Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914): Life, Music, Reception

by

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
Birmingham City University

2025

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the life, music and reception of the forgotten Russian composer Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914). Stanchinsky has been unfairly neglected by musicology. Chapter 1 overviews the consulted sources and the limited prior research on Stanchinsky, while the following chapters are separated into three thematic parts: life, music and reception. Chapter 2 is the first primary-source-based biography of the composer which situates him within the social and cultural milieu of late Imperial Russia. It examines how Stanchinsky's upbringing and education shaped his musical career, and how his social surroundings affected his work and productivity. Chapters 3 and 4 are the first to produce a detailed examination of Stanchinsky's compositional output. The composer's developmental journey in 1904-1910 is explored in chapter 3, while chapter 4 picks up from 1911 and examines the stylistic tendencies of his two last sonatas (F major and G major) and his best-known miniature cycle, the *Twelve Sketches*. Chapter 5 forms the third part of the thesis, which explores how Stanchinsky's works were received and treated during his lifetime and posthumously, as well as considering some of the potential reasons behind the composer's subsequent neglect.

Stanchinsky's music provides a rich insight into the development of music at the turn of the twentieth century. His earliest tendencies, following in the footsteps of Chopin and Scriabin, were completely transformed within ten years. Stanchinsky's final works masterfully combine the old and the new. Many of his works are contrapuntal and obscure tonality through purely diatonic means, while others experiment with higher levels of chromaticism and employ complex rhythms and irregular metres. Stanchinsky provides an unorthodox portrait of a Russian composer, inviting us to revise our ideas of 'Russianness', and his compositional journey can be taken as an exemplar link between nineteenth-century romanticism and twentieth-century modernism. In addition to enriching the musicological scholarship on late Imperial Russia, the research provides performers with contextual and analytical insights, enabling Stanchinsky's significance as a composer to be more widely recognised.

Mamai ir seneliams, už jų begalinę meilę ir nepaliaujamą paramą iš už tūkstančių mylių.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the help and support of many people. I apologise in advance if the following inadvertently omits anyone who has assisted me. I am indebted to my supervisors: Gareth Thomas, for his rigorous attention to detail in music analysis; Sarah Badcock, for teaching me how to be a historian; and Christopher Dingle, for his authoritative oversight of the whole project. I was given opportunities to research, to learn and to travel by Midlands4Cities and the Arts and Humanities Research Council, who have generously funded my work for three-and-a-half years. The university's inter-library loan service and its star supervisor Kip Darling went above and beyond to provide vital access to resources even when all libraries were shut.

Certain chapters would not have come into existence without the generosity of many colleagues from around the world. My examination of the *Scottish Songs* was made possible by Christopher Hepburn, who kindly shared an out-of-print edition of the works. Jonathan Powell sent his PhD thesis, which helped to inform my approach to music analysis. Aleksandr Komarov from the Russian National Museum of Music volunteered his time to transcribe parts of Stanchinsky's 1909 diary when international borders closed in 2020. I am also grateful to the rest of the staff at the Russian National Museum of Music who hosted me in the summer of 2019, and were subsequently generous enough to digitise, share and permit me to reproduce photographs of Aleksey Stanchinsky in this thesis. I must make a special mention of my mother, my diligent research assistant in Moscow, who has helped to decipher Stanchinsky's awkward handwriting and who was always on hand to assist with translation queries.

Finally, I want to thank my family and friends for their continuous support and patience. Everyone I met at conferences and seminars who listened and talked 'Stanchinsky' with me; the 'Kuchka' gang, so delightfully obsessed with Taneyev; and others who have inspired and enriched my thoughts on Russian music. I am thankful to Daniel for providing a sympathetic ear, to Harriet for emergency w(h)ine meetings, and to my support system in Lithuania for keeping me close to my roots. I am especially grateful to my husband, Nick, for believing in me and providing continuous encouragement and comfort.

NOTES ON DATES, TRANSLATION, TRANSLITERATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS

The dates presented in this thesis adhere to two distinct calendar systems, depending on which was used in Russia at the time. All dates prior to 31 January 1918 adhere to the Julian (Old Style) calendar. All dates after 14 February 1918 adhere to the Gregorian (New Style) calendar.

Translations from Russian are my own work unless otherwise indicated. The original Russian quotes of unpublished sources are provided in the footnotes. The spelling of nineteenth century Russian sources has been modernised to adhere to the post-1918 Cyrillic alphabet. Punctuation has been reproduced precisely.

Transliteration from Cyrillic to English follows the transliteration system used in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* with a few modifications. 'Э' has been transliterated to 'E', and 'ы' transliterated to 'y', as per the British Standard System. Name endings -ий have been simplified to -y (e.g. Stanchinsky, instead of Stanchinskiy), while established spellings of names, such as Scriabin, Jurgenson, Lhévinne, Krein, Asafiev and others appear in common usage forms throughout.

Measures of distance, such as versts, are given in their original form with conversions to kilometres provided in brackets.

Stanchinsky's photographs have been reproduced with permission from the Russian National Museum of Music. My contract with RNMM states that the final version of the publication in which photographs are used should be approved by RNMM, but due to the current geopolitical situation this has not been possible. Any required alterations will be made once communication with Russian institutions is restored.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis provides the first substantive study of Aleksey Stanchinsky, exploring the nature of his life and music within the context of his social milieu, as well as his contemporary and posthumous reception. Stanchinsky is a figure that has been on the peripheries of Russian musicology for a century. Not a single work has been published, either in Russia or abroad, which centres on his life and music. Prior to the current project, little was known about his circumstances, stylistic tendencies or the reception of his music in late Imperial Russia. This is not due to Stanchinsky being undeserving of our attention, but because studies of early twentieth-century Russian music have tended to focus on the works of better-known composers from this time, such as Scriabin, Medtner or Prokofiev. The publications which do mention Stanchinsky always relegate him to a single section or chapter and are rarely borne out of primary sources. Through circular referencing, quite a few *canards* about Stanchinsky have gone unchecked and have started being treated as established facts, with little primary evidence to support them.

Despite being largely overlooked by scholars, Stanchinsky's works have begun to receive more attention from performers in the last couple of decades. The 1990s saw the release of a single CD of Stanchinsky's music (Nikolay Fefilov, *Etcetera Records*, 1992), but from the 2000s we see an increase in interest, with five CDs recorded between 2008 and 2023 (Alexander Malkus, *Melodiya*, 2008; Ekaterina Derzhavina, *Profil Edition Günter Hänssler*, 2017; Peter Jablonski, *Ondine*, 2021; and Olga Solovieva, *Grand Piano*, 2019 and 2023).[1] The most notable of these is Olga Solovieva's two-volume collection *Complete Piano Works*, which includes all of Stanchinsky's published piano pieces, as well as some recently discovered early pieces which remain unpublished. Stanchinsky's music was featured in the BBC Proms in 1998 and performed by Peter Jablonski on BBC Radio 3 in March 2021.

With growing interest in Stanchinsky among performers, an updated and expanded scholarly work on Stanchinsky has been needed for some time. This thesis is the first extended study to focus solely on Stanchinsky: it addresses an existing gap in knowledge about the composer's life and music, and begins the work of questioning and correcting some of the previously published assumptions. In addition to contributing to knowledge by bringing forth previously

[1] For a full list of available recordings, see Discography.

unknown materials and analyses, this thesis contributes to our understanding of Russian music more broadly. Stanchinsky is a unique example among his contemporaries, whose music does not easily fit within an established framework. Like many of his contemporaries, he began his career by following in the stylistics footsteps of Scriabin, a progressive composer who all young composers admired. However, unlike many of his colleagues, Stanchinsky escaped Scriabin's influence relatively quickly and embarked on an individual path. In line with broader European developments of early twentieth century, Stanchinsky worked to expand the bounds of tonality but, rather unusually, did so primarily in a diatonic – not a chromatic – setting. His characteristic linear and contrapuntal textures are also unusual for a composer of his generation and appear to anticipate the neoclassical developments of the 1920s. For these reasons, Stanchinsky contributes to our understanding of Russian music by inviting us to revise our ideas of what a Russian composer of his generation can be.

The current project thus feeds into a broader debate in Russian musicology over the 'Russianness' of Russian music. In 1997, Richard Taruskin began debunking myths of Russian music's distinctiveness in his ground-breaking tome *Defining Russia Musically*. By famously likening the treatment of Russian composers to their confinement in a 'ghetto', Taruskin began to expose the long history of mystification of Russian music.[2] Taruskin's hypotheses have transformed the field of Russian music studies and opened it up for further contributions. Over the last couple of decades, musicologists have been painstakingly discrediting persistent assumptions of what constitutes Russianness in Russian music, freeing Russian composers from their 'ghetto' and breaking down illusory national barriers.[3]

Stanchinsky's music contributes to these conversations by providing more depth and nuance to our understanding of Russian music from *fin-de-siècle* Russia. In exploring the figure of Stanchinsky, this thesis also contextualises social and historical matters, contributing to our understanding of the artistic milieu of this time. As a result, it broadens our understanding of the period by positioning the lived experiences of Stanchinsky and his closest circles within their historical context. For example, the examination of Stanchinsky's life adds to our

[2] Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. xvii.
[3] For more on nationalism in Russian music, see: Marina Frolova-Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism: From Glinka to Stalin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Rutger Helmers, *Not Russian Enough? Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Nineteenth-Century Russian Opera* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014); Rebecca Mitchell, *Nietzsche's Orphans: Music, Metaphysics, and the Twilight of the Russian Empire* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2015).

understanding of the personal and professional relationships among Russia's most prolific composers and pedagogues, while the printed reactions to Stanchinsky's music allow us to situate Stanchinsky within his contemporary music scene and add to our understanding of music criticism in early twentieth century Russia. This detailed consideration of the development of Stanchinsky's compositional style speaks to the broader discourse about the compositional fashions and tendencies of the time, and positions Stanchinsky's compositional style as unorthodox and forward-thinking.

The thesis has three main aims:

- To survey Aleksey Stanchinsky's life and his position within the social and artistic milieu of late Imperial Russia
- To examine critically Aleksey Stanchinsky's compositional style and output
- To explore Aleksey Stanchinsky's contemporaneous reception and the reasons for the composer's subsequent neglect in Soviet Russia

The first of these aims focuses on investigating how Stanchinsky's upbringing, education and surroundings formed him as a composer, with a particular emphasis on musical and personal influences on his artistic production. The second explores Stanchinsky's published piano works and songs, establishing a roadmap of the evolution of Stanchinsky's stylistic development. The third probes into critical reviews of Stanchinsky's music throughout the twentieth century, exploring how perceptions of Stanchinsky as a composer were moulded and subsequently changed.

Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914)

Aleksey Stanchinsky was a Russian pianist-composer whose music and short life have been largely forgotten. He began composing in early childhood, and by the age of eighteen was producing serious, large-scale piano compositions. He actively composed until his death at the age of 26. Despite such a short career, Stanchinsky composed more than thirty works for solo piano, alongside a small number of chamber compositions and songs. From 1907, Stanchinsky studied at the Moscow Conservatoire, but had to take a break from his studies in 1910–1911 when he was hospitalised because of a mental illness. After his hospitalisation, Stanchinsky

resumed composition, working at an even faster rate than before. His first *opus* was published by Jurgenson in 1913, and by 1914 Stanchinsky had recovered enough to perform publicly again. However, on the night of 22 September 1914, Stanchinsky walked out in protest after an argument with his mother. The next day, he was found dead on the banks of the local river, and his career was tragically cut short.

Stanchinsky's music represents a connecting link between nineteenth-century romanticism and twentieth-century modernism. The rapid evolution of his compositional style between 1904 and 1914 progressed from simple melody-and-accompaniment pieces to complex contrapuntal, tonally and rhythmically adventurous works. The whole body of his compositional output demonstrates a composer actively in search of his individual voice, and his works are an eclectic collection. Stanchinsky's early style was rooted in late romanticism, but he soon escaped these influences, and his final works foreshadowed the neo-classical developments of the 1920s. Like many of his contemporaries, Stanchinsky experimented with expanding harmonic systems, his approach extending not only to chromatic enrichments, but also to pandiatonicism and modes. His harmonic style, ranging from pure diatonicism to rich chromaticism, pushed the boundaries of nineteenth-century harmonic common practice in multiple directions. Stanchinsky worked with complex rhythms and irregular metres, structuring his themes within irregular phrase lengths, and allowing his beaming to escape the constraints of bar lines. By the end of his life, most of his textures were linear and contrapuntal. He treated the strict polyphonic forms of his compositions with flexibility and composed entire works from a single theme or idea. Stanchinsky reconciled numerous musical influences, including folk idioms and his classical training, to create a style that is individual and unmistakable.

Musical Context

Stanchinsky lived and worked during a time of significant change in music both in Russia and abroad. The early part of the twentieth century saw important developments in music, as it did in literature, theatre and the visual arts. To assert 'superiority of the present over the past (and, by implication, of the future over the present)', modernists sought to break from old Romantic models and looked for new ways of writing music, becoming more adventurous with rhythms,

experimenting with forms and exploring new harmonic systems.[4] In Paris, composers such as Debussy and Ravel worked on exploring colour, experimenting with timbre, orchestration and texture, and used modes and extended tonalities to create new sonorities. The Second Viennese School composers looked for new ways to expand tonality, using chromatic scales in ever more rigid structures, which later led to the development of Schoenberg's serial twelve-tone technique. In London, Edwardian composers such as Elgar worked to liberate English music from its insularity, despite remaining firmly grounded within the English musical tradition.

As a figure who sits in between late romanticism and modernism, Stanchinsky is difficult to categorise in absolute terms. This is all the more complex because the scholarly debates around defining modernism are ongoing, and new definitions are constantly emerging, being refuted and reevaluated again. In their introduction to *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music*, Heile and Wilson explain some of the difficulties in providing a definition of musical modernism, claiming that it 'is a daunting task, not only due to the inherent complexities of the issue but also the myriad of competing theories that have been formulated in the past. Furthermore, the contributors to this volume give voice to a considerable range of views. We believe that this diversity of views is a strength not a weakness, and we have not aimed for ideological or theoretical cohesion.'[5] The lack of ideological or theoretical cohesion is also apparent in another volume edited by Heile, where he posits that 'the concept of modernism that is mostly developed here is subject to historical change and constant redefinition, not a monolithic entity.'[6] The lack of consensus on the definition of modernism is not surprising, and the present thesis does not aim to contribute to the academic debates that surround this topic. In the view of the author, such purely academic deliberations can detract from our ability to appreciate the music for what it is, and this research will aim to keep its focus firmly on Stanchinsky. This is not an uncritical view – and one that appears to align with that of Heile – although curiously, while stating that 'what most scholars are interested in today is a historical reappraisal of musical modernism and its legacy, not a continuation of increasingly tired polemics' in 2016, Heile dedicates an entire paragraph to explaining the

[4] Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Early Twentieth Century: The Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bcu/detail.action?docID=5836788> [accessed 22 April 2023], p. 25. For a broader discussion on modernism and issues associated with the term 'modernist', see Taruskin, *Music in the Early Twentieth Century*, pp. 25-29.
[5] Björn Heile and Charles Wilson, 'Introduction' in *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music*, ed. by Björn Heile and Charles Wilson (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 1-30 (p. 4).
[6] Björn Heile, 'New Music and the Modernist Legacy' in *The Modernist Legacy: Essays on New Music*, ed. by Björn Heile (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1-12 (p. 3).

difference between 'modernism in music' and 'modernist music' in 2019.[7] However, Heile also makes a valuable point in that most contributors to *The Modernist Legacy* are performers and composers, rather than scholars, and many are from a younger generation (rather like the present author) 'for whom the binary oppositions that have dogged twentieth-century music studies in the past [...] have become all but meaningless. While the depiction of musical modernism that emerges is on the whole more sympathetic than what has been prevalent in musicological discussions recently, this does not mean that the authors [... are] uncritical.'[8] This research would like to take this position as a jumping off point for its own criticality, not defined by binary dogmas and scholarly polemics that are of little use to the average performer and listener.

What most contemporary scholars agree on is that early modernist composers did not completely eschew old Romantic models but situated musical innovations within longer traditions. This is particularly true of the Russian context, where talk of a sudden rupture, shock or a completely new direction seems entirely out of place. Harper-Scott calls this phenomenon 'reactive modernism' and posits that this type of music 'cannot be understood either as "modernist" or "non-modernist", "progressive" or "conservative" on the old binary models. Two different aesthetic principles, one faithful and one reactive, are held in dialectical equilibrium. The familiar melody, and the relic of tonality, does not step temporally backwards over the radical split between pre-modernist and modernist music: both the non-tonal and the tonal elements in this music must be understood as having already accepted the new musical reality.'[9] What he describes so eloquently is the kind of music that Stanchinsky wrote, in which elements of innovation merge entirely naturally with old models of the past. Harper-Scott's ideas build on those by Whittall who argues that 'modernism and tonality are not incompatible' and, while 'interaction between stable and unstable factors [...] tend naturally to make for a certain degree of complexity', he invites us to accept the proposition that 'twentieth-century music is more fundamentally and consistently concerned with interactions between continuation and innovation than with undiluted manifestations of the latter.'[10] Although Harper-Scott's ideas are more recent than Whittall's and, as such, more up to date, he makes

[7] Heile, 'New Music and the Modernist Legacy', p. 2; and Heile and Wilson, 'Introduction', p. 4.
[8] Heile, 'New Music and the Modernist Legacy', p. 3.
[9] J. P. E. Harper-Scott, 'Reactive Modernism' in *The Routledge Research Companion to Modernism in Music*, ed. by B. Heile and C. Wilson (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 155-174 (p. 157).
[10] Arnold Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 4-6.

some questionable assertions in defining his 'reactive modernism', such as that 'a history with a claim to representing the past accurately can still be written.'[11] This is an outdated and limited view, which fails to account for human subjectivity which is impossible to remove from any historical research process. As such, the present author is tempted to treat his writings with a degree of caution, though it is encouraging to see that he is starting to attempt to classify the kind of music that does not easily fall under a single label (such as Stanchinsky's). The academic position of this thesis aligns more closely with that of Whittall, in that it sees no real point in seeking to define and confine Stanchinsky's style within the boundaries of a single verbal concept.[12] The present research will not aim to argue whether Stanchinsky was a late-Romanic, a modernist or a 'reactive modernist', but rather look at his music, which bridges labels, and evaluate it for what it is.

Instead of aiming to define modernism or Stanchinsky's place within it, it is more productive to focus on the events and musical context that surrounded this budding young composer. Stanchinsky studied and worked during a time which did not constitute a historical rupture, but it certainly marked an important turning point.[13] Heile and Wilson provide a helpful summary of the wide and varied musical context from this time: '1908 saw Schoenberg's String Quartet no. 2 Op. 10 with its "air from other planet", namely atonality. Further important works, such as the Three Piano Pieces Op. 11 (1909), the Five Pieces for Orchestra Op. 16 and the monodrama *Erwartung* Op. 17 (1909), followed in quick succession. Around the same time, Stravinsky's Diaghilev ballets *Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911) and *The Rite of Spring* (1913) inaugurated Parisian modernism. Bartok's First String Quartet was composed in 1908–09 and his *Allegro barbaro* for piano in 1911. In Russia, Scriabin's *Prometheus* dates from 1908–10 and his Piano Sonatas nos. 6 and 7 from 1911–12. On the other side of the Atlantic, finally, Charles Ives's Third Symphony and *Central Park in the Dark* fall into the same period.'[14]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, composers across Europe searched for new ways to expand musical language and experimented with new scales and chords. It has been observed that 'over the course of the nineteenth century, the chromatic scale gradually supplanted the diatonic.'[15] Tymoczko helpfully summarises the two broad ways in which composers

[11] Harper-Scott, 'Reactive Modernism', p. 158.
[12] Whittall, *Musical Composition in the Twentieth Century*, p. 9.
[13] Heile and Wilson, 'Introduction', p. 8.
[14] Ibid., p. 7.
[15] Dmitri Tymoczko, 'Scale Networks and Debussy', *Journal of Music Theory*, 48.2 (2004), 219–94 (p. 219).

approached this new chromatic context. The first group (Wagner, Strauss, and the early Schoenberg) 'de-emphasised scales other than the chromatic', while the second group (Rimsky-Korsakov, Debussy, Ravel), 'preserved a more conventional understanding of the relation between chords and scale, but within a significantly expanded musical vocabulary.'[16] Within this context, Stanchinsky's *oeuvre* follows more closely the tendencies of the second category, but it is difficult to estimate the extent to which his style developed in response, or despite of these broader developments.

We cannot be entirely sure how much new music from abroad Stanchinsky was exposed to in his lifetime. Moscow and St Petersburg were not as well equipped with opportunities to hear new music as cities like Paris, Vienna or London. We know that Stanchinsky never left the territory of the Russian Empire, which makes innovations in his music all the more noteworthy. Stravinsky's and Prokofiev's music, for example, only became more adventurous after visiting Paris where they were exposed to new developments. The examined artefacts, such as Stanchinsky's diaries, have not provided sufficient details to go on, and evidence in this respect remains sketchy. Even if we had more information, any influence in a composer's *oeuvre* is difficult to pin down, as oftentimes composers might be exposed to a new piece or a new idea but use it in their own work in a completely different way. We know, for example, that Stanchinsky's teacher and friend Nikolay Zhilyayev was keen on new music, especially Debussy, but this does not seem to have had a direct effect on Stanchinsky, apart from possibly his interest in alternative scales (although Debussy's use of alternative scales was prompted, at least in part, by his knowledge of Russian music). Zhilyayev was a significant figure in Stanchinsky's life. A prominent critic, editor and teacher, Zhilyayev's erudition was widely admired in Moscow's musical circles, and he has been labelled a 'musical conscience' in Russia.[17] He was a friend of Scriabin and edited a number of his works, while his students included composers such as Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978), Samuil Feinberg (1890-1962) and another friend of Stanchinsky, Anatoly Aleksandrov (1888-1982). Zhilyayev's influence on Stanchinsky's music is discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

Another important figure in Stanchinsky's life, whose influence shaped his musical development, was his teacher Sergey Taneyev. Taneyev's musical preferences were more

[16] Tymoczko, 'Scale Networks and Debussy', pp. 219-220.
[17] Inna A. Barsova, 'Trudy, dni i gibel' Nikolaya Sergeyevicha Zhilyayeva', in *Nikolay Sergeyevich Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by Inna A. Barsova (Moscow: Muzyka, 2008), pp. 11.

conservative than those of Zhilyayev, and he brought his students up on a steady diet of Bach. A composer and theorist of impressive stature, Taneyev remains famous for his treatise *Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Form* (1909) and is remembered as one of the most influential pedagogues of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Himself a student of Tchaikovsky, Taneyev served as director of the Moscow Conservatoire between 1885 and 1889, and taught some of Russia's foremost composers, including Scriabin, Rachmaninov and Medtner. The polyphonic interweaves in the latter two composers' music could be attributed to Taneyev's influence; the polyphonic direction of Stanchinsky's works from 1908 can be.

Nelson described Taneyev as a 'guardian of specifically "Russian" traditions'.[18] There was a concerted effort in Russia at this time to search for a distinctively Russian form of musical expression, with composers aiming to part from the previous efforts of their Kuchka [the Mighty Five] predecessors (which they saw as unsuccessful in their quest), and to set out in a new direction. Two broad schools of thought formed among composers: Russianists (or traditionalists) and modernists. These differences in musical thought would be further highlighted after the 1917 revolution by the creation of two leading musical groups: the ASM (Association for Modern Music) and RAPM (Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians). The Russianists believed that new compositions should be rooted in a native musical idiom, while the modernists were seeking to promote progressive ideas and experimentation in music. Further differences in thought were also noticeable between the creative practices of the Moscow and St Petersburg Conservatoires. While Moscow's cultural circles showed greater affinity for Russian native idioms, French culture tended to hold greater sway in St Petersburg, where 'art for art's sake' was often associated with leading artistic circles.[19] Despite this, the image of the Moscow Conservatoire remaining a 'bastion of conservativism or even epigonism, while St Petersburg was supposed to be more progressive' does not hold entirely true when considering compositional teaching and theoretical instruction.[20]

Although the search for authenticity in Russian folk song was eventually abandoned, a new, metaphysical narrative of transcending Russia's social ills took hold, elevating composers such

[18] Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), p. 4.
[19] Rebecca Mitchell, *Nietzsche's Orphans: Music, Metaphysics, and the Twilight of the Russian Empire* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 13.
[20] Wendelin Bitzan, 'The Sonata as an Ageless Principle, Nikolai Medtner's Early Piano Sonatas: Analytic Studies on their Genesis, Style, and Compositional Technique' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, 2018), p. 38.

as Scriabin to the status of a prophet-like figure. Scriabin was seen as 'a contemporary unifier of the *Russian* [sic] people', whose music would 'lift humanity to a higher spiritual level.'[21] Notions of musical nationalism were thus freely extended to the composer whose *oeuvre* did not contain any traditionally Russian elements. However, Scriabin's seeming rejection of old models in his quest to create new music for the new Russian society was also met with criticism. Emil Medtner, for example, slammed the composer for his rejection of established musical laws, claiming that his contemporary musical style was a sign of the decline of, rather than progress of, society. For Medtner, the true musical genius followed 'eternal' musical models, favouring the legacy of the past over the 'chimera of historical progress.'[22]

Notwithstanding a strong focus on Russian national identity, many developments in Russian music were influenced by events and advancements in Europe. Prior to the creation of the Soviet Union, Europe and Russia were more closely related than they are today, and cultural exchange was more fluid then than later in the century. We may thus assume that Stanchinsky was influenced by both Russian and European musical traditions. As a pianist, Stanchinsky practised works by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin, recording up to eight hours of daily practice in his diary. This demonstrates that he was intimately familiar with these composers' works, and we may suppose that having their compositions under his fingers shaped Stanchinsky's own approach to writing for piano. There are obvious links in Stanchinsky's *oeuvre* with Bach through his predilection for counterpoint, but Stanchinsky was also very interested in the Romantics, and early in his career wrote late-Romantic-inspired works in the footsteps of Chopin and Schumann.

Early in his career, Stanchinsky was also heavily influenced by Scriabin, but he escaped these influences comparatively quickly and embarked on a path different from many of his contemporaries. Composers such as Sergey Protopopov (1893–1954), Aleksey Melkikh (1885–1943) and Leonid Sabaneyev (1881-1968), for example, 'were stylistically overawed by Scriabin's influence and did not develop sufficiently independent voices' of their own.[23] Others active at the time, such as Feinberg, Alexander Krein (1883-1951), Artur Lourié (1892-1966), Boris Lyatoshyns´ky (1895-1968) and Nikolay Roslavets (1880-1944) all incorporated

[21] Mitchell, *Nietzsche's Orphans*, p. 91.
[22] Ibid., p. 93.
[23] Jonathan Anthony Powell, 'After Scriabin: Six Composers and the Development of Russian Music' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1999), p. 19.

and developed Scriabin's compositional language in individual ways, but remained strongly under the influence of the composer's stylistic tendencies. Stravinsky and Prokofiev also had their periods of drawing inspiration from Scriabin, but both went on to develop their own very distinctive styles. In this respect, Stanchinsky has more in common with the latter two composers: his significant evolution of style and early break away from Scriabin's influence allowed him to embark on an individual path. It is, of course, impossible to know whether Stanchinsky would have matched their prominence had he lived longer. Nonetheless, Stanchinsky's unique style is all the more remarkable in light of the fact that he had a relatively narrow exposure to new music, compared to composers like Stravinsky and Prokofiev.

There are notable similarities between Stanchinsky and his contemporaries. Like Prokofiev, Stanchinsky wrote short stories, and like Scriabin, he wrote poetry. In his early twenties, Stanchinsky collected folk songs, putting him in a long line of composers to do so, not only Russians such as the Kuchka, but also European composers such as Kodály and Bartók. At the same time, Stanchinsky used counterpoint as a structural springboard which allowed him to explore new rhythms and harmonic systems. Like other composers of the time, such as Scriabin, Prokofiev and Stravinsky, Stanchinsky was progressive while always retaining a sense of conventionality: his harmonies, while pushing some boundaries by expanding to include all twelve tones, retained tonal centres to which they would always return. Looking for ways to modernise music was a common trait of the composers of his generation, but Stanchinsky did this differently to many of his Russian colleagues. Sitsky writes of Stanchinsky that his music was 'a kind of prophecy of the neoclassicism that was to engulf the world of music' and 'a demonstration of the future possibilities of polyphony [...] which, especially in the hands of the composers of the Second Viennese School was to become the great predominant technique of the twentieth century.'[24] Although Sitsky did not engage with much of the late twentieth century scholarly debate on modernism, his assessment of Stanchinsky as being different to his Russian contemporaries and foreshadowing the more prominent trends of the twentieth century is pertinent and accurate.

[24] Larry Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900-1929* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. 36.

Previous Research

Little research has been conducted on the life and works of Aleksey Stanchinsky. There is no seminal work about the composer – only a few brief and inconsistent biographies – and even fewer attempts at in-depth musical analysis. Only one musicological work concerned with Stanchinsky has been published outside of Russia: Larry Sitsky's *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900-1929* (1994), which contains a short chapter titled 'Aleksei V. Stanchinskiy: The Diatonic Webern'.[25] Three more unpublished musicological works were produced at universities. The first of these is Jonathan Powell's PhD thesis *After Scriabin: six composers and the development of Russian music* (1999), of which one chapter is focused on Stanchinsky.[26] The second is Christopher Hepburn's MA thesis *Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914): A Guide to Research* (2015).[27] The third is my MA dissertation *Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914): Origins of Style* (2018).[28] In Russia, the situation is similar, with only one scholarly piece written on Stanchinsky's music: Valentina Loginova's PhD thesis, which examines the musical styles of V. Rebikov, N. Tcherepnin and Aleksey Stanchinsky (2002).[29]

Stanchinsky's work rarely gets more than a chapter, and he is usually grouped with other 'forgotten' or 'repressed' composers of *fin-de-siècle* Russia. Despite the authors' best intentions, the lack of space afforded to Stanchinsky renders their works as brief, general overviews, limited in scope and content. Sitsky, for example, produces an excellent first English-language overview of Stanchinsky as a composer, but his research is restricted by the lack of available primary sources, and his musical analyses (which focus only on the final works of Stanchinsky) are brief and largely descriptive. Powell's thesis is constrained by his methodology of examining Stanchinsky's works only in their relation to Scriabin's legacy. Although an interesting approach, it fails to examine Stanchinsky's music in its own right, and is of more benefit to Scriabin scholars. Hepburn's MA thesis concerns itself solely with

[25] Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, pp. 27-37.
[26] Powell, 'After Scriabin', pp. 37-58.
[27] Christopher Hepburn, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914), A Guide to Research' (unpublished master's thesis, Texas Tech University, 2015).
[28] Akvilė Šmotavičiūtė, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914): The Origins of Style' (unpublished master's thesis, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, 2018).
[29] Loginova's chapter on Stanchinsky is also self-published (as taken directly from her thesis) as an online article. Valentina Aleksandrovna Loginova, 'O muzykal'noy kompozitsii nachala XX veka: k probleme avtorskogo stilya V. Rebikov, N. Tcherepnin, A. Stanchinsky' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Rossiyskaya akademiya muzyki imeni Gnesinykh, 2002); Valentina Loginova, 'Avtorskiy stil' Aleksey Vladimirovicha Stanchinskogo' (2012) <https://superinf.ru/view_helpstud.php?id=5471> [accessed 18 November 2019].

Stanchinsky, but Hepburn does not make any attempts at music analysis, and his biography of Stanchinsky is brief and sparsely referenced. Hepburn's thesis includes a table of primary sources held within the Stanchinsky Archive (Fond 239) at the Russian National Museum of Music, yet his catalogue includes only a small sample of sources which do not match the numbering of archival holdings; as such, it is of limited use. My own embryonic analysis of Stanchinsky's works in 2018 equally suffers from brevity and deserves an update. Loginova's PhD thesis covers Stanchinsky's entire life and works in just about 50 pages. There are insightful elements in Loginova's work, but she does not provide music examples and her comments about the music are largely descriptive.

Sources

Stanchinsky's published compositional output consists of over 30 works for piano, a piano trio, and a collection of songs (ten Scottish, two Russian). They are listed, together with composition dates, locations (where available) and dates of publication, in Appendix 1. For ease of reference, a simple list of titles and composition dates is also provided below.

Piano Works:

Songs Without Words, 1904

Mazurka in D♭ major, 1905

Humoresque, 1906

Tears, 1906

Sonata in E♭ minor, 1906

Prelude in C♯ minor, 1907

Prelude in C minor, 1907

Nocturne, 1907

Prelude in A♭ major/F minor, 1907

Etude in F minor/A♭ major, 1907

Prelude in D major, 1907

Prelude in E♭ minor, 1907

Etude in G minor, 1907

'Lydian' Prelude, (1907)

Mazurka in G♯ minor, 1907

Canon, 1908

'Mixolydian' Prelude, 1908

Etude in B major, 1908/1909

Prelude in B♭ minor, 1909

Prelude in B minor, 1909-1910 (likely, December 1909)

Prelude and Fugue, 1909-10

Variations, 1911

Allegro, 1911-1912

Sonata in F major, 1911-1912

Prelude in C (minor), 1912

Sonata in G major, 1912

Twelve Sketches, 1912

Three Sketches, 1912?

Canon-Preludes, 1913-1914

Songs:

Scottish Songs, 1909

V bure deyaniy, v volnakh bytiya, n.d.

Osen', n.d.

Chamber Works:

Piano Trio in D major, 1910?

The vast majority of primary sources which can help us understand Stanchinsky's life and creativity are held at the Russian National Museum of Music (RNMM), Fond 239. The museum's guide to its collections reports that there are a total of 512 items within the fond, including: 93 music manuscripts; 31 literary manuscripts (including diaries and his sister's memoirs about her brother); 270 letters; 8 documents (including his birth certificate and school diplomas); 17 assorted printed materials (mostly published pieces and a few newspaper clippings); 10 concert programmes and posters; and 84 photographs.[30] The individual item numbers of RNMM holdings are not digitised and need to be consulted in person at the museum

[30] RNMM, 'Putevoditel' po fondam', Vol. 3, pp. 271-3 <https://music-museum.ru/doc/reading-room/putevoditel-po-fondam-gczmmk.-ch.-3.pdf> [accessed 15 June 2023].

by searching through a paper card catalogue. During the course of the research, this project was able to glean catalogue numbers for a large number of items, which are provided below and serve as a correction and extension to Hepburn's *A Guide to Research*. It was not possible to copy out every catalogue card in the time available (see Pandemic Conditions below), so some numbers are unavailable. Titles and dates appear as they are written in the catalogue, titles of instrumental pieces are translated to English, and song titles are transliterated. Unpublished pieces are indicated with an asterisk. I am unaware of any surviving manuscripts of unfinished works.

Figure 1.a: List of Stanchinsky's Manuscripts held at the Russian National Museum of Music.

Instrumental Manuscripts[31]		
Fond and Number	**Title**	**Date as in Catalogue**
RNMM 239/1-2	*Serenada**	1905
RNMM 239/3	Excerpt [*otryvok*] G major*	1906
RNMM 239/4	*Adagio* E♭ minor*	1907
RNMM 239/6	Canon 8/16	1908
RNMM 239/7	'Lydian' Prelude 21/16	1907
RNMM 239/8-9	*Musical Sketch* [Muzykal'nyy nabrosok]*	1904
RNMM 239/10-12	Nocturne 12/8	1907
RNMM 239/13	Prelude (Canon in 2 voices)	n.d.
RNMM 239/14	Piece for piano, C major*	1908
RNMM 239/15-16	Prelude C major	1912
RNMM 239/17-19	Prelude C minor	1907
RNMM 239/20	Prelude (Canon) E♭ minor	1913-14
RNMM 239/21	Prelude (Canon in 4 voices)	n.d.
RNMM 239/22	Prelude F minor 6/8	1907
RNMM 239/23	Prelude (Canon in 3 voices) G major	n.d.
RNMM 239/25	Prelude and fugue	1909
RNMM 239/26	Prelude A♭ major	1907
RNMM 239/27	Prelude (*Presto)* B♭ minor	1909
RNMM 239/28-29	Prelude B minor 5/4	1908

[31] Pieces are for piano, with the exception of Piano Trio.

RNMM 239/30	Prelude D major 7/16	1907
RNMM 239/32	*Tears*	1906
RNMM 239/33-34 and RNMM 239/69	Sonata E♭ minor	1906
RNMM 239/35	Sonata F major	n.d.
RNMM 239/36	Sonata G major	n.d.
RNMM 239/37-39	Three *Songs Without Words*	1904
RNMM 239/40-44	*Twelve Sketches* [in various combinations]	n.d.
RNMM 239/45	Etude F minor	1907
RNMM 239/46	Etude G minor 9/8	1907
RNMM 239/48	*Humoresque*	1906
RNMM 239/62	*Sad Motif* [*Grustnyy motiv*], C♯ minor*	n.d
RNMM 239/63-64	*Ballade* D minor*	n.d.
RNMM 239/65	*Storm* A minor*	n.d.
RNMM 239/66	*Gigue**	n.d.
RNMM 239/67	*Mermaid Song* [*Pes'nya rusalok*]*	n.d.
RNMM 239/68	Piece in G minor*	n.d.
RNMM 239/70	Etude C major*	1899
RNMM 239/71	Etude E minor*	1900
RNMM 239/404a	Piano Trio in D major (with Aleksandrov's comments)	n.d.

Vocal Manuscripts		
Fond and Number	**Title**	**Date as in Catalogue**
RNMM 239/49	*V kolokol, mirno dremavshiy* (Tolstoy)*	n.d.
RNMM 239/50	*Volki* (Tolstoy)*	n.d.
RNMM 239/51	*Knyaz' Mikhaylo Repnin* (Tolstoy)*	n.d.
RNMM 239/52	*Kolodniki* (Tolstoy)*	n.d.
RNMM 239/53	*Khodit Spes'* (Tolstoy)*	n.d.
RNMM 239/54	*Oy, chest' li to molodtsu* (Tolstoy)*	n.d.
RNMM 239/57	*V bure deyaniy, v volnakh bytiya* (Goethe)	n.d.
RNMM 239/59-60	*Osen'* (Bal'mont)	n.d.

While most of Stanchinsky's piano pieces have been published, several works remain available only in manuscript form as indicated in the table above. The suspicion is that they are childhood works (RNMM 239/62-71). The music manuscript collection also includes scores of several unpublished songs. Only two of Stanchinsky's romances have been published, together with his *Scottish Songs*, but they are in need of a new modern critical edition.[32] Although Stanchinsky is reported to have started working on an opera and a ballet at the end of his life, no sketches for these works have been found, and the only source pointing to their existence is a libretto held at the Stanchinsky archive, which this research project was unable to examine (RNMM 239/107).

The literary manuscripts reveal Stanchinsky's predilection for writing poems and stories and include titles such as *Moi pisaniya* (*My Writings*, RNMM 239/105)*, Stikhi* (*Poetry,* RNMM 239/111) and *Strashnoe raskazy* (*Scary Stories*, RNMM 239/112). The archive shows that Stanchinsky collected jokes and games, as at least two sources are titled *Sharady*/*Igry* (*Charades/Games*, RNMM 239/113 and RNMM 239/392). Stanchinsky's correspondence collection includes letters from his family (RNMM 239/129-130, 148-171), as well as letters sent to him by Ivan Ermakov (a notable doctor, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst of the time) (RNMM, 239/186-192), Taneyev (RNMM, 239/322, 1-6) and Zhilyayev (RNMM 239/211-228).[33] Due to time constraints, it was not possible to examine these closely as part of the research.

This thesis draws on Stanchinsky's own writings, including diaries and letters, and on the memoirs and recollections of those contemporaries and relatives who knew him. Part of the core challenge for the author was in trying to develop a coherent picture of Stanchinsky's short life based on these fragmentary sources, which are partial and subjective. Russian and Soviet memoir writing has been drawn on extensively by historians in their attempts to understand and engage with the past. Memoirs as a historical source have been subject to significant interrogation and contestation, not least because state censorship limited and restricted the nature of memoir writing and alternative sources.[34] Russian memoir writing of the late

[32] For a full list of published compositions, see Appendix 1.
[33] Ermakov's acquaintance with Stanchinsky is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.
[34] The journal *Avtobiografija* (2013-current) is devoted to works that deal with the representation of the self in Russian culture. For examples of other scholarship discussing more specifically the challenges of ego-documents for historians in the Russian/Soviet context, see: Hiroaki Kuromiya, 'Soviet Memoirs as a Historical Source', *Russian History*, 12.2/4 (1985), 293–326; Barbara Walker, 'On Reading Soviet Memoirs: A History of

nineteenth and early twentieth century is characterised by the cultural historian Beth Holmgren as seeking to emulate the insight and moral power of Russian realist fiction.[35] This thesis recognises the inherent challenges of drawing on memoirs, which often tread an uncertain line between the expression of individual experience and reliable reporting of events and recollections. Wherever possible, the author has tried to corroborate accounts using other primary sources or secondary scholarship. Where there are no other available accounts, as in, for example, Stanchinsky's personal recollections, or his sister's intimate accounts of their private family dynamics, the research has sought to be balanced and cautious in the use and evaluation of these materials. This thesis does not seek to declare historical truths, but rather to draw out the possibilities based on the evidence available.

One of the most informative sources about Stanchinsky is his sister Lydia Perlova's memoir (RNMM 239/119-120). There are two versions of this memoir: a handwritten one, and a typeset one. It was not possible to conduct a close examination of the two to see if any discrepancies occur. The typeset document of 39 loose pages collected in an envelope is the only known source which depicts Stanchinsky's childhood, and this thesis makes extensive use of it in the biographical chapter. The memoir focuses largely on Stanchinsky's childhood events and skips parts of Stanchinsky's life when his sister was not around, such as when either she or Stanchinsky were away studying or working. There are intrinsic biases in a document written by a loving family member, and Lydia Perlova's account should be treated cautiously. However, it is the only document which shines light on Stanchinsky's childhood and, considering that there is no contradictory evidence to her account, this thesis will consider Perlova's memoir to be reliable. This is also supported by the fact that she is able to discuss Stanchinsky's musical achievements with good authority. An accomplished pianist herself, Perlova studied at the Moscow Conservatoire in Joseph Lhévinne's class, who himself had graduated from Safonov's class with a Gold Medal and won first prize in a competition in Berlin.[36] This suggests that her musical training was strong and gives credit to her appraisal of Stanchinsky's music. Future scholars may disagree with my assessment of Perlova's account when – or if – new sources become available.

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the "Contemporaries" Genre as an Institution of Russian Intelligentsia Culture from the 1790s to the 1970s', *Russian Review*, 59/3 (2000), 327–52; Beth Holmgren, *The Russian Memoir: History and Literature* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2003).

[35] Holmgren, *The Russian Memoir*, p. xxi.

[36] Lydia Perlova, 'Vospominanya o Stanchinskom A. V.', RNMM, 239/120, p. 24.

Stanchinsky left five diaries which help illuminate some aspects of his personal and creative life. The first is a childhood diary from 1897-8 (RNMM 239/96); this diary was not examined during the course of the research. The second diary from 1909 (RNMM 239/97) is a small black notebook in which Stanchinsky wrote most days; its contents include a log of daily piano practice, as well as his personal reflections on his day-to-day life. This diary is the most comprehensive and the most useful, and this thesis incorporates reflections from it within its chapters. There are two diaries dated 1910 (RNMM 239/98-99); these were only looked at in passing and were not examined to the same extent as the diary from 1909. The final diary from 1910-11 (RNMM 239/100) is titled in the archive as a 'diary from the period of illness'. It provides insight into Stanchinsky's state of mind during this time and its contents are examined more closely in the next chapter.

Other people who left valuable, albeit brief, reminiscences about Stanchinsky include his friend Anatoly Aleksandrov and his first composition teacher in Moscow, Aleksandr Grechaninov.[37] Both notable composers and writers, they discuss their connection with Stanchinsky from a personal perspective, and their memoirs are illuminating with regard to Stanchinsky's character and social circles. Despite Stanchinsky studying with Sergey Taneyev from 1907 to 1914, he is not mentioned in Taneyev's diaries, while Stanchinsky's relationship with his teacher Nikolay Zhilyayev is revealed only through Zhilyayev's letters to Stanchinsky.[38]

Stanchinsky's piano works have been collected in a total of three separate editions. The pieces were first edited by Zhilyayev and Aleksandrov and published as individual works between 1926 and 1928. In this edition, Zhilyayev revised and prepared most of Stanchinsky's piano pieces; his efforts are discussed in the final chapter of this thesis. The edition continues to hold special significance due to Zhilyayev's devotion to Stanchinsky and was used as an authoritative source (in some cases, considered more authoritative than Stanchinsky's manuscripts) by subsequent editors. This is because, as this this research will demonstrate, Stanchinsky's own manuscripts sometimes lacked attention to detail and contained errors. Zhilyayev, who was familiar with Stanchinsky's performances of his own works, was able to

[37] Anatoly Nikolayevich Aleksandrov and Vladimir M. Blok, *Vospominaniya, Stat'i, Pis'ma* (Moscow: Sovetskiy kompozitor, 1979); Aleksandr Tikhonovich Grechaninov, *My Life*, ed. by Nicolas Slonimsky (New York: Coleman-Ross, 1952).
[38] Nikolay Zhilyayev and Elena Dolenko, 'Pis'ma N. S. Zhilyayeva k A. V. Stanchinskomu: publikatsiya i kommentarii Eleny Dolenko', in *Nikolay Sergeyevich Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova (Moscow: Muzyka, 2008), pp. 78–107.

more accurately represent the composer's musical intentions on paper and correct some of the remaining errors in the original manuscripts. Unfortunately, these scores are now out of print. While some are digitised, many are inaccessible, and are not even available at large Russian reference libraries. These, on the whole, have proven largely fruitless in the search for materials related to Stanchinsky.

The next edition – a single collection of Stanchinsky's piano works – was edited by Anatoly Aleksandrov and Konstantin Sorokin (the head of the piano division of the Russian State Music Publisher at the time) and published in 1960.[39] This edition includes some works which had not been previously published, but it does not represent Stanchinsky's entire piano music output.

The third – and by far the most accurate and trustworthy – edition of Stanchinsky's piano works is Irina Lopatina's 1990 critical edition *A. Stanchinsky: Sochineniya*, published as volume IX of the *Russkaya Fortepiannaya Muzyka* series.[40] This edition includes more previously unpublished works and is the only collection of Stanchinsky's piano works to include a critical commentary. For these reasons, Lopatina's edition has been used as the primary material for musical analysis in this thesis.

Stanchinsky's chamber music publications do not offer such an extensive choice of editions. There is only one edition of the Piano Trio, edited by Russian musicologist Valentin Matveyev-Venttsel' and published in 1966. The *Scottish Songs* appeared in print in 2013 in a problematic publication by Nikolay Pisarenko, which is not available commercially or digitally.[41] Pisarenko's edition is substandard: although Stanchinsky's songs were set in the Scots language, there appears to be no consistency in the way that Pisarenko set texts to music. Most are in Russian translations that are inconsistent, while others include inaccurate transcriptions of the original Scots, and in some cases monosyllabic words (such as 'here') are set over two notes (e.g. 'he-re'). The musical typesetting also lacks attention to detail. For example, beamings of equivalent musical materials within individual songs are not consistent and, in

[39] Aleksey Stanchinsky, *Sochineniya dlya fortepiano*, ed. by Anatoly Aleksandrov and Konstantin Sorokin (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo, 1960).
[40] Aleksey Stanchinsky, *A. Stanchinsky: Sochineniya*, ed. by Irina Lopatina, trans. by Valery Yerokhin, Russkaya Fortepiannaya Muzyka (Moscow: Muzyka, 1990), IX.
[41] Aleksey Stanchinsky, *Trio for Violin, Violoncello and Piano*, ed. by V. Matveyev (Moscow: Muzyka, 1966); Aleksey Stanchinsky, *Sbornik romansov*, ed. by Nikolay Pisarenko (Smolensk: Smolensk City Typography, 2013).

some places, notes have been obscured due to staves overlapping. As the location of the manuscripts of these songs is unknown (they are possibly lost), Pisarenko's 2013 edition is the only available source for this music. This project has attempted to locate the manuscripts of these songs. Enquiries have led me to believe that they may be in the possession of Valentin Matveyev-Venttsel', who spent decades travelling around Russia collecting sources relating to Stanchinsky. However, while I have been able to acquire his contact details, my attempts to contact him remain unanswered.

Pandemic Conditions

This project was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, when international and domestic travel, as well as access to resources, were severely limited. The project began in September 2018, and the onset of the pandemic in early 2020 disrupted the research at a crucial mid-point which had been designated for archival research. For these reasons, the collection of archival sources was restricted to a single two-week trip to Moscow in summer 2019. This trip was originally intended as a short stop to see what sources were available at RNMM and major reference libraries so that a second, longer trip could be planned with more information available. A planned extended trip to Moscow and Stanchinsky's hometown of Smolensk had to be cancelled in 2020. This was detrimental to my work, as I was not able to spend sufficient time examining crucial sources that may have provided clues to some questions which remain unanswered. It has also obstructed my attempts to locate the manuscripts of the *Scottish Songs*, as I was hoping that a visit to *Smolensk City Typography*, who printed the pieces, would have provided more clues as to the manuscript's current location. Smolensk City Museum would also have, without doubt, provided further opportunities to trace Stanchinsky's documents which are not in Moscow. The pandemic and Russia's subsequent invasion of Ukraine have reduced the number of primary sources I was able to consult. Russian archives have also proved to be particularly difficult to work in, especially as a foreign visitor, since no photocopying or taking pictures of sources was allowed. These limitations resulted in a number of primary sources related to Stanchinsky being left unseen or studied only in passing. In particular, it would have been helpful to spend more time examining Stanchinsky's music manuscripts, diaries, and his correspondence with family, friends and teachers.

Access to secondary sources was similarly constrained during several national lockdowns. The nature of this research project required visits to libraries in order to see old print publications in person. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the research relied heavily on inter-library loans. This service was not accessible for several months during the height of the pandemic, and this coincided with the most crucial research time in the PhD timeline. The recommended alternative – to seek sources online – did not yield satisfactory results, as the vast majority of sources related to this research are not digitised. These conditions influenced the scope of the thesis, which turned its attention to music analysis at a time when reading materials were inaccessible.

Lack of opportunities to attend conferences, seminars, and to hold conversations with other students, researchers and teachers has meant that there were limitations to the research and writing processes. Despite these limitations, this thesis is the most extensive study of Aleksey Stanchinsky to date. It adds a missing thread of knowledge to the fields of music and history, covering more breadth and depth than any previously published source.

Methodology and Thesis Structure

The sampling of primary sources for this thesis focused on the availability, accessibility and informativeness of individual items. Due to the limited time spent in archives in Moscow, and the constraints of the archives themselves (RNMM only allows ordering and viewing of five sources at a time, which must be returned before other sources can be ordered), the research process considered the amount of useful information a single source would hold. A diary, for example, covers a broader period of Stanchinsky's life and has the potential to shed more light on his character than a single letter. As such, the biography chapter is constructed largely using information found in Stanchinsky's diary from 1909, as well as his sister's memoirs about her brother. Although my intention had been to examine other sources – including Stanchinsky's correspondence – more closely on a longer, follow-up trip, this was prevented by the pandemic. I have no doubt that these sources will provide further insights to a future researcher.

In order to examine Stanchinsky's reception within his lifetime and posthumously, Russian music periodicals from the years 1913-1917 were searched. This timeframe was chosen as it covers the period from Stanchinsky's first publication in 1913 through to the publication of the

second fascicle of the *Sketches* in 1917, and includes a small number of concerts he gave in 1914 prior to his death that same year. The periodicals examined include: *Moskovskaya Gazeta*, *Muzyka*, *Ranee Utro*, *Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta*, *Rul'*, *Golos Moskvy*, *Rech'*, and *S. Peterburgskiya Vedomosti*. It was important to search the newspapers and periodicals which had been quoted in previous publications about Stanchinsky (*Moskovskaya Gazeta*, *Muzyka*, *Ranee Utro*, *Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta*, and *Rul'*), as I was keen to see those reviews in their entirety and to check their accuracy. This approach proved to be successful, and new reviews were also found alongside those which I expected to see. Furthermore, I was able to consult some additional periodicals due to their availability and accessibility at the depository (*Golos Moskvy*, *Rech'*, and *S. Peterburgskiya Vedomosti*), but no material relating to Stanchinsky was found in these papers.

To fit within the space constraints of a PhD thesis, it was necessary to narrow down the selection of Stanchinsky's works which could be included in the final version. It was not viable to discuss every piece of Stanchinsky in sufficient depth within the confines of this thesis. The sample of Stanchinsky's works included provides a broad and varied picture of his compositional development and output, which is traced in Chapters 3 and 4.

No previous literature has examined Stanchinsky's early development, and most studies of Stanchinsky attend only to his final works. It was felt that this was an oversight and that, to get a comprehensive picture of him as a composer, it was necessary to track his early stylistic development. To provide important context for his later works and illustrate the remarkable rate of his stylistic development, some early pieces have been selected that serve as prime exemplars of his compositional tendencies at successive stages of his development. These pieces were written between 1904 and 1910, a period during which Stanchinsky's compositional development was most rapid. There is a total of twenty-three published piano pieces from this period, and the thesis examines fourteen of them (counting the three *Songs Without Words* and the Prelude and Fugue as single works), alongside his *Scottish Songs*.

The earliest of Stanchinsky's published pieces, *Songs Without Words* (1904), are representative of his early style which is still developing and derivative. Together with Sonata in E♭ minor, and Nocturne, the *Songs* help to establish the starting point of Stanchinsky's compositional journey, which makes the subsequent stylistic changes in his music seem all the more

adventurous and imaginative. In the latter part of 1907, Stanchinsky's style becomes more varied, and the pieces chosen to represent this demonstrate the new ideas that he was incorporating into his style. Stanchinsky's earliest attempts at progressive tonalities are shown in Etude in F minor/A♭ major and Prelude in A♭ major/F minor (which begin and end in different keys), while the 'Lydian' and 'Mixolydian' Preludes demonstrate his progression to working with modes. His work with pure diatonicism – a new development seemingly used as a conscious restriction to create new sonorities within a diatonic framework – is evident in Prelude in B minor, while pieces such as Prelude in D major, Etude in G minor and Etude in B major serve as examples of his increasingly adventurous rhythms and metres. The *Humoresque* (1906) is an earlier work that also demonstrates adventurous rhythms, and this helps to establish that progress in Stanchinsky's music was not entirely linear. From 1908, Stanchinsky's style embraces counterpoint and higher levels of chromaticism, which are demonstrated most clearly in the Canon and the Prelude and Fugue. In addition to these idioms, the Prelude and Fugue also shows the earliest example of what shall later be dubbed the 'Stanchinsky mode' (Prelude), as well as Stanchinsky's growing use of wide spacing within contrapuntal textures (Fugue). Considerable space is dedicated to Stanchinsky's *Scottish Songs* (1909), the only complete set of songs in his output. They allow valuable insights into how he treated and adapted pre-existing folk material, shedding a new light on his compositional process. The songs have never been studied, so it was important to allow sufficient space within the thesis to examine them and the circumstances of their creation in detail. They are of particular cultural and historical interest, and have the potential to attract significant attention from performers and cultural institutions in English-speaking countries, as they are set in Scots and are also undemanding enough to be accessible even to amateur performers. Furthermore, the songs offer an insight into Stanchinsky's thoughts about his own music, as their compositional process is documented in his surviving diaries; a unique opportunity within his *oeuvre*.

Of his final works, it was important to see how Stanchinsky approached large, established forms, and for this reason the thesis examines his last two sonatas, as well as his largest cycle of miniatures, the *Twelve Sketches*. They are among Stanchinsky's largest piano works, but prior English-language literature on these pieces is limited. The entire analytical output on both sonatas amounts to six paragraphs: Sitsky covers both sonatas in two short paragraphs, while Powell covers them in four.[42] With such limited existing analysis of Stanchinsky's sonatas, it

[42] Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, pp. 28-30; Powell, 'After Scriabin', p. 51-53.

felt important to examine these works, as they not only reveal many interesting stylistic traits, but also how Stanchinsky applies them in context. The sonatas are more interesting than the brevity of Powell's and Sitsky's analyses infer. They show how Stanchinsky consolidates old forms with new harmonic and rhythmic languages, flipping the large-scale sonata architecture upside down (Sonata in G major), as well as how his work from this time differs both from contemporaries such as Medtner and early role models such as Scriabin. Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches* (1912) were chosen because it is his most frequently recorded work and represents particularly well the varied colours and idioms of his rapidly developing style. As with the sonatas, not nearly enough has been written about the cycle. Powell discusses the *Sketches*' novel harmonic aspects (octatonic, modal, and symmetrical arrangements of intervallic patterns) in four short paragraphs, which give little idea of what the individual pieces are like.[43] Sitsky, regrettably, covers the entire cycle in one paragraph, with *Sketches* 1-8 appraised in a single sentence.[44] This is in no way sufficient for this fascinating cycle which is arguably the best example of the range of ideas and techniques in Stanchinsky's music from the period immediately before his untimely death in 1914.

While examined as part of the research, the confines of a PhD project precluded inclusion of some other works, such as the *Three Sketches*, four Canon-Preludes or Piano trio in D major. While it is my intention to examine these fully in a later project, their inclusion here would not have affected the principal outcomes of this thesis.

The thesis is structured into three thematic parts: life (Chapter 2), music (Chapters 3 and 4) and reception (Chapter 5). Structuring the thesis thematically, rather than using a continuous narrative, allows for a clear distinction to be drawn between Stanchinsky's life, his musical output, and the consideration of how others perceived him in early twentieth century Russia. This approach aids clarity and academic analysis, allowing the research to delve deeper into isolated issues without disrupting any potential narrative.

Situating Stanchinsky within the social and cultural milieu of late Imperial Russia, Chapter 2 explores how his upbringing and education shaped his musical career, as well as how his social surroundings, beliefs and mental illness affected his work and productivity. Stanchinsky's

[43] Powell, 'After Scriabin', pp. 49-51.
[44] Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, pp. 34-35.

compositional journey in 1904-1910 is explored in Chapter 3, which identifies his most characteristic compositional traits and traces their development. Stanchinsky's hospitalisation during 1910-1911 provides a natural break to the discussion, as there is no surviving music of Stanchinsky from this time. Chapter 4 picks up the analysis of Stanchinsky's works from 1911, allowing us to assess the tendencies which changed and those which endured. The reception of Stanchinsky's music in the early twentieth century is the subject of Chapter 5, which examines the circumstances of the publication, as well as the reception and treatment of, Stanchinsky's works during his lifetime and posthumously.

Chapter 2 – The Life of Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914)

Photograph 1: Aleksey Stanchinsky, portrait from his youth, 1907.[1]

This chapter draws on available sources to reconstruct the biography of Aleksey Stanchinsky and is structured chronologically, allowing the reader to develop an understanding of Stanchinsky's family context, early childhood, youth, education, and his life as a young adult. The first part of this chapter explores Stanchinsky's upbringing, context and education up to

[1] RNMM, 239/432.

the year 1910, while the second part of the chapter investigates his final years, in this way reflecting the structure of the two music chapters that follow.

Memoirs, correspondence and accounts from Stanchinsky's family, friends and acquaintances are drawn on extensively to frame and enrich the materials available from Stanchinsky's own diaries and correspondence. The unpublished memoirs by Stanchinsky's sister Lydia Perlova are the key source for much of this chapter's reconstruction of Stanchinsky's early childhood, because they are the only substantive source available to cover this period of his life. While the nature of these sources means that the reconstruction offered here is partial and sometimes fragmentary, this attempt at reconstruction of a life is nevertheless an important means to contextualising, analysing and understanding Stanchinsky's musical output.

Family, Estate and Student Years

Aleksey Vladimirovich Stanchinsky was born on 9 March 1888 in the small village of Obolsunovo, Ivanovo Oblast. His parents were well-educated. His father, Vladimir Nikolayevich Stanchinsky, was born in Klin in 1849. He studied in Moscow at the Konstantinovsky Institute and became a chemical engineer.[2] His mother, Tatyana Alekseyevna Mityushina, was from Sernukhov and had graduated from the Second Girls' School of Moscow, where she had received an all-round education, including some musical training.[3] Aleksey's birth was complicated. His twin brother Victor, described as a 'strong boy', was born first, but he was entangled in the umbilical cord which strangled him and he could not be revived. Aleksey, born second, was considered premature and weak.[4] His baptism record is held at the Church of Annunciation in the village of Alferyeva (Shuysky district), but it was not possible to inspect it during the course of the research.[5] Tatyana Alekseyevna was not able to look after the boy due to an illness, and his first carers were his grandparents.[6]

Stanchinsky grew up in a musical family. His father 'had a very good ear and a pleasant tenor'; his grandmother 'sang old romances and modern operas'; Aunt Claudia had studied at the

[2] Valentin Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy A. V. Stanchinskogo', *Muzykal'naya Akademiya*, 2 (2007), 150-156 (p. 150); Irina Lopatina, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914)' in Aleksey Stanchinsky, *A. Stanchinsky: Sochineniya*, ed. by Irina Lopatina, Russkaya Fortepiannaya Muzyka (Moscow: Muzyka, 1990), ix, p. 7.
[3] Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 150; Lopatina, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky', p. 7.
[4] Lydia Perlova, 'Vospominanya o Stanchinskom A. V.', RNMM, 239/120, p. 1.
[5] Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 150.
[6] The exact nature of her illness is unknown. RNMM, 239/120, p. 2.

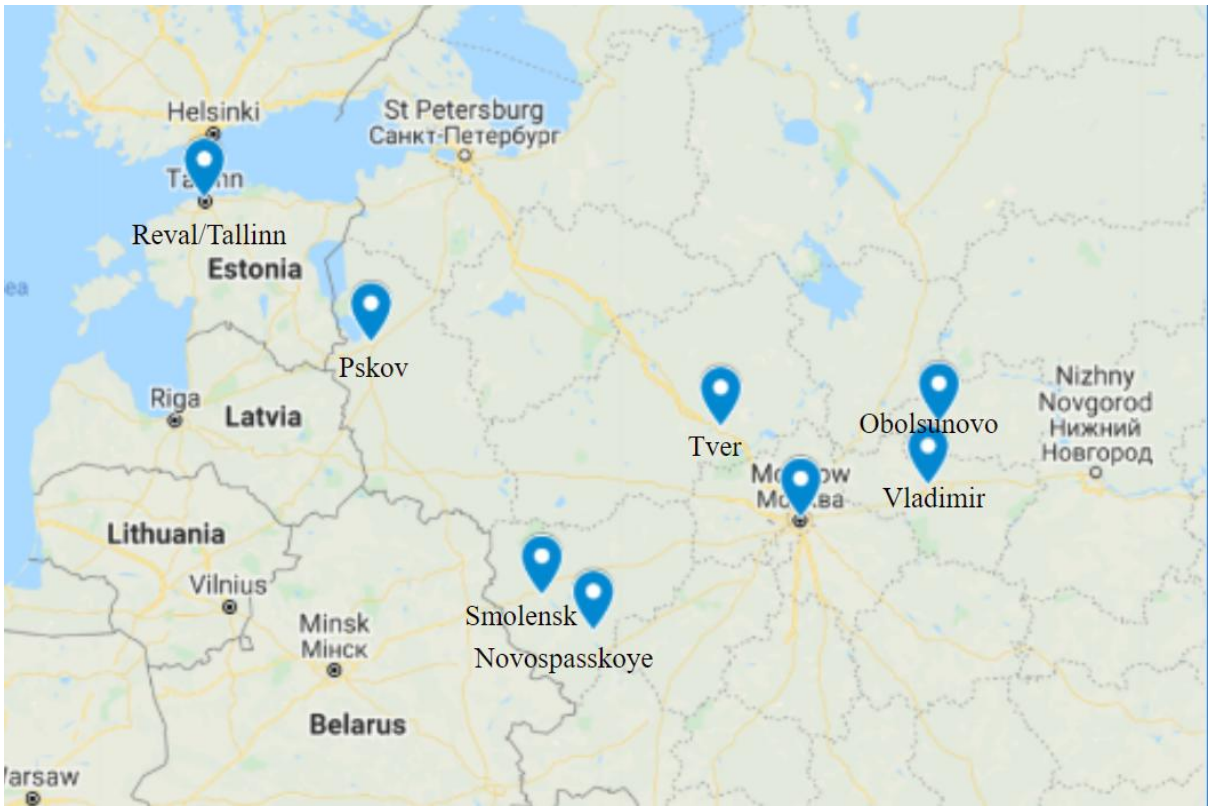
Moscow Conservatoire; Aunt Natasha played piano to a high standard; and Aleksey's sister Lydia (as well as his godmother's daughter Galya) also played the piano, often playing four hands with Aleksey.[7] Lydia Perlova's memoir about her brother portrays a house full of people and music: aunts, uncles and cousins visited often and even stayed with the Stanchinskys for whole seasons, which allowed Aleksey to listen to music from birth. Perlova depicts one occasion from 1890, when Aunt Claudia came to stay and the two-year-old Aleksey begged her to play the piano with him — he would lay his hands on top of hers and pretend it was him who was playing. The family piano, bought in 1882 from the Berlin piano-makers *Westermeyer*, was played often. Stanchinsky's father had extensive collections of sheet music of romances and duets by Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky, and some lesser-known composers who wrote songs and romances, such as Varlamov (1801-1848), Gurilyov (1803-1858), Bulakhov (1822-1885) and others.[8]

Photograph 2: Stanchinsky in early childhood with family; he sits on the chair in the centre, wearing the hat with a wide brim. From left to right: Stanchinsky's mother Tatyana Alekseyevna Stanchinskaya (née Mityushina), brother Vladimir Vladimirovich Stanchinsky, grandmother E. E. Stanchinskaya, father Vladimir Nikolayevich Stanchinsky, sister Lydia Vladimirovna Stanchinskaya (in future, Perlova). Obolsunovo, 1889.[9]

[7] RNMM, 239/120, pp. 4-12.
[8] Ibid., p. 5.
[9] RNMM, 239/437.

Vladimir Stanchinsky's employment as an engineer in a factory largely determined Aleksey's early upbringing. From his birth, Aleksey was surrounded by factory life and workers. He was born in the house for employees of the Karetnikov Kumachny factory, and Vladimir's colleagues from the factory became Aleksey's godparents. His godfather, Konstantin Grigoryevich Toporkov, was an engineer-technologist from the Teykovskaya factory, and his godmother, Anna Konstantinovna Astafyeva, was an engineer's wife.[10] Konstantin Grigoryevich did not show any interest in Aleksey in later life, but Anna Astafyeva became very attached to the boy and they remained close throughout Aleksey's life. Unable to pronounce 'godmother' (*krestnaya*), he called her by the affectionate nickname Korta, which Anna Astafeyva signed in her letters to Aleksey even in 1914. Vladimir Stanchinsky's continuously changing employment meant that the family moved to a new region of Imperial Russia every few years. During Aleksey's early childhood, he lived in Obolsunovo, Vladimir, Tver, Pskov and Reval (now Tallinn).[11] (Figure 2.a)

Figure 2.a: Map of locations in which the Stanchinsky family lived.[12]



[10] Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 150.
[11] RNMM, 239/120, pp. 4-16.
[12] Google Maps. (n.d.) [Locations where Stanchinsky family lived, drawn from RNMM, 239/120].

In the autumn of 1892, the family moved to Moscow for a short while with the father's new job, and soon after most of the family members moved to Vladimir.[13] Only two years later, in the summer of 1894, they moved again, to a small estate of Vareyev on the train line from Vladimir to Moscow. Stanchinsky's sister recollects that the young Aleksey was strongly affected by his Aunt Natasha's piano playing from this time (of Chopin's *Fantaisie-Impromptu*, op. 66, as well as Alexander Alyab'yev's (1787-1851) *Nightingale*).[14]

At the end of the summer of 1894, Aleksey's father was reassigned to Tver, and the family moved again. At the young age of six, Stanchinsky started to exhibit mental and physical vulnerabilities. Stanchinsky's sister remembers that when he was about five or six, lightning struck a pine tree at the edge of a forest across the river from their family home. The sound and the dismembered tree frightened Aleksey so much that he was reluctant to go on family walks, even in good weather, in case it started raining and there was a thunderstorm.[15] On another occasion, at dinner, while the family were living in Tver, Aleksey's father was telling his children a story about the forests on the other side of Volga and, to enhance the mystery of the story, he said that 'people with dog's heads live there'.[16] Aleksey was so frightened and scared that he began weeping and the father could not calm him down for a long time. Due to his anxious behaviour and his poor health, his parents decided not to push him into serious music studies early. Although the family were well connected in professional musical circles and employed distinguished teachers (such as Aleksandr Grechaninov (1864-1956), an established composer in Moscow and a student of Taneyev, Arensky and Rimsky-Korsakov, who stayed with the family during the summer of 1897 to teach Lydia), Aleksey did not take part in these lessons.[17] Instead, he continued to explore music with natural curiosity. One day, his sister Lydia heard Aleksey play an unfamiliar song. She immediately 'ran over' and asked: 'What are you playing? Who taught you this?' and Aleksey replied: 'I came up with it myself.'[18] Most of his childhood pieces from this time (*Buzzing in a Cave*, *Flying Through the Air*, *Riding Along the Volga*) do not survive, although *Mermaid Song*, which Lydia mentions in her memoirs, appears to be preserved at RNMM in manuscript form.[19]

[13] RNMM, 239/120, p. 7.
[14] Ibid., p. 9.
[15] Ibid., p. 4
[16] Ibid., p. 11.
[17] Ibid., p. 25.
[18] «Я подбежала, спрашиваю: «Что это ты играешь? Кто тебя этому научил?» А он говорит: «Это я сам придумал.» Ibid., p. 10.
[19] RNMM, 239/67.

At the end of the summer of 1897, Vladimir Stanchinsky was promoted to a new position in Pskov, and the Stanchinskys moved there in August. The family's financial situation at this time allowed them to hire a French woman, Mademoiselle Alice Goubat, to become Aleksey's full-time nanny. Aleksey became very attached to Mlle Goubat and, due to the time spent talking and reading in French with her, Aleksey was soon fluent enough to read French books without a dictionary.[20] Unlike Aleksey's parents, Mlle Goubat was religious, and she may have sparked Aleksey's interest in religion, as at this time he had arranged a small altar of icons and candles at home and used it for his prayers.[21]

Photograph 3: Stanchinsky as a child with his nanny, Mlle Goubat. Pskov, February 1898.[22]

[20] RNMM, 239/120, p. 15.
[21] Ibid., p. 14.
[22] RNMM, 239/461.

When Aleksey was nine, he started to take general education lessons at home. He was taught Russian and arithmetic by his sister, and his mother taught him music.[23] We do not know if he also attended school. There was a popular view held among Russian educators that 'until the age of eight a child was too young to learn how to read, to withstand the rigours of the classroom, or to travel to and from school.'[24] Aleksey's cousin Anton Stanchinsky, for example, who came to spend that winter with the family, was 'too tired from intensive reading' and was not allowed to go to school, so it is possible that the family may have sought to protect Aleksey from the demands of formal school education.[25]

Growing up in a house full of music, Aleksey developed an intuitive understanding of functional harmony before receiving any formal musical education. The family were used to him always playing the piano and, even at the age of nine, Aleksey demonstrated a strong, natural understanding of tonal relationships. When his mother showed him the scales in his first music lesson, Aleksey replied: 'I already know them'. He played a C major triad, added a B♭ and resolved it onto F major. From there, he continued to add the 7th to each chord until he completed the circle.[26]

In 1899, Aleksey's father was posted to a new location in Reval (now Tallinn), and the family moved again. There, Aleksey began taking music lessons at the newly opened Meyer's Music School. Meyer's wife had just graduated from the St Petersburg Conservatoire where she had studied with Karel van Ark, himself a protégé of Anton Rubinstein.[27] Aleksey performed in a pupils' concert there; he played Reinecke's sonata and was reviewed in the local newspaper *Revelsky Listok*.[28] Although this review does not survive, Aleksey's choice of repertoire suggests that his piano skills were already relatively advanced. He also started to demonstrate exceptional musical memory. Lydia Perlova recollects how Aleksey practised the first movement of Haydn's D major sonata one day, and the next day played it perfectly from memory, leaving her in 'complete amazement'.[29]

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[23] RNMM, 239/120, p. 14.
[24] Ben Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861-1914* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), p. 308.
[25] RNMM, 239/120, p. 15.
[26] Ibid., p. 14.
[27] Ibid., p. 16; Lopatina, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky', p. 7; Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 150.
[28] *Revelski Listok* was a short-lived local paper. 'Revelski Listok', *Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar' Brokgauza i Yefrona* (St Petersburg, 1899), p. 419; Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 150.
[29] RNMM, 239/120, p. 22.

In 1899, at the request of the children, the Stanchinsky family bought a 270-acre estate jointly with Aunt Claudia's husband, Dr. M. M. Smirnov. The estate, Logachevo, was in Smolensk province, near the village of Novospasskoye — the birthplace of Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka. This connection influenced the father's decision to buy the estate, as did the fact that, upon driving into the estate, a rainbow appeared across the sky, which the father seems to have taken as an additional good omen.[30] In the late nineteenth century, Smolensk province was impoverished and predominantly agricultural. Exiled St Petersburg chemist Aleksandr Engelgardt described Smolensk province in his *Letters from the Country*: land in the province was cheap and much of the land sold by the gentry was bought by peasants.[31] Despite the relatively low price of land in Smolensk, the financial commitment for such a large amount of it was significant. The estate was mortgaged to buy additional land at a cost of 10,000 roubles.[32] It is unknown how much Vladimir Stanchinsky earned in 1899, but for comparison, a factory worker in the Rostov and Yurev districts in 1900 could have expected to earn between 131 and 138 roubles per year.[33] While Vladimir Stanchinsky was in a skilled profession, and would have earned significantly more than an ordinary factory worker, the price of the estate suggests that the Stanchinskys may have owned other properties or assets.

The Stanchinsky family spent their summers in Logachevo, and their winters in an apartment in Smolensk. They were planning to use the newly bought land for farming, but this new venture proved more difficult than expected and the co-owners of the estate, the Smirnovs, decided to leave after only two years. To retain the estate, Vladimir Stanchinsky borrowed money at high interest rates from his brother-in-law Morognov, and from a Smolensk doctor Radzvintsky. Stanchinsky's sister wrote in her memoirs that these debts destroyed the parents' health ahead of time, as to save money they lived in damp apartments which gave them rheumatism and heart disease.[34] Despite this, they held on to the estate for Aleksey's sake, so that he had a place to rest and create his works in the quiet of the countryside.

[30] RNMM, 239/120, p. 17.
[31] Engelgardt's letters are an insightful and informative primary source on life in rural Imperial Russia. Aleksandr Nikolaevich Engelgardt, *Aleksandr Nikolaevich Engelgardt's Letters from the Country, 1872-1887*, ed. & trans. by Cathy A. Frierson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 10.
[32] RNMM, 239/120, p. 17.
[33] Tracy Dennison and Steven Nafziger, 'Living Standards in Nineteenth-Century Russia', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 43.3 (2013), 397–441 (p. 408).
[34] RNMM, 239/120, pp. 17-18.

Photograph 4: Logachevo estate, Smolensk region. It looks like the young Aleksey Stanchinsky is sitting on the bottom step, next to a dog.[35]

The Logachevo estate became central for his sense of security and inner peace. After frequent moving across the country for the first ten years of his life, the estate offered Aleksey stability. Nineteenth-century Russian estates were highly important settings for family life. According to Cavender, 'the estate […] took on symbolic importance as the true location of the family and of the emotional self of family members. In the country, [families] could realize ideals of sincerity and trust, and this gave the estate a powerful emotional role.'[36] Logachevo became a sanctuary for Aleksey, where he returned as an adult in times of emotional turmoil.

Aleksey's strong connection to the estate was formed despite the poor state of the house at the time of purchase: it was dirty and rat-infested, with blackened walls, ceilings and floors, ragged

[35] RNMM, 239/501.
[36] Mary W. Cavender, *Nests of the Gentry: Family, Estate, and Local Loyalties in Provincial Russia* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), p. 54.

wallpaper, and rotten frames. The family spent the first summer at the estate cleaning and tidying. There was a lot of work to do: the estate was bought from a gentleman who engaged in petty trade and ran a shop from one of the rooms. That room smelled of must, tar, herring and dogs, and remained nicknamed 'the dog room'.[37] Large countryside estates falling into disrepair were not unusual in late nineteenth century Russia; Ivan Bunin's depiction of lesser noble families and their impoverished surroundings in *Dry Valley* resonated with lived realities for many nobles.[38]

Despite the estate's initial dilapidation, its setting in the countryside was especially important to Stanchinsky, who later in life longed to return there in moments of emotional exhaustion. The house was surrounded by beautiful gardens, which became a source of vitality and creativity for Stanchinsky:

> In front of the narrow balconies overlooking the garden, there are large bushes of roses and jasmine, clusters of lilacs, an old apple orchard along the slope to the Stolpinka stream, overgrown with branchy willows. Right from the balcony there is a path to the old bathhouse, which stands on the bank of a pond overgrown with pond slime. On both sides of the path are old tall poplars […] Going around the bathhouse, the path descends to the well — spring water on the banks of the Desna, which flows here at right angles from Novospasskoye. To the left, along the shore, there are old spruces and small linden trees, right by the shore there are dense alder bushes.[39]

The peaceful and quiet surroundings of the estate became a place of rest for Stanchinsky during times of tiredness and emotional distress in his adult life. For example, on 3 February 1909, he wrote in his diary: 'I can't find peace. Weakness and darkness in the soul. I'm dissatisfied with myself […] I want rest and thirst for the countryside.'[40] On 22 April 1909: 'Worked little. I can't. I want to go to Logachevo. There, real joy awaits me, and there I will be free.'[41] His

[37] RNMM, 239/120, p. 19.
[38] Ivan Bunin, 'Dry Valley', in *Great Russian Short Novels*, ed. by Philip Rahv, trans. by Bernard Guilbert Guerney (New York: The Dial Press, 1951), pp. 555-632; Roberta Thompson Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order in Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Seymour Becker, *Nobility and Privilege in Late Imperial Russia* (Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1988).
[39] «Перед узким балконам выходящим в сад, кругом большие кусты роз и жасмина, купы сирени, старый яблоневый сад по склону к ручью Столпинка, заросшему ветвистыми ракитами. Прямо от балкона тропинка к старой бане, стоящей на берегу заросшего тиной прудочка. По обоим сторонам тропинки старые высокие тополя […] Огибая баню, тропинка спускается к колодцу — криницес ключевой водой на берегу Десны, которая здесь под прямым углом течет из Ново-Спасского. Налево по берегу старые ели и молодые липки, у самого берега густые кусты ольхи.» RNMM, 239/120, pp. 18-19.
[40] «Не нахожу покоя. Слабость и муть в душе. Не доволен собой […] Хочу отдыха и жажду в деревню.» Aleksey Stanchinsky, 'Dnevnik za 1909 g.', RNMM, 239/97, 3 February 1909.
[41] «Мало работал. Не могу. Хочу уехать в Логачево. Там меня ждет настоящая отрада и там я освобожусь.» RNMM, 239/97, 22 April 1909.

evocative language ('I thirst for the countryside') indicates that his desire to return to the Russian countryside constituted a vital part of his wellbeing. Other Russian composers have expressed similar feelings, particularly Tchaikovsky. For example, from Vevey in Switzerland (13 July 1873) Tchaikovsky wrote: 'surrounded by these majestically beautiful views, and feeling all the impressions of a traveller, I still long for Russia with all my soul and my heart sinks as I imagine its plains, meadows, and woods. Oh, my beloved, you are a hundred times more striking and charming than these beautiful, colossal mountains that are really nothing more than nature's petrified convulsions.'[42]

Photograph 5: Stanchinsky sitting on an ice float on the river Desna, with a dog. Logachevo, 1912.[43]

[42] *The diaries of Tchaikovsky*, trans. & ed. by W. Lakond (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 22.
[43] RNMM, 239/433.

The freedom and security that Stanchinsky felt in Logachevo was further enhanced by the presence of his family, which was integral to his wellbeing. Stanchinsky remained emotionally and financially reliant on his family for his entire life. He was especially attached to the female members of his family; their intimate relationships offer indications about Stanchinsky's character, helping us to understand his emotional state and how he formed emotional bonds with those around him. Most of all, Stanchinsky was dependent upon his mother. Their relationship sheds light on Stanchinsky's vulnerabilities and his deep yearning for his mother's approval. Even as an adult, Stanchinsky sought support from his mother while he was composing. He was keen for her to sit near him while he was working, and he would repeatedly ask her if she liked what he was writing. She always answered: 'it's good, I like it, Alyoshechka'.[44] Stanchinsky was not used to being separated from his mother and struggled when she was not close. In the spring and summer of 1914, when he visited Crimea, he wrote to his mother every four to five days.[45] This is by far the highest frequency of correspondence within Stanchinsky's extant letters. The length of the letters (some of which are up to eight pages long) and their content illustrate that Stanchinsky manifested acute anxiety when he was away from his mother.

The Logachevo estate was also central to Stanchinsky's musicianship and creativity, as it was there that his piano was stored. Upon first arriving at the estate, Aleksey languished without an instrument to play, and the family immediately engaged in searching for a piano. His sister Lydia took him around the neighbouring landowners' properties to look for an instrument to buy, but all the pianos were broken.[46] They also visited Pavel Ivanovich Glinka, cousin of the composer (whose father was the brother of the composer's mother). Pavel's sons were selling an instrument, but even that piano turned out to be in poor condition. This search for a piano is evocative of the central role that music played in the family's life. It also sets the Stanchinsky family apart from the neighbouring landowners, who evidently did not take good care of their pianos. Eventually, their own piano was moved to Logachevo, and they rented a piano for their winter accommodation – the apartment in Smolensk.

[44] «хорошо, нравится, Алешечка» RNMM, 239/120, p. 30.
[45] Between 17 May 1914 and 8 June 1914, Stanchinsky sent his mother at least five letters and postcards. RNMM, 239/126-130.
[46] RNMM, 239/120, p. 19.

Photograph 6: Stanchinsky with sister Lydia at the piano, 1905.[47]

After the family moved to Logachevo in 1899, when Stanchinsky was eleven, he began formal general education as a student in the first year of the Smolensk gymnasium. Gymnasiums accepted pupils from eleven years old; their education was considered prestigious, and they were attended by the children of officials and high-status community members.[48] In Smolensk, Aleksey also entered the Klin Music School, where he followed in the footsteps of his sister

[47] RNMM, 239/471.
[48] Etta L. Perkins, 'Mobility in the Art Profession in Tsarist Russia', *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 39.2 (1991), 225–33 (p. 230).

and took piano classes from A. F. Borkus. Borkus had graduated from the Moscow Conservatoire where he studied with Safonov, a prominent pianist and conductor who also taught Scriabin and Medtner.[49] At the same time, Aleksey continued to compose at home but received no formal composition tuition. In 1901, he wrote a one-movement sonata, an octave etude written for his sister and two titled piano pieces – *Storm* and *The March of the Chinese Bride* – the latter of which was dedicated to a cousin who was married to a Chinese man.[50] Stanchinsky's familiarity with piano allowed him to compose for the instrument with ease, and this may be the reason why the vast majority of Stanchinsky's works are written for solo piano.

In the academic year of 1903–1904, Aleksey's parents decided to find music lessons for him in Moscow, as he had developed a percussive sound on the piano and his technique needed attention.[51] This transition was assisted by the fact that Aleksey's sister Lydia was, at that time, entering her sixth year at the Moscow Conservatoire, where she was studying piano with the notable pianist Josef Lhévinne. After a family discussion, a decision was reached to ask Alexander Grechaninov to teach Aleksey composition.[52] Grechaninov was an established composer in Moscow and was already familiar to the family (as he had previously taught Lydia), and these factors likely influenced their choice. For their first meeting, Aleksey composed a ballad *Knight Rollon* [Roland] to a poem by Zhukovsky – a poet who held a tutoring position at the Romanov court. The song, in ternary form, was described by Lydia Perlova as 'a knight riding, the middle part — a prayer in the chapel — and then riding again.'[53] Grechaninov was immediately impressed. Stanchinsky started visiting Moscow regularly to study theory and composition privately with Grechaninov. Grechaninov also taught Stanchinsky piano and asked him to learn some pieces by Mendelssohn and Bach, Beethoven's fourth sonata and a Mazurka by Chopin.[54] For theoretical studies, Grechaninov explained binary and ternary forms to Stanchinsky, and asked him to compose something in this way. As a result, Stanchinsky's three *Songs Without Words* (1904) were born, the third one of which was composed 'in one breath' on a scrap piece of paper, not manuscript, while walking through a forest.[55] Grechaninov's teaching allowed Stanchinsky to transition from provincial musical

[49] O. P. Morozova, 'Kompozitorskaya deyatel'nost' pedagogov-muzykantov Mogileva v 1920-1930-e g.', *Vesnik MGU Imya A. A. Kulyashova*, 2.40 (2012), 15–20; RNMM, 239/120, p. 21.
[50] *Storm* appears to be preserved at RNMM, 239/65.
[51] Lopatina, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky', p. 7; Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 150; RNMM, 239/120, p. 20.
[52] Aleksandr Grechaninov, *My Life* (New York: Coleman-Ross, 1952), pp. 107-8.
[53] «рыцарь скачет, средняя часть — молитва в часовне — и опять скачет.» RNMM, 239/120, p. 25.
[54] Ibid., p. 25.
[55] Ibid., p. 26.

education to a more centralised and professional setting. This training subsequently helped Stanchinsky to secure a place to study at the Moscow Conservatoire.

