SOURCES OF INSPIRATION IN SELECTED
PIANO WORKS BY SERGEI SLONIMSKY

D.M.A. Document

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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ABSTRACT

Sergei Slonimsky is an important composer, without whom Russian music would be incomplete and less controversial. It is not easy to find composers who, with the same success, utilize virtually every existing classical and modern music genre in their compositions. His output covers opera, symphony, ballet, oratorio, and sonata. He is the author of numerous chamber compositions, music for folk instruments, and teaching pieces for children. His vividly imaginative compositions show a brilliant composer’s mastery. Slonimsky draws on many historical eras and cultural epochs: Antiquity, Middle Ages and Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism, and Romanticism. His music consists of a variety of images that contain an abundance of artistic information. However, most of Sergei Slonimsky’s works are unpublished and rarely performed in the United States.

Included in the document is a biographical background of the composer as well as a description of his compositional style and accomplishments. The document will focus on the composer’s piano works and the extra-musical stimuli that inspired these compositions. The main emphasis of investigation will be related to the works inspired by music’s sister arts – painting and sculpture (the suite *Three Graces* and *Passing-by Beauty*). The visual and sound images and the message both the artist and the composer
try to convey will be compared and contrasted. The literary aspect of Slonimsky’s piano works, his fascination with Romanticism, and his continuation of the Russian tradition of imitating bell sounds in music will also be explored.
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INTRODUCTION

I discovered the music of Sergei Slonimsky during the years of my appointment at the Rachmaninov Music School in Novgorod, Russia. I was struck by its lyricism, beauty, and accessibility compared with most of the contemporary repertoire, which is more difficult to comprehend and to teach. During my years of graduate studies at The Ohio State University, I became interested in the relationships between music, the visual arts, and literature, how these branches of arts related to each other, and how composers draw their inspirations from them. After close examination of Slonimsky’s piano works, I came to the conclusion that most of his pieces are programmatic and the musical images are often related to and inspired by other sources, thus providing an interesting field for investigation. The purpose of writing this document is to promote interest in music by Sergei Slonimsky and to augment the English portion of Slonimsky research.

The bulk of the literature on Sergei Slonimsky is only available in Russian. There is an autobiography that was published in 2000. It is in Russian and provides interesting facts and important events of Slonimsky’s life from the composer’s viewpoint. Two published biographies exist. The first, Sergei Slonimsky: Monographicheski ocherk by A. Milka was published in 1976. Marina Ritsareva published a Slonimsky biography in 1991. This book includes an in-depth study of the composer’s life as well as a discussion of his compositional style. Another useful biographical source is the Grove
Dictionary of Music and Musicians. Among the recent publications is *Vol’nie Misli*. It is a collection of essays dedicated to the life and works by Slonimsky. This book, also in Russian, includes a compilation of his works, as well as several pictures of Slonimsky not found in other literature. A D.M.A document has been completed on the *Piano Sonata* of Sergei Slonimsky at the University of North Texas.

Few books in English contain a chapter devoted to Slonimsky. Marina Ritsareva published a chapter on Slonimsky in the book titled *Shostakovich and the Consequences: Russian Music between Adaptation and Protest*. This chapter provides a brief biographical background, and some information about the composer’s life under the Soviet system. It also talks about key aspects of Slonimsky’s compositional style. Valentina Kholopova’s article “Sergei Slonimsky: The Impetus to Innovation and Cultural Synthesis” in the book *Underground Music from the Former USSR*, is useful for its brevity of important aspects of Slonimsky’s life. Kholopova provides important stylistic characteristics of works by Slonimsky as well as a list of his principal compositions.

This study is focused on the variety of sources that served as inspiration for Sergei Slonimsky in his piano writing. Chapter 1 offers Slonimsky’s biographical background and characteristics of the composer’s style, as well as an overview of his piano works. Chapter 2 is dedicated to the works that were inspired by the visual arts. It includes examples of sources (painting and sculpture) as well as their meaning, description, and common characteristics. Chapter 3 explores the works influenced by fairy tales. Chapter 4 discusses the connections with Romanticism, and Chapter 5 discusses the symbolic image of bells as a source of inspiration in Slonimsky’s piano music. Since most of the
Sergei Slonimsky is a versatile musical personality. He is a composer, a pianist, a music scholar, and a pedagogue. Slonimsky made a name for himself in modern Russian music as one of the leaders in the Soviet musical movement that came to life in the 1960s. As a musicologist, he worked out a new system of rhythmic notation, which he called “rhythmic neums.” While teaching at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, he developed a school of composers and musicologists and guided many of his students into successful careers in music, among them the conductors Vladislav Chernushenko, Vasily Sinaisky and Yuri Simonov. He continues to appear in concerts playing his own piano compositions. In his collaborations with the singer Nadezhda Yureneva, he performed a variety of music, including pieces by Balakirev, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, and Mahler, for diverse audiences from academics to workers and students. In his capacity as composer and pianist, Slonimsky revived the old art of improvisation. While a member of the Committee for Nomination of the Russian State Prizes, he initiated the opening of a monument to Musorgsky in Saint Petersburg. Furthermore, he sponsored the foundation of the International Prokofiev Competition, held regularly in Saint Petersburg.¹

The period from 1960 to 1980 was a time of “spiritual Renaissance” in Russian music.² It followed a growing ideological crisis that more or less affected the creative work of composers, in particular those in opposition to the official “socialist realism.” It was in the 1960s, at the end of the so-called “Khrushchev’s Thaw,” that Russian music began to turn from representing communist ideology to reflecting common human values.
The spirit of non-conformity and free-thinking, the assertion of the rights of the individual to express his or her own identity, and the independence from the official regime were common feelings for many artists of that time. Sergei Slonimsky, along with Russian composers in the 1960s, such as Rodion Shchedrin, Alfred Shnitke, Boris Tischenko, Valerii Gavrilin, Edison Denisov, Sofia Gubaidulina, and Nikolai Karetnikov among others, opened new and unique musical horizons in Twentieth Century Russian music. The constant creative search of the Russian composers in the 1960-1980s was inspired by the innovations of avant-garde trends in Western music and by the great masters of the twentieth century, such as Igor Stravinsky, Sergei Prokofiev, and Dmitry Shostakovich. This new generation of composers is recognized for their high level of spirituality and intellectualism, traits that allowed them to solve complex artistic tasks.

Each of the composers chose their own creative path. The spiritual search of Alfred Shnitke was directed towards the musical implementation of certain laws of the universe, subordinate to the “formula of world harmony.” The musical world of Edison Denisov was distinguished by his system of picturesque artistic thinking. Valerii Gavrilin desired to understand humanity through a deep study into the heart of folk consciousness, Russian folklore, and mythology. Sofia Gubaidulina turned to religious themes and mystical ideas. Sergei Slonimsky created a unique sound by superimposing incompatibles and combining different styles.

Slonimsky’s musical reality is extensive; it encompasses Antiquity, Renaissance, Baroque, Classicism and Romanticism. In Slonimsky’s music, one can hear the influence of the folklore and secular traditions of different time periods and styles, along with jazz and rock. Slonimsky was also influenced by the most significant tendencies of twentieth-
century culture, including polystylistic synthesis and a free combination of folklore elements with professional music. He studied such trends as Neoclassicism, Neobaroque (Stravinsky, Hindemith, some of Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Shnitke), and innovations of the New-Viennese school and the composers of *Les Six.* Even though Slonimsky assimilated all of these trends, it is difficult and perhaps impossible to attribute any of them to him. He freely and boldly blended modern techniques of composition with a classical manner of writing and formed his own musical language based upon his brilliant knowledge of folklore.

The peculiarity of Slonimsky’s artistic consciousness is in the intermingling of Western and Slavophile tendencies. His contemporaries often favored one of these tendencies: Shnitke and Denisov followed more Western traditions, while Sviridov and Gavrilin were Slavophiles. In contrast, Slonimsky intertwined both Western and national Russian traditions, which he interpreted rather unpredictably. Moreover, he turned towards other cultures, incorporating foreign material and splendidly transforming it into his own.
ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.
CHAPTER 1

BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF SERGEI SLONIMSKY

1.1 Slonimsky’s Family and Early Music Education

Sergei Mikhailovich Slonimsky was born on August 12, 1932 in Saint Petersburg, Russia (formerly Leningrad, USSR). His family was renowned in the cultural community. His father, Mikhail Slonimsky (1897-1972), was a writer who in the 1920s, along with Vsevolod Ivanov, Mikhail Zoshchenko, Konstantin Fedin, Valentin Kaverin and Nikolai Tikhonov, formed the famous literary group *The Serapion Brothers*. The group took its name from the story by E.T. Hoffman, “The Serapion Brothers,” about an individualist who vows to devote himself to a free, imaginative, and non-conformist art. *The Serapion Brothers* insisted on the right to create a literature that was independent of political ideology. This brought them into conflict with the Soviet government and made it difficult to publish their work. All of the works of Mikhail Slonimsky, independent of the changing manner of his style throughout his life, are full of inner distress and suppressed bitterness. The future composer Sergei grew up with a love for literature, poetry, and the theatre, as well as the progressive sentiments and zest for life inherent in the intellectual elite. However, Sergei did not follow in his father’s footsteps, but turned
to music instead, although he certainly inherited a flair for writing. In his book *Burlesque, Elegies, Dithyrambs*, that was published in Saint Petersburg in 2000, the composer noted his life’s impressions and significant events. In the same book, he spoke very warmly about his father and revealed that his father “more than anybody else influenced his life and nature; transmitted his skills and habits.”

The composer’s aunt from his mother’s side, Isabel Vengerova, was a Professor of Piano at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. After immigrating to the United States, she taught at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, where her reputation grew to legendary proportions. Sergei’s grandfather, Zinovii Slonimsky, was a famous scientist who invented the first telegraph ten years prior to America’s first experiments with this new electrical type of communication. However, Zinovii Slonimsky was simply satisfied with the fact of his invention and was not concerned about getting it patented. He was a highly educated man who spoke twenty foreign languages and had published a great number of articles in such areas as astronomy and engineering. Nikolas Slonimsky (Nikolai Leonidovich), the composer’s uncle, was an eminent American composer, music scholar, and longtime editor of Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians. Also among Sergei Slonimsky’s close relatives is Anthony Slonimsky, a Polish poet.

Sergei came from a Jewish family whose bloodline includes four generations of notable contributors to Russian culture and who must have constituted a highly complex and special hybridized identity. One aspect of this combination is that such an identity can never completely extinguish the Jewish roots, which are always confirmed by the environment, and thus both parts of his heritage must coexist within one man. Another aspect is that his Russian side is as genuine and sincere as can be. In addition to his
family tradition and his countless expeditions to remote villages nourished the Russian part of his identity, which found its vital expression in music—a realm that does not accommodate deception. It could be that Sergei Slonimsky chose to emphasize his Russian roots rather than Jewish due to the political climate of the Soviet Union with its prejudice against the Jewish people. The only composition where the composer employs Jewish motives or intonations is *Jewish Rhapsody* that comes from 1997.

