"That Prelude"
A Study of the rise & fall in popularity of Rachmaninov's Prelude in C sharp minor

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Introduction

In 1892, while still studying at the conservatorium in Moscow, Sergei Rachmaninov composed a short prelude in C sharp minor which was to become a focal point for his future career as a performer and composer. By the early 1900s Rachmaninov was, to his audiences, unmistakably identified with that Prelude. He owed much of his success with the American public to that work, which became a curse to him because of the number of times he was obliged to perform it.

In the early part of this century the C sharp minor Prelude enjoyed a wide dissemination in various forms, including transcriptions for student pianists in *The Etude* music magazine, and Jazz arrangements. In fact the Prelude was:

> ...one of the earliest examples of jazzification of respectable music, perpetrated by George L. Cobb...[1]

Such arrangements serve as an indication of the level of popularity the work had achieved, and Slonimsky's comment about "respectable music" demonstrates a new attitude which many critics had now adopted.

While the work was still a novelty, critics maintained a positive attitude towards it, however, they looked more at the reaction of the public and of the composer, than at the actual music. Analysis of specific elements of the piece didn't really occur until after Rachmaninov's death, when writers began to examine the reasons for the work's popularity. With critical distance from audiences of the early 1900s, writers were free to perhaps even question the basis of the prelude's popularity,

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[1]Slonimsky, Nicholas *Music since 1900* 4th ed., Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1971: p.298. This comment was made in reference to the "Russian Rag", a jazz arrangement of the prelude, receiving copyright on April 27, 1918.

and writings about the composer move to include a broader perspective of his contribution to music history. However, the C sharp minor Prelude did achieve a popularity greater than other works of this genre, and this paper examines that phenomenon.

Most of the primary source material of this study comes from American journals and newspapers, as these were easily accessible. This geographical focus was decided upon because of the amount of time Rachmaninov spent in America, and because opinions about the work are well documented and easily accessible. Material from other countries was not used because of difficulty of access, however some information from biographies and other secondary sources has also been included.

There are a number of spellings of Rachmaninov's name in the source material used in this paper, and in other writings about Rachmaninov. Variations in spelling have been left in their original form in the quotations, and otherwise the above spelling has been used to avoid inconsistency.

The paper has been divided into three chronological periods in order to demonstrate the variety of opinions about the C sharp minor prelude over the twentieth century. These periods have not been comprehensively documented because of word limitations, but each offers a sample of opinions typical of each time frame. It would be interesting to look further at each of these periods regarding the possibility of conflicting opinions, as it is recognised that the nature of the material used in this paper is limited.

This study began as an interest in the way an audience responds to music, and from an appreciation of the music of Rachmaninov. The C sharp minor Prelude was chosen as an example of a piece of music which evoked a wide range of responses from its audiences, and which could be documented over this century. The initial

research had a specific focus, to examine why the prelude was singled out in history from the other pieces in the set from which it comes - the *Morceaux de Fantasie,* op.3. This prelude is one which has been treated as an isolated work by many critics, when in fact it was originally part of a group of five pieces, and overall represents a very small element of Rachmaninov's large output.

This issue of copyright was another aspect particularly relevant to this piece, which was not subject to copyright laws when it was composed, a fact which is emphasised by later writings about the work. Paul Belanger's comment, for example, suggests that it was perhaps to our advantage that this was the case:

> Had Rachmaninoff managed to create the Prelude in an era when composer's royalties mounted with every copy sold, he might never have needed to embark on three decades of concert tours to support his family - and the world of music would be the poorer for it.[2]

There are however much deeper issues which arise from this research which were not able to be covered in the parameters of this paper. The involvement of the audience in the growth and maintenance of the popularity of the C sharp minor Prelude is significant, but raises issues of the role of the audience in the interpretation of music. As can be seen in this study, the audience is influenced by many non-musical factors, such as the charisma of the performer, and the contemporary musical climate in deciding preference for the music of a particular composer.

There is a difference between the passive and active involvement of an audience in a performance. With this Prelude in particular, most audiences chose an active role: it was after all pressure from his audiences that led to its performance by Rachmaninov on many occasions. The numerous pictorial explanations of the work

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[2]Belanger, Paul CD notes to: *Sergei Rachmaninoff in Concert* Klavier Records, California, 1988.

imply the active involvement of the audience, but do these constitute *interpretation*? Or are these responses diverse reactions to *reception* of the music? One might suggest that the performer is the one who interprets the music and the audience is only involved in the reception of that interpretation. In the case of the Prelude however, many of the audiences were also amateur performers of the work, and perhaps thereby filled both roles.

There is also a real difference between the way in which the composer, the performer and the audience perceive the music, which can be aptly demonstrated in the variety of responses to the Prelude that are documented by critics of this century. One might suggest that the perception of a piece by an audience is only important if the composer places an amount of value on the response to his/her music, but Rachmaninov's responses to the popularity which his Prelude received suggest that he perhaps wished that his audiences would give a greater degree of acknowledgment to his other compositions. Rachmaninov did not place any value on the response of his audiences to this Prelude, so is the audience's perception of the work relevant at all? For the purposes of this study, the phenomenon which led to the popularity of the work is part of the perception of the piece, and it is the audiences which upheld that popularity.

Chapter One

Rachmaninov's C sharp minor prelude was composed in 1892 as part of a set of five *Morceaux de Fantasie*. This work has received more attention on its own than as part of the set however, beginning with its first performance by the student pianist, Rachmaninov. A review in *Artiste*, from September 1892, demonstrates the early interest in the prelude:

> Exceptional interest was lent the concert by the participation of S.V.Rachmaninoff ... A group of solo numbers, including a prelude of his own composition, ... aroused enthusiasm.[3]

From its first audience onward the prelude is singled out as noteworthy, and its popularity seems to have grown from there. After Siloti's introduction of the work to audiences outside Russia, it served to herald the name of its composer. Bertensson and Leyda's 1956 biography reports that by 1899:

> In England Rachmaninoff was already known as the man who wrote The Prélude, and all newspaper notice and critical appraisal of him was built around that fact.[4]

So, from his first concert engagements outside Russia, Rachmaninov could not escape ownership of that work, it became a cornerstone for his international success.

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[3]quoted in Bertensson & Leyda *Sergei Rachmaninoff: a lifetime in music* N.Y. University Press, New York, 1956: p.49.

[4]ibid.: p.85.

Immigration to America in 1918

In the year 1918 Rachmaninov and his family moved to America, which was to become his place of residence until his death in 1943. By this time his reputation as a pianist, composer and conductor was well established on the international circuit. The reasons for his emigration cannot be definitively stated, but there are many factors which may have influenced his decision. Fleeing an environment of conflict, lucrative job offers or perhaps as he suggests in a 1923 article, moving towards a more appreciative audience, are possible explanations. 1917 had been a tumultuous year in his home country. It was the year of revolution: a time in which persecution of the arts occurred; it is not surprising then, that Rachmaninov would want to be in a less restrictive environment. His own opinion, stated in the *Etude* magazine in 1923, could be a subtle reference to the persecution of Russian authorities:

> ... American audiences seem to be more rational, more clearly appreciative of the substantial and beautiful elements in the art of music than are many European audiences at this time ...[5]

Kolodin, on the other hand, states categorically that the revolution was the decisive factor for Rachmaninov's emigration.

> The decisive factor arose in 1917, when the Revolution (with which Rachmaninoff had no essential sympathy) passed into the hands of those who were to create the Soviets. To Rachmaninoff this was "the beginning of the end", and a fortunate offer to make a concert tour of Scandinavia provided him with the pretext to leave Russia.[6]

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[5]*Etude Music Magazine* James Francis ed., Theodore Presser Co., Philadelphia, May 1923: p.298.

[6]Kolodin, Irving "Sergei Rachmaninoff" in Thompson, Oscar ed. *Great Modern Composers* Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1941: p.235.

Lipman suggests additional factors which might have influenced Rachmaninov's decision to leave the emerging Soviet state, particularly his aristocratic connections:

> Without doubt the Bolshevik Revolution in November of 1917 was the greatest watershed in Rachmaninoff's life. Though he had signed a petition demanding reforms during the 1905 revolution, he never forgot his quasi-aristocratic social origins ... It was plain to him that the freedom and repose he needed for his work, and indeed his very physical existence, had been placed in jeopardy by the Communist accession to power. So it was that Rachmaninoff left his beloved Russia ... never to return. From now on he would support himself and his family as a concert pianist.[7]

According to Patrick Piggott, the environment was ripe for this choice of career to become be successful:

> In one respect he was lucky: the retirement of Paderewski, ... had left a sudden gap in the international concert scene; and when Rachmaninov, with his striking appearance and his famous name (not to mention his celebrated Prelude) made known his intention of adopting a virtuoso's career he must have seemed like an answer from heaven to the fervent prayers of leading international concert agents. At the time of his escape from Russia, Europe was still at war ... He realised that he must go to America, the 'promised land' of all touring virtuosi ... he had to admit that he loved his audiences, that he found them stimulating and was inspired by their adulation.[8]

It was a shrewd decision, in view of the fact that his compositions were already well known to international audiences: he had only to establish himself further as a performer. It could not have been a more opportune moment, approaching an appreciative audience while his popularity was at its height. In essence he had only to

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[7]Lipman, Samuel *Music After Modernism* Basic Books Inc., New York, 1979: p.97.

[8]Piggott, Patrick *The Great Composers: Rachmaninov* Faber & Faber, London, 1978: p.84.

maintain a status which was already well established for him by the introduction of his works on previous concert tours.

From the earlier concert tour of America ~ 1909-1918

Rachmaninov had toured America in 1909, so he would not have been a stranger to audiences there, and this would also have helped to pave the way for his return in 1918. It was stated of this first tour, that his Prelude was an obligatory item in his recitals, and the press triumphantly reported that:

> In academic Berlin, it has been said, if one strolls through the lodging house quarters on a summer evening the tremendous chords of the Rachmaninov Prélude can be heard pealing forth from every open window.[9]

This quotation gives a romantic account of the extent of the prelude's popularity. The familiar reference to *the* Rachmaninov prelude suggests that it had by now become standard repertoire.