Lydia's memoirs paint a vivid picture of Stanchinsky's lessons with Grechaninov. While Stanchinsky was visiting Moscow for his lessons, he stayed with his sister in her room, and she would accompany him to all his appointments with Grechaninov. She recalled one lesson in particular that illuminated Grechaninov's character and the style of his teaching. Stanchinsky brought a song he composed to the poem by Semyon Nadson, *I Dreamed the Evening Sky*. Nadson's poems were also set by Rachmaninov, Cui and Arensky. Grechaninov asked Stanchinsky to sing his song to him. Aleksey replied: 'I cannot sing.' Grechaninov was impatient: 'How are you a composer and you cannot [sing]! You must be able to sing your own works.' Aleksey attempted to sing the song and, according to Lydia Perlova, succeeded quite well. Grechaninov stopped him and proclaimed: 'an extremely unpleasant voice' and began to sing himself.[56]

Stanchinsky's lessons with Grechaninov only lasted a year. In the spring of 1905, Grechaninov declared that his knowledge was no longer sufficient for Stanchinsky's musical development. He took Stanchinsky to Sergey Taneyev, to whom Stanchinsky played his compositions. At this time, Taneyev was one of the most highly regarded pedagogues in Moscow. The first person to win the Conservatoire's Gold Medal upon graduation, Taneyev served as the Director of the Moscow Conservatoire from 1885 to 1889, and continued to teach there until 1905. Taneyev had been a pupil of Tchaikovsky, and taught most the composers who studied at the Moscow Conservatoire between 1878 and 1905. Grechaninov wrote in his memoirs that 'even those who did not study with him went to him for advice, among them Rachmaninov, Medtner, Scriabin, and myself.'[57]

The meeting went well. Taneyev asked Stanchinsky to play Beethoven's fourth sonata (which he had learned with Grechaninov) but to transpose it to a different key. After Aleksey played

[56] «Приезжая в Москву, Алеша останавливался у меня в комнате, и мы вместе ходили к Гречанинову. Один раз он привез ему романс «Мне снилось вечернее небо», Гречанинов попросил Алешу спать самому этот романс. Помню, Алеша сказал «я не умею петь».
— «Как это композитор и вдруг не умеет! Он должен сам уметь петь свои вещи». Алеша запел все верно. Гречанинов остановил его, сказал «на редкость неприятный голос» и стал петь сам.» RNMM, 239/120, p. 26.
[57] Grechaninov, *My life*, p. 81.

it without a single mistake, Taneyev asserted: 'we need to engage [in] serious [work].'[58] Stanchinsky's ability to transpose a complex piece of music on the spot proved his sharp musical intelligence to Taneyev, whose recognition and approval was very important. While Taneyev agreed to work with Stanchinsky in principle, he recommended that Stanchinsky first take harmony lessons with his student, Nikolay Zhilyayev. Zhilyayev taught a number of notable Russian composers, including Khachaturian, Aleksandrov and Feinberg, and became an established musicologist and editor. His relationship with Stanchinsky developed steadily, and he became one of Stanchinsky's closest friends and allies in later life.

In the summer of 1907, Stanchinsky graduated from the Smolensk gymnasium, and he began his studies at the Moscow Conservatoire in the autumn.[59] His choice to study in Moscow rather than St Petersburg seemed natural given that his sister was already studying there, and his closest musical influences – Grechaninov, Taneyev and Zhilyeyev – were also there. At the turn of the century, the Moscow Conservatoire upheld old-fashioned, Russian values. There was an emphasis on the study of Russian music and Russian folk song, and there was manifest bias towards Russians when selecting the faculty.[60] During his directorship, Stanchinsky's teacher Sergey Taneyev enforced a rule that all foreigners leaving the faculty should be replaced by Russians.[61] This strong focus on Russian traditions and folksong possibly shaped Stanchinsky's own attitudes to the preservation of Russian music, and may have encouraged him to engage in collecting folk songs in the Smolensk region in 1909.

After Taneyev's resignation in 1905, the Moscow Conservatoire was led by Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov (1859-1935), a graduate of the St Petersburg Conservatoire and student of Rimsky-Korsakov. He is generally remembered as a good leader: he gave his role a lot of time and effort; he was present at all examinations and evening events; and he defended the interests of the institution, using his fame among the wider circles of high society.[62] However, due to Taneyev leaving, the composition faculty suffered a significant loss. It was recognised that the technical training of the composers and theoreticians was not of the same standard as it was under Taneyev.[63] While the department was staffed by Taneyev's old students, who largely

[58] «надо серьезно заниматься» RNMM, 239/120, p. 26.
[59] Ibid., p. 28.
[60] Gordon D. McQuere, 'The Moscow Conservatoire 1866-1889: Nikolay Rubinstein and Sergey Taneyev', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 34.1 (2000), 33–61 (pp. 33-34).
[61] Ibid., p. 56.
[62] *Moskovskaya Konservatoriya, 1866-1966*, ed. by Lev Ginzburg (Moscow: Muzyka, 1966), pp. 235-36.
[63] Ibid., p. 261.

adhered to the principles of his teaching, they had a lesser influence on students, and the Conservatoire's reputation for its theoretical courses diminished.[64]

When applying to the Moscow Conservatoire, Stanchinsky hoped to study piano with Konstantin Igumnov.[65] Piano teaching at the Moscow Conservatoire at this time included intensive technical training at junior level, special attention to touch and tone production, exclusion from the syllabus of 'salon' style pieces, and concentration on three types of work: classical, virtuoso and genre (such as Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*).[66] The intensity of pianistic training was reflected in the fact that from 1879 the piano course lasted nine years, and it remained of this length until 1917 (when it was reduced to six years). However, despite the fame and achievement of what might be termed 'the Moscow piano school', the Conservatoire professors were as much individuals in their teaching style as in their personal playing and, despite substantial agreement on the essentials of technique, there was never a single, monolithic and unchanging 'method'. [67]

Stanchinsky wrote the Nocturne for his audition — a technically challenging piece — and harboured hopes to become a pianist. While his audition was successful, and he was admitted to the 6th year of Igumnov's class, the general opinion at the Conservatoire was that he played poorly. However, because of his contacts, it would have been 'awkward' to place him in a lower year.[68] Stanchinsky was concerned about his lack of technical skills; he was particularly conscious of his heavy touch, and he asked Igumnov to work with him on the technique. However, Igumnov replied: 'Why do you need to be a pianist, when you are a composer?' and refused to work with Stanchinsky.[69] Stanchinsky – desperate for suitable technical instruction – asked some other members of the Conservatoire staff to help him, but was refused due to the potential conflict this could create with Igumnov. Eventually, Konstantin Eiges agreed to teach him privately. He oversaw hours of work on each finger, listening to the sound and improving

[64] *Moskovskaya Konservatoriya*, ed. by Ginzburg, p. 261.
[65] Konstantin Igumnov (1873-1948) was a Russian pianist and teacher. He graduated from the Moscow Conservatoire in 1894 with a gold medal and remained a teacher there until his death. He was renowned as an interpreter of Tchaikovsky and Scriabin, and premiered Rachmaninov's Sonata in D minor. For more on Igumnov, see Yakov Mil'shteyn, *Konstantin Nikolayevich Igumnov* (Moscow: Muzyka, 1975).
[66] Christopher Barnes, 'Introduction', in *The Russian Piano School: Russian Pianists & Moscow Conservatoire Professors on the Art of the Piano*, ed. by Christopher Barnes (London: Kahn & Averill, 2007), pp. i–xix.
[67] For more on Moscow's piano school and on Igumnov's particular approach to the piano, see Grigory Prokofiev's interview with Igumnov published in *The Russian Piano School*, ed. by C. Barnes (London: Kahn & Averill, 2007), pp. 78-83.
[68] «неудобным» RNMM, 239/120, p. 30.
[69] «На что Вам быть пианистом, когда вы композитор» Ibid.

Stanchinsky's pianistic touch.[70] By his eighth year at the Conservatoire, Stanchinsky had switched to studying with Eiges as his main teacher.[71] Eiges's views on music are expressed in his essays on music philosophy, in which he puts forward the idea of independence and autonomy in musical art: that it is not necessary to impose any high ideas or thoughts on music in order to make it worthy of respect, and that the musical themes and their development are in themselves worthy of respect.[72] Eiges's thinking may have had an impact on Stanchinsky's compositions, which focus on their own internal musical development and do not claim connections to other art forms or philosophical ideas, and this might explain why most of the pieces do not have programmatic titles.

Stanchinsky's life and studies in Moscow were conducted against a tumultuous backdrop of social and political upheaval. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Russian society was often described as being 'in crisis' – a crisis stemming from political disturbances and unrest; anxieties about social change; urbanisation and industrialisation; and concerns among Russia's emerging elites and middle classes regarding the intractable nature of poverty and the hardships suffered by underprivileged Russians.[73] Educated Russians began to grow increasingly apprehensive about the human costs of industrialisation.[74] Waves of workers' strikes broke out in St Petersburg and other cities. A demonstration by thousands of workers on 9 January 1905 in the square of the Winter Palace turned into a massacre by Imperial soldiers.[75] 'Bloody Sunday' horrified educated society, and faith in the Tsar was 'fatally shaken'.[76] Strikes in other cities followed, creating widespread societal unrest. This, together with the humiliating defeat in the war with Japan, produced 'a violent resurgence of the theretofore dormant political consciousness of the masses.'[77] Mass protests and organised meetings were formed to oppose

[70] Not much has been written about Konstantin Eiges (1875-1950), who was a Russian composer, pianist and teacher. He was a member of Pavel Lamm's artistic circle in the 1910s and 1920s. Jonathan Powell, 'Eiges [Eyges], Konstantin Romanovich', *Grove Music Online* (2001) <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.53155>
[71] RNMM, 239/120, pp. 30-31.
[72] Konstantin Eiges, *Stat'i Po Filosofii Muzyki* (Moscow: Tovarishschestvo tipografii A. I. Mamontova, 1912).
[73] Stephen Anthony Smith, *Russia in Revolution: An Empire in Crisis, 1890 to 1928* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 9–59.
[74] Daniel Beer, *Renovating Russia: The Human Sciences and the Fate of Liberal Modernity, 1880-1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008).
[75] Mark D. Steinberg, *The Russian Revolution, 1905-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: A Short History* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004); Sidney Harcave, *First Blood: The Russian Revolution of 1905* (London: Collier-MacMillan Limited, 1964).
[76] Lynn Sargeant, 'Kashchei the Immortal: Liberal Politics, Cultural Memory, and the Rimsky-Korsakov Scandal of 1905', *The Russian Review*, 64.1 (2005), 22–43 (p. 24).
[77] Grechaninov, *My Life*, p. 100.

the 'tyrannical and short-sighted policy' of the government.[78] Political uncertainty, along with a rising sense of chaos, unrest and impending apocalypse, led some individuals in educated society to seek answers and respite in spiritualism. Artists pondered the order of the world, and their interests in the supernatural and the occult – which were already part of a wider tendency before the 1905 Revolution – intensified.[79] Worldly struggles, and complex socioeconomic and cultural factors, led many young people to escape the world through suicide: '[i]n the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Russian students developed a tradition of "heroic" suicide in which the act of suicide became a heroic feat: a symbol of political resistance against despotism.'[80] '[M]ass political violence […] reduced the value of life' and, in turn, created 'eternal anxiety' within the population.[81] This led to an increase in political suicides among Russia's youth, who 'seemed to be living and dying for the sake of the moment.'[82]

Higher Education institutions across the country were acutely affected by the unrest, strikes and rebellion of 1905. Students were a key cohort of the revolutionary movement and many institutions suspended their classes until the autumn of that year.[83] Muscovite musicians and students at the Moscow Conservatoire actively debated political issues, and some joined the fight for the revolutionary cause. This sentiment was widespread: in early February 1905, twenty-nine of Moscow's leading musicians published a resolution in *Nashi Dni* demanding political reform: '"We are not free artists," they declared, "but like all other Russian citizens, the disenfranchised victims of today's abnormal social conditions. It is our conviction that there is only one solution: Russia must at last embark on a road to radical reforms."'[84] The letter was signed by, among others, Grechaninov, Taneyev, Engel, Rachmaninov and Chaliapin, while Rimsky-Korsakov sent in his support a few days later from St Petersburg. Students at the Moscow Conservatoire also supported the call for reforms. At a meeting held on 4 March 1905, over three hundred students gathered to vote for a strike on political and educational reforms.

[78] Grechaninov, *My Life*, p. 100.
[79] Bernice Rosenthal, 'Introduction', in *The Occult in Russian and Soviet Culture*, ed. by Bernice Rosenthal (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 1-34 (pp. 1-7).
[80] Susan K. Morrissey, *Heralds of Revolution: Russian Students and the Mythologies of Radicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 10-11
[81] Susan K. Morrissey, *Suicide and the Body Politic in Imperial Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 312-314.
[82] The suicide rate in Russia rose after 1905. Official statistics reported 31 suicides per million in 1905, and 49 per million in 1910 (58% increase). Independent statistics reported 500 suicides per million in 1906, and 1640 per million in 1910 (228% increase). Morrissey, *Suicide and the Body Politic*, pp. 315-16.
[83] Sargeant, 'Kashchei the Immortal', p. 24.
[84] V. V. Yastrebtsev, *Reminiscences of Rimsky-Korsakov by V. V. Yastrebtsev*, ed. & trans. by Florence Jonas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 352-353.

These included a need to establish student organisations, as well as amendments to the curriculum, relationships between the students and the faculty, and the cost of the tuition.[85] Moscow's musicians believed that musical education should be accessible to wider society, regardless of financial status. In the autumn of 1906, Sergey Taneyev was instrumental in establishing a 'People's Conservatoire'. This helped to bring art music closer to the general population, and assisted in bringing art music and folk music closer together.[86]

Aleksey Stanchinsky's involvement in the political movements of 1905-1906 demonstrate that he harboured left-leaning tendencies, although he did not become a revolutionary. However, in 1905 – two years before he went to university – Stanchinsky did join the revolutionary movement of students (*studenchestvo*).[87] His involvement may have been influenced by his family. Stanchinsky's father had links with the industrial city Ivanovo, which had a strongly politicised urban workforce and saw large strikes in 1905. Lydia, together with Stanchinsky's drawing teacher and friend Vera Glinka, had been taking part in revolutionary movement since 1900. Lydia's involvement in the student movement had seen her sent home to her parents under police supervision in March 1901 for taking part in a protest in Kazan Square.[88] Lydia's activism, and the immediacy of the revolution, inspired Aleksey to join the movement. In 1905, he became friends with other supporters such as Kostya (Konstantin) Los (who later became a writer), Zhenya (Evgeny) Volochkov and Troitsky.[89] On 10 January 1905, Stanchinsky and his friends learnt about the events of 9 January and the executions of workers in St Petersburg. In their view, 'the revolution began there'.[90] On that day, the friends organised an impromptu celebration in Aleksey's room, singing revolutionary songs and carrying their friend Anyuta (who was wearing a red blouse) instead of a red flag in their arms.[91] This celebration demonstrates the excitement and enthusiasm Stanchinsky and his friends felt about the protests against the Imperial regime. Despite the significant loss of life the previous day, the prospect of an upcoming revolution provided a reason to celebrate.

[85] Sargeant, 'Kashchei the Immortal', pp. 27-28.
[86] Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia, 1917-1970* (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 5.
[87] RNMM, 239/120, p. 28.
[88] Ibid., p. 21.
[89] Not much is known about Konstantin Los or Evgeny Volochkov. Troitsky may have been Aleksey Troitsky, the chess player.
[90] «там началась революция» RNMM, 239/120, p. 28.
[91] Ibid., pp. 28-29.

Stanchinsky directly supported student revolutionary activities by raising funds through organising charity concerts. In the winter of 1906, Aleksey, together with his sister Lydia, organised a concert in Smolensk in support of revolutionary students.[92] They turned to O. N. Kordasheva, who was in their view the most liberal teacher at the Moscow Conservatoire, and between them gathered a group of supportive musicians to perform. The pair also raised money to provide financial support for less advantaged students at the Moscow Conservatoire. In the spring of 1906, Aleksey and Lydia organised a second concert in their parents' apartment in which they played piano. All proceeds from the event were donated to the poorest students. These activities demonstrate Stanchinsky's activism through those means which were the most easily accessible to him: performing music to support equal access to music education.

There is no evidence that Stanchinsky offered any support to revolutionary movements after 1906, and the decline of his activism at this time runs parallel to that of many of Moscow's students. Students were active in organising protests and conscious political movements before and up to the 1905 revolution but, according to Morrisey, 'after the revolution, the sense of (although problematic) achievement disrupted the story. Students could no longer articulate a single coherent narrative for themselves.'[93] In the autumn of 1908, a nationwide student protest temporarily closed some higher education institutions. However, this protest was purely academic in its rhetoric, and its lack of explicit political demands became a symbol of the death of *studenchestvo*. In the eyes of the public, this crisis of purpose turned students from leaders of the liberation movement to drunkards and syphilitics: 'the student appeared increasingly as a decadent figure, who had lost his high ideals in alcohol, sexual debauchery, and venereal disease.'[94]

After entering the Moscow Conservatoire in 1907, Stanchinsky also started to take private composition and counterpoint lessons from Sergey Taneyev.[95] Despite Taneyev resigning from his position at the Moscow Conservatoire in 1905 in protest at the repressive treatment of students by the director (which, in turn, was motivated by student unrest following the 1905 Revolution), he continued to privately tutor a select group of students at his home, free of charge.[96] Taneyev's guidance and preferences affected Stanchinsky's compositional style.

[92] RNMM, 239/120, p. 29.
[93] Morrissey, *Heralds of Revolution*, pp. 7-8.
[94] Ibid., pp. 134, 146.
[95] Lopatina, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky', p. 7-8.
[96] Yuriy Keldysh, *100 let Moskovskoy konservatorii* (Moscow: Muzyka, 1966), p. 72.

Kashkin writes that Taneyev's theoretical teaching was 'completely original' and concerned with internal musical development, rather than external decorations, which 'became a distinction of the Taneyev school'.[97] In counterpoint, Taneyev saw not an end, but a means for developing technique – the most important aspect of which he considered to be thematic work, and he sought to develop this in his teaching. Taneyev was highly supportive of Stanchinsky; when Stanchinsky was not in Moscow, he continued to tutor him by post. Six letters sent to Stanchinsky between 1907 and 1914 survive and are preserved in the Russian National Museum of Music.[98]

Photograph 7: Sergey Taneyev (left) and Aleksey Stanchinsky, early 1910.[99]

[97] N. Kashkin, 'Sergey Ivanovich Taneyev i Moskovskaya konservatoriya: S. I. Taneyev kak professor konservatorii', in *Vospominaniya o Moskovskoy konservatorii*, ed. by N. V. Tumaninov (Moscow: Muzyka, 1966), pp. 121–30.
[98] Due to disruption caused by Covid, and the continued suspension of travel to Russia due to the ongoing war, these letters were not possible to examine in detail. Sergey Taneyev, 'Pis'ma k Stanchinskomu A. V.', 1907-1914, RNMM, 239/322, 1-6.
[99] RNMM, KP 5892/46090.

Taneyev remained supportive of Stanchinsky even when Stanchinsky did not attend his lessons. During his first few months at the Conservatoire, Stanchinsky frequently forgot their appointments. On 21 December 1907, only a few months after Stanchinsky began his lessons, Taneyev was forced to write a letter explaining that if Stanchinsky was going to miss a lesson he should notify the teacher in advance.[100] The letter implies that it was prompted by Stanchinsky missing at least three lessons in a row. Taneyev advised Stanchinsky that if he wanted to take a break from the lessons, they could agree on a length of time for the suspension. He also encouraged him to turn up even if he had not done his homework. Unfortunately, Stanchinsky's diaries from 1907 do not survive, so we do not have any explanation for his repeated absences. He may have been irresponsible or forgetful, or it may have been symptomatic of his worsening mental health.

Stanchinsky was one of Taneyev's star students, even though Taneyev did not always agree with Stanchinsky's artistic choices. Stanchinsky's friend Anatoly Aleksandrov recalled in his memoirs that Taneyev would refer to Stanchinsky as his 'beloved pupil' and would set him as an example for others in his diligence and success in studying contrapuntal techniques.[101] However, upon hearing Stanchinsky's Prelude in E♭ minor, Taneyev made a remark implying that the prelude was not of the standard that he expected. Aleksandrov remembers:

> Taneyev was very fond of Alyosha, considered him very talented [… but] from what I noticed, Taneyev did not like Stanchinsky's creative ideas. He did not agree with their direction, but never spoke sharply about them, at least not in my presence. Once, when I was there, Alyosha played his Prelude in E♭ minor to Taneyev. He listened standing still, holding the music in his hands. After Stanchinsky finished, Taneyev, with a restrained smile, asked about the coda of the prelude. 'Was it about this that Nikolay Sergeyevich [Zhilyayev] spoke to me, that this was similar to Bach?' He said nothing else.[102]

Taneyev's comment might be interpreted in several ways. He may have meant that the coda was derivative, not successful, or not contrapuntal enough to be compared to Bach. It is likely that his 'restrained smile' signalled his judgment that Zhilyayev was overestimating Stanchinsky's success at this composition.

[100] Taneyev to Stanchinsky, RNMM, 239/322-1, 21 December 1907.
[101] Aleksandrov and Blok, *Vospominaniya, Stat'i, Pis'ma*, p. 53.
[102] Ibid., p. 42.

After moving to Moscow, Stanchinsky also continued to see Zhilyayev for composition lessons. A letter from Zhilyayev to Stanchinsky in 1908 indicates that Zhilyayev also stayed with the Stanchinsky family in Logachevo during the summer of that year, in order to continue teaching Aleksey.[103] During Stanchinsky's student years, a friendship developed between him and Zhilyayev, who began to hold Stanchinsky's work in very high regard. Zhilyayev's admiration of Stanchinsky's works is evoked in Aleksandrov's memoirs. For example, upon hearing Stanchinsky's 'Lydian' Prelude, Zhilyayev could not contain his excitement:

> Zhilyayev […] always admired Alyosha's new works. Once, I remember, I came to Zhilyayev's in the morning for a lesson, and found him pacing around the room, full of excitement. 'I have not slept all night!', he said, 'Yesterday Alyosha showed me such a piece!' It was the Prelude in the Lydian mode.[104]

Photograph 8: Postcard of Nikolai Zhilyayev in military uniform. Inscription on the back reads: 'To A. Stanchinsky, N. Zhilyayev, 19.12.08, Moscow.'[105]

[103] Zhilyayev to Stanchinsky, RNMM, 239/21, 4 May – 22 June 1908. Published in *Nikolay Sergeyevich Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova (Moscow: Muzyka, 2008), pp. 81-83.
[104] Aleksandrov and Blok, *Vospominaniya, Stat'i, Pis'ma*, p. 53.
[105] RNMM, 239/481.

Contemporaries recalled Zhilyayev as a demanding pedagogue, who asserted that 'genius needs training' and believed that the weak should not devote themselves to art.[106] At the same time, he was not a strict methodologist and never limited compositional tasks only to exercises on forms or techniques, striving instead to develop his pupils' creative imagination. He used comparative analysis with other art forms, and drew parallels with 'life and nature [...] so that from the very beginning his students were brought up with the consciousness that there can be no art in itself, that great art is necessarily connected with life of people, nature and the environment.'[107] Zhilyayev's approach was different to that of Taneyev's, and these two pedagogues provided Stanchinsky with contrasting creative stimuli.

Stanchinsky's letters indicate that he remained in touch with both of his teachers until his death in 1914, so we can assume that they had a significant impact on his compositions. Stanchinsky makes few references in his diaries to his formal education at the Moscow Conservatoire, and his tuition there appears to have had little direct influence on his development. Most of Stanchinsky's musical education was provided outside of a formal setting: Grechaninov tutored Stanchinsky privately in Moscow; Zhilyayev taught him at home in Logachevo; and Taneyev was no longer a member of the Moscow Conservatoire staff when Stanchinsky began his lessons with him. As such, Stanchinsky's educational journey follows a largely predictable pattern, but in unusual circumstances, which set him apart from other composers who received a more traditional, Conservatoire-based education. It is likely that the informal setting in which Stanchinsky was taught allowed him more freedom to explore different musical ideas and to experiment with his compositional style.[108]

During his student years, Stanchinsky was active in Moscow's social and artistic life and is known to have performed at high-status musical parties, such as those hosted by the art patrons M. K. Morozova and S. I. Shchukin.[109] He was also a frequent guest at parties held by local peasants near Logachevo. Stanchinsky's sister Lydia remembered Stanchinsky's love for these

[106] E. K. Golubev, 'Nikolay Sergeyevich Zhilyayev (1881-1938)', in *Vydayushchiesya deyateli teoretiko-kompozitorskogo fakul'teta Moskovskoy konservatorii*, ed. by N. Bespalov (Moscow: Muzyka, 1966), pp. 58–62.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Due to restrictions brought about by Covid and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it was not possible to seek out Stanchinsky's student records, and this remains a task for a future project.
[109] RNMM, 239/120, p. 34; Lopatina, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky', p. 8.

get-togethers in her memoirs. ‘He loved the Russian people very much,’ she wrote, ‘and in order to be closer to them, he began to go to parties.’[110]

Stanchinsky was well-liked and respected amongst his contemporaries. His friend Anatoly Aleksandrov remembers Stanchinsky as ‘impulsive’ and ‘lively’ and describes his character and ‘kind-hearted and gentle’. He writes: ‘I remember well, when once on the street, he [Stanchinsky] persistently and very kindly offered to help me — to give him my heavy books to carry.’[111] Stanchinsky socialised with famous musicians and artists: through Zhilyayev he met Medtner and Scriabin, and the latter gifted Stanchinsky his signed photograph.[112] This meeting must have been of particular importance to Stanchinsky as Scriabin’s works were a staple part of Stanchinsky’s performing repertoire, and Scriabin was the progressive Russian composer much admired by younger composers. Stanchinsky is known to have been very fond of, and very good at executing, Scriabin’s Etude in D sharp minor.[113]

Photograph 9: Stanchinsky amongst musicians. From left to right: G. Krein, A. Stanchinsky, A. Krein, E. Gunet, L. Sabaneyev, 1914.[114]

[110] «Он очень любил русский народ и чтобы быть ближе к нему, он стал ходить на вечеринки.» RNMM, 239/120, p. 37.
[111] Aleksandrov and Blok, *Vospominaniya, Stat’i, Pis’ma*, p. 76.
[112] RNMM, 239/120, p. 34.
[113] Lopatina, ‘Aleksey Stanchinsky’, p. 8.
[114] RNMM, 239/476.

Stanchinsky's relationship with Medtner 'grew rapidly' and the pair became close acquaintances.[115] Aleksandrov remembers that 'Medtner highly regarded Stanchinsky's talent, even though not everything in Alyosha's music was close to his heart.'[116] In February 1914, Stanchinsky – together with Medtner – performed at a concert in Kharkov, but no reviews of this concert have been found. Medtner's biographer Martyn suggests that, on that occasion, Medtner took Stanchinsky 'under his wing' because Stanchinsky had already 'attracted considerable attention.'[117] In April of 1914, Stanchinsky took some of his works to Medtner to review, and in May he was hoping to stay with him for a few days for further discussions. In the summer of 1914, Stanchinsky corresponded with Medtner from Crimea. On his way home, Stanchinsky was hoping to stop at Medtner's, but this meeting did not occur.[118] After Stanchinsky's death, Medtner dedicated his collection of *Three Pieces* op. 31 to commemorate his friend. The second piece, the *Funeral March*, was prompted directly by Stanchinsky's death.[119]

In 1908, Taneyev took Stanchinsky to Yasnaya Polyana and introduced him to Tolstoy.[120] Stanchinsky played some of his compositions there but was unsuccessful in winning Tolstoy's sympathies for his music. Tolstoy, who did not like Scriabin, did not enjoy Stanchinsky's music and called him 'Scriabushkin'.[121] Comparisons with Scriabin were rather common during this time and this epithet may have been used as a shorthand for modern sounding music, irrespective of whether or not it actually sounded like Scriabin. Following this visit, Stanchinsky, who had always held Tolstoy in very high regard, became a devoted admirer. Several of Stanchinsky's surviving songs are set to poems by Tolstoy, while Loginova reports that, in particular, Tolstoy's *A Confession* became a sort of 'obsession' for Stanchinsky.[122]

A Confession narrates Tolstoy's own spiritual crisis, in which he debates the question of the meaning of life. He wonders whether there would be any meaning in a life which would not be destroyed by death. If death is inevitable, and after death all is forgotten, is there any reason to live? Tolstoy argues that the only meaning in life can be derived from faith, which allows for

[115] Barrie Martyn, *Nicolas Medtner: His Life and Music* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), p. 110.
[116] Aleksandrov and Blok, *Vospominaniya, Stat'i, Pis'ma*, p. 77.
[117] Martyn, *Nicolas Medtner*, p. 106.
[118] The reasons for this are unclear.
[119] Martyn, *Nicolas Medtner*, p. 111.
[120] Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 150.
[121] RNMM, 239/120, p. 33.
[122] Valentina Loginova, 'Avtorskiy stil' Aleksey Vladimirovicha Stanchinskogo' (2012) <https://superinf.ru/view_helpstud.php?id=5471> [accessed 18 November 2019].

the consideration of life after death. Meaning can only be sustained if life is no longer finite, but infinite. For Tolstoy, life without God is meaningless; therefore, God is life itself. In Stanchinsky's diary, we find references from 1909 in which he sought out his own answers about God and the meaning of life:

> I ran to the forest. How wonderful it was! Something supernatural, frozen. Wanted to stand with raised hands, but settled and stood silently for a long time, looked at the foliage, the sun and thought about God. Suddenly [...] thumped to the ground [...] Hurt [myself] and laid motionless for a long time [...] Went further. Here I began to pray aloud. For the first time all of a sudden there is God. A new, wondrous love for God flickered and disappeared. Or maybe there is no God? Almost unconsciously tumbled to the ground. Laid down [...] and asked for grace, thinking about suffering.[123]

Stanchinsky's religious beliefs are particularly evident in the correspondence he wrote in the last year of his life, and are explored in more detail later in this chapter.

While he was a student, Stanchinsky socialised with his peers, as well as his teachers Anatoly Aleksandrov, Sergey Taneyev and Nikolay Zhilyayev. In his memoirs, Aleksandrov wrote that 'Alyosha and I would meet at Zhilyayev's and Taneyev's, we would also visit each other at our homes. In 1909-10 he gave harmony lessons to my wife N. G. Aleksandrova.'[124] Aleksandrov and Stanchinsky's friendship was strengthened by the similarities in the education they received from their teachers (Taneyev and Zhilyayev). Aleksandrov expresses this in his memoirs about Stanchinsky:

> We both [Aleksandrov and Stanchinsky] grew up under the joint influence these two great musicians [Taneyev and Zhilyayev], so different in their philosophical and artistic beliefs. Zhilyayev was a passionate fan of new ideas in art, he considered Scriabin and Debussy to be his idols. Taneyev, as we know, was a strong opposer to modernism; he raised us on Bach and classics, and from the Russian composers — on Tchaikovsky. I think these varied influences benefitted us. It held us within reasonable bounds, from which the young people typically diverge.[125]

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[123] «Побежал в лес. Как там было дивно! Что-то сверхъестественное, застывшее. Хотел было стоять с поднятыми руками, но опустился и безмолвно долго стоял, смотрел на листву, на солнце и думал о Боге. Вдруг... бухнуло на землю... Ушибся и долго лежал недвижимый... Пошёл дальше. Здесь стал вслух молиться. Впервые вдруг ведь есть Бог. Новая, дивная любовь к Богу мелькнула и исчезла. А может быть Бога нет? Почти бессознательно метался по земле. Лег... и просил благодати, думая о страдании.» RNMM, 239/97, [n.d.] September 1909.
[124] Aleksandrov and Blok, *Vospominaniya, Stat'i, Pis'ma*, p. 74.
[125] Ibid.

Aleksandrov fondly recollected the evenings spent at Taneyev's 'cosy' apartment, lit by candlelight. They would get together to play Bach's *Chorale Preludes* from three-line organ scores on the piano, using six hands. Usually, the partners would be Aleksandrov, Stanchinsky and Taneyev, but when Zhilyayev joined them they would play in various combinations. Two of them, remembers Aleksandrov, would play with four hands on the piano, and the other would play the *cantus firmus* on the harmonium.[126] The group also went on trips together, where they would discuss common interests, such as literature and philosophy.[127]

During the time they spent together, Zhilyayev and Stanchinsky developed an especially close relationship. In stark contrast to their first meetings in 1905 and 1906, Zhilyayev's letters to Stanchinsky from 1908 to 1914 demonstrate his care and concern for his former pupil. The full extent of their relationship is difficult to ascertain as Stanchinsky's letters to Zhilyayev do not survive. It is possible that they were lost, together with many manuscripts of Stanchinsky's compositions, after Zhilyayev's arrest by the NKVD on 3 November 1937.[128] Zhilyayev's letters to Stanchinsky, on the other hand, illuminate their relationship, which became more intimate in 1908, as indicated by the change of formal to informal pronouns. The letters demonstrate Zhilyayev's affection for Stanchinsky and are evocative of the caring relationship between them, as 11 out of 18 of his letters are signed off with 'I kiss you'.[129] This was not an unusual letter sign off at the time, but in his correspondence Zhilyayev only used this phrase when addressed to Stanchinsky. As such, it is indicative of the closeness of their friendship.

We know little about Stanchinsky's romantic life, but his diaries indicate that he had a few relationships in 1909. Stanchinsky's relationship with a woman called Etka, for example, lasted between January and April 1909, and was underpinned by Stanchinsky's ambivalence. On 26 January 1909 he wrote: 'I was not satisfied with her. I kissed her. But my kisses were cold [...] They weighed me down [...] I pushed her away. I could not touch her. She noticed this. She denounced me — forbade [me] to kiss her. I felt lightness in my heart [...] Yes, she began to

[126] Aleksandrov and Blok, *Vospominaniya, Stat'i, Pis'ma*, p. 42.
[127] Ibid., p. 74.
[128] Zhilyayev was arrested because of his association with the Soviet military leader Mikhail Tukhachevsky, who was tortured and executed for treason on 11 June 1937. Zhilyayev was executed by an NKVD firing squad on 20 January 1938 and is allegedly buried at the former NKVD state farm 'Kommunarka' or in Butovo near Moscow. Inna A. Barsova, 'Trudy, dni i gibel' Nikolaya Sergeyevicha Zhilyayeva', in *Nikolay Sergeyevich Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova (Moscow: Muzyka, 2008), pp. 11–44 (pp. 35-36).
[129] Zhilyayev to Stanchinsky, RNMM, 239/211-228, 1907-1914.

love me. Her spirit is with me — we are friends — no more. But secrets of love await us.'[130] As Stanchinsky began to trust Etka, he became more open about his feelings. On 12 March 1909 he wrote in his diary: 'told her everything. Said that I can't think of her without sadness. There can be no family happiness between us'; on 17 March: 'today I first spoke with Etka about [...] [word torn out] How good it was that I said everything! Oh! How terribly dreadful! I'm on the verge of death. Life or death. I want to be independent in my actions from home. Want!'[131] This entry suggests that Stanchinsky longed for independence and liberation from home. Stanchinsky appears to have been torn between his complete reliance on his family and his need for independence, but he may also have been conflicted about his attraction to Etka. Emotional struggles and internal conflicts largely underpinned Stanchinsky's diary entries in 1909.

During the summer and autumn of 1909, Stanchinsky had an intimate relationship with a peasant woman, Elena Ivanovna Bai. Elena was a daughter of one of the household staff on the Logachevo estate.[132] Their relationship was of unequal standing: Elena was a house servant, while Aleksey was her master. Their romance thus has resonances with master-serf relationships which manifested massive imbalances of power. Keeping a female domestic servant was within reach of families even on a 'comparatively modest budget' in Russia, as inexpensive female labour was 'overabundant'.[133] For educated and well-to-do families like Stanchinsky's, domestic labourers were often regarded as 'rude, untutored peasants' and ordinary household work was considered demeaning.[134] Stanchinsky's family strongly objected to this relationship and the Bai family moved away to a village 25 versts (27.5 km) from Logachevo.[135]

[130] «Я не удовлетворён был ей. Я целовал ее. Но мои поцелуи были холодны [...] Они тяготили меня [...] Я отстранил ее. Я не мог прикасаться к ней. Она заметила это. Она обличила меня - запретила целовать себя. Легкость почувствовал в сердце своем [...] Да, она меня начала любить. Дух ее со мной - мы друзья - не более. Но ожидают нас тайны любви.» RNMM, 239/97, 26 January 1909.
[131] «Всё рассказал ей. Я сказал, что без грусти не могу о ней думать. Между нами не может быть семейного счастья.» Ibid., 12 March 1909; «Сегодня впервые заговорил с Эткой о [word torn out] Как стало хорошо, что всё сказал! О! Как страшно ужасно! Я на краю гибели. Жизнь или смерть. Хочу быть самостоятельным в своих дейсвиях от домашних. Хочу!» Ibid., 17 March 1909.
[132] Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 151.
[133] Barbara Alpern Engel, *Breaking the Ties That Bound: The Politics of Marital Strife in Late Imperial Russia* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 174.
[134] Ibid., p. 175.
[135] Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 151.

Stanchinsky learnt that Elena Bai was expecting a child in 1909, and she had a baby boy later that year. Stanchinsky did not take an active part in the child's life. His letters suggest that he kept this a secret from his friends and family until 1914. He revealed the news to Zhilyayev, who replied with a very warm and congratulatory response on 20 July 1914. In his letter, Zhilyayev mentioned that this was 'perfect news', and asked Stanchinsky lots of questions about the boy, including his name, where he lived and what he was like.[136]

While we do not have sources which could help to shed light on Stanchinsky's and Elena Bai's relationship from 1909, Stanchinsky reflected on the relationship in a letter to his godmother's daughter Galya in 1914:

> Elena Ivanovna lived with us […] She was my only salvation […] Oh, how happy I was when I felt my salvation... But I still seduced her. Although she gave herself to me wholeheartedly. And this sin lies in my soul. Oh! [...] And so I seduced Lelya [Elena ...] Although it was 'happiness' for us then, but sorrows went on, she was expecting Andrey and was afraid of shame and spoke of suicide […][137]

Having a child out of wedlock was a social disaster for any woman at this time, but it had particularly negative resonances for a poor peasant woman. Aspersions on a woman's sexual morality were potent in late Imperial Russia as they were elsewhere in Europe. In child custody disputes, for example, an upheld allegation of a mother's illicit sexual conduct provided sufficient reason to deny the mother custody, while male sexual transgression was treated less harshly and often deemed as insufficient basis to take children away from their fathers.[138] Young men frequenting brothels was normalised in this period, while female sexuality was demonised as corrupting towards men and in need of control.[139] Due to these robust double standards in place for male and female chastity and sexual conduct, Stanchinsky's gender and class would have insulated him from social disgrace. It is therefore curious how strongly

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[136] Zhilyayev to Stanchinsky, RNMM, 239/227, 20 July 1914. Published in *Nikolay Sergeyevich Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova (Moscow: Muzyka, 2008), p. 107.

[137] «Елена Ивановна жила у нас […] Она была у меня единственным спасением […] О, как я был счастлив тогда, когда чувствовал мое спасение... Но я все -таки соблазнил ее. Хотя она отдалась мне всей душой. И этот грех лежит на моей душе. О! [...] И вот я Лелю соблазнил […] хотя для нас тогда было «счастье», но потом пошли горести, она была в ожидании Андрея и боялась позора и говорила о самоубийстве [...]» Stanchinsky to Galya, 2 September 1914. Published in Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 155.

[138] Alpern Engel, *Breaking the Ties That Bound*, p. 247.

[139] Siobhán Hearne, *Policing Prostitution: Regulating the Lower Classes in Late Imperial Russia* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).

Stanchinsky emphasises the words 'sin', 'shame' and 'salvation' in his letter. In addition to signalling feelings of guilt, these words have religious undertones.

These themes, as well as the circumstances of the birth of Stanchinsky's son, have direct resonances with Tolstoy's *Resurrection*.[140] The main plot line of Tolstoy's *Resurrection* rotates around the nobleman Nekhlyudov, who casually had sex with his aunt's ward. He walked away without consequences, while she lost her position and her infant, and ended up working as a prostitute. Like *Resurrection's* anti-hero Nekhlyudov, who sought redemption for his sins (for impregnating and abandoning a woman), Stanchinsky craved purity, sought forgiveness, and dreamed about cleansing his soul. In the same letter to Galya, he wrote about a walk he took with Elena Bai:

> It was dazzling all around: forest and grass and flower meadows and fields — everything glorified the Creator, and Lelya and I walked and talked about the highest questions, about how it would be 'there' after life, about 'purity' and I cried. Tears flowed involuntarily, and I wanted to go to 'that world'. We said goodbye. And now, remembering this, our words, tears are collecting in my eyes. Oh, how madly I crave purity, Galya. And how I regret that life is passing, and you have little time to do it.[141]

Stanchinsky's way to save his soul was to marry Elena Bai. He was open about not having any attraction to Elena, but instead felt a connection with her because of their son. In his correspondence, Stanchinsky began to angrily reject all sensual desires arising within him and would get offended by suggestions that he may have such feelings. In a letter to Korta he wrote: 'Honestly, to Elena Ivanovna, the mother of my son, I feel something deeper and more sublime. And the physical feeling, oddly enough, is completely alien to me. I assure you. It is, of course, strong, but I am fighting it and I feel a certain strength within me.'[142] In this letter Stanchinsky appeared to contradict himself. He initially claimed that physical (sexual?) feelings were alien to him, but then immediately clarified that he was fighting such feelings. Stanchinsky's

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[140] Leo Tolstoy, *Resurrection*, trans. by Anthony Briggs (London: Penguin Classics, 2009).
[141] «Было ослепительно кругом: и лес и трава и цветочные луга и поля - все славило Творца, а мы с Лелей шли и говорили о самых высших вопросах, о том, как будет «там» после жизни, о «чистоте» и я плакал. Слезы лились у меня невольно, и мне хотелось уйти в «тот мир». Мы простились. И теперь, вспоминая об этом, о наших словах, слезы навертываются на моих глазах. Ах, как безумно я жажду чистоты, Галя. И как я сокрушаюсь о том, что жизнь проходит, и мало что успеваешь сделать.» Stanchinsky to Galya, 2 September 1914. Published in Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', pp. 155-6.
[142] «Честное слово, к Елене Ивановне, матери моего сына, я чувствую нечто более глубокое и возвышенное. А физическое чувство, как это ни странно, мне совсем чуждо. Уверяю тебя. Оно, конечно, сильно, но я с ним борюсь и чувствую в себе некоторую силу.» Stanchinsky to Galya, 2 September 1914. Ibid.

rejection of all physical relationships mirrors the experiences of Tolstoy, who in his later years foreswore such relationships in exchange for an ascetic lifestyle.

Stanchinsky's godmother Korta tried to persuade him to end his relationship with Elena. She suggested that there were only ever physical feelings between Stanchinsky and Elena, and that he should not build his future life on that.[143] Stanchinsky was, once again, offended by this suggestion. He wrote in his response: 'Your words regarding sensuality or physical feelings are unfair. I despise this feeling from the bottom of my heart and will not build the future at all on it.'[144] In a letter to Korta's daughter Galya, written the same day, he clarified further:

> How strange, everyone thinks that my feelings for Lelya are only sensual, and how wrong. This was true earlier [...] and now I can only recall them with disgust and indignation. I repeat, I feel something deeper and more elevated for Lelya, and now that Andrey was born, those feelings were complicated by a mysterious closeness. The mysterious proximity is precisely because something has already happened between us. Independent of us, the birth of a son occurred, and this is the work of God, and I feel my wife in Lelya. You must understand this. I would be an unbeliever if I felt otherwise. A sensual feeling is alien to me, although I cannot boast of myself — the sin is great, but I feel the strength in myself.[145]

This letter reveals further details about Stanchinsky's internal conflict. On the one hand, he claimed that a sensual feeling was 'alien' to him while, on the other, he divulged that he fought such sensual urges with 'strength'. His position appears to have been religiously motivated ('I would be an unbeliever if I felt otherwise') and his religious beliefs add a mystical quality to the birth of his son. In this letter, he suggested that the birth of the boy had occurred 'independently' of him and Elena, and that it was the work of God; this may hint at Stanchinsky's trust in the Christian concept of God's will and grace. Stanchinsky's religious

[143] Anna Asafieva (Korta) to Stanchinsky, 12 August 1914. Published in Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 154.
[144] «Твои слова относительно чувственности или физического чувства несправедливы. Я это чувство от всей глубины души презираю и вовсе не на нем буду строить будущее.» Stanchinsky to Galya, 2 September 1914. Ibid., pp. 155-6.
[145] «Как странно, все думают, что мои чувства к Леле только чувственные, и как ошибаются. Это верно было раньше [...] а теперь я иначе как с отвращением и негодованием не могу о них вспоминать. Повторяю, нечто более глубокое и возвышенное я чувствую к Леле, а теперь, когда родился Андрей, те чувства осложнились таинственной близостью. Близостью таинственной именно потому, что что-то уже произошло между нами. Независимое от нас, произошло рождение сына, а это дело Божье, и я чувствую в Леле супругу. Ты должна это понять. Я был бы неверующим, если бы иначе чувствовал. А чувственное чувство мне чуждо, хотя я не могу хвалиться собой - грех велик, но я в себе чувствую силу.» Stanchinsky to Galya, 2 September 1914. Ibid., pp. 155-6.

beliefs appear to have intensified after his mental illness and hospitalisation in 1910-1911, both of which are discussed in the next part of this chapter.

Final Years and Mental Illness

On 20 January 1910, Vladimir Nikolayevich Stanchinsky died suddenly from angina.[146] Aleksey was 'completely heartbroken and bewildered by thoughts of how to continue to live and study.'[147] The loss of his father was not only emotionally distressing for Aleksey, but it also meant that the family lost its main source of financial income and security, which affected Stanchinsky's ability to continue his musical studies. Aleksey's mother, Tatyana Alekseyevna, was assigned a small pension from the royal court, but it was not enough to cover the family's expenses in Moscow. In the spring of 1910, Tatyana Alekseyevna, together with Aleksey, his sister Lydia's husband (who could not work because of poor health) and her daughter returned to Logachevo, while Lydia remained in Moscow to earn money giving music lessons. Aleksey did not sit his conservatoire exams that year — primarily due to contracting tonsillitis in the spring — and did not return to Moscow to live and study until 1912.[148]

The death of his father impacted Stanchinsky's ability to practise and compose. His diary from 1910 contains daily entries about his practice and composition until 15 January 1910 (Stanchinsky's father died on 20 January 1910).[149] From then, the diary reveals a complete gap until March, indicating that little or no musical activity took place. From March, Stanchinsky's diary entries become increasingly chaotic: the entry for 12 March, for example, has a page torn out and a new one glued in, from which we can deduce that a new entry now covers an older one. Similar cuts feature in entries from 14, 15, 16 and 17 March 1910; the 16 March entry has four different kinds of paper glued in; and the text in many of these entries is unreadable. The disorderliness of the diary in March 1910 indicates that Stanchinsky was frequently changing his mind about the entries, perhaps trying to clarify his thoughts. The following month (in April 1910), Stanchinsky began practising and composing again, and his diary indicates that he was working on the Piano Trio in D at this time.

[146] RNMM, 239/120, p. 37.
[147] Ibid., p. 38.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Aleksey Stanchinsky, 'Dnevnik 1910 g. (zapisnaya kniga)', 1910, RNMM, 239/99.

Stanchinsky's mental health clearly deteriorated after his father's death. Lydia Perlova's memoir indicates that, in the spring of 1910, Stanchinsky suffered a severe nervous breakdown and was hospitalised.[150] His final diary entry for the year 1910 was written on 24 May. It depicts an ordinary day, but also refers to his ailment: 'I know that now something great is happening in nature, but I don't know anything, I'm sitting at home. I did not walk. After tea, [I] sat on the terrace and wrote a diary. So today I did not live and did not see the world […] [I feel] tiredness and weakness. I need some rest in the future [...] very bad.'[151] Lydia Perlova's memoirs clarify the timeline. She writes:

> In the spring [of 1910] I got very sick, so I had to temporarily quit my classes and go to the country with my husband and daughter. Then Alyosha got sick with tonsillitis and did not have to sit exams in the spring. Then everyone gathered in Logachevo[,] and then Alyosha suddenly fell ill with a severe nervous breakdown, so his brother took him to Moscow and placed him in a hospital for nervous diseases. In the fall he was transported to a nervous clinic, where he stayed all winter [1910-1911]. In the spring he checked out and spent the summer with his mother and me in the country.[152]

Stanchinsky was hospitalised in what his friend Anatoly Aleksandrov described as the psychiatric hospital's 'violent ward'.[153] Surviving photographs indicate that Stanchinsky was held at Ivan Ermakov's clinic, although the images are dated 1912, which is most likely incorrect.[154] During the time of Stanchinsky's hospitalisation, Ermakov was the director of the Psychiatric Clinic of Moscow University.[155] While this clinic was a leading institution in

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[150] RNMM, 239/120, p. 38.

[151] «Я знаю, что теперь в природе происходит нечто великое, но я ничего не знаю, а сижу дома. я не гулял. После чаю сел на терассу и писал дневник. Значит, сегодня я не жил и не видал мира [...] усталось и слабость. Нужно мне отдохнуть может в будущем [...] очень скверно.» RNMM, 239/99, 24 May 1910.

[152] «Весной я сильно заболела, так что пришлось временно бросить уроки и поехать на дачу с мужем и дочкой. Потом заболел ангиной Алеша и ему не пришлось держать весной переводных экзаменов. Потом все съехались в Логачево и тут Алеша внезапно заболел сильным нервным расстройством, так что его брат отвез в Москву и поместил в лечебнице нервных болезней. Осенью его перевезали в нервную клинику, где он пробыл всю зиму. Весной он выписался и вместе со мной и матерью прожил лето на даче.» RNMM 239/120, p. 38.

[153] Aleksandrov and Blok, *Vospominaniya, Stat'i, Pis'ma*, p. 76.

[154] RNMM, 239/474 and 239/475.

[155] Ivan Dmitrievich Ermakov (1875-1942) was a medical doctor, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, known for his active promotion of Freudianism. He became director of the Psychiatric Clinic of Moscow University in 1911 and was the president and one of the founders of the State Psychoanalytic Institute in Moscow in 1921. His interests lay in the psychoanalytic interpretation of the creative process. He translated and edited a nine-volume series of Freud's work which became the only officially approved translation of Freud during the Soviet period. Ermakov was arrested in 1941 and died in 1942 in prison in Saratov. There are letters between Stanchinsky and Ermakov, though they appear to be entirely personal in nature. Alexandra Smith, 'Through the Lens of Soviet Psychoanalysis and Utopian Dreams of the 1920s: Ivan Ermakov's Readings of Pushkin's Poetry', in *Taboo Pushkin: Topics, Texts, Interpretations*, ed. by Alyssa Dinega Gillespie (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), pp. 350–77 (p. 350); V. I. Ovcharenko, 'Exhibitions of Ivan Dmitrievich Ermakov', *Arthive*, n.d.

Moscow, and conditions might have been better than in provincial hospitals, nineteenth-century psychiatric clinics were, on the whole, more akin to prisons than medical centres. Their function was to confine people, not to provide care. The patients were incarcerated and deprived of their ownership – both with respect to their personal possessions and their sense of self.[156] It may be for this reason that no compositions from the period of incarceration survive. It is possible that Stanchinsky was too ill or had no desire to compose, or that his music sketches were simply not deemed significant enough to be saved by the staff.

Photograph 10: Stanchinsky (right) at Ermakov's clinic, 1912. Identity of others is unknown.[157]

We cannot be sure of the diagnosis that Stanchinsky received as no medical records have been found. While the extant literature refers to Stanchinsky's illness and subsequent death, and make assertions about the characteristics of his mental illness, they do not provide any evidence for these assertions. English-language publications, such as the Grove entry on Stanchinsky, as

<https://arthive.com/artists/15907~Ivan_Dmitrievich_Ermakov/exhibitions> [accessed 30 September 2021]; René Van der Veer, 'Tatyana on The Couch: The Vicissitudes of Psychoanalysis in Russia', in *Cultural Psychology and Psychoanalysis: Pathways to Synthesis*, ed. by Sergio Salvatore and Tania Zittoun (Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing, 2011), pp. 49–65 (pp. 51-52).

[156] Ben Eklof and Tatiana Saburova, *A Generation of Revolutionaries: Nikolay Charushin and Russian Populism from the Great Reforms to Perestroika* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017), p. 114.

[157] RNMM, 239/475.

well as Hepburn's thesis, refer to Stanchinsky's condition as *dementia praecox,* or schizophrenia. However, Russian sources, such as his sister's memoir, or Lopatina's introduction to Stanchinsky's piano works published in 1990, are more likely to refer to it as a 'nervous breakdown' or 'nervous illness'.[158] Hepburn is the only writer (apart from the present author) who has looked at primary sources in recent years, but his claim that Stanchinsky's mental illness reached its peak immediately following his father's death ('Stanchinsky, physically and emotionally unable to contemplate parting with his beloved father, slept in the chapel next to his father's uninterred body. In the morning, he was found psychologically unresponsive and admitted to a private clinic for observation and evaluation') is not borne out by the primary sources and contradicts the timeline given by Stanchinsky's sister.[159] It appears that many English-language publications have repeated the diagnosis of schizophrenia through circular referencing without re-examining this claim. It is also possible that labelling Stanchinsky's illness as schizophrenia has created a convenient narrative for these writers, allowing them to portray Stanchinsky as a 'mad genius' in order to generate interest (more on this concept later in the chapter).

The reference to Stanchinsky's illness as schizophrenia, which is found in English-language publications, seems to stem from Sabaneyev's *Modern Russian Composers* (1927).[160] This publication gave English-speaking writers access to a supposedly authoritative source, and his claims have persisted largely unexamined. Sabaneyev's writings on Stanchinsky create a vivid impression of Stanchinsky's tortured psyche (possibly written in such a way as to be intentionally scandalous), but they are unreliable. In addition to naming Stanchinsky's illness as schizophrenia, he makes other claims which are demonstrably untrue, such as that Stanchinsky destroyed his early manuscripts (the posthumous publication of Stanchinsky's works examined in the final chapter of this thesis shows this is not the case), and he even gives Stanchinsky's birth and death dates incorrectly as 1889-1913. This section draws on a range of limited evidence from Stanchinsky's own writings, the archives, and the recollections of those

[158] Jonathan Powell and Christopher Hepburn, 'Stanchinsky, Aleksey Vladimirovich', *Grove Music Online* (2001) <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.26540>; Christopher Hepburn, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914): A Guide to Research' (unpublished master's thesis, Texas Tech University, 2015), p. 11; RNMM, 239/120, p. 38; Lopatina, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky', pp. 7-8.
[159] Hepburn, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914): A Guide to Research', p. 11.
[160] Leonid Leonidovich Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, ed. by Yehudah Yofe (New York : International Publishers, 1927) <http://archive.org/details/modernrussiancom00saba> [accessed 7 December 2018].

close to him, in order to offer a balanced, circumspect and cautious evaluation of the circumstances of Stanchinsky's illness and death.

The challenges of coming to definitive conclusions about the nature of Stanchinsky's illness arise from the lack of any medical evidence, as well as the primitive state of psychiatry in the early twentieth century. At the end of nineteenth century, two new mental illnesses were identified: *dementia praecox* and manic depressive insanity, with the name of *dementia praecox* being changed to schizophrenia in 1911.[161] By combining the old Greek words *phren* for the mind and *schizein* (to shatter into pieces), the term more accurately represented the condition of a fragmented mind.[162] At the time, the diagnosis of *dementia praecox* or schizophrenia was one of chronicity: the illness was incurable, patients would deteriorate over time, and many would be hospitalised for most of their lives.[163] Stanchinsky's sister wrote that he was discharged after several months of hospitalisation, which does not fit with this description. During the course of the research, the present author has consulted with a psychiatrist and was advised that no firm conclusions can be reached about Stanchinsky's diagnosis from the limited diary entries that survive. Mental illnesses can be difficult to diagnose, even today, which makes understanding Stanchinsky's condition a particularly complex task. As this thesis has found no primary evidence of any specific diagnosis, it will refer to Stanchinsky's condition simply as a mental illness.

While we do not know the exact nature of Stanchinsky's illness, his condition was probably triggered by, or at least associated with, the unexpected and traumatic death of his father. The results of studies examining etiological links between early bereavement and mental illness are inconclusive, but one study usefully explains the causal connection between bereavement and breakdown: 'the death of a parent is stressful to the family [...] because of its objective consequences: economic hardship, disruption of living conditions, enforced mobility, and the like. This stress, like any severe stress, might then contribute to [...] illness in a genetically vulnerable child. The fact that death of the father was much more frequent than death of the mother, as would be expected actuarially, is consistent with this explanation.'[164] Although

[161] Heinz Katschnig, 'Psychiatry's Contribution to the Public Stereotype of Schizophrenia: Historical Considerations', *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, 24.5 (2018), 1093–1100 (p. 1094) <https://doi.org/10.1111/jep.13011>
[162] Ibid., p. 1096.
[163] Ibid., p. 1095.
[164] Norman F. Watt and Armand Nicholi Jr., 'Early Death of a Parent as an Etiological Factor in Schizophrenia',

Stanchinsky was twenty-one when his father died, it is reasonable to speculate that both his grief and his loss of financial security contributed to his hospitalisation. Having to pause his studies and relocate from Moscow to Logachevo disrupted his routines and probably contributed to his nervous breakdown in spring 1910.

During his time at the hospital, Stanchinsky recorded his thoughts in a thin, lined notebook; its flexible and plain cardboard cover (similar to those used in Russian and Soviet schools) suggests that it may have been given to Stanchinsky by the hospital staff. Unlike Stanchinsky's diaries from previous years, in which he recorded his daily activities, this notebook contains five separate lengthy entries that offer some insights into Stanchinsky's state of mind during his illness. The diary's entries are fragmented and incoherent, and his messy and exceedingly large handwriting spills out from between the lines, suggesting that Stanchinsky noted down his thoughts quickly and in the spur of the moment. It is not entirely clear if the diary entries are recollections of dreams, psychotic episodes or hallucinations.

During his hospitalisation, Stanchinsky's main fixation was with death. The entry of 15 January 1911, for example, contains the following:

> He died. […] Suddenly, the one that was not awaited burst into us suddenly, she brutally carried away my beloved, my dear, cruelly, not at once — at first she revelled in torment. I remember how strangely the candle barely flickered, I saw [it] at the head of the bed. The patient moaned. Moans, only moans filled the empty room. The patient is unconscious […] I remember walking behind the coffin. Someone made speeches. I did not listen, I was silent.[165]

It is difficult to know if Stanchinsky was referring to a real event from his past in this entry or if it was a product of his imagination. We may assume that the death of his father still weighed

American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 49.3 (1979), 465–73 (p. 471) <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.1979.tb02629.x>. Other studies on the subject include: Cathaleene Macias and others, 'Bereavement in the Context of Serious Mental Illness', *Psychiatric Services*, 55.4 (2004), 421–26; Hong Liang and others, 'Early Life Bereavement and Schizophrenia: A Nationwide Cohort Study in Denmark and Sweden', *Medicine*, 95.3 (2016), 1–8; Harris Finkelstein, 'The Long-Term Effects of Early Parent Death: A Review', *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 44.1 (1988), 3–9.

[165] The diary is titled 'Diary 1910-1911 (from the period of illness)' but, due to the hospitalisation dates, it is most likely that all entries were made in 1911. «Он умер… Как вдруг к нам ворвалась внезапно та, кот. не ждут, она жестоко унесла мою любимую, мою дорогую, жестоко, не сразу - упивалась сначала мученьем. Я помню как странно едва едва мерцала свеча, видел у изголовья. Больная стонала. Стоны, единственно стоны наполняли пустую комнату. Больная в безсознании… Помню, шел за гробом. Кто-то говорил речи. Я не слушал, я молчал.» Aleksey Stanchinsky, 'Dnevnik 1910-1911 g. (v period bolezni)', RNMM, 239/100, 15 January 1911.

heavily on him as, in this diary entry, Stanchinsky appears to be personifying death. The figure of Death ('the one that was not awaited') took on a physical form ('she brutally carried away my beloved'), perhaps even a human one. Stanchinsky saw Death as cruel: it did not act immediately, but rather 'revelled in torment' as a person might. We do not know if Stanchinsky was personifying death as a woman or referring to it as a concept, as the word 'death' (*smert')* in Russian is a feminine noun, so the pronouns that Stanchinsky used may have simply been a grammatical necessity.

Death continued to torment Stanchinsky over the coming weeks. On 25 January 1911, in a dream, the moment of death was accompanied by a sound: 'Tonight I jumped up in horror. I heard in a dream again that tearing monstrous cry which was heard at that moment [... of] his death.'[166] From this diary entry, it is impossible to confidently state what sound Stanchinsky is referring to and what it represents. It seems unlikely that he would have been referring to the death rattle – a symptom of the dying process during which the person makes crackling and gurgling sounds from the back of their throat – as the sound Stanchinsky hears is a 'monstrous cry', which would presumably have been much louder than a death rattle. It is possible that the 'monstrous cry' came from someone else, such as a bystander witnessing the death, or perhaps the sound came to represent death itself in Stanchinsky's mind. On 20 February 1911, Stanchinsky wrote: 'Today in a dream I heard death.'[167] Thus, we could speculate that the sound which initially accompanied death subsequently took on the meaning of death: i.e. that personification of death was transformed into the sonification of death. Whether we consider death to be a process, a concept or an event, writing about it as a sound is unusual.

Although Stanchinsky's breakdown and hospitalisation may have been precipitated by the death of his father, the person whose loss Stanchinsky grieves in the following entry does not match the physical appearance of Vladimir Stanchinsky and is unlikely to be him:

> How alive all his features are preserved in my memory: a gentle beautiful face, dark eyebrows, deep eyes with a hidden fire, expressive lip line; his gentleness and confidence, his gestures — plastic and complete; his timid character, but how much strength in his life. How did he finish it? How??? Unhappy.

[166] «Сегодня ночью я с ужасом вскочил. Я слышал во сне опять тот раздирающий чудовищный крик, кот. раздавался в ту минуту... его смерть.» RNMM, 239/100, 25 January 1911.
[167] «Сегодня во сне смерть слышал.» Ibid., 20 February 1911 (in the morning).

I see before me those happy days of our youth, when both fresh, cheerful, full of light and hope, we grew up together.

We were united by an incomparable single feeling — a feeling known with such power by a few, although many, very many are waiting for it or not seeing it in a way we did — a feeling that combines everything beautiful, all living […] This feeling is love for a woman. Passionate love, boundless... [ellipsis his]

I will not speak.... [ellipsis his]

Too difficult.

Fate chose me, not him.

A warm handshake, a smile piercing through with sadness — that's all I remember.

When the waves carried me away with her, for a long time I could see [handwriting unreadable] He trembled, he cried.. [sic] Then he disappeared. […]

Many years later I received an envelope and there was a letter, I have it now. How many times [I have] re-read it. […] Here is what was written:

Friend!

You understand me alone.

You left with her.

I didn't tell you to stay then.

I didn't have a single request from you.

Now the big one is to visit me.

Very soon

very soon[168]

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[168] «Как живые сохранились в моей памяти все его черты: нежное красивое лицо, темные брови, глубокие глаза со скрытым огнём, подвижное выражение губ; Его мягкость и уверенность, его жесты пластичны и законченные; Его немного робкий характер, но как много силы в его жизни. Как он ее окончил!! Как??? Несчастный.
Я перед собой вижу те счастливые дни нашей молодости, когда оба свежие, бодрые, полные света и надежды мы росли вместе.
Нас соединяло несравненное единственное чувство - чувство известное в такой силе немногими, хотя многие, очень многие его ждут или видеть его не таким, как мы - чувство, соединяющее в себе все красивое, все живое […] Это чувство - любовь к женщине. Любовь страстная, безграничная...
Не буду говорить....
Слишком тяжело.
Судьба избрала меня, а не его.
Горячее пожатие руки, улыбка, пронзающая насквозь грустью - вот все, что помню.
Когда же волны уносили меня с ней, долго долго мне виднелся […] Он трепетал, он плакал.. Потом исчез. […]
Уже спустя много лет я получил конверт и там письмо, оно сейчас у меня. Сколько раз перечитывал. […] Вот что было написано:
Друг!
Ты понимаешь меня один.
Ты уехал с ней.
Я не говорил вам тогда остаться.
У меня не было ни одной просьбы к вам.
Теперь большая - навестить меня.
Уже совсем скоро
совсем скоро» RNMM, 239/100, 15 January 1911.

We do not know for certain who this person might have been. In this excerpt, Stanchinsky refers to someone he knew from a young age, so it may have been a childhood friend or a cousin. The content of the excerpt also suggests romantic feelings towards this person, so it may be that Stanchinsky had lost an old love, or perhaps someone from his childhood or his teenage years with whom he had had a romance. Looking through the pictures of people Stanchinsky knew closely, one possibility that springs to mind is that the owner of the dark eyebrows and the expressive lip line may have been Zhilyayev (see photograph 8 in this chapter). Of course, Zhilyayev was alive and well in 1911, but we may speculate that due to his illness, Stanchinsky muddled up the death of his father with the physical features of his friend. Stanchinsky's diaries do not provide any insights into who this person might have been, and do not mention anyone that we could attribute to this diary entry either as a romantic partner, a friend who died, or a combination of the two. Future researchers may well uncover more sources which would help to identify this person who was clearly very important to Stanchinsky.

Subsequent diary entries are especially incoherent and messy, and Stanchinsky's sentences and paragraphs are disjointed. His experiences were visual and aural, colourful and sonorous: he saw colours which laughed at him; he described the sounds surrounding him as big and healthy; and he visualised chords as bright lights:

> I brought a large iron sheet for the entire wall [...] I will decorate it. I bought the paints long ago. No brushes needed. What a pleasure it is to take a handful of red with your own hands [handwriting unreadable] to look with [handwriting unreadable] She also lives. Ooh! and slap it on the object. The red laughs and laughs, and floods [handwriting unreadable] either on the wall or on the ceiling. I will baptise so [handwriting unreadable] in purple. Sumptuous. Then beat the walls with a hammer to the [iron] sheet, to the sheet. Ha ha ha! That will be fun!
> Sounds are so big, thick, healthy. They will greet me.
> Down with all the black, cold kingdom — the triumph of life of bright light chords.
> Happiness, happiness.[169]

[169] «Я принес большой железный лист во всю стену [...] Я его разукрашу. Давно купил краски. Кистей не нужно. Какое удовольствие самими руками взять в горсть красную [...] посмотреть с [...] Она ведь тоже живет. Ишь! и хлопнуть на предмет. Он красный хохочет, хохочет, так и заливает [...] или на стену или на потолок. Я так окрещу [...] в лиловую. Великолепно. Потом стены бить молотком в лист, в лист. Ха ха ха! Вот весело будет!
Звуки такие большие, толстые, здоровые. Они будут приветствовать меня.
Долой все черное, холодное царство, торжество жизни аккордов ярких света.
Счастье, счастье.» RNMM, 239/100, 28 June 1911.

It is unclear if the experience of painting described in this entry actually took place. It may be that it depicts an early form of occupational therapy, but the practicality of it is dubious. As with the previous entries, it is possible that it is a remnant of a dream or hallucination, but due to the nature of these entries, it remains impossible to arrive at an interpretation of their meaning with any degree of certainty.

We cannot know whether Stanchinsky ever fully recovered from his illness. The writings of Stanchinsky's friends and acquaintances suggest that some of his symptoms persisted, and Stanchinsky continued to suffer from psychotic experiences where he hallucinated that he was either a god or a devil.[170] Aleksandrov and Sabaneyev recall in their memoirs that after Stanchinsky's release from the asylum in 1911, horses started to play a special role in his mind: Stanchinsky stopped riding them and would go everywhere on foot. Upon seeing horses on the street, he would take his hat off and greet them, and he would sometimes have conversations with them.[171]

We also do not know if Stanchinsky's illness affected his work. The relationship between the works of mentally ill artists and composers and their health is not clear, even though the mad-genius paradox is one of the oldest debates in psychology.[172] Some scholars argue that no correlation exists, while others suggest a possible link. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, psychologists were more inclined to think that mental illnesses have no effect on artists' work. Scottish asylum doctor W. A. F. Browne, for example, wrote an article titled 'Mad Artists' in 1880 in which he argued that the art of the mentally disturbed was no different from that of healthy people. Additionally, Russian psychologist Pavel Karpov (1873-1932?), who studied the art of mentally ill people, 'found no real difference between the art of the insane and normal people.'[173] On the other hand, modern researchers have argued that a link does exist between mental disturbances and creativity. Kaufman and Paul, for example, claim that people within the schizophrenic range can be capable of greater originality of

[170] Aleksandrov and Blok, *Vospominaniya, Stat'i, Pis'ma*, p. 76.
[171] Ibid., p. 76; Leonid Sabaneyev, *Vospominaniya o Rossiya* (Moscow: Klassika-XXI, 2004), p. 64.
[172] Dean Keith Simonton, 'The Mad-Genius Paradox: Can Creative People Be More Mentally Healthy But Highly Creative People More Mentally Ill?', *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 9.5 (2014), 470–80 (p. 470) <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691614543973>
[173] Browne and Karpov quoted in V. Lerner, G. Podolsky, and E. Witztum, 'Pavel Ivanovich Karpov (1873-1932?) - The Russian Prinzhorn: Art of the Insane in Russia', *History of Psychiatry*, 27.1, (2016), 65–74 (pp. 66-67).

thought due to how their brain works, but stress that originality does not equal creativity.[174] Similarly, the work of Mayo *et al*. suggests that creativity emerges from a need for restoration and equate creativity with a strive against disintegration.[175]

After his hospitalisation, Stanchinsky resumed his lessons with Zhilyayev and Taneyev, who were very supportive of him following his illness. When Stanchinsky fell ill, Taneyev reached out to Stanchinsky's mother, and expressed concern that his pushing of Stanchinsky too hard in his composition work may have contributed to his illness.[176] The final years of Stanchinsky's life were, compositionally speaking, highly fruitful. From 1911-1914 he composed two piano sonatas, two sets of piano *Sketches*, a set of Canon-Preludes and some other small-scale works. Lopatina reports that he also began studying orchestration and started work on a ballet, an opera based upon a Russian folktale, and an orchestral suite on Spanish or Italian themes. However, this author was not able to locate any manuscripts of these works.[177] In the last year of his life, Stanchinsky also resumed his studies at the Moscow Conservatoire.

In 1913, the first publication of nos. 1–4 of the *Twelve Sketches* appeared, and by 1914 Stanchinsky had recovered enough to perform his pieces in Moscow Conservatoire's Small Hall (their reception is examined in the final chapter of this thesis). After this concert, the Bolshoi Theatre singer Deyma Mariya Adrianova, who had patronised Zhilyayev when he was a student, invited Stanchinsky to stay with her family in Crimea.[178] Stanchinsky went there for a month in the spring, where he also met Boleslav Yavorsky (1877-1942), a prominent Russian music theorist.

During the final years of Stanchinsky's life, there are indications that his religious beliefs strengthened, and that these had a calming and comforting influence on him. In 1914, he wrote: 'I definitely used to be overwhelmed with all sorts of hardships and passions, and now, after I have gained faith in God, I strive for purity and perfection with all the power of my soul.'[179] In

[174] Scott Barry Kaufman and Elliot S. Paul, 'Creativity and Schizophrenia Spectrum Disorders across the Arts and Sciences', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5 (2014) <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.01145>
[175] Kelley Raab Mayo and others, *Creativity, Spirituality, and Mental Health: Exploring Connections* (Farnham, UK: Taylor & Francis Group, 2009) <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bcu-trial/detail.action?docID=476396> [accessed 1 July 2020].
[176] RNMM, 239/120, p. 39.
[177] Lopatina, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky', p. 8.
[178] RNMM, 239/120, p. 39.
[179] «Я действительно раньше был обуреваем всякими невзгодами и страстями, а теперь, после того, как я

a letter to Korta, he also explained events around him through religion: when asked about the war in 1914, he replied that the war was the inevitable punishment inflicted on people by God for their original sin. Though not an unusual outlook at the time, his response demonstrates his detachment from worldly suffering, and his complete faith in God's judgment. His godmother Korta wrote to him on 12 August 1914: 'Do you really not read the newspapers now, do not follow the war step by step? I think that this cannot be, because the interests of all humanity are affected here, and Russia stood up as one person, and I think there is no one who could calmly [relate] to the moment [that] we are experiencing.'[180] Her tone suggests that Stanchinsky's passive reaction was not typical of the mainstream. Stanchinsky replied:

> Yes, really big events are happening now. I read the general course of the war in the newspapers, but it's disgusting to read everything else. So much dirt in them always. And as for the war, I'll say that there are more terrible things, and war is a natural event of general evil and unrighteousness, which began at the Fall.'[181] [182]

Stanchinsky met his untimely death only three weeks after writing this letter to Korta. On the evening of 22 September 1914, he went for a walk near Logachevo. Family friend Vera Glinka was visiting them at the time. She remembered that Stanchinsky walked out after an argument with his mother. He was going to see the mother of his child, Elena Bai (who herself confirmed she was expecting him that evening in an interview in 1965), and this provoked disagreement with his family.[183] The family started searching for him when he did not return by 11pm, and the search continued through the night and into the next day.[184] His mother, together with a search party, found him wet and lifeless the next day, on 23 September, 15 versts (16 km) away from home on the banks of the Balonovka River (according to other sources, the Stryana River

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обрёл веру в Бога, я всей силой своей души стремлюсь к чистоте и совершенству.» Stanchinsky to Galya, 2 September 1914. Published in Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', pp. 155-6.

[180] «Неужели ты и теперь газет не читаешь, не следишь шаг за шагом за войной? Думаю, что этого быть не может, пот[ому что] слишком уж затронуты тут интересы прямо всего человечесва даже, а Россия встала как один человек, и думается мне, нет никого, кто спокойно [относился] бы к переживаемому нами моменту.» Anna Astafieva (Korta) to Stanchinsky, 12 August 1914. Published in Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 154.

[181] «Да, действительно происходят теперь большие события. Но я в газетах читаю общий ход войны, а все другое читать противно. Столько грязи в них всегда. И относительно войны скажу, что есть вещи более ужасные, и война есть естественное событие общего зла и неправды, которая началась от грехопадения.» Stanchinsky to Galya, 2 September 1914. Published in Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', pp. 155-6.

[182] By 'the Fall' (grekhopadeniya), in this instance, Stanchinsky is referring to the biblical episode of Eve disobeying God's prohibition, resulting in her and Adam's Fall in the Garden of Eden.

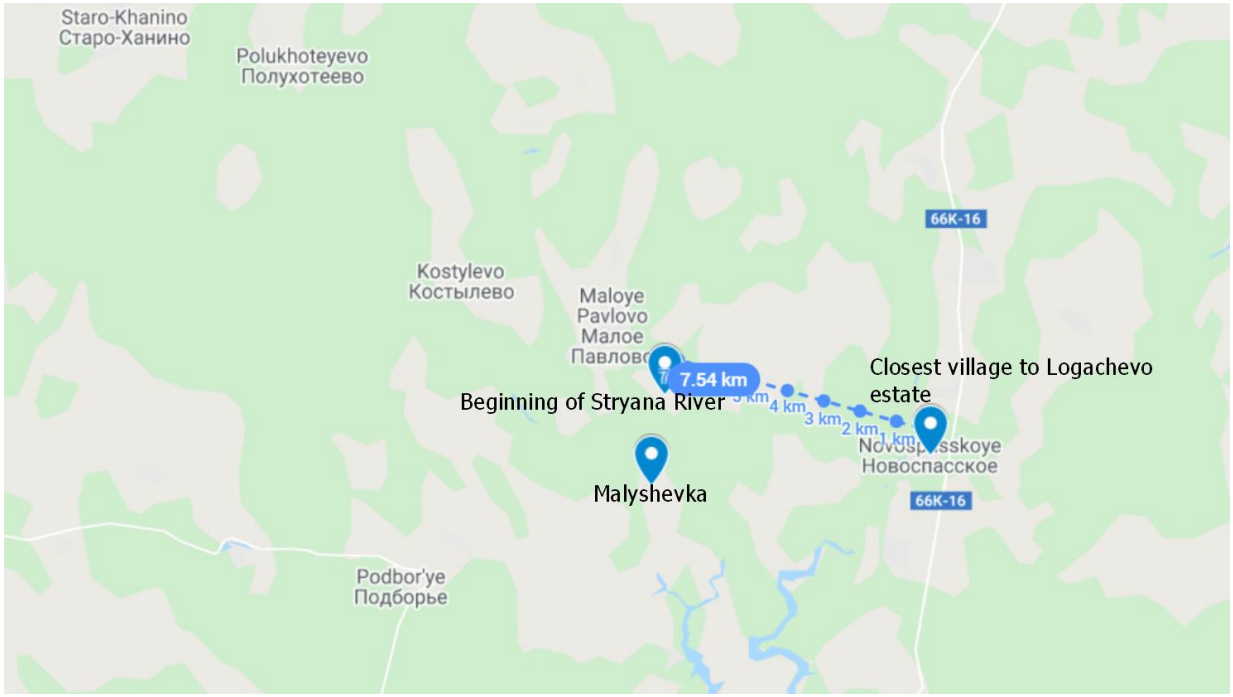
[183] Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 152.

[184] RNMM, 239/120, p. 39.

in the area of the Malyshevka village).[185] (Figure 2.b) According to Stanchinsky's mother, the doctor at the scene determined the cause of death as 'heart paralysis'.[186] It remains unclear exactly how he died, and some sources have suggested that he may have died of suicide.[187] Powell and Hepburn, for example, write that 'there are strong indications that his death was likely suicide' but provide no evidence for making this claim.[188] My suspicion is that this sentence was an addition by Hepburn, whose thesis claims that 'many scholars have speculated that, due to the dramatic life events, Stanchinsky was pushed towards suicide' but even here Hepburn does not provide references to his sources.[189] If a writer had begun spreading the rumour of a suicide, it would have likely been Sabaneyev. However, despite writing in rather exaggerated terms about Stanchinsky's illness, Sabaneyev was cautious in speculating about the circumstances of his death. 'Whether he was drowned or died from a heart failure, whether it was a case of suicide on the part of the unfortunate sick man, or he fell victim to a crime, has remained unknown.'[190] My guess is that, in a similar fashion to the details of Stanchinsky's mental illness, a rumour of suicide was picked up from Sabaneyev by English-speaking scholars and never re-examined. The motive for this may have been to generate interest in Stanchinsky, and picking up a theory of suicide is more convenient for this purpose than reiterating speculations about him drowning or falling victim to a crime. Stanchinsky was buried on 29 September 1914, next to his father, in the graveyard of the Novosspaskoye Church, which would make the theory of his suicide unlikely.

[185] RNMM, 239/120, p. 39, Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Iz epistolyariy', p. 152.
[186] RNMM, 239/120, p. 39.
[187] This author was not able to find a death certificate for Stanchinsky.
[188] Powell and Hepburn, 'Stanchinsky, Aleksey Vladimirovich', p. 1.
[189] Hepburn, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914): A Guide to Research', p. 14.
[190] Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, p. 193.

Figure 2.b: Potential location of Stanchinsky's death.[191]



Conclusions

The present assessment of Stanchinsky's life is the broadest and most detailed biography of the composer, and cautiously examines the evidence surrounding his illness and death. The findings are not conclusive, but they do indicate that it is not possible to retrospectively diagnose the nature of his illness, and that the cause of his death cannot be firmly attributed to suicide.

Stanchinsky's mental breakdown in 1910 is one of the better-known facts about him and is often attributed to a diagnosis of schizophrenia. However, this does not appear to be borne out of primary sources. It is possible that his hospitalisation in 1910 was a result of a convergence of several factors, including learning that he was about to become a father in 1909 and the death of his own father in 1910 which affected the family's financial stability. Speculations about a specific mental health diagnosis may also be prevalent because of Stanchinsky's early and unexpected death, raising conjectures regarding suicide. However, there seems to be no

[191] It is possible that some of the local rivers have since been renamed. The only Balonovka river today is near Mogilev in Belarus. Google Maps. (n.d.) [Possible locations of Stanchinsky's death, drawn from RNMM, 239/120].

evidence to support this theory, and the fact that Stanchinsky was buried in consecrated ground suggests that his death may have been a tragic accident.

The author has found that Stanchinsky was a nervous and vulnerable individual from childhood, but he had strong family support around him and he relied heavily on it well into his adulthood. Stanchinsky's family and social circles were influential in his life's outcomes: he was raised in a musical family and was provided with opportunities to study with influential teachers from an early age, which subsequently assisted in him gaining a place to study at the Moscow Conservatoire. Despite his anxiousness, during his student years Stanchinsky was sociable and made acquaintances with several established figures such as Medtner, Scriabin and Tolstoy. The two biggest influences on Stanchinsky's musical career were Taneyev and Zhilyayev, the latter of whom also became a close friend and fierce supporter of him in his adult life. Stanchinsky's works survive largely due to Zhilyayev's efforts. Following Stanchinsky's untimely death, Zhilyayev spent the next fifteen years bringing them to publication, a process which is examined in more detail in the final chapter.

Several aspects of Stanchinsky's life require further research and clarification. For example, it would be interesting to better understand his time and experience studying at the Moscow Conservatoire, as well as to know more about the details of his lessons with Taneyev and Zhilyayev, as these could in turn shed further light on musical analysis of his works. More research may also help clarify the remaining questions about Stanchinsky's mental illness and his period of hospitalisation, as well as the circumstances of his untimely death. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to find sources which could address some of these remaining questions during the course of the research, such as Stanchinsky's student and medical records, or his death certificate.

Chapter 3 – Stylistic Developments (1904-1910)

In October 1909, Stanchinsky recorded a notable conversation he had with Nikolay Zhilyayev in his diary. The entry depicted a meeting in which Stanchinsky played his *Scottish Songs*. Zhilyayev listened attentively and offered his assessment: 'there is Scottish in them, but there is more "Stanchinsky."'[1] This 'Stanchinsky style', still developing but already recognisable in 1909, can be described as a combination of numerous interweaved yet often contrasting features. Stanchinsky was developing as a composer by continually introducing new techniques and approaches to his works, and his compositional style evolved at a remarkable rate. This chapter examines Stanchinsky's works from the years 1904–1910 which demonstrate a composer actively exploring various musical ideas in search of his individual voice.

Stanchinsky's compositions from this time are an eclectic collection. In this chapter, I have attempted to present their characteristic qualities in as chronological an order as possible. However, generally speaking, this chronology is not always well-defined: tendencies, methods and traits overlap, as is only to be expected for any composer in their formative years. Stanchinsky's earliest pieces from his school days, discussed in the first part of this chapter, follow in the footsteps of the great Romantics; these should not be taken as examples of the 'Stanchinsky style', but rather as the baseline from which all subsequent developments emerged. From 1907, after his entrance to the Moscow Conservatoire, Stanchinsky began to incorporate new approaches to his works by expanding the restrictions of conventional major-minor tonality, experimenting with progressive tonality, introducing modes and exploring more advanced chromaticism. His approach to rhythm and metre became more adventurous too. From 1908, we see his emerging use of contrapuntal techniques, linear textures, and increasingly wide tessituras. In 1909, Stanchinsky worked with folk songs, and his *Scottish Songs* are used as an exemplar of how he devised unusual accompaniments for original folk melodies. As these songs have never been discussed in the musicological literature, they receive more contextual consideration than the other pieces discussed in this chapter. The section contextualising his songs is also broader because of the availability of primary sources that describe the process of their composition, which is not the case for his other pieces.

[1] «есть в них шотландское, но «станчинского» в них больше.» Aleksey Stanchinsky, 'Dnevnik za 1909 g.', RNMM, 239/97, 16 October 1909.

Stanchinsky's compositional development was exceptionally rapid. Because of this, and because of the brevity of his compositional career, categorisation of his works into periods is complicated. Periodisation of a composer's *oeuvre* is complex even in cases of composers whose creative career spanned decades: it took Beethoven scholars several decades to categorise his works, for example, and debates about which works belong to a particular category are still ongoing. One may prioritise biographical or stylistic matters, but 'ultimately, no single model will satisfy all needs, and there will always be varied opinions depending on which realm or realms one chooses to privilege (personal, professional, stylistic, aesthetic, philosophical, cultural, political, economic etc.)'[2] For composers who died young, matters are further complicated: Schubert scholars have noted that 'it is altogether problematic to divide up into different phases and epochs the oeuvre of one who died so young; [and whose] compositional development was fluent in the last year of his life'.[3] Similarly, Stanchinsky's style was continuously evolving during the ten years of his compositional activity, so there is little advantage in trying to categorise his works into early or late. For these reasons, this thesis avoids thorough categorisation, and terms such as 'late works' or 'late style' have been avoided throughout due to their ideological and aesthetic connotations.[4] Where the thesis refers to his compositions as 'early', this is meant from a purely chronological perspective.

In examining Stanchinsky's stylistic developments, this chapter stops at the year 1910, and the following chapter picks up from 1911. This is not intended to separate Stanchinsky's creative output into 'early' and 'late', but rather reflects the biographical and creative hiatus that occurred in his life: it was at this time that Stanchinsky was hospitalised, and no works appear to have survived from this period.

