

Function and Deformation in Sergei Rachmaninoff's Etudes-Tableaux op. 39, Nos. 5 and 6

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The categories of formal function and deformation have become a staple of today's understanding of musical form in the West. Russian theoretical thought has had a number of achievements along the same lines and in its present condition it is ready to welcome North American ideas. The theory of formal function has been thoroughly discussed in Russian theoretical tradition in the course of the 20th century¹ and, therefore, the application of its postulates fits well with music of Sergei Rachmaninoff. This article emphasizes the North American version of this theory, namely, the conceptual framework suggested by William Caplin (1998). The idea of deformation of compositional designs, offered by Warren Darcy and James Hepokoski (2006), will also resonate with many Russian views on both music and art in general. After all, one of the premises of this new magnificent theory of sonata form is the Russian idea of "estrangement."² In addition, the allowance of variability of compositional choices against the default version³ is the result of profound reading of the ideas of dialogic conscience, the one that also originated, among many other sources, in Russian tradition. The major assumption of the author of this article is that the understanding of music of Rachmaninoff can benefit from application of these two most advanced approaches to musical form.

It is especially interesting to apply these major analytical methods to the Etudes-Tableaux

op. 39. For many reasons, during the late 1910s, the compositional language of Rachmaninoff becomes very complex and analysis of these etudes requires application of a number of equally advanced analytical approaches. For example, the formal-functional design of a theme in op. 39, No. 5⁴ presents a heterogeneous set of ideas, ranging from the techniques of ancient Russian chants to some 20th-century strategies. Yet, classical forms remain the core characteristic of Rachmaninoff's melodicism. Needless to say, classical paradigms experience serious deformations in these poetic canvases, the precursors of the dramatic events of the 20th-century.

Therefore, the question this paper is set to clarify is: "What causes deformations in music of Rachmaninoff?"

The influence of Russian Orthodox chant

Rachmaninoff received a formidable training in Russian church music and deeply impressed his contemporaries with two masterworks in this genre, the *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (1910) and the *Vespers* (1915). However, the kinship of his music with the church monody lies deeper than these two incidental compositions; it permeates the very fabric of Rachmaninoff's music. Melodic shapes, harmonic ambiguity, and formal strategies bear the imprint of his genuine aesthetics. Rachmaninoff's melodies rarely display distinct directionality and often present smaller segments

¹ For example, Boris Vladimirovich Asaf'yev in his *Musical Form as a Process* (1930), suggested three main functional stages of musical form that he called *initium*, *motus*, and *terminus*. Igor Vladimirovich Sposobin introduced his theory of six formal functions and five types of their presentation in his *Musical Form*, published in 1947. Viktor Petrovich Bobrovsky's book *Functional Foundation of Musical Form* (1978) provided further development of the ideas of Sposobin and Asaf'yev and presents musical form as a functional phenomenon on a number of levels.

² The term introduced by Viktor Shklovsky in his *Theory of Prose* (1925), which is quoted by Darcy and Hepokoski in their *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types and Deformations in Late Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Hepokoski, Darcy 2006).

³ In Russian theoretical tradition, the variability of definitions of form has been thoroughly studied. Viktor Tsukkerman uses the term "the form of the second plan," which means that in many cases in Classical style (and, wider, in all three styles of common practice) a single definition of form is insufficient and secondary definitions are needed. Most famous case in Tsukkerman's analyses is his dual definition of form of Mikhail Glinka's "Kamarinskaya," presented in his book *Glinka's Kamarinskaya and Russian Traditions* (1957). A more detailed discussion of these sources is available in my Ph.D. dissertation *Russian Methodology of Musical Form and Analysis* (2003).

⁴ From here and on Etude-Tableau op. 39, No. 5 will be called Etude No. 5, and op. 39, No. 6 will be called Etude No. 6.

Example 1. Znamenny neume *pauk* and its use in Etude No. 5.

Etude No. 5 Neume Spider (*pauk*)

Spiders from four *glasy*, 1, 3, 8, and 6

that frequently change direction. Melody reaches the limits of a fourth and turns in the opposite direction; this happens many times within a single melodic-thematic statement. In comparison with, say, Viennese Classical melody, Rachmaninoff's does not arpeggiate triads and does not prolong fifth-based structures. One possible explanation can be drawn from the differences between major Western and Russian scale structures: Greek *systema* (and many its Western derivatives) rely upon tetrachords that complete quintal transpositional limits, while Russian *obikhod* scale (g3, a3, b3, // c4, d4, e4 // f4, g4, a4 // b4, c5, d5) is built upon trichords and the interval of maximum transposition is the fourth.⁵ In the opening melody of Etude No. 5 Rachmaninoff uses either the trichords from the *obikhod* scale, or their modified and extended versions. The arpeggiation (f4-d4, a4-b4, c5) in the beginning of the melody is a compromise, modification of the stepwise trichord in order to fit into harmonic accompaniment. How-

ever, if it is reversed to a trichord (f4-e4, d4-c4) it will sound as one of the most common melodic pattern of Znamenny chant, the neume *pauk*.⁶

Further in the melody, this neume undergoes intensive variation. Its relaxed and uncanny variability is quite characteristic of usage of neumes (*krjuks* and *znamena*) in the Russian chant tradition. After all, a single neume (such as Spider) receives various realizations in different *glasy* (collections of patterns) of the *oktoich* or *os'moglasiye*.⁷

Rachmaninoff's melody is also distinct from the Western common-practice prototypes in its multiple climaxes. This is the mark of the prosaic prototype (chant), as opposed to rhymed verse prototype of Viennese Classical forms. There are simply more climaxes in a prose than in a rhymed verse. The climax is rendered in the melody of the Etude No. 5 in a very specific wave-and-hook shape. It is very similar to a Byzantine neume⁸ *climacus*. Both express ecstatic emotional condition, realized in an exclamatory gesture.

⁵ Within the Western system the quintal limit has been replaced by octaval and, in major and minor tonality the ultimate interval of transposition is an octave. It may look and sound very strange for a contemporary ear that such outer limit of the system in Russian chant was a fourth. The consequences of this distinction are far-reaching: Russian melodies of this tradition do not seem so "see" the goal, the point of arrival set outside of the local level, as do Classical-Romantic systems of harmony. Instead, Russian melody quietly meanders along the collections of patterns. A good example of such non-teleological musical thinking is the theme of the Concerto No. 3.

⁶ Russ. "spider."

⁷ There is a system of eight modes (*echoi*) in Byzantine chant tradition that is called *octoechos*. By analogy, modal system of Russian Znamenny chant is often labeled also as *echoi*. However, its principal difference from the Byzantine system is that it is not based upon eight pitch collections; rather it distributes the wealth of melodic patterns of the chant into eight groups that are called *glasy*. Therefore, it is not adequate to translate *glas* as *echos*.

⁸ More precisely, the neumes with this name existed in both Western and Eastern chant traditions. Egon Wellesz (1961) suggests that *climacus* has been used in Byzantine chant.

Example 2. Byzantine neume *climacus* and its use in Etude No. 5.

