

THE ART OF PIANO TRANSCRIPTION AS REPRESENTED  
IN WORKS OF FRANZ LISZT AND  
SERGEY PROKOFIEV

by

Anastassia M. Voltchok

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Advisory Committee:

Professor Santiago Rodriguez, Chair  
Professor Larissa Dedova  
Professor Cleveland Page  
Dr. Mikhail Volchok  
Professor Kira Gor

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## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE ART OF PIANO TRANSCRIPTION  
AS REPRESENTED IN WORKS OF FRANZ LISZT  
AND SERGEY PROKOFIEV

Anastassia M. Voltchok, Doctor of Musical Arts,  
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Dissertation directed by: Professor Santiago Rodriguez  
School of Music

I was always fascinated by the genre of the piano transcription. The art of transcription allows you to express yourself through a different medium and still bring out the meaning of a composition to the audience. Working on this project was challenging both musically and pianistically. I concentrated on works by Sergey Prokofiev and Franz Liszt for my project, exploring the beautiful world of their compositions, expanding my knowledge of music and the piano.

The genre of keyboard transcription that appeared as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century reached its peak in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with Franz Liszt who was one of the greatest masters of arrangement. He transcribed not just for the demonstration of the variety of tone-colors that could be produced on a grand piano, but was also

anxious to bring recognition for compositions which were perhaps less appreciated in their original forms.

The *Winterreise*, Schubert's song cycle written on poems by a German poet Wilhelm Mueller in 1827, was published in 1828. Liszt chose 12 songs from this cycle and transcribed it for piano in 1839. He changed the order and chose songs that evoked the most expressive images and were convincing without text. Liszt took many songs that were originally written in major keys, making the general mood more optimistic than that of Schubert whose cycle was mostly in minor keys.

In 1851 Liszt also finished his transcription of Schubert's *Fantasie*, Op.15, for piano and orchestra.

Prokofiev followed Liszt's tradition, and in 1937 finished the very effective piano version of his ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, composed in 1935-36 and first performed in Brno, in 1938. Consequently, selected arrangements for piano from his ballet *Cinderella* were published in 1942-44 Prokofiev started *Cinderella* in 1940 but was interrupted when the Second World War began. The ballet was performed in Moscow in 1945.

I included two Compact Discs in my project:

Disc 1

Franz Schubert-Franz Liszt

*Winterreise* 1839

*Fantasie*, Op.15, for piano and orchestra 1851

Disc 2

Sergey Prokofiev

*Romeo and Juliet*, Op.75, ten pieces for piano 1937

*Ten Pieces*, Op.97, from “Cinderella” 1943

*Waltz*, Op102, from “Cinderella” 1944

Making this recording helped me to explore the complexity of pianism and to broaden my knowledge as a musician.

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