Sergei Slonimsky showed a gift for musical improvisation very early in his life. According to the composer, he started improvising much earlier than he learned music notation and developed appropriate playing skills. He liked poetry but never liked reciting poems, instead preferring to sing them. The tunes came easily to him and the first accompaniments usually consisted of uncomplicated chords familiar to him. From age 7, Sergei began to take lessons in piano and composition. His first piano teacher was Anna Artobolevskaya. His first acquaintance and fascination with Prokofiev’s music started during his piano lessons with her. Prokofiev, the rebellious student of Lyadov and Rimsky-Korsakov, was a connecting link between the new music and wholesome traditions of “The Mighty Five.” Anna Artobolevskaya introduced the young composer to *The Fairy Tale* and *March* by Prokofiev, as well as to classical repertoire and piano pieces by Maikapar, Gedike, and Grechaninov. Slonimsky immediately felt in this free, “wrong” music something very natural, real, and accessible. In his own compositions of that time, he tried to emulate both classical and popular music, but after becoming acquainted with Prokofiev’s pieces, he came to believe that he could compose in the same manner. Anna Artobolevskaya fostered in her young student interest for new, “spicy,” unconventional harmonies that was to develop in the later years.
Although he demonstrated musical talent at an early age, Slonimsky was not a child prodigy, and his parents never forced his musical education. Rather, they tried to gradually nurture his natural creativity and give him a well-rounded education. Because of Sergei’s love and natural talent for musical improvisation, his parents particularly encouraged his compositional efforts. In 1942 he started taking composition lessons from Sergei Wolfenson, who was a teacher at the Leningrad Central Music School affiliated with the Leningrad State Conservatory.\textsuperscript{10} Sergei was becoming a very musically receptive and emotional child. As he states in his book,

I always thought that particles of soul live in music motives. They are seized beautiful moments. Music speech is blended in me with the most delicate feelings and deep impressions, and they exist with life itself. Music fruitlessness meant the end of a human’s existence, feelings and senses, the seized beautiful moments.\textsuperscript{11}

The theme of unity and the deep connection of music with the soul as communicating vessel come again later in his life,

The essence of music for me is that the soul of a human comes to the surface. If one does not feel a soul in him and does not believe that it exists in him as well as in others, then this is not a human being. If one does not contain a soul, one does not contain music… From my point of view, one does not have to belong to a certain party or religious confession. In my opinion the only thing that distinguishes a human from a non-human is if he feels that he has a soul. If one has a soul and he is a creative person, then the soul becomes apparent in music and comes on the surface of being more than in any other art. Be it vocal music or instrumental, there is no difference… \textsuperscript{12}

1.2 The Years of Evacuation (1941-1943) and Studies in Moscow (1943-1946)

World War II interrupted Sergei’s music education when the Slonimsky family was evacuated to the Eastern part of the country, the Ural town of Perm. The family stayed in Perm for two years, from 1941 to 1943. At the beginning of their stay there, Sergei “practiced” the pieces he learned and his own compositions on the table, since it took some time for the family to find a piano. For a while in Perm, the famous Kirov
Opera and Ballet Company were also active. The young musician could therefore come into close contact with the musical theatre and learn its repertoire. During the years in Perm, Sergei did not attend any formal music schools. However, he took lessons from Isai Sherman, the conductor of the evacuated Kirov Theatre, who became the composer’s life-long friend. These lessons became extremely important in Sergei’s development as a musician. Sherman did not just teach his student the technical aspects of piano playing, composition, and music theory, but also focused on the music itself and helped Slonimsky’s individual growth as a musician.\footnote{According to Marina Rytsareva, “these lessons helped the composer form such particularly important characteristics of his style as the vivid imagination in the context of precise and strict musical forms—the music without excessive notes.”} As Slonimsky himself recollects, Isai Sherman was his main mentor and judge of his music, his actions, and his conscience during the most difficult and risky years of his life.\footnote{As Slonimsky himself recollects, Isai Sherman was his main mentor and judge of his music, his actions, and his conscience during the most difficult and risky years of his life.}

In Perm, Slonimsky learned the complete repertoire of the Kirov Theatre and was primarily preoccupied with operas and ballets. In addition to the classical Russian operas Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Snow Maiden* and *The Tsar’s Bride* and Tchaikovsky’s *Queen of Spades*, he came to understand Prokofiev’s *Romeo and Juliet*, a ballet hardly comprehensible to anybody in those days, and Shostakovich’s opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District (Katerina Izmailova)*, to be banned by the notorious resolution on music adopted in 1948. During the same period, Slonimsky got to know the Russian peasant life and folk song traditions for the first time. These youthful impressions gave an impetus to his serious study of Russian musical folklore later in his life.
In 1943, the Slonimsky family moved to Moscow, where Sergei’s father worked on publishing his works. Mikhail Slonimsky knew Dmitri Shostakovich and decided to show him Sergei’s early compositions and ask for his recommendations for further study. Shostakovich admitted that he “absolutely does not know how to teach children” and highly recommended Vissarion Shebalin, the director of the Moscow Conservatory. Thus, Sergei was accepted at the Moscow Central Music School for gifted children affiliated with the Moscow State Conservatory.

Evgenii Messner became Slonimsky’s teacher of composition at the Central Music School, while Vissarion Shebalin evaluated the works of young composers once per semester, which was a big and important event for the students. In Messner’s class, Slonimsky for the first time began to thoroughly work on each measure, in order to overcome commonplace, dull harmonies and look for fresh modulations.

In Moscow Slonimsky discovered and fell in love with the music of Grieg, another symbolic name in his musical pantheon. He set Grieg’s music as an exemplary style for himself, particularly his Lyric Pieces and Peer Gynt, which seemed very fresh and melodically rich to Slonimsky. Each individual harmony in Grieg’s music opened some live spell of nature for young Slonimsky. According to the composer, his first attempts were quite tentative. His Waltz in F sharp minor with active modulations in the middle section resembled Grieg’s waltz in the same key and his Prelude was too rich in dominants. The first compositional attempts were made without the knowledge of the fundamentals of harmony. Under the guidance of his teacher, the young composer concentrated on the Russian style in music, mainly studying and analyzing Aleksandr Borodin’s works. Borodin’s musical language as well as Grieg’s was exotic, vivid, and
accessible for Sergei. Major seventh chords, use of modes, and chromatic middle voices, tonic with the added sixth and dominant seventh chords with lowered fifth in Borodin’s music seemed to Slonimsky the pinnacle of refined expression. Under Grieg’s influence Slonimsky composed *The Spring* and *Forest*, and Borodin’s inspiration can be heard in his Suite, where *Fairy Tale* stands out as undoubtedly Russian. The next stage of Slonimsky’s development as a composer involved experimenting with quartal harmony, expanding the traditional forms with more complicated development that leads toward a greater culmination of his works.

Slonimsky studied in Moscow three years and immersed himself in its musical life. He had an opportunity to attend numerous concerts and opera productions, including premieres of Shostakovich’s *Ninth Symphony*, Prokofiev’s *Sixth Symphony* and the opera *War and Peace*. He became acquainted with the art of such great piano masters of the century as Heinrich Neuhaus and Svyatoslav Richter. The school’s atmosphere, its musical life, fellow students in composition, Nikolai Karetnikov (1930-1994) and Nikolai Sidelnikov (1930-1992), and pianist Sergei Dorensky contributed to Slonimsky’s career. In 1946 when the family moved back to Leningrad, Slonimsky was transferred to a similar type of school there.

### 1.3 Leningrad Conservatory (1950-1958)

In 1950, Slonimsky entered the Leningrad State Conservatory majoring in two specialties: piano and composition. The years of study at the Conservatory gave him a fundamental knowledge of the essence of music, on which he based all of his compositions, theoretical essays, and critical publications. He studied composition, instrumentation, and form analysis with Boris Arapov, who was a well-rounded musician,
talented composer, and well-known pedagogue at the Leningrad State Conservatory. According to Slonimsky, “the main idea of Arapov’s lectures was to always keep the content of the work as the most important goal of the composition and use all of the technical elements as the resources for reaching this goal.” In the instrumentation class, Arapov tried to persuade his students to treat orchestral instruments very personally and individually.

Another prominent pedagogue in the Leningrad State Conservatory that helped Slonimsky’s formation as a young composer was Nikolai Uspensky, Professor of Theory. Uspensky was an expert of the Old Russian monody. From his lectures Slonimsky came to understand that to create and sing a melody for a musician is the same pleasant and organic experience as it is for a sculptor to knead clay and make rounded shapes. In Uspensky’s class Slonimsky started to feel compositional freedom, found his unique path, and mastered his skills in diatonic writing. As a result, many of Slonimsky’s works can be recognized for their beautiful, singing melodies, with freely incorporated elements of polyphonic development. Understanding the mysteries of Old Russian monody and polyphonic writings opened a road into the depths of past Russian centuries. Slonimsky also studied the music of those composers who were announced “formalists” during the post Second World War period, such as Brahms, Mahler, and Richard Strauss. By studying and analyzing their music, Sergei came to understand different trends of the development of contemporary Western music.

Slonimsky also studied piano under Vladimir Nilsen, a well-known performer and teacher of piano. Nilsen helped him develop good taste in the interpretation of piano music and helped him get rid of the salon, pseudo-romantic manner in his playing.
During his lessons, Slonimsky not only received fine musical training in piano performance, but also had the opportunity to play and discuss contemporary works by other composers, which later helped him when he was working on his own piano compositions.\textsuperscript{22} Sergei Slonimsky graduated from the Leningrad Conservatory in two specialties: piano (1955) and composition (1958).

1.4 The Years after Conservatory

After completing his academic training, Slonimsky turned his attention to a thorough study of Russian musical folklore. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, he regularly took extended trips to various parts of the USSR, including the Urals, the Votkinsk Power Station, and the Pskov and Novgorod regions, collecting Russian folk songs.\textsuperscript{23} He attended local parties, listened to the folk singers, and became acquainted with villages and their distinctive characters. Some songs he recorded during these trips were later incorporated into his opera \textit{Virineya}, his \textit{Piano Sonata}, and other compositions. In all, he spent nearly two decades of his life on the exploration of folk culture, calling it a “folkloristic conservatoire.”\textsuperscript{24} In 1958, Slonimsky completed his training in the postgraduate courses at the Leningrad Conservatory majoring in musical theory. His master’s dissertation, entitled \textit{Sergei Prokofiev’s Symphonies}, was released several years later in book form. Prokofiev’s work was just then coming to the notice of musicians. Because of the Resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1948, Prokofiev was still officially banned when Slonimsky was writing his dissertation. Slonimsky turned out to be not only one of the first among music theoreticians to rehabilitate the image of that great master in twenty-century music, but to
also provide original research into Prokofiev’s composition techniques. In particular, Slonimsky brought into light Prokofiev’s device of “thematic cohesion.”

Simultaneously, Sergei Slonimsky undertook another major research endeavor, a theoretical approach to the music of Mahler, a composer standing quite apart from Prokofiev. Taking Mahler’s Das Lied von der Erde as an example, Slonimsky disclosed some specific features inherent in the composer’s later orchestral polyphony, which proved to be a pioneering work in musicological literature (published in 1963).

In 1959, Slonimsky began to teach music-theoretical disciplines at the Leningrad Conservatory, and in 1967, he also began to teach composition there. As a professor of music, he brought forth a school of composers and musicologists and guided many of his students into successful careers in music. Among his students are conductors Vladislav Chernushenko, Vasily Sinaisky, and Yuri Simonov. For his dissertation on Prokofiev’s symphonies Slonimsky received his Candidate of Art degree in 1963. In 1976, he became a professor of Saint Petersburg Conservatory and Samara Pedagogical University. Slonimsky is an Academician of the Russian Academy of Education, the winner of the State M. Glinka Prize, and People’s Artist of Russia. He is an organizer of cycle charity concerts in the Petersburg Fund of Culture, reviving unjustly forgotten works by Russian composers from Balakirev to Shcherbakov, Shebalin, Klusner, and Prigozhin. Slonimsky runs musical gatherings devoted to the popularization of Twentieth-Century Russian music, especially from the 1920s. From the beginning of the 1970s the composer worked in cooperation with theatres, the Philharmonic Hall, the Pedagogical University, and Samara Musical College. In 1994, a festival dedicated to the music of Slonimsky was held in the Old Russian city of Samara. In 1999, the world premiere of his opera Ioann
the Terrible’s Vision took place in Samara, staged by Robert Sturua under the musical conduction of Mstislav Rostropovich.

1.5 Overview of Slonimsky Style and Compositional Output

Sergei Slonimsky has a perfect command of all Western compositional procedures, but with his explicit determination for national singularity and heightened attention to rhythmic innovations, his musical style belongs to the tradition of the St. Petersburg school. Sergei Slonimsky reveals his kinship with Stravinsky, as these traditions were conducive to the formation of Stravinsky’s talent.27

Among Russian composers it was Musorgsky who attracted Slonimsky most of all. During his folkloric trips he even visited the village of Karevo where Musorgsky was born, and there recorded a song whose text provided a refrain in his opera Virineya. Slonimsky the composer was interested in Musorgsky’s method of tackling folk material, using opera as a “folk music drama” created by the composer of Boris Godunov and Khovanschina, and the people as the opera’s real protagonist.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Sergei Slonimsky was interested in the musical avant-garde and in a decisive stylistic renewal. He expanded his knowledge of twentieth-century music and became engaged in the study of Stravinsky, Hindemith, Honegger, Schoenberg, and Berg. He established contacts with Moscow-based composers of his generation, including Edison Denisov, Sophia Gubaidulina, and Roman Ledenyov, who were also looking for novel musical devices.28 Among his first works, which attracted attention by their use of non-traditional media, were the Karnaval’naya uvertyura (Carnival Overture, 1957) and the Symphony in F minor (1958). Slonimsky became one of the pioneers of the “new folklore wave” at the beginning of the 1960s, with his vocal
cycle *Pesni vol'nitsî* (Songs of the Runaway Serfs, 1960), his opera *Virineya* (1967), and *Novgorodian Dance* (a later piece, written in 1980), in the style of “instrumental theatre” where all performers, the conductor included, gradually join in dancing. The first time the idea of “instrumental theatre” appeared was in his First String Quintet entitled *Antiphons* (1968), which turned out to be the first attempt in this genre in the former Soviet music. In his preface to the published score the composer pointed out, “The important thing here is to perform this piece in motion.”

