

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: PIANISTIC VIRTUOSITY IN
CHAMBER MUSIC FROM 1893 -1962.

Eun Ae Baik Kim, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2011

Directed By: Professor Rita Sloan, School of Music

Many twentieth-century composers possessed amazing proficiency at the piano. Their keyboard prowess and intimate knowledge of the instrument helped contribute to a remarkable body of piano chamber music which resulted in requiring greater technical command on the part of the pianist. Composers such as Rachmaninoff, Debussy, Poulenc, Bartók, Ravel and Stravinsky were excellent pianists as well as superb symphonic writers.

By employing their vast technical abilities and honing their experiences with orchestral forces, these composers were able to create chamber music replete with new musical textures, rich sonorities and various coloristic effects which heightened the demand for pianistic virtuosity. Today's pianists need to conquer the technical challenges of these chamber works before even beginning to put them together with their partners. Fortunately, most of these composers knew their instrument and its technical demands well enough to ensure that everything they wrote would be

idiomatic to the instrument even while maintaining an exceptional level of technical difficulty, thereby raising the level of piano technique to new heights.

The three recitals, which comprise this dissertation project, were performed on February 21 and October 10, 2010, and February 27, 2011 at the University of Maryland Gildenhorn Recital Hall. The first recital, which was performed with pianist Sooyoung Jung, included works for two pianos: *En Blanc et Noir* (1915) by Claude Debussy, *Fantaisie - Tableaux* (1893) by Sergei Rachmaninoff, and Three Movements from *Petrouchka* (1947) by Igor Stravinsky. In the second recital the focus was on duos with piano: Francis Poulenc's Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1962) with clarinetist Samuel Doosik Shin, Karol Szymanowski's *Notturmo e Tarantella* for Violin and Piano (1915) with violinist Blanka Bednarz, and Sergei Rachmaninoff's Sonata for Cello and Piano (1901) with cellist JongBin Kim. The final recital featured works for two pianos with pianist Sooyoung Jung: Claude Debussy's orchestral works *Nuages* and *Fêtes* arranged for two pianos by Maurice Ravel and Rachmaninoff's Suite No. 2, Op. 17 for two pianos (1901). The recitals were recorded on compact discs and archived within the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

PIANISTIC VIRTUOSITY IN CHAMBER MUSIC FROM 1893 - 1962

By

Eun Ae Baik Kim

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
2011

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Doctor of Musical Arts Recital
Dissertation Recital I
Pianistic Virtuosity in Chamber Music from 1893 - 1962
Eun Ae Baik Kim, Collaborative Piano

February 21, 2010
5:30 pm
Gildenhorn Recital Hall, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

En Blanc et Noir

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

- *Avec emportement*
- *Lent. Sombre.*
- *Scherzando*

Fantaisie - Tableaux (Suite No. 1)

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

- Barcarolle
- A Night for Love
- Tears
- Easter

Intermission

Three Movements from *Petrouchka*

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

- Russian Dance
- *Petrouchka*
- The Shrove - Tide Fair

Program Notes - Recital I

The focus of this concert is music written for two pianos. The composers of these works - Debussy, Rachmaninoff, and Stravinsky - not only had exceptional pianistic skills, but also expressed their individualism in their symphonic works. The composers' understanding of pianistic possibilities and their aural imaginations led them to create new textures, sonorities and various coloristic effects in works for two pianos.

En Blanc et Noir literally refers to the black and white keys of the piano. The French composer Claude Debussy (1862-1918) wrote this work during World War I, while suffering from depression and anxiety in reaction to the unsettled atmosphere of the time. Debussy dedicated the three movements to particular individuals: *Avec emportement* to his friend Sergei Koussevitsky along with a poetic statement referring to those who would not participate in the defense of France; *Lent. Sombre.* to the memory of a friend killed in the war, and *Scherzando* to Stravinsky. The imitation of military bugle calls and the distant rumbling guns give a clear picture of the fearful war, and the chorale melody *Ein feste Burg* appears dissonantly as a symbol of the German threat.

