

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: VIRTUOSIC ELEMENTS IN THE
COLLABORATIVE PIANIST'S
REPERTOIRE: SELECTED SOLO, VOCAL,
AND CHAMBER WORKS OF
RACHMANINOFF AND RAVEL

Eliza Ching, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2012

Directed By: Professor Rita Sloan, School of Music

This dissertation project explores some of the technical and musical challenges that face pianists in a collaborative role—specifically, those challenges that may be considered virtuosic in nature. The material was chosen from the works of Rachmaninoff and Ravel because of the technically and musically demanding yet idiomatic piano writing. This virtuosic piano writing also extends into the collaborative repertoire. The pieces were also chosen to demonstrate these virtuosic elements in a wide variety of settings. Solo piano pieces were chosen to provide a point of departure, and the programmed works ranged from vocal to two-piano, to sonatas and a piano trio.

The recitals were arranged to demonstrate as much contrast as possible, while being grouped by composer. The first recital was performed on April 24, 2009. This

recital featured five songs of Rachmaninoff, as well as three solo piano preludes and his Suite No. 2 for two pianos.

The second recital occurred on November 16, 2010. This recital featured the music of both Rachmaninoff and Ravel, as well as a short lecture introducing the solo work “Ondine” from *Gaspard de la nuit* by Ravel. Following the lecture were the *Cinq mélodies populaires grecques* and the program closed with the substantial Rachmaninoff *Sonata for Cello and Piano*.

The final program was given on October 10, 2011. This recital featured the music of Ravel, and it included his *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, the Debussy *Nocturnes* transcribed for two pianos by Ravel, and the *Piano Trio*. The inclusion of a transcription of a work by another composer highlights Ravel’s particular style of writing for the piano.

All of these recitals were performed at the Gildenhorn Recital Hall in the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland. The recitals are recorded on compact discs, which can be found in the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM).

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SELECTED SOLO, VOCAL, AND CHAMBER WORKS OF
RACHMANINOFF AND RAVEL

By

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RECITAL I: RACHMANINOFF

April 24, 2009

8:00 PM

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

PROGRAM

Op. 4 no. 4 *Oh, never sing to me again.*

Op. 21 no. 7 *How fair this spot!*

Op. 38 no. 4 *The pied Piper*

Op. 38 no. 5 *Dreams*

Op. 14 no. 11 *Spring Waters*

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873 – 1973)

Carmen Balthrop, soprano
Eliza Ching, piano

Prelude Op. 32 no. 12 in G-sharp minor

Prelude Op. 23 no. 4 in D Major

Prelude Op. 23 no. 2 in B-flat Major

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Eliza Ching, piano

Intermission

Suite No. 2 for Two Pianos, Op. 17

I. Introduction

II. Waltz

III. Romance

IV. Tarantella

Sergei Rachmaninoff

David Ballena, piano
Eliza Ching, piano

RECITAL II: RAVEL AND RACHMANINOFF

November 16, 2010

8:00 PM

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

PROGRAM

Gaspard de la Nuit
Ondine

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

Eliza Ching, piano

Cinq mélodies populaires grecques

Maurice Ravel

- I. Chanson de la mariée
- II. Là-bas, vers l'église
- III. Quel galant m'est comparable
- IV. Chanson des cueilleuses de lentisques
- V. Tout gai!

Tripatos

Maurice Ravel

Stacey Mastrian, soprano
Eliza Ching, piano

Intermission

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

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

- I. Lento - Allegro moderato
- II. Allegro scherzando
- III. Andante
- IV. Allegro mosso

Evelyn Elsing, cello
Eliza Ching, piano

RECITAL III: RAVEL

October 10, 2011

8:00 PM

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center

PROGRAM

Sonata for Violin and Piano

- I. Allegretto
- II. Blues – Moderato
- III. Perpetuum mobile - Allegro

Maurice Ravel
(1875 -1937)

James Stern, violin
Eliza Ching, piano

Nocturnes (transcribed for two pianos by Ravel)

- I. Nuages
- II. Fêtes
- III. Sirènes

Claude Debussy
(1862 - 1918)

Kevin T. Chance, piano
Eliza Ching, piano

Intermission

Piano Trio

- I. Modéré
- II. Pantoum - Assez vif
- III. Passacaille - Très large
- IV. Final - Animé

Maurice Ravel

James Stern, violin
Evelyn Elsing, cello
Eliza Ching, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Although Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) and Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) lived roughly at the same time, they had strikingly different compositional styles as well as influences in their music. Their lifetimes fell during the rich and changing times of Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Scriabin, Brahms, Reger, Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Webern, Prokofiev, Bartok, Shostakovich, Hindemith, Strauss, Puccini, and Gershwin. Rachmaninoff shunned the avant-garde trends and represented the “last Great Russian Romantic” while Ravel, a neo-Classicist, looked both to the past and to the future.

