it 143 times in his life, yet only 18 of these performances were given in Europe and United Kingdom.³⁵² In addition, Rachmaninoff only recorded for RCA, also an American recording company. It is easier to purchase the composer's recordings in the States than any other place. Therefore it may be safe to assume that pianists educated in, or who based their career in, North America were more familiar with Rachmaninoff's performances, especially the way Rachmaninoff played this concerto, than their European and British colleagues, even though they too could purchase the composer's recordings.

At least two pianists in my research, Gary Graffman and Byron Janis, have discussed their choices of tempo. Graffman admits that he was influenced by Rachmaninoff's recording: 'Of course I listened to his performance of his own compositions, not to mention that Rachmaninoff was a brilliant pianist and we pianists are supposed to know all his recordings.'³⁵³ Graffman says that when he recorded this concerto with Leonard Bernstein, he was the person who decided the tempi:

We had four public performances before the recording session. When I was going to enter the coda, I simply raised my head as a hint to Lenny, and then he

³⁵² Barrie Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1990), 387-395.

³⁵³ Interview with Gary Graffman (August 2nd, 2009).

just followed me. We had no discussion about the coda at all.³⁵⁴

And Janis states that:

I [have] played the concerto since I was 14 years old and gave an important public performance of it at 16. Before I recorded it I still carefully went back to Rachmaninoff's recording again and noted how he played the piece in detail. In the case of his Third Piano Concerto I played the opening exactly following the composer's tempi, the coda [of the first movement] of the Second Piano Concerto, too.³⁵⁵

Both Graffman and Janis were major American concert pianists before the 1980s. Although their opinions and experiences do not necessarily reflect those of all their colleagues, their testimony probably reflects the general attitude towards the relationship between the score and the composer's performance of the piece at that time.

In Table 5-2-1, we can also see that the influence of Rachmaninoff's 'authoritative rendition' is gradually replaced by pianists' more faithful approach to score-reading. More and more pianists start to play the coda in a slow tempo, as the score requires. Also, in recordings from the last two decades, several pianists play the coda exactly at the tempo written in the score (minim=63). The attitude to the score seems to be becoming more literal.

³⁵⁴ Interview with Gary Graffman (August 2nd, 2009).

³⁵⁵ Interview with Byron Janis (December 1st, 2009).

3.2.2. Europe and the United Kingdom

Although Rachmaninoff also played in Europe and the United Kingdom, in Table 5-2-2 one can see a rather different picture compared to the States. Since the generation of Benno Moiseiwitsch, Eileen Joyce, Cyril Smith, Moura Lympany, Clifford Curzon, Peter Katin, pianists based or trained in Britain seem to have been quite faithful to the score (these are marked in blue in Table 5-2-2). Moiseiwitsch was a close friend of Rachmaninoff and his interpretation of the concerto was highly praised by the composer himself, who considered it better than his own version.³⁵⁶ The way he plays the beginning is very similar to the composer's recording, and his performing style in Rachmaninoff's piece is more lyrical but not far away from the composer's. In the first movement the major difference between his and the composer's performance is the speed of the coda: Moiseiwitsch exactly follows the metronome mark in his first recording and adopts an even slower tempo in his second one. The coda in Smith's and Lympany's first recordings is faster than $\text{minim}=63$, but still much slower than Rachmaninoff's performance and not faster than the previous section. Besides those versions, all the British-based pianists in this research – including Philip Fowke, Peter Donohoe, John Lill, Howard Shelley, Barry Douglas, Noriko Ogawa, and Stephen Hough from the later generations – only Ogdon's first recording and Hough's recent version present the faster coda. It also seems that this faithful interpretative attitude is not determined by their generation, and a similar situation can also be found in the group of French-based or -trained pianists. All of them in Table 5-2-2 (marked in red) – including Philippe Entremont, Gabriel Tacchino, Ilana Vered, Yuri Boukoff, Jean-Philippe Collard, Cristina Ortiz, Cécile Ousset, François-René Duchable, Jean-Bernard Pommier, Hélène Grimaud, Michie Koyama, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, David Lively, and Idil Biret – follow the composer's instruction in the score and play the coda

³⁵⁶ Jonathan Summers, *A-Z of Pianists* (Naxos 8.558207-20), 2007, 531.

more slowly than the previous section. The only exception is Entremont's second recording, made in the United States under the baton of Eugene Ormandy, with whom the composer worked and recorded. According to my interview with the pianist, Entremont recalls that it was the conductor's suggestion to play the coda faster.³⁵⁷

But such a phenomenon does not appear among other European pianists. Four Hungarian pianists – Julian von Karolyi, Géza Anda, Edith Farnadi, and Georges Cziffra – play the coda faster, but Tamás Vásáry and his much younger colleague Jenő Jandó do not. Polish pianist Felicija Blumental, Dutch pianist Cor de Groot, German pianist Walter Gieseking and his pupil Werner Haas play the coda faster, and Spanish pianist Alicia de Larrocha and Rafael Orozco have opinions contrary to each other. Rachmaninoff played the piece four times in Berlin and Holland in the 1929-1930 season and once in Warsaw in 1935, but it is hard to state that those pianists around that time were definitely influenced by the composer's live performance since no tangible evidence can support this hypothesis. They had a better chance of knowing Rachmaninoff's interpretation of the piece via recordings than live concerts, but even so, apparently the influence of the recording on them was not as strong as it was on the North America-based pianists. If we examine their performances more closely, then those who recorded the piece in the 1970s (Vásáry, Jandó, and Orozco), probably were within the performing fashion of the 1970s – paying more attention to the score and being more faithful to the composer's markings, as the previous chapter argued. In fact, in the performances of Cziffra, Haas, and de Larrocha the coda is played around $\text{minim}=63$ (60, 64, 59), so the pianists' intentions were probably still to play the coda slowly, just not more slowly than the previous section. Farnadi's recording of 1953 should also be considered in this way, since her tempo in the coda is exactly

³⁵⁷ Interview with Philippe Entremont (October 21st, 2010).

minim=63. If we can accept this argument, then it is actually uncommon to see a pianist play the coda faster after the mid-1950s. Therefore, the trend is still clear: pianists started to be more and more faithful to the score after the 1950s. For the pianists before the mid-1950s, it is probably because they knew the composer's performance of the concerto, so they decided to play the coda fast.

3.2.3. Soviet Union

In the discussion above, an assumption is that Rachmaninoff's recordings are available to the pianists in principle, though it is not always easy to obtain one. Brazilian pianist Nelson Freire (1944-) recalls that when he was studying in Vienna in the 1960s, he could only find LPs of Rachmaninoff's playing in specific libraries, and he could not purchase them in stores.³⁵⁸ For the Soviet pianists, it was even less likely that Rachmaninoff's recordings were easily accessible. Rachmaninoff was a Russian émigré who left his home before the Communist Revolution and never returned to his fatherland. For pianists who grew up and were educated in the Soviet Union, hearing the composer's live performances was impossible unless they went abroad and happened to go to a Rachmaninoff concert. This opportunity was very rare. On the other hand, although Soviet pianists could hardly know Rachmaninoff's live performances, they probably still had access to his recordings. At least we can know that from Heinrich Neuhaus's writing. In his book *The Art of Piano Playing*, he states that when 'Rachmaninoff [was] playing Rachmaninoff [...] complete fusion of the performance with the work [was] performed; there is authenticity, truth, truer than which nothing can even be imagined.'³⁵⁹ He highly praised Rachmaninoff's performance and regarded it as a crucial reference for piano playing. He stresses that:

³⁵⁸ Interview with Nelson Freire (August 22nd, 2010).

³⁵⁹ Heinrich Neuhaus, *The Art of Piano Playing* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1993), 224.

For talented and advanced pianists, recordings are now probably the most powerful means of education. [...] Even now it happens very often that some talented and wide-awake pupil comes to my class with a record of Rachmaninoff's Second Concerto and asks me for advice. "What do you need me for" I tell him. "When Rachmaninoff himself can give you all the advice you want. Listen to your record some ten or twenty times, then I shall hear you once to see what effect this 'listening to music' has had on you."³⁶⁰

Neuhaus does not mention how he had access to the recordings of the composer. However, from Neuhaus' words we know that not only was he able to listen to these recordings, but also that his pupils could. He did not say if it was possible to purchase those recordings in stores in the Soviet Union at that time, but his words imply that his students were supposed to listen to them without problems. At least those records were not smuggled into the Soviet Union, otherwise he would not mention them publicly. Therefore it is likely that one could at least find copies of those recordings at the Moscow Conservatory, where Neuhaus taught. Neuhaus published his book in 1958, but revised many sections later. I have not found the original 1958 version of the book, so I could not judge if those comments on Rachmaninoff's recording only appear in later editions. However, Neuhaus died in October, 1964, so it is possible that Rachmaninoff's recording was available at least at the Moscow Conservatory before 1964. I have sent emails, letters, and faxes to the librarian of the Moscow Conservatory but without any reply. Pianist Elisso Virsaladze, Professor of the Moscow Conservatory, said that she heard Rachmaninoff's playing of the concertos for the first

³⁶⁰ Neuhaus, 233-234.

time on 78s in Moscow in the 1960s.³⁶¹ According to Bella Davidovich, it was Yakov Zak (1913-1976), famous pianist and the winner of the third Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw in 1937, who 'officially' brought those recordings to Moscow:

When Professor Yakov Zak went to the States for a concert tour in the 1965 and 1966, he got to know Rachmaninoff's daughter and cousin, also the Siloti family. He brought back many records of Rachmaninoff to the Moscow Conservatory. I remember that we (his friends and students) came to his house to listen to those records first. He also helped the Conservatory to contact the Rachmaninoff family, so the family could send more records to the school.³⁶²

Based on the recollections above, it is probably safe to state that at least in the 1960s, Soviet pianists could buy LPs of Rachmaninoff's at the Moscow Conservatory. On the other hand, since it was possible to listen to the composer's performances, did Neuhaus suggest his students should *imitate* Rachmaninoff's playing? How did he see the differences between the recording and the score, since both of them came from the composer himself? We cannot find an answer in Neuhaus's writings. It is also interesting to know that Elisso Virsaladze, a former pupil of Neuhaus, says that she listened to the recording of the composer playing his piano concertos 'only once' and intentionally avoided listening to it again, because 'I only want to know Rachmaninoff's performing style instead of being brainwashed by his

³⁶¹ Correspondence with Elisso Virsaladze (August 30th, 2009). Prof. Alexander Ivashkin, one of the two examiners of the thesis, says that he could buy LP with Rachmaninoff's recordings in the 1960s. And certainly the Collection of the Moscow Conservatory had them.

³⁶² However, Davidovich did not remember they were 78s or LPs. Interview with Bella Davidovich (October 17th, 2010).

interpretation.³⁶³ When we look at Table 5-2-3 (page 431) and see how the Soviet Union-based or trained pianists play the coda, it shows that all of them, except Vladimir Ashkenazy and Rudolf Kerer, still follow the tempo suggestion for the coda in the score; even Evgeny Malinin and Sviatoslav Richter, Neuhaus's pupils, do not play the coda in the style of the composer's performance, though their teacher might have advised them to do so. It is also debatable as to whether Kerer really intends to play the coda faster, because the tempo he played (minim=65) is not far from that in the score (minim=63). Maybe it is because the conductor enters the second theme with a faster tempo (minim=63 instead of minim=69), so the coda also sounds faster. Ashkenazy made his first recording of the piece when he was still in the Soviet Union. In it, he plays the coda faster, but only slightly. The tempi choice of the coda in his second recording, recorded in 1970, shows that the pianist really took Rachmaninoff's recording as a reference. Richter's rendition is especially refreshing among all the recordings made before the year 1960. He unprecedentedly plays the introduction in very slow tempi (minim=30-34), and the first theme is also performed under minim=60. By doing so Richter decreases the speed gap between the introduction and the first theme and gets closer to the composer's intended *a tempo* in the score. The second theme is also played at almost the same tempo as the first theme, which again faithfully fulfils the suggestion *a tempo* in the score.

Even if those Soviet and Russian pianists did listen to Rachmaninoff's own performance of the concerto (in Table 5-2-3, all of the pianists were Moscow based or trained, except Alexander Svyatkin and Vladimir Mishtchuk who came from St. Petersburg), their performances show that they still seemed to be faithful to the score in cases where the composer's tempi choice is different from what he wrote in the

³⁶³ Interview with Elisso Virsalade (January 10th, 2008).

score. From later generations, pianist Mikhail Rudy, Lilya Zilberstein, and Evgeny Kissin state in my interviews with them that Rachmaninoff's recording was only one reference point, and they mainly built their interpretation of the concerto from the score. Rudy simply thought the slower coda fitted his rendition of the movement better and considered his interpretation to be quite different from the composer's in the recording.³⁶⁴ Zilberstein said that 'when I was learning this concerto of course I had to study the composer's recording, but I won't be limited by it. A great interpretation is there, and it's a source of inspiration, but it is also just one opinion.'³⁶⁵ Kissin's opinion echoed both of them:

Before I learned a new piece, I will collect all the recordings I am interested in. However, that's because I have already established my own interpretation. According to the score the coda should be played slower, and I agree with that so I played it as the score suggests. Rachmaninoff played it faster, that's good, because we have one more possibility, but I won't change my interpretation of the piece simply because the composer himself played in a different way.³⁶⁶

3.3. Summary

In theory all the pianists discussed in this research had access to Rachmaninoff's recordings of the concerto (except the early Soviet pianists), but they still show clear differences in geographic groups as far as their tempi choice in the coda is concerned. The major factors influencing the pianists' interpretation here, therefore, may be Rachmaninoff's live performance (in the case of US-based pianists), and the accessibility of Rachmaninoff's recordings. Generally speaking, the majority of pianists

³⁶⁴ Interview with Mikhail Rudy (May 12th, 2008).

³⁶⁵ Interview with Lilya Zilberstein (August 18th, 2009).

³⁶⁶ Interview with Evgeny Kissin (August 16th, 2009).

still follow the *tempi* indication in the coda in the score, except the US-based and some European pianists. One may safely state that the composer's performance of the Piano Concerto No.2 – live or in recordings – was the most important factor in influencing the way the coda was played before the 1950s. UK and European pianists already had the tendency to follow the score rather than the composer's recording. After the mid-1950s, they also moved towards being faithful to the score, and it is no longer common to hear a pianist playing the coda fast. It echoes the case study of the Prelude Op.23 No.5 – pianists became more and more faithful to the score from the 1950s onwards. With North America-based pianists, this is probably because Rachmaninoff's rendition of the piece was still highly influential; therefore the trend of being faithful to the score was postponed and did not appear until the 1970s. With Soviet pianists, it seems that Rachmaninoff's recording never influenced their interpretation at all – as far as the coda is concerned. On the other hand, in the last decade some performers have started to play the concerto with fast *tempi*, as the composer did, following the practice of a fast coda. This probably suggests that Rachmaninoff's recording has become a model for the pianists again after its digital reissue.

To sum up, in performances of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.2 over the generations, the composer's recording and performance is probably the only version that has the status of 'authoritative rendition', and its influence is mainly limited to pianists based in North America and some pianists in the last decade. In the next case study, the Piano Concerto No.3, however, a different picture will emerge from the recordings: the influence of recording becomes much stronger and more noticeable, and the composer's performance is not the only decisive factor influencing pianists' interpretation.

4. Case Study 2: Editorial Choice in Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.3

Rachmaninoff's Piano Concertos No.2 and No.3 are probably two of the most popular pieces among the composer's five concerto works. They were written in a similar style and harmonic language, but are still different in many aspects. The Piano Concerto No.3 is famous (or notorious) for its technical demands. It is much harder than No.2. The characters of its piano writing – such as extended chords, polyphonic textures, and abundant notes – all reflect Rachmaninoff's own pianistic technique and physical advantages, which makes the concerto so personalised that it is hard for others to play. Even for the composer himself, the concerto was still a challenge. Cyril Smith comments that:

It is the most technically exhausting, the most physically strenuous of all. It has more notes per second than any other concerto, a lot of the music being terribly fast and full of great fat chords. Many performances are marred because the soloist simply cannot carry on, and Rachmaninoff himself, after playing it one night at the Queen's Hall, came off the platform shaking his hands up and down and muttering, "Why have I written so difficult a work?"³⁶⁷

The difficulty of the concerto has probably also influenced pianists' interpretation and preparation process. If the technical demands are so high, then it is imaginable that pianists would be more interested in listening to the composer's recording to see how he executed those difficult passages, or how he wished them to be executed. This is like cooking: if we are preparing a simple dish, it is not always necessary to check all the details of cooking processes in the recipe; if the course is complicated, however, then it is best to see an example first to know how it could be properly made. If

³⁶⁷ Cyril Smith, *Duet for Three Hands* (London: Angus and Robertson, 1958), 82.

pianists listen to the composer's recording more seriously, or intentionally take his version as a guideline, it is conceivable that they will be more influenced by his interpretation. When Cyril Smith was recording this concerto, although he thought he knew it 'upside down and inside out', Rachmaninoff's recording still deeply influenced him:

After a long session at the recording studios the master disc was played back to me, as usual, and I thought it sounded good enough to be release. Then, suddenly, I had second thoughts and asked to hear a recording of Rachmaninoff playing the same work. Immediately I knew that mine would not do, and I told the artist manager that I have changed my mind.³⁶⁸

Although Smith writes that he spent another three weeks practising and then recorded it again, and he never mentioned his discussion with the composer regarding the interpretation of the concerto in his autobiography, at least this story reveals that he was influenced by the composer's recording of the piece. The situation probably can be seen in other pianists' learning or recording processes, at least in the performance of Byron Janis, which we are going to see later.

But there is another major difference between the two concertos as regards performance history. Unlike the case of the Piano Concerto No.2, Rachmaninoff was not the first pianist to record this piece, nor was he the only performer who strongly influenced how other pianists interpreted this concerto. His younger colleague Vladimir Horowitz's version of 1930 was the world premiere recording of the concerto, made nine years before the composer's. Before going to the States Horowitz toured

³⁶⁸ Smith, 88.

this concerto in Europe for years with great success, and he also made his American debut by playing this concerto. After he made his sensational Carnegie Hall debut by Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No.1, his formidable technique successfully captured Rachmaninoff's attention and later they had the first private meeting in 1928. Horowitz used this opportunity to play the Piano Concerto No.3 for the composer, and in the end he not only surprised Rachmaninoff but also earned his respect and lifetime friendship. Rachmaninoff highly appreciated Horowitz's interpretation of the concerto. It is a well-known story that the composer remarked publicly after the 7th August, 1942 Hollywood Bowl performance that: 'This is the way I always dreamed my concerto should be played, but I never expected to hear it that way on Earth.'³⁶⁹ Although a recording of this concert has not yet been found, we have Horowitz's live performance of the concerto in the previous year (with Sir John Barbirolli and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra). He played this concerto within thirty-three minutes and forty-nine seconds – almost the shortest version ever. If Horowitz also played the concerto in a similar style one year later in Los Angeles (judging by Horowitz's performances in general around these two years, no significant change took place during this period), we can probably say that this 1941 performance is very close to Rachmaninoff's 'dream version' of the piece in his mind.

4.1. The Question of Deletion

Because Horowitz's performance of the concerto was highly admired by the composer, his recording of it also could also have become an important reference for many of his colleagues, taking on a similar authoritative status to the composer's. Rachmaninoff and Horowitz played the concerto differently in temperament but had two aspects in common. First, they played it at a very fast speed. Secondly, they cut

³⁶⁹ Michael Scott, *Rachmaninoff* (Brimscombe Port: The History Press, 2008), 145-146.

many sections (but their cuts are not all the same). The latter gives us an opportunity to observe whether their recordings are actually 'authoritative renditions'. We might assess their influence through deletions: have other pianists ever made the same or similar deletions as they did? Because their cuts are not all the same, we can also trace whether a pianist was more influenced by Rachmaninoff's recording or by Horowitz's by comparing the cuts the pianist made.

There is no clear explanation for why Rachmaninoff made several deletions in the concerto in his recording. He made five cuts altogether. One might suppose that it was to ensure they fitted onto the 78s, but it may be also simply that he wished to do so. The reason which supports the latter theory is that the concerto was recorded on five discs of 78rpm records, but side ten is blank. If Rachmaninoff had wished, there would have been another four minutes for him to record onto. In addition, the way Rachmaninoff separated and recorded the movements implies how he wished the performance to sound (see Table 5-3, page 433). For example, side 2 ends at bar 221 of the first movement, in the middle of a musical phrase. Logically, had he wanted to end the side with a complete musical sentence (as most pianists did) and then start the next on side 3, there would have been enough room to do so. However, stopping in the middle of a phrase can prevent one ending with a *ritardando*. When the two sides match together, as we hear on CD now, one cannot notice that the phrase was recorded separately. This trick shows Rachmaninoff's experience and wisdom as an old hand recording artist, and the performance in the recording is probably what he wished to present, without compromising the time limit of the 78s.

In addition, in an interview published in *Gramophone* magazine in 1931, Rachmaninoff recalled how he recorded his Piano Concerto No.2, which reveals his recording experience and strategy:

Recording my own Concerto with this orchestra was an unique event. Apart from the fact that I am the only pianist who has played with them for the gramophone, it is very rarely that an artist, whether as soloist or composer, is gratified by hearing his work accompanied and interpreted with so much sympathetic co-operation, such perfection of detail and balance between piano and orchestra. These discs, like all those made by the Philadelphians, were recorded in a concert hall, where we played exactly as though we were giving a public performance. Naturally, this method ensures the most realistic results, but in any case, no studio exists, even in America, that could accommodate an orchestra of a hundred and ten players.³⁷⁰

If the composer maintained the same working method eight years later, when he recorded his Piano Concerto No.3, and also 'played exactly as he was giving a public performance', then those five cuts in the performance were probably what he wished to have. In fact Rachmaninoff, in his lifetime, allowed cuts to be made to his large-scale works during performances, such as the Symphony No.2, *Variations on a Theme of Chopin*, and *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*.³⁷¹ He even shortened his Piano Sonata No.2 (composed in 1913) and published the revision in 1931. This is mainly because Rachmaninoff was seriously concerned about audiences and critics,

³⁷⁰ 'Rachmaninov on Rachmaninov 1931' <http://www.gramophone.net/ArchiveExplorer/View/88> (accessed June 15th, 2011)

³⁷¹ In the case of the Op.22, Rachmaninoff noted in the score that Variation 7, 10, 12 and the *presto* finale may be omitted.

and was not confident in his music writing.³⁷² When he gave the world premiere of the concerto in New York in 1909, critics from several important newspapers – such as the New York Herald, the New York Sun, and the New York Daily Tribune – all argued that the concerto was too long.³⁷³ Although we have no evidence to confirm that Rachmaninoff played the whole concerto without cuts at that concert, it is certain that he never played an uncut performance of this piece later in his life.³⁷⁴ Horowitz left three commercial recordings and several live performances recorded, and all of them are with cuts.

Table 5-4-1 (page 434) shows the different deletions in Horowitz's and Rachmaninoff's several recordings, and how these deletions were imitated by pianists. An interesting phenomenon is that the two pianists seemed to have a different influence in Europe and in the United States respectively. European pianists before and around the year 1958 such as Cyril Smith, Moura Lympany, Witold Małcużyński, and Nikita Magaloff took Rachmaninoff's recording as a reference; the American pianists Byron Janis and Jorge Bolet were closer to Horowitz's recording, but William Kapell, Earl Wild, and André Watts were more influenced by the composer's. In addition, it seems that playing the concerto with cuts was a fashion among the pianists in the West: only Shura Cherkassky and Walter Gieseking played the concerto without any deletions before 1958. Since there were still pianists playing the uncut version of the concerto in the West, it indicates that the deletions are not about the score edition used but the influence of the composer's and Horowitz's recording. In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, the pianists seemed to be uninfluenced by the

³⁷² See Max Harrison, *Rachmaninoff: Life, Works, Recordings* (London and New York: Continuum, 2005), 113.

³⁷³ Robert Walker, *Rachmaninoff His Life and Times* (New York: Walker Hippocrene Books, 1979), 66.

³⁷⁴ According to pianist Gina Bachauer, Rachmaninoff's pupil, the composer always played the third movement with cuts as on his recording. Martyn, 216.

recordings at all. All the Soviet pianists played the concerto without cuts, which creates another geographical difference between the recordings. As was argued earlier, it probably suggests that neither Rachmaninoff's nor Horowitz's recording of the piece was known to Soviet pianists. Even if they had those recordings, as the case study of the Piano Concerto No.2 shows, they were still uninfluenced by them with regard to deletion.³⁷⁵

4.2. The Choice of Cadenza

But both Soviet pianists and their Western colleagues had one thing in common: before 1958, all of them chose the shorter cadenza to play, the only exception to this being Walter Gieseking. Rachmaninoff wrote two different cadenzas for the first movement and both of them end at the same bar. According to the manuscript in the British Library, Rachmaninoff wrote the longer version (75 bars, though marked *ossia*) first, but he played the second, shorter and scherzo-like version (59 bars) in concerts and in his recording.³⁷⁶ Since the composer himself had made the decision in the recording, the shorter version became the favourite among pianists before 1958. Horowitz also played the shorter version, and he explained the choice as follows:

I play the original one (the shorter one). Rachmaninoff always played it, too. The cadenza really builds to the end of the concerto. The alternate cadenza (the longer one) is like an ending in itself. It's not good to end the concerto before it's over! Rachmaninoff was a tremendous virtuoso. What he wrote was wonderful and he could play it. But later, when he looked at it musically in

³⁷⁵ Only a handful pianists recorded the *ossia* in the last movement: Evgeny Kissin (BMG), Tamas Vasary (DG), Grigory Sokolov (live recording), Peter Donohoe (Moscow live recording). The number is too small to show any trend in the performance history of the piece.

³⁷⁶ Martyn, 211.

relation to his whole concerto, he knew it wasn't right. He didn't play it. So I didn't.³⁷⁷

Horowitz's opinion is persuasive but also highly debatable, especially as recent developments in the performance history of the piece show that more and more pianists prefer the longer version, considering that 'it properly completes the emotion of the first movement'.³⁷⁸ However, since both the composer and his favorite interpreter of the concerto played the shorter version, it logically had become the standard version before 1958.

The reason the year 1958 is a watershed in the discussion above is that it is the year that the fashion of playing the shorter cadenza started to shift, and the change arguably started from one single performance – American pianist Van Cliburn's final round at the first Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow in 1958. His success at the competition has become legendary in the musical field in the last century. Both the audience and jury were crazy about his performance and eventually awarded him the first prize. Among the jury members, Alexander Goldenweiser declared that: 'After Rachmaninoff's performance of the concerto, Van Cliburn's interpretation is the best.' and Heinrich Neuhaus also highly praised Cliburn's interpretation of Rachmaninoff's music.³⁷⁹ But could one pianist really have caused such a sensation in the Soviet Union? The situation had actually happened before, and then the hero was Glenn Gould. Kevin Bazzana describes the story of Gould's tour in the Soviet Union in 1957 in his biography of the pianist. At his first concert in Moscow:

³⁷⁷ See J. Pfeiffer's interview with Horowitz, in the booklet of BMG 09026-61564-2.

³⁷⁸ Vladimir Ashkenazy's opinion. Interview with Ashkenazy (December 16th, 2010).

³⁷⁹ Abram Chasins, V. Stiles, *The Van Cliburn Legend* (New York: Doubleday & Company Inc, 1959), 109-110.

His post-Goldberg publicity had not penetrated the Iron Curtain, and as no one had heard of him, the hall, which sat eighteen hundred, was only about a third full.[...] But after playing four fugues from *The Art of Fugue* and the Partita No.6, he was greeted with a thunderous ovation and a huge basket of blue chrysanthemums. During a typically long Russian intermission of about three-quarters of an hour, many in the audience hurried out to telephone friends about what they just heard, and a minor riot ensued as people from all over Moscow rushed to the Great Hall; by the time the second half started, the hall was full, and many people had to be turned away. After the concert, Gould was greeted with cheers and tears and – the ultimate tribute – rhythmic clapping.³⁸⁰

After this sensational debut, Gould's other performances were all sold out in Moscow. For his second recital, 'nine hundred standees were admitted and chairs were set up on the stage'.³⁸¹ The same situation happened in Leningrad, too. On May 18, in Bolshoi Hall, 'all thirteen hundred seats were filled, and somehow another eleven hundred standees were packed into the hall'.³⁸² Such emotional and excited responses were typical of Russian audiences at that time. Byron Janis, the first American to be sent to tour the Soviet Union as part of a US-Soviet Cultural Exchange Program in 1960, also had a similar recollection of the passionate audiences in the Soviet Union.³⁸³ Van Cliburn, too, caused a real sensation at the competition, especially with his rendition of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.3. If we try to ignore all journalistic reports about the competition, what Dmitry Paperno – a pupil of Goldenweiser and a prize winner of the Warsaw Chopin Competition in 1955 – said

³⁸⁰ Kevin Bazzana, *Wondrous Strange: the Life and Art of Glenn Gould* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 166.

³⁸¹ Bazzana, 170.

³⁸² Bazzana, 170.

³⁸³ Interview with Byron Janis (November 16th, 2004)

about Van Cliburn's performance in the final round can probably give us a clear picture about the special quality of his interpretation of the concerto:

The audience greeted Cliburn with warm, long applause; they obviously sympathised with him. When he finally sat down, complete silence ensued, as if in anticipation of something significant. A short, soft orchestra introduction gave me enough time to ask myself, "Isn't it a little too slow?" – and the piano started to hum the first immortal theme of the Rachmaninoff Third. [...] This time the beginning of the Rachmaninoff and all that followed reached even the worldly-wise Moscow musicians. Some of them later, as if ashamed of their involvement in the general and spontaneous reaction of the entire audience, talked about a group hysteria that was too hard to resist. I remember the elderly woman sitting next to me, after the first culmination and abatement before the second theme, brought a handkerchief up to her eyes stealthily. It did not seem embarrassing then.³⁸⁴

Paperno's words reflect two facts about Van Cliburn's performance. First, the audiences loved his playing. Secondly, his interpretation of the concerto was special, although the tempo was 'too slow' for Paperno, a Moscow trained pianist. In fact, this is the most characteristic aspect of Van Cliburn's rendition of the piece. Unlike Rachmaninoff and Horowitz, Cliburn played the concerto with slow tempi and the longer cadenza. Rachmaninoff did not give metronome markings and only wrote *Allegro ma non tante* at the beginning. When the first theme repeats, the composer added *Più mosso* (at bar 27) in the score. Both Rachmaninoff and Horowitz (1941) played the first movement very fast, with the repeat of the first theme faster to

³⁸⁴ Dmitry Paperno, *Notes of a Moscow Pianist* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 1998), 108-109.

crotchet=153 and crotchet=152. Cyril Smith played the repeat around crotchet=154, very close to the former two. He had good reason to keep that rapid speed:

The concerto opens with two bars of orchestral music which orchestras rarely play fast enough. The thing to do is to urge them on with one's own tempo, but to do this always annoyed Rachmaninoff. Once at the Queen's Hall he was sitting at the piano waiting for his cue when, to his intense disapproval, the orchestra started slowly. He put his head down, ignored the lot of them and entered at his own speed which was about forty per cent faster than theirs. It was very naughty of him, yet understandable, for, as I have stressed, Rachmaninoff was a perfectionist.³⁸⁵

Van Cliburn, on the other hand, offered a very different rendition. In the final round, he started the beginning with crotchet=119, with the repeat only speeded up to crotchet=136. Although Giesecking had also played the concerto slowly and chose the longer cadenza about two decades before in the West, and Maria Grinberg also gave a slow recorded performance in Moscow, it seems that Van Cliburn's interpretation still sounded original to the Soviet pianists and audiences – not to mention that his performance was touching, romantic, and emotional. The only common viewpoint he shared with the recordings of Rachmaninoff and Horowitz is that in the cadenza he also cut the ninth and tenth bar before the rehearsal number 19 in the score. Horowitz declared that the cut was 'a necessary measure to avoid ruining the climax'.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁵ Smith, 83.

³⁸⁶ Martyn, 216.

Cliburn's performance not only brought the pianist triumph and glory, but also became a historic turning point in the interpretation of the concerto. Before Van Cliburn's performance, though the Soviet pianists had performed the concerto without cuts, they all chose the short cadenza. In addition, most of them (Emil Gilels, Lev Oborin, Yakov Flier, and Victor Merzhanov) tended to play the concerto as fast and cleanly as possible, except Grinburg, who did not play the concerto at a fast speed. After the Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in 1958, however, it seems that the fashion suddenly shifted. Table 5-5 shows this dramatic transformation. Nearly all young Soviet pianists chose to play the longer cadenza after 1958. Furthermore, they also played the concerto much more slowly than before. Some virtuosi from the older generation, such as Lazar Berman, also followed the new fashion. Evgeny Moguilevsky (1945-), pupil of Heinrich Neuhaus, the first prize winner of the Belgian Queen Elisabeth Competition in 1964, performed the concerto in the final round and recorded it two years later. As a nineteen-year-old student, his performance could be viewed as a reflection of the new rendition of the piece through the eyes of the teachers at the Moscow Conservatory. He played the concerto at a slow speed in general and chose the long cadenza using exactly the same cut that Van Cliburn had kept (see Table 5-4-2, page 435). To a certain degree, it is a *copy* of the Van Cliburn rendition. Another interesting example is provided by Ashkenazy's recordings. His four versions reveal how his interpretation evolved. The first recording records his original idea, the traditional interpretation in the Soviet Union before 1958. When he escaped the Soviet Union, Ashkenazy quickly familiarised himself with western musical fashions. Just like his tempo choice of the coda in the case of the Piano Concerto No.2, by making reference to the composer's recording, he also made reference to Van Cliburn's interpretation of the No.3. After then, he always played the concerto with longer cadenza and slow tempi. The first movement of his second recording was the

slowest of all the versions until Korean pianist Kun-Woo Paik's broke the record. If Ashkenazy – the first prize winner of Belgian Queen Elisabeth Competition in 1956 and Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in 1962 and a major representative of the young Soviet pianists at that time – could change his interpretation so drastically, it is not hard to imagine how influential Cliburn's interpretation was in the minds of many Soviet pianists.

