
BRILLIANT
CLASSICS
SCRIABIN
COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC
DMITRI ALEXEEV

Alexander Scriabin 1872-1915
Complete Piano Music

1. **Valse Op.1** (1888) 3'45

3 Pièces Op.2 (1887-89)
2. No.1 Étude in C sharp minor: Andante 3'01
3. No.2 Prelude in B 0'47
4. No.3 Impromptu à la Mazur in C 1'45

10 Mazurkas Op.3 (1888-90)
5. No.1 Tempo giusto in B minor 4'18
6. No.2 Allegretto non tanto in F sharp minor 1'50
7. No.3 Allegretto in G minor 1'48
8. No.4 Moderato in E 3'40
9. No.5 Doloroso in D sharp minor 3'42
10. No.6 Scherzando in C sharp minor 2'42
11. No.7 Con passione in E minor 3'33
12. No.8 Con moto in B flat minor 3'11
13. No.9 Mazurka in G sharp minor 3'01
14. No.10 Mazurka in E flat minor 6'20

15. **Allegro appassionato Op.4** (1887-93) 10'05

2 Nocturnes Op.5 (1890)
16. No.1 in F sharp minor 3'30
17. No.2 in A 2'27

Sonata No.1 in F minor Op.6 (1893)
18. I. Allegro con fuoco 11'59
19. II. Crotchet = 40 (Lento) 5'13
20. III. Presto – Funèbre 9'12

2 Impromptus à la Mazur Op.7 (1891)
21. No.1 in G sharp minor 4'10
22. No.2 in F sharp 3'53

12 Études Op.8 (1894-95)
23. No.1 in C sharp: Allegro 1'47
24. No.2 in F sharp minor: A capriccio, con forza 2'08
25. No.3 in B minor: Tempestoso 2'08
26. No.4 in B: Piacevole 1'53
27. No.5 in E: Brioso 2'54
28. No.6 in A: Con grazia 1'45
29. No.7 in B flat minor: Presto tenebroso, agitato 2'03
30. No.8 in A flat: Lento, tempo rubato 3'57
31. No.9 in G sharp minor: Alla ballata 5'07
32. No.10 in D flat: Allegro 2'08
33. No.11 in B flat minor: Andante cantabile 4'44
34. No.12 in D sharp minor: Patetico 2'50

Prelude and Nocturne for the Left Hand Op.9 (1894)
35. No.1 Prelude in C sharp minor 2'41
36. No.2 Nocturne 5'04

2 Impromptus Op.10 (1894)
37. No.1 in F sharp minor 3'55
38. No.2 in A 2'44

24 Preludes Op.11 (1888-96)
39. No.1 in C Moscow, November 1893 0'59
40. No.2 in A minor Moscow, November 1895 1'59
41. No.3 in G Heidelberg, May 1895 1'01
42. No.4 in E minor Lefortovo, Moscow, 1888 1'41
43. No.5 in D Amsterdam, February 1896 1'25
44. No.6 in B minor Kiev, 1889 0'49
45. No.7 in A Moscow, 1895 0'52
46. No.8 in F sharp minor Paris, February 1896 1'40
47. No.9 in E Moscow, November 1895 1'12
48. No.10 in C sharp minor Moscow, 1894 1'03
49. No.11 in B Moscow, November 1895 1'24
50. No.12 in G sharp minor Vitznau, June 1895 1'28
51. No.13 in G flat Moscow, 1895 1'40
52. No.14 in E flat minor Dresden, May 1895 1'11
53. No.15 in D flat Moscow, 1895 1'59
54. No.16 in B flat minor Moscow, November 1895 2'29
55. No.17 in A flat Vitznau, June 1895 0'35
56. No.18 in F minor Vitznau, June 1895 1'00
57. No.19 in E flat Heidelberg, May/June 1895 1'13
58. No.20 in C minor Moscow, 1895 1'03
59. No.21 in B flat Moscow, 1895 1'42
60. No.22 in G minor Paris, February 1896 1'01
61. No.23 in F Vitznau, June 1895 0'48
62. No.24 in D minor Heidelberg, May/June 1895 1'05

2 Impromptus Op.12 (1895)
63. No.1 in F sharp 4'58
64. No.2 in B flat minor 3'59

6 Preludes Op.13 (1895)
65. No.1 in C Moscow, 1895 2'20
66. No.2 in A minor Moscow, 1895 0'42
67. No.3 in G Moscow, 1895 0'56
68. No.4 in E minor Moscow, 1895 1'23
69. No.5 in D Moscow, 1895 1'05
70. No.6 in B minor Moscow, 1895 1'37

2 Impromptus Op.14 (1895)
71. No.1 in B 2'26
72. No.2 in F sharp minor 4'34

5 Preludes Op.15 (1895-96)
73. No.1 in A Moscow, 1895 1'39
74. No.2 in F sharp minor Moscow, 1895 1'03
75. No.3 in E Moscow, 1895 1'03
76. No.4 in E Paris, February 1896 1'23
77. No.5 in C sharp minor Heidelberg, May/June 1895 1'06

5 Preludes Op.16 (1894-95)
78. No.1 in B Moscow, January 1894 1'58
79. No.2 in G sharp minor Vitznau, June 1895 1'20
80. No.3 in G flat Moscow, 1894 2'01
81. No.4 in E flat minor St Petersburg, April 1895 1'10
82. No.5 in F sharp Moscow, 1895 0'45

7 Preludes Op.17 (1895-96)
83. No.1 in D minor Paris, February 1896 1'38
84. No.2 in E flat Paris, February 1896 0'52
85. No.3 in D flat Paris, February 1896 1'49
86. No.4 in B flat minor Moscow, November 1895 1'04
87. No.5 in F minor Heidelberg, May/June 1895 1'16
88. No.6 in B flat Heidelberg, May/June 1895 1'16
89. No.7 in G minor St Petersburg, April 1895 1'37

90. **Allegro de concert Op.18** (1895?-97) 6'36

Sonata No.2 in G sharp minor Op.19 'Sonata-Fantasy' (1892–97)
91. I. Andante 7'50
92. II. Presto 4'11

93. **Polonaise Op.21** (1897-98) 7'12

4 Preludes Op.22 (1897-98)
94. No.1 in G sharp minor: Andante 1'21
95. No.2 in C sharp minor: Andante 0'53
96. No.3 in B: Allegretto 1'06
97. No.4 in B minor: Andantino 1'15

Sonata No.3 in F sharp minor Op.23 (1897–98)
98. I. Drammatico 6'36
99. II. Allegretto 2'40
100. III. Andante 4'24
101. IV. Presto con fuoco 6'18

9 Mazurkas Op.25 (1899)
102. No.1 in F minor 3'56
103. No.2 in C 3'19
104. No.3 in E minor 2'04
105. No.4 in E 4'18
106. No.5 in C sharp minor 4'11
107. No.6 in F sharp 2'14
108. No.7 in F sharp minor 5'04
109. No.8 in B 2'18
110. No.9 in E flat minor 3'34

2 Preludes Op.27 (1900)
111. No.1 in G minor 2'03
112. No.2 in B 1'05

113. **Fantaisie Op.28** (1900-01) 10'34

Sonata No.4 in F sharp Op.30 (1901-03)
114. I. Andante 2'52
115. II. Prestissimo volando 5'05

4 Preludes Op.31 (1903)
116. No.1 in D flat/C 2'19
117. No.2 in F sharp minor 0'51
118. No.3 in E flat minor 0'40
119. No.4 in C 1'06

2 Poèmes Op.32 (1903)
120. No.1 in F sharp 2'54
121. No.2 in D 1'39

4 Preludes Op.33 (1903)
122. No.1 in E 1'09
123. No.2 in F sharp 0'58
124. No.3 in C 0'30
125. No.4 in A flat 1'10
126. **Poème tragique Op.34** (1903) 3'57

3 Preludes Op.35 (1903)
127. No.1 in D flat 1'03
128. No.2 in B flat 2'28
129. No.3 in C 1'12

130. **Poème satanique Op.36** (1903) 6'05

4 Preludes Op.37 (1903)
131. No.1 in B flat minor 1'43
132. No.2 in F sharp 1'01
133. No.3 in B 1'46
134. No.4 in G minor 1'06

135. **Valse Op.38** (1903) 5'53

4 Preludes Op.39 (1903)
136. No.1 in F sharp 0'54
137. No.2 in D 1'12
138. No.3 in G 1'16
139. No.4 in A flat 0'51

2 Mazurkas Op.40 (1903)
140. No.1 in D flat 1'51
141. No.2 in F sharp 1'28

142. **Poème Op.41** (1903) 5'27

8 Études Op.42 (1903)
143. No.1 in D flat: Presto 2'13
144. No.2 in F sharp minor 1'07
145. No.3 in F sharp: Prestissimo 1'08
146. No.4 in F sharp: Andante 2'35
147. No.5 in C sharp minor: Affannato 3'17
148. No.6 in D flat: Esaltato 2'00
149. No.7 in F minor: Agitato 1'19
150. No.8 in E flat: Allegro 2'50

151. **Feuillet d'album in F sharp** (1905) 0'57

2 Poèmes Op.44 (1905)
152. No.1 in C (Lento) 1'19
153. No.2 in C (Moderato) 1'10

3 Morceaux Op.45 (1905)
154. No.1 Feuillet d'album 0'54
155. No.2 Poème fantasque 0'30
156. No.3 Prelude in E flat 1'15
157. **Scherzo Op.46** (1905) 1'28

