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External influences on Rachmaninov’s early piano works as exemplified in the “Morceaux de Salon”, Opus 10 and “Moments Musicaux”, Opus 16

Meza, Esequiel, Jr., D.M.A.

The University of Arizona, 1993

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EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON RACHMANINOV'S EARLY PIANO WORKS AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE MORCEAUX DE SALON, OPUS 10 AND MOMENTS MUSICAUX, OPUS 16

by

Esequiel Meza, Jr.

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1993
As members of the Final Examination Committee, we certify that we have read the document prepared by Espinietel Meza, Jr. entitled "External Influences on Rachmaninov's Early Piano Works as Exemplified in the Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10 and Moments Musicaux, Opus 16" and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts (A. Mus. D.).

Final approval and acceptance of this document is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copy of the document to the Graduate College.

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May 28, 1993
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DEDICATION

This document is lovingly dedicated to my mother. Her everlasting support has given me the courage and motivation to pursue my all my endeavors.
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ABSTRACT

This document focuses upon external influences in the development of Sergei Vasilyevich Rachmaninov's (1873-1943) musical style as seen in two early solo piano collections: *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10*, and the *Moments musicaux, Opus 16*. In this author's opinion, these two collections are important compositions in the evolution of Rachmaninov's musical style. Both Opus 10 and Opus 16 are representative of his early compositional period. This study examines the development of these two compositions and provides information regarding important, experimental processes related to Rachmaninov's own musical materials. Opus 10 was written shortly after his graduation from the Moscow Conservatory. Like many of his early works, it was written under the constraints and structural models of his conservatory training. The Opus 16 collection, however, shows evidence of extended compositional experimentation and freedom from the aforementioned constraints.

This examination of influences and stylistic overview of Rachmaninov's *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10* and *Moments musicaux, Opus 16* includes an historical perspective of the compositions, the influential elements of Russian/Eastern Orthodox Church music, the influence of external factors on the two works, the influence of nineteenth century composers on the two works, and the evolution of Rachmaninov's own unique compositional techniques and style.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Opus 10 collection of Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninov (1873-1943) was written between the years of 1893 and 1894. The Opus 16 collection was written in 1897. Both collections are representative of the early compositional period of Rachmaninov. This study will focus on the development of these two compositions and will provide information regarding important, experimental processes related to his own musical materials.

Historical and analytic documentation will be provided that illustrates similarities between the two collections and shows the evolution of technical skill, external influences of other composers, and the artistic components present in the Opus 10 and Opus 16 works. These compositions clearly illustrate the manner in which Rachmaninov used and reused thematic, melodic, and harmonic compositional material. In addition, the two collections under investigation also demonstrate how Rachmaninov utilized motivic themes, harmonies, and musical structures developed by composers in the nineteenth century.

The experimentation, exploration and innovation that occurred during the writing of these two works will also be addressed. Additionally, this document will show how Rachmaninov began to experiment with compositional techniques and how he diverged from accepted compositional norms. We will see how Rachmaninov utilizes compositional materials and how his own unique, creative process developed.
This examination of influences and stylistic overview of Rachmaninov's *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10* and *Moments musicaux Opus 16* includes an historical perspective of the compositions, the influential elements of Russian/Eastern Orthodox Church Music, the influence of external factors on the two works, the influence of nineteenth century composers on the two works, and the evolution of Rachmaninov's own unique compositional techniques and style.
Chapter 2

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF RACHMANINOV’S MORCEAUX DE SALON, OPUS 10 AND MOMENTS MUSICAUX, OPUS 16

Little information is available regarding Russian musical activities during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was not until the nineteenth century that the Russian musical culture began to make strides in the area of serious musical composition.¹ Late nineteenth century Russia, a conglomeration of many independent states, occupied nearly one-sixth of the Earth's land mass, making it the largest country in the world.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Russia was ruled by Alexander I (1801-1825) and Nicholas I (1825-1855). At this time, Russia was experiencing pressures from other countries to become more liberalized and Westernized. This pressure caused these two czars to lead Russia on contrary courses both in favor of and against liberalization and westernization. The first twelve years under the rule of Alexander were primarily dominated by the Napoleonic Wars which eventually led to the invasion of Moscow, the then governmental center of Russia, and the defeat of the French. At that time, the civil freedoms, liberal institutions in education, and governmental reforms that Alexander had previously established were largely abandoned by his successor Nicholas, who made every effort to suppress all ideas that were foreign for fear of a revolution. This led to an atmosphere of repression and hopelessness throughout Russia. Soon thereafter, there arose a group of

militant, young Russian writers who expressed their dissatisfaction with the regressiveness of their country as well as their support of Western influences. These writers had an affinity for the Romantic poets of England and Germany. Alexander Griboyedov (1795-1837), playwright and brilliant satirist of the Russian social order, was a prominent member of the group. However, Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837), who achieved a stature in Russian letters equivalent to German masters such as Goethe, was the main literary figure of the period.

Russian concert life owed its beginnings to increasing contacts with the West. Lenten seasonal concerts became firmly established in St. Petersburg and Moscow, as did concerts for the financial benefit of the performers. Some of the most powerful Russian nobility maintained private orchestras and musical theaters. However, a great percentage of the musical life of the country consisted of amateur music making. According to Gerald R. Seaman, a leading Russian music scholar, pianos and other domestic musical instruments were increasingly in demand, as were teachers of German and Italian descent. Additionally, music for the operas and concerts were primarily provided by non-Russian composers who were living in Russia. One such composer was Galuppi (1776-1780) who, for many years, worked for the Russian aristocracy, providing them with Latin inspired music.

Mikhail Glinka (1804-1857) was considered the father of Russian art music and was Russia's most active native born composer during the first half of

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the nineteenth century. Both Glinka and his contemporary, Alexander
Dargomyzhsky (1813-1869), apart from some salon pieces, wrote very little for
the piano and expressed themselves primarily in the dramatic genre of opera.
According to Gillespie, piano composition made very little progress in Russia
until the rise of the Russian Five.4

The Russian Five, comprised of Mily Balakirev (1830-1910), Modeste
Mussorgsky (1839-1881), Alexander Borodin (1833-1887), César Cui (1835-
1918) and Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908), were proud, nationalistic
composers of native Russian music who were all very aware of the various
types of rich and original Slavic folklore available to them as compositional
material. There were epics retelling ancient Russian legends and narratives
telling of the happenings in daily family life such as marriage, love, death, and
work. The rhythms in this wealth of musical folk art were free and the melodies
were modal rather than tonal.5 It was from this great and plentiful source that
the Russian Five, the first group of Russian composers of any notoriety,
obtained their prime inspirational material for compositions.

According to Gerald Abraham, Balakirev, the leader of the "Mighty Five,"
was very instrumental in "setting the course for Russian Orchestral music and
Russian lyrical song during the second half of the [nineteenth] century."6 His
output for piano consisted, most importantly, of two piano concerti, the first in F-
sharp minor and the second in E-flat major. It should be noted that Balakirev

4Gillespie 267.
5Gillespie 267.
did not complete his second concerto, rather, the concerto was completed by Sergey Liapunov (1859-1924), Russian pianist, composer and Assistant Musical Director of the Court Chapel in St. Petersburg. In addition to the two concerti, Balakirev also contributed several Mazurkas, Scherzos, Nocturnes, Waltzes and various other pieces written in a "salon" style. His most famous work for solo piano, which he could not play, is the Oriental Fantasy, *Islamey*, completed in 1969 and based on "Lisztian technique."

