I hereby recommend that this document prepared under my direction by David Evenson, entitled The Early Piano Sonata of Igor Stravinsky, be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

Signature of Major Professor

Date

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Date
THE EARLY PIANO SONATA
OF IGOR STRAVINSKY

by
David Evenson

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Reminiscing about his Piano Sonata in F-sharp minor composed in 1903 and 1904, the 78-year-old Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) referred to it as "the lost--fortunately lost--piano sonata", adding "it was, I suppose, an inept imitation of late Beethoven". In a letter to the composer and critic G. H. Timofeyer, dated March of 1908, Stravinsky wrote:

In my university years I became friendly with the Rimsky-Korsakov family and then advanced very rapidly. I composed many comic songs . . . and in 1903-1904 wrote a large--four movement--Piano Sonata in F-sharp minor, incorporating many suggestions by Rimsky-Korsakov. It was performed at his home by [Nicholas] Richter, the pianist to whom it is dedicated.

At the time of the sonata's composition, Stravinsky was a 21-year-old beginning composer, quite the opposite of the archetypal child prodigy. Although his father, Feodor Ignatievich, was one of the most prominent Russian opera singers of his day, there was little encouragement

given Igor for his formidable musical interests. His parents, as was customary for the time, insisted that he study law at the St. Petersburg University so that he would be qualified to obtain an administrative post, thus guaranteeing a livelihood. As for their son's musical inclinations, "they regarded these as mere amateurism, to be encouraged up to a point, without in the least taking into consideration the degree to which my aptitudes might be developed. This now seems to me quite natural".  

An opportunity arrived when, as an indolent law student, Stravinsky made the acquaintance of Vladimir Rimsky-Korsakov, the youngest son of the eminent composer Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, thus facilitating a meeting between Rimsky and Stravinsky in the summer of 1902. "He made me play some of my first attempts.  

Alas! the way in which he received them was far from what I had hoped." Rimsky had told him to continue his private lessons in harmony and counterpoint and not to drop out of law school.

However, those early attempts showed enough promise

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4Probably including the Piano Scherzo of 1902, which was discovered along with the Piano Sonata and is the earliest work by Stravinsky that has been published. Howard Ferguson, in a Review published in Music and Letters, April, 1975, describes it as similar to the scherzo movement in the Piano Sonata, though "more awkwardly written for the piano". (p. 243.)

5Igor Stravinsky, An Autobiography, p. 15.
that Rimsky left the door open to possible future consultations. One year later Stravinsky had begun work on the Piano Sonata, but was soon overcome with the difficulties inherent in any composer's first sonata-form attempt. He decided to consult with Rimsky-Korsakov again in the summer of 1903, and stayed as Rimsky's guest for two weeks. Rimsky made him start over on a sonatina exposition, after having explained the principles of sonata-form. "He explained these principles with a lucidity so remarkable as to show me at once what a great teacher he was."6

In 1904 Stravinsky revised the Piano Sonata to these new-found principles, partly at the estate of a favorite uncle in Pavlovka, and incorporated many other suggestions by Rimsky-Korsakov, who had now accepted Stravinsky as his student.

The manuscript of the Piano Sonata was given to its dedicatee and initial performer, Nicholas Richter, a close friend of Stravinsky's. It was performed for the first time to the Rimsky-Korsakov circle on February 9, 1905, and again shortly after in public at one of the Evenings of Contemporary Music, a concert series begun in 1901 by Serge Diaghilev. The concerts had two purposes—to promote modern, foreign music not available in the other, more conservative concert series of St. Petersburg (the

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6 Ibid., p. 20.
music of the French Impressionists was especially popular at the Evenings), and to enable members to perform their own works in front of a sympathetic audience. There is unfortunately no evidence of the critical reception to Stravinsky's Piano Sonata, but it is possible to imagine that it did not create a sensation due to its conservative cast. At any rate, the work was never performed again for almost 70 years. The manuscript was discovered in the Leningrad State Public Library by I. Beletsky and I. Blazhkov along with the Piano Scherzo of 1902 and a Romance for voice and piano to words by Pushkin, also written in 1902. The Piano Sonata was published for the first time in 1974 by Faber Music Ltd., edited by Eric Walter White. The work was recorded by the English pianist Paul Crossley shortly thereafter on the Philips label, but is no longer available. The Sonata was revealed to be not "an inept imitation of late Beethoven", but a rather skillful imitation of middle Tchaikovsky with traces of Richard Wagner.