From Rachmaninoff’s own words, a pianist can know what he believed was crucial in a successful performance of his work:

That is the most important thing for me in my pianoforte interpretations, colour. So you can make music live. Without colour it is dead...¹

Besides color, there are other aspects that are key. The lyrical singing of his soaring melodies must be prominent, whether in a solo or chamber setting. Also important, again taking cue from Rachmaninoff’s own words, a performer must achieve a “culmination point”, or pace a performance perfectly to retain the work’s architecture and have the desired effect. As he told the poet Marietta Shaginian:

This culmination may be at the end or in the middle, it may be loud or soft; but the performer must know how to approach it with absolute calculation, absolute precision, because, if it slips by, then the whole construction

crumbles, and the piece becomes disjointed and scrappy and does not convey to the listener what must be conveyed.²

Rachmaninoff was born in 1873 in Oneg, Russia. Although Rachmaninoff was born into a wealthy family, his father squandered the fortune and eventually all the family estates had to be sold. He received his earliest piano lessons from his mother, Anna Ornatskaya, a graduate of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. When the family moved to St. Petersburg in 1882, he began attending the conservatory, where he studied piano with Vladimir Demyansky and harmony with Aleksandr Rubets. His family life eventually became so strained that his parents decided to separate. On the recommendation of his cousin Aleksandr Ziloti, Rachmaninoff was sent to the Moscow Conservatory to study piano with the strict teacher Nikolay Zverev. He lived at his teacher's residence along with two other piano students. Although he was never encouraged to compose, it was at Zverev's home that he wrote his earliest works. In spring 1888 Rachmaninoff transferred to the senior department of the conservatory to study the piano with Ziloti, while still living with Zverev; in the autumn he began to study counterpoint with Taneyev and harmony with Arensky.

He first visited the estate of Ivanovka, which belonged to his relatives the Satins, in 1890. Ivanovka was deep in the Russian countryside about 600 kilometers to the southeast of Moscow. It was quiet and isolated, which enabled Rachmaninoff to do much of his composing there. Ivanovka became significant in his life because roughly 85% of his music was conceived and developed there.³

After graduating from the conservatory in 1892, Rachmaninoff achieved popularity with his Prelude in C-sharp minor. Spurred by this success, he wrote

easily and confidently for the next few years. During this time he composed his Op. 4 and Op. 8 songs (performed in recital #I).

However, in 1897, following a disastrous performance of his Symphony no. 1 in D minor with (a possibly drunk) Glazunov conducting, he plunged into a long depression. This led to a three-year period when he did not compose. However, this indirectly led to a third career as a conductor. He was engaged by the Moscow Private Russian Opera for the 1897-8 season. He was well received as a conductor for his technique and interpretations. He also began to see Dr. Nikolay Dahl, who specialized in hypnosis techniques. Eventually his confidence returned and he composed his Second Piano Concerto and performed it to great critical success in 1901.

With continuing confidence, he completed his Cello Sonata in 1901 (performed in recital #II) as well as his Second Suite for two pianos (performed in recital #I). In 1902 he announced his engagement to his cousin Natal'ya Satina. Despite the minor scandal caused at the time, the marriage was an emotionally stabilizing factor for Rachmaninoff.

In 1909 he started his first American tour, which included performances of his Third Piano Concerto. He did not enjoy his tours, as they were long and grueling. After returning to Ivankova in the summer of 1910, he composed several important works including the 13 Preludes op.32 (performed in recital #1).

As war broke out around 1914, he continued to tour Russia. By 1917, chaos had overtaken Russia and he made one last visit to Ivanovka, only to find it looted and vandalized. At the end of that year, Rachmaninoff and his family left Russia for

Stockholm, where he had been invited to play. It was the last time he would set foot in Russia.

After leaving Russia, he spent most of his time making a living as a concert pianist, only composing when he had periods of free time. He spent some time living in America as well as other parts of Europe such as Copenhagen, Dresden, and Switzerland. From 1919-1943 he spent part of every year going on exhausting tours. Because of the demands that came with being a concert pianist, he did not compose much in his later years.

Rachmaninoff showed an “early striking gift for melody”⁴ and this, coupled with his idiomatic writing for the piano, made his music widely appreciated by pianists even to this day. Because he was a virtuoso pianist himself, the piano figures prominently in Rachmaninoff’s music, either as a solo instrument or as part of an ensemble. But he used his own skills as a performer not to write music of unreasonable, empty virtuosity, but rather to explore fully the expressive possibilities of the instrument.⁵

His lyrical gifts are evident even in his earliest student works. However his harmonies and textures were still colorless and not complex. After the three-year period when he did not compose, he emerged showing much development. From 1900-1905, very prolific years, he composed his Second Piano Concerto (1900-01), Second Suite for Two Pianos (1900-01), his Cello Sonata (1901), Ten Preludes Op. 23 (1901-3), and Twelve Songs Op. 21 (1900-02).

His harmony and textures become more varied in his later compositions, with full maturity in his compositions occurring around 1905. It was around this time that

he composed his Second Symphony (1906-7), Third Piano Concerto (1909), Thirteen Preludes Op. 32 (1910) and his last six songs, Op. 38 (1916). His Opus 38 songs were also his last important works before leaving Russia for the last time. These songs show his progression towards more color in his harmonies and less emphasis on melody.

All the works presented in my recitals are from his more lyrical years, from 1900 until he left Russia in 1917. His later works are more chromatic in harmony and possess more rhythmic incisiveness. Examples of his later works are his Fourth Piano Concerto (1926), Corelli Variations (1931), and Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini (1934).

Rachmaninoff's melodies were broad, soaring and lyrical, and often intensely passionate. His Op. 21 songs (1900-02) are important because he began to achieve a perfect balance between voice and accompaniment.⁶ It is also significant to note that Rachmaninoff himself later transcribed one of the songs, *Lilacs* Op. 21, No. 5, for piano solo.