Due to the large number of other international artists arriving in America during this period: Moiseiwitsch, Hoffmann and later Horowitz for example, Rachmaninov would not as an individual, have been a novelty to the American public. Nevertheless, an exotic image would have surrounded this group of performers, an image which they undoubtedly used to their advantage. Rachmaninov was an internationally recognised performer and composer, presenting a comparatively conservative style of music to an audience that was obviously appreciative of that style. His music was well known, and now there would be an opportunity for his audiences to experience a type of personal interaction with its creator. An atmosphere

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[9]op.cit.: Bertensson & Leyda: p.161, which does not date its source.

had been prepared for him which invited curiosity about the composer of the music that was already popular.

During his concert tours, Rachmaninov soon discovered the negative aspect that his prelude brought to his recitals - among them, his audience's expectation that he would delightedly perform the C sharp minor prelude at every opportunity. In his 1978 monograph, Piggott describes Rachmaninov's opinion of having to perform the Prelude:

> How he hated that Prelude! Yet one wonders if without its extraordinary popularity his concerts would have been so immediately successful, for there is no doubt that, at least at first, many people attended them simply to hear the Prelude played by its composer.[10]

This is an opinion which has the advantage of 60 years' hindsight in reference to audiences of this period, however it is still a poignant statement. Piggott seems in awe of the "its extraordinary popularity" and is suggesting that the composer's name had already become synonymous with the Prelude in the minds of the majority of his American audiences at this time. It is interesting that the piece of music is given the credit for the success of these recitals, not the ability of the performer. It seems that, in the opinion of his audiences, a single work was the catalyst for the success or failure of his career. Piggott, who is perhaps implying a degree of sympathy for the frustration he ascribes to Rachmaninov, explained in his note prior to this:

> His own piano solo music [Rachmaninov] would ... play only with reluctance, usually including no more than a couple of short pieces at the end of a recital, though there was one piece he could never escape - his early Prelude in C sharp minor.[11]

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[10]op.cit.: Piggott, Patrick: p.84.

[11]ibid.

For Rachmaninov then, the piece was an inescapable element of his performance repertoire, a burden which he ultimately resented. The Prelude was, of course, a standard item in the repertoire of other performers, but all were conscious of its author's identity with the prelude. It seems unlikely that the work would have achieved the same level of popularity without Rachmaninov's own frequent performance of it, and Rachmaninov could not escape the inevitable connection that audiences made between him and the Prelude, at the expense of his other works.

> ... At present [1909] however, he is better known in this country as the composer of the beautiful *Prelude in C sharp minor* ...[12]

By linking a piece so directly to its composer, the audience implies that hearing the composer's performance of his own work will in some way enlighten their experience of that work. As Rachmaninov represented one of the last of the generation of performer/composers[13], this issue was particularly relevant to him, and to performers of his music. It has already been established that the Prelude was played many times by Rachmaninov, either as part of his program or as an encore, which suggests that his audiences wanted to hear his interpretation of the work. The Prelude seems to have acquired the attributes associated with popular music, among them, the phenomenon of people wanting to hear it performed repeatedly. Perhaps it represented a way of establishing a link with Rachmaninov, a way of associating

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[12]from the "Etude Gallery, Portrait Biographies" op.cit.: *Etude*: October 1909.

[13]This is a 19th century phenomenon which has almost disappeared this century. Although some 20th century composers such as Grainger and Busoni did perform their own works, and more recently Larry Sitsky, there is no longer the strong tradition which existed in the 19th century. The term defines itself: a composer, who for various reasons, performs their own as well as others' works. In the 19th century, especially for pianists such as Liszt for example, it was expected that a performer could compose and vice versa. This often involved improvisation during a recital, for which Paganini, Liszt, Chopin and others were well known.

oneself with the exotic image of his music, and of comparing oneself with an internationally acclaimed performer.

Transformations of the Prelude ~ 1898-1920s

The popularity of the work soon extended beyond the concert hall. There is evidence in the number of transcriptions that were published, that amateurs also wanted to perform the work. Examples of this are the 'easy piano' versions printed in the *Etude*. Publishing a more accessible edition of this piece was significant to this magazine for many reasons. It was effective marketing, reflected in the publication of two different versions in separate editions, and it also acknowledged the professional connections that the composer had with the magazine[14].

The first of these publications [see Appendix B], in 1918, is a transcription of the work into d minor, and "..rendered suitable for smaller hands.."[15] As the focus of this magazine was primarily pedagogical, it provided the perfect forum in which to publish a transcription of the work suitable for teaching, and also gives a further indication that it was popular to a wide range of audiences. The second arrangement of it, published the following year [see Appendix C], is preceded by the following comment, which gives an understated opinion of the work's popularity, or perhaps indicates that the editor simply wished to acknowledge an accepted fact:

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[14]he wrote a number of articles for the magazine, both on his own philosophy of music, and on techniques for piano playing.

[15]op.cit.: *The Etude*, June 1918: p.394f.

> Probably the most popular of all Rachmaninoff's compositions [referring to the C sharp minor Prelude]. Its breadth and sonority make it especially suitable for a four hand arrangement. It should be played in a clanging manner like the chiming of bells.[16]

The professional connections that Rachmaninov had with this magazine may have invited accusations of nepotism: however, it is significant that they chose this particular work. Perhaps they felt justified in making comments about the work and how it should be performed because of their connections with the composer. However, it is likely that the introductory comment is probably more for the effect of the intended audience, rather than reflecting the composer's opinion.

Another adjunct of the intense popularity of the work was the number of picturesque interpretations that it invited. This was a popular trend of the period, to ascribe images to a piece of music, the preludes of Chopin and Debussy for example suffered the same fate[17]. These interpretations were, for the most part, not authorised by the composer and ranged from stories about what the work represented to a more general usage of the music to represent a particular mood, especially for film[18]. Most of these interpretations offer a visual hook on which to hang the music, but others go further, to try and explain the music, with descriptions of each section of the work. The program found printed on a piano roll by Lindley Evans from the late 1920s for

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[16]op.cit.: *The Etude*, October 1919: p.638f.

[17]although Debussy put names/titles at the end of each of the preludes, perhaps in order to avoid having one specific meaning attached to the work, these visual images are generally the way in which each of his preludes is remembered by his audiences.

[18]it was not only the prelude which was used in non-musical contexts, a cartoon depicting Moiseiwitsch and Rachmaninov at the Savage Club House in 1919, provides a visual image of Rachmaninov's opinion of his work. Moiseiwitsch is shown at the piano with "Bong, Bong, Bong" being omitted from the instrument, and Rachmaninov stands at the back covering his ears, with an expression of excruciating pain on his face. [this author saw the cartoon in the private collection - held in Canberra - of Mrs Sandra Self, daughter of Benno Moiseiwitsch]

example [see appendix D], suggests that the C sharp minor prelude had acquired a very specific meaning, connecting it with the historic invasion of Moscow in 1812.

A further picturesque interpretation, not necessarily authorised by Rachmaninov, is related in a conversation with Benno Moiseiwitsch, where Rachmaninov recalled one of the images offered to him about the Prelude in a letter. Rachmaninov's reply demonstrates his ambivalent attitude to the Prelude at this time.[19] The letter suggests that the public were looking for an authoritative meaning of the work, amongst the numerous interpretations available, and that the creation of a visual image was a significant method in determining this.

> Rachmaninoff showed me a postcard from a lady admirer, who inquired as to whether his famous "Prelude in C sharp minor" was intended by the composer to give the picture it always called up in her mind - that of a man being buried alive. I asked Rachmaninoff how he was going to reply. "If the piece conjures up that picture in her mind," he replied, "I certainly would be the last to disillusion her."[20]

It could be suggested then that the level of popularity achieved by the prelude was intensified by the images under which it became known. Chopin's "Raindrop" prelude, for example, was also afflicted by this phenomenon, its popular name ensuring that it would be remembered by the public and used as standard repertoire henceforth.

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[19]Rachmaninov's attitude towards the various interpretations of his work can also be seen in his own performances. The Ampico reproducing piano roll from c.1920 [see Appendix A, example two] demonstrates the way in which the composer, on this occasion, chose not to emphasise the final chords, removing the symbolism of bells resounding.

[20]from a copy of an article provided for me by Mrs Sandra Self, daughter of Benno Moiseiwitsch, titled "Rachmaninov Remembered". According to Bob Maynard, on an ABC radio programme, the article was written for *The Digest*, but it is undated, so I have been unable to confirm this. Presumably it was written after the death of the composer, as Moiseiwitsch refers to this at the end of the article, and its title also suggests this.

The numerous transcriptions indicate the extent to which the work captured the popular imagination; various musicians wanted to 'translate' it into their own language. From a few years after its first performance, the prelude was being published in different arrangements, for example in 1898, as a popular song:

> ... an arrangement of it as a popular song - the first of many - was published in America and not long afterwards gyrating couples were waltzing to even less recognisable versions. It was to suffer, too, the attentions of the greedy inhabitants of tin-pan alley, who laid their predatory hands upon it more than once.[21]

Such publications would have assisted the propagation of the work, and this was facilitated by the absence of copyright. It also indicates the attitude of the period to performance, showing that alternate versions of a work were common place, and that there was no expectation that a work would always be performed in the original manner set down by the composer. The fact that Rachmaninov sanctioned these arrangements probably assisted the growth of the prelude's popularity, because it was accessible in so many different forms.

> ... during the 20s a large number of jazz "arrangements" (some anon.) were made of the Prélude in C# minor, including *That Russian Rag*, a saxophone sextette by the Six Brown Brothers, and an arrangement by Duke Ellington. The earliest ... was William Lorraine's *Salome*, in 1898, just after Siloti introduced the work to America.[22]

In addition to the simplified versions of the C sharp minor prelude mentioned above, arrangements into different styles of music were also published, that would have given the piece a completely different character, in some cases removing it from

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[21]op.cit.: Piggott, Patrick: p.28.

[22]information given in a footnote in op.cit. Bertensson & Leyda: p.235.

photocopy of the cover page for the Albert & Son Pty Ltd edition of the score, held at the National Library, Canberra. published c.1920



Russian Rag

by

GEORGE L. COBB.

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classical concert halls, and giving it a status usually ascribed only to pieces in popular genres. The fact that so many musicians felt able to plagiarise this piece, reflects both the lack of copyright, and an inherent difference in attitude towards 'classical' pieces from today, where a piece is preserved with great fervour in the manner in which the composer originally wrote it.