158. **Quasi-valse in F Op.47** (1905) 1'45

4 Preludes Op.48 (1905)
159. No.1 in F sharp 0'41
160. No.2 in C 1'18
161. No.3 in D flat 0'55
162. No.4 in C 1'02

3 Morceaux Op.49 (1905)
163. No.1 Étude in E flat 0'44
164. No.2 Prelude in F 0'51
165. No.3 Rêverie 1'22

from **4 Morceaux Op.51** (1906)
166. No.1 Fragilité 2'07
167. No.2 Prelude in A minor 2'02
168. No.3 Poème ailé 1'14
169. No.4 Danse languide 0'59

from **3 Morceaux Op.52** (1905-07)
170. No.1 Poème 2'53
171. No.2 Énigme 1'22
172. No.3 Poème languide 1'02

173. **Sonata No.5 Op.53** (1907) 13'10

4 Pièces Op.56 (1908)
174. No.1 Prelude in E flat 1'06
175. No.2 Ironies 2'27
176. No.3 Nuances 1'26
177. No.4 Étude 0'35

2 Morceaux Op.57 (1908)
178. No.1 Désir 1'17
179. No.2 Caresse dansée 1'49

180. **Feuillet d'album Op.58** (1911?) 1'40

2 Morceaux Op.59 (1910-11)
181. No.1 Poème 2'16
182. No.2 Prelude 1'47

183. **Poème–Nocturne Op.61** (1911-12) 7'23
184. **Sonata No.6 Op.62** (1911-12) 13'45

2 Poèmes Op.63 (1912)
185. No.1 Masque 1'11
186. No.2 Étrangeté 2'05

187. **Sonata No.7 Op.64 'White Mass'** (1911-12) 12'50

3 Études Op.65 (1912)
188. No.1: Allegro fantastico 3'33
189. No.2: Allegretto 2'19
190. No.3: Molto vivace 1'58

191. **Sonata No.8 Op.66** (1913) 15'13

2 Preludes Op.67 (1912-13)
192. No.1 1'22
193. No.2 0'57

194. **Sonata No.9 Op.68 'Black Mass'** (1913) 9'40

2 Poèmes Op.69 (1913)
195. No.1: Allegretto 2'04
196. No.2: Allegretto 1'30

197. **Sonata No.10 Op.70** (1913) 13'01

2 Poèmes Op.71 (1913)
198. No.1 Fantastique 1'50
199. No.2 En rêvant, avec une grande douceur 2'14

200. **Vers la flamme (Poème) Op.72** (1914) 6'12

2 Danses Op.73 (1914)
201. No.1 Guirlandes 3'20
202. No.2 Flammes sombres 2'23

5 Preludes Op.74 (1914)
203. No.1 Douloureux, déchirant 1'15
204. No.2 Très lent, contemplatif 4'56
205. No.3 Allegro drammatico 0'55
206. No.4 Lent, vague, indécis 1'19
207. No.5 Fier, belliqueux 1'07

Dmitri Alexeev *piano*

Alexander Scriabin's life was short and blindingly bright - like a flash of lightning. After his unexpected death in 1915, a contemporary of his was moved to write the following words:

Scriabin… It feels like up until this point Russian music has never known the name of figure that aroused a more passionate, a more acute interest. For some – and these are becoming fewer and fewer – this name will always be linked to the memory of something fearful and deranged; of a creative force that was full of chaotic raving, and directed at the subversion of all the canons and traditions of musical countenance. Others – and these are growing in number year by year – see in Scriabin a brave, pioneering innovator who had unfailingly tread that path of musical and aesthetic evolution which confers, upon its final stages, the greatest artistic gains: such that truly compel us to undertake a radical reassessment and reevaluation of former musical norms.

And later: 'The character of Scriabin's art – definitively manifesting itself through its dazzling brilliance, passion, and unyieldingly pronounced individuality – could not be denied in any way even by the composer's fiercest critics.'

Already within the lifetime of the composer he was surrounded by myth. He was seen as the new Prometheus who had plundered the heavenly fire. In him people saw the new Icarus whose assent had brought him too close to the sun. Even the very date of Scriabin's death was shrouded in mystical interpretations by his contemporaries as it fell during the Easter period. Adding to the symbolism of his, his birthday on the eve of Christmas (a date of sacred meaning for Scriabin himself), seemed to confirm the divine calling that fate had bestowed upon the deceased creator.

The passing of more than a century since the composer's death done little to dampened the ever-growing interest that attracts people to Scriabin's music and persona, inspiring and intriguing them all around the world. Scriabin left us 74 published opuses. The first and last opuses are not simply separated by the passage of 25 years. Between these works is that truly gigantic chasm which divides different epochs, different outlooks onto the world, and different aesthetics. It is as if the music is written on different planets.

In his youth Scriabin worshipped Chopin. As a child, he would go to bed putting a copy of the composer's music under his pillow. This sincere adoration could not have escaped reflecting itself in his own youthful compositions. One only needs to look at the catalogue of works by Scriabin to notice how even the names of the works throw us back into the world of the great Polish composer: Mazurkas, Preludes, Etudes, Impromptus, Nocturnes… Indeed, so much in those early endeavors by Scriabin pay homage to Chopin. But surely the peril of viewing this music as simply imitation and pastiche is the preserve of the narrow-minded. It is with a heavy heart that one thinks of the unfortunate comment by Cesar Cui describing it as a 'treasure chest of looted Chopin-manuscripts' - by the way, later Cui changed his attitude towards Scriabin. Scriabin was not a copyist, but an inheritor of Chopin who found new ways to continue the psycho-musical paths first laid down by the composer.

Valse Op.1, the first published work by Scriabin, is a wonderfully alluring composition by Scriabin that exudes the intimate warm atmosphere central to the traditions of home music-making that were so popular in nineteenth-century Russia. Yet, even here, there are glimmers of that piquant harmony and unusual turns that are a taste of things to come.

The 10 Mazurkas Op.3 represent the first excursion of the composer to that most Chopinesque of genres. It seems as if the young Scriabin embodied the very spirit of Chopin - his nuances, finesse and beauty. Yet, we do not hear here those Polish national roots. It is, in essence, something else.

Interestingly the great Anton Rubinstein was present during one of Scriabin's student performances in the Moscow Conservatoire; he was so taken by the Mazurka Op.3 No.4 that, after the concert, he came up onto the stage and improvised a series of variations on the mazurka's theme.

Even in these youthful pieces the unique intensity of the psychological atmosphere, the tragic contours of the rhythms, and the unorthodox outlines of the melodic line are unmistakable: All features that will evolve in the fullness of time in forthcoming output of Scriabin. Strikingly characteristic is the end of the last mazurka that crowns the complete cycle – here, there is no tonal resolution; we hear the disappearing mournful peal of a bell, hanging over the work like a question…

The first edition of the *Allegro Appassionata Op.4* comes about already in 1887. This brilliant concert piece was meant to have been the first movement of a sonata.

Scriabin, however, did not bring this idea into fruition, and in the work appeared in its expanded version in 1894 as a separate composition.

Opp. 5, 7, 10, 12 and *14* are Nocturnes, Impromptus a la Mazur and Impromptus. We witness the mature mastery of the composer. The gloss of a certain salon-like quality certainly makes its mark - not unlike Chopin - but, without ever obscuring the genuine beauty of the melodies in these works; the tragic undertones of Impromptu Op.12 No.2; and the ecstatic rhythms prophetic of late Scriabin. Utterly unforgettable are the profound lyrical insights of Impromptu Op.14 No..

A great number of extraordinary pianists studied at the Moscow Conservatoire at the same time as Scriabin. Amongst these, the sensational performances of the phenomenal virtuoso Josef Lhevinne exerted such a powerful influence on Scriabin that he too wanted to impress everyone with that kind of technical brilliance. Yet, Scriabin was never gifted with a natural technical facility and, in secret, took to practicing Balakirev's *Islamey* and Liszt's *Don Juan Fantasy* with such fervor that he 'over-played' his right hand. The injury flung Scriabin into profound and despairing crisis. Scriabin wrote in his diary: 'Fate sends obstacles my attainment of such an ardently desired goal… Utterly downcast. The first reflections on the value of life, religion, about God. Complaints muttered against fate, and God. The composition of the First Sonata, with the funeral march.'

The First *Sonata Op.6* is an early experiment in the expression of the tragic in Scriabin's artistry. Its content can be defined thus: battle and heroic demise; the drama of an individual human fate with the fateful and deadly outcome. The cycle ends with the pathos of battle and strong-willed resistance. Even in the rarefied funeral march one feels not so much hopelessness, but courageous mourning over the fallen hero.

The first movement is composed in classical sonata form with a repeated exposition. The main theme evokes the will, and the preparedness for battle. Its first rising inflection (F-G-A-flat) morphs and reinvents itself through all four movements of the Sonata, and in doing so lays down the inclination for monothematicism and the unification of the cycle into one movement. The second theme is a lyrical Romantic theme of aspiration. It is delicate and fragile – lighter and softer in coloring. The concluding part, in which something march-like can be heard, has a heightened meaning. The insistent desire to overcome the forces of fate is expressed with extraordinary starkness. The exposition's completeness is clear: its repeat essentially serves to affirm the importance that the juxtaposition of these contrasted themes plays in the context of the Sonata as a unified entity. The penultimate bar of the tragic finale of the first movement pre-empts the opening theme of the funeral march (that same F-G-A-flat inflection).

The second movement: the very first chorale chords sound like a concentrated, mournful reflection. The final C major does not bring a full resolution: it third resounds almost like the leading note to F minor. The third movement (Presto) is the awakening tempest of evil spirits. The threatening octave bass (again F-G-A-flat) ushers in tragic and unyielding tones; the anxious and disjointed melody and restless motion all characterise the first theme. The insurmountable nature of fate is victorious. In anticipation of respite there are long pauses through fermatas. And again, like a memory of unfulfilled hopes, appears the mournful theme of aspiration. The movement's conclusion intensifies the feeling of the unresolved, and paves the way for the funeral march.