In both Debussy's *En Blanc et Noir* and in the *Fantaisie – Tableaux* by Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), the pianos produce sound effects that invoke timbres of individual orchestral instruments, mostly wind and percussion instruments. The "Russian Easter" movement imitates multiple church bells, which create beautifully stunning sonorities that announce the Easter celebration. Suite No.1, Op.5 is one of Rachmaninoff's early compositions, and as an example of programmatic music, it portrays four poetic vignettes by Lermontov, Byron, Tyutchev, and Khomyakov. Each movement has a subtitle: "Barcarolle", "A Night for Love", "Tears", and "Easter". Rachmaninoff's

interpretive insight is most evident in the evocation of some of the more suggestive ideas in this suite: “lapping waters,” “nightingales,” “human tears” and “victorious bells,” are evoked in the sounds coming from the two pianos. Rachmaninoff dedicated this composition to Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) after his compatriot composer’s sudden death in 1893.

The final piece on this program, *Petrouchka* was originally composed for Sergei Diaghilev’s Ballet Russes in 1911. Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) took three movements from the ballet score and transcribed it for piano. The *Petrouchka* has three important characters: *Petrouchka*, the Ballerina, and the Moor. They are animated puppets that are supposedly brought to real life by a magician, and they develop emotions and feelings like real human beings. The ugly *Petrouchka* falls in love with the beautiful Ballerina, who rejects him and chooses the handsome Moor instead. In contrast to the two previous compositions by Debussy and Rachmaninoff, the images and sound effects in Stravinsky’s music are more percussive with complex rhythmic changes. Vivid and brilliant harmonies and dissonances create an impressive balletic tableau. Bitonality in the piece, most commonly labeled the *Petrouchka* chord (consisting of C and F# major triads played simultaneously), appropriately symbolizes both the ugly and funny puppet characters. The use of *glissandi*, *tremolos*, trills and repeated percussive chord clusters round out the aural palette of orchestral sonorities in this work.

Debussy's poetic quotes for each movement:

- *à mon ami A. Kussewitsky.*

*Whoever remains seated
And does not dance
Makes a quiet confession
Of some misfortune.*

(J.Barbier M.Carré from *Romeo and Juliet*)

- *Au Lieutenant Jacques Charlot.*

*Prince, let Aeolus be borne by slaves
To the forest where Glaucus rules
Or be deprived of peace and hope
Since those are not worthy to possess virtues
Who would wish ill of the Kingdom of France.*

(François Villon, *Ballades against the Enemies of France*)

- *à mon ami Igor Stravinsky.*

Winter, you are but a rogue...
(Charles d'Orléans)

Illustrative quotations at the beginning of each movement of the Fantaisie -Tableaux of Rachmaninoff:

Barcarole (Lermontov)

*At dusk half-heard the chill wave laps
Beneath the gondola's slow oar.
...once more a song! Once more the twanged guitar!
...now sad, now gaily ringing,
The barcarole comes winging:
"The boat slid by, the waters clove:
So time glides over the surge of love:
The waters will grow smooth again.*

But what can rouse a passion slain!"

A Night for Love (Byron)

*It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale's high note is heard:
It is the hour when lovers' vows
Seem sweet in every whispered word:
And gentle winds, and waters near.
Make music to the lonely ear...*

Tears (Tyutchev)

*Tears, human tears, that pour forth beyond telling,
Early and late, in the dark, out of sight,
While the world goes on its way all unwittingly,
Numberless, stintless, you fall unremittingly,
Pouring like rain, the long rain that is welling
Endlessly, late in the autumn at night.*

Russian Easter (Khomyakov)

*Across the earth a mighty peal is sweeping
Till all the booming air rocks like a sea,
As silver thunders carol forth the tidings,
Exulting in that holy victory...*