The dates indicated above by Piggott and Bertensson, suggest that the Prelude had been introduced to the American public long before Rachmaninov himself came into the picture, during his first concert tour in 1909. While there was a certain aura surrounding his arrival, that of the exotic performer arriving from overseas, his music was not necessarily a novelty to the public that greeted him. His cousin, Siloti, had already introduced the work in its original form to the public, so they would already have established a certain degree of familiarity with it, amplified by the popular arrangements. To an audience of the 1990s, these events propose issues of authentic performance, as Rachmaninov's arrival created the opportunity for audiences to hear the work performed by its composer. There was however a different kind of importance ascribed to Rachmaninov's own interpretation at this time.

Rachmaninov's performances ~ 1918-1930s

Audiences of this period would not have attached the same meaning to the concept of an *authentic performance* in the way in which the term is now used; nevertheless there was still an importance attached to performances of a work by its composer. A degree of authority was attributed to the composer's performance, perhaps because, in Rachmaninov's case, he was a virtuoso performer and composer, at a time when that tradition was dwindling. There was also a certain mystique about the creative process, like the exotic image of the performer, both of which held a certain attraction for the public. Rachmaninov could provide an authoritative

performance of the work because of his direct involvement with the creative process, and the audience was perhaps hoping to experience that creative process through Rachmaninov's performance.

There was however, no real sense that an *authentic* performance, in the current conception of the term, would actually be realised, in fact this was not necessarily a desirable outcome. It was normal for there to be many available versions of a work, demonstrated in the number of different arrangements of the prelude. Rachmaninov himself would not have expected that his work would only be performed in one way, or that others would copy his own interpretations of the work. This is demonstrated in the variations we see in his own recordings of the work [see appendix A].

This was a very different approach to that of the current authentic performance movement, in that, while it acknowledged the authority of the composer's interpretation and/or performance, it did not attach any authority to a particular *style* of performance. Hence, other interpretations and even arrangements were equally valid: in a comment after a performance in London of a jazz arrangement of the prelude, Rachmaninov gave a kind of permission for his music to be reinterpreted by others, and implied that he did not want to hear the music played only as he had envisaged it.

> [Rachmaninov's] party had entered a London restaurant just as the jazz orchestra was playing It - the hated Prélude. His British manager later described the awkward moment: "... the soloist started the famous chords - and then proceeded to do a jazz arrangement of it, and all who knew expected the worst. But Rachmaninoff listened and his eyes lighted up. 'Stay,' he said gently. And they stayed to the end, when the composer, with glistening eyes, exclaimed, 'what a fine piece of music! I enjoyed every note of that' ..."[23]

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[23]quoted in op.cit.: Bertensson & Leyda: p.289.

Although typical of the period, this remark does more than acknowledge the right of other performers to interpret the piece differently, and in this case in another style, it also suggests a degree of pride that his work had achieved such popularity that it was being interpreted by musicians in another style for their enjoyment. Perhaps his comment is an indication that he found it refreshing to hear the work which he could not escape from being reinterpreted, and in a sense given a new life.

A further indication of how performances by Rachmaninov were followed with close attention is illustrated in this anecdote from a review of a London recital in April 1933:

> As usual, London papers said more about one encore than about the whole program of his recital. The News Chronicle headline: THE PRELUDE: RACHMANINOV MUFFS IT. In the midst of the applause he struck the famous opening chords of IT. He did not even wait for the applause to die down, but flung it at the audience like a bone to a dog. And here is news which will be a consolation to thousands of amateur pianists: he played it, and he muffed it. Yes, in the rapid middle section, which is such a trial to the amateur, Rachmaninov himself played 2 wrong notes ...[24]

It was then, not only in America that audiences wanted to hear the Prelude played by its composer, a request which was fulfilled with an equal degree of resignation and frustration on Rachmaninov's behalf. It is amusing to note that the audience would have been aware of the 'wrong notes' and that this reviewer expressed so much satisfaction in reporting their occurrence. Such comments also reiterate the idea that performances by Rachmaninov were conceived of as being in some way authoritative. Had the Prelude not been as popular, the indiscretion in his performance may not have

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[24]op.cit.: Bertensson & Leyda: p.295.

been noticed, or at least not reported in the press. Because Rachmaninov was performing his own work, the inclusion of 'wrong notes' seems more noteworthy, because of the expectation that he would provide an authoritative, *correct* performance of the piece, an expectation which, on this occasion, was not fulfilled.

The expectation of an authoritative performance, which underlies the response shown in this review, also adds to the list of reasons Rachmaninov may have had for his growing dislike of the piece. How frustrating for a composer to be forced to play a work so frequently that each of his audiences can be aware if two notes are out of place! It must have been a source of irritation to read such a review, not having wanted to perform the piece at all, and then to be almost reprimanded - albeit jokingly - for his imperfection. It must have been very frustrating as a performer to have your audience know a piece so well that they were waiting for you make such mistakes.

The same critic makes mention of the "thousands of amateur pianists" who must, in his frame of reference, be attempting to perform the piece themselves. By highlighting the mishap of this performance, the reviewer is perhaps trying to bridge a gap between Rachmaninov and his admirers. It certainly places Rachmaninov's ability as a performer in a more obtainable context and suggests that the Prelude is in fact a difficult work for the pianist, perhaps sympathising with amateur pianists attempting to perform this work.

To what degree did public opinion and performances by others affect the way in which he himself chose to perform the work on a given occasion? One might assume that he was aware of the number of transcriptions circulating especially in the American public, and also of at least some of the performances of his work by other people, and this knowledge may have affected the way he himself chose to present the piece. Perhaps each performance was being controlled by greater or lesser degrees of frustration with the work's popularity, or perhaps, in view of some of his own

recordings, he may have been reacting to something he liked or disliked in another performer's interpretation.

The applause and general positive opinion generated about the Prelude was however, not universally expressed, as one critic from 1918 displays a certain cynicism about the popularity of the work. His opinion is less a criticism of the work than of the audience who waits expectantly for its wishes to be fulfilled. Bertensson's introduction to this quotation reports that Huneker had a reputation for satire, and the style of language he uses in this review demonstrates a certain degree of cynicism towards the Prelude's popularity. As a critic, he seems quite scathing of popular opinion:

> ... the Rachmaninov "fans" - and there were thousands of them in the audience - clamoured for the favourite piece of the Flatbush "flappers". They surged toward Serge (sic) in serried masses. They clustered about the stage.. But the chief thing is the fact that Rachmaninov did not play It. All Flapperdom sorrowed last night, for there are amiable fanatics who follow this pianist from place to place hoping to hear him in this particular Prelude; like Englishman who attended every performance of the lady lion tamer hoping to see her swallowed by one of her pets.[25]

Acknowledgment of the Prelude's popularity was so widespread, some critics even expressed sympathy for its composer who had to endure such wide ranging responses from critics, his audiences and colleagues.

> Poor Rachmaninov was never allowed to forget this early and intrinsically unimportant piece. In time he came to regard it as a hated burden, for the public vociferously demanded it at all

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[25]quoted in op.cit.: Bertensson & Leyda: p.217. from a review by J. Gibbons Huneker in the *Times* about a New York recital of 21/12/1918. "in his habitual acid tone"

> his concerts and daily his post included inquiries from Prelude-admirers wanting to know what it "meant".[26]

Other opinions of the piece show that Rachmaninov was not the only person becoming frustrated with the growing popularity of his piece. Some of his contemporaries voiced an opinion that the popularity was perhaps stifling any opportunity for him to develop as a composer in the public eye. Borowski suggested:

> ... It is to be regretted perhaps, that his C sharp minor prelude has been so popular that it has, instead of drawing attention to the composer's other music for the instrument, caused most of that music to be unduly neglected ...[27]

Recordings of the Prelude ~ from 1918

Also a distinguishing feature of this period is that Rachmaninov was making recordings of his own works, on phonograph and piano roll. This medium would have enabled further comparisons of performances of the Prelude, and also provides a valuable set of documents for this study. The variety of Rachmaninov recordings now available through re-releases, enable us not only to observe Rachmaninov's changing attitude to performing the work, but also support the argument that he did not expect any one of his performances to be treated as definitive. His recordings provide further evidence for attitudes of the period towards the autonomy of the work.

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[26]op.cit.: Piggott, Patrick: p.30.

[27]op.cit.: *Etude Music Magazine*, October 1919: p.617. An Australian critic paraphrased this same opinion, "It is to be regretted, perhaps, that [Rachmaninoff's] C sharp minor prelude has been so popular that it has, to a certain extent, caused most of his music to be unjustly neglected." *Sydney Mail*, March 1920.

Rachmaninov's own attitude to the recording industry is relevant if we wish to make connections between his recordings and his attitude to the obligation of performing the prelude. Colin Fox[28] informs us that Rachmaninov:

> ... signed his first contract with Victor in 1920. Enthusiasts have searched in vain for Rachmaninov recordings from concert broadcasts ... however, on his own strict orders, the radio network would switch to a Victor recording of whatever it was that Rachmaninov was playing and return to the direct broadcast at the end of that piece. Why Rachmaninov insisted on this I'm not sure ...

A number of reasons could be suggested for this: that he liked the recording he had made and wanted people to hear this, rather than a performance affected by his mood on the particular occasion, or perhaps that he was afraid of being accused of another discrepancy like that which occurred when he played two wrong notes in a performance of the prelude (mentioned earlier). This account of Rachmaninov's attitude suggests that he did not have any reservations about the way in which his playing was recorded on the Victor label, so we could assume that these recordings provide an accurate description of the way in which Rachmaninov wanted his public to hear him play a given work. However, given the contemporary attitude towards definitive performance, it is unlikely that Rachmaninov wanted these recordings to be treated as authoritative documents.

The recording industry has also left us with examples of the way in which the prelude was interpreted by others, and it is interesting now to place these recordings alongside those of Rachmaninov [see appendix A]. These include orchestral arrangements in the hands of Stokowski [example five] and performances by his

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[28]on the Sunday Evening Program, ABC FM, 28/8/94.

contemporaries which emphasise particular elements of the piece [example four] and consequently demonstrate the level of popularity of the piece.

By the end of the 1930s, the C sharp minor prelude had firmly established a niche for itself in the popular market, and was being exploited for its full worth. The advantages that this piece had given Rachmaninov in the early stages of his career in America were undeniable, however, from his perspective the piece was a hindrance to his future development as a composer and a burden on his performances.