On the other hand, Table 5-5 (436) also shows that Van Cliburn's interpretation of the concerto does not seem to have had the same influence outside the Soviet Union, not even in his own country. American pianist Leonard Pennario's recording of the concerto in 1961 is the first complete, uncut studio recording made outside the Soviet Union, but he still played the concerto with the short cadenza in the fashion of the composer and Horowitz. Only one decade later, American-trained pianists Joseph Alfidi and Agustin Anievas started to play the longer cadenza. This change, however, may not have been caused by Van Cliburn's performance. As we have seen in the case study of the Piano Concerto No.2, pianists increasingly had the tendency to play the concerto more and more slowly. This is probably has more to do with the general trend instead of the influence of an 'authoritative rendition'. Nevertheless, the influence of an authoritative rendition may be seen to appear again in the last two decades – in the Soviet Union / Russia again. In Table 5-4-2, it is quite puzzling to see that the practice of deletion seems to have been revived, especially among Soviet and Russia trained pianists including Vladimir Feltsman (1988), Vladimir Viardo (1988), Peter Rösel (1990), Vitali Berzon (1990), Boris Berezovsky (1991), Natalia Trull (1993), Evgeny Ukhonov (2000), Valery Kuleshov (2001), Mikhail Pletnev (2002), and Dennis Matsuev (2009). Viardo, Rösel, and Kuleshov only made one minor cut in the cadenza (which Van Cliburn kept), but the others all cut a section in the third movement. This

phenomenon is very strange, especially as there was no such tradition of deletion in the performing history in the Soviet Union / Russia before, as Table 5-5 has shown.

If Russian pianists in the Soviet Union had all played the concerto without cuts before, and being faithful to the score was *the* value of musical performance after the 1950s, and one can see almost no symphonic or instrumental works still being performed with cuts in the last forty years, why did those pianists decide to delete a significant section in the third movement? It is also important to see that both Horowitz and Wild, who had made considerable deletions before the 1960s, changed their minds in their later performances (Horowitz: 1978; Wild: 1981) by only keeping the small cut in the cadenza. It also shows that respecting the integrity of the concerto seems to have been the norm (at least) around 1980. Therefore, this reviving trend of deletion emerges from the Soviet and Russian pianists seems really unfathomable. Since this phenomenon appeared in 1988, just one year after the official digital reissue of Rachmaninoff's performance of his two concertos, I suppose that the reissue itself probably is the answer to the question, just as we have seen in the previous case studies. Since Rachmaninoff also cut the third movement in his recording – and the cut, compared to the other cuts he made, is probably the most reasonable one (cutting a section instead of certain phrases) – pianists can declare that they are following the composer's idea in the recording to justify this treatment. Musically, since the section is the transition to the reprise of the transformed first theme of the first movement, if pianists choose to cut this section, they can probably play the third movement faster and in a more straightforward way. That may be an advantage for them, though this treatment (sacrificing the integrity of the piece), is rarely seen nowadays.

5. Summary of the Case Studies of the Piano Concerti No.2 and No.3

From these two case studies, we can see that the general trend over the generations was for pianists to become more faithful to the score and to play Rachmaninoff's music in slower tempi. There are three major factors deeply influencing pianists' interpretations of the two concertos:

5.1. 'Authoritative Renditions' Strongly Influence Pianists' Interpretation of the Two Concertos

As the case studies show, certain renditions, such as Rachmaninoff's in the Piano Concerto No.2, and Rachmaninoff's, Horowitz's, and Cliburn's in the Piano Concerto No.3, have an authoritative status. Many pianists follow their tempi, editorial, structural choices while establishing their interpretation, and those choices also almost determine the character of the piece: in the case of No.2, if one plays the first movement in fast tempi in the way the composer did, one usually will also play the coda fast. If one plays No.3 with the long cadenza, one usually will also play the piece in slow tempi. An authoritative rendition can appear suddenly. In the case of No.3, the dramatic change regarding the cadenza and tempi choice among Soviet pianists after 1958 was similar to the phrasing pattern shift in performances of the 18th variation of the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* in the 1980s, but the reason here was more direct and clear, and its influence lasted longer. Cliburn's case in the No.3 and Rachmaninoff's case in the No.2 also suggest that the influence of an authoritative rendition has geographical limits. Cliburn's mainly affected the interpretations of pianists in the Soviet Union and Rachmaninoff's primarily influenced the renditions of pianists in the United States. Rachmaninoff's performance of the No.3 became an authoritative rendition, as shown by the deletions after 1987, but this was almost exclusive to Soviet and Russian pianists.

5.2. Reactions to Previous Trends

In the previous chapter we have seen that different generations have their own performing philosophies, and each generation is probably reacting to the previous one. Of all the geographical areas, the Soviet Union probably provides the clearest example of the changes in performing fashion, for two reasons. First, many Russian and Soviet pianists include Rachmaninoff's piano works in their core repertoire, which provides us with plenty of examples to study. Secondly, compared to the West, the Soviet Union was a closed regime, both socially and politically. Because it was closed, it was also comparatively simple due to the lack of diversity. That probably is the reason why we can observe the clearest changes in performing fashions in the Piano Concerto No.2 (the tempi became slower in the late 1970s) and in Piano Concerto No.3 (cadenza and tempi choice after 1958; cuts after 1987). The performing fashion in each period can be viewed as a reaction to the previous one. In the case of the Concerto No.2, Russian pianists started to slow the tempi down in the late 1970s, the timing of which echoes the Baby Boomer trend discussed in the previous chapter. In the case of Van Cliburn's No.3, besides the excellence of the performance and interpretation itself, one reason that Cliburn's rendition became the dominant influence for the Soviet pianists might be that it was an example of reacting against a previous norm. The concerto was previously regarded as a tool for displaying the performer's virtuosity. This fast, fluent, and straightforward style is charming, but is not necessarily the only possible way of performing the concerto. However, playing the concerto in slow tempi is against both the composer's and his favourite interpreter's rendition, and a performer might fear being criticised for lacking technical brilliance. Cliburn brought a new approach to Soviet pianists, and his performance was convincing enough to persuade them to shift to the new model of rendition, one they had probably thought about but none of them had presented yet.

After Cliburn's 1958 visit, the Soviet pianists could play the concerto in slow tempi not because they were unable to manage fast tempi but to follow the spirit of Cliburn's rendition.

Furthermore, just as the trend for being faithful to the score only appeared later in the case of the No.2 in the West, which should have happened in the 1980s, the creative interpretations that we have seen in the case of the Prelude Op.23 No.5 only started to appear in the late 1980s and 1990s, and they mainly appeared in the interpretation of the No.3. There are still some special renditions that emerged in the 1980s. For example, Hungarian pianist Zoltán Kocsis (1952-)’s recording of Rachmaninoff’s complete piano concertos (1983) is a pioneer version aimed at presenting the composer’s performing style. He plays them in a very fast tempi, almost as fast as the composer’s. But if one considers unconventional renditions, then Tzimon Barto’s highly exaggerated tempo contrast in his recording of 1989, and Peter Donohoe’s and Michael Ponti’s idea of combining the two versions of the cadenza into one in their recordings of 1995 and 1997, are perhaps the most unusual interpretations. However, maybe this is because that pianists still need to work with a conductor and orchestra in a concerto performance, which limits the room for a pianist to bring unconventional ideas. In addition, only when one can overcome all the technical challenges in the two pieces can one really think about how to be creative or unconventional. Since they are very technically demanding, it is of course not easy for anyone to think about interpretative creativity first.

5.3. The Trend for Reviving the Composer’s Rendition

As in the results of the case studies in the previous chapter, it seems that more and more pianists have started to use Rachmaninoff’s playing as a reference after the

digitised reissues of his Piano Concerti No.2 and No.3 (1987) and complete recordings (1992). Through the case studies in Chapters Four and Five, we have found several major trends through the generations. However, the bewildering fact is that pianists are very inconsistent in their interpretative approaches. In the previous chapter, we saw that some pianists can be faithful to the score in the Prelude Op.23 No.5 but also decide to change the dynamic design in the Prelude Op.3 No.2. Pianists who present the features of Rachmaninoff's playing in the case studies of the Prelude Op.23 No.5 and the 18th variation of the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* also do not necessarily refer to the composer's recording in their performances of the concertos. Soviet and Russian pianists have a long tradition of being faithful to the score: they still do so in the Piano Concerto No.2, but many of them decide to follow the cuts in Rachmaninoff's rendition, which sacrifices the completeness of the work. The same pianist can be faithful and conventional in the No.2 and also be unconventional in the No.3. Does this mean that pianists are actually very selective about whether or not to be faithful?

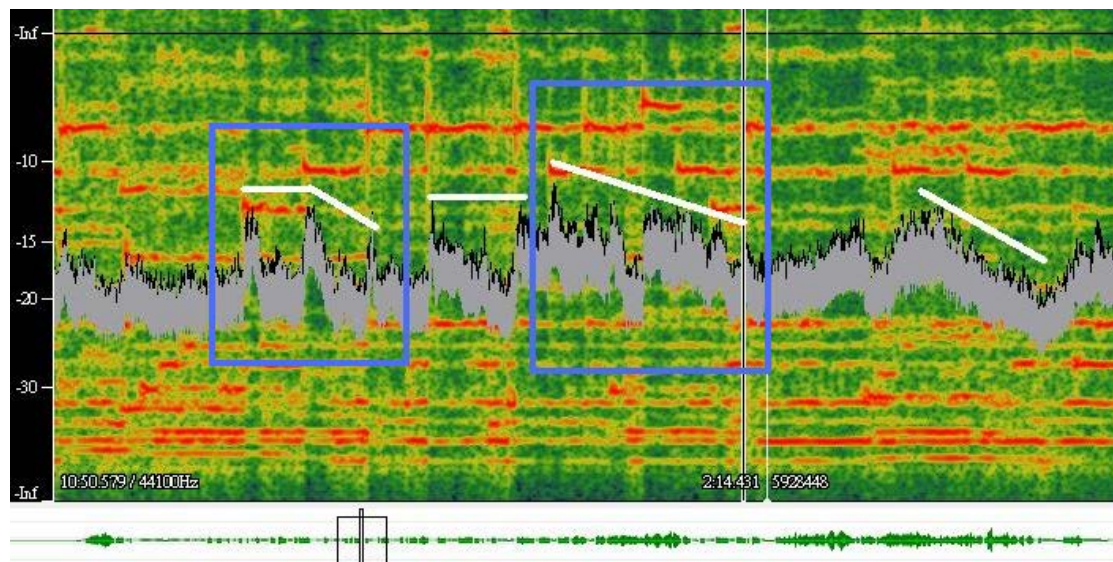
Further light can be shed on this question by examining pianists' phrasing style in a passage from the second movement from Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.2. It is the first theme's first appearance in the piano solo part. In the score, Rachmaninoff marked a *bel canto* style, crescendo-decrescendo dynamic indication in bar 28 (the second blue square in the score example Score 5-1). In the next bar, the closing phrase of the sentence, he marked decrescendo, in the manner of the traditional Russian singing phrase:

Score 5-1: Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No.2, Op.18 Mvt II, bars 27-30



In his recording, however, when Rachmaninoff enters bar 28, he demonstrates the traditional Russian diminuendo singing style in this phrase by playing the first F sharp in bar 28 the loudest, and then ending the phrase with a diminuendo (see the second blue square in SV 5-1). It is worth noticing that Rachmaninoff plays the first short phrase in bar 27 in diminuendo fashion, too – even as the melody is going up (see the first blue square in SV 5-1):

SV 5-1: Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No.2, Mvt II, bars 27-30 (Rachmaninoff, 1929 version) (Audio Example Track 31)

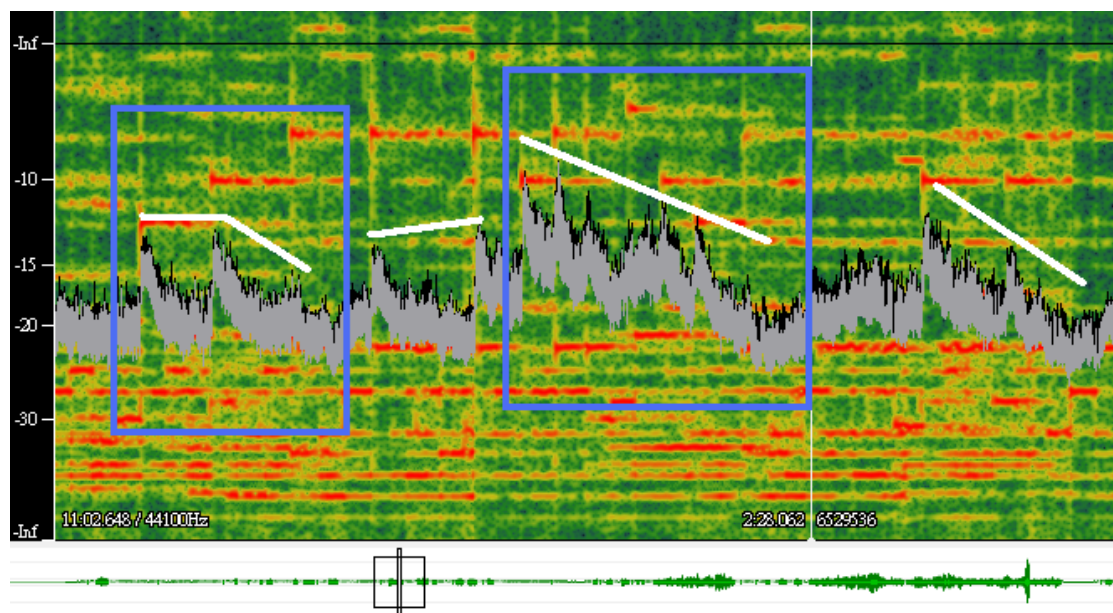


Rachmaninoff's phrasing style here is the same as the samples I presented in Chapter Three. Here I have chosen the performances of Vladimir Ashkenazy (1984), Jean-Yve Thibaudet (1993), Lilya Zilberstein (1994), Evgeny Kissin (2000), Stephen

Hough (2004), and Nikolai Lugansky (2005) to examine and compare to see if their phrasing style is similar to Rachmaninoff's. The reason for choosing these six is that they all expressed clearly that they had listened to Rachmaninoff's recordings of the concerto in my interviews with them, and five of them made their recordings after 1987 (the digitised reissue). However, as I have mentioned earlier, they have different views on Rachmaninoff's recordings: Zilberstein and Kissin only let themselves form an impression of the composer's playing style, but Ashkenazy, Thibaudet, Hough, and Lugansky all seriously studied the composer's rendition.

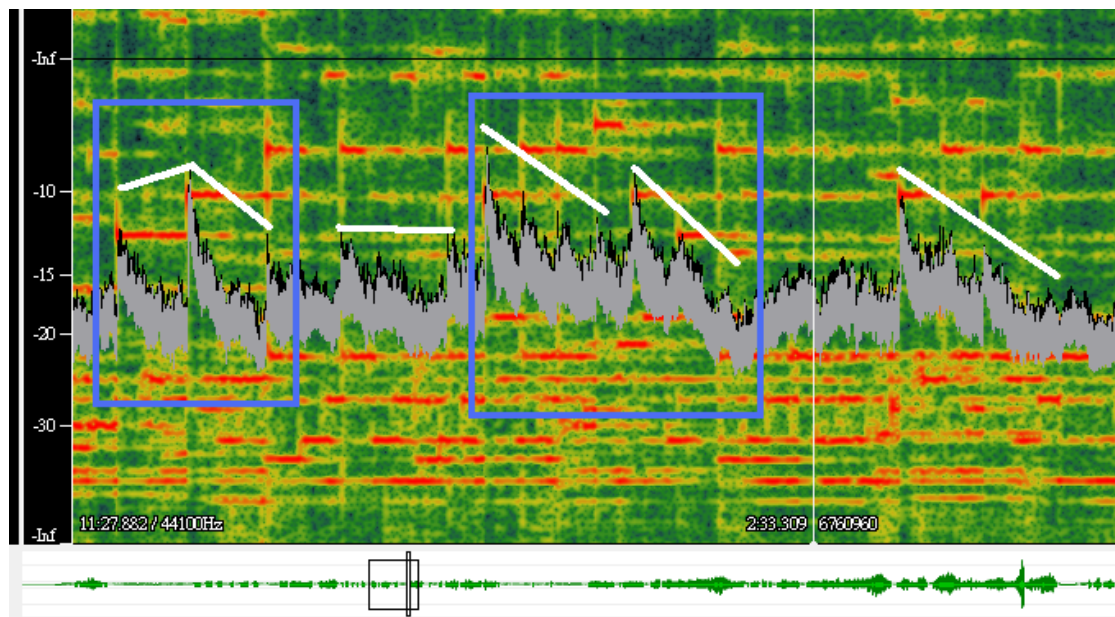
The result is that Stephen Hough's phrasing is the closest one to the composer's of the six: he plays the F sharp the loudest and shapes the phrase in diminuendo style. In addition, he also plays the first short phrase in diminuendo.

SV 5-2: Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No.2, Mvt II, bars 27-30 (Hough) (Audio Example Track 32)



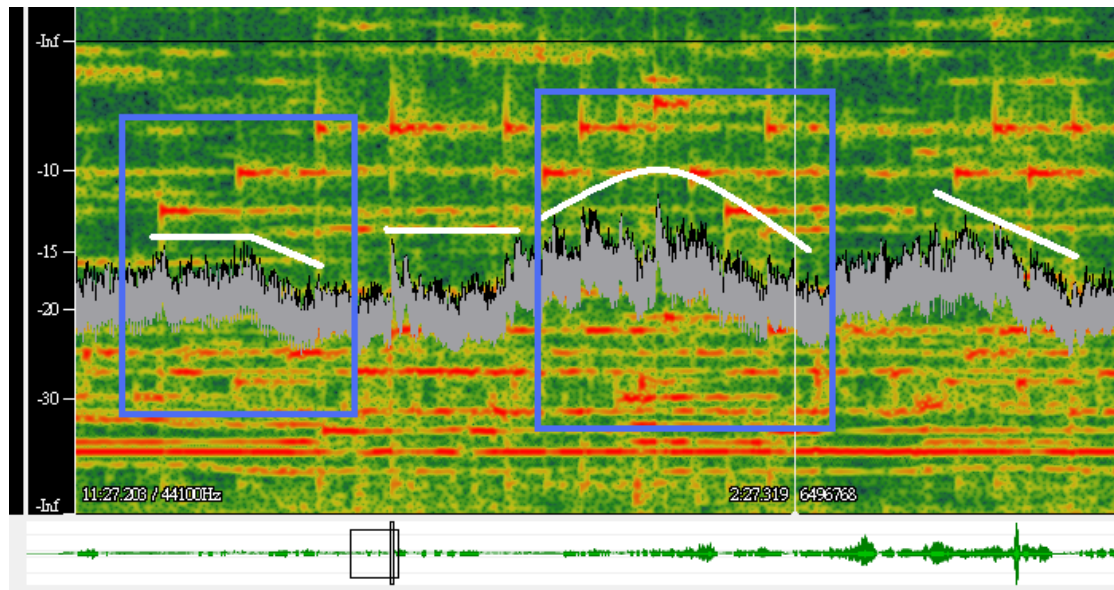
Compared to Hough's performance, Thibaudet's phrasing is in the spirit of the traditional Russian singing style, but he did not play a long phrase. The two phrases in the blue squares are all in diminuendo fashion, but the phrases are short.

SV 5-3: Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No.2, Mvt II, bars 27-30 (Thibaudet)

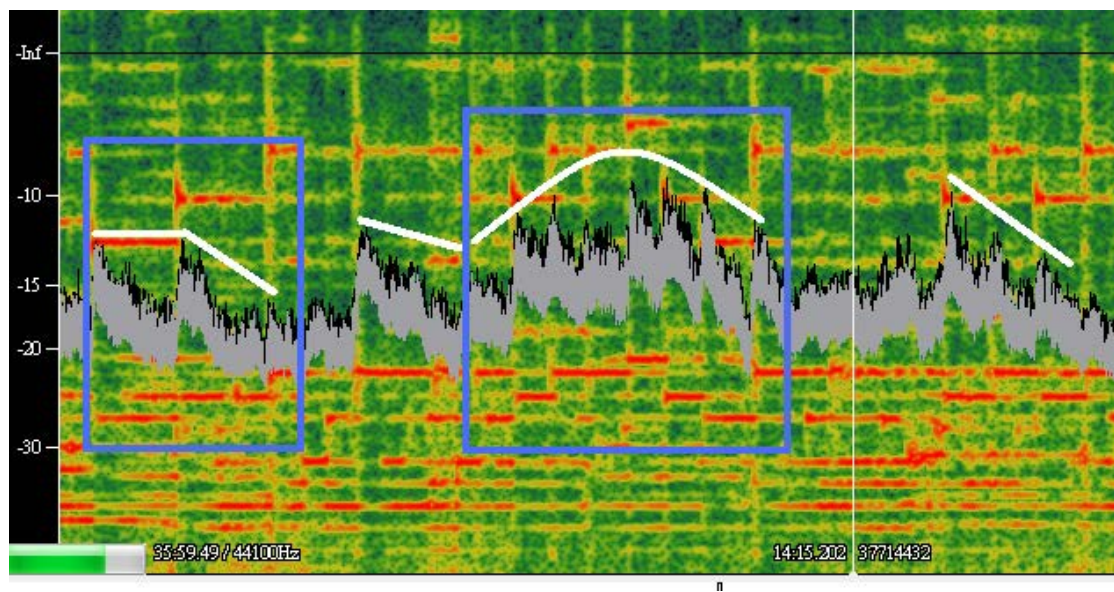


Stephen Hough is British and Jean-Yves Thibaudet is French, but they can still play in a style similar to the composer's and in the traditional Russian style. All four Russian pianists, however, choose to play as the score suggests – at bar 28, Ashkenazy, Kissin, and Lugansky all play using a *bel canto* style, arch-like singing phrase instead of a Russian diminuendo one:

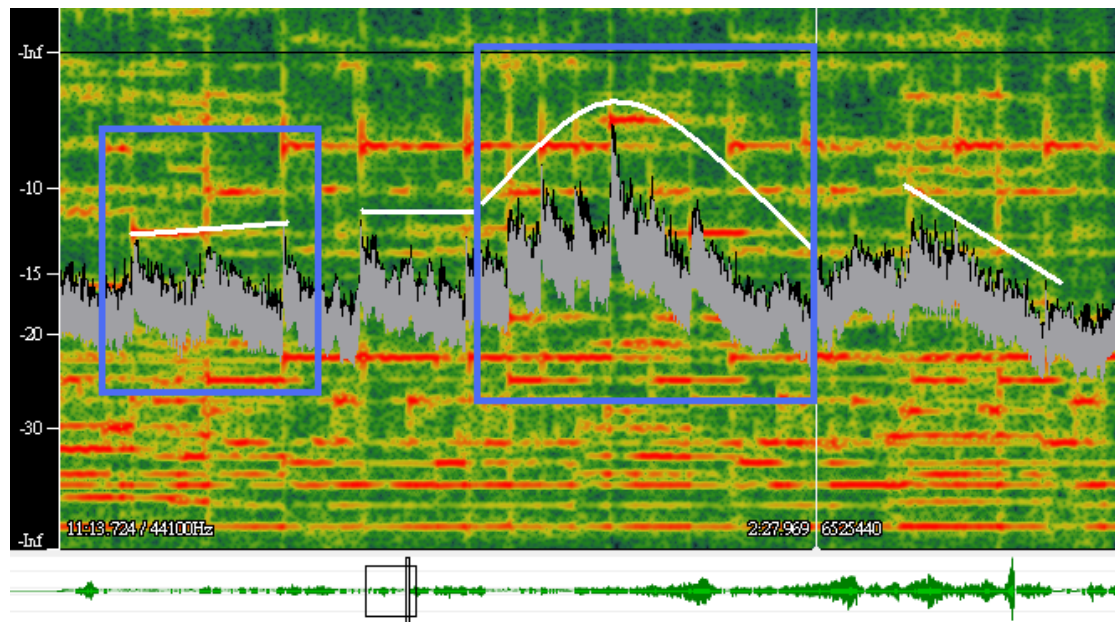
SV 5-4-1: Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No.2, Mvt II, bars 27-30 (Ashkenazy)



SV 5-4-2: Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No.2, Mvt II, bars 27-30 (Kissin)

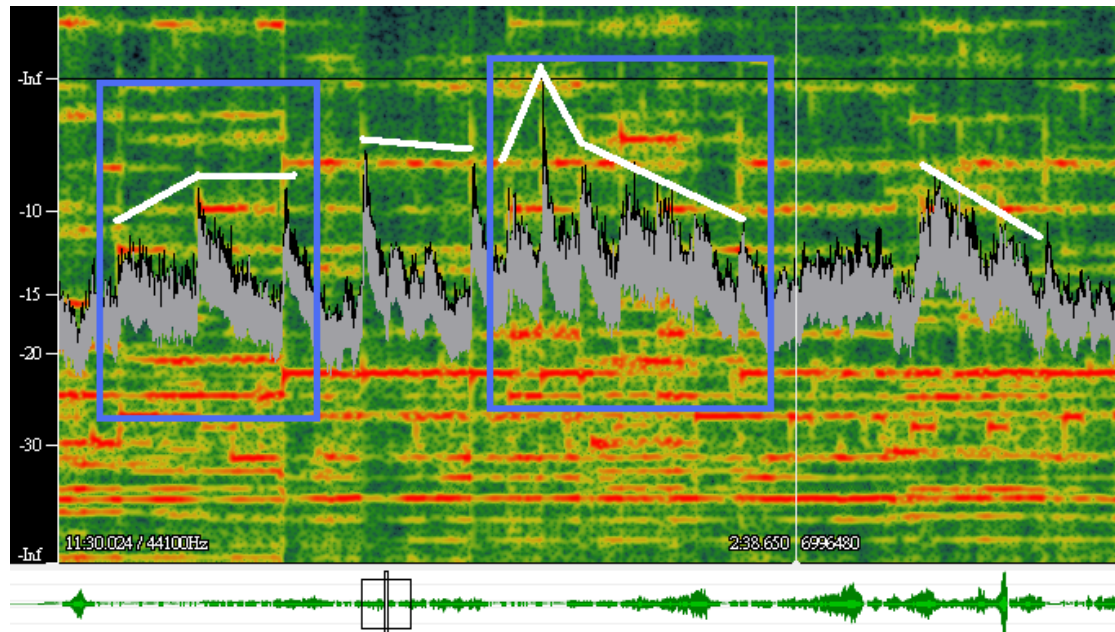


SV 5-4-3: Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No.2, Mvt II, bars 27-30 (Lugansky)



In Lilya Zilberstein's performance, it looks like she is probably playing in the Russian diminuendo style, but the loudest note is G sharp, not the previous note, F sharp. Since Rachmaninoff's crescendo mark also ends at the G sharp in the score, I argue that Zilberstein's intention is still to play according to the score rather than use traditional Russian phrasing. In addition, she and Lugansky also do not play the first short phrase in diminuendo style, which probably suggests that this is not down to their performing habits.

SV 5-4-4: Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No.2, Mvt II, bars 27-30 (Zilberstein)



The examples above show that pianists who are not Russian but have seriously studied the composer's recording can play with a similar phrasing style to the composer, while pianists with a Russian educational background decide to be faithful to the score, even though some of them also pay great attention to the composer's recording. Furthermore, Rachmaninoff played some unmarked arpeggios in the second and third movement of the concerto. Thibaudet plays the one in bar 97 of the second movement as Rachmaninoff did, and Hough adds one in bar 127 of the third movement, very similar to what Rachmaninoff did (bar 126). They do not play as many arpeggios as the composer, but one still can feel that they have absorbed some features of Rachmaninoff's playing and brought them into their own performances of the composer's works. None of the four Russian pianists, however, play unmarked arpeggios in their performances of the concerto.

In the case of Stephen Hough, it is not surprising to see that his phrasing style in the movement is the closest one to the composer's or that he applies the practice of adding arpeggios to his performance, because he not only plays the concerto at a fast speed, plays the coda faster than the previous section in the first movement, but also plays the Piano Concerto No.3 in the fast speed too and presents active inner voices as well as irregular rhythm in the 18th variation of the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. All these features are directly related to the composer's performance. But can one declare that those Russian pianists above are not musically *Russian*? They are actually more faithful to the score than Hough and Thibaudet in terms of obeying the dynamic marks. In addition, in the previous chapter we saw Lugansky also shows his knowledge of the composer's recording by adding arpeggios (in the Prelude Op.23 No.5) and recreating the composer's phrasing characteristics (in the 18th variation). Ashkenazy's, Kissin's and Zilberstein's phrases in the SV diagrams are comparatively flat in dynamics. If one listens to their performances longer, then it is obvious that they actually wished to reduce the dynamic contrast in order to form a broader musical line, just as Rachmaninoff had done in other works. In other words, they probably wished to shape a 'big phrase' in the spirit of Rachmaninoff, though the composer did not do so in this section.

The discussion above suggests that pianists can be highly selective in their following of an 'authoritative rendition'. Hough's rendition is in the style of the composer's in general (and arguably the most similar one to the composer's), but he also does not play the opening of No.2 as Rachmaninoff did, nor does he play No.3 with cuts. Thibaudet learns the irregular rhythm from the composer's performance of the 18th variation, but he also does not play the coda faster in the first movement of the No.2. On the other hand, the discussion may also reveal one crucial fact: it is easier to follow

Rachmaninoff's editorial choice, tempi choice, performing habits, even 'big phrasing' style, but it is more difficult to master his Russian singing style, as it is probably more a spontaneous reflection of his temperament, musicality, personality, or intuition. In Chapter Four, we saw that over the last two decades, more and more pianists have started to apply arpeggiation, asynchronisation, and *leggerio* style to their renditions of the Prelude Op.23 No.5. If we examine their phrasing styles in the middle section, as Table 4-3 shows, only the performances of Barry Douglas (1991), Moura Lympany (1993), Shura Cherkassky (1995), and Kateryna Titova (2007) can be regarded as close to Rachmaninoff's. The diminuendo style in Phrasing Pattern B – arguably the most *Russian* feature in this musical sentence in Rachmaninoff's performance – is still not commonly seen, even in the performances of Russian pianists (marked in red in the table). This result is in accordance with the examples of the Piano Concerto No.2 just mentioned above.

6. The Reasons for 'Authoritative Renditions' and Their Influence

In the case studies above, we have found more examples to support the conclusions of the previous chapter, uncovered certain 'authoritative renditions' among the performances, and observed that pianists can be inconsistent in choosing whether to follow these 'authoritative renditions' or be faithful to the score. How can we explain all these cases? Are pianists simply following musical fashion without intentionally contributing their own ideas? This seems unlikely: performers certainly seem to believe that they bring their own insights to their playing. On the other hand, how are we to describe the phenomenon in which performers prefer to follow 'authorities' (whether specific previous performers or an existing tradition) rather than the notation composers provide? Where does the performer's loyalty lie, and why? There are several theories that can be used to explain the function of 'authoritative

renditions'. The phenomenon is in some degree similar to Thomas Kuhn's 'paradigm': a paradigm is a set of beliefs and intellectual approaches that members of a scientific community share.³⁸⁷ If a powerful rendition is like a paradigm, then in Kuhn's words, 'when the paradigm is successful, the profession will have solved problems that its members could scarcely have imagined and would never have undertaken without commitment to the paradigm.'³⁸⁸ In the case of finding an interpretation of a piano concerto, it means that a pianist may simply follow a well-established, generally beloved interpretation, since it has proved its popularity with audiences and guaranteed certain success in performance. When a pianist meets an interpretative choice or problem, following the 'authoritative rendition' also provides an easy, risk-free option to take. However, Kuhn's theory cannot be completely applied to musical performances, because different 'authoritative renditions' are not totally 'incommensurable' (as Kuhn's theory states), and the boundary of a 'community' in a music field, the piano school for instance, is not fixed at all. In the case of Piano Concerto No.3, pianists can still play the short cadenza but use slower tempi, or they can play in the speedy fashion of Rachmaninoff and Horowitz but still play the complete score. In musical interpretation, as Leech-Wilkinson has summarised and theorised, the forming mechanism is more similar to the theory of memetics.³⁸⁹ This originates from Richard Dawkins's 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*. Dawkins argues that the meme, analogous to a gene, is a 'unit of culture' – an idea, belief, pattern of behaviour, and so on – that resides in the minds of one or more individuals and can also reproduce itself from mind to mind. As with genetics, particularly in Dawkins's interpretation, a meme's success may be due to its contribution to the effectiveness

³⁸⁷ John Horgan, 'Profile: Reluctant Revolutionary', *Scientific American*: 40 (May, 1991).

³⁸⁸ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), 24–25.

³⁸⁹ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Recordings and histories of performance style' in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 256-257.

of its host. The ‘authoritative rendition’, in this context, is like a meme. Since those renditions are powerful and persuasive for certain reasons – the composer’s own performances (Rachmaninoff), the composer’s favourite interpreter (Horowitz), and the pianist who caused a highly sensational event to a specific group of people (Van Cliburn at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, 1958) – following, imitating, even copying those ‘authoritative renditions’ provides an easy way to success, especially as the ‘authoritative renditions’ have enjoyed great popularity.³⁹⁰ The ability to spread the meme, such as the attractiveness of an idea, as a consequence, becomes the most important factor in forming the influential power of the ‘authoritative renditions’. It explains why Rachmaninoff’s rendition of his Piano Concerto No.2 mainly influenced pianists in the United States, and Van Cliburn’s performance of Piano Concerto No.3 can probably only capture the imagination of pianists in the Soviet Union at that time. When Rachmaninoff’s digitised performances became easily accessible, they also become influential again.