Besides Boris Gudonov, Mussorgsky's output consisted of several stage, choral and orchestral works, as well as several groups of "salon" pieces for solo piano. His most noted work for piano solo is the *Pictures from an Exhibition*, completed in 1874. This is a cycle of ten pieces which are extramusically associated with the artistic drawings and paintings of Victor Hartmann, an esteemed friend of Mussorgsky's. Hinson states:

> These highly original character pieces are not always the most pianistic but they represent the greatest masterpiece of piano writing to come from the nineteenth century Russian national school.8

Borodin is credited with having written four operas, three symphonies, several chamber works and songs. His output for piano consists of various salon pieces, a set of unfinished variations, two scherzos and a suite. His *Scherzo in A-flat major* is a very effective and challenging virtuoso work.

Rimsky-Korsakov, composer and Russian music scholar, had a tremendous compositional output which included fifteen operas, fifteen different collections of choral works, three symphonies as well as several chamber works

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8Hinson 453.
and incidental music for orchestra. His works for piano included four sets of variations, several fugues and various collections of “salon” pieces. His most notable work for solo piano is his Variations on BACH, Opus 10.9

The last composer to be considered of the “Mighty Five” is Cui. According to Hinson, he is “the least typically Russian of the group of Five.”10 This composer of French descent contributed eleven operas, eight collections of choral works, several incidental works for orchestra and a large output of vocal literature. His works for piano consisted of solo pieces written in salon style.

Other Russian composers living and working in the same era preferred to work from predominantly French and German models. Two such composers were Anton Rubinstein (1829-1894) and Peter Tchaikovsky (1840-1893). Rubinstein was an accomplished pianist. He was said to be one of the few pianists who, in his prime, could rival the legendary piano playing of one Franz Liszt. But even with such fame, Rubinstein longed for recognition as a composer and worked diligently to realize that goal. His extensive compositional output consisted of six symphonies, ten collections of choral works, a large body of chamber music and five concerti for piano and orchestra. His compositions for solo piano consist of well over 200 individual pieces written in “salon” style. According to Gillespie:

He has earned a permanent place in Russian musical history as one who had a tremendous influence on music in Russia by attempting to share his love for music by educating the masses to good piano repertoire of all periods and the founding of the St. Petersburg Conservatory.”11

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9 Hinson 526.
10 Hinson 176.
11 Gillespie 272.
Tchaikovsky, a student of Rubinstein, achieved more success than his teacher and wrote many piano works. These include his very famous *Piano Concerto in B-flat minor*, two large piano sonatas, three sets of variations and an enormous collection of salon pieces. According to Gillespie:

Most of Tchaikovsky's [solo] piano music is very obscure because it was regarded as being unimaginative, tedious, and unpianistic. His fame rests primarily in the genre of the orchestral symphony and ballet.\(^\text{12}\)

In addition to his contributions to the piano repertoire, Tchaikovsky also composed over fourteen collections of songs, six symphonies, several operas, seven ballets, a tremendous amount of repertoire for violin and piano as well as several pieces for unaccompanied chorus.

Bakst writes:

Tchaikovsky's musical esthetic was conservative. He sought to preserve the bases of classical music.... He did not agree with the attitude prevalent in Balakirev's circle that Russian music was superior to Western music; and, at times, he pointed out the backwardness of Russian music.\(^\text{13}\)

Regarding Tchaikovsky's music, Bakst adds:

Tchaikovsky's melodies possess an emotional persuasion independent of the size and form of the composition. At the same time every composition invariably reveals the intellectual and esthetic constancy [of] Tchaikovsky. The greatness of Tchaikovsky's music is recognized all over the world.\(^\text{14}\)

Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915) soon emerged as a composer with a unique approach to composition. With the exception of six symphonic works,

\(^{12}\)Gillespie 272.


\(^{14}\)Bakst 189.
the majority of his output was dedicated exclusively to the piano. However, Scriabin was the least Russian of all the native born composers and did not utilize any elements from Slavic folklore. Rather, he relied on the music of Liszt, Chopin, and Wagner to serve as models for himself. Scriabin considered himself to be a philosopher as much as a musician as is evident in the oriental philosophy contained in many of his writings. His personal belief in "I am God, I am the world," resulted in a free, all powerful personality that identified itself with the cosmos and contributed toward the creation of his nervous and excited piano works.\textsuperscript{15} Bakst writes:

\begin{quote}
Scriabin became preoccupied with the idea of the emancipation of individual consciousness, "the spirit," and with the creative activity of a powerful self-affirming personality. His philosophy was essentially based on the theory of solipsism which holds that the "self" is the only reality. The world is nothing else than an antithesis created by [his] personal consciousness.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

As Scriabin gradually came to realize what his personal artistic goal should be, he produced increasing numbers of daringly unorthodox works that opened new harmonic concepts to Russians and non-Russians alike.

According to Gillespie, "following generations saw the emergence of many musicians but only a slight supply of good music."\textsuperscript{17} The late nineteenth century Russian composers were not very creative as they worked with formulas derived from either western techniques or their Russian predecessors. The

\begin{footnotes}
\item[16] Bakst 262.
\item[17] Gillespie 274.
\end{footnotes}
available Russian piano collections by late nineteenth and early twentieth century composers offer this same "salon" music. Romantic influences lingered on in Russia through the first twenty-five years into the twentieth century, an artificial extension of the aesthetic of Romanticism which had largely been abandoned in other countries.\textsuperscript{18}

The last composer to be considered in this historical perspective is Sergei Rachmaninov. This composer technically belongs to the twentieth century; however his works are permeated with nineteenth century romantic influences.

Rachmaninov, like Anton Rubinstein, was a phenomenal pianist and ranked highly as one of the leading twentieth century composers in his day, despite much critical carping. This was due to the inherent beauty that is present in his compositions. Rachmaninov's output included seven collections of choral works, two symphonies, three symphonic poems, seven collections of songs and a few chamber pieces. The majority of his compositional productivity lies in the genre of piano music. This tremendous body of repertoire for piano includes two suites for two pianos, four concerti, one set of variations for piano and orchestra based on a theme of Paganini, two early collections of solo pieces written in salon style which include the \textit{Morceaux de salon, Opus 10}, the six \textit{Moments musicaux}, two sets of variations for solo piano based on themes of Chopin and Corelli, twenty-three preludes, fifteen \textit{Etudes tableaux} and two sonatas.

According to Russian scholar Richard Anthony Leonard,

Rachmaninov's piano style stemmed directly from the

\textsuperscript{18}Gillespie 275.
romantic masters of the west, especially Chopin and Liszt. Rachmaninov concentrated on the Chopin-Liszt framework of singing melodies and rich sonorities, decorated by elaborate technical embellishments. Though the formula was old, he yet contrived to use it with individuality.\textsuperscript{19}

Today, Rachmaninov's concerti, as well as his later solo works, are a central component of the concert repertoire throughout the world. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Rachmaninov knew his way around the physical keyboard.\textsuperscript{20} As a result, his compositions are pianistically very secure. They incorporate a keyboard idiom of thick textures, florid decoration, and extreme finesse. Rachmaninov was particularly skilled as a melodist. Many of his songs contain some of the most beautiful passages to be found in vocal literature anywhere. In transferring this innate talent to the actual keyboard, Rachmaninov created a "characteristically limpid, nostalgic melodic line."\textsuperscript{21} This type of melodic writing played a key role in the success achieved by several of his piano compositions, especially his concerti. Throughout his entire compositional output, "Rachmaninov proves himself to be a resourceful and imaginative composer, creating a series of mood sketches with rare beauty and individuality."\textsuperscript{22}

The \textit{Morceaux de salon} and the \textit{Moments musicaux} were written after Rachmaninov's graduation from the Moscow Conservatory of Music in 1892. In 1882 the Rachmaninov family moved to St. Petersburg, where Sergei


\textsuperscript{20}Gillespie 276.

\textsuperscript{21}Gillespie 276.