[2] Mark Ferraguto, 'Beethoven's "Watershed"? Eroica's Contexts and Periodisation', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eroica Symphony*, ed. by Nancy November (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 24–42 (p.42).
[3] Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen, 'Is There a Late Style in Schubert's Oeuvre?', in *Rethinking Schubert*, ed. by Lorraine Byrne Bodley and Julian Horton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 17–28 (p. 20) <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190200107.003.0002>
[4] For discussions about 'late works' and 'late style' and the implications that these terms have see: Theodor W. Adorno, *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (London: Polity Press, 1998) and Edward W. Saïd *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

Lyrical Tendencies (1904-1907)

Stanchinsky's earliest pieces give little indication of the adventurous composer to come, as is to be expected of an artist that is coming of age. Stanchinsky's published output from this time is not very voluminous, and comprises three *Songs Without Words*, two preludes, a mazurka, a humoresque, *Tears*, a nocturne and a one-movement sonata (E♭ minor). All written prior to his admission to Moscow Conservatoire in 1907, these works mark the starting point of Stanchinsky's compositional journey.[5] Although these works do not lay claim to originality, they demonstrate Stanchinsky's early influences: following in the footsteps of Chopin, Stanchinsky wrote preludes, mazurkas and a nocturne; his *Songs Without Words* and *Humoresque* suggest some inspiration from Mendelssohn, Schumann and Dvořák; while the devilish mood set at the opening of the *Humoresque* indicates a potential creative stimulus taken from Liszt's *Mephisto Waltzes*. In line with many Russian composers of the day, Stanchinsky's early work was also influenced by Scriabin, and his Sonata in E♭ minor – whether intentionally or because of his familiarity with it as a pianist – imitates closely the melodic and textural idioms of Scriabin's Etude in D♯ minor.

The pieces discussed in this section are lyric-dramatic in character, revealing Stanchinsky's predisposition to melancholy. Climaxes are passionate and powerful, intensifying the romantic nature of the works, while their lyricism is conjured by minor keys and expressive melodic lines characterised by descending patterns. On the whole, these works show simplicity in their use of binary and ternary forms, although there are some exceptions such as *Humoresque* (1906). Texturally simple, the works rely on chordal accompaniments; Stanchinsky's use of the keyboard is still also relatively limited at this time, with most of the works scored predominantly in the middle register of the piano. The metres continue to be restricted to common time – 2/4, 3/4 and 6/8 – well into 1907. The rhythms fall neatly within bar lines, with only simple subdivisions, and perfect cadences are found where they can be expected at the ends of phrases.

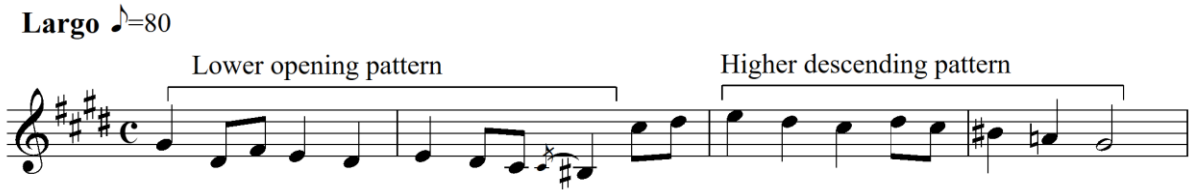
Stanchinsky's earliest published pieces, the three *Songs Without Words* (1904), are texturally and structurally simple, but in them we can already recognise Stanchinsky's propensity for writing lyrical – if somewhat formulaic – melodic lines. The pieces were written as a response

[5] For a full list of Stanchinsky's published compositions, see Appendix 1.

to an exercise set by Stanchinsky's teacher Alexandr Grechaninov after a lesson on binary and ternary forms. Stanchinsky appears to have understood the content well, and his Songs are all composed in ternary form – a structure which will become a favourite of his in later years. The pieces also demonstrate Stanchinsky's good understanding of functional harmony and voice leading, as well as his imitative approach to piano textures, such as accompaniments comprising repeated chords (à la Chopin's Prelude in E minor, op. 28, no. 4, as found in the middle part of Song no. 1); widely arpeggiated accompaniment lines (akin to the middle section of Chopin's *Fantaisie-Impromptu* op. 66, found in Song no. 2); and arpeggiated chords in both hands which accompany the top melodic line (similar to the textures of Chopin's Etude in A♭ major op. 25, no. 1, found in the middle part of Song no. 3).

Stanchinsky's early, formulaic approach to melody might well be expected of a young, inexperienced composer. His phrases fall neatly within four-bar structures, often in the manner of a presentation phrase in a sentence form (a basic idea followed by a variant response) doubtless showing his familiarity with classical models.[6] In Stanchinsky's case, a lower-pitched initial idea is often followed by a higher, descending response. This formula can be first observed in Stanchinsky's *Songs Without Words* (1904). (Example 3.1)

Example 3.1: Melodic phrase plan characteristic of Stanchinsky's early works in *Songs Without Words*, no. 1 (1904), bars 1-4.

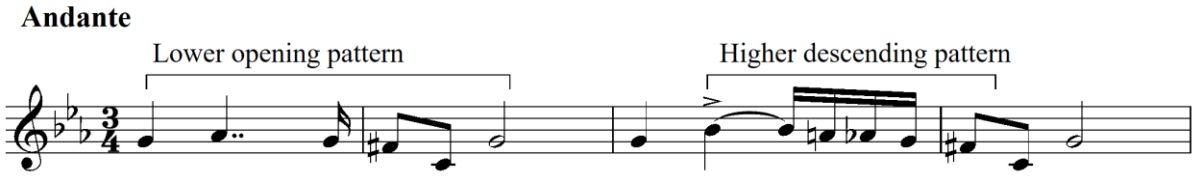


Stanchinsky clearly found this melodic structure useful and successful, as its basic outline can be seen in his Prelude in C minor (example 3.2), as well as his Prelude in E♭ minor (example 3.3). The structure is also apparent, albeit on a larger scale, in some of Stanchinsky's more extensive compositions, such as the second theme of the Sonata in E♭ minor (1906). Stanchinsky's frequent use of a similar melodic pattern indicates that in his early development

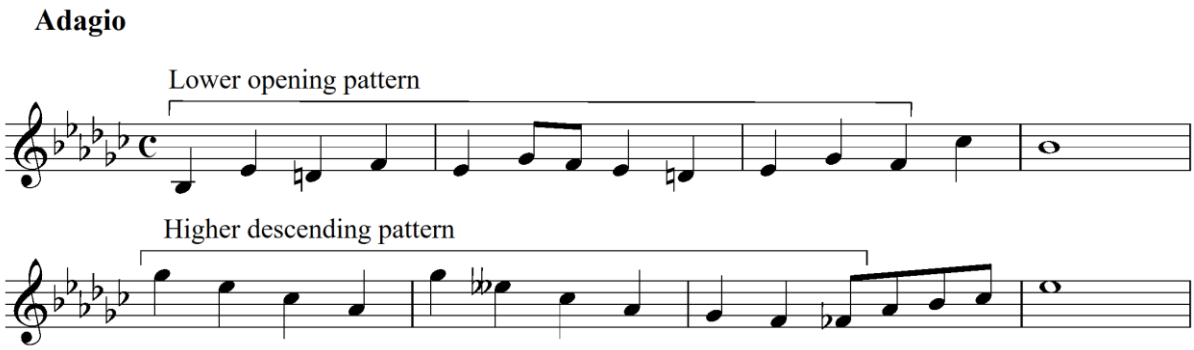
[6] See William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 35-48.

he was cautious not to diverge from tried and tested compositional models – a tendency which will be completely overturned in the next ten years of his compositional journey.

Example 3.2: Melodic phrase plan characteristic of Stanchinsky's early works in Prelude in C minor (1907), bars 1-4.



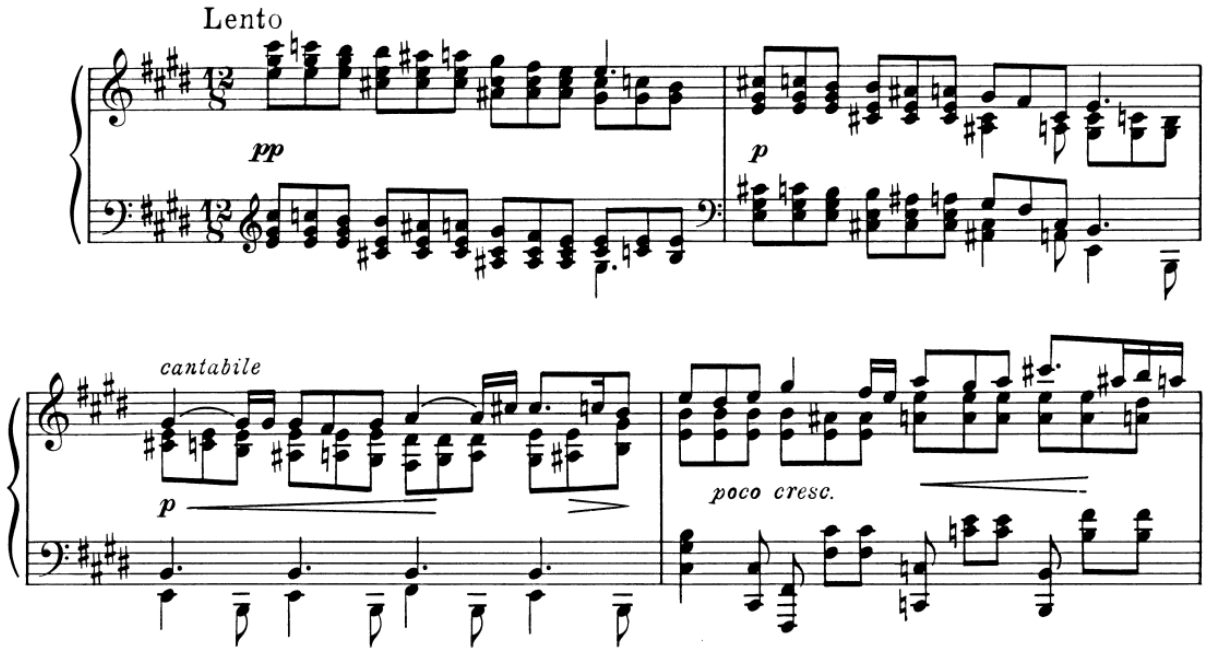
Example 3.3: Melodic phrase plan characteristic of Stanchinsky's early works in Prelude in E♭ minor (1907), bars 1-8.



In Stanchinsky's earliest pieces, there is a strong inclination towards descending patterns which impart a lyrical, melancholic character. This feature is also typical of the work of composers such as Scriabin and Rachmaninov, who belonged to the generation immediately preceding Stanchinsky. In addition to being used in melodies, descending patterns also shape Stanchinsky's harmonic progressions, such as in the bass parts in *Songs Without Words* and the harmonic structures of more complex compositions such as the Nocturne. Composed especially for Stanchinsky's Moscow Conservatoire entrance examination in 1907, the piece contains a refrain of chromatically descending chords. (Example 3.4) The progression creates regular suspensions, which echo the gloominess of some of Rachmaninov's musical idioms, while the main melody starting in bar 3 is reminiscent of the main theme of Liszt's *Sposalizio* (*più lento*, bar 38). Both pieces are in E major, although Liszt's has a more sophisticated structure and use of piano texture. If we compare Stanchinsky's Nocturne to the 'Lydian'

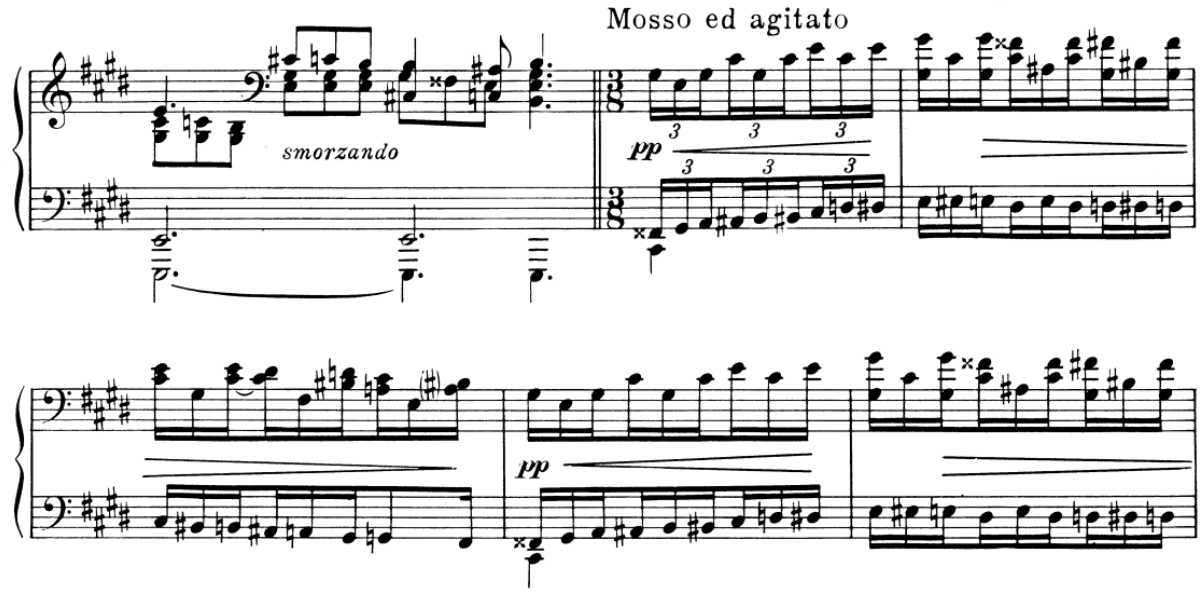
Prelude (written four months later), the Nocturne is still quite conservative in its textures. This might suggest that Stanchinsky was careful not to write anything too unorthodox for his entrance exam, or that the development of his style accelerated after his entrance to the Moscow Conservatoire.

Example 3.4: Stanchinsky's Nocturne (1907), bars 1-4.

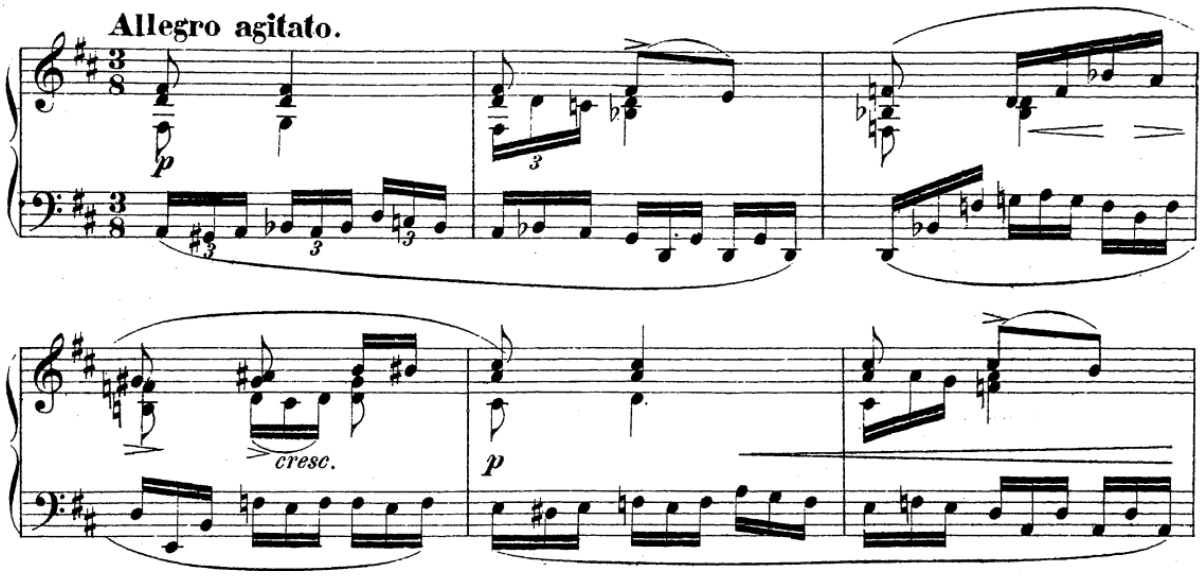


The Nocturne is an accomplished composition which requires the pianist to demonstrate both musicality and dexterity. The poetic and expressive opening is contrasted by the *Mosso et agitato* middle section, written almost entirely as a perpetual flutter of triplet semiquavers in both hands. Nocturnes written in ternary form (slow-fast-slow) were also common of the generation of composers preceding Stanchinsky: Rachmaninov's Three Nocturnes for Piano (1887-1888) follow similar structures, as do Scriabin's Nocturnes op. 5 (1890). The dramatic middle section of Stanchinsky's Nocturne allows him to demonstrate a good command of pianistic texture and chromatic harmony, and it is comparable in its use of triplet rhythms to Scriabin's Nocturne op. 5, no. 1. (Examples 3.5-3.6)

Example 3.5: Stanchinsky's Nocturne (1907), bars 15-20.



Example 3.6: Scriabin's Nocturne op. 5, no. 1 (1890), bars 18-23.



Descending chromatic patterns also form the harmonic and melodic basis of Stanchinsky's *Humoresque* (1906). The *Humoresque* stands out among Stanchinsky's generally melancholic compositions from this time due its lively and capricious character, and its harmonic and rhythmic language are considerably more advanced. Reminiscent of some of Schumann's quasi-rondo pieces (such as the *Fantasiestücke* op. 12, no. 4) which blend rondo, ternary and

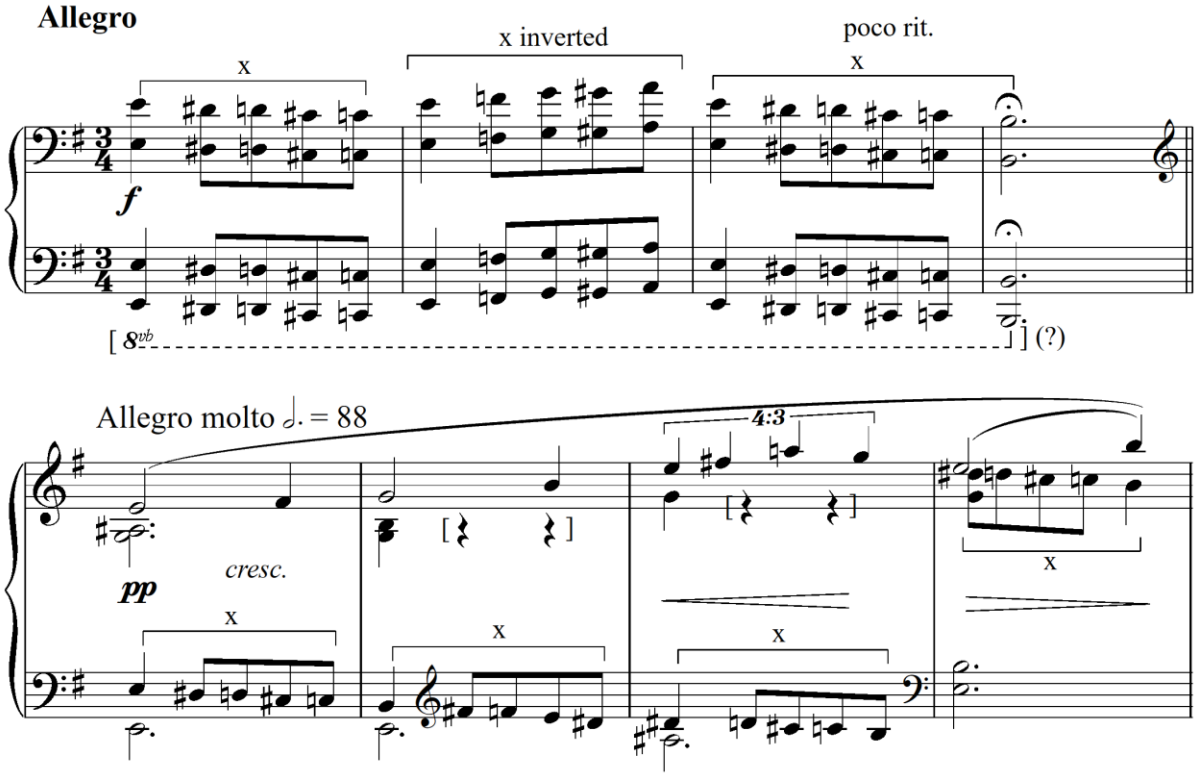
sonata elements, Stanchinsky's *Humoresque* is an unusual form which combines aspects of rondo and ternary forms with the addition of a four-bar coda (K). (Figure 3.a)

Figure 3.a: Structure of Stanchinsky's *Humoresque* (1906).

	R	A	B	A	R	C	A	R	K
		(A_1, ‖:A_2:‖)	(‖:B_1:‖, ‖:B_2, B_1:‖)	(A_1, ‖:A_2:‖)		(‖:C_1:‖, C_2)	(A_3)		
Bars:	1-4	5-54	55-83	84-115	116-9	120-202	203-14	215-8	219-22
Keys:	E min	E min	E min	E min	E min	C min	E min	E min	E min

When contrasted with well-known examples of the genre, such as Dvořák's bright and joyous no. 7, op. 101 (1894) or Schumann's romantic and epic op. 20 (1839), Stanchinsky's *Humoresque* is dark and agitated. The descending chromatic patterns in this work no longer represent melancholy; instead, they are used to unsettle the listener and create a sense wickedness. This perhaps reflects the influence of Liszt (e.g. the *Grand galop chromatique* *Dante Sonata*, *Mephisto Waltzes*) both in terms of the diablerie and virtuosity exhibited in the *Humoresque*. Performed *forte*, the descending patterns set the devilish mood from the very beginning, with the introductory refrain (R) composed out of chromatically descending doubled octaves. (Example 3.7, marked x)

Example 3.7: Stanchinsky's *Humoresque* (1906), bars 1-8.[7]



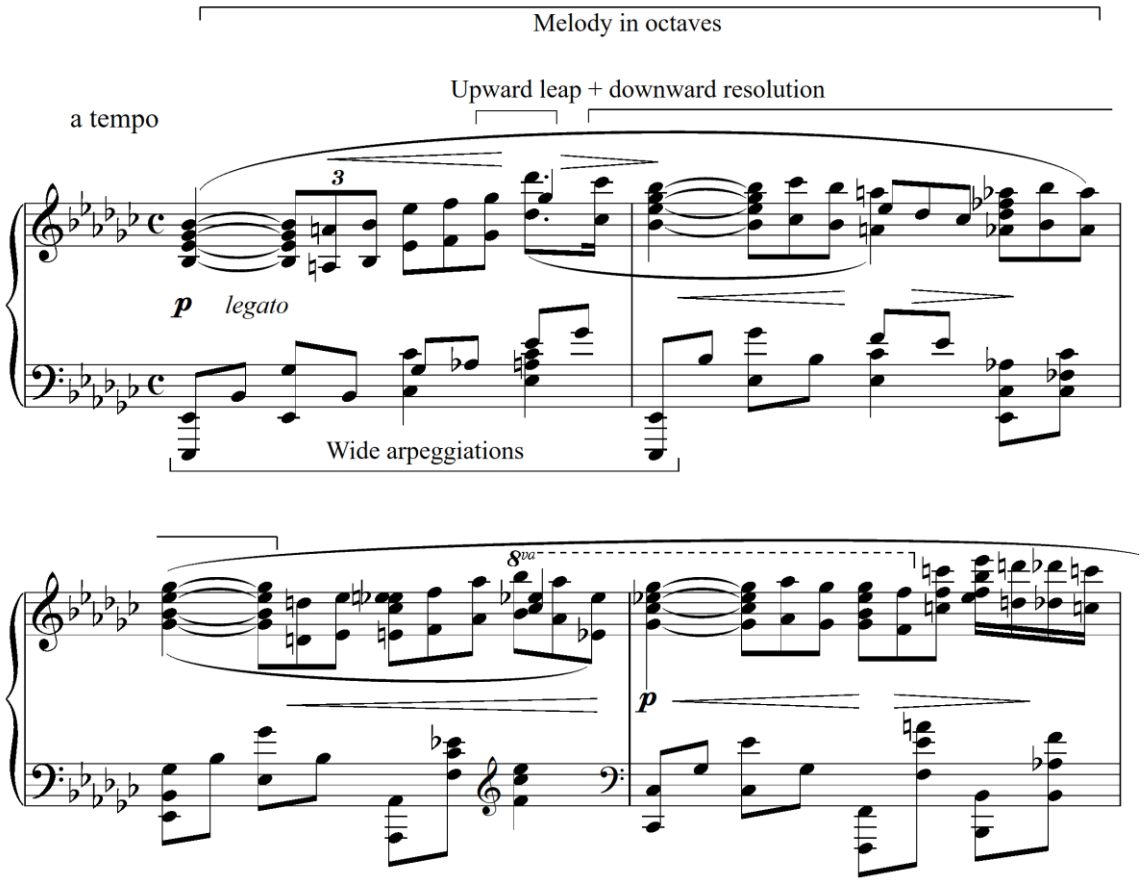
The descending chromatic motif is so significant that it is used as both foreground and background material. After the introduction (ex. 3.7, bars 1-4), in which it is the main melodic stimulus, the motif descends into the background (ex. 3.7, bars 5-8) and acts as a countermelody to the melodic line in the right hand. It is used throughout the recurring A sections of the *Humoresque* (subsection A1 contains this material in every bar), making it the most prevalent musical material within the work.

The largest of Stanchinsky's earliest works is the one-movement Sonata in E♭ minor (1906), written 'undoubtably' under the influence of Scriabin.[8] The sonata is an example of Stanchinsky's developing style as he combines his predilection for descending shapes with Scriabinesque idioms. It unapologetically embraces the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic features of Scriabin's Etude in D♯ minor, op. 8, no. 12 (1894) – a firm favourite of Stanchinsky. At its most obvious, the sonata's key is enharmonically related to that of Scriabin's etude. It

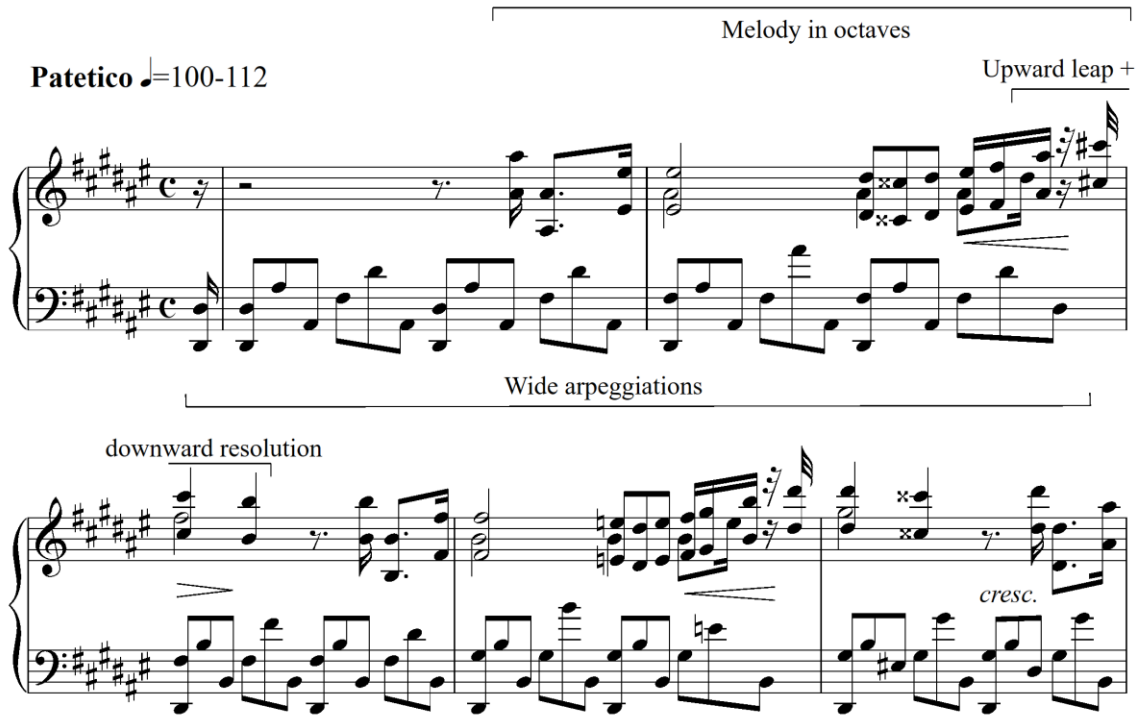
[7] The question mark in bar 4 is an editorial marking by Lopatina. See Aleksey Stanchinsky, *A. Stanchinsky: Sochineniya*, ed. by Irina Lopatina, trans. by Valery Yerokhin, Russkaya Fortepiannaya Muzyka (Moscow: Muzyka, 1990), IX, p. 20.
[8] Jonathan Anthony Powell, 'After Scriabin: Six Composers and the Development of Russian Music' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1999), p. 39.

also closely imitates Scriabin's textures, in particular: the wide-patterned arpeggiations in the left-hand; the melodic line of the right-hand scored in unison octaves; and the use of suspensions. (Examples 3.8 and 3.9) The melodic shapes and rhythmic patterns of the two works are also closely linked. The predominantly stepwise rising melodies are interrupted by a leap on to the last beat of the bar; and the anacruses to the next bar are resolved downwards by a step (albeit Scriabin introduces a suspension in the first beat of bar 3). Such expressive gestures reiterate Stanchinsky's preference for descending semitone patterns in his earlier works.

Example 3.8: Stanchinsky's Sonata in E♭ minor (1906), bars 5-8.



Example 3.9: Scriabin's Etude in D sharp minor, op. 8, no. 12 (1894), bars 1-5.



Stanchinsky's pieces from this time are those of a composer at the very outset of his compositional journey, and we can see clear influences from Romantic composers (in particular, Chopin), as well as from the generation immediately preceding him (e.g., Scriabin). While these pieces reveal he is still digesting the stylistic influences of these composers (as is to be expected of any young composer), they show that, by his eighteenth birthday, Stanchinsky had already developed a good grasp of form and harmony, and was experimenting with a variety of pianistic textures. His preoccupation with melancholy and descending shapes largely dies out in the second half of 1907 and will not return in a significant way for the rest of his compositional career. This is likely due to the new influences he encountered when he commenced his studies at the Moscow Conservatoire in the autumn of 1907, which lead to improved technique, the incorporation of new ideas into his works, and his growing ambition to transition to larger musical forms.

Tonal Enrichment and Rhythmic Advancements (from 1907)

Stanchinsky's musical development accelerated after 1907. This coincided with his admittance to the Moscow Conservatoire and the new music, musicians and conversations that he was exposed to there. Like many composers of the time, Stanchinsky began to look for ways of

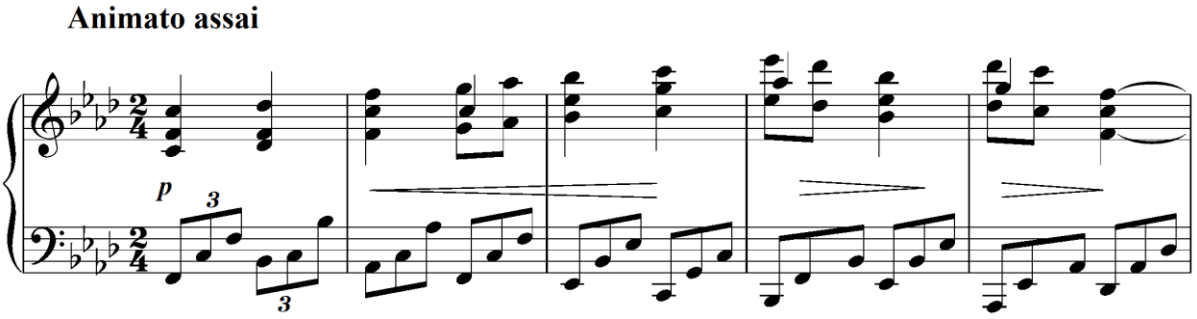
escaping the bounds of conventional major-minor tonality – Rimsky-Korsakov was exploring the possibilities presented by the octatonic scale in his late operas (e.g. *Kashchey the Immortal* (1902)), while Debussy was drawing upon the potentiality of different modes and the whole tone scale in his orchestral and piano music (e.g. *Images* for piano (book 1, 1905)). Stanchinsky's work in this area was still rudimentary at this time, but his approach started to become particularly interesting after 1911. In search of new ways to enrich tonality, Stanchinsky experimented with a range of approaches, including the use of modes, pure diatonicism and higher levels of chromaticism. In this way, his compositions explore tonality in multiple directions: he either strips his harmony of all chromaticism, creating distinctive, diatonically saturated harmonies; or he plays with such rich chromatic additions that pieces lose any sense of a tonal centre. His rhythmic writing also becomes more adventurous at this time, as he begins working in irregular and interchanging metres, while his rhythms begin to be liberated from their metric constraints. His pianistic textures become more linear and his tessituras wider, and he starts to explore the full range of piano.

In the second half of 1907, Stanchinsky's work in exploring tonalities was still embryonic – and not comparable to the large-scale tonal organisation of composers like Mahler, Nielsen or others – yet his explorations of the relative major and minor keys in small pieces show that he was beginning to take small steps towards enriching his tonalities, a trait in line with contemporary developments in composition at the time. In October 1907, Stanchinsky wrote an Etude in F minor/A♭ major. As an accomplished pianist, it is highly unlikely that Stanchinsky would not have known Chopin's Scherzo no. 2, op. 31 (1837), which begins in B♭ minor and ends in D♭ major, and he may have used this as a model for shaping his own piece. A similar, large-scale modulation from relative minor to major (A minor to C major) is also found in Rachmaninov's *The Migrant Wind*, op. 34, no. 4 (1912). Although written after Stanchinsky's Etude, it provides a useful lens for considering how we may view Stanchinsky's piece. A recent, detailed analysis of *The Migrant Wind* by Bakulina presents an argument for an equal hierarchical status of the two keys.[9] Despite the two keys being in the same composite tonal region, Bakulina argues that the piece is non-monotonal and suggests that this aspect of its harmonic framework signals its departure from nineteenth-century monotonal models.

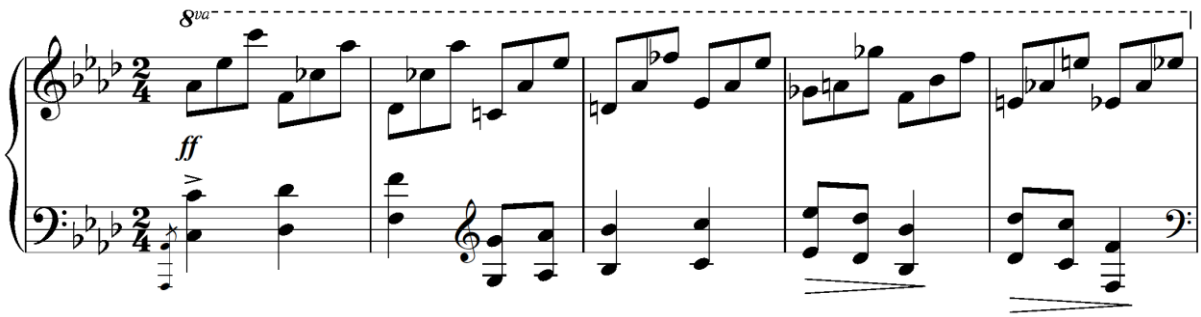
[9] Ellen Bakulina, 'Tonal Pairing in Two of Rachmaninoff's Songs', in *Analytical Approaches to 20th-Century Russian Music*, ed. by Inessa Bazayev and Christopher Segall (New York and London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 13-31.

Composed as a concert piece in a three-part form, the Etude begins with the right-hand melody, starting on the fifth degree of the tonic (C) and harmonised by the left hand in F minor. (Example 3.10) After a short development section which performs a modulatory function, the melody returns in the left hand, this time starting on the third degree of the tonic (C) and harmonised in A♭ major. (Example 3.11) By repeating the melody without significant structural changes – and only 'changing the background' – Stanchinsky achieves a natural and organic large-scale modulation. The technique of altering the background to create movement and growth is a typical feature of Russian music and was used extensively by Glinka in *Kamarinskaya* (1848), where the *naigrysh* motive is repeated twenty-seven times with changes only in the 'background' – i.e., instrumental colours, harmonisations and countermelodies.[10] Stanchinsky's adoption of this method provides the Etude with coherence and allows him to avoid any sense of tonal disorder.

Example 3.10: Stanchinsky's Etude in F minor/A♭ major (1907), bars 1-5.



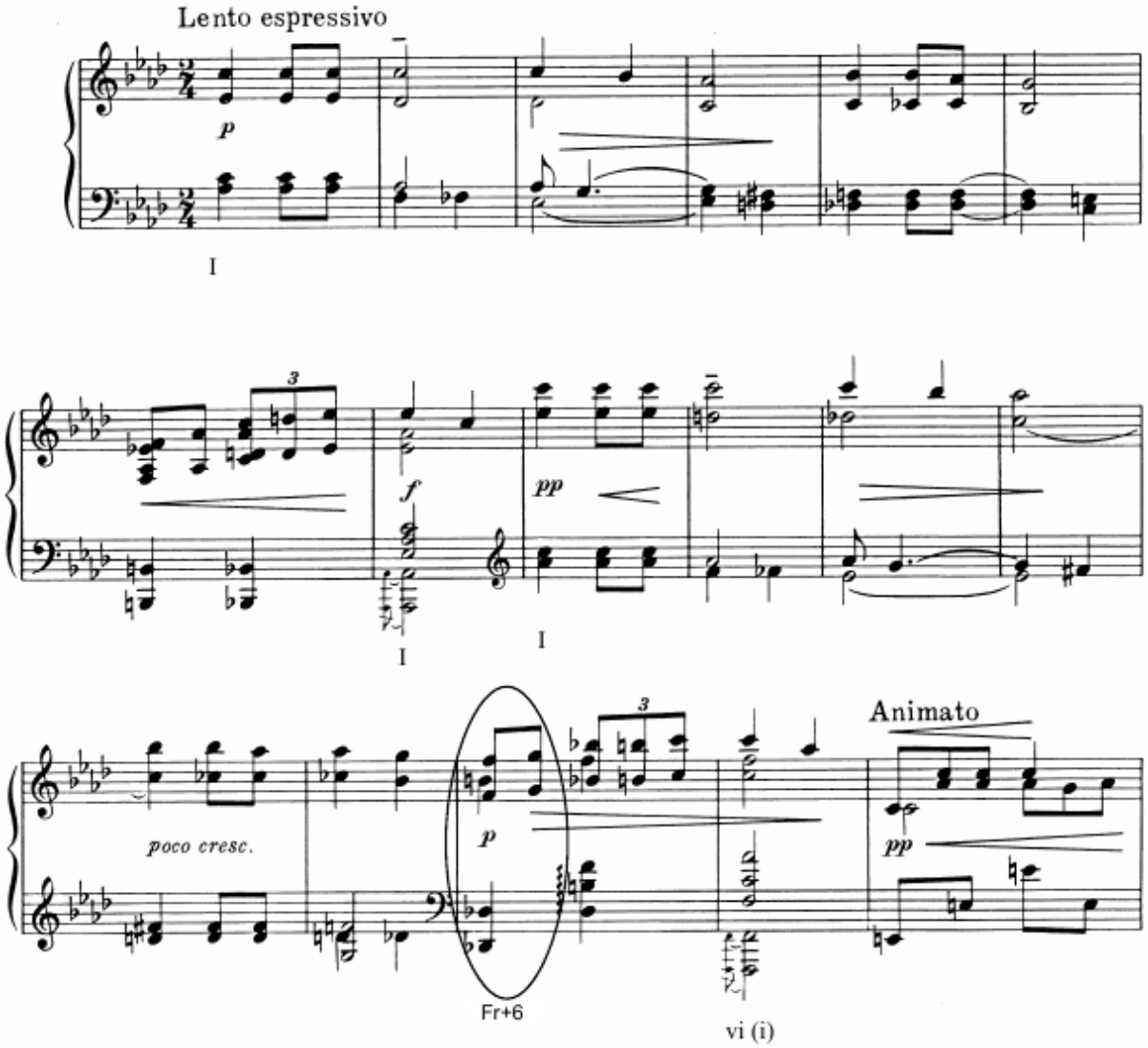
Example 3.11: Stanchinsky's Etude in F minor/A♭ major (1907), bars 98-102.



[10] Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 122.

Dual tonics also feature in the Prelude in A♭ major/F minor (1907), but here the use of two keys is much more compact. Rather than using a large-scale harmonic modulation through 'changing the background', Stanchinsky writes a theme which begins in A♭ major and, on second hearing, modulates to F minor. The modulation is achieved through a French sixth chord in bar 15 resolving to the relative minor. In bar 16, the relative minor becomes the new tonic (chord vi becomes chord i), and the establishment of the new minor tonality is confirmed at the opening of the next phrase (bar 17) in which E naturals (raised leading note of F minor) appear in the bass. (Example 3.12)

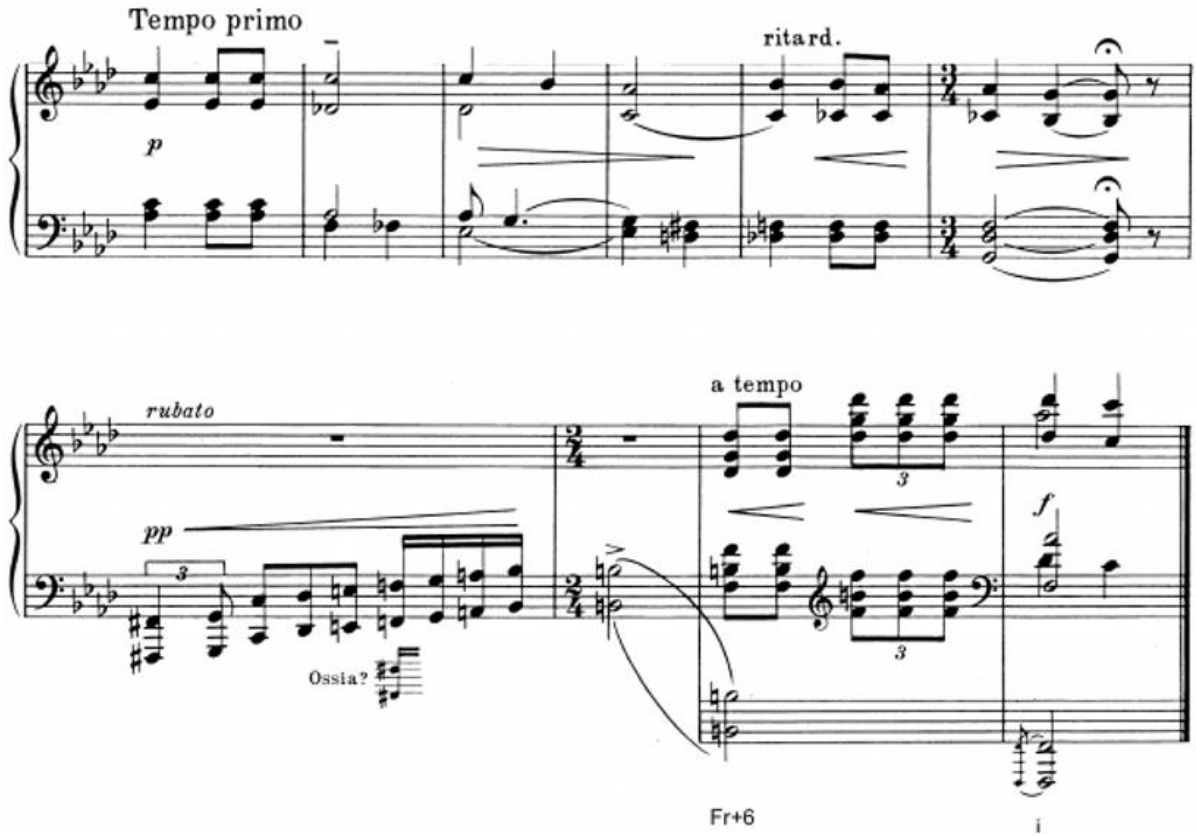
Example 3.12: Stanchinsky's Prelude in A flat major/F minor (1907), bars 1-17.



F minor is confirmed as a tonic of equal importance to A♭ at the end of the prelude. The main theme returns in bar 29 in A♭ major and, after sounding once, modulates to F minor where the

prelude ends. The final cadence is resolved through a French sixth chord, scored to emphasise two tritones: B – F in the left hand and D♭ – G in the right. (Example 3.13) Despite having the sonority of an augmented-sixth chord, it is resolved chromatically (D♭ falls to C, G rises to A♭ and B rises to C), and as such functions as an appoggiatura to the tonic triad.

Example 3.13: Stanchinsky's Prelude in A flat major/F minor (1907), bars 29-38.



Stanchinsky's use of augmented-sixth chords appears to follow a model practised by Tchaikovsky and which he put forward in his harmony textbook, *Guide to Practical Study of Harmony*, first published in 1872.[11] Although augmented-sixth chords are usually built on the lowered sixth degree of the scale and resolved through the dominant to the tonic, Tchaikovsky constructed this chord on the lowered second degree and resolved it to the tonic in root position. Carpenter writes that 'an augmented-sixth chord that most theorists would consider to be in F major or F minor, for example, Tchaikovsky considered to be in C major'.[12] Stanchinsky

[11] Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, *Rukovodstvo k prakticheskomu izucheniyu garmonii* (Moscow: Jurgenson, 1872).
[12] Ellon D. Carpenter, 'Russian Music Theory: A Conspectus', in *Russian Theorical Thought in Music*, ed. by Gordon D. McQuere (Michigan: University of Rochester Press, 1983), pp. 1–82 (pp. 20-21).

frequently used augmented-sixth chords to replace the dominant at cadences, which he resolved through voice leading to the tonic (although in the example above it is still formed on a pre-dominant note of D♭; putting the B♮ in the bass is unorthodox), so it may be that he took some inspiration from Tchaikovsky in this respect. Although Tchaikovsky's treatment of the augmented-sixth chord did not establish itself as part of Russian harmonic theory, it seems plausible that Stanchinsky may have read Tchaikovsky's harmony textbook, spotted this approach when playing his music, or learned it while studying with Taneyev, a student of Tchaikovsky.

This is one of the ways in which Stanchinsky was de-emphasising the dominant – a common feature of his works. Taruskin describes two broad ways that composers chose to treat the dominant at this time.[13] The first, which he labels 'Wagnerian harmony', emphasised prolonged periods of dominant tension that were often prevented from resolving. Examples include Beethoven's retransitions, as well as Scriabin's interlocking dominants that resolve onto each other. The second, which he termed 'Lisztian harmony', appears to deny the existence of the dominant.[14] This appealed to many Russian composers, including Stanchinsky. In Stanchinsky's Prelude in A♭ major/F minor, the two phrases at the opening of the prelude – as well as the final phrase – omit dominant functions at phrase ends; this can also be observed in the final cadence of his Nocturne, written earlier the same year. Instead of structuring cadential points around perfect cadences, Stanchinsky employs augmented-sixth chords (most commonly French), which he resolves directly onto the tonic. On the one hand, this signals Stanchinsky's search for alternative ways of structuring cadences, perhaps by imitating predecessors of his who experimented with cadential formulae, such as Chopin.[15] Yet the frequency with which Stanchinsky employs this feature suggests that he was interested in advancing this further, and this may point towards a native influence. Although Russians were not the only composers to seek alternatives, for the Kuchka (under the influence of Stasov) 'the V-I cadence was singled out as the essential gesture of Western music; it should therefore be eliminated from [their] music, and indeed from any music which would claim to be truly

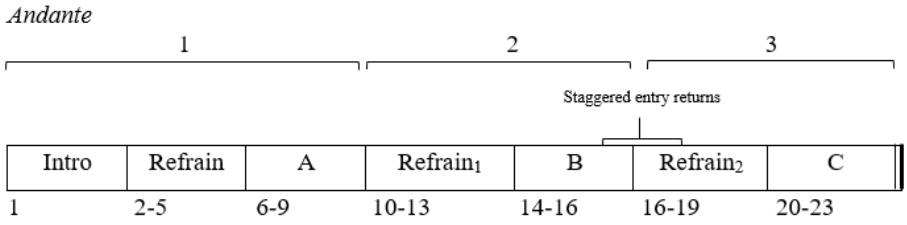
[13] Richard Taruskin, 'Chernomor to Kashchei: Harmonic Sorcery; Or, Stravinsky's "Angle"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 38.1 (1985), 72–142 (p. 125). For more on dominant drives in Scriabin's music, see Kenneth Smith, 'A Science of Tonal Love'? Drive and Desire in Twentieth-Century Harmony: The Erotics of Skryabin', *Music Analysis*, 29.1/3 (2010), 234–63.
[14] For more, see Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically* (1997), specifically the chapter 'How the Acorn Took Root', pp. 113-151.
[15] For more, see Betty Jean Thomas, 'Harmonic materials and treatment of dissonance in the pianoforte music of Frederic Chopin' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Rochester, 1963).

Russian.'[16] According to Frolova-Walker, 'Kuchka's various modal novelties were designed to weaken the "Western" dominant; harmonic tension was thereby reduced, and with it the possibility of depicting emotion.'[17] When writing about Russianness in Russian music, Prince Odoyevsky (1803-1869), a notable writer on music, also noted that avoiding the dominant-seventh chord was one of the most important markers of truly Russian music and 'proposed that the melodies of Russian folksongs should be taken up by Russian composers [but] when such melodies were to be harmonised, he insisted, the dominant seventh should be purged as a foreign and anachronistic element.'[18] It appears that Stanchinsky felt the limitations of this chord when structuring his cadences and saw it necessary to strike out in a new, harmonically modal direction.

One of the most significant works in Stanchinksy's compositional development – one which set in motion his work with alternative scales and modes – is the 'Lydian' Prelude (1907/1908). Despite lasting for a mere 23 bars, the prelude is distinct from anything he wrote before and, arguably, represents the very foundations of his original style. It is written in a three-part form, but its sections do not quite correspond to the traditional ABA model which Stanchinsky had made much use of in his earlier pieces. The structure of the 'Lydian' Prelude is reminiscent of a folk song with a repeated refrain: each of the work's three sections begins with the refrain (which is developed on each hearing), followed by a different melodic response each time. (Figure 3.b)

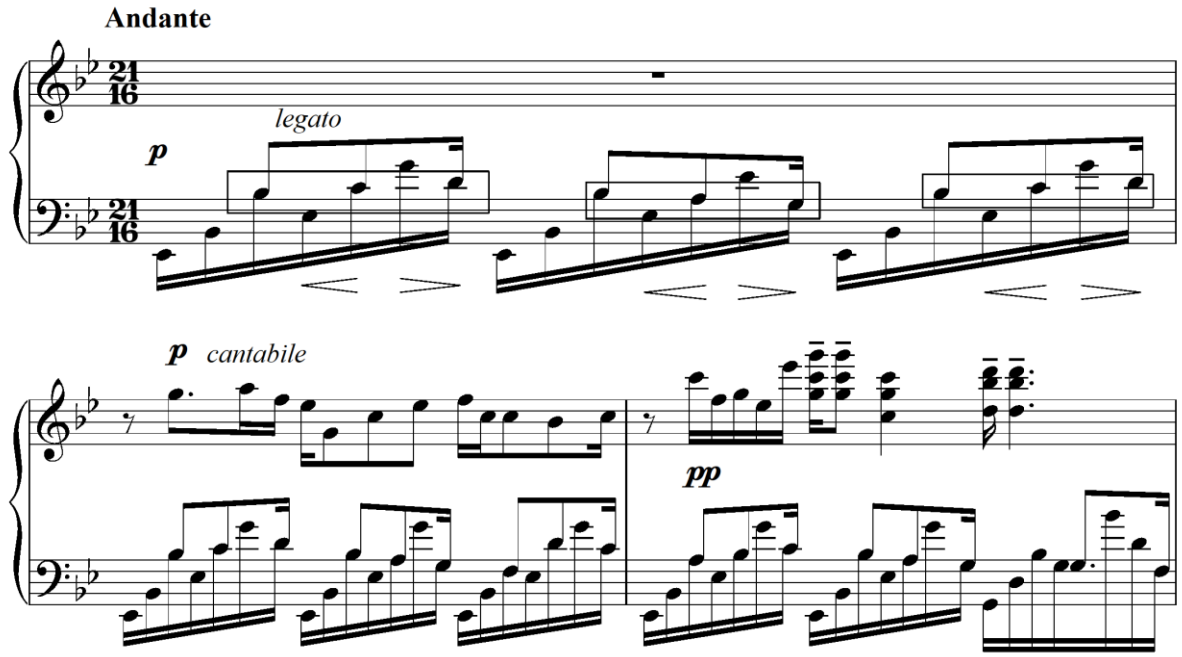
[16] Marina Frolova-Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism: From Glinka to Stalin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 184.
[17] Ibid., p. 204.
[18] Marina Frolova-Walker, 'The Dominant Seventh Chord', (paper delivered at Gresham College, 24 November 2022), https://www.gresham.ac.uk/sites/default/files/transcript/2022-11-24-1800_FrolovaWalker-T.pdf [accessed 4 October 2024]. Odoyevsky's views on dominant seventh are also quoted in Rutger Helmers, *Not Russian Enough? Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Nineteenth-Century Russian Opera* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2014), p. 77.

Figure 3.b: Structure of Stanchinsky's 'Lydian' Prelude (1907/1908).

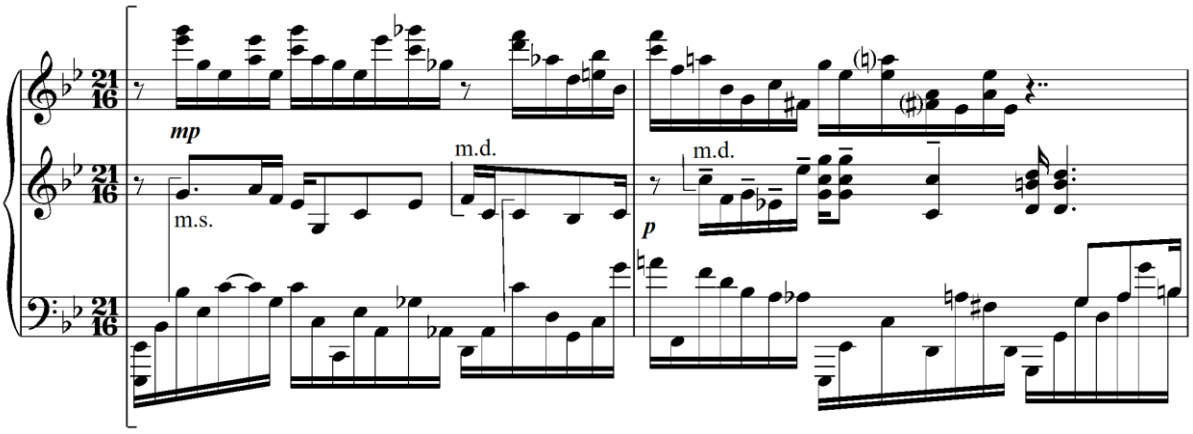


The 'Lydian' Prelude is markedly contrapuntal, and largely abandons textures consisting of chordal accompaniments. Instead, Stanchinsky weaves three independent lines into a complex web – established at the very beginning of the prelude – where a recurring, three-note motif in the tenor register is set against the melodic line. (Example 3.14) Each iteration of the opening refrain contains identical melodic material but presents a new texture. For example, the melody from bars 2-3 is repeated in bars 10-11, where it is split between the hands and accompanied by increasingly complex contrapuntal textures. (Example 3.15) The piece also uses a wider tessitura than Stanchinsky's earlier works and demonstrates his growing interest in exploring the full range of the keyboard. Almost orchestral in quality, the accompaniment parts feature extreme gaps, extending to over five octaves. Although widely spaced accompaniment textures can be found in the works of composers like Chopin (e.g. *Nocturnes*, op. 9) and Liszt (e.g. *Consolations*, no. 3), Stanchinsky does so in an entirely contrapuntal setting, a feature which will become characteristic of his style.

Example 3.14: Stanchinsky's 'Lydian' Prelude (1907/1908), bars 1-3.



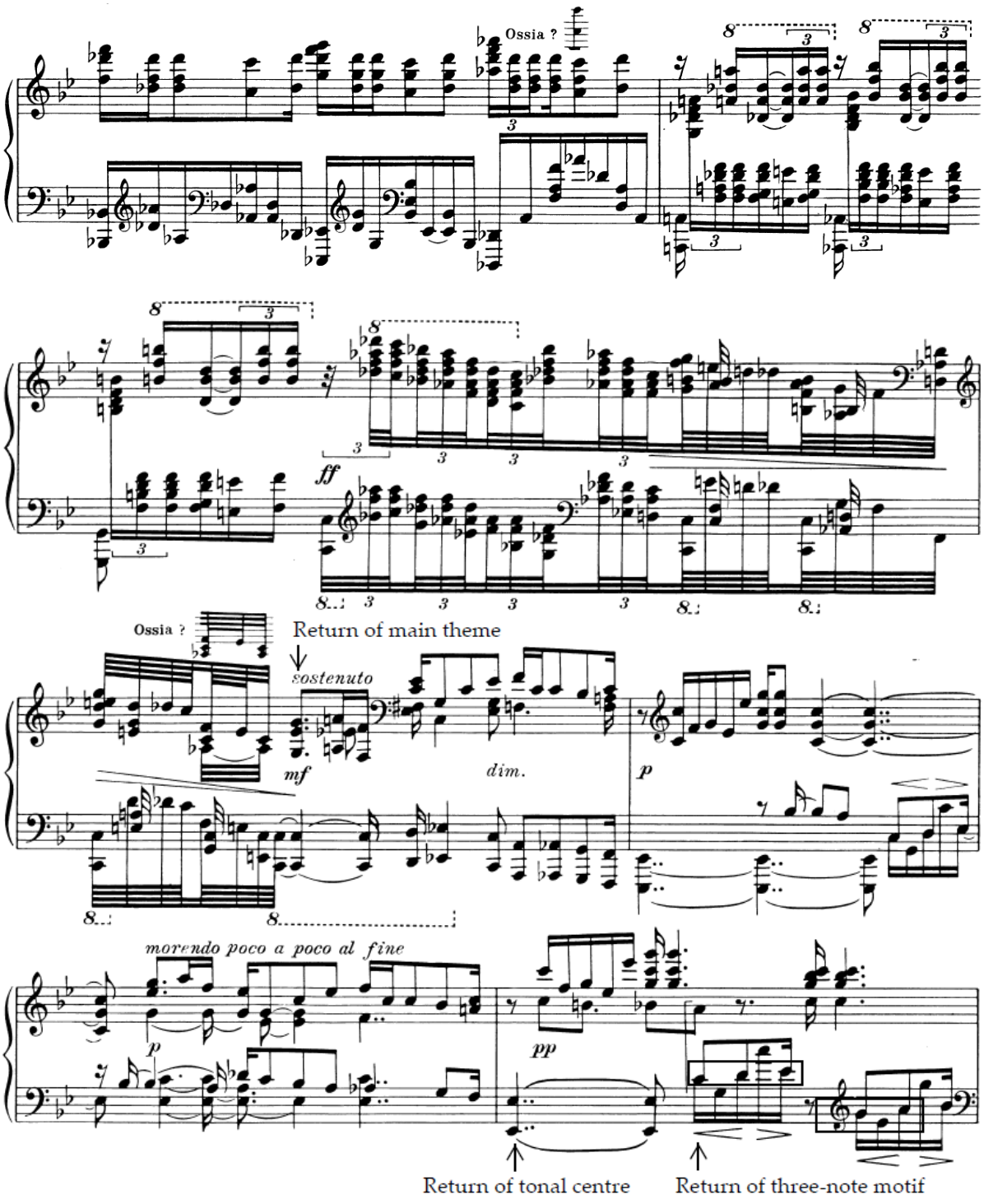
Example 3.15: Stanchinsky's 'Lydian' Prelude (1907/1908), bars 10-11.



By intentionally blurring the beginnings and ends of sections, the prelude also serves as Stanchinsky's first attempt to achieve something more sophisticated than he had done in his earlier ternary pieces This is particularly evident in the transition between the second and third sections of the prelude (bars 15-17). (Example 3.16) The prelude's climax in bar 15 is followed by a staggered return of the thematic material in bars 16 and 17. In this instance, the main theme from bar 2 returns midway through bar 16, the tonal centre is then established half a bar later at the beginning of bar 17, and the three-note motif returns in the final beat of bar 17. The

staggered return is controlled remarkably well by Stanchinsky: the first note of the returning melody also serves as the last note of the previous section. The length of the succeeding chord establishes a sense of arrival, and this contrasts with the fast and dramatic passage which comes before it. Only after the chord has sounded does it become apparent that it is also the first note of the prelude's theme: the already familiar melody grows out of it, seamlessly merging the two different sections. Although the technique of phrase overlap long predates Stanchinsky, his use of this feature is so commonplace that it can be considered a typical Stanchinskian hallmark.

Example 3.16: Stanchinsky's 'Lydian' Prelude (1907/1908), bars 14-17.



The piano writing in this section is very dense, perhaps even overloaded: bar 15 is impossible to perform at speed, and all performers slow down significantly at this point. Neither Sorokin's (1960) nor Lopatina's (1990) editions indicate any tempo changes here, despite their inclusion of the direction *pochiss. rit.* in bars 7 and 9 suggesting that they were not generally averse to

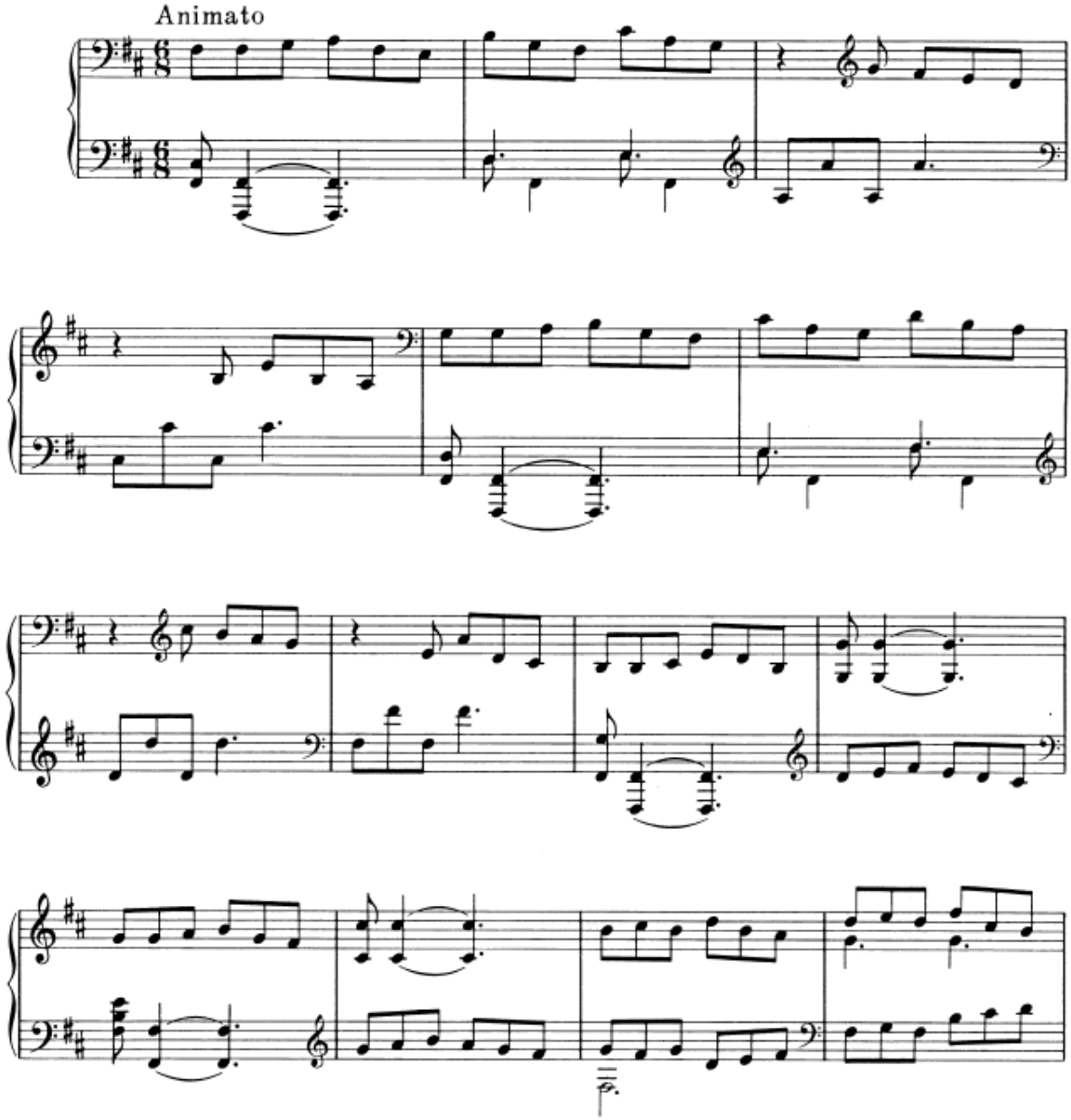
adding tempo indications to Stanchinsky's scores. The manuscript of the prelude does not contain any tempo or dynamic markings either, but bars 15-18 are crossed out in pencil.[19] This may suggest that Stanchinsky intended to rewrite this fiendishly difficult passage, but never returned to it.

Written in 21/16, the prelude also takes a significant step towards greater rhythmic complexity. While most of the prelude's bars are organised into three groups of seven semiquavers, the climax in bar 15 sees this structure disrupted and replaced by uneven formations of 5 + 5 + 5 + 6. The markedly small note values and triplets in bar 15 further the sense of drama and feelings of compression. Irregular metres are a distinct feature of Stanchinsky's works from this time: we find 7/16 in Prelude in D major (1907) and an alternating 9/16-5/8 in Etude in B major (written sometime between 1908-1910). This indicates that, at the same time as extending his harmonic vocabulary, Stanchinsky was also looking for ways to develop his rhythmic writing. Uneven and unorthodox meters never fully take over Stanchinsky's works, but towards the end of his life the frequency with which they are used equally matches that of simple and compound metres. By this point, he is as likely to work in 3/4 as in 7/8 or 5/2 (Canon-Preludes A-D, 1913-14), operating with mastery and ease in all instances.

Having begun to experiment with progressive tonality and modal writing in 1907, Stanchinsky went on to look for other ways to enrich his harmonies. In subsequent years, he turned towards diatonicism as one way to distance his music from the chromaticism of the late Romantic style. For example, Prelude in B minor (1909-1910) is composed entirely diatonically for the vast majority of the prelude: the first 19 bars out of a total of 29 contain no accidentals. (Example 3.17) Scoring the piece in the natural minor mode and omitting the raised leading note (the presence of which is typical in common practice harmony) allowed Stanchinsky to continue exploring modal alternatives to conventional major and harmonic minor scales. The use of diatonicism was also thought to be a distinctly Russian feature. Prince Odoyevsky, for example, thought that using diatonicism 'as strict[ly] as possible' was one of the most important features of distinctly Russian music, while Herman Laroche (1845-1904), a Moscow-based composer and music critic, singled it out as 'one of the truest signs of the Russian element in music.'[20]

[19] RNMM, 239/7.
[20] Herman Laroche (1845-1904) was a Russian music critic and teacher. He taught Stanchinsky's teacher Sergey Taneyev, and produced important essays on Glinka and Tchaikovsky, whose works he championed. Laroche considered that 'Russian music bore traces of the nation's history, which the Renaissance had bypassed, and that

Example 3.17: Stanchinsky's Prelude in B minor (1909-1910), bars 1-14.



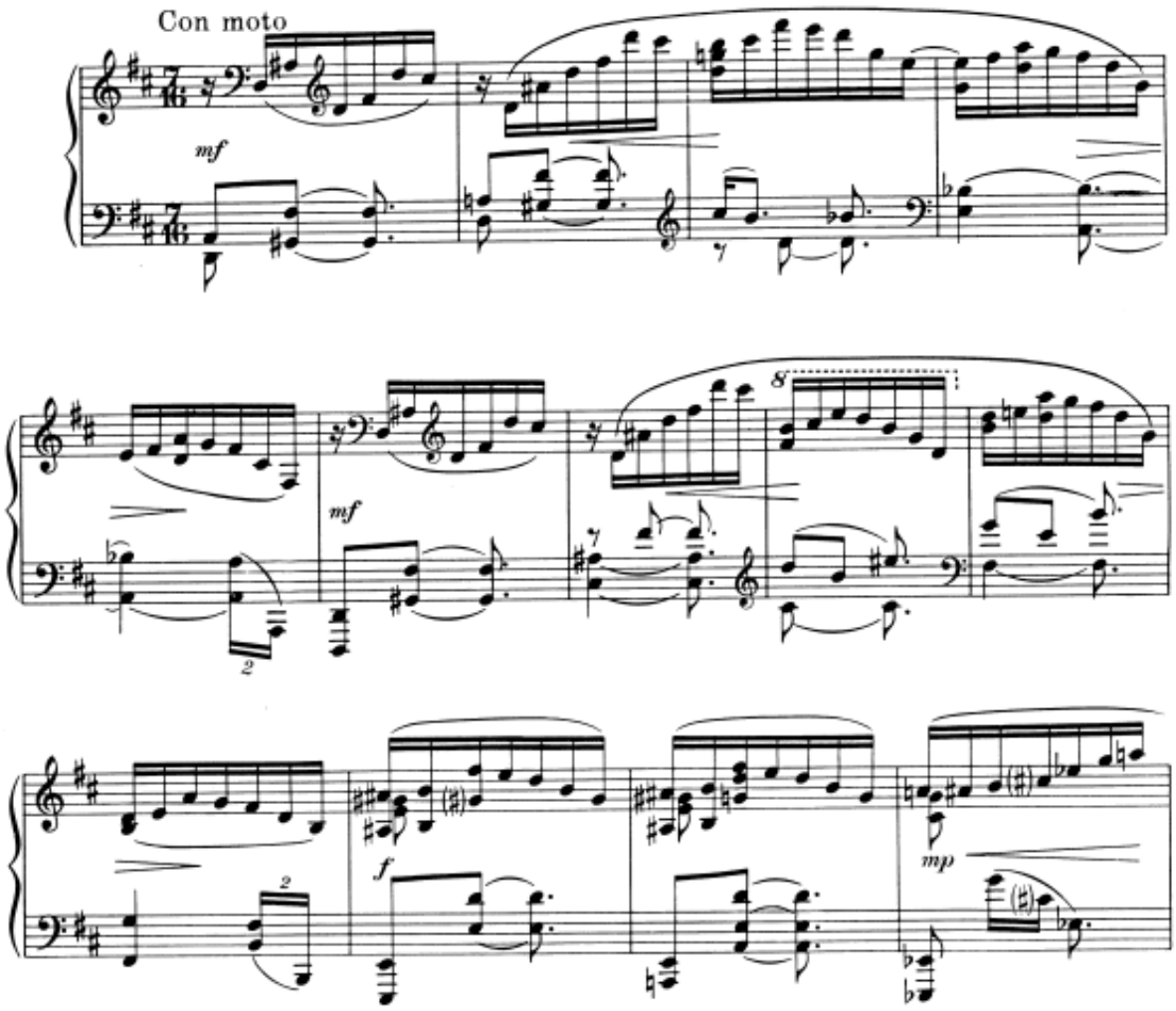
Stanchinsky's evolving meters and rhythms were briefly touched upon when discussing the 'Lydian' Prelude, but this topic is worth returning to and exploring in greater detail. Stanchinsky's rhythmic writing evolved significantly from the simple rhythms of his earliest works, such as *Songs Without Words*, to his last compositions written from 1911. His process of replacing simple rhythms and metres with more complex formations was gradual; it is

musicians could eliminate the resulting backwardness only by studying the counterpoint of Palestrina and his precursors.' Stuart Campbell, 'Laroche, Herman', *Grove Music Online* (2001) <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.16035>. Odoyevsky and Laroche are quoted in Helmers, *Not Russian Enough?*, pp. 77-78.

possible that Scriabin may have been a big influence in this development, although irregular metres can also be found in the works of Glinka, Borodin and Mussorgsky.[21] Stanchinsky's key work in this respect is the Prelude in D major (1907), which is the earliest example of him writing in an irregular metre. The prelude's metre of 7/16 creates a dynamic and restless musical character. This effect is further enhanced by the lack of a consistent downbeat in the right-hand part and the groupings of the left-hand quavers, which subdivide the seven semiquavers into patterns of 2 + 5 in the first two bars. (Example 3.18) In this work, Stanchinsky also abandons four-bar phrases in favour of five-bar phrases, creating a much more agile musical character.

[21] For example, the wedding chorus (act 1 finale) in Glinka's *Ruslan and Lyudmila* is in 5/4. The projected scherzo for Borodin's unfinished third symphony (itself originally a string quartet movement) is in 5/8. The fourth and fifth versions of the 'Promenade' from Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* similarly make use of 5/4 and 7/4.

Example 3.18: Stanchinsky's Prelude in D major (1907), bars 1-13.

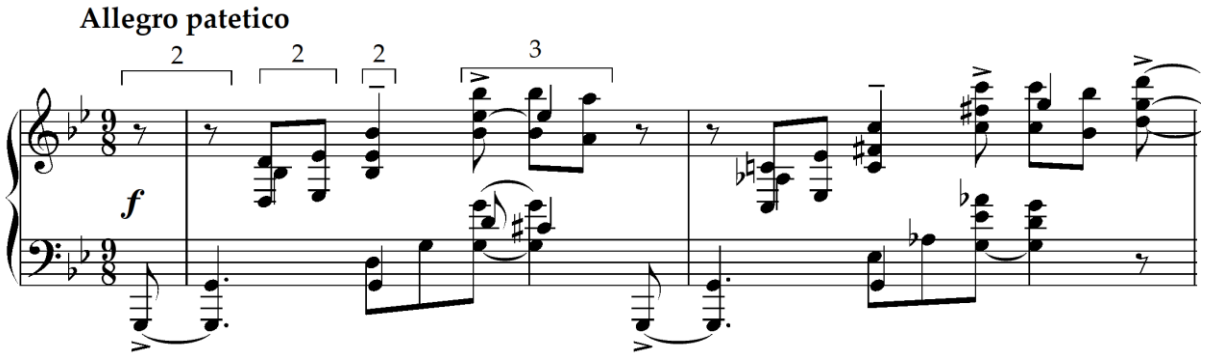


In other works, otherwise regular metres are obscured. While Stanchinsky never abandoned time signatures, his works from 1907 begin to liberate metres and bar lines from their traditional structures. The Etude in G minor (1907), written in 9/8, introduces accents and inconsistent rhythmic placements to alter the expected quaver groupings of 3 + 3 + 3. Although similar displacements had previously been used by composers such as Brahms (such as in his *Rhapsodie* no. 2, op. 79), Stanchinsky applies them in a way which, from the very outset of the etude, prevents any clear sense of the 9/8 metre being established.[22] The etude begins with an accented anacrusis which assumes the weight and importance of a downbeat. The second beat of the bar is marked *tenuto* and is soon followed by an accent mark on the sixth quaver of the

[22] For more, see Scott Murphy, *Brahms and the Shaping of Time* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2018).

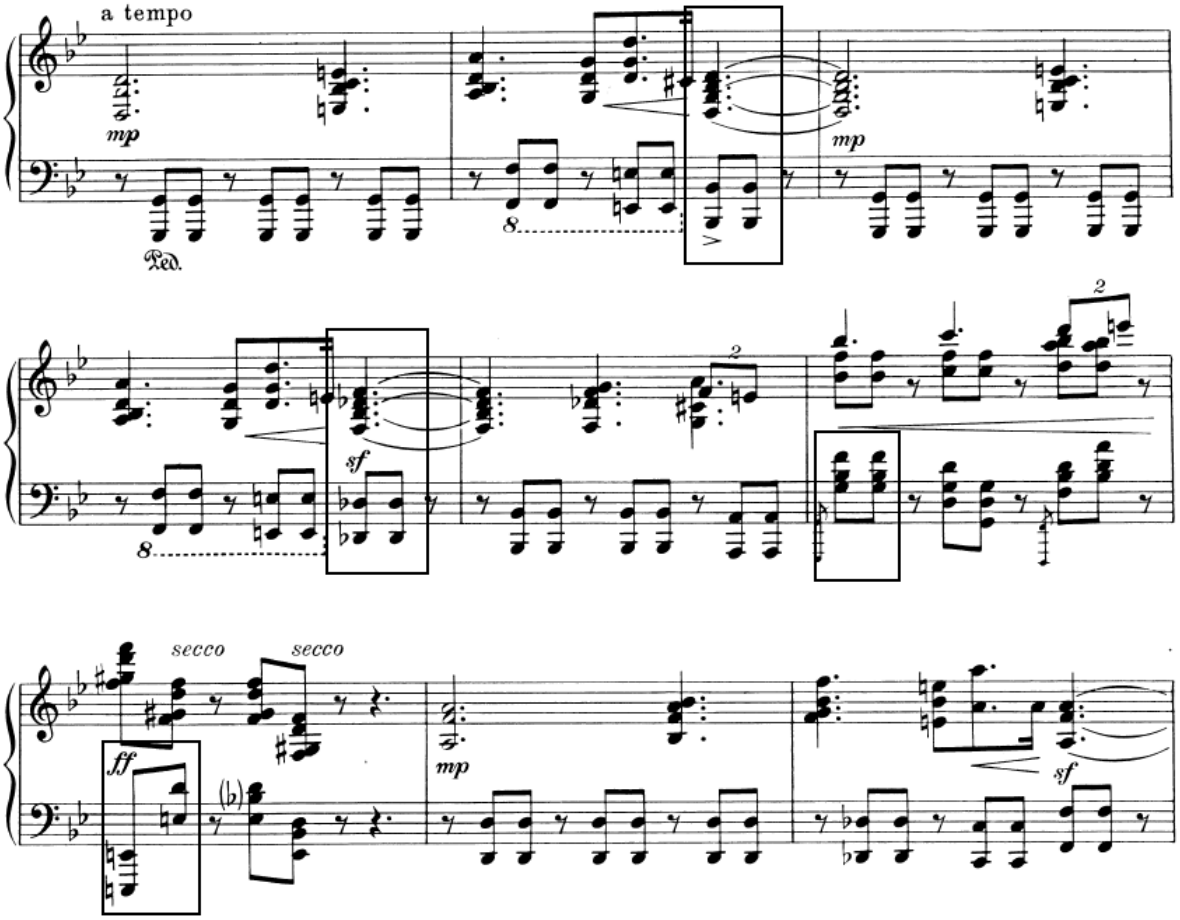
bar. Without looking at the score, the assumed metre would present aurally from the anacrusis as 2+2+2+3. (Example 3.19)

Example 3.19: Stanchinsky's Etude in G minor (1907), bars 1-2.



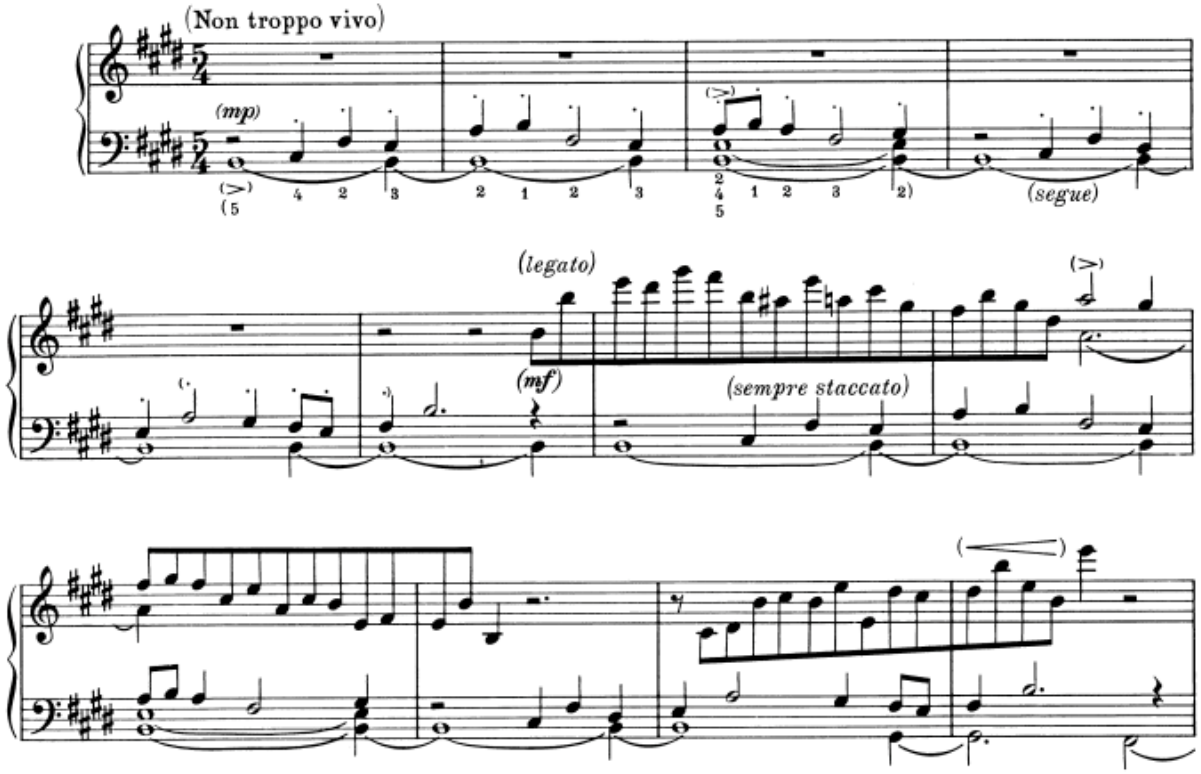
In the middle section's left-hand accompaniment, Stanchinsky introduces another way to undermine the regularity of the metre. The waltz-like accompaniment pattern without the downbeat (i.e., *um-cha-cha* without the *um*) changes its pattern on the third beat of every other bar (bars 27-31), while the accents and right-hand chords in bars 28 and 30 suggest downbeats. During bars 32-33, metric regularity is further obscured by shifting the quaver pairs from off of the beat onto the start of each beat. (Example 3.20)

Example 3.20: Stanchinsky's Etude in G minor (1907), bars 27-35.



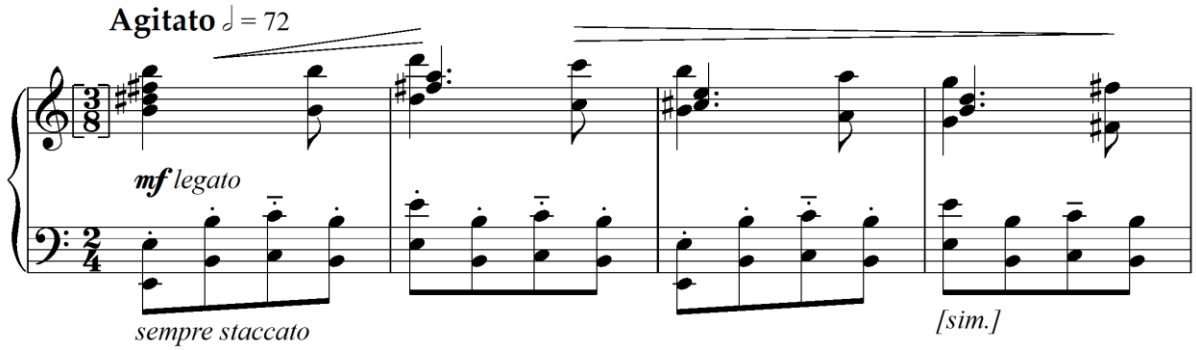
Rhythmic and metric boundaries are also pushed in the 'Mixolydian' Prelude (1908), whose conception appears to be closely related to that of the 'Lydian' Prelude. In the 'Mixolydian' Prelude, the beamings of the right-hand quavers traverse bar lines cutting across the established metre. They do so with no apparent consistency, providing a freedom which contrasts with the five-bar ostinato pattern in the tenor voice. (Example 3.21) This conflict between beaming and barring is very typical of Stanchinsky's style, in which the rigidity of the bar line is often overruled in favour of flexible beaming; this will be seen more frequently in his works written after 1911.

Example 3.21: Stanchinsky's 'Mixolydian' Prelude (1908), bars 1-12.



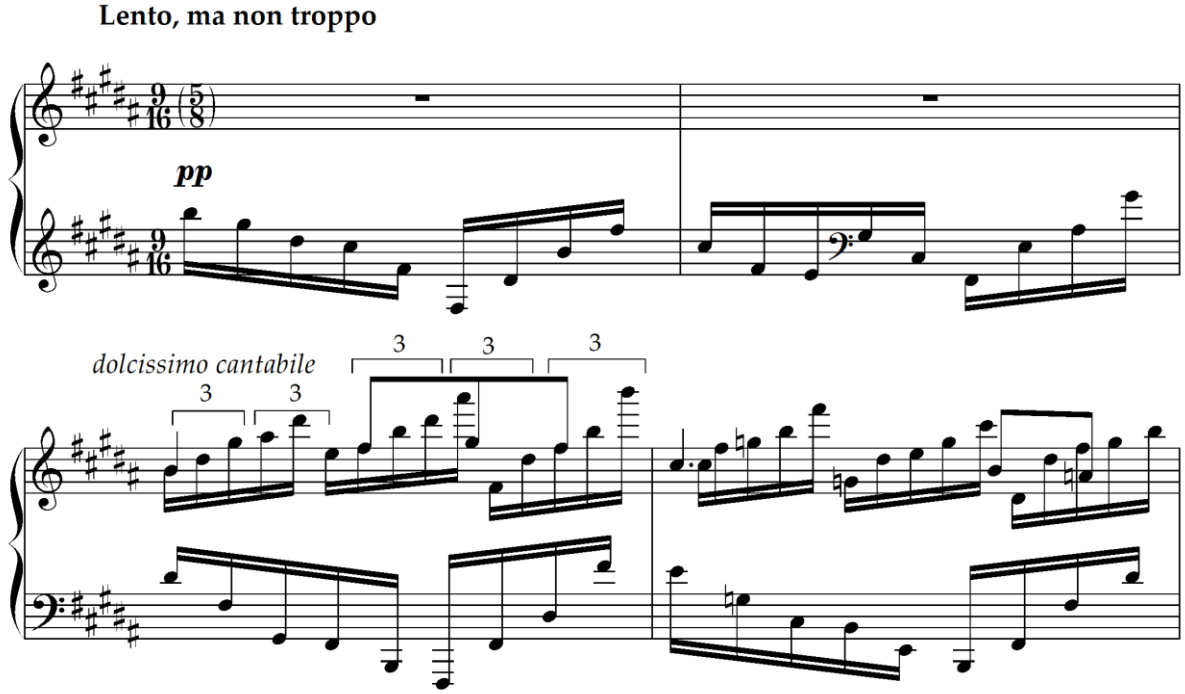
Throughout his career, Stanchinsky worked extensively with polyrhythms and polymetres (often implied) which became more elaborate over time. In some of his earlier works, such as the *Humoresque* (1906), Stanchinsky introduced rhythmic complexity by composing prolonged, polymetric passages, such as by scoring three quavers over four. (Example 3.22) Rhythms like these can be seen in the works of other composers, including Chopin and Brahms, but they are rarely applied to whole sections. The effect that Stanchinsky achieves here foreshadows similar ones created by Stravinsky in *Petrushka* (1911) – for example, the section in 'The Shrove-Tide Fair' from fig. 3, which uses 7/8 and 3/4 simultaneously. In the *Humoresque*, these polymetres are used consistently throughout the opening eleven bars of section B_1 (see figure 3.a), warranting the use of an editorial time signature change in the right-hand part.