Slonimsky subsequently gravitated more towards archaic folk materials, medieval music, and also the *avant-garde*. These apparent contradictory tendencies can be seen in various compositions, both in parallel and separately as in *Kontsert-buff*, 1964–1965, the cantata *Golos iz khora*, 1964, and others. Since the end of the 1950s Slonimsky employed, in certain cases, the 12-tone system, and since the 1960s he used aleatory, sonoristic techniques, non-traditional graphic notation, and a new system of rhythmical notation, which he called “rhythmic neums.” In his later works he became frequently and unexpectedly paradoxical. In his compositions, he strives to create his own models that blend traditional and innovative styles. Alongside the grotesque in *Kontsert-buff* and the extremely complicated counterpoint of *Simfonicheskiy motet*, Slonimsky wrote a *Concerto for Symphonic Orchestra, Ensemble of Electric Guitars and Solo Instruments* in 1974, where he included jazz improvisations as an integral component of a “classic” concerto. Another work he composed for non-traditional media was *Prazdnichnaya Muzyka* (Festive Music) for balalaika, Russian wooden spoons, and symphony orchestra.

Slonimsky has written ten symphonies. This particularly academic genre dominated his output of the 1980s. Although the second of these appeared 20 years after
the first, the next six were written over just three years. Various models of sonata-
symphonic cycle are presented therein: lyrical-epic, pastoral, and those with signs of
narrative drama of the novelistic type (e.g., the Fourth Symphony, dedicated to the
composer’s father, the writer Mikhail Slonimsky). In the later symphonies Slonimsky
displayed a tendency towards post-Mahlerian massive cycles. In the tragic Ninth
Symphony, he depicted the catastrophes that have befallen humanity in the twentieth
century. The programmatic Tenth Symphony *Krugi Ada* (Circles of Hell), written under
the influence of the *Divina Commedia* by Dante Alighieri, is divided into nine parts
circles, which follow without a break.

Slonimsky’s continued interest in the problems facing humanity is reflected in his
six operas. His first opera *Virineya* (1967) is based on the original plot of Lydia
Seifulina’s short novel and depicts the revolution of 1917, not in the conventional way of
glorifying the Great October Socialist Revolution, but as a horrible nationwide cataclysm.
It continues the tradition of Russian opera established by Musorgsky, Prokofiev, and
Shostakovich. Its plot and music are somewhat reminiscent of *Boris Godunov*. The
*Master and Margarita* (1972) is a new type of chamber opera (the first adaptation for
stage of Bulgakov's outstanding novel), which had been prohibited from the stage for
seventeen years after the performance of the first act in the Leningrad House of
Composers and conducted by Gennady Rozhdestvensky. *Mary Stuart* (1980) is based on
the novel by Stefan Zweig and *Hamlet* (1990) is based on Shakespeare’s play. In *Tsar
Ixion* (1993) and *Ioann the Terrible's Vision* (1995), Slonimsky returned to tragic events
in Russian history and renewed the particular form of folk musical drama, which he
modernized under the name of “Russian tragedy.” Slonimsky wrote his first and only
full-size ballet, *Icarus* in 1971, which is based on a theme taken from ancient mythology, and dedicated to the memory of his father. In his vocal cycles he favors the poets of the “silver age” and his contemporaries, Akhmatova, Mandel'stam, Daniil Kharms, Evgenii Reyn and Iosif Brodsky.

Slonimsky finds congenial fantastic realism, “black” humor and grotesque tragedy in such classical writers of Russian art as Gogol, Dostoyevsky, Bulgakov, Kharms, and Zoshchenko. One of his new compositions, *Petersburg's Visions* after Dostoyevsky, was performed by Yuri Temirkanov in eight cities of the USA, including New York, Boston, San Francisco, and Los Angeles in 1996. Sergei Slonimsky is also the author of many chamber works; instrumental and vocal solo works; sonatas for piano, violin, cello; and concerti for violin, cello, and oboe. In 1997 he completed a piano concerto, *Jewish Rhapsody*, and wrote music to the films by G. Poloka “SHKID Republic” and “Intervention.”

Slonimsky’s music is notable for its quality of vision and for the variety of images, colors, and stylistic effects. The remarkably diverse styles, which are drawn from antique modes, folk music, dodecaphony, and the music of the ancient East, have become in themselves a kind of unified style, through the seamlessness with which Slonimsky melds them into an organic whole.34

1.6  Overview of Slonimsky’s Piano Compositions

Piano had always been an important part of the composer’s life. Slonimsky is a good pianist himself. He graduated with a degree in piano performance from the St. Petersburg State Conservatory and studied with Vladimir Nielsen, one of the most influential pedagogues of that time.35 The phenomenon of a performing composer is not
new to the history of Russian musical art. From the nineteenth century the figures of Balakirev, Anton Rubenstein, and Sergei Taneev arise; from the turn of the twentieth century the names of Nikolai Medtner, Aleksandr Skryabin, and Sergei Rachmaninov continue the tradition. In the twentieth century Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitrii Shostakovich, Rodion Shchedrin, and Georgy Sviridov brilliantly developed this tradition. Sergei Slonimsky is one of the contemporary composers who carry on with this tradition now.

The first pieces Slonimsky wrote for piano were short miniatures for children: *Pasmurniï Vecher* (Cloudy Night) and *Gopachok* (A Little Hopak) in 1957. The first major composition, *Sonata for Piano*, appeared in 1962. This big, wide-ranging piece is not beholden to any model, and is adventurous stylistically. Slonimsky avoided using the traditional sonata-allegro form; instead, he employed one long movement, with a “rising from the depths” opening. “*Sonata for Piano* subjects a liturgical chant to all sorts of tonality-stretching elaborations and distortions.” It is built entirely on thematic figurations that are closely associated with Russian folk music.

In the same decade Slonimsky wrote a few art-inspired pieces, as well. They are generally short works: *A Passing-by Beauty* (after Picasso’s drawing); *Three Graces* (a suite in the form of variation after Botticelli, Rodin, and Picasso); and *Faun and Nymph* (after Rodin). During the 1960s Slonimsky wrote mostly short programmatic didactic works and works for four hands that are mostly tonal and highly attractive for teaching and widely used in the music schools in Russia. Some of these pieces would later be included in the collection titled *From Five to Fifty*. In his composition *Kolokola* (The Bells), written in 1970, he exploited different sonorities of the instrument by using the open strings of the piano. This was the second time Slonimsky employed this technique.
The first time he used open strings of the piano was in his cycle *Lyrical Strophes* for voice and piano in 1964.

In the 1980s the small and attractive character pieces continued to prevail in the composer’s output. All pieces were programmatic, many of them combined in suites based on literary sources (e.g., *A Princess Who Did Not Know to Cry* based on a fairy-tale by Baumbach, *A King-Musician* based on a fairy-tale by brothers Grimm) or scenes taken from everyday life (e.g., *Suite of Traveling*). Most of them were tonal pieces enriched by complex rhythms and dissonant harmonies. Among the pieces from this period *Intermezzo in Memory of Brahms* stands out with its beautiful singing melodies and dramatic character. This piece along with *Romantic Waltz* (1982) and *Madrigal for a Fair Lady* (1988) would be jointed in 1993 in the cycle “Recollections about the Nineteenth Century.”

The set of *24 Preludes and Fugues* was written “absolutely by accident” according to the composer. This is how he describes the story of composing the set,

I did not plan to write these compositions. One day I simply turned on the radio and there was Glenn Gould playing Bach. I listened with delight. And then I heard Tatyana Nikolaeva performing fugues by Shostakovich. For some reason I went to my piano thinking that it is time to write something new for pupils of Music Schools and Conservatories. While still thinking, I wrote all twenty-four themes of fugues and most of preludes in my little notebook. It had never happened to me before. After that I worked on the set about two weeks, not more, and completed everything. This is the whole story. As a rule, everything turns out better when it is not planned. The only thing that I kept in mind is that the pieces are to be accessible to students so that they sound as a live natural music and not as pseudo-polyphony.37

Slonimsky dedicated his polyphonic set to A. Dolzhansky, a musicologist and a brilliant scholar of Bach and Shostakovich. The set, *24 Preludes and Fugues*, is mainly
tonal. The music is skillfully and idiomatically written and filled with pleasing tunes and devices that make it as enjoyable to play, as to listen.  

One of the major directions in Slonimsky’s piano output is music for and about children. The purpose of these compositions is to give the young musicians access to listening and understanding contemporary music. In his mostly unpretentious and light piano pieces for children, where he seriously communicates matters that may be of interest to children, the music is theatrically graphic and vivid. The table provided in the Appendix shows Sergei Slonimsky’s entire piano compositions.
ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 1

BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF SERGEI SLONIMSKY


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Anna Danilovna Artobolevskaya was a very famous pianist and pedagogue, who educated a great number of piano virtuosos. She also compiled a collection of piano pieces and exercises “Pervaya vstrecha s muzikoi” (The first encounter with music) that became an essential part of a program in music schools for children in Russia.

7 Slonimsky, 33.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Fitenko, 3.

11 Slonimsky, 35-36.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid. 69.
Ibid. 70.

Fitenko, 4

Slonimsky, 40.

Ibid.

Aleksandr Porfir’evich Borodin (1833-1887), Russian composer, a member of “The Mighty Five.”

Slonimsky, 47.

Ibid.

Fitenko, 7.

Ibid.

Kholopova, 37.

Ibid.

Kholopova, 38.

Ibid.

Kholopova, 38.

Ibid.

Ibid., 40.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Fitenko, 9.

Ibid.


38 Lehman, 166.
CHAPTER 2

MUSIC INSPIRED BY ART

"Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures." Henry Ward Beecher

Program music became a distinct genre in the nineteenth century as Liszt, Musorgsky, Rachmaninov, and other Romantics began to compose works inspired by the visual arts as well as narrative music, or music intended to tell a story or evoke an emotion. Interest in music inspired by the visual arts accelerated in the twentieth century, with a host of composers producing compositions covering a widening spectrum of musical styles, artists, and visual media.¹

Among the large musical works inspired by art is a Symphonic Poem by Rachmaninov, *Isle of the Dead* (1909) after the painting of the same title by a nineteenth-century Swiss painter Arnold Böcklin. The same artist inspired Gustav Mahler earlier and his Fourth Symphony in 1900. A Twentieth Century German composer Hans Henze was influenced by the painting “The Raft of Medusa” by French painter Theodore Géricault, which resulted in his *Oratorio* (1968) for soprano, baritone, a narrator, mixed choir, and orchestra. According to the composer, a monumental composition of Géricault determined the style and colors of music.² It is interesting to note that the musical language and compositional technique of *Oratorio* includes the entire historical experience from church psalmody to modern sonoristic combinations.³ From the genre of
opera, there is an important work by Igor Stravinsky, *The Rake’s Progress* (1951),
inspired by Hogarth’s series of engravings.⁴

In the realm of piano music, the number of pieces composed under the influence
of the visual arts is not very high, if we discount compositions where an author resorts to
only general associations related to art (e.g., *Silhouettes* by A. Arensky, *Pastels* by
A. Grechaninov, *Sketches* by Bartok, etc.) or creates musical images independently that
do not refer to specific initial visual prototypes (e.g., Liszt’s *Historical Hungarian
Portraits* or Debussy’s *Engulfed Cathedral*).⁵ It is interesting to note that some
compositions could be inspired by a poem or a literary source that in their turn were
influenced by visual art.⁶ With these reservations among the works of piano miniatures
there are few interesting compositions that stand out. Among the piano pieces inspired by
the visual arts are: Liszt’s *Spozalizio* (based on the same-title painting of Raphael),
Debussy’s *L’isle joyeuse* (a painting by Watteau “Embarking for Cytheria”), and
Granados’s *Goyescas* (a seven-movement piano suite in response to the works of the
Spanish painter Francisco Goya). And, perhaps, one of the most well-known piano
compositions related to the visual arts is *The Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest
Petrovich Musorgsky, a memorial to the composer’s friend.

The list of piano works inspired by sculptures is not very extensive. Well-known
sculptures inspired compositions from Liszt, *Il penososo* (a statue of Guiliano de Medici
in Florence by Michelangelo), and Debussy, *Dancers of Delphi* (a sculptural group of an
ancient Greek cathedral). Szymanowski united his impressions from Homer’s *Odyssey*
and bas-reliefs from friezes of ancient buildings in his three poems for piano entitled
*Metopes*. Architecture less frequently stimulated a composer’s imagination, though a few
include Liszt’s *Chapelle de Guillaume Tell* (William Tell’s Chapel), Debussy’s *Gates of Algambra*. And finally, there are works that would be difficult to relate solely to architecture: Liszt’s *Venice and Naples*, Milhaud’s *Saudades du Brazil*, or *Pictures of Tallin* by Kapp. Needless to say, compared to the abundance of piano compositions based on literary sources, the number of musical works influenced by art is certainly fewer.

