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ALEXANDER SCRIBIN'S TEN PIANO SONATAS:
THEIR PHILOSOPHICAL MEANING AND
ITS MUSICAL EXPRESSION

DOCTORAL DOCUMENT

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

By

Elizabeth A. Barany-Schlauch, B.M., M.M.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1985

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Adviser
Department of Music
I would like to express sincere appreciation to Professor Richard Tetley-Kardos for his continuous guidance and insight throughout my doctoral studies. Special thanks go to Dr. Rosemary Platt for her support, encouragement, suggestions and comments and to Dr. Keith Mixter for his help in revising this document. To my husband, Mel, I offer sincere gratitude for his unshakable faith in me, for his continuous moral support and understanding and for his willingness to endure with me the vicissitudes of my endeavours. To my mother, I am thankful for her intellectual and emotional participation in the preparation of this document and for her insightful contributions through discussions about the topic of this document. To my father and my brother I am grateful for their continuous moral support and encouragement.
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Programs:

Solo Recital. Thursday, June 3, 1982. 8:00 P.M.
Weigel Auditorium

Chamber Music Recital. Monday, May 16, 1983. 8:00 P.M.
Weigel Auditorium

Concerto Recital. Friday, January 18, 1985. 8:00 P.M.
Weigel Auditorium

Solo Recital. Saturday, June 1, 1985. 8:00 P.M.
Weigel Auditorium
PROGRAM I

GRADUATE STUDENT RECITAL SERIES

Thursday, June 3, 1982
8:00 P.M.
Weigel Auditorium

ELIZABETH BARANY-SCHLAUCH
pianist

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts.

PROGRAM

Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue  
J. S. Bach

Sonata Op. 57 in F minor - "Appassionata"  
L. Beethoven
  Allegro assai
  Andante con moto
  Allegro ma non troppo

INTERMISSION

Fantasiestucke Op. 12  
R. Schumann
  Des Abends (In the evening)
  Aufschwung (Soaring)
  Warum? (Why?)
  Grillen (Whims)
  In der Nacht (In the night)
  Fabel (Fable)
  Traumes-Wirren (Confusing dreams)
  Ende vom Lied (End of a song)

Sonata in A minor, No. 3, Op. 28  
S. Prokofieff
PROGRAM II

GRADUATE STUDENT RECITAL SERIES

MONDAY, MAY 16, 1983
8:00 P.M.
WEIGEL AUDITORIUM

ELIZABETH A. BARANY-SCHLAUCH, Piano

assisted by
Robert McAllister, clarinet
Peter Briedis, violin
Diana Zsarnay, viola
Laura Sewell, cello
Jack Steward, double bass

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts.

PROGRAM

Suite for violin, clarinet, and piano
Overture
Divertissement
Jeu
Introduction et Final

Trio in A minor, Op. 114 for piano,
clarinet and cello
Allegro
Adagio
Andantino grazioso
Allegro

INTERMISSION

Quintet ("Trout"), Op. 114 in A major
for piano, violin, viola, cello and double bass
Allegro vivace
Andante
Scherzo-trio (Presto)
Tema et variazionni (Andantino)
Finale-Allegro giusto
PROGRAM III

GRADUATE STUDENT RECITAL SERIES

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 1985
8:00 P.M.
WEIGEL AUDITORIUM

ELIZABETH A. BARANY-SCHLAUCH

PIANO

assisted by

Robert McAllister, clarinet
Laurien Jones, violin
John Rozendaal, cello
Richard Tetley-Kardos, piano

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts.

PROGRAM

Trio in B flat major, Opus 11
for clarinet, cello and piano
Allegro con brio
Adagio
Thema con variazioni

Piano Concerto No. 1 in E flat major
Allegro Maestoso
Quasi adagio
Allegretto vivace
Allegro marziale animato

INTERMISSION

Quartet (1938) for clarinet, violin,
cello and piano
Massig bewegt
Sehr langsam-Bewegter-in ersten Zeitmass
Massig bewegt-Lebhaft-Ruhig bewegt-sehr lebhaft

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PROGRAM IV

GRADUATE STUDENT RECITAL SERIES

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 1985
8:00 P.M.
WEIGEL AUDITORIUM

ELIZABETH A. BARANY-SCHLAUCH, PIANO

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts.

PROGRAM

Sonata in A major, Opus 2 No. 2
   Allegro vivace
   Largo appassionato
   Scherzo-Allegretto
   Rondo-Grazioso

   Ludwig Van Beethoven

Sonata in B minor, Opus 58
   Allegro maestoso
   Scherzo-Molto vivace
   Largo
   Finale-Presto, non tanto

   Frederic Chopin

INTERMISSION

Valses Nobles et Sentimentales

   Maurice Ravel

Sonata, Opus 26
   Allegro energico
   Allegro vivace e leggero
   Adagio mesto
   Fuga-Allegro con spirito

   Samuel Barber
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Scriabin was essentially an artist to whom music was, in his own words, a way of illumination, the gradual unfolding of the mystery which he felt lay at the heart of all creation: that or nothing. Even as a pianist he demanded that every performance should be a rite of initiation, an approximation to the primal ecstasy of creation: and his whole development is away from the purely lyrical mood which dominated his early works and towards the "Mystery," which gradually came to appear to him as a definite cosmic event, destined to take place in the near future and to usher in a new era of increased spirituality for the whole world.¹

Alexander Scriabin's legacy to music is primarily as a composer-philosopher to whom music was a means of expressing his complex philosophical beliefs and whose goal was to bring to the world, through his compositions, the highest conceivable spiritual enlightenment.

Scriabin's musical compositions probably would not exist without his philosophies. His exquisite harmonic language, his strict adherence to form, his original thematic and rhythmic inventions, his distinctive pianistic color effects, resulted from and were intricately and closely connected with his philosophical convictions. The composer's own words reveal his skepticism towards absolute music:

> I cannot understand how to write just music. How boring! Music, surely, takes on idea and significance when it is linked to a single plan within: a whole view of the world. People who just write music are like performers who just play an instrument. They become valuable only when they connect with a general idea. The purpose of music is revelation.²

¹Martin Cooper, "Scriabin and his Pianoforte Sonatas, "The Listener XXVII (January 1942), 29.
The Russian writer Leonid Sabaneev, Scriabin's biographer and close friend, described how the composer's philosophical-mystical inclinations dominated his musical creations:

Scriabin's creative work in music is very difficult to separate from his life as a whole, and the even monstrous reveries that inspired him. To him music meant utterance, and life was the soil and occasion for the birth of these utterances. He was incapable of regarding music as the art of form, "pure" music, music for itself. To Scriabin this seemed absurd. Music was required as a means to utter and express something. Music was a language, an esoteric language, comprehensible perhaps only to the one completely initiated, but grasped by all peripherally in some way.3

Scriabin's whole output is dominated by piano works, which include the ten piano sonatas, the piano concerto, and numerous smaller pieces such as Preludes, Etudes, Impromptus, Nocturnes, Mazurkas, Valses, Poems and pieces with evocative names. His only excursions out of this medium are the six orchestral works ("Reverie", First and Second Symphonies, "The Divine Poem", "Poem of Ecstasy" and "Prometheus"), an early attempt at an opera and his planned but never realized work entitled "Mystery". "Mystery" was to unite music, dance, poetry, colors and scents in one magnificent composition in the form of an oratorio. The ideas of the "Mystery" were later used by the composer for his "Prefatory Action" which was to be a rehearsal for the "Mystery" itself.

Scriabin's orchestral works have gained the reputation of being the best exponents of the composer's philosophical ideas. They have the most expansive programs and have had the most popularity in

concert halls. Yet the composer's ten piano sonatas are among the best representatives of the gradual and systematic formation and development of both his philosophical and musical creations. They are, as the Russian scholar Eugene Gunst describes them, "those basic cornerstones, on which he erects, story by story, his edifice, which deserves a place side by side with those everlasting monuments left behind by the best masters of the past."^4

During the past decades, Scriabin's contributions to the musical world, such as his new harmonic system, his concept and treatment of sonata form, his thematic manipulation and development, his coloristic and expressive use of the orchestra and his new pianistic idiom have been explored in great depth. However, the philosophical ideas, which generated these innovations, have been approached with skepticism, disbelief and sarcasm. The composer has been accused of using his extra-musical ideas merely to attract attention as a result of his megalomania, egotism, eccentricity and even insanity. It has been suggested that his music can stand on its own and that his astral visions and fantastic imagination are meaningless and outdated, bearing no importance on a thorough understanding of his music. These statements can be justified only from the theorist's point of view. From a performer's point of view, the knowledge and understanding of the philosophical ideas that generate Scriabin's music, regardless of how far-fetched they might appear, can only enhance and greatly contribute to an inspiring and insightful interpretation.

^4Evgenii Gunst, A. N. Skryabin i ego tvorchestvo, [A. N. Scriabin and his works], 2nd ed. (Moskva: P. Jurgenson, 1915), 21.
In preparing for a performance of Scriabin's works, every performer has the responsibility to strive to achieve psychological effects close to those which were demanded by Scriabin. These effects can only be achieved with thorough understanding of their meaning and origin.

Scriabin's live performances created a great impact on his admirers and have received enthusiastic reviews, carrying such superlatives as enchanting, hypnotic, electrifying, ecstatic, entrancing, ravishing, captivating and ethereal. Faubion Bowers, an American author and active propagator of Scriabin's music, recognized Sabaneev's comment on Scriabin's playing as "one of the most revealing comments."^5

As Scriabin played his secret liturgical acts for people, even a passive listener began to feel currents of electricity stretching out to tingle at his psychic nerves. This was not simply an artistic experience, but something irrational, unnamable to reason. It shattered the frontiers of art as we know them...^6

Bowers points out that this comment was made by a man who "was an atheist, a 'positivist' and 'rationalist', antipathetic to Scriabin's mysticism."^7

In order to enable the pianist to understand thoroughly the ideas that generated each of the composer's ten piano sonatas, the intent of this document is to explore the origin, meaning and development of Scriabin's philosophical thoughts. This will be followed by a substantial examination and discussion of the philosophical programs and the specific elements used by the

^6Bowers, loc. cit.
^7Bowers, loc. cit.
composer to give musical expression to these programs in each of his ten piano sonatas. The specific musical elements under consideration will be the thematic and harmonic language and its meaning; the specific techniques of manipulation, development and transformation of these themes used to evoke certain psychological or emotional states; the rhythmic intricacies, the contrapuntal techniques, the use of dynamics and pianistic sound effects that contribute to these psychological or emotional states; and, finally, the effect and meaning of the overall form.

Since the ten piano sonatas touch upon most of Scriabin's philosophical thoughts and their musical development, the understanding of these sonatas might also help the pianist to incorporate and interpret these ideas into the performance of the composer's smaller works.

The documentations from foreign literary sources used throughout this document have been translated by the author, unless otherwise indicated. Translations by other authors have been compared with the original language when available.
CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

Alexander Scriabin was born on Christmas day, January 6, 1872 (December 25, 1871 Julian calendar), in Moscow.

His mother, Lyubov Petrovna (née Stchetinin) was a talented and promising concert pianist. She graduated from the St. Petersburg conservatory with highest honors, where she was a student of Leschetizky and Anton Rubinstein. She actively performed in St. Petersburg, Moscow and many Russian provincial towns. A little over a year after Alexander Scriabin's birth, his mother died from tuberculosis at the age of 23.

His father, Nikolay Alexandrovich, came from a traditional, aristocratic, Russian family with a military background. Nikolay Alexandrovich, however, did not pursue a military career. Instead, he graduated in Law from the University of Moscow, and also from the Institute of Oriental Languages in St. Petersburg. After his wife's death he pursued a career with the Russian consular service, spending most of his time abroad, mainly in Turkey. Consequently, the time spent with his son was limited to short, occasional vacations.

Alexander Scriabin's upbringing was entrusted to his aunt Lyubov Alexandrova Scriabin, the sister of Nikolay Alexandrovich. She was musically inclined. Her love, devotion and support to the young Scriabin, played an important role in the child's development as a person and musician.
In 1882, Alexander Scriabin was sent to the Cadet Corps school, which he attended until 1889. At the same time, Scriabin began to study music privately. His first piano teachers were G. Konyus and Zverev (also the teacher of Rachmaninoff during these years) and his theory teacher was Taneyev.

In 1888, Scriabin entered the Moscow Conservatory of Music, where he continued his theory studies with Taneyev and joined the piano class of Safonov. Later he also studied theory with Arensky.

A year before his graduation from the Conservatory, Scriabin injured his right hand practicing Balakirev's "Islamey" and Liszt's "Reminiscences de Don Juan." As a result from this injury Scriabin composed his two pieces for the left hand, Op. 9. At the same time he began composing his first piano sonata, which was completed in 1892.

Despite this injury, the composer managed to graduate from the Conservatory in 1892 with a gold medal. Soon after graduation he decided to embark upon an independent career as a concert pianist and composer.

The first publisher of Scriabin's compositions was Jurgensen, a leading music publisher, who published the Opp. 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 in 1893. A year later, however, Scriabin met Belaieff, the founder of a music publishing house in Leipzig, which dealt only with Russian composers. In 1895, Belaieff assumed full responsibility for publishing and promoting Scriabin's compositions until 1903. He also became Scriabin's manager and sponsor of many concert tours,
both in Russia and abroad.

In 1895-1896, under the sponsorship and encouragement of Belaieff, Scriabin began his touring abroad, performing his own compositions. The tour included Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Amsterdam, Hague and Rome and proved to be a success. Scriabin received enthusiastic reviews both for his extraordinary pianism and his superb compositions.¹

In 1897, Scriabin married Vera Ivanova Isakovich, also an excellent pianist and a devoted admirer of Scriabin's music. Soon after the marriage, the Scriabins moved to Paris for five months, where the composer began working on his third piano sonata.

The years of 1895 through 1897 proved to be productive years in composition, despite the extensive tours. The piano concerto, the first symphony, the second and third sonatas were completed during these years among many other smaller works for piano.

In 1898, upon Scriabin's return from Paris, he was invited by Safonov to assume professorial duties of the piano class at the Moscow Conservatory. He occupied this position until 1903. Although teaching was always a burden to him, he established an excellent reputation as a piano professor. His students always spoke of him with the highest respect and admiration.²


²Rudakova and Kandinsky, op. cit., 72.
During these years Scriabin continued his composing and performing. Among the completed works are the orchestral miniature 'Reverie' and the second symphony.

During the early 1900's Scriabin began to show an increasing interest in philosophy and mysticism. This becomes evident in his personal notebooks in which he wrote his most intimate thoughts. During these years Scriabin developed a close friendship with Prince Trubetskoy who "was editor of the magazine Philosophical and Psychological Issues and author of several philosophical works of an idealistic orientation." He was also a professor of philosophy and the first elected president of the University of Moscow. Trubetskoy had a strong influence on the early development of Scriabin's philosophical views. Scriabin also became greatly involved with the philosophy of Nietzsche at this time.

After resignation from his professorial duties at the Moscow Conservatory in 1903, Scriabin entered the most productive period of creativity. In 1903 he composed his third symphony (the "Divine Poem"), his fourth sonata and about forty smaller pieces for piano, among them being the "Tragic" and the "Satanic" poems.

Excerpts of these notebooks are translated from Russian by Bowers in his Scriabin: A Biography of the Russian Composer, 2 vols. (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1969).

Rudakova and Kandinsky, op. cit., 76.

He also began to write the text and numerous musical sketches for his opera, based on a philosophical program. This opera can be considered the beginning of the ideas which lead to his planned but never fully realized work, "Mystery," which occupied his mind later in his life.

In the spring of 1904, Scriabin left Russia to live abroad for six years. These six years were spent mainly in Switzerland, Italy and Belgium. While in Switzerland, in 1904, Scriabin participated in the Second International Philosophical Congress in Geneva.

In 1905 Scriabin was separated from his wife Vera and their four children and settled in Bogliasco, Italy with Tatiana Schloezer. Upon her return to Russia, Vera continued to perform extensively, devoting her recitals solely to Scriabin's music.

In 1906 Scriabin was invited by Modest Altschuler, founder of the Russian Symphonic Society in New York, to tour the United States. From December 1906 to March 1907, Scriabin gave concerts in New York, Chicago, Detroit and Cincinnati, performing his piano concerto and many of his solo compositions. After this tour Scriabin returned to Switzerland where he met Koussevitsky, who replaced the role of Belaieff, acting as a concert manager and publisher of the composer's works in the subsequent years.

In 1908 Scriabin and Tatiana Schloezer moved to Brussels, where they lived for two years. There he became involved with the theosophical group lead by Madame Blavatsky. During the remaining years

6Bowers, op. cit., I, 308.
of his life, theosophy became a major influence on his philosophical views which are reflected in most of his compositions dating from 1908 through 1915. The first works that show this influence are his orchestral "Poem of Ecstasy" (1908), his fifth piano sonata (1908) and his smaller piano pieces, Op 40 to Op 57.

In 1909 Koussevitsky arranged performances of the "Poem of Ecstasy" in Moscow and St. Petersburg which were attended by the composer.

Upon his return to Brussels after this Russian visit, Scriabin began composing his orchestral "Prometheus". This was his last orchestral composition, written for an enlarged orchestra, piano, chorus and a light-color keyboard. This light-color keyboard was to be used for a play of colored light in the course of the performance of the work. This was the preliminary step towards Scriabin's idea of fusing all arts and senses which was to reach its ultimate realization in his "Mystery".

"Prometheus" was completed in 1910 and first performed on March 9, 1911, in Moscow, under the direction of Koussevitsky, with Scriabin at the piano. This performance did not include the light-color keyboard. The first performance that included the light-color keyboard took place in Carnegie Hall, under the direction of Altschuler on March 20, 1915.

In 1910 Scriabin returned to live in Moscow, where he finally settled for the remainder of his life. During his last years he made many concert tours, under the sponsorship of Koussevitsky, playing his own compositions all over Russia as well as abroad.
In the spring of 1911, Scriabin went vacationing to Lake Geneva, where he composed his sixth and seventh sonatas and began his ninth.

In 1912-1913 the composer toured Holland, Germany and Switzerland for the last time. During this period he also completed his last three sonatas and began working on his "Prefatory Action," a work which was to be a rehearsal for the "Mystery." This work was never completed and exists only in rough sketches.

In 1914, Scriabin went to London, where his recitals were a great success. His performances there included the "Prometheus" under the baton of Sir Henry Wood. While in London Scriabin suffered from a painful boil on his upper lip, which was treated successfully.

After his return to Russia, Scriabin gave his last recitals in Moscow (November, 1914) and St. Petersburg (January, 1915).

In April of 1915 Scriabin fell ill once again. The boil on his lip reappeared and developed into a carbuncle, ultimately leading to severe blood poisoning despite several operations. The composer died prematurely on Easter day, April 27, 1915 at the age of 43.

CHAPTER II
DEVELOPMENT OF SCRIBAN'S PHILOSOPHIES

The development of Scriabin's philosophical ideas was evolutionary rather than revolutionary and the composer espoused his beliefs vehemently throughout the course of his short musical career. Scriabin cannot be analyzed or evaluated solely from a philosophical point of view because his thoughts are very closely intertwined with the organization of his music to the same degree that his music is dependent on his ideals and thoughts. The Russian historian-composer-critic, Boris V. Asafiev, asserts that Scriabin "is a musician-philosopher, a great composer whose emotional sensitivity and spiritual refinement depend totally on his musical world. It is impossible to understand and accept his philosophy without hearing and studying his musical creations."¹

It is believed by many authors that Scriabin, the philosopher, reached the verge of insanity in the realm of ideology and thought. Here, insanity means incoherence and the lack of logic. This is not the case, however, with Scriabin's process of thinking. He arrived at all of his ideas through logical means and substantiated them with strict formulas and schemes. However, Scriabin's approach to philosophy was not that of a scholar. The development of his ideas does not follow a methodical or predictable path. The formulation of these ideas was greatly dependent on his fluctuating state of mind and goals. The main schools of thought that influenced Scriabin's own

¹Boris V. Asafiev, O muzyke dvatsatavo veka, [The Music of the 20th Century], (Leningrad: Musyka, 1982), 63.
philosophical views were Theosophy and to some degree Nietzschism.

He chose those ideas from each of these schools of thought from the one which best expressed, expanded and supported his own original ideas, which he intended to incorporate into his music.

The central idea that generates the development of Scriabin's philosophies is the striving towards enlightenment, purification and extreme refinement of the human soul. His ultimate goal was to free the human spirit from all worldly trammels caused by suffering, pain, tragedy and ugliness and to lead mankind to an increased spirituality whereby it would experience beatitude, unrestrained joy, bliss and ecstasy. It was his firm conviction that music was the means through which this goal could be achieved and hoped that his compositions had the psychological effects and power necessary to cause this spiritual transformation.

This whole development begins with the expression of simple human emotions, typical of the Romantic period. These emotions are gradually intensified and magnified, reaching their ultimate peak in the expression of the feeling of ecstasy. Ecstasy, to Scriabin, represented the most electrifying, joyous, rewarding and intense human emotion. It meant the ultimate realization of life. In his own words: "Ecstasy is the highest upsurge of activity...in the form of thought ecstasy is the highest synthesis. In the form of feeling ecstasy is the highest bliss."²

²Boris Schloezner, A. Skryabin: Monografia o lichnosti i tvorchestv [A. Scriabin: his personality and works] (Berlin: Grani, 1932), 136.
As Scriabin approached maturity he began to explore the mystical, abstract, and concealed world of emotions which lies outside the physical world. This new world was called by the composer the "cosmic", "astral" or "ethereal" world which leads to "dematerialization". This idea and its terminology has its roots in Theosophy, a doctrine that became a dominating influence on the development of Scriabin's thoughts.

In theosophical terms, and consequently in Scriabin's terms, this "astral" world represents a world of higher spheres, outside of our physical senses, which can be experienced only by those who develop an extreme refinement and sensitivity of the spirit. To reach this height of spiritual refinement the human soul has to go through an evolution that takes millions of years. This theory of evolution teaches that the spirit is a particle or extension of a Deity which goes through a progressive evolution on earth taking the shape of different forms of life before it enters the human body. Thus, it may begin as a mineral, progressing to plants and animals successively. Once the spirit takes the shape of a human being, it travels through numerous stages of development. Each stage is a new life, each being of a more refined and elevated state of the spirit than the previous one. The last stage occurs when the spirit reaches the summit of perfection and is ready to reunite with the Supreme Being.³

The moment when the spirit leaves the physical world to enter the cosmic world and to unite with the Supreme Being is called by Scriabin the moment of "dematerialization." At this moment the spirit experiences blissful harmony, total peace, cosmic ecstasy. In Scriabin's own words: "Dematerialization only happens at the moment when total harmony is experienced. Contemplation of harmony is the condition for dematerialization."^4

According to Scriabin, the human being becomes a tool of God who achieves through his own consciousness harmonious blossoming (state of ecstasy) and then returns to the state of peace (state of nonexistence, incorporeality). For that to happen there must be an all-powerful spiritual leader who is the center of world's consciousness (Scriabin himself), who frees the human spirit from the past, and who carries away all living creatures to the last creative flight (dematerialization).^5

The development of Scriabin's philosophical ideas can be roughly divided into three periods. These periods are parallel to the development of his musical style. The dates suggested for these periods are approximations based on the dates of the composer's personal notebooks in which he kept his most intimate thoughts and on the dates of his most representative musical compositions, mainly the five symphonic works and the ten piano sonatas.

^4Sabaneev, Vospominanie o Skryabine, [Reminiscences about Scriabin], (Moskva: Muzykalni sektor, 1925), 42.

^5Schloezer, op. cit., 101 - 103.
The first period, 1891 to 1900, is the period of Scriabin's youthful attempts in his search for the truth and meaning of life coupled with the search for an individualistic musical language. Influences from the Romantic movement leave a strong stamp on these attempts. Scriabin's main concern is the expression of romantic and lyrical moods and emotions such as love, tenderness, passion, suffering, sorrows and struggle. This is most obvious in his first three sonatas which show affinity with Chopin's style. The first and the third sonatas seem to reflect the tragic upheaval in Scriabin's personal life, caused by the injury of his hand at the height of his brilliant career as a pianist and by his failing, unhappy first marriage.

As a result of the frustrations caused by these personal tragic experiences Scriabin begins to question the existence, meaning and value of God and even rebels against Him. The first signs of Scriabin's rebellion against God are present in his earliest notebook, that of 1891 and 1892 in reference to his first sonata.

At twenty: Gravest event of my life...Trouble with my hand. Obstacle to my supreme goals - GLORY, FAME...This was my first real defeat in life.
First serious thinking: Beginning of self-analysis. Doubled however, that I would never recover, but still my darkest hour. First thinking about the value of life, religion, God. Still a strong faith in Him (Jehovah rather than Christ). I prayed from the bottom of my heart, with fervor, went to church... Cried against fate, against God. Composed First Sonata with its "Funeral March."6

However, Scriabin feels that he cannot be defeated by his personal tragedies. He believes that through suffering and struggle an individual becomes stronger. He begins to feel all powerful because

of his gift of creativity. With this power he wants to teach people to overcome feelings of despair, tragedy and doubt. He expresses his love to all people and proclaims his belief in life. These ideas are expressed by Scriabin in his "What then?" credo, found in his notebook of 1894. It was written at the time of the composition of his first symphony.

To be an optimist in a real sense, one must suffer doubt and conquer it.

Not by my own wish have I come into this world. Well, what then?

In tender youth, full with illusions of desire and hope, I delighted in shining glories.

I awaited a revelation from Heaven. It came not. Well, what then?

I sought eternal truth and asked of people. Alas, they knew no more than I. Well, what then?

I sought eternal beauty, and found it not. Like flowers which never bloom, my feelings were stilled. The rain of night dimmed the bright day.

I sought solace in the new spring, new flowers, but nowhere found it. I strove not to change what was, but to return to the already spent, to recall the already experienced.

Into each person's life, springtime can come but once. How people rush beyond these divine dreams, those enchanting delusions!

At last I took comfort in memories. But once used to them, they vanished. Well, what then?