Etude No. 5, melodic climax

Byzantine neume *climacus*

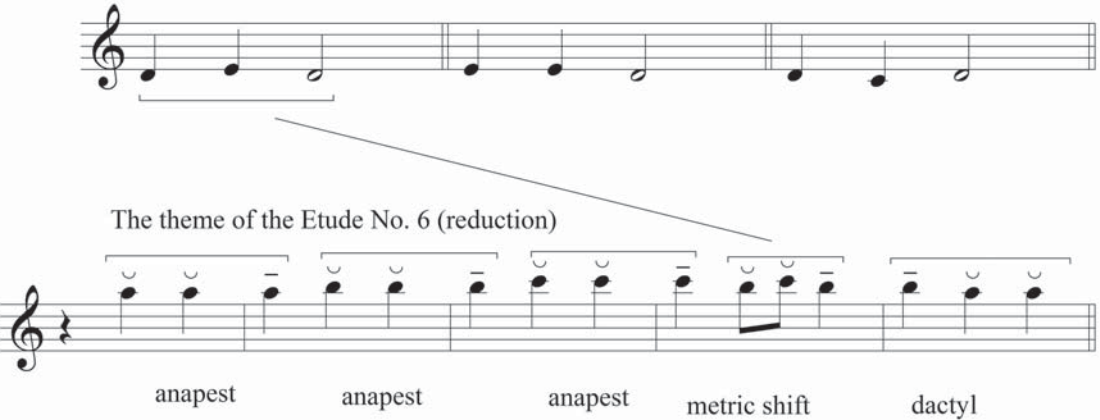


The image shows a single staff of music in G major (one sharp). The first part, labeled 'Etude No. 5, melodic climax', consists of a sequence of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The second part, labeled 'Byzantine neume climacus', consists of a sequence of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The two parts are identical.

Example 3. Znamenny neume *khamila* and its use in Etude No. 6.

Znamenny neume *khamila* in various *glasy*

The theme of the Etude No. 6 (reduction)



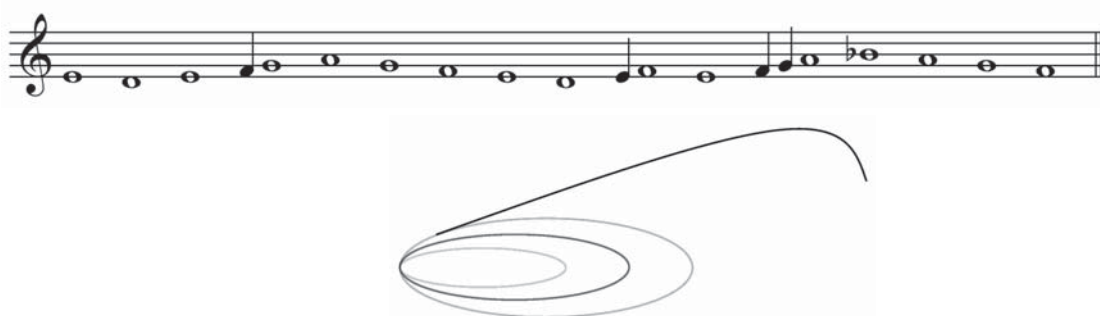
The image shows two staves of music. The first staff, labeled 'Znamenny neume khamila in various glasy', shows three measures of music in G major (one sharp). Each measure contains a half note: G4, A4, B4. The second staff, labeled 'The theme of the Etude No. 6 (reduction)', shows five measures of music in G major (one sharp). The first three measures are anapests (two eighth notes followed by a quarter note), the fourth measure is a metric shift (two eighth notes followed by a quarter note), and the fifth measure is a dactyl (a quarter note followed by two eighth notes). The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F#3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2, F#2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1, F#1, E1, D1, C1, B0, A0, G0, F#0, E0, D0, C0, B-1, A-1, G-1, F#-1, E-1, D-1, C-1, B-2, A-2, G-2, F#-2, E-2, D-2, C-2, B-3, A-3, G-3, F#-3, E-3, D-3, C-3, B-4, A-4, G-4, F#-4, E-4, D-4, C-4, B-5, A-5, G-5, F#-5, E-5, D-5, C-5, B-6, A-6, G-6, F#-6, E-6, D-6, C-6, B-7, A-7, G-7, F#-7, E-7, D-7, C-7, B-8, A-8, G-8, F#-8, E-8, D-8, C-8, B-9, A-9, G-9, F#-9, E-9, D-9, C-9, B-10, A-10, G-10, F#-10, E-10, D-10, C-10, B-11, A-11, G-11, F#-11, E-11, D-11, C-11, B-12, A-12, G-12, F#-12, E-12, D-12, C-12, B-13, A-13, G-13, F#-13, E-13, D-13, C-13, B-14, A-14, G-14, F#-14, E-14, D-14, C-14, B-15, A-15, G-15, F#-15, E-15, D-15, C-15, B-16, A-16, G-16, F#-16, E-16, D-16, C-16, B-17, A-17, G-17, F#-17, E-17, D-17, C-17, B-18, A-18, G-18, F#-18, E-18, D-18, C-18, B-19, A-19, G-19, F#-19, E-19, D-19, C-19, B-20, A-20, G-20, F#-20, E-20, D-20, C-20, B-21, A-21, G-21, F#-21, 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E-252, D-252, C-252, B-253, A-253, G-253, F#-253, E-253, D-253, C-253, B-254, A-254, G-254, F#-254, E-254, D-254, C-254, B-255, A-255, G-255, F#-255, E-255, D-255, C-255, B-256, A-256, G-256, F#-256, E-256, D-256, C-256, B-257, A-257, G-257, F#-257, E-257, D-257, C-257, B-258, A-258, G-258, F#-258, E-258, D-258, C-258, B-259, A-259, G-259, F#-259, E-259, D-259, C-259, B-260, A-260, G-260, F#-260, E-260, D-260, C-260, B-261, A-261, G-261, F#-261, E-261, D-261, C-261, B-262, A-262, G-262, F#-262, E-262, D-262, C-262, B-263, A-263, G-263, F#-263, E-263, D-263, C-263, B-264, A-264, G-264, F#-264, E-264, D-264, C-264, B-265, A-265, G-265, F#-265, E-265, D-265, C-265, B-266, A-266, G-266, F#-266, E-266, D-266, C-266, B-267, A-267, G-267, F#-267, E-267, D-267, C-267, B-268, A-268, G-268, F#-268, E-268, D-268, C-268, B-269, A-269, G-269, F#-269, E-269, D-269, C-269, B-270, A-270, G-270, F#-270, E-270, D-270, C-270, B-271, A-271, G-271, F#-271, E-271, D-271, C-271, B-272, A-272, G-272, F#-272, E-272, D-272, C-272, B-273, A-273, G-273, F#-273, E-273, D-273, C-273, B-274, A-274, G-274, F#-274, E-274, D-274, C-274, B-275, A-275, G-275, F#-275, E-275, D-275, C-275, B-276, A-276, G-276, F#-276, E-276, D-276, C-276, B-277, A-277, G-277, F#-277, E-277, D-277, C-277, B-278, A-278, G-278, F#-278, E-278, D-278, C-278, B-279, A-279, G-279, F#-279, E-279, D-279, C-279, B-280, A-280, G-280, F#-280, E-280, D-280, C-280, B-281, A-281, G-281, F#-281, E-281, D-281, C-281, B-282, A-282, G-282, F#-282, E-282, D-282, C-282, B-283, A-283, G-283, F#-283, E-283, D-283, C-283, B-284, A-284, G-284, F#-284, E-284, D-284, C-284, B-285, A-285, G-285, F#-285, E-285, D-285, C-285, B-286, A-286, G-286, F#-286, E-286, D-286, C-286, B-287, A-287, G-287,

Figure 1. Spinning-out the spiral in the melody of Etude No. 5.