A work so exhibitionist, virtuosic, and emotional as this came as a surprise to those familiar only with the cool, detached, and objective style that characterizes Stravinsky's mature composition. In discussing his apprentice works with Robert Craft, Stravinsky said, "I know that my first works . . . lack personality while at the same time they demonstrate definite technical ability with the musical materials. . . . [they] sound like Wagner in places,
like Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* in other places (but never like Rimsky-Korsakov, which must have troubled that master), and like Stravinsky not at all, or only through thickly bespectacled hindsight."\(^7\) Robert Craft and Vera Stravinsky echo this idea in another writing:

> [the] early works are hardly a cornucopia from a composer of genius in his mid-twenties. On the contrary, his pre-Firebird creations are surprisingly plodding, evincing little more than an acquisition of competence in other composer's idioms. His leap from academic anonymity into the *Firebird* is extraordinarily sudden. \(^8\)

When any lost work of a major composer resurfaces it is traditionally met with great interest, but this was not the case with Stravinsky's First Piano Sonata. Recent doctoral dissertations devoted to the complete piano works of Stravinsky (Charles Joseph, Marlene Thal) refer to it only in passing, and there has been no significant discussion of it in scholarly journals of music. In this year, the one-hundredth anniversary of Stravinsky's birth, interest in the early Piano Sonata is bound to awaken, as it clarifies many aspects of the beginning of the most important musical career of the twentieth century. The purpose of this paper will be to demonstrate ways in which the Piano Sonata is not typical

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\(^8\) Vera Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, p. 22.
of Stravinsky's later style, to trace compositional influences of other composers, and on the other hand to apply some "thickly bespectacled hindsight" to discover embryonic traces of the mature composer: that the use of other composer's idioms in this early work clearly foreshadows Stravinsky's famous musical "kleptomania" (as he himself once called it\(^9\)), though in a significantly different way, and his surprisingly sophisticated sensitivity to the rhythmic parameter, a sensitivity that was largely intuitive.

CHAPTER 2

STYLISTIC DERIVATIONS OF

THE PIANO SONATA IN F-SHARP MINOR

Tchaikovsky

When Stravinsky was eleven years old Tchaikovsky was pointed out to him during intermission of a performance of Glinka's opera *Russlan and Ludmilla*, in which his father was singing the part of Farlaf. Only two weeks later, Tchaikovsky would be dead. Stravinsky writes:

> It was a memorable evening for me. Besides the excitement I felt at hearing this music that I loved to distraction, it was my good fortune to see Tchaikovsky, the idol of the Russian public, whom I had never seen before and was never to see again. . . . Deeply though I was impressed by the unexpected death of the great musician, I was far from realizing at the moment that this glimpse of the living Tchaikovsky--fleeting though it was--would become one of my most treasured memories.

Lawrence Morton points out that Stravinsky's lifelong reverence for Tchaikovsky was probably more derived from that child's-view, idealistic, rose-tinted vision that "remained on the retina of my memory all my life" \(^1\) than any

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realistic appraisal of, as Morton puts it harshly, "the tragic symphonist, the lachrymose sentimentalist,—and, let it be said, the hack composer".12

Regarding The Fairy's Kiss, a 1928 ballet Stravinsky wrote on themes culled from various works by Tchaikovsky as an act of homage, Morton writes:

Stravinsky's hand shows everywhere, and it is the ruling hand... Sequences, the bain of Tchaikovskian form, abound; but instead of being Tchaikovsky's inevitable squares they are Stravinsky's rhomboids, scalenes, trapeziums, or trapezoids—shapes somehow stretched or shrunk-en into asymmetry and arranged in unpredictable combinations. Tchaikovsky's faults—his banalities and vulgar-ities and routine procedures—are composed out of the music, and Stravinsky's virtues are composed into it.13

