

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: VIRTUOSITY AS DISPLAYED IN THE
SOLO PIANO, CHAMBER, AND VOCAL
LITERATURE OF TCHAIKOVSKY,
RACHMANINOFF, AND BRAHMS

Alexander Kostadinov, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2023

Dissertation directed by: Professor Rita Sloan, School of Music

Virtuosity is defined by the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary as “great technical skill,” and virtuosity in music continues to be a constant source of discussion for musicians. What value do virtuosic elements have in late Romantic music, particularly those featuring the piano, a virtuoso-friendly instrument? Do these elements enhance the overall musical impact of the repertoire, and if so, how? Does it make a difference if the work is a solo piano work, piano chamber music, or music for voice and piano? These are the questions that I will explore in this performance dissertation. Each of my three recitals will feature one of these three iconic Romantic composers: Tchaikovsky, Brahms, and Rachmaninoff. A piano concerto, two piano trios, a piano quartet, and three sets of piano/vocal works will be included, all significant in the solo and collaborative pianist’s repertoire.

By the mid-nineteenth century, pianist Franz Liszt and violinist Nicolo Paganini had paved the way to a new age of instrumental technical virtuosity. Along with expanding the possibilities of what instrumentalists could do, virtuosic elements in music have even influenced the very setting of music performance. As chamber repertoire started expanding and becoming increasingly challenging in the late-nineteenth century, chamber music performances

shifted from more casual, at-home venues to being performed in some of the larger and most prestigious concert halls.

Chamber music historically had been simpler, often meant for performance at home by amateurs. This began to change with the quartets of Beethoven, especially the late quartets. Certainly, Brahms' G minor piano quartet was not composed to be played on an upright piano in someone's living room. First of all, the performance of a forty-five-minute complex chamber music work for four musicians is in itself a virtuoso accomplishment. Throughout the quartet, Brahms displays his mastery of counterpoint and thematic development and his ability to balance individual instruments and create a cohesive ensemble sound. The use of virtuosic elements in the piano part adds to the complexity and richness of the work.

As instrumentalists continued to become more virtuosic, composers continued creating more challenging works throughout the nineteenth century. Brahms, Rachmaninov, and Tchaikovsky wrote some of the most technically difficult music of the time. Since Brahms and Rachmaninov were both famous pianists and understood the piano's capabilities, their compositions further challenged musicians. Tchaikovsky's compositions demonstrated many technical challenges as well, as they were often composed in the style of Anton Rubinstein, one of the greatest pianists of the time, praised for his musicianship and technical abilities.

The vocal works which are included in these recitals (the four romances by Tchaikovsky, the vocal set Op. 38 by Rachmaninoff, and the Brahms *Zigeunerlieder*) were chosen to demonstrate how these composers transitioned from writing accompanimentally to more expanded and technically demanding piano parts.

Through these programs, I hope to demonstrate the variety and value of the virtuoso elements in these Romantic masterpieces and how this contributes to making mesmerizing and

meaningful masterworks that continue to attract audiences today. Additionally, I will be performing music which speaks to me in a very direct and immediate way and which I hope will then speak equally significantly to the listener.

This dissertation and recordings can be accessed in the Digital Repository (DRUM) at the University of Maryland.

VIRTUOSITY AS DISPLAYED IN THE SOLO PIANO, CHAMBER, AND VOCAL
LITERATURE OF TCHAIKOVSKY, RACHMANINOFF, AND BRAHMS

by

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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
2023

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Working on the Doctoral of Musical Arts has been a life-changing experience that would not have happened without the guidance, support, and love received from my family, friends, and mentors.

I would like to thank my family, who has supported me in several ways during my music education. Thank you for all the love and sacrifice you have given for me to be where I am today.

I would also like to thank my church family at Hope Lutheran Church and Student Center, for having me as their music director for the past four years. Working in such a supportive and creative environment has helped me grow as a musician in many ways.

I would also like to thank my mentor and supervisor, Professor Rita Sloan. My deepest appreciation goes to you for your guidance, time, patience, dedication, and advice throughout my DMA.

Thank you to my supportive committee, Prof. Gran Wilson, Prof. Larissa Dedova, Prof. Irina Muresanu, and Prof. Vessela Valiavitcharska.

Lastly, I would not be where I am today without the love, help, and support of my loving wife, Bonnie Wang. Thank you for always being by my side and sticking with me through all the adventures life throws at me.

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Program I

March 1, 2022

8:00 p.m.

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

12 Romances, Op. 60, No 2: Я тебе ничего не скажу...

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

(1840-1893)

6 Romances, Op. 57, No. 1: Скажи, о чем в тени ветвей

7 Romances, Op. 47, No. 7: Я ли в поле да не травушка была?

No. 6: День ли царит

- Intermission -

Piano Trio in A minor, Op. 50

I. Pezzo elegiaco

II. Tema con variazioni: Andante con moto - Variazione finale e coda

Var I

Var II: Più mosso

Var III: Allegro moderato

Var IV: L'istesso tempo (Allegro moderato)

Var V: L'istesso tempo

Var VI: Tempo di Valse

Var VII: Allegro moderato

Var VIII: Fuga (Allegro moderato)

Var IX: Andante flebile, ma non tanto

Var X: Tempo di mazurka

Var XI: Moderato Variazioni finale e coda: Allegro risoluto e con fuoco

Coda: Andante con moto – Lugubre (L'istesso tempo)

Jennifer Casey Cabot, soprano

Madeline Jansen, violin

Katie McCarthy, cello

Alexander Kostadinov, Piano

Program II

December 8, 2022

8:00 p.m.

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

6 Romances, Op. 38

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

I. In My Garden at the Night

II. To Her

III. Daisies

IV. The Pied Piper ("The Rat-Catcher")

V. Dreams ("The Dream")

VI. A-oo! ("The Quest")

Trio élégiaque No. 1 in G minor

- Intermission -

Piano Concerto No. 1 in F# minor, Op. 1

I. Vivace

II. Andante cantabile

III. Allegro scherzando

Yuna Kim, violin
Simone Pierpaoli, cello
Öznur Tülüoğlu, soprano
Bonnie Wang, piano

Alexander Kostadinov, piano

Program III

April 20, 2023

8:00 p.m.

Gildenhorn Recital Hall

Acht Zigeunerlieder, Op. 103

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

- I. He, Zigeuner greife in die Saiten ein!
- II. Hochgetürmte Rimaflut
- III. Wißt ihr, wann mein Kindchen
- IV. Lieber Gott, du weißt
- V. Brauner Bursche führt zum Tanze
- VI. Röslein dreie in der Reihe blühn so rot
- VII. Kommt dir manchmal in den Sinn
- VIII. Rote Abendwolken ziehn

- Intermission -

Piano Quartet No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25

- I. Allegro
- II. Intermezzo and Trio
- III. Andante con moto
- IV. Rondo alla Zingarese

Amanda Densmoor, soprano

Yuna Kim, violin

Yu-Hsuan Chen, viola

Simone Pierpaoli, cello

Alexander Kostadinov, piano

RECITAL RECORDING TRACKS

Recital I

1-1: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky - Selected Songs

Я тебе ничего не скажу...

Скажи, о чем в тени ветвей

Я ли в поле да не травушка была?

День ли царит

2-2: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky - *Piano Trio* in A minor Op. 50

Recital II

2-1: Sergei Rachmaninoff, *6 Romances*, Op. 38

In My Garden at the Night

To Her

Daisies

The Pied Piper ("The Rat-Catcher")

Dreams ("The Dream")

A-oo! ("The Quest")

2-2: Sergei Rachmaninoff - *Trio élégiaque No.1* in G minor

2-3: Sergei Rachmaninoff - *Piano Concerto No. 1* in F# minor, Op. 1

I. Vivace

II. Andante cantabile

III. Allegro scherzando

Recital III

3-1: Johannes Brahms – *Zigeunerlieder*, Op. 103

He, Zigeuner greife in die Saiten ein!
Hochgetürmte Rimaflut
Wißt ihr, wann mein Kindchen
Lieber Gott, du weißt
Brauner Bursche führt zum Tanze
Röslein dreie in der Reihe blühn so rot
Kommt dir manchmal in den Sinn
Rote Abendwolken ziehn

3-2: Lecture

3-3: Johannes Brahms – *Piano Quartet No. 1* in G minor, Op. 25

I. Allegro
II. Intermezzo and Trio
III. Andante con moto
IV. Rondo alla Zingarese

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Introduction

The title of my dissertation, “Virtuosity as Displayed in the Solo Piano, Chamber, and Vocal Literature of Tchaikovsky, Brahms, and Rachmaninoff,” aims to answer several specific questions. What value does virtuosity have in late Romantic music, particularly in works featuring the piano? Does the virtuosity enhance the repertoire's overall musical impact, and if so, how? Does it make a difference if the work is a solo piano work, piano chamber music, or music for voice and piano? My dissertation will attempt to answer these questions and through performance, I will explore the virtuosity of the selected works from several perspectives, musical, technical, and compositional. All within their historical context.

First of all, let’s define the meaning of the word virtuoso. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word virtuoso as “One who excels in the technique of an art, especially a highly skilled musical performance,” a person who has exceptional skill, expertise, or talent at some endeavor,” “a person interested in the pursuit of knowledge in some specialized field and especially in the arts and sciences.” Furthermore, virtuosity may refer to “excessive attention to technique in vocal or instrumental music.”¹

The words “virtuosity” and “virtuoso” are rooted in the Latin word *virtus*, which means excellence. Both the Latin *virtus* and the later Italian virtuoso apply to anyone who excels, but the Italian word virtuoso refers more specifically to instrumental or vocal performers of the highest ability. Nowadays, a virtuoso performer refers to a person who possesses an extremely high level of technical proficiency and artistic expression. The term virtuosity is often used to

¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. “Virtuosity,” accessed March 16, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/virtuosity#:~:text=A%20virtuoso%20is%20a%20highly,the%20audience%20by%20its%20feats>.

describe musicians who play their instruments with precision, exquisite speed and have a deep understanding of the musical ideas.² Technical proficiency is not something that can be achieved overnight, but rather through extensive training and practice and, although masterful performance requires more than just technical proficiency, it is still a crucial element in an assessment of a performer's artistry.

Artists such as Vladimir Horowitz, Jascha Heifetz, Martha Argerich and Yo-Yo- Ma have each demonstrated extraordinary levels of musicianship and technical expertise as some of the most virtuosic musicians known to us today. Their remarkable technical skills combined with their profound comprehension of the music being performed meant that they were capable of presenting truly meaningful performances. Flashy displays of technique alone are not part of their programs.

Late Romantic music was distinguished by an emphasis on technical proficiency, easily heard in works featuring the piano. Virtuoso components gave composers the freedom to explore the limits of what was possible in music. By the mid-nineteenth century, pianist Franz Liszt and violinist Nicolo Paganini had paved the way to a new age of instrumental technical virtuosity. On the other hand, composers such as Frédéric Chopin, focused on creating intricate textures and delicate melodies that showcased the virtuosity shown in the expressive and singing capabilities of the piano.

Romanticism also stressed emotional expressiveness and individualism, leading composers to create more expansive and complex musical works. In the area of chamber music, these larger pieces were better suited to larger performance spaces where string quartets piano

² Vernon A. Howard, "Virtuosity as a Performance Concept: A Philosophical Analysis," *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Spring, 1997): 4, accessed February 11, 2023. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40495412>.

trios, quartets and quintets could provide a more robust and intricate sound for larger audiences. Continued advances in piano construction also contributed greatly to the role of the piano on the concert stage; the improved instruments heightened the possibility of overall technical and musical virtuosity.³

As instrumentalists continued to become more virtuosic, composers continued creating more challenging works for them throughout the nineteenth century. Brahms, Rachmaninov, and Tchaikovsky arguably wrote some of the most technically difficult music of the time. Brahms and Rachmaninov were both famous pianists and understood the capabilities of the piano, and their compositions pushed the boundaries of what the piano could do. Although Tchaikovsky was not renowned as a pianist, he had an excellent grasp of the renowned Russian virtuosic technical approach as is easily seen in his concerti, solo piano works and the trio.

³ J. Peter Burkholder, "Brahms and Twentieth-Century Classical Music," *19th- Century Music* 8 (1984), 215-232.

RECITAL I: Program Notes

The Tchaikovsky Trio and Selected Songs

The great Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893) was the quintessential Romantic composer.⁴ Writing over the space of a mere 53 years, he produced a number of brilliant including operas, ballets, symphonies, chamber music, instrumental concertos, and solo instrumental pieces.

His compositional style encompassed emotional intensity, and lyricism, while pushing the boundaries of virtuosity throughout his compositions. He skillfully used musical forms and expertly integrated many different musical styles using elements from Russian folk music, Western European classical music, and Eastern Orthodox liturgical music.