6.1. Barnard’s Acceptance Theory of Authority

On the other hand, the theory of memetics focuses on the spreading function of memes. Since we have seen how pianists are highly selective in accepting the features of ‘authoritative renditions’, and those renditions do not actively communicate ideas to other performers (on the contrary, they are accepted by their followers), I would like to add Chester Barnard (1886-1961)’s ‘acceptance theory of authority’ as a supplementary theory to explain this phenomenon. Barnard is the founder of the Social Organisation School in modern management theory. In his 1938 book *Functions of the Executive*, he introduces the concept of ‘acceptance theory of authority’, which argues that a manager has authority only if subordinates choose to accept his or her

³⁹⁰ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979; revised edition 1989).

commands. Formal authority is reduced to normal authority if it is not accepted by the subordinates. The subordinates accept the authority if the advantages to be derived by its acceptance exceed the disadvantages resulting from its refusal.³⁹¹ According to Barnard, four factors will affect the willingness of employees to accept authority:

- (1). The employees must understand the communication.
- (2). The employees accept the communication as being consistent with the organisation's purposes.
- (3). The employees feel that their actions will be consistent with the needs and the desires of the other employees.
- (4). The employees feel that they are mentally and physically able to carry out the order.³⁹²

If we apply the 'acceptance' theory of authority to musical interpretation, regard the 'employees' as musicians, the 'manager' as a leading performer or an existing tradition (who offers, specifically or within tightly constrained limits, the 'authoritative rendition'), the 'communication' as musical interpretation, and the 'organisation' as performance, then in Barnard's context, factors 1, 2, and 4 in the theory probably well describe the 'maestro-follower' phenomenon in the music field. The interpretations

³⁹¹ Barbara Levitt and J. G. March, 'Chester I. Barnard and the intelligence of learning' in *Organization Theory: From Chester Barnard to the Present and Beyond*. ed. Oliver E. Williamson (New York: Oxford University, 1995), 11-37.

³⁹² Barbara Levitt and J. G. March, 11-37.

or editorial choices of maestros – such as Rachmaninoff, Horowitz, and Van Cliburn in the case of Rachmaninoff's piano concertos, or Cortot, Michelangeli, Lympany in the examples I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter – are followed when:

(1). It is understandable: the interpretation or editorial choice from the maestro at least has to make sense to other musicians.

(2). The musicians accept the interpretation as being consistent with the performance's purposes: interpretation has to fit the need of performance. Taking the interpretative approach of a maestro can probably benefit a musician to either learn a piece well (or faster) or to attract the audience more easily. It is not easy to build a persuasive interpretation on one's own, therefore recordings sometimes provides the easiest (or the laziest) way for young musicians to study a new piece. The 'authoritative rendition' becomes a model for them to reply on. In addition, the 'authority' also offers a possible excuse for its followers. For example, if a pianist is criticised for daring to alter the composer's piece by reorganising, deleting, or rearranging it, the performer can always give the 'authority' as an excuse, stating that he or she simply followed in the steps of a maestro. It cannot free them entirely from criticism, but often can reduce the possible harm.

(3). The musicians feel that they are mentally and physically able to follow the interpretation of the maestros – if a maestro's interpretive approach reflects the editorial choice of the piece, as all the cases mentioned above do, then it is not difficult for other musicians to follow. Glenn Gould's interpretation of Bach *Goldberg Variations*, however, is probably the best counter-example. In his performance his technical display and interpretative approach were so impressive that the recording

dramatically changed the concept of playing Baroque music at that time. However, it is almost completely impractical to copy Gould's interpretation or performance because of the formidable difficulties he established, both intellectually (his original and exciting interpretation) and physically (for example, his phenomenal keyboard control). Although many pianists have tried to imitate Horowitz's interpretation of *Pictures at an Exhibition* or Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.3, in the end most of them can only follow the editorial choice or certain phrasing patterns but fail to represent the huge dynamic range or exceptionally fast speed in their playing. Sviatoslav Richter was a great hero to many musicians, especially to Soviet ones, but it does not mean that his interpretative approach is frequently followed by them. He was famous for playing certain movements from Schubert Piano Sonatas with unusual slow tempi. His first movement of Piano Sonata in B flat Major, D960 is over 26 minutes long (the average duration is about 20 to 22 minutes), and the second movement of Piano Sonata in A major, D664, is around 6.5 minutes (the average duration is about 4.5 minutes). Although Richter's interpretation of those Schubert Piano Sonatas is deeply admired by many, almost no pianists adopted his slow tempi of the two movements in performance, because it is mentally not possible to follow unless the performer has a similar temperament to Richter's.

According to the acceptance theory, 'authority' flows from bottom to top. A manager has authority if he or she is obeyed by the subordinates. This is also similar to how musicians choose to adapt certain 'authoritative renditions' when they learn or play certain pieces. The process is not always from top to bottom, as the traditional teacher-pupil relationship implies, but can rather be very democratic. Since it is a democratic, bottom-to-top process, we should not expect a pianist to completely agree with or follow certain 'authoritative renditions', just as one may support a

candidate but not agree with all his or her political statements or future plans. One can choose one 'authoritative rendition' as a main reference in principle, but follow its features selectively. Just as we have seen in the case studies, although it is probably a current trend to learn from Rachmaninoff's performances, pianists can decide what they wish to learn from his recordings. It also may explain why we have seen many different but contrary principles mixing or clashing in the performances. The result may be confusing, but it is also logical in terms of the 'acceptance' theory of authority.

In addition, if 'authority' comes from bottom to top, then it explains that the provider of 'authority' does not have to be an internationally renowned performer – all that matters is that the performance is followed by others. In the case of Van Cliburn's interpretation of the Piano Concerto No.3, his 'authority' for the Soviet pianists came not necessarily from having studied with Rosina Lhévinne, alumna of the Moscow Conservatory and the leading professor at the Juilliard School, but the fact that all the jurors at the competition as well as the majority of the audience deeply loved his performance and supported him to win the competition. For his Soviet colleagues, Van Cliburn's performance of the concerto was different to the Soviet norm for the piece, but it was understandable, impressive, and 'mentally and physically possible to follow' for the Soviet pianists and audiences: the longer cadenza of the concerto does not necessarily have to be played at a fast speed, and it is also doubtful that any pianist could play it as fast as the shorter version. When Van Cliburn brought his slower, unconventional but logically persuasive rendition to the Soviet public, once his interpretative approach was accepted (and the longer cadenza is also physically manageable), then we see a completely different trend emerging in performing the concerto in the Soviet Union. He did not have to be a maestro like Rachmaninoff or Horowitz; as long as his interpretation was accepted by the Soviet

pianists, it became an authoritative version of the piece, as the case study shows. As mentioned earlier, the performance of Vladimir Ashkenazy right after 1958 might provide the best example. He still plays the short cadenza in his first recording, but the speed is not as fast as his senior Soviet colleagues. In his second recording, he not only chooses the longer cadenza, but also performs the whole first movement in slow tempi in general, with an interpretative concept very similar to Van Cliburn's. Ashkenazy gives a detailed answer about this issue:

The discrepancy of the tempo in my recordings has no direct connection to Van Cliburn, although I really loved his performance in the past, and I still do now. We are close friends. I don't think I'll ever be able to erase his performance at the Tchaikovsky Competition from my memory. I have to say that some of his interpretations at that performance were just brilliant. I was most of all impressed by his performance of Chopin's *Fantasia*, Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto, and Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto. His widespread influence is not to be questioned. However, I don't consider the waves he stirred as "foreign," because his teacher was the great Russian pianist Madame Rosina Lhévinne, and his performance led the Russian School to an ultimate stage of spiritual freedom. Performances of Van Cliburn at that time were nondescript—they emanated absolute spontaneity, innocence, and ardor deriving from adroitness. And those qualities are precisely what a pianist needs when performing Rachmaninoff, and they were also the reasons he mesmerised the Russian audience. As young as I was, I felt inspired by his performance in so far as I learned to approach Rachmaninoff with a style of "innocent, unaffected spontaneity with great gift of the instrument" that could enable pianists to find the music within themselves. Thus, he was influential in the aspect of performing attitude. Everyone loves

Rachmaninoff's playing because of this kind of warm and unaffected spontaneity, and that's why Van Cliburn won the hearts of the audiences. I think in certain recordings of mine I did try to interpret music through emulating his manners. I didn't conform to his playing though, because I had my own character. Nevertheless, that kind of performing style is really very captivating, especially when Rachmaninoff is being played.³⁹³

Since the acceptance of authority is decided by the willingness of musicians and a 'bottom to top' process, it is understandable that some performances are only legitimised as 'authorities' within certain geographic, educational, national, or cultural groups, as we have seen in the case studies. If Lympany's interpretation of Khachaturian's Piano Concerto is viewed as an authoritative version of the piece, it is almost to be taken for granted that it must be so only within a British environment. By the same token, if Van Cliburn had not caused a sensation at the first Tchaikovsky Piano Competition and had not played Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.3 in the final round, his interpretation of the piece would probably never have had the same impact on Soviet pianists. Although Rachmaninoff loved Moiseiwitsch's interpretation of his Piano Concerto No.2, Moiseiwitsch did not perform in the States much, at least not as frequently as Rachmaninoff. It is therefore conceivable that his interpretative approach was not viewed as an authoritative one among American pianists in general. Last but not least, since the acceptance process runs from bottom to top, the 'authority' may fade away when the composition at the bottom is changed. Van Cliburn's rendition of the Rachmaninoff was vivid and legendary to those who witnessed the competition, for example Ashkenazy. To the later generations, especially those born in the 1960s, however, it may have had no special influence. When they learnt Rachmaninoff's Piano

³⁹³ Interview with Vladimir Ashkenazy (18th October, 2005 and March 3rd, 2007).

Concerto No.3, they probably did not regard Van Cliburn's recording as a model. Among Russian pianists now aged around forty, Rustem Hayroundinoff and Evgeny Kissin choosing to play the longer cadenza and Lilya Zilberstein and Nikolai Lugansky picking the shorter is all down to personal preference and they are not familiar with Van Cliburn's performance of the concerto.³⁹⁴

Through the case studies in this chapter, we have seen that several general trends that were discussed in Chapter Four, such as the gradually slower process of playing Rachmaninoff's music, smoother transitions within the structure, reactions to the previous norm, and so forth, also appear in performances of the two concertos. What is special in the two case studies is the influence of 'authoritative renditions'. Through his live performances and recordings, Rachmaninoff at least successfully persuaded his colleagues and later generations to refer to his interpretation of his Piano Concerto No.2 and No.3. The preference of the coda tempo in different geographical areas of the No.2, and the cadenza and deletion choice of the No.3, clearly show the composer's influence on the performers. However, other pianists, such as Horowitz and Van Cliburn, were also able to have a similar influence, so the 'performing style of Rachmaninoff' is redefined again and again over the generations. The impact of those 'authoritative renditions' may fade away, but also may revive: it seems that after the digital reissue of the composer's recording in 1987 and 1992, pianists started to learn from Rachmaninoff's rendition, although they have usually learned and presented in a highly selective way.

In this chapter, I have applied both Richard Dawkins's theory of memetics and Chester Barnard's acceptance theory of authority to explain the phenomena emerging

³⁹⁴ Interviews with them.

from the case studies. In the next chapter, I will focus on the perspectives of the performers, trying to capture the contours of the artistic thinking of their generations through interviews and recordings, and will also provide the conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter Six: Themes, Reflections and Suggestions for Further Study

1. Some Themes of the Thesis

In the first three chapters, we have seen the varied and abundant meanings of ‘performing school’, and the characteristics of the early Russian Piano School: solid technique, beautiful tone, well-balanced dynamics, and a melody-orientated, diminuendo singing style. As a performer Rachmaninoff was not isolated from his time. Asynchronisation, unmarked arpeggiation, unexpected middle voices – we can hear these performing habits of the first half of the twentieth century in his performance, but his practice of them is generally quite restrained, which is similar to the Russian pianists of the time but different from his colleagues in the West. In addition, from his tendency to shape melodic lines in the Russian diminuendo singing style, we know that he not only belonged to the early Russian Piano School, but also was an excellent example of traditional Russian pianism. On the other hand, Rachmaninoff had his own distinctive style of piano playing. His creative usage of tenuto markings suggests rubato, speaking-effect, or alternation of tone. Comparing what he wrote in the score with how he played those pieces, although Rachmaninoff was not literally faithful to the score, he did express a coherent and consistent style in his performances. His most characteristic phrasing approach, the ‘big phrase’, corresponded to the changes he made in his revisions of his early works, and it is arguably the core of Rachmaninoff’s musical style – in both composition and performance.

In Chapters Four and Five, we saw how Rachmaninoff’s piano music has been played through different generations. Pianists have played differently in different periods, and each period can be viewed as a reaction to the previous one. In general, it is efficient and beneficial for pianists to play within current norms, as that saves

time and thought and facilitates employment by broadly conforming to expectations. Musicians also want to be noticed and identified through their performances, however. Therefore, from time to time, we can see that some pianists have wished to offer creative, even unconventional ideas in their renditions. But, generally speaking, in the middle of the twentieth century, pianists' score reading became more literal, performances more and more alike, and tempi gradually slower in performances of Rachmaninoff's music. In the case of the composer's Piano Concerto No.2 and No.3, we have seen that certain performances have the status of 'authoritative renditions' that deeply influence the pianists after them. Not only can the composer's performance become an 'authoritative rendition', but once another performance is accepted by a group of pianists, it too can become an 'authoritative rendition', as in the cases of Horowitz and Cliburn.

The influence of the 'authoritative rendition' is usually limited to certain geographical areas. However, since the digital reissue of Rachmaninoff's complete recordings in 1992, more and more pianists have started to refer to the composer's performances. Most of them apply his performing habits, tempo choices, and editorial choices to their renditions, but the composer's Russian style – his diminuendo singing phrases – is still not very commonly heard. Furthermore, although pianists collectively form this current trend, it seems that they also selectively choose which of Rachmaninoff's performing characteristics to follow. In Chapter Five, I used both Richard Dawkins's theory of memetics and Chester Barnard's acceptance theory of authority to explain the phenomenon of the 'authoritative rendition'.

In the last chapter of this thesis, I would like to present the perspectives of some modern pianists on the issue, to see what performers think about the influence of ‘authoritative renditions’ and about the composer’s own recordings as well. In addition, I will find that my research on the recordings and performing style has conceptual similarities to some approaches taken by art historians. I would like to introduce the most similar example I know – Joan Stanley-Baker’s research on Chinese paintings and calligraphy – and compare it with the findings of my case studies. At the end of the thesis, I will provide some ideas and suggestions for further study.

2. Pianists’ Attitude Towards Authoritative Renditions

It is not uncommon to see a musician use an authority’s performance as a justification for making a similar interpretation themselves, yet this may involve much more than simple imitation or the convenience of borrowing another’s rendition. The other can be a psychological help. When asked about his tempi choice in Chopin’s Nocturne in C minor, Op.48 No.1, Garrick Ohlsson, the winner of the Warsaw Chopin Competition in 1970, admitted that at least, another performance supported his wish to be both unconventional and unfaithful to the score yet loyal to his own feelings. This Nocturne is in A-B-A’ form. After the B section (a chorale), the music re-enters the A’ section, marked *doppio movimento agitato* at its beginning (bar 49). When Ohlsson recorded it for the first time in 1979, he played the A’ section at almost double the speed as the composer required. When he recorded it again around 20 years later, he insisted on playing it without *doppio movimento*, and the duration of the piece extended to eight minutes, much longer than his first version, which was only five minutes and 45 seconds long.³⁹⁵ Ohlsson had his reason for that tempo choice:

³⁹⁵ Ohlsson’s first recording is available on EMI 6711729, and the second on hyperion CDS44351/ 66.

Despite that I had played it so many years that way (*doppio movimento*), I never felt that I am emotionally happy with it. And I cannot say why, even though it is what Chopin wrote. It just didn't feel right inside, and I don't know why.³⁹⁶

But Ohlsson still continued playing it as Chopin had written for many years, until he heard a performance of the piece by Josef Hofmann:

And I heard the fantastic, though rather inaccurate, live performance of Josef Hofmann in the late 1940s. Even though he was not at his technical best, it was so emotionally moving and deeply emotionally satisfying. And he did not play '*doppio movimento*'! So I just thought, okay, if one of the great masters played it that way, it gives me a permission to do what I want, not to say that Hofmann was a very careful pianist.³⁹⁷

In Ohlsson's confession it is interesting to see that although he had wanted to play his personal rendition for years, he still needed an authority to push him into pursuing his rather unconventional interpretation in the end. By the same token, when he listened to the recording of Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C sharp minor, Op.3 No.2 by the composer and Hofmann, he was delighted to know that both of them added several accents in the bass, which is very close to his own idea, and as a consequence he also felt comfortable playing that way. Ohlsson's experience may provide the reason why there has been a trend for including the deletion in the third movement among Soviet and Russian pianists after 1987. In the case study of the Piano Concerto No.3, we saw that although pianists might sometimes have followed the composer's

³⁹⁶ Interview with Garrick Ohlsson (July 8th, 2010).

³⁹⁷ Interview with Garrick Ohlsson (July 8th, 2010).

editorial choices (selectively), they might also sometimes just have used the composer's recording as an excuse, for they had not felt comfortable playing the transition but had not dared to cut it until the composer's performance was easily accessible to them, providing psychological support. The cut may not only be a simple deletion and may influence the interpretation. Take Mikhail Pletnev's recording for instance: since he cut the transition, he further changed the dynamics of the reminiscence section to fit his rendition. Or it may also be the other way around: Pletnev had the idea for the reminiscence section first, then he felt that it is better to cut the transition to make his interpretation work. He may or may not have feared criticism from audiences or critics, but because the composer's recording also included this deletion, he may have felt supported in doing so. Since respecting the score is still the value of our time, probably only the composer's rendition can provide a persuasive model if a pianist wishes to delete a section.

Secondly, the authority's recording may not only provide pianists with a model to follow, but also may stimulate them to explore the opposite, or try to avoid being influenced by it. For example, although Dmitri Bashkirov suggests his pupils study Rachmaninoff's performances, he still keeps a safe distance from the pianist's legacy on disc:

Rachmaninoff was a true genius, and it's always dangerous to copy any genius. For example, it's dangerous to copy Glenn Gould's playing. I was performing Gluck-Sgambati *Melodie from Orfeo ed Euridice* frequently. One day I knew that Rachmaninoff had recorded it, out of curiosity I got the recording and listened to it. The result is a real catastrophe to me: Although I did not agree with his interpretation, his performance was so impressive that I could not get rid of it. It

is not about my agreement or disagreement; it's a purely magical performance, a genius's performance. In the end I had to stop playing this piece [for] around five or six years until I could completely forget Rachmaninoff's playing. After that, I never try to listen to this recording again.³⁹⁸

It is hard to speak out with one's own voice if another has already occupied one's mind. For all pianists who wish to be as original and creative as possible, it is crucial to find one's own approach, even though the composer himself has given a very authoritative revelation. Krystian Zimerman suffered a similar experience to Bashkirov:

After knowing Rachmaninoff's performance, it took me quite some time to unburden myself from that kind of pressure. It was actually very frustrating because Rachmaninoff was such a mesmerising pianist, and his performances were always those of genius. To a certain degree, his recordings restrain our potential to develop our own points of view. Rachmaninoff isn't the only case; many other prestigious recordings have also stunned me so much that they 'impede' my interpretation in the same way. It took me a decade to get the Liszt's *Sonata in B minor* played by Horowitz out of my head.³⁹⁹

Therefore, when Zimerman was preparing to record Rachmaninoff's first two piano concertos, he had very different interpretative approaches for them. In the Piano Concerto No.1, Zimerman liked to play as closely to the composer's performing style as possible. His performance can be viewed as a personal tribute to the great

³⁹⁸ Interview with Dmitri Bashkirov (July 25th, 2010).

³⁹⁹ Interview with Krystian Zimerman (July 9th, 2006).

musician, and also a result of years of serious study of Rachmaninoff's own recording. For the No.2 concerto, however, he decided to present a *reaction*:

I suppose even Rachmaninoff himself didn't have the right to dictate how his piano concerto should have been performed. I freed myself from constraints particularly when I was performing his Piano Concerto No.2. I didn't intend to repeat Rachmaninoff's interpretation, because I had my own words to say. I was only sixteen when I first played this concerto, and it took me a long time to come down to the interpretation I have now. I'm not saying this out of arrogance, or out of disrespect of the composer and his composition. In fact, I know more about showing respect than before, because I've come to understand the piece and the composer more. However, I think performers are entitled to express their thoughts as well, and there is still a lot of room for us to explore.⁴⁰⁰

Zimerman's case provides us with at least two perspectives. First, although we have seen many examples of pianists following certain 'authoritative renditions' to form their interpretations, it is also understandable for musicians to react against them. Just as Chapters Four and Five have shown, general trends change after a period of time, and the new trend is usually a reaction against the previous norm. When the composer or an influential musician has established an 'authoritative rendition', there might be pianists determined to deliberately explore different, even opposite approaches, searching for unusual paths in order to bring something new to the music. However, exploring such approaches does not mean that one has to be a rebel, and does not even mean that the result has to be strange or offensive. On the contrary,

⁴⁰⁰ Interview with Krystian Zimerman (July 9th, 2006).

this thinking strategy would be quite beneficial for a pianist to use to find their own personal voice and establish an individual rendition. Leon Fleisher recalls his experience of finding his own ideas after finishing his study with Artur Schnabel: he had been nervous, anxious, and confused at not having a mentor taking care of him for a period of time, then he decided to learn Schubert's Piano Sonata in B-flat major (D.960), a piece he had never studied with Schnabel, as a new departure. Gradually he found that he 'really did have everything [Schnabel] said in my head' through learning the piece for himself.⁴⁰¹ But regaining confidence was only the first step; the most important issue for him was to become an independent artist:

I took another big step one day when I put on a recording of Schnabel playing Beethoven's B flat Major sonata, Op.22. [...] The sound of Schnabel's playing, his touch, was so familiar that I was enraptured, and I listened with a great deal of love and appreciation. [...] But I realised that there were certain passages I might not have played the way he did. I might have chosen to play them differently. And this sign of freedom, of independent thinking, hit me like a lightning bolt. Maybe I did have my own opinions about music after all. In fact, when I practiced now, I started thinking about what Schnabel might have done, and then experimented by trying the opposite. I was surprised how often that seemed to work. [...] I was moving from being a student who does what he is told to being able to look at a piece and, if not making my own choices right away, at least determining what the choices were before selecting a option. It's a pivotal moment for every artist. It marks the moment when you are no longer

⁴⁰¹ Leon Fleisher and A. Midgette, *My Nine Lives: A Memoir of Many Careers in Music* (New York: Doubleday, 2010), 90.

your teacher's student but your own student.⁴⁰²

Generally speaking, Leon Fleisher's interpretation is personal (like all distinguished musicians) but not rebellious, and he is considered a respected maestro who inherits the Austro-German tradition. Trying opposite approaches does not mean that his music-making is unconventional. Go back to the case of Zimerman's Rachmaninoff album. What he actually does is similar to Fleisher's solo learning process. He knows the composer's recording of Piano Concerto No.2 well but decides to try a different approach, and his rendition is still neither eccentric nor incomprehensible. Zimerman does not play it with the fast tempi the composer did and his phrasing style is unlike the composer's (but close to the indications in the score), but he takes care of all the details in the score and presents a persuasive interpretation. He just wishes to explore the possibilities of the music that Rachmaninoff did not present in his recording. Fleisher thought about the opposite of Schnabel's teaching, and Zimerman tried the converse of the composer's recording, but being bizarre was neither their goal, nor the result of, their music-making. On the other hand, their experiences also imply that even though a musician decides to follow a certain model or 'authoritative rendition', their approach can be very selective. Zimerman probably has an equal understanding of the composer's performance of both the concertos, but he chose contrary interpretative approaches when performing them. Fleisher was able to pass on the legacy of Schnabel's interpretation but also to present quite different, even contrary ideas to the maestro. By the same token, pianists can also selectively decide which features of the composer's performing style they wish to adapt in their performance, even though the result is that they are not always consistent in their interpretations.

⁴⁰² Fleisher, 91.

But there might be a deeper concern behind all the diverse, inconsistent approaches. Pianists are not supposed to copy or imitate Rachmaninoff's performance. It is an essential aspect of our conception of a great pianist that they should present us with their own artistic thoughts rather than clone another's rendition – even that of the composer. However, studying the recording of the composer's playing to determine the performing style is also an important part of learning, understanding, and preparing the composer's work. If a pianist wishes to be familiar with the composer's recording but also wishes not to be overwhelmed or dominated by it, as Bashkirov and Zimerman have experienced, one has to be selective in applying the features. If one completely accepts Rachmaninoff's tempi, rubato, performing habits, and editorial choices and performs them, one will erase one's own personality and originality, which does not accord with our expectations of an artist. Hence all the interviewees in my research stressed that they may have referred to Rachmaninoff's recordings but they did not imitate his performance. Stephen Hough expresses this concern and gives his suggestion for how to see the composer's score and the recording:

I think you need to know both the score and recording, respect both, then make your own choices. There is no point in being a second-hand Rachmaninoff, however well you might be able to do that. You need to be a first-hand YOU.⁴⁰³

Hough's experience of recording Rachmaninoff's complete works for piano and orchestra may tell us more about how a musician forms and matures his or her interpretation. Since the performing style he displayed in the recording is probably the

⁴⁰³ Interview with Stephen Hough (August 16th, 2010).

closest one to the composer's, as the case studies have shown, I think that he is an ideal example for discussing the topic. Hough had studied the composer's recordings for years before the recording session, but he stressed that all he was doing was 'absorbing' rather than imitating. He also thought about the danger of being too strongly influenced by the composer's performance:

I deliberately didn't listen to Rachmaninoff's recordings of the concertos for about a year before recording them. It might be possible to imitate them but it would be artistically awful. I did absorb his general playing style a lot over the years (from an early, impressionable age) so it has shaped me as much as any teacher has. I think the only way to [learn the composer's style in his recordings without being a pure mimic] is to absorb the style over many years and learn the 'dialect' – much like learning a language. You have to be able to think in a foreign language, not just read the words off a page. You have to be sincere with the words and creative in your own way.⁴⁰⁴

When Hough was asked about why he played in the diminuendo phrasing style when the score might suggest a bel canto one, the one most of his colleagues adopted (see the discussion of the Piano Concerto No.2 in Chapter Five), his reason is quite close to the logic of the Russian Piano School:

Although it may not be a bel canto style, it is definitely vocal – and I see it like taking a huge breath and letting the phrase taper away as the air runs out. It begins with a certain passion and force of emotion and then trails away into a more intimate utterance as it gets softer. Although it's not written in the score,

⁴⁰⁴ Interview with Stephen Hough (August 31st, 2011).

it couldn't actually be written as a diminuendo because the intention is different.⁴⁰⁵

Hough's answer shows that he has tried to absorb Rachmaninoff's performing style and represent as well as interpret it in his own logic. This also explains why he would follow the composer's tempi choice in the coda of the Piano Concerto No.2 but not follow his deletion in the Piano Concerto No.3. He has clear reason to support his rendition instead of following the 'authoritative rendition':

The coda is an interesting case. There are simply not enough notes in the arpeggios in bars 3 and 4 [of the coda] for it to make sense at too slow a tempo. There is obviously meant to be a swoop up to the top note and not a measuring out of notes. Although the metronome marking works for the first two bars (and sounds great in a brooding sort of way) at bar three the figuration just gets stuck if played too slowly. [As far as the deletion in the Piano Concerto No.3 is concerned,] I think with Rachmaninoff there is the issue of the composer with a lack of self-confidence and by the time he recorded the Third he was already well out of fashion. I really don't see any point in doing the cuts now. They only save a minute or two of time and they don't make the third movement any less episodic. In some ways I think of the movement as a set of variations and so it doesn't need to be in a tight form.⁴⁰⁶

Of course Hough's idea about the coda is personal; there are still many pianists who do not think the tempo will not work, and it is hard to know if he had been impressed

⁴⁰⁵ Interview with Stephen Hough (August 31st, 2011).

⁴⁰⁶ Interview with Stephen Hough (August 31st, 2011).

by Rachmaninoff's performance first and then thought about this interpretative logic. No matter which is correct though, Hough does not just imitate Rachmaninoff's recording. Even if he was influenced by the composer's rendition, once he developed his own interpretation, he was able to speak 'the language of Rachmaninoff' by using the grammar properly while not simply repeating the composer's own words.

From the experiences and opinions of the interviewees above, my conclusion is that for pianists, a composer's performance can be a great source of inspiration, or a model, but it cannot be the only answer to how to perform the piece: it only provides one possibility of interpretation. It is obvious that Rachmaninoff did not always play what he wrote. However, it is debatable whether the ideas presented in his recording are 'better' than those presented on the score. What we can be sure is only that the recording presents his *later* ideas. Since we do not know if the later ideas are superior, then what the composer's recording really can teach us, is to identify the meaning of his indications in the score, such as Rachmaninoff's use of tenuto marks (suggesting slight rubato) or *cantabile* indication (suggesting the traditional Russian diminuendo singing phrase), and his personal performing style, such as the limited practice of asynchronisation and unmarked arpeggiation, and so on. Once one understands the phrasing pattern of Rachmaninoff's 'big phrase' and the traditional Russian diminuendo singing style, one can apply it to his music where one feels appropriate, even though the composer did not play it in that section himself. Conversely, his recording also tells us what performing features and habits were alien to him, which we may wish to avoid. When Zimerman was asked about his interpretation of Lutosławski's Piano Concerto, a piece dedicated to him, he said that:

My friendship with Lutosławski in fact intensified the pressure whenever I performed his piano concerto, because I just admire him too much. Every time I'm about to play his work, I ask myself three questions, "What does it say on the score? What did Lutoslawski say?" And lastly, "what did he not say?" Perhaps the last question could lead me back to the interpretation he once configured.⁴⁰⁷

In Zimerman's case, 'what Lutosławski said' is similar to what a composer's performance can tell us, and 'what Lutosławski did not say' is similar to what does not appear in a composer's performance. Knowing what a composer looks for and what s/he avoids in a performance are two sides of the same coin. Although Rachmaninoff did not always play with the 'big phrase', it is certain that he never presented kaleidoscope-like details or tiny phrases in his recorded performance. Of course, the features Rachmaninoff 'did not perform' and the features he 'did not like' or 'wished to avoid' are different issues, therefore it is important to study both his music and performance before reaching a conclusion. Take the 'big phrase' style for instance. It is also one of Rachmaninoff's compositional styles. Mosaic-like sections do exist in his music, but his long phrases and continuous melodies are probably more significant characteristics. By comparing his works, performances, and the ways in which he revised his earlier works, we might be safe to state that 'big phrase' is what the composer wished to achieve, and that he also wished to avoid the opposite. To go back to the case of Stephen Hough: although he did not follow everything Rachmaninoff did in his recordings, such as editorial choices or tempi instructions, his playing of the concertos is always in accordance with Rachmaninoff's performing style, and he does not play features that would be alien to the composer's performances, which is probably equally important.

⁴⁰⁷ Interview with Krystian Zimerman (July 9th, 2006).

3. The Rachmaninoff School?

However, Hough's rendition is ultimately very close to the composer's. Can we expect pianists to go even further? Through the case studies and the interviews above, if the trend of learning from Rachmaninoff's recordings grows stronger and stronger, and more and more pianists start to play Rachmaninoff's music in his performing style, would we see a performing school created by the composer's recording and would pianists accept it as an 'authoritative rendition' – creating a *Rachmaninoff School*?

In Chapter One I listed four categories that define a performing school: 1. Technique and technique training; 2. Important figures and general performing styles; 3. Interpretations and traditions; and 4. Schools, curriculum, repertoire, and composers. If we examine these four categories, then although Rachmaninoff's recording cannot directly teach a pianist to master certain techniques, the recording and its influence probably fits the definition of the latter three. Rachmaninoff is an important and influential composer and pianist, and his performance presents both his personal style and the general performing fashions of his time. His interpretation can also be viewed as constituting a tradition, especially as some of his recordings have the status of 'authoritative renditions'. We have already seen many other cases in which the composer's rendition has influenced, or misled, the interpretation of a piece. Roy Howat has argued that Ravel's recording of his Piano Concerto in G major with its dedicatee Marguerite Long in 1932 negatively affects the interpretation of it. He points out several speed and structural problems in the performance and concludes that 'through Long's enormous influence as a teacher, those quirks have become a received tradition unthinkingly emulated by nearly all performers since (the

Concerto is hardly ever heard as Ravel conceived and notated it)'.⁴⁰⁸ In Debussy's piano roll performance of his *La cathédrale engloutie*, when the music enters the second section at bar 16, the composer suddenly doubles the speed, which is not indicated in the score. In the Durand edition of Debussy's Preludes, published in 1985, however, the editors Roy Howat and Claude Helffer note that tempo change in the footnote for reference, which may have influenced many pianists' interpretation.⁴⁰⁹ Since social environment is also one element of the definition of a performing school, and being 'authentic' is still an important value in musical interpretation in our time, it is likely that in the near future, Rachmaninoff's recording will actually alter a generation's interpretations and play a part in the making of a new performing style, which can be viewed as a school. We have seen the Historically Informed Performance (HIP) movement that emerged from the late 1960s through to the 1980s. As Leech-Wilkinson has said of HIP: 'perhaps for the first time ever, an entirely new performance style was forged deliberately from nothing more than the will to change, and – most remarkable of all – it was made to work.'⁴¹⁰ The HIP style, however, was created by research and assumption. We do not actually know how people played in the Baroque and Classical periods since we do not have any recorded music dating from before Edison's invention. But in the case of Rachmaninoff, we have an experienced and professional pianist who made many impressive and persuasive recordings of his own compositions. Since we have such vivid, first-hand, and definitely 'authentic' evidence of a composer's playing style, why would we not see pianists seriously imitate Rachmaninoff's playing?

⁴⁰⁸ The recording was allegedly conducted by Ravel, but in fact it was conducted by Pedro de Freitas-Branco. See Roy Howat, 'What do we perform' in *The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation*. ed. J. Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 12.

⁴⁰⁹ For example, Krystian Zimerman's recording in 1991 (DG 435 7732 8).

⁴¹⁰ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Recordings and histories of performance style' in *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 253-254.