\textsuperscript{22}Gillespie 277.
Rachmaninov attended the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music. There he received a general education and studied piano with Vladimir Demyansky and harmony with Alexander Rubets. Because of a series of family problems, including the death of his sister, Rachmaninov failed all of his general subjects at the end of the term in 1885. His scholarship at the conservatory was in question because of his poor performance, so on the recommendation of his cousin Alexander Siloti, he went to the Moscow Conservatory to study with Nikolai Zverev. It was during this period that Rachmaninov met many of the most prominent musicians of the era: Anton Rubinstein, Taneyev, Arensky, Safonov, and Tchaikovsky. After Rachmaninov entered the senior department of the Conservatory in 1888, he began to study piano with Siloti, counterpoint with Taneyev, and harmony with Arensky. Because of political problems and friction among the faculty of the Moscow Conservatory of Music, Alexander Siloti decided to resign. This development motivated Rachmaninov to work harder at his musical studies and to complete his graduation requirements one year early. During this time, Rachmaninov completed several compositions including his Piano Concerto No.1, in F-sharp minor and a one-act opera, Aleko. The opera was influenced by Tchaikovsky's The Queen of Spades and it unanimously pleased the examining committee at the Conservatory. Rachmaninov was awarded the highest mark for the opera and in 1892 he graduated from the Moscow Conservatory with the Great Gold Medal.

After his graduation from the conservatory, Rachmaninov for the first time was on his own. He lived at the Hotel America which was a second rate residence hotel in Moscow. It was there in 1893 that he composed the Prelude
in C sharp minor. Also late in 1893, Rachmaninov began to compose the Morceaux de salon, Op. 10.
Chapter 3

EXTERNAL FACTORS RELATED TO THE COMPOSITIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF RACHMANINOV'S Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10 and Moments Musicaux, Opus 16

The chants of the Russian/Eastern Orthodox Church and the Dies Irae of the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead had a significant influence on Rachmaninov's compositional style. Rachmaninov scholar Patrick Piggott states that Rachmaninov utilized short melodic sections from the Octoechos, a collection of ancient chants from the Russian/Eastern Orthodox Church, and "welded them into themes suitable for symphonic development."23 Sergei Bertensson and Jay Leyda in their book entitled Sergei Rachmaninoff: A Lifetime in Music state, "Since January of 1895 all of Rachmaninov's energies and hopes had been concentrated on a symphony based on traditional chants of the Russian/Eastern Orthodox Service."24 In addition, Rachmaninov composed an earlier work written for the Russian church. This work, composed in 1893, was a sacred concerto for unaccompanied mixed chorus. The opening section of this work is said to be based on a motive from the Russian/Eastern Orthodox Church.25

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25Piggott 46.
As a child, Rachmaninov frequently accompanied his grandmother, Madame Boutakova, to church services where hymns from the Octoechos were sung. Upon returning home from these services, Rachmaninov and his grandmother would often sit at the piano and play the chants just heard at these services. This made a tremendous impression on the young Rachmaninov as revealed in his later compositions.

Oskar von Riesemann in his book entitled *Rachmaninoff's Recollections*, quotes Rachmaninov saying:

My grandmother was very religious and attended regularly the different churches of the city. She always took me, her favorite, with her. We spent hours standing in the beautiful St. Petersburg churches: St. Issac's Cathedral, the Kasan Cathedral, and other old places of worship in all quarters of the town. I took less interest in God and religious worship than in the singing, which was of unrivaled beauty, especially in the cathedrals, where we frequently heard the best choirs of St. Petersburg. I usually took pains to find room underneath the gallery and never forgot any of what I heard. This I turned into capital, literally, by sitting down at the piano when I came home and playing all I had heard. For this performance my grandmother never failed to reward me with twenty-five kopecks and, naturally, I was not loath to exert my memory for such a consideration, as twenty-five kopecks meant a large sum to an urchin of ten or eleven."

In addition to Russian/Eastern Orthodox church music, the Dies Irae of the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead had a significant influence on Rachmaninov's compositional style. Death, the occult supernatural, and the nocturnal were popular programmatic themes in nineteenth century

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26Bertensson/Leyda 4-5.

romanticism and composers often utilized the rich symbolism associated with the *Dies Irae*. This rich symbolism would have an important influence on Rachmaninov in the writing of the *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10* and the *Moments musicaux, Opus 16*.

The text of the *Dies Irae* portrays the Day of Judgment and is attributed to Thomas of Cefano (d. circa 1250). It is thought by many scholars to have grown out of a trope to the responsory *Libera me*, a poem which was initially included in the Requiem Mass in Italy around the fourteenth century. The plainsong melody is most commonly known through secular quotation of the first two phrases as can be seen in example 1.

![Example 1. Sequence, Dies Irae. First two phrases.](image)

A recent study by Woodard establishes these standards as criteria for identifying quotational use of the *Dies Irae* in the music of Rachmaninov:

1. four notes from the chant may constitute quotation
2. acceptable quotation may include intervallic alteration
3. suspected quotation may be verified retroactively, upon observation of substantial evidence.

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30 Susan Jeanne Woodard, "The Dies Irae as used by Sergei Rachmaninoff: Some Sources, Antecedents, and Applications," diss., The Ohio State University, 1984, 95.
Rachmaninov recognized an unlimited number of possible applications of the *Dies Irae*. Among them was motivic usage of a four-note fragment of the chant. Woodard adds:

A four-note fragment of the chant suited Rachmaninov's symphonic style, as it afforded episodic treatment, sequential development, and contrasted with the long, lyrical themes of which he was so fond.31

Based upon the previously noted criteria that Woodard outlines as criteria for identification of quotational use of the *Dies irae*, one such appearance might be identified in the *Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10, No. 3* entitled *Barcarolle*. Here, Rachmaninov uses a four-note fragment of the *Dies Irae* to construct a beautiful and haunting melody. However, the quotation is not exact. Rachmaninov has altered the intervallic relationships between the third, fourth, and fifth notes of the original plain chant. By making this small alteration, Rachmaninov has masked the *Dies Irae* theme. The result is a dark, somber effect in the melody without the actual auditory recognition of the four-note motive. If this quotation were exact, the third, fourth, and fifth notes would have to be D, B-flat, then C, respectively. Example 2 illustrates how Rachmaninov cleverly rearranged the order of the aforementioned notes to construct the melody upon which the entire *Barcarolle* is based. It is important to note that the melody based upon the *Dies Irae* motive only appears at the beginning of the A section, and again at the return of the highly embellished A section.

31Woodard 44.
In the *Moments Musicaux, Opus 16, No. 3*, a more clearly delineated quotation of the *Dies Irae* motive appears at measure 33, near the conclusion of the piece. Woodard suggests that "single statements of the *Dies Irae* can serve the purpose of drawing attention to the preceding or following material which is related to the motivic cell and which might otherwise go undetected."

Example 3 illustrates how Rachmaninov presents the *Dies Irae* motive, in octaves, for the left hand. Rachmaninov asks that these notes be played staccato, resulting in a musical style resembling that of a funeral march. Further analysis of the right hand melodic fragment reveals that it is also based upon a shorter variant of the *Dies Irae* motive, inverted with a slight rhythmic alteration.

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33 Woodard 63.
Example 3. Rachmaninov *Moments Musicaux*, Opus 16, No. 3, mm. 32-33.\(^{34}\)

Rachmaninov first requested historical information in regard to the *Dies Irae* in 1931 from Joseph Yasser (b. 1893), an organist, musicologist and author of the treatise, "A theory of Evolving Tonality." Yasser reported the following:

He began to tell me that he was then very much interested in the familiar medieval chant, *Dies Irae*, usually known to musicians (including himself) only by its first lines, used so often in various musical works as a 'Death theme'. However, he wished to obtain the whole music of this funeral chant, if it existed (though he wasn't sure of this); he would be extremely grateful for my help in this matter, for he had not time for the necessary research. He also asked about the significance of the original Latin text of this chant, and asked some questions as to its history—particularly as to fixing an approximate period for its origin—without offering a word of explanation for his keen interest in this...\(^{35}\)

Given the latter discussion, it is apparent that Rachmaninov's use of the *Dies Irae* was grounded in knowledge of the chant's use in the works of other composers as he obtained it from Yasser.