Spinning a spiral spring in Etude No. 5



Metaphor of spinning-out a spiral spring in Znamenny chant (example from M. Brazhnikov (1972: 288))



example, in the first movement of Concerto No. 1, Rachmaninoff creates numerous climaxes and all of them fall on subdominant harmony (more precisely, on supertonic half-diminished six-five chord). After hearing these climaxes so many times, a listener may come to a conclusion that the concerto is written in B minor with the accidental prolongations of its minor dominant triad. Even the modulatory path of Transition reveals the same adherence to quartal structure: its first gesture is pivot chord modulation to the key of subdominant¹⁰ – rather rare case in classical form and a sign of serious deformation of the structure of classical sonata exposition in Rachmaninoff's interpretation.

Aesthetic ideas and dramaturgy

The simplicity and traditionalism of Rachmaninoff's music is deceiving. Under its conventional surface one can find significant innovations in many vital areas. Although melody has been undeniably his greatest achievement, the treatment of traditional disposition of "voice and accompaniment" established in early 16th century, is constantly challenged by Rachmaninoff. A "voice" often loses its dominance and splits into a multiplicity of arabesque. Melody, as shown earlier on example of Etude No. 5, leaves the domain of imitation of linguistic periodic structure, and enters the realm of pure figuration. Melodic motion types are so clearly expressed that their percep-

¹⁰ According to calculation of frequency of modulations by Gottfried Weber, the modulation to subdominant has been the least frequent in music of his time.

Figure 2. Flight motive in music of Scriabin and Rachmaninoff.

Rachmaninoff, Etude No. 5

Scriabin, *Poem of Ecstasy*

Allegro volando

tion leads to direct motoric association, such as a spiral and a swing (Fig. 1), flight (with some similarities¹¹ to Alexander Scriabin's theme of flight (*le vol*) in *Poem of Ecstasy*, Fig. 2), or bouncing along ballistic trajectories. The latter can often cause a performer to forget the complex rhetoric and symbolic systems, as well as the technical-compositional exigencies, and simply flow with the flow. It is a pure corporeal joy to play this segment in Etude No. 5, the epitome of kinesthesia (Fig. 3).

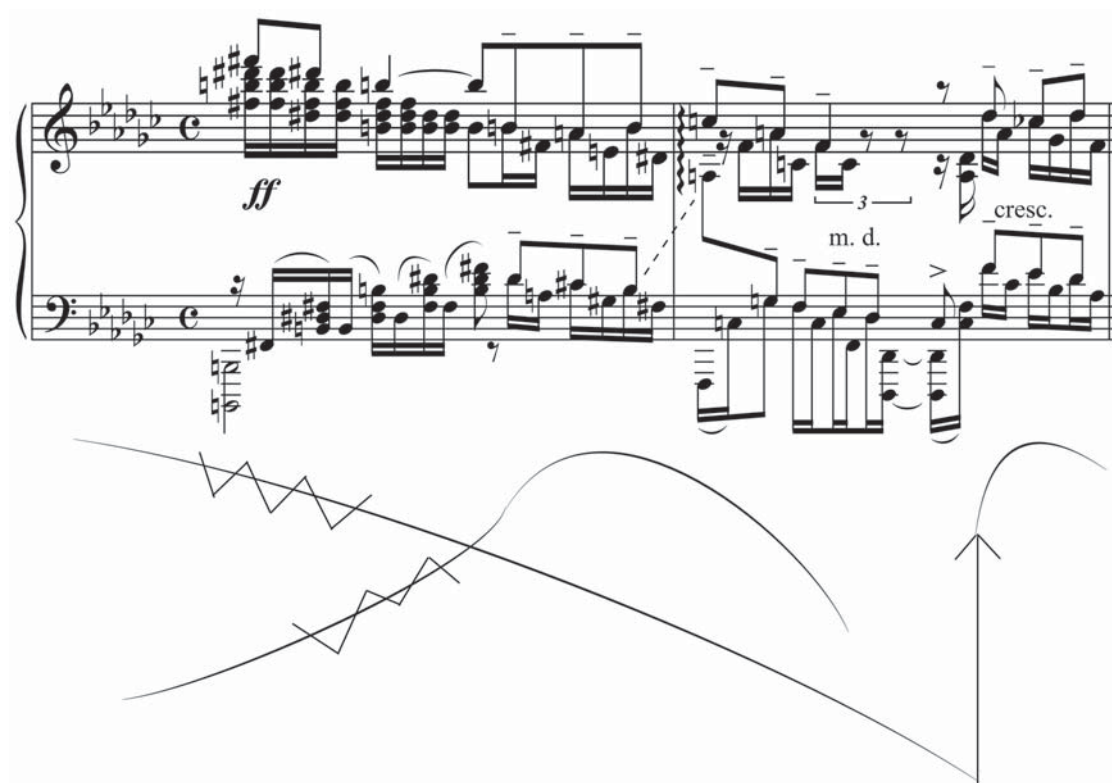
These factors – turning voice into arabesque,¹² melodic quasi-linguistic syntax into geometry and physics of immediate corporeal experiences –

can be called deformations in the same sense as this term is used by Darcy and Hepokoski (2006) in relation to Classical forms. Of course, the degree of deformation and its sources here, in late Romantic and early-20th-century Russian music, are quite distinct from those of Classical style.

Aesthetic ideas, presented on the local level as a geometry of gestures and breathing, are, on the larger scale, a turn into what Russian theorists call “dramaturgic profile” of a musical work. This idea – that a purely instrumental composition may manifest the aspects of large-scale scenic drama – has been brewing in the Russian tradition

¹¹ This similarity between Rachmaninoff's climactic figure and Scriabin's “flight motive” is not as thorough as other analogies. The author admits that resemblance of these two note patterns is partial and there is great deal of dissimilarity in aesthetics of Rachmaninoff and Scriabin. Yet, nobody can deny some kinship, considering the fact that they both grew up in the same environment.

¹² Arabesque is the term commonly used in Russian musicology. The deeper meaning of this term is philosophical; it is the means of expression that lacks subjective character. Historically, arabesque comes from the Arabic visual arts, in which the depiction of a human face was prohibited. The creative energy of an artist was therefore channeled into composition of pure figuration, running lines.

Figure 3. Ballistic trajectories in Etude No. 5.

for decades. Probably the first attempt to harness the dramaturgic forces of a symphonic work was made by Victor Tsukkerman in his analysis of Glinka's *Kamarinskaya* (*Glinka's Kamarinskaya and the Russian Traditions*, 1957). He provides a graph of dramaturgic events in this famous composition. Graphic representation of dramaturgy and narrative is elaborated on in Viktor Bobrovsky seminal text *Functional Foundations of Musical Form* (1978). Valentina Kholopova in her lectures at Moscow Conservatory in 1983–84 provided numerous graphs of dramaturgy, including the analyses of music of Chopin, Schnittke and other composers. For example, her analysis of Chopin's Second Ballade presents a struggle of two agencies, which she calls alpha and beta forces, on the way of their collision.