Example 3.22: Stanchinsky's *Humoresque* (1906), bars 55-58.



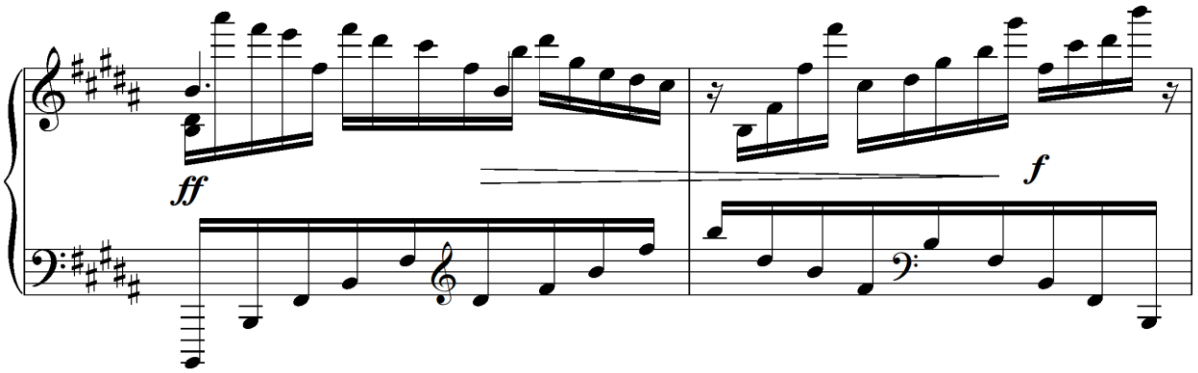
Different time signatures for the right and the left hands are also seen in the Etude in B major (ca. 1908-1910), which shows a more complex approach to this technique. Stanchinsky uses two time signatures simultaneously for the duration of the piece. The etude is scored in 9/16 for the left hand, while the right hand alternates between 9/16 and 5/8 (although the right hand in fact plays in 5/8 for the majority of the prelude, causing continuous rhythmic overlaps). (Example 3.23) From the outset of the piece, the left-hand's nine semiquavers – divided into groups of 5 + 4 – are juxtaposed against the five quavers in the right hand. To add to the complexity, the right-hand's quavers are subdivided into triplet semiquavers (beamed as three groups of five), creating rhythmic overlaps of fifteen-over-nine. Such complex polyrhythms create a contrapuntal effect and are arguably more complex than anything written by Stravinsky in the following decade.

Example 3.23: Stanchinsky's Etude in B major (ca. 1908-1910), bars 1-4.



In addition to its rhythmic complexities, the Etude in B major demonstrates one of the most defining characteristics of Stanchinsky's style: linear and widely spaced pianistic textures. Here, they are similar to those previously seen in the 'Lydian' Prelude, but further expanded. The Etude in B major is woven from three independent lines, which only coincide rhythmically at the beginning of each bar. Unlike the 'Lydian' Prelude, the Etude in B major largely avoids chords and retains its linear texture for the entirely of the piece, including at the climax. In addition to the pianistic textures being very wide and awkward (take particular note of the left-hand part, which is fiendishly widely spaced), the etude also explores the very limits of the piano's range. Numerous parts of the prelude juxtapose extremes in tessitura – with gaps spanning up to six octaves – creating broad and open sounds. (Example 3.24)

Example 3.24: Stanchinsky's Etude in B major (ca. 1908-1910), bars 57-59.



The pianistic writing in the 'Lydian' and 'Mixolydian' Preludes, and the Etude in B major, is significantly more complex than anything seen in the works Stanchinsky wrote prior to his admission to the Moscow Conservatoire. His technical studies influenced his work, as did being surrounded by other composers in a big city. Like many of his contemporaries at this time, Stanchinsky experimented with pushing the boundaries of tonality, with his compositional technique extending to include bitonality, modality and pure diatonicism. During this time, Stanchinsky's textures became broader and more linear, and the tessitura of his works significantly expanded. Through this use of linear textures, Stanchinsky began to abandon chordal harmony, and instead created harmonies as a by-product of voice interaction. He developed these tendencies further in his contrapuntal works, which are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

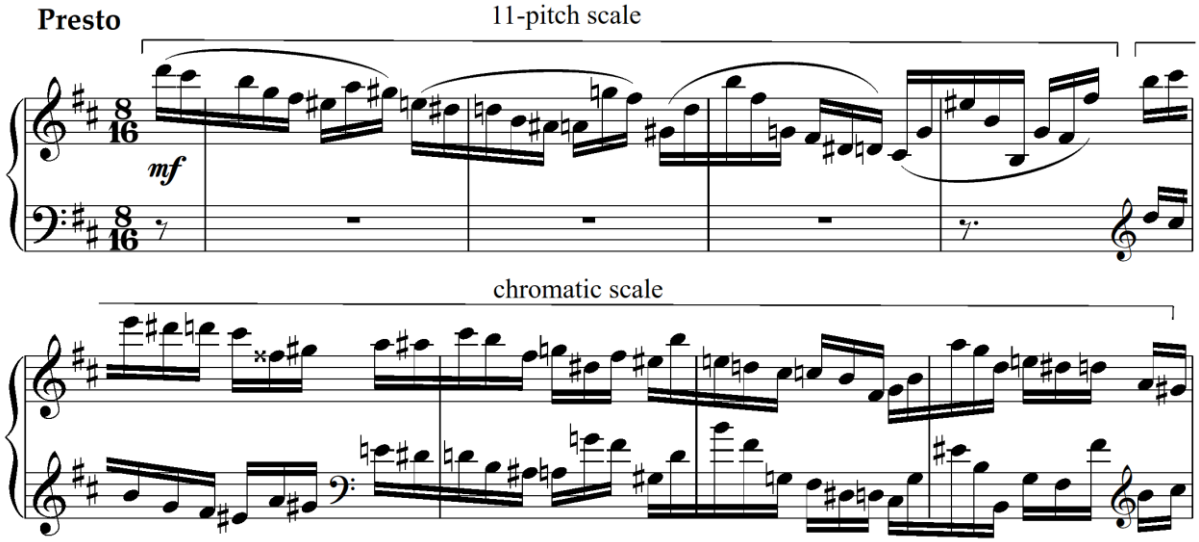
Counterpoint and Chromaticism (from 1908)

Arguably, one of the most characteristic features of Stanchinsky's style is the use of as a main structural stimulus for his compositions. His experimentation with contrapuntal textures is seen as early as 1908, when he wrote Canon – his first work to apply a strict contrapuntal technique to an entire piece. Stanchinsky was studying with Taneyev at this time, so it is likely that the work was an exercise set by Taneyev or that it was inspired by Taneyev's interest in and knowledge of contrapuntal techniques.

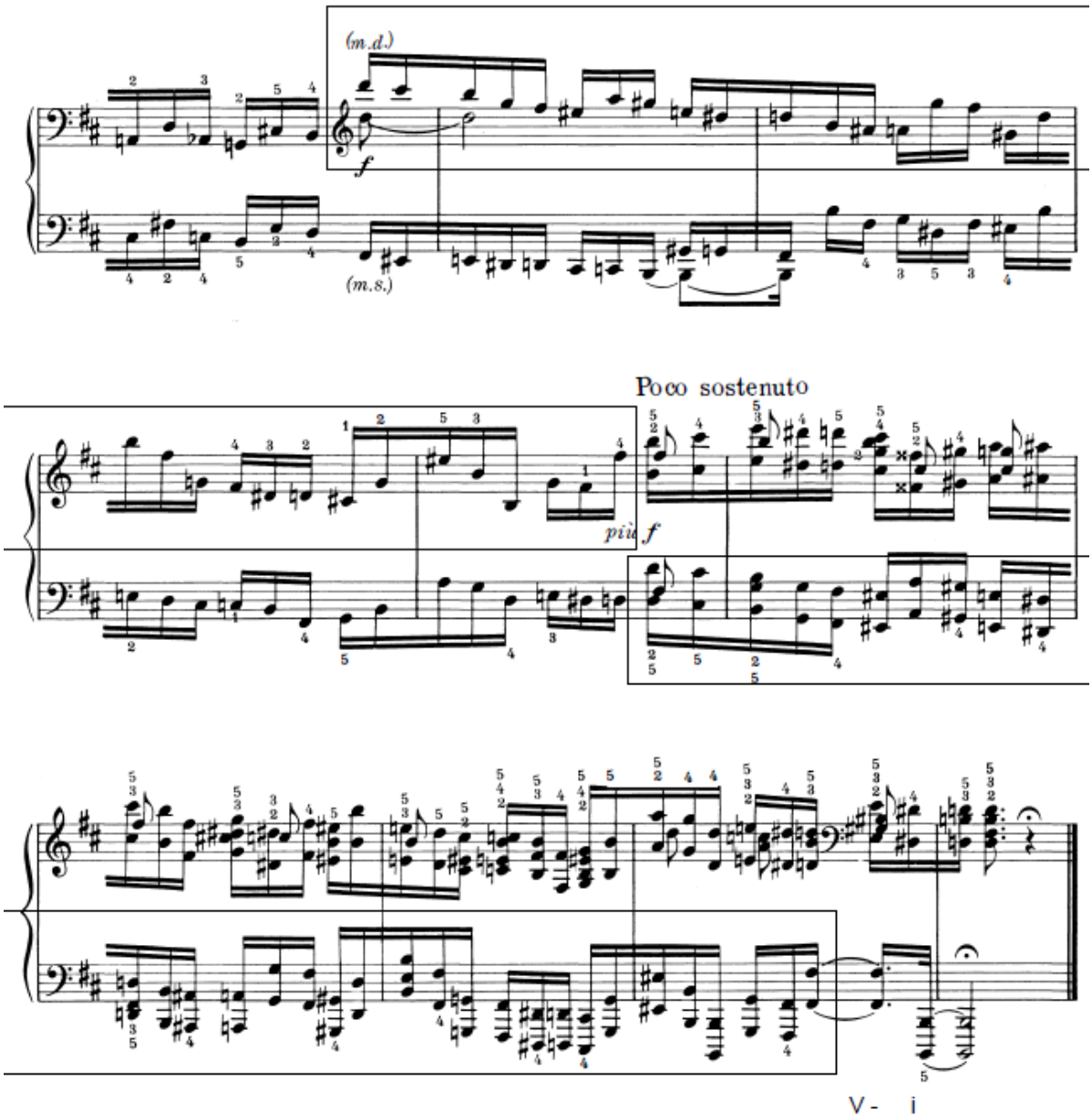
Stanchinsky's Canon harks back to centuries of tradition in its use of imitation, but its tonal and rhythmic languages are distinctly modern. It is Stanchinsky's first composition to embrace the use of dense chromaticism: the first melodic motif (bars 1-4) uses eleven of the twelve

notes available (all except C); and the second motif (bars 5-8) is composed using a chromatic scale. (Example 3.25) The chromatic nature of the melodic motifs prevents the establishment of a clear tonal centre and, for most of the work, the home key is obscured. Nonetheless, Stanchinsky's use of all twelve pitches in the Canon does not create atonality, but rather a sense of suspended tonality, and the concept of the work remains tonal. This is indicated by a key signature still being present – suggesting that Stanchinsky conceived the work as being in a key – while the placement of the note B on the first beat of bar 1 (and similar tonic gestures at the beginnings of bar 2 and 3) marks it as the tonal centre. This tonal centre is finally confirmed by the use of a B minor closing chord preceded by a V-i motion in the bass. (Example 3.26)

Example 3.25: Stanchinsky's Canon (1908), bars 1-8.



Example 3.26: Stanchinsky's Canon (1908), bars 31-40.

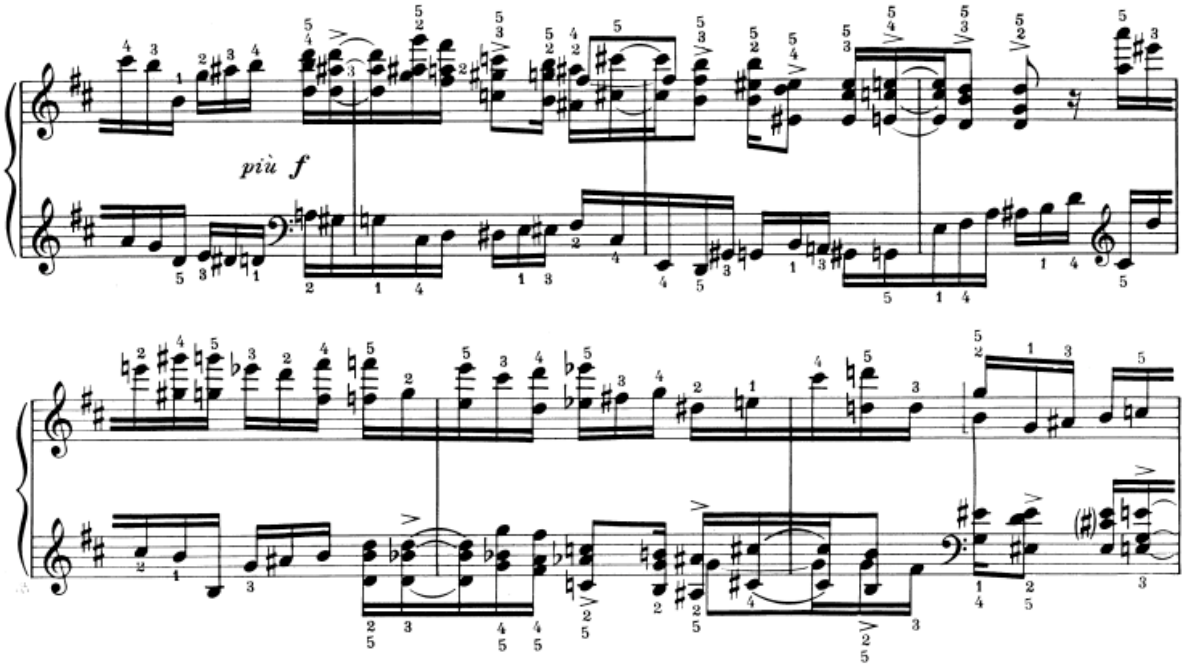


As seen in Example 3.25, Stanchinsky's theme shows elements of multi-part writing – note the descending chromatic lines in the opening line (starting from G in bar one – G, F♯, E♯, E♮, D♯, D; and from B starting in bar 2 – B, A♯, A♮, G♯, G♮, F♯). Both shapes start on the second semiquaver of the bar. However, they are not applied with much consistency and, in typical Stanchinskian style, the pattern breaks down as soon as it is set up. We may compare Stanchinsky's approach here with that of Bach's Fugue in B minor No. 24 (BWV 869), whose theme uses all twelve notes of the chromatic scale in an angular way. Whereas Bach's method is relatively consistent, however, Stanchinsky's is transformed. His approach thus appears to

be neoclassical – Stanchinsky takes a familiar musical trope and alters it in unfamiliar and unexpected ways. Despite the alterations, though, his patterns demonstrate an underlying logic: the first 16 notes grow out of the descending, stepwise pattern, while the second half of the theme includes a contrasting five-note figure in wide leaps. This approach is comparable to some of Bach's fugue themes, which have a contrasting 'head' and 'tail'.

The Canon's rhythmic patterns – written as straight semiquavers in an 8/16 metre – are unusually beamed into groups of 5 + 3. By positioning this pattern to start with a quaver upbeat, Stanchinsky appears to completely disregard the bar line, and this effect is further strengthened by the placement of the phrase mark across each group of eight semiquavers. Such groupings remain consistent throughout the prelude, although the implied accents are disturbed in bars 12-20 when Stanchinsky introduces irregular accents to further disrupt the metric flow. (Example 3.27)

Example 3.27: Stanchinsky's Canon (1908), bars 12-19.



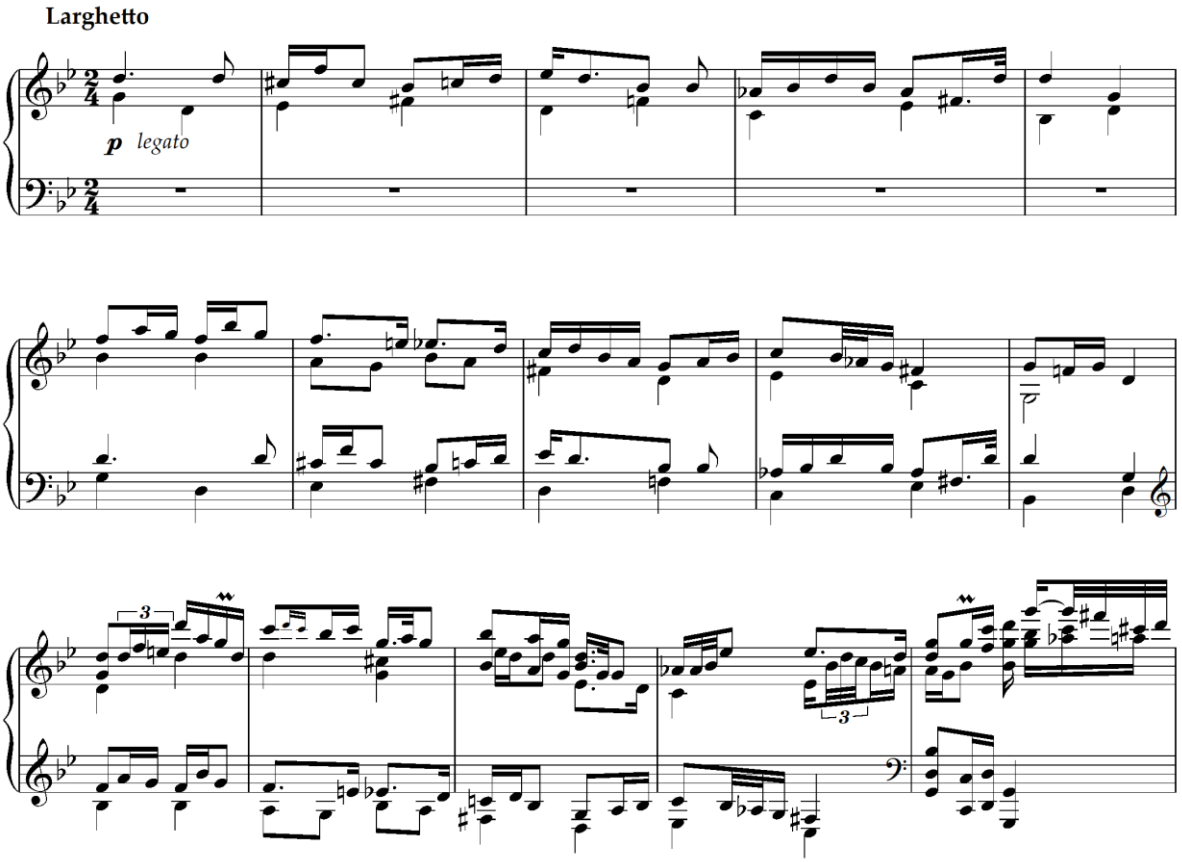
This piece implies an initial concept for the work: a two-part imitative canon, in a simple duple time, in the key of B minor. Indeed, these may have been the requirements of Taneyev's task for Stanchinsky. The resulting composition retains just enough of the initial concept for it to be recognised but, on the surface, its musical language is engineered to negate it. In this way,

Stanchinsky uses an old, structured technique as a means to enable experimentation with other musical elements, particularly tonality. The simple duple time becomes 8/16 and the key of B minor is obscured almost beyond recognition — with no score to hand, the home key (and indeed any real sense of key) would only become obvious as the last chord is played.

Further experimentation with expanding tonal boundaries within a contrapuntal setting are seen in Stanchinsky's Prelude and Fugue (1909-1910) – another piece which likely came into existence under the guidance of Taneyev. In this piece, Stanchinsky continues to explore the use of all twelve pitches, but he also employs an alternative, synthetic scale (lowered 2nd and a raised 4th degrees). This scale will become characteristic of his style in future years and will be dubbed the 'Stanchinsky mode'.[23] From the very outset, Stanchinsky disrupts the usual expectations of a prelude by casting it as a double canon. Consequently, it is more rhythmically adventurous than the ensuing fugue, whose counterpoint contains an unusually small amount of movement between the two voices. In the Prelude, two themes enter simultaneously in bar 1 of the soprano and alto parts, while the imitating voices in the tenor and bass voices join in bar 6.[24] (Example 3.28)

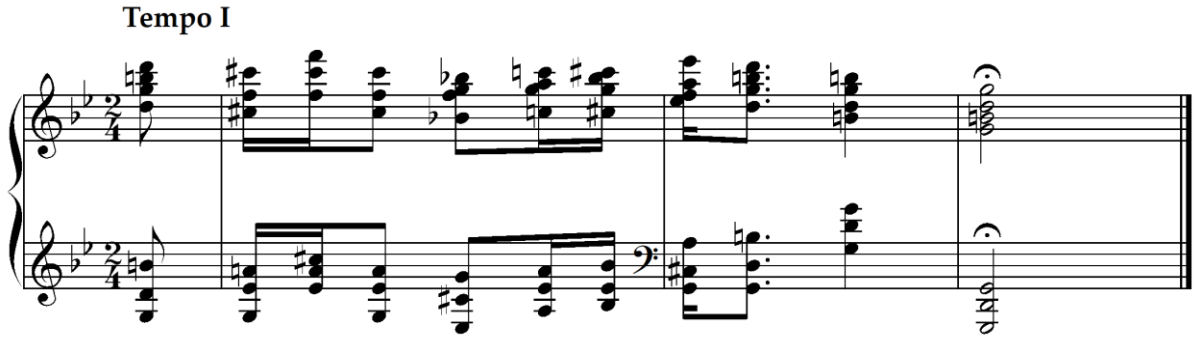
[23] The 'Stanchinsky mode' is explored in more detail in Chapter 4.
[24] There is a discrepancy between the tenor part in bar 13 and the soprano part in bar 8. This could, potentially, be a mistake, either on the part of the editor or Stanchinsky.

Example 3.28: Stanchinsky's Prelude and Fugue, Prelude (1909-1910), bars 1-15.



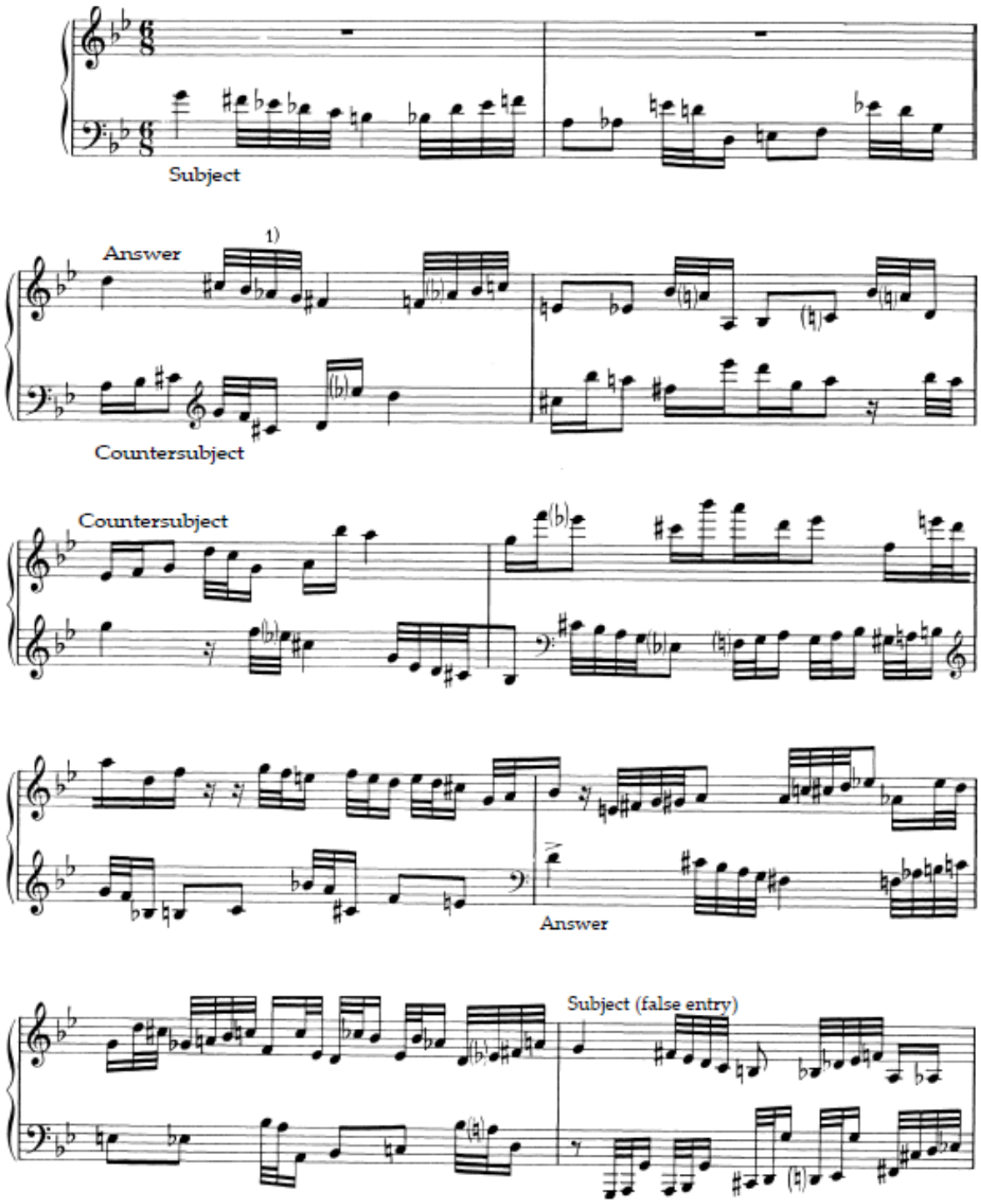
The canon form is not pursued throughout the Prelude, and from bar 16 the piece is developed freely. However, the subject material returns in the last two bars – reinforced by chords based on the fourth and fifth – before the piece ends in a major key via a Picardy Third. (Example 3.29)

Example 3.29: Stanchinsky's Prelude and Fugue, Prelude, bars 29-31.



In contrast with the Prelude, the Fugue makes use of all twelve pitches from the very outset. (Example 3.30). Although fugue subjects which utilise all twelve notes of the chromatic scale can be found as far back as the work of Bach (e.g., Bach's Fugue in B Minor from Book 1, BWV 869), and indeed earlier, Stanchinsky's Fugue illustrates his continued exploration of means by which tonality can be extended. As in the Canon, the use of a chromatic scale here does not warrant the consideration of the work as atonal: a key signature is indicated, there are various moments which articulate a sense of tonic arrival, and the work ends on a strong G major chord via a Picardy Third (although, in characteristic Stanchinsky fashion, he avoids a typical V-I cadence). (Example 3.31) Stanchinsky follows the harmonic conventions of a fugue structure: he presents the subject first in the tonic (bar 1) and then in the dominant (bar 3), grounding all twelve notes of the chromatic scale within a tonal framework.

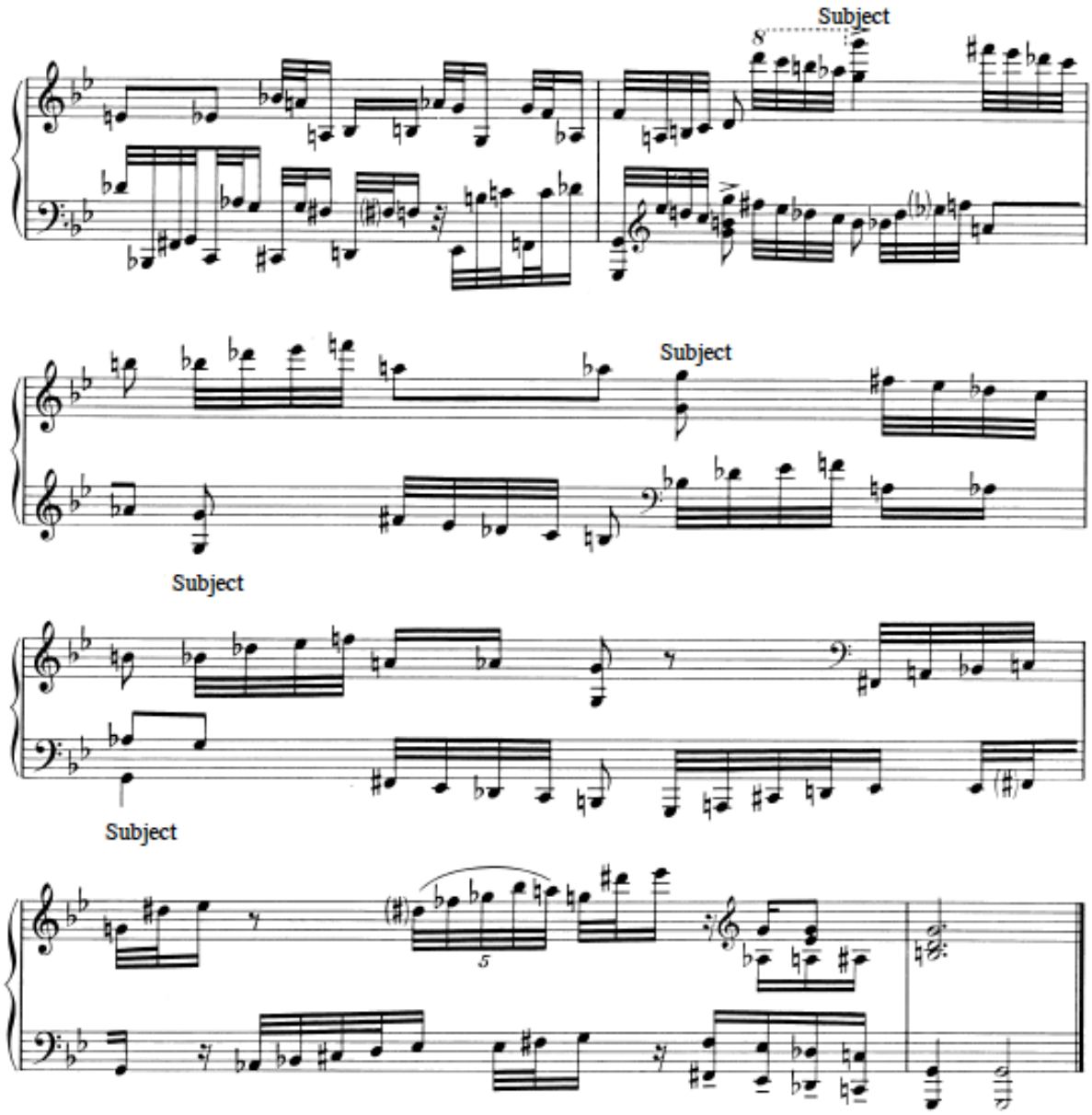
Example 3.30: Stanchinsky's Prelude and Fugue, Fugue, bars 1-10.



The inclusion of a counter-exposition starting in bar 8, although incomplete, provides the fugue with further tonal grounding, while the subjects lose their countersubjects and the subject entry in the tonic turns out to be a false entry. The fugue culminates in a *stretto* consisting of four

incomplete subject entries in the tonic, with the second subject entry in the right hand interrupting itself. (Example 3.31)

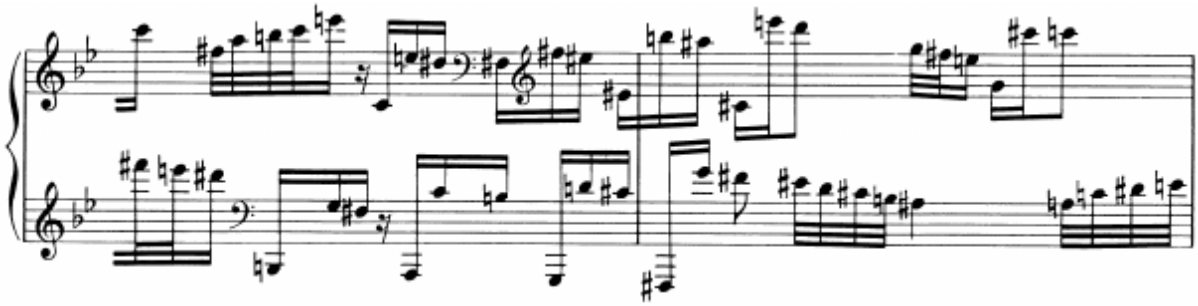
Example 3.31: Stanchinsky's Prelude and Fugue, Fugue, bars 27-32.



In the episode sections of the Fugue, Stanchinsky's melodic writing employs increasingly wide intervals. Sitsky observes that here Stanchinsky uses 'Bach-like sequences, but with very wide spacings', in this way 'prefiguring the neoclassical movement, and in the matter of wide intervals, even the Second Viennese School.'[25] (Example 3.32)

[25] Larry Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900-1929*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. 31.

Example 3.32: Stanchinsky's Prelude and Fugue, Fugue, bars 13-14.



It is interesting to note that, at this stage of his compositional development, Stanchinsky refrains from developing all the musical elements within the same piece. The more complex Stanchinsky's scales and harmonies become, the simpler his rhythms appear, and vice versa. The Fugue contains only occasional occurrences of polyrhythms (a quintuplet is used in the penultimate bar), while only a few motifs cross over bar lines (as seen in example 3.32).

As with the Canon*,* it is not clear if there was a single conceptual motivation behind this work, and there may have been more than one. It is possible that Stanchinsky started with the form of prelude and fugue and introduced higher levels of chromaticism to modernise the Baroque genre and to obscure a clear sense of key. He may also have been looking for a way to formalise the use of all twelve notes, turning to counterpoint as a suitable organisational system, in line with the broader European trend of composers looking for ways to structure alternative scales.[26] These pieces thus demonstrate that Stanchinsky employed counterpoint as a means by which he could disrupt conventional tonalities. In this respect, his approach is in direct opposition to that of Stravinsky, who used contrapuntal models in *Renard* (1915-16) and *Mavra* (1922) to reaffirm the tonal system.[27] However, Stanchinsky's inventiveness remains grounded in tradition: in looking for ways to structure chromatic scales, Stanchinsky relies heavily on old forms, and in this way his most innovative ideas stay couched within the established ideas of the past.

[26] Stanchinsky's use of a chromatic scale does not fit within a recognisable atonal framework, and his approach is not comparable to the more formal, dodecaphonic experiments of Schoenberg.
[27] Maureen A. Carr, *After the Rite: Stravinsky's Path to Neoclassicism (1914-25)*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 32.

Scottish Songs (1909)

In 1909, Stanchinsky turned his attention to folk songs. That year, he collected 54 folk songs in the Smolensk region, although their melodies do not appear to have been incorporated into his compositions.[28] His interest in folk idioms was not limited to Russian folk music, and in the same year he wrote ten *Scottish Songs* set to words and melodies by Robert Burns (1759-1796).[29] Printed for the first time in 2013, the songs remain virtually unknown, both within Russia and abroad. It seems the songs have never been discussed in musicological literature and, while they received a performance in Moscow Conservatoire's Small Hall in 2018, they appear to have never been performed outside of Russia.[30]

Stanchinsky's decision to set Burns's poems and melodies may, at first sight, appear to be an unexpected choice for a Russian composer. However, Scottish culture was fashionable in the nineteenth century, and composers from across Europe were attracted to Scottish poems, novels and melodies. By the early twentieth century, Burns was already familiar to the Russian public, and his themes of nationality, rural life and individual freedom resonated with the Russian intelligentsia. His work initially appeared in Russia at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the first translation of 'Address to the Shade of Thomson' was published in *Ipokreniya* in 1800.[31] The first Russian book-length translation was published in 1936 (*Izbrannaya lirika*, trans. T. Shchepkina-Kupernik), but many individual poems were printed before the turn of the century (for example, 'John Anderson, my jo' in *Sovremenik* in 1856 (trans. M. Mikhailov), and 'For a' that and a' that' in *Poety vsekh vremen i narodov* (trans. V. Kostomarov), both of which were set by Stanchinsky). Russian literary critic Nikolay Storozhenko (1836-1906) played a major part in the passionate reception Burns's poems received in Russia by introducing him to the Russian readership as a poet of humanity and love.[32]

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[28] His collection is preserved in RNMM, 239/61.
[29] Stanchinsky has written other standalone songs, including *V bure deyaniy, v volnakh bytiya* (to the words from Goethe's *Faust*) and *Ocen'* (to a poem by Belmont) which were published in the set of *Sbornik romansov* together with the *Scottish Songs*. Aleksey Stanchinsky, *Sbornik romansov*, ed. by Nikolay Pisarenko (Smolensk: Smolensk City Typography, 2013).
[30] A set of recordings can be found on YouTube, performed by soloists Ya. Ivanilova and D. Stepanovich and pianist E. Talisman. The organ seen at the back of the stage reveals the location of the recording to be Moscow Conservatoire's Small Hall. The recordings are numbered 1-10; for a full list see Discography. The first: Aleksey Stanchinsky, *Here Awa', There Awa*, online video recording, YouTube, 21 March 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVQwMTfhFyA> [accessed 3 August 2021].
[31] Pauline Mackay, 'Timeline of the European Reception of Robert Burns, 1795-2012', in *The Reception of Robert Burns in Europe*, ed. by Murray Pittock (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. xxiii-lxvii, (p. xxv).
[32] Natalia Kaloh Vid, 'The Reception of Robert Burns in Russia', in *Reception of Robert Burns in Europe*, ed. by M. Pittock (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 155-178 (p. 159).

Stanchinsky's settings of Burns's songs were composed for a composition competition announced in Moscow in 1909. The competition was organised by a newly established artistic organisation *Dom Pesni* [*House of Songs*], founded in 1908 by the singer Maria Olenina-d'Alheim and her husband Piotr d'Alheim. Their vision was to 'eschew capitalist relations and embody the true values of collective creation' by creating an environment in which the creator, the performer and the public worked together to create a 'true artistic work.'[33] To enhance the collective experience and encourage full immersion in creativity, Russian translations of the songs performed at their concerts were printed and circulated in advance. Rather unusually, and somewhat counterintuitively to their goal, the society sought to discourage casual attendance at their events. They did so by not selling tickets to *House of Songs* concerts but instead opening them only to paying members of the society. Olenina-d'Alheim explained:

> The *House of Songs* has striven to attract to its concerts not chance listeners, but those who consciously take part in communal creative activity […] opening our doors [by selling concert tickets] not only contradicts the goals of the institution of our Society, but would even bring into question the very purpose of our Society's continued existence.[34]

This financial commitment restricted access to these concerts to a small, elite group, and attendance was also limited by the seating capacity of Moscow Conservatoire's Small Hall, where most of the performances were scheduled. *House of Songs* was oversubscribed; only a portion of those interested in taking part could be accommodated, making it a very exclusive society.[35]

The rules of the competition specified that piano accompaniments should be composed for ten Scottish songs that use the words and melodies of Robert Burns, in the original language. Any publication of Burns's works was permitted to be used, but the recommended 'most complete' book was given as *Songs of Scotland*, ed. Boosey et Co, London, 1877.[36] The competition was international: it attracted composers both from within Russia and from abroad, including Yakob Weinberg (1897-1956), Sergey Tolstoy (1863-1947), Paul Vidal (1863-1931) and Aleksandr Grechaninov, who submitted two separate entries.[37] Stanchinsky's teacher and friend, Nikolay

[33] Rebecca Mitchell, *Nietzsche's Orphans: Music, Metaphysics, and the Twilight of the Russian Empire* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 37.
[34] d'Alheim quoted in Mitchell, *Nietzsche's Orphans*, p. 37.
[35] Ibid., pp. 37-8.
[36] 'Tretiy konkurs: konkurs na fortepiannoe soprovozhdeniye', RNMM, 256/2779.
[37] RNMM, 133/487; RNMM, 208/22; RNMM, 33878/VI; RNMM, 22/664; RNMM, 22/665.

Zhilyayev, also worked on his own submission. In a letter to Taneyev, he revealed that he was writing a set of Scottish songs for the competition in secret:

> (I inform you about this under the greatest secret) I hastily set about fulfilling the task of the *House of Songs* competition (piano accompaniments to ten Scottish songs of Burns) and barely had time to finish it on the last day of the term, that is, September 15th, and only on that day did I return the notes [sheet music] (through our doorman). But I keep this matter from everyone in the greatest secret and report this only to you (and also to L. Sabaneyev).[38]

The jury, consisting of Aleksandr Goldenweiser (1875-1961), Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov (1859-1935) and Nikolay Medtner judged the anonymised entries and announced Sergey Tolstoy's entry as the winner.[39] Stanchinsky noted in his diary that the second prize was awarded to 'a Frenchman', presumably Paul Vidal.[40]

Most of Stanchinsky's *Scottish Songs* demonstrate an effort to retain the Scottish character. His newfound interest in Scottish culture also extended to him taking up two novels by Walter Scott at this time, 'to get to know the Scottish people'.[41] Judging by his diary entries, he aimed to create simple piano accompaniments which would allow the Scottish melodies to take centre stage. His aspirations are hinted at through his criticism of Medtner in his diary:

> Medtner writes better for solo piano. There is little melody in his *Lieder*. He clutters the piano painfully; the voice is not primary, but secondary. No! I have to write songs better than him! Melody from beginning to end, brightness and clarity. Will it succeed[?]!!![42]

However, while Stanchinsky's criticism of Medtner demonstrates his ostensible preference for simplicity, his settings are so unusual that they appear to rethink the relationship between voice

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[38] No score for Zhilyayev's songs has been found. «(сообщаю Вам об этом под величайшим секретом) я спешно принялся за выполнение задачи конкурса "Дома Песни" (фортепианный аккомпанемент к десяти шотландским песням Бёрнса) и едва успел ее кончить в последний день срока, то есть 15-го сентября, и только в этот день я сдал ноты (через нашего швейцара). Но держу я это дело от всех в величайшем секрете и сообщаю об этом только Вам (да еще Л. Сабанееву).» *Nikolay Sergeyevich Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by Inna A. Barsova (Moscow: Muzyka, 2008), p. 71.
[39] RNMM, 239/97, 7 November 1909.
[40] Ibid.
[41] «Взял читать Вальтер-Скотта "Эдинбургскую темницу" и "Роб-Роя", чтобы познакомится с шотландским народом.» Lydia Perlova, 'Vospominaniya o Stanchinskom A. V.', RNMM, 239/120, p. 36.
[42] It is possible that he may have attended the premiere of Medtner's *Twelve Songs after Goethe*, op. 15, which were first performed on 8 January 1909, the date of this diary entry. Barrie Martyn, *Nicolas Medtner: His Life and Music* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), p. 61. «Метнер лучше сочиняет для одного фортепьяно. В его Lieder мелодии мало. Больно загромождает он фортепьяно; голос не главный, а второстепенный. Нет! Я должен писать песни лучше его! Мелодия с начала до конца, яркость и ясность. Удастся ли!!!» RNMM, 239/97, 8 January 1909.

and piano [entirely]. As such, his comment appears paradoxical, as he may well have addressed the same criticism to his own songs. It is also reasonable to speculate that, upon getting to know Medtner's songs better, he saw in them something that inspired his Burns settings, or that, knowing that Medtner was on the panel, he adopted a more complex accompaniment style in an aim to appeal to him. Nonetheless, the inconsistency between the sentiment in his diary and the finished songs allows an insight into Stanchinsky's own notion of simplicity. His piano writing here is simpler than that of his solo piano pieces from this time, yet his settings defy many conventional expectations of piano accompaniments, demonstrating that the inherent complexities of Stanchinsky's style shaped the songs in an individual way.

We know from Stanchinsky's diaries that he found the process of writing the songs very difficult. For example, on 2 August 1909 he wrote: 'My Scottish songs terrify me [...] Can't I write?'[43] On 19 August: 'I began to compose F major — it is not working […] Kept thinking about the songs. And they weighed [on me] like a nightmare. Suddenly fell asleep. I woke up terrified and ran to swim.'[44] On 22 August: 'In the morning before lunch [I] wrote F major [song] and finished it. But I don't like it. Breathed a sigh of relief as [I] crossed it out. Also discarded G minor. Ouch! How much more to write. Energy, where are you?... [ellipsis his]'[45] Stanchinsky's sister also remembered that during this time he was 'tormented' and 'worried', and that he rewrote some of the songs many times.[46] Yet, when the compositions were finished, he thought of them highly. After a meeting with Zhilyayev in which each played their songs, Stanchinsky noted that Zhilyayev's songs were 'much worse' than his and praised his own:

> There are few words to express my pride and joy with which I played my 'songs' [sic] […] Zhilyayev praised me very much. Said that there is Scottish in them, but there is more 'Stanchinsky'. And really[,] they have their own [idioms] and this 'mine' [character, which] I see and contemplate in [my] future compositions, which will be brighter and brighter… [ellipsis his][47]

[43] «Меня ужасают мои шотландские песни. [...] Неужели не напишу?» RNMM, 239/97, 2 August 1909.
[44] «Стал сочинять F-dur — не выходит. [...] Все думал о песнях. И они давили кошмаром. Неожиданно заснул. С ужасом проснулся и побежал купаться.» Ibid., 19 August 1909.
[45] «Утром до обеда писал F-dur и кончил ее. Но не нравится она мне. Облегченно вздохнул, когда вычеркнул ее. Также забраковал и g-moll. Ой! Сколько еще писать. Энергия[,] где ты?...» Ibid., 22 August 1909.
[46] «Он очень страдал, мучился, волновался, когда их сочинял.» RNMM, 239/120, p. 37.
[47] «И он [Жиляев] показывал также свои, гораздо хуже моих.»; «Мало слов выразить мою гордость и радость, с кот[орой] я играл мои «песни». […] Ж[иляев] меня очень хвалили. Говорили, что есть в них шотландское, но «станчинского» в них больше. И действительно[,] в них есть свое и это «мое» я вижу и созерцаю в будущих сочинениях, кот[орые] будут все ярче и ярче…» RNMM, 239/97, 16 October 1909.

This diary entry speaks about the distinctiveness and maturity of Stanchinsky's style. Zhilyayev's comment that 'there is Scottish in them, but there is more "Stanchinsky"' shows how strongly Stanchinsky's compositional idioms permeated the songs. Although the competition entries were judged anonymously, jury member Goldenweiser told Stanchinsky that he had immediately recognised which songs were his.[48] While Goldenweiser's remark may not have necessarily implied a positive view of Stanchinsky's songs, the achievement of an idiosyncratic and recognisable style for a composer of only twenty-one years shows that Stanchinsky's style matured beyond his young age.

When writing about his songs in his diary, Stanchinsky wrote the word 'songs' in quotation marks. We may consider two possibilities for this. On the one hand, he may have been hesitant to call them songs simply because of an awareness that he was setting pre-existing Scottish tunes rather than producing original compositions. On the other hand, he may have recognised that his approach was so far removed from the traditional concept of the genre that some might baulk at it.

Unfortunately for Stanchinsky, the individuality of his style compromised his success at the competition. The jury were looking for simplicity. After the results were announced, Stanchinsky recorded in his diary that the first prize was awarded to Sergey Tolstoy for 'remarkable simplicity and full Scottish colours.'[49] Stanchinsky's songs were deemed too complex. One day at the conservatoire Stanchinsky overheard Medtner and Goldenweiser discussing his songs. Goldenweiser spoke: 'The man set out to show what he can write for piano. Are these accompaniments?'[50] Medtner also criticised Stanchinsky's approach: 'You need to, really, come from the song itself, not from the accompaniment.'[51] Stanchinsky conceded: 'It's as if I invented writing a piano fantasia for a song.'[52]

For his settings, Stanchinsky chose ten songs whose topics range from love and affection to brotherhood and dignity. The texts of these songs portray the everyday life of Scottish country-dwellers and the nature of the Scottish countryside. (Figure 3.c) Many of the songs are centred

[48] RNMM, 239/97, 7 November 1909 and 19 November 1909.
[49] «необыкновенно просто и вполне шотландс[кий] колорит.» Ibid., 7 November 1909.
[50] «Человек задался целью показать, что может писать для фортеп[иано]. Разве это аккомпанементы?» Ibid., 24 October 1909.
[51] «Нужно[,] действительно[,] исходить из самой песни, а не из аккомп[анемента].» RNMM, 239/97, 19 November 1909.
[52] «Будто я изощрял[ся] написать фортепьян[ную фантазию?] на песню.» Ibid.

around human actors as main characters ('Willie Wanderer', 'Robin Adair', 'Mary Morison'), while others focus on the themes of nature ('The Birks of Aberfeldy') or love and relationships ('Robin Adair', 'John Anderson, my jo', 'Blue-eyed lassie', 'She's fair and fause', 'My wife'). Humour features in 'Sic a wife as Willie had', while Burns's political stance is expressed in 'For a' that and a' that', a song which came to symbolise the universal brotherhood of the revolutionary left in early twentieth century Russia.[53]

It is unclear how well Stanchinsky understood Burns's poems, set as they were in the original Scots. There is evidence that he was working on his own translations of the songs, but not all of the songs were translated, and some of the songs which were translated do not feature in the final set.[54] Stanchinsky's settings also show an inconsistent approach to word painting: some of the songs (nos. 1, 2, 3, and 6) demonstrate some word painting, while others (nos. 4, 5, 7 and 10) simply mirror the character of the song in the piano accompaniment. Songs no. 6 and 9 might be considered to reflect the poems' meanings conceptually, yet song no. 8 shows no attempt to consider Burns's words. A question also remains as to how any attempt at word painting could be achieved within the strophic nature of his settings: Stanchinsky set only one verse of each folk song, and as such, different words are set to the same music on each repeat.

[53] *For a' that and a' that* (Burns's tune) is of such cultural significance that it was sung at the opening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. Robert Burns, *A Man's A Man For A' That*, online video recording, YouTube, 10 February 2014 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hudNoXsUj0o> [accessed 3 December 2021]; Murray Pittock, 'Introduction: "The mair they talk, I'm kend the better": Burns and Europe' in *Reception of Robert Burns in Europe*, ed. by M. Pittock (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 1-8 (p. 3).

[54] Translations are preserved in RNMM, 239/114. The file contains eight poems translated to Russian (in pencil) and nine poems written out in Scots (in pen) with a few footnotes to explain the meaning of certain Scots words. The handwriting of the poems in Scots (in pen) is likely Zhilyayev's.

Figure 3.c: Stanchinsky's *10 Scottish Songs.*

	Title in Pisarenko's edition	**Title in Scots**	**First Line**[55]	**Key**	**Tempo**	**Bars**
1.	Скиталец Вилли	Willie Wanderer	Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie	F major/D minor	*Andantino affettuoso*	20
2.	Robin Adair[56]	Robin Adair	What's this dull town to me	B♭ major	N/A	18
3.	Gohn Anderson, my joy [sic]	John Anderson, my jo	John Anderson, my jo, when Nature first began	G minor (Dorian)	*Larghetto*	20
4.	Березы Эберфельди	The Birks of Aberfeldy	Bonie lassie, will ye go	D major	*Allegro vivace*	11
5.	Голубоглазая девушка	Blue-eyed lassie	I gaed a waefu' gate yestreen	B Aeolian	*Andante*	25
6.	Она красива, но не верна	She's fair and fause	She's fair and fause that causes my smart	E Aeolian	*Allegretto*	18
7.	Моя жена	My wife	My love's a winsome wee thing	C Mixolydian	*Allegretto con moto*	22
8.	Мери Морисон	Mary Morison	O Mary, at thy window be	D Aeolian	*Lento*	18
9.	Честная бедность	For a' that and a' that	Where's he, for honest poverty	B♭ major	*Moderato veloce*	16
10.	Билли и его жена	Sic a wife as Willie's wife	Willie Wastle dwalt on Tweed	F Mixolydian	*Allegro marcato*	21

[55] Burns's poems and tunes tend to differ slightly depending on the publication in question. The first lines in this table appear as they are published in the 'Index of First Lines' in *The Oxford Edition of the Works of Robert Burns: Robert Burns's Songs for George Thomson*, ed. by Kirsteen McCue (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), IV, pp. 689-690.

[56] Robin Adair is an exception to this set, as the song is not attributed to Robert Burns. The rhythmic outline of the tune closely resembles Burns's 'Phillis the Fair'.

Stanchinsky's settings each share some stylistic commonalities while also being distinct in character and compositional techniques. All the *Scottish Songs* are composed in four phrases that follow the quatrain structure of the poems. Burns's tunes largely follow an AABA pattern, in which the second phrase is a slightly altered repeat of the first, and the third phrase introduces contrast. However, unlike other composers who provided only simple accompaniments to folk songs, such as Rimsky-Korsakov's *Collection of One Hundred Russian Songs*, op. 24, Stanchinsky does not submit his accompaniments to these melodic repeats. His second phrases tend to develop in texture and tessitura, thereby creating growth instead of merely repeating the accompaniment together with the voice. Unlike many nineteenth-century songs, and unlike his competitors' entries, Stanchinsky's songs make little use of features such as interludes or postludes. Even his introductions are strikingly short; most are two or four bars long, although some are as short as half-a-bar (song no. 5). The settings by Stanchinsky's competitors at the *House of Songs* competition – Grechaninov, Vidal, Tolstoy – also appear more conventional than Stanchinsky's. Their accompaniment parts include more substantial piano interludes and *Lieder*-like textures. Grechaninov, like Stanchinsky, scores one strophe and writes in repeat marks (although his settings are simpler and more conventional), while both Tolstoy's and Vidal's settings (first and second prize at the competition) are through-composed for more than one verse.

Stanchinsky's approach to accompaniment in his *Scottish Songs* falls into three main categories: songs that use contrapuntal techniques; songs that incorporate original folk melodies into piano accompaniments (non-contrapuntal), or create a Scottish character by other means; and those in which Stanchinsky's idiosyncratic piano style and linear textures assume a more significant role.

Contrapuntal Techniques

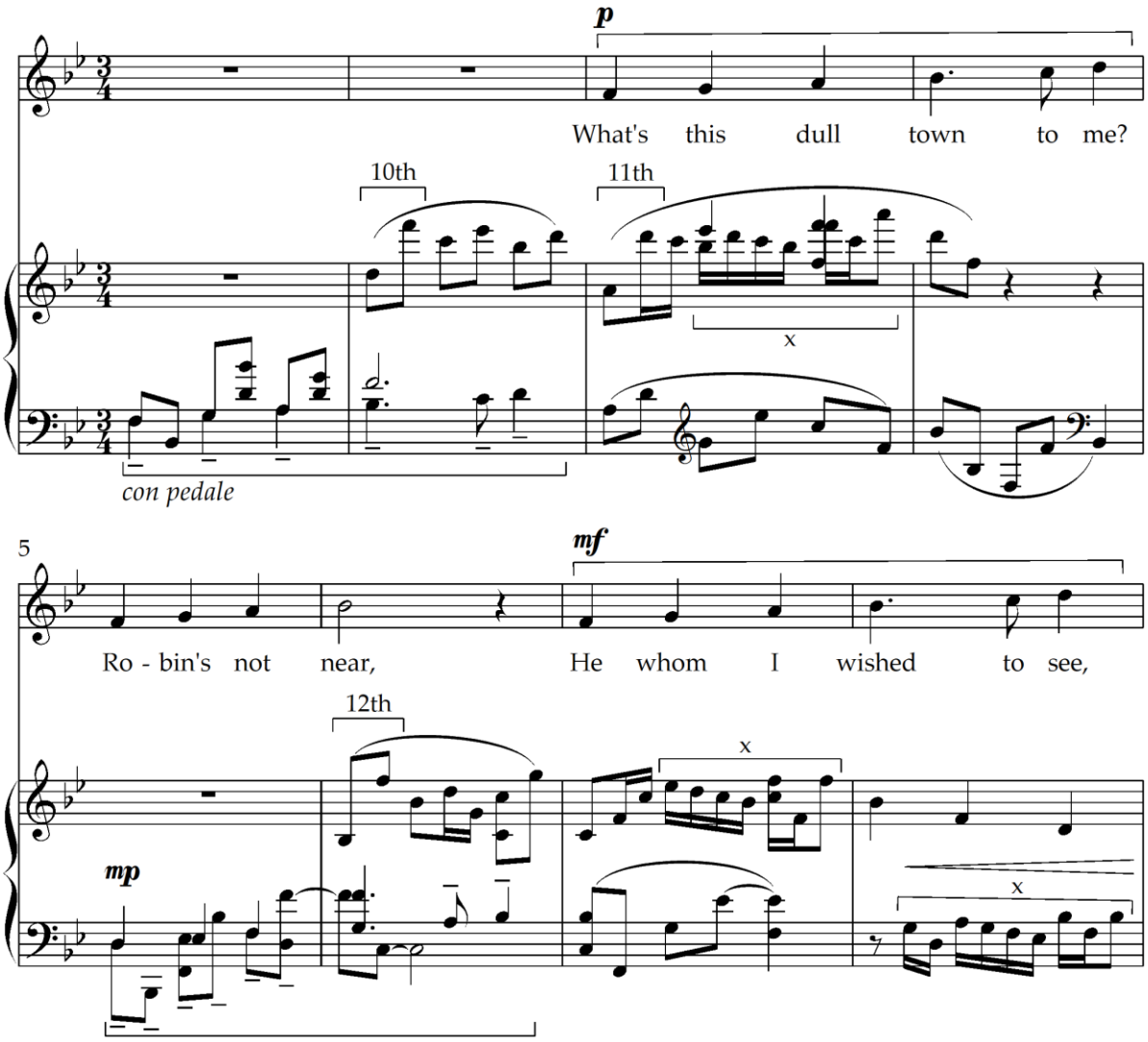
In line with Stanchinsky's growing interest in contrapuntal techniques in his solo piano music, three of his settings (2, 6, 8) are set in canon, either between voice and piano or in the accompaniment part between the right and the left hands. Stanchinsky's diaries show that he attempted to set more songs in canon, but some early versions were later scrapped. For example, on 19 July 1909, Stanchinsky wrote: 'I did some work, composing an F major song

as a canon. Very difficult, but I hope to master [it].'[57] The following day: 'After dinner, composed a canon in F major. Got a little further [with it].'[58] Another day later: 'Didn't like the F major canon, will write in D minor (Mary Morison).'[59] While it is unclear which of the two songs in F Stanchinsky is referring to (no. 1, 'Willie Wanderer' or no. 10 'Sic a wife as Willie had'), neither are written in canon in their final form, but the D minor (Aeolian) song 'Mary Morison' includes a canon in the accompaniment part.

The first setting to include a canon between the voice and piano is song no. 2, 'Robin Adair', which is the only one to precisely quote the original melody in the piano part. The tune is taken as the basis for the accompaniment, with its entries alternated between piano and voice: the piano introduction begins with the melody, before the vocal line enters with it an octave higher in bar 3. (Example 3.33)

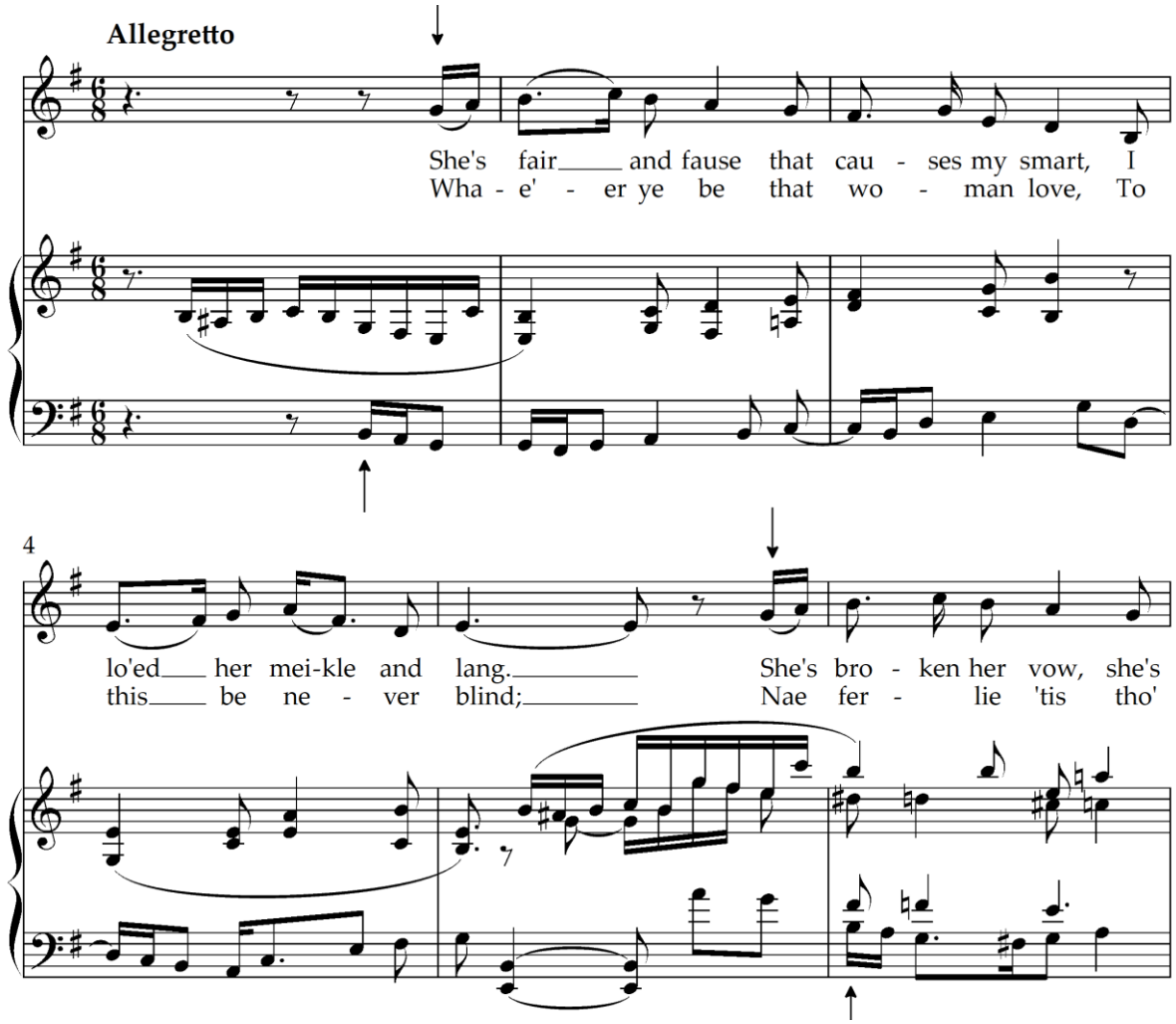
[57] «Я немного работал[,] сочинял F-dur песню каноном. Очень трудно, но я надеюсь осилить.» RNMM, 239/97, 19 July 1909.
[58] «После обеда сочинял F-dur канон. Немного подвинулось дальше.» Ibid., 20 July 1909.
[59] «F-dur-ный канон не понравился, буду писать d-moll (Mary Moryson) [sic].» Ibid., 21 July 1909.

Example 3.33: Stanchinsky's 'Robin Adair', bars 1-8.



A stricter approach is seen in song no. 6, 'She's fair and fause', which makes extensive use of inverted counterpoint. The Scottish folk tune is the main source material used in the piano part, which is set in canon against the vocal line. (Example 3.34) This approach is similar to that seen in song no. 2, 'Robin Adair', except that here the quotation is not direct, but rather inverted. This inverted canon continues throughout the song, with only occasional moments of deviation, where the inversion is adapted harmonically to suit the ends of phrases.

Example 3.34: Stanchinsky's 'She's fair and fause', bars 1-5.

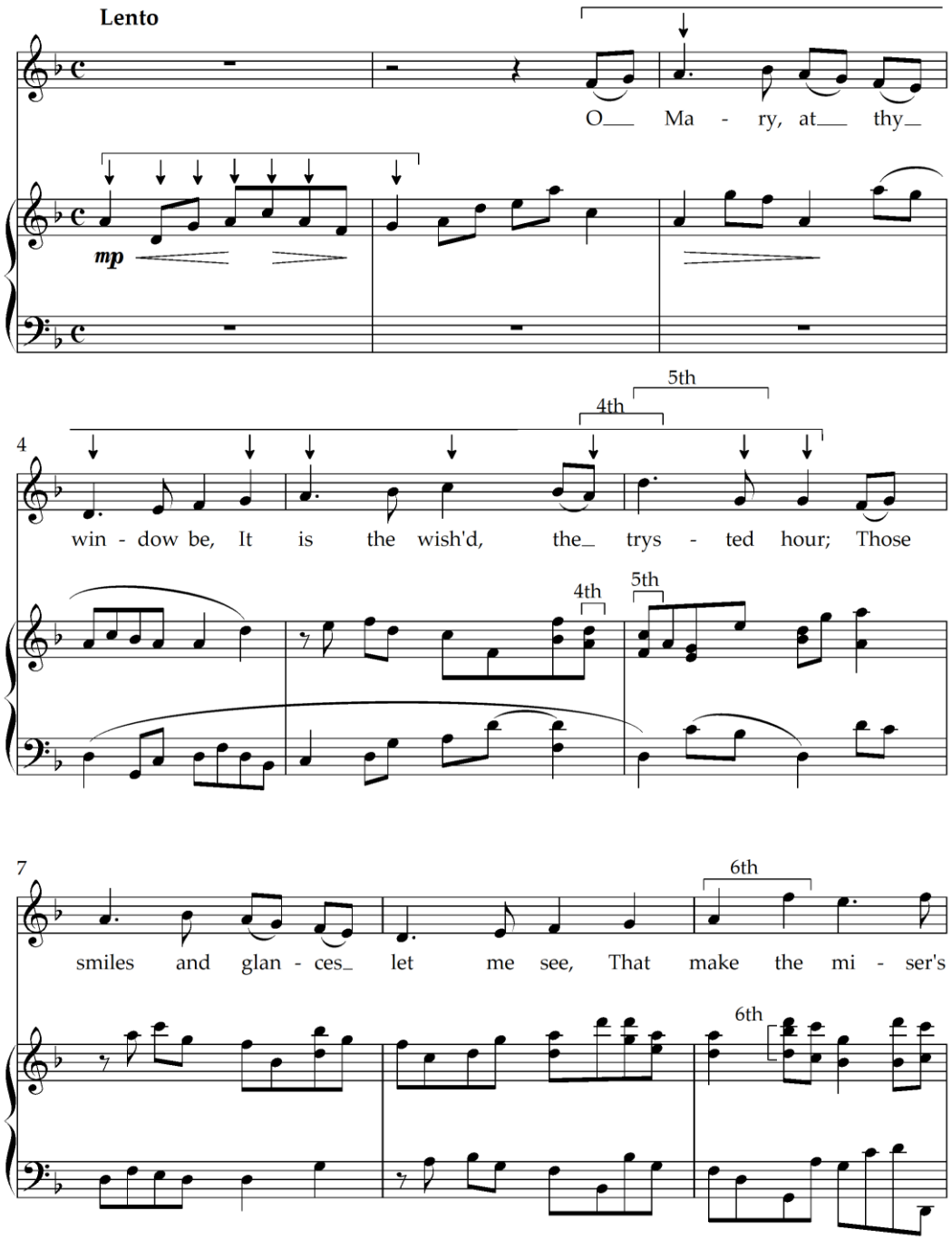


As seen in example 3.34, the vocal line and its inversion in the piano part are metrically displaced and never meet vertically. In bar 1, for example, the inversion in the bass part begins a quaver before the vocal line enters. In bar 6, the parts swap: the vocal line enters a quaver before its inversion enters in the bass. Such displacement creates complex textures and rhythmic interactions between the voice and piano, demonstrating a highly unconventional approach to writing piano accompaniments. This technique may be reflective of the poem itself, in which the woman is described as 'fair' and 'fause'. The false aspect is conveyed in the fact that the left hand is inconsistent (thus, 'fause' and 'fickle'), while the 'fair' aspect might be conveyed by the holistic choice of using canon to represent symmetry and beauty.

Contrasting songs no. 2 and no. 6, song no. 8, 'Mary Morison', includes a canon which is not set between voice and piano, but in the piano part between the two hands. The song's

accompaniment is one of the most detached from the tune in this set. While the vocal line begins with an upbeat, the piano accompaniment does not. Set in motion during the opening bars, which introduce the piece's linear texture, the accompaniment part and the folk tune create a three-part counterpoint. The canon in the piano part is three bars apart, and the voice enters after two bars with neat, four-bar phrases, creating a metrically displaced effect. (Example 3.35)

Example 3.35: Stanchinsky's 'Mary Morison', bars 1-9.



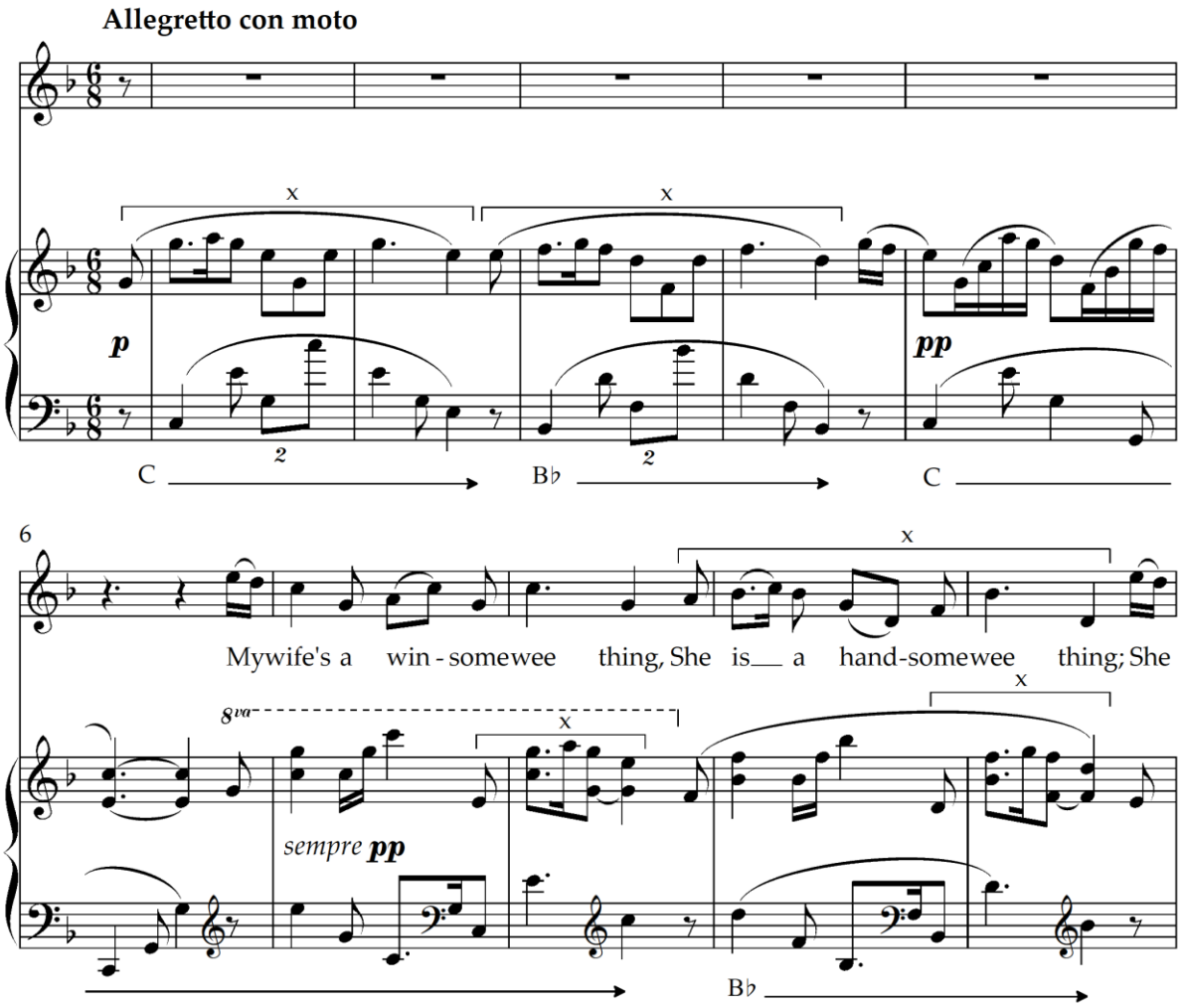
Although the piano part appears to be distant from the folk tune, some similarities exist. Melodically, Stanchinsky's piano theme can be read as a contraction of the melody's opening phrase. (See example 3.35) While the vocal line mostly moves by a step, some intervals occur in the folk tune which Stanchinsky mirrors in the piano part by writing in dyads instead of single notes, and in doing so he creates a connection between the parts. For example, the first melodic intervals larger than a step in the folk tune – a rising perfect fourth and a falling perfect fifth – occur in bars 5 and 6, while equivalent harmonic intervals appear simultaneously in the right hand of the piano part. Similarly, the first sixth in the vocal line in bar 9 is accompanied by the same interval in the piano.

Scottish Character

In song no. 7, 'My wife', Stanchinsky demonstrates a new approach to working with the Scottish material. He takes Burns's tune as the basis for the accompaniment part but fragments and rearranges it to suit his idiosyncratic piano style. Unusually for this set, the song includes a relatively long piano introduction which establishes the most prominent melodic motif of this song. (Example 3.36, marked x) This motif, originating from the third phrase of the vocal line, is used throughout the accompaniment part. It is first heard in the introduction, before coming back in bars 8 and 10 of the piano part, as well as bar 9 of the vocal line, and in so doing creates a dialogue between the voice and the accompaniment. The piano setting in this song demonstrates Stanchinsky's inventiveness and resourcefulness within a limited harmonic setting. The song's home key is C Mixolydian, but the folk tune is continuously alternating between two chords: C major and B♭ major. This inherent duality of the folk tune is a typical idiom of Scottish folk music, which often alternates between tonic and flattened leading note in place of a dominant.[60] The entire song is, therefore, essentially written upon two chords which generally change every two bars. This harmonic framework is first established in the piano introduction, and sets out the stylistic approach of the accompaniment which includes typically Stanchinskian wide leaps in the left-hand part.

[60] A similar harmonic structure is seen in the final song of the set, 'Sic a wife as Willie had'.

Example 3.36: Stanchinsky's 'My wife's a winsome wee thing', bars 1-10.

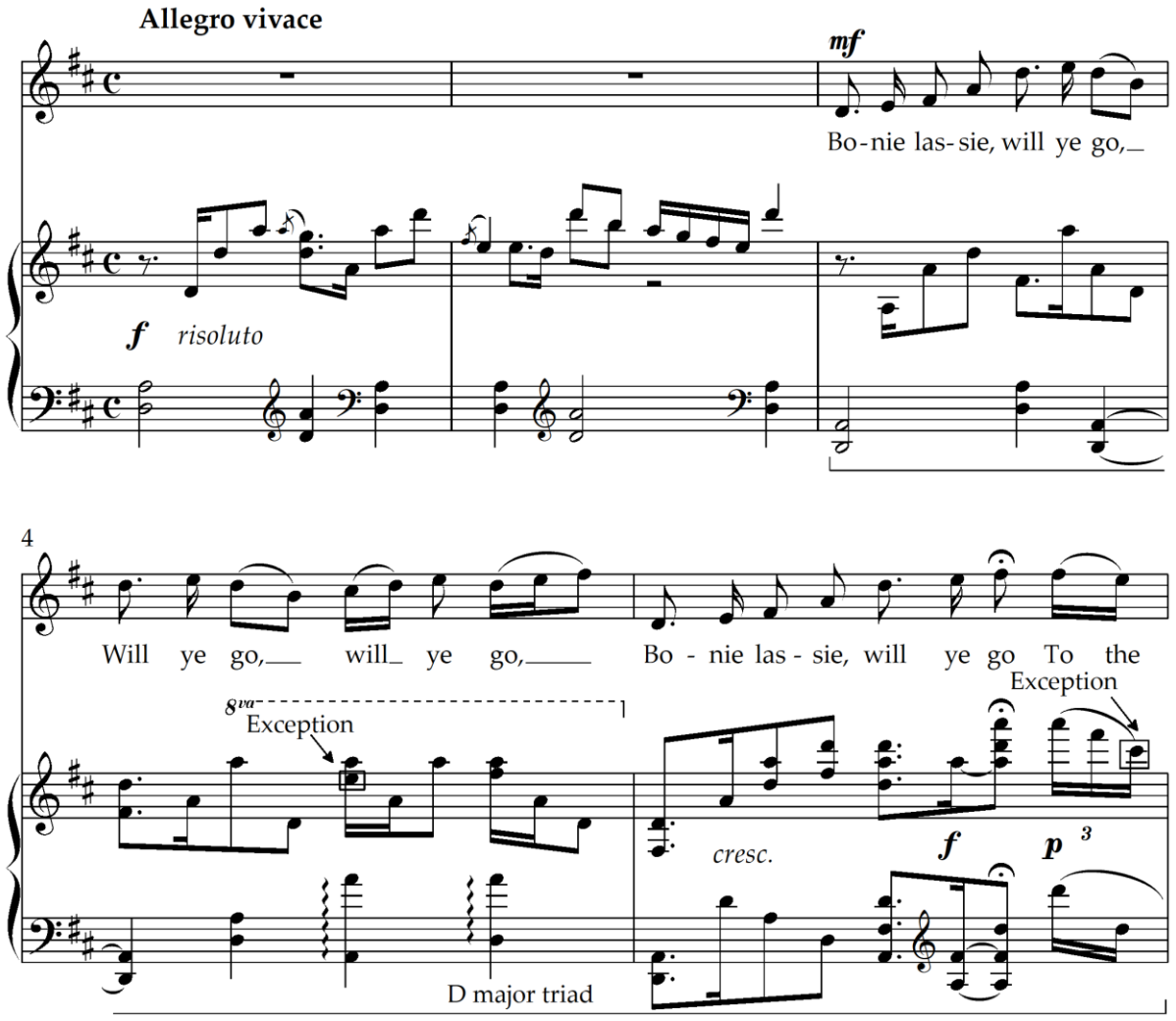


The rest of the songs in this set do not directly quote original folk tunes, but Scottish idioms are either largely retained and combined with Stanchinsky's own stylistic tendencies or created through other means. Stanchinsky preserves the original modality of the songs (most minor keys are in their natural mode, i.e. Aeolian), and many accompaniments include quartal elements (songs nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 10). In this respect, Stanchinsky's treatment of Burn's songs is entirely different to that of Schumann's in *Fünf Lieder nach Robert Burns*, op. 55, in which he 'makes no reference to having heard the Scottish melodies […] nor does he set out to nod his head, musically speaking, to the north by creating musical settings which have even a remotely Scottish character.'[61]

[61] Kirsteen McCue and Marjorie Rycroft, 'The Reception of Robert Burns in Music', in *Reception of Robert Burns in Europe*, ed. by M. Pittock (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 267-290 (p. 276).

A sense of Scottish character is created by original means in song no. 4, 'The Birks of Aberfeldy', which has one of the most striking accompaniment parts in the entire set. From the outset, the left-hand pedals in fifths evoke the drone sound produced by Scottish bagpipes, while the acciaccaturas in the right hand are reminiscent of melodies produced by chanter (the higher-pitched pipe which allows the bagpipe player to control the melody). The song includes elements of scotch-snap rhythms and appears to be written as an experiment in how to score an entire piece under a single chord. For much of the song, the folk tune is accompanied by a D major triad, scored in various inversions and voicings. Bars 3 to 5, for example, are constructed almost entirely (except for two notes — E in bar 4 and C♯ in bar 5) out of an arpeggiated D major triad. (Example 3.37)

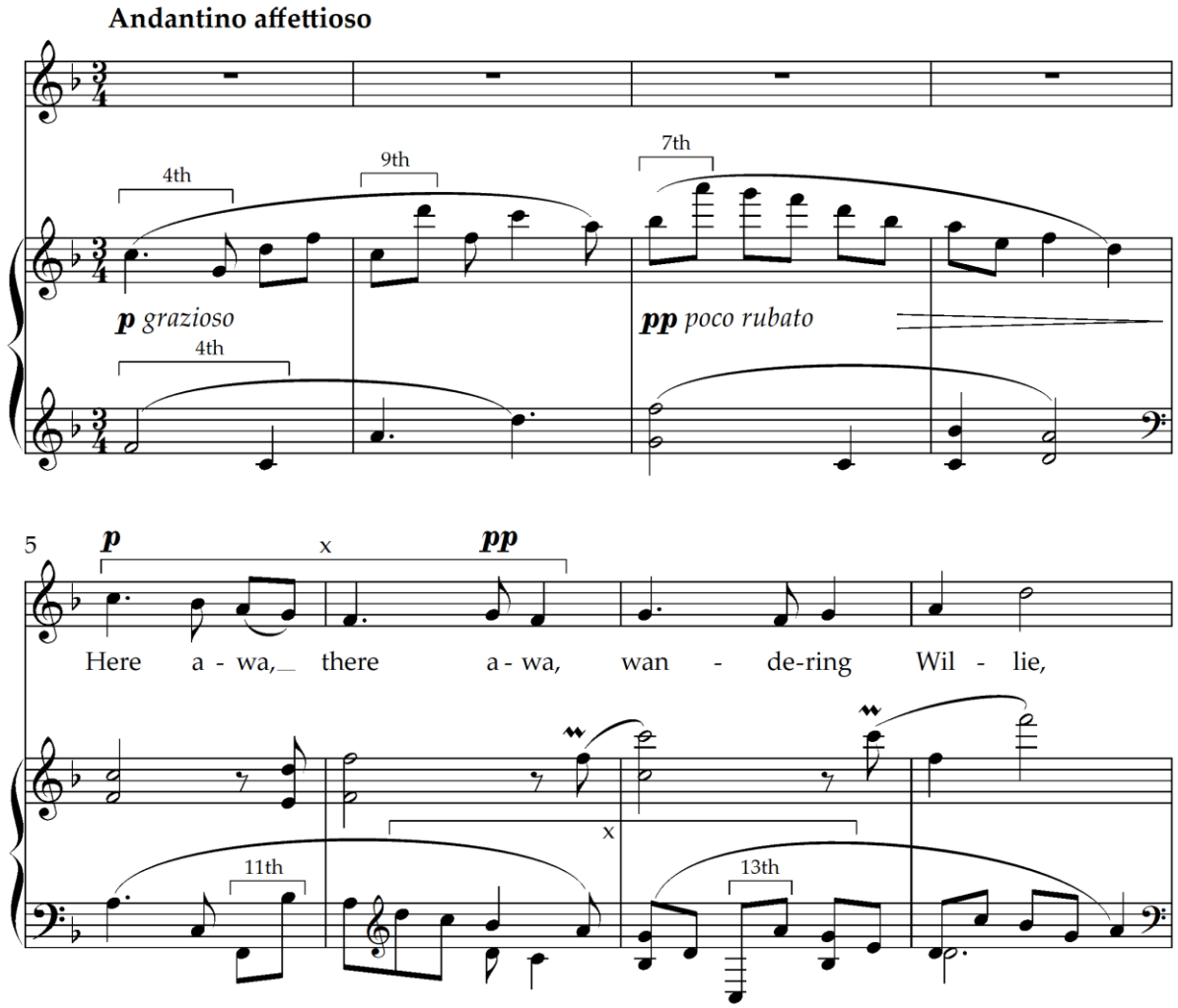
Example 3.37: Stanchinsky's 'The Birks of Aberfeldy', bars 1-5.



The ‘Stanchinsky Style’

Throughout Stanchinsky’s settings, we see many features representative of his solo piano style: he writes rather unidiomatically for piano (his piano parts are full of awkward leaps and stretches); his tessituras are wide; he contrasts diatonicism and chromaticism; and his beamings escape the constraints of bar lines. In song no. 1, ‘Willie Wanderer’, for example, his accompaniment contains many wide leaps from the outset: in the introduction we see sevenths and ninths in the right-hand part, which soon grow to leaps of elevenths and thirteenths. (Example 3.38)

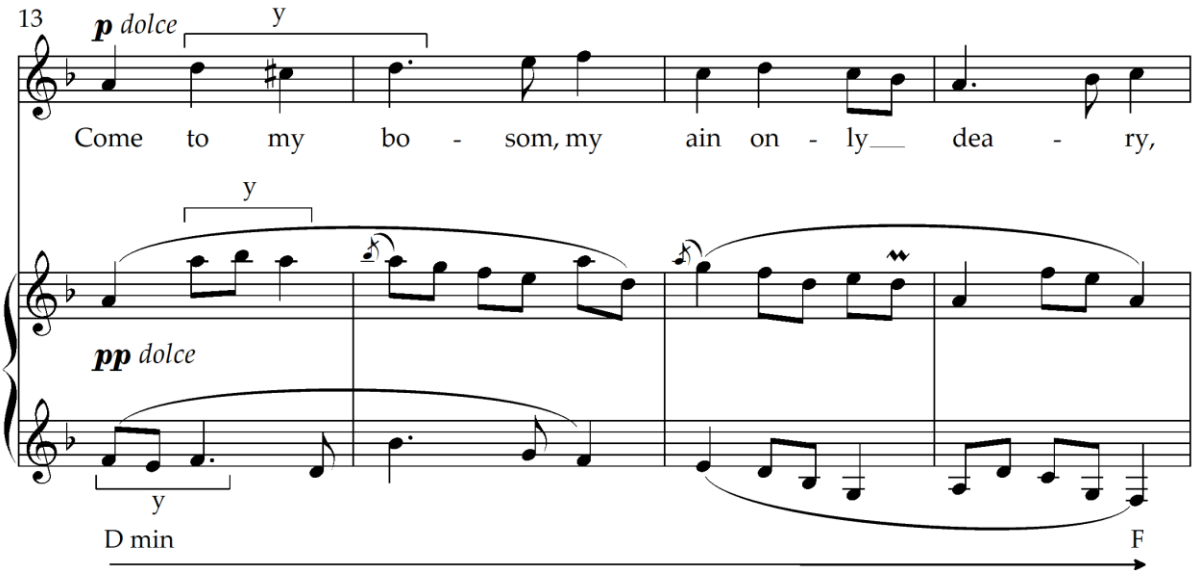
Example 3.38: Stanchinsky’s ‘Willie Wanderer’, bars 1-8.