Though very few instances of the quotational use of the *Dies Irae* were found in the Opus 10 and Opus 16 collections, Rachmaninov's later compositions reveal much more extensive use of the *Dies Irae*. According to Patrick Piggott, these works include the *Symphony No. 1 in D minor*, Opus. 13

\(^{34}\)Sergei Rachmaninov, *Moments Musicaux*, Opus 16, No. 3.

\(^{35}\)Bertensson/Leyda 278.
completed in 1895, the *Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Opus 27* completed in 1907, *The Isle of the Dead, Opus. 29* completed in 1909 and *The Bells* completed in 1913. His later piano compositions also contained increased use of the *Dies Irae*. Example 4 illustrates Rachmaninov's use of the *Dies Irae* motive in the *Prelude in A minor, Opus 32, No. 4* completed August 28, 1910.

![Example 4. Rachmaninov, Prelude in A minor, Opus 32, No. 8, mm. 1-3.](image)

Example 5 shows the *Dies Irae* present in the *Etude tableaux in A minor, Opus 39, No. 2* completed October 14, 1916.

![Example 5. Rachmaninov, Etude tableaux in A minor, Opus 39, No. 2, mm. 1-4.](image)

\[\text{Example 4. Rachmaninov, Prelude in A minor, Opus 32, No. 8, mm. 1-3.}^{36}\]

\[\text{Example 5. Rachmaninov, Etude tableaux in A minor, Opus 39, No. 2, mm. 1-4.}^{37}\]

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\[^{36}\text{Sergei Rachmaninov, Prelude in A minor, Opus 32, No. 8.}\]

\[^{37}\text{Sergei Rachmaninov, Etude tableaux in A minor, Opus 39, No. 2.}\]
Additional appearances of the *Dies Irae* motive can be seen in Rachmaninov's *Rapsodie on a Theme of Paganini, Opus 43*. Examples 6, 7 and 8 illustrate Rachmaninov's intentional use of the *Dies Irae* motive in variations seven, ten and twenty-two, respectively.

Example 6. Rachmaninov, *Rapsodie on a Theme of Paganini, Opus 43*, Variation VII, mm. 1-7.\(^{38}\)

Example 7. Rachmaninov, *Rapsodie on a Theme of Paganini, Opus 43*, Variation X, mm. 10-13.\(^{39}\)

\(^{38}\)Sergei Rachmaninov, *Rapsodie on a Theme of Paganini, Opus 43*.

\(^{39}\)Sergei Rachmaninov, *Rapsodie on a Theme of Paganini, Opus 43*. 
In addition to a love for church music, Rachmaninov was also very fond of the Russian Church carillon. This affinity for church bells had a significant influence on Rachmaninov when writing the *Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10* and the *Moments Musicaux, Opus 16.*

Bertennson-Leyda state:

> Butakova, [Rachmaninov's grandmother], ...for his [Rachmaninov's] second vacation she bought a farm, Borisovo....His Grandmother imposed very limited duties on him; when she had guests he would sit at the piano, announce works by Chopin or Beethoven, and play improvisation of his own. His other duty, equally pleasurable, was to drive his grandmother to nearby convents and churches to listen to the chimes and the choirs.\(^{41}\)

Riesemann also describes Borisovo as being surrounded in meadows, fields, and woods, next to the Volchov river which flows into Lake Limen.

Riesemann adds:

> Vesper bells from neighboring Novgorod drifted over the peaceful countryside. These bells...they were lovelier than all else. The

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\(^{40}\)Sergi Rachmaninov, *Rapsodie on a Theme of Paganini, Opus 43.*
\(^{41}\)Bertennson-Leyda 5-6.
boy would spend hours in the boat, listening to their strange, impelling, utterly unearthly voices. Did he dream then that he would, one day, immortalize the peal of Russian church bells in his music?  

Rachmaninov writes in his unpublished memoirs:

All my life I have taken pleasure in the differing moods and music of gladly chiming and mournfully tolling bells. This love for bells is inherent in every Russian. One of my fondest childhood recollections is associated with the four notes of the great bells in the St. Sophia Cathedral of Novgorod, which I often heard when my grandmother took me to town on church festival days. The bell ringers were artists. The four notes were a theme that recurred again and again, four silvery weeping notes, veiled in an everchanging accompaniment woven around them. I always associated the idea of tears with them. Many years later I composed a suite for two pianos, in four movements, each developing a poetic motto. For the Third movement, prefaced by Tiutchev's poem, "Tears" I knew at once the ideal theme--and the cathedral bells of Novgorod sang again. In my opera, The Miserly Knight, I used the same theme to express the tearful entreaties of the unfortunate widow who pleaded with the baron to spare her child.

Regarding the latter quotation, Gintz writes:

it is interesting to speculate that [Rachmaninov's] attraction to the Dies Irae is linked with his interest in these bells. The four notes described in the above quotation correspond to the pitches B-flat, A, G, E-flat and it is certainly possible that the pitch combination B-flat, A, G (Dies Irae motive) occurred, "veiled in the everchanging accompaniment."

The influence of the Russian bell sonorities is evident in the Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10, No. 3, Barcarolle. Though the actual presence of a bell motive

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42Reisemann 37.
43Bertennson/Leyda 184.
cannot be identified in the Opus 10 or Opus 16 collections, example 9 illustrates Rachmaninov's use of a bell-like chiming effect that imitates the intricate blending of sonorities that is characteristic of a carillon treated both sequentially and episodically.

Example 9. Rachmaninov, Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10 No. 3, Barcarolle, mm. 119-124.\textsuperscript{45}

Example 10 demonstrates further use of sequential and episodic bell-tremolo effects in the Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10, No. 5, Humoreske. Note Rachmaninov's implementation of a richer, fuller chordal texture. Rather than using alternating thirds and unisons as seen in the previous example, he expands the texture to full triads and doubles the root note in the right hand.

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Sergei Rachmaninov, Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10, No. 3.}
Further evidence of the influence of Russian bell sonorities can be found in the *Moments Musicaux, Opus 16, No. 6*. As previously mentioned, example 11 illustrates Rachmaninov's use of the bell device to create an overall effect throughout this entire piece.

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46Sergei Rachmaninov, *Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10, No. 5*.

47Sergei Rachmaninov, *Moments Musicaux, Opus 16, No. 6*. 
Other influences on the compositional development of Rachmaninov's Opus 10 and Opus 16 collections were those provided by the works of Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) and Franz Liszt (1811-1886). Kirby states:

Rachmaninov remained throughout his life and in all respects a romantic composer, never departing from the German tradition, [sic], handed down from the nineteenth-century; the influence of Chaikovskii particularly, but also that of Liszt and Chopin, dominated his entire work as a composer.48

Historically, the piano works of Frédéric Chopin have proven to be a tremendous influence on composers for the piano. The piano compositions of Rachmaninov demonstrate this in various contexts. Badura-Skoda says, "Both Rachmaninov and Prokofiev, although very different from each other, owed not a little to the Polish master."49 Both Chopin and Rachmaninov composed two sets of etudes, as well as twenty-four preludes in each major and minor key. In addition, Rachmaninov composed a set of variations based on a theme from Chopin's Prelude in C minor, Opus 28, No.20 in 1902. Moreover, Rachmaninov's solo piano repertoire, which he utilized throughout his entire performing career, contained a large body of Chopin's compositions for solo piano. In fact, Rachmaninov was later famed for his interpretation and recording of the Chopin Sonata in B flat minor.50

48Kirby, 426.