In speaking of the Tchaikovsky Piano Trio, musicologist David Brown points out, Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio is "the one most likely to attract the listener's attention...Nevertheless, it is certainly a very imposing piece, and will be relished by listeners who like a good dose of drama in their chamber music."⁵ The *Piano Trio in A minor*, Op. 50 was written in 1881 and it is subtitle *À la mémoire d'un grand artiste* (In memory of a great artist), Tchaikovsky's friend and pianist, Nikolai Rubinstein. The trio reflects the broader cultural and artistic trends of the 19th century, such as the emergence of virtuosity as a distinguishing characteristic of Romantic music

⁴ See Appendix I for more biographical information on the composer.

⁵ David Brown, *Tchaikovsky: The Man and his Music* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2007), 238.

and the expansion of chamber music into the concert hall. It has become one of the masterpieces in the chamber music repertoire.⁶

The piano trio consists of 2 movements and its length is close to 50 minutes. One of the most striking elements of the piano trio is its unconventional structure. While the standard form of a piano trio consists of either 3 or 4 movements, Tchaikovsky's work features 2 large movements. The first movement is marked *Pezzo elegiaco* and is composed in sonata form. It features a clear development section, a recapitulation, and a coda, which serves as a funeral march. The initial theme in the trio exemplifies the beauty of Russian melodies. This theme predominantly employs the interval of a second and has limited melodic range. The five-note motive which descends and sounds like a mournful sigh is introduced by the cello, followed by the violin, and then the piano. This motive is used in various sections throughout the movement with slight variations each time.

The second movement is divided into two sections. The first one is marked *Tema con variazioni: Andante con moto* and is a set of eleven variations on a folk-like theme. The initial motive, originally in the first movement as a descending five note figure, is inverted and presented in an ascending form. While the main theme is initially presented in a 4/4 meter, Tchaikovsky shifts to a 3/4 meter in Variation II. Each variation in the second movement has a

⁶ The origins of the piano trio can be traced back to a range of Baroque-era ensemble forms featuring a dominant keyboard instrument accompanied by a violin and an optional cello. During the Classical period, the piano trio began to take on a more prominent role. Classical composers such as Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven wrote piano trios that featured a more equal distribution of parts between the instruments, with the piano often taking on the leading role. In his compositions, Beethoven gradually elevated the piano trio, and it became more equal to the string quartet as a genre. It also moved it from being simply *Hausmusik* into the concert hall. During the Romantic period, the piano trio evolved even further. Composers such as Mendelssohn, Brahms, Rachmaninov, and Tchaikovsky wrote seminal works that expanded the form's symphonic dimensions and proportions.

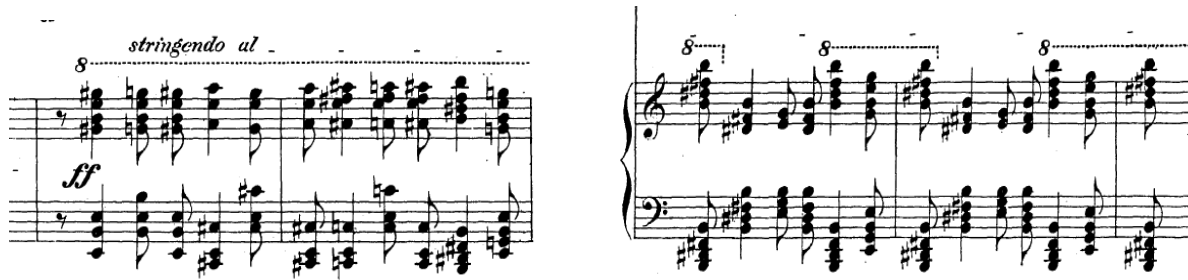
distinct character, offering a departure from the sorrowful tone of the first movement. For instance, Variation III has a playful character, Variation V evokes the sound of a music box, Variation VI is a waltz, Variation VIII is a fugue, Variation IX is captivating, and Variation X is in the style of a graceful and charming mazurka. The theme ends in the dominant key of E major. The last variation is marked *Variatione finale e coda* and could be analyzed as a sonata movement which ends in the tonic key of A minor.⁷

⁷ Hsiang-Ling Hsiao, “*Revisiting Old Forms: the Piano Trio, the Duo Sonata, and the Sonatine as seen by Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Ravel*” (DMA diss., University of Maryland, 2017), 14-16, accessed March 29, 2023, <https://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/3544/umi-umd-3377.pdf;sequence=1>.

Technical virtuosity as displayed in the piano trio

The first movement of the piano trio poses a number of virtuoso challenges for the performers. Right from the beginning, the first three pages of the trio feature the cello and violin carrying the melodic material, with the piano assuming an accompanimental role. However, the piano part is written in the lower register of the piano, necessitating the subtle use of the pedal to achieve the desired legato phrasing. Highly-developed listening skills are necessary to avoid overpowering the cello and the violin.

An example of notable technical virtuosity for the pianist in this trio occurs in measures 55-56, (Ex. 1). This passage presents technical challenges, rhythmic complexity, chordal leaps in contrary motion and a ramped-up tempo (*stringendo*), all contributing to the stunning virtuoso effect.



Ex. 1 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement I, mm. 55-56.

A number of solo piano passages are not simply technically difficult in their own right – they are also very exposed, as seen in measures 86-94, (Ex. 2). The technical challenges require the left hand to jump precisely while outlining the harmonic progression, whereas the right hand shapes the melodic line amidst a flurry of other notes. All of this is done while using rubato and timing in aid of both virtuosity and expressivity.

In tempo molto sostenuto.

In tempo molto sostenuto.

mf *espressivo*

Animato. (♩=138)

Ex. 2 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement I, mm. 86-94.

More musical examples of a similar kind are found on pages 14 and 15 of this document.⁸

⁸ See Appendix I for personal comments on these passages.



Ex. 3 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement I, mm. 107-112.

Another notable passage occurs in the *Tempo Giusto* section.⁹



⁹ See Appendix I for thoughts on performance.

Ex. 4 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement I, mm. 179-183.

To sum up, all of these virtuosic passages necessitate precision, dexterity, and careful attention to maintaining tempo and coordination with the string instruments and the combination of these passages creates drama and intensity as well as emotional depth.

Lastly, virtuosic elements can be found in the coda of the first movement.¹⁰

The image displays a musical score for a piano trio, specifically the first movement of Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, measures 179-183. The score is written for piano, violin, and cello. The piano part features a complex, rapid sixteenth-note passage in the right hand, while the left hand plays a simpler accompaniment. The vocal parts (soprano and bass) enter with the lyrics 'cre seen do' over the piano's virtuosic passage. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'mf' and 'cresc.'.

Ex. 5 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement I, mm. 392-397.

The second movement of the piano trio begins with the piano part introducing the lovely theme of the movement. It is marked *cantabile* and *piano*.

¹⁰ See Appendix I.

In Variation III, the piano once again takes on a soloistic role while the string instruments play *pizzicatos*. This variation is marked *pianissimo* and is in a brisk tempo.¹¹



Ex. 6 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement II, variation III, mm. 11-15.

Variation V features another piano solo variation while the two string instruments sustain long notes for most of the variation. This variation evokes the imagery of a music box.

¹¹ See Appendix I.

VAR.V. L'istesso tempo.



Ex. 7 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement II, variation V, mm. 1-4.

The character in Variation VI shifts to that of a waltz. One of the major challenges in this variation is the ensemble work.¹²



Ex. 8 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement II, variation VI, mm. 19-25.

Variation VII is another notable example of Tchaikovsky writing a virtuosic piano part, as the piano part presents the melody in chords across both hands in a moderately fast tempo.¹³

¹² See Appendix I.

¹³ Ibid.,



Ex. 9 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement II, variation VI, mm. 1-4.

Variation IX, on the other hand, is in fugue form. Interestingly, the composer himself noted that this variation could be omitted.



Ex. 10 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement II, variation VIII, mm. 17-19.

Variation IX poses its own unique challenges. It is characterized by a slower tempo and is quite long. The piano part features harp-like arpeggios that span the entirety of the variation, while both string instruments are given the melody. Additionally, intonation becomes a critical consideration, as both string instruments play in unison for a significant portion of the variation.

Variation X serves as another impressive display of Tchaikovsky's virtuosic piano writing. Set in the style of a Mazurka, the piano takes center stage for a considerable portion of the variation.



Ex. 11 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement II, variation X, mm. 10-12.

The *Variatione Finale E Coda* serves as a combination of virtuosity in all aspects, encompassing technical, musical, and ensemble challenges. The piano part demands exceptional skill with its abundant use of chords spanning various registers, rapid scale passages, intricate broken chord passages, and virtuosic octaves. The performers not only must master the technical challenges, but also convey the intended character of the piece.

The subsequent *Andante con moto* features all instruments presenting the main theme from the first movement. The piano begins the movement with grandiose chords followed by bravura arpeggios.



Ex. 12 Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio, movement II, *Andante con moto*, mm. 1-3.

The preceding examples show how Tchaikovsky's *Piano Trio in A Minor* used virtuoso elements to heighten and underline emotional content in a work which was most meaningful to him. The combination of piano and strings produced a symphonic sound that is strikingly impressive. Tchaikovsky achieves this effect through the use of a wide range of dynamics, a broad range of notes utilizing the entire keyboard as well as both string instruments' range, as well as extensive phrase repetitions and prolonged sequences. In addition to the sheer technical demands of the trio, because of its extreme length (50 minutes), the performance of this piece also requires a high level of physical stamina.¹⁴

¹⁴ Hsiang-Ling Hsiao, "Revisiting Old Forms: the Piano Trio, the Duo Sonata, and the Sonatine as seen by Brahms, Tchaikovsky, and Ravel," 14-16.

Tchaikovsky Selected Songs

Virtuosity in phrasing

In the *Romances* from Tchaikovsky's Op. 46 Op. 47, Op. 57, and Op. 60, the piano part has more of an accompanimental role, using more chordal structures and doubling the singer's melodies. The virtuosity involved here is in the sensitivity of the pianist to the nuance of the words and in subtle support given to the singer. No extended preludes or postludes are present in these songs. However, in the later set with Op. 47 No. 6, we can see a slight transition to a more technical piano part. The piano has an extended prelude, an interlude and postlude, and features a brisk tempo where both piano and voice have equally distributed melodic material.

The opening song for this recital comes from the *Romances* Op. 60. It is the second song *Я тебе ничего не скажу...* from the twelve songs of Opus 60. The text comes from Afanasy Fet's poem *Romance*.

In Tchaikovsky's *Я тебе ничего не скажу...* Op. 60 No.2, one of the principal challenges is the phrasing between the piano and the voice. The opening twelve bars consist of an introductory piano solo, after which the singer comes in and repeats that exact eighth-note melody. The singer and pianist must have precisely the same rhythm and flow of the phrase in mind. A challenge for the singer is singing with perfect legato and appropriate word stress.

Similar to the vocal challenges, the challenges in the piano part are found in playing the introductory solo lines in perfect legato, ensuring the smooth transition between the two-measure phrases that end with dotted quarter notes. The pianist must pay attention to the sound produced in order to seamlessly begin the next phrase at the appropriate dynamic level. The piano part consists of slow arpeggiated figures and primarily provides the harmonic structure of the piece,

serving as a foundation for the vocal line.

Allegretto con moto
espr.

p *cresc.* *mf*

dim. *mp* *mp*

mp *più f*

Я те_бе ни_че_го не ска_жу, Я²⁾ те_бя не встре.

p *p* *più f*

f

_во_жу ни_чуть И о том, что я мол_ча твер_.

mf

Ex. 13 Opening interlude of *Я тебе ничего не скажу*, mm. 1-18.

The second song comes from Romances Op. 57. The selected song *Скажи, о чем в тени ветвей* is the first one of the set of six songs. The lyrics come from Vladimir Sollogub.

Tchaikovsky's *Скажи, о чем в тени ветвей*, Op 57, No 1, is a wonderful showpiece.

piu f *p*

Что тайным трепетом во сне Ей страх и радость обеща - ет?

p cresc. *p*

Не дуг тот странный назо - ви, В ко - то - ром светла - я от - ра - да,

Ex. 14 Tchaikovsky's *Скажи, о чем в тени ветвей*, mm. 25-29.

Я ли в поле да не травушка была? Op. 47, No. 7 is the third song in this recital. The lyrics to this song come from Ivan Surikov's poem, *Little-Russian Melody*.

Tchaikovsky's *Я ли в поле да не травушка была?* is an incredible song in the Russian lament style. It's six-minute length requires a masterful handling of the phrasing and rhythm on the part of the pianist because of the singer's extremely wide vocal range.