The dramatic core of the Sonata is the sonata allegro of the first movement. Its logical and psychological culmination, however, is the funereal finale. The main theme is full of elevated and heroic mourning, and the heavenly sounds of the chorale in the middle section call to mind the songs of angels…. The First Sonata was a significant point in the composer's creativity. The innovative freshness of thematic material, the finesse of motivic development and profound expressiveness (foretelling the aesthetic of Expressionism in some way) creates an unforgettable impression.

In the same period Scriabin composed his two pieces for the left hand: the *Prelude & Nocturne Op.9*. If the Prelude clearly alludes to the mournfully tragic state of mind of the twenty-year-old composer, then the Nocturne - quite the opposite - is surprisingly light and harmonious music. Unexpectedly for Scriabin himself, both pieces quickly gained popularity.

Scriabin's composition of etudes marked every period of his creative life. Altogether he wrote 26 etudes. The very first published *Etude, Op.2 No.1*, written by the then fifteen-year-old composer is already a poem – the music of which is imbued with profundity and fresh emotional expression. To borrow the words of Vladimir Sofronitsky, the genius interpreter of Scriabin's oeuvre, this piece 'is the grain from

which grows the entire grove of Etudes Opus 8; and not only etudes, but also range of preludes. Already here Scriabin's characteristic waves of ascent and descent – the poetic expression and freedom of tempi – can be discerned. Of course, there is much also from Tchaikovsky, but even more of his own: the inimitable Scriabinesque.'

The *Twelve Etudes Op.8* are a genuine masterpiece of the young Scriabin; and it became one of the most popular of the composer's works. Of course, it is without any difficulty that the roots of his inspiration can be identified: the Etudes of Chopin, and to a lesser degree, Liszt. Together with this there is some influence of Etudes from the Russian compositional school, notably Lyadov. It is not this, however, that defines the powerful emotional impact of these works: but the extraordinarily unique inflection, the broad spectrum of images, and the masterful presentation of piano textures. Op.8 is a real cycle. The very first piece takes on the form almost of an introductory statement, presenting clearly the initial idea that evolves and takes on an infallible trajectory, through the dramatic and lyrical transformations, to the climax: the mournful eleventh and famous twelfth, the conclusion and apotheosis of the cycle. These two Etudes can in themselves be seen as a two-part micro-cycle where the deeply morose atmosphere of the eleventh contrasts with the mighty energy of the twelfth, with its inimitable image of volitional self-affirmation and the manifested pathos of the utmost tragedy. It is an image that imbues the entire creativity of the composer. Scriabin's words, from his posthumously published writings, come to mind: 'He is strong who has experienced despair and has conquered it.'

Op.8 is likewise unified by tonal links between the Etudes. It is clear that the tonal movement is carefully choreographed. In these Etudes there is an inimitable character in the emotional flight, soaring; the nuanced finesse of rhythm and astringency of harmony is unparalleled. It is unquestionable that in these Etudes Scriabin has left the framework of the 'instructive etude' far behind. These pieces are almost poems, almost fantasies – they are overflowing with wonderous melodic lines, and rich imagination: each and every piece is a real musical gem.

The Prelude is one of the Scriabin's most beloved genres, to which he returned 90 times. Since the time of Bach, no other composer devoted so much attention to the genre of the prelude. It is even possible to speak of the Preludes as a kind of microcosm within Scriabin's creativity: they reflect most brightly his astonishing and truly unprecedented intensity of his artistic growth. It is not just 28 years that separate the first *Prelude Op.2 No.2*, composed by the fifteen-year-old adolescent, and the last *Preludes Op.74*: an entire historic epoch was left forever, and a colossal break in the rooted aesthetic canons of the previous century was initiated.

Op.11 is the first and one of the most important cycles of Preludes in the oeuvre of the composer. Again, we can easily discern the hereditary of this music: Chopin's own cycle of Preludes. Scriabin likewise uses tonality to link together the pieces, and it is possible to glean some kinship in the characters of individual preludes. Despite this, these apparent similarities only serve to highlight the fundamental differences of the two. From the very first note of the C major Prelude it is abundantly clear that this is highly original music with its own unique sphere of imagery, and its own perception of the world. The music is full of its own inimitable inspiration given to Scriabin alone.

The cycle of Preludes was published in 4 volumes, with six pieces; and, aside from the general and obvious architecture that links together all 24 pieces, it is possible to find the features of a micro-cycle within each volume. The urge to unify short pieces into a cycle was inherent to Scriabin's approach in general. It is interesting that the composer initially thought of a cycle of 48 Preludes, two in each tonality – and indeed nearly finished it having composed 47 – but decided, for whatever reason, to set that project aside and rearrange the 23 preludes into different opuses. In this way, *Opp. 13, 15, 16 & 17* have common roots.

(It is imperative to mention that when one hears the definition of these Preludes as a kind of 'voyage journal' or 'Years of Pilgrimage', this has nothing to do with the content of Scriabin's music. The object of his music was never illustrative: it is always a world of spiritual revelation and intense psychological expression).

All in all, the expressive melodic content of the cycle of 47 Preludes combines stylistic integrity with variety, self-identifiable vigour and finesse, and profundity with accessibility.

Like Op.4, the *Allegro de Concert Op.18* is another brilliant concert piece written in sonata form. The strikingly broad character of the hymn-like second theme is especially captivating. The return of the theme in the reprise takes us into one of those grandiose culminations that are so spectacularly characteristic of Scriabin's mature outputs.

The *Second Sonata Op.19* is one of the most Romantic, evocative and poetically-improvisatory of Scriabin's works: it is not for nothing that the composer called it a Sonata-Fantasia. It is remarkable that a period of five years lies between the composition of the first and second movements of this Sonata; and the second movement was written first in 1892 in Genoa, and the first in 1897 in Crimea. The uncanny stylistic unity of the work, however, does nothing to betray that gap in composition. The work consists of two sonata allegro parts that together create the illusion of a single fantasy. Despite being composed so far apart the coming together of the two movements is staggeringly organic.

It has become a tradition to see the music as evoking a nautical tempest. The composer's own comments do indeed given grounds for this. Yet, one must keep in mind that the realistic programmatic realization of a southern seascape is highly alien to the very aesthetic of Scriabin. His music is always directed towards the listener's imagination. The image of the sea creates the basis of a purely Romantic mood of discontent, mutinous flight, and suffering. The musical language of the Second Sonata continues to actively develop the expressive means set down in the First Sonata. In the Second, however, they are more nuanced, taking on a more improvisatory nature, more colorful, and more airborne. Indeed, the Sonata established itself as one of the composer's most popular oeuvres.

The pathetique character of the *Polonaise Op.21*, its dramatic content, and difficulty of the piano writing remind one of Liszt, more than Chopin.

The Third *Sonata Op.23* is a work that can be regarded as the pinnacle of the composer's first creative period. All the best features of Scriabin's work in this period – brightness, drama, ultimate contrast – are all represented in their most concentrated form. Scriabin returned here to the traditional four-movement cycle. Each movement of the work is through-composed in thematic development, the unity of inflection, and also with its features of monothematicism. Thus, the main theme of the first movement plays a significant role in the transition between the third and fourth movement; and the motif from the movement's finale frequently becomes an important linking feature such as in the coda of the fourth movement of the Sonata alongside the dreamy-delicate theme of the third movement that assuredly transforms into the triumphantly jubilant main theme of the Maestoso. All this contributes to the cohesive conceptual and thematic unity of the work.

From the very first notes of the Sonata we hear the main theme: the calls to arms and self-affirmed creative beginnings. The overall character of the anxiously 'pathetique' theme defines that realm of intensity that the composer evokes with the remark 'Drammatico'. The second movement provides no respite. The first theme of the Allegretto is still pervaded by that energetic and willful state: clear, somewhat march-like rhythm, and passionate declamation. It is only in the Trio that lyrical, graceful cantilena makes an appearance. The third movement, Andante, is one of Scriabin's most lyrical confessions. The broad melody is full of poetry and inspiration. Scriabin said of the theme's reprise: 'Here the stars are singing.' The pianist Mark Meichik remembered: 'When the composer played this passage himself, it was like the singing left hand is accompanied by a silver peal or shimmer.' Appearing as if from the horizon, the main theme of the first movement brings us to the finale Presto con fuoco. The ferocity of passionate intensity rises almost uninterrupted to the triumphant concluding apotheosis. The coda encases the psychological essence of the Sonata where the proud affirmation and conviction, so characteristic of Scriabin, is heard with full clarity.

From the first notes of the nine *Mazurkas Op.25* it is clearly heard just how far Scriabin has moved away from the classical understanding of the genre in a Chopinesque sense. The anxious, exalted intonations, the extreme dynamic contrasts, the creeping chromaticism, the whimsical sophistication of the melodic lines - all these hallmarks speak of the mature and independent musical style of the composer.

The *Fantasie Op.28*, composed in sonata form, is one of the most dramatic and vibrant works by Scriabin. It contributed to a humorous anecdote: Scriabin, who was well known for his absentmindedness, managed to 'completely forget' about the existence of this piece. A memoir relates:

I played some fragments from it, and he asked me: 'What is this? There's something a little familiar about it.' I retorted, 'But it's your Fantasie, Alexander Nikolayevich!' 'I completely forgot! How can that be? Wait, what Fantasie?'

For a long time Alexander Nikolayevich could not remember where and when he had written such a piece.