This way of analysis may seem not formal enough. However, upon closer examination, the

representation of the "dramaturgic profile" appears to be synonymous with the idea of "trajectory" of sonata form, suggested by Darcy and Hepokoski. Indeed, just as the trajectory is the result of interaction of formal and rhetorical devices (the latter includes rotations, deformations and medial caesura), the path through which a Romantic instrumental composition leads its listener cannot be reduced to formal structures alone and necessarily includes the aspects of rhetoric, dramaturgy and semantics. In general, in all well-developed genres of artworks, the grammar is superimposed on rhetoric and both create an indissoluble conglomerate. At least, such is the view of Gérard Genette¹³ and Paul De Man,¹⁴ who studied masterpieces of literature, film and theatre.

This inevitably leads to the interpretation of musical form a multi-dimensional phenomenon that requires an interdisciplinary approach. In this

¹³ Cf. Genette's *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Genette 1983).

¹⁴ "Interaction of syntagmatic (metonymic) and paradigmatic (metaphoric) sides in literature: metaphor is not a substitution, but a particular type of combination" (De Man 1979: 6).

Figure 4. Kholopova's dramaturgic profile of Chopin's Second Ballade.

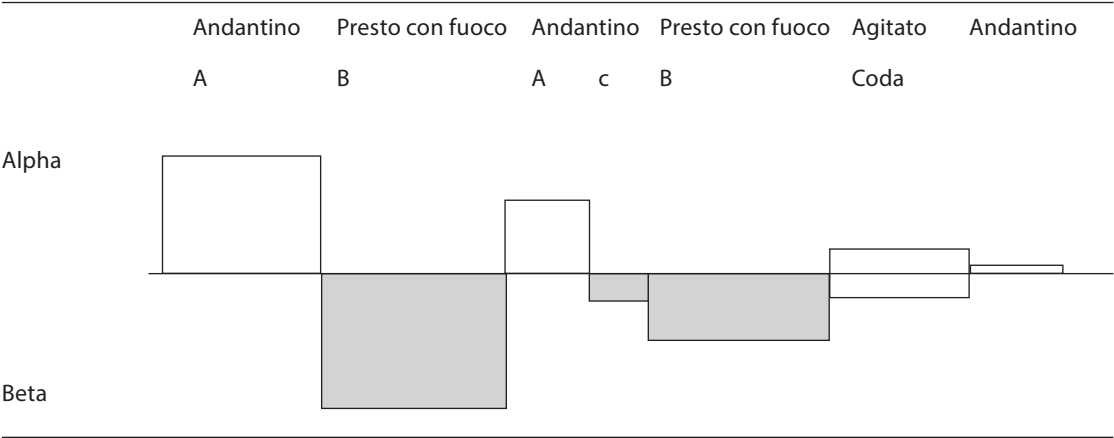


Figure 5. Combined formal and semiotic graph of Etude No. 5.

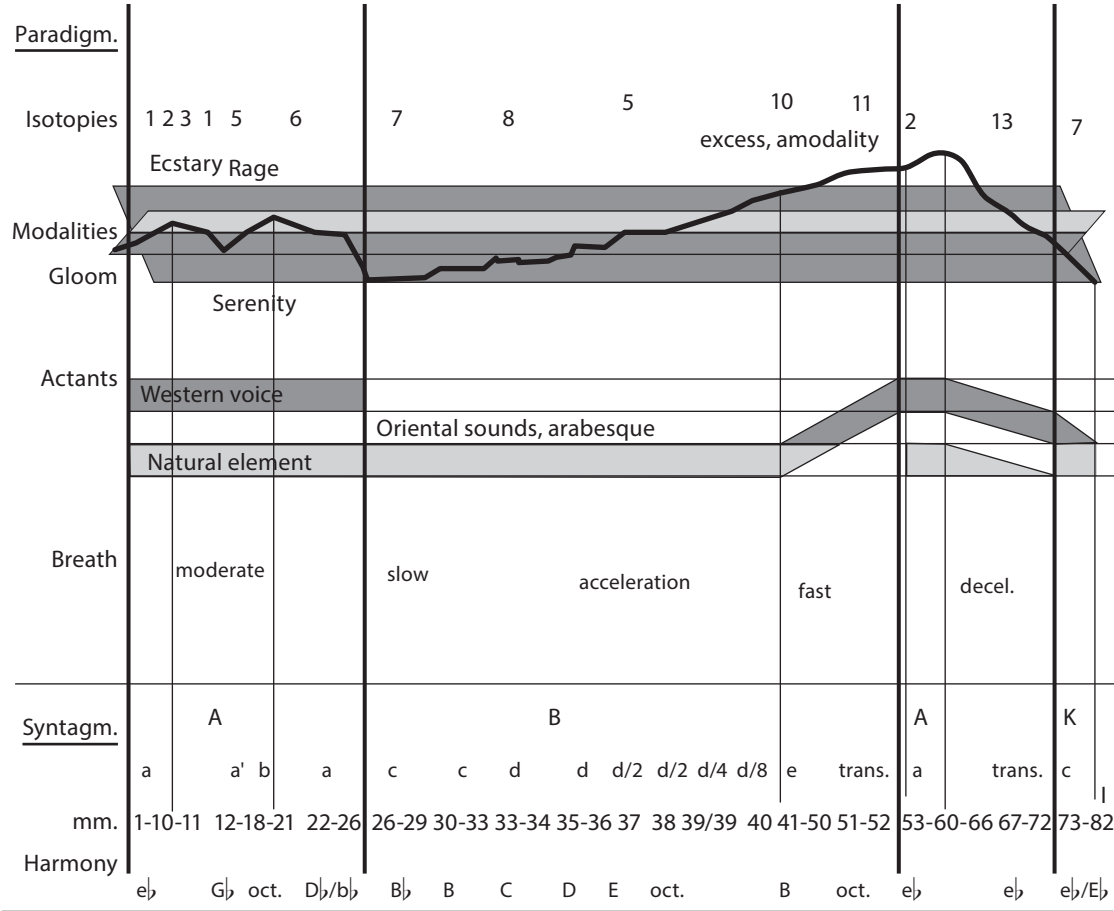
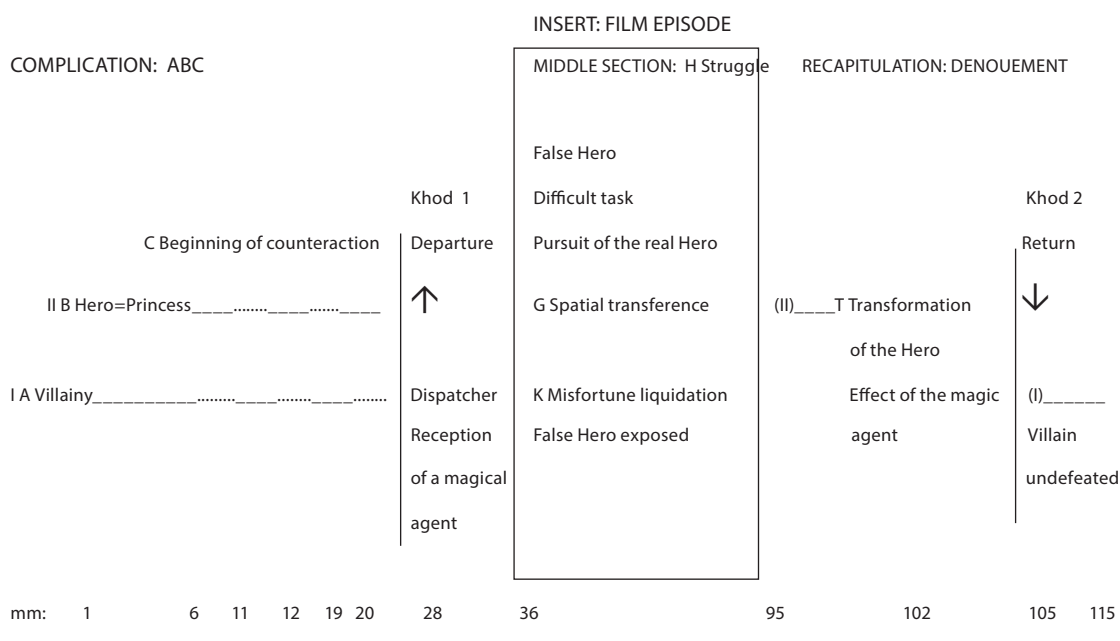