Я ли в поле да не травушка была, Я ли в поле не зе-
 ле- на- я рос- ла; Взя- ли ме- ня, травуш- ку, ско- си- ли, На

Ex. 15 *Я ли в поле да не травушка была?*

The last selection from Tchaikovsky's Romances, *День ли царит* Op. 47 No. 6, is a wonderful and exciting love song, very much in the style of Schumann's *Widmung* or even Cole Porter's *Night and Day*. The text to this song was written by Aleksey Apukhtin. The entirety of the song represents the exhortation of one's love for another. "Whether it is day or night, all I can think of is you!" The piano prelude and postlude are long and virtuosic in nature.



Ex. 16 Postlude of *День ли царит*, mm 60-66.

RECITAL II: Program Notes

The First Piano Concerto, The First Piano Trio, and The Six Romances

When performing at a concert, a musician must always have the feeling that the particular work he is playing at that moment is the greatest music ever written. Also, the performer must give the best that is in him, even if he is playing in the smallest town in the most terrible theater, even if the audience is only one person - the doorman, holding the keys, waiting for the concert to finish as soon as possible, so he can lock the door.¹⁵

Sergei Rachmaninoff, one of the great composers of the twentieth century, was also an extraordinary and renowned pianist, a skilled conductor. Arthur Rubinstein, himself one of the most famous pianists of the twentieth century, called Rachmaninoff “the most fascinating pianist of them all since Busoni.” Claudio Arrau, another great pianist of the twentieth century, said that Rachmaninoff is “one of the greatest pianists of all time and one of the very truly worthy of immortality.”¹⁶

Born into a family of musicians, Rachmaninoff continued to be an exponent of the Romantic era well into the 20th century while others were exploring completely new and distinct worlds of musical sound and organization. His works are characterized by lush harmonies, sweeping melodies, and virtuosic piano writing. In his music, Rachmaninoff regarded the melody as the most important expressive element. In his book, *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music*, musician and writer John Gillespie states: “Rachmaninoff had a special skill as a melodist. His songs contain some of the most haunting beautiful passages to be found in vocal

¹⁵ Gina Bachauer, “My Study with Rachmaninoff,” *Clavier* 12 (October 1973), 14.

¹⁶ Barrie Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor* (Aldershot, England: Scholar Press, Gower Publishing Company, 1990), 396.

literature.”¹⁷ His music also reflects his Russian heritage, with elements of Russian folk music and Orthodox liturgical chants.¹⁸

Rachmaninoff’s piano concertos are deeply rooted in the tradition established by composers such as Grieg and Tchaikovsky. For example, the opening of the *First Piano Concerto* bears a resemblance to Grieg’s *Piano Concerto in A minor*. Rachmaninoff, who was an ardent admirer of Tchaikovsky, often performed his *B-flat Minor Piano Concerto*, which influenced Rachmaninoff’s compositional writing style. In Rachmaninoff’s piano concerti, the pianist and the orchestra engage in a dynamic interplay, rather than being limited to the more traditional roles of the soloist and accompanist. The piano writing is characterized by its rich and complex textures, replete with chords, octaves, and inner melodies that create a thicker sound.¹⁹

The *First Piano Concerto No. 1* in F-sharp minor, Op. 1, was written while Rachmaninoff was still a student at the Moscow Conservatory though I went through various revisions later on. One of the notable performance traits of the piano concerto is its expansive and virtuosic piano writing. The concerto demands exceptional technical skills from the soloist, with its rapid and intricate passages, numerous octave jumps, thick chordal patterns, and rapid ascending and descending scales and arpeggios. The concerto is a great example of Rachmaninoff’s attention to melodic lines, rich harmonic language, and lush textures. The cadenza at the end of the first movement further highlights the virtuosic nature of the concerto.

¹⁷ John Gillespie, *Five Centuries of Keyboard Music* (New York: Wadsworth Publishing Co. Inc.), 86.

¹⁸ See Appendix II for further information on Russian culture’s influence on Rachmaninoff’s and his compositions.

¹⁹ Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor*, 48-53.

Virtuoso Examples from the First Piano Concerto

Chords and octaves

The concerto opens with a two-measure orchestral fanfare playing the tonic note, F-sharp. Two measures after the orchestral introduction, the piano opens with a virtuoso cadenza – a descending octave and chordal progression in both hands, marked *fortissimo*. To enhance this virtuoso passage, the pianist should carefully consider the musical shaping and direction of this progression. The concerto continues with another *cadenza*-like moment for the piano as it presents a rapid ascending arpeggio a few measures later.

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 1, measures 1-11. The score is written for Piano I (Piano) and Piano II (Orchestra). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked 'Vivace'. The score shows a descending octave and chordal progression in both hands, marked *fortissimo* (f). The score is for Rachmaninoff, Op. 1.

Ex. 17 Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.1, movement I, mm. 1-11.

Following a brief orchestral interlude, the piano is presented with the main theme of the first movement. John Culshaw describes this theme as one which “shows that the strain of yearning and melancholy was not missing in the young Rachmaninoff.”²⁰ The primary challenge in this passage is to emphasize the melodic line, amidst the intricate embellishments characteristically found in Rachmaninoff’s composition. A pianist needs to explore the uses of pacing and rubato in order to execute these types of passages lyrically.



²⁰ John Culshaw, *Rachmaninov: The Man and His Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 77.



Ex. 18 Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.1, movement I, mm. 23-29.

The initial lyrical theme presented by the orchestra and the piano now transitions into the following *Vivace* section. Due to the brisk tempo, rhythmic stability is crucial on the part of the pianist as they execute numerous ascending scale-like passages in the right hand while simultaneously outlining the melody with the top fingers.

Lastly, the first movement concludes with a piano *cadenza* that exhibits numerous technical and musical virtuosic elements. The cadenza opens with powerful chords and octaves, jumping between the different registers of the piano at a fast speed. A particularly challenging passage presents the descending chords progressively accelerating, heightening the dramatic effect while both hands face the challenge of a brisk switch in hand positions that often transitions between four - to three-note chords. Moreover, Rachmaninoff incorporates *crescendi* throughout this entire virtuosic section, adding to demands of the pianist.



Ex. 19 Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.1, movement I, Cadenza, mm. 318-321.

After the intense and dramatic chordal section, the cadenza shifts to a new section, *Allegro Moderato*. Included in this section, we find arpeggiated figurations, hidden melodies in inner voices, rich and lush harmonies, and complex harmonic progressions, all typical examples of Rachmaninoff's compositional style and all adding to the emotional impact of the concerto. In addition to these virtuosic displays, Rachmaninoff employs a wide range of sometimes sudden dynamic contrasts which help to create drama and tension. The example in measures 335-341, (Ex. 20) shows Rachmaninoff's masterful piano writing.

Allegro moderato

37

The musical score is for the Cadenza of the first movement of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 1. It is in B-flat major and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato'. The score is written for piano and includes a cadenza section. The piece features a piano (p) and mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic range. The score includes sixteenth-note runs, triplets, and a 'poco a poco cres.' (poco a poco crescendo) marking. The score is written for piano and includes a cadenza section.

Ex. 20 Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.1, movement I, Cadenza, mm. 335-341.

The cadenza concludes with virtuosic chords and arpeggios that frequently jump, involving expansive intervals that pose a challenge to the pianist, requiring large stretches in the

hand. This is a section which requires melodic expressiveness and precise and intricate leaps in both hands, while maintaining a balanced and well-phrased delivery. The cumulative effect of hearing these virtuoso elements should give the listener a wonderful sense of drama and excitement, an emotional expression of Rachmaninoff's youthful passion.



Ex. 21 Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.1, movement I, Cadenza, mm. 381-384.

The second movement of the *Piano Concerto* is a great demonstration of Rachmaninoff's amazing ability in crafting unforgettable melodies. Following a brief interlude by the orchestra, the piano part begins with a solo section. In this passage, the left hand undertakes the task of outlining the harmonic structure through triplet arpeggio figurations, while the right hand assumes responsibility for the melody. This is a particularly challenging moment in the movement due to the difficulty of putting together the two-bar phrases into a longer cumulative phrase over a constantly changing harmonic progression.



Ex. 22 Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.1, movement II, mm. 10-16.

The concerto's third movement begins with a call-and-response, where the orchestra has one measure of introduction followed by one measure of the piano's bravura response.



Ex. 23 Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.1, movement III, mm. 1-2.

The concerto's third movement is a great example of virtuosic passages in terms of technical skill requiring interpretative nuance. The first few pages, for instance, feature a series of arpeggios and scale-like passages incorporating various intervals, requiring accuracy and

proficiency on the part of the pianist while attending to articulations and dynamics, all done with the utmost melodic lyricism.

This movement's middle section resembles a dialogue between the orchestra and the pianist, in which flexibility and attentive listening are essential due to the considerable amount of *rubato* employed.

The image displays a musical score for Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 1, movement III, measures 72-76. The score is written for piano and orchestra, with the piano part on the left and the orchestra on the right. The tempo is marked 'Andante ma non troppo' with a quarter note equal to half a beat. The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The piano part features a series of sixteenth-note runs in the right hand, with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) at the beginning. The orchestra part includes a melodic line in the upper strings, with a dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) and a tempo change to 'poco cres.' (poco cresendo) indicated by a bracket. The score is numbered 46 in a box.

Ex. 24 Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.1, movement III, mm. 72-76.

Once again, short *cadenza*-like moments are presented that are typical of Rachmaninoff's writing.



Ex. 25 Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.1, movement III, m 79.

The following section features another great example of beautiful writing for the keyboard: a simple melodic line is joined with a complicated counter melody resulting in a section full of passion and intensity.



Ex. 26 Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.1, movement III, mm. 88-84.

Six Romances for Voice and Piano

Collaborative virtuosity balancing the voice

Rachmaninoff's song cycle from Op. 38 comprises six songs, titled *Six Romances for Voice and Piano*. The title suggests that Rachmaninoff stressed the importance of both the piano and the voice as equal partners. The song cycle was dedicated to Nina Koshetz, and all six songs featured texts from modern Russian poets. Rachmaninoff's use of chromatic harmonies and extended chords added harmonic richness and complexity to the cycle, enhancing its depth and intensity. The song cycle exhibits many examples of virtuosity, both technical and musical, with extended piano preludes and postludes, long legato melodies in both parts, thick chordal structure, numerous rhythmic changes, as well as a wide vocal range in each of the songs. The entire set lasts approximately seventeen minutes and is known for its deep emotional expression, evoking themes of love, nature, and longing.

One of the most formidable challenges in performing the set of songs from Op. 38, is achieving a cohesive ensemble between the vocalist and the pianist in an organic manner. The accompaniment throughout the piece is rich and dense, making it difficult to discern the larger rhythmic pulse in many of the songs. Also, maintaining the level of technical pianistic virtuosity called for while not overwhelming the singer is crucial throughout the cycle.

The first song, *Ночью в саду у меня*, is the shortest in length. The piano accompaniment primarily consists of chords, while the singer delivers a captivating melodic line. Notably, in measure 15, the piano part is written as "*quasi cadenza*."²¹

²¹ See Appendix II for thoughts on performance.

чү-чей горь - - - - - КО,
 qui san - glo - - - - - te
 gin ca - res - - - - - ses
 ihr ist we - - - - - he,

Ex. 27 Rachmaninoff's, *Ночью в саду у меня*, m 15.

In the second song of the cycle *К ней*, one can immediately see the rhythmic complexity of the combined piano and vocal lines.²²

a tempo
 Ми - ла - я. гдѣ ты,
 O - bien-ai - mé - e,
 Ten - der one, hast - en,
 Lieb - li - che, kommst du?

Ex. 28 Rachmaninoff's, *К ней*, mm. 11-12.

The third song, *Маргаритку*, is comparatively easier in terms of ensemble coordination, as the meter remains consistent in 3/4 time throughout, facilitating a more natural feel.²³

²² See Appendix II.

²³ Ibid.,

ки трех-гран-ны-е, какъ крыль-я, Какъ бѣ-лый шолкъ.
 ai - les au so - e'l Fré - mis - sent leurs blancs pe - ta - les.
 pe - tals are as s'lk, they gli - sten As ra - diant wings,
 zack - ten Blätt - chen wie Flü - gel, wie Sei - de fein.

poco cresc

mf

Въ нихъ лѣта мощь! Въ нихъ ра-дость и - зо - билъ - я Въ нихъ слѣтлый
 Jo - yeu - ses fleurs! O ri - chesse in - di - ci - ble, De vos es -
 And to their songs of sum - mer joy I li - sten, - White host that
 Voll Som - mer - glut voll Lust ohn' Maß und Zü - gel, voll Licht und

mf *dim.*

Ex. 29 Rachmaninoff's, *Маргаритки*, mm. 11-16.

The piano postlude in this song presents a challenge for the pianist, as it necessitates a transition from an accompanying role to a more soloistic role.²⁴

²⁴ See Appendix II for further information.

rit. - *dolcissimo* *pp* *a tempo*

Я васъ люб - лю!
Que j'ai - me tant!
I love you so.
ich lieb Euch all!

tr *mf* *tr* *mf* *9*

tr *poco dim.* *tr* *10*

Poco più mosso

p *mf*

rit.