Whoever you were, you who mocked me, cast me in prison, ravished in order to disillusion, gave in order to steal back, caressed in order to torment,

I take my leave of you and ask no redress.
I am alive. I love life. I love people. I love them all the more because through you they have suffered.

I will proclaim to all people that I have triumphed over you, over myself. I say that they can place no hope in you, that they can expect naught from life except THAT WHICH THEY CREATE BY THEMSELVES ALONE.

I thank you for all the fears which your trials and tribulations aroused. You made me know my endless power, my unlimited might, my invincibility. You gave me the power of creativity.

I will tell them that they are strong and mighty, that it is needless to lament, that there is no loss, that they must not fear doubt which alone gives birth to true triumph.

Powerful is he! Mighty is he! Who feels defeat and overcomes it?7

Scriabin's first symphony, the Opus 26 of 1895, can be considered the climax of the development of all the above ideas and emotions. It concludes with a hymn of praise to art in which Scriabin proclaims his faith in art as a powerful means to bring about peace and unity to the world. This can be considered the beginning of the composer's ideas leading to his "Mystery" which becomes an obsession with him throughout his life, and which in his later years takes the form of a grandiose cosmic event.

The first signs of Scriabin's concern with the human soul and how it is affected by emotions such as suffering, disillusion and struggle appear in his third sonata, Opus 23 (1897), which was entitled by the composer "Etats d'Ame" (Soul States) and which was provided with a specific program. This program describes how the soul experiences

7 Bowers, op. cit., I, 187-188.
suffering, plunges into illusory harmonious emotions, feels powerful and then falls back into darkness, into nothingness. These are similar ideas to the ones expressed in his "What then?" credo; here, however, the concentration is on the soul rather than his powerful "I", and victory is momentary.

The sonata is in four movements, each of which has the following program:

I
The free, untamed Soul plunges passionately into an abyss of suffering and strife.

II
The Soul, weary of suffering, finds illusory and transient respite. It forgets itself in song, in flowers... But this vitiated and uneasy Soul invariably penetrates the false veil of fragrant harmonies and light rhythms.

The Soul floats on a tender and melancholy sea of feeling. Love, sorrow, secret desires, inexpressible thoughts are wraithlike charms.

IV
Now the elements unleash themselves. The Soul struggles within their vortex of fury. Suddenly, the voice of the Man-God rises up from within the Soul's depths. The song of victory resounds triumphantly But it is weak, still... When all is within its grasp, it sinks back, broken, falling into an abyss of ... nothingness. 8

8Bowers, op. cit., I, 254-255.
The second period (1900 to 1908) of Scriabin's philosophical development is a transitional period. It can be characterized as a period of absorption, self-assertion and extraction of ideas from other philosophies, mainly those of Theosophy, Wagner and Nietzsche. This is a period in which Scriabin's ideas become deeply embedded and take a consciously determined path.

During this period all of the feelings and thoughts expressed by Scriabin show immense intensity. He becomes obsessed with the feeling of ecstasy. He realizes that it is his mission to show the world the bliss of ecstasy. He views himself as Man-God who instigates everything and controls the whole universe.

Scriabin explains the meaning of ecstasy and his role as Man-God in his notebooks of 1905-1906.

Like a man during the sexual act - at the moment of ecstasy he loses consciousness and his whole organism experiences bliss at each of its points. Similarly, God-Man, when he experiences ecstasy, fills the universe with bliss and ignites a fire.

Man-God appears as the bearer of universal consciousness.

If the personality acquires the ability to affect the outside world and can at will change the system of relationships between states at any given moment, then such a personality returns the universe to its divine organism. This is the attainment of full harmony, the limit of creative urge, ecstasy. Such a personality will be in public demand, the demand to contemplate divine beauty.

The world will give herself to him, as a woman gives herself to a lover.9

9 Bowers, op. cit., II, 105.
The first signs of this ecstatic mood appear in Scriabin's fourth sonata, Opus 30 (1903) and are further expanded in his fifth sonata, Opus 53 (1908). Both of these works also express the composer's theosophical tendencies. The main concern is with a soul in search of total freedom from all binding chains and inhibitions. Once this freedom is achieved, the feeling of ecstasy is experienced. However, this feeling of ecstasy is still a human feeling full of fire, impetuosity and intensity. In his last five sonatas it becomes cosmic ecstasy. These ideas are presented in the philosophical texts, written by the composer, which accompany the fourth and fifth sonatas.

The philosophical program of the fourth sonata appears in the form of a poem. This poem was written by the composer soon after the completion of the sonata. Total freedom of the soul is symbolically represented by the brilliant and ardent light of the sun. Initially this light gleams softly at a seemingly unreachable distance. Scriabin, intoxicated with the beauty of this star, is determined to reach it in a "flight of liberation." He wants to become the brightest star of the universe and control the whole world through its rays. Once he becomes the "Flamboyant Sun! Sun of Triumph!" he experiences the feeling of ultimate joy, the feeling of ecstasy.

In a light mist, transparent vapor
Lost afar and yet distinct
A star gleams softly.

How beautiful! The bluish mystery
Of her glow
Beckons me, cradles me.

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10 Bowers, op. cit., I, 331.
O bring me to thee, far distant star!
Bathe me, in trembling rays
Sweet light!

Sharp desire, voluptuous and crazed yet sweet
Endlessly with no other goal than longing
I would desire.

But no! I vault in joyous leap
Freely I take wing
Mad dance, godlike play!
Intoxicating, shining one!

It is towards thee, adored star
My flight guides me

Towards thee, created freely for me
To serve the end
My flight of liberation!

In this play
Sheer caprice
In moments I forget thee
In the maelstrom that carries me
I veer from thy glimmering rays

In the insanity of desire
Thou fadest
0 distant goal

But ever thou shinest
As I forever desire thee!

Thou expandest, Star!
Now thou art a Sun
Flamboyant Sun! Sun of Triumph!

Approaching thee by my desire of thee
I lave myself in thy changing waves
0 joyous god

I imbibe thee
Sea of light

My self-of-light

I engulf Thee.11

The summit of human ecstasy is reached in Scriabin's fifth sonata. This work can be considered an offshoot of the orchestral "Poem of Ecstasy." It was composed immediately after the completion of this orchestral composition in a period of three or four days. According to Bowers, the theme of both of these works first appears in Scriabin's notebooks of 1905. This passage is later reworked and becomes part of the text of "Poem of Ecstasy" and also appears as a heading for the fifth sonata. Scriabin is now determined to transmit to the world all the beautiful emotions that lead to ecstasy. He calls to full blossoming all the hidden longings and sensations from the depths of the creative soul.

You have heard my secret call, hidden powers of life, and you begin to stir. The billow of my being, light as a vision of dreams, embraces the world. To life! Burgeon!

I awaken you to life with kisses and the secret pleasures of my promises. I summon you to life, hidden longings, lost in chaos of sensations. Rise up from the secret depths of the creative soul.

Bowers also reveals that as Scriabin was composing his fifth sonata he felt

...that for the first time he found a composition outside himself. He saw it as an "image," a "sound-body" of three dimensions with colors and from another plane. "I am a translator," he cried to Schloezer. His problem was how to render it from concealment into palpable life, to transfer it into corporeal music without losing its original sensation. He did not want his own shadow to dim its quartz-clear image.

14 Bowers, op. cit., II, 182.
As this period progresses Scriabin's tendency towards self-deification becomes very prominent. He realizes the absolute value of his divine "I". He begins to feel he is the Messiah. "I am God" is a common affirmation in his notebooks. He becomes the center of the world. He creates and controls his own world and everything around it. He believes that reality is "a sphere of our sensations, our experiences and our consciousness." He feels that "Man can explain everything, including the whole cosmos by analyzing oneself psychologically." In his notebook of 1905, Scriabin explains his role as a center of world's consciousness.

The growth of human consciousness is the growth of the consciousness of geniuses. The consciousnesses of the remaining people are splashes and sparks of the same consciousness. There is only one consciousness. That is mine.

The genius contains all the play of colors and feelings of other people. He embraces the consciousness of all those people contemporary to him.

Scriabin's tendency towards megalomania and self-deification is strongly reflected in his planned but unfinished opera for which he wrote the text himself. The main ideas expressed in the text are desire for power, striving towards freedom, thirst for struggle and victory, and strong Atheism. The hero is a super-human, the initiator of everything, who creates and activates everything.

15 Bowers, op. cit., II, 100.
17 Bowers, Biography, II, 63.
Historian M. D. Calvocoressi proposes that the hero was "a Nietzschean hero, an artist who was to triumph over the world . . . The Hero was Scriabin himself and the characters were not living people but philosophical abstractions." These philosophical abstractions can be considered as different aspects of Scriabin's own personality. In general Scriabin viewed other people as extensions of his own psychological, philosophical and emotional worlds. This idea is expressed by the composer in his notebook of 1906.

Never propound or propose anything outside the sphere of consciousness. The objection that there are other people who also have consciousness which are closed to us in impenetrable spheres is incorrect. For me the other person is a complex of my sensations. He exists only for me in my experiences as sensations. They say to me that I cannot negate, for instance, the experiences of other people who are other appearances.

Bowers summarizes the main ideas of the opera which show the different aspects of Scriabin's role as the superhero.

The unity of the whole world is one amicable, emotional brotherhood of festivity; the superheroic nature of an individual who commands crowds with a thought, who sexually seduces by a flick of a beauteous rumination; a stage character who lectures, boasts, and rules the world in the name of freedom, who composes his own work of art - the opera within the opera - of such melting exquisiteness that it accompanies the deaths of the hero and heroine in a titanic orgasm, a sex-death, a self-induced suicide à deux.

This opera plays an important role in the development of Scriabin's philosophies that lead to his "Mystery." Its central idea revolves around the striving towards unity of the whole world in a joyous

20 Bowers, Biography, I, 308.
celebration. Boris Schloezer, a philosopher-writer and Scriabin's brother-in-law, claims that in this opera Scriabin understood this unity only in an external form, not in a mystical sense as in "Mystery." It was supposed to be a unity of society achieved through annihilation of opposition and difference.\(^{21}\)

The idea of "Mystery" begins to develop later during this period in the form of a separate composition. The main guiding principle of this work was born out of Scriabin's involvement with Theosophy. It is from Theosophy that Scriabin arrived at the following scheme concerning the development of consciousness. This scheme can be considered a preliminary plan of his "Mystery" and is further developed in his last five piano sonatas.

0 Nothingness - Bliss
1 I wish. I rise out of Original Chaos, the Primordial Ooze
2 I differentiate the undifferentiable
3 I differentiate. I begin to define the elements of time and space, the future of the universe
4 I reach the summit, and from there recognize that all is one
0 Bliss - Nothingness\(^{22}\)

The ideas that originated during the first and second periods of Scriabin's life are further expanded, changed and crystallized during the third period (1908-1915). Scriabin creates a new world of sounds and ideas based on his visionary, illusory, abstract, spiritual, cosmic world. In this world, opposite forces are in constant struggle. These forces include good and evil, God and Satan, the active and the passive, the male and female. Asafiev explains Scriabin's new world as

\(^{21}\)Calvocoressi, op. cit., 471.
\(^{22}\)Bowers, The New Scriabin, 123.
. . . a world full of contrasts that slowly desintegrate and melt into one element. The power of his creative energy destroys these contrasts, creating new connections between them, new worlds, and draws them to ecstasy, to a flight into boundless eternity. The magic swaying of these contrasts, from one to the other, their birth, their growth, their pulverization, is achieved through the process of radiation rather than rotation. Nothing returns to its initial point. It goes into the plane of spiral ascent, whirling and infinity. 23

Scriabin's last five sonatas can be considered the essence of this new world.

In these compositions there is a general striving towards an unusual grandiosity, towards the fantastic and the mystical. Warm human feelings are almost completely abandoned. Everything becomes cosmic, sublime, and cold. Bowers maintains that by this time Scriabin developed the concept that "the magical sounds he drew from the piano were influences from the astral world, and through music supernal beauties pierced the veil into our mundane lives." 24

Scriabin's ultimate goal is dematerialization. He wants to free the spirit from matter and from all the opposing forces that limit the spirit's development. Now the cosmic and the individual are interdependent and inseparable. He strives for dissolution of individuality in one spirit which meant to him return to God, dematerialization. Earlier Scriabin himself was God, he was the center. Now he is only part of the whole but still the all-powerful spiritual leader with the mission and burden to lead the world to dematerialization. 25

23 Asafiev, op. cit., 75.
25 Schloezner, op. cit., 102-103.
Dematerialization would be caused by cosmic ecstasy experienced by all mankind. Scriabin believed that ecstasy experienced by one individual is temporary, but cosmic ecstasy experienced by the masses is a constant state, an eternal state from which there is no return. It causes dissolution, physical death and divine purity.\textsuperscript{26}

Scriabin believed that on the road to dematerialization one is challenged, teased and tempted by evil forces. He preached that good would not exist without evil forces and emphasized that realization of evil followed by confrontation, struggle and triumph only contributes to the development of divine purity, power and strength.\textsuperscript{27} He concluded that since he has divine powers he also contains Satan within himself. He fights Satan, controls it and finally exorcises it. According to Sabaneev, the "spirit of evil" did not mean something negative to Scriabin. He explains that the composer believed that "Satan is the shivering of the universe, which cannot gather everything together in one place. It is the principle of activity, the principle of movement."\textsuperscript{28}

The first signs of Satanism are found in Scriabin's "Satanic Poem" Opus 36 (1904) which belongs to the second period. In this work Satan is represented as a capricious, witty, mocking and playful character in the manner of Liszt. As writer M. Montagu-Nathan indicates, the

\textsuperscript{26}Schloezer, op. cit., 182.
\textsuperscript{27}Sabaneev, Vospominanie, 178.
\textsuperscript{28}Sabaneev, op. cit., 121.
"Satanic Poem" contains the

...first hints at the Satanic or contaminating elements to which the soul finds itself opposed in the process of its evolution; such episodes, which become a regular feature in the later sonatas, are on this occasion indicated by the expression marks "riso ironico" and "ironico," the former occurring at the moment at which the soul's aspirations are first observed by the powers of darkness.²⁹

However, Scriabin's sixth and ninth sonatas are the main exponents of the composer's concern with evil forces as they appear in his cosmic world. The sixth sonata deals with terror, horror and frightening evil forces and the ninth with Satan himself, a serious, uncompromising, powerful evil spirit.

A passage in Scriabin's notebook of 1905, according to Bowers, "explains the ambiguities of the strange Sixth Sonata, where its first unexorcised climax is marked l'épouvante surgit, 'the frightening rises up.' It also provides the future key to the triumphant white Seventh Sonata."³⁰


³⁰ Bowers, Biography, II, 60.

³¹ Bowers, loc. cit.
Scriabin's seventh, eighth and tenth sonatas are the best representatives of the ideas that originate in "Prometheus" and lead to "Mystery." "Prometheus" to Scriabin was a poem of creation, an active beginning of his new world, both musical and psychological. In the conclusion of "Prometheus" there is a hint of the goal of his "Mystery." It is a call to humanity to an ardent transformation. It is, as Asafiev describes it, "a whirlwind of sounds and rhythms; a rejoicing of the creator and all creatures which were called by him to life; a flight to happiness and sun." This idea is also present in Scriabin's seventh, eighth and tenth sonatas.

According to Scriabin, his seventh piano sonata was the closest to the "Mystery," and it was his favorite work. Bowers explains the meaning of the seventh sonata, based upon Scriabin's own words.

[Scriabin] called it "purest mysticism" and felt that in it he had achieved "the highest complexity within the highest simplicity," for finally his system was clear and concentrated, while the message it conveyed was ultimate and absolute. He nicknamed the sonata "White Mass," and it constitutes his only sonata which can be classed as sacerdotal, saintly, or beautitudinous... In this piece he expresses his philosophy in sound - the contrast, interplay and interrelation of the poles of subject and object, spirit and matter, male (active) and female (passive) principles. The Seventh Sonata is a purification because it describes the process of opposite poles touching, merging and fusing. The world (object) is transformed by the artist-creator (subject) who leads us through ecstasy into dematerialization. In the course of this ideological journey, the Seventh produces, according to Scriabin, a variety of effects - chords of perfume, mystic bells of sanctification, fountains of spraying fires, vortexes of wind, a final dance of ecstasy.

\[^{32}\text{Asafiev, op. cit., 73.}\]
On one level, Scriabin shows us the magical effect on the world of the Will, or subjective spirit. On the second level, he shows us the "other world" manifests itself in this plane through sound.\(^33\)

The subject of "Mystery" is the history of the development of the cosmos, of the whole mankind and of the individual. It takes the path of evolution from an undetermined unity (eternity, God), to a determined multitude through multiplication (creation of the world, formation of civilization), back to unity (union with God, eternity).\(^34\)

In Scriabin's own words "Mystery" was supposed to be a reminiscence. There would be no spectators, only participants (performers and audience). "Every participant will remember all his experiences from the first moment of world's creation,"\(^35\) Scriabin said. It was supposed to be a seven-day event during which one would experience the whole evolution of civilization. Time would freeze and we would experience in these days millions of years. The composer expressed that "time is slowed down with the process of materialization. When the path to dematerialization will begin the first to dematerialize will be time itself."\(^36\)

The role of "Mystery" is the crystallization of world's harmony. During its conclusion the Holy Spirit conquers the whole world. The Spirit and mortals unite in cosmic ecstasy.\(^37\)

\(^34\) Schloezer, op. cit., 192-223.
\(^35\) Sabaneev, op. cit., 83.
\(^36\) Sabaneev, op. cit., 215.
\(^37\) Sabaneev, op. cit., 107.
In summary, there are two main ideas that generate the "Mystery". First is Scriabin's belief in the infinite power of the creativity of his will. He felt that since each person is a particle of God it was through the consciousness of the power of will that one could transform the world. This power was therefore divine power and one would simply continue God's task on earth. The second idea is the end and disintegration of the material world caused by the infinite power of art. All arts, such as, music, dance, light, movement, mime, poetry and scents would be united in one majestic celebration and lead the world to a cosmic unity. This was to be an artistic creation of genial and perfect quality. Dematerialization, Scriabin believed, could only be achieved through artistic perfection.\(^{38}\)

Initially the last act of "Mystery" was meant to be the perishing of humanity in a world of fire. Later it was to be a willful self-sacrifice out of love to God. It would be a dissolution in the creative act, union with God, ecstasy, death. This act was equated by Scriabin to a sexual act. The Spirit (male) would take the world (female) as a man takes a woman.\(^{39}\)

Towards the end of his life Scriabin realized that he had merged too deeply into an unreal and fantastic world. He became aware of the impossibility of realization of his astral visions. He concluded that he could not cause the world to dematerialize because the spiritual

\(^{38}\)Schloezer, loc. cit.

\(^{39}\)Schloezer, loc. cit.
refinement of the people had not been developed enough to enable them to experience the act of dematerialization. The world needed time for preparation for such an act. However, the idea that his mission was to unite the Spirit and matter still occupied Scriabin's thoughts. This resulted in the idea of his "Prefatory Action," a work which would prepare the world for the "Mystery." It was supposed to be a work in the form of an oratorio, a shortening of "Mystery" which would still unite all arts in one. But the goal of this composition was to transform the existing world into a world of increased spiritual refinement, rather than cause dissolution in eternity.40

The composer died prematurely at the age of 43. Both "Prefatory Action" and "Mystery" were never realized. Nevertheless, all the ideas that constituted both of these compositions touched in some way and left a definite stamp on most of Scriabin's mature works.

40Schloezer, op. cit., 154.
Scriabin's ten piano sonatas progress from the traditional romantic, lyrical, emotional, personal and passionate musical statements to a complex, abstract, cold and ecstatic world of mystical sounds. This progression is gradual but intense and is parallel to the development of the composer's philosophical ideas. Bowers acknowledges that:

The most striking aspect of his sonatas is the progression - both as a personal autobiography and as original music - they represent. In this he resembles Beethoven. Almost seamlessly, they move step-by-step into greater and greater emotional complexity and musical technicality... The sonatas move without a break from conventionality into modernity, from nineteenth-century intensity and discursiveness into twentieth-century condensation and economy.1

The originality of these sonatas, aside from their musical language, lies in their complex programmatic content. Unlike many programmatic works by other composers these works are not based on any concrete, literary, religious, historical or mythical texts. They are mainly reflections of abstract, symbolic and subjective ideas dealing with emotions, the development of the soul, mysticism, and, finally, with Scriabin's cosmic world. Bowers suggests that to understand the "internal affinity" of Scriabin's music one has to rely on "intuitive knowledge or feeling instead of thought, mysticism as an alternate to logic, action rather than contemplation, a world in brief, where we seek the color of the wind, the sounds of the spectrum where, like Buddhists, we 'listen without eyes'."2

1Bowers, New Scriabin, 173-174.
Scriabin's musical development follows a path from a melodic style to a motivic, fragmented style; from a chromatic harmonic language achieved through altered chords to a very individualistic and concentrated harmonic idiom based on one set of sonorities in which melody and harmony are inseparable; from an accompanimental style based on wide arpeggiated figures and repeated chords to an intricate contrapuntal style in which every voice is of equal importance; from relatively straight forward rhythmic structures to very complex rhythms; from a multi-movement form to one movement form.

Pianistically these sonatas progress from a romantic virtuosic approach influenced by Chopin and Liszt to a very personal coloristic language with some impressionistic traits. It is a language that, according to Bowers, consists of "wide reaches, spasm-like trills, vertiginous speeds, contrapuntal layerings of different sounds, sonorities and colors, wizzard-like colorations in which the sheen of the pearl alternates with sparkles from diamonds."\(^3\)

Before a detailed discussion of each sonata, it is important to understand Scriabin's general concepts about the meaning of form, melody, harmony and rhythm. Regarding form, Scriabin's tendency throughout his entire life was striving towards unity, symmetry and perfection. He advocated that "Form and plan are important. This is the rational moment in creation. Form should be in totality like a sphere, so that it results in a full impression of completeness, of final rounding off. A sphere is a geometrical image of greatest perfection."\(^4\)

\(^3\)Bowers, loc. cit.
\(^4\)Sabaneev, op. cit., 106.
Unity in Scriabin's first three sonatas is achieved through the cyclic multi-movement approach where he uses common themes or motives within several movements. From the fourth to the tenth sonatas Scriabin condenses the form to one movement.

In his one-movement sonatas Scriabin strives for "maximum expression with minimum means." He explains that "the microcosm is contained within the macrocosm, and the reverse is also true. All is one. Less is more." This is achieved through tight economy of thematic material and the nature of its development and manipulation. All the important motives or themes are presented in the introduction and exposition sections. Usually the motivic material from the introduction is either transformed into the main thematic material of the exposition or it serves as unifying elements between the main sections of the sonata form.

Once the thematic material is presented, a constant growth of intensity and excitement begins to develop as the music unfolds. This is accomplished through techniques such as transformation of themes from tranquil to turbulent, and/or transposition of themes, tempo acceleration, increase of rhythmic complexities, superimposition of themes, fragmentation of themes, dialogue between themes or motives, spasmodic use of dynamics and gradual thickening of texture used throughout the development, recapitulation and coda sections. The recapitulation is either an intensified restatement of the exposition material or serves as a second development section leading to the ecstatic, impetuous, vertiginous codas. It is in the codas that the climax of emotional intensity is reached. Thus Scriabin follows his principle "from the

^Bowers, New Scriabin, 54.
greatest delicacy (refinement), via active efficacy (flight) to
the greatest grandiosity.®

Scriabin's melodic language and its transformation throughout his
works plays a very important role in the expression of his philosophical
ideas. There is emphasis on polarity and opposition achieved through
the use of themes of contrasting character. Basically there are three
themes which are frequently referred to by the composer, either orally
or in writing, as "theme of languor," "theme of will" and "flight theme."

A strong similarity can be traced in the contour, character and
texture of these themes in all of his sonatas. The "theme of languor"
is a theme of contemplative, expressive, passive character. It is
usually a single melodic line in arched shape. The texture is transparent
and delicate. Its rhythmic outline is always in triple subdivision.
The "theme of will" is always aggressive, vehement and agitated. This
theme is usually a strong accented melodic line, formed of wide leaps,
and appears over a turbulent chordal or arpeggiated accompanimental
figure. The "flight theme" is either chordal in texture with a strong
and agitated rhythmic drive and a sense of forward motion with rests on
downbeats (in the fourth and fifth sonatas) or it is a sequential
presentation of short motives, consisting of quick ascending or descend­
ing five notes. Its intervallic structure is primarily that of major
and minor seconds (in the sixth through the tenth sonatas).

®Bowers, op. cit., 55.
These themes are introduced separately in the beginning of the compositions. As the compositions progress the themes begin to sound in counterpoint or in dialogue, either fragmented or in their entirety. The "theme of will" or "flight theme" always sounds strong and powerful and gradually contaminates the "theme of languor" with its power. The "theme of languor" is then slowly transformed until it becomes a victorious, fiery, vertiginous statement. Thus, the contrasts are gradually eliminated throughout the composition. Here a parallel can be drawn with Scriabin's philosophical ambitions to eliminate all the contrasting elements of the world and unite them with the absolute Spirit in ecstasy.

In Scriabin's early works the thematic material is lyrical in character. Emphasis is on long melodic lines with chordal or arpeggiated accompaniment. There is definite separation of roles between melody and accompaniment. In his later works the melodies become fragmented and motivic. Scriabin begins to use more and more contrapuntal techniques, the goal being to eliminate the independence of the accompaniment. He believed that "melody and harmony are two sides of one principle, of one essence." He felt that in the music of the classical period, the separation of roles of melody and accompaniment was "a process of differentiation, the fall of Spirit into Matter." He was going to begin a new synthesis where the union of melody and harmony would eliminate this differentiation and free the Spirit from Matter.7

7Sabaneev, op. cit., 47.
Scriabin developed a very personal and unique harmonic language in which he also strives for unity and concentration. As his style develops, there is a gradual tendency to reject the feeling of tonal stability in the classical sense.

In the first three sonatas Scriabin adheres to a chromatic harmonic idiom replete with altered dominant chords. The use of these chords occurs when he wants to express emotional intensity and excitement. However he still adheres to the major-minor system. The key relationships between movements and between the sections of individual movements is based on the traditional key scheme of sonata form.