In this setting, the linear piano accompaniment has its own melodic themes which are inspired by the vocal line but progress largely independently. For example, the melodic shape of the

vocal line in bars 5-6 is echoed in the piano's left hand a bar later, creating melodic unity between voice and piano. (See example 3.38, marked x) However, in the second phrase, Stanchinsky's accompaniment gains significant freedoms from the vocal line. There are no more echoes of the vocal melody and, despite the singer's part being an altered repeat of the first phrase, Stanchinsky's accompaniment grows both in texture (single notes become dyads) and tessitura (right hand is scored higher and left hand is scored lower). The second half of the song (from bar 13) also takes motifs from the vocal line as the stimulus for the accompaniment part but develops them independently. For example, an auxiliary vocal gesture in bars 13-14 is doubled in speed and used together with its inversions in bar 13 to create the piano lines. (Example 3.39, marked y)

Example 3.39: Stanchinsky's 'Willie Wanderer', bars 13-16.

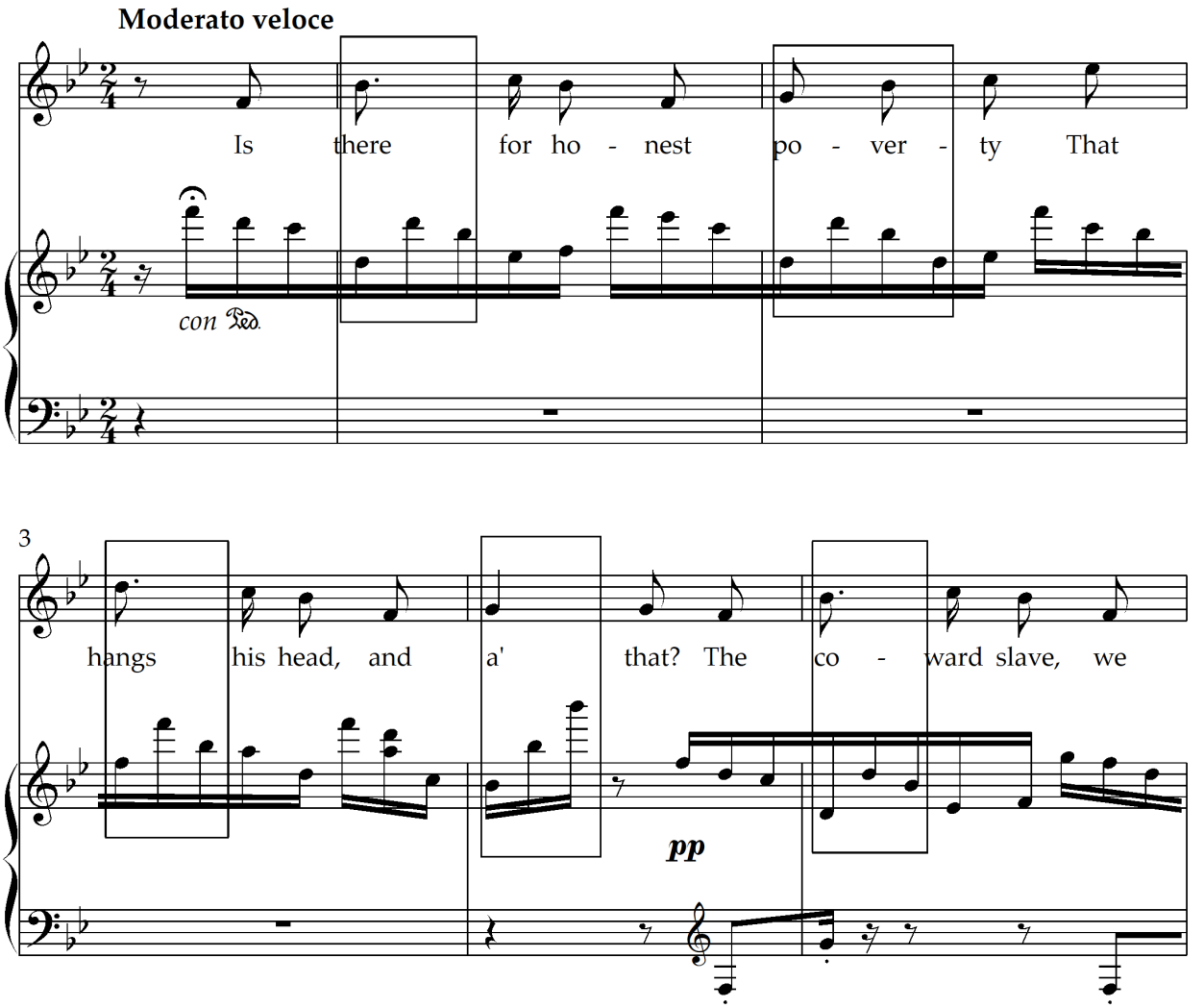


The independence of the piano part creates complex textures with multiple themes competing for the listener's attention. While the entire song is written in a three-part texture, the complexity of it becomes particularly apparent in the second half of the song, during which the piano's right-hand part plays a countermelody independent of the vocal line. Whilst up until this point the left hand has largely been used to provide harmonic support (almost as a walking bass, scored at very wide intervals), from bar 13 it incorporates melodic motifs within its structure, creating a more intricate contrapuntal texture. (See example 3.39) The overall effect results in a highly unusual folksong setting, and it appears that the primary purpose of the accompaniment is not simply to support the voice, but to provide independent melodic and

harmonic interest. The voice part becomes almost incidental, providing a different timbral colour and a third melodic line, but it does not have the primary role as is expected from a song.

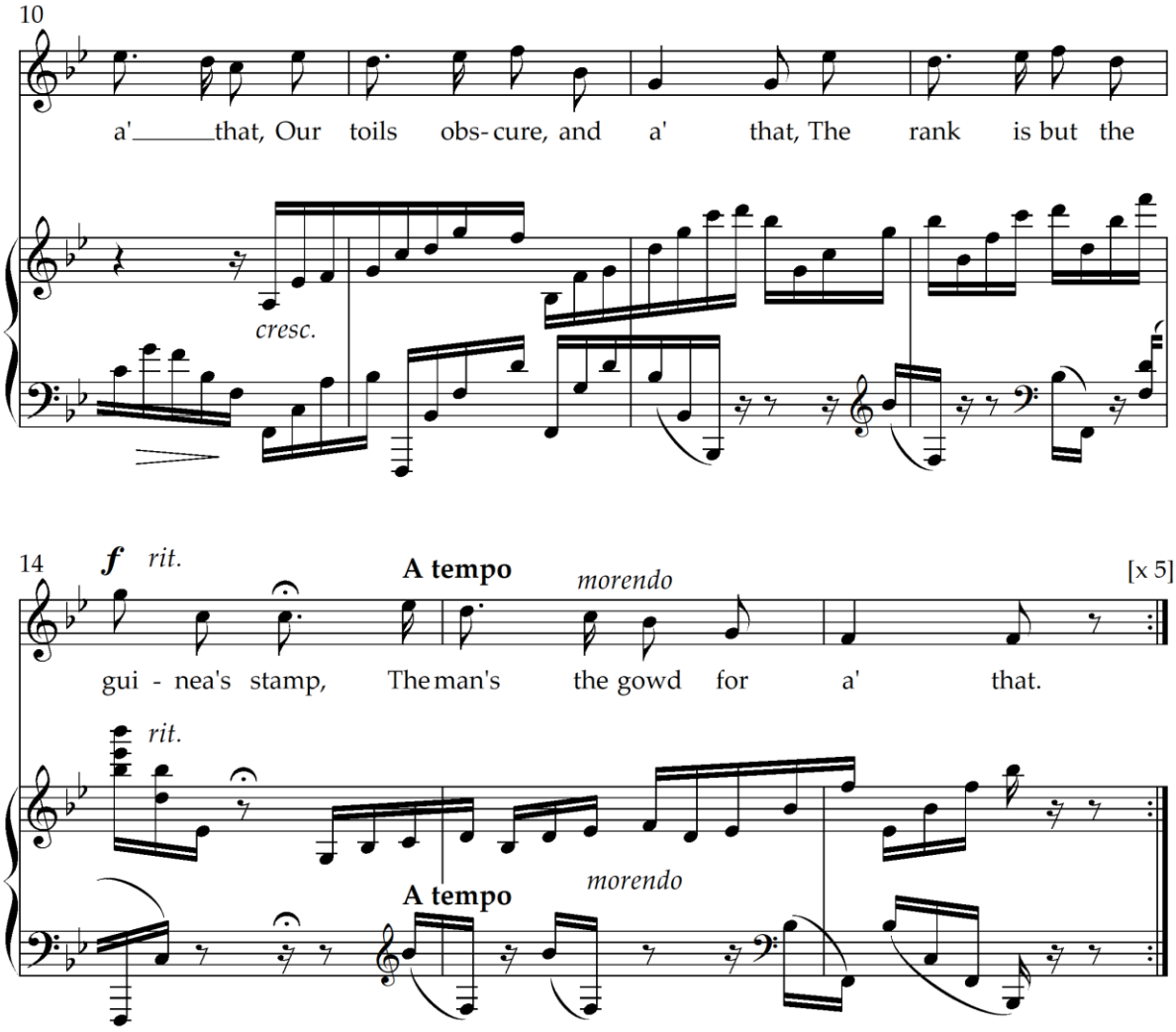
Arguably, the most unusual setting is found in song no. 9, 'For a' that and a' that', whose accompaniment appears to completely disregard the vocal line. The piano part does not originate from the folk tune, nor does it particularly support the voice. Strikingly, the accompaniment is a bare, thin texture, consisting largely of a single line of notes in the treble, occasionally punctuated by a few notes in the bass. (Example 3.40) Such an approach is unique within this set and may be conceptually related to the song's lyrics. The poem advocates simple, modest life, and so the accompaniment part is stripped of any musical decorations.

Example 3.40: Stanchinsky's 'For a' that and a' that', bars 1-6.



The accompaniment part contains very few chords but, despite this, the song retains a sense of tonality. The semiquaver runs are arranged to land on the notes of a B♭ major triad at the beginnings of bars, and B♭s are also emphasised at the ends of phrases. The piano part also remains largely consonant with the notes of the melody, which is not always the case in other songs in this set. The setting's semiquaver beamings, written as they are across bar lines, are characteristic of Stanchinsky's solo piano writing and will become an established feature of his works from 1911. Although most bars contain eight semiquavers (in a 2/4 metre), Stanchinsky places his semiquaver groups to begin with anacruses before bar lines. Most notes are in groups of eight, while others are joined in smaller groups of three, four, five or six, with little consistency. Due to such placements and groupings of the semiquavers, the piano accompaniment does little to maintain the song's metre. Instead, the metre is largely held together by the vocal line, assisted occasionally by two-note motifs in the piano's left hand. (Example 3.41)

Example 3.41: Stanchinsky's 'For a' that and a' that', bars 10-16.



Here, the unusual approach to piano writing redefines the purpose of accompaniment in a song. The accompaniment is not used to support or embellish the vocal part, nor does it provide much in the way of harmonic or rhythmic support for the singer. Instead, it is functioning as a background soundscape to allow the vocal part to stand independently at the forefront. Although the piano part of this piece is highly unusual for a folk song setting, it is emblematic of Stanchinsky's compositional style. The textures and rhythmic arrangements of this setting can be compared to Stanchinsky's Etude in B major (1908-1910) and even act as a precursor to some of the *Sketches* (in particular, nos. 2 and 5) from 1912.

Throughout the set, we get a sense that Stanchinsky's settings are not typical accompaniments to songs: they generally lack the expected chordal/arpeggiated textures, and their complexity shows a certain neglect to the vocal line by allowing a more equal than usual standing between

voice and piano. His piano parts break many expectations: on the whole, they do not support the voice, but function as an equal player, appearing to rethink the purpose of accompaniment in folk settings. The range and flexibility of techniques Stanchinsky uses distinguish him from previous generations (i.e. Rimsky-Korsakov, Balakirev), and they distinguish him from other composers who set Burns's poems, such as Ravel, whose approach in *Chanson écossaise* (1910) is quite simple. By doing more than just providing simple accompaniments, Stanchinsky is anticipating the more enriched approach to folk song settings by composers such as Bartók (*Eight Hungarian Folksongs*, 1917) or Grainger (whose *British Folk Music Settings* were composed and published individually throughout the twentieth century).

Conclusions

The pieces Stanchinsky wrote prior to his hospitalisation in 1910 show that he was continuously searching for new ideas: his compositional development was exceptionally rapid and encompassed a wide range of inspirations. While his intense and quickly changing interests in new techniques resulted in an eclectic set of works, by 1909 the composer had already developed a distinctive and recognisable 'Stanchinsky style' (as dubbed by Zhilyayev). For a 21-year-old composer, being able to stand out among his contemporaries, and for his style to be recognisable, is a significant achievement.

The most important changes in Stanchinsky's music – those which came to define his style – happened between 1907 and 1910, after his admission to Moscow Conservatoire. During his student years, Stanchinsky continued to work within established genres and forms, but began to challenge some of the structures within, e.g. by obscuring previously clear-cut section lines, as well as by modernising his surface musical language. His early style, which relied on lyrical melodies and descending chromatic lines, was soon enhanced by the introduction of dual tonalities and modes. The textures started to evolve too: fewer of his compositions comprised obvious melody and accompaniment parts and instead began to favour a more complex fabric of interweaving lines. Certain works began challenging conventional tonalities by employing higher levels of chromaticism, while others disengaged from chromatic saturation, and he explored diatonicism as another alternative to distance his work from nineteenth-century harmonic models. Stanchinsky also began to use the full extent of the piano range more frequently, contrasting extremes in tessitura and creating spacious, open sounds. By combining

more frequent use of irregular and complex rhythms and metres with his tendency to work against metric constraints, Stanchinsky's development during this period culminated in an individual approach to composition that became cemented in his later works, such as the two last sonatas and the *Twelve Sketches* which are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 – Stylistic Developments (1911-1914)

After a break in 1910 due to illness, Stanchinsky began writing again in 1911. His initial return to composition was slow and careful. His first work written that year, Variations, was dedicated to the composer's cousin, Sophia. Due to its technical and musical simplicity, Variations was most likely envisaged as a pedagogical piece. It allowed Stanchinsky to practise his skill after a long interruption, and to comfortably ease himself back into the craft. Having restored his compositional dexterity, Stanchinsky embarked on writing his most interesting and complex works. In the final few years of his life, Stanchinsky worked with 'redoubled ardour'.[1] His productivity increased, and he was producing compositions at a faster rate than before. During this time, Stanchinsky's interests turned toward large-scale piano compositions and cycles. Between 1911 and 1914, he wrote two piano sonatas, *Allegro* (originally envisaged as the first movement of the Sonata in F major), a prelude, and three sets of short pieces: *Twelve Sketches*, *Three Sketches*, and four canon-preludes. This chapter surveys Stanchinsky's continued compositional development from 1911 by focusing on his last two sonatas – no. 1 in F major (1911-1912) and no. 2 in G major (1912) – and his *Twelve Sketches* (1912). Exploring two large-scale piano works alongside Stanchinsky's biggest set of miniatures provides a comprehensive and varied insight into him as a composer.

The first part of the chapter focuses on Stanchinsky's continued efforts to enrich his tonalities. As seen in his previous works, his attempts to escape conventional tonality extended to include alternative scales and modes, highly chromatic idioms and pandiatonicism. Although Stanchinsky continued to work with chromatic scales, his use of twelve-tone harmony was comparatively limited, and his pieces remained bound within a tonal framework. Much more frequently, he turned to a direct juxtaposition of diatonicism and chromaticism, as well as an increased use of non-standard scalic constructions which included a particular synthetic scale dubbed the 'Stanchinsky mode'.

The second part of this chapter explores Stanchinsky's rhythms, which are more adventurous than seen in his earlier works. In these pieces, he incorporates more frequent use of uneven

[1] Irina Lopatina, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914)', in *A. Stanchinsky: Sochineniya*, ed. by Irina Lopatina, trans. by Valery Yerokhin (Moscow: Muzyka, 1990), IX, pp. 7–8 (p. 7).

metres, irregular accents and juxtapositions of beaming and barring. Even in works with stable, motoric rhythms, Stanchinsky teases the listener with the fragmentation of phrases and implied polymetres between the right and the left hands. In contrast to his first piano works, which were largely pervaded by lyricism and melancholy, pieces from this time are more likely to incorporate mischief and humour created by varied phrase lengths and lively *tempo* indications.

The final part of this chapter examines Stanchinsky's continued work with counterpoint, which he used to create particularly complex and intricate pianistic textures the likes of which are rarely seen in piano literature. Stanchinsky developed a unique way of writing for piano, which sometimes included SATB-style textures and at others had an almost orchestral quality. In his sonatas and the *Twelve Sketches*, we again see his penchant for wide spacings, both in his melodic writing and his use of piano tessitura. In surveying the characteristic qualities of Stanchinsky's music from this period, this chapter observes both the tendencies which evolved with time and the traits which endured.

Tonal Enrichments

Stanchinsky's work on enriching tonalities during this time incorporates several different methods. He uses modes, as well as highly chromatic idioms and pandiatonicism to obscure tonal centres, and he also juxtaposes his embryonic approach to twelve-tone writing with diatonicism to create interesting harmonic effects between the right and the left hands. In the *Twelve Sketches*, we also see his increasing use of a synthetic scale which included both a lowered 2nd and a raised 4th degree (the 'Stanchinsky mode') in order to create distinctive harmonies. The *Twelve Sketches* have been praised as a 'microcosm of Stanchinsky's world' 'which puts Shostakovich's op. 1 "Fantastic Dances" well into shade, and which many of the established masters would have been happy to produce.'[2] It is this author's assumption that this set of piano miniatures may have influenced other composers to write cycles of short character pieces, such as Prokofiev's *Visions Fugitives* (1915-1917) and Myaskovsky's *Prichudi*, op. 25 (1917-1922), although the latter were probably influenced as much by Prokofiev as Stanchinsky. The distinctive *Twelve Sketches* remain popular among performers; most pianists who have recorded Stanchinsky's music have chosen to make the *Twelve Sketches* central to

[2] Larry Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed Russian Avant-Garde, 1900-1929* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. 34.

their CD programmes.[3] We may assume that Stanchinsky himself also deemed the set highly valuable, as the pieces were chosen by him to be published as his op. 1 – his only *opus* to be published within his lifetime.[4]

Stanchinsky's letters show that the original working title of these compositions was *Exercices* (in French), but Zhilyayev thought that the title did not suit the compositions and in 1912 suggested renaming them *Esquisses*.[5] This title is a more fitting description of these works, as the *Sketches* are not exercises for finger technique, but rather individual explorations of distinctive musical ideas. Suites of small pieces were popular in the twentieth century and were written by many composers including Debussy (*Préludes*, 1909-1910; 1912-1913), Schoenberg (*Sechs kleine Klavierstücke*, op. 19, 1911) and Bartók (*Sketches*, op. 9b, 1908-10). As the title of Stanchinsky's *Esquisses* was conceived in French, it also raises the question of whether the set was inspired by Debussy's *D'un cahier d'esquisses* or Alkan's *Esquisses* op. 63. It is notable that, just like Stanchinsky's *Sketches*, neither of these sets are focused on pianistic virtuosity, but rather on more intimate, evocative piano writing. Roger Nicholls describes Debussy's *D'un cahier d'esquisses* as relying on a 'free association of ideas'.[6] Such explanation is also fitting to describe Stanchinsky's *Sketches*. While individual sketches are largely consistent in their musical ideas, the set as a whole demonstrates numerous contrasting musical characters, resulting in an eclectic set. The implication of the new title *Esquisses* also reflects on the characteristics of the pieces: a suggestion of something still in progress – unfinished and yet to take final shape – which is not fully revealed until the process of sketching is finished. The term is closely associated with artistic fashions of the time and as such the pieces can be considered to evoke images which extend beyond the notes. However, unlike Debussy, a composer 'with such a fascination for visual art, who gave his pieces visual titles and who pondered the techniques of visual art in relation to his own musical composition', Stanchinsky's *Esquisses* do not have visual or programmatic titles.[7]

[3] For a full list of CD releases of Stanchinsky's works, see Discography.
[4] Only the first four were published within Stanchinsky's lifetime (in 1913), with two subsequent sets published in 1915 (nos. 5-8) and 1917 (nos. 9-12).
[5] Zhilyayev to Stanchinsky, RNMM, 239/220, 17 May 1912.
[6] Roger Nichols, 'Debussy/Steven Osborne (Piano)' (Hyperion records, CDA68161, 2017).
[7] Paul Roberts, *Images: The Piano Music of Claude Debussy* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1996), p. 42.

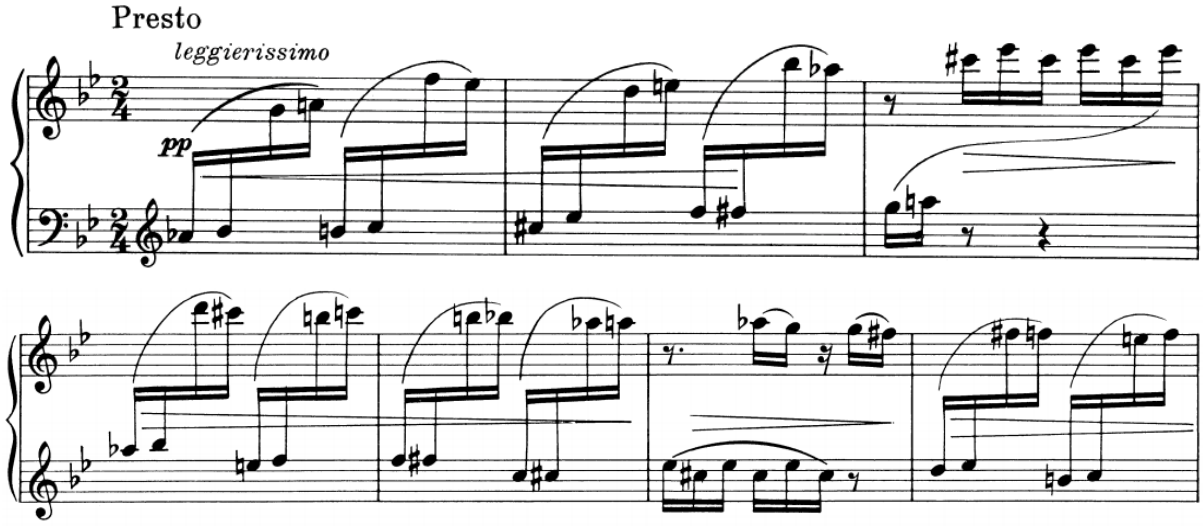
Figure 4.a: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*.[8]

No.	Key	Tempo	Time signature
1.	C minor	*Moderato*	5/4
2.	G minor	*Presto*	2/4
3.	D major	*Vivace*	3/4
4.	E Phrygian	*Lento cantabile*	2/4
5.	A♭ major	*Allegro*	11/8
6.	D Dorian	*Andante epico*	17/8 (4+4+5+4)
7.	C♭ major	*Adagio teneramente*	10/8
8.	G♯ minor	*Molto vivace*	9/4
9.	D minor	*Largamente*	12/8
10.	A major	*Con moto*	2/16
11.	F♯ minor	*Allegro con spirito*	7/4
12.	C major	*Presto assai*	6/8

Although Stanchinsky continued to work on enriching tonalities during this time, highly chromatic writing is not widely used in the *Sketches* and, where it is used, it remains grounded within a tonal framework. The most prominent example of Stanchinsky's embryonic use of twelve-tone writing is seen in the second sketch. While Stanchinsky is still thinking tonally in this work – there is a key signature – all twelve tones are presented within the first two bars. (Example 4.1) Due to this chromatic saturation, this sketch has little sense of a tonal centre: there are hardly any suggestions that G is the tonic key until the very end of the piece. The middle section is perhaps the most tonal: it presents a few significant clues as to the work's home key, yet aurally its tonic is still indeterminable. Despite the G which punctuates the bass part every few bars (bars 30, 33, 36, 40), the rising melody in fourths amid chromatic semiquavers continues to obscure the tonal centre.

[8] Likely to have been numbered by Stanchinsky himself. The key designations have been added by the present author, although in several pieces tonality is fleeting and obscure until the very last bar.

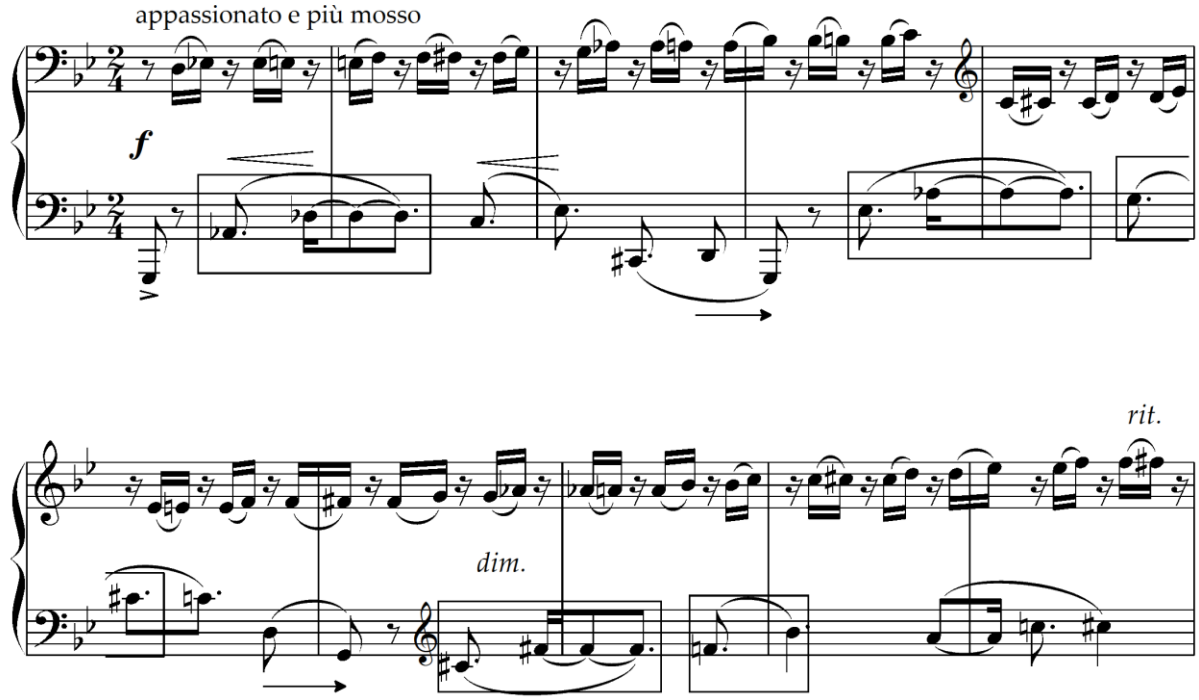
Example 4.1: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 2, bars 1-7.



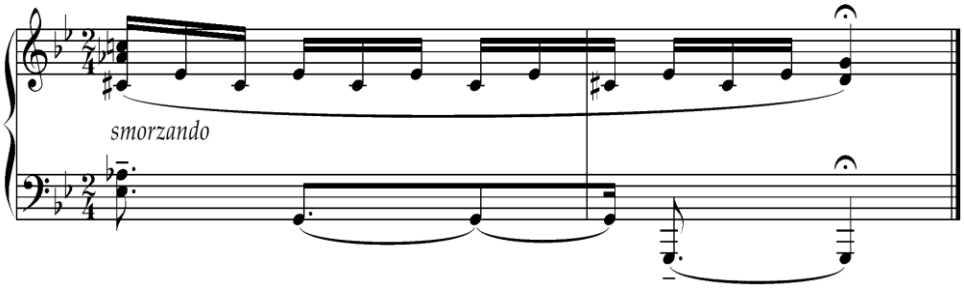
The melodic elements which emerge in the middle part of this sketch highlight the importance of the fourth – an interval used notably in the *Scottish Songs*, and which is emphasised more frequently within Stanchinsky's *oeuvre* from this point onwards. (Example 4.2) This interval is further accentuated in the final bar of the piece, which ends with an open fourth in the right hand. (Example 4.3) Typically, for Stanchinsky, he does not resolve the final cadence through a dominant-tonic progression, but instead chooses to do so chromatically – a tendency which first emerged in his earlier pieces, such as Prelude in A♭ major/F minor (1907). A diminished sixth in the penultimate bar, which contracts to the final interval of a fourth (C♯-A♭ to D-G), draws attention to the 'Stanchinsky mode' while, in the left hand, the A♭ descends by a semitone to G. The C♯ and E♭ in the penultimate bar are displacements of the dominant (D), reminiscent of the cadential technique and the French-sixth sonority found in the Prelude in A♭ major/F minor. The end of the sketch contains an E♭, a C♯, and a G. The addition of an A♮ would create a French sixth, but instead Stanchinsky chromatically displaces this note with an A♭ – a technique which foreshadows similar chromatic displacements found in Prokofiev's music, such as his Piano Concerto no. 2 (1913/1923).[9]

[9] For more, see Richard Bass, 'Prokofiev's Technique of Chromatic Displacement', *Music Analysis*, 7.2 (1988), 197–214 <https://doi.org/10.2307/854056>

Example 4.2: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 2, bars 30-39.



Example 4.3: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 2, bars 50-51.



Pandiatonicism and Modality

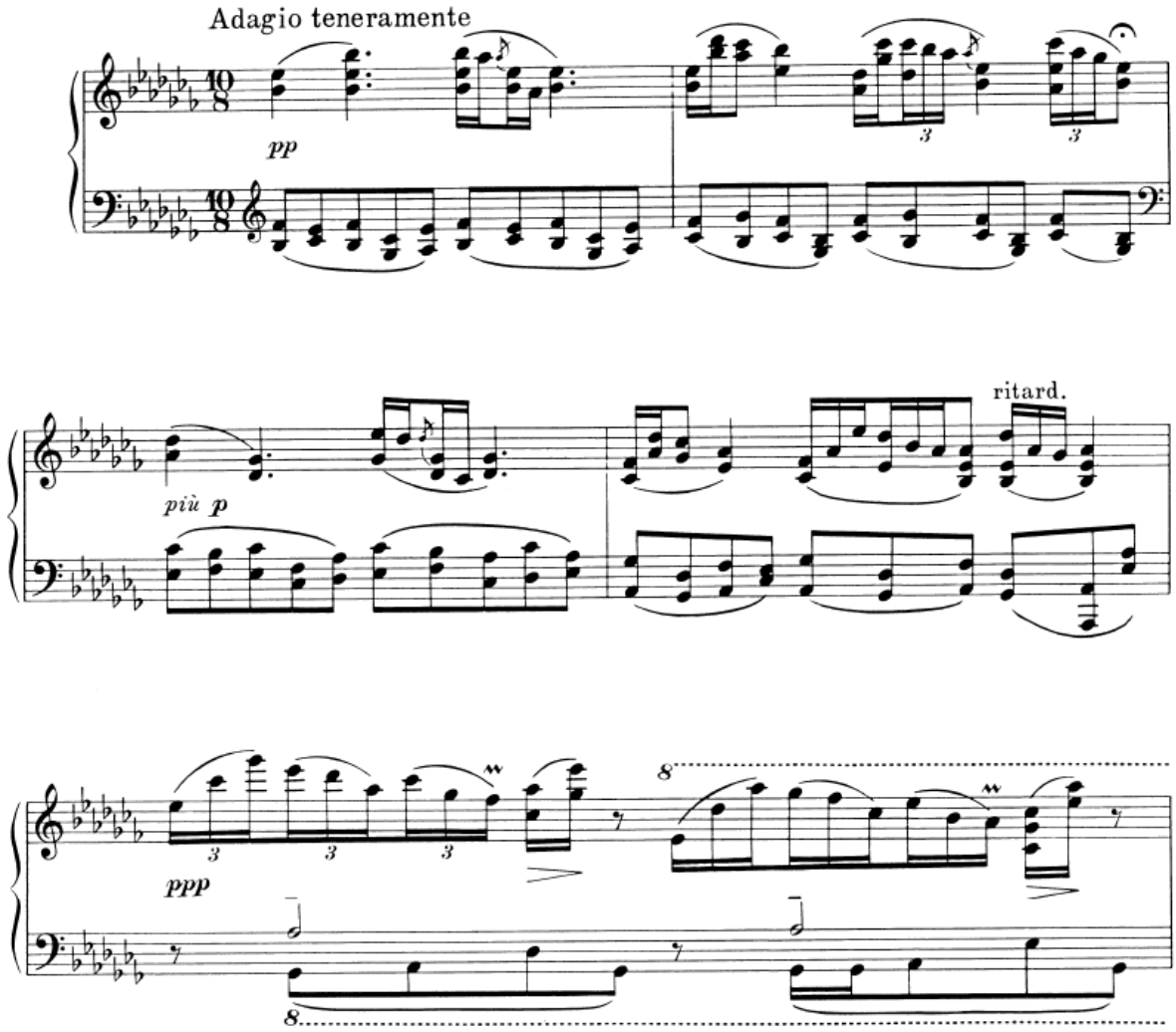
Stanchinsky's work on tonal enrichment differs from some of his contemporaries (notably, the Second Viennese School) in that he never crossed into atonality. Far more frequent than twelve-tone writing is his use of pandiatonicism, which he employed to obscure tonal centres. While other pieces exploring diatonicism were written around this time – Debussy's *Les Collines d'Anacapri* (from Book 1 of the *Préludes*), for example, much of which is 'purely and placidly' diatonic – it is rare to encounter a piece from this time which does not contain a single

accidental.[10] We find that two of the *Twelve Sketches* are written with no chromatic alterations, while many other pieces in his *oeuvre* contain extended sections composed entirely diatonically. This way of writing has two notable considerations. Firstly, this approach may have been influenced by Taneyev, who advocated against the 'tonal system [...] being reborn into a new system that seeks to destroy tonality and substitute the diatonic basis of harmony with chromaticism.'[11] On the other hand, Stanchinsky's diatonic writing was going against contemporary developments, such as those found in the work of Scriabin or Schoenberg. In retrospect, we can appreciate this as a forward-thinking development, as Stanchinsky was foreshadowing works by composers who also came to seek new tonal alternatives to complex chromaticism, such as Prokofiev (Piano Concerto no. 3, 1917-1921) and Stravinsky (e.g., *Pulcinella*, 1920).

An example of an entirely diatonic work by Stanchinsky is the seventh of his *Twelve Sketches*. In some respects, the work is similar to Debussy's *Les Collines d'Anacapri*, although its effect is different because of the slow tempo. While the striking pandiatonic opening in Debussy's piece gives way to a more tonally stable piece, Stanchinsky's use of pandiatonicism is more unusual. The idea behind this sketch appears to be one of becoming: the piece is shaped through wandering tonalities which settle on different gravitational centres, reflecting the process of sketching. The opening five bars are focused on the regions of E♭ and A♭: the first two bars have a B♭ pedal and arrive at E♭ at the end of bar 2, while bars 3-4 have an E♭ pedal and arrive at A♭ at the end of bar 4. Bar 5 is a compression of what has come before, progressing from E♭ to A♭ within the space of a single bar. (Example 4.4) Thus, the first half of this sketch presents two potential tonal centres of gravity, both of which are coloured with modality. As the sketch is entirely diatonic, the A♭ minor is in its natural mode, while the centre of E♭ has a Phrygian colour.

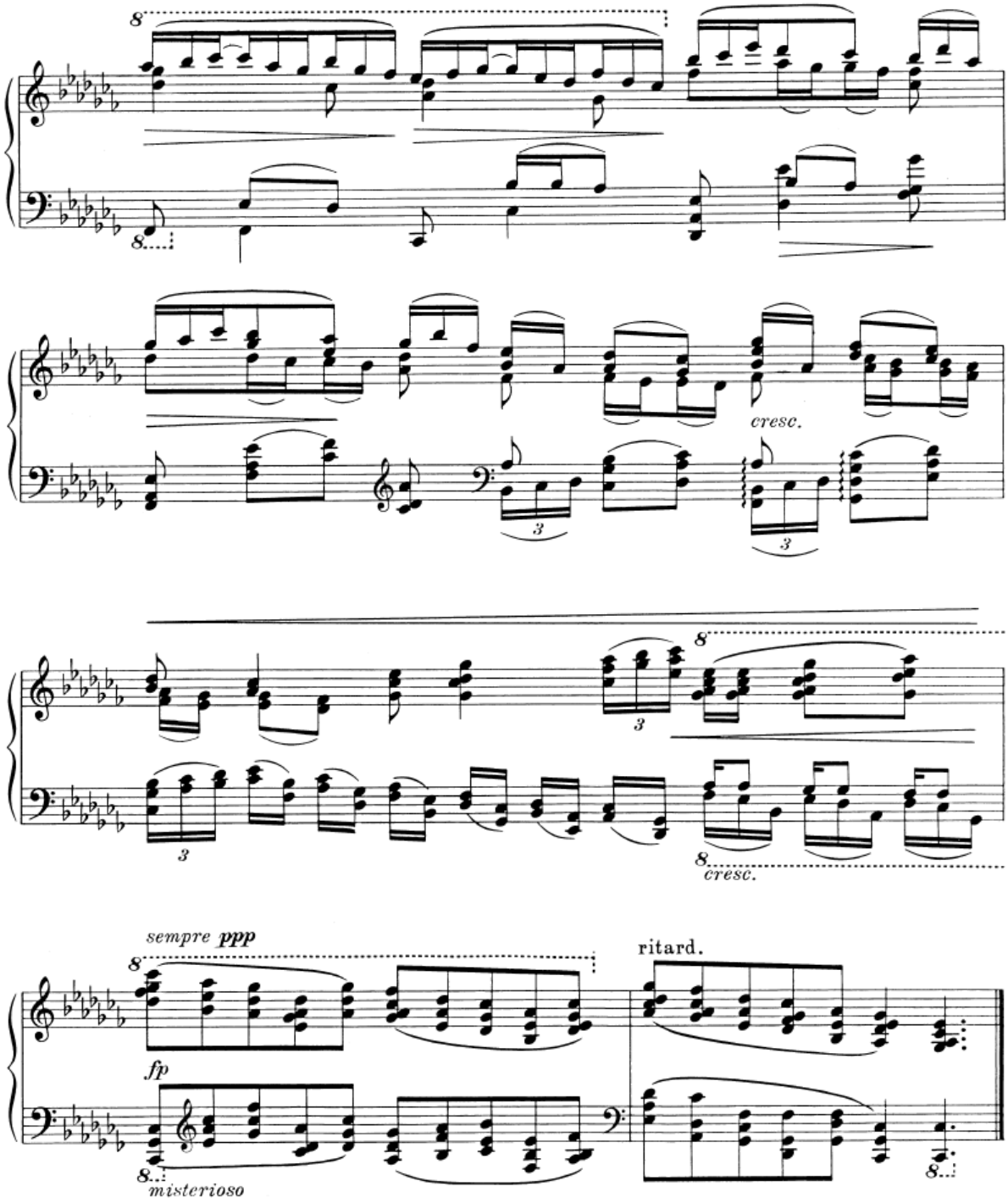
[10] Dmitri Tymoczko, 'Scale Networks and Debussy', *Journal of Music Theory*, 48.2 (2004), 219–94 (p. 247) <https://doi.org/10.1215/00222909-48-2-219>
[11] Taneyev quoted in Philip Ewell, 'On the Russian Concept of Lād, 1830–1945', *Music Theory Online*, 25.4, 3.11 (2019) <https://doi.org/10.30535/mto.25.4.4>

Example 4.4: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 7, bars 1-5.



Tonal discovery continues in the second half of this sketch and, while the piece goes out of its way to avoid common chords, we can pick out emphases on F♭ and C♭ from bar six. From bar eight, the F♭s are dropped and replaced by G♭s, yet throughout these progressions the piece shows no clear tonal centre. The beginning of bar nine is the first point at which the music lands on a C♭ chord; this is where the piece settles and eventually ends. (Example 4.5)

Example 4.5: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 7, bars 6-10.



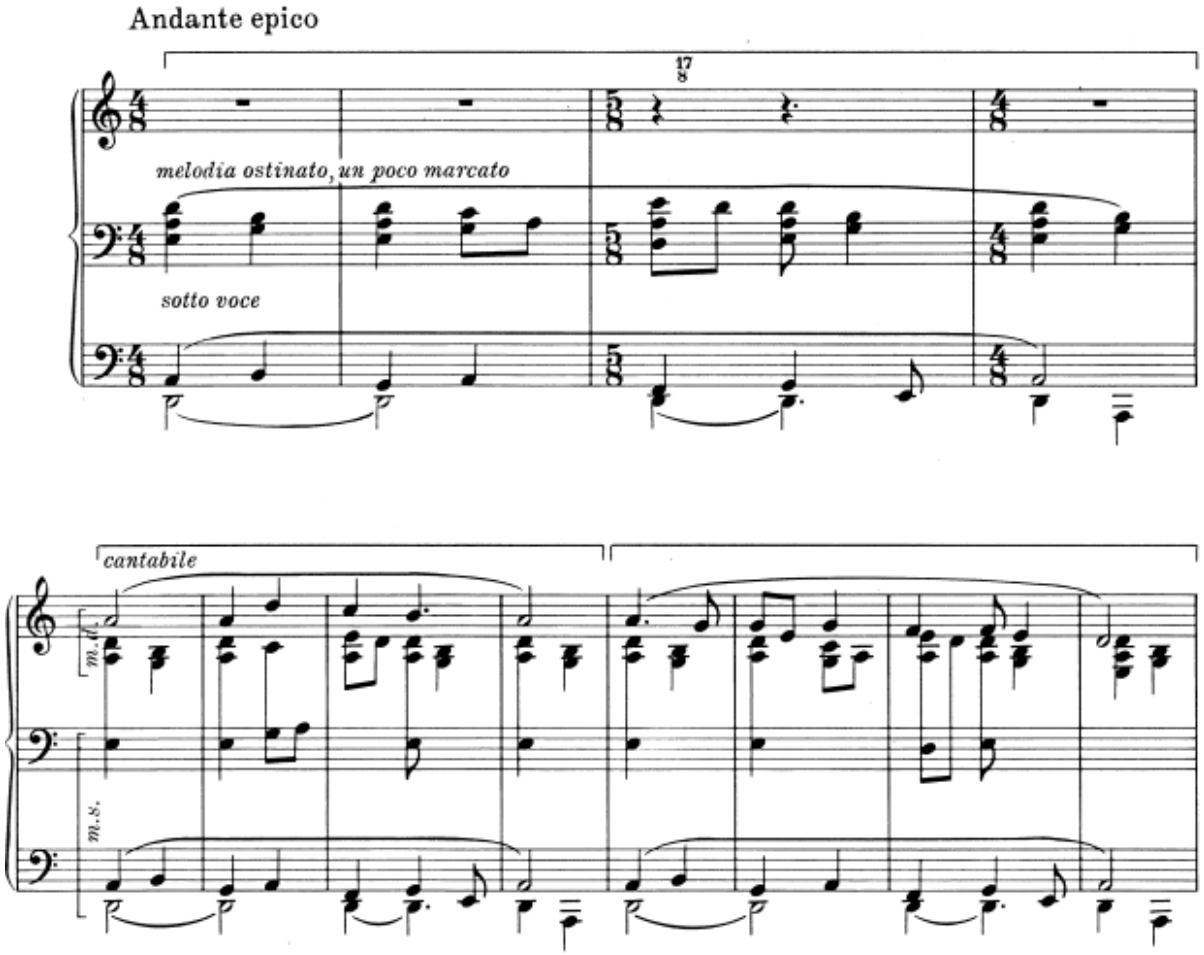
The revelation of C♭ as the final, tonic key of the sketch provides further evidence that this is the piece's tonal centre. Thus, a parallel may be drawn between this sketch and the second one (discussed previously), as both go through a process of tonal discovery, albeit in sharply contrasting tonal contexts. Arguably, the process in the seventh sketch is more original as its

pandiatonic context sits in opposition to the mainstream, modernist preoccupation with chromatic harmony at this time.

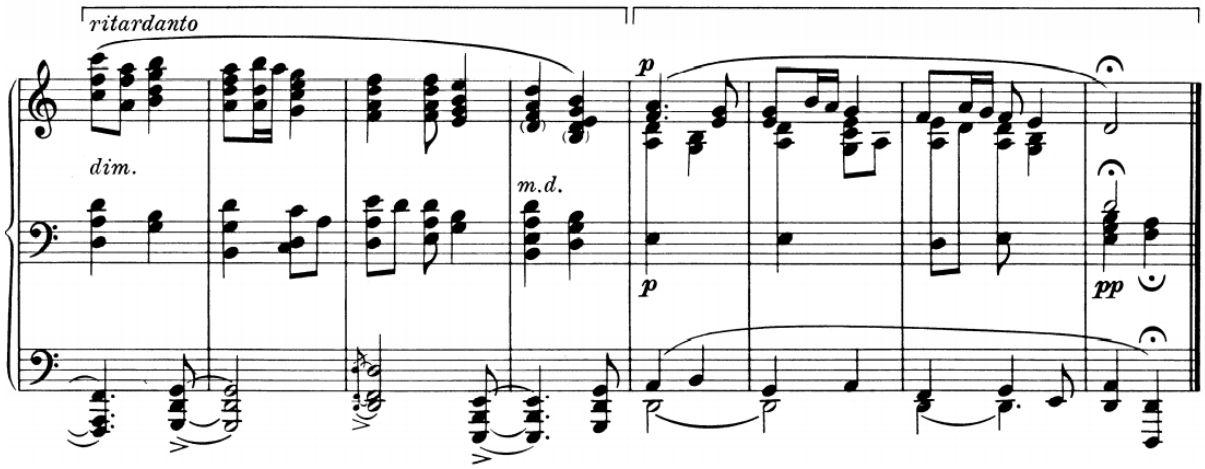
The sixth of Stanchinksy's *Twelve Sketches* is also written entirely within a diatonic/modal framework. Here, diatonicism is not used to obscure the tonal centre but rather to establish harmonic stability. Alekseyev notes that the use of modality in this sketch evokes the style of Borodin and demonstrates a clear connection with the Kuchkists but, nonetheless, it is not a pastiche and the music is composed in a fresh and individual way.[12] Set in D Dorian, the sketch employs *ostinato* patterns which underpin its harmonic structure, with Loginova observing that the '*ostinato* principles receive a peculiar transformation'.[13] The first five phrases (bars 1-20) employ near-identical *ostinato* structures in the bottom voice, with small changes applied to the ends of the phrases. Bars 21-28 see harmonic changes in this voice, but the melodic root of the *ostinato* pattern remains largely the same. The middle voice is largely consistent throughout the whole of the sketch: first introduced at the outset, its pattern recedes into the background from bar five and continues to accompany the melodic line until the very end. (Example 4.6) The consistency of these *ostinati* create stability in the sketch's harmony: a D pedal is present throughout the first twenty bars and returns towards the end (bars 41-44), while the modality of the sketch weakens harmonic tension. Even the final cadence, reached by a step through chord ii, is noticeably static and tension-free. (Example 4.7)

[12] A. D. Alekseyev, *Russkaya fortepiannaya muzyka: konets XIX – nachalo XX veka* (Moscow: Nauka, 1969), p. 354.
[13] Valentina Aleksandrovna Loginova, 'O muzykal'noy kompozitsii nachala XX veka: k probleme avtorskogo stilya V. Rebikov, N. Tcherepnin, A. Stanchinsky' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Rossiyskaya akademiya muzyki imeni Gnesinykh, 2002), p. 141.

Example 4.6: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 6, bars 1-4.



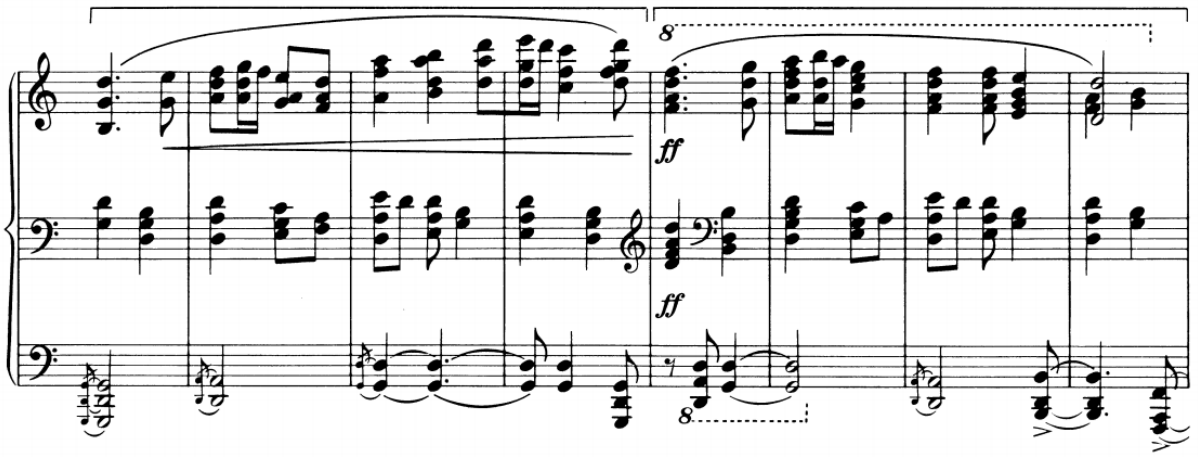
Example 4.7: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 6, bars 37-44.



The sketch's stable harmony and repetitive rhythms reduce any real sense of forward movement, and its *ostinati* create a meditative effect which allows the melody in the upper voice to take primacy. The piece thus appears to be written as an exercise in harmonic stability, which evokes a comparison with the fourth of Stanchinsky's *Scottish Songs*, which is set almost entirely under a single D chord and was examined in the previous chapter. Instead of harmonic tension, forward movement is created through a continuous growth in texture: at the end of the sketch, the texture and tessitura are so complex that the chords must be staggered. (See example 4.7)

While discussing this piece, is it also worth briefly mentioning its metre (a more in-depth discussion about Stanchinsky's rhythmic development is found later in this chapter). The piece is arranged into eleven phrases of four bars each, grouped together within an overarching metre of 17/8. This metre is used as a phrasing indicator: bars of four and five quavers are interchanged in a pattern of 4 + 4 + 5 + 4, which is applied consistently within the sketch. It thus appears that the function of the 17/8 metre is to simplify the notational system: as the pattern of 4 + 4 + 5 + 4 is entirely consistent, the 17/8 mark serves as a reminder of the 5/8 bars without the need for time signature changes to be written in. While most of the rhythms of this sketch fall neatly within the bar lines, an exception occurs in bars 31-32. Here, the top voice changes the pattern to 4 + 4 + 4 + 5, thus disregarding the bar lines and implying polymetres between the different voices. (Example 4.8) This sketch is the only one of Stanchinsky's works in which metres are continuously interchanged, and his use of an overarching metre to stabilise them signals that, despite his rhythmic advancements, he was not willing to completely depart from older models.

Example 4.8: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 6, bars 29-36.



In the other sketches, chromaticism and diatonicism are directly and purposefully juxtaposed. In the eighth sketch, for example, a chromatic pattern in the right hand is juxtaposed with a tonal bass part in the left. (Example 4.9) This sketch pays particular importance to semitones, tones and fifths in its melodic and harmonic structures and, within the juxtaposition of the right hand's relative harmonic freedom and the left hand's tonic and dominant notes, we can distinguish what appears to be a descending whole-tone scale outlined by the notes falling on the beat. (Figure 4.b) However, the presence of the G sharp negates any whole-tone effect and, instead, the A natural creates more of a Neapolitan flavour. A particularly striking contrast is achieved in the right-hand's melody via changes from whole-tones (basic idea, bars 1-2) to semitones arranged in circular patterns (contrasting idea, bars 3-4). Both the accompaniment part and the melodic line show a strong reliance on fifths, especially at the ends of bars – a feature which is both largely consistent within this sketch and a characteristic trait of Stanchinsky's works more generally.

Example 4.9: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 8, bars 1-4.

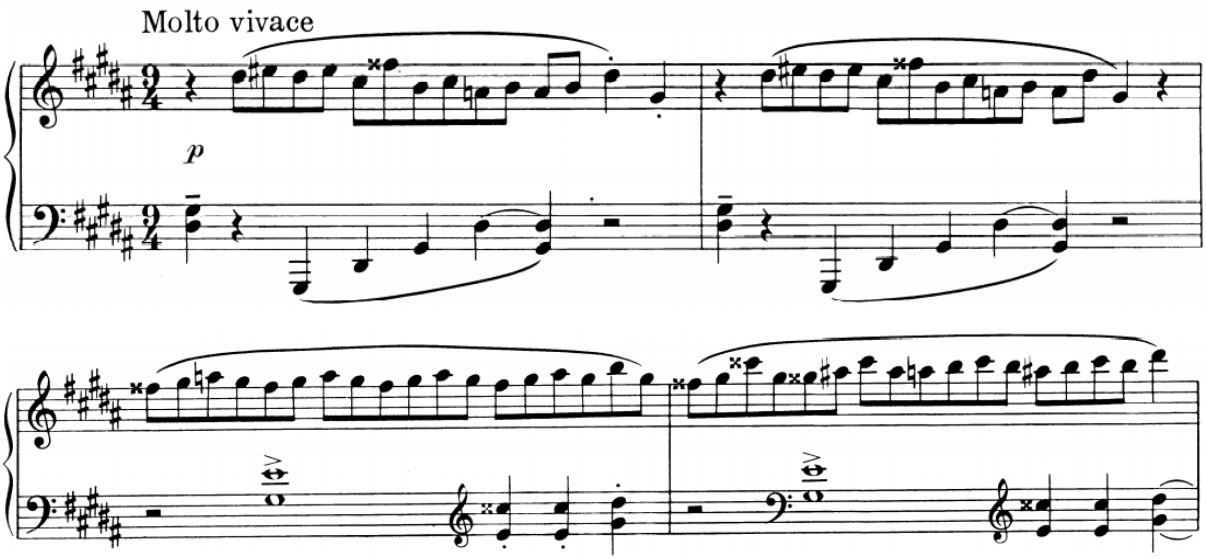
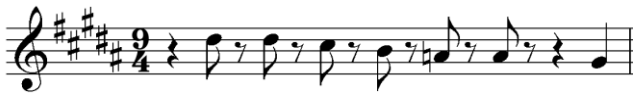


Figure 4.b: Descending line in Stanchinsky's *Sketch* no. 8, bar 1.



The 'Stanchinsky Mode'

As well as working with diatonic and chromatic scales and modes, during the years 1911-1912, Stanchinsky worked with other non-standard scalic constructions and applied symmetrical patterns to the structuring of synthetic scales within individual compositions. In particular, his use of his favoured chromatic enrichments – lowered 2nd and raised 4th degrees – increased. Due to Stanchinsky's special predilection for these chromatic alterations and their frequent use in his works, it appears fitting to nickname this scale the 'Stanchinsky mode'.

In discussing the application of the 'Stanchinsky mode', it is worth briefly returning to its first, though embryonic, use in the Prelude and Fugue (discussed in more detail in the previous chapter). (Figure 4.c) Powell notes that the alterations of lowered 2nd and raised 4th degrees create a kind of symmetry within the scale.[14] He proposes that the symmetry axes are centred

[14] Jonathan Anthony Powell, 'After Scriabin: Six Composers and the Development of Russian Music' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1999), p. 40.

on tonic and dominant pitches (G and D in the Prelude), with chromatic clusters (semitone below and semitone above) placed around these tones. (Figure 4.d) This explanation has merit in that it considers Stanchinsky's fondness of symmetry, which is evident in his interest in strict and invertible counterpoint. However, it is only partially satisfactory as it fails to account for the now unconfined third degree (in this case, B♭).

Figure 4.c: The 'Stanchinsky mode' in Stanchinsky's Prelude from Prelude and Fugue.

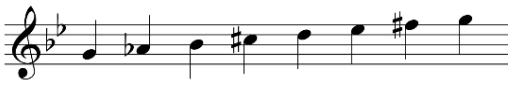
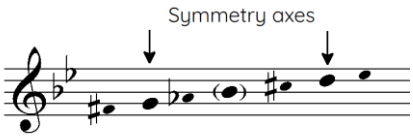


Figure 4.d: Symmetry axes in the 'Stanchinsky mode', according to Powell.



The 'Stanchinsky mode's' alterations are key qualities in folk modes: the lowered 2nd is a feature of the Phrygian mode, while the raised 4th is characteristic of the Lydian mode. There are also links with other, alternative scales used by Russian composers: the lowered 2nd is the first interval of the Korsakovian octatonic scale (starting with semitone-tone, as discussed in more detail below with respect to the first of Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*), and the raised 4th is found in the acoustic scale (raised 4th, lowered 7th) which was favoured by Scriabin. Stanchinsky mostly applied these chromatic alterations to minor scales in his works, with the single exception of his twelfth sketch where he applied them to a major scale. The lowered 2nd and raised 4th degrees of a major mode also form the first tetrachord of the 'Hungarian' scale (where the second tetrachord is a symmetrical mirror of the first), which is listed under 'Scales Symmetrically Inverted' in Bernhard Ziehn's *Canonic Studies* (first published in 1912).[15] While this research has found no evidence that Stanchinsky knew Ziehn's work, I expect that Taneyev may have had a copy of his book, and that Stanchinsky would have enjoyed studying this if he had managed to obtain it through his teacher. It is also possible that Yavorsky may have had an influence on the development of this scale, as two of his books – *Structure of Musical Speech* (1908) and *Exercises in Voice Leading* (1913) – were published within

[15] Bernard Ziehn, *Canonic Studies* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1976).

Stanchinsky's lifetime. (Stanchinsky also met Yavorsky, although this meeting did not take place until 1914.)

Boleslav Yavorsky (1877-1942) has been credited as 'the first Russian theorist to create a system applying to all music' (despite being born in Ukraine), as he sought to 'replace the entire corpus of traditional theory with one based on a single principle, the operation of the tritone'.[16] Despite falling short of his unifying aim, Yavorsky's body of thought – put forward in his 'theory of modal rhythm' which separates consonance and dissonance from stability and instability – remained highly influential in twentieth-century Russian musicology.[17] Yavorsky's work on lads (or modes, to oversimplify its meaning for the purposes of this discussion) proposed a new hierarchical status for pitch systems:

> In contrast to the traditional bi--ladovy [bi-modal] European major-minor system, [Yavorsky] made a case for a multiplicity of lads [... which allowed] Russian musicology to understand the pitch systems of music that move beyond the limits of major and minor not in terms of unorganized [sic] 'atonality' but, rather, in terms of special lads. Yavorsky divided the concepts of lad and tonality (a concrete pitch organization on the one hand, and its position on a given pitch level on the other.[18]

Stanchinsky's use of an alternative, synthetic mode might be a response to some of Yavorsky's ideas. Bazayev writes that even though 'early definitions simply described modes [lads] as diatonic scales, later definitions expanded and altered the concept, applying it to the non-tonal music of Scriabin, Prokofiev, and Shostakovich.'[19] Indeed, many Russian theorists discussed the concept of lads, including Aleksey Ogolevets, Aleksandr Dolzhansky, Miroslav Skorik, and Yuri Kholopov, although these theoretical discussions took place after Stanchinsky's death.[20]

While there are many potential sources of inspiration for the 'Stanchinsky mode', his persistence in using this scale suggests that the invention of new modes and harmonies to enrich tonal systems was a priority for Stanchinsky. This was not unusual at the time, and even

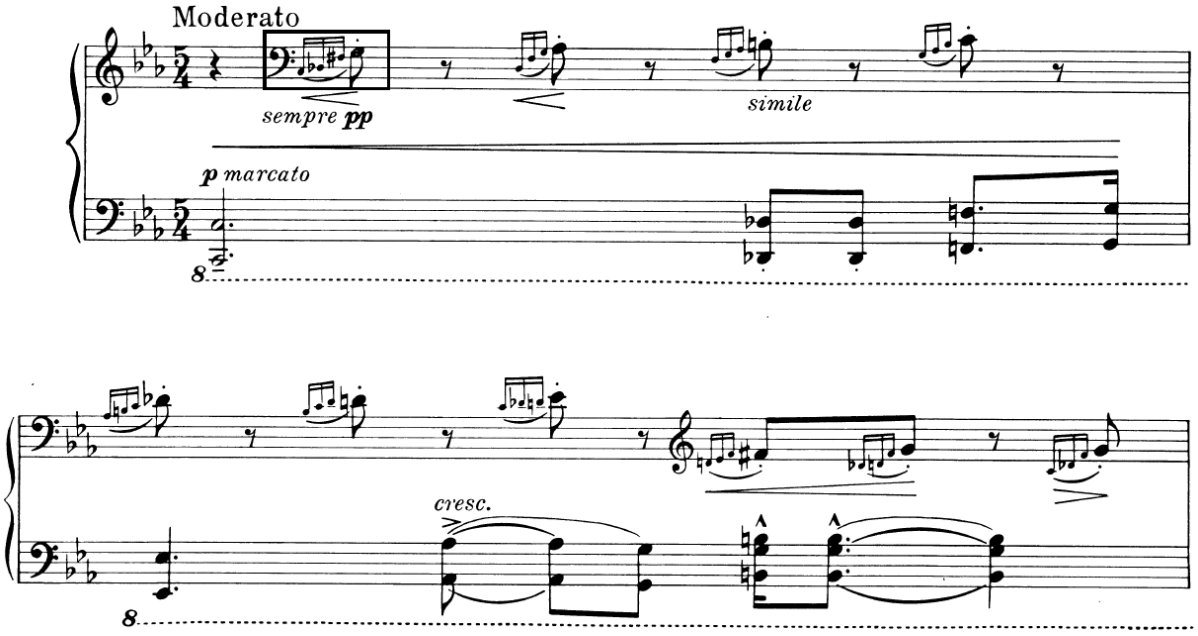
[16] Gordon D. McQuere, 'The Theories of Boleslav Yavorsky', in *Russian Theoretical Thought in Music*, ed. by Gordon D. McQuere (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1983), pp. 109–64 (p. 109).
[17] Gordon D. McQuere, 'The Theories of Boleslav Yavorsky', p. 109.
[18] Kholopov quoted in Philip Ewell, 'On the Russian Concept of Lād, 1830–1945', *Music Theory Online*, 25.4, 3.4 (2019) < https://doi.org/10.30535/mto.25.4.4>
[19] Inessa Bazayev, 'The Expansion of the Concept of Mode in Twentieth-Century Russian Music Theory', *Music Theory Online*, 20.3, 1.2 (2014) <https://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.14.20.3/mto.14.20.3.bazayev.html> [accessed 4 October 2024].
[20] Ibid.

composers of the previous generation – such as Rimsky-Korsakov – were looking to expand on established harmonic models. In 1901, after considering the possibilities in a letter, Rimsky-Korsakov triumphantly proclaimed: 'There still is powder in the flask [...] there are still new harmonies under the sun.'[21] The creation of new harmonic systems was, therefore, also important to Russian composers more generally during the early twentieth century.

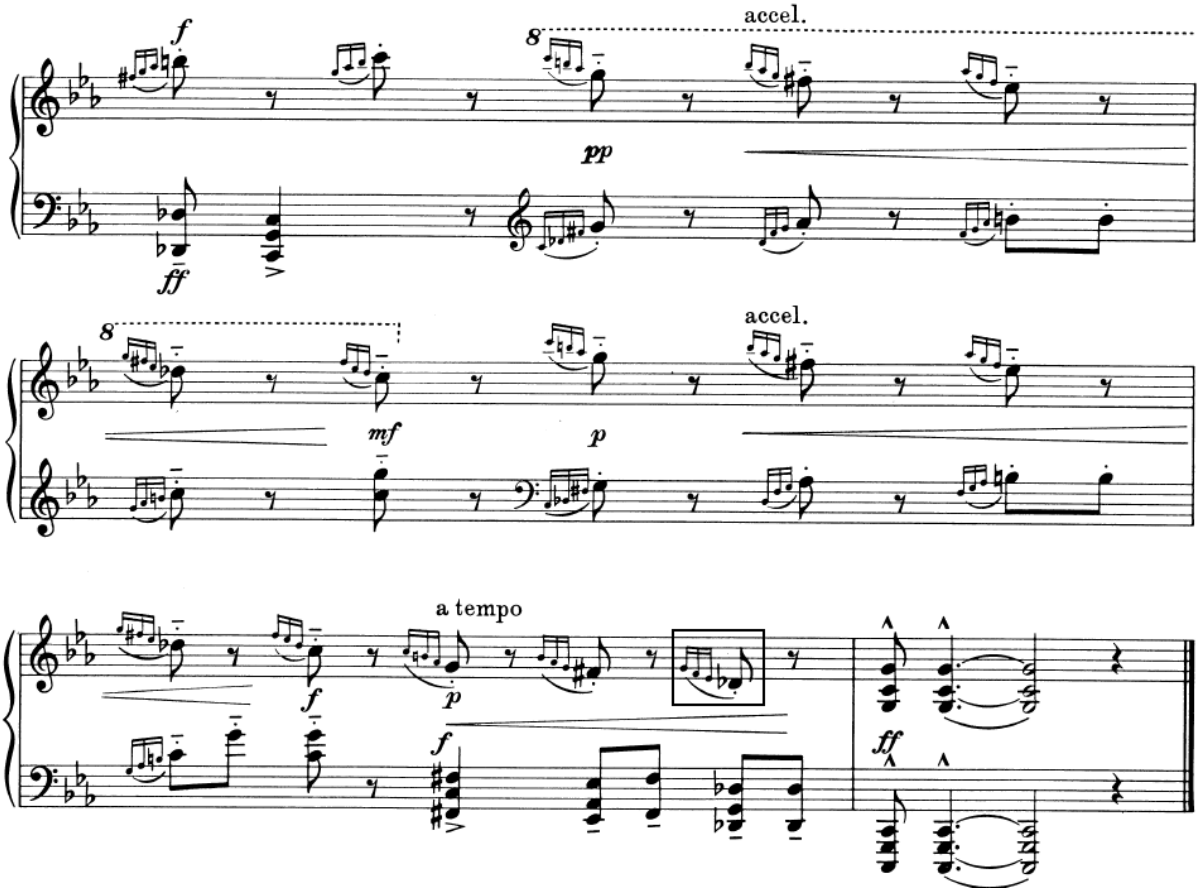
The first of Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, for example, employs the 'Stanchinsky mode' throughout, and symmetry is one of its principle harmonic and structural features. The sketch commands attention with its austere gestures: a continuous melodic line doubled in octaves (the theme) is contrasted by a staccato quaver figure, decorated with preceding grace notes, which runs continuously throughout (the accompaniment). This latter motif is reminiscent of some of the patterns found at the opening of Scriabin's fifth sonata (1907, bars 3-11), and in Stanchinsky's sketch its addition provides the piece with a sense of elegance and lightness. Although functioning as an accompaniment, this grace-note gesture is the more prominent idea within the sketch, and it is used to symmetrically frame it. Its first entry – in the right hand in bar 1 – is comprised of the pitches C-D♭-F♯-G (example 4.10), while its final appearance in bar 18 closes the movement with G-F♯-E♭- D♭, leading towards C in the final bar. (Example 4.11) This neat symmetry between the opening and closing material emphasises the 'Stanchinsky mode' and provides sufficient closure to the movement, in a typical Stanchinsky fashion, without a traditional cadence. The chromatic descent D♭-C takes the role of the final cadence, while the final chords, constructed from three fifths C-G, conclude the piece without confirming the home key's major/minor quality.

[21] Quoted in Richard Taruskin, 'Chernomor to Kashchei: Harmonic Sorcery; Or, Stravinsky's "Angle"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 38.1 (1985), 72–142 (p. 117).

Example 4.10: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 1, bars 1-2.

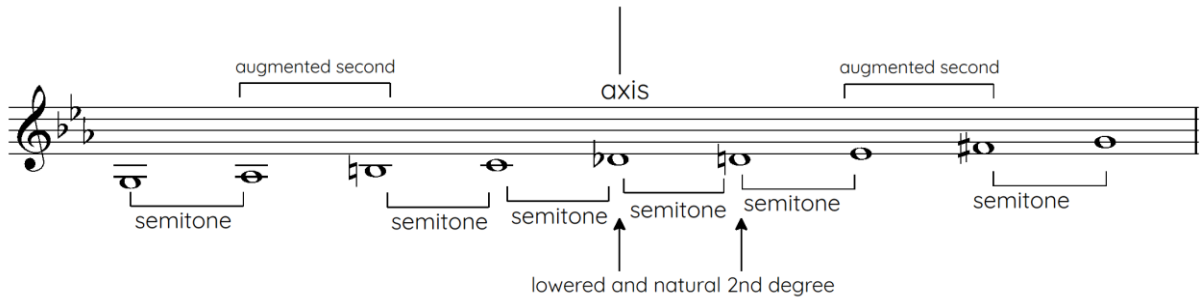


Example 4.11: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 1, bars 16-19.



Symmetry is also present in the scales Stanchinsky used to create the sketch's harmonic field. Powell has observed that the initial mode used in the right-hand part is symmetrical (C-D♭-F♯-G-A♭-B).[22] However, the symmetry in the melodic writing is more extensive than this; one example is the accompaniment line in bars 1-2 (once embellishments have been disregarded). (Example 4.12) This mode is closely related to the 'Stanchinsky mode' (lowered 2nd and raised 4th degrees), but the concurrent appearance of the lowered and natural 2nd degrees gives it an octatonic inflection, and its rearrangement (so that it starts on G) creates symmetry. Shifting the tonal centre within a given mode (and thus creating different harmonic fields while using the same pitches) is one of the ways in which Stanchinsky was experimenting with tonality.

Example 4.12: Symmetrical octatonic mode in Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 1, bars 1-2, RH.



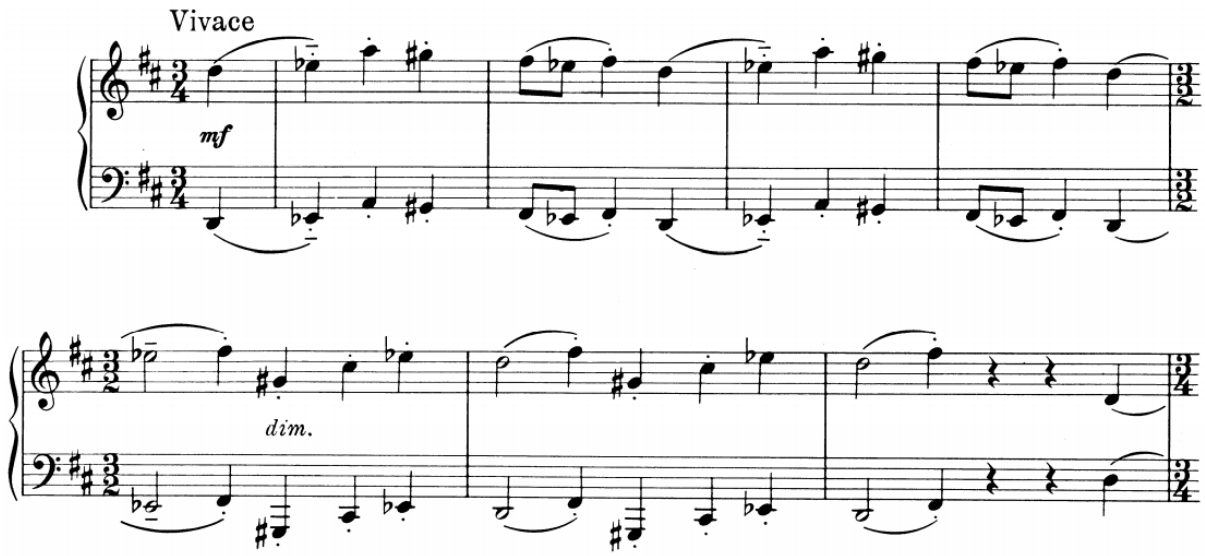
Octatonic scales were also used by other Russian composers, such as Rimsky-Korsakov and Stravinsky (Taruskin puts forward a case that it was Rimsky-Korsakov's use of these that influenced his disciple).[23] Owing to Rimsky-Korsakov's 'rich array of compositional and theoretical contributions', including his significant *Harmony Textbook* (1884), his work influenced many Russian composers of the early twentieth century, including Stravinsky.[24] Bazayev produced work which demonstrates that Prokofiev used 'the octatonic scale more extensively than has been recognized in both Russia and the West', '[at] first to demarcate short musical sections (Visions Fugitives, no. 3 [1915–17]) and later to define larger thematic material (Sonata no. 6 [1940]).'[25] Rimsky-Korsakov's favoured version of the octatonic scale (alternating semitones with tones, rather than vice versa) was dubbed 'Korsakovian' and has

[22] Symmetry axes around C and G with chromatic clusters (semitone below and semitone above) placed around these tones. Powell, 'After Scriabin', p. 40.
[23] Taruskin, 'Chernomor to Kashchei', pp. 72-142.
[24] Ewell, 'On Rimsky-Korsakov's False (Hexatonic) Progressions', p. 122.
[25] Inessa Bazayev, 'An Octatonic History of Prokofiev's Compositional Oeuvre', *Music Theory Online*, 20.3, 1.1 (2014) <https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.18.24.2/mto.18.24.2.bazayev.html> [accessed 4 October 2024].

been termed ‘characteristically Russian’ due to its ability to produce ‘a uniquely symmetrical collection of pitches’ which were frequently used by Russian composers, including Scriabin.[26] Although Stanchinsky’s style was sufficiently removed from Scriabin’s at this time, we may suppose that his interest in the application of this scale may have been influenced by this lineage.

The ‘Stanchinsky mode’ is applied in another three of the *Twelve Sketches* (nos. 3, 9 and 12), and these provide further points of interest to his work with tonality. In the third sketch, for example, these chromatic alterations are highlighted at the very outset and form the most prominent aspect of the melodic writing. (Example 4.13)

Example 4.13: Stanchinsky’s *Twelve Sketches*, no. 3, bars 1-4.

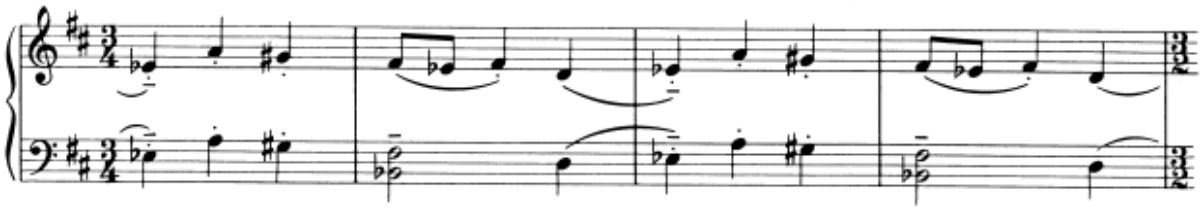


This sketch’s striking gestures and textures – which consist of both hands playing an angular, chromatic motif in unison, spaced across three octaves – have been described as ‘grotesque’ and a ‘dark demonic fantasy’.[27] This motif is retained for most of the piece, with changes in texture in the second half. This piece also has some particularly interesting harmonic alterations, such as the introduction of B♭ from bar 9, which is so piquant, that it could initially be mistaken for an error. (Example 4.14) This so-called wrong note has parallels with what

[26] Vasilis Kallis, ‘Demystifying the Mystic’, in *Demystifying Scriabin*, ed. by Kenneth Smith and Vasilis Kallis (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2022), pp. 134–57 (pp. 135-36).
[27] Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, p. 35; «мрачно-демоническая фантастика» Loginova, ‘O muzykal’noy kompozitsii’, p. 140.

Bazayev describes as Scriabin's 'atonal problem [...] a non-chord tone, which disrupts the balance of the collection [...] which the work is based on.'[28] Such tones create 'imbalance and unrest' and, as they remain unresolved, they leave 'a permanent mark on the musical body.'[29]

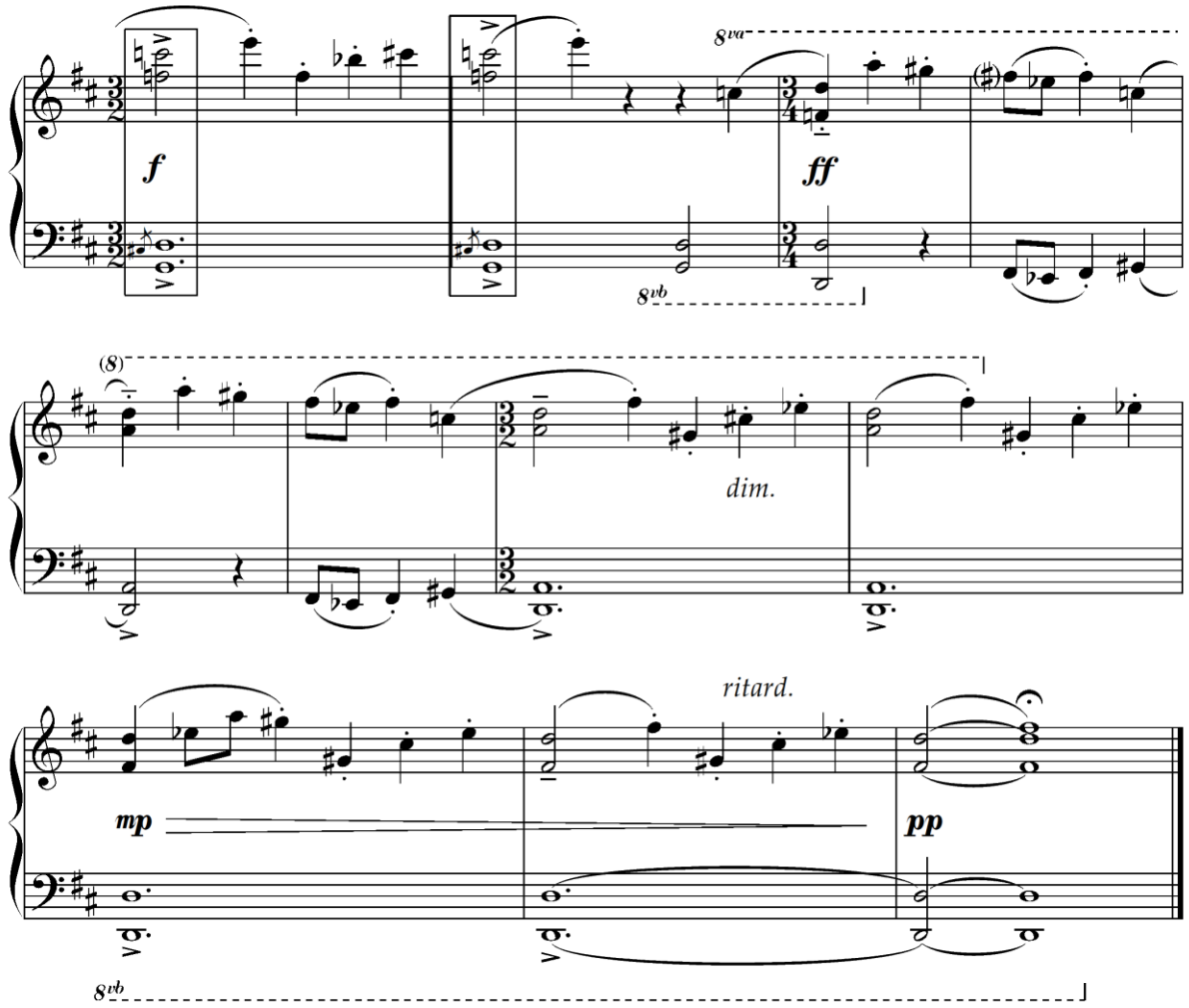
Example 4.14: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 3, bars 8-11.



Stanchinsky's evolving tonalities are further demonstrated by his juxtaposition of keys, such as in the second half of the sketch where he superimposes two fifths: G-D in the left hand and F-C in the right hand. (Example 4.15)

[28] Inessa Bazayev, 'Scriabin's Atonal Problem', *Music Theory Online*, 24.1, 1.1 (2018) <https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.18.24.1/mto.18.24.1.bazayev.html> [accessed 4 October 2024].
[29] Ibid.

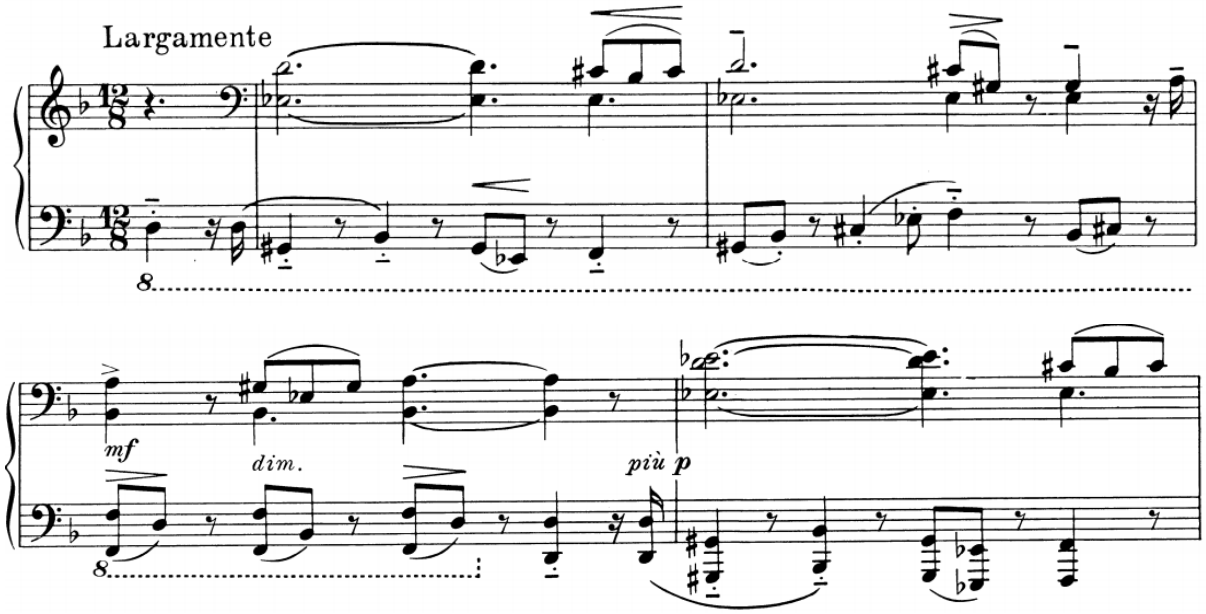
Example 4.15: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 3, bars 21-30.



The final structural cadence is also approached in an unusual way. Having progressed via a plagal relationship from G to D in the bass in bars 22-23, Stanchinsky lowers the leading tone (C♮) in bar 26 in preparation for the D in bar 27. This alleviates any potential dominant tension and creates a diminished melodic triad (C, E♭, F♯) in bar 26. The lack of dominant-tonic tension is significant as it demonstrates Stanchinsky's continued attempts to escape the boundaries of conventional harmonic structures.

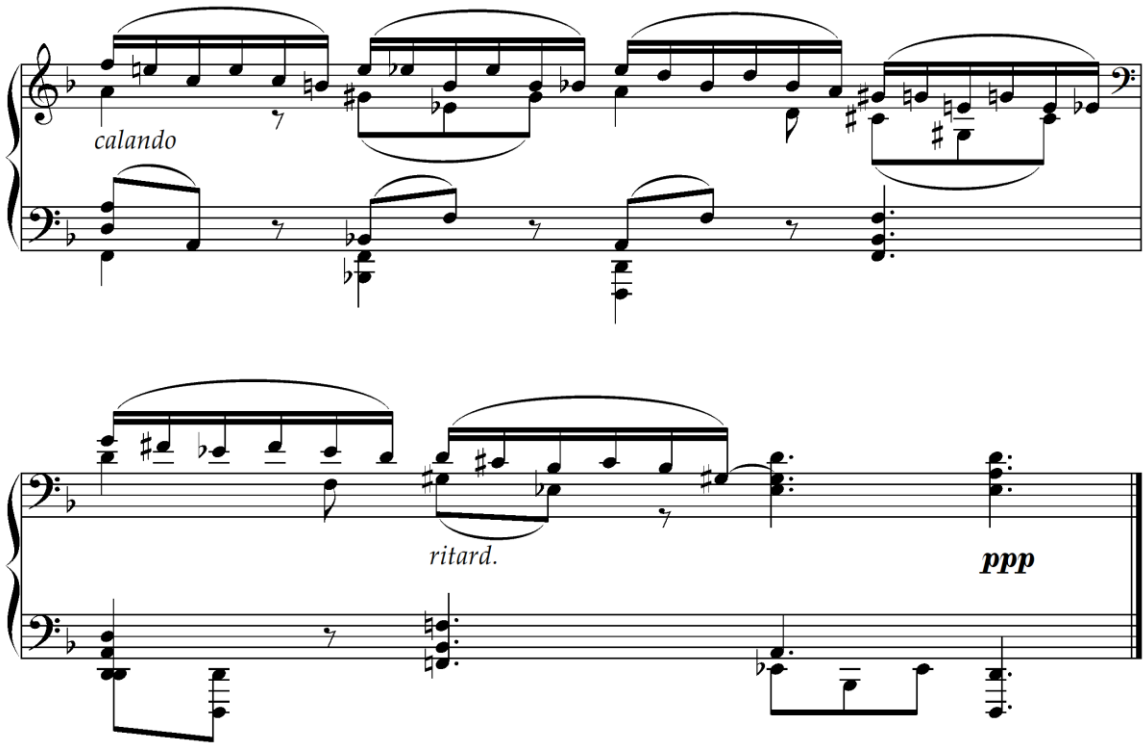
The 'Stanchinsky mode' is applied in a similar way in *Sketch* no. 9. Here, chromatic alterations are again highlighted in the opening, but they also go further by shaping the piece's harmonic structure. The right-hand part opens with a major seventh, while the left hand begins with a melodic tritone (diminished fifth – D-G♯). (Example 4.16)

Example 4.16: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 9, bars 1-4.