*

Ex. 30 Rachmaninoff's, *Маргаритки*, mm. 27-37.

In contrast, the fourth song, *Крысолов*, seems to be the most challenging both in terms of ensemble coordination and text delivery. The abundance of text combined with quick sixteenth

notes and consonant-heavy passages, pose difficulties in singing on the vowels while navigating the consonants, as is evident throughout the entire song.

Tempo come prima
a tempo *cantabile*
mf *p*

ля, За лу - га - ми крас - ной каш - ки строй - но вста - ли то - по -
la, La bas par de - là les hai - es, par - mi les pom - miers fleu -
lag, Un - der poplars loom - ing slen - der, 'Midst the clo - ver's bright ar -
la. Hin - ter Wie - sen, rot - be - blü - tet hoch stehn schlan - ke Pap - peln

mf *mf*

Ex. 31 Rachmaninoff's, *Крысолов*, mm. 17-19.

The piano part in this song presents considerable challenges, not only in terms of technical execution but also in capturing the character of the work.²⁵

cresc. *f* *rit.* *p* *a tempo*

Вплоть до ут - ра за - цѣ - лу - ю, Сер - дце лас - кой у - то -
Ce se - ront bai - sers, ca - res - ses, Et doux ser - ments é - chan -
And to take our fill of kiss - es, Till the morn calls us a -
Küs - sen bis zum Stern - er - blas - sen, Müd vom Glück, das uns ge -

staccato *p* *cresc.* *dim.*

Ex. 32 Rachmaninoff's, *Крысолов*, mm. 42-43.

²⁵ See Appendix II.

The next song, *Сон*, is arguably the most frequently performed song of the cycle. One of the primary challenges in this song is the intricate coordination of duple rhythm against triplets, which is presented in the first 2 pages of the song.

Canto

Lento

mf

Въ ми - рѣ нѣтъ ни-че - го Вож-де -
 Rien de plus en-cha- teur I - ci-
 Say, oh whi - ther art bound, Rare en
 Nichts hält Sehn-sucht ge - bannt, nichts lod

Piano

mf

dim. *p* *p*

лѣт - нѣ - е сна, - Ча - ры есть у не
 bas que le rêve. O fin - fi - nie dou
 chant - ment of dreams, Wrapp'd with si - lence a
 so wie der Traum. Zau - ber ist sein Ge

Ex. 33 Rachmaninoff's, *Сон*, mm. 1-7.

The last three pages of the song are quite challenging for the pianist.²⁶

²⁶ See Appendix II.

rit. *p cantabile* *Meno mosso*

У не - ро ши - по - ки, Ши - по -
 Lors-qu'il vient dans la nuit, pla - ne
Shi - ning *wings do they bear,* *Far out -*
 Sei - ner Flü - gei Paar reicht schim - mernd

legato

marcato la melodia

ки два кры - ла, И лег - ки, такъ лег -
 ma - jes - tu - eux, Que des - cend len - te -
spreading, so light, *As they float thro' the*
 weit, o, so weit, und ist leicht, o, so

Ex. 34 Rachmaninoff's, *Con*, mm. 22-25.

The last page of this song features a demanding piano solo, requiring the pianist to execute numerous jumps and extended interval stretches. The pianist must do so while highlighting the melody, which is marked with *tenuto* markings, alternating between both hands.



Ex. 35 Rachmaninoff's, *Сон*, mm. 32-39.

The final song of the cycle, *AV!*, presents comparable challenges to the earlier songs of the cycle.²⁷

²⁷ See Appendix II.

Andante *pp dolce* S. Rachmaninoff,

Твой нѣж-ный смѣхъ былъ сказ-ко-ю из-
 Ton doux sou-rire é nig-ma-tique et
 Was it a dream? Thy voice, with gol-den
 Dein La-chen sang, ein Mär-chen war's, ein

pp

Ex. 36 Rachmaninoff's, *AY!*, mm. 1-2.

G minor Piano Trio No. 1

Virtuoso arpeggios and intricate scale passages

Rachmaninoff wrote his *G minor Piano Trio No. 1* in 1892, during his years at the Moscow Conservatory. In contrast to the traditional trio form of three or four movements, this early trio is a one-movement work. It is in sonata form, with the exposition comprising several motives that come back in the recapitulation in different key. The main elegiac theme is presented first by the piano. The cello and the violin further develop the theme while the mood and tempo of the piece continue to transform. The work concludes with a funeral march that bears a distinct resemblance to Tchaikovsky's *Trio in A Minor*. The work displays Rachmaninoff's prowess in creating virtuoso piano writing, encompassing a broad range of sound, nuance, and colors.²⁸

Similar to Tchaikovsky's *A minor Piano Trio*, Rachmaninoff's *Piano Trio* opens with a four-note theme. This first section is in a slow tempo and presents the challenges of playing legato octaves and chords while maintaining the soft dynamic marking.



²⁸ See Appendix II for personal comments.



Ex. 37 Rachmaninoff's Piano Trio, mm. 4-7.

A great example of virtuosity in the piano part is exemplified in measures 70 -76, (Ex. 38) where the violin and cello share the melody while the piano executes intricate virtuoso scale passages.

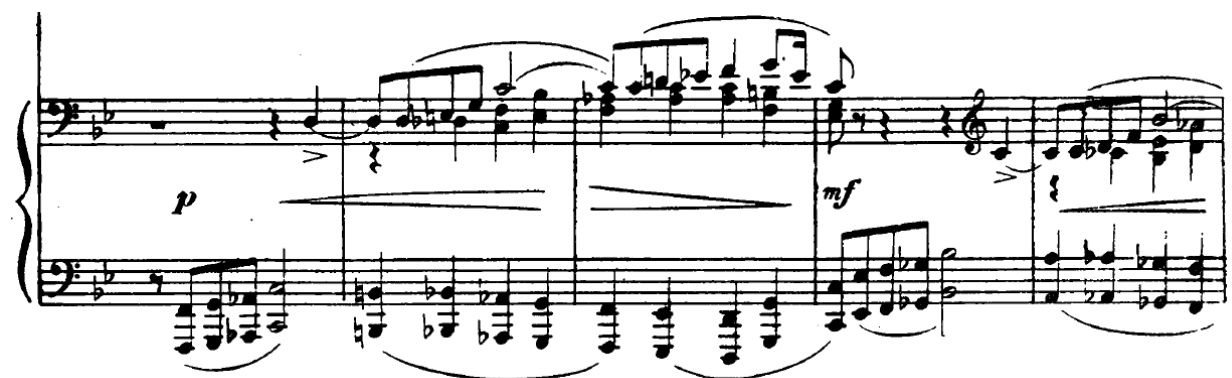
Ex. 38 Rachmaninoff's Piano Trio, mm. 70-73.

The next example of virtuoso writing can be found in measures 80 – 84, (Ex. 39). Here, the pianist is required to perform rapid ascending scales in intervals of sixth.



Ex. 39 Rachmaninoff's Piano Trio, mm. 80-84.

At measure 100, the piano is presented with a solo passage that navigates through several harmonic progressions, offering various options for shaping.





Ex. 40 Rachmaninoff's Piano Trio, mm. 100-109.

RECITAL III: Program Notes

The Piano Quartet in G Minor and *Zigeunerlieder*

Johannes Brahms was born in 1833 in Hamburg and died in Vienna in 1897. Often compared to the other two incomparable composers whose names start with B, Bach, and Beethoven, Brahms became known as a champion of traditionalism. He wrote masterpieces in all the great classical forms except opera, from which many of his contemporary colleagues were turning away. Even though Brahms was writing in classical traditional forms, he was pouring new and innovative content into those forms (adventurous phrase length, chromatic harmonies and harmonic movement, rhythmic complexity, hidden counterpoint, etc.).²⁹

The *Piano Quartet No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25* was composed between 1856 and 1861 when Brahms was only 28 years old. Chamber music historically had been simpler, often meant for performance at home by amateurs. This began to change with the quartets of Beethoven, especially the late quartets, and certainly the Brahms' G minor quartet was not meant for private performance. First of all, the performance of a forty-five-minute complex chamber music work for four musicians is in itself a virtuoso accomplishment. Throughout the quartet, Brahms displays his mastery of counterpoint and thematic development, as well as his ability to balance individual instruments and create a cohesive ensemble sound. The use of virtuosity in the piano part adds to the complexity and richness of the work. As musicologist Vincent C. K. Cheung notes, "The quartet relies heavily on the resources of the piano to establish its character, with the

²⁹ For more information on Brahms compositional innovation, see Rose T. Breckenridge, "Music in Depth: Brahms's Quartet in G minor," *The Cleveland Orchestra Music Study Group*, accessed February 27, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkuNXtDYeN0&ab_channel=TheClevelandOrchestra.

keyboard part assuming a role that is at once soloistic and orchestral.”³⁰ It was first premiered with Brahms playing on the piano and a year later Clara Schumann on the piano. It consists of 4 movements.

The first movement of the quartet has an *Allegro* marking with Exposition, Development and Recapitulation. The exposition presents several different themes, some in the tonic key of G minor and some written in contrasting D major and D minor. The exposition does not have a repeat sign; however, Brahms creates the illusion of repetition by starting the development section with the exact repetition of the first 10 measures of the exposition. The development section uses a number of the themes from the exposition extended in new ways. Interestingly the recapitulation of the first movement begins with the second theme in G major instead of the expected first theme. The recapitulation is finished with a brief but intense coda.

The second movement is marked *Intermezzo and Trio*; it is in compound triple meter and is in the key of C minor. The movement has a contrasting trio as well as a concluding short coda.

The third movement is marked *Andante con moto* and is in triple meter. The strings sing the lyrical first theme while the piano supports them with beautiful arpeggiated figures. The second quasi-march-like theme of this movement slowly builds into a very dramatic section which equally slowly returns to a less turbulent ending.

The last movement of the quartet is the attention-grabber. It is in the key of G minor in duple time. It is marked *Rondo alla Zingarese*, or the “Gypsy Rondo.” Similar to other compositions of Brahms, this movement is built on a simple idea which is fast, tonal, and has a

³⁰ Vincent C. K. Cheung, “*Brahms’ Piano Quartets in their Music- and Social-historical Contexts*,” Cambridge, MA (2005): 1-12, accessed March 23, 2023, https://web.mit.edu/ckcheung/www/MusicalWritings_files/BrahmsPfQt_Context_20050423.pdf.

driving rhythm. The movement is famous for its virtuosity, as Max Kalbeck writes that in one of the performances:

The most appeal and strongest applause came from the Hungarian finale of the quartet; and the fact that during its performance, the cellist knocked over and cracked the bridge of his instrument hurt nothing of its appeal; quite the contrary, every one rejoiced to hear the “smart” Csardas (a kind of rhythmic Gypsy style), whose passages the composer allowed to roll so briskly over the strings, from the beginning again.³¹

Brahms was known for his skill as a virtuoso pianist and his solo and chamber music works are a great example of his complex and demanding piano parts, which showcased his own abilities as a pianist as noted by Jan Swafford in his book *Johannes Brahms - A Biography*.³² It seems clear that Brahms was writing music for himself (or another virtuoso pianist) to play. However, the technical demands of this piano quartet require exceptional skill from each of the performers. The piano part is incredibly challenging, featuring intricate passagework, rapid arpeggios, and virtuosic flourishes that require exceptional finger dexterity, strength and an advanced piano technique. Descending sixteenth-note arpeggiated passages, sixteenth-note runs with extended stretches, broken octave sixteenth-note passages, scales in a rapid tempo, extended octave jumps as well as complex chord progressions are some of the virtuoso mandates in this work. As musicologist Michael Musgrave notes, “The piano part is of equal importance to that of the other instruments, and it demands great virtuosity of the player.”³³ The string parts also demand considerable skill, with challenging technical work and rhythms, as well as difficult

³¹ Max Kalbeck, as cited in Otto Biba, “*Die Kammermusik im Wien der Brahmszeit*” in *Die Kammermusik von Johannes Brahms*, ed. Gernot Gruber (Laaber, 2001), 59.

³² Jan Swafford, *Johannes Brahms: A bibliography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1997), 37.

³³ Michael Musgrave, *The Music of Brahms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 184.

bowing and fingering passages requiring control and meticulousness. Furthermore, the ensemble playing throughout the piece is intricate and demanding, requiring the musicians to be highly coordinated and responsive to one another's playing.

Virtuosity as Displayed in the G minor Piano Quartet

Broken octaves, extended octave jumps, complex chord progressions, unison strings

The first movement of the quartet features several passages that are virtuosic in their nature. An example of such a passage can be seen in measure 77 of the first movement of the piano quartet. The piano performs a descending passage in sixteenth notes rapidly transitioning between black and white keys in *fortissimo* before a *diminuendo* in the last three beats of the second measure.