Chapter Two

By the early 1940s, the Prelude in C sharp minor was widely recognised as one of Rachmaninov's most popular pieces. Biographical material on the composer began to appear, and writers started to critically examine the phenomenon of the work as a significant element in the composer's life. Kolodin, in his article in *Great Modern Composers*, describes the work as one which sparked the rapid growth of his public popularity:

> Rachmaninoff [in composing the prelude] had set in motion a mechanism... which made its way around the world with almost fantastic rapidity, carrying with it the polysyllabic name of the composer, arousing a curiosity about him which could not have been more profitable had it been deliberately stimulated.[29]

The year 1939 would have confirmed to Rachmaninov the instability of the Europe which he left behind in 1917; perhaps the outbreak of war was also one of the factors that led him to become an American citizen before his death in 1943. The composer's death evoked a period of reflection about his work as a performer, composer and conductor, and as a person, and coloured the type of criticism resulting from performances and recordings.

In the last few years of Rachmaninov's life, the prelude's widespread popularity was accepted by critics, and they were beginning to approach it from a more

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[29]Thompson, Oscar ed. *Great Modern Composers* Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1941: p.233. In the list of works provided at the end of this chapter, the Prelude is singled out in the list of the set of five pieces composed in 1892, the author does not individually name the others in the set.

penetrating perspective, critically examining the effects of the work's popularity. Rachmaninov was, to his audiences, the embodiment of the prelude. While this factor enhanced its popularity during the early stages of Rachmaninov's career in America, critics in this period increasingly acknowledged the negative consequences of prelude's popularity:

> Bing! Bang! Bong! All the world over, the crashing opening chords of his prelude in C sharp minor are immediately associated with Sergei Rachmaninoff's name... one pianist after another was choosing it as a sure-fire showpiece, and every young miss in a conservatory was whamming it out with equal ardour. The spectacular fame of the piece did more than sweep the world before most of the public knew much about its composer; it submerged much of Rachmaninoff's later and more ambitious compositions. But the public is now getting its chance to atone for neglect it may have given Rachmaninoff's half century of creative labour.[30]

Recordings of the prelude, for example, become a significant occurrence. This medium facilitated greater access to the music, and perhaps too, access to its composer, through his performances of his works.[31] This period is one in which recordings by others emerged to a greater degree as the industry developed: tributes to the composer and performer also took place at this time. In Philadelphia, for example, in 1939, a cycle of three concerts, consisting entirely of Rachmaninov's works being conducted and played by him, took place "... in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of Rachmaninoff's first American tour ..."[32]

Such festivals and anniversary occasions indicate that the attitude of critics was changing to incorporate an historical perspective of the prelude. This generation of

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[30]from an article in *Newsweek*, 4 Dec, 1939.

[31]as discussed briefly in chapter 1.

[32]*New York Times*, 29 March, 1943.

critics has a knowledge of where the prelude originated, some perhaps a personal knowledge of its composer, and a degree of distance from the earlier popularity achieved by the prelude, which had created a different phase of criticism of the work.

At this time the prelude was still a demanded item in recital programs for Rachmaninov, as shown by the following comment from a *Newsweek* reporter in 1940:

> His pet hate is his own famous Prelude in C sharp minor; he still plays it because he must - audiences like that which packed the new Kleinhaus Music Hall in Buffalo, N.Y., where he appeared for the first time last week, demand it as an encore.[33]

Why was this still the case? The piece was no longer a novelty to the American public: one could safely assume that by this period, everyone would have heard at least one version of the work, but perhaps as the report suggests, the reason was that it was the first time this particular audience had had the opportunity to hear Rachmaninov play the work. So there was still a certain degree of significance given to a performance by the composer. In fact one critic suggests in a later analysis of the composer's career as a performer that:

> [he] was a distinguished pianist, but, other than as the authoritative exponent of his own works, he did not win the raptured applause that came the way of many of his less musically-gifted contemporaries.[34]

Critics of this period began to actively seek Rachmaninov's opinion of the piece, rather than make their own assumptions, perhaps reflecting a desire to know the work on a deeper level than demonstrated by public opinion. In an interview with *Cavalcade* in 1938, Rachmaninov confirmed that he did not expect his prelude would

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[33]*Newsweek*, November 25, 1940.

[34]Young, Percy M. *Keyboard Musicians of the World* Abelard-Schuman, London, 1967: p.131.

always be performed in the form in which it was composed. He is reported to have said that he actually preferred the metamorphosis of the piece into a dance tune.[35]

Rachmaninov's opinion of the work was inevitably coloured by its popularity. An interview with Rachmaninov's manager in the 1930s suggests that Rachmaninov's attitude to the piece was somewhat ambivalent.

> ... a reporter from the *Star* cornered Ibbs, Rachmaninoff's European manager, for the "inside" story of IT: "It is quite a mistake to assume that Rachmaninoff hates it, he explained. He thinks it is a very good bit of work. What troubles him is the fact that he is expected to play it every time he is seen near a piano."[36]

A late 1930s interview of Rachmaninov gives another view of the composer's opinion of the prelude and its popularity, an opinion which he had developed with increasing conviction:

> Of all the dissatisfactions of his long career one among three stands out. "The big annoyance of my concert life," asserted the sallow, lank Russian master, "is my C sharp minor Prelude. I'm not sorry I wrote it. It has helped me. But people ALWAYS make me play it. By now I play it without feeling - like a machine."[37]

Some critics claimed to dread another performance, because the work lacked a freshness or novelty for them, and they acknowledged that much of their current opinion was the result of the number of times they had been forced to listen to the

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[35]interview quoted in op.cit.: Bertensson & Leyda: pp.340-341.

[36]Bertensson & Leyda *Sergei Rachmaninoff: a lifetime in music* New York University Press, New York, 1956: p.296.

[37]from a report in the *Chronicle*, quoted in Bertensson & Leyda *Sergei Rachmaninoff: a lifetime in music* New York University Press, New York, 1956: p.327.

piece. Simultaneously though, they still acknowledge that there is an attraction to the piece, even after repeated performances.

> Even the most bored of listeners must admit the imagination of the ending [of the prelude], even if repeated hearings have killed whatever beauty the rest may contain.[38]

In a visit to the Disney studios in 1942, Rachmaninov's acceptance of the prelude being transformed into other mediums was tested, when he was shown footage of:

> ... Disney's early film *Mickey's Opry House*, in which the tiny hero was seen as a concert pianist playing Rachmaninov's most famous prelude. Its composer told Walt, "I have heard my inescapable piece done marvellously by some of the best pianists, murdered cruelly by amateurs, but never was I more stirred than by the performance of the great maestro Mouse."[39]

Perhaps in a way it was a compliment that his work had been chosen for inclusion in a Walt Disney film; it certainly confirms that the work was securely in the popular realm, and that it still captured public imagination enough to inspire its use in the non-traditional medium of film. Disney productions incorporated quite a significant amount of classical repertoire into their films, the works of Stravinsky and Paul Dukas for example, using their most widely recognised works, and perhaps giving these works even more popularity because of the increased audience that film attracts. It is significant, then, that they chose to use Rachmaninov's C sharp minor prelude[40], given

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[38]Culshaw, John *Sergei Rachmaninov* Dennis Dobson Ltd, London, 1949: p.104.

[39]op.cit.: Bertensson & Leyda: p.372.

[40]One wonders how significant the decision was to Walt Disney productions though, when later monographs do not specifically name the work. "In *The Opry House* Disney had already moved beyond *Turkey in the Straw*; the musical feature of the film was a Rachmaninoff Prelude." [from:

the criteria suggested above, and one wonders whose decision it was, and who was invited to play the soundtrack, as Rachmaninov's comment implies that it was not one of his own performances.

In the years prior to his death, the prelude's popularity was so well established that the work was not only standard repertoire for a recital, but was also the subject of jokes. Abram Chasins reports, in *Saturday Review* in 1955, that during a concert by Hoffmann, the performer baited the composer by referring to the prelude, confirming the direct association in the public mind between the piece and its composer:

> Hoffmann once played a delightful joke on Rachmaninoff. For the umpteenth encore of a Carnegie recital Hoffmann strode to the piano, looked pointedly at Rachmaninoff, and boomed out the famous three-note phrase with which "The Prelude" begins. The audience gurgled in excited anticipation and Rachmaninoff's expression disclosed that this piece was hardly his favourite. Just as Hoffmann reached the C sharps, he waited a few seconds and then, with a naughty-boy grin, went right into Chopin's Fantasie-Impromptu! The audience roared, and Rachmaninoff burst out laughing until the tears streamed.[41]

The striking similarity between this story and the one related below by Piggott in his 1978 monograph, illustrate another aspect of the prelude's popularity. It is conceivable that one of these authors has related the anecdote incorrectly, but even if this is the case, the two instances show that the Prelude's popularity was widespread enough for such stories to be circulating, and in the nature of oral tradition, they were perhaps being embellished along the way.

Schickel, Richard *The Disney Version* Simon & Schuster, New York, 1968: p.127.] Perhaps the writer assumes that readers will know to which of the preludes he refers.

[41]Chasins, Abram "The Rachmaninoff Legacy", in *Saturday Review* October 29, 1955.

> ... at a recital by Vladimir de Pachmann, ..Rachmaninov's presence in the audience was noticed by the celebrated virtuoso, who thereupon raised his hands high in the air and brought them crashing down on the opening notes of the Prelude. Pachmann lingered on the second note (G sharp) for some time, grinning maliciously at Rachmaninov, who sank his head into his hands in any agony of embarrassment only to raise it again a moment later in delighted amusement as the witty pianist converted the held G sharp into the first note of Chopin's Fantasie-Impromptu.[42]

These amusing anecdotes illustrate not only Rachmaninov's own attitude to the Prelude, but also the way in which the work was being received during this period. It implies that Rachmaninov was almost embarrassed by the performance of his prelude. His response may have been a display of frustration that yet again someone had chosen to use this piece as representative of him as a person, as if the Prelude had literally become Rachmaninov's character piece, illustrated further by Josef Hoffmann's witticism:

> Not all Rachmaninov's colleagues poked fun at the Prelude as subtly as did Pachmann, and its composer was probably more irritated than amused by the letters he received from another colleague, Josef Hoffmann, mischievously addressed to 'Herr Cis Moll'.[43]

Rachmaninov's response to Pachmann's (and/or Hoffmann's, as the case may be) performance could also have been regret that he had given up copyright on the piece so early, making it possible for the work to be easily disseminated, and resulting in such a variety of performances. It may have been a sense of resignation that he would have to listen to the work again, or embarrassment that it was being interpreted in a way which he never envisaged.

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[42]op.cit. Piggott, Patrick: p.30.