50Badura-Skoda 246.
Methuen-Campbell, in an article in *The Cambridge Companion to Chopin* entitled "Chopin in Performance" writes:

There were other teachers in Russia who towards the end of the nineteenth century produced Chopin players of note. Alexander Siloti, [one of these aforementioned Russian teachers], taught Sergei Rachmaninov.51

He further adds:

Rachmaninov and Horowitz have played the most interesting Chopin of all the twentieth-century Russians, each retaining the traditional strengths of a poetic tone and a complete awareness of the potentialities of the sustaining pedal which Anton Rubinstein had labelled 'the soul of the piano'.52

Because Rachmaninov studied piano with Alexander Siloti, a devout teacher of the Chopin masterpieces, it is very understandable how the compositions of Chopin would have had a tremendous influence on Rachmaninov's compositional style. Aside from the obvious influences reflected by the similarity of titles in some of the works of Rachmaninov and Chopin, careful examination of the *Morceaux de salon* and *Moments musicaux* musical scores reveals more specific examples of Chopin's influence on Rachmaninov's compositional style.

Many similarities exist between Rachmaninov's *Morceaux de salon*, *Opus 10* and Chopin's *Valses* and *Nocturnes*. Examples 12 and 13 illustrate how Rachmaninov may have used the Chopin *Nocturne, Opus 55, No. 1* as a textural model for his *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 1, Nocturne*. Note the


52 Methuen-Campbell 204.
similarities in texture and tessitura of both left hand parts. In addition, Rachmaninov and Chopin both employ a single-voice, singing melody in the right hand that does not extend much beyond the range of one octave. Both melodies are diatonic in nature and the phrases are eight measures in length, being composed of two periods four measures in length.

Example 12. Chopin, Nocturne, Opus 55, No. 1, mm. 1-8.\(^{53}\)

\(^{53}\)Frederic Chopin, Nocturne, Opus 55, No. 1.
Example 13. Rachmaninov, *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10 No. 1, Nocturne*, mm. 1-8.\textsuperscript{54}

Rachmaninov's *Nocturne* is not as complex as Chopin's, though he does utilize the same three-part ABA formal structure in addition to the aforementioned textural devices. To be discussed in greater detail later in this study, Rachmaninov's failure to create a *Nocturne* as eloquently as Chopin may be explained by his fervent adherence to the limiting compositional models imposed on him as a conservatory student. During the composition of the Opus 10 works, Rachmaninov was teaching at the Marinskii Academy for Girls. The individual pieces in the *Morceaux de salon* appear to be teaching pieces for his young students. Therefore, he would not have wanted to compose a work with the same technical difficulty apparent in the Chopin *Nocturne, Opus 55, No. 1*.

\textsuperscript{54}\textsuperscript{54}Sergei Rachmaninov, *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 1, Nocturne.*
Other influences of Chopin are evident in Rachmaninov's *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 2, Valse*. The *Valse* is in the key of A major, the relative major of the first piece in Rachmaninov's Opus 10 and also exhibits textural reminiscences of Chopin's *Valse, Opus 64, No. 3*. As he did in the *Nocturne*, Rachmaninov utilizes the same left hand figure as Chopin, however he does thin-out the texture by omitting the third of the chord. See examples 14 and 15.

Example 14. Chopin, *Valse, Opus 64, No. 3*, mm. 1-9.55

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55Frédéric Chopin, *Valse, Opus 64, No. 3*. 
Rachmaninov, like Chopin, uses elements of the chromatic scale in the construction of a melody reminiscent of the Chopin melody by beginning on middle C-sharp and ascending chromatically rather than descending from C1 as Chopin does. Note how Rachmaninov employs the previously mentioned chromatic scale in the final four-bar period of the eight measure phrase just as Chopin does. Again, Rachmaninov chooses to ascend chromatically while Chopin descends. Rachmaninov uses an ABA formal structure for his Valse and generally follows the same rhythmic formula that Chopin created for the A section of the Valse, Opus 64, No. 3.

Hancock discusses three pieces from the Moments musicaux, Opus 16 and provides a rather detailed account of the influence of Chopin evident in this collection asserting that five of the six Moments musicaux, Opus 16 are "particularly reminiscent of Chopin's etudes, both in their texture and difficulty of

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56Sergei Rachmaninov, Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 2, Valse.
execution."\textsuperscript{57} The latter is evident in the *Moments musicaux*, No. 4, in E minor and the Chopin *Revolutionary Etude, Opus 10, No. 12*. The Chopin etude is intended to be a vigorous study for the left hand which is apparent in the sixteenth-note running passage that permeates this entire work. Although Rachmaninov does not title his piece to be an etude he employs a similar sixteenth-note running passage in sextuplets as the supportive frame-work for a broad and heroic theme. Examples 16 and 17 demonstrate these remarkable similarities. It is noteworthy how Rachmaninov increases the difficulty of the left hand in comparison to Chopin's rather diatonic figure.

![Example 16. Chopin, Revolutionary Etude, Opus 10, No. 12, mm. 9-12.\textsuperscript{58}](image)

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{57} Robin James Hancock, "Rachmaninoff's *Six Moments Musicaux*, Op. 16, And the Tradition of the Nineteenth-Century Miniature," diss., Boston University, 1992, 43.

\textsuperscript{58} Frederic Chopin, *Etude Opus 10, No. 12, Revolutionary*."
\end{footnotesize}
Both Chopin and Rachmaninov employ a three-part ABA formal structure ending with a coda. Additionally, both composers have written pieces which concentrate their difficulties on the left hand and are in minor keys for an increased dramatic aural impact.

Other reminiscences of Chopin can be seen by comparing Rachmaninov's Moments musicaux, No. 6 with Chopin's Nocturne, Opus 24, No. 2. Examples 18 and 19 show how Rachmaninov uses the Chopin model to develop the left hand figure that accompanies the haunting right hand melody. Like Chopin, Rachmaninov begins with a one measure introduction with the left hand alone. This introduction includes two statements of the harmonic formula with the right hand entering with a single-voice, singing melody in the second measure. However, Rachmaninov diverges from the Chopin formula by

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59 Sergei Rachmaninov, Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 4.
transforming the left hand harmonic formula into a series of intervals as illustrated in example 19.

Example 18. Chopin, Nocturne, Opus 27, No. 2, mm. 1-5.  

Example 19. Rachmaninov, Moments Musicaux, Opus 16, No. 1, mm. 1-5.

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60Frederic Chopin, Nocturne, Opus 27, No. 2.

61Sergei Rachmaninov, Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 1.
As previously mentioned, Rachmaninov, in addition to being influenced by Chopin, was also highly influenced by Franz Liszt. Liszt, identified with the romantic cult of virtuosity, was chiefly responsible for developing a new style of playing and writing for the piano. Liszt often utilized extreme coloristic changes of register; incorporated full chords, octave passages and wide leaps; and employed scales and arpeggios over the entire length of the keyboard in thirds, sixths, octaves, and full chords. Additionally, he had a love of elaborate cadenzas and recitative-like passages which included every voicing combination imaginable.

Walker states:

"All subsequent schools were branches of his [Liszt's] tree. Rubinstein, Busoni, Paderewski, Godowsky, and Rachmaninoff—all those pianists who together formed what historians later dubbed 'the golden age of piano playing'-would be unthinkable without Liszt...It had to do with his unique ability to solve technical problems...Pianists turn to his music in order to discover the natural laws governing the keyboard. It is impossible for a modern pianist to keep Liszt out of his playing—out of his biceps, his forearms, his fingers—even though he may not know that Liszt is there, since modern piano playing spells Liszt."