Regardless of Scriabin's apparent apathy to the work, and even despite some

overly complex piano writing, it has earned a position as one of the most popular of Scriabin's pieces in the repertoire of many pianists.

It is interesting that prior to embarking on the Fourth *Sonata Op.30*, Scriabin had envisaged and nearly finished another sonata. As recollected by Sabaneyev: 'In this time he sometimes played some fragments of his older works. There were not so many of them, and one of the most remarkable amongst these was the so-called "Third-and-a-Half Sonata' which was composed, almost in its entirety, after the Third, and which his called the "Gothic". The first movement was exceptionally delightful… It was not all notated, and he just played it from memory forgetting parts of it. It was made up of two movements, and the finale was not complete. "Why have you not finished it," I asked. "Back then I could not get the finale to sound how I envisaged it. And then, the material became old – it is still in a classical style… And that was exactly the breaking point in my style."'

Scriabin's mature creative period opens with his Fourth Sonata Op.30. The work is remarkable for the completeness of his programmatic conceptualisation, the monolithic cohesiveness pervading the filigree development of details, masterful use of new expressive means, and innovative form. 'The text of the Fourth Sonata is not printed, but rather created in the light of its composition,' Scriabin would write. That text was written by the composer in French with the collaboration of his second wife, Tatyana Schloetzer. Despite the controversial literary quality of the said text it leaves an impression of the basis that served as the stimulus to Scriabin's creation. Here are some fragments: 'Hidden in the distance in a light, transparent mist is a bright star, shimmering with a delicate light... The wonderous mystery of its blue rays beckon… To get closer to you, distant star! To drown in your radiance… But no! In joyous flight I soar… A fervid dance! Into a flaming start, into the glistening fire you burn: you delicate light! With ardent yearning I have become closer to you! In your sparking waves I drown… and drink you, a sea of light! Light, I imbibe you!' Nevertheless, this Sonata is not a concretely programmatic work, but an example of a work with an acutely symbolic programme content encoded within it; and one that tolerates various interpretations.

The very system of the disclosed musical imagery and the concept of its sonata form development, however, create the grounds for its objective and unified comprehension. Although the work is formally a cycle of two parts, it is essentially one movement. The entire Sonata is a manifestation of a single journey from the delicately rarefied image of languished yearning to the utmost grandiosity of ecstasy: the journey – artistically expressed as a flight – is affirmed by dynamic impulses, and creates the essence for the musical development of the sonata form of the second movement.

Formally, the first movement of the Fourth Sonata is somewhat ambivalent: on the one hand it represents an independent structure; on the other we are presented with an open structure that invites itself to be seen as an introduction. Both movements are welded so strongly to their transfigurations of the main theme that they involuntarily create the impression of the structure as a whole being that of a single-movement Sonata with an elaborate introduction. Its constructive core is permeated by three manifestations of the leitmotivic theme of the Sonata. The first (the Andante of the first movement) is impressionistically contemplative: it creates the image of the beckoning of the distant ghostly volatility of the star of desire. Its clear light is a symbol of the pursuit of an ideal. The second manifestation (the same theme in the second movement's development) is an imperious affirmation; the unadulterated flight of unfettered intent. The third manifestation (the coda of the second movement) is the ecstatic jubilation upon the attaining of the ideal dream. The work takes on a single line of development that leads from the surreal fragility of the opening to the ecstasy of its culmination in which we hear unshackled freedom, and the limitless joy of creativity.

The Two *Poems Op.32* launch a long list of compositions for Scriabin in this genre. In a certain way it is plausible to indeed see nearly every composition of his as a poem - poetic content is the essence of his music. Indeed, the poem was a title that Scriabin extended not only to his miniatures, but also to his great symphonic canvases. It is enough to simply recall the Third Symphony with the subtitle the 'Divine Poem', or 'Prometheus. Poem of Fire.' The two poems from the Op.32 set where amongst Scriabin's most cherished, which he played inimitably. The finesses, nuance and sophistication of the first poem, and the fiery temperament of the second make these works genuine miniature masterpieces.

Poeme Tragique Op.34 is one of the most distinctive works of Scriabin's mature period. The Poem begins with an exalted major tonality is punctuated with ecstatic

rhythm. As an observation it is necessary to remark that, starting from this period in time, in Scriabin's music, the minor tonality almost completely disappears. It is only the striking theme of the middle part, with its characteristic trumpet calls, that brings us into the world of tragic exaltation.

Poem Satanique Op.36 ushers in Scriabin's new programmatic and linguistic realm of his late creativity. Nurturing these ideas in Scriabin was, first and foremost, the very spirit and atmosphere at the turn of the century; and in part, the movement towards artistic *modernite* with its aestheticism of excess and subjective gravitation towards the sacrilegious. Indeed, that peculiar sphere of the 'infernal mysticism' attracted many artists of the *fin de siecle*. In the Satanic Poem one catches the distinct markings of the Liszt-Scriabin 'Mephisto complex' - a scherzo dance with teasing syncopation and waltz-like swirling rhythms; hypertrophied virtuosity; seductive half-tones; and unexpected thematic metamorphoses.

Scriabin's biographer, and friend, Sabaneyev wrote:

Without separating the elements of Satanism from the elements of sacredness, white from black magic, the composer exercises the potentials of artistic contrast in order to embark upon a game of utmost sophistication in its biting dissonance, its endless morphing between the grandiose and graceful, the cosmic and the salon, the profound and the skimming of the surface - to reveal an image that was artistically so close to him: the face of the eternally reincarnating and never immediately recognizable Satan.

That very same realm of the infernal found its reflection in the Ninth *Sonata Op.68* in 1913: the 'Black Mass', as the composer himself called that work.

Moving onto the *Valse Op.38* it is astounding how aptly the spirit of the music was captured in the words Scriabin's student of M. Nemenova-Luntz: 'Everyone who had the opportunity to hear Scriabin perform his own works knows how endlessly fascinating, ethereal in its sophistication, how poetic it was - and I would say 'fragrant', and at the same time sweeping as it soared in flight.' All the nuances of harmonic invention, whimsical melodic outlines, lightness of movement reminiscent of the flight of a butterfly - all this simply uses the three-beat waltz as the stimulus to morph it into an ingeniously poetic gem.

The two *Mazurkas Op.40*, like the *Valse Op.38*, in no way harks back to the Chopinesque prototype of the genre. The characteristic feeling of the mazurka is all but gone, hinted at only in passing - it is instead, perhaps, a *Poeme a la Mazur*.

All the forthcoming proceeding from Op.40 and going through into opuses in the 50s demonstrate the emergence of Scriabin's increasingly more complex musical language. The minor tonality completely disappears from his music: the last being tragic *Prelude Op.51 No.2*, which the composer called 'The Broken Strings'. Scriabin never played this work which evidently contained the reflection of some kind of private grief.

The tempestuous evolution of his style brings him to the creation of *Prometheus Op.60* and the final piano Sonatas. These do not just open up a new period in the music of Scriabin, but herald in a new age of music in the twentieth century. Scriabin creates a completely idiosyncratic world - a world that is radiant, tense, unusually sharp. He creates a strange, magically incantatory rhythmic plain. A whole new dimension of color is born out of his unsurpassably complex harmonic system: genetically related, yet seemingly incompatibly diverse in their extremes. To borrow the words of Sabaneyev: 'Elements the mystical Eros, the diabolic containing within itself moments of seductive poisoning - all these components of his new spiritual world powerfully come to the fore. At the same time lyricism and the tragic are either transformed into new unrecognizable and curiously refracted forms, or disappear altogether.'

The very names of these sophisticatedly capricious miniatures are highly characteristic of this new world: *Poeme fantastique, Fragilite, Poeme aile, Danse languide, Enigme, Ironies, Etrangete…* In *Enigme*, as in *Etrangete*, the composer saw something akin to a 'winged, slight being - part woman, part insect - in whom there was something prickly and wriggling, along with some sense of proclamation. And this was all terribly evasive: a great coquettishness concealed within that evasiveness. And you cannot catch it.'

The cycle of *Eight Etudes Op.42* was composed as Scriabin's creative powers flourished, a zenith marked by his composition of his Third Symphony, Fourth Sonata, Satanic Poem, and the Op.32 Poems. These Eight Etudes are psychologically more refined and complex than the previous Op.8 set, if perhaps more monochrome in the type of their expressivity. Although Scriabin remains indebted to the aesthetic

principles of late Romanticism, in many ways these Etudes already show his departure from it. An anxious intensity, restlessness, rhythmic refinement, startling transparency of coloring, and unique polyphony all pervade these works. The third Etude, if performed at the Prestissimo tempo, thus turns in trills – making its textural and technical formula acutely original. These trills will in time become the lengthy 'trill episodes' in the composer's late Sonatas, first appearing in the Sixth. Amongst the most remarkable Etudes in the cycle are the Fourth and Fifth. 'It is one of the peaks of Scriabin's artistry – one of the greatest etudes for the piano imaginable. All my life I play it filled with awe; all my life I return this magical source of pleasure with ceaseless delight,' enthused Vladimir Sofronitsky in relation to the Fifth Etude. In the later short Op.49 and Op.56 Etudes Scriabin gives voice to the image of a flight in trembling, fantastical awe.

The *Fifth Sonata Op.53*, this incredible outburst of his creative energy, was composed within one week right after the Poem of Ecstasy, with which it is inexorably linked in both idea and image. Despite this, the entire thematic content of the Sonata is innately different. As a whole – like in the Fourth Sonata and Poem 'Towards the Flame' – the idea encapsulated is the pursuit of a difficult to reach goal. In the intense battle the will wins and triumphs. The tempestuous whirlwind that introduces the Sonata indeed frames it, becoming its prologue and epilogue. The sharply dissonant vibration in the bass register sound ominous like dull sparks of light; and following these the monstrous tempest rises upwards along the entire keyboard, leaving behind it the impression of terrible horror.