Tchaikovsky's faults are composed into Stravinsky's Piano Sonata, however, and herein lies the important differ-ence between the early composer and the mature: whereas in The Fairy's Kiss Stravinsky transforms the borrowed material from Tchaikovsky into something uniquely his own, in the Piano Sonata material from Tchaikovsky is absorbed discreetly by some thin camouflage, but in the same general style as Tchaikovsky. Melodies are highly lyrical periods of obsess-ively regular four-measure parallel phrases; bass lines are often of the descending scalar type so prevalent in Tchaikov-sky's music; the chromatic harmony is similar to Tchaikov-sky's; the texture is homophonic and consisting of block


13Ibid., pp. 325-326.
chords; and finally, as in Tchaikovsky, sequences are overused in an effort to pad the form, but they are indeed Tchaikovsky's "inevitable squares", that is, completely symmetrical and therefore wearingly predictable. Furthermore, the usual injunction to avoid more than three consecutive repetitions of a sequential pattern is ignored—in places there are as many as six consecutive sequential repetitions.

Stravinsky falls short of a literal quotation from Tchaikovsky, although he does manipulate some Tchaikovskian material, as in this opening from the Piano Sonata in G Major, Op. 37. Note the three-note ascending dotted figure in the right hand against a descending scale in the bass:

![Figure 1. Tchaikovsky: Sonata in G Major, Op. 37, First Movement, measures 1-7.](image-url)
It is evident that Stravinsky adapted this to become the opening of his Piano Sonata by simply constructing a sequence out of the dotted figure in the Tchaikovsky and retaining the descending scalar bass line:

![Figure 2. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, First Movement, measures 1-5.](image)

As a parenthetical note, it is interesting to compare this opening of Stravinsky's First Piano Sonata with the opening of Serge Prokofiev's Sonata in F minor, Op. 1, composed in 1909 from fragments dating back to 1905, the year Stravinsky's Sonata was first performed at the Evenings of New Music, a series patronized by the 14-year-old Prokofiev. Its main theme is virtually identical to Stravinsky's (above), though more colorfully harmonized. Whether the similarity is deliberate or subconscious can only be conjectural, but it is amusing to observe that the Russian proclivity for competitive borrowing was passed to the new generation at such an early age.

![Figure 3. Serge Prokofiev: Sonata in F Minor, Op. 1, measures 3-6.](image)
Rimsky-Korsakov

From a stylistic standpoint there is no discernible influence of Rimsky-Korsakov on the Piano Sonata in F-sharp minor, and in fact little influence throughout the years Stravinsky studied with him. This is ironic when the scope of Tchaikovsky’s influence on the young Stravinsky is considered, in addition to the well-known fact that Rimsky despised Tchaikovsky:

Rimsky could not conceive of Tchaikovsky other than as a 'rival'. Tchaikovsky had been more influential in Germany than Rimsky, and Rimsky was jealous. . . . He would say, and never tire of saying: "Tchaikovsky's music is in abominable taste", and, indeed, though much of it is, Rimsky might have realized that his own music could share honors with Tchaikovsky on this count. 14

During the interim between the first two visits Stravinsky paid to Rimsky in 1902 and 1903, his father had died. By Stravinsky's own admission, his father's sudden absence left in him a psychological vacuum that was filled by Rimsky-Korsakov as a father-surrogate. This accounts easily for Stravinsky's inflated opinion on the value of Rimsky's teaching, in sharp contrast to other Rimsky students in this period, notably Prokofiev 15 and Lazare Saminsky.

14Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, Memories and Commentaries, pp. 55-56.

15"I am bound to say that I learned next to nothing in his classes. . . .", cited in Lawrence Hanson and Elizabeth Hanson, Prokofiev (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 49.
Saminsky recalls that Rimsky taught him "fictitious counterpoint . . . abuse of the sequence . . . constant use of thematic modification instead of the dissection of themes into segments usable in development, a lack of stress laid on the vital difference in the exploiting of themes on motive-bodies capable of melodic evolution, as opposed to melodic episodes".16

All of these faults are to be found throughout the Piano Sonata, but it is not always possible to say how much is the result of Rimsky's teaching and how much is the result of Stravinsky's inexperience and devoted imitation of Tchaikovsky. Since the Sonata was composed away from Rimsky's direct control, his influence was limited to the ex post facto variety.