Doctor of Musical Arts Recital
Dissertation Recital II
Pianistic Virtuosity in Chamber Music from 1893 -1962
Eun Ae Baik Kim, Collaborative Piano

October 10, 2010
5:30 pm
Gildenhorn Recital Hall, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963)

- *Allegro tristamente*
- *Romanza*
- *Allegro con fuoco*

Notturmo e Tarantella for Violin and Piano, Op.28 Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937)

Intermission

Sonata in G Minor for Cello and Piano, Op.19

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

- *Lento-Allegro Moderato*
- *Allegro Scherzando*
- *Andante*
- *Allegro mosso*

Program Notes - Recital II

This recital is the midpoint in a series of three recital dissertation, “Pianistic Virtuosity in Chamber Music from 1893 - 1962.” The program includes duets for piano with a single instrument: the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano by Francis Poulenc (1899-1963), the *Notturmo e Tarantella* for Violin and Piano by Karol Szymanowski (1822-1937), and the Sonata for Cello and Piano by Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943).

One of the leading composers of “Les Six,” Francis Poulenc made major contributions in many areas of musical composition, one of the main ones being the wind chamber music repertoire. A gifted pianist, Poulenc always favored woodwind instruments composing three brilliant sonatas for flute, oboe and clarinet near the end of his life. Written in 1962, the Sonata for Clarinet and Piano was dedicated to composer Arthur Honegger (1892-1955), a fellow friend in “Les Six.” The sense of emotional ambiguity throughout the piece is brought about by constantly shifting harmonies and rhythms often presented in short, juxtaposed phrases. Long pedal tones provide a slight sense of harmony, but the frequent and seemingly spontaneous dissonant chords and use of bitonality continuously challenge clarinetist, pianist, and audience alike. In order to highlight the ambiguities, the pianist must be diligent in addressing pedal technique, thereby calling attention to the sustaining pedal tones over the bar lines with multiple dissonances. In addition to the pedal tones and lack of tonality, the tempo markings of this composition also suggest uncertainty. The first movement, *Allegro tristamente* is fast, but with a sense of grief. The *Romanza* is an intense and slow second movement, followed by an *Allegro con fuoco* final movement that is more optimistic in its cheerful, nonchalant virtuosity.

After Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849), Karol Szymanowski is Poland's most significant composer. He composed mainly piano music in his formative years, but as a teenager, his focus shifted to violin works after collaborating with Pawel Kochanski, who, as a teenage boy, was the concertmaster of the Warsaw Philharmonic. Kochanski's consummate technical skill inspired the composer to create brilliant virtuosic pieces that also featured Szymanowski's unique style. *Notturmo e Tarantella* demands virtuosic playing from both players. In particular, the *Tarantella* movement requires great technical proficiency from both players: *tremolos*, heavy fast chords, complex rhythms, *spiccatos*, double stops, and fast scales. On top of the virtuosity required for the work, it also shows the influence of French Impressionism. *Notturmo* is truly music of the night with evocative whispers and suggestive exoticism, such as when the violin *pizzicati* imitate the guitar and piano *tremolos* the mandolin.

As a multi-talented musician, Sergei Rachmaninoff pursued three roles: pianist, composer and conductor. As a performer, he was known for his great precision, rhythmic drive, refined legato, and utter clarity in even the most complex textures. He believed that every piece of music has a "culminating point" that must be approached in a calculated fashion. The composer's performance style and philosophy are evident in his own compositions, encouraging the performer to join Rachmaninoff in these efforts. When playing his music, I was driven by the powerful and intensely passionate melodies of the cello part in the Sonata in G Minor for Cello and Piano, which helped to take my focus away from the extremely difficult piano part. Although the cello carries the bulk of the lyrical melodic material, the pianist carries the bulk of the textural material, consisting of countless densely written notes. The virtuosity of the piano part supports the musical

expressivity of the piece, and provides sumptuous harmonies. This composition requires refined technical ability and artistry from the pianist that supports, but must not overpower the cello's exquisite melodies. This sonata was written during Rachmaninoff's most successful compositional period along with the Suite No. 2 for Two Pianos, Op. 17, as well as the famous Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 19.