Op. 4 no. 4 *Oh, never sing to me again*, written in 1893, is an example of Rachmaninoff's earliest work. While this song is still simple, this song has a richness in the piano texture. The left hand is mostly comprised of chords and repetitive eighth notes reminiscent of tolling bells. Although he preferred to base his compositions on a clear distinction between melody and accompaniment⁷, this piano part often has a counter-melody against the vocal line. The interludes are interjections of soaring melody. The text is by Alexander Pushkin, and sadly sings of a time and land long past in Georgia.

His Op. 21 songs were composed between 1900-1902, roughly the same years as his Op. 23 Preludes. Op. 21 no. 7 *How fair this spot!* was composed in 1902, during his period of compositional ease. It was also dedicated to Natal'ya Satina, his new bride. The text, by little-known author Glafira Galina, is a celebration of the beauty of nature, contentment, and the presence of God. Stylistically there is an increased lushness in the piano part, as it is used to depict the colors of nature. There is also an extended postlude.

Op. 38 no. 4 *The pied Piper* is from Rachmaninoff's last set of eight songs. As with his Op. 34 songs, he named the Op. 38 cycle "Six poems for voice and piano," indicating a move to a more equal role between the voice and piano. The piano depicts the sounds of a reed pipe, interjected between changes in the landscape as the singer passes a quiet river, fields, sleeping sheep, through the garden and fields, and into the forest to a dark oak. The text for *The pied Piper* is by Valery Bryusov.

Op. 38 no. 5 *Dreams* is also from Rachmaninoff's last set of songs. It is a sensual unfolding of the world of dreams. The hazy quality and stillness in the piano part gradually blossoms into a texture of fullness and movement. The text is by Fyodor Sologub.

Op. 14 no. 11 *Spring Waters* describes the life of nature in the springtime. As the increasing warmth melts the frozen water, the running streams can be heard, depicted by the piano's running figures. The song ends in a culmination of sound, representing the arrival of Spring, as personified in the song text.

Rachmaninoff's Op. 32 Preludes were composed in 1910, around the time of the Third Concerto. By this time his writing had become more complex, both in

texture and flexibility of rhythm. These preludes are also more introspective and emotionally intense than the Op. 23 Preludes. They “all have a common characteristic in that they demonstrate Rachmaninoff’s ability to crystallize perfectly a particular mood or sentiment: each prelude grows from a tiny melodic or rhythmic fragment into a taut, powerfully evocative miniature. They are, in effect, small tone poems...”⁸ His Op. 23 Preludes, together with the Op. 32 and early Op. 3 preludes, represent all twenty-four major and minor keys.⁹

The Prelude Op. 32 no. 12 in G-sharp minor is an example of Rachmaninoff’s later writing—a taut miniature evoking a certain mood. In this prelude, there is an unsettled feeling as one line has a fast figuration repeating under a slower-moving line expressing yearning.

The Prelude Op. 23 no. 4 in D Major is representative of his earlier style, and has a slow, lyrical melody that unfolds as it develops. A constant triplet figure weaves around and in between the melody, embellishing and enriching it as it builds to a climax, and gently settles down towards the end.

No. 2 in B-flat Major is a thunderous display of virtuosity. After the opening, it cascades into a quieter middle section, before returning to a climactic finish.

The Suite No. 2 (op. 17) for two pianos was composed in a few months from 1900-1901. The use of two pianos results in a powerful and sonorous work. The first movement Introduction is chordal and decisive. The second movement Waltz is a shimmering charming dance movement, with the waltz melody broadening as it develops. The third movement Romance is an example of Rachmaninoff’s melodic

writing at its best. It is dark, full and sweeping. The final Tarantella is a thunderous driving movement, from beginning to end.

The Sonata in G minor for Cello and Piano, Op. 19 was composed in 1901, the same year as his Suite No. 2 for two pianos. The sonata has a more prominent and virtuosic piano part than its cello part, unlike most pieces considered cello sonatas. For that reason, Rachmaninoff made it a point to refer to it as a cello and piano sonata. Due to the symphonic and virtuosic nature of the piano writing, it is a special challenge to allow room for the cello to shine through, especially when it is the voice that carries the lyrical melodies.

The first movement is in sonata-allegro form, with a slow introduction and coda. It begins with a Lento introduction, where fragmented themes are introduced. It is followed by the Allegro moderato full of broadly sweeping Romantic melodies.

The second movement, an Allegro scherzando, in ABA form, is a brilliant arrangement of constantly moving triplets in the piano part, with interjections from the cello. There are sudden lyric episodes in the middle of each of these fast outer sections. The trio is a lyrical section, where the cello displays the sweeping melodies that are a trademark of Rachmaninoff's writing.

The third slow movement, Andante, is reminiscent of Rachmaninoff's finest vocal writing. The Allegro mosso finale movement begins with a triumphant theme built on triplets. The second theme contrasts with a lyrical melody introduced by the cello and then carried on by the piano. This movement, also in sonata-allegro form, ends with a brilliant coda.