As to the curiosity of Stravinsky's infatuation with the musical style of Tchaikovsky, Rimsky's bitter rival, but not with the style of Rimsky himself (at least until after Stravinsky had excised himself from Rimsky's studio, as in the Firebird of 1910), perhaps it was because Rimsky didn't allow slavish imitation of himself by students, or perhaps Stravinsky was recalcitrantly trying to assert some kind of independence from his teacher. More likely, however, he simply committed an ingenuous political faux pas.

came in 1912 when Stravinsky attended a Bayreuth performance of *Parsifal* at the invitation of Serge Diaghilev, an invitation he initially accepted with great pleasure. After fifteen minutes of listening politely,

. . . I could bear no more. My limbs were numb and I had to change my position. Crack! Now I had done it! My chair had made a noise which drew down on me the furious scowls of a hundred pairs of eyes. Once more I withdrew into myself, but I could only think of one thing, and that was the end of the act which would put an end to my martyrdom.  

In essence, he resented the depiction of German mythology in the trappings of Christian religious ritual: "It is high time to put an end, once and for all, to this unseemly and sacrilegious conception of art as religion and the theatre as a temple."  

Phony piety was not an issue with Stravinsky in 1904, and the Piano Sonata pays homage to Wagner in several places, most notably in the slow third movement. The opening, below, recalls the Tristan Prelude with the same thin veneer of cosmetic covering that was found applied

![Figure 4. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Third Movement, measures 1-6.](image)

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18Ibid., p. 38.

19Ibid., p. 39.
to the beginning of the Tchaikovsky Piano Sonata above. In comparing Stravinsky's Tristan quote with the original below, note how Stravinsky has expanded Wagner's rising minor sixth into an octave before settling into the famous half-diminished sonority on the downbeat, trailing off chromatically in contrary motion as in Tristan, but coming to a terminal cadence on the tonic. Unlike Tristan, which

![Figure 5. Richard Wagner: Prelude to Tristan and Isolde, measures 1-13.](image)

nebulously suggests several different tonal areas in succession by means of half-cadences and extended rests, Stravinsky's adaptation is squarely in the key of D major. Stravinsky's chromaticism is classically contained and intra-harmonic; Wagner's chromaticism is tonally vague and extra-harmonic. Stravinsky evidently failed to grasp the true significance of Wagner's harmonic methods, but perhaps also wanted to sidestep Rimsky's sure condemnation of this new fangled trendiness. Even so casual a reference to Tristan as this was bound to irritate Rimsky, Stravin-
sky's sugar-coating notwithstanding.

Also reminiscent of Wagner is this passage from the third movement,

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Piano_Sonata_F-sharp_Minor_Third_Movement_29-35.png}
\end{center}

Figure 6. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Third Movement, measures 29-35.

whose panting chromatic sequences are surely inspired by this excerpt from the **Liebestod**:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Liebestod_Tristan_and_Isolde_38-43.png}
\end{center}

Figure 7. Richard Wagner: Liebestod from *Tristan and Isolde*, measures 38-43.
That Stravinsky was very impressed with the so-called "Tristan-chord", that is, the sonority of a half-diminished seventh chord, is shown by his preoccupation with that sonority throughout the Sonata, as in this salon-flourish in the first movement:

Figure 8. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, First Movement, measures 210-212.
CHAPTER 3
SALIENT MUSICAL ASPECTS
OF THE PIANO SONATA IN F-SHARP MINOR

Rhythm

The music of Igor Stravinsky immediately calls to mind his enormous and creative contribution to twentieth century music in the realm of the rhythmic parameter. Stravinsky's individual use of rhythm is a constant throughout his long career and several stylistic periods, characterized in part by an exhaustive use of composite and changing meters, polyrhythms of unprecedented complexity, asymmetrical motific manipulations of astonishing subtlety, extensive use of syncopations often influenced by jazz and vernacular music, and a propulsive, motoric effect created by a lavish use of driving ostinato patterns.