The first signs of Scriabin's new harmonic system can be found in his fourth and fifth sonatas. This language consists of the extensive use of unprepared dissonant altered dominant chords which are treated as consonances requiring no resolution in the traditional sense. There is a definite avoidance of consonant tonic chords on strong beats. These consonant chords are primarily used as passing tones or they appear on unaccented parts of the measure.  

Beginning with the sixth sonata his new harmonic language is crystallized. Scriabin completely abandons key-signatures and the major-minor system. He resorts to his original serial techniques. He chooses a "set" chord formed mainly of superimposed fourths. When this chord is rearranged it forms an elaborate dominant chord with lowered or raised fifths and added tones such as sevenths, ninths, thirteenths, and other added tones. This "set" is used as the basis for all his

8 John S. Weissman, "Skryabin and his Piano Sonatas," The Listener XLVI (July, 1951), 156.
vertical and horizontal inventions and assumes the role of a consonance. He establishes tonalities through transposition techniques. The interval of a tritone plays an important role within the "set" chord itself and in the relationship between the transposed "sets."  

Scriabin's melodic and harmonic languages are enhanced by his complex rhythms variety of meters and frequent change of tempos. He avoided rhythms in duple subdivision with strong downbeats. Instead, he shows a preference for triple subdivision. In his later compositions emphasis is on irregular groupings of fast odd-numbered figurations, cross rhythms, superimposed rhythms in several layers, tied-over downbeats or with rests on downbeats and intricate syncopated patterns. This array of different intricate rhythmic figures can perhaps be explained by his concept of rhythm. Scriabin believed that "Rhythm is a spell of time ... The creative spirit calls upon time and controls it through rhythm."  

He stated that:

Very few people understand what rhythm really is ... everyone associates it with the various metrical figures and schemes. Everything was created with rhythm, it was through rhythm that the whole world was created ... In life and in nature, everything is rhythmic figures and rhythmic changes.

For a more elaborate and detailed discussion of Scriabin's harmonic system as seen in his late sonatas, the reader is referred to Timothy D. Woolsey's dissertation, "Organizational Principles in Piano Sonatas of A. Scriabin" (Unpublished DMA dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1977).

10 Sabaneev, op. cit., 49.

11 Sabaneev, op. cit., 111.
Scriabin felt that his varied and unique rhythmic language coupled with his sound inventions had magical powers that result in many refined psychological effects. He explained:

"... Music preserves in it infinite rhythmic possibilities, it is the strongest and the most effective magic, but a magic that is refined and unique... a magic that does not only lead to the primitive results like 'sleep' or hypnosis, but also leads to the birth of specific refined psychological states, which can be extremely varied. ... however music can also result in hypnosis, trance and ecstasy."

In summary, Scriabin's concepts and treatment of form, melody, harmony and rhythm are shaped and developed under the strong influence of his philosophical convictions. They also contribute to the ecstatic, otherworldly, mystical, cosmic, psychological effects that he wanted to achieve in his music.

Scriabin's ten piano sonatas can be divided into three periods in the development of his musical style which are parallel to the three periods of formation of his philosophical ideas. The first period, 1891 to 1900, includes the first through the third sonatas, the second period, 1900 to 1908, includes the fourth and fifth sonatas and the last period, 1908 to 1915, includes the sixth through the tenth sonatas. Each period has its own characteristics, but there is a definite line of continuity that links all these periods together.

12 Sabaneev, op. cit., 112.
CHAPTER IV
THE SONATAS OF THE FIRST PERIOD

The first period is the period in which Scriabin's musical language is under the strong spell of Chopin, whose music he loved and worshiped in his youth. The moods expressed in Scriabin's music and the means of expression during this period are similar to those of Chopin. The feelings of anxiety, sorrow, suffering, struggle, love, passion and tenderness that appear in Chopin's music, are magnified in Scriabin's music, which is more aggressive and has a nervous element. The main exponents of these moods are the themes and their development, enhanced by a thick, chromatic, colorful harmonic language and nervous rhythms.

Although the first three sonatas are still experimental works, they show many traits that are used by the composer throughout his second and third periods.

The First Sonata

Sonata no. 1, in F minor, Opus 6, written in 1892 is a youthful work which reflects Scriabin's personal tragedy and frustration resulting from his hand injury at the height of his pianistic career (refer to page 17 supra). It can be viewed as a musical expression of the composer's determination to struggle with fate, first turning to God for strength, then experiencing disappointment and the questioning of God's existence. This results in Scriabin's re-evaluation of the meaning of life, religion and God. Eaglefield A. Hull, an English author and enthusiast of Scriabin's music, claims that this work is
... filled with that pessimism to which youth turns so glibly between eighteen and twenty one - but filled also with an immense strength - a spirit evidently prepared to battle with "the sorry scheme of things." If aspiration be the key-note of the first movement, and the pleasure of poetic dreamy meditation of the second, then a sudden girding on of strength ready for the dim-felt on-coming disaster is the keynote of the third."

Based upon Scriabin's own words (refer to page 17 supra) we may speculate that this sonata can be interpreted as follows: the first movement expresses striving towards God, hope and struggle; the second movement is a prayer, reflective and melancholy in mood; the third movement is an outburst of anger and anxiety intertwined with feelings of hope; and the last movement is a Funeral March representing death of Scriabin's hopes and ambitions, the death of his soul.

The suggested program to this sonata, found by Bowers in Scriabin's notebook of 1891 and 1892, further describes the composer's frame of mind at the time of composition.

I Good. Ideal Truth. Goal outside myself. (Belief in God who placed striving within me. Who gave me the ability to attain. Through Him and His strength).

II Disappointment at failure to reach I. Tirade against God.

III Search for these ideals within myself. Protest. Freedom.

IV Scientific basis for Freedom (Knowledge).

V Religion.

1Hull, op. cit., 121.

Bowers points out the roundness of this scheme. It begins and ends with religion. "Musically", he says, "the First Sonata begins its burst of mighty drama and inner tragedy with the striving towards the goal of Good or God, and ends with death."^{3}

Roundness and unity is also evident in Scriabin's treatment of form in this sonata. He uses several devices to connect and interrelate all four movements. These devices include motivic and thematic unity and the union of two movements through a dominant seventh chord.

The first movement begins with a three note motive (f,g,a flat) in left hand octaves which is used in all movements, rhythmically and functionally modified. In the first themes of the first and third movements it is used as an accompaniment figure in eighth-note octaves. In the second theme of the second movement and the first theme of the fourth movement it forms the melody in dotted rhythm.^{4} (see example 1).
Example 1. Sonata no. 1, three-note motive.

The next technique used by Scriabin to unify the movements is the introduction of the same thematic material in several movements. The second theme of the first movement is also used in the middle section (measures 36-55) and coda (measures 82-86) of the third movement. The theme of the Funeral March is briefly stated in the two concluding measures of the first movement.

Finally, the key relationship between the last measure of the third movement and the beginning of the fourth movement also contributes to the overall unity. The third movement is in F minor ending on the dominant seventh chord (C^7) which resolves into the key of F minor of the fourth movement. This device is also used by Scriabin in his third
and fourth sonatas.

In an attempt to express effectively his personal conflicting feelings and thoughts, Scriabin uses a variety of themes, each with its own character, each depicting a specific emotional state.

The first movement is in sonata-allegro form. Three themes are presented in the exposition section (measures 1-58). There is a definite feeling of strength, will power, readiness for struggle and striving upwards towards God expressed in the first theme (measures 1-8). This is a powerful statement, consisting of ascending figures of thick texture covering a wide range of the piano, with driving rhythmic force, chromatic outline and triple subdivision (see example 2).

Example 2. Sonata no. 1, first movement measures 1-8, first theme
The second theme (measures 22-29) is reflective in character, emphasizing feelings of hope, sadness, tender sorrows and languor. In contrast to the first theme, this theme has a thin texture and transparent quality. It consists of a single melodic line supported by chordal accompaniment. The overall shape of this theme is in descending motion as opposed to the ascending motion of the first theme. Here there is a typical rhythmic effect of a tied dotted quarter note to a triplet, an effect often used by Scriabin (see example 3). This type of theme is very characteristic of all Scriabin's sonatas and is later referred to by the composer as the "theme of languor", representing a soul striving to achieve a difficult goal. This is most obvious in his fourth and fifth sonatas.

Example 3. Sonata no. 1, first movement, measures 22-25, second theme.

The second theme is later restated (measures 30-40) in a transformed rhythm. This can be considered a preview of the intricate rhythmic complexities elaborated upon in Scriabin's later works. The triplet figure of the first statement of this theme is now changed to a quadruplet in the right hand against the triplet figure in the left hand.
The third theme (measures 47-50) has a victorious, martial and almost joyous character, which is emphasized by the strong accents in the melodic line, a martial rhythmic accompanimental figure underneath, and a constantly ascending line (see example 4). This theme is first stated in single notes, and then it appears in octaves with a thick chordal accompaniment transposed up a major third. This is the climactic point of the exposition. The feeling here is that of momentary victory over struggle and sorrows.

Example 4. Sonata no. 1, first movement, measures 47-50, third theme

The development section (measures 59-103) is basically a restatement of the three main themes in transformation. There is a gradual growth of excitement and emotion throughout this section. Each subsequent statement of a theme becomes stronger than the previous one. Surprisingly, Scriabin transforms the first theme into a contemplative, melancholy and passive statement. The texture becomes more transparent and the dynamic level is piano (measures 59-67). This type of transformation is very unusual for Scriabin. His tendency is usually to transform weak themes into powerful ones in most of his sonatas.
This is followed by the second theme (measures 67-80), which acquires more strength. It is presented in augmented form and is accompanied by the martial rhythmic figure of the third theme. Scriabin indicates mezzo-forte for the melodic line and pianissimo con sordino for all the remaining voices.

The third theme, following an ascending chromatic crescendo line, sounds even more powerful and triumphant than in the exposition. It goes through several upward transpositions, reaching its climax in the highest register of the piano. Its texture becomes thicker and the dynamic level reaches fortissimo (measures 81-93). This is followed by a sudden pianissimo statement of the first theme, which also undergoes several transpositions to higher key-levels and is underlined by a long crescendo, thus leading into the fortissimo of the recapitulation.

The recapitulation (measures 104-161) is a mere repetition of the exposition material with the exception that the second theme (measures 125-151) is completely transformed from its first appearance. The original quiet, melancholy and reflective character of the second theme is now transformed to a boisterous and powerful statement, which compliments the character of the first theme. This is accomplished through considerable thickening of texture, increase of dynamics from a piano to a forte and through the addition of an agitated chordal accompaniment in triple subdivision. Thus the contrast between the first and second themes is greatly diminished. Scriabin uses this technique and elaborates upon it extensively in his later sonatas.
The coda (measures 162-170) is extremely short. It consists of a descending motivic figure which is repeated in four consecutive descending octaves accompanied by a gradual decrescendo from forte to quadruple piano. This leads to the last two measures which state the beginning of the Funeral March theme.

The second movement is reflective and somber in mood. This movement may be interpreted as the expression of Scriabin's "first serious thinking about the value of life, religion and God" (see page 17 supra). The hymn-like texture used in this movement is very atypical of Scriabin. He never returns to this style of writing in the subsequent sonatas.

This movement is divided in three sections (ABA form). The first section (measures 1-15) is in hymn style, with block chords. The middle section (measures 15-32) is contrasting in character. The theme begins with the three note motive of the first movement, transposed up a major second, (see example 1 supra) and continues in an ornamented filigree linear style of sixteenth notes and triplet passages against octaves in the left hand. The third section (measures 33-53) is a variation of the first, with the hymn melody in the right hand over an accompaniment in the left hand which consists of slow trill effects and wide arpeggiated figures.

The third movement is a Scherzo, full of anger and anxiety. It can be interpreted as Scriabin's cry "against fate, against God." The first and second themes of the Scherzo are interrupted by the
melancholy second theme of the first movement in the middle section.

Bowers describes this movement as follows:

The third movement is a presto tour de force of incessant left-hand octaves. They throb against steady, chordal beats in the right hand. Scriabin called these "ropoty" (murmurings, defiant cries), grovelings before God and fate. Unexpectedly, the searching meno-mosso theme of the first movement returns like a flash of reason within turbulence. The restless, headlong rush resumes and stops abruptly fff. A recitative intervenes as if asking a crucial but unanswerable question. 

This movement is in rondo form (ABACABA). The A section (measures 1-12) consists of a steady, rhythmic, chordal theme with strong accents on the third beat over continuous octaves in the left hand. These octaves are rhythmically displaced forming triplets beginning on upbeats rather than downbeats (see example 1 supra). Scriabin uses this metric displacement effect rather frequently in the future sonatas. This partially contributes to the sense of urgency and nervousness in his works. The character of this theme shows strong similarities with the "flight themes" of Scriabin's later works, such as the first themes of the fourth and fifth sonatas.

The B section (measures 13-22) consists of a typically Chopinesque scherzo theme (measures 13-16), which begins with a chordal rhythmic statement and ends with arpeggiated filigree work (see example 5).

5 Bowers, op. cit., I, 169-170.
Example 5. Sonata no. 1, third movement, measures 13-16, scherzo theme.

This is followed by a repetition of the first two measures of this theme, transposed a fourth up (measures 17-18), and the rhythmic, chordal material of the A section (measures 19-22) which serves as a bridge passage to the return of the A section.

The C section (measures 36-55) is primarily the second theme from the first movement. It first appears as a melancholy, pianissimo statement, then it is transformed into a powerful, victorious, forte theme stated in octaves. This is followed by a repetition of the ABA sections which after a cumulative accelerando and crescendo come to a sudden triple forte stop to give way to the quiet recitativo closing section (measures 82-86). The closing section is a return of the second theme of the first movement full of sorrow and languor. It sets the mood for the Funeral March. A dominant seventh chord is sounded in between rests full of suspense before the Funeral March begins without a break.
The Funeral March is the expression of Scriabin's defeat by fate. It represents the death of his soul, the death of all his aspirations and hopes. The form of this movement is also ternary (ABA). The A section (measures 1-19 and 50-71) is the Funeral March theme, which originates from the motive of the first theme of the first movement (see example 1 supra). This theme appears over a steady left hand quarter-note beat sustaining the pedal point F throughout the entire section.

The most significant section of this movement is the B section (measures 20-49), marked quasi niente. The psychological effect achieved in this section can be viewed as a predecessor of what Scriabin later defines as a "state of nonexistence" (see page 16 supra). The deliberate slow repetition of vertical sound combinations in half-notes played quadruple piano and the gradual spreading from four notes to nine-note combinations create with its coloristic effects feelings of inertia, passivity, hoplessness and death. These feelings are momentarily interrupted by two measures of a recitativo passage marked a piacere and forte (measures 40 and 41), sounding like a human outcry of grief and frustration pleading for salvation. After a short repetition of the quasi niente passage the Funeral March resumes and gradually dies away with a decrescendo. The concluding measure is a sudden forte with three "compelling" chords sounding like an indignant "loud question mark."

6Bowers, op. cit., 170.
The Second Sonata

Sonata no. 2 in G sharp minor, Opus 19, was composed in two stages. It was begun in Genoa in 1892 (second movement) and completed in 1897 in Crimea (first movement). It was entitled by the composer, Sonata-Fantasia.

The programmatic content of this work deviates from the general line of development of Scriabin's philosophical ideas. Therefore, it can not be viewed as a representative composition in that realm. It primarily expresses the composer's impressions of nature. According to Scriabin, it was written under the influence of the sea. He explains that:

The first movement (Andante) represents the quiet southern night at the seashore. The development section is the dark, agitated, deep ocean. The E major section represents the caressing moonlight after the first darkness of the night. The second movement (Presto) represents the wide, tempestuous, agitated, vast expanse of the ocean.¹

Considering Scriabin's views on music and its purpose, it is inconceivable to regard this music as a pure description of nature.

The Russian biographer Victor Delson points out that:

One should not assume that the composer's goal was merely to paint a real picture of the southern sea in musical sounds. Such an approach would be in disagreement with Scriabin's aesthetics. The music of this Sonata-Fantasia is, before anything else, a music of lyrical moods, moods that are musically conceived in close connection with the composer's sensitivity to the either peaceful or turbulent moods, evoked by the constant movement of the sea.²

¹V. Delson, Skryabin: Ocherki zhizni i tvorchestva. [Scriabin: His Life and Works],
²Delson, loc. cit.
The form of this work also digresses from Scriabin's general development. Even though the composer applies the sonata-allegro concept to both of its movements, there is an improvisatory character and the freedom inherent in a fantasy, in the whole composition. The two movements complement each other in character and mood. The usual polarity and contrast between the thematic material within the movements is greatly diminished. However, the thematic content and its manipulation point to many characteristics that lead to the original style of Scriabin's mature works.

In the first movement Scriabin shows his concern with pianistic color effects and transparency and delicacy of texture, thus capturing moods of serenity, peace and the romanticism of the nocturnal ocean in the shades of moonlight.

The exposition section (measures 1-56) contains three main themes expressing similar moods and emotions. The first theme proper (measures 1-22) consists of three motivic ideas (see example 6). Motive I (measures 1 and 2) with its melodic rises and falls (distributed between the two hands), which are separated by rests with fermatas, represents the swaying movement of the peaceful waves of the dark ocean. The falling interval of a fifth which begins on an upbeat, followed by the triplet figure of three repeated notes, as it appears in the right hand, is used extensively throughout this movement and serves as a unifying element.

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9 Delson, loc. cit.
Motive II (measures 3 and 5) is strictly confined to the exposition section. The rhythmic characteristic of sixteenth notes tied to dotted eighths and the overall ascending motion of the melodic line over a crescendo, adds to this passage a sense of slight agitation and forwardness.

Motive III (measures 7-10) appears in octaves as an accompaniment figure in the left hand under an ascending chordal melody in right hand and is underlined with a continuous long crescendo. The sense of continuous movement and forwardness increases here. This motive is then transformed into a chordal lyrical theme (measures 13-18) in the right hand which is periodically interrupted by motive I. This theme appears over an arpeggiated left hand figure in a displaced triplet rhythmic pattern that overlaps the barline. This rhythmic pattern had been used in the third movement of the first sonata and will be further used in many of the subsequent sonatas to express agitation and constant forward movement.

The motivic nature of the material used in these first eighteen measures and the manner of its presentation can be viewed as predecessors of the introduction sections of the sonatas of the late period in which all the important motivic material is introduced and then developed into the main thematic material of the entire works.

A brief bridge passage (measures 19-22), consisting of motivic material of the second theme, precedes the second theme proper. The second theme (measures 23-30) is contrasting in texture and structure but not in mood. Texturally, rhythmically and melodically it follows
the pattern of all Scriabin's "languor" themes in the subsequent sonatas (see page 48 supra). It is a single flowing melodic line in triple subdivision over a simple, transparent, quarter-note accompaniment which provides a subtle harmonic support. The characteristic rhythms of a quarter-note tied to a triplet and the triplet figure with a shortened third note is present here (see example 7).

Example 7. Sonata no. 2, first movement, measures 23-30, second theme.

The second theme is rhythmically transformed in measure 31 through 36. The original triplet figures become quadruplets, quintuplets, sextuplets, septuplets and octuplets consecutively, thus causing a cumulative accelerando effect. This happens over an unaltered accompaniment in left hand with an added middle voice.

The rhythmic complexities are increased in measures 42 through 44 with the introduction of cross-rhythms between melody and accompaniment, also in a cumulative accelerando effect. This passage begins with three against four, proceeds to four against five and finally to three against
six. This happens over a crescendo line. Scriabin uses this technique of cumulative growth of rhythmic complexity over a crescendo in almost all of his sonatas that follow. This is how he prepares his climactic statements which express ecstatic moods.

The third theme proper (measures 45-46) is the climactic point of the exposition. The mood continues to be melancholy and serene. The coloristic effect is magnificent. The theme is a lyrical statement of wide melodic leaps in the middle register. It is marked mezzo-forte and ben marcato il canto. It is surrounded by the pianissimo wide arpeggiated figurations exploring the high and low registers of the piano. This forms a delicate and transparent frame to the melodic line (see example 8). This textural quality becomes much more complex and is extensively used by Scriabin in his later sonatas, where he resorts to the use of several staves for clarity of notation. This is most obvious in the introduction of the fourth sonata, in the second theme of the recapitulation of the sixth sonata, in the third theme of the recapitulation of the seventh sonata and throughout the tenth sonata.

The development section (measures 57-68) consists of the first and second themes in constant dialogue or in counterpoint. These themes are slowly transformed from peaceful to agitated statements. There are two significant transformations of themes in this section. The first is where the second theme assumes the role of accompaniment in forte octaves in the left hand. It appears under a chordal ascending melodic line in the right hand (measures 66-69). The second is the long passage in which motive I of the first theme is initially stated in its original
Example 8. Sonata no. 2, first movement, measures 45-48, third theme.

form at a piano level and is slowly transformed into a thick climactic repeated chord passage (measures 77-86) which leads, with a continuous crescendo, into the recapitulation section (see examples 9 and 10).

Repeated chords are used by Scriabin to give an orchestral effect of a cumulative crescendo on a sustained note. In his later sonatas he frequently uses this effect when he transforms his "theme of languor" into an ecstatic statement. This happens, for example, in the codas of the fourth and fifth sonatas, in the development of the sixth sonata, in the recapitulation of the seventh sonata, and in the development of the tenth sonata.
Example 9. Sonata no. 2, first movement, measures 66-69, transformation of second theme.

Example 10. Sonata no. 2, first movement, measures 79-85, transformation of motive I from first theme.

The recapitulation section (measures 87-127) begins with a two measure, fortissimo statement of motive I of first theme. The first theme proper is shortened considerably. Motive II is eliminated. Concentration is on the lyrical chordal version of motive III which now appears in E major. This is the section which, according to the composer's own words, expresses the "caressing moonlight after the first darkness of the night" (see page 55 supra). This passage is followed by the full statement of the second and third themes.
Both of these themes become more intricately ornamented than in the exposition.

The second theme and its variation is supported by a fuller accompaniment figure consisting of arpeggiated triplets, quadruplets and sextuplets. The third theme begins as an exact repetition of the exposition. In measure 128 the accompaniment figures become rhythmically extremely complex. Cross rhythms of nine against five, twelve against five and nine against six are used in this passage (measures 128-134). The movement ends with the return of the opening motive I stated pianissimo over two measures.

The second movement of this sonata contains very little of Scriabin's characteristic style. Texturally, rhythmically and melodically it is straightforward and simple.

The exposition section (measures 1-53) contains two themes. The movement begins with the first theme (measures 1-40), an agitated melodic line, clear and transparent in texture. The mood of agitation is achieved in the fast, angular, right hand triplet figures, which constantly rise and fall. The dynamics contour of constant crescendo and diminuendo also contributes to this agitation. Scriabin adds the octaves in the left hand to give rhythmic definition to the theme (see example 11).
Example 11. Sonata no. 2, second movement, measures 1-4, first theme.

The second theme proper (measures 41-52) is a return to the peaceful, sad, lyrical mood of the first movement. This theme consists of a crescendo ascending melodic line (it begins at a piano level and ends fortissimo), which is extended only over four measures. It appears over a simple arpeggiated accompaniment in the left hand (see example 12). After an interruption by the first theme material (measures 45-48), the second theme returns transposed up a fifth and leads to the development section.
The development section (measures 53-78) does not show much musical invention or originality. Scriabin uses, unsuccessfully, the technique of canonic treatment of the second theme (measures 63-70). This is presented over left hand accompaniment of either arpeggios or written out trill figures (see example 13).

The recapitulation is shortened (measures 79-101). The second theme is stated only once. However, the last measure of this theme is extended with the addition of four ascending whole note chords which appear over a big crescendo to a fortissimo level.

The coda (measures 102-110) begins with a sudden piano. It consists of the same canonic treatment of the second theme as it was used in the development section. The movement ends with the pianissimo return of the first theme in the last three measures and is followed by two sudden sforzando G-sharp minor chords.

Delson summarizes the psychological meaning of this movement:

The free alternation of emotional rises and falls corresponds to the seascape with its widely developed chains of surging waves, one after the other. A typical realistic theme (second theme) gives the basis for pure romantic moods of dissatisfaction, rebellious outburst, suffering . . .

The Third Sonata

Sonata no. 3 in F sharp minor, Opus 23, entitled by the composer "Etats d'Ame" or "Soul States", was written in 1897. Several years after its completion it was provided with a program (see page 20 supra) by Scriabin's second wife, Tatiana Schloezer, on the occasion of a recital in Brussels in 1905. This program was sanctioned by the composer and has been used ever since as accompanying program-notes for every live performance of this work.

The third sonata can be regarded as the culminating point of Scriabin's achievements in the first period of his development.

10 Delson, op. cit., 289.
Philosophically, this work represents the true beginning of the mystical Scriabin, who now shows concern with freeing the soul of all worldly attachments such as suffering, grief, disillusion and doubt. The voice of Man-God is heard for the first time here. Scriabin, Man-God himself, feels the power of creativity and with this power is determined to find peace, harmony and beauty. As is suggested by Montagu-Nathan, however, "the soul of man, not yet strong enough to resist 'allurements' and 'vague desires,' and having made a valiant effort, falls overwhelmed into the abyss of nothingness."\(^{11}\)

Montagu-Nathan also relates this sonata to the composer's symphonic works:

> In this [sonata], altogether apart from considerations of form and harmony, we have to deal with a step forward in respect of the avowed poetic or psychological basis which we are now accustomed to seek in Skryabin's larger works. Its mystical presentation of the struggles of the souls is of course the herald of the ideology of the Divine Poem, the Poem of Ecstasy and Prometheus.\(^{12}\)

The third sonata is a monumental work, consisting of four movements which are very closely knit together both musically and philosophically. Each movement represents a specific idea (see page 20 supra).

The first movement shows the untamed and free soul plunging passionately into a pit of sorrow and strife. In the second movement the soul finds illusory and temporary relief, losing itself in song and flowers. The third movement represents the soul lost in tender and melancholy feelings. In the fourth movement, the voice of the victorious struggling soul is heard, but ultimately, this soul falls back into "a new abyss of nothingness."