Derek Watson in his book entitled Liszt states, "Of subsequent composers, Rachmaninov, Scriabin and Medtner were greatly indebted to Liszt." He further adds, "Liszt's influence was also transmitted through the teaching and travels of his most important pupils, Sophi Menter and Alexander Siloti in Russia." Siloti was Rachmaninov's cousin and also his teacher in the

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64 Watson 174.
Moscow Conservatory from 1888 to 1892. In addition to having studied with a pupil of Liszt, Rachmaninov also heard many performances of Liszt's works. Rachmaninov also performed and conducted many of Liszt's compositions later in his musical career.

Example 20 taken from Liszt's *Transcendental Study No. 9, Ricordanza*, exemplifies Liszt's use of off-beat rolled chords in recitativo style to accompany the melody. Similarly, Rachmaninov employs the same device in the *Morceaux de salon, No. 4, Mélodie*. See examples 20 and 21.

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Example 21. Rachmaninov, *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 4, Mélodie*, mm. 55-60.

Examples 22 and 23 illustrate textural similarities between Liszt's *Transcendental Study No. 12, Chasse-neige*, and Rachmaninov's *Moments*

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65Franz Liszt, *Transcendental Study No. 9, Ricordanza*.

66Sergei Rachmaninov, *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 4, Mélodie*. 
musicaux, No. 6. Note Liszt’s and Rachmaninov’s use of thirty-second notes in both hands. In both cases, the quick thirty-second notes serve as harmonically supportive material, or busy work, to the melody which is written to be played in the outer portion of the hand.

Example 22. Liszt, Transcendental Study No. 12, Chasse-neige, mm. 5-6.67

Example 23. Rachmaninov Moments musicaux No. 6, mm. 31-32.68

In 1911, Siloti revised and published the Liszt Totentanz, a set of thirty-two variations for piano and orchestra based on the Dies Irae theme. Although there is not documentation in the literature regarding Rachmaninov’s first contact with the Totentanz, it is known that he performed the work in the United

67Franz Liszt, Transcendental Stuy No. 12, Chasse-neige.

68Sergei Rachmaninov, Moments musicaux No. 6.
States in 1939. Rachmaninov's *Morceaux de salon* and *Moments musicaux* contain compositional devices that are similar to those employed by Liszt in his *Totentanz*.

Woodard discusses the *Totentanz* as a prototypical work which contains considerable use of the *Dies Irae* motive. Her study asserts that Liszt's use of the *Dies Irae* motive coupled with Siloti's having revised and published the work had a direct influence on Rachmaninov's compositions. This can be seen in the quotations of the *Dies Irae* motive previously illustrated in this discussion.\(^6^9\)

In addition to the *Dies Irae*, other similarities exist. Example 24 and 25 demonstrate how Rachmaninov models the B section of *Valse* of the *Morceaux de salon* after the opening material of the Liszt *Totentanz*.

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\(^{6^9}\)Woodard 30-42.

\(^{7^0}\)Franz Liszt, *Totentanz*. 
As mentioned earlier, Liszt was known for employing many cadenza-like passages in his compositions. This can be seen in example 26. Note how Liszt increases the rhythmic density as the cadenza progresses to the climax in typical fashion.

Similarly, Rachmaninov uses this device very effectively in the Moments musicaux, No. 1 just before the third variant of the opening theme. Example 27

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71Sergei Rachmaninov, Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 2, Valse.
72Franz Liszt, Transcendental Study No. 4, Mazeppa.
demonstrates how Rachmaninov adds a cadenza based upon a fragment of the opening theme of the *Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 1*.

Example 27. Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 1*, mm. 55.73

Another device used by Liszt which can be found in Rachmaninov’s *Moments musicaux* is the octave doubling of notes between the hands. Example 28 illustrates how Liszt uses this device while example 29 demonstrates how Rachmaninov employs the Lisztian model. Observe the note doubling occurring between the inner notes that accompany the main melodic material delineated by the eight-note values.

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73Sergei Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 1*. 
Example 28. Liszt, Totentanz, mm. 499-503.74

Example 29. Rachmaninov, Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 6, mm. 1-2.75

Rachmaninov is constantly borrowing from himself. Ewen states:

Rachmaninov did not bring to music that which it did not have before him. He was satisfied that the materials he had acquired as a student served his artistic purposes fully. But how admirably he used those materials, with what mastery of formal structure and variety of lyrical expressiveness and harmonic beauty!76

74Franz Liszt, Totentanz.

75Sergei Rachmaninov, Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 6.

Rachmaninov's unique ability to borrow and re-use materials from other compositions served him well when he found himself in times of financial exigency. By borrowing and re-using materials from other compositions, he could complete a great quantity of works in a timely manner. This was true when Rachmaninov composed both the *Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10* and the *Moments Musicaux, Opus 16*. Norris points out:

> It was early in 1894 that, for financial reasons, Rakhmaninov undertook rather more teaching work than he usually liked. Apart from giving private piano lessons he began to teach music theory at the Mariinsky Academy for Girls...[there] he composed some undemanding lucrative piano duets (Op. 11) and also the seven *Morceaux de salon, Op.10.*

During the months of October to December, 1896, Rachmaninov wrote, in a letter to Alexander Zataevich (1896-1936), an ethnographer and collector of folk songs whom Rachmaninov met while on a performing tour with the Italian violinist Teresina Tua in the Fall of 1895. In that letter he writes:

> Since October [1896] I have written twelve romances [Op. 14]...also six children's choruses [Op. 15]...and finally, by the 20th of the month I will have completed six songs for the piano [Op. 16].

Bertensson-Leyda add:

> When Arkadi Kerzin asked Rachmaninoff in 1906 for details on all his works, the reply contained a more explicit motive for the composition of these pieces: 'The fact that so soon after completing the (First) Symphony I wrote twenty short pieces can be explained by my need to pay a rather large sum of money that

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78Bertensson/Leyda 70.
was stolen from me on a train, money that did not belong to me.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{79}Bertessson/Leyda 70.
Chapter 4

COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF RACHMANINOV'S MORCEAUX DE SALON, OPUS 10 AND MOMENTS MUSICAUX, OPUS 16

The Rachmaninov Morceaux de salon, Opus 10 contains seven pieces: Nocturne, Valse, Barcarolle, Mélodie, Humoreske, Romance and Mazurka. The Moments musicaux, Opus 16 contains six untitled pieces. As previously mentioned in Chapter III, both collections were written under conditions of financial exigency and therefore, were written relatively quickly. One method Rachmaninov used in order to complete these works in a timely fashion for publication was that of borrowing material from one collection and using it in another. The latter is highly evident in Rachmaninov's use of a motto motive.

A motto is "a short phrase or theme serving as dominating figure of a composition, usually appearing at the opening...It may reappear note for note in its original form or altered in various ways." 71 Rachmaninov's use and treatment of the motto theme idea provides further evidence of nineteenth century influence upon his compositional style.

Woodard states:

The unlimited number of possible application of the motto theme was recognized by Rachmaninov. Motivic usage became a favorite device. A four-note fragment of the motto suited Rachmaninov's symphonic style, as it afforded episodic treatment, sequential development, and contrasted with long, lyrical themes of which he was so fond. 72


72 Woodard 43-44.
The Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10 and the Moments Musicaux, Opus 16 of Sergei Rachmaninov contain a readily distinguishable motto theme upon which a large majority of these works are based.

The opening two measures of the Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10, No. 1 contain the motto theme in its original form as conceived by Rachmaninov. As can be seen in example 30, the theme is very haunting, diatonic, and gently syncopated, beginning on the second beat of the measure and on the fifth scale degree of the key of A minor.