Inasmuch as rhythm is Stravinsky's common denominator among such otherwise disparate styles as those of the serial and neoclassic periods, it would appear reasonable to presume at least a small degree of incipient rhythmic complexity in his first major work, and indeed the Piano Sonata contains some prescient moments of that later mastery. The second movement scherzo makes a dazzling effect of displaced bar-line pulses, as can be
seen in the opening line, where the apparent metrical pulse is thrown to the second beat of each measure, finally righting itself at measure 5 with charming asymmetry:

![music notation]

**Figure 9.** Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Second Movement, measures 1-8.

Although Stravinsky's motivation for using this type of rhythmic complexity is beholden to the nineteenth century's abhorrence for the inevitable accent at the beginning of each measure (sometimes referred to as "the tyranny of the bar-line"), and although the techniques utilized here are hardly more advanced than those that were used by such composers as Brahms and Schumann, the amazing fact remains that this virtually self-taught novice composer was cognizant of such matters at all. In fact, it can be inferred that Stravinsky arrived at these ideas more-or-less independently and intuitively, having had little opportunity to learn them formally. Charles Joseph\(^20\) has observed the same type of rhythmic techniques in the Piano Scherzo of 1902, the earliest work by Stravinsky yet published and almost certainly one of the works

Stravinsky showed to Rimsky-Korsakov in their historic first meeting in the summer of 1902. At the very least, it can be assumed to be typical of those early works that Rimsky examined. The first phrase of the Scherzo not only contains a hemiola, but syncopated accompanimental chords as well:

Figure 10. Stravinsky: Piano Scherzo (1902), measures 1-4.

Rimsky must have reinforced Stravinsky for the use of this device, as the same formula is used again in the scherzo from the Piano Sonata. Dr. Joseph speculates that this early rhythmic ingenuity suggested to Rimsky Stravinsky's potential for improvement and creative growth, in spite of the awkwardness of the harmony and counterpoint. It may have been the one mitigating factor that resulted in Rimsky's invitation to Stravinsky for further consultation. The main point, however, is the the rhythmic accomplishments of the Piano Sonata "... are so clearly analogous to similar devices in the 1902 Scherzo that this early idea of Stravinsky's owes little to Rimsky-Korsakov's guidance."21

Another example from the same movement shows a startling glimpse of a Stravinskian "fingerprint": asym-

21Ibid., p. 89.
metrical rhythmic manipulations of a melodic cell over a dominant pedal point:

![Musical notation](image)

Figure 11. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Second Movement, measures 376-393.

In addition to the pulse consistently falling on the second beats, the notes within slurs fall into irregular divisions: 4+3+5+3+5+3+1+3+2, etc. The middle section of the movement develops further the juxtaposition of 4+5, now in augmented note values:

![Musical notation](image)

Figure 12. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Second Movement, measures 146-153.

The initial rhythmic motive in the scherzo (short-short-short-long) is used as a unifying motive throughout the entire Sonata, which may explain Stravinsky's remark that the Sonata is an "inept imitation of late Beethoven".
Stravinsky's compositional technique owes a great deal to Beethoven's motivic approach, and it makes its debut with this most Beethovenian of rhythms, as these three excerpts from the other movements show:

![Figure 13. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, First Movement, measures 144-147.](image)

![Figure 14. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Third Movement, measures 63-65.](image)

![Figure 15. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Fourth Movement, measures 212-216.](image)

The rhythmic sensitivity evinced in the second movement is especially welcome after the staid squareness of the first movement. Stravinsky was perhaps too overwhelmed with the formal problems inherent in his first endeavor with sonata composition to avoid monotonous rhythms, but even so he includes occasional hemiolas at cadence points. There is effective use of hemiola in all
the movements, of which Figure 4 is a typical example.

Far from "thickly bespectacled hindsight", it is obvious that Stravinsky's sensitivity with rhythm in the first major work of his career portends something of the greatness to come, especially in the scherzo, "whose graceful themes that soar, dip, and chatter, and off-the-main-beat chords, are the work of a born composer of ballet music."  