Ex. 41 Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor, movement I, mm. 76-79.

Another example of a virtuosity passage in the first movement can be seen in measures 216-226, (Ex. 41). Brahms highlights his love of counterpoint with a canon while having each hand doing technically difficult leaps.³⁴

³⁴ See Appendix III thoughts on performance.

212

217

Ex. 42 Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor, movement I, mm. 212-220.

Heightening the difficulty of this passage, the strings are playing in unison (i.e., intonation issues) while involved in the counterpoint.³⁵

³⁵ See Appendix III.

Ex. 43 Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor, movement I, mm 35-41.

The second movement of the piano quartet presents its own challenges. At measure 17, (Ex. 43) the pianist has the melody. Both hands play the same notes in sixths and Brahms marks the line to be played *legato* and in a *piano* dynamic.³⁶

³⁶ See Appendix III.

arco
p
pp
pp
molto *p*, dolce ed espress.
una corda *)

Ex. 44 Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor, movement II, mm 17-21.

Also, in this movement measures 43-52 present their own difficulty.³⁷

p espress.
p
p dolce

Ex. 45 Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor, movement II, mm. 42-56.

³⁷ See Appendix III.

Musicologist Michael Musgrave notes, “Brahms’ music always reveals a deep understanding of the piano, and his compositions for the instrument are characterized by their richness of tone, complex harmonies, and brilliant virtuosity.”³⁸ The third movement of the G minor quartet showcases Brahms’ exceptional abilities in all these aspects. Again, in this movement the challenge with playing in unison is present.

Ex. 46 Brahms’ Piano Quartet in G minor, movement III, mm 48-50.

³⁸ Michael Musgrave, *The Music of Brahms*, 243.

The third movement also presents a rhythmic challenge.³⁹



Ex. 47 Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor, movement III, mm. 59-70.

A further rhythmic challenge in this movement occurs in the animato section where Brahms layers the rhythms.⁴⁰

³⁹ See Appendix III.

⁴⁰ Ibid.,

73

pp Animato

pizz.

77

J. B. 26

Ex. 48 Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor, movement III, mm 73-80.

Measure 112, shows contrapuntal octave lines before a more bravura section of leaps.

110

116

Ex. 49 Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor, movement III, mm 110-119.

The final movement of this Piano Quartet, known as the “*Rondo alla Zingarese*,” presents an array of technical challenges for performers, specifically in terms of clarity and speed. This movement is characterized by numerous scale passages, extended jumps, and running sixteenth notes that require stable and clean execution. Additionally, the texture of the movement is often dense and heavy requiring excellent voicing from the pianist as well as the string players.

In the last movement another challenge is to keep and maintain a stable tempo. Due to the extended jumps the performer might cut some of the preceding notes off shorter, thereby deviating from the intended musical expression of the composer. Specifically, the sixteenth-note passage from measures 80-115 poses a challenge for pianists, who may be inclined to push the tempo to shape the line. To prevent rushing this section the pianist must be mindful of maintaining the inner pulse and to feel the middle of each measure.



Ex. 50 Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor, movement IV, mm 80-91.

Lastly Brahms incorporates several piano cadenza-like moments in this movement. The one in measure 293 consists of descending thirty-second note passages. Even though this looks like very exact writing, the cascades of descending thirty-second notes should feel improvisatory.



Ex. 51 Brahms' Piano Quartet in G minor, movement IV, m 293.

Zigeunerlieder

Virtuosity in imagination, i.e., strophic settings

It is worth noting that the inclusion of virtuosity can vary depending on the type of work. A great contrast to the *Piano Quartet in G minor* is Brahms' song cycle *Zigeunerlieder*, Op. 103. Originally written for four singers, Brahms arranged these songs himself for solo voice and piano. They were translated from Hungarian folk songs into German by Hugo Conrat. In the song cycle, the piano part is often used to support and highlight the vocal line rather than showcasing virtuosic elements in terms of bravura passages.

Brahms incorporates the dotted rhythms in the first three songs and maintains a duple meter throughout all eight songs. Many of the songs were structured in either strophic or modified strophic form, requiring a constant reimagining of the musical lines as viewed through the text. To this song cycle Brahms also adds syncopation, dotted rhythms, and grace notes to enhance the melodies.⁴¹

As Lorraine Gorrell describes these in her important book "*The Nineteenth-Century German Lied*," "The *Zigeunerlieder* requires a high degree of technical skill from both the singer and pianist. The frequent use of chromaticism and unusual harmonies, as well as the complex rhythms and meter changes make these pieces a formidable challenge for any performer."⁴²

⁴¹ After Brahms introduced the song cycle to Clara Schumann, she remarked, "I must unburden my heart of the joy your *Zigeunerlieder* has given me. I am quite delighted with them. How original they are and how full of freshness, charm and passion! How wonderful the voice progression is, so graceful and full of interest! Their feelings are so varied that in spite of the incessant 2/4 time one is not conscious of any monotony... The enthusiasm was great and many of the songs had to be repeated... Let me press your hand, dear givers of joys." See Paul Stark, *Brahms's Vocal Duets and Quartets with Piano: A Guide with Full Texts and Translations* (IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 122.

⁴² Lorraine Gorrell, *The Nineteenth-Century German Lied* (Newark, NJ: Amadeus, 2005), 9.

The use of repeats in the cycle presents a unique challenge in regards to interpretation. How should the repeat differ from the first iteration? Brahms includes articulation markings in the vocal line, but dynamic markings are only present in the piano part, leaving room for the singer and the pianist to experiment with the interpretation.⁴³

In conclusion, while the challenges faced by the singer and the pianist in this song cycle may not seem as virtuosic as the piano quartet, they require a high level of musical imagination and musicianship to perform with the artistry and understanding these works demand.

⁴³ See Appendix III for further notes on *Zigeunerlieder*.

CONCLUSION:

During the course of the three dissertation recitals, I went on a musical journey that proved to be both challenging and rewarding. Each of the recitals features a monumental work such as Tchaikovsky's *Trio in A minor*, Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto in F-Sharp minor*, and Brahms's *Quartet in G minor*. Each one of these pieces requires great skill and endurance to perform as they are all quite lengthy and incredibly demanding. Each one of these works contains more than enough virtuoso elements to satisfy any performer as well as the most blasé audience. And each one of these works exploits these elements in furtherance of a musical vision rather than as simply fireworks.

Additionally, in each recital, less lengthy and flashy works were included which focused on different aspects of virtuosity: sensitivity to partners, quality of sound production, understanding of text in vocal music and ever-heightened listening. I have found that there is virtuosity in the quietest song in the set, in the slowest four-bar phrase and that artistry in performance could and should be augmented by virtuosity, not defined by it.

Virtuosity enhances enhance the overall dramatic and musical impact of a piece. However, it is important to ensure that technical virtuosity does not detract from the overall musical experience.

By studying, performing, and carefully considering the use of virtuosity in each of the works featured in my three recitals, I have gained a deeper understanding on how virtuoso elements can be used to enrich the musical impact and intent. It is my hope that the musical preparation and the research for this dissertation has made me a more thoughtful and comprehensive overall musician, one who will use virtuosity to enhance my performing, coaching, and teaching going forward. Certainly, I believe that my performances are already

impacted. I also hope that this dissertation and the accompanying thoughts on rehearsal and performance will be of benefit to future generations of my colleagues, students and scholars as we continue to appreciate virtuosity in all its many manifestations.

APPENDIX I

Composer Biography, Historical Tidbits and Notes on Performing

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Tchaikovsky was born in 1840 in Votkinsk, Russia and died in 1893. His mother recognized his musical talent and enrolled him in piano lessons at an early age. Both his parents insisted that he pursue a career in law, and he spent most of his early years studying at the Imperial School of Jurisprudence in St. Petersburg. Later, his interest and passion for music prompted him to enter the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he studied composition under Anton Rubinstein. He then became a professor of music theory and composition at the Moscow Conservatory.

Piano Trio Notes

In studying the piano trio, it is interesting to note that this is the only piano trio that the composer wrote and that he did not believe that the combination of the piano with violin and cello could work well together. In a letter to Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky explains in detail:

You asked why I have never written a trio. Forgive me, dear friend; I would do anything to give you pleasure, but this is beyond me... I simply cannot endure the combination of piano with violin and cello. To my mind the timbre of these instruments will not blend... it is torture for me to have to listen to a string trio or a sonata of any kind for piano and strings. To my mind, the piano can be effective in only three situations: alone, in context with the orchestra, or as accompaniment, i.e., the background of a picture.⁴⁴

However, after finishing the trio, he found merit in the sense that the nature of the composition is closer to that of a symphony.

⁴⁴ Modeste Tchaikovsky, *The Life & Letters of Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky*, ed. Rosa Newmarch (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1970), 391-392.

The trio is finished... Now I can say with some conviction that the work is not bad. But I am afraid, having written all my life for the orchestra, and only taken late in life to chamber music, I may have failed to adapt the instrumental combinations to my musical thoughts. In short, I fear I may have arranged music of a symphonic character as a trio, instead of writing directly for my instruments. I have tried to avoid this; I am not sure whether I have been successful.⁴⁵

Piano Trio Performance Notes

Ex. 3 –In this passage, the right hand performs an ascending pattern while the left-hand plays ascending arpeggiated harmonic gestures. However, the physical demands of the right-hand passage can be uncomfortable due to the brisk tempo and constant switching of hand positions between black and white keys. Furthermore, maintaining a stable tempo is another challenge in this passage as the string instruments play constant quarter notes over the sixteenth note passage of the pianist. The scale passage on the following page presents further technical difficulties. In this section, both hands execute descending scale passages over four beats, followed by a large leap that must be executed smoothly without taking time, ensuring accurate landing on the notes after the hands jump up. It is imperative to maintain a stable tempo during this passage, as the violin and cello perform melodic lines in quarter notes. Overall, these virtuosic passages necessitate precision, dexterity, and careful attention to maintaining tempo and coordination with the string instruments.

Ex. 4 – In this passage the upper two voices have a fugue-like conversation, while the piano part serves as accompanimental and harmonic support. However, after four measures the piano transitions from an accompanimental role to becoming the presenter of the melody. This passage proves to be challenging and uncomfortable, as it requires careful execution of both the melody and filler notes, which need to be executed softly. Complicating matters further, the

⁴⁵ Modeste Tchaikovsky, *The Life & Letters of Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky*, 419.

frequent harmonies change on every beat, making this passage difficult to remember.

Additionally, the left hand has its own melody, adding further complexity in shaping both lines with the marked soft dynamics and adhering to Tchaikovsky's marked phrasing.

Ex. 5 – The piano part features a broken octave passage in the right hand, while the left hand plays a counter melody in octaves. I found it particularly difficult to execute the broken octave passage in a melodic manner, avoiding a mechanical or etude-like sound quality while clearly projecting the melody in the top voice. To overcome this challenge, I had to practice the passage slowly, focusing on connecting the sounds of one octave to the next while actively listening to achieve the desired musical expression.

Ex. 6 The character of this variation is marked as *scherzando*, but the dynamic remains mostly at *piano* or *pianissimo*. The theme is given to the piano part in passages of double sixteenth-notes, which must remain stable while the pianist shapes the melodic line. The variation goes by quickly, with frequent changes in the harmonic language. Memorizing this variation could be helpful in order to execute it precisely and avoid getting lost in the fast-descending arpeggios.

Ex. 8 – In this variation, the cello carries the melody in quarter notes which can sometimes lead to tempo fluctuations in order to shape the melody. Meanwhile, the piano part has a waltz rhythm in the left hand and an accompanying figuration in the right hand. The *rubatos* in the cello part and the waltz rhythm in the piano part must be well coordinated in order for the ensemble to stay together. An interesting moment occurs on page 56, where the piano has a rest while the cello is finishing its line and the violin is beginning its line simultaneously. Both musicians must agree on how the rubato should be applied in order to be cohesive.

Ex. 9 – The challenge in this variation lies in playing the chords as a cohesive melodic line, marked *fortississimo*, without missing any notes. The frequent switching of hand positions between each chord poses a risk of missed notes during these transitions, adding to the physical demands of the variation. Furthermore, Tchaikovsky provides no specific dynamic markings other than *fortissimo*, requiring the pianist to make their own interpretive decisions on where to vary the dynamics based on the presented harmonies.

Ex. 10 – Similarly to previous variations, this variation is characterized by its intricate and dense texture, with many notes presented in each part. As such, the performers must carefully discern who has the subject and bring the entrances out prominently to help the listener's ear. The articulation markings are very specific, asking for precise coordination among the instruments in order to match their articulation.