![Example 30. Rachmaninov, Morceaux de Salon, Op. 10, No. 1, mm. 1-2.](image)

Rachmaninov re-uses the theme rather effectively in the opening section of the Moments Musicaux, Opus 16, No.1. However, Rachmaninov presents the motto in the key of B-flat minor and begins the theme on the anacrusis. This causes a syncopation almost identical to that of the Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10, No.1. Rachmaninov also alters the rhythm slightly by incorporating smaller note values resulting in a quasi-diminution of the theme as originally presented in the Morceaux de Salon, Opus 10, No.1. Additionally, it is important to note that Rachmaninov also incorporates a one measure introduction as can be seen in example 31.

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73Sergei Rachmaninov, Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 1, Nocturne.
Example 31. Rachmaninov, *Moments Musicaux*, Op. 16, No. 1, mm. 1-2.\(^{74}\)

In the *Morceaux de salon*, No. 4, *Mélodie*, Rachmaninov ingeniously conceals the motto motive by beginning in an ascending, step-wise direction rather than with an octave leap as seen before. In addition, he makes the motto motive less obvious by incorporating it within a texture of rolled chords that extend both higher and lower than the motivic fragment itself. Refer to example 32.

Example 32. Rachmaninov, *Morceaux de salon*, Opus 10, No. 4, *Mélodie*, mm. 1-4.\(^{75}\)

The B section of the *Morceaux de salon*, No. 7, *Mazurka*, illustrates further use of the motto theme idea as noted in example 33. Here, Rachmaninov has employed essentially the same intervals of the original motto

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motive, however, he has altered the rhythm by incorporating a dotted eighth-note to sixteenth-note pattern. This rhythmic alteration is necessary to accommodate the triple time lilt of the Mazurka dance rhythm.


Rachmaninov's most heroic use of the motto motive can be seen in the following example 34. Here in the last piece of the six *Moments musicaux*, Rachmaninov transforms the motto motive into a powerfully accented and majestic chordal melody. However, he does not use the same four-note fragment of the motto motive customarily seen, but a more extended version reminiscent of the skeletal framework of the entire first phrase of the motto theme as originally conceived in the *Morceaux de salon, No. 1, Nocturne*.

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76Sergei Rachmaninov, *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 7, Mazurka.*
Example 34. Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux*, *Opus 16*, No. 6, mm. 3-7.\textsuperscript{77}

Rachmaninov's *Morceaux de salon*, *Opus 10* are "character or salon pieces." Kirby writes:

This is a small composition, usually in a simple form (the ternary scheme ABA is by far the most common) in which the middle section often forms a sharp contrast with the principal one. Pieces of this type were given a 'programmatic' or emotional title, indicative of what they are to express or what their associations are.\textsuperscript{78}

The majority of the *Morceaux de salon* adhere to the "ternary scheme ABA" that Kirby mentions. This could have been due to the influence of Anton

\textsuperscript{77}Sergei Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux*, *Opus 16*, No. 6.

\textsuperscript{78}Kirby 230.
Stepanovich Arensky (1861-1906), Rachmaninov's harmony professor at the Moscow Conservatory and to whom the seven Opus 10 pieces are dedicated. Seroff states:

Arensky's influence was twofold: On the positive side his influence showed in Rachmaninoff's songs and particularly in the full melodic piano accompaniment, while on the negative side it was due to Arensky that Rachmaninoff's music had much of a 'salon' character.  

Only on four occasions does Rachmaninov diverge from standard ABA formal structure. He adds a twelve measure introduction to the Mazurka and a two measure introduction to the Barcarolle for the left hand alone. Two additional exceptions to the otherwise standard ABA structure can be found again in the Mazurka and the Valse. In these two pieces, Rachmaninov has added a coda to the end of the return of the A sections.

Contrasting with the clearly delineated formal structure of the Morceaux de salon, Opus 10 is the interestingly disparate approach Rachmaninov takes in his formal treatment of the Moments musicaux, Opus 16. In these pieces, Rachmaninov departs from the ABA formal structure of the more youthful "character piece" and begins to write in a style similar to that of an etude, which he would continue to exploit limitlessly in his Preludes Opus 23 and 32, as well as his Etudes tableaux Opus 33 and 39. According to Kirby:

The etude, as is well known, is primarily a teaching piece, study, or exercise designed as a vehicle for the pianist either to improve or to exhibit his technical skill. Generally, an etude will concentrate on one technical problem of execution - a certain type of figuration, octave playing, arpeggios, staccato chords, scale passages, legato playing, and so forth. Therefore, a certain consistency is

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the result since the same type of thematic material, by and large, is maintained all the way through.80

This is not to assert that the *Moments musicaux* are primarily teaching pieces, but they do focus primarily on one musical or technical aspect in addition to being highly consistent in thematic material.

The first piece of the *Moments musicaux* is a theme and variation, containing five different variations on the same theme. The second piece is an etude focusing on the difficulties of properly voicing a melody written in octaves for the right hand while maintaining a supple left hand accompaniment consisting of sweeping scales that are occasionally doubled in the right hand. See example 35.

![Example 35. Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux*, Opus 16, No. 2, mm. 1-4.][1]

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80 Kirby 285-286.
It should be noted that the writing in example 35 is very characteristic of Rachmaninov. This is evidenced by his employment of the same technique in the *Concerto No. 2, in C minor*. See example 36.


The third piece of the collection focuses on legato third technique. Example 37 illustrates the demands Rachmaninov places upon the pianist by writing the legato thirds in triplet and dotted rhythm.

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82Sergei Rachmaninov, *Concerto No. 2, in C minor*. 
Example 37. Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux*, Opus 16, No. 3, mm. 1-7.\(^{83}\)

The fourth piece, as previously illustrated in chapter 3, is a study using the left hand similarly to the *Revolutionary Etude* of Chopin, but doubling with the right hand. The fifth piece, like the third, is a study focusing on the execution of legato thirds, again in triplet rhythms. The final piece of the *Moments musicaux*, *Opus 16* is a treacherous etude that focuses on many different techniques. As can be seen in example 38, these technical problems include a constant rotary figure doubled in both hands underneath a superimposed, accented, chordal melody. In addition, Rachmaninov begins with a dynamic level of *ff* and ends with a dynamic marking of *ffff*, while never dropping below the level of *f*. This

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\(^{83}\)Sergei Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux*, Opus 16, No. 3.
presents the added problem of endurance and proportioning of dynamic intensity.

Example 38. Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux, Opus 16*, No. 6, mm. 71-74.84

84Sergei Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 6.*
Though Rachmaninov does depart from the ABA form of the Opus 10 and employs the structure of the etude, he is still utilizing nineteenth century formulas. Hancock states that these character pieces were what most attracted Rachmaninov in his effort to "fashion his own [collection] as a retrospective of nineteenth century character piece--a suite of different genres within the character piece tradition."  

Rachmaninov's *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10* and the *Moments musicaux, Opus 16* exhibit musical and compositional growth and maturity. Moreover, they serve as benchmarks in his compositional evolution. Opus 10, which was written shortly after his graduation from the Moscow Conservatory, represents a bridge to his middle period. Opus 16 represents the beginning of his middle compositional period. The middle period can be characterized by Rachmaninov's increased exploitation of the many technical, color and sonority possibilities of the piano. In addition, this middle period can also be distinguished by a more creative and resourceful application of those elements derived from the various exogenous influences previously addressed in chapter 3. As a result, this middle period is a significantly more mature compositional period than the period of his student years and the period just following his graduation. By stylistically comparing the *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10* with the *Moments musicaux, Opus 16*, one can actually chart the specific compositional development of Rachmaninov from the Opus 10 (1893-1894) to Opus 16 (1897).