The sevenths dotted throughout this *Sketch* suggest that Stanchinsky may have been working on exploring this particular sonority. The opening seventh in the right hand introduces a conflict between E♭ and D, which persists throughout the *Sketch*. While variations 1 and 2 begin with an identical interval of a seventh, in variation 3 – where the tune shifts its focus – we see significantly more emphasis put on E♭ than D. Although at this point it appears as if the E♭ has triumphed, it is dropped in favour of E♮ in bars 15-16, while the D returns as part of the theme and asserts its dominance as the bass at the beginning of bar 16. The conflict between these two tones remains unresolved, as at the end of the piece both notes are present in the final chord. (Example 4.17)

Example 4.17: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 9, bars 17-18.



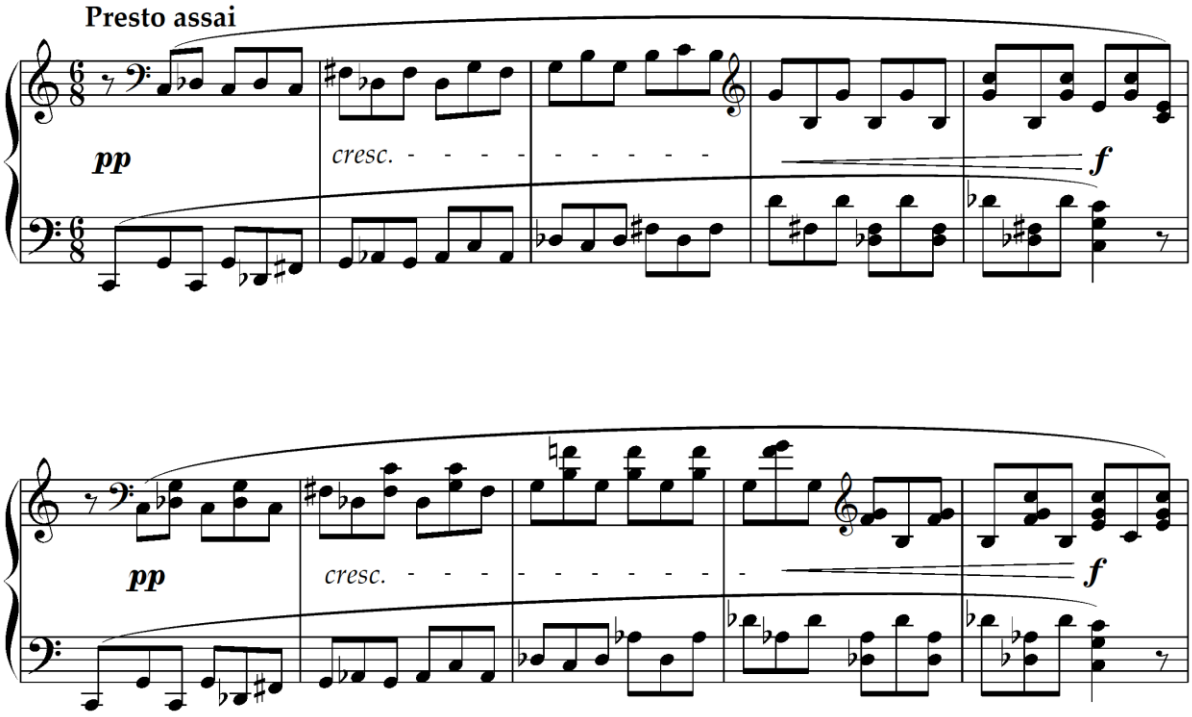
The emphasis on the conflict between E♭ and D in this piece evokes a 'Korsakovian' element. This is not surprising given that the use of the semitone/whole-tone scale had become a 'St. Petersburg specialty' by this time, and Stanchinsky would have likely been familiar with works by Rimsky-Korsakov and Scriabin which made use of it.[30] While we cannot be certain which works Stanchinsky would have known, it is likely that he would have been aware of Rimsky-Korsakov's late operas (*Christmas Eve* (1894-1895), *Sadko* (1898), *Kashchey the Immortal* (1902), and *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh* (1905)), as well as Scriabin's *2 Pièces*, op. 59 (1911) and his sixth sonata (1911, premiered in 1912).

The final *Sketch* no. 12 is a rare example of the 'Stanchinsky mode' alterations applied to a major scale. From the outset, its use in this piece provides little sense of a tonal centre: the tonic key is only confirmed though powerful C major chords at the end of bar 5 (with some indication at the openings of certain phrases, such as phrases 1 and 2). (Example 4.18) Each of the six phrases in section A are shaped in a similar wedge formation, which grows outwards from beginning to end. We can observe this in their widening intervals, beginning with semitones

[30] Taruskin, 'Chernomor to Kashchei', pp. 132-34.

and spreading to octaves, while the texture of the patterns grows too; beginning as single lines in both hands, the voices grow to dyads by the end of phrase 1, and dyads grow into triads by the end of phrase 2, supported by *crescendo* markings in each phrase.

Example 4.18: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 12, bars 1-10.

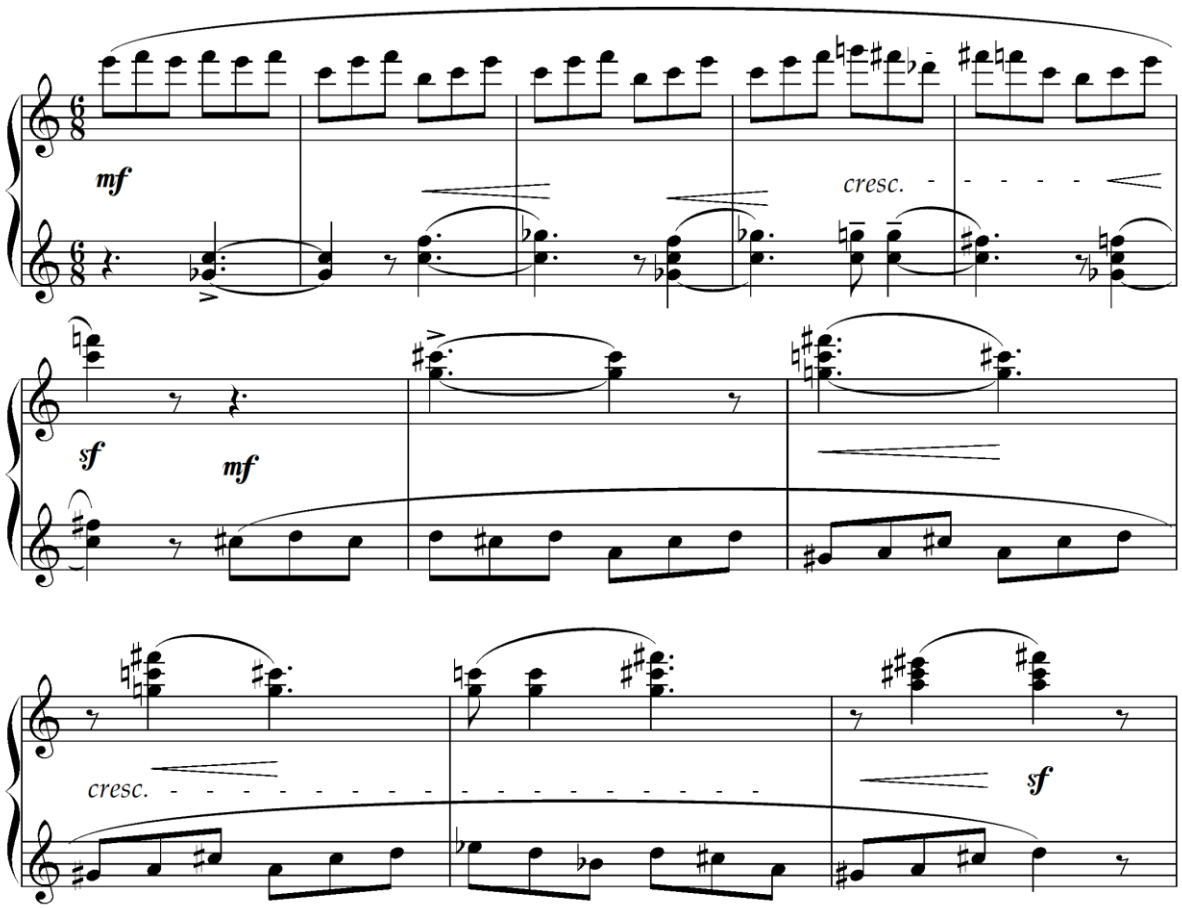


The *Sketch* is written in three parts, with all six appearances of the theme in the first part being slightly different from each other. The first five, for example, consist of five bars each, while the sixth iteration is extended to six bars. Such tendencies are common in Stanchinsky's writing; as soon as a pattern is set up, it is broken in order to create structural disruption. Within this structure, the reiterations of the theme serve different harmonic purposes. The first two and the last two phrases begin and end in C, while the middle two phrases begin on a G to provide dominant tension. However, the dominant function does not establish itself, with phrases three and four also ending in C. Indeed, the entirety of section A serves to emphasise the importance of C major, even though within the harmonic structures of individual phrases any sense of this being the tonic is obscured.

The beginning of the middle part in bar 32 is the first point in the work to provide textural and harmonic contrast. Short melodic motifs emerge first in the left hand, then in the right hand

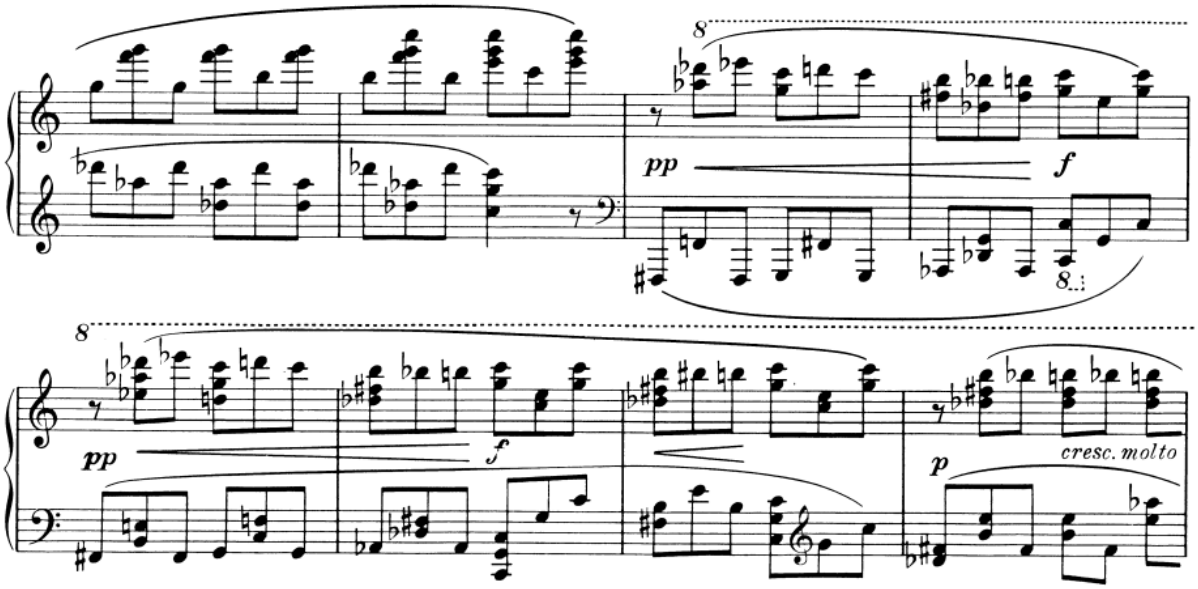
(from bar 38), while continuity is preserved through the quaver movement (which, like bar 1, opens on a semitone – as with so many other pieces, the contrast still retains an element of coherence). (Example 4.19) This new material is a play on triads, centred on or around the notes of C major. Here, Stanchinsky is methodical in his adherence to the C major triad, such that even the most dissonant harmonies – based on tritones and major sevenths – are only a step away from the home key. During the middle section, Stanchinsky also takes his tendency to change phrase lengths a step further. These no longer correspond to full bars, instead written as four phrases of 5.5, 5.5, 3.5 and 5.5 bars respectively. This allows him to vary the rhythmic placement of the tritone motif within bars, starting on an offbeat in bars 32-37 before changing to being on the beat in bars 38-42. At the end of section B (bars 52-59), Stanchinsky includes an eight-bar transitional section which brings us back to the thematic material from the opening of the piece.

Example 4.19: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 12, bars 32-42.



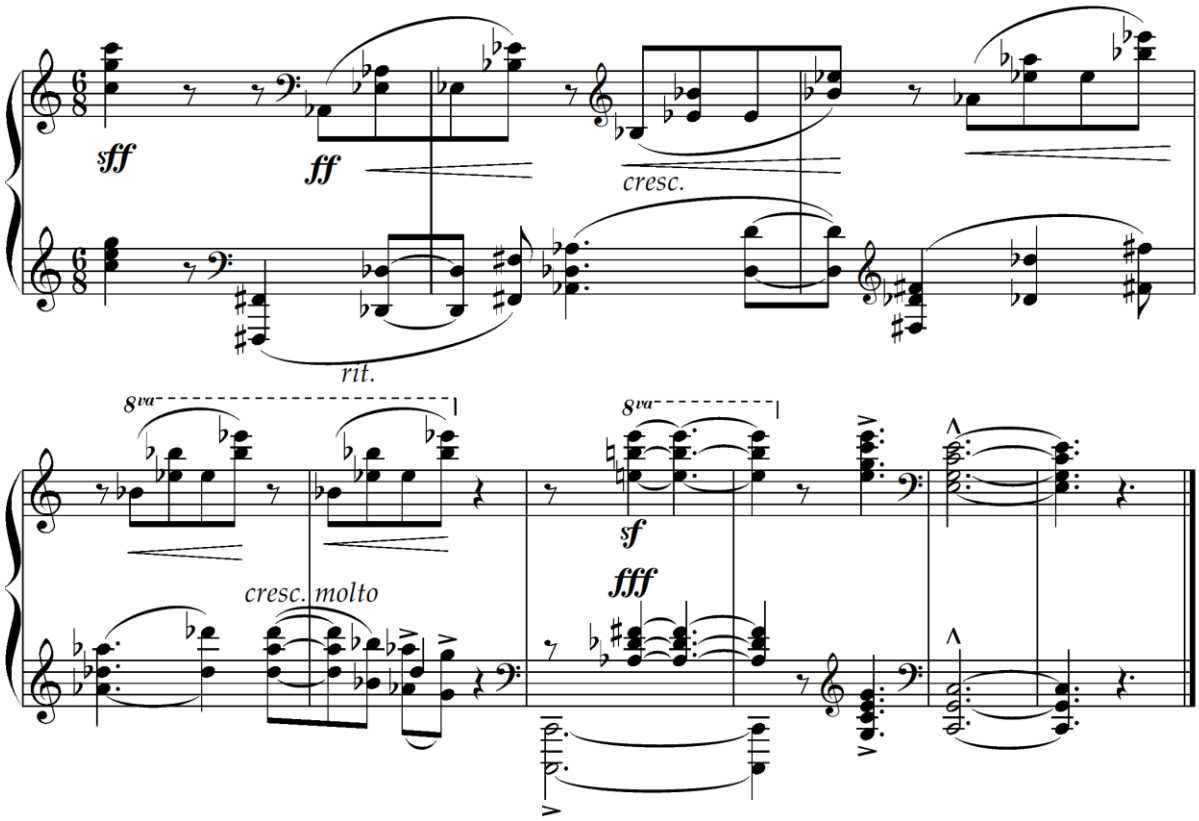
The final section (starting with *a tempo,* bar 60) uses the same shapes as the opening of the *Sketch* but is noticeably different from the very beginning. Its textures are much richer than before, and the phrase lengths are further divided. First structured into four bars, phrase lengths grow to five bars (as they did in the first section) but do not settle like this. In bars 69-76, Stanchinsky fragments the phrases to an even greater extent, writing lengths of 2 + 3 + 2.5 bars (all of which end with the characteristic C major chords). From bar 69, the harmony also changes, moving from the region of C to something more chromatic. A♭, D♭ and F♯ dominate, emphasising the importance of the 'Stanchinsky mode' as well as providing an augmented-sixth quality to the harmony. (Example 4.20)

Example 4.20: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 12, bars 67-74.



The fragmentation of the thematic material leads to a coda whose tonality is different from what has come before. It uses a pentatonic scale comprising only the black keys of the piano, thus creating harmonic contrast and tension. As the prelude is in C major, this scale's relationship to the home key is as harmonically distant as possible. But at the point at which the music is furthest away from the tonic key, it suddenly reverts back to it, facilitated by the final note in bar 80 – a B in the left hand – which is the leading note of C major and the only exception to the pentatonic patterns which precede it. After a C pedal is established in bar 81, the A♭, D♭ and F♯ notes which dominated bars 69-76 take centre stage in the final cadence. These notes are all only a semitone away from those found in a C major triad and are all characteristically resolved to the final C major chord via stepwise motion. (Example 4.21)

Example 4.21: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 12, bars 76-84.



The semitone relationships, first established in bar 1, have thus come full circle to close the work. Indeed, the entire *Sketch* seems to have been built from these initial semitone relationships and grown out of this singular idea. Although the harmonic language seems experimental, it is ultimately built upon traditional ideas centred around tonic and dominant relationships, as well as simple triads. The *Sketch* excellently frames the set by returning to C and, due to its virtuosity, also serves an effective closing piece.

Tonal Processes in Sonata Form

Different approaches to enriching harmony are combined in Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major (1911-12), which adopts a more modern approach than the overt romanticism of his early E♭ minor sonata. In the two decades preceding this work (ca. 1890-1910), western European composers (Debussy, Ravel, Schoenberg, Bartók) avoided sonatas. However, in Russia, others were reviving the form. Prior to 1912, Scriabin had completed seven, and Medtner had written five (each went on to write ten and fourteen respectively), while Prokofiev and Myaskovsky had written one each (and both went on to complete eight more). Stanchinsky appears to have

been part of this renewed interested in the genre in Russia, which had been somewhat marginalised since Beethoven and Schubert. However, Stanchinsky does not take other Russian composers as models for his sonata either in terms of form, texture or expressive range, nor does he follow in the stylistic footsteps of other contemporary sonatas, such as Balakirev's no. 2 (1905) or Rachmaninov's no. 1 (1908), instead creating something rather unique.[31]

The distinctiveness of his approach is felt throughout the sonata, whose decidedly direct and anti-Romantic style anticipates elements of neoclassicism. It is an approach that was to become typical of twentieth-century piano sonatas, with composers rejecting virtuosity that focused on pure brilliance and speed, in favour of a type of 'complexity encountered in the late Beethoven, on multi-voice counterpoint and generally on intricacy of texture.'[32] Following on from his other recent compositions, Stanchinsky largely abandons rich, late-Romantic harmonies and textures, and continues to explore the potential of pandiatonicism to blur tonality. In this sonata, Stanchinsky is, on the surface, continuously subverting expectations by also blurring other features, such as by creating small, free structures through uneven phrase lengths, short motifs, and rhythmic imbalance. He also obscures section lines within movements: section breaks are rarely clear-cut, instead favouring staggered returns of thematic material and tonal centres; although this has precedents in Mozart and Beethoven, he had also already explored this technique in his own 'Lydian' Prelude.[33] Thus, Stanchinsky creates his own distinctive take on the genre. Powell argues that the sonata's 'phrase patterns and melodic formulae […] would have been labelled neoclassical a decade later' and that Stanchinsky's use of 'delicate and simple phrase structures, diatonicism and clarity of form has a great deal in common with the style of Stravinsky of the subsequent decade.'[34]

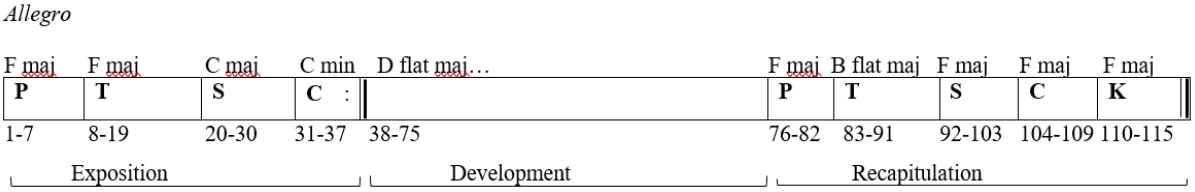
Stanchinsky's regard for eighteenth-century models is demonstrated in the proportions of different movements. In this piece, Stanchinsky places the most importance on the first

[31] For more on sonata composition in Russia, see Wendelin Bitzan, 'The Sonata as an Ageless Principle, Nikolai Medtner's Early Piano Sonatas: Analytic Studies on their Genesis, Style, and Compositional Technique' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, 2018), pp. 37-49.
[32] Thomas Schmidt-Beste, *The Sonata*, Cambridge Introductions to Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 219.
[33] Precedents in Mozart and Beethoven refer to the subdominant recapitulations where the recapitulation begins with the main theme in the subdominant, and the tonic returns later in the section, usually with the second subject. Examples include: the first movement of Mozart's Sonata no. 16 in C major (K545); the finale of Mozart's String Quartet in G major (K387); the first movement of Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata op. 47; Beethoven's Corionlan Overture op. 62.
[34] Powell, 'After Scriabin', p. 51.

movement, *Allegro* (115 bars), which lasts approximately seven and a half minutes. In comparison, the second movement, *Adagio* (49 bars) lasts for six minutes, while the fast third, *Presto* (223 bars), is over in three minutes. This is different from other three-movement sonatas from this period, such as Rachmaninov's Sonata no.1 (1908), whose weighty outer movements typically last 13 or 14 minutes each.

The first movement of Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major, *Allegro*, is a type 3 sonata form, consisting of an exposition, a development section and a recapitulation with a small coda.[35] (Figure 4.e)

Figure 4.e: Structure of *Allegro* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major.[36]



The sonata's tonal plan appears orthodox at first glance, but the movement uses unusual and innovative harmonic processes. On the surface, large sections of the movement see tonality obscured either through diatonic or chromatic saturation. Of particular note in this respect is the development section in which Stanchinsky avoids gradual modulations, choosing instead to transition through keys using block harmony changes. Even more unusually, the retransition prior to recapitulation avoids tonic-dominant tension and returns to the tonic in an unusual way, which will be explored later.

In this sonata, instead of obscuring tonality through added chromaticism, Stanchinsky continues to explore the potential of pandiatonicism, as previously seen in some of his *Sketches*. Both primary and secondary themes are mostly diatonic, although the secondary theme begins preparations for the chromatic closing theme from bar 27. For this reason, the sonata is the first of Stanchinsky's large-scale works to embrace pandiatonicism as an important melodic and harmonic feature. In this respect, Stanchinsky predates Prokofiev, whose 'white-note' pieces

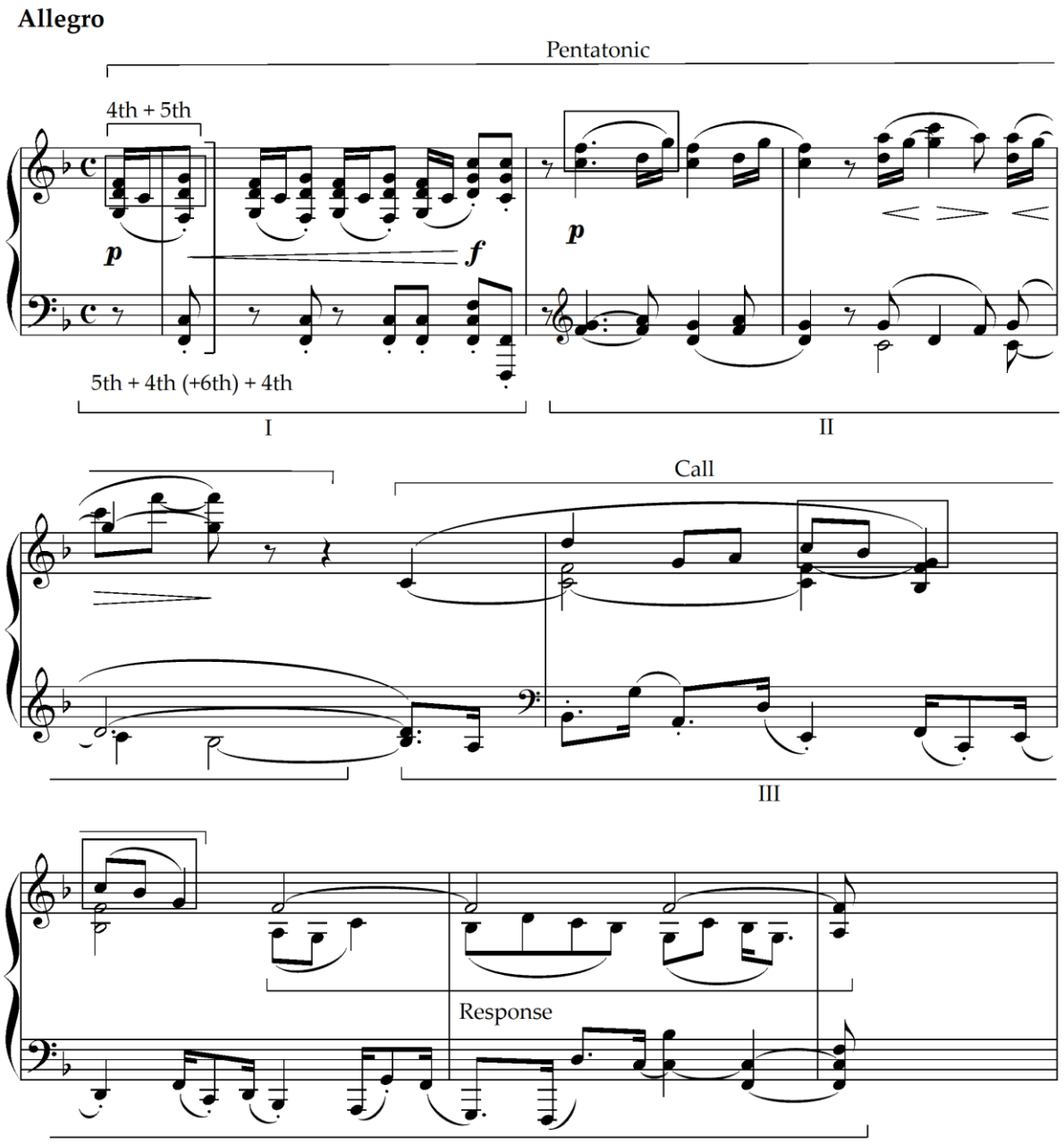
[35] According to Hepokoski-Darcy sonata form classification system. See Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[36] P – primary theme; T – transitional theme; S – secondary theme; C – closing theme; K – coda.

become more prominent after 1915 (examples are found in *Visions fugitives*, such as nos. 7 and 8, as well as the never completed *Quatuor Blanc* whose themes were repurposed for Prokofiev's 3rd piano concerto).[37]

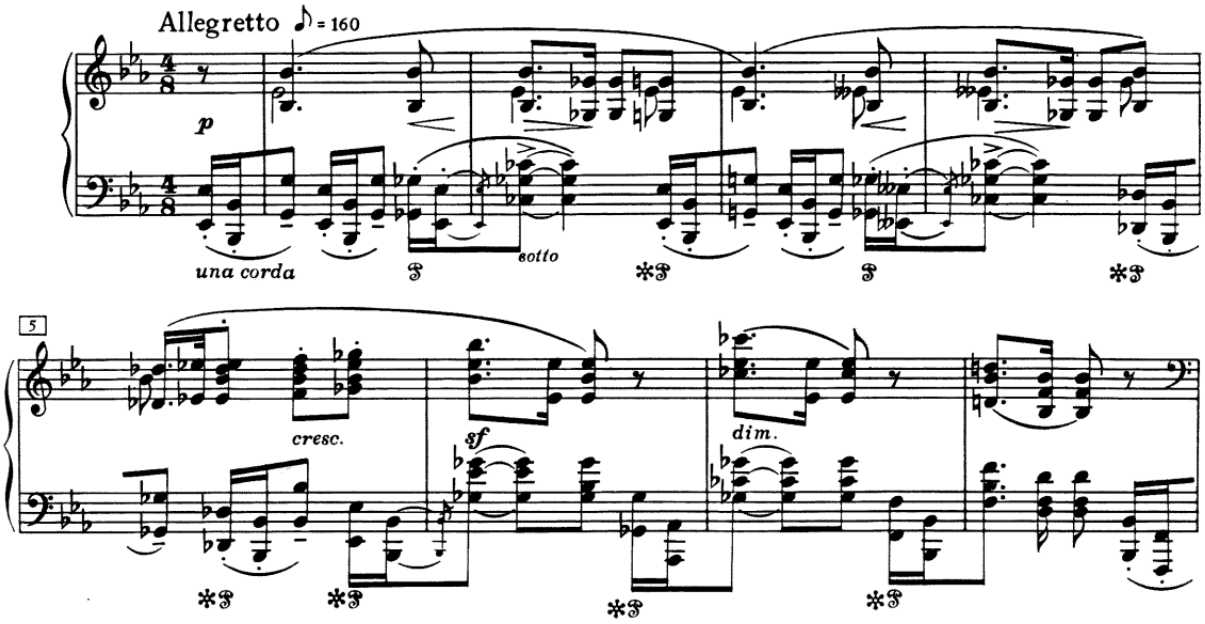
As is also characteristic of his *Sketches*, fourths and fifths are the most important intervals in both the foreground harmony and melodic writing. For example, the primary theme begins with a basic idea in which fourth and fifth relations are apparent in both melodic and harmonic functions. (Example 4.22) Its sonorities are reminiscent of Stravinsky's work from this time, such as the Shrovetide Fair music in *Petrushka* (1911) (although it is highly unlikely that Stanchinsky could have known that work at this time), while the shape of this motif and its placement across the bar line is closely related to the left-hand shapes in the *Allegretto* of Scriabin's third piano sonata (1897-8, bars 1-16). (Example 4.23) Melodically, the opening is built out of a falling fourth and rising fifth (F-C-G) and, harmonically, the repeated staccato chord in bar 1 is built out of these intervals (from the bottom F-C-F + D-G). The fourths and fifths, together with the pentatonic nature of the first four bars, give the opening a folk-like quality.

[37] Gary O'Shea, 'Prokofiev's Early Solo Piano Music: Context, Influences, Forms, Performance' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield, 2013), p. 33.

Example 4.22: Primary theme from *Allegro* of Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major, bars 1-8.

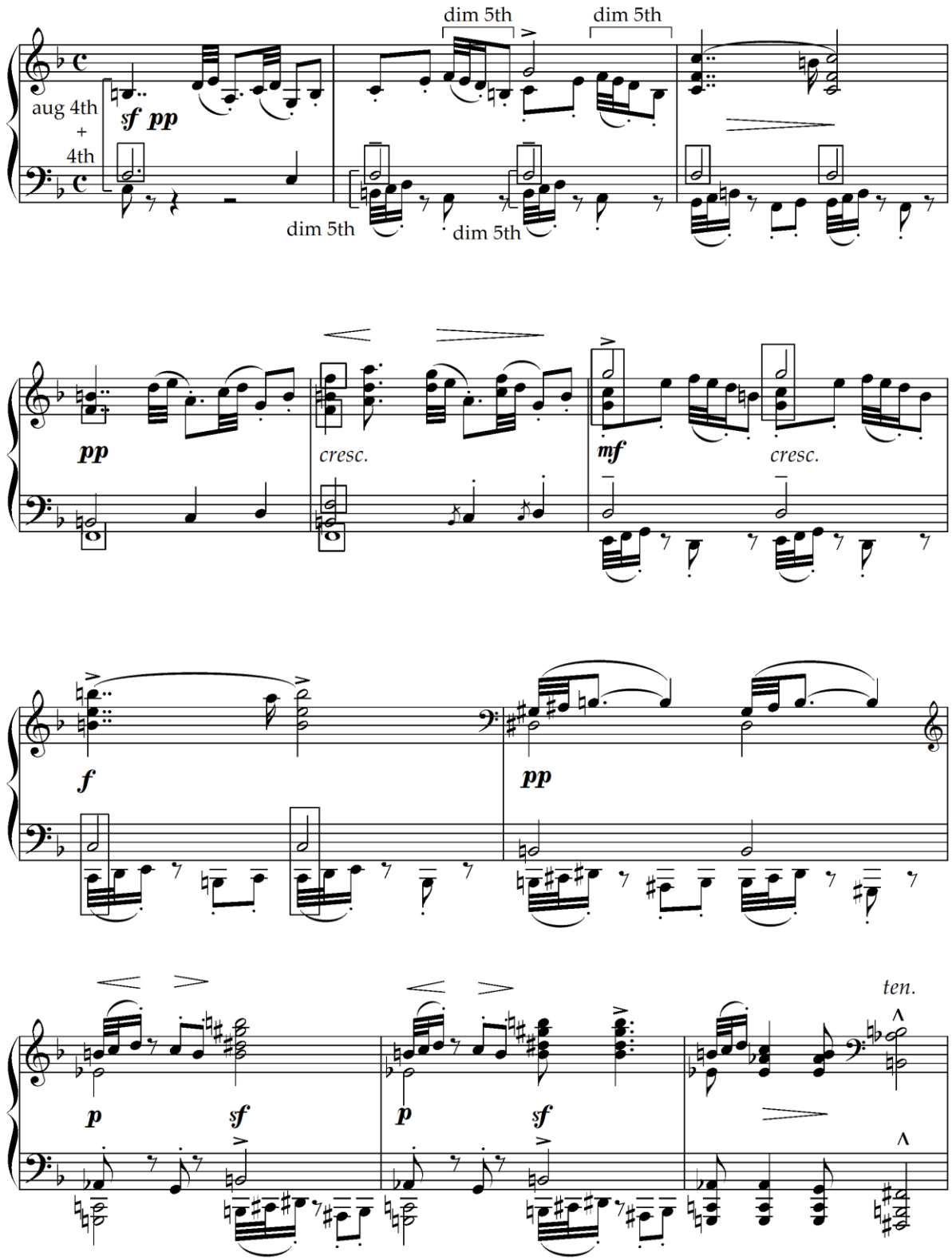


Example 4.23: Opening of *Allegretto* from Scriabin's Sonata no. 3, op. 23.



The secondary theme relates to the primary theme – both are constructed from fourths and fifths – but this time around these intervals are augmented or diminished. The theme opens in bar 20 with a striking chord constructed out of two fourths: one perfect and one augmented (C-F-B). (Example 4.24) Diminished fifths are also prominent in bar 21, where they appear as both melodic (right-hand, descending patterns between F-B) and harmonic (left-hand intervals B-F) structures. The theme also has a distinct rhythmic profile which is created by juxtaposing notes of contrasting lengths (beginning with a double-dotted crotchet followed by demisemiquavers), although the shorter notes here appear to predominantly serve as ornaments. In this respect, the secondary theme functions as a precursor to Stanchinsky's *Sketch* no. 1, in which ornaments precede the melodic staccato quavers, and the lengths of the semiquaver runs also span fourths and fifths. The secondary theme thus establishes essential contrast through its harmony and rhythm, but the way its tonality is handled is unusual.

Example 4.24: Secondary theme from *Allegro* of Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major, bars 20-30.

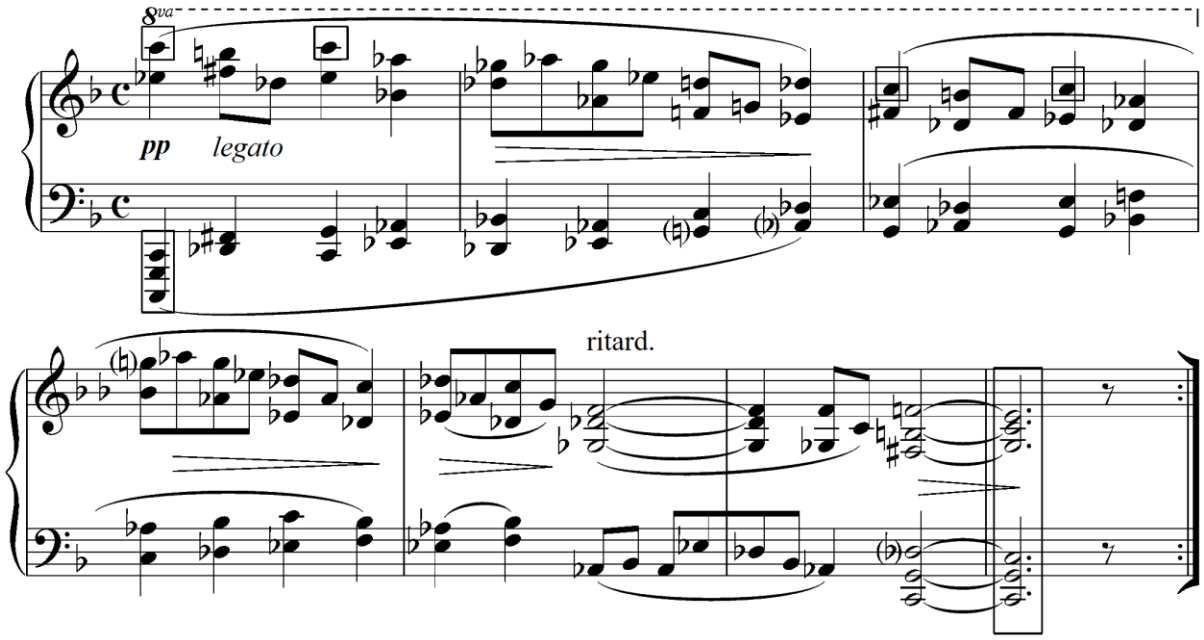


Traditionally, the function of a secondary theme is to provide tonal contrast, but this theme is more elusive. Although the expected key of C major is indicated by the presence of B naturals, the establishment of the secondary dominant key is ambiguous. Sitsky, for example, identifies the second subject as being in F major but using 'a B-natural, leading to some strange harmonies.'[38] Indeed, in the first six bars of the theme, the note F is conspicuous by its presence, suggesting the possibility of F Lydian. The Cs become more prominent only from bar 25, causing a time disjuncture between establishing the secondary theme (bar 20) and the secondary key (bars 25-26). This procedure of staggering the thematic and tonal entries is very similar to that previously seen in the 'Lydian' Prelude (1907). Because of the delay in confirming the new tonal centre of C, the beginning of this passage could be described as being in F Lydian. On the other hand, if comparing the presentation of this theme in the exposition with that of the recapitulation, it can be seen that the secondary theme as a whole is intended to be in C major. However, confirmation of this dominant key is weak and delayed, and it is through such unusual handling of tonality that Stanchinsky suspends our sense of harmonic direction. Even after the dominant becomes recognisable, the centrality of it is both short-lived and obfuscated by the use of chromatic notes and ornaments. In this way, the role of the secondary theme is handled in a more imaginative way than might be expected.

The diatonicism of the primary and secondary themes sits in sharp contrast to the final section, which is constructed from a sequence of richly harmonised chords in C minor. Contrary to expectations, large parts of this closing section further obscure the sense of tonal centre rather than establish the dominant key. Although bars 31 and 33 give some prominence to C minor, the key is only confirmed through the final (and typically Stanchinskian) cadence; the bass arrives on the tonic early – creating an almost classical 'feminine cadence' – before resolving via a Picardy Third, thus delaying the resolution to a major triad until the very last moment. (Example 4.25) The wider piano range and slowly creeping intervals (descending in the right hand, rising in the left hand) in this section feel ethereal and otherworldly, and provide further contrast with the work's earlier themes.

[38] Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, p. 28.

Example 4.25: Closing section from *Allegro* of Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major, bars 31-37.



Stanchinsky can be seen at his most inventive in the way he uses the secondary theme in the retransition towards the end of the development section. (Example 4.26) A strong half-close in F major (end of bar 65), followed by a rest, creates an expectation that the recapitulation will arrive in bar 66. However, Stanchinsky instead uses the secondary theme to create an unusual retransition. The secondary theme material enters in bar 66 (*ppp*, *a tempo*). Here, the left and right hands are principally in unison, with some harmonisation in perfect, augmented or diminished fourths and fifths. These intervals are the most important harmonic features of this section, particularly from bar 69, and the functionality of keys here is less important than the sound of the quartal harmony. At this point in the sonata structure, one would usually expect to hear functional harmony preparing a perfect cadence for a return of the primary theme in the recapitulation. As such, Stanchinsky's choice to avoid functional harmony altogether appears particularly imaginative.

In bar 74 (two bars before the recapitulation), the right hand plays G♭-C-F, with C hinting at a dominant function, and F indicating the upcoming tonic. The augmented fourth G♭-C has been well established over the preceding eight bars, with C appearing in every bar from the beginning of the section. The fifth in the left-hand part (D-A) has emerged over the course of the preceding section: D flats are dropped in favour of D naturals in bar 70, and A flats are replaced with A naturals in bar 73. Such shedding of accidentals slowly clarifies the harmony

in preparation for the final arrival at F major in the upbeat to bar 76. (See harmonic reduction in figure 4.f)

In the two bars preceding the recapitulation in F, Stanchinsky increases the significance of the notes F and C, which are used to transition to the tonic key. When comparing bars 74 and 75, we see that G♭ reduces in prominence as we get closer to the primary theme. In bar 75, G♭ disappears after the very first beat, and significantly more emphasis is placed on the open fourths and fifths of F-C-F. By gradually removing accidentals in this way, Stanchinsky creates a cadence which allows him to return to the tonic key in the recapitulation without employing a traditional V-I. Reasserting the tonic in this manner, at the most crucial harmonic moment in a sonata, is highly unusual and demonstrates that Stanchinsky was seeking imaginative alternatives to common practice.

Example 4.26: Retransition from *Allegro* of Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major, bars 65-76.

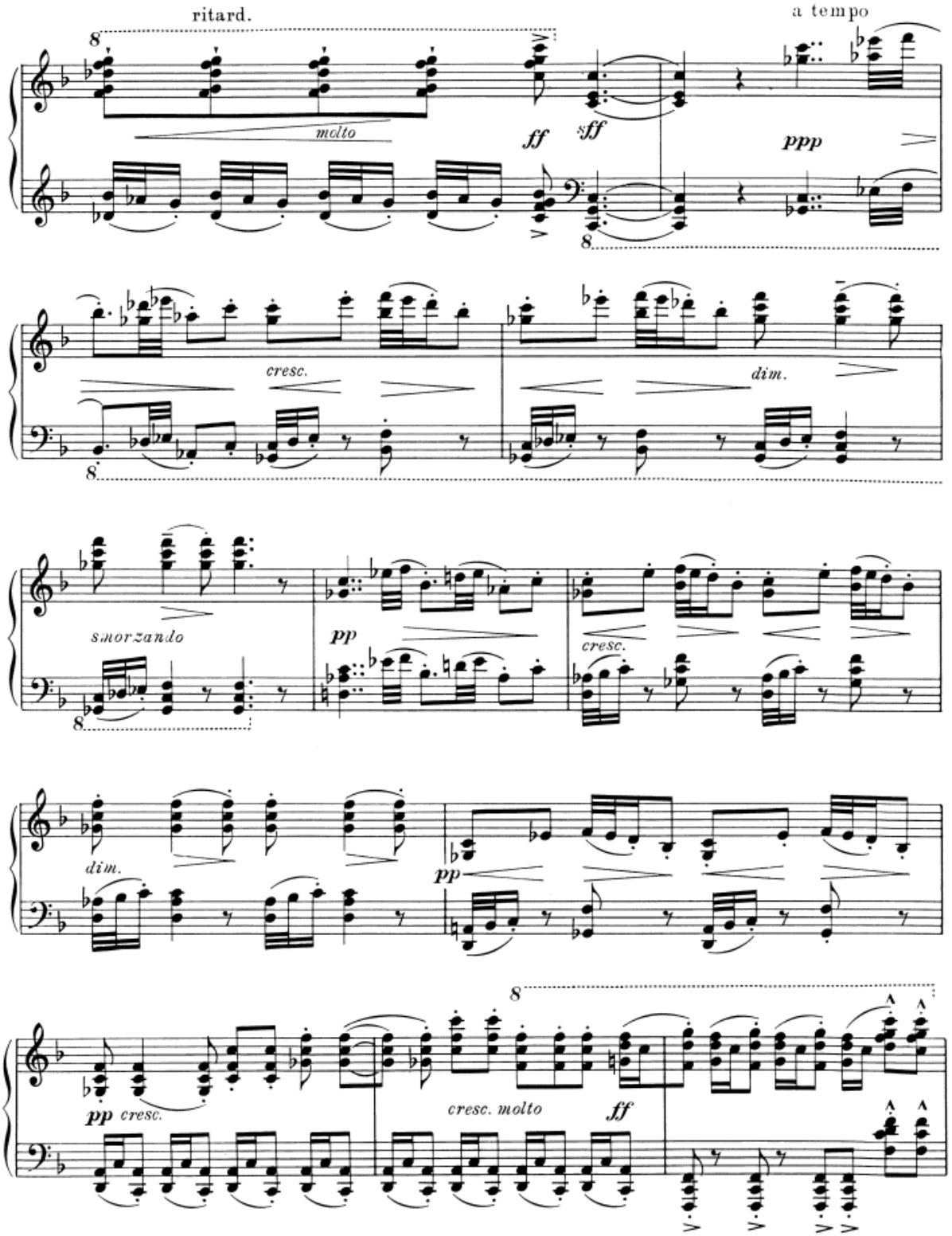
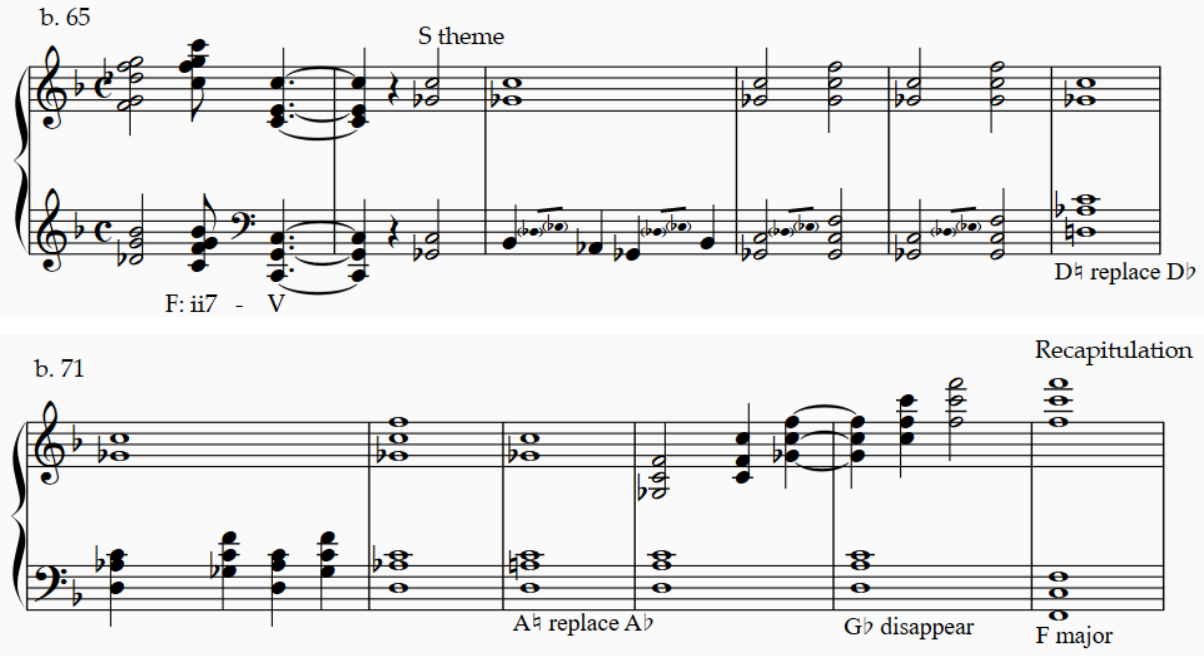


Figure 4.f: Harmonic reduction of the retransition, bars 65-76.



The sonata's tonal plan does not function as expected, demonstrating how new musical idioms are mixed with echoes of classicism: the movement's unusual handling of tonality within an orthodox sonata structure shows that, while Stanchinsky was seeking to modernise his musical language, he remained reliant on established forms. There are clear connections between common practice and Stanchinsky's idiosyncratic style, anticipating the neoclassical developments of the following decades. For example, the sonata foreshadows some of the tendencies practised by Stravinsky in the 1920s, such as in his Piano Sonata (1924). This has many external features of form and texture identifiable from eighteenth-century models – such as the use of sonata form in the first and final movements – whilst also alluding to stylistic features derived from other historical periods (e.g. the quasi-Baroque two-part invention in the finale), and yet it remains distinctively Stravinskyan throughout.

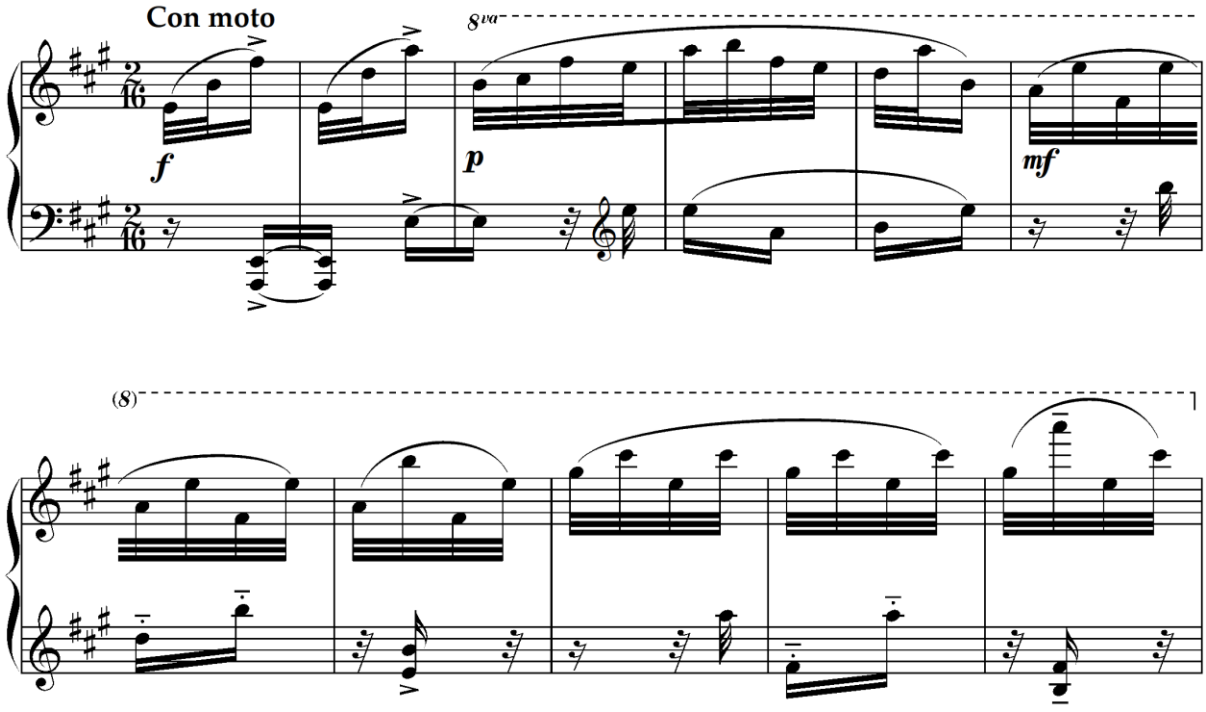
These examples demonstrate that Stanchinsky's methods of tonal enrichment were continuously evolving and changing. While Stanchinsky experimented with higher levels of chromaticism for a time, and briefly explored the use of the chromatic scale, his work did not develop in this direction and his embryonic attempts at creating twelve-tone harmonic structures reached a *cul-de-sac*. Instead, he focused his attention on modality and pandiatonicism, moving in a different direction to some of his contemporaries – such as Scriabin or Roslavets – who embraced rich chromaticism in their works. Stanchinsky's pieces

demonstrate a penchant for symmetry, which was likely inspired by his interest in contrapuntal techniques, and symmetrical scales, which culminated in the creation of a new synthetic scale – the 'Stanchinsky mode'.

Rhythmic Development

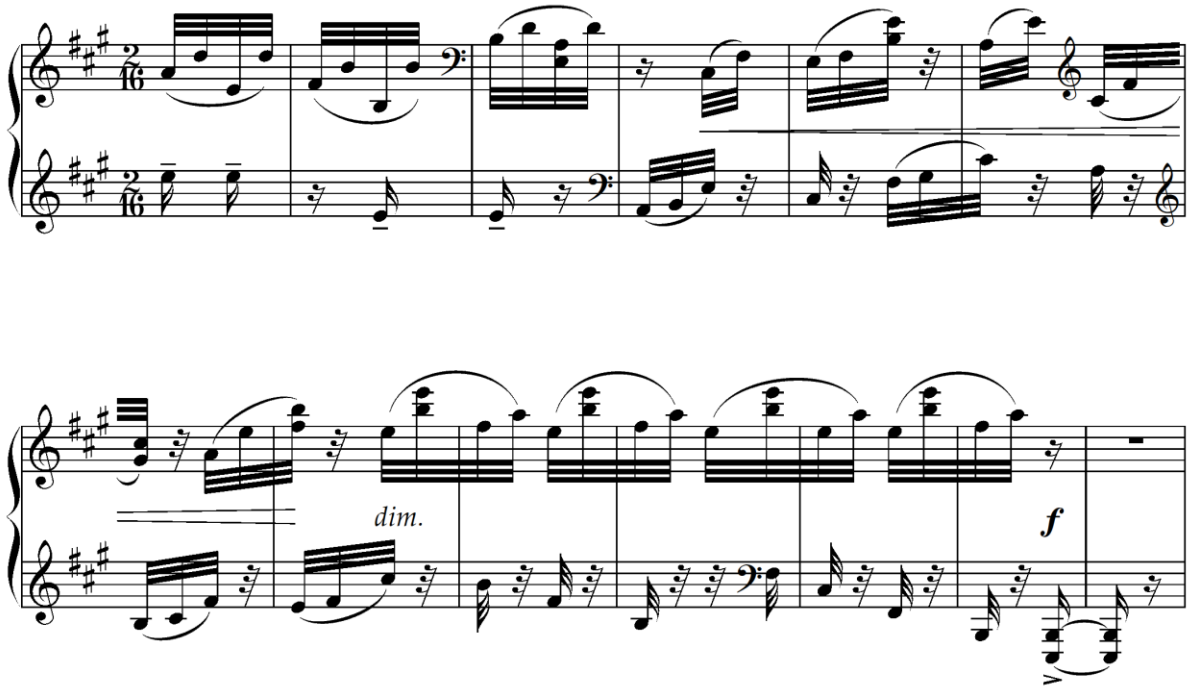
In addition to exploring alternatives for tonal enrichment, Stanchinsky worked on developing his rhythmic writing. At this time, his rhythms became more adventurous through the use of irregular groupings, asymmetric metres, changing time signatures, conflicts between beaming and barring, and the use of accents to create metric disruption. These developments are particularly important in his *Twelve Sketches*. The lively and exciting *Sketch* no. 10, *Con moto*, for example, introduces irregular accents and varied phrase lengths to create unexpected structures. Its continuous, scurrying semiquavers give it a scherzo-like quality and make the *Sketch* an effective show piece which, taken out of the set, would make a good encore. Even though the piece is written in two, its metre of 2/16 is rather unusual and appears to be used as an indicator of articulation, contrasting other *Sketches*, such as *Sketch* no. 6, where metre is used as an indicator of phrasing. (Example 4.27)

Example 4.27: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 10, bars 1-11.

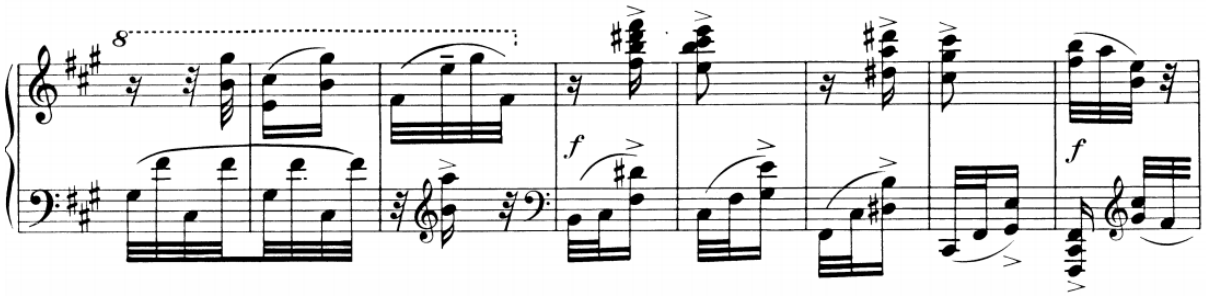


The main rhythmic interest in the piece is provided by irregular accents which persist throughout the work. From the very outset of the *Sketch*, the listener is tricked into hearing the opening figurations as beginning with an anacrusis. (See example 4.27) Further into the piece, Stanchinsky introduces some delightful hemiola effects. In bars 18-20, for example, the left hand's rhythmic delays break down the *perpetuum mobile* – hitherto in twos – and this collapses into a fragmentation of the rhythmic structures. (Example 4.28) Bars 21-25 are then grouped into threes. However, the groups in the right and the left hands do not coincide, and this further disrupts any sense of metric stability. In the second half of the *Sketch*, we also see rhythmic accents shifting; in bar 40, for example, accents in both hands are placed on the second demisemiquaver of the bar. (Example 4.29)

Example 4.28: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 10, bars 18-30.



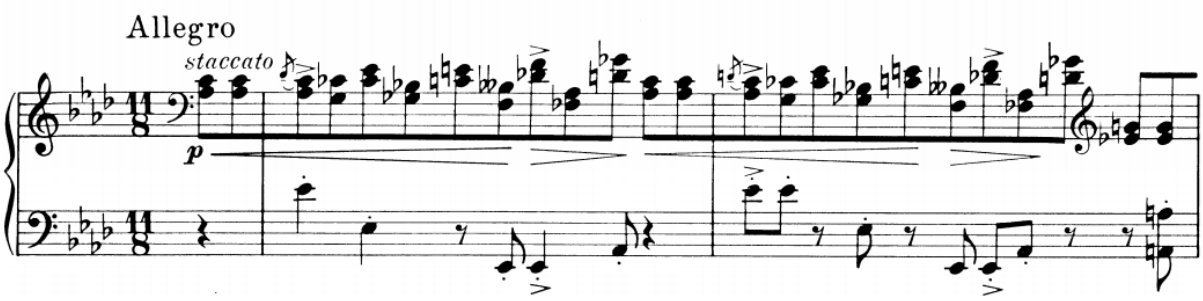
Example 4.29: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 10, bars 38-45.



In this *Sketch*, Stanchinsky also remains true to his tendency to not reiterate themes as exact repetitions. The lengths of the *Sketch's* phrases, as well as the materials used within them, are continuously altered – lengths of 10, 11, 12, 13 and 18 bars appear at various times – and this, along with its fast tempo and exciting rhythmic stresses, lends the *Sketch* a lively and fresh character mixed with an element of surprise. Its extroverted feel is not dissimilar to that of Stravinsky's *Petrushka* (1911), although the rhythmic and harmonic elements are very much Stanchinsky's own. As such, it speaks to Stanchinsky's broader tendency towards establishing his own, individual style, distinct from the somewhat derivative lyricism and melancholic style of his early pieces.

Another fast and playful *Sketch* is piece no. 5, which appears to be a study of juxtapositions. The *Sketch* opposes semiquaver beaming with barring, chromatic elements with strong tonal emphases, and expressive melodies with continuous staccato articulation and 'motoric' rhythms.[39] Composed in 11/8, each bar contains eleven quavers but, despite each of the melodic units being the same length as one bar, Stanchinsky places them ahead of the bar line and forms an upbeat. (Example 4.30) This conflict between beaming and barring is consistent throughout the *Sketch* and is very characteristic of Stanchinsky's *oeuvre*. The steady, though displaced, quaver movement is accentuated on the first and seventh quavers of the bar, creating uneven groups of 2 + 6 + 3.

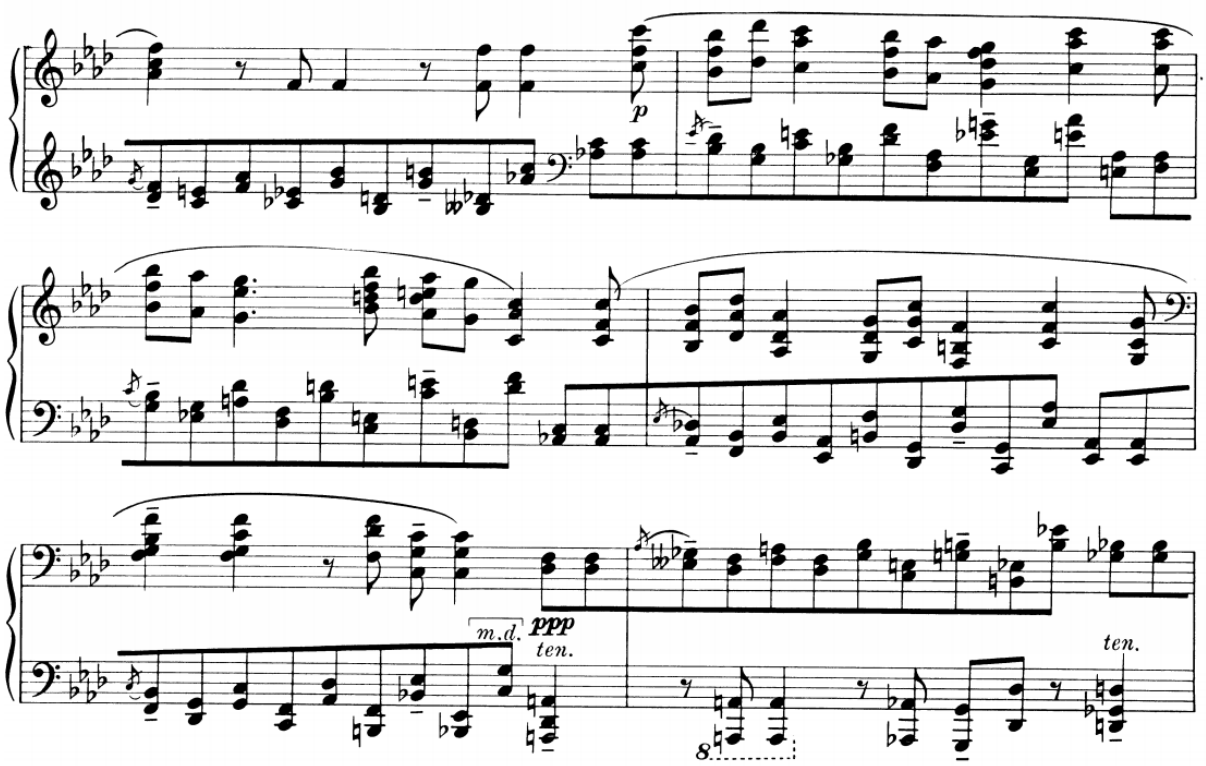
Example 4.30: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 5, bars 1-2.



This relentless movement in staccato quavers continues even when a beautiful, folk-like melody emerges in bars 12-15. (Example 4.31) This new melody could easily be harmonised in F minor, but instead it is set against an altered version of the opening theme in the left hand, which further highlights the importance of the motoric rhythm's continuity.

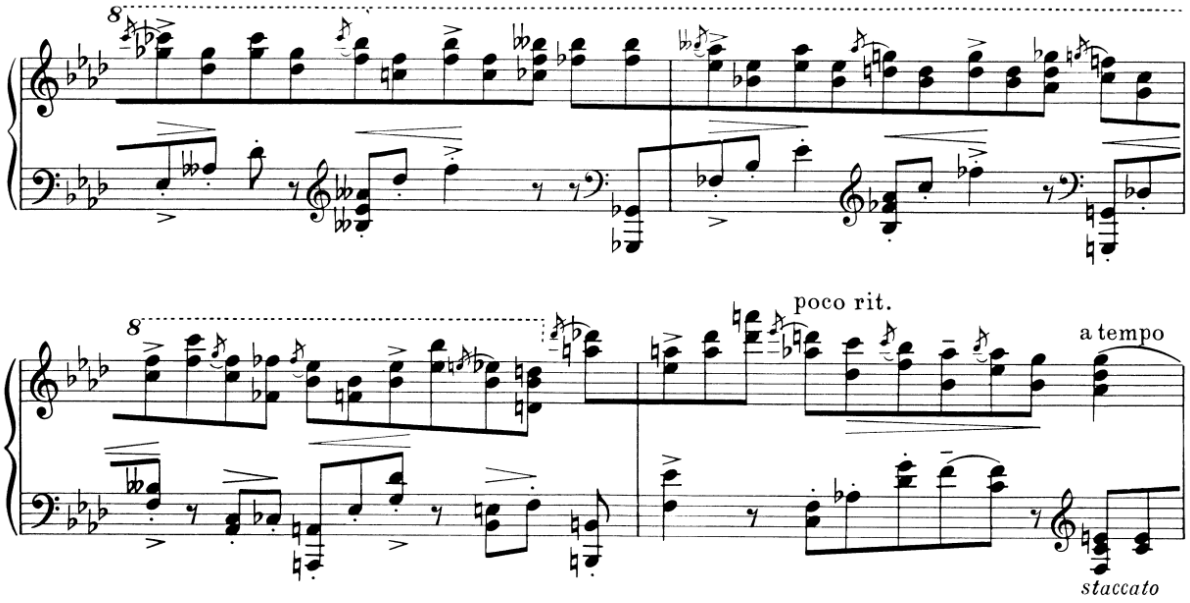
[39] Powell, 'After Scriabin', p. 51.

Example 4.31: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 5, bars 11-16.



The grouping of the quaver motifs never corresponds to the bar lines, even during the section in which the pattern changes. (Example 4.32) From the upbeat to bar 9, the beaming changes to 6 + 6 + 4 + 6, but the placement of accents further divides them into 2 + 4 +2 + 4 + 1 + 3 + 3 + 3. These rhythmic inconsistencies are particularly curious, especially when considered alongside Stanchinsky's choice of accents. Although these accents are consistently placed, from bar 10 they change to *tenuto* markings – the single type of accent used for the majority of the second half (bars 10-20). This change in articulation is significant, as it alters the characteristic of the accented notes from harsher attacks (emphasis at the front of the note) to more sustained and prolonged (full-length) notes. The final two bars combine both types of accents used in this *Sketch*, alternating between attacks and *tenuto*, which brings a sense of unity and closure. Thus, although the *Sketch* employs a continuous rhythmic gesture throughout, its rhythms and rhythmic accents are constantly changing.

Example 4.32: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 5, bars 7-10.



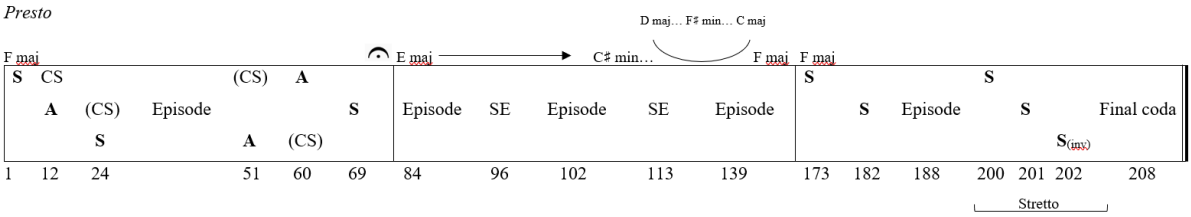
Toccata-like, motoric rhythms are also an important feature of the third movement of Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major, foreshadowing an idiom more typically ascribed to Prokofiev in works such as his *Suggestion diabolique*, op. 4, no. 4 (1910-12) and the Toccata, op. 11 (1912). The final movements of both Stanchinsky's sonatas are written in uneven metres (5/8 and 11/8) and confound the late Romantic expectation of a heavyweight finale, instead replacing them with neoclassical alternatives. The last movement of the Sonata in F major is the composer's first attempt at a fugal work with a lively character, whereas the finale of the Sonata in G pays homage to the dance style.[40]

The Sonata in F major's final movement, *Presto*, is composed using relentless semiquaver movement and toccata-like virtuosic elements, structured into three sections that are clearly defined by their harmony and subject entries. The first section introduces the subject and irregular countersubject in all three voices before finishing with a counter-exposition. Starting in bar 84, the second section alternates episodes with subject entries, developing thematic material and preparing the work for a return to F major in the final section. The third section begins in bar 173 with the return of the subject in the tonic key. After a short episode, the work

[40] Referring to the concept of topics which was introduced by Leonard Ratner and expanded upon in *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*. Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, Style* (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1980); *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory*, ed. by Danuta Mirka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

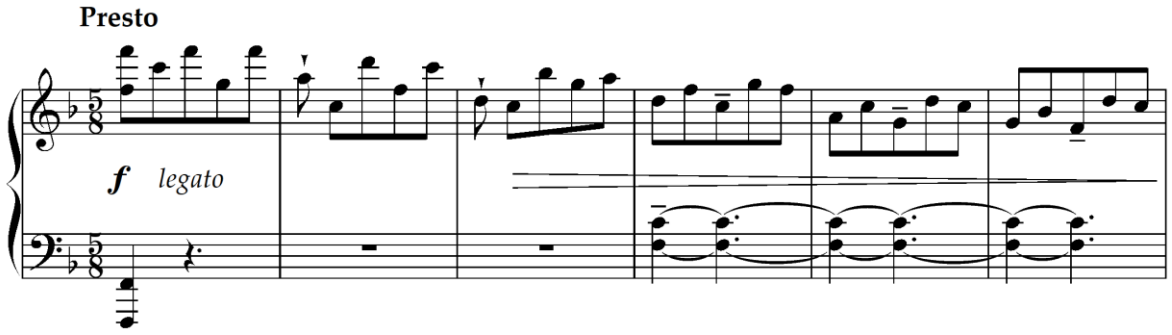
culminates with a *stretto* beginning in bar 200 (subsequent subject entries are in bars 201 and 202, while the third subject entry in bar 202 in the bass is inverted). (Figure 4.g)

Figure 4.g: Structure of *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major.



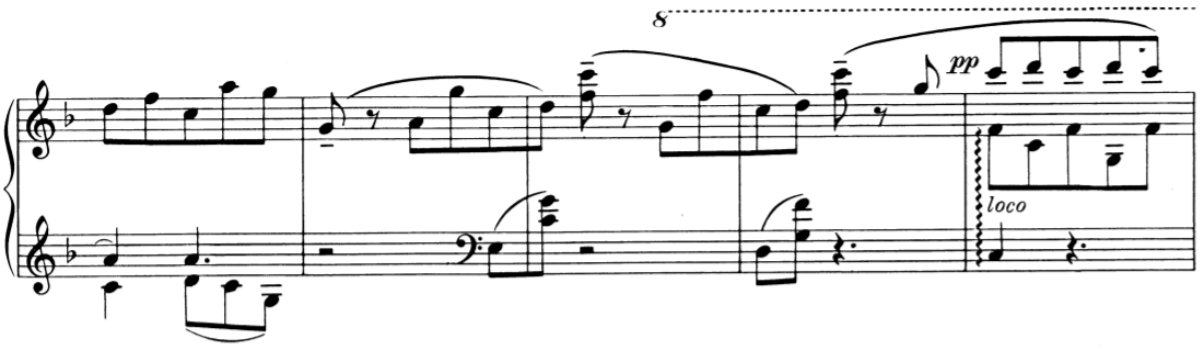
The movement's subject is characterised by wide melodic leaps arranged into broken-chord patterns, which by this time is becoming a recognisably Stanchinskian feature. (Example 4.33) Despite the subject relying on continuous quaver movement, Stanchinsky finds innovative ways to explore rhythmic questions. From bar four, we see frequent accents on the third quaver of the bar which create uneven rhythmic stresses. (See examples 4.33-4.35) Powell observes that 'shifts of emphasis within the bar break down the sensation of regular metre.'[41] Indeed, the changing accent placements – which, in bars 66-68 for example, shift from the first, to second, and then third quavers of the bar – alongside shifting placements of melodic groupings within the bars, achieve this sense of metric disruption while also creating a humorous effect.

Example 4.33: Subject of *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major, bars 1-6.



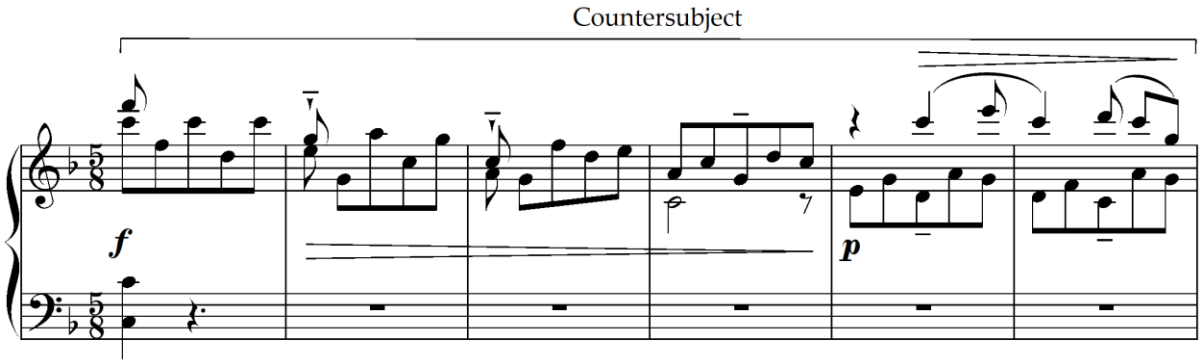
[41] Powell, 'After Scriabin', p. 52.

Example 4.34: Shifting accents in *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major, bars 65-69.



The countersubject is elusive and is only heard in full once during the piece. Further on in the movement, it is mostly only the second part of it that appears, set against the final two bars of the subject and adding contrast to the relentless quaver runs. (Example 4.35)

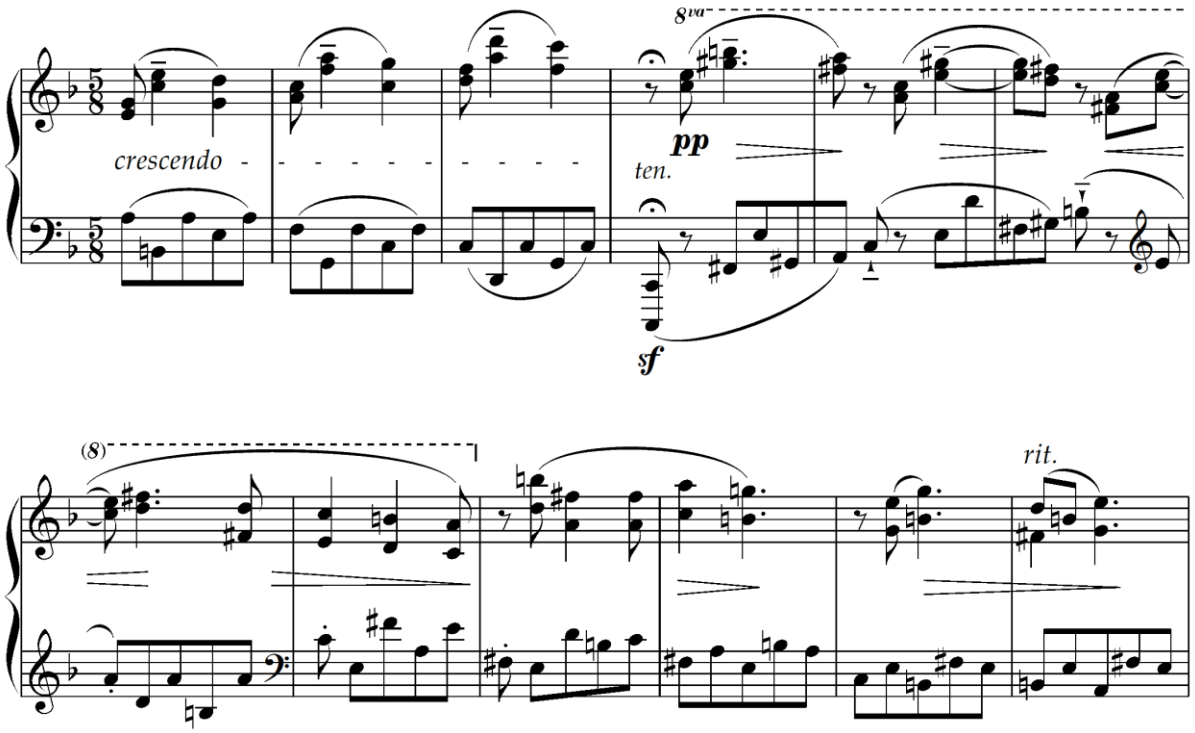
Example 4.35: Irregular countersubject from *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major, bars 12-17.



As well as the subject and countersubject, the piece has an additional thematic element which dominates the episodes and provides further rhythmic disorder. Its exact intervals differ, but it broadly consists of an upward leap of a fifth followed by a step (a second in either direction) – a gesture which is repeated a number of times – before concluding with a four-note descending pattern. This is perhaps most easily seen in the top voice between bars 84 and 88.[42] (Example 4.36, bars 4-8)

[42] It is worth noting that each of the component parts of this motif can be repeated.

Example 4.36: Additional thematic element in *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in F major, bars 81-92.



As can be seen in the example above, the motif begins at the start of bars 81-83, but from bar 84 its placement is shifted. By changing the position of the motif within the bar, Stanchinsky manipulates the sense of metre, allowing the listener to make an adjustment and reinterpret the fragment's new placement with respect to its earlier metric associations. Although a similar approach has been identified in Stravinsky's *Les Noces* (1914/1923) – where motivic factors and interruptions (for example, repeating a melodic fragment previously associated with a stable metric identity in a different place within the bar) have been argued to change the way the listener perceives the metre – Stanchinsky's Sonata predates Stravinsky's ballet and achieves a different musical effect.[43] The technique, however, is similar, particularly in places where the change in the right hand's melodic motifs coincides with shifting placements of the left hand patterns, which further obscures any sense of metric regularity.

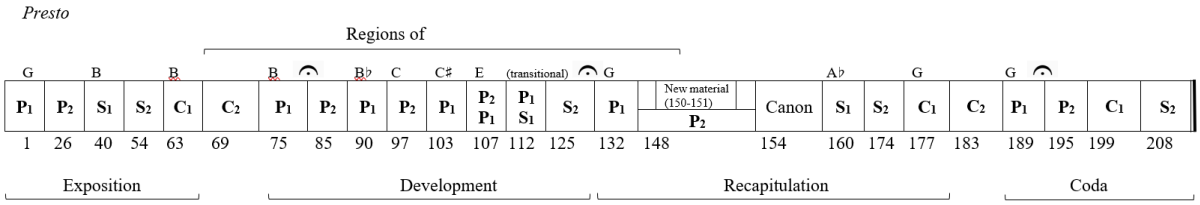
Characteristically, the last movement of his Sonata in G major, also *Presto*, is written in an uneven metre of 11/8 and displays unity in the angular gestures which shape its rhythmic

[43] Gretchen Horlacher, 'Metric Irregularity in "Les Noces": The Problem of Periodicity', *Journal of Music Theory*, 39.2 (1995), 285–309 <https://doi.org/10.2307/843969>

patterns. Alekseyev has noted that this metre creates the impression of stretching out the bar. This slows down the energy of the 'toccata', making it less motoric, and in this way demonstrates a similar approach to some of Rachmaninov's rhythmic delays.[44]

For ease of reference when discussing the different themes of this movement, it is worth briefly exploring the movement's structure, especially given that not all musicologists who have written about this work have recognised that it is in sonata form. Sitsky, for example, writes that 'the composer allowed [the movement] to become too long and repetitive: his idea of form here is far too reliant on repetition.'[45] His assessment is intuitive: the movement could easily be misjudged as too stretched out or tiresome. However, the key to understanding this movement lies in recognising its structure, which is somewhat obscured on the surface (a typical Stanchinskyan trait). A closer examination reveals a process which helps explain the continual repetition and recycling of the theme. The structural basis for this movement is essentially sonata form, complete with an exposition, development and recapitulation sections, as well as a small coda. (Figure 4.h) Once this is recognised, the repetition of its themes becomes expected and predictable. Sitsky appears to have missed this in his assessment.

Figure 4.h: Structure of *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major.



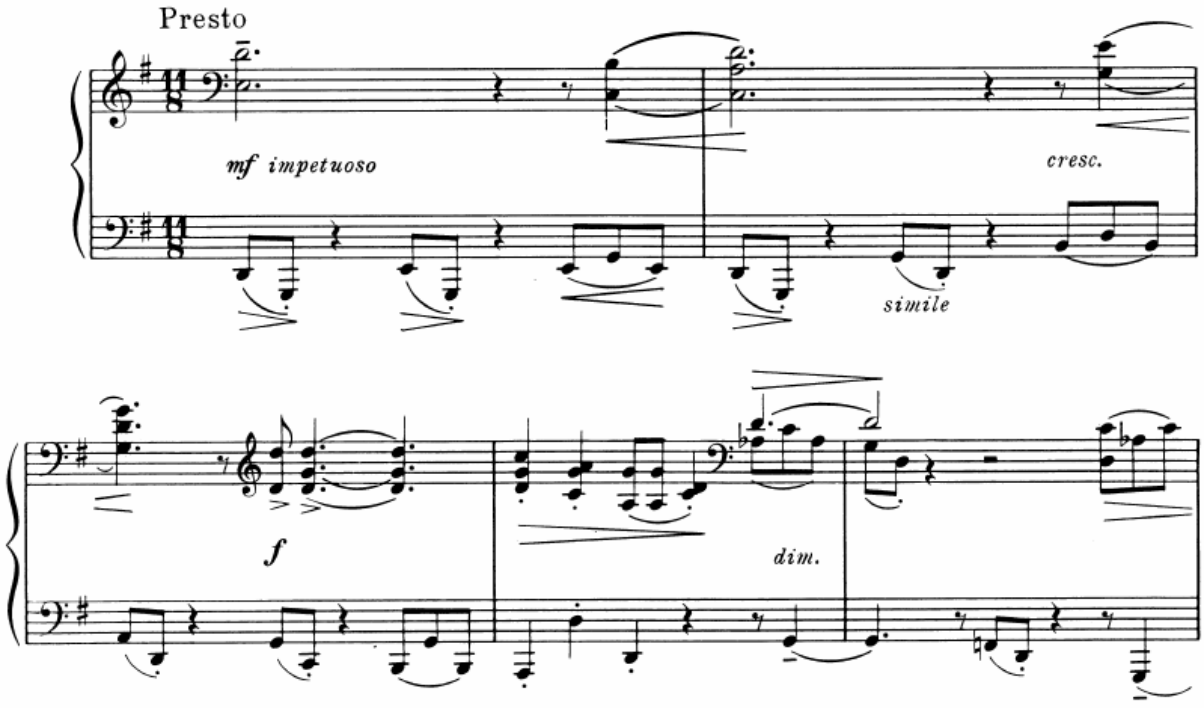
One of the biggest obstacles in identifying the structure of this work lies in its number of themes; by the time the opening theme returns in bar 75, the listener has heard no fewer than six (P_1, P_2, S_1, S_2, C1 and C2). Yet, if we consider their tonal characteristics, it becomes possible to make a clear separation between the first two themes and the two that follow. Themes P_1 and P_2 both appear in the tonic key, thus allowing us to consider them as primary themes. Themes S_1 and S_2, while different from each other, are scored in a contrasting key to the tonic, allowing us to consider them as secondary themes. The theme beginning in bar 63 establishes

[44] Alekseyev, *Russkaya fortepiannaya muzyka*, p. 352.
[45] Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, p. 30.