[43]"Mr C sharp Minor" op.cit.: Piggott, Patrick: p.30.

By choosing to use the Prelude in such a way, the performer exemplified the response of his contemporaries to the popularity of the piece. He recognised the implications both for Rachmaninov and the audience. One may assume that it was not only Rachmaninov who recognised the opening chords of the piece, and who subsequently appreciated the clever way in which this was turned into an amusing beginning for the performance of a completely different work.

By the time of his death in 1943, Rachmaninov's C sharp minor prelude had become one of the most popular pieces in his oeuvre. This single piano work had achieved fame to the extent of which its composer could not have envisaged when it was first composed. It was standard repertoire for students and an expected item on the programs of his recitals, both overseas and in America.

Rachmaninov's death in 1943 was significant to this process of change in approach to examining the prelude's popularity. Critics were now able to adopt a reflective attitude, and to make predictions about the prelude's continuing role in the public perspective. For instance, what would happen to the level of popularity now that the personal influence of the composer, and requests for performances by him, are no longer attainable?

The period immediately after Rachmaninov's death is one in which a large number of articles preceded by titles such as *Rachmaninov remembered* occur. The significances of the claims of personal connections with the composer that many writers made cannot be ignored. It is possible that some writers might have assumed personal knowledge of the composer for their advantage, when Rachmaninov was no longer able to dispute their claims. Also, those who genuinely knew the composer might have prejudiced accounts of Rachmaninov's life.

Critics of the period were analysing the effect Rachmaninov had had on society, and were examining the extent to which the prelude had left its mark on both audiences and pianists. It is interesting that many persist in drawing attention to Rachmaninov's relative youth when he composed the piece, perhaps in order to suggest that the work was relatively insignificant to the rest of his achievements, or that it was insignificant to Rachmaninov himself.

Obituaries in the *New York Times* provide examples of this reflective style of writing. The editorial of 30 March, 1943, indicates one instance in which the positive elements of Rachmaninov's career were emphasised:

> Rachmaninoff will be remembered best for his music ... even the c sharp minor Prelude which he tossed off as a young man, which, to his sorrow, he was always expected to play and which countless students will wrestle with through the years.[44]

Newsweek groups him with Toscanini and Kreisler, as "three men who could be called great in their own time"[45], and goes on to comment on the likelihood of the work's continued popularity:

> At 20 Rachmaninoff was known all over the world for a composition Ernest Newman had called "it", and which he himself grew to hate. Doubtless parlour pianists for centuries to come will go on bong-bong-bonging the Prelude in C-sharp minor.[46]

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[44]from the *New York Times* editorial, 30/3/1943.

[45]*Newsweek* April 5, 1943.

[46]ibid.

Olin Downes reviews the piece from an historical perspective:

> ... more than one of the piano preludes, more mature in style in the opus numbers of the later years than the irresponsible one in c sharp minor, which Rachmaninoff composed when he was 20, and sold, it is said, for as many dollars to a publisher ... will probably for long years be with us. Today there is a certain artistic reaction in his favour.[47]

Such opinions indicate that the prelude was no longer a novelty, it was now an historical phenomenon. Critics could examine the work itself, with actual analysis of the piece providing a basis for explanation of its popularity. The composer's work was being approached from the perspective of the twentieth century, and consequently, specific musical elements of his composition became the focus[48]:

> [an]other comment concerns Rachmaninoff's famous prelude in C-sharp minor, when it was still a "novelty", in the words of T.J.Crawford, a veteran Canadian organist in his *Memoirs*: "... You can realise what a thrill this chromatically daring composition gave ... (us) ... on the threshold of musical adventure."[49]

Critics and audiences could now distance themselves from the composer and from the period in which the work enjoyed novelty status. This critical distance is apparent in

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[47]from an article by Olin Downes in the *New York Times*, titled "A Romantic Passes", April 4, 1943.

[48]op.cit. Piggott: p.28, informs us that Clara Schumann [who died in 1896, but taught up until this time] was using the piece. "Quite early in its phenomenally successful career it came to the notice of the elderly Clara Schumann, introduced to her by an enthusiastic English pupil ... [but she] would not allow her pupil to play the piece until its 'faulty' harmonies had been 'corrected' ...", Piggott suggests that perhaps "... it was Rachmaninov's use of consecutive fifths which upset her ..."

[49]quoted from *The Diapason* (Chicago) March 1, 1947: p.24. in an article by William Flannagan, titled "Sergei Rachmaninoff: a twentieth century composer" written for *Tempo*, issue n.22, the "Rachmaninoff Number", A.Gishford ed., Boosey & Hawkes Ltd, London, 1951.

John Culshaw's 1949 monograph, for instance, which takes a critical view of the prelude and the composer's opinion of it:

> Not much can or should be said about the C sharp minor Prelude. Of its kind it is admirable, and the author, although positively anxious to subscribe to its retirement pension, has never been able to appreciate the type of musical judgement which decrees that because a thing is popular it must therefore be bad.[50]

Writers were starting to make distinctions between the different types of popularity the work had enjoyed, and to examine the phenomenon of that popularity.

The period up until the 1960s is one in which the level of popularity of the work declined. There is less evidence of reviews about the work, one might assume because it is not being performed as frequently, and perhaps for the same reason, it is not frequently being singled out in articles on the composer. Perhaps the main catalyst for the decline was Rachmaninov's death: with the composer no longer there to perform the work, it did not hold the same appeal to the public. Perhaps also there was nowhere else for the work to go: it had after all achieved such a high profile in a diverse spectrum - film[51], jazz, as an orchestral work, and in its original form - that perhaps it was becoming stale in public opinion.

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[50]Culshaw, John *Sergei Rachmaninov* Dennis Dobson Ltd, London, 1949: p.104.
it is also interesting to note that this author prefaces his monograph by saying that "In light of Rachmaninov's present popularity some kind of survey of his life and works seems absolutely necessary." (p9)

[51]as well as its use in the Walt Disney film, the Prelude was used, along with the 2nd piano concerto, as the theme music for the movie *I've Always Loved You*, a Republic picture based on the romance of a female concert pianist, Myra Hassman, for which Rubenstein plays the soundtrack. reviewed in *Variety* September 4, 1946.

The cover page of the souvenir album for the movie, published in the late 1940s.

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Chapter Three

From the 1960s

This period is one in which the role of the historian, as well as that of the critic, becomes relevant. The critical distance that writers of this period have allows a different approach to the music, which incorporates a move to look at the social impact of perceptions of the piece: the influence of the C sharp minor prelude's popularity. During the 1940s and 50s writers had a positivistic approach to analysis. As Kerman suggests in his 1985 monograph, writers such as Donald Mitchell, in 1955:

> ... complained, not for the first time, that journalistic critics had begun to shirk evaluation, discrimination, and the making of value judgements.[52]

This problem has been addressed by the critics quoted in the following discussion, who have both critical and historical distance from the composer. They are not influenced by the immediacy of the work's popularity and can perhaps therefore approach the work from a more objective angle. The influence of the authentic performance movement is also relevant here. There is a different attitude now to the one discussed in chapter one, as more importance is given to a definitive performance of the work *as the composer intended.* Programmatic titles for the work are no longer being invented, which supports this change in attitude, it is sufficient now to call the work by the title under which it was composed.

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[52]Kerman, Joseph *Musicology* Fontana Paperbacks, London, 1985: p.114.

The '24 Preludes'

A number of writers during this period have made a comparison between the preludes of Chopin and those of Rachmaninov, choosing to group the C sharp minor prelude with the sets of preludes, op.23 and op.32. In doing so, these writers counteract the popularity of the C sharp minor prelude by removing its isolated status. Lipman documents the grouping:

> ... for the piano, [Rachmaninov] completed his second set of preludes (1910), the thirteen of which, when added to the ten of the first set - and of course the C-sharp Minor - placed him with Chopin, as a composer of one piano prelude in each of the twelve major and twelve minor keys.[53]

Rachmaninov composed more than 24 preludes, so it is interesting that the C sharp minor one is chosen to complete the group, and Lipman is not the only author to make this connection. *Ovation* also does this in a number of its 1980s issues, most specifically in the July 1985 edition, in which Dean Elder makes the following comparison:

> ... like Chopin (among others), Rachmaninov composed preludes in the twenty-four major and minor keys ...[54]

However, Elder goes on to explain that because they:

> ... are not arranged in key sequence ... not many people realise that he [Rachmaninov] wrote a prelude in every tonality. Nor do pianists program them in sequence since, unlike Chopin's, they do not constitute a unified cycle ...[55]

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[53]Lipman, Samuel *Music After Modernism* Basic Books Inc., New York, 1979: p.97.

[54]*Ovation* July 1985: p.24.

Why then, if there are so many disparities between the two composers, do these observations seem relevant to these writers? It is a different approach to earlier discussions of the C sharp minor prelude, which mentioned this work alone, and perhaps such comparisons are designed to place the prelude back in the context of Rachmaninov's other compositions, highlighting its relative insignificance to the rest of his oeuvre. It had previously had more identity as an individual work than as part of the set from which it originated, and perhaps writers now wanted to rectify this.

Evidence of the grouping of the C sharp minor prelude with the other 2 sets composed by Rachmaninov before the beginning of the 1960s, can be found in an advertisement on the back cover of *Tempo*'s 1951-52 issue, which offers the 24 preludes of Rachmaninov "complete" for 25/-. However, it is only in the last 30 years that writers have chosen to comment on this.

There are in fact only two other preludes written by Rachmaninov that are not in the set of 24: prelude in E flat minor (1888) and prelude in F major (1891). The latter was revised as the prelude for violincello and piano in 1892, which removes it from the category of piano prelude, and the first could in fact be part of one of the later sets of preludes, as it does not have a separate opus number,[56] which means that it could be counted later. If these assumptions are made, then it is not unusual that writers have said that Rachmaninov composed only 24 preludes, however, the observation confirms the individual status of the C sharp minor prelude, because it is not referred to in the context of the set in which it was written.

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[55]ibid.

[56]as listed in the entry on Rachmaninov by Geoffrey Norris, in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians* Sadie, Stanley ed. Macmillan Publishing Ltd, London, 1980.

The variety of formats in which the work has been published over this century has also changed to incorporate the prelude in anthologies with other works by Rachmaninov, including publication of the complete preludes. It has been mentioned above that such publications have been available for some time, but the significant factor is that the prelude is no longer published in profuse quantities as a single work. Earlier this century it would have been common to find many different versions of the work published as single sheets, both in its original format (by Augener Ltd, and in Australia, the Paling's pianoforte series), as a piano duet by Allan & Co., and in its translations into jazz for example [see appendix H].