As much as Rachmaninoff was looking back, Maurice Ravel was looking forward. Although firmly rooted in the French idiom, Ravel's compositional style reflected the changing times. He himself noted, "As a child, I was sensitive to music—to every kind of music."¹⁰

Ravel was born in Ciboure, Basses-Pyrénées, close to the border of Spain, on March 7, 1875. His father was Swiss and his mother was of Basque heritage. Soon after his birth the family moved to Paris. After early piano lessons with Henry Ghys and harmony with Charles-Rene, he entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1887 to study piano. After failing to win any prizes, he was dismissed from the Conservatoire in 1895. Afterwards, he decided to devote himself to composition.

In 1897 he returned to the Conservatoire to study composition with Fauré and counterpoint with Gedalge. Again he was dismissed, in 1900, because of failure to win neither the fugue or composition prize. Between 1900 and 1905 there was also what became known as the 'Affaire Ravel'. He made five attempts to win the Prix de Rome, a prestigious student award. He failed to win each time and after the fifth time sides were taken in the entire artistic community—conservatives verses the avant-garde. By this time Ravel had composed *Jeux d'eau* and his String Quartet and was already well established with the Société Nationale de Musique, a society founded in 1871 to promote French music and to allow young composers to present their music in public.

Ravel found his voice early on, having an original and distinct way of absorbing various influences and synthesizing them. His music was distinctly French while assimilating the qualities of all kinds of music he encountered. His music

contains influences ranging from use of Middle Age religious modes, to the classical structures used by Mozart, to contemporary American jazz (Piano Concerto in G), gypsy themes (*Tzigane*), folk tunes from different lands (*Cinq melodies populaires grecques*), and Impressionism, all while staying tonal. He liked using extended seventh chords, such as the ninth and eleventh chords.

These were all signs of his emerging non-conformist voice and wide-ranging influences. It started early when his father Joseph took his sons to factories to see the latest mechanical devices. Ravel also became a part of a group called Les Apaches (“The Ruffians”) which included his Spanish pianist friend Ricardo Viñes, the critic M.D. Calvocoressi, and at some time the composers Igor Stravinsky and Manuel de Falla. They met regularly to share ideas on contemporary literature, music and art.¹¹

Critical opinion of Ravel has often emphasized his craftsmanship over expressiveness. Ravel himself declared: “conscience compels us to turn ourselves into good craftsmen. My objective, therefore, is technical perfection. I can strive unceasingly to this end, since I am certain of never being able to attain it.”¹²

However, he did regard emotional involvement as the core of his music, saying, “We should always remember that sensitiveness and emotion constitute the real content of a work of art.”¹³ In this vein, Walter Giesekeing found some of Ravel’s piano works to be among the most difficult pieces written for the instrument because “The right expression is so important, because these intricate pianistic acrobatics are never deprived of musical sense, of artistic value...and if this music is technically very complex, it is nevertheless based on musically perfectly logical conceptions.”¹⁴

Ravel's "Ondine" is from the suite *Gaspard de la Nuit*, which is considered one of the most difficult works in the solo piano repertoire. Ondines are mermaids, water nymphs, water spirits that appear in German folklore. According to some legends, ondines can gain a soul only if they marry a man and bear him a child. In Bertrand's poem, Ondine speaks through the movement of water, making her presence known on window panes, waves in the stream, and the bottom of the lake. As the poem progresses, the perspective shifts to that of the man whom Ondine is attempting to seduce. Ravel evokes the images of the water using repeated patterns, arpeggios, arabesques, and glissandi, among other things. The water begins transparently and grows fuller and more "seductive", reflecting the poetry as the Ondine tries to seduce the man. You can clearly hear her laughter at the end of the movement, as she disappears.

Cinq mélodies populaires grecques was composed in 1904. The melodies are authentic Greek folk songs and Ravel harmonized them. They were translated from Greek to French by M.D. Calvocoressi and are usually performed in French, although occasionally with the Greek text. These songs are all based on dance rhythms. In the first song "The Awakening of the Bride" (which is the original title, according to the autograph of this song¹⁵), the piano evokes the sound of wedding bells in the background, as a young Greek peasant awakens his bride on the morning of their wedding by singing in front of her house. The feeling gradually becomes more urgent and excited as the piano part becomes fuller with triads and then seventh chords.

In the second song “Yonder by the church”, the original Greek text refers to all the brave soldiers lying in the little cemetery behind the church. The somber, repetitive rhythm in the piano can be heard as a procession coming from a distance. The melody is written in the Phrygian mode, which adds to the religious tone of the music.

In the third song “What Gallant Compares with Me?” a virile young man is eager to impress his ladylove. He assertively and boastfully sings of the pistols and sharp sword he has hanging from his belt. This song is written in the Mixolydian mode, another church mode.

The fourth song “Song of the Girls Collecting Mastic” is a song sung by women at their work, with a quiet intimate expression, as they dream of their desire for someone beyond their reach. They are harvesting the mastic tree, which is a bushy Mediterranean tree of the cashew family. This song hints at the Lydian mode, and the open fourths and fifths in the piano part give it a feeling of being outside in the open air.

The final song of the set “Everyone is Joyous!” is a vivacious dance, with the piano in 2/4 meter with an occasional interjection of 3/4. It is carefree and with its nonsensical words of tra-la-la, it expresses happiness to be alive.