\(^{11}\)Montagu-Nathan, Contemporary Russian Composers (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1917), 65.

\(^{12}\)Montagu-Nathan, op. cit., 69.
Scriabin's treatment of form in this work corresponds very closely to its programmatic content. This is most obvious in the thematic relationship between the first and fourth movements, both representing the struggling soul. The first theme of the first movement serves as a unifying interlude between the third and fourth movements, sounding as the reminder of the struggling soul, after the peaceful, harmonious, celestial and illusory mood expressed in the third movement. This interlude (measures 51-54) is followed by four measures of a rhythmic motive of breathless and agitated character in the right hand, over the grace-note effect of ascending bass octaves in the left hand, borrowed from the first theme of the first movement (measures 55-58). The motive is used throughout the fourth movement mainly as a bridge between contrasting sections and themes (see example 14). The passage ends on a dominant-seventh chord which leads to the tonic beginning of the fourth movement.

Example 14. Sonata no. 3, third movement, measures 51-58, unifying interlude between third and fourth movements.
The thematic relationship between the second theme of the first movement and the first theme of the fourth movement also contributes to the unity between the first and fourth movements (see example 15). In the fourth movement this theme is rhythmically modified and slightly shortened. The similarity between the two themes is more pronounced in the first development section of the fourth movement where, the same theme is presented in its longer version (see example 16). Symbolically, this passage (measures 71-94) may represent the victory of the struggling soul (see page 20 supra).

Example 15. Sonata no. 3, thematic relationship between the second theme of the first movement and the first theme of the fourth movement.

First movement, measures 25-28, second theme.

[Music notation image]

Fourth movement, measures 1-2, first theme.

[Music notation image]

Example 16. Sonata no. 3, fourth movement, measures 71-74, first theme in transformation in the development section.
Each individual movement of this sonata also shows specific musical characteristics which express its programmatic content. Suffering and struggle seems to be the "motto" of the first movement in a typical sonata-allegro form. These moods are expressed in the melodic contour of the main themes, their rhythmic outline, their polyphonic texture, their harmonic color and finally in their development and manipulation.

The exposition section (measures 1-54), marked Drammatico, instead of the usual tempo indication, contains two main themes. The first theme (measures 1-8) is a passionate and dramatic statement, motivic in structure, with a strong rhythmic drive. The grace-note effect of the ascending octaves in the left hand, consisting of a sixteenth note and an eighth, followed by right hand ascending chords, is answered by a descending triplet figure. Each motive in the right hand is separated by rests. Following the restatement of this theme (beginning in measure 9), a new motive is introduced (measure 11). This motive plays an important role in the remaining section of the first theme proper, and it is also used in conjunction with the second theme (see example 17).

The whole first theme proper (measures 1-24) presents several new characteristics of Scriabin's musical style. The first is the use of rests on the first beats of the measures in the right hand. This contributes to the nervous element of Scriabin's music and gives it a feeling of constant urgency, forward drive and motion. The second is the obvious widespread chords covering tenths, elevenths, twelfths and thirteenth, forming dissonant sounds which foreshadow the sound of the "set" chords of his later works. Here these sounds are achieved through
Example 17. Sonata no. 3, first movement, measures 1-12, first theme and new motivic material.
the use of passing tones over tied consonant chords. This technique is used throughout the whole movement. The third characteristic is the motivic or thematic repetition, in upward or downward transposition, creating a general rise and fall within the sections. This rise and fall is further emphasized by the contour of the dynamics, which consists of a gradual crescendo followed by a sudden piano. This device also contributes to the agitation, nervousness and sense of struggle.

The second theme proper (measures 24-42) begins with a short, four measure statement, treated polyphonically, which may be interpreted as an expression of temporary spiritual peace and harmony (see example 15 supra). This, however, is soon interrupted by motivic material from the main theme, now transformed into a light scherzando passage (measures 31-42) hinting at the freedom of the soul in flight. It is an ascending octave triplet figuration (see example 18). In this passage Scriabin uses the theme in imitation between the two hands.

Example 18, Sonata no. 3, first movement, measures 31-32, scherzando theme in imitation.

13Stegner, op. cit., 103.
The closing section of the exposition (measures 43-53) consists of either the material from the first theme by itself (measures 43-46 and 51-54) or the second theme in the right hand in counterpoint with the first theme in the left hand (measures 47-50). This may represent the struggle of the suffering soul. The main theme overpowers the second theme.

Emphasis on struggle continues throughout the entire development section (measures 55-94). There is a slow transformation of the second theme, which sounds over short motives of the first theme, into a climactic, powerful statement. The second theme goes through several repetitions. Every repetition is transposed to a higher key and reaches a higher dynamic level, beginning with a mezzo-piano and ending with a fortissimo. In its last climactic statement (measures 83-94), the second theme, transposed to yet a higher key level, appears in its entirety in augmented form over the motive of the first theme in the left hand (see example 19).

Example 19. Sonata no. 3, first movement, measures 83-86, climactic statement of the transformed second theme.
The recapitulation section (measures 95-132) begins with a shortened first theme section. Compared to the twenty-four measures in the exposition, here it is only eight measures long. This is followed by the unaltered second theme section and a slightly extended closing section.

The second and third movements offer very few new developments of Scriabin's musical style. These movements are obviously still under the strong influence of Chopin.

The second movement is in ternary form (ABA). The moods of illusionary peacefulness and respite, as the program indicates, do not appear until the middle section. The A sections (measures 1-50 and 83-100) reflect feelings of agitation and nervousness. Perhaps this is still the struggling soul. These feelings are evoked primarily by the rhythmic effect of the left hand. The rhythm of two sixteenth-notes followed by an eighth-note overlaps the barline and thus creates a cumulative effect of misplacement of the down beat (see example 20). The main thematic material in the right hand has a steady martial rhythm which neutralizes the rhythmic effect of the left hand. The incessant repetition of this theme, with its dynamic effects of gradual crescendo and sudden piano and the accelerando effect that leads to a stretto passage at the end of this section, also contributes to the feeling of agitation, urgency and forwardness.
Example 20. Sonata no. 3, second movement, measures 1-8, main theme of Section A.

Allegretto m.m. 3/4

The contrasting B section (measures 51-82) is lyrical, delicate and graceful. This appears to be the point at which, according to the program, the soul finds "illusory and transient respite" and "forgets itself in song and flowers." A unique feature in this section is the short trill figure that accompanies the melodic line throughout the entire section (see example 21). Here the trill serves as a coloristic effect creating the character of delicacy, lightness and serenity.

Example 21. Sonata no. 3, second movement, measures 51-54 main theme of section B.
The third movement expresses feelings of "love, sorrow and secret desires," as the program notes indicate. Its thematic material is very much influenced by Chopin in the melodic contour, the accompanying figures, the chromaticism and ornamentation. It consists of two themes introduced in ABA form. The second theme (measures 18-32) complements the first (measures 1-17). The return of the first theme (measures 32-58) intensifies all the feelings expressed in the first two sections.

The first A section introduces a lyrical melodic line which appears in the top voice over repeated chords in the middle voice and contrapuntal melodic lines in the lower voices (see example 22).

Example 22. Sonata no. 3, third movement, measures 1-4, first theme.
In the B section the doloroso theme intensifies the feelings expressed in the A section. The theme is embellished with thick chromaticism, sounding over the pedal point D sharp, which creates a very special coloristic effect, obscuring the tonality of this section.\(^{14}\)

The return of the A section consists of a florid variation of the first theme. In measure 43 the theme appears in the middle register, accompanied by ornamented figurations in the top voice and downward wide arpeggiated figures in the low register. This technique of variation is used frequently by the composer in his subsequent sonatas and has been seen already in his second sonata.

The fourth movement represents the return of the struggling soul rejoicing in triumphant sounds. This appears to be the point at which the faith of the hero, the Man-God, is resolved. There is a continuous build up of intensity throughout the whole movement, almost without any sense of relief.\(^{15}\)

This movement is in sonata-allegro form. The shortened recapitulation section is followed by the second development and a climactic coda.

The exposition section (measures 1-70) contains two themes. The first theme proper (measures 1-36) begins with a falling chromatic line, which is rhythmically and motivically related to the second theme of the first movement, as has been pointed out earlier (see example 15 supra).

\(^{14}\) Stegner, op. cit., 105.

\(^{15}\) Delson, op. cit., 289.
Here it acquires a powerful and heroic character. The accompaniment figure of widespread downward arpeggios in two triplets, followed by a group of four sixteenth notes, is used almost continuously throughout this section.

The first theme is stated three times. Each time it is interrupted by the connecting motive, which originated in the last four bars of the third movement. Each subsequent statement of the theme acquires a stronger character. The second appearance is in the middle voice and the third is in the bass, stated in octaves.

The bridge passage (measures 25-36) consists of transposed statements of the first theme, up a third, underlined with a crescendo. It ends with the connecting motive transposed downward chromatically, appearing over a diminuendo leading into the second theme proper (measures 37-70).

The second theme (measures 37-40) is contrasting in character. It is a short lyrical melodic line which may suggest sadness and hopefulness (see example 23).

In this section Scriabin uses, the metric displacement technique of a triplet which overlaps the measure, once again (see example 24). The temporary sense of relief expressed in this section is soon ended with the accelerando and crescendo that leads into the breathless, agitated, connecting motive (measure 55-58). The first theme is sounded in its original form (measures 59-80) before the development section begins.

Example 24. Sonata no. 3, fourth movement, measures 47-52, second theme with left hand accompaniment in triplet figures which overlap the measure.

In the development section (measures 71-124) the intensity of emotion increases. It consists primarily of the transformed second theme of the first movement transformed into an heroic theme, over the arpeggiated accompaniment which creates a sense of continuous agitation (see example 16 supra). This theme is restated several times in different transpositions. Each restatement is again underlined by a gradual crescendo which ends abruptly and is followed by a sudden piano. This contributes to the impression of the short nervous outbursts
of emotion of the victorious soul. Climax is achieved in measures 95 through 120. In this passage the first theme takes charge. It appears first in inverted form in octaves and then in its original form. This happens over a crescendo from forte to fortissimo (measures 95-102). In measures 103 through 118 the first theme is treated in imitation between the right and left hands and becomes more and more fragmented. Fragmentation of themes is a common technique used by Scriabin in his vertiginous, ecstatic, cosmic codas of the last five sonatas.

The recapitulation section (measures 125-169) begins with the first theme, which now sounds more powerful than in the exposition. The first theme proper (measures 125-136) consists of a shortened version of the first theme, in octaves, followed by the connecting motive. The second theme proper (measures 136-169) is a repetition of the same material as it appeared in the exposition.

The second development section (measures 170-200) consists of a dialogue between the first theme and the connecting theme. The rhythmic treatment of both of these themes (measures 182-200) creates an effective preparation for the climactic coda. The two themes, with their dotted rhythm in duple subdivision, appear over left hand descending octaves in quarter-note triplet figures. This happens over a gradual crescendo from ppp to fff, creating an accelerated and agitated effect.
The coda (measures 201-304) begins with the transformed, maestoso, climactic statement of the first theme from the third movement (measures 202-223). From a peaceful, dreamy quality, the first theme is transformed into a powerful, victorious, jubilant theme. This appears to be the point at which "the voice of Man-God rises up from within the Soul's depths." The first theme is augmented to quarter-note and half-note values from its original version of eighteen and sixteen-note values. It sounds fff and is periodically interrupted by short motives of the first theme of this movement in left hand octaves (see example 25). The climax is sustained until measure 216, where a diminuendo begins with the insistent repetition of the first theme of this movement in the left hand against the fragmented first theme from the third movement. The voice of Man-God becomes weaker.

Example 25. Sonata no. 3, fourth movement, measures 201-206, climactic statement of the first theme from the third movement.
A sotto voce passage follows in measure 224, with pianissimo sixteen-note figures reminiscent of the second theme of the third movement. It appears over a continuation of the repetition of the first theme from the fourth movement. Exhaustion, sorrow, hopelessness are expressed here. This may be the point at which the soul falls back into "an abyss of nothingness." The sonata ends abruptly with three fortissimo statements of the connecting motive, which is separated by two full measures of rests. This sounds as a frustrated emotional outcry and surrender to fate.
CHAPTER V
THE SONATAS OF THE SECOND PERIOD

Scriabin's fourth and fifth sonatas, composed in 1903 and 1908 respectively, represent the transitional period of the composer's musical and philosophical achievements. These works show a considerable change in Scriabin's musical and pianistic style. Wagner and Liszt seem to be the main influences during this period.¹ This is evident in the condensation of the sonatas to a self-sufficient one-movement form, the use of the technique of transformation of themes, the brilliant and colorful pianistic language, the extensive use of chromaticism, the use of boisterous and powerful themes, the richness of tonal contrasts and the use of extremely thick textures. This, combined with Scriabin's new philosophies, leads to his very personal and unique musical language.

During the six years between the completion of the third sonata and the beginning of the fourth, Scriabin's philosophies assume a new phase. They begin the path towards his cosmic world under a strong influence of Theosophy. Scriabin's desire to express his philosophies in his music becomes more concrete and quite intense.

The Fourth Sonata

The fourth sonata, Opus 30 in F sharp major, is the first exponent of these new trends. Its philosophical program, as expressed in his poem (see pages 22 and 23 supra) can be interpreted as follows:

the "bluish mystery" of the far distant shimmering star is represented
in the first movement, which, gradually but vehemently, is transformed
into the brilliant, blinding light of the sun, represented in the coda
of the second movement. The soul reaches this blinding sun through an
ecstatic "flight of liberation", represented in the second movement,
appropriately labeled by the composer, Prestissimo volando (flying).

The musical expression of these ideas shows true mastery of maximum
expression through minimum means. The whole sonata can be characterized
by its conciseness, its unity of thought, its thematic economy and its
relentless forward drive without repose. Although it appears to be in
two separate movements (Andante and Prestissimo volando), in reality the
first movement serves as an introduction to the second movement. The
main theme of the first movement serves as the main theme of the whole
sonata. It is presented in different guises, thus being transformed from
a quiet, dreamy, subdued statement to a grandiose, impetuous and ecstatic
final statement.

This is a continuation of the technique of thematic transformation
already present in the fourth movement of the third sonata, where the
composer uses themes from the previous movements. While in the third
sonata this technique played only a secondary role, in the fourth, it
becomes the basis of development of the entire composition. Bowers
explains very effectively the form of this work and how it is related
to the composer's subsequent sonatas.

The shape of the whole piece is that of "A" growing, increasing,
waxing into a final and ultimate "A+", spaced with subsidiary
rises and falls. The pressure grows from quiet to grandiose,
sustaining one single tension.
Scriabin will follow this structure of gradually evolving moods in all future sonatas, from languor, thirst, or longing, (invariably slow, soft, vague, mysterious perhaps, and certainly indistinct...), through struggle, depths and heights, or battle (usually a skittering allegro with speed to disrupt tranquility and excitement), through flight, dance, luminosity, or ecstasy (each marked as such, in French). The chain is a series of lifts, ascents and upsurges, finally bursting into fragmentation, dematerialization, dissolution - a last and final strengthening of freedom.²

The first movement consists primarily of the main theme and its textural transformations. It can be divided into four sections. The mood sustained throughout the entire movement is that of languor, desire, longing and mysticism.

The first section (measures 1-17) consists of two full statements of the main theme, which contains two motivic ideas. The first motive (measures 1-6) was described by the composer as "the striving toward the ideal creative power."³ It is an ascending melodic line in triple subdivision, with deliberate avoidance of strong downbeats achieved through the use of ties. The texture is crystalline. The melody appears over dissonant, transparent chords, with a chromatic outline. The key of F sharp major is suggested here, but there is obvious evasion of the consonant tonic chords, especially on strong beats of the measure. Instead these consonant chords are frequently used as passing tones on weak beats of the measure (see example 26). This harmonic characteristic is present throughout the entire sonata. It is with this work that Scriabin's new harmonic idiom begins to develop.

²Bowers, Biography, I, 331.
³Bowers, loc. cit.
Example 26. Sonata no. 4, first movement, measures 1-8, main theme.

The second motive (measures 7-8), marked con voglia (with desire or longing), was described by Scriabin as the motive of "languor or exhaustion after effort." This motive consists of a descending diminished-sixth interval, which is followed by an ascending scale passage. There is a certain feeling of rhythmic freedom here. The steady lilt which was present in the preceding motive is disturbed by the rubato indication and by the use of the irregular group of five eighth-notes, which begin with a rest on the downbeat. These notes serve as upbeats to the next measure (see example 26 supra). This becomes a very typical rhythmic device in the subsequent sonatas and is frequently referred to, by the composer, as "flight motives."

The second section of the first movement (measures 18-34) consists of the second motive only, which is presented in a sequence of upward transpositions. Each transposed statement is separated by pianissimo trill figures in a very high register. Here Scriabin begins to use trills to express luminosity. The trills represent the shimmering light of the far distant star in this passage. Trills are used extensively in

4Bowers, loc. cit.
Scriabin's late sonatas. He explains the meaning of trills and tremolos in his late works as "palpitations . . . trembling . . . the vibration in the atmosphere," and a source of light.\(^5\)

The third section (measures 35-50) is a variation of the main theme. This variation consists of coloristic effects that surround the theme, rather than of transformations of the theme itself. The theme is presented twice. Each time it is fully stated in the middle register over wide arpeggios in the left hand, in steady triplet subdivision. Above the theme, the upper voice appears in the highest register of the piano. In its first appearance (measures 35-42) it is a sequence of repeated blocked chords, marked quietissimo. The second time (measures 43-50) this sequence of chords becomes broken into arpeggios in sixteenth-note triplets. Thus the sense of motion increases. Both times, the upper voice and its high register, with the pianissimo dynamics level and the indicated articulation, gives the impression and image of the scintillating star, under which the theme of languor, longing and desire sounds continuously. This may be interpreted as a symbol of Scriabin's desire to reach the unreachable, beautiful, luminous star.

The fourth section (measures 50-66) can be viewed as a connecting interlude between the first and second movements. It consists of fragmentation of the first motive separated by descending figurations in a high register (measures 50-58), and a descending chromatic sequence of off-beat chords, underlined by a strong feeling of rhythmic drive created in the left hand (measures 58-66), an accelerando and a crescendo.

The section ends with two dissonant C sharp dominant ninth chords (without its third and fifth) in the last two measures, which lead without a break into the second movement.

The second movement has a relentless rhythmic drive and a gradual growth of emotional intensity, offering no sense of repose. It consists of continuous rises and falls, suggesting attempted "flights" towards the ultimate goal. All the themes present in this movement complement each other in character, sustaining the mood of breathlessness, agitation and constant forward drive.

Stegner points out that all the thematic material of this movement (not including the return of the main theme from the first movement), originates in the first eight measures (see example 27). The two motives (motive A and B) that appear in counterpoint in measure 5 are used by Scriabin as "principal points of departure in the unfolding of the movement." In the first theme these two motives form the second half of the theme, where they appear in counterpoint. In the second theme, they become the main structural elements, and are used separately.

Example 27. Sonata no. 4, second movement, measures 3-6, first theme.

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6Stegner, op. cit., 114.
The exposition section (measures 1-47) begins with a full statement of the first theme (measures 1-8). The first four measures consist of an upward leap of a minor sixth in triplet figure. The third note of this triplet figure is replaced by an eighth-note rest (see example 27 supra). As DeIson describes it, this represents the beginning of a flight, a breaking away from the forces of gravity (strong down-beat), with a leap into an indefinite distance (rest).7 This rhythmic figure of two eighth-notes followed by a rest (measure 1) and the last eighth-note of a triplet figure tied to the first of the next triplet group (measure 2) forms the rhythmic essence of this movement. This contributes to the feeling of airiness, agitation and constant striving ahead without repose. This feeling is further emphasized by the spasmodic rise and fall of the melodic line and dynamics outline, colored by the unstable harmonies which avoid consonances on strong beats.

The second theme proper (measures 21-47) consists of the second theme and the modified second half of the first theme. The second theme (measures 21-29) is contrasting in texture but not in mood. The sense of agitation is continued with the use of motive B in the middle voice. Here this motive assumes a primary role. This motive is supported by octaves in the bass and a chromatic ascending chordal line in the upper voices (see example 28). Emphasis on rises and falls supported by crescendo and diminuendo is continued here.

Example 28. Sonata no 4, second movement, measures 21-24, second theme.

DeIson, op. cit., 296.
The following section (measures 30-47) uses developmental techniques. The second half of the first theme is stated in its entirety with slight intervallic changes (measures 30-35). This is followed by motives A and B in dialogue or counterpoint in different transpositions. Sudden fortés and pianos are used in abundance here.

The development section (measures 48-81) may be interpreted as a series of ecstatic flights which set the mood for the appearance of the triumphant theme from the first movement (measures 66-73).

This section begins with several statements of the first half of the first theme treated in imitation between upper and middle voices ending with fast upward arpeggios. Every subsequent statement of this theme is transposed upward. In measures 56 through 65 concentration is on the second half of the first theme. The feeling of tension and forward motion is increased through upward transposition, appearance of cross-rhythms of four against three (measures 57-59) and embellishment with upward arpeggiated sweeps (measures 61-65). This whole passage begins with a pianissimo, and with a gradual crescendo reaches fortissimo. All of this sets the mood for the climactic statement of the completely transformed main theme of the first movement (measures 66-73).

This return of the main theme from the first movement may represent the powerful creative spirit, striving to reach the bright and blinding sun in a "flight of liberation." Now only the motive of "striving towards an ideal" is heard, leaving the motive of "languor or exhaustion" behind. It is transformed into a victorious and heroic statement which sounds as though the ideal is about to be reached. This statement is marked fff, it is accented and sounds over boisterous, rapid, widespread arpeggios
in the left hand (see example 29). The theme is transposed up a fourth in its second appearance.

Example 29. Sonata no. 4, second movement, measures 66-69, transformed theme from the first movement in the development.

In measures 74 through 77 the second theme of the second movement is presented in left-hand fortissimo octaves. This theme, with its triple subdivision, is accompanied by a sequential figure in the right hand in duple subdivision, which creates the same cross-rhythm effect of four against three as has been seen in measures 57 through 59. Here this rhythmic complexity is extended and intensified with the half-step upward transposition of each sequential pattern.

In measures 78 through 81 the sequential pattern continues in the right hand and the second theme in the left hand is replaced by steady quarter-notes. This passage gradually loses its power with a diminuendo poco a poco and leads into the recapitulation.

The recapitulation section (measures 82-143) begins with the first theme in its original form (measures 82-85). This, however, is followed by a complex contrapuntal treatment of motives A and B (measures 86-89 and
and the fragmentation and canonic treatment of the first theme (measures 90-93). The rhythmic drive becomes stronger with the addition of constant eighth-note arpeggios in the left hand.

The second theme also acquires more strength and intensity (measures 102-110). Here it is stated over broken descending octaves in eighth-notes in triple subdivision. Everything becomes more breathless, impetuous and ecstatic, and leads into the coda with fragmentation of the first theme, and motive A and B in counterpoint (measures 129-143).

The coda (measures 144-169) is a vehement and jubilant statement of the first theme from the first movement, marked by the composer focosamente, giubiloso (ardently, jubilant), (see example 30). Here also the "languor or exhaustion" motive is omitted. The longing motive of "striving towards an ideal" is transformed into a victorious and ecstatic statement. This may be the point at which the creative spirit finally reaches its goal. It becomes the bright and blinding light of the sun. The repeated chord figurations, which may suggest the vibrations of the brilliant light, help sustain the fff, strident, accented theme which appears in the highest register of the piano, contrasted with the very low bass rising octaves in the left hand. One senses a feeling of unrestrained joy, uplift and forward motion to the very end. The movement ends with a sustained F sharp ascending chordal sweep in the last four measures. 
Example 30. Sonata no. 4, second movement, measures 144-147, transformed theme from introduction in coda.

When Scriabin compared this sonata to his tenth (which is the climax of expression of joyous, blinding luminosity), he said that in the coda of the fourth sonata he was expressing "asphyxiation from radiance ... winged flight ... light." He equated this feeling of "asphyxiation" with the "suffocation one feels in the moment of ecstasy."®

The Fifth Sonata

Sonata no. 5, Opus 53, is preceded by a quotation from the text which accompanies the musical score of the "Poem of Ecstasy." This quotation serves as the only literary basis for this sonata.

I call you to life, 0 mysterious forces!
Submerged in depths obscure
Of the Creator Spirit, timid
Embryons of life, to you I now bring courage.

In essence, the psychological meaning of the fifth sonata is similar to that of the fourth. Based upon the philosophical context and its musical expression, Delson asserts that this work also expresses an "impulse towards a difficult to attain goal with culminating achievement."® The goal

®Delson, op. cit., 299.
in this case, according to the quotation from the "Poem of Ecstasy,"
is to bring life and courage to the mysterious, timid and hidden strivings
of the creative spirit. Through a tense struggle between the creative
spirit and the hidden mysterious forces (development) the power of will
conquers and triumphs in ecstasy, intoxication, luminosity and vertigo
(coda).

All of the above ideas are hinted upon with the use of Italian
descriptive terms in the score, which describe the meaning and mood con­
vveyed by each theme, motive or section. From here on, Scriabin relies
heavily on descriptive terms. In sonatas no. 6 through no. 10 he uses
the French language to describe the even more extravagant, abstract and
elaborate emotions that are present in these subsequent works.

Scriabin's idea of transforming a quiet, languorous, dreamy theme
into an ecstatic, jubilous and triumphant statement, as seen in his
third and fourth sonatas, becomes almost an obsession with the composer.
In the fifth sonata, every motive, theme or section that initially ex­
presses moods of tenderness, languor, mystery or desire, (verbally marked
as such), become transformed into ecstatic, brilliant, fantastic or
turbulent statements. This is Scriabin's way to express victory and power
of the will and to bring to life all the timid and hidden strivings and
mysterious forces. This is done in a one movement sonata-allegro frame.