Single publications are a rare occurrence for the works of many composers in this decade; most companies choose now to publish the works in sets, and grouping the 24 preludes is one of these combinations. That the work is now being published in volumes with other works, indicates that it is no longer being singled out for special attention, the focus is being put back on the context of the work.

Present context

By the 1960s, there was a marked decline in interest in the C sharp minor prelude, and this decline seems to have extended into the 1990s. This is exemplified by the programming of ABC FM over the last 5 years, for example, where the work appears approximately 10 times.[57] It is significant to note that the reasons for these broadcasts are usually for an anniversary occasion or specific series on Rachmaninov's music - the recent series: "Great Rachmaninov Interpreters" [November 1993] and "Composer of the Week" [April 1994], for example - not as live performances of the

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[57]because of the work's length, it is difficult to determine the exact figures, as generally only works of more than nine mins are listed in the program in the *24hours* magazine where this information was collected.

piece, as it is in dramatic contrast to the frequency of performance that the piece enjoyed earlier this century.

Such methods of programming put the work in the context of Rachmaninov's complete biography. Both the reasons for its performance and the frequency reflect a change in Rachmaninov's popularity. The *New York Times* during the 1970s for example, has only two items listed in the index for Rachmaninov and these are to report centenary concerts, in comparison to 40 years earlier, in which nearly every month has at least one mention of a Rachmaninov recital.

A brief survey of the *Gramophone* journal over the last 30 years also indicates the change in perspective on Rachmaninov's music. There are many more recordings of his major orchestral works, and the preludes are recorded in groups, usually a few on a recording with one of the piano concertos for example. There are recordings of the complete sets of preludes, by Weissenberg in 1972, Ashkenazy in the early 1980s, the earliest being Moura Lympany[58], but these were made for the purpose of recording the complete works of Rachmaninov, and are another example of the aggregate approach to his music that is demonstrated in recent writings.

Programming the work as part of a larger context also takes advantage of its earlier status of personifying its composer. The use of the prelude as Rachmaninov's *signature* piece suggests that interest in the work was as much to do with the way in which Rachmaninov performed it, as with the programmatic references. Margaret Throsby's recent 1994 broadcast for example, chose to use a performance of the prelude as the first item in the series, preceded only by the name of the composer and his date of birth. The recent Sunday Evening program hosted by Colin Fox also used the prelude as a signature piece, it was the first piece heard on the broadcast, and was

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[58]listed in the 1948 edition of *The Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia of Recorded Music* Crown Publishers, New York: p.413.

not preceded by any commentary. The program was centred around the larger context of Rachmaninov's symphonies, but the prelude was highlighted:

> ... Each program begins with the piece whose popularity annoyed the composer later in life - the C sharp minor *Prelude* ...[59]

These broadcasts perhaps indicate a resurgence of interest in Rachmaninov's music, which naturally has to incorporate the prelude, and there is evidence that it is re-appearing as teaching repertoire, as it was performed 4 times at a recent Canberra Eisteddfod. Although the work's level of popularity cannot necessarily be evidenced in the number of public performances, such recent indications suggest that it is enjoying a revival as a teaching piece.

While the prelude is being placed in the larger context of Rachmaninov's oeuvre, the significance of the prelude to his career is not ignored. Hutcheson's 1950 monograph demonstrates a nostalgic view of Rachmaninov's music, which continues to be perpetuated:

> It is hard to believe that [Rachmaninoff] this eminent composer and pianist is no longer with us... He has left us a whole library of piano compositions rich in melodic invention, harmonic warmth, and unsought effectiveness.[60]

In the early 1960s there are still writers who had personal connections with the composer and who were aware of the level of popularity he achieved during his lifetime, and who perhaps wish to perpetuate this popularity[61], as the 1964 reprint of

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[59]program notes for the series, in *24hours* August 1994: p.78.

[60]Hutcheson, Ernest *The Literature of the Piano* Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, London, 1958 repr.: p.295.

[61] for example the assistance given to Bertensson & Leyda by Sophie Satin [his cousin]. The influence of a family member in writing a biography can have a dramatic effect on the focus of the

Hutcheson's book, with revisions by Rudolf Ganz, shows. However, without the composer's presence, the interest in his music declined. Many attended recitals of his music just to hear him play *the* Prelude, and in the hands of another performers it was not the same drawcard.

It is significant also that the new generation of pianists - Barenboim and Richter for example - did not frequently program the work, and perhaps the absence of its performance added to its decline in popularity. Ashkenazy's performance of the complete preludes does not appear until the 1980s; it was the first of these to be released on CD[62], but this did not occur until the early 1990s, when other issues such as re-releases of Rachmaninov recordings may have been influencing the recordings by others. The 1970 reprint of *The World's Encyclopedia of Recorded Music* lists a number of recordings of the C sharp minor prelude[63], which might imply a correlation in live performance, but like the publication history of the piece, these recordings are made in conjunction with other works, not necessarily by Rachmaninov.

Hutcheson's is a retrospective view which looks at the effect Rachmaninov has had on present music culture, as well as analysing historical perceptions of the composer. David Burge, in his 1987 article for the *Keyboard* journal, describes the way in which Rachmaninov's music has been received, and the effect that historical distance has had on perceptions of his music.

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work. While such assistance is invaluable, it is important to realise that a close relative would not want a negative view of the subject of the biography to be portrayed.

[62]according to *The Penguin Guide to Compact Discs and Cassettes* Ivan March ed. (new ed.) Penguin Books, England, 1992.

[63]Rubenstein records it with a Schubert piece, Moiseiwitsch with another of the Rachmaninov preludes, Kapell with three Shostakovich preludes and Gyr with a Paderewski Minuet. Clough & Cuming eds: Greenwood Press, Conneticut, 1970: p.469.

> Rachmaninoff's music has not been treated kindly by twentieth century composers, many of whom find it anachronistic and superficial. That it is immensely popular is also cause for suspicion... However, as time gives perspective to his accomplishments, it becomes clear that his best work reveals a highly refined compositional craft ...[64]

The work's popularity is also retrospectively reviewed, and writers of this period are beginning to make value judgements about the phenomenon. Hutcheson, in the 1958 reprint of his review of works for the piano, had already claimed that:

> The c-sharp minor prelude is a typical example of a piece that became hackneyed simply because it was extremely good.[65]

His brief description implies that the numerous transcriptions of the prelude were in some way a defamation of the piece, brought about by its level of popularity. Such a view suggests that there was a perhaps negative regard for popular music in the eyes of critics of the classical repertoire, and that because of the level of popularity achieved by the prelude, it was perhaps approached only warily by some.

This difference in treatment that the prelude attracts is a direct result of its popularity. Writers such as Young, suggest that because of this, the prelude is not approached as a *serious* composition, and are questioning what the attraction for the public was. The following comment by Young, in his 1967 monograph, suggests that the prelude is in a different class from Rachmaninov's other works because of its popularity, also saying that part of the attraction of the work for the audience was Rachmaninov's own performance it:

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[64]Burge, David "Sergei Rachmaninoff: Romantic and Reactionary" in *Keyboard* July 1987: p.38.

[65]op.cit. Hutcheson, Ernest: p.296.

> ... A gloomy PRELUDE in C sharp minor is the work by which the composer is popularly known ... Guided by feeling he took liberties [when performing], both with time and expression, that incurred the wrath of musical scholars but which invariably commended the attention of his listeners ...[66]

Both Hutcheson and Young do not ignore the factual evidence about the work which is continually repeated in monographs of this period: its origin, the lack of copyright, the composer's youth when he wrote it, and the frequency with which it was played, but they now question what it is exactly about the music itself that captured the popular imagination. This perhaps indicates that because the work was equally significant to the genre of popular music as to classical repertoire. The critics were obliged to develop a different way of approaching it: one which could account for both of these facets.

Analysing the Myth

Although the work's popularity had declined somewhat, critics of this period offer a variety of explanations for its past popularity, some of which encompass technical elements of the work. Stories about the work, such as the one related by Murray Baylor in his 1985 edition of the prelude, offer the best example of the way in which the popularity of the work is maintained:

> ...a woman at a cocktail party... asked a rising young pianist about his forthcoming New York recital. When he told her his program would include a group of Rachmaninoff preludes she replied, "Did you say Rachmaninoff preludes? Oh, did he write more than one?" The story may not be true, but it points up the fact that when many people hear

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[66]Young, Percy M. *Keyboard Musicians of the World* Abelard-Schuman, London, 1967: p.152.

> Rachmaninoff's name they think of the famous C sharp minor prelude, and sometimes they know little more about his music... For a time the piece was played too frequently - often quite badly - and its composer grew to dislike playing it because it was demanded at an encore at all his piano recitals... But there are reasons for its popularity other than its ready availability. It is clearly an original, striking, effectively developed musical idea which makes a dramatic impact on the listeners when it is beautifully played.[67]

It's as if the romantic style associated with his music has to have a romantic style of prose to support it: in a way this mythologises the prelude's popularity. While this is not the first instance in which the work has been referred to as an "... original, striking ..." piece, it marks a change in documentation of the popularity of the work, and records a reason for the popularity.

Recent journalism in *The Canberra Times* to mark the 50th anniversary of Rachmaninov's death demonstrates both the factual evidence that perpetuates the prelude's popularity and the style of writing used frequently to interpret that popularity:

> Envisage, please, this strange scenario: your first opera has been staged on a double bill with a work by Russia's best known composer; your *Prelude in C sharp minor*, which you were foolish enough to sell for a flat $40, has conquered the world; but the premiere of your *First Symphony* has been a total shambles ... [and] Russia's best-known author has more or less told you he considers you beyond hope ... you meet a music-loving hypnotherapist ... [which] fortifies you to produce what will become the most adored concerto of modern times. And you haven't even turned 30 yet. It sounds like a fairytale ...[68]

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[67]Baylor, Murray ed. *Rachmaninoff: selected works for the piano* Alfred Publishing Co. Inc., California, 1985: p.4.

[68]Stove, R.J. "Musical Hero of Russia and America" (...one of the most beloved modern composers, died 50 years ago tomorrow.) in *The Canberra Times* 27/3/93.