The second theme is typical of Scriabin's ghostly and magical expression. The contrast between the two themes is as important as the contrast of the main and second theme of the exposition: the former's flight and the latter's image of languished yearning. The expansive development brings together many extremely diverse themes. They all organically weave themselves into the unfolding flow of the thematic journey. The main course of action in the two-part development, however, is the preparation of the transfigured central theme of the Sonata (the second theme of the introduction) from the compassionately lyrical to the strong-willed and the ecstatic. The final transfiguration comes in the coda: here, the same motivic elements become the basis for the creation of an unbearably bright, blinding artistic evocation of light. This supernova-like flash of light is the pulse that sweeps away everything before it. At the first performances of this Sonata the ending left an absolutely shocking impression, as captured in Taneyev's famous summary: 'this music does not end, but cease'. The Fifth Sonata became one of the most significant works of Scriabin's late period.

The *Poem-Nocturne Op.61*, is one of the finest and most sophisticated Scriabin's works. Like the Tenth Sonata, it reveals a musical atmosphere totally imbued by the elements of nature. It is completely shrouded in the mystical sounds of a pantheistic nirvana.

The Sixth *Sonata Op.62* was begun in the summer of 1911, and completed in the autumn of 1912. All the last works of Scriabin are connected, in one way or another, to Prometheus, the most important work of that period and in a broader sense, to his eschatological ideas of the Mysterium. In this Sonata the abstract expression of space and time is remarkable for its impressionistic soundscape of 'vibrating tempests'. In its dark coloring the ominous intonations reveal the terrifying image of death.

The Sonata begins with an intensely focused harsh theme. This is the main theme: the dark colorings conceals within it the sounds of a distant knell. All the melody is hidden in the first harmony of the theme, and only unveils its horizontal motivic potential later. It is symbolic of the tragic world that is juxtaposed against the world of the ideal, the bright dreamlike image of the second theme. Despite the completely different character the latter theme is born of the same harmonic colors. The final part brings with it the character of a tempestuous swirling, which is concluded by the forces of destiny.

The development starts with the conjuncture of the two themes. It progresses into a climactic culmination that announces the recapitulation where it transforms into exultation. The reprise ushers in the second theme in a new light. The extraordinarily complex rhythmic expression is mathematically disciplined in its manifestation, and seems to prophesy certain musical phenomenon of the twentieth century. In the Sonata's coda all the dark and mysterious seems to indulge into a head-spinning dance: nightmarish and at the same time hypnotically fascinating. It is a danse macabre – the triumph of dark, mysterious powers. The conclusion of the Sonata is something of an ellipsis: the manifestation of the image of the unsaid, the symbol of the mystery of the eternity of time and the boundless nature of space.

Recollections of Scriabin's interpretation of this Sonata tell us that: 'His favorite parts were the "nightmarish peals" and the "flights"… "It is not like the Seventh

Sonata," the composer would say. "These are peals of trouble… There is evil in them." He played them in a dark, disjointed manner, and in doing so would look to the side as if he saw a ghost – something of that evil…'

The conception of the Seventh *Sonata Op.64* preceded the Sixth. It is one of the focal points of his late period of creativity. Like the Fifth Sonata it bears kinship to the Poem of Ecstasy, the Seventh bear kinship to Prometheus. Scriabin himself often remarked on this kinship, and eagerly talked of his new creation. He saw the Seventh Sonata as the attempt to capture the essence of the mystical and symbolic expression and distil it for the capabilities of the piano. Here, the composer deliberately put before him the goal to manifest through musical means purely logical conceptualization. The philosophical programme of the Seventh Sonata is the juxtaposition of the subjective and objective; spirit and matter, masculine activity (creativity) and passive femininity; and likewise it captures interaction of these polar opposites throughout their evolution and development.

The artist-creator (subject), like Prometheus, is emboldened by the will of his genius to transform the world (object), and thus he takes it through ecstasy to eschatological catastrophe. Only after this does the world achieved the promised freedom of the human spirit… That is the Orphic dream of the genius wanting to transform the world through the arts.

The laconic character of the main first theme is revealed in conjunction with its two contrasting beginnings: the impulsive seizures the thrice repeating incantations, accompanied by the determined chordal movement (symbolic of the all-engulfing artistic striving pitted against the mysteries that sound from afar as these vertical complexes, symbolic of the slumbering universe). The first is reminiscent of that typically Scriabinesque theme of self-affirmation; the second, associated with the opening chord of Prometheus, the chord of chaos. The mystic peals that conclude the main theme usher in the development, and play a crucial role in the Sonata. Scriabin considered that they most acutely captured the expression of 'sacristy', and manifested what the composer designated – to borrow a term the theosophic term he loved – the 'white mass'.

The exposition defines the entire essence of imagery that pervades the Sonata. The different states open up in it up as juxtapositions, rather than through a process of developments. The development can be separated into two halves. Initially the thematic material and exposition finds its representation. The broadening, prolongation and condensation, variation and swirling flight differentiate that first part from the second, where everything melts in an intensifying flow of figurations, bells and rumbling.

The recapitulation is an almost simple repetition of the exposition, yet its general character and dynamics are brightly new taking on the features of importance, and even of grandiosity. The enormous coda takes on a special significance within the Sonata. It is longer than all the other parts, and in content takes on the form of a second recapitulation. It is the limits of tension: the ringing of the last catastrophic dance of ecstasy. In is whirlwind flight it seems that all intonation and harmony melts, finally freeing themselves from the reality of thematic expression. The flow of self-crushing movement sweeps into the 'pentachord' and final pause. It is the fall into eternity. The melting trill passages float past like a light breeze, and everything disappears. It is as if we are witnessing the musical expression of the philosophical concept of dematerialization.

This Sonata was one of Scriabin's most loved works. Sabaneyev wrote: 'He often talked about and defined his Seventh Sonata in the most varied manner: "White Mass," he would say about it. 'In it there is something celebratory, and at the same time harshly unattainable." "It is so, so close to the Mysterium," he frequently loved to say about it. With such comments these sonatas seemed to bloom, and their musical content grew in grandiosity to the colossal. These bell-like harmonies in the Seventh Sonata were those very same 'bells from the spheres that called the people of the world to the act of the Mysterium.'

Scriabin spent the summer of 1912 in the Swiss canton of Beatenberg. From there the composer wrote a joking letter detailing the composition of the *Three Etudes Op.65*: 'I inform you of news that is delightful for me, perhaps interesting to you, and in any case deeply disturbing for followers classicism: yours truly has written three etudes! In fifths (what horror!), in ninths (what debauchery!), and… in major sevenths (the final demise!?).'

These pieces are completely seeped in the aesthetics of late Scriabin, and are the ultimate etudes in his creative output. Like in the other works of this period, the tenacity of musical ideas and the starkness of their construction are staggering. Here we are met with the customary characteristics of flight, dreaming, imperiousness, and

exquisite finesse. Technically these compositions are overflowing with extraordinary imagination. Every intervallic combination is cloaked in virtuosity that evokes musical imagery that is at once full of fragility and strange beauty, so typical of late Scriabin. The unforgettable ending of the last Etude in fifths sees the music fly away in ecstatic movement as if to the limits of the unknown…

The Eighth *Sonata Op.66* was begun simultaneously with the Ninth and Tenth, yet was completed by the composer later that them, not until the autumn of 1913. In this way is the latest of all of Scriabin's sonatas. The final year-and-a-half of the composer's life was all-consumed by the artistic conception behind the musical sketches and poetic text for his symphonic oratorio, the Prefatory Action. It is with this musical concept that the Eight Sonata, and the Preludes Op.74, and Poems Opp. 69 and 71, are linked. Scriabin believed it to be one of the most complex of his compositions in terms of its interpretational realization.

It is the most expansive of the Sonatas in his late period, and it feels like it is the most enigmatic and abstract of his works. The refinement here takes is of the utmost extreme, and it feels like the emotional aspect rises beyond the limits of the human. Musically, it is akin to the sonic manifestation of philosophical ideas and logical construction of the highest intellectual order. The world that the Sonata inhabits is not of the earth, but on the unattainable spheres 'beyond the clouds': the flight of the spirit.

The compositional techniques that make up the Eighth Sonata are astounding. There is so much innovation and significance in the harmonic language which further expands the development of Scriabin's system. The multi-layering, differentiation, and simultaneous representations of ideas are pioneering aspects opened up through the Sonata's sound world. Rhythm, thematic order and textures also take on new meaning through the work. Abandoning an expansive melody, Scriabin favors complexes of distilled motifs that combine together thematically. They are linked to the harmonic foundations, and disclose unfettered intervallic structures.

In the Eighth Sonata Scriabin actively and masterfully employs polyphonic devices, and illuminates the creative possibilities of harmonic movement in blocks of fourths. The structure of the Sonata is an originally conceived singe movement. The dramaturgical unfolding of the Sonata is facilitated by the conjunction of thematic elements, counterpoint, and rhythmic variety, development and metric shifts. The entire fabric of the Sonata is steeped in polyphony. Exceptional importance is given to the persistent and rhythmically active rising intonation of the major second interval. It is astonishing how the composer constructs length from this minimal element. The composer himself was especially fond of the Sonata's multi-layered harmony in nine sounds.

It can be said, evidently, that this music is inclined to a certain intellectual over-intensification; but the rarefied philosophical aims, along with the pioneering harmonic and structural principles, make it one of the most interesting examples of the early 20th century musical avant garde.