As previously noted in this chapter, the presence of a readily distinguishable motto in the *Morceaux de salon* and the *Moments musicaux* 

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85 Hancock 3-4.
demonstrate that Rachmaninov used previous compositional ideas and materials in Opus 16, some of which were taken from Opus 10.

The *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10* pieces reveal a more traditional use of harmonic structure. Figure 1 below illustrates the prototypical harmonic relationships which Rachmaninov utilizes in the Opus 10 pieces:

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c}
 & I & V & I & I \\
A: & I & V^7 & I & I \\
B: & IV & IV/iv & I & I \\
\end{array}
\]

{Occasional coda}

Figure 1. The Prototypical Harmonic Structure of Rachmaninov's *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10*

The Opus 10 works contain few departures from a single key area within each formal section. Rachmaninov occasionally passes through the dominant or subdominant key in the A section; however, this is a very rare occurrence in the *Morceaux de salon*. The occasional coda primarily serves as a means of prolonging the tonic sonority. Also noteworthy is Rachmaninov's use of the perfect-authentic cadence, a cadence which he uses with less frequency in the *Moments musicaux*.

Contrasting with the simplicity of the Opus 10, Rachmaninov defines a significantly greater variety of key areas in his *Moments musicaux, Opus 16*. Figure 2 illustrates the presence of harmonic sequences as well as the aforementioned expanded form. These harmonic sequences in the Opus 16 works demonstrate Rachmaninov's use of chromaticism, a trait not inherent in the Opus 10 pieces. Note the almost exclusive use of the imperfect-authentic cadence.
In addition to the harmonic differences, textural differences are also readily apparent when contrasting the *Morceaux de salon* with the *Moments musicaux*. In the Opus 10 works, Rachmaninov employs a more chordal texture. This can be seen in example 39.
Example 39. Rachmaninov, Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 2, Valse, mm. 98-101.86

In the Moments musicaux, Opus 16, Rachmaninov utilizes a florid texture with counter movement in both hands. He rarely employs a chordal texture. This is demonstrated in example 40.

Example 40. Rachmaninov, Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 2, mm. 117-122.87

86Sergei Rachmaninov, Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 2, Valse.

87Sergei Rachmaninov, Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 2.
Further comparison and contrast of Rachmaninov's *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10* with his *Moments musicaux, Opus 16* reveals melodic differences. Rather than writing a single-voice melodic line as in his Opus 10 pieces, he expands the texture of the melody by adding thirds, as in examples 41 and 42.

Example 41. Rachmaninov, *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 5 Humoreske*, mm. 84-95.  

88Sergei Rachmaninov, *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10, No. 5, Humoreske*. 
Another noteworthy melodic difference is Rachmaninov's exchange of melodic material between the hands. This feature is only present in the *Moments musicaux, Opus 16* as illustrated in example 43.

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Example 42. Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 3*, mm. 1-3.\(^{69}\)

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\(^{69}\)Sergei Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux, Opus 16, No. 3.*
Many rhythmic differences have already been addressed during the course of this stylistic overview as well as in chapter 2. As has already been seen, Rachmaninov's *Moments musicaux* are considerably more rhythmically free and unsymmetrical than the *Morceaux de salon* as is evidenced by the rhythmic formation of the motives and phrases, a technique which, according to Bertensson and Leyda, conform to the practices of Russian Church singing. In addition, the dramatic rhythmic differences between the two collections could have also been due to Rachmaninov's aforementioned desire to create his own versions of challenging and concert-worthy etudes as Chopin did.

Example 43. Rachmaninov, *Moments musicaux*, Opus 16, No. 6, mm. 26-28.90

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91Bertensson and Leyda 237.
There are clear differences in Rachmaninov's use of rhythmic, thematic, and harmonic materials in the *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10* and the *Moments musicaux, Opus 16*. The Opus 10 pieces exhibit more consistency in form, style, and compositional structure than the Opus 16 works. This can be attributed to Rachmaninov's adherence in Opus 10 to the student formulas and restrictions of his Conservatory training. The *Moments musicaux* show Rachmaninov's liberation from the imposed constraints and more evidence of creative and innovative resourcefulness. Bertensson and Leyda state:

Rachmaninoff's style of piano-writing grows more and more involved with the advancing years. It becomes more extended and richer in carefully nursed middle voices and accompanying figures. Each piece proves the fact that he writes preferably for his own unusual hand and the infallibly rapid chord technique, which is peculiarly his own. You will not find many pianists, if any at all, who are able to compete with him in the playing of some of his own piano pieces.\(^{92}\)

\(^{92}\)Bertensson/Leyda 236.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS

This study has established Rachmaninov's *Morceaux de salon, Opus 10* and *Moments musicaux, Opus 16* as significant compositions in the evolution of his early musical period, and provided historic and analytic documentation that illustrates both striking similarities and noteworthy differences between the opus 10 and opus 16 collections. It has also demonstrated the evolution of Rachmaninov's technical skills, the presence of exogenous influences, and artistic components apparent in these early works. It has also demonstrated by example and comparison how Rachmaninov utilized similar thematic, melodic, and harmonic material as a basis for both the *Morceaux de salon* and the *Moments musicaux*. Additionally, we have noted the inevitable influence of Chopin and Liszt on Rachmaninov's compositional style and structure.

This study has focused on the development of the Opus 10 and Opus 16 pieces of Rachmaninov. Through the use of musical illustrations taken from the Moments musicaux and Morceaux de salon, we have demonstrated how Rachmaninov's modification and revision processes contributed to his musical and compositional maturity. This study has revealed his adherence to the powerful and formulaic influences of conservatory training. Nevertheless, evidence of extended compositional experimentation and freedom from the aforementioned constraints has been documented through examples from the *Moments musicaux, Opus 16*. This research has provided a stylistic overview of the Opus 10 and Opus 16 works and has established their appropriateness as
teaching pieces and introductory pieces to the later works of Rachmaninov.

We noted significant similarities between the piano works of Frédéric Chopin and the Opus 10 and 16 of Rachmaninov. By comparing the Waltzes, Nocturnes, and Etudes of Chopin to the *Morceaux de salon* and *Moments musicaux*, this research has illustrated the tremendous influence of Chopin on the early compositions of Rachmaninov.

Evidence has been presented that demonstrates how Rachmaninov utilized the *Dies Irae* theme in the harmonic construction of both the *Morceaux de salon* and the *Moments musicaux*. Further research has shown that Rachmaninov also used the Dies Irae theme in the melodic materials found in the Opus 10 and Opus 16 works.

We have surveyed the influence of Russian Church carillon music on Rachmaninov's *Morceaux de salon* and *Moments musicaux*. Additionally, we have shown the development of Rachmaninov as a melodist and how his melodies become the most important ingredient in the construction of his motivic material, particularly in the Opus 16 works.

This examination of influences and stylistic overview of Rachmaninov's Opus 10 and Opus 16 collections has included an historical perspective of the compositions, the influential elements of Russian/Eastern Orthodox Church Music, the influence of external factors on the two works, the influence of nineteenth century composers on the two works, and the evolution of Rachmaninov's own unique compositional techniques and style.

In conclusion, it is obvious from the literature available that Rachmaninov was influenced greatly by nineteenth century composers and that he also was
influenced by his personal involvement with the Russian church. Rachmaninov himself stated:

A composer's music should express the country of his birth, his love affairs, his religion, the books which have influenced him, the pictures he loves.... Study the masterpieces of every great composer, and you will find every aspect of the composer's personality and background in his music.93

It can be said that this great Russian composer was influenced by personal and musical factors to develop a compositional style and skill that changed the course of history for piano literature. Today, Rachmaninov's Concerti, as well as his later solo works, are a central component of the concert repertoire throughout the world.

93Bertenson/Leyda 368.
REFERENCES

BOOKS


ARTICLES


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### DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS


### DISSERTATIONS


MUSICAL SCORES