Harmony and Tonality

When Stravinsky first approached Rimsky-Korsakov in 1902 with his portfolio of first compositional attempts, a relatively unimpressed Rimsky advised him to continue his private lessons in harmony and counterpoint before coming back. One gets the impression from the Piano Sonata that in the realm of harmony, if not in counterpoint, Stravinsky wished to demonstrate with a vengeance that he had done his homework. There is, in fact, a certain amount of overkill present: most of the examples that have been quoted above reveal a relentlessly homophonic, block-chordal, right-hand dominated texture in which even passing tones are harmonized. The Sonata would make an ideal harmony textbook for a second year college theory course, as it is filled with every chromatic chord and harmonic cliche known to nineteenth century harmonic practice. There are no traces

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22 Howard Ferguson, review of the Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, by Igor Stravinsky, pp. 242-243.
of the polychordal and bitonal style that will come in only six years, but instead extravagant use of augmented sixth chords, altered dominants, chromatic mediants, and even a chord sequence known as the "omnibus" progression, which appears several times in the middle section of the second movement and once in the finale. This is simply a series of five chords, beginning and ending with the same dominant seventh chord, the middle three chords resulting from chromatic contrary motion in the interior voices:

![Figure 16. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Second Movement, measures 162-163.](image)

One harmonic device that is overused by Stravinsky here (as is often the case with student composers) is the major seventh sonority resulting from decorative pitches. These chords are easy to write and highly expressive, but if used without restraint can produce a cloying, sentimental effect. The examples that follow also reveal how thoroughly unpianistic these non-harmonic tones are in the way that Stravinsky uses them—the total disregard for the natural shape of the pianist's hand is at least one aspect that carries forward into Stravinsky's later writing for the piano. Some of the decorative use of non-harmonic tones results in extreme dissonance, perhaps a sign of Stravin-
sky's future experimentation with novel sonorities:

Figure 17. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, First Movement, measures 192-195.

Figure 18. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, First Movement, measures 140-141.

The end of the first movement contains a chord construction that by conventional theoretical wisdom is considered weak. The terminal cadence on the tonic has the fifth omitted, with the third doubled. It is difficult to imagine how this escaped Rimsky's criticism, as the resultant chord contains a three-way tonal ambiguity at the final cadence, a point that traditionally should be the least nebulous. The doubling of the third in an octave including the soprano note off-sets the finality of the cadence by suggesting the tonal region of A, and the omission of the fifth leaves the root in question, implying the possibility of D major. Though it is possible, and even probable, that Stravinsky simply preferred a lighter, open-ended sonority
for the end of the movement, it is also possible that he was constructing the chord on the basis of its long-range tonal implications: that the doubling of the third is a reference to the importance in the work of A major (it is the tonal center of the second theme in the first movement and is also the key of the second movement), and that the omission of the fifth foreshadows the key of D major (the tonal center of the third movement and the last--and longest--episode in the rondo-finale):

\[ f\# \text{ minor: i? VI}_6? \]

Figure 19. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, First Movement, measures 312-318.

The Sonata can be seen to be a sort of "essay" on the keys of F# and D, in that these two tonal areas form the polar relationship which creates the form, a point that is summarized at the end of the work when the two chords alternate insistently with each other, in a manner more traditionally used with tonic and dominant chords. Eric Salzman writes: "There is nothing inevitable about tonal centers in Stravinsky's music; they are present and effective because they are stated and asserted to be so; and the means of assertion--repetition, ostinato, pedal-points, juxtaposition of
melodic and harmonic levels centering on specific tones and intervals, accent and articulation, rhythmic and metrical displacement—provide the basis for both the tonality and the form.23 The juxtaposition of F# and D triads shown below suggests that tonal areas touched upon elsewhere in the work were chosen for their close relationship to the tonal area of D: B minor in the first episode of the rondo-finale (the relative minor of D major), F major in the middle section of the scherzo (the relative major of D minor), and A major in the outer sections of the scherzo (the dominant of D):

Figure 20. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Fourth Movement, measures 373–390.