Notes on performing Tchaikovsky with Professor Jennifer Casey-Cabot

While rehearsing Tchaikovsky's *Я тебе ничего не скажу...* Op. 60 No.2, Prof. Jennifer Cabot explained that: "the words tend to feel too heavy for the appropriate speed. I had to practice this simple song much more than some of the songs that have greater range and more complicated harmonies and tessitura."⁴⁶ This is an example of a very simple song that is actually quite challenging. It is interesting to note that the phrases never resolve. It propels itself from the entrance of the singer right through the *piu tranquillo* section that is more recitative-like all the way to the end without once coming to a stop. This fits well with the text, which is a declaration from one person to another, stating that they would never ask for returned love, no matter how difficult to resist.

⁴⁶ Jennifer Casey-Cabot, rehearsal-discussion, University of Maryland, February 1-15, 2022.

During the preparation for Tchaikovsky's *Скажи, о чем в тени ветвей*, Op 57, No 1, Prof Cabot noted that "the tessitura is such that the soprano can really let her voice soar, but the virtuosity for both the pianist and the singer lies in understanding how the form and flow serve in storytelling."⁴⁷ The song unfolds over a span of four minutes. "The singer must pace themselves and not indulge in the notes, but in the phrases instead."⁴⁸ When the pianist gets the melody they must also be expressive while having the larger phrase in mind when considering stretching the melody. The text for this song is also about love but this time exhorting the world to understand how important it is to remember the power of the words of love. Essentially, it is about love itself as well as speaking up with words of love to one another. The reference to the power of the nightingale's song of love is how the song opens, then moves on to describe a young girl's first love and her questioning if it is what she has longed for. It culminates with a repeat of the call to talk about how words of love can help us when life causes us extreme pain. It ends with the text: "what can make the heart glad? Is it not those heavenly sounds which you heard for the first time: Words of love!" What is important for the ensemble in this piece is the tempo. The singer must not wait too long between breaths; the flow must be perfectly timed from measure to measure or it will sound labored and indulgent in the wrong way. The piano part goes from 4/4 time to 12/8 with groupings of eighth notes in groups of four or three.

These changing groupings need to remain extremely steady and the singer needs to take time to breathe, while being very mindful of the flow of the pianist. The pianist must sing mentally as well when accompanying this song. Knowing when to ensure that the tempo stays

⁴⁷ Jennifer Casey-Cabot, rehearsal-discussion, University of Maryland, February 1-15, 2022.

⁴⁸ Jennifer Casey-Cabot, rehearsal-discussion, University of Maryland, February 1-15, 2022.

steady and when to allow time to relax. However, when relaxing the tempo, it must always find its way back. Rests must never slow the tempo down. If the singer wants to stretch a line, they need to do it while singing, not by holding a rest for too long. This takes experience and skill to do it masterfully.

The next vocal selection *Я ли в поле да не травушка была?* is long, slow, and repetitive in form. It is about 6 minutes in length. The character in this song is on the verge of a breakdown from the injustice of the situation. The singer must find a way to be actively singing while projecting an almost catatonic state of sadness. It requires long phrases with several shifts from middle-low voice to extreme high notes in the *melismas* that end each of the three choruses, following each of the three verses. The key to singing this song well, again lies in the execution of timing, flow, speed and phrasing. The pianist can prepare by speaking the text in rhythm and understanding where the word stresses should lie in order to complete each phrase smoothly. For the singer, the challenge is much like in the song *Я тебе ничего не скажу...* Op 60, No 2, because the melody consists of moving eighth notes, which the pianist must differentiate between which of them the singer will stretch or not stretch. Creating perfect legato while managing text is probably one of the hardest things a singer will ever learn to do.

In the last selection from Tchaikovsky's Romances, *День ли царит* Op. 47 No. 6, playing the prelude and postlude well requires making sure one understands that the piano part is setting up the scene for the singer. This requires both the singer and the pianist to understand what they are thinking and doing in terms of the flow and the musical content of the song. The text must be delivered with incredible ease because the tempo of this song is very fast. Therefore, the biggest challenge for the singer is the clear articulation of the text. Knowing how to keep a vibrant legato going at a fast speed is the next biggest challenge in this song. In the words of

Prof. Cabot “This is not a song for a beginner. Actually, none of these four songs are suitable for a beginner. Technically, a beginner could sing all the notes. But the meaning and intent could very easily be lost if the singer does not have enough experience with the bigger picture and a deep connection to such big feelings of love, loss, desire, grief, and pain. I will also say that in order to sing art songs such as these, a singer and pianist must have not only a connection to the text and the ability to physically sing all the notes, but a bigger understanding of how each measure builds and connects to what came before and what comes after. They must understand both how simple and patient, as well as how urgent and motivating you need to be while performing a song. You have to sometimes let things unfold and sometimes you must lead strongly. All of this takes experience, trial and error, and time to mature. I think for a pianist playing Tchaikovsky with a singer, they also need to be able to understand (and have executed themselves) the speaking of the text in rhythm. If they can understand the logistics of that and observe acutely the ability of the singer that they are accompanying, then the appropriate tempo and phrasing will follow.”⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Jennifer Casey-Cabot, rehearsal-discussion, University of Maryland, February 1-15, 2022. Prof. Cabot is on the voice faculty at the University of Maryland. She performed the 4 Romances by Tchaikovsky.

APPENDIX II

Compos Biography, Historical Tidbits and Notes on Performing

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Rachmaninoff was born in 1872 into a family of musicians. His great-grandfather was a skilled violinist, and his grandfather was a renowned pianist who had studied under the famous composer, John Field. Young Rachmaninoff's musical talent was seen at a very early age and he was admitted to the preparatory division at the St. Petersburg Conservatory with a full scholarship at the age of nine.⁵⁰

Rachmaninoff's family relocated to Moscow in 1885, where he was exposed to a vibrant cultural environment that fostered his musical talent. Soon after the family moved to Moscow, Rachmaninoff enrolled in the esteemed Moscow Conservatory, where he studied piano with the acclaimed instructors Alexander Siloti and Nikolai Sverev. He was also enrolled in the composition classes of the renowned Russian composers Alexander Taneyev and Anton Arensky.⁵¹ During his time at the Moscow Conservatory, Rachmaninoff had the opportunity to meet and perform for some of the leading Russian musicians, including Tchaikovsky, who was one of Rachmaninoff's idols. He completed his studies as a pianist in 1891, the same year he finished his *First Piano Concerto in F# Minor*. In the following year, he earned the prestigious Great Gold Medal in the composers division for his opera, *Aleko*.⁵²

⁵⁰ Anastassia Ivanova, "Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concertos: The Odyssey of a Stylistic Evolution" (DMA diss., University of Maryland, 2006), 2, accessed April-16, 2023, <https://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/3544/umi-umd-3377.pdf;sequence=1>.

⁵¹ Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor*, 18.

⁵² Ibid., 33.

Rachmaninoff's compositional style can be split into three distinct periods. He first started composing during his time as a student at the Moscow Conservatory. During this period, he composed the *First Piano Concerto* No. 1, the opera *Aleko*, the *Elegiac Trio* in D minor, op. 9, *Symphony No. 1*, Op. 13, and the *Moments Musicaux*, Op. 16, among others.

During his second compositional period, he had the most success as a pianist, composer, and conductor. Some notable works include the *Sonata for Piano and Cello*, Op. 19, the piano preludes, Op. 23 and Op. 32, the *Piano Concerto* No. 3, Op. 30, the *Piano Sonata* No. 2, the two sets of *Etudes-tableaux* for piano, Op. 33 and Op. 39, as well as the songs Op. 21, Op. 34, and Op. 38, among many other successful compositions.⁵³

His last compositional period includes works such as the *Piano Concerto* No.4, Op. 40, *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*, Op. 42, the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, Op. 43, the *Third Symphony*, Op. 44, *Symphonic Dances*, Op.45, as well as some revisions to previously written compositions and various piano transcriptions.⁵⁴

Rachmaninoff was known as one of the greatest pianists of the twentieth century. He was regarded as a virtuoso pianist throughout his lifetime and his superb musicianship frequently captivated his audiences. In a letter by Elena Somova, who was a friend and admirer of Rachmaninoff, she writes about the first time she heard a performance by the great pianist:

The first time I heard Rachmaninoff in recital in October of 1909, I was immediately conquered by his genius. His superb mastery, severe nobility of the style, deepness and richness of the content, and his trademark sound was astonishing...⁵⁵

⁵³ Ibid., 20.

⁵⁴ Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor*, 20.

⁵⁵ Ivanova, "Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concertos: The Odyssey of a Stylistic Evolution," 4.

The First Piano Concerto

The *First Piano Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp minor*, Op. 1, was written in 1890. During his time at the Moscow Conservatory, Rachmaninoff was only 18 years old when he composed this concerto. The first performance of the concerto was in 1892. It was performed by Rachmaninoff and featured the first movement of the work. The performance was well received: “The first movement had taste, tension, youthful sincerity, and obvious knowledge.”⁵⁶ However, the concerto went under several revisions by Rachmaninoff. The newly-revised version had clearer orchestration and restructured sections that improved the overall coherence of the piece. After the performance of the revised version, Rachmaninoff was disappointed that the audience in America had stronger preferences for his second and third concerti over the first concerto. Rachmaninoff noted: “all the youthful freshness is there, and yet it plays itself so much more easily.”⁵⁷

In the book, *Rachmaninoff: The Man and His Music*, the author, John Culshaw notes:

The First Piano Concerto is certainly not nearly as important as the others, but as an example of the melodic gift, the exuberance and the brilliance of a Russian student-composer at the end of the last century, it is surely unsurpassed.⁵⁸

Six Romances for Voice and Piano

Ex. 27 – This passage features a plethora of thirty-second notes in the right hand, juxtaposed with the left hand outlining a seventh chord with added chromatic notes. This presents a formidable challenge in executing the passage with natural fluidity, as the tempo must

⁵⁶ Dmitri Alekseev, *A. D. S. V. Rachmaninoff* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Muzikal'noe Izdatel'stvo, 2012)

⁵⁷ Martyn, *Rachmaninoff: Composer, Pianist, Conductor*, 286.

⁵⁸ Culshaw, *Rachmaninov: The Man and His Music*, 76.

remain constant. To make it more challenging, the composer marks this passage in a *piano* dynamic with a brief *crescendo*. Furthermore, the singer has descending quarter notes, making it hard to feel the beat amidst the intricate piano writing.

Ex. 28 – In this song, there are several sections where subdivision is necessary since there are varying meters that require counting eighth-notes consistently. Whenever the singer has a sustained note and the accompaniment features a descending sequence in quintuplets such as the one in mm 11-12 (Ex. 28), the singer must feel the larger beats in this section to understand where the melodies fit.

Ex. 29 – The consistent meter in this song provides ample room for nuances and phrase shaping, as exemplified by the abrupt modulation to Gb Major in measure fifteen, which initially feels sudden and lacks lyrical fluidity. In my rehearsals with Professor Cabot, we decided to take more time in the section leading up to the *a tempo* in mm 11-16 (Ex. 29), resulting in a more organic and natural transition, lessening the sense of urgency.

Ex. 30 – The postlude has several scale passages and trills that must be executed melodically rather than sounding like a mere technical exercise. The pianist must work on the section in order to achieve and feel a sense of natural phrasing in shaping the melody.

Ex. 32 – Rachmaninoff's vocal writing is inherently shaped for natural phrasing, and the singer must also be attuned to the pianist's harmonic and rhythmic movements beneath the vocal line. There are instances where the voice naturally lingers and expands on the high notes. Still, due to the consistent sixteenth-notes in the accompaniment, it is crucial to maintain the integrity of Rachmaninoff's intended rhythm. This is exemplified by the melodic line from G-G#-A, leading into the wordy sixteenth-notes, where a *ritardando* might feel unnatural. The piano part in this song presents considerable challenges, not only in terms of technical execution, but also in

capturing the character of the work. The piano part frequently utilizes thirds and sixths, while simultaneously highlighting the melodic line. One of the most demanding passages occurs on page 319, where the left hand involves jumps outlining various harmonies while the right-hand jumps and plays double notes. Additionally, Rachmaninoff further challenges the pianist and the vocalist with expressive markings such as *ritenuto*, *leggiero*, and *cantabile*, which require precise execution.

Ex. 33 – The last three pages of the song are quite challenging for the pianist. This section entails navigating numerous jumps in both hands while maintaining a legato melodic line, addressing issues related to timing and rubato, and several extended intervals that may pose difficulties in the right hand. Furthermore, there are frequent instances of passing the melodic line between the left and right hand while simultaneously playing additional internal notes, adding to the complexity of the performance.

Ex. 36 - The first obstacle the singer needs to overcome is in the first measure, where the pianist is tasked with executing sixteenth-note sextuplets in a pianissimo dynamic. The entrance of the vocalist proves to be a considerable challenge, as it is difficult to perceive the larger beats. To address this, we worked on placing a subtle emphasis on the second beat of the measure to enhance the rhythmic clarity for the singer.