The introduction (measures 1-45) consists of two themes which play
an important role in unifying the whole sonata. Theme A (measures 1-12),
marked Impetuoso. Con estravaganza (Impetuous, with extravagance), has
the function of setting the veiled, mysterious and mystical mood. This
mood is achieved by the use of trills and tremolos in extreme low register,
the sotto voce, con sordino color effects and sudden short swells of dynamics. The trill in the right hand sounds over a tremolo in the left hand, which is formed out of a tritone. This trill figure is followed by five ascending thirty-second notes, which begin with a rest and are underlined with a sudden crescendo (from piano to forte) (see example 31). Following this dark and misty color effect, the five-note figure is repeated several times in different octaves. The resulting whirlwind of sounds, with their crescendo, accelerando and continuous ascending motion, gives an impression of a challenging outcry of the creative spirit, calling the mysterious forces to life.

Example 31. Sonata no. 5, introduction, measures 1-4, Theme A

Theme B (measures 13-33), marked Languido (languorous) and con voglia (with longing or desire), has typical textural, rhythmic and melodic characteristics of all Scriabin's "languor themes." These themes are usually the second themes of all the subsequent sonatas. It is a single motivic melodic line, which shows the composer's preference to triple subdivision with rests on downbeats and syncopated figures. This is underlined by crystalline chords, which deliberately avoid tonic or consonant sounds. These chords are mainly altered dominant seventh chords (see example 32). The constant change of meters (5/8, 4/8, 6/8, 3/8), which appears for the first time in this passage, is a novelty in
Scriabin's style. However, Scriabin continues to abide strictly to the four measure phrase structure.  

Example 32. Sonata no. 5, introduction, measures 13-20, Theme B

A bridge passage to the exposition (measures 34-45), marked accarezzevole (caressingly), is comprised of fragments of theme B and is followed by a short preview of the first theme material (measures 42-46) of the exposition section.

The exposition section (measures 47-156) consists of three themes, which express contrasting moods or emotions. The first theme proper (measures 47-95) is marked Presto con allegrezza (with cheerfulness or joy). This theme has close similarities to the "flight theme" of the fourth sonata (see example 27 supra). This similarity is mostly in its chordal texture and its overall rhythmic effect, which gives a feeling of urgency, forwardness and agitation, coupled with airiness and lightness. This is achieved here with rests on downbeat, syncopated chords and triplet figures with ties on downbeats. The constant rises and falls

10 Stegner, op. cit., 122.
of dynamics, from sudden pianissimo to fortissimo, add to the turbulence and agitation to the entire first theme proper. The contour of the theme is angular, mainly consisting of diatonic consonant triads, which are sometimes altered. The underlining left hand accompaniment of four falling quarter-notes creates a cross-rhythm effect against the right hand in triple subdivision. The sustained C sharp pedal point in the left hand gives this passage a dissonant and unstable flavor (see example 33).

Example 33. Sonata no. 5, exposition, measures 47-41, first theme.

The second theme proper (measures 96-119) contains three motives. The first and third motives complement each other in mood and character. The second motive presents a conflicting and contrasting mood.

Motive IIa, marked imperioso (imperious), suggests the voice of the powerful will of the creative spirit determined to struggle and triumph. It consists of a series of accented falling sixths, which begin with an eighth-rest and are supported by fast, wide arpeggios of altered triads in the left hand (see example 34).
Example 34. Sonata no. 5, exposition, measures 96-99, second theme, motives II\textsuperscript{a} and II\textsuperscript{b}.

Motive II\textsuperscript{b} is a series of chords, marked sotto voce misterioso affanato (subdued, mysterious, excited or agitated). This is in sudden contrast to the powerful motive II\textsuperscript{a}. The feeling of mysterious anxiety is created by the agitated rhythm, the piano con sordino color effect, and harmonic instability (see example 34 supra).

After three repetitions of both motives in different key levels, motive II\textsuperscript{b} is extended and leads to the quasi trombe imperioso (almost like trumpets, imperious) motive II\textsuperscript{c} (see example 35), where feelings of triumph, strength and defiance are intensified. This motive has the same rhythm and accompaniment figure as does motive II\textsuperscript{a}. However the melodic line is different and the texture is chordal.

Example 35. Sonata no. 5, exposition, measures 114-115, motive II\textsuperscript{c}.

The third theme (measures 120-139), marked accarezzevole (caressingly), is merely a continuation of the same languorous, tender and longing mood felt in theme B of the introduction. Its roots in theme B are obvious in the melodic contour. The rhythm is slightly changed and
the texture is quite different. The theme is embellished with a descending chromatic line in sixteenth-notes in the middle voice and is supported by blocked sevenths in the bass (see example 36). The nine-note chord, spread over three octaves in measure 122, which begins as a grace note effect and then is tied to the down beat chord, is the first example of Scriabin's use of such device. This device becomes very common in succeeding works and is used by the composer extensively for special coloristic and psychological effects.

Example 36. Sonata no. 5, exposition, measures 120-123, third theme.

The concluding section of the exposition (measures 140-156) begins with a new rhythmic motive (motive x), marked allegro fantastico (fantastically), which functions as a connecting motive (see example 37). This motive can be considered a rhythmic transformation of motive I\textsuperscript{b}.

Following this motive, a passage marked Presto tumultuoso esaltato (tumultuous, exalted) begins. It consists of a dialogue between fragments of the agitated first theme and the imperioso motive I\textsuperscript{c}. The entire concluding section is underlined with a continuous crescendo and accelerando which lead to the sudden piano beginning of the development section.
The development section (measures 157-327) can be divided into two sections. The first section concentrates on the transformation of theme B of the introduction and the second section on the transformation of the third theme of the exposition.

The first section (measures 157-244) begins with the exact repetition of the introduction material, which is transposed up a major second (measures 157-183). This passage is followed by a complex combination of different themes and motives from the introduction and exposition. Here, there is dissolving, fusing and fragmentation of the first theme, motives II\(^a\) and II\(^b\), and theme B. Theme B is slowly infused with the power and agitation of the first theme and motive II\(^a\), thus being transformed from a languorous, tender and quiet statement to one which is strong, agitated and loud.

Measures 184 through 196 consist of the first theme material in counterpoint or dialogue with the imperioso motive II\(^a\). The change of dynamics is abrupt. This is followed by the transformed theme B, which sounds over motive II\(^b\) (measures 197-204). There is a gradual crescendo throughout this passage. Theme B appears in accented filled-in octaves, forte dynamics level and at a very high register.
This whole procedure is repeated in the following measures (measures 205-244). The ultimate transformation of theme B appears between measures 225 and 244. Here only a fragment of the theme is present. It is preceded by piano fragments of the first theme, which leads with a crescendo to the powerful and triumphant theme B (see example 38).

Example 38. Sonata no. 5, development, measures 227-232, fragment of transformed theme B.

The second section of the development (measures 245-327) also begins with the introduction material. Here, however, the veiled, mysterious trills and tremolos are omitted. This section begins with the ascending whirlwind of sounds of the repetition of the five-note motives (measures 245-248). It is marked leggierissimo volando (lightly flying). Theme B, in its entirety, is also omitted. Only the bridge passage, marked Presto giocoso (humorous) instead of accarezzevole as it appeared in the introduction, is present. It consists of fragments of theme B over arpeggios in the left hand (measures 249-260). This serves as a preparation for the gradual transformation of the third theme from the exposition section which takes place in measures 261 through 327.

The third theme is sounded several times in its original form. It slowly acquires agitation. This is achieved by interruptions of quick sweeps of ascending arpeggios which cover a range of six octaves, and later by interruptions of the rhythmic motive x which first appeared
in the concluding section of the exposition (see example 37 supra).
In measures 288 through 303 this rhythmic motive is extended and transposed, leading into the ultimate ecstatic metamorphosis of the third theme of the exposition. This passage is marked con una ebbrezza fantastica (with fantastic intoxication) and has an accelerando and crescendo from piano to fortissimo.

In measures 304 through 311, motive II^b sounds completely transformed and appears in conjunction with the imperioso motive II^c. This prepares the jubilant appearance of the third theme.

The transformed third theme consists of filled-in octaves which sound over a descending chromatic embellishment, also in octaves (see example 39). The theme is repeated several times. Each repetition is transposed to higher key level and to louder dynamics. This whole passage (measures 312-327) is characterized by an incessant growth of excitement and strength. This is achieved with the continuous crescendo, transposition of the theme to higher keys and the cumulative sound effect of repeated chords.

Example 39. Sonata no. 5, development, measures 312-315, transformed third theme.

The recapitulation section (measures 328-399) begins suddenly with no preparation. The presentation of thematic material is identical to that of the exposition, with changes of key centers.
The coda (measures 400-455) also begins abruptly. This is a summary of all the important thematic material, transformed into vertiginous, furious, brilliant and ecstatic moods.

This section begins with the rhythmic motive \( x \), marked piano, con una ebbrezza fantastica and accelerando poco a poco (measures 400-407). This is followed by the transformed motive \( \text{II}_b \), marked vertiginoso con furia (vertiginous with rage), (measures 408-415). This leads to the contrapuntal combination of the first theme material with motive \( \text{II}_c \), marked con luminosita, (with brilliance). This appears in the extreme high register of the piano (measures 416-431).

The culminating achievement of the ecstatic creative spirit is suggested in measures 432 through 439. Here theme B, marked estatico, is completely transformed. The techniques used in the coda of the fourth sonata are used here. The theme appears in the highest register of the piano, with repeated chord accompaniment in the middle register and the grace-note effects of low octaves in the bass (see example 40).

Example 40. Sonata no. 5, coda, measures 432-439, transformed theme B.
The sonata ends with an abrupt return of the first theme from the exposition and motive $C_{II}$ in dialogue, followed by the ascending five-note passage from the introduction, marked impetuoso (impetuous), crescendo and accelerando, and ends prestissimo and fff. This passage covers the entire range of the piano.
CHAPTER VI
THE SONATAS OF THE THIRD PERIOD

With Scriabin's sixth sonata we enter his mature phase of composition, which is dominated by the finally crystallized mystical, philosophical, fantastic, cosmic world. Ideologically, the seventh, eighth and tenth sonatas can be considered off-shoots of his orchestral "Prometheus" leading to the partial realization of his "Mystery," which becomes the driving force of Scriabin's activities as a composer-philosopher for the rest of his life (see pages 31 and 32 supra). Bowers suggests that "while Scriabin thought over his 'Mystery'—in conversation, schemes, plans and poems—and sketched its themes, motifs and moments, fragments of the music kept shaping into sudden and individual entities."¹ These "individual entities" include the above mentioned sonatas and the shorter piano works, encompassing Opus 62 through Opus 74.

The central idea of Scriabin's philosophy, which inspired him in the above mentioned works, is striving towards spiritual enlightenment in ecstasy, leading to dematerialization or dissolution. Swan summarizes this philosophy as follows: "Beginning with the yearning phase, the Spirit passes through a period of materialization, back to its aerial substance. Carried off in a wild orgiastic dance, it is finally united with God."²

In the course of this path, Scriabin is confronted with the evil forces (represented in his sixth and ninth sonatas) which he is determined to conquer with his unsurmountable power of creativity.

¹Bowers, Biography, II, 229.
²Swan, op cit., 97.
These philosophical views are hinted upon in the scores of the late sonatas with the appearance of French descriptive words. These words add philosophical meaning to Scriabin's unique musical language. Scriabin gave special importance to these descriptive words. He stated that "these words represent my thoughts expressed in musical sounds and they should be considered as integral parts of the composition. I create these thoughts at the same time as I create the musical sounds."^3

Scriabin's mature musical language of this period is full of harsh, dissonant and unstable harmonies, which set the background and color to the motivic thematic material. It also contains typical coloristic effects (such as extensive use of trills and tremolos, expansive arpeggiated figures, multi grace-note figures), rhythmic complexities and polyphonic and fragmentary treatment of thematic material. All this contributes to the expression of the varied, changing moods throughout the compositions, which are framed in a one-movement sonata-allegro form.

The Sixth Sonata

Sonata no. 6, Opus 62, composed between 1911 and 1912, represents the struggle of the spiritual powers of good and evil. We find occasional interruption by motives representing "mysterious calls," "enchantment or spells" and "strange flights." No particular literary explanation was left by the composer in relation to this sonata. However, his philosophical ideas of this period, in conjunction with the French descriptive words in the score, and the comments given by the composer to his friends, are evidences that the sixth sonata is destined to express these extra-musical ideas.

^3Sabaneev, op cit., 134.
According to Hull, this is a "deeply mystical sonata." It consists of a first theme which expresses a "strange flight," a second theme which represents "a dream taking definite shape," and a third theme which brings "strange forebodings of terror." This interpretation is based upon the French descriptive words in connection with these themes. Hull also suggests that after an intense struggle between the two forces (evil and good) and a momentary sound of victory of the creative soul, "the hosts of evil ... return with redoubled force; terror seizes hold of the soul, which passes disillusioned through a period of dismay and terror and becomes at length absorbed in the dizzy delicious dance of the Joy-molecules of the cosmic world."4

Bowers points out that Scriabin called his complex sound combinations present in this sonata "nightmarish...fuliginous...murky...dark and hidden ...unclean...mischievous."5 He further states that:

When [Scriabin] played excerpts for friends he would stare off in the distance away from the piano, as if watching effluvium rise from the floor and walls around him. He seemed frightened and sometimes shuddered.6

Musically, this sonata is not one of Scriabin's best compositions. It has a static quality, which is perhaps due to its economy of material, and its repetitious rhythmic and harmonic effects. Woolsey, in his analysis of this sonata, addresses this problem.

4 Hull, op cit., 144 - 149.
5 Bowers, op cit., II, 229.
6 Bowers, loc. cit.
...a good deal of the melodic material is derived from one source: the second theme motive...The fact that this figure leaves its stamp on so much of the motivic substance of the work tends not only to give unity to the work as a whole, but also to create a lack of distinction and variety in its melodies.7

In comparing this sonata with the seventh he further states:

In the seventh Sonata, a similar motive (used horizontally and vertically as in the sixth) is used even more, to the point where scarcely a single bar of the work is free from its presence. The ensuing lack of variety, however, is more than compensated for, in the seventh, by the sheer power of musical expression. This, perhaps, is not quite true in the sixth. This work is rhythmically perhaps the most static of any of the last sonatas. Not only do the first and second theme groups tend to be static, but, in addition to this, the composer exhibits a lack of both rhythmic and harmonic motion simultaneously, something he seldom does in any of his late sonatas. Usually slower harmonic changes are accompanied by greater rhythmic or motivic interest.8

The exposition section (measures 1-123) can be divided into three sections: the first theme proper (measures 1-38); the second theme proper (measures 39-91); and the climactic concluding section (measures 92-123). According to the indications in the score, the first section represents "mysterious and strange flights" and "caressing" warm emotions. The second section, in which "the dream takes place," expresses "lightness, sweetness and purity." This is gradually empoisoned by "evil spells." The third section begins with a swirling flight, which leads to the "sudden appearance of terror or horror" of which Scriabin speaks so frightfully.


8Woolsey, loc cit.
Two main musical ideas are presented in the first theme proper. The first idea contains two important motives, which are introduced in the first ten measures (see example 41). Motive $I^a$, marked mystérieux, concentré (mysterious, concentrated) is a series of chords, formed of a tritone and an augmented fifth separated by repeated octaves in low register.

Motive $I^b$, marked étrange, aile (strange, winged), is formed out of the members of the chords of motive $I^a$, which now are arpeggiated in five sixteenth-notes with a rest in the middle, and contain additional passing notes. This motive, as is indicated in the score, represents the "strange flight" to which Hull refers in his description of this sonata.

Example 41. Sonata no. 6, exposition, first theme proper, measures 1-4, motives $I^a$ and $I^b$.

The second idea of the first theme proper is more melodic (measures 11-14). It is a four measure phrase which can be divided into three important motivic ideas. These motives are used separately in the course of the sonata (see example 42).
Example 42. Sonata no. 6, exposition, first theme proper, measures 10-14, motives I, I² and I³.

Motive I¹, marked *avec une chaleur contene* (with a contained warmth or ardour) is basically formed out of major and minor seconds in ascending and descending motion (measures 11-12). Its rhythmic outline and its texture resemble Scriabin's "lanquor themes" from the earlier sonatas. This theme is transformed first into terror (measures 108-123), and later into a joyous and triumphant statement (measures 180-197) which is slowly empoisoned by "mysterious forces." This interpretation is based upon the descriptive words inserted in the score, and the textural transformation of the theme.

Motive I², marked *souffle mystérieux* (mysterious breath) is a descending chromatic line, underlined by a syncopated rhythmic figure in the left hand. This motive usually, but not always, follows motive I¹.

Motive I³, marked *onde caressante* (caressing wave), is an ascending arpeggio, which consists of tritones and a minor seventh, and which ends with a trill figure. This motive creates a unique, mystical coloristic effect. It is also used in conjunction with the second theme in the course of this work.
The second theme (measures 39-46), marked le rêve prend forme, clarité, douceur, pureté (the dream takes shape, clarity, sweetness, purity), is a long melodic line with obvious roots in motive I. This is apparent in its melodic contour and in its texture (see example 43). Here, however, the intervallic succession is slightly modified. The first half of this theme forms a five-note motive which is used in different rhythmic transformations throughout the whole sonata. In its original syncopated rhythm and the transparent chordal accompaniment this theme creates a lyrical, dreamy mood.

Example 43. Sonata no. 6, exposition, measures 39-46, second theme.

This theme is repeated several times. The first time it is interrupted by motive I. The second time it is contaminated by a motive marked charmes (enchantment or spell). From here on this motive will always appear with the second theme. According to Delson this may represent the pure soul in conflict with contaminating influences. The structure of this motive, a falling augmented fifth, bears close resemblance to the same motive as it appears in the "Satanic Poem." There it also represents the evil influences, and is used extensively.

9Delson, op. cit., 320.
In measure 73 the second theme begins its rhythmic metamorphosis. Only the first half of the theme is heard in successive eighth-notes or in syncopated quarter-notes. It appears in imitation between the two hands (measures 73-80). In measure 81 it becomes a five-note motive of ascending thirty-second notes. In measures 82 through 91 this five-note motive forms a whirlwind of sounds, similar to the introduction of the fifth sonata. Here it appears in sixty-fourth notes and is repeated several times in ascending transpositions by tritones. This passage, marked avec entraînement (with seduction), leads to the concluding section of the exposition (see example 44).

Example 44. Sonata no. 6, exposition, measures 81-84, transformation of the five note motive of the second theme.

The concluding section (measures 92-123) consists of the five-note motive of the second theme and motive I in various rhythmic and textural transformations, leading and building up to the climactic passage marked l'epouvant surgit (the terror appears suddenly), (measures 112-123).

It begins with the five-note motive of the second theme, marked aile, tourbillonnant (winged, swirling), in a succession of ascending rolled chords, which form a melodic sequence (see example 45). It begins pianissimo and rises to forte in a very high register. This creates an impression of a violent swirling flight. This passage ends with yet another version of the five-note motive (measures 102-103). Here it
appears as multi grace-notes which end with a trill. This version always appears in a very high register throughout the remaining of this sonata (see example 46).

Example 45. Sonata no. 6, exposition, concluding section, measures 92-93, transformation of the five note motive of the second theme.

Example 46. Sonata no. 6, exposition, concluding section, measures 102-103, transformation of the five note motive of the second theme.

The following section (measures 104-123) concentrates on the transformation of motive I^1. Here, its original pure, caressing and crystalline quality is transformed into a wild, thick statement. This section may be interpreted as the point in which struggle between good and evil ends with the triumphant horror. Motive I^1 is now in an agitated rhythm and its texture becomes chordal. It is accompanied by sweeping arpeggios in the left hand. First fragments of the motive appear interrupted by the five-note motive of the second theme. Here this motive appears as a group of five grace-notes which end with a trill. Then it is stated in its entirety and extended into the terrifying sounds of measures 112 through 123. These harsh, thick dissonant harmonies are the "nightmarish... mischievous...devilish" sounds of which Scriabin spoke to his friend
This climactic passage is extended by fragmentation and stops suddenly on a huge ten-note chord extended over five octaves (see example 47). This entire passage (measures 104-112) is underlined by a gradual crescendo from a pianissimo to a fortissimo.

Example 47. Sonata no. 6, exposition, concluding section, measures 112-123, transformation of motive I

The development section (measures 124-206) begins with a sudden drop of dynamics to piano. This dynamics mark is accompanied by the pedal indication con sordino. Hull describes this section and its meaning.

... a confusion of all the former themes follows in this development portion, and the motives of flight are almost continuous. The second part of the first subject is marshalled with increasing strength of formation. A mysterious call is continuously heard.

A Miltonic struggle between the forces of good and evil is in progress - a time of trial and testing.

The powers of evil are dispersed and the "Soul theme" [theme I'] emerges with a tender radiance.12

11 Sabaneev, op. cit., 138.

This section consists primarily of motive $i^b$, fragments of the second theme or the theme in its entirety and in transformation, motive $I^1$ and its transformation and the five-note motive in different rhythmic versions. It can be divided in four sections.

The first section (measures 124-157) begins with motive $i^b$ ("strange flight" motive), marked avec trouble (with agitation). It appears in counterpoint with the five-note motive in continuous sixteenth-notes (measures 124-125). This is followed by the swirling "flight" motive, which consists of numerous upward transpositions by tritones of the five-note motive in thirty-second notes (measures 126-131). A fragment of the second theme is sounded as a reminder of the beautiful, pure dream in measures 132 through 136, which is soon interrupted by motive $i^b$ in imitation between the upper two voices. In conjunction with this motive, a new motivic idea, marked appel mystérieux (mysterious call), which consists of repeated octaves, is heard in the middle voice (measures 137-140), (see example 48).

Example 48. Sonata no. 6, development, fragment of second theme, motive $i^b$ in imitation and new motive (appel mystérieux), measures 134-140.
The following passage (measures 141-157) is a repetition of the above material transposed a half-step higher.

The second section (measures 158-179) concentrates on the ornamentation of the second theme. It is marked de plus en plus entraînant, avec enchantement (more and more seductive, with enchantment). The second theme is presented in the middle register in its entirety. The first half of the theme is embellished by the five-note motive which fluctuates from below the theme to above the theme. It is rhythmically transformed to sixteenth-note sextuplets, beginning with a rest (measures 158-161). The second half of the theme is embellished by trills in its melodic line (measures 162-166). The entire theme appears over an arpeggiated left hand accompaniment. The second theme becomes fragmented (measures 168-175). Only the first half is now sounded, with the five-note motive rhythmically changed to groups of nine sixteenth-notes, which also begin with rests. This fragment is repeated in transposition, up a minor third. This whole section is underlined by a continuous crescendo from piano to forte and leads to the climactic third section of the development. A bridge section of four measures (measures 176-179) consists of motive $I^b$ stated twice.

The third section (measures 180-197) begins with the first theme material (motives $I^1, I^2$ and $I^3$) transformed to a joyous, powerful and triumphant statement (measures 180-187). It is marked joyeaux, triomphant (joyous, triumphant). The first half of the theme appears in the top voice over repeated chords and octave leaps in the bass. The second half of the theme is embellished with the repeated octave motive, marked appel mystérieux (mysterious call), (see example 49). This feeling of joy and victory is momentary.
In measures 188 through 197, only motive $I^1$ is heard. It acquires a somber and mysterious character. Its texture is chordal and it appears over fast arpeggios in the left hand. The "mysterious call" motive is heard repeatedly in the background. It is marked piano, sotto voce, sombre and later epanouissement de forces mystérieuses (blooming out of mysterious forces). A long descending chromatic line with a diminuendo poco a poco leads to the fourth section of the development.

The fourth section (measures 198-206) can be considered a bridge passage to the recapitulation. It is marked avec une joie exaltée (with exalted joy). It begins with the first half of the second theme in triple subdivision, over an undulating accompaniment in the middle voice and the "charmes" motive in the background (measures 198-201). This is followed by two measures of motive $I^b$ ("strange flight" motive). A series of repeated chords in triplets, with the same structure as motive $I^a$, leads to the last measure of this section, marked effondrement subit (sudden destruction).

Beginning in measure 158 of this development section, Scriabin seems to make an attempt to create the same feeling of forward motion and growth of excitement as in his other sonatas. However, unlike in his other sonatas, this feeling is only temporary. The climax seems to die away
gradually towards the end of this section. In the other sonatas the intensity is kept throughout the entire section, leading to a climactic beginning of the recapitulation. This perhaps also contributes to the somewhat static quality of this work.\textsuperscript{13}

The recapitulation section (measures 207-297) begins unexpectedly after the chords of "destruction." It begins as an exact repetition of the exposition, except transposed down by a major second. The second thematic idea of the first theme proper (motives $I^1$, $I^2$ and $I^3$) is changed in texture. It now sounds in filled-in octaves over wide arpeggiated figures in the left hand (measures 232-243).

The most successful and interesting section of the whole sonata is that of the second theme proper of the recapitulation (measures 244-277). The theme goes through a complete metamorphosis here. It is marked tout devient charme et douceur (everything becomes enchantment and sweetness). This is the most beautiful passage of the entire composition, as well as the most complex, both texturally and rhythmically (see example 50).

\textsuperscript{13} Woolsey, \textit{op. cit.}, 59 - 60.
Example 50. Sonata no. 6, recapitulation, measures 244-247, second theme.

Scriabin uses three staves here. The top staff consists of the melodic line of the second theme. The first half of the theme appears in its original rhythmic version. The second half is embellished with continuous trills. The middle staff consists of the five-note motive of the second theme, which is fragmented. It first appears as two notes and gradually increases to three, four and five notes in each consecutive entrance. The rhythmic outline is syncopated and creates an interesting cross-rhythm of six against eight with the bottom voice. The bottom staff consists of the same motive as in the exposition section, which is filled-in by wide sweeping arpeggios which form consonant sounds of dominant-seventh chords.

There is a sense of continuous forward motion in this section, created by upward transposition of the theme in each of its repetition, and a crescendo from piano to forte (measures 254-260). Beginning in
measure 260 this sense of forward motion is slowly eliminated. The theme is fragmented and treated in imitation in the upper two voices, and gradually dies away into pp and ppp. This ends with sudden rests.