The effect of the Myth on Rachmaninov's Biography

There are many examples of the way in which the style of writing used to document the prelude as part of Rachmaninov's biography perpetuate its fairytale status. In a recent Australian radio broadcast, for instance, Colin Fox[69] tells us:

> ... [Rachmaninov] grew to loathe [the C sharp minor prelude], audiences would never let him finish a recital until he'd played it. In 1898, at the age of 25, he was invited to tour England and it seems that the English wanted to see who had written *the* prelude. Rachmaninov found, that in England it was published under such titles as: *The Burning of Moscow* and *The Day of Judgement.*[70]

This prelude has become an important part of Rachmaninov's biography because of the level of popularity it achieved, but now as much attention is being given to the other works in his oeuvre. Are the critics still marvelling at how such a relatively small work became such a significant part of the composer's career? Roger Evans likens the spread of the prelude's popularity to:

> ... the "gusher" that shows oil prospectors where to drill; and Rachmaninoff was content to keep exploiting its devices.[71]

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[69]in his Sunday evening program, 28/8/94.

[70]Murray Baylor [1985] adds *The Bells of Moscow, The Moscow Waltz* and *That Moscow Rag* to the list of titles which the prelude was known by.

[71]in the cover notes to RCA Victor CD. Barry Douglas (pf) 2nd piano concerto, the C sharp minor prelude and other works, recorded in London, 1992.

Friskin and Freundlich, in their compilation of *Music for the Piano*[72], do not fail to emphasise the popularity of the work:

> It should be recognised that the popularity of this [C sharp minor Prelude] is based on genuine musical merit and originality.[73]

What was it then that endeared the C sharp minor prelude to the public? Perhaps there was as much attraction in the way Rachmaninov played the piece, as in the piece itself, drawing people to the performances. Rachmaninov was after all a celebrity as a performer, especially as the authoritative exponent of his own music, as well as the composer of the prelude, and consequently statements about his compositions continue to occur concurrently with discussions of his performing style.

With the aid of historical distance, writers can analyse the prelude's popularity by looking, for example, at the frequency of performance. It is significant that the prelude is mentioned as being omitted from the program of a Carnegie Hall recital, confirming to us that it was an expected item at recitals:

> ... [Carnegie Hall, 21/12/1918] is one recital where Rachmaninoff did not perform his ubiquitous *Prelude in C-sharp minor Op.3, No.2.*[74]

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[72]originally published as Volume V of the series entitled *The Field of Music*, in 1954.

[73]They go on to suggest that it was the G minor prelude that was the most popular! Friskin & Freundlich *Music for the Piano* Dover Publications Inc., New York, 1973: p.154.

[74]from an annotation of Aldrich, Richard *Concert Life in New York: 1902-1923* Putman's Sons, New York, 1941; in Palmeri, Robert *Sergei V. Rachmaninov: a guide to research* Garland, New York, 1986: p.120.

Re-releases & Old Recordings

Old recordings by Rachmaninov are presently being re-released,[75] which might suggest a revival of Rachmaninov's music: However it could also be that recordings of the composer are being remastered, along with those of many other performers, for historical reasons, to preserve the both the music and the career of the performer. This reintroduces the attitudes to authentic performance discussed earlier in chapter one. The reasons for the release of a old recordings in the 1990s are to a large extent involved in producing an *authentic* performance of a work. In the case of the C sharp minor prelude, the task has been made easier by the recordings left by Rachmaninov, which are perhaps now being given the same value as an Urtext edition of the score.

Perhaps the issue of anniversaries is also relevant here. Significant occasions - such as the anniversary of the composer's death - are used as an effective marketing strategy for the re-release of old recordings onto CD. Piano roll recordings of past performers hold perhaps the same intrigue for the 1990s audience as did the opportunity to hear a live performance of Rachmaninov for audiences earlier this century. They are also valuable historical documents of particular performing traditions: in Rachmaninov's case, they preserve the performer/composer tradition.

The benefit of such a variety of performances to the consumer is obvious: there is a greater variety of choice. For the purposes of study, we have the opportunity to become familiar with a range of performances, and perhaps even to examine Rachmaninov's performances as demonstrative of his changing attitudes towards the piece.

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[75]ie piano rolls, gramophone recordings and reproducing piano rolls being remastered onto CD.

The focus is not just on the music but also on the composer, and Ruth Laredo, in a discussion with David Dubal, suggests that the 1980s, is a period in which Rachmaninov is becoming increasingly popular again[76]. In Laredo's recent edition of Rachmaninov works, she comments that Rachmaninov was very precise with his manuscripts, to the extent that she was surprised to find the degree to which editions of the C sharp minor prelude differed from the original manuscript. Her approach to preserving the original score, also preserves the romantic image of its composer:

> ... This edition incorporates all of what I believe to be Rachmaninoff's authentic tempo markings and musical directions. Unlike other editions ... Rachmaninoff's manuscript is far more conservative. His own tempo markings and phrasings speak for themselves - allowing the piece to appear for the first time in print as he really intended it.[77]

This comment implies that the original conception of the work had been distorted by the numerous editions that have appeared. In Laredo's opinion, publishers such as Gutheil took advantage of the lack of copyright and had become careless with its reproduction, saying that "additions" to the original score were "... common practice in 1903. [But] Today we are accustomed to the Urtext ..."[78] This reflects indicates the level of research into Rachmaninov's music that is occurring. While the prelude is no longer prominently in the foreground of popular music, it is attracting considerable interest from music historians.

The work has also remained a part of the pianists repertoire, although to a significantly reduced degree, and is now viewed in much the same way as other repertoire for the instrument, neither excessively highlighted or ignored. Perhaps other

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[76]Dubal, David *Reflections from the Keyboard* Summit Books, New York, 1984: p.245.

[77]Laredo, Ruth ed. *Rachmaninoff: Prelude op.3 no.2 in C sharp minor, Ten Preludes op.23* Edition Peters, New York, 1985: in the performance notes.

[78]ibid: in the preface.

works in the repertoire also enjoyed a prominent period of intense interest and varied responses which has not been documented. Or was there something about this work in particular that made it conducive to such a phenomenon? The prelude's popularity is a fact which perhaps reflects more about its audiences than about the piece itself. Non-musical factors such as the attraction of an *exotic* composer and the trend of ascribing pictures to the music have been shown as influences on the level of popularity. Rachmaninov's role as a performer was also a significant factor.

Due to its popularity, the C sharp minor prelude demonstrates a unique phenomenon in music history. It is a work which attracted interest from all mediums of music culture, and whose interpretations were diverse in both music and prose. The myth was nurtured in the early part of this century and it captured the popular imagination in a way which we are only now starting to explain. The history of the reception of this work demonstrates the active involvement of an audience with a piece of music. Despite a composer who was resigned to having to perform the work until his death, and critics who began to question its popularity after the death of the composer, the prelude still held its place in the public eye and has maintained that place in music history.

In a sense the work has come a full circle, extracted from its context by its popularity in the early 20th century and now placed back into that context. Perhaps without the level of audience involvement, this work may have been recorded simply as an early piano piece by the composer, but because of the factors which maintained its popularity, it has been recorded as a significant composition by Rachmaninov, and facilitated a place for the composer in both popular and mainstream music history.

Appendix A ~
Interpretations of the Prelude[79]

Example One - Edison Phonograph recording of Rachmaninov from 1919. (D2273)

Rachmaninov doesn't linger over first three chords, but over the dissonance created by the second chord in each group, drawing out its resolution. He employs rubato with tempo quite freely in middle section, and provides a very climactic ending. There is extreme dynamic variation throughout.

Example Two - Mason-Hamlin Ampico reproducing piano roll (c.1920)
from the CD *Rachmaninov in Concert*

Here, Rachmaninov emphasises the cadential nature of the three note "theme", again using strong dynamic contrast. His rubato with the tempo brings out the melodic line in the second section very clearly. His style in the final section is quite aggressive, but the ending is controlled, and he doesn't draw attention to the final "bells".

Example Three - RCA Victor 1928 recording of Rachmaninov. (D3114)

This is a much faster performance than 1919 Edison recording, although somewhat similar to the Ampico piano roll. It emphasises three note theme, and continues to linger on the dissonances, this time making more of the lower sonorities of the piano. The ending is still climactic, but it feels like he's attacking the piano, like he's tossing off the performance because he has to; there does not appear to be as much emotion in this recording as examples one and two.

Example Four - (D926) Josef Hoffmann is a contemporary performer who on other occasions is known to have satirised the prelude. This is a piano roll reproduction of one of his performances.