The Ninth *Sonata Op.68* was born in the summer of 1911, immediately in the wake of the Seventh and Sixth. It was completed, however, along with the Tenth, only in the summer of 1913. In some way this Sonata towers above the other works in this period. In it there are no traces of the Mysterium that was so typical to the other late works of the composer. Scriabin saw the Ninth Sonata in a parallel to the Satanic Poem: '"In the Ninth Sonata I have touched most profoundly the satanic," he remarked. "It is genuine evil… the Satanic Poem is but a foreshadowing of the Ninth. There, Satan is a guest, but here he is at home."'

There is indeed an awesome energy that reveals the horrific images of the world's evil. The symbolic imagery of the Sonata is intensely linked to a Romantic vision. The evolving dramatic development is expressed with an exclusive clarity, coherence and power. The emotional fullness of the work is extraordinary. Stylistically the Sonata is diverse – elements of Romanticism and symbolism in its language, and elements of expressionism in the character of its narrative – but not eclectic. The architectural integrity and clear direction taken by the development of sonic imagery allows the free one-movement form to create the impression of a unified synthesis. The name 'Black Mass' does not belong to the composer, but nevertheless the composer often used it. The slow first theme with its quietly crawling third-sixth chromaticism, and mathematically derived imitation a tritone away, is a stroke of genius. It creates the impression of something dangerous, something of a brittle trembling – something of the primordial chaos… It is against this background that the main theme arises, and which Scriabin described thus:

"'This is almost not music, not melody, but… an incantation in sound. It cannot be played simply," he would explain. By 'simplicity' he evidently meant an ordinary pianistic approach. "Here one must play to cast a spell." (Sabaneyev).

The second theme is a delicate and internally un-contrasted theme of languishing: 'The slumbering Sainte and around her evil sorcery.' The dreamy purity of this music is slowly caught in the sinister incantations of the first theme – the gradual desecration of its purity. Later it takes on the features of a grotesque infernal march. The prologue's theme also loses it collected calmness. The already laconic main theme compresses even more. The onslaught of dark forces is more concentrated and reach their apogee in the collapsing landslide of the prologue's theme. Gradually the mutiny of an orgiastic dance seeps into the march; the tempo quickens heralding in the concluding swirling torrent. The Sonata's coda is its prologue. Everything returns to the beginning: 7 bars of hypnotic, slow movement that dissolves into the bass note F.

It is interesting that on the 26 November 1913 Scriabin received the following letter: 'Dear Master, I am saddened not to have come across you in Moscow. Allow me to congratulate you with your latest wok and especially the Ninth Sonata, which I hold to be a gem! I thank you for it and remain faithfully yours, Ferruccio Busoni.'

The luminous atmosphere of the Tenth *Sonata Op.70* unequivocally differentiates it from the darkness of the Sixth and Ninth. In the process of its creation the composer related: 'It will be completely different. It will be joyous: light and earthy. But, it will contain something of the process of dissolution, the destruction of physicality…' The entire work in infused with a profoundly pantheistic world-view: the joyful experience of space and light. Harsh harmonic complexes are absent, the formal construction is clearer, and the outlines of melodic contours are more apparent. The composer intensively brings together extremes of register, coloristic effects of tremolos, and vibrating chords and trills.

The Sonata begins with a slow introduction where the falling chains of thirds in some of the notes remarkably expresses the strong feeling of the implication of the link between nature and the creation of the world. The following flights and sparking trills announce an atmosphere of anticipation. Everything is suddenly bathed in light. The main theme begins – the epitome of that typical Scriabinesque theme of driven flight – embodying soaring, excitement and suspense.

In the development the intense and introspected opening theme is transfigured into the ecstatic. It sparkles against a backdrop of joyful vibrating chords, and the main theme soars all the more joyfully in a phosphorescent flash of light. The movement to the culmination's ecstatic pealing of bells is determined: 'Here, the light is blinding – as if the sun is approaching,' Scriabin would say.

The coda - like in the majority of the late sonatas – is a manifestation of the image of the swirling, whirlwind-like dance. Beginning from the Presto it exudes the introductory theme, the tempo slackens: the same intonations resound as at the start of the Sonata. The first motif frames the work: it leaves the impression of an enigmatic and enlightened, more profound, entity – it offers the tantalizing glimmers to the secret of the world's creation.

It is impossible to ignore the recollections of Scriabin's own interpretation of his Sonata:

'He played so inimitably these mysterious, perfunctory, and strangely simple – for him – sounds. Scriabin had never before composed with such economy and simplicity. "Such languor has to overcome one here," he would say whilst playing the passage where the chromatic theme appears in the introduction." "Here one genuinely dissolves into nature. It is a Mystery – it will be there in the Mysterium too," he would say as he played. Then the strong, stark, radiant harmonies of the transition bring on that light-giving call which turns into the Allegro itself. He would break off here: "Here is such joy, joy beyond all bounds!" He isolates and plays through the strange, crawling harmonies of the Allegro – the transitional theme. "Here the sound is rarefied," he would say. "These trills are the dematerialization of sound. Everything takes wings, everything takes flight and takes off… These trills have to be played in a special way, with 'wings'..." He loved the Sonata very much, like the Seventh. He rated it highly for his ability to simplify the harmonies without destroying the psychological complexity. "These are not classical triads: these sounds are perhaps not even those that sound on the piano, their real sounds are only implied. I am being constrained by well-tempered tuning." Evidently the fruition of this Sonata was ushering in a new phase in the composer's creativity: a new style of his music that was destined never to find its realization.

The last works of Scriabin were composed in 1914 - the two *Poems Op.71*, the poem *Vers la flamme*, two *Danses Op.73*, and the five *Preludes Op.74*. In the creations after Prometheus the element of alchemy is all the more pronounced and luminous. At the same time the musical fabric instigates an increasingly more complex psychological world – one that somehow dematerializes. Scriabin's application of his harmonic and rhythmic systems becomes all the more intricate and precise. The fabric becomes

more ethereal: it is as if the composer is fearful of prolonged sounds, the physical manifestation of sound: this becomes the source for the sounds left hanging in the pedal, the trills that fill his final compositions in his quest to evade a protracted sound. He concentrates all his energies into finding ways to escape any coarseness or edges as the sounds unfold so as not to belittle the astute refinement of that transient expressivity. His thematic rhythms and melodies take on an imperative, hypnotic character. Harmony becomes the principal instrument of psychological manipulation; and rhythm transforms into the language of incantation. It is as if these last compositions by Scriabin are no longer works of art in the usual sense of the word, but are transformed into liturgical acts: small revelations. One might say that these works the splinters of that huge architectural Mysterium that Scriabin did not have time to - and could not - bring into being.

It is no accident that the two pieces of Op.73 are Dances. The element of dance in an ecstatic and infernal sense is extremely characteristic of late Scriabin. *Guirlandes* brings to the piano those iridescent crystal figurations that embody that unearthly 'music of the spheres'. The *Flammes sombres* is that very same 'infernally-dark imagery' that is born out of the same inspiration as the *Poeme satanique* and the Ninth Sonata. The composer called it the 'dance of the fallen'. The sense of foreboding seems to be a premonition of the evil that would befall onto the world in the twentieth century.

The apotheosis that Op.72 brings is an undisputed masterpiece amongst the composer's life's work: *Vers la Flamme*, 'Towards the Flame'. Through the lens of this small piece one beholds the image of a gigantic cosmogony: the transition from initial chaos to the all-consuming burning rage of fire. The strictly calculated mathematical contours of the composition, the change in rhythmic and dynamic contrast exert an irresistibly powerful hypnotic influence on the psyche.

The *Five Preludes Op.74* are pieces were fated to be the last written by Scriabin. This music reveals an even more daring level of insight and the revelation of even more complex psychological states. Scriabin was taken from this life when his artistic genius was rising to new and uncharted heights.

Of particular note in this cycle is the Second Prelude. Sabaneyev's description of the evening he spent with the composer at the start of the summer of 1914 relates its foreboding significance:

Alexander Nikolayevich showed me some sketches to his newest works. The enormous shadow – or perhaps "light" – of the Prefactory Act was cast upon them all. Then he played for me the freshly completed Second Prelude from Op.74. "This is a scorching, a desert-like scorching – of course, it is not a physical desert, but an astral desert… You know, this Prelude leaves the impression that it lasts for centuries: that it sounds eternally for millions of years… It can be played either making it ornate, with nuances, or conversely – very linearly, without any nuances whatsoever. There is such flexibility: one work contains many works. This is the manifestation of multi-faceted composition…" In actual fact Alexander Nikolayevich only played the Prelude in these two dual ways, not more.

I was gripped by a strange impression by this music: it was strangely unlike anything else in his creativity. "What is this?," Scriabin asked me whilst continuing to play. I stayed silent. The experience was completely new, magical and frighteningly spell-binding. He played it several times over without stopping, imbibing the sounds as they melted into the silence of the evening. We were alone in his study… Alexander Nikolayevich did not wait for me to answer. He said mysteriously and quietly: "It is death. It is death as the manifestation of the Sacred Feminine– that brings the ultimate unification: death and love… Death – a sister. In it there should not be any elements of fear before it. It is the ultimate renunciation, the 'white sound'…" Alexander Nikolayevich seemed himself shaken by his creation. It was so uncharacteristic for him. He mysteriously said, "There is nothingness." "This is not music," I said to him. "This is something else…" "It is the Mysterium," he answered softly.

One can only wonder at the direction that Scriabin's music would have taken in the future. Sabaneyev wrote about the final sketches of ideas that Scriabin played for him: 'These were mysterious slow harmonies – full of otherworldly sweetness and spice… They took my breath away… there were utterly extraordinary transitions and modulations… They made the deepest impression on me of anything I had ever heard of Scriabin's. Maybe it was the brightest and best of his creative fantasy. It was a colossal and luminous flight like in the Poem of Ecstasy – but far more complex and more impressing in its harmonies. I felt that I found myself in an ocean of new sounds worlds.'