It seems to be a question of aesthetics. All the interviewees in this thesis have expressed the opinion that copying another pianist's playing, even when it is the composer playing his own piece, is artistically questionable. However, an experiment on reproducing a composer's playing exactly has appeared. In 2008 pianist Sigurd Slåttebrekk and recording technician Tony Harrison tried to recreate the only recordings made by Edvard Grieg in Paris in 1903; they made the recording on Grieg's own piano at his home, Troidhaugen in Bergen, Norway. First of all, the pianist had to copy Grieg's playing closely: he did not only want to speak the language of Grieg's performing style, but also wished to speak with his intonation: not only the grammar or words, but also the voice. Besides painstakingly imitating Grieg's playing, Slåttebrekk also tried to internalise Grieg's performing style into his own playing and then applied the style to performing the pieces the composer did not record. For example, Slåttebrekk recorded the missing parts of Grieg's Piano Sonata: the third movement is the pianist's copy of the composer's recording, the fourth movement is a combination of the pianist's copy and his own playing (Grieg's recording of the movement is incomplete), and the first two movements are performed by the pianist in a style in which he believes the composer would have played it.⁴¹¹ Just as Robert Levin recreated Mozart's Requiem and Mass in C minor from the composer's fragments, musical materials, and compositional grammar, Slåttebrekk also tried to recreate Grieg's playing by the rules, habits, and style the composer showed in his own performance.

To judge whether the project has any artistic value is very subjective, but I have to say that I am persuaded by the result of their work. The way Slåttebrekk played the

⁴¹¹ For the details of the complete project and discussion, please see their website: <http://www.chasingthebutterfly.no/?p=25> (accessed August 22nd, 2011) and the booklet of the album (SIMAX PSC 1299).

Piano Sonata and Ballade (a piece Grieg did not record) is very refreshing and convincing, with all Grieg's performing features and 'unmarked rules' as the team observed and summarised, though it is impossible to know how the composer would have presented the latter in terms of structural design because the piece is actually a large-scale composition in variation form. For me, the project proves that it is not artistically meaningless to reproduce a composer's performance exactly, especially as the team also tried to recreate the performing style in the pieces the composer did not record. By the same token, we can imagine that a pianist can try to recreate Rachmaninoff's performing style by carefully copying his performance first and then applying this style to the pieces he never recorded.

To master a technique and style by copying a maestro's work as the main method is not uncommon in the field of art. For example, students of Chinese opera still learn the performing styles of the maestros of the first half of the twentieth century (the so called 'Major Four' and 'Minor Four') by carefully imitating their singing, phrasing, and intonation through one-to-one teaching and listening to their recordings. In the study of Chinese calligraphy, mastering the styles of the great artists of the past is probably more important than developing one's own style. Only a few artists can successfully create their own style. In Chinese, we also refer to the styles of those maestros as 'schools'. Will a similar situation soon take place in the performance of Rachmaninoff's piano music? I am very interested in this idea, though it will be much more difficult to *recreate* Rachmaninoff's performance or performing style. Rachmaninoff's piano music is much more difficult than Grieg's in general. In the Grieg project, in order to faithfully reproduce the composer's performance, the team 'spent the best part of an entire winter at Trolldhaugen, in the end recording over 1850 individual takes.'⁴¹² In

⁴¹² See the 'What is it' page on their website http://www.chasingthebutterfly.no/?page_id=257

the case of Rachmaninoff, due to the difficulty of his pieces, the effort a pianist would need to spend would be many times greater, which might make the project impossible to conduct. In addition, it is also very hard to reach Rachmaninoff's highly advanced level of pianism. Rachmaninoff could maintain clear articulation in fast passages and complex textures, not to mention his remarkable control of dynamics and legato. It is definitely a great challenge to anyone who wishes to match that kind of level of technique. Furthermore, the Grieg project does not touch on the question of tone quality and sound colours, arguably the soul of piano playing. It is not the fault of the team, because one can hardly hear any obvious colour changes in Grieg's performances due to the quality of the recording. However, this is not the case with Rachmaninoff. In his recordings of the late 1920s and 1930s, one can hear a great range of colour in his playing. In one of his last recordings, the transcription of Bach's Suite from Partita in E Major for Violin Solo in 1941, the beauty of tone and the variety of colour are just intriguing. The reason the tone colour is important is that Rachmaninoff also spoke and sang through tone colour. In his recording of the Prelude Op.32 No.12 in G sharp minor, in the first descending phrase Rachmaninoff did not play in the diminuendo singing style as far as dynamics are concerned, but it still sounds like a diminuendo phrase. The reason is that at the end of the phrase, Rachmaninoff probably played with soft pedal: the tone colour suddenly changes and the softer sound creates a diminuendo effect, even though the volume does not alter much. Needless to say, it is tremendously intricate for any pianist to govern sound and tone as excellently as Rachmaninoff did. For pianists who cannot reach the level of pianism Rachmaninoff achieved, it is probably impossible for them to recreate his performance; for pianists who can play as outstandingly as Rachmaninoff, how many would spend so much time imitating and copying the composer's playing, instead of

being themselves, polishing and fulfilling their own ideas and styles? Can we expect pianists like Hough or Zimerman, or any pianist who has that kind of technical brilliance, to spend their whole performing season in recording studios, just to become the reincarnation of Rachmaninoff? But if a capable and famous pianist was willing to conduct a 'Rachmaninoff project' like the Grieg one, the result would probably also be many times more influential than the Grieg one, and might actually dramatically create a new fashion for performing Rachmaninoff.

I do not know the answer yet. But after all, the result of the Grieg project suggests that this is a beneficial approach for anyone who wishes to immerse themselves into a composer's performance and master the language of the performing style. Also, it reminds us how remarkable Rachmaninoff was as a pianist, and how his pieces are supposed to be played. Hough is open to different interpretations of Rachmaninoff's music but still insists on a particular passage:

[I am open to different views.] My only exception to this is the Vivacissimo tempo [for the coda of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.3] (largely because so many people ignore the marking *and* the recording) – especially if it's done without thinking because it's what everyone does. I think every pianist should learn this piece playing that section at the 'correct' tempo and only THEN decide that it's better slowly. Some students I've spoken to about this have not even thought about it.⁴¹³

What Hough did not directly say (probably out of politeness) is that the reason for many slow performances of Rachmaninoff's music, especially the Piano Concerto No.3, is simply that the pianists choose an easier path. The concerto is on a totally different

⁴¹³ Interview with Stephen Hough (August 31st, 2011).

level of difficulty if it's played a few clicks faster on the metronome. Rachmaninoff is popular – probably too popular – so we have seen too many mediocre or unqualified performances. If playing in the style of Rachmaninoff becomes a fashion, even though we may not witness a 'Rachmaninoff project' similar to the Grieg one, it will still help pianists to rethink how to perform Rachmaninoff *correctly* as well as how to honestly face the challenges his music requires. If all pianists can try to play Rachmaninoff's pieces at the tempi used in his own performances rather than choosing their own, the average quality of the rendition of his music would surely be much higher than it is now.

4. Analogy: Research Into Chinese Painting and Calligraphy

The interviews and discussion I mention above are aimed at explaining the diversity and selectivity in pianists' choices when following Rachmaninoff's performing style. In this section of the thesis, I would like to introduce research from another field to compare with the conclusions of my case studies. In Chapter Five I mentioned several 'authoritative renditions', including the two case studies on Rachmaninoff's Piano Concertos No.2 and No.3. There are many 'authorities' in the field of music, but it is not common to see the influence of specific 'authoritative renditions', especially ones as powerful as we see in the case studies. But the process of interpretive development and the transformation of renditions over the generations that we have seen here is not an isolated case. At least, one can find similar examples in research into Chinese paintings. Compared to Western paintings, the Chinese have several fundamental problems with regard to authenticity and the features of period styles. In the West, it is comparatively easy to identify an artist of a particular piece, as both the artist and work have been described and documented in writing. But the Chinese culture respected heritages and literati who abandoned fame and fortune, so most of the

famous painters were not professionals and mainly painted for their friends, not for public demand. Their reputation usually grew after their death. This means that the number of authentic works by distinguished names is very few, and most of them are not recorded in reports by their contemporaries.⁴¹⁴

When Chinese calligraphy and painting became collectors' objects, they became objects of study and emulation, too. By the fourth century A.D., calligraphy had reached its zenith, with painting a close second. Also around this time, fine forgery became not only a profitable endeavour but a positive sport and gentlemanly pastime in which one pitted one's skills against others' at achieving a passable likeness of the reigning Master of the age, watched by the sharpest eyes of one's own time.⁴¹⁵ In addition, to maintain social prominence, it had become mandatory for governmental elites to obtain the artworks of certain big names.⁴¹⁶ Paintings by the literati became ideal gifts to officials for career advancement, and ownership of works by those masters had thus come to assume a distinctly social function. The result was that collecting followed certain socially advantageous guidelines instead of personal preference, and accordingly, the recognition of authenticity became subject to the pressures of demand and supply.⁴¹⁷ As a consequence, it is very common for scholars today to be faced with a dozen attributions of various characteristics for a given old master. Some are still in the style of the master, some are quite different, and some are not even related at all to that of the master.

In the study of forgery, the Princeton School, following the lead of George Rowley,

⁴¹⁴ Erik Zurcher, 'Imitation and forgery in Chinese painting and calligraphy' in *Oriental Art News Series* Vol.4. Winter 1955, 141.

⁴¹⁵ Joan Stanley-Baker, 'Forgeries in Chinese painting' in *Oriental Art News Series* Vol.32. Spring 1986.

⁴¹⁶ Robert H. van Gulik, *Chinese Pictorial Art: as Viewed by the Connoisseur* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958), 8.

⁴¹⁷ Joan Stanley-Baker, *Old Masters Repainted: Wu Zen (1280-1354) Prime Objects and Accretions* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University, 1995), 5.

has made persistent research efforts: the studies by Wen C. Fong, Marilyn Wong, She Fu, and Joan Stanley-Baker, among others, have particularly contributed to the area. Stanley-Baker's book *Old Masters Repainted: Wu Zen (1280-1354) Prime Objects and Accretions* (1985) is the pioneering work devoted to researching the real artistic image and style of the great painter Wu Zen from all kinds of accretions under his name. In the first chapter 'Methodological Considerations', Stanley-Baker introduces the idea of 'prime objects' (and replications) by George Kubler and applies it to the study of Chinese painting:

Prime objects and replications denote principal inventions, and the entire system of replicas, reproductions, copies, reductions, transfers, and derivations, floating in the wake of an important work of art. Prime numbers have no divisors other than themselves and unity; prime objects likewise resist decomposition in being original entities. Their character as primes is not explained by their antecedents, and their order in history is enigmatic.⁴¹⁸

Stanley-Baker argues that in understanding any given master's work, the first step is to establish a framework by which his original works (the prime objects), can be identified with a greater degree of assurance. The next step is not only the 'identification of forgeries', but the identification of their date of manufacture and, if possible, their School provenance. 'Only in this way is the art historian able to place all the traditionally accepted works of a given Master in a Time/Tradition grid, and chart the evolution and changes of his image in the course of subsequent centuries.'⁴¹⁹ A series of good quality, generally accepted forgeries of a given master lined up

⁴¹⁸ George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 39.

⁴¹⁹ Stanley-Baker, 1995, 23.

chronologically tell us much through the nature of the evolutions, alterations and (typological) accretions that the original style-image undergoes over time. Four categories reflect increasing distance from the original, which she identifies as follows:

(1). **Quasi-original:** There are two ways to derive quasi-original evidence of an original image. First, the contemporary evidence: works by immediate contemporaries, colleagues and students. For the art historian, these works provide the closest possible reflection of the original period style. Contemporaries share in world-outlook, period-style, morphology, brush habits and in the materials of the craft. Secondly, personal evidence: close tracing or line-copies by observant forgers that closely copy, follow or imitate the original image. In faithful copies, the copyists' own period style and personal habits are reduced to a minimum. With regard to period and personal style, the quasi-originals provide objective evidence of the highest accuracy regarding the master's style image.

(2). **Evolution:** Imitations and minor variations based on deep familiarity with originals or quasi-originals (of the original master's personal-style). These reflect something of the compositional types and brush-techniques of the Master, and each generation of students and forgers unwittingly leaves the imprint of their respective period and personal characteristics.

(3). **Alteration:** The artist bases his work on the Master, but does not attempt to suppress his own inspiration. He shares in the act of creation with the Master, to a greater or lesser degree, but clearly retains if not asserts his own personal image.

(4.) **(Typological) Accretion:** Artists freely invent composition types and brush-modes, without letting their notions (if any) of the Master's original image impede production.⁴²⁰

Stanley-Baker's observation of the original image (works) and the four different levels of forgeries aside from it are echoed by the case studies in this thesis on the changing style of performing Rachmaninoff's piano music. In the recording era, it is fortunate that the biggest problem Stanley-Baker and the other art historians have to face does not exist: if we consider the composer's recordings the prime objects, it is confirmed clearly that they are performed by the composer himself, and we can study them to understand the 'original images' of Rachmaninoff's piano playing. All the other performances of Rachmaninoff's piano music can be viewed as the replications of the prime objects, or the 'forgeries' (no negative meaning here), in the context of Stanley-Baker's methodology, and we also can see the similar levels in them. The 'quasi-originals' are the performances given by Rachmaninoff's contemporaries and students. In the case studies of Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G minor and the phrasing style of the 18th variation of *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, we have also seen that many of the composer's contemporaries had similar performing habits and shared a period style with Rachmaninoff. With regard to performing schools, Rachmaninoff and other Russian pianists around that time also showed a certain 'Russianness' in their playing with their diminuendo phrasing style. In addition, in the case study of deletion and cadenza choice when playing the Piano Concerto No.3, we saw that some pianists also tried to closely follow the composer's editorial choice in his 1939/40 recording of the piece, and those pianists also performed the concerto

⁴²⁰ Stanley-Baker, 1995, 4-9.

with fast tempi, close to the playing of the composer – the ‘original image’. There are also pianists who followed Horowitz’s version, which can be viewed as a quasi-original. In Stanley-Baker’s research, both original image and quasi-original influence the understanding of the image of the master, as do the ‘authoritative rendition’ status of the two pianists’ recordings to their colleagues and subsequent generations.

As far as the ‘evolution’ is concerned, the performances that have been influenced by the composer’s recording since 1987 or 1992 can be categorised on this level. With the help of recordings, pianists can study Rachmaninoff’s playing more easily, and their phrasing style, tempi choice, and structural decisions, as shown in the case studies, also reflect characteristics of the composer’s performance. However, they still have ‘their own imprint of their respective period and personal characteristics’ in the performances. Some only (selectively) follow Rachmaninoff’s structural design and deletions, some imitate but also exaggerate certain period styles, and some focus on the composer’s tempi choice and phrasing style. But generally speaking, these performances were probably all influenced by the composer’s recording. In the last two categories, pianists who try to retain or even assert their own personal thoughts into their interpretations, as those in the 1980s in the case study of the prelude shows, can be regarded as producing ‘alterations’. Their main goal is not necessarily to be faithful to Rachmaninoff’s performing style, even to the score, but try to present their interpretative ideas and make their performances distinguishable. As for the ‘(typological) accretions’, there are some pianists who do ‘invent’ ideas when performing a given piece, even if they are contrary to the score or the composer’s performances. In the case study of the Piano Concerto No.3, Peter Donohoe and Michael Ponti’s decision to combine the two cadenzas into one can be considered as belonging in this category.

The phenomenon of the influence of the 'authoritative rendition' in the musical field, as we have seen in Chapter Five, finds a parallel, together with some potentially useful terminology, in research into Chinese painting. After examining all the levels of forgeries and attributions and identifying the chronicle order of the artworks going under the name of Wu Zen, Stanley-Baker discovered that the image of Wu Zen has changed several times over the centuries, and certain artworks have become influential pieces even though they are actually forgeries and were made much later than Wu Zen's time. These further determined the image of Wu Zen as well as becoming models for other artists or forgers to follow or imitate. I summarise Stanley-Baker's discoveries into two points as follows:

(1). In Stanley-Baker's theory, 'attributions accepted as genuine by influential collectors acquire what we may term functional authenticity, as they become in turn models for future sincere copyists and insincere forgers alike'. She finds that each generation of accepted forgeries reflects its own age's perception of the distant original or prime object; it is supposed to be studied as a genuine document of its own (actual) time.⁴²¹ Furthermore, since over the centuries a famous master's oeuvre acquires many images as new creations are added to his original works, sometimes more 'modern' additions have greater appeal for their audience than the genuine works.

(2). People are encouraged to make forgeries, and certain successful, high-quality forgeries, once accepted by powerful collectors, may become as influential as the authentic works. Stanley-Baker states that:

⁴²¹ Stanly-Baker, 1995, 36.

As works of particular masters rise in esteem and as their specimens drop in supply, the resultant rise in demand creates a market condition that is highly conducive to turning gifted artists in the direction of forgeries. Here second-rate and middling artists find a chance at immortality albeit under an ancient master's name, and the certainty of immediate financial rewards. While poor forgeries are soon discovered and rejected, creative, high-quality works win places in men's hearts and collections, and soon become part of the cultural heritage which is passed down through successive collections—to be imitated by later admirers and forgers. In this way forgeries assume a value and influence entirely equal to those of genuine works.⁴²²

In this context, the perception of old masters therefore undergoes continual transformation. In painting, such perceptual changes are marked by later productions. While accretions or forgeries with functional authenticity are rarely reliable reflections of the master, in some cases they entirely obscure the master's style-image: they become *the* real image in the eyes of the later generations.⁴²³

In the performance of Rachmaninoff's piano music, we also see that not only did the composer's own performances become 'authoritative renditions', but so did the Horowitz and Cliburn performances of the Piano Concerto No.3. Each generation or geographical grouping of pianists has accepted different 'authoritative renditions' as the model. Horowitz's and Cliburn's renditions were closer to their followers in the States and Soviet Union respectively; thus, we can also see their influence in limited

⁴²² Stanley-Baker, 1995, 34.

⁴²³ Stanley-Baker, 1995, 4.

geographical areas. Even Rachmaninoff's influence on the performance of his Piano Concerto No.2 was also mainly restricted to the States. Stanley-Baker's description of the reasons why painters would follow, even copy, certain models can also explain why those 'authoritative renditions' became influential and accepted by their followers. In addition, just as Kapell and Janis can follow Rachmaninoff's and Horowitz's rendition and Moguilivsky and Ashkenazy can learn from Cliburn's interpretation, their performances still constitute admirable artistic and technical achievements. However, as Stanley-Baker has also noticed, the success of the later renditions may overshadow the original, just as how, for the pianists in the Soviet Union, the previous interpretation of fast tempi and short cadenza seemed to be forgotten once Cliburn's rendition became the authoritative rendition and the image of the composer also changed. But, since a pianist's interpretation also reflects its time, when our era started to pay more attention to the appearance of similarity in acting, the digital reissue of Rachmaninoff's complete recordings also became an inevitable attraction to pianists. As a consequence, his performances have become the model (again).

Of course, there are some fundamental differences between Chinese paintings and classical music performances I have to acknowledge. Except in certain very rare cases (usually occurring in the recording era),⁴²⁴ we always have the musical score first, and then a performance. The written work is the real 'original artwork', the beginning of all performances; therefore the composer's performance is only a rendition, not *the* artwork. In this context, the composer's performance does not have the authority of an original artwork – or at least we do not expect the composer's performance

⁴²⁴ For example, Horowitz never published (probably even never wrote down) his transcriptions. The 'Horowitz transcriptions' pianists perform are actually dictations (by the pianists themselves or other persons).

necessarily to be in a completely different class of excellence and value from anyone else's, even if the composer is a great pianist. In addition, unlike painting, we cannot trade in musical performances. The value of a performance is artistic, not monetary. On the other hand, the reason I have still decided to introduce the perspective of art history and apply Stanley-Baker's research into Chinese painting to my findings from the case studies here is that the analogies I have sketched above suggest common processes underlying the development of human behaviour over time. Certain kinds of artistic, social, political behaviour and beliefs become widely admired and begin to function as models, with which contemporaries and followers create various kinds of relationships. Richard Dawkins's theory of memetics and Chester Barnard's acceptance theory of authority offer different perspectives on the process of cultural transmission: the former emphasises the activity of how a belief or idea can reproduce itself from mind to mind, while the latter focuses on the process of acceptance from the bottom to top. Stanley-Baker's research, on the other hand, helps us to see the similarities in human behaviour as well as the process of cultural transmission.

Furthermore, her research method also reflects what I have experienced in conducting my research. It is a wonderful journey to explore the performing style of Rachmaninoff and the ways that other pianists have played his compositions. It is also frustrating though, to deal with the vast amount of recordings, facing all kinds of different renditions but hoping to categorise certain trends or discover some factors which influence those performers. After reading what art historians have experienced in their research, however, I no longer feel alone and accept that it is probably the only way to understand the phenomena behind performances. Although the musical interpretation varies from one to another, if one spends enough time and pays careful

attention, one can still discover, or identify, the factors which directly or indirectly form those renditions. Those factors also may vary significantly, which would lead to another question waiting to be explored. But it is not uncommon. In his 'Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art', scholar Erwin Panofsky says that:

To correct the interpretation of an individual work of art by 'history of style', which in turn can only be built up by interpreting individual works, may look like a vicious circle. It is, indeed, a circle, though not a vicious, but a methodical one.⁴²⁵

Probably this is true. Only through painstaking, case by case examination, can one identify the general trend, reaction, and influence among the performances.

5. Suggestions for Further Research

At the end of the thesis, I would like to suggest three areas for further study.

5.1 The Relation between Rachmaninoff's Instrument and his Performing Style

Since the HIP movement, pianists have been more and more aware of the sound quality and mechanism of pianoforte as well as its relation to the music of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. However, the concern should never be limited to the piano music of the Classical period but should apply to all composers' instrumental works. The Grieg project used the composer's piano at his home in Troldhaugen for the recreation, but the team has yet to discuss the piano itself and how the instrument might have influenced Grieg's piano writing, even his performing

⁴²⁵ Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (London: Peregrin; Reprint, New York: Doubleday, 1983), 61.

style. Leif Ove Andsnes, another Norwegian pianist who has recorded the composer's piano music at the same piano, believes that the characteristics of the instrument are related to the composer's piano pieces: the sound quality of the piano is different in its high register, and this probably explains why Grieg had the tendency to modulate towards there, especially when he wished to create a certain effect such as bell sounds or echoes.⁴²⁶ Even for the piano music of the late twentieth century, the period when piano manufacture has become much more standard and consistent than before, it is still important to know the instrument the composer used. For instance, when Zimerman was learning Lutosławski's Piano Concerto, he found that 'composers almost always write based on the locale in which they are situated':

Lutosławski asked me to produce a particular acoustic effect in a section. He even sang for me what it was supposed to sound like. However, it didn't sound a bit like what I could do on my own piano. I simply didn't understand what he was asking for. And then one day, I went over to his place and played the section on his piano. The moment I heard sounds coming from his piano, I understood right away what he had wanted, and I knew later on how to produce the same sounds out of other pianos.⁴²⁷

I have never played Rachmaninoff's pianos, and my piano technique is probably not good enough to support me conducting this kind of research. As far as I know (from the pianists who have played Rachmaninoff's piano in his Villa in Senar, Switzerland), the action of his piano there is especially light. It would be interesting to explore whether Rachmaninoff's instrument did influence his performing style and piano

⁴²⁶ Interview with Leif Ove Andsnes (May 20th, 2005).

⁴²⁷ Interview with Krystian Zimerman (July 9th, 2006).

music writing, especially to test the diminuendo singing phrase, tenuto-staccato, and speech-like effect at his piano. For example, if the sound of the piano also fades away more quickly than average, it probably explains some of Rachmaninoff's pedal markings in his *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*, and the way in which he arranges inner voices in his musical texture.⁴²⁸

5.2 Revisit the Performing School

It seems unfashionable to discuss national performing schools in the current era of convenient transportation and Internet communication. However, as the discussion in Chapters Two and Three has shown, there are still certain distinguishable common characteristics among the early Russian pianists that open up a profound area for students to explore. In the Grieg project, the team mentioned certain similarities between Grieg's and Rachmaninoff's performing style, but I believe it would be more interesting to discuss the question in the context of piano schools. Grieg polished his piano technique and composition skills in the Leipzig Conservatory. As far as performing schools are concerned, he was a product of the German School. However, the features Sigurd Slåttebrekk and Tony Harrison have found in his playing, such as not combining relaxation, diminution, and retardation with a clear cut, and having no prepared turning point of the phrase, are similar to certain aspects of Rachmaninoff's 'big phrase' style (as summarised in Chapter Three) but actually are contrary to the German school – to judge by the performance of Artur Schnabel, Wilhelm Backhaus, and Wilhelm Kempff. At least, the features are almost the opposite of the principles of Schnabel's teaching, as Konrad Wolff laid out in the book *Schnabel's Interpretation of*

⁴²⁸ Pianist Mikhail Pletnev recorded an album on the composer's piano in Villa Senar in 1998 (DG 459 634-2). The sound of the playing is very light and colourful. However, Pletnev also uses a piano with light keyboard actions. It is hard to estimate how much of the effect he created in the playing should be contributed to the instrument.

Piano Music.⁴²⁹ On the other hand, Grieg's composition style is also not very German. He was not good at structure or forms, frequently writing several sections of themes and then linking them with transitions (in his Violin Sonata No.3 in C minor, for example); the latter feature is actually similar to Rachmaninoff's writing strategy. It would be interesting to explore this issue further.

Another issue which is related to national schools is the interaction between language and performing style, a topic that I believe has not been fully discussed yet. Rachmaninoff *sang* and *spoke* through the piano, but how about his contemporaries? If the pianists on disc in the first half of the twentieth century, generally speaking, had this phrasing style, what are the languages in their minds while playing at the keyboard? When Cortot and Rachmaninoff played a singing line in a Chopin Nocturne, does the different phrasing in their performance come more from personality or the language they spoke? When we listen to Ignaz Friedman's performance of Schubert-Liszt's *Hark, Hark the Lark*, or Sofronitsky's Schubert-Liszt *Der Müller und der Bach*, we hear terrific singing qualities in their playing – but what languages did they have in mind when they played: German or Polish or Russian? Do sentence structure, and the accents of a phrase, ever influence the way pianists sing at their instrument? Pianists have to develop their own skills to obtain the singing quality in playing. Might the same language among pianists within the same geographic group help to shape their technique and aesthetics, thus resulting in a national school? Or is the singing image not to be taken so literally, and pianists actually sing at the keyboard without using words? If there are students with vocal, linguistic, and piano backgrounds willing to devote themselves to this area, we will probably see not only the singing method of early pianists more clearly but also open up a new dimension in our analysis of

⁴²⁹ Konrad Wolff, *Schnabel's Interpretation of Piano Music* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1972).

national schools.

In addition, although many traditions or performing habits are vague and imprecise, some, like the 'Russian crescendo' Hough learned from Josef Lhévinne via Adele Marcus, still have clear definitions and should not be viewed as 'Chinese whispers'. It is important to trace and record these traditions before they are no longer remembered. They may not fit current tastes but do open doors that enable us to understand the aesthetics and logic of earlier musicians. The more we know about these 'traditions', the more deeply we can explore national schools.

5.3. The Influence of Social and Political Change on Musicians' Performances

In Chapter Four I summarised and discussed several possibilities for explaining changing general trends over the generations. One factor I have not fully explored (because its impact is not clear in the case studies) is if the collapse of the Soviet Union affected the Russian performing style. Great social and political changes usually influence musicians' artistic expression, as was the case after World War II. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 should have been responsible for a great change. As far as musicians are concerned, following its collapse many distinguished Russian pianists and pedagogues were immediately invited to teach in the West: Bashkirov went to Madrid, Vladimir Krainev to Hannover, Elisso Virsaladze to Munich, Rudolf Kherer to Vienna, and so on. Those pianists were professors at the Moscow Conservatory. Although many of them still held their positions in Moscow, they spent at least half their time teaching outside Russia. On the other hand, when the totalitarian political regime was replaced by a semi-democratic one, the social atmosphere also changed. Brilliant Russian musicians are not appointed, forced, or forbidden by the government to compete in international competitions any more, and

they are able to develop their own repertoire and musical taste more freely. Now that the West is open to Russian musicians with all kinds of ideas and stimulations, we are expecting to see certain changes in their performances. Since Rachmaninoff is still constantly played by Russian musicians and those with Russian background (educational or personal) are usually labeled as natural interpreters of the composer's music, it seems safe to say that the interpretation of Rachmaninoff's music is deeply linked with the development of the Russian/Soviet Piano School. When the performing school changes, we will probably also hear the changing style in performing Rachmaninoff's music. Perhaps we need more case studies on Russian musical performance to compare with each other.

In addition, in the case studies, for those who adopted Rachmaninoff's performing habits in their renditions, I also checked their performances of other composers' work and found that most of them do not use the same approach there, as I mentioned in Chapter Four. We can conclude that this is due to the influence of the digital reissue of the composer's recording. However, records and live performances also show that musicians in the last decade seem to have started to revive some performing practices that disappeared in the second half of the last century and they are updating those practices according to the current taste. For example, pianist David Greilsammer arranged pieces from various composers into mirror-like order in his album (Bach- Keren - Brahms- Schoenberg- Ligeti- Janáček- Cage– Mozart- Cage- Janáček- Ligeti- Schoenberg- Brahms- Keren- Bach).⁴³⁰ The Fantasy and Fugue from Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy & Fugue in D Minor*, BWV 903 are redesigned for the beginning and the end of the album, and the two movements of Janáček's Piano Sonata are also separated by the works of Cage and Mozart. In a recital at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in 2009, French

⁴³⁰ David Greilsammer (Naïve: 22186 05081, 2008)

pianist Alexandre Tharaud also intertwined keyboard works from Couperin and Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, as did Angela Hewitt with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the orchestral version of the Ravel. What they present is not only an interpretation of each of the pieces, but the artistic concept of combining those pieces into a whole. In the summer of 2010, when Thomas Dausgaard led the Danish National Symphony Orchestra and Concert Choir with soloist to the Proms, after performing short choral works by Ligeti, the conductor started directly to perform Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, as though the Ligeti pieces were a prelude to the concerto. Interestingly enough, when Pierre-Laurent Aimard gave the London premiere of George Benjamin's *Duet*, a piece for piano and orchestra, the pianist also performed Ligeti's *Musica ricercata No.2* first and then continued to play the Benjamin without pause. This kind of creative concept is not far away from what pianists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would do: Liszt once played movements from different Beethoven piano sonatas in concert. When Ervin Nyíregyházi (1903-1987) played Chopin's Piano Sonata No.2 for Otto Klemperer, he replaced the original last movement with the more dramatic finale of Chopin's Piano Sonata No.3. Will pianists go that far again? I do not know yet, but at least I will not be surprised if someone plays the combination of Liszt Hungarian Rhapsody No.2 and No.12 in the near future, as Hans von Bülow has done. If the trend is going in this direction, then we shall also not be surprised to hear that pianists start to bring back the practice of asynchronisation and free arpeggiation, and they would learn more and more directly from Rachmaninoff's recording, since it is a great source of inspiration and reference of the performing style in the first half of the twentieth century. Maybe the latest trend of referring to Rachmaninoff's recording can be consider a new wave of reaction – a reaction against literal and faithful score reading and interpretation. It is an idea that deserves more attention.

It is clear that it is Rachmaninoff the composer who has obviously influenced the interpretation of his works through his recordings. The reasons are twofold: he was a truly remarkable pianist, and the sound quality of his recordings is also good enough to record his pianism and music-making. Recorded performances, as the case of the 'authoritative renditions' has shown, can have a strong musical and even cultural influence. I hope that there will be more scholars and musicians alike who devote themselves to the study of recorded music. But just as the score is limited, a performance is limited too – by the circumstances of the performer, the time limitations in the studio, the performer's mood of the day, and so on. I think musicians need to know both scores and recordings, but then they also have to be themselves. Frequently we have seen that composers want what is written on the page until they hear a really convincing alternative view and then they often love that difference. That is why Horowitz's performance of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.3 is different from the composer's rendition, but Rachmaninoff loved it even more. When Krystian Zimerman asked Lutosławski how he would like him to perform his Piano Concerto, the composer replied:

I don't know. I'm curious about what this concerto will develop into. The piece is like my child. I gave it life, but it's not my possession. It will grow and develop on its own course; it will find its own life. I'd very much like to know what it would turn out to be like in another twenty years. Too bad I won't be able to see for myself.⁴³¹

Let us wait to see the continuing development of the changing style of performing

⁴³¹ Interview with Krystian Zimerman (July 9th, 2006).

Rachmaninoff's piano music. His music is great enough to provide variety, room, and possibilities for musicians to explore. While people still love his music, the evolution of interpreting his works will never stop.