### 2.1 Passing-by Beauty

Sergei Slonimsky wrote very few works that are related to art. All of them are interesting and colorful piano miniatures, that deserve special attention. The first composition to be discussed is *Passing-by Beauty, a Comic Scene* (after Picasso’s drawing). It is the composer’s piano arrangement of one of the five *Choreographic Miniatures*. The set was written in 1963, during the early and experimental period in the composer’s life. Since the composer clearly indicates in the title of the piece that it was written after Picasso’s drawing, a discussion of the drawing and its place in Picasso’s output is necessary in order to provide a link between the piece of visual art and music.

Slonimsky does not specify the title of the Picasso drawing that inspired him to write *Passing-by Beauty*. After I looked through all of Picasso’s works related to the topic and since I knew the subject matter of the drawing, I was able to find a drawing that could have possibly motivated the composer to create this piece. The drawing is entitled *Buste de femme* and is located in The Picasso Museum in Barcelona (see Fig. 2.1). It comes from 1889-1890, the Barcelona years of the painter’s life. A zest for drawing predominated in the young artist’s hectic years in Barcelona, where a cultural revival was in progress, in the company of the Bohemian, anarchist-minded *avant-garde*. The influence of Catalan Modernism is quite obvious in the artist’s works of that period.
Nordic tendencies and a marked anti-realist air dominated the cultural outlook of the city. Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Wagner were the idols of philosophers, writers, artists, musicians, and of the Catalan society in general at the end of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. Their writings were printed in the magazines of the period, like *Catalunya Artística, Pèl & Ploma* and *Joventut*. Their music was played in all the opera seasons in the city. A phase of desperate struggles and privations provided Picasso with a plethora of human contacts and new visual discoveries, and in it he accumulated a wealth of potentialities for the future. The illustrations Picasso published in modernist reviews were dominated by the human figure: tavern and street scenes, portraits of his friends and self-portraits. “These demonstrate, under the then-fashionable stylizations of Art Nouveau, a keen insight into situations and character, and a concise, singular dexterity, often touched with irony.”

Having an open-minded spirit, eager for new experiences, meant that Picasso could not help trying out the new means of graphic expression that were all the rage at the end of the nineteenth century: poster designing. The young man took part by preparing drawings for several poster competitions. “In the summer of 1900, he also started to work on newspaper illustrations, which reached a high point during the following winter in Madrid, when Picasso created the journal *Arte Joven* with Francesco d’Assis Soler, where he was the artistic director of the first five issues.”

The discussed drawing *Buste de femme* depicts a street scene that Picasso might have seen from his window or observed from a café gathering with his friends. In the foreground there is a figure of a young, well-dressed woman walking down the street accompanied by a chaperone in the background. A number of men from different corners
Picasso portrays facial features and details of the woman’s attire very thoroughly. Her intricate hat and fashionable dress suggest her affiliation with high social status. Like so many others of Picasso’s women, this woman is very attractive, with a perfect oval face, big dark eyes, and curly hair flowing under her hat. The woman looks directly ahead, with self-assurance. She certainly is aware of the attention her appearance has stirred up, but prefers to ignore it. Out of all of the men in the picture, only one is depicted in full size with his arms crossed (in the upper left corner), which draws a spectator’s attention. Even though he is the only man portrayed in full size, there is nothing special about him. Picasso generalizes this man in order to show the insignificance of his persona. He is just one of the dozen of other men gazing at the woman. The other men depicted are a mixture of people of different ages, social classes, and moods. They are simply passers-by, as one can observe them from streets or cafes of Barcelona at the turn of the century.

Picasso is the master of line, and this drawing is a true example of it. With the use of simple black ink and pen, he clearly suggests all the details and contours of the woman’s figure. The sketch is two-dimensional and flat in its value. Picasso here turns away from the traditional academic three-dimensional technique. In fact, by 1898, when he was already a well-trained draftsman, he had rejected the academic system of meticulously modeling the human form through a subtle gradation of light and dark. “Instead, he started using bold, dark contours that rhythmically delineated musculature, and separated the body into interlocking planes of black and white.”¹² He began sacrificing three-dimensional illusion to emphasize the dynamic two-dimensional elements of the medium of drawing itself. Picasso’s stark approach was not unique: the
flat, linear style ultimately derives from the prints, posters, and designs for theater programs by graphic artists in Paris. The spatial organization is quite traditional: the woman’s figure is placed at the center of the composition and the other figures are sporadically placed around her and even inside of her torso and on the immediate foreground. That somewhat creates an illusion of depth.

The style of the drawing, with its sketchiness and flatness, clearly resembles the style of poster designing that interested Picasso at that time. The anti-academic character and subject matter of the drawing espouses satirical humor and suggests that Picasso might have followed the creed of *fumisme* in this work. He wrote a short poem that describes the scene his music depicts. The current editions do not include this poem. Slonimsky included the poem in the score of his *Passing-by Beauty*, which he gave as a gift to his former student Lyudmila Skaftimova:

Она идет, но... не туда,  
Стука своими каблучками,  
Свирепо лязгая зрачками,  
Она струится, как вода.  
Пожалуй все в ней гармонично:  
Сдала экзамены отлично,  
И все на свете ей привычно,  
В чем я и подписуюсь лично.

С. Слонимский

She is walking aimlessly….  
Clunking her high heels,  
Wildly blinking her eyes.  
She is like flowing water.
Figure 2.1: Pablo Ruiz Picasso, *Buste de femme*, 1899-1900, Museum Picasso, Barcelona, Pen, sepia ink and wash on graph

May be everything in her is so harmonious,
She passed her tests with an A
And everything in the world is just that way.
Well, what can I say
And I sign my name.\(^\text{14}\)

S. Slonimsky
The form of the piece is sectional, with each section approximately the same length:
A (mm.1-10) A’ (mm.11-22) A’’ (mm.23-34) B (mm.35-51) C (mm.52-67) A’’’ (mm.68-80) A’ (mm.81-93) A (mm.94-102). Even though Slonimsky does not follow any traditional formal scheme, some symmetry can be observed in the structure. The piece starts with Section A and its variations and concludes the same way with the two contrasting sections in the middle. The main motive is based on the five notes within the interval of major sixth (F sharp - D sharp). As a basic melodic kernel Slonimsky uses two intervals of a fourth: F sharp - B and G sharp - C sharp (see Fig. 2.2). This motive, with some interruptions, relentlessly permeates the entire composition. In Section A’ this motive is confronted in the upper register by the right hand with an altered unison (see Fig. 2.3). Slonimsky uses dissonance here as one of the devices that contributes to the comic character of the piece. The use of major sevenths, minor seconds, and minor ninths dominated in compositions of this period (opera *Virinea*, vocal cycle *Lyrical Strophes*). This may perhaps be because the intense rhythm of an inner life of a contemporary man required frequent use of different leaps and dissonant intervals in melodies.

With the entrance of the next Section A’’ in measure 23, the main quartal motive moves a half-step down and into the upper voice of major sevenths in the right-hand part, accompanied by minor seconds in the bass (see Fig. 2.4). Section B contrasts the previous section with a thicker texture and more elegant character. Slonimsky marked this section grazioso. However, it is still based on fourths, except now Slonimsky uses them vertically instead of horizontally (see Fig. 2.5). The new material appears in Section C, where the melody now becomes an upper voice of triads in the second inversion, accompanied by the ostinato figure Bb-F-E - a diminished fifth with the perfect fourth
Figure 2.2: Slonimsky, *Passing-by Beauty*, mm.1-6

Figure 2.3: Slonimsky, *Passing-by Beauty*, mm. 11-15
Figure 2.4: Slonimsky, *Passing-by Beauty*, mm.23-26

Figure 2.5: Slonimsky, *Passing-by Beauty*, Section B, mm.36-39
Figure 2.6: Slonimsky, *Passing-by Beauty*, Section C, mm.52-55

inside of it (see Fig. 2.6).

Section C leads toward the climax of the piece, which takes place with the entrance of Section A’’. There is an opening quartal motive, transposed a semi-tone lower, while octaves in the left hand reinforce the upper voice of major sevenths (see Fig. 2.7). The phrases are very short, repetitive, and motivic. As the music becomes more expressive, more dissonance appears, represented by tritones, major sevenths and minor seconds, which sharpens and intensifies the harmony. Another expressive device that the composer utilizes in this piece is bitonality or polytonality. This device was widely used in the first half of the twentieth century. Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and many others employed it, but it is particularly characteristic of music of Darius Milhaud. The first example of it happens with the entrance of A’ where the left-hand part is written in B major and the right-hand part is in B flat major (see Fig. 2.3). These two keys sound simultaneously throughout most of the entire work, having one tonality subordinate to the
other at certain points, but concluding the work with B major. Another characteristic approach in the composer’s harmonic language found here is the lowering of the third in a major triad (see Fig. 2.8). This device allows different quality gradations of major mode, which become iridescent and neutral. Using this flickering third, Slonimsky achieves a darkening, or a clearing of the color that often grows into the subtle game of psychological treatment of light and shade.¹⁵

Like Slonimsky’s other works, rhythm is a very important component of this composition. Very often, Slonimsky combines patterns of regular and irregular rhythms, which create an impression of strength and intensity, sharpness and will, and moreover, it provides a piece with inner dynamics. This piece is rich in syncopations, accents, rests, and dotted rhythms. The duple meter prevails throughout the piece. The texture varies from section to section. The outer parts of the piece are much thinner than the middle sections, where it is more dense and thick. Slonimsky uses the technique of counterpoint very effectively, bringing an element of parody since voices are clearly differentiated by various tonalities (see Fig. 2.9).

Figure 2.7: Slonimsky, *Passing-by Beauty*, Culmination, mm.68-71
Slonimsky employs practically all resources of the modern piano. He successfully juxtaposes polar registers to achieve that parody effect. The orchestral thinking of the composer is evident through his own remarks (e.g., quasi sassofono in measures 89-90). The rich and resonant sound of the piano can be associated with the orchestral tutti. The extended dynamic range, along with the skillful use of registers also contributes to the overall expression. Passing-by Beauty underlines the percussive possibilities of the piano with staccato and marcato as predominant articulation marks.
In order to draw a parallel between Picasso’s work and Slonimsky’s piece or to see correlations between the painting and music, the common principles of the visual arts and music should be identified. Even though music is very different from painting, there are unifying elements that are basic components of both branches of art. They are line, form, color, and texture.

Line is a significant element that helps to indicate the sharpness and clarity of an image in both painting and music. In Picasso’s work, one can observe a variety of lines employed. To emphasize the importance of the main character, Picasso outlines the woman quite boldly, emphasizing the profile with thick and distinct lines. The boldness of lines could be attributed to the decisiveness of her character. The long and curving lines that outline her body signify some stability and direction. From another point the secondary characters are drawn with much thinner and shorter lines, which emphasizes their subordinate part in the story and create a sense of depth. Slonimsky’s melodic line is not so curvy; it is quite jagged due to frequent leaps and interruptions by rest. However, short melodic motives could correspond to the choppy lines Picasso used for sketching the men. The repetitive and bold character of the opening motive, which perhaps portrays the walking beauty, corresponds to the distinctness of Picasso’s line.

Both works seem to be balanced in form. As stated above, Picasso places his main character symmetrically in the center of the work, which brings balance and security to the composition. Slonimsky achieves this balance through the symmetric sectional organization of the parts.

There is not much differentiation of color in Picasso’s drawing, since Picasso used ink and a wash, which is a light covering of watercolor. He emphasizes certain areas
with the application of more intense color, thus drawing a spectator’s attention. As it was said before, the image of the woman and the details of her attire, such as her hat, collar, and cuff of her sleeve, receive the most attention in terms of color. Among the secondary images that Picasso brings to our attention is the hat of the second woman walking nearby, and two men at the right. Another image that draws our attention is the man in the upper left corner, but Picasso highlights his figure differently, not through the use of color, but by shaping his figure. This is the only figure that exists in somewhat three-dimensional space due to its pose and shade that suggests distance. The visual element of color can easily be related to the musical element of timbre, and also somewhat to pitch register and dynamics. If Picasso’s work could be considered monochromatic, Slonimsky’s composition is much more bright and various in colors. However, the monochromotism of color can be correlated with the repetitiveness of the main theme. Slonimsky uses a variety of registers and depicts contrasting images by imitating the sound of other instruments and orchestral groups. He enhances his color palette with unexpected accents and a vast dynamic range (pianissimo – fortissimo). The dominance of major keys at certain points-B major or B flat major contributes to the overall brightness of color and jovial mood.

The texture in Picasso’s *Buste de femme* is very simple. The woman is the only object that is depicted with intricate, elaborate lines of high density. One can recognize every detail of her fashionable hat due to Picasso’s mastery in handling its texture. The other objects are of lesser density, with more delicate lines, and simpler textures. The poster-flatness of the drawing corresponds to the thinness of the one and two-voice texture that opens the piece. However, Slonimsky employs homophonic, and even some
polyphonic, textures for the portrayal of the populous street, and a parody of the incident respectfully.