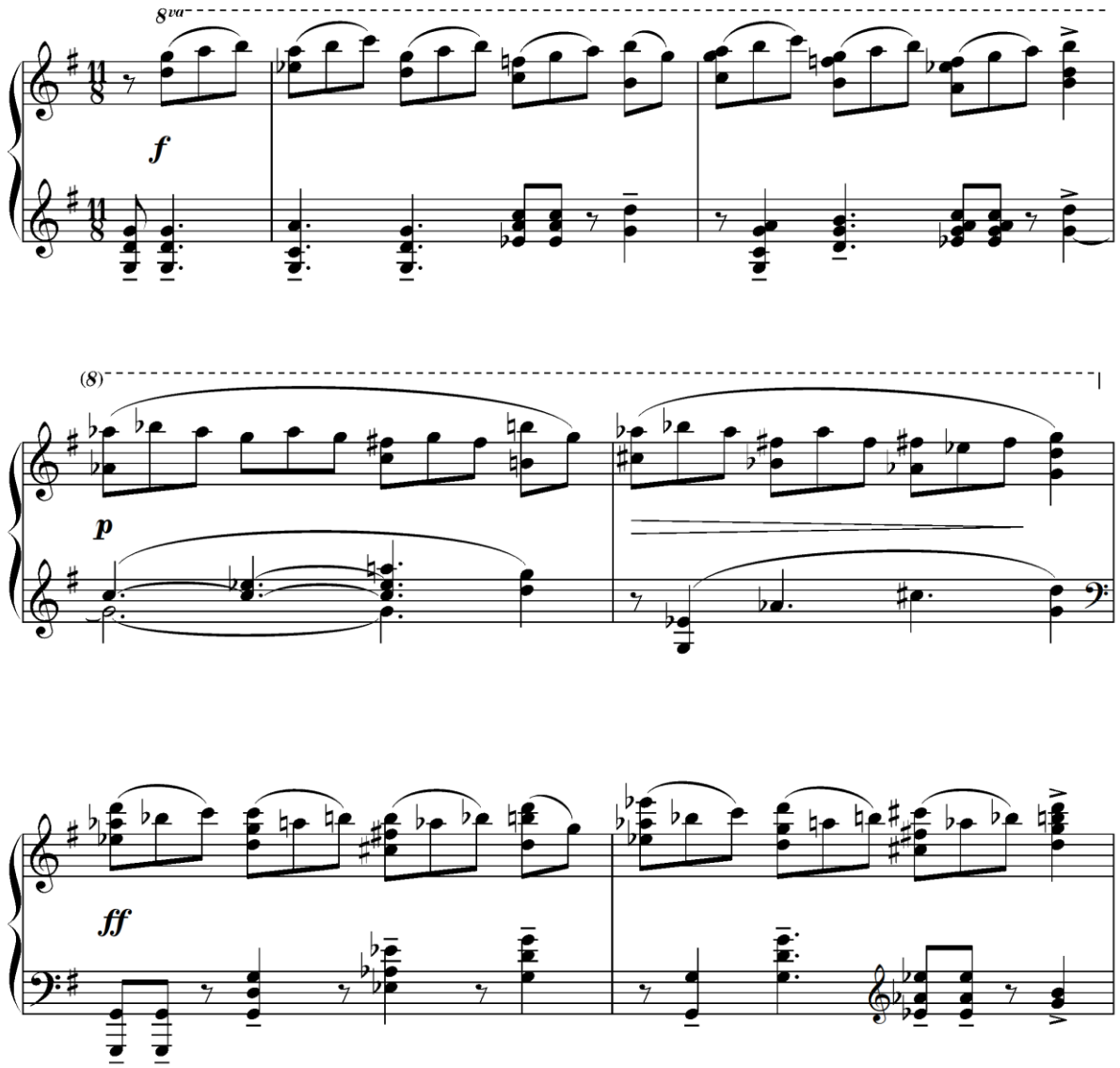
the region of B as the new home key and finishes with a perfect cadence, hence its designation as the closing theme. The material in bars 69-74 functions as a second coda idea, separating the exposition from the development by obscuring the tonic centre, before the development section starts in bar 75.

Unlike the finale of the Sonata in F major, this movement is not written in continuous semiquavers movement; rather, it comprises angular two- and three-note groupings which bring unity to its different themes. Both primary themes (P_1 and P_2) are related in their rhythmic constructions in which the two- and three-quaver units are arranged into different structures. While the first theme breaks them apart, the second theme sees them organised in a more continuous fashion, with fewer rests in between and accompanied by richer textures. (Examples 4.37 and 4.38)

Example 4.37: First primary theme of *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major, bars 1-5.



Example 4.38: Second primary theme of *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major, bars 26-31.

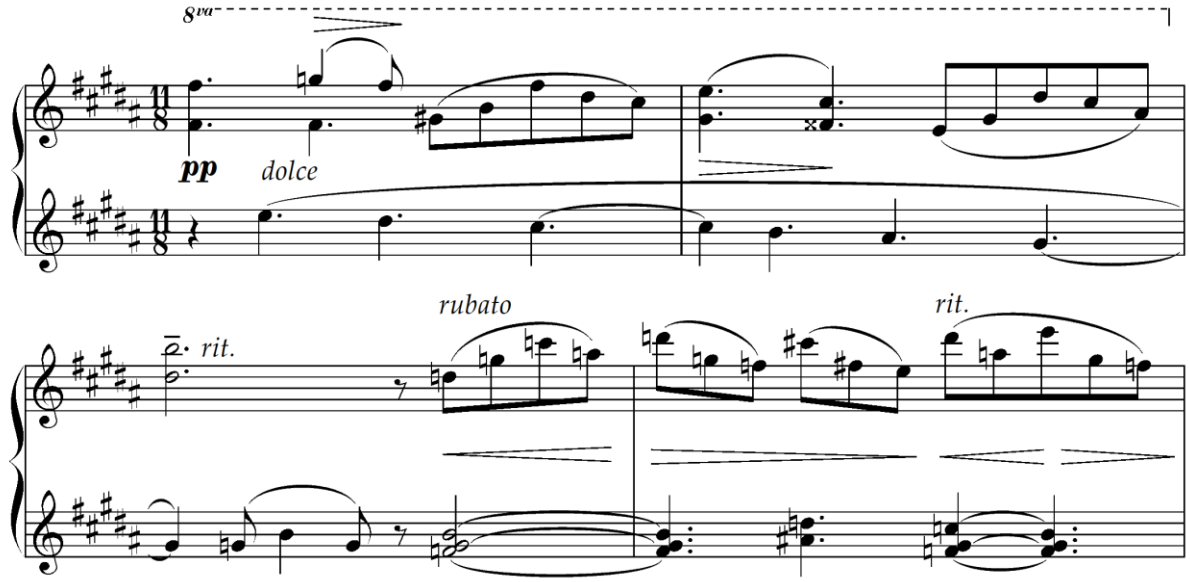


In the first secondary theme (S_1), these quaver groupings are joined by dotted crotchets and often extended into groups of five, thus creating a more expressive character. (Example 4.39) Here, the rhythmic units are also arranged differently for the right and the left hands, giving this passage the feel of a broken waltz. Powell has argued that the rhythmic writing in this passage allowed Stanchinsky to achieve 'Bachian' independence in his part writing.[46] Curiously, the most significant metric disruptions are created not by part independence, but by

[46] Powell, 'After Scriabin', pp. 54-55.

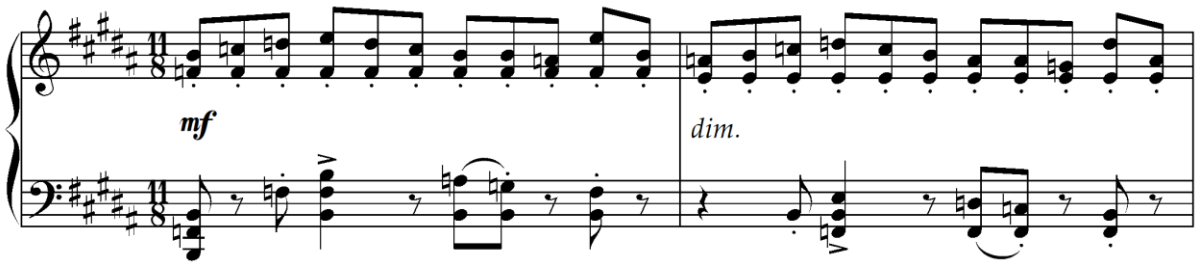
instances in which the rhythms of the two hands coincide (*rubato*, bar 42), where the relative repetitiveness of the broken waltz is interrupted.

Example 4.39: First secondary theme of *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major, bars 40-43.



The second secondary theme (S_2) is closely related to the second primary theme (P_2): both themes employ identical rhythmic groupings, but their textures and melodic outlines are different. (Example 4.40)

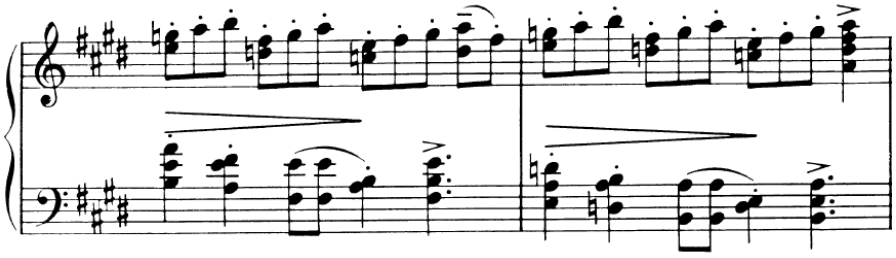
Example 4.40: Second secondary theme of *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major, bars 54-55.



In the development section, Stanchinsky focuses on developing the two primary themes which alternate in bars 75-106, while bars 107-108 explore these two themes at the same time. The

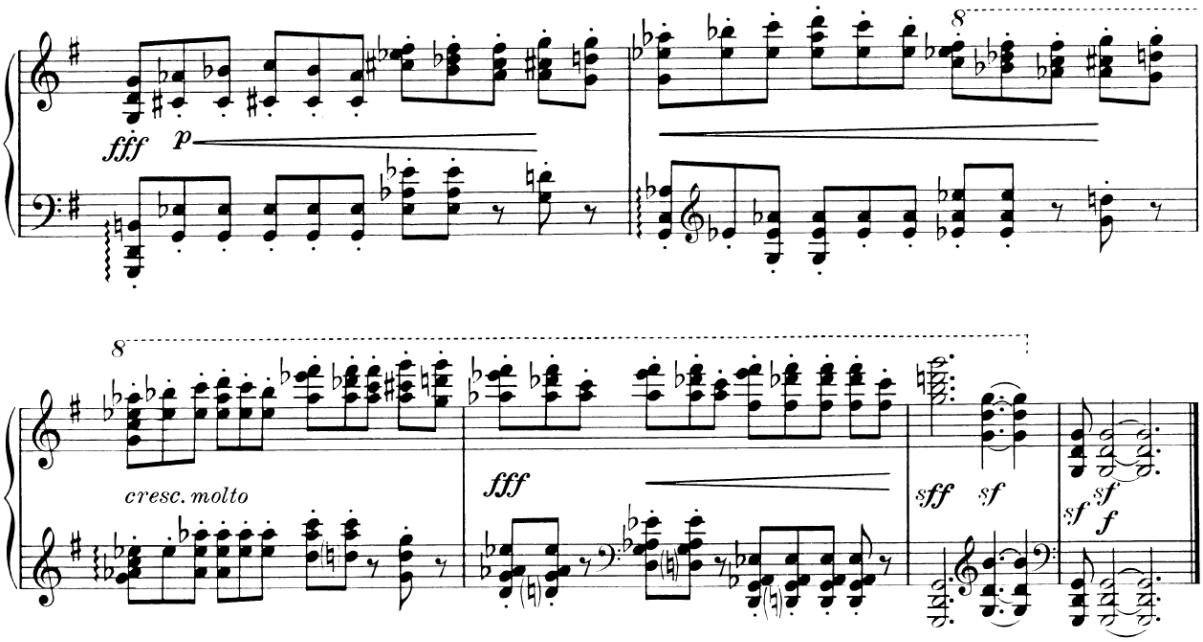
juxtaposition of themes creates a rhythmic conflict between the left and the right hands, providing the section with further rhythmic interest. (Example 4.41)

Example 4.41: Development exploring primary themes simultaneously in *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major, bars 107-108.



The end of coda brings more rhythmic and structural surprises. The identical placement of a fermata in the coda (bar 194) as in the development (bar 84) – between themes P_1 and P_2 – creates a false expectation of another development (see figure 4.h). However, Stanchinsky is only teasing the listener here, as he also does in his further arrangement of the themes. Having played with expectations in relation to the fermata placement, Stanchinsky uses the new material from the development section to transition to the second secondary theme (S_2) where the movement unexpectedly ends. (Example 4.42)

Example 4.42: Ending of *Presto* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major, bars 208-214.



The continuous evolution of this movement creates constant surprise, and it appears to be intended as entertainment: its jokey placements of themes and fermatas trick the listener into expecting something other than that which follows. The movement's scoring within a metre of 11/8 – subdivided variously into cells of two, three or five quavers – provides the music with a certain angular sharpness, and some themes take on the characteristics of disrupted dances. The movement's length and its number of themes, interspaced by transitional sections, obscure the sonata form beyond aural recognition, but nonetheless there is unity in its themes created by rhythmic means.

Stanchinsky's rhythmic writing underwent significant developments over his lifetime. Through the use of irregular accents, varied phrase lengths and implied polymetres, Stanchinsky created rhythmic patterns which were considerably more advanced and imaginative than those in his earliest pieces, and, arguably, more complex than anything Stravinsky was writing at this time. From 1911, Stanchinsky built on his tendency to compose in uneven metres and use motoric rhythms, while also often favouring flexible beaming across bar lines. In this way, he achieved even greater variety in his rhythmic constructions.

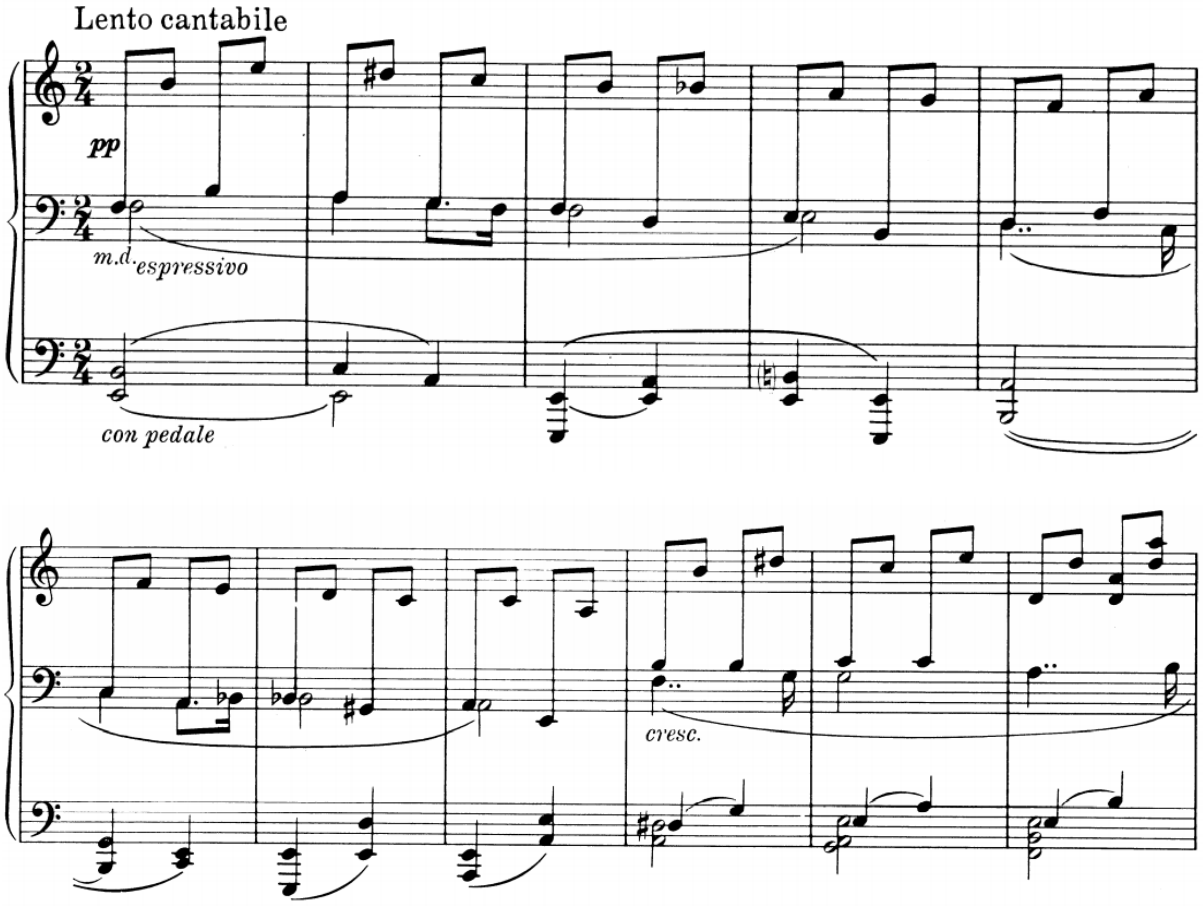
Texture and Counterpoint

Wide leaps and tessituras, and complex, unidiomatic textures, are some of the most characteristic features of Stanchinsky's writing from 1912 onwards. They are particularly evident in *Sketch* no. 4 – the first slow piece in the set – the 'epic grandeur' of the which is reflected in its serenity, static rhythms and wide tessitura.[47] (Example 4.43) Sitsky singles out the piece's 'unusual textures' as its most defining characteristic.[48] The *Sketch*'s writing is almost orchestral in its intention, consisting of a melodic line in the middle voice, an accompaniment in a higher register, and intervallic/chordal accompaniment in the bass. The textures are so full and the tessitura so wide that they require notation across three staves for clarity. Although this was not entirely unusual at this time – composers such as Liszt, Debussy, Ravel, Schoenberg, Prokofiev and Scriabin have all used three staves for the sake of clarity – part writing such as that found in this *Sketch* is rare in piano literature. The piece explores the

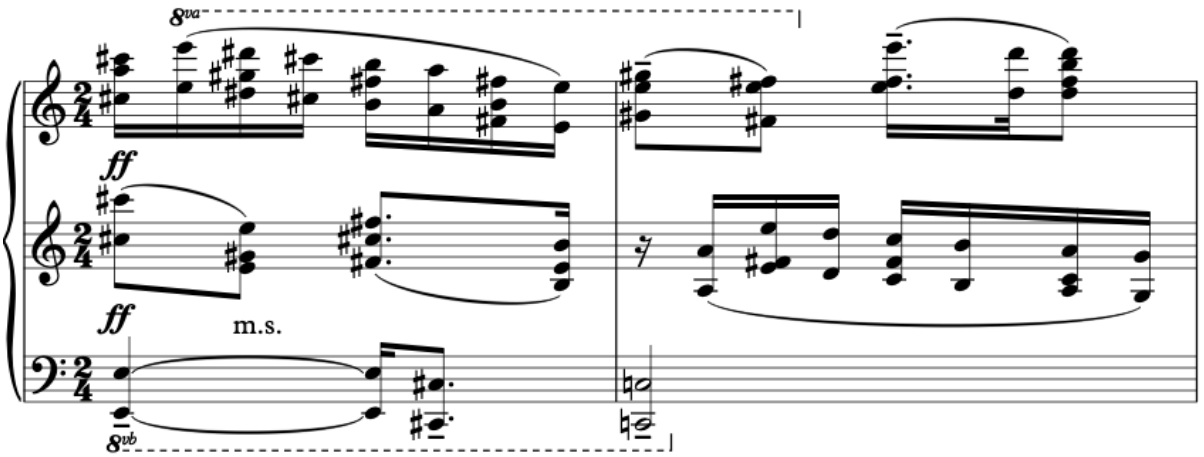
[47] «эпическая величавость» Loginova, 'O muzykal'noy kompozitsii', p. 140.
[48] Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, p. 35.

full range of the keyboard and the climax, for example, ranges across six octaves. (Example 4.44)

Example 4.43: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 4, bars 1-11.

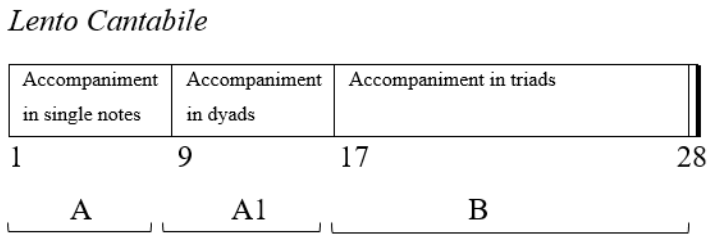


Example 4.44: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 4, bars 20-21.

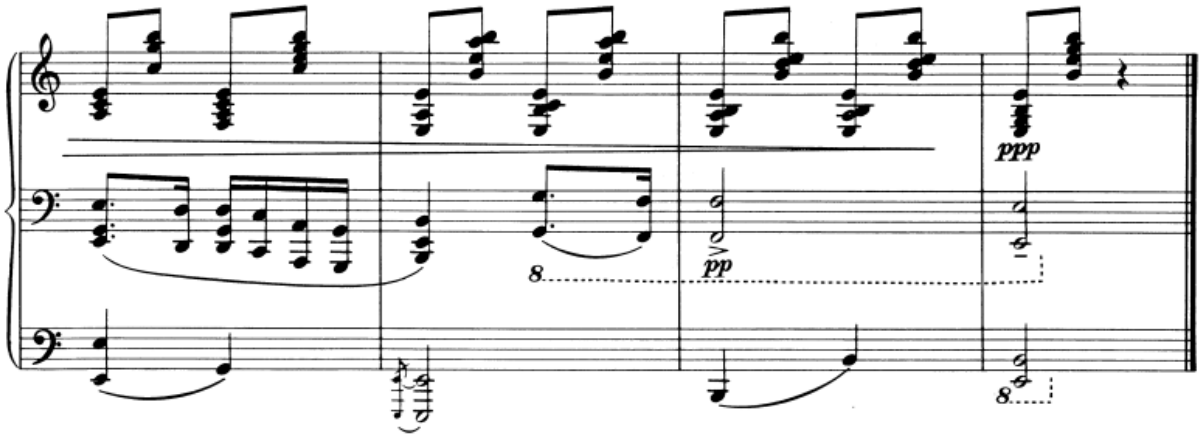


While the *Sketch*'s structure can be loosely defined as binary form (A and A1 are thematically related), its overall musical effect is that of continuous growth; it is as if it has been conceived on the spot, in one breath. (Figure 4.i) Its musical language is continuously developing. The lyrical melodic line never repeats – it only evolves, growing in texture and tessitura – and the end of the prelude is profoundly different to the start. The accompaniment part also grows steadily with each phrase: starting at first as single notes, it transforms into dyads, then triads, and eventually four-note chords. (Example 4.45)

Figure 4.i: Structure of Stanchinsky's *Sketch* no. 4.



Example 4.45: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 4, bars 25-28.



The slow and atmospheric fourth *Sketch* hints at Stanchinsky's earlier style with its lyrical tune – a rare example from this time of his skills as a melodist. However, when compared with his early works, the musical elements surrounding the melody are more sophisticated. The steady pulsating quaver accompaniment is reminiscent of swinging cathedral bells, growing in volume and texture towards the powerful climax. The dynamics die down before the closure, but the textures at the end of the prelude remain rich. The return of the opening melody in the final

four notes in the middle stave create a sense of symmetry among transformed textures, demonstrating one of Stanchinsky's more interesting approaches to structure.

Intricate textures are also on display in *Sketch* no. 11, which is very different from the other pieces in this set. Despite the piece employing strict contrapuntal techniques, it retains a sense of mischief through the deployment of unexpected melodies, polyrhythms and structural reductions. This shows that Stanchinsky can create variety even within the confines of the strictest methods.

Written in ternary form, the piece uses different compositional techniques at different stages. (Figure 4.j) The first and the last sections (A and A1) use the same thematic material and are written as double mirror inversions. The middle section, B, is further split into two subsections. The first of these uses the same thematic idea as the opening, but it is constructed as a canon between the two hands. The second retains the thematic material in the left hand, where it takes up an accompaniment function, while the right hand introduces a new melody over the top. Despite most of the phrases throughout the *Sketch* falling neatly into two-bar structures – as well as both sections A and B lasting eight bars each – Stanchinsky disrupts expectations by shortening the final section to seven bars, creating an abrupt and unexpected ending.

Figure 4.j: Structure of Stanchinsky's *Sketch* no. 11.

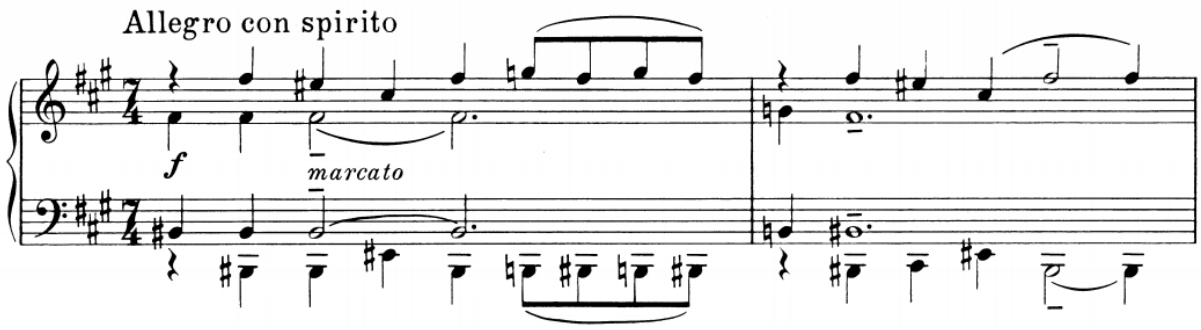
Allegro con spirito

Double mirror inversion	Double mirror inversion in canon	New melodic line introduced	Double mirror inversion
1-8	9-12	13-16	17-23
A	B		A1

The piece's texture, written almost wholly in four-parts, is comparable to a vocal (SATB) or string quartet score, which is highly unusual for piano writing. The two outer voices (S and B) are denser and busier than the inner two lines (A and T), while the voices of each pair mirror one another. The piece is a double mirror inversion: S and B are mirror inversions of each other, as are the A and T lines. Moreover, the two inner lines, which perform the function of harmonic pedals decorated with semitones, take their melodic shape from the outer lines. For example, the soprano line F♯-E♯-(C♯)-F♯ in bar one is lengthened in terms of note durations

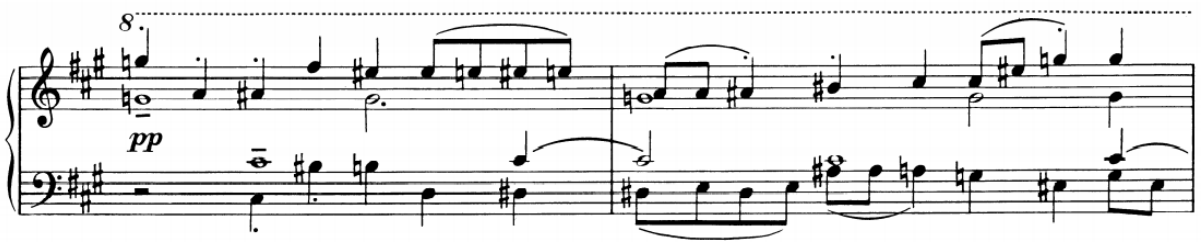
and inverted in the alto line to form F♯-G♮-F♯ across bars 1-2. An equivalent relationship can also be seen between tenor and bass parts: the bass line B♯-C♯-(E♯)-B♯ is augmented and inverted in the tenor line to form B♯-B♮-B♯.[49] There is also a direct correlation between the pitch content of the quaver movement in each outer voice at the end of bar 1 and the melodic movement in the inner voices in bar 2, as in both staves the pitches are identical between the parts. (Example 4.46)

Example 4.46: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 11, bars 1-2.



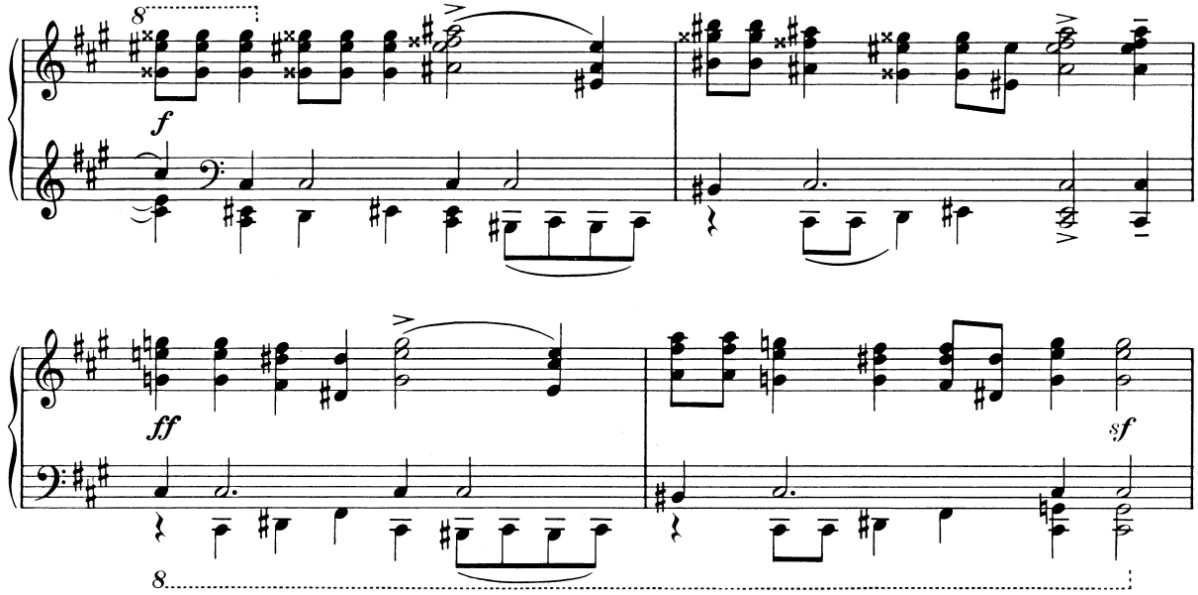
From bar 9, the *Sketch* enters a new section, in which there is significant textural and thematic development. The theme is taken from the opening section, and in addition to being structured as a double mirror inversion, it is set as a canon between the two hands. The right-hand part is inverted in the left hand, which enters two crotchets later. (Example 4.47) However, the canon is disrupted after only four bars, with the right hand introducing a new, dramatic melody in bar 13. This section is particularly unruly and exciting: the canon is broken, as are the strict mirror structures, and the right hand escapes the rhythmic patterns of the left hand. (Example 4.48)

Example 4.47: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 11, bars 9-10.



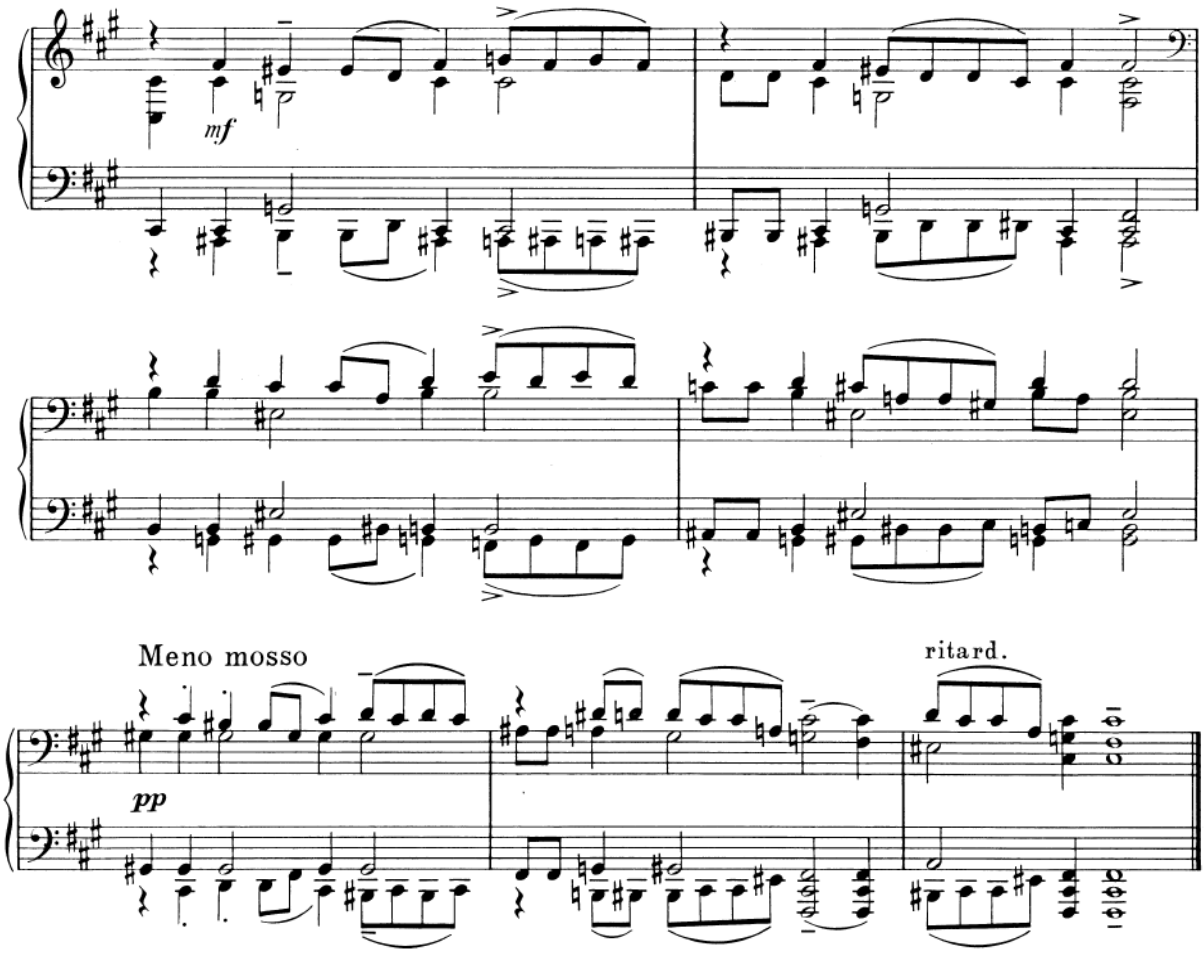
[49] The second B♯ in the bass part is most probably a mistranscription in the edition, as the equivalent note appears as a C♯ in corresponding places (i.e. bar 2).

Example 4.48: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 11, bars 13-16.



From bar 17, the final section returns to the strict, static mirror inversions of the piece's opening; this brings back some order and sense of calm, although it is not fully restored. Retaining a sense of mischief, Stanchinsky shortens the final section to seven bars, thereby contrasting it with the two previous sections (which consisted of eight bars each). This shortening results in an unexpected ending at the end of bar 23, in which a lowered 2nd degree is resolved downwards by step. This kind of Neapolitan inflection has appeared in some of Stanchinsky's other pieces – such as his *Sketch* no. 8 – and particularly in those works written within the Phrygian mode. This also shows an element of the 'Stanchinsky mode', providing another example to the previously discussed topic of tonal enrichment. (Example 4.49)

Example 4.49: Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches*, no. 11, bars 17-23.



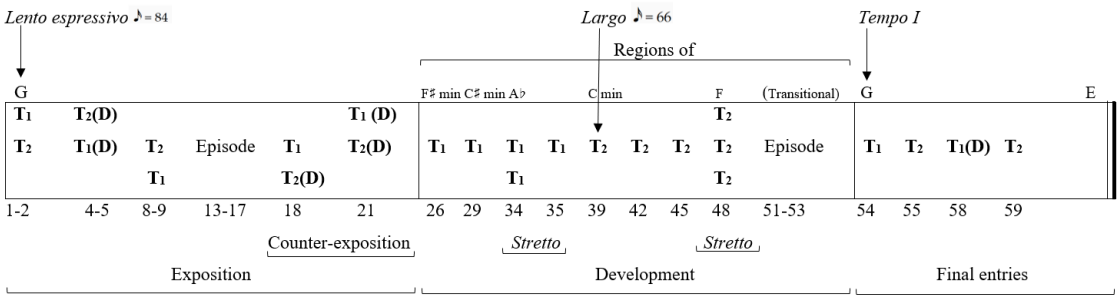
Stanchinsky's interest in counterpoint is also seen in his large-scale pieces. For example, the first movement, *Fuga*, from his Sonata in G major, takes counterpoint as the main structural stimulus for the composition. Certainly, there are precedents for fugal movements being used in pianos sonatas (such as in those of Haydn and Beethoven), but to place this movement first is unusual. It may be possible that Stanchinsky knew Myaskovsky's first piano sonata in D minor (1907–9, published 1914) – whose first movement is a fugue – but Stanchinsky does not appear to have taken direct stylistic inspiration from this work. While Myaskovsky's sonata is more Bachian in its part writing, with its subjects tightly bound, Stanchinsky's subjects contain wide leaps from the very outset, and his development of the materials reaches significant levels of complexity for piano writing.

The *Fuga* comprises an exposition (with incorporated counter-exposition), an extensive development in two parts, and a final entries section. (Figure 4.k) While somewhat unexpected,

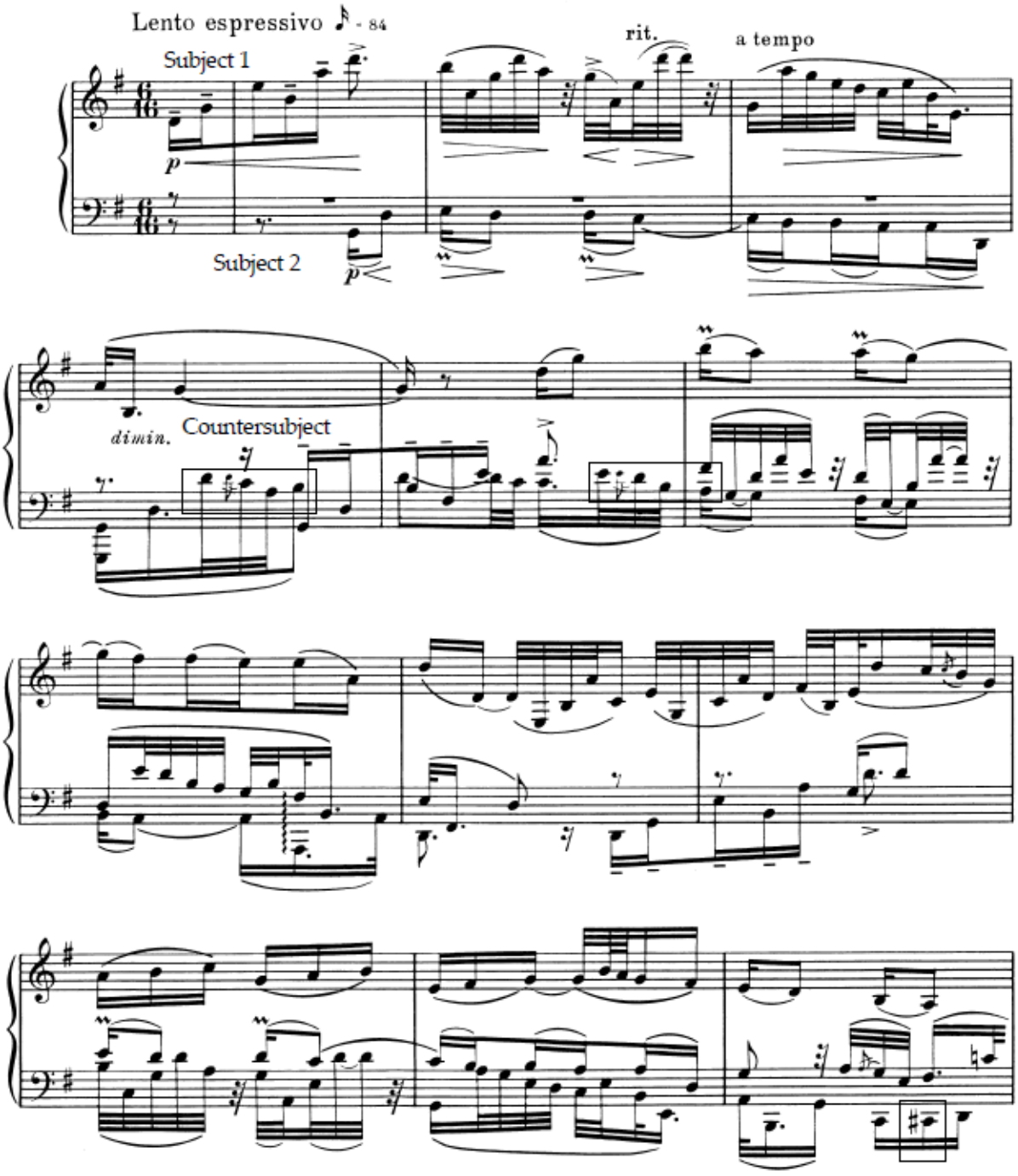
the nonconformity of this movement results in some of Stanchinsky's most interesting and successful writing. Considering it from a purely structural perspective, and excluding harmonic functions, the fugal form can be quite successfully mapped onto sonata form. Both consist of a section where subjects are stated, a development section, and a final entries/recapitulation section. For this reason, swapping the conventional sonata form for a fugue in the first movement is very effective.

The movement is a double fugue, as its two subjects are stated simultaneously from the outset. (Example 4.50) Despite the exposition not allowing the second subject independent exposure, both subjects are given equal importance within the development section; this is split into two halves, with each subject receiving its own *stretto* section.

Figure 4.k: Structure of *Fuga* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major.



Example 4.50: Opening of Stanchinsky's *Fuga* from Sonata in G major, bars 1-12.



Despite the typically Stanchinskian disjunct movement seen in the subject entry, the movement's notation appears to have been influenced by Baroque models. Slow and tranquil, the *Fuga* begins with the tempo indication of *Lento espressivo* (accompanied by a marking of ♪ = 84) and is notated in remarkably small note values within a metre of 6/16.[50] Notating slow

[50] In manuscript, tempo markings appear to be added in pencil by Zhilyayev. RNMM, 239/36.

pieces of music using short note values was common in the Baroque period, when time signatures denominated in smaller note values had a slower tactus. This suggests that Stanchinsky may have been studying old fugues when writing this sonata but, far from being a pastiche, this piece has a definite sense of foreshadowing neoclassicism.

When exploring Stanchinsky's approach to counterpoint in the *Fuga*, it is important to consider his application of tonality within the movement's structure, as the two topics are inextricably linked. While fugues usually generate momentum from the tonic and dominant relationships between the subject and countersubject, the exposition of this movement contains little tension. This is not due to it lacking traditional subject and countersubject statements, but rather because the exposition has a modal quality. The first eleven bars of this movement contain no accidentals, and the first C♯ hinting at a dominant occurs only in bar 12. Subject statements that are ostensibly in the dominant, such as T_1(D) entering in bar 4, are still scored within the tonic scale. Sitsky observed that 'as the voices stack up, Stanchinskiy [sic] creates a diatonically saturated field, most original in sound.'[51]

The two subjects of the fugue have distinct characters and melodic outlines. The first is unusual as a fugue subject, but very characteristic of Stanchinsky's writing. It serves as another example of his predilection for wide intervals and boasts a particularly wide melodic structure; the first bar alone spans two octaves within six notes. The subject's melodic structure relies heavily on fourths in bar 1, while bar 2 places importance on sevenths (two fourths stacked), which is a feature seen in his other works from this time. The opening gesture's beaming across the bar line is also characteristic of Stanchinsky's writing, while the expressive *rit.* and *a tempo* found within the first subject statement (bars 2-3) break it up into a very clearly defined 'head' and 'tail'. The melodic rise at the end of the first half of the subject suggests a close relationship with antecedent-consequent phrasing so, despite unusual appearances, it still has an underlying neoclassical structure.

The second subject, on the other hand, is more orthodox in its composition. Although characteristically different, Powell observes that the two subjects are nonetheless connected by their diatonic nature and wide tessitura.[52] Alekseyev has noted that in this work, Stanchinsky,

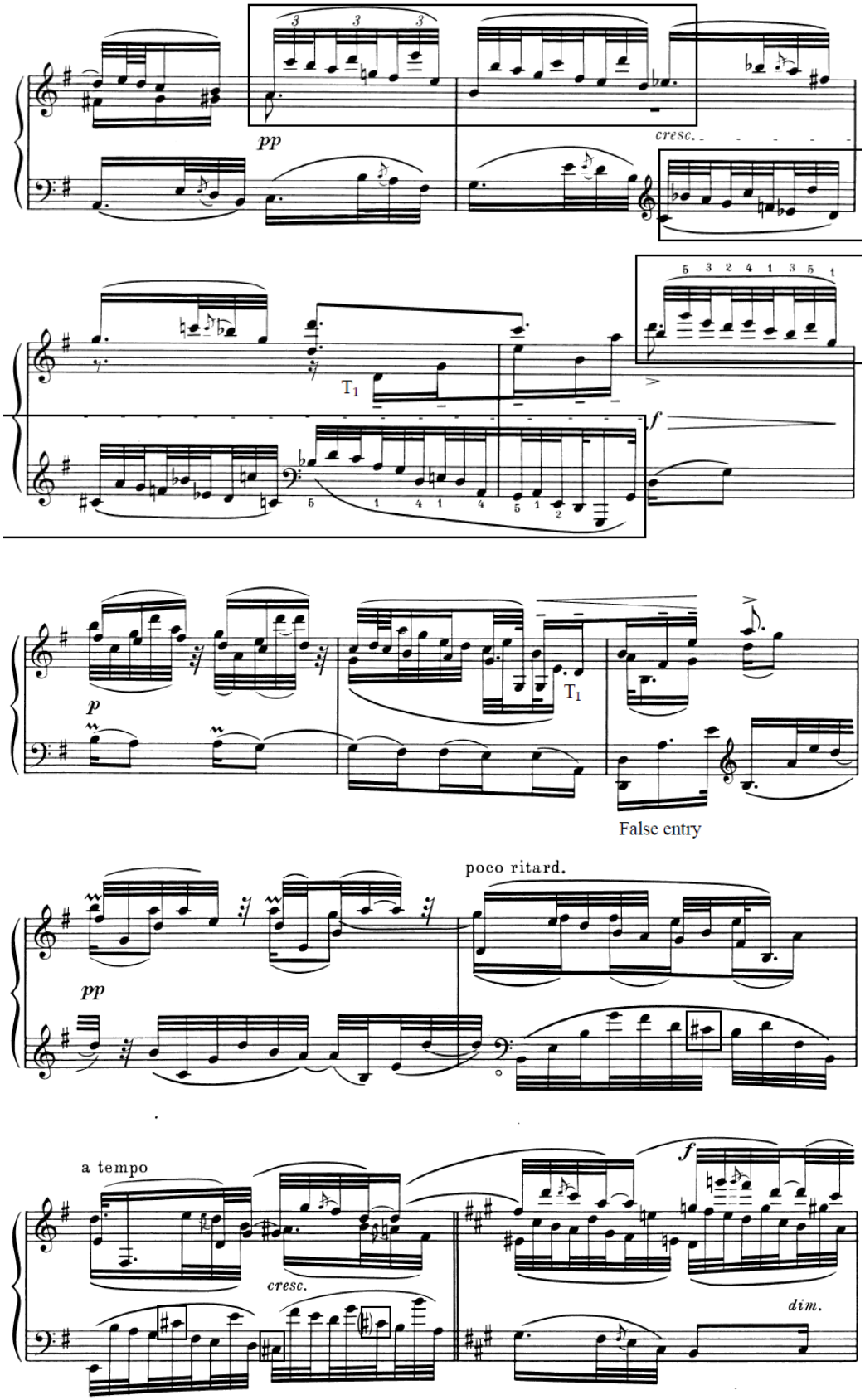
[51] Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, p. 29.
[52] Powell, 'After Scriabin', p. 53.

like Taneyev, introduced the second theme not to provide contrast, but to complement the musical thought expressed by the first theme.[53] This theme is more traditional and closely resembles a formal subject. The theme begins and ends on the tonic, highlighting the tonic-dominant relationship in its opening and closing gestures. (See example 4.50) These gestures also highlight the importance of fifths, as they are the only melodic intervals in this subject greater than a step. The theme is decorated with Baroque mordents, which are characteristic of Stanchinsky's writing and found in other pieces such as his *Sketch* no. 7.

The two subjects are not the only thematically important melodic structures in this movement. In bars four and five, a countersubject emerges which is used extensively in the episode and development sections. Its full structure remains flexible, but its main part is characterised by a three-note descending pattern decorated with an acciaccatura. (See example 4.50, bars 4-6, highlighted in boxes) More new material is introduced in the first episode section (bars 13-17), where the cascading triplet gestures in demisemiquavers (first appearing in bars 15-16 in the right hand) are set against the acciaccatura countermelody in the left hand, creating particularly challenging pianistic textures. (Example 4.51) After the long, diatonic opening, the episode section also creates harmonic contrast by introducing much higher levels of chromaticism.

[53] Alekseyev, *Russkaya fortepiannaya muzyka*, p. 351.

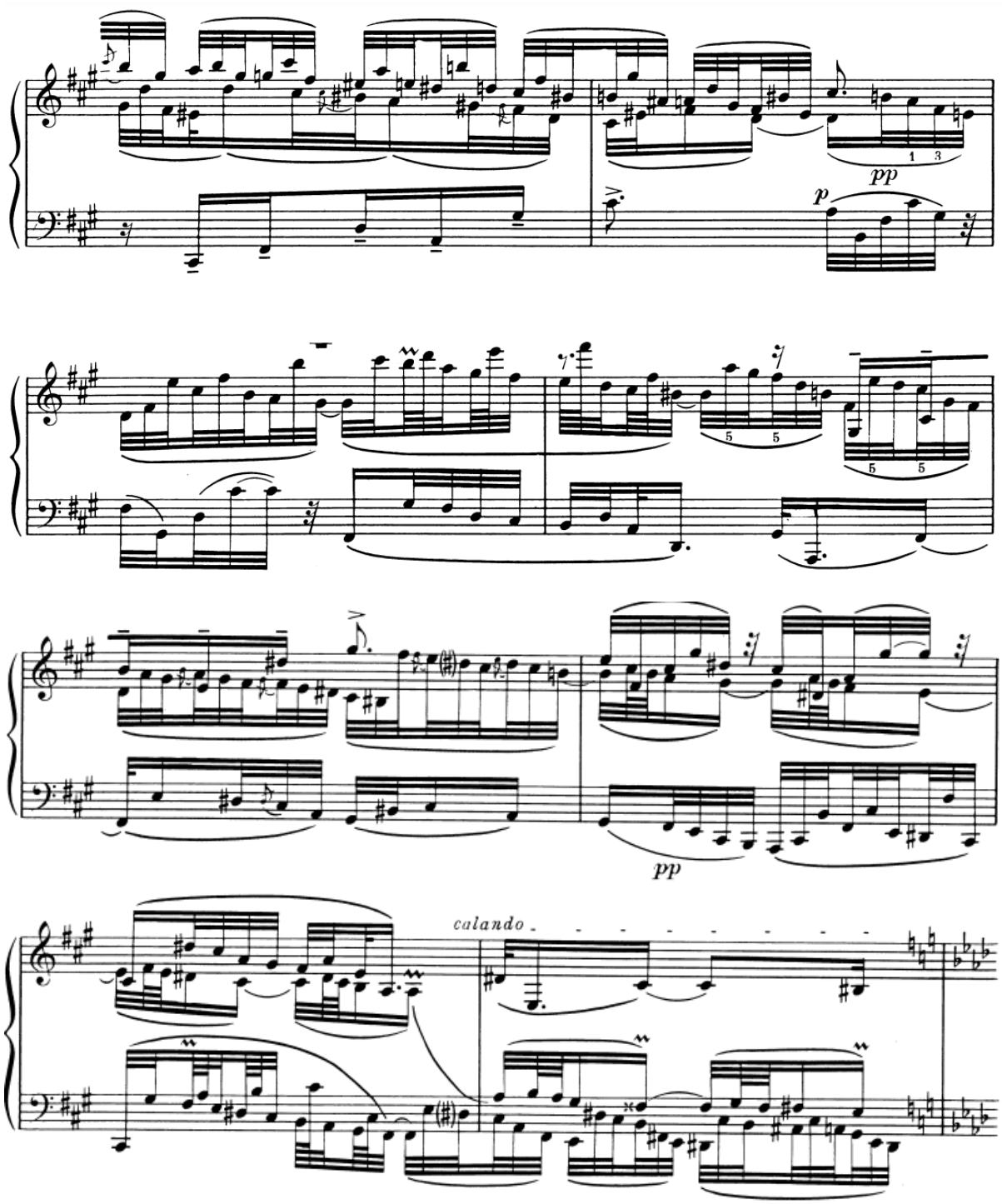
Example 4.51: Episode and counter-exposition from Stanchinsky's *Fuga* from Sonata in G major, bars 15-25.



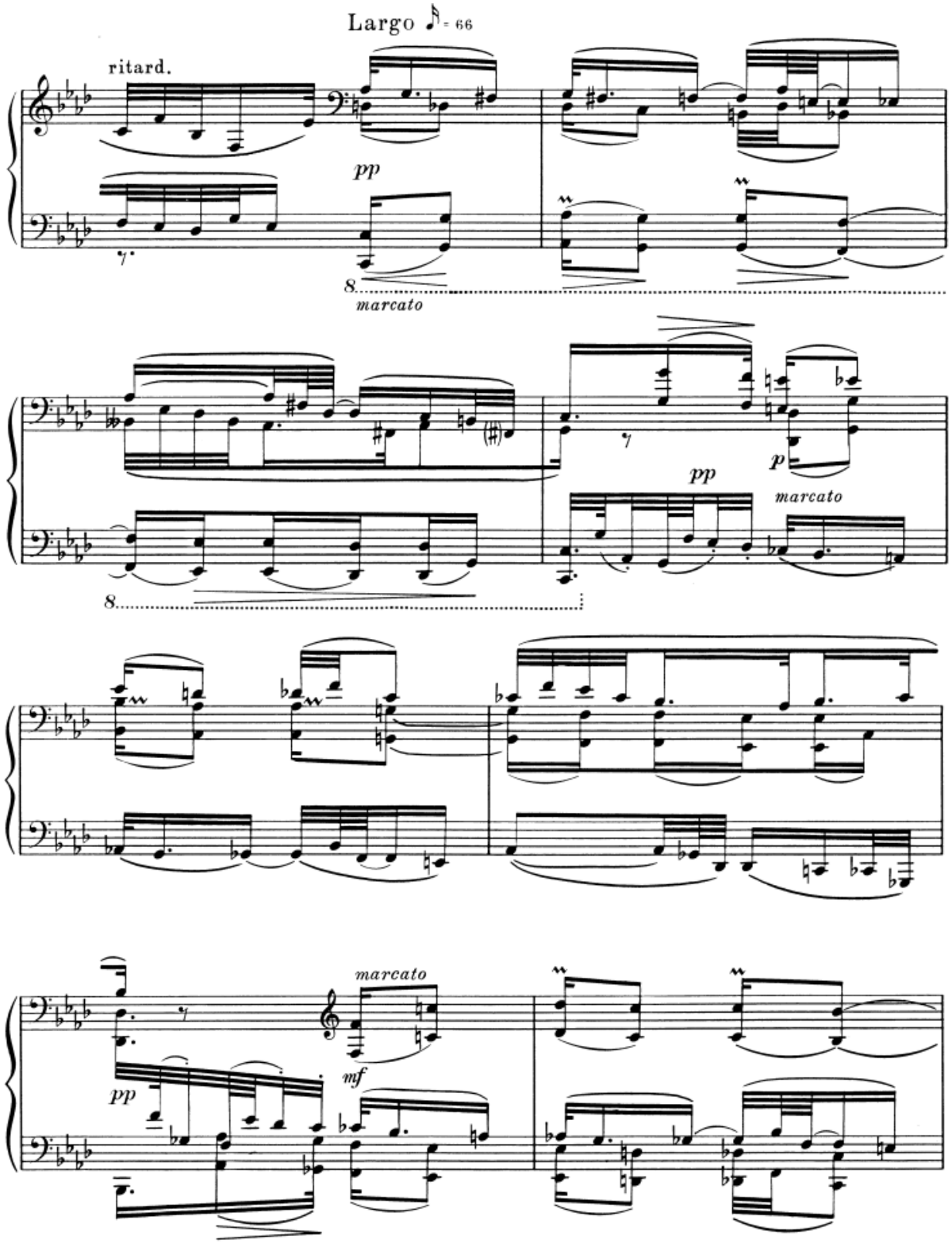
The counter-exposition which follows is used to bring about a harmonic change after the tranquil opening: only the entry of the first subject in bar 17 is scored in the tonic, with all subsequent entries of both subjects scored in the dominant. (See example 4.51) Tonally, the section modulates towards the region of D, as indicated by the presence of C♯ in bars 23-24. In addition to creating harmonic change, this passage also disrupts the metre. A false entry in bar 21 displaces rhythmic groupings in the subsequent two bars: a common occurrence in Stanchinsky's writing.

The transition to the development section is tonally and thematically staggered which, in common with Stanchinsky's other works from this period, removes any sense of a strict section break. The first subject entry is in bar 26, with a tonal centre of F♯, but this is not confirmed until halfway through bar 28; even then, it is obscured by the heavily chromatic accompaniment. (Example 4.52) Large parts of the development section subsequently delay confirmation of their tonal regions. For example, the subject entry at the end of bar 29 suggests the region of C♯, but this remains unconfirmed until the beginning of bar 32. This technique continues to be used into the second half of the section, which is indicated by the arrival of the second subject and a tempo change from *Lento espressivo* (♪ = 84) to *Largo* (♪ = 66). The slower speed coincides with the use of lower registers and chromatic additions to the accompaniment, which create a particularly dark mood. The second subject enters in bar 39 and indicates a tonality of C minor, but this is not confirmed until bar 42. (Example 4.53)

Example 4.52: Opening of the second half of development of *Fuga* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major, bars 26-33.

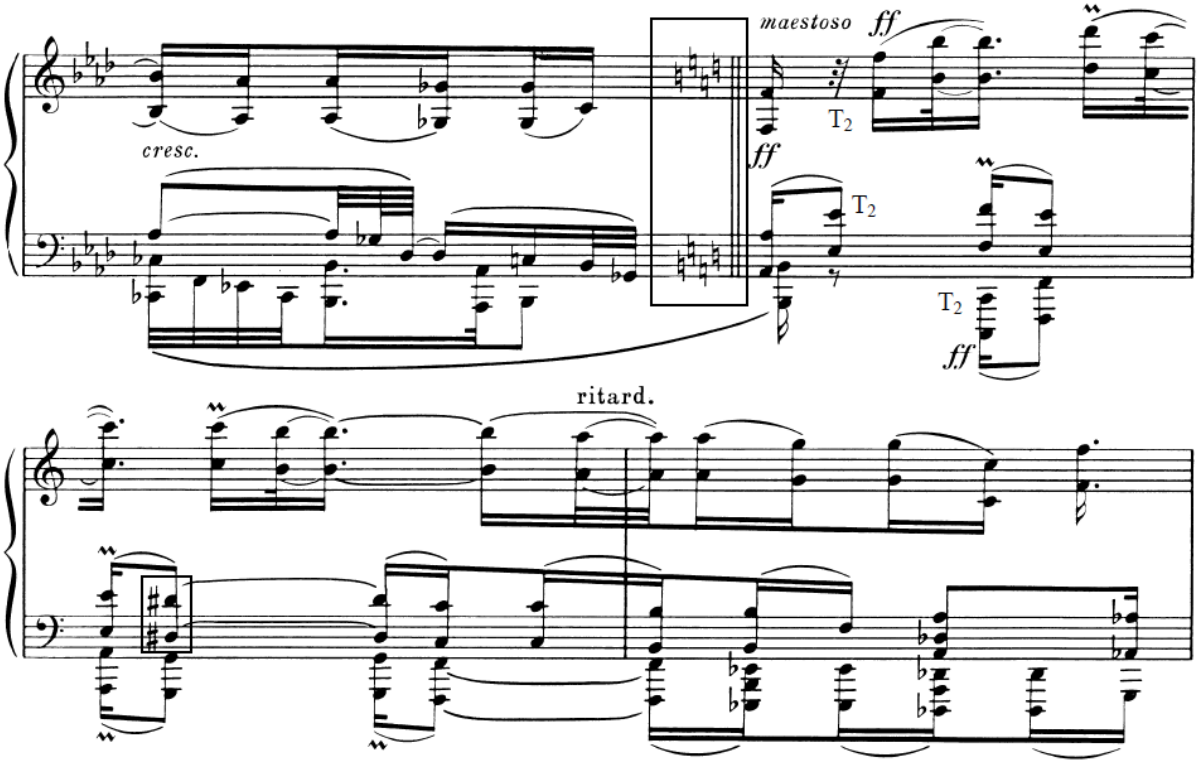


Example 4.53: Opening of the second half of development of *Fuga* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major, bars 39-46.



The tonality in the second half of the development section is fleeting. Subject entries in bars 42 and 45 imply tonal regions of D♭ and F respectively, but even this fails to fully assert any sense of key, and the isolated instances of common chords (bars 42, 45) lose all sense of sounding as such. (See example 4.53) This tonal unruliness reaches its peak in bar 48, which marks the second *stretto* of the development section. Here, the key signature disappears, and three subject entries with different, implied tonal centres (A, F and C) enter within the space of a single bar. (Example 4.54) The removal of the key signature results in the subject's opening gesture (a perfect fifth in the tonic and a perfect fourth in the dominant) becoming an augmented fourth (F-B) in the top voice. This tritone gives the passage a Lydian feel, which is further indicated by the presence of D♯ (the raised 4th degree in a scale of A) in the alto voice. While the subject in the bass part does not include raised 4th degrees within the *stretto* section, the chord which begins the episode in bar 51 includes an F♯ over a root of C. Constructed from tritones, this chord espouses symmetrical principles while, at the same time, its notes all act as suspensions over a C bass.

Example 4.54: Second *stretto* of *Fuga* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major, bars 47-50.

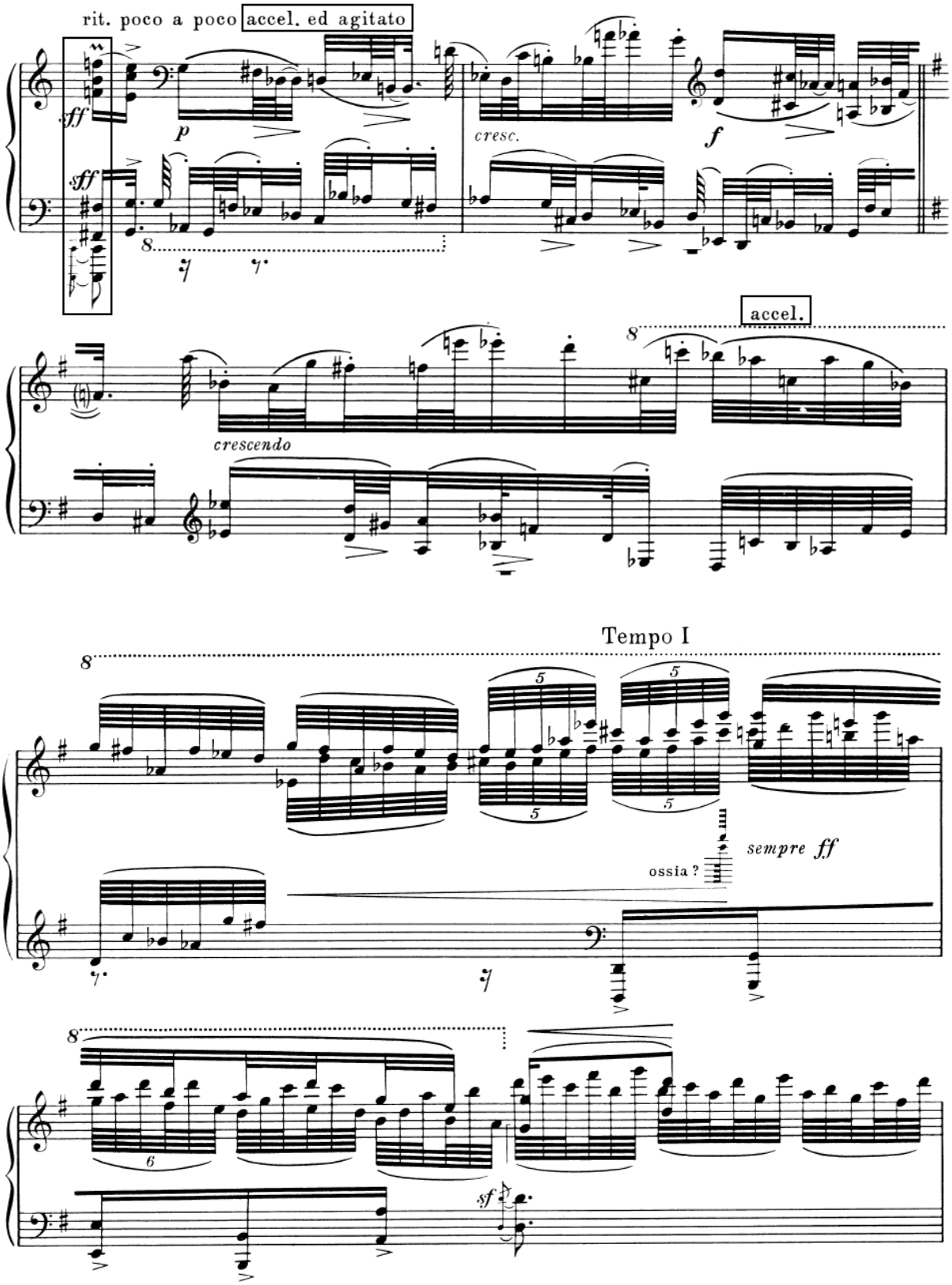


The short episode section in bars 51-53 contains a large number of accidentals which entirely obscure the tonal centre. Powell compares this section with Scriabin's Preludes op. 74, which sound – but are not – atonal.[54] (Example 4.55) In the lead up to the final entries, Stanchinsky uses scale patterns structurally: that is, he transforms a chromatic group into a diatonic one at the final entry, which allows him to create harmonic change at the beginning of the new section without immediately returning to the tonic. As can be expected from Stanchinsky, the tonic is confirmed later than the return of the theme (halfway through bar 55). The pitch components of this transition (bar 54) are 'derived from the tonal centres of the opening section and first group of middle entries of the movement, namely G, D, F♯, C♯ and A♭.'[55] The passage thus has a dominant function without directly employing a dominant. Powell writes: 'just as Scriabin's double dominants resolve onto each other despite containing the same pitch material, this particular scale resolves onto G major although its own components are chromatically grouped around the pitches G and D.'[56]

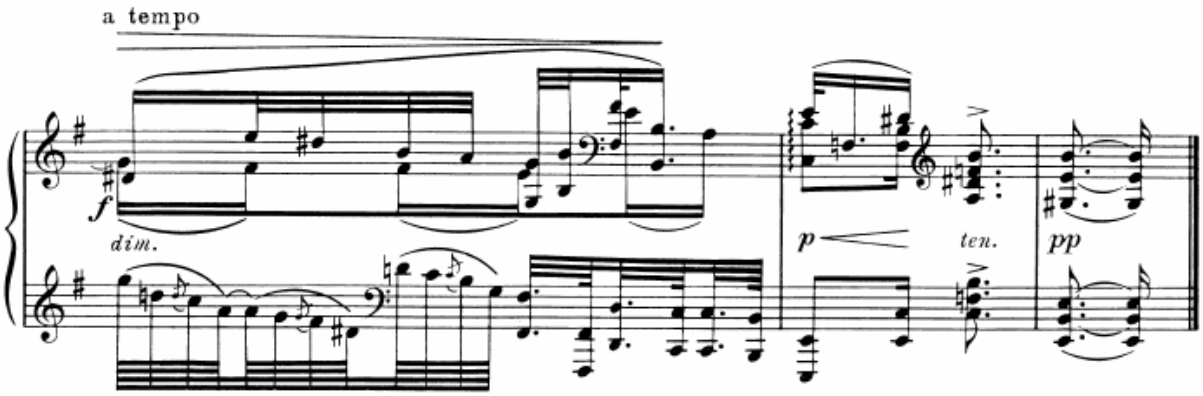
As can be seen in example 4.55, the final entries section begins entirely diatonically, but this lasts for only four bars (bars 55-58). From bar 59, the accompaniment disguises the tonal centre once again, creating a sense of continuous tonal discovery. Until the final chord, there is little sense of what key the piece will end in; when it finally arrives, the music lands unexpectedly on an E major chord with a Picardy Third. (Example 4.56) The moment the piece reaches this new tonal centre is a very special one, which brings a sense of lightness, wonder and playfulness.

[54] Powell, 'After Scriabin', p. 53.
[55] Ibid., pp. 53-54.
[56] Ibid., p. 54.

Example 4.55: Second episode, climax and the beginning of final entries of *Fuga* from Stanchinsky's Sonata in G major, bars 51-55.



Example 4.56: Ending of Stanchinsky's *Fuga* from Sonata in G major, bars 61-63.



The overlapping textures in this movement make for some tortuously challenging piano writing. Sitsky notes that 'sections of the fugue are almost beyond the possibilities of the piano [...] there is nothing quite like this in piano literature.'[57] The lines are often difficult to render coherently, although the writing does demonstrate Stanchinsky's good understanding of the instrument and virtuosity as a pianist. Despite its complexities, the piano part still sits relatively comfortably under the hands and, unlike the fiendishly difficult climax of his Sonata in E♭ minor (1906), it is not overwritten. Every note has a reason for being there, bringing great beauty within this complexity and resulting in one of Stanchinsky's most interesting and successful pieces. His favoured musical idioms flourish within a slow fugal form: the extreme tessitura, fleeting tonalities and diatonically saturated fields demonstrate a distinctive approach to writing for the piano.

Stanchinsky's linear piano textures are probably his most recognisable trait. Compared with his earliest pieces, which were written largely as melodies with chordal accompaniments, his final works are considerably more sophisticated and demonstrate his rapid evolution of style. Stanchinsky's approach to texture is inextricably linked with other aspects of his compositional style, such as enriched tonalities and the use of counterpoint as a structural stimulus, which are applied imaginatively in the first movement of his Sonata in G major. Stanchinsky's use of unusually wide tessituras allowed him to achieve almost orchestral levels of textural complexity, while the intricacy of his contrapuntal lines led him to explore other unorthodox approaches to piano writing, such as SATB-style textures. This combination of techniques was

[57] Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, p. 29.

unusual for a Russian composer of his generation and is evidence of the imaginative lengths Stanchinsky went to in order to hone his unique musical voice.

Conclusions

Stanchinsky's compositional style evolved at a remarkable rate from 1907 to 1914 and, by following Stanchinsky's stylistic journey over time, this project identified aspects of his writing which changed significantly. By 1911, Stanchinsky had largely shed late Romantic and Scriabinesque influences, the latter being highly unusual for a composer of his generation. Stanchinsky showed some interest in folk music in 1909, but this was short-lived and there are no such quotations in his final works. However, some elements of the style – such as the emphasis on fourths and fifths – did endure. Many composers of Stanchinsky's generation, such as Stravinsky, went through a similar process of digesting and subsequently rejecting late Romantic and folk influences, although for Stanchinsky this seems to have occurred at an accelerated pace.

On the other hand, many stylistics aspects that Stanchinsky developed during his student years persisted, and he went on to develop these further. Tonal enrichment was very important to him throughout his career, as seen through his increasing use of modes and pandiatonicism, as well as his juxtaposition of diatonicism and chromaticism. In developing his tonal style, Stanchinsky leaned towards a scalar approach – creating new harmonies by employing non-standard scalic constructions – rather than aiming to dispose of tonality through the use of all twelve tones. His approach also included finding chromatically displaced alternatives to the dominant at cadence points, searching for symmetry, and creating a signature synthetic scale – the 'Stanchinsky mode' – which he used frequently in his final works. Many composers at this time were wrestling with the broader issue of the renewal or rejection of tonality. Noting the interest that Stanchinsky developed in strict musical procedures, such as canon, one can only speculate as to how he would have responded to the twelve-tone techniques of Schoenberg or Roslavets as they developed.

Stanchinsky regularly obscured or disguised surface musical features, including concealing tonal centres and blurring section breaks, which can be observed as part of a broader tendency for irregularity; as soon as a pattern is established in Stanchinsky's music, it is broken and replaced by something new. His rhythmic work is among the more developed features of his

later pieces and includes use of uneven metres or implied polymetres, shifting accents, and juxtaposing beaming and barring. It is, arguably, just as groundbreaking as anything Stravinsky was writing at this time, albeit different in its character and presentation. Stanchinsky continued to work with counterpoint throughout his life, and in his final years he applied contrapuntal structures to both small and large-scale pieces. His signature combination of complex, linear piano textures, wide leaps and spacious tessituras is particularly imaginative.

Stanchinsky was a forward-thinking composer who sought to innovate while remaining grounded in old musical ideas and forms. His approach in this respect is progressive, and the seemingly neoclassical elements of his work foreshadow the styles that would become commonplace in the 1920s.[58] By the time of his death at the age of twenty-six, he had achieved more stylistically than many others had by that age, especially for a composer who had never left Russia. In this respect, he surpassed many of his contemporaries and composers of the generations which immediately preceded and followed him, such as Scriabin, Stravinsky, Debussy and Schoenberg. It is an unfortunate cliché that one may only wonder what he would have achieved if he had lived into the second half of the twentieth century; he certainly would have become one of the more interesting figures in Russian musical life.

[58] Sitsky, *Music of the Repressed*, p. 36.

Chapter 5 – Reception and Publication*

The Russian composer and critic Leonid Sabaneyev began his final reminiscences about Stanchinsky with the remark:

> Nobody now knows almost anything about the composer A. Stanchinsky. And meanwhile there were years when great hopes were pinned on him, even the word 'genius' was repeatedly used [...] in relation to him.[1]

Sabaneyev's appraisal of Stanchinsky was published as part of a collected edition of articles in 2004. This entry on Stanchinsky was reproduced from an undated and previously unpublished typeset document called *From Russia's Musical Past*. Its framing of Stanchinsky in the past tense indicates that the essay was written sometime after Stanchinsky's death.[2] While the name Stanchinsky remains obscure today, even among expert audiences, Sabaneyev portrays him as having been a highly celebrated composer. According to another article by Sabaneyev, published in 1927, Stanchinsky's musical career was 'extraordinarily brilliant, and early success and even the beginning of fame were during his lifetime.'[3] Sabaneyev's accounts paint a vivid picture of Stanchinsky's dazzling achievements while at the same time accentuating his mental illness, and subsequent musicological literature has largely repeated and reinforced Sabaneyev's claims. As a result, most writings on Stanchinsky strongly emphasise this particular characterisation. For example, Montagu-Nathan wrote in 1953 that 'beneath [Stanchinsky's] psychological disequilibrium there lay a quite outstanding creative talent.'[4] The current *Grove Music Online* article about Stanchinsky makes an unconfirmed assertion that he was an 'incurable sufferer of […] schizophrenia [… who] became the rising star of Moscow musical circles and manuscript copies of his works were circulated by admirers.'[5] These claims may be rooted in truth, but they are also exaggerated and oversimplified. No academic study so far has investigated the reception of Stanchinsky's music within his lifetime,

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* Parts of this chapter have been published as Akvilė Stuart, 'A Sick Genius? The Critical Reception of Aleksey Stanchinsky', *Musicology*, 30 (2021), 19–33 <https://doi.org/10.2298/MUZ2130019S>

[1] «Никто теперь почти ничего не знает о композиторе Ал. Станчинском. А между тем были годы, когда на него возлагались огромные надежды, бывало неоднократно произносимо даже слово «гениальность» [...] по его адресу.» Leonid Sabaneyev, *Vospominaniya o Rossii* (Moscow: Klassika-XXI, 2004), p. 62.

[2] Sabaneyev, *Vospominaniya o Rossii*, p. 236.

[3] Leonid Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, ed. by Yehudah Yofe (New York: International Publishers, 1927), p. 191.

[4] M. Montagu-Nathan, 'Was He a Genius?', *Tempo*, 28 (1953), 23–25 (p. 23) <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298200051147>

[5] Jonathan Powell and Christopher Hepburn, 'Stanchinsky, Aleksey Vladimirovich', *Grove Music Online* (2001) <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.26540>

and all claims about his reportedly successful career stem from the same, single source: Sabaneyev's memoirs about the composer.

This chapter investigates the circumstances surrounding the publication and reception of Stanchinsky's works, both contemporaneously and posthumously. The primary sources examined here tell a more nuanced story and, by re-examining prior claims, this chapter provides new insights into Stanchinsky's career and explores potential explanations for the decline of his public profile. The first part focuses on the critical reception of Stanchinsky's works within his lifetime. Between 1913 and 1914, Stanchinsky attracted reviews of his music on two occasions: the publication of his op. 1 in 1913; and a concert in which he performed his works in 1914. It explores the conditions in which Stanchinsky first introduced his music to the public and examines how his music was received by critics in Moscow and St Petersburg. The second part of the chapter examines the posthumous publication of Stanchinsky's works in the late 1910s and 1920s. The final part traces the treatment of Stanchinsky's legacy from the 1930s, and considers why his name and music have become so obscure.

The views and opinions of Stanchinsky's teachers and colleagues, as well as music critics, are at the forefront of this study. As such, the chapter is positioned to follow the perspectives of the receiver, rather than examining the views of the creator – an approach consistent with the emerging field of music criticism studies.[6] In examining these views, this thesis aims to retain a degree of scepticism. The reviews examined in this chapter are highly subjective and their quality varies considerably, as each is dependent on the skill and understanding of the writer. They are representative only of the views of the critics who wrote them; they did not necessarily reflect the views of other listeners, nor did they encapsulate the views of an imagined 'Russian public'. Establishing an accurate picture of the historical reception of a composer amongst audiences is, in most cases, unattainable. While some reviews do comment on the behaviour of audiences during concerts, such sources are very limited. This is particularly the case with Stanchinsky, where there are comparatively few performances to draw on.

Nonetheless, the reviews examined in this chapter supply a historical record of contemporaneous events and give an insight into the musical views and opinions of

[6] For a more in-depth discussion on the history of music criticism, see Christopher Dingle, 'Introduction', in *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism*, ed. by Christopher Dingle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 1–6.

Stanchinsky's contemporaries, as well as other musicals figures of the twentieth century. Dingle writes in the introduction to *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism* that 'far from a fatal flaw, its generally unguarded lack of consideration is often the prime value of music criticism.'[7] Personal relationships, prejudices and favouritism are prominent in the reviews of Stanchinsky's music. According to Frey, music criticism in Imperial Russia is notorious for its 'passionate polemics, its philosophical debates and its well-matched rivalries.'[8] It is these intricacies and biases that make the reviews of Stanchinsky's music particularly noteworthy. Additionally, critical reviews are a fruitful source of information for stylistic analysis. According to LaRue, 'some of the best clues to original accomplishments in any period can be found by studying the works or procedures to which critics and theorists object.'[9] As such, with enough temporal perspective, all reviews of musical works become valuable historical sources.

Collecting historical reviews can be problematic due to the volume of potential sources (i.e. newspapers and magazines) available. A researcher can never be sure that they have found all relevant reviews of a concert or publication, and it is possible that the sample of reviews examined in this chapter is not exhaustive. This is a particular issue for composers like Stanchinsky, where the number of available reviews is very limited; the discovery of even one or two additional reviews could change the way in which we understand Stanchinsky's contemporary reception. The reviews examined here are the entirety of those found in eight music periodicals published in Moscow and St Petersburg from 1913-1917.[10] However, it is possible that there are further reviews in other publications, or that Stanchinsky received reviews in the press outside of these dates.[11] Indeed, this chapter uses a comparatively small sample of reviews, and this presents some limitations alongside the possibility of a skewed or biased picture of Stanchinsky's contemporary reception. A limited set of reviews also means that we are missing the perspective of some crucial voices in early twentieth century Russian music criticism. To counter these drawbacks, this chapter turns to the memoirs and articles of Russian musical figures to supplement newspaper and magazine reviews, while also examining the circumstances surrounding the publication of Stanchinsky's works after his death. These elements bring a new dimension to our understanding of how eyewitness accounts are shaped

[7] Dingle, 'Introduction', p. 3.
[8] Emily Frey, 'Music Criticism in Imperial Russia', in *The Cambridge History of Music Criticism*, ed. by C. Dingle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 208–28 (p. 228).
[9] Jan La Rue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1970), p. 200.
[10] For a full list of periodicals examined, please see Introduction.
[11] A review by Abram Yusfin from 1970 is quoted later in this chapter, though this was found through a secondary source.

and fashioned into stories, and allow a deeper insight into how the image of Stanchinsky was moulded during the twentieth century. Most of the reviews examined in this chapter are studied here in their entirety for the first time and, as such, they contribute significantly to our understanding of Stanchinsky's reception.

Reception in late-Imperial Russia

Stanchinsky first introduced his works to the public in 1913 with the publication of nos. 1-4 of the *Twelve Sketches*. It is unclear why the set was split for the publication and if the following two fascicles (nos. 5–8 in 1915 and nos. 9–12 in 1917) were accepted for publication at the same time. The publication and, hence, the start of his reception by the broader public, was largely made possible by Stanchinsky's unusual personal circumstances. As discussed in the biographical chapter, the death of his father in 1910 and his hospitalisation in 1910–1911 led to a desperate financial situation which jeopardised his compositional training. Due to a lack of funds, Stanchinsky had to withdraw from his studies at the Moscow Conservatoire and return to his family's estate in the countryside. This, in turn, made it possible for Stanchinsky to publish his compositions, as the rules of the Conservatoire forbade students from doing this.[12] Stanchinsky's coeval Anatoly Aleksandrov, who remained a student at the Conservatoire, for example, did not have his compositions published until 1916. Due to Stanchinsky's financial hardship, the decision to publish at this time may also have been financially motivated. While it is unlikely that Stanchinsky profited directly from the sales of his music (in 1913, his *Sketches* were being sold for 25 kopecks a copy), he may have sold the rights outright to the publishing house.[13] It is not known how much the publishers (Jurgenson) paid Stanchinsky in 1913, but upon signing a contract with Sergey Prokofiev in 1911, they offered him 100 roubles for his first sonata and twelve of the early pieces.[14]

Stanchinsky's decision to publish the *Twelve Sketches* as his first *opus* was immediately mocked in the press by Prokofiev, who felt that the genre lacked substance. There was some contemporary precedent for composers to publish a large-scale work as their first *opus* –

[12] Aleksandr Tikhonovich Grechaninov, *My Life*, ed. by Nicolas Slonimsky (New York: Coleman-Ross, 1952), p. 31.
[13] Sergey Prokofiev, 'A. Stanchinsky. Esquisses Pour Piano, Op. 1. Izd. P. Jurgensona, tsena 25 kopeck.', *Muzyka*, 21 September 1913, pp. 602–3 (p. 602).
[14] This is the same amount that Zhilyayev requested for teaching Stanchinsky during the summers of 1905 and 1906. David Nice, *Prokofiev: From Russia to the West 1891-1935* (London: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 75.

Rachmaninov's, for example, was a piano concerto (first version, 1891) – but others were also starting their careers by publishing smaller pieces. Scriabin's first *opus* was a four-page waltz (composed in 1886), while Medtner debuted with *Eight Mood Pictures* (1903). By the time Stanchinsky's *Sketches* were published, he already had three piano sonatas in his portfolio. We can assume, therefore, that the *Sketches* were chosen for publication specifically because they were among his more distinctive and mature compositions. In a letter of 17 May 1912, Zhilyayev wrote to Stanchinsky that the *Sketches* 'seem excellent to me […] they are quite unique, serious and significant, complete, in a word, excellent in all respects (form, style, melody, harmony, rhythm) […] your "exercises" seem to me to be true works of art — the most unique of all that you have written.'[15] As such, it is likely that Stanchinsky's decision to debut with the *Sketches* was influenced by Zhilyayev's high opinion of the works.

Stanchinsky's *Sketches* were published by Jurgenson, who were by far the largest and most successful publisher of Russian music during the early twentieth century. While other music publishers existed in Russia at the time, Jurgenson expanded rapidly and bought out many smaller printing companies between 1870 and 1900.[16] They published works by some of the most significant Russian composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Scriabin and Medtner. We do not know under what circumstances Stanchinsky was accepted by Jurgenson, but Prokofiev had to enlist two senior figures – Taneyev and St Petersburg musicologist Alexandr Ossovsky – to send recommendation letters on his behalf before the publisher would sign him.[17]

Sketches nos. 1-4 are Stanchinsky's only compositions that he edited himself for publication.[18] Indeed, this is the only instance where Zhilyayev appears not to have been directly involved

[15] Underlined by the author. «мне кажется превосходными […] они вполне индивидуальны, серьезны и значительны, законченны, словом, превосходны во всех отношениях (формы, стиля, мелодии, гармонии, ритма) […] твои «экзерсисы» кажутся мне настоящими художественными произведениями— это наиболее индивидуальное из всего, написанного тобой.» Zhilyayev to Stanchinsky, RNMM, 239/220, 17 May 1912. Published in *Nikolay Sergeyevich Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by Inna A. Barsova (Moscow: Muzyka, 2008), pp. 96-7.

[16] In early twentieth century there were at least nine independent music publishing houses in Russia, including large companies such as the *Edition Russe de Musique* (founded in 1909 in St Peterburg by Sergey and Natalie Koussevitsky), and small printers established and run by publishers such as A. Gabler, A. Johansen, M. P. Belyaev (in Leipzig), V. V. Bessel, P. Lenhold and others. At least nineteen companies' stocks were acquired by Jurgenson by 1900. Cecil Hopkinson, *Notes on Russian Music Publishers* ([Bath]: Printed for private distribution to the members of the International Association of Music Libraries at the Fifth International Congress, Cambridge, June 29th-July 4, 1959), pp. 1-9.

[17] Nice, *Prokofiev: From Russia to the West*, p. 74.

[18] It is possible that Stanchinsky himself would have been involved in copy editing of the nos. 5-8. In the

in proofreading or dealing with the publishing house. This is evident from his letters to Stanchinsky. On 30 June 1913, Zhilyayev wrote: 'about the errors in the second proofreading – alas, I think that once you open the printed copies for the first time, the first thing that will catch your eye will be a number of errors not seen before. It always seems to happen to everyone!'[19] Zhilyayev's lack of input is also apparent from his letter dated 26 August 1913, in which he further enquired about the publications: 'Did you get the notes [sheet music] from Jurgenson, have they come out yet?'[20] Based on this evidence, the first four *Sketches* can be said to be the best representation of Stanchinsky's intentions. This is an important consideration when examining reviews of these pieces, as the earliest reviews were written in response to the print publication, rather than a performance. These reviews, therefore, are the only examples of critics responding directly to the notes that Stanchinsky had finalised and edited himself.

Although Zhilyayev did not edit the works for publication, he was instrumental both in advising Stanchinsky during the composition process and shaping the final version of the set, including the title and ordering of the individual *Sketches*. The manuscripts of the pieces bear the French title *Exercices*, a dedication to Lydia Perlova (the composer's sister), and the date 23 III 1912 (which indicates the completion of the first draft, not the finished composition).[21] Letters from Zhilyayev to Stanchinsky reveal that many changes were made to the first draft manuscript before it appeared in its published form. To begin with, the title of the work was changed from *Exercices* (in manuscript) to *Esquisses* (in the 1913 publication).[22] Zhilyayev was clear about his dislike of the title *Exercices* in his letter written on 17 May 1912. He wrote 'by the way, I don't think that the name is particularly successful' and then again, 'the name of these

archival collections, the manuscripts of the nos. 9-12 appear in a separate paper case, with the following superscription in Russian: 'M[oscow], Jurgenson, 1917'. This indicates that the last four *Sketches* were treated differently from the rest. Aleksey Stanchinsky, 'Eskizy, no. 9-12', RNMM, 239/43.