Figure 6. Morphology of the exposition of Etude No. 6.

Morphology of the Etude No. 6 analyzed as a fairy tale



respect, the intuitions of Darcy and Hepokoski appear to be in sync with those of Russian and Soviet theorists.

Rachmaninoff's musical thinking presents an exciting object of research in this sense. He retained traditional formal-compositional structures and compensated their relative simplicity with the advancements of semiotic and rhetorical aspects. His *Etudes-Tableaux* reminds us of Baroque language in its enhanced multi-layered allegoric mode of expression.

Figure 5 that represents the results of analysis of Etude No. 5 falls into two sections: the lower section depicts the major structural events in harmony, form and thematic-motivic dimensions; these events are coordinated with the analysis of the Etude from standpoint of dramaturgy of emotions and interaction of *actants* (in semiotic terms, suggested by Algirdas Greimas (1970) and applies to music by Eero Tarasti (1994) and Robert Hatten (2004)). It is interesting to observe how the emotional content and narrative react to the events on formal-compositional level.

Etude No. 6 can be analyzed in terms of Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of a Fairy Tale* (Propp

1928): There are three phrases in the beginning (as mentioned earlier, a trinity in the traditional tale narrative). They are introduced intermittently with inserts of the negative *actant* (Grey Wolf), just as Propp suggests on his scheme of protagonist – antagonist interaction. There are segments in music that correspond to the role of Dispatcher, to the chase. In the recapitulation, the harmony of “melting” chromaticism suggests analogies with the effects of the magic potion – another part of the morphology of a fairy tale.

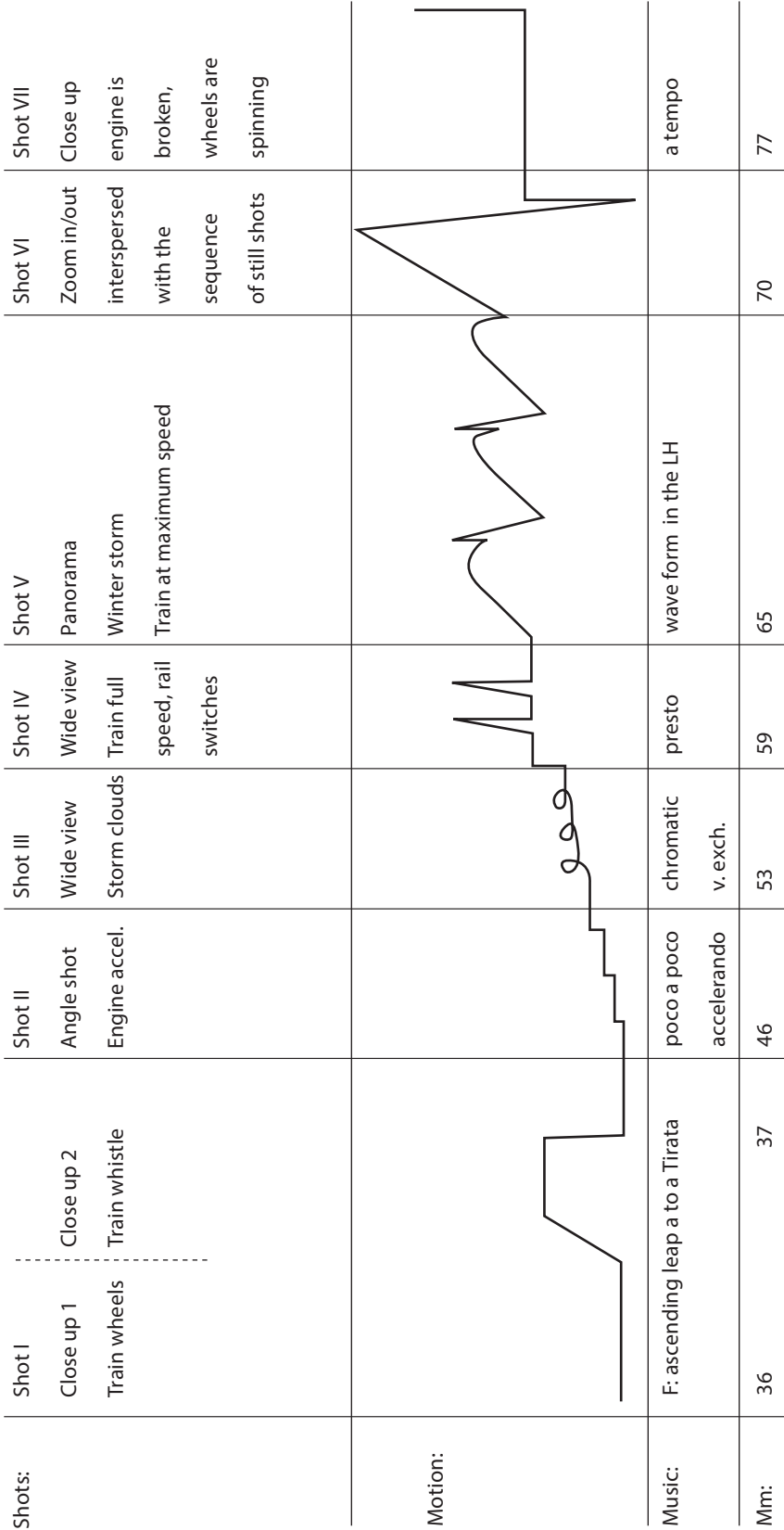
The middle section of its large ternary form seems to shift gears. It is rendered as a single harmonic progression with no structural divisions, appropriate for classical form. Instead, the patches of texture are linked together in the manner reminding of film montage. Sergei Eisenstein's analysis of his film *Alexander Nevsky* (with Sergei Prokofiev's music) comes to mind (Eisenstein 1949). The semantics of this music is easily decipherable for anyone who knows the history of the Soviet Union. There are many similar examples in early Soviet film of the same type of the soundtrack: the vehemently spinning wheels of the steam engine “that will bring us to the future”

Figure 7. The middle section of Etude No. 6 analyzed as a film montage.