Trio in G Minor

Ex. 38 – One of the technical challenges of this passage lies in the piano part, where the pianist must execute a rapid jump from the lower to higher register at the end of each measure for the succeeding descending run. Moreover, our ensemble encountered a challenge regarding the string instruments' tendency to push the tempo due to their sustained notes or eighth-note

patterns while trying to shape the phrase. As in previous examples, I lightly emphasized each of the larger beats for rhythmic clarity.

Ex. 39 – The passage is marked in *fortissimo*, with thirty-second note scales in both hands. Each scale passage comprises either melodic or harmonic scales, resolving to a new chord with each iteration. Since executing this passage cleanly and accurately can be quite challenging, it is helpful to memorize this section of the trio.

Ex. 40 – In my preparation, I experimented with several interpretations to determine the most natural and organic approach. In addition, I worked on pacing and rubato to further highlight the fluidity in this section.

APPENDIX III

Composer Biography, Historical Tidbits and Notes on Performing

Johannes Brahms

Johannes Brahms was born in 1833 in Hamburg and died in Vienna in 1897. From a young age, Brahms had to help his family with finances by performing on the piano. He was an excellent pianist playing in dance halls. As a piano student, Brahms was extremely talented, so the leading teachers of Hamburg taught him without asking for any pay. His reputation as a pianist eventually led him to getting a job as a tour accompanist for the famous Hungarian violinist Edward Remenyi after which many doors opened for Brahms. He met another famous violinist, Joseph Joachim, who then in turn introduced him to the composer Robert Schumann and his wife Clara. Clara Schumann, Brahms and Joachim were committed to the idea of absolute music. They valued classical, traditional forms and musical craftsmanship above all. In 1860, they published a manifesto that was critical of the new German music of the future promoted by Liszt and Wagner. This new German music of the future discarded traditional forms in favor of tone poems, symphonic works that told a story and of course, Wagner's new form of opera with endless melody.

Brahms became well established in Vienna, not only as a composer but as a pianist and a conductor. He also became the focal point of a controversy stirred up by the art critic Eduard Hanslick between the lovers of classical forms in music from the past and also the followers of the new German music of the future, namely the Wagnerites and those who embraced the flamboyant concertos of Liszt and his symphonic tone poems.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ A short lecture on Brahms available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkuNXtDYeN0&ab_channel=TheClevelandOrchestra

Piano Quartet in G Minor

Ex. 42 – The passage features both hands playing a canon, with the right hand performing broken octaves passages that keep jumping in different intervals, while outlining the melody. Meanwhile, the left hand plays the same melody in octaves with its own jumps. This results in both hands being in counterpoint, jumping at different times and intervals, which presents more possibilities for missed notes.

Ex. 43 – This section is also an example of Brahms' attention to counterpoint. In this counterpoint passage, the piano has the melody in the right hand in broken octaves, a beat later the violin and viola join playing the same melody and in the following beat, the left hand of the pianist and cello start the same melody together. There are three melodic lines going on at the same time. (violin and viola, cello and left hand in piano, and the right hand of the piano). We have a canon going in three ways. It can be very confusing aurally. What makes this passage even more virtuosic is that the string instruments are playing in unison. The passage in the instrumental parts is not hard to play in terms of note execution, but matching the intonation is what makes this passage virtuosic.

Intonation

The issue of intonation arises in several instances throughout the G minor quartet where the three string instruments play in unison. In general, the cello and viola tend to play a little lower (flat) and the violin tends to go sharp posing challenges for pitch matching. In piano quartets, the piano serves as the equalizer, therefore it is crucial for the three string instruments to match the piano's pitch. To address this, a significant portion of our rehearsals was dedicated to work on intonation. For instance, measure 35 asks the three string instruments to play sixteenth-note passages in unison, necessitating careful attention to tuning. In selected rehearsal times we

isolated measures 35-41 and played the beginning note of each beat at a slow tempo, listening to the pitch between the instruments and the piano. We started working on the passage at a very slow tempo. We increased our speed each time we went through this passage. Another practice technique we used to work on intonation was to record our practice in different tempos and then listen back to it which helped the group to hear better what other spots had intonation issues. This practice brought the string players attention to what they need to hear and pay attention to when we perform the piece at the performance speed. It did help to hear the harmonies in the piano. We applied the same technique throughout the entire first movement.

Ex. 44 – In executing this passage, the pianist must make a choice regarding which voices to bring out, as both hands play in unison. As a result, an interpretive decision must be made to highlight a certain voice. In my interpretation, I focused on connecting and bringing out the right hand's upper voice while emphasizing the left hand's lower voice. This choice allowed for a clear differentiation of the low lines while maintaining a smooth, *legato* texture.

This passage presents the difficulty of playing *legato*. Playing long *legato* lines on the piano is always challenging since we are playing a percussion instrument and cannot connect one note to another the way string instruments can. *Legato* playing on the piano is an illusion, a musical moment strung together by magic, produced through a combination of listening, finger connectivity, and sometimes pedal. When string players need to play *legato* together in unison, they must match bow strokes, bow speed, vibrato, etc, making *legato* playing a virtuoso element.

Ex. 45 – In this passage the right hand executes the melodic line in leaping octaves, while the left hand plays an arpeggiated accompaniment. Brahms marks this passage to be played *piano* with specific articulation markings, adding to the technical and musical demands.

Ex. 47 – The trio section in the second movement presents several technical challenges for the performers. The passage features rapid eighth-note triplet figures and melodic lines that are passed around between the different instruments. One of the primary challenges of this section is to maintain the tempo and play it without rushing. Additionally, the performers must be attentive to the duration of the notes, ensuring that the eighth-notes are neither rushed nor clipped too early.

A particularly challenging section starts at measure 59 where the piano part switches from playing triplet rhythms to playing eighth notes with a sixteenth rest and sixteenth note while the other string instruments play melodic lines in triplet rhythm. It is crucial to maintain the accuracy of this rhythmic pattern and avoid deviating from it by turning it into a triplet or double dotting it. To master this section, our group practiced with a metronome to hear the subdivision of every single sixteenth note to be heard clearly and avoid switching the rhythm.

Ex. 48 – A technical challenge in this movement can be observed in all four parts at the *animato* section. The piano is presented with the melody in chordal structure in the right hand, while the left hand plays double notes in a slightly faster tempo. The string instruments play repeated thirty second notes. The challenge here is to execute all those parts in a *piano* dynamic, keeping the section lighter.

Ex. 49 – At measure 112, another challenging section arises as the piano part requires the player to perform *legato* octave lines in both hands, each with their melody that involves jumping at different intervals. This presents a significant challenge for the performer as they must maintain a consistent *legato* while executing the octave jumps.

APPENDIX IV

RECITAL I: TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), *Romances*

Я тебе ничего не скажу (I will say nothing to you) Op. 60, No. 2

Text by Afanasy Afanasyevich Fet | Translation by Anton Bepako and Rianne Stam

Я тебе ничего не скажу
и тебя не встревожу ничуть,
и о том, что я молча твержу,
не решусь ни за что намекнуть.
Целый день спят ночные цветы,
но, лишь солнце за рощи зайдёт,
раскрываются тихо листы,
и я слышу, как сердце цветёт...
И в больную, усталую грудь
вечет влагой ночной...
Я дрожу...
Я тебя не встревожу ничуть,
я тебе ничего не скажу!

I will say nothing to you
and will not disturb you at all
And what I kept repeating to myself
I will not dare hint at.
All day long the nightly flowers sleep
Yet the sun has but to disappear behind a cloud,
and they softly enfold their petals
And I listen, how the heart flushes
and the painful, weary chest
is refreshed by the nocturnal moisture...
I tremble...
I will not disturb you at all,
I will say nothing to you!

Скажи, о чём в тени ветвей (Oh say, what is it, in shady branches) Op. 57, No. 1

Text by Fyodor Sologub | Translation by Philippe Ross Bullock

Скажи, о чём в тени ветвей,
Когда природа отдыхает,
Поёт весенний соловей,
И что он песней выражает?
Что тайно всем волнует кровь?
Скажи, скажи, скажи, какое слово
Знакомо всем и вечно ново?
Любовь, любовь, любовь!
Скажи, о чём наедине,
В раздумье, девушка гадает,
Что тайным трепетом во сне
Ей страх и радость обещает?
Недуг тот странный назови,
В котором светлая отрада,
Чего ей ждать, чего ей надо:
Любви! любви!

Oh say, what is it, in shady branches.
When nature is at rest,
That makes the nightingale sing in spring,
And what it is that his song expresses?
What stirs our blood so mysteriously?
Oh say, oh say, what word
Is known to all and is so ever new?
It is love!
Of say, what causes, all alone,
The maiden to wonder and presume,
What fills her sleep with secret trembling,
And promises fear and joy?
Oh name that strange affliction,
Full of radiant delight, for which
She longs and so desires:
It is love!

Скажи! когда от жизненной тоски
 Ты утомленный изнываешь,
 И злой печали вопреки
 Хоть призрак счастья призываешь!
 Что улаждает грудь твою?
 Не те ли звуки неземные,
 Когда услышал ты впервые
 Слова, слова любви!
 Когда услышал ты впервые
 Слова, слова любви!

Oh say, when burdened by life's cares,
 You languish in exhaustion,
 And yet for all sad care,
 You still summon up the ghost of happiness,
 What brings gladness to your breast?
 Is it not those unearthly sounds,
 When you first heard
 The words, the words of love!
 When you first heard
 The words, the words of love!

Я ли в поле да не травушка была (Was I not like grass in lea?) Op. 47 No. 7

Text by Taras Hryhorovych Shevchenko | Translation by Sofia Peycheva

Я ли в поле да не травушка была,
 Я ли в поле не зеленая росла;
 Взяли меня, травушку, скосили,
 На солнышке в поле иссушили.
 Ох, ты, горе мое, горюшко!
 Знать такая моя долюшка!

Was I not like grass in the lea?
 Was I not growing like green grass?
 They took me and cut me down.
 Dried me away in the sun.
 Oh, my misfortune!
 Oh, my miserable fate!

Я ли в поле не пшеничушка была?
 Я ли в поле не высокая росла?
 Взяли меня срезали серпами
 Склали меня на поле снопами
 Ох ты горе, моё горюшко
 Знать такая моя долюшка.

Was I not like grass in the lea?
 Was I not growing like green grass?
 They took me and cut me down.
 Dried me away in the sun.
 Oh, my misfortune!
 Oh, my miserable fate!

Я ли в поле не калинушка была,
 Я ли в поле да не красная росла;
 Взяли калинушку, поломали,
 И в жгутики меня посвязали!
 Ох, ты, горе мое, горюшко!
 Знать такая моя долюшка!

Was I not like a guilder-rose in the lea?
 Was I not growing beautifully in the lea?
 They've broken my branches (and)
 Tied them into bundles.
 Oh, my misfortune!
 Oh, my miserable fate?

Я ль у батюшки не доченька была,
 У родимой не цветочек я росла;
 Неволей меня, бедную, взяли,
 И с немым, седым повенчали!

Ох, ты, горе мое, горюшко!
 Знать такая моя долюшка!

Was I not my father's daughter?
 Was I not my mother's little flower?
 They took me against my will
 [and] wedded me with a grey-haired, unloved
 man.
 Oh, my misfortune!
 Oh, my miserable fate!

День ли царит (Whether day dawns) Op. 47 No. 6

Text by Taras Aleksei Nikolayevich Apukhtin | Translation by Grant A. Lewis

День ли царит, тишина ли ночная,
В снах ли тревожных, в житейской борьбе,
Всюду со мной, мою жизнь наполняя,
Дума все та же, одна роковая,
Всё о тебе!

С нею не страшен мне призрак бывшего,
Сердце воспрянуло снова любя...
Вера, мечты, вдохновенное слово,
Всё, что в душе дорогого, святого,
Всё от тебя!

Будут ли дни мои ясны,
унылы,
Скоро ли сгину я, жизнь загубя!
Знаю одно, что до самой могилы
Помыслы, чувства, и песни, и силы,
Всё для тебя!

Whether day dawns or in the stillness of night,
Whether in a dream or awake,
Everywhere I go, I am filled entirely
With one thought alone:
Only of you!

Gone are the griefs that have tortured me,
Love alone reigns supreme within my heart...
Courage, hope, and eternal devotion,
All that is good, united in my soul,
All that my soul holds dear or sacred,
It is all because of you!

Whether the rest of my days pass in joy or in
sadness,
Whether my life ends soon or late,
I know that, though death overtake me,
All my hope, feeling, song, and strength,
All, all, all are for you

APPENDIX V

RECITAL II: TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943), *6 Romances* (1916)

I. Ночью в саду у меня (At night in my garden)

Text by Aleksándr Blók | Translation by Avetik Isahakian

Ночью в саду у меня
Плачет плакучая ива,
И безутешна она,
Ивушка, грустная ива.
Раннее утро блеснёт—
Нежная девушка-зорька
Ивушке, плачущей горько,
Слёзы кудрями сотрёт.