[19] «А насчет опечаток во второй корректуре — увы, я думаю, что, как только ты раскроешь в первый раз печатные экземпляры, — первое, что тебе броситься в глаза, — это целый ряд не замеченных раньше опечаток. это, кажется, всегда и со всеми так бывает!» Zhilyayev to Stanchinsky, RNMM, 239/214, 10 August 1913. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, p. 102.

[20] «Получил ли ты от Юргенсона ноты, то есть вышли они уже в свет или ещё нет.» Zhilyayev to Stanchinsky, RNMM, 239/224, 26 August 1913. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, pp. 104-5.

[21] Irina Lopatina, 'Commentary', in *A. Stanchinsky: Sochineniya*, ed. by Irina Lopatina (Moscow: Muzyka, 1990), p. 240.

[22] *Sketch* is a commonly used title for short pieces in the English language: Frank Bridge wrote *Three Sketches* in 1906, and York Bowen published his *Three Sketches* in 1916. However, there are potential contextual differences between what is implied by the French word *Esquisse* versus its English translation *Sketch* (less of a problem in Russian – *eskiz*). Scholars and performers have approached this issue in various ways: Sitsky, for example, uses the original *Esquisses* while Powell uses the English and the French terms interchangeably. Lopatina's edition, as well as all English-language CD releases, list the works in English as *Sketches*.

"exercises" involuntarily asks for quotation marks.'[23] Zhilyayev's letter also contains several compositional suggestions: not only do these indicate that musical changes were made within individual *Sketches*, but also that the order of the pieces was rearranged prior to publication (the numbers of the *Sketches* which Zhilyayev refers to in his letter are different to those found within the published set). Consequently, Zhilyayev's musical touch is an integral part of these works.

Sergey Prokofiev, Nikolay Malkov and Leonid Sabaneyev subsequently wrote reviews of the *Sketches* for a variety of Russian periodicals and music magazines.[24] Prokofiev's was the harshest: he did not appreciate the *Sketches* and mocked them in *Muzyka* on 21 September 1913:

> A good name, '*Sketch*'! It will always be able to cover up any shortcomings of the work. For example: the listener finds that the piece is broken, unfinished, – 'but this is a *Sketch*,' – the author replies. There is no substance in the work, no completeness, – yes, but it's a *Sketch* – the author objects again. That is why it's a pity when the author makes his debut with *Sketches*. Looking at them, you don't know if he wrote these *Sketches* as a practice for a more solid *opus*, or if he always writes this way.[25]

We know from Prokofiev's diaries that his reviews were often motivated by personal and professional rivalry. Prokofiev was nearly the same age as Stanchinsky, and this made him a potential competitor. In his diary, Prokofiev complained: 'Myaskovsky informed me that Leonid Sabaneyev had written an article in the *Moscow Gazette* about modern composers in which he threw in a good few brickbats, among them some in my direction, while praising Stanchinsky (!). Dear Stanchinsky, I imagine he will be greatly gladdened and comforted by

[23] «между прочим, название мне не кажется особенно удачным»; «этими «экзерсисами», название которых у меня невольно проситься в кавычки». Zhilyayev to Stanchinsky, RNMM, 239/220, 17 May 1912. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, pp. 96-97.
[24] Nikolay Petrovich Malkov (1882-1942), a noted critic of the period and a regular contributor to *Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta*. Natalia Ostroumova, 'Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta (1894-1918)', in *Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta (1894-1918)*, RIPM (2012), pp. xxix–xxxix <https://www.ripm.org/pdf/Introductions/RMGintroor.pdf> [accessed 16 October 2024].
[25] «Хорошее название «Эскиз»! Оно всегда сумеет прикрыть недостатки пьесы. Например: слушатель находит, что пьеса обрывчата, неотделанна, - «но ведь это же эскиз»,- отвечает автор. В пьесе нет содержания, нет выпуклой музыки, - «да, но ведь это эскиз» - возразить снова автор. А поэтому бывает жаль, когда автор дебютирует с эскизами. Рассматривая их, не знаешь, писал ли он эти эскизы между прочим, упражняясь для более солидной вещи, или же он всегда так сочиняет.» Prokofiev, 'A. Stanchinsky. Esquisses Pour Piano', pp. 602–3 (p. 602).

this.'[26] However, Prokofiev was not alone in criticising the works. Nikolay Malkov, for example, wrote in *Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta*:

> As the name itself shows, Stanchinsky's pieces are a series of *Sketches* (4) that do not pretend to be integral and organic in form. Indeed, we have before us a semblance of pieces of paper from a notebook with hastily written down musical thoughts. Whether it is reasonable to start a musical career with the publication of draft notebooks is another question [...][27]

Both Prokofiev and Malkov, publishing in Moscow (*Muzyka*) and St Petersburg (*Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta*) respectively, thought that Stanchinsky's *Sketches* lacked substance and were not fully formed or developed. Nonetheless, they recognised that these pieces were Stanchinsky's first *opus.* Malkov, for example, finished his review on a more positive note, writing: 'But let's not be too critical of the budding composer and await his further successes.'[28]

The critics broadly agreed that *Sketches* nos. 1 and 4 were more successful than *Sketches* nos. 2 and 3. Malkov wrote:

> Fairness requires it to be noted that two *Sketches* from this series (nos. 1 and 4) are of artistic value, especially the second of them […] This last *Sketch* [is] the most complete in mood, which, by the way, sounds excellent on the piano […] the other two pieces (nos. 2 and 3) are of no interest, the first of them leaves an unpleasant impression of something deliberately fictitious.[29]

From our present-day perspective, it is hard to understand why no. 2 might be regarded as 'unpleasant'. Presumably its bare texture – consisting largely of a single line of semiquavers – and its use of all 12 tones was disconcerting to Malkov. Similarly, Sabaneyev thought that the pieces were:

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[26] Sergey Prokofiev, *Sergey Prokofiev: Diaries 1907-1914*, ed. by Anthony Phillips (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 2006), p. 525.

[27] «Как показывает самое название, пьесы Станчинского представляют ряд набросков (4), не претендующих на цельность и органичность формы. Действительно, мы имеем перед собой подобие листков из блокнота с наскоро записанными музыкальными мыслями. Разумно ли начинать музыкальную карьеру с опубликования черновых тетрадей, это - вопрос другой [...]» Nikolay Malkov, 'A. Stanchinsky. Op. 1. Esquisses Pour Piano. Izd. P. Jurgensona.', *Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta*, 9 February 1914, p. 46.

[28] «Но не будем слишком строги к начинающему композитору, и подождем дальнейших его успехов.» Malkov, 'A. Stanchinsky', p. 46.

[29] «справедливость требует отметить, что два наброска из этой серии (1и 4) представляют художественную ценность, в особенности второй из них […] Этот последний эскиз, наиболее цельный по настроению, отлично, кстати сказать, звучащий на фортепьяно»; «Остальные две пьесы (2 и 3) интереса не имеют, первая же из них оставляет прямо-таки неприятное впечатление чего-то нарочито измышленного.» Malkov, 'A. Stanchinsky', p. 46.

> Subtle in moods, interesting in piano style, [but] not all of equal merit […] Elegiac-dramatic *Sketch* no. 4 — better than others and brighter in mood. Completely incomprehensible is the strangely jumpy *Sketch* no. 3, in which, also, there is poor-sounding pianistic writing.[30]

Given the context of the time, it is perhaps unsurprising that no. 3 was the least understood by Sabaneyev; with its simple texture (consisting of both hands playing in unison), as well as its reliance on distinctive harmonic alternations (particularly the lowered 2nd and raised 4th), its sound would have been unusual. Prokofiev seconded these thoughts:

> Regarding each *Sketch* individually, the first (*Moderato*) is not bad at all, and pleasant with its indeterminacy. The second (*Presto*) might interest the pianist with its finger technique, a mathematics lover with its rhythmic fantasies, but it has nothing to interest a music lover. In the third the *Sketch* (*Vivace*), amusing is the author's desire for both hands to play the same thing on both ends of the keyboard; it's a pity that it sounds wretched. The fourth *Sketch* (*Lento cantabile*) is based on a simple Rubinstein-style theme, but the three-part harmony and the dramatic character save the piece from vulgarity.[31]

Prokofiev singled out *Sketch* no. 4 as one of the more successful pieces in the set. However, he associated its lyrical theme with 'vulgarity', suggesting that he found its outline lacking in sophistication and taste. His mention of Rubinstein further suggests that he regarded the melody as simple, old-fashioned, and leaning towards the banalities of salon music. Sabaneyev and Malkov also both appraised the fourth piece as successful but, unlike Prokofiev, asserted that it was in fact its conservatism that made it superior to the less conventional nos. 2 and 3 (which, today, we might regard as being aesthetically closer to impressionist and neoclassical tendencies). These insights not only provide us with an understanding of how Stanchinsky's *Sketches* were received, but they also shed light on the individual preferences and biases of the reviewers.

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[30] «тонки по настроениям, интересны по фортепианному стилю, не все — равного достоинства. Элегико-драматический эскиз Но. 4 — лучше других и ярче по настроению. Вовсе непонятен странно-прыгающий эскиз Но. 3, в котором к тому же плохая звучность фортепианного изложения.» Leonid Sabaneyev, 'V stane molodykh', *Moskovskaya Gazeta*, 30 September 1913, p. 6.

[31] «Что касается до каждого эскиза в отдельности, то 1-ый (Модерато) очень не дурен, и приятен своею неопределенностью. 2-ой (Престо) может заинтересовать пианиста пальцевою техникой, любителя математики - ритмическими фантазиями, но любителя музыки ему заинтересовать нечем. В третьем эскизе (Vivace) кажется забавным желание автора разыгрывать обеими руками одно и то же в разных концах клавиатуры: жаль. что забава эта звучит убого. 4-ый эскиз (Lento cantabile) написан на простую в рубинштейновском духе тему, не лишенную шаблонных оборотов, но трехэтажные гармонии и некоторый драматизм спасают пьесу от пошлости.» Prokofiev, 'A. Stanchinsky. Esquisses Pour Piano', pp. 602–3 (p. 603).

A greater number of reviewers responded to Stanchinsky's performance at the *Concert of Moscow Composers* in the Moscow Conservatoire's Small Hall on 2 March 1914. Five young composers were invited to promote their works at the event. However, on the day, only Stanchinsky, Sabaneyev and Yevgeny Gunst performed.[32] This concert marked Stanchinsky's debut as a pianist-composer to Moscow's audiences and critics.[33] He performed his published *Sketches* and some unpublished works, including Canon-Preludes A and B (in C major and G major respectively), and *Allegro* in F major.[34]

Stanchinsky's performance sparked a fresh wave of reviews in which he received widespread acclaim and was praised as highly promising.[35] Sabaneyev, who rather unusually performed his own works at the concert and then reviewed it in his own weekly newspaper column, wrote: 'I feel the undoubted talent of this music.'[36] Grigory Prokofiev commented: 'of course, out of the three composers, he [Stanchinsky] is the most gifted. He does not need to stack large piles of sounds, for he has something to say. His *Sketches* are sweet and pleasant; they promise us a lot, and in the Canons of the same author, and in F major *Allegro*, there is a lot that is nice, and there is a need to work and create [more].'[37] It is unclear whether this praise of Stanchinsky's relative economy of style is implicitly critical of the other two composers featured, or if G. Prokofiev is taking aim at other figures (such as Rachmaninov). Regardless, his comments align with his musical preferences. A pianist, teacher and frequent writer for *Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta*, he was a supporter of Scriabin's compositional style.[38] His attitude towards new music caused him to fall out of favour with the regime in the 1920s, when he was

[32] Singers Aleksandr and Grigory Krein dropped out at a short notice due to illness. Grigory Prokofiev, 'Kontserty v Moskve', *Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta*, 16 March 1914, pp. 300–304 (p. 302).
[33] In his review of the concert, Nikolay Zhilyayev specifies that the *Concert of Moscow Composers* was the first time when Stanchinsky presented his works on stage; however, Stanchinsky wrote after the concert that 'the first piece, I have, in fact, once played in public.' Nikolay Zhilyayev, 'Kontsert moskovskikh kompozitorov', *Rul'*, 3 March 1914, p. 8.
[34] Barrie Martyn, *Nicolas Medtner: His Life and Music* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995), p. 107.
[35] When talking about Stanchinsky's talent, the critics used one of two Russian terms: *talant* or *darovanie. Darovanie* is more accurately translated as a gift (or possibly, endowment); however, the terms are similar in their meaning and in the examples are translated depending on the context.
[36] «Я чувствую несомненную талантливость этой музыки.» Leonid Sabaneyev, 'Molodye kompozitory', *Moskovskaya Gazeta*, 3 March 1914, pp. 4–5 (p. 5).
[37] «из этих трех композиторов он [Станчинский] наиболее одаренный. Ему не нужно громоздить большие батареи звуков, ибо ему есть что сказать. Его «Эскизы» милые и приятные; они сулят нам многое, и в «канонах» того же автора, и в F-dur ном Аллегро много симпатичного, и чувствуется потребность работать и творить.» G. Prokofiev, 'Kontserty v Moskve', pp. 300–304 (p. 302).
[38] Lincoln Ballard and Matthew Bengtson, *The Alexander Scriabin Companion: History, Performance, and Lore* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), pp. 306, 368.

dismissed from his position at the Moscow Conservatoire on ideological grounds.[39] We may also speculate that hearing Stanchinsky perform his works live would have influenced how they were perceived. We know that Stanchinsky was an excellent pianist; it is likely that he gave an exciting performance that impressed the critics, who previously would have had to rely solely on the printed notes as they appeared on the page.

On both occasions – the publication and the concert – the reviewers remarked upon the originality of Stanchinsky's works, although not all the critics perceived this originality as a positive attribute. Nikolay Kurov wrote in *Ranee Utro* that Stanchinsky 'has undoubted originality in creativity, refinement'.[40] Sabaneyev wrote that 'the works of Stanchinsky, performed by himself, are undoubtedly original […] I feel the undoubted talent of this music, the vivid and undeniable distinctive originality of the sources in his work, in which the trends of modernism are strangely mixed with classical echoes.'[41] While this aligns Stanchinsky with the then nascent move towards neoclassicism in broader musical culture, Malkov thought that 'the metric tricks are unnatural, artistically unconvincing, and are telling of the author's desire to be original at all costs.'[42] Malkov is presumably referring to the changing metres in *Sketch* no. 3 and, in doing so, provides us with an example of how Stanchinsky's reception reflected broader debates on originality in Russian music at this time – both locally with regards to figures such as Scriabin, and internationally with Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes*.

Stanchinsky's distinctive style puzzled the critics, who were uncertain as to how his works could be best described to the public. Some drew direct comparisons with Scriabin's compositional style, while others more accurately argued that Stanchinsky escaped Scriabinist influences. For example, in *Rul'* on the 5 March 1914, Zhilyayev discussed Stanchinsky's 'vivid individuality (deriving from Mussorgsky, Debussy and Scriabin).'[43] Malkov claimed

[39] Amy Nelson, *Music for the Revolution: Musicians and Power in Early Soviet Russia* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), p. 144.
[40] «несомненная оригинальность в творчестве, изящество» Nikolay Kurov, 'Kontsert pyati kompozitorov', *Ranee Utro*, 4 March 1914, p. 6.
[41] «Произведения Станчинского, исполнения им самим, несомненно оригинальны. Я чувствую несомненную талантливость этой музыки, яркую и несомненно самобытную оригинальность источников его творчества, в которых странно перемешиваются веяния модернизма с классическими отзвуками.» Sabaneyev, 'Molodye kompozitory', p. 5.
[42] «все эти метрические фокусы неестественны, художественно неубедительны и говорят лишь о желании автора быть оригинальным во что бы то не стало.» Malkov, 'A. Stanchinsky', p. 46.
[43] «яркой индивидуальностью (происходящий Мусоргского, Дебюсси и Скрябина)» Zhilyayev, 'Kontsert moskovskikh kompozitorov', p. 8.

that the fourth *Sketch* was written 'however, under the undoubted influence of Scriabin.'[44] Grigory Prokofiev disagreed. On 16 March 1914 he wrote: 'the main thing to take away from the works of the authors included in the programme [Gunst, Sabaneyev and Stanchinsky], was the worship of Scriabin and his recognition as the supreme leader. Least of all deserving the title of "Scriabinist" is Mr. Stanchinsky.'[45] Either way, Scriabin provided a usefully familiar reference point (given his prominence within Russian musical circles at the time), even if such comparisons were ultimately shorthand for describing any modern-sounding music and, therefore, largely uninformative. A comparison to Scriabin could both signal approval when coming from proponents of musical innovation while also being intended as a criticism when coming from those with more conservative views. In both cases, however, such comparisons were reductionist, as the works which Stanchinsky presented to the public at this time had largely abandoned Scriabinesque influences. Grigory Prokofiev's familiarity with Scriabin's works (which he reviewed frequently in the press) arguably allowed him the most accurate assessment. As such, he appears to be the only critic who appreciated Stanchinsky's music on its own merit, without resorting to clichéd analogies.

The reviews also betray a certain sense of confusion regarding Stanchinsky's music, as if the critics were not quite sure what to make of it. In 1914, Sabaneyev wrote: 'things are sometimes very perfect, sometimes very imperfect […] But to say that I fully sympathise with this creativity – I would not risk it.'[46] His remark that he 'would not risk' his sympathies may be explained by his preoccupation with what he described as the 'morbidity' of Stanchinsky's music. In Sabaneyev's view, all music came from within, as he was convinced that 'one must experience [*perezhit'*] the idea that gives life to a creative work.'[47] Here, Sabaneyev was, to an extent, invoking an approach to music criticism advocated by Stasov in 1844, who thought that 'every real work of art […] bears within itself its *meaning* […] The duty [of criticism] is to extract from the work of art itself its vital idea, *by which* […] the whole work exists […]'[48]

[44] «написанный, правда, под несомненным влиянием Скрябина.» Malkov, 'A. Stanchinsky', p. 46.
[45] «Главное, что можно было вынести из сочинений попавших в программу авторов, это поклонение перед Скрябиным и признание его своим верховным вождем. Меньше всего заслуживает титула «скрябинист» г. Станкински […]» G. Prokofiev, 'Kontserty v Moskve', p. 302.
[46] «Что-то порой очень совершенное, порой очень несовершенное [...] Но сказать, что я вполне сочувствую этому творчеству — я бы не рискнул.» Sabaneyev, 'Molodye kompozitory', p. 5.
[47] Sabaneyev quoted in Rebecca Mitchell, *Nietzsche's Orphans: Music, Metaphysics, and the Twilight of the Russian Empire* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 21.
[48] Stasov quoted in Frey, 'Music Criticism in Imperial Russia', p. 209.

Sabaneyev reviewed Stanchinsky's works on several occasions and committed large parts of his publications to discussing the perceived paradox of Stanchinsky's talent and his mental illness.[49] In his review published after the concert in 1914, he wrote that Stanchinsky's works are 'alien to me for the most part. Closer than others, I feel his *Sketches* in which there are moments of very great beauty, although there are also incomprehensible moods for me.'[50] Commenting on the *Sketches* in more detail, he wrote: 'in them one can feel some kind of morbidity [*boleznennost'*] of inspiration and not even refinement [*utonchennost'*] of the [lived] experience, but the purification [*istonchennost'*] of the [lived] experience.'[51]

While it would have been considered inappropriate for Sabaneyev to comment publicly on Stanchinsky's mental illness in contemporary Russia, Sabaneyev left Russia in 1926; after this point, his publications became more explicit about the matter. For example, in *Modern Russian Composers* – printed in New York in 1927 (the essay on Stanchinsky was probably written between 1917 and 1926) – he dedicated two out of the five pages of his essay to discussing Stanchinsky's mental illness and its relation to his music. 'His sprit, abnormally delicate, could not withstand the too hard and harsh contacts with life […] At first his delirious ideas involved only the musical realm, but soon they spread into other spheres as well. He could not withstand the pressure of his own creative forces.'[52] Given Sabaneyev's high professional standing, as well as the fact that his book was published in English (thus allowing anglophone critics and musicologists easy access to an authentic, supposedly authoritative source), these views eventually came to dominate perceptions of Stanchinsky – especially within the English-speaking world – and they continue to do so to this day.

Stanchinsky's most ardent supporter, Nikolay Zhilyayev, took it upon himself to defend Stanchinsky in the press. Two days after Sabaneyev's 1914 review was printed, Zhilyayev published the most positive account of Stanchinsky's music written within his lifetime. There are no doubts that the review is biased, due to Zhilyayev's and Stanchinsky's close friendship:

[49] Stanchinsky was hospitalised in 1910, and because of this had to suspend his studies at Moscow Conservatoire. By the time he started publicly performing and publishing his works (1913-1914) his mental illness is likely to have been a known fact.
[50] «в большей своей части чуждо. Ближе других я чувствую его эскизы, в которых есть моменты очень большой красоты, хотя есть и непонятныя [sic] для меня настроения.» Sabaneyev, 'Molodye kompozitory', p. 5.
[51] «В них чувствуется какая то болезненность вдохновения и даже не утонченность, а какая то «истонченность» переживания.» Ibid., p. 5.
[52] Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, pp. 191.

> As for the youngest of yesterday's composers — Mr. Stanchinsky, who for the first time demonstrated his compositions (and, indeed, [was for the first time] on stage), he draws the most serious attention to himself and makes us expect very, very much from him; by God's grace he has undoubtedly been gifted with the most real talent [...] and, moreover, his talent is very harmonious; all elements [of his music] are in full harmony, not one develops to the detriment of another, and, being united by a rare sense of form, they are at the same time strongly and distinctively developed. Stanchinsky's technique has already reached the virtuosic limits which are necessary to create one's own style, and he already has his own harmonic style, his own unique piano style, not lacking extravagance, and his own melodic contours, in addition to his brilliant control of counterpoint techniques. The appearance of such a composer is a true event.[53]

The reviews tell us little about how Stanchinsky's music was received by its audiences. Sabaneyev wrote that the concert had attracted a 'decently-sized' audience but, as one of the performers, he had a vested interest in reporting it positively in the press.[54] Nikolay Kurov, who was probably a less biased eyewitness, painted a picture of a highly dissatisfied audience: 'Can we talk about the success of this nightmarish concert[?] The audience at first listened and was perplexed, then started reading the brochure attached to the programme, and then began to disperse.'[55] It is possible that Kurov was exaggerating the dissatisfaction of the audience for a scandalous effect. If reported accurately, however, such a response from the audience would imply that they were confused by this new music. Considering how little new music was performed in Moscow at this time, this is indeed plausible. Reflecting upon Stanchinsky's music many years later, Sabaneyev pondered that 'among his compositions […] there was not a single one which could gain popularity with a wide public.'[56]

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[53] «Что касается до самого молодого из вчерашних композиторов — г. Станчинского, впервые выступившего со своими сочинениями (да и вообще на эстраде), то он обращает на себя самое серьезное внимание и заставляет ждать от него очень и очень многого; он несомненно одарен самым настоящим талантом Божьею милостью, с яркой индивидуальностью (происходящий Мусоргского, Дебюсси и Скрябина), и притом талант его очень гармоничен, то ест все элементы его находятся в полном соответствии, ни один не развивается в ущерб другому, и, будучи объединены редким чувством формы, они в то же время сильно и самобытно развиты. Техника у г. Станчинского уже достигла границ той необходимой виртуозности, без которой немыслимо создание собственного стиля, и у него действительно уже и собственный гармонический стиль, и собственный, чрезвычайно своеобразный, не лишенный экстравагантности фортепианный стиль, и собственные мелодические контуры; к этому ещё следует прибавить блестящее владение контрапунктом. Появление такого композитора — настоящее события.» Zhilyayev, 'Kontsert moskovskikh kompozitorov', p. 8.

[54] «Публики в концерт — порядочно.» Sabaneyev, 'Molodye kompozitory', p. 5.

[55] «Можно ли говорить об успехе этого кошмарнаго концерта. Публика сначала слушала и недоумевала, потом занялась чтением приложеннаго к программе журнала, а затем стала расходиться.» Kurov, 'Kontsert pyati kompozitorov', p. 6.

[56] Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, p. 190.

Whilst we are not able to assemble a complete picture of Stanchinksy's contemporaneous musical reception from the content of these reviews alone, we can make further assumptions about the extent of his renown by also considering the circumstances of their publication. Dingle writes that 'for at least two centuries, most people have received the majority of their knowledge about practical music-making, performers, current trends, new developments and significant new works not from the long-considered arguments posited in books and scholarly articles, but from the almost instantaneous response of music critics in newspapers, from the columns of *The Times*, rather than *The Musical Times*.'[57] Similarly, in Russia, we can assume that the general population would have had easier access to Sabaneyev's weekly column in the *Moskovskaya Gazeta* than to Prokofiev's reviews in *Muzyka* or *Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta*. Therefore, we may speculate that Stanchinsky was only known to mainstream audiences in Moscow; the specialist nature of the St Petersburg publications would suggest that Stanchinsky was unknown to wider audiences in this city (and indeed beyond), although the very existence of these publications indicates that there was at least some contemporary interest outside of Moscow.

Publication during and after the Revolution

After Stanchinsky's death in 1914, any further recognition of his music relied primarily on it being made available through publication. The history of this posthumous publication shows that the process of recovering, editing and printing his works was difficult, and his music may easily have been lost had it not been for a small group of friends who dedicated themselves to this task. However, while it was the efforts of these devotees – most notably Zhilyayev – that got this music into the public domain, the resulting scores subsequently attracted broader attention, including from influential figures such as Myaskovsky.

The second fascicle of the *Sketches* (nos. 5–8) was published in September 1915. We know that Zhilyayev was not involved in this particular publication, as he had already returned the remainder of Stanchinsky's manuscripts that had been in his possession to Stanchinsky's sister on 21 December 1914.[58] No documents survive which could help illuminate the process of the

[57] Dingle, 'Introduction', pp. 2-3.
[58] The full list of works returned is contained in Zhilyayev to Perlova, RNMM, 239/357, 21 December 1914. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, pp. 117-118.

publication of these works. Nonetheless, a review responding to the 1915 publication was published in the *Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta*:

> *Sketches* belong to the pen of the prematurely departed young musician, about whose talent his friends talked so much after his death. One thing is clear to me – Stanchinsky was undoubtedly gifted and showed promise. *Sketches* are the fruit of a disordered, sick fantasy, with no sense of restraint in its quests. Glimmers of light are visible here and there; but they are so small as to require strong magnification. It is necessary, of course, to take into account that the *Sketches* are the first printed opus.[59]

Stanchinsky's music did not die with him – or at least not straight away. This review confirms that he was posthumously remembered and talked about in musical circles, and its sentiments largely sum up the responses that Stanchinsky's music received within his lifetime. This review is one of the few published after Stanchinsky's death which does not emphasise that his death was particularly tragic. It is possible that the reviewer was seeing this through the lens of the First World War, during which the premature loss of young men had become somewhat normalised.

The final fascicle of the *Sketches* (nos. 9–12) was published in 1917. At that time, Zhilyayev had been called up to military service and was fighting on the front line, so Stanchinsky's sister – Lydia Perlova – took control of the publication.[60] Zhilyayev's letters to Perlova indicate that he remained interested and highly enthusiastic about the publication. Zhilyayev thought about his departed friend often, but he had little control over the progress of the publication, and his letters to Perlova went unanswered. It is likely that, due to the war, her letters got lost in the post. At that time, many letters to and from the front line 'went astray or were held up for weeks while awaiting inspection by the censors'.[61] On Stanchinsky's birthday (9 March), Zhilyayev wrote from the front line: 'How is it going with the publication of Alyosha's works?'[62] Having

[59] «Эскизы — принадлежат перу безвременно угасшего молодого музыканта, о таланте которого так много говорили, после его смерти, его друзья. Для меня ясно одно — Станчинский был безусловно одарен и подавал надежды. Эскизы же — плод расстроенной, больной фантазии, не знавшей чувства меры в своих исканиях. Местами видны проблески; но они так малы, что требуют сильного увеличения. Необходим конечно, принять во внимание, что эскизы — первый печатный опус.» B., 'A. Stanchinsky. Op. 1 — 8 Esquisses Pour Piano. Izd. P. Jurgensona.', *Russkaya Muzykal'naya Gazeta*, 30 September 1915, p. 40.

[60] Aleksandr Komarov, 'N. S. Zhilyayev — redaktor sochineniy A. V. Stanchinskogo', in *Nikolay Sergeyevich Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, pp. 281-304 (p. 289).

[61] Patrick Zuk, *Nikolay Myaskovsky: A Composer and His Times* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2021), p. 120.

[62] «Как идут дела по изданию Алешиных сочинений?» Zhilyayev to Perlova, RNMM, 239/359, 9 March 1917. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, p. 120.

received no response, on 6 April he wrote again: 'I once again ask you to inform me about this: did you submit the proofreading to Jurgenson and, perhaps, even ready-made copies have been released?'[63] Again, on 23 October: 'Dear Lydia Vladimirovna! Surely you have not received my letter. Post disappears so often these days. Did Alyosha's works come out?'[64] Zhilyayev's escalating language indicates that he became increasingly frustrated by this lack of response.

The publication of the final four *Sketches* in 1917 prompted the first review which critiqued the entire cycle as a single entity. It was written by Nikolay Myaskovsky – a composer, teacher and critic who would later become an important figure in Russian music (although at this point his career was still nascent). Myaskovsky's review is one of the most insightful reflections on Stanchinsky's *Sketches*:

> Stanchinsky's creative work was interrupted almost at the very beginning by his tragic death, and his legacy is relatively small. But what is available makes us pause and pay attention, sometimes even with astonishment, at his creative individuality [which] was so original, strong, vivid, imaginative and fresh. The *Sketches* will not attract typical performers: they possess neither the acrobatic difficulties, nor the conventional pianism, rooted in Liszt and Chopin, exquisitely polished and brilliantly elegant, nor the modern harmonically saturated Scriabinesque patterns, nor the most delicately thought-out, refined and mannered flamboyance of the French, and not even the fantastic ethereal-sounding explorations of A. Schoenberg. Here, everything is original: rhythm is lively, capricious, sometimes as if deliberately disjointed, but without Medtnerian roughness, yet still crisp and clear; metres are often daring (11/8 in no. 5, 10/8 in no. 7, 7/4 in no. 11); harmony is fresh, rich and always organic, sometimes excitingly unsteady (no. 1), subtly refined, but by no means heady or morbid; texture is technically accomplished and often intricate, well-considered, proficiently finished and interesting; the piano writing is highly original and personal, somehow prickly, a little dry, I would say, dishevelled, if it were not for its internal conciseness — it's like the tension of a coiled steel spring. The *Sketches* show a frequent use of widely spaced registers (no. 3, where melody is set at a distance of three octaves, no. 11), a tendency to differentiate each part, perhaps coming from a contrapuntal way of thinking, but at the same time, there is no harshness that typically results from this kind of writing. The result is a beautiful, transparent, sometimes technically difficult, but always clear-sounding piano texture.[65]

[63] «Я ещё раз прошу Вас сообщить мне об этом: сдали ли Вы корректуру Юргенсоны и, может быть, даже вышли в свет и готовые экземпляры?» Zhilyayev to Perlova, RNMM, 239/360, 6 April 1917. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, pp. 120-1.
[64] «Дорогая Лидия Владимировна! Неужели Бы не получили моего письма? Почта теперь так часто пропадает. Вышли ли Алешины сочинения?» Zhilyayev to Perlova, RNMM, 239/361, 23 October 1917. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, pp. 121-2.
[65] «Творчество Станчинского, как уже известно, прервалось почти в самом своем начале трагической смертью, и оставленное им наследие сравнительно незначительно. Но и то, что имеется налицо,

Myaskovsky's review reflected on Stanchinsky's untimely death and emphasised his creative individuality. It also included more detail than previous reviews of Stanchinsky's music: Myaskovsky commented on Stanchinsky's rhythm, harmony and texture, while also providing insights into the sound-worlds of individual *Sketches*. For the first time, influences in Stanchinsky's music were examined retrospectively. However, Myaskovsky did so in an unusual way. Instead of likening Stanchinsky's *Sketches* to music by other composers, he gave examples of juxtapositions and contrasts. When comparing Stanchinsky's style to that of Liszt, Chopin, Medtner, Scriabin, Schoenberg, or the French composers of the time, he found few stylistic similarities. In doing so, he portrayed Stanchinsky's music as being individual and distinctive.

New narratives about Stanchinsky arose in the late 1920s, broadly coinciding with the individual publication of most of his piano works between 1926 and 1928. Compared to the previous decade, we know more about the circumstances of publication from this period, and it is worth exploring them in greater detail. The pieces were primarily edited by Nikolay Zhilyayev and Anatoly Aleksandrov; Myaskovsky was also involved in the process (he played a significant role in getting the publishing house to accept Stanchinsky's works), although his name does not appear on the publications.[66] The ten-year gap between the 1917 publication of the last fascicle of the *Sketches* and the next publication in 1926 can be explained by the social and political context of the newly Soviet Russia.

заставляет на себе остановиться не только со вниманием, но иной раз и с изумлением - настолько своеобычна, сильна, жизнена, богата воображением и свежа была его творческая индивидуальность. Исполнителей распространенного типа эскизы не привлекут: в них нет ни акробатических трудностей, ни традиционно-фортепианной, коренящейся в Листе-Шопене, изысканно вылощенной, блестящей элегантной звучности, ни из Скрябина текущей современной гармонически-пресыщенной манеры, ни тончайшерасчетливой, рафинированно-вычурной эффектности французов, ни, наконец, даже фантастических бесплотно звучащих поисков А. Шенберга. В них все своеобразно: и ритмика - живая, капризная, порой как бы нарочито вывихнутая, но без метнеровской терпкости, притом все-таки четкая и ясная, часто смелая метрика (11/8 в No. 5, 10/8 в No. 7, 7/4 в No. 11); и гармония - свежая, иногда волнующе зыбкая (No. 1), тонко изысканная, отнюдь не пряная и болезненная, богатая и всегда органичная; фактура, технический склад - обдуманный, мастерски законченный, интересный и нередко замысловатый; фортепианное изложение - в высокой степени оригинальное и личное, какое-то колкое, чуть суховатое, хотелось бы сказать, растренанное, если бы не чувствовалась в этом какая-то внутренняя сжатость, напряженость свернутой стальной пружины. В нем заметно частое пользованние широко расставленными регистрами (No. 3 - мелодия на расстоянии трех октав, No. 11), сколонность к индивидуализации каждой партии, исходлящей, пожалуй, из контрапунктического склада мысли, но в то же время и отсутствие часто вытекающей отсюда черствости звучания; в итоге - красивая, прозрачная, иногда технически трудная, но всегда ясно звучная фортепианная ткань.» Nikolay Myaskovsky, *Sobraniye materialov v 2-x t.* (Moscow: Muzyka, 1964), II, pp. 206-207.

[66] Komarov, 'N. S. Zhilyayev — redaktor sochineniy A. V. Stanchinskogo', p. 282.

Following the October Revolution, all publishing houses in Russia were nationalised by the Bolshevik government.[67] Their control was absolute and spanned all cultural institutions: theatres; the Moscow and St Petersburg Conservatoires (by decree of 12 July 1918); private music schools; instrument manufacturers; libraries; and concert halls.[68] On 19 December 1918, the Bolsheviks issued an edict nationalising all music publishing houses and print shops. This included the *Edition Russe* – whose catalogue included the names of composers such as Scriabin, Rachmaninov, Medtner, Grechaninov, Stravinsky and Prokofiev – and Jurgenson, which became the State Music Publisher of the Music Section of the State Publishing House.[69] The seized premises of Jurgenson and some of the *Edition Russe's* inventory were combined.[70] In addition to nationalising all physical means of publishing, the Bolshevik government also declared all works of deceased composers to be state property. However, despite owning these rights, between 1918 and 1921 it appears to have mostly published revolutionary songs, along with a few collections of folk songs.[71]

The State Music Publisher had to contend with significant practical difficulties, including shortages of paper and skilled engravers, and it underwent several restructures in its early years.[72] Continuous overhauls and changes in leadership disrupted not only its own publishing work, but also that of its successor organisations ('Gosmuzizdat' in 1919-23; 'Muzsektor Gosizdata' in 1923-30; and 'Muzgiz' in 1930-1964).[73] However, by the early 1920s, music publishers started to be given greater freedoms by the government: a decree issued by the Council of People's Commissars on 12 December 1921 once again allowed the establishment of private publishing houses.[74] Although only a few pieces of sheet music were published privately in 1922, by 1923 the official Soviet bibliographical chronicle lists almost two hundred. Many more were published between 1925 and 1927, representing the height of the phenomenon.[75]

[67] Robert Rothstein, 'Popular Song in the NEP Era', in *Russia in the Era of NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture*, ed. by Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch, and Richard Stites (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). p. 269.
[68] Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia, 1917-1970* (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 18.
[69] Hopkinson, *Notes on Russian Music Publishers*, p. 6; Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, p. 31.
[70] Nelson, *Music for the Revolution*, p. 21.
[71] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, p. 18; Nelson, *Music for the Revolution*, p. 269.
[72] For more information about the State Music Publisher see Zuk, *Nikolay Myaskovsky*, pp. 307-364.
[73] Zuk, *Nikolay Myaskovsky*, p. 530.
[74] Rothstein, 'Popular Song in the NEP Era', p. 269.
[75] Ibid.

From 1921, further freedoms were afforded to musicians and artists with the establishment of the New Economic Policy (NEP).[76] The term NEP is commonly used in USSR historiography to refer to the period from 1921 to 1927, during which there was a degree of economic decentralisation and relative cultural diversity and freedom (compared with the more repressive eras either side of it: the Civil War (1917-1921) and the first Five Year Plan (1928-1932)). The NEP legalised some private trade and was initiated by the Communist Party in March 1921, heralding a subtle shift in the Bolsheviks' attitudes to the arts. Although some in the Party viewed the NEP as 'a distasteful package of concessions to the enemies of the revolution', it ultimately demonstrated a pragmatic commitment to establishing and maintaining positive relationships with the 'bourgeois specialists'.[77] The NEP allowed musicians to resume partnerships with Western contacts, and foreign artists were invited to perform in Russia, bringing in new repertoire and ideas. The improvement in economic conditions relaxed ideological tensions and brought 'greater permissiveness in matters of musical taste and style'.[78] In 1927, a partnership was initiated between Russia's State Music Publisher and the *Universal Edition* in Vienna.[79] This embodied the freedoms ensured by the NEP and allowed for a wider distribution of Russian printed music – including Stanchinsky's works, some of which were published under this collaboration.

Two significant factors made the late 1920s an opportune time for the publication of Stanchinsky's compositions. Firstly, changes in public life, and the emigration of many musicians who fled from Lenin's Russia, left a need to preserve large quantities of documents. In 1920, Boris Asafiev published an essay called *Nash Dolg* (Our Duty), in which he urged 'every person active in Russian music, to explore all possibilities to search, collect, classify, and find ways and means to publish even raw materials touching upon the past of our music.'[80] At that time, Russia's musical life was suffering significant losses: Prokofiev and Stravinsky were both in Paris; Rachmaninov had started a new life in New York City; and Scriabin and Taneyev had both died in 1915. To protect the nation's musical legacy, a special commission

[76] Matthew Lenoe, 'New Economic Policy (NEP)', in *Europe Since 1914: Encyclopedia of the Age of War and Reconstruction*, ed. by John Merriman and Jay Winter (Detroit, MI: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006), IV, pp. 1854–56, p. 1854 <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX3447000642/GVRL?sid=bookmark-GVRL&xid=bb73a017> [accessed 22 October 2021]
[77] Nelson, *Music for the Revolution*, p. 45.
[78] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, p. 43.
[79] See Inna Barsova, 'Sotrudnichestvo i perepiska dvukh izdatel'stv: Universal Edition i Muzsektora Gosizdata v 20–30-ye gody: Vzglyad iz Veni', in *Muzykal'noye prinosheniye: Sbornik statey k 75-letiyu Ye. A. Ruch'yevskoy*, ed. by Larissa Ivanova, (St Petersburg: Kanon, 1998).
[80] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, p. 89.

was set up and was made responsible for the preparation of archival material.[81] This decade saw new publications about the lives and works of Taneyev and Scriabin, as well as new editions of Scriabin's sonatas.

Secondly, the 1920s saw less censorship towards music in comparison to the more heavy-handed ideological interference of the Stalin regime (although some censorship was instated in 1923).[82] The Commissariat of Public Education was headed by Anatoly Lunacharsky, who described himself as an 'intellectual among Bolsheviks and a Bolshevik among intellectuals.'[83] Lunacharsky was responsible for artistic production and education across Russia and; during his time in office, he 'presided over a significant spread of mass music education and literacy.'[84] Lunacharsky wished to take a gradual approach to the instatement of a proletarian culture and did not want to alienate the bourgeois intelligentsia. In his view, the 'old' and 'beautiful' – including such aristocratic notions as chamber music – were to be preserved and presented to the masses. It was not the arts that had to change instantly, but the masses that had to be educated in the old 'bourgeois ways'.[85] This afforded older artists who had been educated under the imperial regime more freedoms. This was particularly true for musicians who, to a large extent, were scrutinised less than other artists; ideological meaning in music (or lack thereof) is far more difficult to identify, and musicians' contribution to the economy was negligible.[86]

The economic situation in Russia remained difficult, however, as the instability which followed the revolutionary years continued into the 1920s. Musicians who had relied on financial support from the old imperial institutions experienced significant difficulties after the Revolution. Composer Aleksandr Grechaninov wrote in his memoirs:

> Indeed, those were dark days. The pension granted to me by the Tsar was stopped after the Revolution of February 1917. I petitioned the Provisional Government to restore my pension but received no reply — they had graver problems to deal with […] Fortunately we had some savings

[81] Komarov, 'N. S. Zhilyayev — redaktor sochineniy A. V. Stanchinskogo', p. 287.
[82] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, p. 8.
[83] Lunacharsky quoted in Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts Under Lunacharsky, October 1917-1921* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1-2.
[84] Marina Frolova-Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism: From Glinka to Stalin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 387.
[85] The masses were to be re-educated 'right down to elementary behaviour — don't talk, don't smoke, don't crack nuts, wear a tie "so as to fit more into the atmosphere of beauty."' Stanislavsky quoted in Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 88-89.
[86] Nelson, *Music for the Revolution*, pp. 46-7.

> in the bank and were spared extreme hardship. But after the October Revolution our real troubles began. I lost all my pupils; music publishers stopped publishing.[87]

Until the end of the Civil War and the advent of the NEP, the printing presses were unable to fulfil all of the demands placed upon them, and less-favoured subjects (such as musicological research) remained unpublished.[88] Sabaneyev directly attributed delays in posthumously publishing Stanchinsky's work to the financial and political hardships of the time:

> His [Stanchinsky's] compositions saw the light of fame only after his death and even then, for but a brief period. It was wartime; other more real and cruel interests cast their shadow over the world. People could not be concerned about hapless composers. The publication of his work was difficult and complicated, expensive and beyond the means of his friends, while war conditions were not favourable for the performance of his compositions […] Then came the privatisations of the pre-revolutionary period, the tumult and storm of the Revolution, the October upheaval of Bolshevism.[89]

In addition to these political, financial and organisational barriers, the publication of Stanchinsky's works was further delayed by a lack of cooperation from his family. After the war, Zhilyayev was keen to begin the publishing process, but the rights to all of Stanchinsky's works and manuscripts belonged to Stanchinsky's sister, Lydia Perlova. Zhilyayev first approached Perlova about the possibility of publishing these in 1919. His letter from 29 June of that year revealed that he had already made appropriate arrangements with the official bodies prior to contacting her. By writing to her and alluding to a potential fee for the publications, he was hoping to secure her involvement:

> Recently, Popov's employee from the Music Department of the Commissariat for People's Education wrote to you — one would think that you have already received this letter — about the conditions under which you could transfer Alyosha's compositions to the Commissariat for publishing. My best advice for you is this — if you can, take the manuscripts of the compositions with you, come to Moscow and speak personally with the publishing subdivision at the Commissariat. This, I repeat, seems to me the best way to conduct the conversation. And, if at the time of your arrival we will be alive […] then, maybe, I could also be useful to you with my assistance. I do not know if S. Popov wrote to you about the size of the estimated fee and what you would like to receive. In the Commissariat for People's Education, uniform rates for compositions

[87] Grechaninov, *My Life*, p. 132.
[88] Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia*, p. 90
[89] Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, pp. 193-4.

> are being worked out […] so far there are no set prices and composers, pending the establishment of a tariff, receive advance payments from the Commissariat for their works.[90]

The letter in question was sent to Perlova by the director of the publishing house, Pavel Lamm, on 23 May 1919. In the letter, Lamm listed the unpublished works of Stanchinsky that he knew of (this list had presumably been compiled by Zhilyayev). He asked Perlova which of them she would agree to submit for publication and what other works in manuscript form could be printed. The letter urged Perlova 'to not reject the notice'.[91]

Yet, five years later, Zhilyayev was still no closer to persuading Perlova to bring Stanchinsky's manuscripts to Moscow. At the end of May 1923, he joined the editorial board of the State Music Publisher, which granted him more influence over the choices for music publications, as well as a greater number of contacts.[92] By 1924, he had enlisted the assistance and support of Myaskovsky and wrote to Perlova once again:

> Why do you not bring Alyosha's compositions? I spoke to N. Ya. Myaskovsky about their publication — he agrees with this intention; it remains only to rewrite and submit them for publication. But we must bear in mind that the music sector are unable to take many compositions by one composer all at the same time […] we have to expect that […] not all will be published at the same time due to lack of funds, and some will have to be postponed for the time being [...] But do not start this business by correspondence […] it is death for me […] So, I wait. Do not delay.[93]

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[90] «Недавно Вам писал из музыкального отдела Ком[иссариата] Народного Просвещения сотрудник его Попов (кажется, он) — надо думать, что Бы уже получили его письмо — о том, на каких условиях Вы можете передать Алешины сочинения в Комиссариат для напечатания. Мой совет Вам поступить лучше всего так — если можете, то возьмите с собой рукописи сочинении, приезжайте в Москву и переговорите лично с издательским подотделом Комиссариата. это, повторю, мне кажется самым лучшим способом ведения переговор. И если ко времени Вашего приезда мы будем живы…, то и я, может быть, мог бы быть Вам полезен своим содействием. Не знаю, писал ли Вам этот С. С. Попов о размере предполагаемого гонорара и какой бы вы хотели получить Вы. В Комиссариате Народного Просвещения в настоящее время вырабатываются единообразные нормы ставок за произведение… пока что установленных цен нет и композиторы в ожидании установления тарифа, получают из Комиссариата авансы за свои произведения.» Zhilyayev to Perlova, RNMM, 239/363, 29 June 1919. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, pp. 122-123.

[91] «Государственное Музыкальное Издательство просить вас не отказать в уведомлении…» Lamm to Perlova, RNMM, 239/511, 23 May 1919. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, p. 290.

[92] Komarov, 'N. S. Zhilyayev — redaktor sochineniy A. V. Stanchinskogo', p. 281.

[93] «Что же Вы не привозите Алёшиных сочинении? Я говорил с Н. Я. Мясковским по поводу здания их — он принципиально одобряет это намерение; останется только их переписать и представить в издательство. Но надо иметь в виду, что сразу много сочинении одного композитора Музыкальный сектор взять не может… причем надо рассчитывать… не все будет приятно для издания по недостатку средств и часть придется отложить до поры до времени… Но только не начинайте этого дела путем переписки… это для меня смерть… Итак, жду. Не откладывайте.» Zhilyayev to Perlova, RNMM, 239/364, 19 October 1924. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, pp. 125.

We can only speculate about Perlova's reasons for being reluctant to bring Stanchinsky's compositions to Moscow. She might have worried about losing her brother's manuscripts, as the postal service was still not very reliable in the early 1920s. This theory is supported by one of Zhilyayev's letters, in which he reassured Lydia Perlova that the manuscripts would be returned to her, even if he was 'crushed on the street by a tram or suddenly die or something like that […]'[94] The state of public transport was also poor, and, during a time of high inflation, Perlova may not have had the money to travel to Moscow from Smolensk by train.

Zhilyayev's numerous letters to Perlova indicate that the task of publishing Stanchinsky's works was very important and personal to him. In his memoirs about Zhilyayev, Aleksandrov remembers his considerable exasperation and upset towards anyone who hindered the process. By contrast, Aleksandrov took the task of editing Stanchinsky's works more lightly; he believed that Zhilyayev – already an established editor – would not require much help, and therefore did not attend a few meetings. Zhilyayev's response was uncompromising: 'How do you not understand, that you cannot be so careless about your duties, especially in relation to your late friend?'[95]

Zhilyayev's editions of Stanchinsky's works remain among the most trusted sources within the Stanchinsky archive. Zhilyayev had an intimate knowledge of Stanchinsky's compositions and was a well-established editor. After joining the editorial board of the State Music Publisher in 1923, Zhilyayev worked on publications of a diverse range of composers, from Bach and Handel to Myaskovsky and Shostakovich.[96] The two subsequent editions of Stanchinsky's works (K. Sorokin and A. Aleksandrov, eds, 1960, Muzgiz; and I. Lopatina, ed., 1990, Muzyka) rely on Zhilyayev's editing, both in terms of the notes he made in the manuscripts and the editions he published. Lopatina's editorial commentary claims that, due to Zhilyayev's efforts, many of the first prints are actually more reliable sources than Stanchinsky's original manuscripts.[97]

[94] «меня раздавит на улице трамвай или я скоропостижно умру или что-нибудь еще в этом роде…» Zhilyayev to Perlova, RNMM, 239/365, 2 February 1926. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, pp. 126-7.
[95] «Как же ты не понимаешь, что нельзя так небрежно относиться к своим обязанностям, в особенности в отношении своему покойному другу?» *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, p. 289.
[96] Komarov, 'N. S. Zhilyayev — redaktor sochineniy A. V. Stanchinskogo', p. 281.
[97] Lopatina, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky', p. 239.

Many of Stanchinsky's manuscripts are now lost; without them, it is impossible to accurately determine the extent of the changes made by Zhilyayev. We know that Zhilyayev made several corrections prior to publication, including the addition of tempi, fingering, dynamic markings, and performance directions.[98] Stanchinsky tended to give his compositions French or Italian titles (usually indicating the form of a specific work, e.g., preludes, etudes, sonatas). Zhilyayev added Russian translations, which was publishing-house policy, as well as designations of keys and modes to distinguish between different works of the same form. These key designations are crucial in this regard, although some of them are problematic. There are instances where Stanchinsky's works start in one key and end in another, while other works were conceived modally, and Zhilyayev's labels lack these distinctions. For example, Prelude in A♭ major/F minor is labelled as 'f' in first publication (with the lower case denominating its minor quality), while the Canon-Prelude in E mixolydian is labelled as 'A-dur' after the key signature with three sharps. (Both of these examples are corrected to their present titles in Lopatina's 1990 edition.)

Zhilyayev's letters demonstrate that he paid the utmost attention to detail when working with Stanchinsky's manuscripts. In some places, Stanchinsky's harmony was so unusual that Zhilyayev (who was working from Perlova's handwritten copies at the time) thought that she had made mistakes in copying them. To solve these issues, Zhilyayev demanded to see original manuscripts and received them in May 1926:

> I have received your letter and the manuscripts, for which I am very grateful. They are all the more useful to me, or rather, to us, because there are slips of the pen and wrong notes in the copies that you made. But I received only the clean copies from you; when I went to [...] Dolgii Lane, I found out that drafts of Alyosha's works were stored there, and when I looked at them, I gasped — firstly, there are many drafts of the works already published by the State Music Publisher, the study of which (in all forms) is crucial to me, and secondly, there are (as much as I could familiarise myself with them in the space of 2–2.5 hours), apparently, a number of completed works (including those that I thought were lost), which can easily be published; some others, with careful corrections and additions, can also be given a completely finished look for publication.[99]

[98] Komarov, 'N. S. Zhilyayev — redaktor sochineniy A. V. Stanchinskogo', p. 299.
[99] «Ваши письмо и рукописи получил, за что Вас и очень и очень благодарю. Они тем более мне или, вернее, нам полезны, что в снятых Вами копиях встречаются описки и неверные ноты. Но я получил от Вас только чистовики; зайдя [...] в Долгии переулок, я узнал, что там хранятся черновики Алешиных сочинении, и когда я в них заглянул, то ахнул — во-первых, там есть много черновых уже изданных Музыкальным сектором сочинении, изучение которых (со всеми вариантами) мне прямо необходимо, а во-вторых, там (несколько я в течение 2—2.5 часов рассматривания этих черновиков успел

A comparison of Stanchinsky's manuscripts and Perlova's handwritten copies, conducted by musicologist Aleksandr Komarov, revealed that she duplicated them very carefully.[100] Instead, the problems were embedded within Stanchinsky's manuscripts themselves. Stanchinsky enjoyed experimenting with harmonies and, by the time of his death, had not yet settled on a fully consistent harmonic style. Even Zhilyayev, who was intimately familiar with Stanchinsky's music, struggled to determine whether some harmonic writing was an accidental slip of the pen or intentional harmonic development. In a letter to Stanchinsky from 1912, he wrote:

> By the way, there is a colossal amount of slips [of the pen] everywhere, and among them some very important ones, that is, some might not actually be slips, but what [the notes] should actually be […] [*Sketch*] no. 5 'Presto', bar 29 (right hand) — A♭ or A♮ ?; bar 42 (right hand) — last 16th — C♯ or C♮? Or C♮ only in the following bar? Bar 47 — A♭ or A♮? I think A♭, because in the subsequent bar [it is] A♭ to the end. [101]

Zhilyayev's enduring determination to publish Stanchinsky's works came to fruition in 1926. Twenty-four compositions by Stanchinsky were published individually, in small runs of 200-500 copies over the next two years (see the next page).

ознакомиться с ними) есть, по-видимому, целый ряд совершенно законченных сочинении (в том числе и таких, которые я считал без вести пропавшими), которые превосходнейшим образом могут быть изданы; некоторые же другие при осторожном исправлении и дополнении также могут получить вполне законченный для издания вид.» Zhilyayev to Perlova, RNMM, 239/366, 6 May 1926. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, p. 128.

[100] Komarov, 'N. S. Zhilyayev — redaktor sochineniy A. V. Stanchinskogo', p. 293.

[101] «кстати, описок у тебя везде колоссальное количество, и среди них очень важных, то есть таких, которые могут быть на самом деле и не описками, но как же в действительности должно быть […] no. 5 (Presto), такт 29 (правая рука) — la ♭ или la♮?, такт 41 (правая рука) — последняя 16-я — do♯ или do♮? Или do♮ только в следующем такте? Такт 47 — la ♭ или la♮? Думаю, что la ♭ , потому что в следующих тактах до конца la ♭ .» Zhilyayev to Stanchinsky, RNMM, 239/220, 17 May 1912. Published in *Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by I. Barsova, pp. 96-97.

In 1926:

Edited by N. Zhilyayev:

1. Allegro F-dur, op. 2 (1911-1912)
2. Mixolydian prelude (1908)
3. Canon-Prelude in C major (two-part Canon) (1911)
4. Canon-Prelude in G major (three-part Canon) (1911)
5. Canon-Prelude in E mixolydian [not the title used in the 1926 edition] (four-part Canon) (1913-1914)

Edited by A. Alexandrov and N. Zhilyayev:

6. Prelude in C sharp minor (1907)
7. Prelude in D major (1907)
8. Prelude in E flat minor (1907)
9. Sonata in F major (1911-1912)
10. Etude in G minor (1907)

In 1927:

11. Canon in B minor (1908)
12. Canon-Prelude in G flat major (two-part Canon) (1913-1914)
13. Prelude and Fugue in G minor (1909-1910)
14. Sonata no. 2 in G major (1912)

In 1928:

15. Nocturne (1907)
16. Prelude in C minor (1907)
17. Prelude in F minor [now known as Prelude in A♭ major/F minor] (1907)
18. Prelude in B flat minor (1909)
19. Prelude in B minor (1909)
20. Prelude in C major [now known as Prelude in C (minor)] (1912)
21. Lydian prelude (1907)
22. Sonata in E flat minor (one-movement) (1906)
23. Etude in F minor/A flat major (1907)
24. Etude in B major (1908-1910)[102]

We do not know how these works were received, as no responses to their publication have been found in the press. This indicates that Stanchinsky's legacy was of little interest in the late 1920s, and that his works survive largely due to Zhilyayev's efforts.

[102] The list is translated and reproduced from Komarov, 'N. S. Zhilyayev — redaktor sochineniy A. V. Stanchinskogo', p. 283-284.

Publication and Reception from 1930s

The 1930s in Russia brought many changes for the cultural sector. The arts world was shaken by the April resolution of 1932, which dissolved all independent arts organisations and replaced them with unions of art workers.[103] Many unsuspecting composers welcomed the change as it seemed to offer them material security. However, instead of offering protection and relief, the resolution 'in fact removed the last remaining obstacles to the naked exercise of totalitarian power over the arts.'[104] In connection with the April resolution, the concept of socialist realism was introduced, and in 1934 it was implemented as state policy. Old works by pre-revolutionary composers were deprioritised in the political agenda. The Union of Soviet Composers defined this aesthetic as supporting 'the victorious progressive principles of reality' and rejecting 'folk-negating modernistic directions that are typical of the decay of contemporary bourgeois art.'[105] This made circumstances difficult for the performance and publication of works by composers such as Stanchinsky. The state also became the sole patron of the arts, meaning there were no longer any means of private publication. Almost every work written at this time was done so for a state occasion and, by the end of 1940s, individual style was obliterated: the entire Union of Composers 'wrote with a single pen.'[106] The old bourgeois music was out, and new aesthetic ideals – based on transformed nationalistic concepts – were in. This, at least in part, helps to explain the disappearance of Stanchinsky's music during Stalin's rule.[107]

After the publication of Stanchinsky's works in 1926-1928, his name largely disappeared from the public record. Sabaneyev directly attributed this demise to the changing political ideals of the time. Living in America, he wrote: 'Stanchinski [sic] was buried under the ruins of tottering historical values.'[108] In a later article he clarified:

[103] Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, p. 94.
[104] Ibid., p. 95.
[105] Quoted in Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically*, p. 95.
[106] Marina Frolova-Walker, 'Stalin and the Art of Boredom', *Twentieth-Century Music*, 1.1 (2004), 101–24 (pp. 103-4).
[107] During the 1930s, Stalin took great strides towards the revival of Russian nationalism and fostered various projects which encouraged nation-building across the various states of the Soviet Union. Of particular interest in this respect are the *Dekadas*, Soviet music festivals, effectively acting as the Union of Composers annual report to the party, designed to highlight the cultures and artistic accomplishment across the various USSR nations. Frolova-Walker, *Russian Music and Nationalism*, pp. 301; 313-314; Isabelle R. Kaplan, 'Comrades in Arts: The Soviet Dekada of National Art and the Friendship of Peoples', *RUDN Journal of Russian History*, 19.1 (2020), 78–94 <https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8674-2020-19-1-78-94>
[108] Sabaneyeff, *Modern Russian Composers*, pp. 194

> It is very difficult to imagine the further fate of his works. The only happiness in his short life — I think it was his death. She saved him from the tragic experiences of the era, which began almost immediately after his death in Russia. I must admit the fact that under the new regime his music was completely forgotten. Indeed, it was already completely 'out of tune' with what was happening in the world — the page of world history turned over. And it is difficult even to imagine that there could be an interest now in such an artistic phenomenon, which is characteristic precisely of the last 'pre-sunset' days of the Russian Empire. But in the more distant future, one can, of course, expect the resurrection of temporarily dead composers — the first half of his musical work undoubtedly deserves this.[109]

The 1930s in Soviet Russia also saw a great deal more censorship and repression. The use of forced labour camps and detention centres increased dramatically.[110] According to economist Michael Ellman, the number of peasants repressed (arrested, deported or condemned) between 1930 and 1933 was approximately 3,000,000.[111] By 1937-1938, the wave of repressions turned into a 'tsunami' which was subsequently named 'the Great Terror'.[112] The operation targeted anyone perceived as an 'anti-Soviet element'; its purpose was to imprison or exterminate all those who were considered current or potential political threats.[113] Many intellectuals and musicians were arrested, and Zhilyayev himself became a victim of these purges in 1938. He was arrested on 3 November 1937 for his association with the disgraced Marshal of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Tukhachevsky. Tukhachevsky was suspected of treason and was himself arrested in May 1937; he was executed the following month. Zhilyayev was sentenced and shot by an NKVD firing squad on 20 January 1938.[114]

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[109] «Очень трудно представить себе дальнейшую судьбу его произведений. Его единственное в краткой жизни счастье — думаю, была его смерть. Она избавила его от трагических переживаний эпохи, которая почти немедленно после его смерти наступила в России. Я должен констатировать тот факт, что при новом режиме его музыку уже совсем забыли. И действительно, она была уже совершенно «несозвучна» с происходящим в мире — страница мировой истории перевернулась. И трудно даже себе представить, чтобы сейчас мог возникнуть интерес там к подобному художественному явлению, которое характерно именно для последних «предзакатных» дней русской империи. Но в более далеком будущем можно, конечно, ожидать и воскресения временно умерших композиторов — первая половина его музыкального творчества заслуживает этого бесспорно.» Sabaneyev, *Vospominaniya o Rossii*, p. 64.

[110] Sarah Badcock and Judith Pallot, 'Russia and the Soviet Union from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Century', in *A Global History of Convicts and Penal Colonies*, ed. by Clare Anderson (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), pp. 271–306.

[111] Michael Ellman, 'The Role of Leadership Perceptions and of Intent in the Soviet Famine of 1931 – 1934', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 57.6 (2005), 823–41 (p. 828).

[112] Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *Stalin: New Biography of a Dictator* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 150.

[113] Ibid., p. 151.

[114] Inna A. Barsova, 'Trudy, dni i gibel' Nikolaya Sergeyevicha Zhilyayeva', in *Nikolay Sergeyevich Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel'*, ed. by Inna A. Barsova (Moscow: Muzyka, 2008), pp. 11–44 (p. 35).

The Russian musician Valentin Matveyev-Venttsel' claimed that Stanchinsky's compositional legacy was not simply forgotten, but rather intentionally supressed and buried. In a 2016 publication he wrote: 'in the 1930s, there was a Bolshevik ban on the performance and publication of works by A. V. Stanchinsky.'[115] This thesis is unable to corroborate his claims, and it seems improbable that the authorities would have been aware of, let alone interested in banning, the music of a largely unknown composer. His article is the only source which describes the treatment of Stanchinsky's legacy under the censorship of the Stalin era and, given that this account is personal and not referenced, it should be read with a degree of scepticism. Nonetheless, through recounting his conversations with Stanchinsky's family members, Matveyev-Venttsel' tells the story of how Stanchinsky's legacy did not fit the state's ideological narrative until the 1950s.

Matveyev-Venttsel' claimed to have first experienced the mysterious secrecy which surrounded Stanchinsky's name as a ten-year-old child in 1941. He recalled a conversation about Silver Age composers with one of his music teachers. The teacher told him about a composer who died very young: 'at the beginning of the century there was a genius Russian composer who left early.'[116] The teacher then purportedly went silent and did not give the surname of this composer. Later, as a music student at the Conservatoire, Matveyev-Venttsel' remembered this story and tried to discover his name. He asked many senior students about it, but no one would answer his questions. Matveyev-Venttsel' writes: 'much later I understood why.'[117]

In December 1955, Matveyev-Venttsel' was visited by the composer Konstantin Sorokin, who was the head of *Muzgiz's* (the State Music Publisher's) piano editorial board (and who edited and published Stanchinsky's compositions in 1960). In this meeting, Sorokin initiated contact between Matveyev-Venttsel' and Stanchinsky's sister Lydia Perlova. He said: 'an old woman came from the city of Gorky, brought her brother's manuscripts. Go, have a look, it is very interesting, you are friendly towards modern trends, but we cannot publish such music for

[115] «Также в 1930-е годы действовал большевистский запрет на исполнение и публикацию произведений А. В. Станчинского.» Valentin Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Vosstanovleniye istorii zhizni i tvorchestva Alekseya Vladimirovicha Stanchinskogo i istoriya pis'ma o vstreche A. N. Skryabina, N. K. Metnera i N. S. Zhilyayeva po povodu ego sochineniy', in *Uchenye zapiski: materialy mezhdunarodnoy nauchnoy konferencii, posvyashchennoy 100-letiyu pamyati A. N. Skryabina* (Moscow: Memorialnyy muzey A. N. Skryabina, 2016), 8.2, 281–92 (p. 292).
[116] «в начале века гениальный русский композитор, рано ушедший.» Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Vosstanovleniye istorii zhizni i tvorchestva', p. 283.
[117] «Значительно позже я понял, почему.» Ibid., p. 283.

ideological reasons.'[118] Indeed, upon meeting with Matveyev-Venttsel', Perlova complained that no one would publish her brother's works, as they were considered 'modern'.[119] While many of Stanchinsky's piano compositions were already published at this time (there remained only several piano pieces, as well as the Piano Trio and Stanchinsky's songs that were unpublished), the small printing runs of the publications from 1920s would have likely meant that the works were unavailable to purchase, and so were inaccessible to the average performer. The account of this meeting, if remembered and retold accurately, indicates that Stanchinsky's music was, indeed, not being published or reprinted for ideological reasons. Additionally, it suggests that Perlova was afraid to produce Stanchinsky's manuscripts before 1955 and only did so a couple of years after Stalin's death (in 1953).

While the account of Matveyev-Venttsel' is anecdotal, records show that Stanchinsky's family suffered severely under the political repressions of the Stalinist period. Stanchinsky's older brother, Vladimir Vladimirovich, was a victim of the purges and died in an NKVD prison in 1942.[120] Lydia Perlova was also afraid of reprisals, as her husband was of noble origin. Matveyev-Venttsel' recalled that even in 1957, out of fear of being located, she asked him not to mention to anyone the name of the village of Fedosovo, which is where they lived and where Aleksey Stanchinsky had once stayed with them.[121]

After Stalin's death, political censorship eased and composers began to have access to scores which had previously been off-limits. During the 'Thaw', composers felt compelled to 'catch up' with their Western counterparts, although this rush to imitate techniques which had already been mastered in the West was largely spurred by anxiety and accompanied by criticism in the

[118] «приезжала старушка из города Горького, приносила ноты брата. Съезды, посмотри, очень интересно, ты дружишь с современными направлениями, а мы такую музыку печатать по идеологическим соображениям не можем.» Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Vosstanovleniye istorii zhizni i tvorchestva', p. 283.
[119] Ibid., p. 284.
[120] Vladimir Vladimirovich Stanchinsky (1882-1942) – historian, ecologist. Taught at Heidelberg University in Germany between 1901-1906, at Smolensk University between 1919-1931. Published about four dozen scientific works; was a member of the Ecological Society of America from 1924, and a member of the Ecologic Society of Great Britain from 1929. First arrested in 1939; died in prison after his second arrest in 1942. Nikolay Zhilyayev and Aleksandr Komarov, 'Pis'ma N. S. Zhilyayeva k L. V. Perlovoi: Publikaciya i kommentarii A. Komarova', in *Nikolay Sergeyevich Zhilyayev: Trudy, dni i gibel',* ed. by I. Barsova (Moscow: Muzyka, 2008), pp. 113–38 (p. 126).
[121] «Как мне рассказала Лидия Владимировна, она тоже боялась репрессий, так как ее муж Перлов был дворянского происхождения. Она просила меня даже в 1957 году не упоминать названия деревни Федосово, принадлежавшей ее мужу, где одно время у них гостил Алексей.» Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Vosstanovleniye istorii zhizni i tvorchestva', p. 292.

press.[122] Despite the critics' taunting, or perhaps because of it, audiences were very interested in this new music, and during the 1960s it became 'the focus of an unofficial concert subculture.'[123] This situation was favourable for the publication of composers whose music was previously considered too modern, and we may attribute the publication of the second edition of Stanchinsky's compositions in 1960 to this context. The publication was edited by Konstantin Sorokin and Stanchinsky's old friend Anatoly Aleksandrov, while the foreword to the publication was written by Matveyev-Venttsel'. In addition to Stanchinsky's *Twelve Sketches* and works edited and published by Zhilyayev in the 1920s, the edition expanded to include some previously unknown works, the manuscripts of which were provided by Lydia Perlova.[124]

The publication inspired new performances and musicological works about Stanchinsky. Musicologist Irina Lopatina wrote an article about Stanchinsky's compositional style in 1968, describing his music as 'heartfelt lyricism [mixed] with dark fantasy, enchanting melodious beauty of folk song material with bizarre and angular melodic-harmonic breaks, gentle and light pastoral landscapes with frenzied "barbarisms", colourful, poetic, soulful sound with neoclassical dry graphics, tart diatonicism with sophisticated chromaticism.'[125] Another review of Stanchinsky's music appeared in *Sovetskaya Muzyka* in 1970, in which critic Abram Yusfin wrote: 'when most of his piano compositions were published in 1960, they evoked astonishment on account of [his] remarkable talent, original implementation of the national element, originality, and [his] striking anticipation of many considerably more recent phenomena, such as Shostakovich's modal structures and contrapuntal polyphony, or Sviridov's diatonicism.'[126] Concerts followed: in 1976, Matveyev-Venttsel' played Stanchinsky's compositions at the Moscow Conservatoire's Small Hall.[127] The easing of censorship thus allowed for new and regenerated interest in Stanchinsky's music, as well as more performances. The written

[122] Peter J. Schmelz, *Such Freedom, If Only Musical: Unofficial Soviet Music During the Thaw* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 6.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Aleksey Stanchinsky, *Sochineniya dlya fortepiano*, ed. by Anatoly Aleksandrov and Konstantin Sorokin (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo, 1960).
[125] «проникновенный лиризм с мрачной фантастикой, чарующая певучая красота народно-песенного материала с причудливыми и угловатыми мелодико-гармоническими изломами, ласковые и светлые пасторальные пейзажи с исступленными «варваризмами», красочная, поэтическая одухотворенная звукозапись с неоклассической суховатой графикой, терпкая диатоника с изощренной хроматикой» I. Lopatina, 'Cherty stilya A. Stanchinskogo', in *Voprosy Teorii Muzyki*, ed. by S. Skrebkov (Moscow: Muzyka, 1968), pp. 75–102 (p. 75).
[126] Yusfin quoted in Irina Lopatina, 'Aleksey Stanchinsky (1888-1914)', in *A. Stanchinsky: Sochineniya*, ed. by I. Lopatina, trans. by Valery Yerokhin (Moscow: Muzyka, 1990), IX, p. 6.
[127] Matveyev-Venttsel', 'Vosstanovleniye istorii zhizni i tvorchestva', p. 287.

impressions of Stanchinsky's music from this time are positive and, crucially, bring forward more contemporary comparison points for his musical style.

The first critical edition of Stanchinsky's piano works was published in 1990, and this included some more previously unpublished works for the instrument. There are still unpublished manuscripts that remain in the archival collections at the Russian National Museum of Music, though it is my suspicion that these works are either immature or incomplete.[128] However, Lopatina's edition does not conclude the process of collecting and restoring Stanchinsky's legacy. A number of works for instruments and combinations other than solo piano, such as songs and piano trio, remain to be revived, edited (or re-edited) and published; the *Scottish Songs* in particular deserve an updated edition. Since the 1990 publication, there has been a demonstrable resurgence of interest into Stanchinsky's artistic legacy. After the collapse of the USSR, Stanchinsky's music also started to gather interest and recognition outside of Russia. Recordings of his music have been released both in Russia and abroad, attracting reviews in the English language for the first time.[129]

Conclusions

The reviews that Stanchinsky received during his lifetime are more diverse in their praises and critiques than has previously been claimed. Such a conclusion could have been anticipated – in any young composer's career, one can expect to find a mixture of positive and negative reviews. Some critics praised Stanchinsky's talent and originality, while others appeared more puzzled by his unorthodox musical choices. Sabaneyev's reviews and memoirs fixated on Stanchinsky's illness, shedding light on the stigma which surrounded mental health well into the twentieth century and informing future perceptions of the composer and his work. Given that, in the early twentieth century, psychologists were inclined to think that mental illnesses

[128] For an overview of the available manuscripts, see Introduction.
[129] Stephen Greenbank, 'Recording of the Month', *MusicWeb International* <http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2017/Nov/Stanchinsky_piano_PH17003.htm> [accessed 2 October 2019]; James Harrington, 'Stanchinsky: 12 Skizzen; 10 Preludes; Piano Sonata 1; 3 Songs Without Words', *American Record Guide*, July 2017, p. 162; Anne Midgette, 'Preludes to a Revolution', *New York Times*, 19 June 2005, p. AR27; David Moore, 'Preludes to a Revolution', *American Record Guide*, October 2005, pp. 185–86; James R. Oestreich, 'Such a Multitude of Notes Requires Pianist's 11 Fingers', *New York Times*, 15 October 2005, p. B10; John Warrack, 'Stanchinsky, Piano Works', *Gramophone*, November 1994 <https://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/stanchinsky-piano-works> [accessed 2 October 2019]; John Bell Young, 'Russian Piano School, Vol. 2', *American Record Guide*, December 1997, p. 242.

did not affect artists' work, one can only wonder whether Sabaneyev thought that Stanchisky's illness was to the detriment of his creative imagination or was in fact the cause of it.

In many cases, the stories of the contemporaneous reception of composers are told by the composers themselves.[130] Stanchinsky did not live long enough to tell his own story. How would he have portrayed his reception? Criticism which he received in the press is likely to have been damaging to his confidence. While we do not know how he reacted to each of these reviews (none of Stanchinsky's diaries survive from the years 1913-1914), it is probable that such criticism would have been highly distressing for him. His letters and diaries show that his sensitivity was heightened, and that he was tormented by the slightest negativity. As such, it seems reasonable to speculate that some of the reviews may have had a negative impact on his already fragile mental wellbeing.

Stanchinsky's case tells an illuminating story of how a composer's music is received during their lifetime, and how subsequent perceptions of their work are moulded and created. This chapter demonstrates that there is a significant difference between posthumous and contemporaneous reception. Public perceptions of Stanchinsky began to be reviewed almost immediately after his death, and Sabaneyev's comments made in the 1920s and afterwards planted the seeds for future opinions about the composer. As such, myths surrounding Stanchinsky's reception were instigated by a single, supposedly authoritative, source. The chapter also raises the issue of how, why and when we apply the label of 'genius' to a composer. Contrary to Sabaneyev's claims, this study could not identify any sources in which the word 'genius' was used to describe Stanchinsky within his lifetime. This particular *canard* came to exist only after Stanchinsky's death, and was enthusiastically picked up and carried by future musicologists, resulting in Stanchinsky being framed as a mad genius for the rest of the twentieth century.[131]

[130] Notable examples, in very different ways, include but are not limited to Stravinsky, Messiaen, Berlioz, Schoenberg, Boulez and Cage, all of whom had a profound effect on how their music and reception was viewed through their own writings and interviews.
[131] See M. Montagu-Nathan, 'Was He a Genius?', *Tempo*, 28 (1953), 23–25 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298200051147>

Final Conclusions

This thesis set out to study Aleksey Stanchinsky's life, music and reception, by putting forward three main aims: to update his biography and assess his position within the social and artistic milieu of late Imperial Russia; to analyse his compositional style and output; and to explore the content and context of reviews of his works published by contemporary critics, with a view to also explaining his subsequent neglect in Soviet Russia.

Chapter 2 addressed the first aim by providing the first comprehensive biography of Aleksey Stanchinsky in the English language. It detailed his upbringing and education, and contextualised his lived experiences against the social and cultural backdrop of pre-Revolutionary Russia. The chapter began to challenge some previous assumptions about Stanchinsky, such as his mental health diagnosis and the circumstances surrounding his death, and in doing so has paved the way for further research in this area which ought to be continued once access to primary materials is restored. Instead of upholding views of Stanchinsky as an incurable sufferer of schizophrenia, the chapter demonstrated that he lived a full and varied life with a loving family, a supportive group friends and several love interests. While Stanchinsky did suffer from a mental illness, we cannot know that this was schizophrenia. This chapter thus freed Stanchinsky from being perceived as a 'mad genius' on the fringes of Moscow's music scene, and repositioned him as a productive member of the musical circles of the time.

Chapters 3 and 4 addressed the second aim by critically examining Stanchinsky's compositional output. Chapter 3 described his compositional journey from 1904 to 1910, starting with his earliest and most rudimentary pieces, and investigated how his style rapidly transformed into something distinct and recognisably unique. Chapter 4 continued the discussion from 1911, examining the range and flexibility of Stanchinsky's technique in the *Twelve Sketches* and his last two sonatas. It showed that Stanchinsky's style was continuously evolving, but in the last few years of his life he also successfully created a recognisable, and individual, 'Stanchinsky style'. The chapters upheld the view of researchers such as Powell that Stanchinsky was different from many of his contemporaries in that he moved away from Scriabinesque influences quite early in his career; this was unusual for a composer of his generation. Many of Stanchinsky's works are contrapuntal and obscure tonality through purely diatonic means, while others experiment with higher levels of chromaticism and employ

complex rhythms and irregular metres. Stanchinsky provides an unorthodox portrait of a Russian composer, inviting us to revise our ideas of 'Russianness', and his compositional journey can be taken as an exemplar link between nineteenth-century romanticism and twentieth-century modernism. At the time of his death, he was in the process of forging a distinct approach to counterpoint and expanding tonality, and it is impossible to know what impact living under the new Soviet regime might have had on him: we can only speculate as to whether he would have continued in this direction, or changed his style and joined the ranks of state-sanctioned Soviet composers. These chapters open further possibilities for research into the artistic influences on Stanchinsky, as well as the impact of him on other composers.

The textural range and variety of Stanchinsky's music is particularly interesting from the perspective of a pianist: some pieces, such as *Sketch* no. 3 (which could be mistaken for an easy piece) are simple and bare, while others (such as Sonata in G) represent some of the most complex and technically challenging piano writing of the first half of the twentieth century. Nonetheless, even in works where the textures appear daunting on the page, the shapes sit comfortably under the hands, and rendering the lines coherently in performance is reasonably straightforward. The idiomatic nature of Stanchinsky's writing is demonstrative of his skill as a pianist; nothing he wrote is unplayable. Indeed, his *oeuvre* has something to offer pianists of a variety of levels. His earliest works would suit amateur performers and those still developing their skills. He even appears to have written a piece with an educational intent behind it (Variations). The works he wrote after 1910 are well suited for advanced students and professionals due to their virtuosity. For performers looking to expand their repertoire and include some lesser-known works, Stanchinsky would be an excellent choice.

The third aim of the thesis was addressed in Chapter 5, which examined contemporaneous reactions to Stanchinsky's music and explored the circumstances of the publication of his works. The treatment of Stanchinsky's compositional output, both during his lifetime and posthumously, sheds light on how his music was received differently before and after his death. It also helps us to understand how subsequent perceptions of the composer were moulded and created. During his lifetime, Stanchinsky was not seen as the exceptional young composer Sabaneyev portrayed in his memoirs, and many of the reviews he received in the press were unfavourable. However, after his death, the narrative changed. This was possibly due to a combination of factors: his music may have been easier for critics to understand and appreciate within the context of more recent developments, and they may have felt compelled to be kinder

to a composer who passed away so young and under such tragic circumstances. The chapter adds to our understanding of Russian music criticism at the turn of the twentieth century, and feeds into a broader discussion about how perceptions of composers as geniuses take root.

Stanchinsky's compositional journey serves as a succinct example of the development of music at the turn of the twentieth century and provides insights into the broader state of musical progress at this time. While this thesis has added much to the understanding of Stanchinsky, there are, of course, significant areas for further research. To start with, there are the areas where work for this project was curtailed or prevented, due first to the pandemic and then subsequently to the ongoing political situation. In particular, there is more work to be done on Stanchinsky's manuscripts and the correspondence held at RNMM, and the holdings of the Smolensk Museum merit further attention. In addition to these known archival locations, it is likely that exploring these will reveal additional pertinent sources that may enrich our understanding of Stanchinsky, his music and his cultural milieu. One potential next step would be to locate the manuscripts of his *Scottish Songs*, with the possibility that further sketches – or even complete works – may come to light through this process.

Beyond all this, Stanchinsky's case highlights the work that is still to be done to create a more nuanced picture of musical life in the first part of the twentieth century. Current narratives, whether established in the West, or during Soviet or post-Soviet era Russia, overlook the contributions of numerous figures in Russia and former Eastern bloc countries. A wide range of works from this period remain to be discovered, analysed, catalogued, and added to the repertoire of performers and concert halls in order to contribute to these discussions further. Some of this work will be possible in the future. Regrettably, however, many areas of primary research have been closed off, and it is doubtful that primary materials relating to Stanchinsky (as well as other neglected Russian composers of his generation) will be accessible for quite some time.

For performers, there is also a clear need for a critical edition of Stanchinsky's music that is both coherent and readily available, as this would enable wider engagement from those curious enough to explore beyond the most well-known names. Stanchinsky provides performers and audiences with a missing link in the push towards a post-Romantic and post-tonal musical language, as well as an intriguing suggestion of an alternative compositional pathway. The

most important acknowledgement to make, though, is that these are works that stand on their own merits, regardless of their historical situation.

Appendix 1 – Table of Published Compositions by Aleksey Stanchinsky

Composition	Instrument(s)	Stanchinsky's Age	Location of Composition	Date of Composition	First Publication
Songs Without Words, no. 1	Piano	16	Smolensk	1904 (spring)	1990, *Muzyka*
Songs Without Words, no. 2	Piano	16	Logachevo	1904 (May)	1990, *Muzyka*
Songs Without Words, no. 3	Piano	16	Logachevo, in the woods	1904 (summer)	1990, *Muzyka*
Mazurka in D♭ major	Piano	17	Smolensk	1905	1960, *Muzgiz*
Humoresque	Piano	17	Smolensk	1906 (9 February)	1990, *Muzyka*
Tears	Piano	18	Unknown, likely Logachevo	1906 (7 July)	1990, *Muzyka*
Sonata in E♭ minor	Piano	18	Smolensk	1906 (12 September to 3 December)	1928, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
Prelude in C♯ minor	Piano	18	Unknown	1907 (23 January)	1926, *Muzsektor Gosizdata*
Prelude in C minor	Piano	19	Unknown	1907 (15 June)	1928, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
Nocturne	Piano	19	Smolensk	1907 (14-18 August)	1928, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
Prelude in A♭ major/F minor	Piano	19	Moscow	1907 (5 September)	1928, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
Etude in F minor/A♭ major	Piano	19	Moscow	1907 (23-24 October)	1928, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
Prelude in D major	Piano	19	Unknown, likely Moscow	1907 (late November or early December)	1926, *Muzsektor Gosizdata*
Prelude in E♭ minor	Piano	19	Unknown, likely Moscow	1907 (late November or early December)	1926, *Muzsektor Gosizdata*

Etude in G minor	Piano	19	Moscow	1907 (6-14 December)	1926, *Muzsektor Gosizdata*
'Lydian' Prelude	Piano	19 or 20	Unknown	In manuscript: 1907 (December) In first edition: 1908	1928, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
Mazurka in G♯ minor	Piano	19	Unknown	1907	1960, *Muzgiz*
Canon	Piano	20	Unknown, likely Logachevo	1908 (summer)	1927, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
'Mixolydian' Prelude	Piano	20	Logachevo	1908 (July to September)	1926, *Muzsektor Gosizdata*
Etude in B major	Piano	20 or 21	Unknown	1908/1909	1928, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
Scottish Songs	Voice and Piano	21	Logachevo	1909 (June to September, though began planning as early as April 1909)	2013, *Smolensk City Typography*
Prelude in B♭ minor	Piano	21	Logachevo	1909 (December)	1928, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
Prelude in B minor	Piano	21	Unknown, likely Logachevo	1909/1910 (likely December 1909)	1928, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
Prelude and Fugue	Piano	21	Unknown	1909-10 (winter)	1927, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
Piano Trio in D major	Violin, Cello, Piano	22	Unknown	1910?	1966, *Muzyka*
Variations	Piano	23	Unknown	1911	1960, *Muzgiz*
Allegro	Piano	23 or 24	Unknown	1911-1912	1926, *Muzsektor Gosizdata*
Sonata in F major	Piano	23 or 24	Unknown	1911-1912	1926, *Muzsektor Gosizdata*
Prelude in C (minor)	Piano	24	Unknown	1912 (9 March)	1928, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
Sonata in G major	Piano	24	Unknown	1912	1927, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*

Twelve Sketches	Piano	24	Unknown	1912 (on manuscript: 23 March)	Nos. 1-4 in 1913; nos. 5-8 in 1915; nos. 9-12 in 1917, *Jurgenson*
Three Sketches	Piano	24?	Unknown	1912?	1960, *Muzgiz*
Canon-Prelude A	Piano	25	Unknown	1913	1926, *Muzsektor Gosizdata*
Canon-Prelude B	Piano	25	Unknown	1913	1926, *Muzsektor Gosizdata*
Canon-Prelude C	Piano	25 or 26	Unknown	1913-1914	1926, *Muzsektor Gosizdata*
Canon-Prelude D	Piano	25 or 26	Unknown	1913-1914?	1927, *Muzsektor Gosizdata* & *Universal Edition*
V bure deyaniy, v volnakh bytiya (Goethe)	Voice and Piano	Unknown	Unknown	n.d.	2013, *Smolensk City Typography*
Osen' (Bal'mont)	Voice and Piano	Unknown	Unknown	n.d.	2013, *Smolensk City Typography*

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