The B section as a film episode (montage and motion diagram of mm. 36–93)

“Music to a non-existent film” (Ennio Morricone)

A diagram in a style of Sergei Eisenstein



is difficult to disregard when listening to this masterpiece.

Of course, the most exciting twist is seen in the way Rachmaninoff collides the fairy tale with the film montage. The fairy tale loses its customary normative aesthetics and receives a powerful transformative jolt from the menacing film scene in the middle section. And, by the way, in Propp's analyses all fairy tales end either with the victory of a Hero over the Villain or with the wedding. Neither is the case in the Etude No. 6. The Hero, in contrast with tradition, is a female character, and her fate is locked in tragedy.¹⁵ A Grey Wolf – the ultimate negative *actant* – prevails.

Harmonic aspect

The harmonic language of the Etudes-Tableaux op. 39 presents a special case within Rachmaninoff's style. The methods, suggested by transformational and neo-Riemannian theories, seem to work well for certain segments of otherwise traditional harmonic progressions. Following a rich and continuous Russian tradition, Rachmaninoff employs the sections of his scores in a very contrasting harmonic style which suspends the effect of functional differentiation (according to Tatiana Bershadskaya (1985)). These sections appear unprepared and disappear the same way. Since Mikhail Glinka, the aesthetics of an insert in one of the artificial modes into a tonal progression served special dramaturgic function. It represented the sphere of the fantastic, the realm of a fairy tale. Music of such an insert is, by default, different from the surrounding material. Its otherness is often expressed in a symmetric equal division of an octave. Such an octatonic insert in the theme of Etude No. 5 functions as an agent of deformation (see Ex. 4).

Noticeable is the polyphonic linear chromaticism that smashes the tonal skeleton and disorients the directional tendencies of tonal centers. The characteristic of linear chromaticism was pondered by Ernst Kurth, in his analysis of the opening progression of *Tristan and Isolde* (Kurth 1920). Kurth tried to switch the attention of an analyst from the structure of notated sound to the psychology of non-verbal logic that underlines many

harmonic progressions. More precisely, linear chromaticism violates the order of discourse and leads to temporary eclipse of teleological control. Non-directional and non-regulated, these inserts generate pure intensity and, in Deleuzian terms (Deleuze, Guattari 1986), non-orthopedic linearity. If the material before and after such an insert presents harmonic progression, then the insert itself can be labeled as "harmonic transgression."

Cases of harmonic transgressions are numerous in music of Rachmaninoff. Robust and mechanistic, these deformations create a rich field of references. For examples, in the recapitulation of Etude No. 6, dubbed by Rachmaninoff "Little Red Riding Hood," harmony is distorted in such a way that it creates an image of melting. This effect is reached by resolutions of the dominant seventh chord to sonorities a half-step lower than expected (Ex. 5).

This image is a staple of Russian Romanticism; melting of a female protagonist started in Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov's *Snowmaiden* and passed through a chain of female characters in both opera and instrumental compositions.

Form and deformations

As for the forms, Rachmaninoff does not hesitate to start with the most common classical outlines. It has been noted by Russian theorist Boris Gnilov (2015) that Rachmaninoff's forms are taken from Adolf Bernhard Marx's textbook. This, however, does not mean that he had limited view of forms and their possibilities. Moreover, standard schemes were revised and deformed in such a way that in most of the Etudes and later works, it is impossible to adhere to traditional analysis. The first section of a large ternary form in Etude 5 occupies two pages of piano score. Its rich chromatic harmony and extended melodic material leaves it clear, though, that the segment is written in a rounded binary form. This is, of course, a very general estimate. An analyst cannot simply disregard the fact that the melodic-motivic filling of the antecedent phrase comes not from succinct Haydn-esque Q&A type, but from mediaeval Russian chant (as discussed earlier). If there is a basic idea, it lasts for 8 measures and contains six

¹⁵ This vivid interpretation belongs, of course, to the author of this article. However, it is based upon cultural experience that is quite similar to that of the composer. Rachmaninoff dropped a hint at it in naming the Etude "Little Red Riding Hood."

Example 4. Octatonic insert in the antecedent phrase of the Etude No. 5.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for Sergei Rachmaninoff's Etude No. 5, Op. 39, No. 5. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with complex chordal textures and melodic lines. Below each system, harmonic analysis labels are provided for various measures.

System 1:

- Db: I⁷
- V³/vi
- ↑vi^o
- A: V/V¹5
- V⁷

System 2:

- C: V/V¹5
- V⁷
- B: V/V¹5
- V⁷

System 3:

- Db: I
- ct^{o7}
- iv⁴₂
- b: vi⁴₂
- V ♯

The third system also includes a *ff* dynamic marking and a triplet of eighth notes in the right hand.

Example 5. “Melting” chromaticism in the recapitulation of Etude No. 6.

submotives. The consequent phrase begins with the digression into D \flat major and, according to the perception of the tempo and rhythm of the form (hypermetric sense) a listener expects a cadence that would complete a parallel period. However, quite unexpectedly, an octatonic insert enters without warning. Even more abrupt is its end, in which the resolution of the dominant is completely deformed and the recapitulation of the rounded binary form sounds “in the wrong key.”

The basic idea of the Etude No. 6 is even more peculiar. Its metric and harmonic structure is so ambiguous that it makes sense to speak of an equivalent of the intentional tongue-tie in Russian literature, specifically found in the prose of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Andrei Platonov and Daniil Harms. It defies the basic even-odd pattern recognition that predetermines the perceptibility of musical logic as well as speech. Three beats distribute harmonic function in such a way that the anacrusis is expressed in a strange substitute sonority (the one that the author of this article calls a “Rachmaninoff’s dominant”);¹⁶ on the strong beat there is tonic function, but it is expressed in the form of the second inversion; and on the

weak beat there is a tonic triad with the root in the bass. So, the two tonic harmonies are present, one is weaker (inverted and thus temporarily “root-less” or offset) but on the strong beat; another is stronger (with the root in the bass) but is given on a weak beat of the measure. This is clumsy and awkward, yet it represents a special perception of beauty by Nordic people, hidden, non-glamorous, internal perfection (see Ex. 6).

The exposition of the Large Ternary in Etude No. 6 is also very unusual. It consists of three phrases, but there are many factors that preclude defining it as a period. Instead, it can be interpreted as a form of a fairy tale. Its three phrases related to famous metro-rhythmic disposition in so many examples of this genre: three times came an old man to the sea shore; three times he called out a Golden Fish, etc. Its tonal plan is, again, subdominant-oriented. First phrase is in A minor, second phrase reaches D minor, and the third ends in G minor. Such a walk-away tendency is uncharacteristic for classical presentation section.

The cadence in the first phrase is rendered as a prolongation of tonic by means of subdominant chords (see Ex. 7a and b).

¹⁶ It calls for the reference to “dominant” because of plethora of leading tones to the tones of white-key diatonic (D \sharp , B). However, the very leading tone of A minor – the G sharp – is missing in this sonority!