Appendix: Tables from the Chapters

Table 1-2: Selective List of Recordings of Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No. 7					
Performer	Year of performance	Recording information	1 st Mvt.	2 nd Mvt.	3 rd Mvt.
Russian/Soviet Pianists					
V. Horowitz	1945	BMG 60377-2-RG	8'13"	5'22"	3'41"
V. Horowitz	1953	BMG 09026-60526-2			3'15"
V. Ashkenazy	1957	Testament SBT 1046	7'11"	5'17"	2'59"
S. Richter	1958	Parnassus PACD 96-001/2	7'22"	6'29"	3'14"
S. Richter	1958	BMG 74321 29470 2	7'54"	6'08"	3'27"
V. Ashkenazy	1968	Decca 425 046-2	8'17"	6'01"	3'28"
S. Richter	1970	Revelation RV 10094	7'49"	6'26"	3'41"
N. Petrov	1972	Melodiya SUCD10-00208	7'46"	6'39"	3'19"
E. Mogilevsky	1974	MK 418021	8'34"	6'17"	3'31"
M. Pletnev	1978	BMG 74321 25181 2	8'30"	6'59"	3'38"
B. Berman	1990	Chandos CHAN 8881	8'12"	6'27"	3'38"
O. Marshev	1991	Danacord Dacodc 391	7'51"	7'11"	3'21"
V. Ovchinnikov	1993	EMI 7243 5 55127 2 7	8'00"	6'53"	3'33"
V. Ashkenazy	1994	Decca 444 408	7'57"	6'13"	3'32"
Y. Kasman	1994	Calliope CAL 9607	7'56"	6'05"	3'25"
N. Trull	1995	Triton DMCC-60001-3	8'46"	7'05"	3'09"
M. Pletnev	1997	DG 457 588-2	9'06"	6'36"	3'31"
D. Matsuev	1998	DICJ-25001	7'57"	6'22"	3'14"
S. Kruchin	2002	Meridian CDE 84468	8'17"	6'29"	3'32"
G. Sokolov	2002	Naïve DR 2108 AV127 (DVD)	9'12"	8'03"	3'52"
A. Gavrylyuk	2006	VAI 4662223	8'20"	6'30"	3'22"
D. Matsuev	2009	BMG 86972 91462	7'56"	6'45"	3'08"
A. Vinnitskaya	2009	Naïve 22186 00177	7'52"	6'21"	3'15"
Lev Naumov's Pupils					
A. Toradze	1986	EMI DS37360	7'48"	6'28"	3'40"
V. Krainev	1990	MCA Classics AED-68019	7'29"	6'48"	3'22"
A. Gavrilov	1991	DG 435 439-2	7'26"	6'38"	3'38"
A. Nikolsky	1991	Arte Nova 74321 27794 2	8'24"	6'48"	4'16"
A. Sultanov	1990	Teldec 2292-46011-2	8'20"	6'09"	3'46"

A. Mogilevsky	2002	EMI 72435 67934 2 2	9'06"	6'58"	3'30"
P. Dimitriew	2002	Arte Nova 74321-99052 2	8'58"	6'50"	3'46"
Non-Russian Pianists					
D. Pollack	1958	Cambria-CD 1133	7'14"	5'25"	2'51"
S. Francois	1961	EMI CZS 762951 2 A	8'03"	5'47"	3'19"
G. Gould	1967	Sony SM2K 52 622	8'18"	7'35"	3'16"
M. Argerich	1966	FED 074	7'26"	4'40"	3'05"
G. Sander	1967	VoxBox CDX3 3500	8'24"	6'10"	3'11"
M. Argerich	1969	Exclusive EX92T65	6'47"	4'24"	3'01"
M. Pollini	1971	DG 419 202-2	7'27"	6'07"	3'09"
M. Argerich	1979	EMI 72435 5 56975 2 3	7'03"	5'15"	3'05"
Y. Bronfman	1987	CBS MK 44690	8'10"	6'55"	3'13"
B. Nissman	1988	Newport Classic NCD60093	7'53"	5'51"	3'17"
M. Raekallio	1988	Ondine ODE947-3T	8'00"	6'52"	2'55"
M. Mclachlan	1989	Olympia OCD 256	8'33"	7'13"	3'28"
B. Douglas	1991	BMG 60779-2-RC	8'46"	6'54"	3'18"
John Lill	1991	ASV CD DCA 755	8'27"	6'40"	3'22"
P. Donohoe	1991	EMI CDC 7 54281 2	8'25"	5'51"	3'26"
F. Chiu	1991	Harmonia mundi 907087	8'55"	7'05"	3'19"
L. Cabasso	1991	Valois V 4655	7'46"	6'21"	3'25"
Kun Woo Paik	1992	Dante PSG 9126	8'12"	6'42"	3'01"
Y. Boukoff	1993	DRB AMP 104	8'11"	5'30"	3'23"
B. Glemser	1994	Naxos 8.553021	8'28"	6'48"	3'11"
F. Kempf	2003	BIS CD 1200	8'18"	6'25"	3'17"

Table 2-2-1:

Comparison of the Dynamic Balance in Beethoven's Piano Sonata No.31

Op. 110, First Movement, Bars 5-8:

Performers of Russian Piano Educational Background

Pianist	Year	Loudness of the Notes (decibels)											
		1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	
		A	b	C	D	E	f	g	H	i	j	k	l
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Heinrich Neuhaus (1888-1964)		-1 6	-9	-12	-13	-14		-12	-14	-11	-11	-13	
		-2 1	-19	-19	-16	-17	-17	-12	-16	-18	-16	-18	-15
		-2 2	-22	-22	-20	-20	-20	-19	-19	-17	-22	-20	-19
Simon Barere (1896-1951)	1946	-2 1	-16	-19	-16	-22		-12	-17	-14	-14	-16	
		-2 5	-24	-22	-20	-22	-20	-17	-18	-19	-22	-20	-20
		-3 2	-21	-26	-28	-27	-27	-17	-17	-20	-19	-26	-21
Maria Grinberg (1904-1961)	1950	-1 9	-23	-17	-17	-28		-21	-26	-23	-24	-19	
		-2 2	-22	-22	-26	-26	-25	-26	-24	-23	-22	-23	-21
		-2 8	-27	-27	-32	-31	-30	-25	-24	-26	-22	-26	-22
Lev Oborin (1907-1974)	1952	-1 7	-11	-15	-15	-16		-14	-13	-11	-11	-17	
		-1 8	-16	-15	-19	-17	-16	-17	-17	-17	-16	-17	-17
		-2 2	-19	-18	-21	-22	-22	-16	-16	-16	-15	-17	-16
Sviatoslav Richter	1965	-1 8	-16	-13	-14	-18		-18	-17	-14	-15	-14	
		-2	-21	-17	-19	-19	-19	-19	-18	-17	-21	-21	-17

(1915-1997)		2											
		-2 1	-22	-21	-24	-25	-22	-22	-27	-20	-18	-19	-17
Emil Gilels (1916-1985)	1985	-2 5	-14	-17	-18	-19		-19	-16	-15	-15	-17	
		-2 2	-23	-23	-21	-21	-21	-20	-20	-19	-18	-17	-16
		-2 2	-21	-21	-24	-24	-24	-22	-19	-19	-25	-24	-23
Tatiana Nikolayeva (1924-1993)	1983	-2 2	-9	-13	-14	-13		-12	-11	-9	-9	-15	
		-1 9	-19	-16	-17	-16	-16	-16	-16	-16	-15	-16	-14
		-2 3	-18	-18	-22	-24	-20	-16	-15	-15	-26	-26	-20
Vladimir Ashkenazy (1937-)		-2 4	-14	-17	-19	-19		-19	-16	-15	-15	-17	
		-2 3	-23	-22	-22	-21	-20	-19	-19	-20	-18	-19	-16
		-2 1	-22	-22	-25	-24	-24	-22	-19	-19	-26	-24	-23

Table 2-2-2:

Comparison of the Dynamic Balance in Beethoven's Piano Sonata No.31

Op. 110, First Movement, Bars 5-8

Performers of German/ Central European Piano Educational Background

Pianist	Year	Loudness of the Notes (decibels)											
		1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	
		a	b	C	d	E	f	g	H	i	j	k	l
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
Frederic Lamond (1868-1948)	1927	-18	-11	-12	-14	-20		-16	-17	-14	-14	-15	
		-18	-17	-18	-18	-18	-16	-16	-18	-21	-21	-19	-17
		-23	-22	-19	-22	-30	-22	-15	-16	-21	-21	-20	-19
Elly Ney (1882-1968)	1968	-18	-12	-15	-14	-12		-11	-11	-14	-12	-14	
		-16	-15	-14	-14	-13	-13	-14	-14	-13	-14	-14	-14
		-22	-19	-18	-19	-16	-16	-20	-20	-17	-16	-16	-16
Wilhelm Backhaus (1884-1969)	1953	-20	-15	-15	-15	-16		-15	-16	-16	-15	-16	
		-25	-24	-24	-17	-21	-21	-21	-19	-21	-17	-18	-18
		-27	-24	-25	-22	-22	-22	-20	-20	-21	-24	-22	-23
Edwin Fischer (1886-1960)	1938	-22	-21	-19	-19	-22		-18	-19	-19	-20	-20	
		-23	-19	-21	-21	-22	-19	-19	-20	-19	-20	-19	-20
		-24	-21	-22	-25	-25	-25	-22	-24	-23	-22	-24	-30
Mieczyslaw Horszowski (1892-1993)	1958	-19	-18	-17	-19	-18		-16	-18	-17	-16	-18	
		-18	-18	-17	-18	-16	-17	-16	-18	-15	-15	-15	-15
		-21	-20	-17	-18	-17	-16	-14	-15	-17	-15	-15	-15
Walter Giesecking (1895-1956)	1956	-26	-21	-16	-17	-19		-14	-14	-14	-19	-19	
		-21	-21	-21	-26	-25	-22	-22	-22	-22	-20	-21	-20
		-25	-24	-22	-25	-25	-24	-24	-22	-21	-21	-23	-23
Wihelm Kempff (1895-1991)	1951	-18	-21	-16	-15	-16		-15	-16	-22	-21	-18	
		-20	-20	-21	-20	-20	-19	-18	-18	-20	-18	-20	-18
		-27	-25	-25	-28	-23	-23	-18	-18	-20	-19	-20	-18
Claudio	1957	-22	-16	-12	-13	-20		-19	-15	-13	-13	-17	

Arrau (1903-1991)		-17	-17	-15	-17	-17	-13	-13	-14	-15	-16	-14	-15
		-23	-19	-18	-23	-23	-23	-13	-14	-14	-18	-22	-17
Rudolf Serkin (1903-1991)	1960	-19	-17	-15	-14	-22		-17	-22	-18	-17	-18	
		-20	-18	-17	-17	-19	-19	-20	-16	-18	-19	-18	-17
		-20	-19	-19	-26	-26	-26	-19	-20	-20	-22	-21	-21
Annie Fischer (1914-1995)	1977	-20	-16	-20	-18	-19		-10	-17	-14	-15	-16	
		-22	-21	-21	-15	-16	-15	-17	-16	-15	-15	-14	-13
		-27	-28	-26	-25	-24	-25	-19	-15	-15	-21	-20	-19

Table 2-3-1: The Phrasing Comparison of Chopin's Ballade No.4, 2 nd Theme Pianists of Russian Piano Education Background						
<i>Pianists</i>	<i>Recording year</i>	<i>Bar 87</i>	<i>Bar 95</i>			<i>Notes</i>
				Softer than Bar 87?	Crescendo Effect?	
Josef Hofmann (1876-1957)	1938	Arched phrase, the 2 nd chord is emphasised.	Very slightly decrescendo.; sounds even.	V		Original edition (The chord at the end of Bar 94 and the one at the beginning of Bar 95 are not tied.)
Samuel Feinberg (1890-1962)	1952	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.			Bar 95 is much louder, and the singing tune is very obvious.
Simon Barere (1896-1951)	1946	Very slightly decrescendo; sounds even.	Played evenly			The two phrases are almost the same; bar 95 is only a little bit louder than bar 87.
Vladimir Horowitz (1903-1989)	1952	Very slightly decrescendo; sounds even.	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.			Bar 95 is much louder, and the singing tune is very obvious.
Grigory Ginzburg (1904-1961)	1949	Played evenly	Very slightly decrescendo; sounds even.			The whole 2 nd theme is played very softly.

Maria Grinberg (1908-1978)	1948	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.	Very slightly decrescendo.; sounds even	V		
Shura Cherkassky (1909-1995)	1982	Played evenly	Played evenly	V		Bar 94-95 starts dramatically ritardando.
Sviatoslav Richter (1915-1997)	1962	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.	V		The two phrases sound very soft but not even; the singing tune is still obvious.
Oleg Boshniakovich (1920-2006)	1972	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.	V		The two phrases are played almost the same.
Stanislav Neuhaus (1927-1980)	1971	Slightly arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.		V	Bar 95 is much louder than bar 87, and the 4 th chord is almost as loud as the 2 nd chord.
Bella Davidovich (1928-)	1982	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.	Very slightly decrescendo.; sounds even	V		The two phrases are played very softly.
Vladimir Ashkenazy (1937-)	1964	Played evenly	Reversed arched phrase, sounds even.			The whole 2 nd theme is played very softly.

Table 2-3-2: The Phrasing Comparison of Chopin's Ballade No.4, 2 nd Theme Pianists of French Piano Education Background						
<i>Pianists</i>	<i>Recording year</i>	<i>Bar 87</i>	<i>Bar 95</i>			<i>Notes</i>
				Softer than Bar 87?	Crescendo Effect?	
Alfred Cortot (1877-1962)	1937	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.		V	Bar 95 is slightly louder than bar 87, and the 4 th chord is almost as loud as the 2 nd chord.
Youra Guller (1895-1980)	1975	Slightly arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised; sounds even.	Slightly arched phrase, sounds even.	V		The whole 2 nd theme is played very softly.
Yvonne Lefébure (1898-1986)	1978	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.	Crescendo		V	Crescendo to the end
Robert Casadesus (1899-1972)	1930	Slightly arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised,	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.,		V	Bar 95 is much louder than bar 87, and the 4 th chord is almost as loud as the 2 nd chord.

		sounds even.				
Vlado Perlemuter (1904-2002)	1974	Slightly Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised, sounds even.	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.		V	Bar 95 is much louder than bar 87, and the 4 th chord is almost as loud as the 2 nd chord.
Monique de la Bruchollerie (1915-1972)	1947	Slightly arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised, sounds even.	Starts loudly, decrescendo			A rare example of big decrescendo in bar 95
Samson Francois (1924-1970)	1954	Slightly decrescendo, sounds even.	Slightly decrescendo, sounds even.	-----		The volume of the two phrases are almost the same
Nitika Magaloff	1973	Slightly arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised, sounds even.	Starts loudly, decrescendo			Original edition

Table 2-3-3: The Phrasing Comparison of Chopin's Ballade No.4, 2 nd Theme European Pianists						
<i>Pianists</i>	<i>Recording year</i>	<i>Bar 87</i>	<i>Bar 95</i>			<i>Notes</i>
				Softer than Bar 87?	Crescendo Effect?	
Ignacy Jan Paderewski (1860-1941)	1938	Slightly Decrescendo	Slightly decrescendo			Arpeggiated; focused on rhythm instead of melody; the volume of the two phrases are almost the same.
Raoul Koczalski (1884-1948)	1938	Slightly Decrescendo	Slightly decrescendo			Arpeggiated; focused on rhythm instead of melody; the volume of the two phrases are almost the same.
Arthur Rubinstein (1887-1982)	1959	Reversed arched phrase, sounds even.	Reversed arched phrase, sounds even			
Benno Moiseiwitsch (1890-1963)	1947	Slightly Decrescendo, sounds even.	Decrescendo	(V)		The volume of the two phrases are almost the same.
Solomon (1902-1988)	1946	Slightly Decrescendo	Decrescendo			

Claudio Arrau (1903-1991)	1953	Slightly Decrescendo	Arched phrase, the 3 rd chord is emphasised.			
	1971	Slightly Decrescendo	Slightly Decrescendo	--		The volume of the two phrases are almost the same.
Julian von Karolyi (1914-1993)	1951	Slightly Decrescendo	Arched phrase, slightly Decrescendo	V		Original edition
Friedrich Gulda (1930-2007)	1954	Slightly Decrescendo	Crescendo		V	Original edition Crescendo to the end
Ivan Moravec (1930-)	1966	Slightly Decrescendo, sounds even.	Crescendo		V	Crescendo to the end

Table 3-0

In the thesis I only discuss Rachmaninoff's sound recordings and do not take the reproduction of his piano rolls into account. Rachmaninoff made several recordings for the reproducing piano during 1919 and 1929. He only recorded for the Ampico Company and left 35 published rolls in total. Among these, 29 are of the pieces he also recorded for the gramophone. The Ampico piano recordings have been reproduced many times, and the most recent ones are issued separately on Decca 425 964-2 in 1978-9 and Telarc CD-80489 (Rachmaninoff's compositions and transcriptions) and CD-80491 (Rachmaninoff plays the other composers' works) in 1996. Both of the issues reproduced the performances from the same Ampico rolls.¹ (The Telarc recording gives the wrong recording year of the rolls in the booklet, which may cause confusion. In the table, those mistakes have been corrected and marked in blue.) Nevertheless, the results of them are quite different. As far as the duration is concerned, some reproductions on the two discs are very similar (such as *The Star-Spangled Banner*, *The Flight of the Bumble Bee*, etc.), and some are very unlike (such as *Liebesfreud*, *Liebesleid*, *Prelude Op.23 No.5*, etc.). Since Rachmaninoff recorded many pieces for both Ampico rolls and gramophone in roughly the same period, it is important for us to compare the two issues with the sound recordings.

For those performances marked in red in the Table 3-0, the Telarc transfers are much closer to the RCA transfers of the sound recordings as far as the duration is concerned. Naturally, the speeds of the RCA transfers may be wrong, and that cannot be known with certainty since the pitch of the piano and the speeds of the recording machines are not recorded. Subjectively speaking, the Telarc reproductions are closer to the Rachmaninoff's performances in the sound recordings, and some Decca reproductions, for example *Prelude Op.23 No.5* and *Liebesleid*, also sound very unmusical and bizarre to me in numerous passages. Therefore I strongly feel that the Decca reproduced performances are not as convincing as the Telarc ones, and the latter are the only reproductions suitable for the discussion of interpretation.

The Telarc reproductions are recorded with good sound quality and details, providing pleasure in listening. On the other hand, and given the limitations of the Ampico technology, if most of the Telarc reproductions are very similar, even almost identical to the sound recordings made around the same time, then it is not necessary to discuss those piano rolls unless the quality of the gramophone recordings fails to

¹ Barrie Martyn lists all the information (including the original roll numbers) of the rolls in his book. See Barrie Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1990), 503-505.

provide the information needed for the research. In addition, since reproductions from the same rolls can be so dissimilar, it is unavoidable for me to question the credibility of the piano rolls in general. Most of the reproductions fail to provide enough explanation about how the recording is made,² and it is not always possible for us to have both piano rolls and sound recordings by the same performer for us to compare. For these reasons, I do not discuss the Ampico reproduced performances in the thesis.

However, the Telarc reproductions are still not without significance. First, they give us an opportunity to imagine how Rachmaninoff plays the pieces he did not record for gramophone, such as Chopin's Scherzo No.2 in B-flat major. Secondly, they confirm again that Rachmaninoff maintains high consistency of interpretation. Barrie Martyn has observed that "even when the interval between recordings is very considerable, as in the eighteen years between the 1924 piano roll and 1942 gramophone recording of the Chopin-Liszt Maiden's Wish, the same remarkable similarity in interpretation can be heard." After comparing all the gramophone and piano roll performances, my conclusion is that Rachmaninoff played nearly all the pieces faster in his later years, but his phrasings and interpretations remain almost the same.

² Both of the issues provide the basic information about the reproduction. However, they are not sufficient enough for me to judge why the two issues can sound so different.

Table 3-0 The Information of Reproductions of Rachmaninoff's Piano Rolls Performances					
Title of the Works	RCA Audio Recordings			Ampico Piano Rolls Reproduced Performances	
	BMG			Telarc	Decca
Op.3-1				4'22"(1928)	4'02"(1928)
Op.3-2	3'37"(1919)	3'34"(1921)	3'36"(1928)	3'39"(1919)	3'42"(1919)
Op.3-3	3'46"(1940)			4'07"(1920)	3'46"(1920)
Op.3-4	3'34"(1923)			3'35"(1920)	3'19"(1920)
Op.3-5	3'05"(1922)	2'52"(1940)		3'02"(1923)	3'24"(1923)
Op.10-3	3'51"(1919)			3'49"(1920)	3'44"(1920)
Op.10-5	3'28"(1940)			3'44"(1920)	3'42"(1920)
Op.23-5	3'31"(1920)			3'31"(1920)	3'57"(1920)
Op.21-5	2'26"(1923)	2'16"(1940)		2'25"(1923)	2'18"(1923)
Op.39-4				3'42"(1929)	3'29"(1929)
Op.39-6	2'28"(1925)			2'29"(1922)	2'26"(1922)
Liebesfreud	6'56"(1925)	4'55"(1942)		6'50"(1926)	5'40"(1926)
Liebesleid	4'17"(1921)			4'12"(1923)	3'43"(1923)
Polka	4'05"(1919)	3'59"(1921)	3'44"(1928)	4'04"(1919)	3'50"(1919)
Hopak	1'44"(1925)			1'43"(1922)	1'55"(1922)
Wohin	2'15"(1925)			2'10"(1926)	2'04"(1926)
Bumble Bee	1'08"(1929)			1'07"(1929)	1'07"(1929)
The Star-Spangled Banner				1'19"(1919)	1'17"(1919)
Minuet	2'39"(1922)			2'33"(1922)	

Table 3-1: Rachmaninoff's Recording of his Own Compositions and Transcriptions

<i>Title</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Recording Date</i>	<i>Matrix numbers</i>
Barcarolle in g minor Op.10, No.3	1894	April 23, 1919	Edison 6743-C
Polka de V.R.	1911	April 23, 1919	Edison 6744-B
		October 12, 1921	C-25651-2
		April 4, 1928	CVE-25651-6
Prelude in c-sharp minor, Op.3, No.2	1892	April 23, 1919	Edison 6742-C
		October 14, 1921	B-25650-3
		April 4, 1928	BE-25650-23
Prelude in G, Op.32, No.5	1910	May 3, 1920	C-23984-4
Prelude in g minor Op.23 No.5	1903	May 17, 1920	C-23984-4
Prelude in g-sharp minor, Op.32, No.12	1910	January 21, 1921	B-24642-5
Liebesleid (Kreisler)	1921	October 25, 1921	C-25653-5
Serenade in B-Flat, Op.3, No.5	1892/1940	November 4, 1922	B-27110-5
		January 3, 1936	BS-98396-3
Minuet (Bizet)	1922	February 24, 1922	B-26134-3
Polichinelle, Op.3, No.4	1892	March 6, 1923	C-24643-2
Lilacs, Op.21, No.5	1914/1941	December 27, 1923	B-24123-9
		February 26, 1942	PCS-072132-1
Piano Concerto No.2 in c minor, Op.18	1901	January 3 & December 22, 1924	C-31395-2, C-31396-2, B-31397-1, C-29233-4, 29234-3, 29235-4, 29236-3, 29251-2, 29252-2
		April 10 & 13, 1929	CVE-48963-2, 48964-2, 48965-2, 48966-1, 48967-1, 48968-3, 48969-2, 48970-1, 48971-3, 48972-3
Hopak (Mussorgsky)	1923	April 13, 1925	BVE-25108-10
Étude-tableau in a minor, Op.39, No.6	1916	December 16, 1925	BVE-34156-1
Wohin? (Schubert)	1925	December 29, 1925	BE-34145-7
Liebesfreud (Kreisler)	1925	December 29, 1925	BE-34154-3, 34155-3
		February 26, 1942	PCS-072133-1
The Flight of the Bumblebee (Rimsky-Korsakov)	1929	April 16, 1929	BE-51805-1
Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini,	1934	December 24, 1934	CS-87066-1, 87067-1,

Op.43			87068-1, 87069-1, 87070-1, 87071-1
Scherzo (Mendelssohn, from <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>)	1933	December 23, 1935	CS-87283-6
Piano Concerto No.1 in f-sharp minor, Op.1	1891/1917	December 4, 1939 & February 24, 1940	CS-045621-2, 045622-3, 045623-2, 045624-1, 045625-3, 045626-3
Piano Concerto No.3 in d minor, Op	1909	December 4, 1939 & February 24, 1940	CS-045627-1, 045628-1, 045629-1, 045630-1, 045631-1, 045632-2°, 045633-1, 045634-3, 045635-1
Daisies, Op.38, No.3	1916/1940	March 18, 1940	BS-048184-2
Étude-tableau in E-Flat, Op.33 No.7	1911	March 18, 1940	BS-048183-2
Prelude in G-Flat, Op.23, No.10	1903	March 18, 1940	BS-048177-1
Moment Musical in E-flat minor, Op.16, No.2	1896/1940	March 18, 1940	BS-048176-1
Oriental Sketch	1917	March 18, 1940	BS-048185-2
Prelude in E, Op.32, No.3	1910	March 18, 1940	BS-048178-1
Prelude in f minor, Op.32, No.6	1910	March 18, 1940	BS-048179-2
Prelude in F, Op.32, No.7	1910	March 18, 1940	BS-048179-2
Humoresque in G, Op.10, No.5	1894/1940	April 9, 1940	BS-048175-2
Melodie in E, Op.3, No.3	1892/1940	April 9, 1940	BS-048174-4°
Piano Concerto No.4 in g minor, Op.40	1926	December 20, 1941	CS-071277-2, 071278-2, 071279-1°, 071280-1°, 071281-1, 071282-1, 071283-1, 071284-1
Lullaby (Tchaikovsky)	1941	February 26, 1942	PCS-072131-1
Preludio-Gavotte-Gigue (Bach, from <i>Violin Partita No.3</i>)	1934	February 26 & 27, 1942	PCS-072127-3, 072128-2
Note: When recordings were made in the era of 78 r.p.m. records, it was the custom of the studio to give each side of music recorded a separate identifying number, which was marked on the master from which commercial copies were pressed for sale. These are the “matrix numbers”.			
<i>Prefix</i>	<i>Recorder Size</i>	<i>Recording Process</i>	
B	10-inch	Acoustic	
C	12-inch	Acoustic	
BE or BS	10-inch	Electrical	
CVE or CS	12-inch	Electrical	

Table 3-2: Rachmaninoff's Recording of Solo Piano Pieces by Other Composers

<i>Composer</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Recording Date</i>	<i>Original Discography</i>
J.S.Bach	Sarabande (from Clavier Partita No.4 in D, BWV 828)	December 16, 1925	Matrix: CVE-34143-3
L.v. Beethoven	32 Variations in c minor, WoO 80	April 13 & May 14, 1925	CVE-32506-4, 32507-1
	Turkish March (arr. Anton Rubinstein)	December 14, 1925	BE-39387-1
A. Borodin	Scherzo in A-Flat	December 23, 1935	BS-98394-1
Chopin	Waltz in A-Flat, Op.42	April 18, 1919	Edison matrix: 6731-A
	Waltz in A-Flat, Op.64, No.3	April 19, 1919	Edison 6736-A
		April 5, 1927	BE-37455-6
	Waltz in E-Flat	January 21, 1921	C-24903-1
	Waltz in G-Flat, Op.70, No.1	April 2, 1921	B-24904-3
	Waltz in D-Flat, Op.64, No.1	April 2, 1921	B-24192-3
		April 5, 1923	B-24192-5
	Waltz in b minor, Op.69, No.2	October 24, 1923	B-23963-11
	Nocturne in F-Sharp, Op.15, No.2	December 27, 1923	C-27118-8
	Mazurka in c-sharp minor Op.63, No.3	December 27, 1923	B-24644-8
	Scherzo No.3 in c-sharp minor, Op.39	March 18, 1924	C-29671-2, 29678-1
	Ballade No.3 in A-Flat	April 13, 1925	CVE-32510-1, 32511-2
	Waltz in c-sharp minor, Op.64, No.2	April 5, 1927	BE-24645-5
	Nocturne in E-Flat, Op.9, No.2	April 5, 1927	CVE-37465-3
	Waltz in e minor, Op.posth.	February 18, 1930	BVE-59415-3
	Sonata No.2 in b-flat minor, Op.35	February 18, 1930	BVE-59408-2, 59409-2, 59411-2, 59412-2, 59413-2, 59414-1
	Mazurka in a minor, Op.68, No.2	December 23, 1935	BS-98395-1
L.-C. Daquin	Le coucou	October 21, 1920	B-24635-2
C.Deussy	Dr.Gradus ad Parnassum	January 21, 1921	B-24906-1
	Golliwogg's Cakewalk	April 2, 1921	B-24193-8
E. v. Dohnanyi	Étude in f minor, Op.28, No.6	October 25, 1921	B-25652-6
C.W.Gluck	Melodie (from <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> , arr. G. Sgambati)	May 14, 1925	BE-31558-4
E.Grieg	Waltz	October 12, 1921	B-23963-4
	Elfin Dance	October 12, 1921	B-23963-4
G.F.Handel	Harmonious Blacksmith	January 3, 1936	CVE-98393-3
A.Henselt	Étude in f-sharp minor, Op.2, No.6	December 27, 1923	B-28691-5

F.Liszt	Hungarian Rhapsody No.2	April 22, 1919	Edison 6739-C, 6740-C, 6741-C
	Polonaise No.2 in E	April 13, 1925	CVE-32508-2, 32509-2
	Gnomenreigen	December 16, 1925	BE-34146-3
Chopin-Liszt	The Maiden's Wish (Polish Song)	February 27, 1942	PCS-072136-1
	Return Home (Polish Song)	February 27, 1942	PCS-072137-1
Schubert-Liszt	Das Wandern	April 14, 1925	BVE-31564-4
	Serenade (from <i>Schwanengesang</i>)	February 27, 1942	PCS-072138-1
F.Mendelssohn	Spinning Song	November 4, 1920	B-24646-2
		April 25, 1928	BVE-24646-21
	Étude in F, Op.104b, No.2	April 5, 1927	BVE-37453-4
	Étude in a minor, Op.104b, No.3	April 5, 1927	BVE-37454-4
M.Moszkowski	La jongleuse, Op.52, No.4	March 6, 1923	B-27109-7
W.A.Mozart	Theme and Variations (Sonata K.331:I)	April 18, 1919	Edison 6732-C
	Rondo alla turca (Sonata K.331:III)	May 14, 1925	BVE-24638-6
I.J.Paderewski	Minuet in G, Op.14, No.1	April 5, 1925	CVE-24651-5
C.Saint-Saens	The Swan (arr. A.Siloti)	December 30, 1924	B-31557-1
F.Schubert	Impromptu in A-Flat, Op.90, No.4	December 29, 1925	CVE-34144-5
R.Schumann	Carnaval, Op.9	April 9, 10 & 12, 1929	CVE-51089-7, 51090-2, 51091-3, 51092-3, 51093-3, 51094-3
A.Scriabin	Prelude in f-sharp minor Op.11, No.8	April 16, 1929	BE-51806-1
Tausig	Pastorale (after Scarlatti: Sonata in d minor, L.413)	April 19, 1919	Edison 6735-A
	One Lives But Once (after J.Strauss II)	April 5, 1927	CVE-37466-1, 37467-3
Schumann-Tausig	Der Knotrbandiste (from <i>Spanisches Liederspiel</i> , Op.74)	February 27, 1942	PCS-072137-1
P.Tchaikovsky	Troika (from The Seasons, Op.37b)	May 3, 1920	C-23983-1
		April 11, 1928	CVE-23983-8
	Waltz in A-Flat, Op.40, No.8	April 5, 1923	B-27117-3
	Humoresque in G, Op.10, No.2	December 27, 1923	B-28690-4

Table 3-3: Rachmaninoff's Playing of his *Symphonic Dances, Op.45* at the piano (Ormandy Archive, University of Pennsylvania)

Track One (around 9 minutes and 30 seconds)			
1 st Movement			
Bars 48-71	Break	Bars 74-143	Bars 138-235
Practising; stops at bar 71 and tries some bars after bar 71.	Greeting 'how are you', etc.	Bars 74-76 tries the passage; bar 77- playing; bars 109-111 talking; bar 128-singing; bar 143 (first beat) stops playing, and then, talks.	Bar 138 (the 4 th beat); short break at the end of bar 174, and then playing and singing (some parts are only sung by Rachmaninoff).

Track Two (around 9 minutes and 17 seconds)		
1 st Movement		3 rd Movement
Bars 240-264 (1 st beat)	Break	Bars 8-214
Bars 240-248, the recording is damaged.	Talking	Bars 42 and 68: Rachmaninoff does not play the last beat but still counts the time. (Maybe he is turning the page.) Bar 182 starts to use metronome (ca. 73); Bar 197 singing.

Track Three (around 9 minutes and 15 seconds)				
2 nd Movement				
Bars 1-78	Break	Bars 80-92 (1 st beat)	Break	Bars 84-176
Bars 51-55, singing; bar 61 singing the main melody.	Talking, practising passages from bar 84 to 90.	Practising and talking, from bar 88 metronome beating (ca. 88) can be heard.	Talking	Bars 84-99 with metronome (ca.84); bar 106: short break and then restarts from bar 105, talking; bar 141 (1 st beat) short break and talking and restarts from bar 137.

Track Four (around 5 minutes and 6 seconds)		
<i>2nd Movement</i>		<i>1st Movement</i>
<i>Bars 182-248</i>	<i>Break</i>	<i>Bars 1-41</i>
Short break at bar 209.	Repeat bar 245-248; practicing bar 228-233 and bar 32-41.	