Hoffmann really emphasises three note theme. His tempo is relatively slow in comparison with Rachmaninov, and generally even, unlike Rachmaninov's use of rubato. Hoffmann rolls quite a few of the chords, and his performance seems to lack Rachmaninov's emotion.
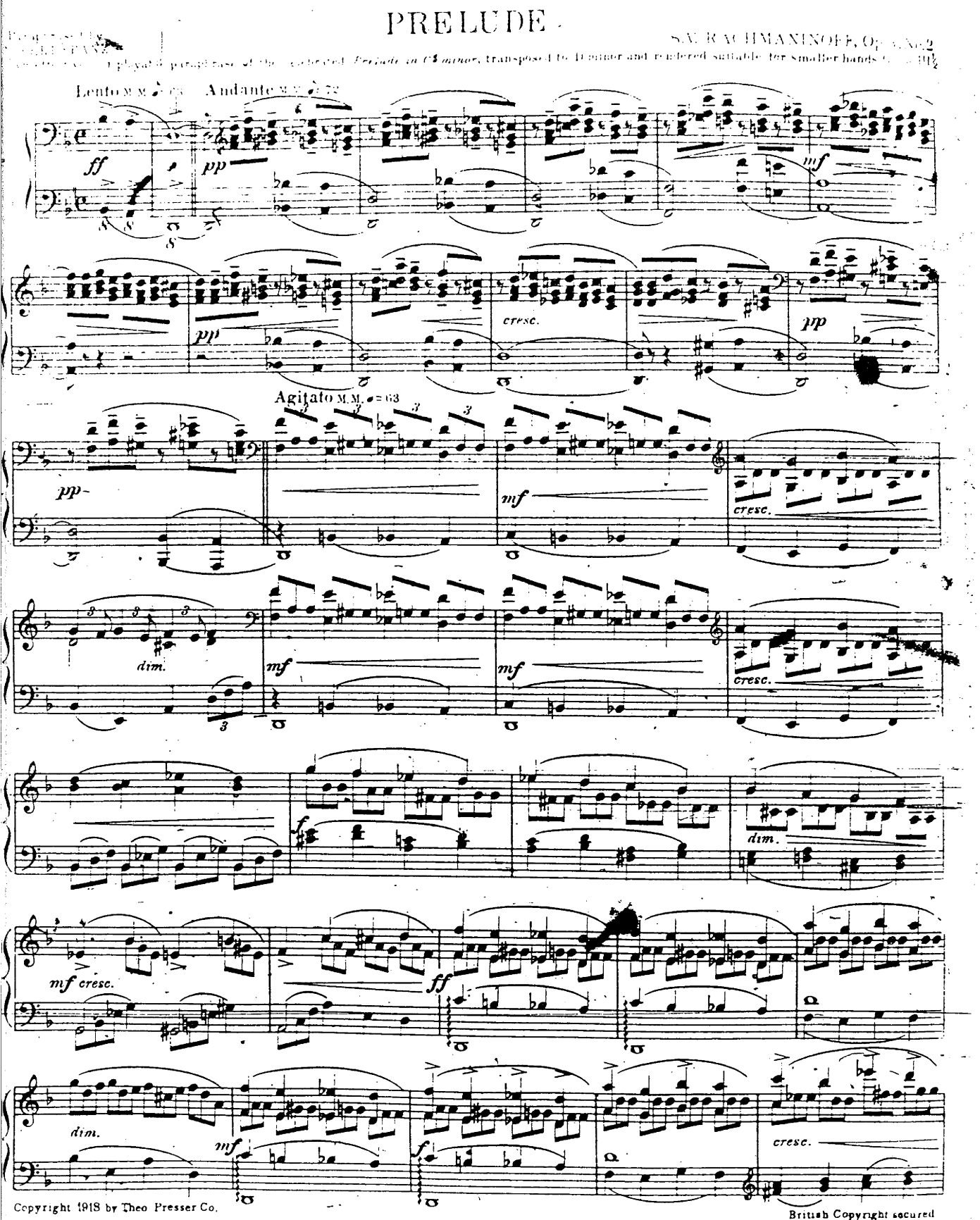
Example Five - Stokowski arrangement, broadcast on ABC FM 4/4/94.
with the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra, conducted by Eric Künsel.

This recording is very symbolic of the things Rachmaninov was supposed to be, i.e. Romantic, and of the images that the prelude created for some, i.e. the bells in the final bars. It captures the drama, the emotion, and the strong dynamic contrasts of the Rachmaninov performances.

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[79]recorded on the attached cassette.

Appendix B ~

Transcription of the C sharp minor Prelude into D minor, from *The Etude*, June 1918.

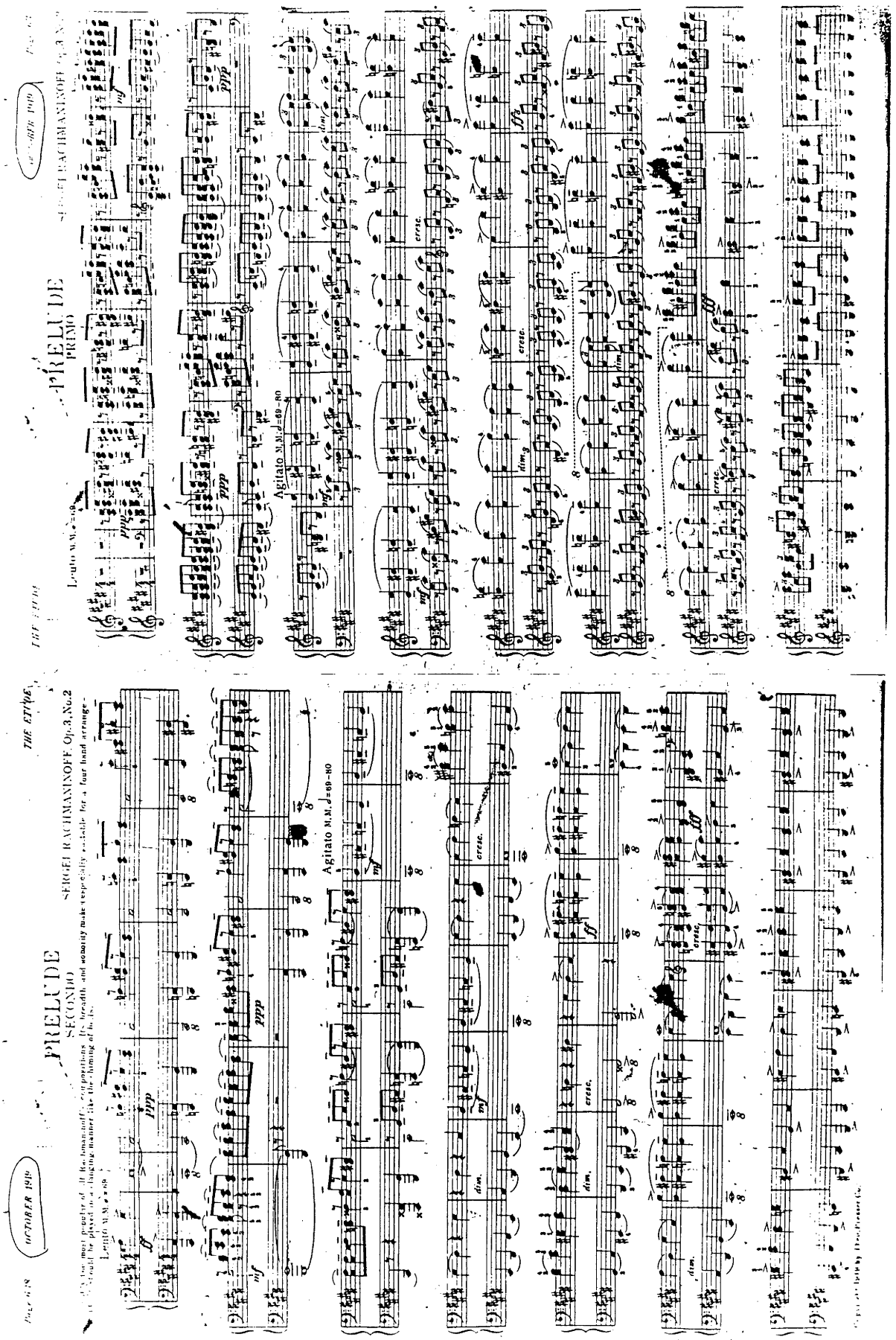


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Appendix C ~

Transcription of the C sharp minor Prelude for 4 hands, from *The Etude*, October 1919.



Appendix D -
Mastertouch Descriptive Roll C.509

"Prelude" ~ Rachmaninov

performed by Lindley Evans (1925-29) [in d minor?][80]
Tempo 80

As the roll advances, the following text appears as a commentary to the music, and is another example of the types of programs that were created to accompany the Prelude.

In the year 1812 Moscow, the capital of Russia, was in danger of an invasion by the French forces, under that great General, Napoleon, and this composition is assumed to depict certain events centering round that historic period.

The opening passages of the work suggest the tolling of the great bells of the Kremlin warning the people of the approach of Napoleon and his forces who, flushed with the conquest of European victories, sought to conquer this great city.

As the French forces approach, treading the snow covered tracks, the great bells continue their tolling throughout the "prelude" the clangour and hum of the bells is vividly expressed. The piano being peculiarly well adapted to emphasise this.

Then the sudden out-break of the immense conflagration, the hurrying feet of the populace as they rush hither and thither. In their excitement, the crash of burning walls, consternation and dread, the people endeavouring to save their personal effects, the roaring and surging of the flames as they pursue their devastating way. Hungrily devouring the stately edifices and destroying the treasures that filled the palaces, presenting a scene of veritable chaos.

While the deep throated bells of the Kremlin chime above the roar of the flames, which have left behind a scene of utter desolation, the glowing embers and smoking ruins of the once proud city of Moscow, the great sacrifice of the Russian people in their noble resolve to destroy their wondrous city, rather than permit it to fall into the hands of the French forces. The closing chords seem to suggest a dying sign of regret for the desolation succeeding a fury which is spent.

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[80]this could be a result of the technology, or an indication that a transcription was used when the roll was cut.

Appendix E - List of Significant Performances by Rachmaninov & others

(dates given in Italics are where the specific Program is not known, but Rachmaninov was playing there, and it could be assumed that at least one encore was the Prelude)

26 Sept.1892	first performance, by Rachmaninov, at a concert forming part of the entertainment at an electrical exhibition in Moscow[81].
1897-98	performed as part of a concert tour by Siloti, his cousin.
1898-99	Rachmaninov under contract to play the prelude in London[82], while there on invitation from the Philharmonic Society.
1909	*Rachmaninov's American Tour*[83] 9/12 - Carnegie Music Hall, Rachmaninov in a program of his own music.
1910	10/1 - Symphony Hall Boston (Rachmaninov played the Prelude and other works by request) 20/12 - Imperial Russian Music Society (Rachmaninov played the Prelude, as well as other pieces from op.3, and 5 of other the preludes)
Dec, 1911	Performance by Rachmaninov in Moscow
1918	*Boston & New York*
Jan, 1919	Two Rachmaninov recitals: - Symphony Hall, Boston - New National Theatre, Washington
Mar, 1919	Rachmaninov recital in the New National Theatre, Washington
Nov, 1921	Rachmaninov recital at the Civic Music League

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[81]Piggott, Patrick *Rachmaninov: the great composers* Faber & Faber, London, 1978: p.26.

[82]Culshaw, John *Sergei Rachmaninov* Dennis Dobson Ltd, London, 1949: p.33.

[83]The majority of the details in this list are taken from Kehler, George *The Piano in Concert* Scarecrow Press, New Jersey, 1982.

Jan, 1922	Rachmaninov recital in the Houston Auditorium, Texas
1922	*Queens Hall, London*
Nov, 1922	Rachmaninov recital in the Olympic Theatre
Jan, 1923	Rachmaninov recital in Charleston, South Carolina
Mar, 1924	Rachmaninov performance at The White House
23 Nov, 1925	Performance of the C sharp minor Prelude by Rachmaninov, but location unknown
1928	*London*
1933	*London*

(performances given in Kehler after this date do not specifically indicate the C sharp minor Prelude on the program; although a prelude is listed at the majority of the recitals, it cannot be conclusively stated that it refers to the C sharp minor one. However, as has been demonstrated, this work was performed mostly as an obligatory encore by Rachmaninov and would hence not be listed on the programs of these recitals.)

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