This music was not recorded and disappeared forever. Yet, despite this irreplaceable loss, we are blessed to behold the glimmer of Scriabin's inimitable genius through his remaining published 74 opuses.

It is not simply as a musician that Scriabin takes his place in the history of Russian art. His creativity has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for many composers, poets, artists, and philosophers. The famous poet Boris Pasternak said: 'Scriabin is not only a composer, but a reason for eternal celebration: the embodiment of triumph and feast of Russian culture.'

His name has become a symbol: a symbol of the aspirational venture into the future, of flight into the unknown, of eternal youth. This he will be for countless future generations to come.

Notes on a Scriabin Performing Tradition

Scriabin was an inimitable performer of his own works. In essence it is impossible to separate Scriabin-the-composer from Scriabin-the-pianist: his playing was an act of creation. The exquisite, exultating, mysteriously fantastic musical images all found an unsurpassable voice through his unique interpretation. Judging from recollections of his contemporaries, the power of this inimitable synthesis was such that there was genuine apprehension that a time will come when the key to the interpretations of Scriabin's works will be lost forever. In this spirit, the following words were written shortly after the composer's death: 'No matter how many pianists I have heard playing Scriabin, even in his most simple works, I found that they all lack that something which is so vital in his creations. Some kind of ephemeral scent, some kind of gentle essence, the spirit – or astral presence – of his creations dissipated: and no technique could save these disappearing charms.'

The main features that defined Scriabin as a performer were the inspired improvisatory nature through which his works seemed to be created anew. An utmost expressivity of expression was clothed in a free, and uniquely brave rubato. His playing had a nervosity; flightiness; the ability to soar with great pathos; an astounding mastery of the piano's colors which lent him an almost immaterial sound, which he achieved through his extraordinary use of the sustaining pedal. At the same time his critics – both positive and negative – remarked on the lack of a strong forte (much the same way as with the playing of Chopin).

Playing in large halls, and in particular with an orchestra, this quality detracted somewhat from the immediate impression that he could make. Scriabin's music in general, particularly his late opuses, was difficult to comprehend by the broader public. Scriabin's finesse and delicate mood, his aristocratic thoughts and feelings was hopelessly lost on the crowds and their psychology. This exquisite music was for a small, esoteric group of followers, as attested by contemporaries:

Those who heard Scriabin in the concert hall could not have the faintest idea about him and his work, what his playing was like in these intimate hours. Scriabin was born a poet of the intimate circle, like his spiritual ancestor Chopin. Alexander Nikolayevich usually played his smaller works in these home concerts; and it was as if these works indeed were written specifically for such a setting. They opened up under his fingers like fragrant, opulent flowers: and here, in this setting, his miniature preludes never seemed so short as on the concert stage – they broadened somehow, and filled the time. He made long pauses between individual works so that the silence seemed part of the composition… Once he even said to me directly: "Silence is also sound… In silence there is sound. A pause always sounds. You know, I think that maybe there can even be a musical work made up of silence." Imagined sounds played a huge role in his psyche that was difficult to behold. When he played it felt that his silences truly do sound, and that some imaginary sounds soar through the pauses adorning the sonic void with a fantastical glow…

'Scriabin's intimate, delicate and alluring sound was unsurpassable. He was initiated into the great secret of sound and mastered it to perfection. Sounds within pianissimo revealed themselves to him their fullest charm, and his virtuoso pedaling clothed these sounds with some strange resonance which no pianist after him could recreate. In the strong moments he was wonderfully nervy – this nervosity had the effect of an electric current.'

The poet Konstantin Balmont, who was present on those musical evenings, remarked: 'Scriabin kisses the sounds with his fingers.'

Of course, these are features of Scriabin's creative persona as a performer which are almost impossible to recreate. The acutely complex psychological organization of his music calls for an interpreter whose own consciousness can find kinship in such features. The limitations of a notated score have rendered it inadequate in transmitting all these nuances. In Scriabin's interpretations his compositions became living beings, changing with each new performance. Not all types of artistic talent are able to recreate that specificity of Scriabin's music. Scriabin understood just how unique features of his music were, and in the final years of his life he took note of pianists who he thought might be able to transmit the tradition of his interpretation.

Singling out a few names: Mark Meichik, who premiered the Fifth Sonata; Issay Dobrowen; Scriabin's students Elena Beckmann-Scherbina and Maria Nemenova-Luntz; his peers Alexander Goldenweiser and Konstantin Igumnov. It is also important to mention Alexander Horowitz – a student of Scriabin at the Moscow Conservatoire – who was the uncle of Vladimir Horowitz. It was Alexander Horowitz who initiated the meeting of the young Vladimir with Scriabin when the latter was on concert tour in Kiev.

Ultimately, Scriabin rated only one pianist: Vsevolod Buyukli. All that remains of this all but forgotten figure in our time are legends. Even I heard back in the 1970s some of these (and one can add that some of these oral anecdotes are far from suitable for print…). His very fate was strange and enigmatic. From birth he was shrouded in an atmosphere of mystery. His mother was Anna Lebedeva-Getsevich, a student of Nikolai Rubinstein – although officially she was only known as his governess. It is also known that Buyukli was incredibly alike Nikolai Rubinstiein in appearance; and this similarity was not something the Getsevich family felt they needed to hide. Goldenweiser and Igumnov, who were friends with him, considered that Buyukli was the son of Nikolai Rubinstein and Anna Getsevich.

Already in the Conservatoire Buyukli became known as an exceptionally talented individual, but with great eccentricities. He maintained and fueled that reputation through his extravagant follies and behavior. Buyukli playing sympathetically reflected that image: it was as unbalanced as was he, although the extreme emotional tension of his playing made it particularly interesting, sharp and fresh. Scriabin, who loved and highly rated Buyukli and found 'moments of genius' in his playing, did not hide the fact that sometimes his playing was 'simply horrendous, just embarrassingly so.' Nevertheless, in moments of inspiration the public beheld an incomparable and spectacularly talented artist. Contemporaries claimed: 'No pianist of our age has played Liszt imbued with such genius, and it seems never will.' 'Buyukli reflects in the sphere of interpretation something of what Scriabin manifests in the sphere of composition… That same refinement of artistic gestures, that same propensity for flight, even quirkiness… That same extreme – sometimes hurting – concentration of nervous tension that finds its expression in the endless shades of drammatico and patetico…'

He lived in various, sometimes unexpected places. Buyukli lived in Poland for several years where his artistic successes were so great that even Rachmaninov was nervous to play after him. To our great loss, all that remains from this extraordinary figure are but legends. Even the circumstances of his death are shrouded in secrecy. All that is known is that he and his mother tried to return to Moscow from Tashkent, where fate had thrust them in the years of the Civil War and its terrible destruction, became ill with typhoid and died almost at the same time in 1920 or 1921.

The tragic and sudden death of Scriabin in 1915 fueled an enormous interest in his music. Many pianists started playing his works. Even Rachmaninov programmed cycles of Scriabin's works: an endeavor which starkly illuminated how with this music, in the hands of such a genius as Rachmaninov, came across with such a huge difference in the artistic conception – something that attracted a negative reception amongst Scriabin's followers. Sergei Prokofiev later recalled: 'When Scriabin played everything flew somewhere, but with Rachmaninov everything stood firmly on the ground…'

The first performer to play a complete cycle of Scriabin Sonatas was Alexander Borovsky. Later Samuil Feinberg, who had heard Scriabin himself (indeed the composer noted Feinberg's interpretation of his Fourth Sonata), and then in the 1920s Heinrich Neuhaus also embarked on performing Scriabin Sonata cycles.

Widely known in the West as a pedagogue, Heinrich Neuhaus was in his own time one of the most famous pianists in Russia where his fame was greatly indebted to his interpretation of Scriabin's music. It had that delicacy, and that unique emotionality that is vital for the interpretation of these works. That said, he also brought features that might be classified as Chopinesque, being one of the best interpreters of Chopin.

Samuil Feinberg is an exceptionally interesting figure. He was a prolific composer, and a pianist with a vast repertoire and extraordinary memory – it is enough to say that in some concert season, over the course of several weeks, he played all 32 Beethoven Sonatas and the complete 48 Prelude and Fugues of Bach. He possessed a genuine sympathy for Scriabin's style: his nerviness and tumultuous gestures. These features brought these same features in some degree also into other music that he performed, and this gave his interpretations a very special character.

In a book about Scriabin, written soon after his death it was said: 'Scriabin carried away with him all the secrets of interpretation – all the nuances of his nervy technique, the shadings; even more painfully, he carried away the precision of rhythmic and dynamic coloration for, alas, his notation can only hint at in the broadest of ways… His art could die like the seeds that fall onto dry ground since

he had no one to whom he could pass on these riches. One must hope that such mournful perspectives do not materialize. Perhaps is musical genius will resurrect itself through another pianist who will bring Scriabin's music back to life by stumbling across it intuitively, like Anton Rubinstein embodied the tumultuous spirit of Beethoven.'