Doctor of Musical Arts Recital
Dissertation Recital III
Pianistic Virtuosity in Chamber Music from 1893 -1962
Eun Ae Baik Kim, Collaborative Piano

February 27, 2011
5:30 pm
Gildenhorn Recital Hall, Clarice Performing Arts Center

Two Movements from “*Nocturnes*” for orchestra Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
transcribed for two pianos by Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

- *Nuages*
- *Fêtes*

Intermission

Suite No. 2, Op.17

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)

- Introduction
- Waltz
- Romance
- Tarantella

Program Notes - Recital III

My final recital on the subject of “Pianistic Virtuosity in Chamber Music from 1893 – 1962” presents two compositions for two pianos: first, a transcription by Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) of an orchestral work by Claude Debussy (1862-1918), and the other, a work originally written for two pianos by Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943).

The French composer Maurice Ravel was a brilliant symphonic writer, and the transcriptions of *Nuages* and *Fêtes* demonstrate his complete understanding of the orchestral genre. Ravel spent hours and hours studying the sound of each instrument, which led him to create extremely colorful textures and invent stunning combination of resonance. The way in which he combined the sounds from two pianos to reproduce Debussy’s orchestral work is pure genius. Maurice Hinson, the author of “*Music for More than One Piano*,” rates this transcription as the best original writing in the two-piano medium.

The two movements that served as source material for Ravel’s arrangement are *Nuages* (“clouds”) *Fêtes* (“festivals”), from Debussy’s famous symphonic work *Nocturnes* (1899). The challenge of transcribing this impressionistic work was to find sounds on the piano that approach Debussy’s orchestral colors. Debussy described *Nuages* as an experiment in finding different combinations inside a single color, as a painter might when painting a study in grey. Ravel placed the central thematic material (originally played by the English Horn) in the middle register of the piano. And he doubled or sometimes even quadrupled surrounding notes to imitate thick orchestral textures. Balancing the extensive parallel chords and carrying them in a legato fashion, comparable to sustaining string and

wind instruments requires pianists to have perfect control of their hands and feet. One obvious example of Ravel's outstanding skill in arranging orchestral material for pianos can be found at the very end of *Fêtes*. Ravel evokes the sound of timpani and the bass in the lowest register in the piano. The pitches of these very low notes are almost not aurally recognizable, and by focusing the audience's ears on the distinctive rhythm, a perfect imitation of the original orchestra instruments is presented.

Suite No. 2 for Two Pianos, Op.17 by Rachmaninoff is considered by many to be one the best composition written in the two-piano literature. Its four movements feature characteristic titles: *Introduction*, *Valse*, *Romance*, and *Tarantella*. The powerful intensity, wonderful sonorities, and colorful textures of this composition almost reach an orchestral level. The composer himself gave the first performance of this piece partnering with his cousin Alexander Siloti. Later in life, Rachmaninoff performed this piece with pianist Vladimir Horowitz in what turned out to be the last performance Rachmaninoff gave just before he died.

The significant technical difficulties of Rachmaninoff's music come not only from his virtuosity, but also from his hand size. His enormous hand stretched from middle C to G, an octave-and-a-half higher on the keyboard, with his middle fingers able to press down notes in the middle of the huge expanse. The chords in his music often exceed a normal hand span's ability. The *Introduction* movement of the Suite No. 2 is a prime example of Rachmaninoff's ease with big chords. The movement marches powerfully along with gigantic chords in both pianos, and continues breathlessly through the coda section. Rachmaninoff's dexterity probably also allowed him to handle the dazzling fast notes of the *Valse* effortlessly. The second movement demands virtuosic finger control and well-

coordinated ensemble work. The fast running notes move harmoniously in parallel thirds portraying an intimate dance for two lovers.