Tripatos is not a part of the *Cinq mélodies populaires grecques* set but it is often performed along with them. Like them it is based on an authentic Greek folk tune and harmonized by Ravel. A tripatos is a Greek three-step folk dance from the island of Chios. The text uses “hands” as a metaphor for a woman’s life. In two verses of the original text that Ravel didn’t set, the woman had just lost her husband

and is being consoled by her father, that “her hands” are made for living.¹⁶ What follows are rhapsodic melismas on nonsensical syllables (of tra-li-la’s) that are an example of Ravel using sheer exoticism.

Ravel’s Sonata for Violin and Piano was composed between 1923 and 1927 and premiered with Georges Enesco on the violin and Ravel himself at the piano. He “believed the violin and piano to be essentially incompatible instruments”¹⁷ and did not attempt to make the two instruments blend. Instead, he wrote with considerable independence between the parts.

The first movement is in traditional classical sonata form. It is sensual, gently lyrical, with interjections of a sharp angular theme. This sonata was actually his second violin sonata, as another sonata had been written in his student years.

The second movement is titled “Blues”, which was obviously influenced by American jazz. Since this sonata was completed before his first trip to America in 1928, he most likely absorbed the jazz he experienced in 1920s Paris. He uses bitonality as well as special effects such as glissandi and pizzicato strumming (imitating a guitar) on the violin to imitate “blues” slides.

The third movement, titled “Perpetuum mobile” is a display of violin virtuosity. The violin has uninterrupted sixteenth notes almost from beginning to end of the movement. Contrasting this is the piano part, which interjects with various themes and textures.

Ravel’s 1909 transcription of Debussy’s orchestral work *Nocturnes* was made as a gesture of homage towards Debussy. Ravel had a complicated relationship with Debussy, which began as a feeling of indebtedness towards his predecessor and

progressed to public feuding by their supporters. The critics and the public compared the two and openly debated over who influenced the other's compositional style. A private letter where Ravel claimed that he had initiated a new kind of piano writing was inadvertently revealed to the public and only exacerbated the situation.

Ravel had spent considerable time studying the capability of each instrument in an orchestra, to determine the possible effects. This made him an excellent orchestrator, as he was sensitive to their specific colors and timbral possibilities. In *Nocturnes*, he was working in the opposite direction. The pianists have to imitate, to the best of their abilities, the colors of an orchestra.

Ravel's Piano Trio was composed in 1914. It is widely regarded as one of the most virtuosic pieces in the piano chamber repertoire—requiring equal virtuosity from all three performers. Ravel was working on the trio when France entered into World War I and he quickly finished it in five weeks before volunteering for service. The trio follows the standard form for a four-movement classical work, yet is infused with exotic and disparate influences.

The first movement *Modère* is in classical sonata form. The opening theme is written with 8/8 meter. However, the melody is subdivided into 3+2+3 over an E pedal point in 4. This unbalanced phrasing creates a gently lilting, dance-like flow that meets at each bar line. The theme is developed through the movement with underlying triplets, sixteenth notes and thirty-second note embellishments and flourishes. The movement closes with a coda with a return of the theme over a C pedal point.

The second movement is titled “Pantoum”. A pantoum is a Malaysian verse form of four-line stanzas in which the second and fourth lines of one stanza are the first and third lines of the next. This pattern continues for any number of stanzas and ends with a restatement of the first line in the final line of the final stanza. “Ideally, the meaning of lines shifts when they are repeated although the words remain exactly the same: this can be done by shifting punctuation, punning or simply recontextualizing.”¹⁸ Although this movement is in classical scherzo and trio A-B-A form, it appears that Ravel is alluding to the form of the pantoum by the shifting and reordering of three musical themes. The first is the opening staccato theme in A minor, the second is a legato, lyrical theme in F-sharp major, and the third is a slower choral theme in F major. The first two themes are introduced in the beginning of the movement. When the third theme is introduced, it is in 4/2 meter and juxtaposed with the opening staccato theme (in 3/4 meter), creating an entirely new context. This interplay between three themes continues until they come together in a fortissimo brilliant ending.

The third movement “Passacaille” is a passacaglia, which is derived from the Spanish words *pasar* (to walk) and *calle* (street). The earliest passacaglias date from the early 1600s in Italy and this is yet another example of Ravel using an influence from the past. The characteristics of a passacaglia are a bass line that repeats the same harmonic pattern throughout the piece, although not necessarily the same notes. The theme is introduced in the lowest register of the piano and then taken up by the cello. After the cello plays the theme, it moves up the register and is taken by the violin. As this eight-bar theme is reiterated, the overall texture continues to slowly

increase in scope and volume, reaching a high point midway through the movement. The texture then gradually thins until finally a single line is left in the bass line of the piano.

In the fourth movement “Final”, Ravel achieves a texture that transcends the traditional sounds of string and piano playing. The first theme is lyrical (in 5/4 meter) and is introduced by the piano over arpeggios and extended trills in the strings. The second theme is more expansive and introduced in 7/4 then 5/4 meter. This changing meter is used to evoke the Basque flavor, as 5/4 and 7/4 meters are often found in Basque music. The development of these themes leads to a black-key glissando and trumpet-like fanfare¹⁹ in the piano. The movement builds to a powerful coda, where the opening themes are joined with the fanfare theme, culminating in an explosive ending to this brilliant work.

¹Wehrmeyer, Andreas. *Rakhmaninov*, trans. Anne Wyburd (London: Haus Publishing, 2004) Preface XIII.