This congenial spirit to Scriabin's music was Vladimir Sofronitsky. Sofronitsky's innate links to Scriabin's music were extraordinarily special. He felt it, understood it, and performed it like no one else. Everyone who had known Scriabin and his playing well remarked that Sofronitsky's manner of interpretation, for all its self-nurturing, reminded them of the very manner of Scriabin's playing. This is all the more astonishing given that Scriabin had never in his life heard Scriabin. All recollections about the atmosphere suffusing Sofronitsky's concerts bear an uncanny resemblance to those of Scriabin's own playing. Sofronitsky's psychological stature seemed to embody Scriabin's own, and yet his own distinct individuality seemed to quietly push it aside. At times he opened up new and unexpected traits that the composer, in all likelihood, was unaware of – and indeed, Scriabin himself believed in the need for an interpretation to be multifaceted and even insisted on the need for the interpreter to bring this kind of creative freedom to his creations.

In that Sofronitsky's interpretation of Scriabin could be considered an equal to the composer was never contested. Everyone knew: Scriabin played differently; but a more authentic, or more 'pure' Scriabin could never be heard. It was an authenticity of the very character, of the experience and feelings.

Here are a few remarks about Sofronitsky. His first teacher in Warsaw, where his family had lived at the time, was Anna Getsevich – the very same student of Nikolai Rubinstein. Through Sofronitsky's own admission, the two people who had exerted the greatest influence on him in his youth were the hugely gifted Vsevolod Buyukli, Getsevich 's son, and Alexander Dubyansky – a pianist of rare talent who tragically took his life in his youth. It is possible that Sofronitsky inherited from Buyukli his love of Scriabin, and from Dubyansky the breath-taking sincerity of feeling, and intense profundity of his playing.

Upon graduating from the Petrograd Conservatoire in 1921, in the same year as that other towering musical genius Maria Yudina, Sofronitsky began a glittering concert career. He became one of the public's most loved artists at a time when they had still not forgotten the impression made by d'Albert, Paderewski, Hofmann, Busoni, Godowsky, Scriabin, Rachmaninov and many other giants of pianism. The popularity of Sofronitsky was not eclipsed by the likes of Petri, Schnabel, nor the blinding trailblazing talent of Horowitz that had then appeared like a comet. It is a little-known fact that in those years Sofronitsky and Horowitz often shared in each other's company and often frequented each other's concerts. There is a note that related Horowitz's impressions about Sofronitsky from the early 1920s, before Horowitz's departure from Russia: 'It is not that Sofronitsky is endlessly gifted: his talent indeed impresses with its innateness and inimitability. *He* is unique…. In some things his interpretational wishes differ from mine. I want more breadth, more stature, more outpouring… Sometimes I feel his art is too chamber-like; but within that chamber-like intimacy he is able to conjure up the grandiose in such a way that its impression lingers long in the memory. The nobility and finesse of his playing is particularly awe-inspiring for me. I have not heard a better Scriabin, and probably never will.'

I feel that this statement coming from Horowitz – known for his egocentricity – is unique. In the next decade Sofronitsky's interpretations style witnessed great changes. His interpretation of Scriabin's music became more monumental, dramatic and powerful… To my huge regret I never heard Sofronitsky's playing despite distinctly remembering a poster of his last concert in the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire. The multitude of recordings of his playing are uneven in the same way as that his concerts were uneven too; but a few of them to offer a glimpse of the capabilities of this colossal artist.

I cannot fail to mention one more name who is to me inexorably linked to the highest echelons of Scriabin's music: Georgy Sirota. This name remember probably only people from my generation of Moscow musicians. His playing, which I heard in my student years, was remarkable for those same characteristics that we hear about in recollections about the composer or Sofronitsky: utmost originality, emotional finesse, breath-taking Romanticism, and that inimitable sound of the piano. From the very first sounds his listeners understood that before them was a rare and extraordinary talent. In the 1960s he had impressive successes: First Prize in the Schumann Competition in Germany, and First Prize in the All-Union Competition which he shared with the young Grigory Sokolov – and the lasting impression he left was deeper and brighter than from the masterful (already then!) playing of the sixteen-

year-old Sokolov. But, some hand of fate hung over him. The tragic fate of Buyukli and Dubyansky comes to mind. At a very young age his mental health declined and his musical activities ceased. We lost yet another evident genius who left behind so many memories for those who heard him many years ago.

In conclusion one can say that Scriabin's inimitable style of playing crystallizes within it the highest peak of Romanticism in performance. Not all kinds of artistic talents are able to fully embody that style. Perhaps it can be said that for the type of musician that has become mainstream in our time the priorities have shifted to balance, evenness, objectivity, and formal perfection. This type – broadly speaking, the Apollonic – is in principle very distant from the style of Scriabin's music making. The disjunction between the style of Romantic music (in this respect, Scriabin's style and all his characteristic traits), and of artistic type does not depend on any national traditions. Even amongst the great Russian pianists not all were close to Scriabin's music. Here, I recall the words of one of the greatest, Emil Gilels, who by the way, took lessons from Sofronitsky: 'I love Scriabin's music so much, but it does not love me.'

The opposite type of artist, who unveiled the truest expression of Scriabin aside from the composer – Buyukli, Sofronitsky, Neuhaus, Feinberg, and some others – it feels have all but disappeared from modern concert life.

A heightened sense of beauty and the fragility of life, the wonders and rarity of talent, the understanding of music as an eternally changing tempest, the absence of the mundane or earthly, the striving to the original and to profound spiritual awakening – this is the aim of Scriabin's music, the essence of his genius, and possibly more broadly, the very essence of art.

Translation: Maria Razumovskaya

The sources

· Leonid Sabaneev. Vospominaniya o Scriabine (Reminiscences of Scriabin), M. 1923
· Vyacheslav Karatygin. Scriabin. P.,1915.
· Alexander Nikolaevich Scriabin. 1915-1940. Sbornik k 25- letiyu so dnya smerti. (Alexander Scriabin. Anthology for the 25th anniversary of his death).M/L.,1941.
· Yevgeny Gunst. A. N. Scriabin I yego tvorchestvo(Scriabin and his art), 1915.
· Viktor Delson. Scriabin,M., 1971.
· Tamara Levaya. Scriabin i khudozhestvennyye iskaniya XX veka (Scriabin and artistic quests of the 20th century), 2007
· Yakov Milstein. Vsevolod Buyukli, M., 1972

'*Russian pianist* ***Dmitri Alexeev*** *is one of the world's most highly regarded artists. His critically acclaimed recitals on the world's leading concert stages and concerto appearances with the most prestigious orchestras have secured his position as one of 'the most remarkable pianists of the day*'
(Daily Telegraph).

He has performed in all major concert halls around the world and has performed with all leading orchestras such as the Berlin Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, Royal Concertgebouw of Amsterdam, the five London orchestras, Orchestre de Paris, Israel Philharmonic and the Munich Bavarian Radio Orchestra amongst others. He has worked with conductors such as Ashkenazy, Boulez, Dorati, Gergiev, Giulini, Jansons, Muti, Pappano, Rozhdestvensky, Salonen, Svetlanov, Temirkanov, Tilson Thomas and Klaus Tennstedt, amongst many others.

Alexeev has also collaborated in chamber music with some of the world's most renowned musicians including Rostropovich, Bashmet, Joshua Bell, Nicolai Gedda, Lynn Harrell, Barbara Hendricks and Elisabeth Söderström.

Alexeev has been a juror for many of the world's most prestigious International Piano Competitions, including the Leeds, Chopin (Warsaw), Van Cliburn, Santander, Beethoven (Vienna) and Tchaikovsky (Moscow) International Piano Competitions. He regularly gives masterclasses around the world. Alexeev has made many fine recordings for EMI, BMG, Virgin Classics, Hyperion and Russian labels.

Complete Piano Sonatas
Opp.6, 19, 23, 30, 53, 62, 64, 66, 68 & 70
Recording: 3-5 November 2008, 19-21 January 2009, 9-11 November 2009, The Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex
Producer: Ates Orga
Engineer & Editor: Ken Blair
Piano technician: David Widdicombe
℗ 2012 Brilliant Classics

Complete Études
Opp.2 No.1, 8 No.12, 42, 49 No.1, 56 No.4, 65 & 69
Recording: 22-24 October 2010, Champs Hill, West Sussex, England
Producer: Ates Orga
Engineer: Ken Blair
Editors: Ken Blair and Will Anderson
Piano technician: David Flanders
℗ 2015 Brilliant Classics

Complete Études
Opp.2 Nos. 2-3, 8 Nos. 1-11, & 47
Recording: 19-21 January 2009, Champs Hill, West Sussex, England
Producer: Ates Orga
Engineer: Ken Blair
Editors: Ken Blair and Will Anderson
Piano technician: David Widdicombe
℗ 2015 Brilliant Classics

Complete Preludes
Opp.9 No.1, 11, 13, 15-17, 22, 27, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 45 No.3, 48, 49 No.2, 51 No.2, 56 No.1, 59 No.2, 67 & 74
Recording: 10-11, 16-17 July 2017, Henry Wood Hall, London
Producer: Ken Blair
Engineer: Will Anderson
Editors: Ken Blair
Piano technician: Peter Salisbury
℗ 2018 Brilliant Classics

Mazurkas, Poèmes & Impromptus
Opp.1, 3-5, 7, 9 No.2, 10, 12, 14, 18, 21, 25, 28, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 41, 44, 45 Nos.1&2, 46, 49 No.3, 51 Nos. 1,3 & 4, 52, 56 Nos.2-3, 57, 58, 59 No.1, 61, 63, 71, 72, 73 & Feuillet d'album
Recording: 11-13 January & 3-5 July 2019, Henry Wood Hall, London
Producer: Ken Blair
Engineer: Will Anderson
Editors: Will Anderson and Charlie Hembrow
Piano technician: Peter Salisbury
℗ 2021 Brilliant Classics

This album compilation mastered by Ken Blair.

Cover: photo of Scriabin c. 1900, by an unknown photographer. Public domain
Photo of Dmitri Alexeev: © Jorge Nava