The material that follows (bridge passage and concluding section) is a repetition of the exposition material, transposed down a major second (measures 268-297). There is no definite separation between the recapitulation and coda. The climactic point of the recapitulation, marked l'épouvante surgit, elle se mêle à la danse délirante (the terror appears suddenly, it mixes with the delirious dance), merges smoothly into the coda without preparation.

The coda section (measures 398-386) consists only of motives which, throughout the composition, represented "mystery," "terror and evil forces." These motives are the "nightmarish" chords, motive I\textsuperscript{a}, a new motive which consists of three accented eighth-note chords (measures 306-307), and the five-note motive from the second theme (used as grace-notes which end with trills or as a group of thirty-second notes used as upbeats).

Constant repetition of these motives in alternation, the rise and sudden fall of dynamics, upward transposition of each repetition of these motives and the molto accelerando towards the end, create a delirious, vertiginous dance of evil forces in triumph and deliciousness.

The Seventh Sonata

Sonata no. 7, Opus 64 was also composed in 1911-1912, at the same time as was his sixth. In contrast to the nightmarish, dark and evil forces expressed in his sixth sonata, this sonata, according to the composer, is "holy" and "sacerdotal." This was Scriabin's favorite sonata, which he named "White Mass" to emphasize its saintliness.
Scriabin felt that this work was the closest expression of his ideas that lead to his "mystery." He believed that in the seventh sonata he achieved the ultimate expression of the moment of dematerialization and purification of the soul. In essence, Scriabin said, it represents the spiritual purification of humanity. The artist-creator calls the whole world to experience a mysterious and ecstatic event during which dematerialization and union with the Holy Spirit is accomplished.\(^{14}\)

Based upon Scriabin's commentaries to his friends, as Sabaneev recollects them, the mystical meaning of the various themes present in this sonata can be summarized as follows:

The first theme represents the "theme of Will", according to Scriabin. This is the voice of the creative spirit calling humanity to a mysterious event. The vertical sonorities which result from the accompanimental figures of the first theme were called by Scriabin "saintly or holy harmonies"\(^{15}\) (see example 51).

Example 51. Sonata no. 7, exposition, measures 1-4, first theme, I\(^a\), "Will theme."

\[^{14}\text{Bowers, op. cit., II, 230 - 231.}\]
\[^{15}\text{Sabaneev, op. cit., 135.}\]
The chordal passage, marked mystérieusement sonore (mysteriously sonorous), which follows after two full statements of the "theme of Will," represents, according to the composer, the "bell harmonies" which, as in his "Mystery," "call humanity to witness and experience a mysterious event."\(^{16}\) (see example 52).

Example 52. Sonata no. 7, exposition, measures 9-16, first theme, I\(^{b}\), bell harmonies.

The second theme was referred to by the composer as "pure mysticism." He suggested that in this theme "there is complete absence of sensuality and lyricism" (see example 53). "Everything becomes dimmed by misty clouds here," Scriabin commented in reference to the passage in which the second theme is heard in counterpoint with a pianissimo fragment of the "theme of Will" and a five-note descending motive. He further explained

\(^{16}\) Sabaneev, loc. cit.
that these clouds are not meteorological, tangible clouds, but that they are "mystical mists" that "dim the image of the sunny will" (see example 54).

Example 53. Sonata no. 7, exposition, measures 29-35, second theme.

Example 54. Sonata no. 7, exposition, measures 47-52, second theme with fragment of first theme and five note motive.

17 Sabaneev, op. cit., 136.
Scriabin also points to the passage of "unexpected flights" in the closing section of the exposition. The varied rhythmic versions of the descending five-note motive are explained as "all the different variants of the flying and fluttering spirit." He stated that "this music represents maximum flight"\(^\text{18}\) (see example 55).

Example 55. Sonata no. 7, exposition, closing section, measures 60-66, rhythmic variations of the five note motive, IIIa.

The rhythmically intricate and texturally delicate passage in measures 73 and 74, marked étincelant (sparkling, scintillating), represents "sparks from the fountain of fire"\(^\text{19}\) (see example 56).

Example 56. Sonata no. 7, exposition, closing section, measures 73-75, theme IIIb.

\(^{18}\) Sabaneev, loc. cit.

\(^{19}\) Sabaneev, loc. cit.
The grandiose return of the first theme in the recapitulation, marked fourdoyant (thundering or flaming violently), according to the composer, should sound like "trumpets of archangels." Scriabin explained that "these are holy voices or exclamations during the sacred incantation" (see example 57).

Example 57. Sonata no. 7, recapitulation, measures 169-173, first theme.

In reference to the coda, Scriabin comments: "Everything becomes mixed and blended here ... this is real vertigo ... This is truly the last sacred dance before the actual act, before the moment of dematerialization. By means of this dance everything is accomplished." The very last nine measures represent the "disappearance into the state of inexistence."

Musically, emphasis is given to contrasting elements which are first presented as strong individual sections. Later they fuse, melt or disintegrate, and lead us towards the final vertiginous and ecstatic dance. There is an absence of warm human feelings and the grandiose, turbulent

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20 Sabaneev, op. cit., 137.
21 Sabaneev, op. cit., 105.
and ecstatic moods, which were present in the fourth and fifth sonatas. Ecstasy is now expressed with quiet, peaceful, harmonious and almost cold and impersonal musical statements. Passages referring to light are also changed from radiant, blinding, burning light to the sparkling or scintillating, unfocused lights of the cosmos. Flight motives, as indicated above, now represent the various fluctuations of the spirit in infinity rather than the struggling soul in flight towards liberation (as seen in his fourth and fifth sonatas).

This sonata stands out considerably from the previous ones, in its ingenious, original and intricate pianistic and harmonic color effects, its melodic inventions and the various contrapuntal layerings, which are used to capture all the contrasting, otherworldly, mystic, cosmic and fantastic moods.

The color effects consist of dissonant, strident chord formations used as repeated chords, huge arpeggiated figures, multi grace-note effects, and rolled chords used in succession. The contrapuntal layerings consist of florid figurations, extremely complex rhythmic effects and extensive use of trills. All the above devices are used to frame the two contrasting themes: the "will theme" and the heavenly, crystalline, pure second theme. Despite the thick texture and extensive use of ornamentation, these two themes are continuously and clearly heard throughout the entire composition.

Structurally, this sonata follows the path which was initiated in the fourth sonata and elaborated upon in the fifth, where everything grows and gradually intensifies in the course of the composition leading to an ecstatic coda. The sixth sonata interrupted this path. The seventh leaves
the sixth far behind in its overall effect of forwardness and in its developmental ingenuity. In this respect, Woolsey comments:

In the Seventh Sonata, Scriabin seems to have been much more willing to let inspiration carry him beyond a traditional formal outline than in the Sixth Sonata. There is a feeling of overall sweep in this work that is missing in the earlier sonata. There is a feeling of constant development and expansion throughout, not only in the development section proper, but in the recapitulation and coda as well, turning the coda into the logical climax of the whole work ... It is this technique of "continuous development" which here, helps to balance both the inherently static harmonies as well as the constant use of the central chord-motive as the basis for most of the harmonic and melodic vocabulary.22

The seventh sonata is divided into an exposition (measures 1-76), a development (measures 77-168), a recapitulation (measures 169-236), a second development (measures 237-312) and a coda (measures 313-343).

The first theme proper (measures 1-28) introduces three important musical ideas which represent successively the "will theme" or theme 1a (measures 1-9), the "holy bell harmonies" or theme 1b (measure 4 and 10-16), marked mystérieusement sonore (mysteriously sounding) and the percussive arpeggiated theme or theme 1c (measures 17-28), marked avec une sombre majesté (with somber majesty).23

Theme 1a is a series of ascending leaps which appear as single accented notes in the right hand in the first two measures and continue in the left hand in accented octaves in the third measure (see example 51 supra). The rhythmic outline of this theme consists of a grace-note

22Woolsey, op. cit., 87.
23Woolsey, op. cit., 79 80.
effect of a short upbeat (in this case a thirty-second note) leading to longer note values on the downbeats. This theme appears over repeated chords in sixteenth-note triplets with a tie on downbeats in the middle voice and a syncopated triplet figure in the bass in the first two measures. This leads with a crescendo to an explosive dissonant chord, formed out of two minor thirds separated by a perfect fourth. This chord breaks up into a sweeping arpeggio which covers a range of three octaves. The last two notes of theme I\(^a\) sound in octaves underneath this arpeggio (measure 3). The overall ascending melodic outline of the theme, its strong rhythmic drive, and the harsh dissonance used for the accompaniment chordal and arpeggiated figurations give this theme a feeling of unsurmountable power, determination and forwardness. This may be interpreted as the voice of the creative spirit calling all people to a majestic and mysterious event (see page 121 supra).

A short motive in measure 4 preceeds the second statement of theme I\(^a\), which is transposed a major second up (measures 5-9). This motive is a short preview of theme I\(^b\) ("bell harmonies").

Theme I\(^b\) is heard in its entirety in measures 10 through 16. It consists of a series of chords formed with two minor thirds separated by a perfect-fourth. These chords form a melodic outline, primarily consisting of repeated notes and major or minor thirds. The complex rhythm of the left hand accompaniment and the extreme low range create an impression of bell sounds. The dynamics begins forte and gradually drops to pianissimo towards the end of this passage (see example 52 supra). This prepares the sudden appearance of theme I\(^c\) in the following measures.
Theme $I^c$ consists of the same harmonic structure as theme $I^b$. However, the rhythmic effect of a sixteenth-note triplet arpeggio leading to a longer note value and its marcato articulation gives this theme its individuality. This arpeggiated motive is transposed upward to different octaves and sometimes it ends with a trill, as in measure 19. Fragments of theme $I^a$ sound in the background throughout this entire section (see example 58).

Example 58. Sonata no. 7, exposition, measures 17-28, theme $I^c$.

The entire first theme proper projects a feeling of immense power, supported or interrupted by vibrating "saintly harmonies" and "bell sonorities." There is a continuous sense of growth of intensity and forwardness.

$^{24}$Woolsey, op. cit., 79.
The second theme proper (measures 29-59) can be divided into three sections. Here Scriabin uses the technique of variation. The theme remains the same, but it is ornamented by different figures. Bowers suggests that this theme represents the human reaction to the "autocratic call of the creative spirit." According to Scriabin's philosophy, the creative spirit is the male, active, objective force and the world is the female, passive, subjective force. The second theme, then, represents the second force. This theme becomes one of the most important themes of the sonata. It is presented in many guises and ultimately, under the influence of the force of the creative spirit, it is transformed into a radiant and ecstatic statement in cosmic terms.²⁵

The first section (measures 29-38), marked avec une céleste volupté (with heavenly voluptuousness or pleasure) consists of the introduction of the second theme (see example 53 supra). It is a seven-measure phrase, with the characteristic triple subdivision and ties on downbeats. The melodic line which consists of seconds and thirds, appears over some counterpoint in the middle voices and syncopated falling wide intervals (sevenths and octaves) in the bass which together form dominant-seventh sounds (measures 29-32). This is followed by three measures (measures 33-35), marked très pur, avec une profonde douceur (very pure, with profound sweetness), which consist of ascending thirds in the right hand over arpeggios in the left hand. These arpeggios are treated in three different ways in this short passage, creating interesting color effects. They are either downward syncopated figures, downward rolled-chord effects or chords used as grace-notes.

²⁵Bowers, op. cit., II, 231.
The pure, heavenly and quiet mood of the second theme is suddenly interrupted by a fragment of the “will theme” (theme I\(^a\)), marked *impérieux* (imperious, dictatorial) which is followed by the “bell harmonies” (theme I\(^b\)), (measures 35-38).

The second section (measures 39-47) consists of the second theme in variation. It appears in the middle voice and is surrounded by a short motive built from an ascending augmented fifth, followed by five descending notes. This motive fluctuates from above to below the theme. The left hand continues the same syncopated figure as in the first section, emphasizing the dominant-seventh chord. All this creates the mystical, cloudy or misty atmosphere, which Scriabin spoke of (see page 122-123 supra).

The descending five-note motive is extensively used as counterpoint to the second theme throughout the piece or it is used as main material in different sections, as will be seen. It undergoes various rhythmic transformations and is occasionally preceded by an ascending augmented fifth (as in measures 39-41), or by *multi grace-notes* (as in measures 42-45). It also appears in double-notes in the recapitulation section.\(^{26}\)

The third section (measures 47-58) consists of the union of the second theme with the fragment of theme I\(^a\), and the descending five-note motive in counterpoint. The fragment of theme I\(^a\) temporarily loses its power, and is dimmed by the five-note motive and the *pianissimo* second theme (see example 54 supra). Thus, as Scriabin comments, “the sunny image of the will is dimmed by mystical clouds” (see page 123).

\(^{26}\)Woolsey, *op. cit.*, 81.
The concluding section of the exposition (measures 60-76) is also developmental in nature. It uses the descending five-note motive in rhythmic variation and the full statement of the second theme with a simplified accompaniment. It also introduces new thematic material, which plays an important role in the preparation of the final vertiginous dance.

The section begins with four different rhythmic variants of the descending five-note motive (measures 60-64), which represent, according to Scriabin (see page 124 supra), "the variants of the flying and fluttering spirit" (see example 55 supra). These rhythmic variants are interrupted by a fragment of a new theme (theme IIIa) in measures 64 and 65 or by the new theme in its entirety (measures 66-69). This is followed by the second theme stated in its entirety over three-note chords in the left hand, formed of a major seventh and a tritone. The theme ends with a trill in measure 72. This entire section is marked animé, ailé.

A new theme (IIIb) is introduced in measures 73 through 76. This theme is marked étincelant (sparkling), representing "sparks from the fountain of fire" (see example 56 supra). This theme can be divided into two motivic ideas. Motive IIIb1 (measures 73-74) is a line of a series of major and minor thirds which appear on the last sixteenth-note of the beat and are preceded by pianissimo, delicate upsweeps of rolled chords in a multi grace-note effect. This is supported by eighth-note downbeats in the left hand, which form horizontally a dominant-seventh sound. Motive IIIb2 consists of four notes (minor second, perfect fourth, minor second) in a dotted rhythm effect. This motive first appears in the left hand (measures 74) and then in the right hand (measures 75-76) over short arpeggios with rests on downbeats.

27 Woolsey, op. cit., 82.
The development section can be divided into two distinct sections. The first section (measures 77-124) emphasizes the contrast between the two opposite forces, which gradually unite towards the end of the section. The strong and powerful "will theme" (I\textsuperscript{a}) and the "pure" second theme appear in alternation in measures 77 through 92. This is followed by a section in which the second theme appears ornamented with the five-note motive (measures 93-102). A single statement of a fragment of theme I\textsuperscript{a}, marked menaceant (assaulting), is heard in measure 97, serving as a short reminder of the voice of the creative spirit who is determined to achieve his goal. In measures 103 through 109 the voice of the creative spirit becomes more insistent. The second theme is now marked avec trouble (with agitation or perturbed). The tempo increases and the dynamic level is forte. Theme I\textsuperscript{a} is stated in its entirety, in accented octaves in the left hand, under the second half of the second theme (measures 105-108). This is interrupted by the five-note motive (representing "flight") which is followed by fragmentation of the second theme with extensive use of trills (measures 109-118). Theme III\textsuperscript{b}, marked très doux, joyeux, étincelant (very sweetly, joyously scintillating), appears in measures 119 through 124 and serves as a bridge passage to the second section of the development.

The second section (measures 125-168) begins with a brief statement of the accented "will theme" (I\textsuperscript{a}) by itself, without the usual accompanying chords and arpeggios. The remaining measures of this section consist mainly of the second theme embellished with varied rhythmic versions of the five-note motive. An occasional interruption of the fragment of I\textsuperscript{a}, marked impérieux (imperious, dictatorial) is heard in the background.

\textsuperscript{28} Woolsey, op. cit., 84.
Throughout this whole section there is a continuous sense of growth. Woolsey attributes this to the "gradual accumulation of sonority and complexity."\(^{29}\) Sweeping arpeggios, five-note motives and trills add mystical and fantastic coloristic effects to this theme, a theme which is slowly transformed into a representation of joyous flight, marked as such in measures 145 through 148. The quiet mood of this passage gradually becomes more agitated in the following measures.

Measures 149 through 156 consist of multi grace-note versions of theme \(1^c\), with added notes and an occasional interruption of the "will theme" \((1^a)\), marked impéreux. This passage with its continuous crescendo and upward transposition leads to the thunderous "bell harmonies" \((1^b)\) in measures 157 through 168, which prepare the violent, "flaming" appearance of the "will theme" \((1^a)\) in the recapitulation. These "bell harmonies" are first marked de plus en plus sonore et animé (more and more sonorous and animated), and later comme des éclairs (like thunder).

The recapitulation section is a repetition of the thematic material of the exposition. The first theme, however, sounds much more powerful, almost brutal. Here the repeated chords become fuller and the left hand syncopations are replaced by boisterous arpeggiated sweeps, first down then up, in thirty-second notes, covering a range of three octaves in every measure. The chord span emphasizes the interval of a minor ninth (see example 57 supra).

The second theme proper receives a more elaborate treatment. The descending five-note motive used as a counterpoint with the second theme sounds now in double-notes. In measures 207 through 209 the second theme

\(^{29}\)Woolsey, loc. cit.
is embellished with arpeggiated left-hand chords and the rhythmically transformed five-note motive in double notes.

The five-note motive in the closing section is also presented in double-notes (measures 228-236). This section is shortened here.

The second development section serves as preparation to the impetuous coda. In this section all the contrasting elements melt, fuse and slowly desintegrate. It begins with theme I^a, marked avec éclat (flashing), which is followed by theme I^b in conjunction with the descending five-note motive. This procedure is repeated once again, now transposed down a minor third (measures 237-244). A fragment of the second theme, now embellished with trills, sounds in conjunction with fragments of the powerful theme I^a, stated in octaves with strong accents in the left hand (measures 245-248). A pianissimo statement of theme I^b (measures 249-252) leads to the ecstatic second theme.

The full statement of the second theme, marked avec une volupté radieuse extatique (with radiant and ecstatic pleasure), appears in measures 253 through 260. This passage is one of the quietest passages in this sonata and texturally it is the simplest (see example 59). The heavenly ecstatic theme is stated twice in a high register, each time ending with a long trill. This is followed by motive I^c completely transformed (measures 260-272). It appears pianissimo, and consists of added notes and a trill at the end. It sounds in conjunction with fragments of I^a. There is a continuous crescendo, upward transposition of I^c and I^a and a gradual thickening of texture throughout this passage. This leads us to a boisterous version of I^b which sounds in alternation with the second theme. Theme I^b is marked molto accelerando and the second theme is marked en un vertige (in vertigo) and presto. The fluctuation of tempo and dynamics adds to the agitation of this passage (measures 273-287).
Example 59. Sonata no. 7, development, measures 253-256, second theme.

In measures 289 through 312, theme III\textsuperscript{b} ("sparks from the fountain of fire"), marked fulgurant (resplendent), is considerably developed. It first appears in its entirety at a pianissimo level (measures 289-293). This is followed by a gradual fragmentation, upward transposition and a crescendo to a forte statement of a fragment of III\textsuperscript{b\textsuperscript{1}}, which sounds over fragments of III\textsuperscript{b\textsuperscript{2}}, in an extremely high register (measures 298-305). In measures 306 through 312, motive III\textsuperscript{b\textsuperscript{2}} is sounded by itself. It begins pianissimo, in single notes, and develops into a grandiose forte statement in filled in octaves (measures 311-312). This leads us into the coda.

The coda, marked avec une joie déborante (with overflowing joy), consists of completely transformed themes \textsuperscript{I\textsuperscript{b}} and III\textsuperscript{b}. \textsuperscript{I\textsuperscript{b}} sounds fortissimo in dotted rhythm, similar to theme \textsuperscript{I\textsuperscript{a}}. Theme III\textsuperscript{b} sounds underneath \textsuperscript{I\textsuperscript{b}} in accented octaves, without the arpeggiated embellishments (see example 60). It is marked \textit{fff}. Bowers describes Scriabin's reaction to this passage as follows:
Scriabin adored the chaotic fortissimo of the crashing final pages: "Everything here is mixed, blended", he said here, playing as if a thousand bells had gone wild. "This is real vertigo" Scriabin was transported.30

Example 60. Sonata no. 7, coda, measures 313-316.

Slowly everything désintégrâtes in the remainder of this section. In measures 317 through 320, repeated fragments of $I^b$ sound in a descending line, marked accelerando and diminuendo. This is interrupted by short fragments of the second theme in measures 321 and 322. Theme $I^b$, marked en délire (deliriously), returns fragmented and transformed. These fragments are repeated in different octaves in ascending motion and lead to the climactic huge chord, which covers a range of five octaves. This chord consists of superimposed chords of theme $I^b$. This can be interpreted as the moment of the final pulverization, the end of the material world. The soul, free from all its binding chains disappears into eternity. This eternity may be suggested in the peaceful and harmonious last nine measures. These measures are preceeded by a short fragment of the quiet second theme. This is followed by a rhythmically transformed $I^c$, into eighth-notes, ending with trills. These figures are transposed upward by tritones, marked accelerando and pianissimo, diminuendo. The sonata ends with a long trill on a very high register with the repetition of motive $I^c$ underneath.

The Eighth Sonata

Sonata no. 8, Opus 66, was composed during the years of 1912-1913, at the same time as the ninth and the tenth sonatas. However, this sonata was not completed until after the latter sonatas. From that standpoint the eighth can be considered Scriabin's latest work in sonata-allegro form.\(^{31}\)

This sonata is Scriabin's longest work in one-movement sonata form. Woolsey asserts that "It is formally the most elaborate as well as texturally the most complex ... its counterpoint sometimes becoming enormously involved."\(^{32}\) It is also the most difficult of all Scriabin's sonatas, as claimed by the composer. Scriabin never played it in public in its entirety. However, some of his favorite passages were used by him frequently to illustrate many of his ideas, in his private gatherings with friends.\(^{33}\)

Scriabin loved this work for its harmonic richness and its contrapuntal intricacy.\(^{34}\) His favorite section was the introduction section, which he played with enthusiasm, illustrating its contrapuntal and harmonic techniques. He commented about his counterpoints to Sabaneev: "... and you say I have no counterpoint after hearing this?! Look at the counterpoint I have here. Note well that all the notes of the counterpoint are parts of the harmony. They are not at war with each other as they are in Bach. Here they are fully reconciled." About the harmonies in this sonata the composer exclaims: "I feel that these harmonic sounds

\(^{31}\)Delson, op. cit., 321.

\(^{32}\)Woolsey, op. cit., 89.

\(^{33}\)Sabaneev, op. cit., 254.

\(^{34}\)Sabaneev, loc. cit.
are drawn from Nature as though they have already been in existence before. This is just like the bell harmonies in the Seventh Sonata.  

Scriabin felt limited by equal temperament. He wanted to find a way to notate sounds which are not included in the equal temperament system. He constantly referred to this as he talked about notating the music for his "Mystery," where he would have quarter-tones as well as the sounds of equal temperament. As unrealistic as this idea may be for the piano, in relation to the introduction of the eighth sonata, he explained:

> Here I have nine tone harmonies ... I have a definite feeling now that these harmonies exit the halls of equal-temperament. I have to invent new signs for these sounds. Before, when there were no repeated notes in my harmonies, it was simple. I was able to notate everything exactly. But now I feel that my harmonies could have two repeated tones [which should sound differently] for which there are no exact notation signs ... For example, my interval of a ninth is much smaller than a regular ninth.

The philosophical meaning of this work is not clear. There are no written documents about the meaning of this work and the use of French descriptive words is extremely limited. All we know is that the composer stated that "...the varied moods expressed in this sonata are very close to the moods of the seventh... and at the very end there is that same outpouring ... dance ... vertigo ... however in this sonata there is even more, much more dance."

Based on this comment and on the close similarity of the thematic material and its manipulation between the eighth and the seventh sonatas, an assumption can be made that the eighth sonata also expresses a variety

35 Sabaneev, loc. cit.
36 Sabaneev, loc. cit.
37 Sabaneev, loc. cit.
of mystical, saintly, cosmic, contrasting moods experienced by the spirit, which blend and fuse together in a final vertiginous dance, carrying the spirit into infinity.

After careful study of this work one also finds similarities, both in its formal treatment and the motivic material with the fifth sonata. The most obvious similarity with the fifth is revealed in the use of an introduction section where motivic material, which plays an important role in the course of the entire composition, is introduced. Here, however, the material is not stated in alternation as in the fifth. It is treated in an intricate and refined counterpoint.

Five motives are introduced in the first ten measures, which according to Bowers, "supposedly represent the elements of earth, fire, water and mystic ether." 38 This, however, should be approached with skepticism. None of the primary sources or Scriabin's commentaries reveal such connotations, neither does the score have any such indications.

The five motives present in the introduction (see example 61) are:

Motive I (measures 1-4) consists of a colorful chordal melody, which sometimes is used as single notes (upper notes of the chords only) and at times as chords in the course of the composition.

Motive II (measure 3) becomes the most important theme throughout the sonata. It is rhythmically and texturally modified, becoming the second theme of the main body of the sonata-allegro proper, marked "Tragique" (tragic).

38 Bowers, op. cit., II, 244.
Motive III (measure 4) is a figure of four ascending eighth-notes which ends with a chord. It is built from a horizontal succession of major and minor thirds (B, D sharp, G, B flat and D flat). This motive is frequently used in counterpoint with motive II in the course of the composition. Sometimes this motive is followed by a descending chromatic line, as it appears in measures 6 through 10 of example 61.

Motive IV (measure 5) is a short chordal motive which consists of an eighth-note tied to a dotted half-note. The upper voice moves up a major second. This motive plays an important role in the structure of the first theme of the sonata-allegro proper.
Motive V (measure 10) is a five-note descending motive formed out of minor seconds and thirds, which is derived from motive II (middle notes). This motive is extensively used as "flight" motive in double notes in conjunction with motive IV in the first theme proper (measures 22-37). There is an obvious resemblance between this motive and the "flight" motive of the seventh sonata. In the seventh this motive also originates in the second theme (see page 124 supra).