Hence, there are obvious relations and some unity between the work of Picasso and Slonimsky. Both artists tell a story and communicate emotions through their respective medium: visual art and music. Picasso’s scene is more trivial and subtle, as he omits a descriptive title to his work. Slonimsky, inspired by the drawing, enhances the plot and brings elements of humor to his music through the wide range of expressive means.

2.2 Piano Suite *Three Graces* in the Form of Variations after Botticelli, Rodin, and Picasso

Slonimsky wrote the piano suite *Three Graces* in 1963, the year when piano miniatures prevailed in his creative output. The suite is a set of four beautiful miniatures that present an interesting occurrence of stylization that further developed in his later years. This composition is unique, because in addition to paintings by Botticelli and Picasso, Slonimsky uses Rodin’s sculpture *Minotaur* as a source of inspiration. Slonimsky recreates three different types of feminine beauty and three artistic styles of various epochs: Botticelli, Rodin, and Picasso. The task of the composer is to expose the listener to the artistic style, creating a resemblance of a portrait, and unite all three works by the integral image of perfection, beauty, and ideal. Slonimsky organizes the pieces within the suite chronologically, enabling him to emphasize Botticelli’s image, and to form it most subtly with lines and colors.

Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510) was one of the most distinctive and popular among the Renaissance artists. Botticelli lived and worked in Florence and was a protégé of
several members of the powerful Medici family. He painted portraits of the family and many religious pictures. The most original of his paintings are those illustrating Greek and Roman legends. He developed a highly personalized linear style of painting. His works were elegantly executed with a rich language of personal and melancholy gesture. Botticelli’s linear style was out of date by the time he died. His reputation was revived, however, in the second half of the nineteenth century, when his female figures were a major influence on the Pre-Raphaelites\(^\text{16}\) and his flowing line was an inspiration for Art Nouveau.

Botticelli’s ideal of feminine beauty could be seen from two of his most famous paintings: *The Birth of Venice* (1482-84) and *La Primavera* (1477-78). The latter inspired Claude Debussy in his creation of the orchestral suite *Printemps* (Spring). “In the history of renaissance art, *The Birth of Venice* was the first surviving celebration of the beauty of the female nude represented for its own perfection rather than with erotic or moral religious overtones.”\(^\text{17}\) *The Birth of Venice* is based on a classical myth – the birth of Venus from the foaming waters of the sea (see Fig. 2.10). The meaning of *La Primavera* (Allegory of Spring) is uncertain (see Fig. 2.11). Among the more probable hypotheses is Warburg’s, who sees in it the reign of Venus sung by ancient poets. To the right, Zephyr pursues Flora, who, once possessed, becomes the “hour” of spring and scatters flowers on the world. Venus is in the center and there are the Three Graces dancing and Mercury dissipating the clouds. This image of the Graces, removed from the other characters and dancing in a silent reverie in their own private bliss, corresponds very well to the picture Slonimsky’s music depicts.
In Greek mythology the three graces were Aglaea (Splendor) the youngest, Euphrosyne (Mirth) and Thalia (Good Cheer). They were the goddesses of joy, charm, and beauty. The Graces presided over banquets, dances, and all other pleasurable social events, and brought joy and goodwill to both gods and mortals. Each grace has her own individuality, although the three are often described in literature and depicted in art as a group. From the sixth century B.C., the group was presented often in sculptures and paintings, as well as decorations on coins and lamps.

“Botticelli’s Graces are tall, golden-haired figures, absorbed in each other and in a stately round dance in which their fingers are locked. They are alike yet different, as sisters should be.”18 Slonimsky reproduces the slow round dance, which the Graces could be dancing, by stylizing a Pavane, a courtly processional type of Renaissance dance. By this means, Slonimsky transmits both grace of movement and a sense of the static character in the painting. Botticelli’s Graces are white and tall, but not too thin, with well-shaped heads, long and elegant hands, a graceful but not too slender neck, an oval face, thick blond tresses, and a lofty port. Gracefulness of line by Botticelli’s magical delicacy is very well represented in Slonimsky’s music by a smooth, gentle, and curving melody (see Fig. 2.13). Slonimsky uses uncomplicated rhythms and ornaments to show the nobility of the dance. The dance’s steps are clearly indicated by the detached, single notes in the left-hand part. The sense of proportion between figures in Botticelli’s painting, such as the space and linear rhythms that join figures and groups in harmoniously arranged masses, corresponds to the balance of the overall rounded binary form of the music, as well as to the symmetry of periods and phrases.
Botticelli favored muted tones in most of his works. In the depiction of his Graces, Botticelli achieves a sense of harmony and connection through the use of colors that resemble each other. This idealistic delicacy and transparency of color is expressed in music by soft, gentle dynamics. *Piano* prevails throughout the piece, and *mezzo-forte* is the loudest mark. Only a limited range of the piano’s register is used, along with an elegant touch, such as *legato, tenuto*, some staccato for the imitation of dance steps. In addition to that, Slonimsky adds his own color to the picture by enhancing the harmonic

Figure 2.10: Botticelli, Sandro, *The Birth of Venus*, 1485-86. Painted for the villa of Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici at Castello. Tempera on canvas. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
language with a bold confrontation of tonalities. However, the harmony is subservient to the melody and dissonances do not break the overall sublime atmosphere of gracefulness.

The characteristic feature of Botticelli’s style, seen in *La Primavera* and *The Birth of Venus*, is a flat, two-dimensional surface. Only the suggested movement of the Graces implies some depth in the painting. In music, it can be compared with the consistent homophonic texture, with the melody staying in the upper voice of the chords, along with a simple, static accompaniment. In Section B, the texture becomes thinner and more
transparent due to the single-line melody, the ostinato accompaniment, and the slow moving middle voices (see Fig. 2.14). Section B of the Botticelli portrait, with its uncomplicated and expressive melody, serves as a common symbol of the feminine beauty that unites all three variations.

Figure 2.12: Three Graces

The second variation portrays Rodin’s ideal of beauty. August Rodin (1840-1917), the most celebrated sculptor of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, did for sculpture what Manet and Monet did for painting. He revitalized and redefined it. “Rodin was bold and creative in sculpting figures with a genius not seen since Bernini.”¹⁹ He is one of those rare artists whose work speaks to the deep desires of most people, yet one whose work repays repeated visits and study.²⁰ The surfaces of his sculptures writhe
Figure 2.13: Slonimsky, *Three Graces, Botticelli*, mm.1-4

Figure 2.14: Slonimsky, *Three Graces, Botticelli*, mm.9-13
with energy and motion, as they define muscles and tension of a figure. With his clay, he worked his surfaces with wrinkles and exaggerated masses to express the lifelike human form. He sometimes left parts of the figure unfinished, as if it were a study of a sculpture. Of all the works by Rodin, the most famous one is unquestionably the great *Thinker* that was modeled in 1880-1882 for *The Gates of Hell* and exhibited in its original size in Copenhagen in 1888.²¹

According to G. Demchenko, the prototype of Slonimsky’s second variation was Rodin’s sculpture *Minotaur*. *Minotaur* is one of the sculptures of Rodin often exhibited. Its first recorded exhibition was in Munich (1896); thereafter, it was shown in Vienna (1898), Paris (1900, 1910, 1917), Potsdam (1903), Düsseldorf (1904) and Barcelona (1907).²² The sculpture was exhibited under different titles like “Faun and Woman,” “Satyr and Nymph” or “Jupiter and Taurus.” Rodin himself preferred the title “The Minotaur,” referring to mythology. After the wedding of Minos and Pasiphaë and her union with a bull, the Minotaur was born. Each year the Athenians had to sacrifice to him seven maids and seven young men until Theseus finally defeated him. With the title “The Minotaur,” Rodin shows the Minotaur with one of his sacrifices.

Rodin not only illustrated the myth of the Minotaur in his sculpture, he speculated about what could happen in the situation depicted. The figure shows no violent seduction, and the nymph has no terrified look or frightened gesture (see Fig. 2.15). The Minotaur is seated on a rock, staring open-mouthed at the nymph’s hair. His left hand is holding her elbow, while with his right hand he embraces her extended right thigh, where it met the left hand of the nymph. Although the nymph is raising her shoulder and her body is leaning against her left side, it seems that she has no inclination to reject her horned
seducer. Her right leg is slung over his, but with her foot pressing against the ground, she seems to avert his embrace. But her right hand is simply lying on her own thigh and her facial expression shows rather a frown than fear.23

Slonimsky conceives Rodin’s variation with a ribbon-like succession of ninth chords, creating a volume of sound that suggests contour rather than color (see Fig. 2.16). The antique coolness of material and classical perfection of form in a romantically warm plasticity are a couple of the associations it evokes. The musical language is saturated with sevenths and ninths chords, bringing reminiscences of Impressionism and atmospheric images of Monet and Manet.

This variation consists of two sections. The first is very sensual, built entirely on ninth chords, and the second employs the theme from Section B of the first variation (see Fig. 2.17). However, this time it sounds an octave lower and the arpeggiated accompaniment preserves the luminosity and subtlety of the image established in the first half of the piece. The variation concludes with a “watery” coda, and with a gentle, flowing succession of seventh chords contributing to the overall beauty and elusiveness of the image (see Fig. 2.18).

The Three Graces is a theme that occurs many times in Picasso’s works of the 1920s. It can be found not only in many drawings and prints in which the subtle use of line recalls Ingres,24 but also in a scene of Mercure, staged in 1924 by the Ballets Russes with scenery and costumes by Picasso (see Fig. 2.19 and 2.20).
Figure 2.15: Rodin, *Minotaur*. C.1886. Plaster. Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Figure 2.16: Slonimsky, *Three Graces, Rodin*, mm. 1-2

Figure 2.17: Slonimsky, *Three Graces, Rodin*, mm. 14-15
The 1920s were a period when Picasso drew heavily on classical themes and produced magnificent monumental nudes and monsters that were reminiscent of antiquity, rendered with a certain anguished irony. These works appeared simultaneously with synthetic cubist paintings.

In contrast to Botticelli’s portrayal of goddesses, typically with perfect elongated figures and flowing movements (see Fig. 2.12), Picasso’s graces have more robust, even somewhat masculine, bodies. This could have been a consequence of the theatrical staging Picasso worked on at that time, in which the Graces emerging from a fountain were played by three male dancers. Even though the formal organization of drawing and the positioning of figures are very similar to that of Botticelli, Picasso portrays his Graces in a very different way. He does not represent them as idealized, divine, Renaissance–
like depictions of female figures. Rather, he brings his Graces closer to real life by endowing them with features of earthly creatures.

The musical image of Picasso’s works does not require stylization from a contemporary composer. It is sufficient to color the diatonic line with dissonance. Slonimsky utilizes irregular rhythmic patterns and dissonant harmonies in full measure, adding to the theme his favorite seconds (see Fig. 2.21). A similar device can be seen in another piece written after Picasso’s drawing that was discussed above, Passing-by Beauty. Even though the melodic line is spiced with dissonance and constantly interrupted by clusters and altered chords, the melody still retains its ribbon-like shape as in the previous variations. This ribbon-like contour of the melody and predominance of major triads unite the suite with a unique color.

The final variation, Three Groups of Graces, is conceived with a virtuosic compositional brilliance. Slonimsky combines the ideal of feminine beauty from three different epochs into a single composition (see Fig. 2.22). The classical image by Botticelli collides with the comic rhythmic pattern and biting clusters taken from the Picasso variation. Rodin’s sensual shadow is opposed by the stately theme from the second part of Botticelli’s variation (see Fig. 2.23). As in a cinematographical flow, all three visual images are blended into one entity.
Figure 2.19: Pablo Ruiz Picasso, *Les trois Grâces* [Paris], 1923. The Picasso Estate. Pen & ink on letter-headed paper.
Figure 2.20: Pablo Ruiz Picasso, Les trios Grâces. Cap d'Antibes. Summer/1923. The Picasso Estate. India ink on paper.

Figure 2.21: Slonimsky, Three Graces, Picasso, mm.1-3
Figure 2.22: Slonimsky, *Three Graces, Three Groups of Graces*, mm.1-2

Figure 2.23: Slonimsky, *Three Graces, Three Groups of Graces*, mm. 5-7
ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 2

MUSIC INSPIRED BY ART


3 Ibid.

4 Evans, 12.


6 Debussy borrowed the title for his *Suite Bergamasque* from one of the poems of Paule Verlaine’s set “Fete galantes.” Verlaine created his set of poems under the impression of the painting “Fete in a Park” by Watteau.

7 The other pieces from the set are: *Faun and Nymph* (arrangement for piano by the composer), *Three Graces, Metamorphoses*, and *Whirlwind (Malyavian Women)*.