²Norris, Geoffrey. “Rachmaninoff, Serge.” *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. 18 May. 2012 <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50146>>.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Wehrmeyer, Andreas. *Rakhmaninov*, trans. Anne Wyburd (London: Haus Publishing, 2004) 41.

⁸Norris, Geoffrey. “Rachmaninoff, Serge.” *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. 18 May. 2012 <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/50146>>.

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- ⁹ Martyn, Barrie. *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1990) 148.
- ¹⁰ Orenstein, Arbie. *Ravel: Man and Musician* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975) 130.
- ¹¹ Kelly, Barbara L. "Ravel, Maurice." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. 18 May. 2012
<<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52145>>.
- ¹² Orenstein, Arbie. *Ravel: Man and Musician* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975) 118.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 117.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.
- ¹⁵ Gartside, Robert. *Interpreting the Songs of Maurice Ravel* (New York: Leyerle Publications, 1992) 54.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.
- ¹⁷ Orenstein, Arbie. *Ravel: Man and Musician* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975) 198.
- ¹⁸ Wikipedia contributors. "Pantoum." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 18 Feb. 2012. Web. 24 May. 2012.
- ¹⁹ Orenstein, Arbie. *Ravel: Man and Musician* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975) 184.

CD 1: Rachmaninoff
Track Listing

1. Op. 4 no. 4 *Oh, never sing to me again*
2. Op. 21 no. 7 *How fair this spot!*
3. Op. 38 no. 4 *The pied Piper*
4. Op. 38 no. 5 *Dreams*
5. Op. 14 no. 11 *Spring Waters*

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873 – 1973)

Carmen Balthrop, soprano
Eliza Ching, piano

6. Prelude Op. 32 no. 12 in G-sharp minor
7. Prelude Op. 23 no. 4 in D Major
8. Prelude Op. 23 no. 2 in B-flat Major

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Eliza Ching, piano

- Suite No. 2 for Two Pianos
9. I. Introduction
 10. II. Waltz
 11. III. Romance
 12. IV. Tarantella

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Eliza Ching, piano
David Ballena, piano

CD 2: Ravel and Rachmaninoff
Track Listing

1. Lecture Part 1
2. *Gaspard de la Nuit*
Ondine
Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)
Eliza Ching, piano
3. Lecture Part 2
4. *Cinq mélodies populaires grecques*
I. Chanson de la mariée
5. II. Là-bas, vers l'église
6. III. Quel galant m'est comparable
7. IV. Chanson des cueilleuses de lentisques
8. V. Tout gai!
Maurice Ravel
9. *Tripatos*
Maurice Ravel
Stacey Mastrian, soprano
Eliza Ching, piano
10. Sonata in G minor for Cello and Piano, Op. 19
I. Lento - Allegro moderato
11. II. Allegro scherzando
12. III. Andante
13. IV. Allegro mosso
Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)
Evelyn Elsing, cello
Eliza Ching, piano

CD 3: Ravel
Track Listing

- Sonata for Violin and Piano Maurice Ravel
(1875 -1937)
1. I. Allegretto
 2. II. Blues – Moderato
 3. III. Perpetuum mobile - Allegro

James Stern, violin
Eliza Ching, piano

- Nocturnes* (transcribed for two pianos by Ravel) Claude Debussy
(1862 - 1918)
4. I. Nuages
 5. II. Fêtes
 6. III. Sirènes

Eliza Ching, piano
Kevin T. Chance, piano

- Piano Trio Maurice Ravel
7. I. Modéré
 8. II. Pantoum - Assez vif
 9. III. Passacaille - Très large
 10. IV. Final - Animé

James Stern, violin
Evelyn Elsing, cello
Eliza Ching, piano

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Ne poj, krasavica, pri mne

by Aleksandr Sergejevich Pushkin

Ne poj, krasavica, pri mne
Ty pesen Gruziji pechal'noj; Napominajut
mne one
Druguju zhizn' i bereg dal'nij.

Uvy, napominajut mne
Tvoji zhestokije napevy
I step', i noch', i pri lune
Cherty dalekoj, bednoj devy!

Ja prizrak milyj, rokovoj,
Tebja uvidev, zabyvaju;
No ty pojosh', i predomnoy
Jego ja vnov' voobrazhaju.

Ne poj, krasavica, pri mne
Ty pesen Gruziji pechal'noj;
Napominajut mne one
Druguju zhizn' i bereg dal'nij.

Zdes' khorosho

by Glafira Adol'fovna Galina

Zdes' khorosho...
Vzgljani, vdali
Ognjom gorit reka;
Cvetnym kovrom luga legli,
Belejut oblaka.
Zdes' net ljudej...
Zdes' tishina...
Zdes' tol'ko Bog da ja.
Cvety, da staraja sosna,
Da ty, mechta moja!

Oh, never sing to me again.

Do not sing, my beauty, to me
your sad songs of Georgia;
they remind me
of that other life and distant shore.

Alas, They remind me,
your cruel melodies,
of the steppe, the night and moonlit
features of a poor, distant maiden!

That sweet and fateful apparition
I forget when you appear;
but you sing, and before me
I picture that image anew.

Do not sing, my beauty, to me
your sad songs of Georgia;
they remind me
of that other life and distant shore.