The entire introduction section is an intricate weaving together of all these motives preserving a delicate, crystalline and transparent texture throughout. The composer takes great care in clearly notating the polyphonic treatment of all these motives, resorting to the use of three or four staves. The main motivic idea seems to be motive II. All the other motives are used to create varied color effects and mystic moods which frame the main idea.

This sonata can be divided into an introduction (measures 1-21), an exposition (measures 22-117), a development I (measures 118-225), a development II (measures 226-319), a recapitulation (measures 320-428) and a coda (measures 429-499).

The two main themes of the exposition originate from the motivic material of the introduction. The first theme uses primarily motive IV and motive V and the second theme uses motives II and III. Motive I is used as connecting material between different themes and is rhythmically and texturally transformed.

The first theme proper (measures 22-87) consists of two thematic ideas. Both can be interpreted as expressions of flight of the free spirit (see example 62). The first idea ($I^3$) consists of motive IV answered by a double-note version of motive V (measures 22-25). As mentioned
earlier, a similar motive is used in the seventh sonata to which Scriabin refers to as "variants of the flying spirit" (see page 124 supra). In the seventh that passage is marked animé, aile (animated, winged). The same lightness and sense of forward movement is expressed here as one finds in the seventh.

Example 62. Sonata no. 8, exposition, measures 22-27, first theme.

The second idea (1°) is an extension of motive IV, forming a two-measure theme with its own individuality (measure 26-27). It is an ascending chordal line in triple subdivision, beginning on an upbeat. The nervous and agitated effect of this theme is caused by the left hand accompaniment, which consists of short arpeggiated figures on the upbeats. The sporadic use of dynamics (crescendo into sudden piano) also contributes to this effect. The mood created here is very similar to that of the first themes of the fourth and fifth sonatas which, according to Scriabin, also express exalted flights.

These two thematic ideas are repeated in alternation in measures 22 through 37. In measure 38 the second idea takes charge. It first appears in its entirety, transposed up a minor third from its original statement, and then it becomes fragmented and undergoes minor rhythmic changes, developing slowly into a joyous statement (measures 46-51), transposed
now a tritone up and marked *joyeux*, *forte*, and *accelerando*. It ends with a trill, which as we have seen earlier, symbolizes "palpitations... trembling...the vibrations in the atmosphere" (see page 87 supra).

A short bridge passage (Molto piu vivo) follows in measures 52 through 57. It is based on motive I, which is rhythmically modified. Its rhythmic outline of a sixteenth note used as an upbeat to an eighth note separated by a sixteenth rest, and its ascending melodic line marked *crescendo*, creates a mood of anxiety and nervousness (see example 63). The same chordal figure is marked fantastico or *con una ebbrezza fantastica* in the fifth sonata (measures 140-141 and 288-303), where it is also used as a bridge passage to the second theme or to the return of the first theme. In the present sonata this figure is used as a bridge passage to the repetition of the first theme proper in the exposition (measures 52-57), a bridge to the recapitulation (measures 306-319) and a bridge to the repetition of the first theme proper of the recapitulation (measures 350-355).

Example 63. Sonata no. 8, exposition, measures 52-47, bridge passage.

The repetition of the first theme proper of the exposition (measures 58-87) presents theme $I^b$ slightly extended and transformed melodically (measures 63-65 and 71-73). A new rhythmic motive, consisting of a tri-
plet figure in which the last eighth-note is tied to the first eighth-note, may be observed in measures 82, 83, 86 and 87 (motive X), (see example 64). This motive is similar to motive II of the fifth sonata marked misterioso affanato (measures 97-98), where it is used in connection with the second theme material (see example 34 supra). This motive is also used in the development section of the eighth sonata, with the function of introducing the first theme material (measures 118-121), as a connecting motive between successive statements of the second theme (measures 158-165) and also as a connecting motive between motives IV and II (measures 188-189, 196-197, 266-267 and 274-275). The effect in all the above passages is that of mystery producing contrast with the surrounding thematic material. This effect is also present in the fifth sonata.

Example 64. Sonata no. 8, exposition, measures 82-83, motive X.

The second theme proper (measures 88-117) consists primarily of the second theme, which is stated by itself (measures 88-91) and later presented in an intricate contrapuntal passage (measures 101-117). New trill figurations are also introduced here (measures 92-100).

The second theme (measures 88-91) originates from motive II, which is rhythmically transformed and changes from a dreamy, quiet statement to a powerful, accented, tragic theme (see example 65). Scriabin describes the dichotomy of moods in this theme as follows: "Here, within one phrase, I have a break of mood ... Tragedy ... and out of it a dissolution is
suddenly born." The "tragedy" may be expressed in the three ascending, accented, wide leaps (II\textsuperscript{a}), followed by "dissolution" represented by the descending melodic line (II\textsuperscript{b}). The state of "dissolution" is further emphasized by the repetition of II\textsuperscript{b} (measures 91-92) and by the extensive use of new trill figures in a very high register (measures 96-101).

Example 65. Sonata no. 8, exposition, measures 88-91, second theme.

The intricate contrapuntal passage that follows (measures 101-117) intensifies this feeling of dissolution with the emphasis on motive II\textsuperscript{b} (see example 66). It begins with the motive I (measures 101-103), stated over a descending chromatic line in the middle voice and varied short arpeggios in the bass (either as ascending multi grace-notes or as descending groups of five eighth-notes, with a rest on the downbeat). This is followed by two statements of motive III in the top voice, which are separated by motive V (measures 103-105). Measures 106 through 117 concentrate on the second theme (II\textsuperscript{a} and II\textsuperscript{b}). The second half of the second theme (II\textsuperscript{b}), which according to the composer represents "dissolution" is the most prominent thematic material here. It is stated several times in different transpositions with II\textsuperscript{a} sounding underneath it (measures 106-109). Each statement is preceded by motive III. In measures 110 through 117, II\textsuperscript{b} appears rhythmically augmented under or over long trills.

\textsuperscript{39}Sabaneev, loc. cit.
Example 66. Sonata no. 8, exposition, measures 101-117, contrapuntal passage in the second theme proper.
The development section is clearly divided into two parts. The second part is almost an exact repetition of the first. The first development begins with motive X, which expresses a mysterious or fantastic mood (measures 118-121). This leads us into the main body of the first development section. Here, there is emphasis on a mixing and fusing of themes which express moods such as flight, tragedy and dissolution. The section begins with the first theme material (measures 121-131) with addition of short trills (measures 129 and 131). This is followed by fragmented second theme (measures 132-136). This procedure is repeated in measures 136 through 157 with the thematic material transposed a major-second down.

Measures 158 through 173 are dominated by the second theme together with motive III as its counterpoint. The theme is transposed several times, either upward by octaves or downward by tritones. Each statement of this theme is separated by motive X. There is a continuous sense of forwardness and slight agitation created by the rhythmic effects of motive X and the sporadic use of dynamics.

Measures 174 through 186 constitute one of the most unusual passages of this development section (see example 67). Theme $i^b$ is completely transformed. Its agitated and nervous character disappears. Now it sounds very peaceful, joyous, almost ecstatic (as ecstasy is understood in his late period). It begins in quarter-notes over motive V in eighth-notes. This is followed by upward arpeggiated figurations which end on the melody notes. These melody notes now sound on the last sixteenth-note of the beat. The coloristic effect is identical to a passage in the seventh sonata (measures 73-74) marked étincelant, to which Scriabin refers to as "sparks of fountains of fire" (see example 56 supra). This passage ends with a long descending line, consisting of motive V covering a range of four octaves.
Example 67. Sonata no. 8, development, measures 173-179, transformation of first theme.

A subtle reminder of tragedy appears in measures 180 through 183 with the appearance of II$^a$, surrounded by trills and motive III. The transformed ecstatic theme I$^b$ is stated once again in measures 184 through 186, transposed a major second up in a higher octave. Here the ecstatic mood is intensified.

This ecstatic mood is suddenly interrupted with the return of the first and second theme material in measures 186 through 213, marked Tragique. Here motive IV, sounding over undulating arpeggios in five eighth-note groups, is followed by the mysterious and agitated motive X (measures 186-189). In measures 190 through 193, the second theme is first sounded in its entirety and then I$^b$ is repeated several times, thus emphasizing the state of dissolution once again. This procedure is repeated in measures 194 through 201, with the thematic material transposed up a minor third. The dynamic level increases to a mezzo-piano from a piano. Tension and agitation begin to intensify, as though predicting some unavoidable grandiose event. The second theme is sounded
once again (measures 202-203), now at a mezzo-forte level, and transposed up another minor third. In measures 204 through 213 II\(^b\) becomes more powerful and insistent. It is repeated several times in upward transpositions and is accompanied by a continuous crescendo, reaching its climax at a very high register and at a forte dynamic level (measures 204-207). In measures 208 through 213, II\(^b\) suddenly drops to pianissimo, it is transformed rhythmically and sounds in the extreme high register. Emphasis seems to be on lightness, delicacy, weightlessness and transparency. A diminuendo, molto accelerando leads to the next section.

In measures 214 through 225 the tempo (Presto) combined with the sporadic appearance of trill figurations and the fragmented theme I\(^a\) over a crescendo, create the same vertiginous, ecstatic mood that appears in all of the codas of Scriabin's late sonatas. In this sonata it happens twice in the middle of the work. This passage is repeated once again before the recapitulation. In the coda, all this is intensified even more. Perhaps these are the sections to which Scriabin referred to when he said that this sonata contains much more dance than the seventh (see page 139 supra).

The second development section follows in measures 226 through 305. The section begins with emphasis on the second theme (measures 226-241) which sounds under or over the double-note "flight" motive (motive V) from the first theme (theme I\(^b\)) and motive III. There is an occasional interruption by the mysterious sounding and agitated motive X. The remainder of this section (measures 242-305) is an exact repetition, with a few extensions, of the material found in the first development section.
The recapitulation section begins in measure 320 and runs through measure 428. It is basically a repetition of the exposition material. However, the rhythmic transformation of theme $l^b$ should be noticed here. This version emphasizes the mood of peaceful and joyous ecstasy as it does in measures 174 and 175 of the development section (see page 148 supra). The second theme is extended considerably, emphasizing the mood of dissolution ($II^b$) and cosmic vibration (trills). It covers a much higher range of the piano and is colored with extensive use of trills.

The coda section begins with a section in which the second theme appears in the middle voice or the bottom voice and is constantly repeated serving as an ostinato (measures 429-448). The "flight" motive (motive V) and motive III sound in the top voice in different rhythmic guises representing perhaps the variants of a flying spirit. There is a crescendo and accelerando leading into the following Presto section (measures 449-464).

Measures 449 through 464 consist of a piling up of trills, motive I in its original form and motive III as multi grace-note figures. The trill is used in abundance, giving this passage a mystic and ecstatic color. Everything sounds undefined, unclear, mystic and abstract.

Measures 464 through 493 consist of a repetition of the material presented in measures 449 through 464, transposed up a tritone, with minor changes. Emphasis is on an extremely high register, fragmentation and constantly increasing speed (an Accelerando leads to a Prestissimo in measure 483).

The sonata ends with motive V, marked doux, languissant (sweet, languorous), which sounds over an ascending five-note motive ending with
trills, thus representing the same dissolution and disappearance of the spirit into the infinite as in the ending of the seventh sonata. Throughout this entire coda section, the constant *accelerando* and transposition to higher keys, give a feeling that something uncontrolled, unavoidable and grandiose is about to happen.

The Ninth Sonata

Sonata no. 9, Opus 68, was written during 1912-1913. This sonata was entitled "Black Mass" by the Russian critic Podgaetsky, probably to emphasize its devilish and mischievous program, in contrast to the "saintly" seventh sonata, entitled "White Mass" by the composer. Based upon Scriabin's commentaries and the descriptive words used in the score, the philosophical program of this work deals with struggle between good and evil, emphasizing the power of evil forces over the good. This program brings this sonata close to the meaning of the sixth. In the sixth, however, there is no direct reference to Satan. The evil forces are in essence the terror, horror and nightmarish visions resulting from fear of the unknown, of the primordial chaos. The ninth sonata, on the other hand, expresses evil forces in the form of a confrontation with the powerful spirit, Satan himself. Scriabin makes a direct comparison of the ninth sonata with his earlier work, the "Satanic Poem," which he considered mere "salon music," a pretentious and false depiction of Satan, where Satan appeared "almost too kind." In the "Satanic Poem," Scriabin said, "Satan was just visiting." In the ninth sonata, Scriabin felt that he

40 Bowers, *loc. cit.*
became involved with Satanism on a much more serious and deeper mystical level. He claimed that "Here there is real evil ... this is serious business." He further explained that "This whole sonata is mischievous, there is so much impurity in it."

By the time Scriabin was composing the ninth sonata he came to the full realization of the meaning and purpose of the existence of Satan. To him, Satan was a powerful and wicked opposite force of the cosmos. The realization of Satan's existence was necessary for the realization of the existence of the Holy Spirit. Satan was the principle of activity and movement in the cosmos (see pages 29 and 30 supra).

The ninth sonata digresses from the essential philosophical ideas that generated most of his output at this time. The idealistic concept of an enlightening ecstasy and dissolution of the spirit, towards which the world was heading as the crowning step of spiritual evolution, is totally absent in this work. Instead, the essence of this sonata is a gradual poisoning of pure, saintly, cosmic emotions which ends with a fiendish, triumphant, delirious march of the ecstatic Satan.

The saintly and pure emotions are expressed in the second theme, to which Scriabin referred as "dreaming saintliness" surrounded by "wicked or evil spells." This second theme is gradually fragmented and empoisoned by the mysterious and wicked first theme material, until it ultimately is transformed into something completely fiendish, impure and mischievous. Bowers describes the transformation of this theme.

\[41\] Sabaneev, op. cit., 139 - 140.
\[42\] Delson, op. cit., 312 - 313.
\[43\] Sabaneev, op. cit., 139.
This theme develops evilly, as the notation reads, "a sweetness gradually becoming more and more caressing and poisonous." Its ritual is perverse. The rite is a spitting at all that is holy or sacred. If the Seventh Sonata exorcises demons, the ninth re-summons them. Corruption, perversity, diabolism recurs. 44

The overall musical effect of this entire sonata is that of continuous development and motivic or thematic transformation which create a sense of forwardness and growth of excitement from beginning to end. This is further intensified by the gradual and steady increase of tempo. The sonata begins with a Moderato quasi andante and ends with an incessant Presto. 45 All this occurs in a very concise and complex sonata-allegro form which is divided into an exposition (measures 1-68), a development (measures 69-154), a recapitulation (measures 155-200) and a coda (measures 201-216).

The exposition section introduces the contrasting two themes: the devilish, mysterious, "legendary" first theme and the "languorous" second theme.

The first theme proper (measures 1-33) consists of three motivic ideas (see example 68). The mood is set with motive $I^a$, marked légendaire (legendary), which creates a dark, mischievous and cloudy atmosphere. It announces, according to the composer, that something evil is about to happen. 46 Motive $I^a$ consists of a double-note figure in which the top notes form a descending chromatic line and the bottom notes form pairs of descending tritones (measures 1-4).

44 Bowers, op. cit., II, 244.
45 Woolsey, op. cit., 96.
46 Sabaneev, loc. cit.
Motives $I^b$ is an ascending chromatic melodic line in dotted rhythm. It appears in the middle voice and is surrounded by motive $I^a$ in ascending sequences (transposed by thirds) in the top voice and by descending short arpeggios which form dominant-seventh sounds in the bottom voice. These arpeggios begin with three notes and are increased to four, five and six notes successively (measures 5-7). This appears over a crescendo and leads to an explosive dissonant seven-note chord. The structure of this chord is similar to the structure of the "nightmarish" chords of the sixth sonata (tritone, perfect fifth and a minor triad in second inversion on top).

Motive $I^c$, marked mystérieusement murmure (mysteriously murmured) follows in measures 7 through 10, sounding piano as a sudden contrast to
the previous material. It consists of several repeated notes followed by a descending minor third, an ascending major third, and a descending minor second. A rhythmic outline which includes sixteenth notes in triplets followed by quadruplets which begin on an upbeat creates a feeling of agitation and forward movement. This feeling is further intensified by the left-hand accompaniment in a syncopated sixteenth-note figure formed out of a tritone. Scriabin comments about the devilish nature of this motive.

This is not pure music anymore, this is an incantation or a bewitching expressed in sounds. One cannot play this ordinarily... here one must play as though one is practicing sorcery.47

The overall musical gesture of I^b and I^c is very similar to the passage in the sixth sonata (measures 104-123) where "horror suddenly appears" (see page 112 supra). The similarities are the ascending chromatic melodic line in dotted rhythm over a crescendo which leads to the explosive chord effect, followed by the quiet repeated note motive. In the sixth, however, the passage sounds wild, destructive and fearful. In the ninth it sounds refined, challenging, mocking and mysterious. This difference results from the textural and rhythmic effects.

Motives I^a and I^c play important roles in the process of the transformation of the second theme in the course of this sonata. I^a undergoes a tremendous textural and rhythmic metamorphosis in the development and the recapitulation. Its transformation is sometimes almost beyond recognition. Motive I^c, however, never loses its individuality. Even though it also undergoes some rhythmic changes and fragmentation at times, it

47 Sabaneev, loc. cit.
always sounds clear, persistent, agitated and mysteriously wicked. Both motives either sound in alternation or in counterpoint with the second theme, thus contributing to its empoisoning.

Measures 11 through 23 consist of a repetition of the three motives. Motive I becomes more prominent here. It now sounds in the top voice and it is extended emphasizing the explosive effect of the evil forces.

A transitional passage follows in measures 23 through 33 (see example 69). It consists of short ascending and descending arpeggios which end with trills. This passage, with its continuous crescendo (from pianissimo to forté), upward transposition and rhythmic acceleration creates a feeling of cosmic agitation and activity. The mocking evil forces slowly acquire more power and sound more threatening and challenging. This flow is suddenly interrupted by a meek two-note motive of ascending and descending half-steps in syncopated triple subdivision (measures 33-38), marked avec une langueur naissante (with a nascent languor). This sets the mood for the full statement of the second theme in measures 39 through 42.

Example 69. Sonata no. 9, exposition, measures 24-26, transitional passage.

The second theme begins with this two-note motive and blossoms into a four-measure theme which consists of two motives (see example 70).

Motive II begins with a rest on the downbeat and has an overall ascending
Example 70. Sonata no. 9, exposition, measures 39-42, second theme.

melodic contour formed of major and minor seconds and a minor third (measures 39-40). Motive II\textsuperscript{b} is a descending melodic line which also begins with a rest on the downbeat and is formed of perfect fourths, major and minor seconds and a minor third. The texture, the rhythmic outline and the intervallic structure of the entire second theme is typical of all Scriabin's "languor" themes such as the main theme of the introduction of the fourth sonata and theme B of the introduction of the fifth sonata (see examples 26 and 32 supra). The two motives are in triple subdivision and appear over transparent dominant-seventh chords in the left hand which emphasize the sound of a tritone coupled with a major second. The second theme is repeated in its entirety in measures 43 through 46. Here it is transposed a major third up.

The following measures (measures 46-54) consist of fragments of the second theme which are constantly interrupted by the mysterious motive I\textsuperscript{c}, rhythmically transformed and fragmented. The repeated notes of motive I\textsuperscript{c} are preceded by multi grace-notes.

In measures 51 through 58 the "pure" second theme is sounded once more in its entirety. It appears in the middle register. The top voice consists of a syncopated tremolo in double-notes of major and minor seconds in a very high register. This seems to intensify the radiance, purity and cosmic quality of the second theme. The bottom voice consists of short descending arpeggios which form dominant-seventh sounds.
Measures 59 through 68 consist of the transitional material from the first theme proper. Here, however, the short arpeggios with trills are occasionally interrupted by fragments of I1\textsuperscript{a} and they appear in descending, transposed sequences underlined by a decrescendo. This leads to the development section (see example 71).

Example 71. Sonata no. 9, exposition, measures 59-68 transitional passage.
The development section can be divided into two distinct parts. Each part becomes more and more agitated, accelerated and fragmented. This creates a feeling of relentless forward motion and conflict.

The first part of the development section (measures 69-104) begins with the individual statements of the first and second themes. The contrast between these two themes is intensified even more before they begin to merge and fuse together.

Measures 69 through 86 present the first theme material ($I^a$ and $I^c$) stated in alternation and transposition by falling seconds. Darkness and mystery seem intensified.

Measures 87 through 92 present the full statement of the second theme, marked *pur, limpide* (pure, transparent). This theme appears over a murmuring left-hand accompaniment which consists of descending or ascending intervals in pairs of sixty-fourth notes separated by thirty-second rests. These intervals form long, sweeping arpeggios of dominant-seventh sounds. The unique color effect of the left hand and its harmonic stability create a peaceful and heavenly mood (see example 72). This is the last statement of the second theme in its "pure" form. In the remainder of this work it will always sound in conjunction with the poisonous motives of the first theme. The heavenly mood is soon interrupted by the appearance of motive $I^c$ in measure 93 through 96, marked *sombre mystérieux* (somberly mysterious).
Example 72. Sonata no. 9, development, measure 87-89, second theme.

In measures 97 through 103, marked avec une douceur de plus en plus caressante et empoisonnée (with a sweetness more and more caressing and empoisoned), the second theme begins to lose its heavenly purity. It is distorted by motive $I^c$. Motive $II^a$ sounds over a descending and ascending arpeggio in the left hand and is followed by an augmented version of a fragment of motive $I^c$, before $II^b$ is sounded (see example 73). Scriabin comments about the mystical meaning of this passage.

Here there is a curious change of mood and sensation within one phrase. This cannot be put into words. Many mystical sensations cannot be verbally expressed. They only can be expressed in musical sounds. This is why the task of a musician is so much simpler and easier. 48

This is followed by an alternation of motives $I^c$ and $II^b$ in their original rhythmic shape (measures 102-104).

48 Sabaneev, loc. cit.
Example 73. Sonata no. 9, development, measures 96-101, second theme.

The second part of the development section (measures 105-154) begins with the return of the first thematic material in transformation, where the dark, mystical, evil powers acquire more power. Motive I° is treated in imitation at the distance of a tritone (measures 105-109). This is followed by motive I° in alternation with motive I°, which now sounds in broken descending intervals instead of double-notes (measures 110-118). A fragment of motive II° sounds over the broken motive I° in measures 115 and 116.

The gradual acceleration begins in measures 119 through 136. This entire passage is marked Allegro. It consists of a quick alternation between fragments of the second theme material which sound over the broken motive I° and motive I°. The second theme completely loses its peaceful, pure character. It now sounds agitated and fiendish. It is finally totally "corrupted" by the evil forces of the first theme material. This is followed by the Piu Vivo passage in measures 137 through 154. Here the second theme is sounded in its entirety (measures 137-140) over broken
motive \textit{I}^a. In measures 144 through 154 the first theme material takes charge. Motive \textit{I}^c becomes very prominent and insistent. It sounds in counterpoint with motive \textit{I}^a in its original double-note version. This is occasionally interrupted by the broken version of motive \textit{I}^a over ascending arpeggios. This leads to the recapitulation section.

The developmental techniques are continued in the recapitulation. The first theme proper (measures 155-173) is completely transformed. Motive \textit{I}^a now serves as a driving force in the form of an ostinato. The tempo changes to \textit{Allegro molto}. Two-note fragments of motive \textit{I}^a sound in the middle voice, while the top voice consists of the ostinato figure and the bottom voice has occasional arpeggiated sweeps in measures 155 through 158. The ostinato figure is sequentially transposed down and continues in the middle voice in measures 159 through 164 while motive \textit{I}^c sounds in the top voice (see example 74). The following measures (measures 165-174) consist of contrapuntal treatment of the broken version of motive \textit{I}^a, the two note fragment of motive \textit{I}^a, motive \textit{I}^c and the ostinato figure. This appears over a continuous accelerando. The last four measures of the first theme proper consist of the descending ostinato figure by itself which leads to the second theme proper.

The second theme proper (measures 179-203) also goes through a complete metamorphosis. It is marked \textit{Alla marcia}. The composer describes it as "a march of evil forces, a bad dream, a nightmare or devilish visions." He says that this represents "desecrated saintliness."\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{49}Sabaneev, op. cit., 140.
Example 74. Sonata no. 9, recapitulation, measures 155-170, first theme.

In measures 179 through 182, the second theme sounds forte, pesante. This version is rough, devilish and distorted. Only motive II\textsuperscript{a} is used, which is extended with a repetition of falling fourths. The two note fragment of motive I\textsuperscript{a} sounds underneath it (see example 75).
Example 75. Sonata no. 9, recapitulation, measures 179-182, second theme.

The tempo increases once again in measures 183 through 186, where it is indicated as Piu vivo and accelerando. Here IIa is sounded piano and it appears in the top voice with an added trill. The middle voice consists of the material from the transitional passage of the first theme proper of the exposition. The bottom voice consists of single three-note chords formed out of a superimposed tritone and a minor seventh.

In measures 187 through 192 motive IIa is sounded forte in octaves. It is supported by fragments of motive Ia, either in double-notes or in broken intervals in the middle voice, and sweeping arpeggios in the bottom voice. The accelerando continues and leads to the Allegro in measures 193 through 200. The second theme (IIa) continues its devilish venture. It is rhythmically transformed and is interrupted by fragmented and augmented motive Ic, first in double-notes and then as full chords. A crescendo leads to the ultimate, ecstatic, triumphant voice of the devil in the coda.