10 Leymarie, 9.

11 Ibid.

13 *Fumisme* by 1880 referred to a way of life, an art form that rested on skepticism and humor, often morbid or macabre. Fumisme did not produce a quick laugh, nor was its intention always obvious. A *fumiste* had no political or humanitarian agenda. *Fumistes* aspired to counteract the pomposity and hypocrisies they perceived in society.


16 The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was created in 1848 in England. The principal founders: Rossetti, Hunt, and John Millais. Their goal was to develop a naturalistic style of art. In the works of the Italian painters prior to Raphael, they found a happy innocence of style that they tried to imitate.


18 Ibid., 128.

19 Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680), the greatest sculptor-architect of the 17th century.


21 Ibid.


23 Ibid.

24 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), a French Neoclassical painter. He made many pencil portraits that were distinguished for their purity and economy of style.
CHAPTER 3

SERGEI SLONIMSKY AND THE WORLD OF FAIRY-TALES

Virtually every piano composition by Slonimsky, regardless of the level of difficulty, with the exception of his Piano Sonata, bears a distinctive title evoking an image or story. In some cases, the composer submits the text or story that will be depicted, as in the suite A Princess Who Did Not Know to Cry, which is based on a fairy-tale by Baumbach. The text can be read before the music or in intervals between its parts. Some of the piano works were inspired by events of every day life, such as the Suite of Traveling, and some represent the composer’s interests in other cultures and nationalities (e.g., Korean Suite, Prelude and Fugue in Korean Modes, American Rhapsody or Jewish Rhapsody). There are also quite a few pieces based on literary sources or poetry. The employment of literary sources by composers traces back to the nineteenth century and is a direct consequence of the growth of instrumental music. Schubert, Schumann, Brahms and others created a new and intimate union between music and literature. Many leading composers, such as Berlioz, Schumann, and Liszt, were extraordinarily interested in literary expression and wrote distinguished essays on music.

Perhaps Slonimsky’s interest in program music could be the outcome of his love for literature and the influence of his father and the literary circle in which he belonged. Most of the sources Slonimsky employed for his compositions are fairy tales, which
shows his interest in the world of fantasy. The practice of taking popular fairy tales and writing music that reflect that story was not new. Slonimsky continues the tradition of Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s *Sleeping Beauty* and *Nutcracker*, Sergei Prokofiev’s *Cinderella*, and Igor Stravinsky’s *Firebird*. For his compositions, Slonimsky uses stories written by symbolic names in Russian, French and German literature: Aleksandr Pushkin, Charles Perrault, and brothers Grimm respectively.

### 3.1 Pieces Based on Aleksandr Pushkin’s Poems

Aleksandr Pushkin (1799-1837) is known as Russia’s greatest poet and writer. During a time when most great literature was being written in French and English, Pushkin revolutionized Russian literature with narrative poems, love poems, political poems, short stories, novels, plays, and fairy tales. Pushkin's sceptical mind and sense of irony helped him capture what it means to be Russian, winning the hearts of his countrymen. The works of Pushkin have inspired many musical compositions, far more than any other Russian writer. Among them there are over a hundred operas by Musorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky, and Stravinsky. Slonimsky draws on the poet’s works in two choruses, *Esli zhizn’ tebia obmanet* (If Life Deceives You) and *Vakhicheskaia Pesnia* (Bacchic Song), and two poetic lieder, *Elegia* (Elegy) and *Posledniaia tucha* (The Last Cloud), which were written in the composer’s early years and revised later in the 1990s.

Among the pieces written for piano there are two compositions for four hands, *The Tale about a Fisherman and Fish* and *The Tale about a Dead Tsarina*. Both pieces are based on famous poems under the same titles. *The Tale about a Fisherman and Fish*
is a moralistic folktale that was reworked by Pushkin as a poem. This is a short summary of it,

Once upon a time lived a poor fisherman. One day he caught a golden fish. The fish talked with him in a human voice and begged him to go free. She promised to fulfill any of his wishes. He was a kind man and simply let her go free. After hearing the story, the fisherman's wife shouted at him and sent him back to see the magic fish - she needed a new trough. The fish granted the wish, and a new trough magically appeared at their hut. But his wife continued to scream and yell at him. She wanted a new house, then she wanted to be a noble lady, then wanted to be the Queen of the Land. Every time she sent her old husband to the shore, the golden fish fulfilled the wishes of the wicked wife. The woman now wanted to be Empress of the Land and the Sea, and that the golden fish be her servant. The fisherman went to the shore, called the fish and when she came he explained the last wish of his wife. The gold fish disappeared without a word. The old man then went home and found his old mud hut, his poor wife, and a broken trough.¹

Every Russian knows the poem since childhood. Russian boys and girls are inseparable from the magic world of Pushkin’s fairy tales. When reading his fairy-tales one enters the world of boundless imagination.

Even though instrumental music is incapable of narration, it can enact stories. It can show, even if it cannot tell. It can suggest a plot, for instance in terms of theme, thematic development, and variety in timbre, register, and harmony. Slonimsky tried to transmit the essence of the poem through his own musical interpretation. The composer clearly identifies the main characters of the plot: The Golden Fish, the Old Man, The Old Woman and images of the sea in between. Slonimsky sets the story with the picture of the tired Old Man, who is depicted by a broad melody in C minor accompanied by triplet figurations that depict moderate tides of the sea (see Fig. 3.1). The Golden Fish is portrayed in the radiant high register and colored with polymodal features. It is a gentle, mostly stepwise, melody with simple rhythm (see Fig. 3.2).
The musical image of The Old Woman is set in contrast to the picture of the Golden Fish begging for her life. Initially Slonimsky uses the parallel major key, C major, involving
short, motivic phrases interrupted by rests, middle register of the piano, and shorter note values. All of these contribute to the picture of an anxious quarrelling woman demanding more for herself (see Fig. 3.3).

Figure 3.3: Slonimsky, *The Tale about a Fisherman and a Fish*, the Old Woman theme, mm. 17-19

As the first sign of approaching troubles, the sea stirs up with a gloomier color. Slonimsky paints this with a dark E-flat minor, in the high register, doubling in parts and more intense dynamics (see Fig. 3.4). The texture thins out and the dynamics calm down before the appearance of the enchanting Golden Fish. This time the theme is transposed a step higher and employs the composer’s favorite “neutral third” and tints of Phrygian mode. The last request by The Old Woman is stated angrily in the low register, in the Secondo part in unison with *pesante* touch and *fortissimo* in dynamics. After the statement of the theme in Secondo part, it moves to the Primo part, interspersed by chromatic tones and rests, showing the grotesqueness of her image. The tremendous
storm on the sea is depicted by the doubling of the parts, massive dynamics (*triple forte*),
and exploiting of the full piano register (see Fig. 3.5).

Figure 3.4: Slonimsky, *The Tale about a Fisherman and a Fish*, mm. 24-26

The stormy figurations of triplets end with effective *glissandos* picturing the
disappearance of the magic Golden Fish into the deep waters. Slonimsky’s piece, like
Pushkin’s story, ends exactly the same way it started: The Old Woman is near her broken
wash-tab. The theme sounds in the exact same register, in a parallel minor, C minor and
slower tempo (see Fig. 3.6).

In addition to the sound portrayal of the poem, Slonimsky provides text for the
identification of each theme. Thus, even if performers are unfamiliar with Pushkin’s
work, it is quite accessible to figure out the story. Obviously Slonimsky’s work,
compared to Pushkin’s, is more compact, lacks in detail and description that is available
to words. However, by using the expressive capabilities of the instrument discussed
above, Slonimsky makes his interpretation of the famous story imaginative, unique and colorful.

Figure 3.5: Slonimsky, *The Tale about a Fisherman and a Fish*, storm, mm. 46-47

Figure 3.6: Slonimsky, *The Tale about a Fisherman and a Fish*, the Old Woman theme, mm. 57-58
Sergei Slonimsky was not the first composer to depict images of sea and fish in his compositions. Franz Schubert splendidly portrays fish in his famous Trout Quintet, Op.114 that was written in 1819. In Ravel’s Jeux d’eau and Une barque sur l’océan from Miroirs, rapid arpeggio figurations evoke images of flowing water and sea tides. Claude Debussy portrays his golden fish in Poissons d’or from Image, Book II.

3.2 Pieces Based on Charles Perrault’s Tales

Charles Perrault (1628-1703) is a French author whose Contes de ma mère l’Oye (Mother Goose Tales) from 1697 gave him great popularity and opened up a new literary genre: the fairytale. Among his most famous versions of fairy tales are Blue Beard, Sleeping Beauty on the Woods, Little Red Riding Hood, The Master Cat or Puss in Boots, Cinderella, and Little Thumb and Donkey Skin. Perrault's most famous stories are still in print today and have been made into operas (e.g. La Cenerentola by Rossini, Cendrilloon by Massenet, La Cenicienta by Jorge Peña Hen), ballet (Aschenbroedel by Johann Straus, Cinderella by Prokofiev, ballet and suite for piano, four hands Ma Mere L’oye by Ravel), plays, movies and animated motion pictures by Disney Studios.

Slonimsky utilized two of his most famous tales: Cinderella and Puss in Boots. Cinderella is perhaps the best-known fairy tale in the world, with over 700 variants reported. The earliest version of the story originated in China, around 860 AD. It appeared in “The Miscellaneous Record of Yu Yang” by Tuan Ch’ing Shih, a book that dates from the Tang dynasty.\(^2\) The version written by Charles Perrault in 1697 has become the standard contemporary version. Slonimsky portrays just one scene from the story, the waltz of Cinderella and The Prince. The piece is an ensemble for one piano-four hands. The formal scheme is ABCA, with Section C written in the parallel major, F
major. The piece opens with a very charming and graceful theme portraying the beautiful Cinderella (see Fig. 3.7).

![Waltz of Cinderella and Prince, mm.1-4](image)

Figure 3.7: Slonimsky, *Waltz of Cinderella and Prince*, mm.1-4

The high register, minor key, unpretentious rhythm, and diatonic character of the melody contribute to the well-known image of the girl. The transparency of the texture, mainly waltz-style accompaniment along with triple meter, very vividly creates an atmosphere of the royal ball. Slonimsky’s favorite hues of Phrygian mode are obvious here in Section B, as well as in the opening theme. According to the plot of the story the magic comes to the end, at midnight, and Cinderella flees the ball. The last section of the piece, with its return to the minor and somewhat melancholy colors of the opening, serves as a premonition of things to come.
Puss in Boots is a European folktale collected by Charles Perrault in his Mother Goose Tales. In Puss in Boots, a poor miller dies and leaves his youngest son nothing but a cat. The son is none too happy about it, either, “...once I've eaten my cat and made a muff out of the fur, I'm sure to starve,” he says. But what a legacy the bequeathed cat turns out to be! The cat in tall boots creates a new identity for the youngest son: the Marquis of Carabas, complete with fine clothes, fields of wheat, a castle stolen from an ogre, and in the end, the respect of the king and the hand of the king's daughter. As in every other tale by Perrault, there is a moral to it: there is great advantage in receiving a large inheritance, but diligence and ingenuity are worth more than wealth acquired from others.  

And another moral: if a miller's son can win the heart of a princess in so short time, causing her to gaze at him with lovelorn eyes, it must be due to his clothes, his appearance, and his youth. These things do play a role in matters of the heart. 

In order to portray a musical image of this ingenious cat, Slonimsky employs a variety of means. The piece begins with the “bravery” accompaniment in Secondo part that sets the character of the entire piece (see Fig. 3.8). The melody starts very decisively with the ascending fourth, syncopated rhythms, mordents and triplets (see Fig. 3.9). This syncopated rhythmic pattern permeates the entire piece illustrating the rattle of the cat’s spurs.