Translation from Russian to English by Anton
Bespalov and Rianne Stam

How fair this spot!

How nice it is here...
Look - far away,
The river is a blaze of fire;
The meadows lie like carpets of colour
The clouds are white.
Here there is no one...
Here it is silent...
Here is only God and I,
The flowers, the old pine tree,
And you, my dream!

Translation from Russian to English by Emily
Ezust

Krysolov

By Valery Yakovlevich Bryusov

Ja na dudochke igraju,
Tra-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja,
I na dudochke igraju,
Ch'i-to dushi veselja.

Ja idu vdol' tikhoj rechki,
Tra-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja,
Dremljut tikhija ovechki,
Krotko zybljutsja polja.

Spite, ovcy i barashki,
Tra-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja,
Za lugami krasnoj kashki
strojno vstali topolja.

Malyj domik tam tajitsja,
Tra-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja,
Miloj devushke prisnitsja,
Chto jej dushu otdal ja.

I na nezhnyj zov svireli,
Tra-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja,
Vyjdet slovno k svetloj celi,
cherez sad, cherez polja.

I v lesu pod dubom tjomnym,
Tra-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja,
Budet zhdal' v bredu istomnom,
V chas, kogda usnjot zemlja.

Vstrechu gost'ju doroguju,
Tra-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja,
Vplot' do utra zaceluju,
Serdce laskoj utolja.

I, smenivshis' s nej kolechkom,
Tra-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja,
Otpushchu jejo k ovechkam,
V sad, gde strojny topolja.

Tra-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja-lja!

The pied Piper

I play a reed-pipe,
tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la,
I play a reed-pipe,
cheering up someone's soul.

I walk along a quiet river,
tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la,
Timid sheep are asleep,
the fields are gently rocking.

Sleep, sheep and lambs,
tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la,
Beyond the fields of red clover
stand slender poplars.

A little house is hidden there,
tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la,
A pretty maiden will have a dream,
That I gave her my soul.

And to the tender call of the reed-pipe,
tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la,
She will come, as if towards a bright dream,
Through the garden, through the fields.

And in the forest under the dark oak,
tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la,
She will wait in a languorous fever
For the hour when the earth falls asleep.

I will greet the dear guest,
tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la,
And will kiss her away till dawn,
Satisfying my heart with tenderness.

And, after we've exchanged rings,
tra-la-la-la-la-la-la-la,
I'll let her go to the sheep,
Into the garden, where slender poplars stand!

Tra-la-la-la-la-la-la!

Translation from Russian to English by
Sergey Rybin

Son

by Fyodor Sologub

V mire net nichego
Dozhdelenneje sna,
Chary jest' u nego,
U nego tishina,
U nego na ustakh
Ni pechal' i ni smekh,
I v bezdonnykh ochakh
Mnogo tajnykh utekh.

U nego shiroki,
Shiroki dva kryla,
I legki, tak ljogki,
Kak polnochnaja mgla.
Ne ponjat', kak nesjot,
I kuda i na chem
On krylom ne vzmakhnet
I ne dvinet plechom.

Vesennije vody

by Fyodor Ivanovich Tyutchev

Jeshchjo v poljakh belejet sneg,
A vody uzh vesnoj shumjat –
Begut i budjat sonnyj breg,
Begut, i bleshchut, i glasjat...

Oni glasjat vo vse koncy:
«Vesna idjot, vesna idjot!
My molodoj vesny goncy,
Ona nas vyslala vperjod.

Vesna idjot, vesna idjot,
I tikhikh, teplykh majskikh dnejj
Rumjanyj, svetlyj khorovod
Tolpitsja veselo za nej!...»

Dreams

There is nothing
more desirable
In the world than the dream.
It has magic stillness.
It has on its lips
No sadness, no laughter
And bottomless eyes,
and many hidden pleasures.

It has two immense wings,
as light as
the shadow of midnight.
It's unfathomable
how it carries them,
and where and on what;
It will not beat its wings,
And it will not move its shoulder.

Translation from Russian to English by Laura
Claycomb

Spring Waters

The fields are still covered with white snow.
But the streams are already rolling in a spring mood,
Running and awakening the sleepy shore,
Running and glittering and announcing loudly.

They are announcing loudly to every corner:
"Spring is coming, Spring is coming!
We are the messengers of young Spring,
She has sent us to come forward,

Spring is coming, Spring is coming!
And the quiet, warm May days
Follow her, merrily crowded
Into the rosy, bright dancing circle."

Translation from Russian to English by Yuri
Mitelman

Gaspard de la Nuit -- 3 Poèmes pour piano
d'après Aloysius Bertrand

Ondine

Encoute! - Encoute! - C'est moi, c'est Ondine
qui frôle de ces gouttes d'eau les losanges
sonores de ta fenêtre illuminée par les mornes
rayons de la lune; et voici, en robe de moire,
la dame châtelaine qui contemple à son balcon
la belle nuit étoilée et le beau lac endormi.

Chaque flot est un ondin qui nage dans le
courant, chaque courant est un sentier qui
serpente vers mon palais, et mon palais est
bâti fluide, au fond du lac, dans le triangle du
feu, de la terre et de l'air.