The coda begins with the broken version of motive Ia, which sounds under fast arpeggios occupying a range of three octaves. It is marked Piu vivo (measures 201-204). The following measures (measures 205-209) continue with the broken version of motive Ia which now appears in sequential descending transposition, underlined by a gradual decrescendo. The tempo changes to Presto. The last seven measures consist of a restatement of
the opening measures of this sonata. The "legendary" mood returns, leaving us only with the memories of the triumphant, powerful evil forces.50

The Tenth Sonata

Sonata no. 10, Opus 70, also written in 1912-1913, is the most radiant and the most optimistic sonata of Scriabin's last period of development. As Scriabin played excerpts of the unfinished work to his friends he expressed the wish that "this sonata will be completely different. It will be full of happiness, brightness and at the same time it will have an earthly element to it. However, it also will have dis-solution, dematerialization."51

Montagu-Nathan asserts that:

Viewed in its spiritual aspect the Sonata is represented as portraying the exorcism of those evil powers referred to in relation to the preceding sonatas. Its musical substance reflects this process in an ethereal purity that contrasts markedly with the empoisoned atmosphere of its predecessors.52

In examining all the French indications in the score, one will notice that all the evil and mysterious forces that were present in the sixth through the ninth sonatas are left behind, leaving us only with pure, sweet, tender, languorous emotions that slowly are transformed into powerful, radiant, joyful, luminous, ecstatic musical statements that symbolize the exaltation and happiness experienced in the approach of the moment of dematerialization. Luminous, blinding light seems to be a

50Delson, op. cit., 318.
51Sabaneev, op. cit., 227.
52Montagu-Nathan, Handbook of the Piano Works of A. Scriabin, 16.
major source of inspiration in this work. In essence, this sonata may represent a totally liberated soul floating in cosmic ecstasy, radiance, unrestrained joy, peace and harmony. In these emotions the tenth sonata resembles the fourth where the soul reaches the blinding and radiant sun in a flight of liberation. However, this sonata, unlike the fourth, also stresses the mystical and cosmic dissolution expressed especially in the typical delirious coda, as seen in all Scriabin's late sonatas. Instead of a loud and ecstatic statement of an augmented theme, as in the coda of the fourth sonata, in the tenth we have quiet fragmentation, diminution and blending of several motivic ideas in an incessantly fast tempo, suggesting dematerialization or dissolution in cosmic ecstasy.

Based on commentaries given by the composer, this sonata also seems to use nature as a source of inspiration. Delson claims that:

Scriabin's love of Russian nature combined with his mystical bend seem to have influenced the composition of the tenth sonata. Here there is a combination of enthusiasm about the majestic harmony of the world's creation and the veiled mysterious secret of "earthly" poetry of the quiet of a forest and its sounds and moods. It is full of festive sensations of space, light, enchanting calls and sounds of blossoming life.53

Scriabin referred to plants and animals when discussing this work. However plants and animals, as they are perceived by the composer, are extensions or symbols of different emotions, caresses or expressions of affection. Scriabin stated that "All plants and animals are reflections of our psyches. Their appearance corresponds to the movements of our soul. They are symbols, and what wonderful symbols! ... for example, animals can correspond to the finest caress expressing love between a man and a woman."

53Delson, op. cit., 324 - 325.
He further states that: "Insects and butterflies are like animated flowers. They are symbols of the most refined and delicate caresses, almost without touching...They were born in the sun and sun is their nourishment...They are the sun's caresses...My tenth sonata is a sonata of insects."\(^54\)

On another occasion, Scriabin explains the meaning of the introduction of the tenth sonata. "These are sounds and moods of the forest...here there is true dissolution in nature."\(^55\)

In summary, Scriabin felt that plants represent the passive, feminine emotions and animals and insects represent the active, aggressive and masculine emotions. In this respect he comments:

In nature one thing always amazes me. Plants, flowers, trees; they are silent and motionless. Like a chorus, they drink juices of the earth and the rays of the sun...And around them is the world of animals full of movement, from the straightest to the most tortuous, from the slowest to the fastest. This is a true dance of movement around the motionless world of plants. Such a contrast! In nature animals represent activity, the male and the plants represent...passivity, the female. This is also polarity.\(^56\)

This principle of polarity is expressed differently in the tenth sonata from the previous works. Instead of good and evil in constant struggle, here there is emphasis on the passive, motionless, languorous themes against agitated, active, impetuous themes, with much importance given to trills, tremolos and repeated chords, as symbols of activity, vibration, luminosity and power. All the passive and languorous themes are slowly transformed into joyous, impetuous, powerful themes throughout the unfolding of the work.

\(^{54}\)Sabaneev, op. cit., 233.
\(^{55}\)Sabaneev, op. cit., 167.
\(^{56}\)Sabaneev, op. cit., 234.
This sonata is clearly divided into an introduction (measures 1-38), exposition (measures 39-115), development (measures 116-223), recapitulation (measures 224-270) and coda (measures 306-378). Developmental techniques are used in all the sections.

The introduction emphasizes sweetness, purity, languor and veiled fervor. It consists of two main themes (see example 76). Theme A, marked très doux et pur (very sweet and pure) is formed of two motives which are used separately in the course of this sonata. Motive $A^1$ (measures 1-2) consists of two falling minor thirds, separated by a half-step, in dotted-rhythm and 9/16 meter. Motive $A^2$ (measures 3-4) is a triplet figure in sixteenth-notes ending on a dotted quarter-note, also in 9/16 meter.

The intervallic outline of this motive consists of major and minor seconds and a minor third. The entire theme A is repeated in measures 5 through 8. Consecutive use of extreme high and low registers is already apparent in measures 7 and 8, where motive $A^2$ is embellished by figurations in the highest register of the piano and octave basses in the lowest register. This use of extreme registers becomes a common practice throughout the work and is mostly elaborated upon in the ecstatic passages.
Example 76. Sonata no. 10, introduction, measures 1-16, themes A and B.

Theme B (measures 9-12), marked *avec une ardeur profonde et voilée* (with profound and veiled fervor), forms a chromatic line in arch shape in 3/8 meter. Its syncopated rhythm and the left hand accompaniment of falling fourths in sixteenth-note triplets with rests on downbeats create a feeling of slight agitation or uneasiness. Motive $A^2$ suddenly appears in a high register, marked *cristallin* (crystalline) as a counterpoint to the second half of the B theme in measure 11. In regard to this theme, Scriabin commented: "Here there should be so much languor. This is where real dissolution in nature is expressed. This is also 'Mystery', this dissolution will also happen there."\(^{57}\)

\(^{57}\) Sabaneev, op. cit., 226.
After a repetition of theme B, transposed a tritone down (measures 13-16), a developmental passage using motive $A^2$ and the second half of theme B in counterpoint (measures 17-20) and augmentation (measures 21-28) follows. Theme A is sounded in its entirety in measures 29 through 32, announcing the appearance of new material which consists of an ascending figure of four thirty-second notes (major third, major second and perfect fourth) used as upbeats to trills. This figure develops into motive X, sounded in the next two measures (measures 37-38), marked lumineux vibrant (luminous, vibrating). This motive consists of trills preceded by two thirty-second notes which form a minor triad with the main note of the trill. It plays an important functional and coloristic role in the whole work. It serves as a connecting motive between major sections, such as the first theme and secondary theme propers in the exposition and recapitulation, and between the development and the recapitulation. It is also used to separate two statements of the same theme. In the development and transitional sections this motive is extensively used as a coloristic effect, usually preceding or in conjunction with motive $A^2$.

The first theme proper of the exposition section (measures 39-58) is marked avec émotion (with emotion). The composer explains that "Here there should be such happiness, overwhelming joy, almost uncontrollable or delirious." The character of this theme projects activity, movement, impetuosity and flight. This results from its syncopated rhythm and the left-hand sweeping arpeggio accompaniment which begins with a rest on the downbeat (see example 77). Its melodic contour seems to originate from

58 Sabaneev, loc. cit.
the second half of theme B. It is a descending chromatic line with an arpeggiated triad accompaniment. This theme undergoes fragmentation in measures 40 through 50, marked inquiet (uneasy) in measure 45 and halétant (breathless) in measure 50. It is interrupted by the sparkling, luminous motive X in measures 53, 54, 57 and 58.

Example 77. Sonata no. 10, exposition, measures 39-40, first theme.

The transition passage which leads to the second theme proper (measures 59-72) consists of motive $A^2$ preceded by motive X. This figure is treated in imitation between hands in several transpositions. Two measures of motive X, marked avec élan (with upsurge) lead to the second theme proper. Scriabin explains the meaning of this transitional passage.

"...the sound becomes more and more refined. These trills represent de-materialization of sound. Everything becomes winged flight. Everything becomes delicate ... One should play these trills in a very special way... winged."$^{59}$

The second theme proper (measures 73-83), marked avec une joyeuse exaltation (with joyous exaltation) uses the intervallic structure of the ascending four-note motive in thirty-second notes (major third, major second and perfect fourth) from the introduction (measures 32-34). Here,

$^{59}$Sabaneev, loc. cit.
however, this intervallic structure is preceded by two ascending half-steps and ends with two descending half-steps (see example 78). The second theme appears in syncopated rhythm over accompanying figures of short arpeggios with rests on the downbeat. It ends with a dissonant trill. The ascending melodic line of the theme, its rhythmic effect and the rises and falls of dynamics create the mood of joyous exaltation and forwardness. The three consecutive statements of this theme (transposed up a major third) are separated by motive X, which, as indicated in measures 37 and 38, represents luminosity and vibration (see page 171 supra). The feeling of joy, exaltation and excitement slowly subsides in the following closing section.

Example 78. Sonata no. 10, exposition, measures 73-75, second theme.

The closing section (measures 84-115) is developmental in nature. It begins with two new motivic ideas (see example 79). Motive III\textsuperscript{a} (measures 83-87) originates from theme A. It is an eighth-note version in triple subdivision of a fragment of motive A\textsuperscript{1} followed by an extended motive A\textsuperscript{2} of the introduction. Motive III\textsuperscript{b} is a descending syncopated figure in sixteenth-notes of a tritone followed by minor seconds with a trill embellishment (measures 88-89). This motive is marked \textit{avec ravissement et tendresse} (with rapture and tenderness). These two motives are used in succession in measures 84 through 89. This procedure is repeated in measures
90 through 93. Measures 94 through 99 consist of fragments of the first theme, motive X and motive $A^2$ in counterpoint. The second theme is sounded in measures 100 through 102 and it is followed by the repetition of material from measures 84 through 93.

Example 79. Sonata no. 10, exposition, measures 83-89, motives III$^a$ and III$^b$.

The development section consists of themes A and B from the introduction which appear in the middle register and are extensively embellished with trill figurations and motive $A^2$ in the top register and accompanying material of octaves or perfect fourths (blocked or broken) in the lowest register of the piano (measures 116-131). This passage is repeated in measures 132 through 147, transposed up a major third. Indications such as *avec une volupté douloureuse* (with painful pleasure) in measure 121 and *avec une joie subite* (with sudden joy) in measures 128 and 144 emphasize the increased emotional intensity and contrast in this section. An accelerando in measures 143 through 147 leads to a passage in which motive $A^2$, preceded by motive X, is treated in imitation and sequential descending transposition. This passage (measures 148-153) is marked *de plus en plus radieux* (more and more radiant). A molto crescendo leads to four measures of repeated chords (measures 154-157), expressing joy and ecstasy.
A sudden piano appearance of the first theme interrupts this ecstatic moment (measures 158-171). In measures 172 through 187 motive $A^1$ with motive $X$ used as an embellishment, marked très doux (very sweet), appears in dialogue with the first theme. Sequences in downward transposition underlined by a gradual decrescendo lead to the ppp return of theme $A$ in its original form (measures 184-191), marked en c'éteignant peu à peu (fading away little by little). After a repetition of this theme, transposed a major third down, theme $B$ begins to undergo a slow metamorphosis. It begins in measure 193, marked avec une douce ivresse (with sweet intoxication). With a continuous crescendo, sequential, upward transposition and gradual thickening of texture, theme $B$ develops into a powerful ecstatic statement in measures 200 through 210. The theme sounds in octaves and is embellished by motive $X$ and motive $A^2$. The last two measures (measures 211 and 212) consist of a fragment of theme $B$ stated in harsh, dissonant chords. This leads to the completely transformed second theme in the following measures.

In measures 212 through 221 the climax of ecstasy is achieved. The second theme, marked puissant, radieux (powerful, radiant), appears in the middle register, with dissonant tremolos in the highest register of the piano and short arpeggiated figures in the lowest register of the piano (see example 80). It is stated twice. The second statement is transposed a minor third up. The dynamics increases from forte to triple forte. The tremolo becomes thicker and appears in a higher register as the passage progresses. Scriabin describes the meaning of this passage:

Here there is blinding light as if the sun has come closer. Here there already is that suffocation that one experiences in the moment of ecstasy. This was already present in its embryonic form in the fourth sonata, where there is also suffocation caused by radiance, the same flight and light.

60 Sabaneev, loc. cit.
Example 80. Sonata no. 10, development, measures 211-214, second theme.
The recapitulation begins after a sudden interruption of motive X in measures 222 and 223. It is basically a repetition of the exposition material. The first theme proper (measures 224-245) begins at the same pitch level as in the exposition. The transition to the second theme (measures 246-259) sounds down a major third from that of the exposition. The second theme (measures 260-270) receives a more intricate treatment. It sounds more powerful and ecstatic. It is marked avec élan lumineux vibrant (with a luminous and vibrating unfolding). It is extensively embellished with trills (motive X) and arpeggiations (see example 81). It is also transposed down a major third from the exposition. There is a continuous crescendo and upward transposition leading to the closing section.

Example 81. Sonata no. 10, recapitulation, measures 260-262, second theme.

The closing section (measures 271-305) begins as an exact repetition of the exposition. In measure 294, however, there is an extension, serving as a bridge passage to the coda (measures 194-305). This extension consists of motive B embellished with motive X and motive $A^2$. This passage is parallel to the passage in the development section which leads to the ecstatic second theme. Upward transposition by thirds and a continuous crescendo ending with fortissimo chords lead to the coda.
Everything begins to disintegrate in the coda. The second theme is in rhythmic diminution, transformed almost beyond recognition (measures 306-330). It sounds pianissimo and is marked frémissant, aile (palpitating, winged). It is embellished with repeated chords and long trills. The tempo is marked Piu vivo (see example 82). In reference to this passage Scriabin commented: "The music becomes more and more refined. There is almost no music left, all that remains is a dematerialized rhythm."  

In measures 330 through 359 the tempo increases even more (Presto). Motive III\textsuperscript{b} is used in dialogue with A\textsuperscript{2} in measures 330 through 341. In measures 342 through 349 the second theme, in its transformed form, is sounded for the last time. It is followed by a repetition of motive III\textsuperscript{b} and motive A\textsuperscript{2} in dialogue (measures 350-359). Suddenly this whirlwind of sounds seems to stop. The process of dematerialization seems to reach completion. The moods of sweet languor return in measures 360 through 378. A Moderato section, marked avec une douce languor de plus en plus éteinte (with sweet languor, more and more fading away), in measures 360 through 371, consists of motive A\textsuperscript{2} in downward sequential

\[ \text{Example 82. Sonata no. 10, coda, measures 306-313, second theme.} \]

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example82.png}} \]

\[ \text{\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{61}Sabaneev, loc. cit.}} \]
treatment and fragment of theme B in counterpoint with $A^2$. This leads to the return of the material from the first four measures of this sonata transposed down a minor third. The sonata ends with a long, tied chord, covering a range of seven octaves. After dissipation and dissolution, a feeling of sweetness and total peace and satisfaction is achieved.
Unlike most composers who express a variety of ideas and emotions through different musical means, Alexander Scriabin seems to be obsessed with one central philosophical idea which developed progressively throughout his entire life and greatly influenced his musical language in all of his compositions.

This central philosophical idea revolves around the human soul and its evolution. The goal is the ultimate purification and refinement of the spirit which results in an ecstatic union with the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being is Scriabin himself, a powerful creative spirit who, through the influence of his music, controls the world's consciousness and leads the world to a grandiose cosmic event. During this event the world shall experience unrestrained joy, beatitude, ecstasy, dematerialization and blissful harmony. On the road to this cosmic event an array of contrasting complex spiritual emotions is experienced, resulting from struggle with suffering, pain, tragedy, horror and mysterious evil forces followed by victory. Scriabin believed these opposite negative experiences were part of his cosmic world and were necessary for the full realization of good and God. He also believed that struggle, confrontation and ultimate victory over all obstacles result in more power and strength of the spirit and add more meaning and value to the act of purification. The above ideas were verbally expressed by the composer in numerous philosophical texts and poems, which appear in his personal notebooks and also were frequently discussed.
in private gatherings with friends.

Scriabin's ten piano sonatas, viewed as a unit, represent the gradual development of this central idea and its musical expression. This development begins with the expression of personal human emotions, typical of the Romantic period, reflected in his sonatas nos. 1, 2 and 3. These works should be viewed as youthful experiments, under the strong influence of Chopin's style, leading towards Scriabin's individual musical language.

The most significant work of this group is the third sonata. It can be considered the culminating point of Scriabin's achievements in his first period of development. The sonata contains many important traits which point to his mature style. Philosophically, it represents the soul striving for liberation from suffering, grief, disillusion and doubt. This is represented in four movements in which Scriabin's concern with overall unity is obvious. In the third sonata Scriabin's treatment of form corresponds very closely to its programmatic content. This is most obvious in the close thematic relationship between the first and fourth movements, both representing the struggling soul, and also between the third and fourth movements, where the quiet, first theme of the third movement is transformed in the climactic coda, representing victory over suffering and pain.

In this sonata Scriabin also begins to use the technique of transformation of themes from quiet and lyrical to passionate, ecstatic statements. This technique becomes the driving force of all his subsequent sonatas. In the third sonata it is used in the development
section of the first movement, where the lyrical second theme is transformed into a climactic, powerful statement. It is also used in the exposition and coda of the fourth movement. In the exposition, the lyrical second theme of the first movement becomes a heroic and martial first theme. In the coda, the peaceful, dreamy first theme of the third movement becomes a jubilant, victorious and ecstatic statement. This transformation is achieved through upward transposition, increase of dynamics, rhythmic augmentation and the use of the fragmented powerful thematic material as counterpoint to the transforming theme.

Another technique of the transformation of themes which is commonly used by the composer in his mature works appears in the third movement of this sonata. This technique consists of the use of delicate, ornamented figurations which sound above and below the unaltered theme. This technique is usually used to emphasize the purity and beauty of the quiet, lyrical themes.

Lastly, the fourth movement of the third sonata also employs the technique of continuous growth of intensity without repose, towards the climactic coda, achieved through transformation of themes, increase of dynamics and rhythmic intricacies, and continuous developmental techniques. This becomes a common feature in all subsequent sonatas, except the sixth.

The simple romantic human emotions present in the first period of the composer's development become intensified and reach their peak in the expression of the feeling of human ecstasy in the second period. This feeling is expressed in the fourth and fifth sonatas.
Both of these works deal with a spirit striving towards a hard-to-achieve goal. This goal is total liberation of the spirit from all worldly attachments and obstacles. Once this goal is achieved, ecstasy is experienced.

In these two sonatas Scriabin resorts to the self-sufficient, one-movement sonata-allegro form with an introduction, an exposition, a development, a recapitulation and a climactic coda. Developmental techniques and constant transformation of themes are used in all the sections. This contributes to a sense of continuous growth of excitement and intensity. In the introductions, quiet, languorous themes are presented, which are slowly transformed into ecstatic statements throughout the development sections and which reach their ultimate transformation in the codas.

The ecstatic statements in the codas consist of the themes stated in the extreme high register, which are supported by repeated thick chords in the middle register and grace-note effects in very low octaves in the bass, thus covering the entire range of the piano. These statements sound victorious, joyous, flaming and turbulent and represent the wild, uncontrolled feeling of exhilaration experienced at the moment of human ecstasy.

The exposition section of both the fourth and fifth sonatas also introduces the "flight themes" which represent the soul in flight toward liberation and ecstasy. These themes begin with an ascending leap, are chordal in texture and have a strong rhythmic drive and sense of forward motion. "Flight themes" are present in all successive sonatas, in which
they will assume different melodic and textural characteristics.

The fifth sonata also introduces the "will theme" (second theme). This theme represents the powerful voice of the creative spirit, determined to achieve his ultimate goal. This type of theme is also used frequently in the subsequent sonatas. The "will theme" is usually an accented single melodic line, is formed of wide leaps, and is supported by boisterous chordal or arpeggiated accompaniments.

The fifth sonata is the first work in which Scriabin uses Italian descriptive words, instead of the usual tempo marks. These words emphasize the philosophical and psychological meaning of its motives and themes. These should be regarded, according to the composer, as important as the musical sounds. In all the succeeding sonatas Scriabin uses French descriptive words extensively.

In summary, up to the fifth sonata, there is a definite evolution and tendency toward the expression of the highest human emotional experience, that of ecstasy. Thereafter, Scriabin felt that there was something even more meaningful, majestic and satisfying, which went beyond human feelings. He began to explore the cosmic world, as seen by Theosophists, which represents the mystical, abstract, concealed, intangible, undefinable world of emotions which lies outside the physical world. He became obsessed with cosmic ecstasy and dematerialization.

Scriabin began to feel limited by human ecstasy, which is a temporary experience. He felt that human ecstasy was limited by the ego and that it was a concrete, direct, blunt, turbulent and self-conscious feeling that has a beginning and an end. Cosmic ecstasy was much more satisfying and
meaningful to Scriabin.

Cosmic ecstasy is an eternal state of peace and harmony which happens at the moment of dematerialization or union with the Holy Spirit, once total purification and refinement of the soul is achieved. Cosmic ecstasy is a subtle, refined and abstract sensation in which self-consciousness is completely lost. At the moment in which this cosmic ecstasy is experienced everything becomes pulverized and fragmented, but it is still a part of one large element which is the undefinable, infinite cosmos.

Scriabin's seventh, eighth and tenth sonatas represent the idealistic cosmic world. The sixth and ninth sonatas digress from this idealistic world. They represent the opposite evil forces of the cosmos, which are necessary for the realization of good. The sixth represents horror, terror and nightmarish visions which result from the fear of evil. The ninth represents Satan, whose existence and meaning are fully realized and understood by the composer. Scriabin confronts Satan without fear, gives him power and finally exorcises him. The tenth sonata is left with only the most radiant and pure harmonious emotions.

The best representatives of Scriabin's new world, and musically the most successful sonatas, are the seventh, ninth and tenth sonatas. The sixth suffers from lack of musical invention and sense of forwardness, and the eighth suffers from an excessive length due to unnecessary repetition of sections.
In all the above sonatas Scriabin uses the sonata-allegro form. The eighth and tenth sonatas have an introduction in which all the important motivic material is presented. The main themes of the exposition originate from this introductory material. In the sixth, seventh and ninth sonatas the introduction is omitted.

The "languor themes" can be traced in all these sonatas. They usually consist of a single melodic line, comprised of major and minor seconds and thirds, in triple subdivision. They always appear over transparent, arpeggiated accompaniments, usually emphasizing the dominant-seventh sound. These themes become structurally the most important themes of the sonatas. The whole development and sense of forwardness seems to depend greatly on the transformation of these themes. They are transformed from languorous and peaceful to radiant, ecstatic and joyous statements in the seventh, eighth and tenth sonatas, and from pure and harmonious to empoisoned, evil and boisterous statements in the sixth and ninth sonatas. Ultimately they become fragmented and fused in counterpoint or appear in dialogue with fragments of the powerful "flight themes", "will themes" (in the seventh, eighth and tenth sonatas) or "mysterious evil themes" (in the sixth and ninth sonatas), in the delirious, vertiginous, ecstatic codas. The transformation of these themes is usually textural or rhythmic. The melodic or intervallic structure of the themes is seldom affected.
In the sixth, seventh, eighth and tenth sonatas, the motivic material from the "languor themes" is also used for the "flight themes or motives". These are quick, short five-note motives in ascending or descending motion. They are used sequentially and in rhythmic variation as embellishments of the "languor themes" (sixth and seventh sonatas) or they form self-sufficient sections or themes (concluding sections of the expositions in the sixth and seventh sonatas, and the first themes of the expositions in the eighth and tenth sonatas).

The "will themes" are also present in the seventh (first theme) and the eighth (combined with second theme) sonatas where they play an important role in the development and recapitulation sections and codas in the process of transformation of the "languor themes".

The "cosmic", abstract, and mystical qualities of these sonatas is achieved through the extensive use of trills and tremolos which represent palpitations, trembling or light vibrations of the cosmos; the use of the five-note motives which represent the variants of the liberated flying spirit in infinity; the use of the "saintly" or "nightmarish, evil" chord motives representing the voices of the Holy Spirit or Satan successively; the use of motives representing sparkles of light or fire from the universe; and lastly the use of motives representing the undefinable mysterious forces of the cosmos.

The passages marked "ecstatic" are musically expressed in a completely different manner from that of the fourth and fifth sonatas. Scriabin's change of concept about ecstasy is clearly apparent. From direct, blunt, turbulent and loud statements in the fourth and fifth sonatas, they
become peaceful, crystalline, joyous and harmonious statements in the last five sonatas. They are single melodic lines, embellished with delicate figurations and trills, which appear over simple arpeggiated accompaniments.

The overall development of the sonatas can be characterized as a gradual elimination of contrasts. The main theme sections are first presented as strong individual contrasting units. This contrast is magnified before the themes begin to lose their individuality. This loss of individuality is achieved through fragmentation, contrapuntal techniques, increase of tempo and rhythmic transformation of themes or fragments of themes. Ultimately, all the important motives unite in counterpoint or dialogue in the delirious, chaotic codas, which symbolize the ecstatic state before the moment of dematerialization (seventh, eighth and tenth sonatas), or the ecstatic voice of the victorious evil forces (sixth and ninth sonatas). The state of the harmonious and divine pleasure after dematerialization or state of Nonexistence is expressed in the seventh and eighth sonatas with a quiet repetition of the five-note motives with trills in very high register. In the tenth sonata, this state is represented in the return of the fragmented introductory material treated in descending sequences.

The last five sonatas, because of their complex philosophical meaning, coupled with an extremely complicated and intricate musical and pianistic language, are the least accessible to the general public and are comparatively rarely performed. Clarifying the philosophical context might hopefully help rectify this situation.
Performing and listening to these works can indeed be an exhilarating, ecstatic and uplifting experience. Total technical and musical command is not sufficient for such an experience. The philosophical meaning of the thematic and/or motivic material and its development coupled with the overall programmatic content of the sonatas must be thoroughly understood to bring about an imaginative, intuitive, insightful and inspiring interpretation in which performer and listener will be enabled to experience the complex and beautiful emotional impact which the composer demanded from every performance of his works.
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