The formal scheme is ternary, where the middle section presents a harmonic and characteristic contrast to the outer sections. The piece is very imaginative in terms of harmonic colors. The first statement of the theme is in E flat minor, after which it repeats but in the relative major, with predominance of the seventh and diminished chords in the accompaniment.
The brief excursion to B minor in the middle section shows another side of the character: comic and somewhat sneaky. In music it is expressed by the change in articulation (staccato), very low dynamics (subito piano), and thin texture (see Fig. 3.10). However, the piece ends brilliantly with the main theme doubled in both parts emphasizing the significance of the main character (see Fig. 3.11).
Figure 3.10: Slonimsky, *Dance of the Cat in Jackboots*, middle section, mm. 25-27

Figure 3.11: Slonimsky, *Dance of the Cat in Jackboots*, mm. 34-35
ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 3

SERGEI SLONIMSKY AND THE WORLD OF FAIRY-TALES

1 Translated By Tatyana Stonebarger.


4 Ibid.
CHAPTER 4

WORKS INSPIRED BY ROMANTICISM

Sergei Slonimsky, despite his adherence to twentieth century humanistic and artistic aesthetics, is emotionally closer to the ideals of the Romantic nineteenth century. Romanticism stays in the consciousness of the composer as a spiritual reminiscence that he experiences today.\(^1\) It is not by mere chance that his set of piano pieces, included in Volume III of his piano collection *From Five to Fifty*, is entitled “Recollections About the Nineteenth Century.” The set includes such remarkable pieces as *Romantic Waltz*, *Madrigal for a Fair Lady*, and *Intermezzo in Memory of Brahms*. Among his other compositions inspired by Romanticism are lieder, works for chorus with lyrics by F. Tyutchev and M. Lermontov, and vocal duets based on poetry by A. Del’vig, A.Fet, and A. Pushkin.\(^2\)

Each epoch has its own historical and cultural symbols, making it recognizable for subsequent generations. The symbolic genres of the nineteenth century are the waltz, lied, and elegy.\(^3\) They represent the essence of the lyrical disposition of a romanticist. According to A. Kushner, “For romanticists, the coloring of viewpoints of phenomena and of people in intimate shades are the most original unbridled human speech…an address to an invisible interlocutor, who instantly understands it’s subtle message.”\(^4\) In
this chapter I will talk about the romantic features in Slonimsky’s *Romantic Waltz*, *Madrigal for a Fair Lady*, and *Intermezzo in Memory of Brahms*.

These pieces remind one of the private salon-style gatherings for the elite or nobility featuring musical or literary performances, often in wealthy Russian homes. *Romantic Waltz* is written in a refined and exquisite manner, which is close to the style of Mikhail Glinka. The thin transparent texture, light airy rhythms imitating waltz-like whirling, and expressive “sighs” based on sixths, create a poetic image and remind one of Glinka’s *Valse-Fantaisie* or his lied *Ya pomnyu chudnoye mgnoven’ye* (I recall a wonderful moment) (see Fig. 4.1).

![Figure 4.1: Slonimsky, Romantic Waltz, mm.1-9](image)

However, Slonimsky’s music is not stylized and does not simply copy the Russian classics. There are many characteristics in his use of melody and harmony that underline the language of the contemporary master, such as delaying the establishment of the tonic...
key of B minor and using chromatic modulations and irregular rhythms. With the help of
elegant, psychologically and musically expressive means, Slonimsky creates a special
poetic and inspired image that is harmonious and femininely beautiful, which is
consistent with Glinka and Pushkin’s “genius of pure beauty.”

The romantic lyricism of Slonimsky is tightly connected with nineteenth century
western culture. Madrigal for a Fair Lady can serve as an example of that connection.
The genre of madrigal leads us to the culture of the Renaissance, and even earlier to the
time of the Middle Ages-songs of troubadours glorifying an ideal image of a fair lady.
However, the intonations and the musical solution of Slonimsky’s madrigal are quite
different. There is no allusion to the madrigals of Palestrina, Shakespeare and
Monteverdi. Moreover, there are no intonations of songs of troubadours. The music of
Madrigal for a Fair Lady is written in the tradition of nineteenth century romantic
lyricism. The beautiful melody soars above the smoothly iridescent triplets of the
accompaniment (see Fig. 4.2). By its character and mood, it brings reminiscences of
Liszt’s Liebesträume or Sonnets del Petrarca. In the course of Madrigal for a Fair Lady,
there are few expressive themes that depict the entire richness of an affectionate feeling
by its dynamic and gradual ecstatic growth–from the calm and deeply peaceful rapture, to
trembling and anxiously weary intonations of entreaty that increasingly transform into an
emotionally intense, passionate hymn of love (see Fig. 4.3).

This piece contains certain characteristics of Russian style, such as Tchaikovsky’s
frequent employment of sixths in the melody to portray passions, and Prokofiev’s
unexpected modulations into foreign keys, his use of chromatic scale, and irregular
rhythms. They illustrate the Russian nature of thinking in these pieces.
Figure 4.2: Slonimsky, *Madrigal for a Fair Lady*, mm.1-5

Figure 4.3: Slonimsky, *Madrigal for a Fair Lady*, mm. 88-91
In both *Romantic Waltz* and *Madrigal for a Fair Lady*, one can trace subtle associations with German Romantic lied (e.g., Beethoven and Schubert). Thus, Schubertian allusions can be heard in *Romantic Waltz* in a delicate, elusive play of parallel major and minor, with an emphasis on the submediant.

Slonimsky expresses his affection for Brahms in a piece that is full of romantic passion, *Intermezzo in Memory of Brahms*, 1982 (see Fig. 4.4). In this piece Slonimsky consciously stylizes music in the spirit of Brahms. In a free form, he recreates a passionate and dramatic character, where romantic intensity and expression combine organically with Brahmsian power and strength. The dramatic themes are contrasted by a calm serenity of a lyrical utterance. As Prokofiev once stated, “I love Brahms for the purity of his flowing music.” Slonimsky, perhaps, could share the same opinion about Brahms’s music.

![Figure 4.4: Slonimsky, Intermezzo in Memory of Brahms, mm.1-4](image)

With dense, dissonant sonorities, Slonimsky recreates a texture reminiscent of a Brahmsian orchestra, further enhanced by a low, singing cello melody (see Fig. 4.5). As
the famous Russian poet Osip Mandelshtam noticed in his expressive lines of *Conversation about Dante*, “The deepness of the cello timbre fits best of all for the transmission of waiting and agonizing impatience… Cello delays the sound no matter how fast it goes. Ask Brahms – he knew that. Ask Dante – he heard that.”

It is noteworthy that Slonimsky alludes to the style of Johan Sibelius (1865-1957), the ancestor of Finish Romantic music. Slonimsky wrote a moving *Elegy in Memory of Sibelius* for piano in 1988 (see Fig. 4.6). He subtly recreated the characteristic features of the genre: a melancholy colored with calm sorrow. *Elegy* by Slonimsky does not present an embodiment of a complex philosophical concept of “life and death,” which is characteristic of many Russian composers (e.g., *Elegiac Trio* by Rachmaninov or *Elegy* from the Musorgsky piano cycle *Without Sun*).
The Scandinavian intonations of the piece remind one of Finnish folk songs. It reflects the style of Sibelius, which contains parts that relate it with other Scandinavian nations. For example, there are allusions to Grieg’s *Notturno* or *Shepherd’s Boy* from *Lyric Pieces*, Op.54 in the harmonic language of the middle section, such as seventh chords with the added sixth, and ninth chords. The expressive intonations of the melody are reminiscent of Finnish folk tunes with their soft triplets, light rhythmic variations, colored by the refined changes of impressionistic harmonies.
CHAPTER 4
WORKS INSPIRED BY ROMANTICISM


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. The words from Pushkin’s famous verse “Ya pomniu chudnoe mnovenie” (“I recall a wonderful moment”)

6. Deviarova, 63

7. Ibid., 65.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.
CHAPTER 5

SYMBOLIC IMAGE OF RUSSIA IN SLONIMSKY’S “THE BELLS”

Bells came into the Russian culture in the tenth century from Byzantium with the acceptance of Christianity. Russian bells, named and blessed, are associated with some of the most colorful episodes in the history of the old regime. In Moscow especially, the surging accompaniment of the Russian church bells seemed a canopy beneath which the city’s rich and turbulent history unfolded. The bells rang to signal the birth of sovereigns, announced their coronations, marriages, and battle triumphs, and tolled their deaths. They served in the rites of the church as well as in ceremonies of state, investing the reigning monarch with powerful aural regalia and affirming Moscow’s spiritual destiny as the Third Rome.

Russian bells resemble western bells in their form, but, unlike the bells that most westerners know, they are stationary in their mounting and untuned. They are rung by manually swinging an internal clapper to produce rhythmic patterns. Russian bells also reached extraordinary size and weight in the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries at the hands of master founders and pious, ambitious rulers. Andrei Chokhlov cast a bell for Boris Godunov in 1599 of over 72,226 pounds; Aleksandr Grigor’ev cast a bell of at least 361,130 pounds for Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich in 1655; and in 1735 Mikhail Motorin
cast Tsar-Kolokol for Empress Anna Ivanovna at 433,356 pounds, a bell whose magnitude remains unchallenged to this day in the annals of bell founding. For the Russian people, from the imperial family in Saint Petersburg to the peasants in remote provincial villages, the zvon (collective sound) of church bells added an aural dimension to the visual splendors of Russian Orthodoxy.

After 1917 the zvon over Russia gradually faded. Many of the bronze inhabitants of Russia’s bell towers were either destroyed in the two world wars or sacrificed to economic progress during the interval between. Only a few fine ensembles of bells survive that the descendants of the Orthodox can hear today, but in the hands of skilled ringers they still stir imagination and call back the past.

The sounds of bells became an organic part of music style and dramaturgy of Russian composers in both opera and instrumental genres. Many outstanding critics and composers mentioned that in their memoirs. V. Stasov said, “How many times the sounds of bells appear: the Russian school can not live without them!” N. Rimsky-Korsakov sated, “And again the bells are ringing! How many times and in what different forms I recreated in my orchestrations this indispensable attribute of the ancient Russian life surviving until the present time.”

This bell, with its distinctive coloristic sound, surrounded and influenced Russian musicians and their output. According to B. Asafiev, “the rhythms of the bell-ringing… belong to the category of feelings that with early childhood were instilling into our psychology.” The early childhood impressions and affectations of Mikhail Glinka testify to a similar thing, “musical ability was expressed during this time by the passion for the bell-ringing; I eagerly listened to these harsh sounds.”
The tendency toward the colorist’s use of the bell sound can be found in the first classical example, Glinka’s opera *Ivan Susanin*. In the concluding choir *Slav’sia*, the composer chooses juxtaposition of the bell-ringing with the orchestra and choir as one of the means of culmination. In the creative output of the composers of “The Mighty Five,” the bell-ringing became an effective means of further coloristic enrichment of harmony and texture. *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Musorgsky was one of the earliest depictions of bells in Russian instrumental music. In the last piece of the cycle, *Kiev’s Gate*, by means of bell-like sounding harmonies, the composer created the true Russian image of “bogatyr.” One of the brightest moments of the finale is the imitation of the textural and thematical development of bell-ringing: ringing of the low bells (see Fig. 5.1), of the low and middle bells (see Fig. 5.2), and the combination of low, medium and high bells (see Fig. 5.3). Musorgsky possessed a unique mastery in imitating bells. In his opera *Boris Godunov*, he based harmonics of the *Coronation Scene* on the alternation of two dominant seventh chords a tritone apart, built on D-flat and G. Their succession creates a special coloristic effect of ringing.

The imitation of bells in Rachmaninov’s music is an expression of his native national origin. His first creative experiences were already connected with the music of bells. That was not an accident. “One of the dearest recollections from my childhood relates to the four notes that were rung by the huge bells of Saint Sophia in Novgorod, which I often heard.”

“In Rachmaninov’s music the bell-ringing is interwoven in the texture and becomes, in most various tints, thrusts, rhythmic designs, and harmonies, an exposure of psychological states of anxious humanity.” The sounds of bells are most obvious in
such works as the Prelude in C# minor (Op. 3), Prelude in B minor (Op. 32), in the finale of his Piano Suite for Two Pianos (Op. 5), in the Second Piano Concerto and other

Figure 5.1: Musorgsky, *Pictures at an Exhibition, Kiev’s Gate*, imitation of low bells, mm. 81-83

Figure 5.2: Musorgsky, *Pictures at an Exhibition, Kiev’s Gate*, imitation of low and middle bells, mm. 84-87
Figure 5.3: Musorgsky, *Pictures at an Exhibition, Kiev’s Gate*, combination of low, medium and high bells, mm. 88-91

pieces. The symphonic poem *Kolokola* (The Bells, 1912) is one of the creative peaks of Rachmaninov’s career and is a distinctive example of peal in music. The work can be called a “bell symphony.”¹³ The leitmotiv of the entire composition is a melodic phrase, in which the intonation originates in genuine peal and becomes a basic melodic kernel (see Fig. 5.4). Among the composers of the twentieth century, who continued the tradition of incorporation or imitation of peal in music, are Georgy Sviridov, Rodion Shchedrin, Valery Gavrilin, Andrei Petrov, and Sergei Slonimsky.

Figure 5.4: Rachmaninov, Symphonic poem *The Bells*, leitmotiv of the work
Slonimsky depicts the sounds of the bells in compositions for various media. The philosophical significance and depth of the images of bells and the peal of bells is found in his opera *Virineya*. With the funeral knell Slonimsky opens the third section of his *Piano Sonata* (1963). The sounds of bells also can be found in his *Eighth Symphony* and the piano piece *The Bells* (1970).