Ecoute! - Ecoute! - Mon père bat l'eau
coassante d'une branche d'aulne verte, et mes
sœurs caressent de leurs bras d'écume les
fraîches îles d'herbes, de nénuphars et de
glâieuls, ou se moquent du saule caduc et
barbu qui pêche à la ligne.

Sa chanson murmurée, elle me supplia de
recevoir son anneau à mon doigt, pour être
l'époux d'une Ondine, et de visiter avec elle
son palais, pour être le roi des lacs.

Et comme je lui répondais que j'aimais une
mortelle, boudeuse et dépitée, elle pleura
quelques larmes, poussa un éclat de rire, et
s'évanouit en giboulées qui ruisselèrent
blanches le long de mes vitraux bleus.

Ondine

Listen! - Listen! - It is I, it is Ondine who
brushes drops of water on the resonant panes
of your windows lit by the gloomy rays of the
moon; and here in gown of watered silk, the
mistress of the chateau gazes from her balcony
on the beautiful starry night and the beautiful
sleeping lake.

Each wave is a water sprite who swims in the
stream, each stream is a footpath that winds
towards my palace, and my palace is a fluid
structure, at the bottom of the lake, in a
triangle of fire, of earth and of air.

Listen! - Listen! - My father whips the
croaking water with a branch of a green alder
tree, and my sisters caress with their arms of
foam the cool islands of herbs, of water lilies,
and of corn flowers, or laugh at the decrepit
and bearded willow who fishes at the line.

Her song murmured, she beseeches me to
accept her ring on my finger, and be the
husband of an Ondine, and to visit with her
her palace and be king of the lakes.

And as I was replying to her that I loved a
mortal, sullen and spiteful, she wept some
tears, uttered a burst of laughter, and vanished
in a shower that streamed white down the
length of my stained glass windows.

Translation from French to English by Nancy
Bricard

Chanson de la mariée

by Michel Dmitri Calvocoressi

Réveille-toi, réveille-toi, perdrix mignonne,
Ouvre au matin tes ailes.
Trois grains de beauté, mon coeur en est
brûlé!

Vois le ruban d'or que je t'apporte,
Pour le nouer autour de tes cheveux.
Si tu veux, ma belle, viens nous marier!
Dans nos deux familles, tous sont alliés!

Là-bas, vers l'église

by Michel Dmitri Calvocoressi

Là-bas, vers l'église,
Vers l'église Ayio Sidéro,
L'église, ô Vierge sainte,
L'église Ayio Costanndino,
Se sont réunis,
Rassemblés en nombre infini,
Du monde, ô Vierge sainte,
Du monde tous les plus braves!

Quel Galant m'est comparable

by Michel Dmitri Calvocoressi

Quel galant m'est comparable,
D'entre ceux qu'on voit passer?
Dis, dame Vassiliki?

Vois, pendus à ma ceinture,
pistolets et sabre aigu...
Et c'est toi que j'aime!

Song of the Bride

Awake, awake, my darling partridge,
Open to the morning your wings.
Three beauty marks; my heart is on fire!

See the ribbon of gold that I bring
To tie round your hair.
If you want, my beauty, we shall marry!
In our two families, everyone is related!

Translation from French to English by Emily
Ezust

Yonder by the Church

Yonder, by the church,
By the church of Ayio Sidero,
The church, o blessed Virgin,
The church of Ayio Costanndino,
There are gathered,
Assembled in numbers infinite,
The world's, o blessed Virgin,
All the world's most decent folk!

Translation from French to English by Emily
Ezust

What Gallant Compares with Me?

What gallant compares with me,
Among those one sees passing by?
Tell me, lady Vassiliki!

See, hanging on my belt,
My pistols and my curved sword.
And it is you whom I love!

Translation from French to English by Emily
Ezust

Chanson des cueilleuses de lentisques
by Michel Dmitri Calvocoressi

O joie de mon âme,
Joie de mon coeur,
Trésor qui m'est si cher;
Joie de l'âme et du coeur,
Toi que j'aime ardemment,
Tu es plus beau qu'un ange.
O lorsque tu parais,
Ange si doux
Devant nos yeux,
Comme un bel ange blond,
Sous le clair soleil,
Hélas! tous nos pauvres coeurs soupirent!

Tout gai!
by Michel Dmitri Calvocoressi

Tout gai! gai, Ha, tout gai!
Belle jambe, tireli, qui danse;
Belle jambe, la vaisselle danse,
Tra la la la la...

Tripatos
by Anonymous

Mains qui n'ont pas vu le soleil
Comment les prennent les médecins.
Et l'un avec l'autre disent:
Comment se fait-il qu'elle ne soit pas destinée
à vivre?

**The Song of the Girls Collecting
Mastic**

O joy of my soul,
joy of my heart,
treasure which is so dear to me,
joy of my soul and heart,
you whom I love ardently,
you are more handsome than an angel.
O when you appear,
angel so sweet,
Before our eyes,
Like a fine, blond angel,
under the bright sun,
Alas! all of our poor hearts sigh!

Translation from French to English by Emily
Ezust

Everyone is Joyous!

Everyone is joyous, joyous!
Beautiful legs, tireli, which dance,
Beautiful legs; even the dishes are dancing!
Tra la la, la la la!

Translation from French to English by Emily
Ezust

Tripatos

How the doctors take hands
That have not seen the sun,
And say to one another:
"How is it that she is not destined to live?"

Translation from French to English by Judith
Kellock

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