Table 4-2: Case Study of Rachmaninoff's Prelude in G minor, Op.23-5

	<i>Arpeggiation</i>	<i>Alter- nation</i>	<i>Cut b= bar(s)</i>	<i>Asynchro- nisation</i>	<i>Phrasing in the middle section</i>		<i>Take time bars 29- 30?</i>	<i>Enter middle section with ascents?</i>	<i>A4 (slow and piano?)</i>	<i>A5 longer dim.?</i>
					<i>Dim at bar 47?</i>	<i>Wave- like?</i>				
Rachmaninoff 1920	C1, C2	A1,A5		C1	V	V	V	V		
Hoffman1915	C1,C2	A3,C2		C1				(V)		V
Hoffman 1922	C1,C2	A3,C2		C1	(V)			V		V
Bowen 1926	C1,C2	A1,A3						V	V	
Leginska 1926	(C1), C2					V				
Levitcki 1929	C2		A3 (b34)	(C1,C2)		V	V			V
Schioler 1929	(C1), C2					V		(V)		
Horowitz 1930	(C1, C2)	A5	A3(b29 -31)	C1			V			
Joyce 1934	C1, C2								V	
Gilels 1937	(C1, C2)			C1			V			(V)
Slenczynska 1945		A5	A3 (b34)					(V)		V
Darre 1946										V
Smith 1946				C1	V	V	(V)			(V)
Barere 1947	C1,C2			C1			(V)			V
Karolyi 1948	(C1)			C1,(C2)						V
Lympny 1951	(C2)			(C1), C2	(V)				V	
Schioler 1951	(C1), C2					V				V
Flier 1952	(C2)			C1			(V)			
Anda 1953	(C1, C2)						V		V	
Wayenberg 1954	(C1)				V		(V)		V	V
Gilels 1959	(C1)			C1			V			
Richter 1960									V	(V)
Odgon 1962	(C1, C2)				V				V	(V)
Goldsand 1962		A5					V			V
Fiorentino 1963	(C1), C2		A5(b83)		(V)			V		V
S.Neuhaus 1965	C1			C1			V		V	
Weissenberg 1968					(V)		(V)			V
Graffman 1969	(C1)				(V)		V			
Cliburn 1970							(V)	V		
Richter 1971									V	V
Bernette 1971					(V)		V		V	V
Katin 1972	C2								V	
Bachauer 1972	(C1,C2)								(V)	V
Serebayakov 1972									(V)	

Anievas 1974	(C1, C2)									
Ashkenazy 1974	(C2)						(V)			
Katsaris 1977	C1						V		V	
Horowitz 1981	C1,C2	A5		C1,C2		V			V	
Shelley 1983	(C1)				(V)	(V)			V	V
Gavrilov 1984	(C2)						(V)		(V)	
Browning 1986	(C1)			(C1)	V					V
Alexeev 1987	(C2)						(V)			
Bolet 1987	C1, C2			C2					V	V
Boukoff 1987	(C1)								V	
Stott 1987	(C1)				V				V	
Koyama 1987									V	
Magaloff 1988	C1, C2			C1,C2	V				V	
Odgon1988	(C1, C2)									
Lympany 1988										
Postnikova1988					V		(V)		(V)	
Biret 1989	(C2)			(C1)	V	V			V	
Hobson 1990	(C1, C2)								V	
Berezovsky 1991	C1						V		V	V
Nikolsky 1991	(C2)				V				(V)	
Douglas 1992	(C1)						V		V	
Donohoe 1993	A2, A4						V	(V)	V	V
Lympany 1993				C1						
Pilippov 1993	C1						V			(V)
Wild 1993	A2,C1,C2, A4			C1,	V	V				
Demidenko 1994									V	(V)
Rodriguez 1994	C1, C2				V	V	V	(V)	V	
Laredo 1995	C1 C2 R					V				V
Cherkassky 1995	A1,A3,C1, C2,A4,A5			C2			(V)			
Pisarev 1996	C2				V	V			V	
Lill 1996	(C1, C2)						V		V	V
Volkov 1998									V	V
Sorel 1998	A1,A2,A3, C1,C2,A4					V	(V)		V	
Lugansky 2000	C1, C2				V		V	V	V	
Kissin 2000	C1, C2				V	(V)	V		V	
Kuzmin 2001	C1, C2				V	V	V	V	V	
Favre-Kahn 2002	C1,C2				V	V	(V)		V	
Petkova 2002	C1								V	
Berezovsky 2004	(C1), C2						V		V	V
Trpceski 2004	C2						V		V	V
Nissman 2006	C1,C2			C1		V				
Hayroudinoff	C1, C2	A5			V	(V)	V	V	V	V

2007										
Matsuev 2007	C1,C2					V	V	(V)	V	
Nebolsin 2007	(C1)						V			
Titova 2007	C1, C2				V	V	V	(V)	V	
Osborne 2008	C1, C2								V	V

Table 4-3: The Phrasing Pattern of the Performances of the Prelude Op.23 No.5
(Pianists with Russian educational background are marked in red.)

Pianist	Phrasing pattern (A)				Phrasing pattern (B)		
	Long	Long dim.	Short dim.	Short (others)	Dim.1	Dim.2	Cres.
Rachmaninoff 1920	V	(V)			V		
Gilels 1959		V	V			V	
Richter1960	V	V				V	V
Odgon 1962		V		V			V
Goldsand 1962				V			V
Fiorentino 1963				V		V	V
S.Neuhaus1965	(V)	V				V	
Weissenberg1968				V		V	
Graffman1969	V	(V)					V
Cliburn1970			V			V	
Richter1971	V					V	
Bernette 1971			V		V		
Katin 1972				V		V	
Bachauer1972	V	(V)			V		
Serebayakov1972			V	V		V	V
Anievas1974	V	(V)				V	
Ashkenazy1974		V			(V)		
Katsaris 1977				V		V	V
Horowitz 1981		V	V			V	
Shelley 1983		V	(V)		V		V
Gavrilov 1984	V	(V)				V	
Browning 1986			V				V
Alexeev 1987				V			V
Bolet 1987			V	(V)		V	
Boukoff 1987			V			V	
Stott 1987				V		V	V
Koyama 1987	V					V	
Magaloff 1988				V			V
Odgon1988	V				(V)		
Lympany 1988		V			V		V
Postnikova1988		V	V			V	

Biret1989		V					V
Hobson 1990				V			V
Berezovsky1991		V	(V)		V		
Nikolsky1991	V						V
Douglas 1992	V				V		V
Donohoe1993	V					V	
Lympany 1993		V			V		V
Pilippov1993				V	V		
Wild1993				V		V	
Demidenko1994	V					V	
Rodriguez1994			V		V		V
Laredo 1995				V			V
Cherkassky 1995		V			V		
Pisarev 1996		V					V
Lill 1996				V			V
Volkov 1998	V					V	
Sorel 1998			V				V
Lugansky 2000	V					V	V
Kissin 2000	V					V	
Kuzmin 2001				V		V	
Favre-Kahn 2002				V		V	
Petkova 2002							
Berezovsky 2004	V	(V)				V	
Trpceski 2004	V					V	
Nissman 2006	V					V	
Hayroudinoff 2007	V	V				V	V
Matsuev 2007		V					V
Nebolsin 2007	(V)					V	
Titova 2007	(V)				V		
Osborne 2008	(V)					V	V

Table 4-4: The Performing Features of the 18th Variation of Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op.43

Pianists	Duration		Inner voice			Phrasing style		Arpe.
	18th Var.	Whole	Active	Passive	None	Irregular	Even	Times
Rachmaninoff			V			V		7
Moiseiwitsch 1937	2'35"	21'26"	V			V		11
Kapell 1945	2'49"	22'19"	V			V		6
Rubinstein 1947	2'57"	22'12"		V			V	
Smith 1948	2'30"	21'49"		V		(V)		3
Rubinstein 1950	2'42"	21'42"		V			V	1
Gheorghiu 1952	3'00"	23'48"		V			V	4
Zak 1952	2'37"	21'49"		V			(V)	6
Rubinstein 1956	3'07"	23'01"	(V)				V	1
Fleisher 1956	2'42"	21'58"	V			(V)		5
Bruchollerie 1956	2'36"	22'21"	(V)			(V)		2
Entremont 1958	2'42"	21'46"		V			V	3
Pennario 1958	2'34"	20'23"	V				V	3
Katchen 1959	2'42"	21'59"	V				V	4
Merzhanov 1959	2'44"	23'20"		V			V	
Pennario 1960	2'47"	22'10"	V				V	1
Weber 1961	3'00"	24'21"	V				V	3
Ogdon 1963	2'57"	23'53"			V		V	
Wayenberg 1964	2'50"	23'25"		V			V	
Graffman 1964	2'57"	22'58"	V				V	1
Wild 1965	2'18"	20'55"	(V)			V		8
Anievas 1967	2'37"	22'09"	V				V	3
Cliburn 1970	2'52"	24'40"	V				V	1
Ashkenazy 1971	3'06"	23'28"	V				V	
Cliburn 1972	3'11"	24'33"	V				V	2
Orozco 1972	2'52"	22'50"	V				V	
A.Simon 1975	2'50"	23'23"	V			(V)		1
Vasary 1977	3'19"	25'03"	(V)				V	
Collard 1978	3'25"	24'40"	V				V	
Donohoe 1978	3'01"	23'16"	V				V	
Swiathowski 1980 Somewhere in Time	2'54"				(V)		V	
Davidovich 1981	2'37"	23'16"	V			(V)		2
Rosel 1982	3'02"	25'11"	V				V	
Tirimo 1982	2'54"	23'39"	(V)				V	
Licad 1983	2'53"	22'53"		V			V	
Ousset 1984	3'11"	25'47"		V			V even	
Eresko 1984	2'56"	23'26"	V				V even	

Kocsis 1984	2'26"	22'22"	V			(V)		2
Fowke 1985	3'10"	24'06"		V			V	
Joselson 1985	2'52"	23'56"		V			V	1
Ashkenazy 1986	3'09"	23'52"	V				V	
Economou 1986	2'33"	22'30"	V				V	3
Pletnev 1987	3'13"	23'28"		V			V	2
Dimitriev 1988	3'01"	25'07"	V				V	
Jandó 1988	2'33"	23'53"		V			V	3
Feltsman 1989	2'42"	23'33	V				V	1
Gutierrez 1990	3'11"	23'13"		V			V	4
Prats 1990	2'40"	22'23"		V			V	2
Shelley 1990	2'58"	23'54"		V			V	
Jablonski 1991	2'58"	23'01"		V			V	
Costa 1991	2'38"	22'59"	V				V	2
Gavrilov 1991	2'46"	22'15"		V			V	
Alexeev 1992	3'09"	23'43"		V			V	6
Rudy 1992	2'55"	23'50"	V				V	3
Koyama 1992	3'01"	24'58"		V			V	
Anikhanov 1993	2'33"	22'32"	V				V	
Thibaudet 1993	2'59"	23'16"	V			(V)		
Kuzmin 1993	3'03"	23'28"	V			V		7
Uriash 1993	3'03"	24'13"		V			V	
Zeltser 1995	2'59"	25'08"	V			(V)		1
Diev 1995	3'19"	24'20"	V				V	
E. Chen 1995	3'17"	25'27"		V			V	
Han 1995	2'31"	22'47"		V			V	
Glemser 1996	2'43"	24'12"	(V)				V	
Lill 1996	2'48"	23'35"		V			V	
Kim 1997	2'55"	24'15"		V			V	
Pletnev 1997	2'59"	22'59"	V			V		5
Volkov 1998	3'21"	24'54"	V				V	
Paik 1998	3'26"	25'23"		V			V	3
Biret 1998	2'52"	23'10"	V				V	4
J. Simon 1999	2'30"	23'33"		V			V	
Nakamatus 2000	2'54"	24'12"	V				V	2
Gavrylyuk 2000	2'42"	23'35"	V			(V)		
Uehera 2001	2'49"	23'15"	V			(V)		1
Marshev 2001	3'33"	26'32"	V				V	
Hough 2003	2'57"	23'32"	V			V		6
Lugansky 2003	2'48"	23'23"	V			V		5
Lang Lang 2004	2'49"	23'48"		V		(V)		4
Hobson 2005	2'14"	21'15"	V			(V)		3
Berezovsky 2005	2'34"	22'01"	V			(V)		4
Matsuev 2009	2'43"	22'05"	V				V	3

Table 4-6: 'Big Phrasing' in the Preludes Op.3 No.2 and Op.23 No.5			
Pianists	Op.23 No.5	Op.3 No.2	Pianists
Rachmaninoff 1920			Rachmaninoff 1919 1921,1928,
Hoffman 1915	V		Hoffman 1915
Hoffman 1922	V		Hoffman 1922
Bowen 1926			Bowen 1926
Leginska 1926			Leginska 1926
Levitzki 1929	V		
Schioler 1929			
Horowitz 1930			
Joyce 1934			
		V	Rubinstein 1936
Gilels 1937	(V)		
Slenczynska 1945	V		
			Kapell 1945
Darre 1946	V	V	Darre 1946
Smith 1946	(V)		Smith 1946
Barere1947	V		
Karolyi 1948	V	V	Karolyi 1948
			Sofronitsky 1949
Lympany 1951			Lympany 1951
Schioler 1951	V		
Flier 1952			Flier 1952
Anda 1953			
Wayenberg 1954	V		Wayenberg 1954
			Reisenberg 1955
Gilels 1959			Gilels 1959
		(V)	Janis 1960
Richter 1960	(V)		
Odgon 1962	(V)		
Goldsand 1962	V		Goldsand 1962
Fiorentino 1963	V	V	Fiorentino 1963
S.Neuhaus 1965			
Weissenberg 1968	V	V	Weissenberg 1968
Graffman 1969			
Cliburn 1970			Cliburn 1970
Richter 1971	V		
Bernette 1971	V		Bernette 1971
Katin 1972			Katin 1972
Bachauer 1972	V		Bachauer 1972
Serebayakov 1972			Serebayakov 1972
Anievas 1974			Anievas 1974
Ashkenazy 1974		V	Ashkenazy 1974
Katsaris 1977	V	V	Katsaris 1977
			Collard 1978
			Berman 1980
		V	Clidat 1981
Horowitz 1981			
Shelley 1983	V		Shelley 1983
		(V)	Slenczynska 1984
Gavrilov 1984			
Browning 1986	V		

Alexeev 1987			Alexeev 1987
Bolet 1987	V		Bolet 1987
Boukoff 1987			Boukoff 1987
Stott 1987			Stott 1987
Koyama 1987		V	Koyama 1987
Magaloff 1988			
Odgon 1988			
Lympany 1988			Lympany 1988
Postnikova 1988		V	Postnikova 1988
Biret 1989		V	Biret 1989
Hobson 1990			Hobson 1990
Berezovsky 1991	V		
Nikolsky 1991			
Douglas 1992		V	Douglas 1992
			Grubert 1992
			Oppitz 1993
Donohoe 1993	V		Donohoe 1993
Lympany 1993			Lympany 1993
Pilippov 1993	(V)	(V)	Pilippov 1993
Wild 1993			
Demidenko 1994	(V)	V	Demidenko 1994
Rodriguez 1994		V	Rodriguez 1994
Laredo 1995	V		Laredo 1995
Cherkassky 1995		V	Cherkassky 1995
			Groslot 1995
Pisarev 1996			
Lill 1996	V	V	Lill 1996
Volkov 1998	V		
Sorel 1998			Sorel 1998
			Thibaudet 1998
Lugansky 2000			Lugansky 2000
Kuzmin 2001			
Petkova 2002			Petkova 2002
Favre-Kahn 2002		V	Favre-Kahn 2002
Berezovsky 2004	V	V	Berezovsky 2004
Trpceski 2004	V	V	Trpceski 2004
		V	Kern 2005
Nissman 2006			Nissman 2006
Hayroudinoff 2007	(V)	V	Hayroudinoff 2007
Matsuev 2007		V	Matsuev 2007
Nebolsin 2007			Nebolsin 2007
Titova 2007		V	Titova 2007
Osborne 2008	V	V	Osborne 2008

Table 4-7: Big Phrasing in the Preludes Op.3 No.2 and Op.23 No.5 (Pianists' Backgrounds)					
<i>Pianists who play with a 'big phrase' in both Preludes.</i>		<i>Pianists who play with a 'big phrase' in only one of the Preludes.</i>		<i>Pianists who do not change the dynamic indications.</i>	
Russia (Soviet Union)	Pilippov	Russia (Soviet Union)	Richter	Russia (Soviet Union)	Rachmaninoff
	Demidenko		Ashkenazy		Flier
	Hayroundinof f		Postnikova		Gilels
USA	Weissenberg		Volkov		Serebayakov
	Slenczynska		Matsuev		Alexeev
UK	Osborne		Titova		Nikolsky
France	Darré		Hofmann		Lugansky
Hungary	Karolyi	USA	Browning		Petkova
Italy	Fiorentino		Cherkassky		Nebolsin
Cypres	Katsaris		Laredo	USA	Cliburn
Macedonia	Trpceski	UK	Smith		Sorel
			Ogdon	UK	Nissman
			Shelley		Bowen
			Donohoe		Leginska
		Ireland	Douglas		Lympany
		France	Farre-Kahn		Katin
		Holland	Wayenberg		Stott
		Greece	Bachauer		Hobson
		Turkey	Biret	France	Boukoff
		Cuba	Bolet	Cuba	Anievas
			Rodriguez		
		Japan	Koyama		

Table 4-8: The Winners of the Best Leading Actor and Actress of the Academy Award (Oscar Award), 1980 to 2010

<i>Year</i>	<i>Actor</i>	<i>Film</i>	<i>Non-fiction</i>	<i>Actress</i>	<i>Film</i>	<i>Non-fiction</i>
1980	Robert De Niro	Raging Bull	V	Sissy Spacek	Coal Miner's Daughter	V
1981	Henry Fonda	On Golden Pond		Katharine Hepburn	On Golden Pond	
1982	Ben Kingsley	Gandhi	V	Meryl Streep	Sophie's Choice	
1983	Robert Duvall	Tender Mercies		Shirley MacLaine	Terms of Endearment	
1984	F. Murray Abraham	Amadeus		Sally Field	Places in the Heart	
1985	William Hurt	Kiss of the Spider Woman		Geraldine Page	The Trip to Bountiful	
1986	Paul Newman	The Color of Money		Marlee Matlin	Children of a Lesser God	
1987	Michael Douglas	Wall Street		Cher	Moonstruck	
1988	Dustin Hoffman	Rain Man	(V)	Jodie Foster	The Accused	V
1989	Daniel Day-Lewis	My Left Foot	V	Jessica Tandy	Driving Miss Daisy	
1990	Jeremy Irons	Reversal of Fortune		Kathy Bates	Misery	
1991	Anthony Hopkins	The Silence of the Lambs		Jodie Foster	The Silence of the Lambs	
1992	Al Pacino	The Scent of Woman	(V)	Emma Thompson	Howards End	
1993	Tom Hanks	Philadelphia	(V)	Holly Hunter	The Piano	
1994	Tom Hanks	Forrest Gump	(V)	Jessica Lange	Blue Sky	
1995	Nicolas Cage	Leaving Las Vegas		Susan Sarandon	Dead Man Walking	V
1996	Geoffrey Rush	Shine	V	Frances McDormand	Fargo	
1997	Jack Nicholson	As Good as it Gets		Helen Hunt	As Good as it Gets	
1998	Roberto Benigni	Life is Beautiful		Gwyneth Paltrow	Shakespeare in Love	
1999	Kevin Spacey	American Beauty		Hilary Swank	Boys Don't Cry	V
2000	Russell Crowe	Gladiator		Julia Roberts	Erin Brockovich	V
2001	Denzel Washington	Training Day		Halle Berry	Monster's Ball	
2002	Adrien Brody	The Pianist	V	Nicole Kidman	The Hours	V
2003	Sean Penn	Mystic River		Charlize Theron	Monster	V
2004	Jamie Foxx	Ray	V	Hilary Swank	Million Dollar Baby	(V)

2005	Philip S. Hoffman	Capote	V	Reese Witherspoon	Walk the Line	V
2006	Forest Whitaker	The Last King of Scotland	V	Helen Mirren	The Queen	V
2007	Daniel Day-Lewis	There Will Be Blood		Marion Cotillard	<i>La Môme</i>	V
2008	Sean Penn	Milk	V	Kate Winslet	The Reader	
2009	Jeff Bridges	Crazy Heart		Sandra Bullock	The Blind Side	V
2010	Colin Firth	The King's Speech	V	Natalie Portman	Black Swan	(V)

Table 5-1: The Duration of the Ligeti Études in the Score (suggested) and Recording (SONY SYNC 62308, January 1997; performed by Pierre-Laurent Aimard; supervised and approved by the composer)

<i>Book</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Duration in the score</i>	<i>Duration in the recording</i>
No.1	I. Désordre	2'22"	2'20"
	II. Cordes à vide	3'16"	2'45"
	III. Touches bloquées	1'57"	1'40"
	IV. Fanfares	3'37"	3'20"
	V. Arc-en-ciel	3'52"	3'45"
	VI. Automne à Varsovie	4'27"	4'20"
No.2	VII. Galamb Borong	2'48"	2'40"
	VIII. Fém	3'05"	3'05"
	IX. Vertige	3'03"	3'03"
	X. Der Zauberlehrling	2'20"	2'20"
	XI. En suspens	2'07"	2'07"
	XII. Entrelacs	2'56"	2'56"
	XIII. L'escalier du Diable	5'16"	5'16"
	XIV. Coloana infinită	1'41"	1'41"

Table 5-2 Rachmaninoff, Piano Concerto No.2 1 st Movement (Complete Table, 128 performances)										
Section/ Metronome Pianist	Intro. Bar 1-7	1 st theme	2 nd Theme	Dev.		Rec. tutti	Solo	Orch.	Coda	Total Time
	66—	A tempo	(A tempo)	72	96	(A tempo)	76	69	63	
Rachmaninoff 1924	47--51	80	(76)	100	110	94	(90)	62	80	9'24"
Rachmaninoff 1929	47--51	81	(72)	90	104	84	(80)	69	81	9'44"
Moiseiwitsch 1937	42--48	79	(60)	86	96	84	(78)	71	63	10'04"
Giesecking 1940	38--50	86	(54)	93	114	74	(70)	66	75	9'43"
Barere 1944	38- -40	88	(68)	95	105	94	90	74	97	9'43"
Rubinstein 1945	38--40	78	(64)	76	91	86	78	69	72	9'52"
Rubinstein 1946	38--44	88	66	90	110	90	(88)	76	80	9'11"
Joyce 1946	37--46	77	(70)	86	96	87	(84)	72	60	10'29"
Smith 1947	50--68	84	(66)	100	116	96	78	72	70	9'24"
Oborin 1947	35--48	76	63	102	105	87	(86)	74	68	9'30"
Tamarkina 1948	37—46	78	(64)	96	104	87	(76)	78	63	9'46"
Karolyi 1948	32--38	78	(60)	92	93	75	76	65	78	10'30"
Rubinstein 1949	42--44	92	60	88	106	92	86	78	84	9'32"
Katchen 1949	39—48	80	(60)	100	109	91	(88)	69	75	9'43"
Kapell 1950	34--41	85	(74)	90	106	82	(76)	72	80	9'22"
Nikolayeva 1951	37--46	78	68	85	96	78	78	69	63	10'22"
de Groot 1952	48--48	78	(64)	92	104	85	84	72	82	10'22"
Malinin 1952	40--44	75	(66)	90	102	74	74	66	61	10'47"
Malinin 1953	36--44	80	63	95	104	80	(76)	73	61	10'03"
Anda 1953	40—52	83	(62)	86	102	88	(80)	69	83	10'22"
Farnadi 1953	36-44	54	(52)	84	90	74	72	56	63	11'27"
Lympany 1954	46—50	68	62	95	112	80	(74)	76	71	10'19"
Entremont 1954	38-44	78	(70)	93	98	90	(90)	(92)	78	9'28"
Blumental 1955	38—34	72	(78)	94	104	81	78	72	73	10'02"
Curzon 1955	46—56	72	62	92	96	84	70	76	57	10'34"
Moiseiwitsch 1955	39—48	74	(62)	91	100	80	(76)	68	55	10'13"
Rubinstein 1956	46—48	85	58	94	103	88	(80)	66	76	10'10"
Shtarkman 1957	40—51	78	(70)	88	106	80	(80)	67	60	10'24"
Katchen 1958	40—54	80	(56)	110	116	90	(88)	72	84	9'39"
Lewenthal 1958	54—49	84	71	88	102	92	(86)	68	68	9'20"

Van Cliburn 1958	36—46	76	(74)	92	93	74	68	56	74	10'46"
Brailowsky 1958	48—46	92	76	88	98	83	(80)	78	78	9'46"
Tacchino 1959	36—42	84	(64)	86	88	79	68	64	58	10'41"
Richter 1959	30—34	58	(58)	95	102	80	(78)	71	51	11'14"
Entremont 1960	38—50	76	54	84	97	80	(82)	65	69	10'40"
Richter 1960	35—46	59	59	95	100	85	83	68	54	11'01"
Janis 1960	46—52	78	74	92	99	87	80	67	82	10'08"
Graffman 1961	44—40	80	(62)	87	106	86	72	72	77	9'55"
Ogdon 1962	36—45	74	55	93	104	73	70	64	84	11'13"
Bollard 1963	34-36	70	(76)	84	97	79	(78)	67	63	10'44"
Kerer 1963	48—56	78	68	90	102	82	84	63	65	10'07"
Ashkenazy 1963	37—50	72	(72)	90	102	85	(73)	67	73	10'45"
Graffman 1964	45—40	78	(60)	(84)	106	78	74	70	78	10'25"
Wild 1965	38—45	84	(83)	100	114	96	(84)	69	72	9'13"
Surov 1965	36-47	74	(68)	78	92	80	76	69	76	10'51"
Anievas 1967	43—55	85	(66)	92	100	83	72	66	74	9'48"
Cziffra 1970	28—32	66	(56)	105	103	80	(80)	50	60	12'11"
Ashkenazy 1970	34—44	67	(66)	88	102	80	(78)	69	77	11'01"
Katin 1971	55—58	78	68	90	93	78	68	67	60	10'35"
Rubinstein 1971	44—44	79	(64)	90	104	88	(78)	78	70	9'59"
Weissenberg 1972	29—36	70	(60)	84	101	82	61	50	56	11'48"
Bachauer 1972	36—40	77	(72)	86	89	82	(80)	70	60	10'22"
Orozco 1973	34—38	78	(60)	93	100	88	(88)	76	63	10'07"
Cherkassky 1973	36—46	87	(62)	90	88	(82)	(60)	72	61	10'26"
Hass 1974	48—52	73	(68)	86	92	79	(75)	62	64	10'39"
Vered 1974	30—38	74	(58)	96	94	78	(68)	65	60	11'30"
Boukoff 1975	27—40	70	(65)	86	110	66	(66)	66	59	10'55"
Simon 1975	52—60	74	(70)	96	103	78	82	62	80	9'48"
Vasary 1976	36—38	69	72	80	96	76	60	67	63	11'23"
Collard 1977	38—42	76	(70)	95	96	82	(84)	63	52	10'56"
Alexeev 1978	49—55	68	74	84	96	76	72	70	67	10'47"
de Larrocha 1980	42—46	75	59	85	93	74	74	56	59	11'23"
Rosel 1982	40—44	63	(60)	82	91	74	(70)	60	58	11'41"
Licad 1983	40—42	65	63	96	100	73	76	68	60	11'00"
Eresko 1984	28—37	76	60	91	103	86	(60)	71	62	10'46"
Kocsis 1984	45—60	86	(78)	96	110	96	(94)	72	84	9'25"
Ortiz 1984	42—58	70	(63)	88	102	86	(64)	69	58	10'30"
Ousset 1984	39—40	77	(75)	90	94	86	80	69	61	10'42"

Ashkenazy 1984	41—48	68	(66)	84	96	74	(66)	60	68	11'26"
Fowke 1985	40—44	80	(72)	86	94	73	(76)	72	66	10'39"
Duchable 1985	44—52	78	(66)	92	104	88	78	77	66	10'19"
S. de Groote 1987	54—59	68	(66)	86	88	76	68	68	63	11'13"
Bolet 1987	40—42	77	(60)	76	86	78	(72)	56	54	11'58"
Kissin 1988	30—44	74	55	92	84	73	(72)	64	62	11'21"
Jando 1988	40—46	71	74	87	104	86	(86)	70	58	11'05"
Golub 1988	46—56	74	(72)	76	96	74	(60)	67	63	11'14"
Ogdon 1988	36—50	69	70	92	90	66	(74)	65	61	10'47"
Gavrilov 1989	39—45	82	58	94	110	76	80	69	66	10'54"
Sultanov 1989	29—44	72	(62)	94	96	80	(84)	71	54	10'41"
Donohoe 1989	40--47	80	67	(78)	106	78	(60)	56	55	11'37"
Lill 1989	39--46	58	64	88	100	68	(68)	69	54	11'43"
Prats 1990	40—45	80	(68)	96	110	89	(74)	71	76	10'00"
Bronfman 1990	39—51	69	(69)	86	96	78	(78)	68	63	11'06"
Shelley 1990	40—50	79	(79)	92	100	81	78	69	63	10'41"
Nakamura 1990	30--30	69	(60)	90	88	66	(62)	74	80	10'59"
Rudy 1990	38--43	75	52	92	100	73	(74)	65	60	11'28"
Gavrilov 1991	29—33	78	(59)	100	110	76	(82)	69	63	10'43"
Son 1991	31—39	74	(60)	94	96	77	(76)	70	67	10'51"
Gutierrez 1991	45—52	84	(74)	95	104	88	(86)	68	82	9'55"
Pommier 1991	34—40	66	74	89	90	78	(60)	69	62	11'05"
Grimaud 1992	40—42	70	60	90	97	71	71	66	60	10'44"
Koyama 1992	36—40	77	(56)	88	88	70	(62)	72	59	11'49"
Douglas 1992	39—44	69	60	88	96	74	74	69	56	10'46"
Thibaudet 1993	38—45	75	(70)	96	98	78	80	61	50	11'12"
Svyatkin 1993	44—54	81	(64)	100	104	74	(72)	69	60	10'35"
Costa 1993	42—45	70	70	80	88	76	(76)	69	76	10'33"
Lively 1994	48—53	75	66	86	99	96	84	70	66	10'13"
Ozolins 1993	36—42	72	(54)	82	94	84	(58)	60	58	11'20"
Zilberstein 1994	32—42	66	(60)	96	96	70	67	67	65	10'56"
Lympany 1994	42—48	70	(71)	89	100	76	70	71	64	10'24"
Derek Han 1995	34—44	72	(72)	98	102	80	76	82	60	10'11"
Lill 1996	38—47	60	68	88	98	74	(68)	70	58	11'30"
Ohlsson 1996	38—54	76	(60)	86	96	74	(68)	72	66	11'06"
Mishtchuk 1996	28—38	69	73	96	100	80	(82)	67	64	10'34"
Pisarev 1996	42—50	78	(70)	94	98	84	(80)	78	60	10'10"
Glemser 1996	45—57	76	(76)	85	96	80	(78)	68	62	10'33"

Evelyn Chen 1997	30—38	81	(76)	90	94	70	(76)	69	63	10'56"
Ogawa 1997	38—38	64	(62)	88	86	62	(62)	67	60	11'20"
Biret 1998	39—35	60	68	86	78	66	72	69	56	11'57"
Kun-Woo Paik 1998	27—30	60	56	91	82	67	68	60	57	12'33"
Volkov 1998	30—36	70	56	86	95	64	60	69	46	11'42"
Rodriguez 1998	44-48	74	(66)	92	96	80	(60)	76	63	10'19"
Soerjadi 2000	33—34	72	(66)	88	86	68	(60)	56	54	11'41"
Grimaud 2000	40—50	74	68	92	94	74	(74)	69	63	11'20"
Kissin 2000	32—44	69	(62)	90	90	72	(76)	64	60	10'54"
Zimerman 2000	26—33	87	(60)	89	96	85	68	66	63	11'29"
Petukhov 2001	34—40	80	(58)	87	91	73	84	67	56	10'48"
Marshev 2001	48—48	66	(70)	84	96	78	(62)	65	56	11'30"
Scherbarkov 2002	36-45	78	74	90	96	82	80	(76)	58	10'24"
Freire 2003	40—46	75	68	94	100	76	(74)	70	60	10'09"
Hough 2004	64—80	86	(66)	90	98	84	(72)	74	75	9'48"
Lang Lang 2004	26--29	78	60	95	94	92	(62)	64	63	11'30"
Lugansky 2005	30--37	70	(58)	92	94	76	(65)	69	63	10'50"
Berezovsky 2005	34--42	74	76	93	103	84	74	76	67	9'48"
Andsnes 2005	34—45	82	(76)	93	98	82	(78)	69	70	10'05"
Hobson 2005	40—42	73	(68)	94	104	86	(76)	75	60	9'57"
Sigfridsson 2006	36—38	70	64	87	94	80	78	66	50	11'25"
Lazic 2008	44—50	74	64	86	92	73	78	65	58	10'52"

Table 5-2-1

Rachmaninoff, Piano Concerto No.2, 1st Movement. (North America-based or trained pianists)

<i>Section/Metronome</i>	<i>Intro. Bar 1--7</i>	<i>1st theme</i>	<i>2nd Theme</i>	<i>Dev.</i>		<i>Rec. tutti</i>	<i>Solo</i>	<i>Orch.</i>	<i>Coda</i>	<i>Total Time</i>
<i>Pianist</i>	66—	A tempo	(A tempo)	72	96	(A tempo)	76	69	63	
Rachmaninoff 1924	47--51	80	(76)	100	110	94	(90)	62	80	9'24"
Rachmaninoff 1929	47--51	81	(72)	90	104	84	(80)	69	81	9'44"
Barere 1944	38--40	88	(68)	95	105	94	90	74	97	9'43"
Rubinstein 1945	38--40	78	(64)	76	91	86	78	69	72	9'52"
Rubinstein 1946	38--44	88	66	90	110	90	(88)	76	80	9'11"
Rubinstein 1949	42--44	92	60	88	106	92	86	78	84	9'32"
Kapell 1950	34--41	85	(74)	90	106	82	(76)	72	80	9'22"
Katchen 1951	39--48	80	(60)	100	109	91	(88)	69	75	9'43"
Blumental 1955	38--34	72	(78)	94	104	81	78	72	73	10'02"
Rubinstein 1956	46--48	85	58	94	103	88	(80)	66	76	10'10"
Katchen 1958	40--54	80	(56)	110	116	90	(88)	72	84	9'39"
Lewenthal 1958	54--49	84	71	88	102	92	(86)	68	68	9'20"
Van Cliburn 1958	36--46	76	(74)	92	93	74	68	56	74	10'46"
Brailowsky 1958	48--46	92	76	88	98	83	(80)	78	78	9'46"
Entremont 1960	38--50	76	54	84	97	80	(82)	65	69	10'40"
Janis 1960	46--52	78	74	92	99	87	80	67	82	10'08"
Graffman 1961	44--40	80	(62)	87	106	86	72	72	77	9'55"
Graffman 1964	45--40	78	(60)	(84)	106	78	74	70	78	10'25"
Wild 1965	38--45	84	(83)	100	114	96	(84)	69	72	9'13"
Anievas 1967	43--55	85	(66)	92	100	83	72	66	74	9'48"
Rubinstein 1971	44--44	79	(64)	90	104	88	(78)	78	70	9'59"
Weissenberg 1972	29--36	70	(60)	84	101	82	61	50	56	11'48"
Bachauer 1972	36--40	77	(72)	86	89	82	(80)	70	60	10'22"
Simon 1975	52--60	74	(70)	96	103	78	82	62	80	9'48"
Licad 1983	40--42	65	63	96	100	73	76	68	60	11'00"
Ortiz 1984	42--58	70	(63)	88	102	86	(64)	69	58	10'30"
Bolet 1987	40--42	77	(60)	76	86	78	(72)	56	54	11'58"
Golub 1988	46--56	74	(72)	76	96	74	(60)	67	63	11'14"
Prats 1990	40--45	80	(68)	96	110	89	(74)	71	76	10'00"
Bronfman 1990	39--51	69	(69)	86	96	78	(78)	68	63	11'06"
Nakamura 1990	30--30	69	(60)	90	88	66	(62)	74	80	10'59"
Gutierrez 1991	45--52	84	(74)	95	104	88	(86)	68	82	9'55"
Ozolins 1993	36--42	72	(54)	82	94	84	(58)	60	58	11'20"
Derek Han 1995	34--44	72	(72)	98	102	80	76	82	60	10'11"
Ohlsson 1996	38--54	76	(60)	86	96	74	(68)	72	66	11'06"
Evelyn Chen 1997	30--38	81	(76)	90	94	70	(76)	69	63	10'56"
Rodriguez 1998	44-48	74	(66)	92	96	80	(60)	76	63	10'19"
Lang Lang 2004	26--29	78	60	95	94	92	(62)	64	63	11'30"