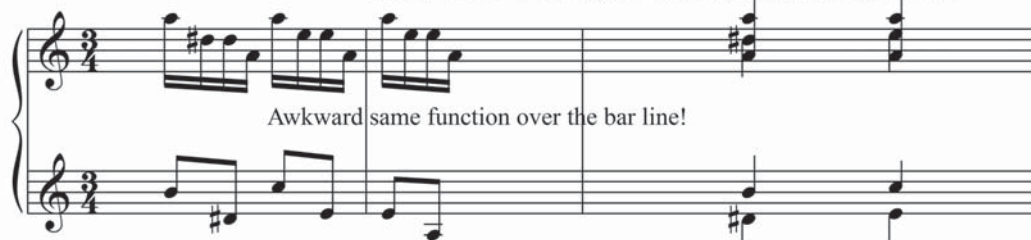
Example 6. Basic idea of the Etude No. 6.

B.i. of the Etude No. 6

Tonic on the weak beat in 6/4 position

Another tonic on the adjacent strong beat; missing a third!

Awkward same function over the bar line!



a: II_2^{\sharp} functioning as a dominant, with the unresolved seventh;
another interpretation is the six-five of the V of V that resolves directly into tonic, bypassing the dominant!

a: II_2^{\sharp} – I_4^{\flat} Enhanced “leading-toneness” but absent leading tone proper!

Compare it to so-called Prokofiev’s dominant:



C: VII I

The second phrase presents elaboration on the first by means of motivic extensions and a sudden break in harmonic logic. The methods of development here are more characteristic of folk music and, in general, monadic tradition, than to classical *motivische Arbeit* (see Ex. 8).

The third phrase is further elongated by an insert (extrapolation), and motivic extension. A strongly anticipated formal event – a cadence that would close the development of all three phrases – is missing here. This license taken by Rachmaninoff, is much more serious than one can imagine. It simply destroys the very basics of classical form and harmony and switches the interpretation of form to that of a narrative semiotic utterance (énoncé) accompanied by musical context (Ex. 9).

An even more drastic intervention into common-practice harmonic language and form is seen at the end of the exposition of this etude. In place of a cadence, there is an insert of contrasting material with six chords leading to the dominant. They substitute for the more common dominant preparation (either tonic or predominant). Using the analogy of applied dominants, one can say that this segment contains six applied predominant functions. Indeed, each seems to “resolve” into another. Proximity and adjacency are evident. However, any attempt of functional (or scale-step) reading of these sonorities will bring an analyst to a jarring disconnect of chords in the left and the right hand. This mysterious sequence of sonorities is another example of *harmonic transgression*, discussed earlier. In the Kurthian sense, a spiraling down the cone trajectory overrides both functional and triadic prolongational readings, transforming the traditional musical form into semiotics of emotional changes (Ex. 10).

Another aspect of deformation in Rachmaninoff’s form is its well-known surpassing the normative length of breath. Marietta Shaginyan, Russian journalist and a friend of Rachmaninoff, noticed it in her essays of 1910s (Shaginyan 1975). This way of affecting listeners was known to many composers before Rachmaninoff. Thus, J. S. Bach extends his melodic statements beyond the expected point of a cadence. The effect is felt imme-

Example 7a and b. First phrase of the exposition of Etude No. 6.

Example 7a and b. First phrase of the exposition of Etude No. 6.

Example 7a shows a first phrase of the exposition of Etude No. 6. The notation includes a treble and bass staff with a complex harmonic structure. The harmonic analysis below the staff is as follows:

a: DII_3^6 i_4^6 $i-3$ V^{94}/iv ii_4^{o6} ii_2^{o4} iv_3^6 vii^{o7}/VII i^7

Example 7b shows a simplified harmonic structure for the same phrase. The notation includes a treble and bass staff with a simpler harmonic structure. The harmonic analysis below the staff is as follows:

a: i - iv - i

diately as dizzying breathlessness. Many of Rachmaninoff's expository periods are elongated. For example, the opening period in Prelude op. 23, No. 1 is such that listeners tend to forget the basic idea in the course of attending to endless figuration in the left hand. The effect of a lullaby, or, using a different analogy from Karlheinz Stockhausen, a *Momentform* phenomenon, acts as the agency that cancels real time and leads listener into an atemporal meditation. Intentionally over-extended segments are ubiquitous in music of Rachmaninoff. The basic idea of the first movement of Concerto No. 3 is 27 measures long. The same is happening in the basic idea of the first movement of Concerto No. 2. In this case, the Transition is lumped together with the Primary and that doubles the length of a single-breath gesture (Ex. 11).

Among many brilliant examples of deformations, the Vocalise stands as the highest peak. Its first four measures present what I call "formal-functional conundrum" (see Ex. 12).

The musical form – a structure that appears within the interaction of harmonic function, metric-rhythmic oscillation and motivic-thematic quasi-linguistic patterns – is seriously undermined. As already mentioned, a Nordic tongue-tie of beauty is amplified by the complexity of interaction of three components that has no match in music of the 20th century. Since Greek music theory, and perhaps even earlier, the arsis-thesis model has been established as a minimum requirement for legibility of musical information. If anything, one has to know, is this moment in music a strong beat, or it is a weak beat. If iamb and chorée are confused and conflated, music normally brings about a comic effect, if not a complete rejection. Ambiguity and complexity are allowed once they are crowned in the context of clarity in simplicity. Yet, while enjoying the beauty of music, without seeing the score, no listener can identify the first three notes of the Vocalise as a single prosodic structure.

Form in the music of Rachmaninoff can be summarized as a combination of transversal tendencies. On the one hand, his forms display substantial classical principles, such as functional distinction of tight-knit and loose (*fest und locker*) and masterful motivic work. Rachmaninoff seems to have done his chores. However, the creative and individual work with the older forms in the direction of their enhancement with new dimensions (rhetorical, semiotic, dramaturgic, corporeal, etc.) is, perhaps, the place where one should search for original Rachmaninoff's contributions.

Example 8. Second phrase of the exposition of Etude No. 6.

motive a motive b with an extension

break in the functional syntax varied sequence

a: ii_4^6 iii_4^6 $liii_4^6$

a: iv vii^{o7} $V+6$ iii vii^{o7}/VII $iv+6$ DII_2^{\sharp} i

Example 9. The third phrase of the exposition of Etude No. 6.

motive a insert motive a

p *sf* *p* *sf*

break in functional syntax no cadence!

cresc. *f*

Example 10. The ending insert of the exposition of Etude No. 6 with six applied chords.

Chromatic applied functions

a: D/D/D/D/D D/D/D/D D/D/D

dim. p

D/D D/D D T

a: N⁶ vii^{°5}/V i⁴+6 VI⁷ V⁶/V V⁷/5 i

(Non-chord tones are in brackets)

Example 11. The Primary theme of Concerto No. 3 as “basic idea.”

First 27 measures present no contrasting material

Allegro ma non troppo *commodo*

p

Piu mosso First appearance of truly contrasting material, contrasting idea on a large-scale

t.27 *t.82*

Moderato

mf

Shklovsky's estrangement and Bakhtinian dialogic form

Transformation of major components of musical composition, such as voice into arabesque, harmonic function into linear gesture, classical form into fairy tale or film narrative, are inscribed into major trends in art theory in Russia. Victor Shklovsky's idea of estrangement and of working with the material and approach (Russ. *material i priem*) (Shklovsky 1925) explain Rachmaninoff's strategy of deformations. Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic consciousness provides a conceptual frame-

work for breaking a single voice into multiplicity of "voicelets," a single prolongational structure into a number of twists and turns in the style of old chants, resistant to the depiction of a single subject in the overall dialogic mode of presentation (see Ex. 13).