Form

It was originally difficulties in form that brought Stravinsky back to Rimsky-Korsakov, and the unfortunate conclusion must be reached that Rimsky was not of much help,

at least in the first movement sonata-form. The tendency to substitute variation and sequence for organic development can be seen in the second theme from the first movement, a very lush and un-Stravinskian eight-measure period of two four-measure parallel phrases. He immediately repeats portions of it at three different tonal levels, culminating in a complete restatement in the original key of A major with embellished inner voices. There is an attempt in the development section to fragment and develop motives from the opening theme, but the ideas do not come easily, and to fill in the empty spaces Stravinsky rambles with transitional passages of empty rhetoric, derived from nothing that has happened before and leading eventually to an irrelevant new theme (see Figure 13). In short, there is a perfunctory "filling-out" of the textbook outline for a sonata form, rather than an inevitable evolving process of functional tonality. This is usually the case with Stravinsky's later creations (though much less ineptly executed), as Eric Salzman noted:

Classical forms and types are based on process; they evolve according to tonal principles and it is through this process of evolution that they come to be. Stravinsky's types are not involved with process and tonal function and come into being through statement and assertion.24

Stravinsky fails to make the distinction between the work of a composer and the work of a copyist, in that all

24Ibid., p. 51.
sectional repetitions (the recapitulation in the first movement, or the reprises of the first sections in the ternary middle movements and rondo-finale) are exactly repeated or transposed, with no deliberate alteration or compression. This results in some amount of stagnation, as there is no drive to the final cadence at the ends of movements. One feels that a few minutes judiciously edited out of these repetitions would have resulted in a stronger piece.

Despite these lapses, the Sonata contains several clever formal devices. This transition from the second movement makes effective use of a Mahlerian vorimitation technique, where the rhythmic motto of the up-coming section subtly appears in measure 218, a full 39 measures before the reappearance of the opening theme. More significantly, in this same passage is the build-up of material by motific accretion, an effective technique similar to the proverbial downward-rolling snowball:

![Musical notation]

Figure 21. Piano Sonata in F-sharp Minor, Second Movement, measures 216-224.
This same formula is used again to good effect in the transitions between the third movement and finale, and also in the coda of the finale.

The cyclic use of a Beethovenian rhythmic motto to impart cohesiveness over all of the movements has already been discussed, and a similarly cyclic approach is taken in the finale, which makes an obsessive, Schumannesque use of dotted rhythm, especially in the propulsive coda. This clearly harks back to the opening theme of the first movement, serving to tie the work together.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Though probably doomed to permanent obscurity because of the ungratifyingly difficult writing for the piano, Stravinsky's early Piano Sonata is of unquestionable historic value as it clarifies and places into perspective many aspects of this great composer's apprenticeship. To briefly summarize the main ideas discussed in this paper, the following points will be cited:

1. Stravinsky's use of other composers' idioms in the Sonata, specifically those of Tchaikovsky and Wagner, is suggestive of the type of wholesale borrowing that will characterize virtually all of his later composition, but with an important difference: in his later works the borrowed material is transformed, partly by rhythmic alterations but mostly by drastic changes from the original context; in the early Piano Sonata the borrowed material is lifted along with the same general style as the original. These borrowings are more self-conscious than they will become later--minor cosmetic alterations are applied as if to disguise the original source, rather than making them conform to Stravinsky's own unique style.
2. Although the Piano Sonata is totally different from Stravinsky's mature writing because it belongs to the esthetics and harmonic techniques of the nineteenth century, there are none-the-less several stylistic elements present that foreshadow something of his later compositional style:

A developing preference for rhythmic complexity, including hemiolas, displaced metric pulses, syncopations, rests, irregular groupings of notes, and cyclical use of recurring rhythmic motives.

A fundamentally unpianistic approach to keyboard writing.

A developing preference for dissonant sonorities from extensive use of non-harmonic tones.

Tonal organization based on a principle of arbitrarily asserted tonal poles, de-emphasizing traditional tonic-dominant polarity.

Formal procedures that are oblivious to the on-going, evolving processes of functional tonality.
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