Table 5-2-2

Rachmaninoff, Piano Concerto No.2, 1st Movement. (Europe- and UK-based or trained pianists)

Blue: UK-based or trained

Red: France-based or trained

Section/ Metronome Pianist	Intro. 1-----7	1 st theme	2 nd Theme	Dev.		Rec. tutti	Solo	Orch.	Coda	Total Time
	66—	A tempo	(A tempo)	72	96	(A tempo)	76	69	63	
Rachmaninoff 1924	47--51	80	(76)	100	110	94	(90)	62	80	9'24"
Rachmaninoff 1929	47--51	81	(72)	90	104	84	(80)	69	81	9'44"
Moiseiwitsch 1937	42--48	79	(60)	86	96	84	(78)	71	63	10'04"
Giesecking 1940	38--50	86	(54)	93	114	74	(70)	66	75	9'43"
Joyce 1946	37--46	77	(70)	86	96	87	(84)	72	60	10'29"
Smith 1947	50--68	84	(66)	100	116	96	78	72	70	9'24"
Karolyi 1948	32--38	78	(60)	92	93	75	76	65	78	10'30"
de Groot 1952	48--48	78	(64)	92	104	85	84	72	82	10'22"
Anda 1953	40—52	83	(62)	86	102	88	(80)	69	83	10'22"
Farnadi 1953	36-44	54	(52)	84	90	74	72	56	63	11'27"
Lympny 1954	46—50	68	62	95	112	80	(74)	76	71	10'19"
Entremont 1954	38-44	78	(70)	93	98	90	(90)	(92)	78	9'28"
Blumental 1955	38—34	72	(78)	94	104	81	78	72	73	10'02"
Curzon 1955	46—56	72	62	92	96	84	70	76	57	10'34"
Moiseiwitsch 1955	39—48	74	(62)	91	100	80	(76)	68	55	10'13"
Tacchino 1959	36—42	84	(64)	86	88	79	68	64	58	10'41"
Entremont 1960	38—50	76	54	84	97	80	(82)	65	69	10'40"
Ogdon 1962	36—45	74	55	93	104	73	70	64	84	11'13"
Bollard 1963	34-36	70	(76)	84	97	79	(78)	67	63	10'44"
Cziffra 1970	28—32	66	(56)	105	103	80	(80)	50	60	12'11"
Katin 1971	55—58	78	68	90	93	78	68	67	60	10'35"
Orozco 1973	34—38	78	(60)	93	100	88	(88)	76	63	10'07"
Cherkassky 1973	36—46	87	(62)	90	88	(82)	(60)	72	61	10'26"
Hass 1974	48—52	73	(68)	86	92	79	(75)	62	64	10'39"
Vered 1974	30—38	74	(58)	96	94	78	(68)	65	60	11'30"
Boukoff 1975	27—40	70	(65)	86	110	66	(66)	66	59	10'55"
Vasary 1976	36—38	69	72	80	96	76	60	67	63	11'23"
Collard 1977	38—42	76	(70)	95	96	82	(84)	63	52	10'56"
de Larrocha 1980	42—46	75	59	85	93	74	74	56	59	11'23"
Rosel 1982	40—44	63	(60)	82	91	74	(70)	60	58	11'41"
Ortiz 1984	42—58	70	(63)	88	102	86	(64)	69	58	10'30"
Ousset 1984	39—40	77	(75)	90	94	86	80	69	61	10'42"
Fowke 1985	40—44	80	(72)	86	94	73	(76)	72	66	10'39"

Duchable 1985	44—52	78	(66)	92	104	88	78	77	66	10'19"
Jando 1988	40—46	71	74	87	104	86	(86)	70	58	11'05"
Ogdon 1988	36—50	69	70	92	90	66	(74)	65	61	10'47"
Donohoe 1989	40—47	80	67	(78)	106	78	(60)	56	55	11'37"
Lill 1989	39—46	58	64	88	100	68	(68)	69	54	11'43"
Shelley 1990	40—50	79	(79)	92	100	81	78	69	63	10'41"
Pommier 1991	34—40	66	74	89	90	78	(60)	69	62	11'05"
Grimaud 1992	40—42	70	60	90	97	71	71	66	60	10'44"
Koyama 1992	36—40	77	(56)	88	88	70	(62)	72	59	11'49"
Douglas 1992	39—44	69	60	88	96	74	74	69	56	10'46"
Thibaudet 1993	38—45	75	(70)	96	98	78	80	61	50	11'12"
Costa 1993	42—45	70	70	80	88	76	(76)	69	76	10'33"
Lively 1994	48—53	75	66	86	99	96	84	70	66	10'13"
Lympny 1994	42—48	70	(71)	89	100	76	70	71	64	10'24"
Lill 1996	38—47	60	68	88	98	74	(68)	70	58	11'30"
Glemser 1996	45—57	76	(76)	85	96	80	(78)	68	62	10'33"
Evelyn Chen 1997	30—38	81	(76)	90	94	70	(76)	69	63	10'56"
Ogawa 1997	38—38	64	(62)	88	86	62	(62)	67	60	11'20"
Biret 1998	39—35	60	68	86	78	66	72	69	56	11'57"
Kun-Woo Paik 1998	27—30	60	56	91	82	67	68	60	57	12'33"
Soerjadi 2000	33—34	72	(66)	88	86	68	(60)	56	54	11'41"
Grimaud 2000	40—50	74	68	92	94	74	(74)	69	63	11'20"
Zimmerman 2000	26—33	87	(60)	89	96	85	68	66	63	11'29"
Freire 2003	40—46	75	68	94	100	76	(74)	70	60	10'09"
Hough 2004	64—80	86	(66)	90	98	84	(72)	74	75	9'48"
Andsnes 2005	34—45	82	(76)	93	98	82	(78)	69	70	10'05"
Hobson 2005	40—42	73	(68)	94	104	86	(76)	75	60	9'57"
Sigfridsson 2006	36—38	70	64	87	94	80	78	66	50	11'25"
Lazic 2008	44—50	74	64	86	92	73	78	65	58	10'52"

Table 5-2-3

Rachmaninoff, Piano Concerto No.2, 1st Movement. (Soviet Union- / Russia-based or trained pianists)

<i>Section /Metronome</i>	<i>Intro. 1-----7</i>	<i>1st theme</i>	<i>2nd Theme</i>	<i>Dev.</i>		<i>Rec. tutti</i>	<i>Solo</i>	<i>Orch.</i>	<i>Coda</i>	<i>Total Time</i>
<i>Pianist</i>	66—	A tempo	(A tempo)	72	96	(A tempo)	76	69	63	
Rachmaninoff 1924	47--51	80	(76)	100	110	94	(90)	62	80	9'24"
Rachmaninoff 1929	47--51	81	(72)	90	104	84	(80)	69	81	9'44"
Oborin 1947	35--48	76	63	102	105	87	(86)	74	68	9'30"
Tamarkina 1948	37--46	78	(64)	96	104	87	(76)	78	63	9'46"
Nikolayeva 1951	37--46	78	68	85	96	78	78	69	63	10'22"
Malinin 1952	40--44	75	(66)	90	102	74	74	66	61	10'47"
Malinin 1953	36--44	80	63	95	104	80	(76)	73	61	10'03"
Shtarkman 1957	40--51	78	(70)	88	106	80	(80)	67	60	10'24"
Richter 1959	30--34	58	(58)	95	102	80	(78)	71	51	11'14"
Richter 1960	35--46	59	59	95	100	85	83	68	54	11'01"
Kerer 1963	48--56	78	68	90	102	82	84	63	65	10'07"
Ashkenazy 1963	37--50	72	(72)	90	102	85	(73)	67	73	10'45"
Ashkenazy 1970	34--44	67	(66)	88	102	80	(78)	69	77	11'01"
Alexeev 1978	49--55	68	74	84	96	76	72	70	67	10'47"
Rosel 1982	40--44	63	(60)	82	91	74	(70)	60	58	11'41"
Eresko 1984	28--37	76	60	91	103	86	(60)	71	62	10'46"
Ashkenazy 1984	41--48	68	(66)	84	96	74	(66)	60	68	11'26"
Kissin 1988	30--44	74	55	92	84	73	(72)	64	62	11'21"
Gavrilov 1989	39--45	82	58	94	110	76	80	69	66	10'54"
Sultanov 1989	29--44	72	(62)	94	96	80	(84)	71	54	10'41"
Rudy 1990	38--43	75	52	92	100	73	(74)	65	60	11'28"
Gavrilov 1991	29--33	78	(59)	100	110	76	(82)	69	63	10'43"
Svyatkin 1993	44--54	81	(64)	100	104	74	(72)	69	60	10'35"
Zilberstein 1994	32--42	66	(60)	96	96	70	67	67	65	10'56"
Mishtchuk 1996	28--38	69	73	96	100	80	(82)	67	64	10'34"
Pisarev 1996	42--50	78	(70)	94	98	84	(80)	78	60	10'10"
Volkov 1998	30--36	70	56	86	95	64	60	69	46	11'42"
Kissin 2000	32--44	69	(62)	90	90	72	(76)	64	60	10'54"
Petukhov 2001	34--40	80	(58)	87	91	73	84	67	56	10'48"
Marshev 2001	48--48	66	(70)	84	96	78	(62)	65	56	11'30"
Scherbakov 2002	36-45	78	74	90	96	82	80	(76)	58	10'24"
Lugansky 2005	30--37	70	(58)	92	94	76	(65)	69	63	10'50"
Berezovsky 2005	34--42	74	76	93	103	84	74	76	67	9'48"

Table 5-3				
The side divisions of Sergei Rachmaninoff's recording of the <i>Piano Concerto No.3</i> with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra				
(The Gramophone Company 'His Master's Voice' Record Nos DB1333-1337)				
<i>Side No.</i>	<i>Mvt</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Side 1	1 st Mvt	The beginning of the 1 st Mvt	Bar 107 (the 8 th bar from the RN 6)	3'33"
Side 2		Bar 108	Bar 221	3'42"
Side 3		Bar 222	The first note of the 4 th bar before the RN 19	3'03"
Side 4		The first note of the 4 th bar before the RN 19	The end of the 1 st Mvt	3'37"
Side 5	2 nd Mvt	The beginning of the 2 nd Mvt	Bar 69 (The 6 th bar from the RN 27)	4'02"
Side 6		Bar 69	The end of the 2 nd Mvt	4'35"
Side 7	3 rd Mvt	The beginning of the 3 rd Mvt	Bar 188 (the 2 nd bar from the RN 52)	4'12"
Side 8		Bar 188	The first beat of bar 320 (the 5 th bar from the RN 64)	3'47"
Side 9		Bar 320	The end of the 3 rd Mvt	3'23"
Side 10	Empty			
Note: If one adds back all the cuts Rachmaninoff made in the concerto, this will probably add 135-140 seconds to the duration.				
RN: Rehearsal Number				
Mvt: Movement				

Table 5-4-1

Rachmaninoff, Piano Concerto No.3: Deletions in the Recordings (from 133 versions), Part 1

RN: Rehearsal Number

Cuts		Pianists	Rachmaninoff 1939	Horo- witz 1930	Horo- witz 1941	Horo- witz 1951	Horo- witz 1978	Cliburn 1958	Kapell 1948	Janis 1957 1961	Smith 1946	Lympny 1952	Bachauer 1956	Magaloff 1961	Wild 1965	Malcu- zynski 1949	Malcu- zynski 1964	Watts 1969	Bolet 1969	Alfidi 1972
1 st mvt	3 rd bar after RN10 to RN 11	V							V		V	V		V		V	V	V		
	9 th and 10 th bars before RN 19	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V				V	V	V	V	V	V	
2 nd mvt	4 th bar after RN 27 to RN 28				V					V										
	6 th bar after RN 27 th to 28 th bar after RN 28	V	V	V							V	V			V	V	V	V		
	1 st and 2 nd bar after RN 36		V	V							(V)									
	6 th bar after RN 36 to RN 38		V								(V)			V			V		V	
3 rd mvt	RN 45 to 4 th bar before RN 47	V	V												V	V	V	V		
	RN 51 to 2 nd bar before RN 52				V															
	2 nd bar after RN 52 to RN 54	V	V		V					V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	(V)	V

Note:

1. Smith cuts RN 36-38 in the second movement completely.
2. Bolet cuts RN 51-54 in the third movement completely.

Table 5-4-2

Rachmaninoff, Piano Concerto No.3: Deletions in the Recordings (from 133 versions), Part 2

RN: Rehearsal Number

Pianists		Mogui-levsky 1964/66	Sonoda 1967	Orozco 1973	Simon 1975	Wild 1981	Bolet 1982	Felts-man 1988	Virado 1988	Prats 1989	Rosel 1990	Berzon 1990	Bere-zovsky 1991	Trull 1993	Biret 1998	Wright 2000	Ukha-nov 2000	Kule-shov 2001	Pletnev 2002	Gelber 2004	Ands-nes 2009	Mastuev 2009
Cuts	1 st mvt	3 rd bar after RN10 to RN 11																				
		9 th and 10 th bars before RN 19	V		(V)		V	V	V	V	V	V					V	V	V	V	V	
2 nd mvt	4 th bar after RN 27 to RN 28																			V		
	6 th bar after RN 27 th to 28 th bar after RN 28																V					
	1 st and 2 nd bars after RN 36																					
	6 th bar after RN 36 to RN 38																					
3 rd mvt	RN 45 to 4 th bar before RN 47											V										
	RN51 to 2 nd bar before RN 52																					
	2 nd bar after RN52 to RN 54		V	V	V			V				V	V	V	V	V	V		V	V		V
Note: Orozco only cuts one bar in the cadenza of the first movement.																						

Table 5-5

Rachmaninoff, Piano Concerto No.3

Cadenza and Initial Tempi Choice of the First Movement in the Recordings

(from 133 versions)

T1: the beginning: *Allegro ma non tante*; T2: the first repeat: *Più mosso*

Cdz: Cadenza choice: Short (S), Long (L), Mix (M)

Others				Soviet			
Pianist	Cdz	T1	T2	Pianist	Cdz	T1	T2
Horowitz 1930	S	129	147	Flier 1941	S	120	127
Giesecking 1939	L	88	102	Oborin 1949	S	120	138
Rachmaninoff 1939	S	137	153	Gilels 1949	S	130	140
Giesecking 1940	L	98	105	Gilels 1955	S	128	140
Horowitz 1941	S	125	152	Merzhanov 1956	S	133	145
Smith 1946	S	147	154	Grinberg 1958	S	108	117
Kapell 1948	S	110	136				
Malcuzyński 1949	S	132	147				
Horowitz 1950	S	117	135				
Horowitz 1951	S	118	142				
Lympányi 1952	S	120	136				
Bachauer 1956	S	122	138				
Cherkassky 1957	S	99	130				
Janis 1957	S	135	150				
Cliburn 1958 (Moscow)	L	119	136				
Cliburn 1958 (US)	L	115	130				
Janis 1960	S	127	145	Ashkenazy 1963	S	108	130
Magaloff 1961	S	128	138	Moguilevsky 1964	L	116	130
Pennario 1961	S	115	133	Moguilevsky 1966	L	116	132
Malcuzyński 1964	S	134	142	Ashkenazy 1971	L	102	127
Wild 1965	S	128	147	Ashkenazy 1975	L	108	131
Sonoda 1967	S	121	142	Gavrilov 1976	L	116	130
Weissenberg 1967	S	130	138	Berman 1976	L	106	119
Bolet 1969	S	137	148	Berman 1977	L	108	120
Watts 1969	M	115	124	Eresko 1983	L	121	130
Alfidi 1972	L	123	138	Eresko 1984	L	122	130
Anievas 1973	L	108	125	Ashkenazy 1985	L	118	139
Orozco 1973	L	113	134	Gavrilov 1986	L	110	132
de Larrocha 1975	S	104	128	Nikolsky 1987	L	106	131
Simon 1975	S	122	146	Virado 1988	L	115	132
Vasary 1976	L	110	128	Feltsman 1988	S	121	135
Collard 1977	S	123	133	Berzon 1990	L	118	132

Laplante 1978	S	118	135	Rosel 1990	L	110	124
Katsaris 1977	L	126	133	Berezovsky 1991	L	113	125
Weissenberg 1978	S	98	116	Postnikova 1991	L	104	126
Horowitz 1978	S	115	130	Rudy 1992	S	112	130
Wild 1981	S	125	135	Kissin 1993	L	98	124
Bolet 1982	S	127	134	Orlovetsky 1993	L	108	126
Argerich 1982	S	117	132	Trull 1993	L	132	147
Kocsis 1983	S	141	160	Orlovetsky 1994	L	108	128
Sgouros 1983	L	129	130	Zilberstein 1994	S	115	128
Nakamura 1985	S	114	130	Lugansky 1995	S	118	134
Wakabayashi 1987	L	117	134	Sokolov 1995	L	108	132
Prats 1989	L	120	135	Demidenko 1997	S	121	140
Barto 1989	L	108	130	Kissin 1997	L	94	122
Rodriguez 1989	S	128	140	Petukhov 1998	L	135	141
Ousset 1989	S	115	125	Pisarev 1998	S	115	128
Shelley 1989	S	116	138	Volodos 1999	L	121	138
Bronfman 1990	L	111	136	Samosko 1999	L	118	138
Clidat 1990	S	100	116	Ukhanov 2000	S	112	136
Costa 1991	S	127	135	Marshev 2001	L	108	116
Gutierrez 1991	S	118	142	Kuleshov 2001	S	126	139
Ortiz 1991	L	126	143	Petukhov 2001	L	138	144
Donohoe 1991	L	123	135	Pletnev 2002	L	121	142
Glemser 1992	L	111	133	Matsuev 2003	L	119	122
Lill 1993	S	103	124	Lugansky 2003	S	128	138
Douglas 1993	L	108	128	Berezovsky 2005	L	125	138
Ozolins 1993	S	112	129	Matsuev 2009	L	114	127
Rodriguez 1994	S	127	138				
Stott 1994	L	111	119				
Thibaudet 1994	L	128	140				
Lively 1994	L	115	130				
Cherkassky 1994	S	104	126				
Andsnes 1995	L	124	136				
Helfgott 1995	L	120	132				
Donohoe 1995	M	114	130				
Cominate 1996	L	100	126				
Iannone 1996	L	120	128				
Ponti 1997	M	119	132				
Ogawa 1997	L	110	120				
Paik 1998	L	114	124				
Biret 1998	L	(123)	(141)				
Pizaro 1998	L	107	128				
Riem 1999	S	115	132				
Soerjadi 2000	L	125	130				
Kim 2000	S	115	129				

Wright 2000	S	112	118				
Nakamastu 2000	S	115	134				
Lang Lang 2001	L	118	132				
Goener 2002	S	125	132				
Shen 2003	L	108	141				
Skoumal 2003	S	120	134				
Hough 2004	S	134	151				
Gelber 2004	S	114	132				
Ohlsson 2004	L	108	120				
Hobson 2005	L	109	133				
Koyama 2005	L	110	126				
Sigfridsson 2006	L	105	123				
Andsnes 2009	L	125	134				
Trpčeski 2010	L	107	131				

Note: The whole performance of Idil Biret's 1998 version is a quarter-tone higher (between D minor and D sharp minor). The original speed was likely much slower than 123 and 141.

Discography of the Case Studies

Chapter Two

Debussy's Prelude *Das pas sur la neige*

<i>Pianist</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Recording Info</i>
Heinrich Neuhaus	1948	Denon COCO80280
Maria Grinberg	1961	Denon COCO 80838
Sviatoslav Richter	1961	Vanguard OVC 8076
Stanislav Neuhaus	1963	Denon COCQ 83242
Anatoly Vedernikov	1963	Denon COCQ 83658
Alfred Cortot	1932	EMI 7243 572249 2 5
Robert Casadesus	1953	Sony MPK 45688
Marcelle Meyer	1956	EMI CZS 767 405 2
Monique Hass	1963	Erato 4509-94827-2
Samson Francois	1968	EMI 769 4352
Jacques Fevrier	1972	Accord 472 535 2

Beethoven Piano Sonata No.31 Op.110

<i>Pianist</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Recording Info</i>
Heinrich Neuhaus	1946	Denon COCO80278
Simon Barere	1946	APR 5621
Maria Grinberg	1950	VISTA VERA VVCD-00096
Lev Oborin	1952	BMG 0743213321127
Sviatoslav Richter	1965	BRILLIANT 92229
Emil Gilels	1985	DG 4776360
Tatiana Nikolayeva	1983	SCRIBENDUM SC039
Vladimir Ashkenazy	1985	Decca 4437062-10
Frederic Lamond	1927	Biddulph Records 1078304
Elly Ney	1968	Colosseum Classics 8012649
Wilhelm Backhaus	1953	Decca 467 258-2
Edwin Fischer	1938	EMI 50999-629499-2
Mieczyslaw Horszowski	1958	VoxBox 5500
Walter Gieseking	1956	EMI 5099926508122
Wilhelm Kempff	1951	DG 4479662
Claudio Arrau	1957	EMI 50999-918432-2
Rudolf Serkin	1960	Sony SM5K87993
Annie Fischer	1977	Hugaroton HCD 41003

Chopin: Ballade No.4, Op.52

<i>Pianist</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Recording Info</i>
Josef Hofmann	1938	Marston 52014-2
Samuel Feinberg	1952	SMC CD 0026
Simon Barere	1946	APR CD 7001
Vladimir Horowitz	1952	RCA 09026-60987-2
Grigory Ginzburg	1949	ARL A56
Maria Grinberg	1948	Denon COCQ-84244.9
Shura Cherkassky	1982	BBC Legends L4057-2
Sviatoslav Richter	1962	DG 4576672
Oleg Boshniakovich	1972	Vista Vera CD-00022
Stanislav Neuhaus	1971	Denon COCO 80644
Bella Davidovich	1982	Brilliant 93202
Vladimir Ashkenazy	1964	Decca 466499 2
Alfred Cortot	1937	EMI CZS 767 359 2
Youra Guller	1975	Nimbus NI 5030
Yvonne Lefébure	1978	INA SOCD 133/5,
Robert Casadesus	1930	Pearl GEM0068
Vlado Perlemuter	1974	Nimbus NI 1764
Monique de la Bruchollerie	1947	Naxos 8.558107–110
Samson Francois	1954	EMI 5099945535727
Nitika Magaloff	1973	Decca 4563762
Ignacy Jan Paderewski	1938	Pearl GEMM 9323
Raoul Koczalski	1938	Dante HPC 042
Arthur Rubinstein	1959	RCA 88697687122
Benno Moiseiwitsch	1947	APR 5575
Solomon	1946	Testament SBT 1030
Claudio Arrau	1953	Aura CD 321
	1971	Philips 4750292
Julian von Karolyi	1951	DG UCCG-4539
Friedrich Gulda	1954	DG 477872-4
Ivan Moravec	1965	VAI Audio 1092

Debussy: *Clair de lune*

<i>Pianist</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Recording Info</i>
Emil Gilels	1930-50	Melodiya MCD 166
Vladimir Ashkenazy	1963	Russian Disc
Yakov Flier	1952	RCD 16284
Anatoly Vedernikov	1957	Denon COCQ 83658
Josef Hofmann	1938	Marston 52004
Walter Gieseking	1939	VAI 1117-2
Monique Hass	1968	Erato 4509-94827-2
Jacques Fevrier	1970	Accord 472 535 2
Moura Lympany	1988	EMI TOCE-7913/14
Samson François	1959	EMI 0724358599022
Alexis Weissenberg	1960	RCA 43212 42142
Jörg Demus	1962	Sony 74321746642
Leon Fleisher	2004	Vanguard ATM1796
Ivan Moravec	1964	Voxbox CDX 5103
Van Cliburn	1972	BMG 60762-2-RG

Schubert: Piano Sonata D.960

<i>Pianist</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Recording Info</i>
Rudolf Serkin	1976	Sony 512874.2
Alfred Brendel	1997	Philips 0289 475 7191
Maria Yudina	1947	VISTA VERA VVCD-00074
Vladimir Sofronitsky	1959	Classound 001-022
Vladimir Horowitz	1953	RCA bvcc 37309
	1987	DG 4743702
Lazar Berman	1990	Koch Dis 920 164
Vladimir Ashkenazy	1987	Decca 417 327-2

Chapter Four

Rachmaninoff: Preludes Op.3 No.2 and Op.23 No.5

Pianists	Recording Info		Pianists
	Op.23 No.5	Op.3 No.2	
Rachmaninoff 1920	BMG 09026-61265-2		Rachmaninoff 1919, 1921, 1928,
Hoffman 1915	VAI IPA 1036-2		Hoffman 1918, 1912
Hoffman 1922	Marston 52004-2		Hoffman 1922
Bowen 1926	APR 6007		Bowen 1926
Leginska 1926	Ivory Classics 72002		Leginska 1926
Levitzki 1929	APR 7020B		
Schioler 1929	DANACORD 491-492		
Horowitz 1930	EMI CHS 7635382		
Joyce 1934	Testament SBT 1174		
		VICTROLA AVM30261	Rubinstein 1936
Gilels 1937	Doremi DHR 7815		
Slenczynska 1945	Naxos 8.111120		
		BMG 68992-2	Kapell 1945
Darre 1946	VAI VAIA IPA 1065-2		Darre 1946
Smith 1946	APR 5507		Smith 1946
Barere 1947	APR 5625		
Karolyi 1948	DG 477089-2		Karolyi 1948
		APR 132	Sofronitsky 1949
Lympany 1951	Decca POCL 3914		Lympany 1951
Schioler 1951	DANACORD 491-492		
Flier 1952	APR 5665		Flier 1952
Anda 1953	Testament SBT-1071		
Wayenberg 1954	British Library Sound Archive		Wayenberg 1954
		Ivory CD-74002	Reisenberg 1955
Gilels 1959	Revelation RV 10033		Gilels 1959
		Mercury 432 759-2	Janis 1960
Richter 1960	DG 419 068-2		

Odgon 1962	EMI CDM 763525 2		
Goldsand 1962	British Library Sound Archive		Goldsand 1962
Fiorentino 1963	APR 5585		Fiorentino 1963
S. Neuhaus 1965	Denon COCQ 83242		
Weissenberg 1968	BMG GD 60566		Weissenberg 1968
Graffman 1969	CBS M2YK 46460		
Cliburn 1970	BMG 09026-60973-2		Cliburn 1970
Richter 1971	Olympia OCD 337		
Bernette 1971	British Library Sound Archive		Bernette 1971
Katin 1972	Hallmark IMP PCD2052		Katin 1972
Bachauer 1972	Erato ECD 40009		Bachauer 1972
Serebayakov 1972	RD 334232		Serebayakov 1972
Anievas 1974	EMI 5 69 527 2 0		Anievas 1974
Ashkenazy 1974	Decca 443 841-2		Ashkenazy 1974
Katsaris 1977	Piano 21 P21 020-A		Katsaris 1977
		EMI 0777 767419 25	Collard 1978
		DG 415839-2	Berman 1980
		Forlane 013	Clidat 1981
Horowitz 1981	RCA 7754-2-RG		
Shelley 1983	hyperion CDS44046		Shelley 1983
		Ivory CD-70902	Slenczynska 1984
Gavrilov 1984	EMI CDC747124 2		
Browning 1986	Delos D/CD 3044		
Alexeev 1987	Virgin 551624 2		Alexeev 1987
Bolet 1987	Decca 421 061 2		Bolet 1987
Boukoff 1987	DRB AMP 108		Boukoff 1987
Stott 1987	Collins 411352		Stott 1987
Koyama 1987	Sony CSCR 8224		Koyama 1987
Magaloff 1988	Valois V 4742		
Odgon 1988	EMI 5 67938 28		
Lympany 1988	British Library Sound Archive		Lympany 1988
Postnikova 1988	Yedang YCC-0138		Postnikova 1988
Biret 1989	Naxos 8.550349		Biret 1989
Hobson 1990	Arabesque Z6616		Hobson 1990
Berezovsky 1991	Teldec 9031- 73797-2		
Nikolsky 1991	Arte Nova		

	74321 27795 2		
Douglas 1992	BMG 5605 57005 2		Douglas 1992
		British Library Sound Archive	Grubert 1992
		BMG 09026- 63674-2	Oppitz 1993
Donohoe 1993	EMI 7243 5 75510 2		Donohoe 1993
Lympany 1993	Erato 4509917142		Lympany 1993
Pilippov 1993	British Library Sound Archive		Pilippov 1993
Wild 1993	Chesky CD 114		
Demidenko 1994	Hyperion CDH 55239		Demidenko 1994
Rodriguez 1994	ELAN CD 82248		Rodriguez 1994
	Sony SMK 48 471		Laredo 1995
Cherkassky 1995	Decca 448 401-2		Cherkassky 1995
		British Library Sound Archive	Grosloot 1995
Pisarev 1996	Arte Nova 74321 67509		
Lill 1996	Nimbus NI 1761		Lill 1996
Volkov 1998	Briosi BR 116		
Sorel 1998	Channel CS98001 /2		Sorel 1998
		Decca 458 930-2	Thibaudet 1998
Kissin 2000	British Library Sound Archive		
Lugansky 2000	Erato 85738 57702		Lugansky 2000
Kuzmin 2001	Russian Disc RDCD 10025		
Petkova 2002	Brilliant 029365 63304		Petkova 2002
Favre-Kahn 2002	Transart TR 108		Favre-Kahn 2002
Berezovsky 2004	Mirare MIR 004		Berezovsky 2004
Trpceski 2004	EMI 0724355794352		Trpceski 2004
		British Library Sound Archive	Kern 2005
Nissman 2006	Pierian 0028		Nissman 2006
Hayroutinoff 2007	Chandos CHAN 2010107		Hayroutinoff 2007
Matsuev 2007	SONY BMG 88697-15591-2		Matsuev 2007
Nebolsin 2007	NAXOS 8.572335		Nebolsin 2007
Titova 2007	Sony 698672		Titova 2007
Osborne 2008	Hyperion CDA 67700		Osborne 2008

Rachmaninoff: Rhapsody on theme Of Paganini, Op. 43

Pianist, Conductor, Orchestra, Recording Info

Sergei Rachmaninoff, Leopold Stokowski, Philadelphia Orchestra, 1934 (BMG 09026-61265-2)

Benno Moiseiwitsch, Basil Cameron, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, 1937 (APR 5505)

William Kapell, Fritz Reiner, Robin Hood Dell Orchestra of Philadelphia, 1945 (BMG 68992-2)

Arthur Rubinstein, Walter Susskind, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1946 (BMG 63015-2)

Cyril Smith, Malcolm Sargent, Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, 1950 (Dutton CDCLP 4004)

Arthur Rubinstein, Victor de Sabata, New York Philharmonic, 1950 (Rare Music 231)

Valentin Gheorghiu, George Georgescu, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, 1952 (LYS 544-545)

Yakov Zak, Kirill Kondrashin, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, 1952 (LYS 5566573)

Arthur Rubinstein, Fritz Reiner, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 1956 (RCA 63035)

Leon Fleisher, George Szell, Cleveland Orchestra, 1956 (Sony MYK37812)

Monique de la Bruchollerie, Jonel Perlea, Concerts Colonne Orchestra, 1956 (Doremi DHR 7842/3)

Philippe Entremont, Eugene Ormandy, The Philadelphia Orchestra, 1958 (Sony SBK89962)

Leonard Pennario, Erich Leinsdorf, Los Angeles Philharmonic, 1958 (Seraphim Classics 7243574522 29)

Julius Katchen, Adrian Boult, London Philharmonic Orchestra, 1959 (Decca 417 880-2)

Victor Merzhanov, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, State Symphony Orchestra of the USSR. 1959 (Relevation RREV10002)

Leonard Pennario, Arthur Fiedler, Boston Pops Orchestra, 1960 (RCA 09026-68874-2)

Margrit Weber, Ferenc Fricsay, RIAS Berlin, 1961 (DG 465 762 2)

Daniel Wayenberg, Van Dohnanyi, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1964 (EMI CMS 7 64530 2)

John Ogdon, John Pritchard, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1962 (EMI CDM 763525 2)

Gary Graffman, Leonard Bernstein, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, 1964 (SONY Royal Edition 47630)

Earl Wild, Jascha Horenstein, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1965 (Chandos CHAN 6507)

Agustin Anievas, Aldo Ceccato, New Philharmonia Orchestra, 1967 (EMI 7243 568619 23)

Van Cliburn, Eugene Ormandy, Philadelphia Orchestra, 1970 (RCA Living Stereo 61961)

Vladimir Ashkenazy, Andre Previn, London Symphony Orchestra, 1971 (Decca 426 386-2)

Van Cliburn, Kirill Kondrashin, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, 1972 (BMG 9026 63060 2)