At night in my garden
A weeping willow weeps,
And nothing will console her,
Sad willow, sad willow tree.
With morning's first light—
Dawn, tender maiden,
From the willow, weeping bitterly,
Will wipe away the tears with her tresses.

II. К ней (To her)

Text by Andréi Bély | Translation by Avetik Isahakian

Травы одеты
Перлами.
Где-то приветы
Грустные
Слышу, — приветы
Милые...

The grasses are adorned
In pearls.
Somewhere greetings
Sorrowful
I hear, — greetings
Dear...

Милая, где ты, —
Милая!..

Dear one, where are you, —
Dear one!..

Вечера светят
Ясные, —
Вечера светят
Красные...
Руки воздеты:
Жду тебя...

Lights of the evening are
Visible, —
Lights of the evening are
Beautiful...
Arms uplifted:
I wait for you...

Милая, где ты, —
Милая?

Dear one, where are you, —
Dear one?

Руки воздеты:
Жду тебя
В струях Леты
Смытую
Бледными Леты

Arms uplifted:
I wait for you
In streams of Lethe
You are washed away
By Lethe's pale

Струями...

Streams...

Милая, где ты, —
Милая?

Dear one, where are you, —
Dear one?

III. Маргаритки (Daisies)

Text by Igor Severiánin | Translation by Avetik Isahakian

О, посмотри! — как много маргариток
И там и тут...
Они цветут; их много; их избыток;
Они цветут.
Их лепестки трёхгранные — как крылья,
Как белый шёлк.
В них — лета мощь, в них — радость
изобилья,
В них — светлый полк.
Готовь, земля, цветам из рос напиток
Дай сок стеблю...
О, девушки, о, звёзды маргариток,
Я вас люблю!

Oh, look! how many are the daisies
Here, and over there...
They're in flower; so many; an abundance;
And all in flower.
Their three-edged petals are like wings,
Like white silk.
They have the power of summer, the joy of
abundance,
They're a shining army.
Earth, fix the flowers a drink of dew,
Give the stems juice... Oh, girls, oh, starry
daisies,
I love you

IV. Я на дудочке играю (I play upon my little pipe)

Text by Valéry Yákovlevich Briúsov | Translation by Avetik Isahakian

Я на дудочке играю,
Тра-ля-ля-ля-ля-ля-ля,
Я на дудочке играю,
Чьи-то души веселя.

I play upon my little pipe,
Tra-la-la-la-la-la-la,
I play and play my little pipe,
Making merry many a soul.

Я иду вдоль тихой речки,
Тра-ля-ля-ля-ля-ля-ля,
Дремлют тихие овечки,
Кротко зыблются поля.

I walk along the quiet stream, Tra-la-la-la-la-la-
la,
Gentle lambs are dozing,
Softly the fields are waving.

Спите, овцы и барашки,
Тра-ля-ля-ля-ля-ля-ля,
За лугами красной кашки
Стройно встали тополя.

Sleep away, sheep and rams, Tra-la-la-la-la-la-
la,
Beyond meadows of red clover, Shapely
poplars rise.

Малый домик там таится,
Тра-ля-ля-ля-ля-ля-ля,
Милой девушке приснится,
Что ей душу отдал я.

A little house is hidden there, Tra-la-la-la-la-la-
la,
A darling girl will have a dream
That I gave my soul to her.

И на нежный зов свирели, Тра-ля-ля-ля-ля-ля-
ля,
Выйдет, словно к светлой цели,
Через лес, через поля.

And to the tender call of a flute, Tra-la-la-la-la-
la-la,
She'll come to keep a rendezvous, Through the
woods, through the fields.

И в лесу под дубом тёмным, Тра-ля-ля-ля-ля-
ля-ля,
Будет ждать в бреду истомном,
В час, когда уснёт земля.

And in the forest under a dark oak, Tra-la-la-la-
la-la-la,
She'll wait in a daze, delirious,
For the hour when the earth sleeps.

Встречу гостью дорогую,
Тра-ля-ля-ля-ля-ля-ля,
Вплоть до утра зацелую,
Сердце лаской утоля.

I will meet my dear guest,
Tra-la-la-la-la-la-la,
Cover her till dawn with kisses,
Slake my heart's desire for caresses.

И, сменившись с ней колечком, Тра-ля-ля-ля-
ля-ля-ля,
Отпущу её к овечкам,
В сад, где стройны тополя.
Тра-ля-ля-ля!

Then, exchanging rings with her, Tra-la-la-la-
la-la-la,
I'll let her join the lambs,
In the garden with the shapely poplars.
Tra-la-la-la!

V. Сон (Sleep)

Text by Feódor Sologúb | Translation by Avetik Isahakian

В мире нет ничего
Вожделенее сна,—
Чары есть у него,
У него тишина,
У него на устах
Ни печаль и ни смех,
И в бездонных очах
Много тайных утех.
У него широки,
Широки два крыла,
И легки, так легки,
Как полночная мгла.
Не понять, как несёт,
И куда, и на чём,
Он крылом не взмахнёт,
И не двинет плечом.

Nothing in the world
Is more wished for than sleep,—
He has powers to charm,
He has stillness.
On his lips there is
Neither sorrow nor laughter,
And in his fathomless eyes
Are many secret pleasures.
He has wide,
Two wide wings,
And they're light,
as light As midnight darkness.
How you're born is unknown,
And whence, and on what,—
He won't flap his wing,
And he won't move his shoulder

VI. Твой нежный смех (Your gentle laughter)

Text by Konstantín Dmítriyevich Balmónt | Translation by Avetik Isahakian

Твой нежный смех был сказкою изменчивою,
Он звал, как в сон зовёт
свирельный звон.
И вот венком, стихом тебя увенчиваю,
Уйдём, бежим вдвоём на
горный склон.
Но где же ты? Лишь звон вершин
позванивает.
Цветку цветок средь дня зажёг свечу.
И чей-то смех всё вглубь меня заманивает.
Пою, ищу. “Ау! Ау!” кричу.

Your gentle laughter was a fairy tale of
changing mood
Calling like a flute that summons me to dream.
And so with a wreath of verse I crown you,
Let's go, let's run together to the mountain
slope.
But where are you? I only hear the ringing
sound of the heights.
A flower for a flower in daylight lit a candle.
And someone's laughter deep inside allures me.
I sing, I search. “A-oo! A-oo!” I shout.

APPENDIX VI

RECITAL III: TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), *Zigeunerlieder*, (1888)

Text by Hugo Conrat | Translation by Richard Stokes

I. He, Zigeuner, greife in die Saiten ein! (Hey, gypsy, sound your strings!)

He, Zigeuner, greife in die Saiten ein!
Spiel das Lied vom ungetreuen Mägdelein!
Laß die Saiten weinen, klagen, traurig bange,
Bis die heiße Träne netzet diese Wange!

Hey, gypsy, sound your strings!
Play the song of the faithless girl!
Make the strings weep and moan in sad despair
Till hot tears moisten these cheeks!

II. Hochgetürmte Rimafluth, wie bist so trüb (Rima, how troubled your towering waters are)

Hochgetürmte Rimaflut, wie bist du so trüb;
An dem Ufer klag ich laut nach dir, mein Lieb!
Wellen fliehen, Wellen strömen,
Rauschen an dem Strand heran zu mir;
An dem Rimaufer laßt mich ewig weinen nach
ihr!

Rima, how troubled your towering waters are;
I'll lament for you loudly on its banks, my love!
Waters rush by, waves stream past,
Roaring towards me on the shore;
On the banks of the Rima let me weep for her
eternally

III. Wisst ihr, wann mein Kindchen (Do you know when my little girl)

Wisst ihr, wann mein Kindchen
Am allerschönsten ist?
Wenn ihr süßes Mündchen
Scherzt und lacht und küßt.
Schätzelein
Du bist mein,
Inniglich
Küß ich dich,
Dich erschuf der liebe Himmel
Einzig nur für mich!
Wißt ihr, wann mein Liebster
Am besten mir gefällt?
Wenn in seinen Armen
Er mich umschlungen hält.
Schätzelein,
Du bist mein,
Inniglich
Küß ich dich,
Dich erschuf der liebe Himmel
Einzig nur für mich!

Do you know when my little girl
Is at her loveliest?
When her sweet little mouth
Jokes and laughs and kisses.
Sweetheart,
You are mine,
Tenderly
I kiss you,
Dear heaven made you
For me alone!
Do you know when my beloved
Pleases me most?
When he holds me
In his arms' embrace.
Sweetheart,
You are mine,
Tenderly
I kiss you,
Dear heaven made you
For me alone!

IV. Lieber Gott, du weißt, wie oft bereut ich hab (Dear God, you know how often I've regretted)

Lieber Gott, du weißt, wie oft bereut ich hab,
Daß ich meinem Liebsten einst ein Küßchen gab.
Herz gebot, daß ich ihn küssen muß,
Denk so lang ich leb an diesen ersten Kuß.
Lieber Gott, du weißt, wie oft in stiller
Nacht Ich in Lust und Leid an meinen Schatz
gedacht.
Lieb ist süß, wenn bitter auch die Reu,

Dear God, you know how often I've regretted
That little kiss I once gave my dearest.
My heart decreed I had to kiss him,
As long as I live I'll think of that first kiss.
Dear God, you know how often in silent nights
I've thought of my love in joy and pain.
Love is sweet, however bitter the regret,
My poor heart will ever be faithful to him.

V. Brauner Bursche führt zum Tanze (A swarthy lad leads his lovely)

Brauner Bursche führt zum Tanze
Sein blauäugig schönes Kind,
Schlägt die Sporen keck zusammen,
Csardas-Melodie beginnt,
Küßt und herzt sein süßes Täubchen,
Dreht sie, führt sie, jauchzt und springt;
Wirft drei blanke Silbergulden
Auf das Cimbale, daß es klingt.

A swarthy lad leads his lovely
Blue-eyed lass to the dance,
Boldly clashes his spurs together,
A csárdás meddoy begins,
He kisses and hugs his sweet little dove,
Turns her, leads her, exults and leaps;
Throws three shining silver florins
That make the cimbalom ring.

VI. Röslein dreie in der Reihe blühn so rot (Three little red roses bloom side by side)

Röslein dreie in der Reihe blühn so rot,
Daß der Bursch zum Mädle gehe, ist kein Verbot!

Three little red roses bloom side by side,
It's no crime for a lad to visit his lass!

Lieber Gott, wenn das verboten wär,
Ständ die schöne weite Welt schon längst nicht
mehr,
Ledig bleiben Sünde wär!
Schönstes Städtchen in Alföld ist Ketschkemet
Dort gibt es gar viele Mädchen schmuck und
nett!
Freunde, sucht euch dort ein Bräutchen aus,
Freit um ihre Hand und gründet euer Haus,
Freudenbecher leeret aus!

Dear God, if that were a crime,
This fair wide world would long ago have
ceased to exist,
Staying single would be a sin!
The loveliest town in Alföld is Kecskemét,
Where many smart and nice girls live!
Friends, find yourselves a young bride there,
Win her hand and set up house,
Drain beakers of joy!

VII. Kommt dir manchmal in den Sinn (Do you sometimes recall)

Kommt dir manchmal in den Sinn,
Mein süßes Lieb,
Was du einst mit heil'gem Eide
Mir gelobt?
Täusch mich nicht, verlaß mich nicht,

Do you sometimes recall,
My sweetest,
What you once pledged to me
With a sacred oath?
Do not deceive me, do not leave me,

Du weißt nicht wie lieb ich dich hab,
Lieb du mich, wie ich dich,
Dann strömt Gottes Huld auf dich herab!

You do not know how much I love you,
Love me as I love you,
And God's grace will pour down on you!

VIII. Rote Abendwolken ziehn (Red evening clouds drift)

Rote Abendwolken ziehn
Am Firmament,
Sehnsuchtsvoll nach dir, mein Lieb,
Das Herze brennt;
Himmel strahlt in glühnder Pracht
Und ich träum bei Tag und Nacht
Nur allein von dem süßen Liebchen mein.

Red evening clouds drift
Across the sky,
My heart burns longingly
For you, my love;
The sky's ablaze in glowing glory
And night and day I dream
Solely of my sweet love.

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Yue, Zhao. "Eastern Exoticism in Western Music: An Examination of Uyghur Folk Songs' Influence in Brahms' Zigeunerlieder Op. 103." DMA diss., Texas Tech University, 2020. Accessed April 10, 2023. <https://ttuir.tdl.org/bitstream/handle/2346/86210/ZHAO-PROJECTPAPER--DMA-2020.pdf?sequence=1>.

This dissertation examines the rhythm, harmony, and melody of the *Zigeunerlieder* by Brahms. The author compares Brahms' vocal cycle to the Uygur folk songs to study the relationship between Hungarian folk music and the Uyghur folk song.