In *The Bells*, Slonimsky uses a variety of expressive means and resources of the piano to achieve the beautiful and unique sound of bells. In the Russian Orthodox Church the minimal number of bells required for the pealing is six. Slonimsky imitates the different timbre characteristics and qualities of the bells in this composition. The piece opens with the gentle strokes of the open piano strings in the low register, imitating the tolling of the huge bells that sometimes were operated by up to fifty people (see Fig. 5.5). The use of open strings creates overtones and resembles the true sound of bells. This opening bell serves as a pedal or a pedal point, which is very common in real life tolling. A real bell after its initial stroke changes over time into a saturated sound. Slonimsky uses a combination of open strings and keystrokes to imitate this aural effect. In *The Bells*, one can hear the muffled blows of the big bell that normally signify the beginning of the church service. Soon thereafter the composer complements these dull sounds with the strokes of the smaller bells, this time hitting the piano keys to differentiate timbre and rhythm. In the *Allegro Scherzando* section, the employment of small bells allows for a quicker tempo, different timbre color and a lighter touch (see Fig. 5.6). The melody is based on the interval of a fourth. This interval permeates the entire composition.
The melodic intonations of the opening theme are reminiscent of the basic melodic kernel Rachmaninov used in his *Bells* (see Fig. 5.4). Since the Russian bells are not tuned, the main emphasis is given to their timbre and resonance. Slonimsky transmits these qualities through the employment of different registers, establishing and repeating distinctive rhythmic patterns and varying the tempo and dynamics throughout the composition, illustrating the whole range of bells. Another important expressive device is
in the use of harshly dissonant clusters that serve as an equivalent to colorful beating of a non-harmonic spectrum of bells (see Fig. 5.7).

![Sheet Music](image)

Figure 5.7: Slonimsky, *The Bells*, Moderato maestoso, mm.46-48

Slonimsky imitates in this piece what is called *perezvon* in Russian. This is when the peal starts with one or few strokes in each bell, beginning with the lowest sounding one and complemented by the higher sounding bells (see Fig. 5.8). This pattern is repeated several times. The piece ends as it began with the mighty strokes of the lowest sounding bell, except at the end where they sound much more solemn. In order to achieve the desired effect the performer needs to beat the strings with the palm of the hand turned across the strings (see Fig. 5.9).

Melody and harmony in this piece do not play the first and foremost role. Instead, the main emphasis is on the rhythmically sounding timbre of the bell. Timbre, as it is known, depends on overtones. The overtones of bells sound extremely loud and therefore create not only a certain timbre, but also characteristic dissonant harmonies. The music of
bells could be called timbre-rhythmic or overtone-rhythmic and Slonimsky depicted it authentically. Just as Russian bell makers strove to endow the voice of each bell with a special beauty, strength, and bright, harmonious sound, Slonimsky, in *The Bells*, emphasizes and imitates the color, strength and poetic qualities of the tolling bells as a symbol of Russia through musical and expressive means.
ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 5

SYMBOLIC IMAGE OF RUSSIA IN SLONIMSKY’S “THE BELLS”

1 E. Williams, The Bells of Russia: History and Technology (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1985), 5.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Stasov, Vladimir Vsil’vich (1824-1906), historian of art, critic. Honorary Academician of the Division of Russian Language and Philology since 01.12.1900.


7 Boris Asafiev (1884-1949) was a composer and writer who lived in the Soviet Union, where he had a strong influence on musical life/musicians.


9 Ibid.

10 Bogatyr is a hero in Russian folklore.

11 V. Bryantseva, Rachmaninov (Moskva: Muzyka, 1976), 156.

12 Yareshko

13 Ibid
CONCLUSION

*This world is mine...* Mikhail Bulgakov

There are many more musical worlds in Sergei Slonimsky’s creative universe that are not mentioned here due to the limited scope of the document. For example, his deep interest in Russian folk sources and Asian influences are beyond the scope of this work. There is a large amount of research on incorporation of Russian folk material in Slonimsky’s operas and compositions for orchestra. However, he draws on folk tunes in many of his piano works. This aspect of his piano output requires further study. The main body of Slonimsky’s piano works is didactic pieces. His interest in educational composition could have been an outcome of Slonimsky’s relationship with Dmitri Kabalevsky, who significantly contributed to the Soviet Educational System. The nature of Slonimsky’s prolific interest in pedagogical writings deserves a special investigation.

As a result of this study, it is worth mentioning that Slonimsky’s multifaceted works reflect not only the inspirations from different life events, such as in Slonimsky’s operas, symphonies, and vocal compositions, but also creative stimuli from the world of art and literature, as well as other cultural eras. There are close connections with the composer’s native land in the use of symbolic Russian images in his music. He draws upon emblematic writers like Pushkin and Dostoyevsky.
In all of his works Sergei Slonimsky speaks to the imagination of the listener. In his works inspired by art, he reveals hidden meanings that could be overlooked in the paintings. He builds his musical textures in a way similar to the corresponding artworks. In works inspired by Picasso he utilizes the percussive sound of the instrument that corresponds to the artist’s use of dry unblended color. In pieces created after Botticelli’s painting one can trace the elegance and thickness of oil colors of the Renaissance painter in the gracefulness of melodic line, fuller texture, and simplicity of the musical language. Slonimsky’s music suggests plots, enacts and augments stories that the writers or painters provided. Slonimsky possesses his own unique, original language, which is very versatile. His music stands out for its astounding sense of humor and sharp psychological grotesque nature, without which it is impossible to survive in Russia today.

There is an incredible freedom and openness with which this composer exists, whether in Renaissance, Romanticism or contemporary era. He is interlacing, from a multi-tiered pattern, his own complex and highly individual compositions. “Enough! The world of music is boundless even inside of the small fantasy of one composer. I will not profane our creative process with a poor, pitiful story of the big and the smallest stimuli. Its fascination in the complete freedom! …… A composer who depends on all and everyone can be free in one thing – his own compositions!”
ENDNOTES

CONCLUSION

1 Sergei Slonimsky, Burleski, elegii, difirambi v prezrennoi proze (Burlesques, elegies, dithyrambs in despicable prose) (Sankt Peterburg: Kompozitor, 2000), 143.
APPENDIX

LIST OF PIANO COMPOSITIONS BY SERGEI SLONIMSKY¹

¹ The list of piano compositions has been extracted from the complete list of works from the following source: Raisa Slonimskaya and Tatyana Zaiceva, Volʹnie misl: K yubileiu Sergeia Slonimskogo (Sankt Peterburg: Kompositor, 2003). The Russian titles translated into English by Yulia Kozlova.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>DATES OF COMPOSITIONS</th>
<th>REMARKS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cloudy Night</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Early Intermediate Level (included in B.I of the Collection <em>From Five to Fifty</em>)</td>
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<td>Little Hopak</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Sonata</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Advanced Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing-by Beauty (comic scene after Picasso’s drawing)</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Advanced Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Graces (a suite in the form of variations after Botticelli, Rodin and Picasso)</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Advanced Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faun and Nymph (after Rodin)</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Unpublished, manuscript in the author’s archive</td>
</tr>
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<td>Pieces for Children: A Sneak, Cartoons with Adventures, Northern Song</td>
<td>1964</td>
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<td>Pieces for Children: March of the Dreadful Villain Barmaley, Thumbelisa</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Intermediate Level (included in B.II of the Collection <em>From five to Fifty</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bells</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Late Intermediate Level (included in B.III of the Collection <em>From Five to Fifty</em>)</td>
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<td>Coloristic Phantasy for Piano</td>
<td>1972</td>
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<td>Level Description</td>
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<td>Polka (from the music to the comedy by N.V. Gogol “Inspector-General”) for four hands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waltz (from the music to the comedy by N.V. Gogol “Inspector-General”) for piano solo</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Early Intermediate Level (included in B.V of the Collection <em>From Five to Fifty</em>)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Drop-Like Pieces: Frogs, A Grasshopper, Bitter Tears, Counting-out Rhyme, In the Rain We Are Singing</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Late Elementary Level (<em>From Five to Fifty</em>, B.I)</td>
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<td>Two Pieces for Piano: Serenade from a Musical, A Street Song</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Late Intermediate/Early Advanced Level</td>
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<td>Two Pieces: Round Dance, Merry Rumba</td>
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<td>Late Elementary/Early Intermediate Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Pieces: Cat’s Lullaby, Charlie Chaplin is Whistling</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Early Intermediate Level (<em>From Five to Fifty</em>, B.I)</td>
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<td>Hungarian March for four hands</td>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>Intermezzo in Memory of Brahms</td>
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<td>Advanced Level (from the cycle “Recollections about the Nineteenth Century”, included in B.III of the collection <em>From Five to Fifty</em>)</td>
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<td>Suite of Traveling: I’m Walking without Daddy and Mummy, Treasures of the South Sea, Devil’s Merry-Go-Round, Little Rondo</td>
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<td>Romantic Waltz</td>
<td>November 1982</td>
<td>Intermediate Level (in 1993 Slonimsky included this work in the cycle “Recollections about the Nineteenth Century”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variations on a Theme by Musorgsky</td>
<td>February 2, 1984</td>
<td>Late Intermediate Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portraits of Beauties (a suite for two pianos, four and eight hands)</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Unpublished, the manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Arrangements of Russian Folk Themes, for four hands</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Three Pieces for Children: A Skipping Rope, Blues, Subway</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Late elementary- Early Intermediate Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Sonatina: Dream, Eastern Dance for Piano solo</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Intermediate Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variations on a Russian Folk Theme</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Intermediate – Late Intermediate Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Pieces based on a fairy-tale by Ch. Perrault for four hands: Waltz of Cinderella and Prince, Dance of the Cat in Jackboots</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Late Intermediate Level included in the collection <em>From Five to Fifty, B.IV</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Madrigal for a Fair Lady</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Advanced Level, in 1993 the composer included it in the cycle “Recollections about Nineteenth Century” (<em>From Five to Fifty, B.V</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian Song</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Late Intermediate Level (<em>From Five to Fifty, B.II</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elegy in Memory of Sibelius</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Intermediate Level (<em>From Five to Fifty</em>, B.II)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pieces for four hands:</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Intermediate Level (<em>From Five to Fifty</em>, B.IV)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country Waltz, Polonaise for Schoolchildren</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Pieces for four hands:</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Early Intermediate Level (<em>From Five to Fifty</em>, B.V)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Procession of Deer,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A Mermaid Song</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Rhapsody on a Theme G-H, for two pianos and harpsichord,</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Unpublished, manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
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<tr>
<td>dedicated to G. Haimovsky</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>French Suite from the music to R. Rolland’s play “Death of</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Early Intermediate Level (<em>From Five to Fifty</em>, B.II)</td>
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<td>Robespierre”</td>
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<td>The Tale about a Dead Tsarevna (after A.S. Pushkin) for four hands</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Intermediate Level (<em>From Five to Fifty</em>, B.V)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Tale about a Fisherman and a Fish (after A.S. Pushkin) for four</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Intermediate Level (<em>From Five to Fifty</em>, B.V)</td>
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<td>hands</td>
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<td>Daydreams of the Paradiasiacal Bird</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Unpublished, manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Princess Who did not Know to Cry (the suite based on a fairy-tale</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Early Intermediate Level (<em>From Five to Fifty</em>, B.I)</td>
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<td>by Baumbach)</td>
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<td>A King-Musician (suite based on a fairy-tale by brothers Grimm)</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Early Intermediate Level (<em>From Five to Fifty</em>, B.I)</td>
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<td>Two Pieces:</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Unpublished, manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
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<td>Polka “Nevsky Prospect,” Mazurka</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Level/Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three Pieces for Children: Dorian Song, Merry-Go-Round, A Morning Song</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Unpublished, manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Preludes and Fugues, dedicated to the memory of A.N. Dolzhansky</td>
<td>December 1993-January 1994</td>
<td>Advanced Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pieces for Children, dedicated to Sasha Slonimsky</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Unpublished, manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Summer Morning, suite, dedicated to Marisha Slonimsky</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Unpublished, manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Rhapsody, a concerto for piano, strings, flute and percussion instruments, dedicated to Yulia Zilberkvit</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Advanced Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean Suite (five pieces)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Unpublished, manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
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<td>Prelude and Fugue in Korean Modes</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Unpublished, manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
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<td>Song of a Proud Girl</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Unpublished, manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Ballad in Memory of Grieg</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Late Intermediate/Early Advanced</td>
</tr>
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<td>Waltz-Elegy, dedicated to Marianna Slonimsky</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Unpublished, manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concert Etude on the Theme by Paganini, dedicated to Harry Grufmann, commissioned by Evelina and Herbert Uxelrode, USA</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Written for the left hand, Unpublished, manuscript is in the author’s archive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ricercare</td>
<td>2001</td>
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BIBLIOGRAPHY


Yareshko, A.S. “Kolokol’nie zvoni v tvorchestve russkih kompozitorov (k probleme fol’klor i kompozitor).” <www.atrasong.ru>


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