In this sense, one can see a strong relationship between Darcy and Hepokoski's innovative approach to Classical sonata (in which both Shklovsky and Bakhtin are mentioned) and Rachmaninoff's approach to formal function and deformation.

Example 12. Analysis of opening measures of Vocalise.

Four possible interpretations of the prosodic structure of the first motive

- 1) $\cup \text{ — }$
- 2) $\text{ — } \cup$
- 3) $\cup \cup$
- 4) $\text{ — } \cup \cup$

c: i il+6 il+7 |D/v v|+7 |D/vi vi|+6

c: i⁶ ii^{ø7} ii⁴⁺⁶/iv V⁷/vi vi⁷ S/S⁷ i vi V⁶₄=⁷ i

Brackets mark the versions of phrasing depending on the choice of prosodic structure.
Vertical lines represent the strong harmonic beats.

Conclusion

Both methods under discussion in this article were originally applied to Classical style. The music of Rachmaninoff, quite obviously progresses from that style quite substantially, which may force many teachers of form to reject the application of Schoenberg-Ratz-Caplin's and Darcy-Hepokoski's terminology in this case. However, Rachmani-

noff's music did not completely break away from Classical style. In comparison with post-tonal compositional techniques, Rachmaninoff's harmony and form remain closely related to Classical tradition. This makes this analysis revealing in both interpretation of his music's inner meaning and in further development of the analytical techniques, offered by Caplin, Darcy and Hepokoski.

Example 13. Voice and dialogic voicelets in Bakhtin's sense.

The voice (melodic voice in Schenker's terms), which is supposed to be primary here, is not such in this music.

Voicelets are more active here; they overwhelm the "main voice" and represent other voices, the voices of the Other, in an irregular doubling (a suspension figure is doubled and resolved non-simultaneously). These voices challenge the integrity of the main voice and argue with its position. They represent Dostoyevsky's the Double, the realm of Alyosha and Ivan from *Brothers Karamazov*, or inner world of Raskol'nikov.

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Vormifunktsioonid ja vormiline deformatsioon Sergei Rahmaninovi etüüd-piltides op. 39, nr. 5 ja 6

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Kuigi Rahmaninovi muusika kuulub aega, mis on klassikalisest stiilist üsna kaugel, näivad vormifunktsiooni ja vormilise deformatsiooni mõisted kirjeldavat tema teoste mõningaid löike päris hästi. Eriti huvipakkuv on nende analüütiliste kategooriate rakendamine etüüd-piltidele op. 39. Mitmel põhjusel muutus Rahmaninovi stiil 20. sajandi teise aastakümne lõpus üsna keerukaks, mistõttu on nimetatud etüüdide analüüsimisel vajalik kasutada erinevaid lähenemisviise. Etüüd-piltide op. 39 teemade ülesehituses peegeldub rida heterogeenseid ideid, mille allikad varieeruvad vanavene kirikulaulust 20. sajandi moodsate tehnikateni. Sellest hoolimata põhineb Rahmaninovi meloodiate ülesehitus klassikalistel vormidel. On ilmselt üleliigne mainida, et neil poeetilistel lõuenditel avalduvad klassikalised vormid tugevalt deformeerituna, peegeldades 20. sajandi dramaatilisi sündmusi.

Vormifunktsiooni ja vormilise deformatsiooni mõisted on tänapäeval saanud keskseteks vormi analüüsimise kategooriateks. Vene teoreetilises traditsioonis on analoogilisi nähtusi uuritud samuti edukalt ning traditsiooni hetkeseis võimaldab sellel hästi haakuda Põhja-Ameerika vastava mõtteviisiga. Funktsionaalne vormiteooria on vene teoreetilises traditsioonis leidnud põhjalikku käsitlemist kogu 20. sajandi jooksul ning selle postulaatide rakendamine Sergei Rahmaninovi muusikale on igati sobiv. Siin artiklis lähtutakse eelkõige just selle teooria Põhja-Ameerika variandist, täpsemalt, William Caplini loodud teoreetilisest raamistikust. Warren Darcy ja James Hepokoski vormilise deformatsiooni idee peegeldub samuti paljudes vene vaadetes nii muusika kui ka kunsti kohta üldisemalt. Pealegi on üks selle uue ja mõjuka teooria nurgakive just vene mõtlemises laialt käsitletud „võõrdumise“ idee. Lisaks sellele on erinevate kompositsiooniliste valikute võimalikkuse möönmine mingi kindla ja ootuspärase vormiskeemi raames olemuselt dialoogiline, millel mõtteviisina on teiste allikate kõrval koht ka vene traditsioonis. Käesoleva artikli autor eeldab, et mainitud kahe lähenemisviisi rakendamine aitab kaasa Rahmaninovi muusika mõistmisele.

Mõlemad kõnealused meetodid on algselt mõeldud Viini klassikute muusika analüüsimiseks. Nagu öeldud, erineb Rahmaninovi stiil sellest üsna suurel määral, mille tõttu võib analüüsija siin Schönbergi-Ratzi-Caplini ja Darcy-Hepokoski terminoloogiat vältida. Samas ei ole Rahmaninovi kompositsioonitehnika klassikalisest tehnikast ka täiesti lahus. Helilooja näib klassikalise vormi postulaatidega mängides nende struktuurilisi ja protsessuaalseid aspekte transformeerivat ja deformeerivat. Deformatsiooni esimene tasand avaldub siin vene ühehäälese ortodokse kirikulaulu (знаменное пение) mõju tulemusena. Selle modaalne üksus, rakuke, mille ulatus ei ületa puhast kvarti, mõjutab Rahmaninovi meloodiaulatust, kulminatsioonide ebatavalist sagedust ja lõppkokkuvõttes ka subdominandi kui harmoonilise funktsiooni valitsemist. Teine deformatsioonitasand väljendub Rahmaninovi muusikas hilisromantismile iseloomuliku poeetilise stiilina. Vaadeldaval ajal võimaldas pianistliku võimekuse ja harmoonilise kompetentsuse kõrge arengutase kasutada heliloojatel kompositsioonilisi vahendeid enneolematu kergusega. Tehnika lihtsalt lakkas olemast probleem; heliloojad hakkasid Kofi Agawu sõnul nägema muusikas pigem mängu selle semantiliste aspektidega. Semiootika, retoorika, metafoori ja kehalise liikumise mõju klassikalistele vormistruktuuridele on ilmne nii Rahmaninovi etüüdides kui ka tema teistes helitöödes. Paljudel juhtudel asendusi klassikalised vormistrateegiad, nagu näiteks repriisilisuse põhimõte (ABA printsiip), I-V lahtikomponeerimine, astmesuhted, motiiviline arendus ja teemasisene funktsionaalne loogika teatraalse dramaturgia, muinasjutule omaste vormide, kinematograafilise montaaži ja kirjanduslike võtetega kaasneva dialoogilise teadvusega, mille Mihhail Bahtin kontseptualiseeris Dostojevski teoseid analüüsid. Mainitud aspektidele osutamine võimaldab paremini mõista nii Rahmaninovi muusika sisemist tähendust kui ka arendada edasi Caplini, Darcy ja Hepokoski analüüsitehnikaid.