Aside from virtuosic moments, the beautiful and lush melodies place the composer's music firmly in the first rank for listeners. The intimate third movement steals listener's hearts with touchingly melancholic lyricism. These simple melodies are gracefully decorated with fast notes and chromaticism as the music progresses. The performer's challenge is to maintain composure and simplicity in spite of the sheer volume of notes. The intense *Tarantella* also focuses on the melodies, but in contrast to the lyricism of the third movement, the final movement pours out emotional intensity through magnificent virtuosity. The fast 6/8-meter dance was supposed to cure diseases associated with the bite of the tarantula spider. The spider-like title *Tarantella* originated from *Taranto*, a southern town of Italy, which existed from the fifteenth- to the seventeenth-centuries. As the movement's title implies, the music spins and accelerates with tremendous velocity.

Recital 1 CD – Track Listings

- 1-3 En Blanc et Noir (1915)
 CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862- 1918)
 (Eun Ae Baik Kim, piano I & Sooyoung Jung, piano II)
1. I. Avec emportement..... 4:06
2. II. Lent. Sombre..... 6:49
3. III. Scherzando..... 3:54
- 4-7 Fantaisie - Tableaux, Suite No.1 (1893)
 SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873- 1943)
 (Eun Ae Baik Kim, piano I & Sooyoung Jung, piano II)
4. I. Barcarolle..... 8:13
5. II. Night for Love..... 5:45
6. III. Tears..... 6:24
7. IV. Easter..... 2:54
- 8-10 Three Movements from ‘ Petrouchka’ (1947)
 IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)
 (Sooyoung Jung, piano I & Eun Ae Baik Kim, piano II)
8. I. Russian Dance..... 2:43
9. II. Petrouchka..... 4:06
10. III. The Shrove - Tide Fair.....10:44

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Recital 2 CD – Track Listings

1-3 Sonata for Clarinet and Piano (1962)
FRANCIS POULENC (1899- 1963)
(Samuel Doosik Chin, clarinet & Eun Ae Baik Kim, piano)

1. I. Allegro tristamente..... 4:57
2. II. Romanza..... 5:50
3. III. Allegro con fuoco..... 3:33

4-5 Notturmo e Tarantella for Violin and Piano, Op.28 (1915)
KAROL SZYMANOWSKI (1882-1937)
(Blanka Bednarz, violin & Eun Ae Baik Kim, piano)

1. I. Notturmo..... 6:17
2. II. Tarantella..... 6:17

6-9 Sonata in G Minor for Cello and Piano, Op.19 (1901)
SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873-1943)
(JongBin Kim, cello & Eun Ae Baik Kim, piano)

1. I. Lento- Allegro Moderato..... 9:51
2. II. Allegro Scherzando..... 6:26
3. III. Andante..... 5:55
4. IV. Allegro mosso..... 11:09

Recorded October 10, 2010 in Gildenhorn Recital Hall, Clarice Smith
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Recital 3 CD – Track Listings

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| 1. | Annotation by Eun Ae Baik Kim..... | 14:25 |
| 2-3. | Two movement from ‘Nocturnes’ for orchestra transcribed for two pianos by Maurice Ravel (1875- 1937)
CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862-1918)
(Eun Ae Baik Kim, piano I & Sooyoung Jung, piano II) | |
| 2. | I. Nuages..... | 8:08 |
| 3. | II. Fêtes..... | 6:37 |
| 4-7. | Suite No. 2, Op.17 (1901)
SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873-1943)
(Eun Ae Baik Kim, piano I & Sooyoung Jung, piano II) | |
| 4. | I. Introduction..... | 4:28 |
| 5. | II. Waltz..... | 7:06 |
| 6. | III. Romance..... | 6:49 |
| 7. | IV. Tarantella..... | 7:56 |

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