Peter Donohoe, Gunter Herbig, City of Birmingham Orchestra, 1979 (IMP BBC Radio 99960)

Rafael Orozco, Edo de Waart, Royal Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, 1972 (Philips 438 326-2)

Abbey Simon, Leonard Slatkin, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, 1975 (VoxBox CDX 5008)

Tamas Vasary, Yuri Ahronovitch, London Symphony Orchestra, 1977 (DG 447 181-2)

Jean-Philippe Collard, Michel Plasson, Toulouse Capital Orchestra, 1978 (EMI 0777 767419 25)

Bella Davidovich, Neeme Jarvi, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, 1981 (Philips 410 052-2)

Peter Rosel, Kurt Sanderling, Berlin Symphony Orchestra, 1982 (Berlin Classics 0093022BC)

Martino Tirimo, Yoel Levi, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1982 (EMI 724347888526)

Cecile Licad, Claudio Abbado, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 1983 (CBS 7464 38672)

Victor Eresko, Gennady Provatorov, USSR Symphony Orchestra, 1984 (BMG 74321 24211 2 Melodiya)

Zoltan Kocsis, Edo de Waart, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, 1984 (Philips 411 475-2)

Cristina Ortiz, Moche Atzmon, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1984 (Decca 414 348-2)

Cecile Ousset, Simon Rattle, City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, 1984 (EMI CDC 754157 2)

Philip Fowke, Yuri Temirkanov, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1985 (EMI CDM 7 620192)

Tedd Joselson, Zoltan Rozsnyai, Philharmonia Hungarica, 1985 (Perpetua 2006)

Vladimir Ashkenazy, Bernard Haitink, Concertgebouw Orchestra, 1986 (Decca 417-239-2)

Nicolas Economou, Miltiades Caridis, ORF Sinfonieorchester, 1986 (Suoni e Colori)

Mikhail Pletnev, Libor Pesek, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1987 (Virgin 724356 9762 8)

Piotr Dimitriev, Samuel Friedmann, Russian Philharmonic Orchestra, 1988 (ARTE NOVA 74321 72108 2)

Vladimir Feltsman, Zubin Mehta, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, 1988 (Sony SMK 66934)

Jeno Jando, György Lehel, Budapest Symphony Orchestra, 1988 (Naxos 8.550117)

Horacio Gutierrez, David Zinman, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, 1990 (Telarc CD-80193)

Jorge Luis Prats, Enrique Bátiz, Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra and, 1990 (ASV CD QS 6128 1990)

Howard Shelley, Bryden Thomson, Scottish National Orchestra, 1990 (Chandos CHAN 8882/3)

Sequeira Costa, Christopher Seaman, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1991 (Carlton 30367 01142)

Andrei Gavrilov, Ricardo Muti, The Philadelphia Orchestra, 1991 (EMI Red Line CDR 5 69829-2)

Peter Jablonski, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1991 (Decca 465 223 2)

Dmitri Alexeev, Yuri Temirkanov, St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, 1992 (BMG 9026 62710-2)

Mikhail Rudy, Mariss Jansons, Leningard Philharmonic Orchestra, 1992 (EMI 0777 754232 28)

Michie Koyama, Andrew Davis, London Philharmonic Orchestra, 1992 (CBS/Sony CSCR 8224)

Konstantin Serovtov, Andrey Anikhanov, St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra, 1993 (Audiophile Classics 101.038)

Arthur Ozolins, Mario Bernardi, The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, 1993 (CBC SMCD5128)

Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Vladimir Ashkenazy, The Cleveland Orchestra, 1993 (Decca 440653-2)

Leonid Kuzmin, Igor Golovchin, State Symphony Orchestra of Russia, 1993 (Russian Disc RDCD 10025)

Igor Uryash, Alexander Dmitriev, St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, 1993 (Melodia Records)

Mark Zeltser, Rudolf Barshai, Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1995 (Laurel 904)

Andrei Diev, *Vladimir Ponkin, The Moscow State philharmonic orchestra, 1995 (Discover Classics)*

Evelyn Chen, Leonard Slatkin, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1995 (Sony 88697642972)

Derek Han, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1995 (RPO SP 010)

Bernd Glemser, Antoni Wit, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1996 (Naxos 8.550810)

John Lill, Taddaki Otaka, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, 1996 (Nimbus NI 1761)

Hae-Jung Kim, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, USSR Ministry of Culture Orchestra, 1997 (Kleos KL5102)

Mikhail Pletnev, Claudio Abbado, Berliner Philharmoniker, 1997 (DG 457 5832 9)

Idil Biret, Antoni Wit, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1998 (Naxos 8.554376)

Kun-Woo Paik, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1998 (BMG 09026 68867 2)
Oleg Volkov, Vassily Sinaisky, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, 1998 (Briosi BR 116)
Jan Simon, Vladimir Valek, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1999 (Cesky rozhlas CR0138-2-031)
Alexander Gavrylyuk, New Tokyo City Symphony Orchestra, 2000 (Sacrambow OVSL-00001)
Jon Nakamatsu, Christopher Seaman, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, 2000 (Harmonia Mundi, HMU 907286)
Ayako Uehara, Edvard Tschivzhel, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, 2001 (ABC Classics 461654-2)
Oleg Marshev, John Loughran, Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, 2001 (Danacord 582 583a and b)
Stephen Hough, Andrew Litton, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, 2004 (hyperion CDA67501/2)
Lang Lang, Valery Gergiev, Mariinsky Orchestra, 2004 (DG 477 5231 8)
Nikolai Lugansky, Sakari Oramo, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, 2005 (Warner 0927 47941-2)
Boris Berezovsky, Dmitri Liss, Orchestre Philharmonique de l'Oural, 2005 (Mirare MIR 008)
Ian Hobson, Ian Hobson, Sinfonia Varsovia, 2005 (Zephyr Z128-07-02)
Denis Matsuev, Valery Gergiev, Mariinsky Orchestra, 2009 (Mariinsky Label 004)

Chapter Five

Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No.2, Op.18

Pianist, Conductor, Orchestra, Recording Info

Sergei Rachmaninoff, Leopold Stokowski, Philadelphia Orchestra, 1924 (BMG 09026-61265-2)

Sergei Rachmaninoff, Leopold Stokowski, Philadelphia Orchestra, 1929 (RCA 5997-2-RC)

Benno Moiseiwitsch, Walter Goehr, London Philharmonic Orchestra, 1937 (APR 5505)

Walter Gieseking, Willem Mengelberg, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, 1940 (Music & Arts CD-250)

Simon Barere, Antonia Brico, unknown orchestra, 1944 (APR 5625)

Arthur Rubinstein, Leopold Stokowski, Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra, 1945 (Biddulph 44718 20412)

Arthur Rubinstein, Vladimir Golschmann, NBC Symphony Orchestra, 1946 (BMG 63015-2)

Eileen Joyce, Erich Leinsdorf, London Philharmonic Orchestra, 1946 (Dutton Laboratories CDEA 5505)

Cyril Smith, Malcolm Sargent, Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, 1946 (Dutton CDCLP 4004)

Lev Oborin, Alexander Gauk, USSR Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1947 (Dante HPC 159)

Rosa Tamarkina, Nikolai Anosov, USSR State Symphony Orchestra, 1948 (Vista Vera 00092)

Julian von Karolyi, Hans Rosbaud, Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, 1948 (DG 477089-2)

Arthur Rubinstein, Serge Koussevitsky, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, 1949 (ROCKPORT RECORDS RR5017)

Julius Katchen, Anatole Fistoulari, New Symphony Orchestra, 1949 (Decca 475 7221)

William Kapell, William Steinberg, Robin Hood Dell Orchestra of Philadelphia, 1950 (BMG 68992-2)

Tatiana Nikolayeva, Konstantin Ivanov, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, 1951 (Denon PCCD 20264)

Cor de Groot, Willem Van Otterloo, Hague Philharmonia Orchestra, 1952 ((Decca XP 6018)

Evgeny Malinin, Moscow Youth Symphony Orchestra, 1952

Evgeny Malinin, Otto Ackermann, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1953 (Columbia 33CX 1369)

Geza Anda, Otto Ackermann, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1953 (Testament SBT-1071)

Edith Farnadi, Hermann Scherchen, Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera, 1953 (Westminsters WL 5193)

Moura Lympny, Nicolai Malko, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1953 (Olympia OCD 190)

Philippe Entremont, Eugene Ormandy, The Philadelphia Orchestra, 1954 (British Library Sound Archive)

Felicja Blumental, Michael Gielen, The Orchestra of Vienna, 1955 (VoxBox ACD 8020)

Clifford Curzon, Adrian Boulet, London Philharmonic, 1955 (Decca 460 994-2)

Benno Moiseiwitsch, Hugo Rignold, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1955 (Guild GHCD 2326)

Arthur Rubinstein, Fritz Reiner, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 1956 (RCA 63035)

Naum Shtarkman, unknown, Moscow State Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1957 (private collection)

Julius Katchen, George Solti, London Symphony Orchestra, 1958 (Decca 417 880-2)

Raymond Lewenthal, Maurice Abravanel, Vienna State Opera Orchestra, 1958 (Universal UMD 80398)
 Alexander Brailowsky, Enrique Jorda, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, 1958 (RCA LM-2259)
 Gabriel Tacchino, Andre Cluytens, Orchestre de la Societe des Concerts du Conservatoire, 1959 (EMI 5731172)
 Sviatoslav Richter, Kurt Sanderling, Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, 1959 (BMG/Melodiya 29460-2)
 Philippe Entremont, Leonard Bernstein, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, 1960 (Sony SBK53512)
 Sviatoslav Richter, Stanislaw Wislocki Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, 1960 (DG 447420-2)
 Byron Janis, Antal Dorati, Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, 1960 (Mercury 432 759-2)
 Gary Graffman, Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1961 (private collection)
 Van Cliburn, Fritz Reiner, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 1962 (RCA Living Stereo 61961)
 John Ogdon, John Barbirolli/Philharmonia Orchestra, 1962 (EMI CDM 763525 2)
 Rudolf Kerer, Kirill Kondrashin, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, 1963 (Multisonic 310353)
 Vladimir Ashkenazy, Kirill Kondrashin, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, 1963 (Decca 425 047-2)
 Gary Graffman, Leonard Bernstein, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, 1964 (SONY Royal Edition 47630)
 Earl Wild, Jascha Horenstein, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1965 (Chandos CHAN 6507)
 Ilja Surov, Aljushin, London Philharmonic Orchestra, 1965 (Marble Arch Ma1594)
 Agustin Anievas, Aldo Ceccato, New Philharmonia Orchestra, 1967 (EMI 7243 568619 23)
 Vladimir Ashkenazy, Andre Previn, London Symphony Orchestra, 1970 (Decca 426 386-2)
 Georges Cziffra, Georges Cziffra, Jr., Paris Orchestra, 1970 (EMI 7476402)
 Peter Katin, E.Kurdell, London Symphony Orchestra, 1971 (Belart 461 370-2)
 Arthur Rubinstein, Eugene Ormandy, Philadelphia Orchestra, 1971 (BMG 9026 63060 2)
 Alexei Weissenberg, Herbert von Karajan, Berliner Philharmoniker, 1972 (EMI TOCE90055)
 Gina Bachauer, Alain Lombard, Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra, 1972 (Erato ECD 40009)
 Rafael Orozco, Edo de Waart, Royal Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, 1973 (Philips 438 326-2)
 Shura Cherkassky, 1973 (British Library Sound Archive)
 Werner Hass, Eliahu Inbal, Frankfurt Radio-Sinfonie, 1974 (Philips 438 329-2)
 Ilana Vered, Andrew Davis, New Philharmonia Orchestra, 1974 (Decca 443612)
 Yuri Boukoff, Jean Fournet, Vienna Symphony Orchestra, 1975 (Philips ABL 3278)
 Abbey Simon, Leonard Slatkin, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, 1975 (VoxBox CDX 5008)
 Tamas Vasary, Yuri Ahronovitch, London Symphony Orchestra, 1976 (DG 447 181-2)
 Jean-Philippe Collard, Michel Plasson, Toulouse Capital Orchestra, 1977 (EMI 0777 767419 25)
 Dimitri Alexeev, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1978 (Olympia 423 123 2)
 Alicia de Larrocha, Andre Previn, London Symphony Orchestra, 1980 (Belart 461 3482 10)
 Peter Rosel, Kurt Sanderling, Berlin Symphony Orchestra, 1982 (Berlin Classics 0093022BC)
 Cecile Licad, Claudio Abbado, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 1983 (CBS 7464 38672)
 Victor Eresko, Gennady Provatorov, USSR Symphony Orchestra, 1984 (BMG 74321 24211 2 Melodiya)
 Zoltan Kocsis, Edo de Waart, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, 1984 (Philips 411 475-2)

Cristina Ortiz, Moche Atzmon, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1984 (Decca 414 348-2)

Cecile Ousset, Simon Rattle, City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, 1984 (EMI CDC 754157 2)

Vladimir Ashkenazy, Bernard Haitink, Concertgebouw Orchestra, 1985 (Decca 417-239-2)

Philip Fowke, Yuri Temirkanov, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1985 (EMI CDM 7 620192)

Francois-Rene Duchable, Theodor Guschlbauer, Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, 1985 (Erato ECD 18411)

Steven de Groote, Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, 1987 (Valley Multimedia-Closeouts 1554)

Jorge Bolet, Charles Dutoit, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, 1987 (Decca 421 181-2)

Evgeny Kissin, Valery Gergiev, London Symphony Orchestra, 1988 (RCA 57982)

Jeno Jando, György Lehel, Budapest Symphony Orchestra, 1988 (Naxos 8.550117)

David Golub, Wyn Morris, London Symphony Orchestra, 1988 (IMP PCD 903)

John Ogdon, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, London Symphony Orchestra, 1988 (Collins 10882)

Peter Donohoe, Taddaki Otaka, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, 1989 (British Library Sound Archive)

Andrei Gavrilov, Ricardo Muti, The Philadelphia Orchestra, 1989 (EMI Red Line CDR 5 69829-2)

Alexei Sultanov, Maxim Shostakovich, London Symphony Orchestra, 1989 (Teldec 9031-77601-2)

John Lill, Taddaki Otaka, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, 1989 (Nimbus NI 1761)

Yefim Bronfman, Esa-Pekka Salonen, The Philharmonia, 1990 (Sony SK 47183)

Jorge Luis Prats, Enrique Bátiz, Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra and, 1990 (ASV CD QS 6128 1990)

Howard Shelley, Bryden Thomson, Scottish National Orchestra, 1990 (Chandos CHAN 8882/3)

Hiroko Nakamura, Evgeny Svetlanov, The State Symphony Orchestra of USSR, 1990 (Sony SK48030)

Mikhail Rudy, Mariss Jansons, Leningard Philharmonic Orchestra, 1990 (EMI 0777 754232 28)

Andrei Gavrilov, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1991 (EMI CDC 7 54003 2)

Horacio Gutierrez, Lorin Maazel, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, 1991 (Telarc CD-80259)

Hae-Jung Kim, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, USSR Ministry of Culture Orchestra, 1991 (Kleos KL5102)

Jean-Bernard Pommier, Laurence Foster, Halle Orchestra, 1990 (Virgin 7243 561207 23)

Helene Grimaud, Jesus Lopez-Cobos, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1992 (Denon 75368)

Michie Koyama, Andrew Davis, London Philharmonic Orchestra, 1992 (CBS/Sony CSCR 8224)

Barry Douglas, Michael Tilson Thomas, London Symphony Orchestra, 1992 (BMG BMG 5605 57005 2)

Sequeira Costa, Christopher Seaman, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1993 (Carlton 30367 01142)

David Lively, Alexander Rahbari, Brtn Philharmonic Orchestra Brussels, 1994 (Discover International DICD 920221)

Arthur Ozols, Mario Bernardi, The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, 1993 (CBC SMCD5128)

Alexander Svyatkin, Andrei Anikhanov, St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra, 1993 (Audiophile APC 101.024)

Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Vladimir Ashkenazy, The Cleveland Orchestra, 1993 (Decca 440653-2)

Lilya Zilberstein, Claudio Abbado, Berliner Philharmoniker, 1994 (DG 439 930-2)

Moura Lympany, Vernon Handley, BBC Symphony Orchestra, 1994 (British Library Sound Archive)

Derek Han, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1995 (RPO SP 010)

Bernd Glemser, Antoni Wit, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1996 (Naxos 8.550810)

John Lill, Simon Rattle, City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, 1996 (British Library Sound Archive)

Vladimir Mishtchuk, Samuel Friedmann, Russian Philharmonic Orchestra, 1996 (Arte Nova 74321 42215 2)

Garrick Ohlsson, Neville Marriner, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, 1996 (Hanssler 98.932)

Andrei Pisarev, Samuel Friedmann, Russian Philharmonic Orchestra, 1996 (Arte Nova 74321 67509 2)

Evelyn Chen, Leonard Slatkin, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1997 (Sony 88697642972)

Noriko Ogawa, Owain Arwel Hughes, Malmo Symphony Orchestra, 1997 (BIS CD-900)

Idil Biret, Antoni Wit, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1998 (Naxos 8.554376)

Kun-Woo Paik, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1998 (BMG 09026 68867 2)

Oleg Volkov, Vassily Sinaisky, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, 1998 (Briosio BR 116)

Santiago Rodriguez, P. A. McRae, Lake Forest Symphony, 1998 (Elan CD 82412)

Wibi Soerjadi, Miguel Gomez Martinez, London Philharmonic Orchestra, 2000 (Philips 464 602-2)

Helene Grimaud, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Philharmonia Orchestra, 2000 (Teldec 8573 843762)

Evgeny Kissin, Andrew Davis, BBC Symphony Orchestra, 2000 (British Library Sound Archive)

Krystian Zimerman, Seiji Ozawa, Boston Symphony Orchestra, 2000 (DG 459 6432 4)

Oleg Marshev, John Loughran, Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, 2001 (Danacord 582 583a and b)

Mikhail Petukhov, Yuri Simonov, Moscow Philharmonic orchestra, 2001 (Monopoly GI-2067)

Konstantin Scherbakov, Dmitri Yablonsky, Russian State Symphony Orchestra, 2002 (Naxos DVD Audio 5.110013)

Nelson Freire, Alexander Dmitriev, St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, 2003 (private collection)

Stephen Hough, Andrew Litton, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, 2004 (hyperion CDA67501/2)

Lang Lang, Valery Gergiev, Mariinsky Orchestra, 2004 (DG 477 5231 8)

Nikolai Lugansky, Sakari Oramo, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, 2005 (Warner 0927 47941-2)

Boris Berezovsky, Dmitri Liss, Orchestre Philharmonique de l'Oural, 2005 (Mirare MIR 008)

Ian Hobson, Ian Hobson, Sinfonia Varsovia, 2005 (Zephyr Z128-07-02)

Henri Sigfridsson, Stefan Solyom, Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, 2007 (hanssler CD 98.259)

Leif Ove Andsnes, Antonio Pappano, London Symphony Orchestra, 2009 (EMI 6 40516 2)

Simon Trpčeski, Vasily Petrenko, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, 2010 (AVIE RECORDS AV 2192)

Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No.3, Op.30

Pianist, Conductor, Orchestra, Recording Info

Vladimir Horowitz, Albert Coates, London Symphony Orchestra, 1930 (EMI CHS 7635382)

Walter Gieseking, John Barbirolli, Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, 1939 (Music & Arts CD 1095)

Sergei Rachmaninoff, Eugene Ormandy, The Philadelphia Orchestra, 1939-40 (RCA 5997-2-RC)

Walter Gieseking, Willem Mengelberg, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, 1940 (Music & Arts CD-250)

Yakov Flier, Konstantin Ivanov, USSR TV and Radio Orchestra, 1941 (Melodiya LP transfer)

Vladimir Horowitz, John Barbirolli, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, 1941 (APR 5519)

Cyril Smith, George Weldon, City of Birmingham Orchestra, 1946 (APR 5507)

William Kapell, E. MacMillan, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, 1948 (VAI/IPA 1027)

Witold Malcuzyński, Paul Kletzki, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1949 (Dante HPC 144)

Emil Gilels, Kirill Kondrashin, USSR State Symphony orchestra, 1949 (Doremi DHR 7815)

Lev Oborin, Konstantin Ivanov, USSR Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1949 (Dante HPC 159)

Vladimir Horowitz, Sergei Koussevitzky, Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, 1950 (Music & Arts CD 963)

Vladimir Horowitz, Fritz Reiner, RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra, 1951 (RCA 7754-2-RG)

Moura Lympny, Anthony Collins, New Symphony Orchestra, 1952 (London POCL-3914)

Emil Gilels, Andre Cluytens, Orchestre de la Societe des Concerts du Conservatoire, 1955 (Testament SBT 1029)

Gina Bachauer, Alec Sherman, London Symphony Orchestra, 1956 (HM CLP1138)

Victor Merzhanov, Nikolai Anosov, USSR TV and Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1956 (Vista Vera VVCD-97015)

Shura Cherkassky, Rudolf Schwarz, BBC Symphony Orchestra, 1957 (BBC BBCL4092)

Byron Janis, Charles Munch, Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1957 (BMG 09026-68762-2)

Maria Grinberg, Karl Eliasberg, USSR State Symphony Orchestra, 1958 (Denon COCO-80743)

Van Cliburn, Krill Kondrashin, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, 1958 (Moscow Conservatory SMC 003/4)

Van Cliburn, Krill Kondrashin, Symphony of the Air, 1958 (RCA 6209-2-RC)

Byron Janis, Antal Dorati, Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, 1960 (Mercury 432 759-2)

Nikita Magaloff, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Suisse Romande Orchestra, 1961 (Arkadia CDHP 595.1)

Leonardo Pennario, Walter Susskind, The Philharmonia Orchestra, 1961 (Seraphim Classics 7243574522 29)

Vladimir Ashkenazy, Anatole Fistoulari, London Symphony Orchestra, 1963 (Decca 425 047-2)

Witold Malcuzyński, Witold Rowicki, The National Philharmonia Orchestra in Warsaw, 1964 (Royal Long Players 2214)

Evgeny Moguilevsky, Daniel Sternefeld, Symphony Orchestra of the BRT, 1964 (Cypres CYP9612-3)

Earl Wild, Jascha Horenstein, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1965 (Chandos CHAN 6507)

Evgeny Moguilevsky, Krill Kondrashin, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, 1966 (LYS 568-573)

Takahiro Sonoda, H. Muller-Kray, Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1967 (Evica HTCA5005)

Alexis Weissenberg, George Pretre, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 1967 (BMG 09026-61396-2)

Jorge Bolet, Webb, Indiana University Symphony Orchestra, 1969 (Palex CD-0503)

Andre Watts, Seiji Ozawa, New York Philharmonic, 1969 (Sony SBK 53512)

Vladimir Ashkenazy, Eugene Ormandy, Philadelphia Orchestra, 1971 (RCA 09026-68874-2)

Joseph Alfidi, Rene Defossez, Belgian National Symphony Orchestra, 1972 (HELIDOR 2548262)

Agustin Anievas, Aldo Ceccato, New Philharmonia Orchestra, 1973 (EMI 7243 568619 23)

Rafael Orozco, Edo de Waart, Royal Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, 1973 (Philips 438 326-2)

Lazar Berman, Leonard Bernstein, New York Philharmonic, 1976 (New York Philharmonic Special Editions)

Vladimir Ashkenazy, Andre Previn, London Symphony Orchestra, 1975 (Decca 426 386-2)

Alicia de Larrocha, Andre Previn, London Symphony Orchestra, 1975 (Belart 461 3482 10)

Abbey Simon, Leonard Slatkin, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, 1975-77 (VoxBox CDX 5008)

Andre Gavrillov, Alexander Lazarev, USSR State Academic Orchestra, 1976 (HMV ESD7032)

Tamas Vasary, Yuri Ahronovitch, London Symphony Orchestra, 1976 (DG 447 181-2)

Lazar Berman, Claudio Abbado, London Symphony Orchestra, 1977 (CBS MYK 37809)

Jean-Philippe Collard, Michel Plasson, Toulouse Capital Orchestra, 1977 (EMI 0777 767419 25)

Cyprien Katsaris, Horst Neumann, Grosses Rundfunkorchester Leipzig, 1977 (Piano 21 P21 020-A)

Vladimir Horowitz, Zubin Mehta, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, 1978 (DG DVD)

Vladimir Horowitz, Eugene Ormandy, New York Philharmonic Orchestra, 1978 (BMG 09026-61564-2)

Andre Laplante, Alexander Lazarev, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, 1978 (Analekta FL 23107)

Alexis Weissenberg, Leonard Bernstein, France National Orchestra, 1978 (EMI TOCE-9498)

Jorge Bolet, Ivan Fischer, London Symphony Orchestra, 1982 (Decca 414 671-2)

Martha Argerich, Ricardo Chailly, RSO Berlin, 1982 (Philips 446 673-2)

Victor Eresko, Vladimir Ponkin, Leningrad Symphony Orchestra, 1983 (Karussell 423 513-2)

Zoltan Kocsis, Edo de Waart, San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, 1983 (Philips 411 475-2)

Dimitris Sgouros, Yuri Simonov, Berliner Philharmoniker, 1983 (EMI 0777 767573 22)

Victor Eresko, Gennady Provatorov, USSR Symphony Orchestra, 1984 (BMG 74321 24211 2 Melodiya)

Vladimir Ashkenazy, Bernard Haitink, Concertgebouw Orchestra, 1985 (Decca 417-239-2)

Hiroko Nakamura, Evgeny Svetlanov, The State Symphony Orchestra of USSR, 1985 (Sony Classical 32DC500)

Andrei Gavrillov, Ricardo Muti, The Philadelphia Orchestra, 1986 (EMI CE33-5098)

Andrei Nikolsky, Georgers Octors, Belgian National Symphony Orchestra, 1987 (Rene Gailly CD87 501)

Akira Wakabayashi, Georgers Octors, Belgian National Symphony Orchestra, 1987 (Rene Gailly CD87 504)

Vladimir Feltsman, Zubin Mehta, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, 1988 (Sony SMK 66934)

Vladimir Viardo, E. Mata, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, 1988 (Intersound CDD 442)

Tzimon Barto, Christopher Eschenbach, London Philharmonic, 1989 (EMI CDC 749861 2)

Cecile Ousset, Gunter Herbig, The Philharmonia Orchestra, 1989 (EMI CDC 7499412)

Jorge Luis Prats, Enrique Bátiz, Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra and, 1989 (Regis B000OCZ85G)

Santiago Rodriguez, Emil Tabakov, Philharmonic Orchestra, 1989 (Elan CD 2220)

Howard Shelley, Bryden Thomson, Scottish National Orchestra, 1989-90 (Chandos CHAN 8882/3)

Vitalij Berzon, Alexander Dmitriev, Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra, 1990 (Leningrad Masters LM 1312)

Yefim Bronfman, Esa-Pekka Salonen, The Philharmonia, 1990 (Sony SK 47183)

France Clidat, Zdenek Macal, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1990 (Forlane 013)

Peter Rosel, Kurt Sanderling, Berlin Symphony Orchestra, 1990 (Berlin Classics 0093022BC)

Boris Berezovsky, Eliahu Inbal, Philharmonia Orchestra, 1991 (Teldec 9031-73797-2)

Sequeira Costa, Christopher Seaman, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1991 (Carlton 30367 01142)

Peter Donohoe, Vernon Handley, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, 1991 (British Library Sound Archive)

Horacio Gutierrez, Lorin Maazel, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, 1991 (Telarc CD-80259)

Cristina Ortiz, Ivan Fischer, The Philharmonia, 1991 (Collins 12462)

Viktoria Postnikova, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, State Symphony Orchestra, 1991 (Revelation RV 10003)

Bernd Glemser, Jerzy Maksymiuk, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, 1992 (Naxos 8.550666)

Mikhail Rudy, Marris Jansons, St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, 1992 (EMI CDC 754880 2)

Barry Douglas, Evgeny Svetlanov, Russian State Symphony Orchestra, 1993 (Sony/ BMG 86972 79722)

Evgeny Kissin, Seiji Ozawa, Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1993 (BMG 09026-61548-2)

John Lill, Taddaki Otaka, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, 1993 (Nimbus NI 1761)

Alexei Orlovetsky, Alexander Dmitriev, St. Petersburg Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, 1993 (CMS WCD 98015)

Arthur Ozolins, Mario Bernardi, The Toronto Symphony Orchestra, 1993 (CBC SMCD5128)

Natalia Trull, Andrey Anikhanov, St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra, 1993 (Audiophile Classics 101.038)

Shura Cherkassky, Yuri Temirkanov, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, 1994 (Decca 448 401-2)

David Lively, Alexander Rahbari, Brtn Philharmonic Orchestra Brussels, 1994 (Discover International DICD 920221)

Alexei Orlovetsky, Alexander Titov, St. Petersburg New Classical Orchestra, 1994 (Infinity Digital QK 57260)

Santiago Rodriguez, P. A. McRae, Lake Forest Symphony, 1994 (Elan CD 82412)

Kathryn Stott, Jerzy Maksymiuk, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, 1994 (British Library Sound Archive)

Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Vladimir Ashkenazy, The Cleveland Orchestra, 1994 (Decca 448 219-2)

Lilya Zilberstein, Claudio Abbado, Berliner Philharmoniker, 1994 (DG 439 930-2)

Leif Ove Andsnes, Paavo Berglund, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, 1995 (Virgin 7243 454173 27)

Peter Donohoe, David Atherton, BBC National Symphony Orchestra of Wales, 1995 (British Library

Sound Archive)

David Helfgott, Milan Horvat, Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra, 1995 (BMG 74321-40378-2)

Nikolai Lugansky, Ivan Shpiller, State Academy Symphony Orchestra of Russia, 1995 (Vanguard 99091)

Grigory Sokolov, Yan Pascal Tortelier, BBC Symphony Orchestra, 1995 (private collection)

Roberto Cominate, Evgeny Tchivzhel, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, 1996 (ABC 454 975-2)

Bernd Glemser, Antoni Wit, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1996 (Naxos 8.550810)

Pasquale Iannone, Minamoto Yorimoto, Orchestra sinfonica della provincia di Bari, 1996 (Phoenix 112)

Nikolai Demidenko, Richard Hickox, BBC Philharmonic, 1997 (British Library Sound Archive)

Evgeny Kissin, Zubin Metha, Berliner Philharmoniker, 1997 (British Library Sound Archive)

Noriko Ogawa, Owain Arwel Hughes, Malmo Symphony Orchestra, 1997 (BIS CD-900)

Michael Ponti, Heribert Beissel, Halle State Philharmonic Orchestra, 1997 (Dante PSG9871)

Idil Biret, Antoni Wit, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1998 (Naxos 8.554376)

Kun-Woo Paik, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, 1998 (BMG 09026 68867 2)

Andrei Pisarev, Samuel Friedmann, Russian Philharmonic Orchestra, 1998 (Arte Nova 74321 67509 2)

Artur Pizaro, Martyn Brabbins, Hannover NDR Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, 1998 (Collins 15052)

Mikhail Petukhov, Pavel Feranek, Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra, 1998 (Opus 91 2672-2)

Julian Riem, M. Mast, Munich Youth Orchestra, 1999 (Triptychon 2001 99)

Vitaly Samosko, Marc Soustrot, Belgian National Orchestra, 1999 (Cypres CYP9607)

Arcadi Volodos, James Levine, Berliner Philharmonic, 1999 (Sony SK 64384)

Hae-Jung Kim, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, USSR Ministry of Culture Orchestra, 2000 (Kleos KL5102)

Wibi Soerjadi, Miguel Gomez Martinez, London Philharmonic Orchestra, 2000 (Philips 464 602-2)

Jon Nakamatsu, Christopher Seaman, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, 2000 (Harmonia Mundi, HMU 907286)

Evgeny Ukhonov, Edvard Tchivzhel, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, 2000 (ABC Classics 461654-2)

Valery Kuleshov, Dmitri Yablonsky, The Russian State Orchestra, 2001 (Bel-Air Music BAM 2020)

Sandra Wright, Jing Po Chiang, Philharmonia Moment Musical, 2000 (River Music 003)

Lang Lang, Yuri Temirkanov, St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, 2001 (Telarc CD-80582)

Oleg Marshev, John Loughran, Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, 2001 (Danacord 582 583a and b)

Mikhail Petukhov, Yuri Simonov, Moscow Philharmonic orchestra, 2001 (Monopoly GI-2067)

Mikhail Pletnev, Mstislav Rostropovich, Russian National Orchestra, 2002 (DG 471 576-2)

Nelson Goerner, Vassily Sinaisky, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, 2002 (Cascavelle VEL3051)

Adam Skoumal, Leos Svárovský, Prague Symphony Orchestra FOK, 2002 (ArcoDiva UP 0057-2 131)

Nikolai Lugansky, Sakari Oramo, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, 2003 (Warner 0927 47941-2)

Denis Matsuev, Rico Saccani, Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, 2003 (BPO Live)

Wen Yu Shen, Gilbert Varga, Belgian National Orchestra, 2003 (Cypres 0264210 D1 BD5-7)

Stephen Hough, Andrew Litton, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, 2004 (hyperion CDA67501/2)

Bruno Gelber, Isaac Karabtchevsky, Orchestra della Svizzera Italia, 2004 (Transart TA 127)

Garrick Ohlsson, Robert Spano, Boston Symphony Orchestra, 2004 (private collection)

Boris Berezovsky, Dmitri Liss, Orchestre Philharmonique de l'Oural, 2005 (Mirare MIR 008)
Ian Hobson, Ian Hobson, Sinfonia Varsovia, 2005 (Zephyr Z128-07-02)
Michie Koyama, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra, Moscow, 2005 (Megaphon)
Henri Sigfridsson, Stefan Solyom, Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, 2007 (hanssler CD 98.259)
Leif Ove Andsnes, Antonio Pappano, London Symphony Orchestra, 2009 (EMI 6 40516 2)
Denis Matsuev, Valery Gergiev, Mariinsky Orchestra, 2009 (Mariinsky Label 004)
Simon Trpčeski, Vasily Petrenko, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, 2010 (AVIE RECORDS AV
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